

SECTION ONE

DESIGN ANOMALIES

ABSENT WITHOUT LEAVE



George Rogers Clark originally captured Vincennes in August 1778, six months prior to the year shown on the illustrated stamp. However, the British recaptured the fort in October of that year. Clark then

again took the fort in February 1779. The stamp actually shows the surrender of Fort Sackville which is near the present site of Vincennes. There are amusing differences between the stamp and the actual painting, *The Fall of Fort Sackville*, by Frederick C. Yohn, from which the stamp was taken. Curiously, the third window to the right on the tower in the background of the stamp is not visible in the painting. This anomaly results because in the painting there is a soldier standing in that exact spot. Further, there are two other soldiers peering over the stockade wall who are also missing on the stamp. The following illustrations show the corresponding painting (left) and stamp (right) details. (USA #651, ISSUED 1929)



AVIATION AGGRAVATION



This stamp commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of powered flight. Powered flight, however, had been around a lot longer than fifty years at that time (1953). The first steam-powered model airplane was successfully flown in 1848. What the stamp is actually commemorating is the fiftieth anniversary of **manned** powered flight. This event took place on December 17, 1903, (Wright brothers' flight). Incidentally, both airplanes shown on the stamp are flying in the same direction. The odd vertical block above the top wing on the design of the early plane is the plane's rudder. (USA #C47, ISSUED 1953)

BAYONETS AND BONNETS



Each of these Civil War stamps shows a rifle or rifles with mounted bayonets. The first stamp (Shiloh) shows the correct type of Civil War bayonet, however, it is mounted on top of the barrel. This condition would make aiming the rifle difficult as the bayonet would block the front rifle sight. The second stamp (Gettysburg) shows the correct bayonet mounting for combat (under the rifle barrel), however, both bayonets are not the correct Civil War type. The third stamp (Appomattox) shows the correct type of bayonets but they are far too thick. Further, the mounting of the bayonet on the center rifle is unusual. In order for the bayonet to be in a direct line with the rifle barrel as the stamp shows, the bayonet would have to be mounted sideways. The following stamp enlargement (left) illustrates this anomaly. An actual photograph of a young Union soldier with a rifle and mounted bayonet is shown on the right to illustrate exactly what Civil War bayonets looked like.



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The bayonet side mounting shown in the photograph was probably for the benefit of the photograph. If the bayonet were mounted either beneath or on top of the rifle barrel, it would be hard to distinguish in the photograph. The Appomattox stamp also appears to have a discrepancy regarding the soldier's head gear. The soldier shown is definitely a Union soldier so his cap should be the same as that of the Union soldier shown on the Gettysburg stamp. Just exactly what type

of cap the Appomattox soldier is wearing is difficult to distinguish, other than a cub scout cap. Then again, we have to reason that as the soldier is remembering fallen soldiers, he should not be wearing a cap at all. The following enlargements show the Appomattox Union soldier's cap on the left and the Gettysburg Union soldier's cap on the right. (USA #1179, ISSUED 1962; #1180, ISSUED 1963; #1182, ISSUED 1965)



BEAVER BALONEY



This stamp shows an Indian woman drying beaver pelts on stretchers. The stamp was designed jointly

by artists of the National Film Board and the Canadian Bank Note Company. As to the stamp design, we are told, *In order to emphasize the activity to some extent, the beaver pelts are shown extensively enlarged.* Just how large are the beaver pelts? An average beaver pelt would not exceed 24-inches in length. If we assume the Indian woman is about 5-feet 2-inches in height, then the beaver pelt on the ground closest to the woman is 44-inches long. This length is beyond *extensively enlarged.* It is a gross exaggeration. To even think that stamp designers would *purposely* allow an exaggeration of this nature is preposterous. (CDN #301, ISSUED 1950)

BOBTAIL NAG



This stamp states that the streetcar shown is a bobtail horsecar. The horse shown, however, is not a "bobtailed" horse. (USA #2061, ISSUED 1983)

BORDEN BOO-BOO



This stamp depicts Sir Robert Laird Borden, Prime Minister of Canada from 1911 to 1920. His name is shown on the stamp as Sir. R. L. Borden. When a person has a title, it is improper to show the title with initials. The title followed by full Christian names and last name is required -- in this case, **Sir Robert Laird Borden**. (CDN #303, ISSUED 1951)

BOWIE BLUNDER



The hunting knife shown on the illustrated stamp appears to be a bowie knife. This type of knife was invented by James Bowie (1799-1836). It is believed Bowie invented his knife in the 1830's, ten years or later after Daniel Boone had died (1820). Further, actual mass production of the knife did not commence until about 1840, at least twenty years after Boone's

death. It is, therefore, highly unlikely Boone carved anything with a bowie knife. Finally, as the carving on the stamp does not show Boone's death year (1820), then the carving had to be made before that year. This fact rules out even Bowie himself as the carver. To justify the stamp design, we would have to assume that the bowie knife was stuck in the wall (added) at least ten years after the carving was made. The idea to use a wood carving theme for the stamp probably stems from a carving in a tree alleged to have been made by Boone. The carving shows just Boone's initials, DB. The tree section showing the initials resides in a Kentucky museum. The following illustrations show (left) an enlarged image of the stamp knife and hunting knives of Boone's era. On the right a dictionary drawing of a bowie knife is shown. (USA #1357, ISSUED 1968)



bowie knife

BUNKER HILL BUNK



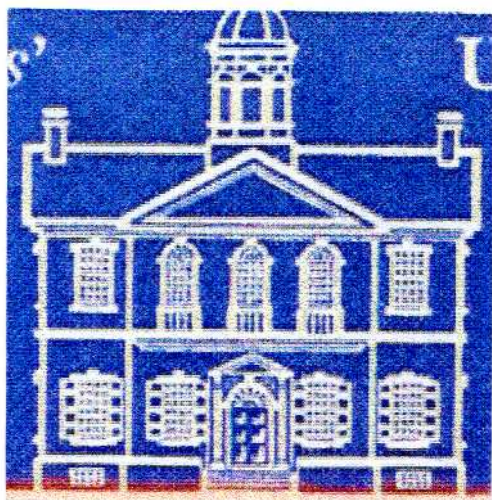
The Bunker Hill monument shown on this stamp was erected (1843) on Breed's Hill. Breed's Hill is now commonly considered a part of Bunker Hill which is in the same hill region. Ironically, the Battle of Bunker Hill took place on Breed's Hill. The following information is from the Encyclopedia Americana:

BREED'S HILL, Mass., a slight elevation in the Charlestown district of Boston, about 700 yards from Bunker Hill. Although the famous engagement of June 17, 1775, is known as the Battle of Bunker Hill, the fighting was done on Breed's Hill. Here was located the American redoubt, against which the British made their three historic charges, and here Joseph Warren fell. Bunker Hill Monument stands on Breed's Hill. As the stamp shows the words, "Bunker Hill," and not "Bunker Hill Monument," the stamp is totally incorrect -- the location depicted is not Bunker Hill. One last dig, John Trumbull, the famous American Revolution artist, calls Bunker Hill "Bunker's Hill," which is probably the correct name. (USA #1034, ISSUED 1959)

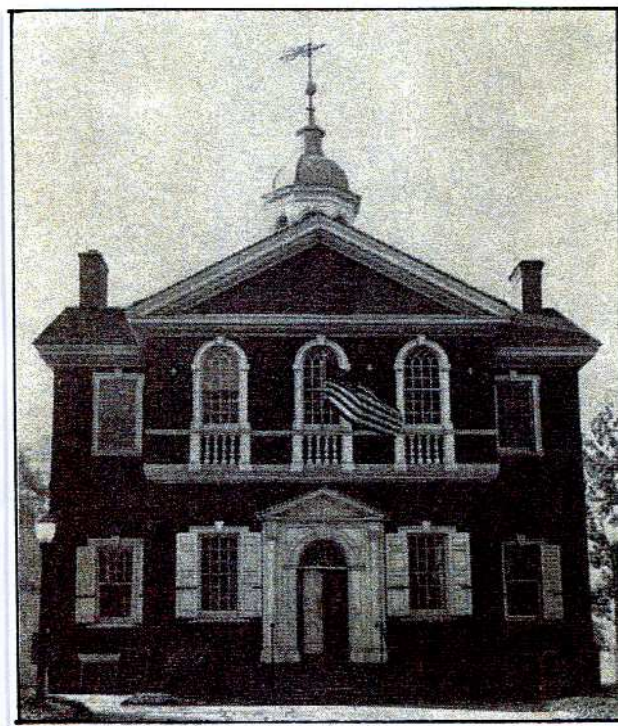
CARPENTER QUIZ



Carpenters' Hall, which is shown on this stamp, presents an interesting perspective question. The following is an enlargement of the building shown in the stamp design.



