

United States Parcel Post System

Postage Due Stamps and Proofs

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More than 30 years after the adoption of a Parcel Post System by the Universal Postal Union, the United States Parcel Post System was created in 1912 (operations to begin January 1, 1913) to address the growing need to send larger items (packages, parcels, and even farm produce) with the speed and safety of the United States mails. Although approved by an Act of Congress on August 24, 1912, the Post Office department was concerned about the profitability of the System and, thus, issued a special set of twelve stamps (Scott Nos. Q1 to Q12) to Postmasters. These stamps would allow strict accounting of Parcel Post System revenues, since only these stamps could be used to mail Parcel Post packages. In addition to the special stamps necessary to pay for parcel shipment, the Post Office Department issued five denominations (1¢, 2¢, 5¢, 10¢, and 25¢ values) of Parcel Post Postage Due stamps (Scott Nos. JQ1 to JQ5). These Parcel Post Postage Due stamps could initially only be used on insufficiently paid Parcel Post mail. Since the parcel post rates were based on weight, distance, and to some extent package size, most mailers had to take their packages to a post office to be weighed and the correct postage applied – thus the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps were not needed. Only in the rare case of a Parcel Post package being placed in a drop box with insufficient postage (and no return address) would Parcel Post Postage Due stamps be needed. In fact, used Parcel Post Postage Due stamps on short paid package wrappers are extremely rare.

This paper presents a brief history of the events leading up to the implementation of a Parcel Post System by the United States. The special stamps used by the Parcel Post System are described. Emphasis is placed on the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps, especially their essays and proofs. The unique photo-model essay, for the 25¢ value, is described, as well as various proof printings. A set of large die proofs (JQ1P1 to JQ5P1) are illustrated. This set was prepared for and given to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The paper also illustrates the rare Pan Pacific small die proofs, in addition, it questions the existence of other small die proofs despite their catalog listing. Example covers with Parcel Post Postage Due stamps are shown to help describe their use in the postal system. Later uses of the Parcel Post Postage Due stamp design by both the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and at least one foreign government are also discussed.

Parcel Post is defined as the delivery of packages (parcels) by the mail service. An international Parcel Post System was established by the Congress of the Universal Postal Union

(UPU) in 1878. In 1882, Great Britain implemented a Parcel Post System that included domestic, foreign, and colonial services. Many other countries rapidly followed suit and established their own Parcel Post Systems. The United States Post Office department (POD) immediately recognized and delivered Parcel Post packages of foreign origin, but they refused to establish a domestic service. The POD reasons for refusal are varied and range from the weight and volume of parcels that would have to be carried by the “letter” carriers, to the poor road and bridge infrastructure that existed in many parts of the country (postal wagons could not easily be used). Also, parcel or package delivery was the province of the express companies which were either owned or backed by the railroads or had special fee arrangements with the railroads. Hence, the proposition of the Government being in the parcel delivery business was directly opposed by the railroads. The railroads had significant influence with Congress, thus early attempts to establish a Parcel Post System were defeated.

In the late 1800’s, more than half the citizens of the United States lived on farms or in other rural settings. There was no rural mail delivery, thus farmers and other country dwellers had to pick-up their mail and newspapers at the nearest post office. This often meant a trip of many miles duration and sometimes it took a full day or more to make the round trip. Mail pick-up was delayed by days, weeks, or even months until the post office trip could be coupled with the “trip to town” for supplies, food, and/or equipment. Wealthier rural individuals often paid private express companies for mail and merchandise delivery. Many express companies refused to serve rural areas, because the distances and lack of customers were detractors from profitability.

Through farm organizations such as the National Grange [1], Farmers’ Alliance [2], and others, rural residents were able to lobby Congress for free home delivery of mail, just as it was being provided to city dwellers. In fact city dwellers had the benefits of free mail delivery since 1863. So important was the National Grange to the growth of our nation (and its mails) that the Grange was honored on its 100th anniversary with a postage stamp (Scott No. 1323, issued in 1967). “Rural Free Delivery” was finally approved by Congress in 1896 [3]. Soon thereafter the advertisements (mail order catalogs) describing goods and products available from around the country (and the world) began to reach the rural residents’ mailboxes on a regular basis. This exposure to a seemingly unlimited stream of products increased the demand for the delivery of packages (Parcel Post) in addition to letters, newspapers, and magazines. An example of a R. F. D. postmark from a rural Wisconsin town is shown in Figure 2. The adoption of Parcel Post legislation was not only strongly supported by the mail order houses but also the National Grange and the Farmers Union [4]. Parcel Post legislation was opposed by the express companies and the railroads, which here-to-fore had a monopoly on package delivery [5]. It was also opposed by rural merchants fearing that people would shop elsewhere by mail. Despite the opposition, the Parcel Post system was approved by an Act of Congress [6] on August 24, 1912 to take effect January 1, 1913. Further ensuring the future success of the Parcel Post System was

the adoption of the collect on delivery (C. O. D.) concept. The C. O. D. provisions of Postal Law went into effect on July 1, 1913.

