

Auxiliary Markings

Publication of The Auxiliary Markings Club

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A journal that reports about and studies the myriad markings
added to a letter that explain how it reached its final destination.

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President's Message

by John M. Hotchner

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AS USUAL, starting with an odd marking. The cover shown nearby has an unusual hand stamp that is neither the color nor typeface style of most postal markings. This is a 1937 Hawaii to San Francisco cover, canceled aboard the luxury liner S.S. President Coolidge, which was based in San Francisco. Its normal route was between that city and Manila, with stops in other Pacific ports. On this trip to San Francisco, the ship arrived during a longshore workers strike. Its mail could not be unloaded, delaying this cover's onward travel to Bermuda. Someone aboard—or maybe not; maybe a postal employee—or maybe not, added the hand stamp. So, the question is: Does this qualify as an official postal service marking, or is it a private marking?

Exhibiting: As this is being written, I'm in the midst of revising my auxiliary markings exhibit so it can be ready for our AMC meeting at PIPEX, May 3–5, near Portland, Oregon. I hope to see many of you there. If you have not tried exhibiting, I recommend it for several reasons:

1. There is something magical about seeing your collection up in the frames for others to enjoy and learn from.
2. It gives you an opportunity to organize your collection, so you see more clearly what you have, the gaps you are challenged to fill, and what you have that might be tradable or salable.
3. It allows you to tell a story with your stamps and covers in a way that brings home not only your philatelic interests but puts the material in a historical context,
4. It exercises your creativity.
5. It is easy to do using minimal computer skills.
6. Once you have entered your first show, and gotten your first medal, the challenge to improve your exhibit



and climb the medal ladder can generate a level of enthusiasm that might surprise you.

7. There is an organization that can help you get started and help you along, the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors, which can provide a mentor, free critiques of your exhibit, and answers to your questions about how to get started.

The hardest part is getting started when you are unfamiliar with the craft. But spend a little time looking at other exhibits, and I hope you might experience the revelation I did many years ago: "I can do this." It was not always a smooth ride, but nearly 50 years later, it was one of the best decisions I made to get involved in this part of the hobby.

Congratulations to our Editor, Andrew Kelley, whose exhibit of the offset lithographed stamps of the US Third Bureau Issue took the Grand Award at the recent San Diego Stamp Show. His exhibit will now go head-to-head against the Grand Award winners of the 20+ National APS shows in the Champion of Champions competition at the APS Great

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Join us for the Next AMC Zoom Presentation

On Tuesday, April 30 at 7:30 PM EST, join our Editor, Andrew Kelley, for a discussion of the auxiliary markings of the Washington-Franklin Head era. This important period of US philately (roughly 1908–23) features a wide range of marks relating to World War I, the dawn of airmail, civil censorship and dissent, disinfection, rates and rate changes, and much else.

A Zoom link will be emailed to all members the week prior to the meeting. Alternately, you may use <https://tinyurl.com/AMCZoom3> See you there!

President's Message, continued from page 1

American Stamp Show in Hartford, Connecticut next August.

Congratulations to our Director, Gregg Redner, who has been selected to receive the inaugural Tony Wawrukiewicz Award for the best article in the 2023 run of our journal, for his article, "Pre-philatelic Port Paye Auxiliary Markings on Belgian Mail" which is in the January, 2023, issue of *Auxiliary Markings*.

2024 Election The Nominating Committee chaired by Past President Ralph Nafziger has reported the following candidates for the offices noted:

President: Gregg Redner
Vice President: Andrew Kelley
Secretary-Treasurer: Peter Rikard
Directors:
Tom Breske
Roger Brody
Jay Stotts

The election with bios of the candidates will run in the next issue of

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Auxiliary Markings. There is still time for Members who wish to run for one of these positions. If you are interested, please contact me at the address above.

Finally, I want to note the passing of Nancy Clark, one of our original members and an enthusiastic supporter of the Club. She took an early interest in working on the Auxiliary Markings Catalog, and helped to establish the fact that this effort will be a good deal more complicated than we thought it would be. The work continues. —JMH

Join the Auxiliary Markings Club at PIPEX 2024

THE AUXILIARY MARKINGS CLUB is a convening society for PIPEX 2024. We hope you will join our President, John Hotchner, and many other Club members in enjoying the presentations, exhibits, stamp bourse, and fellowship. Below is detailed information supplied by the show:

PIPEX 2024 stamp show will be held on May 3-5, 2024. The venue for the show is the Monarch Hotel & Conference Center, located at 12566 SE 93rd Avenue, Clackamas, Oregon. The hotel offers a free airport shuttle to the nearby Portland International Airport (PDX) and special room rates for show attendees. The theme of this year's show is the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings and special PIPEX 2024 souvenir cachets will be available for sale.

PIPEX 2024 is an American Philatelic Society World Series of Philately show. The multi-frame grand award winner's exhibit will be eligible for and expected to compete in the Champion of Champions competition in the APS Great American Stamp Show in Hartford, Connecticut on August 15-18, 2024. Similarly, the single-frame grand award winner's exhibit will be eligible for and expected to compete in the Champion of Champions single-frame competition at CHICAGOPEX, November 22-24, 2024.

This year's show and multi-frame grand award is named in honor of Dr. Anthony Wawrukiewicz, known to many as "Tony W," who passed away in 2023. He made many significant contributions to the PIPEX annual WSP stamp shows and was an accomplished philatelic exhibitor, national judge, columnist, and author of many excellent books.

Up to 160 frames of exhibits will be mounted physically at the show and will be judged in the frames. Exhibitors are also encouraged to submit their exhibits virtually to be posted on the website www.pipexstampshow.org.



