The Philly Philatelist

Award-Winning Newsletter of the Greater Philadelphia Stamp & Collectors Club

Founded 1904 | American Philatelic Society – Chapter 18

March 2026 | **www.GPSCC.org** | **Volume 14, Issue 3**

NEXT MEETING

March 17, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Community Rooms
GIANT Supermarket
315 N. York Rd., Willow Grove, PA

Dinner:

For those who would like to join us for dinner beforehand, we will meet at The W Tavern, about a block from GIANT, at 5:00 p.m. for cocktails followed by dinner at 5:30 p.m.

210 York Rd., Willow Grove, PA

IN THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Paul F. Miller

Calling all stamp collectors!

By the time you read this, Boston 2026 World Expo will be about two-and-a-half months away from starting. This stamp show extravaganza will be held in Boston, Massachusetts May 23-30, 2026. An international stamp show only comes to the United States about once every ten years. Each of these shows is so unique that it could be said that attending one is a once-in-a-lifetime event.

If you plan on attending, make sure you are using the resources available to help you decide how you will best enjoy and participate in the big event. Please use the Boston 2026 World Expo website – https://boston2026.org/ -- to get the best, most up-to-date information.

I have monitored this website for the past several years and have seen how it has grown with its vast information resources.

There is so much information available on the website, including details about the events, exhibits on display, and dealer, society and club booths at the ever-popular bourse.

If you have not done so already, please make sure you visit the website and pre-register. The pre-registration will allow you to identify yourself (which will be helpful when you check-in at the show), and it will allow you to provide notification about the events you want to attend. Don't forget, attendance is FREE!

(Continued next page)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

I think the purpose of the pre-registration and event selection is to allow the event coordinators to manage and control the number of attendees to maximize everyone's enjoyment. The event selection does not lock you into or out of certain events, it just helps you determine how you can best spend your time at the show.

Yamil Kouri, President of Boston 2026, has continuously been providing update sessions about all facets of the show. He just did a presentation on February 27 for the American Philatelic Society (APS). He has another update presentation via The Collector's Club of New York scheduled for Wednesday, March 25. It is exciting to hear him speak about what a wonderful show awaits the stamp collecting community. His presentation on March 25 may be one of his last ones, so try to tune in if you care to hear about the latest developments.

The show, as described by Yamil, is truly expansive in its size and scope. During Yamil's recent presentation, he noted that an app is being developed for Boston 2026 Expo. The app will allow participants to have access to every aspect of the show right in the palm of their hands on their phones.

The app will be more up-to-date and interactive than the program guide that you will get at the registration booth. This is truly an exciting development! The app will be released soon.

Next month, I will try to give you some of the near-final statistics about the size and scope of the Boston 2026 Expo. In the meantime, plan to attend, if you can, and be sure to enjoy this once-in-a-lifetime philatelic event.

PROGRAM FOR MARCH 17, 2026: "JAPONICA: WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT PHILATELICALLY" BY KEN KAMHOLZ

Ken Kamholz, Secretary & Treasurer of the International Society for Japanese Philately and publisher of *Japanese Philately*, will join us in person and present "**Japonica: What's It All About Philatelically**." Japonica is defined as non-Japanese postal issues that are somehow connected with Japan. It is a fascinating topic, and you won't want to miss Ken's presentation!

Ken Kamholz

OFFICERS

President
Paul Miller
president@gpscc.org

VP & Programs
Michael L. Wilson
vpprograms@gpscc.org

Treasurer
Bruce Marsden
treasurer@gpscc.org

Secretary
Robert Cohen
secretary@gpscc.org

Newsletter
Michael L. Wilson
newsletter@gpscc.org

Shows & Events
Alan Warren
showsevents@gpscc.org

CLUB MAILING ADDRESS

Greater Philadelphia Stamp & Collectors Club
661 High Pointe Circle
Langhorne, PA 19047

WEB SITE

www.gpscc.org

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UPCOMING CLUB MEETINGS

Mar. 17 – Apr. 21 – May 19 – June 16 – Aug. 18 – Sep. 15 – Oct 20. – **Nov. 14**

Note: Nov. 14 is a Saturday, and the meeting that day will start at 10:00 a.m. All the other meetings are on Tuesdays and begin at 7:00 p.m.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 13-15 – Garfield-Perry March Party 2026, Best Western Plus, 15471 Royalton Rd., Strongsville, OH.

