



# THE PHILLY PHILATELIST

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

Founded 1904

American Philatelic Society – Chapter 18

January 2026

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

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## NEXT MEETING

January 20, 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



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Paul F. Miller*

Happy New Year! With the arrival of 2026, I find myself not only reflecting on the successes of the Greater Philadelphia Stamp & Collectors Club (GPSCC) over the past year but also looking forward to new opportunities and shared experiences ahead.

Our members are the most important ingredient in measuring the ongoing success of the club. We continue to have a strong and stable membership base, with some new members joining us during 2025.

I enjoy seeing many familiar faces each month at our regular club meetings. I appreciate the effort that members put into participating for the benefit of the club – whether that is doing a presentation; writing an article for the newsletter; sharing cool philatelic stuff during the “Show-and-Tell” times; or just showing up at a meeting and joining in on the conversation. In fact, reading the newsletter each month is also a terrific form of participation because

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it can keep you engaged with updated events related to the club. Let's keep that energy level up as we dive into 2026.

Last month we celebrated the season with a Holiday Dinner at The W Tavern. As you have heard me say before, this end-of-year celebration is a great way to connect with other members outside of the regular monthly meetings. The popularity of the Holiday Dinner is catching on again. This year we had more people in attendance than in recent years. It was really enjoyable and is a great way to enhance the spirit of the holidays.

During 2025, we had some wonderful presentations by members and non-members alike. We usually have a summary of the presentation in the minutes section of the newsletter each month. However, attending the meeting gets you the full scope of the

*(Continued next page)*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

presentation, as well as the questions and answers follow-up and the back-and-forth discussion between members.

As good as the 2025 presentations were, I am certain that we have a wonderful slate of presentations shaping up for 2026. Please note that we have set aside May 2026 as an all “Show-and-Tell” meeting. Everyone gets to participate by sharing something interesting, unique, and fun from their collection.

So, if you have an opportunity to attend a meeting in 2026, please do so. We look forward to as many faces as possible. It helps the presenter, too, to see members engaged in the club’s activities.

This year also promises to be especially exciting, as we anticipate the arrival of the Boston 2026 World Expo - a global celebration of philately. It is the twelfth international philatelic exhibition of the United States held for eight days from May 23 – 30, 2026. This event is held only once every ten years in the United States, so it will be a great opportunity to experience this grand event in our own backyard.

So, here is my wish for 2026: I encourage everyone to get involved, whether by attending or sharing your collections and knowledge with the community we call GPSCC. Together, let’s make 2026 a memorable year for GPSCC and all who share in the joy of stamp collecting.

## PROGRAM FOR JANUARY 20, 2026: “GREAT UNCLE LEN” WITH ANNE GIBBY

“Great Uncle Len” is the White/Morrison family’s special uncle who arranged a life annuity for Anne’s mother-in-law, Mary Morrison Gibby. He was a trader/broker and then secured a seat on The New York Stock Exchange. He was a prolific collector of stamps, postal envelopes, correspondence, transactions, and copious notes to clients, friends and family.

Len was gifted a Boston Stamp Album by his mother in 1879, and Anne received it by default because it was considered not valuable by Mary’s family. Mary entrusted the album, a rare book, and boxes of correspondence to Anne’s husband, Ned. The album is where Anne’s interest starts. Her presentation will be limited to stamps and Len’s trading and brokering with White and Blackwell Bankers from 1886 through 1900, which was a busy time for him and before he secured a seat on the Stock Exchange.

Anne joined the GPSCC in 2021 and became a regular card-carrying member in November 2022. She also has tons of old postcards and other ephemera collected from when she traded at flea markets in Lambertville and other venues in New Jersey.



Anne Gibby at a GPSCC meeting in May 2022

### And just for fun...

Did you hear the one about the un stamped letter?  
You wouldn't get it.



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**UPCOMING CLUB MEETINGS**

Jan. 20 – Feb. 17 – Mar. 17 – Apr. 21 – May 19 – June 16 – August 18

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**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.

