



THE PHILLY PHILATELIST

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

Founded 1904

American Philatelic Society – Chapter 18

April 2026

www.GPSCC.org

Volume 14, Issue 4

NEXT MEETING

April 21, 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

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Paul F. Miller

Calling all stamp collectors – part 2!

Last month, I was excited to remind everyone about the upcoming Boston 2026 World Expo. Now, it is another month closer to the big stamp show. The energy continues to build!

This month I want to share with you some facts about the size and scope of the event. My information is primarily based on details from a presentation given by Yamil Kouri, President of Boston 2026, on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, to members and guests of The Collectors Club of New York.

I have seen several of Mr. Kouri's presentations on this topic over the past few years. This presentation was, by far, the most comprehensive and complete. It

probably was the last presentation that he will have time to give before the show. If you missed the presentation, allow me to provide some highlights.

Location and size – The Expo will be held at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, recently renamed the Thomas Michael Menino Convention and Exhibition Center.

The building is among the largest exhibition centers in the northeastern United States, with approximately 516,000 square feet of contiguous exhibition space.

The Expo will use 352,000 square feet of that space. Attendees will enjoy state-of-the-art technology and free Wi-Fi. Remember, admission is free!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

Dealers and more dealers – The Expo will have a large dealer bourse. Currently, 120 dealer booths have been sold. You might be able to find everything you want!

What else will you find - The United States Postal Service (USPS) will be prominent with a large area, including stage space for ceremonies. There will be five separate exhibit pavilions; 70 philatelic societies with confirmed tables; 24 postal administrations from around the world; an adult beginners' area; and a youth area.

Meetings and Seminars – There are more than 300 meetings and seminars scheduled so far. A list of most, if not all, can be found at the Boston 2026 World Expo [website](#).

Exhibits – The General World Exhibition will include about 3,500 frames of competitive exhibits. The American Philatelic Society will host its annual Champion of Champions exhibits for 2026, consisting of about 120 frames. The Polar Salon will have its own area with 200 frames of competitive and polar court of honor exhibits. A wide variety of other exhibits will also be present.

Court of Honor – Possibly one of the most exciting areas will be a separate Court of Honor, which will have 114 frames of outstanding philatelic material. Mr. Kouri stated that some items on display have not been seen in public in decades.

Other Exciting Attractions – Mr. Kouri once again indicated that an app is being created for the Expo. It will be available for your phones and will act as the electronic version of the program guide. (Scan the QR code below to access the app.) An “Official Passport” book, always a popular “must have,” will be offered for free to attendees.

Where can I stay? – Eleven hotels have been contracted with 11,000 room nights available. But hurry with your reservations as about 10,000 room nights have already been filled. (And for inexpensive accommodations, don't forget about [HI Boston Hostel](#). Enter APS26 for 15% off your stay.)

Local flavor – This was not in Mr. Kouri's presentation. Rather, it is my personal shout-out to GPSCC members who will have prominent visibility at the Expo. I looked at the exhibits listing, and I see that we are lucky to have the following members participating with exhibits: **Bruce Marsden, Vernon Morris, Mark Schwartz, and Michael Wilson**. Additionally, **Alan Warren** has been selected as an International Juror for the Polar Salon exhibits.

Congratulations and good luck to all these folks. Their representation makes GPSCC proud!

The Boston 2026 “Official Passport,” a great way to collect stamps from all the postal administrations in attendance.



Scan this QR code to access the Boston 2026 app.



The USPS is holding seven First Day of Issue ceremonies at Boston 2026. Advance registration is [available](#).

PROGRAM FOR APRIL 21, 2026: “GREENLAND PARCEL POST STAMPS, 1905-1938” BY JAUME BALSELLS

Widely recognized as Greenland’s first adhesive stamps, these highly popular stamps were issued by the Danish government-owned Royal Greenland Trade Office (KGH) under authorization of the Danish Post. They were used to pay postage for shipment of parcels by the KGH between Copenhagen and Greenland and vice versa between 1905 and 1938. This was a limited service to a remote part of the world, running only a few sailings a year during the summer months and serving primarily the few hundred Danish nationals residing in Greenland during the early years of the 20th century. Parcels consisted mostly of personal items and newspapers, which were the only way for Greenland residents to keep abreast of news from Denmark and the rest of the world.

In his presentation, GPSCC member **Jaume Balsells** will cover the history of the stamps, philatelic aspects of interest such as printings, varieties and errors, postal history and usages both postal and fiscal.