March 21 – Philatelic Gathering, 10:00 a.m.-noon, Chester County History Center, 225 N. High St., West Chester, PA.

April 11, DELPEX 2026, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Nur Shrine, 198 South DuPont Highway, New Castle, DE.

SHARE YOUR FAVORITE STAMP OR COVER!

I would like to highlight your favorite stamps or covers in *The Philly Philatelist*. All you need to do is send me a picture of the item and a sentence or two about why it's your favorite.

If your favorite item is a stamp and you don't have a way to scan an image, just give me the country, year and a description, and I'll track it down. If it's a cover, bring it to a meeting, and I'll take a picture of it or send it to me via regular mail, and I'll scan and return it to you. My mailing address is 19 Brookdale Dr., Doylestown PA 18901. Thanks!

Mike W. (newsletter@gpscc.org.)

JOKE OF THE MONTH

What does King Charles III call postage stamps?

Selfies!

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 17, 2026, GPSCC MEETING

Paul Miller called the meeting to order promptly at 7:00 p.m. He wished everyone in attendance a Happy Chinese Lunar New Year. Paul referred members to his article in the February issue of *The Philly Philatelist*, "Lunar New Year Stamps-Part II." Using the article, you can determine which Chinese Zodiac animal represents your birth year and the personality traits associated with each animal sign. In addition, there is a gallery of Lunar New Year Stamps included.

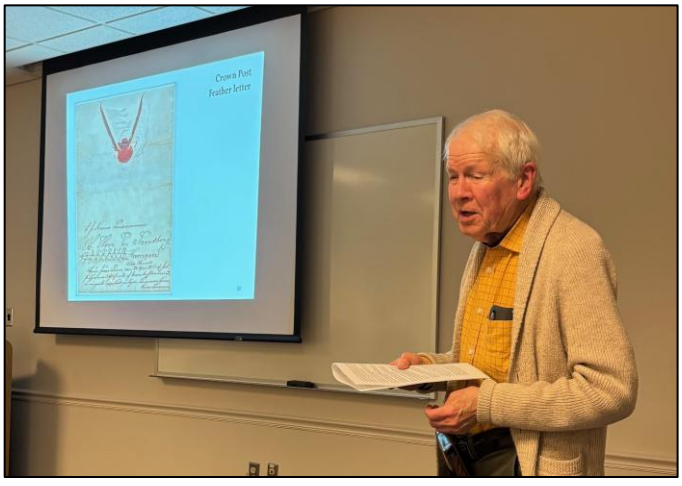
Paul thanked Jaume Balsells for his article, "We All Knew It Would End Like This," which was posted on the APS's "Hub" and included in the February newsletter. The article details the ownership of the British Guiana 1-cent Magenta from 1856 by the Stanley Gibbons Group and its managing group, Showpiece. The stamp was "divided" into 80,000 pieces and sold between 2021-2025. As Jaume writes, Showpiece decided to scrap its business model and liquidate its inventory. It is probably up to Stanley Gibbons to decide the fate of the stamp and ownership.