Despite passage by Congress and the positive projections by lobbyist and the mail order merchandisers, the POD was worried about the financial viability of this new service and wanted strict accountability. This concern over the economics of the Parcel Post System [7], caused the POD to issue special stamps for use on Parcel Post mail only. The Parcel Post stamps (twelve in number, Scott Nos. Q1 to Q12) and the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps (five in number, Scott Nos. JQ1 to JQ5) were issued for use on January 1, 1913. Since the stamps were sent to post offices beginning on November 27, 1912, early uses on fourth class mail are possible. The Parcel Post stamps are all carmine or carmine rose in color and the values of the twelve stamps range from 1¢ to \$1.00. The designs illustrate items associated with mail transport, as well as the strength of America's industrial and agricultural might. Examples illustrating mail transportation, American industry and agriculture are shown in Figure 1. The values and designs for the twelve Parcel Post stamps are given in Table 1. The airplane ("aeroplane") shown on the 20¢ value (Figure 1) is the first time an airplane was used as a vignette on a postage stamp (anywhere in the world).



Figure 1. Examples of Parcel Post stamps. The 4¢ (Scott No. Q4) on the upper left illustrates a rural mail carrier with his horse and mail wagon while the 20¢ (Scott No. Q8) on the upper right features a Wright Flyer (Airplane) carrying the mail. This was the first time an airplane was used as a postage stamp vignette anywhere in the world. The 25¢ stamp (Scott No. Q9) on the bottom left pays tribute to American manufacturing (illustrating a steel mill and railway cars). The 75¢ stamp (Scott No. Q11) on the bottom right illustrates grain harvesting on a farm.

Table 1. Values and Design Subjects for the Twelve Parcel Post Stamps (Q1 to Q12).

Scott No.	Value	Vignette	Scott No.	Value	Vignette
Q1	1¢	Post Office Clerk	Q7	15¢	Automobile Service
Q2	2¢	City Carrier	Q8	20¢	Aeroplane Carrying Mail
Q3	3¢	Railway Postal Clerk	Q9	25¢	Manufacturing
Q4	4¢	Rural Carrier	Q10	50¢	Dairying
Q5	5¢	Mail Train	Q11	75¢	Harvesting
Q6	10¢	Steamship & Mail Tender	Q12	\$1.00	Fruit Growing

An example of Parcel Post stamps being used on a registered letter to pay both postage (2¢, first class rate) and the registration fee (10¢) is shown in Figure 2. The use of Parcel Post stamps to pay both postcard rates and regular letter rates are common after July 1, 1913, the end date of the exclusive period (See Below).



Figure 2. Parcel Post stamps (2¢, Scott No. Q2 and 10¢, Scott No. Q6) used to pay both postage and the registration fee. The stamps are both plate number singles.

Dark green Parcel Post Postage Due stamps (1¢ to 25¢ in value) are shown in Figure 3 below. To ensure strict accountability, both sets (Parcel Post and Parcel Post Postage Due) of these stamps could only be used on Parcel Post packages and other fourth class mail. The Parcel Post System was a resounding success. In the first week over 6 million packages were handled. During the first year of operation an average of 40 million packages a month were being delivered. Thus, after July 1, 1913, regular issue postage stamps were allowed to be used on Parcel Post items and in turn (to use up supplies) Parcel Post stamps were allowed to be used on regular mail. Similarly, the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps could then be used in place of

regular Postage Due stamps, again to use up considerable inventory and provide a needed additional Postage Due stamp values (25¢). The period between January 1, 1913 and June 30, 1913 when the Parcel Post and Parcel Post Postage Due stamps could only be used on Parcel



Figure 3 Parcel Post Postage Due stamps (Scott Nos. JQ1 to JQ5, 1¢, to 25¢, respectively).

Post mail, was known as the “exclusive use period [8].” Also, during this exclusive use period the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps were practically useless. Since the parcel post rates were based on weight, distance, and to some extent package size, most mailers had to take their packages to a post office to be weighed and the correct postage applied – thus the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps were not needed. Only in the rare case of a Parcel Post package being placed in a drop box with insufficient postage (and no return address) would Parcel Post Postage Due stamps be needed. In fact, used Parcel Post Postage Due stamps on short paid package wrappers are extremely rare.

In spite of their intended original purpose (accountability for the Parcel Post System), there was almost instant dislike among the stamp sales clerks. Because the stamps were made all the same color, at the insistence of Postmaster General Hitchcock [9], it became evident that the Post Office employees were making an increasing number of natural errors due to the single color of the series. This was especially true with the 1¢ and \$1.00 value stamps in the series, as shown in Figure 4, where the clerks actually had to read the words to distinguish the value, because both had the same style of “1” as shown in the enlargements in Figure 4. Clerks who went by stamp color in a normal series of regular issue stamps, now had to slow down their sales to actually read the word values. The Parcel Post stamps had other problems that contributed to their dislike including: a large stamp size (did not fit conveniently into stamp drawer slots and more importantly the stamps were too big to fit in multiples on small parcels and parcel tags), the odd number of stamps to the sheet (45 instead of 50 or 100) made the end of day accounting more difficult, and there were seventeen extra stamps to handle.



Figure 4. Comparison of the “1s” on the 1¢ and \$1.00 stamps. The value circles on both stamps are identical.

Another problem associated with the single color issue was that red (or carmine) was universally recognized as the color for first class letters (2¢ at the time of Parcel Post stamp introduction) and so many 1¢ Parcel Post stamps were used illegally on sealed letters. Because of the stamps red color, these letters evaded detection by the operators of the mechanized cancelling machines employed in large cities.

