

Depiction of women on early US stamps

1847 - 1947

The First 50 Years

- Unlike Great Britain that started printing stamps by picturing their Queen, the US had men in leadership to honor on their early stamps. Even in 1869 when the first “pictorial” stamps were issued no one thought to include an event in which women participated.



The Columbian Exposition

- In 1893 when Chicago hosted the Columbian Exposition the United States issued its first Commemorative issue – 16 stamps. These showed events in the life of Christopher Columbus. 6 of them included Queen Isabella of Spain.

From the APS album The First 50 Women on US Stamps

THE UNDISPUTED QUEEN OF U.S. STAMPS



1893/1992 5¢ Columbus Soliciting Aid of Isabella (Scott 234 / 2626a)



1893/1992 8¢ Columbus Restored to Favor (Scott 238 / 2627b)



1893/1992 10¢ Columbus Presenting Natives (Scott 238 / 2628a)



1893/1992 15¢ Columbus Announcing His Discovery (Scott 238 / 2628b)



1893/1992 \$1 Isabella Pledging Her Jewels (Scott 241 / 2624c)



1893/1992 \$4 Columbus and Isabella (Scott 244 / 2625c)

Trans-Mississippi Exposition

- Only 5 years later the US again hosted a world's fair. The Trans-Mississippi Exposition held in Omaha, Nebraska had a theme of settlement of the west. The Post Office Department issued a set of 8 stamps. They all related to the theme of settlement of the west. Only one included women.

Hardships of Emigration



Hardships of Emigration

- The vignette on the 10 cent stamp is titled Hardships of Emigration. It shows a family in a covered wagon watching as their horse dies. It was inspired by a painting by Augustus Goodyear Heaton done around 1892. There is a woman in the wagon and a young girl and boy standing watching. Not a pretty picture.

53 years and...

- So were there no women the U S Post Department thought deserved to be on a stamp? Well – there was a great series of newspaper and periodical stamps in 1875. Eleven designs including allegorical female figures and various goddesses: Ceres, Vesta, Minerva, Clio, Hebe. And an Indian Maiden and the Statue of Freedom (from the top of the capitol).



1875 NEWSPAPER & PERIODICAL STAMPS



1875 3¢
Statue of Freedom
(Scott PR10)



1875 3¢
Victory
(Scott PR25)



1875 6¢
Clio
(Scott PR26)



1875 9¢
Minerva
(Scott PR27)



1875 60¢
Indian Maiden
(Scott PR32)



1875 48¢
Hebe
(Scott PR31)



1875 36¢
Commerce
(Scott PR30)



1875 24¢
Peace
(Scott PR29)



1875 12¢
Yesta
(Scott PR28)



1875 12¢
Justice
(Scott PR16)

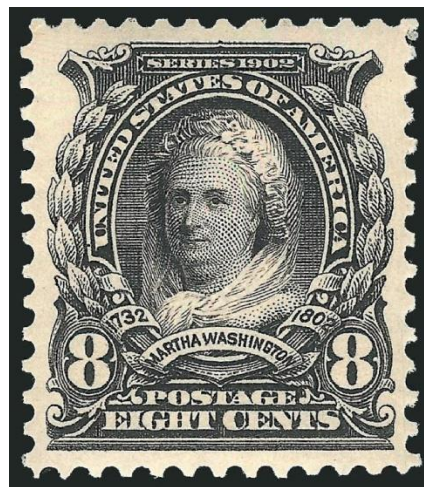


1875 \$1.92
Ceres
(Scott PR24)



The 20th Century

- The Second Bureau Issue definitive series included the first stamp to honor an American woman. Martha Washington was selected from a list of prominent females to be included in this stamp series. The picture was based on an unfinished portrait by Gilbert Stuart.



Jamestown Exposition

- Another World's Fair in 1907 and the US Post Department issued 3 commemorative stamps one of which included a woman. (Neither the Pan-American Exposition nor the Louisiana Purchase Exposition issues had any connections to women apparently.)

