BY KEN LAWRENCE

# New book features postal card presumptions, pretensions and pranks

## A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF A NEW BOOK ABOUT POSTAL CARDS WORLDWIDE FROM 1869 TO 1974 AND HOW THE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION GOVERNED THEM.

I first met James Peter Gough — "Jamie" to philatelic colleagues — in person about 21 years ago. He was campaigning for the Republican Party nomination for United States senator from California in the 2000 primary election as "JP Gough." The *San Francisco Examiner* called him "a banking consultant from La Jolla." He withdrew from the race before election day, but he got his name into the news.

I recall him from those days as a fun-loving trickster and storyteller, gleefully prodding his companions to accept outrageous suggestions as self-evident truths, and then roaring with boisterous laughter after one of them fell for his ruse. I wondered at the time if his political campaign was more a publicity stunt than a serious bid for public office.

Last summer I spotted a trick that Gough played on the staid *London Philatelist*, flagship journal of the Royal Philatelic Society London. At the end of his article titled "Ireland Used Abroad — In Great Britain" in the July-August 2020 issue, he slipped in this unrelated and oddly incongruous footnote:

8. Such announcements [by postal administrations "that foreign stamps and/or postal stationery are not legal in its territory"] have been rare in worldwide postal history. After the commencement of the American-Canadian postal treaty of 30 June 1874 (commencement date of 1 February 1875; effectively a postal union), extending domestic rates of postage to each other as destinations, a small number (but large enough to be noticed) of both Americans and Canadians thought that their respective postage stamps were valid in each other's country. So nine months later, in the *Canada Official Postal Guide* of October 1875, the Canada Post Office reminded postal clerks that "United States postal cards cannot be mailed in Canada." The warning was a fixture in Canadian postal guides until well after the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. The unintended consequence of the warning was that American domestic reply cards (valid in this bilateral postal union) as well as American-issued UPU-compliant reply cards were mostly never accepted by the Canadian post offices, without placing a Canadian stamp for the letter rate over the American imprinted stamp for the response card. Some Americans would send the UPU (higher rate) reply card to Canada in the hope it would be accepted because of its identifying notions about the paid response in English and French; a few of them were accepted, but more the exception than the rule. Source: Steinhart, Allan L., *The Postal History of the Post Card in Canada*, 1871-1911, p10, Second Printing, 1 April, 1980. ISBN 0-9690207-0-8.

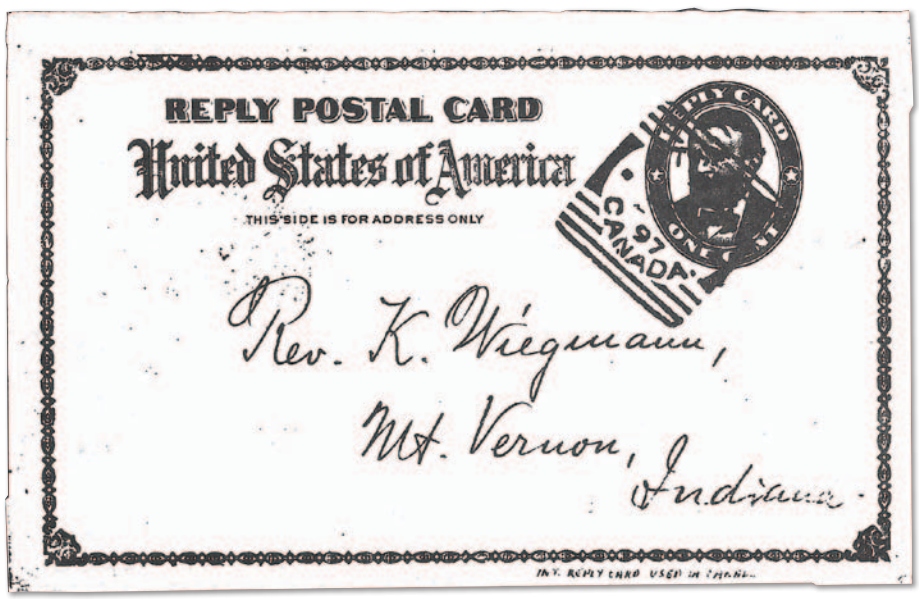


Figure 1. Canadian postal history scholar and dealer Allan Steinhart owned this United States 1¢ Ulysses S. Grant reply postal card of 1892 (Scott UY1r). In 1897 it was returned from Toronto to Mount Vernon, Ind., according to the terms of the U.S.-Canada postal convention that treated cross-border mails as equivalent to each country's domestic mail. *Image copied from* The Postal History of the Post Card in Canada 1871-1911 *by Allan L. Steinhart.*

If you were among his readers who took that to mean that Allan L. Steinhart wrote and published an account of how United States reply postal cards were misunderstood and mistreated by Canadian post offices, Gough fooled you. Steinhart wrote no such thing. Nor did the cautionary note about U.S. postal cards in the 1875 *Canada Official Postal Guide* become a "fixture" that continued into mid-20th century editions. It was gone when U.S. message-and-reply cards made their appearance in 1892.

On page 126 of the 1986 book *The Postal History of the Post Card in Canada 1871-1911 Collected by Allan L. Steinhart* (Hennock's Series of Postal History Collections, No. 3) — supplement and sequel to Steinhart's book *The Postal History of the Post Card in Canada 1871-1911* that Gough


Figure 2. Recipients of U.S. message-and-reply postal cards in Canada mailed these three U.S. reply postal cards back to the original senders in the United States without incident, according to terms of the U.S.-Canada postal convention. The 1¢ Martha Washington domestic reply postal card of 1910 (Scott UY5r), was mailed Dec. 29, 1913, from Toronto to Syracuse, New York, when the U.S. domestic postal card rate also was 1¢. The 2¢ Liberty Head international reply postal card of 1893 (Scott UY2r) mailed July 30, 1926, from Ottawa to Philadelphia, and the U.S. 2¢ Liberty Head international reply postal card of 1924 (Scott UY11r) mailed Sept. 12, 1947, from Toronto to Imola, Calif., were both mailed when the postal card rate from the United States to Canada was 2¢, but the U.S. domestic postal card rate was 1¢.

cited — Steinhart illustrated a United States domestic 1¢ Ulysses S. Grant reply postal card mailed in 1897 from Toronto to Mount Vernon, Ind., copied here in Figure 1, awkwardly captioned, "A U.S.A. reply card reply portion properly used in Canada to the United States at the 1¢ post card preferred postcard rate between Canada and the United States." Steinhart did not mention or illustrate a Canadian post office's failure to honor a U.S. reply postal card in either book.

Coverage in both of Steinhart's books ends at the close of the Edwardian era in 1911, but my collection includes three U.S. reply postal cards from Canada mailed normally and without imposition of Canadian postage in 1913, 1926, and 1947. All three are illustrated in Figure 2.

They are not rare. I recently saw two properly used U.S. postal reply cards from Canada that have been unsold since last April, offered for $7 each plus postage on eBay. I have not yet encountered any that were improperly charged Canadian postage. Some might exist, but there is no evidence that the Canadian postal administration disallowed them.

These examples illustrate why Gough could not hoodwink me with his misleading *London Philatelist* footnote. Neither Steinhart's U.S. reply card nor the examples in my collection confused Canadian postal clerks. Maybe Gough has seen some that did; maybe not. Either way, he could not have drawn his inference about them from Steinhart's book or from the *Canada Official Postal Guide*.

Did Gough's fictional footnote, which had nothing to do with Irish postage used in Great Britain (the subject of his *London Philatelist* article), serve some scholarly purpose, or was it just a lighthearted spoof to share with his stamp pals over a round of beer?