In an effort to assist the stamp sales clerks, an inscription of the stamp value in words (plain capital letters) was added to the sheet margin of the plates. The adding of value inscriptions on existing plates was begun on January 27, 1913. As the plates were pulled from the vaults for printing, the value inscription would be added to the plate before it was put to press. New plates made after January 27, 1913 had the value inscription included. The last plate from the vault to have the value inscription added was Plate No. 6262 for the \$1.00 stamp. The value inscription was added on March 24, 1913. The last printing of \$1.00 stamps from Plate No. 6262 was done on March 26, 1913, so margin blocks with the value inscription from this plate are relatively rare. The 50¢ value stamp was printed for the most part with value inscribed plates. The 50¢ Plate No. 6274 was printed without the value imprint for a 3-day period in December of 1912 (the 10th through the 13th). Thus, it is possible to find 50¢ margin blocks from Plate No. 6274 both with and without the value inscription imprint. Unlike the \$1.00 value, it is the plain 50¢ margin blocks (without inscription) that are relatively rare. Only the 3¢ stamps were printed exclusively with value imprint inscribed plates. An example of a 3¢ plate block with the “THREE” in the margin is shown in Figure 5. For all the other stamp values, margin blocks readily exist both with and without imprints. Figure 5 also illustrates a margin imprint value for the 5¢ stamp (Scott No. Q5) featuring a mail train. Wiley [10] presents detailed information on which plates had the value imprint and when the imprint was added.

The Parcel Post Postage Due stamps as illustrated in Figure 3 all have a common design distinguished by the value displayed on the central circular tablet and surrounding circular band



Figure 5. On the left is an example of a 3¢ Parcel Post bottom plate block of six (Scott No. Q3, “Railway Mail Clerk”) illustrating both the plate number and the “THREE” imprint. A 5¢ imprint margin single (Scott No. Q5, illustrating a “Mail Train”) is on the right.

The design measures 22.4 mm x 33.9 mm and was printed with dark green ink on white, single line watermarked paper by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP). These stamps were design by Clair. A. Houston and engraved by a team of engravers as listed in Table 2. They were printed in sheets of 180 subjects (subsequently divided into panes of 45) and are perforation 12. Plate numbers and other aspects of printing for these stamps are given in Table 3. The plate layout for the 180-subject sheet has been shown by Charles [11]. Since the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps were green, contained a prominent value in a circle at the center, and were not sold to the public (just like other Postage Due stamps), they did not suffer from the general dislike stemming from a confusion in value. Despite the fact that they still had the stamp size and sheet configuration issues plaguing the other Parcel Post stamps, they actually became quite useful to the Postal Clerks, especially the 25¢ value which was not present in the regular Postage Due series. As will be shown below, these Parcel Post Postage Due stamps were still being used many years after their printing and official withdrawal date.

Table 2. Die and Engraving Information for the Parcel Post Postage Due Stamps.

Scot No.	Value	Di No.	Die Started	Die Hardened	Designer	Engraver Frame	Engraver Lettering
----	Border	569	11/09/1912	11/14/1912	C. A. Huston	E. E. Myers	
JQ1	1¢	570	11/14/1912	11/16/1912	C. A. Huston	E. E. Myers	E. M. Hall J. C. Benzing
JQ2	2¢	571	11/14/1912	11/18/1912	C. A. Huston	E. E. Myers	E. M. Hall E. G. Rose
JQ3	5¢	572	11/14/1912	11/17/1912	C. A. Huston	E. E. Myers	E. M. Hall T. Lamasure
JQ4	10¢	573	11/14/1912	11/18/1912	C. A. Huston	E. E. Myers	E. M. Hall E. E. Myers
JQ5	25¢	574	11/15/1912	11/18/1912	C. A. Huston	E. E. Myers	E. M. Hall J. C. Benzing

Table 3. Plate Numbers and Other Information about the Printing of the Parcel Post Postage Due Stamps (JQ1 to JQ5).

Scott No.	Value	Plate Nos.	First Printing	Last Printing	Issue Date	Number Printed
JQ1	1¢	6225, 6226, 6227, 6228	11/20/1912	11/30/1912	11/27/1912	7,322,400
JQ2	2¢	6241, 6242, 6243, 6244	11/25/1912	01/10/1913	12/09/1912	3,132,000
JQ3	5¢	6229, 6230, 6231, 6232, 6239, 6240	11/21/1912	01/11/1913	11/27/1912	5,840,100
JQ4	10¢	6250, 6251, 6252, 6253	11/27/1912	01/10/1913	12/12/1912	2,124,540
JQ5	25¢	6246, 6247, 6248, 6249	11/30/1912	01/06/1913	12/16/1912	2,117,700

A postage due cover, with a mix of both regular Postage Due and Parcel Post Postage Due stamps, is shown in Figure 6. The Parcel Post and Parcel Post Postage Due stamps remained in use for several years (until inventory had been depleted), but no further printings were made. The total number of printed Parcel Post Postage Due stamps is given in Table 3. Table 3 also captures a brief printing history for the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps. All remainders in the hands of the BEP and/or the POD were destroyed in September of 1921. With the destruction of central supplies and no additional printings, supplies in Postmasters' hands dwindled, although residual usage continued for some time. Figure 7 illustrates part of a package wrapper with a block of six 5¢ Parcel Post Postage Due stamps (plus two 2¢ regular postage issue dues) used in 1922.



