

BERMUDA POST

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Whole No. 151

Pacific National Steamship Company's Reina del Pacifico ran aground on reefs off Bermuda in 1957. This may be the only surviving cover (right). See article beginning on page 13.



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On the cover

Pacific National Steamship Company's Reina del Pacifico on reefs off Bermuda in 1957.

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Deadlines

Every publication has deadlines, and this journal is no exception.

Please do not wait until deadline to submit material as the issue is mostly complete by that date.

January issue: Deadline is November 1, mailing date December 15

April issue: Deadline is February 1, mailing date March 15

July issue: Deadline is May 1, mailing date June 15

October issue: Deadline is August 1, mailing date September 15

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Nigel W. Shanks

A very warm welcome to the new members who have joined this last quarter. Without exception all new members over the past 18 months have joined via our website, taking either a paper or digital subscription. It is always a great start to my day when I get the email notification with news of a new member.

Speaking of new members, I would like to say a special thank you to Michael Blaine who joined us in September 2022. Michael has taken the leadership role in organizing our bi-monthly "Stamp Chat" Zoom meetings where we have a BCS member speak on their specialist field or their collecting interests for between 30 and 60 minutes. The "Stamp Chat" talks are well attended, but for those who miss them they are available to watch under the "Stamp Chats" menu on the website. I know Michael is on the lookout for future speakers, so please drop him a note if you are interested. His email is: mblaine@dtcc.edu.

I was fortunate to attend Westpex in San Francisco in late April and met up with BCS members David Cordon and Bill Gompel. With an incredible 97 points, David won a Large Gold and the Reserve Grand Award – an outstanding achievement for David on the back of his prestigious 1 p.m. display last September at the RPS in London. I found the show to be well attended each day with what appeared to be a slightly younger demographic than one might traditionally expect. The dealers I spoke with in my travels through the room all seemed happy but not ecstatic with the dollars being spent. While there was not a great deal of Bermuda material, I did manage to find some lovely postal history items for my collection – and a few noteworthy enough that they will appear in a future issue of *Bermuda Post*. While there were only three BCS members at the show, it was great to catch up, have a dinner together and discuss our shared collecting interests.

The BCS auction will take place in October and we already have a good selection of lots. However, potential consigners still have time to contact John Puzine to discuss consigning. Details are on the website home page or email John on puzine@comcast.net. Lots need to be in John's hands by July 10 and you must contact John BEFORE sending anything.

The Great American Stamp Show will be held in Hartford from August 15-18. This will be a well-attended show and I know that hotels in the area are booked out. If you are planning on attending, please let me know and I can put you in contact with other BCS members who will be at the show.

Finally, and most importantly, I have an urgent request for articles for *Bermuda Post*. It is critical that our editor receives some new articles this quarter from fresh contributors to ensure each issue of *Bermuda Post* continues to have a balanced and informative wide range of articles. We are approaching 120 members and I know that among our membership there is a wealth of knowledge and material that others in the group would be very interested in learning about and viewing. Please take some time to write a few words and scan a few items for an article. It does not take a lot of time, is a rewarding exercise and something your editor, the BCS Board and our members will thank you for. If anyone needs help, advice, or someone to type their notes into an article then I am also happy to help. Just drop me a letter or an email – my details are in the inside front cover.



Upcoming Annual Meeting of the Bermuda Collectors Society

• 2024, August 15-18: Great American Stamp Show in Hartford, Connecticut

The German Steamer *Sisak* Stops at Bermuda

By Nigel W. Shanks

Early in 2022, I was pleased to receive a surprise package in the mail from BCS member (and past president) John Paré. The package contained two similar looking, well-travelled and what might be described by some as “tatty” maritime related covers with a brief note stating, “After reading your article in the last BP, I thought you might enjoy these items. I picked them up at a local stamp show.” The article John was referring to was my story of a “strange” American ship that called at Bermuda in 1918.¹

Over the last 15 months or so, I have set the covers in my “work in progress” pile and from time to time have done some work on attempting to reveal their secrets or at least some of them. Finally, I have made enough progress to document my discoveries.

Both 1921 covers have similar post, forwarding and manuscript marks, being postmarked at Blankenese (western region of Hamburg, Germany) one day apart on March 1 (**Figure 1**) and March 2 (**Figure 2**). Both are addressed as follows: “Mr N von Ehren, Master of the Steamer *Sisak*/ C/- Messrs Harnett Richardson / Hamilton / Front Street / Bermuda.”

The top left of each cover is endorsed in red with “Neptun Werft,” which is a German ship building and ship repair company. The reverse of each bears the sender’s details: “E. von Ehren, Blankenese,” no doubt a family member of the addressee.

Upon arrival in Bermuda, both covers were forwarded to the U.K. Shipping Agents, Messrs. Broad & Sons, Arwenack St., Falmouth, England. This second forwarding address is crossed out in blue crayon on both covers with what looks like “Rostock” written in manuscript and in the case of the March 2 cover, some additional, unreadable, handwriting instructions in purple. Any assistance in deciphering these markings would be gratefully received.

The March 1 cover has a Bermuda machine receiving mark (indecipherable date) on front along with two Falmouth receivers, one dated April 7 and the other August 24, indicating the cover went from Bermuda to Falmouth, possibly back to Bermuda (or somewhere else) before returning again to Falmouth in August. The March 2 cover was received in Bermuda on April 1 and then has a Falmouth receiver again dated August 24. There are no other postal markings.

So far, I am unable to work out what happened to the covers between April and August, 1921. Apart from that, I had a pretty good idea about the markings and at least part of the journey the covers made. The next step was to seek out information on the steamer *Sisak*, and hopefully find information on the captain, N.