## GOUGH'S NEW BOOK FROM THE ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY LONDON

Gough's note in the *London Philatelist* echoed a conjecture he had advanced earlier in his slipcased two-volume book, *The Postal History of the Universal Postal Union: The Postal Card Worldwide 1869-1974*, published by the RPSL in 2019, under review here.

After Gough's title page, pages are numbered from ii to xxxviii and 1 to 935. The book has an index, but its Canada listing omits the pertinent pages I shall cite below. Introductory chapters include acknowledgments, explanations of terms and methodology. The first 208 regularly numbered pages depict, describe and discuss post- and postal

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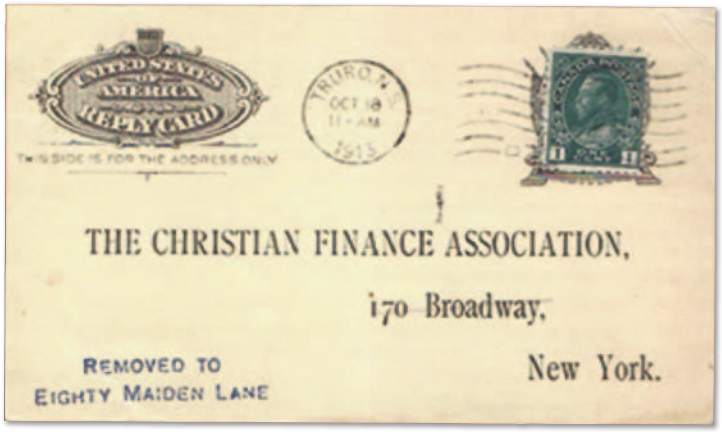


Figure 3. On this Oct. 18, 1913, U.S. 1¢ Philip Sheridan reply postal card of 1904 (Scott UY4r) from Truro, Nova Scotia, Canada, to New York City, the Canadian sender affixed a superfluous 1¢ King George V stamp of 1911 (Canada Scott 104) over the imprinted U.S. stamp indicium. From this evidence, author James Peter Gough drew the unfounded conclusion that "the Canada Post Office did not generally honour American response cards." *Image copied from* The Postal History of the Universal Postal Union: The Postal Card Worldwide 1869-1974.

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cards issued and used before the 1874 General Postal Union convention.

Chapters that follow explore the decisions and consequences for postal cards at consecutive GPU and UPU conventions through the 1906 Congress of Rome, and between conventions. A final chapter titled "The Denouement of Postal Cards 1920-1974" covers eleven UPU conventions. Appendices include country-by-country chronological tables of first postal card issues and first letter card issues, UPU membership dates, French postal rates, British currency equivalents, and a 200-year calendar. The book closes with a bibliography.

## CROSS-BORDER POSTAL CONVENTION OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

As though jinxed by North American geography, Gough's missteps about cross-border mails between the United States and Canada originated in his introductory chapter titled "Terminology and Framework for Understanding," weakening the point he was attempting to assert. In a section about restricted postal unions on page xxxv, he wrote:

> Impressively, the American-Canadian postal union permitted the transmission of mail matter which the destination member did not offer at the same rate and under the same standards in its own domestic service — a position which the UPU membership was never able to adopt. For instance, when the USA lowered its domestic letter rate to 2¢ from 3¢ at the same time that it increased the weight step (from a half-ounce to one full ounce) on 1 October 1883, Canada accepted this divergence from its own domestic pricing of 3 cents *per half-ounce*.

The United States did reduce the single-letter rate from 3¢ to 2¢ per half ounce on Oct. 1, 1883, but the increase in single-letter weight from a half ounce to a full ounce did not occur until almost two years later, on July 1, 1885.

## CROSS-BORDER POSTAL CARDS FROM CANADA TO THE UNITED STATES

On page 538 Gough pictured a U.S. reply postal card from Canada, copied here as Figure 3, above this caption:

> An American reply card with a King George V Canadian 1¢ green definitive (placed over the imprinted American 1¢ stamp of General Sherman [sic, actually Sheridan]) posted in Truro, Nova Scotia on 18 October 1913 to New York.
>
> Based on a pre-UPU admonition in the *Canada Post Office Guide* (which would not be changed for decades) against accepting American postal cards, the Canadian Post office effectively refused to accept American response cards without Canadian postage added. Oblivious to UPU rules, the Canada Post office did not generally honour American response cards. Normally letter rates of postage were applied, but in rare exceptions, merely adding the postal card rate of 1¢ was found acceptable in some small post offices.
>
> The author's collection has American response cards returned from Canada most commonly with Canadian letter postage added in the reigns of King George V and George VI and Elizabeth II. It appears that the prohibition in the Canadian postal guide, added in the 1870s, warning Canadian postal clerks that American postal cards were not valid in Canada was not modified to make an exception for American response cards. American response cards posted in Canada were the only response cards of any member so treated.

The example he pictured proves nothing except that the Canadian sender paid unnecessary postage, but at the correct post card rate to the United States. My evidence presented earlier demonstrates that Gough's deduction about the Canadian post office is wrong.

Taking Gough's mistakes with cross-border reply postal cards as a cautionary guide, let me now flash back to the beginning of his book and explore it from a broader postal-history perspective.

## POSTAL CARDS AND POST CARDS AS UPU POSTAL HISTORY

Despite Gough's title, he necessarily included private post cards and government formular post cards as well as postal-stationery cards. But his choice to emphasize postal-stationery cards influenced his

L'affranchissement des cartes-correspondance est obligatoire. Leur taxe est fixée à la moitié de celle des lettres affranchies, avec faculté d'arrondir les fractions.

The prepayment of post cards is compulsory. The postage to be charged upon them is fixed at one half of that on paid letters, with power to round off the fractions.

Figure 4. In this excerpt from *Treaty Concerning the Formation of a General Postal Union Signed at Berne, October 9, 1874* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1875), the official French term "cartes-correspondence" was translated unofficially into English as "post cards." Gough changed the translation to "postal cards," which he defined as postal-stationery cards.

overall treatment. On at least one occasion, that led him astray.

When he quoted pertinent 1874 General Postal Union convention rules and regulations, Gough substituted his preferred term "postal cards" for the terms "post-cards" and "post cards" found in the U.S. government's English translation of "cartes-correspondence" published in the official French. In Figure 4 I have excerpted a paragraph from the 1875 Washington publication of the Berne treaty to illustrate the contemporaneous translation.

On page 221 of Gough's book, Subchapter 3.4 is titled "Harmonised Approach to Pricing the Physical Card — Cost of the Card Was Included in Notional Rate of Impressed Stamp." Gough began:

> It was also decided at Berne'74 that the cost of the card itself was to be included in the impressed stamp's value and not be a separate or an additional charge to the value of the impressed stamp. This was so well settled as an issue back then that many philatelists today cannot even comprehend that this was ever an issue.

Five paragraphs later Gough admitted that "no mention of this prohibition on charging for the actual cards can be found in the GPU archives." Lacking such documentation, he offered as circumstantial evidence that Great Britain originally planned to charge a premium for its international postal cards, but subsequently eliminated the premium "to comply with the requirement that postal cards only be sold at the value of the imprinted stamps."

But that was not the reason. Harry Dagnall wrote in *The Evolution of British Stamped Postcards & Letter Cards — Their History & Documentation* (self-published, 1985) on page 30:

> There was then the question of what to charge for the cards. This was fixed at 1s 4d for a packet of twelve. However just before the issue, on 5 June 1875 the Postmaster-General informed the Inland Revenue 'It has been decided that under the terms of the General Postal Union Treaty this Department is debarred from charging the Public for the Post Cards any more than the actual charge fixed for postage'. Since some wrappers had already been printed with the higher selling price and packets had been issued to post offices, it was necessary to instruct postmasters to sell them at face value only.

