

Series 1902 – United States

The Post Office Enters the 20th Century

Objective: This exhibit is a usage study of Series 1902 during the first decade of the 20th Century when the mails remained the primary form of personal and commercial communication as the United States transitioned from an agrarian society to an industrial and international power. Using the dominant definitive stamp series in use during the first decade of the 20th Century, the exhibit demonstrates how the Post Office Department (POD) operated within the spheres of domestic and international postal communications.

Background: The Series 1902, in general use from late 1902 through 1909, bears witness to the challenges the POD faced in handling and processing domestic and international mail during the nation's greatest population surge. Sixteen million immigrants arrived on both continental shores between 1890 and 1910. Additionally, the outcome of the 1898 war with Spain added another 10 million to the nation's population along with new territorial mail responsibilities across the Caribbean and the Pacific Ocean.

The POD expended great effort to achieve efficient control and accountability. Regulations covering domestic mails, codified in the *Postal Laws and Regulations*, monthly *Postal Guide* directives, and daily *Postal Bulletins*, along with Universal Postal Union (UPU) regulations covering foreign mail, were strictly enforced. Markings on the mail during the period are testimony to that endeavor.

Development: After a brief introduction of the Series' sixteen stamp designs including the special delivery and 2-cent replacement, the major postal history study begins with a *Classification, Rates and Fees* study which encompasses all domestic and foreign classifications and continues with examples of Territorial, Possession including overprinted stamps, Agency and Treaty usage.

Transporting the Mails documents the Post Office's departmental structure responsible for Rural, Railway, Sea Post and government delivery services. *Handling & Accountability* documents Mail Matter, covering regulatory mail handling and accountability, within a network of 90,000 post offices, surveyed in a display of markings, along with a variety of informational Auxiliary Markings, a hallmark of the series.

The exhibit concludes with a section documenting *Control & Revenue Protection* that includes examples of manuscript, hand-stamp, precancel and machine postmarks illustrating the POD efforts to efficiently control mail flow and protect revenues at the point of origin, as they experimented during the transition from manual to mechanical processing.

Exhibit Outline

2. Stamps of the Series 1902

Denomination designs

1. Classification, Rates & Fees

- a. Domestic
 - i. First & Second-class
 - ii. Third & Fourth-class
 - iii. Service Fees
- b. UPU
 - i. Letter, Post Card, Commercial Paper
 - ii. Printed Matter, Samples
 - iii. Service Fees
- c. Territory & Possession
- d. U.S. Postal Agency, Shanghai
- e. Treaty Rate

2. Transporting the Mails

- a. Rural Free Delivery
- b. Railway Mail Service
- c. Sea Post, Navy Mail
- d. Consular Service & Forwarders

3. Handling & Accountability

- a. Mail Matter
- b. Auxiliary Markings

4. Control & Revenue Protection

- a. Manuscript, Straight Line, Fancy Cancel
- b. Doane, 4-Bar & Duplex handstamps
- c. Station & Sub-Station, Precancels
- d. Machine Postmarks & Cancels

(e) Denotes Certificate