

SECTION THREE

ORIGINAL ARTWORK ODDITIES

ALL DRESSED-UP AND NOWHERE TO GO



A close look at this stamp showing Nicolet's landing at Green Bay, Wisconsin (1634), reveals that the great explorer is splendidly attired in Chinese robes. He is being greeted by a band of partially naked Indians and might be considered somewhat over-dressed for the occasion. However, Nicolet is dressed in Chinese robes because he thought he had landed in China. Difficult to see on the stamp is what Nicolet is doing with his hands. In each hand he is holding a pistol which he has just discharged. The stamp design is after a painting entitled, *Landfall of Nicolet*, by E. W. Deming. The following detail from the painting shows the action. The natives Nicolet encountered were the Winnebago Indians. Nicolet was the first white man they had ever seen. Fortunately for the explorer, these natives were friendly, encouraged a little, perhaps, by his fire power. While very disappointed that he had not landed in China, Nicolet took some solace in information provided by the Indians regarding great waters to the west.

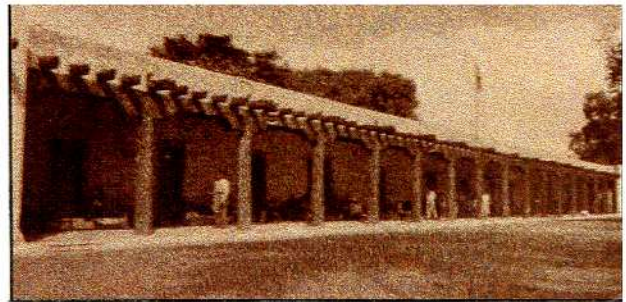
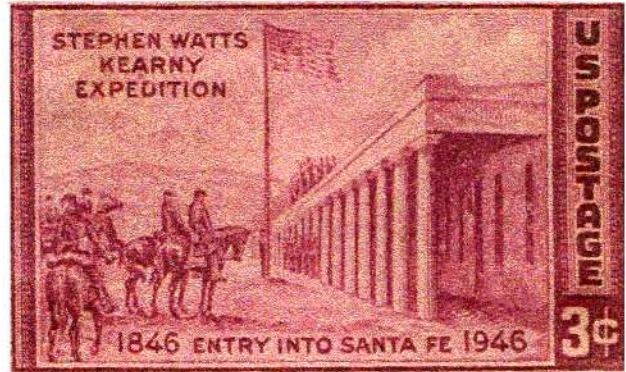
Nicolet died in 1642, still believing in a short-cut to China. (USA #739, ISSUED 1934)



ANY OLD PALACE WILL DO



This stamp depicts The Palace of the Governors, an adobe structure erected by Governor Pedro de Peralta in 1610. The design of the stamp is after a painting by Kenneth M. Chapman. Given the stamp design is fairly accurate, it is evident Chapman did not work from a proper description of the palace. The column headers he shows are not correct and the building appears to be too high. Further (and most important), he fails to show the horizontal beams that extend out of the building -- so characteristic of adobe structures. The adjacent illustrations compare the building in the stamp design to an actual photograph of the building. Another stamp (USA #1031A), as follows, issued in 1960, shows a proper likeness of the building. (USA #944, ISSUED 1946)



BANISHING BENEDICT



These U.S. postage stamps commemorated the American victory over the British at Saratoga in 1777. The stamp designs were individually taken from *two different* paintings by John Trumbull -- the original painting and a *copy* of the original painting. Both paintings have the same title, *Surrender of General John Burgoyne at Saratoga*. The first stamp is from the *copy* of the original painting. This painting is in the rotunda at the Capitol in Washington, D. C. The second stamp is a "close-up" of the central figures in the same scene. However, the design of this stamp was taken from the *original* painting. This painting is in the Yale University Art Gallery.

ORIGINAL ARTWORK ODDITIES

The third stamp is a remarkably *inferior* engraving designed from the painting copy. Both paintings show a number of officers "looking on" as the sword of surrender is passed to General Horatio Gates. While both the original painting and the copy are close, they are not exactly the same. The major difference is the repositioning of the on-lookers standing behind, and to the left of, General Gates. The *number* of individuals is the same in both paintings but for some reason Trumbull repositioned them in the painting copy. He also altered the background, appearance of some of the individuals, and other minor details -- in particular the position of the sword being surrendered to General Gates. Comparing the paintings reveals their differences. Illustrations of both paintings follow. The only official painting "key" (identification of individuals shown) your author has found is that for the painting copy. This key does not show the notorious traitor Benedict Arnold who played a major role in the Saratoga battle. Yet it is very likely Arnold was present at the surrender ceremony and if so, prominently positioned. It is possible, however, that another "key" exists for either the original painting or the copy. A noted philatelist, Marshall S. Loke, wrote an article on the first stamp in 1961. In his article Loke states, *A number of army officers are assembled near the general (Gates), these include Major General Schuyler and Major General Arnold.* The official key for the painting copy, besides not including Arnold, places Schuyler at the extreme right side of the stamp. Is it possible America's most notorious traitor unwittingly weaseled himself onto three U.S. postage stamps but has been officially banished? (L, USA #644, ISSUED 1927; C, #1728, ISSUED 1977; R, #2590, ISSUED 1994)

