The $5 Hamilton Liberty Series Stamp 08/05/2026

This traditional single frame exhibit is a study of how one of the most iconic United States definitive issues of the 20th century was produced and used. The 6th Bureau issues or Liberty Series of 1954 to 1980 (when the reissued 25 cent coil with dull gum was released) had diverse designs and important innovations. The $5 stamp is the high value of this series and completely the focus here. The goal is to present all of the publicly available production items and categories of use in a single frame with an epilogue presenting the next $5 issue replacing this stamp.

This series is the first to have a stamp printed using a sheet-fed dry intaglio method. Printing on pre-gummed paper for the first time allowing for greater efficiency. "The Liberty series served for a longer span of time than any other series of definitive stamps in U.S. history covering a dozen first-class domestic letter rate periods, and seven or eight successive political administrations in Washington DC."[7]

Treatment notes: Where the word "known" is used, this is my survey. Extensive searches of auction catalogs, philatelic journals and interviews with authors and collectors were conducted. The files at the National Postal Museum scanned for study. While this exhibit is not specifically a rate study, large and complex rates are what illustrate and show the rarity and diversity of use. Showing the exact rate is not as important (ie: whether the item had $40k insurance or $45k) as are the services performed by the item shown. There are instances where it is possible that more than one solution to a rate can exist. One might be able to change the value of the content and weight in different combinations to come to the same franking. The most likely has been displayed here without bogging down the viewer. Some items have docketing to note the value making the calculations certain. A key is provided to show the viewer which items have been estimated. All reverse sides of tags are shown at 60%.

Notes on specific items:
The postal bulletin "reprint": the original postal bulletin can be found at the website in the bibliography. This is not a reproduction, it is the version sent to collectors and the press. It's not exactly a "reprint" since it is not the same as what appears in the bulletin.

What is not here:
- There are no known plate errors, mis-perforations, freaks, oddities etc. I have a full mint sheet (less than 20 known) but did not find it to be important to the story for inclusion. I do show a full used sheet which is one of only two known.
- A commercial cover to a foreign destination. There are three, one of them from a stamp dealer. I show a FDC to Germany as a place holder. There is no known COD fee use for this issue, although possible.
- I have studied one known Form 1096 cash receipt with a $5 Hamilton (paying $5.28) from Canandaigua NY. There is no way of knowing for what it had paid.

Rarity/Challenge:
There are many collectors seeking the postal history of this stamp and all U.S. dollar values. My census is part of this synopsis for covers known (omitted for the FIP shows where 2 pages are the limit). The census of known tags is a work in progress as most are too inexpensive to have been documented or sold at public auction. There are only 20 known covers. 3 of which are in this exhibit (I own 2 more but they duplicate use).

Notes on the listings in the Scott Specialized:
The prices in this catalog are a vast misrepresentation of the value and quantity of what exists. The most common use is the registered bank tag. I have not included the most basic examples (except the EKU) in this exhibit as there are tags with special services that are more interesting and are much scarcer. Scott lists the basic bank tag at $25. They sell for twice this on the internet but this does indicate generally their relative population. There are likely hundreds of basic

registered bank tags. That said, they are not all created equally. Tags were often bundled and used to send a large item. So, more than one tag could be used for a shipment. You will see a lot of tags that have no sender or neither sender nor addressee etc. These were part of a group of tags used to send a single item or bag of items and have been separated. They are lumped into same price value as a tag used singly to send an item with a sender and addressee noted on the tag. The Scott basic listing does not represent the quantity or value of a tag with the whole story. A bundle of several tags paying for a shipment would be scarce and would sell for a lot more than $25.

The next category in the Scott Specialized is "air parcel-post" tag at $75. I have one from an APO in my exhibit here. I know of just 3 others. The catalog value does not reflect the rarity. There are no listings for tags paying for Priority Mail or any other scarce service.

A commercial cover is listed at $1,800. There are 5 business reply covers, many have sold for around $5,000, the remaining 15 are registered covers and yes, a few have sold for around $2000 but most twice that amount. The last category in Scott is "Single franking on registered cover" at $7000. They can't be talking about the business reply and the only single franking registered cover is philatelic from H.E. Harris. This listing is completely erroneous. Please disregard these listings in your evaluation of this exhibit.

