

The Cover Story

Oh, The Things You Can Learn Stamp Collecting!

What March event is most significant to Philately?

International Women's Day – March 8 by Mike Schumacher



Figure A1

Throughout the month of March people around the world celebrate a variety of significant events, such as - the Ides of March; St. Patrick's Day; the vernal equinox, President's day, etc. None of these events, however, have played as big of a role to Philately as International Women's Day (March 8). International Women's Day dates back to 1909, when National Women's Day was held in New York at the suggestion of Theresa Serber Malkiel [Figure A1] and organized by the Socialist Party of America to pursue equal rights for women. Theresa Serber Malkiel (1874-1949) labor activist, suffragist and educator – was born in Bar, Russia.

Her family moved to New York in 1891 and by 17 she was working as a cloak maker in a garment factory. In 1892 she organized the Cloak Maker's Union. She was the first woman to rise to a leadership position in the Socialist Party. Her

1910 novel, *"The Diary of Shirtwaist Striker"* is credited with reforming New York labor laws. In 1911, while on a speaking tour in the south she spoke out against the problem of white supremacism. In her later years she promoted adult education for immigrant women workers & assisted them with naturalization.

In 1910, the meeting of the International Socialist in Copenhagen put forth an initiative to make the day an international event - to honor the suffragist movement and to build support for universal equal rights for women. International Women's Day was officially celebrated for the first time in 1911, when more than a million people participated in rallies in Denmark, Austria, Germany and Switzerland. The focus of the rallies was for women's right to vote, hold public office, vocational training and an end to job discrimination. March 8th became officially recognized as International Women's Day by the United Nations in 1975 during International Women's Year.

Figure A3



Its emphasis was on celebrating women's achievements throughout history and across nations. Currently, International Women's Day is

viewed as a global day celebrating the achievements of women and marking a call to action for accelerating gender parity. The day is not specific to any country, group or organization, but belongs collectively to all groups everywhere willing to pursue making a positive difference for women. World-renowned feminist, journalist, and activist, Gloria Steinem has said: "The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to...the collective efforts of all who care about human rights." Thus, it is no wonder as we philatelists' gaze upon our stamps, we see many examples of the suffragist movement, women's rights and accomplishments and the women who have led these efforts.



Figure A2

One of the earliest recognized suffragettes was Emmeline Pankhurst [Figure A2] who is depicted in this stamp from Jersey. Emmeline founded the Women's Franchise League in Britain in 1889 which fought for women's right to vote.

According to the book "What's First" by Jack Gray, the earliest stamp depicting the suffragette movement comes to us from Turkey. "It commemorates the 12th International Congress of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship" which was held in Istanbul [Figure A3]. Other stamps from the set depict "several women's occupations and a number of prominent women from the period."

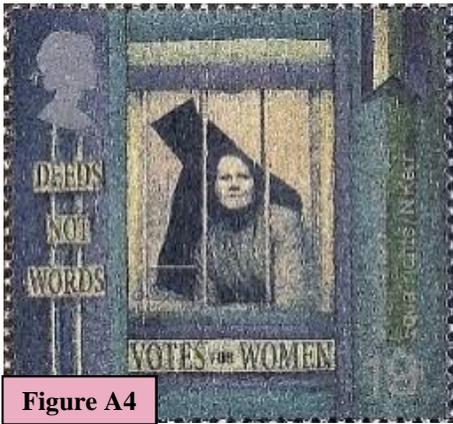


Figure A4

The struggle for women’s rights and equality was a universal fight throughout the world, thus we see the subject represented on numerous stamps from countries world-wide [Figure A4]. The following are a few examples: Great Britain: 1918 Parliament passed the Representation of People Act reforming voting rights.

This set of 8 stamps issued (one from the set shown as Figure A5) depicts various scenes from the suffragette movement & features individuals who

were part of the movement. (From original photos at the time.)

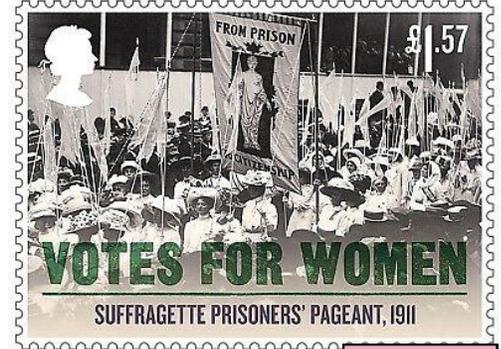


Figure A5

On the front cover of this newsletter can be found four examples of women on United States stamps [Figures A6-A9].

Needless to say, there are many, many more examples that could be shown including many issued by the United Nations [Figure A10], but the Editor has instructed me not to submit to him a 13-page article for the newspaper. So, I will conclude this article with one [Figure A11] that has set a Guinness World Record. It is the 2014 International Women’s Day stamp from Belgium. It contains 606 words in four languages taken from the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. (Only full words are counted in the total of 606.)



Figure A10



Figure A11

The campaign theme for 2019 International Women’s Day is #BalanceforBetter – through collective action and a shared responsibility we can achieve and celebrate a balanced social, economic, cultural and political achievements for all!

Oh, it is amazing the things you can learn stamp collecting!

(Additional examples are provided below.)



Issued in 1994 to mark the centenary of the founding of the Federation of German Women’s Association (BDF)



This iconic image from WWII is a great example of the strength of adding women to the work force. Few images of WWII are in this league.