

United States 1908 Issue, 10c Special Delivery Stamp

The subject of this presentation is the short-lived 10c Special Delivery postage stamp that was put on sale in Washington, D.C. on December 14, 1908 and was officially withdrawn from sale less than six months later on June 9, 1909. The green stamp, with a design incorporating the emblems of peace and haste, typified by the olive branch and the winged-cap of Mercury was designed by the noted architect Whitney Warren, accepted by Postmaster General George von L. Myer and was withdrawn by his replacement Postmaster General, Frank H. Hitchcock.

The stated reason for this withdrawal was that the green color of the stamp caused it to be confused with the 1c regular issue postage stamp causing some special delivery letters to be denied the premium service. The reduced size and radical design change from previous special delivery stamps that had featured a running or bicycle messenger, may have been too radical for the new postmaster general.

Following the official withdrawal of the winged Mercury stamp, post offices were permitted to use existing inventories but new requests for special delivery stamps were fulfilled with reissued blue stamps of the 1902 design. Eight printing plates were authorized but only four were actually used starting on December 7, 1908. Over 3.8 million stamps were produced but it is uncertain how many were actually distributed or used.

This exhibit shows a range of rates, markings, unusual uses and combination frankings of the stamp. It is estimated that fewer than 500 covers survive.



unique model of a rejected preliminary design showing Latin style "V.S." rather than the usual "U.S." initials



essay with uncleared surrounds, signed and dated 1908 by the designer, Whitney Warren



issued stamp

1908 Issue, 10c Special Delivery

Early Use



31 December
Special Delivery "AM"
clock face backstamp

31 December 1908 Washington, D.C. local use, a very early use

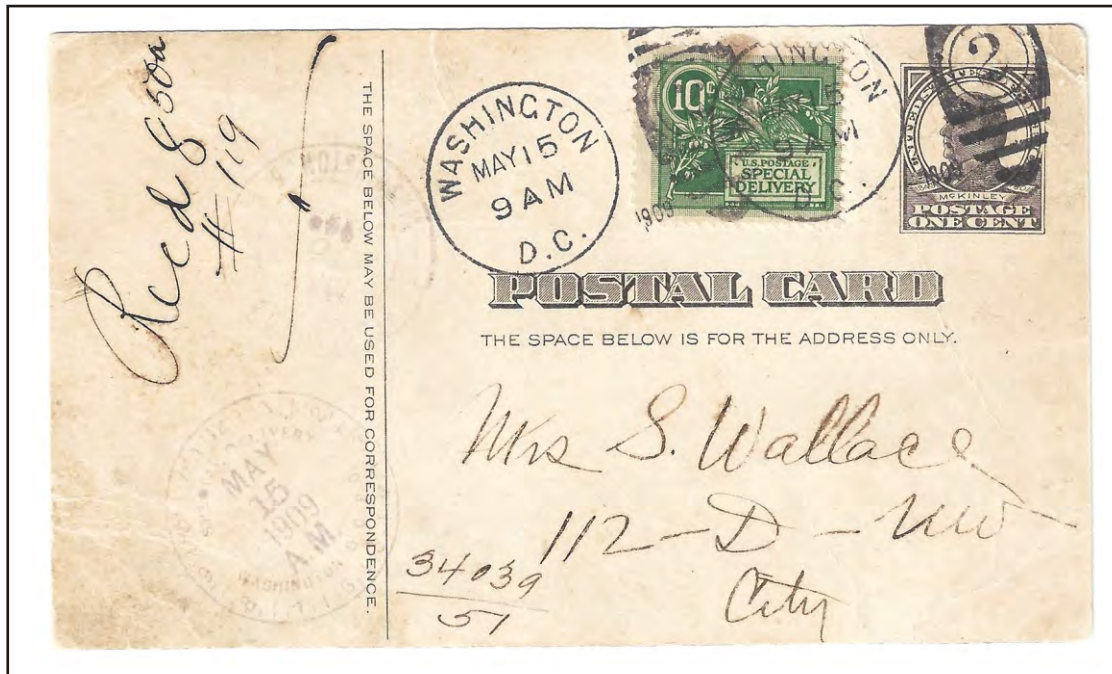
The earliest known use is a December 12, 1908 cover from Washington, DC. This letter is one of fewer than four reported known 1908 uses and many early uses are from Washington, DC.



