

U. S. Special Handling 1925-1959

The Stamps and the Service

Background:

On February 28, 1925, "Special Handling" was established to move fourth-class parcels with first-class service. This new service was vital for the survival of day-old chicks, baby alligators, and queen bees. The original service covered shipments between post offices of any distance for one flat fee of 25¢. In 1928 Special Handling was modified to include special delivery service at no extra charge, extending first class service to the addressee's doorstep. Although it still exists, Special Handling has been largely displaced by Priority Mail.



“LIVE CHICKS” Parcel Post Label – May 13, 1935 – The Intended Use

APEX 168737

Scope and Development:

This exhibit illustrates both **the stamps and the service**, from their inception in early 1925, complete through the 1955 experimental dry-printing period, until 1959 when the dedicated stamps were withdrawn from sale. Stamps from each of the four major printings are shown, followed directly by commercial and non-commercial uses for each, if known. The exhibit also features the scarce varieties, providing identification keys and guidance so collectors may seek discovery copies of, as yet, unknown issues.

Organization and Plan:

Frame 1: Service authorization; pre-production proofs; 25¢ deep-green first printing; first days; transfer roll breaks.
Frame 2: 25¢ second printing in yellow-green; production details; Zeppelin flights and 25¢ commercial examples.
Frame 3: Announcement of 1928 rates; production elements; die proofs; first days; commercial uses of 10¢ stamps.
Frame 4: 1928 printings continued; diverse commercial applications of the 10 & 15¢ wet-printed stamps.
Frame 5: 20¢ uses; 1955 experimental dry-printings; rarity factors; identification guidelines; a “proper” album page.

Featured items appear in a **bold red** border