

USE OF THE 1955 U.S. CERTIFIED MAIL STAMP

This single frame exhibit presents a study of the use of the 1955 Certified Mail stamp during the initial 15¢ rate period (June 6, 1955 to June 30, 1957).

Certified Mail was a new service offered by the Post Office in 1955, the first new service class since the inauguration of airmail service in 1918. First day of issue was June 6 in Washington, D.C., with nationwide service available the following day.

Certified mail provided proof of mailing and delivery of first class mail, without indemnity, as a lower cost option to registered mail. The goal was to reduce the demand on the registry system for items without intrinsic/monetary value. It was immensely successful in achieving this reduction; within the first six years, the volume of registered mail decreased 38% (78 million to 43 million items).

A certified mail stamp (shown above right) was issued for this service and could only be used to indicate payment of the certified mail fee. It's use was not required; regularly issued stamps were also accepted to indicate the certified fee payment. This was the only certified mail stamp issued.



The Certified Mail Stamp

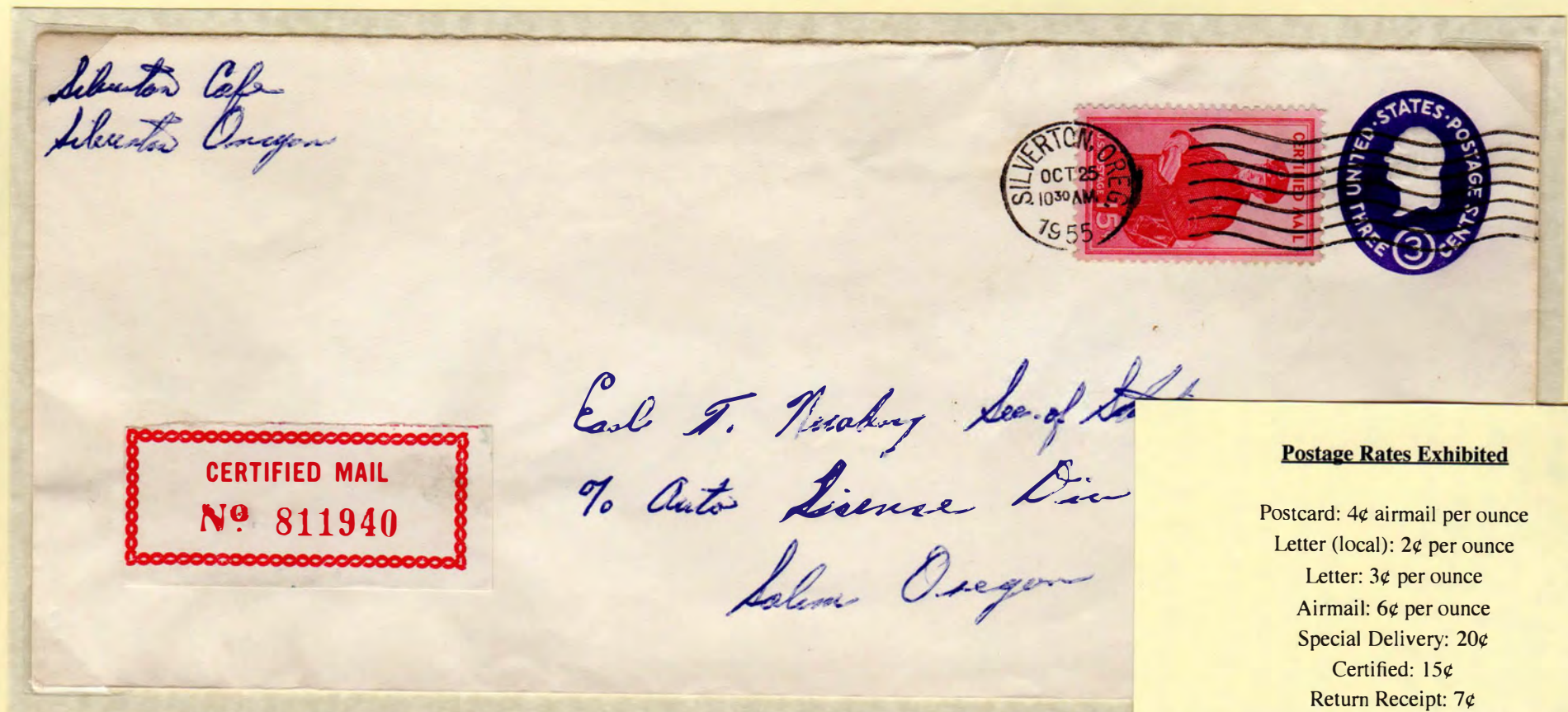
The specific stamp shown above is extra special in the exhibitor's collection: It is the very first stamp he purchased from the Post Office for his collection when he started collecting as an eight-year-old in 1955.

