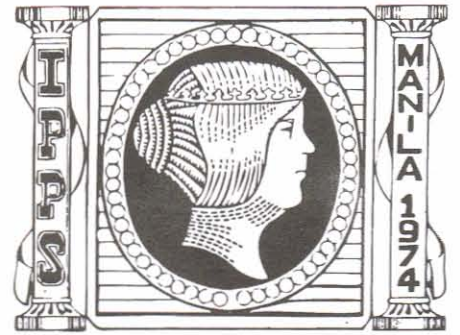


# Philippines Philatelic Journal



The Journal of the International Philippines Philatelic Society

Volume XXVIII No. 1

First Quarter 2006

Philippine Tuberculosis Society, Inc.  
75 YEARS OF SERVICE IN TB CONTROL  
1910-1985

DIAMOND JUBILEE SOUVENIR PANE  
COLLECTORS' LIMITED EDITION N<sup>o</sup> 00000

1985 Specimen souvenir pane

## **Beauty and Values Abound in the Philippine Christmas Seal Collection**

**By N. L. Rivera, Paranaque City, Philippines**

### **Provenance**

Philippine Christmas seals are produced and sold every year by the Philippine Tuberculosis Society, Inc., a private organization founded primarily to combat tuberculosis. Thus, these seals are often referred to as "TB Christmas seals".

The Philippines first Christmas seal was issued in 1910. (Figure 1.) Thereafter there were intermittent issuance's until 1947, when seals were regularly printed and released once a year towards Christmas.

The now rare 1935 Quezon's birthday strip seals (in blue and brown types), although strictly not a Christmas issue, are included in the Christmas seal collection because these are listed and illustrated in *Green's Catalog of Tuberculosis Seals of the World*. (Figure 2.) This catalog, together with all TB Christmas seals issued in the Philippines and around the world, is considered by many as the Bible of Christmas seal collectors.

The first three issues were printed in Manila. From 1947 to 1970, printings of these seals were largely done in the United States, except for some years in the 1960s when seals were printed in Japan. From 1971 onwards, various local printers printed seals in the Philippines.

As of 2005, there have been sixty-two issues of these "TB Christmas seals."

Elizalde & Co., an old and respected commercial company, issued its own private Christmas seals in 1940 and again in 1941. These were given away free to the public upon request. National Artist Cesar F. Legaspi drew the 1940 design during his younger years. The Elizalde seals are among the very few non-TB Christmas seals and are an important entry in the Philippine collection. (Figure 3.) Recently, my friend QC collector Roberto Araos, advised me of private Christmas seals produced by Tanduay Distillery (a subsidiary of Elizalde & Company) and Mobil Oil. These were apparently issued between 1960 and 1980 and require more research to determine the complete series.

In 1971, the Rotary Club of the Philippines issued its first ever Christmas seal, which secondarily promoted its "Buy Philippines" campaign. (Figure 4.) This is a truly Christmas seal issue, similar to the Elizalde seals, but due perhaps to its limited availability and low awareness among collectors, this seal, sadly, is not present in many Christmas seal collections.

The Foundation for the Rehabilitation and Prevention of Blindness in the Philippines (FRPBP) made yearly issues of its charity stamps from 1987 to 1990. Because the Postmaster General in 1987 allowed the sale of these stamps through postal windows, alongside the TB Christmas seals, some collectors mistook these for legitimate Christmas issues and tentatively mounted them in their albums. The FRPBP seals are generally poorly produced, but some se-tenant issues are unique and attractive. (Figure 5.)



Figure 1 - 1910 Rizal Seal, the Philippines First Christmas seal

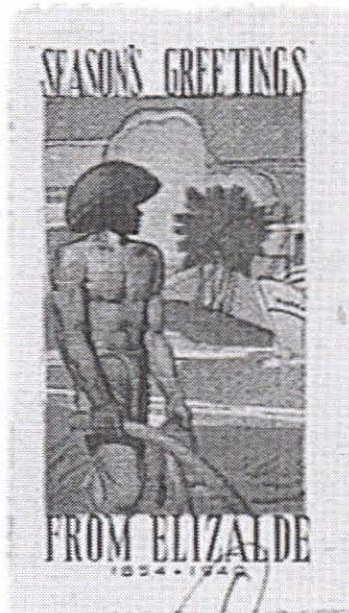


Figure 3 - The Elizalde Christmas Seals (3A left and 3B above)

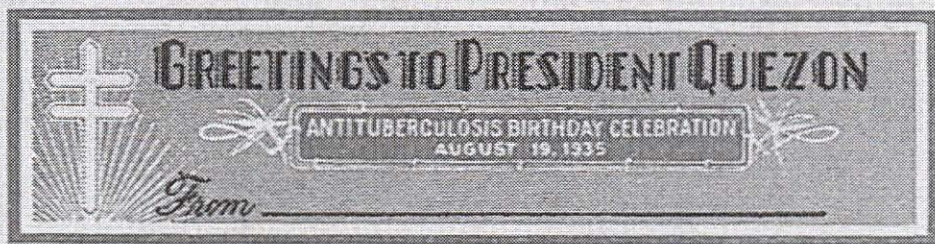
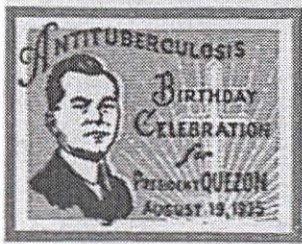


