

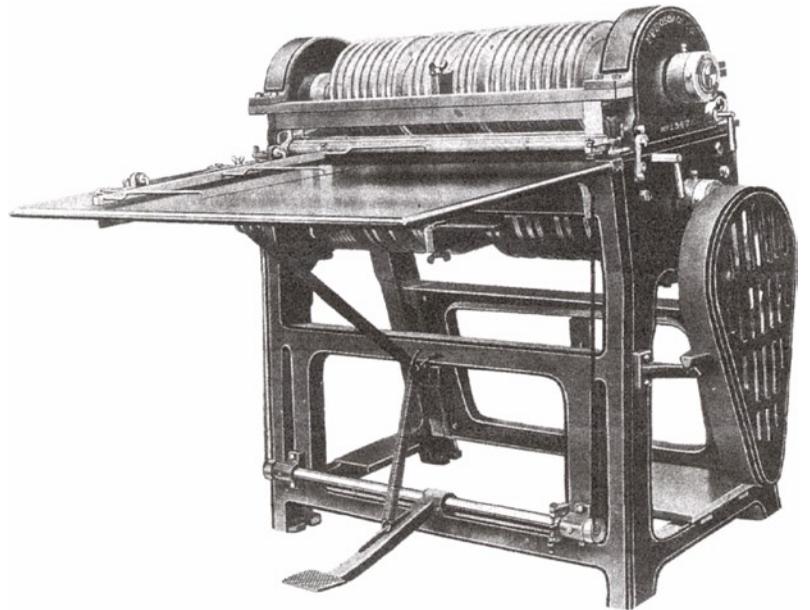
The One Cent Issue of August 15, 1919

The Rosback Perforating Machine - A Failed Experiment

Dramatic changes at the United States Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) occurred in the decade of 1910-1920, partly caused by the onset and then enduring the conditions of the Great War, World War I, and partly because new technology was being studied for possible inclusion into the BEP's printing processes.

From 1911 to 1919, the Bureau changed its perforating wheels from perforation gauge 11 to perf gauge 11 x 10 and then to perf gauge 10 x 10. Some stamps even had multiple sided perforations which were not planned but were caused out of need (i.e. Scott 423A, 423B, etc.).

In early 1919, the Frederick P. Rosback Co. offered the BEP a new foot-powered machine for testing which perforated at a gauge of 12.5 x 12.5. Allegedly, the BEP tested this machine on not only the one cent stamp, which was eventually issued, but also on the two cent denomination, which was never formally issued, although rumors of two sheets of this stamp have circulated in the philatelic community for years.



The perforating machine did not pass muster with the Bureau. Of the initial printing runs of 6641 sheets, only 3175 sheets (48%) were usable. Philatelists have long known that well centered and properly inked 12.5 gauge stamps are rare. One sheet of 100 even missed receiving vertical perforations. My research indicates that the sheet was a left side pane from plate 9985 (Duckworth Collection, Lot 990, Harmer Rooke & Co., Inc. 1962).

Seven plates were used to print this short lived issue. One sixteen hundred subject plate number 9993, divided into 4 sheets of 400 subjects each, was the only one of that size used for this stamp. The other six plates, numbers 9985, 10001, 10025, 32, 33 and 52 were all 400 subject plates which were guillotined into 100 subject panes. Plate numbers were found on the top, left, right and bottom of the sheets, in the approximate center of the row which was spaced 10 x 10. The plate number probably appeared at position six at the top and side or bottom and side (two plates per pane).

For more than 20 years, this collector has searched for a plate number piece from plate 10033 which Durland catalogue had included in the numbers assigned to this stamp. The listing originated in an unconfirmed report from more than 50 years ago. and although reported, no example has ever been seen by plate number specialists to verify its authenticity. No one has ever been able to match all seven plate numbers from all positions.

As can be seen from examining the material in this exhibit, color, shade and spacing varieties abound. The stamp has been found in almost a gray shade, although clearly with green showing, to the scarcer deep green shade.

Usages of the stamp are most difficult since the small quantity of stamps was apparently issued almost entirely through the Washington, D.C. post office and used from mid August, 1919 to late November, 1919. While usages from other cities such as New York and Philadelphia have been located, it is the collector's belief that these were mainly from stamp dealers with Washington connections. Virtually all known usages are on post cards from two Washington D.C. machines, #1 and #2, located in the main post office.

Within the last decade, a Rosback machine similar to the original one used to perforate these stamps was donated to the American Philatelic Society and is now located at the APS headquarters.

