

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**NOVELIST, FOLKLORIST AND ANTHROPOLOGIST FEATURED  
ON U.S. POSTAGE STAMP**

**Postal Service Continues Its Celebration of Literary Arts with  
Zora Neale Hurston Stamp**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Novelist, folklorist and anthropologist, Zora Neale Hurston, known for her artistry and her celebration of black culture, will be honored by the U.S. Postal Service on a 37-cent postage stamp.

The first day of issue ceremony will take place at 11 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 24, 2003, at the Fourteenth Annual Zora Neale Hurston Street Festival of the Arts and Humanities, Center Stage, 100 East Kennedy Blvd, Eatonville, Fla.

The Zora Neale Hurston stamp is the 19th stamp in the Literary Arts series. She was a central figure in the Harlem Renaissance, a flowering of African-American literature, music and the visual and performing arts that took place primarily in the 1920s and early 1930s. She wrote four novels, two books of folklore, an autobiography and more than 50 short stories and essays.

Although Hurston's writing went out of fashion in the 1950s, it enjoyed a dramatic revival in the 1970s. Today Hurston is considered one of America's most original and accomplished writers. Other notable Americans in the Literary Arts series include John Steinbeck, Edith Wharton, Dorothy Parker, Thornton Wilder, Ayn Rand and Odgen Nash.

"Our Literary Arts series continues the proud tradition of presenting a stamp program that is educational, interesting and reflects the rich culture of the written word," said David Failor, Executive Director, Stamp Services. "Zora Hurston is a wonderful addition to the series and we are pleased to feature this great American on a postage stamp."



Zora Neale Hurston was born on Jan. 7, 1891, in Notasulga, Ala. (Hurston gave various years for her birth date, but census and family records confirm that 1891 is the correct year.) She was raised in Eatonville, Fla., a self-governing, all-black town near Orlando. Hurston's family and community imbued her with self-confidence and pride in her heritage. The voices she heard and lessons she learned in Eatonville would infuse her writing.

"In her own way, Aunt Zora used her creative genius to bring the unique culture of African Americans through her captivating novels, short stories and dramatic presentations," said Dr. Clifford J. Hurston, nephew of Zora Hurston. "I, along with other family members, are truly honored that the U. S. Postal Service has selected Zora to receive such a high honor, and we thank you. As a result of the Zora stamp, the family hopes this honor will encourage those individuals who are not familiar with her writings to become so for their self-gratification, cultural enrichment and entertainment."

Hurston began her career as a writer in Washington, D.C., where she was a student at Howard University. "John Redding Goes to Sea," her first published story, appeared in the May 1921 issue of *Stylus*, Howard's literary magazine. In December 1924, the National Urban League published her story "Drenched in Light" in its journal *Opportunity*. Impressed by Hurston's talent, the editor of *Opportunity* urged her to move to New York City, where the Harlem Renaissance was under way. She arrived there in January 1925.

Hurston quickly became a favorite in Harlem with her wit, style, and repertoire of Eatonville folklore. She won two prizes in a literary contest sponsored by *Opportunity*, which published her story "Spunk" in its June 1925 issue. That September she enrolled in Barnard College in Manhattan. The only African-American student at Barnard, Hurston studied with the pioneering anthropologist Franz Boas. In 1928 she received her bachelor's degree in anthropology. Hurston was a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

From the late 1920s through the early 1940s, Hurston made a series of trips to collect black folklore. Traveling in the American South, the Bahamas, Jamaica and Haiti, Hurston studied the stories, music and ceremonies of the communities she visited. She discovered links between African-American and African-Caribbean folklore. "Mules and Men," published in 1935, resulted from her fieldwork in the South. Her research in Jamaica and Haiti, supported by two Guggenheim fellowships, produced her second collection of folklore, "Tell My Horse," in 1938.

After finishing the manuscript of "Mules and Men," Hurston wrote "Jonah's Gourd Vine," the first of her four novels. Published in 1934, it chronicles the rise and fall of a

gifted black preacher. "Their Eyes Were Watching God," considered Hurston's masterpiece, was published in 1937. This novel broke new ground in its portrayal of a black woman's search for identity, love, and freedom. "Moses, Man of the Mountain" (1939) presents the biblical Moses as a figure from black folklore, a "conjure man" with magical powers. "Seraph on the Suwanee" (1948) restates themes from the earlier novels, but the cast of characters changes from black to white.

