

Usages of the Ten Cent Trans-Mississippi Issue of 1898

Historical Background

Taking its cues from the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition was planned as a showcase to demonstrate how the American West was coming of age. It featured a President's day with a speech by then-President William McKinley, Buffalo Bill Cody and his Wild West Show as well as dignitaries like William Jennings Bryan. The Expo lasted from June 1 to November 1 1898 and enjoyed over 2.6 million visitors. A series of nine postage stamps to commemorate the event was issued by the U.S. Post Office and each value depicted a scene from the development of the American West. The 10¢ value was particularly poignant as it reproduced the painting "Hardships of Emigration" by Augustus G. Heaton. It reflects the pain and determination of settlers migrating westwards.

Exhibit Focus

This exhibit focuses on uses of this single commemorative stamp. Domestic rates within the U.S. and its territories, international destinations as well as special services are included. Section and rate/fee headings appear at the tops of pages.

Exhibit Organization and Treatment

The exhibit organization is outlined in the exhibit plan and introduces domestic and international uses with special service fees integrated into the appropriate areas. Exhibit balance is observed with equal weight placed on each section. Covers with multiple copies of the issue paying the actual rate or service fee (or most of it) are preferred when selecting covers to represent each rate as these covers are by far less common.

Philatelic Knowledge

Descriptions of covers include origin, destination, date of mailing and receipt where known as well as rate, fee and rarity information. Rate and rarity information is in bold italicized typeface and significant items are matted with darker mats to allow more immediate recognition of the items. Examples are selected to demonstrate the best condition and unusual or difficult destinations. Images of markings are included as appropriate when they will assist in understanding the cover.

Challenge and Rarity

This exhibit is the product of over 35 years of accumulating and studying this issue. It includes a range of covers representing postal rates and special service fees. Developing the exhibit using this value as the main payment device has proven to be a challenge due to scarcity of the covers in general and demand in particular. One first day cover using only this value is known.

Rarity factors are based on research of exhibitor, philatelic exhibits, the reference below and auction results.

Highlights

- Cover from Exposition Station with solo 10¢ value (five reported examples) - pg 1
- Attempted use of privately produced bi-color using 2¢ vignette (only reported example) - pg 1
- Quintuple rate with solo 10¢ value without registration (only reported example) - pg 2
- Short set on registered cover mailed on the last day of the Exposition - pg 4
- Use in combination with proprietary stamps paying postage from Hawaii (only recorded example) - pg 6
- Use to Syria (only recorded example) - pg 7
- Use to Serbia (only recorded example) - pg 10
- Short set on registered cover to Germany - pg 11
- Sextuple rate registered cover to Germany (three reported strips of three) - pg 11
- Use to Australia (only recorded example) - pg 12

This is the most comprehensive exhibit of the 10 cent value ever developed.

References

The Trans-Mississippi Issue of 1898 - Randy L. Neil and Jack Rosenthal, 1997, Andrew Levitt, Danbury, CT.