

19TH CENTURY AMERICAN PHILATELIC IMAGES OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

And the Artists behind them

THE EXHIBIT

This exhibit displays the art behind images of Thomas Jefferson on American stamps and related items during the 19th century (with one overlap into 1901). It is structured by artists’ first “philatelic appearance” portraying Jefferson, roughly chronologically. It starts with obsolete currency and engravings that are the precursor to early stamps, and ends with the first of the Bureau issues on the cusp of the century.



THE KEY

- Especially distinctive items: **bold red** – the symbol © indicates expert certificate, such as for the **first Jefferson stamp from 1856** at LEFT
- Page headings identify issues and artists, with names in text in **bold blue caps**
- Personal research is shown throughout by association of artists with stamp issues and in particular instances by an **eyeglass symbol** 

STRUCTURE: THE ARTISTS and the issues

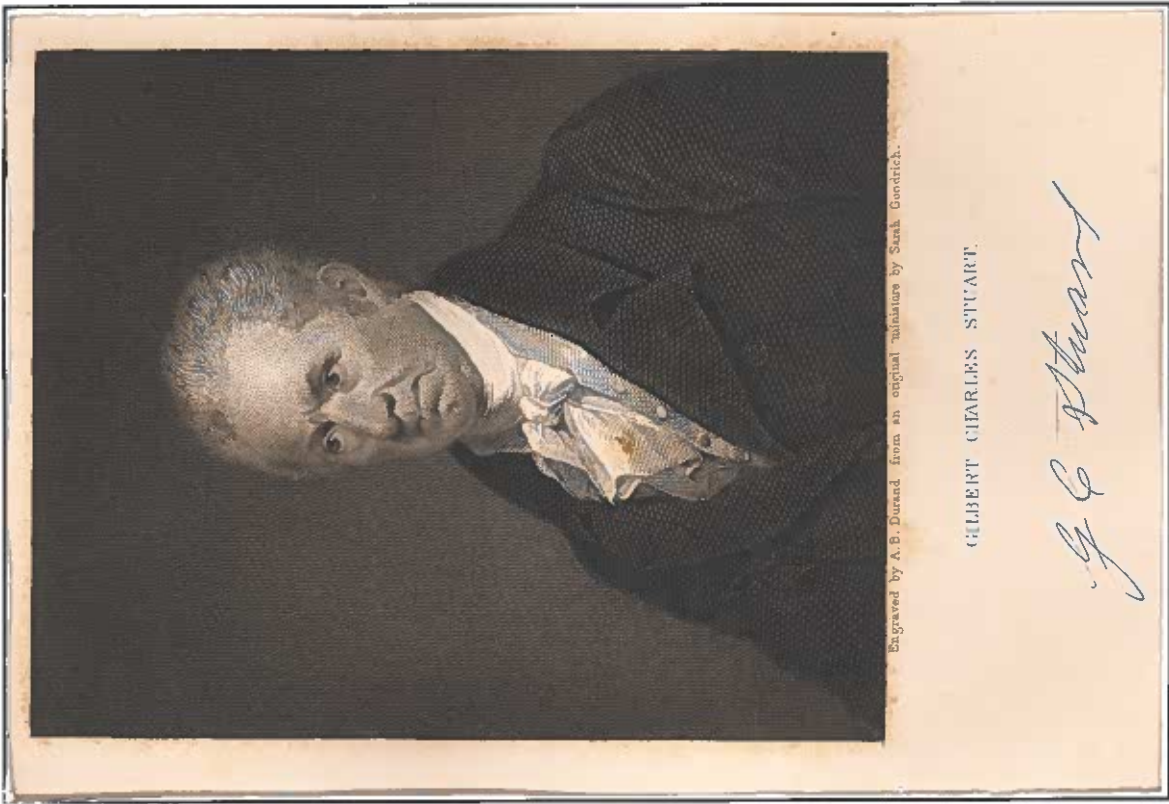
GILBERT STUART

- Precursors to 1856 5-cent
- 5-cent 1856
- 5-cent 1857-1861
- 5-cent 1861-1868
- Usage during the Civil War
- Illegal Revenue Usage 1863
- Taxpaid Revenues 1868-1901

HIRAM POWERS

- Large Bank Notes 1870-1878
- Stamped Envelopes 1870-1886
- Official Stamps 1873-1879

LEFT, MOST INFLUENTIAL ARTIST - Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828). Engraving after watercolor by Sarah Goodridge, c. 1825. Experts say: “[L]ittle is known about the designer of the 5-cent [1856] stamp, and no design essays survive. The final engraving is very close to one of several Thomas Jefferson portraits painted by Gilbert Stuart.”



