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 Fettig

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

EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

A 3-cent stamp honoring the dedication of the Everglades National Park will be first placed on sale at Florida City, Florida, on December 5, 1947. The stamp will be of special delivery size, arranged vertically, and printed by the rotary process, and issued in panes of 50. Since this issue is arranged vertically envelopes should be addressed extremely low and to the left.

DR. GEO. WASHINGTON CARVER COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

A special 3-cent stamp in honor of Dr. Geo. Washington Carver will be first placed on sale at Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, on January 5, 1948. The stamp will be 0.85 by 0.98 inch in dimensions, issued in panes of 70, and printed in purple by the rotary process.

Collectors desiring first-day cancellations of the Everglades stamp on December 5, 1947, may send addressed envelopes, not in excess of 10, to the POSTMASTER, FLORIDA CITY, FLORIDA, with money order or postal note to cover cost of the stamps. Envelopes should be endorsed "FIRST-DAY COVERS, EVERGLADES."

Orders for first-day cancellations of the Dr. Geo. Washington Carver stamp, on January 5, 1948, should be submitted in the same manner to the POSTMASTER, TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE, ALABAMA.

Collectors must not send a covering envelope for return of first-day cancellations, such requests will not be honored but will be returned without service rendered. To expedite handling, first-day covers will be canceled by machine so far as practicable.

For the benefit of collectors the Everglades National Park stamp will be first placed on sale at the Philatelic Agency, Washington 25, D. C., on December 8, 1947. The Dr. Geo, Washington Carver stamp will be placed on sale at the Agency on January 6, 1948. To insure prompt shipment separate orders and remittances should be submitted for these issues. The Philatelic Agency does not service first-day covers.

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Figure (2)

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

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.