The Pacific International Philatelic Exposition
SALUTING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

PIPEX★2024

MAY 3-5, 2024
Friday-Saturday 10am-6pm, Sunday 10am-4pm
MONARCH HOTEL & Conference Center
12566 SE 93rd Avenue Clackamas, Oregon
30 STAMP DEALER BOOTHS
190 EXHIBIT FRAMES, 5 CONVENING SOCIETIES
VISIT pipexstampshow.org to REGISTER online,
BOOK the special show rate hotel, VOLUNTEER,
BUY awards banquet tickets and VIEW the
show schedule.
FREE Admission, Parking & Airport Shuttle
UPTOWN STAMP SHOW
Official Corporate Sponsor of PIPEX2024

Photo Courtesy of The National WWII Museum

The PIPEX website also has a schedule of events, hotel information and much more.

Convening organizations at PIPEX 2024 are: The Society for Czechoslovak Philately; Rhodesian Study Circle; Military Postal History Society; Pacific Northwest Postal History Society and the Auxiliary Markings Club. PIPEX is the annual exhibition of the Northwest Federation of Stamp Clubs, which will hold its AGM at the

show. Other societies will be represented at the show, hold meetings and offer programs.

There will be 30 dealer booth spaces and other features including Grandma's Attic and a youth area. Show hours will be 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Friday and Saturday and 10:00 AM TO 4:00 PM on Sunday

For more information on the show, please contact the PIPEX 2024 Chairman, David Epps at: depps55@gmail.com.

An Interesting Piece of Third-Class Mail

by Jerry Johnson

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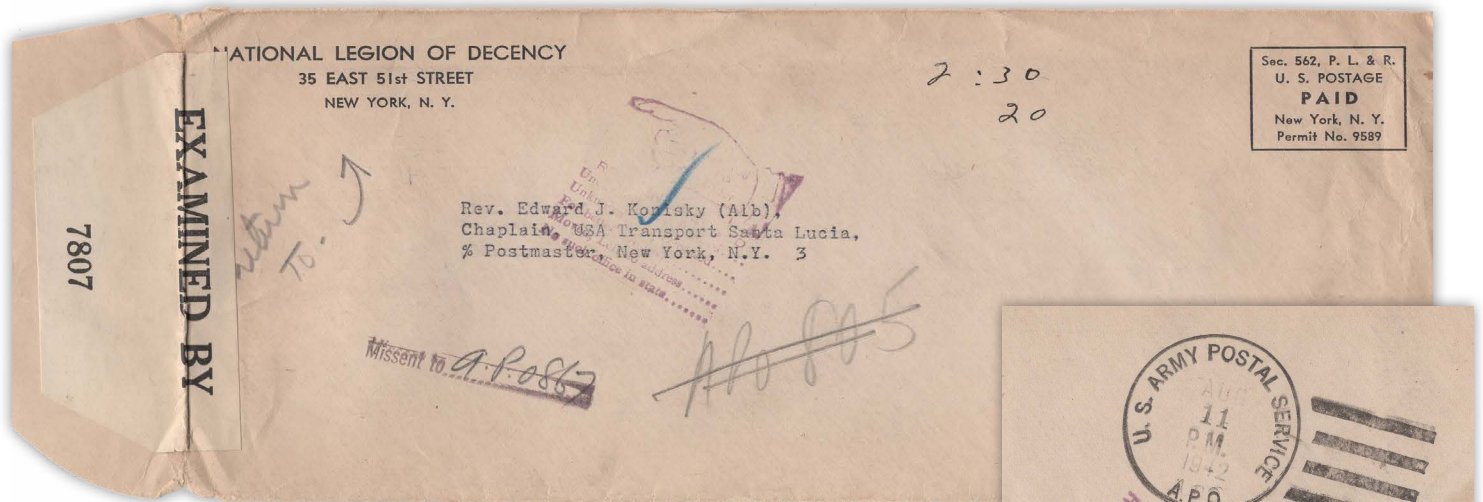


Figure 1. Cover with inset showing markings on reverse

I RECENTLY OBTAINED a third-class mail item from 1942 that I found to be interesting not only from the auxiliary markings but also from the contents. It is shown in Figure 1.

This item was mailed from New York to a chaplain aboard a US Army transport ship. From the various markings it is obvious that he never received the mailing. So, now I want to analyze this item to highlight the use of several references.

This cover is a piece of permit imprint mail. The imprint block (upper right corner) indicates the prepayment of postage at the time of mailing. The top line in the box is the clue to the type of mail and the rate. "Sec. 562. P.L.&R." is for: third-class, regular

bulk/quantity discount rate mail; one-cent paid by permit; and a minimum per piece rate. This was in effect from October 1, 1932, to February 24, 1949.¹

Now let's see what we can find out about the date of mailing. There was a problem with the delivery. Chaplain Konisky was on the transport ship Santa Lucia. However, the item was sent to two APOs—805 and 867. Both of these APOs were in St. Lucia, B.W.I.² APO 805 is crossed out and the auxiliary marking states: "Missent to APO 867". There is a manuscript marking "Return to", most likely applied at APO 805. The Army Post Office applied the circular date stamp (August 11, 1942) to the back (Figure 1 inset). When the item reached New York the date of

August 16, 1942 was applied to the back side and the pointing finger marking for return with a blue pencil marking on the "Unknown line" was applied to the front. Also, the item was opened by a censor at New York ("Examined by 7807" at the left side).

