

Early Distribution And Use Of Postage Stamps In The United States

1842 - 1904

This exhibit will show early usages of postage stamps and selected examples of postal stationery in the United States between 1842 and 1904. Very few stamps issued in this period were distributed to offices with instructions to release them on a specific date. In the period before the 1893 issuance of the Columbian series, true first day of issue covers exist only when rate changes were announced with sufficient lead-time for the Post Office Department to prepare new stamps and to distribute those new stamps to the post offices.

Commencing with the 1893 Columbian series, commemorative stamps were announced to postmasters in writing with specific instructions as to when the stamps were to be released to the public. Other than for the commemorative stamp series and for stamps required to meet rate change laws, there was usually no pre-release publicity for new issues. The start of the Civil War resulted in a rare instance of stamps being rushed into production and distribution was automatic as soon as adequate supplies were at hand.

During the period before 1905, most new stamp releases were not sent to postmasters automatically. Generally, when a postmaster ran low of a particular stamp denomination, he ordered a new supply through the stamp agent, or directly from the Third Assistant Postmaster General. Circulars announcing some of the new stamp series were sent to postmasters. Even then, some directed that new stamp orders would be fulfilled from existing stocks before the new series would be shipped. As a result, a study of first day covers and earliest documented usages is a study of stamp distribution.

In this exhibit items are designated as first day of issue where appropriate and such covers are mounted within a red frame. Additional items are designated as "earliest documented usage" which means that the particular item is the earliest known date of use, excluding unconfirmed reports, and examples not on cover. Only in the case of the 1847 issue are early usage covers shown, in all other cases the items are the earliest documented examples. All items have been authenticated and dates furnished to catalog publishers.

The exhibit is organized chronologically on the following outline:

- Frame 1: 1842 United States carrier stamp through the 1855 issue
- Frame 2: 1857 Perforated issue through 1861 issues
- Frame 3: 1867 Grill issues through 1869 issue
- Frame 4: 1870 Banknote issue through 1879 banknote issues
- Frame 5: 1879 Postage due issue through 1898 color changes
- Frame 6: 1893 Columbian series through 1895 regular issue
- Frame 7: 1897 Color change issues through 1904 Louisiana Purchase series

The 1842 U.S. Carrier Of New York
Three Cents

First Day Service



16 August 1842 U.S. City Despatch Post 3-cent used locally in New York City letter was carried privately from Boston and entered the mails in New York for delivery

First Day Service and Use of Government Adhesive

The United States Postmaster General established a carrier service in New York City by purchasing Greig's City Despatch Post on August 1, 1842. Service as a government carrier service commenced on August 16, 1842 as the United States City Despatch Post and utilized the same stamps previously circulated by Greig. The postmark device used was altered to include "U.S." at foot and the stamps were canceled with boxed "US" handstamp.

These were the first adhesive postage stamps authorized to be used by the post office and the cover above was posted on the first day of service.

The 1844 American Letter Mail Company
Five Cents

First Day Service



25 January 1844 Baltimore to New York City prepaid with American Letter Mail Company adhesive

The Earliest Reported Usage of a Stamp to Prepay Intercity Postage

In January 1844 Lysander Spooner founded the American Letter Mail Company to operate a cheap letter express between Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York and Boston to compete with the government postal service. He issued adhesive postage stamps, which he sold for "20 for a dollar," that could be used to prepay fees for service that the government was charging considerably more for.

Spooner announced on January 25, 1844 the commencement of service. The cover above was carried on the first day of operations.

**The 1845 New York Postmaster Provisional
Five Cents**

Earliest Documented Usage



15 July 1845 New York City usage of 5-cent pair to Scotland, restored

The Only Reported Pair Used on this Date

After the first class postal rate was reduced to five cents for distances to 300 miles, effective July 1, 1845, the New York City postmaster, Robert Morris, prepared a stamp that could be used to prepay the new rate. Several examples are known used on July 15, 1845 indicating that this date is likely the date that the stamp was introduced.

The 1845 Baltimore Postmaster Provisionals
Five Cents On Bluish / On White

Earliest Documented Usages



3 August 1845 usage of 5-cent provisional, on bluish paper



15 January 1846 usage of 5-cent provisional, on white paper

The postmaster of Baltimore, Maryland, James Buchanan, prepared provisional adhesive stamps as well as envelopes. All were variations with his signature printed or handstamped.

The 1846 Baltimore Postmaster Provisionals
Five Cents / Ten Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



27 April 1846 usage of 5-cent handstamped provisional



12 June 1846 usage of 10-cent handstamped provisional

The 1846 Brattleboro Provisional
Five Cents

Earliest Documented Usage



28 August 1846 Brattleboro, Vermont usage of 5-cent provisional stamp

The postmaster of Brattleboro, Vermont, Frederick Palmer, prepared a five cent stamp for usage at his post office. The stamp saw very limited usage.



26 July 1847 New York City usage of 5-cent, first month of use
Alexander reports 29 usages of 5-cent in July 1847



10 July 1847 New York City usage of 10-cent, first month of usage, third earliest reported
Alexander reports 12 usages of 10-cent in July 1847

The 1847 issue was authorized by an Act of March 3, 1847 and became valid for use on July 1, 1847. However, no examples are known used on that date.

The 1851 Issue
One Cent

First Day of Issue
First Day of Rate

"Regulations Concerning Postage Stamps."

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.
JUNE 10, 1851.

To facilitate the pre-payment of postages upon letters and packages, postage stamps of the following denominations are provided and furnished by the Postmaster General, pursuant to the 3d section of the "act to reduce and modify the rates of postage in the United States, and for other purposes," approved 3d March, 1851, viz:

No. 1. Printed in black, representing the head of Washington, of the denomination of twelve cents.

No. 2. Printed in red, representing the head of Washington in profile, of the denomination of three cents.

No. 3. Printed in blue, representing the head of Franklin in profile, of the denomination of one cent.

These stamps will be furnished to one or more of the principal postmasters in each county, who will be required to supply the other postmasters in their respective vicinities, upon being paid for the amounts furnished.



1 July 1851 printed circular with 1-cent used from Baltimore, Maryland, position 16L1¹
it can not be known when this circular was actually posted

Fewer Than Five Reported Examples on Circulars Dated July 1, 1851

The one cent 1851 issue was automatically distributed to larger post offices prior to the July 1, 1851 effective date of the Act of March 3, 1851. The Act established a printed circular rate of one cent for printed circulars to one ounce, sent a distance not exceeding 500 miles as well as a one cent rate for letters for local delivery.

The 1851 Issue
One Cent, Type IV

Earliest Documented Usage



5 June 1852 New York City usage of 1-cent, type IV, position 35L1¹

The one cent stamp was issued on July 1, 1851. Plate one was extensively re-entered sometime in the Spring of 1852 and the new plate is termed plate one late. The resultant impressions, that show the re-entries, are classified as type IV stamps.

The 1851 Issue
Three Cents

First Day of Issue
First Day of Rate



1 July 1851 Richmond, Virginia usage of 3-cent, position 80R1^B

The Only Reported Example from Richmond

The three cent 1851 issue was automatically distributed to larger post offices prior to the July 1, 1851 effective date of the Act of March 3, 1851 Act. The Act lowered the postal rate from five cents to three cents for a prepaid letter to one-half ounce, conveyed not exceeding 3,000 miles. The stamps of the 1847 issue that had been in use were demonetized.

The 1851 Issue
Three Cents

First Day of Issue
First Day of Rate



1 July 1851 Lowell, Massachusetts usage of 3-cent, position 71L1^B
The Only Reported Example from Lowell



1 July 1851 West Windham, New Hampshire 3-cent, position 31L1^B
The Only Reported Example from New Hampshire

The cover below is an example of atypical stamp distribution. West Windham did not receive a supply of the new 3-cent stamp prior to July 1, 1851. However, the sender of this letter was involved in railroad transportation and evidently secured the new stamp in time to be used on the first day. Possibly from nearby Lowell, Massachusetts.

The 1851 Issue
Three Cents

First Day of Issue
First Day of Rate



1 July 1851 Cincinnati, Ohio usage of 3-cent, position 92R1^B

One of Three Reported Usages from Cincinnati



1 July 1851 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania usage of 3-cent, position 81R1^B



11 July 1853 Portland, Maine usage of 3-cent postal entire with dated letter

The first issue of postal stationery was introduced in 1853. Die I was the first used and it was imprinted on both horizontally laid and diagonally laid paper. The cover above is the earliest documented usage of the horizontally laid paper. An example dated July 6, 1853 on diagonally laid paper is reported.

The 1855 Issue
Ten Cents, Type I

Earliest Documented Usage



11 July 1855 Lancaster, Ohio usage of 10-cent, type I, in combination used to England

A ten cent denomination was issued in May 1855. The ten cent postal rate for a domestic letter to one-half ounce, sent over 3,000 miles, had become effective on April 1, 1855 but the new stamps were not available in a timely fashion.

The stamps were printed from a single plate and different types occur on the same sheet. Each impression from the plate of 200 stamps yielded 20 type I stamps, 95 type II stamps, 81 type III stamps, and 4 type IV stamps.

The 1855 Issue

Earliest Documented Usages

Ten Cents: Type III



19 May 1855 New Orleans, Louisiana usage of single 10-cent, type III, in combination to France

**The 1857 Issue
One Cent, Type IV**

**Earliest Documented Usage
Of Any One Cent Perforated**

Perforated versions of stamps previously in circulation began to be distributed in 1857. They were released in the normal course of stamp order fulfillment without special ordering procedures.



25 July 1857 Castleton, Vermont usage of 1-cent perforated, type IV from plate 1L on printed circular

The 1857 Issue One Cent
One Cent, Type III

Earliest Documented Usage



18 September 1857 New York City usage of 1-cent perforated, type III the center stamp in strip
strip is positions 70-90L4, types IIIA, III, and IIIA

The perforated one cent stamps were introduced gradually in the Summer of 1857. Each impression from plate 4 (200 stamps) yielded only 36 type III stamps.

The 1857 Issue

Earliest Documented Usages

Five Cents: Red Brown / Brick Red



23 August 1857 New Orleans, Louisiana usage of 5-cent red brown, three copies used to France



6 October 1858 New Orleans, Louisiana usage of 5-cent indian red shade, strip used to France

The 1857 Issue

Earliest Documented Usage

Five Cents Type II, Orange Brown



8 May 1861 New York City usage of 5-cent orange brown, type II in combination to France

A new plate for production of the five cent stamps was made in 1860. The stamp design was shortened at the top and bottom to better accommodate perforations. All stamps printed from this new plate are type II. The original printing was in brown but a subsequent printing in 1861 was in orange brown.