Figure 2 - The Quezon's birthday strip seals



Figure 4 - 1971 Rotary Club Christmas seal

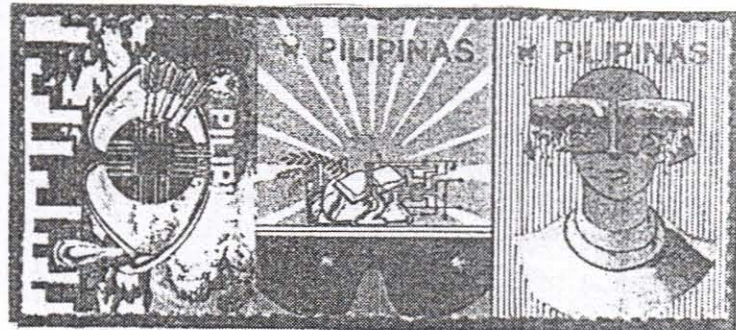


Figure 5 - Strip of 1988 FRPBP charity stamp

## Concepts, Themes, and Designs

After the first three issues, the early Christmas seals hewed to traditional Christmas themes - of Pilipino families preparing for and celebrating Christmas. The Nativity was symbolized by several versions of Mother and Child.

Two Philippine presidents were honored in Christmas seals: the fiery and colorful Manuel L. Quezon, first President of the Philippine Commonwealth was portrayed in the seals of 1947 (Figure 6); and the supremely popular "idol of the masses" Ramon Magsaysay was featured in the 1957 seals. (Figure 7.)

Seal topics briefly shifted to the cultural and floral in the 1960s and early 1980s. The Japan-printed seals of 1960 and 1961 pictured the graceful native dances "tinikling" and "pandanggo sa ilaw" (Figure 8 and Figure 9.) The finely-drawn Sampaguitta, the national flower (Figure 10) and the rare Mindanao orchid, the Waling-waling, were the subjects of the 1969 and 1970 issues. The five different cultivated Mussaendas, each named after a former Philippine first lady, graced the seals of 1982.



Figure 6 - Pres. M. L. Quezon



Figure 7 - Pres. R. Magsaysay



Figure 8 - The "Tinigling"



Figure 9 - The "Pandanggo sa Ilaw"

The 1986 se-tenant sheet provided a refreshing change from the sober themes of previous years. Drawn by the foremost cartoonist Larry Alcala, in his characteristic light wit and banter, the layout is an assembly of "slice of life" vignettes, showing rustic folks, with their foibles and provincialism's, celebrating Christmas and the New Year. (Figure 11, next page.)

Directions for seal designs were verbalized in 1987. Concept statement suggested that seal designs follow a "national orientation - which a Pilipino would take pride in, to own, show and send to friends abroad." Thus the seal sheet of that year depicted a pleasant se-tenant mix of native scenes, dances, fruits, festivals and old transportation.

The 1989 sheet was another direct offshoot of this direction. In delicately crafted illustrations, it showcased ten native festivals and rituals of the "Fiesta Islands". (Figure 12.)

The 1990 design portrayed six indigenous ritual dances, some tribal, captioned with original names, the "banga", "sakuting", "dugsa", "maglalatik" and "binasuan". Incidentally, this issue pioneered the inclusion of free raffle tickets as part of the sheet. There were a first and a second printing, with major differences between printings.

PHILIPPINE TUBERCULOSIS SOCIETY, INC.

