

THEMATICS

Nr 201: DESEMBER 2025

Newsletter of *Thematics Southern Africa*/Nuusbrieff van *Tematika Suider-Afrika*

73 Dombeya Avenue, Kleinbron Park, Brackenfell 7560

Editor: Robbie Harm robertharm9@gmail.com

ARTICLES FOR THEMNEWS

Most of the articles which appear in **Thematics** are sourced from a variety of available philatelic magazines; however, it would be wonderful to use more local articles. I have adjusted the newsletter to allow for local and longer articles. The request for articles remains as strong as ever.

FROM THE EDITOR OF THEMATICS

Dear Thematicists,

We are entering the last month of 2025, and Christmas is around the corner. It is the time when our activities tend to take a downturn. Issue 201 for December 2025 will be the last newsletter for 2025, and, as has been the practice for many years, there will not be a newsletter for January 2026. Many of us will enjoy the rest period that lies ahead, although some of us will not be in position to enjoy the rest period. Those of us who are pensioners, will probably look forward to the family visits that may be in the offing. All that remains for me is to wish each and every one of you a Blessed Christmas (or whatever this period may be called. May you enjoy a peaceful period, and if you have to drive, please be very careful and on the lookout for those drivers thinking that the roads belong to them. If you come through the festive parts of this holiday, I wish you the very best for 2026, and let it be the year where you can fill some of the many holes in your collection(s). I am looking forward to spending a quiet time at home, as our nearest family is a 30-hour journey away from us, while the price of flying tickets brings tears to one's eyes.

Editor

THEMATIC MEETINGS / TEMATIESE BYEENKOMSTE

***First Saturday of the month** – *The Pretoria Chapter* meets at **10:00** in Greek Orthodox Church Hall, corner of Lynwood Road and Roper Street, (opposite UP main gate).

Contact: Helena Snyman 012-803-8922, 083-990-8953 or helenasnyman7@gmail.com.

***First Saturday of the month** – *The Western Cape Chapter* meets at **09:30** in the Church Hall of the DR Church Bellville-Vallei, c/o Postma and St Andrews Street, Oakdale, Bellville.

Contact: Diederik Viljoen at 082-456-6653 or diederikviljoen@gmail.com.

STAMP FAIRS

***First Saturday of the month** – *The Cape Stamp Fair* @ DR Church Bellville-Vallei, c/o Postma and Andrews Streets, Oakdale, Bellville, Cape Town. **Contacts:** Ken Joseph 072-597-1287 ken@philatelicfriends.co.za Robbie Harm 082 925 7103, robertharm9@gmail.com, from 08:30 until 12:30. Please confirm the date of the next Stamp Fair, although reminders are sent via SMS/E-mail.

***First Saturday of the month** – *Pretoria Stamp Fair* @ Pretoria, Greek Orthodox Church, corner Lynwood Road and Roper Street, (opposite UP main gate) **Contact:** Kenny Napier

Kenny.napier@mweb.co.za and Clinton Goslin 083 272 9367, atlasauctioneers@lantic.net.
Open at 08:00 with auction at 11:00.

*** Second Saturday, every month - Johannesburg Stamp Fair:** German Country Club, 131 Holkam Road, Paulshof, Sandton. Open 08:00 with an auction at 10:00. Contact: Kenny Napier, kenny.napier@mweb.co.za and Clinton Goslin 083 272 9367, atlasauctioneers@lantic.net.

***Last Saturday of the month – East Rand Stamp Fair @** Edenvale Bowling Club, 6th Avenue, Edenvale. **Contact:** Kenny Napier Kenny.napier@mweb.co.za and Clinton Goslin 083 272 9367, atlasauctioneers@lantic.net. From 08:00, auction at 10:00.

***First Saturday of the month – Sunbird Stamp Auction @** St Elizabeth's Anglican Church Hall, 5 Salisbury Avenue, Westville, Durban. From 09:00 until 13:00. **Contacts:** Kim Breytenbach sunbird.stampauctions@gmail.com.

***First Saturday of each month - Natal Stamp Fair:** from 09:00 to 12:30.

Even numbered months @ Hilton's Lions Hall, Azalia Drive, Hilton. Host: Maritzburg Philatelic Society. **Contact** Ken Joseph, ken@philatelicfriends.com.

Odd numbered months - at St Elizabeth's Church Main Hall, Salisbury Avenue, Westville, Durban. Host: Highway Philatelic Society. **Contact** Ken Joseph, ken@philatelicfriends.com.

***Second and last Saturday of month – Natal Fair @** Classic Motorcycle Club, 137 Tara Road, Bluff, Durban. Open: From 09:00. Contact: Zbigniew Kawecki, z.kawecki57@gmail.com.

***George** (online philatelic auctions): Ray's Stamps, Contact: Ray Upson (044 871 2286). scpa@xsinet.co.za (Fax2email: 086 733 8444)

THEMATICS AROUND THE COUNTRY

Pretoria Chapter – 1 November 2025

With only three of us in attendance, we shared a variety of information on many items. Like the Austrian stamp of the **composer** Franz Xaver Gruber, composer of Silent night. **Paul Kruger** is still in the limelight and Petra showed four new postcards acquired at Kruger House. She also showed her collection of Paul Kruger - '**n Lewe vol genade**. The exhibition is going for 25 pages and the end is not yet in sight. Some of the sections in the exhibition are Youth years, Great Trek' Pretoria years, Church life, political life, War and presidency, The lonely exile, His funeral and the world wide tributes. Helena showed new **postcards** from the Cedarberg and Augrabies Falls National Park. **Helena Snyman**

WC Chapter – 4 October 2025

We could only muster 5 members (ie. Rianneke, Evert, Reanie, Hugh and Diederik) on the lovely summer's morning. Diederik started first by showing a new purchase which is a part page from the original Fournier handbook of the 1880 Cyprus overprints. It shows 3 different overprints for the 1d. Rianneke received a large number of meter marks as well as stamps for her planned "**Medical Theme**" exhibit that we might see the first draft next year. Reanie showed us a proper small size bronze post office scale that is still in perfect working condition. Nice item for her study. We then looked at a scanned copy of a Brazilian exhibit (SAVPEX) called "**Amateur Radio Activities**". This was a well-presented exhibit with only a

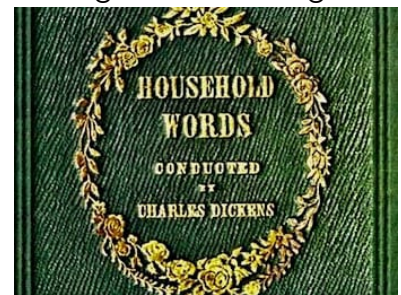
few borderline items. The exhibitor showed a number of meter marks (cut-outs?), proofs, postal stationery, artwork and an extensive range of stamps covering the subject. Please go and have another look at this and all the SAVPEX thematic exhibits to find some ideas for your 2026 exhibits.

Diederik Viljoen

FACTS AND FEATS: THE POSTAL SERVICES

The following Facts and Feats touch on all types of Gum.

The gum used on the backs of the Penny Black was composed of potato-starch, wheat-starch and acacia gum. The Post Office called it cement and early stamps bore instructions printed on the sheet margins "In Wetting the Back be careful not to remove the cement. This created a panic that the gum was injurious to health, and led to the Select committee on Postage Label Stamps being convened in 1852 to enquire into its composition. Charles Dickens wrote an article entitled **The Great British Gum Secret** in the May 1852 issue of *Household Words*. Some American stamps used British gum, while others used an extract of tapioca.



Green-tinted gum was first used for the British 6d stamp of 1854 so that the operator of the embossing machine could distinguish the right side of the paper for printing while red gum was used in the stamps of Hanover (1850-52). Nevertheless, there are several instances of British stamps printed on the gummed side. By the 1860s an improved dextrine was in use, and this continued till 1968 when invisible non-curl PVA (polyvinyl alcohol) gum was substituted. Again there was an outcry at the time, that the alcohol gum would intoxicate anyone licking it! China is the only country regularly to issue stamps un gummed, a glue pot being provided on post office counters for this purpose.



The Republican anniversary series of Czechoslovakia of 1923 had the gum applied in a pattern showing the initials of the republic (CSP). Many of the provincial issues of Germany immediately after the Second World War had *Spargummi* (economy gum), applied in blobs to reduce by 50% the amount of gum required to cover the surface. A pattern of wavy lines appeared in the gum of German stamps of 1921 and a geometric pattern in the stamps of Germany of 1934, Switzerland and Liechtenstein.



The first self-adhesive stamps, with peelable backing paper were issued by Sierra Leone on 10 February 1964.

Facts and feats

from Mackay, James, The Guinness Book of Stamps, Guinness Publishing Ltd, Enfield, 1988

Please note that the information used for this article has in many cases been overtaken by events – Ed.

TIMELINE – DUTCH EXPLORER ABEL TASMAN SIGHTS SOUTH ISLAND OF PRESENT DAY NEW ZEALAND



Abel Janszoon Tasman was a Dutch seafarer and explorer, best known for his voyages of 1642 and 1644 in the service of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). On 13 December 1642 Tasman and his crew became the first Europeans to reach New Zealand when they sighted the north-west coast of the South Island. Tasman named it **Staten Land** "in honour of the States General" (Dutch parliament). It was later renamed *Nieuw Zeeland*, after the Dutch province of Zeeland, by Joan Blaeu, official Dutch cartographer to the Dutch East



India Company. On 14 December 1642 Tasman's ships anchored 7 km offshore, about 20km south of Cape Foulwind (**left**) near Greymouth. The ships were observed by Māori who named a place on this coast Tiropahi (the place where a large sailing ship was seen). Likely born in 1602 or 1603 in Lutjegast, Netherlands, Tasman started his career as a merchant seaman and became a skilled navigator. In 1633, he joined the VOC and sailed to Batavia, now Jakarta,

Indonesia. He participated in several voyages, including one to Japan. In 1642, Tasman was appointed by the VOC to lead an expedition to explore the uncharted regions of the Southern Pacific Ocean. His mission was to discover new trade routes and to establish trade relations with the native inhabitants. One of the objectives was to obtain knowledge of "all the totally unknown" Provinces of Beach. This was a purported yet phantom island said to have plentiful gold, which had appeared on European maps since the 15th century, as a result of an error in some editions of Marco Polo's works. The expedition was to use two small ships, **Heemskerck** and **Zeehaen**. En route back to Batavia, Tasman came across the Tongan archipelago on 20 January 1643. While passing the Fiji Islands Tasman's ships came close to being wrecked on the dangerous reefs of the north-eastern part of the Fiji group. He charted the eastern tip of Vanua Levu and Cikobia-i-Lau before making his way back into the open sea. The expedition turned north-west towards New Guinea and arrived back in Batavia on 15 June 1643. In April 1657, Tasman wrote his will and testament, describing himself as ill but not bedridden. Tasman died at Batavia on 10 October 1659 and was survived by his second wife and a daughter by his first wife. His property was divided between his wife and his daughter. In his will, he left 25 guilders to the poor of his village, Lutjegast.

International Society of World Wide Stamp Collectors and Wikipedia

BEAUTIFUL NEW GREENLANDIC STAMPS

The end of the year is nearing, so now is a great time to discover the beautiful Greenlandic stamps that have been issued since our last email. The first stamp was issued on 28 July 2025, in celebration of what could have been the 100th birthday of Jens Rosing. He is known as the "Grand Old Man" of Greenlandic stamps, which is only fair, considering that he created more than 150



stamps over a period of 51 years. Jens Rosing's style was known to be very respectful, with a strong focus on the traditional Greenlandic life and culture. The souvenir sheet celebrating Jens Rosing was created by Martin Mörck, and the girl depicted in the souvenir sheet is Jens Rosing's daughter Ina - who has inherited her father's artistic flair - you can see her stamp work further down this mail.

The next stamp stays in a celebratory mode, as the stamp left, issued on 4 September 2025, celebrates the 100th anniversary of the founding of **Ittoqqortoormiit** - formerly known as Scoresbysund. **Ittoqqortoormiit** was founded in 1925 by Ejnar Mikkelsen and 80 East Greenlanders, in order to secure sovereignty over Northeast Greenland. Today, 100 years later, **Ittoqqortoormiit** is the smallest Greenlandic town, with no more than 364 inhabitants. The stamp depicts artwork by the late local artist Pia Arke, and it is the second time that her artwork is depicted on Greenlandic stamps.



We remain celebratory a little longer, as we move to the next issue, celebrating the 100th anniversary of telecommunications in Greenland. The stamps were issued on 6 September 2025, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the very first telegram from Greenland to Denmark. Since then, things have developed significantly. For instance, it took two days for the first telegram to be answered by the King - today we expect nearly instant replies - although we might still allow the King a couple of days to reply. The issue consists of two stamps, each depicting a young Greenlandic woman, speaking on the phone - the first stamp depicts the use of the landline, while the second stamp depicts the use of a mobile phone. The souvenir sheet depicts a girl sitting outside, enjoying the sun, while listening to music, and looking at her phone - a great illustration of how Tusass and telecommunication services has evolved.



On 12 September 2025, the first embroidered stamp from Tusass was issued, as part of a joint issue with a number of other countries. The theme of the stamp is the "Dove of Peace". The issue is a statement to show that the postal services behind the joint issue stand for peace, in both words and action, and in a divided and war-torn world, it is increasingly important to show solidarity, and being willing to do so publicly.

On 24 September 2025, a new stamp series focused on ethnographic photographs was started, and the first two stamps of the series certainly are stunning. The two photographs are from Tasiilaq, and were taken by William Thalbitzer and Thomas Nedergaard Krabbe in 1906 and 1904 respectively. The stamps are designed by Ina Rosing, the youngest daughter of Jens Rosing, highlighted at the top of this email. Her work as a visual artist is on display here, and she manages to add visual elements to the stamps, that allow the photos stand out even



more than they do on their own. It is impressive what she is able to do with seemingly simple tools. We are very excited to see the next stamps in this series, as they provide a wonderful look into the rich culture that exists in Greenland.

Also issued on 24 September 2025, was the beautiful and colourful stamp seen left. The stamp celebrates the 40th anniversary of the West Nordic Council. The council is a cooperative forum founded on 24 September 1985, and consist of 18 members - 6 from Greenland, Iceland, and Faroe Islands respectively. The council is focused on safeguarding the environment, resources, and culture of the North Atlantic region. The stamp depicts three figures, each representing one of the three countries, and the aurora in the sky, reflecting in the water of the bay makes this stamp a particularly beautiful celebration of cooperation.



On 7 November 2025, the third part of the series on everyday heroes in Greenland was issued, and it consists of two beautiful stamps, depicting two formidable women - Aviâja Egede Lynge, and Aima Jensen. Aviâja Egede Lynge has been the spokesperson for the children and youth of Greenland for a number of years, and has been pivotal in the work to advance children's rights, working with authorities and organisations, to ensure that children are heard in the decision-making process. She might not be in the limelight, but her work is extraordinarily important, which is why she deserves the praise as one of Greenland's everyday heroes. Aima Jensen, in many ways, is a life-saver. She has worked as the hoist operator on rescue helicopters, she is a trained pilot, has been a marine officer, and has worked several jobs focused on rescue operations in the Arctic environment. But that is not all that she is. She is also a torchbearer for a new generation of Greenlanders, who balance tradition and modernity, making sure that Greenlandic culture and tradition are passed on in a way that allows for them to stay relevant in a changing time. Both women have all the traits that this series wants to highlight: Courage, a sense of responsibility, and love for the community.