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

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

Articles of any length are welcome. An article that is 750 words long with two or three images will fill two pages. Just email the text in a Word file and the images as separate files to [newsletter@gpssc.org](mailto:newsletter@gpssc.org).

Looking for a topic? How about why you collect, or what got you hooked on stamp collecting? Easy-peasy, mac-and-cheesy!

*GPSCC Holiday Dinner attended by (starting at left and going around):*

Talia Faden, Anne Gibby, Letty Moon, Jaume Balsells, Paul Miller, Charles Fulforth, Joel Grubman, Richard Brent, Bruce Marsden, Leslie Marsden, Robert Cohen, Alan Warren, Michael Wilson, Phil Russell, Cyndi Russell, Alan Faden, and Phyllis Shore.



## MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 18, 2025, GPSCC MEETING

President Paul Miller called the meeting to order promptly at 7:00 p.m.

Paul was pleased to announce that as of this meeting, the club has 61 members and so far there has been a 77% affirmative response rate for 2026 renewals.

The GPSCC Holiday Dinner will be held on December 16, 2025, at The W Tavern. An anonymous donor has contributed \$300 towards the dinner. The base dollar amount contributed will be used towards food and soft drinks. Club members are requested to bring cash in case we go over the base dollar amount. No meeting will be held, just a relaxing time with a good dinner with friends.

The GPSCC is now a chapter affiliate of both the American Topical Association (ATA) and the International Society of Worldwide Stamp Collectors (ISWSC). Links to both organization may be found on our club website (<https://www.gpssc.org>). Paul has been in contact with the ATA, and they will be sending a hard copy of their journal. The ATA affiliate membership allows us to share their journal, *Topical Time*, with our members. The 2025 issues can be accessed using this [DropBox link](#). Bookmark this link because future issues will be added to the same folder. There is now a possibility of expanding our membership and receiving Zoom presentations through these affiliations. Thanks also goes to club member Thomas Almerini, President of ISWSC, for his assistance in obtaining the affiliation.

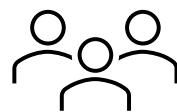
Treasurer Bruce Marsden spoke about the continuing saga regarding tariffs of stamps being sent from foreign dealers. A lot has changed since his article appeared in *The Philly Philatelist* in September 2025. It appears that the issue has been resolved and the most important thing for stamp dealers to use are specific codes. He was able to answer questions and give suggestions to club members at the meeting. Bruce indicated that some philatelic bureaus will no longer send new issue subscriptions to the United States. He will continue to keep us informed about this issue.

Bruce also highly recommended the book, *The Mailman* written by Stephen Grant. It is about his experience becoming a rural mail carrier in his hometown of Blacksburg, Virginia, after being laid off from a corporate job during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a really good read and would be a great holiday present for your own mailman.

We almost have a full line-up of presentations for 2026 meetings. If you have an interest in giving a presentation in 2026, please let Mike Wilson know. As of the meeting date, we still have openings in April, August, October and November. Also, if you would like to write an article for *The Philly Philatelist* please contact Mike.

Tonight, Mike Wilson presented “The Golden Age of Flight and a Postal Thief!” The presentation was based on a set of airmail covers received by Willard Roberts and his older sister Milo in the 1920s and 1930s. The covers were sent to them by their uncle, Herman Pietsch, assistant postmaster of Milwaukee, and Peter Piasecki, postmaster of Milwaukee. Mike purchased the binder of about 100 covers from the Rasdale Stamp Company. The collection covers everything from the glamour to the tragedy of flight. There were postcards from the early flights of airships, crash covers, contract airmail covers and even covers flown by Charles Lindbergh. Mike told the story about Uncle Herman who got arrested for stealing money from the mail. He was found guilty in 1932 and sentenced to 5 years at Leavenworth. He was paroled in July 1935 and died at age 93. Peter Piasecki was postmaster until 1936.