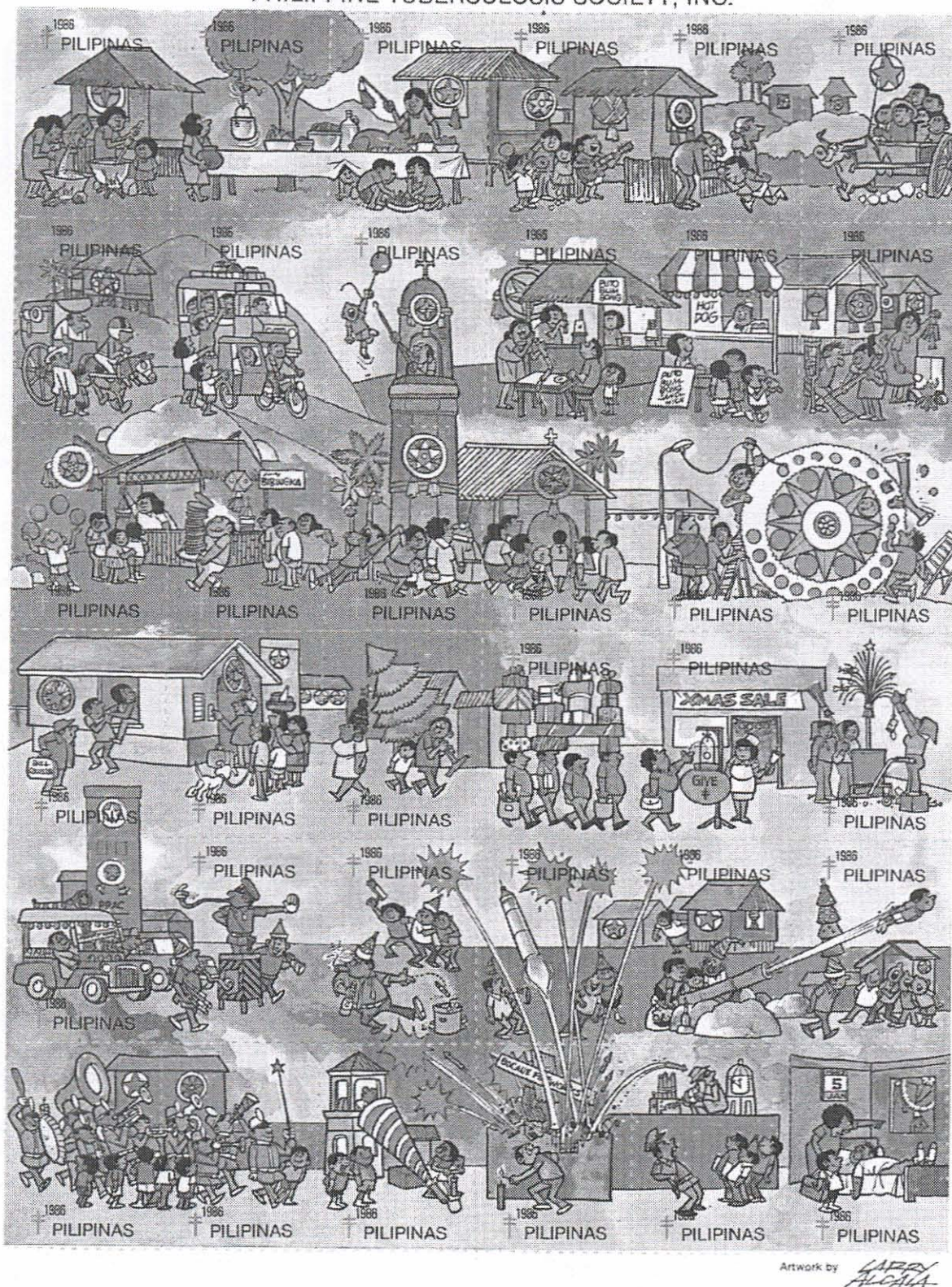


Figure 11 - 1986 Seal Sheet by Larry Alcala

STAMP YOUR LOVE AND CARE WITH A TB SEAL.



PHILIPPINE TUBERCULOSIS SOCIETY, INC.

Figure 12 - Festivals in the Fiesta Islands



In the late 1990s, themes dwelt more strongly on nationalism and love of country. Seal designs extolled “the Filipino stalwarts who contributed most significantly, during the last century, to the enhancement of Philippine independence and nationhood.” Honored with portrayals in the seal sheets of those years, se-tenant with other designs, were Filipino greats – Andres Bonifacio, Apolinario Mabini, Marcelo H. del Pilar, Jose Abad Santos, Jose P. Laurel, Benigno Aquino, Chino Roces and a host of other revered personalities.

<<< **Figure 10 - Sampaguita, The National Flower**

The year of the painting series was ushered in 2000, when the multi-awarded versatile international painter-sculptor Manuel Baldemor consented to have forty of his artworks reproduced free to form the colorful se-tenant sheet of that year. This was repeated when forty other art pieces of Baldemor were likewise featured in the 2003 seal sheet.

This highly appreciated painting designs continued through 2001, 2002 and 2004. Through the influence and indefatigable efforts of Baldemor, almost a hundred of the most prestigious contemporary Filipino painters, plus the heirs of some, were persuaded to lend their works to compose the seal sheet designs for those three years. Five of the donors in this distinguished group are National Artists for the Visual Arts: Victorio Edades, Vicente Manansala, Carlos “Botong” Francisco, Cesar F. Legaspi and Ang Kiukok. (Figure 13, next page.)

**Classic Stages / Phases Of Collection**

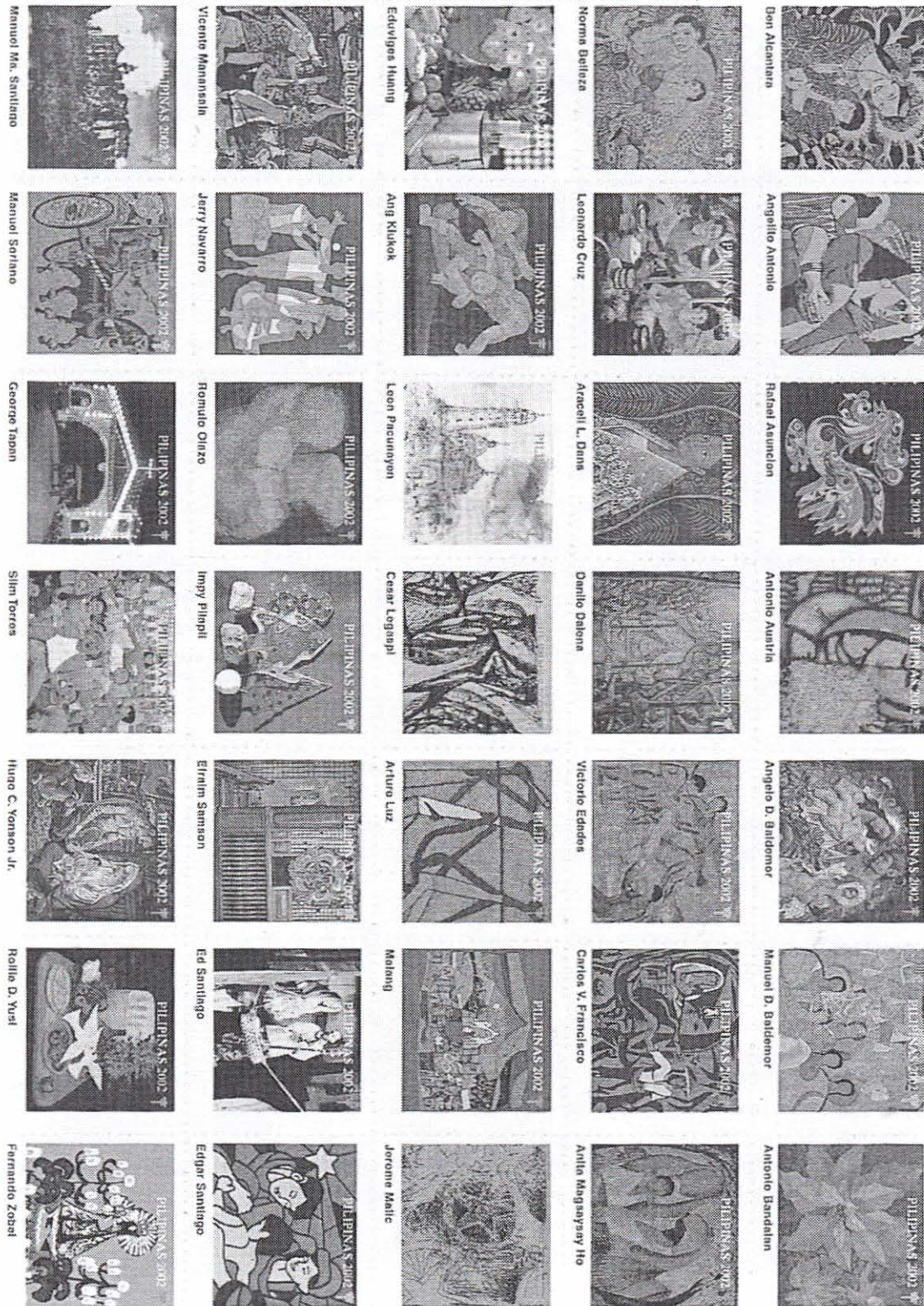
To make collections historically and philatelically meaningful, many collectors endeavor to present the seal collected in the three basic stages or phases of its life, as follows:

1. The material in unused or “mint” condition;
2. The material during production; and
3. The material in normal use.

As much as possible, the mint or unused seal should be in sound condition – no damage to paper, separation or color. Some collectors require original gum, others do not care too much. If included in the regular issuance, the imperforate of the seal and the souvenir sheet are collateral members in this phase. If no souvenir sheet was issued, the single die proof may replace this material.

Samples of the material taken from the production stage would include separation and printing errors, essays if any, color separation and progressive color proofs and proof runs. Some interesting printers’ waste is also collectible.

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DESIGN CONCEPT BY: TB SEAL COMMITTEE

Figure 13 - 2002 Seal Sheet, with Painting by Five National Artists



The "excitement of the chase" heightens during this stage. Some proofs, essays, unusual errors and other production oddities are often difficult to come by. But these provide the "icing on the cake" so to speak, and will test the mettle and ingenuity of the collector in locating and securing the prize item.

Postal usage is the final stage in the life of the collected seal. Because seals have no franking value, they have to be paired with postage stamps, and incidentally immensely brighten the mail during the Christmas season. It is important that the postmark or postal cancellation "ties" both the seal and the stamp to the cover. A preferred used cover is one with postmark clearly showing place and date of usage. A clean backstamp reinforces proof of usage and enhances desirability of the cover.

There are three types of postal cancellations: hand-stamped, machine-cancellation and postal meter (Figure 14). There are occasions when mail is posted with a seal but without a postage stamp. (Figure 15 - see also next paragraph.) If canceled with a postal meter, this becomes a valid and highly collectible cover. (Figure 16.)

There is a not too well known sidelight regarding Philippine seal covers. In 1917, the Philippine Tuberculosis Society was appointed by the American National Red Cross and the American Association for the Study of TB to be their representative for the sale of US Red Cross, and later of US NTA seals, in the Philippines. This arrangement presumably continued up to the outbreak of WW II. Thus, US Red Cross and NTA seals were "officially" sold and used in the Philippines from 1917 to 1941. US seals of these years properly tied on cover with Philippine postmarks, whether domestic or sent abroad are now scarce finds that command a considerable price. (Figure 17.)

### **Rarities / Scarcities**

The goal of every collector is to complete his collection in the manner he prefers. Some aspire for no more than having a representative seal "from first to last" in the order of chronological issuance.

Some might later view this as too staid and clinical, and would now and then add a few tied-on covers as he finds them. These new additions begin to infuse life into the collection.

The more curious and intrepid collector would further expand this accumulation. Little by little, the collector would acquire some needed complementing, but more difficult to find items. These might include seldom-seen proofs, essays, astonishing errors, and even the originals of the first seals. Table I summarizes basic information on the issuance of all varieties of Philippine TB Christmas Seals over the past 62 years.

The following rare / scarce materials would considerably upgrade the beauty and value of the collection:

1. The first three seal issues – the 1910 Rizal, the 1935 Quezon strip seals in blue and brown types and the 1946 maverick seal – are definite rarities. The 1946 seal, in the original sheetlet of six seals in tete-beche format with gutters between, may well be one of the rarest of Philippine seals. (Figure 18) (These first three seals were reprinted in the 1985 main sheet and souvenir pane, and could be cut out to serve as space fillers until the originals are obtained.) [Editor's note: it should also be observed that the concept for the 1985 seals were designed by the author with additional philatelic counsel by

