

# NORTH DAKOTA



## **“Official Business” State Departmental Offices Illustrated Covers 1860 - 1960**

Compiled by Mike Ludeman



Hosted in the Stamp Smarter Library

<https://stampsmarter.org/learning/StateGovCovers.html>

# **NORTH DAKOTA: “Official Business” Illustrated Covers and Corner Cards**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Mike Ludeman**

Although the use of an envelope to securely enclose a letter sent through the mails has been around for many centuries, it was not until the 1840s when several events occurred that brought them into widespread use in the United States. The first was the invention of manufacturing equipment which could mass produce the envelopes inexpensively, and the second was the change in how the United States Post Office Department calculated the way it charged for the postage to carry a letter through the mails. The early rates were based on the number of pieces of paper that made up the letter, and since the envelope was considered a separate sheet, the rate would automatically be doubled for a letter sent in an envelope. This occurred as the result of the Postal Act of March 3, 1845, when rates were changed to consider the weight of the letter rather than the number of sheets comprising the mail piece. This law became effective on July 1, 1845.

By the early 1860s, several state governments had begun to produce decorative envelopes with an all-over background design for use in their “Official Business” correspondence. The typical design included some representation of the official state seal in the upper left corner, together with the name of the individual department or agency, either as part of the design with the seal or in the background of the entire envelope. As these envelopes were often printed in bright colors, they no doubt readily caught the attention of their recipients.

Eventually the local governments (county and city) began to emulate the state government, and some prepared illustrated envelopes for use in their departments and agencies.

The present monograph is an initial effort to document and illustrate these envelopes which were used at all offices within the current state. It is not intended to be complete in all respects, such as one might expect in a formal handbook or catalog but has been prepared to provide the reader with an introduction to a representative sample of the styles and varieties of envelopes that were used during this period, and perhaps educate the collecting community as to the possibilities that could exist in collecting them.

The initial section will include those envelopes used by the state agency and departmental offices, which are typically located at the state capitol. The state department envelopes have been organized into an alphabetical order based on the agency or department name. These department names were not always consistent, as they evolved over time, and therefore, these are usually grouped by what the compiler believed was the most obvious choice. Within the envelopes from a specific

A second section was prepared to include envelopes from agencies and departments prepared for and used by the county and other local (city) governments. The organization of this section was arranged in alphabetical order by county, then by county seat, and finally by date, with any envelopes from a city office in the county to follow.

Only the illustration of front side of these envelopes has been included, unless there is some significant postal history element present on the reverse. When the envelope illustrated also included contents related to the purpose of the office, the contents, or at least the illustrated portion of the

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letterhead or billhead, were also included. As the search for relevant envelopes proceeded, other state and county documents with “interesting” billhead type illustrations were encountered, and because I found these interesting in terms of explaining the purpose for the use of these envelopes, they were included as well.

## DAKOTA TERRITORY AND NORTH DAKOTA

The region that eventually became the states of North and South Dakota was originally part of the Northwest Territory and the northernmost part of the lands acquired in the Louisiana Purchase. As new settlers moved into the unorganized territories, the regions were organized by the United States Congress into a series of new named territories, and when the population reached a critical level, the territory would become a state, and lands not part of the new state were redistributed into new territories.

In 1861, the Dakota Territory (D.T.) was created out of unorganized lands from the Minnesota Territory and the Nebraska Territory, and the provisional capitol was established at Yankton, D.T. These lands also included much of what would later become Montana and Wyoming. Growth was slow until the 1870's because of the Civil War and the threat of the Sioux tribes who were the original settlers. Most settlement was in the southern part of the territory near the Nebraska border until the discovery of gold in the Black Hills.

Yankton continued as the territorial capital from 1861 until 1883, when it was moved to Bismark. Efforts to achieve statehood began at that time, but were unsuccessful until February 22, 1889, when President Cleveland signed a bill dividing the Dakota Territory in half, creating what would become North and South Dakota to the east, where they became states on November 2, 1889, and splitting off much of the western portions into the Territories of Montana and Wyoming, with the understanding that all four would achieve statehood in a short period of time. Bismark became the capital of North Dakota. Montana became a state on November 8, 1889, and Wyoming followed shortly thereafter when it became a state on July 10, 1890.

Counties were established in the Dakota Territory as early of 1862, as the population necessary to establish local governments reached the necessary levels. Pembina county was established in 1867, and others soon followed, although the last of the current 53 counties were not established until 1916. The evolution of the South Dakota counties is complicated and beyond the scope of this Introduction.<sup>1</sup>

The organization of envelopes in the following sections will not distinguish between those used during the Dakota Territorial period and the statehood of South Dakota. Because of the late settlement of this state and its counties, it does not appear that any of the traditional all-over illustrated envelopes were acquired by the state government for use by its departments.

