

	<h1>Registered Mail Study Group</h1> <h1>NEWSLETTER</h1>	
<p>Issue No. 6</p>		<p>April 2025</p>
<p><a href="https://www.usstamps.org/committees/registered-mail-study-group/">https://www.usstamps.org/committees/registered-mail-study-group/</a></p>		

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## Chairman's Column

Welcome to the sixth issue of our **RMSG Newsletter**.

Much of this issue will be devoted to information about the two Registered Cover Censuses which have been at the heart of the RMSG since its inception. There are reports on the additions made this year for the Form 1549A Domestic Registration Label Cover census, and a new updated Table listing over 300 new covers which have been added to the UPU mandated Exchange Office registration labels.

In addition, I have tried something new. In addition to the regular issue of the Newsletter, I have taken an older, but never published, study I prepared in 2012 which looked at over 2,500 covers with the New York, NY Exchange Office labels, which have never been compiled in a published census, and developed some interesting statistics regarding their pattern of use. This study is attached as a separate document with the designation Newsletter No. 6A.

This issue again has a few new, shorter notes, and I retained several sections from the previous issues with resource information as they may be of interest to new subscribers.

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If you have a special project that you would like to share, please consider preparing a short one-page summary and please send it along for inclusion in our next issue of the Newsletter.

I would like to thank D. R. Kohler and Jacob Klerman for providing me with a number of cover scans and images for the “Kugel” Exchange label census.

Jacob also has contributed an article which begins on page 15 of the Newsletter.

**President’s Day.** This note has nothing to do with registered mail, but it is related to a project that I developed earlier this year. President’s Day is a Federal Holiday which is celebrated on the third Monday in February. It was established in 1968 to consolidate the celebration of George Washington’s and Abraham Lincoln’s birthday, and to fix them on a Monday so that federal employees would have the holiday as part of a three-day holiday weekend. This year, I worked with my local public library to create an exhibit using a series of presidentially signed Postmaster Commission documents for presidents from Andrew Jackson (1836) to Wwilliam Howard Taft (1911), which was on display for the month of February and March.

I also created a pseudo-exhibit using scans of the same Postmaster Commission on the Stamp Community Family forum, to share with other collectors. The link to that thread can be found here.

[https://www.stampcommunity.org/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=88783](https://www.stampcommunity.org/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=88783)

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### **Update on the US Form 1549A Domestic Registered Label Census** **Mike Ludeman**

This cover census is maintained in a online database hosted on the Stamp Smarter website, which can be accessed at the following link: [https://stampsmarter.org/features/NYReg\\_1549Home.html](https://stampsmarter.org/features/NYReg_1549Home.html).

During the first quarter of the year, I have been able to add over a dozen newly discovered covers with this registration label and add them to the database, which now includes 571 covers. Unfortunately, there are still 95 covers for which we do not have an illustration of a cover scan, so if you have one or more covers with this registration label, please get it out and compare it to the contents of the database, and if it is one we do not have recorded, or we do not have the image, please prepared a image (300pdi and JPG format) and sent it to me.

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As can be seen in the Table at the right sidebar, the most common sources for the covers with this label are Boston, MA (with 129 covers), New York, NY (with 93 covers), and Chicago, IL (with 59 covers). Not shown in this table are Columbus, OH, with 13 covers reported, and Berkeley, CA with 10 covers. There were 22 post offices for which we have reports of between 3 and 8 examples known. There are 14 post offices which have reported only 2 covers, and 19 more for which only a single example is known.

In the last two weeks of March, a nice group of three covers from the same correspondence between Cincinnati, OH and Hamburg, Germany, each also with the appropriate New York, NY exchange label, were seen on the Delcampe auction site, and are illustrated on this and the next page, along with several other newly recorded covers.

### 1549a Database Statistics

Total Released **571**  
Covers:  
Total Unreleased **1**  
Covers:  
Covers Needing **95**  
Image:

#### Total Covers By City

<b>129</b>	Boston	MA
<b>93</b>	New York	NY
<b>59</b>	Chicago	IL
<b>27</b>	Washington	DC
<b>27</b>	Cincinnati	OH
<b>26</b>	Pittsburg	PA
<b>25</b>	Los Angeles	CA
<b>16</b>	Seattle	WA



Cleveland to Germany, June 22, 1908 (CIN-027)  
Form 1549A Label 56879; New York R# 38642



Cleveland to Germany, July 8, 1908 (CIN-026)  
Form 1548A Label 57958; New York R# 51242



Cleveland to Germany, July 16, 1908 (CIN-025)  
Form 1549A Label 59459; New York R# 12552

These three Cincinnati covers are interesting, since they were mailed close together in time, we can observe that the Cincinnati Post office did not start renumbering the label at the beginning of the third quarter, July 1, 1908, but continued the original numbering sequence. It also provides information about the volume of registered mail at the Cincinnati PO since the R# indicate there were 1081 covers mailed between June 22 and July 8, and another 1501 registered cover mailed between July 8 and July 16.

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The webpage for the Registered Mail Study Group, on the United States Stamp Society website, can be viewed here <https://www.usstamps.org/committees/registered-mail-study-group/>. It has been updated to include the link to the Form 1549A Census database on the Stamp Smarter website.

### Update for the “Kugel” Census of United States Exchange Labels on Registered Mail to Foreign Destinations, 1883-1911

One of my projects this first quarter of 2025 was to update the Master Excel file with all the cover images accumulated during the past several years. To provide some context, I have prepared a brief summary of the history of this project.

The first postal historian to execute a comprehensive study of the covers with the UPU mandated Exchange Office registration labels, was Barbara Mueller, who discussed the state of the knowledge regarding these labels in an article in **The American Philatelist**<sup>1</sup> in 1954, and then she followed it up with a series of seven articles published in **The Specialist**<sup>2</sup> in 1973. Her efforts resulted in the first effort at a classification scheme for these labels, and she was able to uncover a significant amount of background information about the production and use of these labels.