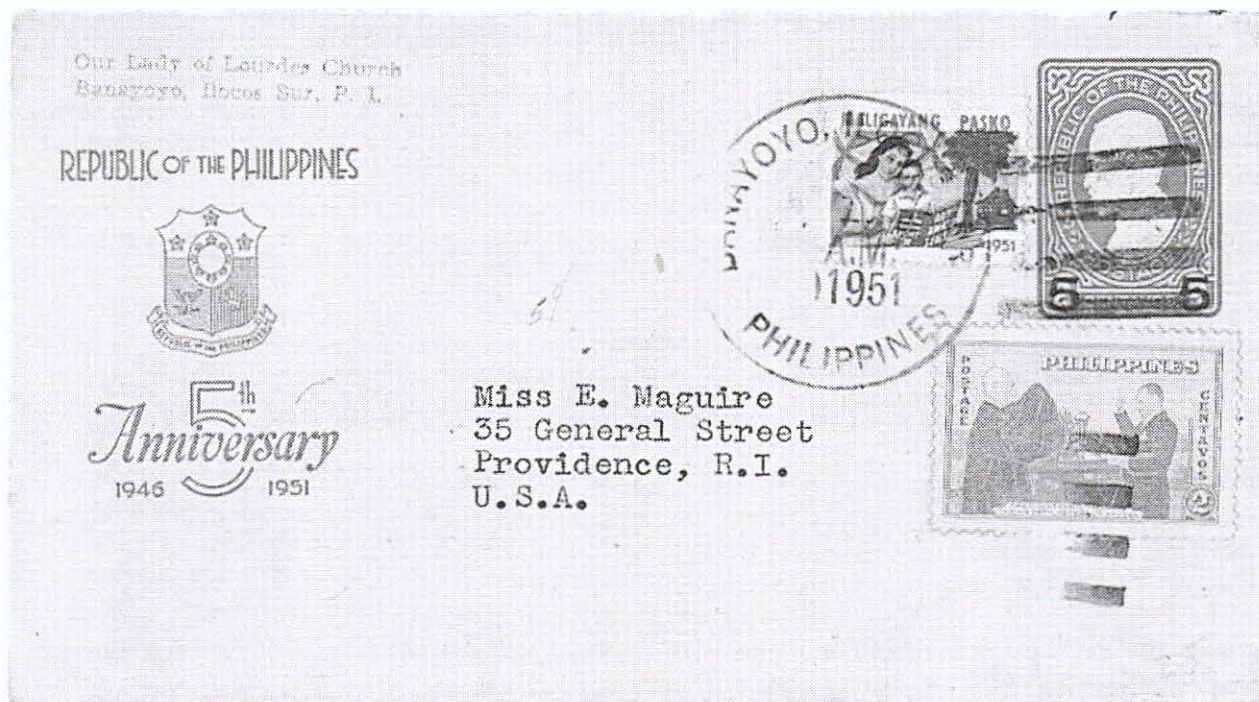


Figure 14 - Handstamped Postmark tying 1951 Christmas seal

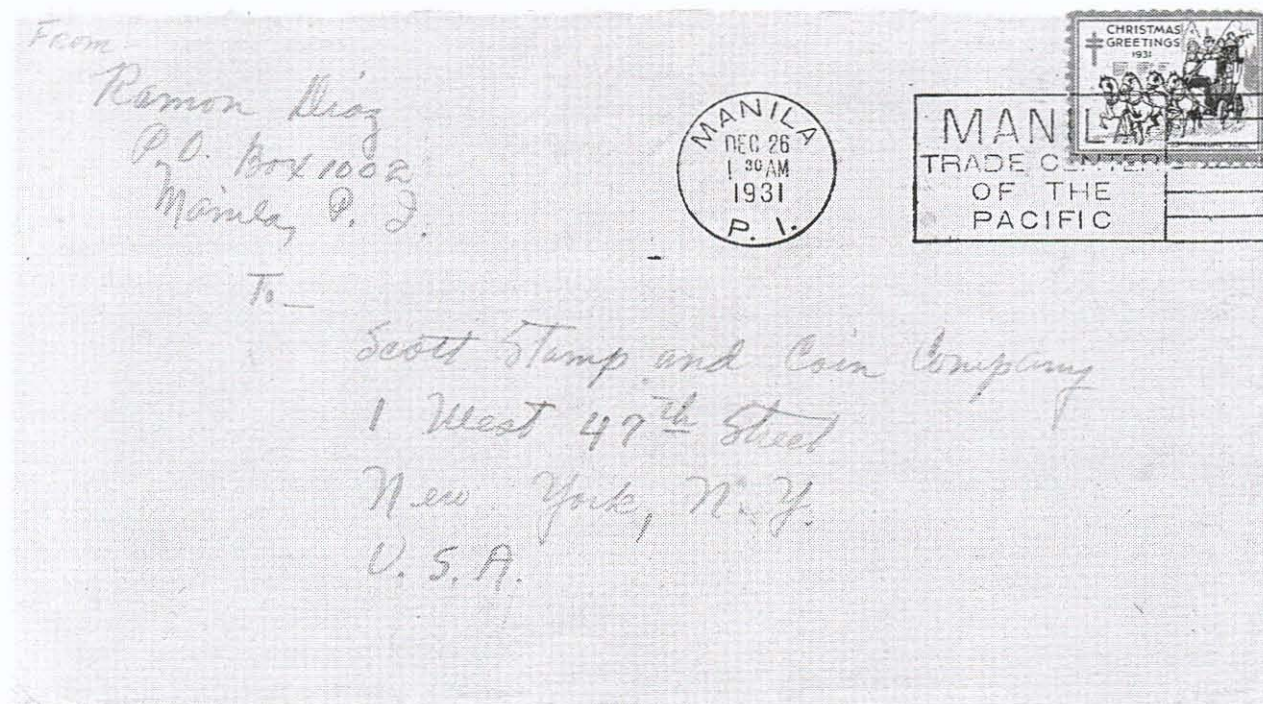


Figure 15 - Seal only cover that escaped detection in Manila during Christmas season

