



THE PHILLY PHILATELIST

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

Founded 1904

American Philatelic Society – Chapter 18

October 2025

www.GPSCC.org

Volume 13, Issue 9

NEXT MEETING

October 21, 2025 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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Paul F. Miller

I just returned from NOJEX 2025, the NJ-NY Metropolitan area stamp show sponsored by the North Jersey Federated Stamp Clubs, Inc. NOJEX was first held in 1962 and has been going strong almost every year since then. Last year, NOJEX moved its show to a new location – the Hasbrouck Heights Hilton Hotel – a real nice venue. This year, it remained at the same location. I believe that it was another successful show.

NOJEX is an American Philatelic Society (APS) “World Series of Philately” (WSP) show. To be identified as a WSP, the show generally is a United States national level show that must go through an accreditation process and follow standards to maintain its status. A WSP show includes a bourse (stamp dealers), competitive exhibits, meetings, and seminars and usually host functions of one or more philatelic societies. NOJEX is one of many WSP shows across America that are committed to perpetuating the stamp collecting hobby.

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This year's show had over 160 frames of exhibits on display. Most of the exhibits compete for a variety of medals and awards. Some of the exhibits are specifically identified as “non-competitive,” but all the exhibits are wonderful.

There is an important aspect of competitive exhibits at a WSP show. If a multi-frame exhibit is awarded a vermeil medal or better at the show, that exhibit owner may apply to have the exhibit shown at International FIP shows. Boston 2026 World Expo is an International FIP show.

So, if a competitive exhibit wins a required award at NOJEX 2025 (or another WSP show in the United States), that could catapult the exhibitor into the biggest international stamp show in the United States in 10 years!

(Continued next page)

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

Several of our GPSCC members received awards for their exhibits at NOJEX 2025, as well as the recently completed BALPEX 2025, and Great American Stamp Show 2025 (GASS). Make sure you flip the pages over to the “Awards and Honors” section of *The Philly Philatelist* to read about some of these winners. They certainly make us proud at GPSCC!

Shifting gears a bit, I want to mention GPSCC Membership Dues. Reminder notices for the 2026 year will be going out in the mail soon. Please look for your renewal notice.

Last year we initiated the GPSCC 2025 Membership Dues Sweepstakes. If you remember, the sweepstakes

awarded free memberships during 2025 to 15 randomly selected existing members. Since that was well received last year, it has been decided that we will do a sweepstakes again for 2026! This will be known as the **GPSCC 2026 Membership Dues Sweepstakes** (go figure!).

The same process will be used again this year. That is, if you are randomly selected, you will receive the normal 2026 membership dues notice in the mail, but there will be an additional page notifying you that your dues are waived for 2026! Keep your fingers crossed for that lucky selection. Regardless of the results, please know that your continued membership in GPSCC is greatly appreciated.

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PROGRAM FOR OCTOBER 21, 2025: “COLONIAL SHIP LETTERS” WITH PHIL RUSSELL

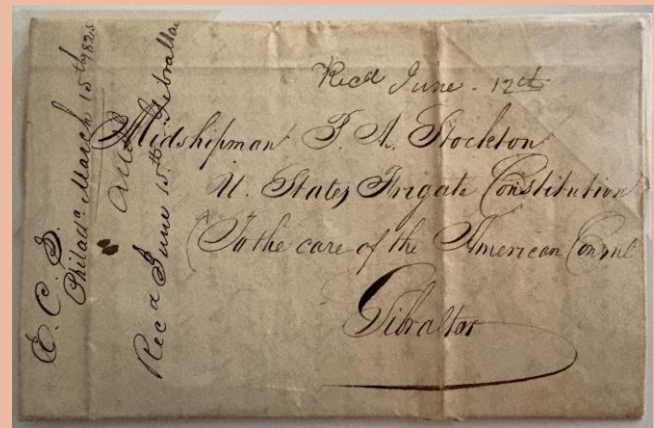
Long-time GPSCC member and past vice president **Phil Russell** will present his collection of **Colonial Ship Letters** from the Samuel and William Vernon Merchant Co. located in Newport, Rhode Island from the 1740s into the 1770s. He’ll explain how he met Edward J. Craig of Newport, and bought these letters from him, and how Mr. Craig obtained the Vernon letter collection in the first place. (He met Valentine Vernon in 1940 on Broadway in the “Johnny Belinda” play).

