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**COLLECTION SCOPE & CONTENT**

The United States Post Office Department (United States Postal Service since 1971) played a major role in America’s world’s fairs by issuing postage stamps to promote and honor the international expositions and their themes, by exhibiting the history of postage stamps and postal operations in the Federal Building, and by operating postal stations on the fair grounds for fair organizers, concessionaires, and visitors. The U.S. post office issued its first commemorative postage stamps for the 1893 Columbian Exposition, initiating a significant change in the postage stamp program ([The Nation’s First Commemorative Postage Stamps](www.postalmuseum.si.edu/AragoColumbianExposition)). Scholars who study American world’s fairs will discover untapped resources in the philatelic collections, archives, and library at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum.

**PROVENANCE**

World’s fair holdings are not identified or organized as such but are part of larger collections transferred from the Post Office Department and Department of the Treasury or donated by individuals.

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

In addition to postage stamps, the National Philatelic Collection includes die proofs, certified plate proofs, postal stationery, and special exposition postmarks on mail. These objects document the postal history of the fairs and provide graphic imagery that projects themes and aesthetic styles of the fairs.

The archival holdings include the Third Assistant Postmaster General stamp design files with information on sources for stamps design, production information, and correspondence with the public in response to specific stamp issues. The files contain documents related to the design and production of U.S. regular stamp issues from Scott #1 (1847) to Scott #2532 (1991) as well as ‘back of the book’ issues (airmail, postage dues, postal savings, federal duck stamps, and postal stationery) for roughly the same period. The collection is organized into file jackets and oversized envelopes according to Scott Catalogue number. For further details, see [www.sil.si.edu/digitalcollections/npm/essays.cfm](www.sil.si.edu/digitalcollections/npm/essays.cfm).

The bibliography includes selected books, catalogs, and journal articles with philatelic information not generally found in traditional exposition literature. Philatelists have researched extensively and published in detail on stamps and events related to postage stamps.

[Note: For U.S. postage stamps from 1978 to present, reproduction permission is required from the USPS]
### Collections

**U.S. Postage Stamps Issued for World's Fairs and Expositions:**

*Year – Fair, City – Scott Stamp Catalogue number*

[Note: search the Scott number on [www.arago.si.edu](http://www.arago.si.edu) for image, related images, and narrative/object records for each issue]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fair, City</th>
<th>Scott Stamp Catalogue number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>Columbian Exposition, Chicago</td>
<td>230-245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Trans-Mississippi Exposition, Omaha</td>
<td>285-293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo</td>
<td>294-299</td>
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<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis</td>
<td>323-327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Jamestown Exposition, Hampton Roads</td>
<td>328-330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition</td>
<td>370-371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Hudson-Fulton Celebration</td>
<td>372-373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Panama-Pacific Exposition</td>
<td>397-400, 400A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914-15</td>
<td>Panama-Pacific Exposition</td>
<td>401-404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Sesquicentennial Exposition, Philadelphia</td>
<td>627, Canal Zone 96</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>A Century of Progress, Chicago</td>
<td>728, 730</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>A Century of Progress, Chicago</td>
<td>729, 731</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>A Century of Progress, Chicago</td>
<td>C18</td>
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<td>1935</td>
<td>California Pacific Exposition, San Diego</td>
<td>773</td>
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<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>California Pacific Exposition, San Diego</td>
<td>778</td>
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<td>1939</td>
<td>Golden Gate International Exposition, San Francisco</td>
<td>852</td>
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<td>1939</td>
<td>New York World's Fair, New York City</td>
<td>853</td>
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<td>1962</td>
<td>Seattle World's Fair, Seattle</td>
<td>1196</td>
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<td>1964</td>
<td>New York World's Fair, New York City</td>
<td>1244</td>
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<td>1974</td>
<td>Expo '74 World's Fair, Spokane</td>
<td>1527</td>
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<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Knoxville World's Fair, Knoxville</td>
<td>2006-2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Louisiana World Exposition, New Orleans</td>
<td>2086</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Anniversary issues:**

- 1992 – Columbian Exposition, Chicago (1893) – 2624-2629 reissue
- 1998 – Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904), St. Louis – 3182e
- 1998 – Trans-Mississippi Exposition (1898), Omaha – 3209a-I, 3210 reissue

**World's Fair Proofs:**

- National Philatelic Collection by Scott Stamp Catalogue number
- Certified Plate Proof Collection by production plate number
- Panama Pacific Die Proof Album (Accession No. 0.58223)
- Post Office Department Philatelic Display Panels
- Roosevelt Presentation Albums (Accession No. 52985.339 and 1994.2090)
- Ernest R. Ackerman Collection
- Clarence H. Eagle Collection
- Postmaster General Collection, USPS (on loan - image reproduction restrictions)
- The Benjamin K. Miller Collection, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations (on loan - image reproduction restrictions)

World's Fair Postal Stationery:
*Year – Fair, City – Scott catalogue number*

1876 – Centennial Exposition, Philadelphia – U218-21  
1893 – Columbian Exposition, Chicago – U348-51  
1893 – Columbian Exposition, Chicago – UX10 set of postal cards with printed images of fair buildings (Accession No. 2000.2007)  
1926 – Sesquicentennial Exposition, Philadelphia – U522  
1964 – New York World’s Fair, New York City – U546

National Philatelic Collection by Scott Stamp Catalogue number
Arthur E. Michel Collection

World's Fair Mail and Postal History:
National Philatelic Collection Covers  
*by Scott Stamp Catalogue number*  
Expositions and Fairs collection  
Hand-illuminated cover autographed by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, New York World’s Fair, 1939 (Accession No. 209801.1)  
James A. Farley Collection  
Presentation sheet, New York World’s Fair, 1939 (Accession No. 209045.80)

World's Fair Artifacts:
Columbian Exposition Owney Tag (rail mail mascot), 1893 (Accession no. 0.052985.210)  
Washington City Old Post Office architectural model, Panama-Pacific Exposition, 1914-15 (Accession no. 241441.1)

Archives:
Third Assistant Postmaster General Stamp Design files by Scott number

Columbian Exposition Souvenir Postal Card (Woman’s Building), 1893 (Accession No. 2000.2007.11)

Selected resources found in the Smithsonian National Postal Museum Library include:


*Cathologue of the American Philatelic Association’s Loan Exhibit of Postage Stamps to the United States Post Office Department, at the World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893.* Birmingham, Conn.: D.H. Bacon, 1893. HE6191.C382 1893


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Images are from the National Philatelic Collection at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum.