

	<h1 style="margin: 0;">Registered Mail Study Group</h1> <h1 style="margin: 0;">NEWSLETTER</h1>	
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CHAIRMAN’S COLUMN

Welcome to the ninth issue of our **RMSG Newsletter**. Again, I apologize for the long delay.

In this issue we have reports of a new cover in both the Domestic Registration Label Form 1549A census, and an updated report on the number of new entries to the Kugel Census of International Registration Labels as of the beginning of the current year. 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.

We have two contributed articles which round out this issue. If an article discusses a collecting area where you, as a reader, can contribute new information to the author, please contact the author and share your information. If I have failed to include a contact email, please contact me, and I will provide it.

In addition to the above contents, distributed with this issue is a separate index to the first two years (8 issues) of the **RMSG Newsletter**. It is a basic index, a compilation of the Table of Content from each issue, in

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chronological order. In the future, as we have more issues and articles, we can look at developing a more comprehensive index.

The charter of the Registered Mail Study Group is to facilitate the exchange of information among collectors who are interested in collecting, researching, and writing about registered mail. If you have a special project that you would like to share, please consider preparing a short, one-to-ten-page article, and send it along to the Editor for inclusion in a future issue of the Newsletter.

Another goal of the RMSG Newsletter is that publication of these articles in the Newsletter will create further interest among our members, and new information would be forthcoming, so that authors would be able to expand their original article, and might then submit it to the Editor of the United States Stamp Society, Andrew Kelley, at Editor@usstamps.org, for publication in **The Specialist**.

Mike Ludeman

Chairman, RMSG

mike@ludeman.net

Update of the US Form 1549A Domestic Registered Label Census

The Form 1549A cover census is maintained in an online database hosted on the Stamp Smarter website, which can be accessed at the following link: https://stampsmarter.org/features/NYReg_1549Home.html.

Another New Form 1549A Cover from Dallas, Texas

Mike Ludeman

As a collector of Texas registered mails, I am always on the lookout for new examples of interesting, registered covers that either originated in Texas or passed through Texas into Mexico. In issue No. 8, I reported the discovery of two new uses of the Form 1549A Domestic Registry Label used in Texas. Since that issue, I have acquired another cover (a front only unfortunately), from Dallas, TX, a registered cover with both the Form 1549A label, and the International Registry label (New York "EXCHANGE" label 29577), mailed from Dallas on Dec 12, 1908, to the office of the Italian Post in Constantinople, Turkey. This is now the 8th recorded cover from Dallas with this domestic label and the first cover reported with the combination of the two registry labels. Registered covers mailed from Dallas with the IRL to any foreign destination is scarce, my records have encountered only 5 or 6 in twenty years of looking. Because there is no cover reverse, we cannot report when it was handled in New York or when it was received in Turkey. Since the cover reverse was not present, I've included a magnified and filtered view of the domestic label processed by Postmark Reveal to help establish the date of mailing.

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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

Online store at: www.usstamps.org/store/

USSS, PO Box 1602, Hockessin, DE 19707-5602

Update of the Kugel Census for International Registration Labels

Mike Ludeman

The Registered Mail Study Group (RMSG) maintains a census list of all covers reported which have at least one International Registration Label (IRL) on the cover, applied at all USPOD Exchange Offices which exchange mail with foreign countries (except for New York). A copy of this Census is maintained on the United States Stamp Society website, at the RMSG webpage, found at:

URL = <https://www.usstamps.org/committees/registered-mail-study-group/>.

Since April 5, 2025, when the Census on the website was last updated, we have added a total of 56 new covers to this “Kugel” Census, bringing the overall count of recorded IRL covers to 1340. The majority of these covers were from the exchange offices at San Francisco, CA (22) and Boston, MA (13), but 21 additional of new IRL usages were reported from ten of the other smaller exchange offices.

The Table on the following page presents a historical reference to show the growth of the “Kugel” Census since the original articles published in 2000. Exchange offices with newly reported covers during this current period are displayed in green.

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Table 1 History of the "Kugel" Census between 1973 and 2026

EXCH. OFFICE	1/10/2026 Count	2025 Count	2023 Count	2018 Count	2015 Count	2013 Count	2012 Count	2010 Count	2000 Kugel	1973 Mueller
Baltimore, MD	13	12	12	10	8	6	5	5	3	0
Boston, MA	187	174	103	101	79	64	57	50	24	11
Brownsville, TX	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Cristobal, CZ	87	86	86	80	69	63	47	39	3	3
Douglas, AZ	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	0
Eagle Pass, TX	8	8	8	7	7	6	5	5	3	0
El Paso, TX	75	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	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	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	21	18	17	17	11	9	9			
San Antonio, TX	9	9	8	5	5	5	5	5	~2	3
San Diego, CA	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0
San Francisco, CA	482	460	247	228	197	148	120	97	50	20
San Juan, PR	13	13	11	9	8	7	7	7	4	1
Seattle, WA	53	51	49	32	29	24	24	24	~10	4
Shanghai	42	42	42	33	31	29	28	26	~10	0
Shanghai - Local	20	20	20	19	17	17	17	14	NA	NA
Tacoma, WA	20	20	20	15	14	9	9	9	5	1
Tampa, FL	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
Small Offices	671	650	567	490	417	347	317	192	98	42
Total	1340	1284	917	819	693	559	494	339	98	48
New York (EXCHANGE)	Not Included	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	2146	NI	NI	NI
New York (CITY)	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	432	NI	~1000s	56
New York (Utility)	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	10	NI	0	0
New York (Std)	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	4	NI	1	0
New York (3rd/4th Class)	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	4	NI	~5	2
Total							2586			

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 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 20th 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.

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://stampsmarter.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

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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

The Registry Delivery Notice

Mike Ludeman

Because registered letters were sent under rigid controls, each exchange during their travel was documented by the signature of the receiving postal employee, with the final signature being that of the addressee upon receipt. The situation often arose when the addressee was not available when the letter was presented for delivery, and a notice was provided to alert the addressee that he should call at the post office to receive their registered letter.

I recently added one of these Registered Letter Deliver Notices to my collection. I try to acquire examples of many post office forms as they evolve over the years. After receiving the new purchase, I decided to look through my collection of these forms, as well as some images of other examples which I have accumulated over the years, and I have created a small study that shows how these forms have evolved over the years.

The US Post Office Department began an organized number scheme for postal forms about 1879 when they introduced the use of postal card size items to serve in place of what had previously been paper forms.