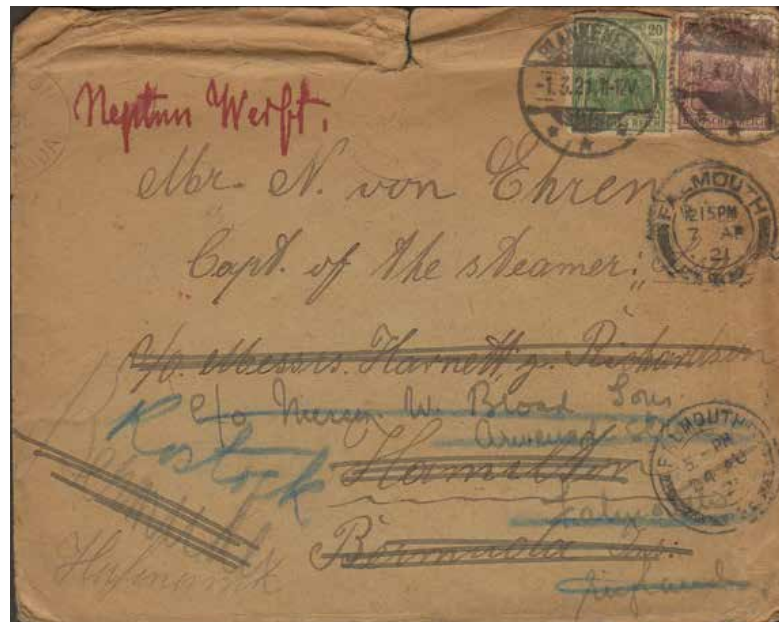


Figure 1
Cover mailed on March 1, 1921.

von Ehren and most importantly what the connection was with Bermuda in April 1921.

While a quick Google search does not reveal any information at all, I did have some luck on www.theshipslist.com and I can highly recommend this website as a starting point if you are looking for information on ships or shipping lines.

The *Sisak* was built in 1907 by Sir W. G. Armstrong, Whitworth & Co., Newcastle on Tyne and her owners were recorded as Deutsche Dampfschiffahrts-Gesellschaft Kosmos (DDG Kosmos), founded in 1872 to exploit a shipping line from Hamburg to the west coast of South America. As a collector of different ships visiting Bermuda (from as many different shipping lines as I can find), I was extremely happy to add this line to my collection. I've not previously seen another ship from this line on a Bermuda related cover.

The earliest reference I have found relating to the *Sisak* is from an article in the *Feilding Star* from just a few days before the end of World War I on November 5, 1918. Feilding is a small New Zealand farming town and I was surprised to find the piece headlined "HUNS DYNAMITE THEIR SHIPS." The article reports that simultaneous attempts by crews of the German ships interned in three Chilian ports were made to destroy their vessels with the engines of the steamships *Rameses*, *Sebara*, *Sisak* and *Redophis* at Corral (Chile) completely destroyed. Being one of nine neutral countries in World War I (although admitting "war guilt" as one of Germany's allies at the post-war Versailles Conference), the Chilian government sent troops on board the ships to maintain order and prevent similar acts. The article ended by stating that "thirty-two German steamers and 57 German sailing vessels with a total tonnage of 230,000 are interned in Chilian ports." A similar article, without naming any ships, appeared in the *New York Times* on the same day. Further research reveals that she had been interned at Corral since 1914 and was ceded to Great Britain in 1921 before reverting to DDG *Kosmos* in 1922.

I was hoping *The Royal Gazette* could help me discover how this now British-owned ship was connected to Bermuda. There are 13 mentions of "Sisak" in that publication. Four are between February and March 1921 and looked promising. The remaining nine are between 1941 and 1960 and all relate to *Sisak* as the town in Croatia and were as such, irrelevant.

The Royal Gazette reported on February 28, 1921 that the German Steamer *Sisak* had been towed by two British tugs from Jamaica to Murray's Anchorage (Bermuda) and confirmed that the agents were indeed Messrs. Hartnett and Richardson as per the address on my covers.

"Towed from Jamaica" -- I was intrigued and thankful that a little more information was provided in two short notes in the same publication on March 1. The vessel was now described as "the disabled German steamer 'Sisak' with a crew of 25 men, captained by N von Ehern (Ehren) and a cargo of 5015 tons of ni-



Figure 2
Cover mailed on March 2, 1921.

trate of soda from Chili (Chile) via Panama Canal and Jamaica.” Readers are informed that the *Sisak* sailed from Jamaica on the 11th, drawing 23 ½ feet of water. The second note of the same day is a reference that the ship experienced very good weather all the way from Jamaica which would be a relief to those with friends and relatives on board.

A short note on March 21 commenting on how quiet shipping was at St. George’s notes that the *Sisak* is one of only four vessels there. The final mention comes on March 29 where it is reported that the *Sisak*, still under tow by the same British tugboats, *St. Anne* and *St. Enoder*, is headed for the Azores.

I have been unable to find out further information on the journey from Bermuda for the *Sisak*. With her Bermuda agents forwarding the captain’s mail to Broad and Sons, Falmouth they must have been under the impression she was headed to England or that the agents there would know what to do with any mails sent on.

However, with the Falmouth address crossed out on each cover and “Neptun Werft” added in red manuscript, it is quite possible that the *Sisak* headed from the Azores to their yards in Rostock, Germany for repairs. As shipping agents acting as consuls for many different countries, it is quite possible that Broad and Sons had a business relationship with Neptun Werft and facilitated the required repairs for the stricken vessel. They could have even arranged for these two covers to be carried to the yards privately or as part of a larger package of mail that was sent on, thus explaining the lack of further postal markings.

The Falmouth receiving mark of April 7 on one of the covers is still difficult to explain, as is the whereabouts of the covers between April and August 24 when they had the Falmouth receiver applied. Perhaps they went somehow to Neptun Werft, missed the vessel and then were returned back to Broad and Sons. Speculation is almost impossible without knowing the route the *Sisak* took after leaving Bermuda.

However, I do know that she was repaired and put back in operation. I came across a short article in the *Kingston Gleaner* (Jamaica) from June 10, 1924 reporting that the *Sisak* had gone aground at a point north of Guayaquil in the Rio Guayas, some 35 minutes south of the equator. She had to be floated by the British tug *Killerig* which had arrived at Kingston, Jamaica before transiting the (Panama) Canal for Guayaquil.

The floating by the British tug *Killerig* must have been successful as the *Sisak* was back in service only to be stranded in Equador off Bahia de Caraquez on May 26, 1926. Unfortunately this time there was to be no rescue and she was lost forever.

So thank you, John. I’ve added a new ship and shipping line to my collection, learned a little about these two covers as well as some of the adventures and history of the German Steamer *Sisak*. I still don’t know what happened to her that resulted in the requirement of a tow from Jamaica to England via Bermuda; anything about Captain N. von Ehren and whether indeed the mail even reached the captain. The lesson being, there is always more to learn and to think about.

FOOTNOTE

¹ Nigel W. Shanks, “November 1918: strange American ship calls at Bermuda,” *Bermuda Post*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (January 2022), 12-14.

My favorite unlisted keyplate flaws revisited

By Denis Littlewort

I well realize there are diverse opinions as to which, if any, of the following examples of significant King George V and King George VI head plate flaws (HPF) and frame plate flaws (FPF) merit Stanley Gibbons (SG) catalogue status. However, as Confucius once said, “If two people always agree, then one is unnecessary.”

