



# THE PHILLY PHILATELIST

Award-Winning Newsletter of the Greater Philadelphia Stamp & Collectors Club

Founded 1904

American Philatelic Society – Chapter 18

February 2026

[www.GPSCC.org](http://www.GPSCC.org)

Volume 14, Issue 2

## NEXT MEETING

February 17, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Community Rooms  
GIANT Supermarket  
315 N. York Rd., Willow Grove, PA

### Dinner:

For those who would like to join us for dinner beforehand, we will meet at The W Tavern, about a block from GIANT, at 5:00 p.m. for cocktails followed by dinner at 5:30 p.m.

210 York Rd., Willow Grove, PA

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Paul F. Miller*

The Greater Philadelphia Stamp & Collectors Club (GPSCC) meetings for 2026 started off with a bang!

Not only did we have a great presentation from GPSCC member **Anne Gibby**, but we had incredibly good attendance from our members. You can read a summary about Anne's presentation in the “Minutes of the January 20, 2026 Meeting” section of the newsletter submitted by **Robert Cohen**.

I commented last month that our members are the most important ingredient in measuring the success of the club. Well, that was on display at the January 2026 GPSCC meeting. The attendance from our members was excellent considering the fact that the meeting fell on an extremely cold and wintry evening. Everyone in the club joins voluntarily, and meeting attendance is also voluntary. So, to see so many happy faces at the January 2026 meeting was heartwarming (pun intended)!

Of special note was the fact that GPSCC was lucky enough to have two new members in attendance. One member, **Fred Palmer**, just joined in December 2025. So, we were especially happy to see Fred attending his first meeting. Another member, **Don Hargy**, was actually a walk-in to the meeting. He was not yet a member when he arrived but joined that very evening.

Although we had a few individuals drop from the GPSCC membership at the end of 2025, we still have a strong, interested, and engaged group of like-minded stamp collecting friends who are the backbone of the club. In fact, in a year-over-year comparison (beginning of 2025 to beginning of 2026), we have had an increase in membership. That is great news for the continued success of the club.

*(Continued next page)*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

At this point it is important for me to remind everyone that GPSCC is again sponsoring a free first year membership for new members. That means if a new member joins during 2026, their membership dues will be free for 2026. This allows the new member to join without any out-of-pocket costs and the ability to "try out" the club experience. Of course, we always hope that new members will become continuing members. So, if you know anyone

who might be interested in this good deal, please encourage them to join.

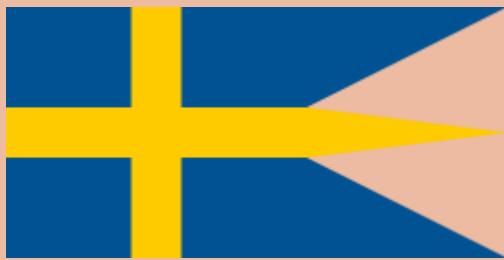
Since we started off 2026 so well, the challenge will be to keep the momentum going throughout the year. I am certain that our slate of 2026 meeting presentations will be excellent and well worth your attendance time. I hope to see as many faces as possible at all the meetings this year!

