

# Stamp Tracks



NEWS AND  
INFORMATION FOR  
PHILATELISTS OF ALL AGES

## The Lincoln Mourning Stamp of 1866

*By Douglas Files*

Abraham Lincoln is not only one of the U.S.'s most respected leaders, he is also the subject of more postage stamps than anyone except Benjamin Franklin and George Washington. Numerous Lincoln stamps have been issued over the last 150 years, but we will limit ourselves in this article to the first one – the one issued to mourn his April 1865 assassination.

This first stamp to honor President Lincoln was commissioned soon after his death. It took several months, however, for the National Bank Note Company to engrave the die and print the sheets of stamps. Once ready, the memorial stamp was sold in post offices starting in 1866, the year after the event. However, the exact date of issuance is uncertain. Some experts think it appeared on June 17<sup>th</sup> and others claim it was released on April 14<sup>th</sup> – on the first anniversary of Lincoln's death. Another controversial topic for philatelists is whether this black stamp was a definitive or America's first commemorative. The design is similar to other definitives of that time, and its 15-cent denomination paid the first class postal rate to France or Prussia. The stamp is black, to indicate mourning for the departed leader. All other stamp honorees up to that time had been dead for decades, but Lincoln was honored as soon as possible after his demise.

The fact that this postal classic shows attractive engraving has made it popular among collectors. Three years after this first stamp another Lincoln stamp was issued, the 1869 90-cent carmine and black definitive, which may be even more treasured by collectors.

Because the 15-cent black mourning stamp is iconic, it was later reproduced on a 2016 Classics Forever souvenir sheet (Scott #5079). Most collectors will find this later stamp much more affordable than the 1866 one, since vastly more copies were issued (18 million vs. 2.1 million). Mint copies of the original stamp can command upwards of \$500.00, but mint copies of the recent forever stamp may sometimes be found for less than face value.



1866 Lincoln mourning stamp. Image from the National Postal Museum website, <https://postalmuseum.si.edu/exhibition/lincoln-from-postmaster-to-president-lincolns-assassination/mourning-stamp>, accessed 11 Mar 2025

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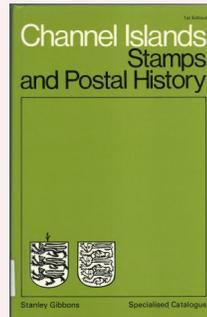
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From the Treasurer

**Thanks to our 170 renewing members to date.**

**To our many past members who have not renewed for 2025 ... please do so now.**

Our needs in these times are substantial. Please be generous and move your membership to a higher level.

**Your dollars allow us to support our active Stamp Discovery program and the Slusser Library as we promote philatelic learning and inspire future generations.**

**The children, teachers, and parents thank you!**



# Passion for Culture Connects Art and Stamps

Contribution by Mike Wood, Vice-Chair

The Postal History Foundation receives stamp collection donations virtually every day. It is unusual, however, that we receive any detailed information about the original creator of the collection or why it was carried out. In this case, we were called by David Wadsworth in Phoenix. Upon arrival at David's house I learned that he was a retired engineer who spent most of his career in Africa working for USAID and other donor institutions in the 70s, 80s, and 90s. David's wife, Julie, had recently passed away. Julie was an accomplished artist, and her art featured the cultures of East and South Africa, the American Southwest, and Philippines.



Julie and David Wadsworth

David donated Julie's large stamp collection, which includes mint and used stamp issues from various South African countries, including Lesotho, Republic of South Africa and the then RSA tribal lands of Transkei, Ciskei, Bophutatswana, and Venda. We do not often receive donations from these areas. Many of these colorful stamps depict topics of interest to Julie, such as nature, history, and cultural art.

The couple began their adventures in Somalia, followed by Kenya, the Kingdom of Lesotho, and ultimately RSA in South Africa. They lived in Lesotho. David was charged with the task of bringing fresh water to as many native villagers as possible by drilling water wells.

