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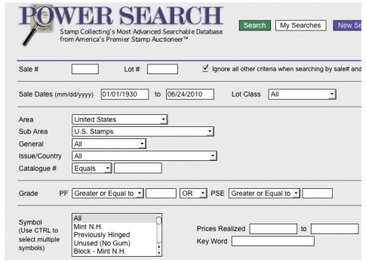

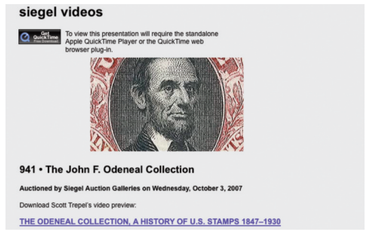

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La Posta
Vol. 47, No. 3
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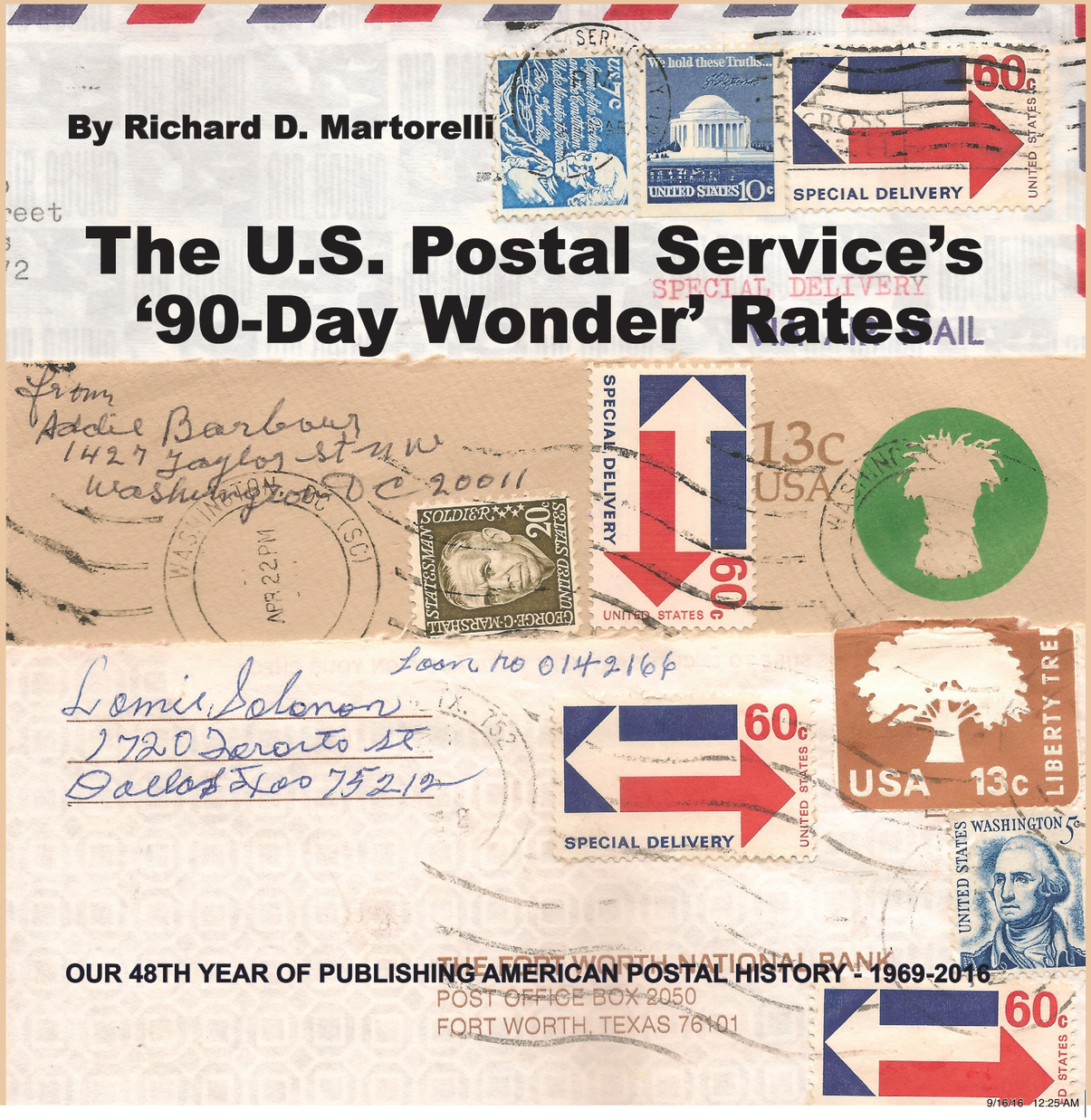

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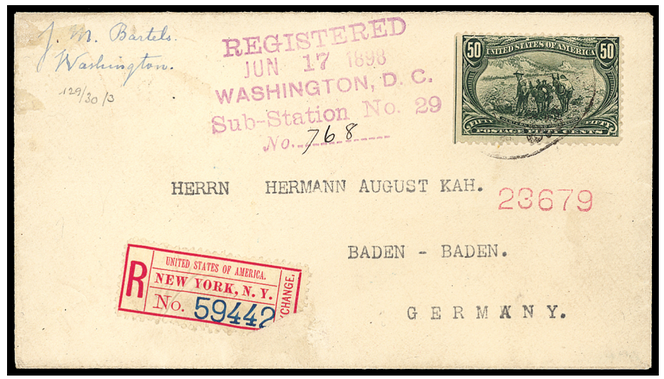

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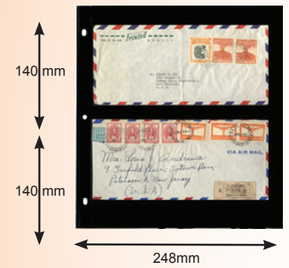

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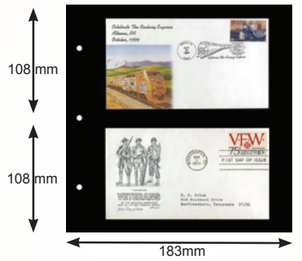

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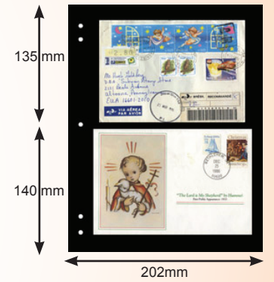

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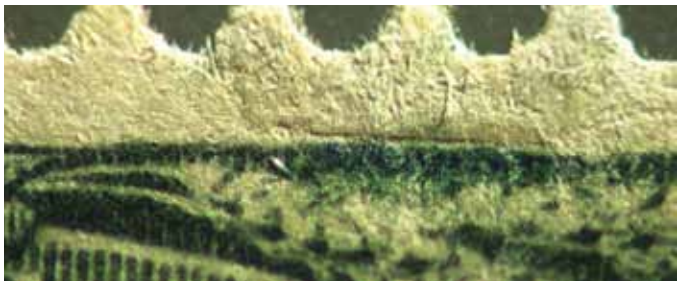
Beware: Stamps are Not Always What They Appear to Be

The Philatelic Foundation recently received a submission of what appeared to be a most attractive and valuable 50¢ Trans-Mississippi Imprint Plate Number Pair with full original gum. Upon close examination, the PF's staff of three in-house experts noticed something not quite right in the middle of the top margin of the stamp on the right.



Upon closer examination, using the technology provided by the PF's VSC6000 digital imaging system, their suspicions were confirmed. The top margin of the stamp on the right had been repaired, as seen in the sharp paper ridge in the magnification. This also showed the paper repair disturbed the design of the top frame line. The repair was noted on the PF Certificate.

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LA POSTA
THE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN POSTAL HISTORY

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Publisher's Page

By Peter Martin

New Postal History Book Coming

Postal history is an enormous field that encompasses more than 50 philatelic specialty societies and more than 100 major specialized areas.

At *La Posta*, we want to showcase the top authors and the best articles that will inform and entertain our readers. We also want to promote postal history by introducing this area to a wider audience.

With that goal in mind, I'm announcing a new book, *Aspects of American Postal History*, that will feature 16 leading authors presenting 16 different aspects of American postal history. It will be a full color, hardbound book in an 8.5 x 11 format.

This type of publication is expensive to produce, so to help finance this project we will offer advertising opportunities, but we also hope that many of our dedicated *La Posta* subscribers will offer their prepublication assistance by becoming book supporters. For a $100 contribution, here is what you get:

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For more details, see the announcement at the bottom of page 21. If you have any questions, please e-mail me at: *pmartin2525@yahoo.com*.

Correcting the *La Posta* Record

Since 1999 *La Posta* has been proudly displaying its total years of publication on the front cover. However, while doing research about *La Posta* history, I discovered that the year being recorded is wrong.

It is a common problem when discussing publication and organizational years of operation and anniversaries.

A journal begun in 2010 marks its first anniversary and second year of publication in 2011. For *La Posta*, which published its first issue (Volume 1 Number 1) in January 1969 and has been continuously published ever since, that means that 2016 is our 47th anniversary but our 48th year of publication. The 2016 first and second quarter issues have been listed as our 47th year of publication, which is incorrect, and this third quarter issue will correctly list it as our 48th year of publication.

Normally the volume number, which should change annually, would be the clue to the number of years published. For *La Posta*, that worked for the first three years, but in 1972 *La Posta* was being published on an "irregular basis" with subscribers getting "six issues per volume."

That procedure resulted in *La Posta* losing a volume number between 1972 and the end of 1975. Therefore, in 1976, when things got back to an annual schedule, what should have been volume eight was actually volume seven and the loss of a volume number has been carried forward ever since.

The February-March 1999 cover (Volume 30, Number 1) proclaimed, "Celebrating 30 years of Publishing American Postal History 1969-1999. The actual celebration should have been for the 30th anniversary of publishing *La Posta* (It marked the 31st year of publication).

The 2000 issues of *La Posta* then began using the phrase, "Our 31st Year of Publishing American Postal History 1969-2000." The year 2000 was actually the 32nd year of publication and that one year error has been carried forward ever since. That is, until today.

Small Bites of Great American Postal History

In the First Quarter *La Posta* we announced an effort to get more people to write about American postal history. We called the column, "Small Bites of Great American Postal History."

The response has been outstanding and the second feature, "A Not-So-Special-Looking Special Rate" by Roland Austin appears on page 19.

We invite more of you to make a submission. Review the criteria in my First Quarter *La Posta* column and send your "Small Bite" by e-mail to *pmartin2525@yahoo.com* or by mail to: *La Posta* Small Bites, POB 6074, Fredericksburg, VA 22403.

At the end of 2016, we will select one "Small Bite of the Year." The winner gets a $100 cash prize.

Peter Martin

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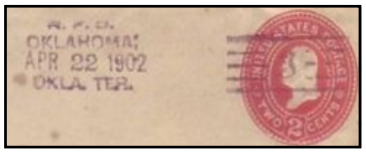

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Figure 1: A Special Delivery handstamp applied at Washington, D.C., Substation No. 20 on March 4, 1902. ***(Courtesy Labron Harris)***

Special Delivery Markings Used at Washington, D.C., Substations

By Dennis H. Pack

In 1885, when special delivery service was launched in the United States, the Post Office Department (POD) issued reams of regulations governing the handling of special delivery mail and the messengers who delivered it. Little was written about how post offices were to accept and postmark special delivery letters beyond saying their handling was to be expedited.

Most post offices postmarked special delivery letters the same way that they postmarked other first class mail—with machine or hand cancels.

However, some substations of the Washington, D.C., Post Office applied a handstamp that included the name of the substation, the date, "special delivery," and a space for a number used to track delivery of the item. This article looks at all of the reported examples of these markings, one of which is impressed on the cover in Figure 1.

It has been said that special delivery mail was the fastest and most reliable form of communication in the United States in the 1890s.[1]

There were few telephones and their service was usually local. Railroads speeded mail between cities, but the letters they carried would not be delivered until the next regular delivery, which might be the following day. Special delivery letters were usually delivered by a messenger within 20 minutes of the time they arrived at the addressee's post office.[2]

Those desiring special delivery service paid a 10-cent fee by purchasing a special delivery stamp and sticking it to the letter in addition to the regular postage.

Special delivery letters were to be bundled separately or placed on the top of bundles of letters sent between post offices, and not mixed with ordinary mail. Regulations said nothing about special postal markings, probably because a special delivery stamp had to be placed on every piece of mail desiring that service, and it could not be used to pay postage or other fees. Special delivery stamps signaled the service that was desired because they were the only stamps that could be used to pay the special delivery fee at that time.

Special delivery stamps then in use contained the notation, "SECURES IMMEDIATE DELIVERY AT ANY POST OFFICE."

At first, special delivery service was only available at designated special delivery post offices, but it was quickly extended to all free delivery post offices and other post offices designated as special delivery offices. Substations offered only limited services, so special delivery letters could be mailed there, but they were not delivered from substations.

In 1890, Postmaster General John Wanamaker authorized the establishment of small branch post offices, called substations, in drug stores and other

Figure 2: Two designs of special delivery handstamps used at Substation No. 19. Style one with "SPECIAL DELIVERY;" Style two with "Special Delivery." The cover at left shows the earliest reported use of a Washington, D.C., substation special delivery marking, May 8, 1895. ***(Both courtesy Labron Harris)***

places. They were different from the full-service branch post offices that were staffed by POD personnel.

The clerks at the new substations were employees of the businesses where the substations were located. They sold stamps, registered letters and issued money orders. Letters and packages could be mailed at substations, but they were usually not postmarked there. "Sub-station," "sub-sta" or "sub" was included in most substation postal markings.

In 1897, the PMG ordered that all substations be numbered—a few had been named—and that those substations from which mail had been delivered be changed to full-service, named stations.

In 1902, "sub" was removed from their designation, and all substations became numbered stations. Later, they became contract stations, which are the forerunners of the contract postal units that exist today.

The first Washington, D.C., substations were established in 1895. By 1902, 79 substations had been established, changed or discontinued there. The substations were only numbered one to 57 because numbers were reused after substations closed and new ones were established.

The Third Assistant Postmaster General reported in the fiscal year ending June 30, 1900, that the Washington, D.C., Post Office employed 52 messengers who delivered almost 153,000 special delivery letters and parcels, of which about 52,000 were mailed at Washington, D.C., to be delivered to local addresses.[3]

It is impossible to know how many of them were mailed at substations.

As shown in Table 1, only eight impressions of the Washington, D.C., substation special delivery markings are reported from six substations.

All of the reported special delivery markings used at Washington, D.C., substations appear to be magenta in color. They contain four lines of text with the substation name at the top followed by the date,

Table 1

SD Pmk Date	Substation No.	Style
June 6, 1899	14	1
May 8, 1895	19	1
June 12, 1901	19	2
October 7, 1901	20	1
March 4, 1902	20	1
February 22, 1902	25	1
February 1900	31	1
June 10, 1896	35	1

"SPECIAL DELIVERY" (in upper-case letters), and a space for a number used to track delivery.

The only exception is that two styles of lettering were used in "special delivery" at Substation No. 19. In style one, "SPECIAL DELIVERY" is entirely in uppercase letters. In style two, "Special Delivery" is in upper and lowercase letters. The two styles are shown on the covers in Figure 2.

Other markings shown in Figures 3 through 6 are typical. The design is the same with "SPECIAL DELIVERY" in uppercase letters. I have seen the marking from Substation No. 25 only as a black and white illustration in the article "Postal Markings of Washington, DC Stations" by Carl L. Steig in *La Posta*.[4]

The special delivery marking from Substation No. 31, shown in Figure 7, appears to have been used by

Figure 3: Washington, D.C., Substation No. 14 special delivery handstamp applied to a cover mailed to a local address with the handwritten date of June 6, 1899.

Figure 4: Washington, D.C., Substation No. 20 special delivery handstamp applied to a cover mailed to a local address on October 7, 1901.

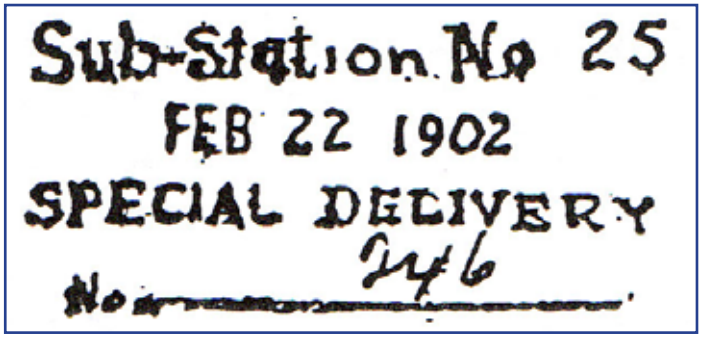

Figure 5: A tracing of a Washington, D.C., Substation No. 25 special delivery handstamp previously used as an illustration in a *La Posta* article. It is dated February 22, 1902, which is the latest reported use of a Washington, D.C., substation special delivery marking.

Figure 6: Washington, D.C., Substation No. 35 special delivery handstamp mailed to a local address on June 10, 1896. *(Courtesy Labron Harris)*

Figure 7: A Washington, D.C., Substation No. 31 handstamp, probably used by accident. It is covered by three impressions of a registered handstamp from the same substation.

Figure 8: An enlarged portion of the Substation No. 31 cover with the special delivery handstamp enhanced.

Figure 9: Washington, D.C., Station No. 57 special delivery handstamp that is similar to those used by the substations. It is mailed to a local address with the handwritten date of June 5, 1902.

mistake. The special delivery marking is covered by three overlapping impressions of a registered double-circle date stamp (DCDS) handstamp from the same substation. An additional impression of the registered DCDS handstamp confirms that this was a registered letter.

The stamp paid postage and the registration fee, and could not have been used to pay a special delivery fee. Figure 8 enlarges the markings and emphasizes the special delivery handstamp.

Six of the reported substation markings were applied to covers mailed to local addresses. The cover mailed to an out-of-state address is the one with the special delivery marking used by mistake. Five of the covers are addressed to "Miss." Let's hope that the messages that were so urgently sent were good news.

A similar Washington, D.C., special delivery marking was applied a little over two months after all substations became numbered stations.

Figure 9 shows a cover mailed at Station No. 57 with a marking very similar to the substation special delivery markings. The design differs in that all of the text is in upper-case letters except "No." The date is handwritten.

It also is addressed to a local address and to a "Miss," but the return address is a business rather than an individual. Station No. 57 was established as a substation two months before all substations became stations.

My sincere thanks to Labron Harris for graciously granting permission to use four covers from his collection as illustrations for this article.

I am interested in learning of other examples of these scarce Washington, D.C., substation special delivery markings. Questions that this study leaves unanswered include how many Washington, D.C., substations used the handstamp, and was it ever applied to letters for delivery outside Washington, D.C.?

If you have examples of these markings, please e-mail scans to: *packd@hbci.com* or send photocopies to: Dennis H. Pack, 1915 Gilmore Ave., Winona, MN 55987. Your help in this ongoing study will be appreciated.

Endnotes

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2 Ibid.

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(Dennis H. Pack is a retired Winona State University professor who collects and writes about U.S. substation and Utah postal markings and history.)

The U.S. Postal Service's '90-Day Wonder' Rates

By Richard D. Martorelli

The U.S. Army Officer Candidate School (OCS) is one of several ways of becoming a U.S. Army commissioned officer. Currently, it is a 12-week (84 days) course designed to train, assess, evaluate, and develop second lieutenants for the U.S. Army.

Because of its short length, it can be flexible and responsive to the U.S. Army's changing personnel requirements. The other traditional methods are measured in years and involve graduation from the U.S. Military Academy or Merchant Marine Academy, a Reserve Officers' Training Corps program, or completion of an Army National Guard Regional Training Institute program.

The term "90-day wonders" has been intermittently applied to junior officers commissioned through OCS since World War II, although the length of the program varied from 17 weeks (119 days) during World War II to 23 weeks during the Vietnam War (161 days).

For a period in 1976, between April 18 and July 17, the United States Postal Service (USPS) had its own "90-day wonders." These were special service fees beyond the basic mail carriage. On July 18, 1976, the Postal Service increased these fees again. This article will explore the driving action for these two sets of fee increases within three months.

Certainly one of the factors was the U.S. economy. Throughout the period 1967 through 1973, the average U.S. inflation rate was 4.6 percent. In this period, the United States spent $168 billion in fighting the hot Vietnam War at the same time it was spending $20 billion for the Apollo Manned Moon Landing program.

In addition, the United States was spending more billions for the overall Cold War. With the creation of the United States Postal Service in 1970, postal employees were given the right to be represented by a labor union, which created opportunities for larger-than historical wage increases.

All of these factors contributed to the growth of the U.S. money supply. Without going into a course on economics, growth in spending (government or private sector), unless constricted by monetary policy, can contribute to greatly increased inflation. This was the case in the early 1970s.