KING GEORGE V

HPF No. 3B - Row 1, Stamp No. 3 (Figure 1)

September 1931 2/6 printing – large scratch through the king’s head, exists only on this printing, difficult to see on the colored paper, rare.



Figure 1

No. 3B - Large scratch through king’s head.

HPF No. 36B - Row 3, Stamp No. 36 (Figure 2)

November 1917 5/- printing – colorless area above king’s head, exists only on this printing, rare, maximum seven examples overprinted “SPECIMEN.”



Figure 2

No. 36B - Colorless area above king’s head.

HPF No. 53A - Row 5, Stamp No. 53 (Figure 3)

April 1927 £1 printing – broken leaf above “E” of “ONE,” very difficult to see on the colored paper, earliest recorded date (ERD) April 1927.



Figure 3

No. 53A - Broken leaf outline above “E” of “ONE.”

Continued on page 8

HPF No. 53B - Row 5, Stamp No. 53 (Figure 4)
August 1934 (?) 12/6 printing – large scratch through upper left scroll, rare, ERD August 1934.



Figure 4
No. 53B - Large scratch through upper left scroll.

HPF No. 55D – Row 5, Stamp No. 55 (Figure 5)
August 1930 10/- printing – broken lower left leaf outline, ERD July 1924.



Figure 5
No. 55D - Broken lower left leaf.

HPF Nos. 57A & B – Row 5, Stamp No. 9 (Figure 6)
October 1937 (?) 12/6 printing – broken lower right leaves outlines, ERD May 1928.



Figure 6
No. 57A & B - Broken leaves outline.

KING GEORGE VI

FPF No. 12A – Row 1, Stamp No. 12 (Figure 7)
November 1937 10/- printing – scratch through second “E” of “REVENUE,” rare, maximum seven examples perforated “SPECIMEN,” ERD November 1937.



Figure 7
No. 12A - Scratch through second “E” of “REVENUE.”

**FPF Nos. 12B & C – Row 1, Stamp No. 12
(Figure 8)**

September 1941 10/- line perf, printing by Williams Lea – breaks in shading outline below the left value tablet, maximum 190 examples, ERD September 1941.



Figure 8
No. 12B & C - Breaks in shading below left value tablet.

HPF No. 21d – Row 2, Stamp No. 9 (Figure 9)
October 1940 2/6 printing – chipped upper left scroll, ERD July 1939.



Figure 9
No. 21D - Clipped upper left scroll.

HPF No. 34 – Row 3, Stamp No. 10 (Figure 10)
May 1941 5/- line perf, printing by Williams Lea, irregular scratch through shading lines below the crown, maximum 200 examples, ERD May 1941.



Figure 10
No. 34 - Irregular scratch through shading below crown.

FPF No. 40 – Row 4, Stamp No. 4 (Figure 11)
May 1941 2/6 line perf printing by Williams Lea, broken shading outline below right value tablet, exists only on this printing, maximum 200 examples.

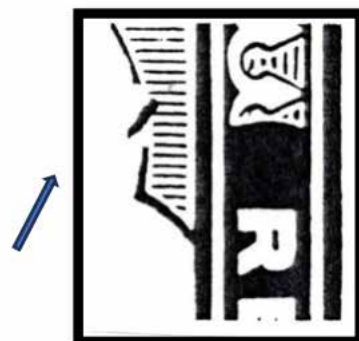


Figure 11
No. 40 - Broken shading below right value tablet.

HPF No. 52d – Row 5, Stamp No. 4
(Figure 12)

September 1941 10/- line perf, cracked crown, rare, maximum 190 examples, stamp shown is Leeward Islands October 1942 £1 (also printing by Williams Lea), Bermuda example unavailable, ERD September 1941.



Figure 12

Cracked crown variety, shown is Leeward Islands £1 value from 1942.

Just to recap, since 1987 the internationally renowned SG *Commonwealth & British Empire* catalogue has listed a number of significant positional plate flaws that occurred on Bermuda's King George V & VI keyplates. As a result, they are to be congratulated for greatly adding to the enjoyment of our wonderful hobby.

Understandably, there has to be a limit to the number of additions to a non-specialized catalogue. Also, other important requirements for listing are that they are constant, with confirmed sheet positions, and reproduce satisfactorily in print. Unfortunately, the latter is not always possible, due to being printed on colored paper.

Fortunately, collectors are now spoiled for choice as regards collecting the Bermuda King George V and KVI keyplate flaws. In addition to SG, they now have access to the *Bermuda Specialized Catalogue*, Dr. Myles Glazer's and Eric Yendall's superb handbooks, and Morris Ludington's magnificent tome; plus, of course, new discoveries reported in *Bermuda Post*.

Whatever the choice, Bermuda's King George V & VI keyplate flaws present a vast and fascinating area of philatelic study.

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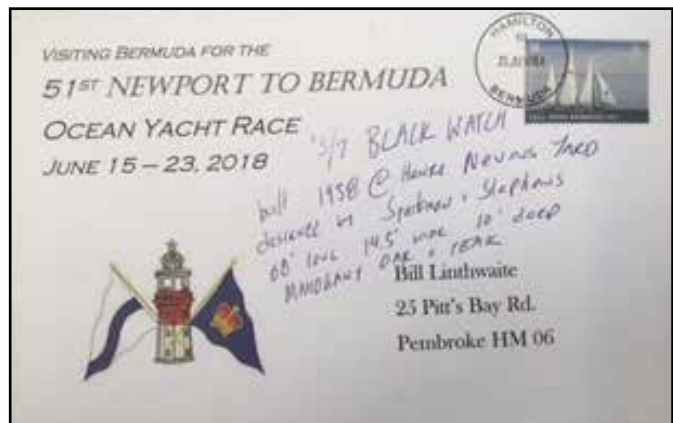
Newport Bermuda Covers

By Bill Linthwaite

In June of 2018, as an extension of my tall ships covers, I made Newport Bermuda Yacht Race covers. I designed and printed in advance a number of large 8.75 by 5.75 inch envelopes and addressed them to my Bermuda address, added the St. David's Lighthouse crossed-flags logo, and in the upper left the words, "Visiting Bermuda for the 51st Newport to Bermuda Ocean Yacht Race June 15 - 23, 2018." That left the upper right corner of the cover for postage and cancellation, with much of the center area for written comments or signatures.

