

	Registered Mail Study Group NEWSLETTER	
Issue No. 10		April 2026
https://www.usstamps.org/committees/registered-mail-study-group/		

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IN MEMORIAM – Jeffery Shapiro

The following was posted on Richard Frajola’s Philamercury Board on August 4, 2026. I am including it here because of Jeff’s long association with the United States Stamp Society.

With sadness and a deep sense of personal loss I learned of the passing of Jeff Shapiro on August 3 in Fayville, Massachusetts. Jeff Had been ill for some time and passed peacefully in his sleep. Jeff was not only a knowledgeable philatelist, and accomplished exhibitor, he was a servant to philately. Jeff has been a member of the Board of Vice Presidents of the American Philatelic Society, a board member of the Military Postal History Society, the Chairman of the Prexie Era Committee of the United States Stamp Society, an accredited APS judge, a volunteer at the Spellman Museum and a stalwart member of the Puget Sound Collectors Club. For years Jeff was a leader in the New England Federation of Stamp Clubs and instrumental in the success of the Boxborough Stamp Show. I am sure there are more organizations and societies he was involved with that I am not aware of. He put together award winning exhibits of German Inflation and Presidential Series postal history as well as other exhibits and was working towards his "30 frame" exhibit of the Win the War stamp.

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Besides his broad and deep knowledge of postal history and his great eye with a knack for finding diamonds in the rough he had an endearing and self-deprecating sense of humor. Many of us have lost a dear friend and mentor. I will greatly miss "dirtyoldcovers".

--- Albert Briggs.

CHAIRMAN's COLUMN

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

In this issue we have reports of new covers in both the Domestic Registration Label Form 1549A census, and the Kugel Census of International Registration Labels. 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 again have several 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.

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 a 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 Plainfield, NJ

Mike Ludeman



This registered cover, mailed from Plainfield, NJ, appeared on eBay earlier this year. It is the third known cover with the Form 1549A domestic registration label recorded from that post office, and it has been assigned the census ID PLF-003. The cover included the original contents which also turned out to be interesting. The letter was written and mailed by Mrs. L. V. Fitz Randolph (Emily C.) to Mrs. Robert S. Weston. Some genealogical research discovered that Mrs. Robert S. Weston was actually Josephine Fitz Randolph Weston, the daughter of Lewis Van Syckel Fitz Randolph and Emily Caroline Price Fitz Randolph. Josephine was the fifth child of the family, born in 1877, and on December 21, 1909, less than one month before this letter was written, at the age of 32, she had married Robert Spurr Weston (who was 40 at the time).

The letter was basically an ordinary mother-daughter letter, but the salutation was “Dear Child”, an odd choice for a new bride of 32. The first paragraph read:

“You are much missed at home. When I went to your deserted room just after you left, I could hardly restrain my tears. But it is all for the best, for partings have to be in this world, and partings because of marriage are less painful than those caused by death.”

This sentiment seemed odd for a mother writing to a newly married daughter of the age of 32, but perhaps I am not attuned to life in 1909. The remainder of the letter was talking about the aftermath of the wedding, reporting late arriving wedding gifts, and the usual reminder to be sure to acknowledge all the gifts. In one part of the letter, the mother indicated that she was traveling to Europe soon. The new Mr. & Mrs. Robert Weston eventually moved to Brookline, Massachusetts, where he worked as an Engineer for the Water

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Department. Robert Weston died in 1943. Josephine survived him but I could not find a reference to her death.

A NEW CINCINNATI 1549A LABEL COVER

Jacob Alex Klerman

Among my collecting interests in US registered mail to Germany 1903-1914; that is, from the Second Bureau Issue (2BI) to the start of World War I. This period includes the start and end of the 1549A Domestic Registry Labels (DRLs).

The current census of 1549A covers can be found 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. DRLs are known from 72 cities; for 15 of them there are known usages to Germany.

Until recently, I owned examples from five cities, but not Cincinnati. Cincinnati is the fourth most common DRDs There are 29 known Cincinnati DRL covers, several of them are to Germany. There was one to Germany a Cincinnati DRL in the Kewriga Auction (#5, 2/10/2025; Item #1083) alas, I was the under bidder.

Then, Stephen Taylor sold me the one displayed below, postmarked June 23, 1908. The back shows a New York Foreign mail double oval, with an unreadable date. The front shows a New York Exchange International Registry Label. The letter is addressed to Nuremberg, Germany, where it arrived July 2, 1908 (see receiving mark on back). This was ten days in transit (standard for this period, at least on a non-treaty rate cover).



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Three 2BI 5¢ Lincolns and two 2BI 2¢ Washington Shield pay the UPU triple rate of 19¢ (effective 10/1/1907 to 10/31/1909). This cover was missing from the Census. Adding it brings the total number of Cincinnati DRDs to 29, the number with International Registry Labels to 12, and the number to Germany to 9.