However, this was the pre-internet era, and the only way that postal historians could communicate reliability was in person or the old standby “snail mail”. In addition, copy machine technology was in its infancy, and many covers were examined in person when groups of collectors could meet, or were described by words rather than by photocopies or images, and the number of examples was relatively small.

<sup>1</sup> Mueller, Barbara R., “U.S. Registry Labels: A Preliminary Study”, **The American Philatelist**, Oct. 1954, p.21.

<sup>2</sup> Mueller, Barbara R., “U.S. Registry Labels: A Study of Types and Usages”, **The United States Specialist**, Oct. 1972-Oct. 1973.

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In spite of these limitations, Mueller was able to record and summarize the data from slightly more than 300 covers, although the majority of these were from the New York exchange office

Little additional work was put into the study of these covers for the next 25 years. The reason for the lack of interest is unknown, but I speculate it was simply the result of so few of these covers being available for examination at any one point in time. It was not until the internet became available to the average person in the late 1990s, and some of the larger philatelic auction houses began to explore the use of the internet to host their auctions catalogs, that the number of postal historians who had the ability to discover and study these covers “in absentia” developed into a critical mass and Al Kugel was one of these researchers.

His census of registered covers with exchange labels was created in the late 1990s through the efforts of Al Kugel, Eliot Landau, and Nicholas Lombardi, and first reported in the **Collectors Club Philatelist**<sup>3</sup>. The three researchers then went on to establish and become the core element of the Registered Mail Study Group (RMSG), a study group under the sponsorship of the United States Stamps Society.

The original notice regarding these labels in the Postal Guide identified that there were to be 22 exchange offices which would use these labels, In the years which followed, more exchange offices were added, bringing the final total to 39, but there are still twelve of these offices for which no covers have been discovered, and it seems likely at this time, those offices probably never handled any registered mail to foreign destinations.

In addition, during the early phase of the census, there was no effort to compile lists of covers with the labels which had been used at the New York, Boston, and San Francisco exchange offices because of the larger volume of mail that had been handled there.

Some of the members of the RMSG continued to collect data for the use of the exchange offices at the 24 smaller known exchange offices that used these covers. The number of exchange offices with covers known increased to 25 with the recording of the label from the Miami, Florida exchange office.

The RMSG operated informally during the next decade, and in 2010 they finally posted the first Excel spread sheet with a listing of all reported covers with exchange labels, which included entries for 474 covers on the USSS website RMSG webpage, with 327 of these being from the smaller exchange offices, and the balance from Boston and San Francisco. It appears that the general consensus was still that the potential covers from these two offices (as well as New York) were so numerous that recording their data would become too burdensome.

The death of Eliot Landau, chairman of the RMSG, in 2016 slowed progress with the collecting of data. Finally, in 2018, a new Excel file with an updated Kugel census was added to the RMSG webpage, this time with information recorded for 514 covers, and a new preliminary listing with 79 covers with Boston registration exchange labels and 228 with labels from the San Francisco Exchange Offices.

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<sup>3</sup> Kugel, Alfred F., “Update of U.S. Registry Labels for International Mail, **Collectors Club Philatelist**, Sept-Oct 2000, p. 277, and Nov Dec 2000, p. 295.

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During this initial collection of information about these covers, no effort was made to compile an archive of digital images of these covers, although the source of the information for each cover was recorded.

This author became interested in these covers with exchange labels about 2005, with the acquisition of a Galveston, Texas cover to Switzerland with a New York exchange. Curious as to why I had never seen one of these covers from a Texas post office, I began a search of the literature, and I eventually discovered both the articles by Al Kugel and the earlier articles by Barbara Mueller, which described the process behind their usage, and the early census results. Because my interest at the time was focused primarily on Texas registered mail, I decided it might be interesting to look for digital images of the registered covers which had been processed by the five known Texas based exchange offices, as well as other Texas covers that were processed with New York or other exchange office labels. This effort began with the scanning of cover images and descriptions from the pages of Schuyler Rumsey Sale#14, which included the A.R.T. Collection of these covers with exchange labels (Who was A.R.T., I have never discovered?), which included several Texas covers. The search continued with other physical and digital catalogs on the websites of multiple philatelic auction houses.

It soon occurred to me that eventually “someone” was going to want to construct a complete digital archive of images of these covers with exchange labels, so I began to download and archive any cover image which I discovered from the other exchange offices in the Kugel census. This effort in turn led to a decision to go “all the way”, and I began to also download images of covers with the New York, Boston, and San Francisco labels.

As this effort progressed, I quickly determined that any cover without date and full registry number on the label visible were going to be of minimal use in the analysis process. As a result, I began to limit my downloads to those covers for which I could readily identify the dates of the cover as well as the full label registration number. For nearly a decade, this was pretty much a solitary, personal project. Because the RMSG was relatively inactive during most of this time, there was no active effort to try and put together the resulting archive. Eventually I met other individuals who also had collections of these covers, and when convenient, these were shared with me.

The original Kugel Excel file format had only recorded a small number of data elements (fields), which I quickly realized were not sufficient to perform the type of analysis I thought would be most useful and interesting. Using the format of the RMSG Excel spreadsheet as a starting point, I designed an expanded version in which I added several additional data fields that would record additional information about each cover that I felt would be useful. In addition, I periodically archived a copy of my Master spreadsheet, which allowed me to go back and construct the Table described later in this article, which illustrates the growth of the tabulations for the number of covers from each of the exchange offices. I also went back into the original Mueller and Kugel articles, and I attempted to construct the counts of these covers from the exchange offices they discussed.

After several years of accumulating information and images of these covers, I decided to take a break from the data collection process, and I made the decision to prepare a “trial run” for some of the analysis that I had been considering for the New York Exchange Office covers. That effort was executed in September 2012, using data from 2586 registered covers which had the New York exchange labels. Out of this total of 2586



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covers, 1852 (71.6%) originated within the United States, and the balance, 744 (28.4%) originated from a foreign country, but transited the New York Exchange Office enroute to their destination. The breakdown of the labels by type was that EXCHANGE labels were recorded on 80% of the covers, and the remaining 20% were observed with the CITY label. The use of the other New York label types was negligible.

