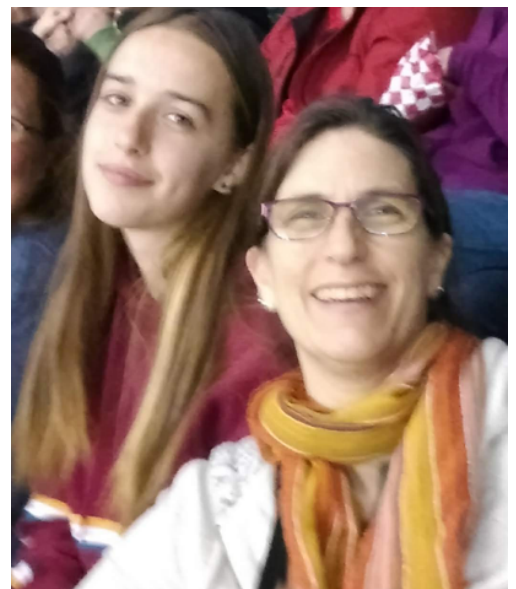


Bonus: A Stamp Tattoo for Alma?

EDITOR'S NOTE: This month's essay is based on an exchange of notes some months ago with Cousin Sarah, who is among a select group that receives FMF Stamp Project articles before I post them on my blog. Like a number in that group, she is not much interested in stamps. That's OK: FMF Stamp Project essays are written for non-collectors. All that's needed is curiosity, an open mind and enjoyment of good stories and pictures. The subject of this essay will become clear at the start. FYI, Sarah's daughter Alma is a pretty and bright young woman, growing fast.



Cousin Sarah (right) with Alma.

July 21, 2022 — Sarah to FMF:

Hi Fred. I'll be honest, my ability to focus on stamps and history is limited, but I do enjoy a quick browse once in a while. I told Alma about these, and she would like to consider having a tattoo made of a stamp!

Can you recommend any stamps that might honor women's history/rights, or possibly early stewardship of the earth? I'm sure there are many recent ones, but she likes the look of older engravings ...

I hope this is a joyful query for you! If not, please don't go out of your way!! We can do our own research, too.

Enjoy your summer. We're in Door County on vacation this week. I'm trying to get some energy back for going back to the classroom.

July 23 — FMF to Sarah:

Hello Sarah — So, speaking as your elder cousin, *in loco parentis*, I should almost say, I would advise you, indeed, to get some energy back! Gird your loins! Prepare to engage! Onward! The classroom awaits.

OK, you can shut down the email here if you wish. But elder cousins are entitled to give well-intentioned advice to younger cousins. And you are not yet ready to retire! Perhaps your best working year may lie ahead! (At least that's what I told myself ... until I was 64.5 years old and my newspaper laid me off. But that's another story ...) I sure wish I had you as my teacher. What a peach!

As for Alma's tattoo — my mind is racing over my philatelic rolodex (philodex?) for stamp engravings celebrating ... women, the earth. I'll come up with something soon ... stay tuned.

Generally speaking, stamps have been very much engaged in culture and progress. Many of them are beautiful, even classic. But they have not notably

championed causes and rights, like human rights, women's rights, gay rights, environmentalism and so on. They were behind the curve on civil rights, as I have pointed out in a past stamp essay, "White Stamps." <https://mancryfmf.files.wordpress.com/2021/06/white-stamps.pdf>.
Love, FMF

July 24 — FMF to Sarah:

OK, I'm getting some early results from my brainstorm on engraved images for Alma to consider for her tattoo. Here are a couple examples from U.S. stamps. Top right is a 2006 reprint of a much earlier stamp (100 years earlier), featuring the female



allegory
America, which stands atop of the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C. The images below are from 2018, offering a re-engraving of the same subject on high-value stamps. Both renditions are charming and inspirational, IMHO. More to come.
Love, Your Cousin FMF

p.s. Should I be sending these messages to Alma as well as Her Mom?

July 24 — Sarah to FMF:

Thank you, Fred! I'm including Alma here. I'll pull up a couple of your essays, too, to see if any of the images there inspire new thoughts for Alma.

Alma, I asked Fred to think about stamps with feminist/ecological themes he's seen in stamps. Feel free to refine the search in any way.

Fun research!





July 24 — FMF to Sarah and Alma:

Greetings. My next foray is into depictions of Marianne, or the female allegory for France. Over the years, French artists and engravers have produced dozens of designs featuring the feminine embodiment of France. Does one of these strike your fancy?

For much more on this topic, including more illustrations of female allegories, go to my stamp essay, "La Belle France" (<https://mancryfmf.com/2019/09/>)

Love, FMF

p.s. You will notice I have included Alma in this note, and will continue to do so.



