

# Celebrating with Pictorial Postmarks

A Unique Program  
for Making Your Mark  
on History



THE BAILEMOS STATION  
OCTOBER 22, 2005  
FORT WORTH TX 76106

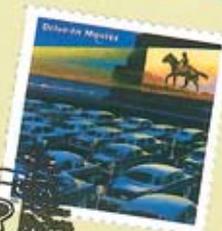
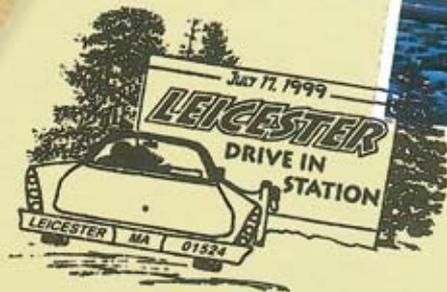


AUGUST 2, 2001  
NYC CYCLING  
CHAMPIONSHIP  
NEW YORK, NY STA. 10199



2010  
APPLEFEST. STATION  
FRANKLIN PA 16323

October 7





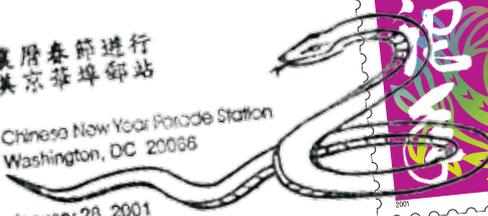
OPERATION SANTA  
 ROBERT H. ROBERTS COLLECTION  
 NORTH POLE STATION  
 DECEMBER 4, 2006  
 NEW YORK, N.Y. 10197



農曆春節進行  
 美京華埠郵站

Chinese New Year Parade Station  
 Washington, DC 20066

January 28, 2001



## Table of Contents

Make Your Event Memorable with a Pictorial Postmark . . . . .	2
What is a pictorial postmark? . . . . .	3
What are the design requirements for pictorial postmarks? . . . . .	4
Size limitations. . . . .	4
Design limitations . . . . .	4
What is not acceptable? . . . . .	5
What is acceptable? . . . . .	5
How do I apply for a pictorial postmark? . . . . .	6
When will I know my request is approved? . . . . .	7
What happens on the day of my event? . . . . .	7
What about people who want the pictorial postmark but can't attend my event? . . . . .	7
History of Pictorial Postmarks. . . . .	10
Townmarks or Postmarks . . . . .	10
Pictorial Markings to Cancel Stamps . . . . .	10
Cancellation vs. Postmark . . . . .	10
Exhibition Stations . . . . .	11
Sanitary Fairs . . . . .	11
Expositions . . . . .	12
Stamp Shows . . . . .	12
First Day of Issue. . . . .	12
Pictorial First Day of Issue. . . . .	13
Pictorial Cancellations. . . . .	14
First Known Use . . . . .	14
Early Special Pictorial Cancellations at Stamp Exhibitions . . . . .	14
A Broader Scope of Events . . . . .	15
Announcements in the <i>Postal Bulletin</i> . . . . .	15
For More Information. . . . .	15

## MAKE YOUR EVENT MEMORABLE With a Pictorial Postmark

**I**F YOU ARE PLANNING A SPECIAL COMMUNITY EVENT, consider commemorating it with a pictorial postmark. This unique philatelic item will be available only at your event or by mail order and will be a great hit with participants who want a very special souvenir. Your pictorial postmark will be announced in the Postal Service's biweekly *Postal Bulletin*, so collectors across the country and around the world may request your pictorial postmark as well!

Pictorial postmarks may commemorate a wide variety of local events such as fairs, conventions, philatelic expositions, parades, Black Heritage month, art shows, historical building anniversaries, opening day ceremonies for local sports teams, and the anniversaries of schools, universities, states, or towns.

If your pictorial postmark is approved, the Postal Service will set up a temporary retail station at your event and produce the pictorial postmark hand canceling device at no cost to you.





## What is a pictorial postmark?

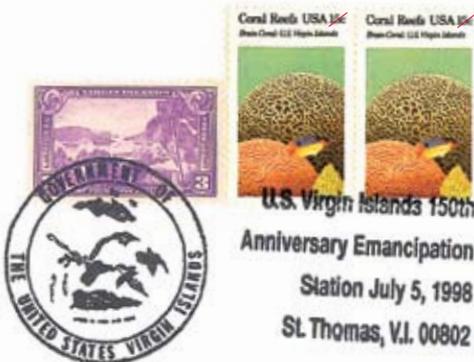
A pictorial postmark features words and graphics related to your event and is applied with a hand canceling device.