Gough had no need to search the GPU archives; the restriction was in Article III of the treaty. It did not matter whether the cards had stamps affixed or imprinted postal indicia; the issue was the amount of postage being paid by the sender:

> L'affranchissement des cartes-correspondence est obligatoire. Leur taxe est fixe a la moitie de celle des lettres affranchise, avec faculte d'arrondir les fractions. (Prepayment of post cards is compulsory. Their charge is fixed at half the amount for letters, with the option to round fractions.)

Charging a premium for post card postage would have violated that provision.

Gough more plausibly supported his belief that the UPU preferred postal-stationery cards to post cards franked with adhesive stamps by citing this unofficial translation of a passage from Article XV of *Regulations of detail and order for the execution of the Convention for the formation of a Universal Postal Union concluded at Paris, June 1, 1878*:

> 3. As far as possible, post-cards issued specially for circulation within the Union, should bear an impressed stamp and the title "Universal Postal Union", followed by the name of the country of origin.

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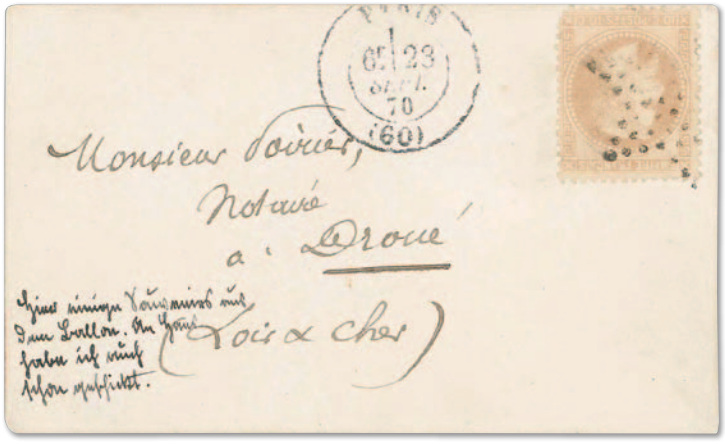



Figure 5. The French 10-centime Napoleon III stamp of 1867 (Scott 32) on this Sept. 28, 1870, post card paid the French domestic post card rate for transport out of besieged Paris by the unmanned balloon Non-Denomme No. 1, which carried only cards. Most of the mail from that flight was captured after German soldiers shot it down. *Image courtesy of Steven C. Walske from his international grand-prix exhibit "1870-71 Franco-Prussian War Siege Mail."*

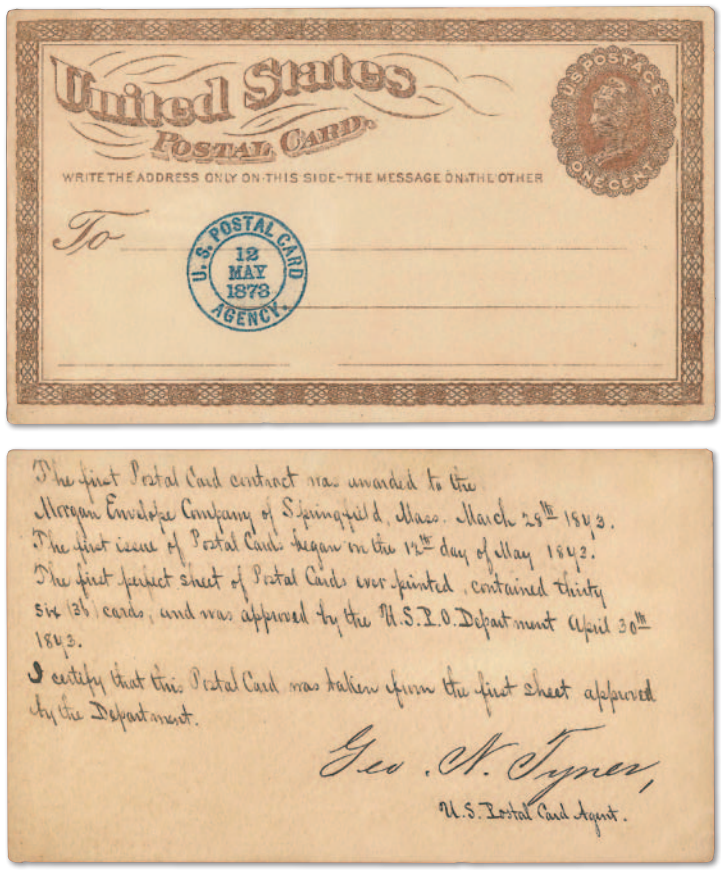



Figure 6. U.S. Postal Card Agent George N. Tyner recorded May 12, 1873, as the date of issue on this 1¢ Liberty Head postal card (Scott UX1). *Image courtesy of Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries.*

*Continued from page 59*

Gough quoted from that reference on page xxxviii and paraphrased it on page 376. His interpretation might be right, but I am not persuaded. The pertinent phrase in the official regulation was "un timbre fixe," which could have meant an affixed stamp or attached stamp, although the unofficial American text translated it as "impressed stamp."

To verify my interpretation, I searched francophone internet philatelic websites for the term "timbre fixe" to see how the term is applied descriptively today. My results retrieved only cards, covers, wrappers, and fiscal documents with adhesive stamps affixed, none with impressed stamps.

U.S. postal cards had impressed stamps; the translator in Washington, D.C., might have chosen the term "impressed stamp" to prevent misunderstanding. Most other UPU member countries issued postal-stationery cards, but some continued to use cards with stamps affixed. Gough acknowledged that fact, but he intentionally neglected post cards that might have given readers a different impression. His footnote on page 233 conceded:

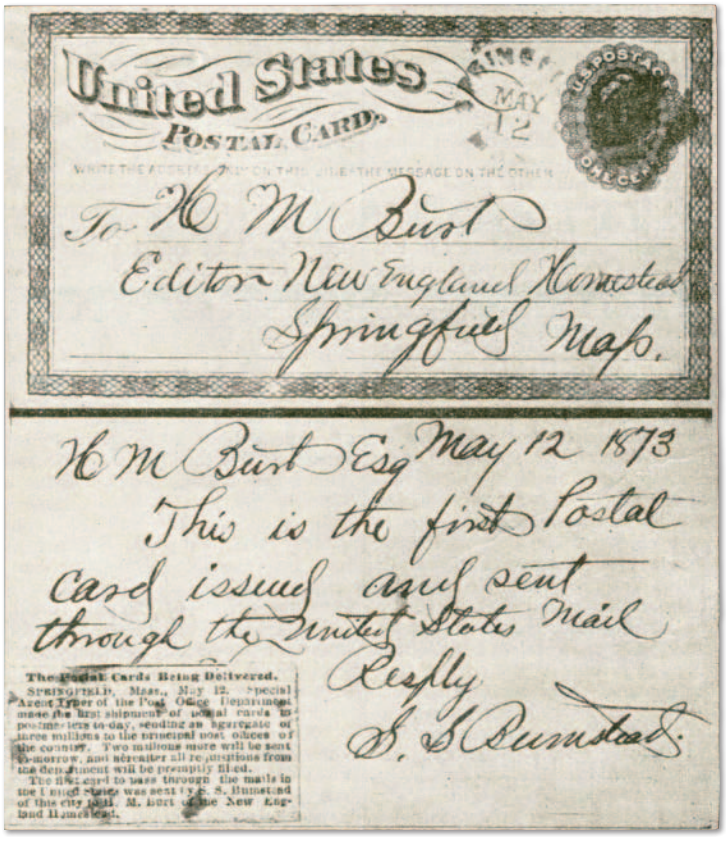



Figure 7. This picture of both sides of the first U.S. postal card mailed May 12, 1873, at Springfield, Mass., with a newspaper clipping about the event attached to the verso, appeared on the front page of the June 13, 1938, issue of *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News*.

