

Why Collect Bermuda?

A Review of the Essential Bermuda Philatelic Literature

David Robinson

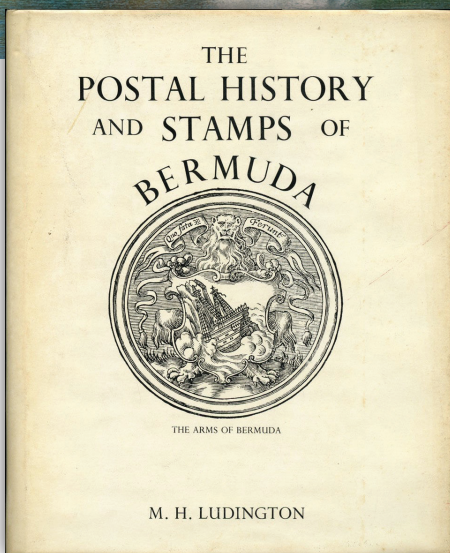
Bermuda is a parliamentary self-governing overseas territory of the United Kingdom, first settled in 1609 by British colonists who were shipwrecked off the coast while on their way to Virginia.

The philatelic history of the islands is closely linked to both the commercial trade routes between Europe and North America and Bermuda's strategically important location, about 600 miles due east of Charleston, South Carolina.

Bermuda has always followed a very modest and practical approach to the issuance of postage stamps and postal items.

Most philatelic research relating to the islands was conducted and published as part of a different specialty. For example: British Empire/Commonwealth, transatlantic maritime, Key Type issues, British North America, or British Caribbean. However, substantial literature can be found specific to Bermuda, which I will attempt to summarize.

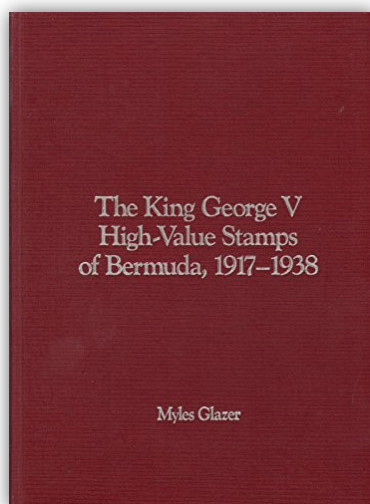
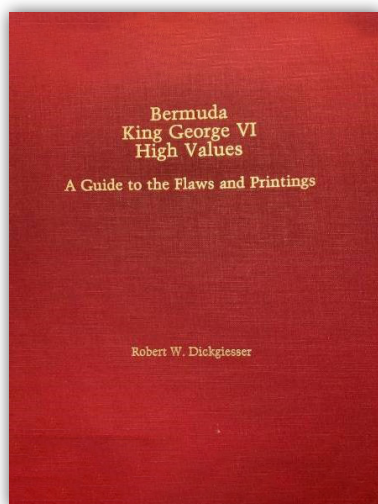
I'll divide the information into what I will refer to as a classic period and a contemporary period. The designation is



solely mine and is based on the formation of the Bermuda Collectors Society, an APS affiliate, and the first issuance of its journal, the *Bermuda Post*, in October 1986.

Finally, I'll identify some non-printed resources, like relevant websites, that are helpful to collectors of Bermuda material.

In the inaugural issue of the *Bermuda Post*, the editor, Reid L. Shaw wrote: "We start this new venture with no small amount of trepidation. As we said in our



letter of invitation sent to known Bermuda collectors, we know there are many Bermuda collectors out there – but will they join with us? Will they become active members, sharing their knowledge and their questions and theories with the rest of us? We don't know yet. What we do know is that there are many areas of Bermuda philately that have not been explored – or at least for which the results of exploration have not been published.”

Classic literature

The Postal History and Stamps of Bermuda (1978), by M.H. Ludington; ISBN 0-88000-108-9.