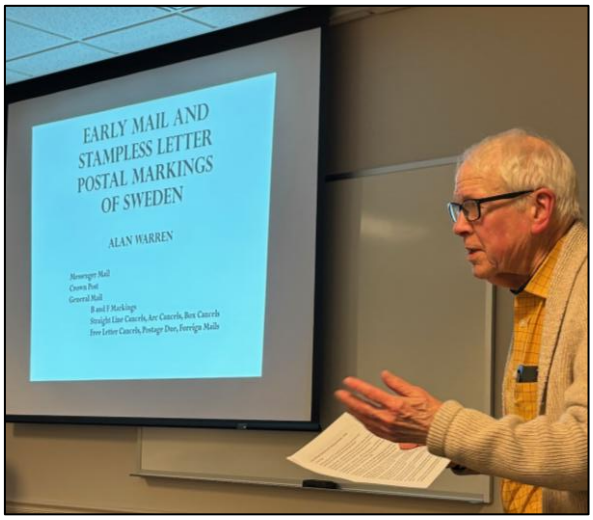
Yamil Kouri, president of Boston 2026 will present an update on the preparations for the world expo for the APS on Thursday, February 26 at 7:00 p.m. and for The Collectors Club of New York on March 25 between 5:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. The Spellman Museum of Stamps and Postal History will be offering a shuttle from the exhibit to the museum. Also, Bruce Marsden spoke about inexpensive accommodations at the HI Boston Hostel: https://www.hiusa.org/find-hostels/massachusetts/boston-19-stuart-street. Use code APS26 to get 15% off your stay. Anne Gibby mentioned visiting the Isabela Stewart Gardner Museum while in Boston.

Our speaker tonight was Alan Warren who presented "Early Mail and Stampless Postal Markings of Sweden." The presentation told the story of postal markings used in Sweden, primarily before the introduction of adhesive postage stamps. The time period was from the 17th century to the mid-19th century. The presentation explored the early types of mail including messenger mail, crown post, military mail and general mail. The feathers on the mail, indicating the speed of transmission, were most interesting.

Alan indicated that there will be a Polar Salon at Boston 2026. It will have up to 250 frames of competitive exhibits from one to 10 frames each exhibited by members of the polar philatelic community. They are prominent collectors of stamps, covers and associated documents dealing with exploration and other activities in the Arctic and Antarctic regions, their stamp issuing entities and related topics. This is the first time it will be held outside of Europe.

Respectfully submitted by Robert Cohen





Above: Alan Warren at the beginning of his talk. Left: Alan discussing a cover with feathers indicating the speed of transmission.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Alan Warren

Articles by two GPSCC members appeared in the February issue of the *Pennsylvania Postal Historian*, published by the Pennsylvania Postal History Society.

Bill Schultz depicted a 1935 picture postcard that showed an oil tank on fire at the Atlantic Refinery in Franklin, Pa.

Michael Wilson described two items he picked up at last year's NOJEX show. One was an 1874 registered package envelope and label issued by the U.S. Post Office Department. The other was a misaddressed envelope sent from Bendersville, Pa., to Philadelphia in 1886. The cover bears a label with the header, "Letter returned to the office by Carrier." Mike concludes that the cover's backstamp date of May 16, 1886, makes this the earliest known use of this particular label.

Vernon Morris had an article in the March 2026 issue of *The American Philatelist* titled, "A Mid-1770s Postal Crisis for American Colonists."

Vern writes that beginning in 1711, British authorities had the right to open and read mail, which became a major concern for colonial patriots in the years leading up to independence, The patriots had to develop alternatives such as private and militia couriers.

Vern showcases a 1772 folder letter from Sam Adams to Elbridge Gerry. He writes, "this is the earliest Committee of Correspondence letter available to collectors, outisde of various museums and archives."

PHILATELIC GATHERING MEETS MARCH 21, 2026

The first meeting of the Philatelic Gathering for 2026 is on March 21. The speakers will be:

- **Alan Warren** on "Early Mail and Stampless Letter Markings of Sweden," and
- **John Howker** on "Nesbitt Envelopes 1853-1860-The First US Postal Stationery."

This will be a wonderful opportunity to hear Alan's talk if you missed it in February.

The Philatelic Gathering meets four time a year at the Chester County History Center (CCHC), 225 N. High Street, West Chester, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. There is free on street parking and free coffee and donuts. After the meeting, whoever wants to join the group for a Dutch treat luncheon at a nearby restaurant in West Chester is welcome. There is no cost to attend the meeting, but a donation to the CCHC is suggested.

