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Organization

Early in 1890, Mr. George J. Bailey -- and probably a few other Cleveland collectors -- decided to make an effort to establish a Cleveland branch of the American Philatelic Association, which then was about four years old. A call was accordingly issued to all the members of the national society and other known stamp collectors in Cleveland and vicinity, inviting them to attend an organization meeting in Mr. Bailey's office at Willson Avenue (later East 55th Street) and Euclid Avenue.

The evidence as to the date of the first Club meeting is confusing; there is no exact record, but it seems probable that March 17th was the date.

The oldest record in the Club's archives is the first minute book. The minutes of the first meeting would be practically unquestionable evidence; but the minutes of the first meeting are missing. Neither is a copy of the call for that meeting available.

The first minute book contains the first list of members, entered by the Secretary in the order in which they were admitted to membership; and, if this list showed the dates of their admission, it would show the date of the first meeting; but the dates of admission are not shown.

The next oldest record in the archives is a clipping from a Cleveland newspaper, preserved by Mr. Wm. H. Schneider in one of his scrapbooks, and referring to the organization of the Club. This clipping is from the "Cleveland News and Herald" of April 22, 1890, and reads as follows:

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"A SOCIETY OF STAMP COLLECTORS

"The philatelists of Cleveland and vicinity met at No. 944 Willson avenue, near the corner of Euclid, last evening to form a branch society of the American Philatelic Association. The meeting was well attended, and much enthusiasm shown. The society will comprise some of the most advanced collectors in this country, as some of the finest collections are owned here. Any collector who was not in attendance last night is requested to send his name to the secretary pro tem., W.W.McLaren, No. 994 East Prospect Street."

Mr. Schneider preserved the heading and date-line of the page on which this appeared; and there is no doubt that this appeared on Tuesday, April 22, 1890. This would indicate that the first meeting was held on April 21, 1890 -- and some of those present at the first meeting listed April 21st as the date in some of their records -- but it seems, from other trustworthy evidence, that, although the process of organization was still going on when the meeting of April 21st was held (the charter list was still open and the name of the Club had not yet been decided upon), it was the second meeting, instead of the first.

The next oldest record available is an item in "The American Philatelist" for July, 1890 about the admission of the Club to branch membership; This is a valuable record; but it does not show the date of the first meeting.

The next oldest record -- and the most valuable one -- is contained in "The American Philatelist" for 1896. As Resident Vice President of the A.P.A., Mr. Bailey made an annual report which contained the following: "Name of branch, Garfield-Perry Stamp Club; organized March 17, 1890; admitted as branch July 1890."

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There is a letter in the archives from Mr. Schneider to the Secretary, dated 1911, wherein he states that the Club was organized April 21, 1890. Very likely he based this statement on the clipping from the "News and Herald" of April 22, 1890.

In 1913, at the 23rd anniversary celebration, Mr. MacLaren, who was also present at the first meeting, distributed copies of a "souvenir" which he had had printed, showing a reproduction of a newspaper item referring to the organization of the Club in 1890. This item was indicated on the souvenir as from the "Cleveland Leader Mar. 19, 1890," and in another place on the souvenir the date of the first meeting was shown as March 18, 1890. The files of the "Leader" in the Cleveland Public Library for March and April, 1890, do not contain any mention of the Club. Careful examination of the souvenir shows that the item reproduced is identical in wording and type with the clipping from the "News and Herald" of April 22, 1890. No file of the "News and Herald" exists to permit checking this item; but as Mr. Schneider's clipping contained the heading and date line, there is no doubt that this item was the one reproduced by Mr. MacLaren. It seems probable that Mr. MacLaren had clipped the same item; but had omitted to endorse the date on the clipping, or the paper in which it appeared; and, knowing that the first meeting had been held in March, he made the date of the item agree with his recollection of the date of the meeting by showing the date of the clipping as March 19th. It looks as if he was one day off on the day of the month.

