

THE UNITED STATES LARGE BANK NOTE ISSUES of 1870 TO 1890

Synopsis

PURPOSE

The purpose is to present representative examples of the rates, methods of delivery, special service fees, and general communication, both domestic and international, during the era of the Large Bank Note Issues of 1870 to 1890. Between 1870 and 1893, the era when the Large Bank Note Issues were typically used, the domestic postal system was refined, rates were (typically) reduced, additional services were developed (Registration), and new services were instituted (Special Delivery). Also, the formation of the *General Postal Union* (later, the *Universal Postal Union*) helped establish uniform postal rates between member nations and reduced the multiple postal treaties between countries.

SCOPE

This exhibit consists of two major categories, domestic postal rates (including territorial) and international rates (including pre-GPU and post-GPU examples. The primary focus applies not only to typical postal communication, but also includes examples of atypical postal activity to demonstrate the various refinements in the postal delivery system.

COMPLETENESS

No postal history exhibit, especially one that encompasses a duration of slightly more than 20 years, can ever be defined—or approach—completeness. For example, during the time frame when the Large Bank Notes were first issued and prior to the formation of the *General Postal Union* (1875), the U.S. had entered into more than two hundred distinct international postal treaties, and many of the treaties included various rates and fees based on the means of transfer. The intent is to show representative examples, applicable to various destinations, and the gradual refinement and standardization of postal rates and methods of conveyance.

ORGANIZATION

Organization, and sequence of presentation, presents an especially difficult challenge. The current arrangement is divided into the two main categories (Domestic and International) with subsections established based on the postal rates in effect. However, the most significant difficulty is encountered regarding the presentation of the more obscure, and infrequently encountered, examples of the second, third, and fourth-class domestic matter. Currently, the bulk of this matter is presented under the Rate of 1872 when postal matter was divided into the four categories. (*Suggestions applicable to organization are greatly appreciated*).

References

Primary Reference, Domestic Rates: *United States Post Office Department, Postage Rates from 1789 to 1930*, reprinted by the Virginia Postal History Society.

Primary Reference, International Rates: *United States Letter Rates to Foreign Destinations, 1847 to GPU – UPU*, Charles Starnes, Leonard H Hartmann Philatelic Bibliopole, 1982.