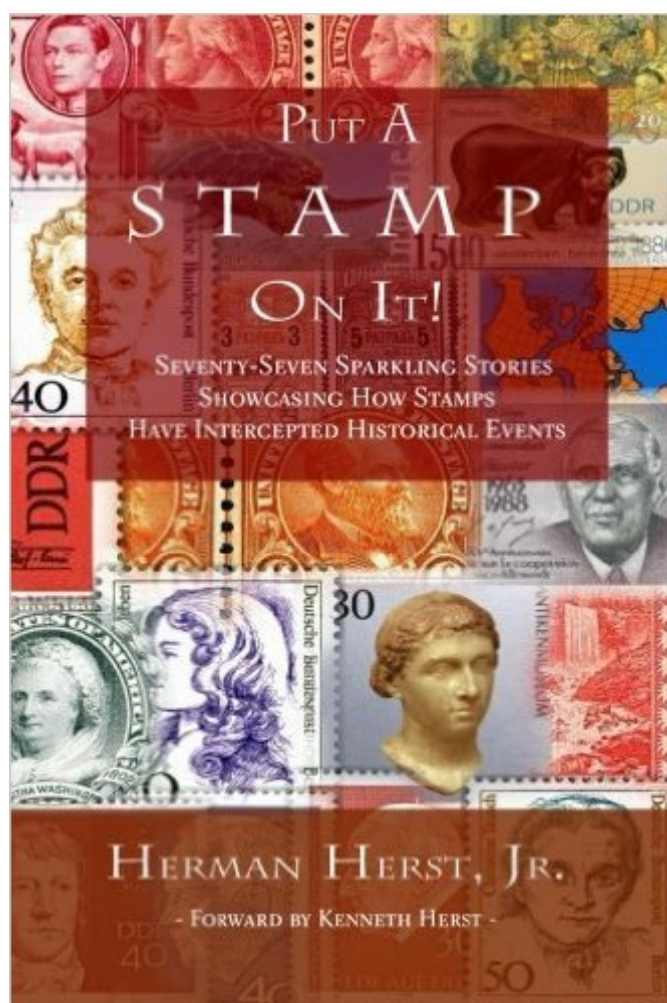


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# Put A Stamp On It!: Seventy-Seven Sparkling Stories Showcasing How Stamps Have Intercepted Historical Events



## Synopsis

WHAT do the Charlie Ross kidnapping, the Dunning sale, Britain's female mason, Sherlock Holmes and the Littlewood's pool, the founding of the YMCA, George Sloane, and the Madeline Smith Postcard all have in common? Stamps were an important part of these historical events. Even though we don't often think of stamps in the context of making history, those small, decorative aspects of the mail system are far more than just there to decorate the envelope. At the heart of every letter, every postal moment for hundreds of years, stamps can be found, changing history as we know it. In this book, author and stamp historian Herman Herst, Jr. shares with us about the rich history of several historical events and the way that stamps influenced them. Told with good humor, perspective, and solid documentation, Herman Herst, Jr. offers us insight into the smallest details of the mail industry - stamps - and shows us that history is often staring back at us every time we mail or open a letter. Come along to share in seventy-seven stories where history proves that stamps are the stars, sealing history in ways we would least expect it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Highly recommended--a fast, fun read for anyone interested in the quirks of history. Herman Herst, Jr. was one of the twentieth century's top stamp experts, but this collection of his writings should appeal to a far wider audience. Herst uses stamps as a tool to explore history in much the same way historians in recent years have used salt (*Salt: A World History*), cotton (*Empire of Cotton: A Global History*), or even potatoes (*The Potato: How the Humble Spud Rescued the Western World*) as anchors for their histories. Herst's subjects range from the arts (Arthur Conan Doyle, Whistler and his mother) to John Brown's raid and the origins of the YMCA. The tales are short, witty, and

often end with a twist.

I was not aware of Herman Herst Jr's background at all, and was very pleasantly surprised by this gem of a book. Each story is on its own, about 3-5 pages each, and funny. It reminds me of the old O'Henry stories - could be funny, or suspenseful, and frequently with a twist at the end. There were a few stories that I especially liked: Sherlock Holmes, Kathmandu was hilarious though only 2 short pages, and the one, Bits of Humor, with all kinds of humorous situations. Of course, the one with the two wives of philatelists and the phrases or languages uniquely meaningful to only the husbands was hilarious. Book is fast reading, and hard to put down, but with 3-5 pages for each story, at least makes for nice breakpoints. I would highly recommend this book to anybody looking for light humorous short stories.

"Unique" is probably the best way to describe "Put a Stamp on It." Using the format of short-story, this nonfiction work is at the same time both light reading and scholarly. It is intellectual, full of miscellaneous knowledge about the world, but also entertaining. Herst was obviously a widely-read, widely traveled person who knew as much about the world outside of his own field as within. Thus he was able to link philatelics with larger events in a meaningful, interesting, totally distinctive way. Some might consider this a can't-put-it-down volume, but it can also be read a few pages at a time. Each account, several pages in length, treats separate themes, the author cleverly weaving together stamp lore, anecdotes, and events. In many cases, the reader feels as if he or she has learned "the rest of the story," insider information known only to a few. For example, it is hard to believe there have been invasions and wars in which we as a nation have been involved, with no account in mainstream texts or history classes. There are also more private tales, even some for readers who prefer "who-done-its." Herman Herst Jr. has left an unusual, varied, well-written legacy in this posthumously-published book, a fascinating postscript to his earlier publications.

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