



PHILATELIC BULLETIN

Sarasota Philatelic Club

Postage Due on Glitter Post Cards

By Vincent Centonze

2026

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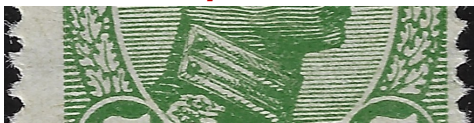
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Before beginning this month's article, as a refresher, remember that *Postal cards* and *post cards* are different. Postal cards are issued by the government and are prepaid with franking indicia printed on the card; whereas post cards (which can be spelled as one word or two), originally known as *private mailing cards*, are privately printed cards wherein all the postage is applied by the user. Prepaid government issued postal cards had been admissible for international use by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) since 1878. The international rate was 10 gold centimes. In the U.S., 2¢ was the rounded equivalent of 10 centimes; this was the rate for international postal cards and post cards until October 1, 1925. The Post Office Department (POD) began printing 2¢ international postal cards in 1879. Prior to the issuance of 2¢ international postal cards, a 1¢ postal card could be used internationally if it was uprated by 1¢.

The use of private mailing cards, henceforth referred to as post cards, for international use was authorized by the UPU in 1885, as long as it was permitted by the country of origin, predicated upon that country's laws and regulations. As per the Private Mailing Card Act of May 19, 1898, the POD authorized the use of post cards beginning July 1, 1898. Prior to that time, if private post cards were sent internationally, they had to be sent at the first-class foreign letter rate. However, by the POD order, post cards could now be sent internationally for 2¢, the same rate as postal cards or uprated postal cards. Figure 1 shows a post card sent from New Bedford, MA, to Glasgow, Scotland, postmarked May 1, 1906, which is correctly franked with 2¢, the UPU foreign postcard rate to the UK.

Stamp Quiz



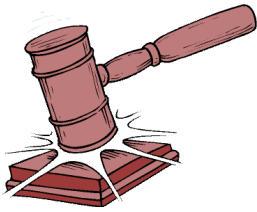
This month's Stamp Quiz is a challenge! Here are some hints: the stamp was printed by typography, is perforated 14 x 14.5, and was part of a long-running series that lasted from 1913-1928. This value paid the domestic post card rate within the country of issue, and is a common stamp. The portrait is of a king born in 1870; he reigned from 1912 until 1947. If you think you know the answer, email me at: centonzevincent@gmail.com. Good luck!



Figure 1. Post card from New Bedford, MA, to Glasgow, Scotland, postmarked May 1, 1906, correctly franked with 2¢. This was the UPU foreign post card rate to the UK.

Figure 2 shows a post card sent from Cincinnati, OH, to Innerleithen, Scotland, franked with 2¢. The post card is postmarked on December 23, 1905, and appears to be correctly franked. However, while there are no U.S. postage due markings, there is a "3d / EH." handstamp, which indicates that there is 3 pence (d) postage due.

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The Prez Sez ...

Please extend a warm welcome to new members Pat Giddings and Vincent Nesci .

Thanks to those members who paid their dues promptly in response to my President's message last month., especially those who became Boosters!

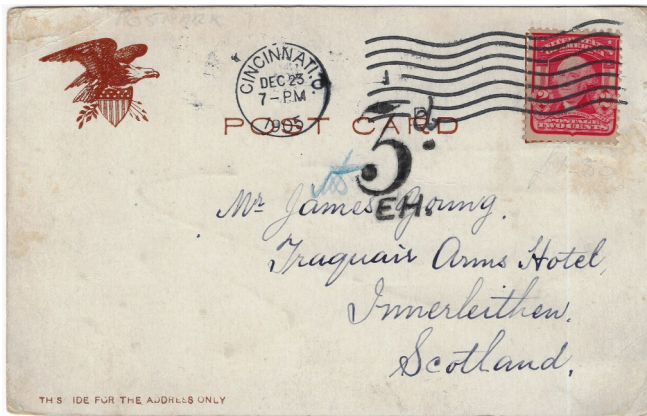
Our next meeting is Monday March 2nd at the Gulf Gate Library featuring a talk by Jack Harwood titled "An Introduction to US Postal Notes of 1883-1894". Gather at 5:30—Jack's talk will start about 6pm.

