

ONE DOLLAR POSTAGE STAMPS OF THE UNITED STATES & ITS POSSESSIONS 1893 - 1939

This exhibit tells the story of the American stamps denominated at one dollar from the first -- which was issued for the Columbian Exposition in 1893 -- up to the Canal Zone \$1.00 commemorative airmail of 1939. Although the dollar theme could be continued right up to the present time, the erosion in its purchasing power (especially as regards the particularly rapid increase in inflation during and after World War II and again during the 1965-1980 period) means that the significance of a dollar has declined sharply in recent times. For example, in 1893 one dollar paid the postage on fifty first class letters; today it will pay for less than three.

For purposes of the exhibit, only those stamps generally available to the public, including regular postage, airmail and parcel post issues, are included -- leaving aside postage due and revenue stamps. Prior to 1893, the highest denomination of a U.S. stamp was 90 cents, a value so high that they are rarely found on covers. Thus, the \$1.00 commemorative stamp from the series honoring the Columbian Exposition in Chicago was our first issue of that denomination.



Registered cover from New York to Vienna, Austria franked with a \$1.00 value from the Columbian series. This stamp was issued on 2 January 1893 (with the earliest recorded date being 21 January 1893). The total issuance was 55,050 copies.

In addition to issues for the United States itself, a number of \$1.00 stamps were produced for use in our possessions as well as at the U.S. postal agency operating in Shanghai, China. However, for the most part, such items were printed in very limited quantities and are difficult to find used on covers. Nevertheless, all of these have been included in the exhibit as they make up a significant and highly interesting part of the story of the dollar stamps.

ISSUE OF 1894
\$1.00 PERRY

New York
22 April 1896

The initial regular issue of a \$1.00 denominated stamp depicted the bust of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, a naval hero of the War of 1812. It was first issued in November 1894 per the Report of the Third Assistant Postmaster General dated 30 June 1898. According to the Scott catalogue, the earliest known use of the Perry stamp is 22 March 1895.



This extraordinary cover sent from New York to Switzerland required \$4.10 in postage including four of the \$1.00 Perry stamps. It was mailed on 22 April 1896 and is backstamped for receipt in Zurich on 1 May.

ISSUE OF 1898
\$1.00 TRANS-MISSISSIPPI

St. Louis, Mo.
27 June 1899

The second commemorative \$1.00 denominated stamp was issued on 17 June 1898 in connection with the great Trans-Mississippi exposition held in Omaha that year. The scene is described "Western Cattle in Storm" (although the photograph on which it was based showed Scottish cattle). It is the second highest value of the nine-stamp set, with only 56,900 examples being issued.