The 1857 Issue

Earliest Documented Usages

Ten Cents: Type I / Type II



25 August 1857 Canajoharie, New York usage of perforated 10-cent, type I, to Canada, backstamped



5 September 1857 San Francisco, California usage of perforated 10-cent, type II

Existing stocks of the ten cent were evidently perforated commencing in late summer 1857. As California was the largest user of the denomination, the first perforated stamps were probably ordered from San Francisco and delivered there.

The 1857 Issue

Earliest Documented Usages

Ten Cents: Type III / Type IV



16 October 1857 St. Louis, Missouri usage of single 10-cent, type III



5 October 1857 San Francisco, California usage of 10-cent, type IV

The 1857 Issue
Twelve Cents

Earliest Documented Usage



30 July 1857 Plainfield, New Jersey usage of 12-cent in combination to France
twelve cent stamps are positions 87R, 87-88R, and 77-78R

The perforated twelve cent stamps were introduced gradually in the Summer of 1857.

The 1860 Issue
Thirty Cents

Earliest Documented Usage



8 August 1860 New York City usage of 30-cent in combination to France

In the Summer of 1860 the first thirty cents denomination stamp was issued. Distribution was gradual with larger offices receiving supplies first.



18 August 1860 New York City usage of 3-cent postal entire

A new series of postal stationery was introduced in 1860. The new designs have small stars at the sides of the central portrait. The above cover is the earliest reported usage of any "star die" entire.

The 1861 Issue

Earliest Documented Usage

One Cent

The onset of the Civil War left large quantities of United States postage in rebel hands. New designs for postage stamps and postal stationery were adopted and rushed into circulation. When supplies of the new stamps were received at post offices, an exchange period started when old stamps could be exchanged for new designs. At the end of the exchange period, which varied depending on when the new issues were received, the old stamps were demonetized.



21 August 1861 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania usage of 1-cent
to the mails carrier fee prepaid plus 3c domestic rate paid with 3-cent 1861 issue

Newspaper notice placed by Philadelphia postmaster on August 19, 1861:

POST OFFICE PHILADELPHIA

August 19, 1861

NOTICE: - The public is hereby notified that the new UNITED STATES POSTAGE STAMPS are now ready and for sale at this office. Those having any of the OLD ISSUE are requested to call and have them exchanged for the new one of the same denomination, within SIX DAYS from the date of this notice, as after date they will not be recognized in payment of postage at this office. The new stamps are of denomination of ONE, THREE, FIVE, TEN, TWELVE, TWENTY-FOUR, THIRTY and NINETY CENTS.

C.A. Walborn, P.M.

The 1861 Issue
Three Cents

Earliest Documented Usage



17 August 1861 Baltimore, Maryland usage of 3-cent pink

First Day of Issue at Baltimore
The Only Reported Example

Newspaper notice placed by Baltimore postmaster on August 17, 1861:

Post Office Notice

The public are hereby notified that the Postmaster at Baltimore will be prepared from this date to exchange ENVELOPES and STAMPS of the new style for an equivalent amount of the old issue, up to THURSDAY, the 22nd instant, after which the old style will not be received in payment of letters mailed at this office.

WM. Purnell, Postmaster
Baltimore, Maryland
au 17-t22



17 August 1861 New York City usage of 3-cent postal entire

Newspaper notice placed by New York City postmaster on August 7, 1861:

SPECIAL NOTICE

POST OFFICE, New York, Aug. 7, 1861. - the new style of GOVERNMENT STAMPED ENVELOPES is now ready and for sale at this office. Exchange will be made of the new style for an equivalent amount of the old issue during a period of SIX DAYS from the date of this notice, after which no letters under cover of the old issue will be sent from this office.

WM. B. TAYLOR, Postmaster

The 1861 Issue
Five Cents

Earliest Documented Usage



21 August 1861 Boston, Massachusetts usage of 5 cents yellow brown
first day of issue at Boston

The Only Reported Example

A newspaper notice announcing the availability of the 1861 style stamps was placed by the Boston postmaster on August 21, 1861.

Ten Cents, Type I

Earliest Documented Usage



17 September 1861 New York City usage of 10-cent dark green, type I combination franking with pair 30-cent and single 5-cent to France

Second Day of Availability at New York

Newspaper notice placed by New York postmaster on September 16, 1861:

Notice

The new style of Government Postage Stamps is now ready, and for sale at this office. Exchange will be made of the old style for an equivalent amount of the old issue during a period of

SIX DAYS

from the date of this notice, after which stamps of the old issue will not be received in payment of postage on letters sent from this office.

Wm. B. Taylor, P.M.

The 1861 Issue

Earliest Documented Usage

Twenty Four Cents / Thirty Cents



7 January 1862 New York City usage of 24-cent red lilac shade

The twenty four cent steel blue and violet shades were the first issued, followed by the red lilac shade shown above.



20 August 1861 New London, Connecticut usage of 30-cent to Hawaii

**The 1861 Pony Express
Two Dollars**

Earliest Documented Usage



28 April 1861 Placerville, California usage of 2-dollar Pony Express adhesive

The Earliest Reported Usage of a Pony Express Stamp

In April 1861 Wells, Fargo & Co., in their capacity as agents for the Pony Express, introduced adhesive stamps. At this time the Trans-Continental Pony Express was a privately owned operation that carried mail between California and St. Joseph, Missouri at the rate of two dollars per half ounce.

The cover above departed Placerville, California on April 28 and was carried east by a relay of riders on ponies. It entered the United States mails at St. Joseph, Missouri on May 10, 1861.

The 1867-1868 Grilled Issues

Earliest Documented Usage

A Grill - Three Cents

Commencing in 1867 the National Bank Note Company began experimenting with the use of grills impressed into the stamps as an additional anti-fraud measure. The first grill known used was the A grill which was an all-over grill with points up.

Initial distribution of the grilled stamps was done without publicity or notice.



13 August 1867 Richmond, Virginia usage of 3-cent A grill

The Earliest Documented Usage of any Grilled Stamp

The 1867-1868 Grill Issues

Earliest Documented Usage

C Grill - Three Cents

After experimenting with all over, points up grill, National apparently removed some of the points in the rollers used to impress the grills. Stamps showing the C grill were the result. Although still points up, the new roller resulted in a smaller grill impression of 13 by 16mm.



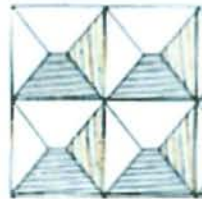
16 November 1867 Baltimore, Maryland usage of 3-cent C grill

The 1867-1868 Grill Issues

Earliest Documented Usage

Z Grill - Three Cents

After further experimenting, National began using a roller with pyramids. The resultant stamps with the Z grill show horizontal ridges, points down, and have a grill impression of 11 by 14mm.



Z grill pyramids



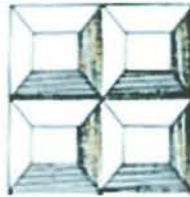
2 February 1868 Clear Springs, Maryland usage of 3-cent Z grill

The 1867-1868 Grill Issues

Earliest Documented Usage

E Grill - One Cent

Later, National apparently planed off the tops of the pyramid shaped bosses. The resultant stamps with the E grill are points up, and have a grill impression of 11 by 13mm.



E grill flat top pyramids

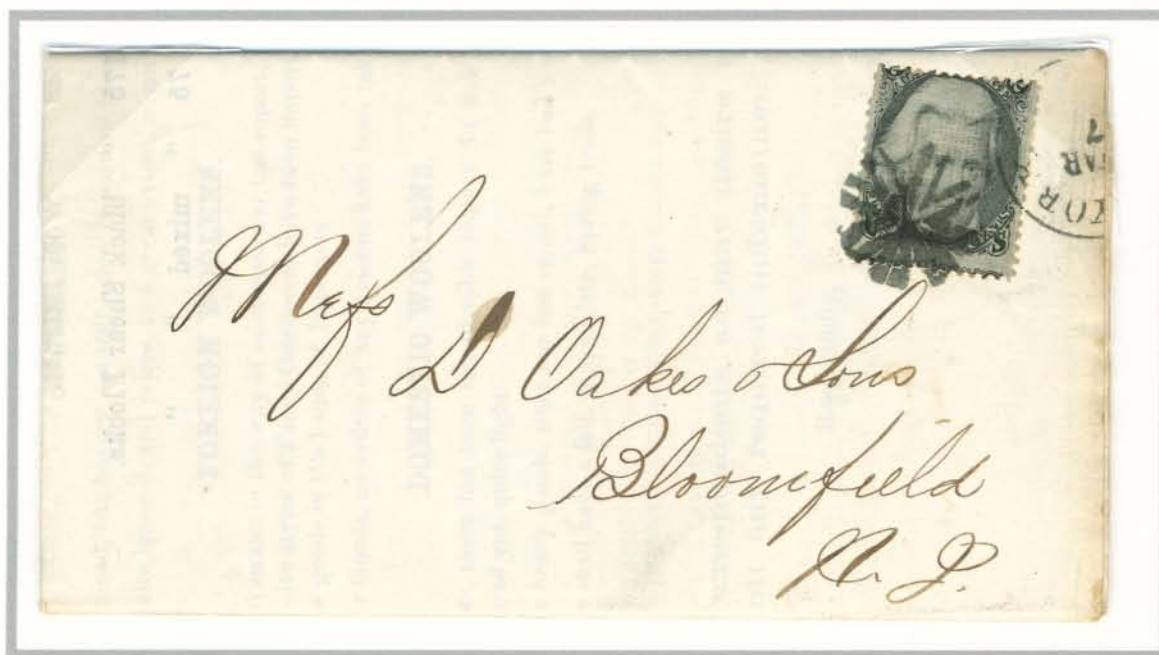


9 March 1868 Lawrence, Kansas usage of three copies 1-cent E grill

The 1867-1868 Grill Issues

Earliest Documented Usages

E Grill - Two Cents / Three Cents



7 March 1868 New York City usage of 2-cent E grill



12 February 1868 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania usage of 3-cent E grill

The 1867-1868 Grill Issues

Earliest Documented Usage

F Grill - One Cent

In a further alteration to the cylinder used to impress the grills, National apparently erased the two outside rows of bosses. The resultant stamps with the F grill are points up, and have a grill impression width of only 9mm. The height is the same 13mm as previously.



