

20th CENTURY UNITED STATES AUXILIARY MARKINGS
DOCUMENTING DELAY OF, OR INABILITY TO DELIVER. THE MAIL
THE FIRST 50 YEARS, 1900-1950

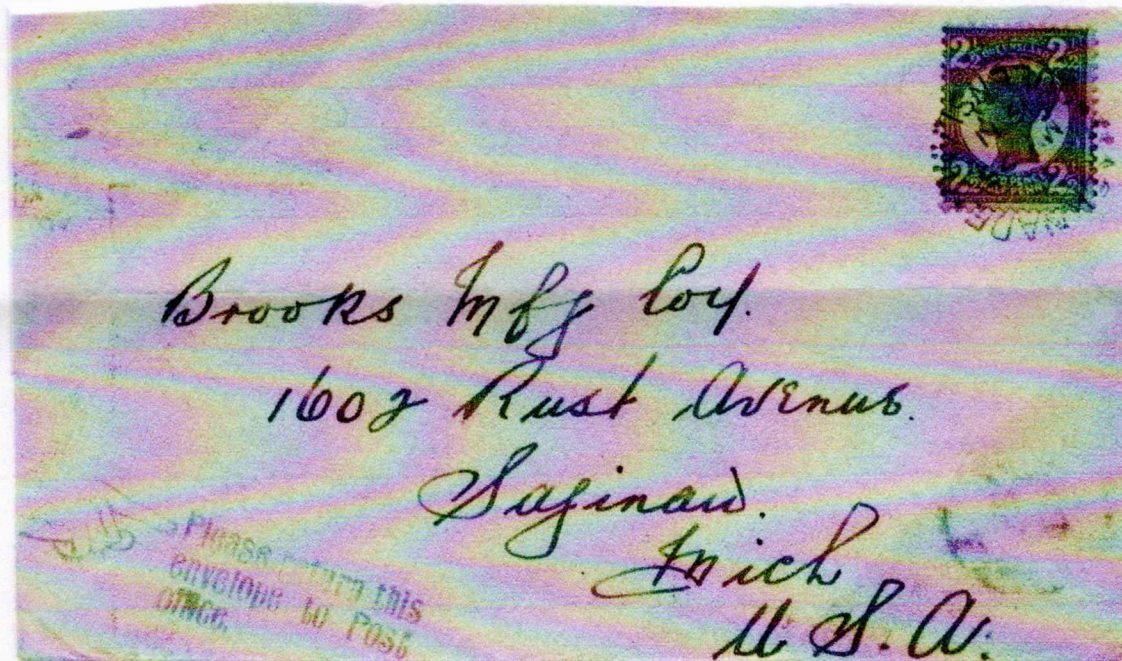
Objective: To present a comprehensive view of U.S. auxiliary markings in use from 1900 to 1950. The exhibit documents the many reasons mail could be delayed or failed of delivery; an important aspect of U.S. postal history, showing the reality of day-to-day postal operations in the world's highest volume postal system.

Treatment: Organization of the exhibit has been developed over time to show problems in the postal service from entry into the system until delivery (or a finding of inability to deliver. Every major type and form of post office marking is included. Specifically excluded are military postal markings, V-mail, and civil censorship; each of which can be its own exhibit. Where such covers are included here it is because of the postal marking on the cover. Markings shown include hand stamps, hand written notes, printed letters, forms and labels, officially sealed labels, hand stamped and machine cancellations, and even addressograph messages.

The exhibit is presented in nine sections:

- I. Mail returned to sender before getting to delivery post office
- II. Mail delayed in transit
- III. Delivery delayed by action or failure of sender or addressee
- IV. Delivery delayed by handling for postage due
- V. Delivery delayed by handling in post office process
- VI. Valid address - Unable to deliver
- VII. Invalid address - Directory service impossible
- VIII. Invalid address - Post Office attempts to locate addressee
- IX. Mail returned from abroad undeliverable

Context: The 1900-1950 period was marked by a huge increase in mail volume from 7.1 billion pieces of mail to 45 billion pieces, wars, addition and expansion of services, and less individual handling of mail. This required more automation for greater productivity and creation of new markings



Semi-official marking - 1911. A stamp collector clerk at the Saginaw, Mich. Post Office delayed foreign covers to place his own "official" request on them before delivery. This scheme got him fired. 9 examples recorded.