On 7 November 2025 the stamp left below was issued, in celebration of the recognition of the 7th of November as an official flag day in Greenland. The flag day was adopted following the official recognition of **International Inuit Day** as an important observance in Greenland. The day marks the celebration of the Inuit as a people, and it is a celebration of unity and strength, and in the words of the late Eben Hobson Sr. "We ... are an international community sharing common language, culture, and a common land along the Arctic coast... Although not a nation-state, as a people, we do constitute a nation." We look forward to celebrating **International Inuit Day** going forward.



The final issue we look at today, is the Greenlandic Christmas stamps, issued on 7 November 2025. The two stamps are created by artist Nikolaj Andersen Olsvig, and are painted in a wonderful impressionist style. The first stamp depicts a group of locals heading for Christmas service, in a traditional red



wooden church. A single star is positioned above the church, as a guide to the locals. The locals are all wearing traditional Greenlandic costumes, making this a beautiful celebratory stamp. The second stamp depicts a family consisting of a mother and child on a traditional dog sled, with the husband as the driver, and seven sled dogs energetically pulling the sled towards the viewer, across the snow-covered landscape.

You can find all these stamps directly at Tusass, where it is also available as sheets, blocks, and a booklet, all available in mint condition or with various conditions, and as FDCs.

Notification by "Stampworld" bounce@stampworld.com on 25 November 2025

PHILATELIC INVENTION IN THE UNITED STATES: MACDONOUGH'S FUGITIVE INK FOR POSTAGE STAMPS

In another article adapted from his gold medal-winning book, *Philatelic Invention to Prevent Stamp Reuse in the United States: 1861-1881*, Jan Hofmeyr, FRPSL looks at some interesting ideas and essays put forward to prevent the reuse of stamps by destruction.

One of the earliest ideas for a stamp that could only be used once came from a resident of Illinois called Charles Rowland in 1859. Rowland had read the sensational stories about fraudulent reuse. So he wrote to Zevely of the Post Office Department (POD) with a suggestion: 'Let the mucilage [that is, the gum] be placed on the right side of the stamp to hold it to the envelope and as the letter passes through the hands of the mailing clerk let him sheer off the left.' Rowland asked if he should patent the idea. There was no response from Zevely so Rowland never followed up.

But the idea of preventing reuse through destructive cancellation is one to which inventors would regularly return over the next 20 years. And as we'll see, Rowland's idea led to some of the more interesting essays to prevent reuse. Not all of them were patented. An example is the crude but rather attractive pair of essays shown **right**.

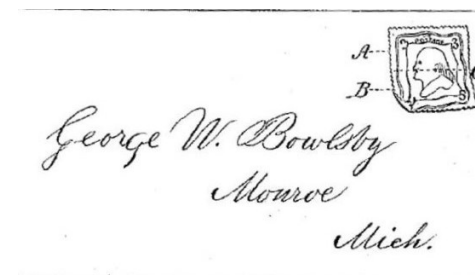
Essays for a stamp that would be cancelled by tearing it in half. (Hofmeyr collection)

Stamp before (near) and after cancellation (far)

These essays in black on green paper are for a 3c. stamp. The word 'POSTAGE' is printed under 'US' in blue. The words 'Void if detached' are printed at the top and bottom. The stamp before cancelling is on the left. The top is separated from the bottom by a thin roulette just above 'US'. The top is ungummed. The bottom is stuck to the card. The stamp on the right has been cancelled by tearing off the ungummed half.



We don't know when these essays were created. But they are usually dated to the mid-1860s prior to the adoption by the POD of Charles Steel's 'grill' stamps. The most well-known of the tear-off essays are those attributed to George Bowsby of Michigan. Bowsby received patent 51,782 for an 'Improvement in Postage Stamps' on 26 December 1865.



Bowsby's illustration for a tear-off stamp. The top half is supposed to be gummed and stuck to the envelope. The bottom half is ungummed and is meant to be torn off along the central perforations

Here's how he described his stamp: 'The nature of my invention consists in applying the adhesive to only a portion of the stamp, so that when the stamp is attached to the letter it will leave the remaining part

projecting... It also consists in tearing off the projecting part by the postmaster...' This is Rowland's idea. Bowsby illustrated his patent with a picture (**above left**). The stamp in the drawing looks like an 1861 3c. stamp. 'A' is the top half of the stamp and is supposed to be gummed and stuck to the envelope. 'B', the bottom half, is ungummed. 'C' is a line of perforations separating the top from the bottom. It's supposed to make it easy for a postmaster to cancel the stamp by tearing off the bottom half.

Although the National Bank Note Company (NBNC) produced many essays for Bowsby's patent using the 1861 1c. stamp, the resulting essays don't conform closely to the patent. Instead of dividing the stamp in half, NBNC added an ungummed, stamp sized tab to the top. **The illustration right** shows a block of three for Bowsby's patent 51,782 (26 December 1865).

An essay for Bowsby's patent based on the 1861 1c. stamp. (Hofmeyr collection). Instead of dividing the stamp in half, as indicated on Bowsby's drawing, NBNC added an ungummed, stamp-sized coupon to the top with the inscription: 'STAMP of no value without coupon. COUPON to be removed only by the POSTMASTER'



The tab attached to the top of each stamp is ungummed. The idea was to cancel the stamp by tearing off the tab. There's no record of any correspondence between NBNC and the POD about these essays. One wonders why NBNC devoted time and money to producing them. Bowsby's idea would have doubled the cost of paper and ink for postage stamps.



Yet NBNC produced them in two colours (blue and red on white paper); and in three forms: imperforate (**far left**), rouletted (**middle left**), and perforated (**near left**).

Different forms of Bowsby essays. (Hofmeyr collection). The roulette separation shown from the back of the stamp. You can also see the difference between the ungummed top and the gummed bottom.

Although most of the essays attributed to Bowsby's patent don't conform to the patent, there is one that does. It's a unique block of four of the 3c. E grill with the top half gummed and the bottom half ungummed (**right**). The E grill helps us to date it to about 1868. This uncatalogued 1868 E grill essay is the truest example of what Bowsby had in mind. The top half is gummed; the bottom half, ungummed. A slit in the middle takes the place of perforations. The earliest possible date for this essay is early in 1868.



Find out more...

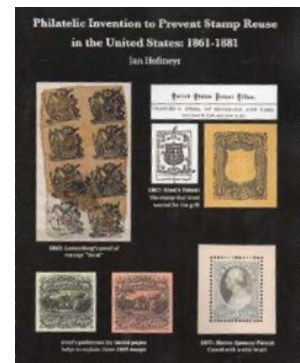
The author of this series, Jan Hofmeyr, talks to *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* about his collecting career in a new video available now on Stanley Gibbons's YouTube Channel. During this exclusive interview Jan talks about his early collecting memories in South Africa, his rise to become a multi-award-winning author and exhibitor, and reveals some of his favourite philatelic pieces he has collected along the way. To view the interview visit the Stanley Gibbons channel on YouTube (www.youtube.com/@StanleyGibbons1856)

Philatelic Invention in the United States

This article is adapted from Jan Hofmeyr's book, *Philatelic Invention in the United States* which provided an illustrated history of the innovation that took place between 1861 and

1881 as the US Post Office Department tried to find a stamp that could not be cleaned for reuse. This 170-page book, contains more than 150 full colour illustrations of essays and stamps, is available from Amazon (\$50). 'A beautifully illustrated explanation of the ways that American inventors tried to solve the problem of cleaning and reuse...' John M Hotchner (RDP, FRPSL, Past President of the APS)

An article by Jan Hofmeyr, FRPSL published in Gibbons Stamp Monthly of May 2025



THE HARP SPEAKS TO THE HEART...