Phil has always been interested in collecting stampless letters for their interesting and historical content. He has a lot of letters from the War of 1812 period, as well as many North Atlantic ship letters from the 1820s to 1850s, many with the captain and ship name. His interest in ship letters may be due to his mother’s family who lived in Falmouth, Massachusetts and was involved in the whaling industry in the 1850s.

Phil received a PhD in physical chemistry from Cornell University in 1963. During his career he worked at GAF Corporation in Binghamton, New York, Brookhaven National Laboratory, and at Yardney Technical Products in Pawcatuck, Connecticut where he retired in 2004.

Phil also is a musician. He played violin for the Binghamton Symphony where he met his wife Cyndi who played the flute.

It’ll be a great program. You won't want to miss it!



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showsevents@gpscc.org**UPCOMING CLUB MEETINGS FOR 2025 & Q1 2026**

Nov. 18 – Dec. 16 (Holiday Dinner) – Jan. 20 – Feb. 17 – Mar. 17

UPCOMING EVENTS**October 18** – [Philatelic Gathering](#), 10:00 a.m.-noon, Chester County History Center, 225 N. High St., West Chester PA.**October 18** – [Burlington Masons Lodge Stamp Show](#) (Bourse Only), Merchantville Stamp Club, 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., 2308 Mt. Holly Rd., Burlington Township, NJ.**October 25** – [Eastern Pennsylvania Stamp Show \(EPASS\)](#) 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Schnecksville Fire Company, 4550 Old Packhouse Road, Schnecksville, PA.**November 8-9** – [PITTPLEX 2025](#), Fairview Sunset Room, 3326 Washington Pike, Bridgeville, PA.**CLUB MAILING ADDRESS**Greater Philadelphia Stamp & Collectors Club
661 High Pointe Circle
Langhorne, PA 19047**WEB SITE**www.gpscc.org**FOLLOW US ON
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SPEAKERS AND TOPICS FOR 2026 REQUESTED

The new year is fast approaching, and I'm looking for anyone interested in making a presentation at one of next year's meetings.

We have speakers for January and June. February will be an all show-and-tell meeting, but March, April, May, August, September, October, and November are open.

Drop me a note at vpprograms@gpscc.org.

Thanks, Mike Wilson

HAVE SOMETHING PHILATELIC YOU WANT TO SHARE?*The Philly Philatelist* is always interested in publishing articles by our members or other collectors.Articles of any length are welcome. An article that is 750 words long with two or three images will fill two pages. Just email the text in a Word file and the images as separate files to newsletter@gpscc.org.

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 16, 2025, GPSCC MEETING

President Paul Miller started the meeting a few minutes before 7:00 p.m. so that the members could promptly join a Zoom call presented by the American Philatelic Society (APS). The Zoom call was a virtual Town Hall presentation hosted by Kirk Gillis, the APS's new Executive Director. This was the first opportunity for many APS members to see Kirk and hear his thoughts and plans for the future of the APS and the wider stamp collecting community.

Although there was some initial technical difficulty in establishing the Zoom call connection, VP Mike Wilson did an excellent job in troubleshooting the problem. Once the Town Hall connection was up and running, we learned that Kirk had an agenda for the presentation. Namely, Kirk had some initial opening remarks, then he intended to provide answers to questions that were supplied before the presentation. Finally, he agreed to open up the presentation to a live Q&A.

