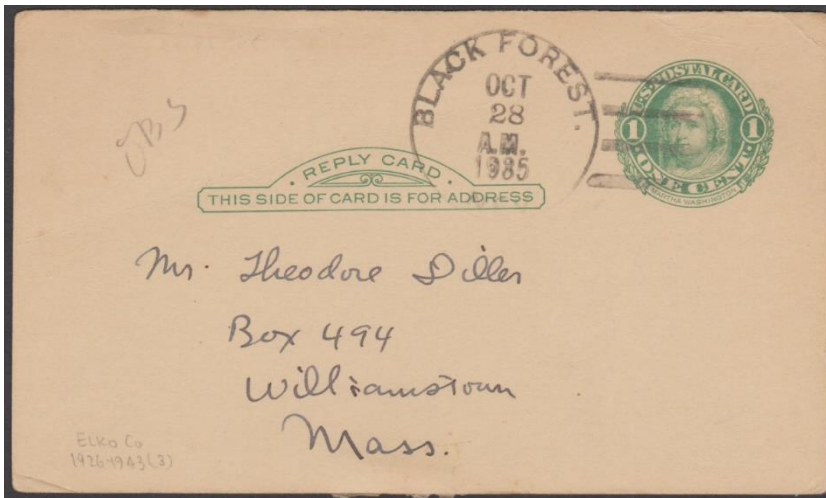
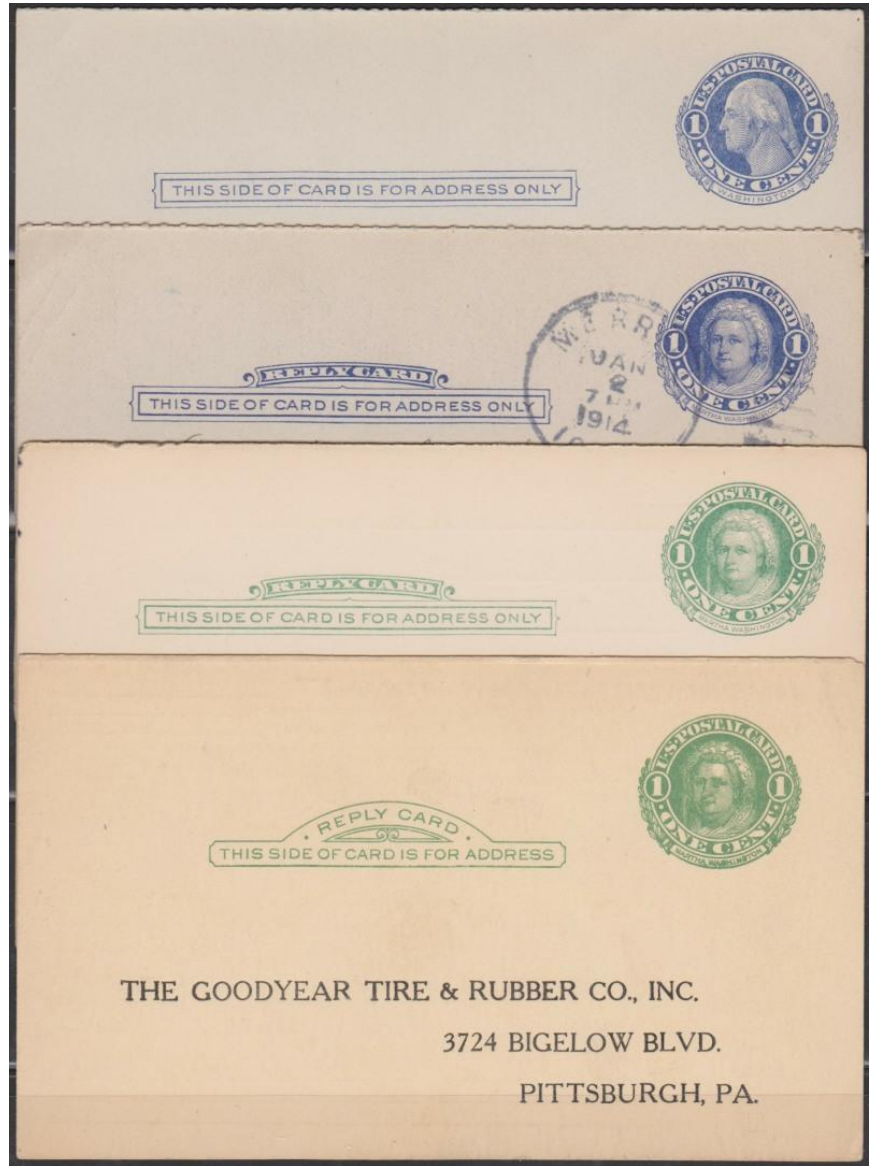


George, Martha and a Black Forest, Nevada, Postmark

By Patrick Crosby

George and Martha Washington were first honored on a United States message-reply postal card in September 1910. George was on the message half, and Martha was on the attached reply half of a rich blue, double card with a double frame line around the inscription. In just over a year, October 1911, the color was changed to green in order to comply with Universal Postal Union standards. Both of these card issues are uncommon.

Then comes 1915 and a similar message-reply is issued with changes to the inscription frame - now with a single frame line and less ornate. This message-reply card is quite common and is Scott UY7 and UPSS (United Postal Stationery Society) MR14. The reply card alone is called Scott UY7r and UPSS R14. It was the workhorse of 1¢ message-reply cards until a rate change in 1952, and even then, the remainders were surcharged for 2¢ usage.



The Martha reply card with a Black Forest, NV, October 28, 1835 four-bar hand cancel postmark was philatelically inspired, the collector just wanting the postmark of a small town on a cheap card (Sorry, Martha!) which he pre-addressed.

But the postmaster of this small mining community had some time on his hands and along with a sharp October 26, 1935 hand cancel on the reverse he writes:

Dear Sir, The population of Black Forest is at present some 30 odd people. Being a mining town it varies. It was named after the Black Forest mine which in turn was named by an old prospector. He named it Black Forest because of the dark green of the trees. Where the pines are thick, they look almost black, hence Black Forest.

*Yours Truly
Iva V. Price*

Black Forest, NV, is in the Spruce Mountain District in Elko County, 38 miles south of Wells, and the area was first mined around 1869. In 1924 the Spruce Mountain Monarch Company took over the mine, then the Black Forest post office was in operation from January, 1926, to March, 1943. The mine was shuttered in 1953. For a fascinating video of 8,300' elevation Black Forest visit www.raydunakin.com, click on Ghost Towns and Mines, and then choose Black Forest Mine. Click on the picture of the red metal building (blacksmith shop) for the video.

Although a typical used R14 is valued at a mere 30¢, I paid \$9.50 for the postmark and the postmaster's signature with information (no longer a cheap card). Another Martha R14 card (at least part of the card) was featured in my *Post Boy* article, September 1917.

When the postage rate for cards was raised to 2¢ on January 1, 1952, the same design message-reply card was issued with the color changed to red, standard for 2¢ issues. This 2¢ card stayed current until a 1958 rate change. That makes 48 years when Martha and George Washington graced our message-reply cards.

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. aerogram; and postal history on business or picture post cards.

