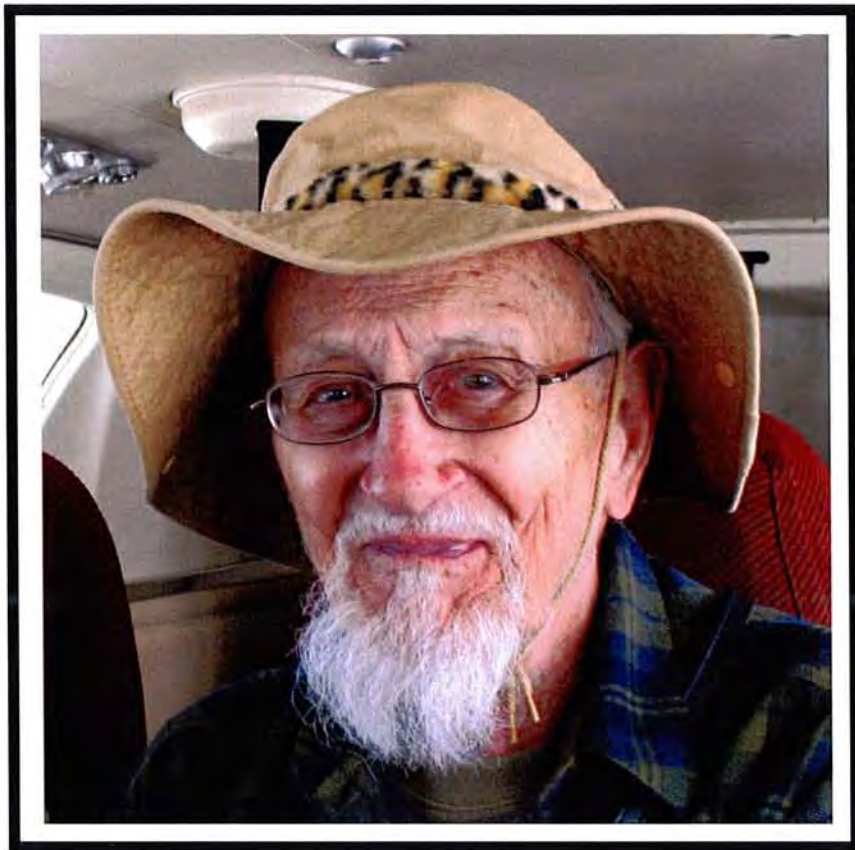


Postal Himal

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE

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Armand Edwards Singer

**Born: November 30, 1914 at Detroit, Michigan
At Rest: July 12, 2007 at Morgantown, West Virginia**



Postal Himal is a quarterly publication of the Nepal & Tibet Philatelic Study Circle. Membership subscriptions run from January through December of each year. Dues should be paid in local currency at the prevailing exchange rate to the Society representative in your area.

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Editor's Ramblings

I certainly hope that we never have two consecutive issues like this one and the last one. It has certainly been unnerving, to say the least, to lose two such prominent members in such a short period of time. And you will see from page 3 that there is another of our members who has sadly passed away.

There are, I believe, two articles of Armand's still to be published in *The American Philatelist*. On page 12 you will find the final article which Armand wrote. He was working on it when he entered the hospital and finished it while he was there. It was sent to me by his Administrative Assistant, Amy Prunty, several weeks before he died.

On page 16, you will find an article about the coming increase in the membership fees. It has been at least 12 years since there was a dues increase, which I think is probably a record of sorts. Please read the article carefully, as there is a special Life membership rate that will be in effect only until December 31, 2008. The increase in dues does not make anyone happy, but it is necessary if our organization is to remain financially solvent. Next year I plan to reissue the membership list and also the general index for *Postal Himal* from its very first issue. I have gone through the first 46 issues and the index is currently 23 pages in length.

CONGRATULATIONS:

Dick van der Wateren was awarded Gold at the International Philatelic Exhibition at Saint Petersburg, Russia in June for his exhibit "The Classic Period of Nepal".

Danny K. C. Wong was awarded a Large Silver with a special "Encouragement Prize for Postal History" at the Sydney Stamp Expo 2007 for his exhibit "Postal History of Tibetan Highland under the Peoples' Republic of China"

To all of the authors of *Postal Himal* in 2006: **Jeremy Brewer, Geoffrey Flack, Wolfgang Hellrigl, Colin Hepper, Jaya Hari Jha, Karl-Heinz Michel, Nicholas Rhodes, Surendra Lal Shrestha, Armand E. Singer, Alan Warren, Dick van der Wateren, Danny K. C. Wong, and Paul Zatulove** who were responsible for *Postal Himal* being awarded Silver at the APS STaMpsHOW 2007 at Portland, Oregon.

Armand E. Singer
from *The Morgantown Post*, submitted by F. Ann Hill, Armand's daughter

Armand Edwards Singer, 92, died Thursday, July 12, 2007, in Morgantown, WV. He was born November 30, 1914, in Detroit. He was the only child of Elvin Satori Singer and Fredericka Elizabeth (Edwards) Singer Goetz.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his beloved wife of 64 years, Mary Rebecca White Singer. He is survived by his daughter, Fredericka Ann Hill, and his son-in-law, Thomas Hill.

