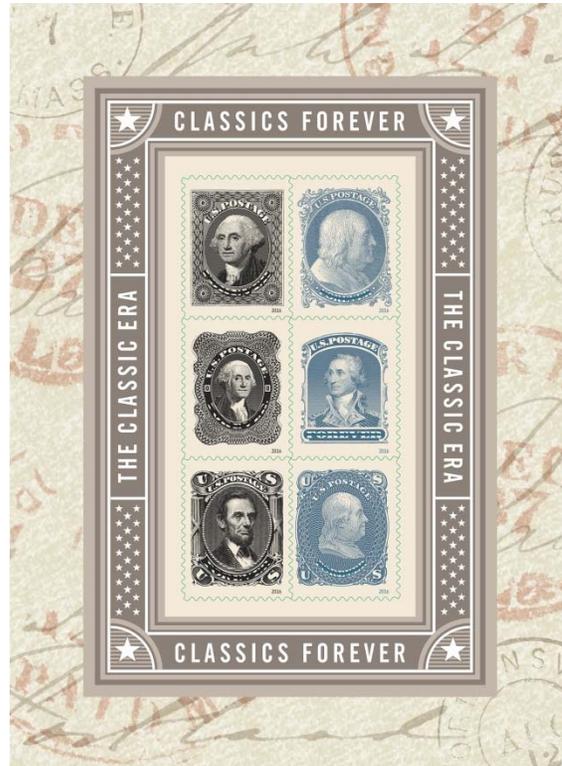


June 1, 2016

Contact: Joe Brockert  
202.268.3260

[joseph.p.brockert@usps.gov](mailto:joseph.p.brockert@usps.gov)

[usps.com/news](http://usps.com/news)



## Classic Engraved Images Appear on New Forever Stamps Dedicated Today

### *Classics Forever Stamp Features Water Soluble Adhesive*

NEW YORK CITY — Engraved stamps are much-beloved by stamp collectors, or philatelists as they sometimes are known. So it's only fitting that the U.S. Postal Service today dedicated a souvenir sheet featuring new engravings of classic 19th-century stamps at the World Stamp Show-NY 2016. The stamps also feature a water soluble adhesive.

The original versions of these classic stamps were issued between 1851 and 1866, 150 years ago or more, and they feature some of the most celebrated Americans, including George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln. "It's not surprising that Washington, Franklin and Lincoln were featured on six of America's earliest stamps," noted U.S. Postal Service Vice President for New Products and Innovation Gary Reblin in dedicating the new stamps. "In fact, it seems fitting that we're celebrating them again with today's souvenir sheet — and the new Forever versions of these 19th century classics," he said.

This souvenir sheet is issued in celebration of the long history of U.S. postage stamps—and in appreciation of stamp collectors and philatelists everywhere. The elaborately designed sheet features new versions of six of America's earliest and most alluring stamps, now issued as Forever stamps to make them easily distinguishable from the mid-19th-century originals. The stamps are printed using the intaglio printing method, as were the originals.

From top, left to right, the stamps featured are:

George Washington stamp, first issued in 1851 at 12 cents. Portrait based on a painting by Gilbert Stuart. Stamp originally engraved by Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co.

Benjamin Franklin stamp, first issued in 1851 at one cent. Portrait based on a bust carved by Jean-Jacques Caffiéri. Stamp originally engraved by Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co.

George Washington stamp, first issued in 1860 at 24 cents. Portrait based on a painting by Gilbert Stuart. Stamp originally engraved by Toppan, Carpenter & Co.

George Washington stamp, first issued in 1860 at 90 cents. Portrait based on a painting by John Trumbull. Stamp originally engraved by Toppan, Carpenter & Co.

Abraham Lincoln stamp, first issued in 1866 at 15 cents. Portrait based on a photograph by Christopher Smith German. Stamp originally engraved by National Bank Note Co.

Benjamin Franklin stamp, first issued in 1861 at one cent. Portrait based on a bust carved by Jean-Antoine Houdon. Stamp originally engraved by National Bank Note Co.

The selvage is composed of postal cancellations and script from envelopes contemporaneous with the stamps. These elements are arranged on a buff-colored background with a textured look to evoke stationery of the period. An inner border reminiscent of star-spangled patriotic bunting also bears the title “Classics Forever” at top and bottom and the words “The Classic Era” on either side. Eric Madsen created the artwork for the selvage. Art director Antonio Alcalá worked with Eric Madsen to design this issuance.

Adding to the appeal for stamp collectors, these new stamps have been printed in intaglio – line engraving reminiscent of fine 19th-century stamps and banknotes – with three million souvenir sheets being produced. These stamps will be sold only at the stamp show in New York, and through mail, telephone and online ordering channels for those unable to attend the show. They will not be available through local Post Office™ facilities. They will be sold only as a complete souvenir sheet of 6 stamps, and the price is \$2.82 (6X \$0.47).

These Classics Forever stamps are water soluble, although they are affixed with pressure-sensitive adhesive, enabling these special stamps to be removed from envelopes after they have been used by soaking them in plain water. This is the first time this feature has been included on Forever stamps. Additional information about this feature, and helpful instructions to explain how collectors can soak these stamps off of envelopes after they have been affixed to mail and used, can be found following the listing of products available with this stamp issue.

### **Leveraging Technology**

The U.S. Postal Service is introducing three additional new products tailored to stamp collectors at the World Stamp Show–NY 2016:

- World Stamp Show Souvenir Portfolio, a coffee-table book featuring each of the eight stamp issues to be released during the show will include 3-D, augmented reality. The first pane of the book includes a pane of the August 2015 World Stamp Show stamps. Collectors are encouraged to collect a new pane each day.