Respectfully submitted by Robert Cohen



## PHILATELIC GATHERING MEETS MARCH 21, 2026

In 2026, the Philatelic Gathering will meet quarterly, with the first meeting of the year scheduled for March 21. The meetings take place at the Chester County History Center, 225 N. High Street, West Chester, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. There is free on street parking and free coffee and donuts. After the meeting, whoever wants to join the group for a Dutch treat luncheon at a nearby restaurant in West Chester is welcome.

There are no fees or dues to attend the Philatelic Gathering, but a donation to the Chester County History Center is appreciated. For more information on joining or attending, contact [Kean Spencer](mailto:Kean.Spencer@keanwspencer1@gmail.com) ([keanwspencer1@gmail.com](mailto:keanwspencer1@gmail.com)). Several members of the GPSCC attend these events, so if you are a first timer, you should see a familiar face or two.

Check out the [Philatelic Gathering's](#) website for more background and summaries of past meetings.

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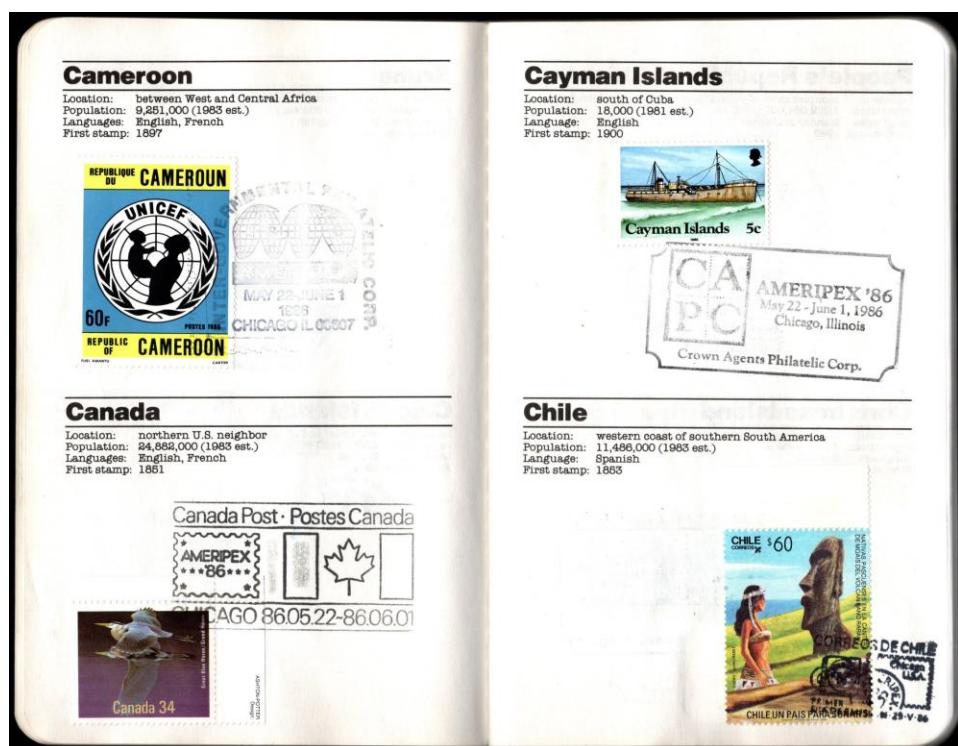
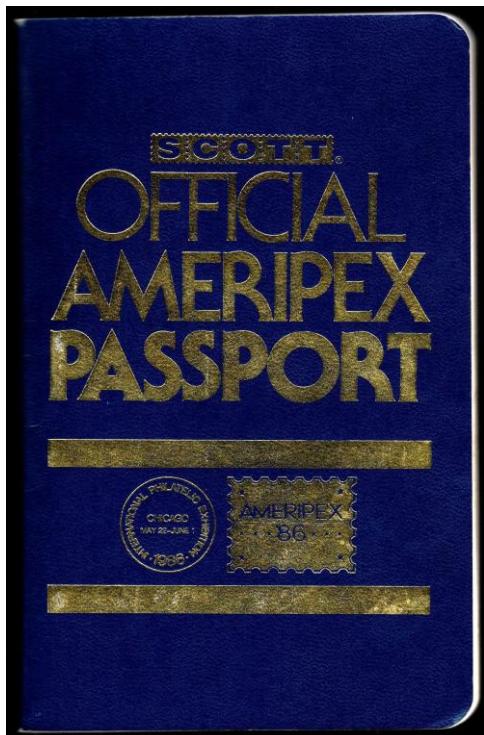
## SOUVENIR FROM PREVIOUS WORLD STAMP EXPO

