

Mary Pickford (America's Sweetheart)
Film Icon – Entrepreneur – Philanthropist
1909 – 1979

BACKGROUND: Mary Pickford (born in 1892) began acting on the stage at the age of 7 but did not get into films until 1909 when she made 40 films for D.W. Griffith. When the famous producer moved his operations to California in 1910 – she went with him. As her fame grew so did her salary. She soon became an international film star. After divorcing her first husband (Owen Moore) she married famous actor Douglas Fairbanks Sr. in 1920. She married her third husband (Charles “Buddy” Rogers) in 1937. Postal History that reflects the stages of her life during these periods will be shown in the exhibit.

STRUCTURE OF EXHIBIT: This exhibit will examine the life of Mary Pickford through Postal History and ephemera during her career. No fan mail is known before 1912. She received fan mail and other correspondence up until her death. The exhibit will cover the three main parts of her life.

Material in the early years is not common. The earliest known piece of fan mail is Je 15 1912 from New Zealand. Australia and New Zealand provide most of the early mail to Mary. The mail usually was marked with Postage Due stamps. Another item of interest is the only known piece of Interrupted Mail (Plane Crash) addressed to Mary. This item is probably unique. The Land Deeds signed by Mary and Doug are surely unique.

Many of the items are unique/scarcely rare since many of the covers are from studios that existed for a very short period. The early years of the movie industry saw many mergers that led to name changes or consolidation of companies.

EXHIBIT PLAN:

Film Icon – She was a Silent film star and could not make the move to the “Talkies”. She is not unique as many silent screen stars could not make the move.

Entrepreneur – She then concentrated on forming movie studios e.g. United Artists, Pickford Studios and after marrying Douglas Fairbanks she created Pickford-Fairbanks Studios. See created United Artists by gathering some of the most noted stars of the times. This creation gave more power to the stars to negotiate movie contracts. She became the wealthiest woman in the world for a few years.

Philanthropist – She supported the military during WWI and WWII activities and other philanthropic causes. But her concentration was the military. Her involvement is seen by the correspondence in the exhibit.

Of interest is the dependence of the rich and famous on the use of Telegrams to communicate. The mail was too slow, and the phone system was still in its infancy. They needed to communicate quickly. Many unique examples are shown in the exhibit.

Bold red text will highlight scarce, rare, or unique items in the exhibit.
Bold green text will highlight dates, names, places, etc. that are of interest.



Will show original research.

Mary Pickford (Americas Sweetheart)
Film Icon – Entrepreneur – Philanthropist
1909 – 1979

INTRODUCTION: Mary Pickford (born in 1892) began acting on the stage at the age of 7, but did not get into films until 1909 when she made 40 films for D.W. Griffith. When the famous producer moved his operation to California in 1910 – she went with him. As her fame grew so did her salary. She soon became an international film star. After divorcing her first husband (Owen Moore) she married famous actor Douglas Fairbanks Sr. in 1920. She divorced him in 1936, and she married her third husband (Charles “Buddy” Rogers) in 1937.

AIM, PURPOSE AND SCOPE: The Aim and Purpose is to use postal history and ephemera that shows the development of Mary’s life from a film Icon to her growth as an entrepreneur and philanthropist. The Scope is from her early career in 1909 until her death in 1979. 1912 is the first recorded piece of fan mail known to this exhibitor.

TREATMENT AND IMPORTANCE: The exhibit’s Plan is comprehensive and flows logically for the theme. This five-frame exhibit is primarily chronological within each section. The importance of the exhibit is an examination of a world-wide cultural icon’s growth and influence in our society and her impact on the growth of the movie industry.

EXHIBIT PLAN:

Film Icon – silent film star - could not successfully make the move to “Talkies”.

Entrepreneur – Formed studios and became the wealthiest woman in the world for a few years.

Philanthropist – Supported WWI and WWII activities and other philanthropic causes,

KNOWLEDGE, STUDY AND RESEARCH: The exhibitor has collected and exhibited movie elated items for over 40 years and has co-authored for American Philatelic Congress Yearbook articles on movie mail; five movie related articles in the American Philatelist; a monograph “*Private Auxiliary Markings on Hollywood Fan Mail*”, published by the Auxiliary Markings Club. La Posta, in its First Quarter of 2025 edition published his article on “*The Postal History of Film Icon, Entrepreneur, and Humanitarian Mary Pickford*”. In addition, the exhibitor has authored or co-authored over 60 movie related articles.

CHALLENGES, RARITY AND CONDITION: Mail from the organizations that made up the movie companies of the early years is very illusive as some had very short periods of existence and/or were very small. Fan Mail in the early years is hard to find as the Studios did not encourage it since the stars would want more pay if they knew how much they received. Later (1914) the studios used Fan Mail as a measure of the star’s popularity and it was used to determine if the star received a raise, appear in more films or have their contract renewed. The exhibit contains the earliest known piece of fan mail to Mary; the only cover of Interrupted mail (Plane Crash) addressed to Mary; and unique Land Deeds signed by Mary and her husband Douglas Fairbanks. Also shown are unique Telegrams to and from Mary and others. Original research is shown with this marking –



REFERENCES: Richards, Thomas, “*The Postal History of Film Icon, Entrepreneur, and Humanitarian Mary Pickford*” La Posta Vol. 57, No.1, Whole No. 302, First Quarter 2025, page 7-21.