

The 2c Circular Die Stationery of 1915

The purpose of this exhibit is to explore the production and usage of the 2c circular die envelope as the work horse for the transmission of communication throughout the world. It will begin with a discussion of the die types and their use in production machinery. Paper, knife and watermark are presented briefly. Production errors and freaks are highlighted with rare examples of color errors and multiple impressions. Of special interest are the unique purple cut square on which the Scott catalogue listing is based, and the green color error envelope entire of which seven examples are documented. These and other interesting covers will be matted in red. Various forms of double impressions, including those with two different dies, are shown. Other spectacular production freaks are presented and are sure to please the eye. The exhibit will continue into the postal history section where it can be simply broken down into domestic use, foreign use and concluding with a very brief showing of penalty mail use. An outline will map the exhibit. The postal history scope will be limited to usages before July 6, 1932.

The 2c circular die envelope was introduced to replace the Mercantile series of oval die envelopes. As the oval dies wore, they were replaced by the circular dies. The postal rates were in a state of flux during the early years that the 2c circular die was used from 1916 - 1932. Produced just before World War I, when the cost of sending a letter was 2c, first class rates were temporarily increased to 3c to help pay for the war effort. After the war, the 2c first class rate was restored and enjoyed a stable run until 1932 when the first-class rate increased to 3c.

Domestic usages between territories and possession, military postal facilities and postal agencies are represented. Registration rates and services are shown but mostly at minimum indemnity rates. A showing of examples of all the indemnity rates throughout the various rate changes would constitute an exhibit in itself. Examples of mail handling are represented throughout the exhibit which include postage due, redirection, interruption and auxiliary hand stamps.

A good portion of the exhibit is devoted to foreign mail. By adding 3c postage, the 2c circular die envelope could satisfy the 5c Universal Postal Union (UPU) surface letter rate and travel to any member nation. Prior to 1878, rates were based on individual agreements between countries, which caused a myriad of rates and fees. The UPU was established as a

result of an international Congress in Paris in 1878. The letter rates in effect during this presentation were established in another UPU Congress in Rome in 1906. The letter rates established were 5c per ounce and 3c for each additional ounce.

The section of foreign usages will show examples of UPU mail, 2c treaty rate mail to neighboring countries, treaty rate mail from the Pan American Postal Congress in 1920 and treaty rate mail from the Pan American Principal Convention of Buenos Aires in 1921. This convention formed the Pan American Postal Union. Examples of rates and services will be presented, including ways in which mail was handled between member countries in situations, i.e. short paid mail, redirection, and postage due.

Regular airmail service began in the US before air service developed in foreign countries. If mail were sent to foreign countries via airmail it could travel through the US via air and then (by ship) surface to that foreign destination. There would be a separate charge for airmail within the US and the international surface rate charge. These charges were based on the ever-changing US air rates. As airmail service developed within foreign countries separate charges would be added to the US rates.

The foreign air section will examine different types of air rates and services. It will begin with combined domestic airmail service plus steamer service overseas, combined surface/air within Europe, surface/air beyond Europe via London, and air mail all the way to destination. Rates to the Western Hemisphere and Canada from 1928 until 1932 are represented. Mail service via SCADTA, airship, and ship to shore catapult with corresponding rates for distance will conclude the foreign air mail section.

The exhibit will conclude with a brief representation of penalty mail. Millions of returned stamped envelopes to the Post Office department were overprinted with the penalty clause. The demonetized envelopes were used to conduct Post Office department business. To help dispose of the remainders and prevent further use, the Post Office defaced envelopes with the appropriate endorsement or punched holes. These examples provide an interesting final chapter in the life cycle of the 2c circular die envelope.

Outline:

I. Production

2. Domestic Surface Mail

- a) Basic 1st Class 2c rate End of 1915 through November 1, 1917
- b) Basic 1st Class 3c rate November 2, 1917 to June 30, 1919
- c) Basic 1st class restored 2c rate July 1, 1919 through July 5, 1932
- d) 2nd ,3rd, or 4th class usages.

3. Domestic Air Mail

- a) Early rates
- b) 2c Government Flights
- c) Transcontinental rates
- d) Contract Air Mail
- e) 10c rate
- f) 5c rate
- g) Possessions
- g) Airship rate

4. Foreign Surface

- a) 5c Basic letter rate
- b) Printed matter rates
- c) Registry services
- d) Supplementary service
- e) 2c Special treaty rates

5. Foreign Air Mail

- a) Combined air/surface. Air mail in U.S. only
- b) Combined surface/air. Air mail in Europe only
- c) Combined surface/air. Air mail via London & France
- d) Air mail to destination
- e) Rates to Western Hemisphere & SCADTA
- f) Rates to Canada
- g) Ship to Shore Catapult rates
- h) Special & Zeppelin Rates

6. Penalty Mail

SOURCES:

US Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-2011 3rd Edition. Beecher -Wawrukiewicz 2011

US International Postal Rates, 1972-1996. Wawrukiewicz- Beecher. 1996

Via Airmail an Aerophilatelic Survey of Events, Routes and Rates. Edited by Simine Scott & Cheryl Ganz. 1992