## PROGRAM FOR FEBRUARY 17, 2026: "EARLY MAIL AND STAMLESS POSTAL MARKINGS OF SWEDEN" BY ALAN WARREN

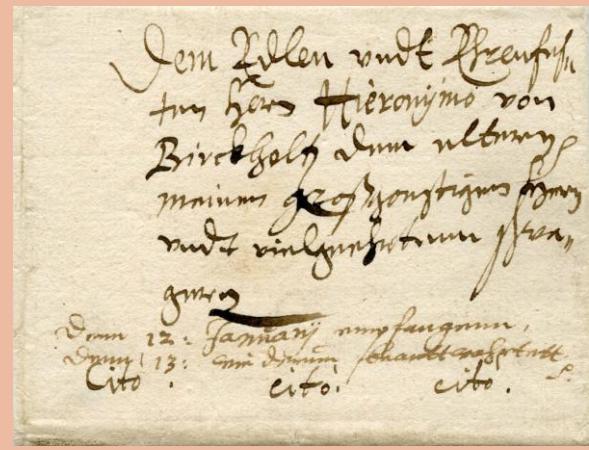
This marcophily exhibit tells the story of postal markings used in Sweden, primarily before the introduction of adhesive postage. The time period is from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, although some examples of stampless covers extending into the 1860s are included. This study explores the early types of mail including messenger mail, crown post, military mail, and general mail. Some manuscript markings are also identified.



Alan Warren presenting  
at the Philatelic  
Gathering in April 2025



The flag of Sweden circa 1750 had a color scheme similar to today's flag. Its primary use at the time was as a naval ensign.



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**UPCOMING CLUB MEETINGS**

Feb. 17 – Mar. 17 – Apr. 21 – May 19 – June 16 – Aug. 18 – Sep. 15

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**February 15** – [K2 Lancaster Stamp Show](#) (Bourse Only), Farm and Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Road, Lancaster, PA.

**February 21** – [Burlington Masons Lodge Stamp Show](#) (Bourse Only), 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., 2308 Burlington-Mt. Holly Road, Burlington, NJ.

**March 13-15** – [Garfield-Perry March Party 2026](#), Best Western Plus, 15471 Royalton Rd., Strongsville, OH.

**March 21** – [Philatelic Gathering](#), 10:00 a.m.-noon, Chester County History Center, 225 N. High St., West Chester, PA.

**CLUB MAILING ADDRESS**

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**WEB SITE**

[www.gpssc.org](http://www.gpssc.org)

**FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM**

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**HAVE SOMETHING PHILATELIC YOU WANT TO SHARE?**

*The Philly Philatelist* is always interested in publishing articles by our members.

Looking for a topic? How about why you collect, or what got you hooked on collecting? Or send me a picture of your favorite stamp or cover and why it's your favorite. Yes, it's that easy.

Your friendly, non-biting editor, Mike W.

[newsletter@gpssc.org](mailto:newsletter@gpssc.org)

## MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 20, 2026, GPSCC MEETING

Sixteen members of the Greater Philadelphia Stamp and Collectors Club (GPSCC) braved the cold to attend the January meeting and see Anne Gibby give her presentation about her “Great Uncle Len.” Anne had previously brought some interesting items from Len’s collection, and it was thought that it would make a fine presentation. Anne did not disappoint.

Great Uncle Len was a collector of stamps, postal envelopes, correspondence, transactions and notes to clients, friends and family from the late 1800s through the early 1900s. He worked as a trader/broker and eventually secured a seat on The New York Stock Exchange. Len’s mother gave him a *Boston Stamp Album* in 1879, and it got passed on to Anne who sold it to an auction house. Through the boxes that Anne inherited, she learned a great deal about Great Uncle Len’s life.

As a resident of New York City, Len belonged to the Stroller Dance Hall and State Island Athletic Club. His father was the first broker/banker, and Len took over the business when his father died. He was very active in politics and was a member of the Young Republicans Club and the People’s Municipal League. Len was involved in nominating people for the assembly, and Anne had a sample ballot to show us. He also watched the count on election day. Incidentally, he was a member of a reform club dealing with tariffs.

Anne brought postcards from different banks, information about railroad stocks, bills and receipts, reply envelopes, letters, registered mail and currency. One of the letters was from the infamous RMS *Lusitania*, a British luxury cruise ship sunk during World War I. Through all of this memorabilia, Anne learned that her Great Uncle Len was a generous man who gave to orphanages and missions. Anne still has plenty more interesting boxes to go through for her next presentation.

