

Collecting Franklin

Vignettes of American History



Benjamin Franklin

1706-1790

This exhibit is a philatelic tribute to Benjamin Franklin - printer, author, philanthropist, inventor, scientist and American Patriot - who served as Postmaster General of the British Colonies in North America and as the first Postmaster General of the independent United Colonies during the Continental Congress period.

Every item of postal history in this exhibit bears the name or likeness of Franklin, including a representative example of almost every postage stamp design with his image. Apart from George Washington, Franklin appears on more United States stamps than any other person.

The majority of items in this exhibit are covers (envelopes), cards or folded letters that passed through the mails. They show the remarkably diverse range of elements in the fascinating collecting area known as Postal History.

Postmaster's Commission - 1764



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, and JOHN FOXCROFT, Esquires, POST-MASTERS-GENERAL of all His Majesty's Provinces and Dominions on the Continent of *NORTH-AMERICA*.

TO ALL to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting, KNOW YE, That We *the said Benjamin Franklin and John Foxcroft.* having received good Testimony of the Fidelity, and Loyalty to His Majesty, of *Abraham Hunt, of Trenton, in New-Jersey, Gent.* and reposing great Trust and Confidence in the Knowledge, Care, and Ability of the said *Abraham Hunt*, to execute the Office and Duties required of a Deputy Post-Master, have Deputed, Constituted, Authorized, and Appointed, and by these Presents do Depute, Constitute, Authorize, and Appoint the said *Abraham Hunt* to be our lawful and sufficient Deputy, to Execute the Office of Deputy Post-Master *at Trenton in New-Jersey, aforesaid.* to have, hold, use, exercise and enjoy the said Office, with all and every the Rights, Privileges, Benefits and Advantages, to the same belonging, from the *Day of the Date hereof* for the Term of three Years, unless sooner removed by us, under such Conditions, Covenants, Provisoes, Payments, Orders and Instructions, to be faithfully observed, performed, and done, by the said Deputy, and Servants, as *he* or they shall, from Time to Time, receive from Us, or by our Order. In Witness whereof, We the said *Benjamin Franklin, and John Foxcroft*, have hereunto set our Hands, and caused the Seal of our Office to be affixed: Dated the *Tenth* Day of *January*, 1764, in the *Fourth* Year of HIS MAJESTY's Reign.

B. Franklin
John Foxcroft

Postmaster's Commission - 1775

By AUTHORITY of the CONGRESS.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, ESQ;

Appointed POST-MASTER-GENERAL of all the UNITED COLONIES on the CONTINENT of NORTH-AMERICA.

TO ALL to whom these Presents shall come, sends GREETING: KNOW YE, That I, the said BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, having received good Testimony of the Fidelity and public Spirit of *Abraham Hunt, of Trenton, in New Jersey, Gent.* and reposing great Trust and Confidence in the Knowledge, Care and Ability of the said *Abraham Hunt,* to execute the Office and Duties required of a Deputy Post-Master, have deputed, constituted, authorized and appointed, and by these Presents do depute, constitute, authorize and appoint the said *Abraham Hunt,* to be my lawful and sufficient Deputy, to execute the Office of Deputy Post-Master of *Trenton, in New Jersey,* to have, hold, use, exercise and enjoy the said Office, with all and every the Rights, Privileges, Benefits and Advantages, to the same belonging, from the *Thirteenth* Day of *October, 1775.* for the Term of three Years, or until he shall receive a new Commission, or until the present be superseded under such Conditions, Covenants, Provisoos, Payments, Orders and Instructions, to be faithfully observed, performed and done, by the said Deputy, and Servants, as *he* or they shall, from time to time, receive from me, or by my Order. In Witness whereof, I, the said BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, have ~~signed~~ *set* my Hand, and caused the Seal of my Office to be affixed: Dated the *Thirteenth* Day of *October,* 1775.

B Franklin

Franklin's authority

1764 POST-MASTERS- GENERAL of all His Majesty's Provinces and Dominions on the Continent of *NORTH-AMERICA.*

1775 *By* AUTHORITY of *the*
CONGRESS.
POST-MASTER-GENERAL of *all the*
UNITED COLONIES on *the* CONTINENT

Hunt's character

1764 having received good Testimony of the Fidelity, and Loyalty to His Majesty,

1775 received good Testimony of the Fidelity and public Spirit

Date of Commission

1764 *January, - 1764,* in the *fourth* Year of HIS MAJESTY'S Reign.

1775 *October, 1775.*

Post Office procedures provide for each new Postmaster to be given a commission by the Postmaster General to serve as evidence of his appointment. The practice dates from revolutionary times to the present, although the number of such commissions prepared today generally mandates the use of an autopen for signing. These two commissions were issued by Postmaster General Benjamin Franklin to Abraham Hunt, authorizing Hunt to serve as Postmaster of Trenton, New Jersey. These commissions are two of the eight commissions signed by Franklin and known to have survived. They are filled in by hand by a clerk, and each has a red wax seal affixed.

Issued eleven years apart — 1764 and 1775 — they show the significant change in governments. Comparison of the texts of the two commissions to Hunt shows that the printed portions of the second are in most respects an almost verbatim repetition of the first. The differences, however, are significant.

In 1764, Franklin co-signed as Postmaster General for the British Colonies in North America, a position he shared with John Foxcroft. It is one of six known Franklin commissions during the Colonial period.

In 1775, Franklin signed “By Authority of the Congress” as “Postmaster General of all the United Colonies on the Continent of North America.” This is the one of two known commissions issued by Franklin during the Continental Congress period.

Of the commissions known that were signed by Franklin, this is the only pair that were to the same individual to serve in the same capacity.

On May 29, 1775, the Continental Congress appointed a committee on postal matters of six members including Franklin. The committee reported on July 25, 1775 and the Congress voted to appoint a Postmaster General the next day, July 26, 1775. Franklin's son-in-law, Richard Bache, was elected to succeed him on November 7, 1776 after Franklin's departure for France. There were 80-some Post Offices in the colonies in the 1775 to 1777 period and Franklin only served in this capacity less than 16 months.

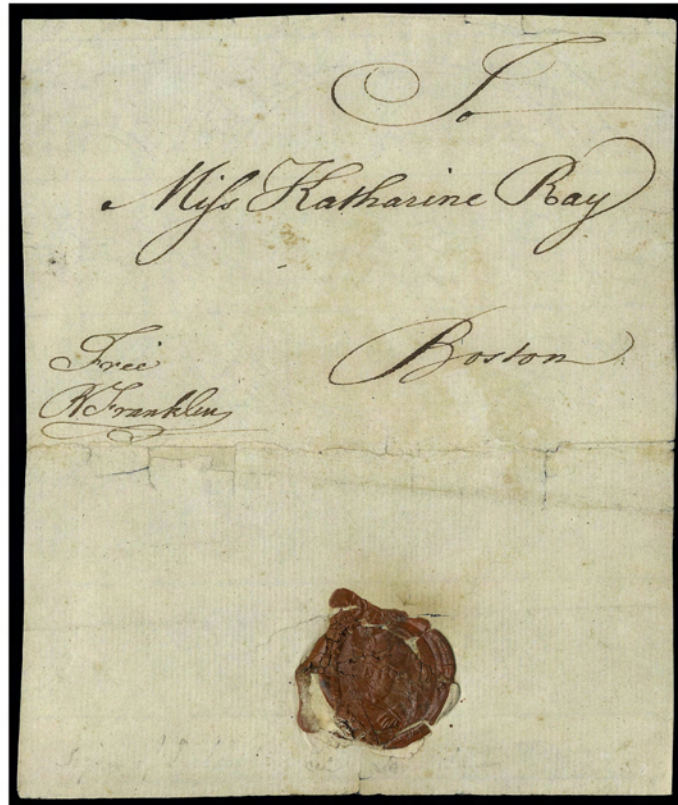
Abraham Hunt was the principal merchant of Trenton. It was at Hunt's house that the Hessian Colonel Rall enjoyed, somewhat to excess, his Christmas revels the night before Washington's surprise attack in 1776. Hunt's "hospitality" doubtless contributed to the success of the Americans. Hunt was later charged with high treason but was completely exonerated and continued in responsible service to the American cause.

Free Franks

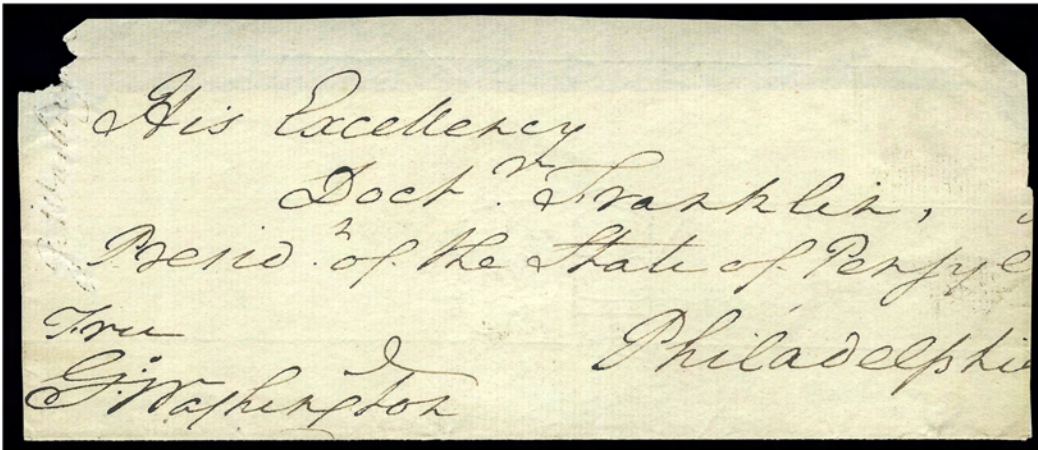
A Free Frank (or Frank) is one method used to authorize the post office to deliver mail free of postage. The franking privilege has been granted to various elected and appointed officials throughout the history of the United States. Most Americans today are exposed to free franks through pieces of mail sent by their Congressman. Franklin had the franking privilege as Colonial and as Continental Postmaster General, later as a Delegate to the Continental Congress (and Constitution Convention) and perhaps in other capacities.