Pocahontas

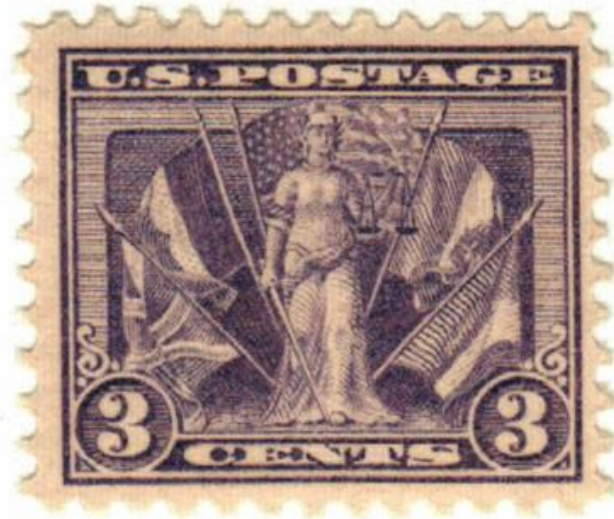
- The exposition celebrated the 300th anniversary of the Jamestown settlement. The landing picture does not appear to include women. The other two stamps honor Captain John Smith and Pocahontas. She is pictured as in a portrait made when she traveled to England.

As noted on the portrait her real name was Matoaka. Pocahontas was a nickname she had due to her lively nature.



Victory

- The Goddess of Liberty Victorious surrounded by the 5 flags of the primary allied participants in World War I was issued in 1919 to celebrate the November 11, 1918 victory.



Pilgrim Tercentenary

- Commemorating the landing of the Pilgrims in the Mayflower at Plymouth Rock in 1620. Two of the stamps included women. One shows the landing of the pilgrims in a small boat with the Mayflower in the background. The second shows the signing of the Mayflower Compact on board the ship.

Based on the image on the federal five dollar bank note.



Inspired by a painting by Edwin White.



Fourth Bureau Issue

- Issued as a definitive series starting in 1922 there were eventually 27 designs. Three of them picture women.

4 cent Martha Washington

- Based on the same Gilbert Stuart portrait as the 8 cent issue of 1902 but as interpreted in a drawing by Charles Francois Jalabert (flipping the image) the stamp paid the 2 oz postage rate.



- 4 c originally Martha Washington - issued January 1923 one of the first stamps in the series. Perf 11. Coil issued August 1923
- Then perf 10 issued March 1925. Then 11 x 10.5 issued May 1927
- Issued with Nebraska and Kansas overprints 1929
- Then in 1930 replaced by Howard Taft 4 cent issued just 3 months after Taft's death. That stamp was in use until 1938 when the Prexies were issued.

15 Cent Statue of Liberty

- Issued November 1922 it was the first US stamp to picture the Statue of Liberty. The design was inspired by an 1888 engraving by Charles Skinner who worked for the American Bank Note Company. Perf 11 printed on a flat plate press. Then in 1931 reissued Perf 11 x 10.5 printed on Stickney rotary press.

15 Cent Statue of Liberty



5 Dollar Head of Freedom

- The 5-dollar Head of Freedom Statue stamp, which features the head of the sculpture atop the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., is bi-colored, the vignette in blue and the frame in red. The Statue of Freedom by Thomas Crawford was erected on December 2, 1863, atop the Capitol. This was, of course, in the midst of the Civil War. She is a female, allegorical figure whose right hand holds the hilt of a sheathed sword, while a laurel wreath of victory and the Shield of the United States are clasped in her left hand.

5 Dollar Head of Freedom



Huguenot – Walloon Tercentenary

- A three-stamp set honoring protestant immigrants. The Huguenots were French Presbyterians and the Walloons were Dutch protestants. Both groups fled persecution in Europe to settle in America. The 2nd stamp of the series shows the Walloon landing at Fort Orange, now Albany, New York.

Huguenot – Walloon Tercentenary



Battle of Monmouth 150th

- This stamp seems to have come from controversy. New Jersey wanted a stamp to commemorate the battle in 1778 and the Post Office Department claimed it had issued too many commemorative stamps in 1928 so only agreed to overprint on the 2 cent regular issue picturing George Washington. Molly Pitcher may be only a fable or may have been Mary Ludwig who supposedly brought pitchers of water to soldiers during the Battle of Monmouth, or may have been Margaret Corbin who took the place of her fallen husband firing his cannon at a battle in New York in 1776.