Figure 6. Postage Due cover with a mixture of regular Postage Due stamps and a 1¢ Parcel Post Postage Due stamp (Scott No. JQ1). This cover from Australia cover was postmarked on November 1, 1918 and illustrates a typical mixed usage after the exclusive use period.



Figure 7. Part of a Parcel Post package wrapper containing two 2¢ regular Postage Due stamps (Baltimore, MD precancel) plus six Scott No. JQ3 Parcel Post Postage Due stamps for a total of 34¢. The Parcel Postage Postage Due stamps are tied with a Baltimore, Maryland cancel containing the year 1922.



Figure 8. A Dead Letter Office envelope with the 3¢ Postage Due was paid by a 2¢ regular Postage Due stamp and a 1¢ Parcel Post Postage Due stamp (JQ1). The cover was canceled in 1927.

The cover shown in Figure 8 was mailed in 1927. The cover required 3¢ postage due which was paid with a 1¢ JQ1 and a 2¢ regular issue Postage Due stamp. This 1927 usage is a full 14 years after the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps were printed and introduced. The author would appreciate any information on the late use of the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps.

The cover in Figure 9 illustrates a rare usage of the 10¢ Parcel Post Postage Due stamp along with three J46 regular postage due stamps paying the postage and penalty on an unstamped envelope from Russia. This stamp is tied to the cover with a faint cancel. At this point it should be mentioned that Parcel Post Postage Due stamps tied to covers are scarce if not rare. Most often the stamps were pre-cancelled in sheet form either with a stamping or roller device or by hand with a crayon to facilitate ease of use. The Parcel Post Postage Due stamps, illustrated on the covers in Figures 6 through 9, have all been tied. Most Parcel Post Postage Due stamps were pre-cancelled to facilitate their use, thus tied examples are somewhat scarce.



Figure 9. Unpaid overweight letter from Budapest, Hungary to Red Bank, New Jersey. The cover was rated 16¢ postage due by the New York port of entry (Penn. Terminal Station) on July 18, 1915. Postage due was paid by a 10¢ (JQ4) and 4 regular postage due stamps (one missing).

As far as this author knows, only one model or essay exists for the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps. This essay for the 25¢ value is listed in the Scott Catalog [12] as JQ5-E1a and is described as a “Retouched photograph of the design as adopted, officially dated and approved.” It was signed by Postmaster General Hitchcock. A description following the listing in Scott is “25¢ model, black.” It is believed this essay is unique. Gobie did not list this essay in his book on the Parcel Post System (see Reference 7) This essay was also not listed by Brazer [13] in his seminal work on essays in 1941.

There are three types of die proofs listed in the Scott Catalog for the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps. An illustration of the 1¢ Parcel Post Postage Due large die proof (Scott No. JQ1P1) is given in Figure 10. This proof is part of a set that was originally given by the Post Office Department to the then President Franklin D. Roosevelt. This set of proofs is unique and each proof has a separate Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) control number in blue ink on the back, as listed in Table 4. Table 4 also list die numbers, die sinkage dimensions, and card sizes for the Roosevelt set. The remaining large die proofs JQ2P1 to JQ5P1 are shown in Figures 11

and 12, respectively. These large die proofs came to the author's collection through the Babcock estate [14]. Babcock had purchased these proofs from the Irvin Heiman sale of the Caroline Prentice Cromwell collection [15] in 1957. Cromwell acquired the JQ1P1 to JQ5P1 proofs from the Roosevelt Collection sale in 1946 [16].

Table 5 lists the BEP control numbers for the Parcel Post Postage Due proofs (presumably large die proofs) in the possession of both the POD and the BEP [17]. The control number sequences for these proofs are large when compared to the control numbers on the Roosevelt set. Since these BEP and POD retained proofs were made in the 1912 time frame (rather than in 1933 for the Roosevelt set), their number sequences suggest they were assigned

Table 4. Details of the Parcel Post Postage Due Large Die Proofs in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Collection.

Value	Scott No.	Die No.	Die Sinkage mm(H) x mm(W)	Card Size mm(H) x mm(W)	BEP Control No.
1¢	JQ1	570	74.9 x 99.6	152.4 x 201.9	330721
2¢	JQ2	571	76.2 x 95.3	152.4 x 201.9	330740
5¢	JQ3	572	73.4 x 99.6	152.4 x 202.7	330732
10¢	JQ4	573	75.4 x 97.8	152.4 x 203.7	330728
25¢	JQ5	574	76.2 x 96.5	152.4 x 201.9	330745



Figure 10. Parcel Post Postage Due 1¢ large die proof (JQ1P1) given to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The proof has BEP Control No. 330721 printed on the back in blue ink. The enlargement on the right illustrates the proof details.

from the original BEP proving room books [18]. The Roosevelt proof numbers are listed in the “new series” books and are consistent with the proof printings done in the 1933 to 1934 time frame.

