

Yesterday in U.S. Stamp News:

The 1901 Pan American Expo Issue, Pt. 1

by John F. Dunn

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A complete set of the Pan Am Expo stamps, Sc. 294-299 on First Day cover, tied by Boston, Mass., oval Registry cancels, the 2¢ entire envelope also bearing a boxed "Registered, May 1 1901, Sub-Station No. 33, P.O. Boston Mass." handstamp.

The Pan-American Exposition set was issued to celebrate the Pan-American Exposition that was held May 1-November 2, 1901 in Buffalo in 1901. The stamps were not intended to promote the show in advance of its opening. They were issued at many post offices across the country on the opening day of the Pan-Am Expo, and bear the inscription "Commemorative Series 1901" in place of the title suggested, "Pan-American Series 1901", the latter being construed by the Assistant Attorney General as an advertisement on a postage stamp and as such prohibited by law.

Meanwhile, as early as the spring of 1899 the Pan-American Exposition committee distributed large quantities of lithographed poster stamps or labels to advertise the Exposition. One of these was used as the basis for



Above, the 2001 Pan Am Expo Centennial issue, Sc. 3505, with altered reproductions of the 1¢, 2¢, 4¢ Invert and one of the promotional poster stamps.

Right, a cover with a November 27, 1899 machine cancel that ties a 2¢ Bureau issue and a Charging Bull label, also with a diamond shaped red label, lower right on which the 2001 reproduction is based.



the four 80¢ diamond-shaped stamps that are part of the 2001 Pan-Am sheet, but with “1901” in the tablets to the left and right, where “USA” and “80” appear on the new stamps.

Leading up to the Exposition, there was considerable concern about, and objection to, another exposition commemorative set on the order of the Columbians of 1893 and the Trans-Mississippi of 1898. But writing from

Washington, D.C. in the April 25, 1901 edition of *Mekeel's Weekly*, J. M. Bartels wrote:

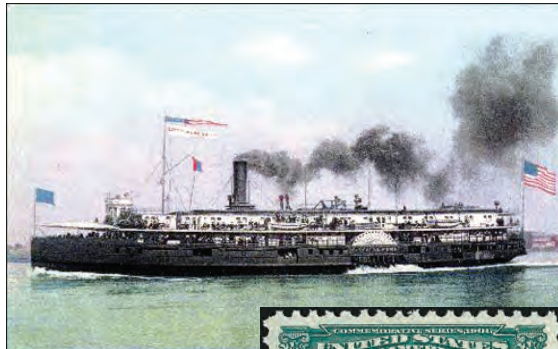
"It will not be necessary to say very much about the new Pan-American stamps in the special edition...prepared in honor of the opening of the exposition and the new issue of postage stamps, which no doubt will be considered the most beautiful set ever issued by this country, if not by the world.

"...Much as has been said against the issuing of commemorative stamps, and though the practice of issuing such stamps is to be deplored on general principles, this set will be received with open arms by collectors and the public throughout the country. Each of them had one main objection, both of which have been overcome. There will be no high denominations in the set to break the small collectors' purse and the size of the stamps is not so objectionably large as to cause much inconvenience to those whose duty it will be to affix them to mail in large quantities...."

The Designs

The set recognized advances in transportation, with each stamp featuring a different aspect of that theme.

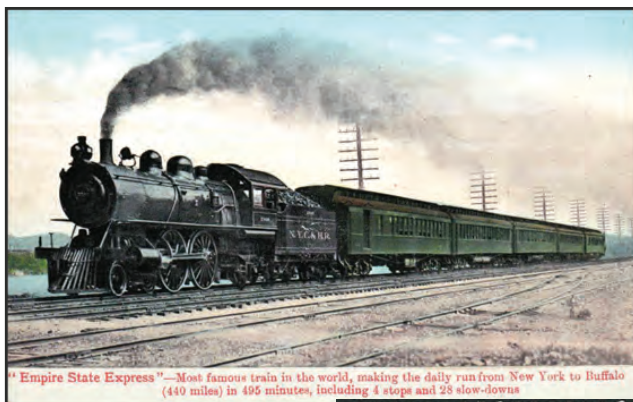
The 1¢ stamp, Scott 294, features Fast Lake Navigation, an appropriate theme for the City of Buffalo, which is situated on Lake Erie. The design was based on a photograph of the steamer City of Alpena, which in 1901 was being operated on the Great Lakes by the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Co.