11 August 1868 Dansville, New York usage of 1-cent F grill

The 1867-1868 Grill Issues

Earliest Documented Usages

F Grill - Three Cents / Five Cents



21 March 1868 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania usage of 3-cent F grill



19 August 1868 Saint Marys, Ohio usage of pair 5-cent F grill in combination

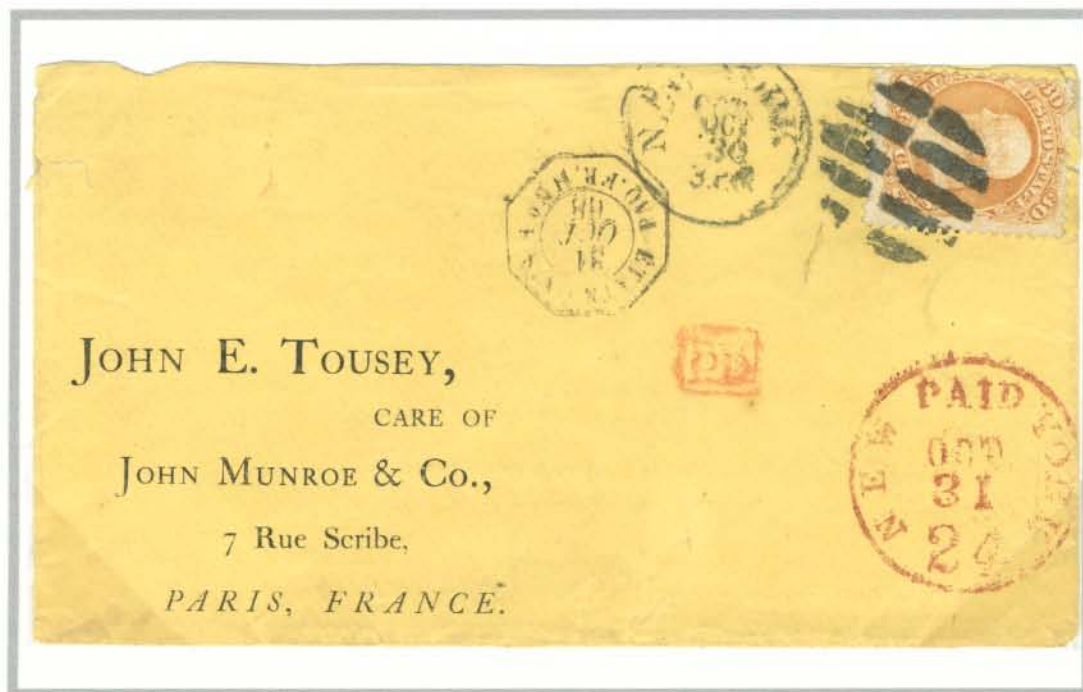
The 1867-1868 Grill Issues

Earliest Documented Usages

F Grill - Ten Cents / Thirty Cents



28 May 1868 New York City usage of pair 10-cent F grill



30 October 1868 New York City usage of 30-cent F grill

The 1867-1868 Grill Issues

Earliest Documented Usages

Z Grill - Twelve Cents



12 February 1868 New York City usage of 12-cent Z grill on overseas cover

Post Office Department,

Finance Office,

March 1, 1869.

SIR:

At an early day, IN THE REGULAR COURSE OF BUSINESS, the Department will issue to Postmasters Postage Stamps of new designs. *See description annexed.*

IN THE PROPOSED ISSUE THE SIX-CENTS STAMP IS SUBSTITUTED FOR THE FIVE-CENTS.

You are required to exhaust all of the present style on hand before supplying the public with the new; and in no case will you be allowed to make exchanges for individuals, or to return Stamps to the Department to be exchanged.

THE STAMPS NOW IN USE ARE NOT TO BE DISREGARDED, BUT MUST BE RECOGNIZED IN ALL CASES EQUALLY WITH THE NEW ONES.

Special attention is called to the fact that sheets of all denominations below 15 cents contain 150 Stamps. The 15 cents, and all higher denominations, contain 100 Stamps on each sheet. This must be borne in mind to prevent mistakes in counting, as in the present issue each denomination has but 100 Stamps to the sheet.

Special requests for the new style of Stamps will be disregarded until the stock of the present issue in possession of the Department is exhausted.

Due notice will be given of the date of issue of any new design of Stamped Envelope, therefore all inquiries respecting them will be disregarded.

A. N. ZEVELY,

Third Assistant Postmaster General.

POSTMASTER

Douglas

Kam

March 1, 1869 Post Office Department announcement of the 1869 pictorial issue. Note the sixth paragraph: "Special requests for the new style of Stamps will be disregarded until the stock of the present issue in possession of the Department is exhausted." *The stamps were not immediately distributed as a new issue.*

The 1869 Issue
One Cent

Earliest Documented Usage



1 April 1869 printed circular, local use at New York City with 1-cent

The 1869 Issue
Two Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



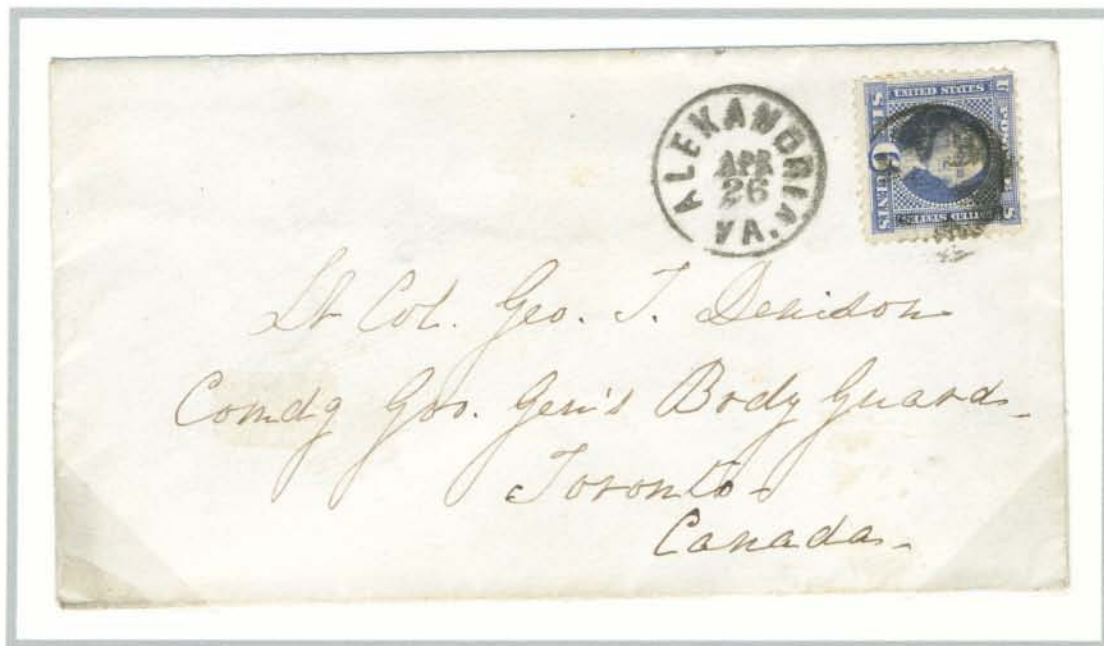
19 March 1869 New York City local usage of 2-cent

The Earliest Documented Usage of any 1869 Issue Denomination

The 1869 Issue

Six Cents / Twelve Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



26 April 1869 Alexandria, Virginia usage of 6-cent



1 April 1869 New York City usage of 12-cent in combination to Italy

The 1869 Issue
Twenty-Four Cents

Earliest Documented Usage



7 April 1869 New York City usage of 24-cent in combination to China

The 1869 Issue
Thirty Cents

Earliest Documented Usage



22 May 1869 New York City usage of 30-cent in combination to China

**The 1875 Re-Issue Of 1869 Issue
One Cent**

Earliest Documented Usage



9 December 1877 Chicago, Illinois usage of pair 1-cent on 3-cent entire to England

The Earliest Reported Usage of Any Re-Issue

It is not known how the re-issues of 1875 were distributed. However, they were not sent to post offices in the normal course of business. Most of the known covers were sent by stamp dealers.

**The 1870 Issue
One Cent**

Earliest Documented Usage Of No Grill



7 May 1870 New York City usage of 1-cent, without grill, in combination

Both the grilled and ungrilled stamps of the 1870 issue, printed by the National Bank Note Company, were issued simultaneously. The grill and no grill varieties have been found on the same sheet for some denominations. Further, it seems likely that the production process resulted in some sheets receiving grills while other sheets did not receive grills.

A review of the earliest documented usages supports this. Of the nine denominations to the 30c issued in 1870, five denominations have earliest documented usages that are the grill variety, while four are for the no grill variety.

The banknote issues were released to the post offices in the normal course of stamp order fulfillment as supplies of previous issues were exhausted..

The 1870 Issue

Earliest Documented Usages

Ten Cents: with grill / no grill



6 May 1870 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania usage of 10-cent, with grill, in combination



14 May 1870 New York City usage of 10-cent, no grill, in combination with France on piece

The 1870 Issue
Twelve Cents

Earliest Documented Usage Of Grill



9 July 1870 New York City usage of 12-cent, with grill, in combination

The 1870 Issue
Fifteen Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



2 June 1870 New York City usage of 15-cent, with grill, in combination



24 June 1870 Woodville, Ohio usage of 15-cent, no grill

The 1870 Issue
Twenty Four Cents

Earliest Documented Usage No Grill



18 November 1870 Rochester, New York usage of 24-cent, no grill, in combination

The 1870 Issue
Thirty Cents

Earliest Documented Usage With Grill



18 August 1870 Boston, Massachusetts usage of 30-cent, with grill, in combination

The 1873 Issue
One Cent

Earliest Documented Usage



22 August 1873 Concord, New Hampshire usage of 1-cent on local cover

The Continental Bank Note Company was awarded the contract to print stamps for the Post Office Department in 1873. New plates were made to produce the lower denominations.

The 1873 Issue

Two Cents / Three Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



12 July 1873 New York City usage of 2-cent on local use cover



17 July 1873 Syracuse, New York usage of 3-cent on postal entire



25 June 1875 Brownsville, Texas usage of 90-cent in combination on address panel of a parcel

The 1873 Issue - Soft Papers
Three Cents / Five Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



2 July 1878 New York City usage of 3-cent



16 January 1879 Chicago, Illinois usage of 5-cent

The Continental Bank Note Company consolidated with the American Bank Note Company on February 4, 1879. The soft paper varieties are usually listed as a separate issue of the American Bank Note Company. However, as the above examples demonstrate, the soft paper was introduced while still under Continental control. These stamps are more properly considered to be varieties of the 1873 issue.

