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## PALM BRIEF

### Palms on U.S. Postage Stamps

The handsome cover picture depicting *Sabal palmetto* in a field of sea oats was designed by Bob Timberlake of Lexington, North Carolina. One of the current Statehood Constitution Series, this 25-cent commemorative is the first to be issued with the new first-class postage rate. I was so impressed with this beautiful palm postage stamp that I was motivated to find out which other U.S. postage stamps have portrayed palms, and to try to identify them.

According to my perusal of the Guide to U.S. Stamps (USPS 1987) the cover picture represents the fifth time that the palmetto palm has been on a U.S. stamp. What appears to be a *Sabal palmetto* is included in the design of a 1924 5-cent stamp issued to mark the Huguenot Walloon Tercentenary. Pictured on the stamp is the Huguenot Monument located in Jacksonville, Florida. In 1930, a 2-cent stamp issued to mark the 250th anniversary of the founding of Charleston, South Carolina, shows part of what can be assumed to be a palmetto palm. A third is a 6-cent 1970 stamp commemorating the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Carolina Colony by the English. The state flag with the palmetto palm is part of its quite stylized design. Finally, a 1976 Bicentennial series of 13-cent stamps featuring state flags included South Carolina. The state flag is composed of a white palmetto palm and a quarter moon on a blue background.

Two other species of palms have been depicted on U.S. postage stamps. The coconut can be found on five different stamps. In 1913, a 1-cent stamp was issued to mark the 400th anniversary of Balboa's "discovery" of the Pacific Ocean upon crossing the isthmus of Panama. Coconut

palms are part of the backdrop framing the explorer's portrait. A 1937 series honoring U.S. territories includes individual 3-cent stamps portraying La Fortaleza, San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Charlotte Amalie, capital of the Virgin Islands. Coconuts and possibly other palms decorate the Puerto Rican fort scene; a clear representation of coconuts appears in the later stamp. Hawaii has been honored with two air mail stamps containing coconuts. An 80-cent stamp in 1952 shows Diamond Head in Honolulu with the trunks and lower leaves of coconuts in the foreground. In 1972, an 11-cent stamp honored the City of Refuge National Park in Hawaii. A single coconut appears in the background. The California fan palm (*Washingtonia filifera*) is the other palm. It appears in a 9-cent 1956 stamp picturing The Alamo in San Antonio, Texas.

The subject of palms on postage stamps has received modest attention thus far. Illustrations accompanying letters from Kiner (1957) and Kanagawa (1974), and an article by Weber (1960), provide fine examples of the variety of palm stamps around the world. A letter written by Delfeld (1975), on behalf of the American Topical (Stamp) Association, made a plea to *Principes* readers for help in the identification of palms on stamps; I have no information what response was generated. Let this note serve as an opportunity to invite a philatelic palmophile to give this interesting subject the attention it deserves.

#### LITERATURE CITED

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