ALONZO CHAPPEL (AFTER STUART)

- Postal Cards 1885, 1894 & 1897

CHARLES BALTHAZAR JULIEN FÉVRET DE SAINT MÉMIN

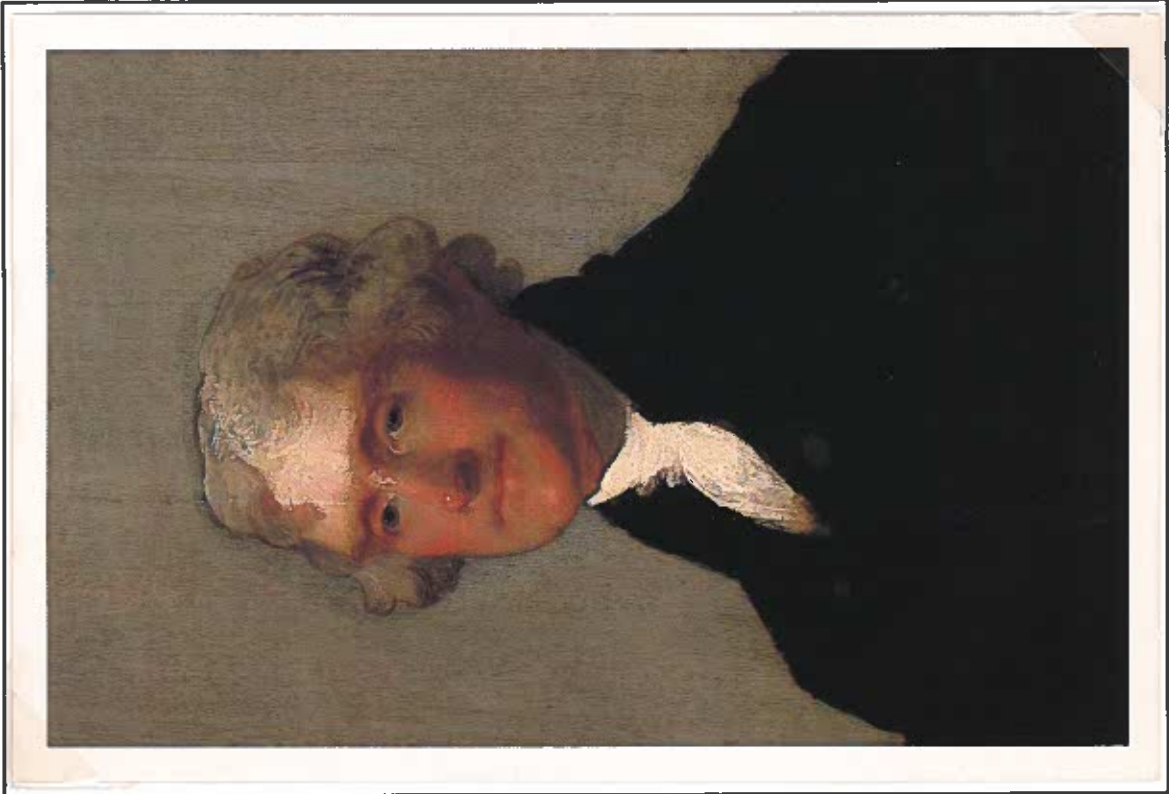
- Postal Cards 1886

GIUSEPPE CERRACHI (or more likely HIRAMS POWERS)

- Small Bank Notes 1890
- First Bureau Issues 1894-1898
- Territorial Overprints 1899

EPILOGUE

RIGHT, INSPIRATION FOR THE FIRST JEFFERSON STAMP. Stuart painted Jefferson from life for the first time in 1800, during Jefferson’s Vice Presidency, but art historians say that work is lost. He likely started the so-called *Edgehill* portrait in 1805, shown in the postcard from Monticello at right, but only delivered it in 1821 after Jefferson insisted.



19th century stamps using Stuart’s portrayal of Jefferson were based on the “*Edgehill*” version, but later issues (e.g., the 1954-1968 Liberty series) were based on the so-called “*Bowdoin*” version, which shows a hair ribbon behind Jefferson’s back that is absent on 19th century issues.

Some claim that the early 5-cent issue may be based on a 1800 oil painting by **Rembrandt Peale**. But the 1890 Third Ass’t Postmaster-General’s official description of “obsolete” stamp designs stated that the 1856 Jefferson portrayal was based on Stuart.