The 1873 Issue - Soft Paper
Ten Cents

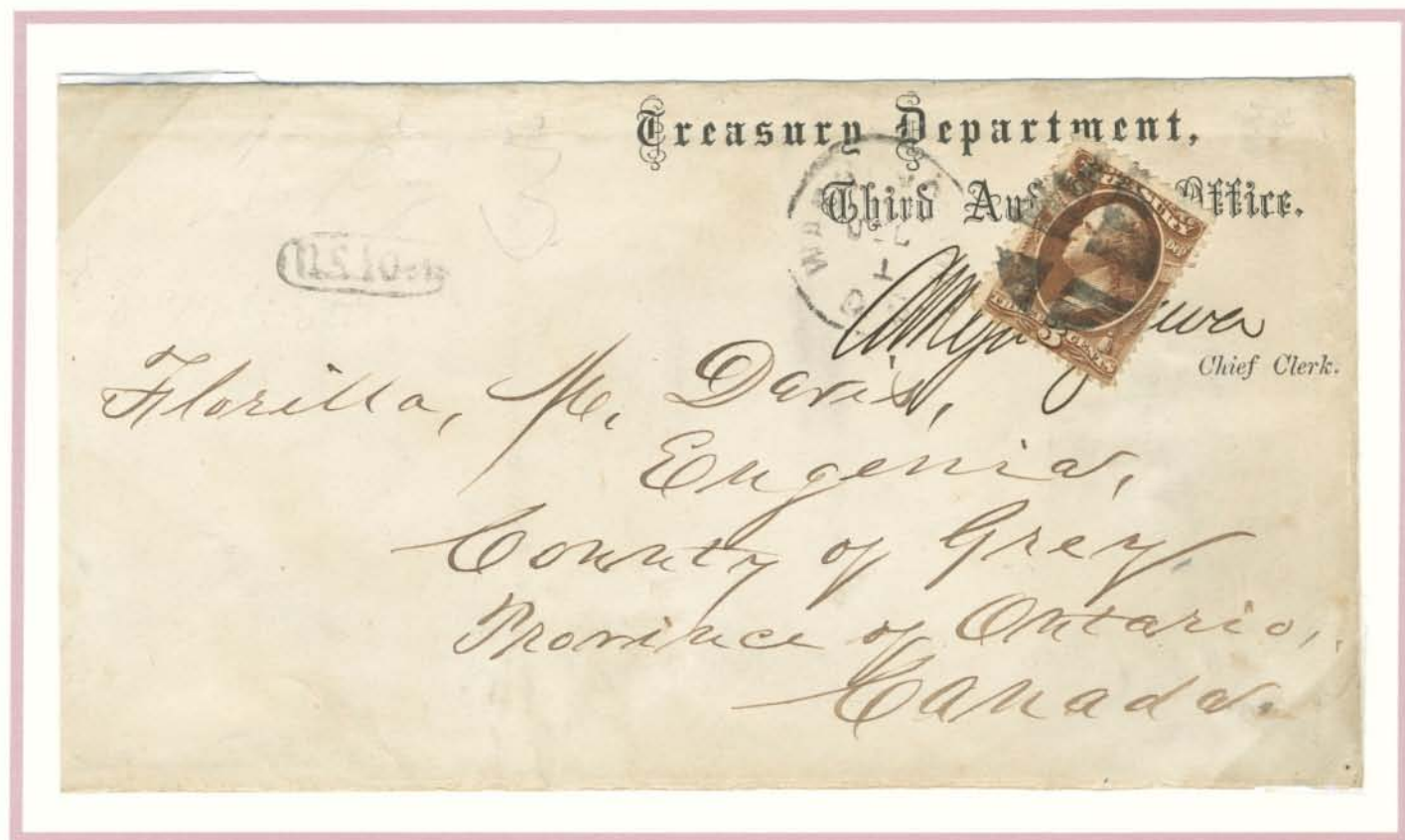
Earliest Documented Usage



5 October 1878 New York City usage of 10-cent

The 1873 Departmental Issue
Three Cent Treasury Department

First Day of Issue



1 July 1873 Washington, D.C. usage of 3-cent Treasury Official

Special adhesives for Government Departments were first issued on July 1, 1873.



19 May 1876 Centennial Station, Philadelphia usage of 3-cent postal entire in combination

The first commemorative issue of postal stationery was introduced in 1876 at the Centennial celebration in Philadelphia. The envelopes were sold on the grounds commencing May 10, 1876.

The 1873 Departmental Issue
Six Cents Treasury Department

Earliest Documented Usage



10 July 1873 Washington, D.C.
usage of 6-cent Treasury Official

The 1879 Issue
Thirty Cents

Earliest Documented Usage



5 April 1881 Chicago, Illinois usage of 30-cent

All of the thirty cent stamps on soft paper can be safely be attributed as being produced by American.

The 1879 Issue
Ninety Cents

Earliest Documented Usage

24 June 1882 New York City usage
of 90-cent in combination

*All of the ninety cent stamps on soft
paper can safely be attributed as being
produced by American.*



The 1879 Postage Due Issue
One Cent / Two Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



4 July 1879 New York City usage of 1-cent due in combination on cover from France



27 July 1879 New York City usage of 2-cent due in combination on inbound Naval cover

Special adhesives for postage due mail, to show amount paid by recipient, were first issued in 1879. The stamps were affixed by postal clerks.

The 1879 Postage Due Issue
Three Cents / Ten Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



20 June 1879 Warrensburgh, New York usage of 3-cent due on inbound domestic cover



7 October 1879 New York City usage of 10-cent due on inbound cover from England

The 1881 Re-Engraved Issues
One Cent

Earliest Documented Usages



2 November 1881 Canandaigua, New York transit backstamp on Chicago, Illinois usage of 1-cent

The American Bank Note Company re-engraved dies of the one cent cent in 1881. The stamps produced from the new dies were distributed in the normal course of stamp order fulfillment.

The 1882 Re-Engraved Issue
Ten Cents

Earliest Documented Usage



4 May 1882 Centre Lisle, New York usage of 10-cent in combination

The American Bank Note Company re-engraved dies of the ten cent in 1882. The stamps produced from the new die were distributed in the normal course of stamp order fulfillment.

The 1883 Issue
Two Cents

First Day of Issue
First Day of Rate



1 October 1883 Manchester, New Hampshire usage of 2-cent

The two cent 1883 issue was automatically distributed to larger post offices prior to the October 1, 1883 effective date of the Act of March 3, 1883. The Act lowered the postal rate from three cents to two cents for a prepaid letter to one-half ounce.

The 1883 Issue
Two Cents Stationery

First Day of Issue
First Day of Rate



1 October 1883 Bridgeport, Connecticut usage of 2-cent entire
3 October 1883 Brimfield, Massachusetts forwarded with 2-cent adhesive

Two Reported Examples Used on First Day

The two cent 1883 postal stationery entire was also automatically distributed to larger post offices prior to the October 1, 1883 effective date of the Act of March 3, 1883. The Act lowered the postal rate from three cents to two cents for a prepaid letter to one-half ounce.

The 1883 Issue
Four Cents, Two Cents

First Day of Issue



1 October 1883 New York City, souvenir usage of 4-cent and 2-cent

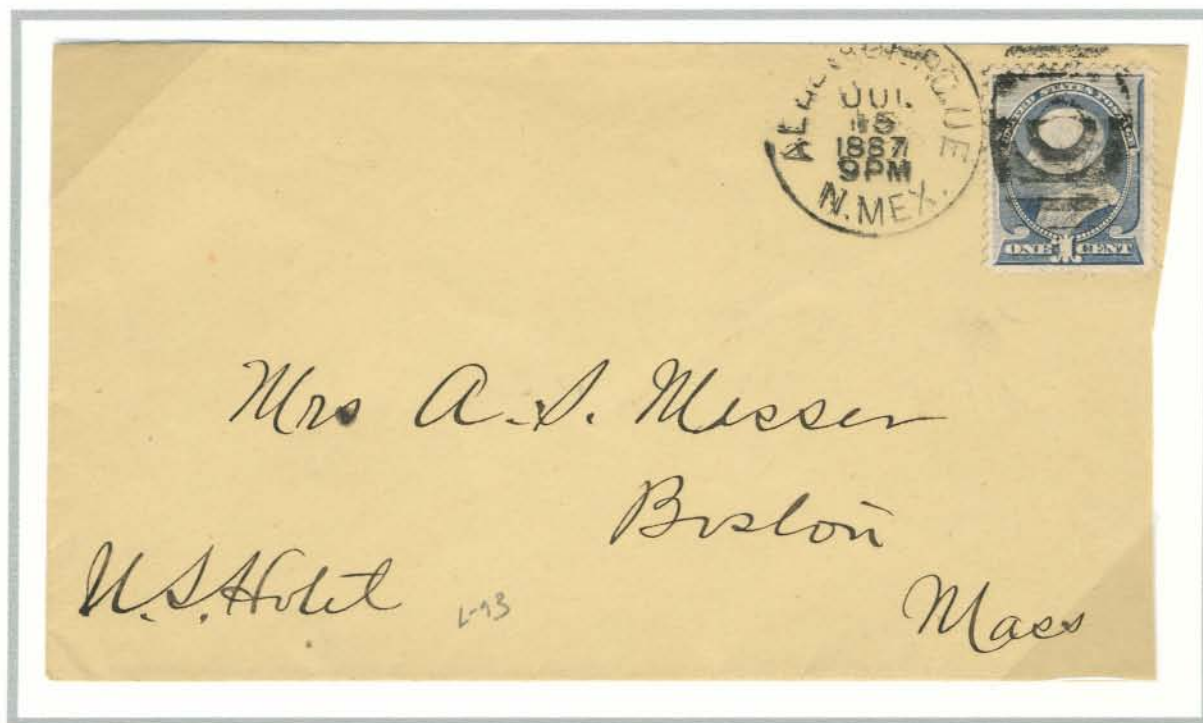
The Only Reported Example

The four cent 1883 issue was also automatically distributed to larger post offices prior to the October 1, 1883 effective date of the Act of March 3, 1883. The stamp was intended to be used to prepay the double two cent domestic postal rate.

The addressee was a famous early stamp collector, and Representative to United States Congress, Ernest R. Ackerman. This cover is the earliest reported example of a philatelic first day cover.