Exhibit Plan

- Page 1: Title Page
- Page 2: Promotional Flyer, Receipt, & Postcard
- Page 3: Letter -- Local & 1 oz.
- Page 4: Letter -- 2 oz. & Return Receipt
- Page 5: Letter -- 3 oz. & 4 oz.
- Page 6: Letter -- 5 oz. & 8 oz.
- Page 7: Airmail -- 1 oz. & 2 oz.
- Page 8: Special Delivery & Airmail-Special Delivery
- Page 9: Return Receipt w/Address & Return to Writer
- Page 10: Certified Markings Not Previously Shown
- Page 11: Government Use & APO to APO
- Page 12: Unauthorized Use & Last Day of Rate

Pages are 11"x11", three pages per row.
Scans of relevant reverses are shown reduced.

The cover below is postmarked October 25, 1955, the exhibitor's eighth birthday — the day he became a stamp collector. A friend's present was the Minkus *My First Stamp Outfit*, beginning a lifelong hobby.



Postage Rates Exhibited

- Postcard: 4¢ airmail per ounce
- Letter (local): 2¢ per ounce
- Letter: 3¢ per ounce
- Airmail: 6¢ per ounce
- Special Delivery: 20¢
- Certified: 15¢
- Return Receipt: 7¢
- Return Receipt w/Address Where Delivered: 31¢

Promotional Flyer & Certified Receipt

Flyer distributed by post office promoting and describing the new certified mail service option and contrasting certified and registered mail services. The other side of the flyer is shown below right.

The red label below is the back of an actual receipt, an example of which is illustrated on the flyer (at far right). This explains in detail how to prepare a certified letter.

1. Stick postage stamps to your letter to pay:
15-cent certified mail fee
First-class or airmail postage
Either return receipt fee (*optional*)
Special-delivery fee (*optional*)
2. If you want this receipt postmarked, stick the gummed stub on the address side of the letter, leaving the receipt attached, and present the letter to a postal employee.
3. If you do not want this receipt postmarked, stick the gummed stub on the address side of the letter, detach and retain the receipt, and mail the letter.
4. If you want a return receipt, write the certified-mail number and your name and address on a return receipt card and attach it to the back of the letter.
5. Save this receipt and present it if you make inquiry.

☆ U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1955 16-71547-1

You save 25¢ when you use Certified Mail

CERTIFIED MAIL

- **Fee—15¢** in addition to regular postage.
- Record of mailing retained by mailer.
Delivery receipt filed in post office.
Return receipt services and restricted delivery service available.
- Handled in transit like first-class mail.
- No insurance for loss or damage.
- Limited to mail of no real value sent at first-class rate.

REGISTERED MAIL

- **Fee—minimum of 40¢** in addition to regular postage.
- **Record of mailing filed in post office.**
Delivery receipt filed in post office.
Return receipt services and restricted delivery service available.
- **Receipted for in transit at every exchange point.**
- **Insurance for loss or damage to \$1,000.**
- **Unrestricted as to value and class of mail accepted.**

A signed receipt is secured from the addressee.

YOU may also obtain return receipt and restricted delivery services.

Certified mail can be sent air mail and special delivery.

The completed, postmarked receipt is your record of mailing.

The numbered label goes on the letter.

