

RHODE ISLAND

The Ocean State



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Early Rhode Island

The State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, more commonly known as Rhode Island, is the smallest state in the Union, covering an area of approximately 1,545 square miles (including Narragansett Bay.) The colony was founded by Roger Williams when he was forced to leave the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Rhode Island became the thirteenth state in the Union on May 29, 1790.

Oliver Hazard Perry (1785-1819) 1894 • Scott 261

Oliver Hazard Perry was born in South Kingstown, Rhode Island. On September 10, 1813, Perry's naval forces defended against an attacking British fleet at the Battle of Lake Erie. At the end, his report to General William Henry Harrison was famously brief: "We have met the enemy and they are ours; two ships, two brigs, one schooner and one sloop."

In 1819 President Monroe selected Perry to preside over an important diplomatic mission to South America. He sailed up the Orinoco River to the capital of Venezuela. After two-and-a-half weeks of working onshore, Perry returned to his ship, anxious for a quick return to the fresh ocean waters. However, while in Venezuela he had contracted yellow fever, dying on his 34th birthday — August 23, 1819.

Ratification of the Constitution Rhode Island 1988 • Scott 2348

In 1778 Rhode Island ratified the Articles of Confederation, but the state's individualism caused it to resist the idea of a federal government, even declining to send delegates to the Philadelphia Convention of 1787, which drafted the U.S. Constitution. From 1787 to 1790, the Rhode Island General Assembly rejected eleven attempts by the local communities to convene a state ratifying convention.

Finally, on May 29, 1790, Rhode Island ratified the Constitution, by a vote of 34 in favor and 32 opposed, making it the last of the original thirteen states to join the union.

Army Issues Nathanael Greene & George Washington at Mt. Vernon 1936 • Scott 785

Nathanael Greene (1742–1786) was born at Potowomut, Rhode Island. When the American Revolutionary War began, Greene was a militia private, the lowest rank possible. By the end of the war, he had bettered himself to become one of the most trusted generals of the Revolutionary army, as well as George Washington's friend and comrade-in-arms. This stamp features Nathanael Greene and George Washington with Mount Vernon in the background.

Rhode Island Tercentenary 1936 • Scott 777

This stamp was issued to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the founding of Rhode Island. In 1636, Roger Williams was banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony for his religious views. He and a group of his followers founded the settlement of Providence, which he declared to be a place of religious freedom.

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Early Rhode Island



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1894 • Scott 261



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Symbols of Rhode Island

Rhode Island Flag, 1775 1968 • Scott 1349

Rhode Island's first state flag was adopted in 1877.

The most prominent feature of the flag, the anchor, was adopted by the legislature for its colonial seal in 1647, and in 1664 it added the motto "Hope." It was this flag, with a white background corresponding to the white facings on the state militia uniforms, that was carried by the 1st Rhode Island Regiment during the American Revolution.

State Birds & Flowers Rhode Island: Rhode Island Red & Violet 1982 • Scott 1991

In 1968 Rhode Island became the last state in the union to adopt an official state flower. Although the violet was adopted as the state flower by the school children in 1897, the flower was not officially adopted until more than 70 years later.

The search for a bird to represent Rhode Island began in 1931, and ended in 1954 when the Rhode Island red chicken became the symbol for the state. When the bill was signed into law, Governor Roberts stated: "The Rhode Island red has become a symbol of Rhode Islanders all over the world." The Rhode Island Red is a breed of chicken developed in Little Compton, Rhode Island specially for the production of eggs.

Windmills Rhode Island, 1790 1979 • Scott 1739

Before steam engines and electric motors, Jamestown had to rely on the sea breeze to power the mills. This Rhode Island windmill has 25-foot sails that catch the wind to turn a 3-ton shaft of white oak that is 19 feet long and 33 inches around. The shaft then turns a heavy stone that once was used to grind corn for the local residents. The Jamestown windmill was built in 1787 to replace one that was destroyed during the Revolutionary War.

American Bicentennial: State Flags Rhode Island 1976 • Scott 1645

On May 19, 1897, after two previous flags, Rhode Island adopted the flag that represents the state even today. The yellow anchor is surrounded by thirteen yellow stars, representing the original states in the union. The state's motto "Hope" is on a blue ribbon shown below the anchor.

