

THE U.S. LARGE BANK NOTE ERA OF 1870 TO 1890

A Study of the Domestic, Territorial, and International Rates During the Era of the Large Banknotes Issued Between 1870 and 1890.

HISTORY

The Large Bank Note Issues of 1870 to 1890 consist of eleven grilled and forty-seven ungrilled, regularly issued stamps, that were produced by the *National Bank Note Company*, the *Continental Bank Note Company*, and the *American Bank Note Company*. Between 1870 and 1893, the era when the Large Bank Note Issues were typically used, Congress passed eight significant postal acts effecting domestic postal rates, weight limits, and special services. With respect to international rates, the *Universal Postal Union* was formed in 1875 to establish uniform postal rates and conventions between member nations and simplify the confusing multiple postal treaties that had been established between individual countries.

SCOPE

This exhibit includes significant domestic letter postal rates, supplementary service fees (Registration and Special Delivery), special rates for printed matter (Unsealed Circulars), newspaper rates, and rates for samples and merchandise (Fourth Class Matter). Examples from and to all territories, in existence at the time the Large Bank Notes were issued, are represented.

The exhibit includes examples of Pre-UPU international rates, Post-UPU Special Treaty Rates (applicable to those nations that were not initial members of the UPU), international registration, and international forwarding. Of the grilled Bank Notes, six of the eleven issues are represented (only eight denominations are known on cover) and all forty-seven of the ungrilled issues are represented.

HIGHLIGHTS

Domestic usage includes examples of the Fourth Class rate, newspaper rates, a photograph mailed at the postal card rate, a “bootlegged” cover originating in France, the Westtown and the Friends Boarding School local stamps, a *Disinfected* cover, examples of multiple weight covers, and the re-united *Pittsburgh Twins* court covers that had been previously separated for more than six decades. Domestic usages also include covers from the Indian and Washington territories, a registered parcel label from the U.S. Treasury for currency transfer, an *Officially Sealed* registered cover that was damaged by an enclosed coin, and registered package fronts with the 30-cent and 90-cent American Bank Note issues.

International usage includes the only known combination of the 12-cent and 24-cent issues of 1870 to England, the 4-cent “Phantom” rate to France with additional examples of the 9-cent rate (over-franked, correctly franked, and an example in transit when the UPU rate was established), the 22-cent rate to Chili, and uncommon cancels of the *U.S. Postal Agency* in China. Highlights also include correspondence to Burma via the Sea Post Office, covers to Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, covers to French Guyana, Russia, Senegal (West Africa), Nicaragua, Bermuda, Ecuador, Columbia, Danish West Indies, the Azores, and an over-franked cover to Cape Town that was posted shortly after the rate reduction. Also included are registered covers to Rio de Janeiro, Russia, Uruguay, and three of six largest known multiples of the 90-cent *National*, *Continental*, and *American Bank Note* Issues on registered package fronts. International destinations from U.S. Territories include the Dakota Territory to Argentina and Turkey.