

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Yosemite Valley Landscape Commemorated on Postage

Albert Bierstadt's *Valley of the Yosemite* gets stamp of approval

HARTFORD, CT —The U.S. Postal Service dedicated the *Valley of the Yosemite* commemorative 42-cent first class stamp at the American Philatelic Stamp Show in Hartford, CT today. The stamp image is based on an 1864 oil-on-paperboard painting by landscape artist Albert Bierstadt. The original painting belongs to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. The Albert Bierstadt: *Valley of the Yosemite* stamp, as the eighth issuance in the American Treasures series, is available nationwide today.

“Albert Bierstadt painted the Valley of the Yosemite in 1864,” said U.S. Postal Service Vice President, Employee Resource Management, Deborah Giannoni-Jackson while dedicating the stamp. “That same year, Nevada became our 36<sup>th</sup> state and President Lincoln signed into law the Yosemite Land Grant to protect 39,000 acres of the Yosemite Valley and the neighboring Mariposa Big Tree Grove. It was a heroic age, and the western frontier was a land of opportunity and spectacular beauty.

“It was the perfect place and time for Bierstadt,” she continued. “He loved nature, adventure and America. And he found them all on perfect display in the great American West. In hundreds of dramatic paintings, he mixed reality and artistry to capture the essence of the wilderness the grandeur of nature and the soaring spirit of a nation growing into its destiny.”

Joining Giannoni-Jackson in dedicating the stamp were Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee member Jessica Helfand and American Philatelic Society Past President Janet Klug.

One of the preeminent American landscape painters of the 19th century, Bierstadt is considered to be a second-generation member of the Hudson River School, a group of artists devoted to the American landscape. Best known for his Western landscapes, he was strongly influenced by the dramatic images of German painters active in Düsseldorf. Both painting styles were highly influenced by romanticism and emphasized the spiritual aspects of nature.

*Valley of the Yosemite*—which measures 11 7/8 inches by 19 1/4 inches—shares the freshness and immediacy of the *plein air* field sketches Bierstadt used in composing a much larger painting entitled

## *Looking Down Yosemite Valley.*

Even at this small scale, Bierstadt effectively used the theatrical atmospheric lighting and dramatic aerial perspective so characteristic of the Hudson River School of painters. *Valley of the Yosemite* evokes the sublime grandeur of the unspoiled Western wilderness that Bierstadt so eloquently portrayed in his monumental panoramic landscapes

Inaugurated in 2001 with the Amish Quilts stamp pane, the American Treasures series is intended to showcase beautiful works of American fine art and crafts. The 2002, 2003, and 2004 issuances featured artwork by John James Audubon, Mary Cassatt, and Martin Johnson Heade respectively. The theme returned to textiles with the issuance of the New Mexico Rio Grande Blankets stamp booklet in 2005 and the Quilts of Gee's Bend booklet in 2006. The 2007 issuance featured a leaded Favrile-glass window designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany.

### **Philatelic Products**

There are three philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- 678461, \*First Day Cover, 80-cents.
- 678491, \*Ceremony Program, \$6.95.
- 678493, \*First Day Cover Keepsake, \$9.20.

### **How to Order First-Day Covers**

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

Information Fulfillment  
Dept. 6270  
U.S. Postal Service  
PO Box 219014  
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

### **How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark**

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase the new stamped postcards at their local Post Office, by telephone at 800-STAMP-24, or at the Postal Store website at [www.usps.com/shop](http://www.usps.com/shop). They should address the cards (to themselves or others) and place them in an envelope addressed to:

Albert Bierstadt Stamp  
Postmaster  
Hartford MPO  
141 Weston St.  
Hartford, CT 06101-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the cards through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by Oct. 15, 2008.

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An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that visits every address in the nation – 146 million homes and businesses. It has 37,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to pay for operating expenses, not tax dollars. The Postal Service has annual revenues of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail.