

PHILATELIC BULLETIN



Sarasota Philatelic Club

2026

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First-Class Cover Attached to Third-Class Cover

By Vincent Centonze

Figure 1 shows an unusual example of a first-class cover attached to a third-class cover. The first-class cover is franked with a 3¢ National Defense Issue stamp of 1940 (Scott 901). This paid the first-class rate of 3¢ per ounce; hence, the first-class cover weighed up to one ounce.¹ The third-class cover is franked with a 1¢ Army Issue commemorative stamp of 1936 (Scott 785) and a 5¢ James Monroe stamp from the Presidential Issue of 1938 (Scott 810), for a total franking of 6¢. The sender glued the two covers together and paid a total of 9¢ to send them. The stamps are cancelled with an Albany, NY, roller cancel.

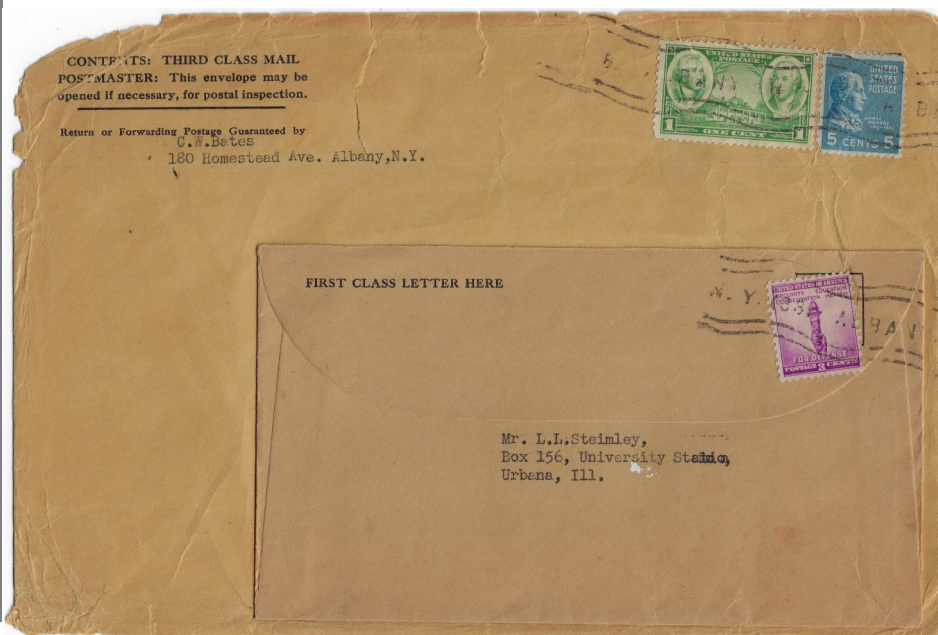


Figure 1. First-Class cover attached to Third-Class cover mailed together; each cover correctly franked for the respective class of mail.

Stamp Quiz



This month's Stamp Quiz is another stumper! The stamp was printed by photogravure, watermarked multiple stars and is perforated 14.5. It was printed sometime in the second half of the twentieth century. If you think you know the solution, email your answers to me at: vincentcentonze@gmail.com. Good luck.

During the likely period in which this cover was sent, between 16 October 1940, when the National Defense stamp was issued, and 1 January 1949, when the rate changed, the third-class rate was 1.5¢ per two ounces.² Therefore, with a 6¢ franking, the third-class matter would have weighed between 3 and 4 weight units, or between 6 and 8 ounces. During the same period, if the first-class enclosure had been placed in the same cover as the third-class matter, it would have made the entire cover a first-class piece. At the minimum total combined weight, based on the frankings of the individual covers, the first-class enclosure would have increased the total weight to a point somewhere between 6 and 7 ounces requiring 21¢ total franking at 3¢ per ounce; hence, by separating the two classes of mail, the sender saved 12¢. At the maximum combined weight, the first-class enclosure would have increased the total weight to a point between 8 and 9 ounces requiring 27¢ total franking at 3¢ per ounce; in this case, the sender would have saved 18¢. So, the sender saved 12¢ to 18¢ by separating the mailing into two pieces.

