

Photos Attached to Post(al) Cards

by Patrick Crosby

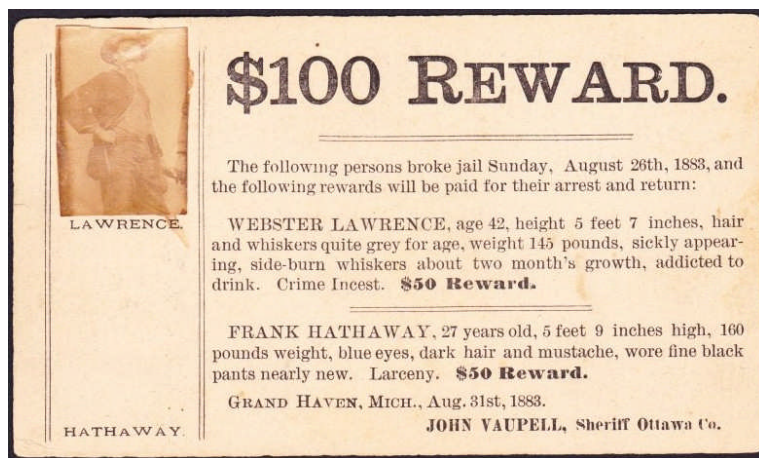
The February 8, 1883 issue of the Weekly Exposition (Brockway Center, MI) reports:

The county jail at Grand Haven was discovered to be on fire, but the promptness of the fire department saved the building with little loss. The fire caught from a stove in the main hall and was undoubtedly caused by the prisoners trying to burn themselves out. Sheriff Vaupell kept them under control, however.

Then there was a jail break later in the year when Sheriff Vaupell was prompted to send out reward cards to the surrounding area sheriffs.



Front of Scott UX7 postal card with 2¢ stamp added.

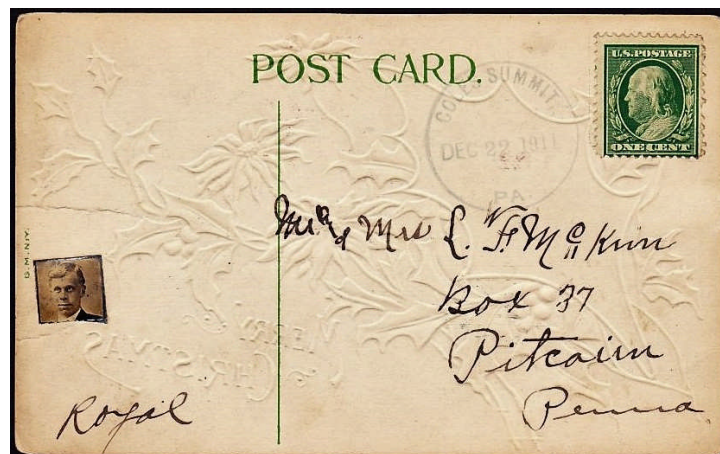


Reverse of the postal card with a \$100 reward notice.

The reward card shown above was sent to Mason, MI, about 90 miles east of Grand Haven, MI. A 2¢ stamp (Sc. 183) was added to a 1¢ postal card (Sc. UX7) to make the then current 3¢ per 1/2 ounce letter rate. The card is postmarked Sept. 1, (1883), and one month later the letter rate dropped to 2¢ per 1/2 ounce, while the postal card rate remained the same at 1¢. This card required letter postage since "...no matter could be attached to a postal card; if it was, the card was to be treated as a letter." (*Postal Service Manual*, July 1873).

Reward postal cards can be purchased starting around \$10 for the simplest example. Sometimes they were cut down in size by a sheriff to fit into a binder or file for future reference. My card from 1883 with a photo attached and the 3¢ letter rate cost me \$73 in 1989. I purchased the 1911 greeting post card a year ago for \$1.

Post Office regulations were changed in 1907 for postal and post cards allowing thin sheets of paper to be attached, like an address label, newspaper clipping, or a photograph. The sender of a Christmas Greetings post card (on the right) postmarked December 22, 1911 at Coles Summit, PA glued a small photo (of himself?) in the correspondence area and a 1¢ stamp (Sc. 374) paid the proper card postage. Not much is known about Coles Summit, but it was likely a small coal mining community which was on a railroad line with a fourth class post office. It was on a Star Route, so a private contractor who guaranteed speed and security was hired by the Post Office Department to bring the mail to the post office at Coles Summit.



References:

Chronicling America—Historic American Newspapers (Library of Congress),
www.chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/newspapers

Anthony S. Wawrukiewicz and Henry W. Beecher, U.S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-2011, (American Philatelic Society, 2011)

Kenneth A. Wood, This Is Philately, (Albany, OR, Van Dahl Publications, 1982)

The Daily Postal Bulletin (Washington, DC, Office of the Postmaster General) No. 8233 (March 4, 1907), No. 8381 (August 26 1907), No. 8538a (March 2, 1908), No. 8642 (July 2, 1908)

Patrick Crosby is a member of the Nevada Stamp Study Society and collects U.S. postal cards, especially used, including first days; the 1886 Grant Letter Card (or Sheet); UC16, the first U.S. aérogram; and postal history on business or picture post cards.