

commentary

from other pens...

1847 issues put stamp on U.S. postal system

By Lawrence L. Knutson

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — When they were issued in 1847, the first two U.S. postage stamps were useful symbols of national unity in an unsettling time of war and sectional discord.

The two stamps, one a red-brown five-cent portrait of colonial postmaster Benjamin Franklin, the other a black 10-cent image of George Washington, helped letter writers span the continent and leap oceans.

Printed over four years, the first 4.6 million stamps were followed by trillions of others, each backed by the United States government and each a miniature work of art.

The largest exhibit ever of the 1847 stamps is on view at the Smithsonian Institution's National Postal Museum.

The display of hundreds of stamped letters, including an array of lacy valentines, shows where they originated and to whom they were sent. It shows their history in the townmarks and cancellations they acquired under the scratching pens of the nation's postmasters as they traveled by road, rail and steamboat.

The exhibit's highlights include a discovery: two proof panes of 100 stamps each, one for each denomination. They were found in an engraving company's files just five years ago.

"No other panes of 100 exist," said Wilson Hulme, a former Navy submariner, business executive and stamp collector who is now the postal museum's curator of philately. "They were done for purposes of the printers being able to demonstrate the quality of their work. They are just gorgeous impressions."

Other gems never before on display include the 1847 India ink-and-pencil sketches of the proposed designs for the two stamps and an 1847 letter that describes them. The designs, previously used for bank notes, are attributed to American artist Asher Durand, a prominent engraver who became one of the leading landscape painters of the Hudson River school.

"You are looking at great rarities," Hulme said. "The bulk of the exhibit is a fabulous holding of 1847 covers that show how they were used. It's beautiful stuff. To see it all in one place at one time is unique."

As a moment in time, the year 1847 marked a turning point for the U.S.

That year, Americans were singing "Columbia, Gem of the Ocean;" Henry Wadsworth Longfellow published "Evangeline;" Irish immigrants arrived by the tens of thousands and the Mormons began their trek to the Great Salt Lake.

In 1847, the nation also fought its first foreign war, a one-sided contest with Mexico. All of California came under U.S. control, to be followed by a huge stretch of the Southwest.

These events led to ferocious debate over allowing slavery in the newly acquired territories. On March 3, 1847, the day Congress approved the issuing of adhesive postage stamps, the House voted to close the new lands to slavery. Although that effort died in the Senate, the furor intensified. The Civil War began 14 years later.

The first two stamps — the five-center for destinations of up to 300 miles and the 10-cent issue for more distant addresses — were soon bringing the mail to people throughout the new territories and across the existing 29 states.

The world's first postage stamp, Britain's "Penny Black," was issued in 1840. Within a month, Sen. Daniel Webster of Massachusetts suggested the United States follow suit. It took seven years for Congress to agree.

The new stamps were relatively expensive in an era when a penny bought a daily newspaper, 10 cents paid for a pound of coffee and a laborer earned a dollar a day.

The postal museum's exhibit of the rarest and most interesting of these rare stamps and stamped envelopes draws on its own holdings and from important American and international collections.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Lawrence L. Knutson has reported on Congress, the White House and Washington's history for 35 years.



Going nuts



pat schiefen

• postscript

Fall brings to mind many things including harvest, Thanksgiving and football. Spiced nuts make a perfect finger food for holiday buffets and other gatherings. In the cookbook "Party Nuts!" by Sally Simpson there are numerous recipes for making spiced nuts.

Buy nuts from a good source that sells lots of nuts to get the freshest including wholesale clubs and church ladies. St. Paul's Episcopal Church sells nuts every fall obtained from a grower. To visit with someone call Carol Pettijohn at 899-6241.

Have fun, experiment with different kinds of nuts. Don't worry about subtlety. Seasonings need to be strong to offset the dense richness of the nuts themselves. You can do anything with pecans that you can do with walnuts and the same goes for almonds and hazelnuts. Nuts need to be stored in the freezer to ensure against rancidity. It won't hurt to refrigerate most nuts for up to three months. Toasting nuts will intensify their flavor.

Toasting nuts

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place raw nuts on baking sheet or pan. It is not necessary to grease or line it. If your oven is uneven turn the nuts once or twice. The following chart will give approximate time for lightly toasted nuts.

- Almonds, Hazelnuts, Macadamias - 12 to 15 minutes
- Peanuts - 15 to 20 minutes
- Pecans, Pine nuts, Pistachios, Walnuts - 10 to 12 minutes

Brittles can be made with more than peanuts. I particularly like almond brittle.

Your basic nut brittle

- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 1/2 to 2 cups lightly toasted almonds, pecans,

or pistachios or the party nut of your choice, chopped or left whole

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Butter an offset spatula.

Place sugar and water in a large, heavy saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Continue to boil until sugar is dissolved about 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and simmer until it reaches the hard crack stage is cinnamon colored, 300 degrees on a candy thermometer, 12 to 15 minutes.

Quickly stir in the nuts and pour immediately onto prepared sheet. Using buttered spatula spread as thinly as possible. Set aside to cool and break into large pieces. Store in airtight container. It will keep two to three weeks. Makes 2/3 pound.

Hot cayenne Tabasco almonds

- 2 cups raw whole almonds, blanched or skin on
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons Tabasco Sauce (any variety)
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Line baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Place all ingredients, except the salt, in a large bowl and toss until nuts are well coated. Transfer nuts to the prepared sheet and arrange in a single layer. Place in the oven and cook. Stir every 15

minutes until the nuts are darkened not burnt, about 45 minutes. Remove from the oven, immediately loosen nuts with metal spatula, sprinkle evenly with salt, and set aside to cool before serving. Makes 2 cups.