You, as the sponsor or organizer of the local event, are responsible for providing the design of the pictorial postmark. **The postmark must include the following information:**

- Name of the temporary retail station, including the word “Station” or the abbreviation “Sta.” (for example, Hollywood Festival Station or Customer Appreciation Day Sta.).
- City, state, and ZIP Code™ of the location for the temporary retail station.
- Month, day, and year when your pictorial postmark is being offered.

Only one pictorial postmark design will be approved for your special event. If your event runs for more than 1 day, you may use the same pictorial postmark each day, but the postmark must display the correct date.

Hall of Fame  
**INDUCTION DAY**  
**August 5, 1990**  
**Cooperstown, New York**



## What are the design requirements for pictorial postmarks?

### Size limitations

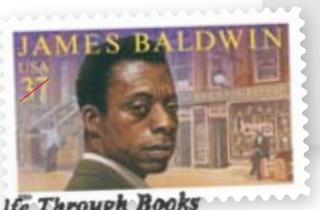
Overall dimension of your pictorial postmark must not exceed 4 inches horizontally and 2 inches vertically.

### Design limitations

All graphic designs used in pictorial postmarks should be sharp and clear so that they will reproduce well on a rubber composition hand postmarking device.

When you submit your letter of request to the local postmaster, you will need to include explicit written authorization from the individual or company that designed the pictorial postmark, authorizing the Postal Service to reproduce and distribute the design.

If your pictorial postmark features the name or image of an individual, living or dead, you will need to submit explicit written authorization from the appropriate owners, families, or estates (for example, Morgan Freeman Birthplace Station or Boris Karloff Tribute Station). Explicit written authorization is also needed for copyrighted material and other proprietary material such as trademarks, service marks, registered marks, insignias, or logos (for example, the United Way logo or the Girl Scouts logo).



*Celebrating Life Through Books*  
7<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL

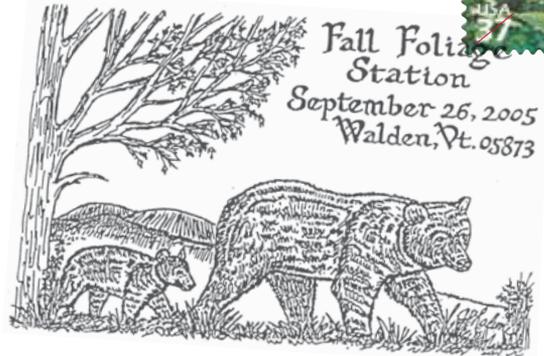
**HARLEM BOOK FAIR STATION**  
July 23, 2005 New York N. Y. 10031



## What is not acceptable?

Postmarks that promote the sale or use of private, nonpostal products or services cannot be approved.

Postmarks that endorse or involve the ideals, policies, programs, products, campaigns, or candidates of religious, anti-religious, commercial, political, fraternal, trade, labor, public-interest, or special-interest organizations cannot be approved.



## What is acceptable?

Postmarks that recognize events such as meetings, exhibitions, or conventions sponsored by or involving religious, anti-religious, commercial, political, fraternal, trade, labor, public-interest, or special-interest organizations may be approved, provided that their designs do not include words, symbols, or illustrations referring to ideals, policies, programs, products, campaigns, or candidates.



September 10  
2005



THE  
GREAT  
STATE OF  
**MAINE**  
AIRSHOW  
NAVAL AIR STATION, BRUNSWICK  
2005 Station • Brunswick, Maine 04011



*Romeo*

Valentine Station  
February 1, 2001  
Romeo MI 48065



*Juliet*

Valentine Station  
February 1, 2001  
Juliette GA 31046

## How do I apply for a pictorial postmark?

At least 10 weeks before your event, the sponsors or organizers of the event must submit a letter of request to the postmaster of the city where the pictorial postmark will be issued.

Each letter of request must include the following information:

- Name, complete mailing address, and telephone number of the contact person.
- Camera-ready artwork for the pictorial postmark design.
- Complete description of your event.
- Date(s) the pictorial postmark will be offered.
- All required supporting documentation for the pictorial postmark referred to in the design requirements on page 4, namely, written authorization from the appropriate individual or organization permitting the Postal Service to use the pictorial postmark design and written authorization, if required, permitting the Postal Service to use in the pictorial postmark any word, symbol, or illustration that is the proprietary property of another person or organization.