The entire Town Hall presentation encompassed a full 60 minutes, and Kirk addressed a wide range of topics. At the conclusion of the presentation, several GPSCC members stated that they think Kirk has a big job ahead for the coming years. Briefly, some topics addressed by Kirk included:

- A focus on APS membership growth, and philately, in general.
- A confirmation that people (i.e., the collectors) are the greatest resource.
- An acknowledgement that the social aspects of stamp collecting are incredibly valuable. Kirk specifically commented on how many wonderful and unique people he has already met by attending just a few recent stamp shows.
- A desire to have APS staff more connected to each other's jobs, rather than operating in silos. This will enhance what the APS has to offer to its membership.
- A desire to expand the relevance of stamp collecting to non-collectors and to collectors who have once collected but are now "paused" or are not connected to clubs or the APS.
- Develop plans to engage youth in the stamp

collecting hobby. Kirk referred to this as "developing a pipeline" for new, young collectors to join the ranks with the established, older generation of collectors.

- Tackle the technology challenges and opportunities, including the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) where it is most useful and cost effective. Kirk made several references to upcoming changes to the functionality of the APS website that he envisions rolling out in stages.
- Possible market research partnering with the United States Postal Service (USPS) to gain insights on collectors' interests and desires. Kirk believes that certain focused areas of growth among the APS and USPS are very much aligned, and the APS should look to capitalize on that.
- Develop plans for further APS "reach" (i.e., the connection to prior collectors and non-collectors) that may include targeted paid advertising.
- Develop a "strategic framework" in advance of the APS Board Meeting in October 2025, with a goal to turn that into a strategic plan.
- Continuation of the Circuit Sales program. Kirk stated that for now the circuit sales fill a need for certain members and are still profitable. He will look for ways to possibly enhance the program with efficiencies. He does not intend to cancel the program unless he can replace it with something else that is equally valuable.

Kirk thanked all who virtually attended the presentation. He stated that although this was the first Town Hall presentation, there likely would be others. He also stated that other presentations like this in the future may be open for a larger number of participants. The APS must work on its Zoom credentials to handle larger participant numbers in the future.

With the conclusion of the Town Hall presentation, the remainder of the meeting turned to other business and social matters of the club.

MINUTES (CONTINUED)

It was reported that there is a new member within the past month. His name is John Adamski. Although John could not attend the current meeting, he is hopeful that he will attend future meetings. GPSCC membership now stands at 60 members.

On the topic of membership, it was discussed that membership renewals for 2026 will soon start again. Last year, there was a Membership Dues Sweepstakes in which 15 lucky members won free dues for 2025. Since that was successful and well received, it was decided that GPSCC would sponsor another sweepstakes for 2026. More information will be forthcoming.

Additional discussions occurred concerning chapter affiliations with the American Topical Association

(ATA) and the International Society of Worldwide Stamp Collectors (ISWSC). Initial discussions began on this topic last month. In the meantime, it has been determined that GPSCC has the credentials to qualify for a chapter affiliation for both clubs. Paperwork will be filed to request a grant of chapter affiliation in the near future.

Finally, Phil Russell had been originally scheduled as the featured speaker for the September 2025 meeting. Phil graciously permitted GPSCC to use his time to participate in the APS Town Hall presentation. Phil’s presentation will not be missed, however. He will return next month to present his collection of Colonial-era covers at the October 2025 meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Paul Miller

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PHILATELIC GATHERING MEETS

OCTOBER 18, 2025

Two great speakers will present at the Philatelic Gathering on October 18: Gary Loew on “A Postal History Check List: How to Extract Hidden Information from Your Covers” and Mark Cole on “Giraffes on Postage Stamps from Around the World.”

Summaries and PDFs of the September presentations from Bob Myers (siege of Paris balloon mail) and GPSCC member Mike Wilson (air crash mail) can be viewed here: <https://lcps-stamps.org/study-groups/>.

The Philatelic Gathering meets at the Chester County History Center, 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.

