

# US RRR & AR to 1945

## Introduction

This is a pseudo-virtual exhibit; *pseudo-* because it is intended to be printed (with real covers, not the scans) as an exhibit. I put it in this virtual form in order to expose it to criticism before I mount the pages, and also to see just what I have, what I need, and what I can dispose of.

The exhibit is too long—133 pages (although I could easily prepare 200 pages of this material)—but based on my experience with last year's *BNA-UK* exhibit, paring it to 112 pages (seven frames) for Orapex (an annual Canadian national level show in Ottawa) in May 2009, is realistic.

There are undoubtedly many errors and omissions of fact, some page arrangements could be improved, the organization likely leaves something to be desired, the story line might be obscure, . . . . The international airmail rates section (pp 115–127 almost certainly has mistakes. Some of the material could be upgraded, too. I hope readers will send comments, criticisms, and suggestions (e-mail address below)—this is the main point of putting it on-line.

I am also interested in buying or trading for material that would fit in, early AR forms and covers, after-the-fact or returned by air AR or RRR forms or cards. There are also a number of earliest dates for which documentation is sparse or nonexistent, e.g., earliest use of RRR cards, when RRR became a free option, earliest use of AR cards, earliest RRR card returned by air (same with AR card), . . . .

The scans are 150dpi, very low resolution, hence some of the images look a lot worse than the covers really are (on the other hand, the appearance of some is considerably improved). This is another reason to call this *pseudo-virtual*. Had I intended to make this a real virtual (!) exhibit, I would have scanned at 300dpi. The side images are in greyscale, as these are intended to be printed (as I intend to use a bw printer). The images of the items to be mounted are within  $\pm 5\%$  of their actual size, or so I hope.

I have also included an index, mainly so I can easily find what I am looking for among 200+ items. I think all virtual exhibits (*pseudo-* or not) should have an index. Page numbers are not currently visible, so add 8 to the number appearing in the index. Of course, when the time comes to submit the exhibit, the index will not be included, and neither will this introduction.

This was prepared in the typesetting language  $\text{\TeX}$  (but *not* straitjacket  $\text{\LaTeX}$ ). The font family (including expert set) is ITC Elysium.

When text overlaps an image, it means that the cover will be mounted to the left of where it is shown. Some of the scans were sloppily done, so that it appears that covers have been cut down. They are usually better-looking than their scans indicate.

David Handelman, Ottawa, August 2008  
rochelle2@sympatico.ca

*Added, March 2009.* With the arrival of more material, I decided to allow it to be a bloated 128 pages (eight frames). Some pages that didn't make the cut are shown at the very end. The page numbering in index is off by eight (8), since the numbering begins restarts at the first page of the exhibit (page 9).

*Added, March 2010.* A few new additions, including the previously unreported pre-UPU international material.

# US RRR & AR to 1945

## Synopsis

This exhibit deals with the postal service officially known as *avis de réception* (AR) to, from, and through the US. Domestically, the typical term used is a variant on *return receipt requested*, hence domestic US AR is always referred to as RRR (even if the wording is different). On the other hand, AR on international mail is simply referred to as AR.

AR and RRR provide the sender of a registered (or in some cases, insured) letter or package with a signed receipt as evidence of delivery. The returned receipt, known as a return receipt in the US, is either a form (to be mailed under cover, or for some jurisdictions, as a folded letter sheet), or a postcard-size item, known respectively as an RRR form or RRR card. For international mail, the corresponding items are AR form and AR card. The corresponding registered (insured) letter will be referred to as an AR or RRR cover, the latter for domestic, the former for international items.

We develop the postal history of RRR and AR service in and through the US. This includes AR & RRR forms, their covering envelopes, their incoming counterparts, and the later AR & RRR cards. We deal with AR and RRR covers from several points of view. One (for domestic) is the set of extra services available on RRR, e.g., restricted delivery and showing address; another (for AR, i.e., international) is the set of exotic destinations of some of them. We also deal with AR in combination with other services and features, for example, with early airmail, with postage due (both domestic and international), and with penalty (official) mail. Computation of the rates is very important.

The cut-off year, 1945, is somewhat arbitrary, but convenient, as there were frequent rate changes in the post-War period, and it becomes very complicated to present.

Some European jurisdictions had AR service (under different names) from the beginning of the 19th century, and bilateral and multilateral treaties between some of these countries enabled AR service between them, as early as the 1830s. Germany and Austria had the service (respectively, *Rückschein* and *Retour Recepisse*—without the accents) from the first decade, and other countries followed suit. Much later, France and Italy adopted it (*avis de réception* and *ricevuta di ritorno*) in 1859 and 1861. The US initiated its domestic RRR service in 1863, and before 1874, had negotiated treaties with Germany and Switzerland for AR service between them.

As a founding member of the UPU, the US was required to offer AR service within the initial UPU membership (1875), and from 1879, it was required to be available to all current UPU members. The earliest known international AR item to or from the US in the UPU period is an 1882 German AR form (shown here).

**Domestic** There is an obvious initial division of the exhibit into domestic and international, with some overlap (e.g., domestic RRR cover forwarded outside the US or domestic RRR cards used to Canada).

Domestic US RRR service began 1 July 1863. There was no charge per se—instead it was compulsory on registered matter. The post office had a pad with registration receipts attached to their counterpart return receipt (as illustrated in this exhibit). At the time of registration, the receipt would be filled out and handed back to the sender; the return receipt would be partially filled out, and sent attached (usually with gum) to the registered letter. When the letter was delivered, the recipient would sign the return receipt, it would be put in a covering envelope, and sent back to the office of origin. Thereupon the return receipt would be given to the sender, frequently with the covering envelope. In case of non-delivery, the letter with attached form would be returned to sender.

In mid-1879, forms were largely replaced by RRR cards, that is, postcard-size cards, which did not require a covering envelope. RRR forms continued to be used (sparingly) for at least two years.

Until 1910, registered letters were not marked in any way to indicate that return receipt service applied—because it was automatic. However, sometime in mid-1910 (the date is uncertain, but the earliest reported example is shown here), RRR became a free option on registered mail. All the sender had to do was endorse the registered letter with the impolite *return receipt demanded*. [Possibly based on an ignorance of French: *demandeur* means *requested*, not *demanded*.] Many variants of this wording occurred, both in manuscript and in handstamp form, but the version that eventually became most popular and later official was *return receipt requested*.

In 1913, parcels could be sent with insurance, and all insured matter was eligible for RRR service (with the same fee schedule, so until 1925 was a free option).

In 1925, RRR service finally required a fee (the US had been one of the very few entities worldwide to have no fees for RRR or AR). Several elaborations of RRR service eventually became chargeable as well.

Restricted delivery (registered letter to be given to *addressee only*, or *personal delivery*) is found on an 1884 letter (shown here), preceding by almost 20 years the known documentation for it. It was available from at least 1884 and likely earlier, and required RRR service as a prerequisite (this became meaningful only from 1910, since RRR was compulsory prior to that year). It was a free option on mail sent with RRR until a fee was imposed in 1934.

Another elaboration of RRR service, again having it as a prerequisite, is *showing address where delivered*. This was available at an additional 20¢ over the RRR fee beginning in 1931. Showing address and restricted delivery are frequently seen together on the same cover.

*Organization of the domestic section: Forms and covering envelopes.* We begin with the earliest RRR forms (second earliest known, 1864) and their covering envelopes (earliest known, 1865). The rather drab RRR cards were introduced in 1879, and we show form and card from Fargo (ND) bracketing the change, as well as the earliest (thus far) RRR card found, and a very early 1880 RRR card for a registered parcel (rather than a registered letter).

On 11 July 1910, RRR became a free option on registered mail (as opposed to compulsory). This meant that some endorsement or handstamp indicating the service was required. We show what is so far the earliest recorded use on domestic mail (in the normal period), 18 July, as well as a use a month later with an apparently unrecorded experimental registration label at Elizabeth (NJ).

Then we proceed to a few uses of RRR with F1, the only US registration stamp (later, in the official section, there is a first month of use). On 15 April 1925, extensive rate changes occurred, including for the first time, a charge on RRR service. We have an example from the second day of this rate.

*Official (penalty) mail* This subsection concerns the combination of RRR with mail from (federal) government offices. It begins with a 1911 use of postal savings stamps on postal savings system stationery (1910–14). For other departments, domestic postage was free, and if the office were located in Washington, registration was free (otherwise, it had to be prepaid). When RRR became chargeable, all government offices were required to pay the fee. This creates a number of combinations possible, for example, RRR covers with registration paid (in stamps, including examples with F1), with registration & RRR paid, and with only RRR paid. There is also an anomaly, a 1936 Treasury Department (San Francisco) envelope with no postage at all paid, although it was liable for registration, RRR, and restricted delivery.

*Insured mail with RRR* When insurance became available on parcel post, and later on third class, RRR was possible, with the same fee structure as for registered mail. It is difficult to find examples, but we show a few, e.g., a first-year official parcel tag, and a remarkable 1942 parcel post wrapper between quartermasters requiring 70½¢ postage (unfortunately, the sender had no half-cent stamps, so it is overpaid).

*Restricted delivery [H]* Also known as *deliver to addressee only* or *personal delivery*, or some other variant, this was a service available to senders. We show by far the earliest known use (1884); the literature only contains references from 1902. We show the earliest (thus far) known handstamp for the service, and illustrate the combination official restricted delivery (necessarily with RRR, since that was a prerequisite),

and various uses up to the 1940s. In 1934, the service became chargeable.

In case the addressee refused to sign for a registered letter with restricted delivery (as opposed to being signed for by an agent), then it was returned to sender. We have two examples, refused by Henry Ford and by Wendell Willkie (the latter just after having been nominated as Republican presidential candidate), both marked, *Refused on account of personal delivery restriction*.

*Showing address* In 1931, a very expensive elaboration of RRR became available, *Showing address where delivered*; at a time when registration was 15¢ and RRR was 3¢, this service cost 20¢ (and required RRR). Examples include a combination of showing address and restricted delivery in the period when the latter was chargeable.

*Airmail & RRR* For each of the airmail rate periods which permitted registration, we show examples of RRR covers sent by air, emphasizing the early material (from 1925). We also include clipper service with Hawaii.

*Extra indemnity with RRR* Beginning 1923, there was only one extra level of indemnity (illustrated in the airmail section). This expanded in 1928 to indemnity up to \$1000, and finally unlimited indemnity became available in 1932. Perhaps the star of this section is the massively franked cover with an estimated \$300000 in indemnity (owing to an arithmetic error, we cannot be sure what was intended) with 39 dollar stamps, in the first month that this supplemental indemnity became available. We also have the usual money bag tags with RRR, with ludicrously high frankings, including a block of six of the fourth bureau \$5.

*RRR & postage due* Registered covers rarely arrive with postage due, all the less so RRR covers. We present examples that obviously slipped by and were subsequently charged; in one case, a letter was dropped in the mail box with no stamps applied at all, but requesting all the usual services, including showing address (it should have been returned to sender, but was allowed to continue and charged single deficiency). In another, the sender had requested restricted delivery, but this was not noticed by the accepting clerk, and it was charged at the destination office. More reasonable examples include an extra cent charged for forwarding to a destination requiring more postage.

*Forwarding to foreign destinations* Domestic RRR covers could be forwarded abroad if they were fully prepaid (as they almost always were) at no extra charge. We have an example showing this and two examples where extra postage (accounting for the difference in rates) was charged inappropriately.

*Fraudulent activities & AR* Some covers were returned to sender, because they were addressed to people known to be engaging in fraudulent activities. We show one addressed domestically and two to foreign destinations turned back at New York (1936 to Canada, and 1937 to Ireland)!

*Domestic RRR wreck* The one known example (1931) of this combination is illustrated.

*Inquiry and after-the-fact* Both extremely rare for the US, we have an example of a 1903 inquiry form, and a 1935 after-the-fact RRR card.

*Return of RRR card by air* This required airmail postage on the card. 1940s uses are rare. Permitted from 1938, a 1943 example, possibly the earliest, is shown.

**International** We follow as much as possible the organization of the domestic section. Thus we begin with AR forms and covering envelopes, then AR cards, the early AR covers, with many destinations shown. Then the section showing combination of early airmail with AR, for which calculating the rates becomes a nightmare. Then, as with the domestic section, we have weird combinations: returned for fraudulent activities, postage due AR (much shorter than the domestic section), and two of the four known international wreck AR covers (the other two are not US-related). We conclude with the one known US international inquiry form.

International AR service was available (as a free option on registered mail) from at least as early as 1869; but in the UPU period, the earliest incoming item in the is dated 1882, and the earliest outgoing is 1883. In 1892, the Treaty of Vienna required that AR forms be prepared in the country of *destination* (as opposed to what it had been, the origin). This changed the way things were done. It was reversed by

the Treaty of Washington. We present examples to illustrate the consequences of these treaties, and in fact, they give direction to the study of early AR.

Around 1923 (a year later than most other countries), the US replaced AR forms by AR cards. The US was one of a minority of countries that normally had no stamps on either its AR forms or its AR cards (exceptions arose for the later cards they were returned by air or were after-the-fact). In 1925, a fee of 5¢ was initiated for AR service (RRR was 3¢); this caused confusion for some months. There were no extra services, such as restricted delivery (or showing address), available on international AR covers, but this didn't stop senders from so endorsing the covers.

*Organization of the international section. Forms & covering envelopes* We begin with the 1882 German AR form to the US, the earliest international US AR item in the UPU period. It also shows payment of the AR fee on the form, which was typical of most countries in that period. When the Treaty of Vienna applies (1892), we see US AR forms prepared for incoming registered letters and foreign AR forms returned to the US (in foreign covering envelopes) for registered letters from the US. In particular, the form and covering envelope combination is difficult to find, but we show one in each direction. Then a few US AR forms, and one of the half dozen or so US AR forms for a registered cover to Canada in the Vienna period—suggesting that there was an agreement between Canada and the US to reverse the Vienna rules for mail between them.

The Treaty of Washington (1899) reversed the onus, and we show a Germany AR form returned in a US covering envelope, and then a few more (different) US covering envelopes. (The US printer had a problem with the accent on *réception*.)

From 1899, if an AR form accompanying a registered letter were lost or damaged, the destination office was required to make up a replacement. Examples are rare, but we have one, a Chilean AR form, for a registered letter from the US to Chile (1903). We also show a US AR form forwarded to another country in order to reach the sender (of the registered letter), together with its US covering envelope.

Three AR forms in the 1910s are known with watermarks; we show all of them, one returned from Riga, another with the original letter to Germany that was held by the British during WWI, and the third for a registered letter to China mailed from the Panama-Pacific Exposition.

Then we present several pages of AR cards, beginning with a very early (April 1923) example returned from Poland with Polish stamps erroneously applied, paying the Polish AR fee (in Poland, and most other countries at this time, the AR fee was paid on the card). We show examples in the 1920s and 1930s to China, Transvaal, Cuba, Luxembourg, Palestine, Laurenço Marques, Tuva, among others.

Domestic RRR cards were permitted for use (but seldom seen) on registered letters to Canada (with some conditions), and we show several examples. Then we show unauthorized uses of domestic RRR cards to UK and New Zealand, and a particularly weird one returned from the Netherlands, with a stamp applied unnecessarily.

Finally, the only known example of an international AR card on an insured parcel (rather than a registered item) is shown—returned from Lundy, with several remarkable features.

*AR covers* Three pre-UPU US AR covers are known (possible only to Germany or Switzerland); we present the 1871 example; this possibility was previously unreported. Four or five AR covers from the US are known in 1883 (the earliest in the UPU period), and we show two of them. The earliest known AR cover to the US is also in 1883, and is remarkable in other respects (addressed to a prisoner at Fort Leavenworth—who escaped—and the cover returned to sender). Still in the pre-Vienna period, we have AR covers to Denmark, Paris, and the earliest non-Hechler AR cover to Canada (from anywhere).

In the Vienna period (1892–98), we have an AR cover to Guernsey, the earliest AR cover to the British Isles; also to Netherlands and Finland, among others. The treatment of AR changed in this period, we have an incoming AR cover from Württemberg showing the effect, the AR fee now had to be prepaid on the cover (formerly, from the German states, the AR fee would have been paid on the form, as on the 1882 example). Still in this period, we have a transiting example, Nicaragua to Mexico, via the exchange point at Eagle Pass (TX) with its scarce registration etiquette.

From 1899, we group the covers into periods, pre-WWI, WWI, post-WWI to 1925, and from 1925 (when AR became chargeable). Various treaty rates are discussed, and even a partially free official example (to Canada) is shown. An AR cover from New York to Samara (Russia) arriving during the October (1917) revolution, eventually returned to sender, and two more in subsequent months are refused transmission.

A run-down AR cover from the American office in Shanghai, transiting New York, to UK is exhibited. Among other things, the British endorsement on reverse shows that the accompanying AR form went missing—and so a replacement would have to have been prepared.

When AR became chargeable (April 1925), there was some confusion among clerks, and we show three examples in August–October, the first with correct postage, the other two missing the AR fee!

*AR with airmail* We provide a fascinating glimpse at the really complicated fee structure involved with early airmail. Some were partly flown, some were full airborne. We have a first day of air rate 1927 AR cover to Dalmatia, sesqui-rated, and an amazing AR airmail cover to French Guinea, also in 1927. Most of the other early airmail covers are to Europe (still complicated), but among other things are the all-up 1930 AR cover to Argentina, and the 1934 unreported rate and route to Saigon, via Cleveland, San Francisco, and Hong Kong.