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<sup>1</sup> List of counties in North Dakota, Wikipedia, URL = [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_counties\\_in\\_North\\_Dakota](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_counties_in_North_Dakota) , accessed July 17, 2021.

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## THE FUTURE PLANS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The complete series of these monographs has been hosted on the Stamp Smarter website through the courtesy of Don Denman. These are not intended to be an active project of the original compiler, but the source documents (a simple Microsoft Word file) can be made available to other collectors who would be interested in taking responsibility to add new materials to them.

For the immediate future, the compiler solicits the contribution of digital scans that illustrate envelopes which are not present in these monographs, including those present but were used with different dates. Preference will be given to those envelopes with the all-over illustrations, and the state/local buildings and seals, and those used prior to 1920. Contributions of envelopes from any state will be welcome. It is requested that the submitted envelopes should be scanned at 300dpi and provided in the JPG format when possible. Images of envelopes created with a camera or iPhone are not really useful unless they are carefully focused and prepared with no angular distortion. If contributing more than a small number, please contact me to discuss options other than email.

All contributors will be acknowledged in the monograph(s) for which they submit examples unless requested otherwise. Any errors are the sole responsibility of the compiler, and please bring any errors found to my attention.

Mike Ludeman

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v3

# NORTH DAKOTA: "Official Business" Illustrated Covers and Corner Cards

## State Capitol

Constructed 1883-1884; additions 1894 & 1903; burned 1930



Postcard image courtesy of eBay seller slingwing, June 2021.

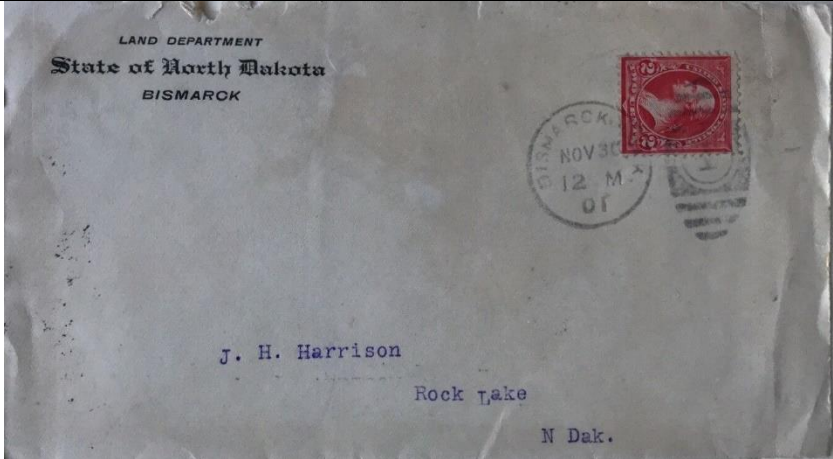
## New Capitol

Constructed 1931-1934



Postcard image courtesy of eBay seller crowspostcards, June 2021.

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<b>ID:</b>	<b>State:</b> North Dakota	<b>County:</b> Burleigh	<b>City:</b> Bismark
<b>Dates:</b> 30 Nov 1901	<b>Color:</b> Black on gray	<b>Size:</b> Regular	
<b>Office:</b> "LAND DEPARTMENT / State of North Dakota / BISMARCK"			
<b>Notes:</b>			
<b>Source:</b> Image courtesy of eBay seller calloohcallay11, May 2021.			
			

