

# The Story of the Anthony Stamp

## Feminist finally wins philatelists' acclaim

by ERNEST A. KEHR



WHEN the Susan B. Anthony stamp was issued last August, critics admired it as a masterpiece of gravure art and philatelists acclaimed it one of the five most beautiful adhesives ever produced by this country. Since then it has circulated more widely than any other postal issue of the Farley administration. The design is the essence of simplicity, a tribute to the simple woman who organized the movement for women which resulted in the woman suffrage amendment to the Constitution. The stamp is of regulation size and shape, in bright purple ink. The central design is a portrait of Miss Anthony copied from the marble bust made by her friend, Adelaide Johnson. The vignette is in a frame of purple with white edges, the colors of the Woman's Equal Rights Society. While the stamp primarily honors America's great feminist, it is also a tribute to Mrs. Johnson, the unsung heroine of this philatelic commemorative. The story of the bust from which the stamp was engraved is one of the most interesting of all the tales relating to stamps.

Miss Anthony, who died in 1906, did not live to see the completion of her work, but Mrs. Johnson is still alive and is as interested in the welfare of her sex as when she knew Miss Anthony. Mrs. Johnson spiritually, is a young woman. Her step is lively, her conversation brisk. Her recollections of the Woman's Memorial, from which the stamp design was borrowed, reveal the determination which marked the suffrage movement. From the start the making of the bust of Miss Anthony was handicapped by misfortune. During her later years Miss Anthony posed for Mrs. Johnson over a period of months until the clay model, reflecting Miss Anthony's enthusiasm and inspiration, had been completed. Prior to her departure for a scheduled lecture tour of the Mid-West, an informal reception was held to show the model. After the bust had been displayed, wet cloths were put

over it to preserve the clay. Later in the evening someone who had missed the reception, entered the studio to view the model privately. In uncovering it she accidentally defaced the nose. With tears in her eyes, Mrs. Johnson told Miss Anthony of the accident.

"Miss Anthony ordered her trunks back from the depot," Mrs. Johnson recounts, "and cancelling her engagements, she posed for me until I had remodeled the broken nose."

After thirty years of preparation the plaster casts were taken to Carrara, Italy, where Mrs. Johnson established a studio for the creation of the Woman's Monument which now stands in a crypt in the Capitol. When the seven-and-one-half ton mass of marble portraying Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony had been finished, it was sent from the studio to a wharf, hauled by several yoke of oxen. En route, however, the workmen accompanying the marble halted the oxen, for some unknown reason, and refused to go on. For thirty hours Mrs. Johnson tried frantically to get the marble to Genoa in time for shipment. Finally through an acquaintance, she obtained a special freight train and got the statuary to the Dante Alighieri, only a few hours before it sailed for the United States. The memorial arrived at Washington and was unveiled on February 15, 1921.

Mrs. Johnson, incidentally, has the distinction of being the only living sculptor to have a creation on a United States postage stamp.

Stamps sent by

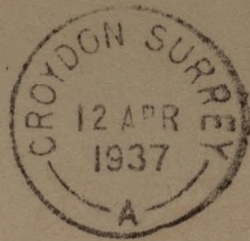
Kitty Marion

to be sold for

Suffragette

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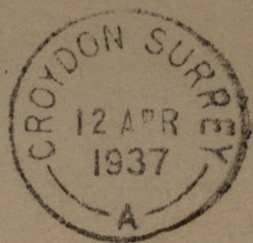
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