Armand chose the teaching of Romance Languages as a career and received an A.B. from Amherst College in 1935, an M.A. from Duke University in 1939, and a Ph.D. from Duke University in 1944. He instructed French and Spanish at West Virginia University for 40 years, beginning in 1940 as a teaching fellow and retiring in 1980 as a professor emeritus, although anyone who knows Armand knows that the word "retirement" was not really in his vocabulary. He continued to teach a graduate course in research methods until 1995 and taught courses in the Appalachian Lifelong Learners program. Armand had the reputation of a faculty member who could do, and was willing to do, all kinds of professional assignments. In addition to teaching foreign languages, he directed the Program in the Humanities from 1963-1972 and was acting chair of the Department of Religion in 1973.

On campus, Armand was known as a faculty leader for research and scholarship before this was a requirement of faculty members. Armand's research in the field of Romance literature focused on the Don Juan theme. He had numerous publications on this topic; the first *A Bibliography of the Don Juan Theme: Versions and Criticism*, appeared in 1954 with an updated volume appearing in 2003. In addition to his published work, Armand's dedication to research and scholarship was evident in the wide variety of scholarly activities in which he participated. He served as the first Director of the Department of Foreign

Language's Annual Colloquium on Literature and Film in 1976 and for several years thereafter (1976-80, 1985-86, 1996-97, 1999-2001, and 2005). At the time of his death, Armand was serving as the director for this year's colloquium, the Thirty-first, with the theme of "Stage and Screen Today". For many years Armand was also the editor of the West Virginia University Philological Papers, a journal devoted to research on literature and film, which is published by the Department of Foreign Languages in the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences (as editor: 1948-50, 1953-55; as editor-in-chief: 1951-52, 1955-2004; and as co-editor: 2005-07). Armand was also active in the Phi Beta kappa Honor Society and, for the last 20-25 years, was famous for his amusing and informative presentation of the society's history at the annual induction of new members.

Armand and his late wife, Mary, were a team devoted to scholarship in the humanities. In 2000, Mary and Armand together with their daughter and son-in-law responded to WVU's Building Greatness Campaign by establishing the Armand E. and Mary W. Singer Professorship in the Humanities, which is intended for faculty members in the Department of Foreign Languages. Armand's commitment to the humanities was recognized in 1990 when he became the recipient of the 4th Annual Humanities Award from the West Virginia Humanities Council.

During his life, Armand was active in numerous professional societies. He was a member of the Modern language Association and served on its bibliography committee from 1956-59 and was elected to its national delegate assembly from 1975-78. He was also a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society, the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, and the South Atlantic Modern Language Association, for which he served on the Executive Committee (1971-74).

Aside from his professional pursuits, Armand

had many and varied avocations: philately, limericks, travel, hiking, and jazz, and was the published author in many of these areas as well. In the area of philately, Armand was a recognized authority on the stamps of Tibet and Nepal, and he published and lectured extensively on this topic. He belonged to the American Philatelic Society, the Nepal and Tibet Philatelic Study Circle, the Nepalese Philatelic Society, and the Collectors Club of New York. Other publications included his volume of *Essays on the Literature of Mountaineering* and edit volumes of Ward Marden's limericks, demonstrating his particular interest in this literary form.

Armand was also a great traveler, who traveled around the world and across the country. His love of travel and hiking were legendary, as evidenced in his "Where's Armand?" website. Always the teacher, Armand sought to introduce the adventure of travel to his students through study abroad trips with him and his family. An avid hiker,

Armand hiked the Grand Canyon 15 times, the last time at the age of 87. He attempted a 16th time at the age of 91 with his daughter, but stopped when common sense took over. He also loved driving across country, something he did every 2 years since the 1930s. And Armand was always ready with stories of his travels for anyone who had the time for a good laugh, a tall tale, and a good adventure.

Memorial gifts to the Armand E. and Mary W. Singer Professorship in the Humanities may be sent to the WVU Foundation, PO Box 1650, Morgantown, WV 26507-1650. Checks should be made out to the WVU Foundation with Singer 3V448 on the memo line.

Memorial contributions may be made to The Nature Conservancy, Attn: Treasury (Web/Support), 4245 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 100, Arlington, VA, USA or at (800) 628-6860.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, October 6, 2007 at 3:00; at Brooks Hall, West Virginia University downtown campus, Morgantown, WV.

In Memoriam - Wilfred Franke **Alan Warren and Colin Hepper**

Noted Tibet expert Wilfred Franke of Köln, Germany died in June. He was a member of the German Society of Stamp Experts (Bund Philatelistsche Prüfer e.V.), the Nepal and Tibet Philatelic Study Circle. He was chairman of the India Study Group of the German Philatelic Society (Forschungsgemeinschaft Indien im

Bund Deutscher Philatelisten) at the time of his death, and former editor of its journal *Indien-Report*.

In 1994-1995, Franke authored a series of articles on the forgeries of the first, second, and third issues of Tibet that appeared in *Indien-Report*.

In Memoriam - Armand E. Singer

Jeremy R. Brewer

One of the least palatable aspects of belonging to a group of like-minded companions, and philatelic societies are no different, is learning, by word of mouth or upon opening a forthcoming issue of the society journal, of the decease of a fellow member. At one moment all may appear to be well and then with little or no warning a colleague is no more. Sadly, on this occasion it is our friend and President, Armand.

He and I first met at an early Waterfall sale. Two of the items which we both desperately wanted was a typed "Tibet" on Indian stamp cover and the 1933 4t used proof pair. After duly battering each other Armand won the cover and I the proof. Years later, the latter also ended up in Armand's collection, graciously acknowledged in his publications "The Armand E. Singer Tibet 1809-1965 and Supplement". Until gently thrown out by the auctioneer the two of us and Arnold Waterfall passed an hour in five minutes! Then Armand, on a stolen visit from his university duties, departed for his flight back to the States, Waterfall to Yorkshire and myself home, too - but a meeting to cherish with Armand's fascinating recollections of Cummings of Vermont, MacDonald of Kalimpong and, of course, Vernay.

