

COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST
SECTION III

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The Collectors Club Library

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THE COLLECTORS CLUB, INC.

22 East 35th Street

New York

N. Y.

The largest philatelic library in the Americas and probably the largest in the entire world, is owned by the Collectors Club of New York.

The Library was started in 1896 under the guidance of Mr. Hiram E. Deats, who also was the first Librarian. Mr. Deats was followed as Librarian by such distinguished philatelists as Joseph S. Rich, John Walter Scott, and in 1918, by Dr. J. Brace Chittenden.

Dr. Chittenden did more to make the Collectors Club Library what it is to-day than anyone not closely associated with the Club can realize. It was through his untiring work that the splendid Index was established. He gave unselfishly of his time, working almost every week day and sometimes on Sundays.

Through his efforts the Club obtained a wonderful library of philatelic material assembled by the late Victor Suppantsehsch of Austria. Learning that this library was for sale, Dr. Chittenden prevailed upon some of the members of the Club to provide funds for its purchase. On its arrival in New York, Dr. Chittenden spent many months cataloguing and arranging the material. The final tally of material received was over twenty-eight thousand items, including some of the rarest items in the field.

Other gifts and acquisitions which have been added to the library include the Joseph S. Rich library, the John Walter Scott library, the Abraham Hatfield library, the J. M. Bartels library, the E. B. Sterling library, and many others. In 1927 three members provided funds for the purchase of the Pablo Busch library of Buenos Aires, which was especially strong in the periodicals of the South American countries.

At the present time the Library is housed on the second and third floors of the Collectors Club home at 22 East 35th Street, New York City. On the second floor will be found the Handbooks, Periodicals, Card Index, Current Literature Index, and the Librarian's desk. The third floor is devoted to filing of Catalogues, Auction Catalogues, Government Publications, and sections containing material covering the various Philatelic Exhibitions of all nations and the activities of the various Philatelic Societies.

In moving into their new clubhouse in 1937, much thought was given by the Library Committee and Board of Governors to the proper housing of this wonderful library. Much new shelving had to be provided and new cases erected, for all the

shelves are enclosed in locked cases. A new system of classification had to be worked out. After due deliberation, it was decided to make three general classifications—Handbooks, Periodicals and Catalogues—breaking these down into sub-classes where necessary.

In the matter of arrangements, there were many fields of thought. Some suggested the Dewey Decimal system, others a plain alphabetical arrangement, etc. Finally it was decided that since the library was a library on just one subject—Philately—that nothing could be more simple than to arrange the files in the order in which the countries appeared in the Scott Standard Catalogue, which, after all, is the basis of most stamp collecting. There were some modifications to this plan, such as grouping the colonies under the mother country in the case of the Handbook sections, and the separation of Periodicals into those published in the English language and those in foreign tongues.

As now arranged, the first section of the Handbook files, (each section contains from eighteen to twenty-one running feet of shelf space) contains all books bearing on the United States. This is broken down into subdivisions covering General Issue, Commemoratives, Envelopes, Revenues, Franks and Expresses, Postmarks, Cancellations, Possessions, and others, as well as a division for material covering the Confederate States.

The next case contains the section covering Handbooks which deal with the entire world, such as, Catalogue for Advanced Collectors, the Kohl Handbuch, etc. In this section also will be found divisions covering such subjects as Forgeries, Reprints, Essays and Proofs, Watermarks, and on shelf devoted to the catalogues and descriptions of world famous collections and auctions, such as the Ferrary, Hind, Worthington, etc.

Next come the sections containing the Handbooks covering specific countries. Under each country the books are arranged by author's name, alphabetically. After this there is a section called "Miscellaneous." This covers that great number of books which have been written on the general subject of Stamp Collecting and which, as a rule, deal in generalities. The last case in the Handbook section is devoted to the one hundred and eighty-six volumes of photographic reproductions of the famous Edward S. Knapp collection.

Across the room are the Periodical cases. The first four sections are devoted to periodicals which have been

published in the United States. The files contain copies of the "Stamp Collector's Record," the first philatelic paper published in our country—1864, and cover the great majority of all publications right down to date. Following the United States sections are those for periodicals printed in the English language outside the United States. These are arranged by country of origin and alphabetically under each country. The last nine cases contain periodicals printed in foreign languages. These also are arranged by countries alphabetically from Abyssinia to Venezuela. The sections containing French, German, and Spanish papers are most impressive and contain many items which do not appear on shelves of other libraries.

In the room assigned to Catalogues, the files are very complete. It has been stated by competent authorities that the files are probably the most complete in the world. Volumes of the Scott Catalogue from the beginning of the multipage issues, Stanley Gibbons, Yvert & Tellier, Senf, Zumstein, and all the other prominent catalogues, as well as many others which few have ever heard about. In the files are copies of almost all the very early catalogues of the 1860's. One interesting volume contains the first catalogue ever published, the Berger-Levrault of September 1861.