GPO 368925

POD Notice No. 3

Nov. 1955

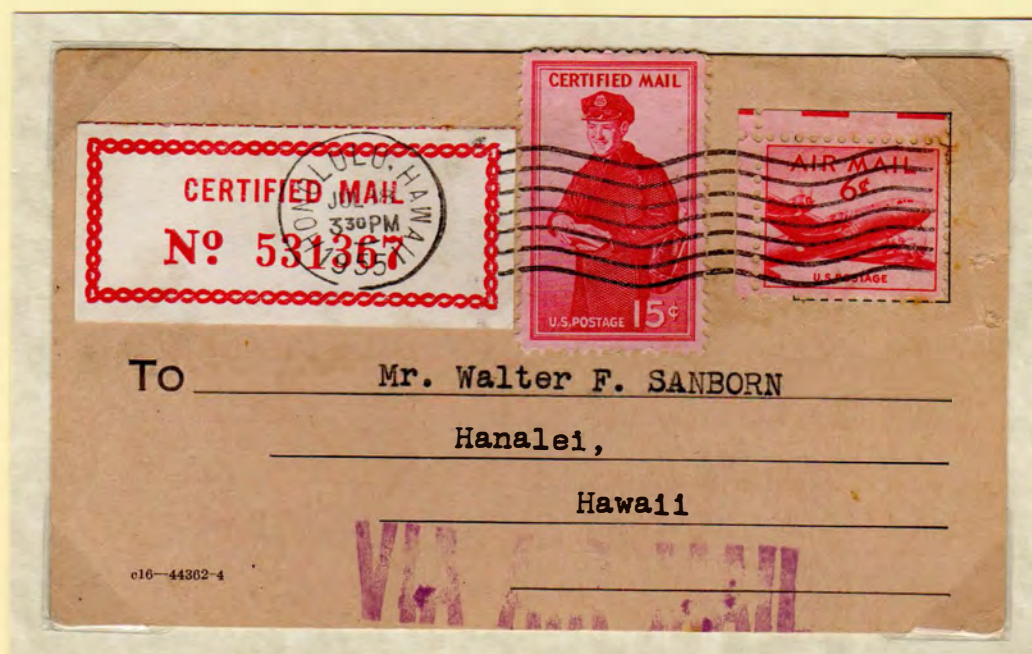
Nº 833217

RECEIPT FOR CERTIFIED MAIL—15¢	
SEND TO	POSTMAN ON DATE
STREET AND NO.	
CITY AND STATE	
If you want a return receipt, check which of the following you wish, and address where delivered. <input type="checkbox"/> 20¢ fee. <input type="checkbox"/> 20¢ fee.	
If you want the receipt postmarked, check here. <input type="checkbox"/> 20¢ fee.	
No fee from 3000. Reprints previous edition of July 1955. 3000. This form which MAY be used.	

CERTIFIED MAIL
Nº 833217



Postcard



Postcard, Airmail

7/18/1955 -- 21¢

6¢ airmail

15¢ certified

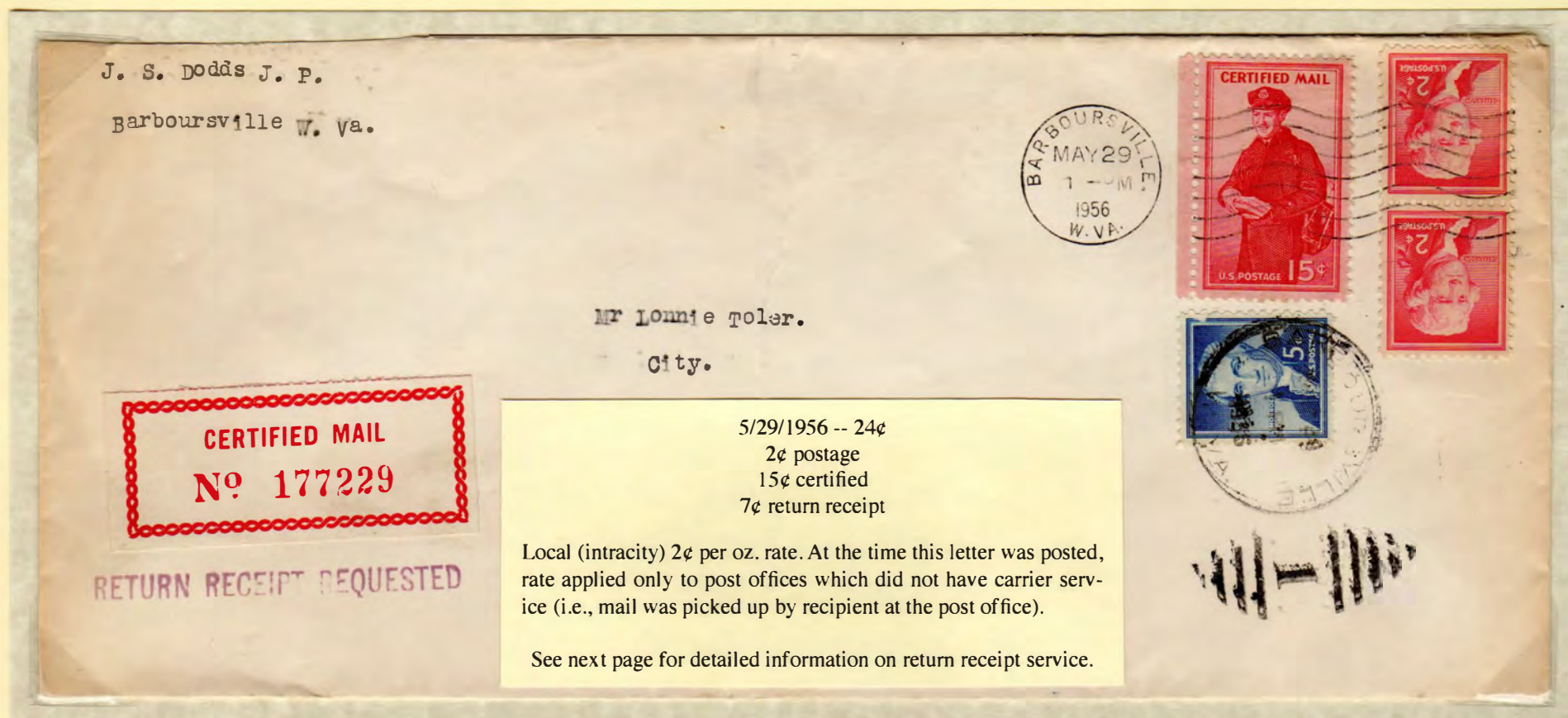
(convenience 2¢ overpayment of 4¢ postcard airmail rate; 6¢ was the letter rate)