In 1939, transatlantic airmail became an expensive option and slightly later, trans-Pacific became an even more expensive option. We show examples to Ethiopia and Palestine.

*Postage due AR* One shortpaid, one incoming from Mexico during their civil war, during the brief period when the US did not recognize the validity of any Mexican stamps, and a more or less normal due cover—charged for *poste restante* in China.

*Wreck AR* The two known US-involved wrecked AR covers are presented; to England in 1917 recovered from a torpedoed steamer, and from Germany in 1905, returned to sender, and likely wrecked within US waters on the return trip.

*Inquiry* The one known international inquiry form from the US (1914) appears. The weird provisional inquiry with two 1900 German AR forms concludes the exhibit.

*Headings* There are five levels of headings (excluding the exhibit title).

# Title

## Subtitle

### Subsubtitle

*Subsubsubtitle* (In-line) Practically all pages have a subsubtitle, and all descriptions of covers have a sub-subsubtitle.

**References** Milgram, *United States registered mail, 1845–70* deals with early forms and rates. Most rates are from Beecher & Wawrukiewicz [BW] (domestic US), Wawrukiewicz & Beecher [WB] (international rates from and some to the US), and various years' US postal guides. *Postal Laws & Regulations* (PL&R) for several decades were often helpful. My book, *AR—avis de réception*, is *de rigueur*. The restricted delivery material shown here was the basis for my article, *Don't get personal*, *Collectors Club Philatelist*, June 2007).

**Original research** I have written a number of articles based specifically on the material in this exhibit, and related covers; some are given below. For example, the very important [H4] shows (for the first time) that pre-UPU AR service was possible from the US, and gives examples of the covers and forms (some appearing here) together with documentation. [H3] illustrates the earliest AR cover incoming to the US (in the exhibit), which also had to be returned to sender, because the addressee had just escaped from prison. [H2] is an important article discussing restricted delivery; aside from illustrating by far the earliest example, preceding the known documentation by almost a decade, it also shows what happens if the restricted delivery feature could not be met (the corresponding covers appear in this exhibit).

The sections in [H0] dealing with the US include previously unpublished material, e.g., domestic RRR cards permitted to Canada (with examples prior to known documentation, shown here), and used

to other countries (three shown here), undocumented.

- [H0] AR—avis de réception, Postal History Society of Canada (2002) Ottawa.  
 [H1] *Registered brick mail*, Collectors Club Philatelist (CCP) 2006 85 (4) 217–221.  
 [H2] *Don't get personal*, CCP 2007 86 (2) 99–106.  
 [H3] *Escaped!* CCP 2008 87 (4) 248–249.  
 [H4] *Early international US AR*, CCP 2010 89 (2) 99–105.

For convenience, here is some basic rate information.

## Basic US rates

dates →	63/7/1	69/1/1	74/1/1	75/7/1	83/10/1	85/7/1	93/1/1	09/11/1
domestic first class*	3/h	→	→	→	2/h	2	→	→
reg'n (domestic)	20	15	8	10	→	→	8	10
RRR fee	C	→	→	→	→	→	→	→
restricted delivery	?	?	?	?	FO	→	→	→
showing address	NA	→	→	→	→	→	→	→
int'l first class* **	var	var	var	5/h	→	→	→	3/ + 2
reg'n (international)	var	var	var	10	→	→	8	10
AR fee	NA	NA/FO	FO	→	→	→	→	→

	10/7/11	17/11/2	19/7/1	25/4/15	32/7/6	44/3/26
domestic first class*	2	3	2	→	3	→
reg'n (domestic)	10	→	→	15	→	20
RRRfee	FO	→	→	3	→	4
restricted delivery	FO	→	→	→	10¢***	20¢
showing address	NA	→	→	→	20¢***	27¢
int'l first class* **	3/ + 2	→	→	→	→	→
reg'n (international)	10	→	→	15	→	20
AR fee	FO	→	→	5	→	→

Rates mostly compiled from [WB] & [BW]; some errors from there have been corrected, and undoubtedly some have been introduced. Dating system is year/month/day. All rates are in cents (¢). Airmail, drop, printed matter, extra indemnity, special delivery, after-the-fact, card returned by air, . . . not included.

\* /h per half ounce; otherwise per ounce in the domestic and international rows. Registration and RRR/AR fees are flat (independent of weight).

\*\* 3/ + 2 is 3¢ per ounce plus 2¢, that is, 5¢ for the first ounce and 3¢ for each additional—this is the UPU rate; many countries had treaties with the US, resulting in domestic rate to them.

\*\*\*Restricted delivery changed from free option to 10¢, 9 July 1934; showing address became available (20¢) on 18 March 1931; both required RRR.

C = compulsory, but no extra charge; NA = service not available; var = depends on destination; FO = free option on registered mail, & on insured from 1913.

# Index

Omitted from the index are terms that occur very frequently—for example, US, AR, RRR, rate, . . . .

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# US RRR & AR to 1945

**RRR & AR** refer to the service (offered on registered mail) known as *return receipt requested* or *avis de réception*, or *acknowledgment of receipt, advice of delivery, . . .*. This provides the sender, by return mail, signed evidence of delivery of the letter. The exhibit deals with this service in, to, and from the US. We use RRR to denote the domestic version, and AR for the international.

Domestic (RRR) service began in 1863 and international (AR) had begun by 1868. Initially, forms (known as RRR or AR forms) were mailed attached to the registered letter, and these were signed and returned to the sender. US AR and RRR forms required covering envelopes. Later, the forms were replaced by cards. Covers for which AR or RRR service is indisputable (they are not always so marked) are known as AR covers (RRR covers).

We develop this service in the US, via the forms, covering envelopes, cards, and covers, and their incoming counterparts, and from several points of view. One (for domestic) is the set of extra services available on top of RRR; another (international) is the set of exotic destinations. We also deal with AR in combination with other services and features, particularly early airmail, postage due, and official (*penalty*) mail.

## Outline

**Domestic (RRR)** Early forms and covering envelopes, early cards; early RRR covers, use with F1, rate changes (1925), with official (*penalty*) mail, with insured parcel post.

Restricted delivery is developed in detail (from 1884), followed by RRR on early airmail (from 1925), and then in combination with extra indemnity and money bag tags. Then we deal with very unlikely combinations: postage due RRR, forwarding domestic RRR mail outside the US, the one known domestic wreck RRR cover, domestic inquiry & after-the-fact uses, and a very early return of RRR card by air (1943).

*Highlights* include: parcel post insured with RRR & charged 70½¢ (1942), earliest restricted delivery cover (1884), refused on account of restricted delivery (to Henry Ford and to Wendell Willkie), massive and early supplemental indemnity franking (1932), one stamp per service covers, the wreck RRR cover (1931), inquiry form (1903), and the after-the-fact card (1935).

**International** Very early AR forms and covering envelopes, AR cards, domestic RRR cards used internationally, card for international insured parcel.

Then AR covers, chronologically (with reference to postal treaties) to various destinations; AR covers with early airmail, and then very unusual combinations with AR: such as returned for fraudulent activities, postage due AR, wreck AR covers, and concluding with the one known international inquiry form from the US and a weird two-part inquiry form *to* the US.

*Highlights* include: earliest incoming AR item (1882), combination AR form and covering envelope (1892, 1897, 1903), replacement AR form for letter to Chile (1902), AR cover with form attached & held three years during WWI (1916–19), unauthorized use RRR cards to UK, Netherlands, and NZ (1918, 1921, 1945), AR card for insured parcel returned from Lundy (1938).

In the cover section, a pre-UPU AR cover (1871), earliest reported non-Seebeck international AR cover (1883) from US in UPU period, earliest *to* US (and addressed to prisoner who had escaped), transiting US to Mexico with Eagle Pass registration etiquette (1897), to Russia during October revolution (1917), from US office in Shanghai requiring duplicate AR form (1920), most of the early airmail covers (especially to French Guinea & Saigon), postage due incoming during Mexican civil war (1914), wreck AR covers (1914 & 1905), and inquiry form (1914).

# Domestic return receipt (RRR)

Domestic US RRR service began 1 July 1863, as a compulsory but free elaboration of registration. When a registered letter was delivered, the recipient would sign a form (later a card), which would be returned (under cover, if a form) to the sender as evidence of delivery. There was no additional charge above registration. It became optional on domestic registered mail in 1910 (still no charge), and became a chargeable service in 1925.

Few RRR forms appear to be known in 1863–64. Forms and forms together with their covering envelopes covering envelopes are shown. They are known used to 1881, despite RRR cards having been introduced in mid-1879 (these did not require covering envelopes). Until 1910, domestic registered covers almost never show an indication of return receipt service, but after that date, the request for the service had to be marked; the preferred endorsement was return receipt demanded, although many variations exist. Later the standard indication was the more polite return receipt requested, from which we derive the abbreviation RRR.

## RRR forms

To be returned under cover

RETURN REGISTERED LETTER RECEIPT.

NOTE.—This return receipt, after being signed by the party to whom the letter or package which accompanies it is delivered, must be immediately enclosed to the Postmaster at the office where it originated.

Should the registered letter not be delivered, this receipt must be forwarded with it, in due course, to the Dead Letter Office.

No. 11 Oct 25<sup>th</sup> 1864.

Mailed at Burlington Iowa

by David Rorer

a letter addressed to Treasurer & Recorder Quinry  
Adams Co. Iowa

Stamp here the office and date of delivery

Received the above described letter.

Sign here. } Aley Ramsey

RRR form, 4 June 1864. For a registered letter mailed from Philadelphia to Como (IL), properly signed by recipient. Manuscript date mark at Como. *Second earliest US RRR form of which I am aware.*

**Return Registered Letter Receipt.**

NOTE.—This return receipt, after being signed by the party to whom the letter or package which accompanies it is delivered, must be immediately enclosed to the Postmaster of New York.  
Should the registered letter not be delivered, this receipt must be forwarded with it, in due course, to the Dead Letter Office.

No. *3480.* 1869.

Mailed at **NEW YORK, N. Y.,** by *J. Cummings, 91 Gold St.*  
 a letter addressed to *J. Nichols*  
*Herrick Centre, Pa.*

Stamp here the Office and date of delivery.

Received the above-described letter.

Stamp: *HERRICK CENTRE PA FEB 1*

Sign here: *Ira Nichols*

*Ira Nichols*  
*Wm. B. G. B. G.*

New York RRR form, January 1869. Specially printed for the New York office for 1869. For a registered letter from NY to Herrick Centre (PA).

**RETURN REGISTERED LETTER BILL.**

NOTE.—This return receipt, after being signed by the party to whom the letter or package which accompanies it is delivered, must be immediately enclosed to the Postmaster at the office where it originated.  
Should the registered letter not be delivered, this receipt must be forwarded with it, in due course, to the Dead Letter Office.

No. *2* *Oct 9, 1871.*

Mailed at *Montville, Maine*  
 by *Josiah Pearson*  
 a letter addressed to *M. Wagner & Co.*

Stamp here the office and date of delivery.

Received the above described letter.

Stamp: *ARSONVILLE ME*

Sign here: *M. Wagner & Co.*

Printing error, October 1871. Mistakenly worded **BILL** (for receipt). For registered letter (reg'n number 2), Montville (ME) to Marshall (MI).

Forms with their covering envelopes

US RRR forms were returned under cover to the postmaster at the office of origin, who then forwarded them to the sender of the registered letter.

**RETURN REGISTERED LETTER RECEIPT.**

NOTE.—This return receipt, after being signed by the party to whom the letter or package which accompanies it is delivered, must be immediately enclosed to the Postmaster at the office where it originated.

Should the registered letter not be delivered, this receipt must be forwarded with it, in due course, to the Dead Letter Office.

No. 17      Dec 13 1865

Mailed at Kittanning Penna

by J. E. Meredith

a letter addressed to H. S. Retzer Esq  
Harrisburg Penna

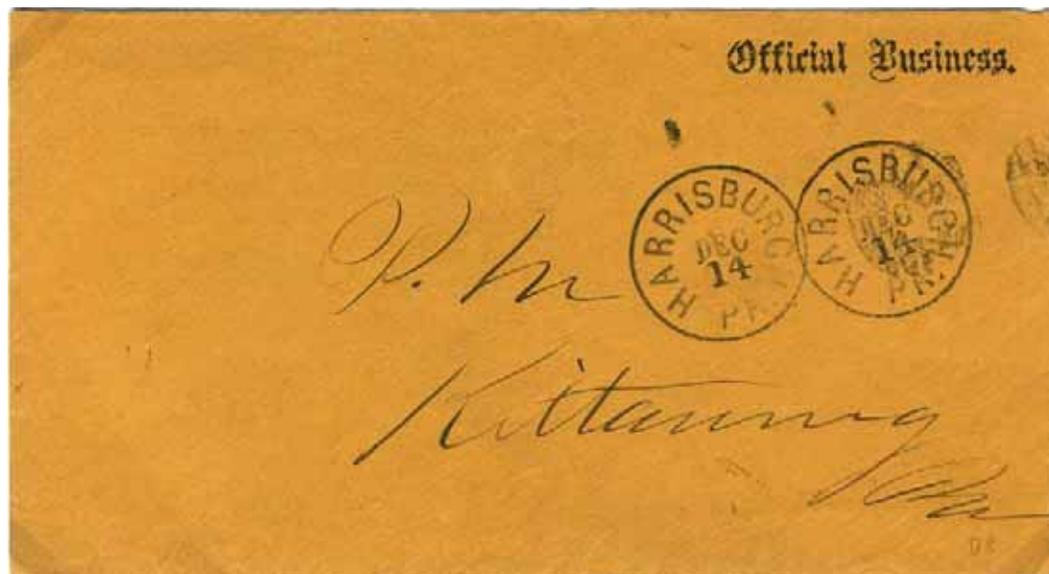
Stamp here the office and date of delivery

Received the above described letter.

Sign here } James P. Barr  
per J. E. Meredith



Return receipt with covering envelope, 1865. Early example, with simple official envelope. For registered letter from Kittanning (PA) to Harrisburg.



**RETURN REGISTERED-LETTER RECEIPT.**

NOTE. This return receipt, after being signed by the party to whom the letter or package which accompanies it is delivered, must be immediately inclosed to the Postmaster at the office where it originated.

Should the registered letter not be delivered, this receipt must be forwarded with it, in due course, to the Dead-Letter Office.

No. 2      Oct 6, 1876.

Mailed at Clear Creek Post Co NY  
 by A. Saunders  
 a letter addressed to Thornton & Bro  
Girard Pa

Stamp here the office and date of delivery.

Received the above-described letter.

Sign here. } Thornton Brothers



Return receipt with covering envelope, 1876. Official post office stamp issued 1873. Registered letter # 2 (numbering restarted every quarter) from Clear Creek (NY) to Girard (PA).

Reg. Bus.




Postmaster, Clear Creek

County, NY

OFFICIAL.

This Envelope is to be used only for Post-Office Business.

# RETURN REGISTERED-LETTER RECEIPT.

NOTE.—This return receipt, after being signed by the party to whom the letter or package which accompanies it is delivered, must be immediately inclosed to the Postmaster at the office where it originated.

Should the registered letter not be delivered, this receipt must be forwarded with it, in due course, to the Dead-Letter Office.

No. 2 Aug 8<sup>th</sup>, 1878.

Mailed at Sullivan Co Pa

by C. W. Palmer

a letter addressed to Lyman Brown  
49 Warren St New York

Stamp here the office and date of delivery.

NEW YORK, N.Y.  
AUG 10 1878

Received the above-described letter.

Lyman Brown  
for J. S. McDonald

Sign }  
here }

Return receipt with covering envelope, 1878. For registered letter # 2 from Sullivan (PA) to New York.

Registered Business.

NEW YORK  
AUG 12 1878  
2 30 PM



Postmaster, Sullivan

Topi County,

OFFICIAL.

This Envelope is to be used only for  
Post-Office Business.

PO

This blank is to be filled up at the mailing office and given to the person who presents the letter for registration.

### RECEIPT FOR A REGISTERED LETTER.

MAY 28 1879

REGISTERED.

187

No. 9041

Post Office,

of *Mary Delaplata*

a letter addressed to *Mrs W. P. Denebola*

*Galena*

*Ind*

*W. P. Denebola*

P. M.

Received

### RETURN REGISTERED-LETTER RECEIPT.

Note.—This return receipt, after being signed by the party to whom the letter or package which accompanies it is delivered, must be immediately inclosed to the Postmaster at the office where it originated.  
If, in due course, to the Dead-Letter Office.

MAY 30 1879

REGISTERED.

187

No. 9041

Mailed at

by *Mary Delaplata*

a letter addressed to *Mrs W. P. Denebola*

*Galena*

*Ind*

Received the above-described letter.

Stamp here the office and date of delivery.



*Mrs W. P. Denebola*

Sign here.

Registration and return receipts for a registered letter

Return receipt & receipt forms, June 1879. Showing how forms were situated in post office pad.

For a registered letter Philadelphia to Galena (PA). Both filled out when registered letter was mailed; RRR form was then attached to the letter, & later returned under cover after being signed by the recipient.

Registered cover with accompanying RRR form

Despite the ubiquity of RRR forms, this is the only known example of a domestic US registered cover with its RRR form.