The following is a photograph of the actual building, taken directly from the front, although not the same angle as that seen in the stamp design.



The question is, if one were to elevate himself to the view point where the lower roof gable line (i.e., lower line in the triangle) was parallel with the roof line in the background, how much of the tower would be visi-

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ble? The stamp design indicates that the entire tower would be seen. However, the stamp designer, Frank P. Conley, appears to have decreased the height of the gable and increased the pitch on the roof in the background. These conditions cause the tower to become elevated. It appears the stamp design was taken from an architectural drawing which was intended to illustrate rather than depict the building. The following illustrations compare corresponding roof pitch lines shown on the stamp and the photograph. The stamp detail is on the left. (USA #1543, ISSUED 1974)



NOTE: The logic for this entry might be in error. Please disregard.

COAT CHECK



The coat of arms on this stamp is shown as, *Arms of the London and Bristol Company for colonizing Newfoundland*. This information is not correct. The coat of arms shown is that granted to the colony by Charles I in 1637. It appears the stamp designer obtained his information from a book written by the historian Prowse who used the wrong illustration in his work. The postage stamp error was not discovered until Newfoundland officially adopted its coat of arms in 1928. The correct coat of arms is shown on CDN #427 issued in 1966. (NFD #88, ISSUED 1910)

COLUMBUS DISCOVERIES



A painting entitled, *Landing of Columbus*, by John Vanderlyn (1776-1852), was used for the design of this stamp. The stamp designer saw fit to *exclude* two members of the landing party directly behind Columbus. This exclusion is perfectly understandable as the crowd is a little too jammed-up for a postage stamp engraving. However, the two figures excluded are each holding *standards* (a spear and a Christian cross) which are *included* in the stamp design. The missing men and their standards are identified on the following

detail from the painting. Note that you can see a hand holding the cross standard. The hand is that of the missing man on the right.



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Vanderlyn's remarkable work is 12-feet by 18-feet. As such, it would be difficult to overlook any part of the painting. The following details from the stamp show

the areas of the missing men. The first detail shows the area of the missing man on the left. The second detail shows that of the missing man on the right.



Vanderlyn's entire painting is shown below. The work was placed in the U.S. Capitol rotunda in 1847, five

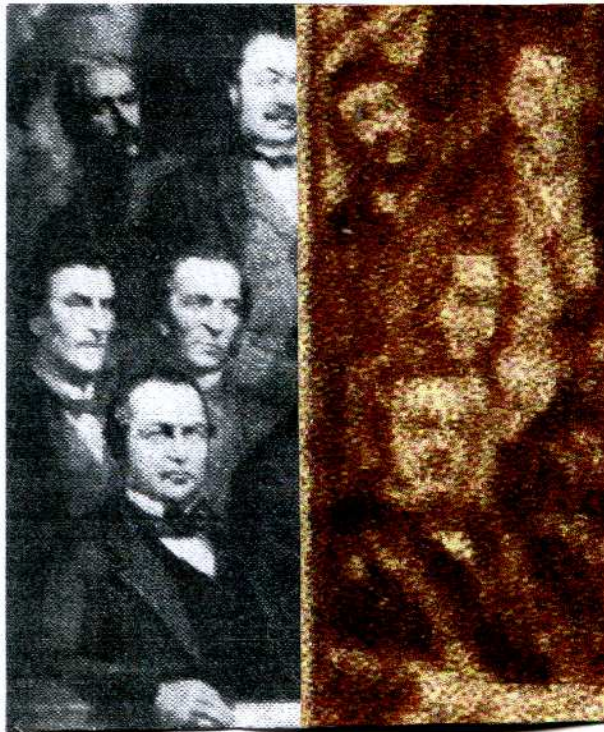
years before Vanderlyn died. (USA #231, ISSUED 1893)



CONFEDERATION COMPLICATIONS



Canada celebrated its 50th Anniversary of Confederation with a postage stamp showing *some* of the Fathers of Confederation. The stamp was designed after a painting by Robert Harris that shows the Quebec Conference held in 1864. The stamp designer evidently had trouble with the wide and ornate left and right stamp borders. He therefore cut off seven fathers on the right side of the stamp and one father on the left side of the stamp. While this action in itself was totally unforgivable, it is made worse by the fact that there was room for the father on the left. The following illustration shows comparative details from the painting (left) and the stamp (right). The father on the extreme left of the painting is not included in the stamp design.



Fortunately, in 1927 (60th Anniversary of Confederation) the stamp design was revised (CDN #142 as follows) to include all of the fathers in the painting.



With this release, controversy raged because the stamp showed 34 delegates instead of 33, the correct number. No one, it appears, took the trouble to look at the painting key. One of the figures shown is Hewitt Bernard who was the secretary for the conference. Bernard is the top left figure in the *adjacent* illustrations (both in the actual painting and the stamp detail). This means that there were just 33 fathers shown in the painting and on the revised stamp. However, with regard to actual number, both the painting and the stamp are incorrect. Two fathers shown as present, William McDougall and Thomas D'Arcy McGee, definitely *did not* attend the Quebec conference. The following illustration shows the two absent but present delegates.



The father shown in the circle on the left is William McDougall, the father on the right is Thomas D'Arcy McGee. (CDN #135, ISSUED 1917)

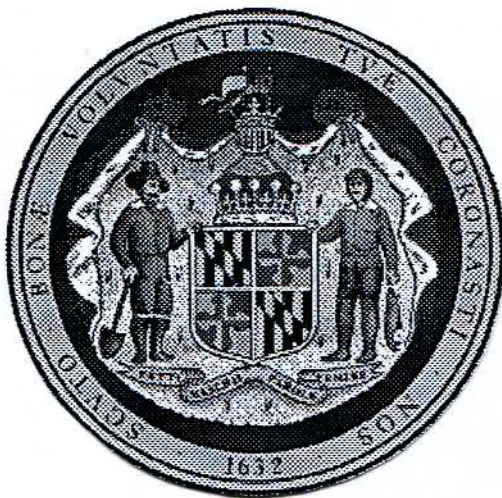
CORONET COMPLICATIONS



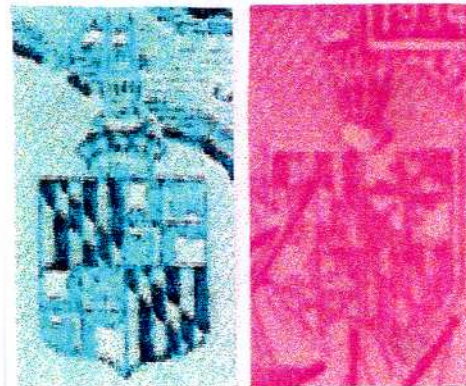
This U.S. stamp issued in 1934 shows the Calvert family coat of arms in the upper right corner. Another U.S. stamp, as follows, USA #984 issued in 1949, also shows the same coat of arms in the upper left corner.



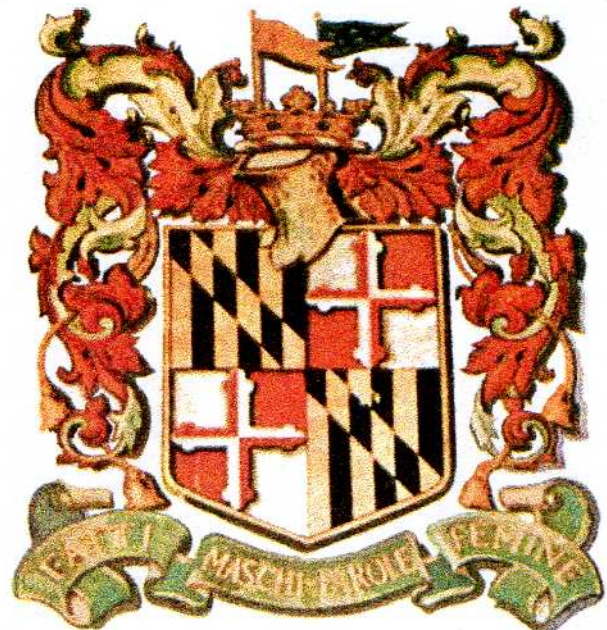
The Calvert Coat of Arms is used on the reverse side of the Great Seal of Maryland which appears as follows:



A comparison between the coats of arms shown on the postage stamps reveals that only the second stamp issued in 1949 matches the coat of arms shown on the Great Seal of Maryland. The following illustrations compare the stamp details (1949 stamp is on the left).