Post Office Department Change of Address Card
Hawaiian inter-island service, Honolulu, Oahu to Hanalei, Kauai

Hanalei is a small (pop. 450, 2010 census) census-designated place (CDP) on the north shore of Kauai. It was the backdrop for the 1958 musical film *South Pacific*. Scenes were filmed in the town itself and at Lumahai Beach to the west of Hanalei.

Form 22-B (Rev. 12-51)	DATE July 18, 1955
USE THIS CARD TO NOTIFY YOUR CORRESPONDENTS OR PUBLISHER OF CHANGE OF ADDRESS	
EFFECTIVE AS OF <u>above date.</u>	
PLEASE CHANGE MY ADDRESS—	
FROM <u>1914 Manoa Rd.</u>	(STREET OR AVENUE)
(NO.)	
<u>Honolulu 14, Hawaii</u>	(CITY) (ZONE NO.) (STATE)
TO <u>2417 SONOMA Dr.</u>	(STREET OR AVENUE)
(NO.)	
<u>Honolulu 14, Hawaii</u>	(CITY) (ZONE NO.) (STATE)
<u>Richard L. PATTERSON</u>	(PRINT NAME HERE)
GPO	(SIGN NAME HERE)

Letter -- Local



Letter -- Single Weight (1 oz.)

Letter -- 13¢
3¢ postage
15¢ certified

6/7/1955 (right)
First day of national service



6/24/1955 (left)

Autographed by Robert S. Bancroft, letter carrier in Washington, D.C. and modeler for the stamp vignette (center). Signed FDCs are well known. This autographed commercial use is quite unusual.

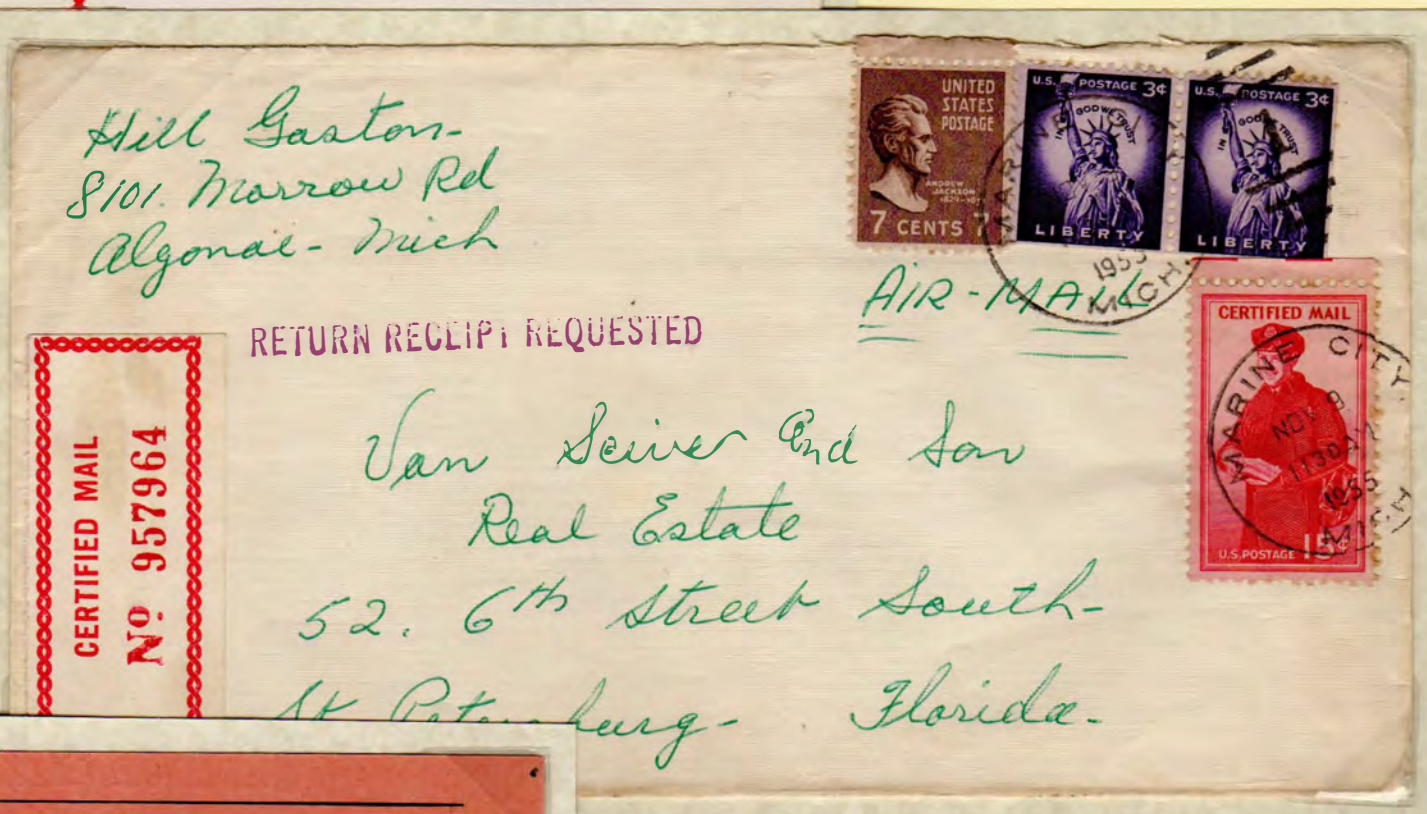
Letter -- Double Weight (2 oz.); Return Receipt