New York to Jefferson Valley (NY), 1869. Postage of 3¢ domestic plus 15¢ registration (rate commenced January 1869). Both cover and form refer to registration number 740. Form had been attached by glue.

Since the item had not been signed for on the form—usually this means non-delivery—but there are no return-to-sender marks, we conclude that the item was delivered but the attached form was ignored.

RETURN REGISTERED LETTER RECEIPT.	
<small>NOTE.—This return receipt, after being signed by the party to whom the letter or package which accompanies it is delivered, must be immediately enclosed to the Postmaster at the office where it originated. Should the registered letter not be delivered, this receipt must be forwarded with it, in due course, to the Dead Letter Office.</small>	
No. 740	NEW YORK, 1869
Mailed at	DEC 22 REGISTERED
by Geo. F. Hartman	333 N. 37
a letter addressed to	John Griffin Jeff. Valley N. Y.
Stamp here the office and date of delivery.	Received the above described letter.
Sign here.	

## RRR cards introduced 1879

The thin paper forms were replaced by cards ca June–September 1879 (this applied to many other official forms as well); these were mailed as post cards, not under cover. Forms are known used as late as 1881.

The form and card below, returned from Fargo (Dakota Territory), bracket the changeover.

**RETURN REGISTERED-LETTER RECEIPT.**

NOTE.—This return receipt, after being signed by the party to whom the letter or package which accompanies it is delivered, must be immediately inclosed to the Postmaster at the office where it originated.  
—Should the registered letter not be delivered, this receipt must be forwarded with it, in due course, to the Dead-Letter Office.

No. 111 Sept. 16, 1879  
Mailed at Atwater Postage Co Ohio  
by P. Miller  
a letter addressed to J. G. Woodruff Esq  
Fairfax Cass & Park

Stamp here the office and date of delivery.

**FARGO**  
SEP  
20  
1879  
D.A.C.

Received the above-described letter.

Sign }  
Here. } A. Harwood

Generic RRR form, September 1879. For a registered letter from Atwater (OH) to Fargo.

When the registered letter or parcel accompanying this card is delivered, the Postmaster will require signature to the receipt on the other side, also on his record of registered deliveries, and mail this card without cover to address below.  
A penalty of \$300 is fixed by law for using this card for other than official business.

**Post Office Department.**  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS. Post Office at Atwater

**RETURN TO:**

Name of Sender P. Miller

Street and Number, }  
or Post Office Box. }

Post Office at Atwater

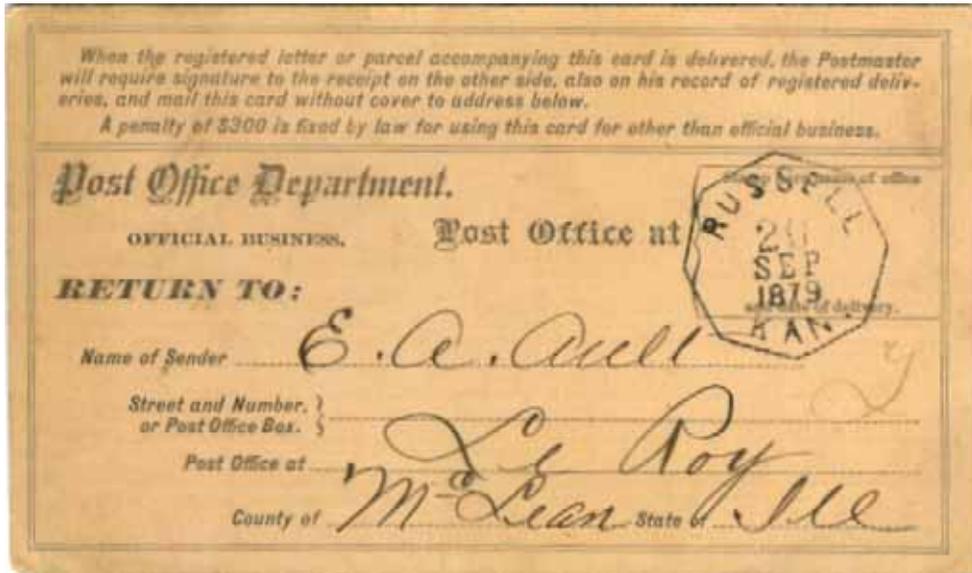
County of Portage State of Ohio

Stamp here name of post office and date of delivery.

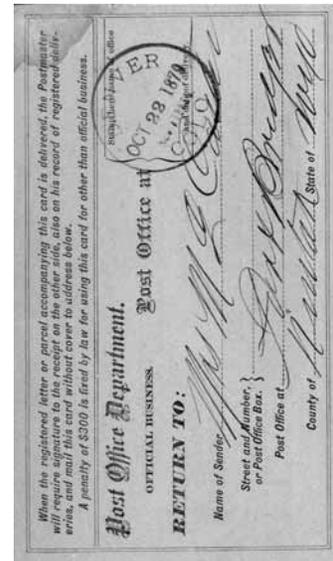
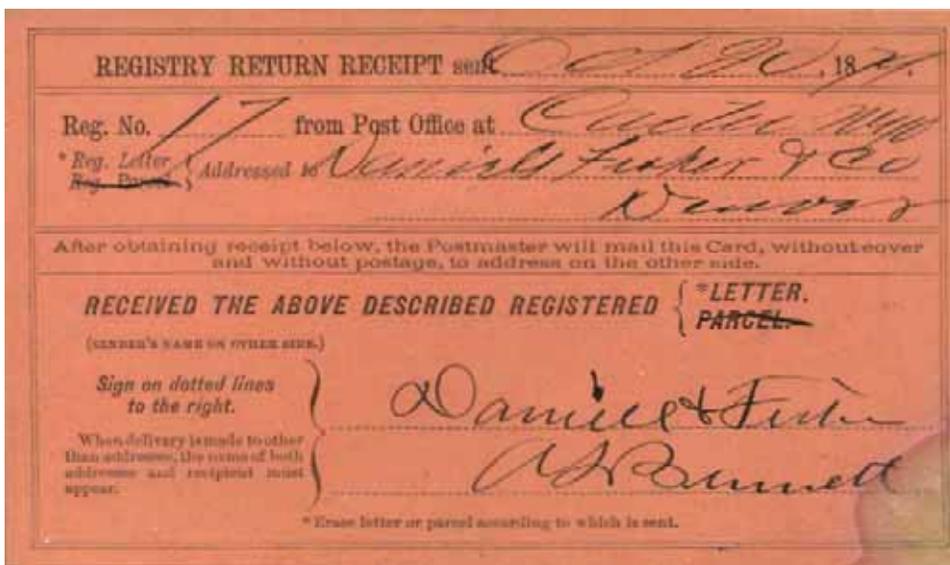
**ATWATER**  
SEP  
30  
1879

Generic RRR card, March 1881. Part of the same correspondence.

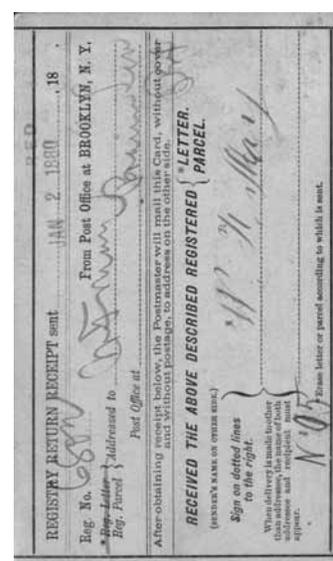
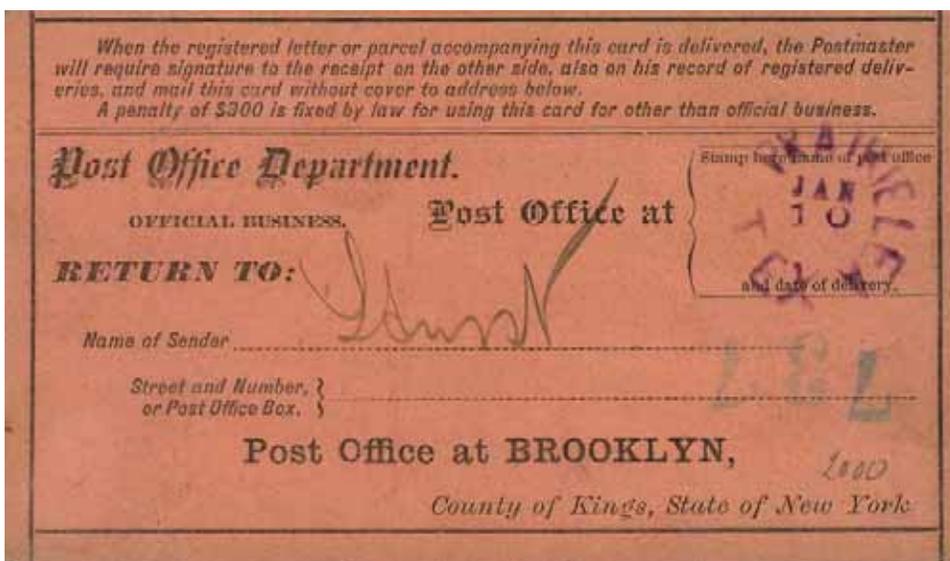
Early uses of RRR cards



Earliest known RRR card, 16 September 1879. For a registered letter from LeRoy (IL) to Russell (KS).

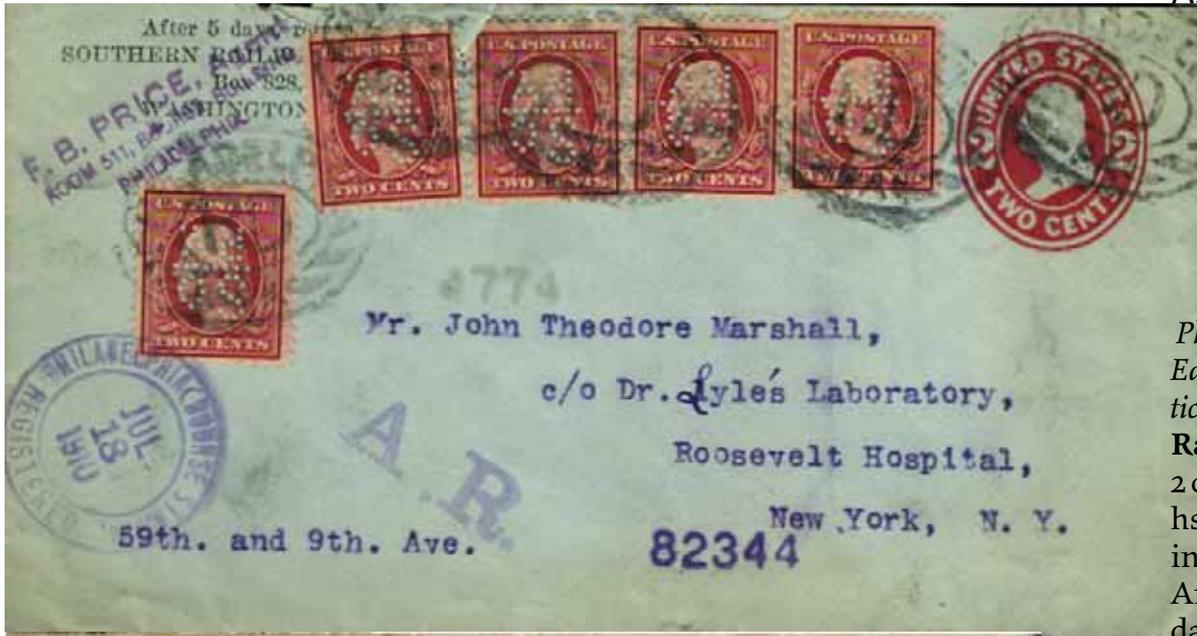


New York state to Denver, 22 October 1879.



Brooklyn to La Prairie (TX), 2 January 1880. Printed card for Brooklyn. Reg. Letter is struck through, and replaced by Reg. Parcel; use for parcels is quite a bit more difficult to find.

RRR becomes optional, 1910



On 11 July 1910, RRR became a (free) option; RRR or equivalent (official term: *return receipt demanded* until the 1920s; variants exist) had to be endorsed or stamped.

Philly-NY, 18 July 1910. Earliest normal domestic RRR-endorsed cover. Rated 10¢ reg'n & 2¢ domestic. **A.R.** has usually applied on international mail. After October 1909, dated handstamps to be only on reverse of registered letters. Perfins of Southern Railway.



Elizabeth (NJ)–Bridgeport (CN), 16 August 1910. Third earliest normal RRR-endorsed cover. Rated as above. Odd wording: RECEIPT DESIRED. Experimental registration label (1907–1910), unrecorded at Elizabeth.



Boston–Amherst, 26 August 1910. Rated as above. Tiny Return Receipt Demanded has. No backstamps.



Registration stamp (F1) introduced

Only US registration stamp; issued December 1911-13. Never demonetized; could be used only for registration fee. First month of use example appears in the official section.

Quintuple rate, 1915. Rated 10¢ registration and five times 2¢ per ounce domestic. Endorsed *Registered receipt* asked for. Norway Lake (ME) to Cape Elizabeth.



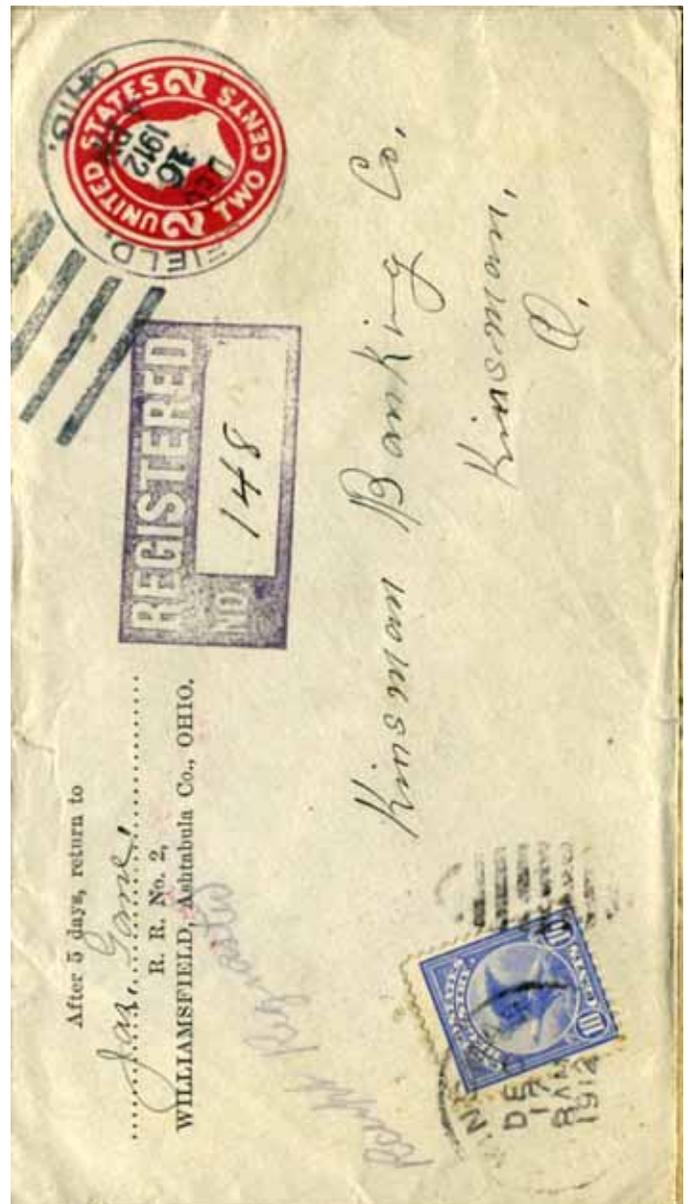
Registered Receipt asked for  
Norway Lake  
Albin

Ms registration marking, Norway Lake.



