



The Post Boy

Connecting and supporting stamp collectors
of all ages and interests in Northern Nevada since 1975

FEBRUARY 2025
VOLUME 58
ISSUE 2

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In-person and virtual meetings:
2nd and 4th Saturdays at 10 AM
Silverada Estates Clubhouse
2301 Oddie Blvd., Reno
([map](#)) ([Google Maps](#))
All are welcome!

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Upcoming Events

Sat. Feb. 8 In-person and Zoom meeting starts at 10 AM. After announcements, committee reports, and the raffle, there will be a live auction. Members can have up to 5 lots on the table—more can be added to a total of 60 lots.

Tue. Feb. 11–Thu. 20 Online auction: Lots are due to **Dave Parsons** by email (nsssauctions@gmail.com) by Feb. 9. Limit 20 lots per member. Auction will start Feb. 11 and close at noon on Feb. 20. As webmaster **John Walter** will be out of town during most of the auction, bidding updates will come by email from Dave.

Sat. Feb. 22 In-person and Zoom meeting starts at 10 AM. This meeting will feature a live auction with all donated material! All proceeds will go to the NSSS.



Stamp Shows

Feb. 14–16	Arizona Nat'l.	Phoenix
Feb. 21–23	San Diego	San Diego
Apr. 25–27	WESTPEX	San Francisco
May 2–4	PIPEX	Portland
May 23–25	Rocky Mtn.	Denver
Jun. 6–7	SOPEX	Medford
Jul. 26–27	Reno	Reno
Aug. 14–17	GASS	Chicago

The Post Boy Reporter

January 11

by John Walter

This was our first live meeting auction since October. Members submitted 53 lots with 46 being sold and all 5 donation lots sold for a total of \$507.75. This was probably the highest percentage of lots sold in a meeting auction. Seems like there was pent-up energy and demand for new items for the members present.

An interesting item sold by **Howard Grenzebach** is a German cover (see front page). This is Howard's description of the cover:

"Mailed on October 20, 1923, as the great inflation was growing (next month was much worse), this cover is franked with two connected pairs of five-million-mark stamps. The rate at the time was 10 million marks for a 20-gram letter with an additional 10 million for registration."

The opening bid was \$3.00 with a final bid of \$6.00. It was a very lively auction with lots of bidding.

January 25

by Will Eubanks

Erik Fields provided refreshments. President **James Steckley** reminded everyone of the upcoming stamp shows (see front page). He reminded everyone to fill out the Linn's stamp popularity poll (forms available at each meeting). He also thanked **Jeff Waldman** for picking up a recent donation in Carson City. **Dave Gehringer** announced that presentations are filled until April; months still needing volunteers are April, June, September, October, and November. Membership chair **Mike Potter** reported current membership at 65. Quiz whiz **Eric Moody** reported that Linn's has requested to reprint some of our quizzes (with credit, of course) in their newsletter—he will send them some of our past quizzes. **John Walter** recommended we (the NSSS) second nominations for APS officer positions.

After a rousing raffle (**Eric Moody** won the bonus and **Scott Matthews** won the money), **Jeanne Paquin** gave an excellent presentation on the postal history of Antarctica, inspired by two covers from the Byrd Expedition in Little America, Antarctica (**Figures 1 and 2**). The quarterly board meeting followed Jeanne's presentation.



Figure 1: Byrd Expedition cover sent to Lima, MT.



Figure 2: Byrd Expedition cover sent to Burbank, CA.

Rural Free Delivery

by Patrick Crosby



Figure 3: R.F.D. wagon.

The pictured Rural Free Delivery (R.F.D.) wagon (Figure 3) is inside the Yamhill Valley Heritage Center in McMinnville, OR, where it may well have been used. Note how small the wagon is. The rural carrier provided his/her own transportation and the only other person allowed inside the vehicle was a postal inspector. The wagon endured a lot of pain as it bounced and shook along the dirt and mud roads in all weather, and today's lack of sharp and complete hand cancels on cards and envelopes posted on R.F.D. routes attest to those conditions. Some rural carriers just used a pen or pencil to cancel the postage (a manuscript cancel or ms) and it's no wonder why these are so often hard to read. Sometimes only an "X" or a line through the postage was used. Even though regulations called for the cancellation to include town and state names, route number, and date, carriers said "forget it" as they bounced along the roads between farms.