Bbq pecans

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted or vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon ketchup
- 1/4 teaspoon Tabasco sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 cups raw pecan halves
- Preheat oven to 200 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Place melted butter, Worcestershire, ketchup, Tabasco, chili power and salt in a medium sized bowl and stir. Add pecans and mix until well coated. Transfer pecans to baking sheet and arrange in a single layer. Place in the oven and bake, stirring frequently, until lightly browned about 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and drain the nuts on paper towels. Serve warm or let cool. Makes 2 cups.

Pine nuts are also called pignoli and pinons. They are harvested from pine trees and can be found inside the pine cone.

Pesto pine nuts

- 2 cups lightly toasted pine nuts
- 3 tablespoons pesto (store bought or homemade)
- 1 tablespoons finely grated parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- Place all ingredients in a large bowl and toss to combine. Transfer nuts to a large plate in a single layer and set aside to dry for at least 2 hours. Makes 2 cups.

Voters leave government divided among three parties

By John Hanna

AP Political Writer

TOPEKA — In this year's general election, voters left each of Kansas' three major political parties with a strong base of power within state government.

Each party — Democrats, Republicans aligned with outgoing Gov. Bill Graves, and Republicans who've often been at odds with him — cannot achieve its policy objectives on its own.

Each will be forced to build legislative coalitions to accomplish its goals. Coalitions may form and dissolve issue by issue, or two groups may work together regularly.

Gov.-elect Kathleen Sebelius, a Democrat, and Attorney General-elect Phill Kline, a Republican, already are trying to build governing coalitions, two months before they're sworn into office.

"We're really going to enter an era of coalition government," said outgoing Lt. Gov. Gary Sherrer.

The state's three-party system is a product of the Republicans' traditional dominance of Kansas politics.

Nearly 743,000 of the state's 1.6 million registered voters are Republicans, compared to 441,000 Democrats, about 27 percent of the total. The state has 420,000 unaffiliated voters, who account for 26 percent of those registered.

Of the 44 governors, including Sebelius, 32 have been Republicans. During the past century, only one Democrat has served as secretary of state — Larry Ryan in 1949-51 — and legend has it that voters were confused because he ran against Republican incumbent Frank Ryan.

But dominance hasn't brought peace. A split among Republicans has existed for decades.

In 1912, the GOP split over Teddy Roosevelt and his progressive Bull Moosers. During the 1950s, it split among adherents to President Eisenhower and Ohio Sen. Robert Taft. During the 1970s, there were self-styled progressives like then-Senate President Richard Rogers and the more conservative "cavemen" he criticized.

The GOP split might go back to statehood, when the first governor, Charles Robinson, feuded with one of Kansas' first two U.S. senators, James Lane.

Another round of infighting intensified in 1994, when Graves won the governor's race but David Miller won the GOP state chairmanship.

Since then, the lines have been fuzzy between



john hanna

• ap news analysis

the two camps.

Abortion has been key. Abortion rights advocates have sided most often with Graves. Abortion opponents have opposed him.

This year's issue was a willingness to accept tax increases to prevent cuts in education and social services, with Graves leading the push.

Graves and his allies consider themselves moderates; his GOP critics are described as conservatives. The labels have become shorthand for an "I know one when I see one" test, usually based on whether a Republican is strongly aligned with Graves or not.

Whatever the lines, the split is real and ongoing, and voters appeared to give neither faction a strong advantage.

Moderates still control the leadership in the Senate, where Republicans have a 30-10 majority. No seats were on the ballot this year. Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh, who won a third term, and Insurance Commissioner-elect Sandy Praeger and State Treasurer-elect Lynn Jenkins are considered moderates.

Returning members and members-elect pick new House leaders on Dec. 2, with Republicans holding an 80-45 majority. Even if a conservative isn't named speaker, that wing of the party is likely to control a large enough number of votes to influence policy.

The most prominent conservative in state government will be Kline. He has promised to pursue tougher sentencing laws and interpret a state law restricting late-term abortions more narrowly than his predecessor, Carla Stovall, a Republican who favored abortion rights.

But Kline is wooing moderates and even Democrats. His transition team includes past supporters of Sen. David Adkins, R-Leawood, a moderate whom Kline defeated in the GOP primary, and Wyandotte County Sheriff Leroy Green, a Democrat.

"Certainly, I need to build some bridges," Kline

said during a news conference last week. "We'll do what we can to make sure people are welcome in that office."

The Democrats' power base in state government is the strongest one — the governor's office, occupied by Sebelius, the party's only statewide office-holder.

But Sebelius won't be able to get any initiatives passed without Republican votes.

Of course, Sebelius understands well the position she's in, having run as a Democrat for statewide office. She wouldn't have won if her record \$4 million campaign had failed to attract Republican votes.

She named Adkins as one of five team leaders in her top-to-bottom review of state government.

"I think what the challenge will be is how to put together a working coalition to move things forward," Sebelius said in a recent interview. "I've always assumed that."

The state will be governed by coalition. The questions at any time next year will be which two of the state's three major political parties have formed the alliance and how long it will last.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Political Writer John Hanna has covered state government and politics since 1987.

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The Goodland Daily News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

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Published daily except Saturday and Sunday and the day observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Daily News, 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: daily@nwkansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: gdnadv@nwkansas.com

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SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$25; six months, \$42; 12 months, \$79. Out of area, weekly mailing of five issues: three months, \$30; six months, \$45; 12 months, \$80. By mail daily in Kansas, Colorado: 12 months, \$115. (All tax included.)

Incorporating:
The Sherman County Herald
Founded by Thomas McCants
1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR
Founded by Eric and Roxie Yonkey
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Nor'West Newspapers
Haynes Publishing Company