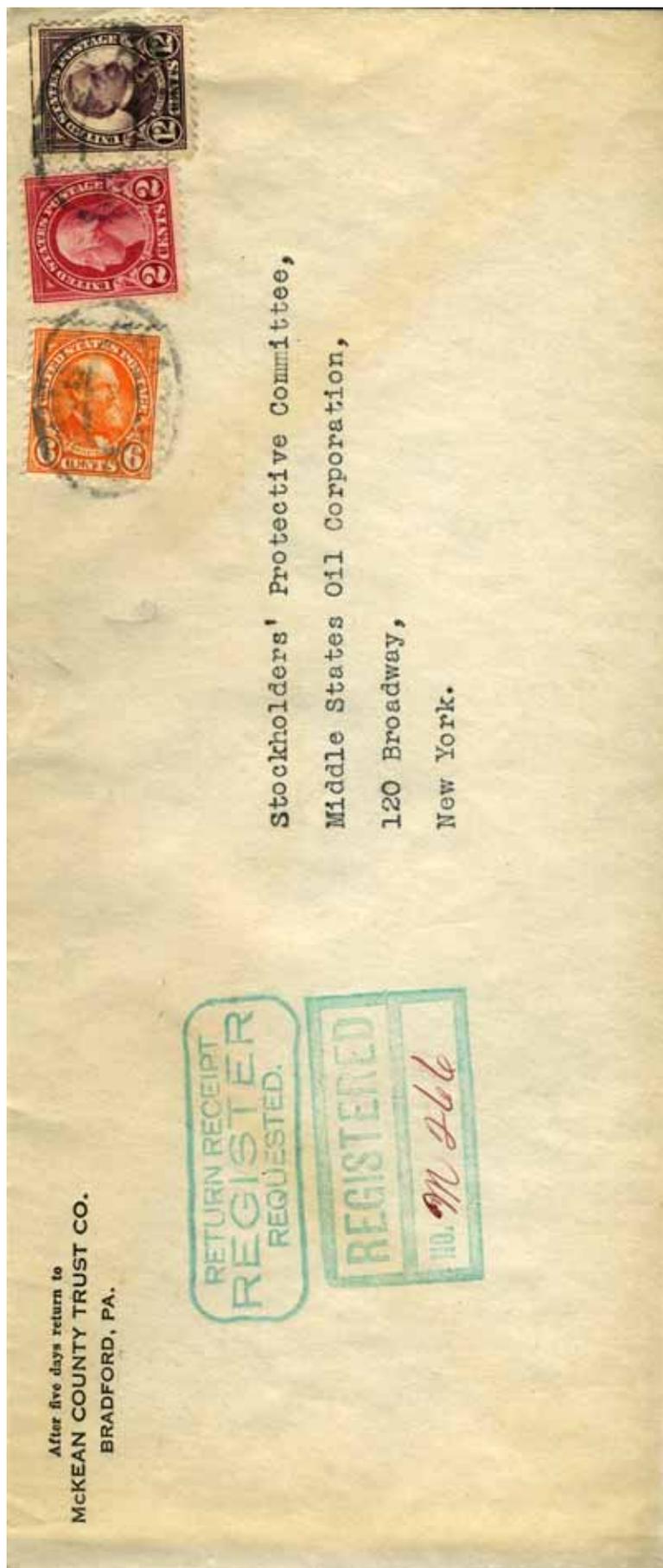
Special delivery, F1, 1913. Rated 10¢ registration, 10¢ special delivery, and 2¢ domestic —one stamp per postal service. From Salt Lake City (UT) to Berkeley (CA).

Between small towns in Ohio, 1912. From Williamsfield to Kinsman (where F1 was datestamped).



# Rate changes, 15 April 1925

On this date, the domestic RRR fee became 3¢ (formerly a free option), and registration increased to 15¢ from 10¢.



Second day of rate, 16 April 1925. Rated 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR fee, and 2¢ domestic. Bradford PA to New York. Unusual turquoise handstamps.



# Official (penalty) mail

Mail from federal government offices was free of domestic postage; if the office were located in DC, registration was also free. However, the RRR fee was always chargeable (when it applied).

The postal savings system (part of the post office) exceptionally issued stamps & stationery (June 1910) rather than use penalty envelopes, possibly as an accounting measure. Their use was discontinued in 1914.

*Postal savings bank to postmaster, December 1911. Drop letter mailed Watsonville (CA) to its PM. Rated 10¢ registration and 2¢ domestic. With official Postal Savings stamps (O121 or O125, issued February or May 1911) and stationery (U072, 1911).*



Official mail with F1



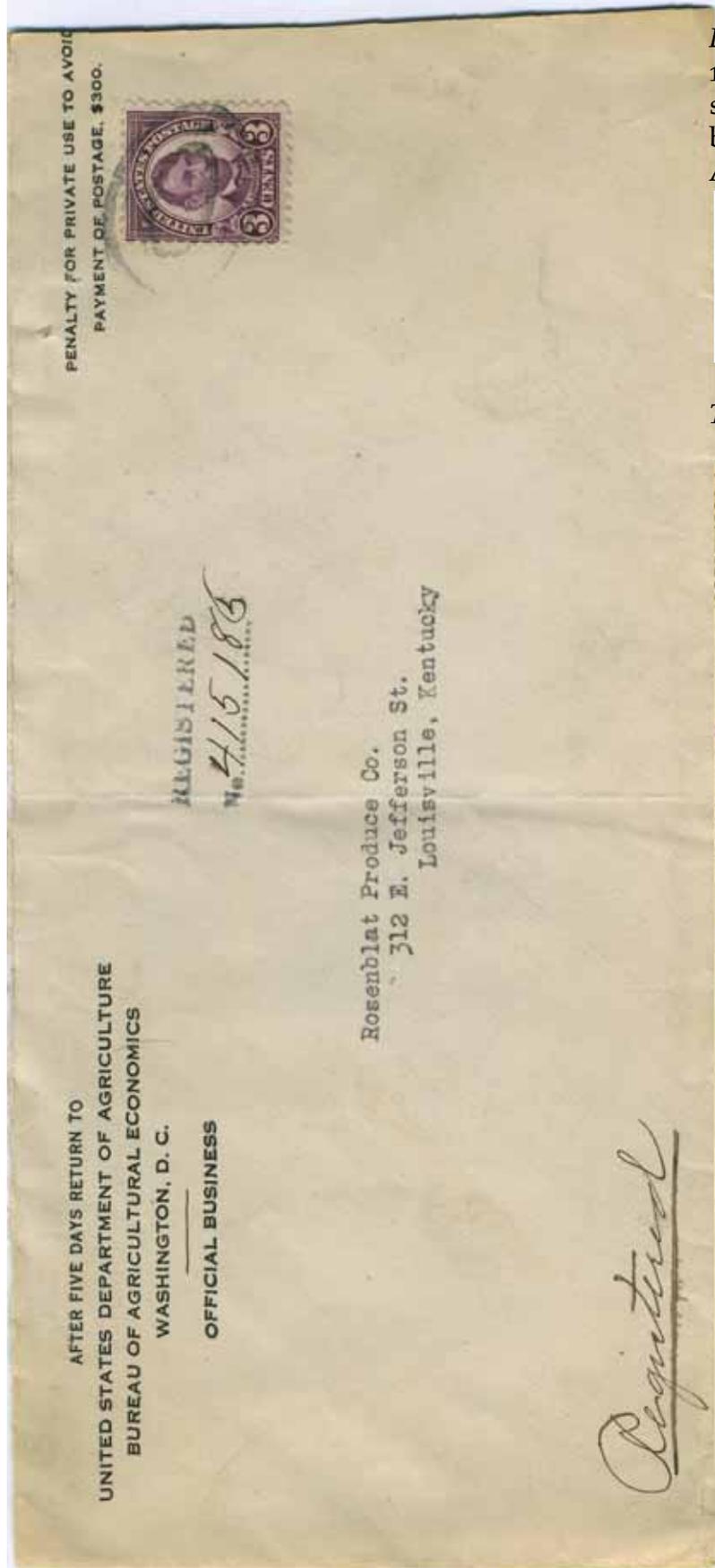
First month of use of F1, 28 December 1911.  
Circuit court clerk's office in Boston, to Attleboro (MA).

Department of the interior, 1913.



# Mailed from Washington

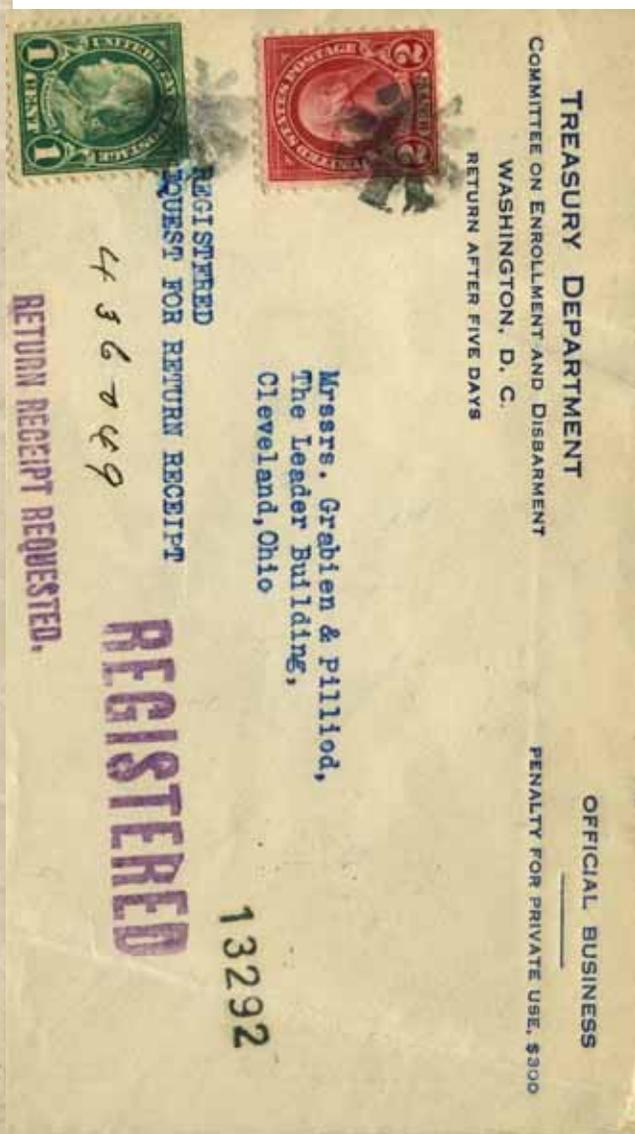
Exempt from registration fee (in addition to domestic fee) if mailed from a government office in Washington. Payment of the RRR fee (in this period, 3 ¢) was still required.



Department of Agriculture, Washington—Louisville, 1930. No RRR hs or endorsements; however, 3 ¢ stamp pays for this service (a card would have been attached to the envelope), as the Dept of Agriculture was exempt from regular postage.



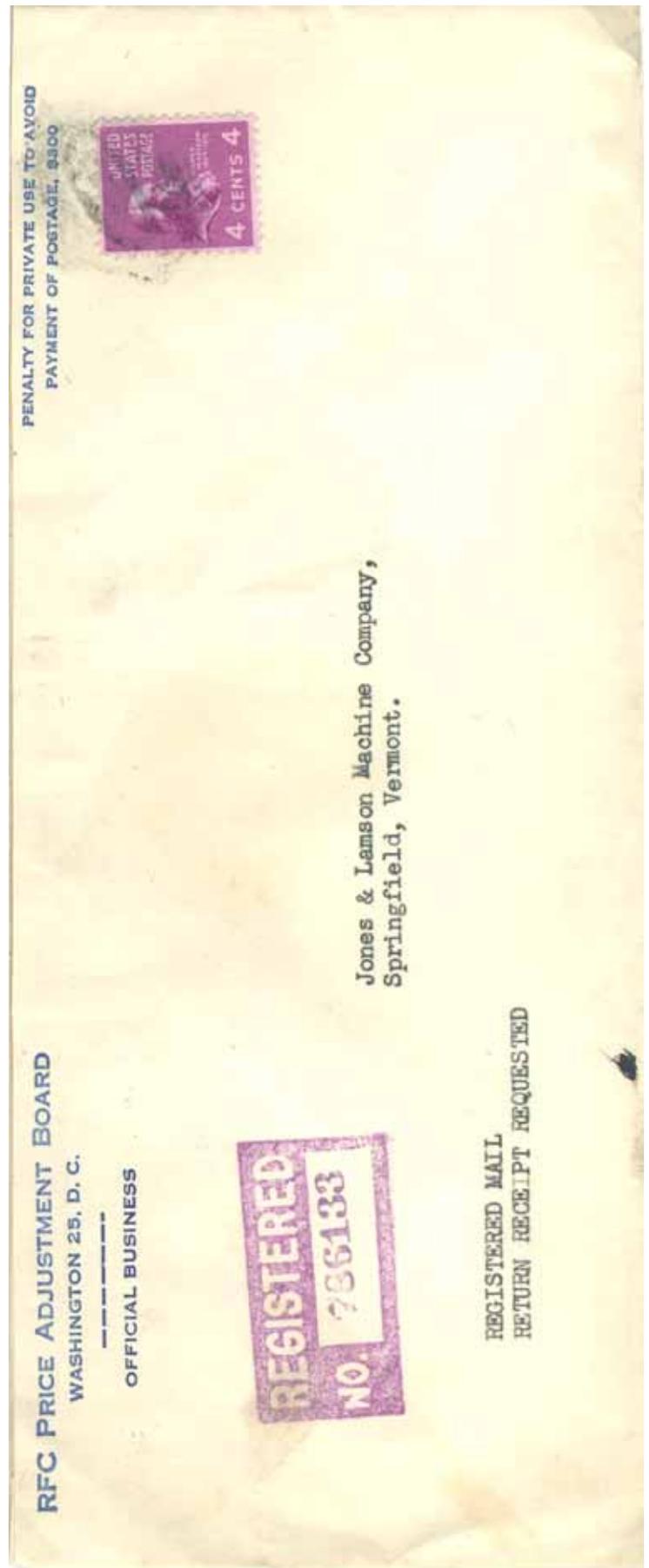
Treasury Department, Washington—Cleveland, 1926.



From DC



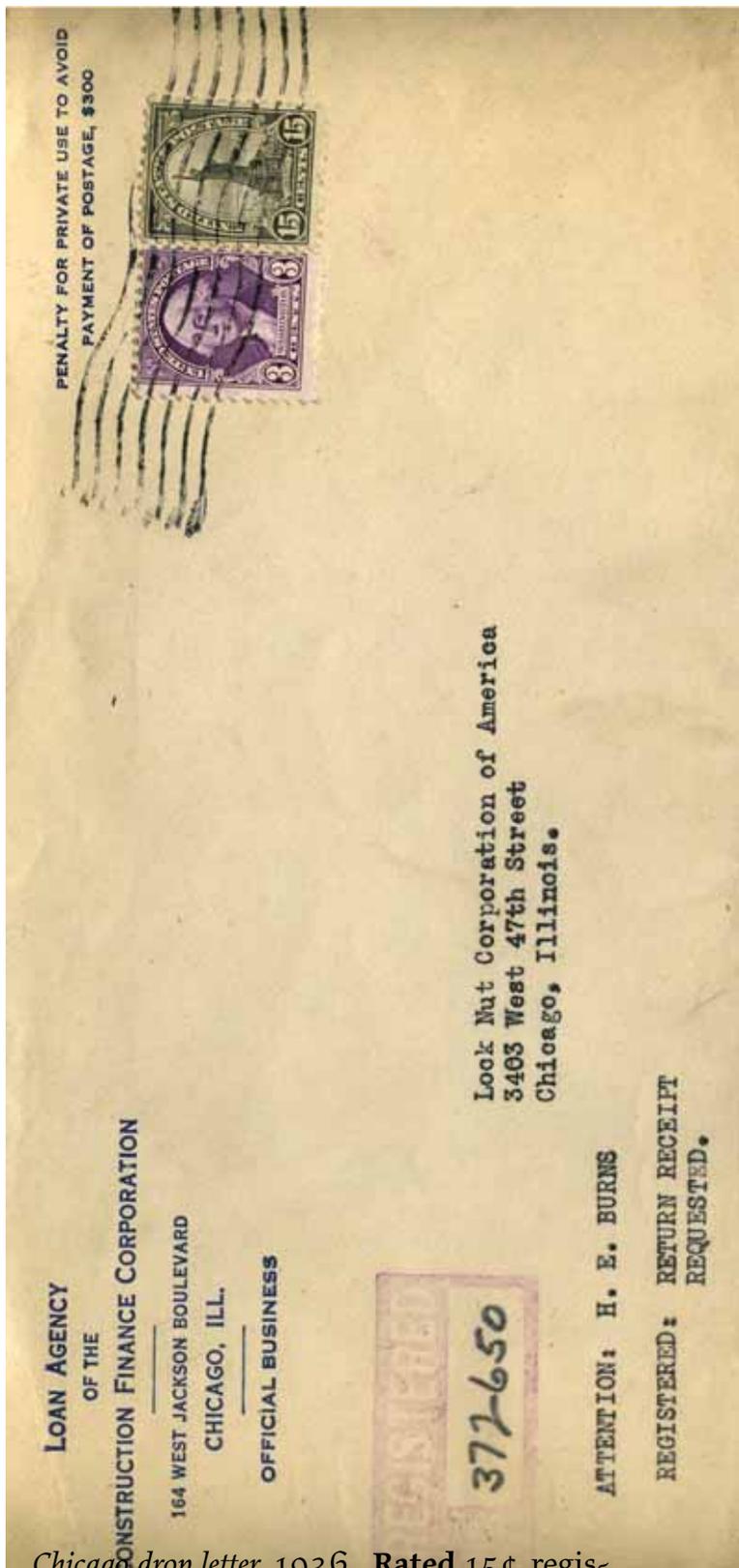
Federal Trade Commission, to Philadelphia 1939.  
Rated 3¢ RRR.



Price Adjustment board—Springfield (VT), August 1944. RRR fee rose to 4¢ in March 1944.

From outside DC

Although exempt from domestic fee, federal government mail from outside DC required payment of registration and RRR fees.



