

This Day in History... August 9, 2001

American Treasures Series

On August 9, 2001, the USPS inaugurated the American Treasures Series with the issue of four stamps depicting Amish quilts.

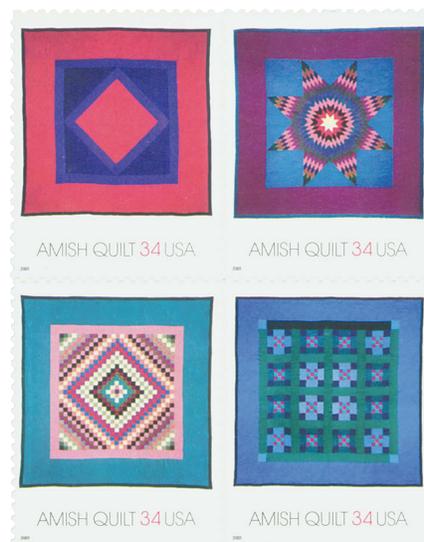
In announcing the new stamp series, the USPS stated, "US postage stamps honor significant people, major events, and lasting achievements. Yet sometimes, people just want beautiful stamps."

The goal of the American Treasure Series was to create miniature works of art to adorn our mail. The series would feature a variety of artists, art schools, and eras, and would ultimately include paintings, glasswork, and tapestries.

To begin the series, the USPS selected Amish quilts. The quilts pictured on the stamps were based on traditional designs from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Fittingly, the First Day Ceremony for the stamps was held on the opening day of the 39th Amish Acres Arts and Crafts Festival in Nappanee, Indiana.

The stamps were dedicated at the Joseph Stein Stage of the Round Barn Theatre, where the Broadway play *Plain and Fancy* was also celebrating its 15th season. *Plain and Fancy* opened on Broadway in 1955 and ran for 462 performances. The musical was one of the first depictions of the Amish and included a traditional barn raising. At the Round Barn Theatre, the stamp images were painted on a large curtain behind the stage. The images were also projected onto the stage as the scenes began, making the stamps a part of the historic play. Local quilters also produced replicas of the quilts on the stamps to hang in the theatre as a reminder of the national event they hosted

The American Treasures Series continued in 2002 with a stamp featuring the artwork of John James Audubon. Over the next 12 years, additional stamps in the series honored Mary Cassatt, Martin Johnson Heade, Rio Grande Blankets, Gee's Bend Quilts, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Albert Bierstadt, Winslow Homer, Edward Hopper, William H. Johnson, and the Hudson River School.



The first stamps in the American Treasures Series feature the designs of quilts created in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

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