The Stamp

Colors and Papers



Grey-green



Light green



Green



Deep green



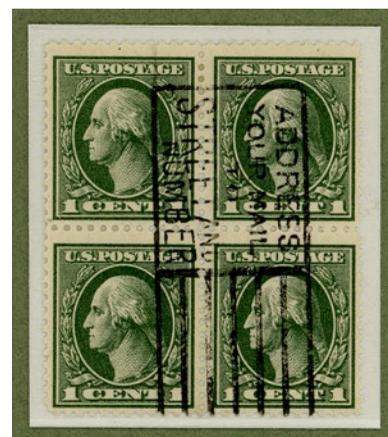
Light cream paper



Dark cream paper



Light cream paper



Dark cream paper

The Stamp

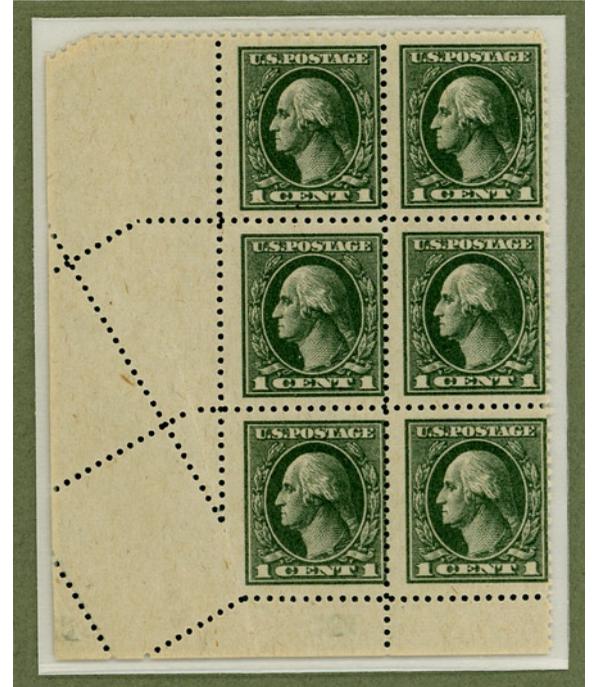
Perforation Varieties



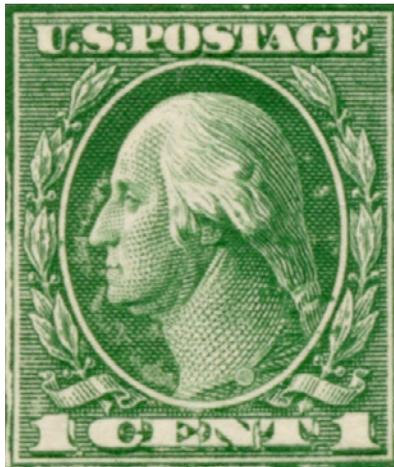
Vertical imperforate pair from left pane, plate 9985



Typical perforation centering problem



Pre-printing paper fold



Hollow frame lines with hollow shadows 1 cent 1

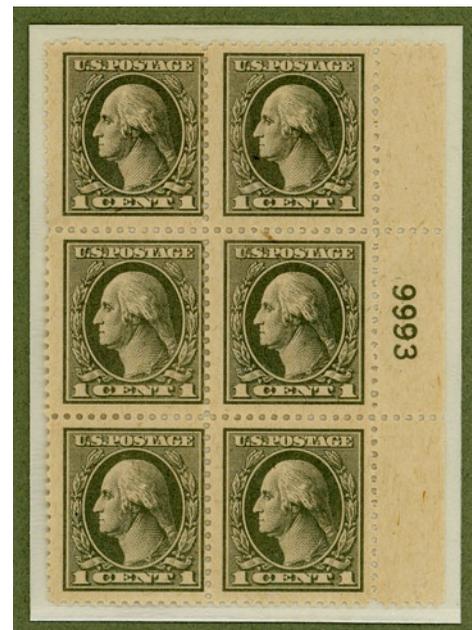
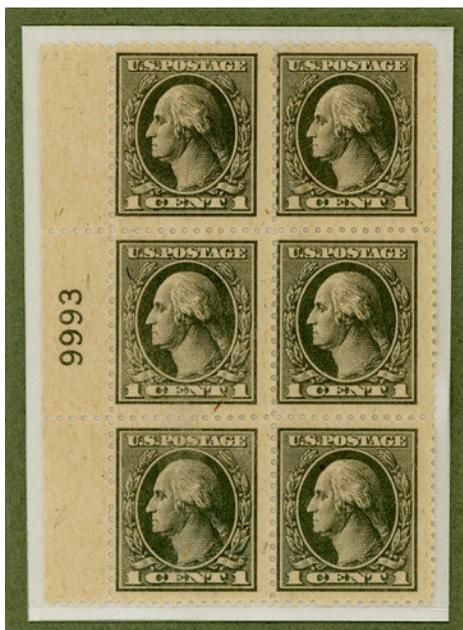
Inking and Printing Varieties



Damaged 'E'