For those not familiar with this particular race event, it is a very historic race which happens in June of every even-numbered year. The 635-mile biennial Newport Bermuda Race is the oldest regularly scheduled ocean race, one of very few international distance races, and (with the Transpac Race) one of just two of the world's regularly scheduled races held almost entirely out of sight of land. It is a joint effort by the Royal Bermuda Yacht Club (RBYC) and the Cruising Club of America (CCA). The race was started in 1906, and the race in 2018 was the 51st. It attracted 168 participants. Boats ranged in size from 36 to 112 feet in length, divided into seven divisions based on type. In 2018, for the first time, catamarans and trimarans were included.

When I make tall ship covers, the main goal is to get an imprint of the ships's rubber stamp as the central item on the cover, but as far as I know, and I didn't ask, these yachts wouldn't carry a rubber stamp; extra weight and all that. So instead, as I walked along the pier at the Yacht Club, I asked each of the individuals I approached if they'd mind signing one of my envelopes and adding any pertinent facts about the race or their boat.



The Black Watch cover. The handwritten text reads: "S/Y (Sailing Yacht) BLACK WATCH built 1938 @ Henry Nevins Yard designed by Sparkman & Stephens 68' long, 14.5' wide, 10' deep. Mahogany, Oak & Teak"

In the process of doing this, I visited the RBYC marina a total of four times between Thursday and Saturday, but Friday evening's visit was the most productive. This was the night of the after-race celebration. All the boats were in and a local band was performing Carlos Santana songs. Everyone was in a festive mood with drinks in hand, strolling or mingling in small groups all along the labyrinth that is the floating pier. No one seemed to mind that I was joining their little group and listening to their conversations until I could make my spiel and hand over pen and cover. I was somewhat outside my comfort zone, but the results made it worth the extra effort. The problem with doing it this way is that each one is unique, so there are no duplicates for sharing.

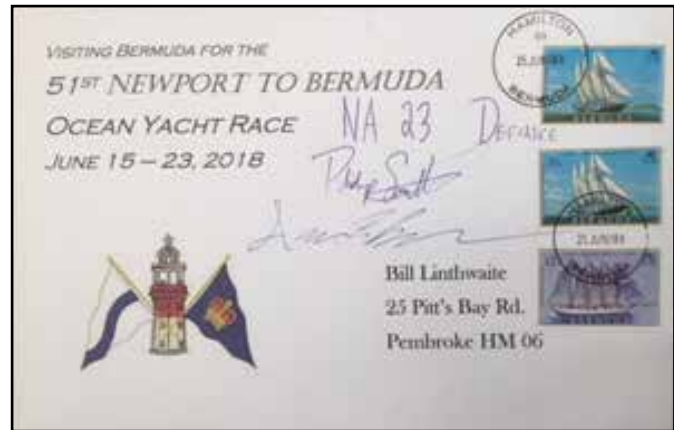
One skipper at first refused, saying, "No, I don't think so." Another said that when these showed up on eBay, he wanted his cut of the sale, but in both cases I assured them my pursuit was not at all about money, but an attempt to combine two of my favorite pastimes, sailing and stamp collecting.

I'm pleased with the whole experience. Learning the rich history of the Newport to Bermuda Race, rub-

bing shoulders with the impressive assortment of sailors who comprise the yachting community and for a few brief moments learning from them was just awesome. I didn't meet a single philatelist in the group, but somehow they saw in my collecting a shared love of sailing and they were happy to contribute to my cover collection.

An excellent example of the historic aspect of the Newport Bermuda race is the classic yacht *Black Watch*. I urge anyone who is at all interested to research her story online. Briefly, she was conceived by famed yacht designers Sparkman and Stephens and built for Rudy Schaefer (of Schaefer Beer fame) in 1938 specifically to compete in the Bermuda race. She has competed 11 times since, racking up at least three wins, most recently in 2012.

U.S. Naval Academy offshore racing was represented by two teams. *Defiance* finishing sixth in her class and *Wahoo* who finished third in her class.

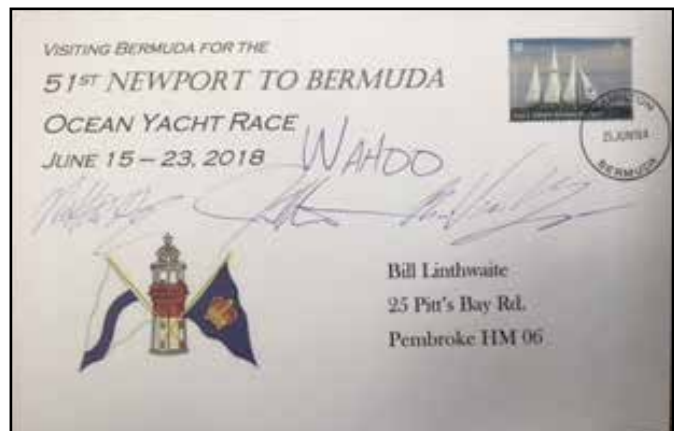


U.S. Naval Academy offshore racing was represented by two teams. Defiance finished sixth in her class and Wahoo finished third in her class.

I waited to put stamps on the envelopes until after I was finished getting them all signed. If I had put the stamps on before getting them signed, I probably would have wasted a few stamps, and didn't want to do that. So on Sunday, after all the covers were ready, postage stamps were affixed to each one, and on Monday morning I was off to the GPO in Hamilton.

Of course, I asked if the cancellations could be post-dated to Friday's date, June 22, but had to settle for June 25. I prefer to have the cancellations match the dates on the cover, but with the post office closed on Saturday, perhaps a Monday morning cancellation isn't so bad.

While I was at the philatelic window Craig Tyrrell, Operations Manager of the Bermuda Post Office, walked by and saw the covers being serviced. The subject of a stamp issue featuring the Newport to Bermuda Yacht Race came up and we agreed the obvious year to do so would have been 2016, as that year was the 50th race. Tyrrell was of the opinion there most likely would be such an issue eventually, but given that there had been such focus in 2016-17 on the upcoming tallships and with the America's Cup looming, it must have been overlooked. Maybe it'll happen on the 60th or 75th race!