The anniversary Banquet Menu for 1915 shows the date as March 17th; but the Banquet Menu for 1925 shows March 19th. The first anniversary banquet was held on February 7, 1895; the next, on February 6, 1896; the third, February 11, 1897; the fourth on March 17, 1900 -- so the dates of the banquets can not be used to check the date of the first meeting.

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The evidence, therefore, is not conclusive; but probably March 17th was the date -- first, because March 17th was specified in Mr. Bailey's report of 1896; second, because both March 17th and April 21st were "third Mondays" in 1890. At the meeting of October 15, 1890, the regular meeting night of the Club was changed to the "third Wednesday of each month", and it seems reasonable to assume that the previous meeting night had been the third Monday -- for the reason that the clipping from the "News and Herald" of April 22, 1890, mentions a meeting held on the night before -- that is, on April 21st -- which was the third Monday in April.-- and the fact that March 17th was likewise a third Monday makes the date of March 17th fit into the picture.

A memorandum prepared by Mr. Barnum in 1937 shows that six attended the first meeting, as follows: Messrs. Bailey, Schneider, Kress, MacLaren, Brobst, and Putz. So far as the first five mentioned are concerned, this is apparently verified by the fact that they received membership numbers 1 to 5. Mr. Putz became No. 13; and it is assumed that, at the first meeting, and possibly for some time thereafter, he did not become a member; and before he did, other members had been admitted and assigned Numbers 6 to 12.

No minutes of the first six meetings have been preserved; and it is not known whether minutes were made or not. Mr. MacLaren was an extremely efficient Secretary; and it hardly seems possible that he made no minutes of those early meetings; but it is likely that no minutes were made, as the pages in the first minute-book which would naturally have been used to write up the minutes of those meetings are blank -- probably left blank purposely. These blank pages perhaps indicate that some notes of the early meetings actually had been made, and that Mr. MacLaren intended to write them up, as minutes, in the book at a

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later date, and therefore left space for them. On the other hand, it may be that no records whatever were kept of the first six meetings; that it was decided by the Club that no effort would be made to write up Minutes for those meetings, and that the pages were left blank to indicate merely that there were no minutes of the meetings. It might appear that the first six meetings were not considered regular club meetings -- the clipping from the "News and Leader" of April 22, 1890, mentions Mr. MacLaren as "secretary pro tem", indicating that the Secretary (and perhaps other officers) had not been definitely appointed at that time -- but this view is not borne out by the fact that "The American Philatelist" of July 10, 1890 contains an item to the effect that Garfield-Perry had applied for branch membership, and had been admitted as branch No. 19, which indicates that the appointments, etc. had been made at least in June, and likely before. The item in "The American Philatelist" listed ten members at that time. This list did not include either Mr. Kress(#3) or Mr. Gruber (#7) who presumably were not members of the A.P.A. as yet; but did include Mr. John V. Painter (#17).

In his memorandum of 1937, Mr. Barnum says "an application was made and accepted for the Branch Charter before the name Garfield-Perry was adopted"; but this appears to be incorrect for the reason that the item in "The American Philatelist" of July, 1890, above-mentioned, states that "The Garfield Penny(sic) Stamp Club, of Cleveland, Ohio have applied for branch membership, etc" which definitely shows that the name of the Club had been decided upon before the application was made for the Branch Charter. As the application had been granted before July, it is probable that the name had been adopted either in June or May, more likely in May.

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For convenient reference, the item in "The American Philatelist" is quoted. This is shown under the heading "Exchange Superintendent's Report" July 10, 1890":

"The Garfield Penny(sic) Stamp Club, of Cleveland, Ohio, have applied for branch membership to the American Philatelic Association, and as they have ten active American Philatelic Association members in good standing, I have admitted them to branch membership as No. 19 on the list, July 1, with George J. Bailey, President, and W.W. MacLaren, Secretary and Manager.

The members are as follows: J.V. Painter, George H. Worthington, O.L. Hart, W.H. Schneider, Vice-President, C.A. Brebit(sic), Treasurer, R.G. Dodge, Irwin(sic) A. Brown, C.N. Stockwell."