Rural mail routes, begin on October 1, 1896, exist to this day and though the carrier doesn't do the cancelling anymore most of the system remains the same.

The R.F.D. system was small to being with, but grew in leaps and bounds for the next 20 years. Where farmers once took most of a day once a week to travel to the post office, now there was pickup and delivery at their roadside mail receptacle six days a week. The value of their farmland went up and, with price quotes available by mail, they procured better prices for their goods. Some local merchants didn't like the competition with increased package deliveries. Some small communities lost their local post office in favor of an R.F.D. route.

("The Morning Appeal"; Carson City, NV; Dec. 29, 1903) Nevada Congressman VanDuzer "...will take up the matter of a rural free delivery in the Truckee Meadows, in Carson Valley and Mason Valley. He has called the attention of the department to the fact that these three valleys, on account of their compact agricultural population and good roads, are particularly adapted for the establishment of this service. Rural free deliver routes as a rule, cover from 2 to 25 miles in length and serve about 100 families. The routes are so established that the carriers distribute the mail at each farmhouse and deliver registered mail, special delivery matter and pension letters.

"Another matter of benefit arising from the rural free delivery is that the rural carriers are required to carry with them a sufficient supply of stamps for the supply of their patrons; also envelopes, postal cards, and news paper wrappers."

("The Silver State"; Unionville, NV; Feb. 7, 1901) "The benefits of this service are not confined to direct results... [It puts] their occupants in more vital touch with each other, with business opportunities, and with the general movements of the world... it promotes cordial feelings with the government which extends such facilities."

("The Record"; Gardnerville, NV; Aug. 7, 1903) R.F.D. service is a "...potent factor in the construction of good roads."

("Carson City Daily Appeal"; Carson City, NV; Jul. 28, 1911) "The citizens near Reno are to benefit by the rural free delivery. The government has decided to place carriers in service at that section and for five miles out of Reno people will benefit by this service."

In the early years R.F.D. service was a political football. It seems it was mostly developed because of Republican efforts, but both Republicans and Democrats took credit for its expansion and blamed each other for its deficits. Before the practice was curtailed, congressmen tried gaining votes by securing a route for their con-

stituents where the routes did not qualify.

Roadside mail receptacles were required of postal customers and a route needed about 100 customers. On one route in Kentucky many farmers removed their receptacles because the appointed rural carrier was “negro”. Soon the USPOD closed the route because it was no longer economically feasible and the carrier lost his job. In Linn County, Kansas, a female rural carrier was so appreciated that the fifteen farmers on her route each yearly gave her a bushel of corn for her horse. After post office inspectors toured a route in Lockport, New York, Postmaster Hatch was told the USPOD would “...no longer endure the soap boxes, nail kegs, cigar boxes, old tea kettles, etc. being used by farmers...in two different soap boxes used as receptacles for mail hens had made their nests and were laying eggs.”



Figure 4: R.F.D. hand cancel from Delta, OH.

In purple ink the rural carrier cancels the postcard (Figure 4) with a manuscript “Delta Ohio 4/10-09”. In the upper left corner the sender writes “Deliver on route” since the addressee was on the same rural route. This was like a lot of the mailed articles and made for very efficient mail service. These postal items are termed “down-the-line”, “up-the-road”, or “down-the-road” usage. No instructions to this effect were needed.

On August 1, 1900 rural mail carriers were told to cancel all mail collected on their route using indelible pencils. Shortly thereafter and for three years the USPOD began issuing distinctive “official” hand cancelling devices, after which time post offices or carriers could buy “unofficial” cancelling devices from private companies. Eventually requirements were changed so that only

down-the-line items needed a rural carrier’s cancel and items sent outside the local post office area were not to be carrier-cancelled.