WEST CHESTER, PA STRAIGHT LINE POSTMARK CENSUS

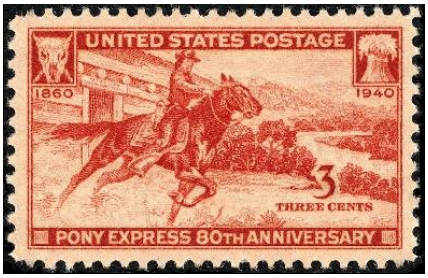
Bill Schultz is conducting a census of straight-line postmarks from West Chester. The postmark was in use from 1812 to 1828. It measures 23mm x 2mm, and all known examples of the mark use red ink. Fewer than 10 have been recorded as of early 2026. An example is pictured below. More images are available here: https://wcstraightline.blogspot.com/.

If you own or know of one, email an image of the cover (preferred at least 300 dpi) and information on the item to Bill at Bill@patriciaschultz.com. He will make the collection publicly available as it develops.

PONY EXPRESS MAIL

Paul F. Miller

The Pony Express was the first "express" mail service used in the United States. It was a mail system executed by a continuous horse-and-rider relay between St. Joseph, Missouri and Sacramento, California. The length of the route was 1,966 miles and included 190 stations along the way, which allowed for changes of riders and horses.



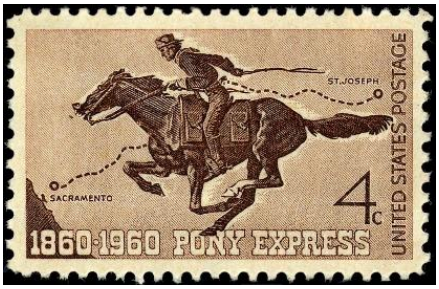
U.S. Scott 894 issued April 3, 1940

The Pony Express was noted for some of its famous riders, such as William ("Buffalo Bill") Cody and Robert ("Pony Bob") Haslam, and captured the imagination of the nation and the expanding "Wild West."

Surprisingly, although it is one of the most enduring legends of the West, the Pony Express only operated for about 18 months between April 1860 and October 1861. It was actually a financial disaster, despite being heavily subsidized. The following is a brief history of the Pony Express's brief history!

William Russell, Alexander Majors, and William Bradford Waddell were the three founders of the Pony Express. It was operated by the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Company, the parent company. The parent company was already operating as a freight and stage company that held government contracts for army supply delivery, employing 4,000-6,000 men and owning 3,500 wagons and 40,000-75,000 oxen.

The Pony Express idea began as a "publicity stunt" in hopes of winning a million-dollar government mail contract for a fast mail delivery system. Before the Pony Express, the railroads and telegraph lines extended no further west than St. Joseph, Missouri, and mail traveled west by stagecoach and wagons, a trip that could take months if it arrived at all. The idea of the Pony Express alleviated this problem with riders who could dramatically reduce the time it took to deliver the mail. But it was a dangerous job, fraught with Indian attacks, rough terrain, and severe weather.



U.S. Scott 1154 issued July 19, 1960

Many thought that the fast mail delivery system was impossible. The Pony Express proved them wrong, but it was an expensive method of mail delivery. The initial price was set at $5 per ½ ounce, then $2.50, and by July 1861 to $1.00. The initial price was 250 times the price of mail through the normal mail service, which was 3-cents. Of course, the founders of the Pony Express hoped to win an exclusive government mail contract, but that never materialized.

The Pony Express established a designated route and expected riders to cross the plains, deserts, and mountains in 10 days. Although the schedule allowed for 10 days, most trips were usually made in 8 or 9 days. This was about 12-14 days shorter than the existing stagecoach mail routes. The quickest run occurred in 7 days and 17 hours in March 1861 when riders were carrying President Lincoln's Inaugural Address.

Pony Express riders were usually lightweight young men, often teenagers. For this reason, an 1860 Pony Express advertisement in California read:

> *"Wanted. Young, skinny, wiry fellows not over 18. Must be expert riders, willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred."*

PONY EXPRESS MAIL (CONTINUED)

Most of the riders were around 20, but one named Bronco Charlie Miller was only 11, and the oldest rider was in his mid-40s. Most weighed an average of 120 pounds.

One hundred eighty-three men rode for the Pony Express, each receiving $100 per month in pay. This was a dangerous and well-paid job. As a comparison, the wage for unskilled labor at the time was about $0.43–$1.00 per day, and for semi-skilled laborers like bricklayers and carpenters, it was usually less than $2 per day.