The overall results satisfied me that I was recording the necessary information, so I went back to “harvesting” cover images from all the usual sources, and even today, I probably add between 10 and 15 new examples of the New York covers per week to the archive. Fortunately, most eBay sellers are now including both front and reverse of these covers in their listings, and even many of the major auction houses have both images, which makes the harvesting process much more satisfactory.

Rather than try to describe all the results and conclusions of the analysis of those New York Exchange Office covers, I located my original 2012 report, which was never published, and received only a very limited distribution, added a cover page to it, and have included it with the distribution of this RMSG Newsletter as an Attachment to Issue Number 6 (identified as RMSG Newsletter No. 6A 😊). This allows everyone with an interest to read as little or as much of it as they might wish.

I do want to emphasize that this report was not really prepared (and especially not edited) for publication, so please excuse the warts and errors that may be present. However, I would be interested in helpful feedback on some of the material contained in the report.

Unfortunately, age and the expansion of interests has only allowed me time to harvest additional images of these New York covers, and I have not kept up with entering information into the Master spreadsheet I was using for New York, so further analysis such as was performed in 2012 is not possible at this time.

Early in 2025, I went through my entire archived folders of digital images of these exchange office covers, and prepared an update of the RMSG Master file, beginning with the previously published file on the Registered Mail Study Group Committee page.<sup>4</sup> When this exercise was completed, a total of 1320 covers has been recorded in the census, the total numbers of covers increased substantially from the count of 843 covers that were in the previous 2018 census.

With the assistance of Roger Brody, two new tables with this census information have been integrated into the RMSG webpage. Figure 1 nearby shows the **Links** section of that page which the viewer may use to access the database.

### Links (updated April 5, 2025)

- Registry Exchange Label Records [View Online Table] [Download XLSX]
- Registry Exchange Label Totals by Office [View Online Table] [Download XLSX]

**Figure 1.** The Link information to access the two Tables with information about the RMSG “Kugel Census.

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<sup>4</sup> Registered Mail Study Group, URL = <https://www.usstamps.org/committees/registered-mail-study-group/>, accessed April 5, 2025.

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The first entry, **Registry Exchange Label** Records, will display the full census of the covers of all exchange offices except New York. The [\[View Online Table\]](#) option displays the contents of the table in alphabetical order by exchange office, but the table can be searched and sorted, and then display all the data fields. The second option [\[Download XLSX\]](#) allows the user to download a copy of the complete table in the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet format, where he can maintain the copy or perform any data manipulations he desired.

The second entry, **Registry Exchange Labels by Office**, is a simple summary of the number of covers present in the census for each of the exchange offices. The user may view or download this table as well.

In the time interval between 2018 and the present update, several changes were also made in the data which was being collected for the census.

First, the date field in the previous Kugel Census reports was based on the mailing date of the cover. Subsequent research has shown that the significant date for these covers should be the date when the cover was processed at the respective exchange office. For newer entries, this is the date which is now included in the date field. For some of the older entries, this field has been updated when an image of the cover was available, but in many cases, it has not. In addition, three new fields for the three individual date components (day, month, and year) have been added to the Excel file, but are not visible in the online Table View. These were included to simplify the analysis of the covers from each exchange office by simplifying the ability to sort the census from a single exchange office by date.

In addition, to encourage contributions from the postal history community, we have added another new field which displays in the Table View, and which indicates whether we have an image of the cover, and if so, the “quality” of the image that we have in our image archive. This field has two components:

**Image quality:**        **A** = a high-resolution image scan in color;  
                              **B** = a low-resolution color scan (as from eBay or auction catalogs); or  
                              **C** = a photocopy from old auction catalog or similar source, or  
                              **NEED** = indicates that we do not have any image of the cover.

**Cover component:**        **(F)** = cover front; **(R)** = cover reverse, or **(FR)** = both front and reverse are available. A field entry of **A(FR)** thus indicates that we have a high resolution, publication quality (300dpi) scan of the cover, while **C(F)** would indicate we only have a photocopy of the cover front.

Anyone who can provide an improved image of any cover listed in the census is encouraged to submit it to the RMSG using the email at the top of the page.

For a historical overview of the growth of the current census over the past 50 years, I went back to the original articles by Mueller in 1973, and the articles by Kugel in 2000, and tabulated the number of examples they had reported for each of the exchange offices. I then supplemented this information from data in several copies of the Excel files I had created and archived during the past decade where I had some intermediate data available. This information was combined into the Table 2, which can be seen on a nearby



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page, **History of the “Kugel” Census between 1972 – 2025**. The current tabulation is presented in green in the first column. The older data is presented in chronological order to the right.

<b>Table 1</b>									
<b>History of the "Kugel Census between 1973 and 2025</b>									
	2025	2023	2018	2015	2013	2012	2010	2000	1973
<b>EXCH. OFFICE</b>	<b>COUNT</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Kugel</b>	<b>Mueller</b>
Baltimore, MD	12	12	10	8	6	5	5	3	0
Boston, MA	174	103	101	79	64	57	50	24	11
Brownsville, TX	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Cristobal, CZ	86	86	80	69	63	47	39	3	3
Douglas, AZ	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	0
Eagle Pass, TX	8	8	7	7	6	5	5	3	0
El Paso, TX	72	69	53	51	44	39	38	5	4
Havana, Cuba	19	19	12	12	10	7	6	0	0
Honolulu, HI	13	12	10	10	9	9	8	4	1
Jacksonville, FL	9	9	8	5	5	5	5	1	0
Key West, FL	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1
Laredo, TX	41	40	28	27	22	20	20	~5	2
Miami, FL	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mobile, AL	124	119	80	74	52	47	40	~15	5
Naco, AZ	4	4	4	3	2	2	2	3	0
New Orleans, LA	67	66	44	41	34	31	29	~10	5
Nogales, AZ	21	21	17	15	12	12	12	0	0
Philadelphia, PA	23	22	19	19	15	15	14	~12	11
St. Louis, MO	20	18	17	17	11	9	9		
San Antonio, TX	9	8	5	5	5	5	5	~2	3
San Diego, CA	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0
San Francisco, CA	460	247	228	197	148	120	97	50	20
San Juan, PR	13	11	9	8	7	7	7	4	1
Seattle, WA	51	49	32	29	24	24	24	~10	4
Shanghai	41	42	33	31	29	28	26	~10	0
Shanghai - Local	21	20	19	17	17	17	14	NA	NA
Tacoma, WA	20	20	15	14	9	9	9	5	1
Tampa, FL	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1320</b>	<b>1017</b>	<b>843</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Small Offices</b>	<b>686</b>	667	514	473	393	353	327	98	42