Hurston also wrote short stories, plays, essays, and an autobiography, "Dust Tracks on a Road" (1942). In 1943 Dust Tracks won the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award for its contribution to race relations.

Hurston died on Jan. 28, 1960, in Fort Pierce, Fla. Today Hurston's writing is widely studied in colleges and universities and is loved by readers from all walks of life.

Howard E. Paine of Delaplane, Va. was art director for the stamp. Drew Struzan of Pasadena, Calif. was the stamp artist and based his portrait of Hurston on a 1934 black-and-white photograph taken in Chicago by Carl Van Vechten. The background of the stamp art recalls the setting of Hurston's novel, "Their Eyes were Watching God."

Seventy million Zora Neale Hurston self-adhesive stamps will be printed for the January 2003 issuance.

To see the Hurston stamp, visit the Postal Service Web site at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) and locate the online version of this press release by clicking on "News and Events," then "Philatelic News."

Current U.S. stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available toll free by calling 1 800 STAMP-24. In addition, a selection of stamps and other philatelic items are available in the Postal Store at [www.usps.com/shop](http://www.usps.com/shop).

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits 137 million homes and businesses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$65 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume—some 207 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves 7 million customers each day at its 40,000 retail locations nationwide.

### Technical Details

Issue:	<i>Zora Neale Hurston</i>
Item Number:	454200
Denomination & Type of Issue:	37-cent Commemorative
Format:	Pane of 20 (1 design)
Series:	<i>Literary Arts</i>
Issue Date & City:	January 24, 2003, Eatonville, FL 32751
Designer:	Howard E. Paine, Delaplane, VA
Art Director:	Howard E. Paine, Delaplane, VA
Typographer:	John Boyd, New York, NY
Artist:	Drew Struzan, Pasadena, CA
Modeler:	Donald H. Woo
Manufacturing Process:	Gravure
Printer:	Sennett Security Products (SSP)
Printed at:	American Packaging Corporation, Columbus, WI
Press Type:	Rotomec, 3000
Engraver:	Southern Graphics
Stamps per Pane:	20
Print Quantity:	70 million stamps
Paper Type:	Phosphor Tagged
Gum Type:	Pressure Sensitive
Processed at:	Unique Binders, Fredericksburg, VA
Colors:	Magenta, Cyan, Yellow, Black, Gold (PMS 871)
Stamp Orientation:	Horizontal
Image Area (w x h):	1.41 x 0.84 in./35.81 x 21.33 mm
Overall Size (w x h):	1.56 x 0.99 in./39.62 x 25.14 mm
Pane Size (w x h):	6.50 x 5.87 in./165.10 x 149.09 mm
Plate Size:	120 stamps per revolution
Plate Numbers:	"S" followed by five (5) single digits
Marginal Markings:	"© 2002 USPS" • Price • Plate numbers in all four corners • Plate position diagram •
Catalog Item Number(s):	454220 Block of 4 — \$1.48 454230 Block of 10 — \$3.70 454240 Pane of 20 w/plate no — \$7.40 454261 First Day Cover — \$0.75 454293 Pane of 20 w/First Day Cover — \$8.15

### HOW TO ORDER THE FIRST DAY OF ISSUE POSTMARK

Customers have 30 days to obtain the first day of issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office, by telephone at 1-800 STAMP-24, and at the Postal Store Website at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com). They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others) and place them in a larger envelope addressed to: ZORA NEALE HURSTON COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS, POSTMASTER, 151 NORTH MAITLAND AVENUE, EATONVILLE, FLORIDA 32751-9998.

After applying the first day of issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by February 21, 2003.

Stamp Fulfillment Services (SFS) also offers first day covers for new stamp issues and postal 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 telephoning 1 800 STAMP-24 or writing to: INFORMATION FULFILLMENT, DEPT 6270, US POSTAL SERVICE, PO BOX 219014, KANSAS CITY, MO 64121-9014. First day covers remain on sale for at least one year after the stamp's issuance.