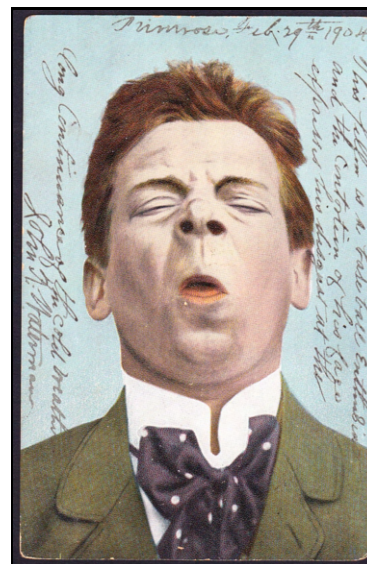
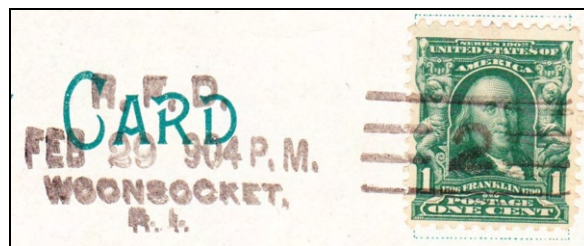


Figure 5: Type 1 R.F.D. cancel from Woonsocket, RI (top), and the corresponding view side (bottom).

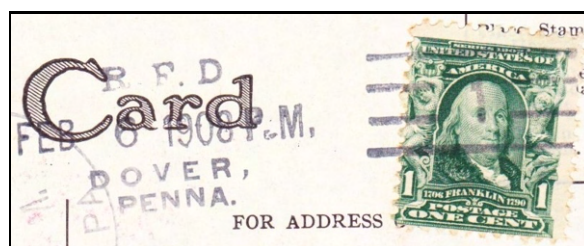


Figure 6: Type 2 R.F.D. cancel from Dover, PA.

The USPOD’s official device included what they liked on a cancel: “R.F.D.” (always at the top), town and state names, and date. For collectors, official cancellations are termed in general type 1 and type 2, the only difference being that with type 1 the letters of “R.F.D.” have no serifs while type 2 devices have the “R.F.D.” with serifs. Figure 5 shows a type 1 official R.F.D. postmarked on February 29, 1904 in Woonsocket, RI. The view side’s

funny face is said to be a reaction of a baseball fan to continued bad weather. In [Figure 6](#) is an official type 2 R.F.D. hand cancel from Dover, PA. There would be 4 or 5 killer bars. In both cases the carrier was number “2”.



Figure 7: R.F.D. cancel from Milford, PA.



Figure 8: R.F.D. cancel from Chester, NH.

Unofficial style R.F.D. cancels are varied in style and are very desirable. [Figure 7](#) shows one from Milford, PA with 6 bars and a hard-to-read carrier “1”. Addressed only to a name and “R.D. No. 1” it is an obvious down-the-line usage. The double ring circle date stamp with target cancel from Chester, NH in 1908 ([Figure 8](#)) is an unofficial hand stamp and includes “No. 3” for the carrier.



Figure 9: R.F.D. cancel from Round Top, TX.

My best R.F.D. cancel is one from Round Top, TX ([Figure 9](#)). The killer portion is an American flag and according to information I received when purchasing it, it received the “rarest” rating from Richow, being one of under 20 known. R.F.D. hand-stamped flag cancels also exist without a town or state name or a date, and these were likely for only down-the-line usage.

Oh, I wish I owned the only American Postal Machines Company flag cancel made for rural free delivery use. Early on it wasn’t clear if R.F.D.-collected mail would be cancelled by the carrier of the local post office, so the APMC prepared one of their standard-style flag dies with a large “Rural Free Delivery” in the flag for use in one of its machines. It was used in the An-niston, AL (so, AA) post office which was alphabetically first of all the towns that used their machines and had a rural route. Frederick Langford (ref. below) states “Value undetermined, but great.”