Paul Miller introduced two new members, Fred Palmer and Don Hargy who then briefly spoke about their interests. Anyone who joins GPSCC, gets free

membership for the first year. As of tonight’s meeting, we have a total of 57 members. Last year at this time we had 49 members.

Mike Wilson spoke about MILCOPEX 2026 and its sponsorship of a series of postal history talks between now and the show’s opening on September 25. There will be a Zoom meeting on January 26 entitled “New Approaches to Postal History” with the speaker Adel Bulpitt. Check out <https://milcopex.org/advance-speakers> for future presentations.

Mike has an article published in the January issue of *The American Philatelist* entitled “The Black Blot Program.” Mike also informed members that the Philatelic Gathering will only be meeting quarterly instead of monthly from now on.

As a reminder, we are now an affiliate member of the American Topical Association (ATA), and we receive a hard copy of their bi-monthly magazine. A Dropbox link will be provided in a follow-up email so you can access ATA’s *Topical Time*.

Bruce Marsden gave updated information about tariffs. The key for buying and receiving stamps and philatelic materials internationally without tariffs are specific codes. The traditional HTS code for philatelic material is 9704.00.0000. The new IEEPA HTSUS code for informational material is 9903.01.31. As long as these codes are used by the seller, there should not be tariffs involved. Bruce also spoke about inexpensive lodging for Boston 2026. If you have a friend or friends who are in need of lodging, Bruce recommended the HI Boston Hostel.

Paul said the he heard some members suggest that we consider a new venue for the 2026 holiday party. Any suggestions, please let Paul know.