- 2015 eGuide to U.S. Stamps, a fully digital version of the latest Postal Service Guide to Stamps includes all of the content in the beautifully re-designed printed edition. It features high-resolution stamp art with comprehensive search capabilities and pinch and zoom viewing options. The eGuide is available at [usps.com](http://usps.com), [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), [barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com) and iTunes along with 1,000 other e-tailers.
- USPS StampApp, the only official cloud-based U.S. stamp collecting app that includes an entire stamp reference library along with user-generated content for stamp collectors to upload their own stamp collection. It is available on [usps.com](http://usps.com), Apple's App Store and Google Play.

At the World Stamp Show–NY 2016 at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York City, the U.S. Postal Service will hold an official stamp dedication almost every day of the show, to introduce a total of eight new stamp subjects.

### **Ordering First-Day-of-Issue Postmarks**

Customers have 60 days to obtain first-day-of-issue postmarks by mail. They may purchase new stamps at World Stamp Show, at the Postal Store [usps.com/shop](http://usps.com/shop) or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes to themselves or others and place them in envelopes addressed to:

Classics Forever Stamps  
Special Events Coordinator  
380 West 33rd Street  
New York, NY 10199-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark up to a quantity of 50. There is a 5-cent charge for each additional postmark over 50. All orders must be postmarked by August 1, 2016.

### **Ordering First-Day Covers**

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamps and stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog, online at [usps.com/shop](http://usps.com/shop) or by calling 800-782-6724. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-782-6724 or writing to:

U.S. Postal Service  
Catalog Request  
PO Box 219014  
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

### **Philatelic Products**

There are six philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- 586806, Press Sheet with Die-cut, \$28.20.
- 586810, Keepsake, \$15.95.
- 586816, First-Day Cover (set of 6), \$5.46.
- 586821, Digital Color Postmark (set of 6), \$9.72.
- 586824, Framed Art, \$39.95.
- 586830, Ceremony Program (random single), \$6.95.

### **New Feature With Water-Soluble Adhesive**

The Classics Forever stamps were produced on paper that has a coating that will allow collectors to soak stamps off envelopes without the use of chemicals. The water-soluble PSA stamps are of interest to philatelists in the United States. While many collectors desire new, mint condition stamps in full panes or as single stamps, others desire to collect stamps that have been processed through the mail stream.

Pressure sensitive adhesive (PSA) stamps are made of three standard components: face stock (the paper on which the stamp image is printed), adhesive and liner. To create a water-soluble PSA stamp, a starch-like component is added to the reverse of the face stock prior to combining the three individual components in manufacturing. The manufactured stock is then sent to the printer for the printing of the stamp image using current processes. This starch component allows the face stock to be separated from the adhesive using water rather than chemicals.

The water-soluble PSA stamp is significantly different from the water-activated gummed (WAG) stamps in widespread use prior to 2002. The WAG stamps were the “lick and stick” variety. While the water-soluble PSA is reactive to humidity, it is measurably less affected by this variable than traditional WAG stamps.

Here are some very basic instructions on soaking stamps:

- Step 1: Cut stamp off envelope and trim leaving approximately ¼” paper around stamp. Be careful not to cut perforations/diecuts.
- Step 2: Use a shallow bowl and fill with warm water.
- Step 3: Soak stamp until they are free from the envelope.
- Step 4: When stamps have separated from the envelope, remove stamps from water immediately using tongs.
- Step 5: Rinse the stamp in clean water to make sure it is free from any residual glue or paper. The stamps will be fragile, so handle with great care.
- Step 6: Using tongs, place stamps face down on a clean, preferably white paper towel, until dry (be careful not to use paper towels with designs in them so the color does not leach into the stamp).

Note: Soaking time will vary depending on the water temp, how long it has been adhered to the envelope, etc. Collectors are used to this variable as stamps from around the world are different.

### **More About These Stamps and the Designs**

The artwork for the Classic Stamps pane was created from high-resolution scans of the artwork located at the Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum. The printer modified the artwork to remove the original denomination and replace it with “Forever” and add “2016” in the margins. This process followed the old tradition of using an engraved printing plate.

This souvenir sheet features new versions of six of America’s earliest and most alluring stamps, now issued as Forever stamps to make them easily distinguishable from the mid-19th-century originals. America’s early stamps presented a new means of honoring our nation’s heroes. The 1851 George Washington and Benjamin Franklin stamps, represented on the top row of the souvenir sheet, were issued when dramatically reduced rates made the mail more accessible to a growing, migrating population. The quick public appreciation of their beautifully engraved portraiture also made stamps a perfect mode of tribute to Abraham Lincoln, died just after guiding the United States to a successful conclusion of the Civil War.

Whether a collector is interested in the great Americans depicted, the artistry, the printing technology of the day, the quirks and evolution of historical postal practices, or the communications enabled by the originals, there is something for everyone in these beautifully evocative stamps.

###

This new souvenir sheet and many of this year’s other stamps may be seen on Facebook at [facebook.com/USPSStamps](https://www.facebook.com/USPSStamps) or via Twitter [@USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps) or on the website <https://www.usps.com/stamps/>, the Postal Service’s online site for information on upcoming stamp subjects, first-day-of-issue events and other philatelic news.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

# # #

**Please Note:** For broadcast quality video and audio, photo stills and other media resources, visit the [USPS Newsroom](#). Reporters interested in speaking with regional Postal Service public relations professionals should visit this [link](#). Follow us on [twitter.com/USPS](https://twitter.com/USPS) and like us at [facebook.com/USPS](https://facebook.com/USPS). For more information about the Postal Service, visit [usps.com](https://usps.com) and [usps.com/postalfacts](https://usps.com/postalfacts).