The 1934 stamp is missing the coronet shown above the shield -- upon which rests the full-faced helmet. Also, the shape of the shield is different. The missing coronet is the "earl's coronet," which the Calvert family had the right to include on their coat of arms after the Maryland charter was granted in June 1632. As the stamp commemorated the period 1634 to 1934, then the coronet should definitely be included in the stamp design. It is apparent the stamp designer, Alvin R. Meissner, used an illustration of the coat of arms in effect prior to the Maryland charter. The following photograph shows the coat of arms at that time.

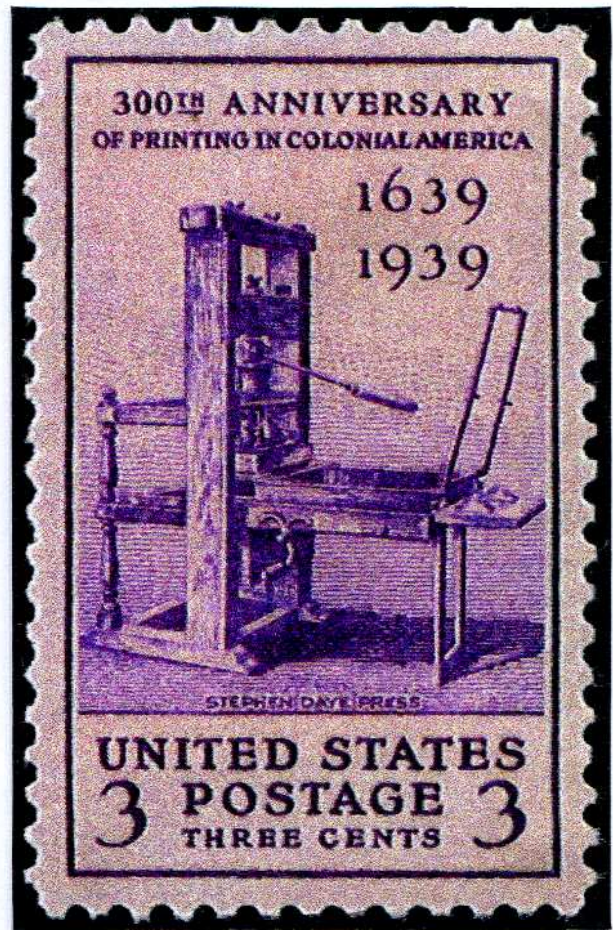


It is noted that the helmet in this illustration is profile rather than full-faced. Also, the flags are flying in the opposite direction to those shown on the current Maryland seal. These details, however, are just artistic variations. (USA #736, ISSUED 1934)

DAY DILEMMA



The printing press depicted on this stamp is shown as a *Stephen Daye Press*. Stephen Daye is believed to be first printer in the British Colonies in America. The stamp raises a number of questions. Stephen's last name, while shown as "Daye" on the stamp, is spelled "Day" in most contemporary documents and in actual signatures of Stephen himself. Major reference works refer the reader to "Day" when "Daye" is looked-up. Next, some historians are of the opinion that the first printer was Matthew Day, Stephen's son. Matthew is said to have printed documents a year earlier than the commemoration date shown on the stamp (i.e., 1638 instead of 1639). Finally, the press machine shown on the stamp may not even be a Stephen Daye Press, if such a press ever existed. The press shown is a likeness of an ordinary early press that belongs to the Vermont Historical Society. (USA #857, ISSUED 1939)



DIAMOND DISCREPANCY



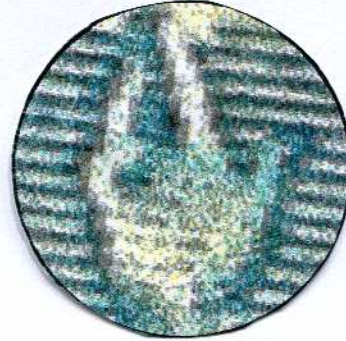
Les Halloway, the designer of this stamp, made the person catching the ball left-handed. We see this because he is wearing his glove on his right hand. Also, in showing a baseball diamond, Halloway has placed a small diamond directly in the center of the diagram. This marking should actually be a circle, the center of which, in reality, is nearly 6-feet closer to the home plate location. The circle, of course, is the pitcher's mound and it is certainly much larger than the bases -- not the same size as the stamp implies. The exact center of a baseball diamond would fall *within* this circle, it has no relevance to any of the diamond's measurements. In other words, the center has no significance. (CDN #1221, ISSUED 1988)

DIGIT DELETION



This stamp marked the passage of Canada's Citizenship Act. The design shows a symbolic Canadian greeting the new day. For some unknown reason, the engraver gave the figure only three fingers on his right hand. As the error is so obvious, it is hard to conceive

how it was not detected prior to printing. The stamp was designed by Alan B. Beddoc of Ottawa, Ontario. While it is a little late now, Mr. Beddoc should have been reminded that Canadian citizens come in two types -- male and female. (CDN #275, ISSUED 1947)



EVANGELINE AND WHAT'S NOT SEEN



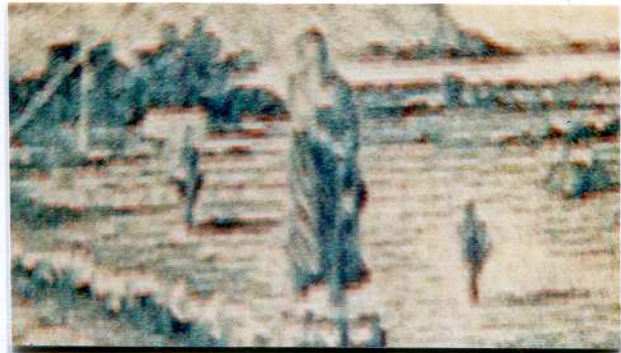
A scene in Grand Pré, Nova Scotia is shown on this Canadian stamp. There is a little chapel in the background and a statue of *Evangeline* in the foreground. The chapel, built in 1920, is a replica of the Church of St. Charles. It was in this church that the Expulsion of the Acadians was ordered in 1755. The Acadians, who were French settlers, refused to take the British Oath of Allegiance unless they were exempted from military service. A compromise was not reached, so some 14,000 Acadians were ordered to be dispersed to various British colonies. The Acadian people endured incredibly hardships during this "relocation." After the expulsion there emerged a romantic story of a parted Acadian couple that came to the attention of Horace L. Conolly, a Boston minister. Conolly tried to get the novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne to write the story, however, Hawthorne was not impressed. Later, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow somehow heard about the story and obtained permission from Conolly to use the plot in a poem. Wadsworth never visited Grand Pré, he relied upon published accounts of the Acadian expulsion. Wadsworth selected the name *Evangeline* for the

heroine in his poem which was published in 1847. The poem became very popular and *Evangeline* became virtually enshrined in the folklore of Nova Scotia. The extent of this "enshrining" is evidenced by the fact that the statue seen on the stamp was designed and partially created by Philippe Hébert (1850-1917), one of Canada's foremost sculptors. Hébert died before he could complete the work. It was finished by Hébert's son, Henri, in 1920. It is said that the face on the bronze statue gradually appears older and sadder as one circles the work. The following photograph shows the statue from the same angle as that seen on the stamp.



In this photograph, it is seen that *Evangeline* is holding a long wooden staff. The staff is much higher than her

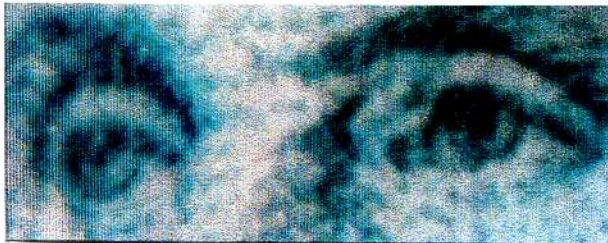
waist and it is angled towards her right side (left facing). The stamp designer apparently did not care for this arrangement. He cut the staff off to about the length of a walking stick and angled it to Evangeline's left side (right facing). The following stamp detail enlargement shows the revision. As to the little chapel in the background, which gives a somewhat "saintly" air to the scene, it is never used as a church. It serves as a museum for Native Indian artifacts and relics of Acadian and New England settlers. (CDN #176, ISSUED 1930)



EYE WONDERS



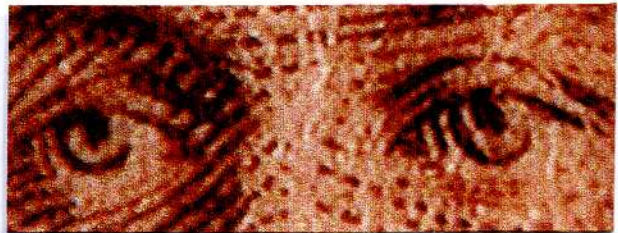
This stamp has an error that appears to have occurred in the printing process. Washington's left eye (right facing) has a deformed upper eye lid. The following enlargement clearly shows the anomaly.



A Canadian stamp (CDN #96), issued in 1908, showing the likeness of the Prince and Princess of Wales also has an eye defect.



In this case, however, the lower part of the Prince's right eye (left facing) is missing as seen in the following enlargement.



Further, the fact that the Prince's left eyeball is considerably larger than his right eyeball adds to the severity of the defect -- resulting in a "bug-eyed" appearance. The defects in both stamps were evidently not considered severe enough to warrant reissuing the stamps with corrections. If they had, then the original stamps would have certainly become unique variations. (USA #710, ISSUED 1932)



FIN AND FLIPPER FLAPPER



It was certainly fitting for Newfoundland to show a codfish and a seal on a number of its early 1870's postage stamps. These prime natural resources of the region encouraged settlement and provided a livelihood for thousands of people. Unfortunately, the artist who engraved the plates for the stamps lived in England and apparently had little knowledge of the animals he was asked to design. He omitted to show a split in the tail of the codfish (illustrated above). Also, he gave the seal front paws, or feet, instead of flippers as seen on the following stamp (NFD #26).



The tail fin error on the cod fish is unforgivable; however, there *may* be an excuse for the seal with paws. We are told the artist depicted a type of hair seal rather than the more common commercial fur seal (in this case the harp seal). Contrary to popular belief, we are informed that a type of hair seal does have paw-like front flippers, and it is a native of the Newfoundland region. This being the case, the stamp is not incorrect, it is just inappropriate. It does not appear, however, that anyone was really concerned with either the fish or the seal. The same stamp designs were repeated some years later between 1876 and 1879 (NFD #38, #40). In 1882, the cod fish finally got its split tail (NFD #46). Then about 1887, the seal was given proper flippers (NFD #53). These stamps are shown below. (NFD #24, ISSUED c.1865)



FLIGHT PLIGHT



On July 28, 1933, an Italian air armada of twenty-three Savoia-Marchetti flying boats under the leadership of General Italo Balbo landed at Shoal Harbor, Newfoundland. The armada was on its return flight to Italy from the Century of Progress Exposition at Chicago. Newfoundland commemorated the event with a stamp over-printing. The rate of \$4.50 shown on the stamp was that agreed with the Italian authorities to carry a one-half ounce letter to Europe. However, it is known that Balbo had refused to carry mail at a rate less than \$4.50, so the agreement was one-sided.

It is reasoned that both the United States and Canada decided not to issue special stamps commemorating the event in light of political considerations. The Newfoundland government's decision to use the *Labrador, the Land of Gold* stamp for over-printing was probably based on the fact that the stamp has three light planes in the background. Shoal Harbor is at the head of Random Sound in Trinity Bay, about 132 miles northwest of St. John's, Newfoundland, which is nowhere near Labrador. Moreover, other than British royalty, Newfoundland did not honor living persons on postage stamps. An exception was made with the Balbo stamp and the person honored was not even a citizen of Newfoundland or the British Empire. We must wonder if the postal authorities considered these aspects. It is also amusing that the stamp more or less parallels the U.S. Lindbergh issue (USA #C10) which was the first U.S. stamp to honor a living person, albeit indirectly. (NFD #C18, ISSUED 1933)

FLUTTER FLAPPER



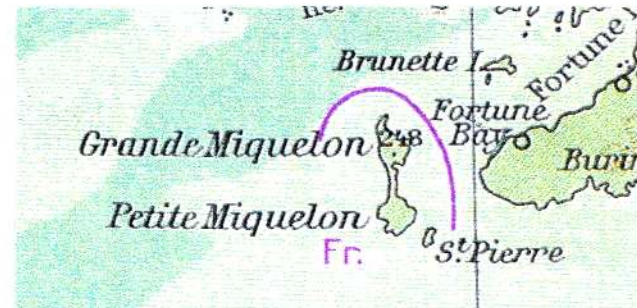
The period warship shown in the center of this stamp has its flag flying in the wrong direction.

While the flag shown may appear correct to the eye, flags on sailing ships must fly in the same direction as the wind. If the wind is strong enough to fly the flag in the opposite direction, then the ship would also have to be going in that direction. In this case, the sails would be filled towards the stern of the ship. It is remarkable how often artists make this error. It is possible, of course, that a little gust of wind can momentarily reverse the direction of a flag so we will not pursue the argument any further. (USA #791, ISSUED 1937)

FRENCH CONNECTION



The map of Newfoundland's territory shown on this stamp appears to include a French possession. The French islands of Miquelon and St. Pierre are directly off the southern coast of Newfoundland. The map on the stamp shows a small defined white area in the exact location of the larger of the two islands, Miquelon. The area is circled on the following enlargement of the stamp detail (left). An atlas map showing the French islands is on the right. (NFD #145, ISSUED 1928)

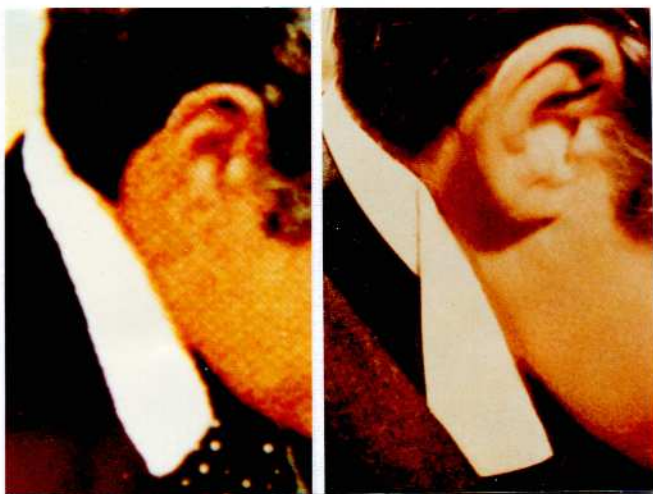


GABLE GOOFS AND LEIGH LIES



Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh are seen on this stamp in a scene from the film *Gone with the Wind*. A close examination of this stamp reveals that the lower portion of Gable's right ear and the background in this area appears to be defective. The lower portion of the ear is very vague (some stamps worse than others) and the hair line behind the ear is incorrect. Further, if the stamp is supposed to depict the famous and usually seen Gable/Leigh embrace in the film, then there is a whole series of anomalies associated with the way in which both actors are dressed. Also, the background is totally different. Here, how-

ever, a change would certainly be justified to give the stamp a more pleasing and interesting effect. Nevertheless, one might note that the stamp embrace is somewhat "un-Hollywood." Leigh should have her left arm over Gable's shoulder and Gable should have his left arm around Leigh's upper back. Certainly, if there is another "embrace" in the film that corresponds to the stamp design, it is highly inferior to the one we normally see. Illustrations on the stamp anomalies follow.

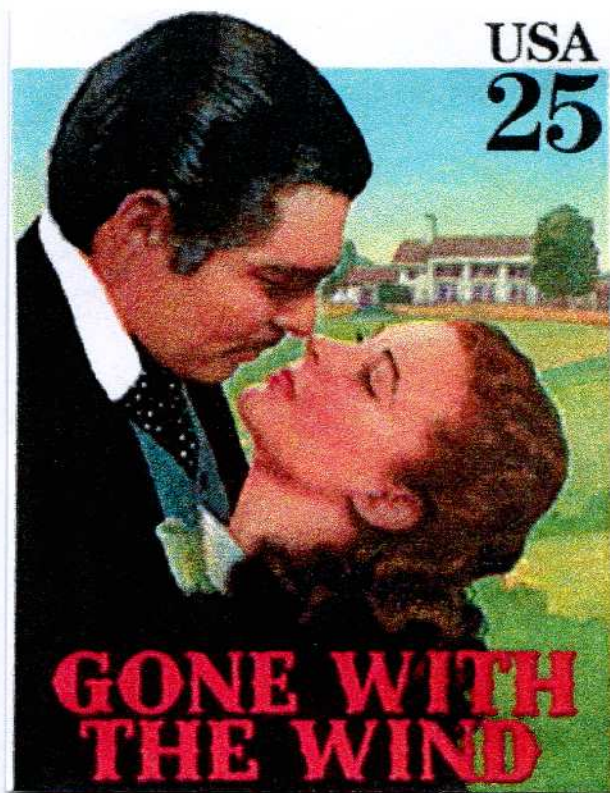


Gable's right ear area on the stamp (left) is compared here with the same area on the actual photograph probably used for the stamp design. This comparison is a "worse case," however, all stamps issued show the defects.