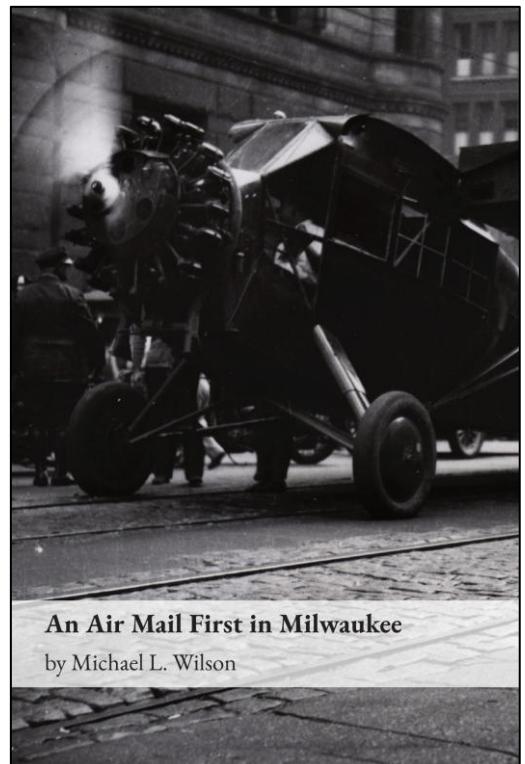
Respectfully submitted by Robert Cohen



## AWARDS AND HONORS

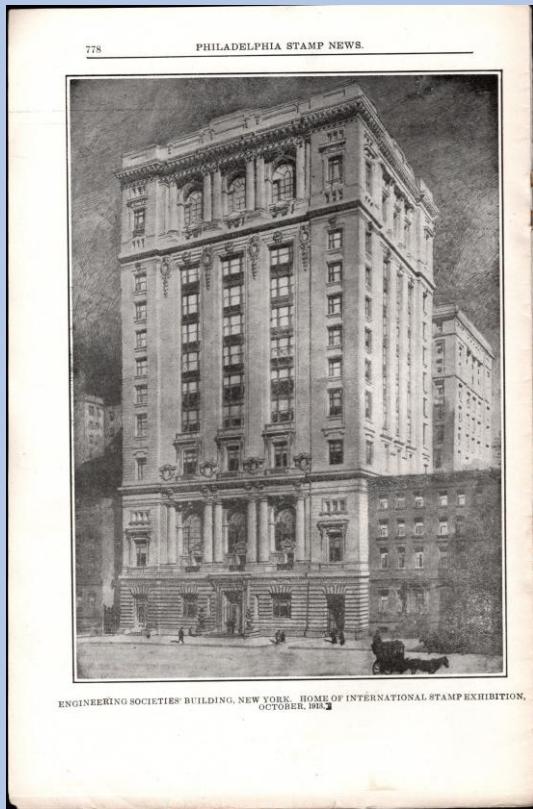
Alan Warren

In the philatelic articles competition at the Sarasota National Stamp Exhibition in Florida in January, **Michael Wilson** won large vermeils for two articles: "An Air Mail First in Milwaukee" that appeared in *The Airpost Journal*, and "The 'Golden Age of Flight' An Air Mail Collector's Wonderland" that appeared in his postal history blog.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Michael L. Wilson



In the early 1900s, the *Philadelphia Stamp News* (PSN) was a premier philatelic publication, acting as the official newsletter for the American Philatelic Society, the U.S. Revenue Society and the Philadelphia Stamp Club, as well as for stamp clubs in Iowa, Missouri, New York, and Ohio.

The highly anticipated event for 1913 was the first international philatelic exposition to be held in the United States scheduled for October 27 to November 1 in New York City. Every issue of the *PSN* that year had some story on the exposition, including a photo of the conference's venue in the February 8, 1913, edition: the Engineering Societies' Building. Built in 1907, the building stands to this day and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

## LUNAR NEW YEAR STAMPS – PART II

Paul F. Miller

In the January 2026 issue of *The Philly Philatelist*, I described the Lunar New Year and referred to a number of postage stamps that have been issued by the United States Postal Service (USPS) in various annual series over the past few decades. This month's article is intended to provide some additional details about Lunar New Year postage stamps from other countries and expand upon certain details associated with the Chinese Zodiac.

As noted last month, within the past 45 years, many countries and postal administrations have issued postage stamps commemorating Lunar New Year. Some colorful examples are pictured on page 8.

The current year – 2026 – is the Year of the Horse. This year embodies qualities of energy, independence, and perseverance, making it a symbol of vitality and success in Chinese culture. Those born under this sign are often seen as dynamic individuals who embrace life with enthusiasm and determination.

The Chinese Zodiac is a traditional classification scheme based on the Chinese calendar that assigns an animal and its attributes to each year in a repeating twelve-year cycle. The zodiac is very important in traditional Chinese society and exists as a reflection of Chinese philosophy and culture. In fact, the 12 Chinese Zodiac animals in a cycle are

not only used to represent years in China but are also believed to influence people's personalities, careers, compatibility, marriages, and fortunes.

If you are interested in determining which Chinese Zodiac animal represents your birth year, follow the chart below. There is a time gap in the year dates between the lunar calendar and the Gregorian calendar. Therefore, some people born in January or February of the Gregorian calendar may actually have the animal sign of the prior year. If you were born in January or February, you can look up the exact animal sign using a specific birthdate lookup function found on the internet.

**Rat:** 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1996, 2008, 2020, 2032

**Ox:** 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009, 2021, 2033

**Tiger:** 1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010, 2022, 2034

**Rabbit:** 1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011, 2023, 2035

**Dragon:** 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012, 2024, 2036



The image to the left is a representation of the 12 Chinese Zodiac animals.

## LUNAR NEW YEAR STAMPS – PART II (CONTINUED)

**Snake:** 1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013, 2025, 2037

**Horse:** 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014, 2026, 2038

**Goat:** 1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003, 2015, 2027, 2039

**Monkey:** 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016, 2028, 2040

**Rooster:** 1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005, 2017, 2029, 2041

**Dog:** 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018, 2030, 2042

**Pig:** 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, 2019, 2031, 2043

Lastly, and maybe most importantly, are the personality traits associated with each animal sign. Check them out below. It's fun to see if you agree with the personality traits that match with you, your spouse, or your children.