Greetings from America Rhode Island 2002 • Scott 3599

The Greetings from America stamp series features retro designs that mimic that popular tourist postcards of the 1930s and '40s. This Rhode Island stamp shows a sailboat with vividly colored sails as it skims the water. In the background is the Southeast Lighthouse on Block Island, as it looked before it was moved back from an encroaching cliff edge.

Touro Synagogue 1982 • Scott 2017

In 1658, a group of Jewish families moved into Newport harbor seeking a haven from religious persecution. The Jewish population grew, and in 1759 the congregation, led by Isaac Touro, purchased land and build a synagogue which was dedicated in 1763. During the Revolutionary War the building was used as a British hospital. It was later used as a meeting place for the Rhode Island General Assembly, Rhode Island Supreme Court, and the town of Newport. Today, the Touro Synagogue continues to serve the Jewish congregation.

Following his 1790 visit, Washington wrote a letter to the congregation. His words, "The Government of the United States ...gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance" were quoted on a 1982 postage stamp.



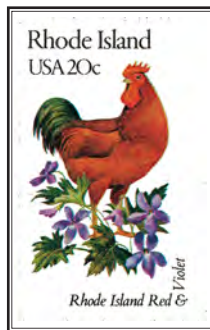
Symbols of Rhode Island



Rhode Island Flag, 1775
1968 • Scott 1349



American Bicentennial: State Flags
Rhode Island
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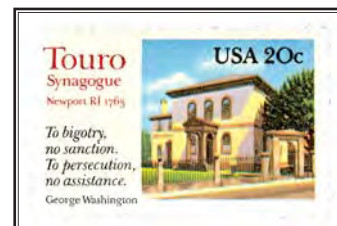
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Windmills
Rhode Island, 1790
1979 • Scott 1739



Touro Synagogue
1982 • Scott 2017



Rhode Island: Famous People and More

Famous Americans: Artists

Gilbert Charles Stuart

(1755–1828)

1940 • Scott 884

Born in North Kingstown, Rhode Island, Gilbert Charles Stuart grew up in Newport where, as a teenager, he was tutored in painting by the famous Scottish painter, Cosmo Alexander. During his career he produced portraits of more than 1,000 people. It is Stuart's image of George Washington that is featured in the painting that has appeared on the U.S. one-dollar bill for more than one hundred years. His work can be found in art museums across the United States and the United Kingdom.

Performing Arts

George M. Cohan

“Yankee Doodle Dandy”

(1878–1942)

1978 • Scott 1756

George M. Cohan, entertainer, playwright, composer, lyricist, actor, singer, dancer, and producer, was born in Providence, Rhode Island. He joined his parents in vaudeville shows as an infant, learning to dance and sing as soon as he could walk and talk. By the time Cohan was a teenager, he was writing skits and songs for family shows. He had his first big Broadway hit in 1904. In 1942 the film *Yankee Doodle Dandy* was released which told of the most important years of Cohan's life.

American Folk Art: Carousel Animals

1988 • Scott 2390–2393

Rhode Island is home to several carousels. Among them is The Flying Horse Carousel, the oldest platform carousel that has been in continuous operation in the U.S. is located at Watch Hill, Rhode Island. Slater Memorial Park Carousel, located in Pawtucket, boasts 42 horses, 3 dogs, a giraffe, a camel, and a lion. The Crescent Park Carousel in East Providence includes 66 figures and a carved band organ.

Opening of Japan

1953 • Scott 1021

On July 8, 1853 four ships commanded by Commodore Matthew Perry anchored in Tokyo Bay. He possessed a letter from Millard Fillmore, President of the United States, seeking friendly relations that would lead to the Treaty of Kanagawa that brought peace between the U.S. and Japan, would open two Japanese ports to U.S. ships, allowed for the protection of persons shipwrecked on the Japanese coast, and permitted U.S. ships to buy supplies in Japanese ports. On March 31, 1854 Japan and the United States signed the historic treaty. Commodore Matthew C. Perry, U.S.N., lived in Newport, Rhode Island.

First Automated Post Office

1960 • Scott 1164

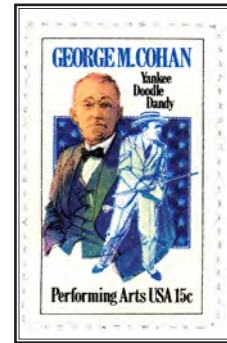
In 1958, Providence, Rhode Island, was chosen as the site for a completely mechanized and modernized Post Office that would improve service, speed up delivery, and provide better working conditions for Postal Workers. The Providence Post Office was designed with 6 culling machines to separate odd-shaped envelopes from the typical-sized envelopes. There were also 6 positioning and canceling machines to turn all the envelopes to face the same way so the stamps could be canceled, and then to apply the cancel over the stamp. Eleven letter sorting machines and 2 parcel post sorting machines at the post office could read the addresses on envelopes, sort the envelopes, and place them into a stack suitable for delivery or for further sorting. The First Automated Post Office in Providence was able to move more than one million pieces of mail each day.