In this illustration, Gable's defective ear is not evident, although the hairline is still incorrect. It appears the illustration was taken from preliminary stamp artwork

and not the stamp itself. This conclusion is supported by the graphic stamp perforations. The ear defect, therefore, probably occurred in the printing process.



This comparison between the probably photograph used for the stamp design (top) and the postage stamp enables one to see the differences. (USA #2446, ISSUED 1990)

HIGH FLYING LYING



The airplane shown on this stamp is a Lockheed Model 18 Lodestar. The plane is seen flying over the Southern Canada Power House at Lord's Falls on the Saint Francis River, Drumondville, Quebec. The registration information shown on the plane's wings is CF-BAF as can be seen on the following enlargement.



This registration was never assigned to a Lodestar plane. It was assigned to Lockheed's Model 10A, the original Electra. (CDN #CE1, ISSUED 1942)

HISTORICAL HYSTERICS



The illustrated Huguenot-Walloon Tercentenary stamp series is probably the biggest mess-up in U.S. postal history. The main problem lies in combining the two entities, Huguenot and Walloon, on the same stamps. The third stamp illustrated is strictly a Huguenot stamp, however, along with referencing the Walloons, it has dates that *primarily* apply to the Walloons. The stamp shows a monument erected by the French Huguenots at Fort Carolina (now Mayport), Florida in 1564. It was destroyed by the Spanish in 1565. The monument was replaced and dedicated in 1924. This date, therefore, has significance, but not in the context of a tercentenary (1624-1924). The other two stamps are essentially correct except they reference the Huguenots. The Walloons, by enlarge, did arrive in North America in 1624. However, there were Dutch settlements as early as 1614. This fact prompted the New York Holland Society to object to the dates shown on the stamps. The entire controversy related to these stamps is primarily in connection with the difference

between Walloons and Huguenots. Very basically, Walloons were French-*dialect* speaking Protestants living in parts of Belgium. In the late 1500's and early 1600's, many Walloons fled to the Netherlands to escape religious persecution. Here, they became known to the Dutch people as Huguenots (French Protestants). In 1624, a large number of Walloons emigrated to North America. The Huguenots were French speaking Protestants living in France. They were also subjected to religious persecution. In 1562, some Huguenots made an *unsuccessful* attempt to establish a colony in North America (referred to with the monument stamp). In 1685, a mass emigration of Huguenots to other countries took place. Many of these people went to North America. The Scott Catalogue shows the following regarding the three stamps: *300th anniversary of the settling of the Walloons, and in honor of the Huguenots*. Given the circumstances, this statement appears to be the best way to resolve the mess. (USA #614-6, ISSUED 1924)

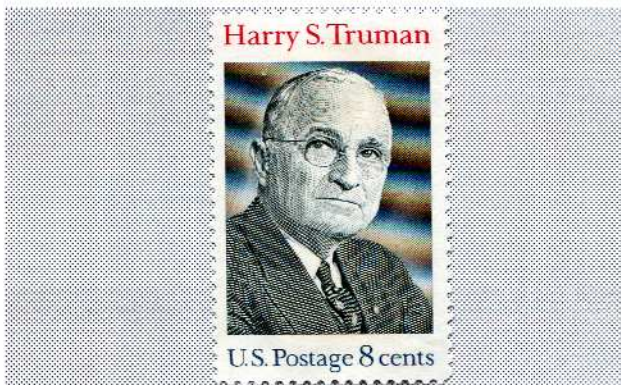
INDIANA TWO-STEP



The little old house that served as the first Capitol of Indiana is shown in the background of this stamp. The house was built around the year 1800 and has been preserved as a historical land mark. The actual house has two steps leading up to the threshold of each of its front doors. The stamp designer did not to include the steps in the stamp design. It appears he made the front doors longer to eliminate one step and decided that what was left did not require a step. While the actual house design might be a little odd in this regard, it is certainly too late to change it now. The following illustrations show the stamp design house (left) compared with a photograph of the actual house. (USA #996, ISSUED 1950)



INITIAL ISSUE



It is common knowledge that Harry S Truman's middle "initial" did not stand for any specific name. He tells us that one of his grandfathers' name was Shipp and the other Solomon. As his parents could not

decide which of these two names to give their son, they decided to just give him the letter "S," thus honoring both grandfathers. You will note that I have shown the word "initial" in quotations. This distinction was used because the letter is not an initial -- it is just a letter. Consequently, the letter must not be shown with a period like a regular initial. When a period is used after a letter, the period takes the place of missing letters. In Truman's case, there were no missing letters because they were undecided. For this reason, Harry Truman himself never used a period when he wrote or signed his name, nor did his printed letterheads show a period. Both the Encyclopedia Americana and the Merriam Webster people abide by the rule. The illustrated stamp and two other U.S. Truman stamps issued to date are therefore incorrect in this regard. (USA #1499, ISSUED 1973)

IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS



A man with a strange hat and long, flowing white beard graces this Newfoundland stamp issued in 1897. The inscription reads, "CABOT, HYM THAT

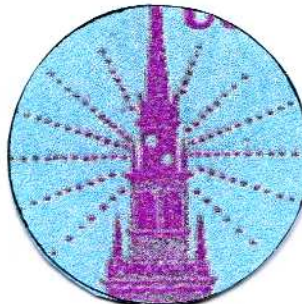
FOUND THE NEW ISLE." The intention of the stamp, of course, is to honor John Cabot who discovered Newfoundland in 1497. However, because no portrait of John Cabot could be found for the stamp design, the likeness of Cabot's son, Sebastian, was substituted. To make matters worse, recent evidence suggests that Sebastian may not have even accompanied his father on the 1497 voyage to Newfoundland as was generally believed. Moreover, some historians remark that Sebastian was a bit of a "bad egg" in the world of explorers who was prone to telling tall tales of his travels and experiences. For the well-intentioned stamp designers we can offer some solace by saying, *it's the thought that counts*. (NFD #62, ISSUED 1897)

LET THERE BE LIGHT



The church tower shown on the Old North Church depicted on this stamp gives one the impression that it is circular. However, the entire structure is square. Further, we might also wonder as to the placement of the lanterns shown on the stamp. Given the narrow window or opening, the lanterns probably did not appear as the stamp design indicates. It is far more likely that they were placed vertically in a straight line (one atop the other with as much space as possible in-between). Surprisingly, *Chronicle of America* (1988) states that only one lantern was hung, quote: *At sunrise, the sexton at Christ's Church ascended the tower and hung a single lantern*. As the story goes, the plan called for two (2) lanterns if the British were seen to be coming in boats across the River Charles; one (1) lantern if they were seen going on foot by Boston Neck in the south. The British crossed the river so two (2) lanterns, as the stamp shows, were hung. The expression *One if by land, two if by sea*, as shown on

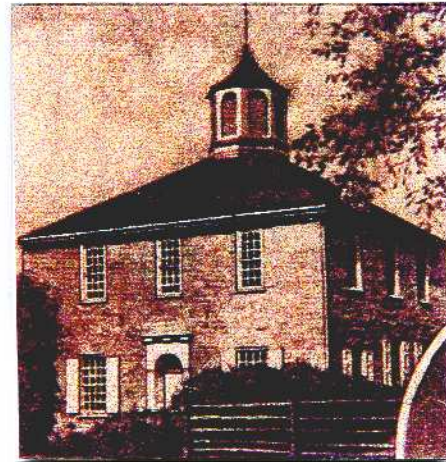
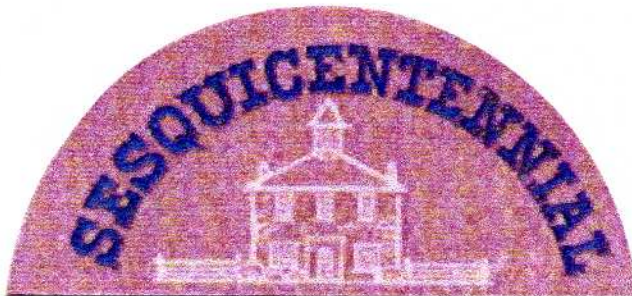
the stamp, is from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem, *Paul Revere's Ride* (1860). We have to accept that the word "sea" simply meant "water," which in this case was a river crossing. Perhaps herein lies the confusion as there are no seas or even large lakes anywhere near the River Charles. The word "sea," therefore, cannot be taken literally. In all likelihood, the patriots did not even use the word "sea," in their plans. We can be reasonably sure they just stated, "land route or river crossing," or words to that effect. On a different note, for many years, there has been debate as to who actually hung the lanterns in the steeple. Credit has been generally given to John Pulling who was the church sexton at the time. However, the question was put to a recent curator of the church who stated that Pulling was too old and too feeble to even walk out in the night, let alone climb the stairs to the steeple. The curator informed that it was Robert Newman, a 26-year-old patriot, who performed the deed. The following illustrations show the stamp design tower (left) and the actual tower. (USA #1603, ISSUED 1975)



