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## **National Postal Museum Depicts Rural Postal Delivery in New Online Collection**

The Smithsonian's National Postal Museum has launched "Bringing the World Home," another featured collection on its award-winning Web site **Arago**. It is the story of the development, implementation and growth of the Rural Free Delivery service and its impact on rural America; the collection is at <http://www.arago.si.edu/flash/?eid=342|s1=6>.

The Post Office Department established the nation's first free mail delivery service in 1863. It began in 44 northern cities and spread across the country following the Civil War. Even as the new service grew, it remained available only to urban dwellers. Providing this service to rural areas became a congressional and national debate. In 1896, funds were allocated for a limited test in West Virginia. The service caught on and petitions of encouragement and support flooded Congress.

**Arago** is dedicated to the online presentation of the museum's vast collections and contains high-resolution images and associated stories presented by curators, expert volunteer researchers, museum staff and guest writers. Since the image of a woman first appeared on a U.S. postage stamp in 1893, the U.S. Postal Service has represented female politicians, social activists, educators, artists, business women and performers on more than 200 stamps.

The National Postal Museum is devoted to presenting the colorful and engaging history of the nation's mail service and showcasing one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of stamps and philatelic material in the world. It is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C., across from Union Station. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed Dec. 25). For more information about the Smithsonian, please call (202) 633-1000 or TTY (202) 633-5285. Visit the museum Web site at [www.postalmuseum.si.edu](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu).

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