

The Cover Story

Repatriation! by Josh Furman

This is a story that is well-known historically, but scarcely told in philately [**Figure 1 on front cover**]. During World War II, two Swedish ships, the Drotningholm and the Gripsholm traveled back and forth across the seas, ferrying citizens back to their home countries from assignments abroad. We are concerned with the Gripsholm's voyage from Asia. The passengers were POW's, diplomats, journalists, nurses, missionaries and merchants, e.g. "oil people", and crew members of U.S. merchant ships, who had been left behind in Asia. On its outbound trip, The Gripsholm also carried packages to prisoners of war. One repatriate prisoner recognized the razor that was sent to him as his father's!

"M. S. Gripsholm [Figure 2 on front cover] is painted white with the name of the vessel, the Swedish flag and the words Sverige and Diplomat painted prominently on port and starboard. The vessel will travel fully lighted at night with identifying markings fully illuminated." (N.Y. Times)

In the case of the cover illustrated on the front page, the passenger was an American missionary who had been assigned to work in Japan, but decided it was time to return home.

Rev. Myers first took a Japanese ship, The Japanese exchange liner TEIA MARU, with 1500 Americans, Canadians and other Western Hemisphere nationals aboard. The ship arrived at the same time as the Gripsholm at Mormugao, Portugese India, the port of exchange. The GRIPSHOLM also carried American and Canadian Red Cross supplies, consisting of medicines, concentrated foods, vitamins, and blood plasma, which were intended for distribution to American and Western Hemisphere nationals in Japanese controlled territories.

The trip back to New York took about 41 days, not across the Pacific Ocean, but around Africa and across to South American and then north to the United States. The ship made stops along the way as needed for supplies and fuel. The cover illustrated was mailed to Rev. Myers in care of the American Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, one of such stops, where the mail was delivered after being doubly censored.

So this seemingly innocent cover, with wonderful usage including two Prexies, has a deep and valuable human interest and historical tale to tell.

(For more on these two ships and their voyages, see my source for much of this material at <http://www.salship.se/mercy.asp>)

U.S. New Issue Announcements by Phil Fetting

Many collectors still obtain the colorful new issue announcements for U.S. Stamps. They come as a colorful full size letter size document complete with information regarding the new issue and complete with a first day cancel of the stamp on the front. When some search for the early items from the start in 1960 they are

dismayed to see a folded flyer with no first day cancel. Relax, that is the way they were issued until the Prominent American issue of 1970. After 1970 they were mailed flat and have first day cancels. What many

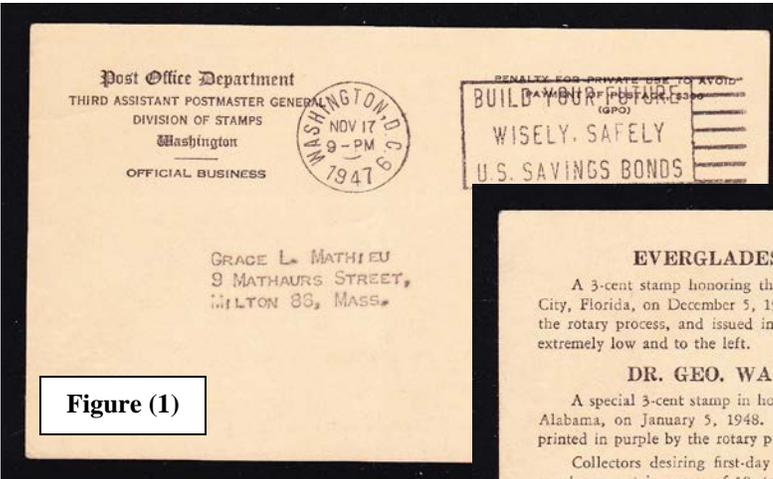


Figure (1)

collectors don't know is that first day information actually was mailed to the collectors on a U.S. Post Office Department postal card in the 1940's. Figure (1) shows the front of the card with a neat typed address to the

