

# Lancaster Farming *Antiques Center*

## Antique Licenses Offer History, Geography Lessons

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BELLEVILLE (Mifflin Co.) —

"It's fascinating how much you learn - history, geography. There's so much stuff you learn when you start collecting and branching out," reflects Forrest Kauffman, of Belleville, Mifflin County.

Forrest has collected nearly 1,000 (with no duplicates) out-of-state hunting and fishing license buttons issued during the mid-20s and -30s.

They're round, metal buttons with a clear celluloid coating issued after cloth licenses

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Forrest Kauffman,  
Mifflin County Collector

(1913-1923) but before paper (during the war).

"For example, I've learned that it's hard to find hunting and fishing license buttons from the Depression years. They're scarce. They only cost \$1 then, but people couldn't afford them. They would have worked all day for a dollar, but couldn't afford to spend it on a license. They probably hunted anyway," he adds with a laugh.

"Here's some issued for Hawaii," Forrest says, pointing to



Hawaii issued hunting licenses up until 1948 or 1949. Forrest Kauffman shows that some of these were issued for the Territory of Hawaii.

hunting buttons labeled with a T. H. for Territory of Hawaii and the dates 1935-36. "What did they hunt?" Perhaps one of the most fascinating in Forrest's collection is a certain paper license folded and kept in a square-framed button called a window frame.

Some states switched to this design when metal became scarce during the war. The paper hunting license contained the

Forest began collecting out-of-state licenses when it became harder to find Pennsylvania licenses. Although Forrest has collected hunting and fishing licenses from every county in Pennsylvania and for nearly every year, that same goal becomes unrealistic when collecting out-of-state licenses. He has one from every county, but not every year. Not all states issued button licenses.

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Forrest Kauffman

name and pertinent facts about the hunter. Forrest removes and unfolds this one, which was issued in Delaware in 1946. In pencil is written a name; Address Middletown, Delaware; Color Negro; Age 17; Weight 147.

"The southern states issued these to African Americans in the 30s and 40s," Forrest explains. "These are of interest to hunting and fishing license collectors and to those collecting black memorabilia."

"Mississippi and South Carolina had the county names on them. Most states issued nonresident licenses, but they're pretty scarce. New Jersey issued hunting and fishing licenses for aliens, too (non-citizens)" Forrest laughs. "North Carolina issued resident, nonresident, complimentary, and combination licenses. Georgia only issued buttons for three years - 1934-36. This nonresident one from Georgia would sell for over \$1,000."



Forrest Kauffman calls this a short complete-set of licenses. It includes resident small game, resident deer, and resident and nonresident fishing licenses. He knows of only one other person who has a complete set for Michigan.

"Maryland issued only angling licenses, no hunting licenses. There were special buttons to fish in Deep Creek Lake, Md., which is near the Pennsylvania border. I like the graphics on Michigan's buttons - rabbits, ringnecks, trout, bass, and deer. The Tennessee licenses issued for Reelfoot Lake are hardest to find.

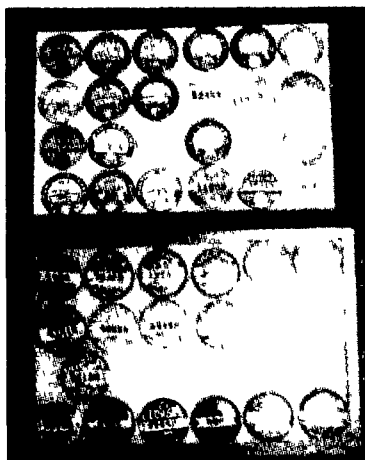
"Virginia issued an elk licenses. They sell for \$1,200 now, but I don't have any. Florida issued hunting and fishing license buttons for only one year - 1927-28. I saw one on the Internet for \$1,000 and it was in bad shape."

Forrest's collection has grown

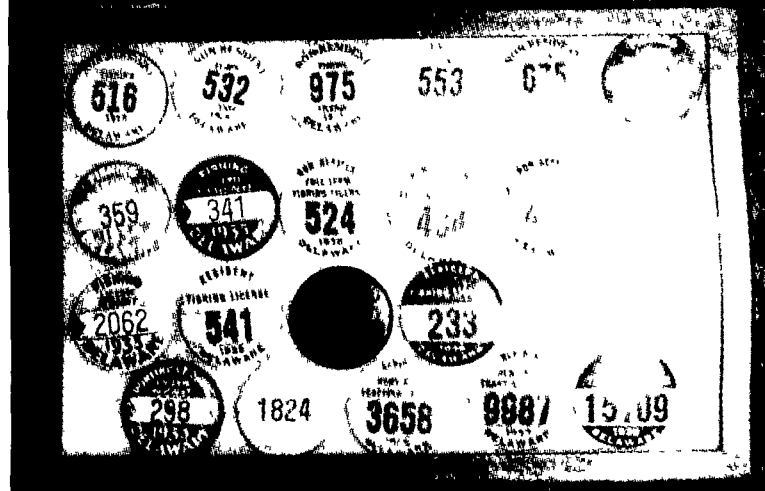
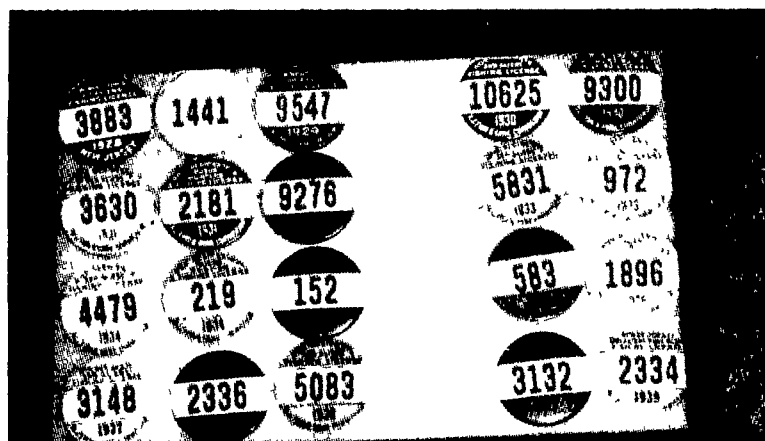
to include hunting and fishing licenses from other countries, such as Canada, Austria, and Germany, and game warden identification badges.

He promotes the hobby of collecting by giving stained buttons to kids at trade shows for free. He's provided information for detailed reference books written about Pennsylvania and Maryland hunting and fishing licenses.

He's also been working on another kind of collection - tidbits of information that he's gathered during his fifteen years of collecting licenses. And the most logical way to store this collection? Possibly in book form.



The top box shows a complete set of North Carolina county and state hunting licenses from 1927 through 1939. The bottom box shows buttons representing the only three years that Georgia issued hunting and fishing licenses. The nonresident license for Georgia sells for over \$1,000.



Kauffman keeps his New Jersey (top) collection of nonresidents hunting and fishing licenses in order by year with spaces allotted for the buttons he still needs. The bottom box displays Delaware nonresident licenses from 1928 to 1938.