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Today's Collector
New Opportunities

What is our Future?



Postal Card used in Juleo, Baja California 1895
Just one of the rarities coming up in The Arce collection.

Okay, this is the start of a new series, which is no more than Part Two of what I have been talking about: being a philatelist, knowing our stamps, and having fun while staying holed up in our stamp room. Lord knows how much I like philately, and sometimes it seems to be one of the best things in my life. Sometimes, I also think it is too much of a burden to deal with all the things I have done with my hobby. I spent a lot of time writing to you, my readers. I ask nothing for the work I do because, over the years, I have had some wonderful friends from being part of the Philatelic Societies I belong to. I have made friends who have been around for a long time and have written to me, or we have traded stamps and knowledge of our philatelic interests. Over the years, I look back at hundreds of collectors who have been my steady clients. Each time I send out material I have sold, it gives me pride to know others care. Now that my stamp sales are coming to a close, I still have many friends who come to me with questions and help finding out about something they have.



My friend Joe Arce in his younger days.

Now that I am starting a new segment for my new messages, I am going to open up more questions to you. Not ones that you need to tell me the answers, but questions you need to answer for yourself. I have been working on a collection that was built by a good friend of mine. He is gone now, but I still remember him by his mind and accomplishments. His name is Joe Arce, and Joe grew up in Southern California. When he was young, he was a motorcycle racer. He raced on Drag Strips, and he perfected his fuel to make the cycle run faster. It was not an easy task, and he realized he needed to study chemistry to devise the best fuel he could make to go faster than the next guy. He took night classes to study chemistry because, at this early age, he started his own trucking company. Joe was hired by the company that was perfecting rocket fuel, and he became a Rocket Scientist. Joe was one of the smartest guys I have known. I met him through stamps and at the local chapter of MEPSI. We both collected Mexican philately. Today I have finally been able to get his collection of Mexico together, ready for auction. Joe was as much a writer and exhibitor of his collecting interests as he was a collector, but he also had broad interests beyond Mexican stamps. His family was originally from the Baja Mexico peninsula, which he did a lot of research on.



Joe Arce, the collector and philatelist.

For some of the things he collected, he wrote long essays, including on Mining Companies of Mexico. Much of this required assembling letters and covers from these miners, but many of these were open to stories he found from homesick geologists working for the companies in Mexico. Other parts described the difficulty of the work, the heat, and the vastness of the arid Mexican deserts and mountains. So, as I worked on each album that departed from stamps and was about things that he had found interesting, it took me on a journey that unfortunately was not exactly like philately. Some of the covers and postcards of those old mining companies were the only connection, and few were not auction material. Joe's writing was always interesting, and it was too bad that so much was not auction material. Oh, don't get me wrong, he was a collector of the earliest classic issues of Mexico, and not only these, but his love was the study and collection of proofs, essays, and Specimen Issues, of which his collection is vast.



Revenue Proofs, just one of the many things that Joe Collected.

The reason I am telling you so much about my friend Joe Arce is that I want to point out to you, my readers, that just collecting the stamps is not the end of the world in philately. Joe loves the whole thing, from stamps to covers and what they represented. When you open up your favorite album, do you only see stamps? Or do you look deeper and see the cancel or the cover that ties the stamps to their meaning? Think about what you are looking at: some pretty unused or used stamps that just fill a box in your album. Okay, look at the picture, then the interesting frame, look at the date if it has one, and the cancel that might tell you what cover it might have come off of. Sure, they are pretty, and if you know the history behind that little piece of paper, it will tell you a story. Once it was part of a letter to another businessman, or it carried a small lady's envelope that held an invitation to get together with the writer for a cup of tea. Oh, how powerful those little pieces of paper have been. It was the mail that almost ended the vast number of illiterate men, women, and children.

Communication is the thing that stamps and mail have been so powerful in changing our world in the Nineteenth Century, as computers and the internet have been doing in our world today.

Enjoy!

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MEPSI #2795

APS #198784, USPCS #4060,

Western Cover Soc. #1423, UPSS #6670,

CCNY #7864 and Royal Philatelic Society of London