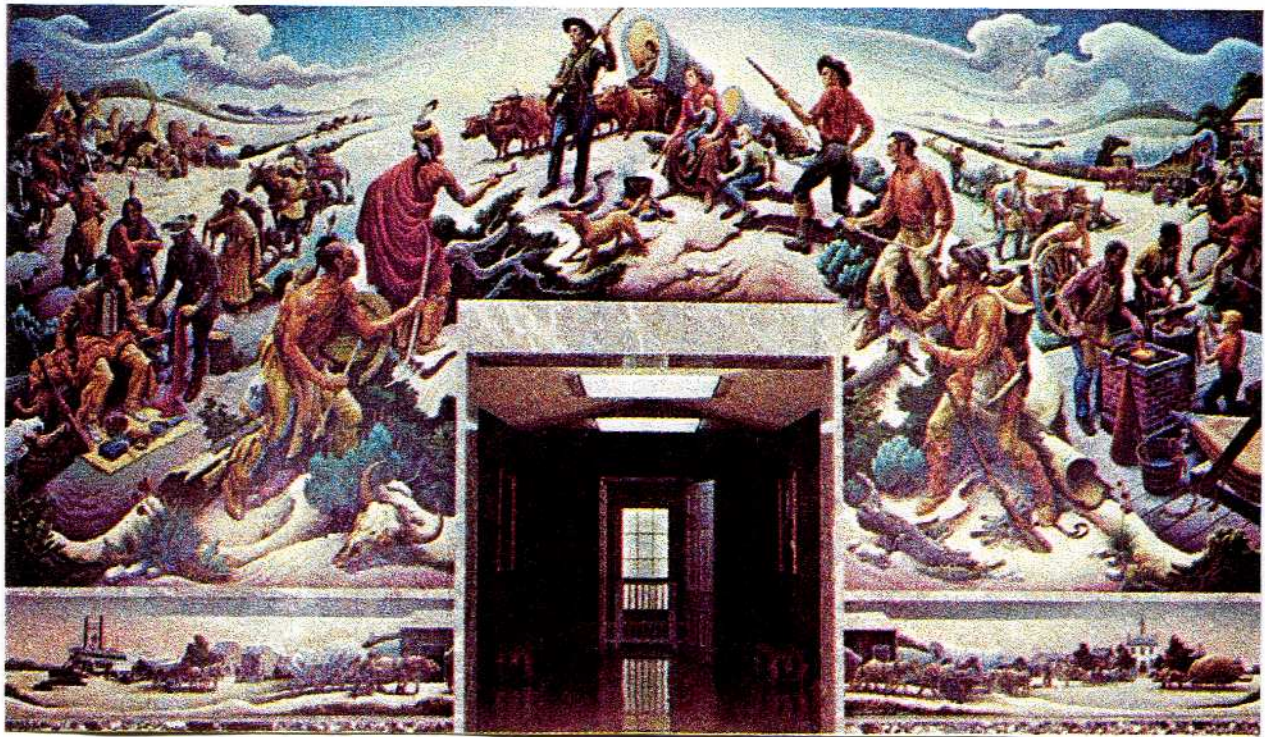


Top, original painting. Lower, painting copy.

BENTON BASHING



The scene on this stamp is from a section of a mural by Thomas Hart Benton entitled, *Independence and the Opening of the West*. What we see in the scene is both strange and a little disturbing. It is strange because the lead wagon has apparently made camp on the top of a hill. The wagons behind would have difficulties with this location. It is disturbing because we see *apparent* Indian hostility. An Indian, holding what *appears to be a tomahawk*, is approaching three armed men and a dog. Two of the men have rifles, the other man has an ax. We also see a startled mother with her children. The Indian, however, is *not* holding a tomahawk. What he has in his hand is a peace pipe. Nevertheless, in the actual mural (illustrated below) another Indian, not seen in the stamp design, has a bow and arrows. If one looks very closely at the stamp, the top of the second Indian's bow is seen at the lower left stamp corner. Benton's intention in this aspect of the mural was to convey both sides of the white man's relationship with the Indians -- good and bad. Unfortunately, the startled pioneers in the stamp design convey only the bad side. This impression leads us to believe that the Indian in the stamp design is threatening the pioneers. Further, as we cannot see the rest of the mural in the stamp design, the overall message we get from the stamp is Indian hostilities. Contrary to popular belief, Indian attacks on wagon trains were more the exception than the rule. The pioneers' greatest hardship was harsh weather and lack of water. The Indians did not become hostile until their livelihood was threatened. While hostile Indians were definitely a concern to the pioneers, Indians should not be portrayed as "bad guys" on postage stamps or anywhere else. Certainly, such was not the intention of the mural or the stamp design. When the complete mural is studied, we see a proper balance in the various aspects of pioneer life. Nevertheless, the mural section used for the stamp design conveys only one message -- hostility. This message is out of context with the original *full* message intended for the mural. (USA #1426, ISSUED 1971)



BROCK'S KNOCKS



The monument honoring Sir Isaac Brock shown on this stamp has had a very troubled history. The original monument built in 1824 was torn down to remove a rebel newspaper that had been secreted into the structure as a prank. After being rebuilt, the structure was blown to pieces by an extremist in 1840. Constructed for the third time, the statue was hit by a bolt of lightning in 1929 that severed the statue's right arm. (CDN #501, ISSUED 1969)

CHAMPLAIN CHAGRIN



Shown on the right hand side of this stamp is a portrait purported to be the likeness of Samuel de Champlain. The portrait from which the stamp portrait was designed, we are told, was painted by Moncornet, an armless and one-legged French artist who painted by holding the brush in his teeth. The person in the painting has been identified as Michel Particelli, an Italian by birth, who became controller of finance in France under King Louis XIV. (CDN #97, ISSUED 1908)



DELEGATE DISCREPANCY



Design of this stamp is a detail from John Trumbull's painting entitled, *Declaration of Independence*. The "key" to the painting shows George Clinton

as the third person in the first row, right. Clinton is identified below in an enlargement of the stamp detail. It is known, however, that Clinton was not present at the declaration signing. (USA #1691, ISSUED 1976)



FACELESS FOUNDER



Jacques Cartier is credited with the discovery of Canada. The portrait of Cartier on this stamp is after a painting by Francois Riss (c. 1839), illustrated on the right. Riss, it is said, copied a picture that was reported to bear the likeness of Cartier. If this is true, Riss was indeed privileged, because officially no genuine portrait of Cartier exists. For this reason, some art authorities believe the Riss portrait is entirely spurious. Another Canadian postage stamp (CDN #1011), as follows, issued in 1984 also portrays Cartier.



Here we see Cartier holding a smoking pipe. This detail is a reference to the fact that Cartier saw Indians smoking tobacco in pipes during his explorations of 1534. However, the pipe Cartier is holding appears to be a clay pipe. If so, then it is totally out of place. Clay pipes were not invented until the latter part of the sixteenth century, most certainly after Cartier had died in 1557.

