

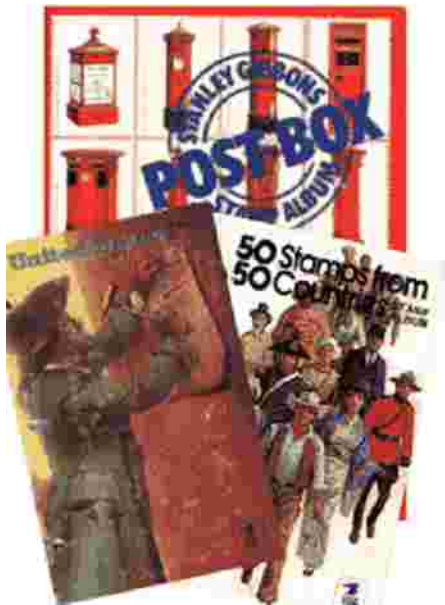
STORAGE

Now that you have stamps, the question arises "where do you store them?" At this point you may want to purchase some "**stock pages**" -- cardboard pages that are punched to fit a three-ring binder. They have a series of pockets into which stamps can be sorted. The pockets may be quite close together for storing small stamps or more widely spaced for larger stamps. You may want to buy a stock book instead, which is simply a book of stock pages bound together. You may need to loosen the top edge of the "pocket" by running the tip of your tongs along the inside edge.



STAMP ALBUMS

It is not absolutely necessary to get an album immediately. You may prefer to wait until you have determined what you want to collect and then select the album that best meets your needs. Or you may wish to buy an inexpensive loose-leaf U.S. or worldwide album for your beginning collection and add other, more specialized albums later. Used albums with a few stamps in them are often available at the dealer tables at a stamp show or at your local stamp store for less money than a new album.



Albums come in many sizes and formats. They may be for the stamps of only one country or a group of countries. They may be for a specific topic such as birds, sports, space, maps, buildings, or any of a myriad of other subjects.

Albums come in a variety of prices. The cheapest ones are permanently bound and have space for a fixed number of stamps. They are not really useful. A much better choice is a loose-leaf album that allows for the addition of pages each year accommodating the stamps issued after the album was published. It is best to choose a album with pages printed on only one side, as stamps mounted on facing pages can hook together, damaging both stamps in the process.

If you don't want to start with a regular album, you can make an acceptable substitute by using blank pages and placing them in a three-ring binder. You can decorate the pages with a border or not as you choose. The stamps then can be mounted by country, by subject, in chronological order, or in any sequence you choose. Arrange your stamps so

they look neat and are not too crowded. You will enjoy looking at them more that way. There are free downloadable pages for displaying stamps of a number of topics on the APS website.

Many collectors continue to keep their stamps in stock books or on stock pages because of the ease of rearranging the stamps to make space for new acquisitions. If you like that system, do not feel that you must change to an album.

However you store your stamps, a few cautions are in order. Do not store your albums in damp basements or hot attics. If the temperature of the room is not comfortable for you, it's probably hard on your stamps as well. Mint stamps may even become stuck to the pages if they are stored in muggy rooms. Mildew is nearly impossible to remove from paper. Store your albums or stockbooks upright, rather than lying on their sides. And take them out and look at them once in a while. The fresh air is good for the stamps, and looking at them is good for you.