Upper left top stamp - plate underinked

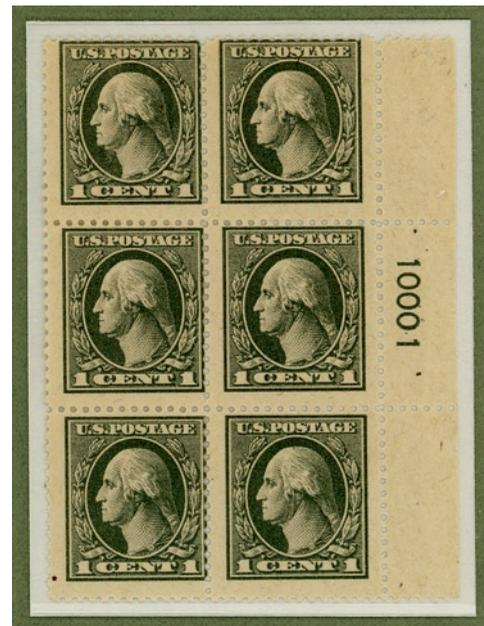




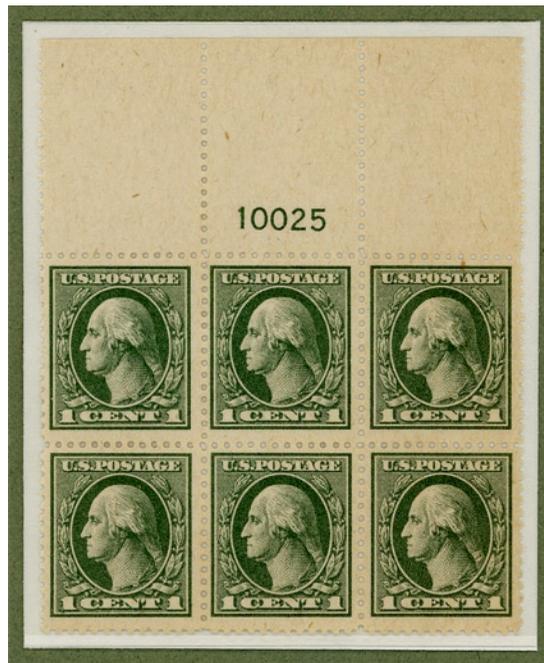
Ghosted plate number in lower margin, position 98

