

## DELAWARE-RELATED STAMPS

As the second-smallest state in the nation, Delaware has fewer stamps directly related to it than most of the others. They are presented here chronologically as they were issued.



The definitive issue of 1869 was the first series of U.S. stamps which did not have portraits of famous persons on it. John Trumbull's *Signing of the Declaration of Independence* is the subject, and two of Delaware's three delegates, Thomas McKean and George Read, appear in it. (Scott # 120)



The next to appear was a 3 cent stamp honoring William Penn. Penn landed at New Castle, Delaware in 1638 and founded Pennsylvania. Before the Revolution, Delaware was the three lower counties of Pennsylvania, but had its own legislature beginning in 1704 with Penn's approval. It became a separate state on June 15, 1776, declaring independence from both Pennsylvania and Great Britain. The stamp is unusual in that it had three official first-day-of-issue cities; New Castle, Delaware, and Chester and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania. (Scott # 724)



Next is the 2¢ value of the 1937 Army-Navy set, which shows Commodore, later Admiral, Thomas MacDonough, a native of Delaware. MacDonough & Oliver Perry commanded a fleet which won the critical Battle of Lake Erie in the War of 1812 (Scott # 791)



Fourth was a 1937 issue commemorating the Constitutional Convention. Delaware delegate Thomas McKean was ill on the day of signing and fellow member George Read signed for him. (Scott # 798)



In 1938 a stamp was issued for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ratification of the Constitution, and Delaware gained its nickname of "The First State" by being the first to ratify it, on December 7, 1787. (Scott # 835)



The 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landing of the Swedish and Finnish colonists at what became Wilmington saw a stamp issued in 1938 showing a painting by Stanley Arthurs of the colonists meeting the natives. The original painting now hangs at the University of Delaware. Sweden and Finland also issued stamps of different design. for the event. (Scott # 836)



Peter Stuyvesant was the governor of the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam, and he had come south and established Fort Casimir at what is now New Castle. In 1653 he formed the first volunteer fire brigade, and is honored on a stamp first issued at Dover, Delaware in 1948. (Scott # 971)



It wasn't till 1964 that another Delaware-related issue appeared. The Christmas issue included a stamp with a sprig of American holly. This is the official state tree of Delaware. (Scott # 1254)



The next Delaware-related issue to appear was in 1966, this time not as a commemorative issue but as the highest denomination, \$5.00, of the Prominent Americans regular issues series. John Bassett Moore was a Delaware native and rose to become a judge on the International Court of Justice at the Hague in the Netherlands. (Scott # 1295)



The bicentennial of the United States brought forth several Delaware issues. The first of these was in May with a pane with each stamp depicting one of the fifty different state flags. (Scott #1633)



A set of four souvenir sheets was issued at Interphil in May, 1976 depicting patriotic paintings of the Revolutionary period. One of these is Trumbull's painting of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Three of the Delaware delegation, George Read, John Dickinson and Thomas McKean are identifiable on the right side of the sheet. (Scott # 1687)



As part of a series of postal cards honoring revolutionary era patriots, Caesar Rodney's portrait appears this 9 cent card. It was issued in single and reply card format. (Scott # UX70 & UY27)



Another 1976 issue again shows Trumbull's painting of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, at which the Delaware representatives were present. The painting stretches without interruption across four stamps. (Scott # 1694a)



Harriet Tubman was one of the driving forces of the Underground Railroad during the Civil War, and several of the "stations" she used while guiding slaves to freedom were in Delaware, primarily in Wilmington and Sussex County. She is locally honored along with Quaker abolitionist Thomas Garrett at Garrett-Tubman Park in Wilmington. (Scott # 1744)



Benjamin Franklin and King Louis XVI of France are shown on a figurine commemorating the alliance with France during the Revolution, in which the king is handing Franklin a copy of the treaty, which enabled French forces to fight against England for independence. The connection with Delaware is that the original figurine is on display at the Winterthur Museum north of Wilmington. (Scott # 1753)



Emily Bissell is best known for the creation of the Christmas seal in the United States. It was first sold in 1907 only in Wilmington by the Delaware chapter of the American Red Cross, and the funds were used for the treatment of tuberculosis. They were sold nationally in 1908 by the American Red Cross. The Emily Bissell Hospital near Wilmington was established as a center for the treatment of tuberculosis, and was the site of the First Day of Issue ceremony. The seals are now sold in many other countries as well. (Scott # 1823)