To use an analogy, while the "dynamite" of inflation was assembled, it did not explode until the "fuse" was lit. That happened in October 1973, when Egypt and Syria launched a surprise military campaign against Israel to regain territories lost in the June 1967 Six-Day War. As a long-standing ally of Israel, the United States supplied Israel with arms.

In response to this, the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) announced an oil embargo against Canada, Japan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States.

By the end of the embargo in March 1974, the price of oil had quadrupled globally. The U.S. national average price for a gallon of gasoline almost doubled from May 1973 to June 1974.

Remember gas lines, weekday sales based on "odd or even" license plates and no weekend sales? All of this impacted the economy, and inflation jumped to 11 percent in 1974 and 9.1 percent in 1975. The economic recession that occurred combined high unemployment and a stagnant economy with rampant inflation.

Another factor was the legislation that created the United States Postal Service. When President Nixon signed the Postal Reorganization Act into law on August 12, 1970, and the new United States Postal Service officially began operations on July 1, 1971, one of the parts of the Postal Reorganization Act required that rates for each class of mail, and fees for services, cover direct and indirect costs attributable to the class of mail or service provided, plus a portion of institutional overhead costs. In its prior life as a U.S. cabinet department of the federal government, there was no such legal requirement.

Prior to September 1975, the U.S. Postal Service had submitted two other rate requests under the Postal

Table 1:

Comparison of special service fees before, during, and after the 1976 rate change periods.

	Date	Special Delivery	Certified Mail	Return Receipt	Insured Mail	Insured Value	Registered Mail	Registered Value	Dead Letter Office Fee
Base Rate	04/17/76	$0.60	$0.30	$0.15	$0.20	$15	$0.95	$100	$0.10
Interim Rate	04/18/76	$0.80	$0.40	$0.20	$0.25	$15	$1.25	$100	$0.13
Final Rate	07/18/76	$1.25	$0.60	$0.25	$0.40	$15	$2.10	$100	$0.20
Interim % Increase		33%	33%	33%	25%		32%		30%
Final % Increase		108%	100%	67%	100%		121%		100%

Figure 1: Usages of Special Delivery rates in the April to July 1976 period.

Top: The airmail-lozenge envelope was mailed in March 1976 and shows the 60-cent rate, used with the final U.S. airmail rate of 17 cents.

Middle: The envelope, from April 1976 shows the interim rate of 80 cents

Bottom: The envelope from May 1977 shows the approved final rate of $1.25.

Reorganization Act. The first was for, among other increases, a first class mail rate changes from six cents to eight cents per ounce, implemented in May 1971.

The second was for, among other increases, a first class mail rate change from eight cents to 10 cents per ounce, and a postcard increase from six cents to eight cents; both were initially implemented in May 1974.

These changes were revised in September 1975 after the Postal Rate Commission (PRC) decided in August 1975 to reduce the first class increase on weight beyond the first ounce to nine cents, and reduce postal cards from eight cents to seven cents.

In September 1975, still feeling the impact of inflation and higher operating expenses of salaries and fuel costs, the USPS filed a third rate request change with the PRC. This included a request for a first class increase from 10 cents to 13 for the first ounce, as well as increases in postcard and airmail rates.

At that time, the USPS felt that the PRC did not have jurisdiction to set rates for special service fees, such as for special delivery, certified mail, return receipts, insured mail, registered mail, and Dead Letter return mail fees. Other fees that the USPS thought beyond the warrant of the PRC were correcting mailing lists, COD collection, restricted delivery, permit imprints, certificate of mailing, and special handling service.

While originally including information in their rate filing on the changes that they planned to make in these fees, the USPS did not seek a review or approval of these changes by the PRC. The information was only in support of their request for increases in basic postage rates.

After a successful court challenge by Associated Third Class Mail Users that increased rates in service fees were part of the PRC's jurisdiction, the USPS made several amendments in January 1976 to their original filing to ask for review of these service fees.

The PRC acted quickly on the USPS request, with public hearings completed on April 2, 1976. With an unclear future, the USPS implemented temporary increases effective April 18, 1976. Under the authority of the Postal Reorganization Act, the USPS could,

Figure 2: Covers illustrating usages of basic certified mail/ return receipt rates in the April to July 1976 period.

Top: The envelope, mailed in February 1976, shows the base rate of 30 cents for certified mail and 15 cents for a return receipt, along with 24 cents for two ounces of first class mail.

Middle: The envelope was mailed in May 1976 and reflects the interim rates of 40 cents for certified mail and 20 cents for a return receipt.

Bottom: The envelope was mailed in October 1976 and reflects the final approved rates of 60 cents for certified and 25 cents for a return receipt.

and here did, implement increases of 33 percent while the rate request was under review by the Postal Rate Commission.

The first line of Table 1 ("Base Rate") shows the fee schedule for a selected group of special services as they existed before the interim increases were made. The second line, ("Interim Rate") shows the administratively implemented increases made by the USPS while the permanent increases were being reviewed by the Rate Commission.

After submitting additional information and presenting oral arguments to the Postal Rate Commission, the USPS submitted their final case for decision on May 18, 1976.

While rates of postage had been reexamined three times since 1971, a number of special service fees had not been changed in many years.

On June 30, 1976, after having reviewed all of the material and writing their two-volume report, the Postal Rate Commission sent its' recommended decision to the Postal Service Board of Governors.

For the six fees included in Table 1, following is a summary of the PRC's analysis and decision, along with illustrated examples. As noted, under the Postal Reorganization Act, the PRC's goal was to establish recommended rates that would pay for the costs of the service, and provide additional funds to offset the overhead costs (those that could not be linked directly to the provision of a postal service, such as the salary of the Postmaster General) of the USPS's operations.

Special Delivery

Special delivery mail, in existence from 1885 to 1997, was given preferential handling in dispatch and transportation and, in addition, provided immediate delivery to the destination address from the receiving post office during published hours. Special delivery service was eligible to be used by all classes of mail.

The special delivery fee had last changed in 1971, when it was set at 60 cents for a letter weighing two pounds or less. The PRC supported an increase in all special delivery fees, with the base rate for first class,

airmail, and priority mail going from 60 cents to $1.25. These increased fees provided a cost coverage for the service of 101 percent. Put another way, for every $1 of revenue, costs for special delivery service were 99 cents, leaving approximately one cent to support all other operations and expenses of the USPS.

In Figure 1, the airmail-lozenge envelope at top was mailed in March 1976 and shows the 60-cent rate, used with the final U.S. airmail rate of 17 cents.

The middle envelope, from April 1976, shows the interim rate of 80-cents, and the bottom envelope from May 1977 shows the approved final rate of $1.25.

Certified Mail

Certified mail was started in 1955 as a means of tracking the registering of "no-value" mail as a service to individuals and businesses. The main reason for using certified mail is to provide an official record of the mailing and proof of delivery to the addressee, at a cost far less than registration.

Any mailable matter of no intrinsic value (no insurance coverage is provided), on which postage at the first class or airmail rate has been paid, will be accepted as certified mail. About 30 percent of the revenues of certified mail at that time were from the additional purchase cost of a return receipt service.

The certified mail fee had last been changed in 1966, when it was set at 30 cents for a first class letter. The PRC approved an increase from 30 cents to 60 cents, which was necessary to achieve cost coverage of 103 percent.

Return receipts to provide the mailer evidence of a completed delivery were originally furnished with registered mail at no additional cost. The service was extended to insured mail in 1913 and to other mail classes when a fee was first charged for this service in 1925. The fee does not insure the article against loss or damage, but only provides the proof of delivery.

The return receipt fee was last changed in 1969, when it was set at 15 cents for a receipt showing to whom and where an item was delivered. The Postal Service, in 1975, did not separately track the costs of the return receipt system.

In this application for higher rates, costs and revenues for this service were included with the data for registry, certified, and insured mail. The USPS did report that approximately 75 percent of return receipt revenues were associated with certified mail.

Based upon that, the PRC stated that this implied a comparable cost relationship between the two services. Since the average increase for certified mail was 86.8 percent, the PRC approved an increase of 62.8 percent (75 percent of 86.8 percent) in rates for return receipts as reasonable.

The fee for the basic service was increased from 15 cents to 25 cents, with similar changes in the other more restricted service classes.

In Figure 2, the top envelope, mailed in February 1976, shows the base rate of 30 cents for certified mail and 15 cents for a return receipt, along with 24 cents for two ounces of first class mail.

The middle envelope was mailed in May 1976 and reflects the interim rates of 40 cents for certified mail and 20 cents for a return receipt.

The bottom envelope was mailed in October 1976 and reflects the final approved rates of 60 cents for certified and 25 cents for a return receipt.

Insurance

Insurance on mail was established as a special service in 1913 in conjunction with the new parcel post/fourth class service.

The fee provides limited indemnity for loss, rifling, or damage to domestic mail. Insurance may be obtained by postal customers only on third- and fourth-class mail, or airmail that contains third- or fourth-class matter (and may contain incidental first-class enclosures).

The insured mail fee was priced according to the insurance value purchased. The last change in the price of this service came in 1966 when the minimum value was increased to $15, with a fee of 20 cents. The PRC approved a rate increases for the minimum liability of $15 from 20 cents to 40 cents. The effect of this was to generate a cost coverage of 103 percent.

The top envelope in Figure 3 shows postal usage of the Postal Insurance stamp Scott QI2 (20 cents). These nondenominated labels were sold in vending machine booklets, and proved payment of the minimum insurance fee. There were five basic varieties (Scott QI1 through QI5) issued from 1965 through 1981, representing the then-current minimum insurance fee. The way to distinguish between Scott QI2 through QI5 is the color of the oval "INSURED/U.S. Mail."

The fees and colors, in chronological order are red—20 cents (1966); black—40 cents (1977); green—50 cents (1978); and red—45 cents (1981). The design on Scott QI1, valued at 10 cents was printed in dark red, but was worded "Insured/P.O.D./V" in the oval.

The middle envelope is a philatelic commemoration of the first day of the interim insured minimum fee of 25 cents. Postmasters were instructed to "surcharge" the booklets in the vending machine by adding a five-cent stamp to the existing 20-cent label.

The bottom cover, mailed in late 1976, reflects the minimum insurance fee of 40 cents and the airmail fee of 17 cents.

Figure 3: Envelopes showing basic insured mail fees in the April to July 1976 period.

Top: The envelope shows postal usage of the Postal Insurance stamp Scott QI2 (20 cents). These nondenominated labels were sold in vending machine booklets, and proved payment of the minimum insurance fee.

Middle: This envelope is a philatelic commemoration of the first day of the interim insured minimum fee of 25 cents. Postmasters were instructed to "surcharge" the booklets in the vending machine by adding a five cent stamp to the existing 20-cent label.

Bottom: This cover, mailed in late 1976, reflects the minimum insurance fee of 40 cents and the airmail fee of 17 cents.

Figure 4: Covers with minimum registration fees paid in the April to July 1976 period.
Top: This envelope, from February 1976, reflects postage for the minimum insured value of 95 cents.
Middle: This envelope was mailed in May 1976 and reflects the interim registration fee of $1.25, plus first class postage of 35 cents for three ounces.
Bottom: This envelope was mailed in July 1976, and reflects the final approved minimum registration fee of $2.10 plus first class postage for two ounces.

Registered Mail

In contrast to certified mail and insured mail, the registered mail service is explicitly designed to provide a system for handling valuable mail matter, and indemnification to mailers for loss, rifling, or damage in the mails. All matter mailed at first class, airmail, or priority rates may be registered.

Patrons must declare the full value of registered mail; the fees are scaled to value.

For registered mail, in 1966 the minimum value was increased to $100, with a fee increase in 1969 to 80 cents and in 1971 to 95 cents.

After reviewing the USPS's data, the PRC increased registry service fees by an average of 92.2 percent, resulting in an overall cost coverage of only 102.6 percent.

For this service, the PRC took note that it is the initial handling costs that drive the system. These fixed costs do not vary with the value of the registered piece; the initial processing and handling cost of a $100 item is the same as a $10,000 item.

The largest rate increase came in the fees for pieces valued at $100 or less, from 95 cents to $2.10 per piece (120 percent), while the percentage increase in higher indemnity categories was much less (for $10,000, it increased from $5.15 to $6.20 (20 percent).

The top envelope in Figure 4, from February 1976, reflects postage for the minimum insured value of 95

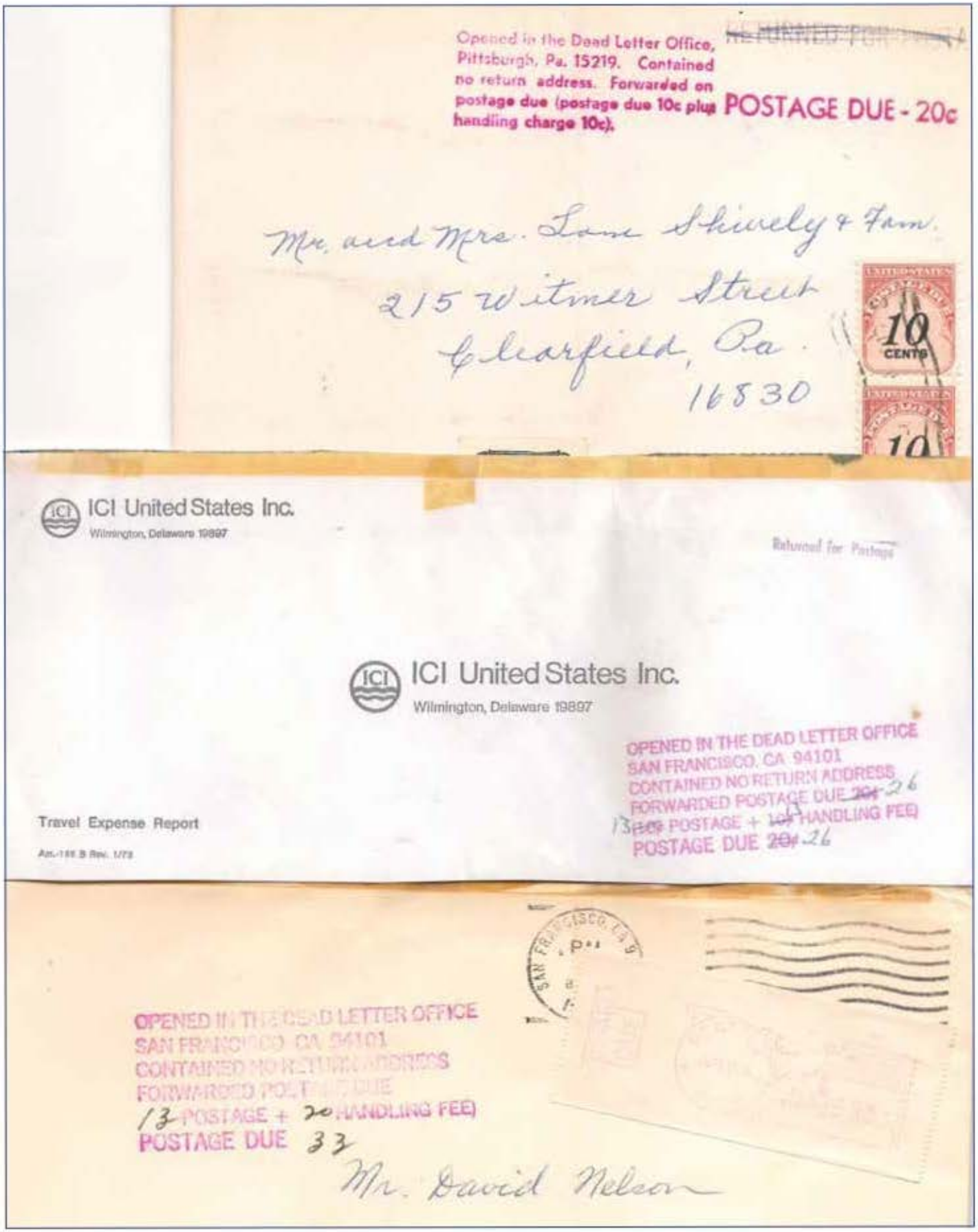

Figure 5:Covers returned from the Dead Letter Office showing fees from the April to July 1976 period.
Top: This envelope, from 1974, reports the DLO fee of 10 cents, in addition to the postage due.
Middle: This envelope reports the interim fee of 13 cents (noted by the manuscript changes to the handstamp).
Bottom: This envelope reports the final approved fee of 20 cents in September 1976.

cents. The middle envelope was mailed in May 1976 and reflects the interim registration fee of $1.25, plus first class postage of 35 cents for three ounces.

The bottom envelope in this group was mailed in July 1976, and reflects the final approved minimum registration fee of $2.10 plus first class postage for two ounces.

Dead Letter Return Fee

In this review, the last category of special service fees is the dead letter return fee. This is the service where the USPS opens and examines mail that is completely undeliverable due to improper addressing, in order to ascertain the name and address of the sender or addressee.

This service is mandatory and applies to first class letters or parcels only. From the inception of the service in 1866 to 1920, there was no fee charged to the addressee of the returned mail. From 1920 to 1985, a fee was charged, in addition to the cost of any postage due, but this service fee was eliminated in 1985.

The fee, collected upon delivery, had been 10 cents since 1958. Although the USPS proposed an increase from 10 cents to 25 cents, they had no data on the cost to provide this service. Because of that, and because this service was not one that a postal patron could refuse, or not choose, the PRC approved an increase from 10 cents to only 20 cents.

Figure 5 illustrates these changes. The top envelope, from 1974, reports the DLO fee of 10 cents, in addition to the postage due.

The middle envelope reports the interim fee of 13 cents (noted by the manuscript changes to the handstamp), and the bottom envelope reports the final approved fee of 20 cents in September 1976.

The changes in the fees approved basically covered the cost of the services provided, with a very small contribution to overhead costs. On average, the increase was 109 percent from the March 1976 rates to the June 1976 rates, for the same level of services.

The PRC thought that the fee increases recommended were substantial, and expressed that they could not have increased them more without losing business.

The new permanent fees are on the third line ("Final Rate") of Table 1. The bottom line of that table ("Final % Increase") shows the total growth for the selected services from the pre-review fee to the post-review fee.

The PRC's decisions on postal rate changes is treated as advice by the Board of Governors of the USPS, and does not limit the governors' exercise of their statutory authority to decide on rates.

There have been times when the governors have overruled the PRC on rate matters. In this case, my opinion is that the PRC's decisions were given only a cursory review by the governors. That is because, on July 9, 1976, six business days after the PRC's submission, the USPS announced that the governors approved the rate increases and ordered them implemented on July 18, 1976.

The above discussed fees, which I refer to as "90 day wonders," were only used in the 91-day time frame between the enactment of the interim fees on April 18 and the implementation of the final fees on July 18, 1976.

From a reading of the Beecher book, this appears to be the shortest period of use for domestic U.S. rates. The next shortest period was the 108-day period for the nine cents first class second ounce and seven cents postcard rates implemented on September 14, 1975 and changed on December 31, 1975.

Neither of these, however, beat the shortest time frame in which a regularly issued stamp could be used as single-piece postage for first class mail.

The 1994 Year of the Boar Chinese New Year stamp (Scott 2876) is denominated 29 cents, and was issued on December 30, 1994. Two days later, on January 1, 1995, first class mail rates increased to 32 cents.

Having family with early January birthdays, I mailed cards on December 31, using the stamp in its appropriate rate period. As with any short-lived rate, finding, or making, examples of these types of usages is an engaging challenge for the postal historian.

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(Richard Martorelli has been collecting postal history for 45 years with a focus on postage due usages. He can be reached by e-mail at: rdmartorelli@gmail.com*)*

A Not-So-Special-Looking Special Rate

By Roland Austin

At first glance, the exploded box illustrated above appears to be an ordinary 19th century, third-class usage with an undated target cancel on the stamps. Next, you might read the full address label and realize the contents were not ordinary third-class matter and would assume it to be parcel post. There is a possibility that you could be correct in both assumptions.

Early mailings of material other than first class or second class were originally mailed as only third-class matter until May 1, 1879, when certain items (including plants/planting material) were reclassified as fourth-class matter at a uniform rate of one cent per ounce for mailings weighing up to four pounds.

A short time later, on July 24, 1888, a special rate within the fourth class category was created for plant material with a special rate of one cent per two ounces for mailings weighing up to four pounds.

According to the mailing label, this remarkable example contained "live plants," mailed to Newburyport, Massachusetts, from Springfield, Ohio, a distance of 847 miles.

The pair of two-cent Washington head stamps of the First Bureau issue paid four cents postage for an up to eight ounce mailing at the one cent per two ounce rate. Although undated, I would place this mailing between 1895 (the year this stamp appeared) and 1902 (the year the Second Bureau issue appeared), which falls in the first special "two-ounce" rate period.

This "two ounce" rate lasted until January 1, 1913, when the rate went back to one cent per ounce, now for a mailing weighing up to 11 pounds.

