

This Day in History... April 1, 1960

Boat Stamps Issued

On April 1, 1960, the US issued two boat stamps for use on motorboat applications.

Two years earlier Congress passed the Federal Boating Act of 1958. This act permitted states to take on certain boat safety responsibilities that had previously been handled by the US Coast Guard.

The act was passed “to promote boating safety on the navigable waters of the United States, its Territories, and the District of Columbia; to provide coordination and cooperation with the States in the interest of uniformity of boating laws; and for other purposes.” As part of this act, the government developed a numbering system for vessels, and encouraged the states, territories, and District of Columbia to develop their own boat safety laws and numbering systems. The given numbers were then to be painted or in some way attached to the ship’s bow.

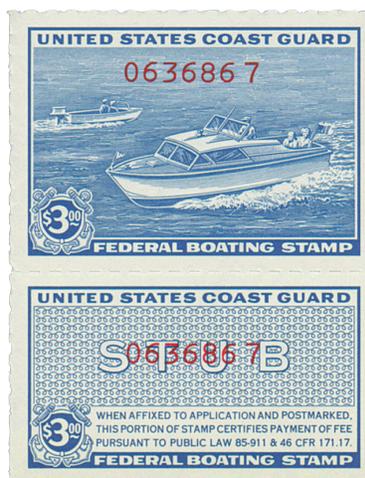
By 1960, most states had passed boating laws as suggested in the Federal Boating Act. However, several states (Alaska, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Massachusetts, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Wyoming, and Washington) and the District of Columbia had not. Part of the act accounted for this. After April 1, 1960, boats in those 12 states and DC with 10 horsepower engines or larger required registration with the US Coast Guard.

Boat owners accomplished this by purchasing a \$3.00, two-part stamp at the post office, which was first available for sale on April 1, 1960. The picture portion of this stamp was applied to a temporary registration. The post office sent the lower portion to the Coast Guard, which issued the boat owner a permanent card good for three years. The \$1.00 boating stamp, issued the same day, was needed for reissue of a lost or destroyed permanent card.

Boaters were then expected to carry the certificates on their boats in pocked-sized waterproof cases. The Coast Guard vigilantly patrolled water ways to ensure boaters had their certificates. Some types of vessels were exempt from the law, including those that were used just for racing as well as government and foreign boats.



The \$1 stamp was used to reissue lost or destroyed cards.



The \$3 stamp paid the initial registration fee.

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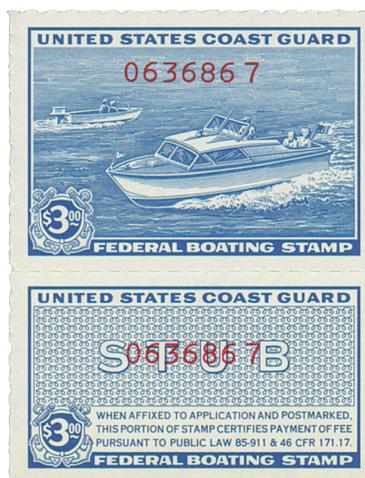
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