The original Cartier stamp (first illustrated above) was reprinted in 1978 (CDN #754) and appears as follows.



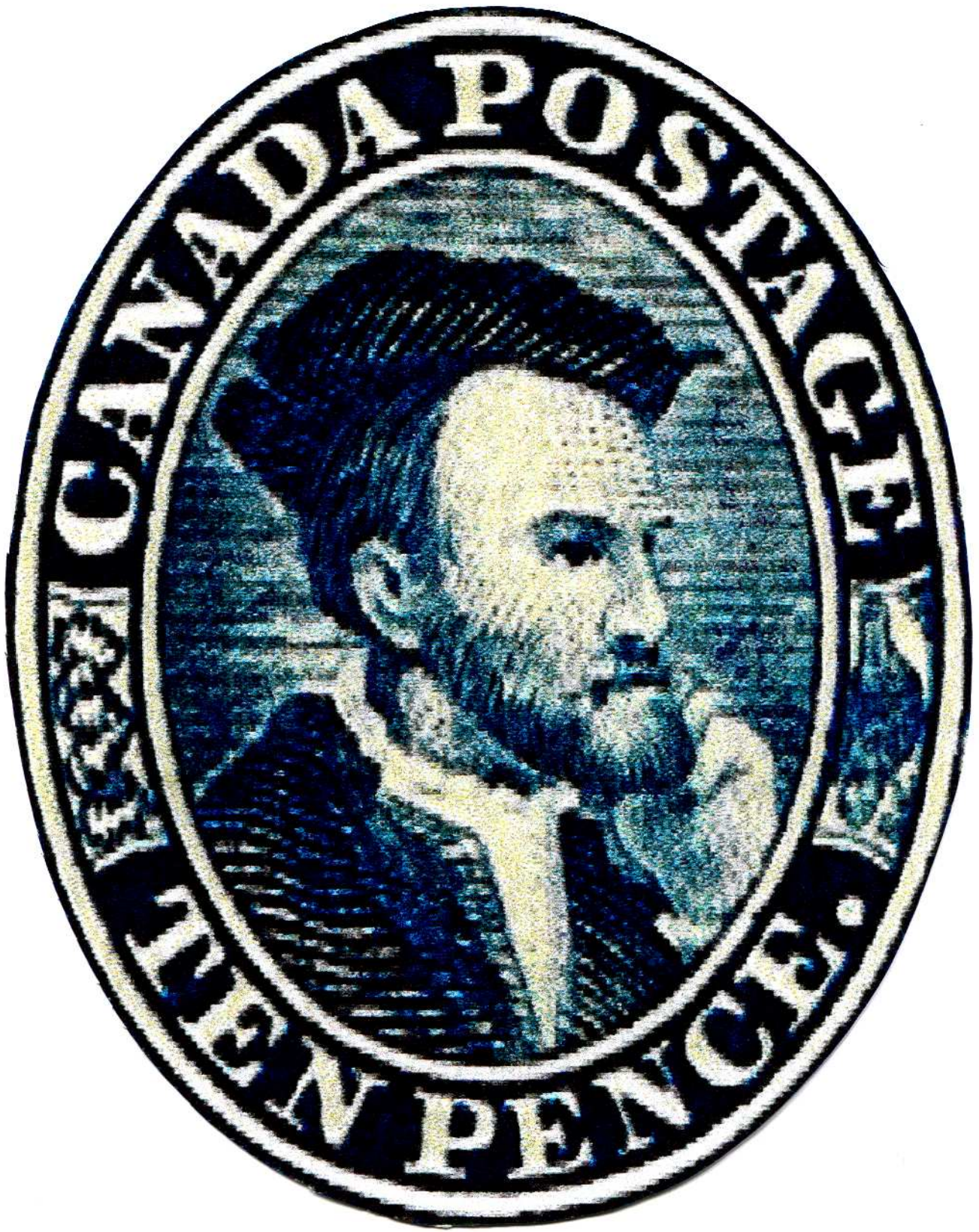
The double image stamp was issued on the occasion of CAPEX (Canadian International Philatelic Exhibition). (CDN #7, ISSUED 1855)