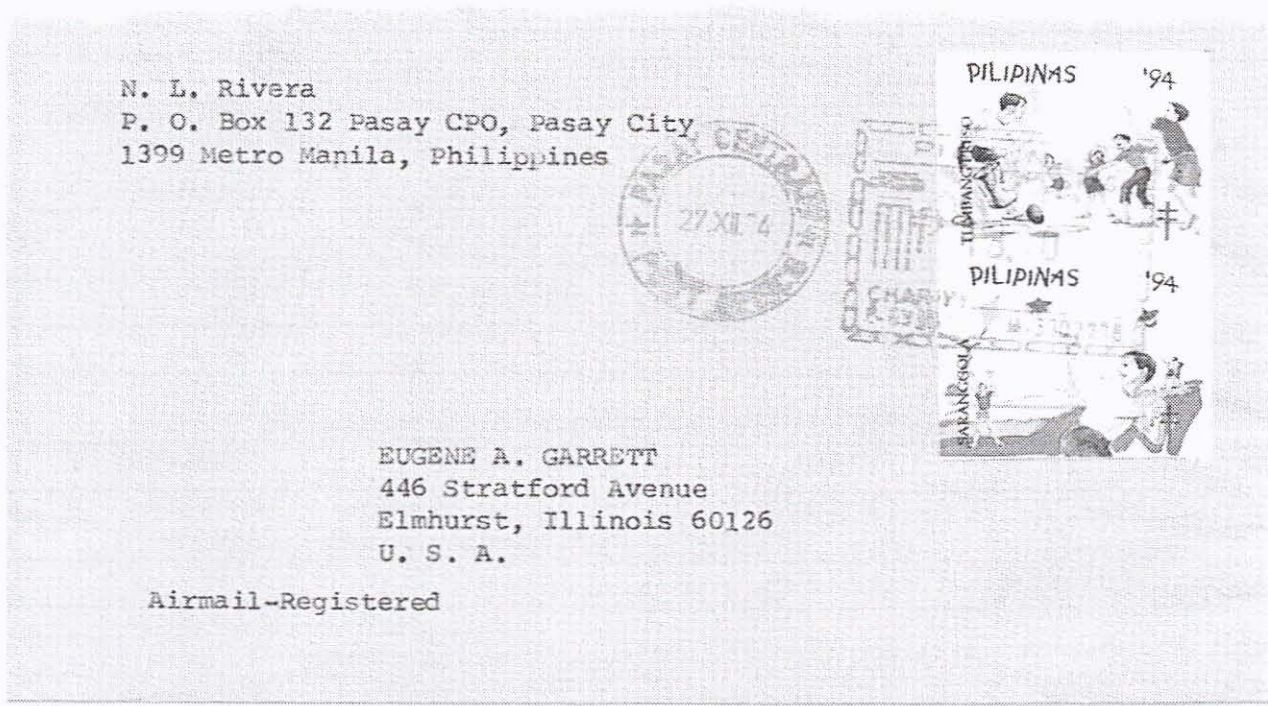
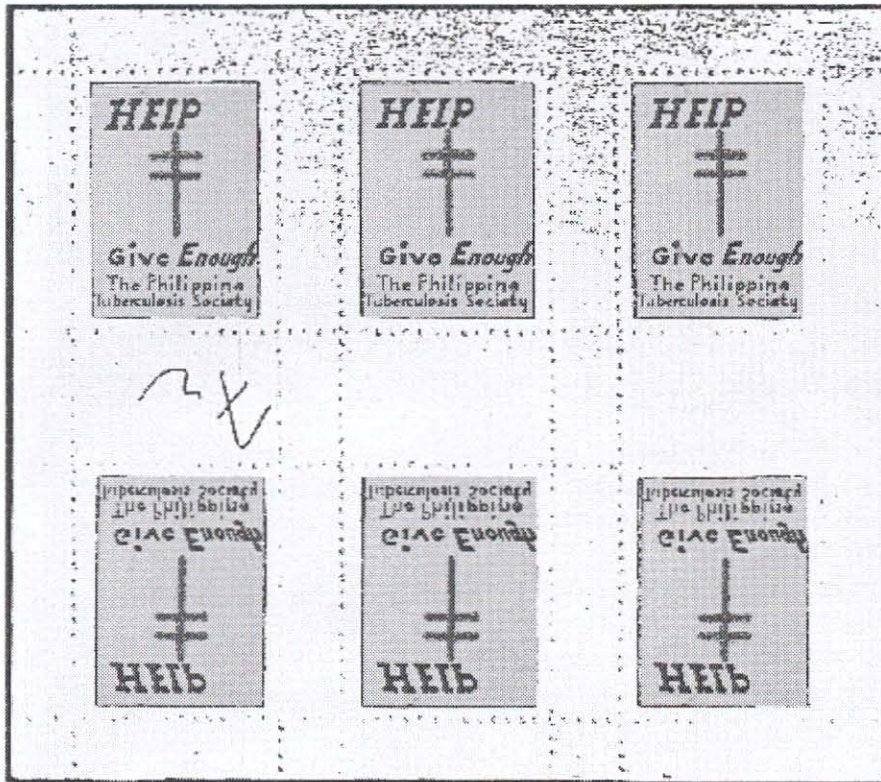