Next, some more insight can be found by looking at the sailing dates for the Santa Lucia. The Santa Lucia was in commercial operation prior to the attack on Pear Harbor. The ship entered Army service on March 4, 1942, when she departed from New York. After sailings to Australia, San Francisco, the Fiji Islands, and

Columbia, she returned to New York on July 16, 1942. Later, while still in New York, the ship was turned over to the Navy in August and was renamed the USS Leedstown.³

So, we know that the cover was returned on August 16, 1942, but when was it mailed? It had to be when the Santa Lucia was in service—March 4 to July 16, plus the time in New York

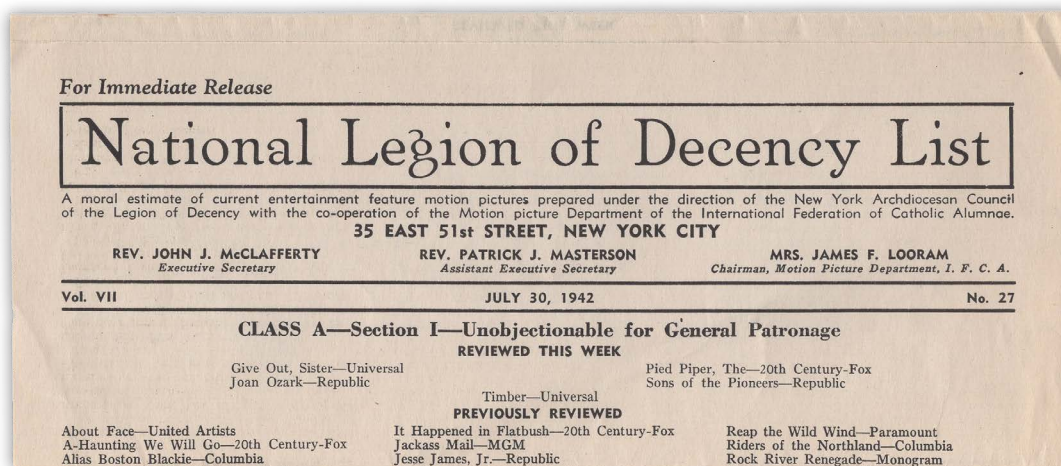


Figure 2. Contents of the cover in Figure 1.

Continued on page 5

until August. The final clue comes from the contents shown in Figure 2.

The National Legion of Decency was a Catholic group founded in 1934 by Archbishop of Cincinnati, John T. McNicholas, as an organization dedicated to identifying objectionable content in motion pictures. The large page listing from the cover is dated July 30, 1942. As noted earlier the cover was posted at an APO on August 11, 1942. Given the transit time of the cover, it is likely that it was sent near the issue date of the enclosure. I doubt that the sender knew the ship was back at New

York, as the sender was probably doing mass mailings at set intervals.

As a closing note, one of the motion pictures in the listing was “Jungle Siren.” The listed objection for his movie was “suggestive scenes and remarks”. From an Internet search I found that this movie was about a woman, raised in the jungle, who helps an American man (played by Buster Crabbe) fight Nazis who are trying to start a native uprising. Most likely, this movie would be rather mild by today’s standards. I found that it can be purchased today on a DVD.

References:

1. U. S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872–1999, Revised Second Edition. Harry W. Beecher and Anthony S. Wawrukiewicz, Cama Publishing Company, Portland, OR., Appendix 3, Permit Imprints.
2. United States Numbered Military Post Offices: Assignments and Locations, Edited by George Cosentini and Norman Gruenzner, Published by The Military Postal History Society, 1994.
3. Troop Ships of World War II, by Roland W. Chalis, published by The Army Transportation Association, 1947

Call for Articles to be Included in a Jointly Sponsored PSSC / AMC Anthology on Auxiliary Markings

THE PHILATELIC SPECIALISTS SOCIETY of Canada (Robert Vogel—President) and The Auxiliary Markings Club, located in the US (John Hotchner, RDP—President), would like to announce an exciting joint project dealing with the global subject of auxiliary markings in their many forms. The venture will take the form of an Anthology, which invites articles of up to 5,000 words on a topic related to auxiliary markings. The hope is that the anthology will be international in scope and will deal with a wide variety of markings.

Auxiliary markings are defined as postal markings which concern the movement of the mails—especially mail that had problems. The evidence of those problems are the markings applied to envelopes and packages as the mail was processed. They may have to do with inadequate postage, problems with the delivery address, accidents that occurred with planes, trains, ships or trucks carrying the mail, or literally hundreds of other reasons. These postal markings are applied to covers by handstamp, machine cancellation, a stick-on label, manuscript markings, or by mechanical or electronic methods and indicate that the covers in question were given special attention due to some special circumstance. A broad definition would include accompanying postal service letters, and ambulance covers in which damaged or misdirected mail has at times been delivered, and markings placed on covers by institutions other than the postal service, such as the military or prisons.

Publication particulars, such as document style, figure DPI resolutions and citation styles will be emailed to all



accepted authors and will also be posted on both the PSSC and AMC websites.

This joint anthology will be posted electronically on both the PSSC and AMC websites and will be in open access format. Should members wish to purchase a printed copy, this can be arranged through the PSSC on an as required basis.

The projected publication date is the spring of 2025, and queries of interest are encouraged from March 2024 onward. The editor also welcomes questions regarding the suitability of a proposed topic for inclusion in the anthology. Final versions of accepted articles will be due to the editor by December 1, 2024.

If you would like to submit an article or ask a question about this joint anthology project, please contact Editor Gregg Redner, PhD, FRPSC by emailing him at greggredner@rogers.com.

The Various Printings of the 1910, Third Generation Belgian Auxiliary Labels

by **Gregg Redner, PhD, FRPSC**
greggredner@rogers.com

TO SAY that there has been little written about the subject of Belgian auxiliary labels would be a gross understatement. To date, only one monograph (*Het gebruik van etiketten bij het terugzenden van poststukken*, written by Firmin Neyt as #84 in the Fisto-Studie series and published by the East Flanders Study Circle, in Belgium) has been written about the subject, and this is only a general overview. Recently a large article written by Daniel Goffin, ("Le première émission des étiquettes pour envoi retour," *Le Philatéliste Belge*, nr. 39), concentrates on the first three issues of Belgian auxiliary labels (1892, 1894 & 1910), with particular attention paid to the first two. These issues are the rarest of all Belgian auxiliary labels and are the hardest to find, in great part because they were originally designed to be used on returned international mail. As such, few of the covers containing these labels were preserved in their home countries.