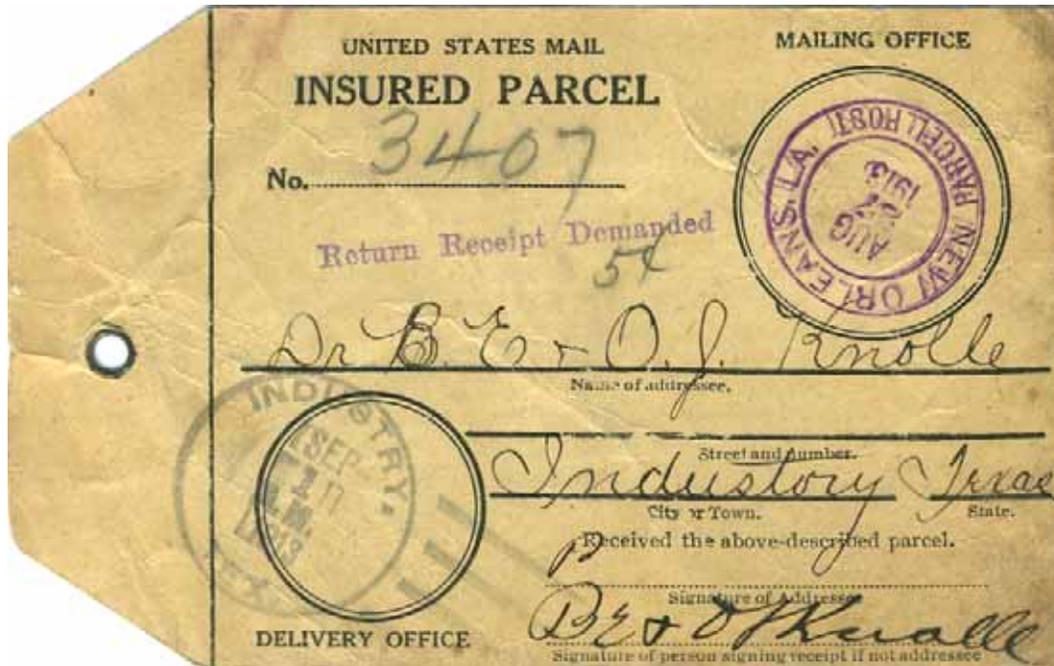
Chicago drop letter, 1936. Rated 15¢ registration fee and 3¢ RRR.



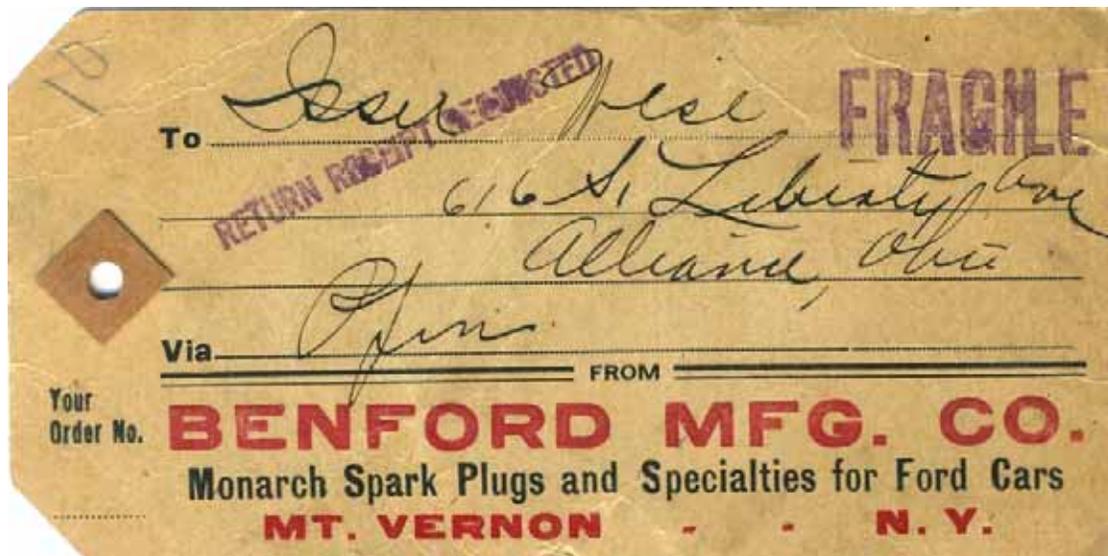
Office of Censorship, Seattle-New Orleans, 1942. Rated as at left.

# Insured parcel post with RRR

Insurance on domestic parcel post was introduced 1 January 1913, and immediately RRR service was available. The RRR fees are exactly the same as those on registered mail. Insured parcel post mail with RRR is seldom-seen.



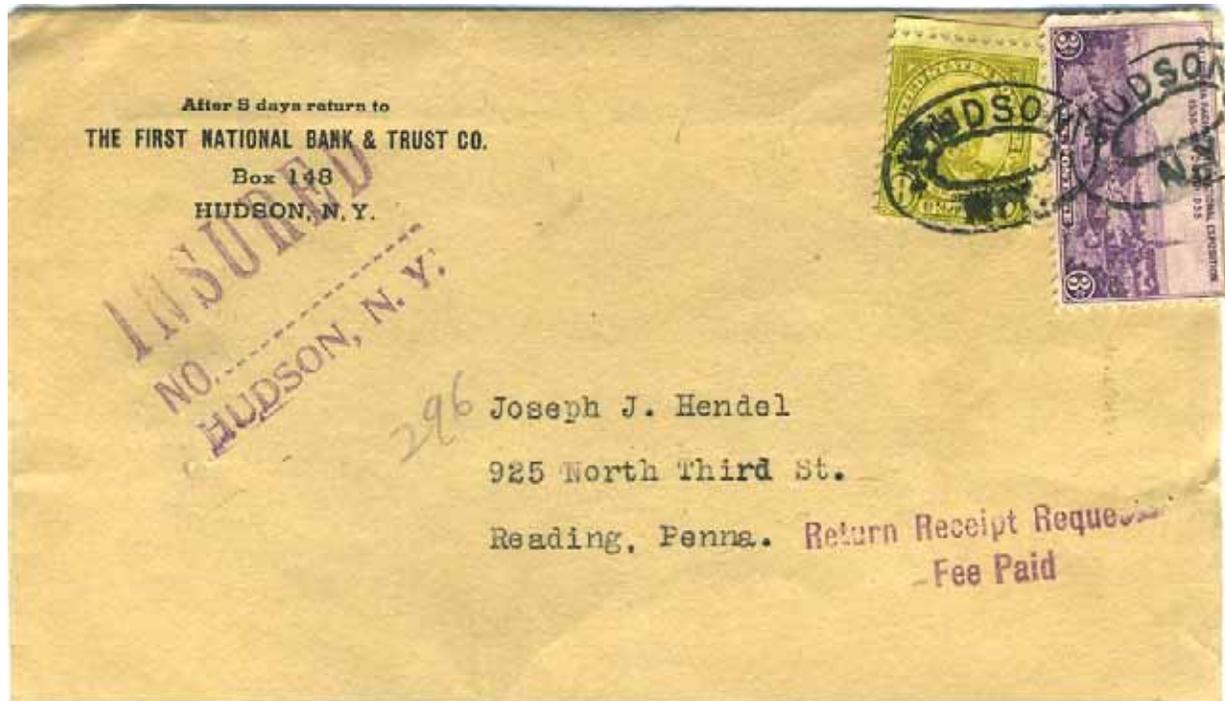
Official parcel tag, New Orleans–Industry (LA), 1913. **Rated 5¢** insurance (RRR was free). Stamps would have been applied to the sender's mail tag.



Parcel tag, Mount Vernon (NY)–Alliance (OH), 1914–25. **Rated 5¢** parcel post and 5¢ insurance. The stamps were issued beginning in 1914, and these rates applied until 1925. Parcel post did not require dated postmarks.

Insured third and fourth class/parcel post with RRR

Insurance was also available on third and fourth class mail. Above 8 ounces, fourth class mail was referred to as parcel post. Low survival rates make these difficult to find.



Double third class, Hudson (NY)–Reading (PA), ca 1935. Small complete clasp envelope. **Rated** double third class (at 1½¢ per two ounces, in effect 1925–49), minimal insurance (under \$5) 5¢ (1925–44), & RRR fee 3¢ (1925–44). Dumb killers & no backstamps, typical third class mail. Right stamp issued 1935.



Portion of wrapper containing 16-pound parcel, between quartermasters, 1942. **Rated** parcel post four zones (Detroit–New York) at 10¢ first pound and 3½¢ each additional; minimal insurance 5¢, and RRR fee 3¢, totalling 70½¢, overpaid by a half cent (sender likely could not find ½¢ Prexy). Weight marked 16 #.

# Restricted delivery

The sender may restrict delivery of a registered letter to the addressee (or his agent); possible endorsements include *personal delivery*, *addressee only*, *personal receipt required*, and others. The earliest reference in a postal guide appears in 1892, and there are no mentions in earlier PL&R; the 1884 cover is by far the earliest known.

Restricted delivery required return receipt as a prerequisite, but was otherwise free until 9 July 1934 when it required an additional 10¢, increasing to 20¢ on 26 March 1944.



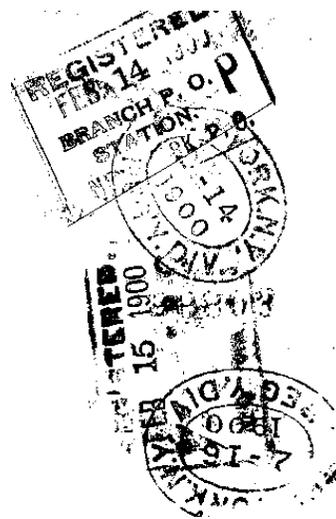
Form announcing registered letter, 1888. Registered letters were to be given only to the addressee or their agents (and the latter if there were a written order to that effect). This refers to the 1879 PL&R, which seems to suggest that a restricted delivery endorsement is unnecessary. However, the cover below is dated 1884.



Deliver personally, 1884. Earliest known restricted delivery cover. Rated 10¢ registration and 2¢ domestic. Returned unclaimed.

*Deliver Personally*

Early restricted delivery



Personal delivery only to →, 1900. Second earliest restricted delivery cover. Rated 8¢ registration and 2¢ domestic. Returned unclaimed. Contains insurance cancellation notification.



Personal receipt required, 1905. Earliest known handstamp indicating restricted delivery. Includes reference to PL&R. Rated as above. Originally drop letter within Boston, forwarded to Roxbury, and returned unclaimed.

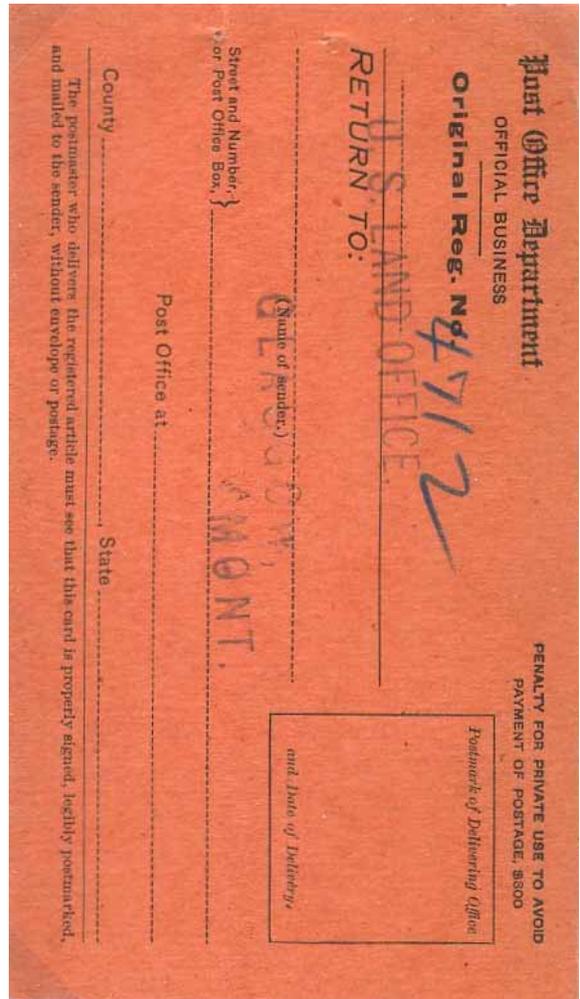
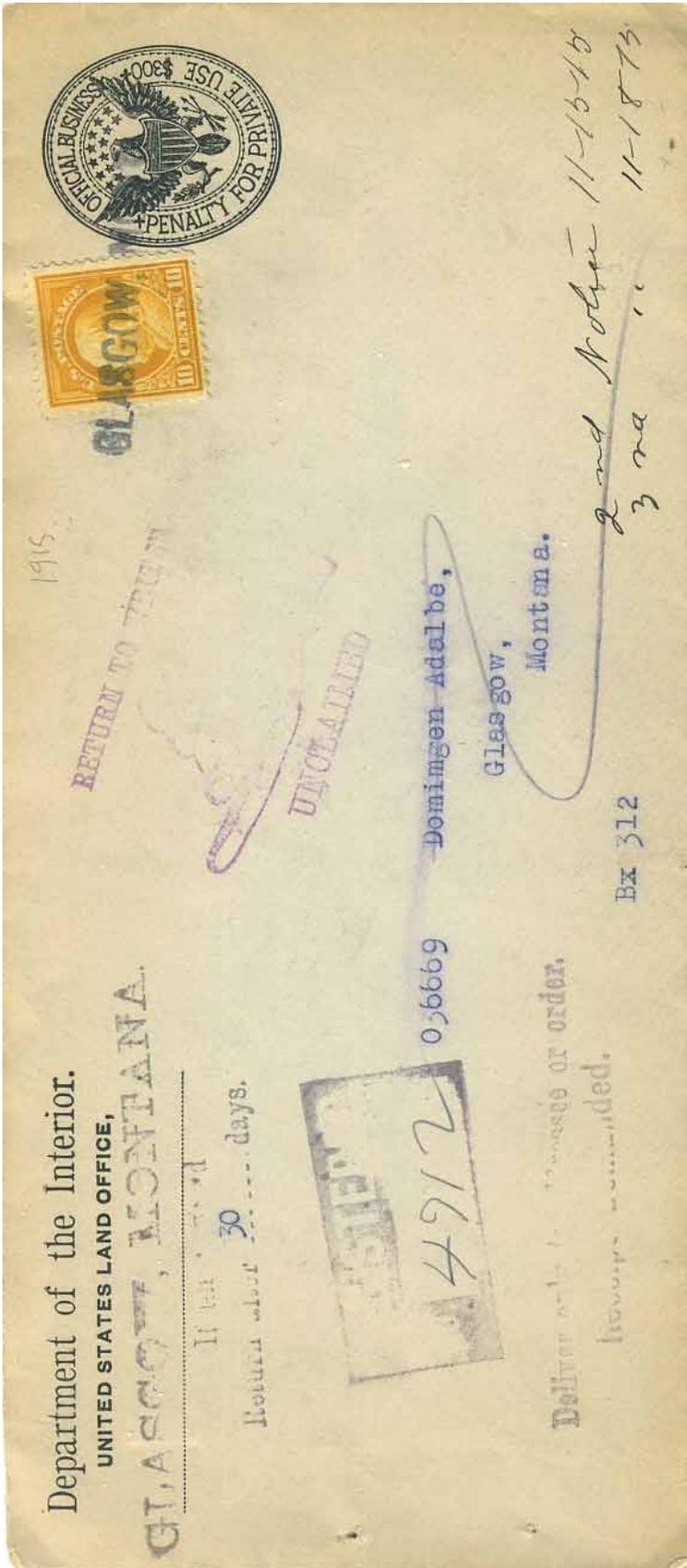
Restricted delivery with card

Official, returned to sender, card still attached, 1915. Both card and cover refer to reg'n number 4712. Mail from government offices outside DC required only prepayment of 10¢ registration fee.

Drop letter from US Land Office in Glasgow, Montana, returned unclaimed. Enclosed letter is notice of rejection of a homesteading application.

At lower left, handstamps read:

**Deliver only to addressee or order  
Receipt demanded.**



RRR card, originally attached by staples.

Restricted delivery, penalty covers  
 Standard and nonstandard restricted delivery handstamps, Department of the Interior.



Bismarck-Golden Valley (ND), 1915. Rated 10¢ registration fee. Returned to sender.

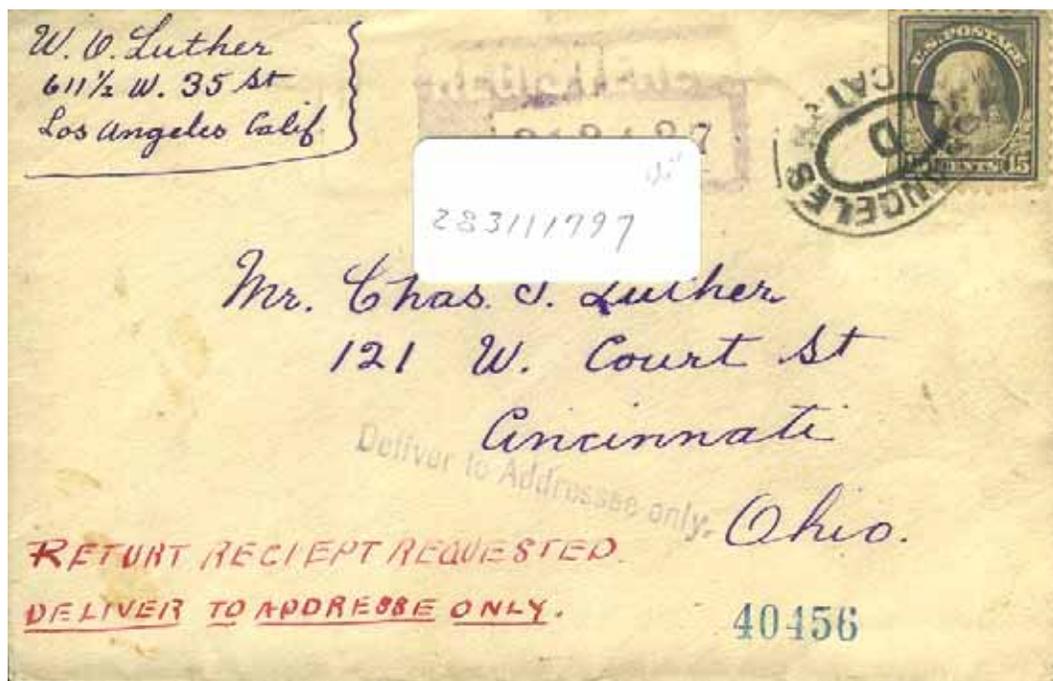


Los Angeles drop letter, 1926. Rated 15¢ registration fee and 3¢ RRR.