There are few who have tackled both Nepal and Tibet philately as comprehensively as Armand and he may well be the last to do so. Himalayan mountaineering covers and cards formed a third collection and made a fine adjunct to his own enthusiastic climbing aspirations. Do see in the publication "A Catalog of Himalayan Mountaineering Correspondence" (Singer and Gould) the A. E. Singer Personal Expedition cover of 1965 (when aged 51), the aerogramme from Teshi Lapcha Pass in 1974 (aged 60) and that sent from Rongbuk Monastery Camp in 1982 (now aged 68) and, of course, Sir Edmund Hillary's approbation. Mail carried during his bungee-jump when aged 90 is not yet illustrated!

Fortunately for us collectors Armand's

academic experience gave him the foresight to produce two publications picturing his Tibet collection (titles as above) and another, of his Nepal collection ("The Armand E. Singer Nepal 1772-1961 and Beyond". Thus, wherever his collections stray in the future, his own endeavours are available for consultation. Elected to The Collectors' Club of New York in 1985, he chose Tibet as the subject of his address there some three years later.

Within the philatelic world, what caused Armand most chagrin was his inability at competitive exhibition, particularly at International level, to command an award which he regarded as commensurate with his exhibit. At National level he was more successful with a gold at Rhode Island in 1985, followed by another gold and also prestigious best-in-show at Washington in 1994. This year, at WESTPEX, he took another gold. At International level, however, he was less fortunate, not because of quality but because of technique. His ideas and those of the somewhat restrictive rules of exhibiting hardly tallied. Armand, being a whole-hearted stamp collecting enthusiast wanted to show everything - all his marvelous treasures. It was wonderful, naturally, for appreciative observers to be given the opportunity to marvel, but it didn't bring the awards his material merited.

For me, of all the many philatelic writings - as books, newsletters or journal articles - that Armand has produced, it is not a studied exposition or informative general commentary that is my favourite, but his "Diary of an Inveterate Auctioneer" first published during 1981/82 in *Postal Himal*. I understand that this has now been included in more than one other publication; as it deserves to be. The remark has already been made by the late Lester A. Michel that it leaves one in "a shivering sweat" - and it sure does. I must own that I figured in the narrative being the "friend" on whose behalf Armand was also bidding. The "intimidator" is

known to me and, without doubt, to others but no identity will be revealed here. Suffice it to say that I am told that he is unhappily encumbered still with the dubious fruits of his extravagance. So Armand, thank you again but now, in sorrow, for the last time, for sticking to your guns and triumphing!

Armand's effortless talks at the Study Circle's occasional meetings in his inimitable style of sardonic humor were always captivating. Able to speak on anything, apparently - and he did! More often than not his recently deceased wife Mary accompanied him and I had her assurance

that his deliveries had always been thus. How they will be missed. Always kind and hugely welcoming to me I was fortunate to speak to him shortly before his death when he was still cheerful and optimistic so much so that I was to send him an illustration of one of the envelopes addressed to Mallory and found on the latter's frozen corpse by the American climbing team in 1999. Alas, it is too late now.

My sincere condolences are offered to Armand's daughter Ann who has so unkindly lost both her parents within only a few years of one another.

Armand Singer: My Customer, Mentor and Friend **Geoffrey Flack**

Armand Singer was my customer for over thirty years. He, more than any other collector, helped me to grow my business and develop as a philatelist. Armand's enthusiasm pushed me to search out the scarcest and most fascinating items for his collections and in so doing he helped me to learn so much more about this wonderful hobby. Like most serious collectors Armand's desires didn't always match his bank account. On one occasion, when the amount he owed me exceeded the comfort level for both of us, Armand (who was, at the time, in his late 80s) decided to add "skydiving" to his list of accomplishments. He took great pleasure in knowing the effect this had on me.

Armand was also my mentor. He was a consummate teacher who shared his more than fifty years of philatelic experience and knowledge whenever anyone had a question or needed help. A very generous man, who gave his time not only to me, but to so many other collectors who saw him as the "father figure" of Himalayan Philately. Armand will be a teacher

and mentor for many future collectors. His articles and books on the stamps and postal history of Tibet and Nepal will be studied and quoted by collectors not yet born.

Armand was most importantly my friend. Not a week went by when we didn't talk on the phone. Of course, our common interest in stamps was central to most conversations, but over the years we discussed everything from politics (where we didn't always agree) to film. Our common love of travel allowed us to share many wonderful hours and allowed us, in our conversations, to travel together to the far corners of the world. Armand's enthusiasm and phenomenal memory allowed myself and others to accompany him on his hikes in the Himalayas; to share his tent at the South Pole and to drive with him across America when he was still in his teens. I am so happy that my wife, my children and I were able to know Armand and to call him a friend.

My customer, mentor and friend will be missed.

Armand E. Singer 1914-2007

Alan Warren

Noted Tibet and Nepal collector, exhibitor, and author Armand Edwards Singer died following complications from surgery in Morgantown WV, July 12, 2007, at age 92. His exhibits of the stamps and postal history of these two countries have garnered gold medals at World Series of Philately shows, and his Tibet once received the grand award at NAPEX. Singer was president of the Nepal and Tibet Philatelic Study Circle at the time of his death.