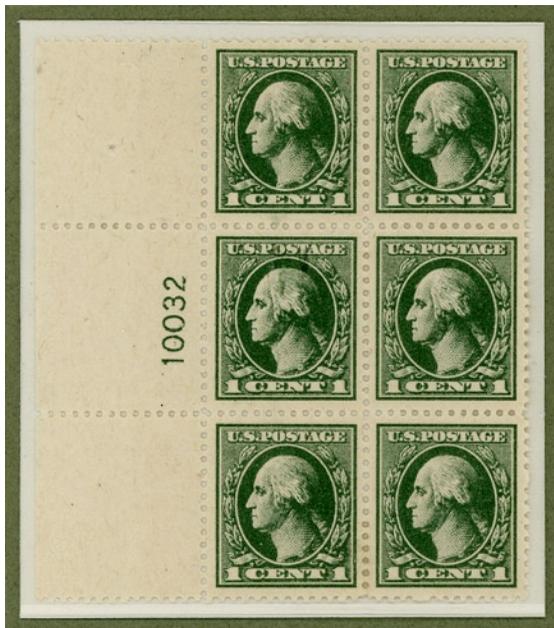


Wide margin pane cut

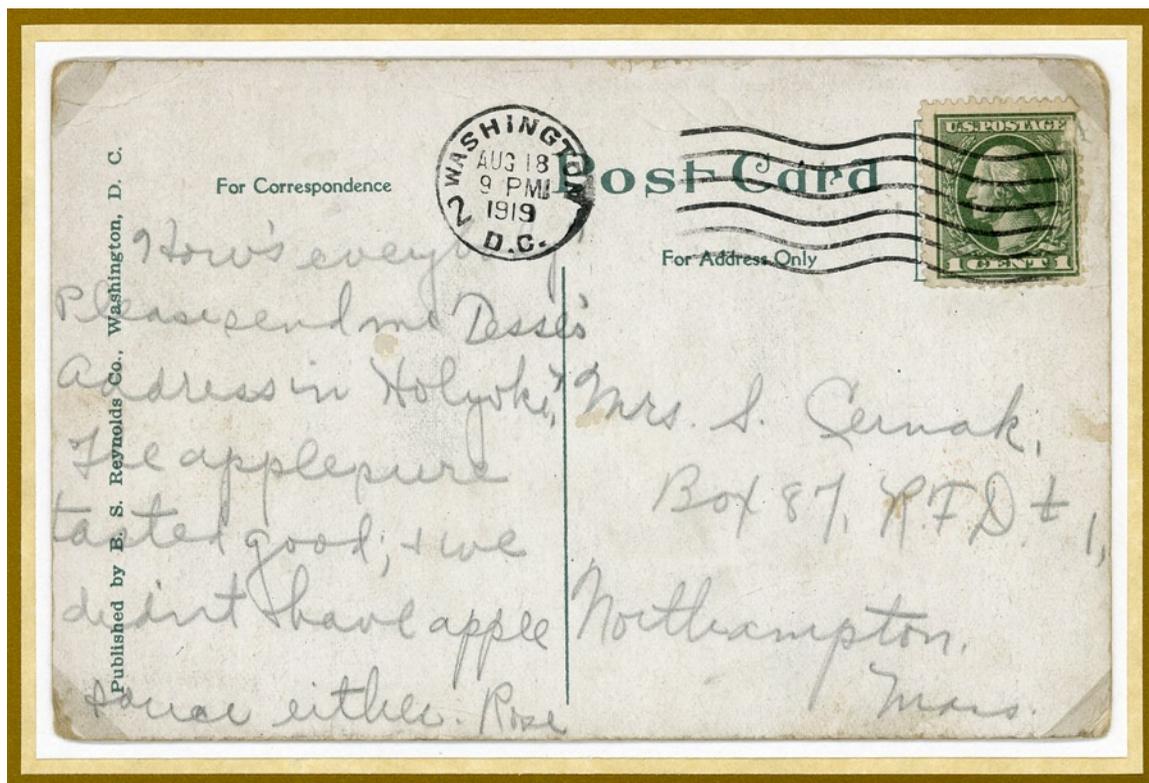


Narrow margin pane cut



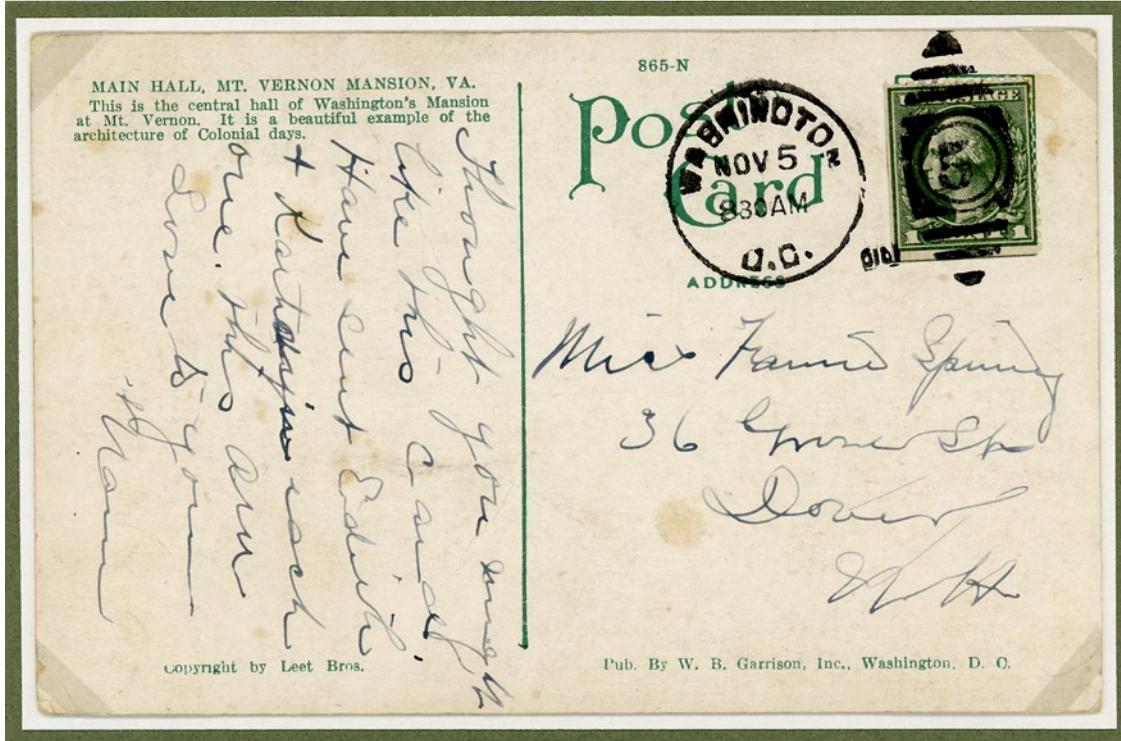




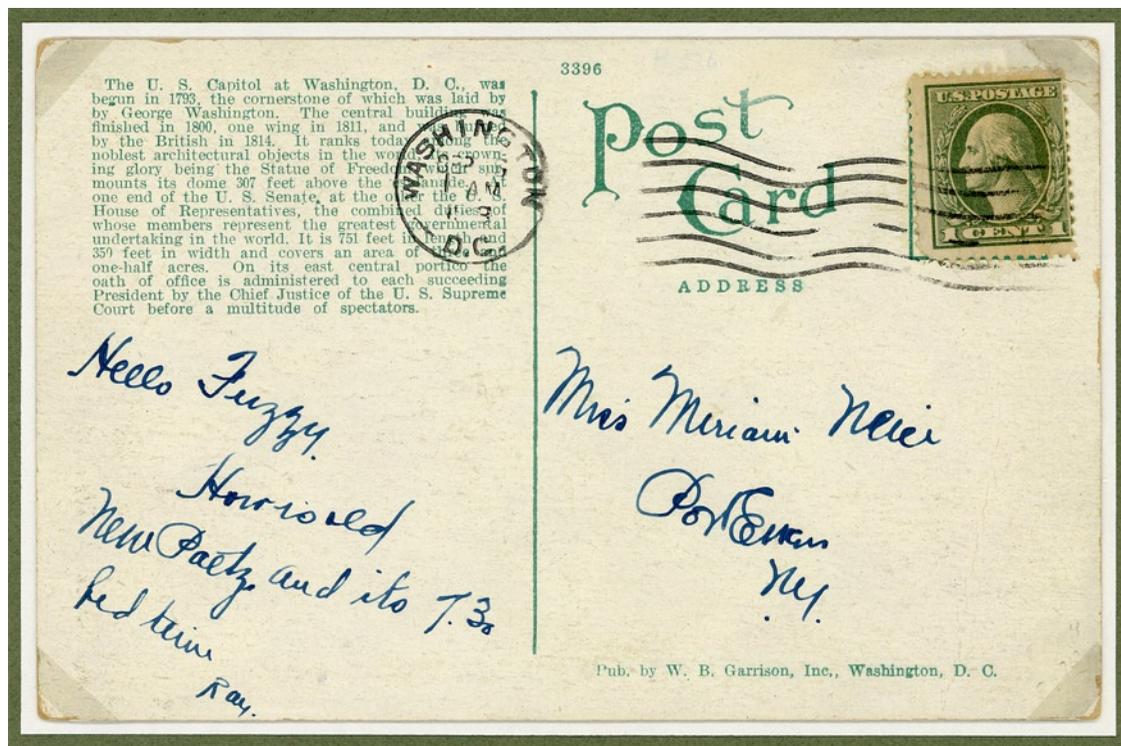


Washington, D.C. (2) to Northampton (R.F.D.), Massachusetts
18 August, 1919, 1¢ post card rate