### Registered Mail Received by the R.F.D. Route Carrier

One of the more beneficial improvements to the postal system was the introduction of the Rural Free Delivery System in 1895. It provided direct daily delivery to many families in rural areas that only had the ability to get to town and their local post office once or twice a month. Of course, the negative effect was that many small, rural post offices disappeared. The **Official Postal Guide** for January 1906, at page 7,

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reported there were 76,688 post offices as of June 30, 1900, and that number had decreased to only 69,131 by June 30, 1905. Obviously not all post office closings were directly related to the introduction of rural routes, but there is no question it was a factor.

The closing of these post offices also introduced a new inconvenience to the postal customer who needed other postal services beyond the delivery of his mail. Very quickly, arrangements were made for the rural carrier to provide many of the services previously offered by the local post office, and he was equipped with the ability to sell postage stamps, to accept cash for the purchase of a postal money order, and to accept and registered mail provided by the patrons on his route. The registry service was initiated in some areas as early as April 1900, and during 1901 and 1902, the registry system was authorized on a route-by-route basis. The following entry shown as Figure 1 was found in the **Postal Bulletin # 6819**, dated July 16, 1902.

<p><b>The Daily Postal Bulletin,</b> ISSUED FROM THE OFFICE OF <b>GEN'L SUP'T RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE</b> <b>JAMES E. WHITE, GEN'L SUP'T.</b></p> <hr/> <p>NOTE.—This number of the Bulletin consists of two Sheets. Nos. 6819 and 6819a.</p> <hr/> <p><b>ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS</b> <b>For the Treatment of Registered Matter</b> <b>in the Rural Free Delivery Service.</b></p> <p>POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THIRD ASS'T P. M. GEN'L, REGISTRY SYSTEM, WASHINGTON, D. C., July 15, 1902.</p> <p>The following instructions are for the guidance of postmasters at offices having rural free delivery service, and they are to be preserved with the letter of instructions furnished to postmasters when the rural free delivery service is established. Additional copies of that letter, or of these additional instructions, may be obtained by application to the Third Assistant Postmaster General, Division of Registered Mails:</p> <p><b>MATTER RECEIVED FOR REGISTRATION.</b></p> <p>1. Postmasters at offices having rural carrier service, as well as all other postmasters, carriers in charge of rural free delivery stations, and rural carriers, are required by the Postal Laws and Regulations to register all mailable matter properly presented for that purpose.</p> <p>2. It is the duty of every postmaster to see that the carriers in charge of his rural free delivery stations, and his rural carriers, encourage in every legitimate way the registration of valuable mail matter, and to see that registry business is at all times properly conducted at all of his stations and by all of his carriers. (See Postmaster General's Order No. 763, page 879 of the January, 1902, Postal Guide.)</p> <p><b>HOW MADE UP FOR DISPATCH.</b></p> <p>3. Registered letters and parcels must be</p>	<p>of a rural free delivery station, rural carrier, or postal clerk, to whom he delivers the package.</p> <p><b>MATTER RECEIVED FOR DELIVERY.</b></p> <p>12. Full particulars of receipt of registered mail for delivery by rural carrier must be recorded on the delivery book immediately upon receipt of same at a post office or at a rural free delivery station.</p> <p>13. R. P. E.'s and registered tag envelopes, as well as the articles received therewith, must be back-stamped upon receipt of same, with the postmarking stamp of the post office or rural free delivery station. (See Section 849, of the Postal Laws and Regulations, edition of 1902.)</p> <p><b>DELIVERY BY RURAL CARRIERS.</b></p> <p>14. Rural carriers must receipt to postmasters, or to carriers in charge of rural free delivery stations, upon the post office delivery book, for all articles given them for delivery, entering complete description thereof in their carriers' registry delivery books.</p> <p>15. Rural carriers must take receipts from the addressees or other persons to whom registered articles are properly delivered, on their carriers' registry delivery books. Registry return receipts accompanying registered mail must be signed in the same manner as in the carriers' registry delivery books. The actual date of delivery must be written on the registry return receipt. (See Sections 855, 858 and 859, of the Postal Laws and Regulations, edition of 1902.)</p> <p>16. Rural carriers are obliged to deliver registered letters and parcels, in every instance, at the house or place of business of the patron on their routes to whom such letters or parcels are addressed, except when by arrangement or otherwise the addressee or a person duly authorized to receive and receipt for a registered article meets the rural carrier on his route; but in all cases the requirements of Section 15 of these instructions must be strictly complied with.</p> <p>17. If a rural carrier, with due authorization, delivers registered matter to another rural carrier for final delivery, he must obtain receipt therefor, upon his registry delivery book, from the carrier to whom he so delivers it; and the carrier so receiving the registered matter will upon delivery of the same take receipt therefor as provided in Section 15 of these instructions.</p> <p><b>REGISTRY SUPPLIES.</b></p>
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Figure 1a. Instructions for registration of matter by RFD Carrier, from Postal Bulletin #6819, July 12, 1902.

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### HOW MADE UP FOR DISPATCH.