The special rate for plant material was adjusted again at one cent per two ounces on April 24, 1914 (but only for up to eight ounces), lasting until plant matter at a special fourth-class rate ended after April 14, 1925. However, the one cent per two ounces rate for plant material, with the eight ounce limit, continued under the third-class category until January 1, 1949.

Collecting pre-April 15, 1925, examples of this special plant rate is a true challenge. In my experience, I have seen three, this being the only one from the original "two-ounce" period (which allowed for heavier mailings) with the rate paid by stamps of the First Bureau issue.

The nature of this mail is the biggest factor contributing to its scarcity. The shipping containers were likely soiled beyond saving or so bulky they were damaged/destroyed upon opening, which may also be the reason the other examples I have seen were rated at the smaller, minimum payment of one cent (perhaps only carrying seeds, not plants).

Figure 1 (Above): An attractive Savannah, Georgia, hotel advertising cover with a December 21, 1899 flag cancel.

Figure 2 (Right): The reverse of the Figure 1 cover shows a December 23, 1899, Detroit cancel with an oval 'Train Late/1/Mail Delayed' auxiliary marking.

A 'Train Late/Mail Delayed' Auxiliary Marking

By Steve Swain

One of the most important guidelines for postal history collecting is to always look at the reverse of the cover. The front of the cover could have an outstanding advertising illustration, a distinctive postmark, an unusual cancellation, a scarce stamp franking the envelope, etc., all of which make the cover a premier collectible item.

But the reverse of the cover could reveal an even more unique characteristic that completes the equation of an exceptional piece of postal history. Such is the Figure 1 cover that I recently purchased from an online dealer as I was searching for additions to my advertising cover collection.

The "Chas. F. Graham Proprietor" advertising cover for the Pulaski House in Savannah, Georgia, and the Hotel Tybee on Tybee Island, Georgia, has an outstanding, well-designed graphic displaying both hotels.

The black circular date stamp, although somewhat difficult to discern because of being struck on the cover's black illustration, is SAVANNAH/DEC 21 1899/7-PM/GA. However, the flag cancel with wavy lines tying a two-cent Washington (Scott 250) to the cover is reasonably visible and certainly enhanced the attraction of the cover. Overall, it was a very appealing addition to my collection.

When the cover arrived in the mail, I removed it from its plastic holder and, remembering the postal history collecting principle, I turned the cover over. To the right of the Detroit, Michigan, receiving date stamp was an oval-shaped marking that I had not seen before: TRAIN LATE/1/MAIL DELAYED (Figure 2).

With a few hours of research, I learned that the oval auxiliary marking was relatively scarce, as confirmed by websites for several major auction houses offering covers with the same marking and describing it as "rare." Additional research did reveal there were not too many recorded examples of covers with the handstamp, but those that had been offered for sale really did not command that high of a price.

I then visited the Auxiliary Markings Club website (*http://www.postal-markings.org*) for possible

Auxiliary Markings Record						
Auxiliary Marking Text	Type	Country	Date/EKU	LKU	Color	Type
TRAIN LATE/MAIL DELAYED (in oval)	DELAY	USA	3/1/1907		Black	Handstamp

Figure 3: The Auxiliary Markings Club's record for the'Delay' marking.

additional information about the marking. The site's Full Auxiliary Markings record indeed listed it as a handstamp of the "DELAY" type (Figure 3). But what immediately caught my eye in the listing was the date for the earliest known use of the marking: "3/1/1907."

The receiving date stamp on my cover seemed to show DETROIT/DEC 23/12-PM/1899/MICH and, if so, was a much earlier usage of the Train Late marking.

To confirm the year of my cover, I used an image editing program and cropped the receiving date stamp from a scan of the cover. When I reversed the color, then sharpened and enhanced the image, the exercise did seem to confirm a date of 1899, as seen in Figure 4.

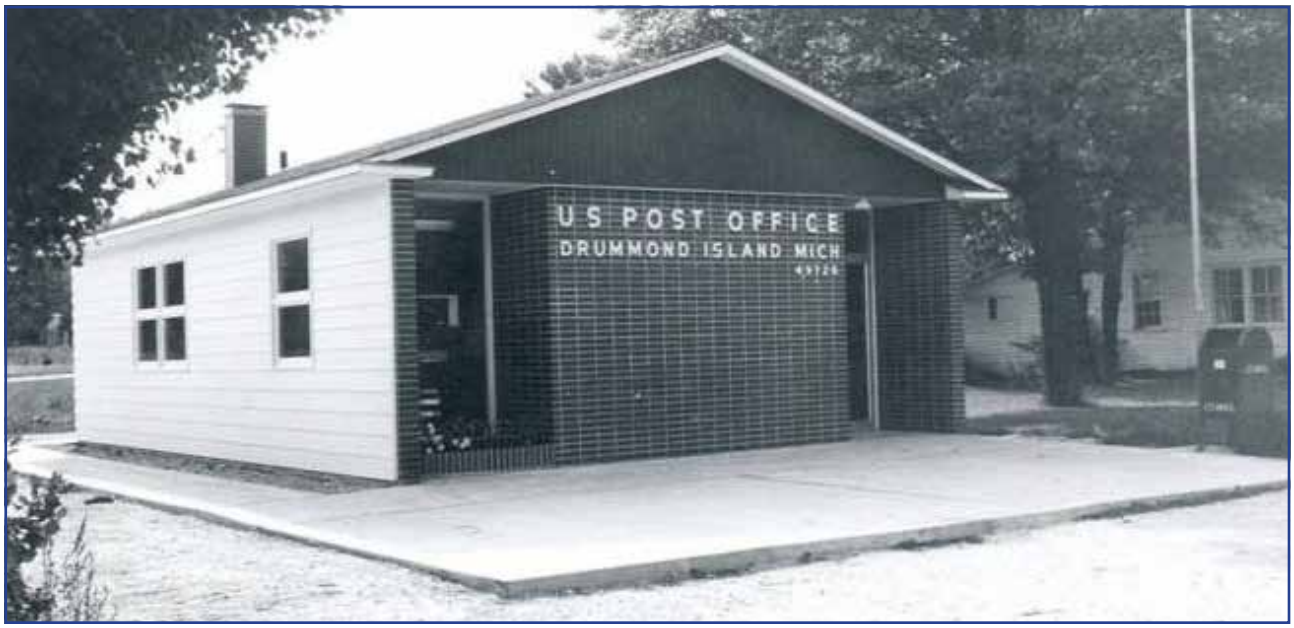
As I reviewed covers with the Train Late marking on auction house websites and eBay, several had date stamps of 1905 and 1906. Only one did I find with the year 1899 (November 23). It was like my December 23 cover. I was not able to locate a cover for a year prior to either of these.

Unfortunately, my cover with the Train Late marking was not a new earliest known use, but it was so very close!

However, not only do I now have a very attractive addition to my advertising cover collection, I have a cover with a relatively scarce auxiliary marking. "Always look at the reverse of the cover!"

(Steve Swain has been a collector of stamps and postal history for more than 55 years. He recently became the editor of Georgia Post Roads*, the quarterly journal of the Georgia Postal History Society. He can be contacted be e-mail at:* swain.steve9@gmail.com*)*

Figure 4: Enlarged views of the Detroit date stamp and the Train Late oval.



The Drummond Island, Michigan, Post Office in the 1960s.

The Drummond Island, Michigan, Post Offices

By Paul Petosky

Drummond Island is located in Chippewa County on Michigan's Upper Peninsula on the border of Canada. It is one of the largest islands in Lake Huron and is the only island in the Manitoulin island chain that is part of the United States.

Four post offices have provided mail service on the island: Drummond, Scammon, Maxton, and Johns Wood.

The first postal service for Drummond Island was established to communicate with the British fort located at Whitney Bay during 1815-1828. There is record of the schooner *Eagle* arriving at Drummond Island in June 1816, carrying mail for officers at the fort, which was named in honor of British officer and Canadian administrator, Sir Gordon Drummond.

Drummond, the British commander of the Lake District, built Fort Drummond after the War of 1812. When it was found to be on American territory it was abandoned in 1822. Daniel Murray Seaman came as a Mormon missionary to the Indians and settled here in 1853, followed soon by other Mormons.

He became the first postmaster, of the post office named Drummond on February 9, 1881. It was located on the west side of the island.

The township of Drummond was established in 1853, but it wasn't until 1881 that the U.S. Postal Office established an office on Drummond Island.

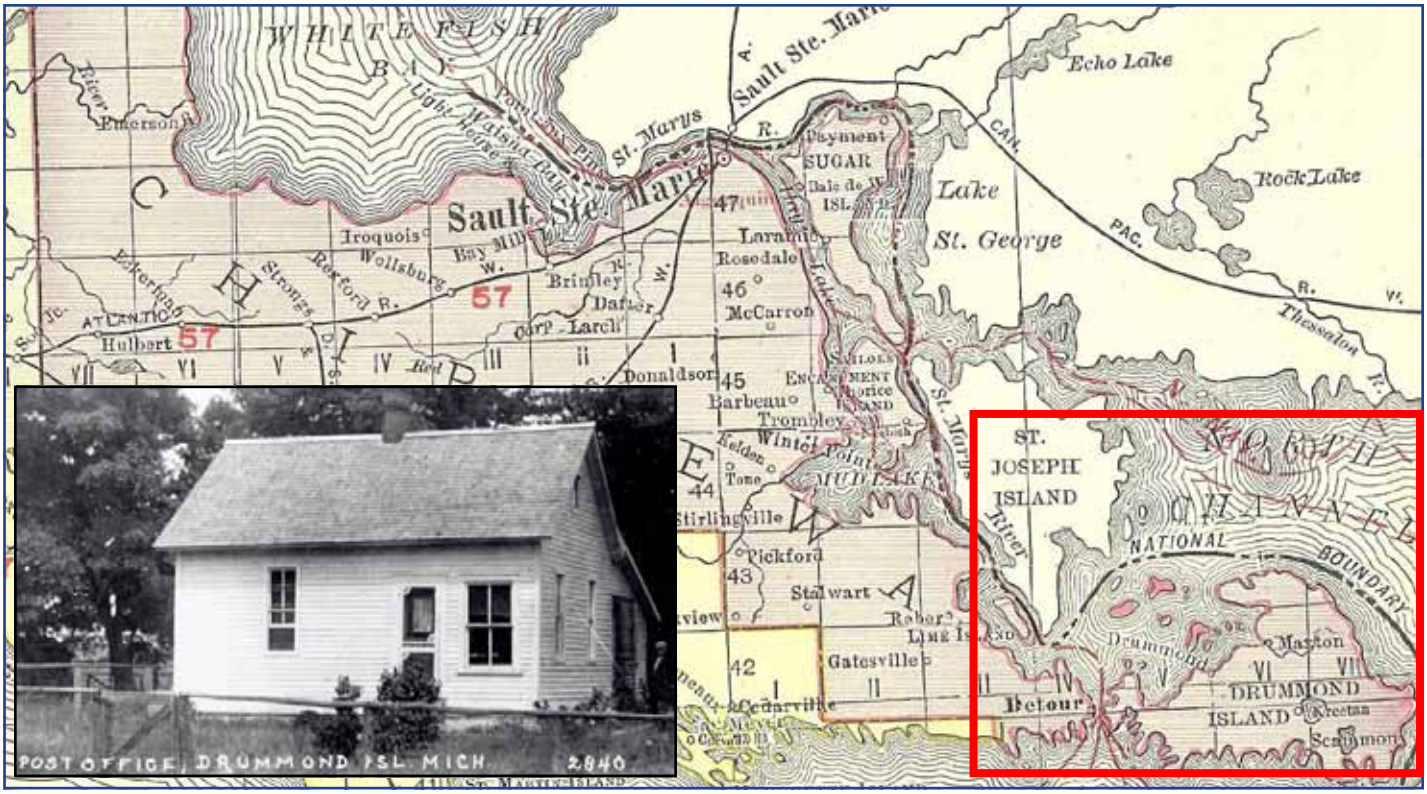
The current island population is slightly more than 1,000.

Drummond

Drummond was established as a fourth class post office on February 9, 1881. Domestic Money Order Business was added on October 16, 1907. Drummond was advanced to a third class office on July 1, 1950. The post office name was changed to Drummond Island on July 1, 1953. The following list of postmasters served at the Drummond and Drummond Island Post Offices.

Postmasters with Dates of Appointment

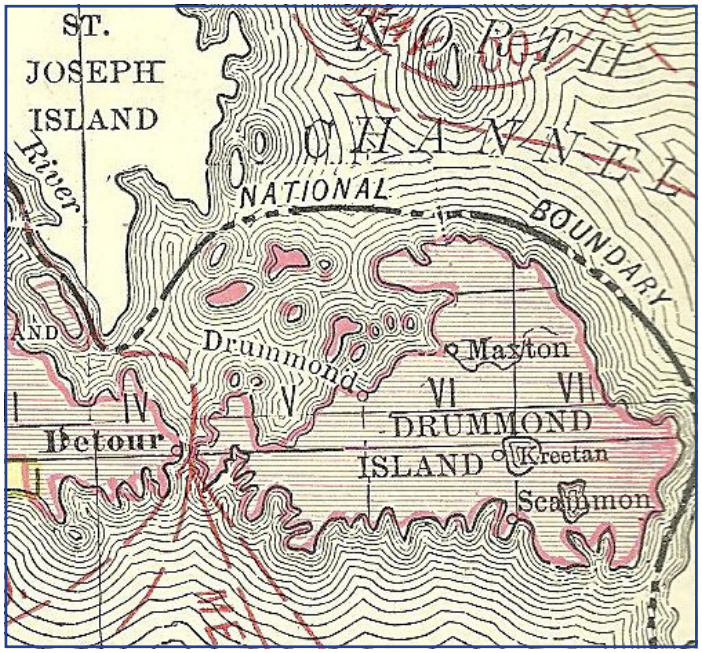
Daniel Murray Seaman	February 9, 1881
Hattie B. Morgan	December 20, 1897
Jennie B. Dutcher	January 26, 1906
Grace D. Anderson	February 6, 1908
Phebe E. Johnston	August 9, 1910
Margaret J. Dick	October 25, 1912
Myrtle F. Bailey	February 13, 1915
Floyd S. Seaman	October 31, 1946
Mrs. Rosemund J. Mack	February 11, 1971
Bernard Huyck	August 27, 1992
Sheila I. Matthews	June 12, 1993
Cynthia G. Schwab	February 21, 2003
Dale Streichert	March 6, 2004
Julie A. Kurkierewicz	May 9, 2008
Jeannette M. Landreville	June 30, 2012 to present



An 1889 Chippewa County map with Drummond Island at lower right. Inset is the Drummond Island Post Office used during 1912-1915 (Now a private residence).

A Drummond four-bar postmark from 1932.

A Drummond Island four-bar postmark from 2001.



A 1902 Drummond Island map showing the villages on the island.

A map detail of the Michigan-Canada border with the Drummond Island area in red.

Drummond in the 1910s

Scammon

February 19, 1884 to November 30, 1892

This settlement on the south shore of Drummond Island developed around the mill of the Island Cedar Company. Clark A. Watson, company superintendent became the first postmaster on February 19, 1884.

Scammon was established as a fourth class office on February 19, 1884 and was discontinued on November 15, 1892, with mail service to Drummond.

Clark A. Watson was the only postmaster. He served from: February 19, 1884 to November 15, 1892.

Maxton

March 9, 1900 to November 29, 1930

This village on Drummond Island came into existence when the Cleveland Cedar Company built a mill here. Ernest A. Sims became the first postmaster on March 9, 1900.

Maxton was established as a fourth class office on March 9, 1900. It offered domestic Money Order Business effective on October 16, 1907. The post office was discontinued on November 29, 1930, with mail service to Drummond.

Postmasters with Dates of Appointment

Ernest A. Sims	March 9, 1900
Lewis W. Cloudman	October 16, 1902
Bernadotte E. King	May 25, 1908
(PO moved 660 yards east)	June 9, 1904
(PO moved .5 miles west)	July 6, 1908
Karl C. Cloudman	November 1, 1910
William A. Cloudman	March 20, 1913
	to November 29, 1930
(PO moved .75 miles southeast)	October 20, 1926

Kreetan/Johns Wood

September 7, 1905 to July 15, 1927

Johns Wood, was a village that began as a sawmill site and was called Scammon's Cove. It was taken over by the Kreetan Company of Tonawanda, New York, and the post office was established under the name of Kreetan on September 7, 1905 with Maggie J. Walz as its first postmaster.

The name was changed to Johns Wood on March 19, 1914 with lumberman Harold C. Johnson as postmaster.

The Johns Wood Post Office discontinued operation on July 15, 1927, with mail service to Drummond.

Postmasters that served at the Kreetan and Johns Wood Post Offices are listed below.

Kreetan

Kreetan was established as a fourth class office on September 7, 1905.

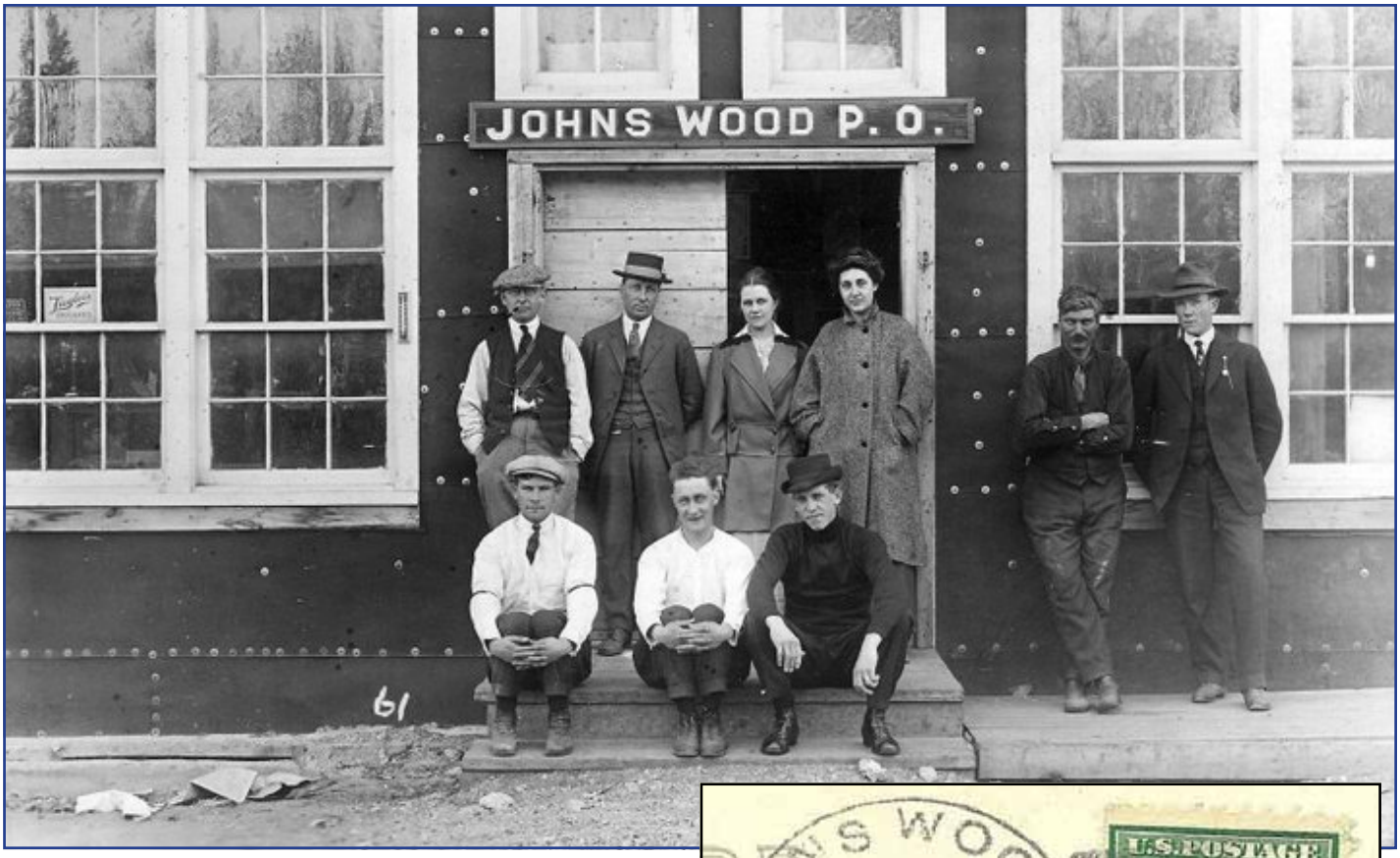
Postmasters with Dates of Appointment

Maggie J. Walz	September 7, 1905
Victor K. Wainio	December 3, 1907
Howard C. Johnson	December 30, 1908

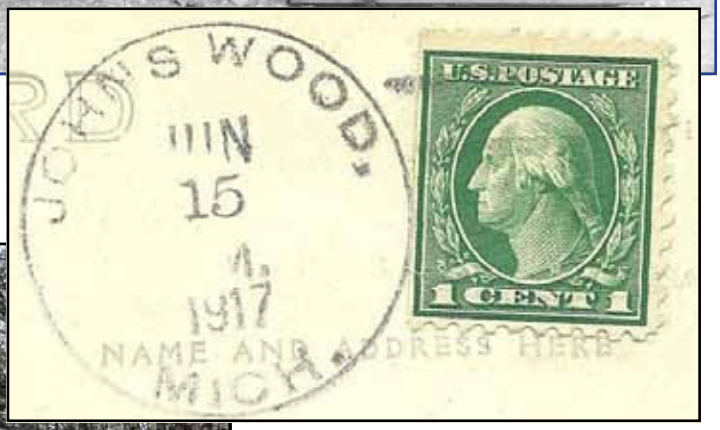
Name changed to Johns Wood March 19, 1914

Howard C. Johnson	March 19, 1914
Charles F. Knisley	December 9, 1915
Timothy O. O'Gorman	January 8, 1917
Roy Hiatt	April 14, 1919
T. Ray Langhbaum	August 25, 1921
Saima Olson	January 25, 1923
Ella B. Landreville	January 5, 1924
Emery C. Rieckhuff	June 8, 1925
	to July 15, 1927

(Paul Petosky specializes in Michigan Upper Peninsula discontinued post office postmarks and post offices. He writes a monthly column about Michigan post offices in the Great Lakes Pilot *newspaper. His Postmarks from the Past website is at:* http://postmarks.grandmaraismichigan.com/. *Anyone interested in Michigan postal history can contact him by e-mail at:* paul_petosky@yahoo.com*)*

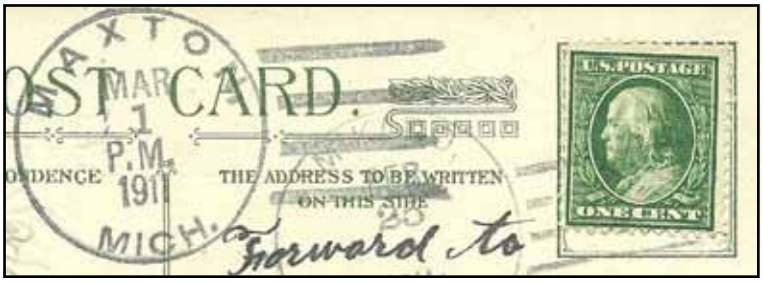


The Johns Wood Post Office and Wayfarers Mart in 1915.



