

History of The Garfield-Perry Stamp Club (Part I)

In February 1890 three young stamp collectors, George Bailey, William Schneider, Charles Kress and Wallace MacLaren, agreed it would be a good idea to start a stamp club in Cleveland. A mailing went out to most of the known collectors in the area for a meeting on March 17 in the office where Bailey worked at the corner of 55th St. and Euclid Ave., still a busy intersection.

Not so coincidentally, one of the letters went to George Worthington owner of the Cleveland Stone Co. and an internationally known collector. The idea certainly was to attract Mr. Worthington and his millionaire friends to help distinguish this club from a number of others that had been recently formed in the area. No one expected Worthington to attend, but Schneider reported at the meeting that Mr. Worthington would permit his name to be added to the roll.

Apparently that worked well in that by late summer the club was well organized and had adopted the name Garfield-Perry Stamp Club in honor of those men who appeared on the first Bureau issue series in February 1890. Pres. Garfield was a native to the area, and Commodore Perry had been victorious in the Battle of Lake Erie not far offshore.

Dues were \$1.00 per year, and that was reduced to 50¢ in 1892. The club was quite selective in its standards for membership, and within two years the roll was at 27.

The club pioneered a number of things. For example, it began a collection of counterfeits to be used for reference to ensure “clean” collections. What was to become a magnificent reference library was started. Money was raised to exhibit stamps at the Chicago World’s Fair. Auctions were held at each meeting as well as circuit books being sent out. An effort was made to find inexpensive ways of adding new materials to collections. For example, 1893 marked the issuance of the 16 Columbian stamps, and the club project was to find the cheapest source of used sets. Seventeen national and foreign dealers were canvassed resulting in an offer to sell a set to each member for \$13.25!

Now back to Mr. Worthington. He was born to money, and while in Europe on a trip with Vick-

ers Painter, a partner and another wealthy collector, he was encouraged to buy some rare stamps for a nephew. He was so enthralled with them that he decided to start his own collection.

Thus began the building of one of the great collections of all time. The numbers of rarities he owned were truly amazing. By 1902 his holdings were so large he could no longer manage its organization, so he hired Alvin Good who had no previous philatelic experience to bring order to his collections. Good worked frantically to keep ahead of the purchases. Dealers flocked from all over the world to peddle their wares. For example, in 1904 the general manager of Stanley Gibbons, Ltd. visited from London as earlier Worthington had bought a collection from him for \$25,000. In 1909 his collection was estimated to be worth \$500,000 and was the third largest in the world.

The club was rapidly growing. By 1942 the membership had climbed to 217. By 1947 the library had gotten so large it was decided to donate it to the Cleveland Public Library who had a special room for the 700 bound volumes, 500 soft cover books and 1,000+ papers, articles, etc. Member Ed Piper, the club librarian for many years, had maintained cross-referenced files on 29 journals dating back to 1888 and extending to his death in 1969.

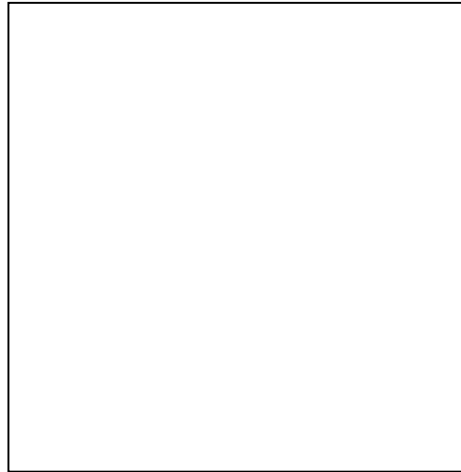
Duplicate sets of the cards were placed in the APRL where they are still a valued asset.

Each year the club celebrated its anniversary with a major show during the month of March. Up through 1976 the exhibits were presented only by members with invited guests and organizations. The first three-day March Party was in 1978, and the first truly open exhibition was in 1979.

The club has been blessed over the years with many members who have authored philatelic books and pamphlets. Some of them include Susan MacDonald, Charles Ball, Tom Allen (Cleveland postal history), Dale Pulver (México columnist) and Reg Morris (machine cancels).

Also there are a number of members who have contributed their services to the APS including Ken Nilsestuen who is the current APS treasurer.

Come back next year on March 20-22 for our 125th March Party.



George Worthington. ca. 1915

History of The Garfield-Perry Stamp Club (Part II)

The Garfield-Perry Stamp Club held its first meeting in March 1890, and each year we celebrate with the March Party; this is the 125th. A lot has happened over these years, particularly how the show (and other shows as well) was organized.

Stamp exhibits typically were limited to members only. Pages of the exhibit/collection were in showcases with the majority of the exhibit being in what was called the "bin room" with only judges being allowed admittance. For example, George H. Worthington, the club's most distinguished member, received one of the three gold medals awarded at the first US. international show held in 1913 in NYC. He "showed" the entire BEP printings in full sheets to 1900, but only a few pages were available to the public at any one time.

Times changed, and the club began to show exhibits in 1947 in six page wooden frames. In 1953, eight page oak frames were introduced that were the standard for many clubs for many years. In 1998 the club purchased sixteen page aluminum frames from the *Pacifica '97* international show that are presently being used. In 1976 the club opened the exhibits to others, and the March Party became a three day show in 1979.

