



# The Expert's Corner

By J. Randall Shoemaker



## Why Do I Need To Get Stamps Expertized?

**A**fter being on the show scene for more than 40 years, I've been asked this question about a zillion times. Unfortunately, the answer doesn't come in a few short sentences. 'Why' depends on your past, present and future collecting habits, as well as how much you intend to spend on stamps and how you wish to dispose of your collection at the end of your collecting career.

**PAST** – Stamps with values in excess of \$250 should be considered as prime candidates for expertizing. If you consider the future sale of these items, most wise collectors will want certificates on them prior to purchase. This applies to you as a buyer AND seller.

A bit of investment in expertizing will reveal how you have done in your past buying life and what sources proved most accurate in their descriptions to you. Small un-described faults can be lethal to future value and it is best to know the accuracy of each of the places you generally buy from. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure! Once you have determined the relative accuracy, it is much less problematic to buy from Source 'A' if everything was as described from them.

Many people say they don't need experts to tell them if their stamps are okay but what they don't realize is that when they go to sell them, their 'word' is meaningless. There is no substitute to a recognized Third Party certification by professionals who examine stamps regularly and who know what to look for in the way of faults, either repaired or unrepaired.

**PRESENT** – If you are regularly, or even only sporadically, buying stamps in the \$250 and up bracket as many advanced collectors do, it is best to protect yourself now rather than later. Surprises down the road are unnecessary with some preventative expertizing.

You can buy items 'subject to certification' from any reputable dealer, auction firm or other legitimate source. The transaction does not finalize until the results are returned to you. It is best to get into a habit of seriously looking at items in this price range. The cost of expertizing is generally about 4-5% of the catalog value which is pretty cheap insurance for your life long purchases.

**FUTURE** – This is where expertizing is most invaluable. Depending on how you plan to liquidate your philatelic holdings, the presence or absence of certificates of authenticity can seriously increase the value of a collection. If you are contemplating auction sale of your holdings, having key items all previously expertized will significantly increase the value and interest in a collection. The auction house will see this as a valuable property and will be much more likely to issue a presale advance.

They will also realize that extensions will be limited in this type of sale and therefore much easier and less time consuming than selling without certification. You will get paid much more expeditiously. Further, since the key items are pre-certified, BUYERS will be much more aggressive in their bidding and you will realize higher prices than un-certified items since they will be purchasing with much higher confidence in the descriptions. If you choose selling to a stamp dealer, it may be the difference in getting top dollar or not.

If a dealer sees a collection offered with few if any certificates of authenticity, he pretty much automatically reduces the price he will offer. He has to figure in that a certain amount of the material is misdescribed and/or even miscataloged and that key items will need to be expertized and therefore incur extra expense and time to liquidate. On the other hand, if the collection is presented with many COA's and key items already done, the price he will offer rises significantly. He will know that the certified material will sell first and he will be able to recoup his investment.

You will benefit greatly by this small bit of investment in both knowledge and safety in your purchases. Be smart and plan for your future!

[Editor's Note: J Randall Shoemaker is President of PSAG, Inc. [www.psaginc.com](http://www.psaginc.com)]