

Commemorative Covers

During the past three decades, beginning with 1938, four Iowa communities have been designated by the Post Office Department as the place at which a First Day of Issue should be made exclusively for one of the Nation's new Commemorative stamps. This honor is much sought after because it focuses national attention on the spot so designated. Moreover, the First Day of Issue city continues to have its name appear in various stamp guides and postal literature, thus impressing its name on stamp collectors throughout the world.

Many Iowans may inquire — What is a "First Day of Issue" cover? The almost nine thousand members of the State Historical Society of Iowa who, on August 10, 1965, received the Hoover Memorial Stamp as a First Day of Issue, should be familiar with this interesting philately. Over two hundred enthusiastic "thank you" letters and cards have been received from grateful members of the Society and many others have phoned their appreciation.

For readers who did not receive a First Day of Issue cover we will quote Leo August, editor of the *United States Specialized Catalog of First Day Covers*.

Essentially, a first day cover is an envelope to which a stamp has been affixed and cancelled on the day of its issue. A post-1920 cover usually has to meet two additional requirements: it should be cancelled at the specially-designated "first day city" with one of the postmarks prepared specifically for use on the first day . . . Custom has decreed that the first day envelope should be white and of good quality, so it will not yellow with age. It should be standard $6\frac{3}{4}$ size whenever possible . . .

Since the 1930's most collectors prefer to save cacheted First Day of Issue covers. A cacheted envelope is one which usually bears on its left side a rubber-stamped, printed, or engraved pictorial design with explanatory text. These cacheted covers have reached a degree of perfection that adds much to their beauty as well as providing interesting, educational information for the collector. While most commercial dealers issue cacheted envelopes as a part of their service, individuals frequently prepare special cachets. Between the two — commercial and individual — it is sometimes possible to collect more than one hundred different First Day of Issue covers for a single Commemorative stamp. The values accruing from the study of United States Commemorative stamps are truly rewarding. The sixteen Columbian stamps of 1893 (the first United States Commemorative stamps) pointed the way to America, and ultimately to Iowa. The nine Trans-Mississippi "Omaha" Exposition stamps had an even more intimate association with Iowa history since they dealt with

various phases of the American frontier — discovery and exploration, the fur-trading, mining, and military frontier, and the frontier of the farmer and the cattleman. The Pan-American stamps dealt with transportation — Great Lakes steamer, railroad, automobile, the steel-arch bridge at Niagara, the ship-canal at Sault Ste Marie, and the ocean steamer. Only five stamps were issued to commemorate the Louisiana Purchase, but since Iowa formed a part of this epoch-making event these stamps were significant in Iowa history.

Most of these early covers were issued on a certain date, generally at "Any City" or at Washington, D.C. Thus, the Columbians were dated from "Any City" January 2, 1893. They were withdrawn from sale on April 12, 1894. The Trans-Mississippi series, on the other hand, was first placed on sale at Omaha, Nebraska, on June 10, 1898. The Pan-American Stamps (six in number) were first placed on sale at Buffalo, New York, on May 1, 1901, and withdrawn from sale on October 31 of that year, the opening and closing days of the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo. The Louisiana Purchase Stamp was first placed on sale at New Orleans on April 21, 1904; thereafter it appeared on sale at "Any City" between May 1 and December 1. The following stamps, or series of stamps, appeared in the years immediately preceding the Norse-American Stamp which is the first intimately associated with Iowa.

<i>Stamp</i>	<i>Date of Issue</i>	<i>Place of Issue</i>
Jamestown	April 25, 1907	Jamestown, Virginia
Lincoln	Feb. 12, 1909	Any City
Alaska-Yukon	June 1, 1909	Seattle, Washington
Hudson-Fulton	Sept. 25, 1909	New York
Panama-Pacific		
1 cent	Jan. 1, 1913	San Francisco
5 cent	Jan. 1, 1913	San Francisco
10 cent	Jan. 1, 1913	San Francisco
2 cent	Jan. 18, 1913	San Francisco
Victory	March 3, 1919	Washington, D. C.
Pilgrim	Dec. 18, 1920	Plymouth, Provincetown
Tercentenary		Massachusetts
Harding Memorial	Sept. 1, 1923	Marion, Ohio & Washington
Huguenot-Walloon	May 1, 1924	11 cities
Lexington-Concord	April 4, 1925	Boston, Cambridge, Concord,
<i>Postage Stamps of the United States (1962)</i>		Lexington

The importance of Commemorative stamps and First Day of Issue covers as tools in studying Iowa history can be readily demonstrated.

The handsome Wisconsin Tercentenary Stamp, which was issued on July 7, 1934, depicted the arrival of the French explorer, Jean Nicolet, among the Winnebago Indians at Green Bay in 1634. Nicolet's feat was an important step in pointing the way to Iowa. The picture on the postage stamp was reproduced by the Society on the front cover of the July 1960 issue of *The Palimpsest* which dealt exclusively with the Winnebago Indians in Iowa. Nicolet was the forerunner of Joliet and Marquette who in turn were honored in the one-cent stamp in the Trans-Mississippi "Omaha" Exposition series of 1898.

A second important stamp celebrated the 150th

Anniversary of the Ordinance of 1787 and the organization of the Old Northwest Territory. The center of this stamp showed a map of the United States in 1787, with the Northwest Territory and Southwest clearly featured. On the left-hand side is Reverend Manasseh Cutler, purchasing agent of the Ohio Company, who bought huge tracts of choice Ohio land for the Revolutionary War veterans. On the right-hand side one sees General Rufus Putnam, a distinguished Revolutionary War soldier, who formed the Ohio Company of Associates in Boston.