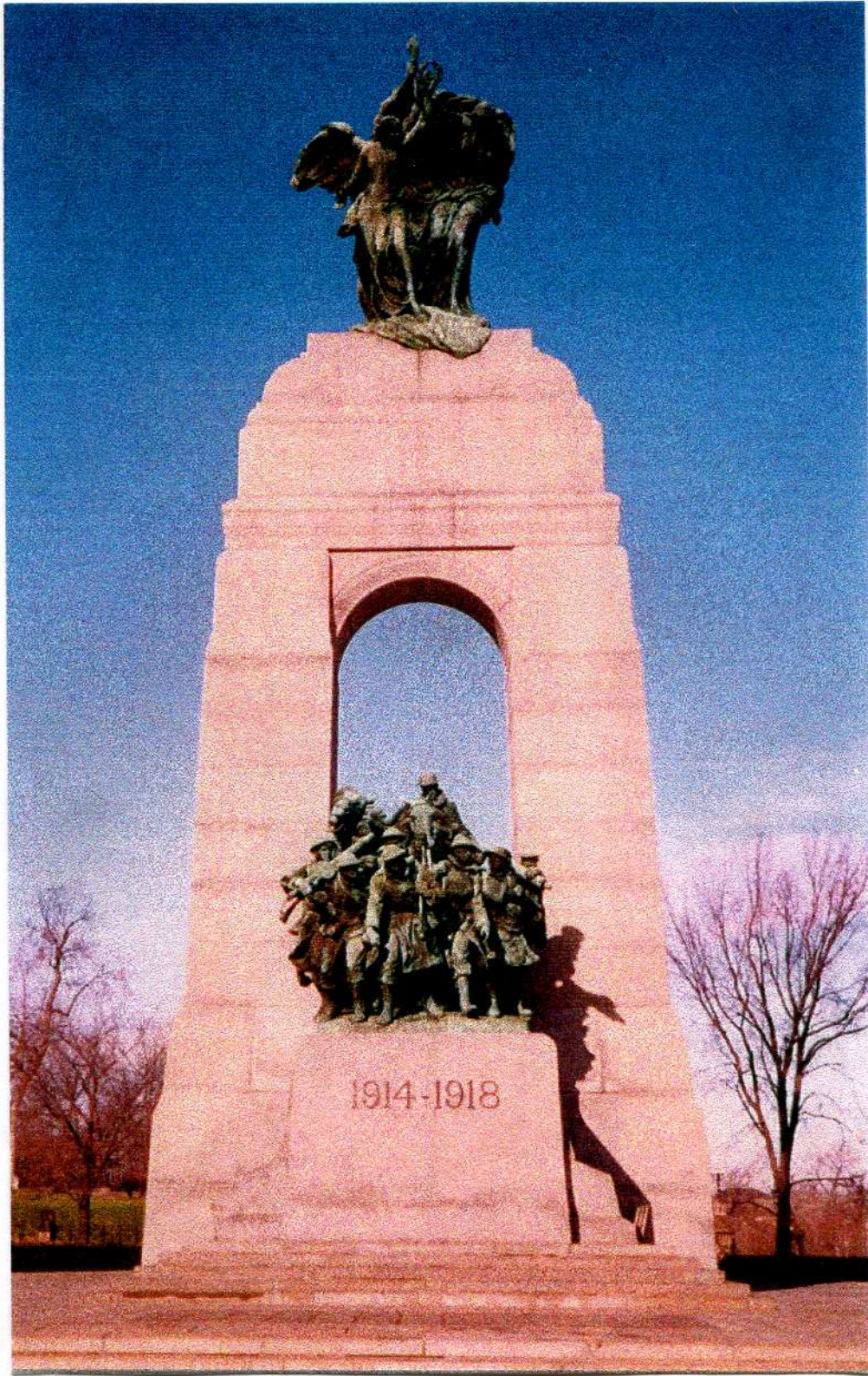
FRONTENAC WILL NEVER KNOW



Louis Philippe Hébert's statue showing Frontenac's Defiance of Sir William Phips was used for the design of this stamp. The statue vividly expresses the character of the fiery governor. One detail, however, is out of place. The statue shows Frontenac wearing the sash of the Order of St. Louis which was not conferred upon him until six years after his defiance of Sir William Phips. Frontenac's "heart" was also apparently out



Jacques Cartier may have looked like this. Then again, his appearance may have been totally different. Remarkably, there is only one claim regarding the great explorer's likeness and this claim is highly suspicious. (See story on adjacent page 86.)



Canada's National War Memorial, seen here from the front, was featured on a postage stamp shortly after the work was unveiled in May 1939. Certainly, those people who attended the unveiling were thinking about war. (See story on adjacent page 87.)

of place. After his death, it is said that his wife was handed a silver chest containing the heart of the old warrior. The Comtesse de Frontenac stiffly refused the

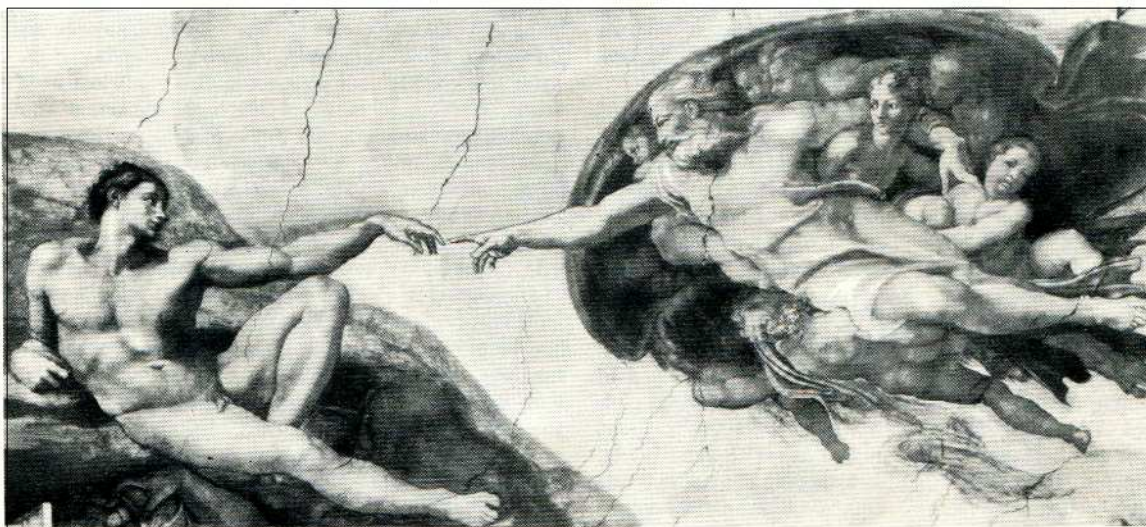
memento saying, *I do not want a dead heart which, when beating, did not belong to me.* (CDN #561, ISSUED 1972)

GOTCHA MIKE



This stamp shows the hands from Michelangelo's painting, *Creation of Adam*. The entire painting section, as follows, shows God the Father reaching out to give life to Adam. While the religious symbolism is impressive, we definitely have a problem with Adam.

