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## APS UNIT 28

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EMPIRE STATE  
POSTAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY

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## A COVER WITH REGISTERED MAIL STAMP

By Maris Tirums

The US Post Office Department issued a special stamp for use on registered mail on December 1, 1911. This 10 cent ultramarine stamp is designated as F1 in the *Scott Catalogue*. It was the only registered mail stamp issued by the United States.

When the stamp was issued, the cost to register a letter was ten cents. The registration stamp was intended to be used in addition to the regular postage stamp which paid the regular postage rate at the time of mailing. However, persons sending a registered letter were also permitted to use regular postage stamps to show payment of the registration fee; so why were the registry stamps issued in the first place?



The special registry stamp was officially abolished on May 28, 1913, by order of Postmaster General Albert S. Burleson. Their continued use was allowed until supplies were used up. Covers bearing these stamps are somewhat scarce now. The 2011 *Scott Catalogue* priced a registered mail stamp on cover at \$70.

The cover illustrated here is an Ulster County New York item as the points of origin and destination were both within the county. It was mailed from Glasco on February 22, 1913, and was received at Kingston on the same day. The first class letter rate was paid with a two-cent Washington regular issue, Scott No. 405. Glasco is a hamlet on the Hudson River approximately five miles north of Kingston.

Registered mail is intended to be secure with the highest level of postal security. Thus letters are “sealed,” usually on the reverse side where the flap is glued down, with hand applied postmarks so that tampering could be easily detected if any of the postmarks are broken or disturbed. The Glasco postmaster used his four-bar canceler for this purpose. The envelope received a registered mail receiving back stamp at Kingston. This cover also bears an unusual mute dispatch cancel consisting of a large X within two vertical side bars.

Just before the use of special registered mail stamps was deemed to be unnecessary and a bad idea, the Post Office Department embarked upon another ill conceived initiative: issuance of twelve parcel post stamps and accompanying parcel post postage due stamps, which were issued for use at the beginning of 1913. All of this seems so archaic now as the post office clerk quickly slaps a meter on mail items processed at the counter. ■