The errors in the showing of "Penny" instead of "Perry" and in the names of the members Brobst and Brown were likely due to the application having been made in somewhat illegible handwriting.

The reason for naming the Club "Garfield-Perry" is probably as follows:

In 1890, there were in existence several branches of the American Philatelic Association -- Chicago Branch No. 1, and branches in New York, Brooklyn, and other cities. They were all called "philatelic societies", with the exception of one in New York, which went a little further and called itself "The National Philatetical Society". Nearly all of them also bore the name of the city in which they were located.

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Mr. Bailey and the other early members had ample precedent, therefore, to call the new Club "The Cleveland Philatelic Society". But there were evidently some original minds in the group -- possibly they had merely a desire to give the Club a name somewhat different from the others. It is not clear why they chose the modest name of "stamp club" instead of "philatelic society" unless they merely wanted to be different.

But the Club was named after President Garfield and Commodore Perry for particular reasons. In those days, President Garfield was much more prominent in the minds of stamp collectors than in later years. His assassination in 1881 had been followed by the issuance of the 5¢ brown mourning stamp in 1882, and that had been replaced only a few years before 1890 by the same design in indigo.

Commodore Perry's portrait, too, had been seen much in collectors' albums for several years prior to 1890; commencing with the banknote issues of 1870, and interest had just been renewed by the appearance of the beautiful 90¢ orange stamp issued on February 22, 1890 -- less than a month before the first meeting of the Club.

Further, the portrait of Garfield on the 5¢ stamps had been taken from a photograph made by J.S. Ryder, a prominent photographer of Cleveland; while the portrait of Perry on the 90¢ stamps was made from the statue of Perry in Cleveland.

The Garfield monument in Lakeview cemetery was, in 1890, much more of an attraction than in later years; while the Perry statue was located in the Public Square and consequently very much in the public eye.

It was therefore decided to name the Club in honor of our martyred President and the gallant hero of the battle of Lake Erie.

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Due to the~~re~~ being no minutes for the first six meetings, it is not definitely known when the charter list was closed. There is no mention of the date in the minutes of the seventh or later meetings.

There were sixteen charter members. A list compiled in 1912 by Mr. LeGrand French, who was Secretary at that time, shows that there were eighteen charter members; but the list shows a later correction to sixteen, which checks with Mr. W.H.Barnum's statement in "G-P Club News" for March, 1930, that there were only sixteen. Mr. French's original list of eighteen included both John V.Painter and John N.Luff; Mr. Barnum's list does not include either of them; and there is no doubt that Mr. Barnum was correct. The date of Mr. Painter's entry into the Club is not known; but he was included in the list sent to the American Philatelic Association with the Club's application for a branch charter, and that indicates that in June, or possibly May, 1890, he was considered a member; but for some reason -- probably a good reason -- he was assigned membership number 17, which is the next number outside the 16 charter members. It may be that Mr. Painter merely failed to sign the charter roll before it was closed. As to Mr. Luff, he was not admitted to the Club as a member until May 15, 1902; and was not assigned a membership number at that time. Later, in 1904, he was in error assigned membership number 18, which had already been assigned to another member. In any event, he was not a charter member.

As to charter member No. 15, Mr. Barnum said in an article written in 1929, that the list of those who signed the original charter shows G.A. Albers as No. 15; but as the first membership list shows W.K.Chisholm as No. 15, he(Barnum) presumed that Mr. Albers being a minister, decided

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that philatelic club membership was too worldly, so never qualified. (Qualification in those days consisted in paying the annual dues, which were not required to be paid with the application for membership, but after election to membership). This is the only mention of the Reverend Albers in the Club records.

In 1894, it was decided to frame the organization list signed by the charter members; but the whereabouts of that list is now unknown. It is thought that it was perhaps among other Club property which was destroyed by fire in the basement of the Finance Building in 1927.