Franklin was known to frank mail with two different styles - "Free B. Franklin" and "B. Free Franklin". Both styles are shown here. The "B. Free" is regarded by some as an expression of Franklin's patriotism.

In his 1931 book *Colonial and Revolutionary Posts*, Harry M. Konwiser wrote "At New York, as in other sea ports in the American Colonies, as else in the then 'civilized' countries, the letters arriving by the ships were delivered to a coffee house near the wharf, where they lay exposed on a table until called for. Persons not only took their own mail but that of their friends." Either of these covers could have been "coffee house" mail.



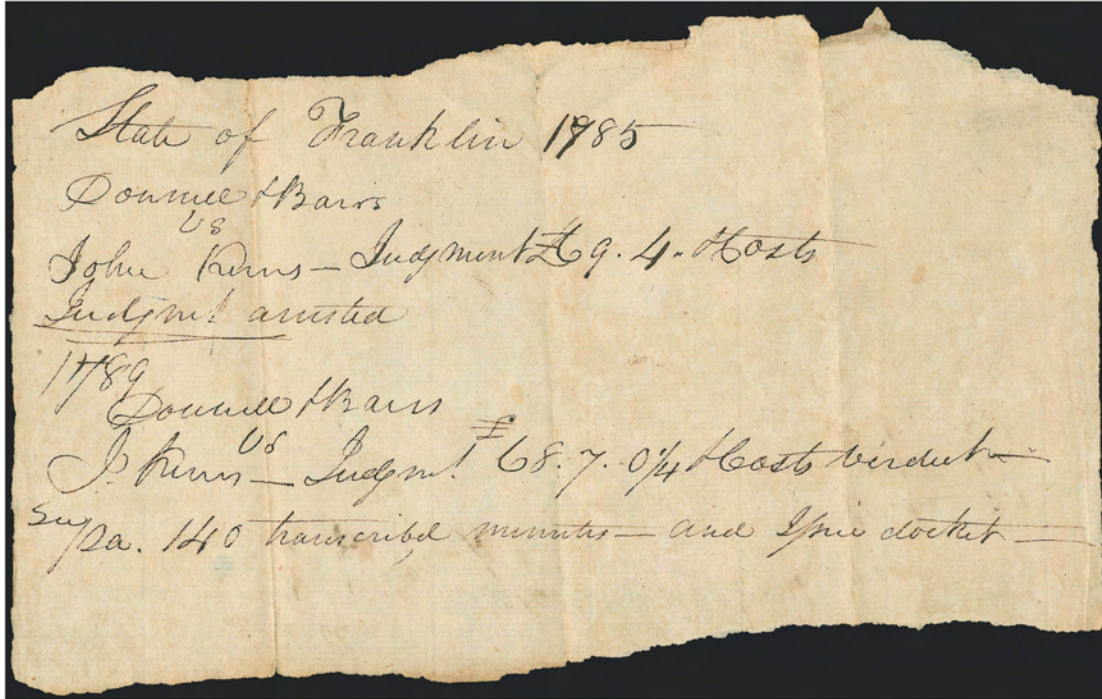
George Washington to Benjamin Franklin



This undated free-franked mail from George Washington is addressed and franked entirely in Washington's hand to Franklin as president of the state government, a position Franklin held from 1785 to 1788.

Following the American victory against the British in 1781, Washington had returned to Mount Vernon. George Washington was a private citizen writing to Benjamin Franklin. Washington was not elected President until 1787. As a private citizen Washington did not have the franking privilege. Even so, this letter - and perhaps others - were delivered by the post office without charge.

State of Franklin



The State of Franklin was intended to become the 14th state when settlers in western part of North Carolina (now Eastern Tennessee) decided to form an independent state, known as the State of Franklin, in 1784. The capital was Greeneville and John Sevier was elected Governor.

Franklin declined an invitation to move to the fledgling state, but he permitted it to be named in his honor.

After four years, the State of Franklin failed to obtain support from Congress or North Carolina's government and was disbanded.

This piece of a legal document is docketed as originating in the State of Franklin in 1785.

The First United States Postage Stamps



The first United States postage stamps issued for general use in July 1847 comprised 5¢ and 10¢ values bearing portraits of Benjamin Franklin and George Washington, respectively.

The 5¢ and 10¢ 1847 Issue were designed to pay the simplified rates introduced two years earlier: 5¢ per half-ounce for distances under 300 miles and 10¢ per half-ounce over 300 miles.

One of the oddities of this issue is the use of a Roman numeral "X" to indicate the 10¢ value of the Washington stamp.

The cover shown here is a triple 5¢ rate required by weight as the letter travelled less than 300 miles, from New York City to Albany. The addressee is Millard Fillmore, Comptroller of New York State who became President of the United States in 1850. Covers with a combination of the two 1847 Issue values are unusual.

Before the formation of an international postal union in 1874, rates were negotiated between countries. Treaty rates usually involved postage-sharing, which required a system of accounting for each and every letter. Further complicating matters, the credits and debits were often related to the routes or shipping lines involved.

These two covers to France have British accountancy marks used to indicate the monies due to Great Britain for letters originating in the United States with only the U.S. postage prepaid. Following an established agreement, France would collect the amount due from the addressee and remit that amount to Great Britain for transit services.

Top The “Colonies & Art. 13” framed handstamp refers to Article 13 of the letter bill that accompanied the mail. The “15” handstamp is the amount in decimes due from the addressee (approximately 30¢).

Bottom The “GB/1F60c” handstamp refers to the bulk transit charges owed to Great Britain. The five 1¢ 1851 stamps pay the internal U.S. rate and “8” decimes (approximately 16¢) was collected from the addressee.

British Accountancy Stamps



COLONIES
&c ART. 13

1850



GB
1F60c

1858

26 Decimes Due



The United States postage on both covers was 5¢, the so-called shore-to-ship rate. In France, 26 decimes (approximately 50¢) was collected from the addressee. The “26” was handstamped on the top cover and written in pen on the bottom cover.

Top This cover was posted in New Orleans to Bordeaux, France.

Bottom This cover was posted in Providence, Rhode Island to Paris, France on September 16. The letter indicates that the year was 1854. The “New York Br. Pkt.” circular datestamp clearly visible on the right indicates that the letter was carried by a British Packet vessel (in this case, the Cunard Line’s *Africa*). The choice of sailing line determined how much postage went to each country involved.



The Universal Postal Union, created in 1874 (and first named the General Postal Union), eliminated the need for such complicated accounting on mail between countries. President Lincoln’s Postmaster General, Montgomery Blair, was instrumental in the conception of the UPU.

“Paid to the lines”

Prior to April 1851, the United States and Canada did not have a postal treaty that permitted full prepayment of postage from one country to the final destination. Covers mailed between the U.S. and British North America during this period usually have stamps from the country of origin used with due markings applied by the receiving country's post office. The covers shown here were both mailed in 1848. They have similar “4 ” manuscript markings indicating Canadian postage.

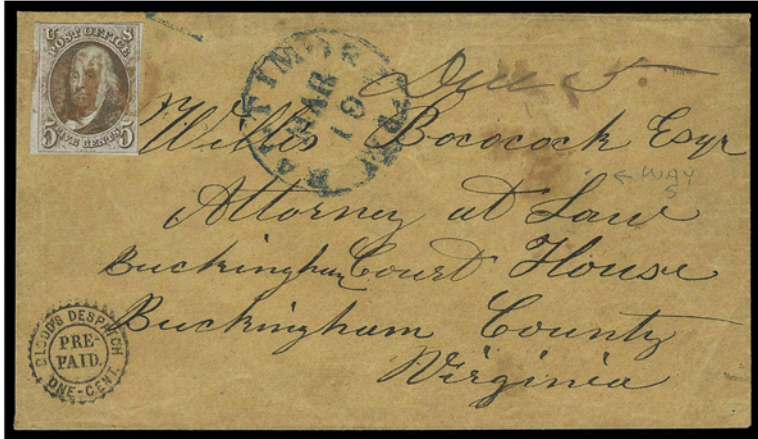
Top This cover was mailed from Albany, N.Y., to Montreal. The 5¢ 1847 stamp paid U.S. postage “to lines” as marked. The “4 ” was applied by the Canadian exchange office at the border to indicate postage due (in pence) from the addressee for delivery to Montreal.

Bottom This cover was mailed from Toronto to New York City. In this case the sender paid 4 pence for Canadian postage to the border (“Paid to the lines”) and affixed a pair of 5¢ 1847 stamps to prepay U.S. postage from the border to New York City (over 300 miles). United States stamps were sent to Canadian post offices for this purpose.



Along the “Way”

c. 1851



**WAY
5**

“Way” letters reflect a special arrangement between the post office and mail carriers who received letters along the way while en route between post offices. By definition, way mail was limited to letters added to open bags of mail handled by stage lines, a rider on horse, or a steamboat or railroad line that did not have an official U.S. route agent on board. For his services, the mail carrier received a fee of 1¢ per letter, regardless of weight or distance.

Top This cover was mailed from Philadelphia to Buckingham, Virginia. The sender gave the letter to Blood’s Despatch, a Philadelphia local post, who brought it directly to the train bound for Baltimore rather than placing it in the post office. On arrival in Baltimore, it was marked “WAY 5” (now barely legible) and also a manuscript “Due 5”. Buckingham was just over 300 miles from Philadelphia, thus an additional 5¢ was due.

c. 1852



Bottom This cover was carried by a Mississippi River steamboat, the “Princess No. 3”, to New Orleans. It was marked “Way” by hand, and the 1¢ way fee (and 3¢ postage) was prepaid by a strip of 1¢ 1851 stamps.