Make Mine A “Reina On The Rocks,” Please

By Nigel W. Shanks

Around 6:30 a.m. on Monday, July 8, 1957 the Pacific National Steamship Company’s *Reina del Pacifico* (Queen of the Pacific) ran aground on reefs at Devil’s Flat, 5.5 nautical miles north of Bermuda among the colorful sea fan gardens that line the reef. The 17,702 gross tonnage vessel, on her way back to Liverpool with 556 passengers and some 350 crew on board, was the largest vessel to ever run aground in Bermuda waters and had made the same trip without incident hundreds of times over the past 26 years. In the evening after the incident, the captain and crew assured passengers that they were completely safe and the ship’s band, as usual, played “Rule, Britannia. Britannia, rule the waves.”

Figure 1, below, shows an aerial photo of the *Reina* lodged on the edge of Devil’s Flat, the reef appearing to extend along her bottom for about a quarter of her length from the bow.

Continued on page 14



Figure 1
This grainy image shows an aerial view of the Reina lodged on the edge of Devil’s Flat.



Figure 2
A 1954 postcard showing Reina as she would have looked at the time of grounding.



Figure 3
A view of the card room of the Reina.

The *Reina del Pacifico* was launched as the PNSC's largest vessel on September 23, 1930, being the fleet's first white hulled vessel and the first whose name did not start with the letter "O." She visited Bermuda on her 25.5 day maiden voyage and continued to be a regular visitor for the following nearly three decades of her life while a passenger liner. From early in World War II she became a troopship and at the end of the war in 1946 she sailed over 350,000 miles and carried 150,000 people as a repatriation vessel. In January 1947 she had a major overhaul and refit before entering service in 1948 as a passenger vessel which again visited Bermuda as part of the Liverpool-Valparaiso (Chile) service.

Figure 2 shows a 1954 postcard from Bermuda to Switzerland and depicting the ship as she would have looked at the time of the grounding. Figure 3 shows the card room of the *Reina*, one of the images from a letter view souvenir of the ship which was printed in 1949 after her 1947 refurbishment.

The ship's troubles in July 1957 made front page news as the lead story in Bermuda's *The Royal Gazette* from the time of her grounding until she was freed to continue her voyage nearly a week later. The following summarizes the incident during that eventful week in Bermuda.

Monday

Various reports stated her as "hard aground," "not taking on water" and listing 12 degrees with the 556 passengers on board, 61 having boarded in Bermuda, reported as being "safe" and joking about having their drinks "on the rocks," with first class passengers inventing a cocktail they named "Reina on The Rocks." Passengers aboard told *The Royal Gazette* the ship made a sudden turn and then slid onto the coral without jarring. Two attempts to refloat her on the Monday high tides proved unsuccessful, causing concern for 66 Boy Scouts who were on their way from Jamaica to attend the 50th anniversary of the Boy Scout Jamboree in Sutton Park, Warwickshire, England.

Tuesday

The ship is still stuck firmly on the reefs at Devil's Flat. The process of unloading 600-800 tons of cargo and the dumping of some 300 tons of fresh water so as to lighten the ship commenced, with assistance from U.S. Army barges which hauled the cargo to the Dockyard. A U.S. Navy tanker was also brought alongside so fuel from the *Reina* could be pumped aboard to further lighten the load, the hope being that she would refloat on the high tide the following day. Passengers who wanted to leave the vessel were taken ashore for the day and were advised that they could stay in accommodation ashore at their cost until the situation was resolved. Some were even reported as leaving on BOAC flights to England, with select first class passengers having flights paid by PSNC. Passengers in other classes departed at their own cost. Press had been allowed on board since Monday and were reporting the master as Captain E. C. Hicks, on his first voyage as master but with many years of experience on the vessel. The Bermuda based pilot of the vessel at the time of the grounding was named as Mr. Ivor Reid, described as "obviously shaken." He was relieved of duty the evening of the incident. No explanation for the grounding was given by the captain or pilot, although there were some rumors that a harbor marker was missing at the point of the grounding. Pilot Reid was ranked third out of the 14 Bermuda pilots and was quoted as saying that the books said he could even be sent to prison for negligence. Harnett and Richardson, the agents for PSNC, confirmed there would be an investigation of the incident when the vessel returned to Liverpool.

Wednesday

A visibly shaken Captain Hicks was interviewed and stated that there was no sign of any hole or damage to the ship, going on to say "this is my first and last passenger ship command, I can assure you." The captain had previously been the chief officer of the *Reina* and had been associated with her for 31 years and went on to say, "I feel they're greasing the noose for me on the other side." A Seaboard and Western Airlines

flight under charter from BOAC delivered, after a 14 hour flight from London, some 15 tons of special equipment including huge coils of cable, piping and pumps to assist with the refloating. A further six tons of cargo including 18,000 feet of cable arrived on a KLM Royal Dutch Airlines DC-7 plane which would turn around and return to London with the 66 Boy Scouts, ensuring they would not miss the Jamboree. Despite reports that the ship should be floated in the following days, some were less optimistic with passenger Ricardo Abascal, a shipping agent from Santiago, stating “my opinion – and I know something about ships – is that we are too stuck on the reefs.”

Thursday

Freed at last after 85 hours “on the rocks.” On the high tide at 7 p.m., two tugs, *Bermudian* and *Justice*, moved into position and began to take the strain with the U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Castle Rock* and the salvage vessel *Topmast* standing by in case they were needed. With water roiling astern of the two tugs, the *Reina* remained in place for about 40 minutes until finally, and after three and a half days, she finally slid gently off the reef at Devil’s Flat at 7:40 p.m. By 8 p.m., around 100 passengers who felt uncomfortable being on the *Reina* during the refloating attempt, and who had been transferred to the tender *Chauncey M. Depew*, made their way back on board the *Reina*, which had dropped anchor for the night. Passengers were reported as remaining cheerful throughout the ordeal, with one commenting, “Well, we’ve had four extra days of duty free liquor. What are we worrying about?” However, members of the St. Paul’s church congregation were less pleased, having booked the *Chauncey* for a moonlight cruise for 900 that same night. Some 75 pounds of hotdogs and 75 dozen buns along with hundreds of unhappy parishioners who had not heard of the cancellation on the radio were left waiting on the dock. It was reported that ticket money would be refunded at the church office.

Friday

Still at anchor near where she ran aground, initial cargo reloading commenced in the early hours of the morning before she set sail for Grassy Bay at noon to continue loading and seaworthiness checks. Reloading included all 700 tons of cargo that had been removed, which comprised mostly copper, tin and baled cotton along with 300 tons of oil and 400 tons of water which replaced the 300 tons removed to aid the refloating. With most passengers still cheerful, BOAC, KLM and Eastern Airlines were kept busy arranging flights for those passengers who had important commitments or who did not wish to re-join the cruise.