The first world stamp exposition I attended was AMERIPEX in Chicago in 1986. I was living at the time in Downers Grove, a suburb of the Windy City, and went with my father. My favorite souvenir from that show was the "Official AMERIPEX Passport." More than 110 postal administrations participated in that show, and you could buy a stamp from each, stick it in your passport, and have it cancelled.

My passport was almost complete with stamps from 113 countries.

Do you have a favorite souvenir from a previous world stamp exposition? If you do, send me a picture, and I'll include it in an upcoming issue of *The Philly Philatelist*.

Michael L. Wilson



## LUNAR NEW YEAR STAMPS

Paul F. Miller

The Lunar New Year is the beginning of a new year based on the lunar calendars. These calendar years begin with a new moon and have a fixed number of lunar months, usually twelve. This “new year” event is celebrated by billions of people across the world. The determination of the first day of a new lunar year varies by culture, as many cultures use a lunar calendar, while others use a lunisolar calendar. The lunisolar calendar is similar, except it has a variable number of months. Because of the variable number of months, the calendar synchronizes with the solar year every few years. Regardless of the timing of the new year celebrations, they are always meant to be a time of happiness, health, prosperity, and family.

Within the past 45 years, many countries and postal administrations have issued postage stamps commemorating the Lunar New Year. Some of the countries have issued stamps that are part of an annual series celebrating the Chinese Zodiac.

Currently, the growing list of countries issuing these types of stamps includes (in no particular order):

United States	China	Singapore
South Korea	France	Liechtenstein
Canada	Great Britain	Indonesia
Isle of Man	Kyrgyzstan	Malaysia
Mongolia	New Zealand	Taiwan
Thailand	Vietnam	United Nations
Christmas Island (Australia)		
Channel Islands (Guernsey and Jersey)		

The United States Postal Service (USPS) issued its first Lunar New Year stamp on December 30, 1992 (Figure 1). It adopted its format based on the Chinese New Year, which is the most popular and most widely recognized new year celebration throughout the world.

The Chinese lunar cycle is based on a twelve-year repeating cycle. According to legend, the signs of the Zodiac were determined by Buddha. He was concerned for the welfare of the Chinese nation, so he called for a meeting of all animals of the kingdom. Only twelve animals showed up: the rat, ox, tiger,

rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig. For their loyalty, Buddha honored each animal with its own year in the Chinese Zodiac. It is believed that people will possess the nature and characteristics of the animal that represents the year in which they are born in the Chinese Zodiac.

A variation of the story is that a Jade Emperor decided to measure time based on the results of a race that included animals. He summoned the animals to a race across a treacherous river. The first twelve animals to complete the race were rewarded by inclusion on the Chinese Zodiac. The order of the lunar calendar follows the outcome of the race, where the rat is the first animal to start the sequence, and the pig is the last.

Since the first Lunar New Year (now commonly referred to as the “Chinese Lunar New Year,” or the “Chinese New Year”) stamp issued by the United States represented the year 1993, the image used celebrated the Year of the Rooster.



Figure 1 - U.S.  
Scott 2720  
issued  
December 30,  
1992

The stamp was designed by Clarence Lee from Honolulu, Hawaii. He had never designed stamps before but used his skills to create a unique modern and Chinese design that resulted in a paper-cut two-dimensional look. When the stamp was first created, the USPS did not have plans to begin a new series.

However, the Rooster stamp was so popular that many post offices sold out in just a few days. Outside of the United States, there was a huge demand for the stamp in Asia. Because of this rapid popularity, the USPS decided to create a Chinese New Year stamp series depicting all animals of the Chinese Zodiac, running from 1992 to 2004.