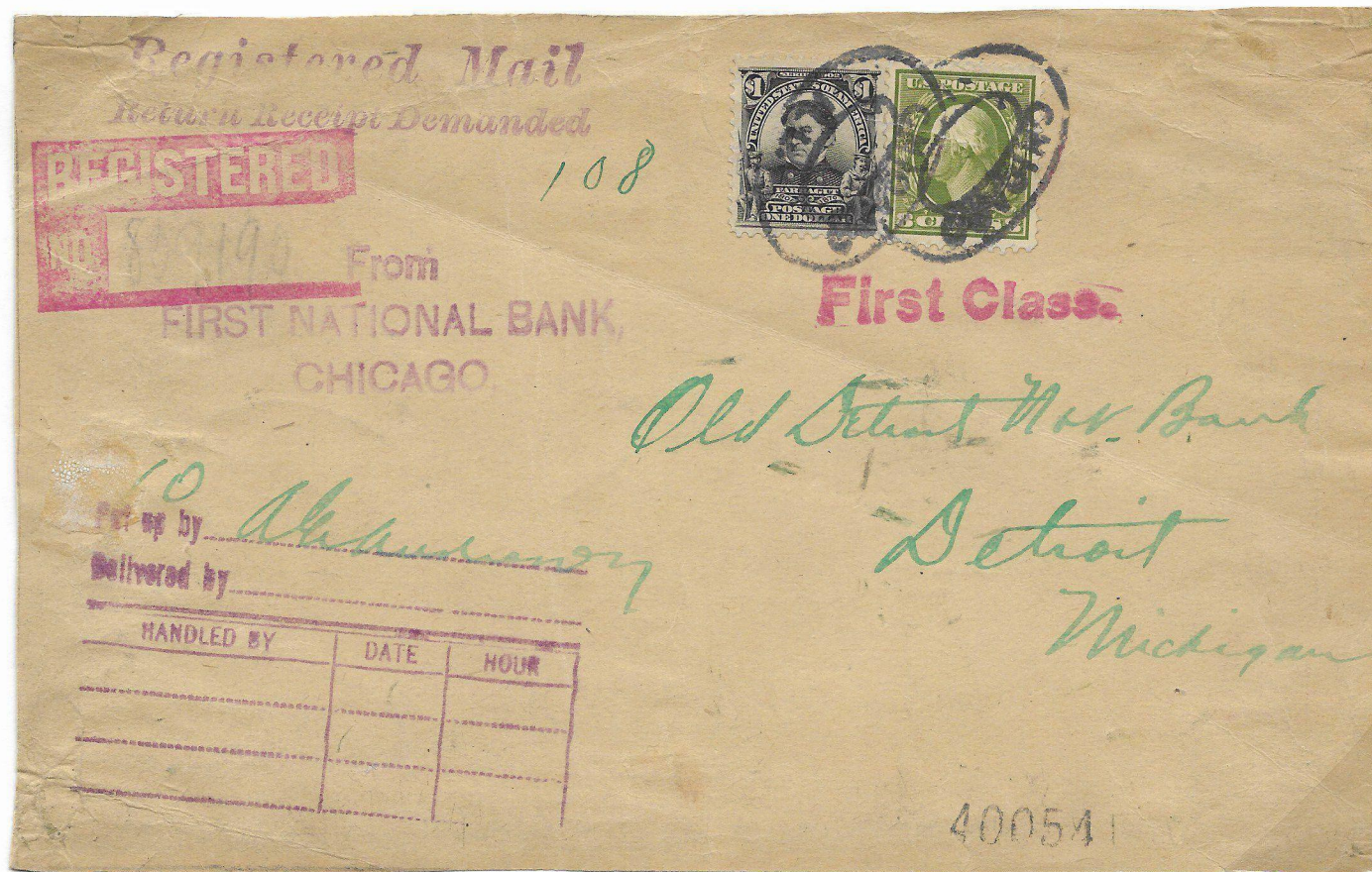


The single use of a \$1.00 stamp on this registered cover to Germany appears to represent overfranking, presumably philatelically so.

ISSUE OF 1903
\$1.00 FARRAGUT

Chicago, Ill.
(1912)

The second regular issue of a \$1.00 denominated stamp depicted Admiral David G. Farragut, a naval hero of the Civil War. It was first issued on 5 June 1903. However, the earliest recorded use per the Scott catalogue was on 30 September 1903.



The Farragut stamp is used above in mixed franking with an 8 cent stamp of the Washington-Franklin series. It was affixed to the front of an inter-bank package to Detroit, which was sent by First Class Registered mail. Date not directly ascertainable, but another front from the same correspondence (without Farragut) is postmarked 30 August 1912. The franking apparently pays 10 cent registration fee plus 98 cents postage up to 49 ounces.

ISSUE OF 1909
\$1.00 WASHINGTON

Chicago, Ill.
30 August 1912

The third issue of a definitive \$1.00 denominated stamp depicted President George Washington. Issued on 29 January 1909, this stamp was not widely used because of its high face value and relatively short period in circulation. Replaced with a Franklin head design three years later.



