



Bulletin  
No. 14

# The Lincoln Digest

DR. LOUIS A. WARREN, *Editor*

Published by

The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

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## LINCOLN COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS

President Harry S. Truman on the morning of June 29, 1948, signed a bill authorizing a special stamp to be issued on November 19, commemorating the eighty-fifth anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's speech made at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on November 19, 1863. Postage stamps have been utilized in many nations to memorialize men, measures, places and events, but as far as we can learn no stamp has been issued heretofore to commemorate the delivery of a speech.

On November 20, 1947, the day following a Dedication Day celebration at Gettysburg, Senator Myers introduced in the Senate of the United States the following Joint Resolution:

**"To authorize the issuance of a special series of stamps commemorative of the eighty-fifth anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Postmaster General is authorized and directed to prepare for issuance on November 19, 1948, a special series of 3-cent postage stamps, of such design as he shall prescribe, in commemoration of the eighty-fifth anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address."**

This resolution was read twice and referred to the committee on Civil Service. Brought before the House on March 16, 1948, it was referred to the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service. On June 11, 1948, the bill was "Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed."

A report to accompany the bill was prepared by Mr. Morton of the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service. The following excerpt is from the report:

"Lincoln's Gettysburg Address has made as deep an impression in the literature of the American people as the historical effect of the famous Battle of Gettysburg which was the turning point of the Civil War and will forever affect the place of the United States among the governments of the world. The Postmaster General has reported on this bill and while he does not recommend the bill, largely because authority already exists with the Postmaster General to issue such stamps, he does concur in his report in the great historical significance of Gettysburg. It is the view of the committee this event in American history is of sufficient merit to warrant the issuance of this stamp since it will have a great effect in calling to the minds of the American people unity of purpose and devotion to duty."

First sale of the new stamp was scheduled for November 19, 1948, at the Gettysburg Post Office concurrent with a program in keeping with the anniversary date.

There have been several commemorative stamps associated with Abraham Lincoln.

### *1st Anniversary of Death—1866*

Among the great many newspapers and periodicals which used the black mourning rules on their publications

after the death of Lincoln was *The Stamp Collector's Record* for May 1, 1865. The copy in the Foundation Library contains a brief tribute to Lincoln and the obituary closes with this appeal:

"We trust that the suggestion which was made to the Postmaster General, some time since, will now be acted on, and that we may expect an effigy of our martyred President on one or other of the new forthcoming issue of U. S. postage stamps."

Complying with the above request and many other urgent appeals, a fifteen-cent postage stamp bearing a likeness of the martyred President was issued on April 15, 1866. While it was not pronounced a commemorative, yet the fact that it was released on the first anniversary day of Lincoln's death, and the further consideration that it was printed in mourning black, should definitely associate it with other commemorative issues.

### *100th Anniversary of Birth—1909*

The Senate and House of Representatives in joint action approved on January 22, 1909, a resolution, "That the Postmaster General is hereby authorized to design and issue a special postage stamp of the denomination of two cents in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln." The stamp was printed in red bearing a profile of a Lincoln bust by St. Gaudens. There was much irregularity in the sale of these stamps with reference to the time element, and one clerk in the Brooklyn Post Office sold about 50,000 to the public the day before the release date of February twelfth.

### *75th Anniversary of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution*

There are several important dates associated with the preliminaries to the final consummation of the Emancipation Proclamation. Lincoln first read his draft of the instrument to the Cabinet in July, 1862, and the final step came on October 20, 1865, with the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. This last date was used in 1940 to memorialize the 75th anniversary of the Emancipation Amendment. One of the features of the occasion was the issuing of a 3-cent stamp which portrayed "The Emancipation Group," a statue by Thomas Ball. The statuary shows Lincoln and a slave with his shackles broken.

### *5th Anniversary of the Beginning of the Chinese-Japanese War*

A five-cent stamp memorializing the 5th anniversary of the beginning of the Chinese-Japanese War was first issued at Denver, Colorado, on July 7, 1942. It was at Denver that Dr. Sun Yat-sen was advised of the successful launching of the Chinese Republic and from that city he returned to China to accept the Presidency of the new nation. Associated on the stamp with the portrait of Sun Yat-sen is one of Abraham Lincoln. On many occasions the first president of the Chinese Republic stated that "he had been inspired by Lincoln and that he had been motivated by the principles laid down by the Great Emancipator at Gettysburg."

This commemorative stamp carried on it an inscription from Lincoln's Gettysburg Address in both English and Chinese.