3 February 1909 Berkeley, CA "7 AM" and REC'D" postmark, a local use

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11c total rate: 10c plus 1c postcard rate / 1c third class rate



15 May 1909 Washington, D.C. local use on 1c postal card

There are 12 reported uses on 1c postal cards, the above being the earliest. The only reported use on an unsealed 1c entire is the example below.



17 December 1915 Almont, PA to Sellersville, PA third class rate use on unsealed 1c entire

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12c total rate: 10c plus first class 2c rate

The 1883 first class postage rate of 2c remained in effect until November 2, 1917 when the temporary 3c war surcharge rate went into effect. The 2c rate was restored on July 1, 1919.



27 January 1909 Dodgeville, Mass to Ashton, Rhode Island

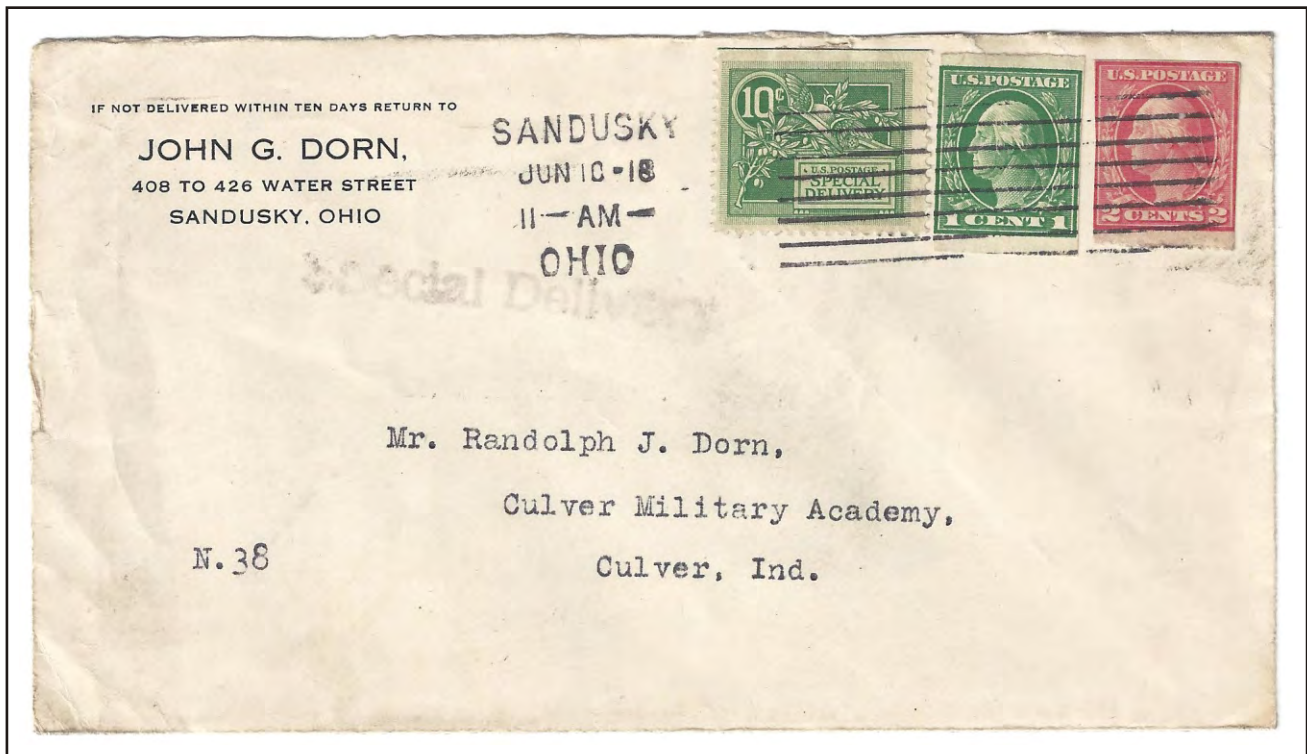


17 July 1909 New York City to Philadelphia

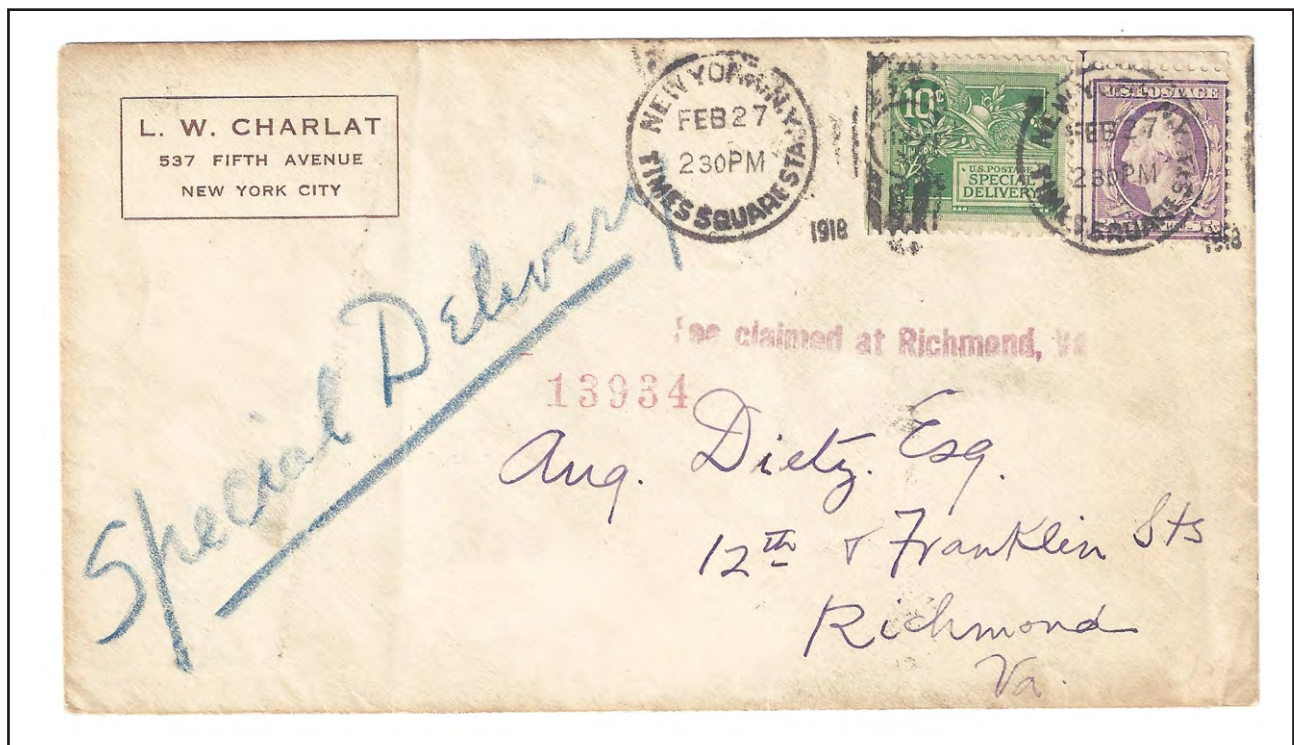
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13c total rate: 10c plus first class 3c war surcharge rate

The 3c war surcharge rate was in effect from November 2, 1917 until July 1, 1919 when the rate was reduced back to 2c.



10 June 1918 Sandusky, Ohio to Culver, Indiana



27 February 1918 New York City to Richmond, VA

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20c / 22c rates: 10c plus 8c / 10c registry fee, plus 2c first class rates

The 8c registry fee was inaugurated in 1898 and was in effect until October 30, 1909. On November 1, 1909 the rate was raised to 10c.