VOLUNTEER WORK WEEK AT THE APS

The annual Volunteer Work Week at the American Philatelic Society (APS) is scheduled for July 13-17.

There are many tasks at the American Philatelic Center that go above and beyond what the APS staff can do, whether it’s supporting donation organization, working in the Reference Collection, indexing library materials, or much more.

Make this year the year that you join us! Learn more at <https://stamps.org/events/volunteer-work-week>.

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!

See page 8 of this issue of *The Philly Philatelist* for two of my favorite items.

Michael W. (newsletter@gpscc.org)

PHILATELIC GATHERINGS

The Philatelic Gathering (PG) met for the first time in 2026 on March 21 with two great presentations from:

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

Summaries of their talks and copies of their presentations are available at this link: <https://lcps-stamps.org/study-groups/>

The remaining meetings of the Philatelic Gathering in 2026 are scheduled for June 20, September 19, and November 21. Program details will be provided in later issues of *The Philly Philatelist*.



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UPCOMING CLUB MEETINGS

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

May 23-30, 2026 – [Boston 2026 International Philatelic Exhibition](#), Boston Convention & Exposition Center, Boston, MA

June 20-21, 2026 – **SCOPEX 2026**, American Philatelic Center, 100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte, PA



CLUB MAILING ADDRESS

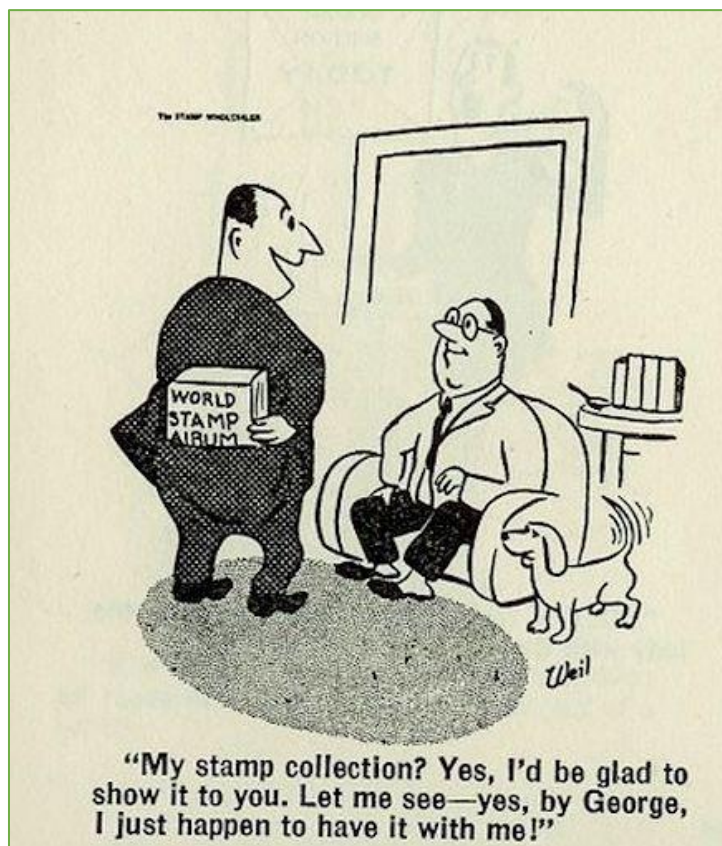
Greater Philadelphia Stamp & Collectors Club
661 High Pointe Circle
Langhorne, PA 19047

WEB SITE

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“STAMPS MAKE ME NERVOUS”

A funny short bit from comedian Nate Bargatze. Check it out: <https://youtube.com/shorts/cYCZ8FgOa14?si=dcwLxjdUzIfbkiyG>.



MINUTES OF THE MARCH 17, 2026, GPSCC MEETING

President Paul Miller called the meeting to order promptly at 7:00 p.m. He wished everyone in attendance a Happy St. Patrick's Day. He noted that the United States Postal Service (USPS) has never issued a specific U.S. postage stamp commemorating St. Patrick's Day. He indicated, however, that he had some stamp and non-stamp related information for St. Patrick's Day that he was saving for a "Show-and-Tell" presentation near the end of the meeting.

Rather than dealing with regular club matters first, Paul quickly opened the floor to our guest speaker for the evening, **Ken Kamholz**, who is not a GPSCC member, but who traveled to see us and provide his presentation. Ken is the Secretary and Treasurer of the International Society for Japanese Philately (ISJP). The ISJP publishes a magazine named *Japanese Philately* four times a year and Ken is the Publisher of that magazine.

