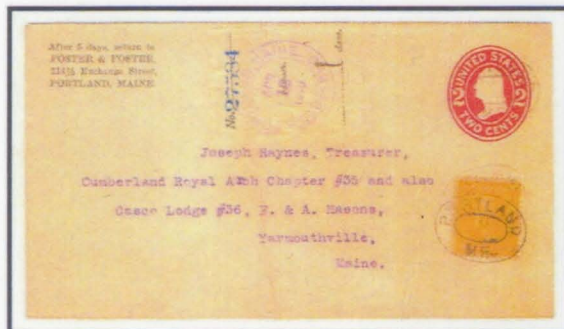


# REGISTERED U.S.A.

The Handling of Valuable First-Class Mail by the U.S.P.O.  
Rates, Markings, Delivery Restrictions, and Processing Procedures



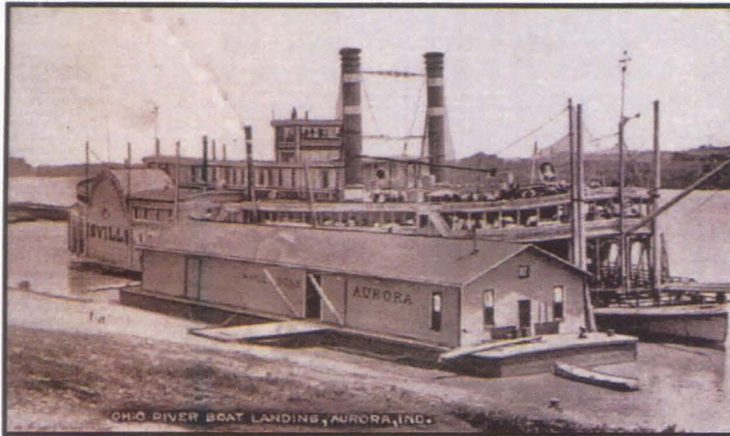
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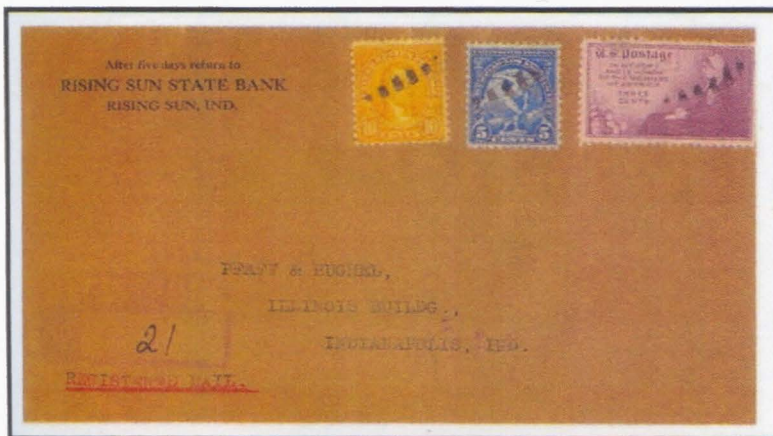


*Ohio River Images  
Cincinnati to Louisville in the Packet Boat Era*

Our Ghost Airfields of Indiana Project began when we could not find any listing of closed Indiana airfields. Its field research sure beats staring at microfilm in a library. Well, someone had to do it!



Registered U.S.A. is our first philatelic publication. Russ has collected and studied Indiana Postal History since he was in high school. Evelyn collects and researches U. S. stamps designed by artists from Indiana. We look forward to sharing additional philatelic information in the future.



*Rising Sun, Indiana is where this all began.*

The pleasures of life come from sharing your journey through it with friends. Philately, like most avocations, is best experienced in the company of others. We give special thanks to the following philatelic friends who have so generously given of their time and knowledge in making this study possible:

David Straight,  
Ellen Preache,  
Arthur H. Hadley,  
and John Becker III.

Life is too important to take yourself too seriously. Russ wants to give additional credit to his grandmother who, early in his life, pointed out he could not spell "shxx," the inventors of spell- and grammar-checkers who thought they could miraculously turn straw words into golden prose, and his wife and editor who can.



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# INTRODUCTION

The Registry Service evolved from the handling of valuable first-class mail prior to its formal inception July 1, 1855. This additional service available at any post office on sender-declared valuable letters shows up on items found in many areas of postal history study.

This study is presented in the following sections:

Handling Valuable First-Class Mail before 1855	4 - 13
Registered Mail in the Cash Fee Era 1855 - 1867	14 - 27
Improving the Security of Registered Mail 1867 - 1879	28 - 61
Streamlining the Processing of Registered Mail 1879 - 1909	62 - 97
Restructuring the Registered Mail System 1909 to 1923	98 - 115
Registration Fees Based on Indemnity Value 1923 - 1971	116 - 145
Delivery Options Available on Registered Mail	146 - 151
Analyzing the Travels of Registered Mail	152 - 156

Please consider this document a first effort in covering a complex topic. This book shares what has been learned to date. There are still additional research paths to travel in the future as time permits. We hope to expand our work to cover the U.S.P.S. era after 1971 at some future date. We are working on a supplement to this study presenting various markings found on registered mail. Corrections, additions, comments and questions always welcome.

## Why I Collect Registered Covers (a personal note)

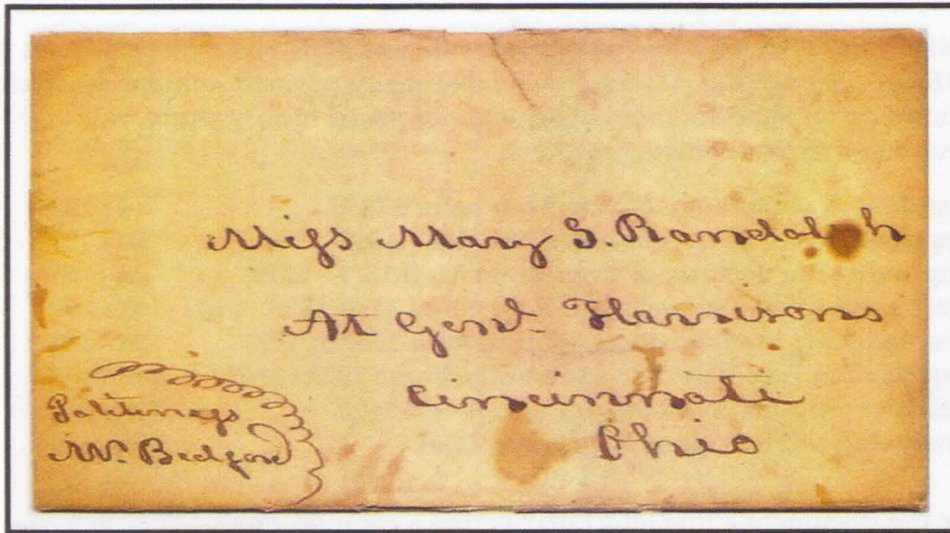


Los Angeles, CA March 15, 1926

Among the millions of registered covers handled by the U.S.P.O. between 1855 and 1971 you occasionally find a gem. It may be franked by rather common stamps. It does not represent a hard-to-find rate or an obscure topic. It just is. Collect what you enjoy and share your knowledge and love of the hobby with others.



## Handling Valuable First-Class Mail before 1855



Laurenceburgh (Lawrenceburg), IN December 17, 1825 (by date line)

The mistrust of sending money by first-class mail was widespread. This letter containing money from a brother, Abner H. Dill, to his adopted sister was carried outside the mails by a friend. His father was a prominent politician and former postmaster of Lawrenceburg, Indiana.

Money and other valuables had been sent via letter mail at the sender's risk on a regular basis since the inception of the postal service. *Postal Regulations* clearly stated valuables were included in the mails strictly at the owner's risk and that the post office or its revenues were not liable for any financial losses.<sup>1</sup> Vigorous enforcement and prosecution efforts appear to have kept the pilferage of valuable mail to a minimum. Still, the loss of valuable mail was a growing problem as the volume of mail carried over increasingly longer distances grew with each passing year.

The majority of post offices served a very limited geographic area. Towns and villages contained at most a few hundred postal patrons. Some larger city post offices served a few thousand patrons. Most patrons were known by name to their postmaster, postal clerk, or in later years their letter carrier. The major exceptions to this circumstance involved the delivery of mail to itinerant travelers passing through the area or persons newly moved into the community.

Letters were addressed assuming the addressee would call for them at the post office of destination. The addresses contained the name of the person to whom a letter was to be delivered, the post office at which this person resided or regularly received mail, and the county and state in which that post office was located. Street addresses were not always readily available or required.

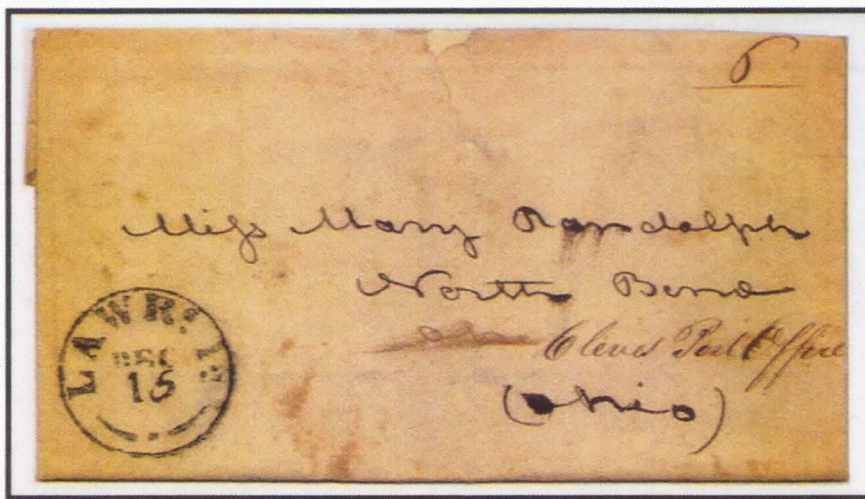
Postal procedures clearly defined who had the right to take delivery of a letter. Chapter 24 of the *Postal Regulations* published in 1847 best summarize these requirements.<sup>2</sup> Assuring mail was delivered to its intended addressee relied heavily on the personal knowledge of the postmaster or clerks at the post office of destination. The person entitled to take delivery of a letter was the addressee or another person in whose care the mail was directed. Addressees could also instruct the post office to make delivery of incoming mail in accordance with their order. The order was in some cases implied when a person was in the habit of receiving letters through a relative, clerk, or servant.

The mail transportation system provided the most opportunity for valuable letters to go astray. Mail was wrapped according to its destination and placed in pouches carried by contractors between post offices. Mail traveling further than the end of the contractor's route was directed to a distributing post office (D.P.O.). There the wrapped mail packets were again sorted for dispatch on the appropriate route to their post office of destination or its closest D.P.O.

1. *Postal Laws and Regulations of 1832*, Chapter 34, Sec. 286.

2. *Postal Laws and Regulations of 1847*, Chapter 24, Sec. 181 - 185.





Laurenceburgh (Lawrenceburg), IN December 15, 1828 (by date line)

This letter containing \$5 was mailed by former postmaster James Dill to his adopted daughter at the "Cleves Post Office" which served the small community of North Bend, OH.

Banks and other commercial interests utilized private stage or express companies to move valuable packages. They were prohibited by law from carrying letter mail for a fee. A local private post appeared in New York City in 1842 but was shortly taken over by the government.<sup>3</sup> It made provisions for "registering" valuable letters for an additional fee but no examples are known to exist.

Express mail service was offered on a few routes by the U.S.P.O. beginning in 1836.<sup>4</sup> Its purpose was to expedite the delivery of mail over longer distances. It specifically excluded "money letters" to minimize exposing the post rider or coach to undo danger of robbery.

Long-standing postal regulations prevented the implementation of some logical steps to improve the security of valuable items in the mails. Postmasters were forbidden to place any mark on a letter that might indicate it was of value. However, they were instructed to report missing valuable mail when there was proof that both the item had a valuable enclosure and that it was missing from the mails. The postal system provided no documentation of either fact.

Comments proposing a specific service for the handling of valuable mail including indemnity against loss first appeared in the *Postmaster General's Report* issued November 17, 1828:

It may be advantageous to the public and the Department, at some future time, for it to become the insurer of moneys transmitted in the mail, being authorized to charge a higher rate of postage in such cases, to indemnify for the risk incurred. To guard against frauds, this responsibility must necessarily be limited to packets mailed at the principal offices, under such regulations as shall afford the greatest possible security.

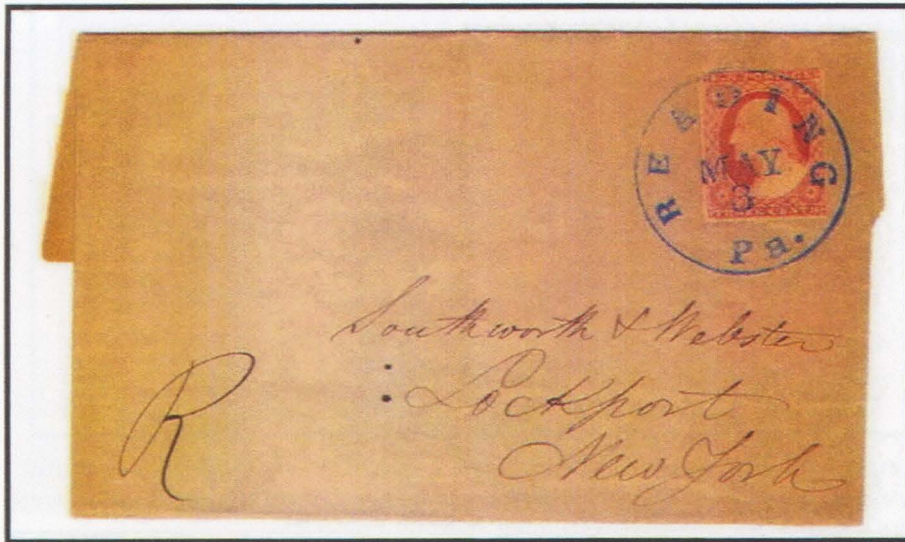
Inquiries about providing a registry service increased along with a growing customer demand for a more secure method of mailing valuable enclosures. England, Canada, and other countries began the detailed tracking of letters of value in the 1840's for a "register" fee in addition to the payment of the usual postage. The English service in particular was proving itself to be an effective solution to the problems associated with securing valuable mail.

The U.S.P.O. desired to improve the public's conception of the safety of items entered into the mails. A balance had to be struck between the need to identify valuable mail so it could be traced on each step of its journey from sender to addressee versus marking it as a prime target for theft. Records needed to be kept so the point at which a valuable letter went astray could be discovered. All of this would require additional, detailed pen-and-ink record-keeping further complicating the struggle to process on a timely basis the increasing volume of mail needing transport over increasing distances.

3. Delf Norona, "Genesis of Our Registered System," *American Philatelist*, Vol. 47 No. 8, May, 1934, p. 407

4. *Postal Act* approved July 2, 1836, sec. 39.





Reading, PA May 3, 1854 ( by date line)

Manuscript "R" possibly added at either the post office of mailing or the post office of delivery. This is a one-sheet, folded letter from the Farmers Bank of Reading, PA to Southworth & Webster acknowledging receipt of a "Cert. of Deposit" drawn on the Bank of Lockport.

Documenting an unofficial system is a challenge. One can only infer its existence and function by analyzing letters containing valuable items, newspaper articles, and other period documents. Letters known to carry money or other valuable content bearing an "R" or similar notation begin to appear in October of 1845. The number of known examples increases over the next ten years until the establishment of the official registry system July 1, 1855. Today, we can only identify with certainty valuable letters handled in the unofficial registry system when they meet the following criteria:

The item is dated between the fall of 1845 and June 30, 1855; and

The item contains some notation documenting it received special attention because of its value.

Postal inspectors investigated postmasters, clerks, and mail contractors as probable suspects whenever a valuable letter was never received or its envelope was delivered pilfered of its contents. There was always the issue whether the missing valuable item had actually been enclosed. Period newspaper articles document cases resolved when the sender finally acknowledged the missing item was not enclosed or was mailed without a proper address. The unofficial registry system existed where documentation was kept of valuable letters entered into the mails to protect postal personnel handling the items from false accusations of misconduct and to provide a trail for later investigation.

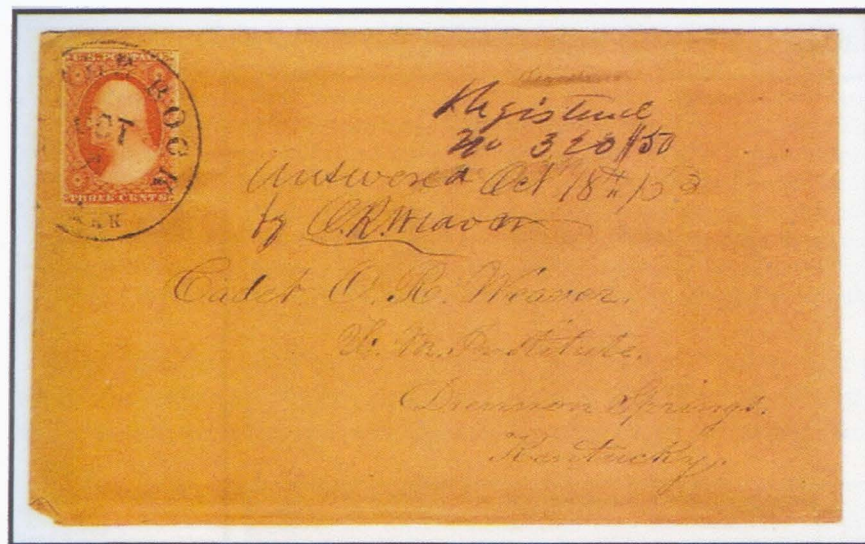
There were no provisions in postal regulations for giving postal patrons a receipt for depositing a valuable letter into the mail or verifying its contents, although cases of this having been done are reported. No record was kept of individual valuable letters processed or delivered at a post office. The 1847 *Postal Laws and Regulations* included the following:

Sec. 218. Money, or other valuable things, sent in the mail, is at the risk of the owner. But, if it be lost, the Department will make every effort in its power to discover the cause, and if there has been a theft, to punish the offender.

Sec. 220 No reported loss will be investigated by an agent, unless satisfactory evidence is produced, either by the certificate of the postmaster, or some other disinterested individual that the money or other valuable thing was deposited in the post office.

Section 218 is identical to section 286 of the *Postal Laws and Regulations* issued in 1832.





Little Rock, AR October 4, 1853  
(by addressee notation)  
Manuscript "Registered" and  
"No 320 \$50".

Chillicothe, OH April 14, 1854  
(by date line)

Postage-collect, business letter  
containing \$30 marked with a  
manuscript "Registerrd".



The unofficial registry system first appears at Philadelphia in 1845. New Orleans operated an unofficial registry system from 1851 to 1855. James Holbrook noted in his book *Ten Years Among The Mail Bags* that a register of valuable mail was kept at the New York City post office in 1853 but known valuable letters are not marked indicating their status.<sup>5</sup> Unofficially registered mail increasingly appears from a few additional post offices after 1853.

Public requests for the establishment of a formal registry system slowly moved the U.S.P.O. toward formalizing the unofficial system. The costs associated with resolving an increasing number of missing valuable items became greater than the problems created by providing, for an additional fee, a more secure system for tracking valuable letters from sender to addressee.

Official releases issued by governmental executive departments were published in the Washington, D. C., newspaper, *The Semi-Weekly Union*. The U.S.P.O. finally acknowledged it was aware of the existence of an unofficial registry system at some post offices by publishing the following notice June 30, 1855:

Registering Letters. — We are advised that postmasters should make no record or marks upon registered letters by which the fact of their containing money or other valuables may be suspected or made known. It has been ascertained that, in some instances, postmasters are in the habit of marking the word "registered" on the outside of such letters, together with the amount of money enclosed. The practice is unauthorized and impolitic, and is forbidden by the department.

5. James Holbrook, *Ten Years Among The Mail Bags*, (Philadelphia, PA: H. Cowperthwait & Co., 1856), p. 99.





Trenton, NJ February 24, 1846 (by date line)  
Valuable letter mailed to Philadelphia where it received the large "R" marking.

The unofficial registry service appears to have its beginnings at Philadelphia, PA in October of 1845. F. S. Eaton surveyed a large correspondence finding about 100 items, known to be of value, receiving an "R" handstamp upon their arrival at Philadelphia.<sup>6</sup> Additional examples are known on mail to other addressees at Philadelphia. This mark is known struck by both a large- and small-sized device in either blue or red ink between October, 1845 and late 1854.

The following newspaper article appeared in the *New York Times* October 20, 1852. It is the most complete description available of how valuable mail was separated from the regular mail for dispatch without letters being marked in a manner indicating their status. It also documents that valuable mail was marked or unofficially registered upon receipt at Philadelphia.

#### Philadelphia

Post Offices of the United States—Interior View of one of them—Mail Distributions—  
Registration of Money Letters—Curious Facts and Anecdotes—The Old and New Law. . . .

The mail system of this country is remarkable for its widely-extended organization. The whole land is ramified and intersected by innumerable post routes, and the remotest frontier settler, on the outposts of civilisation, is brought within the reach of mail conveniences. . . .

Philadelphia is a discreet, Quakerly matron, and, satisfied with her Mint, she is willing patiently to endure the abominations of her post-office establishment.

As the routine in regard to the disposition of mail material is not generally known, I will briefly allude to it.

The letters which are dropped in through the slips from the outside, are taken from the receptacle, and are faced, rated, and stamped. The paid ones are marked accordingly. They are then deposited in a large box, horizontally placed, and furnished with six compartments, superscribed respectively, "odd mails," "steamers," "New-York City," "Eastern," "Western," and "Southern." This is a preliminary distribution, after which they are divided into a number of sections, and cased, that is, put into a number of pigeon-holes, preparatory for their transmission to the different offices. When they are about to be made up, they are taken out of these cases, examined, and way-bills are made out to accompany them. The next step is to put them in wrappers and tie them. The **more valuable mails** [emphasis added] are deposited in canvas bags, which are nozzled and labeled, and then sealed with the seal of the office. These bags are then deposited in ample leather pouches, and locked with the United States mail locks. Thus equipped and secured they are sent on their destination.

6. Norona, *op cit*, p. 413.



*New York Times* October 20, 1852 article continues:

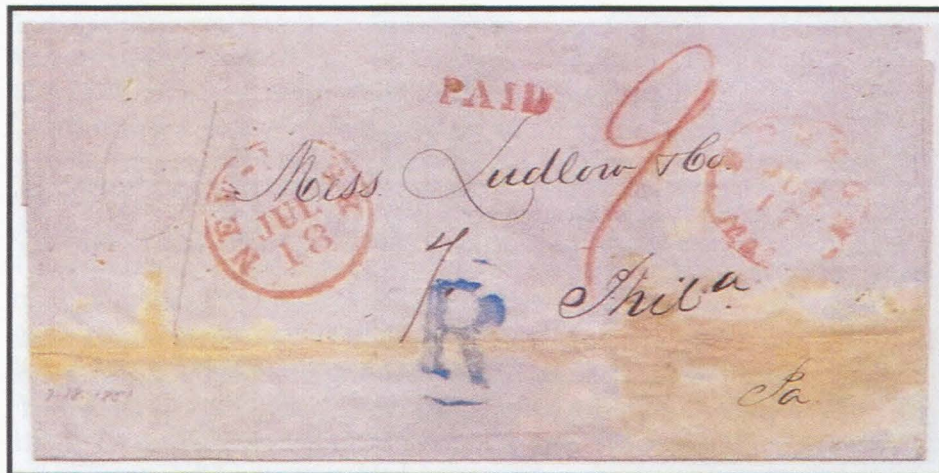
When a mail arrives, the following ceremonies are performed. The huge pouches are dragged in and made to disgorge their contents. The letters are collected, and the different packages examined to see if they correspond with the way-bills. A further examination takes place of all letters supposed to contain valuables or money, and all such are carefully put aside to be **registered** [emphasis added]. Money letters which arrive at the office are uniformly registered [Money letters contain bank notes and currency], but **those forwarded are not** [emphasis added], unless a special request to that effect is made. The registration of valuable letters is a very important matter. Upon an average, fifty thousand dollars a day, in bank bills, are registered in this office. A few minor offices in Pennsylvania, but no other large offices in the country, adopt this plan. There should be a public law enforcing the general observation of it. . . .

Most valuable items were not marked until they arrived at their post office of destination. This article shows how receiving postmasters could identify valuable letters by the way they were secured under seal in separate canvas bags amongst the other incoming mails in locked leather pouches.



Philadelphia, PA January 14, (year not given)

This item was unofficially registered and numbered at Philadelphia before being mailed to Columbia, PA. Its franking, five cents, and postmark are consistent with letters sent postage collect between July 1, 1845 and February 28, 1855.



Boston, MA July 17, (year not given)

A previous owner's pencil notation at lower left attributes this item to 1851. Crayon "9" and "PAID" may indicate three units of three-cent first-class postage were paid by the sender consistent with the postage rate that became effective July 1, 1851. New York July 18 postmark is consistent with a misdirected letter forwarded to its proper destination where the Philadelphia "R" was applied.





Indianapolis, IN April 18, 1847 (by date line)

Large "R" applied to an incoming unofficially registered letter. Ten-cent first-class postage for a letter traveling over 300 miles collected from the addressee upon the delivery of this letter.



Baltimore, MD November 1, 1850 (by contents)

Small "R" applied to an incoming unofficially registered letter. Five-cent first-class postage for a letter traveling up to 300 miles paid by sender.

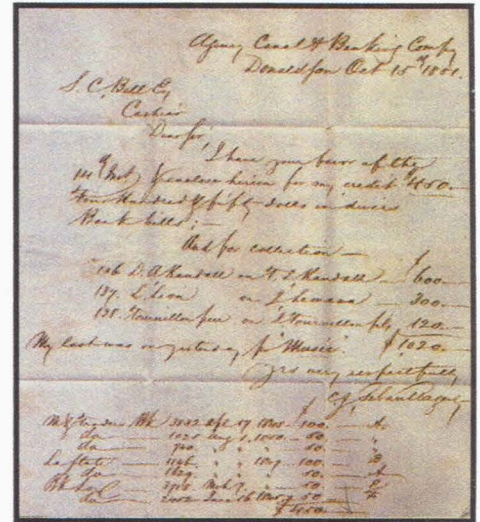
An unknown quantity of valuable mail daily passed through U.S.P.O. post offices unmarked. Very few items that can be year-dated prior to 1852 are known bearing unofficial registered markings. However, the practice of separately wrapping valuable letters in sealed bags as described in the October 20, 1852 article, or a similar practice, seems to have been widely performed. Both Indianapolis and Baltimore, large distributing post offices, apparently separated valuable letters from the regular mail upon dispatch facilitating their unofficial registration upon arrival at Philadelphia.

The unofficial registry system at Philadelphia illustrates the next practical step that could be easily implemented internally at a large post office to improve the security of valuable mail. The application of special notations to incoming sender-declared-valuable letters further assured they would receive special care until delivered to their addressee.



# The New Orleans Experiment 1851 - 1855

An unofficial registry system appears in New Orleans by August of 1851.<sup>7</sup> The first reported valuable letter mailed at New Orleans marked "registered" is dated November 20, 1851. An increasing number of unofficially registered valuable letters continue to appear into 1855.



Donaldsonville, LA October 15, 1851 (by contents)

"Registered No. 197" on letter containing \$450 in bank notes.

It is difficult to conclusively say whether the manuscript registered notation on this item was applied at Donaldsonville or New Orleans. It would seem more logical that 197 pieces of valuable mail would pass through the New Orleans post office given its size.

The New Orleans unofficial registry system contained several elements later adopted by the U.S.P.O. Postmaster Michel Musson established a register of valuable mail, numbered each item when it was entered and provided the addressee a printed notice requiring their signature in order to take delivery of a valuable letter.<sup>8</sup>

The illustration at the right is a reduced rendition of how this 5 1/2" x 8" notice and delivery confirmation form, printed on gray paper, appeared, based on known examples. The short line at the top was for the item number assigned by the post office that appears on each letter. The first line on the bottom is for the addressee's signature when the item was picked up at the post office. The second line is for the date the item was picked up.

William G. Kendall succeeded Musson as postmaster April 7, 1853. Most known examples of unofficially registered mail from New Orleans are from his administration. Unfortunately, his tenure as postmaster ended in a scandal involving the pilfering of unofficially registered mail.<sup>9</sup>

NEW ORLEANS POST OFFICE,

..... 1854.

Sir

You are requested to call on the undersigned for

Valuable Letter

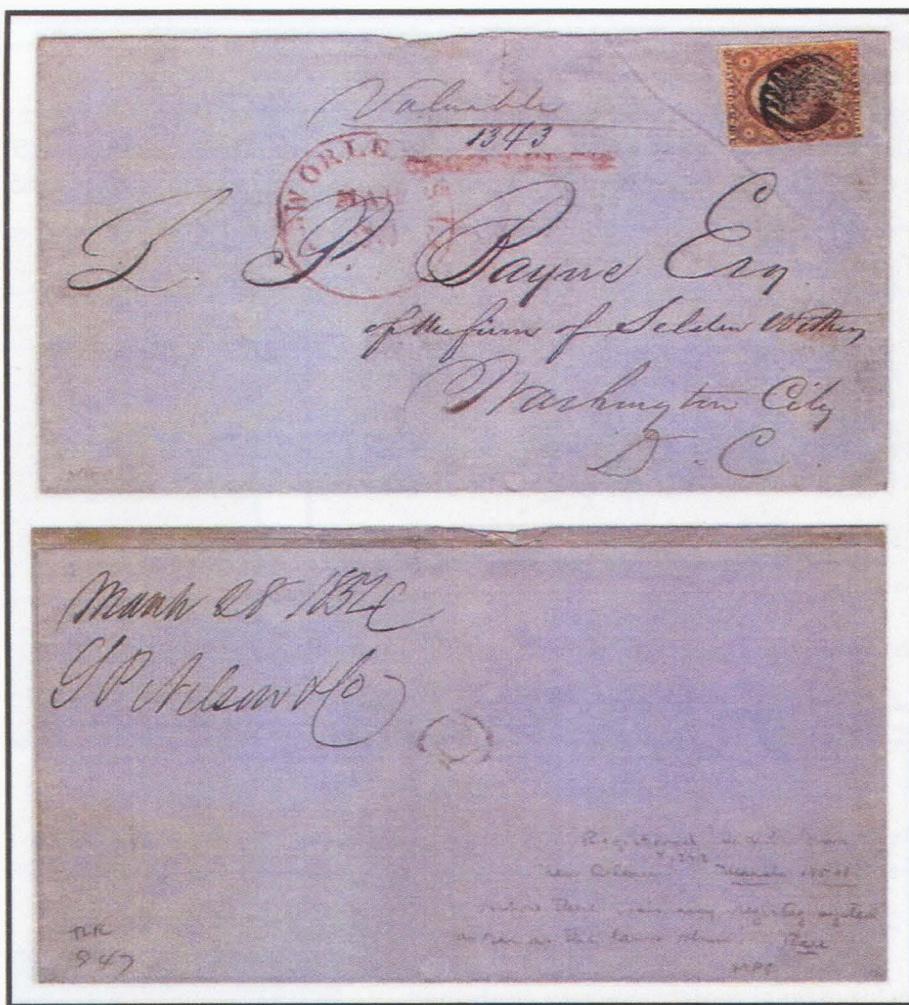
W. G. Kendall, P.M.

Received Valuable Letter as above

.....

7, 8, 9. Leonard V. Huber and Clarence A. Wagner, *The Great Mail*, (State College, PA: APS, 1949) p. 122.





New Orleans, LA March 28, 1854 (by notation on reverse)

Straight-line "REGISTERED" struck in an ink matching that used on the postmark applied at post office of mailing. Manuscript "Valuable" possibly added by the sender. A previous owner of this outer sheet without contents noted in pencil the following comment on its reverse side:

Registered in red from New Orleans #1343 March 1854  
before there was a registry system so far as the law shows.

Postmaster Kendall was arrested on April 25, 1855 for embezzlement. The charges resulted from bank notes removed from valuable mail registered at New Orleans which were subsequently mailed to their destination for redemption under a fictitious name. Someone at the New Orleans post office with access to the registered mail clearly appears to have been involved in this scheme. The case hinged on who actually wrote the bogus signature. Postmaster Kendall was not convicted at his trial because testimony could not conclusively prove the identity of the signatory.<sup>10</sup>

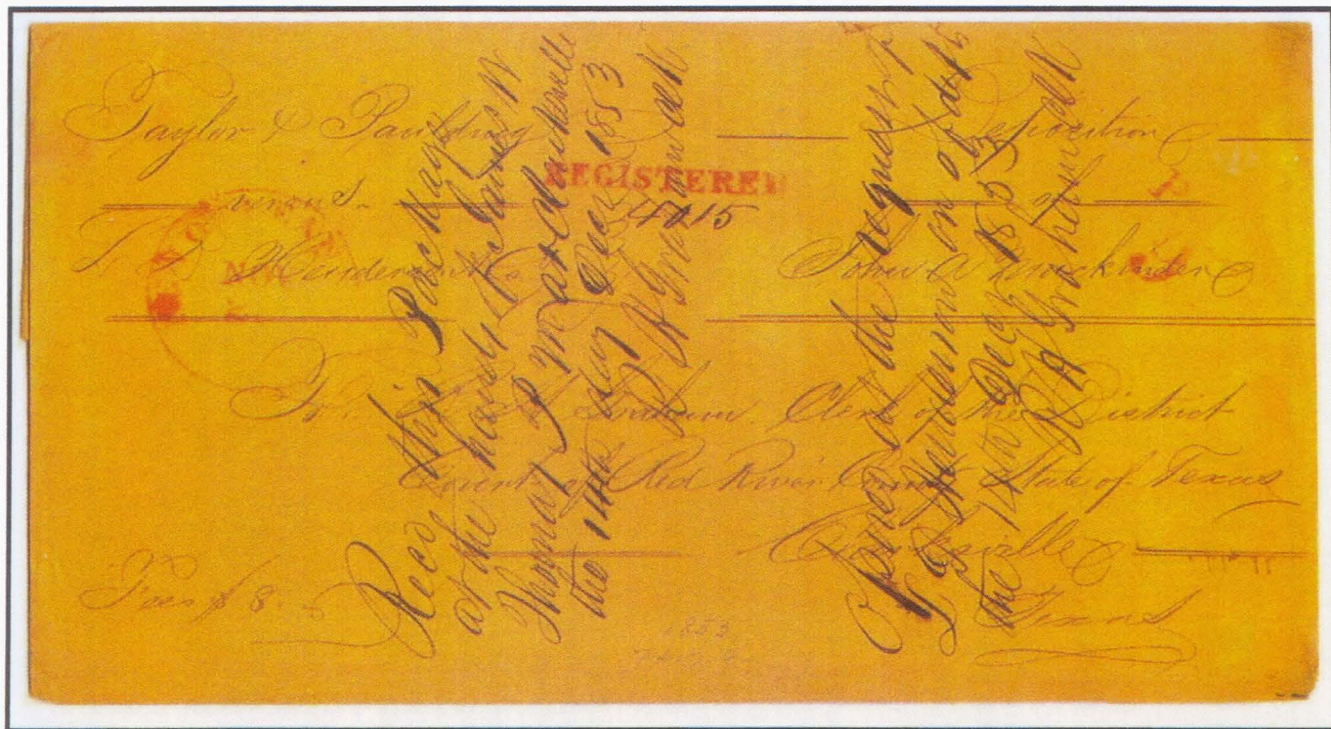
The same day Postmaster Kendall was indicted the three postal inspectors working the case were also indicted by a local court for tampering with the mail. They freely acknowledged as a part of their investigative duties they had opened mail at the New Orleans post office addressed to other people. The local courts treated them like criminals as Postmaster Kendall was treated even when they showed such actions were proper for postal inspectors.<sup>11</sup>

Yes, items were pilfered from the registered mail at the New Orleans post office. Exactly who and how many parties were involved in the act remains unclear. This affair provided additional fuel for a growing number of newspaper articles critical of the handling of valuable mail by the U.S.P.O.

10, 11. Huber, and Wagner, *op. cit.* p. 126.

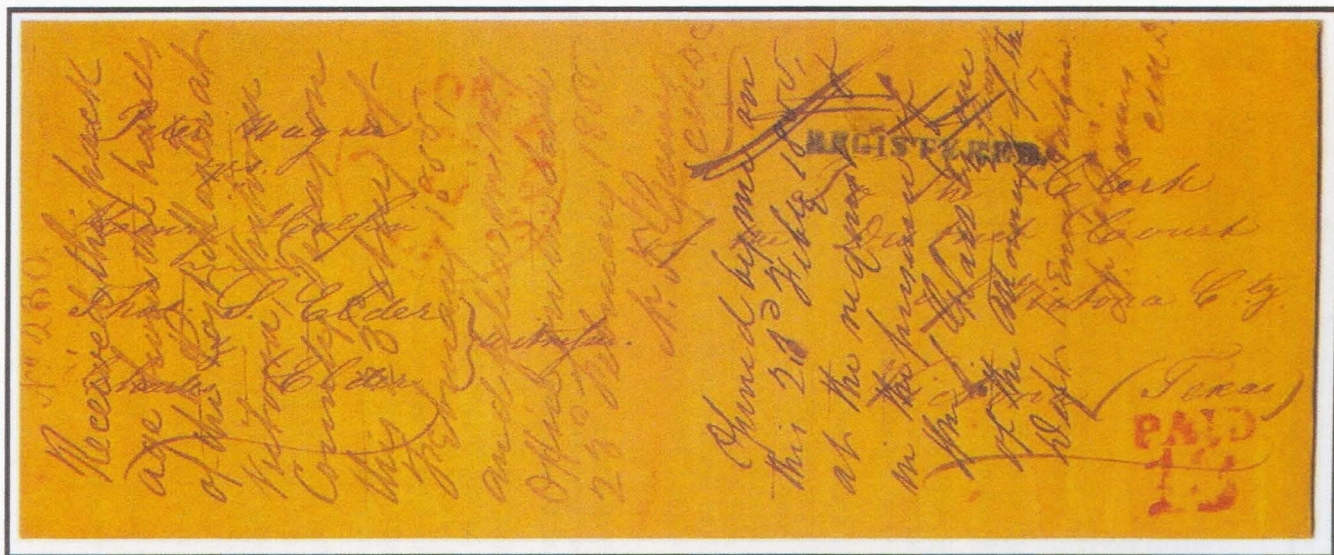


New Orleans was the first post office known to routinely mark outgoing valuable letters with a straight-line "REGISTERED" device. A number of items seen were heavily docketed when received at their post office of destination.



New Orleans, LA November 29, 1853

Unofficially registered letter mailed at New Orleans with straight-line "REGISTERED" handstamp.



New Orleans, LA February 18, 1855

Unofficially registered letter mailed at New Orleans with straight-line "REGISTERED" handstamp.



## NEW POSTAGE ACT.

AN ACT further to amend the act entitled "An act to reduce and modify the rates of postages in the United States, and for other purposes," passed March three, eighteen hundred and fifty-one.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled.* That, in lieu of the rates of postage now established by law, there shall be charged the following rates, to wit:

For every single letter in manuscript, or paper of any kind in which information shall be asked for or communicated in writing, or by marks or signs, conveyed in the mail for any distance between places in the United States not exceeding three thousand miles, three cents; and for any distance exceeding three thousand miles, ten cents.

And for a double letter there shall be charged double the rate above specified; and for a treble letter, treble those rates; and for a quadruple letter, quadruple those rates; and every letter or parcel not exceeding half an ounce in weight shall be deemed a single letter; and every additional weight of half an ounce, or additional weight of less than half an ounce, shall be charged with an additional single postage; and upon all letters passing through or in the mail of the United States, excepting such as are to or from a foreign country, the postages as above specified shall be prepaid, except upon letters and packages addressed to officers of the government on official business, which shall be so marked on the envelope. And from and after the first day of January, eighteen hundred and fifty-six, the Postmaster General may require postmasters to place postage stamps upon all prepaid letters upon which such stamps may not have been placed by the writers.

And all drop-letters, or letters placed in any post office not for transmission through the mail, but for delivery only, shall be charged with postage at the rate of one cent each; and all letters which shall hereafter be advertised as remaining over, or uncalled for, in any post office, shall be charged with one cent each, in addition to the regular postage, both to be accounted for as other postages now are.

SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That it shall not be lawful for any postmaster or other person to sell any postage stamp or stamped envelope for any larger sum than that indicated upon the face of such postage stamp or for a larger sum than that charged therefor by the Post Office Department; and any person who shall violate this provision shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and, on conviction thereof shall be fined in any sum not less than ten nor more than five hundred dollars. This act to take effect and be in force from and after the commencement of the next fiscal quarter after its passage. *Provided,* That nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to alter the laws in relation to the franking privilege.

SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted,* That for the greater security of valuable letters posted for transmission in the mails of the United States, the Postmaster General be and hereby is authorized to establish a uniform plan for the registration of such letters on application of parties posting the same, and to require the prepayment of the postage, as well as a registration fee of five cents on every such letter or packet to be accounted for by postmasters receiving the same in such manner as the Postmaster General shall direct: *Provided,* That such registration shall not be compulsory; and it shall not render the Post Office Department or its revenue liable for the loss of such letters or packets or the contents thereof.

Approved March 3, 1855.





Lawrenceburgh (Lawrenceburg), IN July 5, (year not given)

Sender-declared valuable, first-class letter receiving registered service. Five-cent registration fee, payable in cash, effective July 1, 1855 to June 30, 1863. It is unusual for a cash fee item to indicate the rate paid. Manuscript "Private" with pointing hand and "For Registering 5 Paid" and "No 1." notations. Blue ink was used at Lawrenceburgh intermittently from 1853 to 1856. "Paid" and "5" rating devices match those seen used on earlier Lawrenceburgh stampless covers. "R" seen from several post offices on early registered mail.

The *New Postage Act* of March 3, 1855 authorized the Postmaster General to establish the registered mail service effective July 1, 1855. The registration fee was to be paid in cash. Additional stamps on a first-class letter paying the registration fee would have made a registered letter easily identifiable as being valuable in violation of postal regulations.

The voluntary payment of the registry fee provided the sender of a valuable first-class letter three additional procedures intended to provide a higher level of security:

The sender received a written receipt proving the letter had been mailed;

The U.S.P.O. documented the travels of the letter within the postal system; and

The addressee acknowledged its delivery by giving a written receipt.

Every step of each individual registered letter's journey from sender to addressee was documented by receipts, bills, and registers unique to the service.

The processing of a piece of registered mail under these regulations dramatically increased the amount of old-fashioned quill-pen-and-ink paperwork required of postmasters and clerks. It was not unusual to have postmasters openly discourage the use of the registry system. The U.S.P.O. did provide additional compensation for this workload.

A postmaster's compensation was directly related to the amount of postal revenue generated by his post office. Additional compensation was granted based on the amount of registered mail entered into the mails at a post office. Specifically, the *PL&R* (*Postal Laws & Regulations*) effective July 1, 1855 stated:

Sec. 191. . . . postmasters will enter [on their quarterly report] the amount of fees received for registry of letters, casting their commissions at 80 per cent thereof. . . .

The specific commission on registry fees was reduced to 50 percent July 1, 1863 and completely eliminated July 1, 1864 when Postmaster General Montgomery Blair placed postmasters on a salary. The salaries of postmasters of third- and fourth-class post offices were based upon their total revenue from postage stamps sold, including those used to pay the registration fee.<sup>1</sup>

1. D. D. T. Leech, *Post Office Department of the United States of America* (Washington: Judd & Detweiler, 1879 [reprint New York: Arno, 1976] p. 50





Wilkes Barre, PA August 21, 1855 (by addressee's notation)

Early registered items do not bear consistent markings. Here the word "Register" has been obliterated but the number "56" remains. The addressee appears to have noted payment of \$28.08 for taxes on its face after receiving this letter.

The first three months of the registry service continued the dichotomy between needing to mark an item as registered so it could be efficiently tracked versus the practical issue of such markings making a valuable letter more susceptible to theft. Registered letters were not to be marked in any way that attracted attention to their value. The *List of Post Offices In The United States - July 1, 1855* included the following regulation:

Sec. 347. Postmasters are forbidden to make any mark, or entry of any kind, on registered letters, indicating that they contain a valuable enclosure.

This philosophy prohibited the affixing of additional stamps paying the registration fee on a letter.

U.S.P.O. records indicate a total of 124,857 letters were registered between July 1 and September 30, 1855. We can only identify letters as having been registered during this period if they were marked in violation of this regulation. This restriction was modified in October, 1855 by Postmaster General James Campbell with respect to the numbering of registered letters.

The *New Postage Act* of March 3, 1855 set the registration fee at five cents but left the establishment of the processing procedures for registered mail up to the discretion of the Postmaster General with the following restrictions. The registration of a valuable letter was not compulsory; and, the Post Office Department or its revenue was not liable for the loss of any registered letter or its contents. Roughly the first three months of this new service operated under the following regulations:

*Instructions To Postmasters, And Notice To The Public* issued May 10, 1855:

Sec. 1. Letters, alleged to be valuable, posted at one Post Office in the United States, and deliverable at another such office, shall from and after the first day of July, 1855, be registered at the office of mailing, on the application of the person posting the same, and the payment of a registration fee of five cents.

Sec. 2. Postmasters are instructed to enter all such letters in a book to be prepared and kept for the purpose, to be called the Receipt Book (which, in small offices, will be prepared by stitching together the several sheets of blank receipts furnished by this Department,) containing blank receipts with a wide margin for a brief duplicate of each, as in Bank check books. The Postmaster will enter in this margin the number of the receipt, the date of filling it, the name of the person to whom the letter is addressed, and of the place to which it is to be mailed. He will then fill up the receipt to correspond with this marginal entry, separate it from the margin,



*Instructions To Postmasters, And Notice To The Public* issued May 10, 1855 continues:

Sec. 3. Registered Letters will not be entered in the ordinary accounts of mails received and sent, but separate accounts of such letters will be kept at each Post Office, to be called account of registered letters received, and account of registered letters sent, blanks for which will be furnished by the Department.

Sec. 4. When a letter has been received, registered, and receipted for, as directed in section 2, the Postmaster will enter its number, the date of mailing, the rate of postage, the name of the person to whom it is addressed, and of the office (whether of distribution or delivery) to which it is to be sent, in his account of registered letters sent. He will make a separate letter bill for each registered letter or parcel of registered letters for the same office of delivery or distribution, entering therein the number, address, registration fee, and rate of postage of each. He will then mail each such letter or parcel of letters, in a separate package from his unregistered letters, and will SEAL each package, after tying it in the usual manner. The letter bills of such registered letters will not be enclosed in the packages with them, but such letter bills will be enclosed in a separate wrapper or envelope, sealed and addressed to the Postmaster, at the office to which the corresponding package of registered letters is sent.

To prevent delay in the examination and comparison of letter bills, the Postmaster at each of the larger offices will assign to some confidential clerk (not employed in opening the mails) the duty of opening in his absence official letters addressed to him.

Sec. 5. In all large offices, where letters are received, entered and mailed by different persons it shall be the duty of the Postmaster either to keep the Receipt Book provided for in section 4, or to designate some one specially for that service.

The Postmaster, or receiving clerk, having received a letter for registry, will pass it to the clerk who keeps the account of registered letters sent, who will receipt for it by writing his name or initials across its marginal entry in the receipt book. He will enter it in his account of registered letters sent, and keep it in a secure place of deposit until the hour of mailing. He will then make up his letter bill of registered letters, which is to be forwarded in a separate sealed wrapper or envelope as provided in section 4, addressed to the Postmaster at the office to which the corresponding package of registered letters is to be sent. It shall also be his duty to make up each package of registered letters, seal the package with wax at the tie, address it to the office of its destination, and see that it is placed in its appropriate bag at the moment when that bag is to be finally locked and sent from the office.

Sec. 6. On the receipt at a distributing office, of registered letters for distribution, the clerk who opens and distributes the mail, will apply to the Postmaster, or to such one of his assistants as may be authorized to open official letters addressed to him, for the corresponding letter bill. Having compared the letters with the bill, he will indorse it "correct" if he find it so, or will note the error if there be one, and will pass it with the letters to the clerk who keeps the account of registered letters received for distribution, who will enter its contents in his account and indorse upon it his signature or initials. He will then fill up the corresponding return bill, noting upon it whether correct or otherwise, and will pass it to the Postmaster or his principal assistant, who will see that it is returned by the first mail thereafter with his indorsement, to the office of mailing.

Registered letters remailed at a distributing office for their respective offices of delivery, are to be passed from the charge of the clerk who keeps the account of registered letters received, into the charge of the clerk who keeps the account of registered letters sent (if two are employed in these duties) who will receipt for them by indorsing the original letter bill, and afterward dispose of them in the same manner as is provided in section 5 for letters originally mailed at the office.

Sec. 7. On the receipt of registered letters at the office of delivery, if it be a large one, the clerk who opens the mail will apply for the post-bill, and otherwise proceed in the same manner as prescribed in section 6. The clerk who keeps the account of registered letters received, will, on receiving the letter-bill enter its contents in his account, make a duplicate thereof on the blank return bill which accompanies it, and having indorsed thereon the word "correct" if it be so, or noted the error if there be one, he will pass it to the Postmaster or his principal assistant, who will inclose it in a sealed envelope and mail it direct by first mail to the address of the Postmaster from whose office the bill was received.

Sec. 8. On the receipt of registered letters at smaller offices of delivery, the Postmaster or his assistant will compare such letters with their letter bill, make a duplicate upon the blank return bill annexed, and will then mark the return bill correct, or note upon it any error found in the original bill, and inclose it in a sealed wrapper or envelope, and mail it direct by first mail to the address of the Postmaster at whose office it was originally mailed.

Sec. 9. When the duplicate letter bill of any registered letter or letters is returned from the office of distribution or delivery to the office where it was originally mailed, that fact shall in each case be noted by a check mark on the margin of the account of registered letters sent, opposite the original entry; and if it be not duly returned, the failure shall in like manner be noted by a different check mark, and such failure shall in all large offices be immediately reported by the clerk who keeps the account of registered letters sent to the Postmaster or his principal assistant, and each Postmaster will give immediate notice to the chief clerk of this Department of every such failure noted in his office.



*Instructions To Postmasters, And Notice To The Public* issued May 10, 1855 Sec. 9 continued:

If upon the receipt of any duplicate or return letter bill it be found on examination that a letter originally mailed with it is missing, or that any important error or discrepancy is indorsed on it, the fact will be duly noted on the account of registered letters sent, and immediately reported to the chief clerk of this department, and if the discrepancy implies a robbery of the mail, or if a money letter or package of considerable value is found to be missing, such report will be made by telegraph if possible.

It will also be the duty of the Postmaster to report by telegraph any mail robbery of which he may otherwise receive early information.

Sec. 10. On the delivery of a registered letter at the office of its destination, a receipt therefor will be taken from the person authorized to receive it, and such receipt will be carefully filed and preserved at that office.

The blank receipts furnished by this department can be used for this purpose, but Postmasters may adopt any other certain method of verifying the delivery of registered letters. . . .

It appears it was soon discovered the May 10, 1855 instructions did not efficiently provide for the timely matching of the registered bills with the letters they documented at post offices where multiple packages of registered letters had to be processed daily. Clerks labored to effectively receipt for each letter received then document how each letter was dispatched to another distributing post office or its post office of destination. The unique way the original instructions called for the sealing of the tie of registered packages made it obvious where the valuable mail could be found amongst the contents of the pouch.

Postmaster General Campbell issued additional instructions, published in the Washington D. C. *Semi-Weekly Union* October 10, 1855 (effective date not given) making important changes:

#### Registration of Letters--Important.

The regulations and instructions to postmasters for carrying into effect the 3<sup>d</sup> section of the act of March 3, 1855, providing for the registration of valuable letters, are, by the direction of the Postmaster General, modified, as follow, viz:

1st. So much of sections 4, 5 and 6 of these regulations as requires that packages of registered letters shall be sealed is hereby revoked.

2d. All registered letters are, before mailing, to be numbered on the upper left-hand corner; their numbers to correspond with those on the letter bills in which they are entered.

3d. Each registered letter, or package of registered letters, will be enclosed in a wrapper in the usual manner, and if there be a package of unregistered letters to be sent by the same mail, the package of registered letters will be placed in such package, without being tied, and the whole will then be carefully tied up into one package, addressed to the office of its destination, and placed in its appropriate bag at the moment when that bag is to be finally locked and sent from the office. If no unregistered letters are to be sent by that mail, the package of registered letters is to be tied and forwarded in the same manner without being sealed.

4th. The registered letter bill will be inclosed in a separate envelope, addressed to the postmaster, as now required, and will be forwarded by the usual route as an unregistered letter.

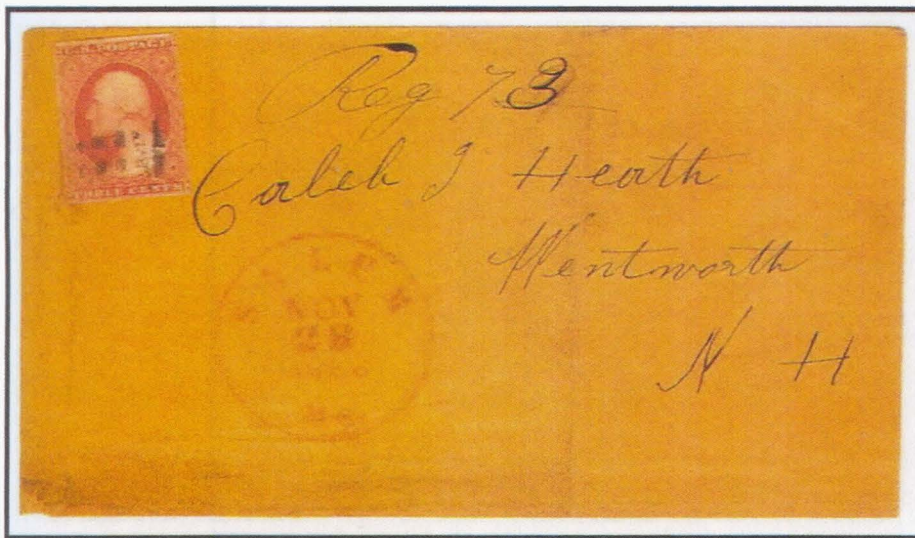
5th. The number given to registered letters at the office of mailing are not to be changed in the accounts or letter bills of distributing offices through which they may pass.