Today the March Party is one of the 30 World Series of Philately (WSP) shows with its Grand Award exhibit going to the annual APS Stamp-show where a Champion of Champions will be crowned.

Going back to Mr. Worthington, he had amassed the largest, most valuable collection in America. In 1913 the annual APS convention was held at Put-in-Bay in Lake Erie with the club as the host. The various social events included a trip across the lake to Cedar Point amusement park and a reception aboard Worthington's 100-foot yacht *Priscilla*.

With over \$350,000 owed to others and no liquid assets due to poor investments, Worthington in 1917 was forced to sell his collection estimated to be worth \$760,000. Somehow the collection was transferred to New York dealer Julius C. Morganthau. Alfred Lichtenstein was a good customer of Morganthau's, and the price he offered for the entire holding was accepted by the creditors who had no idea as to the value of the little pieces of colorful paper.

The story goes that Lichtenstein and his lawyers met with the creditors in the board room of a bank in Buffalo where the material was being held in its vault. Lichtenstein took from his briefcase drafts and certified checks for \$280,000 and then

reached into his pocket and took out a roll of sixteen \$10,000 notes and a \$5,000 note for a total of \$445,000, significantly less than that which Worthington had invested.

Alvin Good had been hired in 1902 with no philatelic experience as the collection curator but grew greatly in his knowledge of the hobby. After Worthington was forced to sell his collection, Good became a stamp dealer in Cleveland and became one of the foremost in his field.

Worthington was not the only honored name in the club's history. Others who have contributed to our hobby in vital ways include Donald Lyberger (APS President, 1943-49) who brought the APS into the modern world, Tom Allen (Cleveland postal history), Dale Pulver (*Linn's* México columnist) and Reg Morris (writer of 20+ books on canceling devices and scouts on stamps), Denise Stotts (APS Director, 2007-11) and Ken Nilsestuen (current APS Treasurer).



Donald Lyberger,



Tom Allen (1942-2007)



Dale Pulver (1929-2008)



Reg Morris (1931-2009)

Another author who is with us this year is dealer Doug Weisz who has written the book *Dorothy Knapp: Philately and Family*. She was extremely well known for her hand-painted first day covers. Stop by booth #39 to see and buy the book.

Join us next year at the same place on March 10-12 for our 126th year.

History of The Garfield-Perry Stamp Club (Part III)

When the club was being formed in 1890 the founders sent out invitations to attend the first meeting in March to all those who might be interested. That list included a prominent businessman George H. Worthington, already a well known collector. The idea was to attract him and his millionaire friends. This worked quite well in that at the first meeting it was reported that Worthington would allow his name to be added to the roll at number 9.



George was born in Toronto in 1850. Shortly thereafter the family moved to Cleveland where his father was in the construction business with emphasis on large endeavors.

So he was born to money, and while in Europe in 1884 with as friend who was a wealthy collector, he was encouraged to buy some rare stamps for a nephew. He was so enthralled with them that he decided to start his own collection.

Thus began the building of one of the great collections of all time. By 1902 his holdings were so large he could no longer manage its organization, so he hired Alvin Good to manage his collections.



Take a look at this souvenir card from the 1909 banquet. Mauritius Post Office covers, Hawaiian missionary stamp, Alexandria "Blue Boy, St. Louis "Bears", etc. Pictured are stamps and covers estimated at that time to be worth \$36,000. In 2016 dollars that would be more than \$900, 000!

Then he did it again with the menu cover for the 20th anniversary dinner that showed 15 stamps in-

cluding six Cape of Good Hope triangles and the 15¢ and 30¢ 1869 inverts.

In 1909 his collection was estimated to be worth \$500,000 and was the third largest in the world. That would be \$12,500,000 in today's dollars!

And he loved to live large. He built a stately mansion on Euclid Ave. near where the I-90 underpass is today. He was Commodore of the Cleveland Yacht Club in 1901 and the Commodore of the Inter-Lake Yachting Ass'n. in 1907. He also owned a 100 ft. yacht named *Priscilla* that he used for the official 1913 APS national convention reception at Put-in-Bay.

Going back a bit, in 1886 he organized the Cleveland Stone Co., the largest producer of building stones in the world, controlling 50 quarries. Investments in mining, streetcars and what became the chewing gum giant, American Chicle Company, made him a captain of industry.



His home at 2638 Euclid Ave.



Priscilla

By 1915 he was awash in debt, primarily due to some very bad business decisions and the panic of that year. He owed \$377,000 with only his collection as collateral. Mr. Good estimated its worth at \$832,000 that should have been more than enough, and Worthington told Warren Colson, his friend and a major Boston stamp dealer, to arrange for a sale.

Somehow the custody was transferred to New York dealer Julius C. Morganthau. Alfred Lichtenstein was a customer of his, and he offered a price for the entire collection. There is an interesting story that Lichtenstein went to Buffalo where the collection was locked up to make the deal. Lichtenstein met with the debt holders at the bank and took from his briefcase drafts and certified checks for a total of \$280,000. Then he reached into his pocket and pulled out sixteen \$10,000 notes and a \$5,000 note for a total of \$445,000.

After that Worthington lost interest in collecting. His wife died in 1920, and he moved out of his house into the Hollenden Hotel where died in 1924.