11/19/1955 -- 21¢
6¢ postage (3¢/oz)
15¢ certified

11/9/1955 -- 28¢
6¢ postage (3¢/oz)
15¢ certified
7¢ return receipt

For the payment of an additional 7¢ fee, the sender could receive a "return receipt" indicating delivery of the letter. A card addressed to the sender (scan, below right) was attached to the rear of the envelope. When delivered, the relevant information was completed on the other side of the card (below left) and the card was removed and returned to the sender.



DELIVERING EMPLOYEE ☐ Deliver ONLY to addressee.
☐ Show address where delivered.

Received from the postmaster the registered, certified, or insured article, the number of which appears on the face of this return receipt.

1. _____
(Signature or name of addressee)

2. _____
(Signature of addressee's agent—Agent should enter addressee's name on line ONE above)

Date of Delivery _____

☆ U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1955 16-71548-1

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

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

REGISTERED NO. _____
CERTIFIED NO. _____
INSURED NO. _____

NAME OF SENDER _____
STREET AND NO. OR P.O. BOX _____
POST OFFICE _____
STATE _____

RETURN TO →

POSTMARK OF DELIVERING OFFICE

POD Form 3811
Apr. 1955

Scan of front of card; note glue strips on sides for attaching to back of cover.

Letter -- Triple Weight (3 oz.)



Letter -- Quadruple Weight (4 oz.)



Letter -- Quintuple Weight (5 oz.)

6/16/1957 -- 30¢
15¢ postage (3¢/oz)
15¢ certified

Street name correction

No answer on first delivery attempt (6/17). There are no other markings, so delivery was evidently successful on a subsequent attempt.



Letter -- Octuple Weight (8 oz.)

Package Clipping

6/24/1955 -- 39¢
24¢ postage (3¢/oz)
15¢ certified

6¢ postage due; only 18¢ postage originally applied

Package had to have been sent first class, not parcel post. Certified service could not be used for parcel post, only for first class mailings.

Airmail -- Single Weight (1 oz.)