6th. Postmasters are required to see that the postmark of each registered letter (whether written or stamped) is clear and distinct, so that the place and date of mailing can be readily determined.

Registered letters themselves were now to be numbered to facilitate matching them with the accompanying Registered Letter Bill. This bill was sent by first-class mail enclosed in an envelope under the free frank of the postmaster in the same mail as the registered package. Some postmasters were in the habit of numbering valuable letters upon arrival at their post office prior to June 30, 1855. Some persisted in this practice thereafter. However, the trail back to the first number assigned a letter at its post office of mailing had to be maintained. Dual numbering of a registered item was necessitated by the practical need to have a sequential series of numbers over time for tracking incoming registered letters at their post office of destination.

Registered letters were now to be wrapped separately but packaged with the regular letters so they would not as obviously stand out as being of value. A thief now had to open every package of mail in a pouch to find the more valuable plunder.

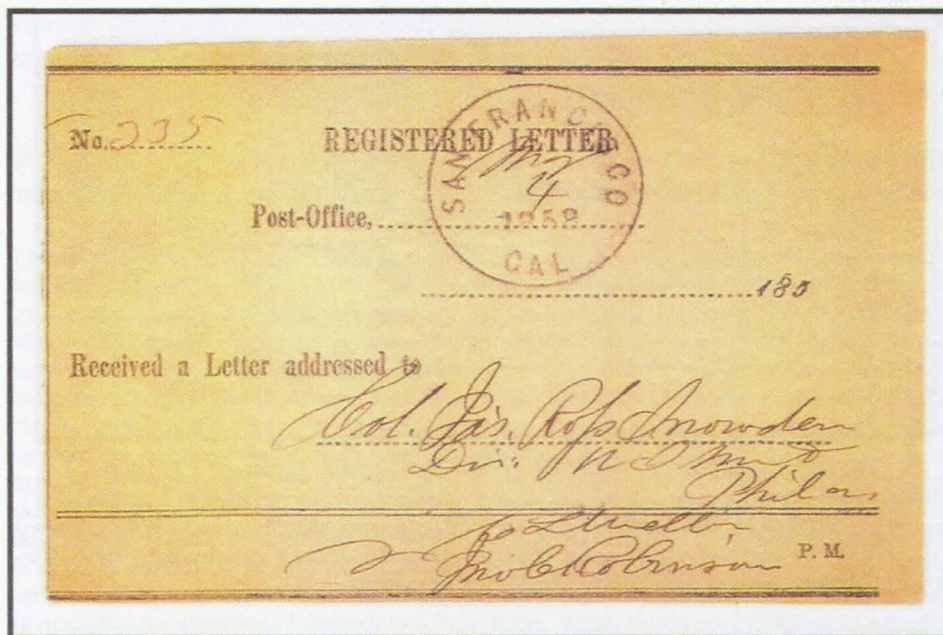




Salem, MA November  
28, 1856 (confirmed by  
date line)

Letter shown below states  
this envelope contained \$96  
which was a large sum in 1856.

Nov 28 1856 Mr Heath to  
I got all safe I got home all safe  
I have a little time & got watch money  
I want you & say Mr Colby 30 I  
& say Mr Jingles 24 I & say Sipper 24 I  
& say Chambers 18.50 30  
tell Clark & wait till I come up his  
detator was rotten & small  
I send you 96 Dollars I will send you some  
Money on Tuesday next 2500 Hutchmore you  
the Market is Dull & Fizzel



San Francisco, CA May 4, 1858

Receipt provided to a person upon mailing a registered letter.





New York, NY January 14, 1856 (by contents)

Envelope containing "Return Registered Letter Bill" dated January 13, 1856, franked by a postmaster's free-franking privilege, and sent first-class mail to the post office of mailing acknowledging receipt of the item listed on the return registered letter bill shown below.

**RETURN REGISTERED LETTER BILL.**

227 Upon the receipt of the package of Registered Letters to which the annexed bill relates, the Postmaster will make a duplicate bill thereof, by filling up this blank, and mark it correct, if it be found so, or note upon it any error that may be found. He will then enclose it in a sealed envelope, direct it to the Postmaster, and send it direct to True Office.

Post Office, *New York, Jan 13 1856*

REGISTERED LETTERS Received from *New Haven, Vt, Jan 12*

No.	To whom addressed.	Regis-try Fees. Cents.	Originally paid at this office.		Free.
			By Stamp. Dolls. & Cents.	In Money. Dolls. & Cents.	
<i>3104</i>	<i>Henry Boynton</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>		
	<i>Correct</i>				

*An. Calton*  
P. M.

Return Registered Letter Bill New York, NY January 13, 1856

Return Registered Letter Bill documents letter addressed to Henry Boynton entered as No. 3 at New Haven, VT January 12, received at New York, January 13, 1856, and entered in the Account of Registered Letters Received for delivery or distribution as number 3104. The clerk at New York properly noted this bill as being "correct" before mailing it back to the post office of mailing.





Cincinnati, OH August 10, 1857 (by date line)

"R" device used with manuscript "83" applied at Cincinnati. Faint manuscript "R" with manuscript number "9281" added at New York to assist in tracking this individual item among the many registered letters processed daily.

The *List Of Post Offices in the United States with the Names Of Postmasters, on the 13th of July, 1857* compiled from the records of the post office department by D. D. T. Leech and published by John C. Rives confirms the regulation requiring that an item number is to be entered on a registered letter:

Sec. 386. Where a letter has been received, registered, and receipted for, as directed in section 2, [referring back to the first regulations issued May 10, 1855] it is to be marked on its upper left-hand corner with the number corresponding to it on the receipt book. . . .

The volume of registered items handled by the U.S.P.O. remained relatively constant during the later 1850's. The old argument that registered items created an easy target for theft was now joined with complaints about the cost of paying the extra five-cent fee for the service. The actual pilferage rate of valuable mail does not seem to have greatly increased because an item was marked registered. The most consistent source of disparaging comments reported in period newspapers appears to have come from postal employees themselves because of the workload created by properly documenting registered mail. Numerous failures or errors in documentation were reported to the chief clerk of the department.

The *Postmaster General's Report* for 1860 does not paint a very encouraging picture of the public's acceptance of the registry system or the Department's view of its first five years of operations:

. . . The act of March 3, 1855, providing for the registration of valuable letters posted for transmission in the mails of the United States, has now been in operation more than five years, but with results, I regret to add, which have disappointed the expectations that led to the adoption of this novel feature in our postal system. Whether regarded as a precaution for the protection of the interests of this class of correspondents, or as an instrumentality for the detection of depredations upon the mails, the law has proved a failure. The government assumes no responsibility whatever for the loss of letters or packets thus registered, and as they are conveyed in the same pouches, they are surrounded by no greater guarantees for their security, either in transmission or delivery, than such as belong to the ordinary mails of the country. They bear a mark, however, which indicates to all through whose hands they pass their valuable character, and this indication serves rather to suggest and invite depredation than to prevent it. The practical working of our mail system makes it entirely manifest that everything, be it bulk or registry mark, which points out the valuable contents of letters and packets, is as far as possible to be avoided as certainly endangering their safety. The principal argument which has been advanced in support of the existing registry act is that it operates as a safeguard for the rest of the mails by diverting the attention of depredators from them. While this is no doubt true to a degree, it serves rather to confirm than to confute the view which I have presented against the longer continuance of a precaution that is fruitful only in danger to what it was designed to protect. . . .



Determining if an item was registered and what registration rate was paid by its sender can be a challenge. Most numbered items are considered to have been registered even if they do not bear a version of a manuscript notation attesting to that fact. An exception might be a numbered sequence of letters within a correspondence.

### Registered

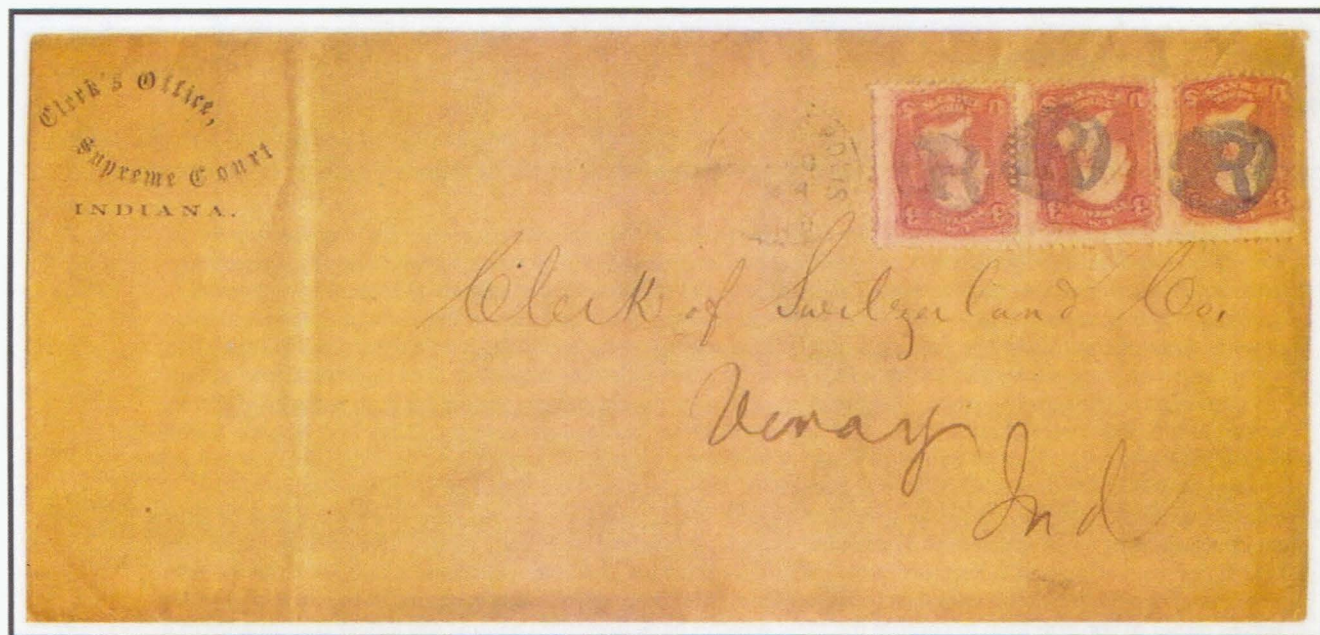


Indianapolis, IN March 20, 1860

Triple first-class rate paid in stamps. Properly marked registered letter.

"Money \$4.00" added after delivery.

### Probably Not Registered



Indianapolis, IN December 24, (year not given)

Fancy cork "R" obliterator on triple first-class rate cover without a number.



It is difficult to evaluate the cash registration fees paid by senders of some registered covers from the 1860's. The registration fee was raised to twenty cents July 1, 1863 by *The New Post Office Act*. Most postmarking devices used in the 1860's did not contain a year date slug. Some items can be year dated based on sender or addressee notations found on them. Others can be year dated by content. Many lack this information.

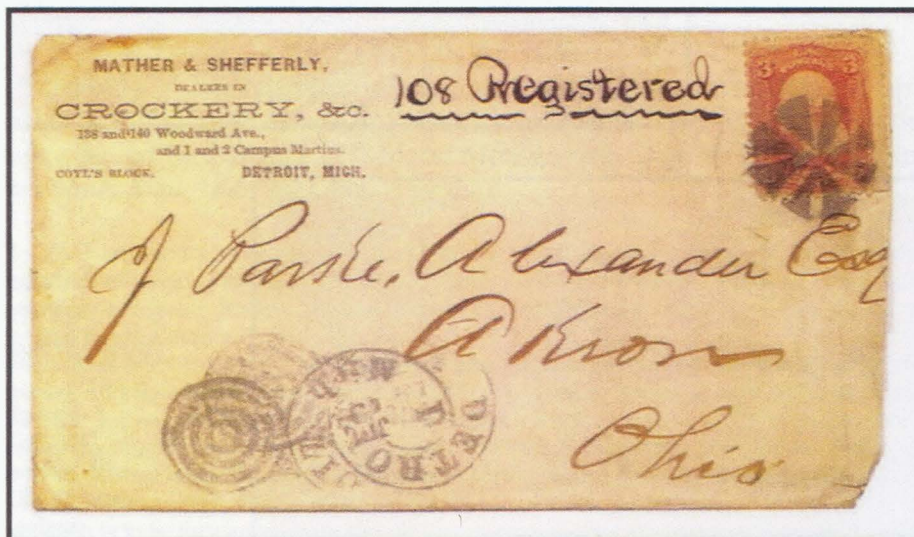
Registered letters were required to be numbered as of October, 1855 and bear the word "registered" in some form as of July 1, 1863. However, these notations are found with and without numbers on items dated prior to the beginning dates of these requirements. We are left with a number of items franked with stamps from the 1861 issue whose sender could have been charged either cash fee level.



Waynetown, IN January 8, (year not given)

Triple first-class rate paid in stamps.

Sender could have paid either the five-cent or twenty-cent cash registration fee.

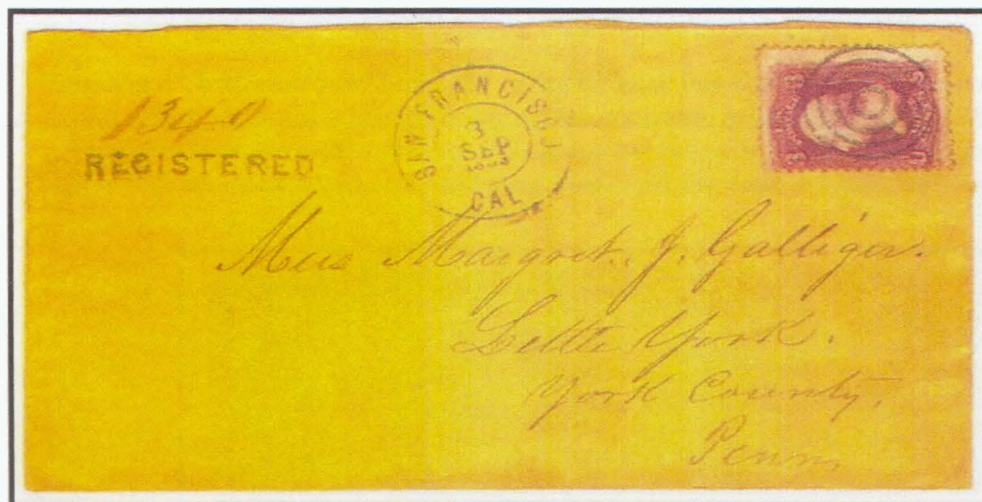


Detroit, MI July 19, (year not given)

Sender could have paid either the five-cent or twenty-cent cash registration fee.



Twenty-Cent Registration Fee (Paid in Cash) July 1, 1863 to May 31, 1867

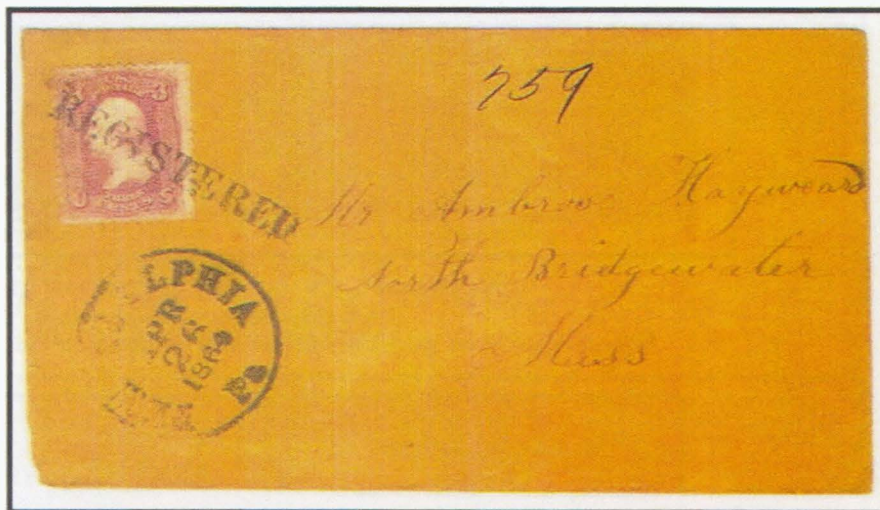


San Francisco, CA  
September 3, 1863

"REGISTERED" and number  
in the upper left-hand corner  
now required by regulation.

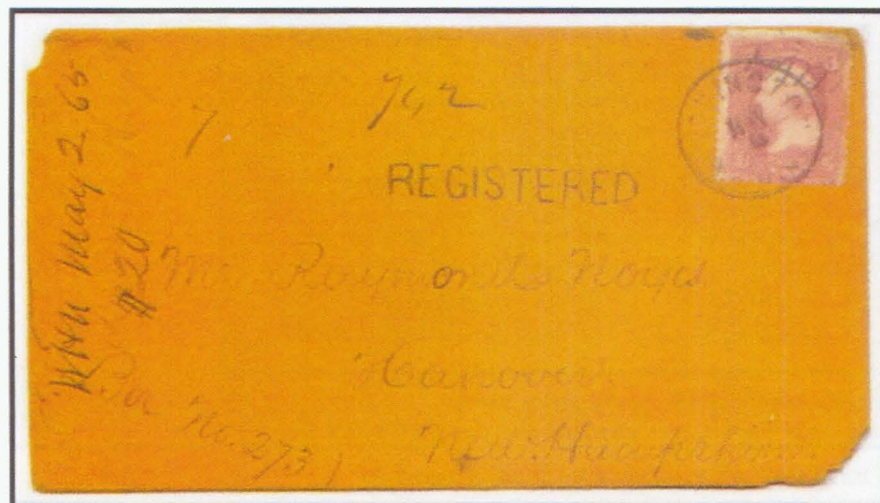
Philadelphia, PA  
April 26, 1864

Straight-line "REGISTERED" used as  
an obliterator  
with manuscript "759"  
added to the right where space was  
available.



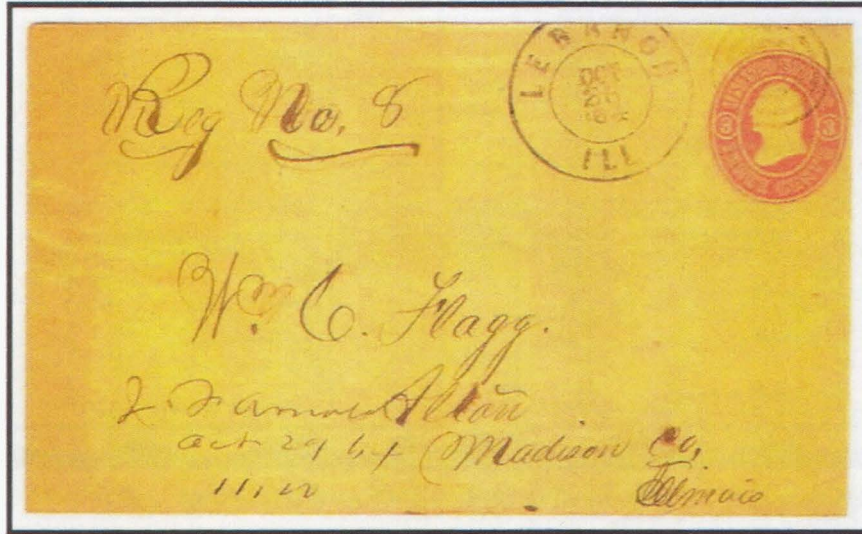
Princeton, MA  
May 3, 1865  
(by addressee notation)

Straight-line  
"REGISTERED"  
with manuscript "742"  
and "PAID" is noted  
on the stamp.





## The New Postage Act of 1863



Lebanon, IL October 26, 1864

Properly marked registered letter with a manuscript "Reg No. 8".

The *New Post Office Act* of March 3, 1863 effective July 1, 1863 made important changes to the handling of registered mail:

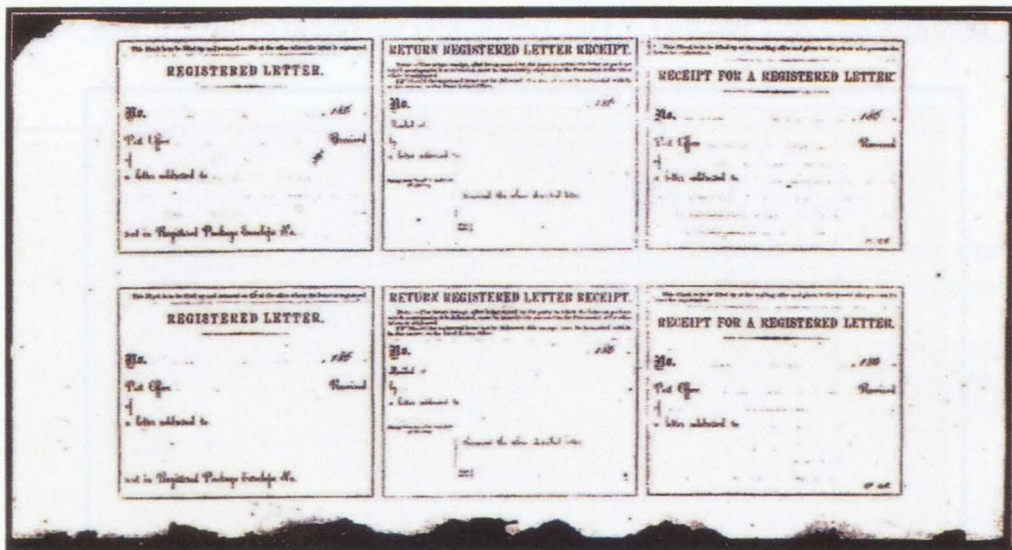
Sec. 32. And be it further enacted, That, for the greater security of valuable letters posted for transmission in the mails of the United States, the Postmaster General is authorized to establish a uniform plan for the registration of such letters, on application of parties posting the same, and to require the payment of the postage, as well as a registration fee not exceeding twenty cents, on every such letter or packet, to be accounted for by postmasters receiving the same in such manner as the Postmaster General shall direct: Provided, however, That such registration shall not be compulsory, and it shall not render the Post Office Department or its revenue liable for the loss of such letters or packets, or the contents thereof; and provision shall be made by regulation for a return receipt to the writer, showing to whom and when such registered letter was delivered, which receipt shall be received in the Courts as prima facie evidence of such delivery.

Congress left the details of this "uniform plan for the registration of such letters" up to the Postmaster General. Detailed instructions prescribing changes to be implemented in the handling of registered mail were issued by Postmaster General Montgomery Blair and published in the April, 1863 issue of *The United States Mail And Post Office Assistant*:

Instruction No. 32. Postmasters will observe and call attention to the important provisions of this section. The return receipt is made legal evidence of the delivery of the letter to the party addressed. To entitle a letter to registration the regular postage must be prepaid by stamps; and in addition to this, the registration fee must be paid in money.

The registration fee is twenty cents. It is of the utmost importance that postmasters should exercise the greatest care and diligence in the custody and despatch of registered letters, so that they may be able to make affidavit that a given registered letter was despatched from their respective offices on a certain day and in a designated mail pouch. The receipt delivered to the sender of the letter, and the corresponding marginal entry in the receipt book, should specify his name and residence. The postmaster will at the same time prepare a blank return receipt, which must contain the same items and number as the receipt given the sender, and which is to be forwarded with the registered letter for the signature of the receiver. In addition to the registered number in the upper left hand corner of the letter, the word "Registered" should be plainly written or stamped on the face of the same. The blank return receipt to be signed by the receiver of the letter, should be enclosed in the same sealed wrapper with the left hand or registered letter-bill accompanying the parcel of letters to which it relates.





Three-part U.S.P.O. form completed when a letter was registered.

### Instruction No. 32 continues:

In all large offices where letters are received, entered, and mailed by different persons, it shall be the duty of the postmaster either to keep the receipt book, or to designate some one specially for that service, and to see that it is made the duty of the clerk receiving a letter for registry and keeping the account of registered letters sent, after making up each package of registered letters for mailing, to enter the same in a book to be kept for the purpose, in which shall be stated the date on which the package is sent away from the office, the name of the office to which the package is sent, and the number of each letter contained therein. Before the hour of mailing arrives, the package shall be passed to the mailing clerk, who will compare the letters in it with the entry on the book; and if found correct, shall SEAL and receipt for the same by signing his name opposite the number of each letter contained therein, and specifying the hour at which the letters are despatched from the office. The mailing clerk will see that the registered letter package is enclosed in the same package with the unregistered letters, sent by the same mail, and in the margin of the ordinary account of mails sent, opposite the entry of the post-bill accompanying said mail, shall be written the word "Registered," and the same word, or its initial, "R," written on the post-bill.

On the receipt at an office of a mail containing a package of registered letters, the clerk who opens and distributes the mail will pass the registered package to the clerk keeping the account of registered letters, who will receipt for the same by signing his name to the post-bill; he will then compare the letters found in the package with the accompanying bill, and will indorse it correct if he find it so, or will note the error, if there be one, and then enter the contents in the account of registered letters received, and deposit the letter or letters in a secure place to be kept, with the blank return receipts, until delivered to the persons addressed.

On receipt at a distributing post office of a mail containing a package of registered letters for distribution, the clerk who opens the mail will proceed in same manner as above prescribed for registered letters received for delivery. The letters will then be entered in the account of registered letters received for distribution, and disposed of in same manner as above provided for registered letters originally mailed at the office.

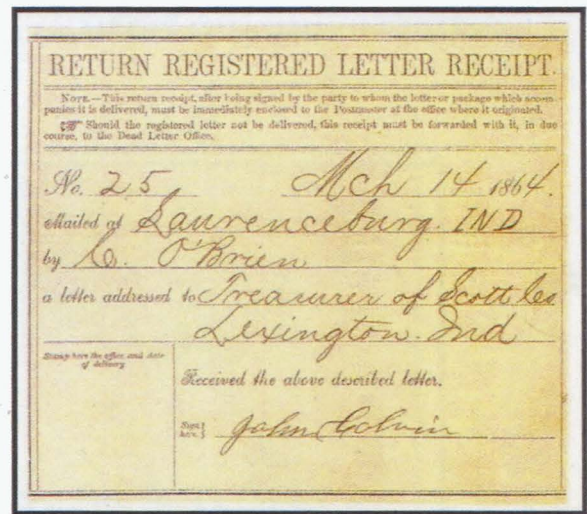
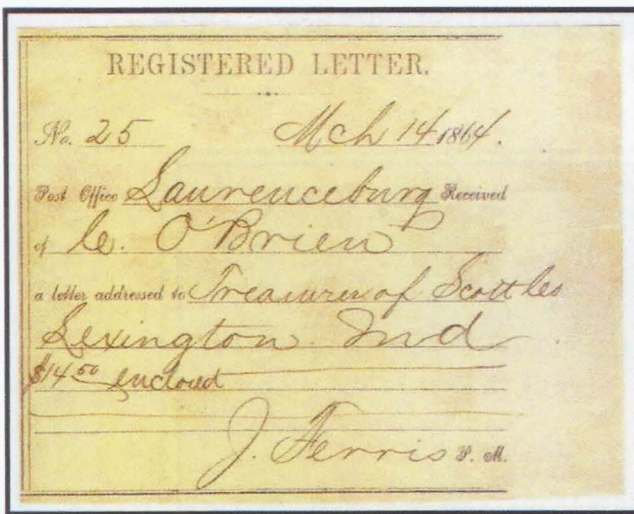
The postmaster at the office of delivery will not deliver a registered letter until the person authorized to receive it shall have first signed the return receipt therefor, and also a second acknowledgement to the same effect, to be filed at such office of delivery. The return receipt, duly filled up and signed, is to be forwarded as soon as practicable to the post office where the letter to which it relates was originally mailed, and it shall be the duty of the postmaster at the latter office to cause the same to be delivered without delay to the sender. In case the postmaster at the mailing office has not received a printed form of blank for the return receipt, he will make use for the purpose of the present printed receipt designed for the sender, with the requisite additions and modifications. And should the postmaster at the office of delivery fail to receive a blank return receipt, he should make out from the data in his possession a receipt of this kind, and return the same duly signed by the receiver to the mailing postmaster.

The use of a return receipt is not required for registered letters sent to or received from foreign countries.

From and after July 1, 1863, postmasters will be allowed a commission of fifty per cent on the amount of registration fees received at their offices.

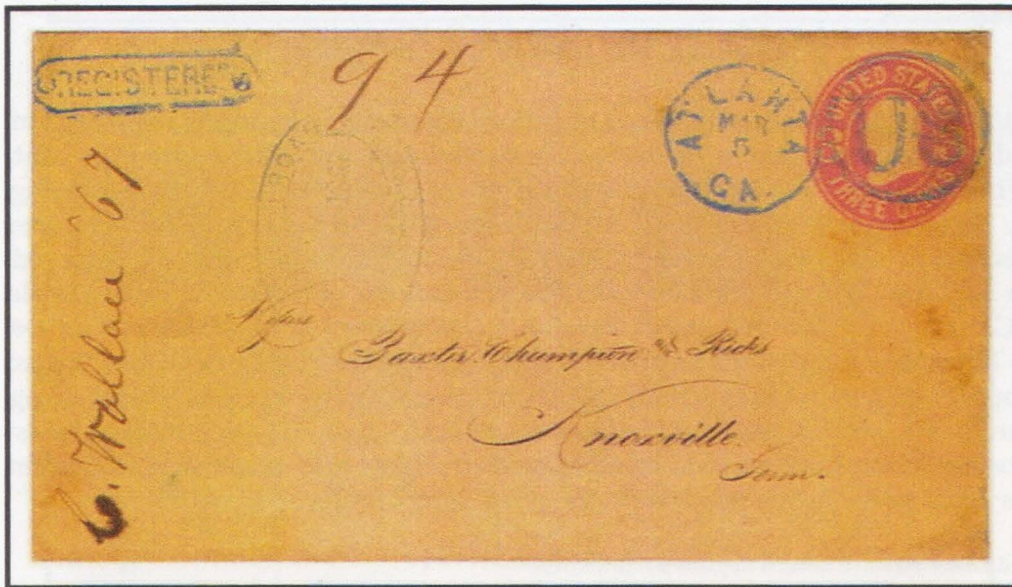
Such portions of former regulations with regard to registered letters as are not modified by the preceding instructions should be strictly observed.





### Lawrenceburg, IN March 14, 1864

Matching Registered Letter (receipt from time of mailing?) and Return Registered Letter Receipt from the Cornelius O'Brien correspondence. The Return Registered Letter Receipt was mailed back to the postmaster at the post office of mailing in the next regular mail "to be handed over to the writer of the letter."<sup>2</sup> under the postmaster's free-franking privilege.



### Atlanta, GA March 5, 1867

Railway postal clerks could not accept letters for registration. This item was registered at Atlanta. The indistinct railway postal mark indicates it traveled by rail to its destination.

The first railway car designed for the sorting of mail was placed into service in 1864. The success of this experiment led to the creation of the Railway Mail Service in 1869. The old system of distributing post offices was replaced by a nationwide system of moving distributing rooms in 1879. Sorting post offices along the routes separated mail for adjacent post offices not served by rail.

Railroad agents were cautioned that business correspondence could not be carried on trains free of postage and registration fees by marking them "R.R.B." (railroad business). Only internal railroad instructions related to the operation of trains could be carried free of postage between railroad facilities under the "R.R.B." designation.<sup>3</sup>

2. United States Mail And Post Office Assistant, Vol. 3, No. 10, (New York, N. Y., July, 1863), p. 2.

3. *ibid.*, Vol. 4 No. 5, (New York, N. Y., February, 1864) p. 2.



## Improving the Security of Registered Mail 1867 - 1879



Standish, ME June 15 (year not given)

The U.S.P.O. was facing an increasing level of processing errors in handling registered mail. Three factors repeatedly were mentioned in *The United States Mail And Post Office Assistant* as contributing to many errors. First, packets of registered items were hard to identify amongst the increasing volume of first-class mail. Second, postal employees were burdened with extensive pen-and-ink paperwork. Third, the investigation into missing registered letters was hampered by the lack of detailed documentation listing every hand that had touched each package of registered mail to its destination.

Postmaster General A. W. Randall issued *Regulations Respecting The Registration Of Letters* in January, 1867. These new regulations implemented the use of the U.S.P.O. furnished "registered package envelopes." Its general instructions called attention to important procedural changes to be implemented on June 1, 1867. It also put postmasters on notice that, "The registration fee is in all cases to be paid in postage stamps, the same to be attached to the letter and canceled at the mailing office." The regulations listed seven forms required in the processing of registered mail:

1. Registered Letter Bill and Return Registered Letter Bill.
2. Receipt for a Registered Letter, (with corresponding marginal entry.)
3. Return Registered Letter Receipt.
4. Account of Registered Letters Received.
5. Account of Registered Letters Sent.
6. Receipts for Registered Letters Delivered.
7. Record of Registered Matter in Transit.

These changes enabled a more detailed tracking of registered items as they passed through the postal system. The use of a standardized registered package envelope appears to have reduced the number of comments seen in *The United States Mail And Post Office Assistant* concerning lost or misdirected packages of registered letters. The signature required on a Registered Package Envelope from each person handling it verified that it was properly routed on a timely basis. However, the workload faced by postal employees continually increased along with the volume of registered mail.





Waynetown, IN October 22, (year not given)



Portland Mills, IN August 26, (year not given)

Postmasters were finally able to frank registered letters with stamps documenting the total of all money paid for their delivery. It was no longer a violation of postal rules to openly mark a registered letter as such after July 1, 1863. The commission payable postmasters on their registered fees had been abolished in 1864. This change made properly accounting for post office revenues more uniform.

Registered letters were franked with two ten-cent stamps or an appropriate combination of available stamps of lesser denomination. A twenty-cent stamp was not issued for paying the registration fee.



# The New Registry System of 1867

*The United States Mail And Post Office Assistant* issue for February 1867 summarized the improvements these new procedures should bring to the registry service as follows:

## The New Registry System.

The Postmaster General has caused to be prepared, and will soon issue to Postmasters, new Regulations concerning the registration of valuable letters. These regulations embody important changes in the present mode of registration, and will, it is believed, render the system much more effective and satisfactory than it has been heretofore. The plan contemplated by the new Regulations is as follows:

All post offices are to be supplied by the Department with envelopes of a peculiar character and appearance, called "Registered Package Envelopes." These are of large size, made of stout Manilla paper, and marked with two broad red stripes passing lengthwise across the upper and lower portions of the face and back, leaving the intervening space for the address, and also with proper spaces for postmarks and numbers. The word "REGISTERED" appears in large letters on the face. All registered letters, when mailed, must be enclosed in one of these "Registered Package Envelopes" by the mailing postmaster, and the envelope postmarked and numbered. These envelopes are in all cases to be mailed without wrapping or tying.

Registered letters are never to be sent "direct" when a Distributing Post Office intervenes between the mailing office and the office of destination, (except in the case of offices which exchange through brass locked pouches,) whether going within the state where mailed or not. No attention is to be paid to any request to "mail direct" where to do so would involve a neglect of this regulation.

The registered letter bill and return bill are to be sent from the mailing office together, and in the same mail which conveys the registered letter or letters to which they refer. The bills to be enclosed in the usual franked envelope, directed to the P. M. at the office to which the registered letters are to be sent, and placed among the ordinary letters.

At every post office the P. M. or at least one clerk must be at all times prepared to make affidavit that any registered letter mailed there, and concerning which inquiry is made by a special agent or other officer, was properly enclosed in a "registered package envelope" placed in a locked pouch, and sent forward by the proper route.

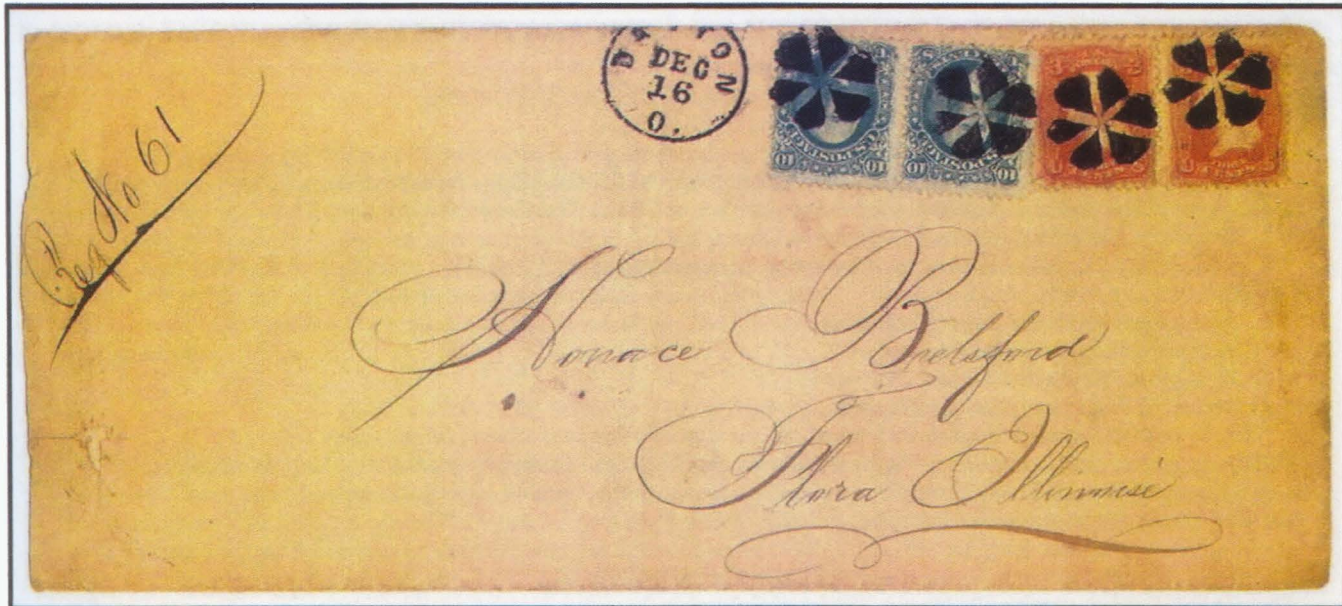
At every post office the P. M. or at least one trusty clerk must be present at the opening of every arriving mail pouch, and take charge of all "registered package envelopes" which may be contained therein, keeping a record of their numbers, postmarks, and addresses. Postmasters at separating offices are to be required to keep a record of the numbers, postmarks, and addresses, all registered package envelopes passing through their offices, and also of all registered packages of postage stamps and stamped envelopes. Route Agents and Railway P. O. Clerks are required to keep a similar record, and to obtain receipts for all registered matter from the person to whom it is transferred by them, in all cases where practicable. Proper books and blanks for keeping these records will be furnished to all route agents, railway P. O. clerks and Postmasters at separating offices, and at all offices where pouches containing matter for other offices are opened.

The registration fee on all letters is to be prepaid by stamps.

The above are the principal features of the new registry system. Full instructions, with the necessary blanks, registered package envelopes, &c., will be issued by the Department at an early day. Until official notice is given of the time for the new regulations to go into operation, postmasters will of course continue to register according to the plan heretofore in use. We urge upon all postmasters, in advance, however, the necessity of a strict and careful adherence to the requirements of the new regulations when they shall appear. It is the intention of the Department to hold all postmasters, route-agents, &c., to a rigid accountability in this matter. The regulations are easily understood, and ignorance will not, therefore, be considered any excuse for their violation or neglect, which will be regarded as a serious offence, rendering the delinquent liable to removal from office. It is to be hoped, however, that all connected with the service will carefully study and follow these regulations, which, if properly carried out, will, we believe, render the American registry system superior to that adopted by the postal department of any other country.

The fact that the U.S.P.O. did not provide postmasters with a standardized registered package envelope until 1867 is somewhat puzzling. Large-sized, privately-produced, heavy cardboard envelopes were available for commercial use as early as 1863. Some may have been used as registered packages. The general practice before 1867 was to wrap registered letters in cloth or paper tied by string and sealed, on the knot, by wax. Registered packages easily blended into the larger volume of first-class mail, which opened the door to their mishandling.





Dayton, OH December 16, (year not given)  
Double first-class rate letter with twenty-cent registration fee paid by stamps.

Detailed plans for improving the registry system as published in *Regulations Respecting The Registration Of Letters*, January, 1867 effective June 1, 1867 follow:

#### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS. . . .

1. Registered letters are never to be sent "direct" when a distributing post office is located on the route between the mailing office and the office of destination, except when sent under brass lock from one first-class office to another. This rule is to be strictly adhered to, whether the letters are intended for offices within the State where mailed or not; and no attention is to be paid to any written or verbal request on the part of writers of registered letters to "mail direct," when such a compliance would involve a violation of this regulation. . . .
2. Registered letters are never to be sent (from offices not distributing post offices) except enclosed in one of the "registered package envelopes" furnished by the department for that purpose to all post offices.
3. The "registered package envelopes," when mailed containing registered letters, are never to be wrapped, and are never to be tied in a bundle with ordinary letters or other matter, but to be placed separate in the pouch, so that their presence may be noted at once by the proper person on the opening of the pouch.
4. The post bills heretofore in use with the printed heading "unpaid letters" on one side, and "registered letters" on the other, are no longer to be used as registered letter bills. The "registered letter bill" and "return registered letter bill," which will be furnished to all post offices on application to the different blank agents, (or to the Appointment Office, Post Office Department, Washington, D. C.,) are the only bills to be used in the registration of letters.
5. The "registered letter bill" and "return registered letter bill," (which are printed side by side on one sheet,) are not to be separated at the mailing office; but, after being properly filled up, are to be sent together enclosed in an ordinary franked envelope bearing the same direction as the "registered package envelope," and sent by the same mail, but among the ordinary letters. The postmaster at the office to which the bills are sent will separate them, and if the letters to which they refer have been duly received, he will mark the "return registered letter bill" "correct," and return it immediately to the mailing office.
6. Every postmaster, route agent, railway post office clerk, or other person connected with the service, through whose hands a "registered package envelope" shall pass in transmission through the mail, is required to make a record of the number, postmark, and direction of the same, in the book or blank sheet provided for that purpose, and also to take a receipt for it from the person to whom he delivers it in all cases where it is practicable to obtain such receipt.

The registration fee is in all cases to be paid in postage stamps, the same to be attached to the letter and canceled at the mailing office.

Instructions in detail concerning the above and all other matters pertaining to the registration of letters will be found included in the annexed regulations. Postmasters who may at any time be in doubt concerning any portion of their duties as herein set forth, can obtain full explanation by addressing the Third Assistant Postmaster General, Washington, D. C., or consulting a special agent of the department personally or by letter.



*Regulations Respecting The Registration Of Letters* issued January, 1867 effective June 1, 1867 detailed the revised methods of handling registered mail:

... BLANKS.

All blanks required for use in the registration of letters can be obtained by addressing the blank agents of the department, a list of whom will be found below. The blanks required are:

1. Registered Letter Bill and Return Registered Letter Bill.
2. Receipt for a Registered Letter, (with corresponding marginal entry.)
3. Return Registered Letter Receipt.
4. Account of Registered Letters Received.
5. Account of Registered Letters Sent.
6. Receipts for Registered Letters Delivered.
7. Record of Registered Matter in Transit.

[The old post bill headed "registered letters" on one side and "unpaid letters" on the other, will not be used for transmission with registered letters in the future. Postmasters who may have a supply of those bills remaining on hand will make use of the "unpaid letter" side only, and send them with packages containing unpaid ordinary letters.]

LIST OF BLANK AGENTS.

District No. 1. — Supplies blanks for the District of Columbia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Florida. Postmasters in either of these States wanting blanks of any kind should address "First Assistant Postmaster General, Washington, District of Columbia."

District No. 2. — Supplies blanks for the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, California, Nevada, and Oregon, and Washington Territory. Postmasters in either of these States or Territories wanting blanks of any kind should address "Post Office Blank Agent, New York, N. Y."

District No. 3. — Supplies blanks for the States of Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Texas, New Mexico, Utah, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, Kansas, and Nebraska. Postmasters in either of these States wanting blanks of any kind should address "Post Office Blank Agent, Buffalo, N. Y."

REGISTERED PACKAGE ENVELOPES.

2. The registered package envelopes, in which all registered letters are to be enclosed before mailing, can be obtained by addressing the "Third Assistant Postmaster General, Washington, D. C." Postmasters will be careful to keep a sufficient number of these on hand, never allowing their supply to become exhausted before ordering others. In case the supply of these envelopes at any post office shall become exhausted before the new supply ordered has been received, the postmaster will obtain from the nearest post office such number as can be conveniently spared, being careful to return an equal number when the new supply arrives. This practice of borrowing, however, must not become habitual, and a postmaster will not be considered excusable for allowing his supply of "registered package envelopes" to become exhausted a second time.

... PAYMENT OF POSTAGE AND FEES.

4. The full postage upon all registered letters, whether foreign or domestic, must be prepaid by stamps. The registration fees upon registered letters or packets are as follows: On domestic letters to any part of the UNITED STATES OR TERRITORIES, TWENTY CENTS EACH. ...

THESE REGISTRATION FEES ARE ALWAYS TO BE PREPAID BY POSTAGE STAMPS, to be attached to the letters and canceled at the mailing office.

The previous three-part form containing the Receipt For A Registered Letter, Return Registered Letter Receipt, and marginal entry record maintained by the post office of mailing was replaced by two forms (blanks two and three above).

The burden completing this paperwork placed on postmasters and clerks led some to openly discourage patrons from registering valuable mail. Frequent articles printed in the *The United States Mail And Post Office Assistant* indicate postal employees made comments to the public to the effect that registered mail was no safer than first-class mail or that registering a letter only made it easier to be identified and stolen. This negatively affected public confidence in the registry service.



#### RECEIVING LETTERS FOR REGISTRATION.

5. When a letter is presented at a post office for registration, the postmaster, after seeing that the full postage, as well as the registration fee, is fully prepaid by stamps, will fill up the blank "receipt for a registered letter," (entering therein the registered number of the letter; the date, name of his post office, name and address of the sender of the letter, and name and address of the person to whom the letter is directed,) sign it, and deliver it to the person presenting the letter, after also filling up the corresponding marginal entry (printed on the left hand of the same sheet) in the same manner.

This marginal entry is to be retained by the postmaster. The letter must then be plainly marked "registered" and numbered.

#### PREPARING AND MAILING REGISTERED LETTERS.

6. After the above directions have been followed, the postmaster will fill up a "return registered letter receipt," (unless the letter is addressed to a foreign country, in which case no return receipt is required,) entering therein the same items which he has already entered in the margin entry. This return receipt he will then attach to the letter in such manner that it can be readily removed at the office of destination. He will then take a "registered letter bill" and "return registered letter bill," (being careful not to separate them,) entering in the heading of each bill the name of the office to which the letter is to be sent, being careful, if the letter is directed to an office beyond the first distributing post office on the route, to enter the name of such distributing post office, adding the initials D. P. O. He will then enter the name of the person or persons to whom the letter is addressed, and also that of the office of final destination, each in its proper column in the body of each bill. If no distributing post office intervenes on the route, he will enter the name of the office of final destination both in the heading and body of each bill. He will also enter in the proper column in the body of each bill the number of the "registered package envelope" in which the letter is to be forwarded. The postmaster will then enter the letter on the account of registered letters sent, copying from the registered letter bill the date, number, name of office to which the letter is sent, and name of party addressed. As the registration fee is to be prepaid by stamps in all cases hereafter, no entry need be made in the column headed registry fee. [from bill formats prior to June 1, 1867] When the time approaches for the closing of the mail he will place the letter in the "registered package envelope" (1) which he will securely seal, and which must be plainly postmarked and numbered, and addressed to the postmaster of the distributing post office to which the letter is to be sent, or (in case the letter is to be sent "direct") to the postmaster at the office of its final destination. The "registered letter bill" and "return registered letter bill" are then to be placed in an ordinary envelope addressed to the same postmaster to which the "registered package envelope" is addressed, and placed in the same mail, but among the ordinary letters. The "registered package envelope" is then to be placed in the proper pouch, and must never be wrapped in paper nor tied in a package with letters or other matter. The postmaster, his deputy or a duly qualified clerk, must perform this duty in person, so that at least one of them shall at any time be able to make affidavit that any particular "registered package envelope" left the mailing office enclosed in a pouch properly locked and labeled, and was forwarded by the proper route. (2) (The above instructions mention only one letter, but it is not intended that postmasters shall use a separate bill and a separate "registered package envelope" for each letter. All the registered letters to be sent by one mail to the same office are to be entered on the same registered letter bill and return bill, and all enclosed in the same "registered package envelope.") All the duties above assigned to "the postmaster" may be performed in his absence by his deputy or a sworn clerk.

(1) In case a package too large to be enclosed in a "registered package envelope" is presented for registration at any post office, it should be securely wrapped, and a "registered package envelope," properly directed and numbered, secured to the wrapper by paste or otherwise in such a manner that it will not become displaced before reaching its destination.

(2) In all cases where it is practicable, two persons should be present at the mailing of a registered package envelope, and be prepared to testify as above, in case it should be required.

#### NUMBERING "REGISTERED PACKAGE ENVELOPES."

7. The first "registered package envelope" sent by a postmaster after the beginning of a quarter must be marked No. 1, the second No. 2, and so on to the end of the quarter. The next quarter will begin again with No. 1. It will be remembered that the number on the "registered package envelope" has nothing to do with the "registered numbers" on the letters which are enclosed therein.



RECEIVING REGISTERED LETTERS FOR DELIVERY.

8. On the arrival of a mail at any office the pouch shall be opened only by the postmaster, his deputy, or a sworn clerk; and if a "registered package envelope" addressed to the postmaster be found, search shall be made among the ordinary letters received by the same mail for the envelope addressed to the postmaster containing the registered letter bill and return bill, which should have been sent at the same time. The "registered package envelope" will then be opened (by cutting the end thereof) and retained on file, and the registered numbers and addresses of the registered letters contained therein compared with the entries which appear on the registered and return bills. If these are found to correspond, the return bill must be separated from the registered letter bill, the date entered therein, and the word "correct" endorsed thereon, with the signature of the postmaster, and forwarded by next mail to the postmaster of the office from which it was received. The number, name of person addressed, and postmark (with date) on each letter, are then to be entered on the sheet of "receipts for registered letters delivered," each item in its proper column, and the appropriate entries, copied from the registered letter bill, made in the account of "registered letters received." The letters are to be kept in a secure place until they can be delivered to the persons entitled to receive them.

DELIVERY OF REGISTERED LETTERS.

9. (Before the delivery of a registered letter, if the registry fee has not been prepaid by stamps at the mailing office, the postmaster will collect the amount thereof from the person to whom the letter is addressed, placing on the letter, and canceling, postage stamps to the amount of the fee due.) When a registered letter is to be delivered, the person receiving it will sign his or her name in the last column of the sheet of "receipts of registered letters delivered," and will also sign the "return registered letter receipt." The date of delivery will be entered in the column headed "when received" 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 to the postmaster at the office where the letter was originally mailed. (It will be noted that the return bill is always to be returned to the postmaster at the office from which the registered bill was received, whether it be a distributing office or the office of original mailing, but the return receipt is in all cases to be returned to the office from which the letter was originally sent.) Registered letters must never be delivered to any person but the one to whom they are addressed, or to a person whom the postmaster knows to be authorized to receive them. A receipt for each registered letter delivered must always appear on the sheet provided for that purpose.

NON-RECEIPT OF REGISTERED LETTERS OR BILLS.

10. If, on the opening of a pouch arriving at any post office, a registered letter bill and return bill be found addressed to the postmaster, and no corresponding registered package envelope nor registered letters be found, the postmaster will at once detach the return bill, endorse it "not received," and forward it by first mail to the postmaster at the office from which it was sent, and also report all the facts immediately by letter to the Second Assistant Postmaster General, Contract Office, Inspection Division, Washington, D. C.; also to the nearest resident special agent of the Department, in order that the case may be investigated. In case the missing letter should afterward be received, the postmaster will at once notify the above mentioned officers of the fact. If, on the arrival of a "registered package envelope" at any post office, the registered letter bill and return bill are not received by same mail, the postmaster will, after opening the "registered package envelope," fill up from the numbers, addresses, &c., of the registered letters, a registered letter bill and return bill, and send the return bill to the postmaster at the office from which the "registered letter envelope" was sent, endorsing the return bill as follows: "No bills received," which will be considered an acknowledgement of the receipt of the letters. If the bills should afterward arrive, the return bill will be endorsed "correct" and forwarded according to instructions above. All irregularities and failures in regard to registered package envelopes and letters must be promptly reported to the officers above mentioned.

FORWARDING REGISTERED LETTERS.

11. When a registered letter arrives addressed to a person who has removed, or who for any other cause wishes it forwarded to him at another office, it may be done at his written request. A memorandum of the order to forward should be entered on the account of registered letters received, opposite the name of the person making the request. The letter should then be sent forward as a registered letter in the same manner as if originally mailed as one, but no additional registry fee nor postage is to be charged on it. The order for forwarding must be filed at the office of forwarding as a voucher for the action had in the case.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR ROUTE AGENTS AND RAILWAY POST OFFICE CLERKS.

12. Route agents and railway post office clerks through whose hands registered package envelopes or registered packages of stamps or stamped envelopes may pass in course of transmission by mail, are required to note in a book furnished by the Department (to be carefully preserved and subject at all times to inspection by a special agent) the number, postmark, date, and address of every such envelope or package, and the disposition made thereof by them. Special attention is expected to be paid to this instruction, and a violation of it will be considered a serious offense, rendering the delinquent liable to prompt removal from office. Route agents and railway post office clerks will, in all cases where it is practicable, obtain a receipt for each such envelope or package from the person to whom they may deliver it, railway post office clerks obeying such instructions on this subject as they may receive from the superintendent of railway post offices.

INSTRUCTIONS TO POSTMASTERS AT SEPARATING OFFICES, AND OTHERS.

13. Postmasters at separating offices, and postmasters at all offices where pouches are opened containing mail matter for other offices on the same route, will make upon the sheet of "record of registered matter in transit" (provided for that purpose by the Department) a note of every registered package of letters, stamps, or envelopes which may pass through their offices, entering the number, date, postmark, and direction of each such package. They will be at all times prepared to make prompt reply to any inquiry from a special agent or postmaster concerning any such package. The "registered package envelopes" are of so conspicuous an appearance that their presence among the contents of any opened mail pouch cannot fail to be observed, and an omission to make the note required will be considered inexcusable. The sheets upon which these entries are made are to be carefully preserved by the postmaster, kept in good order, and to be at all times open to the inspection of special agents.