Further study of the census reveals that this is one of four covers in the same correspondence: from Palm Brothers in Cincinnati, Ohio to Herren Huber, Jordan, and Koerner. All four covers have the same franking. They also each have a Cincinnati “REG” double oval mute cancel, a New York IRL, a purple “RETURN RECEIPT DEMANDED” handstamp, and are postmarked within a month of each other: 6/22/1908, 6/23/1908 (our cover), 7/8/1908, and 7/16/1908.

(As an aside, this pattern is not uncommon; that is, many of the covers we have are from a single correspondence. I also collect 19th century Newton Massachusetts. Before about 1840, much of what we have from the Newton Centre post office is from the “Penelope Waterman correspondence.” With those covers, Newton Centre is well represented; without them, not so much. Bottom line, what is saved is far from random. The relation of what has survived to what once existed is far from clear. Analyst beware!)

The corner card in the upper left reads “PALM BROS. & CO. / TRANSFER ORNAMENTS”. So, what is a transfer ornament? Today, we would call it a decal. Quoting a Palm Brothers Decalomania Company (1946; the successor to our mailer!) advertisement “a decal is nothing more or less than paint film attached temporarily to a paper backing” (as quoted in Baker, 2015). They were attractive because they required neither tools to attach a panel/plate, nor a skilled artist to create the artwork.

Our sender, Palm Brothers Decalomania Company was the first US producer of decals. At its founding on 1856, the company imported generic decals (e.g., scroll designs, stripes, and numbers) from Germany (n.b., all four envelopes are to Germany). In 1868, they started manufacturing decals. In 1892, they won a gold medal and highest award at the Chicago World’s Fair competition.

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REFERENCES

Baker, W., 2015. Sticking point: history, manufacturing techniques, and preservation of decals. *Collections: A Journal for Museum and Archives Professionals*, 11(4), pp.275-290.

Makes you Want to Cry

Mike Ludeman

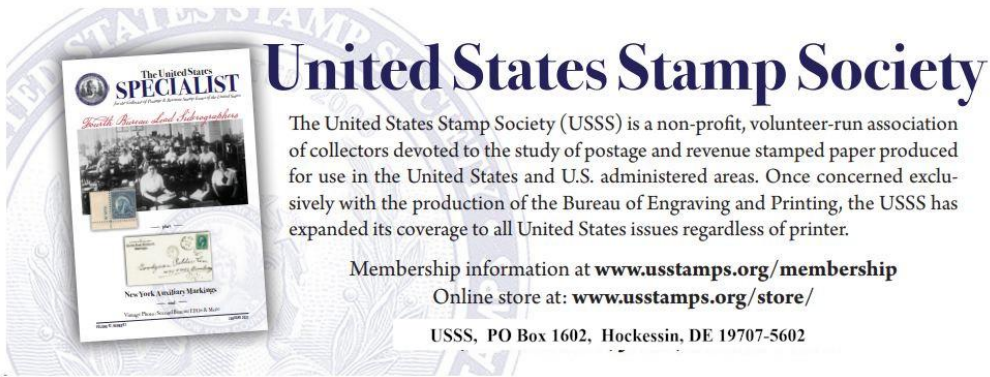
I doubt that few of our readers will disagree with my observation that you can find almost anything on eBay, and at the same time would agree that there is no limit to what untrained people will do to a philatelic item when presenting for sale. The following two images were seen in an eBay lot in September 2024. I no longer recall why I did not bid on it, or what sort of selling price was reached, but it apparently sold. Perhaps I was just too sad to want to bid on. But I preserved the images for reference, and am trying to decide if these labels should be entered into the Stamp Smarter Form 1549A database, if only to identify the date and registration number represented by these “clippings”.



When did the USPS Discontinue Tracking International Registered Mail?

Mike Ludeman

I'm sure I am not the only collector of registered mail who occasionally finds it necessary to purchase material from a dealer in a foreign country. One of the annoyances, especially for expensive items, is that the USPS tracking system does not track international mail once it has been released from the International Service Center (customs office) where it entered the United States. Quite by accident, I came across the controlling reference in the Federal Register for June 1, 2009. I thought it would be appropriate to include that reference here. It appeared on two consecutive pages, the banner shown is for the first page.

The banner features a large, faint background watermark of a United States postage stamp. On the left, there is a small image of a book titled "The United States SPECIALIST" with a subtitle "Fourth Bureau and Subscriptions". Below the book is a small image of a postage stamp. To the right of the book, the text "United States Stamp Society" is written in a large, bold, serif font. Below this, a paragraph of text describes the society as 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. It mentions that the society was once concerned exclusively with the production of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, but has since expanded its coverage to all United States issues regardless of printer. Below the paragraph, there is a line for membership information at www.usstamps.org/membership, a line for the online store at www.usstamps.org/store/, and a line for the society's address: USSS, PO Box 1602, Hockessin, DE 19707-5602.

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.

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14932

Federal Register / Vol. 74, No. 62 / Thursday, April 2, 2009 / Rules and Regulations

POSTAL SERVICE

39 CFR PART 20

International Inbound Registered Mail Procedures

AGENCY: Postal Service™.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Postal Service has adopted different processing procedures for inbound international Registered Mail™; after it is received at an International Service Center.

