

USA 1934-35 3c Mother's of America stamp - its place in postal rates, services and usages

Historical background to the stamp

Anna Jarvis, one time President of the American Mothers Clubs introduced Mother's Day (13th May) in 1908. Twenty five years later Margaret McCluer, the National President of the American War Mothers, suggested marking Mother's Day with a stamp.

Postmaster General James Farley and President Roosevelt agreed the proposal. Roosevelt suggested basing the stamp on a painting by James Abbot McNeil Whistler entitled "Arrangement in Grey and Black: The Artist's Mother". And so it was that the stamp was duly issued on 2nd May 1934.

The stamp proved so popular that there were three different print runs - perforated on rotary press, perforated on flat bed and ungummed imperforate. Despite over 203 million of the perforated stamps being placed on sale, they sold out within weeks. This explains their comparative scarcity on cover.

Aim of the exhibit

The exhibit shows how the 3c Mother's of America stamp played a part in postal rates and services. It also demonstrates its usage in conveying domestic and overseas mail. Important items are highlighted with a blue border.

Scope and structure of the exhibit

The exhibit, which comprises two frames, embraces the period 1934 to 1937 and includes envelopes, wrappers and cards. Its structure is as follows:

- earliest usages
- mail incoming to the USA
- domestic mail
 - first class and third class
 - airmail
 - registered and special delivery
- overseas mail
 - UPU surface mail
 - Pan American Treaty rate mail
 - airmail
 - registered and special delivery

Highlights of the exhibit

- Mother's Day stamp used for postage due
- fraudulent mail
- third class mailings
- cover sent on first day of 6c airmail rate
- cover bearing all three printings
- registered Treaty rate covers
- international printed matter rate
- postcard sent by catapult mail

Postal rates relevant to the period

Domestic mail

first class: 3c per oz
third class: 1½c per 2oz
airmail: 8c per oz, then later 6c per oz

Overseas mail

Treaty rate: 3c per 1oz
Postcard rate: 3c
first class: 5c per 1oz plus 3c for each extra oz
printed matter: 1½c per 2oz
airmail: various rates
registration: 15c
special delivery: 20c

References

- Postage Stamps of the United States - Postmaster General (1963)
- US International Postal Rates, 1872-1996 - Wawrukiewicz and Beecher
- Commemorative Stamps of the Twentieth Century (volume 1) - Max Johl
- Women on United States Postage Stamps - Price-Davis and Hunt
- Women as Presented on United States Stamps - McCluer