This authoritative 432-page book was originally published in 1962, supplemented in 1968 and last revised in 1978. This publication should be considered the standard reference for collectors of classic Bermuda philately. Ludington was considered a pioneer of Bermuda-specific philatelic research, with numerous contributions to various Robson Lowe publications and British Caribbean Study Group papers. The publication is divided into two books and provides exhaustive research and data on the post

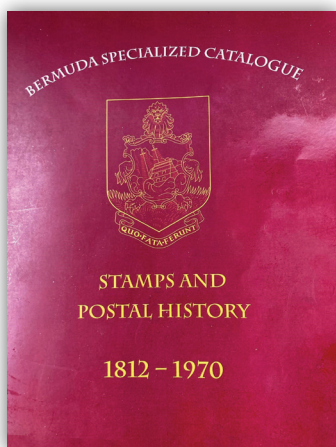
office operation in Bermuda starting in 1754 through the mid-1950s. Information on the organization of the post office as well as the stamps issued through King George VI is included.

The following tribute was paid to Ludington in announcing his death in the October 1998 edition of *Bermuda Post*, that “as long as stamps and postal history of Bermuda are collected, he will be remembered and revered.”

Bermuda King George VI High Values – A Guide to the Flaws and Printings (1980), by Robert W. Dickgiesser; Triad Publications.

This 59-page publication, along with its 173-page companion book (1985) “King George VI Large Key Type Stamps of Bermuda, Leeward Islands, Nyasaland,” provide comprehensive descriptions and explanations of the known varieties for paper, perforation, watermark, ink, gum, color, and plate flaws. Anyone who wants to begin to understand and organize a collection of the King George VI Key Type issue should have one of these references.

The King George V High Value Stamps of Bermuda, 1917-1938



(1994), by Myles Glazer, Calaby Publishers.

Like the Dickgiesser books, this 208-page publication provides a comprehensive description and explanation of the known varieties for paper, perforation, watermark, ink, gum, color, and plate flaws. Anyone who wants to begin to understand and organize a collection of the King George V Key Type issue should have one of these references.

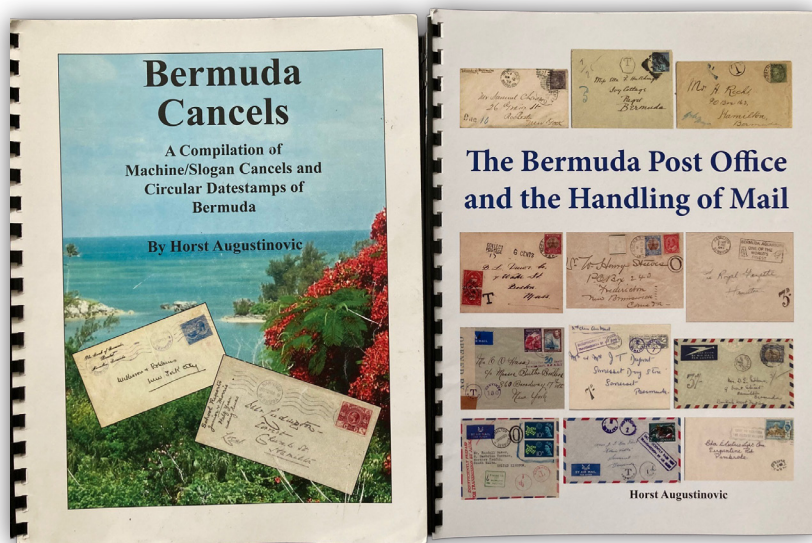
The Postal History of Bermuda (2003), by Edward B. Proud; ISBN 1-872465-293.

Even though this was published after my arbitrary dividing line, the tone of this 432-page book fits a more classic piece of literature. Proud's book is divided into six chapters – General History of Bermuda, Postal History of Bermuda, Postal Rates of Bermuda, Post Offices and Postmarks of Bermuda, the Packet Mails to and from Bermuda 1806-1917, and Air Mail tables. This information can be very helpful in providing context to postal history.

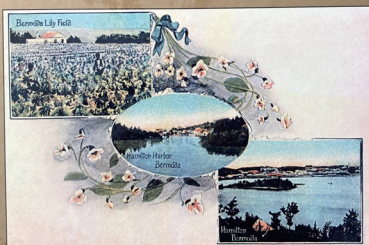
Contemporary literature

Bermuda Specialized Catalogue (2012), by David Cordon and Michael Forand; ISBN 978-0-615-69303-3.