The basic principle of the harp – taut strings of different lengths that produce different tones when plucked – has been known since the beginnings of human musicality. Depictions of simple harps can be found as early as 4000 BC among the Sumerians and in ancient Egypt, where the instruments were used for ritual ceremonies. Similar depictions can be found in almost all early civilisations in Asia, Africa and America (**left**).



Probably the oldest known harpist is King David, who lived around 1000 BC (**right**). There is evidence of the harp among West European peoples from around the time of Christ. It probably arrived in Ireland in connection with the Egyptian tin trade and spread from there to northern Europe, where it is already mentioned in ancient Scandinavian poetry. In the Middle Ages, elaborately decorated harps were very popular at royal courts, where they were used for courtly dances and to accompany chivalric songs and epic poems (**left**). At the same time, however, simple folk harps used by itinerant minstrels could be found in all village squares.



Until the Renaissance, harps were tuned diatonically and could only be played in one key. In an orchestra, the harp was therefore usually part of the basso continuo. In 1607, in the premiere of Monteverdi's opera "Orfeo", an 'arpa doppia' was used for the first time, so called because it had a second set of strings (similar to the black keys of the piano) in addition to the diatonic set of strings (white keys of the piano). Around 1660, Tyrolean instrument makers came up with the idea of changing the tension of individual strings by one semitone at a time by moving a lever. However, the invention of the pedal harp (**right**) in 1720 by the German instrument maker Jacob Hochbrucker (1673-1763) was decisive in establishing the harp as a melody instrument in the orchestra during the Baroque period.



Changing the pitch of the strings with the feet enabled harpists to play chromatic tones and in different keys for the first time. Marie-Antoinette of Austria-Lorraine (1755-1793) came to France through her marriage to Louis XVI and introduced the pedal harp to the French court at her first court concert in 1770. The instrument became fashionable in Paris and many women of high society followed the queen's example (**left**). Among them was Marie-Thérèse de Willer-Mawlaz (1751-1816), who later became the third wife of the author



Pierre Caron de Beaumarchais. The Bohemian composer Johann Baptist Krumpholtz (1742-1790), who had settled in Paris in 1777, dedicated his '1st Sonata for Harp with Violin Accompaniment' to the talented harpist.



The music score depicted on the current Austrian stamp (**right**) is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Together with the French harp makers Jean-Henri Naderman (1734-1799) (**left**) and Sébastien Érard (1752-1831), Krumpholtz worked on constructive improvements that considerably expanded the instrument's potential.



The Romantic period is regarded as the golden age of harp music. On the one hand, harpists developed remarkable skills in order to meet the challenges of the increasingly demanding concertos and sonatas of the Romantic masters. On the other hand, composers wrote harp parts of a wholly new complexity and integrated virtuoso harp passages into their works. Hector Berlioz once put it this way: "The harp speaks to the heart like no other instrument – I try to release this magic in my music." The harp works of



Debussy (**left**) and Ravel show that the harp was able to hold its own even during Impressionism and the various musical changes in the 20th century. Not only that, it is now also enjoying growing popularity outside the classical sphere and has established itself in jazz and film music, and, thanks to the invention of the electric harp by Joël Garnier (1940-2000) in 1984, even in rock, metal and electronic music.

The current Austrian stamp shows a concert harp made by Lyon & Healy in Chicago. Founded in 1864, the company has been making harps since 1889 and is one of today's leading harp makers. The company's harps can be found in major orchestras around the world, including the Vienna Philharmonic. The frame of the stamp sheet (**right**) shows a detail of the string mechanism on the upper neck of the Lyon & Healy harp from the Vienna Musikverein.



Quellen: persönliche Informationen der Grafikerin Kirsten Lubach, Wien; D. Levitan "The History of the Harp" (<https://live.stanford.edu/news/the-history-of-the-harp/>); Frouvelle „The Evolution of the Harp Over Time“ (<https://lelivreetlaharpe.com/en/the-history-of-the-harp/>); Bibliothèque Nationale de France (<https://www.bnf.fr/en/>); Wikipedia Philatelistischer Hinweis: Österreich 10.9.2025

An article by Peter Lang in Der Musikus No 164 of September 2025

MOUNTAINS AND MOUNTAINEERING ON STAMPS

The World's Mountains

Mountains are large land forms that rise more or less abruptly from the surrounding surface. Elevation, relief, steepness, spacing, and continuity are among the criteria considered when identifying them, but there is, in fact, no universally accepted definition for what constitutes a "mountain." As a whole, 24 percent of the world's landmass is mountainous. Within the continents, mountains cover 64 percent of Asia, 36 percent of North America,

25 percent of Europe, 22 percent of South America, and only 3 percent of Africa. The Himalayas are home to most of the world's tallest mountains, including the highest on earth: Mount Everest, which rises from sea level to 29,035 feet (8,852m). Due to gravity, the maximum height any mountain on our planet can reach is around 82,000 feet (25,000m) from the lowest point on the earth's crust.

Mt. Perdido is the third highest peak in the Pyrenees



Types of Mountains

Folded.

Mountain ranges typically are formed by the movement and interaction of lithospheric plates. As these plates collide, the earth's crust is folded and uplifted. The major mountains tend to occur along linear arcs. Examples of folded mountains are the European Alps (**above right**) and the Himalayas of Asia.

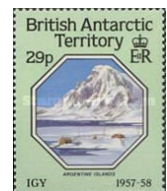
Volcanic.



These mountains are formed due to eruptions where the extruded magma accumulates on the earth's surface, often in pyramidal form or as a shield. Some volcanoes are still active, while others are extinct. Examples of volcanic peaks are Mt. Fuji in Japan (**left**), Mt. Egmont in New Zealand, Hekla in Iceland, and Oruro in Bolivia.

Dome.

Mountains created when hot magma rises but is not erupted. Instead it uplifts overlying sedimentary rocks to create a dome shape in the earth's surface. A good example of a dome mountain is a peak in the Arrowsmith Peninsula in British Antarctic Territory (**right**).



Fault-block.



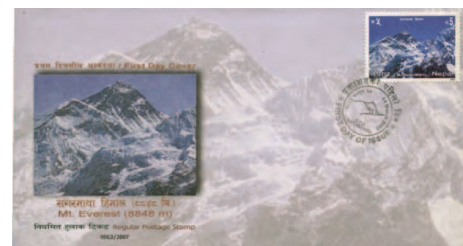
These are mountains formed when blocks of rock slide along faults in the earth's crust and are uplifted and tilted. Examples of fault-block mountains can be found in the Alaskan Ranges in North America. A well-known example is Mt. McKinley, or Denali, the highest mountain peak in North America at 20,320 feet (6,194m) (**left**).

Mountains and Human Settlement

Mountains provide homes for at least 10 percent of the world's population.

Mount Everest first day cover of Nepal, postmarked 14 March 2007

Thousands of different ethnic groups dwell in mountainous regions around the world and have learned to live in these often harsh environments. Their economy historically is based on some combination of hunting, foraging, small-scale farming, nomadism, logging and/or mining, and in some



instances tourism — although invariably they remain poor.

Mt. Egmont in Egmont National Park, New Zealand 1971

By contrast, their mountain habitats are increasingly being invaded by outsiders from more prosperous countries intent on scaling the challenging peaks to be found in the indigenous homelands. Fortunately, the often controversial cultural contacts between natives and foreigners are limited by the fact that relatively few mountains are popular for climbing. Many are very remote, at high elevations, and with poor weather conditions most of the time. This means that

climbers have to spend more time hiking, camping, and battling the elements than actually ascending the sought-after summits.