INSTRUCTIONS TO POSTMASTERS AT DISTRIBUTING AND OTHER LARGE OFFICES.

14. Postmasters at distributing and other large offices will be guided by the foregoing regulations in regard to the registration of letters, except that postmasters at distributing post offices in sending registered letters to other distributing post offices will enclose them in one of the canvas registered letter bags provided for that purpose, placing the number, direction, and postmark on a parchment or leather tag, to be firmly tied around the neck of the bag, and the fastening of the bag to be securely sealed. This bag will then be placed within a leather pouch (or mail box, if one be used) secured by brass lock and forwarded to destination. The "registered package envelopes" will not be used in such cases. The postmaster at each first and second class office, and at other offices where the clerical force will admit of such an arrangement, will detail at least one trusty clerk, whose duty it shall be to be present at the opening of every mail pouch arriving, and take charge of all registered packages contained therein, (including stamp and envelope packages,) to keep a record of the number, postmark, and date of arrival of each such package, and deliver it to the postmaster or to the clerk in charge of the registered letter department, who shall affix his signature or initials to the record of each package as an acknowledgement of the receipt of the same.

A. W. RANDALL,  
Postmaster General.

Post Office Department, January, 1867

The complexity of processing registered mail resulted in almost monthly questions, comments, and reminders about proper processing procedures being published in the *United States Mail and Post Office Assistant*. It appears these regulations did improve the ability of postal inspectors to track an individual registered letter or package from sender to addressee. However, they increased the workload on postmasters and clerks handling the growing volume of registered mail.

Postal personnel were continually being cautioned not to discourage postal patrons from using the registered mail. Its delivery was delayed by missing or incorrectly prepared letter bills, return letter bills, and return registered letter receipts. Personnel were repeatedly cautioned not to route registered items "direct" circumventing the paperwork required when properly routing items through the appropriate distributing post office.



*New Regulations Respecting Registration of Letters*  
(Booklet issued October 1, 1868 without effective date)

Operational issues were addressed the following year by the release of a booklet detailing the handling of registered mail. Several sections contained a word-for-word restatement of the January, 1867 regulations. The sections that changed how registered mail was handled are given below:

REGULATIONS.

Sec. 2. Postmasters at offices supplied wholly or in part by route agents or postal clerks will deliver all registered matter to go over such routes into the hands of the agents or clerks, and obtain their receipts therefor, instead of sending the same in "brass-lock pouches," as heretofore. Registered matter to go over other routes (i. e., routes on which there are no route agents or postal clerks) is to be sent as formerly, with the exception that the postmaster at the mailing office will affix to the registered package envelope a blank receipt to be signed and returned to him by the postmaster at the office where the pouch containing the same is next opened. Such postmaster will sign and return the receipt to the postmaster from whom he received it, and forward the package, with another blank receipt attached, to be signed and returned likewise to him. This plan of receipting is to be continued until the registered package shall have reached the office of final destination.

The following is the form of such receipt:

RECEIPT FOR REGISTERED PACKAGES.					
RECEIVED of _____, P. M. at _____, (date here.) _____, 186 , the following described registered packages, to wit:					
Registered postage stamp package.	Registered stamped envelope package.	Registered package envelope.	Postmarked at—	Date of post- mark.	Name of P. O. ad- dressed.

Sec. 4. If there be a distributing post office located on the route between the mailing office and the office of final destination, the letters must be mailed to the distributing post office; and if there be more than one distributing post office between such offices, the letters should be mailed to the first. . . .

REGISTERED PACKAGE ENVELOPES.

Sec. 7. . . . The "registered package envelopes" must be used for no other purpose than that of enclosing registered letters. All "registered package envelopes" spoiled by misdirection, or otherwise rendered unfit for use, are to be returned to the Third Assistant Postmaster General at the close of each quarter. When a postmaster is superseded before the close of a quarter he will forward them when he surrenders the office to his successor.

In like manner postmasters are required to report quarterly the number of registered letters mailed, stating separately the number of domestic and foreign, the number of "registered package envelopes" used for the same, and the amount of registry fees paid on each class. These reports to be addressed to the Third Assistant Postmaster General.

FEES ON REGISTERED LETTERS.

Sec. 8. The registration fees upon registered letters or packets are as follows: On domestic letters to any part of the UNITED STATES or TERRITORIES, and to PANAMA, NEW GRENADA, 20 cents each; until JANUARY 1, 1869, from and after which date the same will be reduced to 15 cents. . . .







NON-RECEIPT OF REGISTERED LETTERS OR BILLS.

Sec. 14. If, on the opening of a pouch arriving at any post office, a return bill be found addressed to the postmaster and no corresponding registered package envelope nor registered letters be found, or received within a few days, the postmaster will endorse the same "not received," and forward it by mail to the postmaster at the office from which it was sent, and also report all the facts by letter to the Second Assistant Postmaster General, Contract Office, Inspection Division, Washington, D. C.; Also to the nearest resident special agent of the Department, in order that the case may be investigated. . . .

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ROUTE AGENTS AND RAILWAY POST OFFICE CLERKS.

Sec. 16. Head clerks and route agents will provide themselves with a small leather pouch in which to convey "registered package envelopes" to and from the terminal offices of their route, of which they will take special and personal charge.

They will also obtain from the Post Office Department, or from the postmaster at the terminus of their route, a book provided by the Department for the purpose of keeping a record of all registered matter passing through their hands.

On leaving the office at either terminus of their route, they will receive and receipt for any or all registered package envelopes, packages of stamps or stamped envelopes, that may be tendered them by the postmaster or the proper clerk, properly enter the same in their book of record for registered matter, place the registered package envelopes in their pouch, including the stamps and stamped envelopes when practicable, and become personally responsible for their delivery into the hands of a postmaster or other authorized agent of the Post Office Department.

Registered matter coming into their hands, either from postmasters on the line of their route, railway postal clerks or route agents on their own, or on other routes, or that may come to them in pouches for distribution, or that may come into their hands in any way, they will also enter in their book of record of registered matter, and in all cases receipt for the same.

When a head clerk or route agent arrives at the terminus of his route, he will take what registered matter he may have for delivery into the post office, deliver the same to the postmaster, the registry clerk or other proper clerk, and at once obtain his receipt on his book of record.

Registered matter for delivery from a way office on his route at which he delivers mail, he will send to that office in the pouch of letters for delivery, (the same to be witnessed when practicable,) accompanied by a receipt properly filled up for signing, with his own name, title, and P. O. address on the receipt, that the postmaster to whom it is so sent may know to whom and where to return it.

Registered matter that is to pass through the hands of another railway postal clerk, route agent, or other agent, on a connecting or intersecting route leading from or past a way office on his route, at which he delivers mail, for which he cannot at the time obtain a receipt of such clerk or agent, he will send with a receipt, the same as above directed in case of registered matter delivery from such way office, and the postmaster at such way office is required to sign and return such receipt by the next mail to the address of the postal clerk or route agent leaving the same, and to take a receipt of the postal clerk or agent to whom he may deliver such registered matter. When this receipt is returned properly signed, he will make a note of the fact on his book of record opposite the description of the registered package, and file away the receipt for future reference.

When a head clerk or route agent has registered matter that is to pass through the hands of another railway postal clerk, route agent, or other agent, on a connecting or intersecting route leading from or past his terminal office, and he cannot at the time obtain a receipt of such clerk or agent, (as positive safety to registered matter is of more importance than expedition, and as there is no positive safety without a perfect chain of receipts,) he will take such registered matter into his terminal office and take a receipt for the same upon his book of record the same as for registered matter left there for delivery.

ACCOUNTS OF REGISTERED LETTERS.

Sec. 18. No accounts or records in relation to registered letters are to be forwarded to the Department with the quarterly return. They are to be carefully preserved by the postmaster for reference.

The foregoing regulations supersede all previous regulations on the subject of the registration of letters.

ALEX. W. RANDALL,  
Postmaster General.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, October 1, 1868.



# REGISTERED LETTER BILL.

This Bill, and the annexed Return Bill, are to be filled up alike at the office of mailing, by entering in the proper columns the registered numbers, names of persons to whom addressed, and destination of the registered letters to be sent, also the number of the Registered Package Envelope in which they are to be forwarded. This Bill is then to be separated from the Return Bill and enclosed in the same Registered Package Envelope with the letter or letters to which it refers. The Return Bill must then be enclosed in a R E D envelope, directed to the Postmaster at the office to which the Registered Package Envelope is directed, and sent in the same mail among the ordinary letters.

The first letter registered is to be entered No. 1, the second No. 2, and so on to the end of the quarter. The next quarter will commence again with No. 1. The full postage and the registry fee must in all cases be pre-paid by stamps.

## REGISTERED LETTER BILL.

This Bill, and the annexed Return Bill, are to be filled up alike at the office of mailing, by entering in the proper columns the registered numbers, names of persons to whom addressed, and destination of the registered letters to be sent, also the number of the Registered Package Envelope in which they are to be forwarded. This Bill is then to be separated from the Return Bill and enclosed in the same Registered Package Envelope with the letter or letters to which it refers. The Return Bill must then be enclosed in a R E D envelope, directed to the Postmaster at the office to which the Registered Package Envelope is directed, and sent in the same mail among the ordinary letters.

The first letter registered is to be entered No. 1, the second No. 2, and so on to the end of the quarter. The next quarter will commence again with No. 1. The full postage and the registry fee must in all cases be pre-paid by stamps.

Registered Letters from *White Haven Pa.*  
*Nov. 17*, 187*0*.  
*To Town Line Pa.*

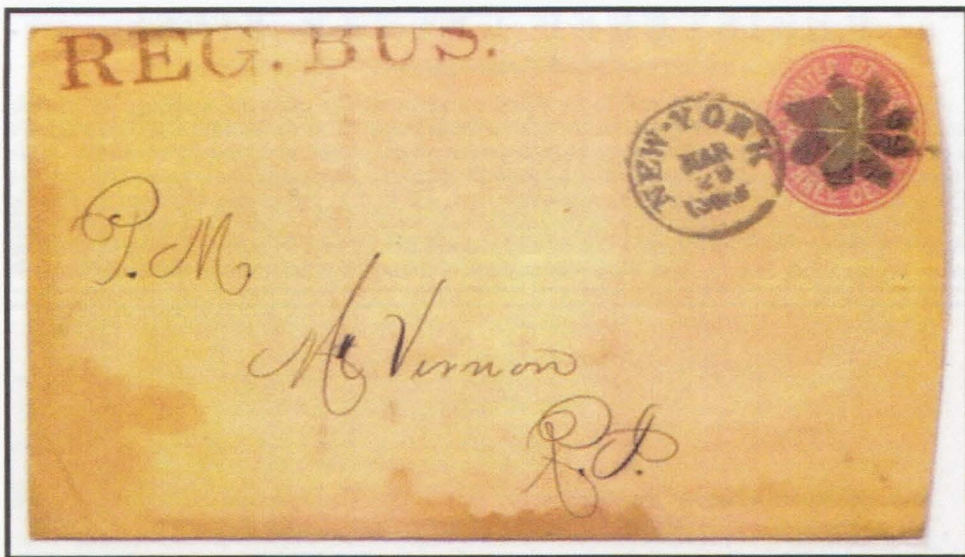
Registered Number of Letter.	TO WHOM ADDRESSED.	OFFICE OF FINAL DESTINATION.	Forwarded in Reg. Package Envelope No.
53	<i>Wm. Davenport</i>	<i>Town Line</i> <i>Pa.</i>	60

*John N. Torbert, P.M.*

White Haven, PA November 17, 1870

Registered Letter Bills now accompanied the letters they documented in their registered package envelope. Registered Letter Bills included space for recording both the registration number of letter and the registered package envelope number. The instructions on the top of this form instructed postmasters that the registered letter number was to restart with number one at the beginning of each quarter. The only mention of beginning numbers anew each quarter contained in the January, 1867 instructions referred to the Registered Package Envelope number.





**Registered Stamp Bill.** (No

REGISTERED STAMPS,  
From New York, N. Y. 1869.

To *Mt Vernon R.D.*

NO.	TO WHOM ADDRESSED.	FREE.
<i>17070</i>	<i>P.M.</i>	<i>/</i>

JAMES KELLY, P. M.

New York, NY March 29, 1869  
Registered Stamp Bill sent to the postmaster at Mount Vernon, RI.

This is a specialized form of a registered letter bill used on shipments of mint postage stamps sent by registered mail. An embossed three-cent first-class envelope stamped "REG. BUS." was used to mail this item between postmasters.

Registered mail documents could be sent under the postmaster's free-franking privilege until 1873. The *Postal Laws and Regulations* of 1873 effective July 1 abolished this privilege creating official stamps and embossed envelopes for use by each executive department of the government. Both this item and the one on the adjoining page were franked by first-class postage of its era.





RETURN REGISTERED LETTER RECEIPT.		
<small>NOTE.—This return receipt, after being signed by the party to whom the letter or package which accompanies it is delivered, must be immediately enclosed to the Postmaster at the office where it originated.            Should the registered letter not be delivered, this receipt must be forwarded with it, in due course, to the Dead Letter Office.</small>		
No. <u>1</u>	Nov <u>9</u> 186 <u>9</u>	
Mailed at <u>Mount Vernon, R. I.</u>		
by <u>John W. Hollman</u>		
a letter addressed to <u>Raymond Vernon</u>		
<u>16 Summer St New York</u>		
<small>Stamp here the office and date of delivery.</small> 	Received the above described letter. Sign here: <u>[Signature]</u>	

New York, NY November 12, 1869

Return Registered Letter Receipt returned to the postmaster at Mount Vernon, RI for hand delivery to the sender of this item.<sup>1</sup> This is for a letter delivered at New York. Return Registered Letter Receipt was signed by its addressee upon receipt of the letter as required by regulation.

Section 13 of the *New Regulations Respecting Registration of Letters* issued October 1, 1868 required the Return Registered Letter Receipt to be "... immediately forwarded, in one of the RED 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. ..."

1. *United States Mail And Post Office Assistant*, Vol. 3, No. 10, (New York, N. Y., July, 1863), p. 2.



This Blank is to be filled up and retained on file at the office where the letter is registered.

## REGISTERED LETTER.

No. 9 May 12 1869.

Post Office Town Line Received

of Syrus H. Hall

a letter addressed to Leicester Co

S. E. Warner Broadway & Fulton

Street New York

sent in Registered Package Envelope No. \_\_\_\_\_

---

This Blank is to be filled up and retained on file at the office where the letter is registered.

## REGISTERED LETTER.

No. 7 May 12 1869.

Post Office Town Line Received

of J. E. Wilkinson

a letter addressed to Eastman P. Kendall

No 25 Hawley Street Boston

Mass

sent in Registered Package Envelope No. \_\_\_\_\_

Town Line, PA May 12, 1869

Example marginal entry from the two-part Receipt for a Registered Letter, (with corresponding marginal entry) form. This section was kept as a record at the post office of mailing for two years then was usually destroyed or sold as scrap paper.<sup>2</sup>

2. *United States Mail And Post Office Assistant*, Vol. 5, No. 10, (New York, N. Y., July, 1865), p. 3.





Macon, GA August 7, 1868

Southern Express Company envelope for money remittance said to contain \$800. The practice of sending money by private express companies began in the 1830's when money could not be sent in the U.S.P.O. express mail system. Postal laws prohibited express companies from carrying any first-class correspondence enclosed in these envelopes. Information detailing a payment could be openly noted on the face of an express envelope in plain view. Some patrons continued to prefer sending cash and equivalent valuable documents by express companies rather than discreetly enclosing them in a registered letter.





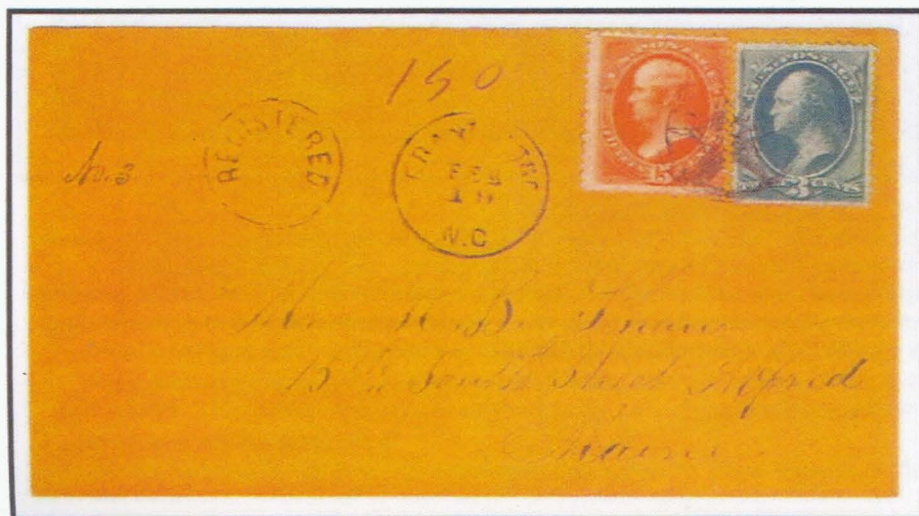
Richmond, VA  
November 19, 1870

Registered-specific postmark device.

First-class  
postage overpaid  
by one cent.

San Francisco, CA April 23,  
(year not given)

Registered-specific postmark device.



Grantsburg, NC  
February 19,  
(year not given)

Circular registered device.





East Berry, NH February 10, 1873

Registration fee paid item numbered, but not marked "registered".

Blue "7769" added at post office of delivery.

Postmaster General A. W. Randall issued the following regulation September 21, 1868 reducing the registration fee on domestic letters from twenty- to fifteen-cents. The stated reason was to bring the registration fee charged by the U.S.P.O. in line with that of other countries:

The fee for registering letters to Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Prussia, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Russia, Greece, Moldavia, Wallachia, and Turkey, is only 8. cents.

The fee for registering letters to Gold Coast, Cape of Good Hope, Ceylon, Constantinople, East Indies, Egypt, Falkland Islands, Gambia, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Java, Lagos, Labuan, Siberia, Malta, Mauritius, Natal, New South Wales, Queensland, St. Helena, Sierra Leone, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia, is 16. cents.

It seems therefore that the amount which is now required to be paid for registering domestic letters, 20. cents, when compared with the fees named above for registering letters to foreign countries, is unreasonable.

It is therefore Ordered, That, from and after Jan 1, 1869, the registration fee on all letters registered in, and addressed to any part of the United States, shall be fifteen cents; the same to be in all cases fully prepaid in postage stamps affixed to the letter and cancelled.

The new rate was announced in the January 1, 1869 issue of the *United States Mail and Post Office Assistant* in the following manner:

#### Reduction of the Registration Fee.

On and after the 1st inst., the registration fee on domestic letters will be FIFTEEN-CENTS instead of twenty cents, as formerly. Postmasters should take pains to have the public made aware of this fact, and by every other means in their power induce those who desire to make money remittances by mail to have their letters registered (in cases where Money Orders cannot be procured). We have reason to fear that there has been a too general apathy on this subject among postmasters; and in not a few instances we have heard officially, of those among them who seem, for some reason, to wish to *prevent* the registration of letters at their offices. If such postmasters could read some of the dark hints and inuendoes on this subject contained in complaints from persons who have lost money letters, and who "asked the P.M. about registering, but were told the letter would go just as safely without it," they would, out of regard to their own reputations, never allow another valuable letter to be deposited in their office unregistered, if in their power to persuade the sender to secure its safety by registration.

Many postmasters, we learn, on the other hand, have prepared conspicuous notices, advising the registration of *all* valuable letters and packages, which are posted just over the boxes for reception of letters. It is a good example and secures them from unjust suspicion and blame if the pockets of those who do not heed the advice suffer in consequence.



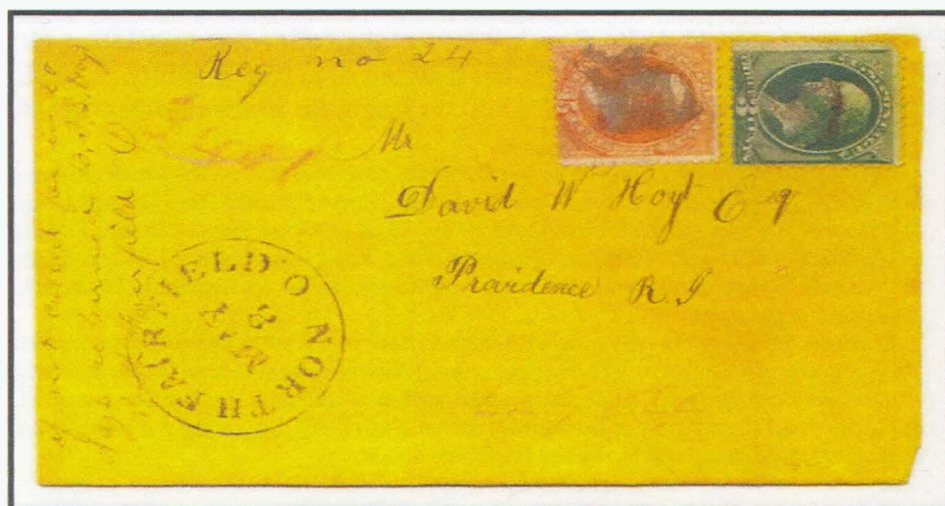


Foxbury, ME  
January 28, 1870  
(by date line)

Manuscript "Registered 1"  
The "In Care Of A. B. Richardson"  
authorized a  
third party to take delivery  
for Miss Reed.

North Fairfield, OH  
May 8, 1871  
(by date line)

Endorsement by sender, "if not  
called for in 20 days returned to  
P. B. Hoyt, North Fairfield, O."



Regulations issued by Postmaster General John Creswell September 1, 1870 established new procedures for handling registered letters not deliverable to the addressee at the post office of destination. Senders had to include a return address to retrieve an undeliverable letter:

## Post Office Department,

OFFICE OF THE THIRD ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL,

September 1, 1870.

Before registering a letter or package the Postmaster shall require the sender to endorse his name and post office address, or a return request, on the envelope or wrapper of such letter or package; and if the same shall not be called for, or delivered at destination, within thirty days, it shall be returned to the mailing office duly registered, and, if possible, returned to the sender, and by him receipted for to the Postmaster; and if any registered letter or package so returned to the mailing office cannot be restored, after reasonable and diligent effort, within thirty days, the same shall then be returned to the Dead Letter Office for disposition as in other cases provided for by existing laws and regulations.

By order of the Postmaster General:

W. H. H. Terrell,  
Third Assist. P. M. General.





#### Undated fifteen-cent rate period registered letter.

Return address consistent with a New York City location. Cover is lacking the required postmark that should have been applied at the post office of mailing. Number 17107 is the item number assigned to this item at Albany when it was entered into Albany's "Account of Registered Letters Received."

Example of a registered letter mailed from and addressed to a large city where letter carriers provided free service to and from the door of the postal patron. Carriers were required to provide a registered letter the same degree of security and custodial documentation as if it were delivered at the post office. Instructions contained in the *Postal Laws And Regulations* of 1873 state:

Sec. 504. Postmasters will hand to the letter-carriers, for delivery, all registered letters, (except those addressed to box-holders,) first requiring them to sign their names in the last column of the sheet for "receipts for registered letters delivered." The carrier will, on the delivery of every such letter, require the person receiving it to sign the "return registered-letter receipt," and also a receipt for the same in a [carrier] book furnished for that purpose.

The "carrier book" functioned the same as the counter book documenting the delivery of a registered letter at a post office window. Carriers listed each registered item received for delivery on the day's rounds in the book. If the addressee was not at home and so not able to sign for delivery of a registered item, a notice either to call at the post office for the item or to ask the carrier to again attempt delivery was left in the addressee's home mail slot. Undelivered items were logged back into the post office records at the end of the day's rounds.









Lawrence, MA  
February 8,  
(year not given)

Straight-line  
"REGISTERED"  
device with border.

North Kingsville, OH  
December 15,  
(year not given)

Circular "REGISTERED"  
device.



## REGISTERED LETTERS.

### REDUCTION OF THE FEE THEREON TO EIGHT CENTS.

Post Office Department,  
OFFICE OF THE  
THIRD ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL,  
DIVISION OF REGISTERED LETTERS,  
Washington, D. C., December 18, 1873.

TO ALL POSTMASTERS:

By direction of the Postmaster General, on the first of January, 1874, the fee for registering a letter mailed at any post office in the United States or Territories, and addressed to any other post office in the United States or Territories, will be fixed at EIGHT CENTS, in addition to the regular letter postage.

Please govern your actions accordingly, requiring both fee and postage to be prepaid by postage stamps affixed to the letter, and duly canceled at the mailing office.

Until further notice the Department will not provide postage stamps of the denomination of *eight* cents, as that sum can be obtained by combining stamps of the most convenient denominations at hand.

The fifteen-cent stamps remaining in the hands of Postmasters on January 1, 1874, must not, in any case, be returned to the Department.

E. W. Barber  
Third Assistant Postmaster General.



This form functioned in much the same way as a registered letter bill and return registered letter bill except postal employees were saved the chore of listing every item within the package.

 The Route Agent or Railway Postal Clerk by whom the pouch containing this receipt and accompanying package is first opened will sign his name in the space above this note, with the names of the carrier, and return it to the Postmaster from whom he receives it.



50



The *Postal Laws And Regulations* issued April 5, 1873 did not make any significant changes in the processing of registered mail. It summarizes forms used in the registry process as follows:

Sec. 470. The following named-blanks are required for use in the registration of letters, and are furnished on application to the First Assistant Postmaster General, viz:

Registered-letter bill and returned registered-letter bill.

Registered-letter receipts. (Receipt for a registered letter, with corresponding marginal entry, and return registered-letter receipt.)

Account of registered letters received.

Account of registered letters sent.

Receipts for registered letters delivered.

Record of registered matter in transit.

Receipt for registered packages.

Record-books for postal-clerks and route-agents.

Sec. 471. Registered-package envelopes and seals, and ordinary envelopes for official use in the registration of letters, are furnished, on application, by the Third Assistant Postmaster General.



# RECORD OF TRANSIT.

Condition.

Signature.

Good or Bad.

By Whom Received and Date.

Good. *Correct*  
*April 1890 received 11/18*  
*Good. Bear 11-18*  
**CORRECT.**  
**H. H. HUNT, MESSENGER.**  
**A. & O. C. ROUTE.**  
*11-19*

## INSTRUCTIONS.

All Postal Officers handling this Package must keep a Record of its Number, Postmark with Date, Address, Date of Receipt and Disposition made of it, so that it may be traced from Place of Mailing to its Destination, always taking a Receipt for it when practicable. If such Receipt can not be obtained at the time, a Receipt properly filled up must be placed in the Pouch with the Package, to be signed by the F. M. of the next office where the Pouch is opened, and by him returned to the forwarding Route Agent or Railway Clerk by next mail.

**E. W. BARBER,**

Third Assistant Postmaster General.

Meadville, PA November 17, 1874  
Registered Package Envelope.





East Jaffrey, NH  
May 24,  
(year not given)

Straight-line  
"Registered No."



Bristol, IN  
June 1, 1877  
(by contents)

Manuscript "Reg 136".



North Kingsville, OH  
November 7,  
(year not given)

Earlier period circular "Registered"  
with manuscript "10".





Troy, NY  
November 12, 1878

Early use of dater-styled  
circular registered device.

Indianapolis, IN  
March 31, 1879

Three straight-line devices used  
to register and postmark a  
registered item.



Post Office Department,  
Washington, D.C. June 26th 1875

It is hereby Ordered, That the fee for registering a letter mailed at any post office within the United States, addressed to any other post-office in the United States, or to a Foreign Country, be fixed, on and after July 1st, 1875, at the uniform rate of ten cents, in addition to the regular letter-postage, to be fully prepaid by postage stamps affixed to such letter, and cancelled at the mailing office.

Marshall Jewell,  
(Sd.) *Postmaster General*





New Orleans, LA March 8, 1876 (by addressee notation)

Registered letter addressed in pencil to: "Mr. James. L. Martel", "636 Clay Str.", "San Francisco (Cal)".

Delivered by a city carrier with appropriate "CARRIER" marking added to back of envelope.

Registered letters were never left with the regular mail at a carrier's stop on his route unless the addressee or their authorized agent was present to sign for it at the time of delivery. A notice to call for a registered letter at the post office would be left for the addressee. It would be returned to the post office by the carrier for later pick up.

At this time letter carriers could not accept a letter for registration on their route. Carriers were supplied with a small book for documenting registered letters delivered on their route with space for the addressee's signature and date of delivery (*Postal Laws & Reg.*, 1873, Sec. 504). Undelivered registered letters were signed back into the post office at the conclusion of each day's rounds.





Jacksonville, FL March 28, 1878

Two units of first-class postage was paid on this letter bearing two numbers. Number 528 is the sequence number for this letter. Number 441 is the sequence number for the registered package envelope in which it traveled. The registered package number was not a required entry on the face of a registered letter but it appears on some items. Both were required to be entered in the "Account of registered letters sent" maintained at Jacksonville.

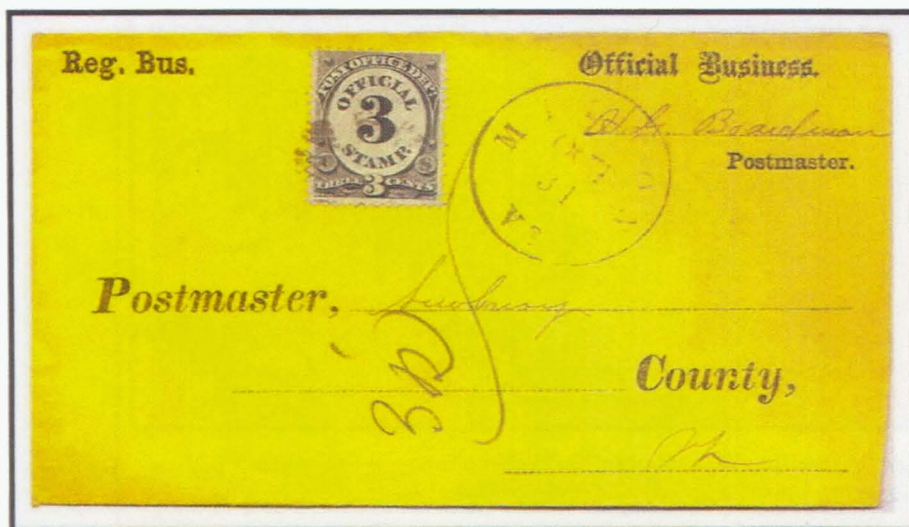


Seafield, IN October 2, 1878

Postmasters were instructed to return any undelivered registered letters to the sender if the letter was not delivered within thirty days of its arrival at the post office of delivery. A reasonable shorter time period was to be observed if instructed in writing by the sender on the face of the letter. This letter was to be returned if not delivered within ten days. "BOSTON MASS REG." rimless circular device, normally used on registered bills and similar forms, was applied to this letter October 7 probably indicating the date this letter arrived at that post office. Arrival markings began appearing on the back of some registered letters passing through larger post offices in the 1870's. They would not be required by regulation until 1879.



Postmasters were furnished with official stamps and embossed envelopes beginning July 1, 1873. Legal opinions limited their use to internal U.S.P.O. addresses. Regulations required Return Registered Letter Receipts to be sent back to the postmaster at the post office of mailing for his delivery to the sender of a registered item. These envelopes were also used to mail Registered Letter Bills and Return Registered Letter Bills as well as for other post office business.



< Signature line.

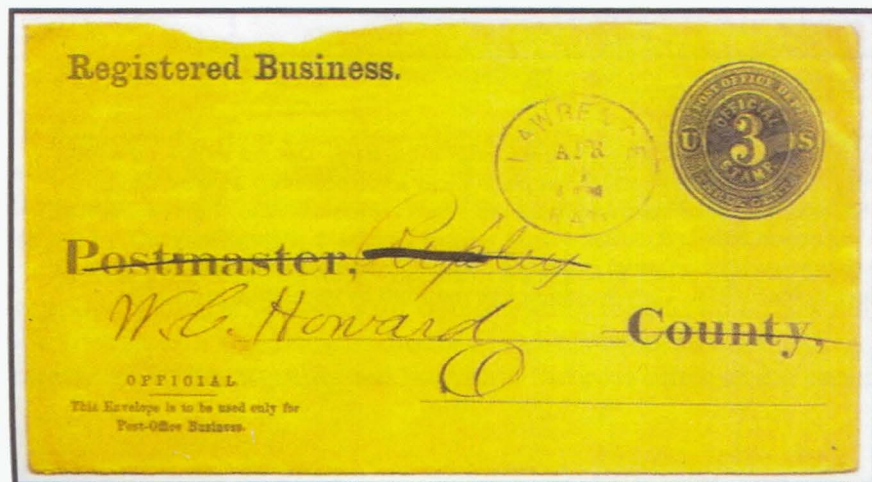


Official Business notice  
on back of envelope.

Milton, VT October 31,  
(year not given)

Bangor, ME  
October 16, 1876  
(by addressee notation)

U.S.P.O. embossed official business  
envelope containing sixty-seven cents sent  
registered mail between postmasters.



Lawrence, KS April 8, 1879  
(by enclosure)

Official embossed envelope used to  
send a Return Registered-Letter Receipt  
directly back to the sender of a registered  
letter from the post office of destination.  
This was not an authorized usage for an  
embossed official envelope.



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 indorsed 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. 5 April 4, 1879.

Mailed at Ripley Ohio

by W. C. Howard

a letter addressed to J. D. A. Norton  
Lawrence Douglas Co Kansas

Stamp here the office and date of delivery.

Received the above-described letter.

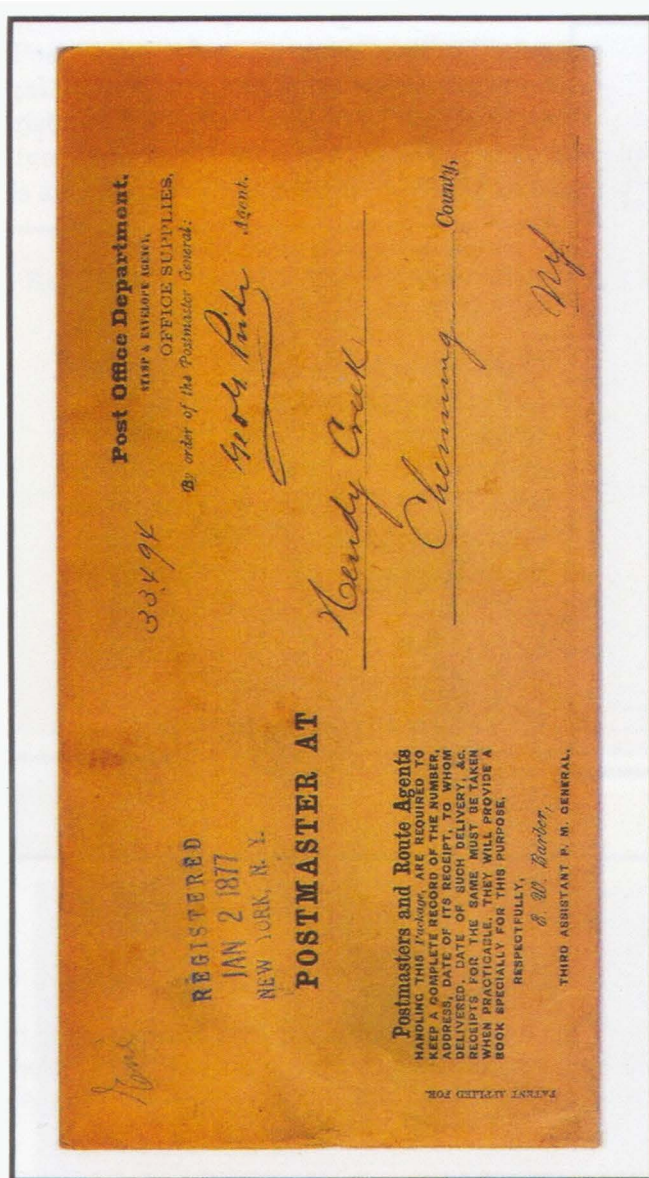
John D. A. Norton  
5

This postmarked Return Registered Letter Receipt was enclosed in the official embossed U.S.P.O. envelope shown on the bottom of the previous page for mailing directly back to the sender of registered letter number 5, W. C. Howard.

This version of the Registered Letter Bill included specific instructions requiring the use of a “Reg. Bus.” envelope and the numbering of both the registered letters and Registered Package Envelopes it documented.

[illegible]





New York, NY January 2, 1877

The Post Office Department Stamp and Envelope Agency delivered new mint stamps and embossed envelopes from supply offices to post offices in a designated geographical area. Envelopes used for this purpose were mailed under seal as a registered item without the affixing of stamps paying the registration fee.

The heavy cardboard envelopes used were similar in size to the thinner registered package envelopes. They did not contain preprinted blanks for entering the details and signatures of each route agent or clerk entrusted with its custody during its journey. It bears the following instruction:

### Postmasters and Route Agents

HANDLING THIS Package, ARE REQUIRED TO  
KEEP A COMPLETE RECORD OF THE NUMBER,  
ADDRESS, DATE OF ITS RECEIPT, TO WHOM  
DELIVERED, DATE OF SUCH DELIVERY, &c.  
RECEIPTS FOR THE SAME MUST BE TAKEN  
WHEN PRACTICABLE. THEY WILL PROVIDE A  
BOOK SPECIALLY FOR THIS PURPOSE.



REGISTERED POSTAGE-STAMP BILL

New York, N. Y.

Memorandum of a package of  
No. **44213** received from  
New York.

This memorandum must be detached from the  
file by the receiving Post Office, and record of above  
proper book.

THOMAS

New York, NY  
January 8, 1879

Registered Postage Stamp Bills.

REGISTERED POSTAGE-STAMP BILL

New York, N. Y., JAN. 8 1879

Memorandum of a package of POSTAGE STAMPS  
No. 1548, received from the Postmaster at  
New York.

This memorandum must be detached from Return Bill and retained on  
file by the receiving Post Office, and record of above number must be kept in  
proper book.

THOMAS L. JAMES, P. M.

Registered Stamped Envelope Bill. (No. )

REGISTERED STAMPED ENVELOPES,  
From Chicago, Ill. 187

To Warren Mills Wis

NO.	TO WHOM ADDRESSED.	FREE.
1068	P M	

CHICAGO, ILL. OCT 16 1879

JOHN McARTHUR, P. M.

Chicago, IL  
October 16, (year not given)

Registered Stamped  
Envelope Bill.

The U.S.P.O. used specific versions of processing forms when supplying post offices with valuable mint stamps and embossed envelopes by registered mail.



## Distributing Post Offices Replaced by the Railway Postal System

Beginning in 1875 the U.S.P.O. tested a revised plan for the handling of registered mail traveling beyond the geographical area covered by a single distributing post office. Selected D.P.O.'s were authorized to send registered mail in locked "through" pouches to other D.P.O.'s via the rapidly expanding railway postal system. Subsequent annual reports of the Postmaster General noted increased efficiency and cost savings achieved by this plan.

Mail was no longer routed through distributing post offices beginning in 1879. The railway postal system provided rolling sorting rooms from which mail could be delivered directly to many post offices across the nation. It also enabled mail to be sent to "sorting post offices" and stations in locked pouches. This necessitated the last style of registered letter bill shown below. Detailed instructions for its use documenting these new procedures appeared on its reverse side shown on the next page.

**REGISTERED LETTER BILL.**

SEE NEW INSTRUCTIONS ON THE OTHER SIDE RESPECTING  
THE USE OF THIS BILL.

Registered Letters from *East Baldwin, Me.*  
*Feb 2*, 1880.

To \_\_\_\_\_

Registered Number of Letter.	TO WHOM ADDRESSED.	OFFICE OF FINAL DESTINATION.	Forwarded in Reg. Package Envelope No.
	<i>G. Weston Thompson</i>	<i>Brunswick Me.</i>	

*D. T. Richardson, P. M.*  
*E. Baldwin*  
*Me.*

East Baldwin, ME February 2, 1880

Registered Letter Bill.



By direction of the Postmaster General, postmasters will in future address and bill registered letters and packages, addressed to points within the United States, to the postmaster at the office of *destination* instead of to a distributing office on the route, as heretofore required by Section 476 of the Postal Regulations of 1873.

ALL DOMESTIC REGISTERED MATTER WILL THEREFORE BE SENT DIRECT.

Special care must be taken that the postmark showing the name of office and date of mailing be clearly and legibly impressed on the Registered Package Envelope.

IN ADDITION TO THE FOREGOING CHANGE, THE USE OF THE RETURN REGISTERED LETTER BILL REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 475 AND 492 OF THE POSTAL REGULATIONS WILL BE DISCONTINUED; BUT THE *Registered Letter Bill* WILL CONTINUE TO BE USED AS PROVIDED BY SECTION 475, AND TO TAKE THE PLACE OF THE RETURN BILL AS FOLLOWS:

Upon receipt by a postmaster of a registered package, he will compare the registered number and address of contents with the entries on the Registered Letter Bill inclosed with it in the registered package envelope, and if found to agree he will indorse the word "CORRECT" across the face of the bill, sign and return it to the postmaster at the mailing office. Should the bill *not* be returned to the mailing office within a reasonable time, the postmaster must make inquiry concerning it of the office to which it was sent. Such inquiry should state the date on which the package was transmitted and its number, together with the addresses and numbers of the letters or packages named therein.

If a registered package containing *no registered letter bill* arrives at a post office, a *new* bill must be filled up from the numbers and addresses of the letters in the package, properly signed, postmarked, and indorsed "*no bill received*," and returned to the mailing office, and the irregularity reported to the THIRD Assistant P. M. General.

Should the bill afterward arrive it should be indorsed "acknowledged," postmarked, signed, and returned as above indicated.

✍ The first letter registered is to be entered No. 1, the second No. 2, and so on to the end of the quarter. The next quarter will commence again with No. 1. The full postage and the registry fee must in all cases be prepaid by stamps.

*February 25, 1879.*

East Baldwin, ME February 2, 1880

Registered Letter Bill (reverse side)

The process of converting most registry paperwork seen by the public to the newly-approved official-use-only penalty post card format was under development when the above changes were implemented. The use of penalty post card forms became effective July 1, 1879. This old style of registered letter bill remained valid for use after that date while supplies lasted.



# Streamlining the Processing of Registered Mail 1879 - 1910

The U.S.P.O. was entering an era of rapid growth in both the volume of registered mail it handled and the number of post offices it processed. New settlements desired the status of having a post office. Postal patrons increasingly relied on registered mail to send orders to the mail-order catalogue companies and other valuable letters to banks, insurance companies, and relatives.

It was time to replace the laws and regulations that had evolved over the years in various pieces of legislation with one document detailing the operations of the U.S.P.O. appropriate for this new era. This was accomplished with the *Postal Laws and Regulations* issued March 3, 1879. Additional changes were made to the registry system through this era focusing on providing an efficient service.

The *Post Office Department Annual Reports for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 1910* provides this summary of the growth of the registry system:

## GROWTH OF THE REGISTRY SYSTEM.

The growth of the registry system since 1876, prior to which no statistics were regularly compiled in annual reports, is shown in the following table:

Years.	Number of post offices.	Number of registrations.			Total paid and free.	Fees received.
		Paid.		Free.		
		Domestic.	Foreign.			
1876.....	36,383	3,198,031	155,235	653,051	4,007,817	\$335,416.00
1877.....	37,345	3,528,480	145,908	673,739	4,348,127	367,438.80
1878.....	39,258	3,906,001	153,993	748,810	4,808,804	414,990.40
1879.....	40,855	4,430,576	166,781	831,065	5,429,022	459,736.70
1880.....	42,989	5,690,774	257,969	1,038,770	6,990,513	595,774.30
1881.....	44,512	6,804,510	324,312	1,210,096	8,338,918	712,882.20
1882.....	46,231	7,999,597	415,382	1,212,943	9,627,022	841,497.90
1883.....	47,863	8,797,902	467,595	1,329,210	10,594,716	926,549.70
1884.....	50,017	9,074,203	496,390	1,675,952	11,246,545	957,059.30
1885.....	51,252	8,777,370	511,614	1,754,272	11,043,256	928,808.40
1886.....	53,614	9,153,907	545,620	1,948,700	11,048,227	969,952.70
1887.....	55,157	9,737,139	600,029	2,177,653	12,524,421	1,034,070.80
1888.....	57,376	10,531,986	719,558	2,425,625	13,677,169	1,125,154.40
1889.....	58,999	10,773,199	737,626	2,551,041	14,061,866	1,151,082.50
1890.....	62,401	11,365,652	798,517	2,782,912	14,947,081	1,216,416.90
1891.....	64,329	11,569,246	879,821	2,658,535	15,047,602	1,238,906.70
1892.....	67,119	11,612,032	931,978	2,716,084	15,260,094	1,254,401.00
1893.....	68,403	11,774,369	1,028,034	2,759,016	15,561,410	1,150,790.16
1894.....	69,805	11,512,186	949,252	2,589,116	15,050,554	996,915.04
1895.....	70,064	10,828,187	916,338	2,683,556	14,428,081	939,562.00
1896.....	70,360	11,154,855	1,037,506	2,913,975	15,106,336	975,388.88
1897.....	71,022	10,669,773	1,020,633	2,868,677	14,559,083	935,232.48
1898.....	73,570	11,420,990	1,056,508	3,122,722	15,600,220	998,199.84
1899.....	75,000	12,238,584	1,172,500	2,674,938	16,086,022	1,072,886.72
1900.....	76,688	13,936,388	1,456,548	3,029,713	18,422,649	1,231,434.88
1901.....	76,945	15,957,126	1,660,152	3,197,223	20,814,501	1,409,382.24
1902.....	75,924	17,636,071	1,992,072	3,203,257	22,831,400	1,570,251.44
1903.....	74,169	19,940,205	2,449,148	3,561,825	25,951,178	1,791,148.24
1904.....	71,131	21,601,667	2,794,070	3,818,133	28,213,870	1,951,658.96
1905.....	68,131	23,324,040	3,014,115	3,862,022	30,200,177	2,107,052.40
1906.....	65,600	26,343,453	3,606,458	4,215,573	34,165,484	2,395,992.88
1907.....	62,659	29,749,206	4,231,373	4,225,070	38,255,649	2,722,446.32
1908.....	61,158	31,712,794	4,411,116	4,027,887	40,151,797	2,889,912.80
1909.....	60,144	32,707,224	4,199,623	3,632,698	40,539,545	2,952,547.76
1910.....	59,580	33,682,081	4,782,199	3,589,294	42,053,574	3,593,946.36

a Decrease.





Providence, RI December 23, 1879

A three-line registered postmark device was used to postmark and register this double first-class rate letter. Manuscript "No 2,200" indicates the high volume of registered mail being handled.

The Report of the Postmaster-General for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1879 noted:

#### REVISION OF THE REGISTRY SYSTEM.

The registry system was given much attention during the year. The rules governing its conduct were thoroughly revised in preparing the new edition of the Postal Laws and Regulations, and the methods greatly simplified. Useless details were dispensed with, and valuable improvements added. The work of conducting the system has been greatly lessened, without detracting from its security.

The principal changes may be noted as follows:

1. *Abolition of distributing offices.* — By this change all registered matter is mailed direct to the office of destination without the intervention of the distributing offices, which are thus saved the labor of making up new invoices and keeping records of registered packages in transit.

2. *Extension of through-pouch system.* — As a result of the change noted above, the through-pouch system, the operations of which have been explained in previous reports, has been largely extended by the addition of many new through-pouch offices, and the multiplication of exchanges between offices authorized to use the through pouches. These changes have greatly facilitated the dispatch of registered matter, and at the same time increased its security.

3. *Abolition of the return-registered-letter bill.* — The registered-letter bill and the return-registered-letter bill were in effect duplicate invoices as between postmasters, the former being retained at the receiving office, and the latter returned to the dispatching office as a voucher. The registered-letter bill has been made to serve both purposes by requiring the receiving postmaster to return it with his acknowledgment to the dispatching postmaster, and a considerable saving of clerical labor was accordingly effected by dispensing with the one bill. The single bill now in use has been designated as the Registry Bill.

4. *Combination of records.* — The "Registered-Receipt Book" and "Account of Registered Letters Sent," two separate records kept at the mailing office of matter received from the public and forwarded, have been combined into one book designated as the "Registration Book, or Account of Matter Registered and Dispatched." At the office of destination, the two separate records, of "Registered Letters Received for Delivery," and "Account of Registered Letters Delivered," have been united in one book, called the "Record of Registered Matter Received and Delivered." Duplicate entries of registered matter handled have been avoided at both the mailing and dispatching offices, leading to a very material reduction of labor.

5. *Adoption of blanks on card form.* — The registry-return receipt (the receipt which by law the sender of a registered parcel is entitled to from the addressee) has been placed on cardboard of the size, form, and quality of the postal card in public use, and forwarded through the mails without inclosure in envelopes. The plan is really that of adapting the postal card to official purposes. On one side of the card is a form for the signature of the addressee, and on the other the name and residence of the sender so arranged as to constitute a return address. Less writing is required on the card than on the paper form it superseded; and as each card takes the place of a paper form and two envelopes, the great economy of clerical labor and material will be readily apparent in view of the volume of registry business transacted.

The registry bill previously referred to has also been put on card form, with equally beneficial results. This improvement has been the subject of warm commendation from postmasters. As there can be no doubt that this improvement, so advantageously begun in the registry system, is equally well adapted to other branches of postal business, I respectfully recommend that it be at once put into operation wherever it is applicable.



## The Postal Laws and Regulations of 1879

The *Postal Laws and Regulations* approved by Congress March 3, 1879 effective July 1, 1879 replaced all previous acts covering post office operations in one document. It effectively created a system for handling valuable mail that truly met the stated objectives for the service stated in section 807 below.

The 1879 Act established the basis on which the registry service has operated ever since. Title V, Chapter One detailed the registry system of the United States. Its sections covering the receiving, transmitting and delivering of registered domestic mail-matter follow:

**Sec. 806. Registry System Authorized.**—For the greater security of valuable mail-matter, the Postmaster-General may establish a uniform system of registration. But the Post-Office Department or its revenue shall not be liable for the loss of any mail-matter on account of its having been registered. (R. S., § 3926.)

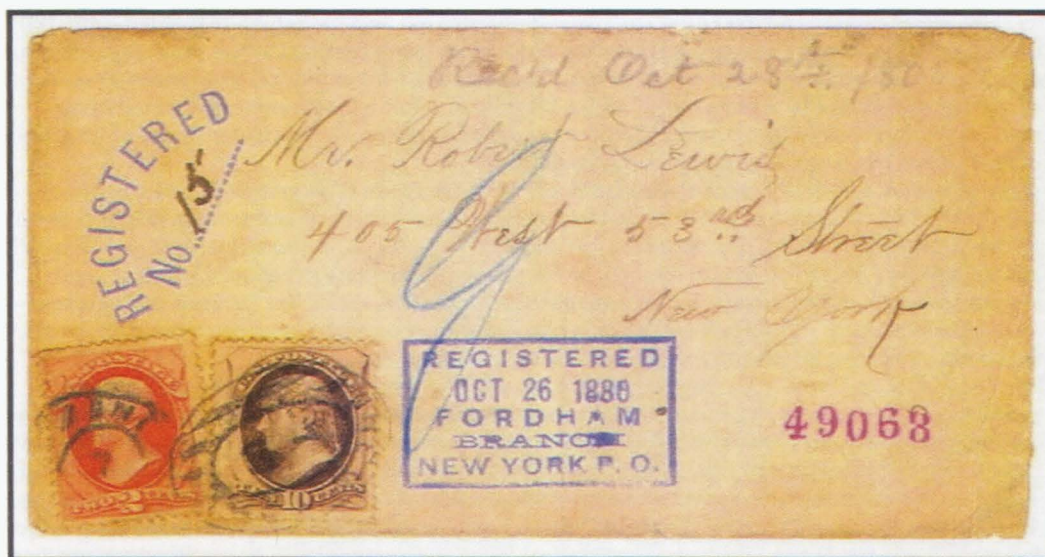
**Sec. 807. Object of the Registry System.**—The registry system is intended to secure to valuable mail-matter in its transmission through the mails the utmost security within the province of the Post-Office Department.

**Sec. 808. Means Employed to Attain Safety.**—The manner in which security over ordinary mail-matter is obtained is by the use of a distinctive cover, retention in special custody, systematic receipts and records showing any transfer from receipt until delivery, affording a continuous trace from the sender in its course through the mails until its delivery into the hands of the addressee.

**Sec. 809. Postmaster's Duty to Encourage Registration.**—Postmasters are obliged to register all mailable matter offered for registration, and should advise the public to register valuable mail-matter, so as to enable the Post-Office Department to keep it under this strict supervision, which cannot be given to the transmission of ordinary mail matter.

**Sec. 810. What Mail-Matter can be Registered.**—First-class matter, or matter on which letter rates of postage has been paid, which matter must always be sealed. Third-class matter and fourth-class matter, unsealed, fully prepaid at the proper rates and conforming to all requirements. No matter excluded by law from the mails can be registered. See Title II, Chapter Three.

**Sec. 811. No Registration on Sunday.**—Postmasters are not required to receive letters or other matter for registration on Sundays or legal holidays.



Fordham Branch, New York P. O., NY October 26, 1880

Two-cent first-class local (drop) rate letter with fancier arch-shaped registration mark from earlier years. Box-shaped five-line registered postmarks appear from branches of major large city post offices beginning in the later 1870's.