Rhode Island: Famous People and More



Famous Americans: Artists
Gilbert Charles Stuart
1940 • Scott 884



Performing Arts
George M. Cohan "Yankee Doodle Dandy"
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American Folk Art: Carousel Animals
1988 • Scott 2390-2393



Opening of Japan
1953 • Scott 1021



First Automated Post Office
1960 • Scott 1164



Rhode Island Postal Cards

America's Cup Race 1980 • Scott U598 Newport, RI Postal Envelope

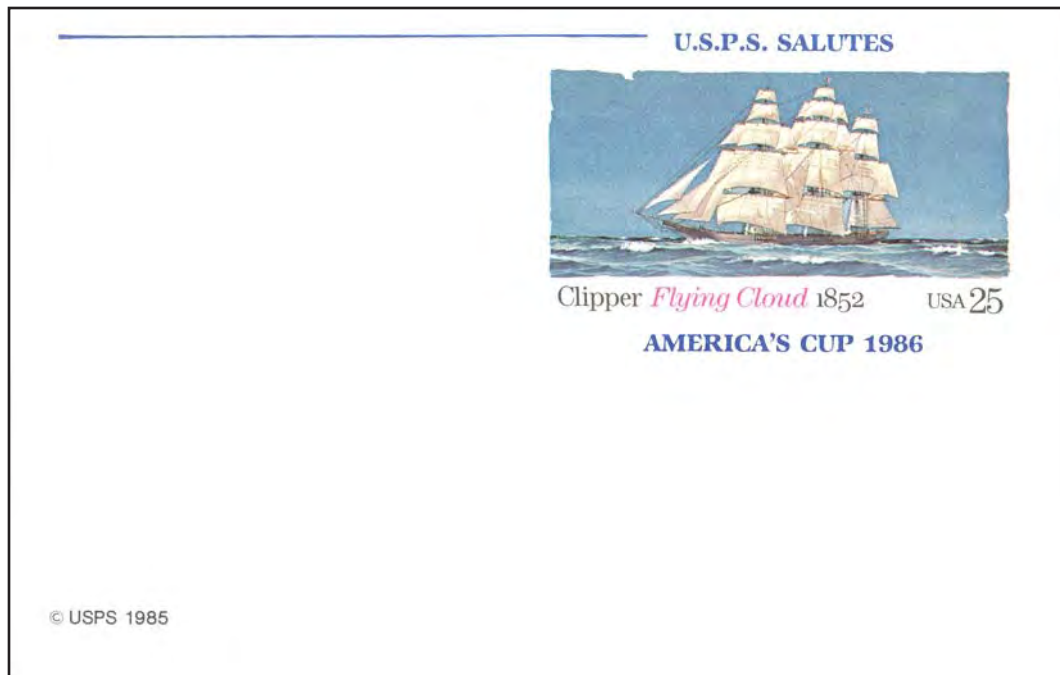
The "America's Cup" is a trophy awarded to the winner of the America's cup regatta match. Started in Great Britain, the Cup was brought to the U.S. in 1870 when this challenge-driven series of match races was won by the New York Yacht Club. From 1930–1983, Rhode Island hosted the America's Cup, attracting top sailors and yacht designers to the state.