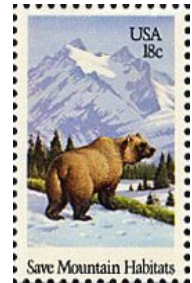
The importance of protecting mountains from resource exploitation is apparent when their ecosystems are reviewed.



Mountain Sheep on Nepal stamp of 1999

While rainfall varies greatly across rugged highlands, ranging from very wet to very dry, about 80 percent of our planet's fresh water originates in mountainous regions and, in a time of increasing water scarcity, it is correspondingly important to safeguard these sources of precious H₂O.

Save Mountain Habitats: Grizzly Bear on USA stamp of 1984



Due to changes in elevation that induce zones or belts of differing climates, soils, and vegetation, montane ecosystems display a wide range of biodiverse organisms: plants and animals that deserve conservation.



Yak, on 1973 of Nepal

Many highland plant species have great potential for human use. Consider, for example, the Himalayan Yew, found throughout Afghanistan, India, Nepal and Myanmar (Burma), which may yield a drug to help cure cancer, although 10 kilograms of the tree's bark, leaves, and needles are required to produce a single gram of the drug.

The penetration of transportation links, hydroelectric power projects, and mining operations can cause serious damage in mountainous regions if the fragility of their ecosystems is ignored.



Viaducts (left) and Dam & Power Station (right) on Swiss stamps of 1949



Exploitation of finite resources — if unchecked — will mean diminishing raw materials for future generations. In sum, if the world's highest mountains are able to inspire generations of climbers to accomplish great scaling feats, then no less a commitment should be made to preserve their delicate ecosystems and the endangered cultures that lie within them.

Mountaineering

The sport or hobby or profession of climbing mountains is referred to as mountaineering, a popular pastime around the world. While mountaineering began in attempts to reach the summits of large mountains, it is now diversified into various other activities such as rock-craft, snow craft, and skiing. These sports require experience, technical knowledge and athleticism, and all involve some risk. Sadly, loss of life is not uncommon due to avalanches, rock falls, adverse weather, or personal hazards



such as equipment failure or fatigue. Avalanches are a particular hazard; there is a one-in-five chance of dying if caught in a major snowfall and only a 50/50 chance of being found alive if buried for more than a few minutes. A world governing body in mountaineering, the **Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme (UIAA)**, exists to regulate such issues as access, safety equipment, medical assistance, and the preservation of montane environments. It was founded in Chamoix, France in 1932 and today represents some eight-eight member organizations from seventy-six different countries, comprising several million climbers and



mountaineers. There are two main types of mountaineering: alpine climbing and expedition climbing.

Alpine.



Alpine climbers usually tackle medium-sized mountains such as those found in the European Alps and North American Rockies.

Stamp honouring the centennial of Austrian Mountain Rescue Service, 1996

Being at lower altitudes these peaks are more easily accessed than larger and higher ranges and may be climbed on a fairly short time scale. Alpinists are involved in negotiating rocks and traveling across snow surfaces, ice, and glaciers. They usually carry their own loads between bases or bivouacs (makeshift resting or sleeping arrangements) and invariably climb routes to the summits in a single push. "Light and Fast" is the mantra of the Alpine mountaineer.

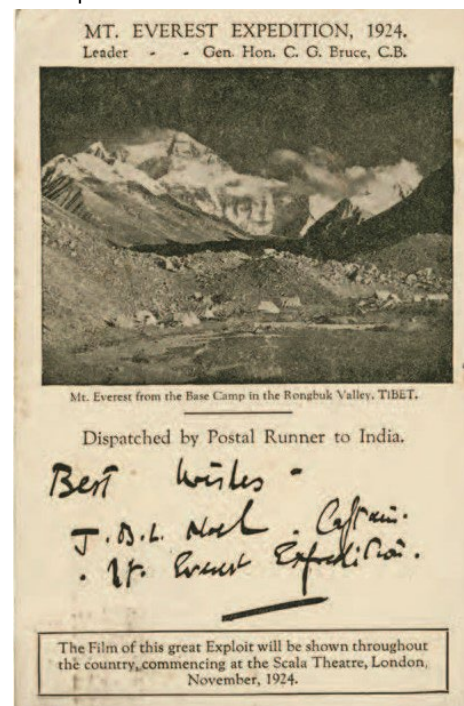
Expedition.

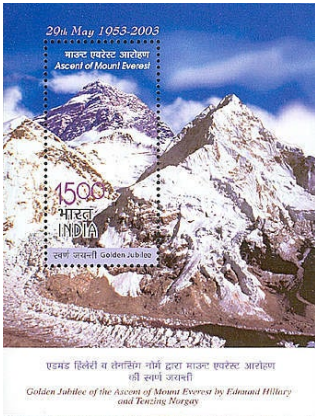


By contrast, Expedition climbers, while employing the same skills as Alpinists, must also have additional abilities to deal with rugged mountains at higher altitudes: longer routes, possible greater risks of rock falls or avalanches, more severe weather, and an expanded time scale. Progress is slower, with climbers using multiple porters or pack animals to transport gear and food between camps. Fixed lines are commonly used to minimize the danger involved in constantly moving between bases, and supplemental oxygen is made available. Thus, much planning and higher capital expenditures are involved in mounting expeditions to the world's highest ranges.

Asian Mountains

Of concern today is the mounting and adverse impact of increased numbers of climbers tackling ascents in some of the more popular locations. Their presence at some sites has led, in the words of a perceptive observer, to the creation of "a gigantic theme park in the sky, complete with queues, litter, idiotic punters, and fatal accidents." Mount Everest is a case in point. Named after Sir George Everest, first Surveyor General of India, it is known as *Chomolungma* (goddess mother of the universe) by Tibetans and as *Sagarmatha* (goddess of the sky) by the Nepalese. A British expedition in 1924 resulted in a tragedy when George Mallory and companion Andrew "Sandy" Irvine disappeared from sight a few hundred meters short of the summit, while still climbing. Mallory's body was only discovered seventy-five years later in 1999. Irvine's body still has not been found. It is not known whether they were successful in scaling Everest. A 1924 postcard from India bears a specially designed sticker tied with a "Mt. Everest Expedition 1924" handstamp, while the reverse features a photograph of the peak from the base camp in the Rongbuk Valley, Tibet. It is signed by Capt. John B.L. Noel who contributed substantially to the expedition in return for the rights as official expedition photographer.





Everest famously was first climbed by Sherpa Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary in 1953; they reached the summit with the aid of a team of 400 porters and Sherpas. There are many philatelic reminders of the event.

Souvenir sheet celebrating the golden jubilee of the ascent of Mt. Everest, 2003 (India)

Of special interest is the fiftieth anniversary set of stamps from New Zealand and the golden jubilee miniature sheet issued by India that same year. In the years following 1953 numerous expeditions mounted to achieve the same goal: some successful, others regrettably fatal. In 1965 an Indian expedition reached the summit, and a combined British and Royal Nepalese Army expedition completed an ascent in 1976. The Nepalese first day cover illustrated bears the signature of Lord John Hunt, president of the British Army Mountaineering Association.

illustrated bears the signature of Lord John Hunt, president of the British Army Mountaineering Association.