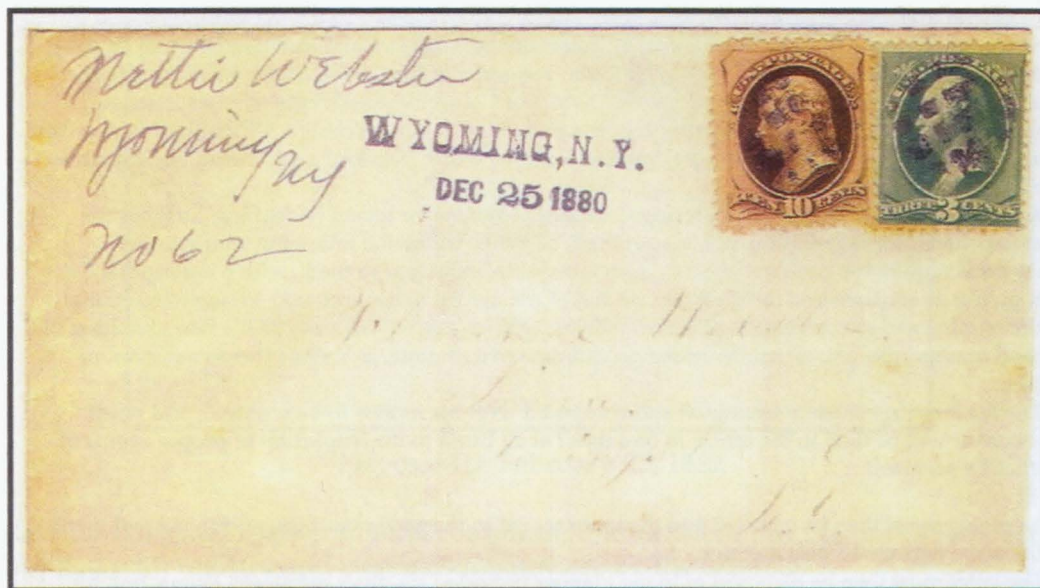




Washington, DC February 20, 1880

**Sec. 812. Limit of Fee for Registration -- No Fee on Official Matter.** — Mail-matter shall be registered only on the application of the party posting the same, and the fee therefor shall not exceed twenty cents in addition to the regular postage, to be, in all cases, prepaid; and all such fees shall be accounted for in such manner as the Postmaster-General shall direct. But letters upon the official business of the Post-Office Department which require registering shall be registered free of charge and pass through the mails free of charge. (R. S., § 3927.)

**Sec. 813. Registration Fee.** — The fee on any registered matter, domestic or foreign, is fixed at ten cents on each letter or parcel, to be affixed in stamps, in addition to the postage. Two or more letters or parcels addressed to, or intended for, the same person cannot be tied or otherwise fastened together and registered as one.



Wyoming, NY December 25, 1880

Two straight-line devices used to postmark a registered letter.



**Sec. 814. Rules for Sender of Registered Letters.**—Postmasters before receiving a letter for registration must require the sender to have it fully and legibly addressed; to have his or her name and address indorsed across the end; to have placed all its contents in a firmly sealed envelope; and affixed the necessary stamps to pay postage and fee.



Reading, PA July 3, 1882 (by sender's notation)

Registered letter that may have been mailed other than first-class mail. Postage paid is consistent with either five units of first-class postage or a fourth-class parcel weighing fifteen ounces. If it were a package, the envelope would have been attached to the package to bear address and stamps.

**Sec. 815. Rules for Sender of Third and Fourth Class Matter.**—Postmasters before receiving third and fourth class matter for registration must require full address, indorsement, and prepayment of fee and postage, as stated in preceding section, and further require that such matter shall be marked THIRD CLASS or FOURTH CLASS, as the case may be, and shall be so put up as to safely bear transportation, and admit of an examination of contents, to ascertain that it is admissible to the mails as such matter. See sections 223, 237, and 238.

**Sec. 816. Postmasters must not Address and Seal Letters.**—Postmasters and their employees are forbidden to address a registered letter for the sender, to place contents in letter, or to seal the letter, or to affix the stamps. This must, in all cases, be done by the sender, as required in section 814. No inquiry must be made further than to ascertain that the matter is mailable, and no statement can appear on the receipt as to the contents of any registered letter, except letters containing currency, registered under the following section:

**Sec. 817. Registry of Letters Containing Currency for Redemption.**—Under such regulations as the Postmaster-General may prescribe, all postmasters are authorized to register in the manner prescribed by law, but without payment of any registration fee, all letters containing fractional or other currency of the United States, which shall be by them sent by mail to the Treasurer of the United States for redemption; and the postmaster at the city of Washington, in the District of Columbia, shall register, in like manner, without charge, all letters containing new currency returned for currency redeemed, which shall be received by him from the Treasurer, in sealed packages, marked with the word "register" over the official signature of the said Treasurer. (R. S., § 3932.)

**Sec. 818. Special Instructions for Registering Currency.**—Whenever letters containing currency for redemption are offered for registration, postmasters will be governed by the following instructions:

*First.* They must require the contents of every such letter to be exhibited to them, with a descriptive list of contents, giving an accurate and detailed description of the money to be remitted. In case of fractional currency, the number and denomination of pieces will be sufficient; but of currency of the denomination of one dollar and upward, the letter, number of series, and date of each note, as well as the denomination, must be given.

*Second.* The list must be carefully examined and compared with the money to be remitted, and when found to be correct will be filed in the office, to be subject at all times to the inspection of proper agents of the Post-Office Department.

12 P. L

*Third.* The money must then be inclosed and the letter sealed in the presence of the postmaster, who will then give the usual registry-receipt therefor.

*Fourth.* The letter must then be disposed of in the manner provided for other registered letters; but, for the sake of further security, the postmaster must be ready to prove beyond question in every case, by a disinterested witness, that such letter was duly mailed in the mode prescribed for registered letters; otherwise, should the letter or package be lost, he will be held responsible therefor.



**REGISTRY RECEIPT.**

Post Office at \_\_\_\_\_

Registered Letter Parcel No. 1043 Rec'd \_\_\_\_\_

of H. Edson

addressed to Albert Stricklen  
Lignon Italy

8- Jm A Wildman, P. M.

**REGISTERED**  
**APR 29 1884**  
**POST OFFICE**  
**INDIANAPOLIS, IND.**

Indianapolis, IN  
April 29, 1884

Registry Receipt  
(Form 1549)

The postmaster or clerk accepting this item for registration did not indicate whether it was a letter or package. This form was detached from the Registration Book and given to H. Edson at the time of mailing.

**Sec. 819. Receiving Mail-Matter for Registration.**— When a letter or parcel is presented for registration the postmaster will first examine it to see that the sender has complied with requirements of sections 814 and 815, and, if such be the case, he will then enter on the book of registration the name and address of sender, address and destination of letter or parcel, registered number and date of mailing, filling out alike the stub of the book and registry receipt. He will number the letter or parcel to correspond with number on stub and registry receipt, sign the receipt, separate it from the stub, and give it to the sender.

NOTE.— Postmasters will erase the word LETTER or PARCEL, on receipt and stub, so that it will read according to the character of article registered

**Sec. 820. Number Registered Matter and Registered-Package Envelopes.**— The registration-book must be commenced each quarter with No. 1, and continued consecutively through the quarter, and the letters or parcels registered correspondingly numbered. Registered-package envelopes are also to be numbered consecutively, commencing each quarter with No. 1.

**Sec. 821. Matter becomes Registered after a Receipt is given Therefor.**— After a receipt has been given therefor, and the matter has been numbered as prescribed in the preceeding sections, the letter or parcel becomes a registered letter or parcel, and must be guarded with the utmost care, and kept separate from ordinary mail-matter.



Hayes, MD February 25, 1882

Inconsistent markings on registered mail complicated its efficient processing. Small post offices were not supplied with registry and postmarking devices by the U.S.P.O.

**Sec. 822. Cancellation of Stamps, Registry-Mark, and Postmark.**— All stamps on registered matter will be effectually canceled, and the letter or parcel marked plainly REGISTERED, and plainly postmarked.



**Sec. 823. Registered Matter to be kept Secure.**— All registered matter must be kept separate from ordinary matter, and in that part of the post-office most secure from accident or theft, and to which no access can be had by any one unauthorized by the postmaster, who must account for all registered matter coming into his post-office.

**Sec. 824. Receipt to be Taken upon Delivery of Registered Matter.**— A receipt shall be taken upon the delivery of any registered mail-matter, showing to whom and when the same was delivered, which shall be returned to the sender, and be received in the courts as *prima facie* evidence of such delivery. (R. S., § 3928.)

The image shows two historical post office forms. The left form is a 'Post Office Department' return card, dated December 27, 1880, from Holland, CT. It is addressed to the 'Post Office at' and includes fields for 'Name of Sender', 'Street and Number', 'Post Office at', and 'County of'. The right form is a 'Registry Return Receipt' dated December 27, 1880, from Holland, CT. It includes fields for 'Reg. No.', 'Post Office at', 'Addressed to', and 'Received by'. Both forms are filled out with handwritten information.

Holland, CT December 27, 1880

Registry Return Receipt card (Form 1548) for item delivered at Norwich, CT December 29, 1880.

**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 the 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.

The image shows two historical post office forms. The left form is a 'Post Office Department' return card, dated December 20, 1881, from Nulls Mills, IN. It is addressed to the 'Post Office at' and includes fields for 'Postmaster at', 'County of', and 'State of'. The right form is a 'Registry Bill' dated December 20, 1881, from Nulls Mills, IN. It includes fields for 'REGISTERED LETTERS, etc., from', 'To P. O. at', 'In Reg. No.', and 'Addressed to'. Both forms are filled out with handwritten information.

Nulls Mills, IN December 20, 1881

Registry Bill card (Form 1545) for item delivered at Anderson, IN December 20, 1881.

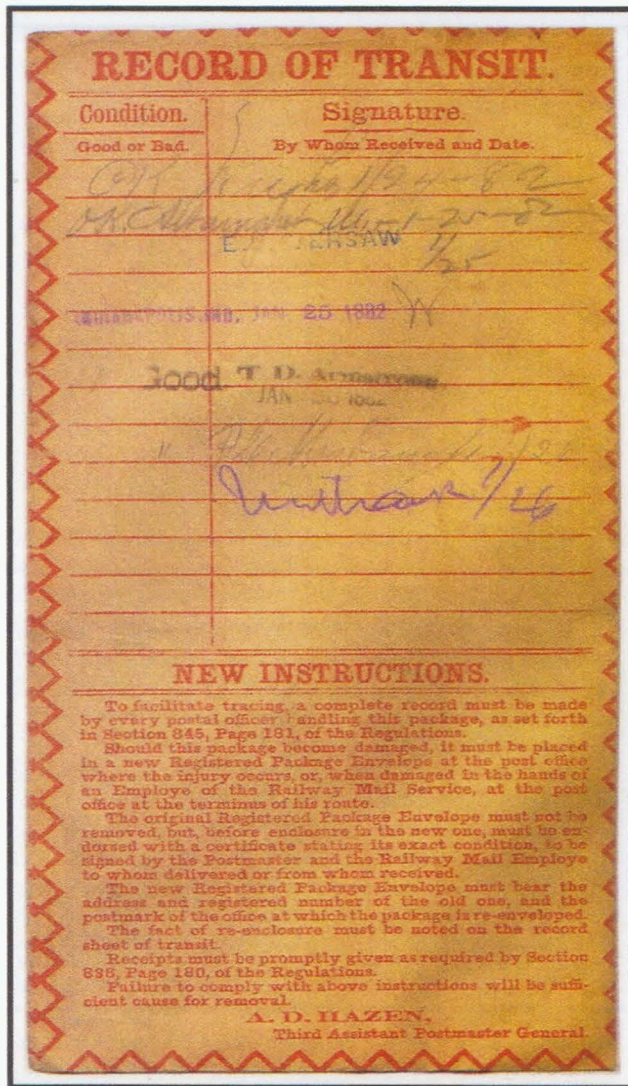
**Sec. 826. The Registry-Bill.**— A registry-bill, of the new card form, must be prepared to accompany the registered letter or parcel, which bill must, on its face, be filled out with the name of the mailing post-office, county, and State (the place for stamp is reserved for post-office of destination); on the other side, in the heading, the date of mailing, mailing post-office, post-office of destination, county, and State, number of registered-package envelope in which it is to be inclosed, and in proper columns in body of bill the registry number of letter or parcel, class, whether first, third, or fourth, name of addressee, and the bill must be signed by the postmaster on the lower left corner.

**NOTE.**— The above section mentions only one letter or parcel, but it is not intended that postmasters shall use a separate bill for each letter or parcel sent by one mail to the same post-office; all domestic registered letters or parcels for the same post-office are to be entered on one bill and inclosed in one registered-package envelope when practicable. When this cannot be done, a separate registry bill must be made out for the contents of each registered-package envelope. Special bills in sheet form (old style) may be used by large post-offices when necessary.





New Albany, IN July 24, 1882  
Registered Package Envelope



New Albany, IN January 24, 1882  
Registered Package Envelope

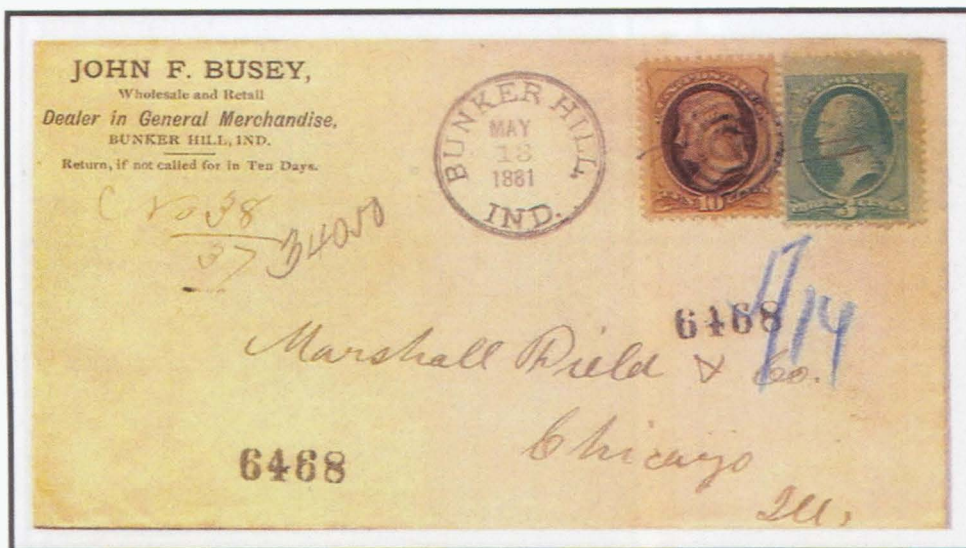


New Albany, IN June 22, 1882



Postmasters at larger post offices purchased fancier registered-specific postmarking devices for use on registered documents. Sometimes they are also found on letters.





Bunker Hill, IN  
May 13, 1881

Manuscript  
"No 38  
37"

The second number is the number of the registered package envelope in which it was placed. It is not unusual to find this extra information on a registered letter from this era.

**Sec. 827. Registered-Package Envelope.**— A registered-package envelope is to be used for no other purpose than covering registered mail-matter in its transmission from the receiving post-office to post-office of delivery. They must securely cover the registered matter they convey, be plainly addressed to post-office of destination, county, and State, be distinctly numbered, and legibly postmarked with the postmark of the mailing post-office and date of mailing.

**Sec. 828. Preparing Registered Matter for Dispatch.**— The registered letter or parcel with registry-bill and registry-return-receipt must be placed together in a registered-package envelope, addressed to the same post-office as the letter or parcel. The registered-package envelope must then be firmly sealed.

**Sec. 829. Matter too Large to go in Registered-Package Envelopes.**— When a registered letter or parcel too large to place inside of a registered-package envelope is received, it must, together with the registry-bill and registry-return-receipt, be wrapped, and a registered-package envelope, cut open so as to expose address and record of transit, be securely tied thereon, or be gummed or sealed to the wrapped package so that it cannot be detached or the contents interfered with.



Carthage, NC May 23, 1884

Registered Package Receipt (Form 1556) returned to Cameron, NC documenting receipt of three registered packages mailed May 20 and May 22 destined for other post offices.

**Sec. 830. Registered-Package Receipt.**— After a registered package has been made up for dispatch, a registered-package receipt must be filled out with name of mailing post-office, date of mailing, number and address of registered package. This registry-receipt [Registered-Package Receipt] is to be signed and returned without delay by the postmaster or employee of the Railway Mail Service who next receives the registered package after it leaves the mailing postmaster.



**Sec. 831. Dispatching a Registered Package.**—If a registered package is to be delivered direct to an employee of the Railway Mail Service for transmission, the postmaster will hand to him the package and obtain his signature on the package receipt. When a registered package cannot be delivered direct, as above, it must be deposited in the mail-pouch, never in a newspaper or tie sack, the package receipt being placed in the letter package which is to be first distributed by the employee receiving the same. The pouch must be locked, and the lock must be tied to ascertain if it has been securely fastened.

**Sec. 832. Registered Matter not to be Tied with Ordinary Mail-Matter.**—Postmasters must not wrap or tie registered packages with any ordinary mail-matter, but should place them separately in the mail-pouch, so that their presence can be observed at once by the person opening the pouch.

**Sec. 833. Mail-Carriers not to Handle Registered-Matter.**—Under no circumstances can a registered package be intrusted to a mail-carrier or a mail-messenger outside of the locked-pouch, nor should the pouch be intrusted to any but a sworn officer or employee of the Department.

**Sec. 834. Certifying to Proper Dispatch of Registered Matter.**—The postmaster, his deputy, or a duly-qualified clerk must be prepared at any time to make affidavit that any particular registered package was either given to an employee of the railway mail service or left the post-office in a pouch properly locked and labeled, and was forwarded by the proper route; and in all cases where practicable two persons should be present at the mailing of a registered package, and be prepared to testify as above, in case it should be required.

**Sec. 835. Sending Registered Matter to an Office from Distant Post-Offices.**—When a registered package that is to pass into an Office is to be sent from a post-office located on a route at any distance from the railway or steamboat line, the postmaster must so pouch the package that it will be received and receipted for by the postmaster at a post-office connecting with the Office. If the sending postmaster makes up a direct pouch to the Office and another to the connecting post-office the registered packages must not be placed in the pouch for the Office, if the pouch passes through any other post-office before reaching the Office.

**Sec. 836. Never send Registered Matter Direct over Railway Mail Routes.**—In no case must a postmaster dispatch a registered package in a direct pouch over a route upon which there is railway mail service. Registered matter on such routes must be held for the Office and pouched or delivered to the employee in charge, as the safety of registered matter must be considered before celerity in its dispatch. If the dispatching post-office is not on a railroad or steamboat line the requirements of the preceding section must be observed.

**Sec. 837. Receiving Registered Packages in Pouches for a Post-Office.**—Postmasters opening a pouch and finding registered packages therein addressed to their post-offices will sign the package receipts which they will find in the bundles of letters, examine the registered packages, and note the condition and date of arrival on the package receipt, which they will return by first mail to the sending postmaster or employee of the railway mail service.

**Sec. 838. Postmasters Receiving Registered Packages in Transit.**—If a registered package received in a way-pouch is addressed to a post-office beyond his own on the same route, the postmaster will sign the accompanying registered-package-receipt and fill up another package-receipt, inserting the name of his post-office, and, after indorsing the package, replace it in the pouch with the package-receipt placed in the bundle of letters for the next post-office on the route.

**Sec. 839. Recording Packages in Transit and Returning Receipts.**—From the package-receipt he received with a transit package the postmaster must make the proper entry in the record-of-registered-matter-in-transit, and then return the receipt by first mail to the Office or post-office whence it came.

**Sec. 840. Continuous Examination, Record and System of Receipts.**—The process of examination, indorsement, record, filling out package-receipts anew and depositing in pouch, must be repeated by every postmaster opening the pouch until it reaches its destination.

**Sec. 841. Record-of-Registered-Matter-in-Transit.**—Postmasters at all post-offices where pouches containing mail-matter for other post-offices are opened must make on the record-of-registered-matter-in-transit a full statement (as per heading of columns) of every registered package, registered postal-card package, registered stamped-envelope package, registered postage-stamp package, or through-registered-package passing through their post-offices, showing particulars of arrival and disposal of each such package or pouch. They must at all times be prepared to make prompt reply to any inquiry from a Special Agent or postmaster concerning such registered packages or pouches. The registered packages are so conspicuous that their presence among the contents of any mail-pouch cannot fail to be observed, and an omission to make record of them will not be excused. This record of transit must be carefully preserved in good order and be at all times open to the inspection of Special Agents of the Post-Office Department.

**Sec. 842. When Registered Packages should go in Way-Pouches.**—Where through-pouches and way-pouches are sent over routes on which there is no railway mail service, the registered packages must be sent in the way-pouches, and not in the through-pouches, except when the through-pouches are sent under brass locks and special instructions given to forward registered mail in the same.



## RECORD OF REGISTERED MATTER IN TRANSIT.

The following Registered Packages, Registered Postage Stamp Packages, Registered Stamped Envelope Packages, Registered Postal Card Packages, and Through Registered Pouches passed through the Post Office at \_\_\_\_\_ on the dates mentioned below.

The Statement is to be kept in good order and always retained in the past office.

Blank Record of Registered Mail in Transit

**Sec. 843. Registered Packages must be Sent by the most Secure Route.**—Postmasters must dispatch registered packages by the most secure route, and endeavor, especially when they have to be sent long distances, to have them reach a railway Office or through-registered-pouch-office as soon as possible, even though such registered packages traverse a longer distance to destination than that taken by ordinary mail-matter; it being desirable that registered matter should be in the hands of responsible agents of the service, as far as practicable avoiding the exposure and handling necessitated by the frequent opening of pouches at far post-offices. For list of through-registered-pouch-offices see the latest Official Postal Guide.

**Sec. 844. Postmasters must Observe the Registry Schemes.**—When registry schemes and schedules of routes and times for the dispatch of registered matter are furnished to postmasters by the General Superintendent or Division Superintendent of Railway Mail Service, they will comply with such schemes and schedules until otherwise directed by the General Superintendent of Railway Mail Service, or by the Division Superintendent.

**Sec. 845. Indorsing Registered Packages.**—When a postmaster or railway-mail employee signs a receipt for a registered package, he will carefully examine the package, and indorse thereon in the spaces provided therefor a statement of its condition, the date of its receipt, the name of his post-office or Office and his signature; also indorse statement of condition on package-receipt.

**Sec. 846. Checking Return of Package Receipts and Bills.**—On the return of a registered-package receipt and registry-bill, the postmaster will note the date on the stub of the registration-book and file them for future reference.

**Sec. 847. Failure to Return Registered-Package Receipt.**—In case a registered-package receipt is not promptly returned by the postmaster, or employee of the railway mail service, to whom it was sent with the package, the postmaster who sent it must fill out on duplicate, noting date of such duplicate on registration-book. Failure of duplicate to return in due season must be reported to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General.

**Sec. 848. Failure to Return Registry Bill.**—In case the registry bill fails to come back to the mailing post-office in reasonable time, a *Circular of inquiry for registered matter*, giving particulars of the package and its contents, must be sent to the post-office to which the registered package was addressed.



Post Office, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, 18\_\_

INQUIRY CONCERNING  
REGISTERED PACKAGE ENVELOPE REPORTED MISSING.

Registered Letter No. \_\_\_\_\_, mailed from this office \_\_\_\_\_, 18\_\_  
and inclosed in Registered Package Envelope No. \_\_\_\_\_, directed to the Postmaster at \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, has been reported "NOT RECEIVED."

The Postmaster at \_\_\_\_\_, to whom this Registered Package Envelope was first sent on its way to destination, will please state **ON THE BACK OF THIS LETTER OF INQUIRY** what record he has of said Registered Package Envelope, and describe in what manner and in what pouch he forwarded it from his office, and when—giving the exact date. He will then inclose this letter to the Postmaster at the next Post Office at which the pouch containing said Registered Package Envelope was opened, or to the Railway Postal Clerk to whom it was delivered, as the case may be, who will also indorse on it such information as he may have in regard to said Registered Package Envelope, taking care to state precisely how and when forwarded or disposed of by him, if received; and who, in his turn, will inclose it to the next Post Office or Railway Postal Clerk, (if necessary,) and so on until this letter finally reaches the Post Office of destination at \_\_\_\_\_, the P. M. of which office is requested to return it to me under cover, with a final indorsement, stating whether the Registered Package Envelope has been received, or not received, giving, at the same time, the date of such final indorsement.

5-247

Postmaster.

Circular of Inquiry Concerning Regular Package Envelope Reported Missing (Form 1536) which consists of a 13½ inch by 16 inch blank sheet folded in half with this information on its resulting front page. Apparently those involved noted the information gained from their investigation thereon.

**Sec. 849. Circular of Inquiry Returned Indorsed "Not Received."**—If the circular of inquiry is returned stating the registered package has not reached its destination, a full report of the case must be made to the Chief Special Agent Post-Office Department, Washington, D. C., for investigation, and, in addition, to such Special Agents for certain States and Territories as may be designated by the Chief Special Agent.

**Sec. 850. Misdirected Registered Packages in Transit not to be Opened.**—Misdirected registered packages, except those mentioned in next section, must be returned to the mailing post-office for better directions. The postmaster detecting the error must indorse it "RETURNED FOR BETTER DIRECTION," place the misdirected registered package under cover of a regularly numbered registered-package envelope, duly postmarked and addressed to the mailing post-office, and sealed, making due note of the fact on his record-of-registered-matter-in-transit. Registered packages in transit or addressed to another post-office must not be opened.



**Sec. 851. Misdirected Registered Postage-Stamp Packages, etc.**—Postmasters at through-registered-pouch-offices, or separating post-offices, on receiving a registered package of stamps, envelopes, or postal cards bearing an incorrect or imperfect address, should hold the package and at once notify the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, STAMP DIVISION, giving the registered number, date of postmark, and full address of the package, and await instructions in regard to its disposal.

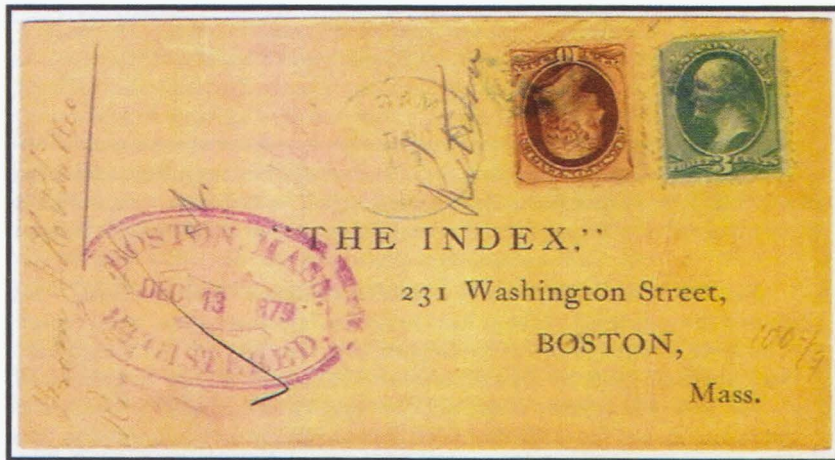
**Sec. 852. Registered Packages Found in Bad Order or Damaged in Transit.**—In case a registered package becomes damaged it must be placed in a new registered-package envelope at the post-office where the injury occurs or is discovered; or, when damaged in the hands of an employee of the railway mail service, at the post-office at the terminus of his route. The original registered-package envelope must not be removed, but, before it is inclosed in the new one, it must be indorsed with a statement of its exact condition, signed by the postmaster or railway-mail employee from whom received. The new registered-package envelope must bear the address, registry number, and name of the post-office of origin, and also the postmark of the post-office at which the package is re-enveloped. The fact of reinclosure must be noted on the Record-of-registered-matter-in-transit. Employees of the railway mail service finding in their Offices registered packages in bad order or damaged must deliver them to the postmaster at the terminal post-office for treatment as prescribed in this section. See section 855.

**Sec. 853. Postmasters to Receive Registered Matter from Employees.**—Postmasters at terminal post-offices of routes on which there is railway mail service must at all times be prepared to receive and properly receipt for registered packages brought to their post-offices by employees of the railway mail service. No delay of trains or unreasonable hours of arrival will authorize a deviation from this regulation.

**Sec. 854. Rules for Registered Packages Uniform for all Classes.**—The rules given for the treatment of registered packages apply equally to registered postage-stamp packages, postal-card packages, and stamped-envelope packages, except where special rules are given for the treatment of such matter in certain contingencies.

**Sec. 855. Registered Postage-Stamp Packages Damaged in Transit.**—Registered postage-stamp packages, registered postal-card packages, or registered stamped-envelope packages which have been damaged in transit must be securely wrapped and sealed by the postmaster discovering the damage, or at the terminal post-office to which such matter is delivered by railway-mail employees. After indorsing the package as provided in section 852, the postmaster will attach to it a label, "Registered postage-stamp package," "Registered postal-card package," or "Registered stamped-envelope package," as the case may be, will mark the original address and registry number on the wrapper, indorsed as follows: "PLACED UNDER COVER AT \_\_\_\_\_ POST-OFFICE, \_\_\_\_\_, 18-." He will then enter the package upon the record-of-registered-matter-in-transit, forward it to its destination as other registered matter, noting the fact of its being damaged and placed under cover, and send a full report of the facts to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, STAMP DIVISION.

**Sec. 856. Receiving Registered Matter at a Post-Office for Delivery.**—On the arrival of a mail at any post-office the pouch must be opened only by the postmaster, his deputy, or a sworn clerk. If a registered package addressed to the postmaster is found in the pouch, the registered-package receipt must be first returned, as required in section 837; the registered package will be opened by cutting the end, and the addresses, etc., of the registered letters or parcels contained therein compared with the entries on the registry-bill. If these are found to correspond, the postmaster will examine the letters or parcels as to their condition, **postmark them on the back** [emphasis added], enter on the Record-of-registered-matter-received-and-delivered, date of arrival, the number and postmark of the registered package, and the number and addresses of the registered letters or parcels, and attach the return-receipts to the letters or parcels by bands or thread. The registry-bill is then to be signed, postmarked on the proper place, and remailed without cover. Postmasters receiving registered-stamp packages, postal-card packages, or envelope-packages, addressed to their post-offices, must enter such packages on Record-of-registered-matter received-and-delivered, and sign for them in delivery column.



Parkman, OH December 11, 1879  
December 13 Boston, MA registered mark applied at post office of destination as receiving mark on the front of this item.



The Postmaster making up Registered Letters, &c., for dispatch, will fill up the other side of this Bill, and write the name of his Post Office, County, and State in the blank address on this side. The Postmaster receiving this Bill in Registered Package will at once compare address with letters, &c. inclosed: make entries on record of registered matter received; stamp postmark below: sign this Bill on other side, noting any errors, and return it to the mailing Post Office without cover. A penalty of \$300 is fixed by law for using this card on other than official business.

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

RETURN TO:

Postmaster at *Bradford*  
County of *N.H.*  
State of *N.H.*

*STO*  
*28*  
*MASS.*

**REGISTRY BILL** 15 Po

REGISTERED LETTERS, etc., from

To P. O. at *Boston Mass* 2d Reg. Page No. *21*

All Registered Letters or Parcels sent in this Package with this Bill must be described below.

REG. NO.	CLASS.	ADDRESS TO
<i>21</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>P. M.</i>

SENT BY *W. H. Barnum* RECEIVED BY *B*

*MASS.*  
*28*  
*1880*

Bradford, NH August 26, 1880

Registry Bill (Form 1545) returned from Boston, MA August 28, 1880 endorsed "CORRECT" by dated device. The "correct" endorsement was no longer specifically required by section 856.

**Sec. 857. Omissions on Registry-Bill and Return-Receipt to be Supplied.**—If the sending postmaster has failed to properly fill up his registry-bill or registry-return-receipt, the receiving postmaster must supply the omission. Before returning the registry-bill, he will note any irregularity thereon over his signature.

**Sec. 858. Failure to Send Registry-Bill or Registry-Return-Receipt.**—If, on opening a registered package, no bill is found, the receiving postmaster must fill out a bill and indorse it NO BILL RECEIVED, sign it, address it properly, postmark it, and forward it without cover to the mailing post-office. If no registry-return-receipt accompanies a registered letter or parcel, the postmaster opening the package must fill one out, attach it to the letter or parcel, and mail it to the sender when signed. A report of every such case must be made to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, in order that the delinquent postmaster may be specially advised.

**Sec. 859. Treatment of Registered Letters Arriving in bad Order.**—If, on opening a registered package, a registered letter is found in bad order, the postmaster will indorse the letter, RECEIVED IN BAD ORDER, and sign his name. He will then inclose the letter in an ordinary official envelope, seal the envelope, and address it to the person to whom the registered letter is addressed, indorsing on the envelope, HAVE THIS EXAMINED ON DELIVERY, and make proper entry thereof, as required in section 856. On delivery of this letter the addressee should be requested to open the envelope in presence of the postmaster, delivery-clerk, or letter-carrier, and if there should be any of its original contents missing, the original envelope of the letter should be obtained from the addressee, with his indorsement thereon as to the deficiency; and this envelope, with the registered-package envelope, should be sent to the Chief Special Agent for investigation.

**Sec. 860. Registered Letters found Unsealed.**—If a registered letter arrive unsealed, the postmaster will indorse it RECEIVED UNSEALED, and sign his name. He will then place it in an official envelope, and deliver it as directed in the preceding section, obtaining from the addressee the original envelope of the letter, with the indorsement of the addressee thereon, stating whether the contents are correct or incorrect. If the contents are found correct, a report must be made of the case to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, accompanied by the envelope. If incorrect, the case should be reported and the envelope of the letter and the registered-package envelope sent to the Chief Special Agent.

**Sec. 861. No Charge to be Made on the Delivery of Registered Matter.**—The law, section 812, requires full prepayment of registry fee and postage, which is to be affixed by stamps to letter or parcel when presented for registration; postmasters, therefore, receiving registered letters or parcels for delivery will deliver them to the addressee even if the requisite amount of stamps to cover postage and fee are not affixed, first examining them to see if the postmaster at the mailing post-office has performed his duty in this respect, and noting any cases where it has been neglected.

**Sec. 862. Report when Stamps do not cover Postage and Fee.**—A report of all cases where the postage stamps upon registered matter do not cover the postage and registration fee, showing number of letter or parcel, date of mailing, post-office of origin, and amount of deficiency, must be made weekly to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, that it may be recovered from the mailing postmaster who has failed to comply with the law. See section 812.





Pittsburgh, PA  
November 23, 1889

U.S.P.O. official business  
penalty-envelope used to mail  
second notice below for a  
registered item available for pick  
up at the post office.

Arrangements could also be  
made for it to be delivered at the  
address of the addressee.

**Sec. 863. Registry-Notices to be Sent.**—On receipt of a registered letter or parcel at a post-office (not a free-delivery post-office), the postmaster must notify the addressee of its arrival, using for that purpose a "Registry-notice," which notice must be delivered to the addressee in the same manner as ordinary mail-matter. This "Registry notice" may also be used at free-delivery post-offices for registered letters or parcels too large to send out by carrier.

**Sec. 864. A Box-Holder to be Notified when Registered Matter Arrives.**—Box-holders must be advised of the arrival of a registered letter or parcel addressed to their boxes, by depositing in the boxes the proper notices, as provided in the preceding section.

**Sec. 865. Delivery of Registered Letter or Parcel.**—On application for a registered letter or parcel, the applicant proving to be the proper person to receive it, the postmaster will require signature to be given on the record-of-registered-matter-received-and-delivered; also on the registry-return-receipt which accompanies the registered letter or parcel.

Post Office, Pittsburgh, Pa., NOV 23 1889, 188 .

Present this NOTICE at the Registry Division between 9 A. M. and 6 P. M.

RECEIVED OF

Postmaster at Pittsburgh, Pa., 188 .

the following-described registered mail addressed to

J.H. Milligan 87 Diamond St

No. 9147	No. "	No. "	No. "	No. "
"	"	"	"	"

One Registered Piece

Sign here: Per

When the applicant is unknown identification is required in order to insure safe delivery. If you wish to use an order fill out the form on the reverse side of this card.

I identify the addressee:

5-205 (OVER.)

POSTMASTER, Pittsburgh, Pa., 188 .

Please deliver the Registered Mail described on the reverse side of this card, addressed to me, to

(ADD DEANER'S NAME.)

(Sign here.)

I verify addressee's signature above:

22—It is necessary that all signatures unknown to this office be verified in order to insure safe delivery. If you wish the Registered Mail described on the reverse side forwarded to you at any post office, please alter the above form accordingly, sign the same, and mail it under cover to this office. General orders for the delivery of Registered Matter to regular Messengers must be made by the person or firm in charge, accompanied with the signature of the person authorized to receipt for the same. The name of addressee, and the name of a person clearly authorized to receive Registered mail for addressee, should both appear in all "per" signatures on "Registry Return Receipts." The relationship or agency should be expressed after each "per" signature, e. g., "Clerk," "Agent," "Messenger," etc.

I IDENTIFY DEANER WHOSE NAME APPEARS HEREON.



**Sec. 866. Delivery of Registered Matter by Carriers.**—Postmasters at free delivery post-offices must deliver through the carriers all registered letters and parcels addressed to street and number, requiring the carriers to receipt for such letters on the record-of-registered-matter-received-and-delivered or on a special receipt-book. The carriers must, on the delivery of any registered letter or parcel, require the person receiving it to sign the return receipt, and also receipt in the book furnished for the purpose.

**Sec. 867. Name of Carrier Delivering Registered Matter must Appear.**—Carriers' registry-delivery-books must show the name of the carrier who delivers each registered letter or parcel.

**Sec. 868. Utmost Care Required in Delivery.**—Registered letters or parcels must never be delivered to any person but the one to whom they are addressed, or on the written order of addressee. Identification should be required when the applicant is unknown, and written orders should be verified and placed on file as vouchers.

**Sec. 869. Responsibility for Wrong Delivery.**—Postmasters will be held responsible for the wrong delivery of any registered matter, and must, therefore, take the requisite measures to ascertain the proper person to receive it.

**Sec. 870. Proper Signature Required.**—When a person other than the addressee signs for a registered letter or parcel, the names of both addressee and recipient must appear on the receipts.

**Sec. 871. Registry-Return-Receipt to be Retailed 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 date of delivery (which is also the mailing postmark), and sent by next mail, without cover of an envelope, to the address of the sender which is written on the registry-return-receipt.

**Sec. 872. No Postage on Registry-Bills and Registry-Return-Receipts.**—The registry-bills and registry-return-receipts, after signature, require no postage thereon; they are to be simply postmarked and mailed without delay.

**Sec. 873. Registered Matter for Delivery to Insane or Dead Persons.**—If, on the receipt of a registered letter or parcel, the person addressed is dead, it may be delivered to the legal representative of the deceased, who must be either the executor of the will or the administrator of the deceased, and who produces proof of the fact. In some States the residuary legatee named in a will is allowed, on giving bonds for the proper fulfillment and execution of its provisions, to become the executor. In any such case such person is, upon presentation of the necessary proof, to be considered the legal representative of the deceased. Registered matter addressed to persons who have been declared insane by competent authority should be treated as above; but in the absence of any legal representative, all such domestic registered matter must be returned to the mailing post-office for delivery to the sender.

**Sec. 874. Attachment of Registered Letters.**—A registered letter is not subject to attachment in the hands of a postmaster before its delivery, as the Department holds it in *custodia legis* for delivery to the person addressed, or to his or her order. A postmaster acting in virtue of his office, and refusing to deliver letters on a process issued by a State court, will readily be purged of any alleged contempt of such process; and in case of any conflict with the State law, he, acting in the line of his duty, will have protection by the law which governs the transmission of registered matter.

**Sec. 875. Fraudulent Registered Letters may be Returned.**—The Postmaster-General may, upon evidence satisfactory to him that any person is engaged in conducting any fraudulent lottery, gift-enterprise, or scheme for the distribution of money or of any real or personal property, by lot, chance, or drawing of any kind, or in conducting any other scheme or device for obtaining money through the mails by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises, instruct postmasters at any post-offices at which registered letters arrive directed to any such person, to return all such registered letters to the postmasters at the [post] offices at which they were originally mailed, with the word "fraudulent" plainly written or stamped upon the outside of such letters; and all such letters so returned to such postmasters shall be by them returned to the writers thereof, under such regulations as the Postmaster-General may prescribe. But nothing contained in this title shall be so construed as to authorize any postmaster or other person to open any letter not addressed to himself. (R. S., § 3929.)

**Sec. 876. Return Undelivered Registered Matter to Mailing Post-Office.**—If a domestic registered letter or parcel cannot be delivered within thirty days after its arrival, or within such time as may be named in a request indorsed on its face, or in case delivery is prohibited by the Postmaster-General in accordance with the preceding section, the postmaster must indorse on it the cause of non-delivery and return it to the post-office whence it was mailed. It must be marked RETURNED TO WRITER, renumbered, and entered in registration-book, as if mailed at his post-office (counted as free in his quarterly report of registered letters and parcels), placed in a registered-package envelope with a registry bill, and a note of such return with date thereof made in receipt column of record-of-registered-matter-received-and-delivered. The address of letter or parcel must be changed only as to destination, and R. W. marked on registry bill, indicating return to writer. On arrival at the original mailing post-office it must be treated as if it were an original registered letter or parcel received for delivery. Fraudulent matter of foreign origin must be sent to the Dead-Letter Office, accompanied by a letter of advice addressed to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, explaining the character of the matter, and giving the date of the order of the Postmaster-General forbidding its delivery.



Sec. 877. **Refused Registered Letters or Parcels.**—In case of addressee simply refusing to receive a registered letter or parcel, it must be retained the proper length of time before return, as prescribed in the preceding section.

Sec. 878. **Original Record to Show Return of a Letter or Parcel.**—Note must be made on the original record of every registered letter or parcel returning to a mailing post-office, stating its return and date.

Sec. 879. **When Sender of Returned Registered Matter is not found.**—In case a domestic returned registered letter or parcel cannot be delivered to sender, it must be retained thirty days and be then forwarded (properly registered) to the Dead-Letter Office, after due notice to sender by advertisement or otherwise.

Sec. 880. **Sending Registered Letters or Parcels to the Dead-Letter Office.**—When registered letters or parcels are sent to the Dead-Letter Office they must be postmarked with date of sending, indorsed with reason for so forwarding, be accompanied with duplicate bills showing the sending post-office and the number and address of each registered article, and placed under cover of an official envelope addressed to Third Assistant Postmaster-General, Dead-Letter Office, Washington, D. C., indorsed INCLOSING REGISTERED MATTER. The packet must be registered as a free registered letter and placed with registry-bill and registry-return-receipt under cover of a registered-package envelope addressed to the postmaster, Washington, D. C.

(3540.)

Post Office Department,  
OFFICE OF THIRD ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL,  
DIVISION OF DEAD LETTERS,  
Washington, D. C., July 28, 1880.

Postmaster J. H. [unclear]

SIR:

The inclosed **VALUABLE DEAD LETTER**, not having been received by the person for whom it was originally intended, is sent to you to be delivered to the writer, (or party addressed.) You will date and carefully fill up the annexed receipt, and having caused it to be signed by the person authorized to receive the letter, you will forthwith return it to the THIRD ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL.

If the writer (or party addressed) cannot be found in THIRTY DAYS, or lives beyond the delivery of your office, you must return this circular and inclose the dead letter, with such information as you may obtain in regard to his or her present location noted on the back of this circular. Under no circumstances must it be forwarded by you to another Post Office for delivery therefrom, nor must it be retained by you longer than thirty days without special authority from this Office. See page 120, Regulations of 1879, sections 484 to 489, inclusive.

In any correspondence relating to this letter quote the initial, number, and book, as designated at the top of the receipt.

Respectfully,

A. D. Hazen  
Third Asst. Postmaster Gen'l.

Washington, DC July 28, 1880  
Return of "Valuable Dead Letter" to its sender.

Form #3540 is inferred in PL&R of 1879 Sec. 880, but not listed in Sec. 892 list of forms.





### Westchester, PA September 11, 1882

Registered letter forwarded from Cleveland, OH September 15, 1882 to New York, NY at "24 Broad St. Care Geo. A. Scott and Co". It received a September 17, 1882 processing mark from a registry clerk documenting its arrival at New York.

**Sec. 881. Forwarding Registered Letters or Parcels.**—Should a registered letter or parcel be received addressed to a person who has removed, or who from any other cause wishes it forwarded to him at another post-office or returned to writer, it may be so forwarded or returned, at his written request, without additional charge for postage or fee. In such cases the postmaster must enter it on his delivery-book, and make in the record-of-registered-matter-received-and-delivered, in delivery column, a memorandum showing when and where forwarded. He must alter the address of the registered letter or parcel as to destination only, and indorse it **FORWARDED**. It must then be entered in registration-book as if mailed at his post-office, counted as free in quarterly report registered matter, numbered anew, and forwarded in a registered-package envelope, with a registry-bill, accompanied by the original registry-return-receipt. The order for forwarding or returning must be filed as a voucher.

**Sec. 882. Missent Registered Letters or Parcels Received.**—If on opening a registered package addressed to his post-office a postmaster finds a registered letter or parcel inclosed addressed to another post-office, he will indorse the bill **MISSENT**, sign and remail it, file the registered-package envelope, and enter the letter or parcel on his record-of-registered-matter-received-and-delivered, making a note in delivery column, *Missent and forwarded*, and re-register it from his post-office as in preceding section.

**Sec. 883. Writer cannot Control Registered Letter after its Dispatch.**—After a registered letter has been transmitted from the mailing post-office, it cannot be recalled by the sender, but must be sent to the destination named in its address. If not delivered it will be returned in accordance with section 876. Before dispatch a registered letter can only be reclaimed by writer under extraordinary circumstances. He must give satisfactory reasons to the postmaster for such action, produce a fac-simile of the envelope, fully identify himself, and return the registration-receipt endorsed with his name, which the postmaster will paste opposite the entry in the registration book, endorsing the entry **RETURNED TO WRITER BY ME, \_\_\_\_\_, P. M.** The registered letter, before return, must endorsed **WITHDRAWN BY WRITER FROM \_\_\_\_\_ POST-OFFICE, \_\_\_\_\_ P. M.**

**Sec. 884. Response to Inquiries.**—Inquiries or tracers regarding registered packages, letters, or parcels must receive immediate attention from postmasters as also all inquiries on registered business.

**Sec. 885. Tracers for Stamp, Envelope, or Postal-Card Packages.**—When a registered package of stamps, envelopes, or postal cards has been forwarded, and no acknowledgment therefor is received by due course of mail, or bill returns marked **NOT RECEIVED** or **BAD ORDER**, a coupon tracer will be sent to ascertain whether the package reached its destination in safety, or at what point and through whose fault it disappeared or was tampered with. If, through this means, it should be ascertained that the package reached its destination in good order, the tracer may be retained when it returns; but if it appears that the package was received in bad condition, or was lost or stolen in transit, the tracer must then be forwarded to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General. Should the tracer not be returned in due season, a duplicate must be sent to the post-office whence last coupon was returned or special inquiry sent until package is accounted for or loss ascertained, when the tracer with full report of loss must be sent to Third Assistant Postmaster-General.

**Sec. 886. Registered Matter found among Ordinary Mail-Matter.**—Matter which has once been registered can never lose its character as such until it has been delivered to the rightful owner. When a postmaster discovers any registered letter or parcel among ordinary mail-matter, he must enter it upon his record-of-registered-matter-received-and-delivered, and treat the registered letter or parcel as directed by the regulations. If the registered letter or parcel is addressed to his own post-office, he will deliver it to the person for whom it was intended, and if addressed to another post-office he will inclose it in a registered-package envelope and forward it. He will in each case report all the facts immediately to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General.



**Sec. 887. Report to Chief Special Agent Missing Registered Matter.**—Every case of missing registered packages, registered letters, or registered parcels must be reported without delay to the Chief Special Agent, Post-Office Department, Washington, D. C., giving full particulars, as also all cases of alleged abstraction of contents of registered letters or parcels; and also to Special Agents, as stated in section 849.

**Sec. 888. Quarterly Reports to Third Assistant Postmaster-General.**—At the expiration of each quarter postmasters must forward to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General a report showing separately the number of domestic and foreign letters registered at their post-offices, together with the number of parcels of third and fourth class matter, domestic and foreign, registered during the quarter.

**Sec. 889. Omit in Account-Current Fees on Registered Matter.**—The postage and registry fee on a registered letter or parcel is required by law to be prepaid and affixed to the letter or parcel in stamps and the stamps canceled, and no special entry of such items should be made on the quarterly account-current rendered by postmasters to the Auditor of the Treasury for the Post-Office Department; the money received for stamps sold for this purpose should be included in the general postal account under the head of *Account of stamps sold during the quarter*.

**Sec. 890. Accounts of Registered Matter.**—No accounts or records in relation to registered letters or parcels are to be forwarded to the Department other than the quarterly report stated in section 888. All other accounts and records are to be carefully preserved by the postmasters for future reference.

**Sec. 891. Disposition of Used Registered-Package Envelopes.**—Registered-package envelopes which have been emptied of their contents, those spoiled by misdirection, or in any way rendered unfit for use (cutting and resealing is not permissible), must be retained on file one year and then sold for the highest attainable price, and the proceeds of such sales taken up in account-current under head of *Amount received for waste-paper, etc.*; provided, however, if they cannot be sold at small post-offices, they may be sent in a lot to the postmaster at the nearest large post-office having facilities for the sale of waste-paper.

**Sec. 892. Blanks Used in Registration.**—The following blanks required for use in the registry system are furnished on application to the Superintendent Blank Agency, office First Assistant Postmaster-General, Washington, D. C.:

Registration-book, showing matter registered and dispatched	Form No. 1549
Registry-bill	1550
Registry-return-receipt	1548
Registered-package receipt	1556
Record-of-registered-matter-received-and-delivered	1547
Record-of-registered-matter-in-transit	1553
Carriers'-registry-delivery-books	1560
Railway-mail-registry-books	1539
Registry-notices	1525
Registry-circular-of-inquiry	3856
Registry quarterly report	3848
Requisition for registered-package envelopes	3204
Registry deficiency report	3846
Registry-tracer	1536

**Sec. 893. Envelopes Used in Registry Business.**—The envelopes used will be furnished on requisition addressed to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General.

1. *Ordinary official penalty-envelopes.*
2. *Registered-package envelopes.*

**Sec. 894. Registry Supplies to be Kept Up.**—Postmasters must not allow their supply of registered-package envelopes or any of the blanks required in the registry business to become exhausted. Requisition must always be made in time to receive a new supply before those on hand are entirely used.

**Sec. 895. Postmasters take Special Interest in Success of Registry System.**—In order to make the registry system as efficient as possible, it is necessary that it should receive not only the attention, but the hearty co-operation, of every postmaster, who should feel that he has an interest in the improvement of the service as well as a desire to promote the public good. Special attention should be paid to secure legibility of addresses and postmarks on registered-package envelopes, and all entries upon registry blanks and records should be neatly and distinctly written. Postmasters are particularly enjoined to report promptly to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General any neglect or violation of the registry regulations which may come to their knowledge, in order that the officer in fault may be called to account for his misconduct.

**Sec. 896. Postmasters not to Reprimand other Postmasters.**—Postmasters are positively forbidden to reprimand other postmasters for neglect or violation of these regulations. It is the province of the Department to instruct postmasters as to their duties and to take cognizance of their neglect or refusal to obey instructions.

**Sec. 897. Postmasters in Doubt as to their Duty** as to any requirements of the regulations of the registry system, must submit the matter in doubt to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General. Ignorance of the law or regulations will not be accepted as an excuse for their violation or for neglect of duty.



## New York City Processing Marks on Registered Mail



New York, NY December 28, 1881

The New York City General Post Office, later known as the City Hall Post Office, operated the largest registered mail division in the U.S.P.O. Its clerks processed all outgoing and incoming registered mail for the largest city in the country. Additionally, they processed registered mail to and from Europe, Africa, South America, and other parts of the world.

The following summary illustrates processing marks unique to this post office found on many, but not all, registered mail handled by New York City between 1881 and 1902. There is no apparent pattern between incoming and outbound or foreign and domestic registered items seen with these marks. Some marks might have been assigned to specific work stations within the registry division.

Two geometric devices are found mostly on mail originating at New York beginning in 1881.



Four different letters were used between 1882 and 1884: B, C, D, and U



Twenty smaller alphabetic devices utilizing nine letters were used between 1884 and 1902: B, C, D, E, H, L, O, S, and U.





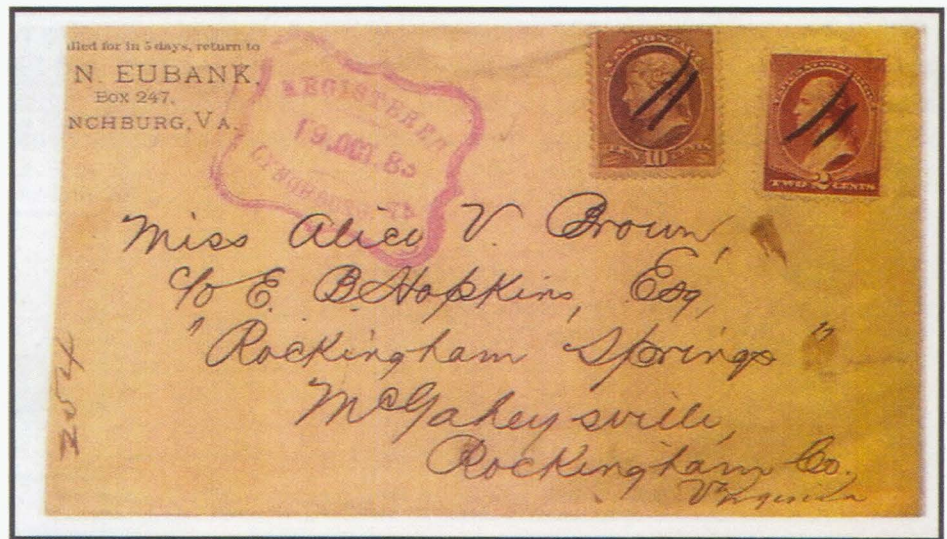


Elkton, TN  
October 2, 1883

Manuscript postmark not including the name of the post office as required by regulations. Ten-cent registration fee paid. Not marked registered but numbered "#2".

Lynchburg, VA  
October 19, 1883

Example of a registered postmarking device sold to postmasters of smaller post offices.