The \$1.00 Washington stamp is shown above along with a 10 cent Franklin on the address label of a registered inter-bank packet mailed from Chicago to Detroit. Only five examples of this stamp on cover have been recorded.

**ISSUE OF 1913
\$1.00 PARCEL POST**

San Francisco, Cal.
28 November 1917

Varick St. Sta. N.Y.
27 October 1928

On 1 January 1913, the Post Office Department inaugurated a parcel post service for packages at reduced rates. The postage was to be paid with special stamps inscribed "U.S. Parcel Post." A set of 12 values was provided, including a \$1.00 stamp as the highest denomination. However, accounting for an extra set of stamps caused confusion and, on 1 July 1913, it was decreed that regular postage stamps could be used on parcels and parcel post stamps be could be used on regular mail. The date of issue of the \$1.00 parcel post was 3 January 1913, and just over a million copies were printed.



Shown above are \$1.00 Parcel Post stamps used in a strip of 3 on an inter-bank parcel tag to Los Angeles and on a Graf Zeppelin cover sent on the first flight from the United States to Germany. This stamp paid the \$1.00 special fee for the Zeppelin service in effect at that time, with a 5 cent stamp paying the normal international letter rate.

ISSUES OF 1915-1917
\$1.00 FRANKLIN

Several additional printings of the \$1.00 Franklin stamp were made, differing in perforation and/or watermark. The 1915 stamps were on watermarked paper and perforated 10. The 1916 stamps were unwatermarked and perforated 10. The 1917 stamps were on unwatermarked paper but perforated 11. These were in use until their replacement by the Fourth Bureau issue in 1923.

New York, N.Y.

Military Post Office
Hoboken, N.J.



The upper example shows four \$1.00 unwatermarked perf. 10 stamps (plus others) used on the front of an envelope glued to a registered package to India, probably in 1917. The lower example shows a tag with two \$1.00 perf. 11 stamps plus other postage from the Military Post Office in Hoboken (a main port of disembarkation for members of the AEF) to Portland, Ore. in 1920. The parcel likely contained personal effects of a returning soldier.

ISSUE OF 1923
\$1.00 LINCOLN MEMORIAL

New York, N.Y.
23 July 1933

The Fourth Bureau Issue was produced in the 1922-1925 time period. It included a \$1.00 denomination depicting the Lincoln Monument in Washington. Issued on 12 February 1923, this value was the primary vehicle for the payment of high denomination postage required in the ensuing decade and a half.