In the spring of 2012 there were around 500 would-be summiteers at the Everest base camp at one time, all awaiting a chance to ascend the peak. Today, the famed mountain is less like a goddess of the sky and *“more like the coldest, windiest, cruellest, most expensive, over-populated, corpse-strewn death trap on the planet.”* Avalanches, falls of deadly ice-rocks, altitude sickness, hypothermia, and relentless high winds are among the obstacles facing Himalayan climbers. Poor hygiene and disease also may come into play during lengthy waits in camps. Then there is the spiralling expense of contemporary expeditions. Just a license to climb Mt. Everest costs \$10,000. Guides, gear, and supplies add considerably to the charges. Sensible mountaineers will go as members of a large group, but places on these still can cost \$30,000 or more.



Examples from Pakistani issue featuring mountains in the Karakoram Range, 1981: (L to R) K-6 and K-2



There are numerous other Himalayan peaks to challenge expedition climbers. K-2 (unofficially Mt. Godwin Austen) — the second highest peak in the world at 28,251 feet (8,611m) — was finally conquered by an Italian expedition in 1954, a year after the Everest triumph. Its name comes from the 1856 Survey of India, and indicates that the peak is found in the Karakoram range of the Himalayas and was the

second peak to be measured by the Survey. A Nepalese set issued in 1996 revealed the impressive alignment of summits to be found within the Annapurna Mountain Range. In fact, Nepal is home to *eight* of the ten highest mountains in the world.

“First Ascent of Manaslu,” 1956 on a stamp of Japan

One of these, Mt. Manaslu, is the eighth highest mountain in the world. Its summit was first reached by Japanese climbers Toshio Imanishi and Gyalzen Norbu on 9 May 1956. Tragically, in the summer of 2012, at least eleven climbers were killed on Manaslu when their tent camp at close to 22,960 feet



(7,000m) was swept away by a massive avalanche. The casualties included French, German, Spanish, Italian, and Nepalese citizens, a reflection of the international nature of modern mountaineering. Kazakhstan in central Asia marked the International Year of Mountains with a souvenir sheet featuring the beautiful Altai Range in the far eastern part of that country.

European Mountains

Turning attention to mountain ranges in Europe, there is a wide selection of stamps issued by states with highlands within their borders or in adjacent states. The earliest ascent



commemorated on a stamp is the first successful climbing of Mont Blanc in the Alps on 8 August 1786 after a number of failed attempts. The bicentenary of that achievement was marked by a French stamp (**left**). Successful expeditions such as the one undertaken by Jacques Balmat and Dr. Michel Paccard, however, were infrequent. By 1825 only seventeen parties had reached the mountain's summit. Rising 15,774 feet (4,808m) on the border between France and Italy, Mont Blanc is the highest peak in Western Europe and is popular today for hiking, mountaineering, skiing, and snowboarding.

Rising 15,774 feet (4,808m) on the border between France and Italy, Mont Blanc is the highest peak in Western Europe and is popular today for hiking, mountaineering, skiing, and snowboarding.

Mountains in Tatra National Park, 1969

Every year some 17,000 mountaineers attempt to reach the summit; in summer as many as 300 climbers spend the night at a high refuge hut before making an early start on the final ascent. They tend to follow a well-marked route, the Couloir du Gouter, but it is not without its hazards, among them falling rocks and the fragile crust of a glacier. In the past twenty years, seventy-seven fatalities have been recorded.



It wasn't until the nineteenth century that mountaineering really developed as a sport in Europe. And it was mainly gentlemen from the British Alpine Club — the world's first mountaineering organization — who successfully scaled many of the Alpine peaks, clad resplendently in knickers and tweeds and with hobnails in their boots. Only the Matterhorn (**left**) or Monte Cervino, the 14,688-foot (4,478-meter) pyramid of granite on the Swiss/Italian border, resisted their attacks for some years. Its precipitous north-facing wall was believed inaccessible. Climbers were bombarded by a cannonade of boulders and stones: the celebrated "artillery" of the Matterhorn. The northeast ridge was finally ascended in 1865 by four Englishmen and three guides (two Swiss and one French).

Disastrously, the mountain was to take its revenge scarcely an hour later. At a dangerous rock passage one of the group slipped, pulling down others. The hemp security rope broke under the shock and four members of the party plunged some 4,000 feet to their deaths. The tragedy led to condemnation of the ill-omened sport, yet over the years many more expeditions set out to conquer the mountain via different routes, some successful, others fatal. Since 1865 more than 500 alpinists have died on the slopes of Monte Cervino, making it one of the deadliest peaks in the Alps. The north face was finally knocked off in 1931 by two German brothers, Franz and Toni Schmid.

Another example of a severely challenging climb is the north face of the Eiger (**right**), an imposing mountain in the Swiss Bernese Alps rising to 13,025 feet (3,970m) above sea level. It is one of three peaks along a prominent ridge commonly referred to as the Maiden or the Virgin (*Jungfrau*), the Monk (*Mönch*), and the Ogre (*Eiger*). A beautiful horizontal strip of three stamps issued by Switzerland in 2006 (Scott 1240a-c) shows the entire ridge: Eiger, Mönch, and



Jungfrau (**left**). The first successful ascent of the Eiger was made via the west flank by an Irish climber assisted by two Swiss guides in 1858. After numerous abortive attempts, the far more difficult north face was climbed by an Austrian-German expedition in

1938, eighty years after the first ascent of the mountain. The expedition was constantly threatened by snow avalanches, and the men climbed as quickly as possible between falls. They also faced storms and intense cold. After reaching the summit in late afternoon on the third day they were exhausted and only just had the strength to descend via the west route through a raging blizzard.

Over the years, accidents on Eiger have taken the lives of many aspiring summiteers. Since 1935, in fact, more than sixty climbers have died attempting the north face, earning it the name of *Mordwand* (murder wall), a pun on its official title of *Nordwand* (north wall). The Eiger is a huge limestone buttress with a spectacular sheer face rising to 5,900 feet (1,800m) above ground level along its northern wall. While an ascent from this approach may not represent the highest level of technical difficulty in modern Alpinism, its ferocious reputation stems from the frequency of rock falls, avalanches, and its treacherous ice fields. Cloud cover also impedes progress. In summer the face is invariably unclimbable due to falling rocks; winter ascents are preferable, when the crumbling face is strengthened by ice. One notorious section is known as the "*White Spider*"; its snow-filled cracks radiating from an ice field on the upper face resemble the legs of a spider. Another infamous spot is "*Death Bivouac*" where in 1935 two climbers were found frozen to death not far from the summit.

African Mountains

While the African continent may not have as many challenging mountains as the Eurasian land mass, there are nevertheless some impressive peaks extending from the Atlas Mountains in Morocco and Algeria via the Cameroon massif in West Africa (rising from the Gulf of Guinea in a series of volcanic peaks) to the highlands of East Africa and the Drakesbergen in the Republic of South Africa.

Mountain Climber, Mount Kenya, Ruwenzori Mountains, Mount Kilimanjaro.

One of the most spectacular mountains in Africa, however, is Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, a snow-covered volcano that actually consists of three peaks, two of which — Mawenzi (16,896 ft) and Shira (13,000 ft) — are extinct. The third, and highest, is Kibo (19,340 ft), which is considered dormant but active. Kilimanjaro is the highest mountain in Africa and the highest free-standing mountain in the world. Its slopes contain



an example of virtually every ecosystem on earth: glacier, snowfields, deserts, alpine moorland, savannah, and tropical jungle. Another magnificent summit is Mt. Kenya (*Kirinyaga*), at 17,053 feet (5,199m) the highest mountain in Kenya and the second highest in Africa. It, too, is an ancient, extinct volcano.