Landing of Rochambeau at Newport, RI 1780 1980 • Scott UX84

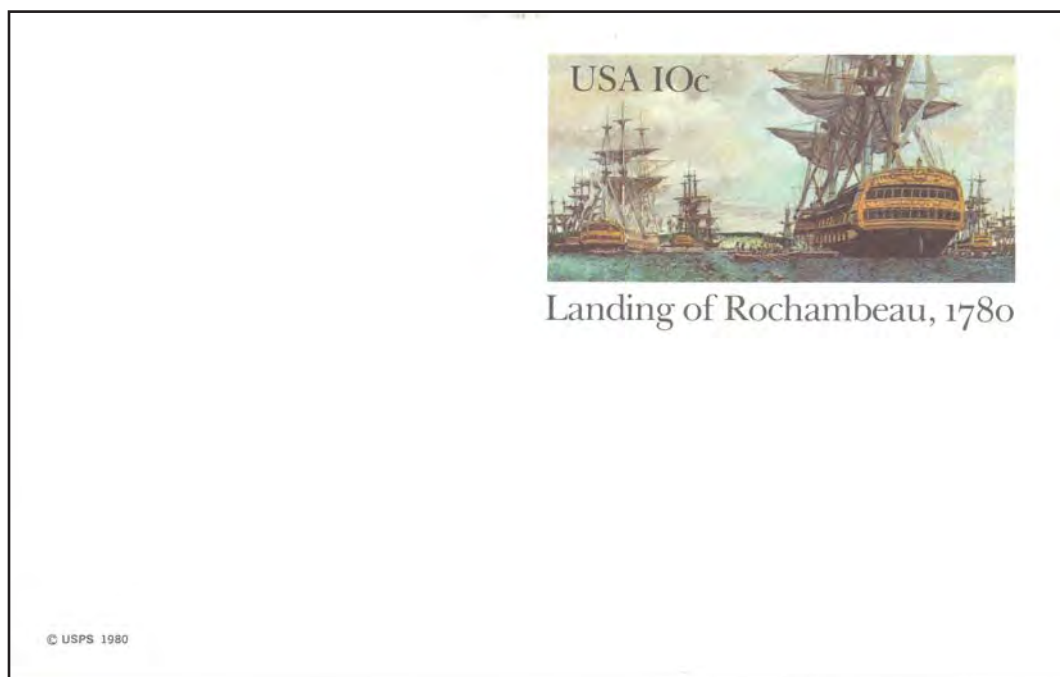
In 1780, Jean-Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, comte de Rochambeau, was appointed commander of the French land forces in America. On July 10 of the same year, his troops landed at Newport, Rhode Island. A year later, Rochambeau's forces left Rhode Island, combined forces with George Washington, and marched on to the siege of Yorktown and the Battle of the Chesapeake.



Rhode Island Postal Cards



America's Cup Race
1980 • Scott U598



Landing of Rochambeau
1980 • Scott UX84



Rhode Island Postal Cards

Battle of Eutaw Springs General Nathanael Greene 1981 • Scott UX90

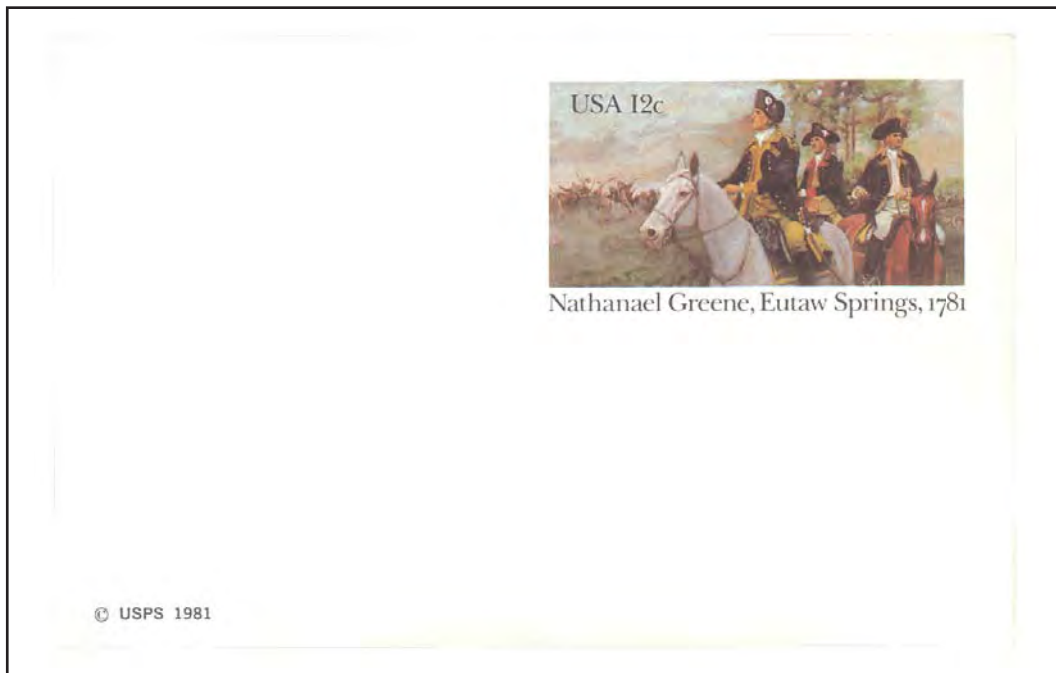
The Battle of Eutaw Springs was the last major engagement of the American Revolutionary War in the Carolinas. General Nathanael Greene believed that if his army could destroy the British Army camped at Eutaw Springs, he could permanently end the British threat to the south. General Greene was born at Potowomut, Rhode Island.