The complete list of charter members is as follows:

1. George J. Bailey
2. William H. Schneider
3. Charles Kress
4. W. W. MacLaren
5. Clyde A. Brobst
6. Oliver S. Hart
7. R. Lannes Gruber
8. George H. Worthington
9. R. Gardner Dodge
10. Irving A. Brown
11. Carl N. Stockwell
12. Allen W. Hewitt
13. Frank G. Putz
14. John Lehr
15. W. K. Chisholm
16. Frank G. Johnson

GARFIELD-PERRY STAMP CLUB

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Officers

The officers were:

President Geo. J. Bailey Secretary W. W. MacLaren
Vice-President Wm. H. Schneider Treasurer Clyde A. Brobst
Exchange Supt. W. Wallace MacLaren

The only committee was the Membership Committee, the members of which were Messrs. Schneider, Kress and Dodge.

Members

As stated before, there were sixteen charter members. After the charter list was closed, two additional members were admitted prior to the December meeting, as follows:

John V. Painter #17
E. L. L. Bangs #18 (Baltimore, Md.)

At the October 15th meeting, two visitors, Messrs. Hessler and R. H. Crowell applied for membership; and, on November 21st, Mr. Carl Stockwell applied for membership for his brother Norris P. Stockwell.

Messrs. Crowell (#19), Hessler (#20) and N. P. Stockwell (#21) were elected members at the meeting of December 17th; and the application of Henry C. Crowell was received and referred to the Membership Committee.

The total number of members at the end of 1890 was 21. Three of these were honorary members: Mr. Worthington (Honorary Member No. 1); Irving A. Brown (Honorary Member No. 2) and Mr. Painter (Honorary Member No. 3)

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Meetings

Nine meetings were held. The exact dates of the first six meetings are not known; but it is likely that they were all held on the third Mondays of the month, in March, April, May, June, July (or August) and September. The meeting in October was held on a Wednesday; at that meeting, a motion was passed to change the regular meeting night to the third Wednesday of each month. But the next meeting (in November) was held on Friday, the 21st. The December meeting, however, was held on Wednesday the 17th. Wednesday continued to be the regular meeting night for many years (until the fall of 1901).

The records are not complete, but there is no doubt that all of the meetings were held in Mr. Bailey's office in the Harkness Building at East 55th Street and Euclid Avenue.

As to the attendance at the meetings, there is a record of the attendance at only three of them -- the seventh, eighth and ninth. There were eight present at the seventh meeting; four at the eighth; eight at the ninth. It seems likely that there were only six at the first meeting. Bailey, MacLaren and Putz attended all four of the meetings of which we have any record -- Schneider and Kress, three each.

Entertainment

What exhibits or other entertainment was furnished at the first six meetings is not recorded; but we know from the minutes that on October 15th, Mr. Bailey exhibited his collection; on November 21st according to the minutes, the members "looked over three exchange lots and the collections of Messrs. Bailey and MacLaren"; and on December 17th, Mr. Stockwell's collection was inspected.

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Publicity

At the October meeting, the subjects of putting a frame of stamps on exhibition and making a search for information concerning the old Cleveland local stamp were discussed, and favorably considered; but no action was taken. At the next meeting, in November, it was decided to try to secure a place in Ryder's or Burrows' to put a frame of stamps on exhibition; and, at the December meeting, the President appointed Messrs. Schneider, Stockwell and MacLaren to arrange the frame and to record all stamps lent by members.

Official Club Organ

At the November meeting, the Secretary was requested to see what could be done towards securing an official club organ. At the next meeting, he read two offers -- one from the Rhode Island Philatelist and one from the North Western Philatelist, to become the Club's official organ. No action was decided upon.

Exchange Circuit (Sales Dept.)

Some time was spent at the November meeting in discussion of the establishment of a local exchange circuit among the Club members; but it was not until the December meeting that it was decided to establish a local Sales Department.

A manager, Mr. MacLaren, was appointed; and the members were requested to bring filled sheets to the next meeting.