The *Bermuda Specialized Catalogue* is my first choice as a reference document for Bermuda. While the *Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue*, *Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogue* and the *Higgins & Gage World Postal Stationery Catalogue* by Edward G. Fladung provide standard and recognized organization of the Bermuda stamp issues, the *Bermuda Specialized Catalogue*



The Golden Age of Bermuda Postcards



by
Horst Augustinovic

takes it to the next level. The *Bermuda Specialized Catalogue* is the culmination of 20 years of effort, with a goal of providing a specialized listing of every significant aspect of Bermuda philately. The catalog provides information that is not available in general catalogs.

The first 13 chapters cover stamp issues through 1970, with detailed tables given for Queen Victoria flaws, George V Key Type varieties, and George VI Key Type varieties. Additional chapters cover postal stationery, proofs, revenue stamps, railway stamps, naval and military mail, early postal history and handstamps, postal markings, censorship handstamps and labels, paquebot markings, machine cancellations, postage meters, warship covers, aerophilately, NASA, and charity seals. An excellent list of Bermuda philatelic literature is included, as well as auction catalogs from 1939 – 1912. If you are more than just a passing collector of Bermuda, you must have this in your reference collection.

Bermuda Cancels – A Compilation of Machine/Slogan Cancels and Circular Datestamps of Bermuda (2020), by Horst Augustinovic; ISBN 978-0-947481-96-4.

The Bermuda Post Office and the Handling of Mail (2022), by Horst Augustinovic; ISBN 978-0-947482-36-7. ***The Golden Age of Bermuda Postcards*** (2011), by Horst Augustinovic; ISBN 978-1-926609-49-2.

Censorship and Bermuda's Role in Winning World War II (2019), by Horst Augustinovic; ISBN 978-0-947481-65-0.

Horst Augustinovic is a respected member of the Bermuda Collectors Society and has undertaken several publication projects in order to share his research and understanding of the philatelic variety and abundance that Bermuda has to offer. In addition to the publications listed above, there are five additional publications authored by Augustinovic on Bermuda history.

The compilation of machine/slogan cancels is a unique resource to identify the 100-plus machine cancellation/slogan varieties that existed since 1913. Similarly, the *Handling of Mail* is a unique resource to identify the more than 350 miscellaneous markings that have been applied to postal history at any one of the Bermuda post offices.

The book on postcards shows the development of Bermuda postcards from the end of the 19th century to approximately the middle of the 20th century. Because postcards give insight to the society of the time, they help us understand who we were. The censorship book provides critical information as well as interesting perspectives, insights and stories concerning the wartime efforts of Bermuda's approximately 1,500 censors dur-

ing the period 1939–1945. While these books are intended for the Bermuda specialist, each can be enjoyed just for the wonderful stories that Horst shares.

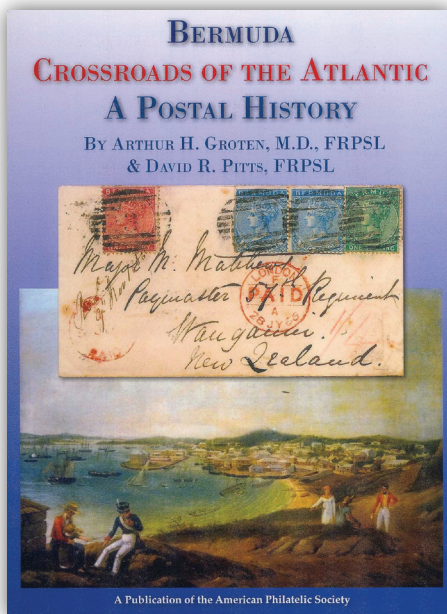
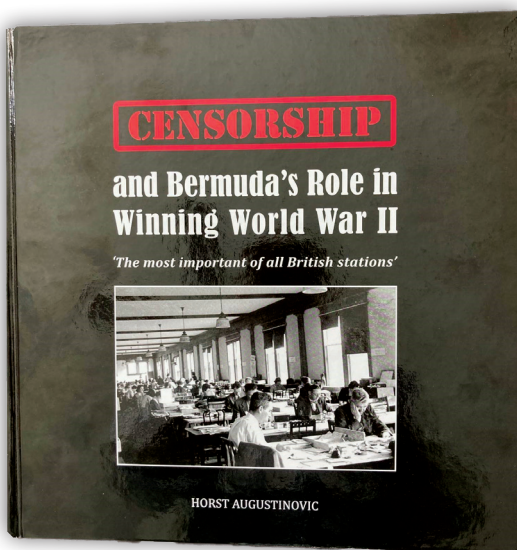
Intercepted in Bermuda: The Censorship of Trans-Atlantic Mail during the Second World War (2006), by Peter A. Flynn, M.D.