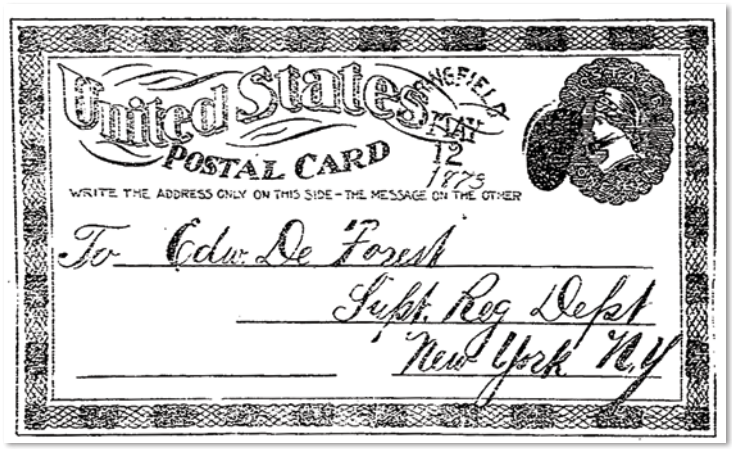



Figure 8. The April 17, 1900, *Boston Herald* published this wood engraving of another first-day postal card mailed May 12, 1873, at Springfield. Assistant postmaster and historian of world postal systems Carl Wilhelm Ernst had displayed the actual card at the Boston Public Library the previous evening, to accompany his lecture titled "World Literature and the Postal Service."

15. France also extended its domestic rate of 15c as its new GPU Base Rate. However, France was using a formular card at this time and this section is only reviewing foreign rate postal cards with impressed stamps.

I too have studied pertinent GPU and UPU conventions and regulations for many years, and I have collected post- and postal cards that document their application. As far as I have been able to determine, the postal unions made no distinction between postal-stationery cards and post cards franked with adhesive stamps except to the extent that member countries did. The UPU did not inhibit postal administrations from authorizing the use of private or formular post cards with stamps affixed.

## HOW TO STUDY POSTAL CARDS AND POST CARDS AS POSTAL HISTORY

My definition of the postal category is not contingent on whether a card has a postal-stationery stamp indicium, an affixed adhesive stamp or stamps, metered postage, or a permit imprint:

Postal cards and post cards are correspondence cards mailed flat without cover, rated by the piece, at a discount from single letter postage.

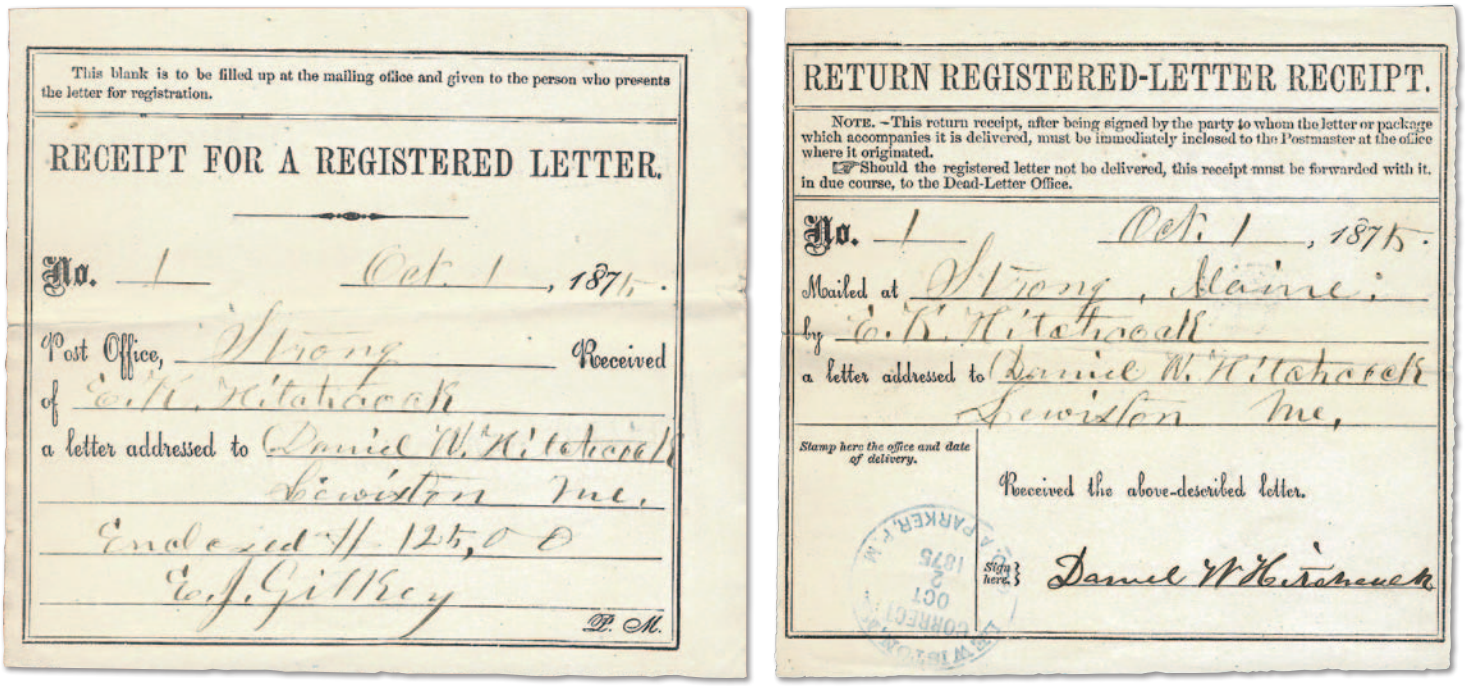
From my perspective a French "ballon non monte" (unmanned balloon) or "ballon monte" (manned balloon) post card of 1870-71, franked with a 10-centime adhesive stamp and mailed during the siege of Paris, was a postal-history counterpart to an Austro-Hungarian 2-kreuzer correspondence card of 1869 with an integral imprinted stamp, mailed domestically during the same period.

On Sept. 27, 1870, French director of posts Germain-Francois-Sebastien Rampont-Lechin issued two decrees. The first concerned letters sent by manned balloons; the second, post cards by unmanned balloons. This is my translation of the second decree:

Article 1. The post office is authorized to transport, by free unmanned balloons, post cards (cartes-postes) bearing on one side the destination address and on the other the correspondence of interest (du public).

Article 2. Post cards consist of vellum paper, maximum weight 3 grams, 11 centimeters long by 7 centimeters wide.

Article 3. Payment of post card postage is required. The charge to be paid is 10 centimes for France and Algeria. The rate for ordinary letters applies to post cards sent abroad.



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.

No. 1 Oct. 1, 1875.

Post Office, Strong Received

of E. K. Hitchcock

a letter addressed to Daniel W. Hitchcock

Lewiston Me.

Enclosed $125,00

E. J. Gilkey

P. M.

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. 1 Oct. 1, 1875.

Mailed at Strong, Maine;

by E. K. Hitchcock

a letter addressed to Daniel W. Hitchcock

Lewiston Me,

Stamp here the office and date of delivery.

Received the above-described letter.

Sign here. Daniel W. Hitchcock

Figure 9. The U.S. Post Office Department introduced compulsory return-receipt service for registered mail in 1863. Until 1879 the receipts consisted of paper forms, signed by recipients and returned to the original senders. Shown here are the sender's receipt for an Oct. 1, 1875, registered letter from Strong, Maine, to Lewiston, Maine, that enclosed $125, and a return receipt signed by the recipient, which the post office returned to the sender on Oct. 2.