DATES: *Effective Date:* June 1, 2009.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Margaret M. Falwell, 703-292-3576.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Inbound international Registered Mail entering the United States through the United States Postal Service® International Service Centers is offered in conformity with international agreements of the Universal Postal Union (UPU), U.S. law and the regulations of the United States Postal Service (USPS® or Postal Service). The UPU agreement requires

verification upon receipt, processing through a secure mail system, and signature upon delivery. For these services, in addition to terminal dues, the delivering postal operator is provided a set amount in compensation from the originating postal operator, regardless of the cost of the delivery process. The Postal Service is not authorized to charge a premium for the delivery of these items to the addressee.

Through the December 20, 2006, enactment of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA), Congress fundamentally changed the Postal Service's business model by converting it from one based on an expectation that it would break-even over time, to a more commercially competitive, profit-making model. This change requires the Postal Service to review all of its services in an effort to better align costs and revenues, while at the same time ensuring the security of the mail.

Domestic Registered Mail is handled in a separate hand-to-hand labor-intensive process from point of acceptance to delivery. The domestic Registered Mail fees are set by the Postal Service and are based on the stated value of the item, for which insurance is provided in the fee, up to \$25,000. These fees take into account the labor and processing costs required to accept, process and deliver this mail.

In contrast, inbound international Registered Mail is defined by the UPU's agreement, which limits the compensation the Postal Service receives for providing the service and also limits the indemnity available to customers. The UPU agreement does not require hand-to-hand processing. Inbound international Registered Mail, therefore, will no longer be handled in the domestic Registered Mail system.

International senders of Registered Mail will continue to receive the features that distinguish this service. The Postal Service will verify the receipt of Registered Mail to the originating postal administration. A signature will be obtained at the time of delivery in accordance with domestic regulations governing the delivery of accountable mail. The sender also will have access to the inquiry process and may receive indemnity based on UPU limits for loss, damage or missing contents. Customers will also benefit from the high security of the domestic First-Class Mail® mailstream, which is protected by the United States Postal Inspection Service® and the United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General. The Postal Service anticipates improved service as well as cost savings as a result of this change to its

operational handling of inbound international Registered Mail items.

The Postal Service hereby adopts the following changes to *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, International Mail Manual (IMM), which is incorporated by reference in the Code of Federal Regulations. See 39 CFR 20.1.

List of Subjects in 39 CFR Part 20

Foreign relations, International postal services.

■ Accordingly, 39 CFR part 20 is amended as follows:

PART 20—[AMENDED]

■ 1. The authority citation for 39 CFR part 20 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a); 39 U.S.C. 401, 404, 407, 408, 3622, 3632, and 3633.

■ 2. Revise the following sections of *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, International Mail Manual (IMM) to read as follows:

Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, International Mail Manual (IMM)

* * * * *

7 Treatment of Inbound Mail

* * * * *

750 Extra Services

* * * * *

752 Registered Mail

752.1 Identification

* * * * *

[Revise 752.13 to read as follows:]

752.13 Treatment of Registered Items

All mail registered by the country of origin must be handled in the domestic First-Class Mail mailstream from the exchange office to the office of delivery. A signed delivery receipt must be obtained at the time of delivery.

* * * * *

Stanley F. Mires,

Chief Counsel, Legislative.

[FR Doc. E9-7373 Filed 4-1-09; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7710-12-P

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.

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.

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.

Wanted For a Future Article

Jacob Klerman KlermanStamps@gmail.com

Scans of Registered covers mailed from the United States to Canada during the 2 cent rate period of the Treaty Rate between the United States and Canada beginning 2 Feb 1875 and continuing until 1 Oct 1883.

[26-2]

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 to these destinations. I am also seeking additional covers addressed to the indicated addresses 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]

Railway Post Office Registered Letter, 1930

Frank R. Scheer



Figure 1 - Envelope front bearing five Taft 4-cent stamps postmarked CHICAGO & CINCINNATI RPO, 1930.

It is unusual—but not impossible—for registered mail to be posted in a Railway Post Office (RPO). Both sender and addressee were in Indianapolis, so the mailing location was a CHICAGO & CINCINNATI RPO during its fifteen minutes of station time at Union Station.

The philatelic cover was intended to me a first day of sale of the Taft four-cent stamp. The first day of issue was at Cincinnati, Ohio, on June 4th, 1930. It is possible that the sender though a June 4th postmark might still be available on an arriving RPO. However, as shown in a route schedule in Figure 5, train 15-1 departed Chicago on June 5th. A RPO postmark remains the same date as its origin terminal departure.

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The envelope was not endorsed "Registered" by the sender. The clerk in charge who postmarked the letter placed it into a pouch to the Indianapolis, Indiana Post Office. A clerk there determined that there was sufficient first-class postage plus registration fee. Consequently, the "Registered No 138" stamp was applied to the envelope front.



Figure 2 - Reverse side with Indianapolis, Indiana, Registry Section backstamp.



Figure 3 - Front and rear postmark detail.