SHARE YOUR POSTAL HISTORY

ENTHUSIASM!

Do you enjoy postal history? Do you have some material you would like to share? Then head over to the MILCOPEX 2026 web site and enter a one-page exhibit before June 1, 2026! Here’s the website: <https://milcopex.org/>.

MILCOPEX is the premier stamp show in Wisconsin and is sponsored by the Milwaukee Philatelic Society. There was no MILCOPEX this year due to the Great American Stamp Show taking place in their backyard, but it will be back in September 2026 with a postal history theme.

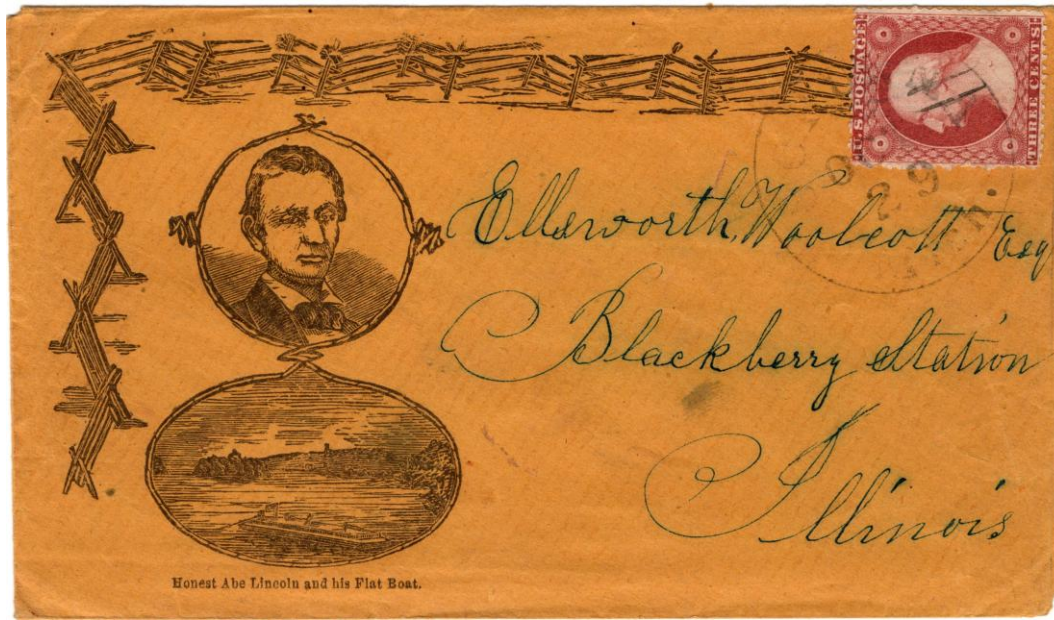
To generate excitement around the show and the theme, MILCOPEX organizers are inviting every postal history enthusiast to submit up to six one-page digital, noncompetitive exhibits.

A list of simple rules and an application can be found at the above website. Go for it!

ABRAHAM LINCOLN 1860 CAMPAIGN COVER

Michael L. Wilson

This is a great Abraham Lincoln campaign cover. The cover is postmarked "October 29" but without a year. I'm fairly confident, however, that it dates from 1860.



It is franked with a 3-cent stamp from the Series of 1857-61 (Scott 26), so it could be from as early as 1857 but that is highly unlikely. It was after Lincoln lost the Illinois Senate race to Stephen Douglas in 1858 that he began to be mentioned as a presidential candidate for 1860.

But note in particular the split-rail fence across the top and down the left-hand side of the cover. Lincoln was given the nickname "Railsplitter" at a convening of Illinois Republicans in May 1860 just before he was nominated for president. Lincoln was nicknamed the Railsplitter because he had built split-rail fences as a young man, and the image of a hardworking, self-reliant man appealed to voters (all male) at the time.