Alexander Majors, one of the three original founders, was a religious man and resolved "by the help of God" to overcome all difficulties in the Pony Express route. He presented each rider with a Pony Express special-edition Bible and required this oath, which they were also required to sign. It stated (in part):

> *"I, ... , do hereby swear, before the Great and Living God, that during my engagement, and while I am an employee of Russell, Majors, and Waddell, I agree not to use profane language, not to get drunk, not to gamble, not to treat animals cruelly, and not to do anything else that is incompatible with the conduct of a gentleman. And I agree that if I violate any of the above conditions, I will accept my discharge without any pay for my services, so help me God."*

Pony Express riders were expected to ride in a relay manner, with each rider averaging 10 miles an hour, covering about 75-100 miles before another rider would take his place on the route. That meant a rider, on a good, uneventful ride (without severe weather or Indian attacks), would spend 8 to 10 hours in the saddle.

Pony Express stations were initially located about 25 miles apart. Eventually, the number of stations increased to 190 to allow for fresh horses at intervals of 10 to 15 miles. The Pony Express owned and used about 400 Mustang and Morgan horses for all parts of the trip.

Special saddlebags that could be moved to a fresh horse quickly at a change station were used. The rider changed to a fresh horse at each station, taking only the mail pouch (called a mochila, from the Spanish for "pouch" or "backpack"). The mochila was thrown over the saddle and held in place by the rider's weight sitting on it. Each corner had a cantina or pocket. Bundles of mail were placed in these cantinas, which were padlocked for safety. The mochila could hold 20 pounds of mail along with the 20 pounds of material carried on the horse, allowing for 165 pounds on the horse's back.

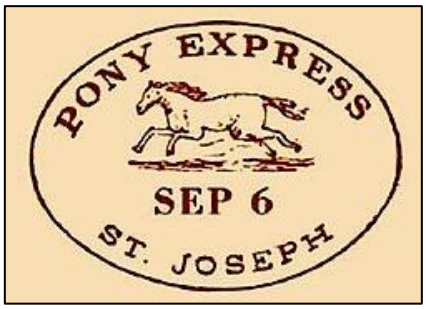
The riders strictly understood the importance of the pouch. It was often said that, if it came to be, the horse and rider should perish before the mochila did! (That is a real commitment to mail delivery!)

PONY EXPRESS MAIL (CONTINUED)