The earliest form of this type which I have is an unused variety which was dated in the 1880s. These early forms were identified as **Form 1525**, with the form number located in various locations and in different formats. These were designated as Form 1525 until about 1911, when they were renumbered as Form 3849, although an early version from Washington, DC, is known in 1907. This time frame corresponded to some major changes in the way registered mail was handled beginning Jan. 1, 1911. The following is a chronological sequence of these forms. It is certainly not complete, and readers are encouraged to submit examples of similar forms from their collection for inclusion in later issues of the Newsletter, or to be published and distributed as a short monograph.

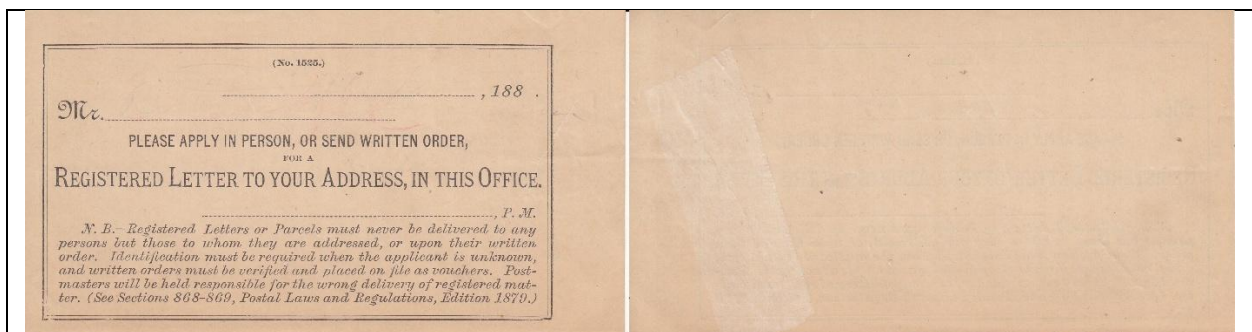


Figure 1. (Form 1525.) Form number in upper center. No printing on reverse.
Unused example of Registry Delivery Notice, 1880s.

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Figure 2. No Form number. Registry Notice. Privately printed version of a Registry Delivery Notice prepared by the post office at Omaha Nebraska. Used Nov 8, 1894.

Figure 3. (No. 1525.) Form number in upper left corner. Registry Delivery Notice. This variety seen used between Sept. 7, 1894 and Dec 27, 1895. No printing on reverse.

Figure 4. (No. 1525.) Form number in lower left corner. Registry Delivery Notice. No printing on reverse. This variety seen used Nov. 30, 1898

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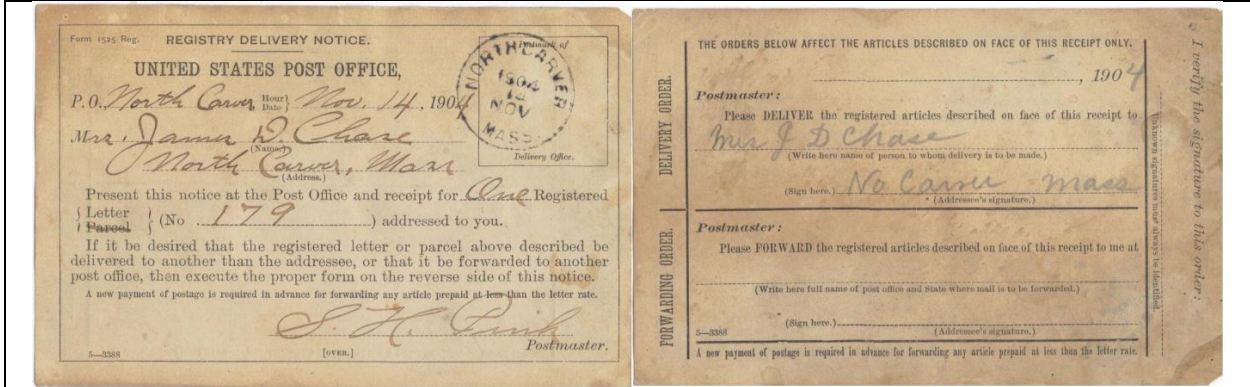


Figure 5. (Form 1525 Reg.) REGISTRY DELIVERY NOTICE. Form number in upper left corner. This variety seen used between Nov 14, 1904 and Sept 22, 1907.

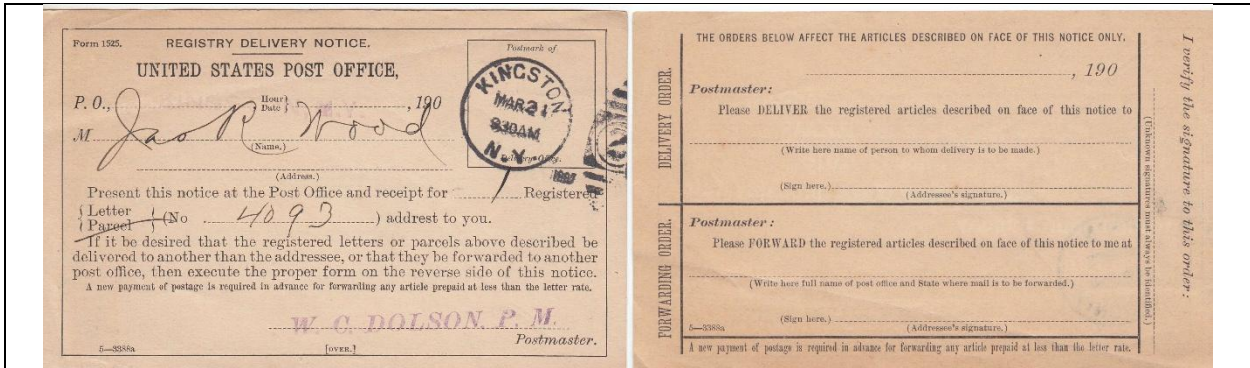


Figure 6. (Form 1525) REGISTRY DELIVERY NOTICE. Form number in upper left corner. Similar to Figure 5, but the word "Reg." not present after the 1525. This variety seen used between March 21, 1907 and June 1, 1907.

