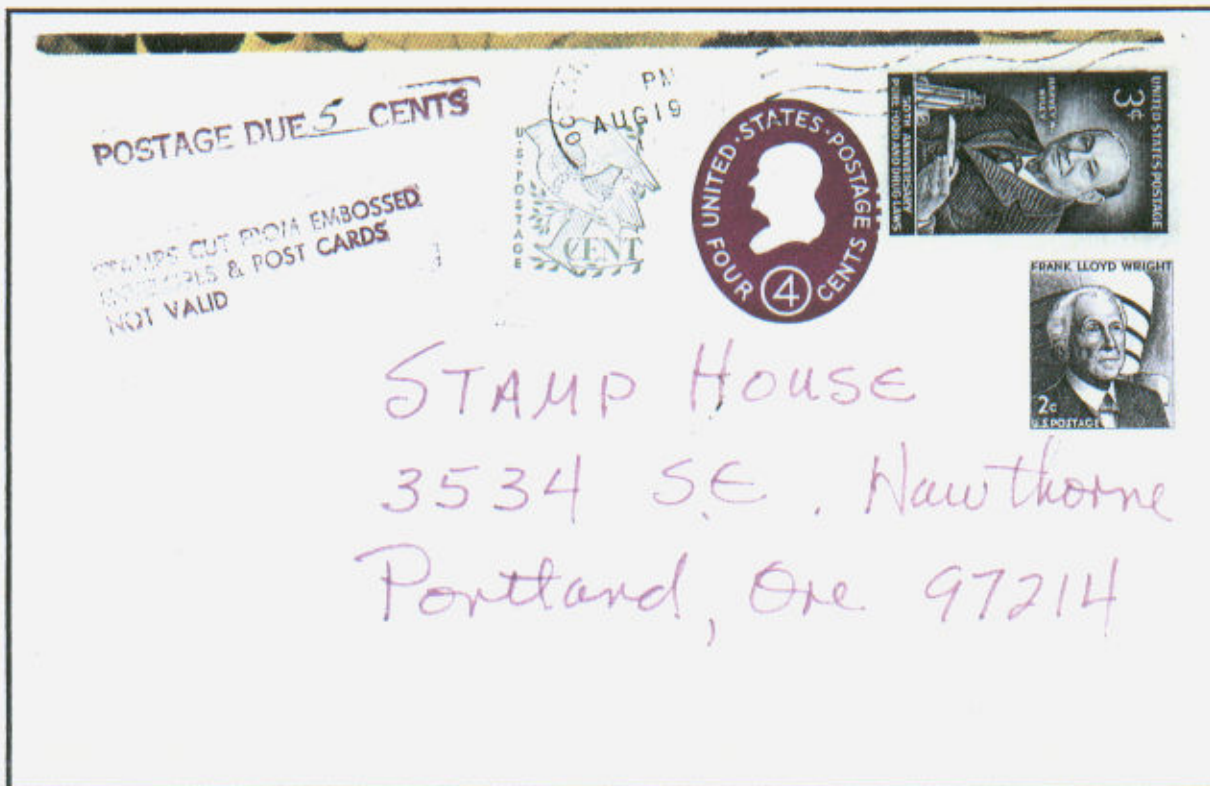


Cheapskates

From the inception of compulsory prepayment of mail in the United States on April 1, 1855, patrons have been trying to defraud the postal system in numerous ways. One way, of course, was to soak cancellations from stamps, and a response was adding grills. The postal card arrived in 1873 and when the stamp portion was missed by a hurried clerk, someone thought about reusing it by cutting it out around the untainted postal portion. The same opportunity was provided by uncanceled embossed stamps cut away from envelopes. Both were illegal, but that did not stop the cheapskate from acting. With the issuance of stationery, it was always government policy to allow the exchange of uncanceled stationery at face value. An error in writing was easily exchanged! Examples of the misuse, and illegal use of both the postal card and stationery are the subject of this exhibit. Commemorative and airmail stationery also received the scissors of persons intent on fraud. This collection represents a selection of these illegal uses which are mainly found on covers paying bills, not a letter to a friend or neighbor, and continues well into the second half of the 20th century. Cheap is cheap!



U545...19 August 1975 illegal use, caught, 5c due marked, paid by meter strip on reverse
Auxiliary markings tell all- "Stamps cut from embossed envelopes & post cards not valid"