

Synopsis page(s) for:

The Dead Presidents' Society

Revised:
Mar. 2025

Statement of Purpose and Scope: This exhibit will illustrate the lives of America's deceased Presidents. Beginning with George Washington and concluding with Franklin D. Roosevelt, our nation's presidential philatelist, each President will be explored with stamps and covers.

Historical Background:

Walking through the exhibit section at AMERIPEX86, held in Rosemont, Illinois, gave me the idea for this exhibit. I happened to come across the now late and great Creighton Hart's exhibit of presidential free franks from George Washington to Ronald Reagan (incumbent at the time). The 1999 Robin Williams movie, *The Dead Poet's Society*, gave me the idea for the title.

Treatment:

This exhibit begins with the first postage stamp issued in the United States, the 1842 3-cents City Despatch Post stamp and concludes with stamps showing how our President is elected to office, by voting.

There is one page for each President featuring the first nationally issued postage for that President, (12 had to be taken from the 1938 Presidential issues). This is followed by a stamp/s illustrating some aspect pertaining to that President's life or administration. Finally, there is a commercially used cover franked by the first stamp issued for each President. In some cases, an additional page or foreign material was included to illustrate a specific point.

Knowledge, Study and Research: Research and development for this exhibit began in February of 1996. Resources of information used for this exhibit were:

- > Baur, Brian C., *Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Stamp-Collecting President*, Linn's Stamp News, 1999.
- > Beecher, Henry W. and Wawrukiewicz, Anthony S.; *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-1993*, Traditions Press, 1994.
- > Beecher, Henry W. and Wawrukiewicz, Anthony S.; *U.S. International Postal Rates, 1872-1996*, Cama Publishing Company, 1996.
- > Klug, Janet, and Sundman, Donald J. *100 Greatest American Stamps*, Whitman Publishing, 2007.
- > Picione, Louis L; *The President Is Dead!*; Skyhorse Publishing, 2016.
- > Rustad, Roland E., *The Prexies*, Bureau Issues Association, 1994.

Rarity and Condition:

Throughout this exhibit I have attempted to obtain the highest quality of material obtainable, as you shall see. Some of the material in this exhibit is more than 170 years old and has been badly "mistreated" over the years. Also, I have attempted to find covers where the stamp/s have been used in ways other than their basic, non-descript usages.

PRE-CIVIL WAR MATERIAL:

Accumulating material for this exhibit had its difficulties, particularly for Presidents George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, our first and third Presidents, respectively. Since they were among the earliest of our Presidents to be honored on a stamp, material for them is scarce, making covers for them harder to obtain.

George Washington is explored beginning with the above-mentioned local stamp. The progression is then followed by:

- the 5- cents 1845 postmasters' provisional stamp,
- the 1847 10-cents first nationally issued postage stamp, on a cover with a **Little Rock, Arkansas**, postmark, (a comparatively scarce marking).
- the 1851 3-cents issue,
- the 1861 3-cents issue,
- and the 1861 24-cents issue.

Thomas Jefferson is explored with:

- the 1858 5-cents issue, (on a cover to Nova Scotia, Canada),
- the 1861 5-cents issue, (on a cover to Amsterdam, Holland, and a cover to Calcutta, India),
- This 1861 5-cents Jefferson stamp is shown here in combination with the 1861 10-cents Washington stamp going to Coela, France.

Stamps for both Presidents Washington and Jefferson are explored up to the end of the Civil War.

LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY ISSUES:

Since there are only three (at last count) surviving covers bearing the 1894 \$2 James Madison issue, this exhibit contains both a mint and cancelled stamp along with a revenue stamp that used the same portrait of Madison.

President Andrew Jackson is shown here on both an 1863 2-cents United States and a Confederate States stamp (and cover) issued during the Civil War period.

The 1875 5-cents issue of President Zachary Taylor is featured in a double-frank on a cover sent from the United States Post Office in Shanghai, China.

EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY ISSUES:

Stamps on covers featuring deceased Presidents serving during this period were less difficult to obtain. The cover franked with the 1902 13c issue of President Benjamin Harrison is extremely rare because of its destination, two small islands off the western coast of Africa, namely the **Sao Tome and Principe Islands**.

THE "PREXIES":

Twelve of our Presidents presented here had to be taken from the 1938 Presidential Issue because it was the first (and only) time they were ever featured on a stamp. Some of these Presidents were pictured on stamp denominations that were seldom used such as: William Henry Harrison, 9c; Millard Fillmore, 13c; Franklin Pierce, 14c; and Andrew Johnson, 17c, making them somewhat difficult to find. The \$5 stamp of Calvin Coolidge was seldom seen on postal correspondence because of its high denomination. I have one example of it being used on an interbank shipping tag.