## When will I know if my request is approved?

The Postal Service will reply to your request within 14 days of its receipt. The postmaster to whom you submitted your letter of request will notify you by mail.

## What happens on the day of my event?

On the day of your event, the Postal Service will set up a temporary postal retail station in a secure, heavily traveled location that is easily accessible to customers. This station may consist of one or more tables, specially constructed booths or counters, or a mobile retail unit and will provide hand postmarking service and the sale of stamps and other stamp products.

At your event, the Postal Service will provide hand-back service—a customer personally presents an addressed or unaddressed envelope, postal card, or other item with sufficient First-Class Mail® postage to a postal clerk at the temporary retail station. The clerk applies your pictorial postmark and hands the item back to the customer.

## What about people who want the pictorial postmark but can't attend my event?

For those customers who are unable to attend your event, the Postal Service provides mail-back service—customers can mail pre-stamped envelopes and cards to a designated Post Office to receive your pictorial postmark. To qualify for this service, mail-in requests must be postmarked no later than 30 days following the actual pictorial postmark date.



NATIONAL  
MUSEUM  
OF THE  
AMERICAN  
INDIAN

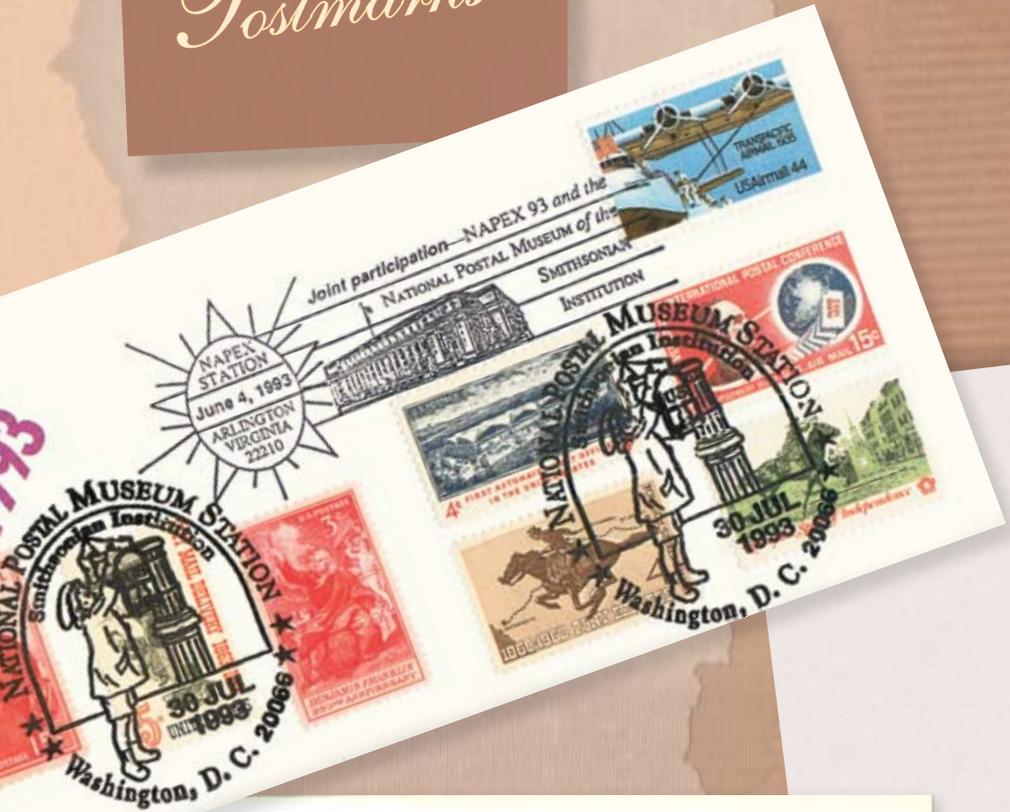


Christmas Quilting of Peace  
50th Anniversary Station  
1954 - 2004  
December 2, 2004  
Washington, D.C. 20066

# History of Pictorial Postmarks

MODESTO ART MUSEUM STATION  
CELEBRATING  
MAIL ART EXHIBIT  
MODESTO  
Art museum  
MODESTO • CALIFORNIA • 9

300 Y  
January



YEARS  
19, 2006  
5350

EXPO '89  
Dec. 3, 1989 Washington, DC



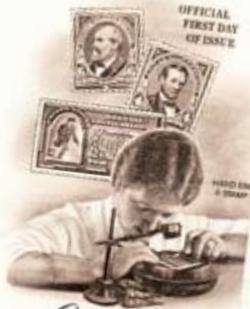
LINCOLN DAY  
NOV. 17, 1989  
WASHINGTON, DC 20068



PEARL HARBOR REMEMBERED  
1941 65th Anniversary 2006



USS ARIZONA MEMORIAL STATION  
December 7, 2006 - Honolulu, HI 96818



Centennial  
OF STAMP PRODUCTION BY THE  
BUREAU OF ENGRAVING  
AND PRINTING



## HISTORY OF PICTORIAL POSTMARKS

SEVERAL BRANCHES OF POSTAL HISTORY INTERTWINE to produce today's pictorial postmarks.