A Johns Wood four-bar postmark dated June 15, 1917.

A 2011 photo of the Maxton Post Office that replaced the old one that burned down. ***(Courtesy Cindy Hammers)***



A Maxton four-bar postmark dated March 1, 1911.

Figure 1 (Left): A postcard sent from Chautauqua, New York, to Musselburgh, Scotland, in July 1906, prior to the divided back era.

Figure 2 (Right): The addressed side of the Figure 1 postcard bears a pair of the then-current one-cent stamps canceled with a large CDS and double ovate cancels.

From Chautauqua to Musselburgh for Two Cents

By Wayne Anmuth

The postcard depicted here, albeit scarce in its use, brings to bear much of the changing regulations during the postcard craze that occurred between 1900 and 1915. What began in Europe as a frenzy in the 1890s infected the United States and changed our total manner of communication during this period.

Starting on July 1, 1898, postcards could be sent through the mail for only one cent regardless of whether they contained a message or not on its front side.

The Post Office Department also ended its monopoly on the printing of postals, but the words "Private Mailing Card—Authorized by the Act of Congress on May 19th, 1898" were required to be printed on the back of all cards not issued by the government.

This new regulation also ushered in the colorful scenes that private postcard producers depicted on the front of cards that added to their immense popularity.

In December 1901, the Postmaster General issued Post Office Order No. 1447, which allowed the words "Post Card" instead of the longer "Private Mailing Card" on the back of postcards.

The period prior to 1907 became the undivided back era.

Regulations provided that postcards could go through the mail with a one-cent stamp, provided that there was no writing on the addressed side other than the address. If there was writing on the addressed side then domestic postage of two cents was required.

The public never quite grasped the regulations and thousands of cards were held back by postal clerks for additional postage. As a result of a ruling by the Universal Postal Union, the rule was changed in 1907 and the divided back came into being and a message could be written on the left portion of the address side without additional postage.

The postcard depicted here is noteworthy as it was sent from Chautauqua, New York, to Musselburgh, Scotland, in 1906, prior to the divided back era.

Vacationing in Chautauqua, the home of the famed Chautauqua Institution, the writer wrote his message on the front side (Figure 1) and affixed the proper amount of postage of two cents, the international rate. The addressed side (Figure 2) bears a pair of the then-current one-cent stamps canceled with a large CDS and double ovate cancels.

With the exception of postcards to Canada and Mexico, the international rate from the United States was two cents, and five cents if the writer had written a message on the address side.

(Wayne Anmuth can be contacted by e-mail at: wanmuth@verizon.net*)*

Figure 1: A 1935 letter from the White Motor Company that predates its entry into the HPO field.

White Motor Company Cover Predates Entry Into the HPO Field

By Peter Martin

While the heyday of Highway Post Office collecting has long passed, there are still diehards who collect this postal history subject area, although most collectors today incorporate it into a state specialty, rather than collecting the whole range of HPO covers.

HPO service started with the first HPO on February 10, 1941, when the Washington D.C., and Harrisonburg, Virginia, HPO was inaugurated. HPO service ended in 1974. Most HPO collectors are familiar with the competition among bus companies that wanted to provide equipment for this new and innovative Post Office Department delivery service, which was intended to supplement and replace Railroad Post Office mail handling.

The White Company of Cleveland was one of the companies selected to provide HPO buses and their Model 788 White transit bus was used for HPO 1. This bus, shown in front of the White House, where President Roosevelt gave it a look (Figure 2), had an overall length of 32 feet and an inside width of seven and one-half feet. The model had proven its efficiency in passenger service.

Figure 1 shows a pre-HPO commercial cover sent by C.A. Ward Jr. on October 16, 1935, almost six years before the first HPO run. The illustrated corner card

The White Company HPO 1 bus in front of the White House.

shows the White Company Motor Trucks and Busses logo and provides its Cleveland address.

For added postal history interest, the two-cent Washington, which originally was machine cancelled on October 16, was further cancelled with an October 17 Cleveland D.P.O duplex device, which is also applied to the struck-through magenta, "Postage Due 1 Cen[t]" supplementary marking in the lower left corner. The envelope had been marked, "Held For Postage," in magenta. A one-cent Franklin, with a perfined W with two interior circles, was added to pay the postage due. The "Held For Postage" was struck through, and the letter was sent to Chagrin Falls, Ohio.

Figure 1: The front of a pioneer airmail postcard for the March 17, 1912, Galveston-La Marque, Texas, National School Grounds Aviation Meet. It shows the pilot in his biplane and the event post office substation.

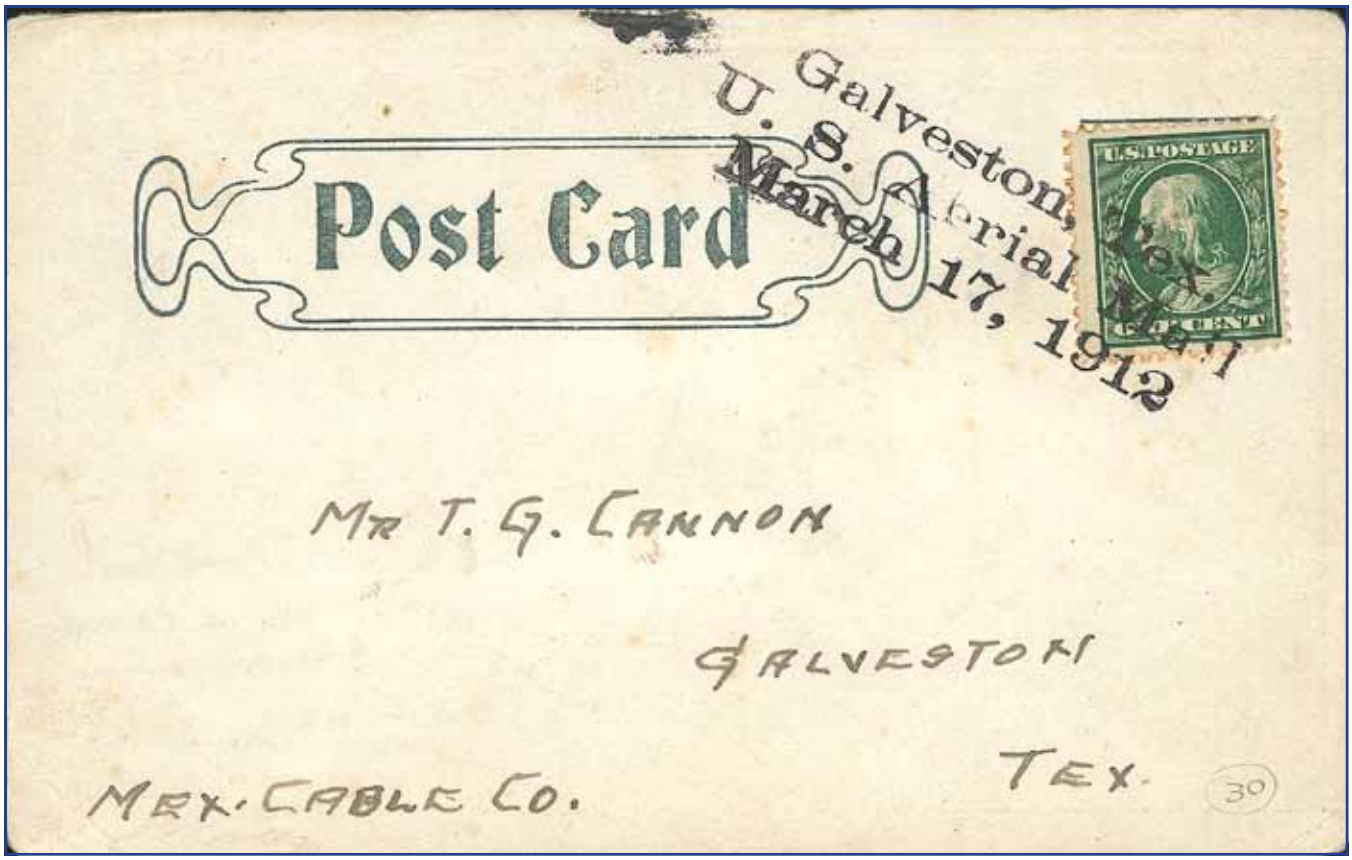


Figure 2: An example of the postcard reverse with the three-line 'Galveston, Tex/U.S. Aerial Mail/March 17, 1912' event cancel. ***(Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries)***

Aviation Pioneer Paul Studensky

By Peter Martin

Pioneer airmail is always an interesting subject, so when I found the Figure 1 postcard in a postal history auction with a description of, "Aviator Paul Studensky Receiving U.S. Aerial Mail at Galveston, TX," I was intrigued enough to place a bid.

While lots of pioneer airmail had special cancels for the flights, I had not seen images of actual pilot mail delivery. I won the lot and when the postcard arrived, I was pleased to find that not only is the pilot shown (sitting in his Beech-National biplane), but so is the special event "post office," which is actually a flimsily built one-man shack with a small opening for transacting business and a sign above it reading, "U.S. Aerial Mail." The hanger for the National Aeroplane Company appears in the background.

It is the only philatelic item of which I am aware that shows a pioneer airmail post office.

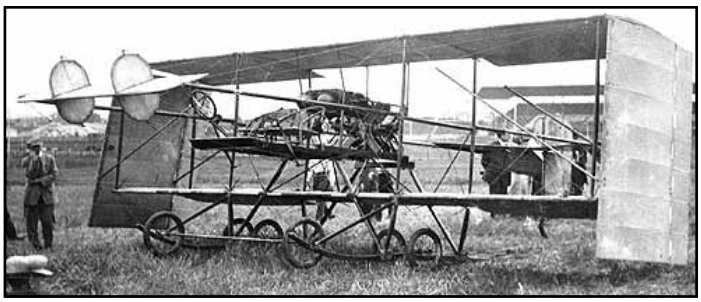
The period from 1910 though 1916 is known as the airmail "pioneer period," during which time early fliers carried small amounts of first class mail from temporary postal stations established in connection with aviation meets, carnivals or fairs. Many of the mail flights were authorized by the Post Office Department in Washington, D.C., while others were only sanctioned by the local postmaster.

The American Air Mail Catalogue identifies this flight as number 19: "**1912, March 17, Galveston, Texas-La Marque, Texas. National School Grounds Aviation Meet.** This meet was sponsored by the Galveston Chamber of Commerce and the mail flight was authorized by H.A. Griffin, Postmaster. Aviator Paul Studensky delivered a pouch of mail to the Postmaster at La Marque, a distance of 15 miles, and returned to Galveston with the official receipt of the mail. A large number of postcards bearing a likeness of Studensky and his plane were sold to the public."

Studensky's flight, which carried an estimated 1,200 pieces of mail, was the first authorized mail flight in Texas, indeed the first airmail carrying flight in the South. The three-line cancel for the event, which was applied at a postal substation adjacent to the National Aeroplane Company, in a serif type, reads, "Galveston, Tex/U.S. Aerial Mail/March 17, 1912."

My postcard was unused, but I was able to find an example of the postmark used on a postcard in the Robert A. Siegel Auction online archives (Figure 2). It was from the March 2002 *William C. Mack Air Post Collection* auction (Siegel 844, Lot 3521).

The airmail pilot, Paul Studensky (sometimes spelled Studenski in later life), had an interesting career. Studensky was born November 13, 1887, and raised in Saint Petersburg, Russia. Studensky studied law and medicine before earning the 292nd license from L'Aero Club de France.



Studensky's Beech-National biplane with the upper wing panels folded down. At the time it was the largest airplane in the United States.

Airmail Pilot Paul Studensky at the controls of his Beech-National biplane at the South Dakota State Fair in 1912.

He immigrated to the United States in 1911 and from 1911 to 1913 exercised his flying skills throughout the country. After a stint of barnstorming, he accepted employment with the National Aeroplane Company, operating out of Galveston, Texas, and Cicero, Illinois. For National, he served as an instructor, test pilot and exhibition pilot. In 1913, Studensky signed on with the Silver Lake Aviation Company, operating near Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. His flights were made in a Bleriot monoplane, a Curtiss biplane and a Beech-National biplane. At one time he also flew in Earle Ovington's U.S. Air Mail Carrier No. 1.

In 1914, he gave up professional flying and joined the New York Bureau of Municipal Research. He received his doctorate from Columbia University in 1921, taught at New York University for 27 years (retiring in 1954), and became an authority in economics and public finance and administration. He wrote several books, including *The Income of Nations* and *Financial History of the United States*.

Studensky lived in Brentwood, Long Island, New York. He died of a heart attack on November 2, 1961, at age 73, while browsing in a bookstore.

Figure 1: A cover addressed to a Rock Island, Ill., Confederate prisoner of war. It is franked with an 1861 three-cent rose tied by a duplex cancel of Nevada City, Calif., on April 15, 1865, with the manuscript directive "Via Overland."

California Overland Mail to a Confederate Prisoner of War

By Patricia A. Kaufmann

You do not usually see the terms "California Overland Mail" and "Confederate" in the same sentence. The cover illustrated in Figure 1 is an exception.

It is Confederate only in the sense that the mail was delivered to a Confederate soldier imprisoned at Rock Island, Illinois. It did not pass through the Confederate mail system. But since the beginning of Confederate collecting, Northern prisoner of war mail has nonetheless been collected by Confederate students and such uses are listed in the CSA catalog.[1]

The subject cover is franked with an 1861 three-cent rose (Scott 65) tied by a duplex cancel of Nevada City, California, on April 15, 1865, with a manuscript directive at upper left, "Via Overland." The cover is addressed to "Mr. Willim P. Armor, Rock Island Prison, Illinoise, Baracks 25." Inventive spelling, to be sure.

On an historical note, the cover is dated the day that President Abraham Lincoln died after being shot the evening before at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. A Rock Island Barracks blue examined oval "cancels" the Nevada City double circle postmark to indicate that the letter contents were censored.

The Federal prison at Rock Island, Illinois, a small strip of land in the Mississippi River, held between 5,000 and 8,000 Confederate prisoners.

The sketch of the prison shown in Figure 2 was found in a letter written by Confederate soldier James W. Duke to his cousin in Georgetown, Kentucky.

The drawing, by a soldier identified only as H. Junius, is apparently the item described in Duke's letter as "the picture of our row of Barracks." This idyllic scene of men strolling peacefully on the grounds or performing routine chores among the neatly maintained barracks, probably reveals more about the restrictions placed on outgoing mail than on actual conditions within the prison.

Overland Mail

In September 1858, the Overland Mail Company started regular semiweekly stagecoach service along the so-called "Butterfield Route" between San Francisco and St. Louis via Los Angeles. John Warren Butterfield was the president of the company.

A variety of markings, printed and handstamped, were used on mail to designate this route. This is an

Figure 2: A sketch of the Rock Island Prison barracks found in a letter written by a Confederate soldier to his cousin. ***(Library of Congress)***

extremely popular collecting area and much has been written about it over the years. Most collectors are very familiar with this fascinating topic.

Figure 3 shows one of the designs of a printed Overland Mail Company corner card, offered as a full, unused entire as lot 4047 in the Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries Sale 908.

Armed conductors rode alongside drivers on the stagecoaches and were in charge of the mail and passengers. Each conductor carried a record book, which included information on the company, a map of the mail route, a time schedule, special instructions to all employees, and pages for keeping notes[2] (Figure 4).

The U.S. postal rates in force between April 1855 and February 1861 were 10 cents per half ounce for distances over 3,000 miles and three-cents for distances less than that.

The entire length of the Butterfield route was slightly over 2,800 miles, so a letter sent between San Francisco and St. Louis (or intermediate points) would only be charged three-cents postage. Compared to Confederate postage rates, that was a veritable bargain![3]

The election of President Lincoln in November 1860 set in motion the secession of the southern states and the Civil War. Wells Fargo Pony Express riders carried word of Abraham Lincoln's election as president from Fort Kearney, Nebraska, to Placerville, California, in a record five days. This was considered one of the most significant accomplishments by the Pony Express.

Almost half the overland route lay in Confederate states. The Texas convention passed an ordinance of secession on February 1, 1861, (not effective until March 2, 1861[4]) and Gen. David Twiggs surrendered the U.S. army forts and personnel in Texas on February 18. This gave Confederate sympathizers

Figure 3: A printed Overland Mail Company corner card. ***(Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries)***

Figure 4: Butterfield Overland Mail Record Book. ***(Smithsonian National Postal Museum)***

opportunities to confiscate equipment and stock from the Butterfield stations in Texas, and also opened the threat of Indian attacks on the stations. After reports of this were received in Washington, D.C., Congress

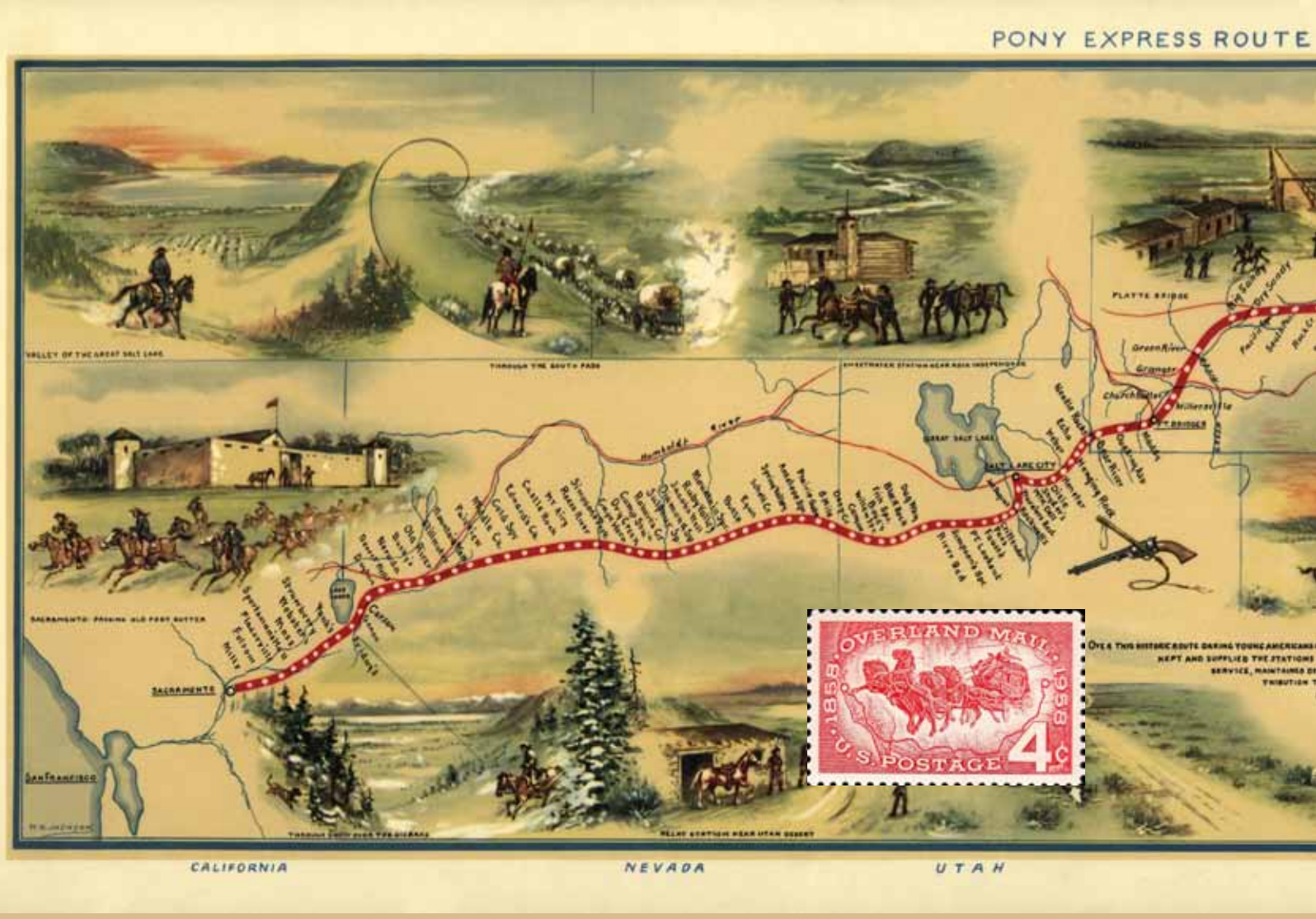


Figure 8: This map of the 1860 Pony Express route, illustrated by William Henry Jackson, shows Nevada (City) as the third stop after L

Figure 5: Holladay Overland Mail & Express Company stagecoach office on the southwest corner of 15th and Market Streets in Denver, circa 1860s.