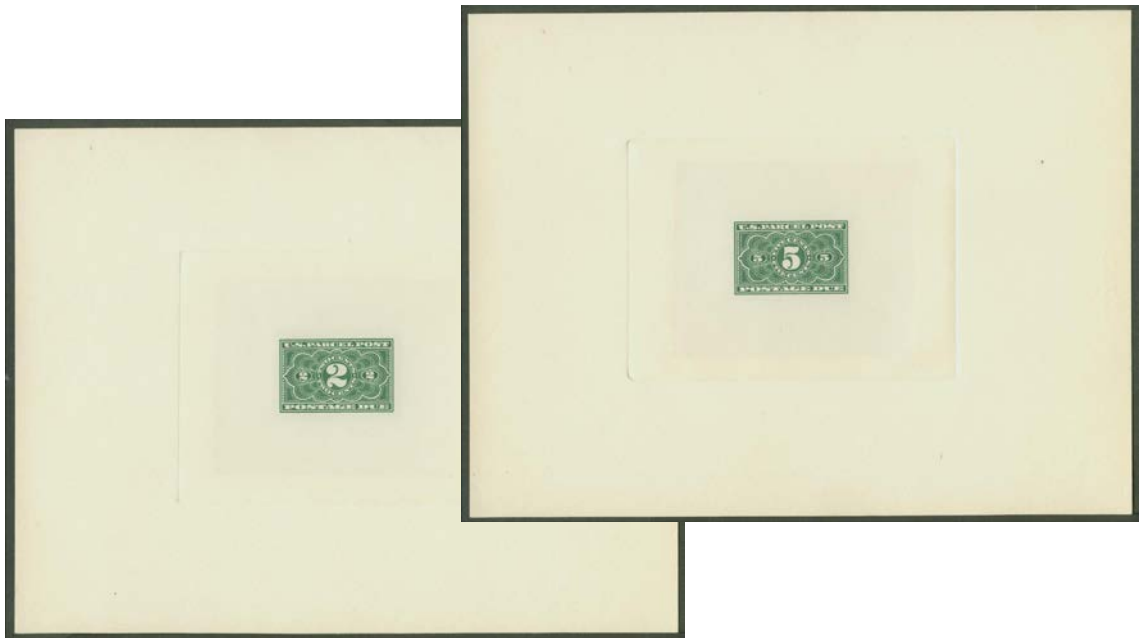


Figure 11. Parcel Post Postage Due 2¢ and 3¢ large die proofs (JQ2P1 and JQ3P1) given to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The proofs have BEP Control numbers (330740 and 330732, respectively) printed on their backs in blue ink.

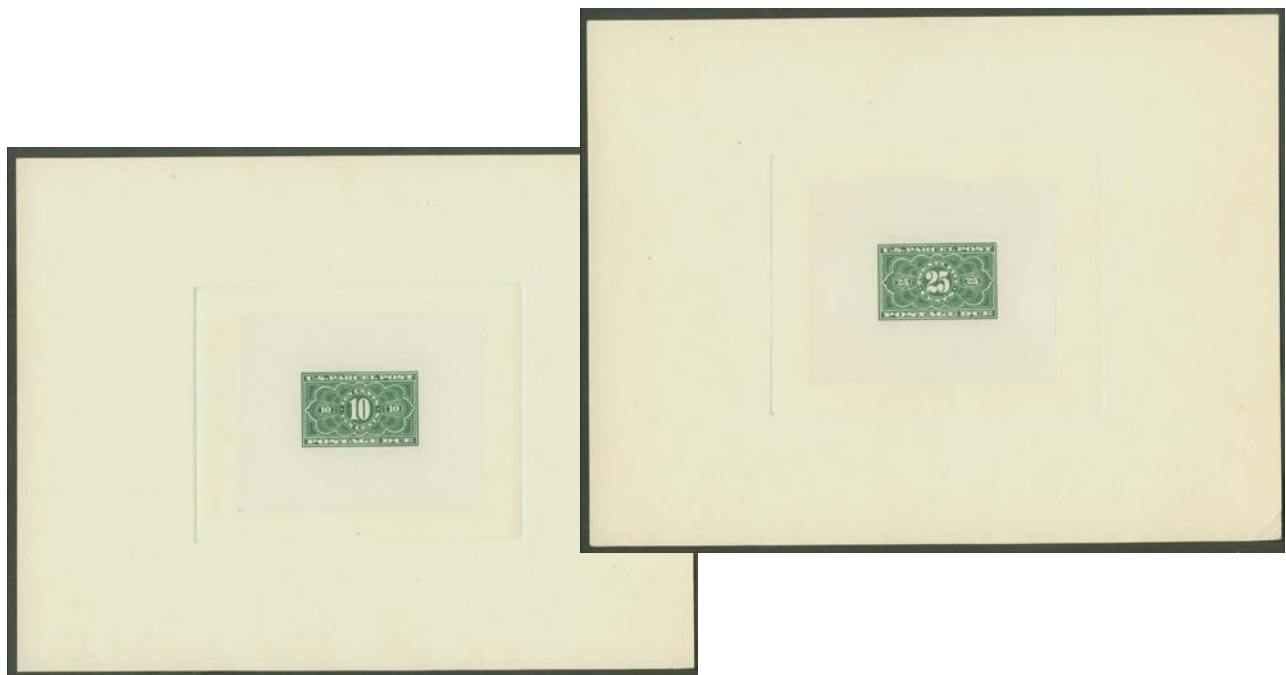


Figure 12. Parcel Post Postage Due 10¢ and 25¢ large die proofs (JQ4P1 and JQ5P1) given to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The proofs have BEP Control numbers (330728 and 330745, respectively) printed on their backs in blue ink.

