

The U.S. Centennial and Beyond

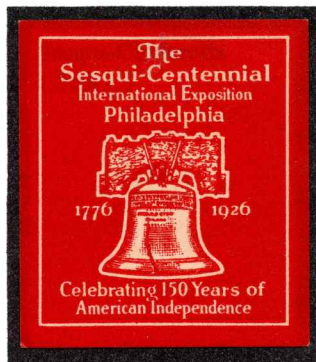
America has always celebrated her birthdays and anniversaries. The 100th celebration of the Declaration of Independence in 1876 gave testimony. While celebrated nationally, the major event was held in Fairmount Park in Philadelphia-The 1876 Philadelphia Int'l Exposition. The Expo ran from 10th May through 10th November with 30,863 vendors attracting 9.9K visitors. There was a small U.S. Post Office with a variety of services. While two items of postal stationery are included here, there was no commemorative stamp. Postmarks are collected as well as admission tickets and other ephemera such as view cards and receipts. Picture postcards and seals, however, were not yet in prominence. America and the USPS celebrated again with an Int'l Expo for the Sesquicentennial in 1926. The U.S. International Stamp Expo-*Interphil*-held in Philadelphia from 29th May thru 6th June 1976 was part of the nationwide Bicentennial celebration.



To commemorate the Expo, the USPOD issued two items of postal stationery, U218 and 219 ↑ in 1876. There is a second version (U219-20) in which there is a double line under the word "Post Office." These stamped envelopes depicted items of postal/information history through 1876 to include the Pony Express, the telegraph, and the railroad transportation of mail. They have been subsequently reproduced. →



↑ U.S. Scott# 627 commemorates the 150th Anniversary of U.S. Independence. The Int'l Expo was celebrated in Philadelphia from 1 June thru 1 December, 1926. A variety of Cinderellas and postmarks are sought after. ↓→



After months of political wrangling up to 1976, Congress decided against a single Bicentennial event in either Philadelphia or Boston. Instead, there were smaller events held across the nation for many months. Scott#1632 (upper left)↑ was created for both the Int'l Stamp Expo in Phila and The Bicentennial. From 1974 thru 1977 there were numerous Bicentennial-related U.S. stamp sets, commemoratives, and souvenir sheets. Further, there are foreign worldwide Bicentennial stamps to fill several albums, as this remains a specialty area today.

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MEMORIAL HALL

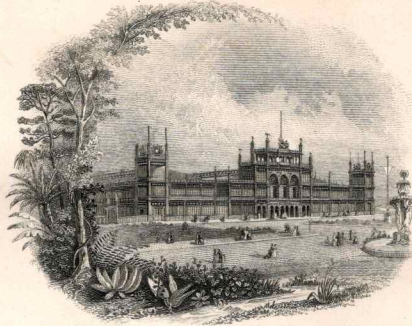
PHILADELPHIA, PA

Memorial Hall ↑ is the only permanent remaining building of the 1876 Philadelphia International Exposition. Following the Centennial, it was used as a museum. It was renamed the Pennsylvania Museum and served as an art gallery. Following another major revision in 2008, the gallery was reopened as the "Please Touch Museum." The 1876 Expo was very successful. Beautiful buildings remained, and two new and permanent bridges were built over the rivers. This greatly facilitated access to the city. Money was made, and the government (both the Feds and the City) was paid back for the loans they made. Thus it was decided to hold an Expo annually in the same spot in Philadelphia, Fairmount Park, the next planned to start on 10 May 1877. By the spring of 1877 the event was set and ready to go. However, there were many fewer vendors, and the U.S. Post Office was discontinued. Little enthusiasm was generated for this exposition repeat. And almost immediately, the event was but a trickle of that imagined. Soon all that remained was a permanent exhibit in one of the main buildings alone, and even this was closed by the late summer of 1881 after a very poor season. Many of the buildings were sold for parts.



← **Admission Ticket to the '76 Expo**
According to WJ Bomar, a visitor to the fair needed the exact change of 50¢ to enter the gate. There was a special train built right to the fairgrounds by the Pennsylvania Railroad, and the West End Railroad Company built a railroad line within the grounds of the fair for visitors to go from one area to another for 5 cents.

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*The President and Board of Directors
of the International Exhibition Company,
respectfully invite you to be present
at the opening ceremonies of
The International Exhibition of
1877
May 10th. Main Building,
Centennial Grounds, Philadelphia.
To Miss G. E. Bustitt.*

Philadelphia, April 2nd 1877.

An Early Answer Requested.

This page contains an engraved invitation to the opening ceremonies of "The International Exhibition of 1877." This soiree was held on 10 May 1877 in the Main Building of the Exhibition Grounds.

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In association with the 1976 Bicentennial celebration, the USPS issued U582 on 19 October 1976. This is an updated version of U220 (green) used for the Centennial celebration in 1876. The above cover contains U582 postal stationery (green), and it was franked on 23 October 1976 to coincide with the celebration of 200 years of Franco-American friendship and alliance. The French stamp is Scott 1401 of 1974, and it has been surcharged as Reunion 395.



The World's First Envelope Commemorative
 CALUMET STAMP CLUB Hammond, Indiana.

At its annual show in March of 1976, the Calumet Stamp Club of Hammond, IN used a facsimile of U219 (red), the postal stationery for the 1876 Centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia. This reproduction forms the vignette for the cachet of stamp show cover. It is noted on the cover that U219 was the world's first envelope commemorative.