Settling of Rhode Island 350th Anniversary Roger Williams Landing 1986 • Scott UX112

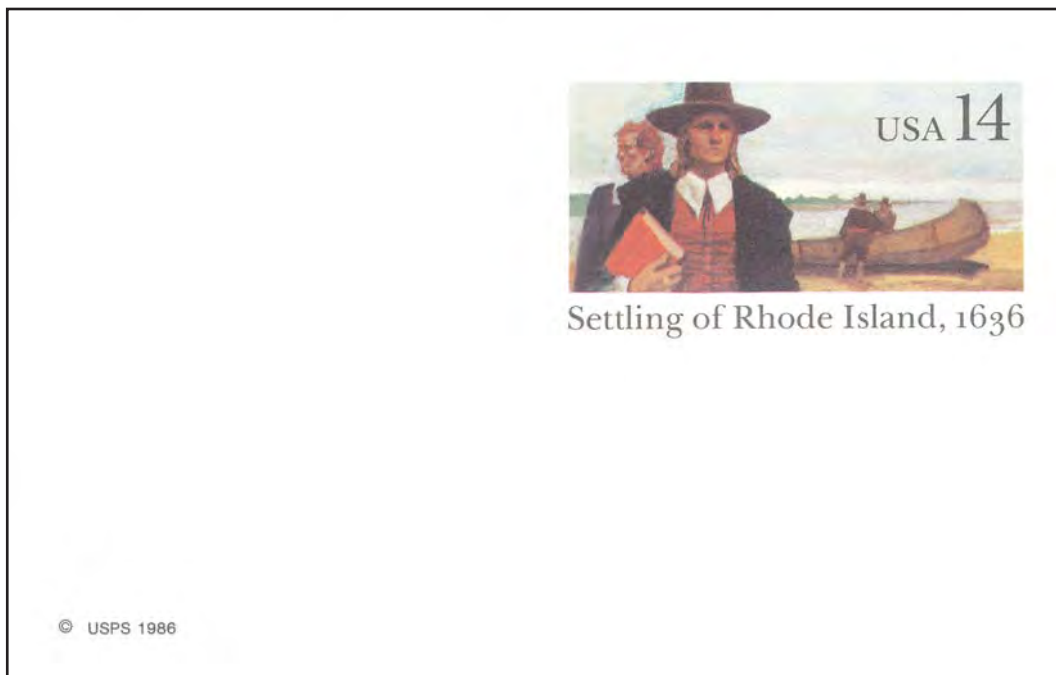
Rhode Island was first settled in 1636 by Roger Williams and his followers. His settlement was at the tip of the Narragansett Bay. Providence, the state's capital and largest city, is located on the Bay.



Rhode Island Postal Cards



Battle of Eutaw Springs
General Nathanael Greene
1981 • Scott UX90



Settling of Rhode Island
350th Anniversary Roger Williams Landing
1986 • Scott UX112



Rhode Island Postal Cards

Redwood Library & Athenaeum Newport, RI 1999 • Scott UX303

The Company of the Redwood Library was chartered in 1747 by Abraham Redwood and his associates. The Library opened in 1750 as the first lending library building. Today, the Redwood Library & Athenaeum is the oldest lending library still occupying its original building in the United States.

Block Island Lighthouse 1999 • Scott UX306

The Block Island Lighthouse has served as an aid to navigation since it was first lit in 1874. Located approximately 12 miles off the coast of Rhode Island, the light, shining from a 67-foot light tower, warns mariners of the dangers in the waters.



Rhode Island Postal Cards



Redwood Library & Athenaeum
Newport, RI
1999 • Scott UX303



Block Island Lighthouse
1999 • Scott UX306









THE AMERICAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY

A special thank you to John Flannery, Tom Greene, and Michael S. Imbruglis for their assistance in identifying the stamps related to the state of Rhode Island.

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