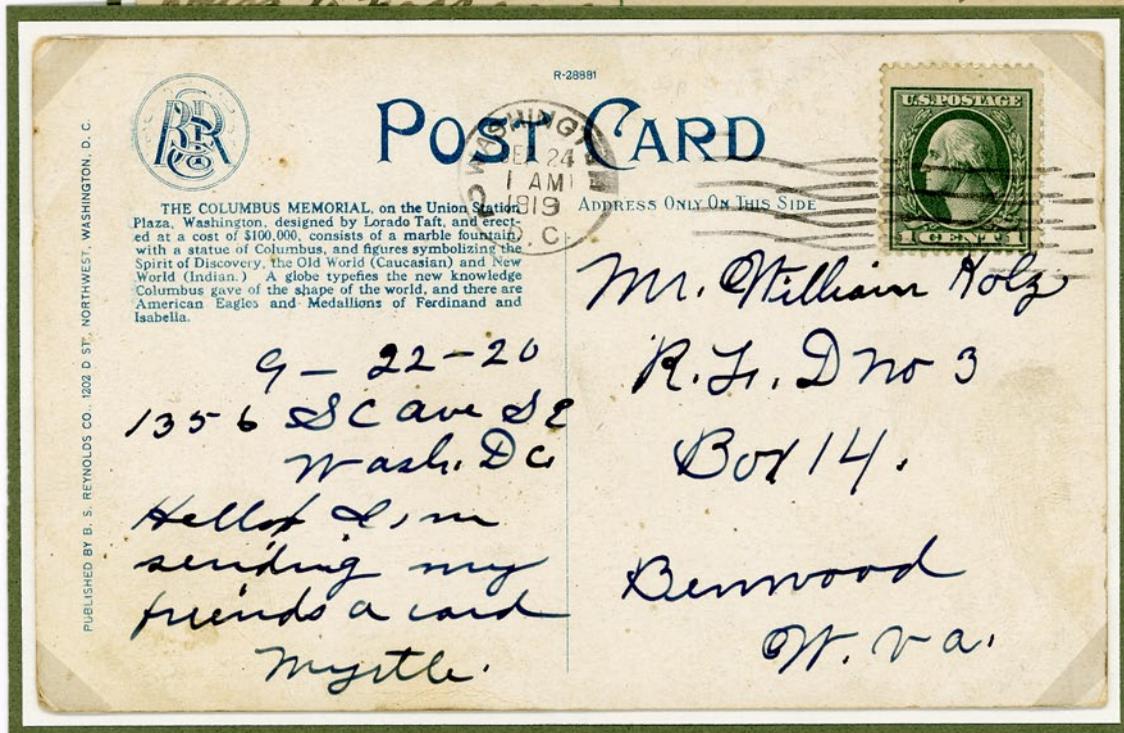
Only recorded example



Washington, D.C. (5) to Dover, New Hampshire
5 November, 1919 (year inverted), 1¢ post card rate



Washington, D.C. (1) to Port Ewen, New York
16 September, 1919, 1¢ post card rate



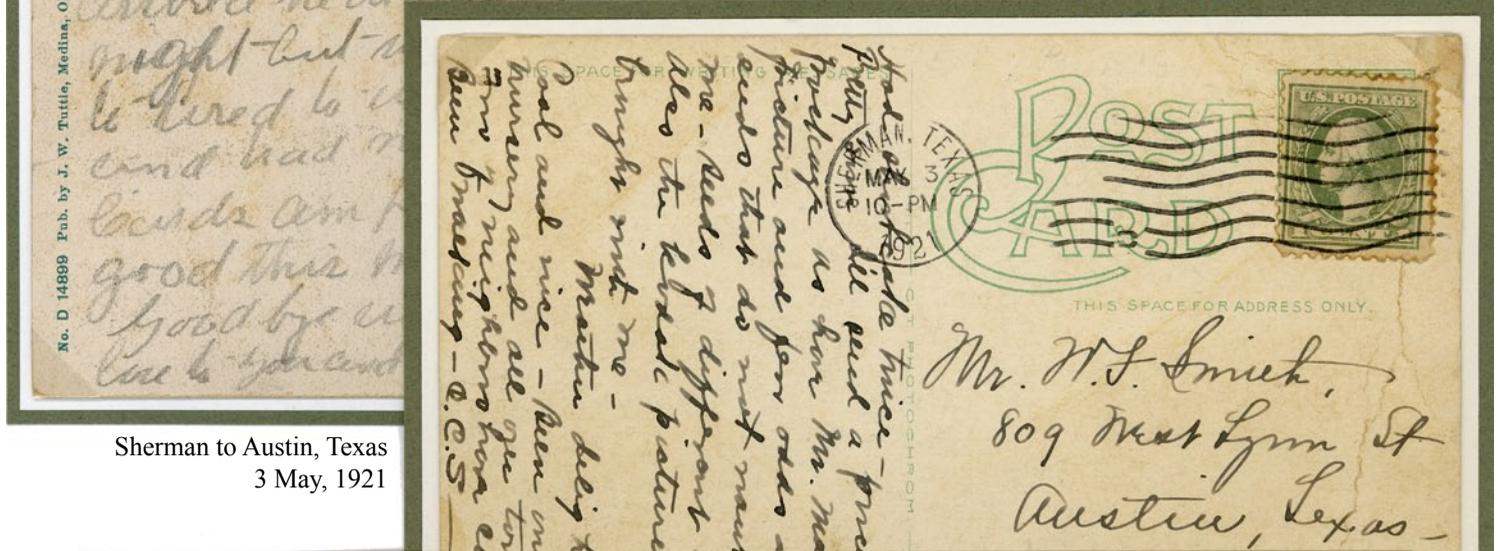
Typical Washington, D.C. (2) usages to domestic destinations
11, 20 and 24 September, 1919, 1¢ post card rate