18 March 1909 Atlanta, GA to Boston, Mass



4 November 1909 Pasadena, CA to Chicago, IL
used four days after registry rate was increased to 10c

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Unpaid 2c first class rates

The postal authorities anticipated that the special delivery stamp might be used without adding the 2c first class postage and permitted the post offices to accept such letters but required the 2c be paid by the addressee. **Fewer than ten examples are known.**



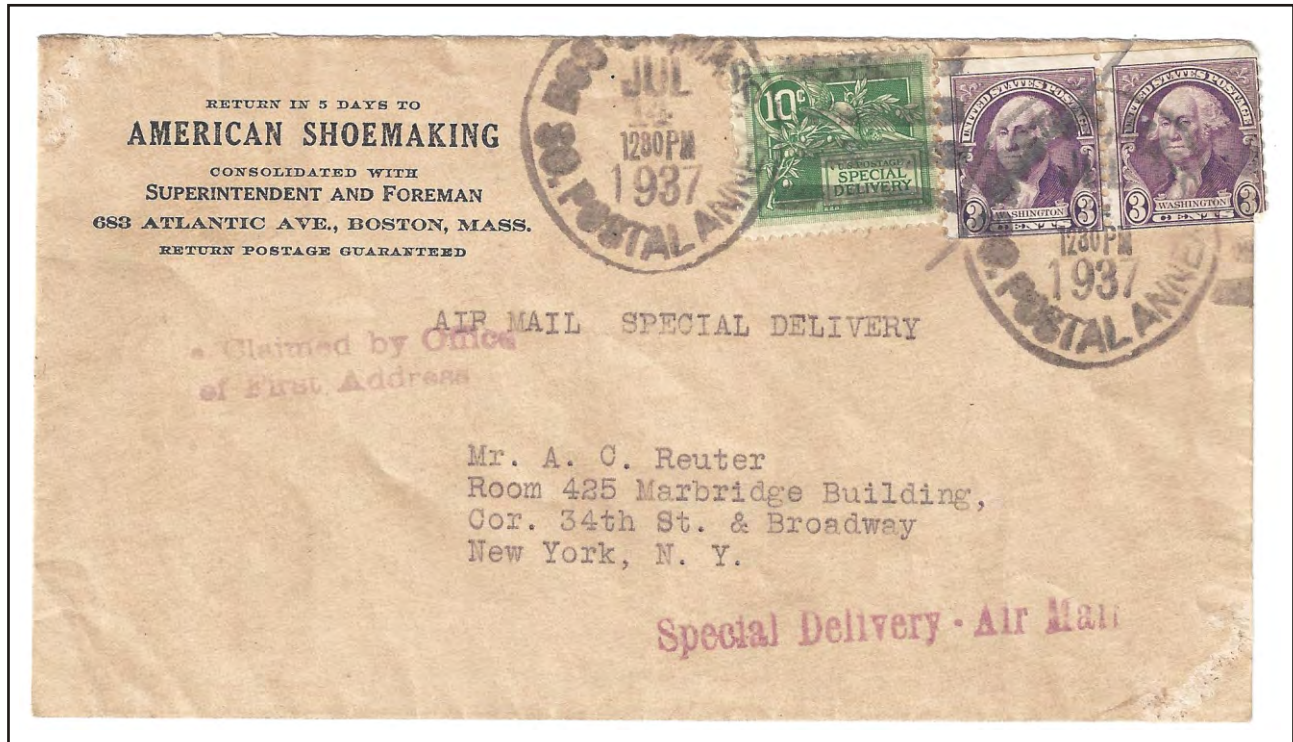
3 September 1909 San Francisco, CA to Inverness, CA, 2c postage due, two known with dues



16 February 1911 Portland & Seaside Railroad, Train 2 to Grand Rapids, MI, no postage due

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16c Airmail special delivery rate / shortpaid 10c plus 1.5c third class



14 July 1937 Boston, MA to New York City, the only reported example with this rate



21 December 1935 Dayton, OH local use, the only reported example prepaid at this rate prepaid at the third class rate and accepted but the special delivery fee was 15c at this date

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Posted to a Street Car Railway Post Office / to a Railroad Post Office

Although there are a few known 1908 issue special delivery covers that bear railway post office markings, the street car use below is the **only reported example**.



6 July 1909 Pittsburg, PA, Street R.P.O. Train 2, street car to East End, Pittsburg, PA



22 June 1909, Boston & Poughkeepsie R.P.O. Train 112 to Boston, MA
Boston clockface arrival and "FEE PAID", probably picked up on the fly at the Walpole station

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Auxiliary Markings, Fee Paid / Fee Claimed

Eight cents of the ten cent special delivery fee was credited to the carrier that delivered the letter from the receiving post office to the addressee. A wide variety of fee claimed and fee paid handstamps were used.