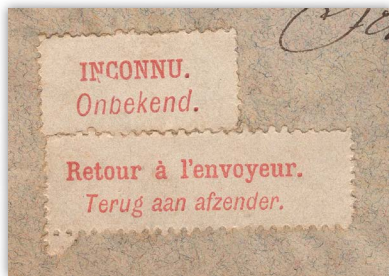


Figure 1. 1892 label.

The first generation of Belgian auxiliary labels was issued on July 1, 1892, and was a red unframed label printed on white paper (See Figure 1). The second generation, issued in 1894, changed the ink color from red to blue (See Figure 2). This decision may have perhaps been made because several other European countries, including Hungary and Yugoslavia used red ink on their labels. The decision to use blue ink arose perhaps out of a desire to make Belgian auxiliary labels visually distinct.



Figure 2. 1894 label.

The third generation of Belgian labels was ordered to be delivered in late 1900, but these labels would not be delivered until 1902. Like the second generation labels, they are printed in blue ink, but unlike the first two labels, these labels were framed (See Figure 3). The reason for the introduction of



Figure 3. 1900 label.

the frame may have arisen from the fact that almost all European countries had by this time introduced frames on their return labels. As with the first two generations of labels, the French language lettering was given prominence, both in positioning and type setting. This third generation of labels served for over ten years, making it the longest serving of the first three generations of labels.

Belgian auxiliary labels were originally intended to be used, according to the UPU directive of July 4, 1891, on undeliverable mail returned to foreign countries. They were subsequently also used on domestic returned mail. Eight labels were produced for use in Belgium:

- 399—RÉFUSÉ/Geweigerd (Refused)
- 400—INCONNU/Onbekend (Unknown)
- 401—Non Réclamé/Niet afgehaald (Not claimed)
- 402—DÉCÉDÉ/Overleden (Deceased)

- 403—Retour à l'envoyeur/Terug aan afzender (Return to sender)
- 404—Adres Insuffisante/Onvoldoende adres (Address insufficient)
- 405—Non admis au transport/Niet ter vervoer toegelate (Not admitted to the mail)
- 406—Parti sans laisser d'adresse/Vertrokken zonder adres op te geven (Party left with no forwarding address)

The third generation labels are particularly interesting, because of the varieties that exist for four of the eight labels. Unlike the first two generations, third generation labels were reprinted at least twice and in some cases more, and this resulted in significant differences between the printings. This makes collecting this generation of Belgian auxiliary labels a true challenge.

In this article, I would like to examine the various labels and the differences which exist between printings. We will follow the labels in order of their assignment, beginning with label #399, *Refusé*. A table of label types appears on the facing page.



Figure 4a. Label #399—First printing.



Figure 4b. Label #399—Third printing.

Label #399 (See Figure 4a) shows a difference between labels of the first and second printings. While all

other aspects of the first two printings remain consistent, there is a clear difference in the fineness of frame and also the ink density. The third printing (See Figure 4b) contains a change in the font for both French and Flemish. It also can be identified by a missing period following the Flemish word *Geweigerd*.



Figure 5a. Label #400—First printing.



Figure 5b. Label #400—Second printing.

Label #400 (See Figure 5a) remains reasonably consistent until the very end of the third generation period—roughly around 1908—when the layout of the second printing changes completely. The second printing (See Figure 5b), while maintaining the prominence of position for the French language, also capitalizes the Flemish text and uses the same font. Although there is no written evidence to confirm this, the change may have been an attempt to equalize the importance of the two languages. Regardless, label #400 represents the first time the two languages are presented in this way.

There is no evidence currently to support the existence of a second printing for either label #401 or #402. In the case of label #401 this may have been because it is one of the lesser used labels, thereby limiting the need to reprint. It should also be noted that additional printings may have occurred where the printing plates or the ink used remained consistent and

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Label #399

Printing	Capitalization/ French	Capitalization/ Flemish	Serif/SS French	Serif/SS Flemish	Ink Density	Perf.
1 st	Capitalized	Mixed/ital.	Serif	Serif	Light	11.5
2 nd	Capitalized	Mixed/ital.	Serif	Serif	Heavy	11.5
3 rd	Capitalized	Mixed/ital.	SS	Serif	Medium	11.5

Label #400

Printing	Capitalization/ French	Capitalization/ Flemish	Serif/SS French	Serif/SS Flemish	Ink Density	Perf.
1 st	Capitalized	Mixed/ital.	Serif	Serif	Light	11.5
2 nd	Capitalized	Mixed/ital.	Serif	Serif	Dark	11.5

Label #401

Printing	Capitalization/ French	Capitalization/ Flemish	Serif/SS French	Serif/SS Flemish	Ink Density	Perf.
1 st	Mixed	Mixed/ital.	SS	SS	Dark	11.5

Label #402

Printing	Capitalization/ French	Capitalization/ Flemish	Serif/SS French	Serif/SS Flemish	Ink Density	Perf.
1 st	Capitalized	Mixed/ital.	Serif	Serif	Light	11.5

Label #403

Printing	Capitalization/ French	Capitalization/ Flemish	Serif/SS French	Serif/SS Flemish	Ink Density	Perf.
1 st	Mixed	Mixed/ital.	Serif	Serif	Light	11.5
2 nd	Mixed	Mixed/ital.	SS	SS	Medium	11.5
3 rd	Mixed	Mixed/ital.	SS	SS	Light	11.5

Label #404

Printing	Capitalization/ French	Capitalization/ Flemish	Serif/SS French	Serif/SS Flemish	Ink Density	Perf.
1 st	Mixed	Mixed/ital.	Serif	SS	Medium	11.5

Label #405

Printing	Capitalization/ French	Capitalization/ Flemish	Serif/SS French	Serif/SS Flemish	Ink Density	Perf.
1 st	Mixed	Capitalized	Serif	SS	Light	11.5
2 nd	Mixed	Capitalized	Serif	SS	Medium	11.5

Label #406

Printing	Capitalization/ French	Capitalization/ Flemish	Serif/SS French	Serif/SS Flemish	Ink Density	Perf.
1 st	Capitalized	Mixed/ital.	SS	Serif	Light	

as such at present such printings are difficult to identify.