The 1887 Issue
One Cent

Earliest Documented Usage



15 July 1887 Albuquerque, New Mexico Territory usage of 1-cent

The American Bank Note Company changed the design of the one cent stamp in 1887.

The 1888 Issue

Four Cents

Earliest Documented Usage

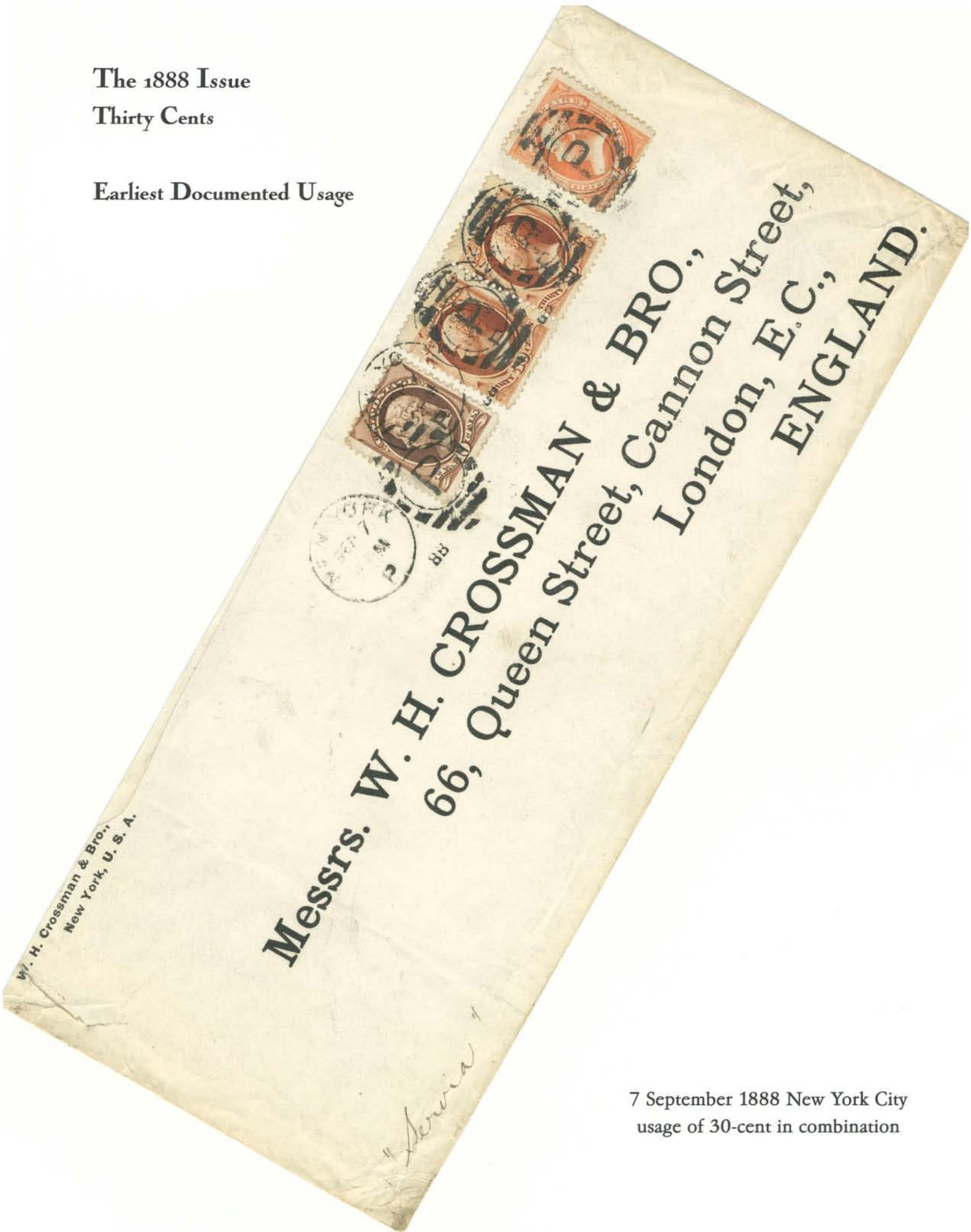


18 January 1889 Westchester,
Pennsylvania usage of 4-cent in
combination

The 1888 Issue

Thirty Cents

Earliest Documented Usage



7 September 1888 New York City
usage of 30-cent in combination

The 1890 Issue

Earliest Documented Usages

One Cent / Two Cent Carmine



27 February 1890 Syracuse, New York usage of 1-cent in combination



11 March 1890 Cates, Tennessee usage of 2-cent carmine

The smaller size 1890 issue was printed by The American Bank Note Company. The two cent stamp was originally printed in a deep lake shade but was soon replaced by the carmine shade.

The 1890 Issue

Earliest Documented Usages

Three Cents / Six Cents



28 February 1890 Paterson, New Jersey usage of 3-cent in combination



8 May 1890 New York City usage of 6-cent in combination

The 1890 Issue

Thirty Cents

Earliest Documented Usage



14 April 1890 Charleston, South
Carolina usage of 30-cent

The 1894 Special Delivery Issue
Ten Cents, New Design

Earliest Documented Usage



25 October 1894 Worcester, Massachusetts usage of 10-cent Special Delivery

Special Delivery service, for an additional fee of ten cents, was introduced in 1885 and special stamps were issued. The design was altered in 1894.

The 1897- 1898 Issues, Colors Changed
Two Cents / Five Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



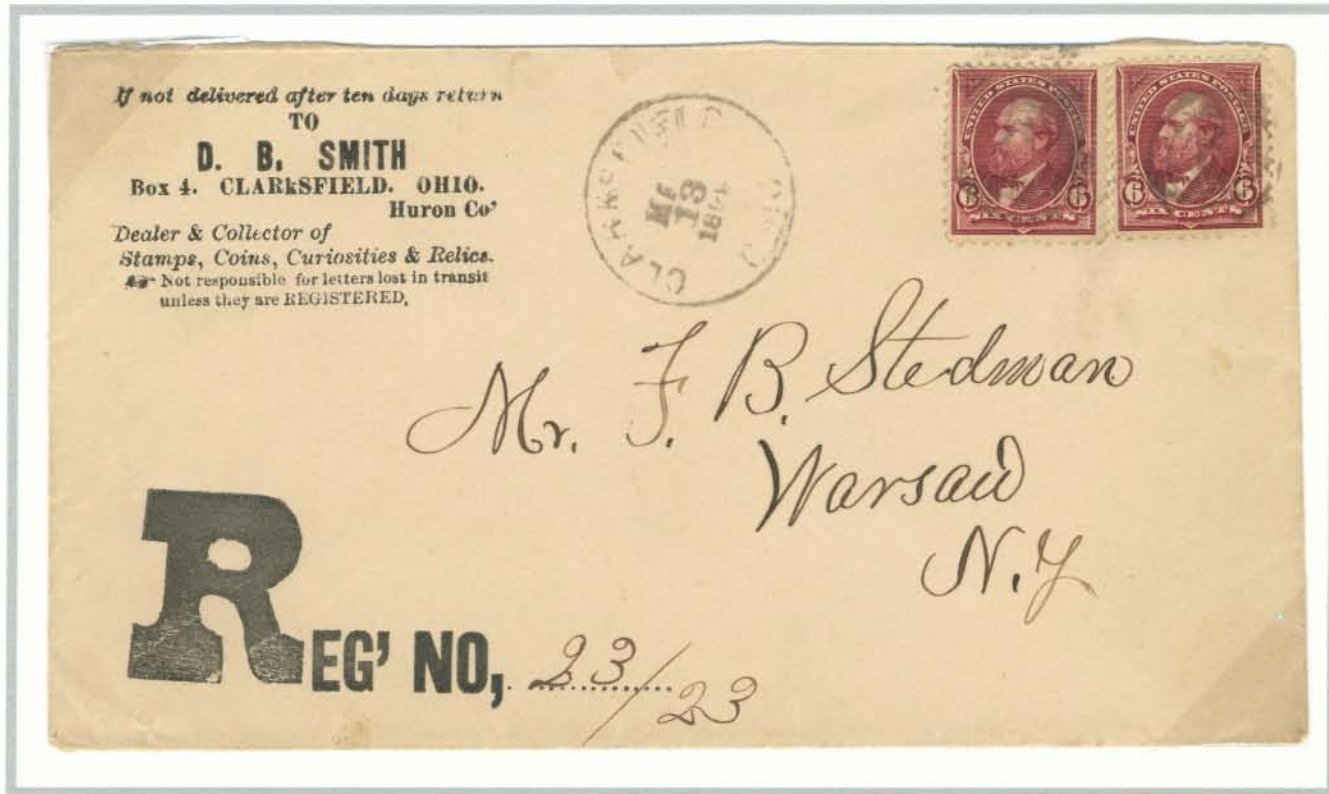
18 November 1897 Forest Glen, Maryland usage of 2-cent red, type IV



19 March 1898 New Haven, Connecticut usage of 5-cent blue

The 1897- 1898 Issues, Colors Changed
Six Cents / Ten Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



13 March 1899 Clarksville, Ohio usage of 6-cent lake



10 December 1898 Ellenville, New York usage of 10-cent brown

The 1893 Columbian Series
Two Cents

First Day of Issue



1 January 1893 New York City, souvenir usage of 2-cent Columbian

Five Reported Examples

The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition issue of commemorative stamps consisted of fifteen different denominations. The stamps were made available to Postmasters, upon special request, in advance of the official release date of January 1, 1893.

The 1893 Columbian Series

One Cent, Two Cents

First Day of Issue



1 January 1893 New York City, 1-cent souvenir first day prepared by C.A. Burger
Three Reported Examples



1 January 1893 New York City, 2-cent souvenir first day prepared by C.A. Burger
Five Reported Examples

The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition issue of commemorative stamps consisted of fifteen different denominations. The stamps were made available to Postmasters, upon special request, in advance of the official release date of January 1, 1893.

The 1893 Columbian Series
Three Cents, Four Cents

First Day of Issue



1 January 1893 New York City, 3-cent souvenir first day prepared by C.A. Burger
Two Reported Examples



1 January 1893 New York City, 4-cent souvenir first day prepared by C.A. Burger
Two Reported Examples

The above pair of covers, addressed to C.A. Burger, are part of the set of six covers prepared as souvenirs for the new stamp issue.