Article 4. The government reserves the right to retain all post cards that contain information of a nature that could be useful to the enemy.

Article 5. The Finance Ministry is appointed to execute this decree.

An appended notice (also my translation) clarified the plan:

In execution of the previous decrees, the director general of the posts has the honor to inform the public that manned balloon ascensions can occur only at indefinite times. Free [i.e., not tethered] balloons will be launched tomorrow, September 28, if time permits.

Correspondence that the public wishes to send by this means should be written on vellum cards (follows the description given above).

Closed letters that the public wishes to reserve for mounted balloons must bear the endorsement: par ballons montes, etc.

In the event that all deposited letters cannot be sent by the departing manned balloon, preference will be given to the lightest letters.

Paris, 27 September 1870

Signed: Rampont

The unmanned balloon *Non Denomme No. 1* (Unnamed No. 1) ascended Sept. 30 with only post cards aboard. Most were captured by German soldiers when the balloon fell into their lines. The Figure 5 card has a note scrawled in German, "Here is a souvenir from the balloon. I sent one to Hans." The Sept. 28 postmark is the earliest on a post card recorded by Steven Walske, but a Sept. 27 date is possible.

Gough's inaugural date of Sept. 23 is not. That was the date that letters first were flown from Paris aboard a manned balloon, not post cards mailed for transport aboard an unmanned or manned balloon. Gough betrayed ambivalence about his subject in the opening paragraphs of his France chapter on page 52:

France first introduced the use of formular cards for use during the siege around the city of Paris (by German forces in the Franco-Prussian War) for use to destinations in France and to other parts of the world. These cards were flown by large balloons over the German forces surrounding Paris.

Some specialists consider these cards as "forerunners" and not really formular cards. But in telling the postal history of the postal card these Ballon Monte cards are included under the term of formular cards.

In his introductory chapter titled "Terminology & Framework for Understanding," Gough had written that "it has been well established in philately that the term for officially issued government cards without an impressed stamp are 'Formular Cards'." No post cards flown from Paris during the 1870-1871 siege met that definition.

In an article titled "World's First Air Mail Post Cards" in the November 1998 *American Philatelist*, Ernst M. Cohn wrote:

The first air mail post cards authorized by the French post office were privately produced in besieged Paris during the Franco-German War of 1870-71. The first official Parisian unmanned balloon to carry the new air mail cards was shot down and the Germans took most of its load as booty. As a result, that balloon was the first and the last such airpost vehicle; however, the post cards continued to be used until the end of the siege.

For decades, collectors' interest in these cards concentrated on the various imprints, all of which are private and have no postal significance.

Because Gough's title subject is postal-stationery cards, French post cards of 1870 and 1871 are missing from his timelines. But as an episode in the history of discounted correspondence cards, France introduced its version on Sept. 27, 1870, which occurred after Austria-Hungary and the constituents of North Germany

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inaugurated theirs, and before British and Swiss cards appeared.

## POSTAL CARDS BEFORE THE GENERAL POSTAL UNION AND THE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION

Gough opened Chapter 1 inauspiciously by retelling the discredited legend of Lipman's Postal Cards in the United States. He wrote:

> Many philatelists do not realise that the postal card has its earliest origin in 1861, when Mr. John P. Charlton of Philadelphia applied for a patent on the idea. He later sold his patent to a friend, Mr. Hyman Lipman, who was more familiar with printing. Mr. Lipman added a border around the front of the card and a frame for where the stamp should go. Like letters, it could go at 1¢ in the local mail. Because the American civil war was already underway, the public was not focused on new innovations and it died for lack of public interest.

Robert L. Toal's book *The Lipman Postal Card: Forerunner from Philadelphia*, published by the United Postal Stationery Society (UPSS) in 2019, refutes all of that. My recent review titled "Revising the Lipman's Postal Card Legend" in the November 2020 *Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues* presents additional evidence that the story is a myth.

Every part of Gough's paragraph is wrong, from the year of Lipman's card (1872, not 1861), to his description of Charlton's invention (a copyrighted envelope, not a patented card), to the spelling of Lipman's given name (Hymen, not Hyman), to the rate of a local letter in 1861 (2¢, not 1¢).

## FIRST UNITED STATES POSTAL CARD ISSUED MAY 12, 1873

Gough stumbled again when he discussed the first United States postal card. On page 86 he wrote:

> The date of issue seems to be in dispute because there was no pre-announced national date of issue, although 1 May 1873 had been the official target date for issue. There are a number of postal cards reported with cancellation dates before 13 May 1873, including: 10 May at Owensboro, Kentucky; 11 May at Providence, Rhode Island; and 12 May at Springfield, Massachusetts (near where the postal cards were produced). Postal cards with 13 May cancellations are recorded from Boston, New York, and Washington, DC … and a couple of other cities are claimed as well.

No United States first-day details are more incontrovertibly proven than May 12, 1873, as the date, and Springfield, Mass., as the place where the first United States postal card made its debut. U.S. Postal Service historian Jennifer Lynch sent me a copy of a contemporaneous report that states, "Distribution of Postal Cards from the Agency at Springfield commenced May 12th 1873."

Springfield was the location of Morgan Envelope Company, the Post Office Department's contractor to manufacture the cards, and headquarters of the Postal Card Agency. A collectible artifact of the inaugural event is the Figure 6 postal card inscribed, signed and datestamped by Postal Card Agent George N. Tyner:

> The first postal card contract was awarded to the Morgan Envelope Company of Springfield, Mass. March 28th 1873. The first issue of Postal Cards began on the 12th day of May 1873. The first perfect sheet of Postal Cards ever printed, contained thirty six (36) cards, and was approved by the U.S.P.O. Department April 30th 1873.
>
> I certify that this postal card was taken from the first sheet approved by the Department.
>
> Geo. N Tyner
> U.S. Postal Card Agent

Postmark dates purporting to have been struck before May 12 are spurious. (I have a postal card dated Jan. 27, 1873, from Boston to Marquette, Mich., canceled Jan. 28, which was obviously sent in 1874.) But first-day cards mailed May 12 at Springfield are well documented. The May 13 *Springfield Republican* reported:

> The issue of postal cards, yesterday, amounted to 3,000,000, 10,000 of which were for the Springfield post-office. S. S. Bumstead was the first sender and H. M. Burt was the first recipient in this country of a postal card by mail; almost simultaneously, however, Postmaster Lee mailed one to Congressman Dawes. The first card bearing a printed advertisement was also sent by Mr. Bumstead.

Sylvester S. Bumstead was a coal merchant and proprietor of a fruit market; Henry M. Burt was the publisher of *New-England Homestead* newspaper.