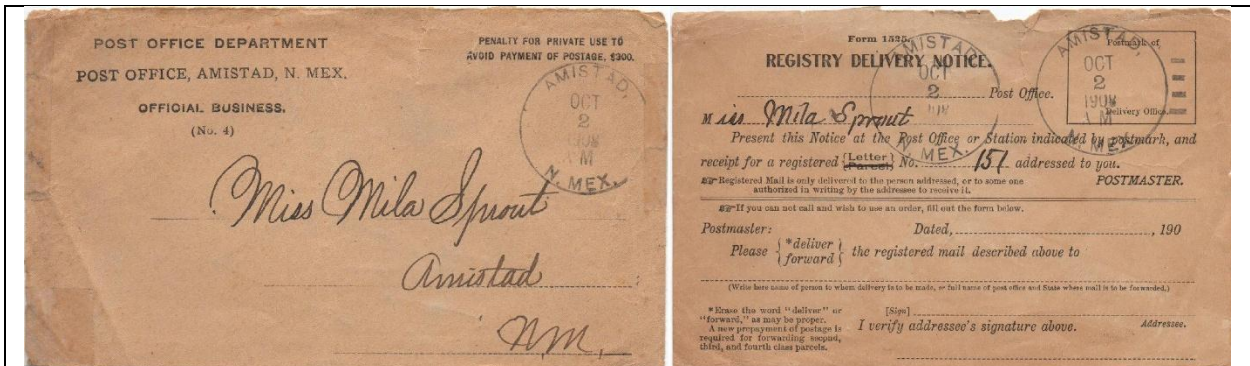


Figure 7. (Form 1525) REGISTRY DELIVERY NOTICE. Form number in upper center. This notice was mailed to the addressee, mailed in envelope on left above. No printing on reverse. This variety seen used Oct. 2, 1908.

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Figure 8. (FORM 3849 A – Reg.) REGISTRY NOTICE. Form number in upper left corner.
 Earliest example after form number changed from 1525 to 3849. Appears to have been printed for exclusive use at Washington, DC. Seen used Sept. 17 and 21, 1907.

Figure 9. (FORM 3849 A.) REGISTRY NOTICE. Form number in upper right corner.
 First general use example seen after form number changed from 1525 to 3849.
 Seen used August 15, 1912.

MEMBER'S RESEARCH REQUESTS

Short research requests can be submitted for insertion in this section. Send these to me at 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.

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Registered Mail between US and Canada

Jacob Klerman KlermanStamps@gmail.com.

Seeking scans of US to Canada registered letters 1875-1893. Single rate would be 13c or 12c. Note that these covers would not have the exchange labels.

[26-1]

Registered Mail between US and Newfoundland, or the US and the Far East (Malaya/Straits Settlements/Borneo and Java/Dutch East Indies), with New York Exchange Labels

Jacob Klerman KlermanStamps@gmail.com.

For future articles in my **Insights** series, I am looking for more examples of registered covers with the International Registration Labels (Exchange Office) which traveled to Newfoundland via the New York exchange office. I am also seeking additional covers addressed to the indicated destinations in the Far East that departed the United States through the Exchange Offices at New York or San Francisco.

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

[25-3]

Mail between US and Germany July-September 1914

Jacob Klerman 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]

IRL INSIGHTS: BOSTON TO NEWFOUNDLAND

Jacob Alex Klerman

KlermanStamps@gmail.com

This is the third in a planned series of short articles providing “insights” based on and adding to the information in the updated Kugel Census of International Registry Labels (IRLs; <https://www.usstamps.org/committees/registered-mail-study-group>).

The second article concerned Boston IRLs to Europe, noting that they all originated from the Boston area. This article concerns Boston IRLs to Newfoundland. The first section provides some basic context. The second section provides a summary of the relevant records in the database and discusses two covers. The third section considers the relevant USPOD guidance. The fourth section considers: Why Boston? The fifth section concludes.

These *IRL Insights* are not intended to be authoritative. Instead, as the title suggests, they provide “insights.” It is hoped that others will provide other insights—towards a more complete understanding of IRLs and their place in US registered mail postal history.

1. Canadian Context

To understand what follows, some Canadian context is crucial.

First, Figure 1 provides a map. Newfoundland is the area in red at the top right/northeast. Formally, Labrador is the continental part to the left/west; while Newfoundland—with more than 90 percent of the population—is the island to the right/southeast. Together, they made up the (single) province of Newfoundland and Labrador. These areas are well to the north and east of the Canadian Maritimes (in yellow on the map): Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Maine is the closest US state (in brown on the map). The other New England states are also relatively close (in yellow on the map). Distances are long. Boston to St. John’s Newfoundland is about 1,200 miles.

Second, traditionally, the US to Newfoundland route had been by sea, irregular, and long. By the start of the IRL period, Boston to Portland, Bangor, and Vanceboro (on the Canadian border). Then Vanceboro to Saint John, New Brunswick, and Halifax, Nova Scotia. Finally, by boat from Halifax, Nova Scotia to Newfoundland; a trip of two to three days. The intra-Newfoundland railroad was built between 1881 and 1897 to New Brunswick.

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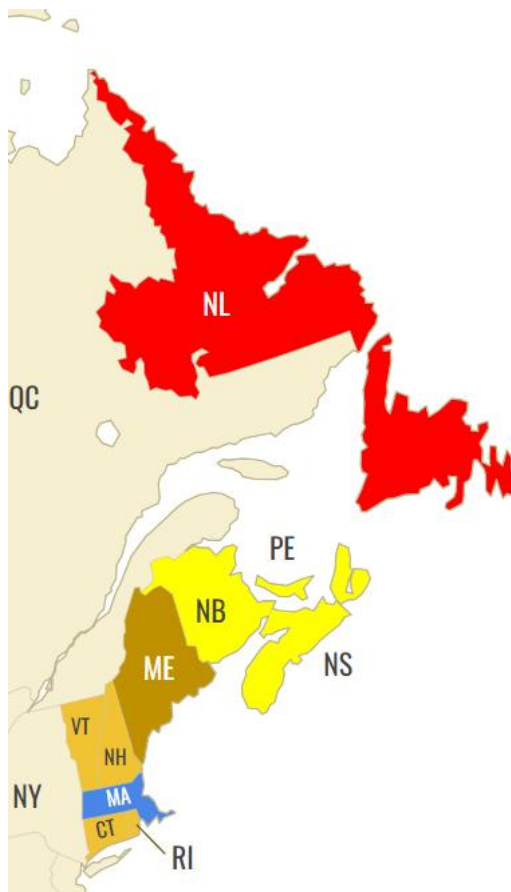


Figure 1. Map of northeast United States and Maritime Canada (courtesy of ultimaps.com)

Third, the 1867 British North America Act formed the Dominion of Canada from the former provinces of Canada West (now Ontario), Canada East (now Quebec), New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. Newfoundland would not join Canada until 1949.¹ Crucially for this article, since Newfoundland was not part of Canada, the 1875 Canada-US Postal Treaty—and the de facto postal union between the US and Canada—did not apply. Newfoundland was not an original signatory to the 1874 General Postal Union Treaty, but it did join the Universal Postal Union on April 1, 1879. Thereafter, UPU rates would apply until March 1, 1909, when a US-Newfoundland treaty set US-Newfoundland rates equal to the countries' domestic rates (Wawrukiewicz and Beecher, 1996, pp. 40-41; see there for pre-UPU rate history).