The 1893 Columbian Series
Five Cent, Ten Cents

First Day of Issue



1 January 1893 New York City, 5-cent souvenir first day prepared by C.A. Burger
Two Reported Examples



1 January 1893 New York City, 10-cent souvenir first day prepared by C.A. Burger
Two Reported Examples

The above pair of covers, addressed to C.A. Burger, are part of the set of six covers prepared as souvenirs for the new stamp issue.

The 1893 Columbian Series
Fifteen Cents

Earliest Documented Usage

26 January 1893 Washington, D.C. usage of
pair 15-cent Columbian issue



Although it is believed that the fifteen cent Columbian stamps were available at post offices on January 1, 1893, the above cover is the earliest usage that has been documented.

The 1893 Columbian Series
Three Dollar, Four Dollar

Earliest Documented Usage



24 March 1893 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 3-dollar souvenir cover



24 March 1893 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 4-dollar souvenir cover

Although it is believed that both the three dollar and four dollar Columbian stamps were available at post offices on January 1, 1893, the above covers are the earliest documented usages.

The 1893 Columbian Series Postal Stationery
One Cent

Earliest Documented Usage



31 March 1893 New York City usage of 1-cent Columbian entire in combination

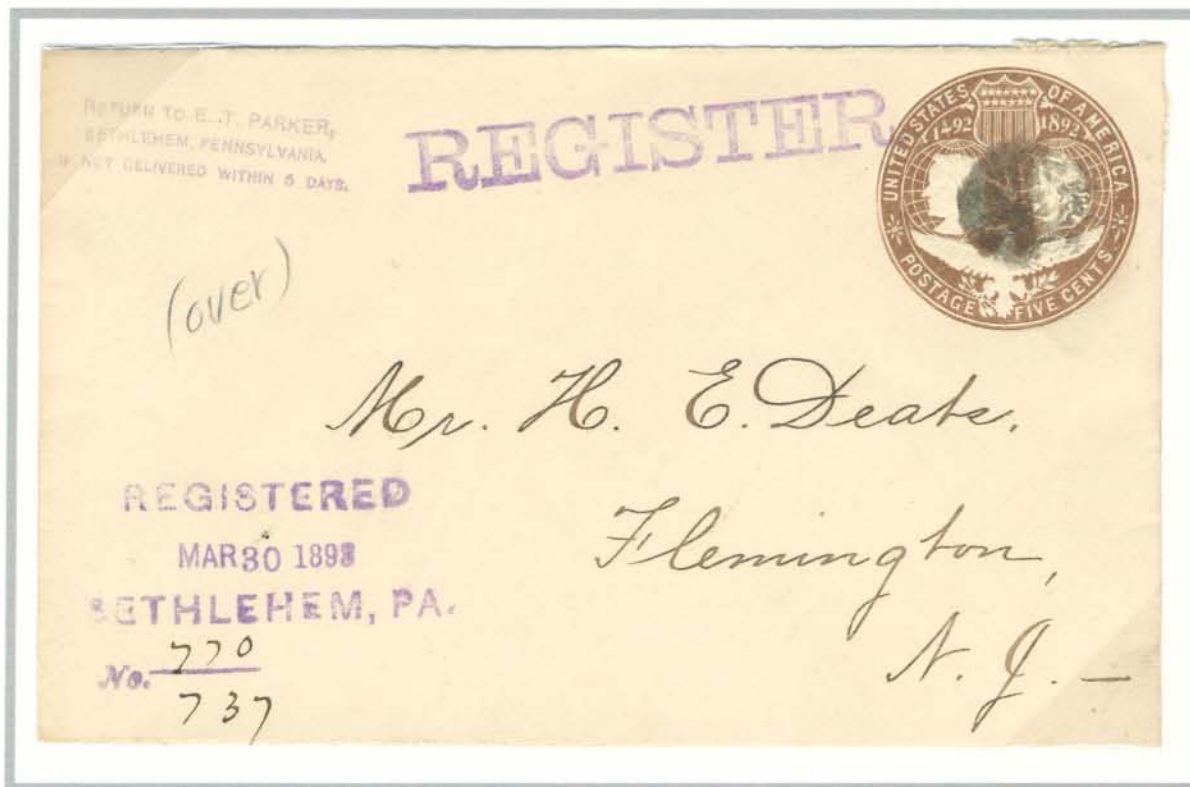
The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition series of commemorative stamps was supplemented by an issue of postal stationery. Four denominations were prepared but were not released until after the stamp issue.

The 1893 Columbian Series Postal Stationery
Two Cents / Five Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



20 March 1893 New York City usage of 2-cent postal entire in combination



30 March 1893 Bethlehem, Pennsylvania usage of 5-cent postal entire

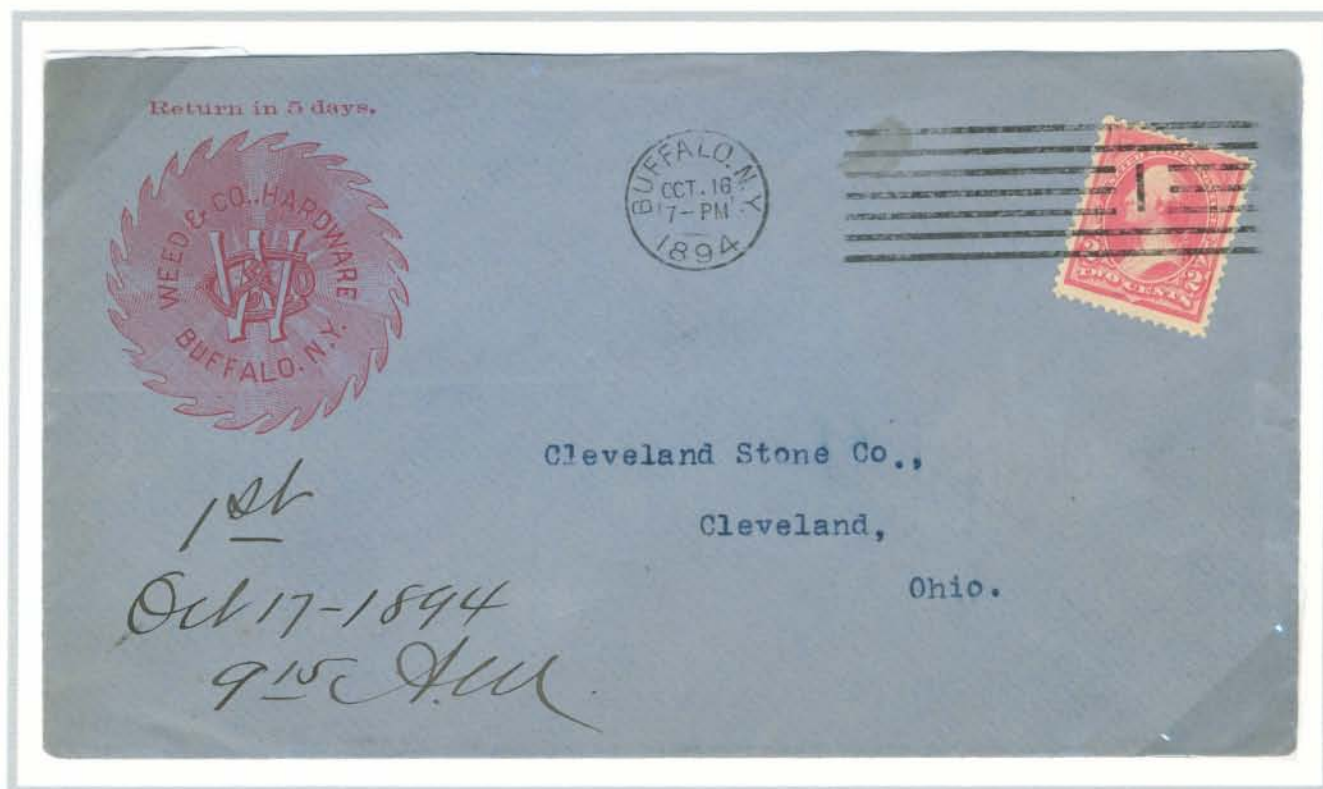
The 1894 Issue

One Cent / Two Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



17 October 1894 Canal Dover, Ohio usage of 1-cent ultramarine in combination



16 October 1894 Buffalo, New York usage of 2-cent pink

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing began producing stamps in 1894. Their first series was similar to previous designs except that triangles were added in the top corners. Colors shown above as first issued.

