

Primary Rate Usages of the U.S. One-Cent Circular Die Postal Stationery Synopsis

Purpose: This three-frame exhibit shows the primary ways the United States 1¢ Circular Die stamped envelopes and wrappers, first issued in 1916, were used in their day. Also included are 1¢ Circular Die envelopes that were overprinted **CANAL ZONE** in 1924, revalued to 1½¢ beginning in 1925, or overprinted for Post Office Department official business use at various times. While 1¢ stamped envelopes and wrappers could be used for any postal purpose, they were issued for some very specific purposes that are the focus of the exhibit.

Why four frames? Because that is how many frames are necessary to tell the story. The exhibit began as a single frame exhibit, but more space was necessary to tell the full story. Any more than four frames, however, would require padding.

1¢ rate usages: These are why the 1¢ Circular Die stamped envelopes and wrappers were produced, and they account for three-quarters of the exhibit (48 out of 64 pages, including the title page).

Special note regarding 1¢ wrappers: Although they could be used for any purpose, stamped wrappers were primarily intended for mailing printed matter. Depending upon the specific contents, the period of use, and/or the weight, domestic usages could have been at 2nd class, 3rd class, or 4th class rates. Without a dated postmark and indication of contents, it is usually impossible to tell the specific rate at which a particular wrapper was used. In such cases, one could either include the range of possible rates in the write-ups or omit the items from the exhibit. The exhibitor chose to do the former.

1½¢ rate usages: These resulted from ½¢ increases in three of the 1¢ rates, beginning with the basic 3rd class rate in 1925. At that time the Post Office Department surcharged existing stocks of 1¢ stamped envelopes to 1½¢, and these are, of course, included. The Post Office Department, however, would not surcharge 1¢ envelopes that were already in the public's hands. Instead, it issued ½¢ adhesive stamps so people could revalue the postal stationery themselves. That was the original purpose for which ½¢ adhesive stamps were produced, and it makes sense to include examples of 1¢ stationery revalued to 1½¢ in that manner.

Official business usages: Unneeded envelopes were sometimes overprinted for official Post Office Department use. Since the POD did not charge itself postage, the envelope stamps represented no monetary value.

Limits: No original rate usages greater than 1½¢ are shown. Although this exhibit could easily be expanded by including usages at such higher rates, doing so would overwhelm the 1¢ and 1½¢ rate usages. The exhibitor has thus chosen to limit the exhibit to 1¢ and 1½¢ rate usages in order to maintain the focus. Note, however, that one item originally sent at a 1¢ rate but remailed at a higher rate is shown, as are another two items with 2¢ postage added to each to make up three times a 1¢ rate. So is a 1¢ envelope with 18¢ postage added to pay the registered mail and return receipt fees. These are still examples of 1¢ rate usages, as the underlying rate in each case is 1¢.

Significant items:

- Two examples of the **CANAL ZONE** overprint.
- Postally used freak: partly inked impression.
- Postally used freak: missing letter **I** in **UNITED STATES**.
- One of four discovery copies of a local precancellation type from Westfield, NJ.*
- Discovery copy and only reported example of a local precancellation type from Mechanicsburg, PA.*
- Two 1¢ envelopes with half a bisected 1¢ stamp added to each to make up the 1½¢ rate.
- The Santa Rosa, CA, surcharge, unlisted but mentioned in Scott, listed in Minkus and UPSS catalogues.
- The Santa Ana, CA, surcharge, unlisted in any catalogue but mentioned in Scott.
- Fantasy 1½¢ surcharge with favor cancellation (original research by exhibitor)
- Eight different examples of provisional local precancellations.

***Note:** The exhibitor is the person who discovered these two local precancellation types.

Awards: This exhibit won a Gold Award and a Marcus White Award at ARIPEX 2022, a WSP national show.

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1¢ Circular Die stamped envelopes and wrappers were first issued in 1916. Production of the envelopes continued until 1950, at which time the Post Office Department issued a new Oval Die series to replace the Circular Dies. Production of all stamped wrappers had already ended in 1934 because of declining demand.

While 1¢ stamped envelopes and wrappers could be used for any postal purpose, they were issued for some very specific purposes that are the main focus of this exhibit. First and foremost, these are 1¢ rate usages. In addition, the exhibit shows 1½¢ rate usages that resulted from ½¢ increases in three of those 1¢ rates. It also shows a few examples of envelopes that were overprinted for official Post Office Department use. Since the Post Office Department did not charge itself postage, the embossed stamps on those envelopes represented no monetary value. Although this exhibit could easily be expanded to many more frames by including usages at higher rates, doing so would overwhelm the 1¢ and 1½¢ rate usages. The exhibitor has thus chosen to restrict the scope of the exhibit in order to maintain the focus.

Plan of Exhibit

Title Page
1¢ Rate Usages
1½¢ Rate Usages
Official Business Usages
Epilogue Page



1¢ per ounce local non-carrier office 1st class letter rate. 1922.
Rate applied to letters deposited for pick up at a post office without carrier delivery service.