Figure 16 - 1994 Christmas Seals without Postage Stamp Tied by Postal Meter



Figure 17 - 1940 US NTA Seal Tied with Philippine Machine Postmark

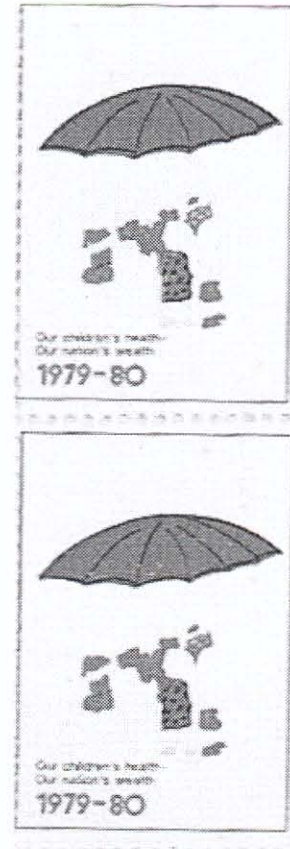
<b>Varieties of Philippine TB Christmas Seals 1947-2005</b>			
A. There were NO PERFORATED issues during these years			
1973-1976	1978	1982-1984	1985 (except for 200 trial perforation sheets)
B. There were NO ROULETTED issues during these years:			
1947-1972	1977	1988-1989	1991
1997-2005			
C. There were NO IMPERFORATE issues during these years:			
1955	1958	1960-1962	1965-1967
1970-1973	1975-1976	1977 (some imperf with color shifts)	1978
1983			
D. SOUVENIR SHEETS were issued during these years:			
1985 (Roul and Imperf)	1988 (Regular and Special)	2004-2005	
E. SINGLE DIE PROOFS were issued during these years:			
1950 (2)	1953	1966 (2)	1967
1970-1973	1975	1980-1982	1985 (several varieties)
1986 (full sheet set-tenant)	1987-1988	1989 (full sheet set-tenant)	1990-1991
1995-1998	2003		
F. IMPERFORATE SHEETLETS were issued during these years:			
1999-2002			
G. PROGRESSIVE COLOR PROOFS were available during these years:			
1947-1952	1977	1980-1982	1984-1991
1993-2005			
H. There were SPECIAL MATERIALS issued during these years:			
1972 - Oversized essays (very rare)	1985 - Specimen of sheet & specimen of souvenir pane	1985 - ESSAY 1 and ESSAY 2	1985 - Trial perforations (200 sheets)
1986-1995 - OMRON overprints (perf, part roul, imperf in some years)	1988 - Special souvenir sheet (300 printed)	1993 - Special souvenir printing on hand-made paper (300 sheets)	2003 - 2000 and 2001 seals overprinted "2003"
<b>TABLE I</b>			



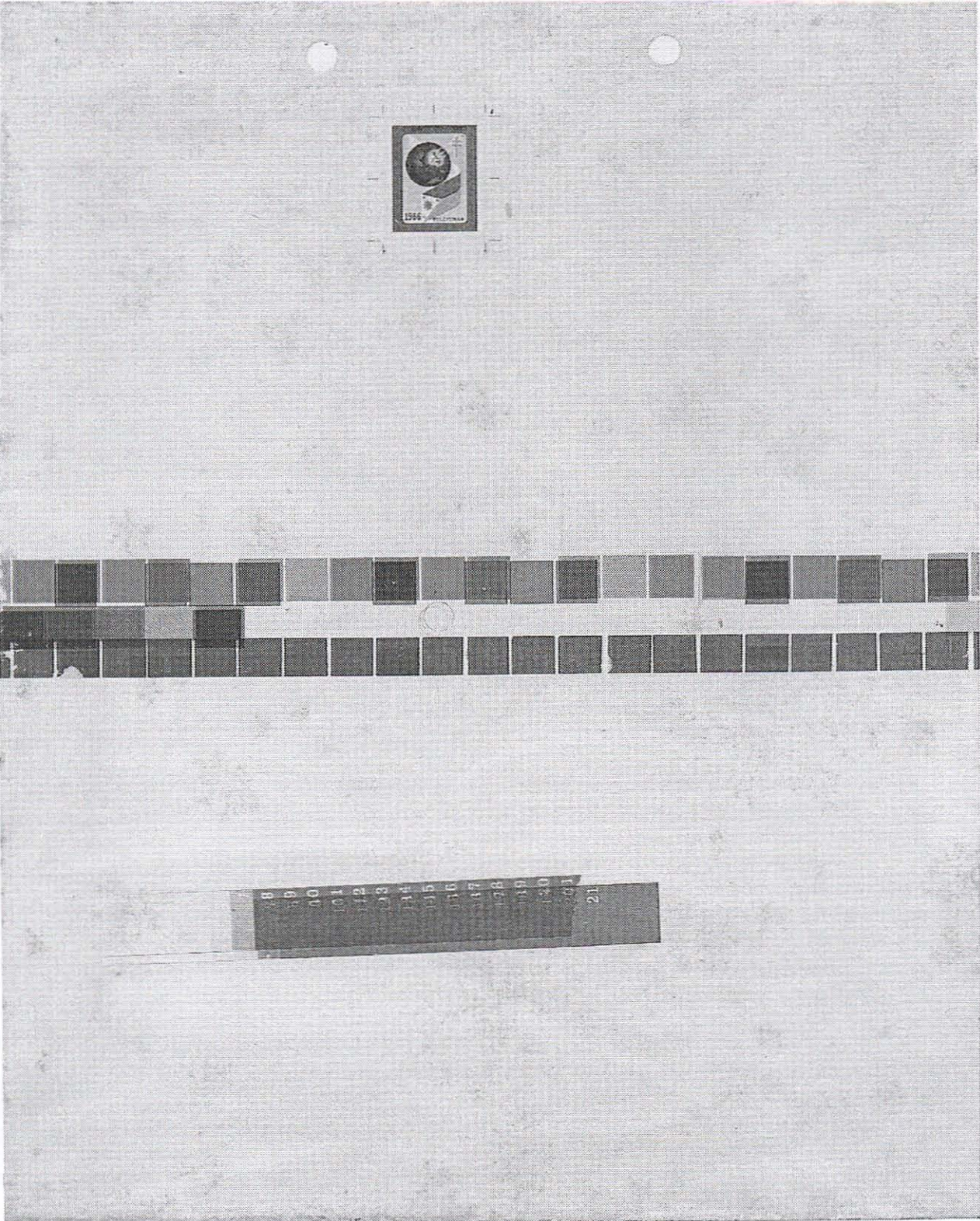
Carlos Inductivo and Gustavos Ingles.]