## LUNAR NEW YEAR STAMPS (CONTINUED)

All the stamps within the series were designed by Clarence Lee. In addition to the image, a professional calligrapher wrote Kanji characters to state the name of each stamp. Kanji is a Japanese adaptation to Chinese characters and can often be read by a variety of Asian groups from differing countries and cultures.

In 2008 the USPS began a second series of Lunar New Year stamps. Art Director Ethel Kessler and artist Kam Mak worked on the new series and decided to focus on some of the common ways the Lunar New Year Holiday is celebrated. Some elements of the previous Lunar New Year stamps were incorporated in the new design, including the paper-cut designs of the twelve animals and Chinese calligraphy. This series was issued from 2008 through 2019. The first stamp issued in this series in 2008 celebrated the Year of the Rat (Figure 2).



Figure 2 - U.S.  
Scott 4221 issued  
January 9, 2008.

Currently, the USPS is in the middle of its third series of Lunar New Year stamps. This third series began in 2020 and is expected to run through 2031. The current series, featuring artwork by Camille Chew, depicts three-dimensional paper-cut animal masks inspired by traditional Lunar New Year parades. The first stamp issued in this series in 2020 again celebrated the Year of the Rat (Figure 3).

### Fast Facts

During the Chinese New Year, the Chinese use a lot of red and yellow or gold colors. Why?

Red symbolizes good fortune and joy in Chinese culture, and it is found everywhere during the Chinese New Year and other family holidays or gatherings. Customarily, on Chinese New Year, the elders give the younger ones a red envelope to

welcome in the new year and give a blessing. The red envelope is also a symbol of prosperity. Red is also the color in Chinese weddings, representing good luck, joy and happiness.



Figure 3 - U.S.  
Scott 5428 issued  
January 11, 2020.

Yellow or gold is considered the most beautiful color. The Chinese saying, *Yellow generates Yin and Yang*, implies that yellow is the center of everything. Yellow symbolizes neutrality and good luck and is sometimes paired with red in place of gold. Yellow was the color of Imperial China and is held as the symbolic color of the five legendary emperors of ancient China. It also represents freedom from worldly cares and is thus esteemed in Buddhism as seen where monk's garments are yellow, as are elements of Buddhist temples.

When is the Chinese New Year in 2026? The Chinese New Year in 2026 falls on February 17 (Tuesday) and will last until February 21 (Saturday). It is the Year of the Horse. As an official public holiday, Chinese people can get nine days off from work, February 15 to February 23.



2026 is the "Year of the Horse"

## “DECEASED” - A SOLDIER’S LETTER IS TOO LATE

Michael L. Wilson

At an auction a couple of years ago, I picked up the cover pictured below. It is a very interesting cover from a postal history perspective, but it is also a tragic cover given the fate of the intended recipient, Marine Private James Young Simpson, Jr.

Postmarked in Augusta, Georgia on June 10, 1918, it's franked with 3-cents of postage (U.S. Scott 501, a very common stamp). As a wartime measure, first-class postal rates were increased from 2- to 3-cents in November 1917, and those rates applied to mail sent within the United States, to U.S. possessions and to Army personnel serving in France.