Iowa constitutional and governmental history stems from the Ordinance of 1787. In addition, three towns in the Old Northwest served as capitals for Iowa — Vincennes, Indiana, 1805-1806; Detroit, Michigan, 1834-1836; and Belmont, Wisconsin, 1836-1837. The first governor of the Territory of Iowa, Robert Lucas, came from Ohio. Lucas had served two terms as Governor of Ohio before his appointment as Governor of the Territory of Iowa. Curiously, the Northwest Ordinance Stamp deserves special mention in philatelic history because it was the first one on which the "killer bar" was used that cancelled the stamp and also carried the legend First Day of Issue which took place at Marietta, Ohio, and New York City on July 13, 1937.

Closely associated with the Ordinance of 1787 is the Northwest Territory Stamp issued the fol-

lowing year to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the settlement of the Northwest Territory at Marietta, Ohio, in 1788. This was the same year that Washington was elected president. It was likewise the same year that the Fox Indians granted Julien Dubuque the right to work the lead mines around their village on Catfish Creek near present-day Dubuque. First sold at Marietta on July 15, 1938, the Northwest Territory Stamp preceded by a scant month the Iowa Territorial Commemorative Stamp which went on sale at Des Moines on August 24, 1938. Ohio, the first state carved out of the Northwest Territory, furnished more settlers to Iowa than any other state before the Civil War.

In 1944 the Post Office Department issued a stamp commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental railroad by the junction of the Central Pacific and Union Pacific at Promontory Point, Utah, on May 10, 1869. The stamp was first placed on sale at Omaha, Nebraska; Ogden, Utah; and San Francisco, California. President Lincoln fixed the Eastern terminus of the Union Pacific at Council Bluffs in 1862. General Grenville M. Dodge, a long-time resident of Council Bluffs, was the chief engineer in charge of construction of the Union Pacific from the Missouri River to Promontory Point, Utah.

On October 16, 1946, a stamp was issued commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the entry of

General Stephen Watts Kearny into Santa Fe during the Mexican War. It should be pointed out that 500 men in Kearny's army were Mormons who had just completed, or were on the verge of completing, their trek across Iowa from Nauvoo on the Mississippi to the Missouri. Brigham Young granted Captain James Allen permission to recruit 500 of his men for the Mexican War in return for \$20,000 which was needed to help the exodus of the Mormons to Utah. These 500 men constituted the famous Mormon Battalion that was trained by General Kearny at Fort Leavenworth before setting out overland for Santa Fe. Ultimately, the Mormon Battalion followed Kearny to California and aided in its conquest. The stamp was first placed on sale at Santa Fe.

Closely associated with Iowa history is the Utah Centennial Stamp which was first placed on sale on July 24, 1947, at Salt Lake City. Because the first leg of the Mormon trek lay across Iowa, and because this trek was perhaps the most colorful event in Iowa during the year 1846, it deserves special mention and association with the Iowa story. At one time during the summer of 1846, there were as many as 15,000 Mormons moving across Southern Iowa. Their presence is remembered in such names as Garden Grove and Mount Pisgah in the Hawkeye State.

The 100th Anniversary of the discovery of gold in California was appropriately commemorated by

a stamp issued at Coloma, California, on January 24, 1946. Scores of Iowa communities saw some of their best citizens join the mad trek to California and thousands of Forty-Niners streamed across Iowa in search of fame and fortune. The number of Iowans in California was so great that they played a leading role in framing the California Constitution in 1850. In other words, the newly adopted Iowa Constitution of 1846 served as a model for the Constitution of California. A California Statehood Stamp was placed on sale at Sacramento on September 9, 1950.

A stamp commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase was placed on sale at St. Louis on April 30, 1953. Since Iowa was, in the words of William Salter, the "first free state in the Louisiana Purchase" and since Thomas Jefferson subsequently sent forth Lewis and Clark, and Zebulon M. Pike, the Louisiana Purchase is of real interest to Iowans. In addition, the erection of Fort Madison in 1808 must also be associated with the Louisiana Purchase.

The invention of the telegraph and the successful laying of the Atlantic Cable were vitally important to Iowa. The telegraph linked citizens of the Hawkeye State with their relatives and friends back East after its completion to the Mississippi in 1848. Ten years later, in 1858, the Atlantic Cable was successfully laid, and Iowa was linked with Europe. The excitement generated by both

these events can only be likened to such innovations as television or the advent of man into space. The 100th Anniversary of the transmittal of the first telegraph message was observed by the sale of the Telegraph Commemorative Stamp at Washington and Baltimore, on May 24, 1944. The Atlantic Cable Stamp was first placed on sale in New York on August 15, 1958. The story of the successful laying of the Atlantic Cable is described in the October 1958 issue of *The Palimpsest*.

One might continue at length to associate various commemorative stamps with the story of Iowa. Of more than passing interest would be such stamps as the Poultry Industry Commemorative Stamp (1948), Swedish Pioneers (1948), American Turners Society (1948), the Grand Army of the Republic (1949), the Boy Scouts of America (1950), Newspaperboys (1952), the 4-H Clubs (1952), Future Farmers (1953), Land Grant Colleges (1955), Labor Day (1956), Teachers of America (1957), Boys' Club of America (1960), Homestead Act (1962), City Mail Delivery (1963).

There are so many of America's great men associated with Iowa history that the list could almost be endless — Abraham Lincoln, Robert E. Lee, Francis Scott Key, John James Audubon, George Washington Carver — to mention a few. Truly, many stamps on a variety of subjects might be associated directly or indirectly with Iowa.