His books include reproductions of his exhibits and portions of his collections of Nepal and Tibet as well as Himalayan mountaineering mail. He also wrote monographs on the proofs and officials of Tibet. Armand Singer authored over 100 philatelic articles that appeared in *Weekly Philatelic Gossip*, *The American Philatelist*, the American Philatelic Congress *Book*, *The Great Wall*, our own *Postal Himal*, and *The Collector's Club Philatelist* among other publications.

Singer was born November 30, 1914 in Detroit. He took up stamp collecting at age 7 and collected worldwide issues, eventually focusing on the United States and British North America. In the 1950s he acquired a Nepal collection that contained a cover sent from Kathmandu to Lhasa, bearing stamps of both countries. The bug had bitten him and he went on to build world class collections of both countries. In addition to philately he also pursued interests in mountain climbing, hiking, travel and jazz.

His hiking and climbing took him to South America, Africa, the Himalayas and around the United States. He visited both the North and South Poles and he hiked the slopes of Mount Everest and climbed Mount Kenya (at age 64!) among many other peaks. Armand hiked the Grand Canyon 15 times and attempted it a 16th time at age 91 with his daughter, but after setting out, he thought better of it.

Singer studied at Amherst College, Duke University, and the Université de Paris. He joined the faculty of West Virginia University in 1940 and taught for 66 years in the field of Romance languages and literature. He chaired the Humanities Program at the university for many years and from 1971 to 1974 he served on the Board of Directors of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association. In 1990 he was honored with the fourth annual Humanities Award of the West Virginia Humanities Council.

For many years he was editor of the *West Virginia University Philological Papers*, a journal devoted to research on literature and film. He often chaired or directed the annual colloquium at the University in this field. Armand Singer chaired a number of colloquia at the university and also participated in several abroad as well, principally in the field of literature. He frequently lectured on the Don Juan Theme. Although he was named professor emeritus in 1980 he continued to teach a graduate course and also taught courses in the Appalachian Lifelong Learners program.

Singer was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and took part in the annual ceremonies at the university when new members were inducted. On these occasions he often presented a lecture on the history and significance of the honor organization.

Each person who came into contact with Armand will remember him for his multifaceted interests, his boundless energy and enthusiasm, his zest for life and desire to taste so many of life's experiences, and most certainly his wry sense of humor. He was a great lover of limericks. In addition to the extremes of mountain climbing and visiting the poles, he made parachute jumps from an airplane just seven years ago!

In Memoriam - Professor Armand Singer Dick van der Wateren

“That time is inexorably creeping up on me, so here goes”, with these words Armand started his *Holiday Season Special*, No. 44, dated 3 December 2006.

The Special ends, referring to his 92nd birthday, November 30 with the wishes of a well-wisher who “hoped I’d have ‘many more days’”. Armand wrote: “I’m afraid he didn’t mean ‘years’. It was not a slip of the tongue”.

How true these words turned out. Armand’s *Season Special* became the last one of a 44 year long custom. The 13th of July we got the sad news of Armand’s passing away. My first contact with Armand was in 1990 at the World Philatelic Exhibition of London. I have a photograph, taken at this event with some NTPSC members and, on which, Armand can be seen.

Further contacts with Armand took place in

1994 (NAPEX, Washington), 2000 London (where Armand became our new President), 2004 WESTPEX and lastly 2006, again in Washington. All of these contacts gave me the opportunity to see some of his outstanding collections, to learn something from his knowledge, and in 2002 his willingness to correct the proof of my “Nepal Revenues”. (Don’t forget that my school English dates from 1937-1942). Receiving my book, he answered by e-mail: “The book just arrived. You should be very, very proud. The printing and format do justice to your erudition”. No doubt he must have been a very good teacher, being glad with the results of his students.

For me Armand was a great man. We will miss him.

May he rest in peace.



Taken at LONDON 1990. From left to right: Armand Singer, Frank Vignola, Leo Martyn, Garret Adams, Colin Hepper, Ved Parkash (dealer), Wolfgang Hellrigl and Dick van der Wateren

Armand Singer
Wolfgang Hellrigl

I do not feel to be really qualified to write about Armand, as I am aware that many other members of the Study Circle actually knew him much better than I did. Although we keep up a long correspondence, Armand and I met only on few occasions, and these were usually somewhat hectic encounters between exhibits, dealers' stands, or at Study Circle meetings. However, during 'Washington 2006' I spotted Armand sitting all by himself at the Study Circle's stand. So I pulled up a chair and we sat there for a good hour, talking about all sorts of things, stamps obviously included. On this occasion I took Armand's picture, later published in *Postal Himal* No. 127.

Armand was without doubt one of the most interesting persons I ever met. What I admired most was his untamed desire to discover and experience new things in life, even at an advanced age where most other people would be content to take it easy. His trips to the Antarctic or Everest Base Camp are typical examples of his wish to reach even the most

remote places on earth.

Armand's philatelic writings are invaluable sources, beginning with his excellent early articles on the British-Indian postmarks of Nepal. He then wrote several volumes on his famous Tibet collection, and one on the markings and cachets connected with Himalayan mountaineering expeditions. Finally, I managed to persuade him to write a volume on his Nepal collection also. The mass of material contained in these various books represents one of the best references available, and is indispensable for any further research work in these areas.

But philately was probably just a marginal aspect of Armand's life, judging from his numerous other activities connected with the West Virginia University. Perhaps it was just one of the seven seas that this extraordinary man sailed so successfully. Armand's death is indeed a great loss to our Study Circle. We will particularly miss his great personality, his quick wit, and his inimitable writing style.