Ken's fascinating topic for the evening was called "**Japonica: What It's All About Philatelically.**" Since none of the GPSCC members really knew what Japonica was, Ken described it as follows: The study and categorization of non-Japanese postal issues that are somehow connected with Japan.

Ken's first example of Japonica was presented to help us understand the basic principle. It was an image of the United States postage stamp commemorating the Centenary of the United States-Japan Treaty of Amity and Commerce. (U.S. Scott 1158, issued September 28, 1960). Ken described it succinctly – it is NOT a Japanese stamp, but it does represent a connection to Japan.

Ken described the four broad categories of Japonica as: (a) non-Japanese issues with designs that relate to

an event that did or will occur in Japan; (b) non-Japanese issues with designs that are wholly or partially Japanese; (c) non-Japanese issues designed by a Japanese; and (d) non-Japanese issues printed in Japan.

While Ken described categories (c) and (d) as minor categories, he presented numerous examples of stamps that easily fall into categories (a) and (b). As Ken provided stamp images that represented Japonica, he described where the connection to Japan was evidenced on the stamp and why that supported the classification.

Ken identified the earliest Japonica item as a stamp from Marienwerder, a small territory between Germany and Poland, issued in 1920. An image of that stamp can be seen on Ken's presentation slides, which are found on the GPSCC [website](#).

Ken further described many of the themes that are usually found representing Japonica. They include sports; expositions; Scouting; public figures; and the Japanese imperial family, among many others. He rounded out his presentation by stating that his organization, ISJP, has a repository of about 2,000 images that represent Japonica. His club members are always on the lookout for new Japonica examples from around the world each year. Ken's presentation was truly a different and interesting topic!

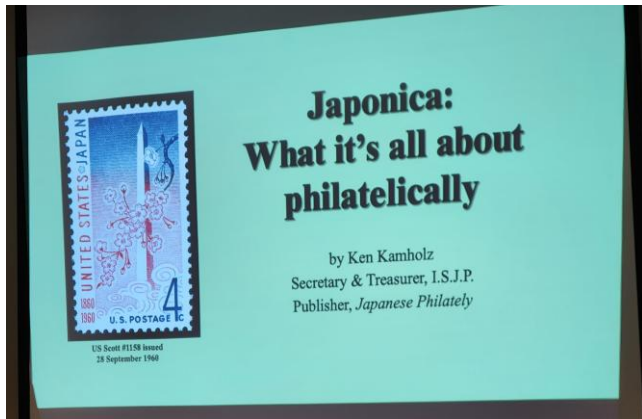
The meeting wound down with some discussions about the upcoming Boston 2026 World Expo, a real hot topic currently, and a brief "Show-and-Tell" about St. Patrick's Day by Paul Miller.

Respectfully submitted by Paul F. Miller.

Right: Marienwerder Japonica stamp from 1920.

Far right: U.S. Scott 1158 issued September 28, 1960.





Title slide from Ken Kamholz's talk.



Ken accepting a "thank you" certificate from GPSCC President Paul Miller.



AWARDS AND HONORS

Alan Warren

Our editor and webmaster **Michael Wilson** was named Book Review Editor of *The Airpost Journal*, a bimonthly magazine published by the American Air Mail Society. He is also the society's Development Chair and one of his tasks is leading the current capital campaign.

He also has an article in the first quarter 2026 issue of *La Posta: The Journal of American Postal History*, titled "A Well-Traveled 1904 Advertising Cover." The cover advertises a pain-killer called "Lycosite." Michael analyzed the numerous postal markings on the front and back of the cover. It was sent May 3, 1904, from Fond du Lac, Wisconsin and went to New York City; Southampton, England; Cape Town, South Africa; Newcastle, Australia and then Sydney, Australia where it arrived at the dead letter office.

Since the intended recipient could not be located, it was marked "Return to Sender." It then went back to Newcastle, San Francisco, Washington D.C., and arrived at Fond du Lac April 30, 1906. Michael's analysis of the routing indicates the cover traveled over 28,000 miles in just under two years!

Member **Bill Schultz** has an article in the February issue of the journal of the New Jersey Postal History Society. In June of 1799, the Post Office Department

issued handstamps to the twelve largest post offices in the country. The markers were made of brass, were circular in design measuring 26 mm, and bore the month and day. Bill shows a stampless letter with a September 10 (1799) handstamp. It was sent from Newark to a lawyer in New York City. Written at the upper right of the cover is "8" (cents) which was the rate at the time for a letter sent 40 miles or less.