Fourth, Newfoundland was a truly trivial destination for US mail. The 1900 Annual Report of the Postmaster General (p. 999) lists mail by destination. Newfoundland received only 275,333 grams of letter mail. That was 0.3 percent of non-European mail.

¹ How, why, and when other provinces joined the Canadian Confederation is more complicated and not crucial for this article.

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2. The Basic Data from the Updated Kugel Census

As noted in the previous *IRL Insights*, the current version of the census has 187 valid records for Boston.² Of the 31 records not from the US to Europe, 11 are from the US to Newfoundland. These covers originate throughout the United States: one each from MI, NE, OH, and RI; two from NY; and five from MA.

The earliest Boston IRL recorded was mailed to Europe in 1892, one of five recorded that year. Boston IRLs for US to Newfoundland mail start the next year, with two in 1893. Counts are less than one per year, so it is hard to make much of the patterns. With that caveat, the last two are in 1905 and (perhaps) 1906. Before that, the last one was in 1900. Below, we consider a conjecture about this timing.

Figure 2 displays a cover from the US to Newfoundland via Boston. This is the earliest recorded Boston IRL with the “Utility” IRL, and “Boston” applied via handstamp. As is common with other Boston IRL’s, the registration number is in manuscript. This cover appears in the Schuyler Rumsey auction of the Meroni Collection of IRLs (Auction 60; Lot 1290). The franking of 18¢ is consistent with a UPU registered double rate letter. The letter is postmarked New York. This cover is thus strong evidence that—at least in some periods—US mail to Newfoundland was not routed through New York.



Figure 2. New York to Newfoundland, via Boston, February 4, 1896 (in census as 1906)

The auction catalog and the database show this cover as February 2, 1906. If that date is correct, this would be the last item in the database to Newfoundland, via Boston. However, that date appears to be an error.

² In contrast, “invalid” records are lacking some basic piece of information.

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Careful inspection of the image suggests that the date is in fact February 2, 1896. Unfortunately, no image of the reverse of the cover seems to be available). The franking is consistent with this interpretation. If the letter was truly posted in 1906, this would be a late (but not unheard of) usage of the two Columbians (1¢ and 10¢; issued 1893), of the two first Bureau Issue (2¢; issued 1894), and—especially—of the American Bank Note Issue (5¢; issued 1882).

Finally, note the directive in the upper left, which, though partially covered by the Boston IRL, appears to read “Via Halifax.” Given that 1896 would be before the start of regular ferry service (see below). Likely routing was on the Pickford and Black mail steamers from Halifax to St. John’s and St. Pierre. That service operated every other week or monthly during the winter, with service affected by ice conditions in the harbors.³

Four or perhaps five of the remaining—that is, not to Europe, not to Newfoundland— 20 Boston IRL records are Newfoundland related:

- 1901 Newfoundland to Germany, likely on a ship leaving from Boston.
- 1908 Newfoundland to Jamaica, again likely on a ship leaving from Boston.⁴
- 1895 Shanghai to Newfoundland; that is, from the US Postal Agency in Shanghai, through Boston, to Newfoundland.
- 1899 Austria to Newfoundland; again, through Boston, to Newfoundland.
- 1903 Alleghany, PA to St. Johns, Canada. No image is available for this cover, but it seems plausible—even likely—that there is a data entry error, and that the true destination is St. John’s Newfoundland.⁵

Figure 3 displays one of these non-standard Boston/Newfoundland records (also from the Meroni Sale, Lot 1289). The letter, posted October 5, 1901, originated in St. John’s Newfoundland (as per the return address on the far left) and was addressed to Germany. The letter arrived in Boston on October 10, where it received a Boston IRL (“Boston” pre-printed and handstamp number), and in Germany on November 11. This cover is thus another example of Boston mail to Europe, not routed through New York (see the previous *IRL Insights*; Klerman, 2025a).

Note the directive at the upper left “via New York / pr. ‘Bruce’s Train’”. The New York part of the directive appears to refer to a specific sailing for Germany (perhaps rather than a sailing from Boston; if so, it appears that the directive was respected by the Newfoundland post office but ignored by the Boston post office). The “Bruce’s Train” part of the directive appears to refer to the through rail service from St. John to Port aux Basques (in the southwest corner of Newfoundland; about 550 miles and 30 hours; see

³ This information is from ChatGPT which cites William Munro (“The Reid Newfoundland Company 1889-1923”, 1979) and Peter G Wells (“Maritime History of Canada”, 1988). I can find no non-ChatGPT references to either document.

⁴ There are five Boston IRLs to Jamaica. We plan to discuss IRLs to Jamaica in a future *IRL Insights*.

⁵ There is a Saint John, New Brunswick, even then, part of Canada. While errors are possible, by regulation, mail to Canada (including New Brunswick) did not get an IRL. Note carefully, that the New Brunswick city is “Saint” (not “St.”) and John (not “John’s”).

There is also a St. John’s, Newfoundland. Note carefully, the “St.” as in our database entry, and the “John’s” which seems closer to “John” than to “Johns” in our database entry.

They were the largest cities in their respective provinces and had similar populations in 1900; about 30,000 and 40,000, respectively (populations as per ChatGPT).

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<https://www.saltwire.com/cape-breton/the-ss-bruce-made-its-historical-first-journey-from-newfoundland-to-canada-in-1898-20296>) and then via an 8-hour, 100-mile trip on the new steamship *SS Bruce* to North Sydney (in northeast Nova Scotia; at the time, the fourth busiest harbor in Canada), which commenced service on June 29, 1898 (see Figure 4 and <https://www.marineatlantic.ca/journey/ss-bruce>).⁶



Figure 3. Newfoundland to Germany, via Boston, 1901



Figure 4. (first) *SS Bruce*, in the dry dock at St. John's Newfoundland. (Courtesy of the Maritime History Archive, Memorial University of Newfoundland, PF-284.121)

⁶ The *SS Bruce* is a prominent aspect of Newfoundland postal history. See for example the exhibit page on p. 79 of Piercey (2022).

