

# Getting Collared: The Use of Stamp Collars in the United States

## Purpose

The purpose of this illustrated mail exhibit is to show how different types of “stamp collars” were used by businesses and organizations during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to showcase their products and services to reinforce in the viewer’s mind the connection between a particular product and service and their company.

## Scope

Although the use of stamp collars dates from the 1850’s, their heyday began in the 1880’s and continued until approximately 1911 at which time the Post Office Department prohibited the placement of any printed design in the area of an envelope where the postage was affixed. However, they have been sporadically used to this day.

## Background

During the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the advertising options for businesses and other organizations were limited. There was no television, no internet, no social media, and no telemarketing. Paid radio commercials were not begun until 1921. Businesses relied almost exclusively on print media for advertising. Newspapers, magazines, and signage were mainstays. However, anything which could be printed on was a possibility and the envelopes which carried a company’s correspondence were a perfect choice. Many companies printed information about themselves and their products on envelopes. However, the use of a “stamp collar” had the effect of focusing the viewer’s attention on a particular area and when that area contained information related to a company and/or its products and services, it resulted in a powerful connection in the viewer’s mind between that company and a particular product or service.

## Treatment

This exhibit is focused on the different types of stamp collars and the way in which they were utilized. It is not about printing methods, postage rates or the stamps affixed. Where known, company and organization profiles are shown. Postage rates are also shown although most are very common. Exceptional covers are boxed in red.

## Importance

The use of stamp collars was an important part of a company’s or organization’s effort to attract customers using physical mail matter and this is the first exhibit known to study the variety of collars used in the U.S.

### Chapters

- Early Collars
- Product Related Collars
- Advertising Collars
- Identity Collars
- Brand Name Collars
- Word Collars
- Circular Collars
- Banner Collars
- Logo Collars
- Dold Collars
- Event Collars
- Decorative Collars
- Postal Stationary Collars
- Post 1911 Collars



A printed advertising circular (post cards were not authorized until 1898) for Ladd’s Discount Book which was a book of discount computations. The collar wording is: FOR ACCURACY / RAPIDITY / AND CONVENIENCE / USE LADD’S DISCOUNT BOOK