If you didn't know – what would you think this stamp was about?



1931 Red Cross 50 Years

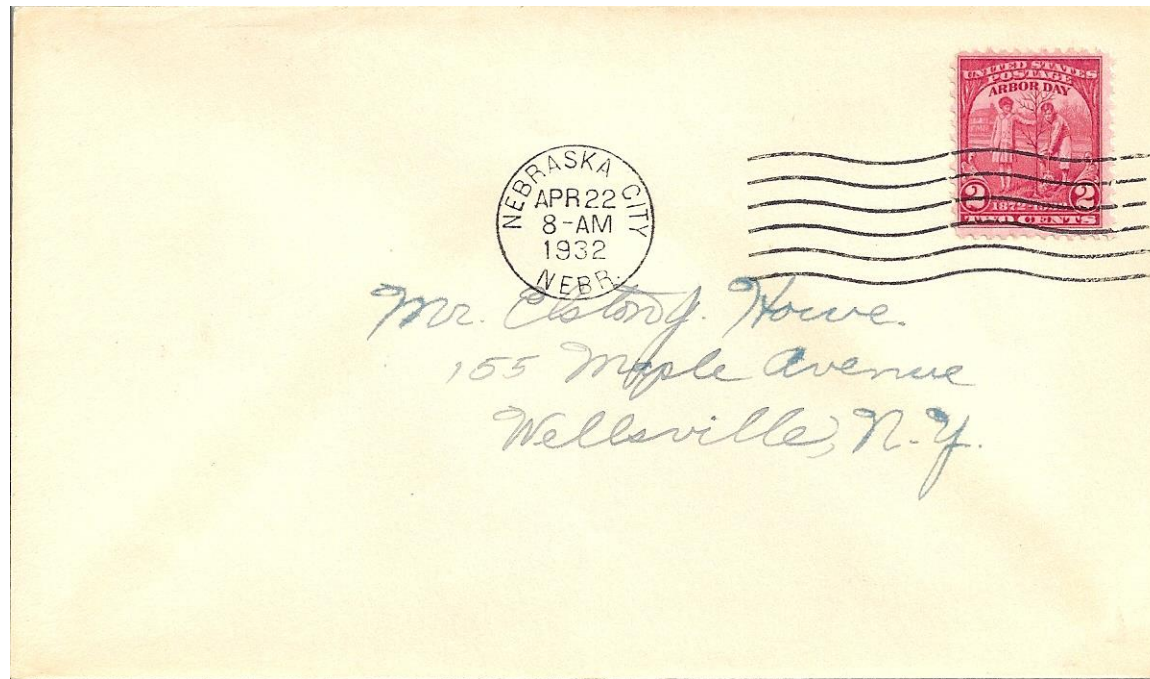


Issued May 21, 1931 it pictures a Red Cross nurse and globe and is based on a poster titled "The Greatest Mother in the World"

Arbor Day First Day Cover

- Celebrating the 100th anniversary of the birth of J Morton Sterling who had the idea of Arbor Day. First celebrated on April 10, 1872 it was later changed to April 22. The controversy on this stamp is that the engraving was based on a photograph posed by the children of the Director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, in apparent violation of the rule that living persons may not be represented on postage stamps. In the end, it was judged that since the children were not being honored by the stamp, the design was acceptable.

First Day Covers were considered to be started with the Rutherford B. Hayes issue of October 4, 1922. This stamp was issued in Nebraska City, Nebraska which was the state that first celebrated Arbor Day.



National Recovery Act 1933

- A stamp was issued to increase awareness of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal program the National Industrial Recovery Act (NRA). The picture includes a farmer, a businessman, a male laborer and a female worker. The original picture this design was based on shows Roosevelt as the second person. Some think the woman is a student not a worker.

