

A TRADITIONAL STUDY OF THE FIRST DAY COVERS OF A 1940'S CLASSIC

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first U.S. postage stamps, the Post Office Department decided to release a 3¢ commemorative in May of 1947. The stamps' release coincided with the first day of the CIPEX exhibition in New York City (see sidebar below).

The stamp was designed by Leon Helguera, who had previously designed the 1943 2¢ United Nations commemorative stamp for the U.S. and later stamps for the United Nations. The exhibit begins with some of the preliminary sketches and artwork prepared by Helguera and the stamp's modeler, Victor McCloskey, Jr.. Plate markings and production anomalies are shown as well as P.O.D. announcements, presentation folders and publicity photographs.

The only large die proof (or proof of any kind) known in private hands is a part of the *Production and Issuance* chapter. Although Scott lists a large die proof on India paper this proof was produced on wove paper and it is believed that this proof is the source of the Scott listing. There is a Bureau handstamp on the reverse reading "Engraver's Stock Proof/Authorized by" and initialed — most likely being pulled for the vignette engraver, Matthew Fenton,



Plate block of the 1947 U.S. Postage Stamp Centenary Commemorative signed by the designer, Leon Helguera, on the day of issue; May 17, 1947.

EXHIBIT PLAN

1. Production & Issuance
2. First Cachets
3. First Day Use
4. First Day Use to Foreign
5. Destinations
6. Unofficial Cities
7. Usage

Fourteen cachetmakers produced their first cachet for this issue, incorporating twenty-four different designs. This exhibit contains cachets from thirteen of these cachetmakers showing twenty-two different cachet designs. Over 45 cachetmakers produced cachets specific for the 3¢ commemorative encompassing well over 100 different cachet variations. While the exhibit doesn't yet contain all of the documented cachets, it does provide more

(Continued on page 2)



Unique hand-painted cachet by Walter Stawuszewski.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

- * Design sketch and photographic models of preliminary artwork and progressive designs
- * Only large die proof in private hands
- * Unique Dorothy Knapp, Herman Maul & Walter Stawuszewski hand-painted cachets
- * Printing plates for all 4 Artcraft cachet varieties.
- * Largest-documented multiple First Day Use
- * First day uses to French Indo-China, the Canal Zone, Australia and New Zealand.
- * Discovery Copy of Ralph Duncan First Cachet

CIPEX : THE CENTENARY INTERNATIONAL PHILATELIC EXHIBITION OF 1947

The Centenary International Philatelic Exhibition (CIPEX) was held at the Grand Central Palace on Lexington Avenue in New York City starting on May 17th and ending on May 25th, 1947.

A major facet of the decennial exhibition was the 100th anniversary of the issuance

of the first U.S. postage stamps. As such the Post Office Department released the commemorative stamp on the first day of the show.

Two days later on the 19th a 15¢ Souvenir Sheet depicting the first two U.S. stamps

(in different colors) was issued. A 5¢

airmail stamped envelope followed two days later on the 21st.

The stamp and CIPEX are forever linked and many cachets prepared for the first day of the centenary commemorative depict themes relating to the CIPEX show.



Only large die proof known in private hands. No small die proofs are known to exist.

WHAT'S NOT HERE...

CIPEX Souvenir Sheets: As the souvenir sheet was issued two days *after* the release of the commemorative stamp, it does not play much of a role in a FDC exhibit of the commemorative stamp. The same holds true for the airmail envelope which was released four days later.

Production Varieties: With exception of what is shown in the exhibit the Exhibitor is not aware of any other production varieties. As of this time no imperforate copies or plate varieties have been reported.

Cachet Color Varieties: Due to space limitations, variations of cachet colors are noted, but not shown.

than a representative sample of all production methods used. In addition, general purpose and cachets that were designed for other stamps are shown used for the issue. Of note are variations on the same hand painted cachet design work of Mae Weigand. A registered first day cover with a scarce and CIPEX registry dated-oval cancel is a part of the exhibit — and is the one of the very few examples of this cancellation the Exhibitor has ever encountered. Recycled designs by cachetmakers are shown where appropriate.

Covers that have come to light since 2009 include unique hand-painted covers that were commissioned by Walter Garrett, a collector from Texas. Cachetmakers that produced unique cachets for Garrett include Knapp, Maul and Stawuszewski — all are included in the exhibit. Weigand also produced covers for Garrett but the designs did not vary significantly from those produced for other collectors.

First day uses to foreign destinations are given a chapter in the exhibit. Even though the stamp was released during the largest international stamp show up until that time, first day foreign destinations uses are difficult to find. Uses to Cuba, French Indo-China, the Canal Zone, Malta, Brazil, Venezuela and New Zealand are shown and the rates explained.

The stamp wasn't available at the Philatelic Agency in Washington, D.C. until Sunday the 18th — and covers posted in Washington that day are shown. Additional first day uses from unofficial cities are included — including an "almost" pre-date from Waseca, Minnesota. While the cover was postmarked on the first day, an enclosed letter explains that the stamp was purchased a day early and the sender didn't want to get the Post Office clerk into trouble by posting the letter early.

Ordinary commercial uses of the 3¢ commemorative are difficult to find, but the exhibit displays what has been found by the Exhibitor to date. Both domestic and foreign uses are shown — including a censored cover to the American Zone in Berlin as well as a package piece with 33 Centenary Commemoratives, 2 "Prexies" and a Special Delivery stamp.

Items signed by the designer, Helguera, are relatively common as he spent most of the CIPEX exhibition signing items for a donation to the *Stamps for the Wounded* charity. Items signed by the engravers and modeler are more difficult to find but included in the exhibit is correspondence to one of the engravers from a collector looking to have covers signed by all of the engravers — the signed covers are included.



Unique Dorothy Knapp hand-painted cachet commissioned by Walter Garrett, a Texas Collector.

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