The vignette of the stamp shows the port bow of the steamer, formerly operated on the Great Lakes by the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Co. Note that the steamer had but one funnel, the pilot house placed well forward

and the vessel propelled by side wheels.

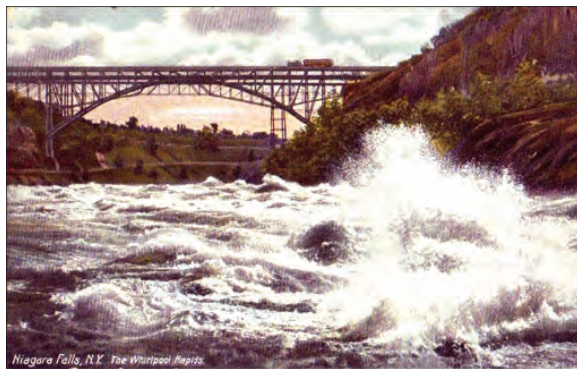
The central design of the 2 Cent stamp is a picture of the Empire State Express, which was operated by the New York Central and Hudson R.R. The photograph was taken by P. Yates of Syracuse, while the train was going sixty miles an hour. It depicts a train of four cars drawn by a four wheel drive locomotive. Note that there are five cars in the photograph, the stamp shows only four. (Note: for a closer view, use the pdf magnifier tool. JFD.)



The Empire State Express was selected by the Post Office Department after urgent solicitation on the part of G. H. Daniels, General Passenger Agent of the New York Central Railroad. He argued that more had been written about it than all other trains ever placed in service, and the resultant advertising had been one of the greatest factors in bringing before the world the superiority of American machinery and manufacturers. He further explained that as the Pan-American Exposition was to be held in Buffalo and the New York Central being primarily a New York institution, the Empire State Express was a logical subject to be used.

The form of transportation selected for the 4 Cent stamp was the automobile. At that time the most common type of auto was the storage battery carriage, and the one chosen for the stamp was a reproduction of one of the first electric automobiles formerly used in Washington by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad for passenger service. The photograph shows a chauffeur on the box with Samuel P. Hege, who was Passenger Representative of the B. & O., in Washington, D.C.

The automobile is of the closed coach type and the background of the picture shows a part of the United States Capitol (also seen in the stamp). The illustration also had appeared in the *Royal Blue* of September 1900, a publication of the Baltimore & Ohio.



ids. This is from an actual photograph (a photo other than the one shown here) and the picture presents the largest single span steel bridge in the world. Two trolley cars are seen upon it and a view of Niagara Falls is shown in the background, with the graceful swinging bridge arch as a frame. The Canadian and American shores appear on either side.

Although it was advanced for its time, on January 27, 1938, the bridge came crashing down into the Niagara Gorge as the result of an ice jam that reached the height of 65 feet.

The 8 Cent stamp carried a view of the great ship canal locks, including their immediate surroundings, at Sault Ste. Marie, not far from Buffalo. A tug and two ore boats

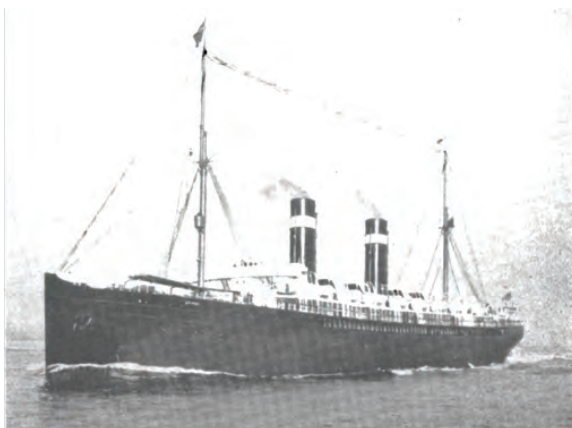


are shown in the lock. The photograph on which the stamp design was based pro-

vides a much wider view of the area.