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The only other Newfoundland record in the database is an 1893 record from Newfoundland to Australia, with a San Francisco IRL. IRLs were applied at the exchange office from which a cover left the US. Thus, for mail to Australia via San Francisco, we would not expect that cover to have a Boston IRL.

3. Official Guidance

Starting in 1890, the *Postal Guide* (p. 720) included a table listing exchange offices for specific destinations, including Boston for Newfoundland (see Figure 5). This timing is consistent with the start of Boston IRLs to Newfoundland in 1893.

FOREIGN DESTINATION.	UNITED STATES EXCHANGE OFFICE.
Newfoundland, and the French islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon.....	Boston, Mass.
All trans-Atlantic destinations, including Great Britain and all European countries, and British India, Straits Settlements, Siam and the Dutch Settlements in the East Indies . . .	New York, N. Y.
Central and South America (except Pacific ports), the West Indies (except Cuba, for which see table of international pouch exchanges), and islands off the Atlantic coast.....	New York, N. Y.
Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Guatemala, the Republic of Honduras, and British Honduras (when more expedient than to dispatch to New York as above)	New Orleans, La.
All trans-Pacific destinations, including the Hawaiian Kingdom, New Zealand, Tasmania, Australia, New Caledonia, Japan, the Chinese ports, and the East Indies (except British India, Straits Settlements, Siam, and the Dutch Settlements),.....	San Francisco, Cal.
Pacific ports of Central and South America	San Francisco, Cal.

Figure 5. January 1890 *Postal Guide* list of exchange offices for foreign registered mail.

This routing is consistent with other mail for the Canadian Maritime provinces; that is, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Since the mid-1880s, the *Postal Guide* had published special separations for registered mail to Canada, as well as Cuba and Mexico (but not Newfoundland). For most of the New England States, those separations had called for sending mail to the Maritimes—New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Islands— through Boston. The exception was registered mail from Maine, which was to go via Portland.

Finally, note that starting in 1895, the foreign exchange office table includes a footnote: “Parcel-Post registered matter for Newfoundland should be billed to New York.”

4. Why Boston?

From the original Cunard route in 1850, there had been regular sailings between Boston and Halifax. From 1845, there had been regular sailings to Saint John, New Brunswick. *Postal Guides* for the 1880s, show only (regular, non-registered) sailings from Boston in some periods, and sailings from both Boston and New York in other periods.

From 1876, there was regular rail service from Boston to Halifax, Nova Scotia. The last leg was regular ferry service from North Sydney Nova Scotia to Port Aux Basques Newfoundland, which started in 1898.

The paucity of database records after 1900 might suggest that, before the ferry was completed, mail went by rail to Boston and then by direct ship to Newfoundland. Perhaps, once the regular ferry service started

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registered letters went to New York—where they got a New York IRL, by rail to Portland and Halifax, via the ferry, and then on to destinations in Newfoundland.

The cover displayed in Figure 6 is consistent with this interpretation. It was mailed from Hoboken NJ to St. John's, Newfoundland. The cover is postmarked December 2, 1902, which is after most (but not all) of the Boston IRLs to Newfoundland. Given that Hoboken is across the Hudson River from New York City, it is also possible that local New York mail to Newfoundland was handled differently.

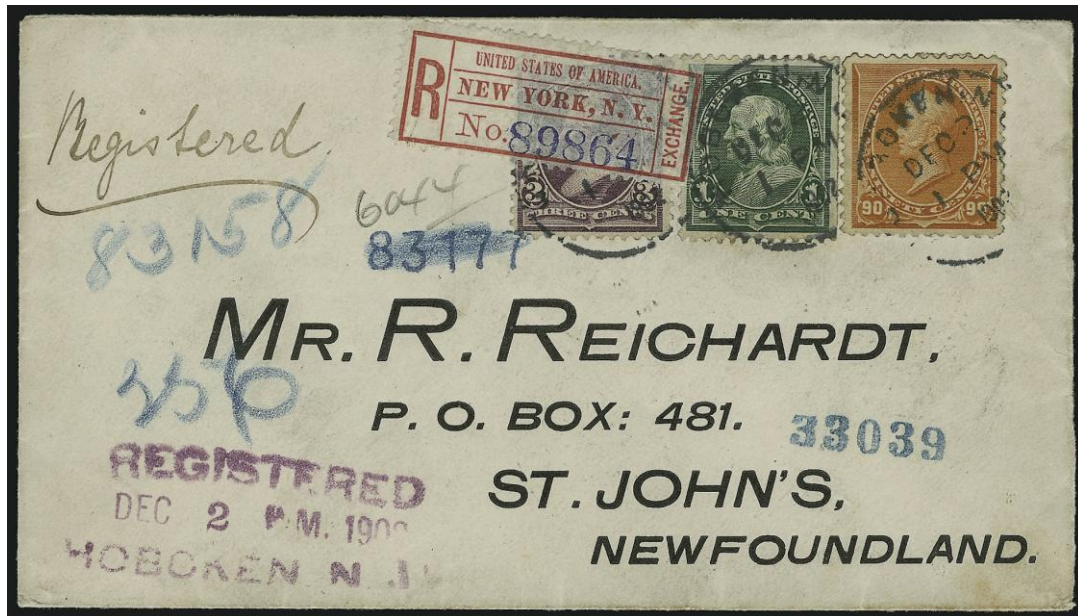


Figure 6 Hoboken NJ to St. John's Newfoundland, December 2, 1902, with a New York Exchange IRL

Two other aspects of this cover are worth noting. First, the franking is 93¢; consistent with 17 times the UPU rate. Second, the envelope has a pre-printed addressee for R. Reichardt. According to Walske and Willing (2007) and Walske (2009), R Reichardt was an alias for the musical instrument maker, stamp dealer, and sometime philatelic forger, E.R. Krippner. Walske reports that Krippner/Reichardt had been in Hoboken in 1897 and arrived in St. John's in 1899. Walske (2009) shows another cover with this pre-printed address. The high multiple might be for a letter containing stamps.

Once we revise the date for the item displayed in Figure 2, the only post-1900 item to Newfoundland with a Boston IRL is a letter from Williamsville MA date June 9, 1905. Williamsville MA is about 70 miles west of Boston. The first two *IRL Insights* (Klerman, 2025a, 2025b) argued that mail originating from close to exchange offices was more likely to exit the US through that post office and port. This might suggest a similar pattern for Newfoundland. Perhaps starting approximately 1900, mail to Newfoundland was routed via New York and would have received a New York IRL. This item would then be interpreted as a local exception (consistent with the patterns for mail to Europe from Philadelphia and Boston—as discussed in the first two *IRL Insights*). Continuing with this line of argument, note that the 1900 item is from Woonsocket RI, also near Boston (about 50 miles south).