At the St. Louis Stamp Expo in March, **Vernon Morris** won a large gold, the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society medal, and the show grand award with his "Transition of British Colonial Mail to United States Post Office, 1685 to 1799."

Alan Warren had an article published simultaneously in two journals: *The Posthorn* of the Scandinavian Collectors Club, and *First Days* of the American First Day Cover Society, since the subject was of interest to both audiences. "Norway to Argentina—Stamp Catalogs in a First Day Cover" describes an envelope used in 1929 to mail a catalog, and bearing a set of Norwegian stamps marking the centenary of the death of the mathematician Niels Henrik Abel, and cancelled on the day of issue. The cover went from Oslo to Buenos Aires. He shows the catalog and the letter accompanying it as well.

FROM “TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM, EARL OF DARTMOUTH” PHILLIS WHEATLEY, 1772

In this poem, Phillis Wheatley, widely regarded as the “Poet Laureate of the American Revolution,” declares her love of freedom comes from being a slave and compares the relationship of the American colonies with England to a slave’s relationship with a slave holder. Wheatley was honored on a stamp in January 2026, quite appropriate for the nation’s 250th birthday.

Should you, my lord, while you peruse my song,
Wonder from whence my love of Freedom sprung,
Whence flow these wishes for the common good,
By feeling hearts alone best understood,
I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate
Was snatch’d from Afric’s fancy’d happy seat:

What pangs excruciating must molest,
What sorrows labour in my parent’s breast?
Steel’d was that soul and by no misery mov’d
That from a father seiz’d his babe belov’d:
Such, such my case. And can I then but pray
Others may never feel tyrannic sway?



DID YOU KNOW?

Paul F. Miller

I will call this the “Good News/Bad News” segment for the United States Postal Service (USPS).

First the good news...USPS records gains in mail delivery during 2025 holiday mailing season.

The USPS reported improvements in on-time mail delivery during the holiday mailing season, according to a press release.

On average, the USPS said, mail items and packages were delivered within 2.5 days, compared to 2.8 days for the previous holiday mail period, which ran from November 15, 2024, to January 9, 2025. Total mail volume for the 2025 holiday season was 16 billion, according to the USPS.

The USPS credits significant investments in new technology and new logistics planning and execution for improvements in delivery times during the holiday season.

Excellent news from the USPS – way to go!

Now for the bad news...USPS posts losses for first quarter of fiscal 2026.

For the first quarter of the 2026 fiscal year (October 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025), the USPS reported

operating revenue of \$22.2 billion, a drop of 1.2%, compared to the first quarter of fiscal year 2025.

According to the USPS, that drop in operating revenue was primarily due to declining volumes in three mail categories: first-class mail, shipping and packages, and marketing mail. The revenue decline was partially offset by price increases in those categories, the USPS said in a press release.

Net loss for the first quarter totaled almost \$1.3 billion, compared to net income of \$144 million for the same quarter in fiscal year 2025. “This change to net loss is attributed to an increase in workers’ compensation expense of \$634 million, operating revenue decrease of \$264 million, an increase in retiree health benefits expense of \$175 million, higher other operating expenses of \$169 million, and higher transportation expenses of \$43 million,” the USPS said.

The USPS is pursuing reforms that it believes will improve the financial situation, such as changes in retiree pension benefit funding rules for the Civil Service Retirement System, diversifying pension asset investments, raising the statutory debt ceiling and reforming workers’ compensation administration.

Not so great news from the USPS – how can it continue like this?

EXPERIMENTAL AIRMAIL FLIGHTS IN MILWAUKEE

Michael L. Wilson

As an airmail enthusiast and native Milwaukeean, here are two of my favorite philatelic items.