North American Mountains



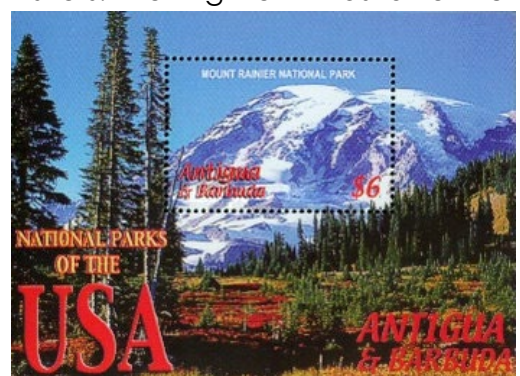
From the Alaskan Ranges (which include Mt. McKinley, Mt. Olympus, Mt. Rainier (**left**), Yosemite, the Tetons, and the Big Horn) to Mt. Washington in the Appalachians, there are numerous challenging and really tough climbs in Canada and the United States. These initially attracted sportsmen from Europe, and for many years their styles of mountaineering predominated. But Americans themselves also were active. In the 1930s new skills were introduced from Europe, enabling climbers to tackle more difficult ascents. In the post-war years, revolutionary techniques and equipment were tested in the Yosemite Valley. Vertical rock walls and overhangs, once considered impossible to scale, were now conquerable.

At 20,320 feet (6,194m), Mt. McKinley in Alaska — also known as *Denali* ("The High One") — is the tallest mountain in North America and a worthy goal for many high altitude climbers. It was first ascended in 1910 by a group of miners carrying improvised equipment; however, their attempt on the lower North Peak was not officially recognized. A documented climb led by Archdeacon Hudson Stuck and with better equipment reached the South Summit in 1913. What has now become the standard route of ascent — the West Buttress — was only achieved by Bradford Washburn in 1951. Although the sustained ascent of 16–17 days via several camps is not particularly hazardous, the weather can be unpredictable and at times ferocious. Climbers need to be experienced in traveling on steep snow- and ice-covered slopes and exposed traverses. Sadly, there is an unusually high casualty list due to inexperienced and exhausted mountaineers slipping on the deceptively easy inclines. Some climbers use Denali as a training ground for subsequent Himalayan expeditions.

As a national park it also attracts many thousands of visitors. Moving from Alaska to the contiguous United States, the most topographically prominent peak is Mt. Rainier in Washington State. This massive, dormant volcano rises to 14,411 feet (4,393m). An attractive souvenir sheet from Antigua & Barbuda offers a fine view of Mt. Rainier from the north, while an American stamp shows a canoeist on Reflection Lake in the foreground.

National Parks issue of the USA: Mount Rainier National Park, 2006 (Antigua & Barbuda).

The first European to view the peak was Captain George Vancouver in 1792, and it was he who named the mountain in honour of his superior officer, Rear Admiral Peter Rainier. Although it is about 1,100 years since its last major eruption, Mt. Rainier is considered one of the most dangerous volcanoes in the world, in part due to its proximity to human population centres. The mountain experiences about twenty small earthquakes a year. The summit comprises several craters, while its flanks are covered with numerous glaciers, snowfields, and rocky debris that offer a major challenge to climbers. Teams need to be experienced in traveling over wilderness and glaciers. As many as 13,000 people attempt the climb



each year, most of them starting from Camp Muir on the southeast flank; however, fatigue and poor weather mean that only about half of the attempts are successful.

The worst mountaineering accident on Mt. Rainier occurred in 1981 when eleven climbers lost their lives in an ice fall on a glacier. Regrettably, the volcano claims an average of two deaths a year due to rock and ice falls, avalanches, and hypothermia associated with severe weather conditions. Nevertheless, the national park continues to be popular for winter sports such as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. The Rocky Mountains form the major upland region in western North America. They run for more than 3,000 miles (4,830 km) from British Columbia in Canada to New Mexico in the United States. They



comprise a series of striking ranges with dramatic peaks, cirques, and glaciated valleys.

Wyoming Statehood: High Mountain Meadows, by Conrad Schwiering, 1990 (U.S.)

The eastern edge of the Rockies rises rapidly above the Great Plains and features mountains such as the Wind River Range and Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming and the Front Range of

Colorado.

Colorado Statehood: Columbine & Rocky Mountains, 1977 (U.S.)

The highest peak is Mt. Elbert in Colorado, which rises to 14,440 feet (4,401m).



The Continental Divide is located with the Rockies; this is the line at which waters flow either west to the Pacific Ocean or east to the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. The western edge of the Rockies includes the Wasach Mountains near Salt Lake City, Utah, and the Bitterroot Mountains along the Idaho-Montana border. The first crossing of the Rockies by European explorers was undertaken by Sir Alexander Mackenzie in 1793. A decade or so later, the Lewis and Clark expedition carried out a scientific survey, confirming a route for other explorers and traders later to roam the mountains in search of minerals and furs. Beginning in the 1840s, thousands of migrants struggled along the Oregon Trail to reach the Pacific.

Today the Rockies offer a variety of challenging outdoor activities the year round. The American Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado covers an area of 415 square miles and attracts millions of visitors.

Great White Throne, Zion National Park, Utah, 1934 (U.S.)

They can engage in driving, hiking, camping, skiing, snowboarding, biking, and motor biking along numerous paved roads and trails such as Trail Ridge Road, which reaches more than 12,000 feet (3,656m). More serious mountaineering is also an option, although only skilled technical climbers with extensive training and proper equipment are encouraged to register with the Park authorities. Groups of up to twenty climbers are allowed to attempt the ascent of Longs Peak (14,259 ft), one of fifty-four mountains with summits over 14,000 feet (4,268m) in Colorado. The sixteen-mile round trip can take up to twelve hours, with bivouacs provided en route. Climbers are warned of hazards in the form of violent weather — rainstorms, lightning, strong winds, snowfalls, and avalanches — that may cause injuries and even deaths.



As elsewhere in the mountainous regions around the world, climbers' deaths are a regrettable annual occurrence in the North American Rockies. Yosemite National Park is located on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada Range in northern California. It comprises a mile wide, seven mile long canyon, walled by striking granite cliffs, glacially carved domes,

and soaring pinnacles. El Capitan (**left**) is the largest granite monolith in the world and has a 3,300-foot face. Up to four million visitors are attracted to Yosemite annually, and climbing is a popular activity — offering in places a gruelling test of endurance. Tackling Half Dome peak involves an ascent of 4,800 feet (1,461) out of the valley, with the last 900 feet (274m) being up the vertical face of this striking feature. Well-placed steel cables assist climbers to the summit, which offers spectacular views of the valley below.

There are numerous other locations in the western United States where climbers and mountaineers can face exciting challenges. A few such sites appear on the stamps



featuring the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River (**left**), the Devil's Tower National Monument (**right**), Wyoming, and the Great White Throne in Zion National Park, Utah. Moving finally to the eastern United States, a chain of impressive uplands extends all the way from



Maine in New England to Georgia in the South. Most prominent are the Appalachian and Blue Ridge Mountains, with numerous trails for adventurous ascents. The Adirondack Mountains in New York State represent an eroded dome with forty-six peaks, the highest of which is Mt. Marcy at 5,344 feet (1,129m). Climbers who successfully ascend all the peaks are entitled to join the Adirondack Forty-Sixers club. The White Mountains of New Hampshire are the most rugged in New England, with Mt. Washington rising to 6,288 feet (1,197m). It is a fairly easy ascent

— there is even a cog railway for the less energetic — but bad weather and some of the strongest winds in the northern hemisphere can prove a major challenge. Within the White Mountain range is Cannon Mountain, known for its technical rock and ice climbing challenges. Until recently, however, it was most famous for a rock formation that resembled the profile of an old man.



Old Man of the Mountains, New Hampshire, 1955 (U.S.)

After several hundred years as a popular tourist attraction, sadly, the Old Man of the Mountain collapsed on May 3, 2003, although its profile lingers on a U.S. stamp.

