

SYNOPSIS

Machine Slogan Postmarks of the Washington DC Post Office

An exhibit of the slogan killers used in the rapid canceling machines of the Washington, D. C. Post Office from 1897 until it ceased processing mail due to anthrax contamination in late October 2001.

Treatment: This rapid canceling machine postmarks exhibit is one long chronology of many of the slogans from the title page at the beginning to the epilogue page at the end. The slogans are presented in the order of their appearance. Each slogan is introduced with a graphic illustration of the slogan, followed by the Earliest Known Use, EKU, and the Latest Known Use, LKU, then an example either on cover or on piece. When appropriate, additional commentary on the displayed example is provided. Rare items, that is less than 5 impressions recorded, are noted with a red star. Ninety percent of the possible 240 slogans are shown. The remaining two dozen are either one or two known examples, are owned by Museums, or specimens in the exhibitor's collection that were deemed not presentable.

Importance: This is the first exhibit of Washington DC machine slogan cancels since a small exhibit by "Tuck" Taylor at DELPEX over a decade ago and is the first to cover the entire duration that the Washington DC Post Office cancelled the mail. That is, this exhibit is the first to show Washington DC Post Office's rapid canceling machine slogan killers from the first, the UPU Congress flag slogan of 1897, to when the Washington DC Post Office ceased processing the mail in late October 2001 -- a period of 104 years.

Knowledge: Since Bob Payne's Promotional Slogan Cancellations study of machine slogan cancels to 1940 came out, the only published study has been my listing of the Washington, D. C. slogans. That listing was compiled using the resources of the National Postmark Museum, the George Turner collection (now in the possession of Clifford Alexander), my own collection, and from other individual collectors. The resources of the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum Library, the Kiplinger Library of the Washington Historical Society, and the American Philatelic Research Library were also used.

Rarity: The precise rarity of many of these slogans is still unknown as much census work remains. However, two slogans really stand out. One is the 1939 error of use of the 1928 International Civil Aeronautics Conference bi-plane slogan, which is in frame 1, row 4, page 3. Robert Payne in his 3 volume study of Washington, D. C. machine cancels, list just two known strikes, one at 10:30 AM and at 12 - M(idday). The one at noon is illustrated. The specimen in my display maybe the 10:30 AM EKU recorded by Payne or it may be a new find. Either way, at most only three impressions are known. The second is the 1965 Unity of Knowledge / Smithsonian Institution / Celebration. Again only three impressions are known -- one is in the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum collection, one is in the collection of the National Postmark Museum, and the third is in this exhibit (frame 4, row 3, page 3). All three have been cut from their original envelopes down to 2" x 4" pieces. In the census this exhibitor maintains there are many slogans with less than 10 examples recorded. Which maybe a sampling size issue rather than an indication of rarity. Or it could be more of an presence in the marketplace issue as most of the slogans with low slogan counts are modern or recent slogans. They just have not come onto the market yet. Which is why "less than 5" was chosen as the standard for a "red star".

Condition: Examples of postmarks selected for this display were for their "presentability" with full covers preferred over impressions on piece (otherwise known as 2 x 4's) and without regard to significance of earliest or latest date of use. Postmarks did not need to be complete, but did need to be clearly identifiable. Condition is very much a consideration in the "presentability" of the examples. The condition of the examples does appear to deteriorate towards the end of the display; but this maybe more a property of the quality of modern paper.

Presentation: This is a traditional presentation and in keeping with that spirit this presentation has been hand lettered using pencil on quad-ruled Scott album pages. Hand lettering with pencil was selected because this is a hobby and after working at a computer all day hand lettering was far more relaxing. Also, blocks of text in pencil being grey and not black do not compete visually with the material. It allows the material to stand out, not the text. The large Scott National Album size pages also allows the display of today's long business size envelopes to be shown horizontally and thus easily viewed. However, a long envelope on a slope does provides a break in the overall visual of two covers on a page forever-- the rail road impact.

References:

1. C. A. Stillions, *Washington, D. C. Rapid Cancelling Machine Cancellations Through October 2001*, published privately, several updates.
2. Robert J. Payne, *United States Promotional Slogan Cancellations 1899 - 1940*, Bart Billings, N. Las Vegas, NV, 2007, 2 volumes
3. Robert J. Payne, *Machine Cancels of Washington, D. C.*, Bart Billings, 2006, Vol 3, Appendix B