More restricted delivery



Boston—Santa Cruz, 8 August 1910. Second earliest normal use RRR cover, and second earliest recorded restricted delivery handstamp. **Rated** 10 ¢ registration and 2 ¢ domestic. Boston experimental registration label, and faint Santa Cruz clock receiver.



Los Angeles—Cincinnati, 1920. Handstamp Deliver to addressee only, indicating restricted delivery. Apparently double 2 ¢ domestic rate plus registration (10 ¢), overpaid by 1 ¢. Official seal (OX15, issued 1917) on reverse (untied).



Two handstamps meaning the same thing, 1930. "Address only" & "Personal receipt" are equivalent. Clerk likely intended to use his "Return receipt demanded".

Rated 15¢ reg'n fee, 3¢ RRR, and 2¢ domestic (one stamp per service). From Collegeville (PA) to New Brunswick (NJ).



Forwarded twice, ret'd to sender, 1933.

Rated 15¢ reg'n fee, 3¢ RRR, & 3¢ domestic [up from 2¢ in 1932] (one stamp per service).

From Philadelphia to Winchester (VA) to Sheepscot (ME), and returned.



Winona MN—Oakland, May 1934. Rated as above.

CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY  
INDEPENDENCE SQUARE  
PHILADELPHIA · PENNSYLVANIA

REGISTERED



Mr. Clayton B. Geyer  
329 East Market Street  
Marietta, Pa.

DELIVER TO ADDRESSEE ONLY  
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED



Restricted delivery charged 9 July 1934, 10¢ fee for restricted delivery began.

Philadelphia-Marietta (PA), 1936. Rated 15¢ reg'n, 3¢ RRR, 10¢ restricted del'y, & 3¢ domestic.

From MR. H. C. EDMUNDSON  
60 SANSOME STREET  
SAN FRANCISCO, 4, CALIF.  
D112168-F.P.  
Bakersfield, Calif.  
RRS



Meter, January 1944.

Rated as above. Meters are not commonly seen on RRR covers.

From San Francisco to Bakersfield (CA).



Mr. Ernest R. Taylor  
#216 Roberts Lane  
Riverview Tract, Kern Co., California

RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED  
DELIVER TO ADDRESSEE ONLY

BAKERSFIELD CALIFORNIA



210  
215  
299  
4428  
3/21/44 -  
Pd. - \$5.00 - Rent

Jael H Reed  
Stafford Springs,  
Conn

Misrated, 16 March 1944. RRR prerequisite for restricted del'y; clerk omitted 3¢ RRR fee.

**Restricted delivery refused**

Restricted delivery required the signature of the addressee (not of an agent or employee); if the latter did not wish to sign, the letter was returned to sender. The few examples known were sent to famous people.



To Henry Ford, 1930. Purple handstamp **Refused on account of personal/delivery restriction**. Rated 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR fee, and 3¢ domestic.



To Wendell Willkie, July 1940. Ms *Refused acct. restricted delivery*. Willkie had been nominated as Republican presidential candidate in late June.

**Rated** 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR, 10¢ restricted delivery, 10¢ special delivery, and 3¢ domestic.

JOHN TRIER,  
776 Broad St.,  
NEWARK, N. J.



RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED  
SHOWING ADDRESS WHERE DELIVERED.

RETURN TO SENDER  
FOR NON-DELIVERY  
REASON FOR NON-DELIVERY CHECKED  
Unknown  
For better address  
Refused

*Returned unknown  
10/1/31*

Mr. Charles James,  
P. O. Box 101,  
Freeport, Long Island, N.Y.

41998

REGISTERED

RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED  
SHOWING ADDRESS WHERE DELIVERED

howing ad-  
dress where  
elivered

ervice elaborating  
RR. Fee 20¢ (plus  
RR fee) from 18  
arch 1931. Of-  
n with restricted  
elivery.

Newark-Long Island,  
1931. **Rated** 15¢  
reg'n, 3¢ RRR, 20¢  
showing address,  
& 2¢ domestic.

SPEAR & COMPANY  
911-921 Penn Avenue  
PITTSBURGH, PA.



RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED  
SHOWING ADDRESS WHERE DELIVERED.

RETURNED TO WRITER  
*Gone - unknown*

Mrs. John Correll,  
House 16, R. D. 1,  
Zenith #1 Coal Mine,  
Butler, Pa.



REGISTERED LETTER

P. O. BOX 506B  
EAST LIBERTY STATION  
PITTSBURGH, PA.



RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED  
SHOWING ADDRESS WHERE DELIVERED.

157248 OCT 15 1938

REGISTERED  
RETURN RECEIPT  
REQUESTED

~~Mr. Emmett Duffy~~  
~~3332 Spring Garden Ave~~  
~~Pittsburgh, Penna.~~



RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

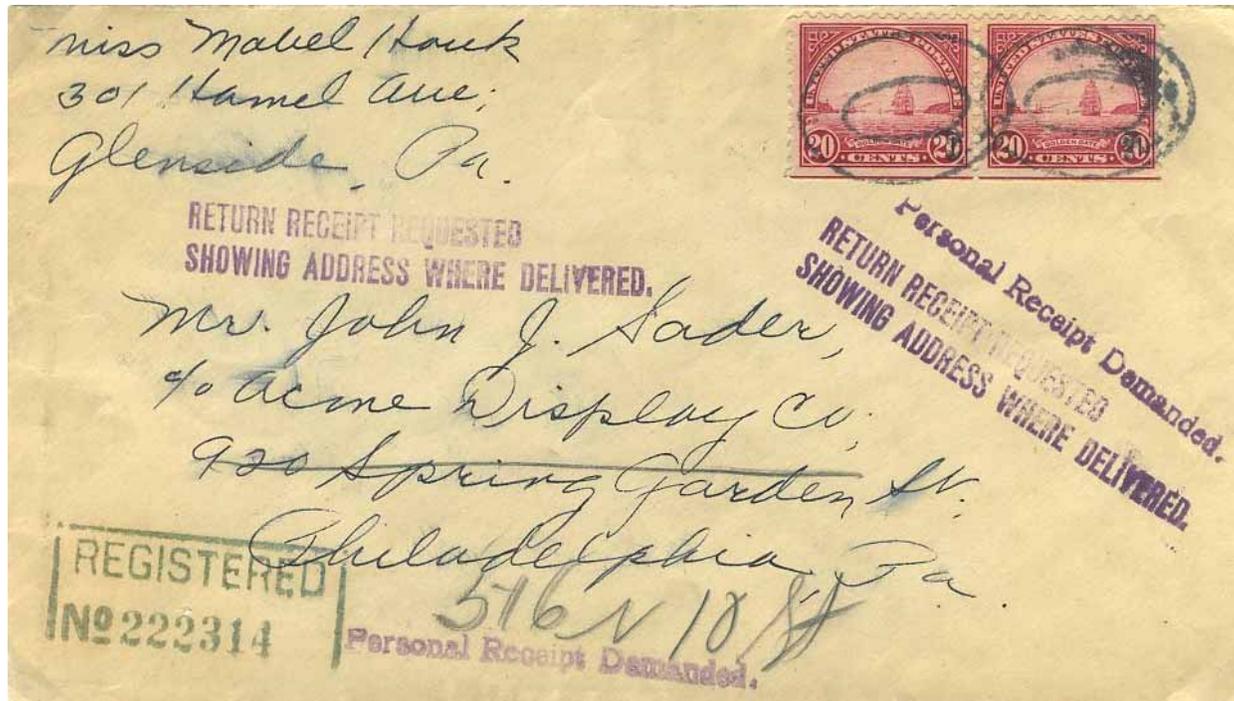
No such post office in state named

Pittsburgh-Butler  
1937. **Rated**  
ive but do-  
rate now 3¢.

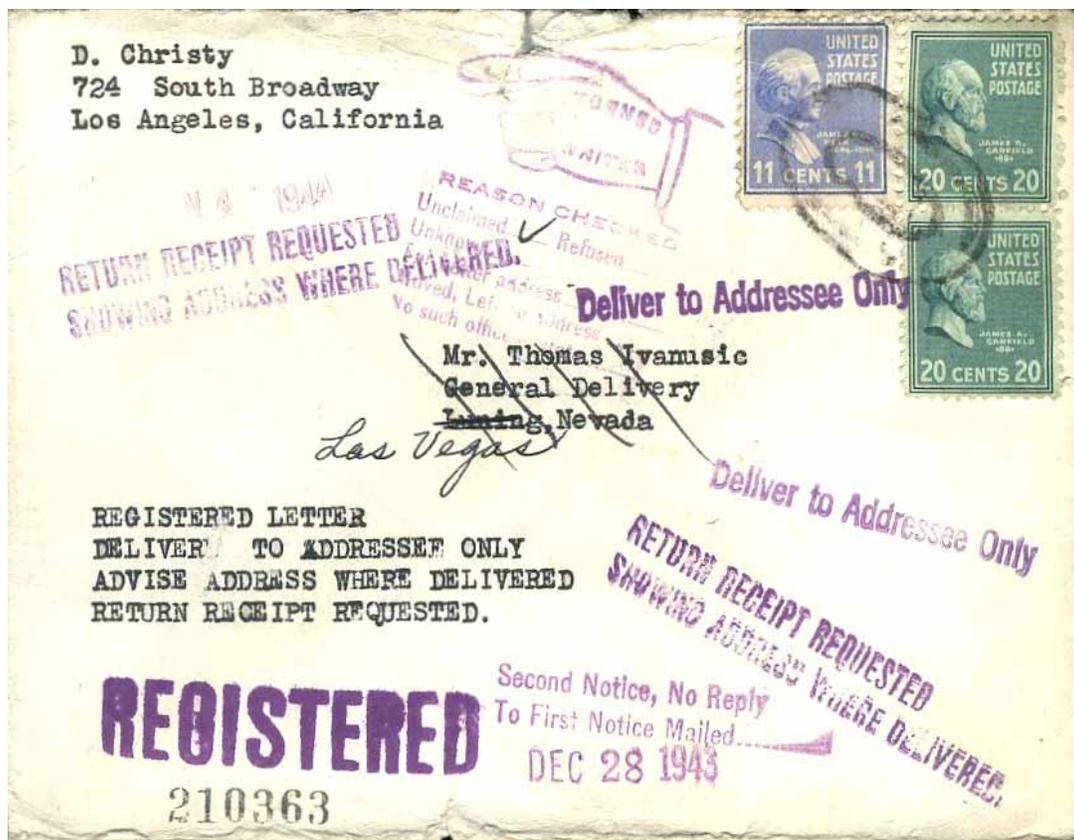
Pittsburgh drop let-  
ter, 1937. **Rated**  
as above except that  
drop letter (2¢), not  
domestic rate (3¢)  
applied.

All three covers re-  
turned to sender.

Showing address & restricted delivery combined



Glenside (PA)—Philadelphia, May 1932. **Rated** 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR fee, 20¢ showing address (effective March 1931), and 2¢ domestic (3¢ from July). No charge for personal receipt (restricted delivery) until 1934. *Not returned to sender!*



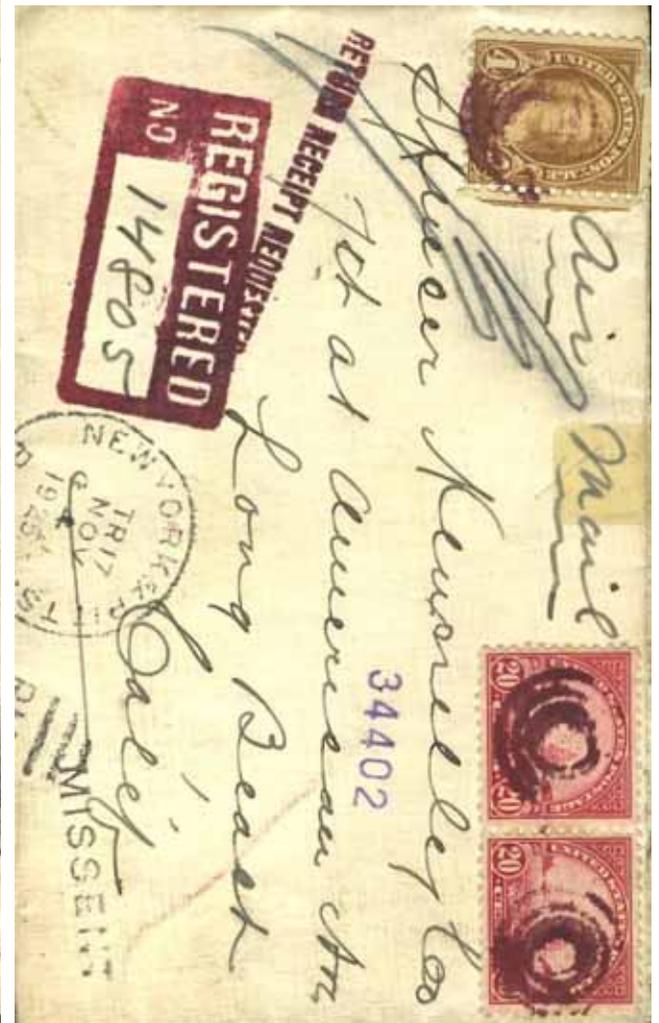
Los Angeles, forwarded to Las Vegas, May 1943. **Rated** 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR fee, 20¢ showing address, 3¢ domestic, and 10¢ restricted delivery. *Returned to sender.*

# Early airmail & RRR



First airmail, rate period, double, March 1925. **Rated** 10¢ reg'n (rate changes occurred next month) plus double 8¢ per ounce single zone airmail (in effect 1 July 1924). Flown San Francisco to Cheyenne. Postmarked 5 March at Oakland and 8 March at Thermopolis (WY).

Second airmail rate period, mistakenly sent by rail, November 1925. **Rated** 15¢ reg'n, 3¢ RRR (effective April 1925), 10¢ overnight single New York–Chicago airmail, and 16¢ two zones airmail Chicago–San Francisco at 8¢ per zone. MISSENT by New York & Pitts. R.P.O. Reached Long Beach 4 days after leaving Jersey City.



Third airmail rate period  
26 January 1926–31 January 1927



Double contract air mail (CAM) & extra indemnity, July 1926. Los Angeles–Oklahoma City. Rated 20¢ reg'n with extra indemnity (insured up to \$50, began April 1923, and very rare before 1928; only indemnity level available), 3¢ RRR fee, 20¢ for two CAM flights (Los Angeles–Salt Lake City & Chicago–Oklahoma City), & 5¢ for the government route (Salt Lake City–Chicago). Returned to sender.



Los Angeles to New York, January 1927. Rated as above (two CAM, one government), except ordinary (15¢) registration. Three days travel time.

More third rate airmail covers

Three zones, San Diego to Cleveland, February 1926. **Rated** 10¢ special delivery, 15¢ reg'n, 3¢ RRR, & gov't rate at 8¢ per ounce per zone: San Francisco–Cheyenne, Cheyenne–Chicago, and Chicago–New York (Cleveland is in the last leg).

The 24¢ stamp was issued for exactly this purpose. Three days travel time.

Two-line RRR/*avis de réception* handstamp designed for domestic & international use.

Two zones, San Francisco–Milwaukee, July 1926. **Rated** as above, without the last flight.



Fourth and fifth airmail rate periods

1 February 1927–30 July 1928 and 1 August 1928–5 July 1932.



Double rate, Los Angeles–Boise, December 1927. Rated 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR fee, and 10¢ per half ounce (any route) by air.



San Francisco–New York, September 1930. Rated 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR fee, & 5¢ for first ounce by air.



Night air mail, New York–Cleveland, September 1928. Overnight carriage. **Rated** 15¢ reg'n, 3¢ RRR, and 5¢ first ounce, overpaid 2¢.



Double rate, California–DC, 1930. **Rated** 15¢ reg'n, 3¢ RRR, 5¢ first ounce, & 10¢ second ounce airmail. Commercial cover to PMG.

Sixth airmail rate period

First ounce 8¢ (additional at 13¢) in effect 6 July 1932 to 30 June 1934.

With extra indemnity, September 1933. Rated 20¢ registration with indemnity to \$50 (from 1 July 1932), 3¢ RRR, and 8¢ airmail, single rate. Each service paid completely by single stamp. From DC to LA.