Armand Singer
Leo Martyn

Although Armand and I only occasionally saw each other during our 35+ years of friendship, we regularly talked over the phone. Our conversations dealt with many subjects other than philately as his interests and philosophical views were most interesting and intriguing. He will be missed.

Armand E. Singer
Richard M. Hanchett

Armand was what I believe would have been called, in earlier ages, a 'Renaissance man' - educated, well travelled, conversant in many languages, interested in many areas.

That he certainly had a flair for living none can deny. His *Holiday Season Special*, No. 44 contains several examples. At the age of 81, Armand had purchased a new Mitsubishi Eclipse sports car. Interested to see how fast it would go, he got it up to 130 mph (216 kph for our metric friends)! At 81 years of age!!!! During the same year, while making up some lost time driving to meet his son-in-law in Colorado for a camping trip, Armand drove 660+ miles for two consecutive days (at 70 mph this would have been over 9.5 hours of driving each of the two days).

Armand has visited both the North and South Poles. While I visited the Antarctic two years ago, I did not get to the South Pole. At any rate, Armand wanted a postmark from there for his collection. He was informed that the post office was not for tourists, but only for the use of those who worked there. What to do? What to do? Armand proceeded to write a postcard addressed to himself from 'Bob' with 'Bob' writing about how work was going, how much he disliked the winter season, etc. After purchasing stamps, Armand placed the correct postage on the card, held it behind his back, backed up to the posting box and, undetected, deposited the postcard. Ingenuity is always a good commodity to possess.

And of course, there were the phone calls from Armand. Many is the time when my wife and I have returned home, and upon checking the answering machine, heard the familiar "Armand here". After contact was made, there followed a discussion of whatever he had called me for, followed by other discussions of whatever happened to be on his mind at the time. And so we wiled the time away most pleasantly.

Undoubtedly one of Armand's most endearing pluses was his dry sense of humor, leaving some to try to decide if he was serious or was just 'pulling their leg'. As I have been accused of it myself, it is something which I appreciated in him.

Armand also had ideas on how exhibits should be judged and what should be allowed. It was his exhibit and he should be allowed to present it the way that he thought best, and that he should be judged on how well he presented the material and not on some minute rules and regulations that had been formulated by someone else. Maybe someday there will be a category of 'non-traditional' presentation which will allow exactly that. And if it comes to pass we can all remember that Armand was one of its first champions.

I had decided not to go to WESTPEX 2007 as my wife didn't want to make the trip and I was thinking about that rather long cross country trip for just two days. Talking with Armand on the phone about the meeting he happened to mention that he had no one to stay with and if I went we could share a room, cutting down on the expense for each of us. I agreed and immediately made the plane reservations. We both had a great time. The evenings were the best, for after getting ready for bed we spent a good deal of time talking. We talked about places we had visited and enjoyed and about how we had each become interested in collecting Nepal. Armand may have been in his 90s, but he could still recall many things from his early years.

Armand told me that the one thing that he missed was his wife, Mary. He thought about her every day, he said. He also said that every day he cried a little for her. Well Armand, my friend, no more crying and no more missing. You and Mary now have eternity to be with each other.

God bless.

The following was sent by Amy Prunty, Armand's Administrative Associate.

(how typical of Armand that he would not go until his friends had left - ed.)

Following is a message from Dr. Singer's daughter, Ann:

"I am saddened to tell you that my Dad, Armand Singer, (Babu or Mondo to some), passed away at age 92 and a half years of age after fighting gallantly for almost 6 weeks to survive. What follows is from an old and dear friend, (Larry Schwab), of my dad's who sat with Tomas and my Dad at his bedside Wednesday night for almost 3 hours and he and Tomas told stories about Mondo! They left at 2 am and he passed away at 2:15 am. Love, Ann"

Armand Singer, born in 1914, died peacefully at 0215 this, (Thursday), morning at Ruby Memorial Hospital. To die was his wish after enduring five weeks of extraordinary misery, failed surgeries, immobility, and unremitting pain. He requested that his ventilator be removed and life support systems be discontinued two days ago and made known his wishes to Ann, Mary and Armand's only child. I was at his bedside with Tomas, Ann's husband, until just minutes before his death. True to his character of being Armand, he was in control even to the very last.

In passing from this life, he bequeaths a colorful, extensive and eclectic record of intellectual accomplishments and travel odysseys. Armand had visited both the North and South Poles, for example. He had traveled,

together with his wife, Mary, daughter Ann, and son-in-law Tomas, and close friends, every continent and ocean. His inveterate travel habit led him to journey to some of the planet's most difficult and remote destinations. An endearing feature of the man was that he refused to allow his age to prevent him from doing the things he wanted to do.