I'm actively looking into the possibility of moving to a new meeting place that will allow us to return to The first Tuesday of the month starting in April—stay tuned!

Best—Pat

Postage Due on Glitter Post Cards (cont.)

At the time U.S. 1¢ and British ½d were both the equivalent of 5 gold centimes (c). Therefore, 2d would have been the equivalent of 30c or U.S. 6¢. Assuming that was twice the deficiency, it would mean that the post card was shortpaid by 3¢ in the U.S. The UPU letter foreign letter rate was 5¢; therefore, in Scotland, this postcard was being assessed as a letter. The reason for this can be found on the picture side of the card on which various parts of the photograph are highlighted with gold glitter. Figure 3 shows the picture side; however, the glitter may not show up well on the reproduced image. Post cards whose images or photos on the picture side were highlighted with glitter are common, especially before 1907; however, according to the Postal Bulletin of March 4, 1907, *cards bearing particles of glass, metal,*



(Left) Figure 2. Post card postmarked December 23, 1905, which appears to be correctly franked at the foreign post card rate to the UK; however, there is a “3d / EH.” handstamp, which indicates that there is 3 pence postage due. (Right) Figure 3. Picture side of the post card showing that it is highlighted with areas of glitter.

sand, tinsel, or other similar substances, are unmailable, except when enclosed in envelopes. Therefore, after the regulation of March 4, 1907, the card in Figure 2 would have been unmailable in the U.S. unless it was enclosed in an envelope. Fortunately for the sender, the card was mailed in 1905. I could not find any postal rules or bulletins which regulated the use of glitter prior to 1907, and by the number of glitter cards in circulation, it seems there were no stipulations against it in the U.S. However, unfortunately for the recipient, in Britain, it was a different matter. While glitter cards were not banned from the mails, they were charged at the letter rate. It is unusual to find an international post card charged postage due in only one country due to differing rules. However, domestic British cards bearing a ½d stamp, can often be found charged 1d postage due; this was double the ½d deficiency to make up the 1d domestic letter rate. Figure 4 shows the address side of one such British domestic post card that contained glitter card on the picture side; it was charged 1d postage due.

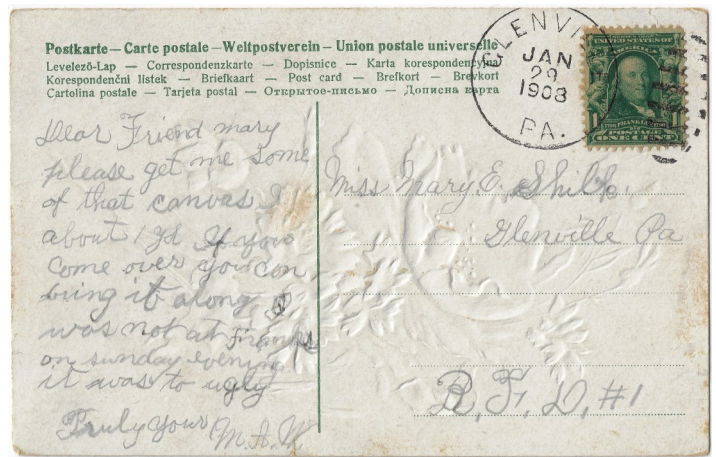
In the U.S., glitter cards mailed after the regulation of 1907 can still be found with no postage due. This is likely because the glitter is on the picture side and was not readily noticed by clerks as they canceled large quantities of mail. Many of these are Valentine's Day cards... after all, nothing says “I love you” like glitter. In addition, the lack of return addresses typical of postcards suggests that some were delivered despite the prohibition.