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Figure 4 - Although the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis RPO served Indianapolis, by 1930 New York Central System 60-foot RPO cars were used.

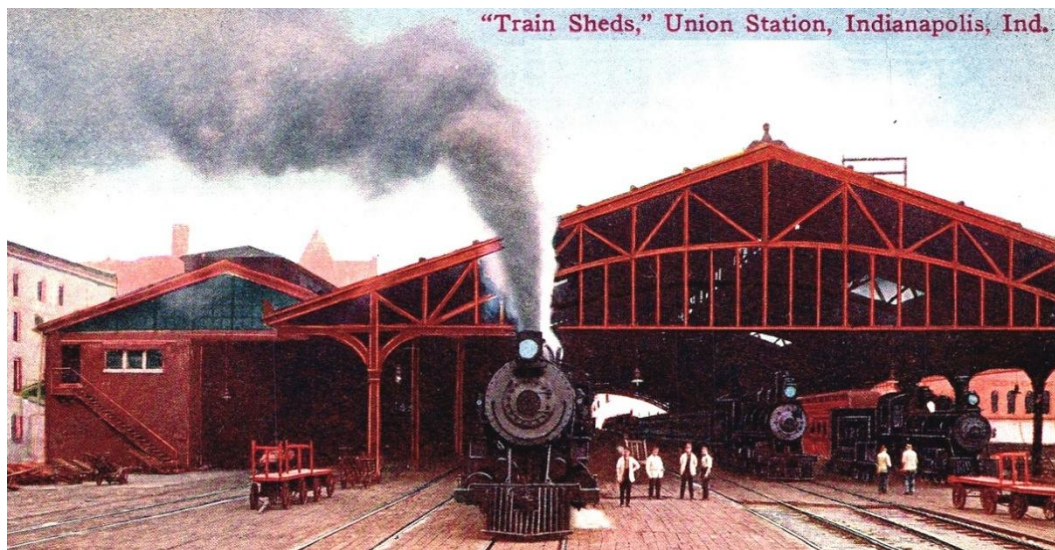


Figure 5 - A trackside view of the Indianapolis Union Station

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Chicago & Cincinnati R. P. O.

★ Exc. Trs. 5, 36.

(Ill. Cent. R. R., Chicago to Kank. Jc. (no) 55.53 ms. Rt. 105,756 pt. and C. C. C. & St. L. Ry. Kankakee Jc. (no) to Cin'ti, 249.87 ms. Rt. 105,754 pt. Ind'pls to Cin'ti, 109.80 ms. Kankakee to Ind'pls, 139.80 ms.—Dist. 4.)

14b	46a	34b	18b	16a	Sept. 28, 1930	35a	1b	19cu	43b	15a
8 10	11 40	9 50	1 00	10 40	L.†○Chicago, Ills.A.	7 35	6 10	7 25	5 40	4 30
					(Ill. Cent. Sta.)					
8 33	12 05	10 13	1 24	11 01	.. Kensington, "	7 13	5 32	6 57	5 07	4 00
9 27	12 57	11 07	2 17	11 53	.. Kankakee Jct., "	6 13	4 38	6 08	4 13	3 13
					(no)					
9 30	1 00	11 10	2 20	11 55	A.} L. 6 10	4 35	6 05	4 10	3 10	
					†○Kankakee, "					
9 35	1 05	11 15	2 25	12 01	L.} A. 6 05	4 30	6 00	4 05	3 05	
9 53	1 22	11 29	2 44	12 15	.. ○St. Anne, "		4 05	5 44	3 42	2 44
10 28	1 46	11 50	3 08	12 36	.. ○Sheldon, "	5 01	3 33	5 22	3 12	2 19
10 38	1 55	11 58	3 18	12 43	.. Sheff, (no) Ind. "		3 18	5 11	2 59	2 10
11 09	2 17	12 24	3 44	1 03	.. Templeton, "		2 41	4 45	2 23	1 48
11 47	2 47	1 00	4 14	1 31	.. †○LaFayette, "	3 38	2 11	4 20	1 55	1 23
12 15	3 10	1 20	4 36	1 50	.. Clarks Hill, "	3 10	1 33	3 53	1 20	12 59
12 22	3 19	1 26	4 42	1 56	.. Colfax, "	2 57	1 24	3 46	1 14	12 53
12 50		1 53	5 03		.. ○Lebanon, "		12 58	3 26	12 52	
1 40	4 30	2 40	5 50	2 55	A.} L. 1 55	12 05	2 45	12 10	12 00	
36b					○Indianapolis "		15a			5cu
7 45	4 40	2 55	6 00	3 05	L.} A. 1 45	11 50	2 35	11 55	4 50	
8 24		3 35	6 38	3 41	.. ○Shelbyville, "		11 04	1 51	11 09	4 08
8 52	5 49	4 07	7 08	4 12	.. ○Greensburg, "	12 30	10 35	1 26	10 42	3 42
					A.Louisville, Ky. L.					1 30
9 57		5 02	7 56	5 05	Lawrenceburg Jct. (no)		9 32		9 38	2 38
10 03		5 09	8 02	5 11	Valley Jc., O. (no) (C.T.)		9 27		9 32	2 31
					(Eastern Time)					
11 30	8 15	6 50	9 30	6 40	A.†○Cincinnati, Ohio L.	11 55	10 00	1 00	10 05	3 05
					(Cent. Union Sta.)					