The above discussion is for supply and demand information. The demand and price support adds great challenge to this collecting area. These listings also point to the lack of knowledge of the use of this stamp and is an integral part of the importance of this exhibit. Especially the understanding of tags and their relative scarcity. These are not your typical tags and should be considered separately. **All the tags in the exhibit show different services and use. All known use types are presented.**

Special Items of Interest:

- 1 of 2 known large die proofs in private hands (the other a BEP 3 hole margin and repaired design punch). A small die proof in black and the other 2 proofs can be viewed at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum.
- 1 of 2 known Alaska gold tags, a special rate just for shipping gold from Alaska.
- Earliest known commercial use on tag (earliest any use).
- Earliest known use of a commercial cover.
- Parcel post label, only 3 such labels and mine is the only solo use known.
- 1 of 5 known sent Priority Mail[1], mine is the earliest known.
- Only known tag shipping a gold bar from a refinery[9].
- Only known BEP velodrome proof. Authenticated by James E. Lee.
- Only known on a routing slip.
- Only known on a bulk mailing receipt.

Reference/Bibliography:

1. Daniel S. Pagter, *Transition from Domestic Air Parcel Post to Priority Mail*. The United States Specialist, Vol 89, No 3 Year 2018, pp. 134-139.
2. The United States Specialist Vol 27 No 10 1956 Sol Glas
3. The United States Specialist Vol 35 No 10 1964 Lewis E. Miers
4. The United States Specialist Vol 74 No 9 2003 Steven Rod
5. The United States Specialist Vol 65 No 12 1994 Barbara R. Mueller
6. The United States Specialist Vol 68 No 12 1997 Roland Austin
7. "The Liberty Series" American Philatelic Soc 2007 Lawrence, Eeles, Wawrukiewicz
8. www.uspostalbulletins.com
9. Pagter, Weisz, *Liberty $5 Hamiltons Send a Gold Bar*. The United States Specialist, Vol 96, No 5.
10. Beecher and Wawrukiewicz, U.S. Domestic Postal Rates 1872-2011. Third Edition, 2011.
11. Beecher and Wawrukiewicz, U.S. International Postal Rates 1872-1996. First Edition, 1996.
12. Linn's Stamp News May 2025, "Documenting early $5 Hamilton uses along with an early new tag discovery." Pagter & Weisz.

