

PHILATELIC BULLETIN



Sarasota Philatelic Club

2024

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Stamp Quiz

This month's stamp quiz may be a bit harder. It's from a definitive issue, but all the stamps in the issue are different, showing modes of convey-



ance and other topics, many of which are tourism, postal, and telecommunications-related. Here's another hint: the stamp was issued in 1963-64 and printed by photogravure. If you think you know the answer, send your guesses to me at: centonzevincent@gmail.com.

The Philadelphia Commercial Museum Provides a Treasure Trove for Philately

By Vincent Centonze

The late 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed a tremendous boom in the world's manufacturing, commerce, and technology. It was the fruition of a century's progress in industrial technology. Countries proudly boasted their industrial prowess through giant international expositions, such as the Paris Exposition in 1888 and the Columbian Exposition in 1893.

After attending the spectacle of the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, Dr. William P. Wilson (1844–1927), a biologist from the University of Pennsylvania, had the idea for a "permanent world's fair museum." In 1895, he purchased many of the Columbian Exposition's exhibits and shipped them back to his hometown of Philadelphia. There he housed them in temporary facilities until he could obtain the backing and funds to open a permanent location, which was a neo-classical building at 34th Street and Civic Center Boulevard. This permanent building for what was to become the Philadelphia Commercial Museum was dedicated in 1899 as part of the National Export Exposition, which ran from 14 September through 30 November 1899. Figure 1 shows two different types of Barry machine slogan cancels and an American Postal Machine Company machine slogan cancel, all of which were used in Philadelphia to advertise the National Export Exposition. Figure 2 shows labels that were affixed to mail to advertise the National Export Exposition. These two labels were used on cover as can be seen by parts of cancellations that tied them. Labels such as these are considered "Cinderellas."



Figure 1. Two Barry machine slogan cancels and an American Postal Machine Company slogan cancel advertising the National Export Exposition. This exposition was to become the Philadelphia Commercial Museum in 1899.

(Right) Figure 2. Two types of labels that were affixed to mail to advertise the National Export Exposition. These two labels were used on cover as can be seen by parts of cancellations that tied them. Labels such as these are considered "Cinderellas."



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The Prez Sez ...

Dear club members,

I hope you all survived Hurricane Milton with minimal disruption. We lost power for 2 and a half days, and had some minor tree damage. All in all we did just fine! Since the Sarasota Municipal Auditorium is being used as a FEMA Resource Center we assume it also came through the storm safely—which is good news for the stamp show in January.

First I need to correct an oversight in the last Bulletin; Juan Clavo who is one of our newest club members won a Gold medal at GASS for his exhibit “Costa Rica First Issue, 1863. The Medio Real Stamp “. Juan is to be especially congratulated as he is a new exhibitor having shown his exhibit for the first time at our show in 2024!

I received an email from long time member Fran Schlusemann’s daughter Eileen Hansen letting me know that her mother recently passed at age 93. RIP. Afterwards Eileen brought some of the stamps that were left of her mother's for me to look at to help her understand their value— Eileen ended up donating many of them to the club—for which many thanks!

Our next meeting will be Tuesday November 5th at the Unitarian Church. We currently have no set program so plan to bring one or two items to talk about. Gather at 6:30PM, Show and Tell will start at 7PM.

Pat Walker

The Philadelphia Commercial Museum (Continued)



Following the National Export Exposition closure, the building housing it officially became the Philadelphia Commercial Museum in December 1899. The museum highlighted and heavily publicized industrial and agricultural products with the aim of promoting American industry and business around the world. It was one of the earliest promotions of large scale world trade and served as a forerunner of the International Trade Administration. Figure 3 shows a postcard picturing the Philadelphia Commercial Museum as it appeared in 1923.

Figure 3. The Philadelphia Commercial Museum as it appeared on a postcard in 1923.

Foreign countries were anxious to connect with this important museum which acted as a liaison between the U.S. Government and foreign nations wishing to compete in American markets, as there was not yet any Federal Trade Organizations. During the museum’s heyday in the in the first three decades of the 20th century, it received numerous items including textiles, art, weapons, farm implements, musical instruments, and raw materials to showcase to the world in the hope of garnering business. The number of inquiries and the amount of mail the museum received from all over the world was overwhelming. An entire section of the museum’s Bureau of Information was dedicated just to foreign correspondence and had an extensive translation department. Fortunately, someone associated with the museum saved much of the correspondence. Figure 4 shows a photograph of the museum’s library and administrative staff in 1905.