As the Bible tells us Adam was created directly by God, why is Adam shown with a navel? There is also a problem with the nipples on his chest. We now know that every human being starts life as a female, nature then decides whether the person will be male or female. The nipples on a male's chest are just remnants of features not used. These two tell-tale details indicate the Adam in Mike's painting had to be born of woman. Realistically, the story of creation would have more credibility if a woman was created first (without a navel, of course). Nevertheless, theologians have gotten around the whole issue by stating that the figure of Adam personifies the physical nature of man before union with the spirit of God. (USA #1107, ISSUED 1958)



HISTORY REPEATS



The National War Memorial in Ottawa's Confederation Square shown on this stamp was built to honor the many Canadians who died in World War I -- *the war to end all wars*. Much care was taken by Vernon and Sydney March in sculpturing the monument which shows in exacting detail fighting men and women of the Infantry, Artillery, Navy, Air Force, Medical Corps and Nursing Association. Figures representing Peace and Freedom crown the work resulting in a very moving art expression. While there is certainly nothing

unusual or odd about the monument itself, there is great irony associated with its unveiling. The Memorial was

unveiled on May 21, 1939, just a few months before the outbreak of World War II. (CDN #247, ISSUED 1939)

IF THE SHOE FITS, WEAR IT



The title shown on this rare U.S. stamp is *Western Cattle in Storm*. This title is definitely appropriate and the scene brings to mind life in the "Wild West." However, the scene shown is actually far from the United States; and the cattle, for certain, did not even end up on American dinner plates. The original painting from which the stamp was designed is enti-

tled, *The Vanguard*. It was painted by J.A. MacWhirter and actually shows a group of cattle in the West Highlands of Scotland. The scene was used by an American cattle firm for its trademark and from there found its way onto a U.S. postage stamp. From the artistic standpoint, MacWhirter's title is much more appropriate than that assigned to the postage stamp. The lead bull is the "vanguard" which literally means the forefront of an action or movement. The American cattle firm certainly picked a winner in using the scene for its trademark. The connotation of "a leader" would carry over to its business. As for the postage stamp, here we have a simple case of, "if the shoe fits, wear it." Who knows, perhaps some leather ended-up in the U.S. (USA #292, ISSUED 1898)

LADY LIBERTY LADIES



Embodied in the Statue of Liberty (or *Liberty Enlightening the World*) shown on this stamp is the influence of two ladies. The first was the sculptor's mother, Charlotte Beysser, who was used as a model for the face of Lady Liberty. The second was Emma Lazarus, who wrote the sonnet, *The New Colossus*, of which five lines, as follows, are inscribed on the statue's pedestal:

*Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me:
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.*

Emma's poem was almost completely ignored by critics and by the general public in her time. She died some 16 years before her words became etched in the minds of the nation. Emma's entire poem in her own hand is shown below. (USA #566, ISSUED 1922)

The New Colossus.
Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land,
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glowed world-wide welcome, her mild eyes
command
The air-bridged harbor that twin-cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she,
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore;
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"
Emma Lazarus.
November 2nd 1883.

MISSISSIPPI MISSES



In 1862 an attempt was made by the North to build a canal on the Mississippi River to bypass Vicksburg, a Confederate stronghold. This attempt failed. Another attempt was made one year later. This attempt also failed. In 1876 heavy rains caused the Mississippi to change its course and bypass Vicksburg on its own! Another Mississippi “miss” is on the seal shown on this stamp. It was reproduced from the original Mississippi Territory seal. Close examination will reveal that the word “Mississippi” on the seal is missing the fourth “s,” (i.e., it is spelt “Missisippi”). The following enlargement of the seal shown on the stamp clearly shows the omission. Major reference works do not mention that the word was originally spelt this way. It appears the seal was wrong to begin with but nobody thought the other “s” would be missed. We also have a stamp date misalignment. The year 1798 shown on the stamp was the year negotiations *commenced* to cede Georgia’s western territory to the United States. The territory which, became known as the Mississippi Territory, was not actually created until 1802. Further, the stamp also shows a misfit -- Winthrop Sargent. While Sargent was certainly appointed Mississippi Territory’s first governor, he was highly unpopular and was removed from this office in 1801 -- one year before the territory officially became the Mississippi Territory. In actual-

ity, Sargent was the *official* governor of the *unofficial* territory from 1798-1801. Finally, the stamp map misrepresents the actual territorial area. The Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia, explains the oversight as follows: *The map on the stamp is somewhat misleading as the boundaries of the Mississippi Territory specified in the 1798 act included all land from the mouth of the Yazoo River on the Mississippi River eastward to the Chattahoochee River as the northern boundary, and the 31st parallel between the Mississippi and Chattahoochee Rivers as the southern boundary. On the stamp, however, only the portion of the territory that falls in the boundaries of the State of Mississippi are shaded, as are two additional territories that were added to what would become a state in 1817. (USA #955, ISSUED 1948)*



ON A WING AND A PRAYER



Symbolism on this stamp is entitled *Allegory of Flight*. The angels shown, however, would have a little difficulty flying as each of them has been given only one wing. Nevertheless, a variety of the stamp exists in which the angel on the left has a swollen breast. Hopefully her offspring will be a complete angel. (CDN #C1, ISSUED 1928)

PRESIDENTIAL DESIGNS



It is common knowledge that Franklin Delano Roosevelt was an avid stamp collector. Not so well known, however, is the fact that one U.S. stamp (above) was totally designed by Roosevelt and six other stamps are based on his sketches. The stamp totally designed by Roosevelt shows the Great Seal of the United States. This design is certainly very appropriate for a "presidential design." It is amusing, however, that the eagle on the Great Seal has switched twice between the Eagle of Heraldry and the American bald eagle since the seal was originally designed in 1782. The following chart shows the history of the eagle designs.

1782 - EAGLE OF HERALDRY

NOTE: In the design process, an American eagle (bald eagle) was considered. However, the heraldical eagle was selected upon advice from the consultant hired to design the seal.



1841 - BALD EAGLE

NOTE: Possibly, a die produced by a jeweller, Seraphim Masi, in 1825 influenced the design on this seal. Masi's die was used for making government pendant seals.



1885 - BALD EAGLE

NOTE: The seal of 1841 had a number of deviations from the original seal (1782). It was decided to go back to the original design. However, the eagle somehow remained a bald eagle.



1964(?) EAGLE OF HERALDRY

NOTE: The Department of State publication #6455, July, 1957 states, "...design displays the American eagle." However, the American eagle is the bald eagle. The current design was adopted after 1964.



The following is the complete Great Seal currently used.



Certainly, the Eagle of Heraldry with its little "top-notch" is a better looking bird for use on a seal. This eagle, however, is fictitious. It is not an American bald eagle, the world recognized symbol of the United States.