3. Registered letters and parcels must be made up for dispatch from rural free delivery stations the same as they are made up for dispatch from post offices. The particulars of dispatch, such as R. P. E. numbers and dates, should be written on the stubs of the registry book.

4. The registered letter or parcel, with gray card registry bill (Form 1550) and registry return receipt (Form 1548) must be placed together in a registered package envelope, or in a registered tag envelope properly attached to the parcel, addressed to the same post office as the letter or parcel.

5. First-class matter too large to be inclosed in registered package envelopes must be re-wrapped in a strong paper wrapper, sealed, and a registered package envelope split open and so pasted thereon as to expose both front and back for address and record of transit.

6. Third and fourth class parcels too large for inclosure in registered package envelopes should have registered tag envelopes tied to them, in which will be inclosed registry bills and return receipts, but nothing else. A separate tag envelope must be used for each parcel. The tag envelope must be attached to the registered parcel by passing a stout twine around the tag and then through the eyelet holes, when it should be knotted loosely and then tied firmly about or at the cross-fastenings of the parcel.

7. Registered tag envelopes must be addressed, indorsed, and preserved on file, the same as registered package envelopes, and be numbered in the same manner. The tags must never be used on sealed matter, nor should postmasters rewrap articles upon which they are used, unless the original wrappers be in bad condition.

8. The R. P. E. number, name of the dispatching office, date of dispatch, and name of office to which it is addressed, must be recorded in the transit book. (See Section 10 of these instructions.)

### HOW DISPATCHED BY RURAL CARRIER.

9. Registered packages dispatched by a rural carrier must not be inclosed in locked mail pouches as on star routes.

10. Receipts must be taken on the post office transit book, from the rural carrier, for registered packages dispatched by him from a main office to a rural free delivery station thereof, from rural free delivery stations to the main office, or from post offices located on a rural carrier's route to other post offices.

11. The rural carrier will enter a description of the package upon his registry delivery book; and he will take a receipt for it, on that book, from the postmaster, carrier in charge

these instructions.

### REGISTRY SUPPLIES.

18. It is the duty of every postmaster to obtain all supplies for his rural carriers and rural free delivery stations, in the same manner as for his main office.

19. It is the duty of the postmaster at every office having rural free delivery stations to supply to the carrier in charge of each such station a registration book, a registry delivery book, a registry transit book, and an adequate supply of registered package and tag envelopes, gray card registry bills (Form 1550) and registry return receipts (Form 1548).

20. It is the duty of the postmaster at every office having rural free delivery service to furnish to each rural carrier one book of manifold registration receipts (Form 3897 R), one carrier's registry delivery book, and an adequate supply of "Information Cards" (Form 3898 R) for distribution to patrons along his route.

### REGISTRY REPORTS.

21. Letters and parcels registered at rural free delivery stations, and those registered by rural free delivery carriers, are not to be reported separately to the Third Assistant Postmaster General on Form 3848, but are all to be included in the semi-annual reports from the main office on that form.

When special reports are desired in relation to carrier registration or other features of the registry service, they will be called for and rendered on other forms.

EDWIN C. MADDEN,

Third Ass't P. M. G.

### THROUGH REGISTERED POUCHES.

#### New York to Buffalo, N. Y.

Commencing the 20th instant, New York will make an additional dispatch of through registered pouches on *Sundays* for Buffalo at 3.15 a. m. via the New York & Chicago R. P. O.

#### Baltimore, Md., and New York, N. Y.

On and after the 20th instant, Baltimore will dispatch through registered pouch for New York daily at 9.00 p. m. via the New York & Grafton R. P. O., instead of at 4.20 p. m. daily, except Sunday, by New York & Wash. R. P. O. New York will dispatch daily at 4.30 a. m. by New York & Washington R. P. O., instead of daily, except Sunday, as at present.

#### Ogden, Utah, to Reno, Nevada.

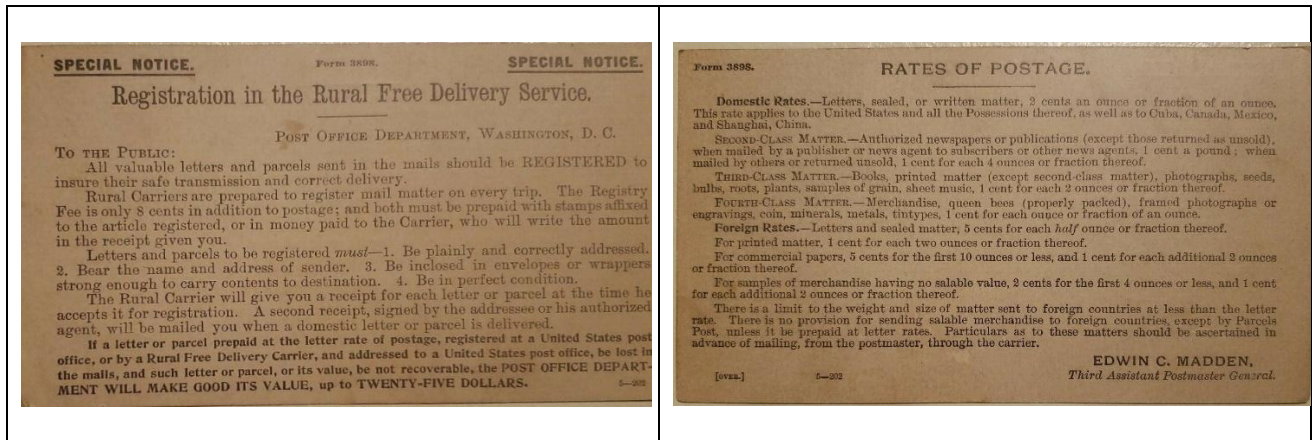
Postmaster of Ogden will dispatch through registered pouch for Reno via Ogden & San Francisco R. P. O. at 12.01 a. m., and omit present dispatch at 1.15 p. m. [16 July 02]

Figure 1b. Instructions for registration of matter by RFD Carrier, from Postal Bulletin #6819, July 12, 1902.