Table 5. Control Numbers of the Parcel Post Postage Due proofs retained by the Post Office Department (POD) and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP). Whether these proofs were large die or small die is unknown.

Value	Scott No.	POD Retained Proof No.	BEP Retained Proof No.
1¢	JQ1	559333	559330 559331
2¢	JQ2	559486	559488 559490
5¢	JQ3	559350	559346 559348
10¢	JQ4	559371	559357 559358
25¢	JQ5	559471	559468 559470

The second and third types of die proofs for the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps are small die proofs. The first of the small die proofs is listed by Scott as JQ1P2 to JQ5P2. Since the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps were not developed or in use until the 1912 to 1913 time frame, these small die proofs are obviously not from the so called Roosevelt Albums [19] which were produced in 1903. A careful inspection of the Southgate Collection sold by Brazer [20] in the early 1940's did not contain such a set of proofs. A similar statement can be made about the auction of the Roosevelt Collection in 1946 (see above). They also were not part of the Hackett [21] or Cromwell sales (see above) in the 1950's. In fact a careful examination of major auction catalogs over the last fifty or so years has failed to yield any reference to such proofs. The author wonders if they exist and would appreciate any available information about these proofs.

By the time of the Panama Pacific Exhibition in 1915, the Parcel Post Postage Dues were in use and included in the special printing of proofs for the Post Office Department's display at the Exhibition. A set of the Parcel Post Postage Due Panama Pacific small die proofs (Scott Nos. JQ1P2a to JQ5P2a) is shown in Figure 13. This set of proofs was the set offered as Lot No. 355 in the Heiman sale of the Cromwell Collection in 1958 [22]. These proofs are printed on a wove paper which has yellowed with time. The design of the Parcel Post Postage Due stamp measures 25.4 mm x 38.1 mm and each proof has a 2-3 mm margin, which is consistent with the margins on the regular Panama Pacific Postage Due small die proofs. According to the BEP proving room books only six proofs of each value were printed as shown in Table 6. Ruling out the Panama Pacific set in the Smithsonian and the whereabouts unknown mounted Exhibition set [23], this leaves four potential intact sets possible. Through careful study of auction catalogs and private communications with collectors, this author can definitely account for three sets. Three sets are consistent with the identified three sets of the Large Numeral Postage Due Panama Pacific small die proofs described in an article by Charles [24] where there were again only six proofs of each value-color combination printed. There is some indication that a fourth set may exist, but the author has not been able to verify its existence.



Figure 13. Panama Pacific Parcel Post small die proofs (JQ1P2a to JQ5P2a). Three sets have been documented in the philatelic literature.

While it has been said that the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps were the most unnecessary and perhaps useless stamps in the world during the exclusive use period [25], they received significant usage as regular dues after the exclusive use period ended and, in fact, they provided a 25¢ postage due stamp which received considerable use on bundled return mail. Some Postmasters even went so far as to allow them to be used in place of a regular issue stamp, and may have sold them to the general public. Both these activities were strictly forbidden by Postal Regulations.

No other proofs or essays for the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps are known in private hands. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing did however dust off the 25¢ Parcel Post Postage Due stamp design for use on a souvenir sheet issued in 1993 as shown in Figure 14. The souvenir sheet measures 257 mm wide x 203 mm high and was printed in dark green on white card stock. This sheet was issued for the Omaha Stamp Show, Omaha, Nebraska, September 1993. In addition to the 25¢ Parcel Post Postage Due stamp (JQ5) the sheet features the 10¢ Special Handling stamp (QE3), the “Merry Widow” Special Delivery stamp (E7), and finally the 10¢ Newspaper & Periodicals stamp (PR2a). The Parcel Post Postage Due (Die no. 574), the Special Handling (Die no. 736), and the Special Delivery (Die no. 440) stamps were all die stamp intaglio reproductions from the original dies. The Newspaper and Periodicals stamp was an offset printed reproduction from the original National Bank Note Company die. No record of the engraver or die history exists. Because these are excellent reproductions and could be cut from the card to form imperforate proofs, the BEP also printed small diagonal lines on these “proofs.” Such lines were discussed in connection with the Postage Due stamps depicted on the Bureau’s 100th Anniversary Card issued in 1994 in an article by Charles [26].

Their widespread use as regular Postage Due stamps contributed to the recognition of their classic design. At least, one other nation, Senegal, modeled a series of Postage Due stamps (Senegal, Scott Nos. J22 to J31) after the United States Parcel Post Postage Due stamps. Figure

15 illustrates the Senegal 5 centimes Postage Due stamp (J22) in green. Both perforated and imperforate stamps are shown along with a United States JQ3 (5¢) Parcel Post Postage Due stamp pair for comparison. Unlike the Parcel Post Postage Dues, Senegal printed each value in a different color to avoid confusion. The frame for all the values was printed from a master die which had the central numeral position blank. A die proof of this master die is also shown in Figure 15. It is printed in a rose lilac color which is the color of the issued 50 centimes stamp (Senegal J27).