*Lincoln as a
Railsplitter.
Source:
Dickenson
College.*

That fact is why I think this cover dates from the second half of 1860 and that this cover was postmarked on October 29, 1860. It is certainly from no later than 1860 because it depicts an unbearded Lincoln, and we know he grew his beard after he won the 1860 election.

The cover has Philatelic Foundation certificate number 586893, which opines that it is a genuine usage of Scott 26 on a Lincoln campaign cover mailed from Corunna, Michigan. Corunna is situated between Flint and Lansing, about 90 miles northwest of Detroit. Its destination was Blackberry Station, Illinois in Kane County about 45 miles west of Chicago.

LINCOLN CAMPAIGN COVER (CONTINUED)

The recipient's name is clearly written - "Ellsworth Woolcott, Esq." According to the 1860 census, there was one person with that exact name in Kane County who worked as a farmhand and was born in New York around 1830. But I don't think that was the person.

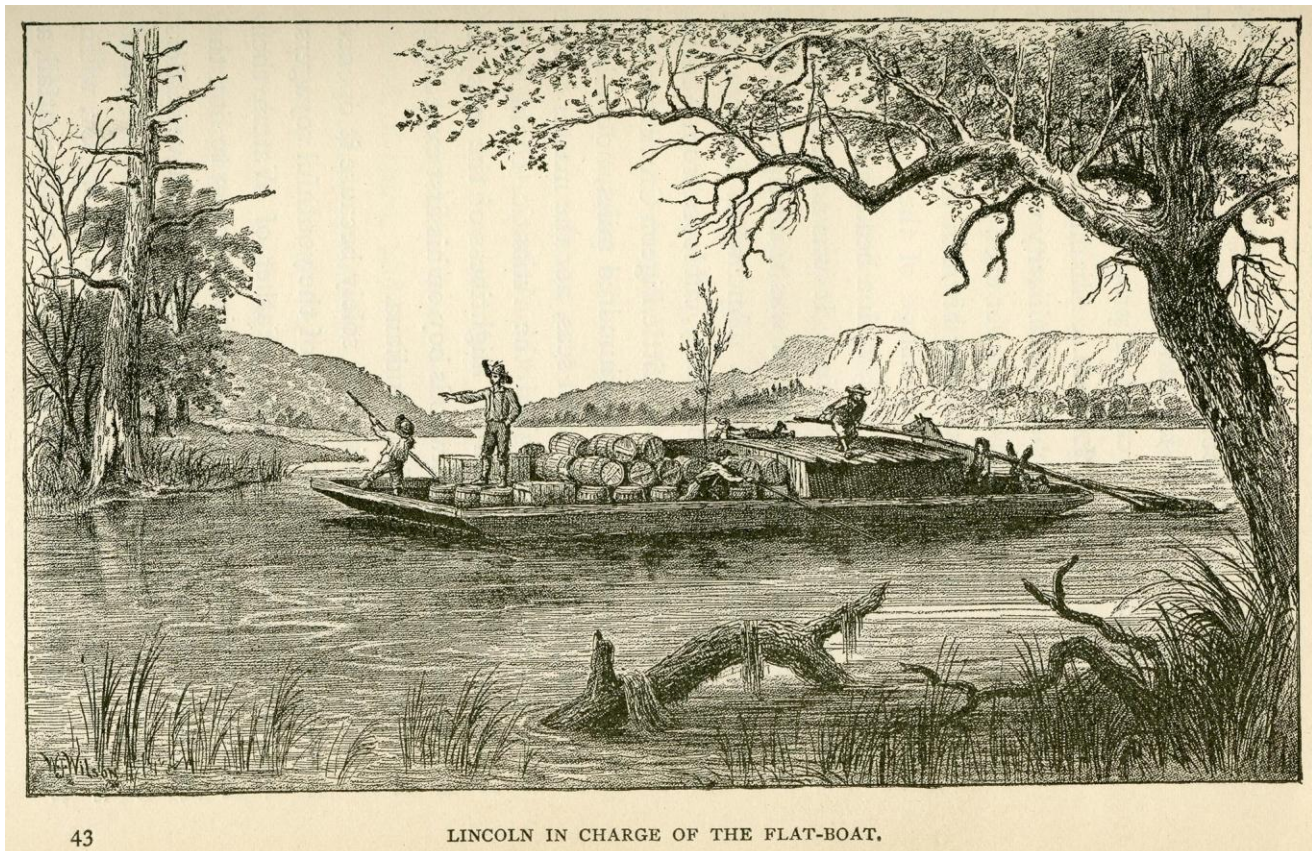
There also was an "Ellsworth Woolcut" or "Wolcott" living in Kane County in 1860. My guess is this was the recipient of the letter. He too was a farmhand but was born in 1833 in Pennsylvania. In 1860, he was living in Kane County with his father Benjamin and his mother Betsy, short for Elizabeth. By 1863, this Ellsworth, along with his parents, was living in Vernon, Michigan, which is just six miles from Corunna. He died in 1914 and is buried in Vernon.