National Recovery Act 1933



Mothers honored

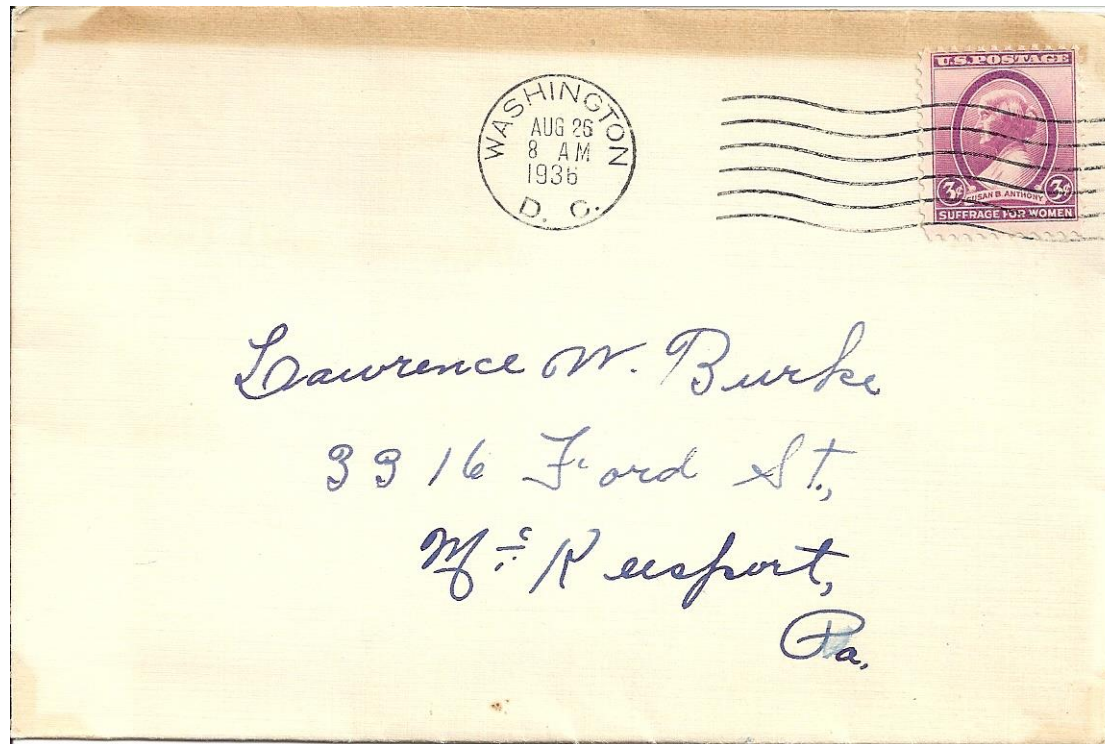
- The design was based on the picture by James A. McNeill Whistler of his mother. Issued May 2, 1934.



Third American Woman Honored

- In 1936 Susan B Anthony became only the third American woman (after Martha Washington and Pocahontas) to be honored and named on a US Postage Stamp. (in 90 years)
- The campaign was for a stamp honoring the 19th Amendment that gave women the right to vote. That was passed in 1920. It was an odd anniversary (16 years) and some said that it was politically motivated to get women to vote in the election.

Susan B. Anthony – Women's Suffrage First Day Cover



Roanoke Colony – Virginia Dare

- Commemorating the 350th anniversary of the first birth to European parents in North America. The Roanoke Colony is also known as the lost colony. Nothing is known of them after 1590.
- The stamp design was one of many from Franklin Delano Roosevelt while he was president.