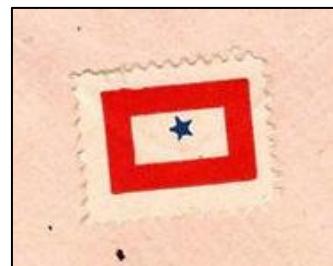
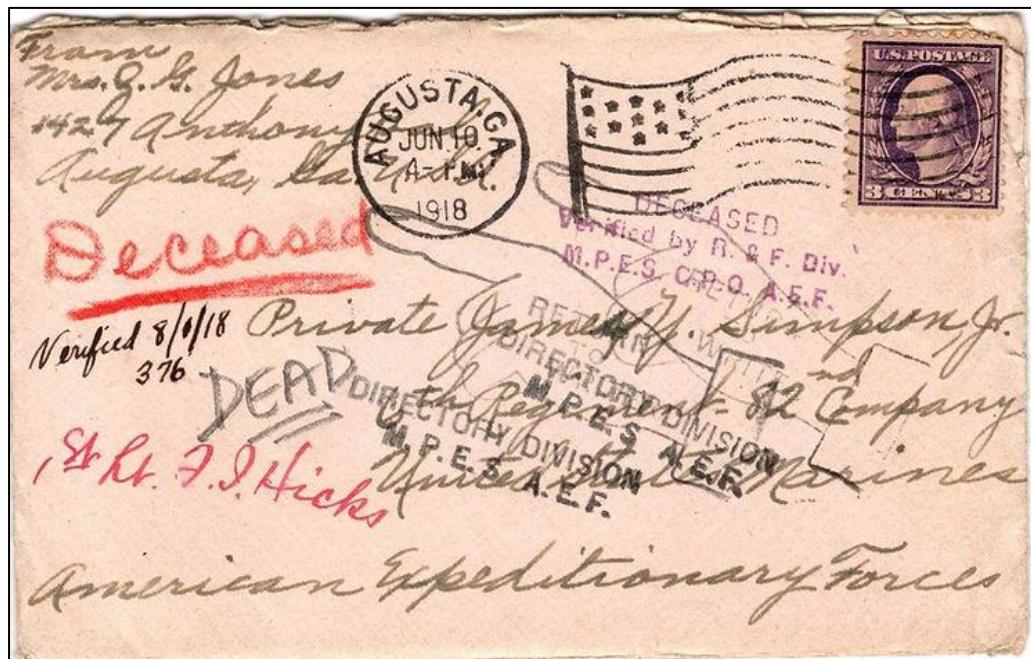
The cover was addressed to Private Simpson who was serving in France in the 6th Regiment, 82nd Company of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) during World War I. On June 1, 1918, Private Simpson's regiment went into action at the Battle of Belleau Woods. According to military records, 1,811 Americans were killed and another 7,966 were wounded at Belleau Wood. German casualties are estimated to have exceeded 10,000 with more than 5,000 killed.

Private Simpson was among the American casualties. He was killed in action on June 6 and subsequently awarded the *Croix de Guerre*, a French military decoration bestowed on forces allied with France, for bravery.

Of course, given the speed of communications from the battle front to the home front during World War I, there was no way for the correspondent, Frances Jones, to know that Private Simpson was dead before she even mailed the letter. So, the letter departed Augusta, Georgia for France.

There is no indication when the cover arrived in France, but it is clear that the cover was heavily processed by military postal officials. The front of the envelope has a variety of auxiliary postal markings:

- Right below the flag cancellation there is a purple “DECEASED Verified by R. & F. Div. M.P.E.S. C.P.O. A.E.F.” stamp. I checked with the National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, and they had no information on “R. & F. Div.,” but they suspect it was some sort of clearing



On the back of the envelope is a small label with a red border and a single blue star in the middle. That's the “Blue Star Service Banner” that was designed and patented in 1917 by Capt. Robert L. Queisser of Ohio. The single blue star represented one family member serving in the military.

## "DECEASED" - A SOLDIER'S LETTER IS TOO LATE (CONTINUED)

house for casualties. "M.P.E.S." stands for "Military Postal Express Service." The MPES was established in May 1918 by the U.S. War Department to handle military mail in Europe during World War I. "C.P.O." stands for "Central Post Office."

- There are two faint black "RETURN TO WRITER" pointed finger handstamps over Private Simpson's name.
- There are two black "DIRECTORY DIVISION M.P.E.S. A.E.F." stamps in the middle of the cover. The National World War I Museum and Memorial did not have any information on a Directory Division within the MPES.
- Lastly, there are some written notations on the cover including a bright red, underlined "Deceased," a penciled "DEAD," the notation "Verified 8/1/18 376," and finally the signature of First Lieutenant F.I. Hicks. That would have been Frederick I. Hicks who was attached to the 6th Regiment's headquarters company.