# $5 Hamilton Census

| | | | | Notes | Destination | Addressed To: | From | Source | Image |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X | 4-16-58 | $5.88 | Registered RRR | | Philadelphia, PA | Smith, Barney & Co | Bridgeport, PA | Saadi | 4-16-58 Saadi.jpg |
| | 1960 | | Registered | | Lucerne, Switzerland | | Detroit, MI | KL | |
| | 4-12-61 | Solo | Registered | Boys Town label tied reverse | Kipushi, Katanga, Africa | Theo Jansen | New York, NY | Austin | 4-12-61 Austin.jpg |
| | 9-25-59 | | Registered | | Ft Worth, TX | Ft Worth National Bank | Alamo National Bank | Saadi | 9-25-59 Saadi.jpg |
| | 8-12-62 | Solo | Registered | | Calgary Alberta Canada | A.E. Shore | H.E. Harris | Linn's | 8-12-62 Linns.jpg |
| | 9-25-63 | $10.25 | Registered | Pair + | Ft Worth, TX | Ft Worth National Bank | Austin National Bank | USSS exhibit | 9-25-63 Pagter.JPG |
| | 11-19-63 | $7.00 | Registered RRR | | Ft Worth, TX | Ft Worth National Bank | CPA, Houston, TX | USSS Article | 11-19-63 Widener a.jpeg |
| X | 2-16-66 | $14.80 | Registered | Pair + | Santa Barbara, CA | Crocker-Citizens National Bank | Los Angeles, CA | Saadi | 2-16-66 Saadi.jpg |
| | 2-21-66 | $9.80 | Registered | Pair + | Santa Barbara, CA | Crocker-Citizens National Bank | Los Angeles, CA | Saadi | 2-21-66 Saadi.jpg |
| | 2-23-66 | $5.05 | Registered | | Santa Barbara, CA | Crocker-Citizens National Bank | Los Angeles, CA | Ennist | |
| | 4-19-66 | $7.20 | Registered | | Santa Barbara, CA | Crocker-Citizens National Bank | Los Angeles, CA | Ennist | |
| | 5-22-66 | $5.89 | Registered | | Santa Barbara, CA | Crocker-Citizens National Bank | Los Angeles, CA | Saadi | 5-22-66 Saadi.jpg |
| | 4-20-70 | $5.26 | Registered RRR | | Camden NJ | Bank of New Jersey | Mrs. C.T. Kehew | eBay/Linn's | 4-20-70 eBay.jpg |
| | 7-17-70 | | Registered RRR | | Camden NJ | | Cape May, NJ | KL | |
| | 1972 | | Registered | | Elgin, IL | | Crystal Lake, IL | KL | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1-14-63 | Solo | Business Reply Mail | | Hurlock, MD | Orville W. Corkran | Seaford, DE | USSS Article | 1-14-63 USSS.png |
| | 1-15-63 | Solo | Business Reply Mail | | Hurlock, MD | Orville W. Corkran | Baltimore MD | Linn's | 1-15-63 Linns.jpg |
| | 12-29-70 | $11.34 | Business Reply Mail | | Sparta IL | First Federal Savings | Evansville, IL | Linn's | 12-29-70 Linns.jpg |
| X | 9-?-57 | Solo | Business Reply Mail | | Peoria, IL | Bradley University | Lubbock, TX | Saadi | BRM Saadi.jpg |
| | 1962 | Solo | Business Reply Mail | | Hurlock, MD | | Brentwood, MD | KL | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | 9-11-59 | $8.00 | Parcel Post Label | | Newark, CA | With 3x #1052 | Cateret, NJ | KL | 9-11-59 Rumsey 101-940.jpg |
| X | 1970 | Solo | Parcel Post Label | | New Haven, CT | Mrs. R. Nutting Haessler | The Newhall Co | Saadi | 1970 Saadi.jpg |
| | 9-19-66 | | International Parcel Post package piece | Missing Stamps? Mixed franking. | Sweden | Hans Klasen | Middlebury, CT | aolsson | 9-19-66 Sweden PP.jpg |
| X | 3-7-67 | $9.15 | International Tag APO | 12867 BR Vietnam War | Willow Springs, IL | Mr & Mrs Frank J. Ostrowski | Vietnam | eBay | 3-7-67 Vietnam.jpg |
| | 7-9-68 | $15.68 | International Parcel Post package piece | Zone 8, 19lb, $0.88 (1st) 18 x $0.80=88 +14.40=$15.28 + 40 (Ins)= $15.68. | ? | ? | Vietnam | eBay | Vietnam Parcel Piece.jpg |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| X | 11-21-66 | $100.00 | Postage Due Bill | | Block/20 | POD FORM 8532a | Lenox, MA | Saadi | 11-21-66 Saadi.jpg |
| | 4-18-68 | $5.54 | Postage Due Bill | | With 54c dues issues | | Iola, WI | Kewriga | 4-18-68 Kewriga.jpg |
| | | | | | | | | | |

X Exhibit Items

# The $5 Hamilton Liberty Series Stamp

Purpose & Scope: This is a traditional single frame exhibit showing production and use of one of the most iconic stamps of the 20th century used from 1956 through 1970. Highlights are both production items available in public hands and all of the known types of use including a tag whose rate only included gold sent from Alaska. There are no known stamp varieties and only commercial use is shown apart from the first day cover in chapter 2.

Background/Importance: The Liberty series (the 6th Bureau issue) was named for the first stamp produced, the 8c Statue of Liberty in 1954 and subsequent 3c stamp of the same design. During the previous 40 years, $5 stamps were produced using more than one color. Interestingly, during a movement to produce more 2-color stamps, the $5 Hamilton was produced in only black. The central subject was composed from a photograph of a painting by John Trumbull. It was the first $5 stamp with compound perforations of 10.5 x 11 and one of the first stamps printed using the dry method on a sheet-fed flat-bed press on pre-gummed paper, thus speeding and streamlining production. It was issued principally to be used to send valuable and/or heavy shipments.

Treatment: Chapter headings are numbered in picture boxes. Chapters 3 through 6 carry the mail and the remainder of the chapters show use for receipt of funds owed for services. Key/important items are highlighted in red box. Additional relevant information is displayed in *Italics* with important item highlights in red. Certified items noted with red (c).

## 1. Production

Bureau of Engraving & Printing "Kodak Velox Paper" photograph used to approve modeler wash drawing before design sent to engraver. "Approved" reverse (scan below).

Plate block autographed by Charles R. Chickering, designer central subject and Victor S. McCloskey Jr., lettering.

*Design prepared & submitted to post office department Nov 22, 1955. The engravers of the stamp were Charles A. Brooks portrait & frame and John S. Edmondson lettering & numeral*