At this same time Julie was interacting with the villagers and learning about their language, history, and

*Continued on page 4*

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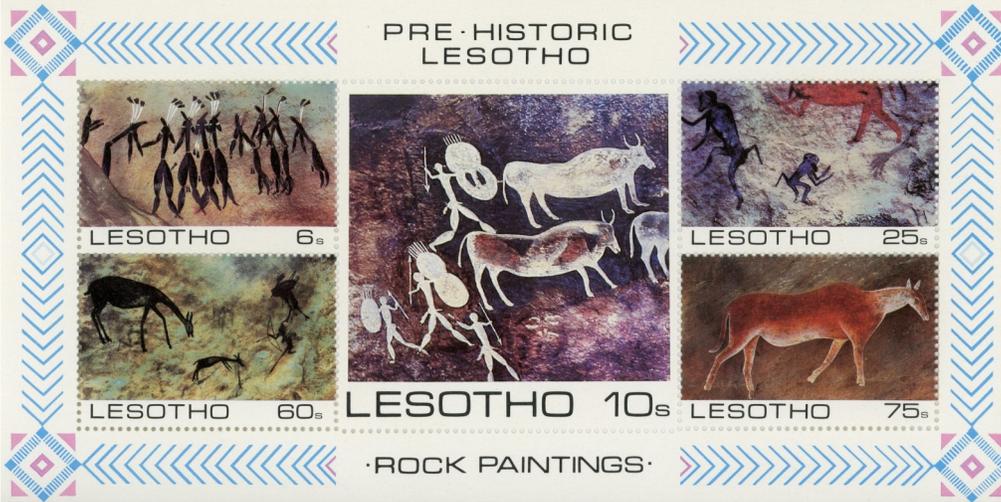


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**Ancient rock art on Lesotho souvenir sheet. Scott #402 Lesotho. Rock art includes “petroglyphs,” a carved or scratched image on stone, and “pictographs” which are painted images using natural pigments.**

culture. She was particularly fascinated by the native history evidenced in rock art and artifacts left by tribal ancestors.

Having grown up in Utah, Julie became very familiar with rock art. She and David had photographed hundreds of ancient sites in Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico. During their travels throughout Africa and the Philippines

they were struck by the similarities in rock art between the Americas and Africa.

Intrigued by the rock art, Julie started painting from their photos. She was very particular about the historical accuracy of her reproductions and did not re-arrange elements of the art work. Julie felt that it would be wrong, as the paintings were probably spiritual representations created by the original artist. Sometimes she painted the images a little brighter to make them more visible and possibly reflect what the original art looked like centuries ago.



**Julie’s painting of an ancient pictograph by bushman people of South Africa. Cape Province, South Africa. She would also add important information to the front or back of each painting about the specific site and symbols.**

Julie felt it was important to preserve and record these historic images as the originals today continue to

fade and erode over time. The backgrounds in her paintings are created by a glazing technique of building layers, producing visual effects of depth and dimension similar to the look of centuries of deposits naturally formed on a cave wall. Her work became very popular and she sold many of her paintings in the United States and Africa.



**Show of Julie’s work in Tucson. 1997**

We appreciate that David has entrusted us with Julie’s beautiful stamp collection. It will be useful for students in our educational program as Julie believed history and learning about other cultures to be of utmost importance.

## Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area

The Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area, designated by Congress in 2019, recognizes the rich history, natural and cultural resources, and heritage of the Santa Cruz River watershed. Tucson is part of this beautiful and historic area.

The mission of the SCVNHA is to connect people to the historic and cultural foundations and the living landscapes of the Santa Cruz Valley and actively work towards its long-term stewardship. The Postal History Foundation is pleased to become part of this important heritage alliance.

As a partner of the National Parks Service, the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area participates in the nationwide Passport to Your National Parks® program. The PHF will be receiving our own passport stamp within a couple of weeks.



“We are delighted to have The Postal History Foundation Museum become our newest stamp station, hosting their own, one-of-a-kind Santa Cruz Valley NHA stamp, which will attract the 1.3-million NPS Passport Stamp collectors and offer them a glimpse into the history and significance of mail delivery in this region.” Lesley Kontowicz, *Executive Director, Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area*.