## **Part 2**

# **NORTH DAKOTA**

## **County & City Agencies**

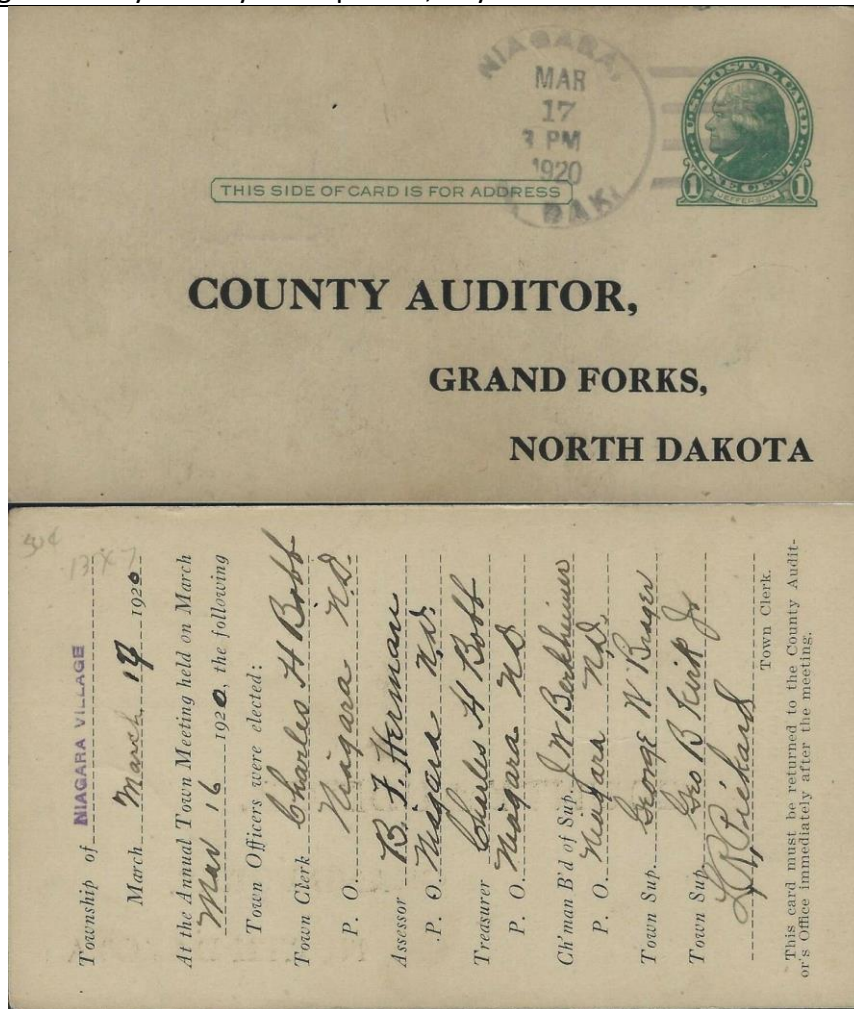
### **“Official Business”**

## **Envelopes**

**Arranged by County and City**

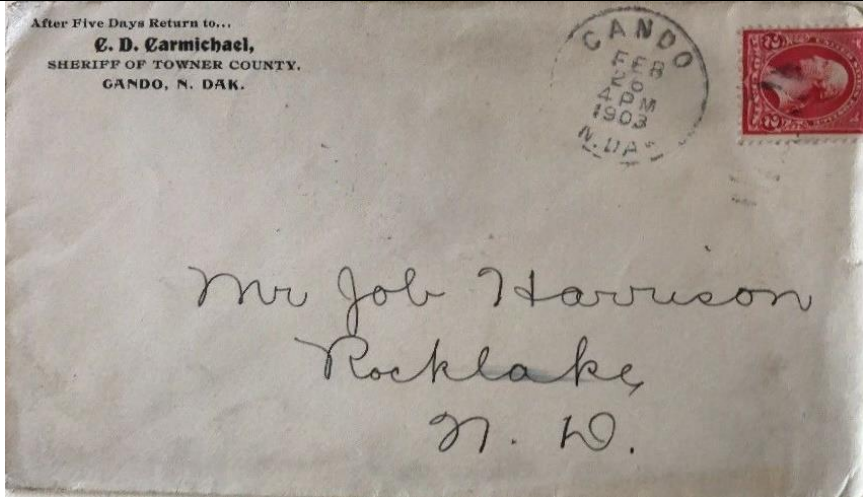
# NORTH DAKOTA: "Official Business" Illustrated Covers and Corner Cards

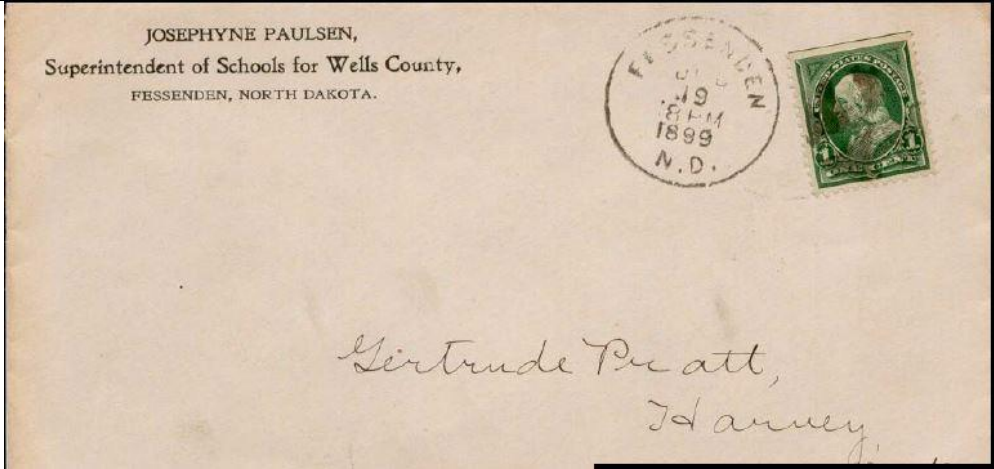
<b>ID:</b>	<b>State:</b> North Dakota	<b>County:</b> Grand Forks	<b>City:</b> Niagara
<b>Dates:</b> 17 Mar 1920	<b>Color:</b> Black	<b>Size:</b> Postal card	
<b>Office:</b> "COUNTY AUDITOR / GRAND FORKS, / NORTH DAKOTA"			
<b>Notes:</b> Tabulation of election results.			
<b>Source:</b> Image courtesy of eBay seller precan, July 2021.			