Saturday

Reloading continued and a certificate of seaworthiness was issued to the *Reina del Pacifico* by the local agent for the ship and Lloyds of London representative, Gerald Harnett, allowing the vessel to leave Bermuda at daylight on Sunday. The tender *Chauncey M. Depew* was taking passengers to and from the ship all day, with the last trip from Hamilton scheduled for midnight.

Sunday

With the reloading not completed until 5 a.m., and piloted by K. Smith (who relieved Ivor E. Reid), at 7 a.m., the *Reina del Pacifico* finally slid smoothly through the North Channel and out to sea, bound for England -- nearly a week delayed and after 85 hours stranded on Devil’s Flat. Upon arrival, the ship would go to drydock in Liverpool for inspection and an English maritime court of inquiry will be held to establish who or what was to blame for the stranding of the liner. In Bermuda there was to be a local inquiry into the pilot’s actions. With still no explanation or excuse given for the stranding, Pilot Reid continued to state that he was on the bridge with the captain at the time of the incident and that he would cooperate fully with any inquiry. Reid went on to state, “This is my first black mark. Now I will have to face all Bermuda and everybody will say ‘there goes Reid’ and I will know what it means. All of your life you have

Continued on page 16

a tremendous responsibility. Suddenly there is a catastrophe and what I would say is this: is a past record wiped out also?"

Figures 4 and 5 show an airmail cover with PSNC crest on reverse from Bermuda to England dated Hamilton (Friday) July 12, 1957. It is endorsed RMMV *Reina del Pacifico* PSNC "On The Rocks" Bermuda and initialed with a "30" front and reverse. The cover must have been posted by a passenger or even a crew member while ashore during the week of the grounding. Is this the only surviving mail item from this event? Has anyone seen other mail from this voyage? Please email nigel.bermuda@gmail.com.



Figure 4
Airmail cover from Bermuda dated July 12, 1957.
This may be the only surviving cover from the grounding
of the Reina.



Figure 5
Inscription on reverse of Figure 4 indicating the Reina
"On the Rocks."

New Bermuda collector enjoys artwork on stamps

By Lolitta Trott

I started collecting stamps in 2005 when my daughter was born. Why? Because some of the pictures on stamps are beautiful pieces of artwork that caught my eye. As they say, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. It was like having an art museum in my house without taking up all the wall space or having to buy an art gallery. And hopefully I'll have something to pass on. I went to the Bermuda Philatelic Bureau and bought a stamp kit which came with an assortment of stamps including a strip of comics and signed up to receive mint copies of new stamps as they came out.

I didn't know the first thing about collecting but dived in anyway. So, from 2005 to about 2016 I received stamps in the mail. I was so excited to check my mailbox. Not for bills saying that I owe someone, but for stamps. Little pieces of paper with a design or picture on it that brought me joy, and still do.

After some time, I found out that my nana (grandmother) collected used stamps. My aunt passed them on to me. This got me into collecting stamps that had gone through the mail and received a dated cancel so they couldn't be reused. Because of this I was able to get stamps for the earlier years that I didn't have access to, such as The Gun Powder Plot at St. Georges 1975, Miss World 1980 or the Bermuda Historic Forts 1982.

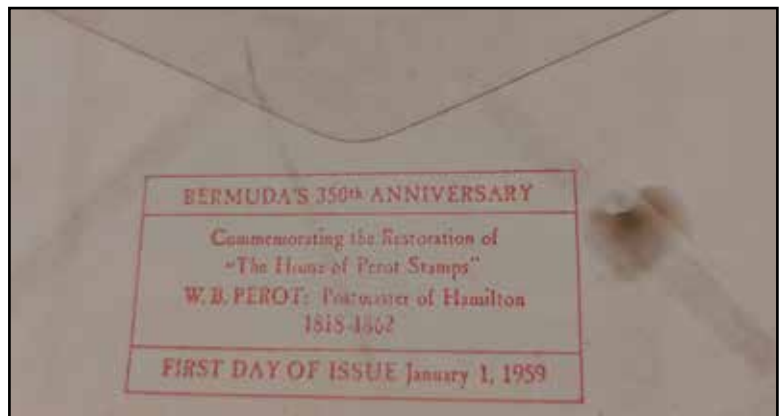
From 2016 until 2023 I took a break from collecting. I'm not so interested in the technical part of how stamps are made (yet), but I really like the stories/history

behind many of them. Recently, I read an article in *Bermuda Post* on the date stamps which I never really paid much attention to until now. So, I started looking through my first day covers and found a 1959 Perot cancellation. I believe it's the only one I have in my collection. I was on Cloud 9 and I'm on the hunt for more. Unfortunately, I can't go to the Perot Post Office and mail something to my family or purchase a first day cover just for the cancellation as the post office is not open to the public at this time.

I recently joined the Bermuda Collectors Society and look forward to learning about collecting. My collection has expanded from just mint copies to used stamps to first day covers and sheets. My focus is the Bermuda stamps, but I also have stamps from other parts of the world.



This 1959 cover to Lottie Fall in Shelly Bay is one of the interesting pieces of postal history Lolitta Trott has found. An interesting cachet is found on the reverse side (below).



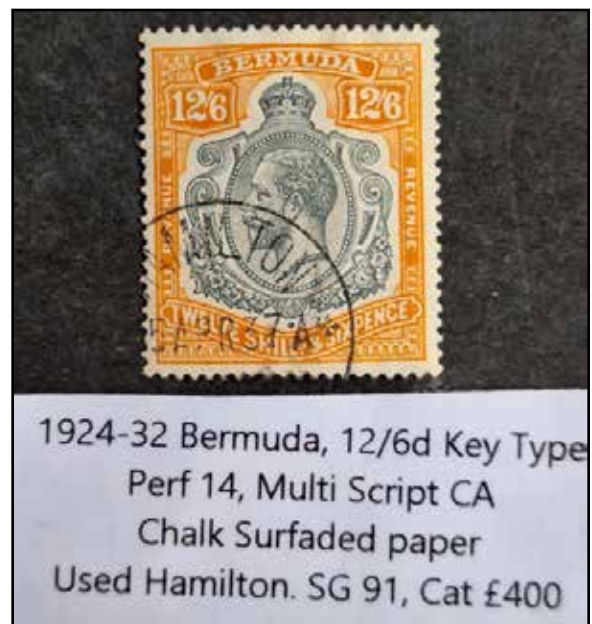


Rare Bermuda King George V stamp listed

What the Sleuth considers one of the rarest possible items popped up on eBay in May. A seller from Australia listed a “used” KGV 12/6d stamp for sale. The image from that listing page is illustrated here. It should be noted that the seller was aware that postally used KGV 12/6d key-plates are scarce. The title of the page is: “VERY RARE 1932 Bermuda 12/6 ochre & grey KGV postage stamp Used, SG91 Cat £400.”