Trains 5 and 36 Class (A)—Other trains Class (B)

Figure 6 - CHICAGO & CINCINNATI RPO from a Railway Mail Service Fifth Division Schedule of Mail routes 482, page 24, 1930. The RPO space authorizations are not included in this image, but train 15-1 used a 60-foot RPO car similar to Figure 4.

The sender evidently carried this envelope to train 15-1 at trackside upon arrival. It was promptly postmarked and enclosed in a pouch directed to the Indianapolis Post Office.

Post Office Motor Vehicle Service shuttled mail between Union Station and the Indianapolis Post Office. The post office registry section backstamped the envelope and applied item number 138 since the first class postage was affixed plus the registry fee. The sender did not endorse the envelope "Registered" when mailing it, so that person may have not intended its handling as a registered letter. Stamp block collecting was popular during the early and mid-1900s for first day covers; the group of five stamps are

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joined at their perforations even though it is not a plate number block. The letter carrier had the addressee sign for the registered letter.

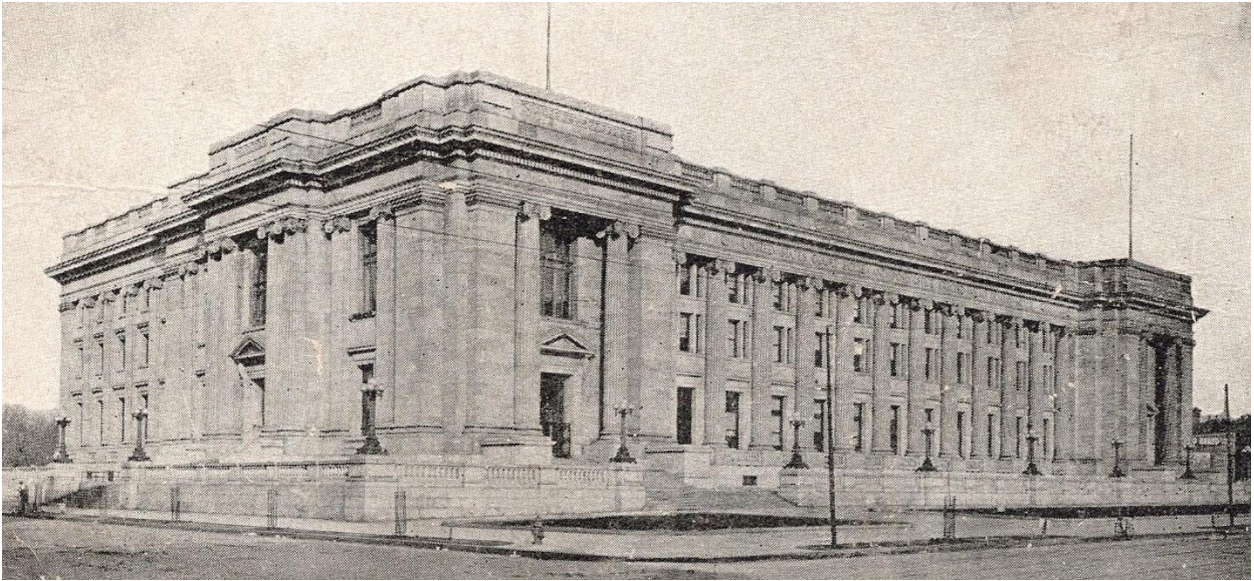


Figure 5 - Post Office, Indianapolis, Indiana.

The POSTAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS circa 1913 are included along with period Indianapolis pictures to explain the handling of this letter.

**Registration of
matter found in
ordinary mail.**

Sec. 884. An article acceptable for registration, found in the ordinary mail drop, marked to show that it is intended for registration, shall be taken from the ordinary mail at the office of origin and registered. The employee who registers the article shall receipt for it to the mailing branch of the office and mail a registration receipt to the sender, with a notice cautioning him against mailing matter for registration in the ordinary mail drops.

2. If an article has been marked "Registered" but, because it does not fulfill all requirements for registration, is not registered, the words "Not in the registered mail" shall be placed on the cover.

Figure 6 - Postal Laws and Regulations (PL&R), 1913, Page 448, Section 884.

CHAPTER 3.

TREATMENT OF MAIL MATTER IN THE RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE.

I.—RECEIPT OF MAIL AT POSTAL CARS.

Sec. 1609. Mail shall not be placed in a postal car unless there is a clerk on duty to care for it. Delivery of mail to railway post offices.

Sec. 1610. Railway postal clerks may accept from a postmaster or sworn assistant loose mail matter on which the stamps have been canceled, but matter bearing canceled stamps shall not be accepted from mail messengers or the public, except matter of the first class readdressed for forwarding. (See sec. 568.) Mail railway postal clerks may accept. —from a postmaster or assistant.