We thank Jack and Pat Mount for recommending the historic holdings and museum of the PHF to the SCVNHA. Jack and Pat also generously donated the cost of the passport stamp site kit.

### Lincoln *continued*

As an aside, collectors noted that many of the recent Classics Forever stamps had been printed off-center. When the postal service was asked the reason for this, a spokesperson responded that they had been printed by the intaglio process and the extreme pressure involved in this type of recess printing distorted the sheets of stamps during the production process.

President Lincoln is well-known today for his Emancipation Proclamation as well as his concise Gettysburg Address. His stamps are no longer known to the average American but they are certainly still celebrated by collectors. Thus, Lincoln’s memory is preserved as one of our greatest presidents, and as a 19<sup>th</sup> century humanitarian. In our own way, we stamp collectors help to keep this memory alive.

#### References

Goodwin, Doris Kearns, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 2005, Simon & Schuster, New York.

Haimann, Alexander and Haimann, Clifford, Lincoln’s first act as president, National Postal Museum, <https://postalmuseum.si.edu/exhibition/lincoln-from-postmaster-to-president/lincolns-first-act-as-president>, accessed 11 Mar 2025

Postage stamps and postal history of the United States, Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postage\\_stamps\\_and\\_postal\\_history\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postage_stamps_and_postal_history_of_the_United_States), accessed 11 March 2025

Snee, Charles, What the USPS is citing as the culprit for poor Classics Forever centering, Linn’s stamp news website, May 2, 2021, <https://www.linns.com/news/us-stamps-postal-history/usps-poor-centering-classics-forever-stamp.html>, accessed 24 Mar 2025.

## Library News

Arielle Garcia library@phftucson.org

### Tucson 250: Desert, Culture, and Community

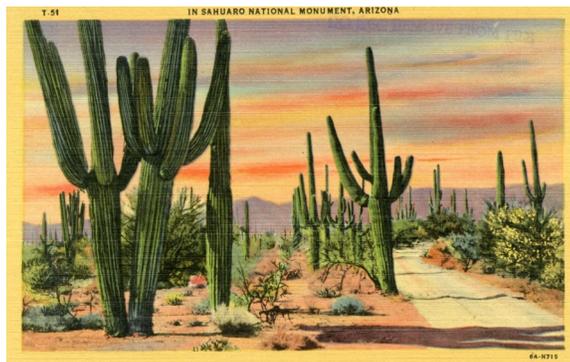
Coming August 20, 2025

We're currently preparing for an exciting new exhibit to celebrate Tucson's 250th birthday! Scheduled to open on August 20, 2025, the exhibit will launch in conjunction with our Tucson Birthday Kids Art Contest.

This upcoming exhibit will showcase postcards, stamps, and mail that reflect the rich history and heritage of Tucson and its surrounding areas. It's been both a rewarding and challenging process—there is so much we want to include! To help guide our selections, we've chosen to organize the exhibit thematically into three categories: Desert, Culture, and Community. While there won't be strict visual section breaks, these themes will help create a natural flow through the space, allowing us to highlight the many layers that make Tucson unique.

Visitors can expect to see iconic imagery such as the Saguaro National Monument, Old Tucson, and other historic and cultural representations of the region. Much of the material will come from our archival collections, along with special contributions from volunteer Jack Mount's personal collection.

Unlike previous exhibits primarily curated by the librarian, this one is a true collaborative effort. We're working closely with the education department and volunteers to create an experience that fully captures the spirit of Tucson. We're excited to share it with the community and hope you'll join us for its debut in August!



Linen postcard featuring Saguaro National Monument which was established in 1933. It was elevated to a National Park by Congress in 1994.

