

This Day in History... April 5, 1906

Consular Service Fee Stamps

On April 5, 1906, Congress passed a law calling for the creation of Consular Service Fee stamps.

That same act also provided for the reorganization of the consular service in the United States. This included classifying and grading the consuls and consuls-general, and specifying their salaries.



The first Consular Service Fee stamp, it was issued in 1906.



Issued in 1924

These stamps and changes to the consular service were in part intended to dissuade dishonesty and help keep more accurate records. They served as proof passport and visa fees were paid. American diplomats at consular offices in foreign countries used them. The stamps went into effect on June 1, 1906.

According to the act, every consular officer was to have these new stamps in several denominations to meet the various fees for passports and visas. The stamps were to be affixed to the documents to prove the fees had been paid, usually placed close to the signature or in the lower left corner.



Issued in 1925



The last Consular Fee stamp, issued in 1952.

If there wasn't a document issued, the stamps would be attached to a receipt for the amount of the fee and canceled with pen and ink or a rubber cancel. These cancels usually had the date of the cancellation and the initials of the officer or Consular Office.

Between 1906 and 1955, there were six issues of Consular Service Fee stamps, totaling 40 stamps in all. These stamps were discontinued on September 30, 1955.

They were not supposed to be available to the public unused, but a small number have gotten into collectors' hands. It's interesting to consider who may have used these stamps – travelers off on exotic adventures, World War II journalists, – anything's possible.

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