

A Postal History of Hartford, Connecticut

As U.S. Post Office - 1792-1897

PURPOSE & SCOPE: This exhibit illustrates the evolution of the rates, markings and services of the postal system of the United States from the perspective of the city of Hartford. After a brief introduction to Hartford's pre-Federal postal history, the exhibit starts with the first U.S. Postal Act of 1792 and continues through 1897 when Hartford opened its first branch office.

ORGANIZATION & TREATMENT: The covers shown in this exhibit are generally arranged chronologically, divided into sections corresponding to major rate changes.

Each section begins with a section header and a rate chart. The section header is repeated in the upper left of subsequent pages, while a summary of the page will be found in the upper right.

Both domestic mail and mail to foreign destinations are included. After each foreign mail treaty is introduced, corresponding mail is identified under the "Rate" description for subsequent covers. Similarly, after an introductory page, subsequent UPU mail is identified under the "Rate" description.

The main story line is presented as double-line boxed text. Information about each item is in unboxed text, and historical notes are in italicized text.

Special items in this exhibit are highlighted with a green matt. Bold text is used to highlight key information about an item.

EXHIBIT PLAN:

PERIOD	KEY EVENTS	SUMMARY
Through May 31, 1792	Forerunners	Pre-federal postal rates
June 1, 1792 - March 1, 1799	Postal Act of February 20, 1792	First rates under U.S. Constitution
March 2, 1799 - January 31, 1815	Act of March 2, 1799	Zones reduced from nine to six
February 1, 1815 - March 30, 1816	Act of December 23, 1814	50% surcharge tax imposed on postage
March 31, 1816 - April 30, 1816	Act of February 1, 1816	Tax rescinded and prior rates resumed
May 1, 1816 - April 30, 1825	Act of April 9, 1816	Zones reduced from six to five
May 1, 1825 - June 30, 1845	Act of March 3, 1825 Independent Mail & Express Cos.	Rate for 150-400 mile zone changed from 18½¢ to 18¾¢
July 1, 1845 - June 29, 1851	Act of March 3, 1845 Act of March 3, 1847	Zones reduced from five to two; Rates changed from distance/sheets of paper to distance/weight
June 30, 1851 - March 30, 1855	Act of March 3, 1851 U.S.-U.K. Convention of 1848 U.S.-GAPU Convention of 1852	Zones change to over/under 3,000 miles; penalty imposed for unpaid letters
April 1, 1855 - June 29, 1863	Act of March 3, 1855	Compulsory payment of postage on domestic mail
June 30, 1863 - September 30, 1883	Act of March 3, 1863 U.S.-French Convention of 1857 U.S.-U.K. Convention of 1867-68 U.S.-U.K. Convention of 1869 U.S.-NGU Convention of 1867 GPU/UPU Convention of 1875	Mail divided into 3 classes: 1st, 2nd and 3rd Compulsory prepayment by postage stamps on 1st and 3rd class mail
October 1, 1883 - June 30, 1885	Act of March 3, 1883	First class rate reduced to 2¢ per half ounce
July 1, 1885 - December 1, 1897	Act of March 3, 1885	First class rate changed to 2¢ per ounce