

Discover the World Through Stamp Collecting

Discoveries await you in the world of stamp collecting. Every stamp has something of interest and with over 200 countries issuing stamps year after year since the 1840s, there is a lot to discover. I collect giraffes on stamps and recently acquired a 1922 stamp from Tanganyika. The name "Tanganyika" was new to me, so I looked it up and was surprised to learn that this African country changed its name. It is now the nation of Tanzania. The stamps were printed using a metal plate that was engraved. The engraving artist was very skilled since the stamp design is intricate. The paper on which the stamps were printed has a watermark, best seen from the back. Some varieties of this stamp have a sideways watermark that make the stamp a bit more valuable. I was also surprised to find that the used copies of this stamp are more valuable than the unused ones. Now I want to find other stamps in this set.

Stamp collecting has been called "the hobby of kings and the king of hobbies." Linn's Stamp News estimates that more than 5 million individuals in the United States collect the small pieces of paper that indicate payment of postage. While President Franklin Roosevelt may have been the most famous U.S. collector, other well known collectors include financial gurus Bill Gross and Warren Buffet; astronaut Sally Ride; actors Gary Burghoff, James Earl Jones, and Patrick Dempsey; author James Michener; explorer Jacques Cousteau; musicians John Lennon, Freddy Mercury and Ron Wood; cartoonist Gary Trudeau; and French President Nicholas Sarkozy. If you choose to collect stamps, you will be in good company.

A few people collect stamps because some stamps are worth a lot of money, but most of us collect because we enjoy the stamps. In fact, stamp collecting is not an expensive hobby. You can find many stamps to enjoy for less than \$2! Plus, stamps come in your mail. Pay attention to the envelopes before you throw them away. Carefully cut the stamps away from the envelope and store them for your enjoyment.

You can store your stamps in a stamp album or on special pages we call stock pages. These have gutters to slide you stamps into. You can also save your stamps in a shoebox, or in envelopes. No matter what your choice, be sure that the stamps are kept in a low-humidity environment.

Centre County is fortunate to have the headquarters of the American Philatelic Society, our nation's oldest and largest stamp collecting organization. The APS has served stamp collectors since 1886! We have a library to help you learn more about stamps and what you wish to collect. We offer beginner classes and sell a few supplies to get you started. Come visit us to learn more and to tour the historic Match Factory between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. each week day. We are located at 100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte, PA, 16823. Visit us on the web, www.stamps.org.