In 1982 a pane of 50 stamps was issued showing the official flower and bird of each state. Delaware's stamp shows the Blue Hen and the peach blossom, chosen in the 1800s, when peaches were a major agricultural product in Delaware. (Scott # 1960)



The bicentennial of the signing of the Treaties of Versailles and Paris, which officially ended the War of Independence in 1783, was commemorated by a stamp picturing the American commissioners in negotiations. The Benjamin West painting now hangs in the Winterthur Museum in Wilmington, Delaware. (Scott # 2052)



A booklet of four different stamps in a strip was issued in 1986 honoring stamp collecting. One of the stamps has two connections to Delaware; one stamp in the illustration is the 1938 Swedes and Finns issue, and the left stamp has a Wilmington cancel near the bottom. (Scott # 2201a)



A postal card was issued in 1987 commemorating the bicentennial of the Constitutional Convention. While five of the delegates are shown, none is from Delaware, though our representatives were present. (Scott # UX116)



The ladybug is Delaware's official state insect, adopted in 1974 after a campaign by a school in Milford, Delaware. It appears on a 1987 stamp in a pane of fifty showing wildlife in America. (Scott # 2315)



1987 also saw the beginning of an entire series of stamps honoring the original thirteen states which ratified the Constitution, issued in the order in which they did so. Delaware thus was the first state so honored. While the others show scenes from the states, Delaware's stamp displays the state seal. (Scott # 2336)



The 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landing of the Swedes and Finns was commemorated with an air mail stamp in 1988 showing a colonial era map along with colonists and Indians. As in 1938, Sweden and Finland issued stamps commemorating the occasion, but this time they used designs very similar to the U.S. issue. The First Day ceremony was at the Grand Opera House in Wilmington. The king and queen of Sweden also visited Delaware and a special postal station was set up in connection with the celebration of their visit. (Scott # C117)



A sheet of 25 stamps with events and personages of the Civil War was issued in 1995 and has one stamp dedicated to Harriet Tubman, the Underground Railroad "conductor" who led over 300 slaves to freedom. (Scott # 2975k)





The same pictures were also used on a matching set of postcards at the 20¢ postcard rate. Each card has on its face a full size picture of that stamp.  
(Scott # UX210)



The Christmas issue of 1997 repeats the 1964 theme, again showing a sprig of American holly, the state tree. It was issued only in booklet form, with panes of four, five, six and twenty stamps. (Scott # 3177)



The mobile pictured on this stamp was created by the noted sculptor, Alexander Calder, in 1959. It is titled *Black Cascade* and now hangs in the Delaware Art Museum in Wilmington, Delaware. (Scott # 3198)



In October, 1999, a mini-sheet of 20 stamps showing native American insects and spiders was issued containing one with a lady bug, Delaware's official state insect. (Scott # 3351c)



Not until April, 2002 did another Delaware stamp appear, this time being one of fifty 1940s style "postcards" showing the state name and distinctive scenes from the state, with a face value of thirty-four cents. The stamp shows a beach scene and the state capitol. When the first-class postage rate went up to thirty-seven cents in October that year, the sheet was re-issued with the higher denomination. (Scott # 3568 & 3703)



The next issue was a total break with the tradition of the postal service. It consists of a set of sixty stamps, to be issued in six sets of ten coil stamps from 2008 to 2011. The stamps include the flags of the states and territories as well as several U.S. Flags, and are in a horizontal commemorative format. Each has a scene from the area the flag represents, and Delaware's is a picture of the beach in Sussex County. The designer of the series also just happens to be an artist from Delaware. (Scott # 4282)



The Purple Heart medal, earned by servicemen who have been wounded in battle, is shown on this stamp. It is its seventh time as a stamp subject, and the artwork is based on the 2012 version. The stamp had its first day of issue in Camden, Delaware, but the cancel reads Dover, as Camden does not have a post office. (Scott # 4704a)



The Red Knot is a shore bird which is intimately connected with Delaware. It makes an annual migration of over 9000 miles from Arctic latitudes to the southernmost parts of South America. On its northward journey it always stops on Delaware's beaches to feed on horseshoe crab eggs after its long over-water journey. The stamp is one four species on the Shore Birds issue, which appeared in 2015 in both sheet and coil forms. (Scott # 4991 & 4997)

