

Birmingham – Ferndale Stamp Club Newsletter



August 2026

August brings its warm Michigan glow and a chance to spotlight one of Detroit's most distinguished natives: Ralph Bunche, born August 7, 1904. He rose from early Detroit roots to become a leading diplomat, scholar, and humanitarian. His work with the United Nations after World War II earned him the 1950 Nobel Peace Prize, making him the first African American — and the first person of color anywhere — to receive the honor.

Collectors will recognize the 1982 Ralph J. Bunche, 20¢ postage stamp of the Great Americans Series, a reflection of his lifelong commitment to peace. As we mark his birthday this month, Bunche's story reminds us how philately preserves the achievements of remarkable individuals whose influence reaches far beyond Michigan. Here's to an inspiring August of collecting and discovery.



Both July meetings were well attended with spirited auctions. Phil Vallellunga shared an interesting update about the Greenfield Village post office exhibit. He noticed that

some of the philatelic material on display didn't match the time period the building is meant to represent. After reaching out to the Village's exhibit designers, he offered to help source historically accurate items. Thanks to his efforts—and the generosity of our club members—period-correct ephemera has now been gathered for the Village to use in its display.

Club Meetings –

August 4th and 18th, 6:00 p.m. at the NEXT Senior Center, Birmingham.

Upcoming Events –

August 1st, Modern Stamps Public Auction #539 at their Oak Park facility, Saturday at 12N.

August 8th, Allen Park Stamp Club Show at Sokol Cultural Center, 10-4 Saturday.

August 15th, 1-4, PSPS tour of the Marshall Postal Museum, dlhartwick@comcast.net, Contact Debbie Hartwick for more information.

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Frozen Treats

Pat Hensley

A cool bit of summer philately: The U.S. Postal Service added a playful twist to mail in 2018 with its first scratch-and-sniff stamps - the Frozen Treats Forever set (Scott #5285–94). Issued on June 20th in Austin, Texas, on a double-sided booklet featuring 20 watercolor popsicles by Margaret Berg, with design work by Antonio Alcala and Leslie Badani. Each stamp carries a light, summery scent meant to evoke warm-weather nostalgia.



The popsicle itself has an equally sweet story. In 1905, 11-year-old Frank Epperson of San Francisco accidentally left a cup of soda mix and a stirring stick on his porch overnight. By morning, he had a frozen treat he could hold by the stick - his first “Epsicle.” He shared them for years before finally patenting the idea in 1924. His children’s nickname - “Pop’s ‘sicles” - soon became the name everyone knows: Popsicles. The simple invention grew into a summertime staple, inspiring countless flavors and even the classic twin pop meant for sharing.

Scratch-and-sniff printing has its own quirky history. Developed in the 1960s at 3M, the process uses microencapsulation - tiny scent-filled capsules mixed into ink. When scratched, the capsules break and release their fragrance. The technology has appeared in magazines, children’s books, stickers, and even medical smell-therapy tools.

Together, the Frozen Treats stamps blend clever printing, cheerful artwork, and a bit of childhood joy. Slip one onto your next envelope and you’ll send a small burst of summer along with your mail.

References:

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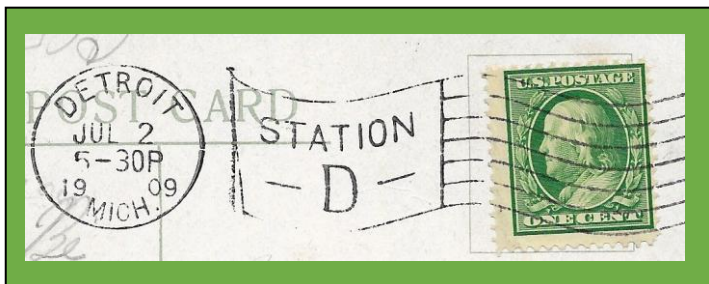
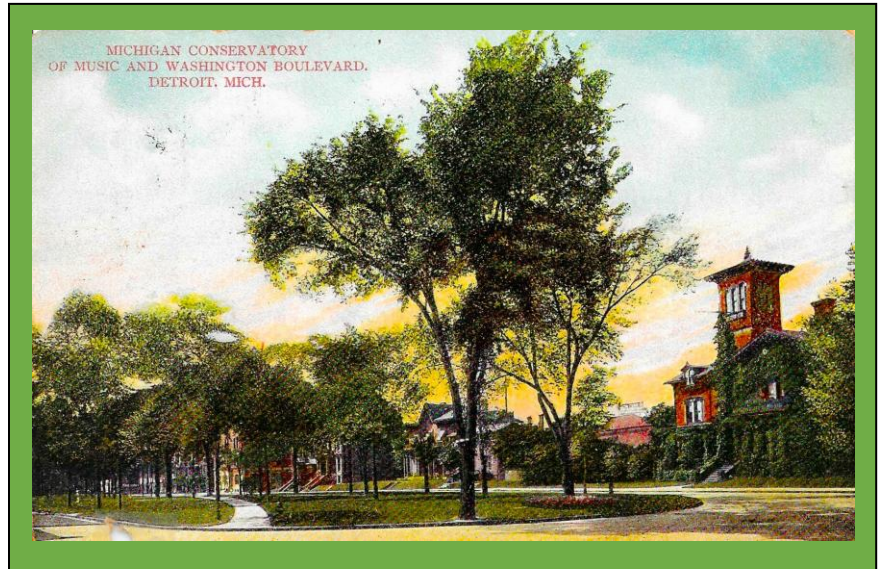
Michigan Conservatory of Music

Michael Swope

In the early 1900s, Detroit's Washington Boulevard was home to one of the city's most admired cultural institutions: the Michigan Conservatory of Music. For more than a decade, the Conservatory occupied the former mansion of Governor John Bagley, a residence once described by the *Detroit Free Press* as one of the largest and most elegant houses in the city. The Conservatory boasted that it was "the leading, most thorough, progressive and artistic institution in America."

The Conservatory's future, however, was already shifting. In October 1907, the Bagley estate was sold - prompting immediate speculation that a hotel would eventually replace the mansion. The Conservatory continued to operate there, but in March 1912, the Conservatory announced it would relocate to another historic Detroit residence, the former home of Mayor and Governor Hazen S.

Pingree, whose third-floor ballroom seated about 300 and offered a ready-made concert hall. The move came just in time. In June 1912, demolition began on the Bagley mansion. Although representatives claimed the teardown was "to save taxes to the owner," the *Detroit News* reported that "the real reason... was to make ready for the erection of the hotel." Within a year, the site was sold to hotel pioneer Ellsworth Statler. Ground was broken on July 2, 1913, and the Statler Hotel opened in February 1915, erasing the last physical trace of the Conservatory's former home and marking the end of an era on Washington Boulevard.



Shown above is a 1907 Wolverine News Company (Detroit) chromolithography post card depicting the Michigan Conservatory of Music. It bears the green, 1¢ Franklin postage stamp, Scott #331 and was cancelled at Detroit on July 2, 1909.

References: Post card from Author's collection, Wikipedia.org