

AUXILIARY MARKINGS ON U.S. FIRST DAY COVERS

A Synopsis

Introduction

A wide variety of auxiliary markings exist. Major post offices ordered hand stamps locally or from suppliers with which to make these markings. Other markings such as had-written notes, labels, and censors' tapes contribute towards this variety. During the period represented by this exhibit, numerous hand stamps were common, with some types being used in multiple cities. Many older FDCs and a small percentage of more modern U.S. FDCs actually traveled through the mails, as evidenced by auxiliary markings. This exhibit tells the story of these markings on U.S. FDCs, which represent true postal history.

Purpose

The purpose of this exhibit is to present a variety of unusual auxiliary markings on U.S. FDCs. Many of these markings reflect the mishandling of the mails. Auxiliary markings on FDCs are difficult to find. Such FDCs are not in as good condition as their unaddressed counterparts that saw no actual mail service or were encased in plastic sleeves. This is **not** a conventional illustrated mail exhibit.

Exhibit Content

The exhibit contains only auxiliary markings on U.S. FDCs, and is organized chronologically with respect to when a specific marking/cancel was used in the mailstream (i.e. to show the flow of the FDCs through the mails). After much consideration, this structure appeared to be the most satisfactory. The period includes the time from which the FDC was posted to when it was received or returned. Examples of all phases are included. Where important, routing and/or rates are indicated. Copies of important markings/cancels on the reverse side of the FDCs are included. Cachetmakers are indicated where they are not identified on the FDC.

The exhibit is organized as follows:

1. Sending Post Office Markings: Includes FDCs given special services (airmail, special delivery, registered, insured), special messages such as received under cover, unmailable, and service suspended. An FDC addressed to a **POW** is included. This FDC is believed to be **unique**.
2. Delays in Transit: Examples include lack of airmail service, damaged, and missent FDCs. Three FDCs that were involved in **plane crashes** are exhibited. Another FDC was **singed** in a **mail car fire**. These were extremely difficult to acquire.
3. General Receiving Post Office Markings: **Unusual** FDCs that were unsealed or empty when received, general delivery FDCs, and FDCs with messenger fees are examples of those illustrated in this category. Two **Tin Can Mail FDCs** are shown. These are rarely seen. An FDC **addressed to a German POW** in the U.S. also is included. Such FDCs are scarce.
4. Delays at Receiving Post Office: FDCs in misplaced mail are shown, as are censored FDCs mailed during wartime. **One of only three known** examples of a **British Censor** on an FDC with an enclosure, is presented. An unusual FDC with a **Nazi censor marking** also is included. One FDC censored by the Army was addressed to the **secret P.O. Box** for mail destined to the **Manhattan Project** in Los Alamos, NM.

5. Postage Due: Examples of FDCs assessed for postage due are shown with and **without** postage (unusual), and with various markings. Both domestic and foreign usages are illustrated. The latter often are tied with foreign postage due stamps.
6. Forwarded by Receiving Post Office: This category includes FDCs that have been forwarded by docketing and auxiliary markings. An FDC **forwarded in Northern Rhodesia** is an example.
7. Unforwardable Mail: FDCs sent to recipients who have moved, unclaimed and undeliverable FDCs, FDCs sent to the **Dead Letter Office**, and FDCs returned to the sender/writer are shown in the exhibit.
8. Address Incorrect/Incomplete: FDCs that had addresses corrected and/or added to by the post office and were delivered successfully, are presented. Others include FDCs with addresses not listed in directories, and no such post office in the state named.
9. Undeliverable at Correct Address: Examples of FDCs that had correct addresses, but the recipient was unknown at a specific address, the recipient was **deceased**, the FDC was **refused**, or it was **fraudulent**, are included.
10. Held for Return: Sometimes a patron has his/her mail held pending a return from being out of town. An FDC with a marking indicating this action is presented.
11. Sent to Foreign Addresses: A variety of U.S. FDCs that were sent to foreign destinations such as the Americas, Europe, and Asia (including **Tibet**), with receiving cancellations and markings are shown.
12. Returned from Abroad Undeliverable: Finally, U.S. FDCs sent to foreign destinations such as the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Africa where they were unclaimed or the addressee had moved and therefore, required that they be returned, are included. An FDC sent to **Tibet** is included.

Research/Sources

It required many years from numerous sources to acquire the material in this exhibit. The exhibited FDCs are **not** ordinary FDCs and are **difficult to find**. Sources included dealers' stocks at many shows and price lists, on-line websites, and auctions. Several dealers searched for relevant material. A satisfactory method for organizing the items had to be developed. Background information required to describe the FDCs adequately required much research time. There are no comprehensive references on auxiliary markings.

Importance

The exhibit shows the wide variety of auxiliary markings that may be found with diligent searching. The exhibit also demonstrates that FDCs are not necessarily merely covers with decorative cachets. The new issues actually can be used to carry the mail, thereby showing their use for a purpose for which they were intended.

References

- Nafziger, Ralph H. First Day Covers in the Mailstream, *First Days*, vol. 45, no. 1, January 1, 2000, pp. 24-28 (Honorable Mention, AFDCS Philip Ward Award, 2001).
- Nafziger, Ralph H. Auxiliary Markings on First Day Covers, *Auxiliary Markings*, vol. 2, no. 1, January, 2005, pp. 4-5.
- Youngblood, Wayne. The Postal History of FDCs, *U.S. Stamp News*, vol. 11, no. 1, January 2005, pp. 10-11.