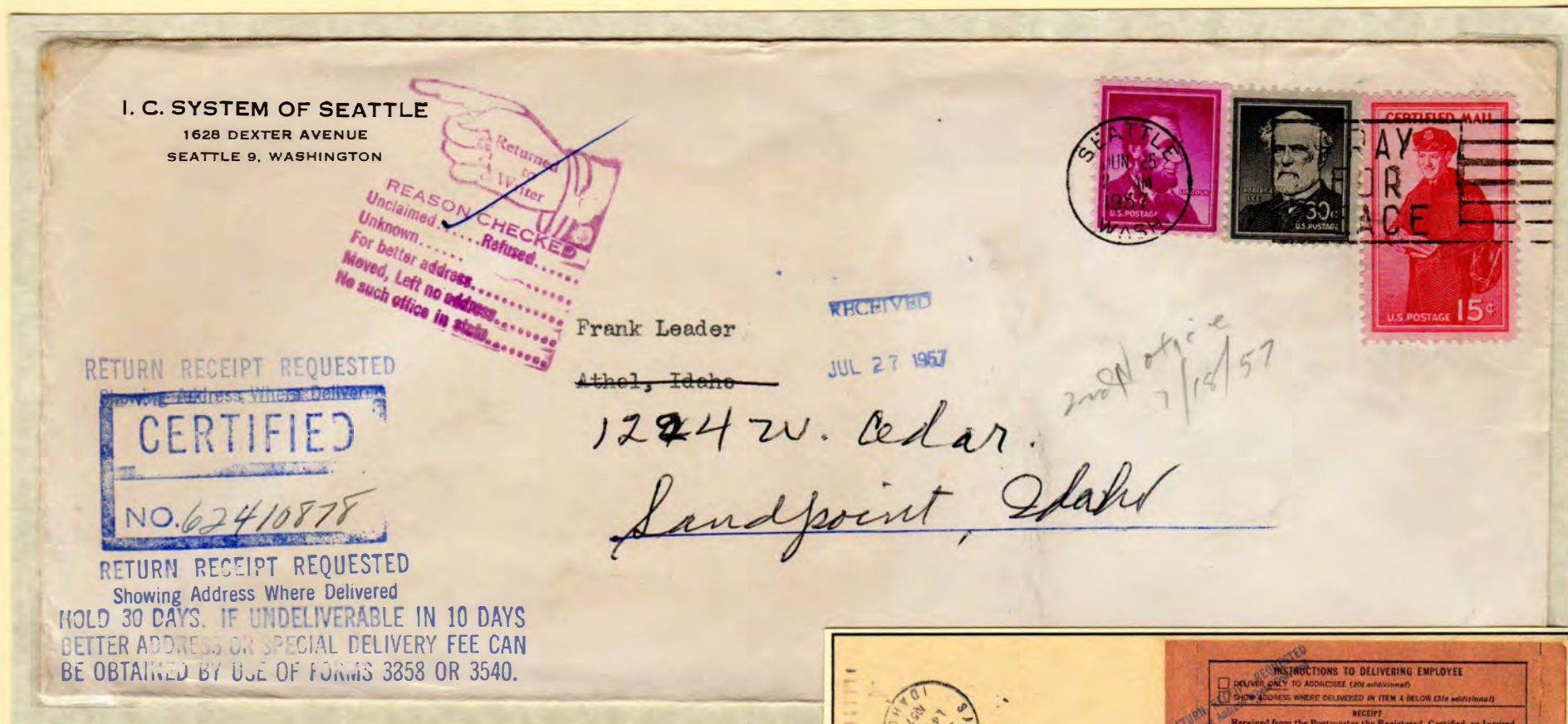
Special Delivery



Airmail, Special Delivery



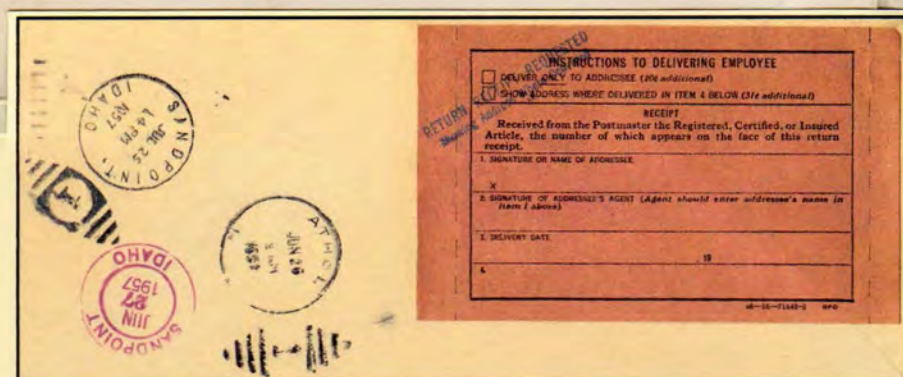
Return Receipt Showing Address Where Delivered



Return to Writer -- Unclaimed

6/25/1957 -- 49¢
3¢ postage
15¢ certified
31¢ return receipt
w/address delivered

6/25 - Sent from Seattle
6/26 - Received in Athol, Idaho, for-
warded
6/27 - Received in Sandpoint, Idaho
7/18 - Second notice
7/25 - Returned to sender from Sandpoint
7/27 - Received back in Seattle