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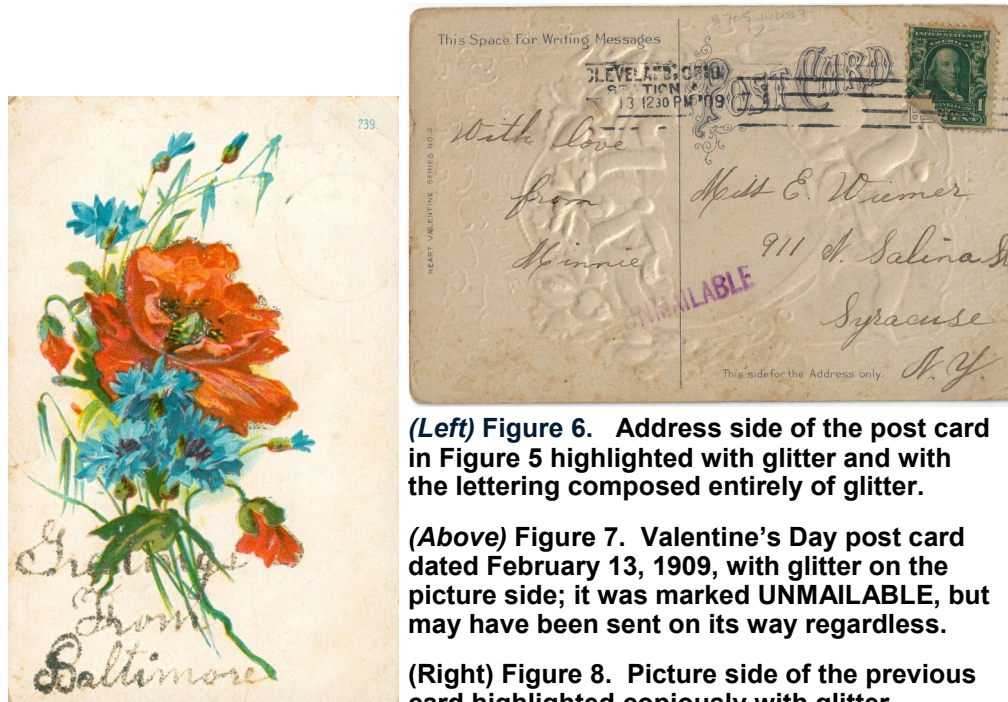
Postage Due on Glitter Post Cards (cont.)

Figure 5 shows a post card dated January 29, 1908, that contains glitter on the picture side but successfully made it through the mail. Figure 6 shows the picture side, which contains a significant amount of glitter. On the other hand, Figure 7 shows a glitter card postmarked February 13, 1909, with a violet straight line UNMAILABLE handstamp; Figure 8 shows the picture side replete with glitter. Nevertheless, it was postmarked and may have made it to the recipient.

There were other prohibitions on post cards, including size, content, and message restrictions. We'll explore some of these in upcoming articles. If you have any comments or interesting post cards, please email me at: centonzevin-cent@gmail.com. Happy collecting!



(Left) Figure 4. Address side of a British domestic post card that contained glitter card on the picture side; it was charged 1d postage due. (Right) Figure 5. Post card postmarked January 29, 1908, that contains glitter on the picture side but successfully made it through the mail.



(Left) Figure 6. Address side of the post card in Figure 5 highlighted with glitter and with the lettering composed entirely of glitter.

(Above) Figure 7. Valentine's Day post card dated February 13, 1909, with glitter on the picture side; it was marked UNMAILABLE, but may have been sent on its way regardless.

(Right) Figure 8. Picture side of the previous card highlighted copiously with glitter.



References

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A Valentine Card to Poland?

By James Mazepa, RPD

Well, not really a Valentine card, although the sentiment is the same. The card was sent from New York, on February 19, 1913, to Sosnowiec, Russian Poland. It is franked with a 2¢ Washington head definitive, perf 12, from the issue of 1912-14 (Scott 406) paying the 2¢ UPU foreign post card rate to Poland. The sender sends best wishes from New York and asks if they have seen Father lately. The card was postmarked as received February 19, 1913. The same day it was sent! How could this be? In the West, we use the Gregorian calendar, and in Russia, they use the Julian calendar, which is 7 days behind the Gregorian, creating an interesting historical artifact.



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