

Synopsis

Promoting the Games: Olympic Poster Stamps 1906-1956

Poster stamps are a subset of cinderella stamps. They are not produced by a government or intended for use as postage. They are advertising stamps and usually poster-like in appearance. They were effectively used for promoting the Olympic Games throughout the world and the **purpose** of this exhibit is to highlight some of those poster stamps and labels from the first year they were used in 1906 to 1956.

Scope Included are poster stamps issued for the 10th anniversary of the modern Olympic Games in Athens, the 20th anniversary of the Olympic movement, the Summer Games from 1912 to 1956 and the Winter Games from 1928 to 1956. Also included are issues for the 1916 and 1940 cancelled events.

Treatment The selected poster stamps and labels are presented as issued chronologically. The promotion of the Winter Games started in 1928 and labels are shown for those host cities which produced them. Whenever the label design was based on the event official poster they are identified as **poster stamps**. All others are referred to as **labels**.

Condition and rarity The quantities of labels issued vary greatly in number. The various language versions also varied considerably. Generally, issues to 1928 are harder to come by. Examples on cover are limited and difficult to find because they were not considered in the same way as postage stamps. Labels for the Winter Games were issued in much smaller quantities because of the diminished scope of the events. About 750 labels were issued up to 1956 with 20% of them covering the events to 1928 and only 7% dedicated to Winter Games.

Knowledge Being cinderellas, these issues did not garner the popularity or the prestige of postage stamps issued for the Olympic Games. No current catalogs exist for these labels. With the worldwide web, new items and information are constantly emerging. Much technical information has been gathered from a few sources identified below.

Why are poster stamps not found so much on cover? Poster stamps are collected on their own for their appearance, beauty, design, color and subject. They were a form of advertising as much as commemoration. The **1912 Stockholm set** is very representative of the poster stamps issued in the first quarter of the twentieth century and that is the reason why it is included here in its entirety. In size, color and design it captured the collector's attention and the quantities produced reached out to 16 different countries around the world.

References: R. Dubois, Catalog of Olympic Labels 1894-1985, 1986

Podolsky S., ed. Postal History and Vignettes of the Xth Olympiad and III Winter Olympic Games, 1976, Sports Philatelists International


www.alphabetilately.org

Other websites: Poster Stamp Bulletin, Olympic Museum, Riga Stamps, BNA Topics

Promoting the Games: Olympic Poster Stamps 1906-1956

The purpose of this exhibit is to highlight various Olympic poster stamps issued between 1906 and 1956. These were mainly produced by the Olympic Organizing committees of participating countries to publicize the events and raise funds for the athletes. **Poster stamps reflected the official event poster in design and color.** Other labels are presented here as well and they were also non-denominated and created by graphic artists to advertise and promote the Olympic events.

Prior to 1906, none were issued to publicize the first three Olympic Games of the modern era. Later, the two world wars interrupted the Games but not necessarily their promotion by cities which had been awarded these Olympics a number of years preceding the events. Although some winter sports were included in previous Olympic Games, it was only in 1928 that poster stamps were issued to promote the Winter Games. Being overall less popular and less attended, a much smaller number of those poster stamps were issued. Overall, the supply of Olympic labels and poster stamps is thin and they are very difficult to find on cover.

 **This symbol indicates fewer than 10 different labels were issued for this event.**



1928 label



1948 poster stamp

Poster stamps and labels were issued for the following events:

Year	Summer host city	Winter host city
1906	Athens (10th anniv. modern O.G.)	
1908	London	
1912	Stockholm	
1914	Cairo (20th anniv. O. movement)	
1916 *	Berlin	
1920	Antwerp	
1924	Paris	
1928	Amsterdam	St. Moritz
1932	Los Angeles	Lake Placid
1936	Berlin	Garmisch-Partenkirchen
1940 *	Tokyo/Helsinki	
1948	London	St. Moritz
1952	Helsinki	Oslo
1956	Melbourne/Stockholm	Cortina d'Ampezzo
*cancelled		