The 1894 Issue

Three Cents / Eight Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



1 November 1894 Boston, Massachusetts usage of 3-cent in combination



8 May 1895 Ft. McPherson, Georgia usage of 8-cent in combination

The 1894 Issue
One Dollar

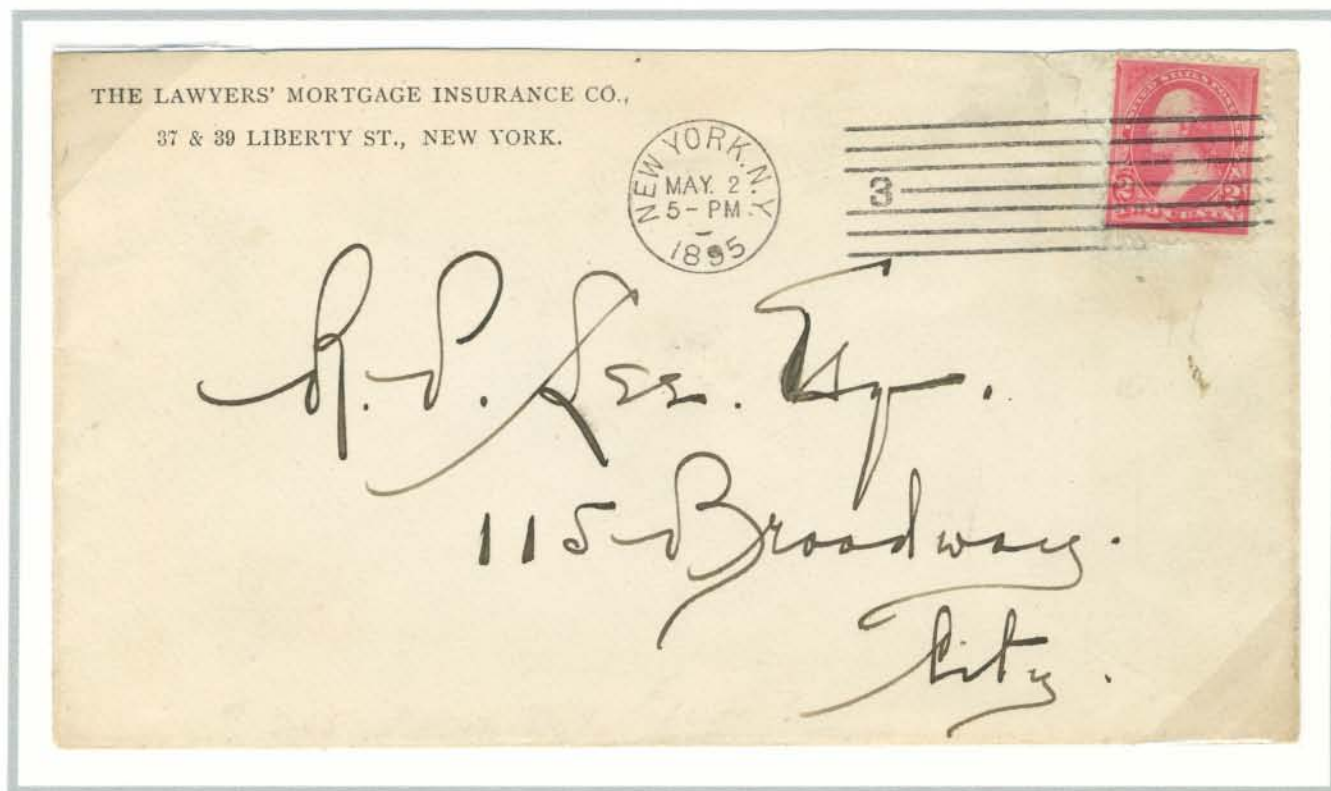
Earliest Documented Usage



18 January 1895 Heusler, Indiana philatelic usage of 1-dollar

**The 1895 Issue, Watermarked Paper
Two Cents**

Earliest Possible Usage



2 May 1895 New York City usage of 2-cent, type I

The Earliest Possible Usage of a Watermarked Stamp

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing switched to the use of watermarked paper in 1895. A postal document specified that May 2, 1895 was the date the new watermarked stamps were released to the public.

All of the stamps on cover shown in this section of the exhibit have been lifted to verify watermarks and are now hinged into place back onto the original covers.

The 1895 Issue, Watermarked Paper
One Cent / Three Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



16 May 1895 Detroit, Michigan usage of 1-cent



31 January 1896 New York City usage of 3-cent

The 1895 Issue, Watermarked Paper
Two Cent Shades

Earliest Documented Usages



28 May 1895 Fitchburg, Massachusetts usage of 2-cent carmine (original shade)



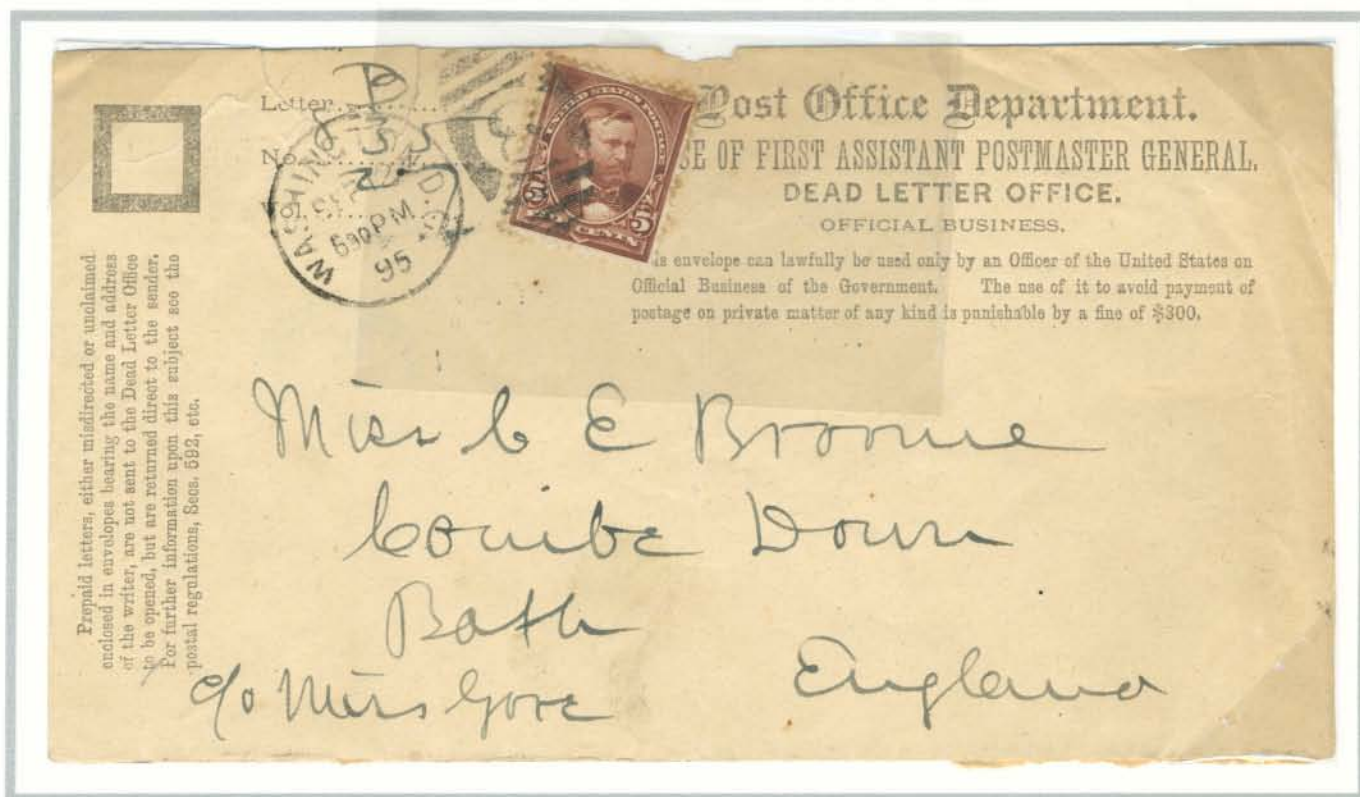
8 December 1897 Brooklyn, New York usage of 2-cent pink (changed color)

The 1895 Issue, Watermarked Paper
Four Cents / Five Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



22 July 1895 Millbury, Massachusetts usage of 4-cent on postal entire



12 September 1895 Washington, D.C. usage of 5-cent on penalty envelope

The 1895 Issue, Watermarked Paper
Eight Cents / Ten Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



11 September 1895 New York City usage of 4-cent in combination



25 July 1895 Boston, Massachusetts usage of 10-cent

The 1897- 1898 Issues, Colors Changed
Fifteen Cents

Earliest Documented Usage



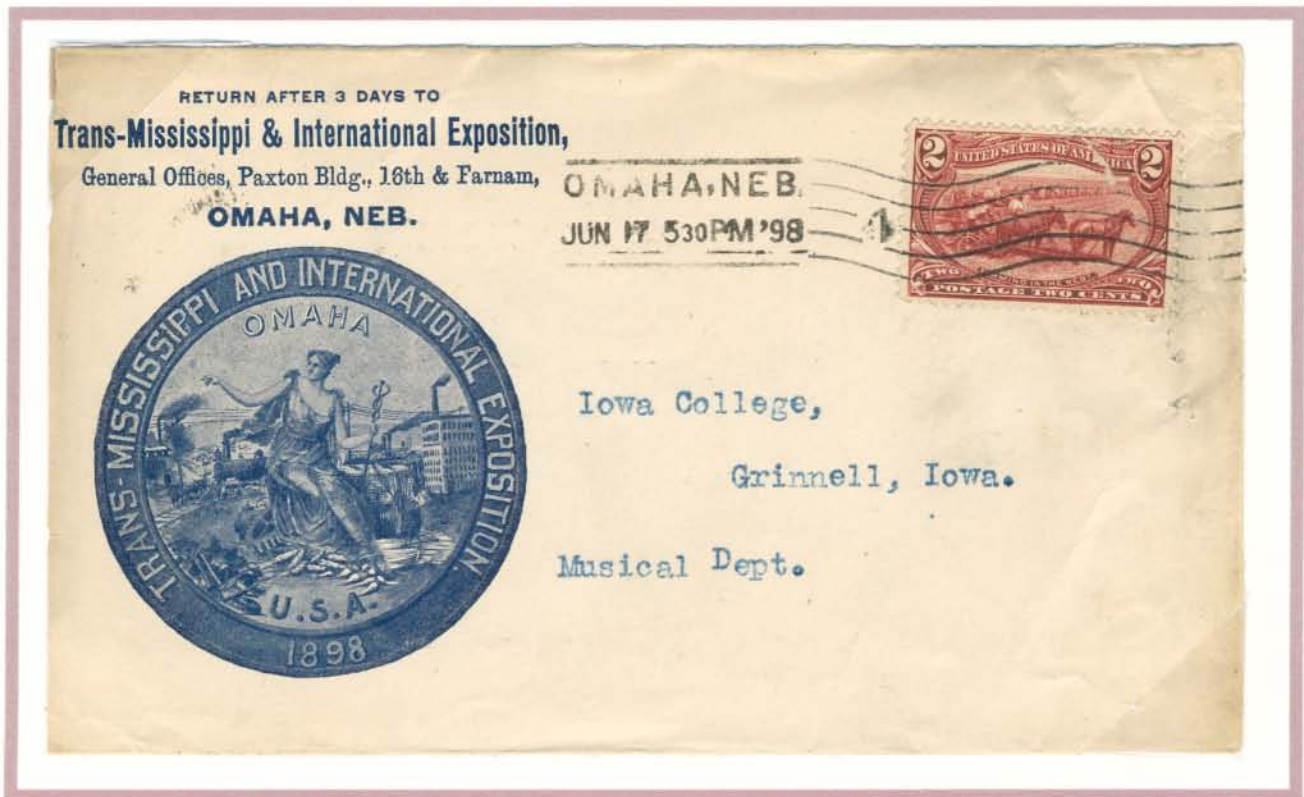
3 March 1899 New York City usage of 15-cent olive green



reduced image of backstamps

The 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition Series
Two Cents

First Day of Issue



17 June 1898 Omaha, Nebraska usage of 2-cent Trans-Mississippi Exposition issue
official imprint cover of the Exposition which was held in Omaha, Nebraska

The 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition issue of commemorative stamps consisted of nine different denominations. According to a letter sent to postmasters on June 11, 1898, shown on following page, the stamp distribution to offices began on June 10. Stamps were made available only upon special request. June 17, 1898 is considered to be the first day of issue with most values being known used on that date.

3337-b.