Some RFD carriers were issued also cancellation devices which identified their home post office and their route number was inserted in the cancel part of the device, similar to the device known as the Doane cancels. The RFD carrier was issued a registration book in which he was to record any registered mail he received on his route, and he was to make a notation on each letter with the registration number, but in the two examples shown here, it is not apparent that this was done. The postmaster at the home post office of the RFD route would then enter the information in his registration book, and he would provide the RFD carrier the receipt for his records.



## Registered Mail Study Group Newsletter



**Figure 2. Form 3898.** A postal card size notice with instructions to customers on a rural route. This is the second version of this notice, issued on July 1, 1902, which advised that the indemnity for registered mail was now increased to TWENTY FIVE DOLLARS. The first version was used between April 1900 and June 30, 1902, and advised that the indemnity was only ten dollars.



**Figure 3.** Registered letter mailed on RFD route 3, Feb 12, 1902, out of Fillmore, NY, sent to Green Hills, Ohio.

**Figure 4.** Registered letter mailed on RFD route 7, April 27, 1904, which operated out of Bliss, NY, sent to Attica, NY.

A PDF of a one frame Exhibit by Guy Purington, **Registration in the Early Years of the United States Rural Free Delivery System**, which was presented at the Richard Frajola sponsored Philatelic Digital Rendezvous in 2017, can be found here: <https://www.rfrajola.com/PDR2017/GP1/GP1.htm>.

### STAMP SMARTER LEARNING CENTER

<https://www.stampsmarter.org>

Throughout this and future Newsletters, you will see me frequently make a reference to resources that may be found on **Stamp Smarter**. This is the abbreviated name for the **Stamp Smarter Philatelic Learning Center**, a privately owned philatelic website operated by Don Denman. I find it to be a marvelous collection of materials on stamp collecting and postal history, and advise everyone I am a sponsor, a contributor, and content developer for the site. Don Denman stepped up several years ago when Tony Wawrukiewicz digitized and edited the complete series of the **Official Postal Guide**, but we were unable to have them

## Registered Mail Study Group Newsletter

integrated into the searchable Postal Bulletin website, Don came forward and they are now on the Stamp Smarter website. Since then, one of my continuing projects has been to make other older, and more recent, post office publications available on that website.

### COMMUNITY PROJECTS

#### Postal Forms Database.

The original pioneering work in documenting postal forms used by the United States Post Office department was done towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Anthony S. Wawrukiewicz and David Straight, and it was described in an article by Tony published in the United States Stamp Society journal, **The Specialist**, in the issue for April 2001. Tony and David continued to record these postal forms in an Excel worksheet, which was eventually published on the US Postal Bulletins website:

[http://www.uspostalbulletins.com/US\\_Postal\\_Forms.aspx](http://www.uspostalbulletins.com/US_Postal_Forms.aspx).

In 2016, Russ Ryle and Don Denman converted that spreadsheet into an on-line database format which is now hosted on the Stamp Smarter website, at

[https://stampsarter.org/features/NYReg\\_Forms\\_Home.html](https://stampsarter.org/features/NYReg_Forms_Home.html).

Since its creation, several students of these postal forms have been adding old and new varieties of all examples of these forms.

The Post Office Department has relied on part-printed forms (also called “blanks” by the Department) since the creation of the General Post Office under the Articles of Confederacy in the 1780s. The organization of these forms is awkward, as they often did not have simple or consistent titles, and it was not until the 1840s that they began to be found with identifying form “numbers”, and even then, the numbering was inconsistent. Much of the numbering became standardized in 1879, but searching for information about these forms in the database can require some imagination. If you are interested in postal forms, please examine this database and add what you can contribute to it. The general goal is to include examples of each type of postal form by name and number, along with the various revision and printing which occur as the postal system has evolved.

### Post Office Forms, Documents, and Circulars

As many readers have no doubt observed, I have a passion for the many postal forms and related paperwork that was used by the Post Office Department in both the movement of the mail as well as the operation of the post offices who served as the end point for the mails. I always try to include one or two of these forms related to the registry system in each issue of the Newsletter, but there are forms for many other functions of the postal system.

## Registered Mail Study Group Newsletter

I wonder if there are enough readers of this publication (and elsewhere obviously) to warrant the creation of a Postal Forms Study Group with a periodic Newsletter dedicated to such materials. If this is of interest to any readers, drop me a short note which expresses your interest, and identifies any specific type of forms and documents that is your primary interest. I would be willing to experiment with this for a while if there is a sufficient audience for the information, and an occasional volunteer who might share some of their materials, so I don't have to write everything.

*Mike Ludeman*

### MEMBER'S RESEARCH REQUESTS

Short research requests can be submitted for insertion in this section. Send these to me at [mike@ludeman.net](mailto:mike@ludeman.net). A small image can be inserted, but it is not practical to include a full-sized cover scan with one of these requests. To start this off, I will insert a few examples related to some of my personal interests. The code [25-1, 25-2] at the end of these examples will indicate the year and issue with the initial insertion. Since digital space has no costs, we should be able to manage to keep an insertion indefinitely or until withdrawn by the submitter. Some studies might be better presented on a full page, or perhaps two. Please submit these as a Microsoft Word document (\*.doc , \*.docx) and depending on the volume of these types of requests, I will plan to run a "Research Request" for at least four issues, and longer if it does not become burdensome.

#### Mail between US and Germany July-September 1914

Jacob Klerman [KlermanStamps@gmail.com](mailto:KlermanStamps@gmail.com).

I am trying to construct a census of US mail to Germany July-September 1914; that is around the outbreak of war in Europe. In part, this is in support of a planned multi-part article on this issue for the **USSS Specialist**. In part, this is towards an exhibit on US mail to Germany during World War I.

Those with relevant covers (or leads on who might have such covers) are encouraged to contact me with scans. If those owning covers are interested, I am willing to pay generously to purchase relevant material.