Usages

Outside Washington, D.C.

Baltimore, Maryland (2) Local usage
23 December, 1919

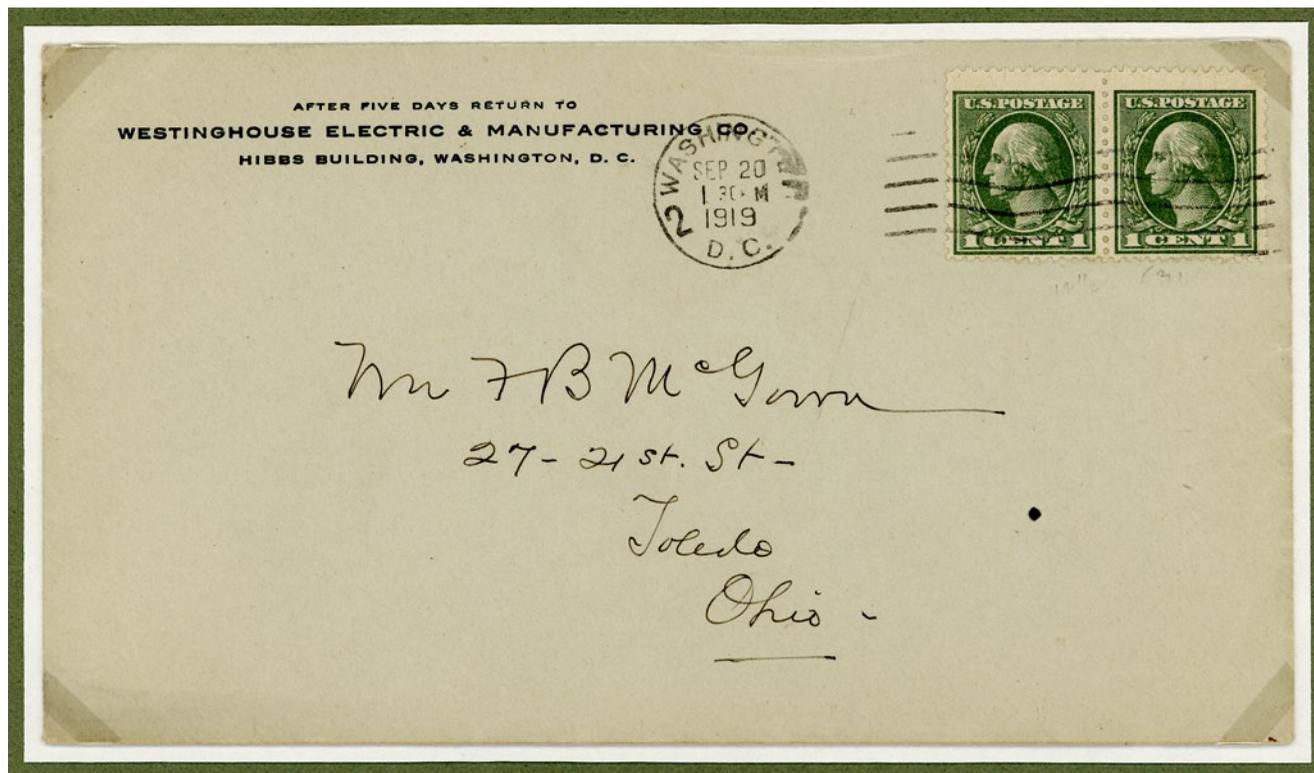
Medina, Ohio to
Frederick City, Maryland
6 September, 1919