No small task is the indexing of all this material. Every Handbook is indexed in at least three ways. First a card indexing it by title, a second card listing it under author's name, and then a third card, (and sometimes this reaches to the thirteenth card), listing the book under every subject covered. For example, if the book covers the stamps of the British Colonies in the West Indies, it is necessary to make a card for every colony mentioned.

On the "title" card is shown pertinent information as to name of publisher, date of publication, binding, number of pages, size of page and any other data available. This information is not typed on the "author" or "subject" cards. Every card also shows plainly in just which section that particular book is filed so that it can be located without loss of time.

Periodicals have an index of their own. This is arranged by countries alphabetically. Each card shows the title of the paper, place of publication, name of publisher or editor. Then is listed exactly what items our files contain. If there are any issues missing in a particular volume, space is left in proper sequence for the insertion of the number of that issue

should it be received at a later date. For current periodicals a different type card is used. This has the same information as before at the top, but the body of the card is ruled off into spaces for each month, and as each issue is received, its number is placed in the proper space. Should an issue miss delivery, it is immediately discovered when the next number is received and a printed form postal card sent to the publisher requesting a copy of the missing issue. All cards covering current periodicals are marked with a bright colored metal tab for quick references; and these cards are gone over quarterly. If no issues have been received during that time, inquiries are made of the publishers to find out if the paper has ceased publication and requesting that files be brought up to date if this is not the case.

Prior to the start of the present world war, the Library was regularly receiving over one hundred and seventy periodicals from all parts of the world. To-day this number is much less due to world conditions. The Library has received word from some of the publishers in foreign lands that it is impossible to mail their papers now but that they were saving a file for our Library and that the files would be sent when conditions are normal.

Another activity of the Library is the "Current Literature Index." All periodicals received are carefully looked over and any worthwhile articles indexed. Two types of cards are used for this, "subject" and "author." The "subject" card shows the country to which the article refers, author, name of periodical, volume and issue numbers and date published. The "author" cards only list name of periodical and subject with date of article. At present this index only covers the period from January 1939 to date, but various members are working on some of the more noted periodicals to carry the indexing back to the start of the journal. Some of these have been completed, but it will take several years of continued steady work to complete the entire task. When it is finished, it will be one of the most valuable reference sources possible.

There are still many gaps to be filled in the files of both Handbooks and Periodicals, and with each passing year, it becomes increasingly more difficult; but the Collectors Club Library and its Library Committee are continually working to make the holdings more complete. Perfection will probably never be accomplished, that is too much to expect, but with

each year, the files grow more complete and the "Want List" gets smaller. This is accomplished through donations from interested friends, exchanges with other philatelic society libraries, and in a few rare instances, by purchase. The Library has a very large accumulation of duplicate material in Handbooks and Periodicals which are available for exchange purposes or sale. In the case of sales, the proceeds are used to help defray the expense of permanently binding volumes.

From the original Library of approximately one hundred books back in 1896 to the present Library of over one hundred and ten thousand items, is a far stretch. The Collectors Club is justly proud of its Library and acknowledges its debt to those far-sighted members, interested in philatelic literature, who so firmly planted the seeds, carefully watched over it through the seedling stage into the budding state and passed it on to us, the members of to-day, to pick the blossoms from—The Largest Philatelic Library in the World.

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RULES FOR THE LIBRARY

1. All persons using the Library shall be required to register their names in a book provided for that purpose.
2. Any books removed from the shelves shall be returned to the Librarian's desk and not replaced on the shelves by the borrower.
3. Members will not be permitted to borrow more than three volumes at any one time.
4. Unbound numbers of periodicals cannot be removed from the Library.
5. Out of town members, on written application to Librarian, may have, not to exceed three volumes, sent them charges collect, for not more than two weeks, and they must be returned in good condition all charges prepaid.
6. Members not returning the books within the specified time shall be denied the further privileges of the Library until all books borrowed have been returned.
7. Non-members may be granted the privilege of the Library on approved application by the Library committee, but will not be allowed to remove books from the Library.
8. Rare or special books cannot be taken from the Library rooms or loaned to out-of-town members without the written permission of the Library committee.
9. Duplicate periodicals, handbooks, pamphlets, etc., shall be kept in a separate room, and the sale price shall be clearly marked on each item.
10. Members borrowing books from the Library shall see that each item is recorded in his name by the Librarian or his deputy, and further see that when returned they are discharged from the record.
11. The Library Cases must be kept locked at all times.
12. NEW BOOKS may not be loaned from the Library for a period of ninety (90) days from the date of their acquisition.
13. CATALOGUES may not be loaned for a period of one (1) year from date of issue.

These rules may be amended or added to from time to time as required.