The Sleuth suggests that readers take a good look at the image to note any discrepancies. First, the stamp’s catalogue number is wrong. It might be SG #93. However, that is only if you missed the word “REVENUE” on both sides of the value tablet. Yes, indeed, it is the elusive SG #F1. It also has a Hamilton cancel dated “Apr 37,” which falls into the time slot when the “Revenue-Revenue” was allowed to be used for postage.

Remembering back to when the Bermuda Collectors Society was formed, Bob Dickgiesser listed a “Revenue-Revenue with a legitimate revenue cancel” as one of the 10 rarest Bermuda stamps. A few covers are known franked with that stamp, but the Sleuth is not aware of ever seeing a postally used single.



The stamp received 11 bids, and closed at AU\$ 355.00 plus \$24.00 tax and any applicable U.S. taxes. The Sleuth considers that amount a bargain and suspects it is now part of a BCS member’s collection.

We need articles!

It takes a steady supply of articles to fill the pages of *Bermuda Post*.

Please take time to send your editor an article of any length.

- What is your favorite cover and why?
- What varieties/errors are you researching?

All of these would make good reading for our members!

Contact the editor TODAY at everettparker1245@gmail.com

Bermuda musings ...

Robert L. Vesco, the boy wonder of international finance

By Horst Augustinovic

Born in 1935, the son of a Detroit autoworker, Robert Lee Vesco quickly advanced from automotive body shop apprentice to controlling “International Controls Corporation” where he increased annual sales from \$1.3 million to more than \$100 million in just three years. In 1971, this success led to his gaining control of “Investors Overseas Services,” a Swiss-based mutual fund empire, from which he was accused of looting \$224 million just a year later. Indicted by a U.S. federal grand jury, he quickly fled the United States for a life of luxury in Costa Rica, the Bahamas and Antigua – all countries that did not easily grant extradition requests from the United States.



Figure 1
Robert L. Vesco.

While in the Bahamas, Vesco “was able to move Bahamian politicians around like chess pieces on a game board,” according to a leading Bahamian newspaper. Using “International Bancorp Bahamas” to launder some of the \$224 million he embezzled from IOS, Vesco bought “Butler’s Bank” and merged it with the “Bahamas Commonwealth Bank.” Having made an illegal \$200,000 contribution to Richard Nixon’s re-election campaign in an effort to sway the SEC investigation against him, it was at the Commonwealth Bank where he was about to be arrested following yet another extradition request from the U.S. With his political influence, he managed to quickly flee to Costa Rica.

After scandals involving two Costa Rican presidents, Robert Vesco finally settled in Cuba where he was finally safe from U.S. extradition efforts. But being Robert Vesco, he again got into trouble and was arrested for drug smuggling and economic crimes. Sentenced to 13 years in jail, he died in Cuba in 2007.

What has all of this to do with Bermuda philately? Well, in the 1970s I was involved in printing and bulk mailing a number of different newsletters by “International Air Lift” from Bermuda. One of them was an “executive’s personal development letter” of which Robert Vesco was a subscriber while in the Bahamas.

After fleeing to Costa Rica, his post office box in Nassau was apparently closed and I simply had to keep the last envelope addressed to him and returned “Box closed” and stamped “RETURN TO SENDER” in my postal history collection.



Figure 2
“International Air Lift” returned to Horst Augustinovic.

Did you know ...

... That the game introduced to America from Bermuda in 1874 was actually Sphairistiké?

By Horst Augustinovic

When Mary Ewing Outerbridge returned to her Staten Island home from a holiday in Bermuda in 1874, she had trouble getting through Customs in New York. In her luggage, the Customs inspector had found some curious objects -- a long, narrow net, which did not look like a fishing net, and several implements with handles and webbed heads. Could they be rug beaters, butterfly catchers or perhaps snowshoes?

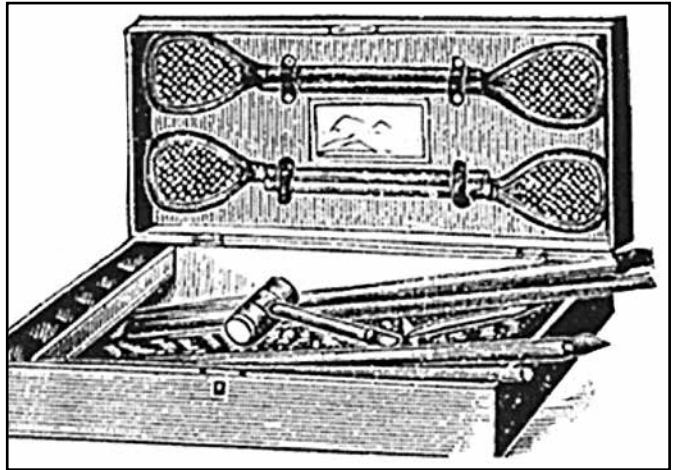
Miss Outerbridge explained that this was the equipment needed for a new outdoor game called Sphairistiké. A few weeks later, this new game -- clearly neither cricket nor baseball -- was played at the Staten Island Cricket and Baseball Club. Across a net hung between two posts, gentlemen and ladies could be seen hitting a bouncing rubber ball with some sort of bat. Sphairistiké had come to America.

It was earlier in 1874 that Major Walter Wingfield had applied for a patent on "a new and improved portable court for playing the ancient game of tennis." A British officer and avid sportsman, Major Wingfield claimed that the new "portable court"

constituted a new game, as the "ancient game of court tennis" was an indoor affair with complicated rules where a ball could bounce off all four walls and still be in play. Major Wingfield's game, on the other hand, was far simpler. All it required was a lawn, two posts and a net, and rackets to hit the ball with. It was much like badminton, with the important difference that in lawn tennis, a rubber ball was used instead of a feathered "bird," making for a much more energetic contest.



An early Bermuda tennis match at the Shore Hills Hotel at Ferry Reach, now the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences.



Early design of tennis implements.

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A classic scholar, Major Wingfield based the name of his new game -- Sphairistiké -- on a Greek word meaning "ball-playing." For a popular game, this was not exactly a great name. One

wit wrote, "I hear that Major Wingfield intends bringing out a game with a Greek name. The name, I understand, will not exceed ten syllables, and may be easily mastered in six lessons." Since the new game was clearly descended from court tennis, it quickly became known as lawn tennis and Sphairistiké was soon forgotten.