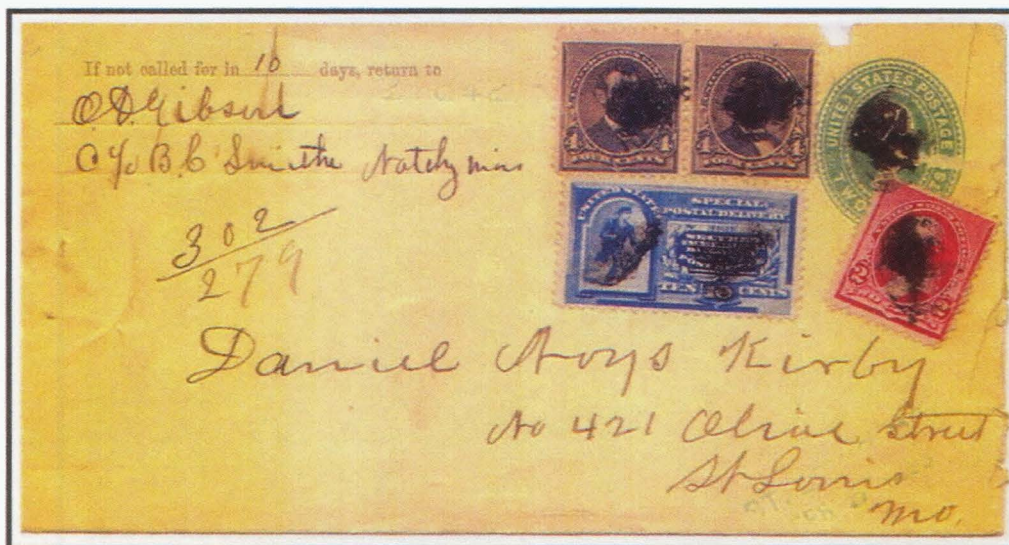


Troy, NY  
October 22, 1885

Example of a registered postmarking device sold to postmasters of smaller post offices.



## The Registration of Special Delivery Mail



Natchez, MS (not postmarked)

Indistinct St. Louis, MO February 5, 1893 receiving mark at lower right.

The Special Delivery System secured, by means of special messenger, the immediate delivery of all mail bearing the special delivery stamp. It was established by an Act of Congress March 3, 1885 effective October 1, 1885. Service was limited to certain larger post offices. Service was extended to all post offices and all mailable matter by legislation approved August 4, 1886 effective October 1, 1886.

All items bearing the special delivery stamp were entitled to immediate and prompt delivery to an addressee located within one mile of the destination post office between the hours of 7 A.M. and 7 P.M. Mail arriving at a post office prior to 9 P.M. was also entitled to immediate delivery. Postmasters had the option of delivering special delivery items on Sunday but it was not required.

Special messengers, who were considered postal employees, were hired to provide immediate delivery of items received at larger post offices. They were compensated based on the number of pieces delivered at eighty percent (eight-cents) of the special delivery fee paid on each item. Their total compensation was not to exceed thirty dollars per month.

Postmasters and clerks at third- and fourth-class post offices were instructed to make special deliveries receiving the same additional compensation as special messengers hired at larger post offices. No additional compensation was allowed clerks at second-class post offices.

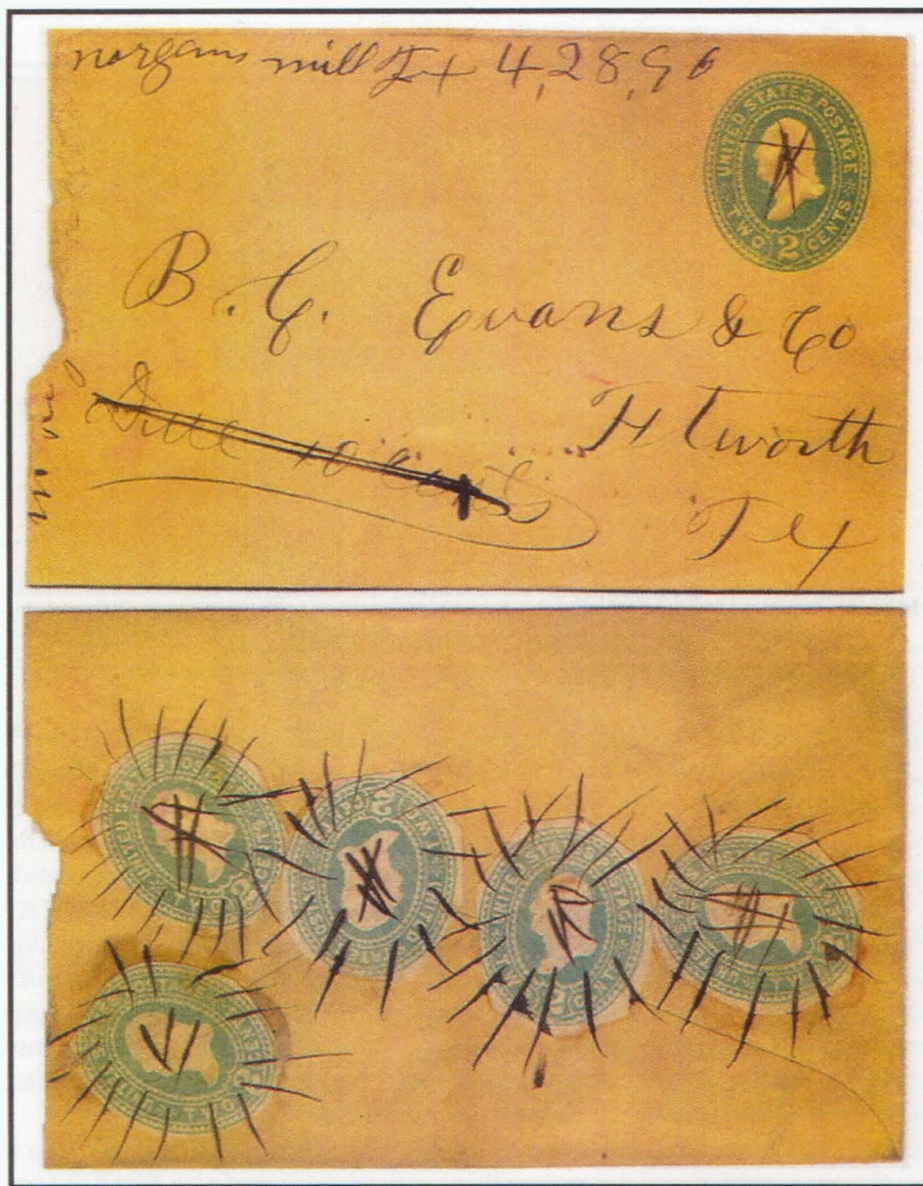
Messengers or clerks were required to obtain a receipt for each item delivered signed by the addressee or someone in his or her household, or persons known to be authorized to accept the delivery of mail at a particular address. This receipt was retained at the post office of destination.

### NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC. EXTENSION OF THE SPECIAL-DELIVERY SYSTEM TO ALL POST OFFICES AND ALL MAILABLE MATTER, OCTOBER 1, 1886

... Registered letters or parcels will also be entitled to immediate delivery, the same as ordinary letters or parcels, when bearing special-delivery stamps in addition to the full postage and the registry fee required by the law and regulations. ...

Special delivery service did not modify or supercede registered mail rules and regulations. The delivery of a registered item by special delivery messenger had to be made into the hands of the addressee, or an authorized employee or agent. Addressee signatures on the Record of Registered Delivery and the Return Receipt Card which was returned to the sender were still required.





### Norgam Mill, TX April 28, 1890

Registered letter sent to "Ftworth, TX" [Fort Worth]. Its sender or the postmaster at Norgam Mill paid the registration fee by attaching five trimmed two-cent postal stationary frankings to its reverse side. Someone noted the questionable franking on this item adding the manuscript "Due 10 cents" notation. This was later obliterated indicating this item was delivered to its addressee. Any shortage in registry fee would have been charged back to and collected from the postmaster at the post office of mailing. Nothing should have been collected from the addressee of this letter as the first-class postage was properly paid.

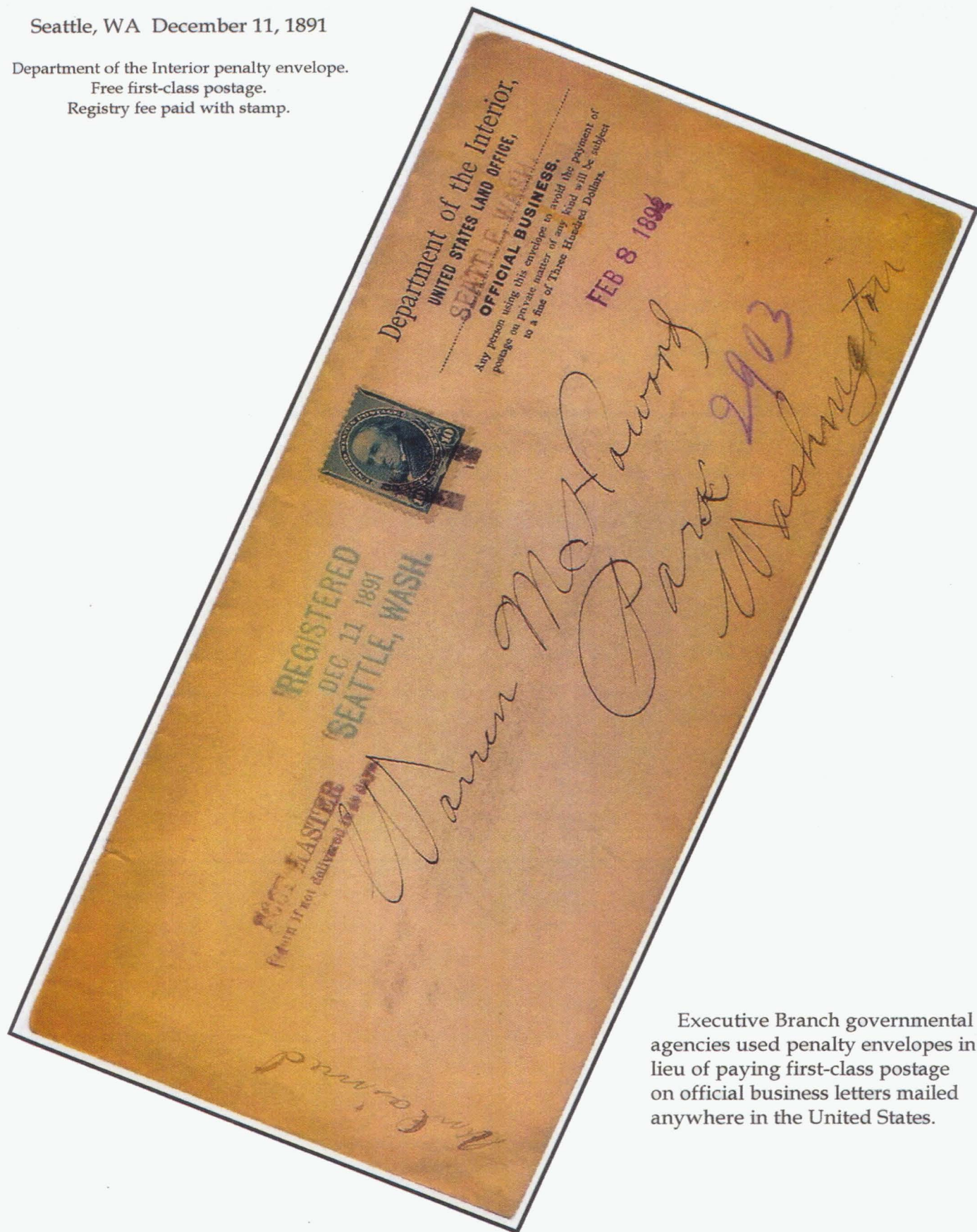


Seattle, WA December 11, 1891

Department of the Interior penalty envelope.

Free first-class postage.

Registry fee paid with stamp.



Executive Branch governmental agencies used penalty envelopes in lieu of paying first-class postage on official business letters mailed anywhere in the United States.



Eight-Cent Registration Fee January 1, 1893 to October 31, 1909

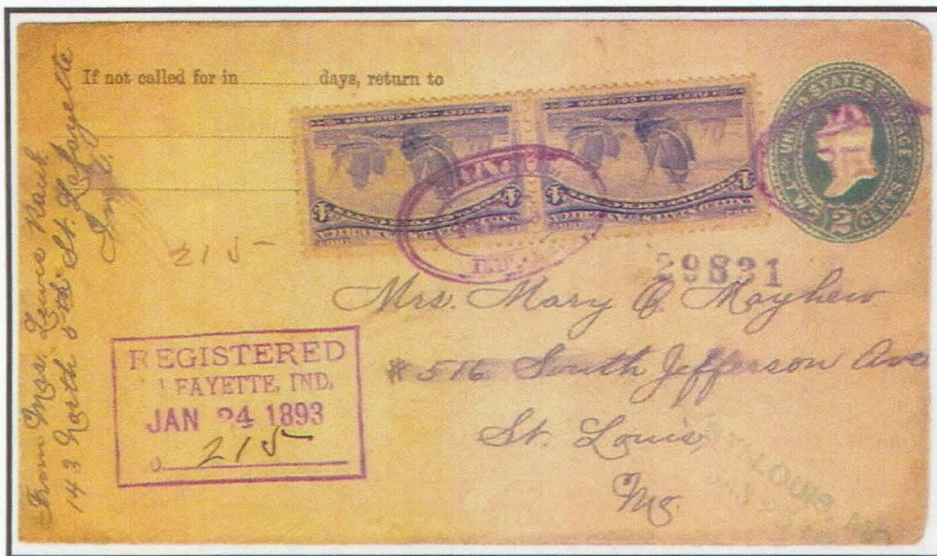
Wingate, IN  
January 7, 1893

Appropriate franking for a registered letter paid on otherwise unmarked letter sent registered mail based on post office of destination's "Registry Div." markings.



Lafayette, IN  
January 24, 1893

Rectangular registry postmark with space for item number seen used from the largest post offices.



Newton, MA  
April 9, 1897

Straight-line "REGISTERED" used with a commercially available registered postmark seen from medium-sized post offices.

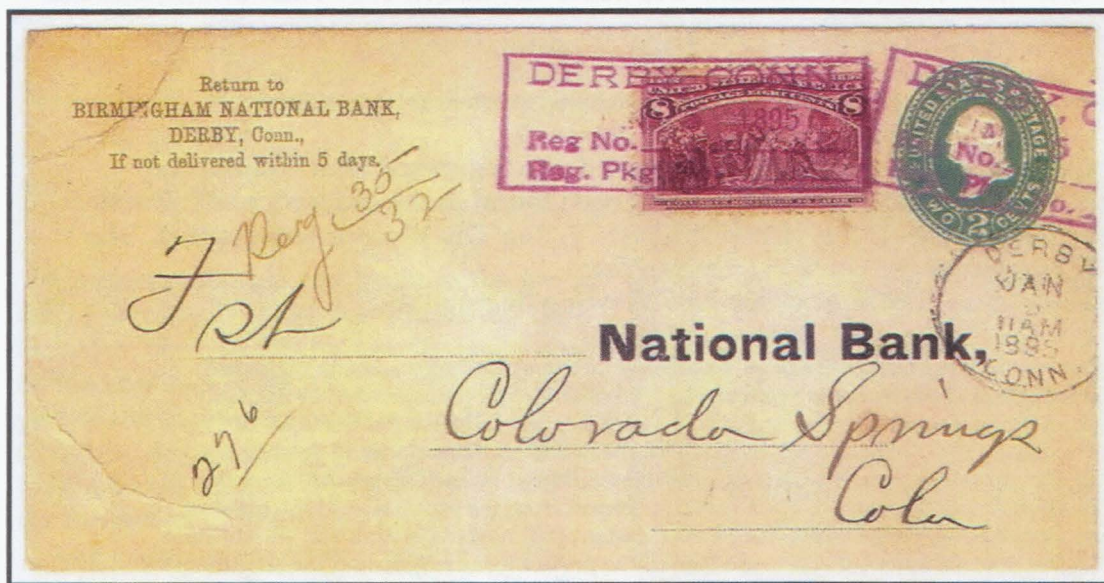
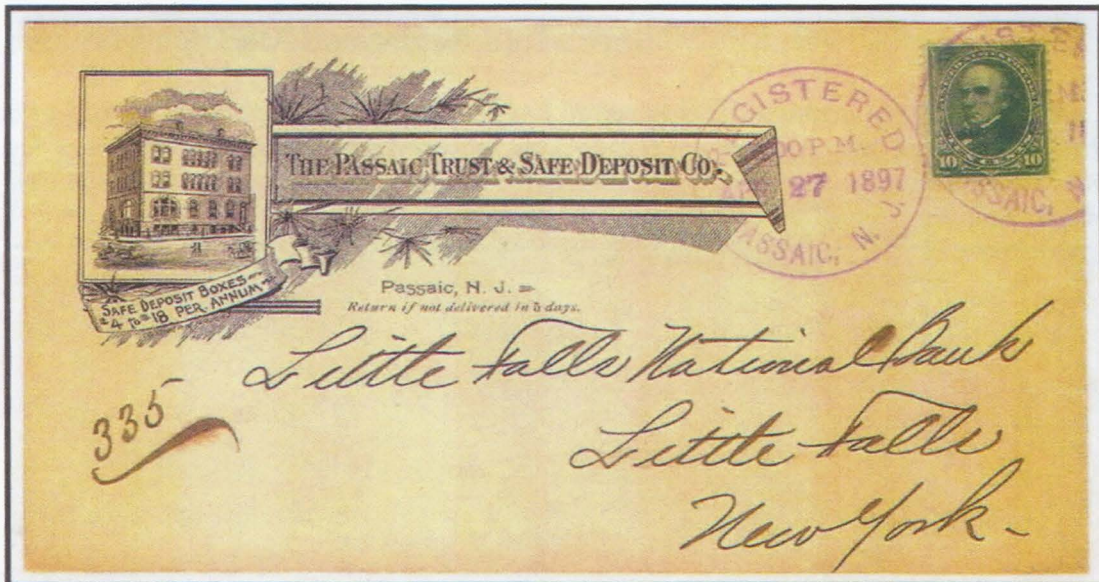




Passaic, NJ  
April 27, 1897

Commercially available  
postmark containing  
time.

Most devices did  
not contain a time  
slug although  
regulations  
emphasized the  
importance of  
documenting the  
timely handling of  
registered mail.

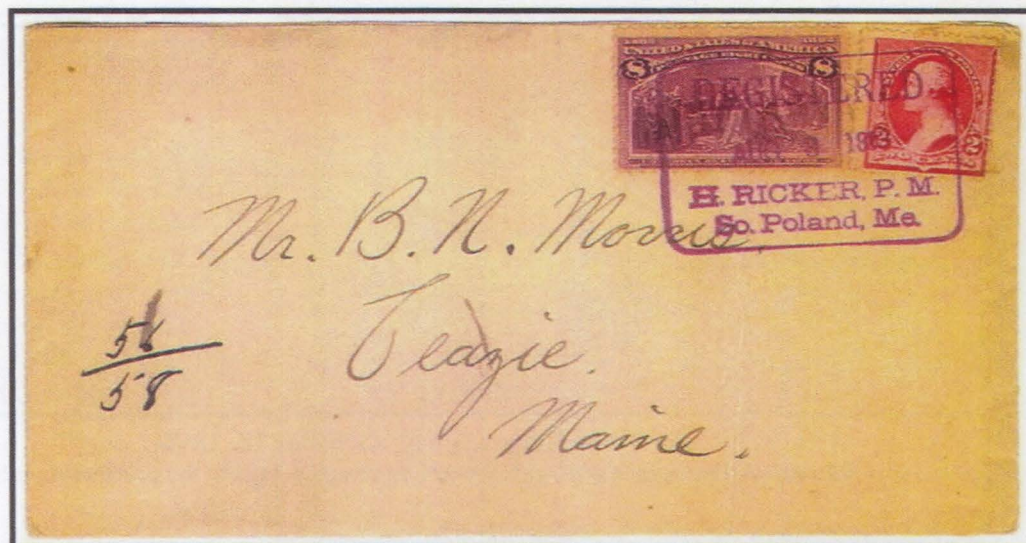


Derby, CT  
January 5, 1895

Commercially  
available postmark  
containing lines for  
both item and  
package number.

South Poland, ME  
August 3, 1893

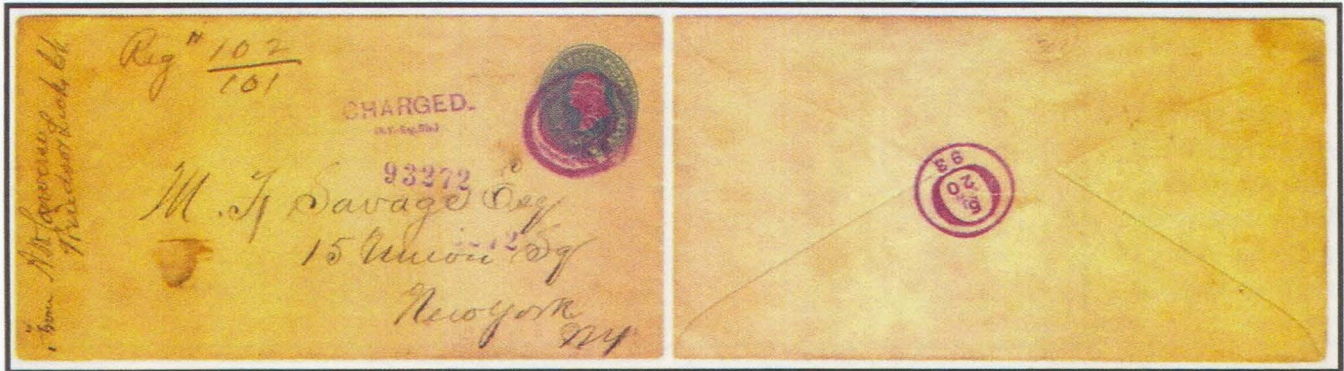
Commercially available  
postmark  
containing the name of the  
postmaster.





## Short-Paid Registered Mail

Any shortage in postage or registration fee paid by the sender of a letter had to be accounted for at the post office of delivery. Postal regulations required any shortage of registry fee discovered at the post office of delivery to be reported to Washington and be charged back to the postmaster at the post office of mailing.<sup>1</sup>



Windsor Locks, CT (not dated or postmarked)

Backstamped New York, NY May 20, 1893.

Eight-cent registration fee charged back to the postmaster at Windsor Locks, CT.

This item arrived at the New York registry division marked as a registered item without the payment of the registration fee. It is not marked as having been found in the ordinary mail. It was entitled to be treated as registered mail. The "CHARGED (N.Y. Reg. Div.)" mark was applied. The postmaster at Windsor Locks was charged for the missing fee.

The *Postal Laws and Regulations* of 1893 provided the following instructions:

**Sec. 1106. Registration Fee not Prepaid is not to be Collected at Office of Delivery.**—If any registered matter on which a fee is chargeable shall, by inadvertence or neglect of the mailing postmaster, or from any cause, be dispatched without full prepayment of postage and registry fee, the postmaster at the office of destination shall collect from the party addressed, when the matter is delivered, the amount of postage that may be due. The amount due as deficiency in the registry fee will be collected by the Department from the delinquent postmaster as a penalty for his neglect, upon receipt of report from the postmaster at the office of destination. Such reports should be made weekly to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, and should state the number and weight of the letter or parcel, the date of mailing, the post-office of origin, and the amount of the deficiency in each case. . . .



Norway, ME October 18, 1894

Eight-cent postage due for registration fee charged back to the postmaster at Norway, ME.

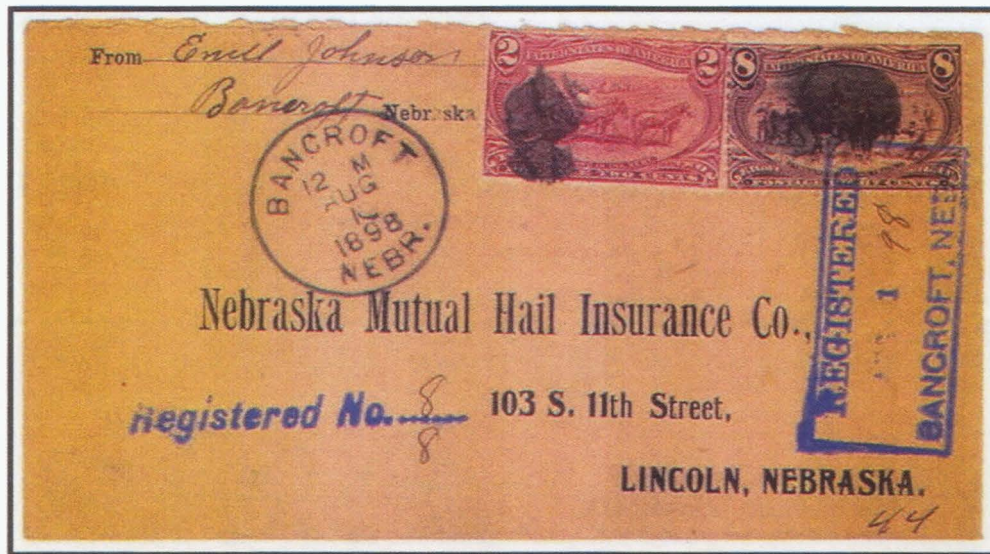
1. *Postal Laws & Regulations* of 1879, Sections 861 and 862.



## Indemnity against Loss Added to the Registration Fee

Up to \$10 between July 1, 1898 and June 30, 1902

Up to \$25 between July 1, 1902 and June 30, 1909

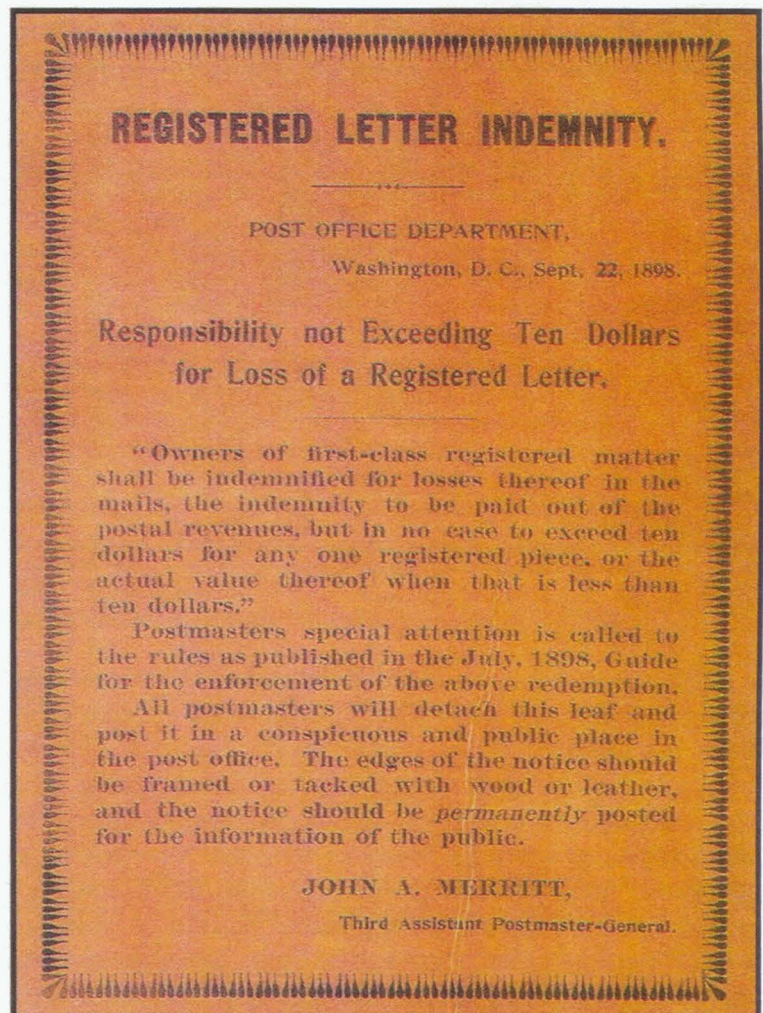


Bancroft, NE August 1, 1898

Congress enacted a revision to the postal laws February 27, 1897 that permitted the inclusion of up to \$10 indemnity coverage on the contents of each registered item as a part of the eight-cent registration fee. Congress did not budget funds with which to reimburse senders for their losses until the budget year beginning July 1, 1898.

The Postmaster-General issued amended regulations June 21, 1898 implementing the \$10 indemnity coverage on first-class registered mail matter effective July 1, 1898. The maximum indemnity on each registered item was raised to \$25 July 1, 1902.

The inclusion of limited indemnity as a part of the registration fee helped fuel the rapid growth in the volume of registered mail processed by the U.S.P.O. between 1899 and 1910. The notice shown at right was sent to all postmasters on the inside back cover of the October, 1898 *Postal Guide* for prominent display in their office.





## All Post Offices Now Supplied a Registered Postmark Device



Lamar, CO  
March 20, 1899

Circular "Reg. Div." registered dater used as a processing backstamp.



Schaller, IA June 13, 1902

Duplex-style of postmark used with smaller size of dater-styled registration postmark.



Omaha, NE December 1, 1906

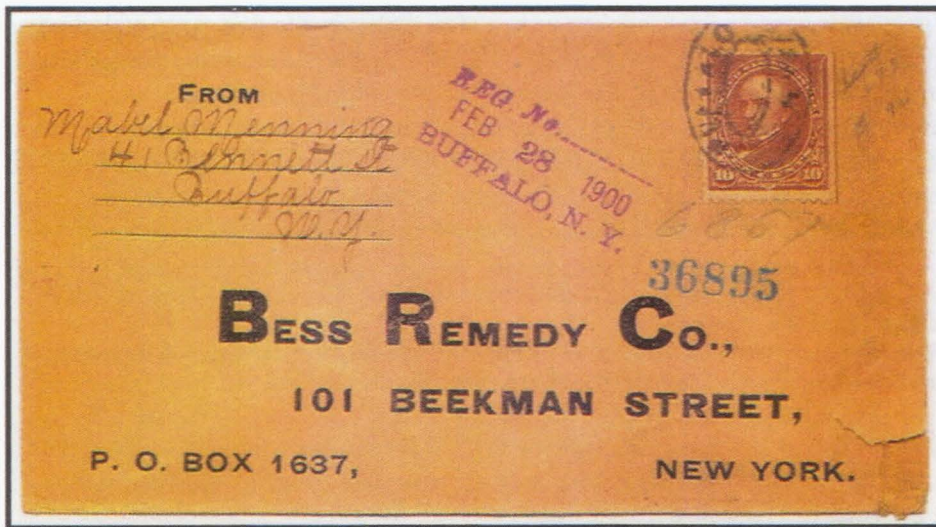
Registry division "R.D." oval obliterator used with larger diameter dater-styled registration postmark.

Beginning in 1902 the U.S.P.O. supplied all postmasters and clerks with a circular dater-styled registration device. This style of double-ring circular device made of rubber on a wooden handle is still in use today. It first appeared in the 1880's as a "Reg. Div." postmark used in processing forms and mail. The design is similar to metal postmarking devices first seen in the 1870's. Its diameter and type style changes over time. A generic form of this device containing post office name and state within the rings and a date slug in the center can be found used as a postmark or backstamp on about any type of mail. M.O.B., Parcel Post, and Air Mail services use similar devices.

Regulations required all registered mail to be postmarked with a U.S.P.O. supplied red ink. The hue of the ink supplied varies over time. Devices were inadvertently struck on the black inkpad darkening following red impressions. It is not rare to see non-standard ink colors used in error.



## Registration of Letters by Carriers on Their Route



Buffalo, NY February 28, 1900

City carriers did not postmark items picked up on the route for entry into the mails. All carrier mailed items were postmarked at the post office. Street address indicates this item may have been mailed with a carrier.

### CARRIERS AS POST OFFICES<sup>2</sup>

New Plan for Registering Letters Goes Into Effect.

Postmen Can Be Held Up in the Streets or at Houses, but the Mail Must Be Ready for Them.

The new Post Office arrangement by which persons living above Fifty-ninth Street in Manhattan, in the Bronx, and in the residential sections of Brooklyn may have letters registered by letter carriers went into effect yesterday. The scheme is being tried by the Post Office Department in various large cities with the hope of increasing the postal revenue and accommodating the public. The idea of thus making each letter carrier a sort of walking branch Post Office or sub-station has been awaited with considerable interest, especially by the carriers, who see in the innovation the necessity of putting an extra pocket in their already, much subdivided uniforms and an addition to their duties, which they assert are already sufficiently onerous.

Carriers are required to accept letters for registering when delivering mail or when hailed in passing. Thus if a man in walking along the street suddenly becomes possessed of a burning desire to register a letter he may hold up a passing carrier, and the two may effect a registry on the spot, providing the hailer resides within the limits of that particular carrier's route. The system was not designed for this particular highway contingency, however, but was designed to appeal to the citizen at home.

The carrier, however, is protected in many ways from the effects of an abuse of the new system. He may be hailed, waylaid, held up, or otherwise detained by would-be senders of registered letters, but not for long. His schedule over his route, under the new conditions, resembles somewhat that of a limited express train in that the stops are to be for the smallest fraction of time. He is forbidden to make oral explanation of the new system, to indulge in any discussion whatever with patrons in regard to registration in general, to register letters free, advance money or stamps to pay postage, or to make change.

The letter must be ready in every respect when the carrier appears, for he is forbidden on pain of dismissal to wait even the fraction of a minute longer than is necessary to write the receipt. This latter act it is believed will consume quite enough time, especially in cold weather.

The carriers of all the up-town Post Offices went out on their rounds in the morning each heavily armed with the tools for registering letters on the highways and byways. These consisted, in the first place, of a book about the size of a bankbook, containing printed forms. On these forms are spaces for the number of the letter, the date, name, and address of the sender, and the person to whom the letter is addressed, the carrier's name and number, and the trip number. These blanks must be made out in triplicate by means of carbon paper. Each carrier was further provided with a large stock of cards explaining fully the new system, one to be handed to any applicant who happened to be inclined to discuss the question. . . .

2. *New York Times*, January 16, 1900.



## Registered Mail Handled by Rural Carriers

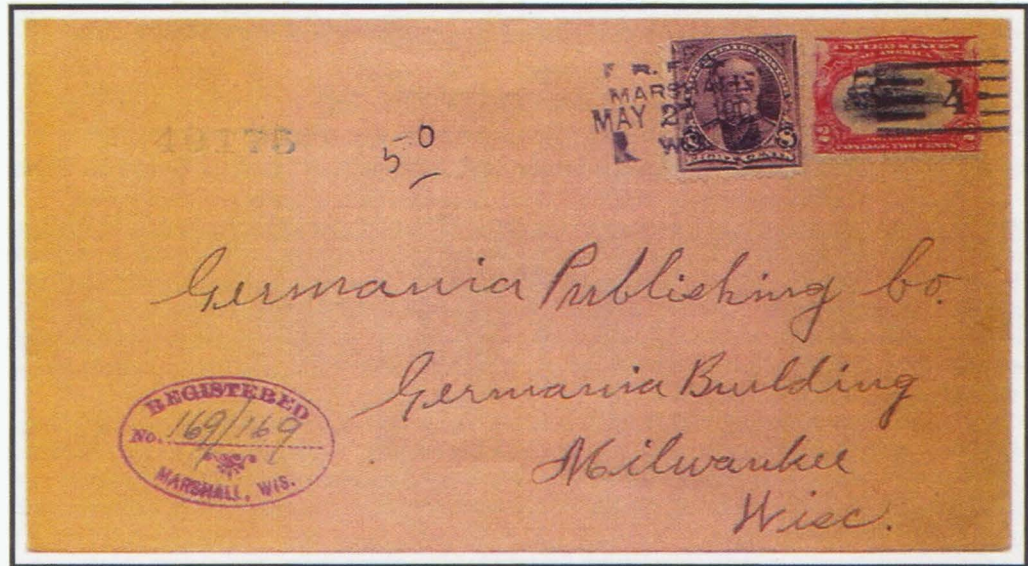
The rural free delivery system began as an experiment in the late 1880's. It rapidly expanded to cover rural areas served by the U.S.P.O. after 1900. Mail deliverable at a post office window now arrived in front of the home of most rural postal patrons. Carriers also accepted items, properly franked with stamps paying the appropriate rate, for entry into the mails.

Rural mail carriers were supplied with the necessary forms to accept letters and parcels for registration while on their route. They also delivered registered matter to box holders on their route being careful to meet all the requirements for a proper delivery of registered items. The *Postal Laws and Regulations* of 1902, effective April 1, 1902, defined this activity as follows:

Sec. 805. At free-delivery post-offices letters or small parcels of first-class matter will be registered by letter carriers on their routes. (See sec. 759.)

2. The registration of mail matter by letter carriers and rural free-delivery carriers will be governed by special instructions issued by the Third Assistant Postmaster-General.

The rural delivery service operated in accordance with *Instructions For the Guidance of Postmasters and Carriers in the Conduct of the Rural Delivery Service* that provided detailed guidance to postmasters and carriers about the proper conduct of the service.



Marshall, WI May 27, 1901

Registered letter entered into the registry system by a rural carrier.

The manuscript "50" was the item number assigned by the carrier when posted with him by its sender. The carrier then accounted for the letter as a part of his daily procedures when he returned to the Marshall Post Office upon completion of his route. The oval Marshall registration device was then applied as a part of this procedure. It indicated both the "169" item number and the package number assigned at the post office of mailing. There is no backstamp from the post office of delivery on this item; however, Milwaukee did apply number "40175" when it was entered into their record of registered mail received for delivery.

R.F.D. carriers functioned as an additional step in the chain of custody of registered mail. They were supplied with one Carrier's Registration Book (Form 3896), Carrier's Registry Delivery Book (Form 1560), an indelible pencil, an adequate supply of registry delivery notices (Form 1525), and information cards (Form 3898). They operated under the same requirements as a postmaster or clerk accepting or delivering registered mail at a fixed location.



Form 3898:  
REGISTRATION IN THE RURAL FREE  
DELIVERY SERVICE.  
(undated, but indemnity limit appropriate for  
the July 1, 1902 to June 20, 1909 period)



**SPECIAL NOTICE.** Form 3898. **SPECIAL NOTICE.**

**REGISTRATION IN THE RURAL FREE DELIVERY SERVICE.**

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C.

**TO THE PUBLIC:**  
All valuable letters and parcels sent in the mails should be REGISTERED to insure their safe transmission and correct delivery.

Rural carriers are prepared to register mail matter on every trip. The Registry Fee is only 5 cents in addition to postage; and both must be prepaid with stamps affixed to the article registered, or in money paid to the Carrier, who will write the amount in the receipt given you.

Letters and parcels to be registered *must*—1. Be plainly and correctly addressed. 2. Bear the name and address of sender. 3. Be inclosed in envelopes or wrappers strong enough to carry contents to destination. 4. Be in perfect condition.

The Rural Carrier will give you a receipt for each letter or parcel at the time he accepts it for registration. A second receipt, signed by the addressee or his authorized agent, will be mailed you when a domestic letter or parcel is delivered.

If a letter or parcel prepaid at the letter rate of postage, registered at a United States post office, or by a Rural Free Delivery Carrier, and addressed to a United States post office, be lost in the mails, and such letter or parcel, or its value, be not recoverable, the POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT WILL MAKE GOOD ITS VALUE, up to TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS.

(OVER.)

This "information card" was distributed to postal patrons served by rural free delivery carriers explaining the registry service. *Instructions for the Guidance of Postmasters and Carriers in the Conduct of the Rural Delivery Service* effective March 4, 1907 stated:

Sec. 178. If a carrier has to refuse to register a letter or parcel tendered for registration, the reason shall be clearly explained to the sender, who shall also be given an information card (Form 3898).



Lathrop, CA June 4, 1906

Letter registered on the route with carrier's postmark then postmarked again at the carrier's home post office when he accounted for his daily activity. Dispatched to Oakdale, CA where it received its first-class receiving backstamp the next day. Received mark applied by addressee.

The number of post offices served by the U.S.P.O. dramatically decreased with the advent of the R. F. D. system. Most rural fourth-class post offices closed by 1910. The rural carrier now functioned in the place of one's neighbor at the postal window in the local general store down at the crossroads.



## Future Improvements to the Registered Service Recommended in 1907

The image shows two historical postal forms. The left form is a 'Registry Bill' (Form 1550) dated August 5, 1907, from Bangor, ME, to H. N. Kimbark. The right form is a 'Notice to Sender of Undelivered Mail' (Form 3540) dated August 5, 1907, also from Bangor, ME, to H. N. Kimbark. Both forms are part of the 'Post Office Department' and 'Official Business' series.

Bangor, ME August 5, 1907  
Form No. 1550 Registry Bill (Gray Card).

Assistant Superintendents of the Division of Registered Mails met in conference May 1, 1907 charged with making recommendations that would improve the efficiency and safety of handling registered mail. They were specifically charged with identifying changes that would result in cost savings. Their final report, issued as a letter to the Third Assistant Postmaster General July 1, 1907, made thirty-three recommendations.

Recommendations later enacted included: the elimination of the gray card bill for all domestic registered mail (Form 1550) and pouch bill coupons in the domestic service unless used as a registered package receipt; first-class registered mail should be pouched separate from registered mail of other classes; all valuable mail dispatched from the dead letter office should be treated as registered mail regardless of its original status; any amount due on short-paid registered mail should be collected from the addressee upon delivery instead of being billed to the postmaster at the post office of origin; increasing the limited indemnity on registered mail to \$100. It took twenty-one years to enact:

15. Unlimited indemnity.- That new legislation be obtained which will permit unlimited indemnity for loss of registered mail originating at and addressed to a United States post office with such sliding scale of registry fees and under such regulations as the Postmaster General may prescribe.

The last seventeen recommendations contained in this report covered modifications to window registration books, registry transit book (Form 1553), registry delivery book (Form 1547), sender's return receipt (Form 1548), registry delivery notice (Form 1525), and other internal departmental forms.

The image shows two historical postal forms. The left form is a 'Notice to Sender of Undelivered Mail' (Form 3540) dated August 5, 1907, from Bangor, ME, to H. N. Kimbark. The right form is a 'Notice to Sender of Undelivered Mail' (Form 3540) dated August 5, 1907, also from Bangor, ME, to H. N. Kimbark. Both forms are part of the 'Post Office Department' and 'Official Business' series.

Notice to Sender of Undelivered Mail (Form 3540).



REGISTRY (Route) BILL NO. 87 (PAGE 100), Dated 7/15/1907, For Registered Matter Dispatched FROM TO *Chicago* (P. O. or R. P. O. and Tr. No.)

R. P. E. No., or DESCRIPTION OF REGISTERED PACKAGES, SACKS, AND CASES.	Pouch Locked	M., with Lock No.	POSTMARKED AT—	DATE OF POSTMARK.	NAME OF POST OFFICE ADDRESSED.	Rotary No.
1039	<i>Car and box</i>				<i>Chicago</i>	
55066	<i>Willamette</i>					
55067	<i>L.A. box</i>			13		
55068				10		
8044						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						

No. of Packages Inclosed in this Pouch, A total of *4* Packages sent by this Dispatch, Inclosed in *4* Pouches.

Postmark of *Chicago*

Dispatching Office, *Chicago*

Return Equipment: Pouches, *4* Locks, *1*

Hour Pouch unlocked, *6* M.

Hour Pouch opened, *10* M.

Postmark of *Chicago*

Dispatching Office, *Chicago*

Return signed coupon in official envelope in first registered dispatch.

Postmark of *Chicago*

Dispatching Office, *Chicago*

Bill No. *87*

Lock No. *1*

Rotary No. *1*

RECEIVED a total of *4* Packages, described on above-numbered Bill, from the office (or R. P. O. train) named in postmark at top of this coupon.

Also received Coupons Nos. *1*

Statement of Discrepancy or Damage:

WHEN GIVING RECEIPT IN BOOK, SIGN THROUGH CARBON ON BOTH COUPONS.

Hour Pouch opened, *10* M.

Postmark of *Chicago*

Dispatching Office, *Chicago*

Return signed coupon in official envelope in first registered dispatch.



Bill No. *87*

Lock No. *1*

Rotary No. *1*

RECEIVED a total of *4* Packages, described on above-numbered Bill, from the office (or R. P. O. train) named in postmark at top of this coupon.

Also received Coupons Nos. *1*

Statement of Discrepancy or Damage:

Hour Pouch opened, *10* M.

Postmark of *Chicago*

Dispatching Office, *Chicago*

Return signed coupon in official envelope in first registered dispatch.





## The Registry Label Experiment

The increasing volume of mail to be registered at the larger post offices motivated the U.S.P.O. to attempt to speed up the processing time it took a window clerk to properly enter a letter into the registry system. A combination return receipt and registration label, Form 1549-A, was first tested at Washington, DC in late 1907. The first style of this form may have been tested at other very large post offices but the only known examples of its use (3) come from Washington, DC.



Washington, DC November 8, 1907

First style of form seen used from Washington, DC. It appears to have been used within the main post office and not at a public window. No other registered markings were placed on the face of this letter. It did receive a standard circular, registered dater postmark in red ink on its reverse side. The large Washington, DC device struck in violet ink is similar to others seen from large post offices. Some include "REG" or "REGISTERED" restricting their use to registered mail.





New York, NY February 17, 1908

Example of the second, more widely-used style of Form 1549-A label. The sender had to fill out the receipt for mailing a registered item attached to this label before presenting it to the postal clerk for registration. The clerk then numbered the receipt and label attaching the label to the item being registered. This sped up the processing of registered mail at the window.

This form was distributed to sixty-four larger post offices in late 1909 for use during the holiday rush and at other busy times. Postmasters receiving these forms could pass them on to other postmasters upon their request. They are known used from less than fifty post offices. The label was discontinued with changes in postmarking registered mail January 1, 1911, but the sender-prepared receipt for a registered letter remained in use thereafter.



## Restructuring the Registered Mail System 1909 - 1923



Kirkpatrick, IN June 21, 1909

The U.S.P.O. faced increasing financial losses operating the registered mail system. The overall volume of registered mail had increased over ten-fold in the last thirty-five years. Second-, third-, and fourth-class mail became eligible for registration. Limited indemnity against loss had been provided without an additional charge to the customer.

The number of postal patrons served by the U.S.P.O. continued to grow as settlers moved into new states created out of sparsely settled lands west of the Mississippi. An increasing number of immigrants filled large cities. Post offices continually grew in size serving new faces. Fewer and fewer clerks and postmasters enjoyed the luxury of knowing their postal patrons on a first-name basis.

The method of delivering the mails rapidly changed becoming more complex. Independent contract carriers transporting mail between post offices by land and water had been replaced by the Railway Postal Service. The scheme of using a relatively few large post offices (D.P.O.s) to sort mail received from other distributing centers addressed to all post offices in a state or region had been replaced by railway postal clerks sorting the mails while in motion. Most second- and first-class post offices now offered free city carrier service taking the mail right to the addressee's front door.

Postmaster General F. H. Hitchcock issued Order Number 2488 appointing a committee "to investigate the registry service in its entirety" on August 4, 1909 as follows:

In view of the report of the special committee appointed to ascertain the cost of handling the various classes of mail matter that the Registry System is conducted at a loss, Charles H. McBride, Assistant Superintendent, Railway Mail Service, New York, N. Y., George L. Wood, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Salaries and Allowances, Office of First Assistant Postmaster General, and Henry D. Temple, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Registered Mails, Office of the Third Assistant Postmaster General, are hereby appointed a committee to investigate the Registry System in its entirety.

The Committee will submit to the Postmaster General, not later than December 1, 1909, a final report covering,-

- (a) Methods by which the revenues of the system may be increased;
- (b) A simplification of forms and methods which will reduce the cost of conducting the System, while maintaining a proper degree of safety.

The committee will enter upon its duties at once and proceed with the investigation as rapidly as other duties necessarily required of its members will permit. The Committee will confer and co-operate with the Committee on Standardization of Forms, appointed by Postmaster General's Order No. 1276, dated April 15, 1908, and will from time to time confer with and report progress to the Third Assistant Postmaster General.



The Committee submitted an interim "memorandum of the more important recommendations which have been agreed upon" October 30, 1909 making the following recommendations:

1.- Classification of Registered Mail.

That three classes of registered mail be established, as follows:

- a. Preferred matter, comprising articles of first class mail exceeding \$50 in value. Fee, 20 cents. Limit of indemnity, \$100.
- b. Ordinary matter, comprising articles of first class mail not exceeding \$50 in value. Fee, 10 cents. Limit of indemnity, \$50.
- c. Parcel matter, comprising articles of second, third, and fourth class mail. Fee 5 cents. Recommended limit on indemnity, \$15 (no indemnity authorized under present law).

2.- Increase of Limits of Fee and Indemnity.

That Congress be requested to enact a law permitting the payment of indemnity for preferred registered mail up to its full value, without limit, and the charging of commensurate fees on a graduated scale.

3. Envelope and Tags.

- a. That the registered package and tag envelopes now in use be discontinued.
- b. That registry envelopes and tags of special construction, having detachable return receipts, be manufactured and sold to the public for the amount of the registry fee. Samples accompany this report. [none found in file with this document] The appropriation for registered package and tag envelopes is believed to be available for this purpose, and sufficient in amount.

4. Equipment.

- a. That no more distinctive registered pouches and sacks be manufactured; that ordinary pouches closed with rotary locks be used for the exchange of registered mails whenever more convenient; and that the special registry equipment continued in use be handled when empty in the same manner as ordinary equipment.
- b. That the use of lead seals for closing registered sacks be discontinued, and rotary locks and keys be furnished to all railway post-offices and such post-offices as may be necessary in order to retain the elasticity in registry exchanges given by the use of lead seals.

5. Distribution.

That the distribution of registered mail by scheme for distance States be discontinued, and such mail dispatched in state and city pouches, sacks, or jackets for distribution by clerks handling ordinary mail for those states.

6. Handling of Registered Mail.

- a. That registered parcels of the second, third, and fourth classes be entered in bulk instead of individually on the dispatch bills describing the contents of registered pouches and sacks.
- b. That descriptive delivery records of mail registered at the 10-cent fee be dispensed with at the larger offices, and receipts taken under an "inward" number which will be stamped on the incoming bill opposite the entry describing the mail.
- c. That the address part of the tag proposed for parcel mail be used as a delivery receipt and filed as the only record of such mail at the office of delivery.

The institution of numerous other improvements in methods that will effect considerable economies will also be recommended.

7. Return Receipts.

That Congress be asked to modify the law so as to require return receipts only when demanded and paid for by the sender.

8. Delivery and Forwarding.

That the regulations governing the delivery of registered mail, except for the preferred class, be modified so as to permit delivery to any responsible adult at the place of address, unless otherwise directed by the sender or addressee.

9. Free Matter.

That the registration of matter addressed to the Division of Dead Letters; of equipment; and of Government publications (unless of great value) be discontinued.



The Committee issued its final report February 28, 1911. It was calculated changes it proposed would save the Department \$1,009,000 annually based on data submitted by the sixty largest post offices. \$100,000 would be saved from discontinuing the contract for providing registered package- and tag-envelopes. The rest resulted from clerk and carrier labor savings.

The following summary details Committee recommendations concerning the handling of domestic registered mail with reference to specific orders authorizing their implementation.

1. Registry fees and indemnities. Order No. 2617 issued September 13, 1909 effective November 1, 1909 raised the registration fee of all mail matter to ten cents increasing the maximum indemnity against loss to \$50.

This section now also encompassed what was listed as item one, Classification of Registered Mail, and item two, Increase of Limits of Fee and Indemnity, in the interim report issued October 30, 1909. No action was taken on providing more than one level of indemnity for an additional higher registration fee until April 1, 1923. Second-, third-, and fourth-class mail could be registered for the ten-cent registration fee with the lower indemnity limit of \$25.00 until that date.

2. Registered Envelopes and tags. Orders No. 2812 of December 9, 1909 and No. 5113 of February 25, 1910, and their implementing detailed instructions eliminated the use of registered package and tag envelopes effective January 1, 1911.

3. Registry transportation equipment. Order No. 2700 of October 23, 1909 supplemented by instructions of the Third Assistant Postmaster General dated November 24, 1909 ended the purchase and use of distinctive registry pouches and sacks. Ordinary pouches, closed with rotary locks, were to be used whenever convenient. Existing special registry equipment continued in use handled in the same manner as ordinary equipment. Orders of the Third Assistant Postmaster General dated October 23, 1909 and May 23, 1910 extended the use of rotary locks [for registered mail]. An additional order issued by the Third Assistant Postmaster General October 10, 1910 discontinued the use of lead seals [on registered pouches] effective January 1, 1911.

4. Control of registry exchanges. All registered mail now is exchanged in sacks closed by rotary locks. All post offices now have keys for these locks. It is no longer necessary to authorize the hand-to-hand exchange of registered mail between a postmaster and railway postal personnel.

5. Distribution. The distribution of registered mail by scheme for mail destined to distant states was replaced by the dispatching of mail in state pouches, sacks, or jackets to be sorted by clerks along with the ordinary mail for those states by Order of the Third Assistant Postmaster General April 19, 1910.

6. Handling and recording of registered mail. Orders No. 2701, dated October 23, 1909, No. 2741, dated November 9, 1909, and No. 2811, dated December 9, 1909 authorized registered parcels of the second, third, and fourth class could now be entered in bulk showing the number of pieces sent instead of being individually described on the dispatch bills for registered pouches and sacks.

Order No. 2660 of October 6, 1909, No. 2682 of October 14, 1909, and No. 2813 of December 9, 1909 permitted larger post offices to dispense with descriptive delivery records detailing registered mail received for delivery providing an inward number was stamped on the incoming bill opposite its descriptive entry.

7. Order No. 3276 of July 11, 1910 made the providing of a return receipt signed by the addressee documenting the delivery of a registered item optional upon the request of the sender at the time of mailing. The Committee felt it would be appropriate to make an additional charge for this service but did not feel it appropriate to recommend its institution at this time.

8. Delivery and forwarding. Order No. 5045 of October 25, 1910 permitted the delivery of a registered item to any responsible adult at the place of address, unless otherwise directed by the sender or addressee.

9. Free matter. It was recommended that the registration of mail addressed to the Division of Dead Letters, of mail equipment, and of government publications, unless of great value, be discontinued.

The Committee concluded its report requesting the issuance of a revised set of Postal Laws and Regulations, detailed instructions for postal employees, and a circular explaining the registry service to the public be issued.



Ten-Cent Registration Fee November 1, 1909 to April 14, 1925  
Indemnity against Loss Increased up to \$50

Augusta, ME  
November 8, 1909

Registered "dater" used as postmark struck  
in violet ink.

Free return-receipt service automatically  
provided to the sender of all registered  
items without any specific request  
prior to July 11, 1910.



New York, NY  
February 3, 1910

Registered dater-styled  
postmark including station name  
(Madison Square).

Domestic use of the  
"REGISTERED Return Receipt  
Requested" mark seen on foreign  
destination registered mail from a  
company that regularly did both.