Cleveland to California, September 1933. Rated 15¢ reg'n, 3¢ RRR, and 8¢ airmail, single. ↓↓

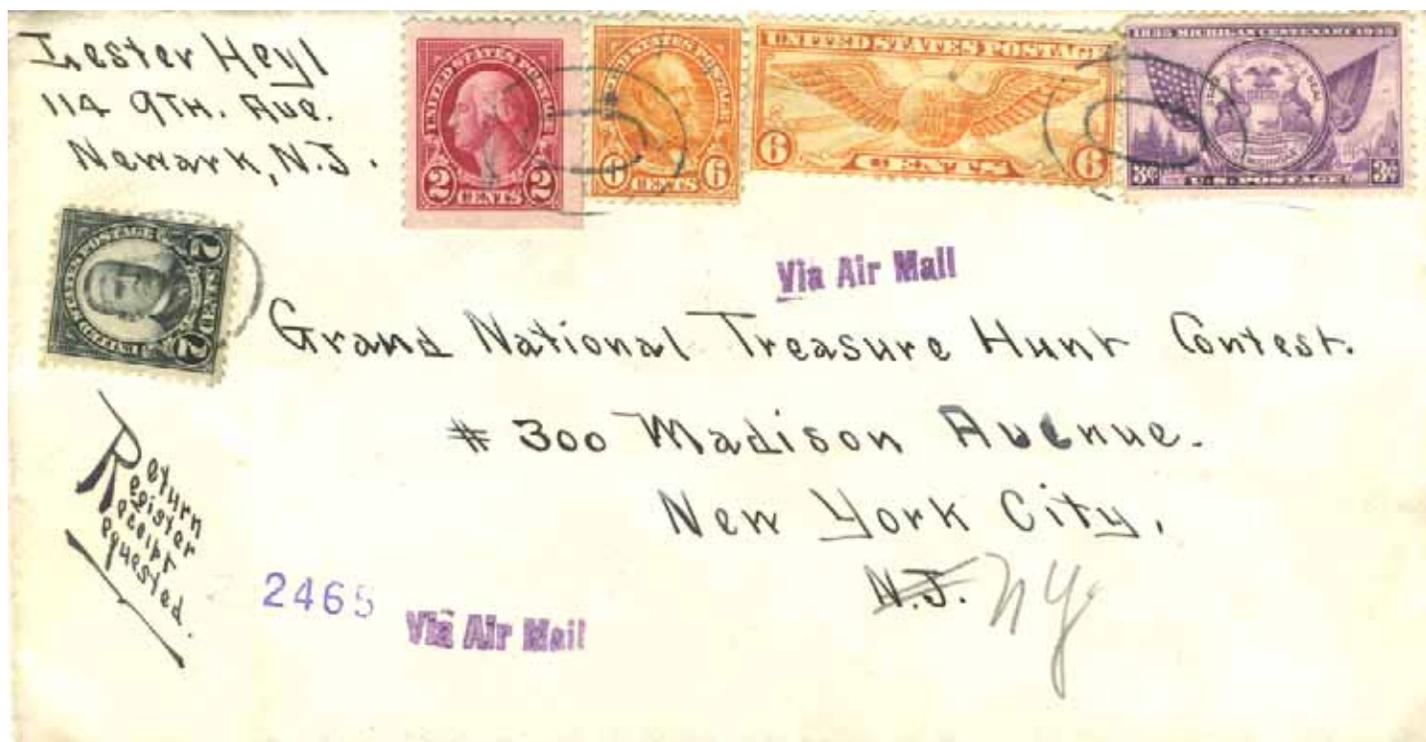


Seventh airmail rate period

6¢ per ounce, in effect 1 July 1934–25 March 1944



Third day of rate period, 3 July 1934. Rated 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR fee, 6¢ airmail, single.



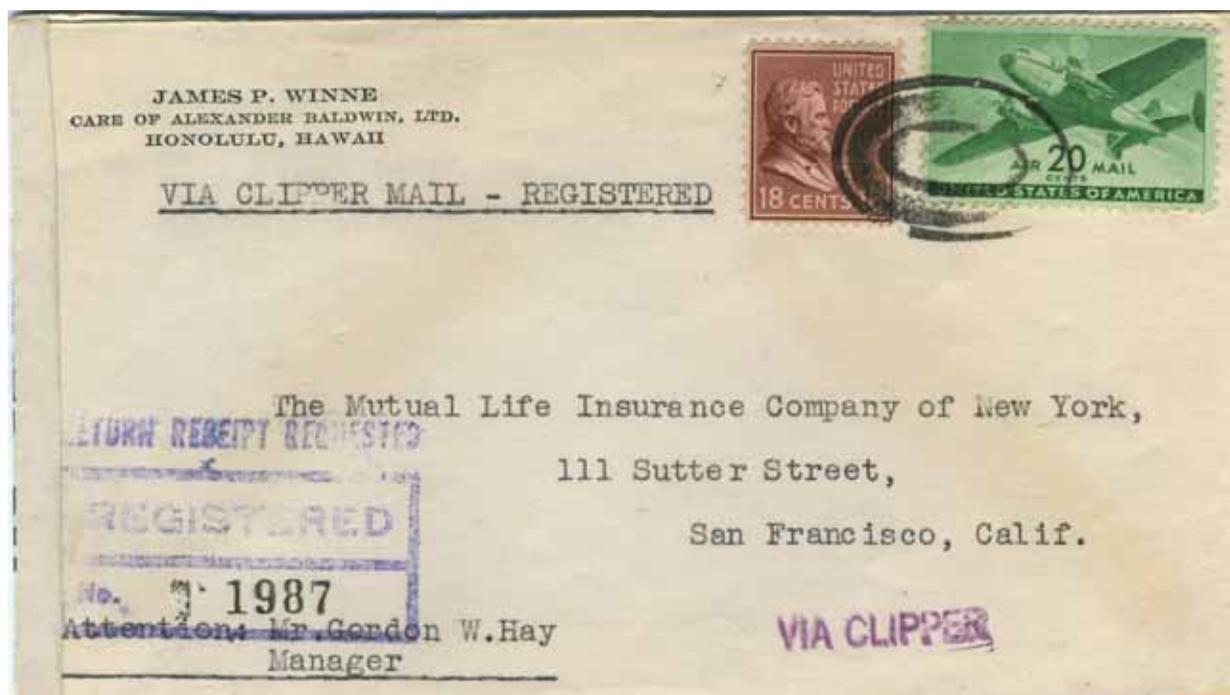
Newark to New York(!), 1935. Rated as above. Unusual handwritten RRRR. Tuberculosis seal on reverse.

## Clipper service with Hawaii

Between mainland and Hawaii per half ounce, 25¢ (beginning 29 October 1935) and 20¢ (21 April 1937–14 January 1945).



Double rate, 1936. **Rated** 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR, and double 25¢ per half ounce clipper rate. Printed air mail advice.



Honolulu–Frisco, 1942. **Rated** 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR, and single 20¢ clipper rate.



Quintuple rate, Honolulu-California, 1942. Rated 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR, and five half ounces at 20¢ each. (No combination of extra indemnity and fewer multiples will make up the rate.) Censor tape at left (domestic mail from port cities could be censored).

California-Hawaii, May 1944. Rated 20¢ registration, 4¢ RRR (these two rates had increased in March), and 20¢ single clipper rate.

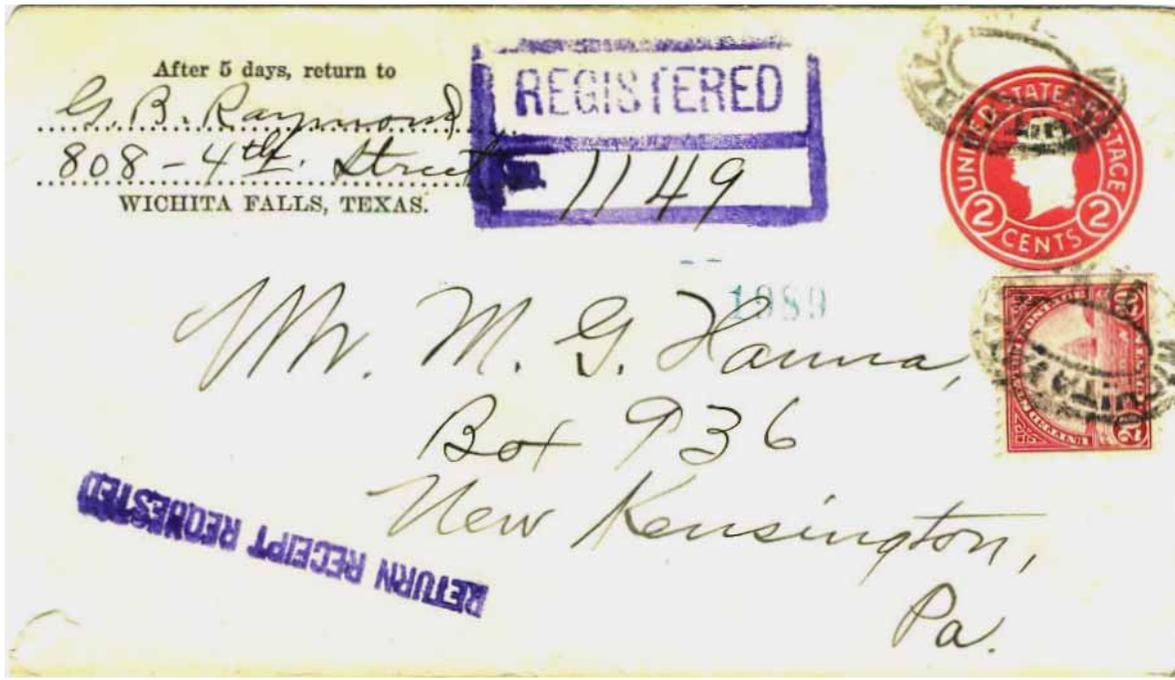
RRR handstamped before stamps applied. Censored as above. Returned to sender. ↓↓



# Indemnity

From 1923, (extra) indemnity (on reg'd mail) up to \$100 (20¢; rare); 1928, ten levels to \$1000; 1932, unlimited.

Early indemnity, 1924. **Rated** 2¢ domestic & 20¢ reg'n with extra indemnity.



Triple & extra indemnity, 1931. **Rated** 30¢ reg'n, extra indemnity (to \$200), 3¢ RRR fee, & triple 2¢ domestic. New York to Worcester.



Robinhood-Woolwich (ME), 1934. **Rated** (as of 1 July 1932) 25¢ reg'n with indemnity up to \$75, 3¢ RRR, & 3¢ domestic. (No other rate combination fits postage exactly.)



AFTER FIVE DAYS RETURN TO  
**C. F. CHILDS AND COMPANY**  
141 W. Jackson Boulevard  
CHICAGO

RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED



REGISTERED MAIL



4722

Peoples Savings and Trust Co.,

Green Bay

Wisconsin

4722

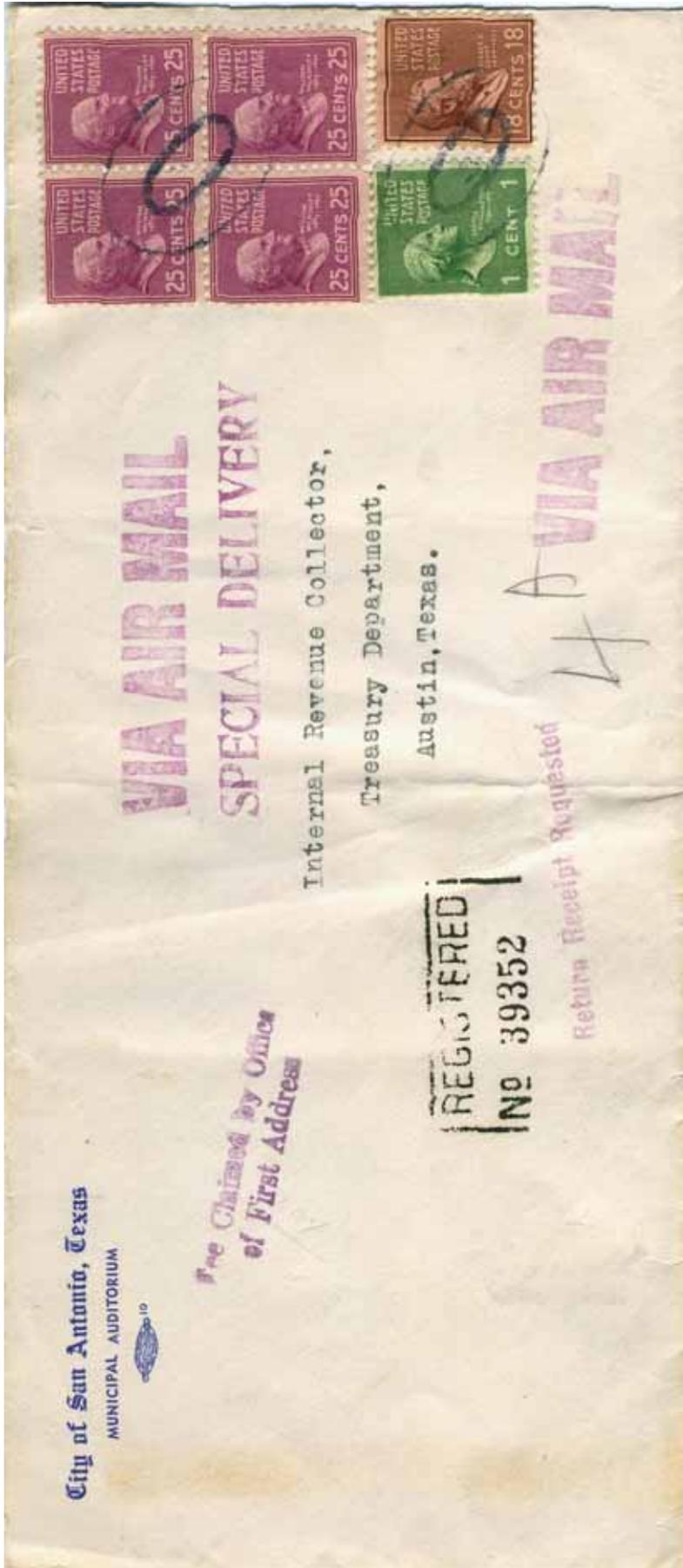
What's the rate?

*Large with extra indemnity, 1933.*  
**Rated** 3¢ RRR; three possible rate combinations, in order of likelihood:

- 9 ounces by surface at 3¢ per ounce plus reg'n with indemnity up to \$300 (50¢);
- 4 ounces by air at 8¢ for first & 13¢ for each add'l ounce, and reg'n with indemnity to \$100 (30¢);
- 19 ounces by surface and reg'n with indemnity to \$50 (20¢).

Not marked airmail (although baby Zepp is used); 19 ounces is excessive even for an envelope this size.





What's the rate, II?

San Antonio–Austin, March 1942.

**Rated** 3¢ RRR, 10¢ special delivery; airmail is 6¢ per ounce. Three possible rate combinations, in order of likelihood:

- one ounce and reg'n with indemnity up to \$1000 (\$1);
- 6 ounces and reg'n with indemnity to \$500 (70¢);
- 11 ounces and reg'n with indemnity to \$100 (40¢).

Envelope does not appear stressed enough to have contained 6 ounces.

Less than four months after Pearl Harbor.





## Supplemental indemnity with RRR

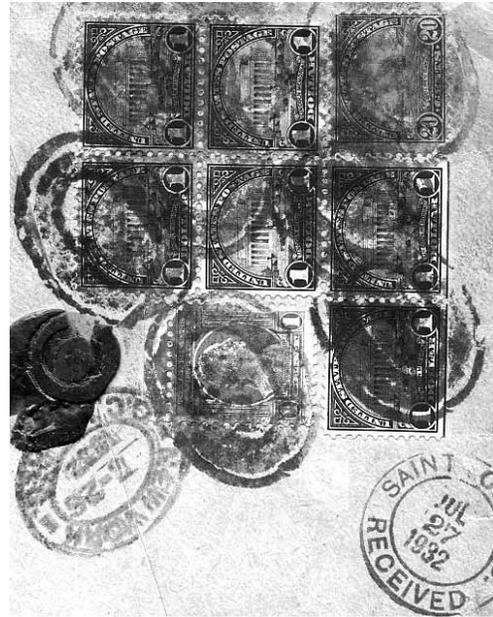
Until 1 July 1932, the maximum indemnity on registered items was \$1000. After this date, it was unlimited. Rates depended on the amount of indemnity, the weight, and the distance.

*Early supplemental indemnity, 27 July 1932.*

**Rated** total postage \$39.21 (33 fourth bureau \$1 stamps on the front, 6 more on reverse, and a 20¢ and a 1¢ stamp, also on reverse). Domestic postage was 3¢ per ounce (effective 6 July 1932); RRR fee was a mere 3¢.

Registration with indemnity up to \$1000 was \$1 and for 600–1400 miles (New York–St Louis), the fee for each additional \$1000 (or part thereof) in indemnity was 12¢. No combination of weight and indemnity rates will give the postage exactly (cast out threes).

Thus a clerical error was made, and we can only guess that the indemnity was somewhere in the range \$300,000–350,000.