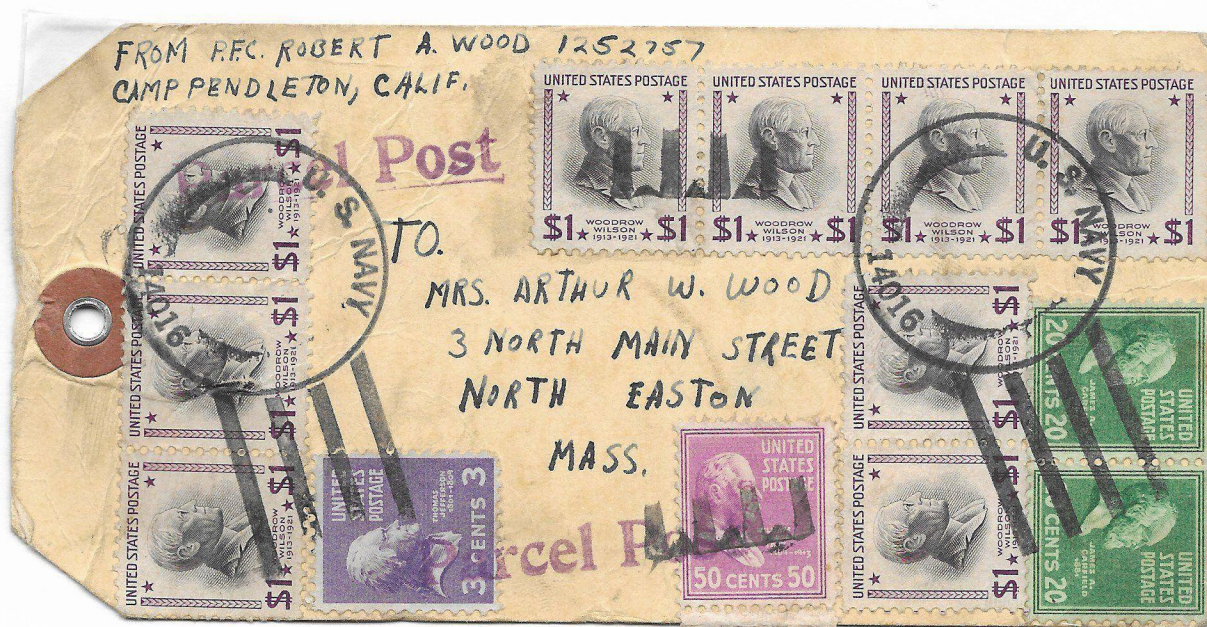
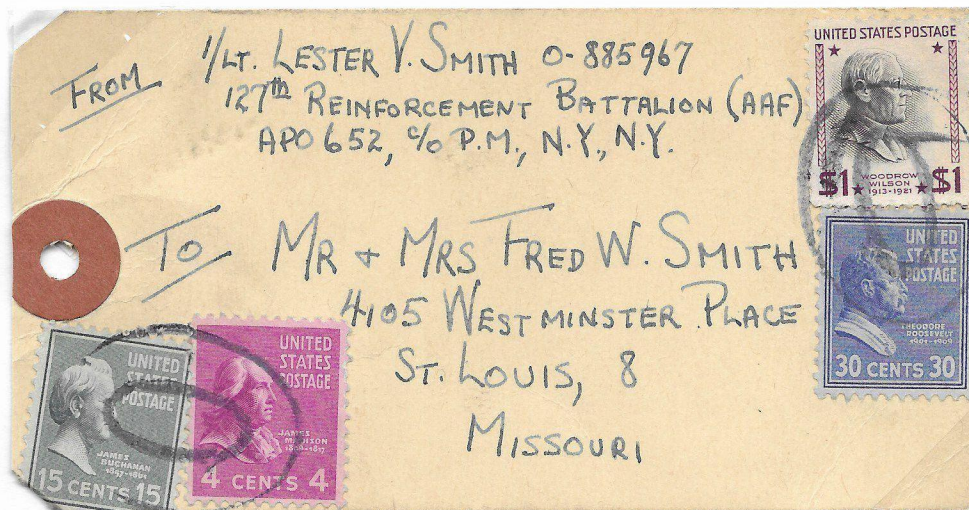


Shown is a cover franked with three \$1.00 Lincoln Memorial stamps and additional postage that was carried on the return flight of the Italian hydroplane fleet of Gen. Balbo. It was backstamped in Italy on 2 August and then sent back to the addressee in the U.S. Officially sealed by the Somerville, Mass. post office on 23 August 1933.

ISSUE OF 1938
\$1.00 WILSON

APO 652
U.S. Navy 14016

The U.S. Presidential Issue was produced in the 1938 and depicted all of the deceased presidents up to that time. It included a \$1.00 denomination with the bust of President Woodrow Wilson, who served from 1913 to 1921. The Wilson stamp was a primary vehicle for the payment of high denomination postage, i.e. overweight letters, airmail, registration, and parcel post fees required in the ensuing decade and a half.