<https://postalmuseum.si.edu/fdr/panel1.html>

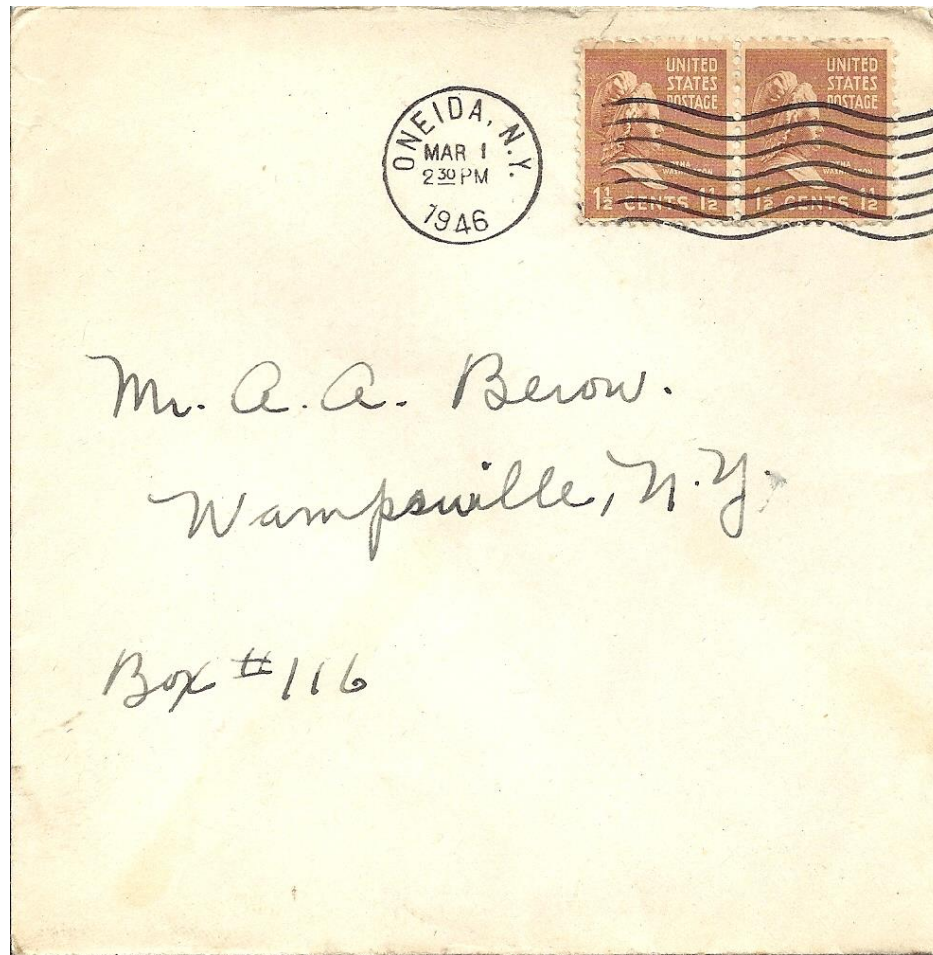
Virginia Dare Birth 350th



1938 Presidential Issue

- Issued to show all the Presidents in order of their serving, there were 3 stamps $\frac{1}{2}$ cent, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cent and $4\frac{1}{2}$ cent that were not of presidents. Martha Washington on the $1\frac{1}{2}$ cent was the only woman. $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents was the third class greeting card rate from 1925 to 1948. Regular first class would require 2 stamps.

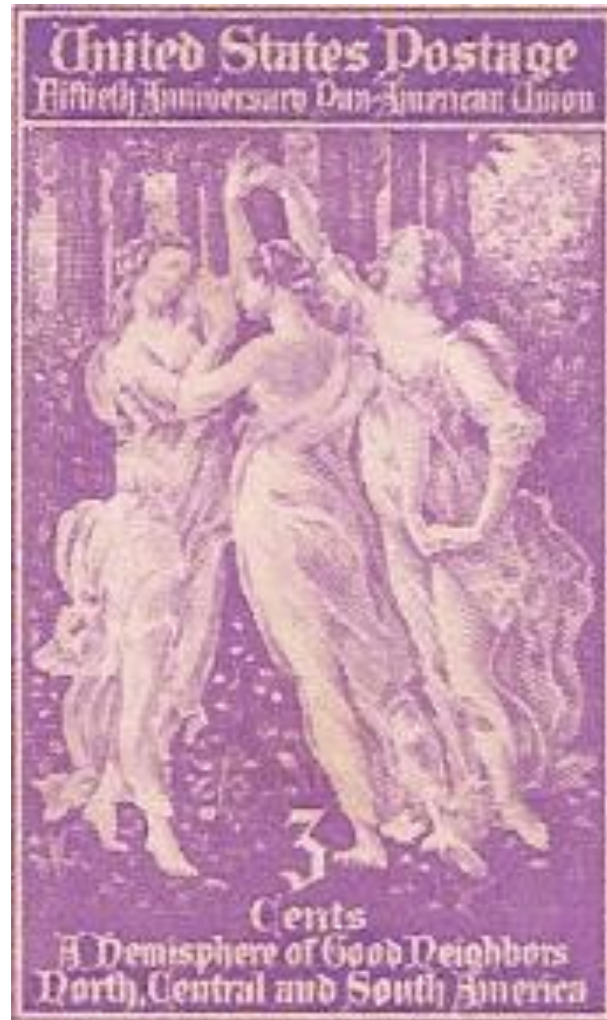
Martha Washington 1938



Pan American Union

- 50th Anniversary of the union established for North America, Central America and South America – using a portion of Botticelli's painting "Spring" – the three graces, as suggested by FDR. This organization became the Organization of American States in 1970

