

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Fame, Via Postal Route

Women honored by the United States Post Office Department for recognition with portraits on stamps is the subject of the Diary again today. In our last issue we wrote of the four times in which Martha Washington was honored by individual stamps or stamps on postal cards, and of the \$4 stamp issued in 1893, bearing the likeness of Queen Isabella of Spain in recognition of her support of Christopher Columbus' voyage to discover the new world.

The writer's interest in these stamps was created through the reading of an article by Myrtle C. Johnson in *Independent Woman*, the publication of the National Business and Professional Women's Clubs, on the subject of women honored by stamps. We have learned that after the two notable women mentioned, that Pocahontas next won fame, via the postal route, when she appeared on an issue in 1907 of the five-cent denomination.

As the daughter of an Indian chief, Pocahontas no doubt rated the honor extended to her by the U.S Postal Service, as an aboriginal American princess, but her claim to fame rests chiefly on the fact that it was through her efforts that Capt. John Smith was saved from a violent and untimely death at the hands of her father.

After 1907 there was a long pause before women's contribution to the national life of this country was again recognized by the Post Office Department. Then in 1934, there was issued a three cent stamp "in memory and in honor of the mothers of America," with the reproduction of James Whistler's portrait of his mother.

In 1936 a woman who helped open the door, through which have come most of the favorable changes affecting women's status, was singled out for recognition via the postage stamp. She was Susan B. Anthony, and the date was that of the ratification of the 19th amendment to the United States Constitution, which occurred 16 years after her death.

Louisa May Alcott and Frances Willard because of achievements in other fields, were honored next with stamps in the five cent denomination, and the Jane Addams' stamp in the ten cent denomination issued as

part of the Commemorative Series of 1940. Miss Alcott in the authors' group; Miss Willard among the educators; with Miss Addams, founder of Hull House, as a student of, and worker in, the social sciences, among the scientists.

In 1948, our stamp historian tells us, four stamps honoring women were issued. One, in the series commemorating 100 years of progress of American women, bears the portraits of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Carrie Chapman Catt, whose efforts to advance the cause of women have done so much to bring the hard work of many thousands of lesser-known women to fruition.

That same year three cent stamps were issued to honor Clara Barton, the founder of the American Red Cross; Juliette Low, who organized the Girl Scouts of America; and Moina Michael who was personally responsible for instituting American Poppy Day.

In 1952, official acceptance of the disputed Betsy Ross legend was marked with the issuance of a Betsy Ross stamp, followed later in the year by the stamp honoring Women in the Armed Forces.

In addition to these stamps honoring women who have lived and made notable contributions to the nation's history, there are at least a score of stamps, we read, bearing pictures of women either as symbolic figures, or just as members of the female sex. We have representatives of Freedom, and the three branches of the government. There is a tribute to the pioneer woman, and there is stamp where one can see the Indian woman watching Columbus land on the new world. There is also a stamp featuring the infant, Virginia Dare, the first child of European origin, to be born in America.