July 27 — FMF to Sarah and Alma:

We've been speaking about the feminine image on stamps, and here is a stamp that incorporates two female portraits. Actually, they are the same woman: Queen Victoria of England, who celebrated her 60th year on the throne in 1897.

Her 64 years was



In old age, didn't Victoria bear an uncanny resemblance to the Red Queen in Wonderland? (see left)



the longest British reign — until Elizabeth II, who came along in 1952 and was queen for 70 years. Here are a few more classic Victoria engravings. No need to dwell on these, since I don't imagine the imperial imagery works that well in a 21st century tattoo. Affectionately,
Your Cousin
FMF



July 27 — FMF To Sarah, Alma:

Hiya! How about this interesting one (see below)— a charity stamp put out by France in support of the Red Cross and the besieged people of Ukraine. Isn't that a fetching rendition of Marianne, with her flowing locks, Phrygian cap and determined expression? Love, FMF



July 27 — FMF to Sarah, Alma:

Ladies — I call your attention to one of my stamp essays you may have missed: This one is titled: Hey Taliban, What About the Women and Girls? Here is the link, which includes

some pictures of women on stamps.

<https://mancryfmf.com/2021/08/>

And here is another link, to a longer essay on Afghanistan history and stamps. Beware, though, it gets kind of grisly: For a while there in recent decades, successive leaders featured on the stamps were killed off, one after another. Enjoy.

<https://mancryfmf.com/2021/09/>

Love, Your Cousin FMF

July 30 — From Sarah to FMF:

Phew! Thanks, Fred! These are a good place to start. Alma has received and will review. Apparently the stamp-tattoo idea may be a little trendy, so she's waiting to see if the impulse fades before committing...

But I really appreciate the quick and thorough response!

August 3 — FMF to Sarah, Alma:

Hello Cousins — You probably have noticed by now that I am really getting into this search for interesting designs for a tattoo. I haven't come up with anything yet in the area of environmentalism, which Alma proposed. But women is another matter, as you have seen from my past notes and the images accompanying them.

Now I want to share some engravings and other illustrations of "Lady Liberty" herself. The Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor is a female allegory which has graced American stamps for a century. The early ones may look a bit corny, but bear with me. They get cooler as they go along. See if you find anything you like in these examples:



This one (left) is from the 1920s. A graceful figure, to be sure, but pretty boring, I'd say.

That one (right) from the 1950s is better defined, but still boring.





This 15-cent airmail stamp from 1960 is more interesting — capturing the statue from an arresting angle. But it still doesn't grab me. Something about the statue seems ... remote ... impersonal.



Here's an 18-cent airmail stamp that quite frankly baffles me. OK, I recognize the statue of liberty, with a jet flying over it to signify it's an airmail

stamp; I get that, too. (It suddenly hits me how the tiny jet takes on a lurid aspect after the plane attacks on New York and Washington in 2001.) My trouble is with the whole design. From this odd angle, the tablet Liberty is holding obscures half of her head! It's very busy, with confused foreshortening and a shoulder that seems to go on forever. I guess you get to see some bad ideas with the good!



I thought this one (left) was cool ever since it came out in the 1970s. (I like the whole Americana set, but that's another story: <https://mancrymf.com/2017/01/22/ericana-series-1975-6/>) The design is bold and sleek, the engraving impressive, the message inspiring. However, for a tattoo, I don't know. She seems a bit ... fierce, and ... cold. The eyes are caverns, the nose a slab.

Here is the latest image of the Statue of Liberty on a stamp, from 2011. It's not an engraving, but I thought I'd include it just as another idea. I think it's a "warmer" portrait than the last one. Indeed, Liberty looks positively ... wistful.



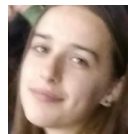
OK, I've saved the best for last. This is an airmail stamp from the early 1970s. (Sarah remembers what airmail stamps are, and can explain to Alma why they are different from non-airmail stamps.) It's an elegant update of a design originally used a decade earlier (see the 15 cent airmail stamp above). This time,

there's a close-up portrait of the statue's face, looking slightly left. It's a beautiful engraving, and it's not like any Statue of Liberty face I've seen — including on the Statue itself! It's more human than the symbol rising

stoically in New York Harbor; fleshy; classically caucasian; resolutely feminine. I love it. What do you think, Alma? Tattoo material? You bet!



POSTSCRIPT I sent an advance copy of this essay to Cousin Sarah to review. Here is her response in part: "... Alma seems to have dropped the interest for a stamp tattoo ..."



Oh well.

THE FMF STAMP PROJECT CONTINUES