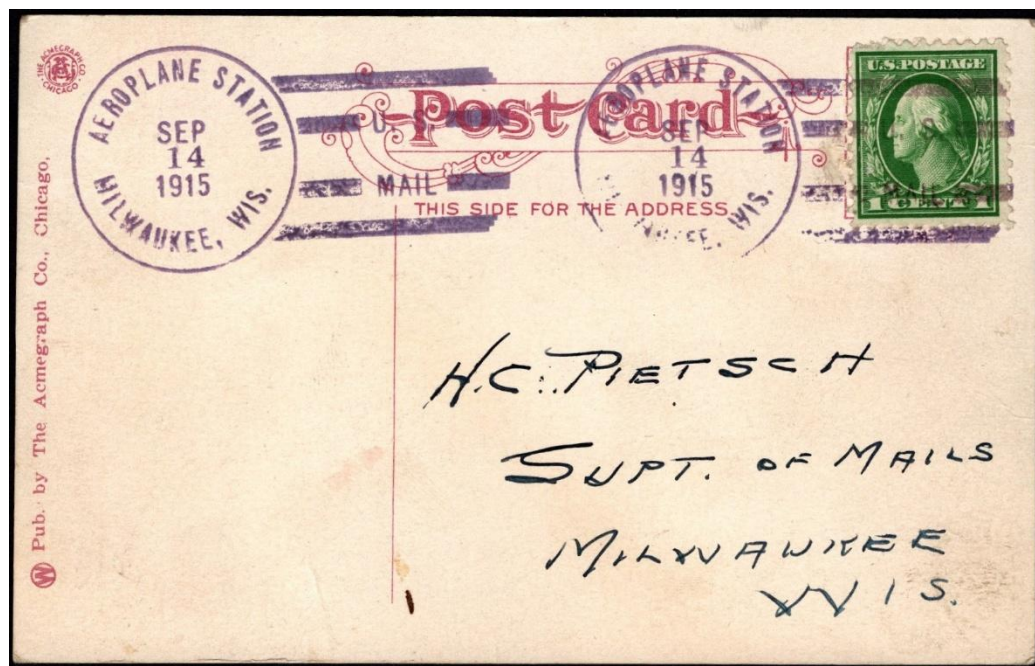
Between September 23, 1911, and November 3, 1916, the postmaster general authorized 95 experimental airmail flights across the country. These experimental flights paved the way for the start of regularly scheduled airmail service on May 15, 1918, between Washington, D.C. and New York City.

Two of those experimental flights took place in the Milwaukee area, specifically at the state fairgrounds in West Allis. The first was on May 30, 1912, and the second took place September 13-17, 1915. Regularly scheduled airmail flights to and from Milwaukee started June 7, 1926.



One of 600 pieces of mail flown by Horace Kearny and Farnum Fish between the fairgrounds and the West Allis post office – a distance of roughly 1 mile – on May 30, 1912. One of only 5 items recorded for this event.

Between September 13-17, 1915, Osbert Williams made 5 flights, each circling the fairgrounds carrying mail. This post card was carried aloft on September 14, 1915. More than 3,800 pieces of mail were flown. The number that remain today is unknown.



BICYCLE MAIL ROUTE OF 1894

Paul F. Miller

Last month, I wrote an article about the Pony Express mail service that operated briefly in 1860 and 1861. It turns out that there was another unique mail service – the Bicycle Mail Route – that operated during 1894 in California and had an even shorter lifespan.

The United States in 1894 was suffering. The country was in a depression. Unemployment levels were rampant, businesses were collapsing, and crop values were declining.

The Pullman Company, a manufacturer of railroad cars, was also feeling the pinch and cut wages almost overnight by 25%. This action resulted in the Pullman Strike, one of the most consequential strikes in U.S. history. It pitted the American Railway Union (ARU) against the Pullman Company.

Eugene V. Debs, the ARU founder, amassed 250,000 union members across 27 states to strike and boycott the Pullman Company and the rail service, starting on May 11, 1894. This effectively shut down all rail service from Detroit, Michigan to San Francisco, California. Since much of the country's mail service depended on railroads, this cut off the western part of the U.S. from physical communication. No trains, no mail, no communication.

The folks in California were in a panic over their lack of alternatives for correspondence. Then, an enterprising fellow by the name of Arthur Banta came up with an astounding idea. Banta owned the Victor Cyclery store in Fresno, California, so he devised a plan to deliver the mail between Fresno, California and San Francisco, California using bicycles – the Bicycle Mail Route!

Banta set up a bicycle mail route that spanned the 210 miles between Fresno and San Francisco. The route consisted of eight relay points where riders were to remain at the ready for their deliveries. Banta estimated the route could be completed in about 18 hours each way. A total of 13 cyclists were hired for the route, eight primary riders and five substitutes.

Although Banta was a bicycle man by trade, he hoped to make some quick money from his new idea. The bicycles he sold in his shop were made by Overman Wheel Company of San Francisco. So, he decided the best route would be between his shop in Fresno and the bicycle company in San Francisco.

The Bicycle Mail Route offered to carry a letter via bicycle from one end to the other for 25¢, plus the required government 2¢ postage (to make it legal). While that was many times the price of standard mail, isolation and desperation closed the price gap. There was simply no alternative, and “the only delay was an occasional punctured tire.”