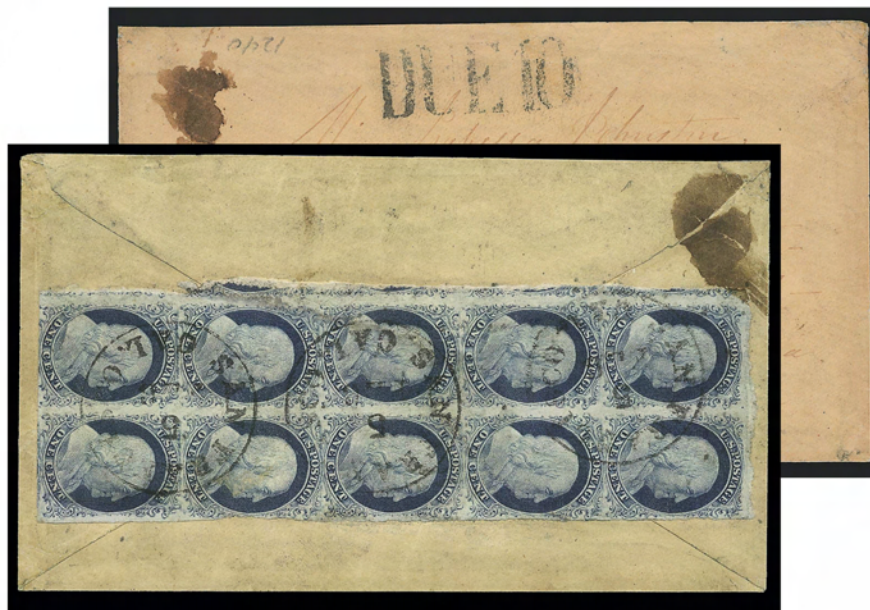
1851 Issue Multiples of the 1¢ stamp

These two California covers are both franked with large multiples of the 1851 1¢ stamp. They are quite rare as high-rate covers were normally franked with the higher denomination stamps.

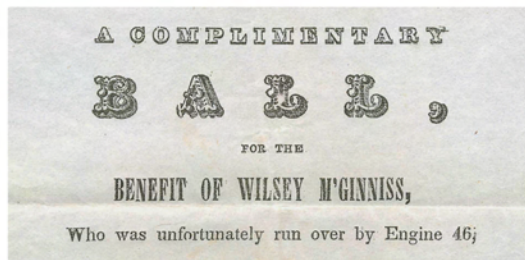
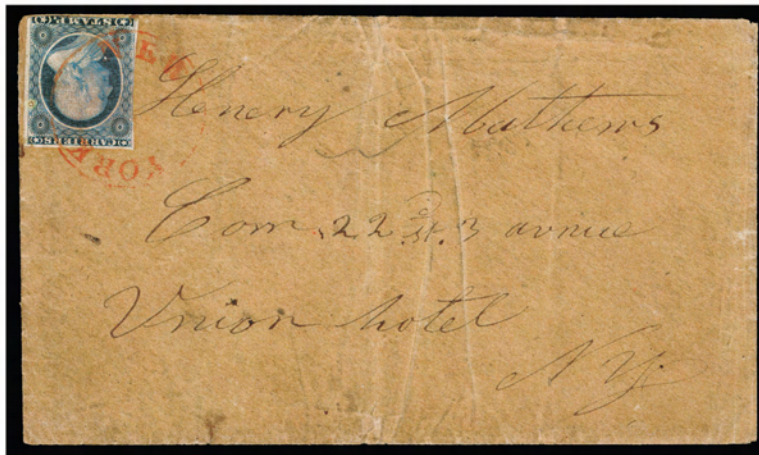
Top This cover to Illinois, originated in Sacramento, California, and was prepaid at the 6¢ “over 3,000 miles” rate, effective from July 1, 1851, to April 1, 1855.

The strip of stamps comes from the first plate used by Toppan, Carpenter & Casilear to print the 1¢ 1851 Issue, known as Plate 1 Early. The strip contains a combination of Types II and IIIa. Exhaustive studies of the 1¢ 1851 have been made, because the process by which the plates were created resulted in considerable variation among the positions on the plates.

Bottom This cover originated in San Francisco, California and is addressed to Philadelphia. Beginning on April 1, 1855, prepayment of postage was made compulsory and the rate for mail going over 3,000 miles was increased to 10¢ per 1/2 ounce. This cover is stamped “DUE 10” on the front indicating that it was a double rate cover.



Franklin Carrier Stamp



Carriers were employed by post offices to carry letters between the post office and local addresses or drop boxes within the city. Until July 1863, regular postage did not provide for delivery to or from the post office, so carriers were paid a fee of 1¢ or 2¢ per letter, which was paid for by the sender and/or addressee in the city where service was provided. In 1851 the Post Office Department issued a stamp without a stated rate, the Franklin Carrier, intended exclusively to prepay the carrier fee. Because it was so similar to the regular 1¢ 1851 stamp, it was replaced almost immediately with the Eagle Carrier.

Top The strip of three Franklin Carrier stamps was cancelled at the New Orleans post office, where there was some confusion over the proper use of the Carrier stamp. In this case it was probably accepted for 3¢ regular postage.

Middle and Bottom This cover was handled by the New York City carrier department. The enclosure is an invitation to a ball being held on October 28, 1852, for the benefit of Wilsey McGinniss, a fireman, "Who was unfortunately run over by Engine 46."

Carrier Department Stamp

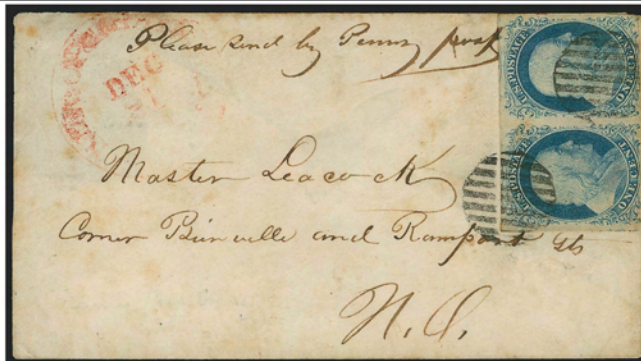
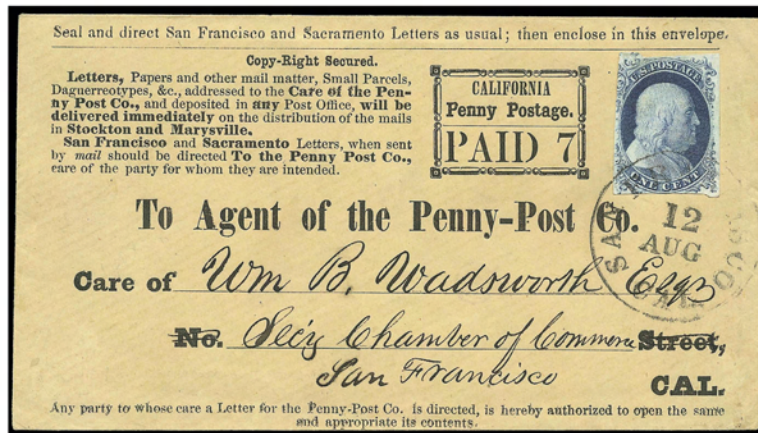
The Franklin and Eagle Carrier stamps were made available to all carrier departments, who had to pay for them out of their own budgets. For economy and convenience, some carrier departments had their own stamps printed.

When the supply of Eagle Carrier stamps was depleted in Philadelphia around 1856, the U.S.P.O. Despatch (carrier department) used regular 1¢ stamps obtained from the post office (requiring a special accounting arrangement) and also made its own stamps by applying the oval marking usually used on letters to the gummed sheet margins of imperforate 1¢ stamps.

This cover was mailed in March (1857) and shows the use of three 1¢ 1851 stamps with the “U.S.P.O. DESPATCH” carrier stamp. The carrier stamp was made from the bottom sheet margin of regular 1¢ stamps. Note the portion of a regular stamp showing in this enlargement of a section at the bottom of the Carrier stamp.



Penny Post



Top The largest local delivery operation in California, the private “Penny-Post”, was started in June 1855. In spite of the name, the charges usually were more than a penny. The 1¢ United States stamp was necessary as express companies were prohibited from carrying mail unless the usual rate was affixed in U. S. stamps.

Middle Although carriers were considered employees of the Post Office Department, they ran their operation as a separate entity from the post office. Carrier fees were collected and accounted for by the carrier department. This cover was mailed from New York City to Boston around 1860 and has the “Penny Post Paid” handstamp to indicate that the 1¢ fee for carrier delivery to 42 Niles was paid, probably by arrangement with the addressee. The 1¢ postage paid the rate for a printed circular. Letters were 3¢.

Bottom This cover demonstrates dual fees in New Orleans. The sender addressed the cover to a young man at Bienville and Rampart Streets, but instead of giving it to the carrier directly or dropping it in a carrier letter box, he endorsed it “Please send by Penny Post” and brought it to the post office as a “drop” letter. The post office received 1¢ and the carrier received 1¢.

Wells, Fargo & Company

Following the discovery of gold, the rapid growth in California and along the Pacific Coast in the 1850's gave rise to private city posts and expresses. They served a vital role in maintaining communication and freight transportation in areas poorly served by the Post Office.

Wells, Fargo & Co. was the largest express and banking operation to emerge from the competitive environment of the 1850's. Wells Fargo started in San Francisco and soon had offices in towns and mining camps throughout the area. The company also operated an overland stagecoach line. In 1861, Wells Fargo took over operations of the western leg of the Pony Express.

Top This cover was carried by Wells, Fargo & Co. from San Francisco to Sacramento in 1855. It is unusual because the required United States postage was usually paid by a 3¢ stamp or stamped envelope. The sender wanted this letter carried by Wells Fargo and "to be delivered immediately."

Bottom This December 1861 envelope to Switzerland is an advertisement for Wells Fargo & Co.



Augustine Heard, & Co. Hong Kong Trading House

Both of these covers are addressed to Augustine Heard & Co., a prominent 19th Century trading house in Hong Kong. A collection of bills of lading in The Royal Asiatic Society in Hong Kong shows that the Heard firm handled among many other things:

- 25 chests old Benares opium
- 50 eighth casks brandy
- 7 boxes refined silver bars
- 20 boxes macaroni
- one sealed box of 800 Mexican dollars
- 50 cases oysters
- 5 kegs tongues
- one keg pigs feet



Top This cover weighed three ounces, requiring six times the 5¢ per half-ounce rate to Hong Kong via British Open Mails. The “6/6” mark was applied by the British foreign-mail office to indicate postage due (six shillings, six pence).