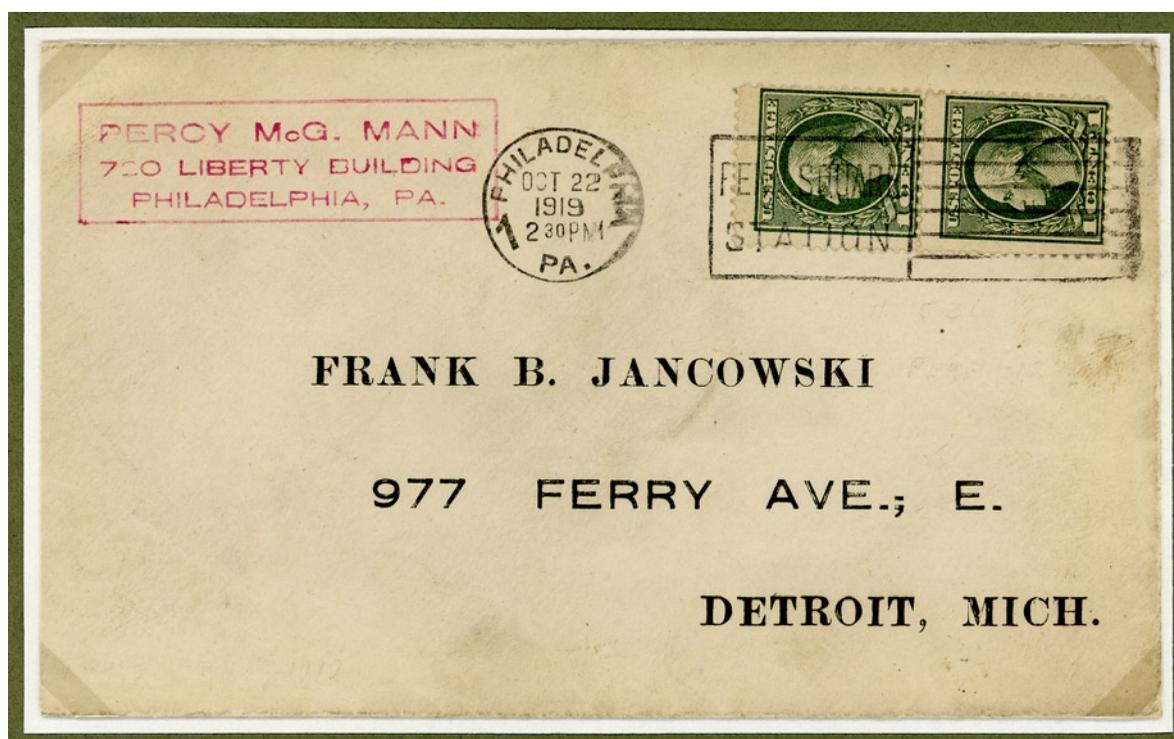
Sherman to Austin, Texas
3 May, 1921



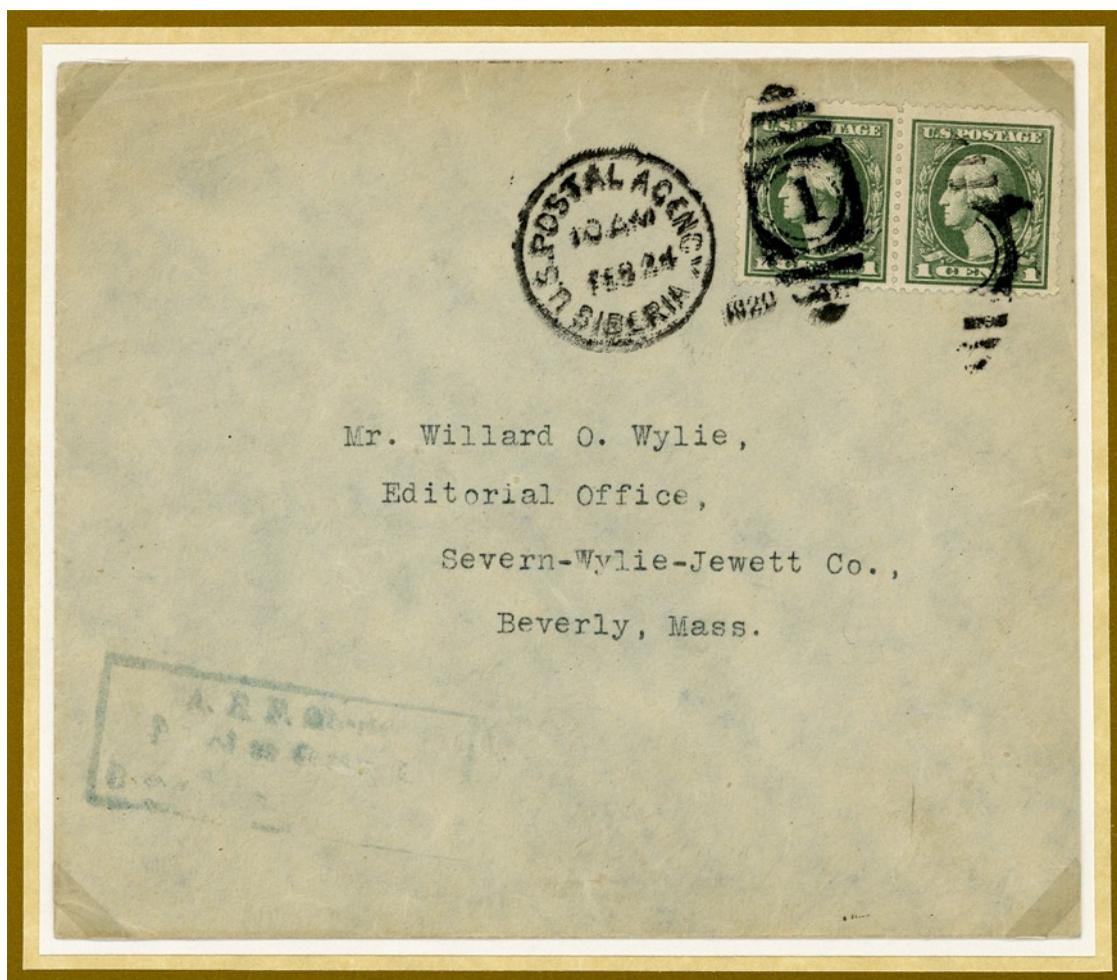
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Germantown Sta.) to Indianapolis, Indiana, 28 June, 1920
1¢ stamp added to 1¢ stationery to make up 2¢ first class rate