Figure 18 - Rare 1946 Tete-Beche Seal Sheetlet

Figure 19 - Red and Black Missing Error Pair >>>



2. We have heard of some very lucky collectors owning any of these first seals cleanly tied on cover. These are extreme rarities. Even the early Republic seals properly tied on cover would be valued almost ten-fold over just the seal.
3. Errors are production accidents, some of which can really be amazing. Among outstanding seal errors are those with: inverted or missed colors or overprints, deep and long multiple accordion folds, missed printing due to paper fold, double impression of one or two colors, wide color or separation shifts, freak or missing perforations or roulettes and countless others. Availability would range from limited to rare. (Figure 19)
4. The enlarged essay of 1972, about twice the size of the regular seals, surfaced only in 1985. Only one sheet of 8 x 5 seals was ever found. Extremely scarce. (Figure 20)
5. The single die proofs of 1950 (two varieties), 1951 and 1953 have always been hard to find. These were available among US seal dealers up to a few years ago, but not any more. The Republic single dies of 1981 and 1982 are probably scarcer. Only a few copies of these were made, but not issued. (Figure 21)



**Figure 21 - 1966 Single Die Proof (Variety without red block at bottom)**



Figure 20 - Enlarged 1972 Essay (20A left) with Regular size 1972 seal (20B right)

6. The approved 1985 single die proof, including the rejected ones, are equally elusive. The trial single die proof on scrap paper, with the Quezon seals smaller than actual, and the TB cross inside the 1946 seal in black, instead of red, is a rarity.
7. Possibly only four complete sheets were printed of the 1985 Essay No. 1, with the center seal slogan reading "Brighten your mails with SEALS this Christmas" instead of the regular "For a healthier community, let's fight TB". Some varieties, all with the Rizal green not yet printed, are just slightly less difficult to find. (Figure 22.)

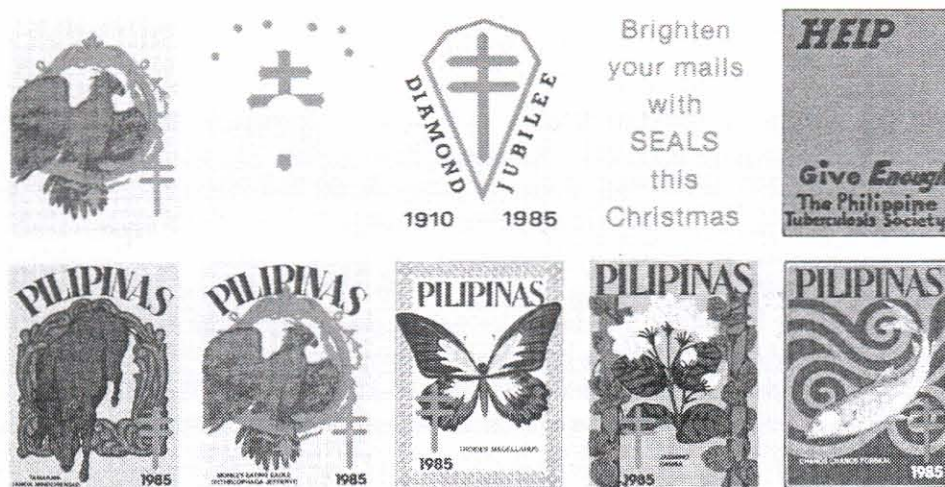


Figure 22 - Block from 1985 Essay #1 with Different "Brighten your Mails..." Center Seal Slogan

8. Similarly, perhaps only four complete sheets were made of the 1985 Essay No. 2, with center seal slogan "For a healthier community, let's fight TB" in black instead of the regular red. Likewise, there are varieties, all with the Rizal green missing, that are just slightly easier to find.
9. The progressive color proof of 1947, 1979 and 1984 are extra-scarce. Of the 1947 PCP, one US dealer quipped, "I know they exist, but I have not seen any." The 4-stage 1977 and the multi-stage 1984 PCPs were unissued and were only scrounged from printers' waste.

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10. The 2004 essays are of recent vintage but are already extremely scarce. Essay No. 1, in experimental dark pink background color, is a color separation proof, where the painting on seal frame no. 9 was replaced with another at the last minute. The regular sheets were subsequently printed with yellow background and with the replacing frame. Only seven or eight copies of this essay were printed. A one-of-a-kind 7-stage PCP of this essay was also made.
11. The 2004 Essay No. 2 is almost identical with Essay No. 1, except that its background color is yellow. Also only seven or eight copies of this were made., no PCPs.

The rarities are the jewels that crown the collection and make it distinctive over others. They endow the collection with color, drama – and intrinsic value and the collector with that glowing feel of fulfillment. The collection is just comparatively completed but not closed. It shall remain open, receptive of new wondrous finds.

[Editor's note: Graphic reproductions in this article came from the collection of Eric David except those of the author (Figures 5 and 18), and Doug Lehmann (Figures 15 and 22).]