The sender could have mailed the two pieces separately. Because the sender did not do so, it is likely that the first-class enclosure was probably related to the third-class matter and the sender wanted them to arrive together.

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The Prez Sez ...

Dear Club Members—

I hope you have had a pleasant summer in spite of the heat and with no hurricanes in the near future!

IMPORTANT club news—our Editor is going to be on sabbatical in the near future and because of that will not be able to supply the steady stream of articles that have graced these pages since he took over.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU—now more than ever we will depend on you to write short articles. This can be a favorite item, a mystery you need solved or a dissertation. I know I have sent appeals for articles before, with minimal response; this time please respond. Until I appoint an “associate editor”, you can send your contributions to me to me.

Thanks in advance—I’m sure your fellow club members will enjoy your stories!

NEXT MEETING
September 1

First-Class Cover Attached to Third-Class Cover (cont.)

Figure 2 shows another example of an instance in which two classes of mail were attached, this time unknowingly. It is the address side of a post card sent locally within Hagerstown, MD, to a “Miss Bessie White” at the “5 & 10¢ store.” The post card is franked with a 1¢ Franklin from the Issue of 1902 (Scott 300) and postmarked on 13 February 1907. There is also a black “Due 1 cent” handstamp along with a 1¢ deep claret postage due stamp (Scott J31 or J38, depending upon whether it is watermarked). The postage due stamp bears a Hagerstown, MD, precancel, applied with a postcancel device. The post card rate at the time was 1¢, so the card appears to be properly franked.³ This begs the question of why there was postage due. The answer can be found on the picture side, shown in Figure 3.

The picture side has an illustration of a rose with the wording, “A Note from Hagerstown md”. The printed message and parts of the flower are heavily highlighted with gold glitter. Post cards whose images or photos on the picture side were highlighted with glitter are common, especially before 1907; however, according to Order No. 98 of 16 February 1907, reported in the *Postal Bulletin* of 20 February 1907: *cards bearing particles of glass, metal, sand, tinsel, or other similar substances, are unmailable, except when enclosed in envelopes.*⁴ After this regulation was announced, the card in Figure 2 would have been unmailable unless it was enclosed in an envelope. It is tempting to assume that the postage due was applied by an overzealous postal clerk as a penalty for non-compliance with the new regulation; however, this post card was sent on 13 February 1907, *before* the *Postal Bulletin* published the new regulation. Therefore, the glitter was not the reason this card was charged postage due.



(Left) Figure 2. Address side of a post card sent locally within Hagerstown, MD, franked with a 1¢ Franklin from the Issue of 1902, postmarked on 13 February 1907, and paying the correct 1¢ post card rate. The post card was assessed postage due and there is a 1¢ postage due stamp affixed, confirming payment.

(Right) Figure 3. Picture side with an illustration of a rose with the wording, “A Note from Hagerstown md”. The printed message and parts of the flower are heavily highlighted with gold glitter. There is also a small envelope containing a hand-written message.

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First-Class Cover Attached to Third-Class Cover (cont.)