LIGHT DIFFERENCES



Indiana's old Capital at Corydon as it is shown on this stamp appears to have been short-changed window-wise. The windows on the upper floor show only two panes across. The actual building has three panes across. The following illustrations compare the stamp design with a photograph of the actual building. One might also note the badly off-center circle on this stamp. (USA #1308, ISSUED 1966)



LIGHT READING



This stamp makes two claims. First, that Edison's original lamp was invented in 1879. Second, that 1929 was the Golden Jubilee of electric light. On the first claim, Edison invented many lamps prior to 1879, however, they were not *practical*. The problem was the filament. Edison tried thousands of materials for use as the filament. He needed to find something that could

be heated to give off light but would not burn into ashes. Everything he tried prior to 1879 had such limited life it was not practical. He invented the carbon filament in 1879 which had a practical life expectancy. On the second claim, the first incandescent electric lamp was invented in 1802 by Sir Humphrey Davy, an English chemist. However, again the lamp was not practical. Somewhat practical (though unsatisfactory), electric lamps are traced to as early as 1859. In that year, Moses Farmer lit his house in Salem, Massachusetts with electric lamps. Edison's invention brought about a *practical* electric lamp and therefore *practical* electric light. The statements on the stamp, therefore, are only correct when they are taken to include the word *practical*. (USA #654, ISSUED 1929)

LITTLE THINGS MEAN A LOT



This stamp depicts the Great Seal of the State of Wyoming. While there are several versions of the seal, the stamp designer's rendition is greatly superior to any. Unfortunately, there is one minor omission that has significant meaning. Under the shield (lower,

center) there should be a ribbon with the dates 1869 and 1890. While the date 1890 (statehood date) is naturally expressed further down on the stamp, there is no reference anywhere to the date 1869. This date is important because it was in that year that women were given the right to vote and hold public office in Wyoming Territory. It was the date of Wyoming's **EQUAL RIGHTS** and these words are shown on the banner behind the **WOMAN** who is the central figure on the seal. Wyoming is very proud (and rightly so) of its very early attention to equal rights. That is why the central seal figure is a woman. Without the date, the important time reference for Wyoming's equal rights is lost. The following illustrations show the unfortunate omission and the remarkable stamp artistry. (USA #897, ISSUED 1940)



MEDAL MUDDLE

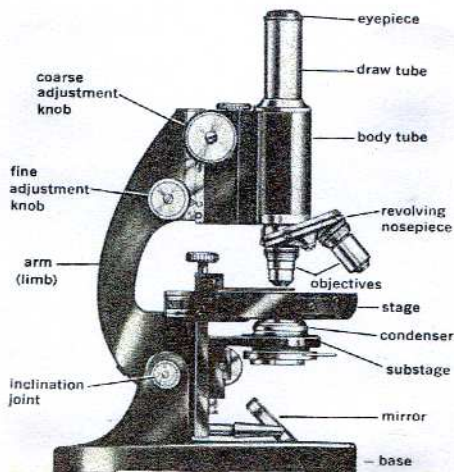


There are three (3) different types of U.S. medals of honor depicted on the illustrated stamp. The use of the singular "Medal of Honor" as shown on the stamp is misleading. The medal on the left is the Army-Air Force medal. This medal was used when the Air Force (or Air Service) was part of the Army. The medal in the center is the Air Force medal which was used after the Air Force became a separate military establishment. The medal on the right is the Navy-Marine Corps medal. (USA #2045, ISSUED 1983)

MICROSCOPICS TOPICS



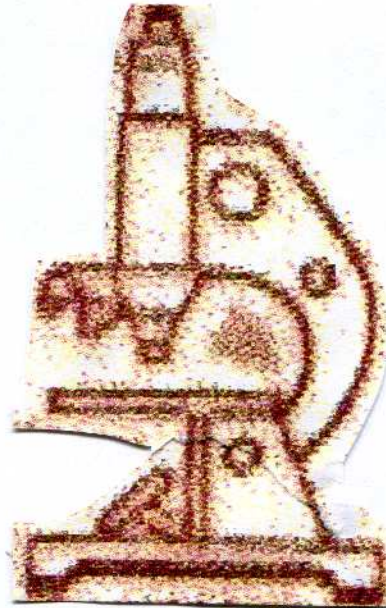
A microscope and globe were used for the 1958 International Geophysical Year theme depicted on this stamp. It is, however, highly evident the stamp designer sacrificed accuracy for aesthetics in that the microscope is incomplete and therefore unusable. Conspicuously absent is the microscope substage assembly which is mounted directly under the stage. The following illustrations of the stamp microscope and an actual microscope show the omission.



We can see, of course, that if the designer had included the substage assembly, the globe in the background would have been excessively obliterated. Nevertheless, when one is dealing with science, he or she should be as accurate as possible. In this case, it would have been far more appropriate to redesign the entire stamp. Unfortunately, errors have a habit of breeding other errors. When the following Education stamp (CDN #396) of 1962 was designed, a microscope was used in the stamp background to signify science.



The following is an enlargement of the microscope seen on the foregoing stamp.



Remarkably, the stamp designer for this stamp also omitted the microscope substage assembly. It might be reasoned that this person had a look at the geophysical year stamp and just followed suit. In this case, of course, there can be no excuse for omitting the detail. There is nothing further in the stamp background so inclusion of the additional detail would not affect anything. Certainly microscope illustrations are not hard to find. All major reference works have them. (CDN #376, ISSUED 1958)

MIGRATORY PROBLEMS



This attractive set of stamps was designed by Debbie Adams and produced by the Canadian Bank Note Company. All four stamps carry the same message in both English and French: *migratory wildlife -- faune migratrice*. On the first printing of the stamps, however, the stamp showing the belted kingfisher (lower left) did not show the letter "f" in the word *faune*. The following illustrations are enlarged stamp details that show the printing as it appears and how it should appear.



Immediately Canada Post learned of the error, the stamps were reissued with the correction. The original stamps were not recalled. We therefore have two versions of the stamp block which are listed as MIGRATORY WILDLIFE - 1 and MIGRATORY WILDLIFE - 2. Exactly how an error of this nature could occur is a little baffling. Postage stamps undergo very vigorous examination. Certainly more than one person looks at the proofs and they are all aware of the dire consequences of errors. We can imagine that Debbie Adams was mortified when she learned of the oversight. As all four stamps have the same message, it was probably a case of *assuming* they were all correct. In this case, the first, second and third proof was probably correct. Therefore the last stamp, which had the error, failed to get the same level of attention as the other stamps. One must note that the error on this stamp is totally different in nature to other stamp errors because it is not a *complicated* error. In other words, *anyone* at Canada Post could have and should have noticed it. It did not require any special expertise or knowledge of the stamp subject. While the error is certainly no great cause for concern, we have to stop and wonder for a moment. These stamps were issued in 1995 -- a time when one careless assumption in many walks of our modern life could lead to a major catastrophe. The grim lesson is that human beings are very vulnerable, despite our advanced technology. The old saying *to err is human* continually haunts us. Unfortunately, the potential results of our errors have become so significant that we cannot afford to make errors -- but we cannot stop being human. (CDN #1563-1566, ISSUED 1995, Error is on #1564, reissue is #1567)

NO BACON PLEASE



It is quite safe to say that Francis Bacon would not be impressed with the illustrated postage stamp. There is nothing wrong with the likeness of the great philosopher, nor the inscription stating that he was *The guiding spirit in the colonization scheme*. What is wrong is the name, "Lord Bacon." When Bacon was raised to the peerage, he took the title of *Verulam*, and therefore was Lord Verulam, not Lord Bacon. (NFD #98, ISSUED 1911)

NUMBER GAMES



The denomination “1” in the right top corner of this stamp is backwards. It is the mirror image of the “1” in the opposite corner. We might also wonder as to the total logic of this stamp. It is celebrating two anniversaries -- Newfoundland’s 400th anniversary (1497-1897) and Queen Victoria’s 60th anniversary. Because of the way the stamp is designed, one immediately confuses the dates shown with Victoria’s reign. It takes a moment to realize that the numbers are not related. (NFD #61, ISSUED 1897)



PARTIAL SEAL IS HARDLY REAL



The seal in the upper left part of the illustrated stamp is a portion of the official seal of the United States Department of the Air Force. This department, and its seal, came into official being on September 18, 1947. As the stamp was issued in 1957, one would reason that the stamp designer would have had access to a copy of the actual seal for design purposes. The stamp seal detail is at best only similar to the same detail on the actual seal as can be seen in the following illustrations. (USA #C49, ISSUED 1957)



PEN POSTULATING



A hand holding a quill pen is seen on this stamp commemorating the Quebec Conference in 1864.