Washington, D.C. (2) to Toledo, Ohio
20 September, 1919



Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1) to Detroit, Michigan
22 October, 1919



U.S. Postal Agency, Siberia (1) to Beverly, Massachusetts
24 February, 1920
with A.E.F. box origin cachet

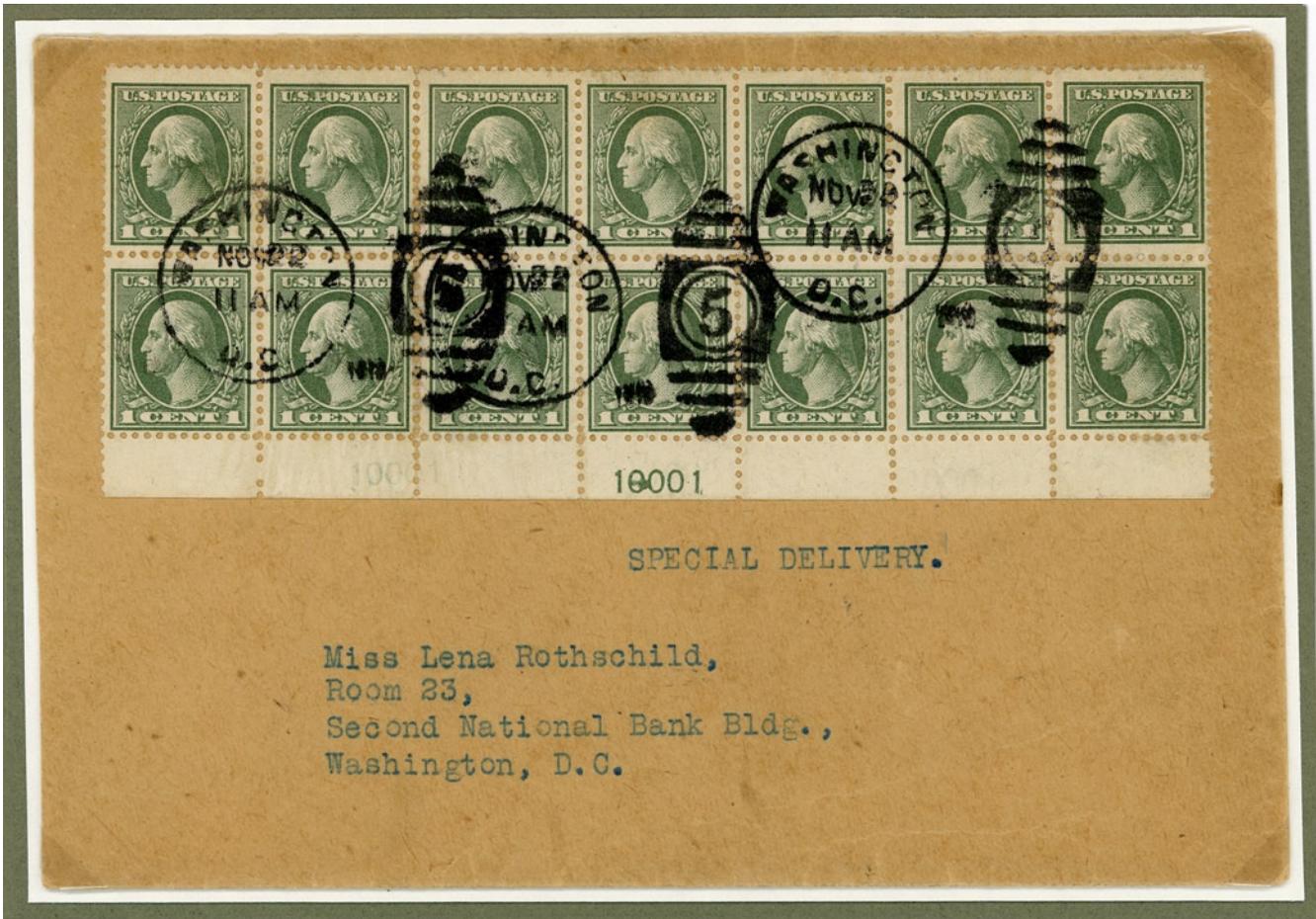
Only recorded example



Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1) Local usage
8 September, 1919



Washington, D.C. (5) Local usage
28 November, 1919



Washington, D.C. (5) Local usage; 22 November, 1919
(4¢ double weight first class rate, 10¢ special delivery fee)

Registration and Return Receipt



Holyoke, Massachusetts to Benton Harbor, Michigan
26 September, 1919 – received Benton Harbor on 29 September, 1919
(2¢ first class fee, 10¢ registration fee, 2¢ return receipt fee)