Skowhegan, ME  
December 1, 1910

Fancier "Registered Return Receipt  
Requested" device seen from some post  
offices. Matching ink color with postmark  
indicates this was applied by the post  
office.





# Free Return Receipt Service Now Provided Only upon Request

## SENDER'S RETURN RECEIPT FOR REGISTERED MAIL.

OFFICE OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL,  
Washington, July 11, 1910.

Order No. 3276,

Section 3928 of the Revised Statutes (855, P. L. & R.) has been amended to read as follows:

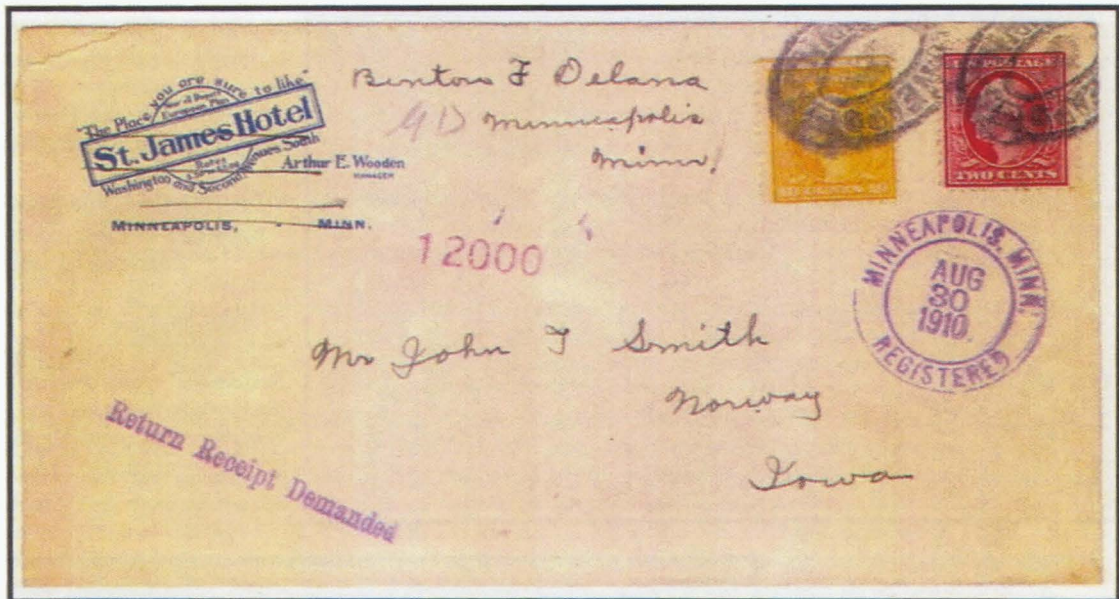
"Whenever the sender shall so request, a receipt shall be taken on the delivery of any registered mail matter, showing to whom and when the same was delivered, which receipt shall be returned to the sender, and be received in courts as *prima facie* evidence of such delivery."

In accordance with this amendment postmasters should not hereafter prepare receipt cards for return to the senders of domestic registered letters or parcels that do not bear the indorsement "Receipt desired" or words of similar import. When an article bearing such an indorsement is received for registration, the registration receipt issued to the sender and the registration record shall be similarly indorsed.

If no return-receipt card accompanies a domestic registered letter or parcel bearing the indorsement "Receipt desired" or words of similar import, the postmaster at the delivering office shall supply one.

Sections 811, 852 and 855 of the Postal Laws and Regulations are hereby amended accordingly.

F. H. HITCHOCK,  
Postmaster General.



Minneapolis, MN August 30, 1910

Straight-line "Return Receipt Demanded" and registered dater-style postmark was used at most post offices. Oval obliterations are found from larger first- and second-class offices.

Order No. 3276 appeared on the front page of the *Daily Bulletin of Orders Affecting the Postal Service* No. 9259 of July 12, 1910. An important announcement to all postmasters from A. M. Thavers, Acting Third Assistant Postmaster General also appeared issuing the following instructions:

... until further notice postal employees accepting mail for registration must in every case ask if a return receipt is desired, and if a person desiring a return receipt has failed to make the proper indorsement on the mail, the receiving postmaster or clerk should supply it. ...

He published a notice dated October 25, 1910 revoking this instruction effective December 1, 1910 in the *Daily Bulletin* issued October 27, 1910.







## Standardized Markings on Registered Mail

### ORDER OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL.

#### DISCONTINUANCE OF REGISTERED-PACKAGE AND TAG ENVELOPES.

OFFICE OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL,  
Washington, Nov. 25, 1910.

ORDER NO. 5113.

Beginning January 1, 1911, registered mail shall be dispatched without registered-package and tag envelope.

Before dispatch each registered article shall be plainly marked on the face so as to indicate that it is registered, and letters and other sealed matter shall be postmarked twice on the back by the office of origin.

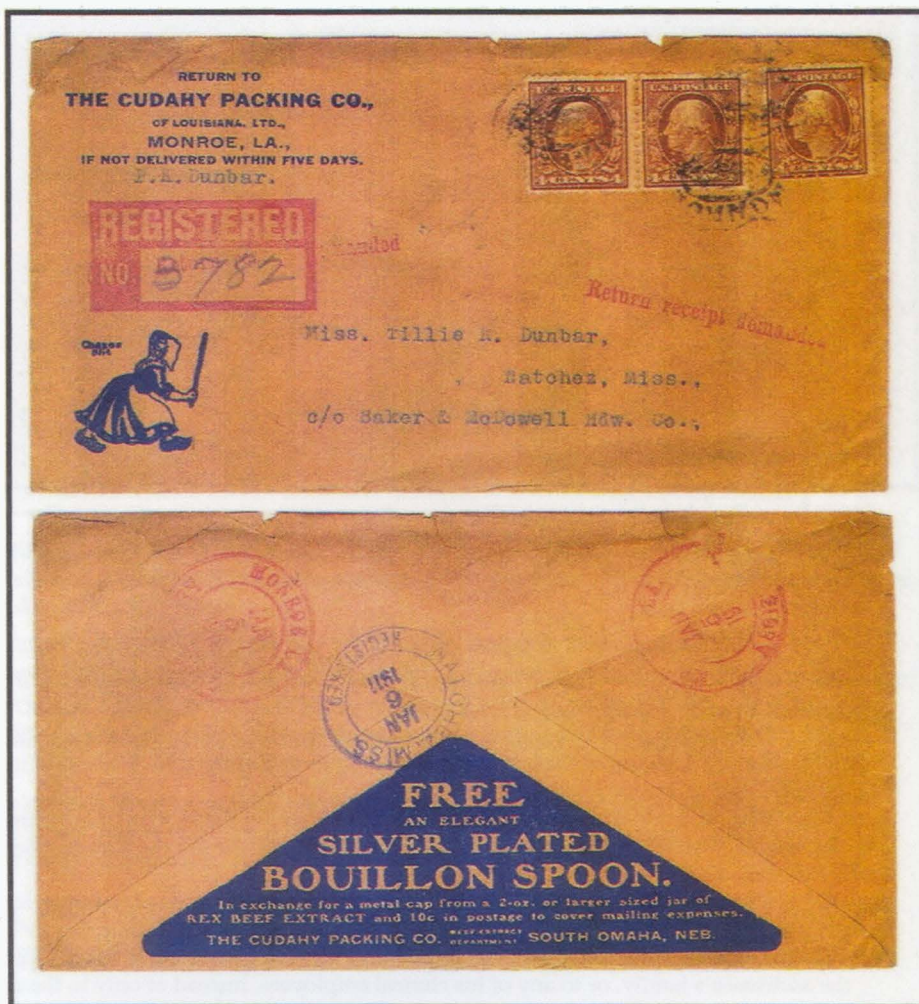
All regulations inconsistent with this order are hereby modified accordingly.

FRANK H. HITCHCOCK,  
Postmaster General

Monroe, LA  
January 6, 1911

This registered letter illustrates the new procedures implemented January 1, 1911. One of the new standard registry devices is positioned below the return address.

The double postmark from the post office of mailing crosses the flap on the back. The post office of delivery also postmarked the back noting its receipt at that office. These postmarks use the circular "dater" style of registry-specific postmarking device previously supplied to all post offices. Natchez, MS used a non-standard blue ink.





# The 1911 Registered Marking Devices

November 26, 1910.

Fourth Assistant Postmaster General,

Division of Supplies.

Sir:

It is requested that steps be taken to furnish postmasters and the Railway Mail Service, before January 1, 1911, with the supplies necessary to carry out the Postmaster-General's Order No. 5113, of November 25, 1910, and the instructions issued thereunder by this Office. The following supplies will be needed for immediate use.

## Rubber Stamps:

No. 1.		75,000
No. 2.		25,000
No. 3.		10,000.

One No. 1 stamp should be supplied, without requisition, to every third and fourth-class post-office; one No. 2 stamp should be supplied, without requisition, to every third-class office; and 10,000 No. 2 stamps should be supplied to the Division Superintendents, Railway Mail Service, in accordance with a schedule to be furnished by the General Superintendent. A schedule for the shipment of stamps to first and second class post-offices will be furnished by this Office in a few days.

## Stamp Pad.

One stamp pad, inked with red ink, should be sent without requisition to every second and third class office. If any not-money-order office is not using a rubber canceling stamp it will need a stamp pad. Requisitions will doubtless be received from first-class offices for a number of extra pads, so that at least 10,000 in all should be ordered immediately.

## Instructions.

It is desired to send to every post-office a copy of the instructions for the execution of Order No. 5113. It is therefore requested that the necessary supply of 75,000 copies be ordered from the Public Printer, and that if practicable one copy be inclosed with the supplies sent to each office. Copy for these instructions is inclosed herewith.

Respectfully,

Acting Third Assistant Postmaster General.



One of 75,000 devices ordered November 25, 1910.



Return Receipt Requested of similar design.

The above onion-skin carbon from the U.S.P.O. archives documents the ordering of the devices needed to implement Order #5113. It appears the distribution of these devices was timely and thorough. These were rubber-faced devices set on a wood base. Registered letters marked with them can be found as late as the 1950's especially from smaller post offices.



# DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS.

Office of Third Asst. P. M. Gen.,  
Washington, Nov. 25, 1910.

1. In accordance with the Postmaster General's Order No. 5113, dated November 25, 1910, on and after January 1, 1911, all postmasters will discontinue the use of registered-packages and tag envelopes in the dispatch of registered mail, whether in registered pouches, sacks or jackets, in iron-locked or brass-locked pouches, or as hand pieces.

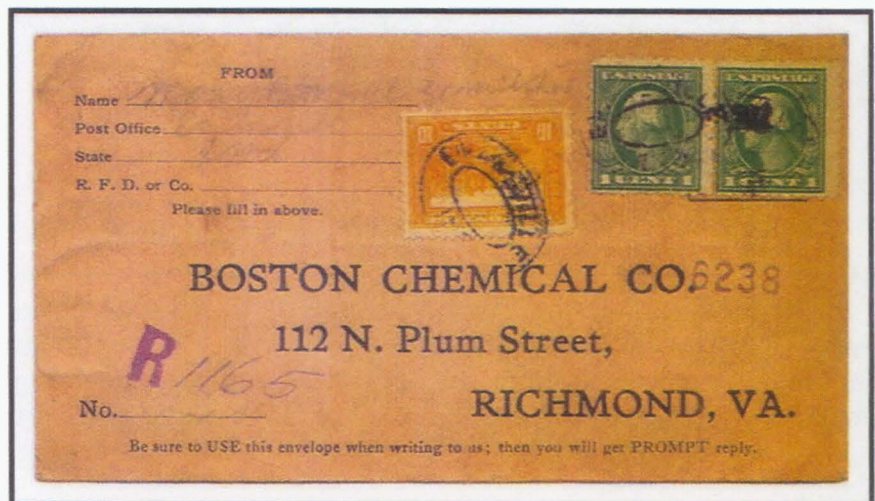
2. Before dispatch, all registered matter shall be plainly marked with a rubber stamp or have written on its face the word "Registered," in bold letters, and when possible in red. This indorsement must, if practicable, be placed in the upper left-hand portion of the address side of the registered article or directly above the address: otherwise in some conspicuous place near the address. The original registration number of the piece should be placed immediately under the word "Registered" in the space provided in the stamp. Articles too small to contain the word "Registered" must be stamped or marked in a similar manner with the letter "R," to be followed by the original registration number. Registered articles received at United States exchange offices from foreign countries must be plainly marked "Registered" or "R" in the same manner as domestic matter before delivery or dispatch to interior offices. . . .



Atlanta, GA January 3, 1911 (by postmark on reverse side)  
Example of straight-line "REGISTERED" device supplied to all post offices.

Evansville, IN  
January 4, 1915  
(by postmark on reverse side)

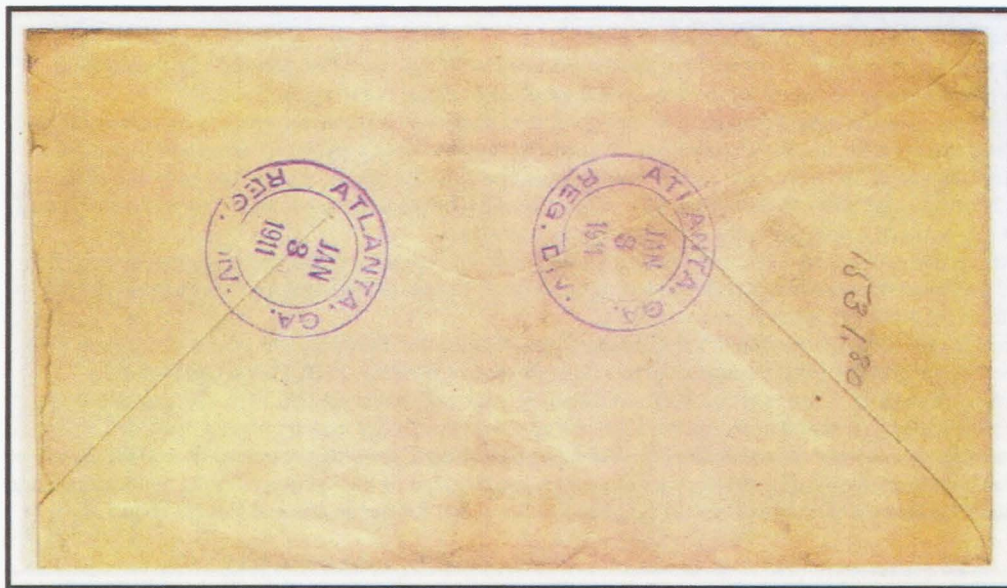
Small "R" device followed by registration number used on a small-sized registered letter without sufficient space for the larger devices.





Detailed Instructions issued Nov. 25, 1910 continued:

3. Sealed parcels should be indorsed "First Class" on the address side of the piece by the mailing postmaster.
4. Before dispatch, postmasters must see that the county is plainly marked on each registered article as near the lower left-hand corner of the address side as possible, unless the piece is addressed to some office which is excepted from this requirement. (See pages 105 and 106 of the July, 1910, Postal Guide.)
5. Before dispatch, the impression of the postmarking stamp must be placed *twice on the back* of each letter and other sealed article, as nearly as practicable at the crossings of the upper and lower flaps. First-class matter should not be postmarked on the face. All other matter should be postmarked as heretofore.



Atlanta, GA January 3, 1911 (back of cover previously shown)

Example of double postmarks on back of registered letter as required by the new regulations.

Detailed Instructions issued Nov. 25, 1910 continued:

6. Senders' return receipts accompanying registered mail and gray card bills and receipts accompanying matter addressed to foreign countries should be securely fastened to the registered article with twine or with two wire clips, one at the top and one at the left end, to prevent them from becoming detached while in transit.
7. Senders' return receipts and gray card bills found loose in the mails, which can not be assembled with the registered articles to which they belong, should be destroyed as waste paper.
8. When dispatched in iron-locked or brass-locked pouches, registered matter should be tied with the ordinary mail, whenever practicable, and placed on the top of the local or No. 1 working package, immediately under the facing slip, together with the registered-package receipt.
9. The word "Registered," in bold letters, shall be plainly stamped or marked on the facing slip covering the package containing the registered matter or the registered-package receipt describing it (one or both).
10. Registered matter that can not be tied with the ordinary mail should be inclosed, if possible, in a registered-package jacket (or registered-package envelope) unaddressed, unnumbered and unsealed, but securely tied; otherwise the registered articles should be placed loose in the pouch.
11. For special instructions concerning the dispatch of registered mail for foreign destinations via New York, N. Y., see pages 109 and 110, articles 92 to 96, of the July, 1910, Postal Guide.
12. Registered mail for foreign destinations (except for Canada, Mexico, and the Republic of Panama) proper for dispatch via San Francisco, Cal.; Seattle, Wash., or Tacoma, Wash., should, when the quantity or bulk justifies, be inclosed in a jacket or not-regular pouch or sack addressed simply to the country of destination, as "China," "Japan," "Korea," "Australia," etc.
13. When it is known that registered mail for two or more foreign countries is scheduled for dispatch from one of the Pacific exchange offices by the same sailing, all such matter should, when the quantity or bulk justifies, be inclosed in one jacket or not-regular pouch or sack addressed simply to the countries of destination, as "China and Japan," "China and Australia," etc.
14. Pouches, sacks and jackets containing only mail addressed to foreign countries may be reinclosed when practicable in pouches, sacks, or jackets addressed to the proper exchange office.



Detailed Instructions issued Nov. 25, 1910 continued:

15. Registered-package and tag envelopes now on hand in post offices may be used as jackets and jacket tags by placing the letter "J" before the number. The minimum number of pieces required for a jacket is hereby reduced to two. Jacket tags should be used on single pieces too large for inclosure in pouches.

16. Whenever registered mail has been improperly dispatched under cover of a registered-package or tag envelope, it should be stripped at the first post office, railway post office or terminal railway post office handling it in transit. Registered-package and tag envelopes so received may be treated as waste paper after having been carefully examined to see that they have been emptied of their contents. Care should be taken, however, not to strip R. P. E.'s that have been used as substitutes for registered-package jackets, as indicated by the letter "J" stamped or written thereon.

17. Registered matter that has not been properly indorsed with the word "Registered" by the mailing postmaster should be so indorsed by the first postal employee noting the irregularity.

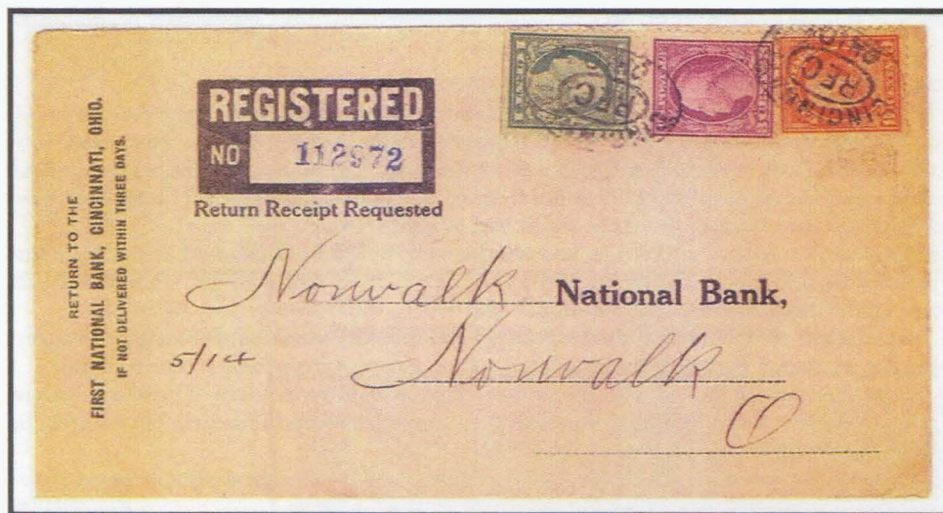
18. Employees receiving registered mail in bad condition shall, when possible, repair it by means of official seals; otherwise it should be reinclosed in a special registry "bad condition" envelope (Form 81) or an official envelope. In every such case the employee repairing the break, or re-enveloping the mail, shall sign his name and write or stamp the date across the edge of the seal, or across the new envelope, and secure the signature of a witness to the transaction when possible.

19. When matter is reinclosed the new envelope must bear a statement of the condition, the name and address of the addressee, the name and address of the sender, the office of origin and the original number; also a statement of the contents of the article, if known.

20. In the dispatch of registered mail for Canada, Cuba, Mexico and Salvador, all postal employees will be governed by the instructions on pages 120 to 131, inclusive, of the July, 1910, Postal Guide and in subsequent supplements. Care must be taken to dispatch these registered articles to the proper exchange offices, in view of the difference between the schemes governing ordinary and registered mail.

21. The necessary rubber stamps will be furnished all postal employees without request on their part. Postmasters not receiving a sufficient number of stamps for the need of their offices should make requisition on the Fourth Assistant Postmaster General (Division of Supplies) for the additional stamps required.

A. M. TRAVERS,  
Acting Third Asst. P. M. Gen.



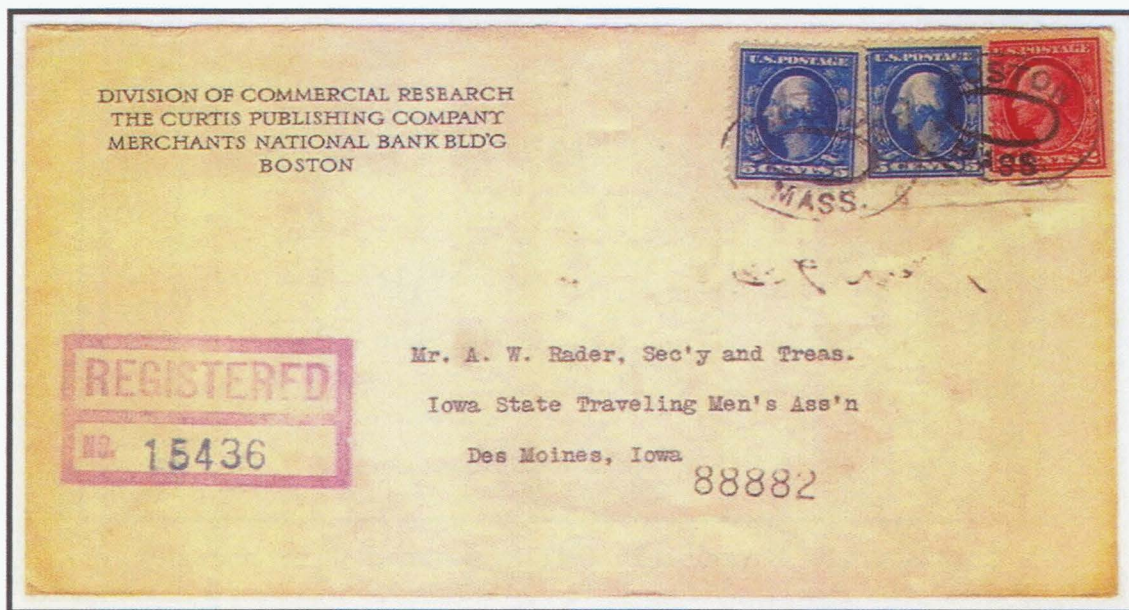
Cincinnati, OH May 13, 1918 (by postmark on reverse side)  
Three-cent first-class war rate effective November 2, 1917 to June 20, 1919.

Regulations did not say who had to place the appropriate registered markings on an item. Banks and other commercial enterprises that routinely sent registered mail began printing the required markings, at times along with the request for the optional, free return receipt service, along with their return address and return instructions.

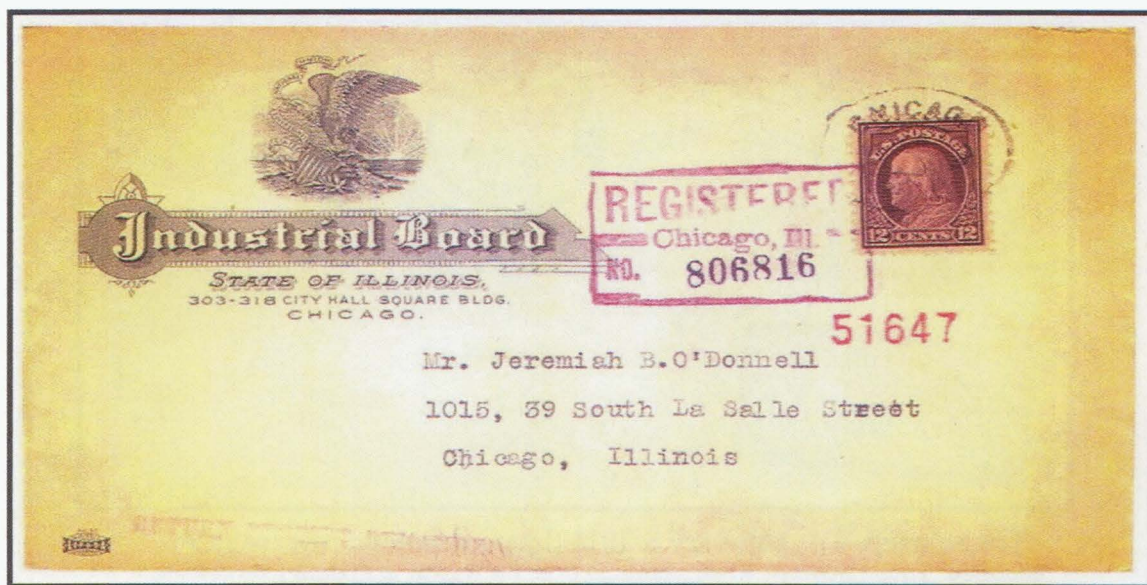
Regulations did not state a requirement that the obliterator used to cancel stamps on a registered item could not contain the city and state of the post office. Most larger-sized post offices continued to use oval-shaped obliterator containing this information.



## Redesigned Registration Device



Boston, MA May 9, 1914 (by postmark on reverse side)



Chicago, IL November 13, 1914 (by postmark on reverse side)

Very few of these devices are seen containing the name of their city of use.

It appears the first style of rectangularly-shaped two-line registration device with a space for the number assigned at the post office of mailing was redesigned when additional quantities were ordered. It is likely the original "negative image" style of device met the same fate as earlier rubber devices issued to R.F.D. carriers. Its life span was greatly shortened unless carefully cleaned on a regular basis. This new "positive image" device appears to have better tolerated daily use.



# Specific Stamp Issued for Use on Registered Mail



Logansport, IN December 26, 1911 (by postmark on reverse side)

A special blue ten-cent stamp was issued December 11, 1911 for the payment of the registration fee. It was not valid for postage. Its use was not mandatory. All other postage stamps valid for the payment of postage on first-class mail remained valid for the payment of the registration fee.



Los Angeles, CA February 8, 1914 (by postmark on reverse side)  
Endorsed "Found in drop" when recovered from the regular mail during processing.

The plan was that a special stamp would help better identify registered letters, now mailed without the cover of a registered package envelope, from the surrounding regular mail. It turned out to be a short-lived, failed experiment. Some senders believed the use of this special stamp enabled them to post a letter bearing it along with the other first-class mail from their home, business, or in an outside collection box. This stamp provided no exemption from the rules requiring letters being registered to be mailed at a post office window with the completion of the necessary paperwork. Patrons not requesting a return receipt appear to have been most at fault. The use of this special stamp for the payment of the registry fee was "abolished" May 28, 1913 but remaining supplies could be used until the supply was exhausted.





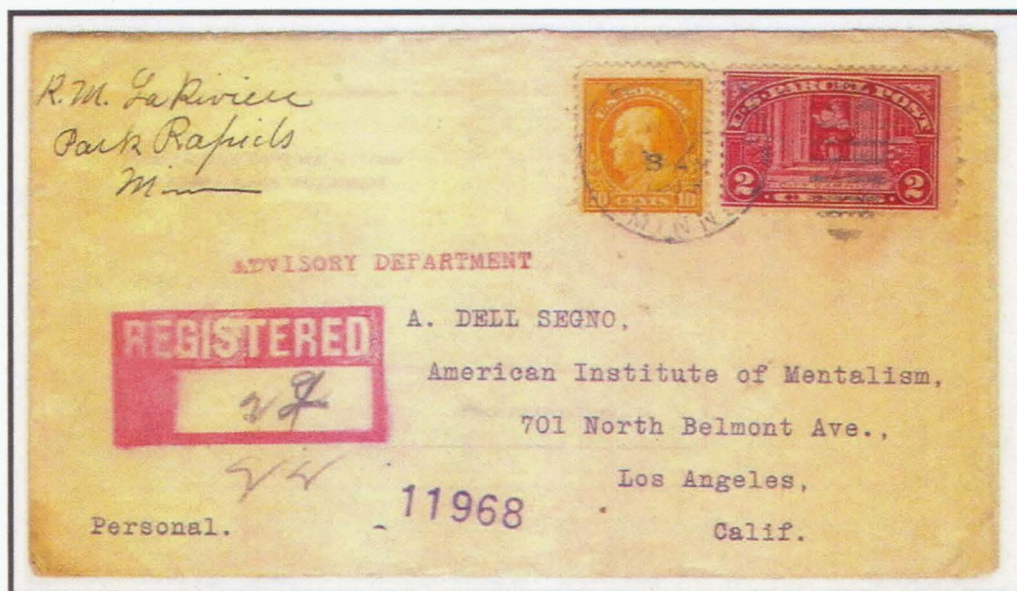
Santa Cruz, CA June 14, 1919

Late use of registry stamp with sender-applied registration markings.

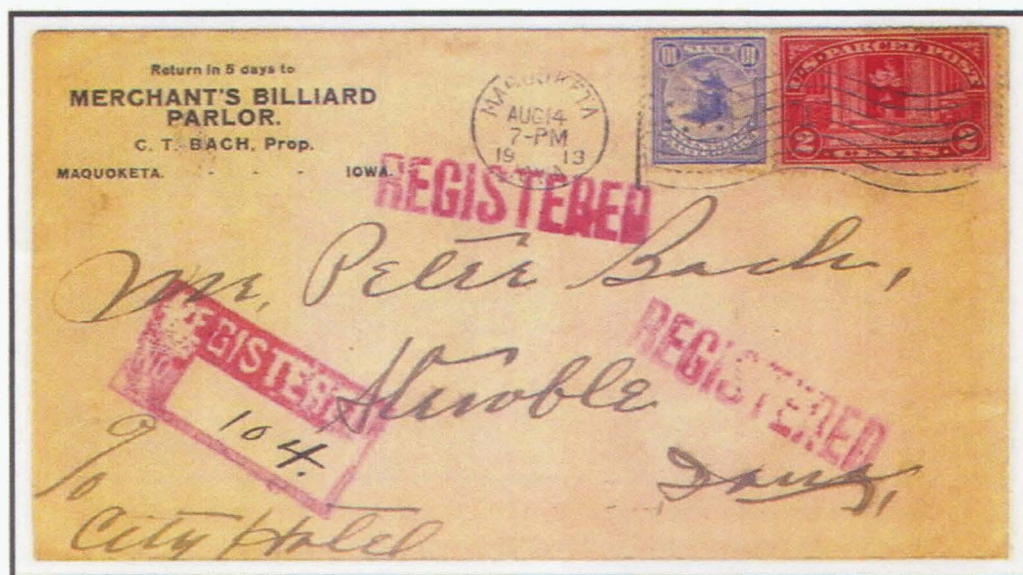
Late usage of the registry stamp can be found into the 1920's. This late usage is unusual in that the stamp was affixed to the back of the envelope. Both the embossed envelope and the registry stamp were obliterated with a box-style device containing the city and state of the post office.



It is not unusual to run across registered matter after January 1, 1911 that does not follow the postmarking requirements of the November 25, 1910 instructions. Postmarks appearing on the front of letters is the most common violation seen.



Park Rapids, MN July 17, 1913  
Duplex postmarking device used on the face of a registered letter.



Maquoketa, IA August 14, 1913  
Flag style of machine cancel used on front of a registered letter.

Parcel post stamps were first placed on sale January 1, 1913 but were not valid for use on first-class mail until July 1, 1913. The use of stamps produced for a specific class or service of mail proved to be an impractical experiment. They were not always available when needed in the window drawers, especially at smaller post offices, when a letter or parcel appropriate for their use was mailed. The issuance of twelve denominations of parcel post stamps acerbated this problem. Drawers quickly filled up with unused stamps of odd denominations.



## Registered Mail Given Air Mail Service



Washington, DC May 29, 1918

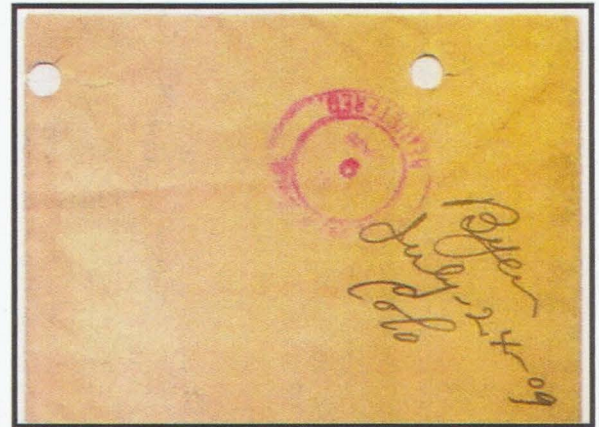
Twenty-four cent air mail rate and ten-cent registration fee carried this letter from Washington, DC to Crawfordsville, IN shortly after the May 15, 1918 first air mail flight between Washington DC and New York, NY. There was no air mail service other than the Washington to New York route during this period. There is no New York receiving backstamp. Cover probably carried by train from Washington to Crawfordsville with the other first-class registered mail.

Air mail, like other forms of first-class mail, could be registered by the sender with payment of the registration fee. A system of contract air mail routes (C.A.M.) brought regular service to most large cities in the mid 1920's. First-class air mail letters destined for smaller post offices only traveled between these larger post offices by air. There they were sent on to their destination by normal ground based routes. Early air mail was often delayed by aircraft mechanical problems or bad weather necessitating the application of a "this mail sent by train to avoid delay" or similar auxiliary marking. Air mail did not receive any expedited delivery to its addressee at the post office of destination unless a special delivery fee was also paid.

The air mail service was managed as a unit of the Railway Mail Service. Registered mail sent by air required the same paperwork and delivery procedures as ground transported items.



# Registration of Official Government Business Mail



From the reverse side of this item:

Received at Byer, CO July 24, 1909.

Indistinct dater-styled registered postmark probably applied at Denver on the return trip back to its sender.



## U.S.P.O. Informational Label

Label used in 1909 reassuring patrons they would receive a return receipt without charge on all domestic registered letters.

Denver, CO July 22, 1909

Department of the Interior penalty envelope with registered fee paid by stamp.  
Executive Branch administrative offices only enjoyed free registry service on official business mail  
if it was mailed from Washington, DC



# U. S. REGISTERED LETTER

Prepared and Dispatched in this manner by permission of the Post Office Department.

**INSTRUCTIONS TO POSTMASTERS:** The use of this Envelope does not permit the free registration of matter mailed elsewhere than at Washington, D. C., except in the cases specially provided for as published on page 13 of the August, 1909, Postal Guide.  
No return receipt will be furnished for mail registered under cover of this Envelope, unless the sender indorses the envelope "Return Receipt demanded."  
This Envelope is not to be separated from its enclosures. It must be delivered intact without opening.

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Return if not delivered in TEN days

H. L. BEAVIS,

3766 E. 21ST ST.,

CLEVELAND, OHIO.

SG 2553

Reg. No. 539005 R.F. 10#6

Postage 27625  
27265  
Kent Ohio

(EVERY POSTMASTER AND POSTAL CLERK WHO HANDLES THIS REGISTERED PACKAGE MUST RECEIPT FOR IT, RECORD IT, AND OBTAIN A RECEIPT FOR IT, IN PROPER FORM.)



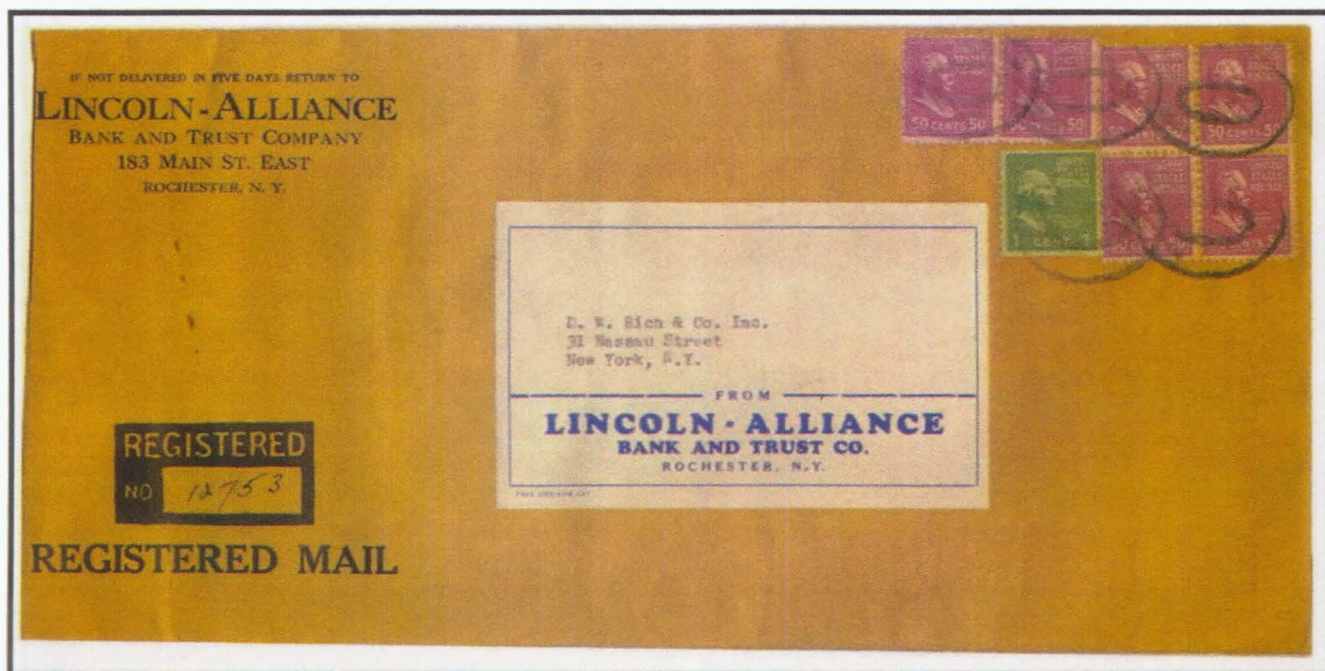
Washington, DC April 8, 1919

Executive Branch administrative departments were granted the privilege of sending official business mail from Washington, DC by registered mail without paying the registry fee. The Department of the Interior used this envelope noting it had this privilege and containing the appropriate instructions to postmasters on its front:

**INSTRUCTIONS TO POSTMASTERS:** The use of this Envelope does not permit the free registration of matter mailed elsewhere than at Washington, D. C., except in the cases specially provided for as published on page 13 of the August, 1909 Postal Guide.  
No return receipt will be furnished for mail registered under cover of this Envelope, unless the sender indorses the envelope "Return Receipt demanded." This Envelope is not to be separated from its enclosures. It must be delivered intact without opening.



## Registration Fees Based on Indemnity Value 1923 - 1971



Rochester, NY June 9, 1939 (by postmark on reverse side)

Bank letter franked with \$3.01 in stamps paying for three ounces of first-class postage totaling nine cents and \$2.92 paying \$25,000 of indemnity coverage as follows:

First \$1,000 of indemnity coverage included in registration fee of	\$1.00
Additional 24,000 of indemnity coverage from the Second Supplemental Surcharge Table	
(Zone 1 @ 8¢ per \$1,000 of coverage)	<u>1.92</u>
	<u>\$2.92</u>

The U.S.P.O. began basing the registration fee charged the sender of a valuable letter on its declared value. A relatively simple two-level fee structure offering sufficient protection to cover most mail orders and private correspondence with a maximum indemnity of \$100 per item registered was available from April 1, 1923 to June 30, 1928.

The registry fee schedule expanded July 1, 1928 into a multi-level schedule of registry fees offering an indemnity level up to \$1,000 per item mailed. Ten levels of indemnity were made available to senders of registered letters in incremental steps costing between fifteen-cents and one-dollar. This was sufficient for most postal patrons. Banks, insurance companies, and other commercial interests that regularly dealt in stocks, bonds, and other negotiable instruments needed a higher coverage limit.

Amendments to the *Postal Laws and Regulations* approved June 28, 1932 effective July 1, 1932 first dealt with offering levels of indemnity over \$1,000 and up to \$10,000 per registered item. Fees charged for indemnity levels above \$1,000 were defined as "insurance fees." Items valued over \$10,000 could also be registered but were required to carry sender-provided private insurance and pay additional fees to the U.S.P.O.

Some patrons falsely believed they could avoid the U.S.P.O. fees by only declaring a minimum value upon registration. Postmasters were instructed not to accept for registration any item they believed to be undervalued.

Senders were required to seal all registered letters before mailing to preserve their indemnity against loss. No indemnity was payable on any undervalued item that went astray.



Registration Fees Effective April 1, 1923 to April 14, 1925



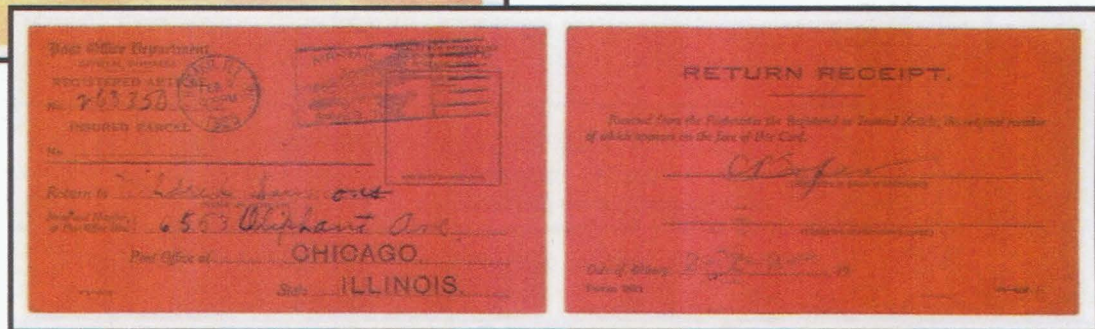
Chicago, IL February 6, 1925  
(by postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 2¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$50 indemnity 10¢.

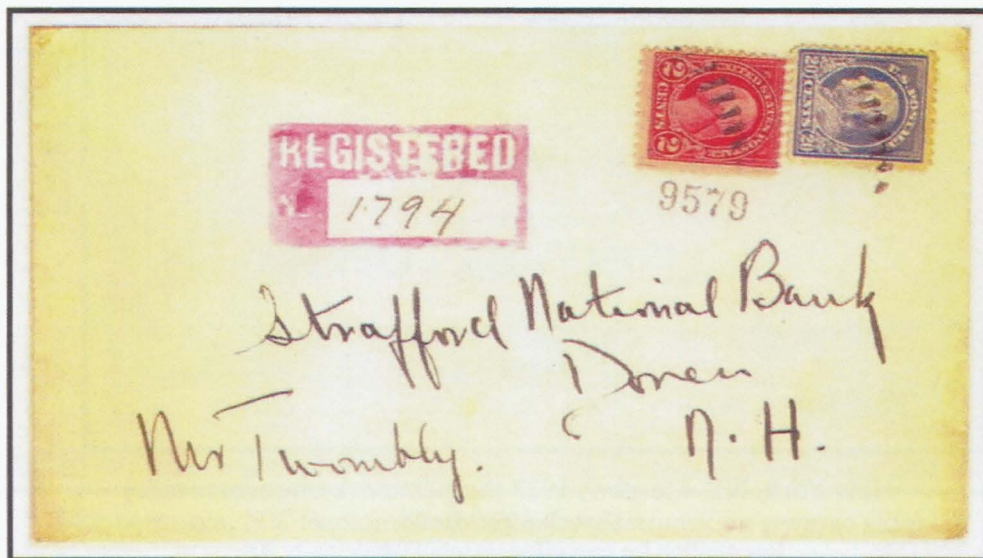
Free Return Receipt service.

Sender-applied manuscript, "Return receipt requested" necessitated the completion of a Return Receipt (penalty card Form #3811).



Chicago, IL February 7, 1925

Return Receipt (Form #3811) available free on request of the sender when the matching letter, shown above, was registered at the post office of mailing. This penalty-styled card remained in use after April 15, 1925 when a three-cent fee was initiated for this optional service.

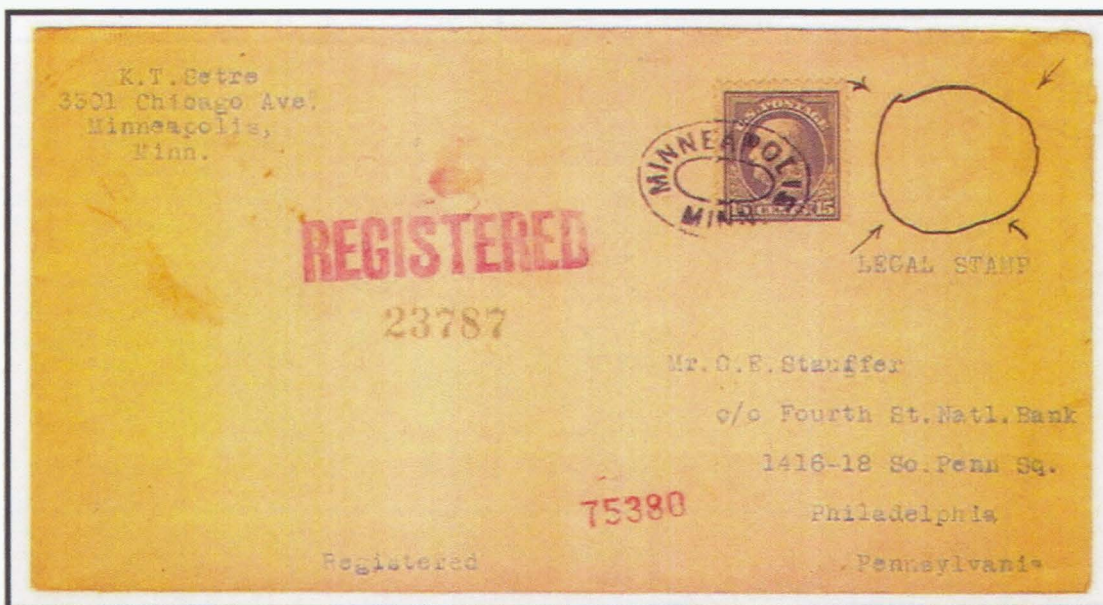


Durham, NH June 13, 1923 (by postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 2¢.

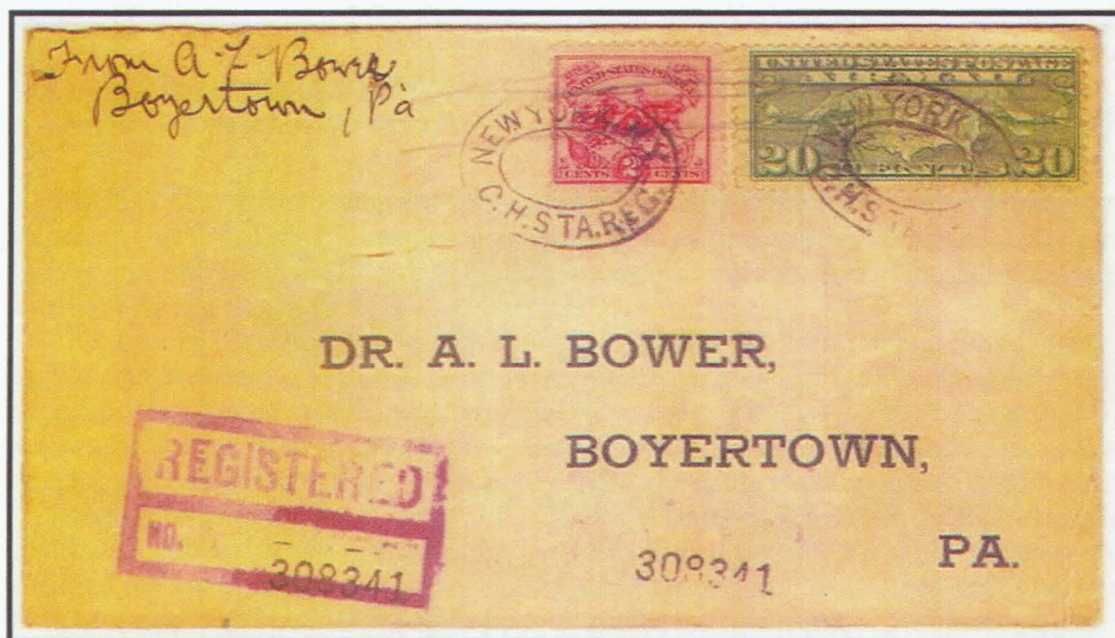
Registration fee providing up to \$100 indemnity 20¢.





Minneapolis, MN May 20, 1925 (by postmark on reverse side)

Two-cent first-class postage rate paid by embossed envelope folded backward during its manufacturing.  
Registration fee providing up to \$50 indemnity 15¢.



New York, NY March 9, 1927 (by postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 2¢.

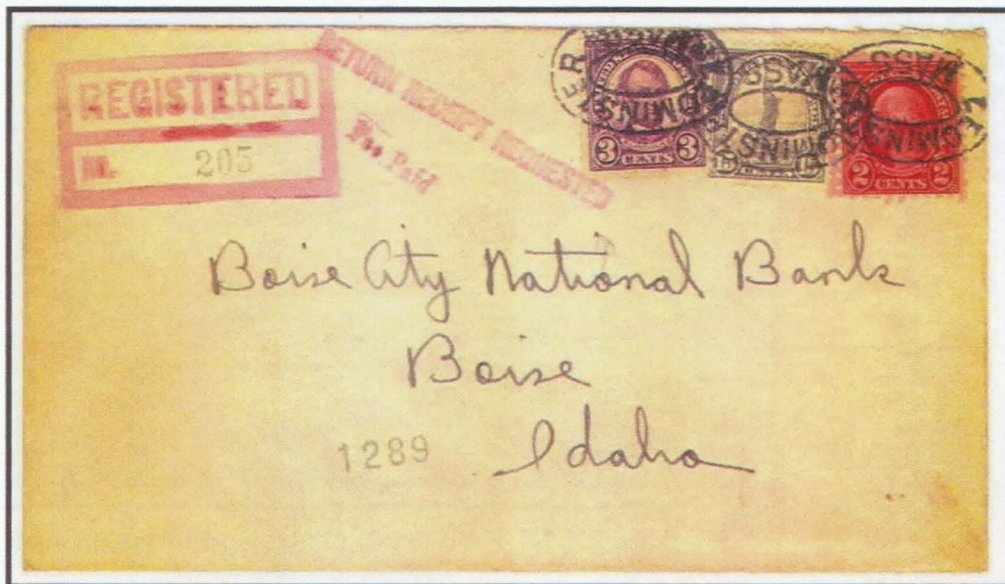
Registration fee providing up to \$100 indemnity 20¢.

Dr. Bower mailed this item back to himself from New York.



Return Receipt Now Available for a Fee  
Three-Cent Return Receipt Rate Effective April 15, 1925 to March 25, 1944

Addressees were asked to pay any unpaid return receipt fee. Failing this the return receipt card was sent back to the post office of mailing in a penalty envelope where three cents postage due was billed the sender. This provisions motivated the use of several versions of "fee paid" notations.



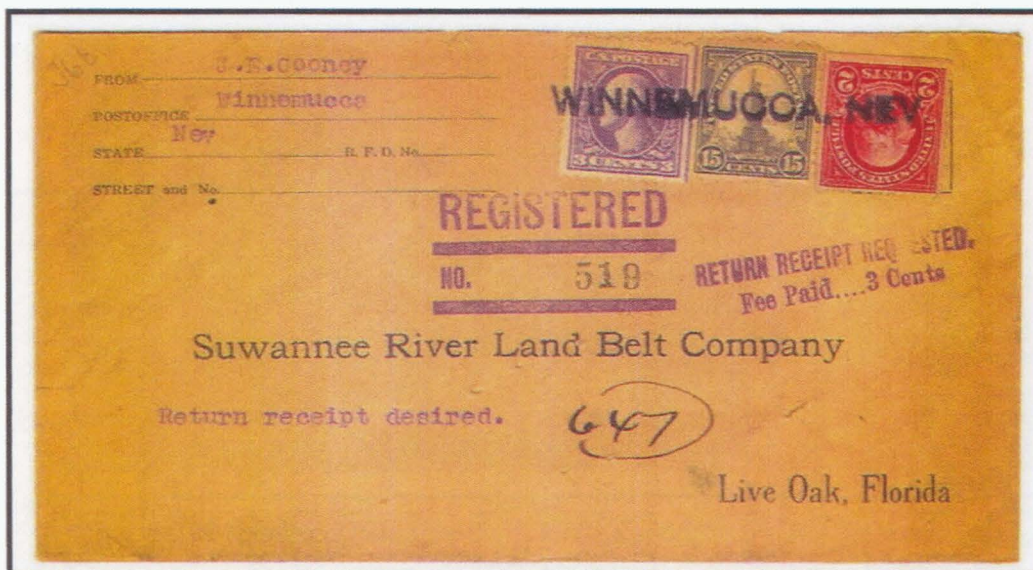
Leominster, MA July 13, 1926 (by postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 2¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$50 indemnity 15¢.

Return receipt fee 3¢.

Two U.S.P.O. issued straight-line auxiliary devices "RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED" and "Fee Paid".



Winnemucca, NV September 3, 1926 (by postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 2¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$50 indemnity 15¢.

Return receipt fee 3¢.

The registration mark is a modified second issue rectangular device.

U.S.P.O. issued two-line "RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED. Fee Paid....3 Cents" is seen from many post offices.



## Registration Fees Effective July 1, 1928 to June 30, 1932

Postmaster-General Order No. 7783 issued June 9, 1928 established the first multi-level table setting registration fees based on the value of an item's contents as declared by its sender. The U.S.P.O. assumed no liability for value lost over the limit of the indemnity purchased.

### Registry Fee Table Effective July 1, 1928 - June 30, 1932

Maximum Indemnity	Registration Fee
\$50	15¢
100	20
200	30
300	40
400	50
500	60
600	70
700	80
800	90
1,000	\$1.00

Return Receipt Fee 3¢



Franklinville, NJ February 8, 1929 (by postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 2¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$50 indemnity 15¢.