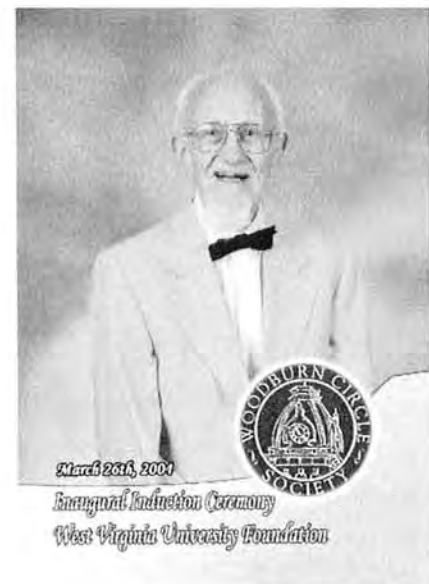
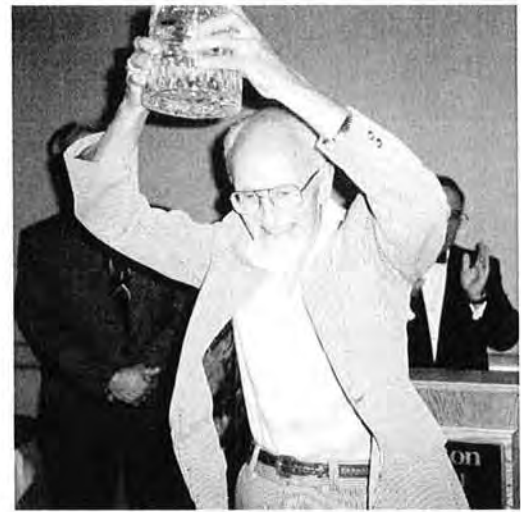
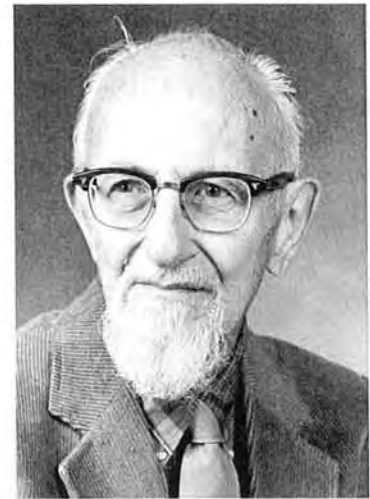
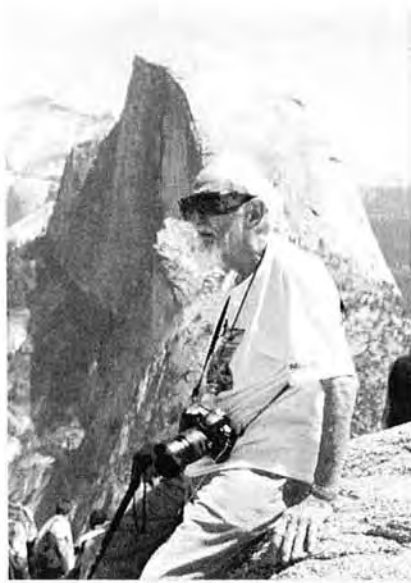
There will be a legion of friends, family, and admirers at his memorial service, planned for early October, when WVU is back in session. There we will likely encounter philatelists, explorers, linguists, distinguished professors, poets, limerick writers, peripatetic wanderers, and grateful students whose journeys have encountered his.

Please do this, in Armand's memory, and for an enlightening read: Google "Armand Singer" and boot the first web page that pops up. There you will find an extraordinary record - not written by him, but instead by a yoga teacher in Hawaii - of some of his many interests, including a reflection on his final days alive on Earth. Juxtaposed near those words is a photograph of Armand on Safari in the Serengeti in an open Land Rover and tandem sky diving in Hawaii, remarkable feats at any age. The catch here is that both photographs were made when he was nearly 90 years old.

- by Larry Schwab



Armand hang gliding



Lt. Col. T. Chamberlin, Camp P.O., and the 1814-16 Anglo-Gurkha War Armand E. Singer

I am not letting anyone in on a great secret that collecting Nepalese 1814-16 war covers fills a nice little niche, and not too expensive to boot. These covers often contain a letter with fascinating details about a fiercely fought contest some two centuries old, or summaries of the letter's contents translated on the cover's face. What is not easily found and not at all modestly priced is the British counterpart of the Nepalese correspondence. I was recently offered a native collection of some hundred pages with nicely, professionally described examples, but not one from a British soldier, for whatever reason.

The place to study the English side of the struggle is Frank Vignola's *Postal History Collection of the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-16* (Santa Monica, CA: George Alevizos, 1981, limited ed. of only 20 copies, hard bound). Although Vignola's name is nowhere on the title or other pages, the 135 or so unnumbered pages are actually photographed from his collection, since disposed of. The Nepalese examples, one to a page, are translated and extensively described. There are, as well, 32 examples of British correspondence, 18 of which were sent by Lt. Col. T. (Vignola writes "F", in error) Chamberlin commanding the 24th Regiment (South Wales Borderers) to Col. Boyle, Military Secretary to the Earl of Moira, Governor General of India, HQ Calcutta. George also published (1981) a shorter version of the book in 25 unnumbered pages as *A Philatelic View of the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-16* by Frank Vignola and O. R. Sanford Jr., with a selection of the same illustrations, no longer presented as pages from a collection. For more extensive pictures, see John Pemble, *The Invasion of Nepal: John Company at War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), but without any mention of Chamberlin himself. A most revealing correspondence: Chamberlin accuses the commanding officer of gross incompetence, (quite justly - the British got nowhere against

the fierce Gurkhas for over a year though greatly outnumbering them and, of course, far better equipped), writes of disease, and fevers, including ever-present dysentery, and finally talks of mustering out because of low pay and heavy indebtedness, not to speak of wounds and death. Nothing much has changed these past two centuries!

The British forces, now under Major General Ochterlong, finally prevailed and the Nepalese surrendered, signing the Treaty of Segauli, February 18, 1816. The British came to appreciate the skills and bravery of the Gurkha troops, soon making them a mainstay in their own army, a practice adhered to until this day. Since the British decided not to storm and destroy Kathmandu, at least partly for that reason, relations between the victor and vanquished remained far more friendly than is often the case.