Catalog of US stamped Envelopes Essays & Proofs. Dan Undersander. 2003

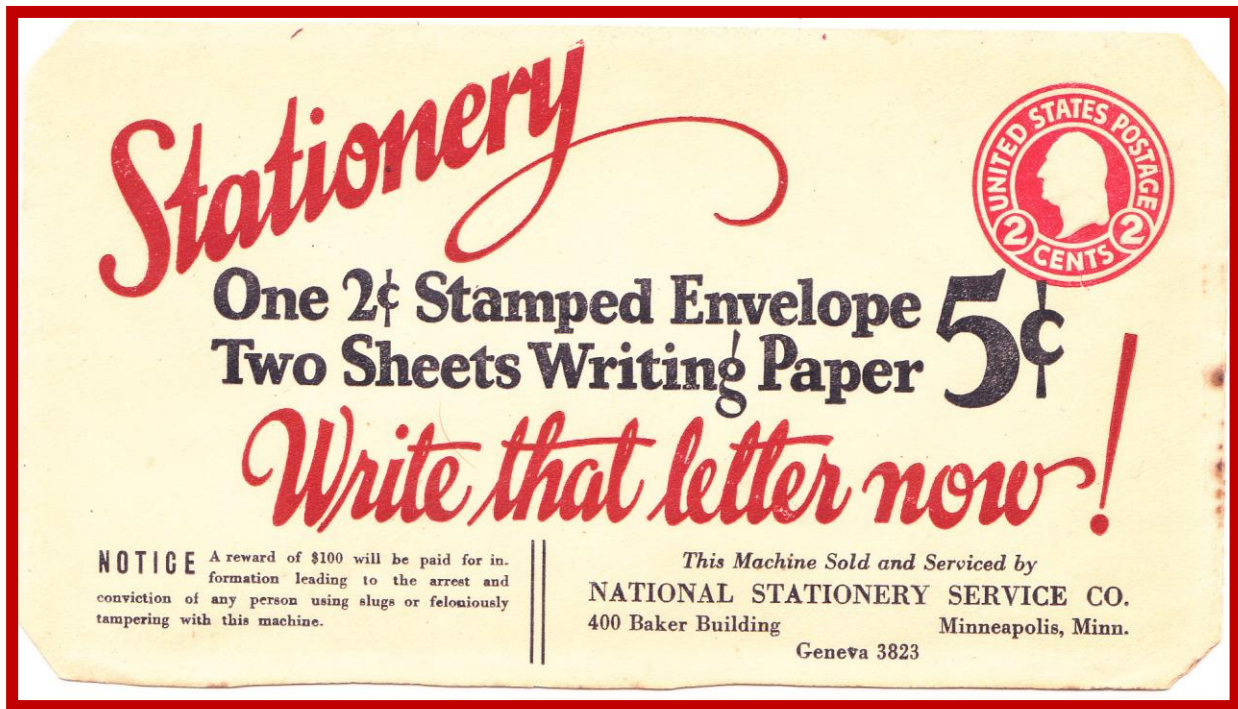
20th & 21st Century Stamped Envelopes & Wrappers of the United States. 4th Edition
Dan Undersander. 2017

Postal Stationery UPSS Journal. USA Envelopes The World of Errors-Double Trouble No.380 pg.
139. By Thomas Galloway

Postal History of the AEF, 1917-1923. Theo. Van Dam. 1980

2c Circular Die Stationery of 1915

Production, Rates & Postal History to July 6, 1932.



Vending machine placard printed on circular die envelope c. 1925

On February 6, 1915, the manufacturer of stamped envelopes was awarded to the Middle West Supply Co. of Dayton, Ohio. This was the beginning of the new series of envelopes that would serve the Post Office Department until 1960's. The 2c first-class letter rate became effective July 1, 1885. This exhibit will focus on the 2c denomination and its broad usages until the 1st class letter rate was increased to 3c on July 6, 1932. Printing of the circular die began at the end of 1915 but earliest reported usages are known to begin in February of 1916.

The purpose of this presentation is to show the production, rates and usages of the 2c stationery in the conveyance of communication and matter through the mails via surface and air transportation domestic and foreign. Notable items of interest will be matted in **RED**.

EXHIBIT PLAN

A. PRODUCTION

B. DOMESTIC SURFACE

1. 2c 1st Class Rate
2. 3c 1st Class War Rate
 - a. 2c Local Rate
3. Restored 2c Rate
4. Registry Services
 - a. First tier indemnity to \$5
 - b. Return receipt
 - c. Restricted delivery
 - d. Supplemental surcharges
5. 3rd Class Rates
6. 4th Class Parcel Post

C. DOMESTIC AIRMAIL

1. Early Airmail
2. Government Flights
3. Transcontinental
4. Contract Air Mail (CAM)
5. Unified Rates
6. Possessions
7. Special Flights

D. FOREIGN SURFACE MAIL

1. Basic 5c Rate
2. Printed Matter
3. Registry
4. Return Receipt & Special Delivery
5. Treaty Rates

E. FOREIGN AIRMAIL

1. Combined Domestic Air/ Surface
2. Combined Surface/Foreign Air
3. Airmail to Destination
4. Western Hemisphere & SCADTA
5. Canada
6. Ship to Shore Catapult
7. Zeppelin & Special rates

D. PENALTY MAIL