In summary, the Parcel Post System was and still is a major contributor to the growth of our nation. Coupled with R.F.D. and C.O.D., Parcel Post allowed the rural population of the United States to engage in communication and commerce with the rest of the nation and the world. In the beginning, the Parcel Post System used special stamps to insure strict accountability because of concerns over profitability (especially by the Postmaster General). These concerns or fears soon vanished as the Parcel Post System rapidly grew into the robust service it is today ranging from the handling of regular packages to urgent parcels which are shipped by express mail.

The Parcel Post Postage Due stamps were, at first, practically useless. Since most packages had to be taken to a Post Office to be weighed, there was little or no need for them during the exclusive use period. Once they were allowed to be used in place of or in conjunction with regular Postage Due stamps, their utility increased greatly. In fact, the 25¢ Parcel Post Postage Due stamp filled a significant void in the regular Postage Due stamp series and, thus, it saw widespread use until its limited supplies were depleted. Only a little over 2 million 25¢ Parcel Post Postage Due stamps were printed (See Table 3). Due to their limited numbers all values of Parcel Post Postage Due stamps are relatively scarce, especially on cover.

This article has traced the development of the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps while providing insight into the adoption and general operation of the Parcel Post System. The unique large die proofs of the Parcel Post Postage Due stamps have been described and illustrated. The rare Panama Pacific small die proofs have also been shown. A later use of the Parcel Post Postage Due stamp design by the BEP on a souvenir card is described along with the adaptation of the same design by Senegal for use in a series of Postage Due Stamps.

Table 6. Proving Room Data for the Parcel Post Postage Due Panama Pacific Small Die Proofs.

Proof		Printing Dates	
Value	Die No.	January 13, 1915	January 14, 1915
1¢	570	6	
2¢	571	6	
5¢	572	7 ^a	
10¢	573	7 ^a	
25¢	574	-----	6
Frame ^b	569	6	

a) One proof destroyed on January 31, 1916

b) Reasons for printing this die for the Panama-Pacific series is unclear



Figure 14. Souvenir card issued by the BEP for the Omaha, Nebraska, Stamp Show in September of 1993. The card features a die stamped intaglio reproduction of JQ5 as shown in the enlargement. Other green back of the book issues associated with mail delivery are also pictured (See text).



Figure 15. Senegal Scott No. J22 perforate and imperforate 5 centimes Postage Due stamps in green (bottom left). The design measures 36.4 mm wide by 21.2 mm high. A 5¢ JQ3 plate number pair is included for reference (top left). Proof of the master frame and background design (right) for Senegal J22 to J31 series of Postage Due stamps missing the central number value (the central numbers were engraved separately on each working die created from the background master die). The proof is rose lilac in color and measures 54.2 mm wide by 39.4 mm high.

References

[1] The National Grange (Order of Patrons of Husbandry) is a farmers' fraternal organization which encourages farmers to unite for common economic and political purposes. It was founded in 1867, and by the 1890s it had over one million members. While forming the center of social life in many farming communities, the Grange was also a very effective advocacy group fighting the railroad monopolies and lobbying Congress for the passage of Rural Free Delivery and Parcel Post. The Grange still exist today with about a quarter million members in 37 states. The National Grange Headquarters is in Washington D.C.

[2] The Farmers' Alliance was an economic movement amongst farmers that was founded in 1876 and flourished during the 1880s. The Alliance met its defeat at the hands of the commodity brokers (and the railroads), but its elements went on to form the Populist Party in 1892. The Populist Party was a major advocate for Rural Free Delivery.

[3] Rural Free Delivery is said to have been created by an Act of Congress in 1896 during President Grover Cleveland's Administration, but, in fact, it actually started several years earlier. In 1891, the Post Office Department began a series of experiments on rural mail delivery. They began with five routes covering ten miles in rural West Virginia (Jefferson County). The experiments were a success and by the time the R.F.D. act was passed in 1886 the number of routes had increased significantly. In 1896 alone eighty-two rural routes were added. Nation-

wide R.F.D. took several more years to implement. By 1902, the mileage logged by rural carriers was over 100,000 miles, and by 1910 it had risen to almost a million miles on an annual basis.

[4] The National Farmers Union (Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union of America) is a federation of state farmers' unions dedicated "to protect and enhance the economic well being and quality of life for family farmers and ranchers and their rural communities." It was founded in 1902 and is the second largest farm organization in the country after the Farm Bureau. The current membership is about 250,000 distributed over 32 states. It is headquartered in Washington, D.C. The National Farmers Union has been very politically active from its beginnings. In the early 1900s, the Union lobbied for Parcel Post, direct Senatorial elections, and women's suffrage.

[5] Richard B. Kielbowicz, "Government Goes into Business: Parcel Post in the Nation's Political Economy, 1880-1915," *Studies in American Political Development*, Volume 8, Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 150-172.

[6] The Act of Congress on August 24, 1912 authorized Parcel Post, a service that would "...embrace all other matter, including farm and factory products not now embraced by law in either the first, second or third class, not exceeding eleven pounds in weight, nor greater I size than seventy-two inches in length and girth combined..." Full details of the Parcel Post System as implemented on January 1, 1913 may be found in a 32-page pamphlet printed by the Government Printing Office, entitled PARCEL POST REGULATIONS and is dated to be effective on January 1, 1913. It was issued by Postmaster General Frank H. Hitchcock in connection with Post Office Department Order No. 6685 (Washington, D. C., November 30, 1912) which described the conduct of the Parcel Post System.