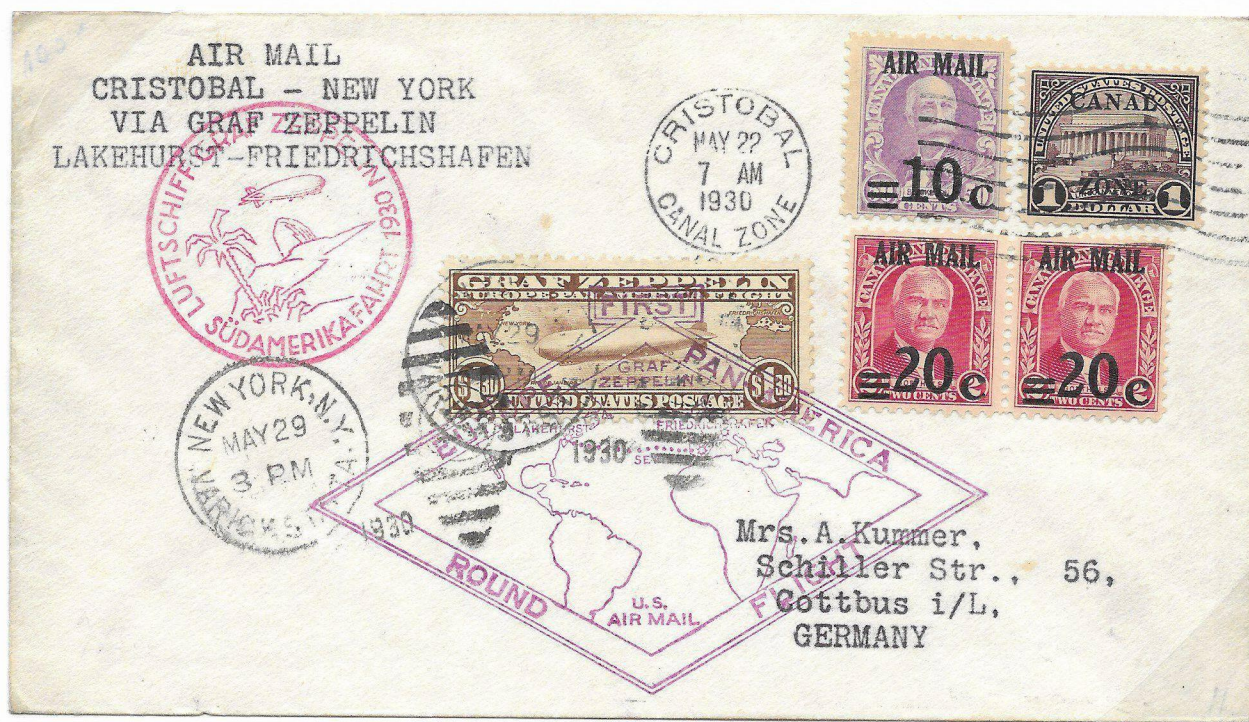


These \$1.00 Wilson stamps are shown used on parcel address tags from an Army Air Force officer at APO 652 in Stone, England and from a Marine PFC at Camp Pendleton CA. In neither case is there a year date shown, but they were probably mailed around 1944. The lower example was quite heavy (i.e. possibly a foot locker with unneeded personal belongings) based on the \$9.93 postage that was paid.

CANAL ZONE
ISSUE OF 1924-26
\$1.00 LINCOLN MEMORIAL OVERPRINT

Cristobal
22 May 1930

Reflecting a change-over to the use of U.S. currency, Panamanian stamps denominated in centesimos and balboas and overprinted "Canal Zone" were withdrawn from sale by the Canal Zone Postal Service on 30 June 1924. Overprinted U.S. stamps of the Fourth Bureau issue were introduced the following day, including 10,000 copies of the \$1.00 Lincoln Memorial. (A second printing of 20,000 stamps was issued in April 1926 and can be distinguished by the sharply pointed "A" in the overprints as compared to flat tops in the original printing.)



A \$1.00 Lincoln Memorial overprint is shown above used on a Graf Zeppelin Round-the-World flight cover from Cristobal via New York to Germany. Additional Canal Zone postage is affixed as well as a U.S. \$1.30 Zeppelin stamp added in New York to pay the special letter rate for the flight.