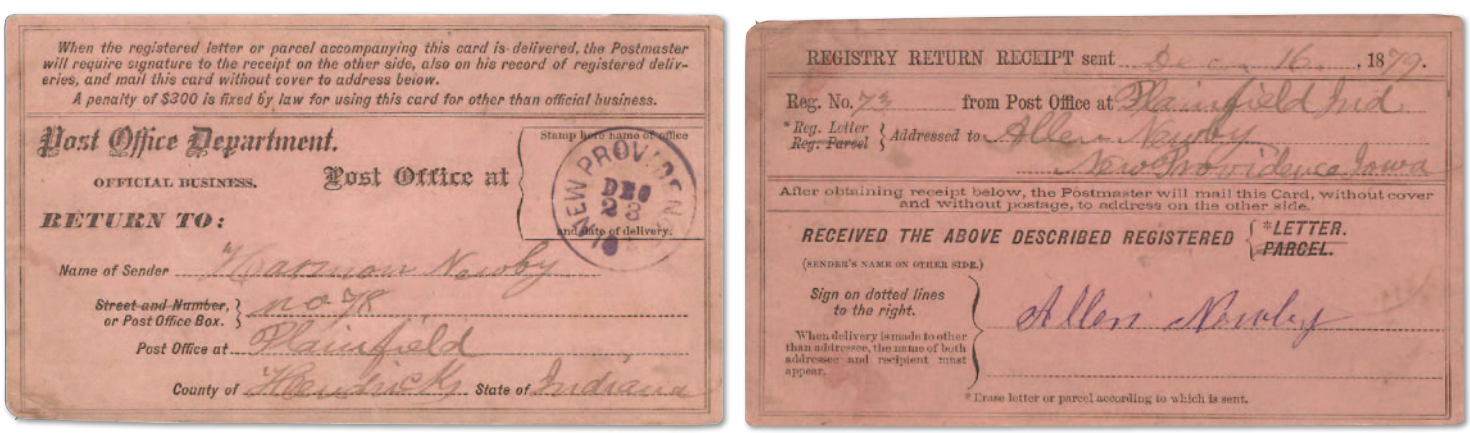


Figure 10. In 1879 the POD began using penalty-franked cards as return receipts for registered mail, inscribed "After obtaining receipt below, the Postmaster will mail this Card, without cover and without postage, to address on the other side." This Dec. 16 and 23, 1879, card from Plainfield, Ind., to New Providence, Iowa, and back to the sender is an early example.

His young son Frank H. Burt grew up to be a well-known Boston stamp collector and life member of the American Philatelic Society. The story of that card is among the great legends of American philatelic lore.

On Sept. 28, 1935, the younger Burt rediscovered the postal gem among his father's personal effects. He recalled that glorious moment, and pictured the card (copied here in Figure 7), in a June 13, 1938, *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News* article:

> A gloomy afternoon found me alone in the attic of my former home in Newton, Mass., whence I had removed to Arlington. Box after box of relics lay about me and slowly and rather sadly I handled papers and books, mostly of little account. But out of one box came a curious blank-book, home-made, coverless, and with many letters tucked in between the leaves. . . .
>
> The fascination of that mystery book was still strong and the Arlington bus was barely on its way when I took it from the brief-case for further study. Out came a letter within whose folds something was hidden. Unfolding it, to my astonished gaze appeared a postal card of the first issue addressed to my father—
>
> "H. M. Burt
> Editor New England Homestead
> Springfield Mass."
>
> and with this message under date of May 12, 1873:—
>
> H. M. Burt Esq
> This is the first Postal card issued and sent through the United States mail
> Resply [Respectfully]
> S. S. Bumstead
>
> The treasure I had seen in my early years and believed lost beyond recovery was found!

Burt displayed the card at a meeting of the Springfield Stamp Club in June 1936. To the best of my knowledge, that was its only recorded public appearance, but subsequent attempts to recover and possess it have become American hobbyists' equivalent of the medieval Christian quest for the Holy Grail from Jesus Christ's Last Supper, with each generation's leading postal card specialists as knights-errant. Here is my reconstruction of that saga:

After newspapers reported Burt's discovery, postal stationery specialist Daniel Deronda Berolzheimer of Nantucket approached Burt with an offer to buy it. Burt submitted his story to *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News* and gave Berolzheimer a signed statement that narrated his discovery, with pictures of the card attached. In his article Burt valued the card at $1,000 to $10,000.

Berolzheimer thought it was worth about $100, so no sale occurred. But the document Burt presented to Berolzheimer has re-emerged whenever newly inspired searchers sought a prospector's guide to the missing prize.

The May 13, 1939, *New York Sun* reported that "Frank Burt intends to present to the POD the original of the first U.S. postal card." *Linn's Weekly Stamp News* reported the same on page 1 of the June 10, 1939, issue, and other newspapers copied *Linn's*, providing later searchers with several opportunities to encounter that clue.

But on May 12, 1943, on the 70th anniversary of its creation, 80-year-old Frank Burt told the United Press "that the historic card is now kept in a vault." Our hobby's scouts seem to have missed that lead. Burt died in 1946.

After Berolzheimer died in 1952, George Clarke Slawson of Vermont, honorary life member of the UPSS, acquired the Burt document. In the October 1958 issue of *Postal Stationery*, he illustrated the card and mistakenly wrote that "in 1938 the card was obtained by the late D. D. Berolzheimer." Slawson died in 1969; Robert A. Siegel sold his collection including his research materials.

In a May-June 1975 *Postal Stationery* article, Frank B. Stratton wrote that Slawson had once told him the card


Figure 11. Although the large 1¢ Grant postal card (Scott UX10) exceeded the UPU maximum size, the POD tolerated the 2¢ foreign postal card rate on oversize souvenir cards sold by Charles W. Goldsmith at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which opened May 30. This card, which pictured the fair's Agriculture Building, was among those sold through a coin-operated vending machine during the first week of the fair. The sender mailed it June 6, 1893, from Chicago to Brunn, Austria, without adding a 1¢ stamp. The New York exchange office rated it shortpaid by that amount — the equivalent of 5 French centimes — which the Austrian post office converted to 2 kreuzers upon arrival June 20 and charged double the deficiency to be collected from the recipient.

"was safely deposited in the Smithsonian Institution," perhaps in the unfounded belief that Berolzheimer had owned it and had donated it.

In 1978 U.S. postal card collector Daniel M. Bagby approached Franklin R. Bruns Jr., curator of philately at the Smithsonian Institution, to see if the card had become part of the national collection. It had not, but Bruns called Bagby's attention to the 1939 *New York Sun* article. Following that lead, Bagby queried the U.S. Postal Service librarian about the card's whereabouts, but that too led nowhere.

Bagby's fellow New Jersey postal card specialist Theodore W. Bozarth, who possessed the 1938 Burt document from Slawson's estate, used it to illustrate an Oct. 1, 1979, *Linn's* article, page 73, titled "Whereabouts of first postal card in U.S.

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remains a mystery." And so it has remained. On Oct. 4, 1979, Bozarth sent a copy of his article to the National Archives, hoping to find the card there, but that hope proved equally futile.

Bozarth died in 2005. The 1938 Burt document appeared in Weiss Auctions' May 5, 2007, sale. Bill Falberg reproduced it in the September-October 2007 issue of *Postal Stationery*. According to the most recent (2020) and earlier editions of the UPSS *United States Postal Card Catalog*, the May 12 first-day card is still in Burt's family's possession. If true, one hopes that Burt's descendants might allow members of the public to view it on the card's 150th anniversary in 2023, or sooner.

Before Burt rediscovered his father's first-day postal card, Boston assistant postmaster Carl Wilhelm Ernst, a scholar who wrote and published historical studies of postal systems around the world, placed a different one on display during an April 1900 lecture at the Boston Public Library. The *Boston Herald* published a woodcut picture of Ernst's card over a report on his lecture, which I show here in Figure 8.

The UPSS catalog reports eight cards postmarked May 13 (1873) from four towns — Boston, New York City, Washington, and Hartford, Conn. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries' Sept. 18, 2014, sale of the "Georgian" collection of United States postal cards (Bagby's collection) included an Albany, N.Y., May 13 cover. Those were first-day uses in their respective cities, but postal cards had first been issued one day earlier at Springfield.


Figure 12. A fairgoer mailed this souvenir postal card to Zurich, Switzerland, at the Chicago world's fair post office in the Government Building on Oct. 20, 1893. The 1¢ Columbian commemorative stamp added to the 1¢ Grant card decorated with Goldsmith's pictorial view of the Electrical Building met the 2¢ foreign postal card rate still being tolerated just 10 days before the exposition closed, so it passed through the New York exchange office without postage due being charged. It arrived at Zurich on Nov. 2.