Label #403 (See Figure 6a) exists in at least two distinct printings. However, there may be more, as the first printing exists in two different levels of ink density. However, unlike label #399, the printing density is inconsistent, and as such may just be a result of differences in inking on the plates. Without a doubt, there was a distinct second printing of this label (See Figure 6b), which can be identified because of changes in font, with both languages using sans-serif type. The second printing appears to have been made around mid-decade. A third printing was made during the end of the decade and while there are subtle changes in font-type, the major determiner is the size. Printing three



Figure 6a. Label #403—First printing.



Figure 6b. Label #403—Second printing.

(8 cm x 30 cm) is larger than printing two (7 cm x 29 cm).

Examples of the third generation label #404 are quite rare and as such there is currently not enough evidence to suggest a second printing.

Label #405 seems to have had two distinct printings, both of which used the same layout and type. The difference seems to have been in the ink

color and density, with the first printing in lighter color ink and lighter density and the second printing slightly lighter and more defined.

Similar to labels #401 & 402, there is no evidence that a second printing was made of label #406. This may be because it is the rarest of all of the third-generation labels and was not used extensively.

The third generation labels, while more common than the first and second generation labels, still make an interesting and challenging study because, unlike those earlier labels, there exist clearly distinct printings, several with interesting variations. The work on this project has just begun and doubtless more varieties and printings will be found as research progresses

Modern Rebuted mail from the Netherlands to Canada

by **Gregg Redner, PhD, FRPSC**
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THIS DECEMBER 29, 1932, letter was mailed from Utrecht Station in the Netherlands to Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The card was sent General Delivery and arrived in Montreal on January 11, 1933, at 7:00 PM according to the receiving mark on the reverse of the cover. It was subsequently forwarded to Station H, arriving at 11:00 AM the following day. Station H was the Post Office located at 2140 St. Catherine Street. The purple General Delivery auxiliary marking on the bottom center of the obverse confirms that the letter was received and was being held for pickup by the addressee.

The letter contains two “not called for” auxiliary markings. The second marking is purple, which was applied on February 13, 1933, which is confirmed by the two purple CDs markings on the reverse of the cover. Notice that the inspection was carried out by two different postal personnel—using two different handstamps indicated by No. 188 and 289. This was common practice during the period and was used as a way to verify that no identifiable information had been missed. Because the letter did not contain a return address, after one month in awaiting pickup at the General Delivery window, the cover was forwarded to the Central Post Office in Ottawa. There are two black CDs markings from February 28, 1933, to indicate that the letter had been received at the Inspection Division—*Bureau des Rebutés*—where it was never claimed.



More Damaged Mail Markings

by Douglas B. Quine, PhD

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THE UNITED States Post Office Department and subsequently the United States Postal Service have long applied auxiliary markings when mail is damaged or delayed in transit. A nice set of such markings was reported by Fillion and Hines¹ two years ago. These markings can explain the poor condition of received mail pieces or unusual delays (e.g. crash mail). I recently bought a batch of covers including a few markings that I have not seen reported before relating to damaged mail.

The undated domestic Figure 1 “DAMAGED BY WATER / POSTAGE PAID” marking does double duty. First, it explains any water damage to the envelope or the contents and secondly it indicates that the missing postage is due to the water-soluble gum having dissolved in transit so the stamp floated off. The envelope dried out nicely so the auxiliary marking is the only remaining explanation of the missing postage. It is ironic that this letter was addressed to an insurance company claims department.

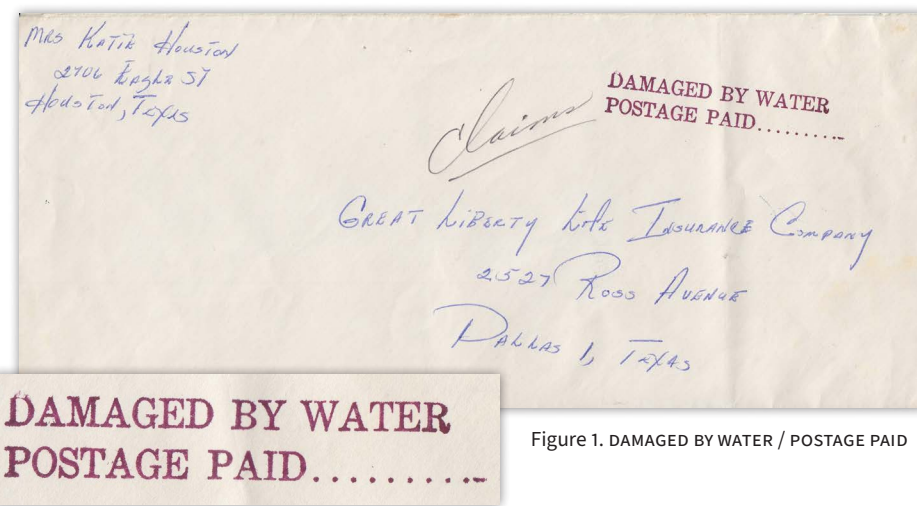


Figure 1. DAMAGED BY WATER / POSTAGE PAID

handstamp acknowledges a stamp was originally on the envelope and approves the envelope for a one-ounce rate. I find the “OK'D” an interesting slang usage. This 1984 cover is a preprinted late usage of the sparsely used tiny bar LMCSS (Letter Mail Code Sort System) barcode which was introduced in 1972. The left-hand or A Field of the LMCSS barcode encodes (in binary) the five-digit “outgoing” ZIP code for the destination sectional center as a single three-digit number (752) followed by a two-digit number (62). The right-hand or B Field of the LMCSS encodes the “incoming” or street level information using very arcane codes for different address elements which are explained elsewhere.² LMCSS was replaced by the widespread POSTNET deployed in 1982 and Intelligent Mail Barcode (IMB) deployed in 2006 which encode the 11-digit ZIP code digits one by one for the delivery address.