The following are postage stamps based on sketches made by President Roosevelt.



(ALL STAMPS: USA #CE1 [Seal], ISSUED 1934; #733 [Byrd], ISSUED 1933; #737 [Mother], ISSUED 1934; #858 [Map], ISSUED 1939; #899 [Liberty], ISSUED 1940; #900 [Gun], ISSUED 1940; #901 [Torch], ISSUED 1940)

PURITAN PROMOTION NOTION



Commemorated on this stamp is the 300th anniversary of the arrival of the Puritans under Governor John Winthrop. The stamp shows the Massachusetts Bay Colony Seal, which is enlarged below. The Latin inscription on the seal states, *Seal of the Society of Massachusetts in New England*. The New England location was the result of a fortunate oversight in the charter given to the Massachusetts Bay Company. As the charter did not specify where the company's annual meetings were to be held, the company arbitrarily moved itself to New England. Here, it set up a self-governing commonwealth. In the center of the seal we see an Indian holding a bow in his right hand and an arrow in his left hand. Emanating from the Indian is a ribbon upon which is written (right to left), **COME OVERLAND: HELP US**. As the words appear as though they are being stated by the native, we must wonder what kind of help is being implored. Certainly, the Indians did not need any kind of charity. They had been doing very well in North America for thousands of

years. The only "help" left, therefore, is spiritual help. The Indians, however, were certainly not looking for a new religion. They had also been doing very well in this department for untold generations. It appears the Puritans created the little symbol to convince themselves of the help the natives needed. (*Aside: Your author reserves the right to be wrong on this one, but would certainly like to know the actual seal interpretation.*) (USA #682, ISSUED 1930)



ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME



A painting, commonly known by the title, *Whistler's Mother*, was used for the design of this stamp which honors the mothers of America. The painting is by James Abbott McNeill Whistler and is indeed a portrait of the artist's mother. The official title of the

painting, however, is *Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1*. This rather cold title was probably selected by Whistler to give the painting a more "professional" touch. Unfortunately, when the painting was first displayed, people took exception to the title, believing that it indicated the artist's disregard for his mother. It has even been said that this "disregard" brought about immediate hostility towards Whistler in England. In truth, Whistler had a very high regard for his mother, so the painting is quite appropriate for the stamp. One final note, the color selected for this stamp was reddish violet, somewhat removed from Whistler's title. (USA #737, ISSUED 1934)

STITCH IN TIME AND A BLADE TO SHINE



A remarkable painting by Emanuel Leutze entitled *Washington Crossing the Delaware* was used for the design of these United States bicentennial stamps. While few people would fault the quality of Leutze's work, or perhaps the "license" Leutze used in the arrangement of the painting, one might fault him for overlooking two details. Firstly, the flag so proudly displayed was not designed until the year after Washington crossed the Delaware. Secondly, the sword so prominent on Washington's hip did not make its debut until some sixty-four years after the same event! (USA #1688b/c, ISSUED 1976)

TIES THAT BIND



flag on the right and the smoke from the train are blowing in different directions. An enlargement of the stamp detail showing the error follows. (USA #922, ISSUED 1944)