After 1 March 1907 the left half of the address side could be used for a message; doing so before 1 March could have resulted in postage due.⁵ Nevertheless, the left half of the address side was correctly left blank on this post card, so that is also not the reason for the postage due. Rather, this post card was charged postage due because there is a small envelope affixed to the picture side. Within this envelope is a note with a handwritten message. Figure 4 shows the note which reads, "Hagerstown, Darling when am I to get my ans. I am very impatient Yours Ada". If the handwritten message had been scrawled on the margins of the picture side of the post card, there would have been no postage due and no problems. Instead, this post card contained a written message enclosed within the tiny cover, making it a first-class item. The first-class letter rate at the time was 2¢ per ounce.⁶ If it was considered a local letter, it would still have required 2¢ franking because the Hagerstown, MD, post office was a carrier post office; hence, the local letter rate at a carrier post office was the same as a non-local first-class letter.⁷ Regardless, in whichever first-class category it was considered, it was shortpaid by 1¢ collected from the addressee. One could argue that each item was a separate class of mail, like the adjoined covers shown in Figure 1. In that case the post card would have been correctly franked; whereas, the small cover would have been *completely* unpaid first-class mail, in which case it would have been charged double the 2¢ rate as a penalty, or 4¢ postage due.⁸ It's also too bad that we'll never know whether Miss Bessie responded favorably to her would-be beau after he cost her 1¢ postage due for his love letter! At least they left philately an interesting curiosity.

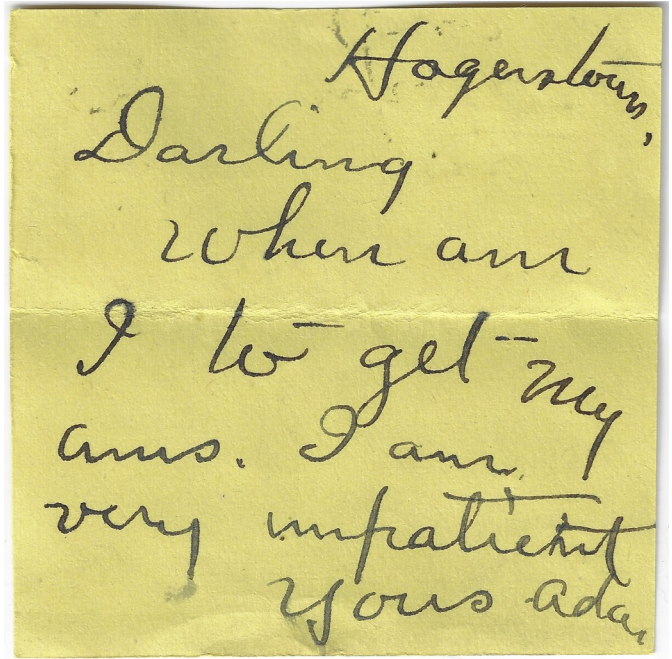


Figure 4. Handwritten message enclosed within the small cover attached to the picture side of the post card. The fact that this written message was enclosed within the cover made this a first-class item. It should have been sent at the first-class rate and was therefore assessed postage due.

If glitter post cards interest you, the February 2026 edition of our club's *Philatelic Bulletin* contains additional information on glitter cards, including those sent to foreign destinations. Happy collecting!

End Notes

1. Wawrukiewicz, A., & Beecher, H., *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-1999, Revised Second Edition* (Portland, OR: CAMA Publishing Company, 1996), 8.
2. *Ibid.*, 114.
3. *Ibid.*, 36.
4. *Daily Bulletin of Orders affecting the Postal Service*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 8224 (Washington, DC: Post Office Department, February 20, 1907.)
5. *Daily Bulletin of Orders affecting the Postal Service*, Vol. XXVII, No. 8132 (Washington, DC: Post Office Department, November 1, 1906.)
6. Wawrukiewicz & Beecher, 8.
7. *Ibid.*, 12.
8. Wawrukiewicz, A., *Insights into U.S. Postal History, 1855-2016* (Bellefonte, PA: American Philatelic Society, 2016), 1.

References

- Daily Bulletin of Orders affecting the Postal Service*, Vol. XXVII, No. 8132, Washington, DC: Post Office Department, November 1, 1906.
- Daily Bulletin of Orders affecting the Postal Service*, Vol. XXVII, No. 8224. Washington, DC: Post Office Department, February 20, 1907.
- Wawrukiewicz, A., *Insights into U.S. Postal History, 1855-2016*. Bellefonte, PA: American Philatelic Society, 2016.
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APS Chapter 353

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