I don't know what "376" stands for, but "8/1/18" was probably the date that Private Simpson's death was verified to the satisfaction of the MPES and when this letter started its journey back to Frances Jones.

I have to assume that Frances knew of Private Simpson's death before she received this letter in her mailbox because I can't imagine her shock if she learned the news from the markings on the cover.

Even so, her grief must have been overpowering as she open the envelope and re-read what she wrote to Private Simpson.

When Frances started the letter on June 8, she was well aware that fighting was raging in France. It was front-page news in newspapers around the country. She writes, "I suppose you are in this awful drive that is going on now. The papers have so much about the Marines. I do hope you have escaped being injured, but hate to think of the poor boys who have to suffer." Little did she know that James had already perished as she wrote those words.

She writes of the birth of James's cousin. "Aren't you anxious to see Harry's baby?," she pens. "Everyone says he looks like Harry and is an awfully good baby. I think he takes that after his Cousin James. Don't you think so?" She must have been devastated when she realized the two would never meet.

And then there is the way she closed the letter: "Take good care of yourself. Don't try to catch any bombs." How sad she must have felt re-reading that.



Private James  
Young Simpson, Jr.

A photograph of a handwritten note on aged, yellowed paper. The text is written in cursive ink and reads: "too young. Write when you can. Take good care of yourself. Don't try to catch any bombs. Lots of love. Frances and Bert."

Frances's closing reads: "Write when you can. Take care of yourself. Don't try to catch any bombs. Lots of love. Frances"

## AWARDS AND HONORS

Alan Warren

**Michael Wilson** was appointed Secretary of the Pennsylvania Postal History Society.

At the Chicagopex show in Itasca, Ill., in November, **Mark Schwartz** had two entries in the single frame champion-of-champions competition: "Packet Mail Sent from Essex County, Mass., 1840 up to UPU," and "Carrier Service at Boston 1823-1863." In the open competition he received a large gold and the AAPE Single Frame Reserve Grand-2 with his "The Use of Boston's 'PAID in Grid' Cancels: 1851-1859."

**Vernon Morris** received a large gold and the APS research award at the Florex show in Deland, Florida in December with his "Evolution of British Colonial to U.S. mail: 1685 to 1799."

**Michael Wilson's** article "1924 Round the World Flight: Triumph & Tragedy" appeared in the January/February *The Airstop Journal*, published by the American Air Mail Society. He describes the efforts of the U.S. Army Air Service to achieve the objective with details about the aircraft, pilots, and routing involved.

**Michael** also has an article in the January 2026 *The American Philatelist*, "Beware the Black Blot." He summarizes the efforts of individuals and organizations to take advantage of collectors over the years and then focuses on the 1960s and 70s program to designate new stamp issues around the world that were speculative in nature.



*Mark Schwartz (l) receives his large gold from Chicagopex awards chairman David Wenzelman (Carlos Vergara photo)*

## DID YOU KNOW?

Michael L. Wilson

The United States has hosted an international philatelic exposition roughly every ten years since 1913. The Boston 2026 World Expo will be the 12<sup>th</sup> such event in the United States.

With one exception, the United States has issued a stamp or souvenir sheet to celebrate the occasion. Do you know which exposition was the exception? It was the very first one held in New York City from October 27 to November 1, 1913.

While no postage stamp was issued for the 1913 expo, there was a "Cinderella" stamp – also called a poster stamp or label – printed by the Hamilton Bank Note Company. The design depicting George Washington was printed in several colors.

The engraved label was very high quality, and the government was concerned that the labels could be

confused with legitimate postage. A U.S. attorney actually ordered that the stamps not be circulated. A compromise was reached that allowed the stamps to be distributed once they were overprinted with the exhibition dates.

These labels are relatively inexpensive and can be purchased on eBay for less than \$15. If anyone has an example used on cover, please share an image!

Attractive Cinderellas were issued for later expositions, as well.