Figure 6: The only recorded use of a Wells Fargo Pony
(Courtesy Steven C. Walske)

Lake Tahoe. ***(Library of Congress)***

y Express stamp on a cover into Confederate Virginia.

Figure 7: Nevada City, California, circa 1856, by Julia Ann Rudolph.

passed the March 2, 1861, Post Office Appropriation Bill that moved the daily overland mail contract to the central route, effective July 1, 1861. The Overland Mail Company struggled to maintain service during the spring of 1861. The final eastbound mail left San Francisco on April 1, arriving in St. Louis on May 1.[5]

Understandably, the Union would not pay any company for a mail contract that would take the route through a state that had seceded, specifically Arkansas and Texas. The government still had two years left on the Overland Mail Company contract and had to structure a deal that would serve both Overland and Wells Fargo.[6]

The central route was a six-times-a-week service along the Platte River and through the Rocky and Sierra Nevada mountains between Saint Joseph, Missouri, and Placerville, California. Butterfield ceased operations in April 1861 and Wells Fargo & Company began service along the new route in July.[7]

The overland mail of the 1850s was an alternative to the "Via Panama" route that was the default route until the Southern "Butterfield" overland route took hold. Prior to that, a sender was required to endorse the cover to be sent overland in order for it to be sent on the overland route.

After July 1, 1861, all mail between San Francisco and the East was carried by default on the daily overland mail route pursuant to a March 12, 1861, Post Office Order, albeit with minor disruptive periods.

The contract was to expire on July 1, 1864, at which time it was renegotiated. In addition to the daily mail, contractors were to provide expedited service by Pony Express until the completion of the overland telegraph. By 1865, overland mail did not really need any endorsement since it was the default route but, likely from force of habit, the correspondent of the subject cover so marked it.[8]

The initial July 1861 contract was granted to the Overland Mail Company (aka Butterfield). At that time, Wells Fargo was a controlling stockholder in the Overland Mail Company and a subcontractor to them for the Wells Fargo Pony Express. The Overland Mail Company subcontracted the administration of the Pony Express to Wells Fargo, and the operation of the eastern half of the line to the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Company.

The latter company went bankrupt in early 1862, and Benjamin Holladay (1819-1887) bought the assets of that company for $700,000, not the Overland Mail Company, as erroneously stated in some sources.

Control through stock ownership in the Overland Mail Company had passed to Wells Fargo in 1860, when Butterfield was removed as president of the Overland Mail Company. Thus, Wells Fargo, through Overland Mail Company, operated the daily overland contract. Holladay was only peripherally involved, despite the similarity in the name of his company as the successor operator of the eastern half of the line (Salt Lake to Kansas).[9]

The Holladay stagecoach office in Denver was on the southwest corner of Fifteenth and Market Streets, as shown in Figure 5. In November 1866, Ben Holladay sold the stagecoach company to Wells, Fargo & Company for $1,500,000 plus $300,000 in company stock.[10] The daily overland mail, which had the Pony Express as part of its service for a short time, continued to run until May 1869 with the opening of the transcontinental railroad.[11]

During the Civil War, the Confederate forces that invaded New Mexico used the old southern Butterfield route both coming and going. Also, Albert Sidney Johnston used the route when he fled from California to join the Confederacy.[12]

The only recorded use of a Pony Express stamp arriving in the Confederacy is shown, courtesy of Steven C. Walske, in Figure 6. This remarkable use bears a $2 pony stamp canceled May 1, 1861, arriving St. Louis on May 14, as evidenced by the St. Louis cancel tying the three-cent Nesbitt entire.

When the pony stamp was canceled, Virginia was still an independent state, having seceded on April 17, 1861. Virginia was accepted into the Confederacy on May 7, 1861. It was four days by train from St. Louis to New York City where it arrived on May 18, so it was able to sneak through to Richmond before the Washington-Richmond mail route closed down on May 23, 1861.[13]

Nevada City, California

Nevada City, the originating post office on the subject cover, is the county seat of Nevada County in California and located 60 miles northeast of Sacramento. It was first settled during the California Gold Rush. Nevada (Spanish for "snow-covered") is a reference to the snow-topped mountains in the area.

Figure 7 shows a photo of Nevada City, California, circa 1856 taken by Julia Ann Rudolph (c. 1820-c. 1900) who was a 19th century American studio photographer active in both New York and California.

Figure 8 is a map of 1860 Pony Express Route, which was illustrated by William Henry Jackson, and shows Nevada (City) as the third stop after Lake Tahoe.

William P. Armor

Cover addressee William P. Armor (also seen in military records as Armour and Armer) served in Company K, 43rd Georgia Infantry (Hall County, Brown's Boys). He enlisted as a private for the duration of the war from Gainesville, Georgia. Armor was listed as captured by the Army of the Tennessee at Champion Hill on May 14, 1863, and sent to Memphis on May 25, 1863. He is listed on a roll of prisoners at

Fort Delaware on June 9, 1863, and again as a paroled prisoner June 30, 1863. He was exchanged July 3 or 4, 1863 (conflicting dates are noted in military records).

Armor was promoted to third sergeant on an unspecified date and was again captured at Cassville, Georgia, on May 19, 1864. He appears on a roll of prisoners at Nashville, Tennessee, captured by forces under Maj. Gen. Thomas, commanding the Department of the Cumberland. From there, he was forwarded to Capt. S.E. Jones, provost marshal general, Louisville, Kentucky, on May 24, 1864. He was transferred to Camp Morton, Indiana, listed as prisoner at the Military Prison in Louisville on May 24, 1864, and sent to Rock Island, Illinois. He was listed as released on June 21, 1865, when he took the oath of allegiance per General Order No. 109 (Figure 9). The oath and other military records are in the National Archives and Records Administration files on microfiche.

Armor's place of residence was listed in military records as Cokesville Hall, Georgia. He was described as having a fresh complexion with dark hair, gray eyes, a height of 5'8" and age 26.

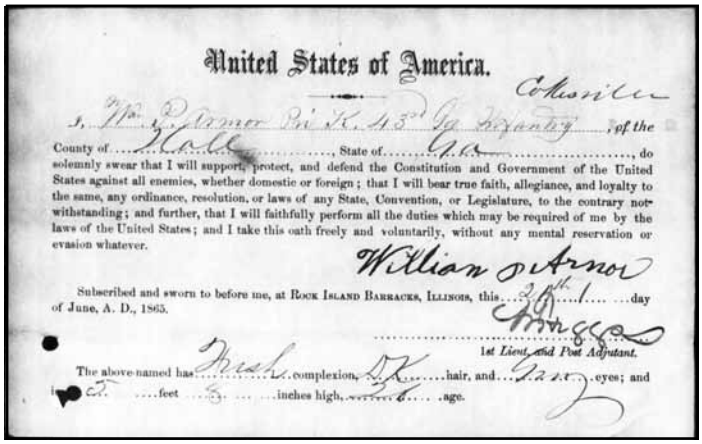
William P. Armor was born in 1839 in Hall County, Georgia, and died April 6, 1918, also in Hall County. He married Amanda C. Wiley (1842-1914) on March 10, 1866. They had five children. Per military records, William's brother, Harrison, is shown in the same unit during the war.

Curiously, on most records, such as U.S. Census records over the years, William's name is spelled "Armour," as well as that of his entire family. The name also appears as Armour in online genealogy records. But he spelled it Armor and I have thus chosen to make that the primary spelling in this article.

In census records, he is listed as a farmer. It appears that the origin of the family name was in England and that is the preferred spelling there. Perhaps dropping the "u" was an effort to Americanize the name, e.g., the British word "colour" vs. American "color," or perhaps it was simply the evident lack of formal education. His birth year and day also appear to be in question. Some *Ancestry.com* records show him as born on an unspecified date in June 1838 instead of 1839, although most records agree on the date of death and other details.

It is clear from a comparison of the Armor signature on the oath of allegiance that it is executed in the same handwriting as the address on the cover. This leads to speculation that perhaps he addressed one or a number of envelopes and mailed them to correspondents to use in reply. Both the signature on the oath and on the address panel of the cover have the same labored start-and-stop script of a minimally educated man.

The underhand curlicue on the top left of the "W" of "Willim" (sic) is the same as on the oath of allegiance.



United States of America.

I, William P. Armor Pvt. K. 43d Ga. Infantry, of the County of Hall, State of Ga., do solemnly swear that I will support, protect, and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States against all enemies, whether domestic or foreign; that I will bear true faith, allegiance, and loyalty to the same, any ordinance, resolution, or laws of any State, Convention, or Legislature, to the contrary notwithstanding; and further, that I will faithfully perform all the duties which may be required of me by the laws of the United States; and I take this oath freely and voluntarily, without any mental reservation or evasion whatever.

William P Armor

Subscribed and sworn to before me, at Rock Island Barracks, Illinois, this 26th day of June, A. D., 1865.

1st Lieut. and Post Adjutant.

The above named has fresh complexion, dk hair, and gray eyes; and is 5 feet 8 inches high, 26 age.

Figure 9: Oath of Allegiance signed by William P. Arnor (sic) in the labored hand of a soldier ill-versed in penmanship. ***(National Archives and Records Administration)***

There is a similarly executed "P" of the middle initial on both documents. Also, on the oath, he only made two humps on the "m" of "William" instead of three, as well as only two humps for the "m" of "Armor" instead of three—effectively producing an "n" in both cases. Studying the address panel on the cover, he left out the "a" in "William" – in his own name. "Barracks" is also misspelled with one "r," as well as "Illinois," to which he added an "e."

Final Thought

One simple prisoner of war cover conjures up marvelous images in the minds of postal historians in that rare intertwining of Civil War postal history with the Western mails.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Steven C. Walske and Richard C. Frajola for their review of the original article draft to help sort out the facts about Overland Mail Company and other express services.

Endnotes

1 Patricia A. Kaufmann, Francis J. Crown, Jr., Jerry S. Palazolo, *Confederate States of America Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History*, Confederate Stamp Alliance, 2012.
2 Butterfield Overland Mail Record Book, Smithsonian National Postal Museum, *http://postalmuseum.si.edu/collections/object-spotlight/butterfield.html* Accessed July 1, 2016.
3 Steven C. Walske, Richard C. Frajola, *Mails of the Westward Expansion 1803 to 186*1, Western Cover Society, 2015.
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5 Walske and Frajola, p. 167.
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Figure 1: The 1942 pigeon cover sent from Camp Crowder, Missouri, to New York City.

Feathered Heroes

By Jesse I. Spector and Robert L. Markovits

This article should put to rest any doubt that not only is postal history informative, but adventurous, imaginative and eclectic to boot.

For example, you might be surprised to learn that the French Croix de Guerre with Palm for heroic service was awarded in 1918 to Cher Ami for saving the lives of 200 U.S. soldiers. Yes, Cher Ami, a black check-cock military homing pigeon who saved the lives of the "lost battalion" that had strayed too far into enemy lines and was being shelled by "friendly fire."

Cher Ami flew 25 miles through enemy fire back to the command post carrying a message that resulted in the shelling being halted. Cher Ami would be wounded with a bullet in his breast, his left eye shot out, and the right leg holding the message container hanging by a tendon.

And, you may recall G.I. Joe in World War II. No, not that one. We are talking about the blue-checked pigeon named G.I. Joe, who saved the lives of the British 56th Infantry Brigade in October 1943 when they unwittingly entered the town of Colvi Vecchia, Italy, which the Germans had unexpectedly abandoned shortly before an Allied aerial bombardment was to be unleashed.

An unsuccessful radio attempt by a nearby American division requesting the mission be aborted resulted in the Americans resorting to using a homing pigeon to transmit a frantic message. G.I. Joe flew the 20 miles to base just as bombers were taxiing into position to take off on the mission.

With but minutes to spare, on receipt of the message, the mission was mercifully aborted. G.I. Joe was awarded the Dickin Medal for Gallantry by the Lord Mayor of London, the highest award given to an animal by the British.

Well then, with the adrenaline now flowing, let us introduce you to a marvelous cover and the story of the United States Army Pigeon Service that this cover has to tell.

Our cover (Figure 1) is quite descriptive, indeed. A large envelope sent airmail-special delivery from a Pvt. Philip J. Levy, attached to Company C, 38th Battalion, Management Service Commands, Recruit Training Center (M.S.C. RTC) United States Army Pigeon Section at Camp Crowder, Missouri.

The recipient of the communication is a Mr. J.J. Wittiner in the personnel department of an establishment located at 130 East 15th Street, New York City. A pencil notation in the upper center of the cover indicates that Wittiner received the letter. In the lower left corner are two lovely pigeon sketches: a rectangle containing a blue ink sketch imprint with signature of the artist, as well as an aesthetically appealing black ink sketch.

Transporting this cover the 1,171 miles from Camp Crowder in Grundy County, Missouri, to New York City using both airmail and special delivery service would suggest that Pvt. Levy's interest in contacting the personnel department was somewhat urgent.

Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the communication pertained to his seeking employment, since military

Figure 2: Pigeons were carried into combat in specially designed pouches made in factories that produced bras.

enlistment and draft in World War II were "subject to the discretion of the President, other laws, and the duration of the emergency plus six months," so that we fail to sense urgency from that perspective.

Even without the benefit of an enclosure, we suspect the communication was of an entirely different nature. The recipient's name and the address in New York regrettably failed to materialize information in our search to shed further light on this aspect.

Postage was paid using a six-cent airmail (Scott C25) stamp and a 10-cent special delivery (Scott E15) stamp. A purple imprint fee claim for the special delivery charge is evident in the center of the envelope.

The stamps were cancelled with a CDC duplex device of the Railway Mail Service on the Northern Division of the Port Arthur Line. Although the date of posting is obscured, receiving imprints in New York City on the reverse are dated January 21, 1943.

With this information in place, we now introduce you to the Army Pigeon Service of the United States Army Signal Corp, and a legendary figure, Chief Pigeoneer Col. Clifford A. Poutre.

Sending messages with homing pigeons has a history dating back centuries. The Romans used homing pigeons during military campaigns two millennia ago. There is evidence that the Egyptians, Persians and Greeks also sent messages by homing pigeon.

In more recent times, homing pigeons were used by the besieged Parisians in the 1870s during the Franco-Prussian War.

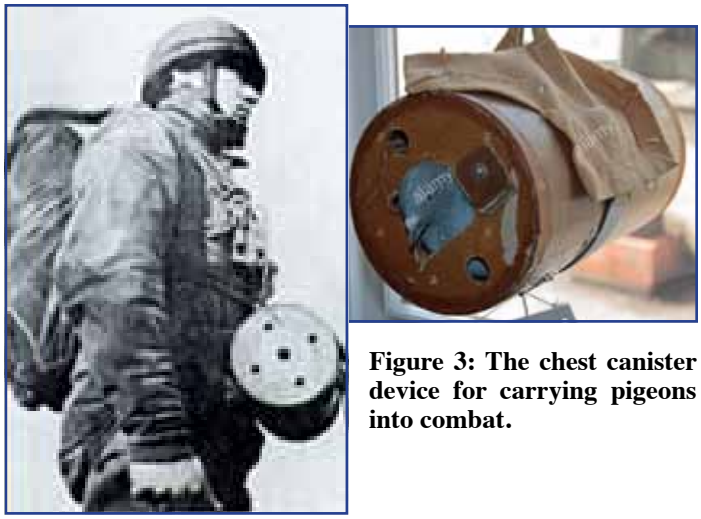

Figure 3: The chest canister device for carrying pigeons into combat.

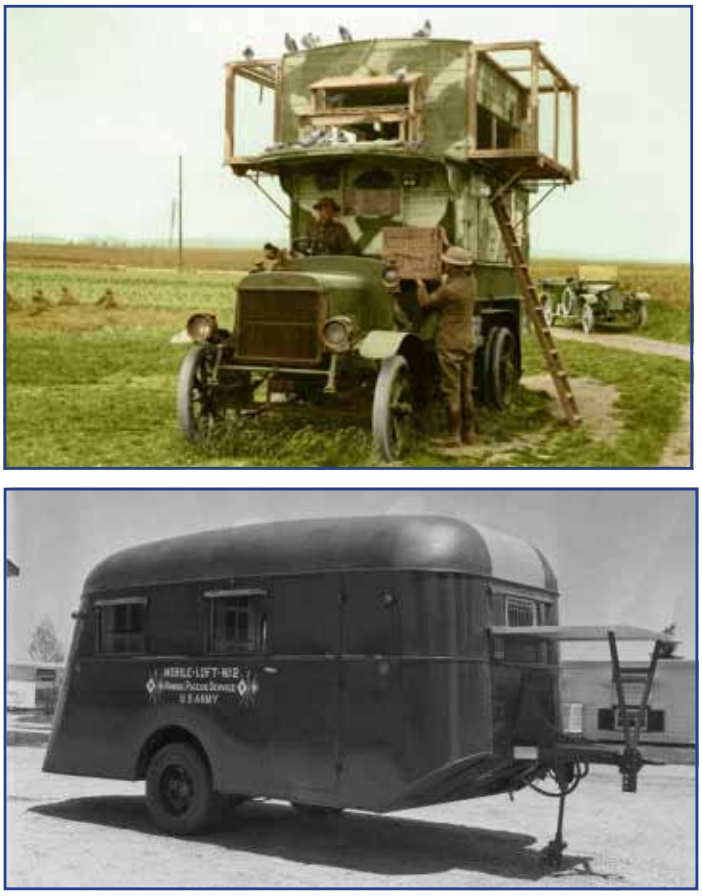

Figure 4: Mobile lofts for carrier pigeons used in World War I (Top) and World War II.

The U.S. Army attempted to use pigeons during the 1870 Indian Wars in the Dakotas; however, the large number of hawks endemic to the region resulted in this experiment being a failure.

World War I would see the zenith of the use of homing pigeons for military purposes, with pigeons serving routinely as couriers by all of the belligerents. At the urging of Gen. John Pershing, the U.S. Army Signal Corps established a pigeon service in 1917.

Despite the advent of telegraph communication well before World War I, the cutting of wires through

detonations, or intentional cutting of wire by enemy sappers would make the use of homing pigeons an indispensable addition to the Signal Corps as an alternative means of communication.

At the onset of World War II the advent of wireless radio communication would to a great extent supplant the role of homing pigeon service; yet, the availability of pigeons in situations that did not lend themselves to radio communication would result in a number of niches in which they were invaluable for the survival of military personnel.

Several examples are quite telling: pigeons were carried by airborne troops who parachuted into battle with the birds being carried in specially designed pouches made in factories that in peacetime produced brassieres (Figure 2) or in a chest canister device (Figure 3). The pouch or canister would be carried on the parachutist' chest on descent, and then swung around onto his back once in combat.

The pigeons could carry messages for distances of over 100 miles to their home loft. B-17 bomber crews carried them on flights so that if their plane was shot down the pigeon could return to the home base with message as to where the crew had gone down.