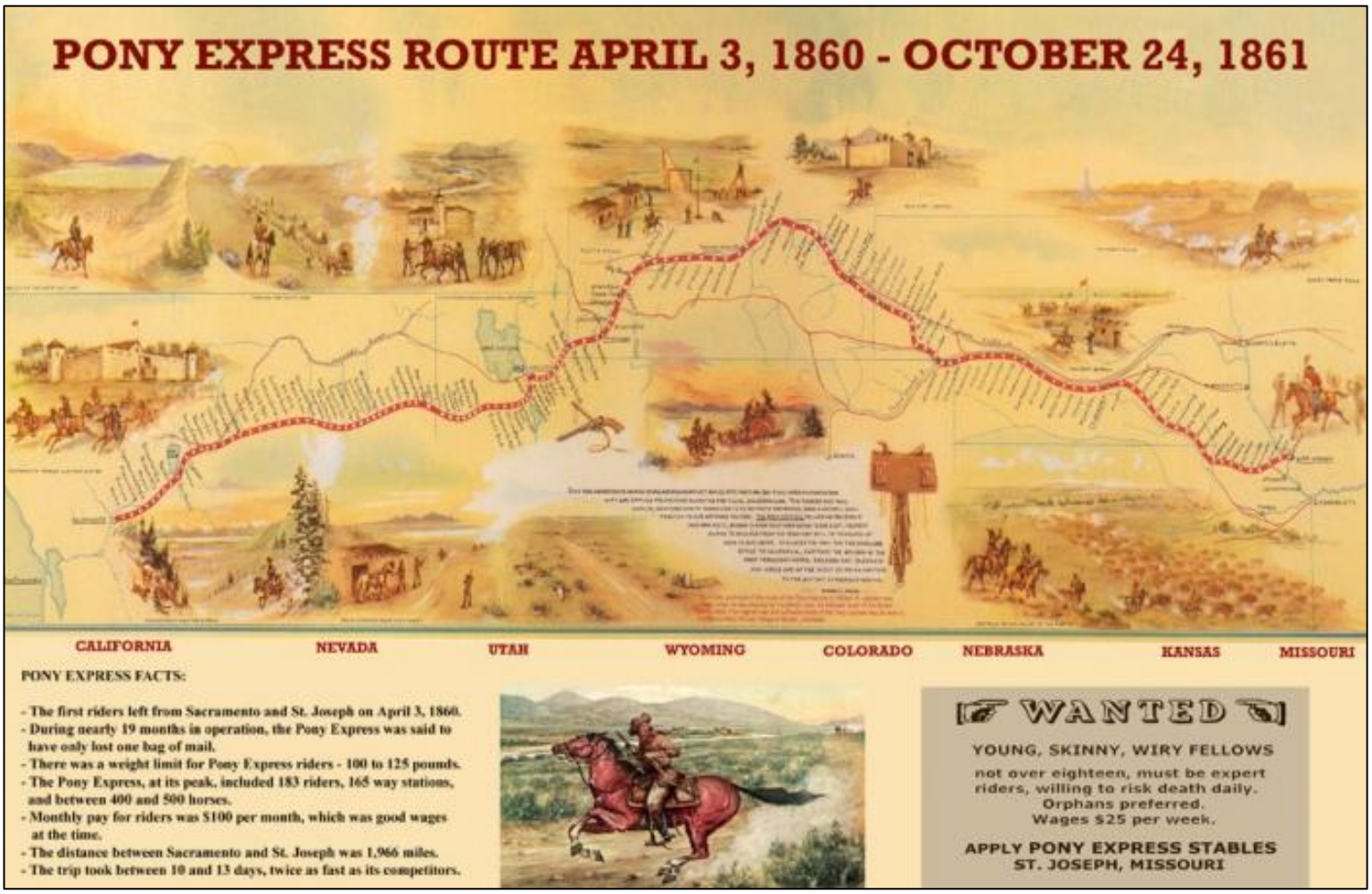
Amazingly, Pony Express riders carried approximately 35,000 pieces of mail over more than 650,000 miles of terrain during the route's 18 months of operation. Only one rider lost his life when hostile Indians killed him, and only one sack of mail was ever lost. The Pony Express is credited with helping to keep California in the Union by providing rapid communication between the two coasts of the United States.

The ultimate demise of the Pony Express came quickly. Not only was the operation never able to cover its costs, but it announced its closure two days after the transcontinental telegraph reached Salt Lake City and connected Omaha, Nebraska, and Sacramento, California. Other telegraph lines connected points along the line and other cities on the east and west coasts rapidly.

When it was replaced by the telegraph, the Pony Express quickly became romanticized and became part of the lore of the Old West. Its reliance on the ability and endurance of hardy riders and fast horses was seen as evidence of rugged American individualism of the frontier times.



Pony Express Postmark, Westbound, 1860



DID YOU KNOW?

Paul F. Miller

The romance and reality of the Pony Express Mail can be further explored by a visit to the Pony Express National Museum in St. Joseph, Missouri. Information about the museum can be found on their website: https://www.ponyexpress.org/.

The website describes the museum experience as:

> The Pony Express National Museum preserves the story of America's first fast mail service through immersive exhibits, historic artifacts, and engaging educational programs for all ages. As the eastern terminus of the Pony Express, the museum is housed in the original stables where the legendary journey began.

The Pony Express National Museum in St. Joseph, Missouri, displays educational, state-of-the-art exhibits conveying the need, creation, operation, and termination of the Pony Express. Whatever your age, you're sure to be captivated by the stories and images of an era long passed.

The Pony Express Museum, St. Joseph, Missouri

CHRISTMAS DAY COVER FROM THE SOUTH PACIFIC DURING WW II

Michael L. Wilson

The cover depicted on the next page satisfies two of my collecting interests: airmail and Wisconsin. I found it on eBay, and even before this cover arrived in the mailbox, I was playing detective.

