

This Day in History... March 22, 1917

High-Value Stamps Rushed into Use for WWI

On March 22, 1917, the US Post Office rushed to issue two new stamps to meet an urgent need. These high-value stamps were needed for use on packages going to Europe.



This stamp image was based on a portrait by Gilbert Stuart.

Even before the US officially joined the war and began sending troops overseas, American industries were participating in the war in another way. They were sending

machine parts to our allies in Europe. They had to mail these heavy parts, which required high-value postage stamps.



This stamp image was based on a painting by William James Hubbard.

By early 1917, the Post Office's supply was running dangerously low, as demand vastly increased. Because of the urgent need for stamps, the US Post Office had no time to prepare new designs. Instead, they

decided to use the master dies from stamps of the Series of 1902. The original plates and transfer rollers had already been destroyed. New ones had to be created, but it still took less time than designing new stamps would have.



1903 \$2 James Madison Stamp

The new \$2 James Madison and \$5 John Marshall stamps were issued on March 22, 1917. The only differences between the 1902 and 1917 issues were that the earlier stamps were perf. 12 and printed on double watermark paper. The 1917 issues were perf. 10, on unwatermarked paper. Also, the 1917 Marshall was printed in a lighter shade of green.



1903 \$5 John Marshall Stamp

Both stamps were also used to send valuable Liberty Bond shipments. The \$5 Marshall stamp was also used to pay for fund transfers between postal departments. New designs were finally produced in 1918 (US #523 and #524). But the \$2 Madison stamp continued to be used into 1920 and the \$5 stamp into 1924.

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