CANAL ZONE
ISSUE OF 1931
\$1.00 GAILLARD CUT

Fort Amador
27 May 1946

No other dollar denominated regular stamps were issued for the Canal Zone. However, a \$1.00 airmail was issued on 18 November 1931 as the top value of a nine-stamp set depicting a ship traveling through the Gaillard Cut with an airplane overhead. A total of 406,000 copies were printed.



The \$1.00 airmail definitive is shown above on a registered cover to California along with a 15 cent stamp of the same series.

CANAL ZONE
ISSUE OF 1939
\$1.00 PAN AM CLIPPER

Balboa Heights
15 July 1939

A \$1.00 airmail was issued on 15 July 1939 as the top value of a six-stamp set commemorating the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Panama Canal and the tenth anniversary of airmail service in the Canal Zone. Only 40,000 copies of this denomination were printed.



The \$1.00 airmail commemorative is almost always found on first day covers as there was little need for a stamp of this denomination. However, finding an example on a non-cacheted cover is unusual.

**GUAM
ISSUE OF 1899
\$1.00 PERRY OVERPRINT**

Guam/Ladrone Is.
31 October 1901

Following the occupation of Guam Island by the U.S. Navy, a set of the First Bureau definitives was overprinted "Guam." This included the \$1.00 denomination, of which 3,000 copies were provided.



This considerably overfranked cover shows use of both of the highest values. It was sent to a government official on nearby Saipan in the German Marianas. There was little commercial use for these denominations, so this is clearly a souvenir or philatelic franking; still a highly desirable piece. Note that the use of the "Ladrone" postmark was limited because of objections by local people since it means "thieves" in Spanish. (This name reportedly was originally applied to the Marianas by Magellan, who encountered a problem with the disappearance of supplies during his visit.)

**PHILIPPINES
ISSUE OF 1901
\$1.00 PERRY OVERPRINT**

The Philippines were captured by the United States in the Spanish-American War as a result of the naval victory by Commodore Dewey at Manila Bay on 1 May 1898. Initially, regular unoverprinted U.S. stamps were used, but on 1 May 1899 the Philippine Postal Service was organized. Seven values of First Bureau stamps overprinted "Philippines" were placed on sale on 30 June. On 30 August 1901, six more values were issued, including 3,000 copies of the \$1.00 Perry.