The key items of this exhibit are:

Frame 1 – Page 01	1842 3-cents City Despatch Post stamp - (Washington).
Frame 1 – Page 03	1845 5-cents Postmasters' Provisional cover, double franking – (Washington).
Frame 1 – Page 04	1847 5-cents stamp, blue cancel postmarked Little Rock, AR; - (Washington).
Frame 1 – Page 09	1856 5-cents stamp, to Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada – (Jefferson).
Frame 1 – Page 10	1856 5-cents stamp, on cover to Amsterdam, Holland – (Jefferson).
Frame 1 – Page 10	1856 5-cents stamp, on cover to Calcutta, India, Asia – (Jefferson).
Frame 2 – Page 03	1861 2-cents CSA stamp on cover to Charlotte Court House, Virginia – (Jackson).
Frame 2 – Page 07	1875 5-cents stamp from US Post Office in Shanghai, China. – (Taylor).
Frame 3 - Page 05	1902 13-cents issue on cover Sao Tome & Principe Islands - (B. Harrison).

Also, some of these covers in this exhibit are addressed to unusual destinations.

Frame 1 – Page 07	Cover travelling to Montevideo, Uruguay – (J. Adams and Jefferson).
Frame 1 – Page 15	Cover travelling to Landour, India – (Monroe).
Frame 2 – Page 06	Cover travelling to Refrewshire, Scotland – (Tyler).
Frame 2 – Page 16	Cover travelling to Port Elizabeth, South Africa . – (Grant).
Frame 3 – Page 02	Cover travelling to Constantinople, Turkey – (Garfield).
Frame 3 – Page 07	Cover travelling to Bratislava, Czechoslovakia – (T. Roosevelt).

Presentation:

Each Presidents' name is printed in a large underscored French Script font and any additional pages are titled in 12-point ARIAL type. The key items of this exhibit are enclosed with a **red frame outline**.

A stamp with a number in **[red brackets]** indicates the stamp's ranking position in Janet Klug and Donald Sundman's 2007 book, *100 America's Greatest Stamps*.

Each President's date of death is displayed in *red italic Viner Hand type*.

Portraits stamps for Presidents who have died during their term of office are enclosed in a **purple box**.

Foreign stamps are identified by blue type.

(e) = an expertised item. **Certificates of authenticity are attached to the reverse side of the page.**

Final comments

Much research and development went into the planning of this exhibit. I am of the belief that I obtained the finest possible quality of material, both stamps and covers, along with the information presented here. This here is my "poor man's version" of Creighton Hart's *Free Franks of Presidents'* collection exhibited at **AMERIPEX86**, in Rosemont, Illinois.

The Dead Presidents' Society

1799-1945

Purpose and scope of this exhibit - to show the chronology of presidential deaths throughout our nation's history by means of stamps and covers.

Historical Background – This exhibit pays tribute to an extremely select assemblage of individuals. There are only two requirements for those seeking membership into this exclusive society. Each candidate must:

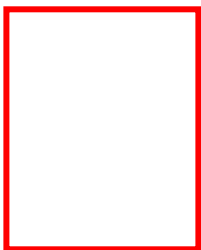
- 1 – have served as President of the United States somewhere between 1789 -1945; and
- 2 - *be dead!*

Treatment and Presentation - There is one page for each President with the following material:

- The first nationally issued US postage stamp featuring him. (*12 of them were taken from the 1938 Presidential Issue*).
- Stamps dealing with some aspect of that President's life or administration.
- A commercially used cover franked by the afore mentioned stamp honoring them. Two exceptions being the 1894 \$2 James Madison issue because only three examples are known to exist, and the 1938 \$5 Calvin Coolidge issue, due to its high denominational value, was very rarely used to mail regular correspondence.

In some cases, an additional page/s or foreign material was included to illustrate a specific point.

The concluding page of this exhibits illustrates the way our President is chosen – **by voting**.



THE FIRST POSTAGE STAMP ISSUED IN AMERICA.

[#63] 1842 3-cents issue. **(e)**.
3 cents per 2 ounces domestic letter rate.
Quantity issued: *Unknown*.

This 3-cents issue printed for **City Despatch Post**, a private New York City based postal service, was the first postage stamp produced in the USA (for use within NYC limits **only**). This stamp, which indicated pre-payment of delivery service, was in use for only 196 days until the federal government shut down all private mail routes and carrier services.

Engraved and printed by Rawdon, Wright and Hatch.

The stamp featured a portrait of **General George Washington**.

Color Key:

> The key items of this exhibit are enclosed in a **red frame**.

> **[#2]** = Ranking in *100 America's Greatest Stamps*, 2007.

> *Date of death:*

> Portraits for Presidents who died during their term of office are enclosed in a **solid purple box**.

> Foreign stamps are identified by blue type.

> **(e)** Expertized item.