Right to the end of the 19th Century, few ladies ventured on the court in anything but lawn-sweeping skirts and large hats. Only slowly short skirts -- that is, just above the ankle -- and small hats were introduced. Tennis dress for men, on the other hand, started out on the casual side with knickers, tam-o'-shanters, long



In 1973, the Bermuda Post Office issued four stamps to commemorate the 100th anniversary of tennis in Bermuda.

trousers, colorful cravats, and bright blazers. Gradually, white became the favored color, and by the end of the century, fashionable players were seldom seen on the court in anything else. However, long white trousers and a white shirt was to prevail for another half century.

Other paraphernalia of the game -- nets, balls, and rackets -- evolved slowly during the early years of tennis. There was little change in the net, a little more in the ball and most of all in the racket. In fact, the search has always been for a racket that would impart more speed to the ball with less effort, and this led to tighter stringing and metal frames. Yes, tennis is a great game and Major Wingfield and Mary Outerbridge deserve every tennis player's thanks.

The "Did you know ..." column is excerpted from Horst Augustinovic's three book series, What you may NOT know About Bermuda. For information on these very informative hardcover books (with lots of philatelic information!), contact Horst by email at horstaugustinovic1@gmail.com



Secretary's Report

By Jeffrey Dow
 jmdcollectibles@yahoo.com



NEW MEMBERS

Robert Cohen, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania
 Alp Torun, Clifton, New Jersey
 Junqi Wang, United Kingdom
 Robert Tweedus, Morris Plains, New Jersey

NON-RENEWALS

None this quarter

DONATIONS

Thomas Olson

ADDRESS CHANGES

None this quarter

DECEASED

None this quarter

REINSTATEMENTS

None this quarter

RESIGNATIONS

None this quarter

STATISTICAL REPORT

Membership at end of previous quarter:	111
New Members:	4
Reinstatement:	0
Loss (non renewals):	0
Resignation:	0
Deceased:	0
Current membership:	115

Chuck Cwiakala -- a Remembrance

By John L. Puzine

It is with deep sadness that I report Charles (Chuck) Cwiakala passed away on May 11, 2024. Chuck was 85 years old. He was married to his wife, Teresak, who he met in 1959. They had three children: Tanya, Mark, and Erica plus four grandchildren. Chuck graduated from the Illinois Institute of Technology with a degree in chemistry and was a technical director for the Dial Corporation, traveling around the world for decades.

In addition to his professional career, he was an avid philatelist. Chuck was a longtime BCS member, attended meetings, and served on the Board of Directors. Chuck was also very involved in the Chicago Collectors Club, the American Air Mail Society, and numerous other philatelic organizations.

He authored articles on Bermuda air mail for the AAMS, and in 1996 published *Bermuda by Air - A Handbook and Catalog of Bermuda Aerophilately*.

That book is the bible for collectors of Bermuda air mail. Chuck was also an auction agent acting on behalf of many collectors at various auctions, and acted as an agent in the Cherrystone sale of Robert Dickgiesser's massive Bermuda collection. Until



CHARLES (CHUCK) CWIAKALA

very recently Chuck remained active in all things philatelic.

I had the pleasure of meeting Chuck on many occasions, and can describe him as one of the most personable and enthusiastic people you could ever meet. The philatelic community has lost a giant, and he will be missed by many.

FLIGHT COLLECTION FOR SALE

OFFERED FOR SALE IS A VERY LARGE COLLECTION OF BERMUDA AEROPHILATELY.

This collection was formed over thirty years and includes a high percentage of the listed flight material from all the available Bermuda catalogs. The collection starts with the Los Angeles flights and goes up to the final flights serviced by the U.S. and Bermuda post offices in 2004.

It contains over 530 items – mostly covers. The common FAM17 flight amounts to only twenty covers. So it is not filled with the inexpensive items from that particular flight.

The owner's value was calculated using Chuck Cwiakala's *Bermuda by Air*, Bill Clark's Catalog, and the *Bermuda Specialized Catalogue*. The owner paid more than the estimated value of \$ 11,000.

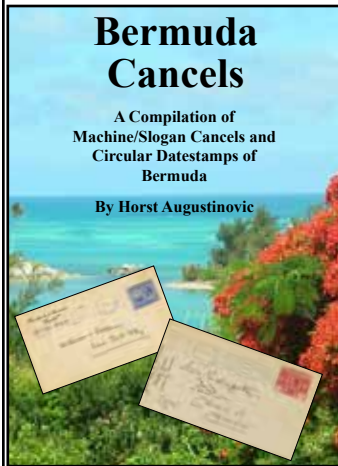
If you've ever considered collecting Bermuda aerophilately here is an opportunity for an instant well-formed collection available for \$7,995 (or best reasonable offer). Shipping (not in album pages) would be free in the U.S. Other arrangements are negotiable.



A complete listing in the form of a 14 page document can be provided by contacting John Puzine by email at puzine@comcast.net or by phone at 941-979-8117.

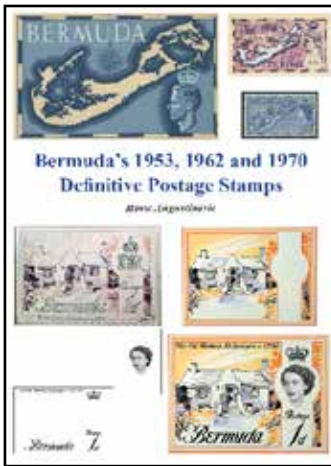
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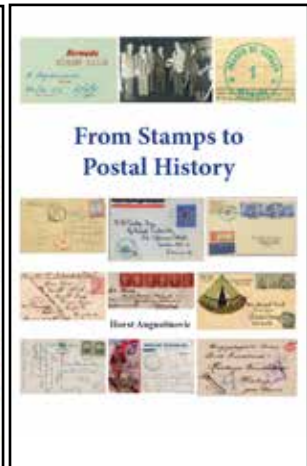
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From Stamps to Postal History is a look at history of the Bermuda Stamp Club, philatelic society and eight exhibitions, as well as Horst's quest to find 50 censor markings. It's all covered in 82 pages in color!

From Transport to Accommodation is an examination of how philately has played a role in transportation and public accommodations in Bermuda. The 88 page book is lavishly illustrated with both philatelic items and antiquarian photographs.

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