This special delivery service began on July 6, 1894, complete with its own new stamps which were created to identify the service. The special design stamps were diamond shaped and included the wording “Bicycle Mail Route.” The stamps issued for this service are recognized in the Scott Catalogue under “Local Stamps.” An image of the first stamp produced is shown below as Figure 1.



Figure 1: U.S. Scott 12L1

The special design stamp was produced so hastily that no one realized that “San Francisco” had been misspelled as “SAN FRANSISCO.” The printer produced over 800 stamps before the error was realized.

The engraver, Eugene Donze, made a quick crude change to the spelling, added a few other features, and then put the die back into production for more stamps to be printed. An image of the revised stamp is shown as Figure 2.

BICYCLE MAIL ROUTE OF 1894 (CONTINUED)



Figure 2: U.S. Scott 12L2

The bicycle route used was a difficult ride. There were no “bike lanes” back in 1894. Very little of the route was on any pavement at all. Most roadways between cities were rough and rutted carriage roads. Even in major cities like San Francisco, many of the interior streets were still dirt roads. Nevertheless, Banta hired some excellent cyclists to get the job done.

As quickly as the service began – July 6, 1894 – it abruptly ended on July 18, 1894!

Why? Because the Pullman strike ended. President Grover Cleveland secured a federal court injunction against the ARU to stop interfering with mail trains. He enforced the injunction with support from 12,000 U.S. Army troops. Clashes occurred that were violent but brief. Thirteen strikers were killed, and 57 were wounded. The strike collapsed, the trains started running, and with them mail returned to the rails and to San Francisco.

Banta, upon hearing the news of the strike’s end, wrote in his journal: “John Enos left Fresno Monday,

July 16th, 2:30pm with a pack of mail intending to run clear through to San Francisco with the same... Enos arrived in San Francisco Wednesday noon, making the distance in less than two days. There being no mail there for return and the regular railroad service having been resumed without further prospects of molestation, the route was finally abandoned.”

Although the special Bicycle Mail Route of 1894 lasted less than two weeks, it has been reported that 380 letters were carried and delivered. Additionally, recorded documents show that not only letters and cards were delivered along the route – although that was its only intended purpose. Packages were also delivered between stops that included legal documents, false teeth, and undershirts!

It is unknown how much money Banta actually made (or lost) from his impromptu endeavor. However, he understood the value of his Bicycle Mail Route stamps in relation to stamp collectors. In an old advertisement, believed to be from a publication named *Filatellic Facts & Fallacies* (about 1894), Banta offered some stamps for sale to collectors.

Additionally, in 1935, Banta arranged for a re-run of the mail route. For the occasion, he produced additional reprints using a defaced original die. Special souvenir envelopes were printed for the re-run of the race. These envelopes included a map of the bicycle route on the front and a brief history on the back. The souvenir envelope (Figure 3) was carried over the mail route during the re-run and is marked with both San Francisco and Fresno date stamps.

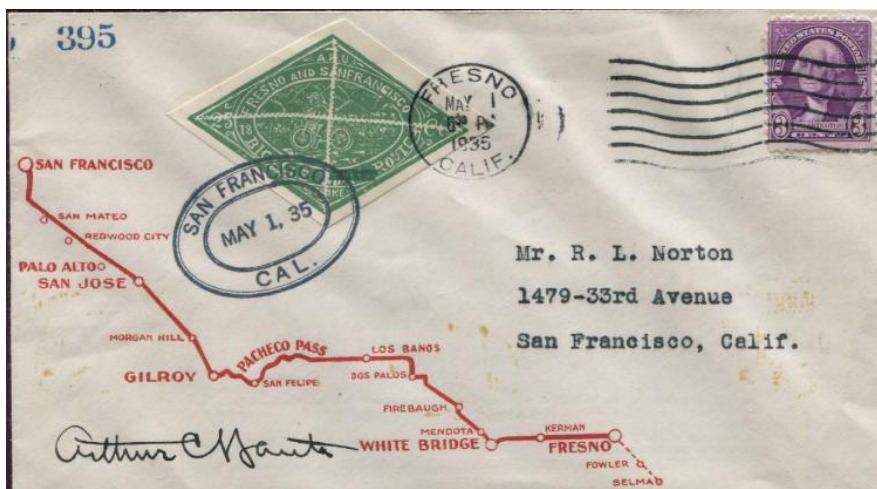


Figure 3 – Special souvenir envelope