By the 1820's steel pens had replaced Quill pens. Steel pens first appeared in England in 1803, so it is very likely high-profile politicians would have been aware of their existence at that time. Nevertheless, we must concede that quill pens were sometimes used for signing political documents long after these pens had become obsolete. In some cases, such quills were sold at auctions to people who collected things of this nature. (CDN #432, ISSUED 1964)

PHANTOM SHIP



This stamp commemorated the arrival of Sir Humphrey Gilbert's fleet at Newfoundland in 1583. The stamp shows five ships entering the harbor at what is now St. John's, Newfoundland. Gilbert certainly left Plymouth, England in five ships, the *Delight*, *Golden Hind*, *Raleigh*, *Squirrel* and the *Swallow*. This event is

commemorated on a Newfoundland stamp (NFD #218), as follows, issued in 1933.



Shortly after the expedition got underway, however, the *Raleigh* returned to port, leaving Gilbert with only four ships. Gilbert arrived at Newfoundland with four ships, not five. (NFD #219, ISSUED 1933)

PITCHER PROBLEMS



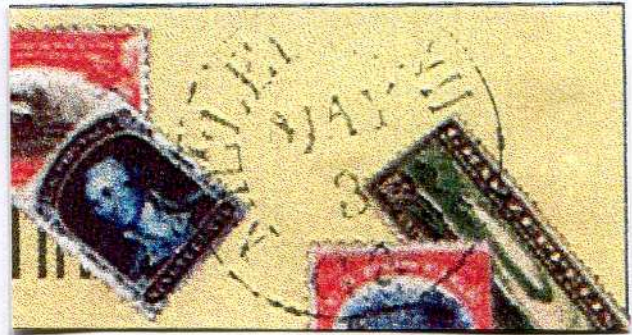
Overprinting on this stamp was used to commemorate the Battle of Monmouth and, as we are led to believe, the person of Molly Pitcher, "heroine of the battle." According to some historians, there was no such person as Molly Pitcher. The name "Molly Pitcher" was used by soldiers to refer to the women who carried water to them during battle. A "pitcher,"

of course, is a container for holding water or other liquids. The designation "Molly" was a generic or "pet" name for these ladies. If the stamp was meant to honor the heroine of the Battle of Monmouth, it should have been over printed MARY LUDWIG HAYS. Mary was a "Molly Pitcher" at this battle. When her soldier husband fell (wounded or exhausted), she grabbed a cannon rammer and took over his duties. It is apparent Mary was just as much "one of the boys" as the boys themselves. She chewed tobacco and cursed and joked with them. At one point in the battle, when Mary stretched to reach for a cartridge, a cannon ball passed between her legs, tearing away her petticoat. Immediately following this incident, she was heard to make a remark as to what might have happened if the shot had been higher. (USA #646, ISSUED 1928)

POSTAL SERVICE THRIFT



paid or was due. Certainly, we can suppose that it would not be out of line for post offices to use such handstamps for stamp cancellation impressions. However, using one that would be at least 83 years old might be stretching probability a little beyond its limits. Then again, perhaps we should be commending the U.S. Postal Service for keeping its equipment in service for such great lengths of time. Undoubtedly, such thrift and dedication has aided in keeping postal rates to a minimum. An enlargement of the applicable stamp detail follows. (USA #2782, ISSUED 1993)



A handstamp cancellation impression covering three separate postage stamps is shown on this stamp. The latest of the three stamps canceled is the 1930 Graf Zeppelin issue (USA #C13). The cancellation reads **MILLEDGEVILLE** (which is in Georgia) and the date **MAY 3**. According to the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia, the handstamp used for the impression predates the introduction of adhesive postage stamps in 1847. Such handstamps were of various designs and were stamped directly on the envelope to show that the required fee had been

PROPELLER ERROR



A curious artistic oversight on this stamp is that one can actually see the propellers on the airplanes. When a plane is in flight, the propeller is not visible, other than a slight white blur. (USA #C7, ISSUED 1926)



RESOURCE DISCOURSE



Issued to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Alberta and Saskatchewan, this stamp has a major

design error. The stamp is vertically divided showing these province's main resources. Petroleum resources are depicted on the top portion and wheat or grain resources on the lower portion. On the left margin of the stamp, the names of the provinces, Alberta and Saskatchewan, are shown. The provinces, however, do not line-up with their respective main resources. Alberta should be shown with petroleum and Saskatchewan wheat or grain, not the other way around. (CDN #355, ISSUED 1955)

SEAL SURFING



The design on the illustrated stamp is supposed to be the Great Seal of the United States. However, there is an error. The blue band directly under the eagle's head on the official seal is a rectangle. It does

not have "shield" corners like those shown on the illustrated stamp. Nevertheless, in one way the stamp design is even more correct than the Great Seal itself. The design shows a true bald eagle, America's national emblem, not the eagle of heraldry (a modified British version with a little top-notch) which presently adorns the Great Seal. In the 1960's (and beyond), the population of bald eagles in the United States was greatly diminished as a result of the over use of DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloro-ethane). As a result, the U.S. has imported bald eagles from Canada to hopefully reestablish this magnificent bird in its rightful land. Perhaps with increased presence of bald eagles, Great Seal designers will notice the error or their ways and dethrone the eagle of heraldry. (USA #1369, ISSUED 1969)

SECRET SYMBOL



While engraving the plate for the illustrated stamp, the engraver yielded to temptation and included a little secret symbol in the design. Neatly placed within Revel's beard (beside his mouth) is a tiny *Star of David* (Mogen David). It can only be seen under considerable magnification (as follows), but there is little

doubt it was deliberately engraved. (USA #2193, ISSUED 1986)



SHARK STEAKS



The theme of this stamp is *Resources for Tomorrow*. The three fish shown on the lower right side of the cogwheel are Mako sharks. While certainly an outstanding game fish with superior fighting qualities, it has no commercial value. Nevertheless, with the current excessive depletion of preferred sea life, perhaps the stamp designer has foreshadowed our future. (CDN #395, ISSUED 1961)

STARS 'N STRIPS GRIPES



Examination of this stamp reveals three major design indiscretions. To begin, the light blue shading on the flag is totally out of place and messy. Next, the stars on the flag are not properly aligned. Finally, the stars on the flag are too large. If the stamp designer, Dave LaFleur, continued the flag so that it was shown in its entirety, the resulting flag would not be the American flag. In order for all of the 50 stars to fit in the flag star field, the height of the stars must be less than the height of the flag's stripes. Also, placement of the stars must be such that they do not always line-up with the stripes. In the following actual flag detail, it is seen that in the space of three red stripes there are effectively four (4) stars.



In the following detail from the stamp design, it is seen that there are only effectively three (3) stars in the space of three red stripes.



Under the stamp designer's arrangement, the flag's star field would require an additional red stripe to accommodate five stars in the first vertical row. The following enlargement of the complete stamp design shows Old Glory in all its ugliness.



LaFleur admitted that he had problems with the design, lamenting, *How can you reproduce it so small -- and still come up with a powerful image?* However, there are other U.S. stamps with powerful designs that depict the *entire* flag in about the same space as LeFleur's partial flag. Nevertheless, credit where credit is due.

