
example, one could search for covers which show the July 6, 1932–June 30, 1934 8¢ air mail letter rate and build a collection based on this rate. One could find many different covers showing different frankings, destinations, and routes.

Solo usage covers are those which bear a single stamp to pay the total rate for all fees (e.g., first class plus registry). Many collectors enjoy the challenge of searching for solo usages. Some collectors prefer regimented frankings, which are covers bearing separate stamps for each service, an example being a stamp paying the First Class rate, another paying the certified mail rate, and a third to pay for the return receipt. Other collectors specialize in rates on postal stationery items such as envelopes, postal cards, or wrappers. Rates may also be collected on metered mail.

Almanac

1792 – On June 1 postage is first calculated in dollars and cents.

1845 – Letter rates are reduced and simplified July 1 as part of a postal reform.

1863 – An Act of Congress on March 3 divides mail into three classes, First, Second, and Third.

1863 – Distance ceases to be a factor in the calculation of letter rates effective July 1.

1873 – A rate is established for postal cards on May 1.

1875 – Effective January 1 publishers are required to pay postage on newspapers and magazines. Prior to this date postage was paid by subscribers upon delivery.

1875 – International letter rates are simplified on July 1 as the terms of the General Postal Union (later the Universal Postal Union) take effect for most countries.

1879 – Fourth Class mail is established on May 1.

1883 – First Class letter rate is reduced to 2¢ on October 1, a rate that remains in effect until 1932.

1885 – Special Delivery begins October 1.

1913 – Parcel Post service begins January 1, an expansion of Fourth Class mail.

1917 – War tax goes into effect November 2 on First Class mail and Parcel Post.

1918 – First regularly scheduled air mail service begins on May 15.