50th Anniversary of Pan American Union



Wyoming Statehood 50th

- The stamp design features the state seal, which is dominated by the central figure of a woman on a pedestal in front of a banner reading 'equal rights'. Wyoming was in the forefront of women's rights in the late 19th century.

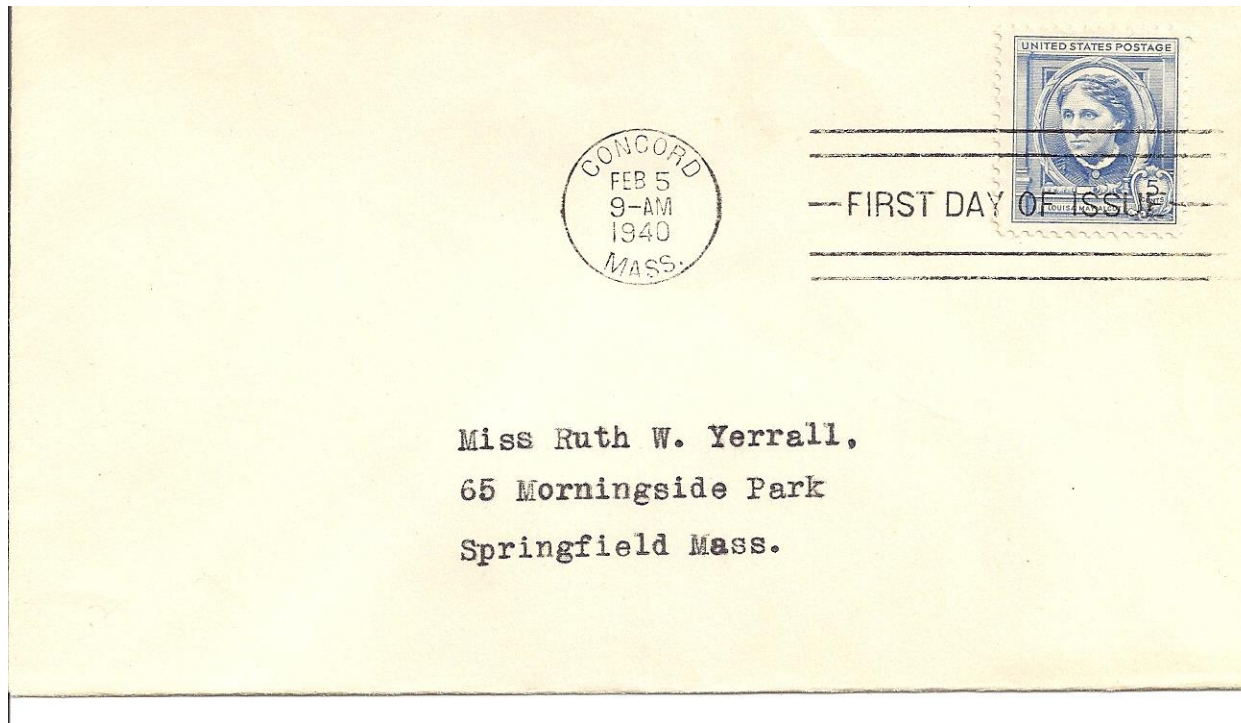
Wyoming Statehood



Famous Americans

- This series issued in 1940 included 35 people in 7 categories that were selected from numerous suggestions from the public. Three of the 35 were women, Louisa May Alcott in the Author category, Jane Addams in the Scientist category and Frances E Willard in the Educator category. First Day issue ceremonies were held in cities of importance to the subject.

Louisa May Alcott



Concord was the setting of Little Women, Alcott's best-known novel.