The illustration on this cover is listed in *Abraham Lincoln Illustrated Envelopes and Letter Paper 1860-1865* by James W. Milgram, M.D. published in 1984. Milgram catalogs it as AL-82 and notes that it is

probably a copy of similar designs first published by Joseph E. Baker of Chicago. Baker's versions of this cover include the imprint "Baker-Chicago" or "Published By Baker, Chicago." The illustration on this cover has been seen on white, orange and yellow envelopes. This is clearly an orange envelope variety.

It was Joseph E. Baker (1837-1914) who drew the portrait of Lincoln seen on the cover shortly after Lincoln's 1860 presidential nomination. Baker became famous for this portrait, and during the Civil War he drew many political cartoons.

In addition to "Honest Abe" and his split-rail fence, the cover features Lincoln and his two flatboat voyages to New Orleans between 1828 and 1831. These voyages supposedly shaped Lincoln's attitudes on transportation, commerce, and especially slavery.



Source: *Abraham Lincoln and the Downfall of American Slavery*, Noah Brooks, 1914.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE – HISTORY, HIGHLIGHTS, AND INTERESTING FACTS

Paul F. Miller

In the June 2025 issue of *The Philly Philatelist*, I noted that the United States Postal Service (USPS) had plans to celebrate its 250th anniversary on July 26, 2025. Two new stamps were released to celebrate the historic milestone. Additionally, the Smithsonian National Postal Museum in Washington, DC hosted a family-friendly “Postal Party.”

In the United States, something that is 250 years old and intertwined in everyday American life is a pretty big deal. In fact, the USPS is actually one year older than the United States itself, having been established by the Second Continental Congress on July 26, 1775.

Many Americans may complain about the service provided by the USPS (jokingly or not), but moving the mail across our country is a huge task. The history behind this American institution is quite amazing, notwithstanding the current day criticisms. In this article, I prefer to focus on the history, highlights, and interesting facts.

As stated above, the United States Post Office was founded by the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia on July 26, 1775. Benjamin Franklin was appointed the first Postmaster General. The Postmaster General is like the CEO of the agency who is responsible for managing and directing the day-to-day operations.

On February 20, 1792, the Postal Service Act (signed into law by President George Washington) was passed which created the United States Post Office Department (USPOD). The USPOD received a huge boost in its power by President Andrew Jackson in 1829 when Jackson invited Postmaster General John McLean to sit in on the Cabinet. Eventually, the Post Office Act of 1872 solidified that action by officially elevating the USPOD to Cabinet status. This permitted the Postmaster General to have a more direct link to the President, as the Cabinet of the United States is the principal official advisory body to the President.

The USPOD remained in place from 1792 until 1971. The Postal Reorganization Act was signed by President Richard Nixon on August 12, 1970. It replaced the Cabinet-level USPOD with the independent and newly named “United States Postal Service” on July 1, 1971. The regulatory role of the postal service was then transferred to the Postal Regulatory Commission.