Interestingly, while in the planes, the pigeons could survive at altitudes of 20,000 feet without supplemental oxygen and could withstand 40 degree below zero F. temperatures without additional protective covering.

Tank crews carried them along in case they were disabled far from base to obtain rescue; similarly, downed fighter pilots used them as well. The list goes on, and the uses were amazingly varied. With that in mind the question that arises is how do you train a pigeon to be—well, a homing pigeon?

Bird fanciers have existed for centuries. In eighth century France only nobles were permitted to have homing pigeons, and the birds were considered a symbol of power and prestige. Following the French Revolution the common Frenchman was an equal when it came to breeding and training homing pigeons.

In the 20th century bird fanciers abounded, with competitions displaying the incredible ability of prized homing pigeons to find their way back to their nests, even from hundreds of miles away.

Even today, scientists have yet to figure out how "homers" manage to navigate over long distances, although there is unquestionably a relation to their ability to appreciate magnetic fields and the position of the sun; yet, amazingly, long-distance night flying is but another of their incredible skills. Homing pigeons' accuracy rate is on average 96-99 percent in finding their way back to their loft.

At the onset of World War II the Germans had 50,000 homing pigeons ready for use, while the Americans had to rebuild their service from scratch. The Signal Corp solicited birds from fanciers who were willing to donate their homers, and the government would also procure pigeons from the public for about five dollars a bird, half their cost on the retail market at the time.

Figure 5: A leg capsule for battlefield messages.

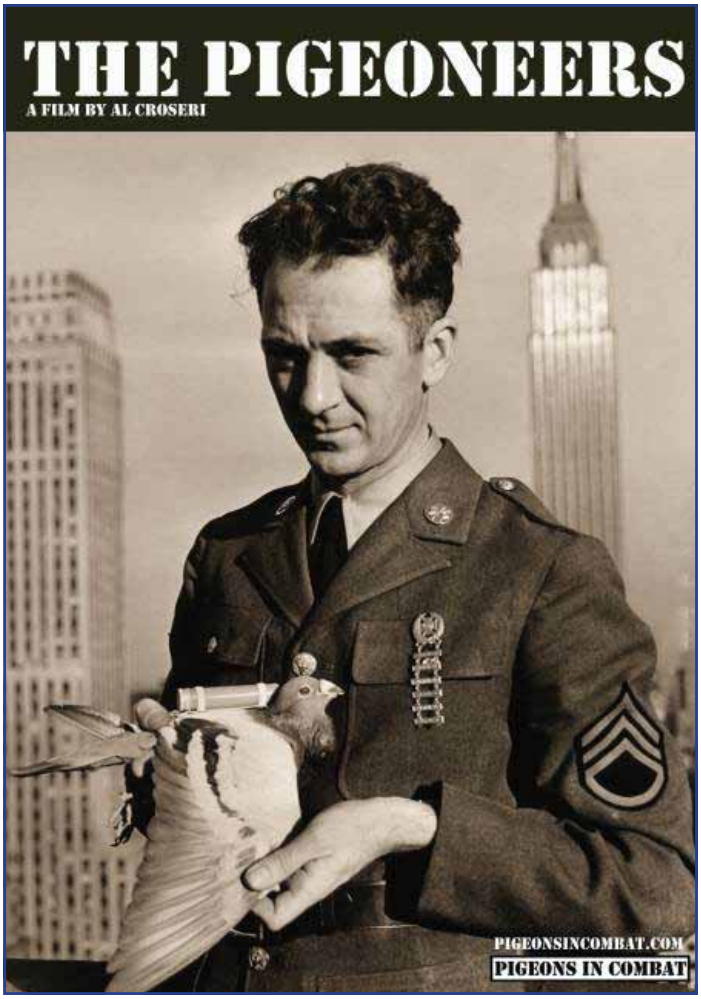

Figure 6: A large cigar-shaped message capsule.

Figure 7: Col. Clifford Poutre (left), chief pigeoneer, U.S. Army Signal Corps.

Figure 8: Col. Clifford Poutre releasing flight of the last bird.

Eventually, the military established the first of four breeding and training facilities at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, and by 1943 had acquired enough pigeons to sustain the program, yielding 54,000 birds, 39,000 of which were sent overseas to every theater of war including Europe, the Central Pacific, Asia and Alaska.

A total of 3,000 enlisted men and 150 officers, as well as a veterinary service consisting of veterinarians and veterinary technicians, maintained the breeding, training, health and survivability of the pigeons in the varied environments around the world.

In addition to Fort Monmouth, the pigeon service would develop bases at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Fort Benning, Georgia, and Camp Crowder, Missouri, the latter the location from which our cover originated.

The goal of the Pigeon Service was to crossbreed the fastest, strongest pigeons with the best homing instincts, to produce even faster and stronger birds that could return home from ever-greater distances.

All homers share the blue rock pigeon or rock dove pigeon as a common ancestor; however, generations of careful breeding resulted in the modern homing pigeon.

While World War I pigeons could fly about 200 miles in one flight, the World War II birds could easily double that distance, with some capable of 600-mile flights. Over short distances the birds could approach 60 miles per hour, though 35-40 miles per hour was there usual cruising speed.

Young birds, one to four years of age were required, since a bird could lose two or three ounces, about a fifth of their total weigh, on a strenuous flight.

It took about eight weeks from the time of hatching to train a reliable bird. The chick was removed from the nest after four weeks and placed in a mobile loft (Figure 4). Over the next two to three weeks the loft was moved daily and the birds flew short flights three times a day for several days in order to memorize its aerial bearings.

By eight weeks, the bird had acquired enough stamina to fly for about an hour, and would then be trained to fly 50 to 60 miles and then further. At that point it was considered ready to carry messages in combat in one of many roles: carrying messages in a small capsule attached to the leg (Figure 5) or with a cigar-shaped capsule on its back for larger messages (Figure 6); wearing a camera pack to photograph enemy lines for reconnaissance; carrying messages sent by spies; or, being dropped by specially designed parachutes into guerilla and partisan camps to wing back messages to military intelligence units.

A few tricks used to teach the pigeons to return would include withholding food prior to going on a mission, since hunger was a strong motivator to return to base. Actually, sex and jealousy were the strongest motivators. When a male pigeon saw his mate with another male that was introduced to the loft shortly before he left on a flight, his return was guaranteed to be faster!

In combat situations the pigeon lofts were quarter-ton mobile combat lofts that could be attached to a Jeep or truck for rapid deployment. Bases in secure areas had larger trailer lofts. Mind you, not all trained pigeons were equally capable or exceptional.

One bird named African Owl was shipped to the front and was reported by his handlers to have "come along for the ride, since he couldn't find his way around the inside of the loft much less over the countryside." We are not certain if African Owl's problem was nature or nurture- bad genes, poor training, or both.

Since our story to this point has featured our feathered protagonists, we do wish to introduce a very

special person—an incredibly competent and sensitive pigeoneer, the legendary Col. Clifford Poutre, Chief Pigeoneer of the U.S. Army Signal Corp in World War II (Figure 7).

Born in Hudson Falls, New York, in 1904, Poutre, a college graduate, enlisted as a private in the U.S. Army in 1929, becoming a pigeoneer stationed at the 11th Signal Company in Hawaii.

He was then assigned to the army pigeon loft at Fort Monmouth, N.J. working under the tutelage of Thomas Ross, a Scotsman who was one of the foremost pigeon experts in the world.

When Ross retired, Poutre took over as head of the Army Pigeon Breeding and Training Center. He would become recognized internationally as a leader in military pigeon training. He was responsible for teaching his birds unprecedented skills: returning to mobile lofts even after the loft had been moved over 10 miles from where the pigeon went aloft on a mission; carrying parcels, packages and cameras on their back, chest and legs; flying at night; and flying without stopping for up to 24 hours.

Col. Poutre was known for treating his pigeons as if family members, indeed, his children. He believed in control through kindness and considered pigeons as intelligent creatures that were to be respected for their capabilities. He did away with using food deprivation as a training tool and convincingly showed that instilling trust in the birds resulted in their performing to the greatest potential.

By war's end, his ranks were filled by some of the foremost pigeon fanciers and trainers in the United States. Statistically the track record of the Pigeon Service was astounding—30,000 messages sent in combat conditions with 96 percent reaching their destination. Even iPhone 4™ has a drop rate of more than four percent of its calls!

Oh yes, there were occasional misses. Some pigeons ended up as POWs—one in particular for but a brief time. That pigeon, Lucia di Lammermoor, had been carried to a forward position where she was subsequently sent aloft with important information to be flown back to base. Lucia was somehow delayed in flight, landing behind enemy lines. When she eventually arrived later that night at her home loft she carried a new message rather than the one entrusted to her. It read: "To the American Troops: Herewith we return a pigeon to you. We have enough to eat—The German troops."

Figure 9 (Above): Col. Clifford Poutre, age 103.
Figure 10 (Below): Cher Ami, winner of the Croix de Guerre.

Col. Poutre gave flight to the last bird in 1957 just prior to the closing of the Army Pigeon Service at Fort Monmouth (Figure 8). The military homing pigeon had become obsolete. The colonel retired after 31 years of military service in 1960.

Shortly prior to his death in 2007 he was contacted by the makers of a film documentary dedicated to the history of the Army Pigeon Corp.

On a cool spring day in North Carolina, Col. Poutre, age 103, was given a pigeon to release. In his Army dress green uniform, he held the pigeon and talked to it for several minutes as if to an old friend. With warmth that revealed his passion he released the bird. The depth of emotion in his eyes and the smile on his face said it all (Figure 9).

We do not know what became of the sender of our cover, Pvt. Philip J. Levy. His name was a remarkably common one in the Federal censuses and military archives of the World War II timeframe.

While we narrowed the search to several possible candidates, we were unable to conclude with enough certainty who our man might have been.

On the other hand, we do know what became of Cher Amie, winner of the Croix de Guerre in World War I. After healing from his wounds, he was returned to America and lived until 1919.

He is now on display at the Smithsonian Institution where his exploits are retold and his wounds can be seen (Figure 10).

Well then, as we stated at the outset, postal history is a dynamic field, not just for the philatelic delight, which is obvious, but for the drama, tension and heroics that are integral to the experience.

After this story can there be any doubt?

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Snapshots

The "Snapshots" column features photographs of interest to postal historians. *La Posta* readers with interesting or historical photographs should send a 300 dpi or better scan, or a sharp color or black and white photocopy, plus a photo caption to: *La Posta* Snapshots, POB 6074, Fredericksburg, VA 22403; E-mail, *pmartin2525@yahoo.com*. Be sure to include your name and address.

The Last Horseback Mail Carrier

This photo, from June 24, 1939, shows "Ol' Dobbin" with Alvey Lister aboard, making the last of his daily mail deliveries in Duncan, Oklahoma. Modern transportation methods replaced the mail carrier on horseback and this news photo caption reports that he is passing out mail to children on his route and is the last horseback mail carrier.

Figure 1: Sent from France to Switzerland in July 1908, this card took a detour by way of New York.

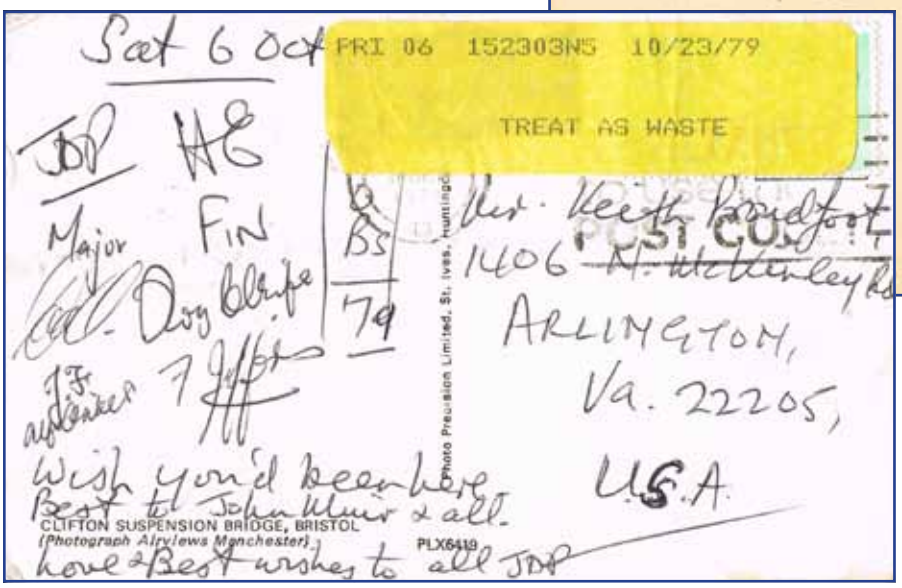


Figure 2: 'Treat as waste' says the yellow label on this 1979 undeliverable post card from England.

Delivery Problems with Incoming Covers from Abroad

By John M. Hotchner

In the last issue of *La Posta* we looked at covers that had been "missent" either going abroad, or missent to the United States. A new cover, actually a postcard, has come to hand that illustrates this problem. The Figure 1 cover is dated in 1908 and was sent from France to Switzerland. Including its unexpected trip to New York, it took from July 13 to August 3, to go from one country to an adjoining one in Europe.

Continuing with international mail problems as shown by auxiliary markings, we will look today at covers from abroad that had problems other than being missent or with postage due. We will deal with the latter in a future article.

There are two categories of the remaining covers: markings placed on foreign covers indicating that the mail could not be delivered and was returned to the sender abroad, and foreign covers that were delivered despite problems. We will cover the first category in this installment, and the latter category in the next.

I will note here that covers returned to sender (RTS) overseas are not seen in quantity in the United States. Unless remailed and finally delivered here, they remained in the country of origin. In recent years, with the growth and international use of eBay, I am seeing more of these offered and several of the examples shown here have come from that source, with thanks to my friend Carl Troy, who watches for them.

The 1979 postcard in Figure 2 is one that would have been returned as undeliverable, except that there was no address to which it could be returned. Thus, it got a yellow label with a "Treat as waste" message.

In the normal course of events, it should have been burned, but I have heard stories to the effect that some such mail was authorized to be given to schools and public libraries for the educational value of the postcard illustration.

I don't know if this was sanctioned at the national level, or if it was a local decision, but I have seen other such "waste" markings from other times and locations.

Sometimes there is a cover like the Ghana example in Figure 3, where Return to Sender is indicated due to inability to deliver, "no such [street] number," but

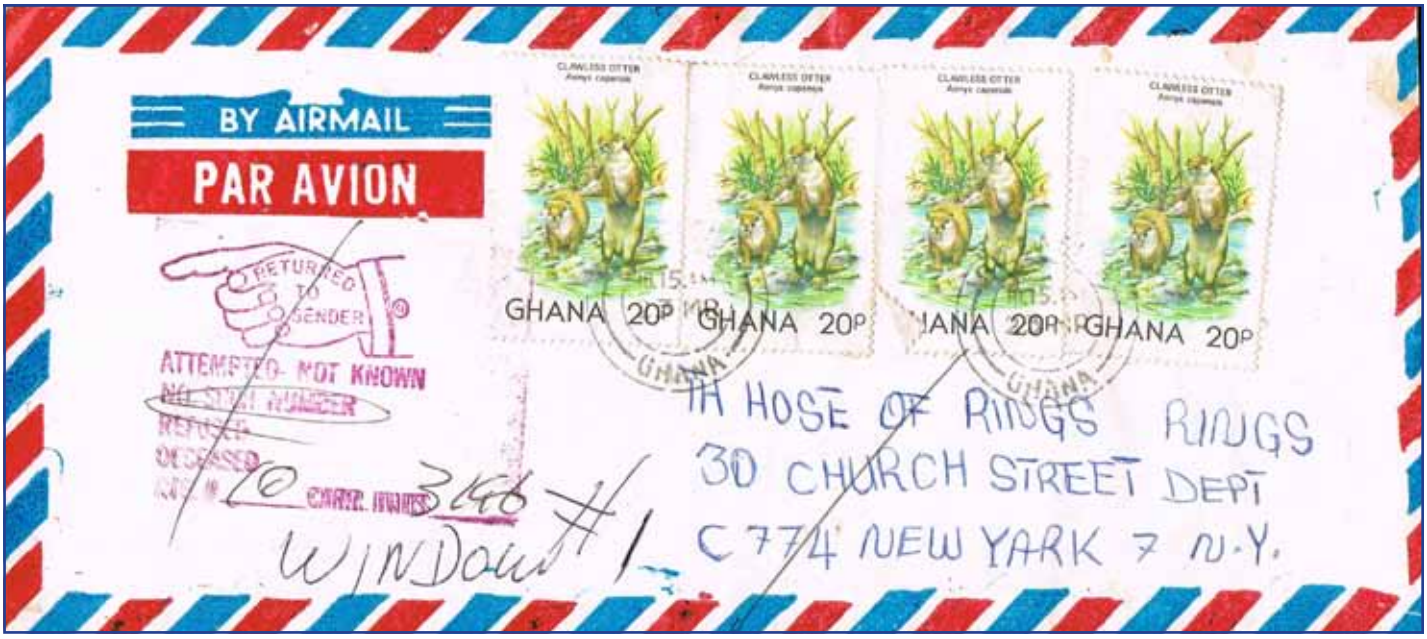


Figure 3: While it says 'Return to Sender,' it is unclear whether this (probably) 1982 cover from Ghana ever made that trip.

there is no marking to prove that it ever happened. There is no return address, front or back, no indication that the envelope was opened by a dead letter office, and no markings indicating receipt back in Ghana.

Also, there is no year in the cancellation date, but the stamp was issued in February 1982.

The Figure 4 cover is unusual. Sent from Argentina by registered mail in 1962, delivery was attempted, but it was not deliverable because the company was "Bankrupt Out of Business."

I don't know if this was a postal marking or not, but the pointing hand Return to Sender marking is, and "Unclaimed" is checked.

It is unusual to see foreign language markings on covers handled in the United States but the Figure 5 cover from England sports a "*Retour* (Return to Writer) *Pas De Tel Numero*" message.

Per the backstamp, it got as far as Chicago, where the barely readable Elmhurst, Illinois, address was clarified. My guess is that the street address was 191 Clinton Avenue, but the cover was undeliverable as "No Such street number" could be found. Someone also handstamped "Unknown" on the envelope, though that seems superfluous.

Figure 4: Undeliverable because the organization it was addressed to went bankrupt, this 1962 registered Argentina cover was returned to sender.

Figure 5: This British cover, dated in 1958, contains an unusual foreign language 'Return to Sender' message.

Figure 6 (Above): Contrary to what one might assume, this early-1990s Fiji cover made it to the United States before the auxiliary marking was applied.

Figure 7 (Left): The Public Health Service officer to whom this was sent had a, "Change of address due to official orders." The cover never found him.

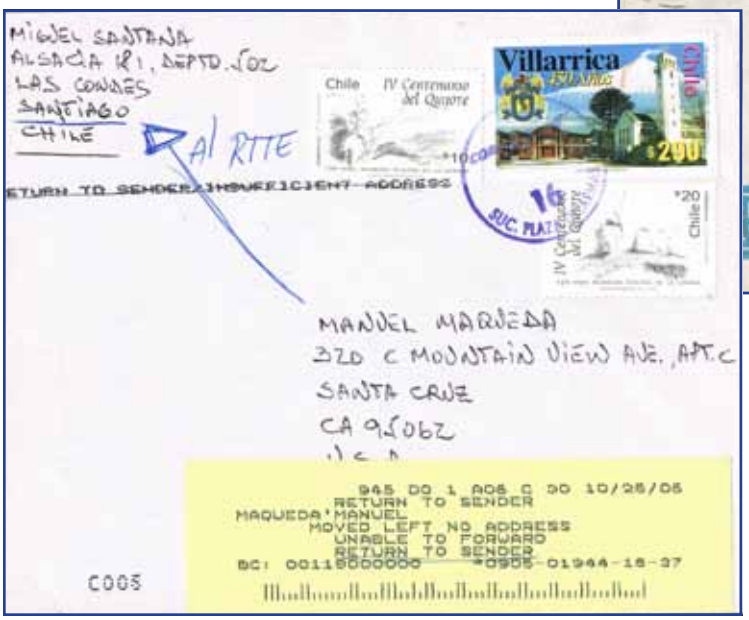


Figure 8: Actress Joan Collins was "Not at Warner Bro. Studio" when this 1962 letter from Brazil reached Burbank, California, so it was returned.

Figure 9: Computer printed yellow stickers have been used for RTS messages; the one on this 2006 Chile cover says, "Moved left no address."

Figure 6 is an incoming from Fiji, "Returned for better address show country of destination in English & no abbreviations AMF PHL" (Air Mail Facility, Philadelphia).

Again, there is no indication that the cover was returned, but either "Pennsylvania" and/or "U.S.A." seem to have been added in the original ink and handwriting. Presumably with the complete address it got to its destination. The cancellation date is unreadable, but the stamp was issued in 1992.