As described in its publisher's preface, this 207-page book, with much original research, is the definitive work on World War II Bermuda censorship. It will be of great value to Bermuda collectors as well as censorship collectors of any country. This book presents the evolution, nature, scope, and consequences of transatlantic mail examination in Bermuda by the Imperial Censorship of Posts and Telegraph during the Second World War. It provides a significantly expanded understanding of censorship in Bermuda.

Access to previously unavailable and recently declassified documents and information on 8,700 Bermuda censored covers in a collector survey have allowed a comprehensive and detailed examination of censorship in Bermuda. Further, censorship activities are set in the context of the war as a whole and the evolution of the world's postal air service as the war progressed

Bermuda Crossroads of the Atlantic – A Postal History (2017), by Arthur H. Groten and David R. Pitts; ISBN 978-0-933580-82-4.

This 150-page book, published by the American Philatelic Society, provides the story of the pivotal role of Bermuda in the development and execution of trans-



atlantic communication through postal history. The information is really helpful in understanding Bermuda postal history prior to 1900.

Bermuda By Air – A Handbook and Catalog of Bermuda Aerophilately (1996), by Charles E. Cwiakala; ISBN 0-9652017-0-8.

This 141-page book is considered by some to be the standard reference for Bermuda aerophilately. The book describes flights to and from Bermuda from 1919 through 1995.

Non-printed resources

The Bermuda Collectors Society's website (<https://bermudacollectorsociety.com/>) has resources to help collectors of Bermuda. The recently re-designed site has an abundant number of resources and references to help the Bermuda collector. To highlight a few areas of the site:

Displays offers viewing of Bermuda-specific exhibits, displays, and presentations developed by past and current members.

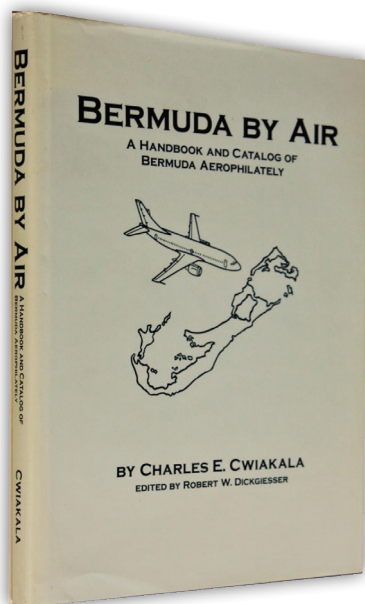
Library provides a listing of published works of Bermuda philately, some of which have been discussed in this article.

Bermuda Post offers a sample of the BCS quarterly journal. BCS members can obtain every issue of the journal starting from October 1986 which is an excellent source of information for topics which do not appear in published works, so even new members can take advantage of the past research that has been undertaken.

Links provides site links to dealers, organizations, philatelic search engines, and areas of philatelic interest.

The British West Indies Study Circle website (<https://bwisc.org/>) has a section for Bermuda, as part of promoting interest in the study of stamps and postal history of the English-speaking islands that comprise the West Indies. The Resources tab within the Bermuda section of the site has several useful exhibits and links.

The Bermuda Online / Stamps website (<http://www.bermuda-online.org/stamps.htm>) has an illustrated listing of Bermuda stamps through 2019. This private sector website is managed by the



Royal Gazette Ltd and also has a listing of publications (many not identified in this article). It is unclear if this site is maintained for regular updates.

Bermuda Stamps website (<http://www.bermudastamps.co.uk/>) is a UK-based site offering information about Bermuda postage stamps, fiscal stamps, and postal history through about 2015. It is unclear if this site is maintained for regular updates.

Bermuda Philatelic Bureau website (<https://philatelic.bermudapost.bm/>) is a direct contact to the purchase of current Bermuda stamps available at the Bermuda Post Office.

The wealth of literature available for Bermuda makes it an outstanding country to research, explore, and collect. The founding members of the Bermuda Collectors Society could have only imagined the possibilities of printed publications and web-based information that is available to collectors today. I, for one, am thankful that they did have the courage to imagine!