Thanks, Jacob

[25-2]



## United States Stamp Society

The United States Stamp Society (USSS) is a non-profit, volunteer-run association of collectors devoted to the study of postage and revenue stamped paper produced for use in the United States and U.S. administered areas. Once concerned exclusively with the production of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the USSS has expanded its coverage to all United States issues regardless of printer.

Membership information at [www.usstamps.org/membership](http://www.usstamps.org/membership)

Online store at: [www.usstamps.org/store/](http://www.usstamps.org/store/)

USSS, PO Box 3508, Joliet, IL 60434-3508



# THE “LAST” TREATY MAIL LETTER

Jacob Alex Klerman, Sanford, NC, USA.

This article describes a registered cover from the United States to Germany mailed as World War I broke out. Combining the markings on the cover with information from the diplomatic record; and from articles, advertisements, and the Shipping and Mails column in the *New York Times* we can infer the routing of the cover. In the sense discussed below, this cover represents the “last” mail at the US-Germany “direct mail” treaty rate.

## The Cover and its Markings

Figure 1 provides scans of the front and back of the cover (purchased on ebay in 2021).



Figure 1: Scans of front and back of cover

**Sender:** Corner card reads F.A.O. Schwarz / 303 Fifth Avenue / New York, NY". FAO Schwarz was a prominent toy dealer (founded 1862 in Baltimore by a German Jewish immigrant; from 1870 forward, in New York City), at a prestige address (Fifth Avenue).

**Addressee:** Dan Ley, Furth, Bayern, German Empire. No additional information.

**Franking and Rate:** The cover is franked by a 1¢ Franklin oval entire, and 10¢ and 1¢ Washington-Franklins, paying the single US-German "direct steamer" treaty rate (2¢) plus the (then current) registry fee (10¢).

**Postal Markings:** Purple "REGISTERED" handstamp. (As of 1911, no international registry label would be expected.) As per regulations, a black New York "E" mute oval (i.e., Station E) cancelling the stamps, but no date. On the reverse, as per regulation, two strikes of the New York Station E double oval registered handstamp in purple, dated July 31, 1914 and a New York Foreign Mail Registered oval in black, also dated, July 31, 1914.

There is also a black "5" in circle. I cannot explain that marking.

Finally, there is a Furth received mark, dated August 29, 1914. During this period, there were several sailings a week from New York to Germany, with transit time of well under two weeks. Thus, a transit time of 30 days is noteworthy.

### **Interpretation**

The United States would not enter WWI until April 1917. Great Britain would not enter World War I until August 4, 1914. Nevertheless, Europe had been moving inexorably towards war nearly from the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary by a Serbian on June 28, 1914.

Crucially for our purposes, anticipating the outbreak of war, on August 1, 1914, the German steamship lines suspended sailings "on account of the threatening situation abroad" (see the front-page story in the August 1 *New York Times* and Figure 2 showing the ad from North German Lloyd appearing in that issue).



**Figure 2: North German Lloyd advertisement (*New York Times*, 8/1/1914)**

Combining steamship sailing/arrival information, newspaper stories, and the diplomatic record, we can recover the likely routing. Given the franking for the US-German “direct” treaty rate, this letter was intended for the Hamburg America Line *Vaterland* which was scheduled to sail the next day (August 1), with a mail closing time of 8:30am and a sailing time of noon. Like other German steamers, the *Vaterland* never sailed. Instead, she remained in Hoboken. When the United States declared war in 1917, it seized the *Vaterland*, renamed her *Leviathan*, and used her for troop transport.

Other, non-German, steamship lines were still sailing. The *New York Times* (8/1/1914) states that the White Star Line *Oceanic*, also sailing 8:30am/noon August 1, “got *Vaterland* general European mail. German mail will be landed at Plymouth.” The *Oceanic* arrived Plymouth and then Southampton, Great Britain August 8, 1914.<sup>1</sup> As part of ongoing procedures to speed up mail delivery, mail for Great Britain would have been offloaded about a day earlier (i.e., 8/7/1914) at Cobh/Queenstown, County Cork, Ireland. From there, mail would have been forwarded to London via express train to Dublin, ferry to Wales, and express train to London.

From that point, there are three possible scenarios.

1. **Westbound on *Celtic* and then back to Europe—not plausible.** The British had suspended mail service with Germany. Great Britain had declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914. British Post Office Circular #2171, issued on August 6, 1915, announced that: “The mail service to Austria, Germany, and Hungary is suspended.” Given the British declaration of war two days earlier, this

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<sup>1</sup> Consistent with the Admiralty subsidy that the White Star Line had received, she was immediately recommissioned as an armed merchant cruiser, departing from Southampton on August 25, 1914, and running wrecking in the Shetland Islands (in northernmost Scotland) two weeks later, on September 8.

announcement should not have come as a surprise to British post office officials and staff. On the arrival of the *Oceanic* at Queenstown late on August 7, officials there would have been expected to telegraph the central post office authorities in London for guidance. London would have advised them to return closed mail bags for Germany, unopened, to the United States.<sup>2</sup>

How might the close mail bags have gotten back to New York and then to Furth by August 29 is unclear. The most likely, but not likely, possibility is that the *Oceanic*'s mail was transferred to the White Star Line *Celtic*. For three reasons, this seems unlikely. First, it is far from clear that an *Oceanic* to *Celtic* transfer of mail at Queenstown on August 7 was possible. The *New York Times* for August 9 reports that the *Oceanic* arrived in Plymouth on August 8 and other sources show her arriving in Southampton also on that date. This likely would have put her in Queenstown late on August 7. The *Celtic* is reported to have left Liverpool on August 6. This would likely have put her in Queenstown early on August 7. Exact times of arrival and departure at Queenstown are not available. Any connection would have been very tight and likely impossible.