Author

- Louisa May Alcott, a novelist who gained financial success writing under the name “A.M. Barnard.” But she achieved literary immortality when she wrote “Little Women” under her own name. The tale of four sisters – Jo, Meg, Beth, and Amy – has become one of the most beloved stories in American literature. Alcott based the character of “Jo” on herself.

Jane Addams

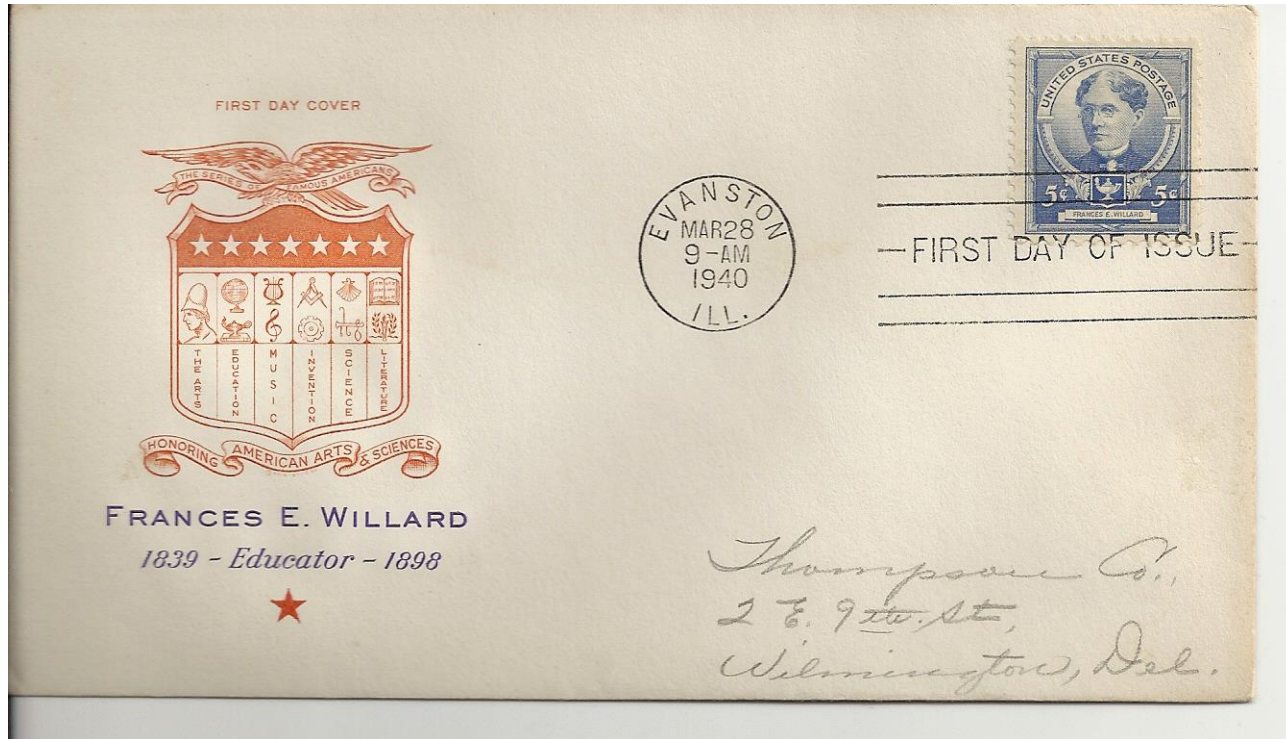


Hull House, which Addams founded, was located in Chicago.

Scientist

- Jane Addams was a social reformer who was the co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931 and commemorated on U.S. #878 in 1940. She was most remembered as the founder of Hull House, which offered social, educational, and cultural opportunities to the large immigrant population of Chicago.

Frances Willard



Willard was the President of Evanston College for Ladies.

