

The PhilateliKid

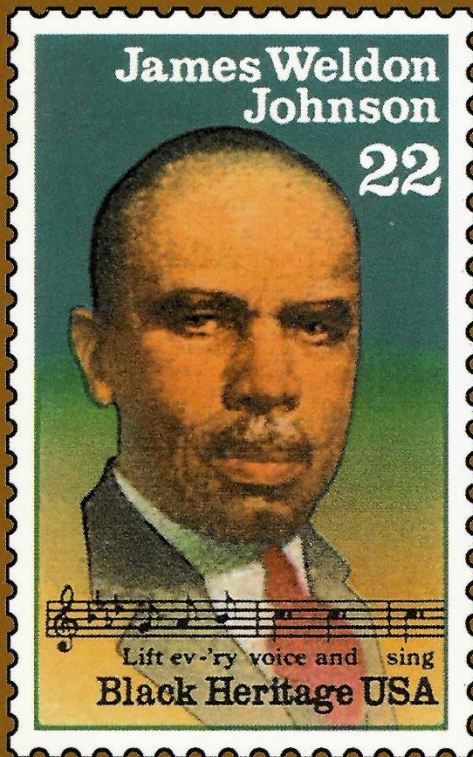
The newsletter for Stamp Collecting Clubs for Kids (SCCFK)

Collect Stamps (The Most Educational Hobby)

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James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938)

In 1998 and 1999 the USPS sold postcards featuring stamps that had been issued for the Black Heritage series of stamps. The postcards did NOT have a pre-printed indicia. An indicia is the term that describes a stamp that is printed right on the post card. Without pre-printed indicia they are not termed postal cards, which do have pre-printed indicia. This series of postcards featured a picture side which had an enlargement of the stamp issued, along with a narrative describing the person.



James Weldon Johnson

Poet, composer, author, government official, teacher and influential civil rights activist, Johnson is perhaps best remembered for his novel *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, as well as his work with the NAACP, where he served as secretary from 1916-1930.

He was a prodigious lyricist who wrote and staged musical comedies and light operas with his brother Rosamond as composer. Johnson gained enduring fame as the creator of such musical standards as "Since You Went Away" and "Lift Every Voice and Sing," now widely regarded as the African American national anthem.

After becoming the first African American to be admitted to the bar (in 1897) to practice law in Florida, he moved to New York to pursue his theatrical interests. He later served as U.S. consul in Venezuela and Nicaragua but returned to New York to resume a writing and publishing career.

This month, we are featuring one of these postcards. It features the multi-talented poet, author, and composer James Weldon Johnson. In addition to the many achievements listed on the postcard, Johnson also served as the first Executive Secretary of the NAACP. That position is the chief operating officer of the organization, a position he held for 10 years. During those years he also was a big promoter of trying to get the U.S. Congress to pass an anti-lynching bill, which at the time was prevented from passing by the southern States' Senators. Johnson also was very active in the Harlem Renaissance movement. Sadly he died in 1938 at age 67 when the car his wife was driving was hit by a train. His wife, Grace Nail Johnson, although injured badly, survived and died in 1976 at age 91. She also was a well-known political activist in her own right.

Question: What famous American song ends with these lines: (answer at end of page 4)

Lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee

Shadowed beneath Thy hand

May we forever stand

True to our God

True to our native land

Our native land.

Editorial

As editor of *The Philatelist* I have not in the previous 80 issues written an editorial about a non-philatelic subject, but the situation of COVID 19 has prompted me to write now.

As of this writing, November 29, 2021, the world has had over 5.2 million people die from this disease, with over 777,000 of those deaths in the U.S.

This is a calamity beyond imagination, yet many people I see are going about business as usual, meaning taking little or no precautions. Let's put this in perspective.

777,000 compared to other well-known tragedies

20 children and 6 staff members of Sandy Hook Elementary School were murdered by a crazy man with a gun, who first murdered his own mother, then committed suicide. Total dead: **28**

On June 12, 2016 a crazy man with a gun murdered at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando , Florida **49** people dead.

On October 1, 2017, a crazy man with a gun murdered in Las Vegas, NV at an outdoor concert **58** people dead.

