

STAMPS

Holy Land mail gives much to study, learn

The Holy Land holds a special place in the history of both Christianity and Judaism. For philatelists, it also offers a rich history that can be explored through the covers and stamps that document the evolution of Israel and Palestine, as the country was known until 1948.

For those who specialize in mail from the region, there's the Society of Israel Philatelists, an organization devoted to the study of Holy Land postal history.

There's plenty to learn and new discoveries of material are often made by members, said Howard Chapman, an attorney with TransCon Builders, Inc. in Bedford Heights who is the society's treasurer and executive secretary.

He told me during the Garfield Perry Stamp Club's March Party, where the SIP held its annual meeting, the society's 700 worldwide members have a wide variety of interests primarily rooted in Jewish history.

"The people collect all types of material that deals with the Holy Land. The collecting of Holy Land material can be as simple as you want it to be," Chapman explained. "You're talking about the



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country that goes back thousands of years to the beginning of time. You're really studying the history of not just Judaism, but you're getting into the history of a lot of religions that started in Jerusalem," he said. Modern-day Israel has existed as a nation for just 68 years. The society was formed the same year. Palestine's history is complex, having been administered at different times by Turkey, Italy, France, Germany and Great Britain. Each ruling country established its own mail services, leaving plenty of interesting material for persistent collectors to hunt down and study.

SIP's membership is not made up solely of Jewish people, Chapman said. Collectors of several faiths and even no faith are members and enjoy the camaraderie of sharing new discoveries and develop-



PHOTO PROVIDED BY HOWARD CHAPMAN
This page from an exhibit by Howard Chapman, a member of the Society of Israel Philatelists, shows Jerusalem local postage stamps used on a registered cover dating from the first day the stamps could be used May 10, 1948.

ing exhibits of a particular phase of Holy Land mail service.

Chapman has developed an exhibit on Jewish National Fund Cinderella stamps. (Cinderellas are labels not actually usable on mail.) The fund was established during the Fifth Zionist Congress in 1901 in Basel, Switzerland. His exhibit picks up the story:

"The fund was to be the property of all the Jewish people and was originally established to purchase land throughout Palestine. In 1901, the JNF office in Vienna, Austria, released the first stamp of the JNF as a source of fund raising."

The exhibit examines the essays, proofs, color trials, issued labels and their usages.

the historical geographic borders of Palestine or Israel. For example, members collect and exhibit mail related to Nazi-run World War II concentration camps in Europe and anti-Semitic hate mail from around the world.

The society publishes an informative and entertaining quarterly journal, "The Israel Philatelist," and has published numerous books examining different aspects of Holy Land-related postal history such as the Palestine mandate issues, Israel military postal stationery, places and post offices with biblical names and postal history of the West Bank between Israel's independence and the 1967 war.

More information on the Society of Israel Philatelists is available online at <http://israelstamps.com>.

Post card show

The Firelands Post Card Show is 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. June 26 at the Eagles Club 711, 151 Cline St., (behind Wendy's), Norwalk. Admission is \$1. For information, call (419) 706-3543 or email wojish@neo.rr.com.

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