References

- Richard W. Helbock, *Postmarks on Postcards* (La Posta Publications, Scappoose, OR, 2002), Ch. 12.
- Frederick Langford, *Standard Flag Cancel Encyclopedia*, 4th ed. (Pasadena: Frederick Langford, 2008), 79, 126–127.
- chroniclingamerica.loc.gov for all newspaper items.

Quiz: Snakes on Stamps

by Eric Moody

1. This country's coat of arms, which features an eagle killing a snake, has appeared on many of its stamps (#500, 719, 1889, 2876, etc.), sometimes in depictions of the national flag which incorporates the coat of arms. The country is
 - (a) Bolivia.
 - (b) Saudi Arabia.
 - (c) India.
 - (d) Mexico.
2. In 1963 this colony in Africa issued a set of 12 diamond-shaped stamps (#306–317) depicting native snakes.
 - (a) Spanish Sahara
 - (b) French West Africa
 - (c) Portuguese Guinea
 - (d) Rhodesia
3. The Chinese (Lunar) "Year of the Snake" was celebrated in 2013. This country marked the new year with a stamp (#2393) featuring a colorful, cartoon-like reptile.
 - (a) People's Republic of China
 - (b) Australia
 - (c) U.S.
 - (d) Korea
4. Four snakes—a python, viper, cobra, and "Gliding snake"—are shown on a 2003 set of stamps (#2033–2036) from this Asian country.
 - (a) Republic of China
 - (b) India
 - (c) Nepal
 - (d) Thailand
5. A 1991 set of stamps from Brazil (#2316–2319) features snakes and
 - (a) fish.
 - (b) birds.
 - (c) zoos.
 - (d) dinosaurs.
6. A Yellow-faced Whip Snake is depicted on a 1982 stamp (#795) that is part of a set showcasing the wildlife of this country.
 - (a) Canada
 - (b) Spain
 - (c) Australia
 - (d) South Africa
7. In 1996, the U.S. produced a set of stamps (#3105a–o) that featured endangered species. One of the creatures shown is a variety of garter snake that carries the name of this city.
 - (a) Los Angeles
 - (b) San Francisco
 - (c) New Orleans
 - (d) Savannah
8. A caduceus, the serpent-entwined staff that is a symbol of the medical profession, is shown on a 1977 Brazilian stamp (#1516) that celebrates an international medical congress held that year in Rio de Janeiro to examine and discuss diseases of the
 - (a) lungs.
 - (b) skin.
 - (c) bones.
 - (d) teeth.
9. This former Portuguese colony issued a set of wildlife stamps in 2000 that included one (#1130e) featuring a cobra. The African country is
 - (a) Angola
 - (b) Mozambique
 - (c) Sao Tome & Principe
 - (d) Guinea-Bissau
10. A 1996 stamp (#2601b) depicting "Boitata, the Snake of Life" is part of a Popular Legends set issued by this country.
 - (a) India
 - (b) South Africa
 - (c) Nicaragua
 - (d) Brazil

11. The “Sonoran Desert” pane of ten stamps produced by the U.S. in 1999 depicts wildlife in a rocky, cactus-strewn landscape. Stamp #3293i of the set features a Diamondback rattlesnake and a
- (a) flying hawk.
 - (b) scampering lizard.
 - (c) hiding mouse.
 - (d) leaping rabbit.
12. All the animals of the Lunar (Chinese) New Year cycle, including a snake, are depicted in three sets of stamps (#2926—with English inscriptions; and #2927 and 2928—with Chinese inscriptions) issued in 2004 by this Asian country.
- (a) Indonesia
 - (b) Philippines
 - (c) Vietnam
 - (d) Singapore

The quiz is worth 120 Auction Bucks. Please give your answers to **Maggie Griener** at the next meeting or email them to postboyquiz@renostamp.org.

January Quiz Answers

1c, 2b, 3d, 4b, 5c, 6c, 7b, 8d, 9b, 10c, 11b, 12a.

Vassar Post Office Display by John Walter

The Vassar post office display for the month of February has three themes. The full frame has material for Valentine’s Day, celebrated on the 14th. The other frame has items for Presidents’ Day, honoring all past presidents on February 17. The second frame also celebrates the entire month for African American Heritage Month.