The 1946 cover from Germany in Figure 7 chased the addressee, a Public Health Service officer. According to the marking in the lower right corner, there was a "Change of address due to official orders." But after at least two forwardings, and maybe more, without successful delivery, the cover was stamped with a pointing finger and "Return to sender. Not a proper address. No forwarding address available."

Another undeliverable cover, this one a 1962 letter from Brazil to the movie star Joan Collins in Burbank, California, is shown in Figure 8. It seems to me that a public personage like this could have been tracked down, but the post office accepted the movie studio's "Not at Warner Bros. Studio" at face value, and planted a pointing finger with "Returned to Writer" in it, and added, "Unknown in Burbank, Calif."

A yellow computer printed message on the 2006 Chile-origin cover in Figure 9 says that the cover is being returned because the addressee had, "Moved left no address/Unable to forward." In this day and age, that seems to me to be unusual, though it remained a standard computerized message.

The next cover, from Egypt, date unknown, is shown back and front in Figure 10. The stamp issue date was in 1973. It is included here because of the message indicating return: "Insufficient address/Show country of destination in English."

But it was delivered and without return because someone in the USPS was able to read the Arabic, and deliver the cover to the Voice of America in Washington, D.C.

Figure 10: This cover from Egypt has been opened to show both the front and back (with the 1973 stamps). Addressed in Arabic, it seems to have been delivered in spite of the auxiliary marking.

Figure 11: When initially received in the United States in 1976, this cover was given an RTS marking saying "insufficient address." It went back to Saudi Arabia.

Figure 12: The sender readdressed the Figure 11 cover using the pasted on paper and returned it to the United States, where it presumably was delivered despite still being in Arabic.

This seems to be a case of using the handiest auxiliary handstamp, but not the right one. The cover had already gotten to the United States. It was not the country of destination that was problematic, but rather the rest of the address.

A similar problem is shown in Figure 11; a Saudi Arabian cover originally sent in 1976 that was returned because of the notation, "Insufficient Address" in the handstamp. In this case, the problem was not the language in which it was written, but rather the address itself.

When returned, the sender rewrote the address on the slip of paper pasted on the front (Figure 12), had it validated by a July 1977 Saudi post office cancel, and sent the cover back to the United States where, apparently, it was delivered.

Finally, in Figure 13, we have a French-origin cover, cancelled in 1981, which was returned because "Authorized time for forwarding has expired."

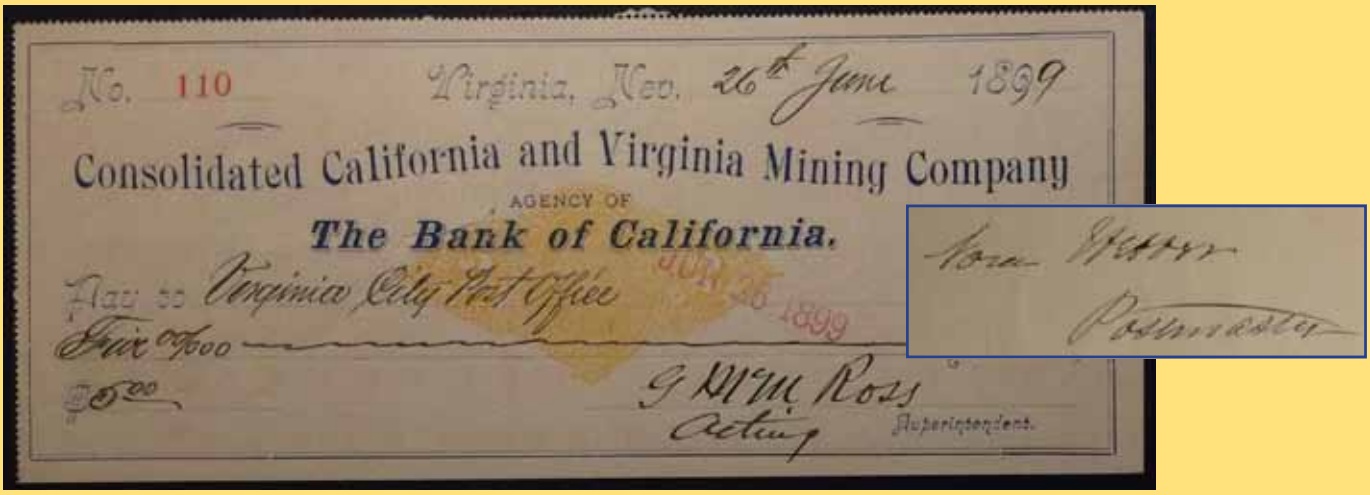
Figure 13: This French-origin 1981 cover got a large RTS marking, and the message, "Authorized time for forwarding has expired."

Either the sender did not have the new address, and this was the end of the matter, or the sender addressed a new envelope to the addressee on receipt of this one. Either way, this cover saw no further duty. This is the largest pointing hand RTS marking that I have recorded on international mail.

Next time we will look at foreign covers that came to the United States with address or other problems that were resolved, allowing them to be delivered.

Meanwhile, if you have comments, questions, or other examples to share, please contact me at: John Hotchner, POB 1125, Falls Church, VA 22041, or by e-mail at: *jmhstamp@verizon.net*.

The Odd Lot



An 1899 Check Payable to the Virginia City PO

By Peter Martin

Illustrated above is a 19th century check that is rare not because of its type or revenue stamp, but for its usage. The 8 by 3-1/4 inch check from the Consolidated California & Virginia Mining Co. in Virginia, Nevada, is payable to the Virginia City Post Office and endorsed on the back (inset) by the Postmaster Nora Weber, who was appointed to her post on August 2, 1894. Nineteenth century checks payable to post offices are rare. In this case, the company may have been paying for a post office box or for stamps.

The $5 company check No. 110, dated June 26, 1899, on pink safety paper, was issued by the Agency of The Bank of California, and bears a printed two-cent revenue stamp, Scott RNX7, that is cut-cancelled. The check is signed by acting Superintendent G. McM Ross. The original historic Virginia City Post Office was established in 1859 in Utah Territory. This item was found in Silver City, Nevada, about 40 years ago and was recently listed on an Internet auction site by a Florida seller.

United States Post Offices, Volumes 1 through 8
Compiled by Richard W. Helbock

The *United States Post Offices* series is the first complete listing of all of the United States post offices that have ever operated in the nation. The listings are based on the U.S. Post Office Department's "Records of Appointments of Postmasters," but contains data that has been refined by numerous postal historians who have published listings of the post offices that operated in individual states.

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Figure 1: The De Luz, California, Post Office in March 1940.

Figure 2: A cacheted De Luz cover, postmarked in 1945 and signed by Postmaster Chloe J. Baxter.

Smallest Post Office Candidate: De Luz, California

By Peter Martin

While there have been many claims for the title of smallest post office, the Figure 1 photo represents the 1940 claim of De Luz, California's John J. Baxter who listed the post office as six-by-seven-feet. But researchers listed it as eight-by-eight feet and not the smallest, so the postmaster had a sign made saying that De Luz was, "the smallest complete post office in the world."

De Luz is a mountainous district north of San Diego, in San Diego County, at the southern end of the Santa Ana Mountains. The unincorporated community is older than many of the cities along the Pacific coast.

The post office opened on November 1, 1882, and in 1940 it served about 75 families and had monthly receipts averaging $300, mostly from money orders. The office was a favorite with cachet collectors.

The Figure 1 image shows Baxter in front of the post office in March 1940. Oddly, news reports of the day cite John J. Baxter as the postmaster, but U.S. Postal Service records (see chart) name Mrs. Chloe J. Baxter as the postmaster beginning in July 1938. As further evidence, the Figure 2 De Luz cacheted cover, believed to have been designed by the San Diego Stamp Club, is signed by Chloe J. Baxter as postmaster.

In the photo, two local youngsters check their post office box for mail. The boxes are built into the outside wall. Tacked to the wall to the right of the boxes are hunting regulations. Behind the postmaster's hand are the current FBI Most Wanted posters.

Of interest is the 1940 census poster to the right of the front door. It reads, "1940 Census/USA/It's Your America/Help the 10-Year Roll Call." Below the image of Uncle Sam are boxed images for: people, homes, farms, business, factories, and mines.

The De Luz Post Office was closed February 28, 1955, as part of the then Post Office Department policy to close and consolidate smaller post offices.

De Luz Post Office Postmasters
San Diego County, California

Name	Title	Date Appointed
(Originally established as DELUZ)		
Louis L. McClure	Postmaster	11/01/1882
Henry J. Camp	Postmaster	04/24/1883
Changed to DE LUZ on December 5, 1890		
David S. Lacey	Postmaster	12/05/1890
Sarah C. Wilmst	Postmaster	01/05/1895
Irvine N. Camp	Postmaster	01/27/1902
Louis J. Garnsey	Postmaster	04/07/1904
Henry J. Camp	Postmaster	10/09/1906
Kate S. Regan	Postmaster	10/06/1909
Louis J. Garnsey	Postmaster	01/10/1914
Walter H. Tiffany	Postmaster	11/27/1931
Mrs. Chloe J. Baxter	Act. Postmaster	07/21/1938
Mrs. Chloe J. Baxter	Postmaster	03/29/1939

Discontinued February 28, 1955; mail to Fallbrook.

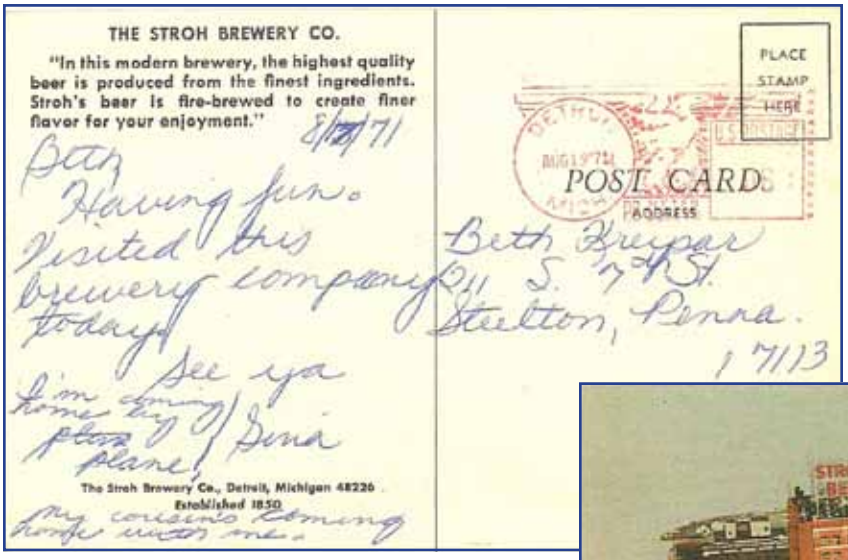


Figure 1 (Below): An advertising postcard provided to Stroh Brewery Company factory tour visitors in Detroit in 1971.

Figure 2 (Left): The reverse of the postcard with a Strohs promotional message and a six-cent Detroit meter.

Advertising Postcards for Visitors on Company Tours

The idea of taking a tour of a company plant or facility to see them making a product, which in most cases is a well-known brand, used to make for an exciting vacation trip.

After completing the tour, companies would try to make the most of the visit and would offer visitors a place to rest and, in some cases, would provide a sample of the products that they just saw made.

In addition, companies would often provide visitors with a promotional advertising postcard that would have some advertising value, as well as space for a written message. After mailing the postcard in a company provided mailbox, the company would pay the postage and deliver it to the post office.

Unfortunately, this type of vacation attraction has greatly diminished due to company liability and security concerns. A casualty of the change was the promotional advertising postcard.

The following two examples provide a glimpse of the how these advertising postcards were used.

The Stroh Brewery Company

The promotional advertising postcard shown in Figure 1 was mailed August 19, 1971, with a red six-cent Detroit, Michigan, postage meter. It was addressed to "Steelton, Penna. 17113."

The back top left side of the postcard promotes the Stroh Brewery Co.:

"In this modern brewery, the highest quality beer is produced from the finest ingredients. Stroh's beer is fire-brewed to create finer flavor for your enjoyment."

And, at the bottom:

"The Stroh Brewery Co., Detroit, Michigan 48226/ Established 1850."

The written message is quite short, but to the point:

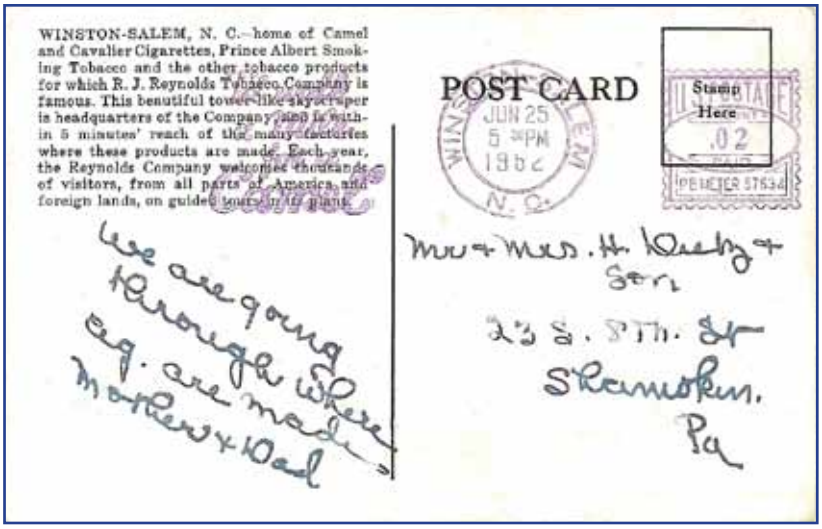
8/17/71

Beth. Having fun. Visited this brewery today. I'm coming home by plane. My cousin's coming home with me. See ya

Gina

The Stroh Brewery Company was founded in Kirn, Germany, in the middle of the 19th century. Bernard Stroh, having emigrated to the United States, began brewing beer in a factory in Detroit in 1850. Subsequently, Stroh bought other brands and expanded significantly.

An interesting fact is that during the days of Prohibition they changed their name to the Stroh


WINSTON-SALEM, N. C.—home of Camel and Cavalier Cigarettes, Prince Albert Smoking Tobacco and the other tobacco products for which R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company is famous. This beautiful tower-like skyscraper is headquarters of the Company, and is within 5 minutes' reach of the many factories where these products are made. Each year, the Reynolds Company welcomes thousands of visitors, from all parts of America, and foreign lands, on guided tours in its plant.

POST CARD

JUN 25 5 PM 1952 WINSTON-SALEM N. C.

Stamp Here .02 PB METER 57634

We are going through where cig. are made
Mother + Dad

Mrs + Mrs. H. Dreby + Son
23 S. 9th St
Shamokin.
Pa

Figure 3 (Above): The reverse of the postcard with a Reynolds Tobacco Company promotional message and a two-cent Winston-Salem, N.C., slogan meter.

Figure 4 (Right): An advertising postcard provided to Reynolds Tobacco Company factory tour visitors in Winston-Salem, N.C., in 1952.

Products Company and sold ice cream and near beer. In 2000, due to a change in the economy, the company was sold with most of the brands brewed under the Stroh name going to the Pabst Brewing Company.

The front side of the advertising postcard (Figure 2) pictures the brewery and the lion's head logo and atop two buildings are signs promoting "Strohs Beer."

R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company

The promotional advertising postcard shown in Figure 3 was mailed by the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company with a magenta June 25, 1952, Winston Salem, North Carolina, two-cent meter stamp that included the slogan: "I'd walk a mile for a Camel." The card is addressed to Shamokin, Pennsylvania.

At the top left there is a lengthy amount of text promoting the company, with the following statement at the bottom.

"...Each year, the Reynolds Company welcomes thousands of visitors, from all parts of America and foreign lands, on guided tours in its plant."

The written message is again short and to the point:

We are going through where cig. are made.

Mother & Dad

The front of the advertising postcard (Figure 4) pictures a skyscraper building and, at the bottom, illustrates three tobacco products: A package of king size Cavalier cigarettes with a facsimile tobacco tax stamp; a package of Turkish & domestic blend Camel cigarettes with a facsimile tobacco tax stamp at the top; and a can of Prince Albert, crimp cut, long burning pipe and cigarette tobacco.

The slogan "I'd walk a mile for a Camel" was so heavily promoted in the advertising world that Camel cigarettes became one of the most famous brands of cigarettes.

As a youngster in the late 1920s, the funny saying at the time was when supposedly going into a tobacco store you would ask the storekeeper, "Do you have Prince Albert in a can?" When the storekeeper said "yes" you would reply, "Let him out!"

The R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company was founded in the latter part of the 19th century in Winston Salem, North Carolina, and by the 1890s was successfully producing several million pounds of tobacco.

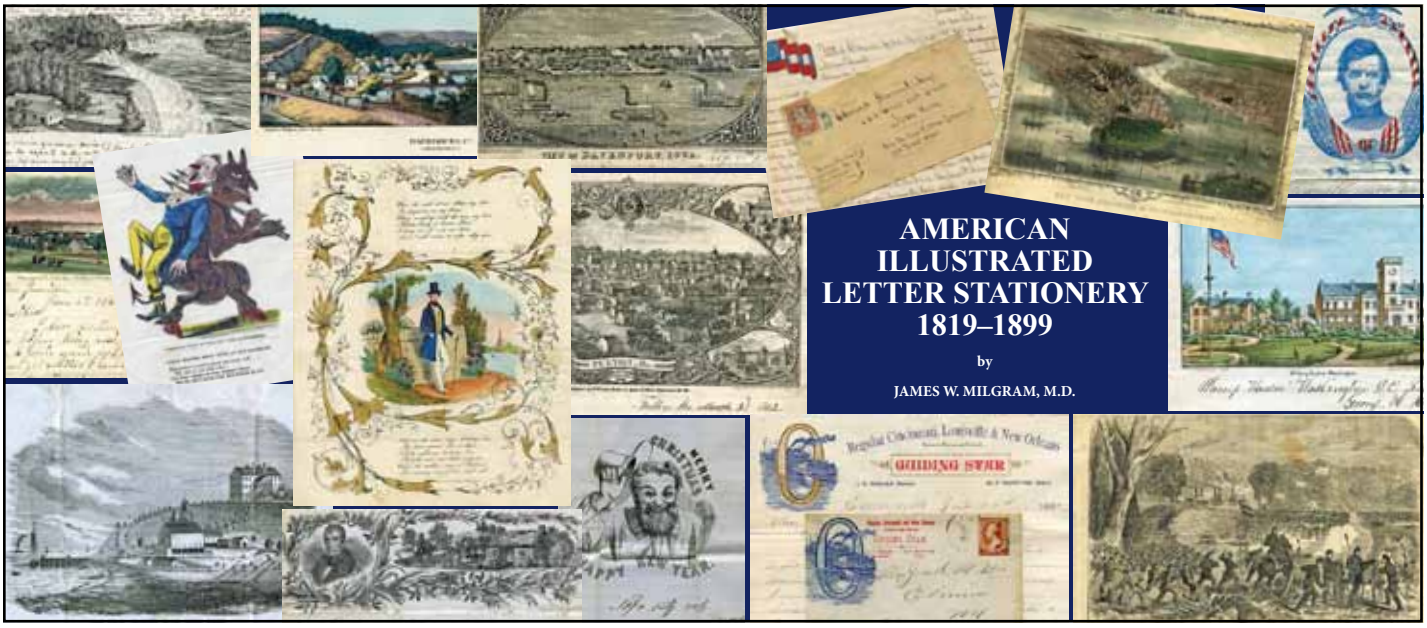
Reynolds continued buying the nearby tobacco factories and consolidated their operations into a highly successful tobacco products company.

In 1985, the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company was merged with Nabisco Brands, but after a few years there was a bidding war with a leveraged buyout that resulted in the name RJR Nabisco.

The use of the promotional advertising postcards represents one of the little known facets of the advertising world, especially in the field of beer and tobacco products.

(Charles A. Fricke, the 1981 American Philatelic Society Luff award recipient for distinguished philatelic research and a longtime postal card specialist, lives in Jenkintown, Pa.)

Publishers, editors and authors who would like to have books considered for this column may submit review copies to: Editor, *La Posta*, POB 6074, Fredericksburg, VA 22403.



American Illustrated Letter Stationery 1819-1899

***American Illustrated Letter Stationery 1819-1899* by James W. Milgram, M.D. Lake Forest Ill.: Northbrook Publishing Co., 2016. Hardbound, 8.5 x 11 inches, 560pp., Approximately 1,120 color illustrations. ISBN 0-9614018-5-0**
Available for $90 postpaid: Northbrook Publishing Co., 1352 Estate Lane, Lake Forest, IL 60045; E-mail, *j-milgram@northwestern.edu*.

There is a saying that, "You can't judge a book by its cover," but with Jim Milgram's new *American Illustrated Letter Stationery 1819-1899*, you can get a pretty accurate idea of what to expect.