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The fact that mail from New England to the Canadian Maritimes continues to go through Boston mitigates against that interpretation. Perhaps the volume of mail to Newfoundland was insufficient to support mail from Boston, while the volume of mail to Maritimes was larger, supporting mail from Boston. There are simply too few covers to be sure. More evidence of New York IRLs to Newfoundland would be informative.

5. Discussion

This is the third in a planned series of *IRL Insights*. This one has discussed Boston IRLs on mail to Newfoundland. There is clear evidence of registered mail to Newfoundland through Boston. As will be true for many of these *IRL Insights*, we are limited by the lack of information on New York IRLs.

Those with additional insights are urged to contact the author. Others interested in contributing "IRL Insights" are urged to contact the *Newsletter* Editor.

Acknowledgements.

The images from Rumsey Auctions are used with permission. The image of the SS Bruce is provided by and used with the permission of the Maritime History Archive, Memorial University of Newfoundland. This article would not have been possible without Mike Ludeman's yeoman efforts on the Kugel database. More broadly, this article has benefited from numerous email conversations with Mike, which have greatly improved my understanding of these issues. Remaining errors are solely mine.

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REGISTERED PACKAGE ENVELOPES

The “Red Band” Census

Mike Ludeman

With the establishment of the Registry system in 1855, the Post Office Department now had the new problem of developing a system to secure the registered mail as it traveled from the origin post office to its destination. The combination of registry books, registry bills, return registry bills, all provided the means to track the movement from origin to destination, but did little to secure the physical envelope during its travels.

In January 1867, the POD published a new pamphlet of instructions, “**REGULATIONS RESPECTING THE REGISTRATION OF LETTERS**” and their use was defined on page 5, Section 2, which can be found on the Stamp Smarter Learning Center website at URL=

<https://stampsmarter.org/learning/download/RegulationsRespectingTheRegistrationOfLetters.pdf>.

This publication announced the introduction of the Registered Package Envelope (RPE), a secure envelope, made of a heavy card stock, measuring 5” x 10”, which was designed to contain a small number of registered letters. At the originating post office, all registered letters addressed to the same destination, would be docketed on both a Registered Letter Bill and a corresponding Return Registered Letter Bill (printed together on a single sheet), and the registered letters would be secured in the RPE, and these two items would be secured in a separate first class (official POD) envelope addressed to the same destination office. The RPE had an adhesive flap, which when sealed, was virtually impossible to be opened again without leaving a trace of the fact it had been opened. Instructions on the RPE directed the postmaster at the destination post office to open the RPE, remove the registered letters(s), then check them against the corresponding Registered Letter Bill/Return Registered Letter Bill, and if the contents matched, then the Return Registered Letter Bill would be marked “CORRECT” and returned to the postmaster at the originating post office. That postmaster would preserve this Returned Registered Letter Bill in his records as proof that the letter had been properly received at the destination.

The first series of these RPE were manufactured under the contracts with the same vendors who supplied the postal stationery (PSE) and postal cards (GPC), but carried no franking, as they were not actually accountable paper, but simply a postal form that happened to be an envelope, and which could be conveniently manufactured by the existing vendor.

This first series of RPE were also very distinctive in appearance, as they consisted of two broad red bands which ran horizontally across the front and reverse of the envelope. The front also has locations marked for the originating post office to apply a postmark and the address of the destination.

Approximately 15 years ago, I joined with several other collectors to try and develop a handbook which described the many varieties of these RPE from their introduction in 1867 until the end of their use in 1911. Over time, we learned that these first series of RPE had been manufactured under contract with three

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vendors: George F. Nesbitt & Co (~1867-June 30, 1870), Dempsey & O'Toole (July 1, 1870 - June 30, 1871), and Morgan Envelope Co (July 1, 1871- ~end 1871).

By pooling information from our collections, we began to refer to them as the "Red Band" variety. This was convenient, because subsequent varieties of the RPE were printed starting in 1872, and each of those included an instructional box which was signed by the then current Third Assistant Postmaster General, beginning with W.H.H. Terrell, and then E.W. Barber. We ended up identifying these later issues in our discussions by the name of the corresponding Third Assistant PMG, so this gave us a consistent nomenclature for each group.

We quickly discovered that these Red Band envelopes were not very common. Of course, there were fewer registered letters in the 1867-1872 period than later, and there was the usual rule that these RPE were to be preserved by the destination post office for either one or two years, after which they could be sold for wastepaper, with proceeds retained by the postmaster. As a result, most of these ended up as pulped paper. Our solution was to start our own census of the surviving copies of these "Red Band" RPE's. The initial survey effort held constant at between 20 to 30 RPE for nearly ten years, with maybe one new example being encountered each year. Suddenly a large trove of registered materials from Forestville, Minnesota appeared on eBay which was acquired by one of our census team members. This trove added another 32 entries to our census.

During 2025, I was able to acquire three additional examples of these "Red Band" RPEs, and more recently, I was sent a scan of one other new example. Over the years, we regularly made inquiries to other collectors to determine if they had examples we could add to our census. Even with these efforts, we have only identified 67 of these early RPEs to date, with 20 from Nesbitt, 32 from Dempsey & O'Toole, and 15 from Morgan. The lesser number from Morgan was attributed to the end of the production of the "Red Band" RPE at the end of 1871.

As we acquired more examples, we began to look for printing and typesetting variations that might allow us to better distinguish when each envelope had been produced. Over time, we identified ten distinct variations that we believe represented different printing times and printing plates or electrotypes. If there is interest from our readers, we can present some of this information in a later issue of the Newsletter.

Dating these red band covers was difficult. While these RPEs had postal date stamps from the originating and destination post offices, as well as occasional markings applied in transit, few post office date stamps from that era included the year date. Occasionally a Returned Registered Letter Bill would still be present in the RPE, and it would have a year date that allowed a more precise date of use.

In the hope that we might uncover more of these for our census, I have illustrated the two major formats for these "Red Band" RPEs. The first format has the words "REGISTERED PACKAGE" and "ENVELOPE" on two lines within the upper red band, while the second format has only the words "REGISTERED PACKAGE" in one line in the upper red band.

If any of our readers have one or more of these "Red Band" RPE's, please send a scan to me. We prefer 300 dpi and the JPG format, but if you don't have a scanner, a clear photograph will be sufficient. Both sides of the RPE are desired. Only the front is illustrated here.