# NORTH DAKOTA: "Official Business" Illustrated Covers and Corner Cards

<b>ID:</b>	<b>State:</b> North Dakota	<b>County:</b> Towner	<b>City:</b> Gando
<b>Dates:</b> 26 Feb 1903	<b>Color:</b> Black	<b>Size:</b> Regular	
<b>Office:</b> "C. D. Carmichael, / SHERIFF OF TOWNER COUNTY."			
<b>Notes:</b>			
<b>Source:</b> Image courtesy of eBay seller calloohcallay11, May 2021.			
			

<b>ID:</b>	<b>State:</b> North Dakota	<b>County:</b> Wells	<b>City:</b> Fessenden
<b>Dates:</b> 19 Dec 1899	<b>Color:</b> Black	<b>Size:</b> Regular	
<b>Office:</b> "JOSEPHYNE PAULSON / Superintendent of Schools for Wells County,"			
<b>Notes:</b>			
<b>Source:</b> Image courtesy of The Dakota Collector, Oct 2002, p. 13.			
			

## Part 3

# NORTH DAKOTA

## Private Business’s Using designs similar to the “Official Business” Envelopes

Arranged by County and City

**No covers identified.**

## **Part 4**

# **NORTH DAKOTA**

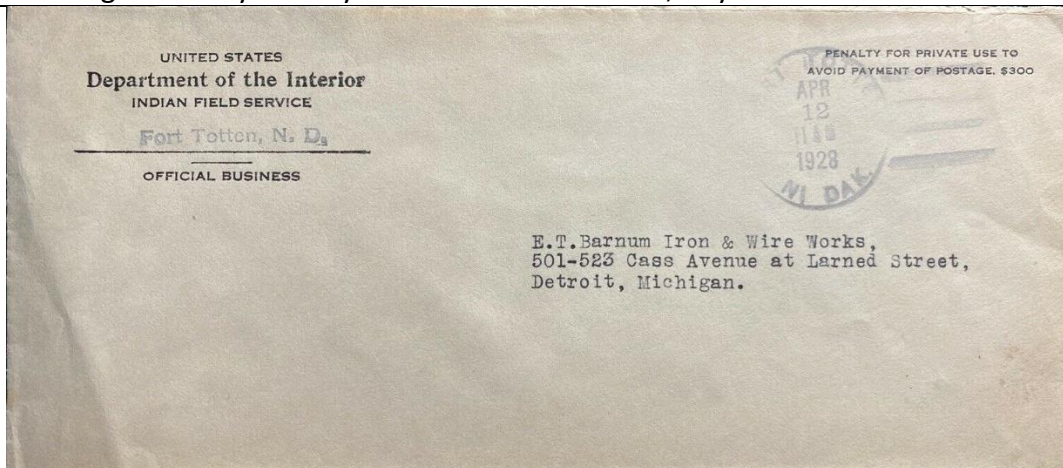
## **Federal Department & Agency Envelopes**

### **Used within the State**

**Arranged by County and City**

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<b>ID:</b>	<b>State:</b> North Dakota	<b>County:</b> Benson	<b>City:</b> Fort Totten
<b>Dates:</b> 12 Apr 1928	<b>Color:</b> Black	<b>Size:</b> Legal	
<b>Office:</b> "Department of the Interior / INDIAN FIELD SERVICE."			
<b>Notes:</b>			
<b>Source:</b> Image courtesy of eBay seller Aztec-collectibles, July 2021.			



<b>ID:</b>	<b>State:</b> North Dakota	<b>County:</b> Ward	<b>City:</b> Minot
<b>Dates:</b> 1 Oct 1909	<b>Color:</b> Black	<b>Size:</b> Regular	
<b>Office:</b> "Department of the Interior / UNITED STATES LAND OFFICE."			
<b>Notes:</b>			
<b>Source:</b> Image courtesy of eBay seller paperhistory, June 2021.			