### Townmarks or Postmarks

From the earliest days, years before official postage stamps were introduced in 1847, handwritten and stamped townmarks or postmarks were used to indicate the place and date of mailing.

### Pictorial Markings to Cancel Stamps

Once postage stamps were introduced, a rich variety of locally produced pictorial markings were used to cancel stamps. Postmasters made cancellers or “killers” from several materials, primarily cork, and stamped a wide variety of designs—such as coffins, Masonic symbols, stars, crosses, grids, flags, hearts, and birds—limited only by their imagination and carving skills.



### Cancellation vs. Postmark

Although the terms cancellation and postmark are often used interchangeably, they are not the same thing. A *cancellation* is used to deface or “kill” a stamp to prevent its reuse. A *postmark* is used to indicate the Post Office of origin and date and time of mailing. A postmark often is used as a cancellation, but a cancellation is never used as a postmark.

*Postal laws and regulations regarding the use of the postmarking stamp changed over time.*

In 1847, the *Postal Laws and Regulations* instructed postmasters that letters with stamps affixed were to be cancelled immediately “with an instrument to be furnished to certain of the post offices for that purpose.” In Post Offices not supplied with such an instrument, “the stamps must be cancelled by making a cross X on each with a pen.”

Section 295 of the 1855 *Postal Laws and Regulations* states that cancellations were to be made “with black printer’s ink wherever that can be obtained; and where it cannot, the operation shall be performed by making several heavy crosses or parallel lines upon each stamp with a pen dipped in good black writing ink.” Section 297 states: “The use of the office dating

or postmarking stamp as a canceling instrument is prohibited—*unless it be used with black printer's ink, and in such manner to thoroughly effect the object.*" (Italics in original.)

The 1879 *Postal Laws and Regulations* contains the same wording about using black printer's ink for cancellations, although calling it "black printing-ink." The prohibition against using the postmarking stamp is much more strongly worded: "The use of the office rating or postmarking stamp as a canceling instrument is positively prohibited, inasmuch as the postmark, where impressed on the postage-stamp, is usually indistinct, and the cancellation effected thereby is imperfect."



*Once mail volume increased in the mid- to late-1800s, the postmark and the killer were combined in the same device, so that the postmaster or clerk only had to strike a letter once to simultaneously apply the postmark and cancel the stamp.*

### Exhibition Stations

Beginning as early as the 1840s, the Post Office Department created what were called branch Post Offices, stations, or sub-Post Offices. These were outlying stations in the delivery area of a central or main Post Office, located for the convenience of the public and the Department to facilitate and expedite the collection and delivery of mail.

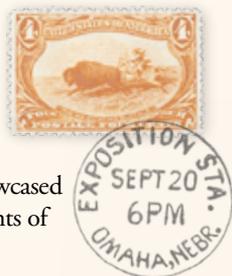
A natural outgrowth of these stations were temporary stations at exhibitions and fairs where the Post Office Department set up a booth to sell stamps and other philatelic products.

**Sanitary Fairs**—The earliest known temporary stations were set up at "Sanitary Fairs" in 1863 and 1864. Sanitary Fairs were organized on behalf of the United States Sanitary Commission and other similar organizations that raised funds to provide much needed assistance to soldiers during the Civil War. Several of the Sanitary Fairs had Post Office booths that sold specially printed (nonpostal) stamps for use on all letters, whether for delivery within the fair or by regular postal letter carriers. Letters intended for mailing at the regular Post Office also had to have

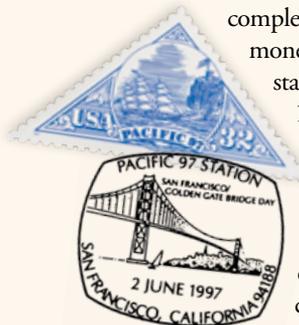
the requisite U.S. postage stamps attached. While U.S. postage at this time was generally 2 or 3 cents, Sanitary Fair stamps sold in denominations of 10, 20, and 30 cents.