Bottom This cover was stamped with 2¢ extra for the double 45¢ British Mail rate to Hong Kong via Southampton. The “1d” was a credit from British postal authorities to the colonial post office in Hong Kong.

Supplementary Mail

Top Two types of “SUPPLEMENTARY MAIL” circular datestamps were used at the Chicago post office. Specialists believe that this marking was applied to letters received after the mail bags were sealed and placed on eastbound trains.

“SUPPLEMENTARY MAIL” letters were expedited by the postal clerk, apparently with no extra charge.

Bottom New York used a variety of markings to indicate “SUPPLEMENTARY MAIL” service. After the regular mail bags were prepared for a ship's scheduled sailing, letters could be posted by “SUPPLEMENTARY MAIL” and rushed on board prior to departure. These “SUPPLEMENTARY MAIL” letters were charged double the rate of postage. In this case, 15¢ becomes 30¢, and the extra fee could be paid in cash or stamps.



Pony Express

The Pony Express was launched in April 1860 by the freight and stage firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell in the hope of securing a government mail subsidy for the Central Route. They advertised a 10-day transit time for letters between San Francisco and the eastern terminus at St. Joseph, Missouri, with an option to use the telegraph line to convey messages between St. Joseph and points east. This was about half the time needed by the stage coach service on the southern route via El Paso.

The 1861 Pony Express cover shown here was carried by an independent express company from St. Louis to St. Joseph, then by Pony Express to Placerville, California. From there a messenger took the mail to San Francisco by rail and steamboat. Although it never entered the post office, 10¢ postage was required per the Act of March 3, 1855.

The Pony Express ended in October 1861 within days of the completion of the transcontinental telegraph line.



Campaign Covers

During the 1850's and the 1860's, printed envelopes with illustrations and messages were quite popular. Some advertised products. Others were used to promote election candidates ("Campaign" covers) or social/political causes ("Propaganda" covers).

Top Millard Fillmore was elected Vice-President of the United States in the 1848 election on the Whig ticket led by Zachary Taylor. Fillmore succeeded to the Presidency on Taylor's death in 1850. Conflicts within the Whig party over the slavery issue denied him the party's Presidential nomination in 1852. In 1856, Fillmore ran for President, with Andrew J. Donelson as Vice-Presidential candidate, as the candidates of the American or "Know-Nothing" party.

Bottom Abraham Lincoln was elected President in 1860. Most of the envelopes of this design were used during that campaign. This is a rare use of the 1861 stamp on that cover

Fillmore - 1856



Beardless Lincoln - 1862



Letters to England, and beyond



to England, forwarded to France



Top This 1862 cover has a series of markings and stamps to pay for or indicate the following:

- 1¢ carrier fee in New York City to bring the letter to the post office (paid by stamp)

- 1 shilling (24¢) postage due from the addressee, of which 21¢ was given back to the U.S. by Great Britain, since the cover went by an American Packet (“21” debit marking)

- 8 pence British postage to re-mail (or forward) the letter from Liverpool to Paris, France (paid by pair of 4 pence British stamps).

Bottom This 1870 cover was mailed from Massachusetts on November 18, 1870 and returned for “Insufficiently Paid” postage. Then it was remailed.

- the original route via France had been terminated and the letter was sent through England, Germany and Italy and on to India where it was backstamped on arrival in Calcutta on January 24, 1871.

- the letter was “Paid Only To England” so a due stamp for “8 annas and 8 pies” indicated the postage due from the addressee in India.



to India, via England



PAID ONLY
TO ENGLAND



1862 Advertising Cover

This 1862 advertising envelope depicting men toasting with Smith & Brothers' India Ale is one of the earliest examples of a chromolithographed American advertising envelope.

It was printed by the well-known firm of Sarony, Major & Knapp, located at 449 Broadway in New York City, who produced a wide variety of high-quality lithographic prints during the mid-nineteenth century.

Napoleon Sarony worked as an apprentice for several lithographers, including Nathaniel Currier of Currier and Ives. Sarony left the lithography business in 1864 to become a photographer. He went on to become one of America's most famous pioneers in this field. Sarony succeeded Matthew Brady as America's best-known portrait photographer and was especially well-known for photographing stars of the New York stage.



Patriotic Covers

Union



Top This Union Patriotic Cover has a design of national symbols in vivid red, white and blue. It is addressed to Munich, Bavaria, and redirected to Switzerland. The stamps are tied to the cover by Boston "Paid" grid cancellations. The cover also has red "Boston Br Pkt 7 Paid Jul 22" stamp and a red boxed "Aachen Franco" transit stamp.

Confederate States



Bottom This Confederate States patriotic cover to Corinth, Mississippi, pictures "Jeff. Davis.", the "First President" of the Confederate States of America. The use of Federal postage stamps is very unusual.

Top In the early part of the Civil War, it was possible to send mail across the lines through a private express company. After expresses were forbidden from carrying mail on August 26, 1861, it became extremely difficult for civilians on opposing sides to correspond. Prepayment of U. S. postage was always required.

Any U.S. stamps affixed in the Confederacy were considered to be contraband. Adams Express was obligated to add valid postage in Louisville before placing items into the mail.

Bottom Arrangements were made for prisoner-of-war mail to be exchanged "By Flag of Truce". This letter was written by a soldier in the 4th Kentucky Regiment, Louis's Brigade - the so-called "Orphan Brigade" - to Lockport, Kentucky. Kentucky was neutral in the summer of 1861, and men wishing to join the Confederacy became "orphans" as they could not return home. The letter is datelined at Dalton, Georgia, on December 1, 1863. The stamps were accepted at Old Point Comfort, Virginia and Lockport even though the two outer stamps had been demonetized in 1861.

Through The Lines



Flag Of Truce




Avoiding The Civil War Draft - for \$300

SUBSTITUTES
FURNISHED
—BY—
THOMAS NEWTON,
No. 6 WALL STREET,
AT ONE HOUR'S NOTICE

REFERENCES:
E. J. BALDWIN, 84 Broadway,
LUDLOW PATTERSON, 7 Broad Street,
E. C. CANTINE, 37 Wall Street.

And 100
stitutes f
seen on a

THOMAS NEWTON,
No. 6 WALL STREET,
WILL FURNISH SUBSTITUTES
AT SHORT NOTICE.

P. O. BOX, No. 

The Civil War is the first United States war that required conscription, or the “draft”, to raise troops.

The *New York Herald*, on February 26, 1863 reported that the conscription bill had passed both houses of Congress and the “sweeping” measure was now the “law of the land”. It included men to age 45 of “all colors, parties, creeds, professions and pursuits.” Conscription was extremely unpopular and led to riots such as the infamous New York Draft Riot.

The *New York Herald* article reported that men “must pocket their conscientious scruples and go forth to fight, or fork out three hundred dollars each for a substitute. It is nonsense to talk of resistance. The laws must be obeyed.”

This advertising piece offered to provide substitutes **“AT ONE HOUR'S NOTICE.”**

Remember ! Ellsworth!!!

Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth, a militia commander and friend of Abraham Lincoln, organized a regiment of New York City firemen to fight in the Civil War. They were known as the First New York Zouaves. Ellsworth's regiment was dispatched to Alexandria, Virginia. Noticing a Confederate flag flying above the Marshall House hotel, Ellsworth climbed to the roof and removed the flag. He was confronted and shot by the hotelkeeper, who was immediately killed by Ellsworth's men.

Ellsworth became known as the first Union officer to be killed in the war. President Lincoln had an honor guard bring his friend's body to the White House, where it lay in state.

Top Only two used examples of this Charles Magnus design are known. The stamps used here had been demonetized about two months earlier.

Bottom This design depicts two Union soldiers and a Zouave trampling a fallen Confederate soldier and flag. The house with a figure in the window in the background represents the building where Ellsworth was killed.



Demonetized Stamps



OLD STAMPS
NOT RECOGNIZED

Demonetization occurs when a government declares that an official monetary instrument no longer has value. Concerned that supplies of U.S. stamps would be shipped north and sold to finance the rebellion, the United States government declared that all supplies from seceded states were contraband. The new 1861 Issue was released in mid-August, and post offices in different cities began to exchange the new issue for old stamps in preparation for a complete demonetization of all old issues. While clearly distinctive, the new stamps were similar in design and color to the stamps which were taken out of use. With each of the two covers shown here, the sender apparently tried to save 1¢ by “hiding” an older demonetized stamp between two of the later good stamps.



on reverse

Top This cover was stamped “Old Stamps Not Recognized” at Philadelphia and has an appropriate postage due marking.

Bottom In this case, as can be seen from the image from the back of the cover, the letter was “Held For Postage” until the sender went to the Post Office and provided a good stamp to be affixed, in this case, at the lower left.

Demonetized Stamps

Top Somewhat ironically, this cover is an attempt to use a demonetized stamp on a patriotic cover. The 1¢ stamp to the left is from the newer, post-demonetization issue, but the 3¢ stamp on the right has been demonetized and the appropriate “Old Stamps Not Recognized” stamp and postage due marking are seen.

Center The demonetized stamp on this cover is noted by the “ILLEGAL STAMP” marking. This is the simplest marking of the five demonetized covers shown here. There are only seven covers with this “ILLEGAL STAMP” known, and this is the only one with the 1¢ stamp.

Bottom This November 1862 cover originated in San Francisco with the demonetized 1¢ and 3¢ 1857 stamps used with a new 10¢ 1861 Issue. The “15” hand stamp indicates that the old stamps were rejected and partial payment of the 15¢ treaty rate to France was not allowed. It was sent to France and has a black “8” decimes due handstamp on the back.



ILLEGAL STAMP



Civil War Shortages



The Civil War was a time of great hardship and deprivation. Many essential commodities, such as paper, were in short supply. People were forced to re-use envelopes and fashion envelopes from wallpaper and other forms of paper.

Top This example of a wartime “adversity” usage is an envelope split along the seams and turned inside-out so it could be used a second time. The first use of this envelope was from St. Louis to Middleton, Mississippi, and a 1¢ 1857 stamp was used. The second use was from Winona, Mississippi, to New Orleans, and the postage paid was indicated by the manuscript “Paid 5”.