Ralph Albert Palkowski, born in Milwaukee in 1923, sent this missive to his pre-war place of employment, George J. Meyers Manufacturing Co. in Cudahy, Wisconsin, a suburb of Milwaukee. It was postmarked on Christmas Day, 1944.

At the time, Ralph served in Marine Fighting Squadron 222 (VMF 222, for short) of Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) 14. MAG 14, in turn, was part of the First Marine Aircraft Wing (FMAW). You can see all those acronyms in Ralph's return address.

VMF 222 was known as "The Flying Deuces." They provided air support for the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) during the island-hopping strategy in the South Pacific and fought in engagements at Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, Bismarck Archipelago, and the Southern Philippines. When Ralph mailed this letter, VMF 222 was stationed on Nissan Island, which is one of the Green Islands of Papua New Guinea.

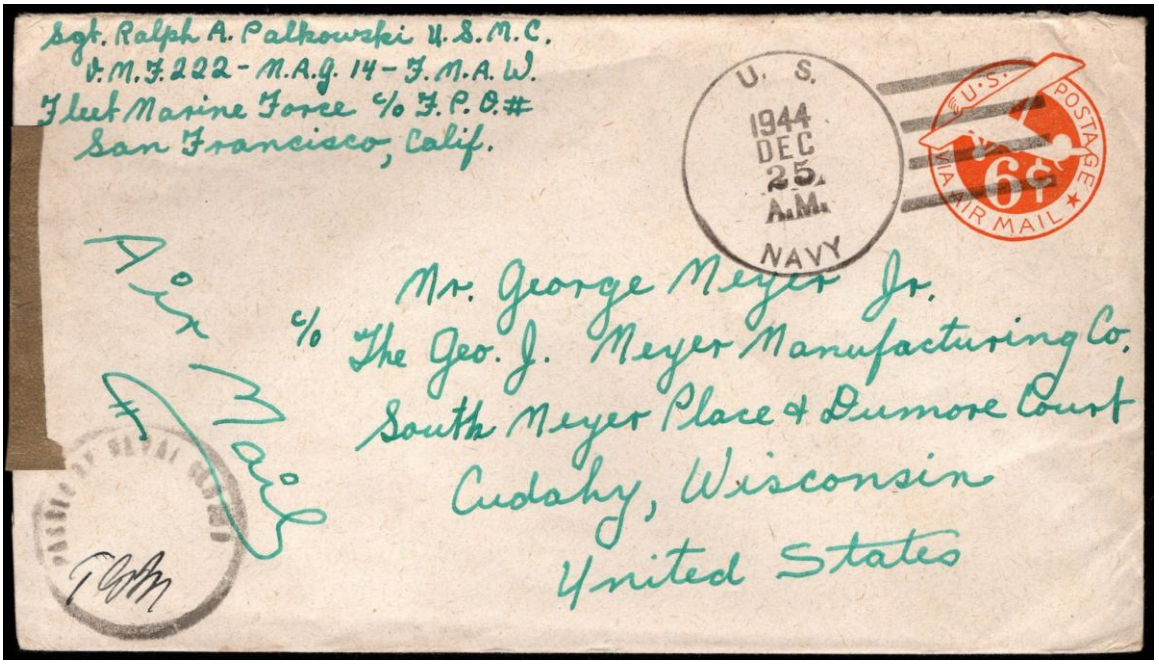
Although members of the U.S. armed forces had free frank privileges during World War II, it was not unusual for them to pay six cents (per half ounce) to speed up a letter by air mail. That is precisely what Ralph did. He enclosed his letter in a common 6-cent air post stamped envelope issued in 1944.