**DIRECTIONS**

Address this envelope to yourself, enclose it with your payment for tickets and application blank and mail to Ticket Department

**Associated Students**  
University of California  
Berkeley, California

If Undelivered  
Return after 4 days to  
A. S. U. C.  
Berkeley, Calif.

**NAME** E. O. Heinrich

**Street** 1001 Oxford Street,

**City** Berkeley

**State** Calif

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

**PAID 17 CENTS**

**PERMIT NO. 1**

**REGISTERED**

**NO** 07147 4922

Berkley, CA November 5, 1928 (by postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 2¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$50 indemnity 15¢.

Mute meter dial required by the ban on postmarking information appearing on the front of a registered item.



FRANKLIN TRUST COMPANY  
FIFTEENTH AND CHESTNUT STREETS  
PHILADELPHIA

*No Am  
Notice 5/29/29  
Beckman*



Edmund F. Oeffinger,  
816 S. 47th St.,  
Philadelphia, Pa.

Philadelphia, PA  
May 18, 1929  
(by postmark on  
reverse side)

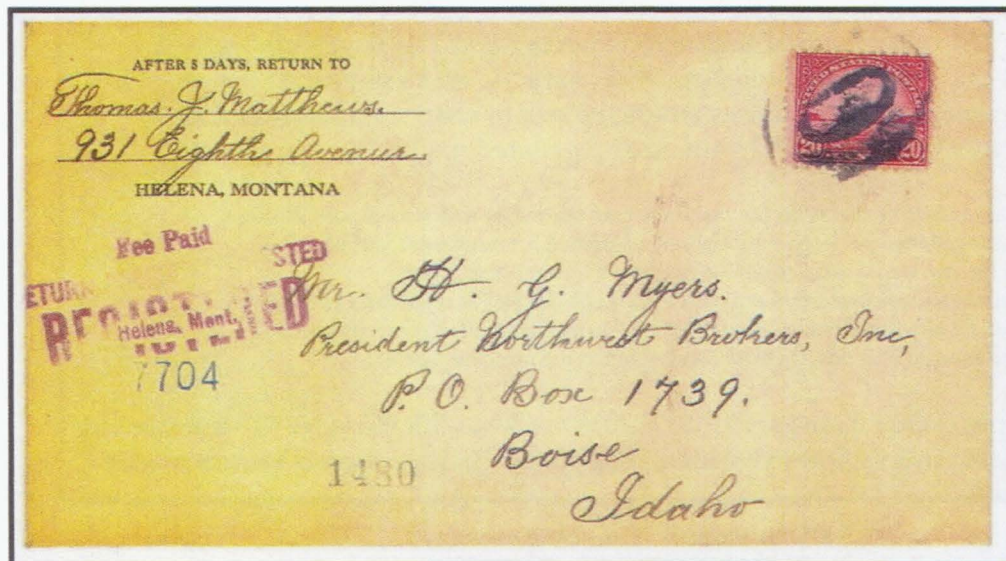
First-class postage 2¢.  
Registration fee providing  
up to \$50 indemnity 15¢.  
Return receipt fee 3¢.

Sender-applied  
registration device.

St. Mary's, WV  
December 4, 1930  
(by postmark on  
reverse side)

First-class postage  
@ 2¢ per ounce 6¢  
Registration fee  
providing up to \$50  
indemnity 15¢.

Post office name  
applied above  
registration device.



Helena, MT  
March 4, 1932  
(by postmark on  
reverse side)

First-class postage 2¢.  
Registration fee providing  
up to \$50 indemnity 15¢.  
Return receipt fee 3¢.

Unique registration  
device includes the name  
of post office.



DO NOT DETACH HERE AT ANY POINT OF SEPARATION  
WITHOUT DETACHING END OF ENVELOPE.

X

## INSTRUCTIONS

Every postal employee who handles this Jacket must receipt for it, record it, and obtain a receipt for it in proper form.

The number of this Jacket, in all records, must invariably be preceded by the letter "J."

Should this registered Jacket be damaged, it must be indorsed with a statement of its condition signed by the postmaster or postal clerk, and by him placed in a new Jacket bearing the number, date, office of origin and address of the old Jacket. The new Jacket must be postmarked and marked "Re-jacketed at (name of post office or R. P. O.)"

Jackets must be signed for at the time they are delivered: when received in iron-locked pouches the accompanying registered package receipts (or the coupons of manifold registry bills when used in lieu thereof) must be signed, postmarked, and returned in the next mail.

No "Record of transit" need be made on this Jacket except at office of delivery and when received in bad condition, or misssent. The absence of indorsement in transit will be regarded as evidence that the Jacket was received and dispatched in good condition.

By direction of the  
Third Assistant Postmaster General

## RECORD OF TRANSIT

Condition	Signature
State if not good	By Whom Received and Date

Jamestown, NY December 18, 1928

Enlarged partial back of a Registered Package Jacket showing instructions for its use.

"Instructions Regarding Discontinuance of Registered Package and Tag Envelopes" issued January 30, 1911 as printed in the *Daily Postal Bulletin* of January 31, 1911 established the use of a registered package jacket in special circumstances where the size or shape of a registered item prevented it from conveniently being included with other registered mail:

10. Registered matter that can not be tied with the ordinary mail should be inclosed, if possible, in a registered-package jacket (or registered-package envelope) unaddressed, unnumbered and unsealed, but securely tied; otherwise the registered articles should be placed loose in the pouch.

These unaddressed, unnumbered and unsealed registered-package jackets (or registered-package envelopes) are to be used merely as containers or convenient coverings for small registered parcels that might otherwise become mislaid and not be easily located when the pouch is opened.

Registered package envelopes on hand January 1, 1911 were marked with the letter "J" and used for this purpose until the available supply was exhausted. Registered Package Jackets were available from the U.S.P.O. thereafter.



# U. S. P. O. D. REGISTERED JACKET.

Five or more registered articles for dispatch at the same time to the same destination should be inclosed in a Registered Jacket if at least one handling of the articles in transit as single pieces will be saved thereby and three or more should be inclosed in Jacket, when practicable, for the same reason. (See amended paragraph 1 of Section 903, Postal Laws and Regulations of 1924.)

A Manifest Registry Bill must accompany all mail dispatched in Jackets.

BE SURE TO SEAL SECURELY AND POSTMARK PLAINLY.

POSTMARK AFTER SEALING so that the impression of the postmarking stamp will appear partly upon the upper and partly upon the lower flap, in spaces provided therefor.

POSTMARK OF

POSTMARK OF

R. P. O. or Mailing Post Office

POSTMASTER AT

R. P. O. or Mailing Post Office

J. No.

47

(IF FOR AN R. P. O. WRITE NAME OF R. P. O. AND TRAIN NUMBER.)

COUNTY OF

STATE OF

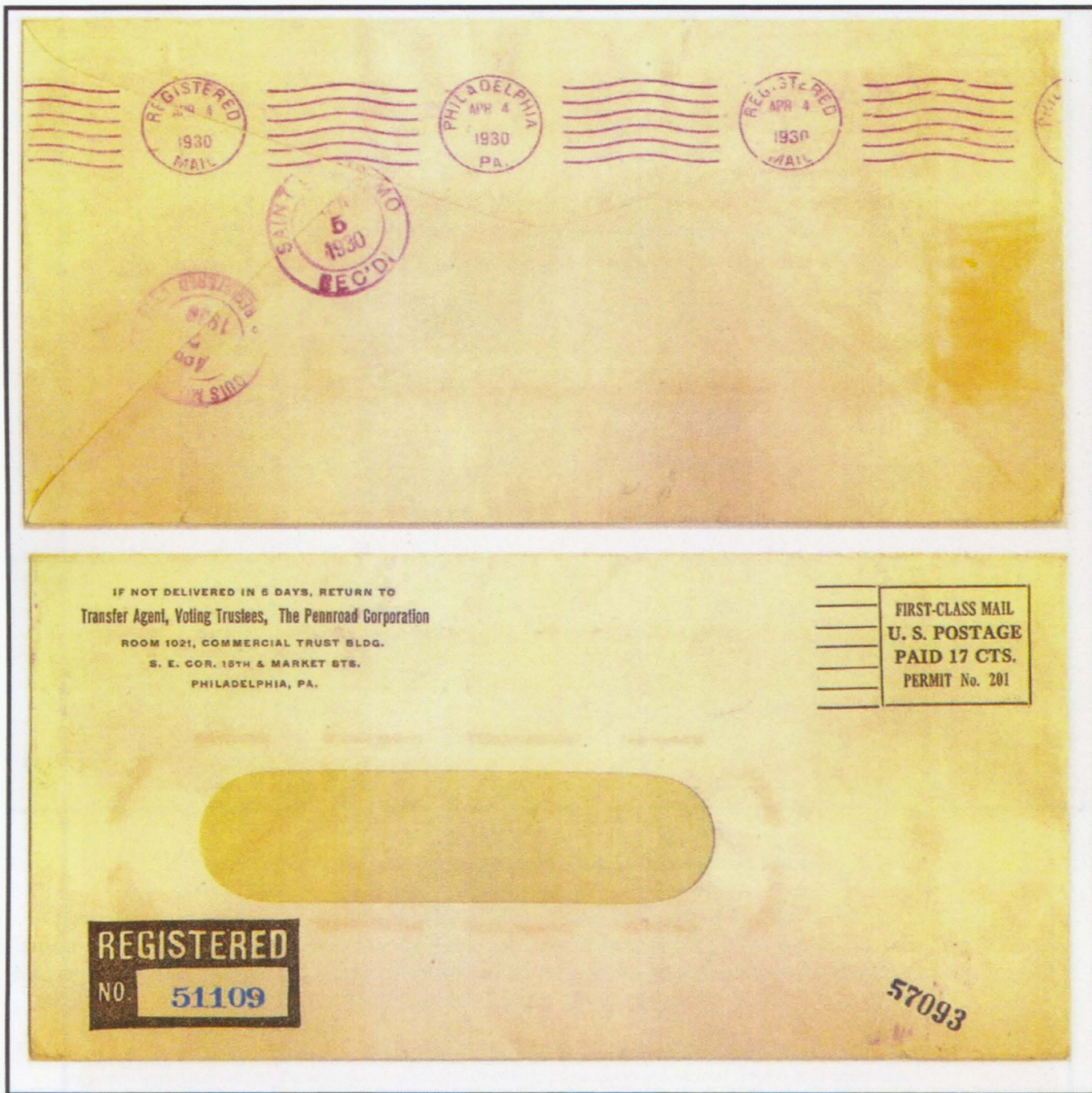
OPENED BY:

(No. 94)

Jamestown, NY December 18, 1928  
U.S.P.O.D. REGISTERED JACKET. - front



## Registered Machine Cancel



Philadelphia, PA April 4, 1930

First-class postage 2¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$50 indemnity 15¢.

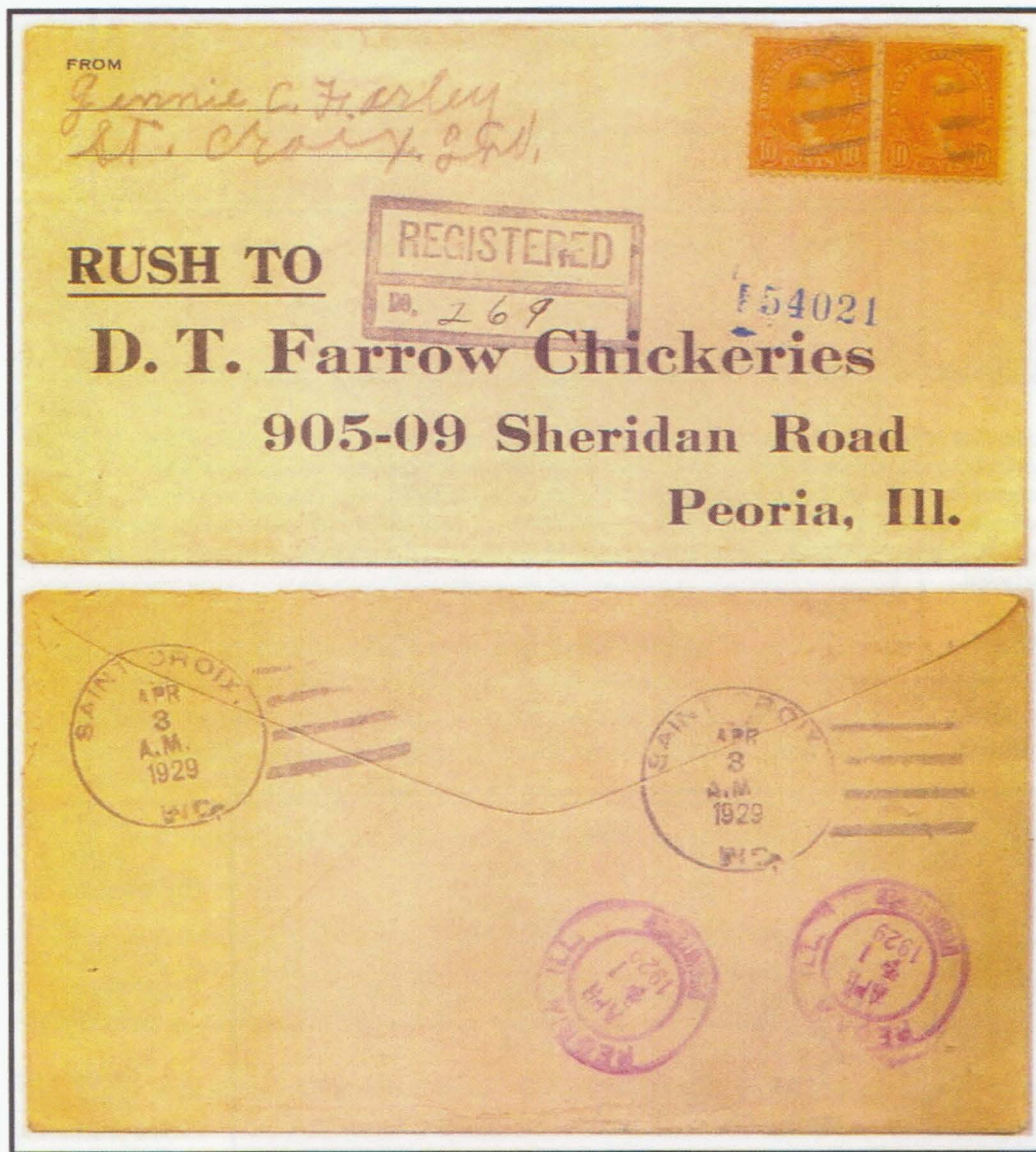
Repeater machine cancel properly used to postmark bulk mailing of registered letters. The Pennroad Corporation used business-sized envelopes pre-printed with a registration marking to send out ballots to shareholders. The volume of registered mail dispatched by this company made it practical to use a seventeen cent meter to frank its registered mail.



## Sender-Applied Philatelically-Motivated Fancy Cancels on Registered Mail

U.S.P.O. regulations clearly required the use of black ink for postmarking and obliterating stamps except on registered mail where red ink was recommended to help draw attention to the special character of each item. Registered mail was individually postmarked by hand at the window upon mailing. The postmark was moved to its reverse side in 1911. The 1928 Postal Guide defined the proper marking of a registered letter as follows:

"... When a combined postmarking and canceling stamp is used on registered letters; the stamp should be applied in such a manner that only the impression of that portion of the stamp which cancels the postage stamps will appear on the address side of the article. As red is a distinctive color used in connection with the Registry Service, it is desired that where practicable, the red ink pads be used in connection with the rubber registry stamps.[when postmarking registered items on their reverse side] ..."



St. Croix, IN April 3, 1929

First-class postage 2¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$50 indemnity 15¢.

Return receipt fee 3¢ (but not indicated on this cover?).

Use of partial 4-bar postmark on registered mail as required by postal regulations.



Some collectors attempted to get around these restrictions by having a friendly local postmaster or window clerk mail registered items with stamps obliterated by a unique device of the sender's design. The U.S.P.O. repeatedly warned postmasters this was not an acceptable practice.



Port Chester, NY May 11, 1925 (by postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 2¢.

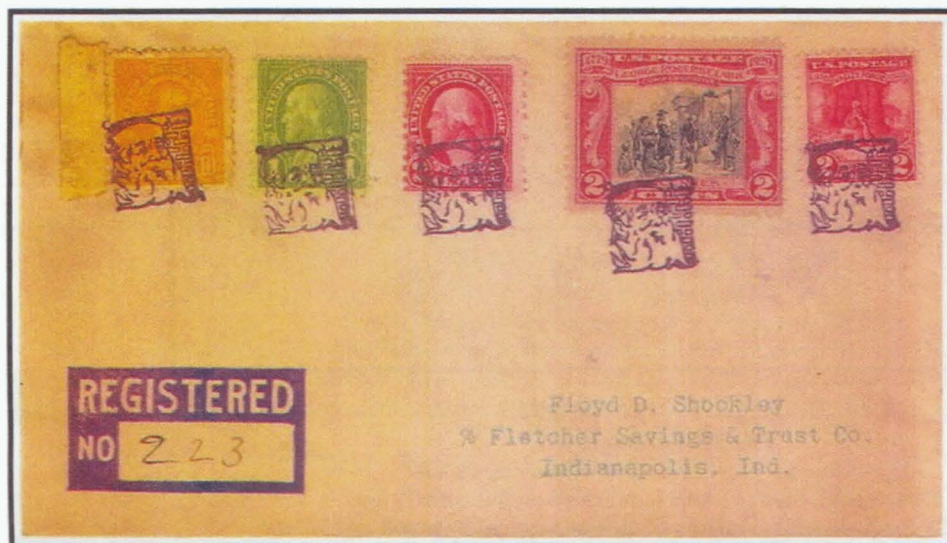
Registration fee providing up to \$50 indemnity 15¢.

The U.S.P.O. issued an order prohibiting the further use of "fancy" cancelers November 17, 1931:

Correspondence received at the department indicates quite a number of postmasters are using unauthorized rubber stamps for the purpose of cancelling stamps on registered mail, the evident intent of many of these stamps being to advertise some particular locality, city, or some local event.

The use of these unauthorized cancelling devices on registered mail should be immediately discontinued and only such canceling devices used in cancelling stamps on registered mail as have been authorized by the department.

It appears there were a sufficient number of postmasters and clerks willing to "wink" at the practice to create a long list of philatelically-inspired registered covers between 1928 and 1934. Some were handed back to the sender as general delivery items at the post office of mailing. Others returned to the sender or a philatelic friend at their home address like any other registered letter.



Santa Claus, IN  
April 3, 1930  
(by postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 2¢.  
Registration fee providing up to \$50 indemnity 15¢.

Sender-prepared fancy obliterator on a philatelically-inspired registered letter.

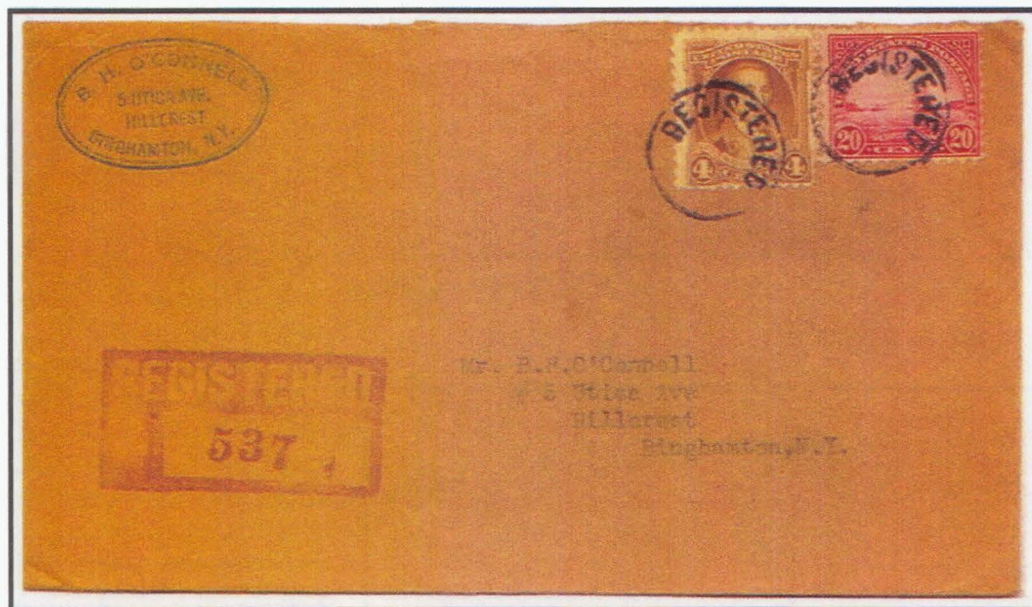
Floyd D. Shockley was one of several collectors who generated registered covers using unique obliterations.



Wallingford, PA  
July 28, 1930  
(by postmark on  
reverse side)

First-class postage  
@ 2¢ per ounce 6¢.  
Registration fee  
providing up to \$50  
indemnity 15¢.

Sender-applied (?)  
straight-line  
"Registered" used to  
cancel stamps.



Binghamton, NY  
April 2, 1934  
(by postmark on  
reverse side)

First-class postage  
@ 3¢ per ounce 6¢.  
Registration fee  
providing up to  
\$25 indemnity 18¢.

Use of old registered  
device first seen in the  
1870's to cancel  
stamps.

The issuance of the following order August 27, 1934 effectively ended the creation of philatelically-inspired registered items:

... Postal employees should see that the proper ink and only authorized devices are used in cancelling postage stamps. Any matter having postage stamps affixed that have been defaced with unauthorized private cancellation mark of any description whatever should be refused and any instances noted where these instructions are not being observed should be promptly reported to the Department. ...

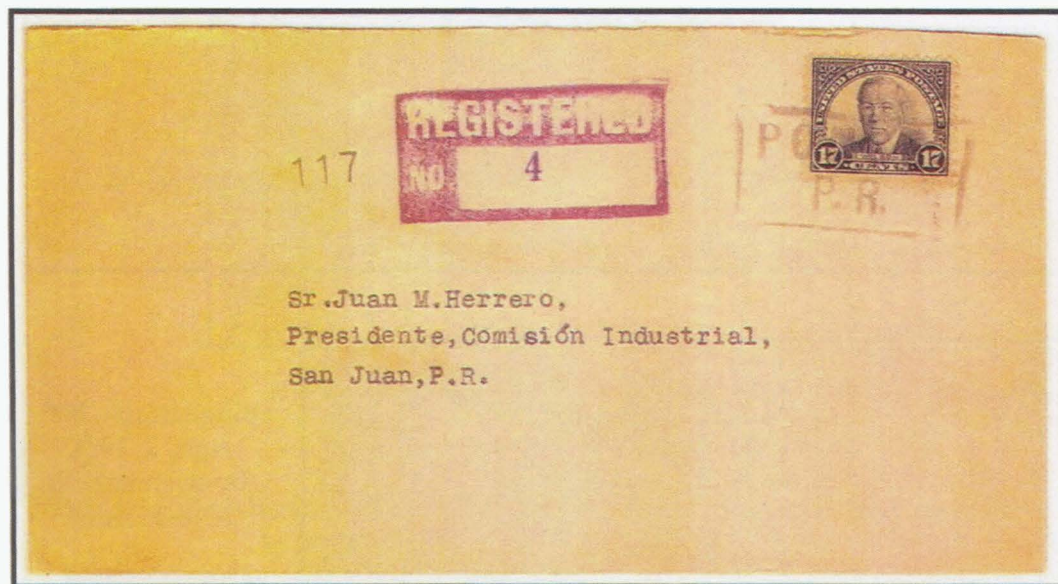
The tone of this order was sufficient to discourage philatelists and postal employees from continuing this practice. It also ended what had been a lucrative revenue stream for some fourth-class postmasters who benefited from the sale of stamps to cover the fifteen-cent registration fee in addition to the first-class postage applied to these covers.



## Registration Fees Effective July 1, 1932 to March 25, 1944

### The Five-Day Rate Period July 1, 1932 to July 5, 1932

The new registration fees went into effect July 1, 1932. However, the increase in first-class postage from two- to three-cents became effective July 6, 1932. This created a five-day period during which letters mailed with two-cent first-class postage paid the new registry rates.



Ponco, PR July 1, 1932 (by postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 2¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$5 indemnity 15¢.



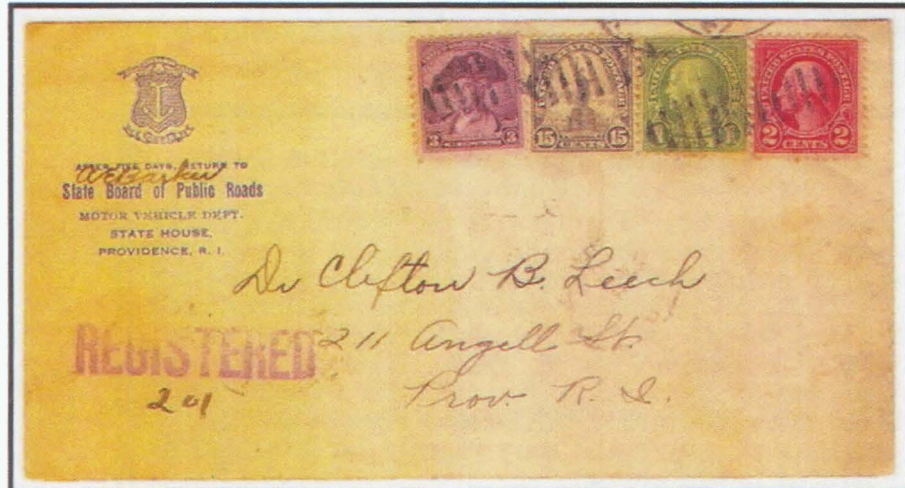
Seaford, NY July 5, 1932 (by postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 2¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$5 indemnity 15¢.

Return receipt fee 3¢.





Tiverton, RI July 6, 1932  
(by postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 3¢.  
Registration fee providing up to  
\$25 indemnity 18¢.



First Day of three cent first class rate.

Fitchburg, MA  
February 7, 1934

First-class postage 3¢.  
Registration fee providing up to  
\$1,000 indemnity \$1.00.  
Return receipt fee 3¢.

This is the maximum  
indemnity available without  
paying for additional  
insurance authorized by the  
Supplemental Instructions  
Related to the Declaration of Full  
Value and the Collection of  
Required Surcharges on  
Domestic Registered Mail  
effective July 1, 1932.

Regulations required the  
placement of stamps  
sufficient to pay all postage  
and fees on the item being  
registered. They did not  
preclude the use of any  
available space on smaller-  
sized items.





*Supplemental Instructions Relative to the Declaration of Full Value and the  
Collection of Required Surcharges on Domestic Registered Mail*

THIRD ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL,  
Washington, July 26, 1932.

Amendments to the Postal Laws and Regulations and detailed instructions were published in the Postal Bulletin of the department issued June 30, 1932, for the purpose of promulgating the act of Congress entitled, "An act fixing the fees and limits of indemnity for domestic registered mail based upon actual value and length of haul, and for other purposes," approved June 28, 1932, and effective July 1, 1932. This act was not printed in its entirety in one place in the POSTAL BULLETIN of June 30, 1932, but was divided and printed in connection with the appropriate sections of the regulations. In order that all concerned may readily be informed as to its wording the act is printed in full below:

(Public—No. 202—72d Cong.) (H. R. 10244)

*An act fixing the fees and limits of indemnity for domestic registered mail based upon actual value and length of haul, and for other purposes*

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That section 3926 of the Revised Statutes of the United States as amended by the act of February 27, 1897 (ch. 340, 29 Stat. L. 599), providing limited indemnity for loss of registered mail matter, and by the act of March 3, 1903 (32 Stat. L. 1174), fixing such indemnity at not exceeding \$100, and that portion of the act of March 4, 1911 (36 Stat. L. 1337), making appropriations for the service of the Post Office Department for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1912, and for other purposes, and providing indemnity for the loss of third and fourth class domestic registered matter, which laws were jointly amended by section 3 of the act of May 1, 1928 (45 Stat. L. 469; U. S. C., Supp. V, title 39, sec. 381a), are hereby further amended to read as follows:*

*"For the greater security of valuable mail matter the Postmaster General may establish a uniform system of registration, and as a part of such system he may provide rules under which the senders or owners of any registered matter shall be indemnified for loss, rifling, or damage thereof in the mails, the indemnity to be paid out of the postal revenues, but in no case to exceed \$1,000 for any one registered piece, or the actual value thereof when that is less than \$1,000, and for which no other compensation or reimbursement to the loser has been made: Provided, That the Postmaster General may in his discretion provide for the payment of indemnity for the actual value of registered mail or insured mail treated as registered mail in excess of \$1,000, but not in excess of \$10,000, when such mail is not insured with any commercial insurance company or other insuring agency and may fix the fees chargeable for the risks assumed ratably at the rates fixed up to \$1,000: Provided further, That the Postmaster General in his discretion may cause to be underwritten or reinsured in whole or in part with any commercial insurance companies any liability or risk assumed by the Post Office Department in connection with the mailing of any particular registered article or articles.*

There are differing opinions interpreting the impact of these regulations on providing reimbursement to the sender of a higher-valued registered article lost, pilfered, or damaged in the mails. It appears that fees charged for over-and-above \$1,000 in indemnity were for additional insurance coverage only. Additional indemnity fees are found on registered articles paid in stamps.



"Sec. 2. The full value of all registered mail or insured mail treated as registered mail shall be declared by the mailer at the time of mailing unless otherwise prescribed by the Postmaster General, and any claim for indemnity in any amount involving such mail, when the full value knowingly and willfully was not stated at the time of mailing, shall be invalid. All claims for indemnity involving registered mail, or insured mail treated as registered mail, or other insured mail, or collect-on-delivery mail, which is also insured with commercial insurance companies or other insuring agencies, shall be adjusted by the Post Office Department on a pro rata basis as a coinsurer with the commercial insurance companies or other insuring agencies."

Sec. 2. Section 3927 of the Revised Statutes of the United States, as amended by section 209 of the act of February 28, 1925 (43 Stat. L. 1068), and by the first section of the act of May 1, 1928 (45 Stat. L. 469; U. S. C., Supp. V, title 39, sec. 384), be, and the same is hereby, amended further to read as follows:

"Mail matter shall be registered on the application of the party posting the same. The registry fees, which are in addition to the regular postage, and the limits of indemnity therefor within the maximum indemnity provided by law shall be as follows:

"For registry indemnity not exceeding \$5, 15 cents;

"For registry indemnity exceeding \$5 but not exceeding \$25, 18 cents;

"For registry indemnity exceeding \$25 but not exceeding \$50, 20 cents;

"For registry indemnity exceeding \$50 but not exceeding \$75, 25 cents;

"For registry indemnity exceeding \$75 but not exceeding \$100, 30 cents;

"For registry indemnity exceeding \$100 but not exceeding \$200, 40 cents;

"For registry indemnity exceeding \$200 but not exceeding \$300, 50 cents;

"For registry indemnity exceeding \$300 but not exceeding \$400, 60 cents;

"For registry indemnity exceeding \$400 but not exceeding \$500, 70 cents;

"For registry indemnity exceeding \$500 but not exceeding \$600, 80 cents;

"For registry indemnity exceeding \$600 but not exceeding \$700, 85 cents;

"For registry indemnity exceeding \$700 but not exceeding \$800, 90 cents;

"For registry indemnity exceeding \$800 but not exceeding \$900, 95 cents;

and

"For registry indemnity exceeding \$900 but not exceeding \$1,000, \$1:

"Provided, That for registered mail or insured mail treated as registered mail having a declared value in excess of the maximum indemnity covered by the registry fee paid there shall be charged additional fees as follows: When the declared value exceeds the maximum indemnity covered by the registry fee paid by not more than \$50, 1 cent; by more than \$50 but not more than \$100, 2 cents; by more than \$100 but not more than \$200, 3 cents; by more than \$200 but not more than \$400, 4 cents; by more than \$400 but not more than \$600, 5 cents; by more than \$600 but not more than \$800, 6 cents; by more than \$800 but less than \$1,000, 7 cents; and if the excess of the declared value over the maximum indemnity covered by the registry fee paid is \$1,000 or more, the additional fees for each \$1,000 or part of \$1,000 on articles destined to points within the several zones applicable to fourth-class matter shall be as follows:

"For local delivery or for delivery within the first zone, 8 cents;

"For delivery within the second zone, 9 cents;

"For delivery within the third zone, 10 cents;

"For delivery within the fourth zone, 11 cents;

"For delivery within the fifth or sixth zones, 12 cents;

"For delivery within the seventh or eighth zones, 13 cents.



"All such fees shall be accounted for in such manner as the Postmaster General shall direct. Mail matter upon the official business of the Post Office Department which requires registering shall be registered free of charge, and pass through the mails free of charge."

Sec. 3. The Postmaster General may make such rules and regulations in accordance with this act as he may consider necessary or advisable.

This act shall become effective July 1, 1932.

Approved, June 28, 1932.

Reports received at the department indicate that a number of postmasters as well as some patrons of the registry service either do not fully understand or are not complying strictly with the law, regulations, and instructions which have been published, relative to the declaration of actual value and the collection of the prescribed surcharges on domestic registered mail or insured mail treated as registered mail.

Some patrons seem to be under the impression that if the registered matter is covered by commercial insurance, nominal, rather than the real values, of the registered articles may be declared, or that no declaration of value is required, and that no surcharge is collectible in such cases. This understanding of the matter is erroneous. The act of Congress, quoted above, requires that the full value of registered mail or insured mail treated as registered mail shall be declared by the mailer at the time of mailing unless otherwise prescribed by the Postmaster General.

The exceptions to the requirement of declared values to be prescribed by the Postmaster General have been covered in the amended regulations under this law and special instructions issued by the Third Assistant Postmaster General thereunder and apply to matter entitled to free registration and to other registered articles which contain exclusively checks, drafts, and other written or printed matter having no intrinsic value which may be duplicated without expense or at a nominal cost, and to nonnegotiable securities which can be duplicated unless the known or estimated cost of duplication will exceed the maximum indemnity provided for the amount of registry fee paid. The declared value of nonnegotiable securities which can be duplicated shall therefore be the known or estimated cost of duplication.

The requirement that the full value of registered mail or insured mail treated as registered mail shall be declared by the mailer at the time of mailing unless otherwise prescribed by the Postmaster General as herein explained is therefore mandatory and the Post Office Department can not waive this requirement nor permit or condone any violation or evasion of this requirement of the law.

This law will be uniformly administered.

When the full value knowingly and willfully is not stated at the time of mailing the article involved is rendered nonacceptable, or, in other words, unavailable. When this fact is known by any postmaster he shall refuse to accept the matter until the requirement of the law is met by the sender.

Note: Postal zones are defined by the distance between the post office of mailing and the post office of delivery as a circular radius. Zone 1 is less than 50 miles, zone 2 is from 50 to 150 miles, zone 3 is from 150 to 300 miles, zone 4 is from 300 to 600 miles, zone 5 is from 600 to 1,000 miles, zone 6 is from 1,000 to 1,400 miles, zone 7 is from 1,400 miles to 1,800 miles, and, zone 8 is anything over 1,800 miles.



When a postmaster has reason to believe that the full value of a registered article has not been declared as directed by law, he shall require the mailer to furnish additional proof by either exhibiting the contents of the article, by producing a copy of the invoice or letter of transmittal describing the contents, or evidence as to the amount of commercial insurance placed thereon, if any, in order that the true value may be determined, and unless satisfactory evidence of the full value of any article involved (except nonnegotiable securities, etc., as hereinbefore explained as not subject to surcharge) is produced the postmaster shall refuse to accept the article for registration, in which event the sender must render the article available under the requirements of the law before it is accepted.

In connection with the subject of declaration of value and collection of surcharges, attention is directed to the supplemental instructions published in the Postal Bulletin of July 15, 1932, under the caption, "Modification of instructions published in the Postal Bulletin of June 30, 1932, under the caption 'Changes in domestic registry, insurance, and C. O. D. fees and limits of indemnity—Establishment of surcharges—Refunds of return-receipt fees.'" Those instructions have reference to the declaration of value in connection with domestic registered collect-on-delivery mail and also amplify the previous instructions as to the statistical records which should be kept and reports rendered in connection with surcharges.

When a postmaster at the office of delivery receives registered mail, or insured mail treated as registered mail, of apparent value on which the mailing postmaster has failed to collect proper surcharges, the delivering postmaster will take a full description of the article, including names and addresses of sender and addressee, weight of article and the amount of fee and postage affixed thereto. The article will then be delivered and the delivering postmaster will furnish the mailing postmaster full particulars of the article, sending a copy of his report to the Third Assistant Postmaster General (Division of Registered Mails). The mailing postmaster will collect the amount of surcharges found by him to be due from the sender but not collected at the time of mailing, make appropriate corrections in his registration records to show that the surcharges were subsequently collected and the amount thereof, and transmit to the Third Assistant Postmaster General (Division of Registered Mails) uncanceled postage stamps representing the amount of surcharges collected subsequent to the mailing of the registered article. If the postmaster at the mailing office is unable to collect the charges due he will report full particulars to the Third Assistant Postmaster General (Division of Registered Mails).

The department is contemplating the adoption of some method which will obviate the necessity of affixing postage stamps to registered articles in payment of the surcharges in cases where the matter mailed is valued at more than \$1,000, also the matter of providing columns in future editions of the firm mailing books used for registered mail or insured mail treated as registered mail in which there shall be entered the declared value, amount of commercial insurance, if any, borne by each registered article, and the amount of postal surcharges collected; also the furnishing of a slip form, to provide similar information to be used where the sender does not customarily use a firm mailing book or sheet. These matters will be made the subject of future bulletin and Guide notices.

A supply of slip copies of this notice is available and can be obtained for use by postmasters at their main offices and stations, and for distribution to patrons of the registry service who may be interested in the subject matter of the notice.

F. A. TILTON,  
*Third Assistant Postmaster General.*



# Summary of Supplemental Surcharges in Effect July 1, 1932 to June 30, 1957:

## First Supplemental surcharges covering indemnity levels on items up to \$2,000 declared value:

Indemnity purchased covering declared value exceeding \$1,000:	July 1, 1932 to March 25, 1944	March 26, 1944 to April 30, 1954
Up to \$ 50	1¢	2¢
100	2	3
200	3	4
400	4	6
600	5	7
800	6	8
1,000	7	10

## Second Supplemental surcharges covering indemnity levels in excess of \$2,000:

	July 1, 1932 to March 25, 1944	March 26, 1944 to December 31, 1951	January 1, 1952 to June 30, 1957
Local and Zone 1 (up to a 50 mile radius)	8¢	11¢	12¢
Zone 2 (50 - 150 mile radius)	9	12	14
Zone 3 (150 to 300 mile radius)	10	14	16
Zone 4 (300 to 600 mile radius)	11	15	17
Zones 5 and 6 ( 600 to 1,400 mile radius)	12	16	18
Zones 7 and 8 (1400 mile radius and beyond)	13	18	19

Note: Indemnity levels over \$1,000,000 were priced at the discretion of the U.S.P.O.

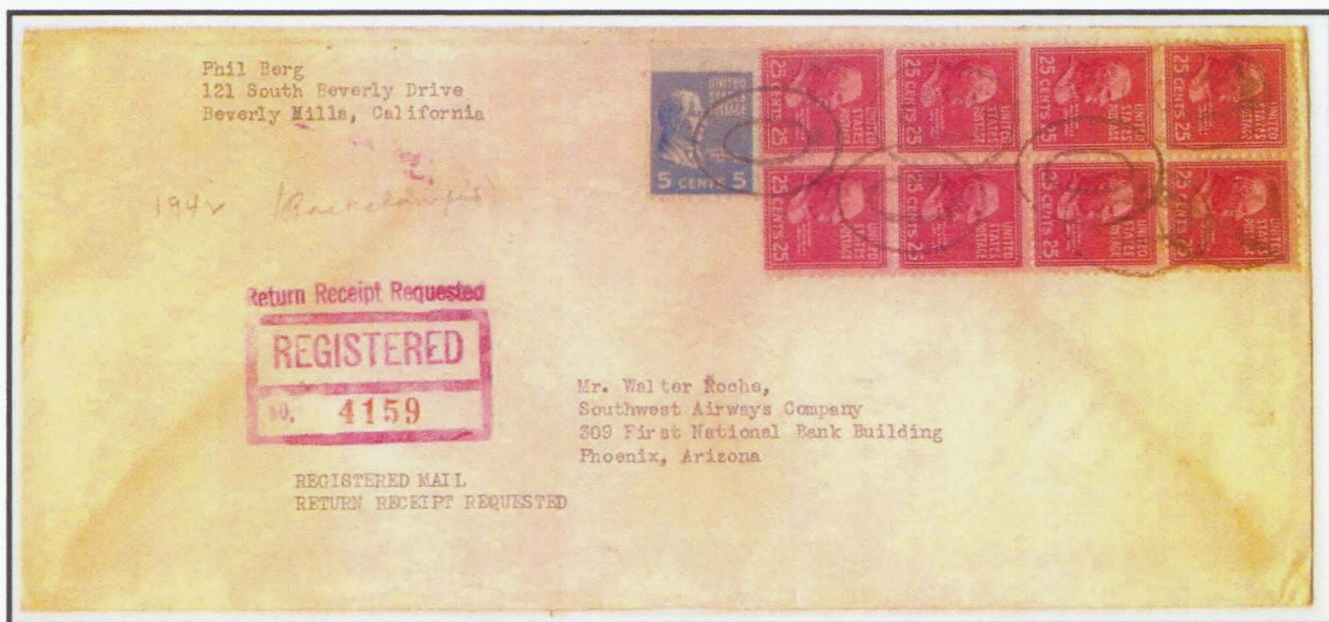


Geneva, NY February 24, 1934 (by postmark on reverse side)

\$1.58 total franking represents three units of three-cent first-class postage, ten-cent special delivery fee, three-cent return receipt fee, and \$1.36 for the purchase of up to \$5,000 of indemnity coverage as follows:

First \$1,000 of indemnity coverage included in registration fee of	\$1.00
Additional 3,000 of indemnity coverage from the Second Supplemental Surcharge Table (Zone 5 and 6 @ 12¢ per \$1,000 of coverage)	<u>.36</u>
	<u>\$1.36</u>

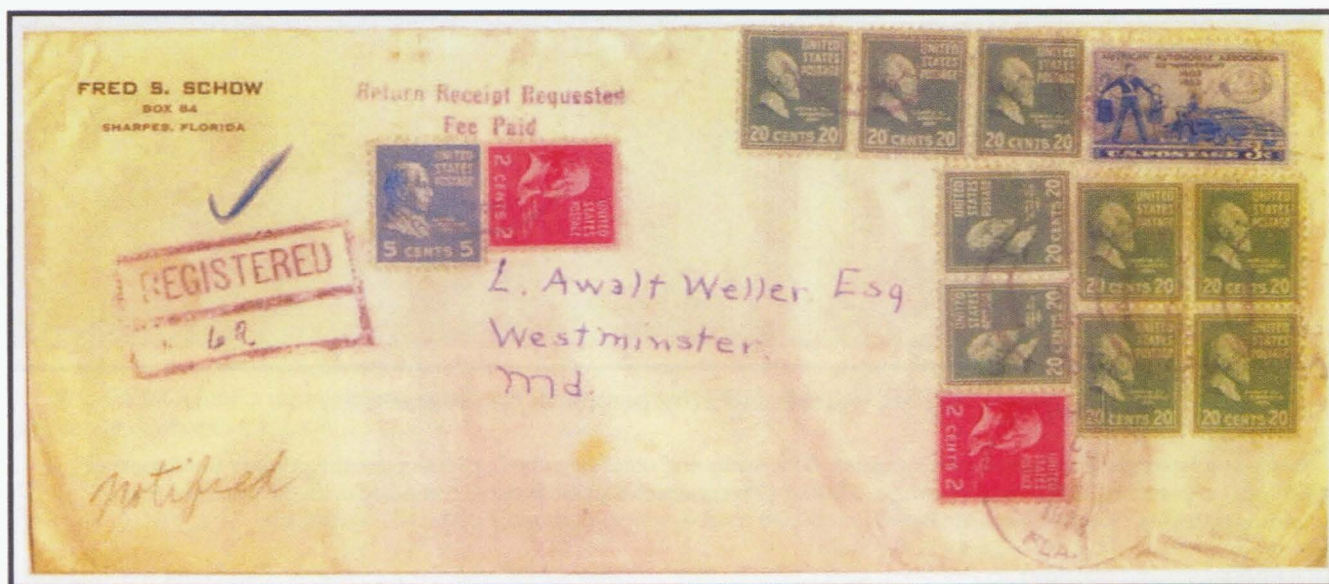




Beverly Hills, CA October 16, 1942 (by postmark on reverse side)

\$2.05 total franking represents three-cent first-class postage, three-cent return receipt fee, and \$1.99 for the purchase of up to \$10,000 of indemnity coverage as follows:

First \$1,000 of indemnity coverage included in registration fee of	\$1.00
Additional \$9,000 of indemnity coverage from the Second Supplemental Surcharge Table (Zone 4 @ 11¢ per \$1,000 of coverage)	.99
	<u>\$1.99</u>



Sharpes, FL October 27, 1952 (by postmark on reverse side)

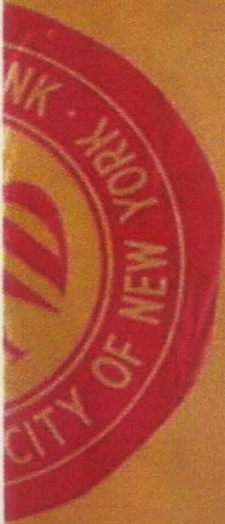
\$1.92 total franking represents one unit of three-cent first-class postage, seven-cent return receipt fee, and \$1.82 for the purchase of up to \$1,600 of indemnity coverage as follows:

First \$1,000 of indemnity coverage included in registration fee of	\$1.75
Additional \$600 of indemnity coverage from the First Supplemental Surcharge Table	.07
	<u>\$1.82</u>



6-E 9-24  
3-33

AFTER 5 DAYS RETURN TO  
**THE CHASE NATIONAL BANK**  
NATIONAL PARK BRANCH  
214 BROADWAY  
NEW YORK, N. Y.



Providence Wash

*Opened by c/o Riden  
R. B. Riden  
15*



Registered Mail



New York, NY June 9, 1939 (by postmark on reverse side)

Banks and insurance companies mailing bearer documents and other negotiable papers were the primary purchasers of high-value supplemental indemnity coverage. These fees were relatively inexpensive compared with the potential loss of thousands of dollars of assets in transit.



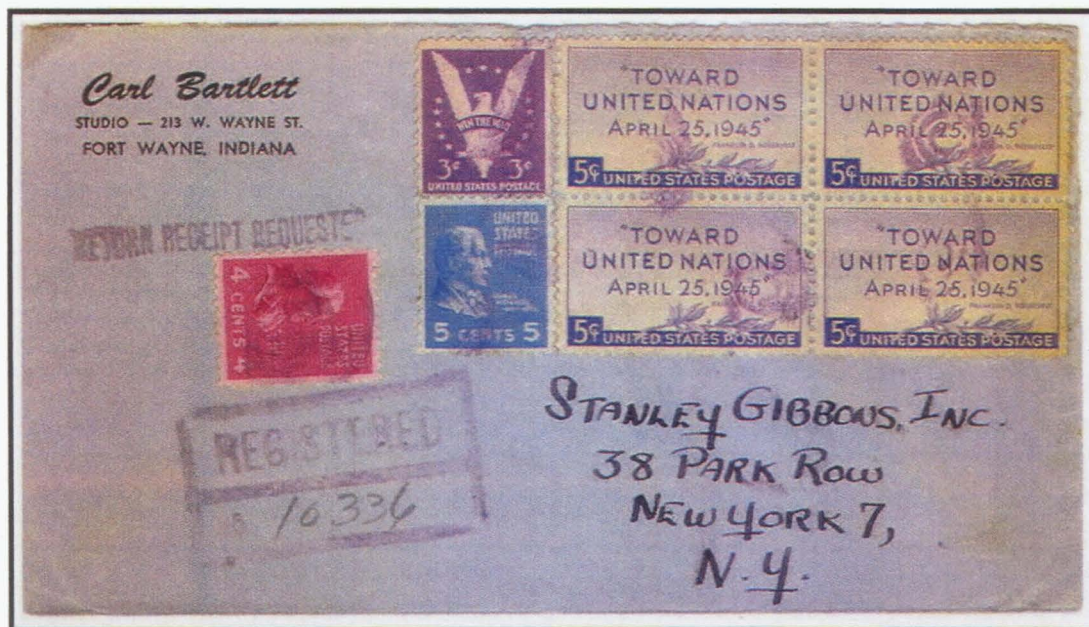


\$21.45 total franking represents seven units of three-cent first-class postage, and \$21.24 for the purchase of up to \$185,000 of indemnity coverage as follows:

First \$1,000 of indemnity coverage included in registration fee of	\$1.00
Additional 184,000 of indemnity coverage from the Second Supplemental Surcharge Table (Zone 4 @ 11¢ per \$1,000 of coverage)	<u>20.24</u>
	<u>\$21.24</u>



# Registration Fees Effective March 26, 1944 to December 31, 1948



Fort Wayne, IN October 16, 1945

First-class postage 3¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$50 indemnity 25¢.

Return receipt fee 4¢.

## Postmarks on the Reverse Side:

Mailed at Fort Wayne, IN October 16, 1945

New York, NY REG DIV oval October 17, 1945

Received for delivery at New York, NY

(Church St. Annex) October 18, 1945



## Registry Fee Table Effective March 26, 1944 - December 31, 1948

Maximum Indemnity	Registration Fee
\$5	20¢
50	25
75	35
100	40
200	55
300	65
400	80
500	95
600	\$1.05
700	1.15
800	1.20
900	1.25
1,000	1.35

## Registered Mail—Fees for indemnity limited to:

\$5	20¢	\$300	65¢	\$800	\$1.20
50	25¢	400	80¢	900	1.25
75	35¢	500	95¢	1,000	1.35
100	40¢	600	\$1.05		
200	55¢	700	1.15		

The fee on domestic registered matter without intrinsic value and for which indemnity is not paid is 20 cents.

Domestic registered mail is subject to surcharges when the declared value exceeds the maximum indemnity covered by the registry fee paid. Fees on domestic registered C. O. D. mail range from 40 cents to \$1.40. Indemnity claims must be filed within 1 year (C. O. D., 6 months) from date of mailing.

Consult postmaster as to the registry fees chargeable on registered parcel post packages for foreign countries.

c7-16-19433-1

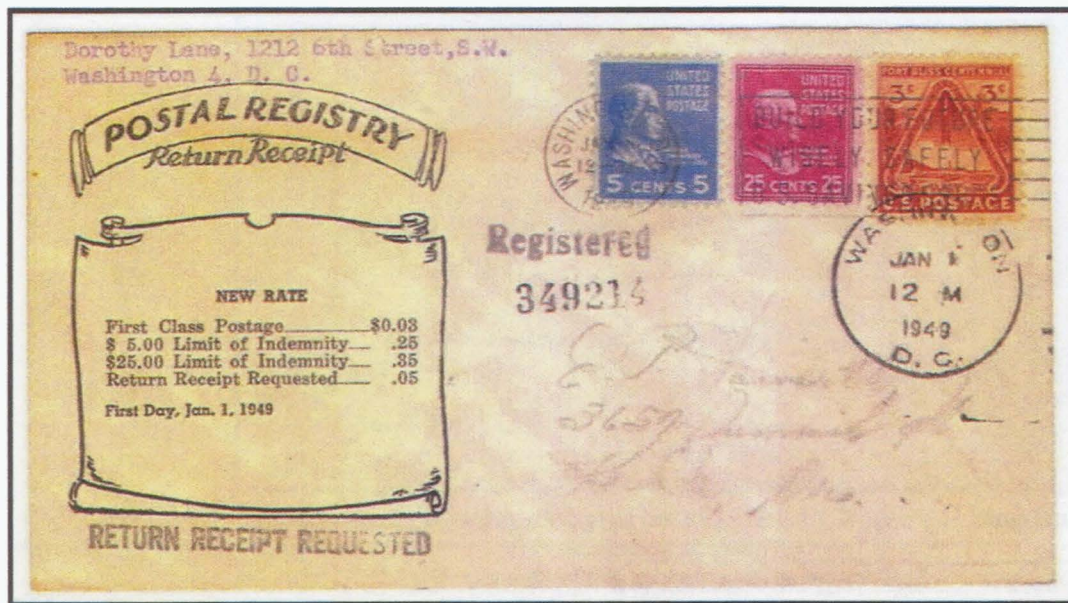
## Receipt for Registered Article (Form 3806-S rev. 11/46)

This is the back side of form showing rates.

Return Receipt Fee 4¢



# Registration Fees Effective January 1, 1949 to December 31, 1952



Washington, DC January 1, 1949  
 Philatelically inspired first day of rate cover.  
 Improperly postmarked on front.  
 Rate analysis on cover cachet.

Postmarks on the Reverse Side:  
 Mailed at Washington, DC January 1, 1949  
 Kansas City, MO dater January 3, 1949  
 Received for delivery at Kansas City, MO  
 (West — — — STA) January 3, 1949  
 Generic daters began replacing some registered-specific devices in the mid 1940's.



Registry Fee Table Effective  
 January 1, 1949 - December 31, 1951

Form 3806-S (Rev. 11-46)

Receipt for Registered Article No. **349214**

Postmaster per **AW**

Fee paid **25** cents. Class postage **25**

Declared value **10** Surecharge paid, \$ **05**

Return Receipt fee **05** Spl. Del'y fee **05**

Delivery restricted to addressee:

in person \_\_\_\_\_ or order \_\_\_\_\_ Fee paid \_\_\_\_\_

Accepting employee will place his initials in space indicating restricted delivery.

NOTICE TO SENDER—Enter below name and address of addressee as an identification. Preserve and submit this receipt in case of inquiry or application for indemnity.

(Name of addressee) **CR 10 28** (P. O. and State of address)

Receipt for Registered Article (Form 3806-S rev. 11/46)  
 This the front side of the form that accompanied the above cover.