2. Railway postal clerks shall accept from the public, unless otherwise ordered, all mail matter except that of the fourth class upon which the proper rate of postage is paid; all matter in penalty envelopes or bearing the frank of any person entitled thereto by law; soldiers' and sailors' letters unpaid when duly certified; and matter of the first class upon which the stamps are canceled when readdressed for forwarding. —from the public.

Figure 7 - PL&R 1913, Page 705, Section 1610.

II.—CANCELING, DISTRIBUTING, AND MAKING UP MAIL.

Sec. 1615. Postage stamps affixed to mail matter and all stamped envelopes, newspaper wrappers, and postal cards deposited in railway post offices shall be immediately and effectually canceled by the use of black ink. The postmarking portion of the postmarking and canceling stamp shall not be used to cancel postage stamps. (See sec. 576.) Cancellation of stamps. —on matter deposited in railway post office. —use of postmarking stamp for, forbidden.

Sec. 1616. All mail matter except that of the second class deposited in a car for mailing shall be legibly postmarked. Postmarking. —of mail deposited in car for mailing.

See secs. 540 and 541, as to manner of postmarking.

2. On trains running in more than one day the postmarking stamp during the entire trip shall show the date the train is scheduled to start. —to show date of starting trip, when.

Figure 8 - PL&R 1913, Page 707, Sections 1615 and 1616.

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Summarizing the citations appearing in Figures 8, 9, and 10, Registered Mail could be placed in an “ordinary mail drop.” This included the letter slot on the side of the RPO car. Section 884 specifies it will be taken to the office at origin and registered, as was done at the Indianapolis Post Office. Section 1610, paragraph 2, allows Railway Postal Clerks to accept “...all mail matter except ... fourth class upon which the proper rate of postage is paid.” Finally, Sections 1615 and 1616 will be postmarked. Registered Mail postage is often canceled with a mute oval rubber stamp. Perhaps this was in the mind of the sender, knowing that a route postmark with date will appear on the first day of sale envelope.

IRL INSIGHTS: BOSTON TO INDIA

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This is the fourth 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/>).

This is the first of a series of articles on mail to European colonies in South Asia: the British in India (the focus of this article) and in Malaya/Singapore, the French in Indo-China; and the Dutch in Java/Sumatra.

The article touches on three broader themes. First, while the geography might suggest routing via a West Coast port, in fact, almost all mail to Asian colonies went via the home country; in the case of India, Great Britain.

Second, the Kugel Census is fundamentally incomplete. It only includes non-New York IRLs. The vast majority of international registered covers went via New York. Our information is therefore incomplete.

Third and relatedly, a goal of these IRL Insights is to flush out unrecorded covers and thereby to generate a proper census of IRLs to less common destinations. Those with such, previously unrecorded, covers are urged to contact the author. Even better, please write a brief article for this *Newsletter*.

This article proceeds in four parts. The first part provides some basic geopolitical context. The second part considers postal and, in particular, registered context. The third part displays some representative covers. The fourth part 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. Geopolitical Context

The British role in India dates back to the 17th century when the East India Company established factories; i.e., trading posts. From the middle of the 18th century to the middle of the 19th century, the East India Company conquered most of India from native rulers and from the French.¹ In 1858, control passed from the East India Company to the British government, known colloquially as the British Raj.²

While most of India was under direct British control, substantial areas—known as the Princely States—were controlled indirectly; that is, local princes maintained nominal control, but the British controlled foreign

¹ What follows is based primarily on Wikipedia: “The British Raj”, “Presidencies and provinces of British India”, and “Princely State.”

² The Portuguese and French also had (trivially small) colonies in India during the IRL period. For discussion of IRLs, they appear to be irrelevant.

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policy and exerted considerable control over local affairs. The five largest of these Princely States were (in decreasing order of population): Hyderabad, Mysore, Jamu and Kashmir, Gwalior, and Baroda. Notably, many of these Princely States issued their own postage stamps, collection of which continues to generate considerable interest.

For the purposes of this article, British India includes the current countries of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka/Ceylon, Myanmar/Burma, and Aden. Figure 1 provides a map (courtesy of Wikipedia).

