



POSTAL NEWS

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Schooner Stamped Card Sails Into Post Offices

CRYSTAL, MN — The U.S. Postal Service issued the schooner stamped card today at the Minnesota Stamp Expo. This new stamped card features a two-masted schooner sailing on open water. It is designed to be a convenient way to send postcards with attached paid postage.

Sailing vessels are identified by their rigs — the shape, number and arrangement of sails and masts. The boat depicted on the stamped card has a schooner rig, which features fore-and-aft sails on two or more masts. Noted for their speed and versatility, schooners were inspired by 17th-century European designs, with the rig further developed in New England in the early 18th-century.

By the end of that century, it was one of the most important rigs in North America, used for fishing and other coastal trades. Requiring a smaller crew for vessels of their size, schooners handle well in a variety of conditions. Their utility carried schooners into the 20th century, but the advent of reliable marine engines led to their eventual decline in popularity.

Schooners have played an important role in American history. In 1775, the schooner Hannah was the first armed vessel under the Continental Army's pay and control in the Revolutionary War. In 1851, the New York Yacht Club's schooner America, which was based on the design of New York Harbor's fast pilot schooners, beat the fastest racing yachts in a race around the Isle of Wight in the United Kingdom. The same cup they won continues to be awarded as the oldest trophy in international sports, now renamed America's Cup. In 1905, the New York-built Atlantic, a three-masted schooner, won the Kaiser's Cup and set a record for a monohull crossing the Atlantic Ocean that would stand for 100 years.

The stamped card features a two-masted schooner sailing on open water. The hull is black with a white line horizontally across it. The top of the masts are black, and the lower halves are salmon. The bowsprit is also salmon and the sails are white. The boat sails across calm blue waters under a clear sky with two seagulls flying overhead. A red flag appears on top of the main mast.

Illustrator Libby VanderPloeg grew up in the harbor town of Grand Haven, MI, and lived in Chicago and

New York City, finding herself drawn to water and boats.

VanderPloeg used a photo taken by Billy Black of the schooner Columbia, a 2014 replica of the original built in 1923, as a reference. She began with pencil sketches of various vessels that caught her eye before landing on the schooner. VanderPloeg put her sketch into Adobe Illustrator to create the final work in color. She said she loved the balanced geometry of the big, beautiful boat floating peacefully on calm waters. VanderPloeg hand-lettered “FOREVER/USA” on the bottom of the art using a digital pen and tablet.

Antonio Alcalá served as art director for the project.

Schooner is being issued as a Forever stamped card. Its postage will always be equal to the value of the stamped postcard rate in effect at the time of use, even if the price increases after purchase.

News of the schooner stamped card is being shared with the hashtag **#SchoonerStampedCard**.

Postal Products

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The Postal Service generally 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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