That is the story that Gough's readers deserved to be told. I have adapted it for publication in *First Days*, journal of the American First Day Cover Society, so that future researchers will have a convenient factual reference.

## GOUGH'S TALL TALE ABOUT UNITED STATES REGISTRY RETURN RECEIPTS

Here is another doozy of a yarn. In a footnote on page 210 Gough wrote:

3. Acknowledgments of Receipt ("ARs") were not as automatically similar [from one country to the next] as one might think. As one example, in the United States ARs were formatted on slips of paper but later converted in the early 1870s and 1880s to a postal card format. These American ARs were filled out by the originating postmaster (not the sender). At the destination for the registered item (the point of return for the AR), the postmaster returning the AR would document as to whom the item was delivered; these ARs were not usually signed by the recipient. The philosophy of the period was that the postmaster's attestation was considered more reliable and definitive. Upon return to the original post office (the original sender), the AR would be filed in the local post office and kept for one year — never being handed over to the sender.

The AR service was included in the reg-

istration fee (at no extra charge) but would only be done when specifically requested. This accounts for the extreme rarity of American ARs before a general reform by the UPU at the Congress of Lisbon in 1885. David L. Straight (USA) reported the earliest known use from abroad being in the 1890s. The author has not found any earlier examples, which is a testament to the post office's efficiency in destroying ARs after one year had passed.

Gough's account is inaccurate in almost every significant regard. Return receipts were not optional in the United States. A carrier or postmaster secured the addressee's signature on the receipt upon delivery of the registered article. The return receipt was sent to the original sender; it was not filed by the post office for a year and later destroyed. (Postmasters did not destroy waste paper; they were ordered "before the expiration of each quarter, [to] sell, at the highest price attainable, all waste paper and twine collected in their offices," and to "account for the same as other postal funds.")

Formular cards replaced paper slips as return receipts for domestic registered mail in 1879, not in the early 1870s. Return receipts from the 1860s to the 1890s are not rare; sellers frequently offer them for sale on eBay.

Figure 9 shows a sender's receipt for an Oct. 1, 1875, registered letter from Strong, Maine, to Lewiston, Maine, which had enclosed $125, and a return receipt signed by the recipient that was returned to the sender on Oct. 2. This passage from the 1873 edition of *Postal Laws and Regulations of the United States* shows how postmasters processed the return receipt:

> Sec. 493. When a registered package is received at an office for delivery, the postmaster will require the person receiving it to sign his or her name in the last column of the sheet of "receipts for registered letters delivered," and also sign the "return registered-letter sheet." The date of delivery must then be entered in the column headed "date of delivery" on the sheet of receipts, and the postmark of the office of delivery must be affixed to the return receipt, which will be detached from the letter and immediately forwarded, *in one of the envelopes furnished by the Department*, to the postmaster at the office where the letter was *originally* mailed, *who will deliver the return receipt to the person who sent the letter*. [POD emphasis]

Figure 10 shows a return receipt card for a Dec. 16, 1879, registered letter from Plainfield, Ind., to New Providence, Iowa, signed by the recipient, postmarked Dec. 23 at New Providence, and mailed without cover to the original sender, which obeyed these revised instructions in the 1879 *Postal Laws and Regulations*:

> Sec. 825. The Registry-Return-Receipt. — A registry-return-receipt of the new card form must be filled out for each domestic letter or parcel (i.e., addressed to any post-office in the United States or Territories). The registry-return-receipt must on its face have written the name of sender, street and number, or post-office box, name of post-office, county, and State (the space for stamp of post-office is reserved for post-office of delivery). On the other side enter date of mailing, registry number, mailing post-office and State, and address of the registered letter or parcel . . .
>
> Sec. 871. Registry-Return-Receipt to be Remailed to the Sender. — As soon as any registered matter has been delivered and the registry-return-receipt therefor has been properly signed, the receipt must be postmarked with the date of delivery (which is also the mailing postmark), and sent by the next mail, without cover of an envelope, to the address of the sender which is written on the registry-return-receipt.

Return receipts for domestic registered mail became optional in 1910.

On Richard Frajola's Phila-Mercury website (www.rfrajola.com/exhibit.htm), Canadian scholar and collector David Handelman has posted a book titled *AR* and 11 Avis de Reception exhibits, including a U.S. domestic exhibit and a U.S. international exhibit displayed separately, all of which can be downloaded as PDF files. In Handelman's U.S. international AR exhibit, the earliest return receipt to the United States is a properly signed German AR form returned to Philadelphia in 1878.

## MAILED CARDS AS THIRD-CLASS PRINTED MATTER IN THE UNITED STATES

On page 647 Gough reproduced most of Postmaster General David McKendree Key's Order No. 31 titled "United States Postal Cards the Only Mailable Card Matter" beside this caption:

> On the front page of the *Daily Bulletin* of the US Post Office of 14 July 1880, the postmaster general reminded the employees of the US Post Office that only official cards of the US Post Office were valid at the discounted rate of postage. This was a pushback to growing public demand for more flexibility with regard to what qualified for the discounted rate. The American public was receiving privately-printed postal cards from abroad and wanted to have the same options.

That was wrong, incomplete, and misleading: Wrong because it was a new rule without precedent, not a reminder. Incomplete because Gough clipped off the last paragraph that included the Oct. 1, 1880, effective date. Misleading because on Sept. 24 in Order No. 37 titled "All Card Matter Mailable until January 1, 1881," Key's successor, Postmaster General Horace Maynard, postponed implementation, and because on Jan. 9, 1881, in Order No. 44 titled "Only Printed Cards Mailable as Third-Class Matter," Maynard rescinded Key's order entirely, "effective immediately."

In consequence, a printed card could not legally be mailed at the third-class postal rate for a period of just nine days. If one could be found posted illegally between Jan. 1 and Jan. 9, 1881, it would be a marvelous rarity of U.S. postal history. Gough's inference bore scant resemblance to the true significance of that episode.

## WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION SOUVENIR POSTAL CARDS

My final example of Gough's penchant for erroneous improvisation concerns 1¢ Grant postal cards from the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Souvenir picture postal cards intended for use by tourists sending messages home appeared on a large scale for the first time in the United States at that world's fair, which opened on May 1, 1893.

The exposition committee granted to Charles Way Goldsmith an exclusive con-

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Figure 13. This 1¢ Grant souvenir postal card with Goldsmith's pictorial view of the Navy battleship *USS Illinois* was mailed Nov. 20, 1893 — three weeks after the world's fair closed — from Paterson, N.J., to Zurich, Switzerland. With 1¢ Columbus in Sight of Land and 3¢ Santa Maria commemorative stamps (Scott 230 and 232), the combined postage met the Universal Postal Union 5¢ single letter rate. That same day the POD had published a notice that the oversize cards required letter-rate postage to foreign destinations. The card arrived at Zurich on Dec. 4.

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cession to sell his cards on the fairgrounds, initially two cards (of four original designs) for 5¢ through coin-operated vending machines; later in sets of 10 and 12 cards at Goldsmith's office in Chicago; after the fair, from Scott Stamp and Coin Co. in New York City.

To create Goldsmith's souvenirs, American Lithographic Co. printed multicolor views of exposition buildings and the Navy battleship *USS Illinois* on the clay-coated back sides of 1¢ Grant postal cards of 1891. The dimensions of the cards as issued were 6⅛ inches by 3¾ inches, the largest size among the POD's standards. The 1¢ cards posed no problem for domestic use, but they exceeded the maximum postal card dimensions authorized by the UPU convention — 14 centimeters by 9cm, equal to about 5⅗ inches by 3⅗ inches.

Two excellent books have thoroughly documented every aspect of the Goldsmith cards — *Chicago's Great White City: A Postal History Panorama of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition* by Harvey M. Karlen (Berk-Hill, Oak Park: 2003) and *Handbook of the Postal Cards of the World's Columbian Exposition* by Kenneth C. Wukasch (UPSS, Norfolk: 2005). Unfortunately both books are absent from Gough's bibliography.

Without benefit of those historians' diligence, he wrongly wrote on page 623:

> The American 1¢ postal card was intended for domestic mails and was in response to the public's demand for larger sized postal cards. Additionally, the card was widely used for printing multi-colored scenes/vistas from the World Columbian Exposition of 1892-1893 for tourists to send as souvenirs. Postal patrons at the postal facility were warned (by bulletins on the walls) to put a 4¢ stamp on it if it were addressed to a foreign destination.

Otherwise, the US Post Office bulletin warned that this card did not comply with international standards and would be charged postage due at destination as an unpaid letter. The American exchange offices did not try to catch all of these large sized cards on the outbound to mark them for postage due — given the high numbers going abroad seen by the author that have no postage due markings. And even where the Americans marked these cards for postage due, not all destination post offices collected the charges — at least not all the time. However, some of these cards exist without American postage due markings but marked for postage due on arrival in the country of destination.

Although the cards did exceed the maximum dimensions allowed by the UPU convention, the true story of how the POD treated them is more interesting, more intelligent and more coherent than Gough's narrative.

Not wanting to spoil the experience of visitors from foreign lands, POD officials decided that they would be rated as post cards, not as letters, for the duration of the fair. That meant adding 1¢ postage, not 4¢, which was the instruction given to patrons at the post office in the Government Building on the fairgrounds.

The U.S. exchange offices passed Goldsmith cards prepaid at the UPU 2¢ post- and postal card rate without constraint. If 1¢ postage was not added, they were rated 1¢ shortpaid and marked T 5c (the equivalent of 5 centimes due, to be doubled in the equivalent currency of the destination country and collected from the recipient). Under UPU rules the exchange office of the originating country had the responsibility to rate shortpayment; if no T was struck, the article was to be "considered as prepaid and treated accordingly, unless there be an obvious error."

Figure 11 shows a so-called "pre-seal" Goldsmith card that a visitor purchased from a vending machine and mailed to Austria from a Chicago city post office during the first week of the fair. The sender neglected to add postage to meet the UPU rate, so the New York exchange office rated it as a postal card 1¢ shortpaid, the equivalent of 5 French centimes. Despite being oversize it was not rated as a letter.

Figure 12 shows a later Goldsmith card with an official exposition seal in the pictorial print, mailed at the World's Fair Station post office to Switzerland. The 1¢ Columbian commemorative stamp on the 1¢ Grant card combined to meet the 2¢ foreign postal card rate, still being tolerated just 10 days before the exposition closed.

The fair closed on Oct. 30, 1893. On Nov. 17 the POD is-

sued an order titled "The Largest United States Postal Cards (Size 'C') Mailable to Foreign Countries Only as Letters," published in the November 20 *Daily Bulletin of Orders Affecting the Postal Service*:

> Article XVI of the Regulations for the execution of the Universal Postal Union Convention of Vienna, provides that post cards in the mails exchanged between countries of the Postal Union shall not exceed 14 centimeters (5 3-5 inches) in length by 9 centimeters (3 3-5 inches) in breadth; and that post cards which do not conform to these conditions shall be treated as letters.
>
> The United States domestic postal card of the largest size (size "C") measures 6⅛ inches in length by 3¾ inches in breadth. It therefore exceeds the maximum size permissible for "postal cards" in international mails, and can be dispatched to a foreign country (except to Canada and Mexico to correspondence for which our domestic postal regulations apply) only as a letter, and subject to the rate of postage applicable to letters for the country to which the card is addressed. Consequently, the postal cards in question when addressed to any foreign country embraced in the Postal Union (except Canada and Mexico) are subject to a charge of 5 cents each, and if a less amount is prepaid, are liable on delivery to a charge equal to double the amount of the deficiency; that is to say, if prepaid only 2 cents, they are short 3 cents, and a charge equal to that sum, or the equivalent of six cents, will be collectible of the addressee on delivery.

(There the POD followed UPU practice of using the terms "postal card" and "post card" interchangeably.) After publishing that order, the POD did enforce it by requiring letter-rate postage on oversize postal cards to foreign destinations.

According to Wukasch, the Figure 13 Goldsmith card sent Nov. 20, 1893, from Paterson, N.J., to Zurich, Switzerland, formerly owned by him, is the earliest recorded with 4¢ postage added to meet the UPU 5¢ single letter rate.

## CRITICISM, RECOGNITION AND PRAISE FOR GOUGH'S BOOK

Gough is not a stylist, nor was he guided by a firm editorial pencil. Page after page includes text that begins in his main narrative but places his expansive observations (not reference notes) separately, as distractions, in numbered footnotes below. That arrangement compels the reader to skip back and forth between his subjects and his digressions.

As a survey of worldwide stamped correspondence cards, edited professionally, the book probably would have made a significant contribution to English-language philatelic literature. As it stands, particularly regarding the subjects of greatest interest to collectors of United States philatelic classics, Gough's mistakes and discursions detract from and debilitate his positive elements, leaving this reader in doubt as to which parts merit trust.

Gough's book has won almost every significant accolade our hobby offers. Before reviews appeared, the RPSL awarded his book the prestigious Crawford medal "for the most valuable and original contribution to the study and knowledge in book form during the relevant period."

The American Philatelic Society included the book in Gough's citation for the 2020 John N. Luff award for distinguished philatelic research. The UPSS honored his book with the Lewandowski literature award — a $1,000 cash prize and a silver medal — for the best postal stationery publication of 2020.

Pondering those awards for Gough's book in light of how many mistakes I had found in it recalled to my memory the embarrassment of the Ameripex 86 international exhibition jury, which awarded a gold medal to the flawed *New Dietz Confederate States Catalog and Handbook* that had not yet been published and that no one had read. Richard B. Graham titled his review in the Oct. 13, 1986, *Linn's*, page 36, "Dietz Confederate catalog causes controversy."

## THE GOOD PARTS OF GOUGH'S BOOK

Best are his illustrations, in full color of high quality, most of them actual size. If Gough's gags and gaffes were deleted from his book, the result would be a visually appealing coffee-table tableau of the world's rarest, most desirable and most interesting postally used postal cards.

As an example, in his first chapter Gough pictured such treasures as the three varieties of the world's first postal card — the 2-kreuzer Emperor Franz Joseph card, Austrian version, Hungarian version in German and Hungarian version in Hungarian — each canceled Oct. 1, 1869, the first day of issue.

For many readers, including me, the most useful features of Gough's book will be the chronological tables compiled by Wayne Menuz, editor of *Postal Stationery* and former president of the UPSS, who also contributed the book's foreword.

(Menuz's tables are not perfect. Besides omitting countries that adopted private and formular government post cards from his sequential listings, I noticed that Menuz omitted Bhutan, which issued its first postal card in 1966.)

In his expressions of gratitude to Menuz, Gough wrote, "His enthusiasm for helping this project cannot be understated," (page 23), and twice wrote (pages 856 and 861), "The efforts Wayne took in this compilation cannot be under stated; nor can this contribution be under valued." Was Gough kidding, or was he serious?

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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*The Postal History of the Universal Postal Union: The Postal Card Worldwide 1869-1974* is available from the Royal Philatelic Society London at www.rpsl.org.uk/Publications and from philatelic literature dealers.