

Profile in Space Philately: Harry Anderson of the Space City Cover Society and the NASA Local Post

The Space City Cover Society (SCCS) and the NASA Local Post (NLP) were born in 1967 in Houston, Texas. The idea behind SCCS was to create collectible space event covers at a reasonable price so that collectors wouldn't go broke in the pursuit of the hobby. The NLP was created to fill the void of the lack commemorative postal stamps and cancels featuring the United States space program.

Information on the creators and organizers involved in the creation of the SCCS and NLP is difficult to come by.

It is rumored that there were several people involved in starting these two organizations, but the two names continually surface in SCCS and NLP documentation, is Harry L. Anderson and M. Allen Banks. Sadly, both of these individuals have passed on and very little biographical information is in existence.



Harry L. Anderson

Harry Anderson was born on July 27, 1929 and died on January 24, 2010 in Houston, Texas, his home of many years. Harry served in the United States Army from 1952 to 1960, serving a portion of that time in Korea. Harry rose to the rank of Master Sergeant. Harry married Martha Jacqueline George of Victoria, Texas on January 19, 1958. And, it is believed that the Anderson's had at least one child as Harry carried the generation of "senior" at the end of his name.

Harry was a devout philatelist. Harry authored and co-authored many philatelic publications, two of which have been archived in the American Philatelic Research Library (APRL) in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania.

Harry along with Monte Eiserman co-authored a publication produced by the American First Day Cover Society (AFDCS) in the early 1970's entitled, *"Moon Landing 10-cent Commemorative Airmail Stamp Issued September 9, 1969 at Washington, D.C."*. It appears that this publication may have been revised in 1992 and published by AFDCS under the name of *"Moon Landing: Historical Account and Cachet Listing"*. Neither the 1970's or 1992 publications are still in print. Only the 1970's publication is cataloged in the APRL.

A 2014 version of the 1970's publication now entitled, "*Moon Landing Scott C76 Cachet Catalog*" is now available through the AFDCS. The 2014 edition was revised by David S. Zubatsky and is available from AFDCS as a PDF download or as unbound printed pages delivered by mail.

The other APRL cataloged publication was co-authored by Harry and M. Allen Banks and written in the late 1960's. The "*Lincoln Philatelic Checklist*" was published by the authors and the Lincoln Philatelic Society. This publication is also no longer in print.

It was a phone conversation on the fateful date of the Apollo 1 accident on January 27, 1967 between Harry and Allen Banks that led to the creation of the SCCS and the SCCS Apollo 1 covers. Harry would become the president of SCCS and Allen Banks became the SCCS Vice-president.



The Apollo 1 Cover with Orange Cachet

Due to the demand by collectors for the Apollo 1 covers, Harry and Allen Banks had a meeting with then Houston Postmaster, Granville Elder. Harry and Allen Banks explored the possibility of servicing space covers for collectors with a space related cancel from the Houston area. Harry and Allen Banks soon learned that no such cancel existed.

To publicize the space program and to commemorate the activities at NASA in Houston, Harry and Allen Banks created the NASA Local Post. The NLP would use commemorative local post stamps and cancels to fill the philatelic void for the Houston site.

The very first NLP local and cancel appeared on February 20, 1967 which was the fifth anniversary of John Glenn's Project Mercury flight.



The First NLP Souvenir Sheet featuring the Glenn local



The NLP went on to create 96 local post stamps and over 250 covers.

In 1982, Harry turned over most of the day to day operation of SCCS to two individuals, one took care of getting the mail, opening it and handling the banking for incoming payments. The other filled orders and took care of the outgoing mail. Harry continued to design covers, obtained photographs for the artwork and type set the copy for the printers. The operations personnel were not identified by name.

From 1988 to 1994, Harry relinquished his position as club president due to a serious illness. Four individuals were selected to guide the SCCS cover program and club activities. These individuals were also never named. Unfortunately, SCCS standards of quality and genuineness that Harry had instilled in SCCS suffered a great deal under these individuals rein. The cover program lost collectors due to lack of order fulfillment and correspondence.

Harry attempted to return to his former duties at sometime during the 1988 to 1994 time frame, but that only made his health worse and he had to once again step back out of the operation of the club.

Harry did return in 1994 and was able to resume control of SCCS where he remained until his death in January of 2010.

Both Harry Anderson and Allen Banks were very private persons which tends to be the reason for very little information being available about the two. One thing for sure is the love of America's space program and philately that they shared. Their legacy of work, local post issues and covers proves that so very well.