Maximum Indemnity	Registration Fee
\$5	25c
25	35
50	40
75	45
100	50
200	60
300	70
400	85
500	\$1.00
600	1.10
700	1.20
800	1.30
900	1.40
1,000	1.50

Return Receipt Fee 5c



# Postmarking Information Now Allowed in Meter Dial Used to Frank Registered Mail



Burbank, CA April 19, 1949 (dated by postmarks on reverse side)

First-class postage 3¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$5 indemnity 25¢.

Return receipt fee 5¢.



Burbank, CA October 13, 1951 (dated by postmarks on reverse side)

First-class air mail postage 6¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$5 indemnity 25¢.

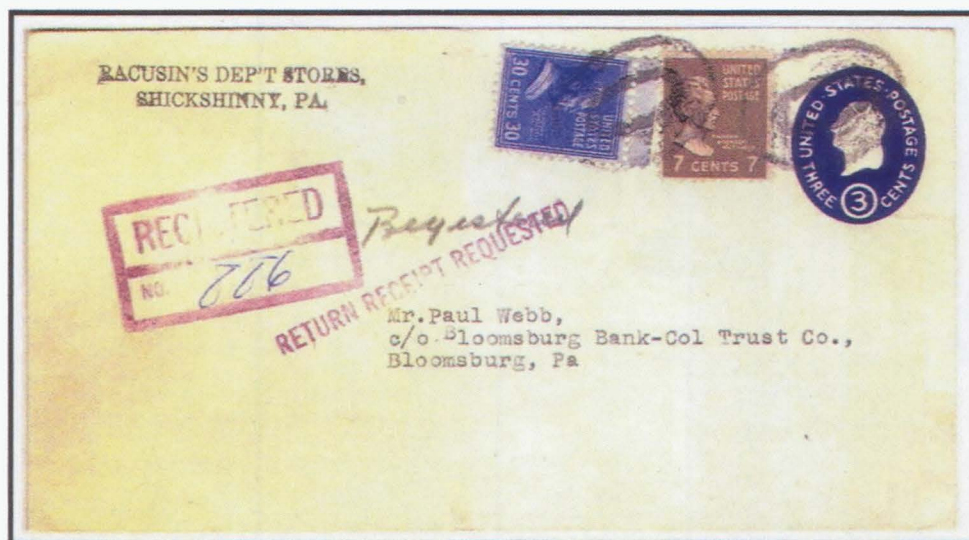
Return receipt fee 5¢.

Effective January 1, 1911 no postmarks could be placed on the face of a registered letter. City, date and transit information had to be placed on the reverse side of a registered item. Meters were approved for use on first-class mail effective September 1, 1920.<sup>1</sup> Their dials were to be "muted" omitting this information. *Postal Bulletin* 14322 of March 15, 1927 modified this requirement stating "if a letter with first-class meter stamps was registered, the date must be omitted . . .". Regulations changed again effective July 1, 1951 permitting a meter to contain city and date however these items still had to be postmarked on their reverse side.

1. William K. Thomas, *History and Evolution of Metered Postage*, (APS Research and Literature Committee, 1962).



# Registration Fees Effective January 1, 1952 to June 30, 1957



Shickshinny, PA June 1, 1955

First-class postage 3¢.

Registration fee providing no indemnity 30¢.

Return receipt fee 7¢.

Postmarks on the Reverse Side:

Mailed at Shickshinny, PA June 1, 1955

Bloomsburg, PA dater June 2, 1955



POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE TO AVOID  
PAYMENT OF POSTAGE \$50

POSTMARK OF  
DELIVERING OFFICE

INSTRUCTIONS.—Show name, address and number of  
article below. Complete "Instructions to Delivering  
Employee" on other side, when applicable. Marked  
guaranteed ends and securely attach to back of article. En-  
dorse front of article. RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED.

REGISTERED NO. NAME OF SENDER

CERTIFIED NO. STREET AND NO. OR P. O. BOX

INSURED NO. CITY, ZONE, AND STATE

RETURN TO

POD Form 3811, Dec. 1955

## Form 3811 Return Receipt

New style of return receipt card issued in December of 1955 included detachable strips for attaching it to the back of a registered item. Return receipt service was also available on Certified and Insured Mail using this form.

## Registry Fee Table Effective January 1, 1952 - June 30, 1957

Maximum Indemnity	Registration Fee
None	30¢ (1)
\$5	40
25	55
50	65
75	75
100	85
200	95
300	\$1.05
400	1.15
500	1.25
600	1.35
700	1.45
800	1.55
900	1.65
1,000	1.75

Return Receipt Fee 7¢

(1) rate eliminated June 7, 1955.



# Registration Fees Effective July 1, 1957 to July 13, 1969



Omaha, NB December 9, 1957

First-class postage 3¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$10 indemnity 50¢.

Return receipt fee 10¢.

Postmarks on the Reverse Side:

Mailed at Omaha, NB December 9, 1957

Received for delivery at Anamotosa, IA December 10, 1957

Remnant of Form 3811 strip at lower right.

## Registry Fee Table Effective July 1, 1957 - July 13, 1969

Maximum Indemnity (a.) Registration Fee (b.)

\$10	50¢ (1)	50¢
	60 (2)	60
100	75	75
200	95	95
400	\$1.25	\$1.25
600	1.50	1.50
800	1.75	1.75
1,000	2.00	2.00
2,000	2.25	2.15
3,000	2.50	2.30
4,000	2.75	2.45
5,000	3.00	2.60
6,000	3.25	2.75
7,000	3.50	2.90
8,000	3.75	3.05
9,000	4.00	3.20
10,000	4.25	3.35

Return Receipt Fee 10¢

(1) Rate increased to 60¢ August 15, 1961

(2) Rate eliminated March 25, 1966.

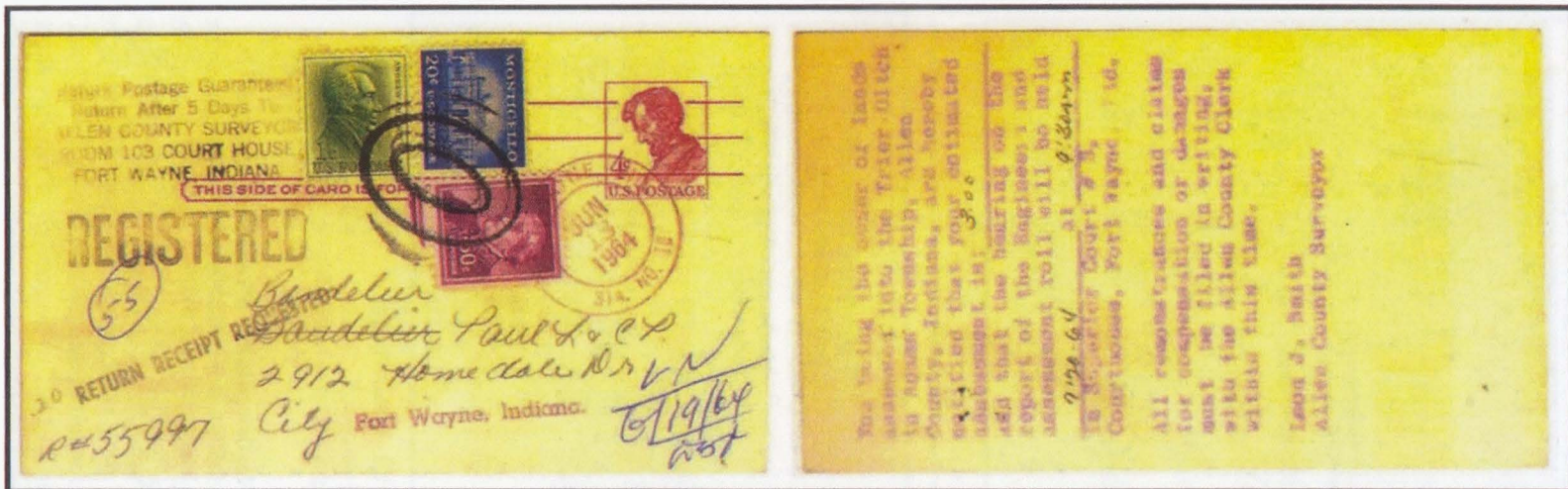
(a.) Item without commercial insurance.

(b.) Item with commercial insurance.

Postal Bulletin 20034 issued June 27, 1957 ended the supplemental surcharge system (effective date July 1, 1957?). The sender of a registered letter was now charged one of two rates. One rate was for a registered item without additional sender provided commercial insurance coverage (a). The other rate was for a registered item on which the sender provided commercial insurance coverage (b).

Additional insurance was available over \$10,000 up to \$1,000,000 at 15¢ per \$1,000; and, from \$1,000,000 up to \$15,000,000 at 10¢ per \$1,000.



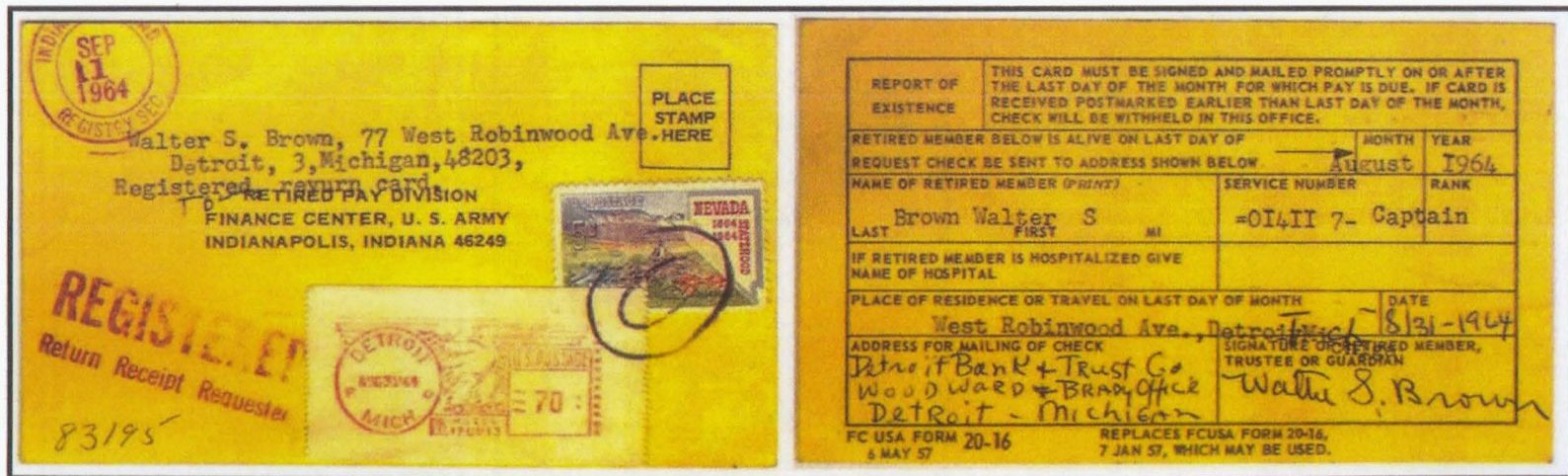


Fort Wayne, IN June 18, 1964

First-class postage 5¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$10 indemnity 60¢.

Return receipt fee 10¢.



Detroit, MI August 31, 1965

First-class postage 5¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$10 indemnity 60¢.

Return receipt fee 10¢.

Post cards and postal cards provided little privacy but could be registered to provide proof of delivery. They were usually used to document notifications required by law.



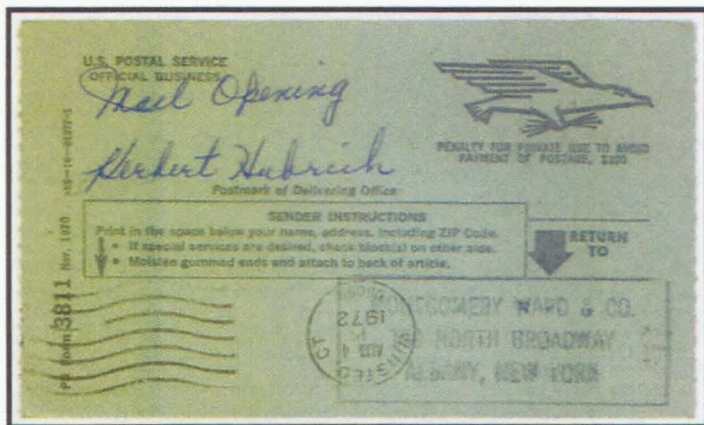
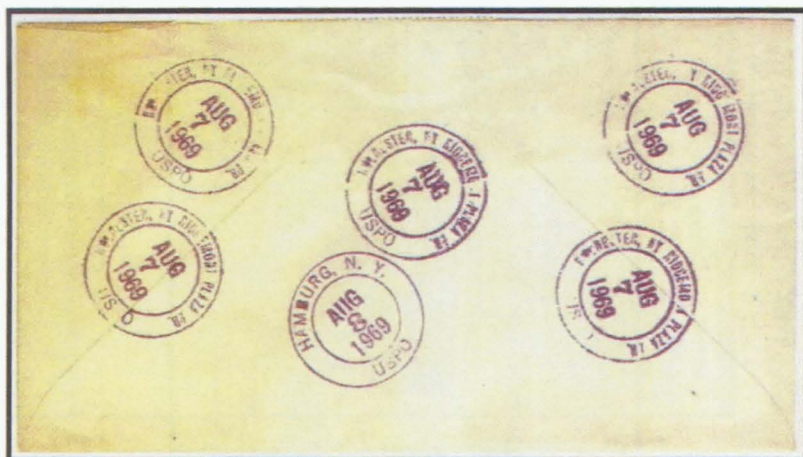
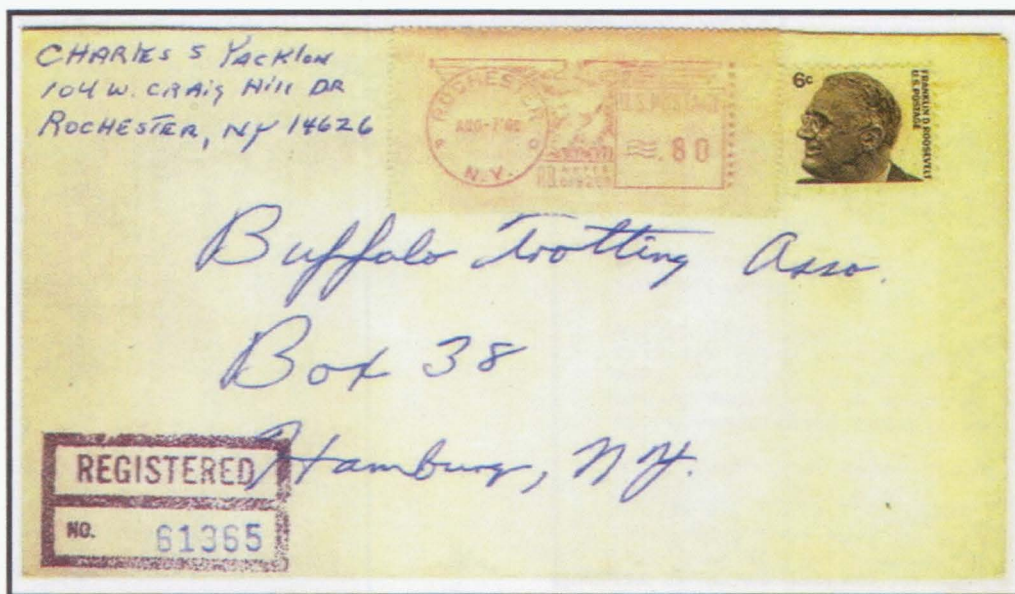
# Registration Fees Effective July 14, 1969 to May 15, 1971

Rochester, NY  
August 7, 1969

First-class postage 6¢.  
Registration fee  
providing up to \$110  
indemnity 80¢.

Postmarks on  
the Reverse Side:

Mailed at  
Rochester, NY  
August 7, 1969  
Received for  
delivery at  
Hamburg, NH  
August 8, 1969



## Form 3811 Return Receipt

Penalty-style form bearing the new symbol of the U.S.P.S.  
introduced in November, 1970.

## Registry Fee Table Effective July 14, 1969 - May 15, 1971

Maximum Indemnity	Registration Fee (a.)	(b.)
100	80¢	80¢
200	\$1.05	\$1.05
400	1.30	1.30
600	1.55	1.55
800	1.80	1.80
1,000	2.05	2.05
2,000	2.35	2.20
3,000	2.60	2.35
4,000	2.85	2.50
5,000	3.10	2.65
6,000	3.40	2.80
7,000	3.65	2.95
8,000	3.90	3.10
9,000	4.20	3.25
10,000	4.45	3.40

(a) Item without commercial insurance.

(b) Item with commercial insurance.

Each additional \$1,000 15¢ 15¢

(First \$1,000,000 costs \$152.95 \$151.90

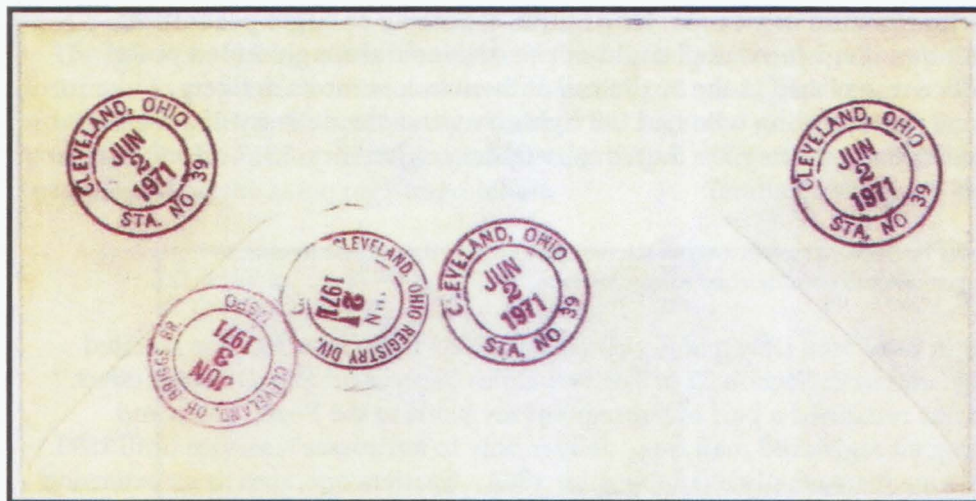
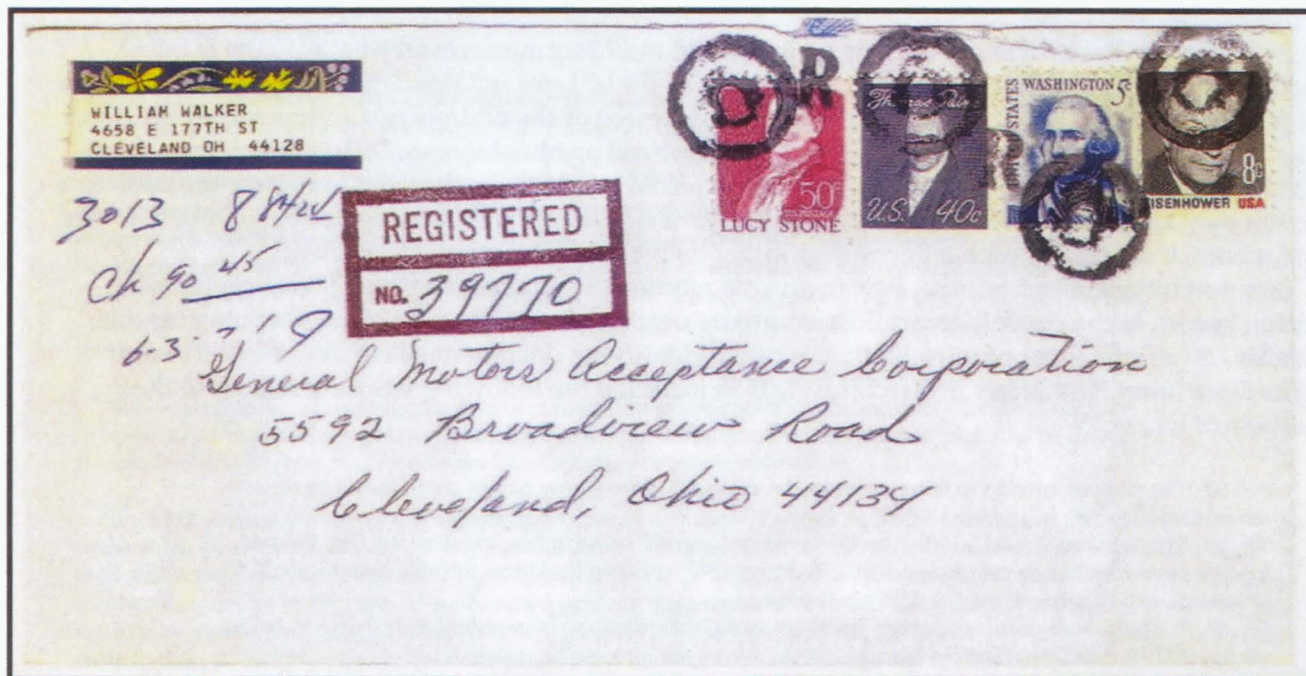
Each additional \$1,000 10¢ 10¢

(up to \$15,000,000)

Return Receipt Fee 15¢



# Registration Fees Effective May 16, 1971 to June 30, 1971 and Beyond



Cleveland, OH June 2, 1971

First-class postage 8¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$100 indemnity 95¢.

Registry Fee Table Effective  
May 16, 1971 - April 17, 1976

Maximum Indemnity	Registration Fee (a.)	(b.)
100	95¢	95¢
200	\$1.25	\$1.25
400	1.55	1.55
600	1.85	1.85
800	2.15	2.15
1,000	2.45	2.45
2,000	2.75	2.65
3,000	3.05	2.85
4,000	3.35	3.05
5,000	3.65	3.25
6,000	3.95	3.45
7,000	4.25	3.65
8,000	4.55	3.85
9,000	4.85	4.05
10,000	5.15	4.25

The U.S.P.O. became the U.S.P.S. July 1, 1971. The marking requirements for registered mail established January 1, 1911 remained the same. The registration device on the front of this cover and the daters used as postmarks on its back are updated versions of those found on a 1911 registered cover. The "R" obliterator is similar but not identical to the smallest registration device issued in 1911. The sender probably applied this non-standard device.

(a.) Item without commercial insurance.  
(b.) Item with commercial insurance.  
Each additional \$1,000 20¢ 20¢  
(First \$1,000,000 costs \$203.15 \$202.25  
Each additional \$1,000 13¢ 13¢  
(up to \$15,000,000)  
Return Receipt Fee 15¢



## Delivery Options Available on Registered Mail

Sender-requestable delivery options on registered mail became necessary because the U.S.P.O. modified first-class mail delivery requirements in the *Postal Laws and Regulations of 1893*. Before then all first-class mail was only to be delivered to its addressee or the addressee's authorized agent. Mail was "called for" by the addressee or his or her authorized agent, at the post office of delivery. Mail was hand-delivered by the postmaster or another postal employee authorized to deliver the mail, to a person they knew and could personally identify. The delivering employee had to be willing to swear under oath, if necessary, each letter was properly delivered to its intended recipient.

Itinerant travelers and patrons new to an area required additional scrutiny. It was preferred a person known at the post office would accompany new patrons to the post office vouching for their identity. A written letter of introduction or other identifying documents were also used. *The Post Office Department Regulations* in effect July 1, 1855 included the following wording related to the delivery of letters:

Sec. 52. The persons entitled to letters received by mail, are those whose names are in the address, or to whose care they may be directed.

Sec. 53. The delivery should be either to the person addressed, or according to his order. The order is, in some cases implied, as where a person is in the habit of receiving his letters through his son, clerk, or servant, and of recognizing the delivery to him.

Sec. 54. If a letter appear to be of value, it will be safest to require a written order for its delivery, to the person calling, if he be not the person addressed.

Calling for mail by persons with common names, i.e., John Smith, especially at larger post offices created identification uncertainties. Registered mail could not be delivered through rented postal boxes at the post office. A notice was placed in the box to call at the window for its delivery.

The first specific instructions seen covering who had the right to receive the delivery of a registered item are contained in the *Regulations Respecting The Registration Of Letters*, January, 1867 effective June 1, 1867, (Section 9, Delivery of Registered Letters):

... Registered letters must never be delivered to any person but the one to whom they are addressed, or to a person whom the postmaster *knows* to be authorized to receive them. ...

The same language appeared in *The Postal Laws and Regulations of 1873*. Its section 155 also restated the same instructions provided earlier in Section 52 of *The Post Office Department Regulations* in effect July 1, 1855. These requirements remained a part of subsequent revisions to the Postal Laws and Regulations effectively granting all registered mail free "deliver only to addressee" service until 1893.

Free city carrier service became increasingly available after 1863. Carriers operated as an extension of the post office (postmaster with respect to registered mail). *The Postal Laws and Regulations* issued April 5, 1873 stated:

Sec. 504. Postmasters will hand to the letter-carriers, for delivery, all registered letters, (except those addressed to box-holders,) first requiring them to sign their names in the last column of the sheet for "receipts for registered letters delivered." The carrier will, on the delivery of every such letter, require the person receiving it to sign the "return registered-letter receipt," and also a receipt for the same in a book [carrier registered receipt book?] furnished for that purpose.

It had become increasingly difficult for postal employees to have personal knowledge of the identity of patrons calling for registered letters. The increasing use of city letter carriers meant fewer persons were regularly calling at the post office for their mail. However, carriers returned to the post office with an increasing number of registered letters from homes where addressees were not available to take delivery.



The Postal Laws and Regulations of 1893 made a major change in the delivery of registered mail by a city carrier which was designed to lessen the number of registered items returned to the post office for future addressee pick up:

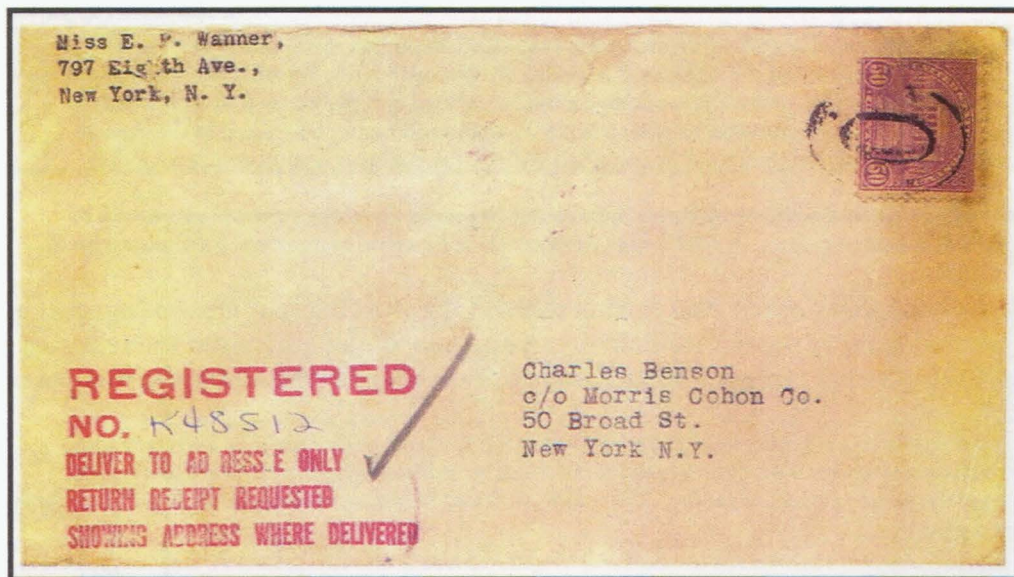
**Sec. 1111. Delivery of Matter by Carriers.**—Postmasters at free-delivery post-offices must, unless requested to the contrary by addressees, deliver through the carriers all registered letters and parcels addressed to street and number, or to parties whose street address is given in the city directory. If the addressee is a box-holder all of his registered mail should be held for desk delivery, unless he has specially requested such matters to be delivered by carrier. **Carriers are required to deliver all registered letters and parcels where the persons addressed usually receive their mail by carriers.** [emphasis added] Registered matter of the third and fourth classes must have preference over unregistered matter of such classes in delivery. Weight or bulk of registered matter will not excuse a carrier for not making delivery.

Carriers should receipt for registered letters and parcels on the delivery book or otherwise when specially directed by the Department.

Note.—Desk deliveries of registered matter should be encouraged by postmasters where satisfactory to business patrons of the registry system, especially where the number of registered pieces to be delivered is considerable, or where such pieces are known to be of considerable value.

**Sec. 1112. Name of Carrier Delivering Matter must Appear.**—Carriers' delivery books must show the name of the carrier who delivers each registered letter or parcel. Carriers must enter in such books with ink the numbers of the letters or parcels, the names of addressees, and, when in care of another, the street and number, except in the cases of well-known persons, corporations, or firms. **For convenience in signing by agents and others than addressees,** [emphasis added] carriers should devote two lines to each entry in their delivery books. In delivering registered matter carriers must take receipts on both delivery book and registry return receipts. Whenever it is possible signatures should be in ink or indelible pencil.

The use of a registry return receipt as prima-facie evidence of delivery of a specific item or document to a specific person was now potentially flawed. This required the U.S.P.O. to make provisions requiring the specific signature of the intended addressee on the return receipt card when requested by the sender. This created the first of two delivery options for registered mail. Both could be requested on the same registered letter.



New York, NY April 14, 1937 (by postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 2¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$5 indemnity 15¢.

Deliver to Addressee Only fee 10¢.

Return Receipt Requested Showing Address Where Delivered fee 23¢.



## Deliver to Addressee Only



Falls Mills, NY May 30, 1894

Sender restricted by manuscript notation, "Deliver to addressee only".

*The Postal Laws and Regulations* of 1893 were the first to authorize a sender to impose restrictions on the delivery of a piece of registered mail beyond those contained in prevailing general orders covering the delivery of mail matter:

**Sec. 1113. Care in Delivery—Identification of Addressee.**—Registered letters or parcels must in no case be delivered to any person but the addressee, or on his written order. Identification should be required when the applicant is unknown, and written orders should be verified and placed on file. These orders may be for the delivery of a specific letter or parcel, or for all registered matter addressed to the person giving the order. All general orders should be complied with by the postmaster until countermanded in writing.

The sender of a registered article may by an indorsement upon its envelope or wrapper, restrict its delivery to the addressee in person, in which case delivery must be made to no other. [emphasis added]

*The Postal Laws and Regulations* of 1902 further defined the wording that must be applied by the sender of a registered letter to restrict the delivery of an item. It also addressed the return of registered letters so restricted to their sender when direct delivery to the addressee was not possible.

**Sec. 858. . . . 3.** Registered mail indorsed for delivery to the addressee in person must be delivered to no one but him, not even upon his written order; and if it can not be so delivered, it must be returned, after the expiration of the proper period, to sender. The word "Personal" is not to be constructed as an indorsement so restricting delivery. . . .

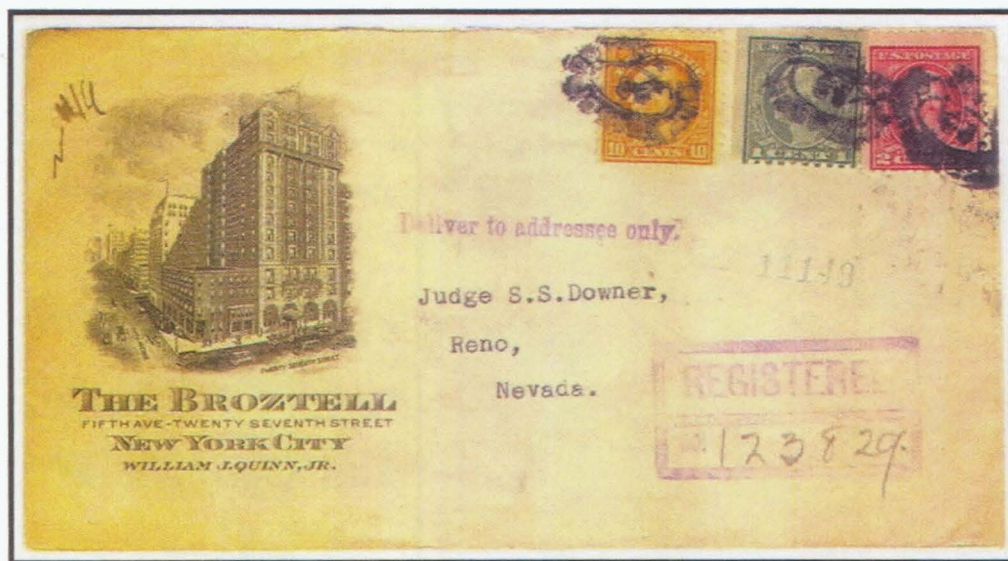
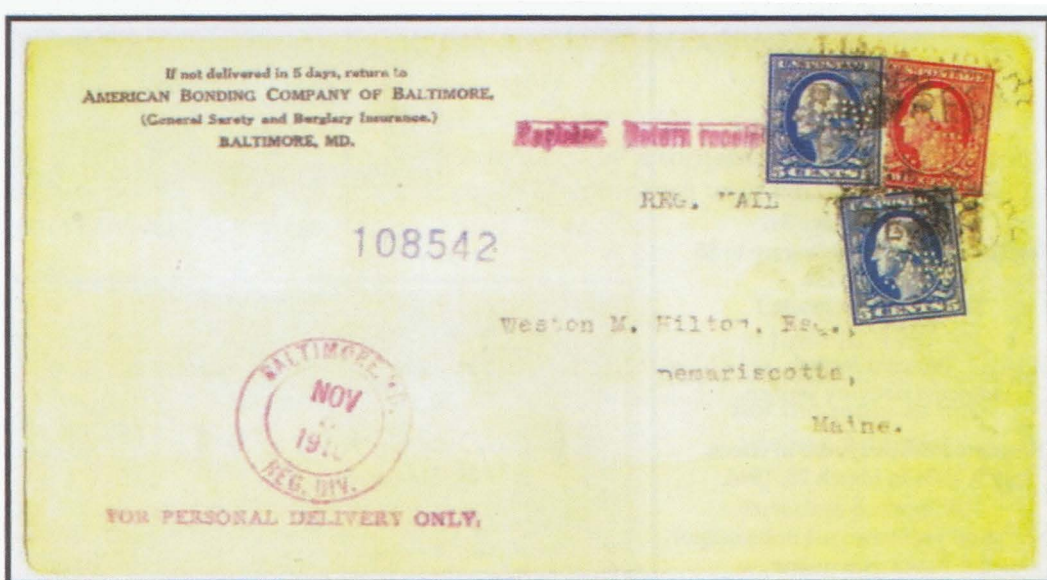
The "deliver to addressee only" endorsement was used sparingly between 1893 and 1909 when discussions began about making the mandatory return receipt optional. It is seen more often after 1909 when the return receipt became a sender-requested option. Return receipt service was free until April 15, 1925. There was no additional fee imposed for a "deliver to addressee only" service until July 9, 1934.



Baltimore, MD  
November 5, 1910

First-class postage 2¢.  
Registration fee  
providing up to \$50  
indemnity 10¢.  
Free return receipt  
service.

"FOR PERSONAL  
DELIVERY ONLY"  
endorsement did not  
restrict delivery  
to the addressee only.



San Francisco, CA  
(by postmark on  
reverse side)  
November 8, 1918

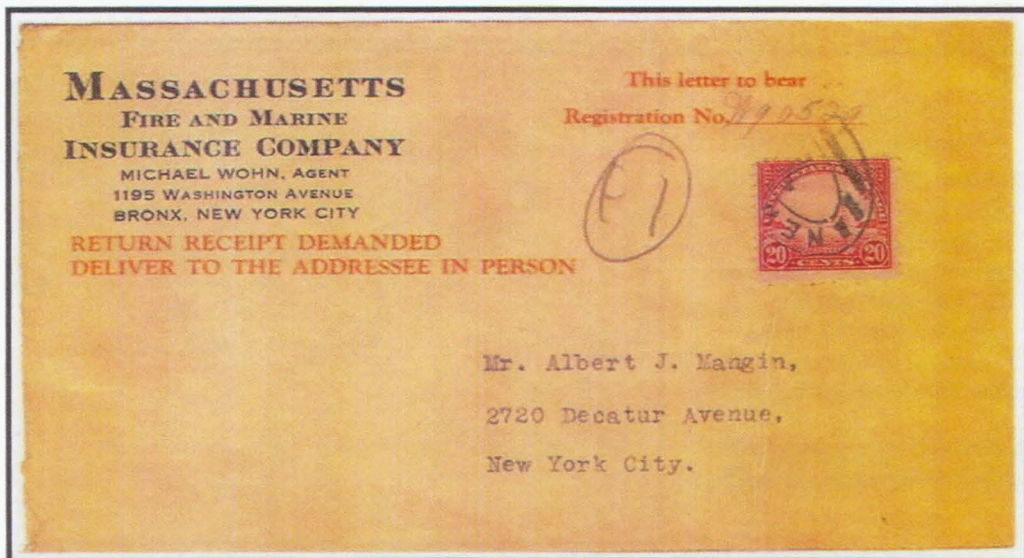
First-class (war rate)  
postage 3¢.  
Registration fee providing  
up to \$50 indemnity 10¢.  
Free return receipt service.

U.S.P.O. supplied  
straight-line "Deliver  
to addressee only." auxiliary  
device.

New York, NY  
(by postmark on  
reverse side)  
May 20, 1927

First-class postage 2¢.  
Registration fee providing  
up to \$50 indemnity 15¢.  
Return receipt service 3¢.  
Free deliver only to the  
addressee service.

Valid sender-provided  
delivery restriction  
instructions.





Urbana, KS  
June 17, 1935  
(postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 3¢.  
Registration fee providing up to \$5  
indemnity 15¢.  
Return receipt fee 3¢.

Ten-cent fee for  
restricted delivery service.

Restricted Delivery rate in effect:  
July 9, 1934 to March 25, 1944.



Bellefontaine, OH  
March 3, 1952  
(postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 3¢.  
Registration fee providing no  
indemnity 30¢.  
Return receipt not requested.

Restricted delivery service fee 20¢.

Restricted Delivery rate in effect:  
March 26, 1944 to June 30, 1957.



Afton, OK  
January 4, 1962  
(postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 4¢.  
Registration fee providing up to  
\$10 indemnity 60¢.  
Return receipt fee 10¢.

Deliver to Addressee Only fee 50¢.

Restricted Delivery rate in effect:  
July 1, 1957 to April 15, 1975.





## Return Receipt Showing to Whom and Where Delivered

Senders of some documents needed to confirm not only who signed for a registered letter but where the addressee was located. This service was primarily used by attorneys, banks, and the government. It was never available as a free service. It could be combined with the restricted delivery service with the payment of the additional fee.



Emeryville, CA  
June 16, 1937  
(by postmark on reverse side  
not the same as the  
return address)

First-class postage 3¢.  
Registration fee providing up to \$5  
indemnity 15¢.  
Return receipt showing address where  
delivered fee 23¢.

Rate in effect  
March 18, 1931 to March 25, 1944.

San Francisco, CA  
April 6, 1945  
(by postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 3¢.  
Registration fee providing up to \$5  
indemnity 20¢.  
Return receipt showing address where  
delivered fee 31¢.

Rate in effect  
March 26, 1944 to June 30, 1957.



Los Angeles, CA  
July 17, 1958  
(by postmark on reverse side)

First-class postage 3¢.  
Registration fee providing up to \$10  
indemnity 50¢.  
Return receipt showing address  
where delivered fee 35¢.

Rate in effect  
July 1, 1957 to April 17, 1976.





## Analyzing the Travels of Registered Mail

A delivery notation is added to document; it is an event causing a delay that may or may not result in an item being returned to its sender. The vast majority of all mail passes smoothly through the postal system from sender to addressee as planned. Most carry the minimally required franking and postmarks. Individual steps in the delivery process are not documented by markings applied to an item unless a problem has been encountered.

Murphy's Law concerning the postal system clearly states anything that can possibly go wrong will eventually go wrong if you process a high volume of mail over a long period of time. The following are examples of notations seen on registered mail. Some seldom occur but make for interesting covers. By no means is this a complete listing of all known delivery notations on registered mail. Mr. Murphy is still at work.

Analyzing the path some registered letters took in reaching the intended addressee or, failing in that task, on its journey back to its sender can be a complex exercise. This process begins with the postmarks on an item that document where and when it passed through a registry clerk's hands. Things can really get interesting when you find a registered item that somehow went astray from the usual processing path.

We close our discussions with examples of how to interpret the travels of some more interestingly marked registered items. Hopefully this will better enable you to understand the complexities behind delivery-related markings seen on some registered material. We hope to release a more complete "survey" of registered markings, delivery notations, known examples of the 1549a experimental labels, and other similar information as a supplement to this book in the near future. Please contact us at [theryles@bluemarble.net](mailto:theryles@bluemarble.net) if you have information to share that should be included in this project. (300dpi .jpeg files showing both the front and back side of an item appreciated).



Louisville, KY December 11, 1909

First-class postage 2¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$50 indemnity 10¢.

Item sent to "city" so it was held at the general delivery window at the main post office for Mr. Goodwin to pick up. [First] "NOTICE" was given this addressee December 11 and "Second Notice" was given on December 14. The letter was returned to its sender December 17 when Mr. Goodwin failed to go to the post office to retrieve it. The pointing finger style "UNCLAIMED. RETURN TO WRITER" found on first-class unclaimed mail was supplemented with the two-line "Circular 3856 1/2 sent, Mailing P.M. \_\_\_\_\_" mark. The circular admonished senders to use an addressee's complete address when it was known. Apparently the Louisville post office knew where to find Mr. Goodwin even if the sender did not.





### Parlier, CA December 9, 1940

First-class postage 3¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$5 indemnity 15¢.

Return Receipt fee 3¢.

Deliver to Addressee Only service fee 10¢.

Postmarks indicate this letter was mailed at Parlier December 9, 1940 addressed for carrier delivery at New Orleans, LA. It was received at the New Orleans post office December 13 where it was found to be unsealed. U.S.P.O. seals were applied across both ends of the envelope and postmarked as required by regulations. A two-line auxiliary mark was applied stating "Received at New Orleans, LA Reg. Division M.P.O. Insecurely Sealed". Someone has entered in pencil the notation "will call F89 12/13/40" below the stamps. Delivery notice was given on December 14 with a second delivery notice given three days later on December 17. It was held at New Orleans until December 23 when it was returned to its sender arriving back in Parlier December 27.

Almost all damaged or undeliverable mail is returned to the sender whenever possible. The New Orleans post office wanted to get this envelope returned to it for some unknown reason. It added the following five-line auxiliary mark:

Carrier or Delivery Clerk  
The Attached Envelope-Wrapper Should  
Be Obtained if Addressee is Willing  
To Surrender Same. Return to Reg. Dtv.  
M.P.O. New Orleans La.





New York, NY May 24, 1923

First-class postage 2¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$50 indemnity 10¢.

Free Return Receipt.

This letter was mailed at New York May 24, 1923 addressed for carrier delivery at Los Angeles, CA. Someone did accept delivery of this item someplace probably signing the return receipt card but was not the addressee. Regulations permitted registered mail to be delivered to someone residing at a given address unless delivery had been restricted by the sender to only the addressee. At some time the pencil notation "not at 1265" was added. This is the only other address information given for Mr. I. Elazeroff. However, someone, sometime, did remail this item at Los Angeles paying additional first-class postage and a second ten-cent registration fee. A large pointing-finger style "RETURNED TO WRITER UNCLAIMED" was applied March 7, 1924 at Los Angeles. A "SECOND NOTICE" of attempted delivery at an unknown location was attempted April 3, 1924. Under this device we can see an indistinct two-line auxiliary mark containing the word "registered" that has been later obliterated with a pencil. A straight-line date of "MAR 31, 1924" was applied consistent with three Los Angeles dater-styled registered postmarks on the back of this item.

There are nine registered postmarks on the back side of this item. Two are from New York (Wall St. Sta.) May 24, 1923 applied in a pattern consistent with postmarks of original mailing. Next in sequence is a May 29, 1923 Los Angeles Sta, C dater-styled registration postmark probably related to the first attempt to deliver this item at the sender supplied address. The remaining six postmarks are from 1924. Where was this item for over ten months?

We find three Los Angeles dater-style registered postmarks from March 31, 1924. These are struck in an ink consistent with the straight-line "REREGISTERED AFTER DELIVERY" on the front. They are in a pattern consistent for postal regulations requiring two postmarks on the back side of each item entered into the registry system. Was this when the item was re-registered? If so, who paid the additional twelve cents?

The last three postmarks indicate this item was returned to New York April 12, 1924 passing through its registry division (two oval marks) and on to Wall Street Station for return to its sender 323 days after it was mailed.





Los Angeles, CA August 7, 1928

First-class postage 2¢.

Registration fee providing up to \$50 indemnity 15¢.

Return Receipt fee 3¢.

This letter was mailed at Los Angeles August 7, 1928 addressed for carrier delivery at the sender-supplied address of 1170 Hyperion Avenue. There is a purple "Return Receipt Requested". Apparently delivery was made to someone not the addressee who signed the return receipt card. Regulations permitted registered mail to be delivered to someone residing at a given address unless delivery had been restricted by the sender to only the addressee. The pencil notation "Try 613 N. Commonwealth 4" indicates it was returned to the post office August 8 at which time the red penciled note "Not in Registered Mail" was added along with the red penciled obliteration of the number in the rectangular registered marking device.

Here the tale of this cover becomes somewhat mysterious. A penciled notation "Unknown at Address 1154" followed by two indistinct characters, possibly initials, was added with a line with arrows at both ends leading back to the earlier manuscript note. The front of this item also contains in pencil "gone 625y" and "no su\_ # So 1243 L". Over the Registration box there is a faint large pointing hand in purple with "UNCLAI — LOS ANGELES CALIF" on the hand, dated August 17, 1928 on the cuff, over which later was struck a three-line "DEAD LETTER BRANCH, LOS ANGELES, CALIF, No. ....(155)" mark, and the smaller pointing hand. Underneath the Dead Letter and faint Return request is a smaller "FEE PAID 3 cents".

There are ten Los Angeles registered dater postmarks on the back side of this item. Five are from August 7, 1928 applied in a pattern consistent with postmarks of original mailing. Second from top left is an August 8 strike consistent with the straight-line August 8 seen on the front. Center left we find two indistinct postmarks similar in inking to the indistinct August 17 device noted on the front. Two August 17, 1928 daters are clearly struck accounting for nine postmarks so far.

The latest postmark on the back of this item is a November 4, 1946 Los Angeles Sta. S. Is this related to the Dead Letter Branch or the pointing finger or the obliterated REREGISTERED AFTER DELIVERY? Why over 18 years after the latest 1928 postmark? What does the "Nov 6 1946" in purple across the obliterated reregistration device mean? This item should have been returned to its sender as undeliverable in the registered mail in 1928 unless someone had accepted delivery of it at some place and time unknown, and was holding on to it unopened to be given to its addressee? Where was it during this time?





Chicago, IL June 14, 1939

First-class postage 3¢.

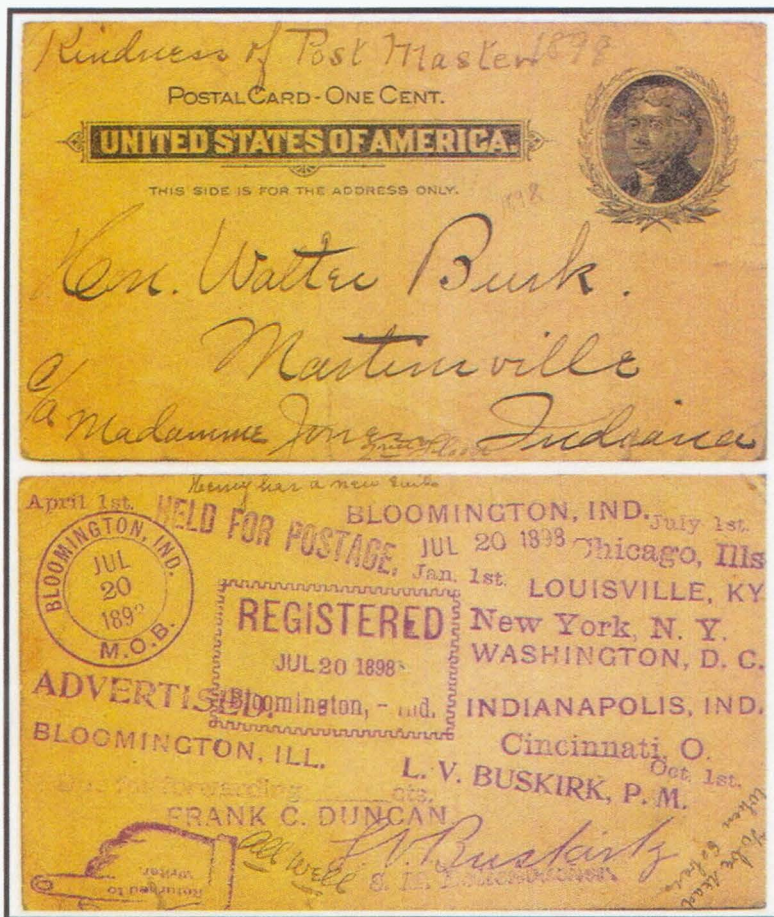
Registration fee providing up to \$5 indemnity 15¢.

Return Receipt fee 3¢.

This letter was mailed at Chicago June 14, 1939 sent to Klamath Falls, OR. There it received a June 18 registered dater postmark and was delivered to the original address supplied by the sender. Regulations permitted registered mail to be delivered to someone residing at a given address unless delivery had been restricted by the sender to only the addressee. It was then forwarded to Miss Glazner's new address in Santa Anna, CA as a first-class item receiving the Klamath Falls machine cancel on June 19. An additional fifteen-cent registration fee would have been paid if the person forwarding this item wished it to continue to California in the registered mail.



## Our Quest Continues

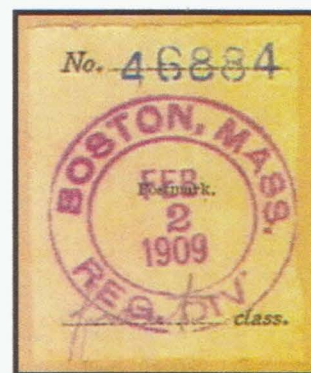


Bloomington, IN, July 20, 1898

(date on back of card)

"To be read when sober." notation on back side at lower right. "Henry has a new suit" back side top center. "All well" back side bottom left.

"Kindness of Postmaster" postal card containing examples of many devices available for use at Bloomington (and other post offices?) in 1898. Large registered device purchased by a postmaster. We are unsure if its cost was charged to the post office or out of his pocket. Unusual to find a registered device used on a non-registered piece of mail. Lack of postmark indicates this item may have been hand-carried to its addressee



Example Form 1549a label.

We are still actively expanding our knowledge of the registry system. New information crops up as we mine additional resources of public documents and published material. Our greatest pleasure comes from chatting with other collectors who share our interest. We look forward to refining what has been presented up to 1971 in this first effort and covering the U.S.P.S. era after that date in a future expanded edition of this work. We will probably leave tackling inbound and outbound foreign-destination registered mail to others. The domestic service should keep us occupied for awhile.

Our next planned project is to publish a supplement to this work detailing the many different styles of registered devices seen over the years. This will include auxiliary marking devices related to the delivery or non-delivery of registered mail, and processing marks seen on registry forms. We are compiling an updated detailed listing of known Form 1549a covers that will be included in this supplement.

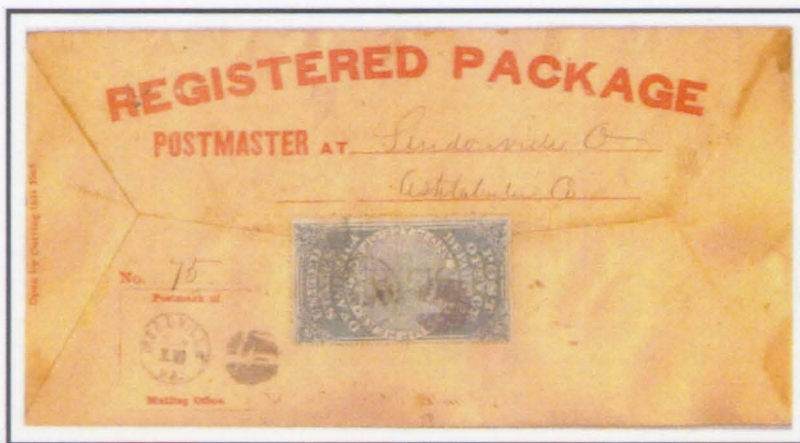
Comments, suggestions, corrections, and conversation sharing your interest in registered mail are always welcome. New discoveries and interesting items always appreciated. Please send us a computer image (front and back in 300 dpi .jpg format) if you can contribute any items for inclusion in this project. Please send us your contact information if you would like to be notified of our next publication in this series. Blurb does not tell us who bought this book.

Email: [theryles@bluemarble.net](mailto:theryles@bluemarble.net) or send to Ryle Publishing at its address.

## Please Practice Positive Philately

Our hobby is a journey of discovery as we act as the current stewards of information and material to be shared with future generations of collectors to come. There will be philatelists as long as our journeys are shared with others.





*Registered U.S.A.* traces changes in registered mail rates, markings, delivery requirements and processing procedures. *Registered U.S.A.* is the result of an ongoing special study begun in 2001 when the author could not locate any previously written work summarizing the registered mail service over its 126 years of operation by the U.S.P.O. Previous articles and books had covered individual topics or specific time segments of the registry story. Those writings failed to give the reasons behind key changes observed over time in markings found on registered first-class mail. Our quest began in an attempt to answer these questions. Many are answered in *Registered U.S.A.*. A few still remain to be resolved.

The author was introduced in his youth to the operations of the U.S.P.O. by his grandfather, a rural mail carrier. A great-great grandfather had been a general store proprietor and the postmaster at the rural fourth-class post office it hosted in the late 1800's. This led to the author's interest in philately and postal history. Thankfully, his wife (and editor) also shares a philatelic avocation or affliction depending upon your point of view.

"Information shared is history saved." Philatelic research, like most activities, is best experienced in the company of others. This book would not exist today except for the generous contributions of time, knowledge, and encouragement of many philatelic friends.

*Registered U.S.A.* is our way of sharing information learned to date with others interested in this subject. Credit is requested for any material used from this book to further your writing projects and enjoyment of our hobby. We welcome any information, comments or suggestions you might offer to help improve future editions of this work.

Our quest continues.

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