

U.S. POSTAL AND POST CARDS TO CANADA: THE FLUCTUATING RATE, 1873-1958

This exhibit is a rate study of surface postal and post cards mailed from the United States to Canada, showing how the card rate fluctuated between 2¢ and 1¢ over a period of 85 years.

The term **postal cards** refers to mailing cards produced by the government with preprinted postage. The term **post cards** refers to privately produced mailing cards which required postage to be added. The U.S. first issued postal cards on May 12, 1873, originally intended for domestic use only at a rate of 1¢ each. Effective July 1, 1873, U.S. postal cards could be used to Canada by adding 1¢ postage. This 2¢ rate remained in effect through December 31, 1874. The next day the rate dropped to 1¢. A 1¢ rate for post cards, domestic or to Canada, went into effect on July 1, 1898. Prior to that time they had been subject to the letter rate, then 2¢.

The following table summarizes the rates shown in the main body of this exhibit.

<u>Effective Date</u>	<u>Rate</u>
July 1, 1873	2¢ (Originally postal cards only.)
January 1, 1875	1¢ (Postal and post cards as of July 1, 1898.)
November 2, 1917	2¢
July 1, 1919	1¢
October 1, 1925	2¢
July 1, 1928	1¢
September 1, 1931	2¢ (Effective through July 31, 1958.)

Many people wrongly presumed that the card rate to Canada was the same as the U.S. domestic card rate. Sometimes the rates were the same, but often the rate to Canada was higher. As a result, underpayment sometimes occurred. Less frequently, for one reason or another, people overpaid the card rate to Canada. This exhibit contains examples of both underpayment and overpayment, including the underpaid postal card shown below.

For the purpose of this exhibit, Canada includes only the Canadian provinces and territories proper. Postal and post cards to Newfoundland before it became part of Canada in 1949 are beyond the scope of this exhibit. Cards sent to Canada at printed matter rates, air mail rates, or free of postage are also beyond the scope of this exhibit.

This exhibit concludes with an epilogue. On August 1, 1958, the U.S. surface postal and post card rate to Canada rose to 3¢ and never dropped back to 2¢ again. The era of the fluctuating rate had finally ended.

2¢ rate, 1¢ underpaid.
In spite of under-
payment, postal card
was neither returned
for additional postage,
nor held for additional
postage, nor rated
postage due. 1934.