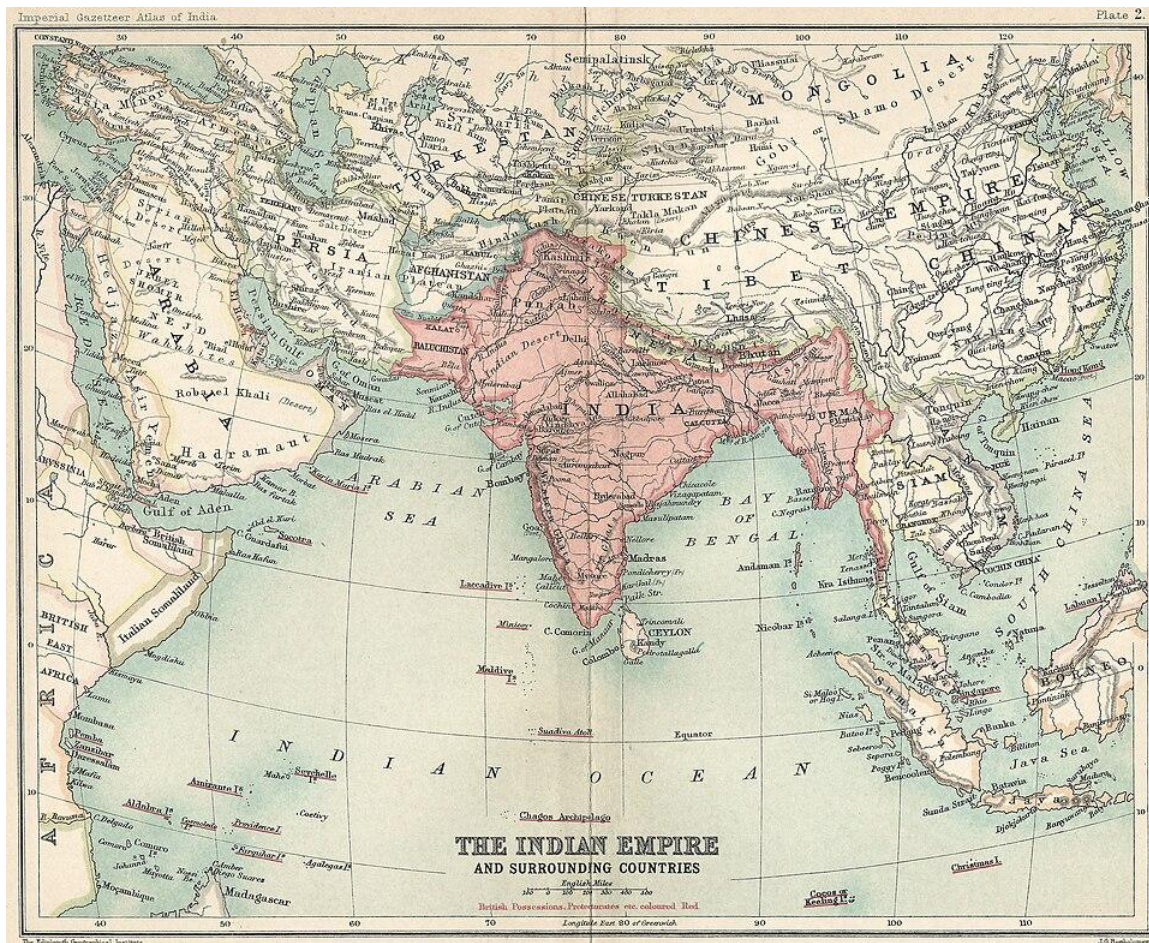


Figure 1: Map for British Asia, as of 1911 (from Wikipedia: “British Raj”)

2. Postal Context

Rates from before India’s joining the UPU are more complicated than most. There were multiple routes, each with its own rate. Notably, given what follows, from 1868, the cheapest routing was US mail from San Francisco to Hong Kong, and then by British mail to India, for 10¢ per half ounce. Alternatives via British and German mail were at least twice as expensive. For some of the routings, there were special rates for registered mail. Then, from 1 July 1876, there was a unified rate of 10¢, regardless of routing. My search for banknote covers reveals no examples of these rates.

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Like most Asian colonies, British India was not included in the original GPU agreement (effective 1 July 1875). Also, like most Asian colonies, British India did join slightly thereafter, on 1 April 1879. It follows that all IRL covers to India should be at UPU rates.

The 1892 *Postal Guide* table “General Exchange Offices for Registered Mails” (displayed in the second IRL Insights; Klerman, 2025) specifically names New York as the exchange office for (emphasis added):

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, and points in the Colony of Western Australia, (Capital City, Perth).

In practice, that meant that registered mail was dispatched to England and then forwarded to India via the Royal Mail.³

For the British government and British commercial interests, mail to India was quite important. As volumes increased over the IRL period, the routing became more standardized and schedules across the connections synchronized. Specifically, during this period, the regular routing was train to Dover, Dover-Calais ferry, train to Paris and then Paris to Brindisi, Italy (faster and shorter sea route than via Marseilles, France). From Brindisi, a single regularly scheduled Peninsular and Orient (P&O) steamer would carry the mail—usually with stops in Malta and Alexandria, through the Suez Canal (having opened in late 1869) to Aden, and then from Aden to Bombay (today Mumbai), India. The Aden to Bombay leg had a Sea Post which sorted the mail. Total travel time would have been three to four weeks. Within India, during the IRL period, the British had developed a dense railroad network. Calcutta would be by rail. For coastal cities—Karachi and Madras—a British Indian Navigation Steamer was more likely.

An open question is the volume of registered mail. If the volume was high enough, mail would be carried in closed bags, and we would not expend any intermediate postmarks. If the volume was lower, we would expect registered mail to have postmarks at each intermediate point at which it was resorted. This issue is one of the foci of the next section’s presentation of covers.