Returned to Writer & Related Markings

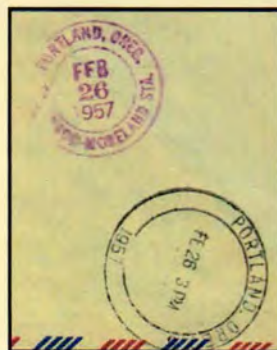
Return to Writer -- Unclaimed

2/13/1957 -- 21¢
6¢ postage (3¢/oz)
15¢ certified

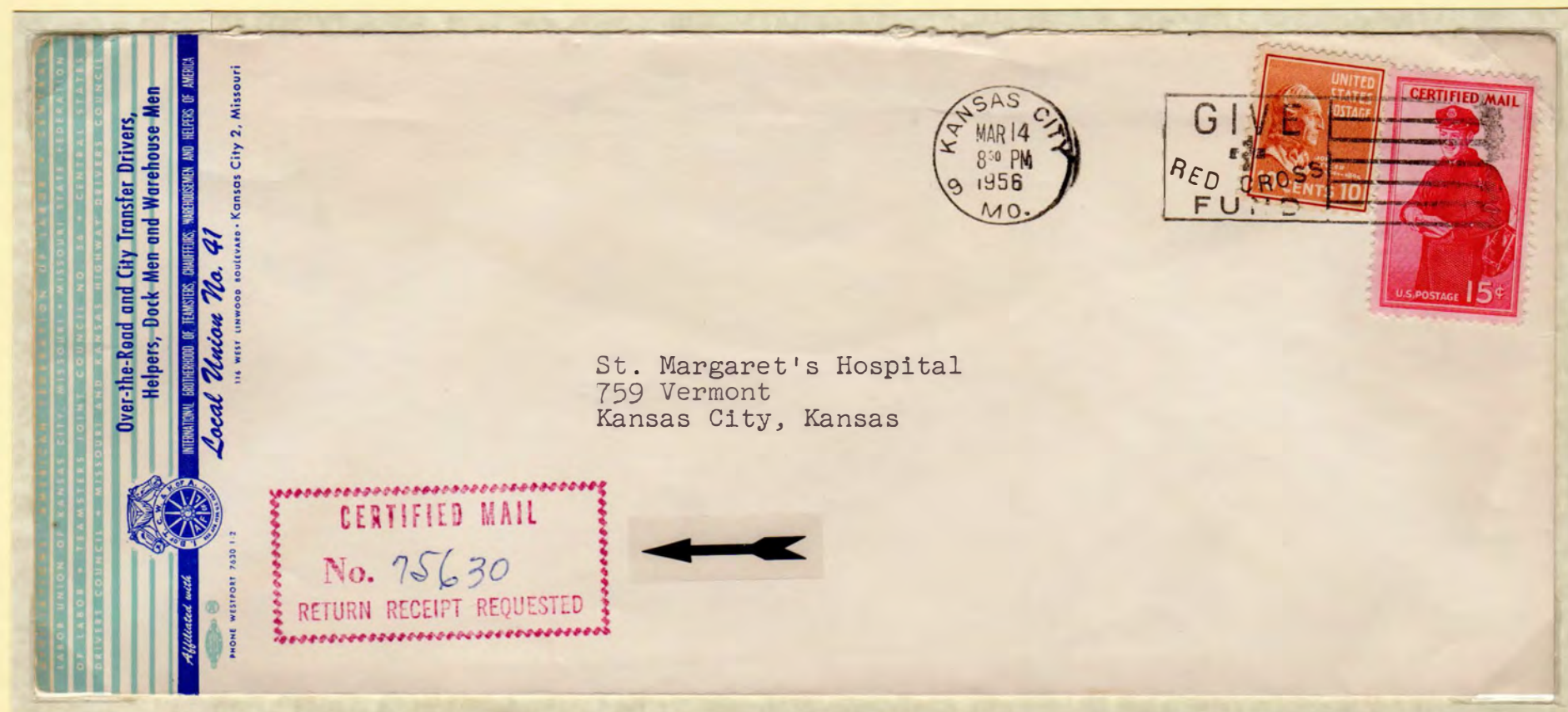
Handstamped 1st and 2nd notifications

The manuscript notations above the addressee are non-standard, unknown markings. The 'NID' in 'NIDDH' may mean 'Not in Directory'.

Portland 2/26/1957 back-stamps indicate the date cover was returned to sender.