12 January 1910 Cincinnati, OH to Worcester, MA with "Fee paid" handstamp and number



4 December 1909 Milford, NJ to Vineland, NJ with "Fee claimed" handstamp

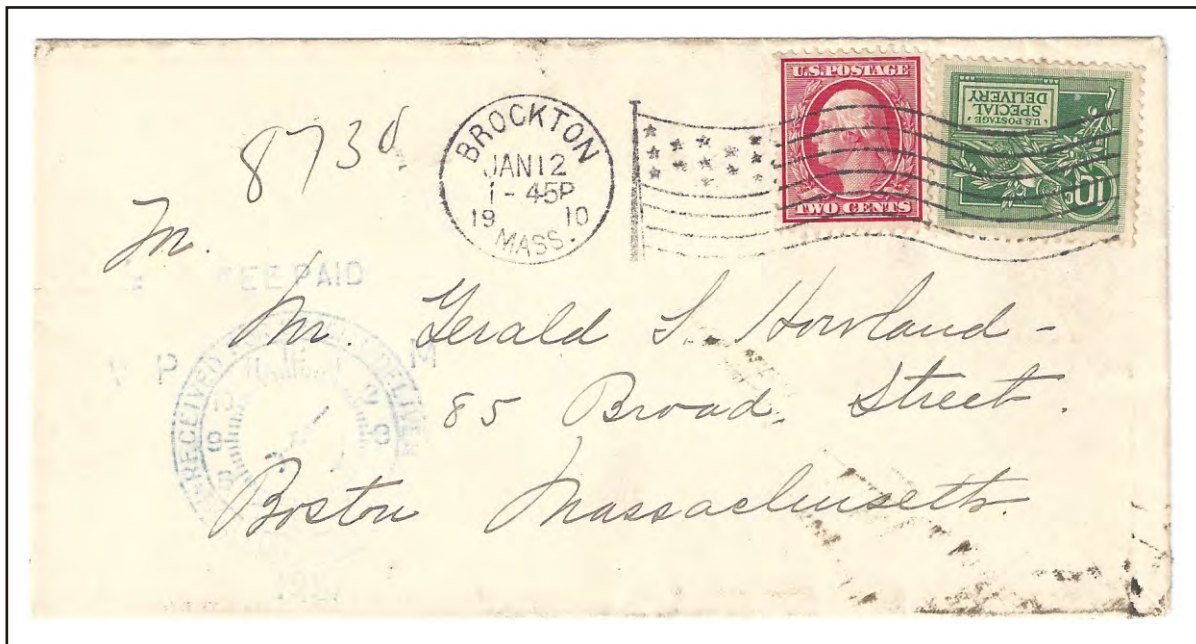
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Auxiliary Markings, Fee Not Claimed / Fee Claimed



6 May 1911 Franklin Park, MA to Enfield, NH and forwarded to Chicopee, MA, "Fee not Claimed"

Usually the "fee not claimed" meant that no special courier was provided so the POD kept the 10c fee and the local post office got nothing. But in the case of the above cover it was forwarded by the post office without a delivery attempt, so the "fee not claimed" mark instructed the destination post office that it still qualified for special delivery, so that post office got 2¢ and paid 8¢ to the carrier.



12 January 1910 Brockton, MA to Boston, MA with their clockface "FEE PAID"

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Auxiliary Markings, Receiving Timestamps



30 April 1909 London, OH to Columbus, OH, "REC'D SP. DEL'Y DEPT" arrival timestamp



23 April 1911 Greenville, ME to Boston, MA with their clockface arrival timestamp

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Private Auxiliary Markings



23 August 1909 San Francisco, CA to a guest at Hotel Knickerbocker, New York City "NOT IN ROOM" and "PAGED BY BOY" on front and hotel arrival timestamp on reverse



11 February 1914 Pawtucket, RI to New London, CT, combination franking with 2c imperforate pointing hand as well as "SPECIAL" and "SPECIAL DELIVERY" handstamps, all privately applied

Fewer than 10 covers to, or from, U.S. territories are recorded.