[7] Henry M. Gobie, *U. S. Parcel Post-A Postal History*, Postal Publications, Miami, FL, 1979.

[8] Reference 7, page 47, Figure Caption.

[9] There is evidence that Postmaster General Hitchcock actually received a recommendation from his Postal Advisory Committee to make all the Parcel Post stamps the same color, Reference 7, page 17.

[10] H. L. Wiley, *United States Parcel Post Stamps, Stamp Booklets, Postal Savings Stamps*, Handbook No. 7, Meekel-Severn Wylie Co., Boston, Mass., 1914, pp. 3-16.

[11] Harry K. Charles, Jr., "United States Postage Due Stamp Essays and Proofs Part IX: Parcel Post Postage Due," *The United States Specialist*, Volume 84, No. 2, February 2012, pp. (to appear).

[12] *Scott Specialized Catalog of United States Stamps and Covers*, Scott Publishing Co., Sidney, Ohio, 2008, p. 712.

[13] Clarence W. Brazer was the foremost expert on essays (and proofs) during the first half of the twentieth century. His seminal book on essays is still the bible for essay and proof collectors today. Clarence W. Brazer, *Essays for U.S. Adhesive Postage Stamps*, Handbook Committee American Philatelic Society, 1941.

[14] Edward P. Babcock (1909-2000) was born in Geneva, NY. He soon moved to Rochester, NY where he grew up. Edward started stamp collecting as a youth. He attended engineering school at Cornell during the 1927-28 period, but he had to drop out because of financial issues associated with the stock market crash in 1929. He worked at many engineering jobs around New York City. Because of his continued interest in stamps, Edward was fortunate to meet Clarence Brazer in the late 1930's, beginning a long dealer-customer relationship which lasted until Brazer's death in 1956. Edward Babcock was one of Brazer's key outlets for back of book material, especially postage due proofs and essays. He was a philatelist and not only interested in the stamps but also in every nuance of their design and history. Edward kept up a running correspondence with Clarence Brazer and, after Brazer's death, he met and corresponded with another philatelic great, Walter McIntire. Between Babcock and McIntire, they solved several mysteries surrounding the Bureau Issue postage due stamps. Babcock was McIntire's sounding board and offered him many cogent comments on his philatelic articles, prior to publication. Edward worked behind the scenes asking probing questions of the experts to see if they would come to similar conclusions about philatelic postage due mysteries that he had already solved. His collection, his attention to detail, and his willingness to share his knowledge with other philatelists made him an important contributor to postage due stamp history. Edward died at the age of 91 in Wilmington, Delaware his home for the last 50 years of his life.

[15] "The Caroline Prentice Cromwell Collection of United States Stamps, Proofs, Essays, and Essays" Irwin Heiman, Inc. November 7-8, 1957, Lot No. 676, page 68.

[16] The Postage Stamp Collection of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Part One United States of America and Latin America, February 4-5, 1946, H. R. Harmer Inc., 32 East 57th Street, New York, NY, Lot No. 87, page 28.

[17] Reference 7 pages: 165 (JQ1P), 172 (JQ2P), 177 (JQ3P), 183 (JQ4P), and 186 (JQ5P).

[18] Ronald A. Burns, "A Study of the Production Records for the 1903 and 1914-15 Printings of the "Roosevelt" and "Panama Pacific" Small Die Proofs", Bureau Issues Association Research Paper No. 7, August 1994. Parcel Post Postage Due "Panama Pacific" p. 72.

[19] Allan M. Thatcher, "The Roosevelt Albums of United States Die Proofs" *Essay-Proof Journal*, Volume 10 (1953), pp. 67-71.

[20] Clarence W. Brazer, "U.S. Essay & Proof Unit" "The South Gate Collection" *The American Philatelist*, August 1942, pp. 725-726.

[21] "The "Robert P. Hackett" Proofs and Essays of United States Stamps," H. R. Harmer, Inc. 6 West 48th Street, New York 36, New York, February 6-9, 1956, pp. 106-107.

[22] "The Caroline Prentice Cromwell Collection of United States Stamps, Proofs, Essays, Private Coils, Miscellaneous Foreign" Part Two, Irwin Heiman, Inc. March 20, 1958, Lot No. 355, page 29.

[23] James H. Bruns, "The Scarcity of the Panama-Pacific Proofs: Part III," *The United States Specialist*, Vol. 59, No. 9, September 1988, pp. 419-449.

[24] Harry K. Charles, Jr., "United States Postage Due Stamp Essays and Proofs Part II: Large Numeral Postage Due Die Proofs," *The United States Specialist*, Volume 83, No. 2, February 2011, pp. 61-70 and 75-83.

[25] George Wren, "Parcel Post Dues," *The American Philatelist*, Volume 10, No. 3, March 1996, pp. 224-226.

[26] Harry K. Charles, Jr., "United States Postage Due Stamp Essays and Proofs Part VII: First Bureau Small Die and Plate Proofs," *The United States Specialist*, Volume 83, No. 12, December 2011, pp. (to appear).