

## IT MUST BE WORTH A LOT OF MONEY

I am a collector. From my earliest years, I collected stuff. As a little kid, I collected the covers of ice cream cups that featured movie stars. I collected soda bottle caps, We used them in games that we played. I collected marbles, which we called “immies.” Of course I collected baseball cards. I wasn’t very passionate about my baseball card collection. Baseball cards came with packs of gum, and I didn’t want to spend my pennies on gum. I didn’t collect comic books. They cost a dime.

I did collect stamps. I wrote elsewhere about my being introduced to this very educational hobby, which also had the possibility of a collector coming across a very valuable stamp, making him very rich. I started with a lovely stamp album, given to me as a birthday present. It was called “Modern Postage Stamp Album” and had a red cover and a picture of skyscrapers and an airplane. It was published by Scott, designed and written by Theresa M. Clark, and copyright in 1938. Of course, I still have it. I would dutifully paste the collected stamps in the album with little hinges. I also traded stamps with fellow collectors, but with little enthusiasm.

I was also told that if you collected numbered plate blocks and first day covers of US commemorative stamps, they would be worth a lot of money some day. So from the time I was a teen-ager until a few years ago, I collected US commemorative plate blocks. I would buy a sheet of stamps in the post office and remove the four corner stamps with the number. I carefully put them in special mint block files, purchased in stores that sold stamps to collectors. The reason I stopped collecting them a few years ago was because I learned that they had no value. There was no one who would buy them. There was a surfeit of plate blocks. I have not bought a stamp in over a year. I am using up my beautiful plate blocks on the letters I send out. Last year (2010) when Fran and I went to Spain and France, I learned that stamps are bought and sold at flea markets. I was sure that I could sell my beautiful stamps to dealers there. I estimated their value in Euros and thought I would make a killing. There was no interest at all. Finally one dealer bought a particularly pretty sheet for about its face value. I gave several plate blocks to my cousins.

In my late teens, as I developed an interest in music, I collected records—first 78’s (that was all there was in the ‘30s and ‘40s). My friend Phil collected jazz records as a teen-ager, but he didn’t have a record player. He would leave his records at the homes of friends who did. In the late ‘40s, a very fancy record store, Liberty Music, ran a full page ad in the N.Y. Times announcing that it was selling its entire stock of records at 50% off. I ran down and bought a bunch of classical and jazz albums. Several months later, Columbia Records announced that it was introducing a new 33 1/3 rpm record, and RCA came out with a 45 rpm record. The 78rpm record became obsolete, as did my prized portable 78 rpm record player. I had overwound the big Victrola that was my mother’s, years before.

Speaking of my mother, I suspect I got the collecting bug from her. She had a respectable collection of 78 rpm records consisting of classical music, liturgical music, Yiddish music, some popular music and even a comedy record. Most of them were 12 inch, recorded on one side, and very heavy. In addition my mother had her collection of Yiddish books in a special bookcase, and in the big China closet, my mother appropriately kept her collection of China and cut glass, and foreign coins, and souvenir spoons.