## New on the Shelf

*Mexican Maritime Mail: a postal history from colonial times to the 20th century* by Karl H. Schimmer & John M. Heath (1997)

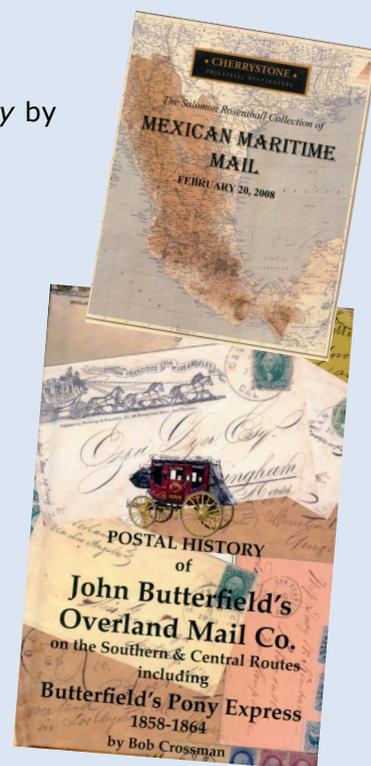
*Collecting United States Cover and Postal History* by William R Weiss (1987)

*U.S. Commemorative and Special Printed Envelopes, 1876-1965* by F. L. Ellis & William H. Maisel (1974)

*The Postage Stamps of New Zealand: Volume IX* by Robert Samuel (2006)

*The Salomon Rosenthal Collection of Mexican Maritime Mail* by Cherrystone Philatelic Auctioneers (2008)

*Postal History of John Butterfield's Overland Mail Co. on the Southern & Central Routes including Butterfield's Pony Express 1858-1864* by Robert O. Crossman (2023)



## Stamp Discovery Preparing for Art Contest

As mentioned before in this issue, Tucson is approaching its milestone 250th Birthday. Our Stamp Discovery program is hosting a Kids Tucson Birthday Design contest for this special birthday. The grand winning design will be printed on postcards. During our celebration on August 20th, Tucson's official birthdate, we will unveil the top winners from each age group. Also unveiled that morning will be a special USPS pictorial postmark for canceling mail at our contract post office. Our special pictorial postmark was designed by local graphic artist Don Regole, who has designed several excellent postmarks over the years for special events here at the PHF.



2019 grand winning design



Contest QR code

If you know any local Tucson students who like to draw, please spread the word. We always look forward to receiving the mail each day as we anticipate new, colorful, and creative entries.

## Farewell to These Fantastic Volunteers

Unfortunately we must say goodbye to education volunteers Ruth Ann Kolton and Bill Mizner. These volunteers passed away in February of this year. They were very dependable and served for many years.



Ruth Ann, or "Rusty", (left), was incredibly helpful to our previous education director, Sue Sisson, as well as me, when I started in the position. We lived near each other in the late 2000's and so she was very willing for me to drop off "homework." I enjoyed visiting her and her fabulous white bichon frisé, Felipé, who was always happy to greet me with tail wags. I would drop off lesson projects for Rusty. She would organize thousands of stamps into lesson sets. Each set would be used by a student in the classroom, library, or homeschool setting. When a volunteer does this, they usually make about 300 sets at a time. We supply packets of stamps to students across the country and we have over 100 lessons available for order.

For the past ten years Bill Mizner, (right), came in twice a week to soak stamps. The stamps were on envelopes or cardboard boxes and had traveled through the mail. People send us donations of stamps they have torn off envelope corners because they know we use them for lessons and requests.

Bill had a tremendous sense of humor and was always telling us stories about his childhood, which appeared to be very mischievous, especially since his partner in crime was his twin brother, Frank. We enjoyed hearing about his travels with his wife Susan over the years. He acquired many classic, unique and humorous T-shirts while on these trips.



These volunteers were very important and generous to our education program. We are grateful for the time they gave in support of the students.

**PHF Calendar**

**Board Meeting**

July 19, 2025

**Kids Birthday Contest Unveil**

August 20, 2025

**Visiting the PHF**

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**In Memoriam**

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Opening August 20, 2025

**Tucson 250**

**Celebrating Tucson's  
Desert, Culture, and  
Community**

Visit our permanent and rotating exhibits in person or explore them online at our website under

Museum >Permanent Exhibits **or**  
Museum > Rotating Exhibit

**Tucson Stamp Club**

The club is currently meeting at the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge on 3445 N Dodge Blvd, 85716

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