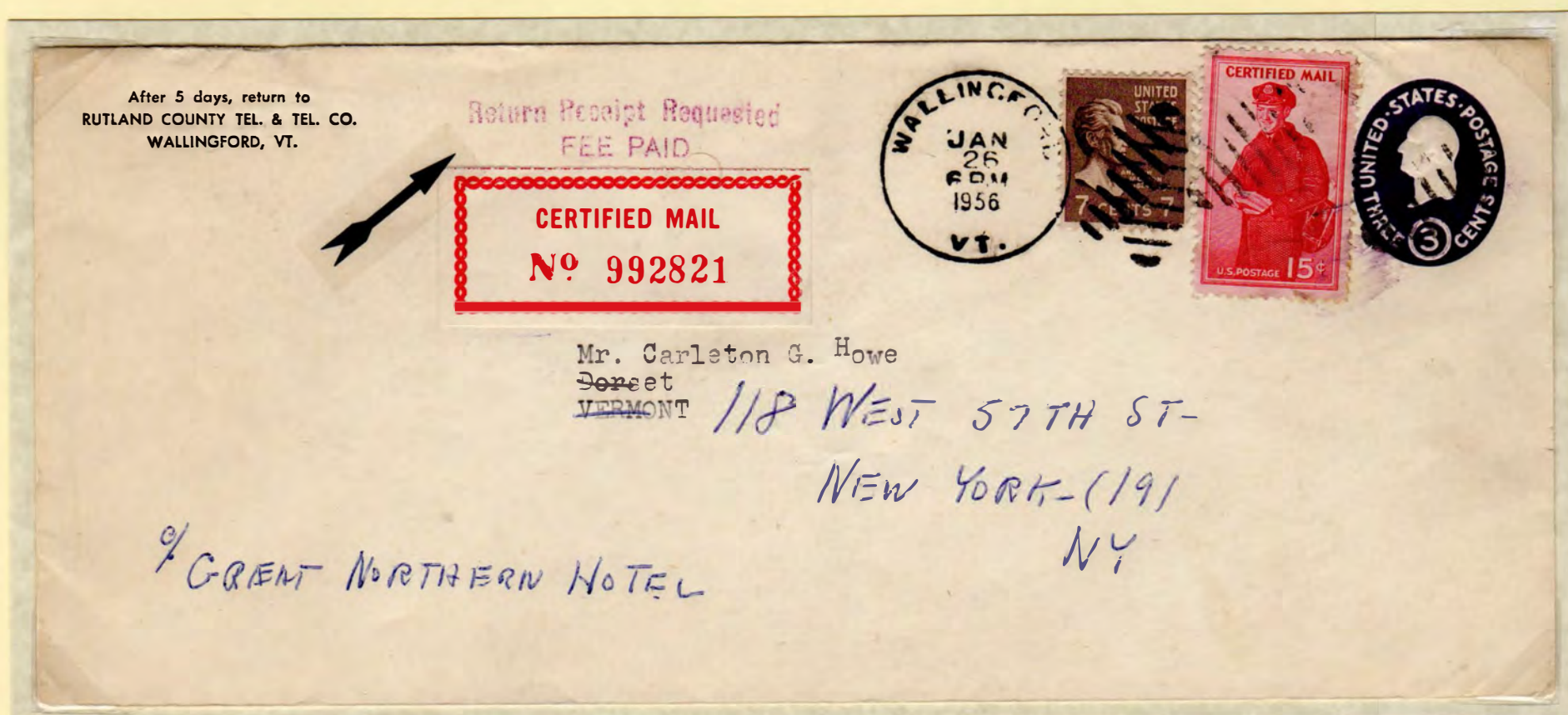


Certified Markings Not Previously Shown



Handstamp certified mail indicator

Large users of certified mail, typically businesses, could get a ledger from the post office with a list of certified mail numbers already entered. These users would apply a custom handstamp to the envelope to show certified status and would write the next number from the ledger, while recording the necessary mailing information in the ledger itself. This was a significant time saver for the mailer. These uses are very seldom seen.



Government Official Use

Federal Government
Department of Justice

??/10/1955

Probably 3¢ postage
15¢ certified

The *OFFICIAL BUSINESS, PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE*, and *EMPLOYMENT SECURITY MAIL*... endorsements covered only the basic surface postage; the certified fee had to be actually paid, thus the certified mail stamps on official government correspondence.

State Government -- West Virginia

Undated

Probably 3¢ postage
15¢ certified



APO to APO

9/7/1955 -- 18¢
3¢ postage
15¢ certified

Unusual APO (Army Post Office) to
APO use.

APO 42 (42nd Infantry Division) Bad
Kreuznach, Germany
to
APO 185 (40th Infantry Division) Mainz,
Germany



Unauthorized Use

Unauthorized Postage Use Airmail to Germany

11/12/1955 -- 15¢
Correct airmail rate
(11/1/1946-->4/30/1967)

The certified mail stamp was authorized only for paying certified mail fees. There are no "postage due" or "return to sender" markings, so envelope was probably delivered to Germany as addressed. There are no backstamps.



Last Day of Rate



Last Day of 15¢ Certified Rate
June 30, 1957

The certified mail rate increased to 20¢
on July 1, 1957

6/30/1957 -- 21¢
6¢ airmail
15¢ certified

Signed by Walter A. Smith,
Indianapolis Postmaster