Figure 2. DAMAGED IN CONVEYOR BELT (1980)

Collectors often comment on the remarkable specificity of some postal service auxiliary markings and the Figure 2 “DAMAGED IN CONVEYOR BELT” is a nice example. While the envelope is not torn or distorted, the black smudges on the face are certainly striking and it is understandable that mail recipients would be wondering what happened. I see the existence of such markings as indicating that specific postal equipment or processes reached a frequency threshold of damage that demanded explanation.

Figure 3 shows an envelope that lost its stamp. The two line EVIDENCE POSTAGE WAS AFFIXED. ONE RATE OK'D

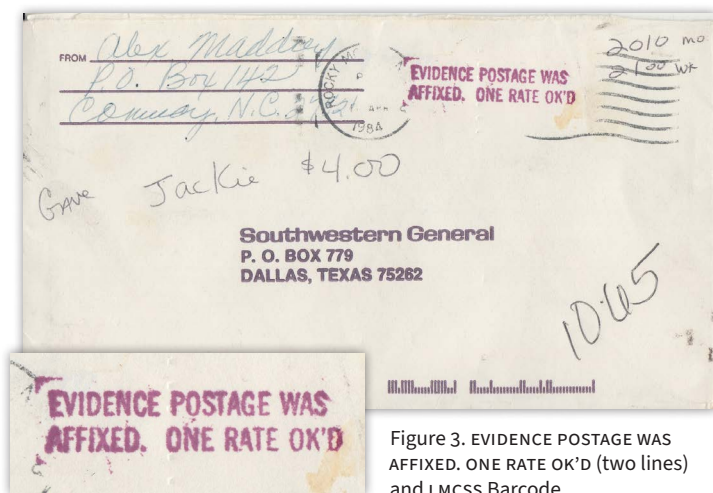


Figure 3. EVIDENCE POSTAGE WAS AFFIXED. ONE RATE OK'D (two lines) and LMCSS Barcode.

The EVIDENCE POSTAGE WAS AFFIXED. ONE RATE OK'D text without the period in a smaller font spanning three lines rather than two from a 1984 cover within Dallas, Texas

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is shown in Figure 4. Variations on this text were last reported in Auxiliary Markings in 2015.³

The final step in our short journey through auxiliary markings for mail damaged in the post is the Figure 5 FOUND LOOSE IN MAILS AT DALLAS TEXAS handstamp on a penalty envelope from the Dallas TX NIXIE section. Other LOOSE IN THE MAIL markings have been reported in Auxiliary Markings, most recently in 2017.⁴

Notes

1. Fillion L., Hines T. 2022. "Contemporary, Post-1953 'Damaged Markings'". *Auxiliary Markings XIX* (2): 2-3
2. Paul RJ. 1973. "The Cincinnati System. Phase II. Postal Service Automation. Letter Mail Sort System Code [sic]." *The United States Specialist* (11): 531-546
3. Wawrukiewicz T. 2015. "Postage Verified / Postage OK." *Auxiliary Markings XII* (2): 12
4. Len-Rios A. 2017. "Found Lose in Mail." *Auxiliary Markings XIV* (4): 12

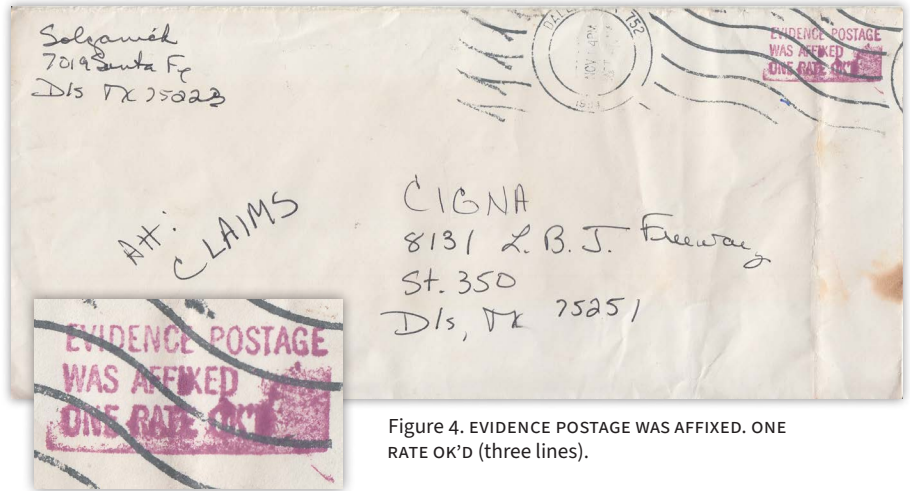


Figure 4. EVIDENCE POSTAGE WAS AFFIXED. ONE RATE OK'D (three lines).