Bottom Government coins were in short supply during the Civil War. John Gault of Boston came up with the idea to encase postage stamps in very thin metal frames with a front of transparent mica. Encased postage, as here, usually carried advertisements.



1¢



30¢



Confederate Usage of United States Stamps

Both of these covers were mailed in the Confederate States and stamped with demonetized United States postage.

Top This letter was mailed from New Orleans on February 7, 1861, just four days after Louisiana and five other states formed the Confederate States at the Montgomery Convention. The 33¢ in U.S. postage was still valid at this time. Although the rate from the United States to Rio de Janeiro via British Mail had been increased from 33¢ to 45¢ one month earlier, the foreign exchange office allowed the letter to pass.



Bottom This letter from a destitute Confederate widow was mailed in Canton, Georgia, on April 9, 1863. Despite the fact that only 3¢ postage (not the 5¢ Confederate States rate) was prepaid with old United States 1851 Issue stamps, the letter was apparently accepted into the Confederate postal system as prepaid.



Confederate States Postage



The three covers shown here all have obsolete United States postage in addition to Confederate postage. In each case, the obsolete United States stamp did not pay postage. In the bottom two examples, the United States government-issued Franklin entires were probably used as envelopes when stationery was scarce in the South.

Top The first Confederate letter rates of 5¢ and 10¢ were based on distance until June 30, 1862. After that date, the rate was 10¢ per half ounce, regardless of distance. This letter with a 5¢ stamp and "Due 5" was addressed about 150 miles away, so the due marking suggests that the letter was mailed after the rate increase.

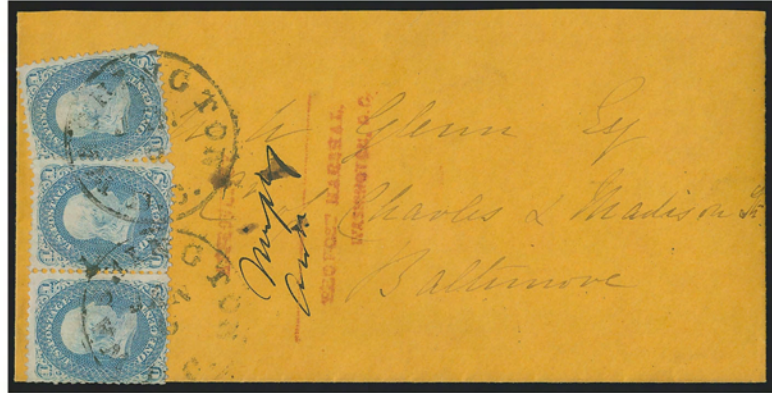


Bottom This top-right cover bears a 10¢ CSA stamp with President Davis's portrait. The cover to the lower-left has a 20¢ CSA stamp issued in 1863 with Washington's portrait. Confederate General Issue stamps not shown here also pictured Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson and John C. Calhoun.

Prisoner Of War Censored

Top During the Civil War, Old Capitol Prison was housed in the abandoned and dilapidated building used as the temporary Capitol after the British burned the original U.S. Capitol during the War of 1812.

Many prominent prisoners were confined in the Old Capitol Prison, including Henry Wirz, commandant of Andersonville Prison, and the Lincoln assassination conspirators, who were hanged on the gallows. This cover from a prisoner at Old Capitol Prison has a censor's handstamp and signature.



Bottom Rock Island Prison in Illinois was designed to hold up to 13,000 prisoners. During the first winter after opening in 1863, the temperature reportedly fell to 40 degrees below zero. A few months later, in the summer of 1864, the prisoner's food rations were reduced in retaliation for the reported treatment of Union prisoners at Andersonville. This letter from a prisoner at Rock Island bears a censor's "R. I. BARRACKS/EXAMINED/PRISONERS'S LETTER" handstamp.



Waterbury Hand-Carved Cancels

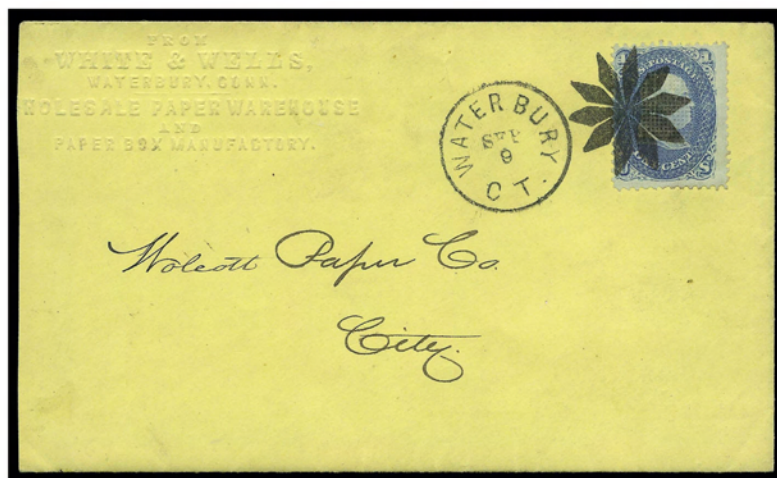
Man with Hat



John W. Hill (1834-1921) was employed in the Waterbury, Connecticut, post office. Hill was known locally for his skill at whittling and created fanciful designs in cork to cancel mail at the Waterbury post office. About 300 different designs - letters, numbers, geometrical designs, animals, flowers, patriotic designs, etc. - have been identified.

Top The "Man With Hat" cancel is recorded on two covers with a Franklin stamp, used on this 1866 cover to pay the local rate.

10 Segment Rosette



Bottom The cancel on the 1868 cover shown here is a ten-segment rosette. Notice the beautiful symmetry in the rosette and also in the "W" below.



Kingdom of Hawaii

Hawaii was an independent kingdom until 1893, but its post office was run by a series of American inhabitants of the islands.

The first two covers shown have mixed frankings - that is, stamps from the Kingdom of Hawaii and the United States - which were used to indicate prepayment of the U. S. and Hawaiian components of the total postage.

Top The Hawaiian stamp on this cover pictures King Kamehameha III. The United States stamps paid the ship captain's fee and the domestic transcontinental rate.

Center The Hawaiian stamps on this cover honor King Kamehameha IV. The Hawaiian stamps represent an overpayment of the 5¢ Hawaiian postage. The United States 1861 Issue stamps pay the domestic rate plus the ship fee.

Bottom This beautiful cover from Hawaii bears only United States postage and is addressed "To the Postmaster, Kingdom of Saxony, Germany, Europe."

1858



1867



1865



A Four-Month World Tour For Only 53¢



This cover made a four-month multi-national tour. It originated in New York City in February 1867 and is addressed to an American naval officer aboard the U.S.S. Shenandoah, in care of the American Consul at Hong Kong. The first leg of the journey was to London. The "32" manuscript credit marking was applied by the U.S. to give England its share of postage. In London it was marked with a "PAID 20 FEB 1867" datestamp and "1d" to indicate a credit to the British colonial post office in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, the U.S. Consulate office applied its large red identification handstamp and forwarded the letter by mail to the U.S. Consul at Shanghai, who applied the two-line handstamp in blue and dated the letter April 23, 1867. The U.S. Consul in Shanghai forwarded the letter to Yokohama, Japan, where the U.S.S. Shenandoah was currently stationed. Docketing on back indicates it reached there on June 7, 1867.

Grilled Stamps To Prevent Reuse

During the 1860s, the Post Office was convinced that cleaning and reuse of stamps was hurting revenues. In 1867, Charles F. Steele was granted a patent for a machine to produce a “Grilled” stamp “which shall stick better than usual, and which it shall be impossible to fraudulently remove and use again.” Steele’s idea was to emboss stamps in order to break the fibers of the paper and allow the canceling ink to be absorbed.

Top This cover to England has a combination of Franklin stamps from two different issues. The 30¢ Franklin and 5¢ Jefferson are from the 1868 “F” grill issue. The 1¢ is the 1869 Pictorial issue with “G” grill. The difference between the grills is their size.

Bottom The 1¢ 1869 Pictorial stamps on this domestic cover have “G” grills. It would be very difficult to remove the canceling ink from these grilled stamps.



A Rare Combination of Stamps

Both Stamps Show Franklin



Both of the 1869 Pictorial stamps on this cover include an image of Franklin. The 1¢ is the familiar bust of Franklin. The 24¢ stamp depicts in minutely engraved detail, the Signing of the Declaration of Independence, a painting by John Trumbull. Franklin has a prominent position among the Founding Fathers. The gathering painted by Trumbull never happened, but pictures the principal activists in the Declaration.

This is the only genuine cover recorded with this combination of 1869 Issue stamps. The sender intended to pay the 25¢ rate for American Packet service to Rio de Janeiro and from there by French Packet to Buenos Aires. However, the French Packet service ended by January 1870, and instead the letter was sent via British Packet. The British were credited with 8¢ of the postage.



Merchant's handstamp applied at their office when the mail was received.

Official Business

In an effort to clean up Washington D.C. official abuses, the franking privilege of many users was ended and official stamps were issued to government departments for use on mail beginning July 1, 1873. Official stamps were used for less than six years before they were replaced by “penalty” envelopes.

The same basic designs were used for the 1¢ to 90¢ values for each department (except the Post Office Department), differing only in color and name. The 1¢ stamps had Franklin’s portrait, regardless of the department named. The Post Office Department stamps used large arabic numerals.



Top This San Francisco Surveyor’s Office imprint envelope has two 1¢ Interior Department stamps. All Interior Department stamps were vermilion, as here.

Bottom A complete set of mint (unused) 1¢ official stamps.