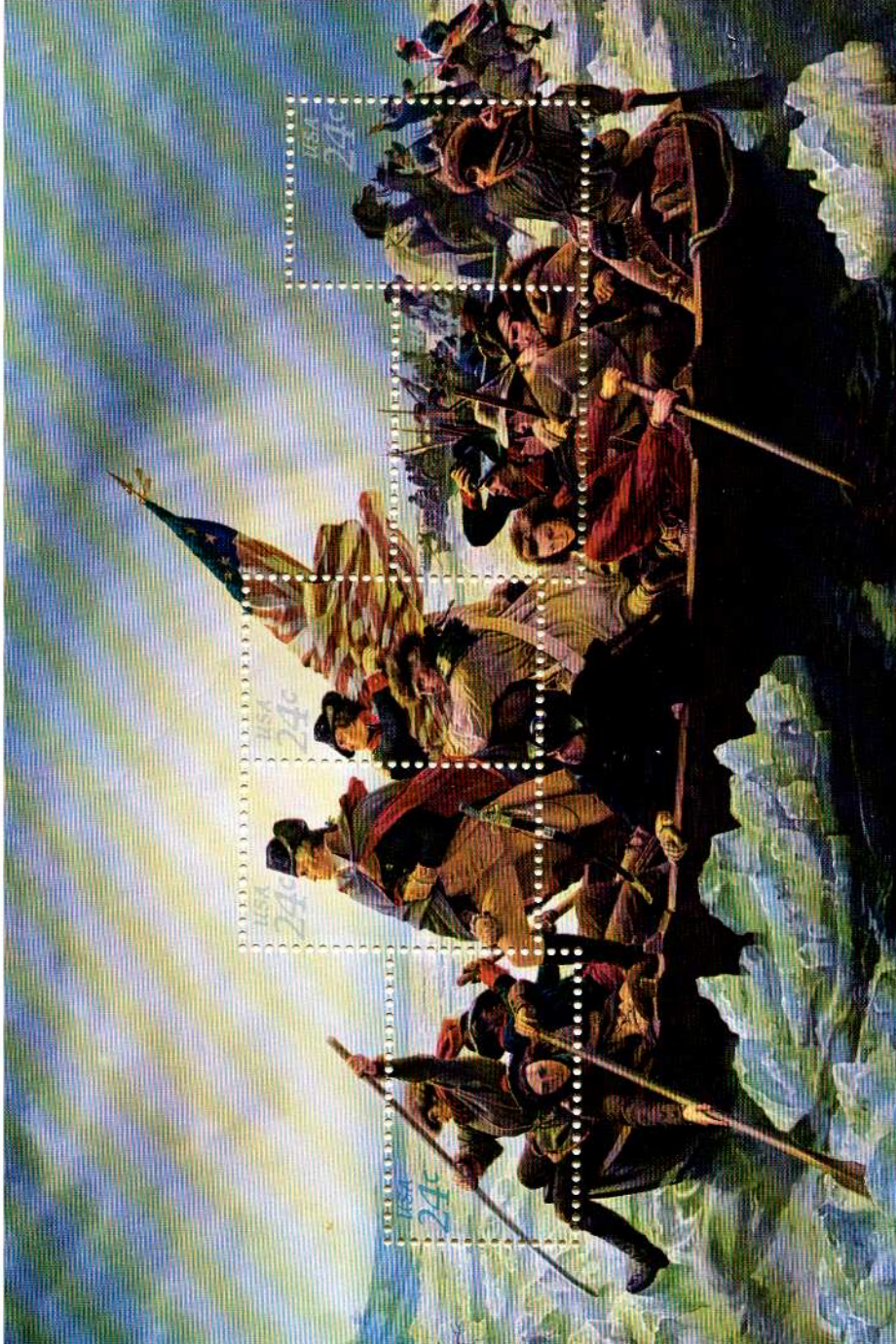


The final linking of the continental United States by rail was a glorious and welcome occasion. The project was not, however, without a scandal and a contribution to human misery. Investigations into the cost of the east to west link disclosed that \$73 million had been paid out for \$50 million worth of work. On the final stretch, success was mainly due to the poorly paid but hard-working Chinese laborers. Under deplorable conditions, they pushed the great railway through 690 miles of mountainous terrain. The stamp shown is from a mural by John McQuarrie. It has a "wind direction" error which somehow escaped the artists -- the

WASHINGTON'S WITNESS



A close examination of the illustrated stamp will reveal a man standing partially behind a tree on the left side. The man is peering at Washington as he kneels in prayer. This mystery man has never been positively identified. It is, however, generally agreed that this person is either Haym Salomon or Isaac Potts. Salomon was a wealthy merchant who helped finance the revolution. Potts owned the land on which Washington's army camped at Valley Forge. Unfortunately

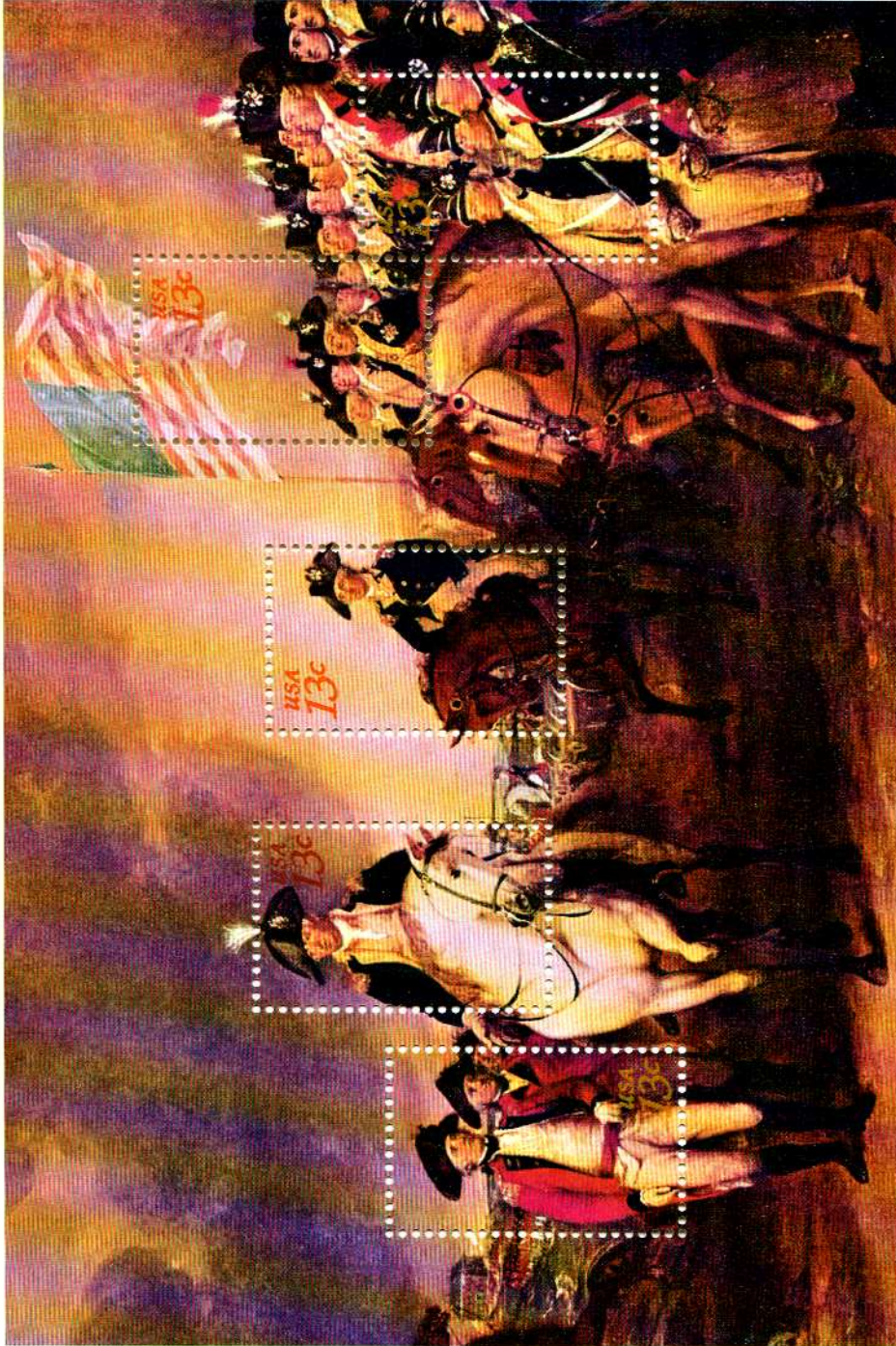


Washington Crossing the Delaware

From a Painting by Emanuel Leutze / Eastman Johnson



In this painting, which was used for one of the American Bicentennial Souvenir Sheets of 1976, we see a woman manning one of the oars. Although certainly possible, we might wonder if such would have occurred. Remarkable, the official description of the stamp showing the lady is *Men in Boat*. Nevertheless, the painting has two details that could not possibly have occurred. The story is found on adjacent page 92. (USA #1688a-e)



The Surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown

From a Painting by John Trumbull



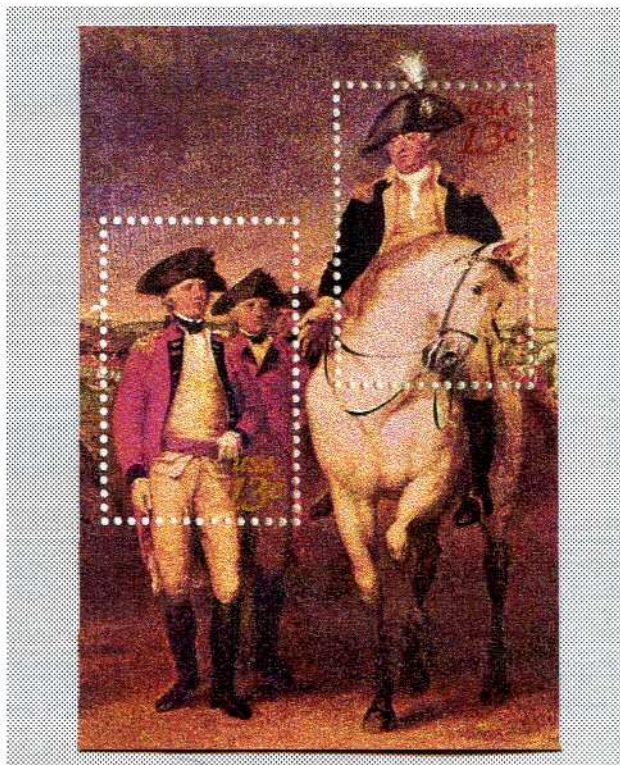
John Trumbull's remarkable painting, *The Surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown* (original work), was used for the design of this American Bicentennial Souvenir Sheet of 1976. The question, however, must be asked if Trumbull forgot something. The story is on adjacent page 93. (USA #1686a-e)

the artist, H. Bruekner, whose painting was used for the stamp design, left no clue to the person's identity or why he is in the painting. The following illustrations

show the location of the mystery man on the stamp together with an enlargement of the man. (USA #645, ISSUED 1928)



YORKTOWN "STAND-INS"

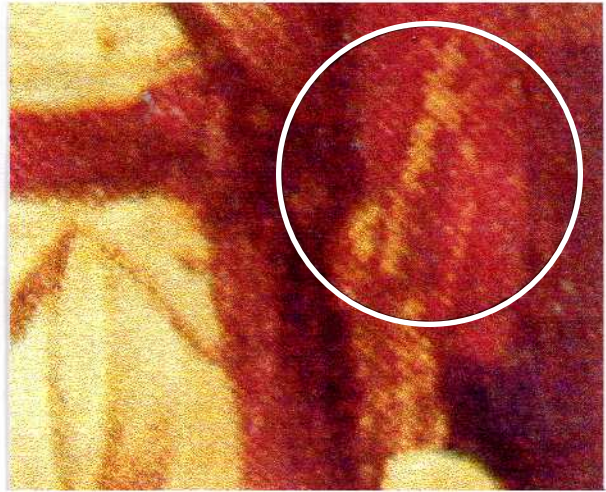
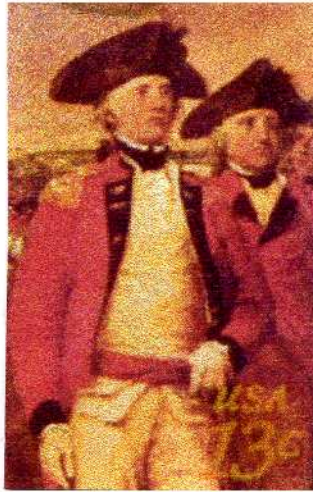


When the British General, Lord Cornwallis, surrendered to the American forces at Yorktown in 1781, he sent one of his officers to present the sword of surrender, claiming he was too ill to do this unpleasant duty himself. The British stand-in first offered the sword to General Rochambeau, A French general fighting with the American forces. Rochambeau, of course, redirected the redcoat to George Washington. Washington, however, sensing a mild insult, redirected the stand-in to Benjamin Lincoln, who officially accepted the sword. The two stand-ins are shown on separate stamps in this American Bicentennial series. General Benjamin Lincoln is a well-known military figure. The "red coat," however, is not so well known, even though he became the central figure on a United States postage stamp. Who was he? His name is Charles O'Hara (1740-1802). After Yorktown, he was exchanged and went on to become a British lieutenant-general and later governor of Gibraltar. With regard to the stamp showing O'Hara, we have a problem -- HE IS NOT CARRYING A SWORD TO SURRENDER! He does not even have a strap over his right shoulder that would hold the scabbard for a sword. There is certainly a little omission here on the part of the artist,

ORIGINAL ARTWORK ODDITIES

John Trumbull, whose painting was used for the stamp design.. The painting is the *original* painting by Trumbull that resides at Yale University. Trumbull also made a *copy* of the painting that hangs in the Rotunda, Washington, D.C. In the painting copy, O'Hara definitely has a sword. The shoulder strap for the scabbard and the hilt of the sword can be clearly seen.

In the first two illustrations that follow, O'Hara, as seen in the *original* painting (postage stamp), is on the left. The same detail from the painting *copy* is on the right. The third illustration shows the hilt of the sword O'Hara is wearing as seen in the painting copy. (USA #1686a/b, ISSUED 1976)



YOU'VE GOT ME ALVIN



This stamp is designed after a painting by Janius B. Stearns. Alvin R. Meissner, who designed the

stamp, either found a little known painting copy by Stearns or arbitrarily modified the picture for the stamp design. Stearns definitely created at least two paintings of the scene. Both paintings are essentially identical except in one painting there is a chair directly behind Washington and there is a non-occupied stool in front of the table in the background. Meissner appears to have used this painting for the stamp design, however the stool is missing. Both paintings are shown below. (USA #798, ISSUED 1937)