The worst airplane accident in history occurred on the Spanish island of Tenerife. **583** dead.

During the Vietnam War, the number of Americans who died in combat: **58,193** dead.

During WWII the number of Americans who died in the military services: **405,399** dead.

COVID 19 deaths in the U.S. to date (that we know of): **777,000**

Placing blame does nobody any good.

What we need to do is to get together and work on stopping this disease. I am not going to say here what we all have been told. We have heard it enough times.

What I am saying is that if you **care about others at all**, in your family, community, and businesses and organizations where you meet others, then do something! Set an example and encourage others to follow your example. We cannot and must not continue doing business as usual.

Many of my friends have reached retirement age, which means they have experienced quite a lot. Wisdom is a function of time and experience. Those of us who have been around for a while must not follow what we have been taught about “Don’t get involved.” And “Don’t rock the boat.” Of course, just having lived a long time, and having a lot of experiences does not guarantee wisdom, but if you believe you do have some wisdom, then share it. Don’t be bashful.

We live in a world where many of us have a life that was not even imaginable a few generations ago. We have comfortable homes, comfortable transportation, nice food, lots of personal services from getting fingernails polished to tattoos, delivery services, great medical services, safety at work and everywhere, stable currency, high literacy, great universities, highly developed trades and crafts, and so on. But we now have 777,000 Americans who have none of that because they are dead from COVID 19. What a terrible, terrible waste.

I do not believe anybody has all the answers, but I do believe that doing nothing is the worst course of action. Maintaining the *status quo* means we will keep on having very sick people who really suffer incredibly, families of those people who suffer incredibly, our society which suffers incredibly. Yet, we should not throw up our hands in despair, thinking we cannot do anything, because we can! If you have any leadership skills, put them to use NOW!

During WWII, Americans united to save our way of life with sacrifice, and a “CAN DO” spirit. I would like to see that become the norm again. We can!

But let’s get real. Is this the time to be having large public gatherings at recreational events such as ball games, Spring Breaks, and philatelic shows? If I attend a ball game where the crowd is 50,000 and only one person dies as a result of catching COVID 19 there, is that okay? If you think that is okay, what about 100? 500? 5,000? Maybe you can live with just

one death – but if that one death is you, or your mother, or your child, do you still feel the same way?

I don't want to end this year on a gloomy note, so here is some good news.

We still can flip a switch and get electricity. Turn on a faucet and get drinkable water (in most places.)

We can still exercise our right to choose our own government officials by using our right to vote, although we still have way less than 50% of eligible voters who vote in most elections.

We still can trust that the food and drugs we buy are reasonably safe.

We still can rely on safety in our workplaces.

Most of the time when I get on an elevator, I believe it won't crash. Same goes for airplanes.

We can still worship where and when we want to.

We still have wonderful protection by our vigilant military forces.

We have incredible entertainment for free by just turning on a television, or getting on the internet.

We have a wonderful, and reasonably inexpensive postal system.

Our roads and bridges and infrastructure need work, but still they are a lot better than when our parents were born, and the problem was not slow speeds on the Interstate highways, but the slow speeds on the terrible one-lane roads that was all that existed.

We can believe our banks won't close and leave us penniless, as happened 90 years ago.

We have wonderful power tools, and labor-saving appliances. Think about how your grandparents washed clothes, and then hung them on a clothesline to dry.

Do you have eyeglasses, or hearing aids? Those were not even invented until recent times.

Think about what we have learned about the universe. Jupiter has a lot more moons now, than when I was a boy!

We can pick up a phone and very inexpensively speak with people thousands of miles away, with a clarity that sounds like they are just in the next room.

I say we need to count our blessings. Thanksgiving has just passed, and the holiday season is now upon us. On behalf of my wife, Linda, and myself, we wish you all very happy and safe holidays. Be safe. See you next year.

Answer: The song is *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, also known as the *Black National Anthem*.

Stamp Collecting Clubs for Kids is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are greatly appreciated and if \$10 or more you will be sent a written receipt. You also can donate via PayPal on our website - www.stampcollectingclubsforkids.org or www.yummystampcollecting.org which redirects you to the same website.