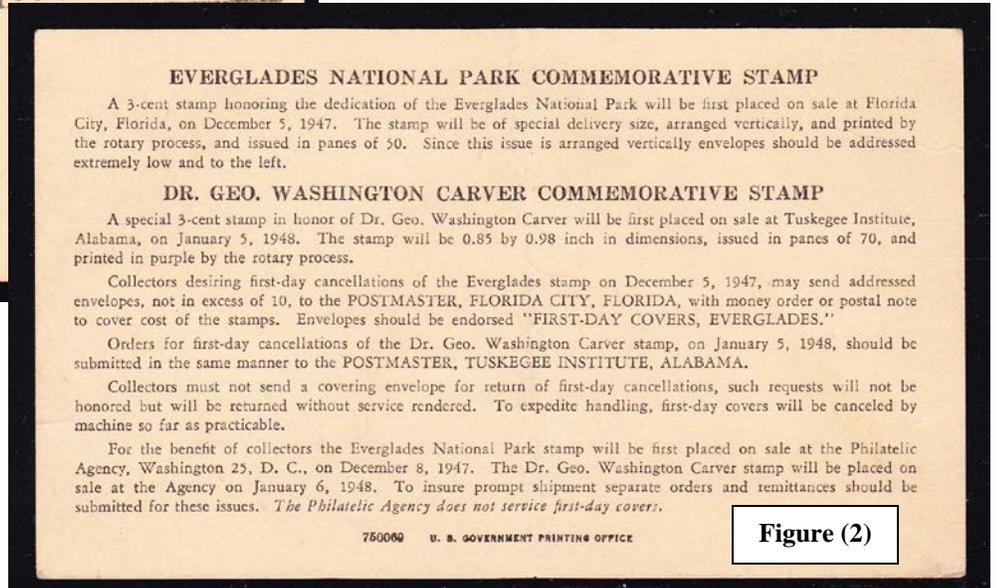


Figure (2)

collector. Figure (2) has all the information for two new issues, in this case Scott 952 (Everglades) and 953 (George Washington Carver). Figure (3) is the end result - a nice colorful unaddressed Fluegel cachet for the Everglades stamp.

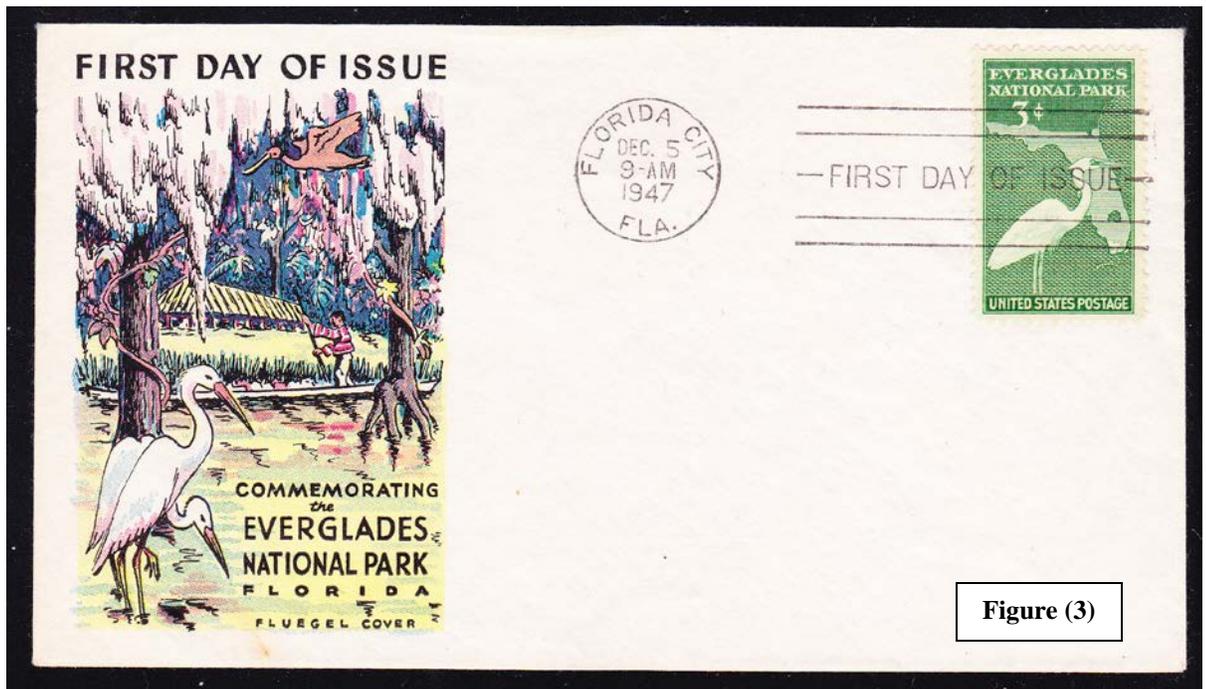


Figure (3)