LaFleur's stamp design idea is excellent. Contrasting the flag with an ornate wooden building brings to mind picturesque little towns in rural America where numerous residents have Old Glory as a permanent fixture. (USA #2913, ISSUED 1995)

TERRITORY TREACHERY



Canadian scenes from paintings by Jean-Paul Lemieux are shown on these stamps. After the stamps were issued, it was discovered that the scene territory names had been reversed. The scene showing the church is supposed to name the Northwest Territory. The scene showing the children is supposed to name the Yukon Territory. The error was discovered when someone looked at the names on the original paintings. It is highly unlikely the error would have been discovered in any other way. Both territories have mountains, snow, little churches and children. (CDN #1018, 1025, ISSUED 1984)

TIMBER TRUNCATION



Design of this stamp is after a painting by Charles W. Jefferys entitled *Founding of Halifax*. It appears the stamp designer decided there was just too much timber in the scene. He therefore eliminated three tree stumps in the stamp design. The detail from the painting (shown first) and the stamp detail follow. While the scene implies an orderly and industrious work crew, in reality the settlement had many problems with workers. Most of the 2,576 settlers did not have the skills necessary to construct dwellings. When winter set in, over one half of the people crowded onto the ships that had brought them. Typhus broke out and before spring about 1,000 of the total number of settlers had died. Many of those people who escaped the plague moved to Boston, New York and Philadelphia. Fortunately, subsequent immigration into Halifax from the American colonies enabled the new settlement to survive. (CDN #283, ISSUED 1949)



TIME WARP



Stamp collecting was promoted by the U.S. Postal Service with this special stamp. The stamps shown in the stamp design background and the stamp on the cover in the foreground are USA #213 (green) as follows, issued September 18, 1887.



However, the postmark on the cover envelope shows the date June 16, 1886. How could a stamp be canceled over fifteen months before it was issued? It is evident the stamp designers meant to use USA #210 (red-brown) issued in 1883 which has the same design. Then again, they may have intended to use USA #211B (pale red-brown) issued in 1885. Again, this stamp has the same design. However, this selection would have been very unusual as the least expensive version (no gum) is listed at \$350 each. A whole uncut sheet as shown on the stamp would have an astronomical value -- certainly not within the average stamp collector's budget. An enlargement of the stamp detail showing the cancellation impression follows. (USA #2198, ISSUED 1986)



WILLIAMSBURG WONDER



This stamp commemorated the ratification of the United States Constitution in 1788. The official Postal Service description for the stamp states: *The central design is a reproduction of a colonial-type courthouse, with two horsemen in the foreground, one in the act of mounting and the other galloping away carrying news of the ratification.* As we know the Constitution was ratified in the Williamsburg, Virginia Courthouse, which still exists, we have to wonder why the actual building was not used for the stamp design. The following is a photograph of the actual building (which has been restored).



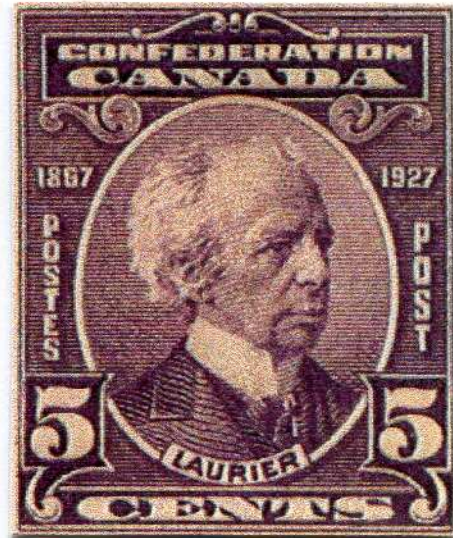
We can immediately see that the building in the stamp design is much larger than the actual building. There should be only one window each side of the entrance, not two. It is also apparent that the stamp designer added four entrance columns. While the columns admittedly improve the look of the building, it does not appear they ever existed. (USA #835, ISSUED 1938)

WILLIE WASN'T THERE



This stamp showing Sir Wilfrid Laurier (1841-1919) is one of the stamps in Canada's *Sixtieth Anniversary of Confederation* (1867-1927) series. The word "CONFEDERATION" is shown on the stamp as can be clearly seen in the following enlargement. Why Sir Wilfrid Laurier is honored in the Confederation series is totally beyond comprehension. At the time of Confederation, Laurier was 26 years old and had not yet entered politics! Laurier was not one of Canada's Fathers of Confederation. Certainly, he was a distinguished statesman and *could have been* one of the *Fathers*. He did not, however, become involved in

Federal politics until 1874, seven years *after* Confederation. (CDN #144, ISSUED 1927)



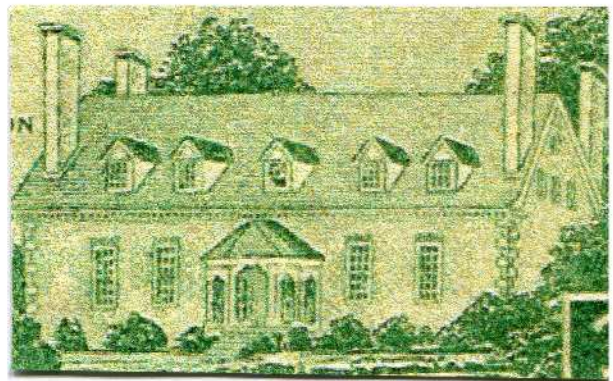
WINDOW PAINS



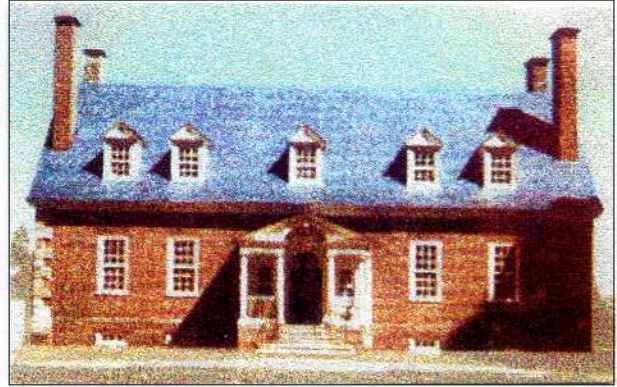
Gunston Hall, the home of George Mason, is shown on this stamp. Mason himself was also shown on a stamp -- twenty-three years after his house was depicted (USA #1858, issued 1981, as follows).



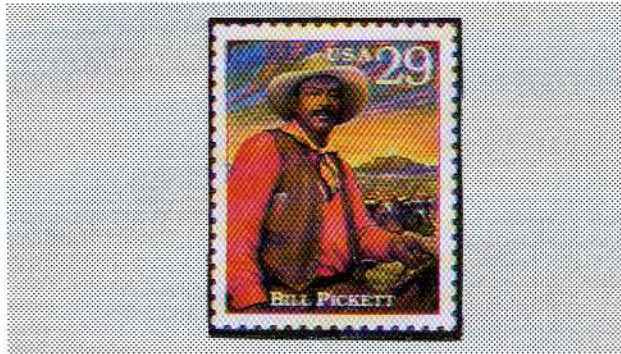
Mason, therefore, becomes the only person on a U.S. stamp to have his real estate honored first. While Mason himself was missed, there is also something missing on the Gunston Hall stamp -- the basement windows. The following illustrations show the stamp design building (top) and the actual building.



It is reasonably certain the windows were in the original building. Kevin Shupe of the Gunston Hall Library tells us the original windows probably had vertical bar grills, one of which still survives on a basement window at the back of the building (river side). If the stamp designer, Rene Clarke, purposely excluded the windows for design purposes, he would have been wise to have shown more shrubbery. The following photograph shows the river side view of the hall. Nevertheless, Clarke did depict the front porch as it appeared during George Mason's time. The balustrades and railings on both the front and back porches were added in the 19th century. (USA #1108, ISSUED 1958)



WRONG PICKETT PICK



In preparing for the design of this stamp, the stamp designers picked a photograph of the wrong person. Rather than the famous Bill Pickett (1870-1932), one of Bill's relatives was chosen for the design. The error was noticed by Bill's descendants so the stamps were recalled and a revised stamp (USA #2870g), as follows, was prepared and released.



Unfortunately, some of the original stamps had been released prior to the recall resulting in a nightmare for the U.S. Postal Service. The matter was resolved by a limited 'sale by lottery' issue of the recalled stamps. Nevertheless, as Bill Pickett was quite a famous entertainer, it is difficult to see how the error was made in the first place. (USA #2869&70g, ISSUED 1994)