Second, any connection at New York would have been tight. The *Celtic* arrived—that is, at dock—early on August 15. The USPOD New York harbor mail tender—depicted on the 10¢ 1913 parcel post stamp—would likely have met the *Celtic* late August 14 and gotten mail to the USPOD early on August 15. The Italian America Line *America* sailed at 11am August 15, with a mail closing time of 8am. This connection is possible, but tight. The Holland America Line *Potsdam* sailed at 6pm, but it is not listed as carrying mail. The Holland America Line was in negotiations with the USPOD about carrying mail. Perhaps the USPOD convinced the Holland America Line to carry mail.

Third, the connection on the European continent would have been tight. The *Potsdam* did not arrive in Amsterdam until August 27. That would only have left two days—in the middle of the war—to get mail to Furth. Again, possible, but unlikely. I have been unable to locate an arrival date for the *America*. She was slightly faster than the *Potsdam* (16 knots vs. 15 knots), the voyage to Naples was longer than the one to Rotterdam (4185 nm vs. 3383 nm), and the rail trip from Naples to Furth was also likely longer than the one from Rotterdam (1390 km vs. 664 km using the current road network; with likely better train service via Rotterdam). So, again, possible, but not likely.

2. **Later westbound sailing and then back to Europe—even less plausible.** The closed bag missed the connection with the *Celtic* and went back to New York on a later westbound sailing. As of the outbreak of the war (for these purposes, likely August 5, 1914), USPOD policy required sending mail to Germany on neutral steamers not stopping in a country at war with Germany. Scanning sailing dates reveals no eastbound sailings between the August 15 of the *America* and *Potsdam* (as discussed in the previous bullet) and August 25 (the Holland America Line *New Amsterdam*). Eastbound transit on or after August 25 would not have arrived in

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<sup>2</sup> A telegram to London was suggested as the expected reaction by Graham Mark (personal communication).

Furth by August 29. Furthermore, there are no arrivals in New York on Cunard (bracketing arrivals *Mauretania* on August 6 and *Laconia* on August 17), White Star Line (bracketing arrivals *Celtic* August 15 as discussed in the previous bullet and *Baltic* August 22), or the American Line (bracketing arrivals *Philadelphia* on August 12 and *St. Louis* on August 22).<sup>3</sup>

3. **On to Holland and Germany—most plausible:** The closed mail bag went through. Standard routing would have been Rotterdam, via the train route the Nimjen Holland and Emmerich Germany, and then via train to Furth. On this scenario, this letter would likely have reached Rotterdam on August 9 (or perhaps slightly later, if British mail to Holland was also delayed by the war) and needed nearly three weeks (August 9 to August 29) for the letter to get from Rotterdam to Furth. Given that the German railway system and most German men were involved in the war effort, three weeks from Holland to Furth is not shocking.

This scenario is inconsistent with the stated British POD policy. Given the suspension of mail, the closed mail should not have gone through. Perhaps, there was confusion about whether the suspension of mail service applied only to mail originating in Great Britain versus also to transit mail.

Diplomatic correspondence is consistent with this third scenario. British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Edward Grey sent a telegram to the British Ambassador at Washington, Cecil Spring Rice, on October 4, 1914, who left a copy at the US Department of State the next day. The telegram stated (<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1914Supp/d863>):

*No mails whatever have reached this country from United States for Germany since August 8. Mail received on that date was returned as undeliverable, postal communication between Great Britain and Germany having been suspended [emphasis added].*

The post office announcement of the suspension of mail with Germany was as of August 6. We would have expected the diplomatic cable to have said “since August 6.” The *Oceanic* would have “reached this country” on August 8. Perhaps the language of the cable was carefully written to (implicitly) acknowledge that mail arriving from August 6 to August 8 was forwarded to Germany.

## Discussion

This article has described a cover from New York to Furth Germany as World War I was breaking out. The cover was mailed at the “direct” treaty rate for the Hamburg America Line *Vaterland*. Due to the situation in Europe, the *Vaterland* did not sail. A news story in the *New York Times* states that the mail was transferred to the White Star Line *Oceanic*. The *Oceanic* arrived in Great Britain after the suspension of mail service to Germany.

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<sup>3</sup> Arrival dates for the years 1890 to 1930 can be found in the *Morton Allan Directory of European Passenger Arrivals* (Baltimore, Genealogical Publishing Company, 1980)

Nevertheless, this article's analysis suggests that the closed mail bag with this letter was forwarded to Germany via Holland.

The US-German treaty rate was only valid on steamers sailing direct. Pre-World War I, the only steamers satisfying that condition were North German Lloyd and Hamburg America Line. As of August 1, 1914, neither of those lines were sailing. No other lines began sailing that route. Thus, no mail was eligible for the treaty rate.

It follows that this cover can be viewed as the “last” registered cover mailed at a time when it plausibly would have been eligible for transport as per the treaty terms; that is, on a steamer sailing “direct” to Germany.<sup>4</sup> In fact, this letter was loaded onto a German “direct” steamer, then—when the sailing was canceled—unloaded from that German steamer and loaded onto a non-“direct” steamer.

--END--

Acknowledgements: Mike Ludeman and Graham Mark for helpful comments.

Those with additional insights or relevant covers are encouraged to contact the author at [KlermanStamps@gmail.com](mailto:KlermanStamps@gmail.com).

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<sup>4</sup> Some envelopes continued to be posted at the 2¢ treaty rate after August 1. Most of them were likely simple errors. The 2¢ treaty rate was identical to the 2¢ domestic rate. Even before the treaty rate became effective (January 1, 1909), some mail to Germany went through at the 2¢ domestic rate (multiple examples in the author's collection). Usually, the underpayment was detected; sometimes it was not.

Nevertheless, some of the mail posted at the treaty rate after August 1 was clearly intended for the treaty rate. It bears directives such as “via German steamer.” Most observers expected the war to be over quickly (as had been true of the Franco-German war of 1870-1871). The treaty rate was nominally still in effect through February 4, 1915 (see *US Postal Bulletin* #10656, 2/5/1915). The US Post Office Department appears to have held such mail pending “direct” sailings and—after some pause—released those envelopes for transit along with non-treaty mail on non-direct sailings.