**Expositions**—Beginning with the 1853 New York Exposition, a number of large U.S. cities hosted expositions that served as showcases for American industry and agriculture, and included as well displays from foreign nations. Some of these expositions showcased the work of the federal government in addition to the achievements of individual states.



At the U.S. Centennial International Exposition held in Philadelphia in 1876, the Post Office Department set up a postal station that was a complete working Post Office, offering general delivery, lock box, money order, and registered letter services. The Centennial station was staffed by four clerks and a dedicated corps of 10 letter carriers who hourly collected letters deposited in 50 lamp-post mounted letter boxes scattered throughout the 285-acre site. The postal station at the Exposition used a number of different postal markings, primarily a single circle hand stamp with CENTENNIAL at the top of the circle and PHILA'DA, PA. at the bottom of the circle, with the month, date, and time in the center.



**Stamp shows**—The Post Office Department also created temporary postal stations at large national stamp shows, beginning with the International Stamp Exhibition, October 16–23, 1926, in New York City. These temporary stations had their own special postmarking stamp, giving the station name and the date the mail was being cancelled.

*Stamp shows generally ran for two or three days. The postmark applied at these stamp shows was variously called a “philatelic cancellation,” “special cancellation mark,” or “special exhibition cancellation.”*



### First Day of Issue

In 1922, the Post Office Department began announcing the first day of issue for nearly all postage stamps, stamped envelopes, and postal cards. Collectors took advantage of this advance notice and bought the new stamps on the first day of sale, attached them to whatever envelope they had at hand, and got them postmarked and mailed on that first day. The only thing that distinguished the first day cover postmark from any ordinary postmark was the date.

On July 13, 1937, the Post Office Department for the first time used the slogan “First Day of Issue” in the machine cancellation applied to the 3¢ *Northwest Territory Ordinance* commemorative stamp. To the right of the postmark, centered within the seven lines of the killer bars, are the now familiar words FIRST DAY OF ISSUE.

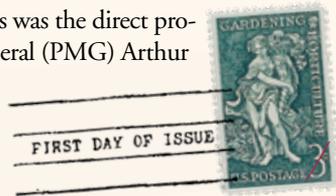
An official First Day of Issue hand cancel was first used on January 29, 1940, on the first stamps issued in the Famous Americans series: the 1¢ *Washington Irving* and the 2¢ *James Fenimore Cooper*. To the right of the postmark, in the center of the four lines of the killer bars, are the words FIRST DAY OF ISSUE.

The philatelic press noted in 1940 that collecting new stamps on envelopes with First Day of Issue cancellations was becoming a major sideline in United States philately. Collectors eagerly perused the philatelic press and the *Postal Bulletin* for the announcement of a new stamp, then deluged the postmaster of a city where a new stamp was to be issued with addressed envelopes and small sums of money for stamps to be affixed, cancelled, and mailed back to them.

### **Pictorial First Day of Issue—**

The next innovation in First Day of Issue cancellations was the direct progenitor of today’s pictorial postmarks. Postmaster General (PMG) Arthur E. Summerfield announced that when the 3¢

*Gardening and Horticulture* stamp was released on March 15, 1958, the machine and hand cancellations



would feature a reproduction of a bookplate used by noted botanist, horticulturist, and Cornell professor, Dr. Liberty Hyde Bailey. The design would be placed between the circular postmark and the killer bars with the “First Day of Issue” inscription. The *Gardening and Horticulture* stamp was issued at Ithaca, NY, on the 100th anniversary of Dr. Bailey’s birth.

When PMG Summerfield announced the Horticulture pictorial cancellation, he also announced that the first day cancellation of the 3¢ *Brussels Universal and International Exhibition* stamp on April 17, 1958, would feature the Exhibition’s official emblem; the first day cancellation of the 25¢ *Paul Revere* stamp on April 18, 1958, would feature Boston’s North Church; and the first day cancellation of the 4¢ *Forest Conservation* stamp on October 27, 1958, would feature Smokey Bear and the words “Keep America Green.” Furthermore, appropriate themes would be used on other forthcoming stamps.

Before the latter two stamps were released, PMG Summerfield had already announced the design of the first day cancellation for the *International Geophysical Year* stamp on May 31, 1958. In its May 18, 1958, issue, *The New York Times* reported that collectors' interest in "postal markings which include thematic illustrations" had become so intense that the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee of artists and philatelists had strongly advised the postmaster general that such a cancellation should be prepared whenever a new stamp was released.