One's first reaction to the book is, "Impressive." The heft of the 560-page book, the quality of the paper and Smyth-sewn binding, the unusual subject matter in the title, and the impressively illustrated wrapper, all lead to a heightened anticipation about what's inside.

Milgram is a prolific researcher and author with many other books to his credit including, *Abraham Lincoln Illustrated Envelopes and Letter Paper, 1860-1865, Federal Civil War Postal History, United States Registered Mail 1845-1870*, and *Vessel-Named Markings on U.S. Inland & Ocean Waterways, 1810-1890*.

In his latest work, he tackles a difficult subject not before attempted by any philatelist, largely because the subject area is so large and the difficulty of acquisition is so high.

Milgram has the advantage of more than 50 years of collecting in this area, so he has literally spent a lifetime of research and hunting for these elusive morsels. He has accumulated, with the exception of California miners' illustrated lettersheets, what is probably the largest collection in the world.

His early start and passionate pursuit makes him eminently qualified to discuss and present this subject to a wider audience and he does so with the gusto of a proud father presenting his children for the first time.

American illustrated lettersheets have been an almost forgotten source of 19th century images. They were produced by lithography, usually in very limited quantities.

Lithography kept the production cost down so that most illustrated letter papers originally sold for pennies, although some of the most expensive Civil War stationery sold for 15 cents for a lettersheet with matching envelope.

Until the Civil War, color printing was rare. Before that time, the majority of city images were printed in black and white and watercolored by hand, sometimes using stencils for the placement of individual colors.

Thanks to surviving lettersheets and their presentation in this book, we now have some 1,120 excellent color views, some full page in size, of life in America during the 19th century.

To present this subject, Milgram has organized the contents into 14 chapters: City and Town Views, Abolitionism, Political, Causes, Scenic and Expositions, Gold Rush lettersheets, Federal and Confederate, Spanish-American War, Valentines, Schools and Colleges, Hotels, Transportation, and types of private businesses.

Each chapter begins with a brief introduction followed by consecutively numbered figures with captions that discuss the illustrated lettersheet.

In some chapters, for each caption, Milgram assigns his own catalog number. While the catalog numbers next to an image are fairly easy to understand (AL-LS-1=Albany, N.Y., lettersheet number 1; Abol. LS 1=Abolitionist lettersheet number 1), Milgram never describes the cataloging system and his treatment of numbering is very inconsistent.

For example, in the "City and Town Views" section, the two-digit prefix identifies the town, but not the state. Some abbreviations used the first two letters of the city; others did not.

I expect more philatelists are interested in collecting the lettersheets of their state, rather than just a city and the organization by state and then by city would make more sense. At the very least, a list of views by state would have been a nice reference.

In the "Abolitionist Lettersheets" chapter Milgram uses the numbering system from his *Federal Civil War Postal History*, but this is not compatible with his numbering for Chapter 1, nor within his own category (This chapter's numbers don't use dashes and some use "Abol. LS 1;" others use "Abol. LS No. 3.")

Chapter 5, "Scenic Views and Expositions" provides no numbering system at all and Chapter 6, "Gold Rush Miner Lettersheets," uses Baird numbers for reference.

This lack of consistency in numbering limits the usefulness of this book as a catalog, which it could, and should, be.

In some chapters Milgram also provides a rarity scale for that section. Endnotes, in a nonstandard form, appear at the end of chapters.

Some of the chapters can be considered a complete listing of all known lettersheets for that area; others are representative of the subject matter.

For example, the 48-page Confederate patriotic lettersheet section makes its first appearance in print and all known lettersheets, including independent state designs, are illustrated. This section is a worthy addition to Confederate postal history.

On the other end of the spectrum, the illustrated lettersheets for specific businesses and hotels (a collection of just hotel designs would number in the thousands) are vast and only a representational grouping is shown.

In this case, Milgram chose designs that included the typical, the unusual and the most interesting.

As another example, chapter 1, "City and Town Views Including Streets and Buildings," is the longest chapter in the book and yet is still just representational because of the massive amount of material for this subject.

The strength of this book, and its most useful feature, are the illustrations, which are of almost universally high quality and as large as they can be to fit the page size. In many cases, accompanying covers are included with the lettersheets

The text editing could have been better with far too many errors in punctuation, style and usage, but many readers will not notice these technical errors and the overall impact on the work is negligible. Still, they could have been avoided.

Perhaps the most glaring omission in the book is a lack of an index. Without one, readers will have to look page-by-page to see if their favorite city, state, business or subject is included.

An appendix identifying the included lettersheets by state would also have been very useful.

The $90 price is not cheap, but you won't find this amalgamation of information about this subject anywhere else. The high quality color illustrations help to make the price seem a bit more reasonable.

The author will autograph copies if that request is made with the order. For any fence sitters, the author will also allow the book to be returned, if it proves to be unsatisfactory.

I expect Milgram's *American Illustrated Letter Stationery 1819-1899* to be the standard reference for this subject for decades to come. If you have an interest in this subject, buy your copy now before it sells out.

Peter Martin

Submit books for review to:
***La Posta* Editor**
POB 6074
Fredericksburg, VA 22403

This column features United States post office photographs from the collection of the Post Mark Collectors Club's Margie Phund Memorial Postmark Museum and Research Library, which is located in the historic Lyme Village near Bellevue, Ohio. The museum has more than two million postmarks from all over America and a photograph collection of more than 50,000 United States post offices. Both are the largest collections in the world. Information about PMCC, the museum and more post office views are available at *www.postmarks.org*.

Florida Post Offices

By Steve Bahnsen

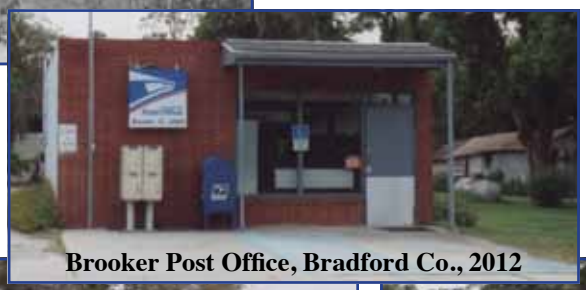
These photographs are of Florida post offices. The PMCC Museum's collection includes more than 1,600 pictures from Florida that range from black and white views from the 1950s to color digital photos from 2015. Given its tropical climate, post offices in the Sunshine State often have palm trees in front of them but never any snow. The nearly 800 miles from Key West to Pensacola has buildings of all sizes and designs.

Sydney Post Office, Hillsborough Co., 1967

**Telogia Post Office
Liberty Co., 2013**

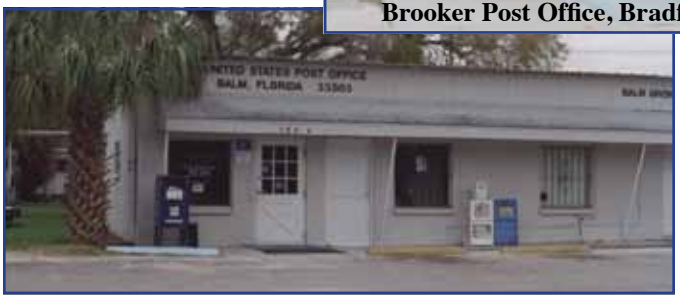
**Graham Post Office
Bradford Co., 1988**

**Killarney Post Office
Orange Co., 1985**



Brooker Post Office, Bradford Co., 2012

Shady Grove Post Office, Taylor Co., 1992



Balm Post Office, Hillsborough Co., 1998

Loughman Post Office, Polk Co., 2012

Orlovista Post Office, Orange Co., 2015

Ponte Vedra Beach Post Office
Saint Johns Co., 2015

Alafaya Post Office, Orange Co., 2015

Wellborn Post Office, Suwanee Co., 2007

Zephir Hills Post Office, Pasco Co., 2012

Key West Post Office, Monroe Co., 1998

Astatula Post Office, Lake Co., 2009

Hobe Sound Post Office, Martin Co., 2015

Weston Post Office, Broward Co., 2015

Letters

***La Posta* welcomes reader letters about journal content or anything related to a postal history topic. Send your comments to: Peter Martin, Editor, *La Posta*, POB 6074, Fredericksburg, VA 22403, or e-mail *pmartin2525@yahoo.com*.**

Reader Adds to 'Fascinating Stuff'

The Second Quarter 2016 *La Posta* had some fascinating stuff. A few comments:

1. The masthead of the letter enclosure related to "The Teutonic War Relief Committee" (page 34) is even more interesting than the authors noted.

One of the committee members shown on the letter was Henry Goldman, son of the founder of the big investment bank, Goldman Sachs. He was forced to retire from the company in 1917 because of his pro-German leanings. The rest of the family strongly supported the Allies. Goldman remained a strong supporter of Germany until 1933, when he visited the country and saw the brutal, institutionalized anti-Semitism under Hitler. From then on, until his death in 1937, he helped German Jews escape the Nazis.

Another committee member shown is Ahmed Shukri, of Columbia University. We don't know much about him, other than he was born in 1892, and wrote a book published by the Columbia University Press in 1917 about Islamic marriage and divorce.

The book might be the result of a doctoral thesis because he earned a law degree and a Ph.D. from Columbia about the time his book appeared. One 1919 reviewer in the Christian missionary journal *The Moslem World* called it, "a most scholarly and unbiased work."

2. The post office building shown as an illustration in the "The History of the New Ulm, Minnesota, Post Office" (page 46) article is a stunning building. Apparently, the government's first plan for the post office was so cookie cutter that residents complained. The result was unique.

A few years later, the government standardized the architecture of new post offices in small towns. For a short video about this, search *You Tube* for "Old Post Office, New Ulm."

3. For the first time, *La Posta* has begun running illustrations, apparently taken off the web, that are enlarged to the point of distortion (e.g. Manfred Berliner's grave and Edison's Mimeograph in the "Zuccato's Papyrograph" (page 32) article—another fine article, by the way).

Even advertisers are being sloppy about this (e.g. Brookman Stamp Company's own logo, and the CD illustrations by *La Posta* itself for United States Post Offices.) I'd urge authors and advertisers to search for duplicate illustrations that can be enlarged in *La Posta* without distortion.

I'm not a techie, but perhaps a screen shot that is converted to a .jpg file might result in better resolution in larger sizes than just downloading the original.

Don Glickstein
Seattle, Washington

***(Editor's Note:** Don's third point brings up an editor's dilemma. Internet images are usually 72 or 96 dpi. They look fine on a computer screen but do not reproduce well in print. Internet images are what they are. Converting a 72 dpi image to 300 dpi does not improve its quality. Enlarging a 72 dpi image in print will cause it to appear blurry.*

I try to avoid using low resolution images in La Posta*, but sometimes, especially with archival material, it's the only image available. So the choice then becomes do I use a low res image that supports a story or do I eliminate it. If it's an image that provides additional information that can add to the story, I lean toward inclusion.)*

La Posta Article Furthers Collecting Interest

I have been a subscriber to *La Posta* for a number of years. I look forward to every issue of your wonderful magazine, and sometimes discuss articles with some of my collector friends.

The First Quarter 2015 article by Jesse Spector and Bob Markovits about "Lunatic Asylums of the Western World" really hit the mark as I have recently started to collect in this area.

Thank you so much for publishing such a much-needed magazine for postal history collectors.

Jerry Login
New York, New York

Pam Am Clipper is Over San Francisco

I found the article, "At Ease Aloft on the Pan Am Clipper" in *La Posta* Volume 47, Number 1 interesting reading, however I believe the clipper at the top of page 33 is flying over San Francisco.

The Golden Gate Bridge, Bay Bridge, Treasure Island, Fort Mason, The Presidio and many other landmarks are shown.

Mike Brown
Carmel, California

***(Editor's Note:** Mike Brown is correct. Several other readers also reported this correction in the Second Quarter "Letters" column.)*

A San Francisco Earthquake Sidenote

I have been going through old philatelic magazines and I found a couple references to a stamp related to Jerry Johnson's very interesting Second Quarter *La Posta* article (page 22).

It's just a little side note, not even on a cover and I don't have the original. I just have the illustration from the old cited journal (shown at right). I thought you would be interested.

Jeff Lough
Lawrence, Kansas

The Airpost Journal. of November 20, 1929. Vol. I, No. 1 reports that this was the first airmail stamp. It was used in 1906 in San Francisco by the Johnston-Dienstag Co. who conducted a special aeroplane service in San Francisco immediately after the great earthquake and fire. The stamp was brown and had an eagle in flight, with the name of the company and, 'Special Service San Francisco, California'. After about a week, the Government stopped it's use.

In The News

Military Postal History Society Offers Special Edition

The special edition Military Postal History Society spring bulletin was issued as a promotional item for the NY 2016 World Stamp Show. The standard 36-page bulletin was expanded to 64 pages to offer a wider sampling of civilian and military postal history content from the Mexican American War, World War I, World War II, and Vietnam. The list of included articles is:

- On the Trail During the Mexican War
- 1916 — The Third Year of the War
- Mitsui Corp. — Two Different Wars
- WWI Ubiquitous "I am quite well…" Cards
- Forensic Examination of Letters 1916
- Marine Detachment on a Battleship
- Turbulent 1916 American Scene & its Portent for the Future
- Tankless "Tank Corps" Trained at Gettysburg in 1917
- "Before a War…" U.S. Involvement in Southeast Asia
- Stars and Strife: Post War British Soldiers and Hollywood
- APO/DPO/FPOs — Opening and Closings
- Decoration (Memorial) Day Postcards

The special edition spring bulletin was sent free to members. It will be sold for $15 to nonmembers. For more information about the MPHS, visit their website at: *www.militaryphs.org*.

Siegel Firm Offers Auction of Classic Postal Markings

The New York auction house of Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries is well known for their offerings of top-end stamps and postal history.

The firm's October 5 Sale 1136 will be of particular interest to postal historians.

"The Peter Sharrer Collection of United States Classic Postal Markings" only has 107 lots, but they are a treasure trove of some of the rarest markings in the best condition available.

From a James Madison free frank, to circle and shield handstamps, to fabulous datestamps and Paid markings, to fancy cancels and railroad and ship markings, the collection formed by this philatelist is superb.

The catalog is fully illustrated with lot descriptions that go beyond the norm.

You can view the catalog online at: www.*siegelauctions.com*. For questions, call Siegel at (212) 753-6421 or e-mail *stamps@siegelauctions.com*.

Report news related to postal history or philatelic research to the editor at:
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Sincerely,

Peter Martin

Publisher

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ILLUSTRATED ADVERTISING COVERS showing various old products. Many with matching graphic enclosures. Submit collecting interests for free photocopies. John Cuddy, 2768 Willits Rd., Philidelphia, PA 19136. Phone: (215) 552-9855. [47-4]

WANTED

ALL STATES AND CATEGORIES wanted! Better consignment material always needed for my bi-monthly Mail Bid Sales. Write/ call for consignment details. Jim Mehrer, 2405-30th Street, Rock Island, IL 61201. Phone: (309) 786-6539. E-mail: *mehrer@postal-history.com*. Website: *www.postal-history.com*. [48-1]

WANTED: LAST FLIGHT COVERS or scans (front & back) from 1949 AM-49 flights, especially Fairmont, West Virginia, and Cincinnati, Ohio. Roger Baldwin, 5908 NW 72nd Street, Warr Acres, OK 73132; E-mail: rbaldwi@cox.net [47-4]

The La Posta Bookstore — Books For Sale

Unless noted, previously owned books are one of a kind. E-mail *pmartin2525@yahoo.com* to confirm availability and to reserve your purchase. First come, first served. Postage is $5 for the first book and $1 for each subsequent book. Make checks payable to: La Posta Publications and send to: POB 6074, Fredericksburg, VA 22403.

New

***Pennsylvania Local Deed Tax Stamps Catalog*, edited by Robert Conley. 2015, 72pp., color illus. Just released. First update in 50 years. Retail $27. ..... $22**

***SRS State Revenue Catalog,* edited by Dave Wrisley. 2013, hardbound, 733pp. The essential reference for this specialty. Retail $97. ..... $82**

Previously Owned

Philatelic

***Postmarked Kentucky: A Postal History of the Commonwealth of Kentucky from 1792-1900* by Alan T. Atkins. J-B Publishing Co. (NE), 1975, hardbound, 169pp., illus. $20**

***The New Specialized Catalogue of Canada Post Official First Day Covers 2nd ed*. by Andrew Chung and R.F. Narbonne, Unitrade Press, 2002, spiral bound, 192pp, illus $10**

***Uniontown, Alabama, Postmaster's Provisionals* by Francis J. Crown Jr. Confederate Stamp Alliance, 2016, saddlestiched, 80pp, illus. $10**

Nonphilatelic

***American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third ed.* Houghton Mifflin Co., 1992, hardbound, 2,184pp. A great reference $15**

***The Encyclopedia of Ships* edited by Tony Gibbons. Thunder Bay Press, 2001, hardbound, 544pp., color illus. The definitive guide to more than 1,500 of the most important ships from the earliest times to the 21st century. $15**

***Fighter: Technology, Facts, History* by Ralf Leinburger. Parragon Books (GB), 2008, card covers, 320 pp. color illus. Examines each of the world's most important fighter planes for the first 100 years of flight. As new. $15**

***The National Geographic Society: 100 Years of Adventure and Discovery* by C.D.B. Bryan. Harry N. Abrams (NY), 1987, hardbound, 484pp., well illustrated. The story of the first 100 years of the National Geographic Society. $25**

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Rex J. Bates
1923-2016

Benefactor subscriber Rex James "Jim" Bates, 92, of Sequim, Washington, died March 8 at his home.

He was born November 9, 1923, in Seattle, to Rex L. and Lucy Anderson Bates. In 1942, Bates enlisted in the U.S. Army and was recruited into the Army Air Corps Weather Reconnaissance Squadron. This was a handpicked group of 24 engineering students who were commissioned as lieutenants, trained at the University of Washington, and sent to the Pacific to fly into the weather to determine conditions before the commencement of major battles. They were based on Guam and were the first "Hurricane Chasers" — the first to fly into the eye of a hurricane.

He married Reva Meyers in 1947 while a student at the University of Chicago School of Business. After earning a bachelor of science in physics and a master of business administration specializing in statistics and applied mathematics he joined the investment firm of Stein Roe and Farnham. As a partner, he worked for 23 years as both a stock and bond analyst. In 1972, he became financial vice president of State Farm in Bloomington, where he served for 19 years

A lifelong "birder," Bates served as a trustee of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology for many years. He was also an avid stamp and postal history collector, tennis player and salmon fisherman.

Eliot A. Landau
1942-2016

Eliot Alan Landau, 73, of Woodbridge, Illinois, passed away January 4 after a long illness.

A native of Chicago, born May 15, 1942, Landau was a civil rights worker in Mississippi, a Supreme Court law clerk to Justice Thurgood Marshall, and a law professor at several universities before becoming president of the family and civil law firm Landau & Associates in 1980.

A philatelic law specialist and avid stamp collector, he was an expert on Abraham Lincoln–themed postage.

He was an accredited APS national philatelic chief judge and frequent Lincoln stamp exhibitor and lecturer. His award-winning philatelic exhibition "Lincoln, Slavery, and the Civil War" combined philately, ephemera, and artifacts in an engaging exploration of Lincoln's presidency, the Civil War, and black history. Landau served as president of the Chicago Philatelic Society and as chairman of Chicagopex. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Eileen Bell Landau.

Henry F. Mezzack
1922-2016

Henry Francis "Hank" Mezzack, 93, of Bowie, Maryland, passed away on May 3.

He was born December 16, 1922, and was married to wife Emeline (nee Bak) for 66 years.

Mezzack served for more than 26 years in the Army Air Corps and United States Air Force, flying a total of 76 missions during his service in World War II and in Korea. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the second third and fourth oak leaf cluster to the Air Medal for action in Korea.

He retired from active duty in 1969 as a lieutenant colonel and was employed subsequently at the Electromagnetic Compatibility Analysis Center in 1963 as an electrical engineer and Air Force deputy, retiring in 1983.

An avid collector and designer of first day covers, Mezzack ran H&M Covers for more than 30 years.

Irwin R. Weinberg
1928-2016

Irwin R. Weinberg, 88, of Kingston, Pennsylvania, passed away May 2 at his home.

Weinberg was born February 10, 1928, in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, graduating from E.L. Meyers High School. He married Jean Tyrell in 1952.

At age 17, he started a brief career as an elevator operator in New York City. He went on to become an internationally known stamp collector and dealer, whose career took him from Nassau Street to Buckingham Palace, owning the famous one-cent magenta British Guiana and many other well-known philatelic rarities.

He was president of Irwin Weinberg Rarities Inc., which also operated under the name Miner Stamp Company, a small catalog and mail-order house in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, founded in 1945.

In 2009, Weinberg was inducted into the American Stamp Dealers Association's hall of fame.

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