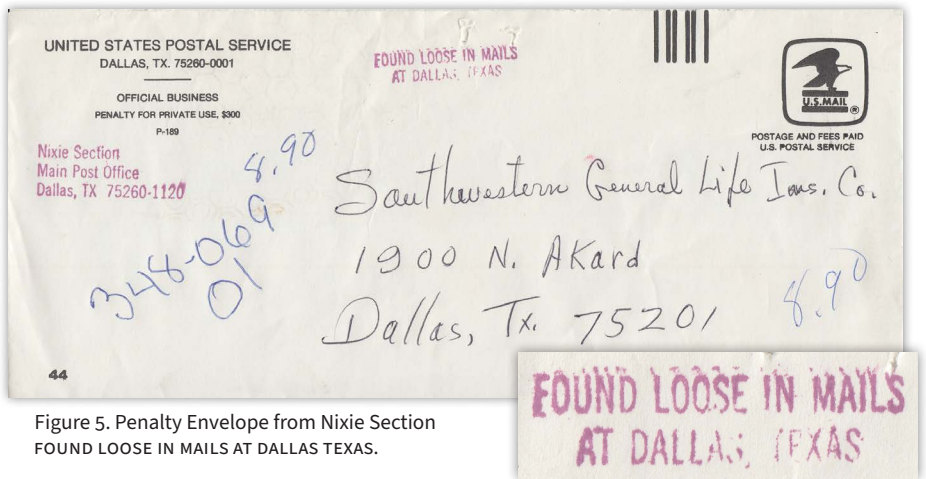


Figure 5. Penalty Envelope from Nixie Section FOUND LOOSE IN MAILS AT DALLAS TEXAS.

Not Mailed in Airplane Box

by Andrew S. Kelley

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Clockwise from Top: Cover, Omaha, Nebraska postmark from back, and closeup of retouched "Not mailed in Airplane box" auxiliary marking.

THIS COVER presents an interesting auxiliary marking and a bit of a puzzle. The sender paid the 10¢ per half ounce domestic airmail rate that took effect on February 1, 1927, the day the cover was posted. (This new "flat" rate applied regardless of distance.) Evidently, however, they failed to deposit the cover in the correct box in a Denver, Colorado, post office, explaining the "Not mailed in Airplane box / Time" auxiliary marking.

The puzzle is the February 2, 1927, Omaha, Nebraska, postmark on the back. (Ironically, the slogan cancel touts the time-saving benefits of airmail.) Domestic transit and receiving markings are not typical on US mail during this period. I welcome AMC Members' theories about the reason for the postmark.

Belated Proposed Explanation of USPS KEY RETURN ZIP CODE Label 897

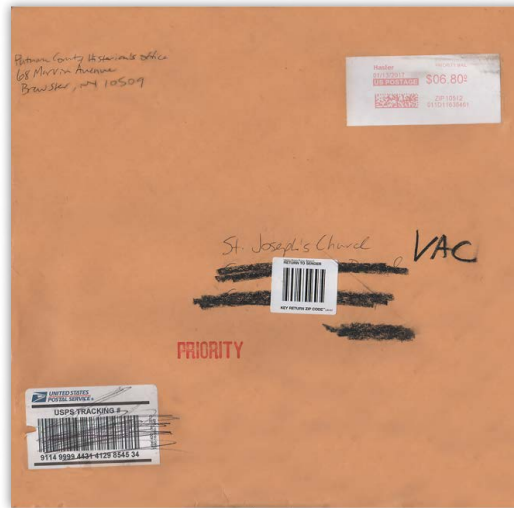
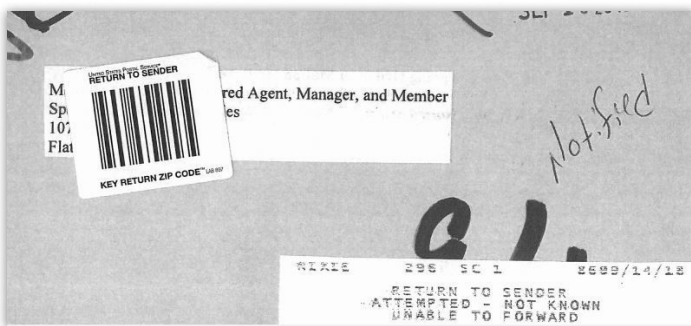
by Douglas B. Quine, PhD

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IN THE April 2017 issue of *Auxiliary Markings*,¹ Dr. Terence Hines reported a puzzling USPS label 897 “RETURN TO SENDER / KEY RETURN ZIP CODE” (Figure 1). He illustrated examples on two large covers, one of which is shown in Figure 2. Rereading the article more than seven and a half years later, I believe I have an elegant explanation for this label.

Historically the postal system was text based and addresses and corrections were done in text. With modern automation, the “eyes” are now computer scanners which cannot decipher handwritten corrections or pointing finger “Return to Sender” handstamps. The USPS therefore developed a standard bar-coded LAB 897 which my scanner reads as “569659” and which (for us mere humans) is printed as “RETURN TO SENDER / KEY RETURN ZIP CODE”. It alerts the operator of the barcode scanner that they must enter the return address zip code to direct the mail piece back to the sender. If this tag is observed on an automated conveyor belt, it would indicate the mail piece should be outsourced for manual data entry. All other barcodes on the envelope were obliterated to prevent them from being acted upon and sending the mail piece to the original (incorrect) address. Like the traditional pointing finger “Return to Sender” handstamp, this generic label provides no address information itself, but it can alert the automated computer systems to the addressing issue. I speculate that in an ideal world, when the zip code was manually entered a new label would be affixed (possibly by the Computer Forwarding Systems (CFS) on top of this exception barcode to enable automated processing back to the sender.

I sent my proposed explanation to Terence, and he responded “Your answer to my long-ago question is excellent and it would, I’m sure, be welcome in the newsletter.



I certainly have not seen any such explanation elsewhere”.