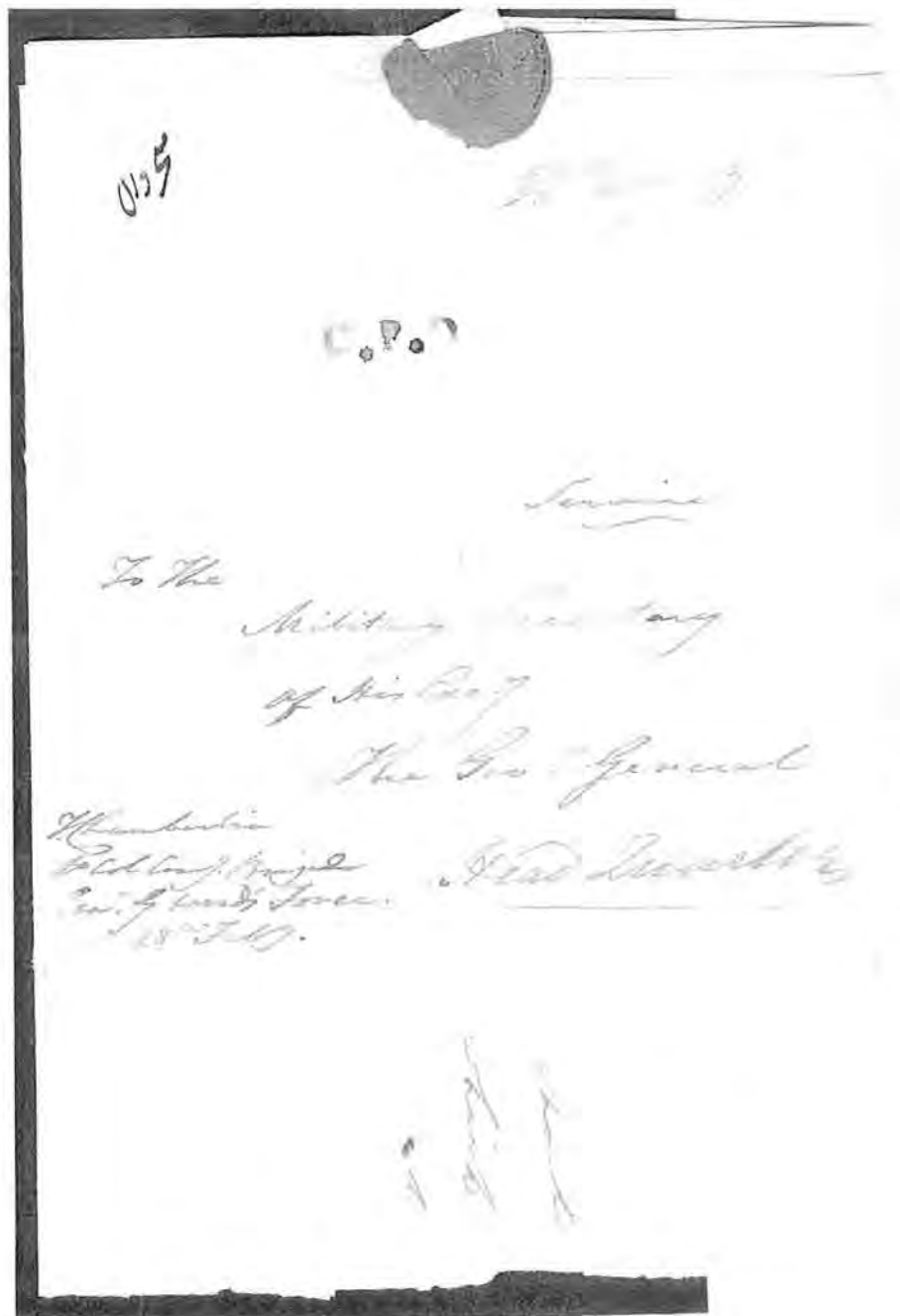
The Chamberlin correspondence finally reached the philatelic market (how extensively I do not know, but that is where and how Vignola got his pieces). Of the 18 mentioned above, not one was ever offered to me, but I have acquired three others. One I illustrate as an old-fashioned English collector once displayed it. The other two were recently featured in an Etkin-Argyle auction No. 17, March 8, 2007 as Nos. 727-28.

This pair was listed as unique, one with "Camp P.O.", the other with the shorter "C.P.O.". Both are marked with a rubber stamp in gray ink. Are they genuine? There is no doubt about the covers themselves, written in Chamberlin's well known script. No less of an authority than Robson Lowe wrote the "authentication" concluding for the British Philatelic Association that they could not provide a certification since there was no other example in existence of the two stampings during this war. The ink was similar to that used "for the M-E-Y War Field Force...in 1833". They saw a soldier's letter with a "framed TRICHINOPOLY POST FREE which

could well be struck in the identical ink". No definite opinion could be expressed: "however, having compared the ink and type used, [the committee] can find no reason to be suspicious of their authenticity". The letter is dated May 2, 1962, and signed by Robson Lowe himself. The following year, L. J. Dunn, expert in inks and forgeries, did extend further research, comparing the ink on the two Chamberlin letters with fifteen samples, 1806-1828. The inks were

chemically the same. Modern inks are a different composition, and the older ones necessary for a successful forgery are probably not even procurable today---this is in his letter of February 18, 1963.