**Rat:** Adaptable, quick-witted, optimistic, considerate, versatile, outgoing. Rats are known for their charm and intelligence, making them natural leaders. They are ambitious and often successful in their endeavors.

**Ox:** Prudent, calm, strong-willed, persistent, industrious, honest. Oxen are known for their diligence and dependability. They are methodical and patient, often achieving their goals through hard work.

**Tiger:** Confident, courageous, steadfast, loyal, upright, trustworthy. Tigers are known for their courage and enthusiasm. They are natural risk-takers and often seek adventure.

**Rabbit:** Gentle, considerate, cautious, friendly, virtuous, compassionate. Rabbits are known for their elegance and sensitivity. They are compassionate and often seek harmony in their relationships.

**Dragon:** Energetic, confident, ambitious, frank, romantic, intelligent, generous. Dragons are seen as powerful and ambitious, often inspiring others with their enthusiasm and leadership qualities.

**Snake:** Sociable, graceful, eloquent, humorous, wise, perceptive, determined. Snakes are known for their deep thinking and analytical skills. They are often seen as mysterious and are good at keeping secrets.

**Horse:** Warm-hearted, upright, easygoing, positive, patient, steady, independent. Horses are known for their enthusiasm and love for freedom. They are sociable and enjoy being around others.

**Goat:** Gentle, softhearted, considerate, reliable, hardworking, thrifty. Goats are known for their creativity and artistic talents. They are often seen as kind-hearted and compassionate.

**Monkey:** Intelligent, enthusiastic, self-assured, sociable, innovative, eloquent, adaptable. Monkeys are known for their intelligence and quick thinking. They are often seen as fun-loving and sociable.

**Rooster:** foresighted, ambitious, capable, quick-minded, confident, outgoing, independent. Roosters are known for their diligence and attention to detail. They are often seen as punctual and reliable.

**Dog:** Righteous, brave, loyal, responsible, reliable, clever, quick-witted. Dogs are known for their strong sense of justice and loyalty to friends and family. They are often seen as trustworthy companions.

**Pig:** Warm-hearted, sincere, honest, optimistic, generous. Pigs are known for their kindness and willingness to help others. They are often seen as good-natured and easygoing.

## LUNAR NEW YEAR STAMPS GALLERY



China - 1980



China - 1981



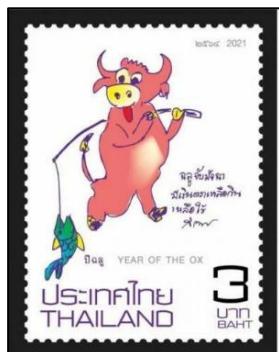
China - 2001



China - 2004



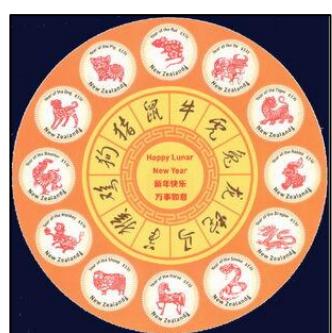
United Nations - 2011



Thailand - 2021



Liechtenstein - 2022



New Zealand - 2019



Singapore - 2012



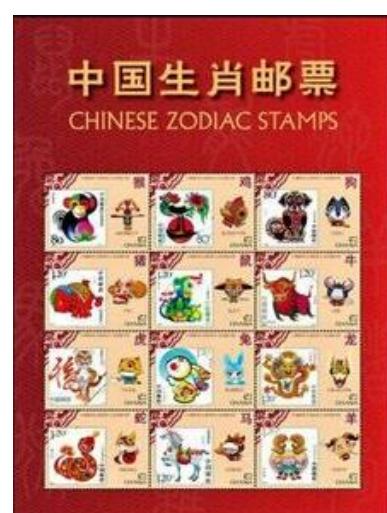
Zambia - 1998



Uganda - 1996



South Korea - 2024



Ghana - 2016

## WE ALL KNEW IT WOULD END LIKE THIS

Jaume Balsells

Everyone get your popcorn. It looks like there is a good chance that the British Guiana 1-cent Magenta might be soon coming again to the market!