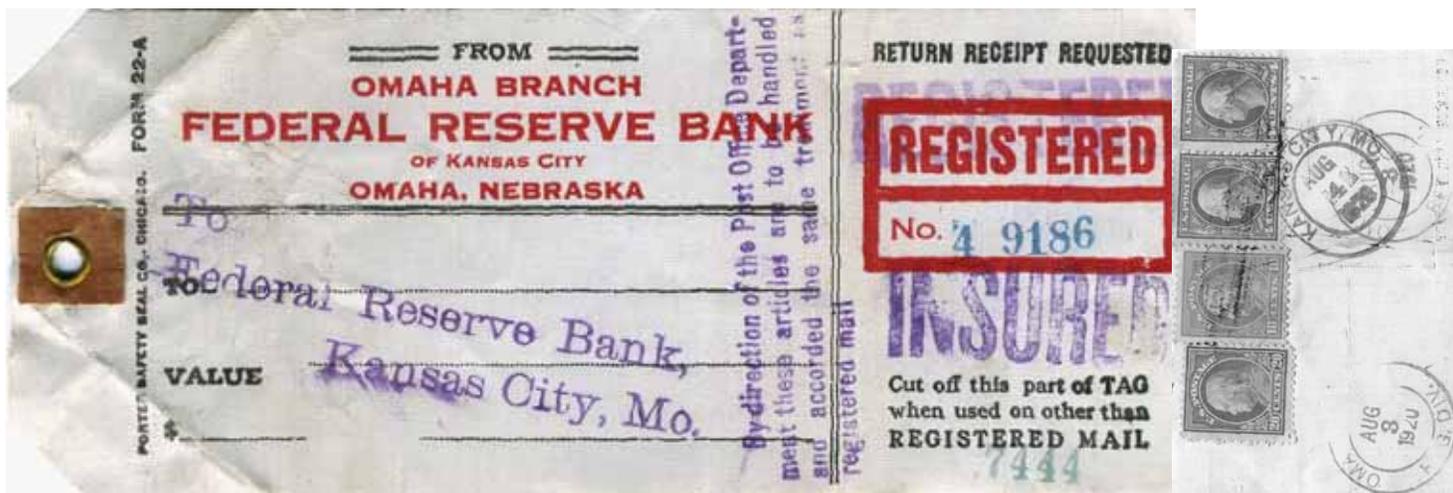


## Money bag tags

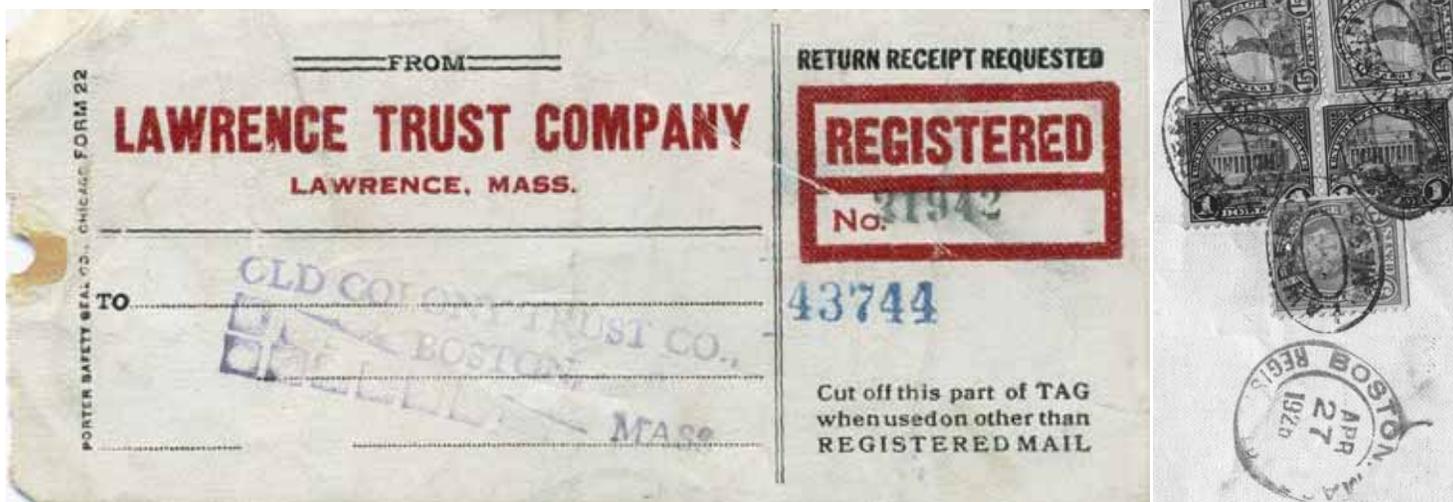
Tags on bags of money sent between financial institutions; registered first class, and usually with RRR. Until supplemental indemnity became available (1932), insurance was pointless.



Muskogee–Kansas City, 1921. **Rated** 10¢ registration, no charge for RRR, and 148 ounces at 2¢ per ounce domestic. May have contained \$25,000.



Omaha–Kansas City, 1920. Post office insurance was pointless, as the maximum indemnity was \$100. Treated as registered, and rated 10¢ registration and 14 ounces at 2¢ per ounce.

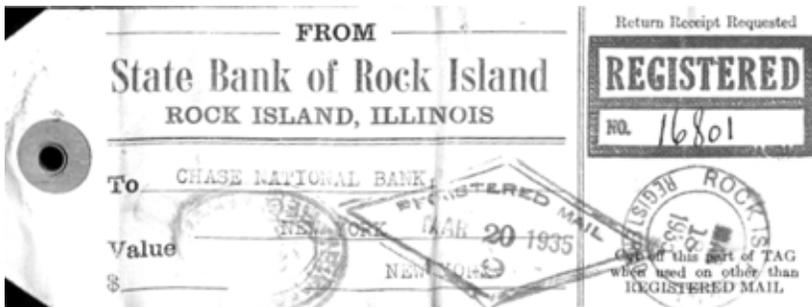


Lawrence (MA)–Boston, 27 April 1925. **Rated** \$2.39, either misrated, or for some reason the only available extra indemnity was applied: 20¢ registration with indemnity up to \$100 (available from 1923 and rare until 1928), 3¢ RRR (initiated 15 April 1925), and 108 ounces at 2¢ per ounce. (Alternatively, RRR fee was omitted, normal reg'n at 15¢, and 112 ounces.)

# Money bag tags with supplemental indemnity



Rockford (IL)–New York, 1935. **Rated** \$34.50; five zones: registration with indemnity up to \$1000, \$1, and 12¢ per additional \$1000; miscalculation or slight overpayment? Perhaps \$200,000 and over 300 ounces.

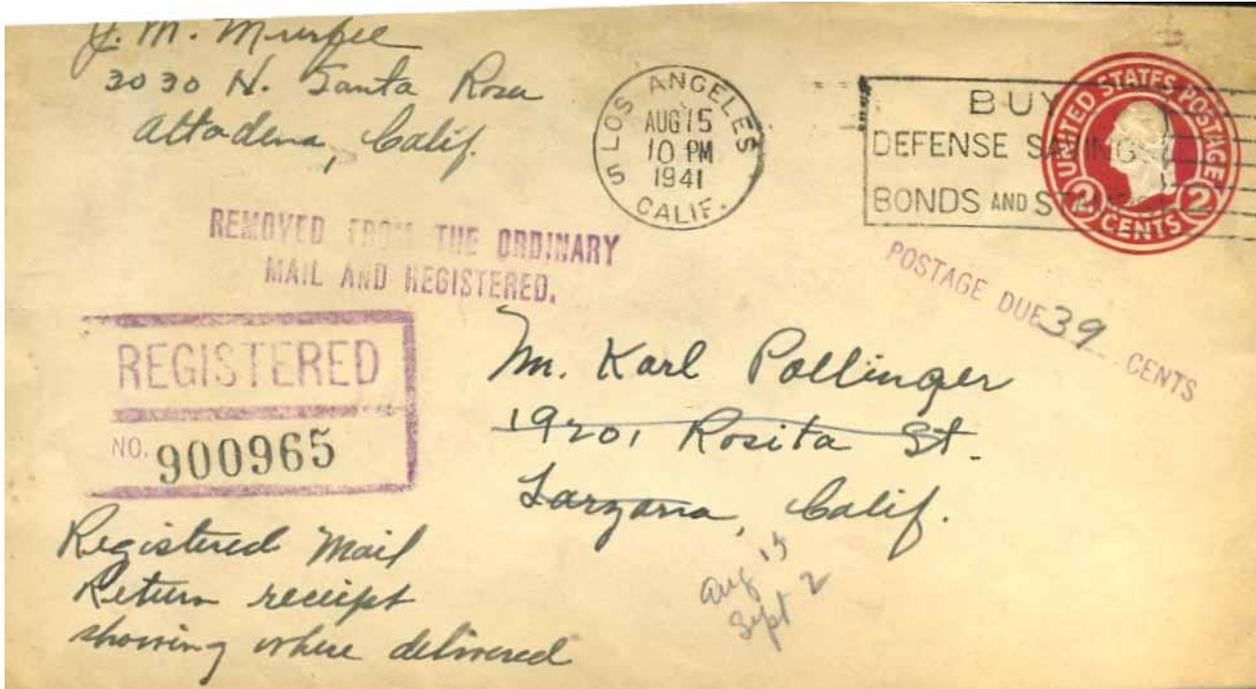


Oswego–Detroit, 1937. Purple RETURN RECEIPT DEMANDED (middle right of front).

**Rated** reg'n with \$38,000 indemnity (lower left of front), zone 1, \$1 + 37 × 8¢, 3¢ RRR, and 163 ounces at 3¢, totalling \$8.88.

# Postage due & RRR

RRR covers can be assessed postage due under some circumstances: letters intended to be registered (with RRR) dropped in the mail box with insufficient postage (although the rule was to return these to sender—this seems not to have been enforced); clerical error resulting in missing payment for a service; extra postage charged as a result of forwarding to a destination requiring more postage (for example, during the period when drop and domestic rates differed). Single deficiency was charged on registered postage due letters.



Dropped in the mail but marked registered, etc, 1941. Sender had endorsed it *registered mail/return receipt/showing where delivered*, and post office obliged by charging for these services, 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR, and 20¢ showing address, plus 1¢ to top up the 2¢ to pay the domestic rate.

The letter had been officially sealed, which probably led to its being removed from ordinary mail.



Missing rate, likely clerical error



Missing restricted delivery, 1935. Rated 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR, and 3¢ domestic, paid for; accepting clerk missed request for personal receipt (restricted delivery) at extreme left; this was noted later and the fee (10¢) charged.



Missing restricted delivery or special delivery, 1939. Rated 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR, 6¢ air mail, and 10¢ for each of restricted delivery (addressee only) and special delivery, only one of which was paid for, and charged 10¢ for the other one.

More postage due RRR



Missing special delivery fee, 1928. **Rated** 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR, 10¢ air mail (stamp), and charged 10¢ for unpaid special delivery.

Wrong rate period, August 1926. Rate changes April 1925, sender still using old rates—10¢ registration, no charge for RRR—and due the difference, 5¢+3¢. Dropped in mail box (Found in ordinary mail).↓



After 5 days, return to  
W. P. FULLER & CO.,  
P. O. Box 2217,  
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA.

6399

Still more postage due RRR



Due as a result of forwarding, 1933. Domestic covers which were sent as drop letters (2¢ in 1933) which were forwarded outside the local delivery area (but still within the US) were charged the difference between domestic and drop letter rates, 1¢ (in 1933).

**Rated** 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR, 20¢ showing address, and 2¢ drop letter. Forwarded from St Louis to Pennsylvania.



Explain this, 1942. **Rated** 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR, and 3¢ domestic, but short paid by 2¢, despite having been accepted by the clerk (RRR handstamp at left). Postage due stamps applied on reverse.



Extra postage added or charged for international forwarding



Hollywood–New York, postage added, forwarded to Copenhagen, & returned 1933. **Rated** (domestic) originally 15¢ reg'n, 3¢ RRR, 8¢ air mail. 7¢ stamp added in New York, apparently to pay 5¢ UPU rate to Denmark (surface) and difference between international AR (5¢) and domestic RRR fees (3¢). Who paid the 7¢?

Bilingual *Ubekendt/inconnu* (unknown) etiquette on reverse, applied in Denmark.



Massachusetts restricted delivery, forwarded to Buenos Aires, and improperly charged postage due, February 1934. **Rated** (domestic) originally 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR (although not marked, it is implied by the restricted delivery handstamp, since the former required RRR), 3¢ domestic; no charge for restricted delivery until July. Charged 2¢, the difference between international AR and domestic RRR (as above). There was no difference in postage between domestic rate and the preferred rate to Argentina at the time. No evidence of collection of the amount apparently due.

On forwarding outside the country, restricted delivery became inapplicable.



AR mail returned for fraudulent activities  
 Mail to known fraudsters returned to sender: one domestic, one in Canada, and one in Ireland. Handstamps (all applied at New York) are of different sizes. FRAUDULENT. Mail to this address returned by order of Postmaster-General  
 LA-NY, 1925. Rated 10¢ registration, 2¢ domestic, no RRR fee.



New York state-Canada, 1936. Rated 15¢ registration, 5¢ AR, and 3¢ to Canada. Intercepted at New York city.



Maine-Ireland, 1937. Rated 15¢ registration, 5¢ AR, & 5¢ UPU rate to Ireland. Also intercepted at New York city.

## Domestic wreck RRR cover

Only known example of this combination for the US. Recovered from wreck of Seattle–Pasco CAM flight (32). On 22 January 1931, struck a cliff at Baldy Mountain, near Washougal (WA), and the plane was not found until 29th. All 250lb of mail, water- & oil-soaked, were recovered, but pilot died. Mail was forwarded from Portland (OR) on the 30th.



Air wreck, 1931. Quasiphilatelic. **Rated** 15¢ registration, 3¢ RRR, 5¢ airmail, leaving 2¢ overpayment with a 2¢ stamp; it is possible that an 8¢ stamp came off in the wreck (space to the left of the 10¢ stamp) and the letter was double rate (second ounce airmail was 10¢).

At left is Return receipt requested/Fee paid handstamp. There are two *different* handstamps reading **Delayed by plane crash near Washougal Wn. 1–22–31** (large and small type, two and three lines).



# Domestic inquiry form concerning a registered letter

This may be regarded as an extremely late type of AR (RRR) service. Only known example of domestic US inquiry form prior to 1931.

No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Post Office, San Francisco, Cal.,**  
REGISTERED LETTER DIVISION.

San Francisco, Cal., 189\_\_\_\_  
To the P. M. at Sheep Ranch  
Cal.  
Registry Div  
JAN 14 1903

Sir:

Inquiry has been made by  
W K Vandervee Co, residing  
at \_\_\_\_\_ street,  
for Registered { Parcel } No. 71708, addressed  
to Mrs E L Bohms

It was inclosed in R. P. E. No. 51940, and  
forwarded to your P. O. Dec 20 1902 for  
distribution and receipt acknowledged. Please state  
on this sheet particulars of its receipt and disposal,  
and return this circular to P. M. at San Francisco,  
Cal.

Very respectfully,  
W. W. Montague, P. M.  
Postmaster.

11-17-04.

Postmaster San Francisco Cal  
Dear Sir  
Mrs E L Bohms was  
Notifide Twice that Registered  
Package No 71708 P. No 51940  
was here. But did not call  
for it untill to Day  
Yours Respectfully  
A. W. Fox

Inquiry, San Francisco, 1903. No fee for this service until 1931.  
Clerk's reply (spelling errors and all) on reverse:

Mrs EL Bohms was Notifide Twice that Registered  
Package No 71708.P. No 51940 was here. But did  
not call for it untill to Day.

# After-the-fact RRR card

In the US, this very rarely seen service is often treated as an inquiry as to the fate of a registered (or insured) letter. The fee was 5 ¢ (in contrast to the usual RRR fee of 3 ¢) 1931–44. Two other examples are known, both in the Prexy period.

Form 1516  
INQUIRY FOR  REGISTERED  INSURED } Article No. 05771  LETTER  PARCEL } Ordinary  
C. O. D.

Mailed at Station B  
4 Y B Young Ky C on Dec 30 1935, 1935  
addressed to 5 Hill north east Pa  
Contents: \_\_\_\_\_

REPLY: Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 1935  
If C. O. D., give money order No. \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_, 1935  
If unclaimed, state postage necessary for return \_\_\_\_\_ cents.  
If not received the article? \_\_\_\_\_  
Disposition: \_\_\_\_\_

**Return Receipt Requested**  
**Fee Paid**

POSTMASTER.  
The piece for which inquiry is made is not accounted for and is ordinary, insured, or C. O. D. If the office will have Form 1510 executed; if registered, Form 563. 2-2701

After-the-fact RRR, 1935. For a registered letter sent from New York to Pennsylvania. Not signed or processed at destination office.

Post Office Department  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE TO AVOID  
PAYMENT OF POSTAGE, \$300

POSTMASTER, Station B  
(OFFICE TO WHICH INQUIRY IS SENT—CROSS OUT IN REPLYING)

POSTMASTER,  
(OFFICE MAKING INQUIRY—TO BE FILLED OUT BY OFFICE MAKING REPLY)

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 2-2701

## Return of RRR card by air

This was possible beginning in 1938, provided the sender paid the domestic airmail fee for the card (in addition to all other fees). Postage was applied to the RRR card. Very few 1940s examples are known, and this is probably the earliest.



St Paul (MN)—Fairbanks, 1943. Ordinary RRR card franked with 6¢ stamp, paying the domestic air rate. Signed in red crayon (not visible in scan) on reverse.