As an amateur in inks and chemical fine points, I can merely say that the two examples do not look as if created to fool gullible collectors. I do not feel threatened, though I sank a considerable sum in order to obtain them.

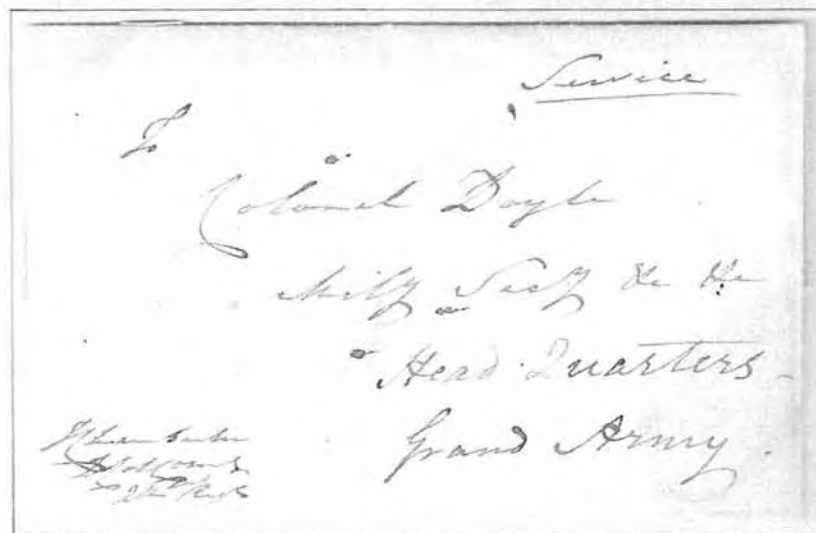


THE COVERS FROM THE ANGLO-NEPALESE WAR, 1814-1816

These entire letters, both from the Lt. Col. Chamberlain correspondence, are quite rare. I have left the Nov. 1814 example as exhibited by an English collector. The camp near Puchrousa must be just into Nepal enroute to Kathmandu, or still in India. Accounts of the war seem to favor a site actually in Nepal, but I can not find the exact location of the camp in question.

The Gurkha War

15 Dec 1814 - Entire letter 'on Service' from Lt. Col. Chamberlain, Commanding
24th Regt (South Wales Borderers) at Camp near Puchrousa to Headquarters.



The Regiment had moved towards Nepal from Patna in November 1814 and formed part of the 4th Division, under Maj-Gen. Bennet Marley. December was spent planning the assault on the passes leading to Kathmandu.

"I look to the conduct of this Division with great confidence, all seem actuated by a proper spirit and eager for the day of trial which is still protracted for want of our Artillery which, I understand, cannot be here for 15 or 16 days."

Increase in Membership Dues

The time has come to discuss the upcoming rate increase for membership in NTPSC. Much as none of us enjoys spending additional money, the time has come, after more than 12 years without an increase, when it has become necessary. We are barely covering our costs to print and mail each issue. As our USA members know, the Postal Service recently increased rates. Not only did the actual rates increase, but also several less obvious changes were made as well. One of them was in the size of the envelope that can be mailed at the lowest cost. So, not only do we pay more for the stamps, but we now also pay according to the size of the container.

And now to the actual increase in the membership rates. Cost for a one year subscription in USA \$ will increase from 18 to 25 for 2008 and to 30 for 2009. We hope that the increase in 2009 will be the last for at least 5 years, but can't make that a promise as we do not know what changes the Postal Service will make in the future, nor what direction currency exchange rates will take. Due to the weak dollar, there will be no increase in the cost to those members who pay in £ or €. For next year we will hold the 3-year rates as they currently are (\$50, £33, €52), which will allow you to lengthen your renewal period if you wish to. Also, there will be a DECREASE in the cost of

a Life Membership for next year only. Instead of a Life Membership being 20 times a 1 year membership, the Life Membership will be 15 times a 1 year membership or \$375, £180, €285. This special will expire on December 31, 2008. If you wish to take advantage of this special offer and do not have the funds available, a multi-payment scheme can be set up for you with the strict understanding that it is NOT refundable – once you commit to it you must make your payments or your membership will not be increased beyond December 31, 2008.

In summary, for 2008 the rates for 1-year, 3-year, and Life membership will be: for USA \$ (25, 50, 375) for £ (12, 33, 180) and for € (19, 52, 285). For 2009 the rates for the time periods will be: for USA \$ (30, 82, 600) for £ (12, 33, 240) and for € (19, 52, 380). The 3-year rates are 2.75 times the 1-year and the Life rates are 20 times the 1-year.

While no one likes this, we have tried to make it somewhat more palatable by holding the 3-year renewals steady for next year and by reducing the Life Membership rates for next year. We are not broke, but any organization must have a reserve set up and this will help to maintain ours while bringing the rates into line with the actual costs for publishing and postage.

Camp P.O.

1815

Service
to the Military Secretary
of His Excellency
The Governor General

Head Quarters
Mantle
P.O. Camp
Mantle

SM

9 Feb 15

This second entire letter, Feb. 3, 1815, bears what is the only example of the "Camp P.O." handstamp. There exists a Feb. 28 example with "C.P.O." in the same ink, etc., also unique. Both were examined. Accompanying B.P.A. letter (signed Robson Lowe, 1962) and a technical report (1963) on ink and genuineness both state that the handstamp seems authentic, there being no suspicion of forgery, but note that it is impossible to provide absolute proof of authenticity.

C.P.O.