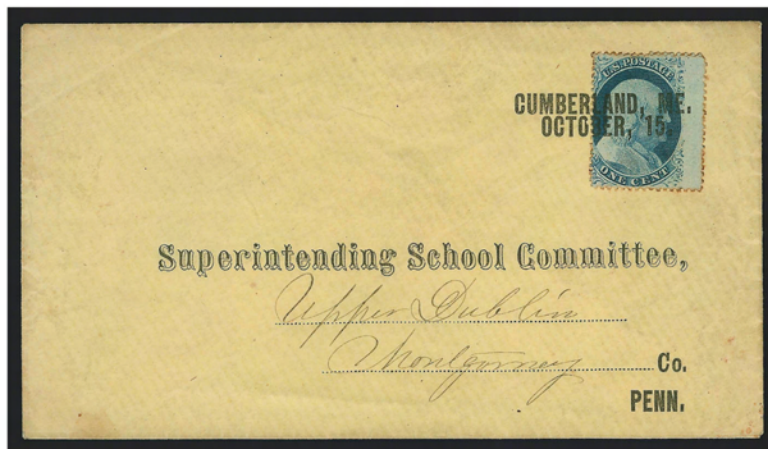
Agriculture Executive Interior Justice Navy



Post Office State Treasury War

Precanceled Stamps

c. 1857



The Cumberland and Glen Allen “precancels” are really not precancels at all. They are “printed cancellations” applied to stamps on envelopes to expedite the bulk-mailing process. However, collectors still prize them as very early and unusual examples of “precancels”, which were later applied to sheets of stamps as an easy way to cancel postage on bulk mailings.

Top This cover with the Cumberland, Maine, two-line printed postmark is one of three known. It dates from 1857 and is one of the earliest forms of printed cancellations on United States postage.

1882



Bottom This Glen Allen, Virginia cover is dated 1882. The contents of this envelope advertise circulars and advertising labels available for purchase from the sender. The letter and the circular rates were unchanged from the rates in use 25 years earlier. The precancel is known in three colors - green being the rarest.



Bicycle Mail

Top right The American Railway Union went on strike in 1894. The proprietor of Victor Cyclery in Fresno established a bicycle mail service between San Francisco and Fresno, a distance of about 210 miles. The service involved relays of riders, not unlike the Pony Express which had ended some 30 years earlier. Service lasted less than two weeks and was discontinued when the strike ended.

Bottom right A close look at the detail of this bicycle stamp reveals that "San Fransisco" is misspelled. There is some debate about whether the engraver of the bicycle mail stamp was a retired government engraver or a man whose principal activity was engraving nameplates for caskets. Whoever did the work, the quality of the image is considerably below that of regular stamps.

Below The back of the cover has a handstamp "Victor Bicycle Messenger Service, Fresno and San Francisco, Fresno, Cal., Jul. 16 1894".



Chefoo Local Post



Top The Treaty of Nanking in 1842 required China to open certain ports to trade. In time, a number of “treaty ports” were opened, and some established local posts. The Chefoo Local Post was set up in 1893. The local posts in China carried mail between the treaty port cities and the main post office at Shanghai. The United States, France and Germany maintained postal agencies in Shanghai.

This post card has been cancelled by “Local Post Chefoo 18 Dec 95” and the postage was used to carry the card to the United States Postal Agency in Shanghai. The two United States stamps were tied by a “U.S. Postal Agency, Shanghai, Dec. 28 2PM 1895” datestamp.

Chinese Imperial Post



Bottom In 1896, the Chinese government established a National Post Office. In 1911, Sun Yat-Sen overthrew the Imperial Post Office. The Imperial Post Office was dissolved in early 1912. This 1904 postcard has a 1¢ “Chinese Imperial Post” stamp tied by “Shanghai Local Post” postmark and a U.S. 1¢ stamp cancelled at the U. S. Postal Agency in Shanghai.

Sea Post Office

The Post Office Department operated mobile post offices on certain railroads and ocean liners and mail was processed en route. The "Sea Post Office" was staffed by employees of the nations involved in the voyage.

This registered letter to Germany was mailed in Cleveland, Ohio on August 26, 1899. The datestamps on the back of the cover indicate that the letter was in New York on August 28 and in the "U.S. GERMAN SEA P.O." service on August 29. The next ship to sail from New York to Bremen was the *S. S. Lahn* of the North German Line. The *Lahn* sailed from New York on September 5, 1899. Note the numeral "12" in the killer stamp and in blue crayon on the seal. The *Lahn* was known to use the number "12" to identify mail.

The official seal was probably added because the letter was registered or possibly because the flap became unsealed. The seal has been very carefully placed to secure the flap and also to show on the front of the envelope.



Sailor's Mail

Boxer Uprising, China

Built in 1864, the U. S. S. *Monocacy* was a sidewheel gunboat, a two masted schooner with a coal-fired engine. The *Monocacy* spent her entire nearly 40-year Navy career in Chinese, Korean and Japanese waters.

By the time that Commodore Dewey arrived in the Far East to command the Asiatic Squadron, the *Monocacy* was completely outdated. Her age and condition required that she be left behind in 1898 when Dewey and the remainder of the squadron steamed for the Philippines and the Battle of Manila Bay. In 1903, the *Monocacy* was struck from the U. S. Navy rolls and sold.

The return address on this 1901 letter reads "Sailors Letter, J. F. Campbell, U. S. S. *Monocacy*, Taku, China". In 1901, the *Monocacy* took part in the allies' combat operations against Chinese forces during the Boxer uprising.

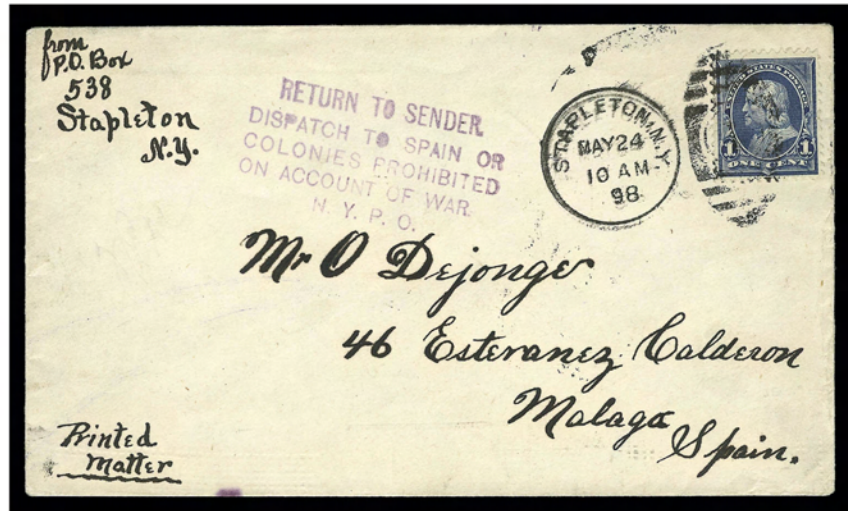


Spanish-American War

The United States declared war on Spain on April 25, 1898 following the sinking of the Battleship *Maine* in Havana harbor two months earlier. The war was won decisively by the United States, and ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898. Spain lost the remnants of its overseas empire including Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam.

Top This May 1898 letter addressed to Spain is marked; "RETURN TO SENDER, DISPATCH TO SPAIN OR COLONIES PROHIBITED ON ACCOUNT OF WAR, N. Y. P. D."

Bottom This October 1898 letter is from "Military Sta. 1, Porto Rico." The rate for soldier's mail was 2¢, and the rate for non-soldier's mail was 5¢. Since this letter was not marked as soldier's mail, the stamps were 2¢ less than required. Postal regulations required that short paid letters be charged double the shortage. The letter is marked "Due 4¢" and "T" and has appropriate postage due stamps.



Territories



After winning the Spanish-American War in 1898, the United States had become a major territorial power having acquired Cuba, Guam, the Philippine Islands and Puerto Rico. The United States also had interests in the Panama Canal Zone, the Danish West Indies (now the United States Virgin Islands), Hawaii and, after World War II, in the Ryukyu Islands.

Top This cover bears a regular United States 1894 issue stamp that has been overprinted "Guam."

Bottom This cover bears a strip of five Philippine 30 centavo stamps. This series of stamps was produced at the United States Bureau of Engraving and Printing in 1906 and honored prominent figures from both United States and Philippine history.



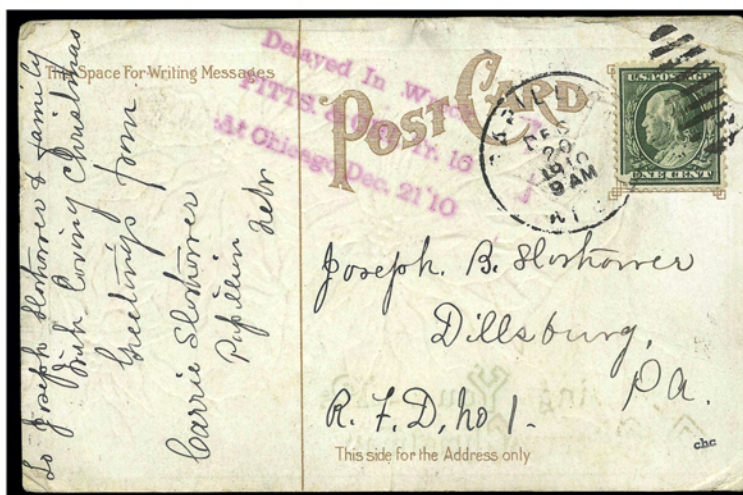
Damaged in Railway Carriage

In the early years of the twentieth century, train wrecks were more common than they are today. Both of the cards shown here were salvaged from train wrecks.

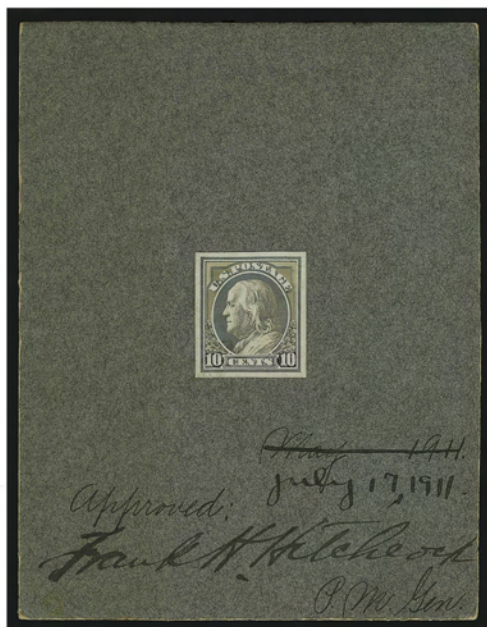
Top This 1908 card from Oakland, California to Paris had been involved in a train wreck and “Damaged by Fire & Water.”