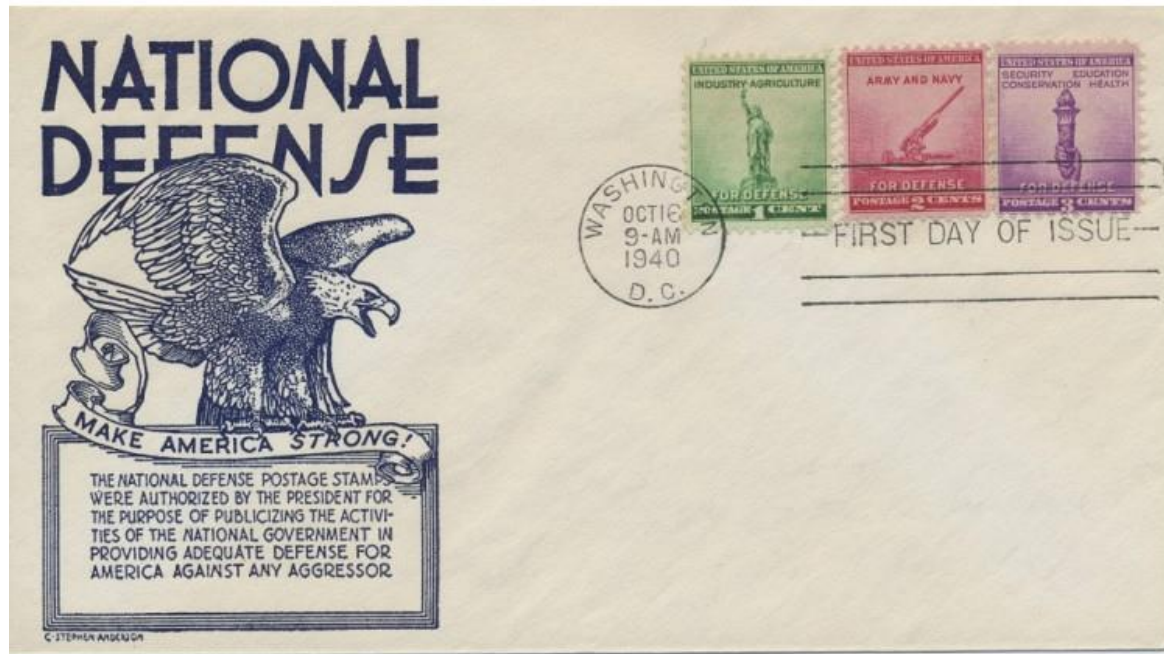
Educator

- Frances Willard became president of the Evanston College for Ladies in 1871. Two years later, it merged with Northwestern University and Willard was named Dean of Women for the Women's College. Willard's greatest impact was in the suffrage and temperance movements.

National Defense Issue

- President Roosevelt request this issue to inform the public on the dangers faced by the nation from the war in Europe. Issued in October 1940, the 1 cent was the second stamp issued showing the Statue of Liberty. Roosevelt linked that to Industry and Agriculture. The 2 cent stamp pictured an anti-aircraft gun and the 3 cent the Torch of Enlightenment. Post offices were directed to sell these stamps rather than the current definitive stamps.

National Defense Issue



Overrun Countries Issue

- Sometimes you have to look carefully to find women on stamps. The series of 13 stamps issued showing the flags of the countries overrun by the Axis included in the frame a kneeling woman “breaking the shackles of servitude”.

Overrun Countries



Transcontinental Railroad

- Commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Golden Spike and taken from a mural in Union Station, Salt Lake City, the design includes women, children and Native Americans along with the many officials at the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in Promontory Point, Utah

Transcontinental Railroad

- Issued May 10, 1944



50th Anniversary of Motion Pictures

- Issued in 1944 to celebrate 50 years of the motion picture industry in America, it shows an open air movie projected for service members somewhere in the South Pacific. Both men and women are in the audience.

Motion Pictures



The end of 100 years

- During the war years few stamps overall were issued so with only 3 stamps issued in 1941-42 it was no surprise there were no women. Also in 1945, 1946 and 1947 no stamps had women as a subject or included in the design.
- Total stamps referenced in this presentation is 55:
- 13 Overrun countries stamp issue
- 11 Periodical stamps
- 6 Queen Isabella
- Leaving 25 stamps that could have women we knew
- But only 8 of those have named women: Martha Washington (twice), Pocahontas, Virginia Dare, Susan B Anthony, Louisa May Alcott, Jane Addams, Frances Willard
- Someone must have noticed because in 1948 there were 6 women named on stamps.