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National Postal Museum Announces Launch of Centralized Gateway to World's Greatest Philatelic Research

The Smithsonian's National Postal Museum announces the formal launch of the GlobalPhilatelicLibrary.org website, a centralized information gateway to the world's greatest philatelic research. Founding partners include the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum and Smithsonian Libraries in Washington, D.C., the Royal Philatelic Society London and the American Philatelic Research Library in Bellefonte, Pa.

On Feb. 15th 1888, American Philatelic Society President, J. K. Tiffany wrote to Mr. E. D. Bacon, Secretary of the Royal Philatelic Society London, regarding a joint indexing project. He said "...I consider the project as utterly impossible of any practical execution..." One hundred and twenty four years later the project has become a reality.

This ambitious project, first considered in 1888 has become a present day reality thanks to the inspiration and dedication of the founding partners. The website establishes a single destination—a responsive centralized gateway—by which philatelists around the world can search, locate and access philatelic research from partner libraries in real time, from any computer. Searchable listings of books and publications, as well as resource locations and access, are now just a click away, providing invaluable resources to those doing philatelic research.

- World-class collection of printed, electronic and other media
- Access and support for beginners, hobbyists, specialists, writers and postal historians
- International collaboration and cooperation with philatelic libraries and museums around the world
- Anthology of fascinating, informative and sometimes even scandalous articles written throughout the past century about philately and some of the people involved in its history

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“A large part of the philatelic information I have acquired was discovered incidentally while searching for something else,” said Thomas Lera, Winton M. Blount research chair at the Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum. “I hope other philatelists, scholars and researchers will push open the doors of the new global philatelic library to find the answers to their questions and uncover new ones in the process as well.”

Other contributing philatelic research libraries include The Collectors Club Library in Chicago; The Collectors Club Library in New York; Greene Foundation (Canada); Oslo Filatelistklubb Bibliotek (Norway); Philatelistische Bibliothek Hamburg (Germany); Postal History Foundation in Tucson, Ariz.; Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library in Denver; and Western Philatelic Library in Sunnyvale, Calif.

“All involved with this project should be congratulated,” said Alan Holyoake, internationally-known philatelist. “The introduction of a centralized gateway must be one of the most important developments ever to have taken place within the ‘philatelic’ world. I fully expect this centralized gateway to rapidly allow philatelists from around the world to not only enhance their knowledge but also establish relationships and friendships with others around the globe.”

The Smithsonian Libraries is a 20-branch system containing more than 2 million volumes, with 50,000 rare books, 10,000 historic manuscripts and over 1,600 electronic journal titles. Researchers, Smithsonian staff and the general public are able to use the collections in library branches located in Washington, Maryland, New York and the Republic of Panama. The Libraries is a member of the Association of Research Libraries, the Chesapeake Information and Research Library Alliance and the Federal Library and Information Center Committee.

The National Postal Museum is devoted to presenting the colorful and engaging history of the nation’s mail service and showcasing one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of stamps and philatelic material in the world. It is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C., across from Union Station. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed Dec. 25). For more information about the Smithsonian, call (202) 633-1000 or visit the museum website at www.postalmuseum.si.edu.

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