In 1961 the *Postal Manual* incorporated pictorial cancellations into the definition of first day covers: "envelopes bearing a new stamp canceled on its first day of sale with a special die reading *First Day of Issue*, and a pictorial cancellation adding an interpretation of the meaning of the stamp."



### Pictorial Cancellations

**First Known Use**—The first known pictorial cancellation that was not a First Day of Issue cancellation was authorized for use at the Smithsonian Station in Washington, DC, beginning September 27, 1971, when the Headsville, West Virginia, Post Office was re-established inside the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of History and Technology (now called the National Museum of American History). The cancellation featured the name of the postal station in the postmark and a drawing of the board-and-batten Headsville Post Office building, with the killer section patterned after a flag cancel. The museum's name appears in the flag's field.

The Postal Service marked the 50th anniversary of its Philatelic Sales Unit, located in Washington, DC, by issuing a pictorial cancellation dated December 1, 1971. Like the Smithsonian Station pictorial cancellation, this cancellation remained in use at the Philatelic Sales Unit after the anniversary event.

### Early Special Pictorial Cancellations At Stamp Exhibitions—

In late 1971 and early 1972, the Western Region of the Postal Service authorized special pictorial exhibition station cancellations at stamp shows held within the region. Like many of today's pictorial postmarks, these

special pictorial cancellations were used at a special exhibition station; lasted only a few days; included an interesting graphic; and included the station's name, location, ZIP Code, and the date in a round postmark. In the June 1972 issue of *The American Philatelist*, a writer enthused about this new practice: "I am now thoroughly convinced the Western Region has created a tremendous boost for postmark collecting.... It's quite possible that an entirely new sideline will 'catch on' throughout the U.S. if the other postal regions follow Western's lead and commence to put pictorial imagination in their show cancellations too."

### A Broader Scope of Events

The program expanded in the 1980s with the enthusiastic participation of postmasters who recognized the opportunity to be involved in commemorating local events. Temporary philatelic stations were set up and provided pictorial cancellations at state fairs, conventions, parades, and other locations of significant local interest, in addition to stamp shows, philatelic exhibitions, and stamp dedications.

The wording of the *Domestic Mail Manual* and the *Postal Operations Manual* was revised in 1981 to permit cancellations at temporary philatelic stations for events sponsored by or involving specific types of organizations, providing Postal Service endorsement was not suggested. This was when the wording in today's design limitations was first added.

**Announcements in the *POSTAL BULLETIN***—Beginning in July 1993, the Postal Service started using the biweekly *Postal Bulletin* to announce forthcoming pictorial cancellations, instead of overwhelming the press with philatelic press releases.

*As of the January 20, 2005, Postal Bulletin, the Postal Service's pictorial cancellation program's name changed to pictorial postmarks program and what were formerly called pictorial cancellations began to be referred to as pictorial postmarks.*

### For More Information

For more information on obtaining a pictorial postmark for an event, contact your local postmaster at least 10 weeks before the event.

Visit [www.usps.com/postalhistory](http://www.usps.com/postalhistory) for more information on Postal Service history.



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Postmaster General and  
Chief Executive Officer

**John E. Potter**

Senior Vice President,  
Government Relations

**Thomas G. Day**

Executive Director, Stamp Services

**David E. Failor**

Manager, Stamp Exhibitions and Products

**Cindy Tackett**

Program Manager, Pictorial Postmarks  
and Management Analyst

**Robert E. Reyes**

Postal Historian

**Megaera M. Ausman**

Writer and Research Analyst

**Paula E. Rabkin**

Design

**Jill Tanenbaum Graphic Design  
& Advertising Inc.**

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250th Anniversary Station  
1753 - 2003



July 19, 2003 • Spencer MA 01562



Fort Sumter Flag  
1901

USA 33



140th ANNIVERSARY  
First Blood of The Civil War

From War's Beginning 'til Peace Restored... We Remember

BATTLESHIP MISSOURI MEMORIAL STATION  
December 7, 2006 - Honolulu HI 96818

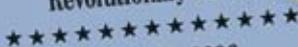


August 21, 2003  
STATE FAIR POST OFFICE STATION  
ST PAUL MN 55108



THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION  
225th ANNIVERSARY  
*Lighting Freedom's Flame*

Yorktown Victory Station  
Washington Rochambeau  
Revolutionary Route



October 19, 2006  
Yorktown, VA 23690