I recently found out that the adventures on fractional ownership started by Stanley Gibbons Group plc with the purchase of the mythical stamp are coming to an end after Showpiece (the company created to manage these assets), decided last December to scrap their business model and liquidate their inventory.

I am not surprised at this outcome, and I imagine most collectors won't be either. The purpose of a business is to make money, and in the world of collectibles, that means buying (cheap) and selling (less cheap). Keeping a low inventory is also a sign of a well-run business, which means you ideally want to turn items around as quickly as possible.

Showpiece's premise was that they would *hold* the items on behalf of their micro-owners (at no cost), while turning a profit by selling "virtual fractions" of valuable collectibles. Sunken costs in the form of unsold inventory will quickly skyrocket unless one manages to quickly sell all the "fractions" of an item. And as your inventory grows so will the costs of safe storage, insurance, legal obligations, web management, etc.

I followed the process for the Magenta closely and think it informative to share some numbers. The stamp was purchased in June 2021 for \$8,307,000. Gibbons "divided" the stamp into 80,000 pieces valued at £100, which at the time was equivalent to \$10,800,000. This translated to an instant 30% appreciation of the sale value. Gibbons offered a 10%

discount on the first three days of sale, during which they sold 9,891 pieces. Sales continued until April 30, 2022, when the "pieces" entered the open market, meaning that one could buy or sell "pieces" on the Showpiece platform at market prices. The total number of pieces sold as of April 30, 2022, was 13,040, spread amongst 1,645 buyers and for a total value of approximately £1,205,090 (\$1,435,000), or about 19.5% of the cost of the stamp paid by Gibbons. It is not known how many additional pieces Gibbons sold between the summer of 2022 and December of 2025 but the value of "pieces" in the open market kept declining steadily, and during 2024 and 2025, one could purchase pieces from other "owners" at prices ranging between £50-60 (\$60-74).

By my estimate, Gibbons still owns about 80% of the stamp and thus should have full rights to decide its fate. If they wanted to recoup their investment, they could theoretically price the stamp at \$7,000,000 to break even. That would mean each "piece" is worth \$87 (£64 at today's exchange rate), almost a 30% loss for initial buyers. By contrast, the S&P 500 has appreciated roughly 100% during the same period.

We all knew it would end like this. Stamp collecting is not a financial investment. Collectibles do not generate revenue while we own them, only when we sell them. Stamps and philately are only worth every cent when we think of them as an investment in our learning, our social groups and our joy.

The 1-cent Magenta has been the stamp that accumulated all the records. And there is one more record we can add to the list: biggest philatelic commercial flop ever!

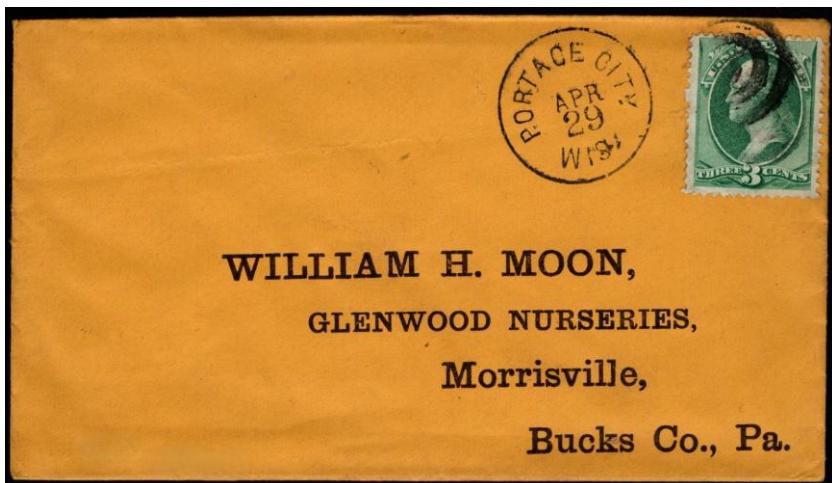


British Guiana 1-cent Magenta from 1856. Left is the stamp pictured in natural light. Right is an image taken with an infrared filter to show the print detail.



