

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **LOUISIANA PURCHASE TO BE HONORED WITH POSTAGE STAMP**

**Stamp to be Issued on Bicentennial Celebration**

WASHINGTON – Often referred as the greatest real estate deal in history, the 1803 Louisiana Purchase created one of the largest nations in the world. On April 30th, the United States Postal Service will commemorate the bicentennial of this event by issuing a postage stamp.

The dedication ceremony will take place at 11:00 a.m. in the Cabildo of the Louisiana State Museum, 701 Chartres St. New Orleans, Louisiana. The 37-cent self-adhesive stamp will be available at post offices nationwide beginning May 1.

“The Louisiana Purchase was a critical milestone in our nation’s history, allowing our young nation to double in size with the stroke of a pen. We join the people of Louisiana—and the twelve other states that today include parts of that famous purchase—in celebrating this bicentennial anniversary with the issuance of the Louisiana Purchase stamp,” said Richard J. Strasser, Jr., chief financial officer and executive vice president for the U.S. Postal Service and the stamp dedicating official. “Since 1775, the Postal Service has been part and parcel of the history of America, and we take great pride in commemorating that history through our stamp and education programs.”

Among those expected to join Strasser at the stamp dedication ceremony are state Sen. Willie Mount; Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, Lieutenant Governor, State of Louisiana; Norman Robinson, NBC anchor; Jim Sefcik, director, Louisiana State Museums. Representing the Postal Service will be George L. Lopez, vice president for



Southwest Area; Anthony J. Ruda, district manager, Louisiana District and Alan J. Cousin, Sr., postmaster, New Orleans.

Toward the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the question of who controlled navigation rights on the Mississippi River—then the western border of the United States—became one of vital importance. France had originally claimed Louisiana, a vast tract of uncharted wilderness west of the Mississippi, but ceded it to Spain in 1762, prior to the 1763 Treaty of Paris. On Oct. 1, 1800, Spain secretly transferred the land back to France.

President Thomas Jefferson learned of the transfer in 1801. He sent Robert R. Livingston as U.S. Minister to France with instructions to negotiate for a port at the mouth of the Mississippi or, failing that, for permanent trading rights at the port of New Orleans. In January 1803, Jefferson dispatched James Monroe to France with an appropriation from Congress to buy New Orleans, as well as eastern and western Florida, if possible.

On April 11, the night before Monroe joined him in Paris, Livingston was informed that Napoleon was willing to sell the entire territory of Louisiana to the U.S. Aware that they were overstepping their authority, but worried that the amazing offer might be rescinded, Livingston and Monroe quickly began formal negotiations with Francois Barbé-Marbois, France's minister of finance. They agreed upon a price of \$15 million, and in early May they signed a treaty to seal the transaction. The treaty was dated April 30, 1803.

The U.S. Constitution did not stipulate either how the country could acquire new territory or who had the power to do so. Some Congressmen and other government officials questioned the legality of the treaty and, in fact, it was not even in keeping with Jefferson's own strict interpretation of the Constitution. Nevertheless, Jefferson saw clearly how the acquisition of Louisiana would greatly benefit the young country and realized that waiting for passage of a Constitutional amendment would jeopardize the purchase. Jefferson persuaded Congress to approve the treaty, and it was ratified by the Senate on Oct. 20.

On Dec. 20, 1803, the United States took possession of its new territory at a ceremony in New Orleans. The vast territory of Louisiana was bounded on the east by the Mississippi River and on the south by the Gulf of Mexico, but no one, including the French, knew just how far west and north it stretched. Subsequent treaties settled the

area at 883,072 square miles; defined the northern boundary as reaching to Canada and the western as running generally northwest along the Rocky Mountains to the middle of what is now Montana; and also surrendered the gulf coast of Mississippi, Alabama and Florida to the U.S.

Dutch and British bankers had financed the purchase at six percent interest for 20 years. When final payment was made, the total cost for doubling the size of the country came to \$23.5 million—about four cents an acre.

The background of the composite stamp art consists of a map of the United States overlaid with a facsimile of the first page of the English translation of the treaty. In the foreground is a painting by Garin Baker that depicts the signing of the treaty. Livingston and Barbé-Marbois (with his back to the viewer) are depicted shaking hands; Monroe is signing the document. Two unidentified men observe the proceedings. Baker based his painting on a half-tone engraving of an illustration by André Castaigne. The engraving was executed by H. Davidson and published in the June 1904 issue of *The Century Magazine*. Castaigne's original illustration appeared in the *Rose of Old St. Louis*, a historical novel about the Louisiana Purchase that was published in 1904 by The Century Co.

Stamp artist Garin Baker, is a native of New York City, a freelance artist, muralist and illustrator. His art—from New York cityscapes to rural landscapes reminiscent of the Hudson River School—has been exhibited widely and honored by the Society of Illustrators and the Art Directors Club.

Previous stamps commemorating the Louisiana Purchase include four stamps in the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition issue: the 1-cent Robert R. Livingston; 2-cent Thomas Jefferson; 3-cent James Monroe; and a 10-cent stamp featuring a map of the Louisiana Purchase. The 3-cent Louisiana Purchase Sesquicentennial stamp was issued in 1953.

To see the new Louisiana Purchase stamp, visit the Postal Service Web site at [www.usps.com/communications/news/stamps/welcome.htm](http://www.usps.com/communications/news/stamps/welcome.htm), and open the press release announcing the stamp.

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 at 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 \$66 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>Louisiana Purchase</i>
Item Number:	454300
Denomination & Type of Issue:	37-cent Commemorative
Format:	Pane of 20 (1 design)
Series:	N/A
Issue Date & City:	April 30, 2003, New Orleans, LA 70113
Designer:	Richard Sheaff, Scottsdale, AZ
Art Director:	Richard Sheaff, Scottsdale, AZ
Typographer:	Richard Sheaff, Scottsdale, AZ
Artist:	Garin Baker, New Windsor, NY
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:	54 million stamps
Paper Type:	Prephosphored, type I
Gum Type:	Pressure-sensitive
Processed at:	Unique Binders, Fredericksburg, VA
Colors:	Magenta, Yellow, Cyan, Black, Line Blue, Black
Stamp Orientation:	Vertical
Image Area (w x h):	0.84 x 1.41 in./21.33 x 35.81 mm
Overall Size (w x h):	0.99 x 1.56 in./25.14 x 39.21 mm
Pane Size (w x h):	7.9557 x 5.9375 in./202.07 x 150.81 mm
Plate Size:	120 stamps per revolution
Plate Numbers:	"S" followed by six (6) single digits
Marginal Markings:	"© 2002 USPS" • Price • Plate numbers in all four corners • Plate position diagram • 2 UPC codes on back
Catalog Item Number(s):	454320 Block of 4 — \$1.48 454330 Block of 10 — \$3.70 454340 Full Pane of 20 — \$7.40 454361 First Day Cover — \$0.75 454393 Full Pane w/FDC — \$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 800-STAMP-24, and at the Postal Store Web site 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: **LOUISIANA PURCHASE COMMEMORATIVE STAMP, POSTMASTER, U.S. POSTAL SERVICE, 701 LOYOLA AVE., RM 3003, NEW ORLEANS LA 70113-9802.**

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 May 30, 2003.