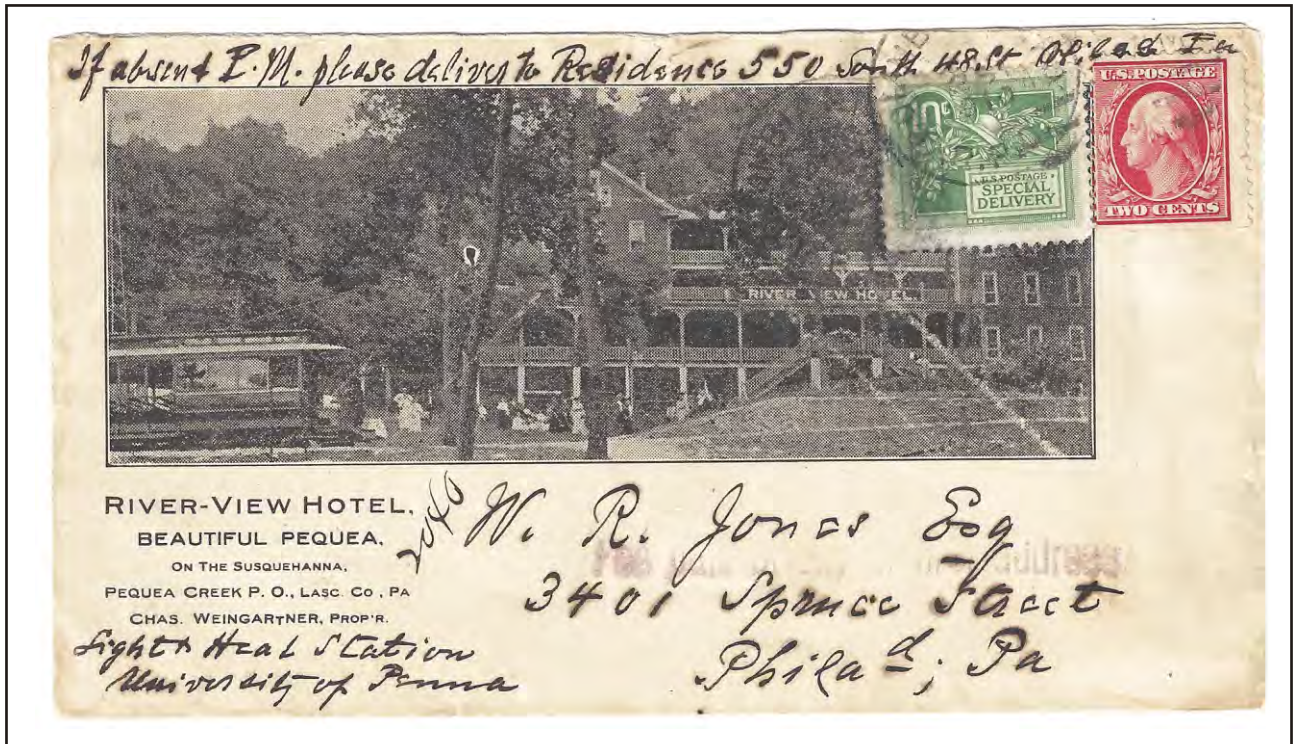


7 August 1909 Luzerne, NY to Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii
manuscript note reads, "Postmaster please notice. If too late to deliver in Honolulu send to Manchuria Pacific Mail Co. Sailing August 21st from Honolulu.



17 February 3 April 1911 Tombstone, Arizona Territory to Phoenix, Arizona Territory

Illustrated Advertising Covers



25 August 1910 Pequea, PA to Philadelphia, PA

illustration of the River-View Hotel, "on the Susquehanna" shows trolley car at left cover addressed to Light & Heat Station at Univ. of PA, if absent ... deliver to residence ..



29 November 1910 Los Angeles, CA to Elmhurst, CA
illustration of the Hotel Rosslyn with trolley cars in front

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Combination Frankings with 1909 Commemoratives



with 2c Hudson-Fulton
23 October 1909
from Washington, PA



with 2c Alaska-Yukon
23 July 1910
from New York



with 2c Lincoln, 27 July 1909 from Newark, NJ