An ocean steamship to depict fast ocean navigation was selected for the 10 Cents design. Many of the early records described the photograph on which the stamp design was based as picturing either the New York or the Paris of The American Line. But philatelic columnist Beverly S. King, who did considerable research and writing in the field of stamp designs, stated, "In checking this matter over with officials of the International Mercantile Marine Company we found that the reproduction on this stamp could not have been either the Paris or the New York as both of these liners had [angled] clipper bows and the ship on the stamp has a straight bow. In addition, both of these boats were foreign built and naturally would not have been used on a commemorative stamp of this sort to depict fast ocean travel.

"Further investigations proved that the vignette was engraved from the photograph, shown here, of the *St. Paul* of the old International Navigation Co., which had absorbed both The American and Red Star Lines. O. G. Reichelt, who as well as being connected with the International Mercantile Marine Co., is a member of the Collectors Club,





kindly furnished this photograph and upon checking the matter up for us with R. M. Hicks, Manager of the I. M. M. Washington office, received the following from him under date of April 25th, 1930:

“Referring to your letter of April 24th, regarding the 10 Cent stamp of the 1901 Pan-American Commemorative Issue, the Steamship *St. Paul* was used as a model for the engraving appearing on this stamp, but it is not an exact copy of this ship, a few minor changes having been made.’

“This was also verified through A. W. Hall, Director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. In addition to this David Lindsay, of the I. M. M. recalls securing this photograph for Mr. Baldwin, of the Bureau, who engraved the vignette.” [We show above a different photograph of the *St. Paul* docked, but which has a closer resemblance to the stamp design than the photo, page 6, that was described by Beverly S. King. JFD.]

The *St. Paul* was built and launched in the United States in 1895. It was taken over by the government during the Spanish-American War and was the first to go into commission as an auxiliary cruiser of the United States Navy, on April 21, 1898, one day before war was declared by the United States.

Production & Printing

All of the Pan-American Expositions stamps were designed by R. Ostrander Smith of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. In addition to the central designs, consideration also was given to a variety of frame designs.

Shown in the left column (page 8) are examples of origi-

nal pencil sketches done for each denomination by R. Ostrander Smith. In the right column, we have added the vignettes to give you the effect that would have been achieved with these frames.

(Note that we do not show the *St. Paul* photo from pages 6 or 7 within the oval frame of the 10¢ preliminary frame because neither of those photos would fit within that small oval. Instead, we inserted an image with a sharper angle, from an American Line poster featuring the *St. Paul*.)

In no instances were the frame designs shown here used for the stamps for which they were considered; however, with minor modifications the 2¢ frame design was adopted for the 4¢ stamp as issued.



One of the design essays for the 10¢ Pan-Am would have been a considerable departure from the rest of the set. Shown on page 8, it contained an eagle in an oval frame surrounded by American flags. According to Johl, in *The United States Commemorative Stamps of the 20th Century*, this essay with what is commonly called “American” flags was rejected because Latin and South American nations were sensitive to our use of “American” for things relating only to the U.S., and the Pan-American Expo was intended to foster goodwill among the American nations.

The Pan-Ams were the first bi-colored stamps issued by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. As we shall see in a subsequent discussion, the same problems that previous printers had encountered with bi-color printings surfaced again with the Pan-Ams. For the moment, however, we will discuss the bi-color printing without reference to the varieties that resulted from that process.

To Be Continued