Thus, the USPS as we know it today is a corporation-like independent agency of the Executive branch of the United States federal government. Its specific responsibilities include providing postal services throughout the United States. It is further obligated to provide uniform price and quality across the entirety of its service area. Due to its creation in the very early stages of American history, it is one of the few government agencies explicitly authorized by the United States Constitution.

The USPS essentially has a monopoly on traditional letter delivery within the United States and operates under a universal service obligation (USO). It does have exclusive access to letter boxes marked “U.S. Mail” and personal letter boxes, but it does have to compete against private package delivery services, such as United Parcel Service, FedEx, and DHL, to name a few.

Here is a brief historical timeline of significant milestones for the USPOD/USPS:

- 1775: Creation of the USPO; Benjamin Franklin appointed first Postmaster General.
- 1792: Creation of the USPOD along with establishing postal policies and postal routes.
- 1847: First U.S. postage stamp authorized; mailed letters are pre-paid by sender.
- 1858: Installation of street letter collection boxes.
- 1860: Pony Express mail begins; active from April 3, 1860 to October 26, 1861.

(Continued next page)

USPS – HISTORY, ETC. (CONTINUED)

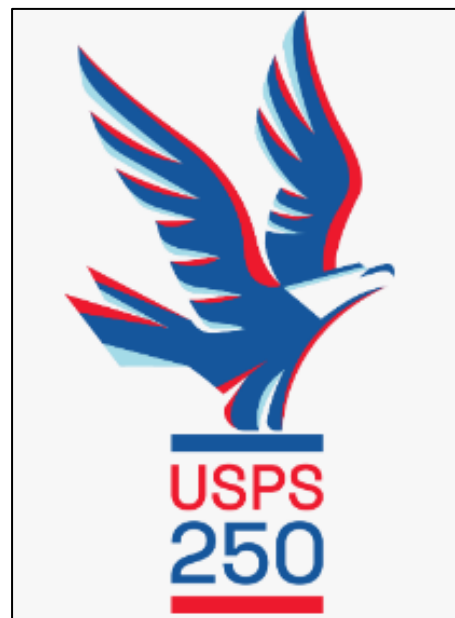
1861-1865 - Civil War:

- 1862: Large scale use of mail-in ballots (initially for military personnel).
- 1863: Creation of free city delivery (i.e., delivery directly to your home).
- 1863: Postage based on weight rather than distance traveled.
- 1864: Creation of money orders.
- 1864: First U.S. Railway Post Office route established.
- 1872: USPOD elevated to Cabinet status.
- 1893: First commemorative stamps issued.
- 1902: Creation of rural free delivery (like the free city delivery in 1863).
- 1911: First authorized U.S. air mail (experimental).
- 1913: Parcel Post service begins for packages.
- 1918: Domestic U.S. air mail is formally established.
- 1920: Postage meters first used.
- 1942: Initial V-Mail (or Victory Mail) used for military personnel abroad.
- 1963: ZIP Codes introduced.
- 1968: Priority Mail service begins.
- 1970: Postal Reorganization Act signed; USPOD replaced by USPS.
- 1977: Railway Post Office terminated; final run on June 30, 1977.
- 1983: ZIP+4 Code is introduced.
- 1994: USPS goes online with www.usps.com.
- 2007: First “Forever” stamp issued.
- 2017: USPS launches “Informed Delivery” – a digital preview and tracking service.
- 2024: Initial deployment of Next Generation Delivery Vehicles.
- 2025: USPS celebrates 250 years helping to shape America.

Finally, here are some (really) interesting facts:

- The USPOD owned and operated the first public telegraph lines in the United States. Starting in 1844 from Washington to Baltimore, then extending into New York, Boston, Buffalo, and Philadelphia. In 1847, the telegraph system was privatized.