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Figure 1. The Registered Package Envelopes produced by both Nesbitt and Dempsey & O'Toole had the two line "REGISTERED PACKAGE / ENVELOPE." in cream (negative) text in the top red band.

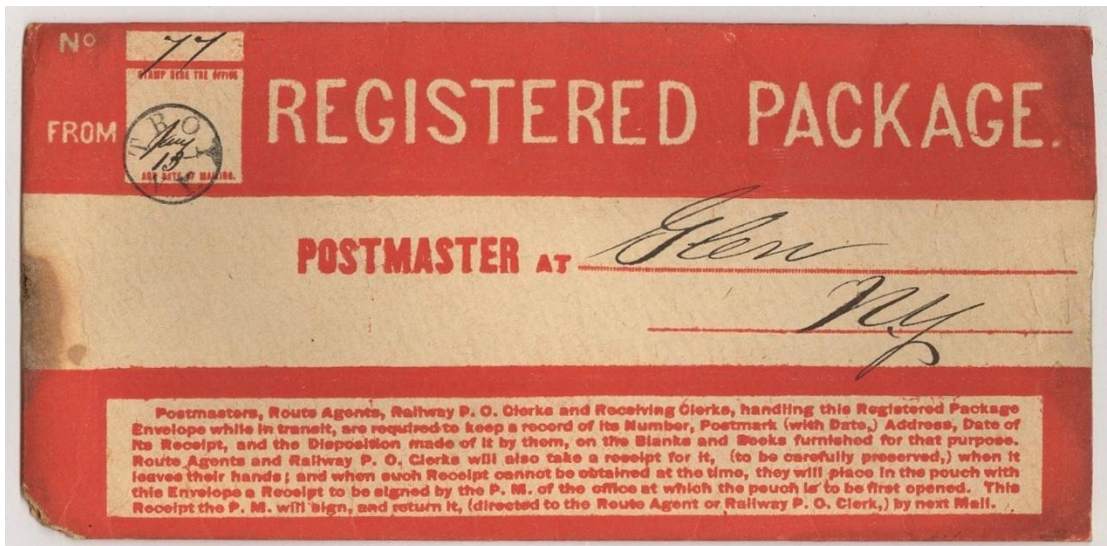


Figure 2. The Registered Package Envelopes manufactured by Morgan had only the one line "REGISTERED PACKAGE" text in the top red band.

IRL CENSUS: SOLO INTERNATIONAL USES OF THE 13¢ WASHINGTON-FRANKLIN

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In the February 2009 *US Specialist* (“Washington-Franklin Head Issues Committee”, pp. 53-54), Paul Bourke—then the incoming Chair of the Washington-Franklin Head Issue Committee—solicited:

... volunteers to help conduct a census of stamps on cover and unusual uses of the stamps in order to form an omnibus data base of what is out there.

For example, I think it would be valuable to know how many 50¢ and \$1 Washington heads are known on cover, tag, piece or whatever. I would make the same comment about the AEF Booklet Pane stamps, or the 13¢ Franklin head paying an exact rate – such as first class postage plus registry or special delivery fee – during the War Emergency rate period; you may be surprised at how few there are.

As far as I can tell, little came from Bourke’s plea of nearly three decades ago.

I would like to renew Bourke’s plea with respect to international registered mail. I share Bourke’s generic sentiment, “you may be surprised at how few there are.”

This is the first of a series of articles presenting very preliminary census information and soliciting additional examples. You might send such additional examples to me. Alternatively, the Editor of this *Newsletter*, Mike Ludeman, has assured me that he would be willing to publish brief articles with no more than a high-quality scan of the front and back and a brief description of the item. Of course, he and I also encourage longer and more detailed articles.

To start this series, consider a variant of Bourke’s original plea: solo international registered usages of the 13¢ Washington Franklin (W-F) Washington head issue. The “bluish-paper” variety Scott #365) is known from 16 February 1908, but is exceedingly rare (apparently, no known covers). It is unlikely, but possible, that a solo international registered cover with the bluish paper variety will come to light. The regular version is known from 19 January 1909 (Scott #339). That stamp is not rare, but solo international registered examples seem to be.

This is an important case. The stamp was issued to pay the, then current, UPU registered single rate of 13¢ (5¢ for the UPU rate + 8¢ for the registration fee). On 1 November 1909, the domestic—and therefore—the international registration fee increased to 10¢. At that point, the main justification for the stamp disappeared. The rate/franking combination was therefore only possible for a little more than 10 months.

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Moreover, my sense is that solo registered covers are uncommon. Unless one had regular international registered mail, it was easier to just make up the rate with lower value stamps. Plus, the 13¢ Second Bureau Issue (2BI) remained valid. Some who regularly used a 13¢ solo franking plausibly still had 2BI copies around. (This suggests looking for 13¢ 2BI issues after 19 January 1909; I leave that for a later column.) It is therefore not surprising that examples appear to be rare.

It is, nevertheless, surprising how rare they are. For more than a decade, I have been intensively collecting US registered mail to Germany in the early 20th century. Germany appears to have been the most common destination for US registered mail. In 1909, about half of US mail to Germany went at a treaty rate, but there is still plenty of non-treaty rate mail. Nevertheless, I have never personally seen a 13¢ W-F solo usage. Similarly, I have not seen any offered on eBay or anywhere else. I would very much like to own one, but I do not. The same rate should be available to any UPU country. Perhaps I missed one by only searching on Germany.

Here are the three covers which I have identified, only one of them to Germany:

In Part VI of his *US Specialist* series “Why Collect the Washington Heads? A 100th Anniversary Tribute” (April 2009, 80/4, pp. 174-181), Larry Weiss—the then current Chair of the USSS Washington-Franklin Heads Study Committee—showed an example. It was mailed from Cleveland OH on 15 October 1909—about two weeks before the end of the rate regime—for Leipzig, Germany, with a New York Exchange IRL.¹ The back of the cover has a black New York Foreign Mail double oval received postmark for the two days later (17 October 1909; Cleveland should have been a short overnight trip; unclear why it took so long) and a purple double circle US Sea Post Registered handstamp for 19 October 1909. There is no receiving date stamp. Manuscript docketing appears to indicate received 1 November 1909. Travel time of 12 days from New York is plausible. This cover is illustrated nearby as Figure 1. Weiss states: “The cover bears an unusual US Sea Post registry handstamp on the back” (p. 178). This statement appears to be imprecise.² While the US Sea Post dates back to 1891,³ through the mid-1900s (i.e., roughly 1907), they did not backstamp registered mail. They started backstamping registered mail about 1908. This cover is an example. I have ongoing work trying to establish when Sea Post backstamping began. As of now, I have identified no written source on the issue.

