

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 Grant Title documents are surely unique.

Many of the items are unique/scarce/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. At United Artists she gathered 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.