OFFICE OF THE THIRD ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL,

WASHINGTON, D. C., *June 11, 1898.***TRANS-MISSISSIPPI—"OMAHA" EXPOSITION STAMPS.**

DENOMINATION.	SUBJECT OF ILLUSTRATION.	COLOR.
1-cent	Marquette on the Mississippi	Dark green.
2-cent	Farming in the West—Plowing	Copper red.
4-cent	Indian Hunting Buffalo	Orange.
5-cent	Fremont on the Rocky Mountains	Dark blue.
8-cent	Troops Guarding Wagon Train	Dark lilac.
10-cent	Hardships of Emigration	Slate.
50-cent	Mining Prospector	Olive.
\$1	Cattle in a Storm	Black.
\$2	Saint Louis Mississippi Bridge	Light brown.

The issue of these stamps began June 10th, and will cease December 31st, 1898.

They will be valid for postage without limit of time.

These stamps, as well as others, can be had only by purchase and of postmasters; and postmasters can secure them only by using the blank form of requisition designed for that purpose, and issued through the Division of Supplies, Office of the First Assistant Postmaster General. This blank is designated "3201—Omaha," and is printed on yellow paper.

Not less than 10 of the 50-cent nor 5 of either the \$1 or \$2 stamps are furnished to postmasters. Collectors at small offices where these are not found should apply to one of the 169 first-class post offices named in the Postal Guide, which may be consulted at any post office. They will be supplied by mail from those post offices upon receipt of the face value, return postage, and registry fee.


Third Assistant Postmaster General.

The 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition Series
One Cent, Five Cents

First Day of Issue



17 June 1898 Washington, D.C., 1-cent souvenir cover
One of Five First Day Usages Reported



17 June 1898 Washington, D.C., 5-cent souvenir cover
One of Three First Day Usages Reported

The 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition Series
One Cent, Two Cents, Four Cents, Five Cents

First Day of Issue



17 June 1898 Camden, New Jersey usage of 1-cent, 2-cent (2), 4-cent, 5-cent(2)
Trans-Mississippi Exposition stamps on 4-cent entire to Ootacamund, India
correctly prepaid triple rate letter plus registry fee

The 1901 Pan-American Series
Complete Set

First Day of Issue



1 May 1901 Boston, Massachusetts usage of complete set on registered cover.

Fewer than Fifteen Complete Sets on First Day Covers Reported

The 1901 Pan-American Exposition issue of commemorative stamps consisted of six different denominations. The stamps were made available to Postmasters, upon special request, prior to the official release date of May 1, 1901 which was the opening date of the Exposition held in Buffalo, New York.

**The 1901 Pan-American Series
Two Cents + Eight Cents Combination**

First Day of Issue



1 May 1901 Washington, D.C. usage of 8-cent and 2-cent on registered cover.

Four Covers Reported With This Combination

The 1901 Pan-American Exposition issue of commemorative stamps consisted of six different denominations. The stamps were made available to Postmasters, upon special request, prior to the official release date of May 1, 1901 which was the opening date of the Exposition held in Buffalo, New York.

The 1901 Pan-American Series
One Cent

First Day of Issue



1 May 1901 Buffalo, New York usage of 1-cent on cover
official imprint cover of the Exposition which was held in Buffalo, New York

Cover mailed by David C. Warner, an exposition policeman. A portion of his affidavit which states that this cover bears the first Pan-American stamp sold at the exposition, and that it was the first letter mailed from the exposition grounds is shown below.

I was the 13th Pan-American Policeman appointed and commissioned a New York State Policeman by Governor Theodore Roosevelt in June 1900.

A few weeks before the Exposition opened on May 1st, 1901, I became one of the Mid-way Squad and patrolled the Mid-way while the Concessionaires were getting ready for Opening Day.

The Pan-American Post Office was located at the corner of the Mall and the Mid-way on my beat and thus I became well acquainted with the Postmaster, thus having direct information when the Postoffice would be opened for business.

I was on my beat when Mr. Heinz, the Superintendent opened the Post-office May 1st, 1901 and he sold me the First Pan-American Commemoration Stamp, which I placed on a letter to your mother as being the first letter mailed in the Pan-American Postal Section on the Pan-American Exposition grounds. This letter was immediately hand-cancelled by Mr. Heinz.

The 1901 Pan-American Series

Earliest Documented Usages

One Cent Inverted Center

Two Cent Inverted Center



2 August 1901 Bessemer, Alabama local use cover with 1-cent stamp with inverted center

The Earliest of Three on Cover Usages of the One Cent Inverted Center

The one cent 1901 Pan-American Exposition issue with inverted center is reported to have been discovered at Bessemer, Alabama, by the Carrel Jewelry Company in 1904.



26 February (1902) Brooklyn, New York postmark 2-cent stamp with inverted center

The Only Two Cent Inverted Center with a Dated Cancel

There are no examples of the two cent 1901 Pan-American Exposition issue with inverted center known on cover. Of the seven reported used examples, this is the only one that bears a dated postmark.

The 1902 - 1903 Issue
Thirteen Cents

Earliest Documented Usage



18 November 1902 Washington, D.C. usage of 13-cent in combination

The thirteen cent stamp was the first denomination of the 1902-1903 series to be issued. Stamps were first available for sale at Washington, D.C. on November 18, 1902.

The 1902 - 1903 Issue
Three Cents / Five Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



19 March 1903 Hecker, Illinois usage of 3-cent in combination



9 February 1903 Chicago, Illinois usage of 5-cent

The 1902 - 1903 Issue
Six Cents / Ten Cents

Earliest Documented Usages



8 May 1903 Huguenot, Georgia usage of 6-cent in combination



12 March 1903 New York City usage of 10-cent

The 1902 - 1903 Issue

Earliest Documented Usages

Two Dollars / Five Dollars



17 February 1904 Nahiku, Hawai usage of 2-dollar and 5-dollar in combination on canvas wrapper

The 1904 Louisiana Purchase Series
Two Cents, Three Cents, Five Cents

Pre-Release Date Usage



29 April 1904 St. Louis, Missouri usage of 2-cent, 3-cent, and 5-cent on registered cover.

The Only Reported Combination Cover Used This Date

Although the official release date for the Louisiana Exposition issue of commemorative stamps was April 30, 1904 to correspond with the opening of the Exposition in St. Louis, the above cover is evidence that the St. Louis post office prematurely distributed some stamps.

LOUISIANA PURCHASE COMMEMORATIVE SERIES OF POSTAGE STAMPS.

OFFICE OF THIRD ASS'T P. M. GEN'L,
WASHINGTON, D. C., Mar. 22, 1904.

1. Postmasters are notified that a special series of stamps in five denominations, to commemorate the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, and known as the commemorative series of 1904, will be issued beginning Apr. 21 for sale to the public during the term of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, from April 30 to December 1, 1904. They must not be sold to the public before or after this period.

2. The denominations and subjects of these stamps are as follows:

One-cent, green; subject, Robert R. Livingston, United States Minister to France, who conducted the negotiations for the Louisiana Purchase.

Two-cent, red; Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States at the time of the Purchase.

Three-cent, purple; James Monroe, special ambassador to France in the matter of the Purchase, who with Livingston closed the negotiations.

Five-cent, blue; William McKinley, who as President of the United States approved the Acts of Congress officially connecting the United States Government with the commemorative exposition.

Ten-cent, brown; United States map showing the territory of the Purchase.

3. This series of stamps will not be issued in book form.

4. There will be no commemorative issue of stamped envelopes, newspaper wrappers, postal cards, special-delivery or due stamps.

5. The stamps of the commemorative series of 1904 are not to be sold exclusively in place of stamps of the regular issue. A supply of the latter must be carried in stock by all postmasters. Stamps of the commemorative or of the regular issue will be supplied according to the preference of the purchaser.

6. The value of commemorative stamps handled must be included by postmasters in Articles A, B, C, D, and 1 of their quarterly reports to the Auditor.

7. Postmasters of the presidential class will each month use the page following that on which their record of regular issues is entered, in stock account book No. 3240-a, to keep a separate record of stamps of the 1904 commemorative issue.

8. The April, 1903, edition of stock report form 3240 provides lines headed "Special Issues," which should be used by postmasters of the presidential class in their monthly stock statements, with the heading "Commemorative Series of 1904" written in, to re-

port number and value of the commemorative stamps handled.

9. Money received from the sale of stamps of the 1904 commemorative issue should not be kept separate, but must be placed with other postal receipts and accounted for in the usual manner.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAKING REQUISITIONS.

10. To secure stamps of the commemorative series of 1904 postmasters must use the regular requisition form 3201, and write a large plain capital letter "C" (representing the word "Commemorative") in the space below the word "County," at the top of the blank. If this letter "C" is placed elsewhere on the blank, the requisition will not be filled. Postmasters need not write a communication in connection with the requisition to inform the Department that the commemorative stamps are wanted; the letter "C" written in the proper position on form 3201 is sufficient.

11. Requisition for the commemorative stamps must not be made on the same sheet used to order the regular issue of postage stamps, postal cards, or stamped envelopes, but on a separate form 3201; otherwise the requisition will be returned to the postmaster unfilled.

12. The postmaster's average sales, including those of stamps of the commemorative issue after any have been sold, must appear in the space provided therefor at the top of the requisition blank.

13. The Department will not expedite or "rush" requisitions for the commemorative stamps; they will be shipped about a week after receipt of requisition (see paragraph 14).

14. It is possible the demand for the commemorative stamps may be so heavy that all requisitions can not be filled so promptly as indicated in paragraph 13. This notice is given that postmasters may not enter into unnecessary correspondence with the Department if delivery is somewhat delayed.

15. Requisitions made by telegraph, or in any other manner than on form 3201 as instructed in paragraph 10 hereof, will not be filled.

16. The Department will reduce any requisition which appears excessive, or in case all the stamps called for can not for any reason be supplied.

17. The invoice which accompanies shipments of commemorative stamps, as well as invoices for all other stamp supplies, must be signed by postmasters and sent to the Third Assistant Postmaster General immediately on receipt of the stock (see section 331, P. L. and R.).

EDWIN C. MADDEN,
Third Ass't P. M. Gen'l.

The 1904 Louisiana Purchase Series
Complete Set

First Day of Issue



30 April 1904 New York City, souvenir usage of complete set from Scott Stamp & Coin. Co.

The Only Reported Example of Complete Set on First Day Cover

The 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition issue of commemorative stamps consisted of five different denominations. The stamps were made available to Postmasters, upon special request, prior to the official release date of April 30, 1904.