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The Philadelphia Commercial Museum (Continued)



Figure 4. The Philadelphia Commercial Museum library and administrative staff in 1905.



Figure 5. Cover from Riga, Latvia, to the Philadelphia Commercial Museum; one of the earliest covers sent to the Museum when it first became known by that name.

Figure 6 shows a registered stamped envelope from Bombay, India, to the Philadelphia Commercial Museum (Lang RE10, H&G C-3a) postmarked 9 March 1920. The indicium is 2½ annas and the envelope is uprated with a pair of 1-anna definitives (India Scott 82) for a total franking of 4½ annas. This correctly paid the UPU international postage and registration to the U.S.



Figure 6 Registered stamped envelope from Bombay, India, to the Philadelphia Commercial Museum on 9 March 1920.

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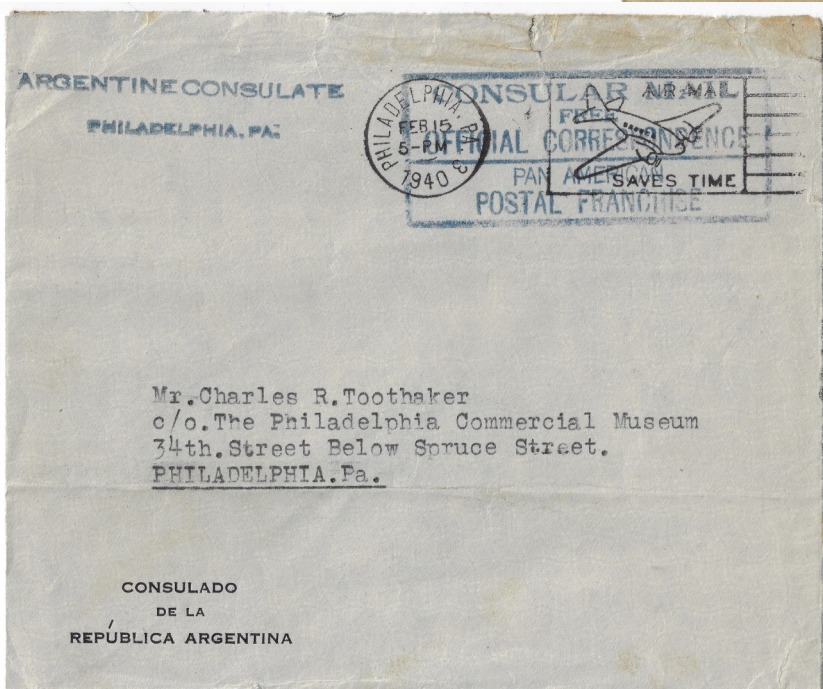
The Philadelphia Commercial Museum (Continued)

Figure 7 shows a stamped envelope from Buenos Aires, Argentina, machine cancelled on 27 February 1924 and addressed directly to William Powell Wilson at the Commercial Museum. Dr. Wilson had left his position as biology department chair at the University of Pennsylvania to become the director of the museum; he remained in that position from its founding until his death in 1927. The 5 centavo stamped envelope (H&G B-34), paid the UPU international rate from Argentina to the U.S.

Finally, Figure 8 shows a somewhat ratty cover that is nevertheless interesting because it is free franked from the Argentine Consulate in Philadelphia, addressed to the museum. The cover bears a relatively uncommon marking in blue which reads CONSULAR MAIL / FREE / OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE / PAN AMERICAN / POSTAL FRANCHISE. On top of the free frank indicium is a Philadelphia machine slogan cancel dated 15 February 1940.



(Above) Figure 7. Cover from Buenos Aires, Argentina, machine cancelled on 27 February 1924 and addressed to the Commercial Museum founder, Dr. William Powell Wilson. Wilson was impressed when he attended the Columbian Exposition in 1893, and dreamed of creating a permanent exposition in Philadelphia.



(Left) Figure 8. Free franked cover from the Argentine Consulate in Philadelphia, to the Philadelphia Commercial Museum. The cover bears an uncommon blue marking which reads CONSULAR MAIL / FREE / OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE / PAN AMERICAN / POSTAL FRANCHISE.

Long forgotten now, the museum changed its name several times, at one point becoming the Civic Center Museum. It closed its doors permanently on July 1, 1994. With numerous other institutions, commissions, and organizations for commerce and trades arising over the years, the museum finally became superfluous. But there's no denying the role it once played to bolster nascent international trade. The museum was of its time, and when that time passed, the museum faded into history. Fortunately, its philatelic legacy lives on.

References

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