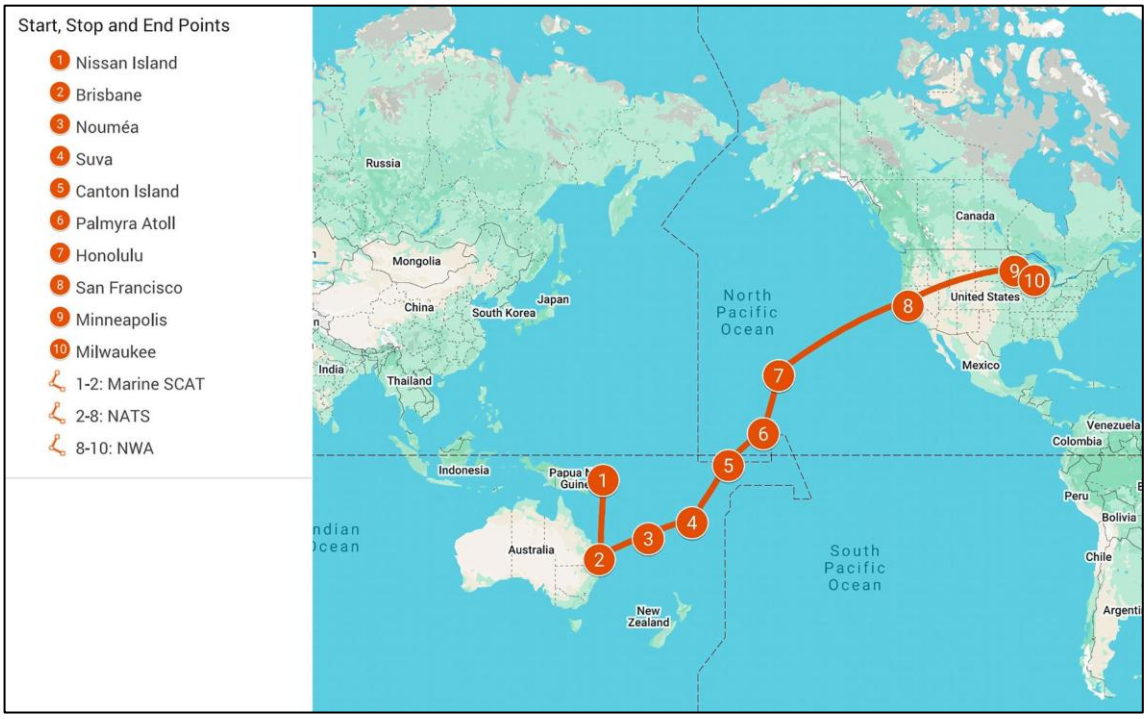
As the crow flies, the distance from Nissan Island to Cudahy is about 8,400 miles. Based on the receiving mark on the back, the cover traveled that distance in 11 days. That is pretty remarkable when you consider this was before the jet age and during wartime.

The military placed a high priority on routing mail during World War II. The first leg of this cover's journey was probably on a transport plane operated

CHRISTMAS DAY COVER FROM THE SOUTH PACIFIC DURING WW II (CONTINUED)

by the Marines' South Pacific Combat Air Transport Command (SCAT). Chances are the SCAT plane flew to Brisbane, Australia where the cover was placed aboard a Naval Air Transport Service (NATS) plane that made its way to San Francisco basically along what was known as Foreign Air Mail Route 14 first flown by Pan American Airways: New Caledonia, Fiji, Canton Island, Palmyra Island, Honolulu and finally San Francisco.





Once the letter arrived at the Fleet Post Office in San Francisco, it hopped a flight on Northwest Airlines (NWA) that flew mail for the U.S. Post Office Department along Air Mail Route 3 to Minneapolis and then to Milwaukee.

Ralph was discharged from the USMC in late 1945 and returned to Milwaukee and went back to work for George J. Meyer. He then re-enlisted in the USMC in 1947 and returned to Marine Corps Aviation, serving in Guam and Korea before returning to the United States to work at the USMC recruiting station in South Bend, Indiana and Niles, Michigan in the mid to late 1950s. He did another tour of duty in Japan in the 1960s and retired from the USMC in 1968, after overseeing its recruiting office in Milwaukee for a few years. Ralph then moved his family to Cudahy where he worked as a machinist for Lucas Milhaupt, Inc. for 25 years, retiring in 1993. Ralph would pass away in 1995 at age 72.