Conclusion

I hope that this broad overview of mountains and mountaineering on stamps will encourage other collectors to pursue the topic or, in the case of those already committed to the theme, to delve deeper into the spectacles so admirably portrayed philatelically. It may be too much to anticipate that, through our stamps, we might be encouraged to participate in actual mountain climbing, beyond the virtual participation to be found in a magazine article. Nevertheless, perhaps vicariously we may begin to sense the challenges and thrills of the sport and, in the words of a devoted American climber, acquire “a lasting affection for the wrinkles, bulges, eruptions and fractures of the earth’s crust which we call mountains.”

Acknowledgment

Many of the stamps illustrated in this article are drawn from the collection of a friend and former mountain climber, Frank Palmer, who also kindly agreed to check the text for any obvious errors of fact or interpretation. Other stamps are reproduced from the American Philatelic Society’s Reference Collection.

Endnotes

1. *The Oldie Magazine* (Summer 2012): 35.
2. *Ibid.*
3. "Eiger," Wikipedia, August 2012.
4. According to *Webster's Dictionary*, a cirque is "a steep, hollow excavation high on a mountainside, made by glacial erosion" that forms a natural amphitheatre.
5. Frank Russell, *The Mountains of America*; Introduction by Edward Abbey (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1976), page 6.

The Author: Barry Floyd has been a lifelong devotee of stamp collecting, accumulating countrywide items as a child but developing thematic material later in life. He has published books featuring the commemorative stamps issued for *Captain James Cook* and *Charles Darwin*, and is a regular contributor of articles to British and American journals.

An article by Barry N. Floyd in The American Philatelist of September 2013

ERRORS ON STAMPS

Errors of stamp designers worldwide cause stamps that make you smile.

WRONG NOTE-ATIONGRAPHY



The commemorative stamps of DDR (East Germany) shown above at the left were issued for the Centenary of Robert Schumann's death. On 23 July 1956, only three days after release the stamps were withdrawn from the counters of all Post Offices because it was found that the notes in the background were not by Schumann but a classic art song written by Franz Schubert. Maybe the fact that both German composers' similar name starts with *Schu*.... caused the error by the graphic designer. The corrected issue of the same set (above right) was re-issued on 8 October 1956 with genuine in the background written by Robert Schumann.

This article is taken from Volker Janssen's book Errors on Stamps.

Compiled by Robert Harm 1 December 2025

PHILATELIC TERMS: Q

Bibliography: McKay, James, Philatelic Terms Illustrated, Stanley Gibbons Publications, Ringwood, 2003.
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QARKU POSTES I KORCES

This is an inscription that identifies some early issues of Albania.

Quadrille (kadriel)



The term **quadrille** refers to the grid of small squares faintly printed on otherwise blank album pages. In top-quality pages, the quadrille will be clear and distinct, but very faint so as not to detract from the appearance of material mounted on the page. The purpose of the quadrille grid is to act as a mounting guide, and the centre points at top, bottom and sides, as well as the centre of the page, are usually emphasised.

Quadrille paper (kadielpapier)



The term is used to refer to a type of paper into which is incorporated a pseudo-watermark in the form of a grid of squares. A rectangular pattern is described as **oblong quadrille**, and some stamps, although described as being on **quadrille paper**, merely have a protective coating in such a pattern, called **surface quadrille**. These squares are usually visible without holding the paper to the light. **Quadrille paper** is in fact batonne paper with the lines at right angles and about 3 mm apart. Shown is a stamp from Obock.

Quadripartite labels

These are postal labels consisting of four parts, divided by roulette or perforation. The best example of this is provided by the Chinese express labels of 1909, the outer portions of which served as a sender's and recipient's receipt.



Qu'aite State in Hadhramaut

The Aden Protectorate was made up of two parts, each consisting of a number of states whose chiefs had protective treaties with Great Britain. The Qu'aite State in Hadhramaut was one of the states making up the Eastern Protectorate. This state issued its own, although the stamps of Aden were also valid for use in the protectorate under an organisation known as the Aden Postal Union, whereby all stamps of the various stamp-issuing entities were valid in all areas.



Qu'aite State of Shihr and Mukalla

The Aden Protectorate was made up of two parts, each consisting of a number of states whose chiefs had protective treaties with Great Britain. The Qu'aite State of Shihr and Mukalla was one of the states making up the Eastern Protectorate. This state issued its own, although the stamps of Aden were also valid for use in the protectorate under an organisation known as the Aden Postal Union, whereby all stamps of the various stamp-issuing entities were valid in all areas.



Quality

This is a word that is used to refer to the state of a stamp or other philatelic item, as in *top quality*. It is not a precise descriptive term.

QUAN BUU



The inscription **QUAN BUU** is found on three military stamps issued by South Vietnam during the 1960s.

Quartz lamp (kwarts lamp)

This is an electric lamp incorporating a filament in transparent fused quartz, emitting and passing the maximum of ultraviolet rays. When these strike certain surfaces, they cause **fluorescence**. It is an invaluable tool of the philatelist in examining stamps for any kind of repair or tampering which would result in a **fake**. It is also extremely useful in identifying **aniline** inks and the different kinds of coating found in many modern stamps.

Queensland

Queensland is a state in the Australian Commonwealth and occupies the northeast portion of the island continent. Although both the Spanish explorer Luis de Torres and the Dutch had discovered the Cape York Peninsula, it was not until 1770 that Captain Cook discovered the east coast of what is now Queensland. The penal settlement was established



near the Brisbane River by John Oxley, but it was not until the mid-1800s that settlers sailed directly from Britain to Brisbane. The political separation from New South Wales (when it was known as the Moreton Bay District) came on 10 December 1859, when Queensland was proclaimed a separate colony.



In spite thereof, the stamps of New South Wales were used until 1 November 1860. The early stamps of the colony of Queensland featured the beautiful Chalon portrait of Queen Victoria. The first post office at Brisbane opened its doors in 1834, when the use of the stamps of New South Wales became compulsory for use in the District from 1 May 1854. On 1 March 1901, the states of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia formed The Commonwealth of Australia. Thereafter the stamps of the Australian Commonwealth replaced those of the colony.

Quelimane

Formerly known as Zambezia and administered by the Zambezia Company, this administrative district of Portuguese East Africa is now part of the People's Republic of Mozambique. In 1544 a military post was established at the site of the present town of Quelimane to guard the delta of the Zambezi River. Under the name of Zambezia, stamps were issued in 1894 comprising the numeral key type



stamps of the Portuguese Colonies inscribed **ZAMBEZIA**. King Carlos type stamps inscribed **ZAMBEZIA** came in 1898, a surcharged issue overprinted **PROVISORIO** in 1902, **REPUBLICA** overprints in 1911, with a final issue in 1914. Meanwhile, in 1913, stamps of the Vasco da Gama issue for the Portuguese Colonies Macao, and Timor had been overprinted **QUELIMANE** and surcharged. In 1914 a set of the Ceres key type was issued inscribed **QUELIMANE**.



Quetzal Bird



The national emblem of the Central American country of Guatemala, the Quetzal bird (*Pharomachrus mocinno*) has been featured on many of that country's stamps. It has been familiar to stamp collectors ever since it first appeared as the main design element of a stamp in the 1870s. As is common in the world of birds, it is the male that is the most beautiful with its spectacular long tail and specimens have been



noted with a body length of 30 cm and a tail of up to 61 cm. The Quetzal bird has also given its name to the currency unit of Guatemala.

Quickstamp

Quickstamp is a term used by Australia Post to describe stamps dispensed by **automatic teller machines** since 1994.

q.v.

This abbreviation is of a Latin expression *quod vide* meaning *which see*. It will be found in many works to direct the reader's attention to other references that will provide additional information.

Compiled by Robert Harm 12 October 2025