## IT'S A SMALL WORLD!

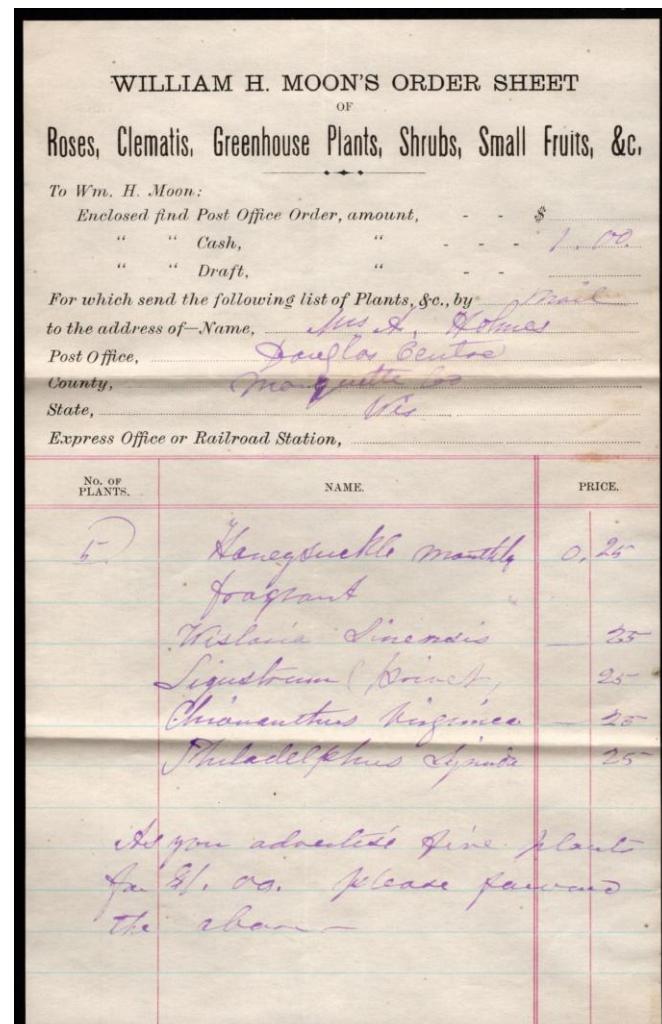
Michael L. Wilson



A few years back, I purchased a box full of 19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> century covers. I don't have an exact count, but there are several hundred covers from all over the United States.

Every now and again, I flip through to see what I can find and imagine my surprise when this cover turned up. Why you ask? Well, William H. Moon was an ancestor of GPSCC past secretary **Letty Moon**! I sent this image to Letty, and she said she is tickled every time one of these pieces turns up somewhere.

This cover was postmarked in Portage, Wisconsin on April 29 of either 1882 or 1883. There is no year in the postmark nor is there a year listed on the order form. But the 3-cent stamp on the cover was first issued in 1881 with the earliest known use of August 7, 1881. By October 1883, the letter rate was reduced from 3-cents to 2-cents per 1/2 ounce. Hence, the cover must have been mailed in either 1882 or 1883.



Honeysuckle Fragrant



Weigela Rosea



Philadelphus coronarius (Mock Orange)



Chionanthus virginica (White Fringe Tree)



Ligustrum Privet

Plants listed on order form at the price of 25 cents each. Today, these plants sell for about \$25.