3. Some Covers

Here I describe three covers: one early, one late, and one in between. The presentation is chronological.

Figure 2 shows an 18 December 1891 cover from Station K, New York, NY to Bombay, “British East India Asia”. A 4¢ Plimpton entire is uprated with a 6¢, two 2¢, and a 1¢ Small Bank Notes correctly pays the 15¢ UPU registered single rate (the rate would not drop to 13¢ until 1/1/1893). The stamps are cancelled with three black Station K, New York oval mute cancels. Station K applied a purple boxed 5-line registered handstamp. Transit markings include two black oval New York Registry Division backstamps (12/18/1891 and 12/19/1891), a New York EXCHANGE IRL, and a black circle Bombay-Aden “SEA POST OFFICE” handstamp (1/11/1892), with an “O” indicating the group working this Sea Post voyage. (Each sea post team had its own handstamps, each with a distinguishing letter.) Beyond the double oval handstamp, there is no New

³ This discussion draws on Piskiewicz (2024, vol 1, pp. 294-302).

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York Post Office examiner's mark. There is no Indian receiving mark, so we can not establish total transit time. Time to processing by Sea Post was about three and a half weeks.



Figure 2: Branch K, New York, NY (12/18/1891) to Bombay, "British East India Asia" (courtesy of Mike Ludeman)

Figure 3 shows a recent addition to my collection. The cover is addressed to Mrs. Crowley, care of Colonel Crowley, Assistant Adjutant General. Presumably Mrs. Crowley was the wife of a mid-level British Army

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officer. A handstamp on the back, reading "FROM / E.T. PARKER / POSTAGE & REVENUE / — STAMPS, — / Bethlehem, - - Pa.", suggests that the envelope contained postage stamps for a collector.



Figure 3: Bethlehem, PA (3/30/1893) to Meean-Meer, India, forwarded to Amahabad, India (author's collection)

The cover was mailed from Bethlehem, PA (3/30/1893) for Meean-Meer (Lahor Army Cantonment). A 5¢ Columbian entire, plus 6¢ and 2¢ Columbian commemoratives (on the back) pay the then current (as of

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1/1/1893) UPU registered single rate of 13¢. All of the stamps are cancelled with a smudge cancel. Bethlehem applied a purple four-line (including "No. ____") handstamp. New York transit markings include a violet "O" New York Registry Division examiner's mark and a black New York Registry Division double oval handstamp, both dated 1 April 1893. Other transit markings including black Group A round (Bombay-Aden) Sea Post handstamp (dated 24 April 1893), two black strikes of a Mean-Meer round handstamp (dated 1 May 1893). Mrs. Crowley had moved, leading to the final transit mark, and a black round Allahabad handstamp (dated ? May 1893). Total transit time is again about three and a half weeks to the Sea Post, and about four weeks to (initial destination in) India.

Figure 4 shows a 26 October 1903 cover from Melrose Highlands Station, Melrose, MA to Hyderabad, "British India". Hyderabad was the largest and wealthiest of the princely states, only indirectly controlled by the British. It had its own postal service and issues its own stamps. The cover is franked with an 8¢ Pan-American stamp, two 1¢ Trans-Mississippi stamps, and a single 3¢ First Bureau Issue, correctly paying the 13¢ UPU registered single rate. They are cancelled by two black strikes of the Melrose Highlands circular date stamp, and there is also a purple four-line registered handstamp. There is also a purple boxed "SEA P.O. C SET" handstamp, dated 16 November 1903. The "C. SET." notation refers to the sea post team that handled the cover. The Rumsey Auctions description states that there is a Hyderabad arrival backstamp, but no image of the reverse is available.



Figure 4: Bethlehem, PA (10/26/1903) to Hyderabad, India (courtesy of Rumsey Auctions 60/1399)

4. Discussion

As noted, this is the first of a series of articles on mail to European colonies in South Asia: the British in India (the focus of this article) and in Malaya/Singapore, the French in Indo-China; and the Dutch in Java/Sumatra.

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All of the known covers went through New York. The Kugel Census is therefore of limited use. The apparent routing was via New York Foreign Mail Division (receiving an examiner's back stamp and a New York IRL), to London, and then across the English Channell by ferry, to Brindisi by rail, and then by Pacific and Oriental steamer—Alexandria, Aden, and Bombay. All of the covers have some Bombay-Aden Sea Post Office marking—circle markings in the earlier period, boxed markings in the later period. None of the covers have markings before the Sea Post. This suggests that, even for registered mail, the New York Foreign Mail Division made up a closed bag directly for the Bombay-Aden Sea Post.

Those with additional covers or insights are urged to contact the author. Even better, write up your covers for the *RMSG Newsletter*.

Acknowledgements.

The images from Rumsey Auctions are used with permission. This article would not have been possible without Mike Ludeman's yeoman efforts on the Kugel database and from his private database of New York IRLs. The article has benefited from numerous email conversations with Mike which have massively improved my understanding of these issues. Remaining errors are solely mine.

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