

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Celebrating Master Storyteller O. Henry's 150th Birthday Anniversary *The U.S. Postal Service New Forever Stamp on Sale Today*



To obtain a high-resolution image of this stamp for media use only, email roy.a.betts@usps.gov.

GREENSBORO, NC — The U.S. Postal Service today issued a commemorative Forever stamp honoring literary giant O. Henry during a ceremony at the Greensboro Historical Museum. The stamp is on sale today at Post Offices nationwide and can be purchased online at usps.com/shop or by phone at 800-Stamp24 (800-782-6724).

The stamp commemorates the 150th anniversary of the birth of O. Henry, the pen name of William S. Porter. Born in Greensboro, NC, Sept. 11, 1862, O. Henry became one of America's most popular writers of short fiction. His stories, such as *The Gift of the Magi*, *The Last Leaf*, and *The Ransom of Red Chief*, are known for their humor, irony and skillful unfolding of plot, often with a surprise twist at the end.

"O. Henry was one of America's wittiest and most popular short fiction writers," said U.S. Postal Service Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President Megan Brennan.

"Beginning today, O. Henry will travel wherever the U.S. Mail goes, and we are proud to share his legacy with millions of Americans through this new stamp," Brennan said.

Brennan officially dedicated the stamp and was joined by O. Henry impersonator Stephen Hale; Carol Ghorsi Hart, director, Greensboro Historical Museum; Margaret Benjamin, president, Board of Trustees,

Greensboro Historical Museum; Denise Turner Roth, city manager, Greensboro; Russell D. Gardner, Greensboro district manager, U.S. Postal Service; and Ronald L. White, postmaster, Greensboro.

The strong language in O. Henry's stories and the cinematic speed of their telling have been seen as characteristically American. Noted critic, Guy Davenport, compared O. Henry's jauntily comic prose to ragtime music. Another critic, Burton Raffel, contrasted him with the realistic writers of his day, such as Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, and Stephen Crane, who represented the world as truthfully as they could in their work. Pain, poverty, and death have a presence in O. Henry's stories, but the dominant sense of lightness and gaiety is unmistakable.

By the time of his death on June 5, 1910, he was the most widely read storyteller in America, and was internationally admired. He wrote nearly 300 stories — most in the final eight years of his life.

Drawing on O. Henry's close association with New York City, art director Ethel Kessler designed the stamp using work by illustrator Cap Pannell. His portrait of O. Henry was based on a photograph of the author as a young man, probably from the late 1880s. As reference for the background, Pannell used an image — created by A. Loeffler in the early 20th century and now in the collection of the New York Public Library — of the elevated rail in New York. The stamp art was sketched in pencil and ink and then manipulated on the computer.

Customers may view the O. Henry Forever commemorative stamp, as well as many of this year's other stamps, on Facebook at [facebook.com/USPSStamps](https://www.facebook.com/USPSStamps), through Twitter [@USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps) or on the website *Beyond the Perf* at beyondtheperf.com. Beyond the Perf is the Postal Service's online site for background on upcoming stamp subjects, first-day-of-issue events and other philatelic news.

How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark, O. Henry Forever Stamp

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase the new stamp at a local Post Office, at The Postal Store website at usps.com/shop or by calling 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724). They should affix the stamp to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others) and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

O. Henry Stamp
Postmaster
Greensboro Main Office
201 N. Murrow Blvd.
Greensboro, NC 27420-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes by mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by Nov. 12, 2012.

How to Order First-Day Covers

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service 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 or by calling 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724). Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724) or writing to:

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

Philatelic Products

There are six philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- 469961, First-Day Cover, 89 cents
- 469965, Digital Color Postmark, \$1.60
- 469984, Uncut Press Sheet, \$72.00
- 469991, Ceremony Program, \$6.95

- 469997, Commemorative Panel, \$9.95
- 469999, Cancellation Keepsake (DCP w/Pane), \$10.95

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

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For reporters interested in speaking with a regional Postal Service public relations professional on this issue, please go to about.usps.com/news/media-contacts/usps-local-media-contacts.pdf.

A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation — 151 million residences, businesses and Post Office™ Boxes. The Postal Service™ receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, *usps.com*®, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 35th in the 2011 Fortune 500. In 2011, Oxford Strategic Consulting ranked the U.S. Postal Service number one in overall service performance of the posts in the top 20 wealthiest nations in the world. *Black Enterprise* and *Hispanic Business* magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for six years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

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