Bottom This card was mailed at Papillion, Nebraska, on December 20, 1910, and was involved in a train wreck in Chicago, Illinois, the next day. The hand stamp reads “Delayed In Wreck PITTS. & CHI Tr. 16 At Chicago Dec. 21 '10.”

Several hundred Christmas packages that were being transported in the mail car were completely destroyed.



Essay Signed by the Postmaster General



This essay of a stamp issued in 1912 was approved by Postmaster General Frank H. Hitchcock in July 1911. It is one of a set of five such essays of different denominations, each of which is considered unique. Hitchcock served as Postmaster General during the term of President William Howard Taft, from March 6, 1909 to March 5, 1913.

Hitchcock introduced a parcel post system, and took the first steps to establish the transport of mail via airplane. He oversaw the first successful mail service with a sworn-in but unpaid pilot in 1911.

It is quite unusual for the Postmaster General to approve essays of stamps. Normally this approval is at the next, or proof, stage. While philatelic literature describes this item as an essay, an earlier stage in the production of a new stamp, it is very similar to a proof.



Issued Stamp

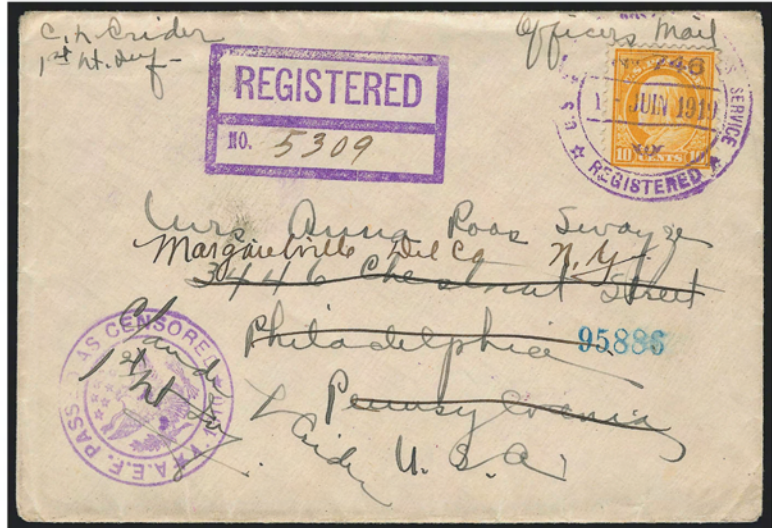
Censored

Wartime conditions frequently required that mail be censored to protect the confidentiality of military information. It is interesting to reflect on the changes and problems that are created in the modern military by the use of e-mail and telephone conversations from the battle area. Both of these covers date from World War I.

Top This 1916 registered cover to Austria originated in Shanghai, China. The cancel on the stamp indicates that the letter was mailed at the "U. S. Postal Agency Shanghai." The tape on the left side of the envelope was used to reseal the letter after it was examined by the censor.



Bottom As indicated by the manuscript legend "Officer's Mail" above the stamp and by the sender identifying him/herself as "C. L. Crider, 1st Lt." in the upper left corner, this 1919 letter was eligible for self-censorship. Lt. Crider has signed the letter just to the lower left of the address and accordingly the letter was stamped "PASSED AS CENSORED."



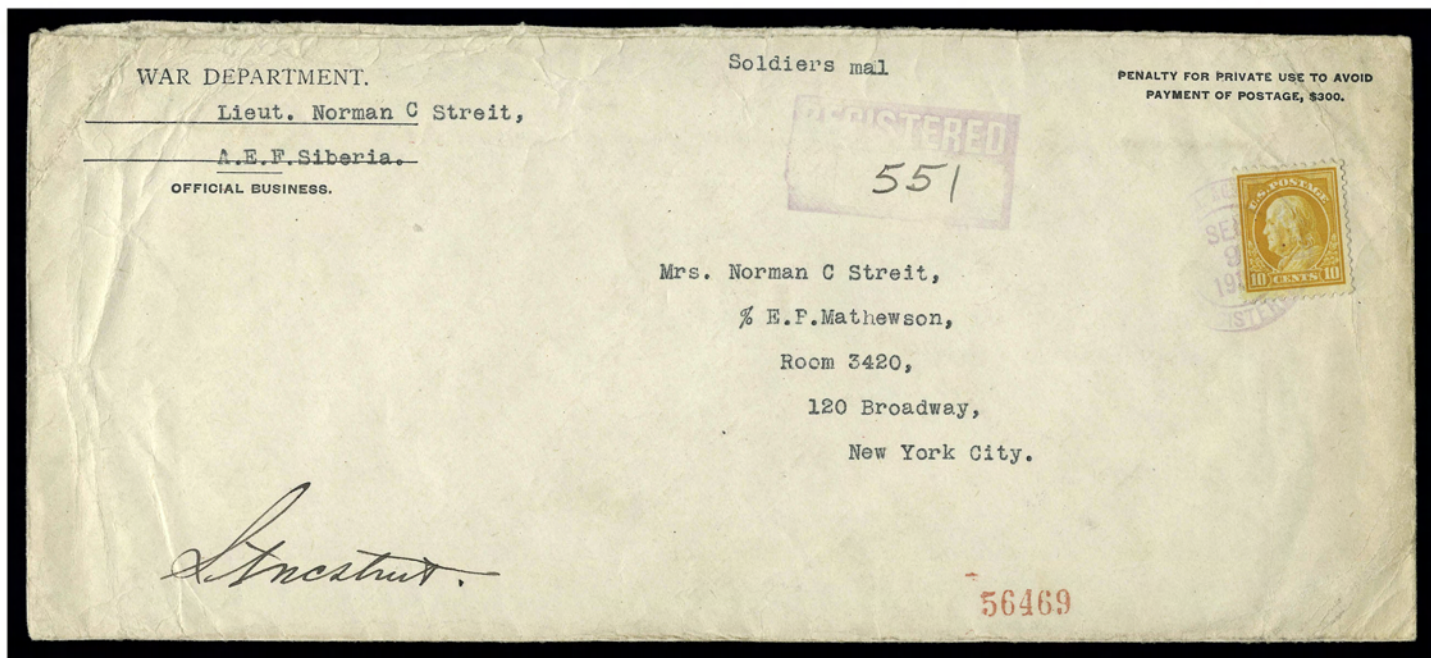
American Expeditionary Force - Siberia

American involvement in Siberia during the Boshevik Revolution was problematic. An Allied Expeditionary Force was sent to Siberia to protect the rear or eastern front even though President Woodrow Wilson was very reluctant to do so.

In August 1918, U. S. troops arrived in Vladivostok. Years later Secretary of State Newton D. Baker stated, "The expedition was nonsense from the beginning and always seemed to me one of those sideshows born of desperation."

Wilson's doctrine was based on territorial integrity and complete neutrality in Russia politics. The last American troops left Siberia in April, 1920.

This registered letter was self-censored and the stamp is tied with a "U. S. Postal Agency Siberia" cancel.



Radio Letter

This radio letter was written on May 29, 1919. The S.S. *Bergensfjord* was at sea on an eastbound crossing and the S.S. *Stavangerfjord* was at sea on a westbound crossing. In mid-ocean, they apparently came close enough that radio contact for passenger communications was feasible. A passenger on the *Bergensfjord* sent this message to Minneapolis via the *Stavangerfjord*.

The New York Times reported on Wednesday, June 4, 1919, that the *Stavangerfjord* made port in New York City on Tuesday, June 3. This letter, received by radio during the voyage, was transcribed and put into the mail at the Marconi Station in Brooklyn on June 5. It arrived in Minneapolis on June 7 and was apparently delivered or called for on June 9.



“Delay Due To Wrecked Mail Plane”



Top The history of the postal system is filled with stories of attempts to speed the mail - to shorten the time from sender to addressee. Some of these attempts were so well considered and carefully developed that they are part of the postal system today. The use of post roads, railroads and airplanes, even when they were originally considered impractical or dangerous are examples of innovations that have become essential to a modern mail system.

Early air service was dangerous. The pilot was killed in this January 1930 crash in the Utah mountains. The mail was found and returned to the sender five months later.

“Via Graf Zeppelin”



Bottom There were many other developments that were not long-lasting - screwball ideas from inventors and developers that were considered sure things promising fame or riches, possibly both, for their sponsors. The Pony Express and Bicycle Mail are two schemes mentioned elsewhere. This 1929 cover was carried to Japan by dirigible. Both mail and passengers were carried on dirigibles, but these aircraft were not part of commercial aviation for long. The Hindenburg disaster in May of 1937 effectively ended dirigible service.

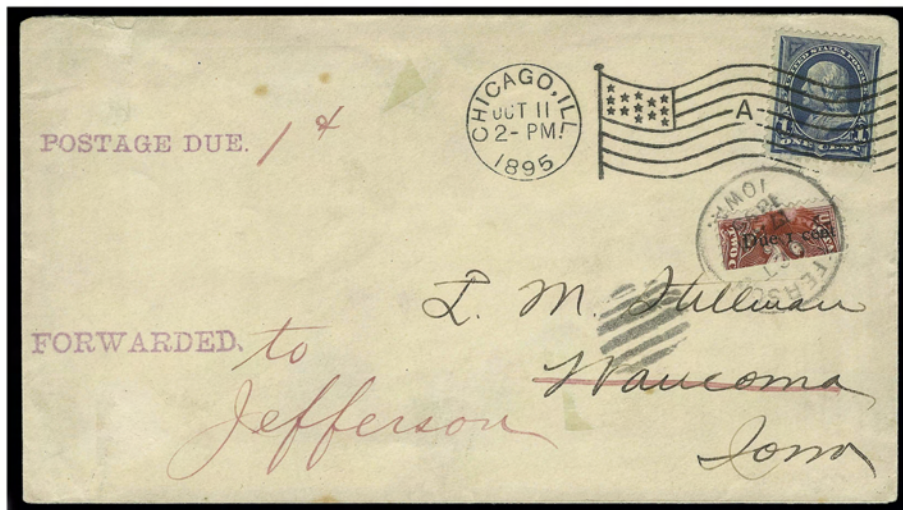
ex. Roosevelt

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was an avid and well-known stamp collector. His collection included United States proofs, stamps and varieties that had been produced for him and perhaps other officials at the direction of his friend and Postmaster General, James A. Farley. A great uproar broke out when it became known that these special products were made for the President, and the practice was ended. The so-called “Farleys” – imperforate and ungummed versions of commemorative stamps – were issued in 1935 to give collectors an opportunity to acquire examples of the “special” stamps made for President Roosevelt.

