



Would anyone like to guess which ships these could be?



## Katherine Ann Porter and the WERRA

With the 22nd stamp in the *Literary Arts* series, the U.S. Postal Service honors acclaimed writer Katherine Anne Porter. Considered a master prose stylist, Porter won both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1966 for *The Collected Stories of Katherine Anne Porter*, which was published in 1965.

Award-winning stamp artist Michael J. Deas based his painting of Porter on a 1936 photograph made by George Platt Lynes. By including a ship in the design, Deas links Porter's portrait to the sea voyage that inspired her best-selling novel *Ship of Fools* and to her assessment of life, which she called, "this brave voyage."

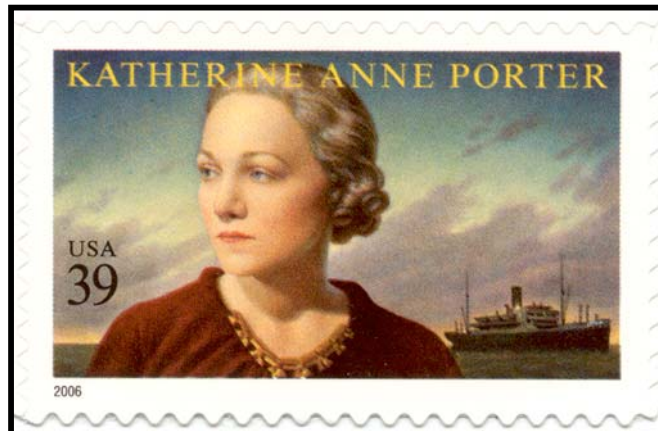
**WERRA** (passenger)

US # (2006) 39c

**1923 – Norddeutscher Lloyd, Bremen, Germany; A.G. Weser, Bremen (yard No 324); Gt. 9,476; 146.00m x 17.58m; two triple expansion steam engines 4,200 hp., 12,5 kn; passenger accommodation for 74 first, 90 second class.**

She was built by A.G. Weser, Bremen for the Norddeutscher Lloyd, Bremen, Germany, and launched on Sept. 21, 1922, as the **WERRA**. On Jan. 24, 1923, she made her maiden voyage to East Asia, then on to La Plata. During 1933, she was put on the route Bremen - Havana - Galveston. On Aug. 12, 1935, she was sold to Italy's SpA, Genoa, intended to be used on the company's Genoa - South America service, renamed **CALABRIA**. Her tonnage was then listed as: Gt. 9,515. In 1936, she was transferred to Lloyd Triestino. In June 10, 1940, she was seized in Calcutta, and transferred under the British flag, managed by British India S.N. Co. And on Dec. 8, 1940, she was sunk by **U-103**, 380 miles W off Galway in 52°43'N 18°07'W en route from Calcutta to Glasgow. At that time she had a crew of 129, one gunner and 230 Indian passengers onboard, and all were lost. She was also loaded with 400 tons iron, 3,050 tons tea, and 1,871 tons oilcake.

Second of six sisters built for the Far East passenger trade, **WERRA** and the others also sailed occasionally to North, Central and South America.



In May 2006, the U.S. Postal Service issued a 39-cent stamp to honor Katherine Anne Porter, author of the *Ship of Fools*. Porter had traveled aboard a North German Lloyd steamer to Bremerhaven from Mexico about the same time as she wrote her book in Aug.-Sept. 1931. The fictitious ship in her novel was called **VERA**,

which is believed to be the NGL ship **WERRA**.

In 1965, Abby Mann adapted Porter's novel for the silver screen. It tells the overlapping stories of several passengers aboard a 36-day ocean voyage during the 1930s. It was directed by Stanley Kramer and was to be Vivien Leigh's last film.

The movie also starred Simone Signoret, José Ferrer, Lee Marvin, Oskar Werner, Michael Dunn, Elizabeth Ashley, George Segal, José Greco and Heinz Rühmann. Werner, Dunn and Signoret were nominated for Oscars and the film won Academy Awards for best art direction, set direction, and cinematography and was nominated for best costume design, best picture and best screenplay based on material from another medium.

The stamp design includes a tiny sketch of a two masted, one funnel liner.

Source: Eugene W. Smith, *1951 Trans-Atlantic Passenger Ships*; Rich Wahlberg; A. Palmhof; *Lloyd's War Losses, the Second World War*; US Postal Service.