Malolos/Bulacan
19 December 1906

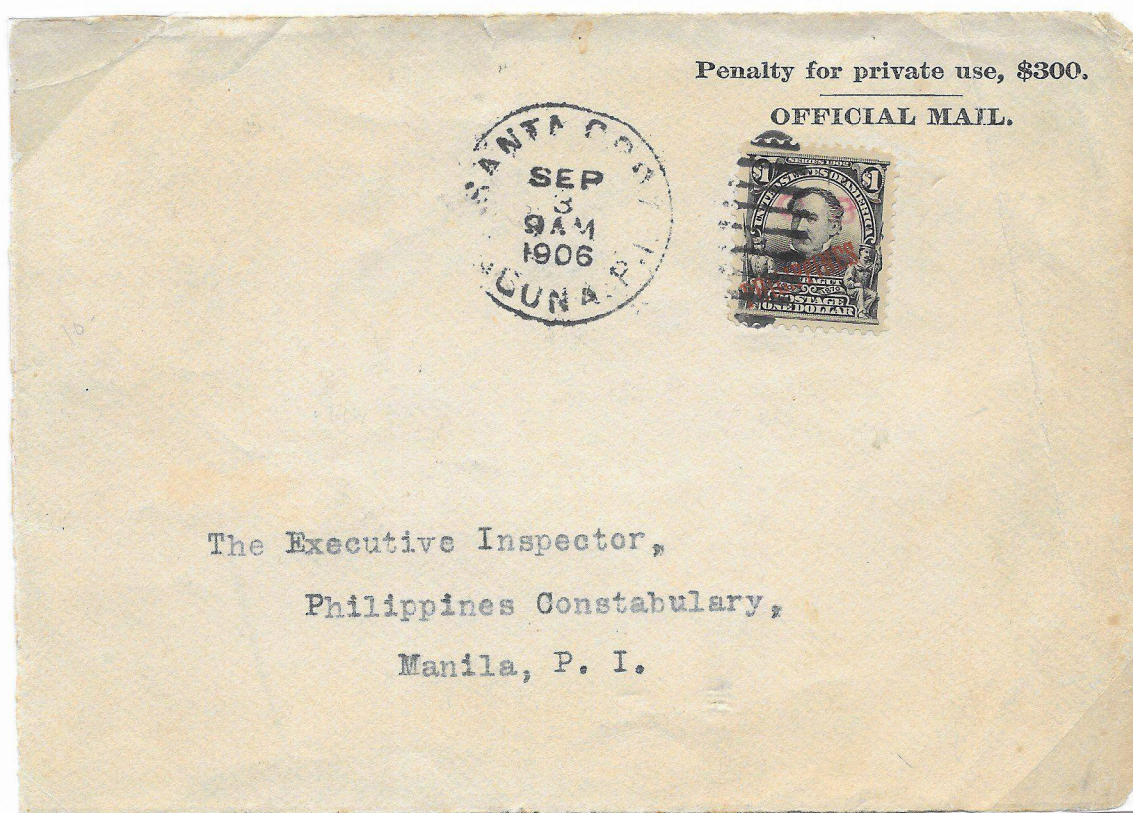


There was but little commercial use for high value stamps in the Philippines, but overfranked covers with \$1.00 stamps come on the market on rare occasions. Above example of registered mail to Manila backstamped on the same day.

**PHILIPPINES
ISSUE OF 1904
\$1.00 FARRAGUT OVERPRINT**

Santa Cruz/Laguna
3 September 1906

The "Philippine" overprint was also applied to the Second Bureau issue, with 14 values being so treated in 1903 and 1904. A total of 5,617 copies of the \$1.00 Farragut were overprinted and placed on sale on 4 January 1904. This entire issue was demonetized on 8 September 1906.



Because there was little commercial use for high value stamps in the Philippines, a few enterprising philatelists rushed to prepare copies on cover pending the demonetization. In fact, except for their efforts, examples of these stamps on cover would be essentially impossible to find. Above example used on a portion of a package front. (Note that the stamp also has a provisional red "O.B." overprint. Beginning on 1 January 1906, postage stamps were used to prepay official mail sent by all branches of the Insular Government instead of using penalty envelopes. Officials obtaining postage for government business were authorized to overprint them in manuscript or with rubber stamps to indicate the official character of the mail.)

SHANGHAI
ISSUE OF 1919
\$1.00 FRANKLIN OVERPRINT

Shanghai
November (1920)

Because of the fluctuations in the value of the Chinese dollar, the U.S. post office in Shanghai was losing business because its rates were stated in American dollars. As a result, it was decided to sell stamps for Chinese currency (worth approximately 50 U.S. cents at the time). Thus, on 24 May 1919, stamps of the Third Bureau issue were overprinted "Shanghai/China" and a new denomination. These were placed on sale at the U.S. Postal Agency in Shanghai on 1 July 1919. Denominations ranged up to and including the \$2.00 on \$1.00 Franklin value, of which 11,000 copies were issued. The agency in Shanghai closed and the stamps were demonetized on 31 December 1922.



Copies of the \$2.00 on \$1.00 stamp on covers are exceedingly elusive, except for philatelic creations with full sets. Example shown above is used on a label from an insured package, which probably contained shipping documents traveling between two steamship companies, certainly an unusual usage.