¹ This same cover also appears (in black and white; unlike the Weiss image which is in color) in Paul Bourke’s “Exploring the Washington-Franklin Era Part XVI” (*US Specialist*, April 2004, pp. 171-179). That the same cover was used in both articles suggests just how rare this franking is (or just that the cover passed from one collection to the other).

² Piszkiwicz (2015, 349, in the *US Specialist*, emphasis in the original) states: “While registered letters **backstamped** by Sea Post offices can be found occasionally (most frequently letters from Germany to the United States sorted to various U.S. exchange offices by U.S.-German Sea Post Offices), registered mail **originating** at Sea Post offices is nearly impossible to find.” Even this statement appears to overstate the rarity of backstamping. My review of covers from the late-IRL period suggest that—unlike patterns earlier in the decade and in the 19th century—suggests that roughly half of all registered covers are backstamped. This seems about right, given that Cunard never had Sea Post and the French Line only had Sea Post from 2012 (except for an experimental service for a few months in 1909; the White Star Line had had a Sea Post from 1904; the US and German lines from the early 1890s). I have ongoing work trying to establish an exact date.

³ For more on US Sea Post service to Europe, see: <http://www.tpo-seapost.org.uk/tpo2/spus.html>.

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Figure 1. A solo use of the 13c Washington-Franklin on a cover from Cleveland, Ohio to Germany, 15 Oct. 1909.

- The “Washington-Franklins 1908-1922: Earliest Documented Usage” exhibit (on the USSS Exhibits web page) includes an image of a cover from Brendale PA (a small coal mining town; likely population under 500; with a significant Italian population) to Palermo, Italy dated 8 March 1909 (cancel is likely a Type 3 Doane; i.e., four thick bars; issued by USPOD 1905-1906, but continuing in use for at least a decade thereafter). The cover has a partially pre-printed address, in Italian. No image of the reverse is provided. This cover is illustrated as Figure 2.

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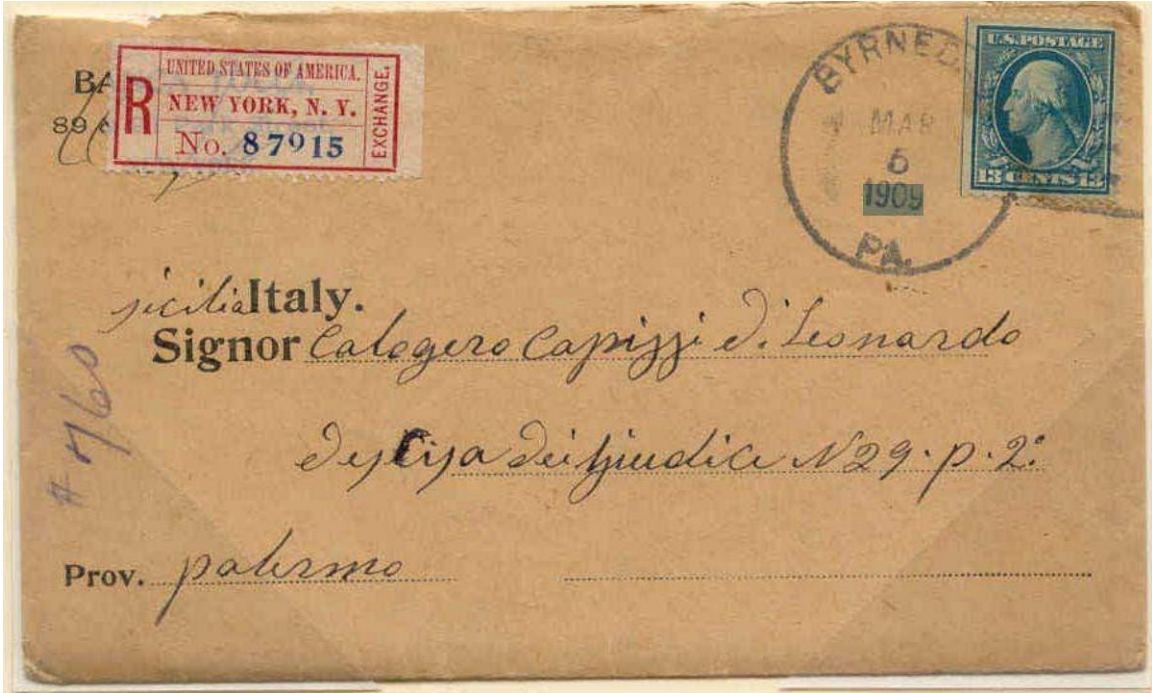


Figure 2. The earliest recorded use of the 13 cent Washington Franklin issue on a cover from Byrnedale, PA to Palermo, Italy, 8 March 1909

- The Siegel sale of the Haber Collection of 1909 issues (Sale #1283, Lot #1576) includes a letter from Utica NY to a Jewish charity in Jerusalem (Palestine), dated 15 September 1909. The cover is cancelled with a Utica double mute cancel. The front also has a purple Utica cancel and a New York Exchange IRL. There is a large manuscript cross from the top to bottom of the cover and (approximately) left to right; it is off kilter, so it looks sort of like an X. I presume this was added by the Ottoman Empire (that controlled Palestine at this time) and is similar to British usage that included such crosses on registered letters. No image of the reverse is provided. This cover is illustrated here as Figure 3.

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Figure 3. Utica, NY to Jerusalem, Palestine, 15 Sept. 1909 (image courtesy of Siegel Auctions; reverse from a listing on Delcampe, Aug 2017.)

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This third cover appears to be the only one that Siegel has ever sold. Preliminary searches of the Kewriga, Bennett, and Rumsey sites turn up nothing as well. Of course, perhaps I missed something. Those with other examples should please contact me.

Acknowledgements.

The image from Siegel Auctions is used with permission. This article would not have been possible without Mike Ludeman's yeoman's work on the USSS Registered Mail Study Group. The article has benefited from numerous email conversations with Mike that have massively improved my understanding of these issues. Remaining errors are solely mine.

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List of Mails to be made up by the Sea Post Offices: New York-Bremen and New York-Hamburg.

URL = http://www.tpo-seapost.org.uk/tpo2/downloads/sp_list_of_mails_to_be_made_up_by_the_sea_post_offices.pdf.