- USPS employment base is estimated to be at 640,000 employees (2024 report).
- USPS operates 33,641 Post Offices and contract locations (2023 report).
- USPS delivered a total of 127.3 billion packages and pieces of mail to 164.9 million delivery points in 2022 (2023 report).
- The holiday season between Thanksgiving and Christmas is the peak period for the USPS, representing a total volume of greater than 11.5 billion packages and pieces of mail.
- USPS operates a fleet of 235,000 vehicles, most of them are the recognizable local delivery trucks (2024 report).
- USPS fleet of vehicles travel about 1.4 billion miles each year (2023 report).
- USPS fleet of vehicles consumed about 222 million gallons of gas in 2022 (2023 report).
- A 2014 report indicated that for every penny increase in the national average price of gasoline, the USPS spends an extra \$8.0 million per year to fuel its fleet.
- Financial results for fiscal year 2024 included total operating revenue of \$79.5 billion and a net loss of \$9.5 billion.



AWARDS AND HONORS

Alan Warren

GPSCC member **Vern Morris** gave a Zoom presentation on September 3, sponsored by the Collectors Club of New York, and titled “Postal History of the United Colonies.” He focused primarily on events and documents of the year 1775. He described the postal rates and routes at the time and explained the currency such as pounds, shillings, pence, pennyweights, grains of silver, etc. The governing document at the time was the British Stamp Act of 1765.

Using items largely from his own collection he showed rare pieces of mail during the Second Continental Congress in 1775. In August that year the decision was made to establish the American post office. Vern showed the earliest known piece, dated September 7, 1775. He also gave us a glimpse of duty-free mail permitted for government delegates and soldiers.

Mike Wilson writes in the September/October issue of *The Airpost Journal*, published by the American Air Mail Society, about one of the early Zeppelins, the *Schwaben*, which was completed in 1911 and flew over 200 flights before it was lost in a fire in June 1912. He shows a postcard he owns that was carried by this airship. Sometimes addressed and stamped postcards were dropped from the airship with a note

that the finder place it in the nearest mailbox. In this case the card was sent to a friend in Mannheim, Germany, and noting “...warm regards from the air.”

At the BALPEX show in Maryland in early September, **Mark Schwartz** walked away with *three* large golds for his: “Independent Mail and Express Company Operations at Boston 1843-1845,” “Use of Boston ‘PAID in Grid’ Cancels 1851-1859,” and “Carrier Service at Boston 1821-1859.”

Bruce Marsden won a large gold at the Indypex show in Danville, Indiana in September with his “Switzerland Strubels 1854-1863 Production and Use.”

Club members also earned awards at NOJEX in late September. **Mark Schwartz** secured *three more* large golds for “The New York Postmaster Provisional,” “Packet Mail Sent from Essex County, Massachusetts: 1840-UPU,” and “Carrier Service at Boston 1824-1863.” He also was awarded the Errors, Freaks & Oddities medal for his Postmaster Provisional exhibit and the Single-Frame Reserve Grand Award for his carrier service exhibit.

Mike Wilson earned a large vermeil for his “Pan American Airways Speed Test of 1946” exhibit.

DID YOU KNOW?

Michael L. Wilson

The GPSCC has about 60 members, but one most certainly holds the title of “Most Remote Member” and that is our newest member **Michael A. White**.

Michael lives on Saipan, an island about 120 miles north of Guam and some 7,800 miles as the crow flies from Philadelphia. (That is a very strong crow, by the way.)

Michael is a graduate of Penn State University and earned his law degree at Temple University. He collects U.S. stamps and first day covers and United Nations issues.

We also extend a warm welcome to our other new members this year:

- **John Adamski**
- **Rick Anderson**
- **William Chandlee**
- **Spencer Engel**
- **Joel Grubman**
- **Bill Kershner**
- **Thomas McFarland**
- **Abel Peter**
- **William Ristey**