



1898 TRANS-MISSISSIPPI ISSUE

THE TRANS-MISSISSIPPI ISSUE WAS released in 1898 to coincide with the Trans-Mississippi International Exposition in Omaha. The McKinley-appointed Postmaster General James A. Gary authorized the release of the commemorative set, which originally comprised eight stamps and was expanded to nine with the addition of the \$2.00 value. This was the second set of commemorative stamps released by the Post Office, following the 1893 Columbians.

The Trans-Mississippi set was originally intended to be printed in two colors and exists as essays in this state. Johl notes that the bicolor printing scheme was abandoned due to the outbreak of the Spanish-American War. The Bureau's postage stamp production was reduced to provide additional capacity for revenue stamps needed to finance the war effort.

The stamp-collecting community protested strongly against the new issue. With the Columbian issue still available at a few branches, many felt that the Post Office Dept. was taking

advantage of collectors by forcing them to purchase the new issue. This sentiment was further reinforced when the \$2.00 denomination was added to the set.

The full set was placed on sale at post offices on June 17, 1898. This was almost three weeks after the start of the Exposition on June 1. At the end of 1898, deliveries to post offices of the Trans-Mississippi issue were discontinued. Post offices with remaining stocks of the issue on hand returned them for credit, and most remaining stocks were destroyed. Unfortunately, records were not kept of the quantity of each denomination destroyed, and so the number sold is not known.

The Trans-Mississippi stamps represent the pinnacle of the engraver's art. The \$1.00 Trans-Mississippi, depicting "Cattle in a Storm", has often been called the most beautiful United States stamp ever produced. Below is a listing of design sources and the names of the engravers responsible for the issue.

SOURCE OF DESIGN	VIGNETTE ENGRAVER	FRAME ENGRAVER
1c <i>Marquette on the Mississippi</i> , painting by Lamprecht	G.F.C. Smillie	D. S. Ronaldson
2c <i>Farming in the West</i> , from photograph	M.W. Baldwin	
4c <i>Indian Hunting Buffalo</i> , reproduction of engraving in book	G.F.C. Smillie	
5c <i>Fremont on Rocky Mountains</i> , modified from wood engraving	M.W. Baldwin	
8c <i>Troops Guarding Train</i> , from drawing by F. Remington	M.W. Baldwin	
10c <i>Hardships of Emigration</i> , painting by A.G. Heaton	M.W. Baldwin	
50c <i>Western Mining Prospector</i> , from drawing by F. Remington	G.F.C. Smillie	
\$1 <i>Western Cattle in Storm</i> , from engraving by J. MacWhirter	M.W. Baldwin	
\$2 <i>Mississippi River Bridge</i> , from engraving	G.F.C. Smillie	