This proof (shown enlarged in the first frame of this exhibit) was made from the die of the 12c Franklin stamp issued in April 1914. It is known as a “Large Die Proof”, referring to the size of the paper and card. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing number **329741** hand stamped on back corresponds to the Bureau’s record of production and dates the proof as having been made in 1933. From a 1946 auction catalog, we know that this large die proof was in the collection of President Roosevelt.



Bisected Stamps



The term “bisect” applies to stamps that have been cut in half and used to pay postage at half the stamp’s face value. There are also one-third and one-quarter “bisects”. The U.S. Post Office never authorized postmasters to accept bisects. The acceptance or rejection of a bisected stamp seems to have been at the discretion of the post offices handling the letter. There are no known stamps with Benjamin Franklin that are genuine bisects.

Top This cover comes close to being a Franklin bisect. In 1895 the Jefferson, Iowa, postmaster ran out of 1¢ postage due stamps. He improvised with a sheet of 2¢ postage due stamps overprinted “Due 1 cent” on both halves of each stamp, which he cut in half and used to indicate 1¢ postage due. Although printing a sheet of 100 postage due stamps would produce 200 of these half stamps, only 11 examples are known.



Bottom This cover is a “philatelic” creation that served no genuine postal purpose. The rate for a domestic letter up to one ounce was 2¢. The collector who created this probably sent it to himself or a friend.

From 1929 to 1935, a few ocean liners were equipped with catapult mounted airplanes. The plan was to launch the float-equipped plane when the ship was several hundred miles from her destination. This would advance the mail and save one day or more in the delivery. Arrangements were made for fast boats to meet the planes, and transfer the mail to special cars. It was not unusual for the planes arriving in New York to “buzz” the Hudson River traffic to advertise their arrival.

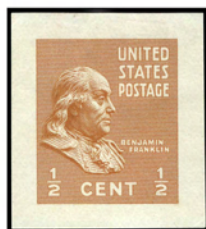
Top This card is properly franked with 6¢ for air service to New York and 20¢ for the combination of the international and catapult service. This card was postmarked in New York on May 27, 1935. It was flown from the S. S. *Bremen* to Southampton, England on June 2.

Bottom This cover was marked “ship to shore” and franked for catapult service. It was posted in Detroit on December 13, 1929. Judging from the “TOO LATE” stamp, the letter apparently missed the sailing of the *Bremen* in New York early on December 15. Catapult flights did not operate during the winter and the last flight from the *Bremen* for 1929 was on October 22. This letter would not have received catapult service even if it had made the sailing of the *Bremen*.

via Catapult



1938 Proof



Postage stamp designs usually start with the artist's conceptual sketches and drawings, known as "models." After the design concept has been developed, an "essay" is produced. Following the essay, a "proof" is made from the completed die. This is the final step before production of the plate and the printed postage stamp. Proofs are carefully-printed impressions that have much finer detail than the stamps printed from a printing plate.

Die proofs of stamps printed by private companies are much more common than proofs from the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, because the private firms used proofs in salesman's sample books, distributed them to officials as favors, and allowed impressions to be made long after the issue. Proofs of Bureau issues are much scarcer, especially as tighter control over distribution developed in the 20th century.



detail of proof



detail of stamp

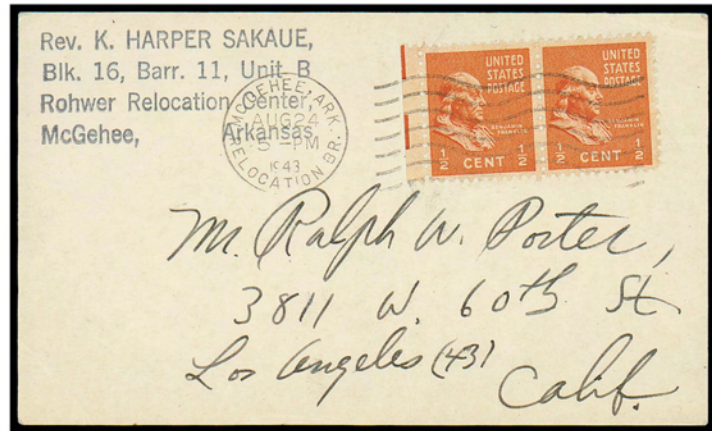
In 1938 the "Presidential" series was released. Washington was pictured on the 1¢ stamp and the series continued through 29 Presidents to Coolidge on the \$5 stamp. The series included three fractional rate stamps with Benjamin Franklin on the $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ stamp, shown here on a rare die proof, thought to be unique in private hands.

Japanese-American Internment Camp

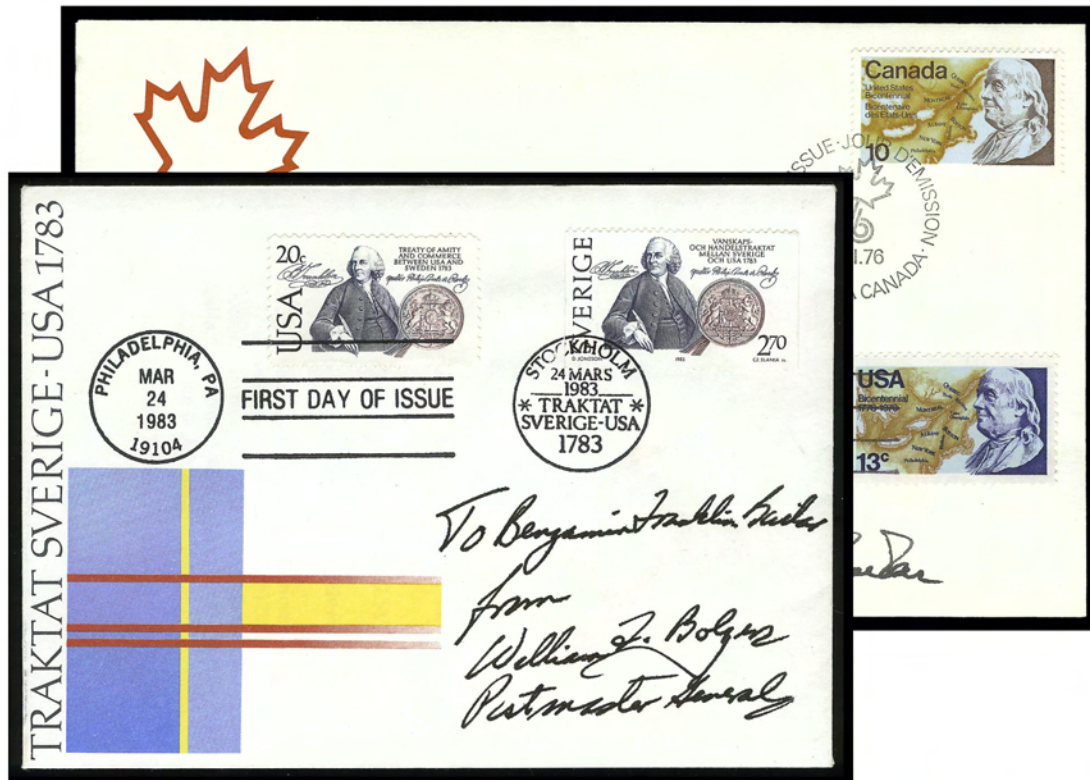
On December 7, 1941, Japan launched a surprise attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii and on other American military facilities in the Philippines, Guam, and Midway Island. The following day, the United States declared war on Japan.

On February 13, 1942, members of Congress from the Pacific Coast area sent President Roosevelt a letter in which they recommend the "immediate evacuation of all persons of Japanese lineage" aliens and citizens alike from the entire strategic area of California, Washington, and Oregon. Xenophobia towards persons of Japanese ancestry was so strong that on February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt issued an executive order, ordering the relocation of persons of Japanese ancestry, including American citizens. During the next eighteen months, about 120,000 people of Japanese descent are removed from the Pacific Coast area to ten relocation centers in California, Arizona, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, and Arkansas.

This 1943 card is from the Rohwer Relocation Center in McGehee, Arkansas.



First Day of Issue



Collecting “First Day of Issue” covers is a popular way to collect new stamps. These covers have special designs, “cachets,” to recognize the subject of the stamp.

Top The United States has issued a few stamps in conjunction with the issuance of similar stamps by foreign governments. Both of these covers are cancelled on the first day of issue and were signed by the Postmaster General of the United States at the time of issue. The stamps at top-right were issued to commemorate the United States Bicentennial. Franklin was the Postmaster General of Canada as well as the colonies that later became the United States. In 1983, the United States and Sweden issued the top-left stamps to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the two countries in 1783. The King of Sweden had specifically requested that Franklin represent the United States in negotiating that treaty because of his admiration for Franklin.

Bottom Dorothy Knapp was an artist who designed many cachets for first day covers. Most of her designs were produced in large quantities. Some designs, as here, were painted individually by Knapp. This cover is one of fewer than twelve of this design that she painted.



Eight 20th Century Stamps



This cover is “philatelic” because it was prepared for collecting or philatelic purposes. However, it is also “commercial” as it served a real and important purpose and was used in the mail. The writer was hoping to get the attention of the addressee, and the cover accomplished that purpose extremely well. The creativity and ingenuity of the sender give this cover status as a genuine collectible.

The total face value of the eight stamps on this cover is 29¢, the correct postage for a first-class letter in 1992. The stamps on this cover are all 20th century issues. The stamps include definitives, a stamp from 1956 recognizing the 250th anniversary of Franklin’s birth, and other commemoratives. The 7¢ blue stamp was issued in 1972 for educational materials which were granted preferential rates.