As I prepared this update for publication, I checked the Internet for any insights after all these years. The USPS reference list of labels² reports this label originated in March, 2015. I also found eBay community posts³ from July 13, 2023, and July 14, 2023, discussing the mystery of this label. The first writer, Simba6, said

In our experience the white “KEY RETURN ZIP CODE” label is used to prove the package was successfully sent to the U.S. through customs but was being returned to the sender in another country. This sticker is to prove the package was sent to the zip code on the address but was not delivered.

However, given that both of Hines examples were domestic, I know this label cannot be a customs associated label.

The second eBay writer, Martin2001, wrote:

I don’t have any experience with this sticker, never heard of him. Not much info (practically none) on the web. There are, for some reason, many PDF documents showing images of various envelopes that were not delivered and could not be forwarded and were to be returned to sender. I only saw the images for the domestic mail. I am attaching one of them. It looks like the barcode on this sticker contains the sender’s zip code. One can only speculate why there is the word KEY on the sticker, why not only RETURN ZIP CODE.

Martin 2001 confirmed the domestic use of this label and also attached Figure 3 which supports my original speculation. It shows a CFS NIXIE label directing the envelope back to the sender.

Notes

1. Hines, T. 2017.
2. Label 897 https://about.usps.com/publications/pub223/223c2dir_007.htm retrieved Dec. 2, 2023
3. <https://community.ebay.com/t5/Shipping/WHAT-DOES-KEY-RETURN-ZIP-CODE-MEAN/td-p/33868038#:~:text=In%20our%20experience%20the%20white,address%20but%20was%20not%20delivered> retrieved Dec. 2, 2023

Correction Supplied By Dead Section St. Louis, Mo. Post Office, No. 3

by Joe Crosby

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THIS COVER was mailed at El Reno, Oklahoma Territory, on Sept 26, 1900, addressed to "Bridge Avenue, Davenport, Ill." A backstamp shows it went on train four on the Kansas City and Caldwell R.P.O. When it arrived in the St. Louis Post Office, it was sent to Dead Section Clerk No. 3 on Sept 28, 1900, (see Figures 1 and 2) because there was no Davenport in Illinois then (or ever). The clerk correctly diagnosed the problem and provided the auxiliary marking address correction (Figure 2) to send it on to Davenport, Iowa, about four hours north of St. Louis where it was back-stamped "RECEIVED 1" at 8:00 AM the next day. (Figure 3.) Bridge Avenue was located in a residential neighborhood on the east side of Davenport, Iowa

Although there was no Davenport in Illinois in 1900, there was a Davenport in Lincoln County, Oklahoma Territory, established in 1892 about one hour and 18 minutes east of El Reno. But since the cover was addressed to Illinois, it went by rail as far as St. Louis.

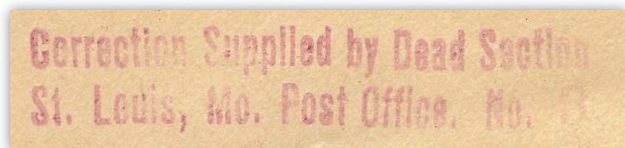


Figure 1, closeup of Correction Supplied Marking from Figure 2.

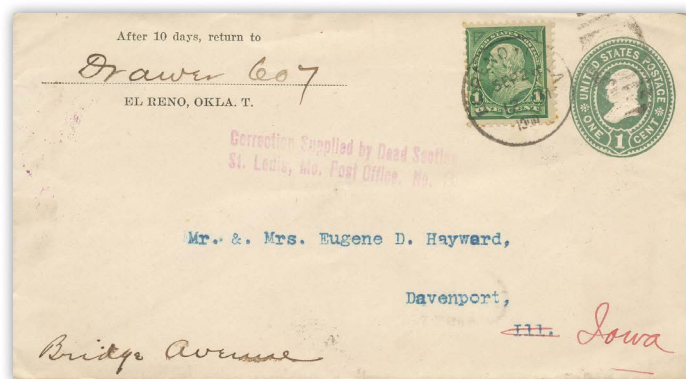


Figure 2. Note manuscript "Iowa" address correction supplied by the dead letter clerk.



Figure 3. Back of Figure 2, showing transit markings.

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Members of the Auxiliary Markings Club are entitled to one free classified ad per year of 40 words or less. Please submit your copy at least one month before the publication date (i.e. by the beginning of December for the January journal, by the beginning of March for the April journal, by the beginning of June for the July journal, or by the beginning of September for the October journal). **The editor strongly prefers to receive ads by email: stamps@andrewkelley.net.** However, he will accept hard copy ads mailed to: Andrew Kelley, 9038 East 25th Dr., Denver CO 80238.

COVERS PURCHASED, ESPECIALLY COVERS FROM 1900-1950. Unusual covers also. John Hotchner, PO Box 1125, Falls Church, VA 22041, or jmhstamp@verizon.net.

WANTED: UNITED STATES WASHINGTON-FRANKLIN Head series covers (Scott 331-547) with interesting auxiliary markings. Also unusual rates, destinations, etc. Please send scans/prices to: Andrew Kelley, stamps@andrewkelley.net.

WANTED: COMMERCIAL COVER USAGES OF 1980s Transportation Coil Series *precancel* plate number

coils; 20¢ Flag *precancel* coils on commercial cover. Rob Washburn, P.O. Box 840, Skowhegan, ME 04976. Email: stamps@beeline-online.net.

MAIL ROBBERY POSTAL HISTORY WANTED FOR pending book on Mail Robbery Postal History. Photos of existing covers greatly appreciated. Dr. Steve Berlin—Thank you. drsteveniberlin2916@gmail.com.

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If you have submitted articles, thank you (and please keep them coming). If not, please consider digging a favorite auxiliary mark from your collection and preparing an article about it. We welcome all submissions, big or small.

