

## Non-denominated postage stamps on mail from the USA to UK: 1978 to 2001

Since 1978 the United States has issued a number of non-denominated postage stamps for domestic use only: A, B, C or D rate Eagle; E rate Earth; F rate Flower; G rate Flag or H rate Hat stamps, in anticipation of the next First Class domestic postage rate increase.

This exhibit demonstrates uses of these stamps on international mail sent from the USA to Great Britain between 1978 and 2001.

Uses of these stamps are shown in alphabetical order of issue to illustrate how their use in payment of international rates was treated by the US Post Office. The value, date of issue, and the then relevant international rate are documented in the page heading together with comments on Post Office handling.

Pages in Exhibit	Non Denominated Letter and value	Date stamp Introduced	Date of Domestic Rate Change
2	A 15¢ Eagle	22 May 78	29 May 78
3 & 4	B 18¢ Eagle	15 Mar 81	22 Mar 81
5 & 6	C 20¢ Eagle	11 Oct 81	1 Nov 88
7 & 8	D 22¢ Eagle	1 Feb 85	17 Feb 85
9 & 10	E 25¢ Earth	22 Mar 88	4 Apr 88
11 & 12	F 29¢ Flower	22 Jan 91	3 Feb 91
	F 4¢ make-up		
	F 29¢ Flag		
13 & 14	G 20¢ Old Glory pc	13 Dec 94	9 Jul 95
	G 32¢ Old Glory		
	G 3¢ make-up		
15 & 16	H 33¢ Hat	9 Nov 98	10 Jan 99
	H 1¢ make-up		

As postal costs increased, the US Postal Service began to increase their rates for various mail classes. Such increases had to be submitted to the Postal Rate Commission for approval which often took as much as a year to make a decision. If the rate increase was approved the Postal Service had then to rush to design and produce new stamps. In 1975 the Postal Service printed non-denominated Christmas stamps in anticipation of a rate change that finally occurred on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1975. In 1978 a similar requirement led to the "Eagle A" stamp being printed to represent an unknown new rate to meet customer demand until new definitives bearing the actual approved rate were printed.

The exhibit does not include special Christmas non-denominated stamps issued in 1975, 1981 and 1991, nor such stamps issued for special domestic rates, such as bulk rate or presorted mail. First Class non-denominated stamps issued from 2000 onwards are not included.

Principal references:

Wawrukiewicz, A & Beecher, H: *US International Postal rates, 1872-1996*, The Authors, CAMA Publishing Co, 1996.

<https://stamps.org/Portals/0/albums/Nondenominated.pdf>

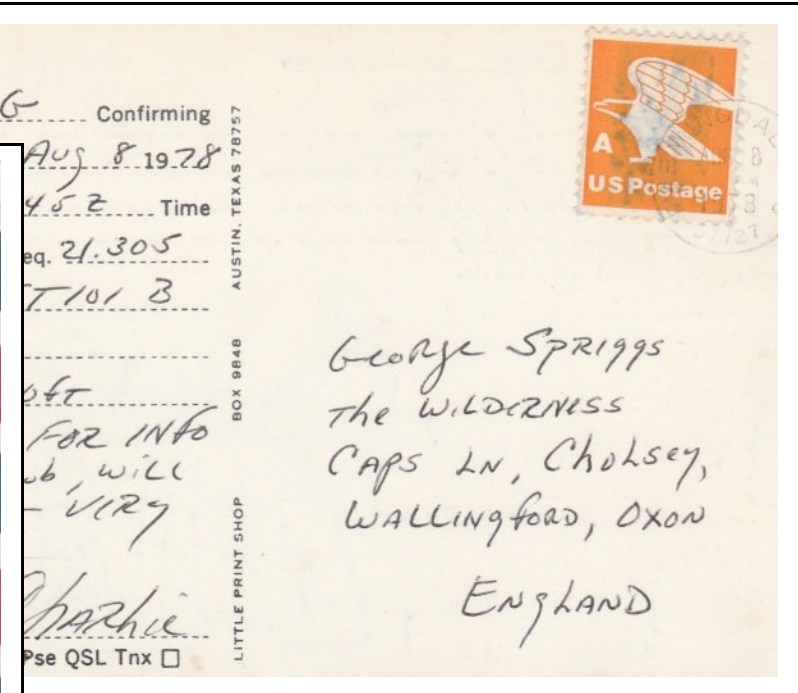
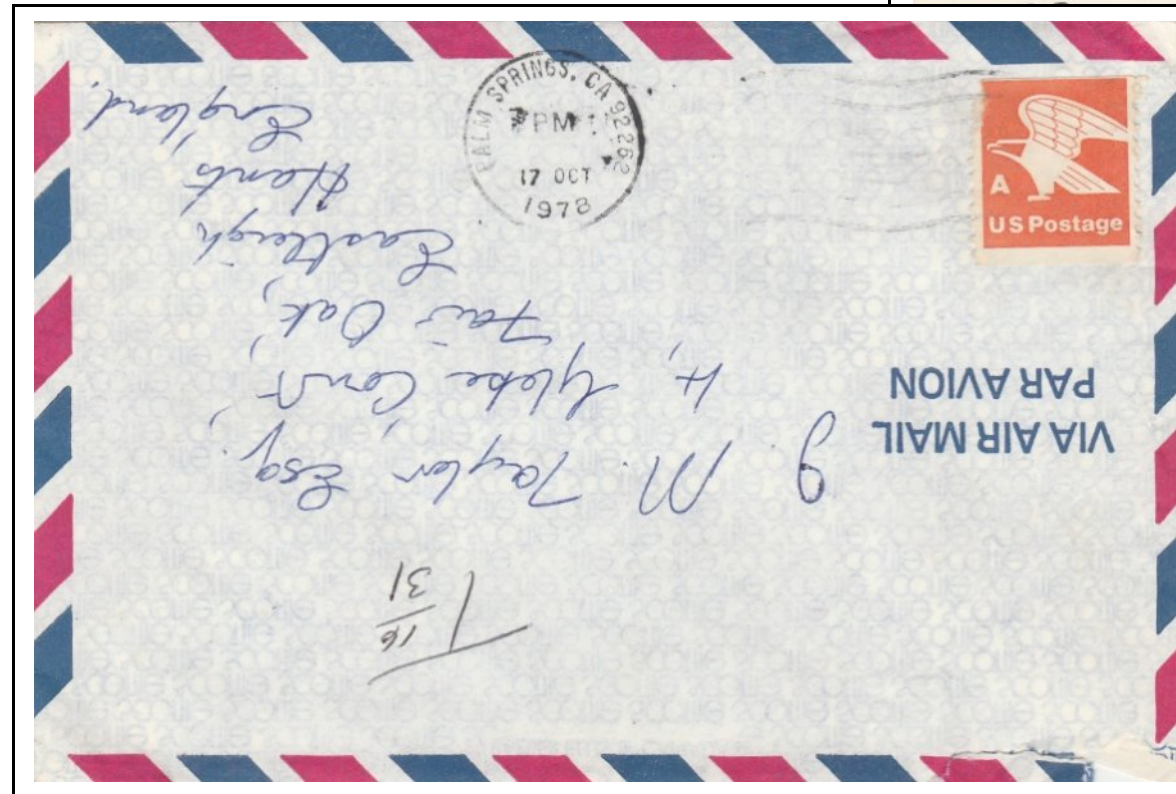
<https://www.kenmorestamp.com/non-denominated-u-s-stamps>

### "Eagle A", 15¢, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1978

UK dates used in this display: dd.mm.yyyy

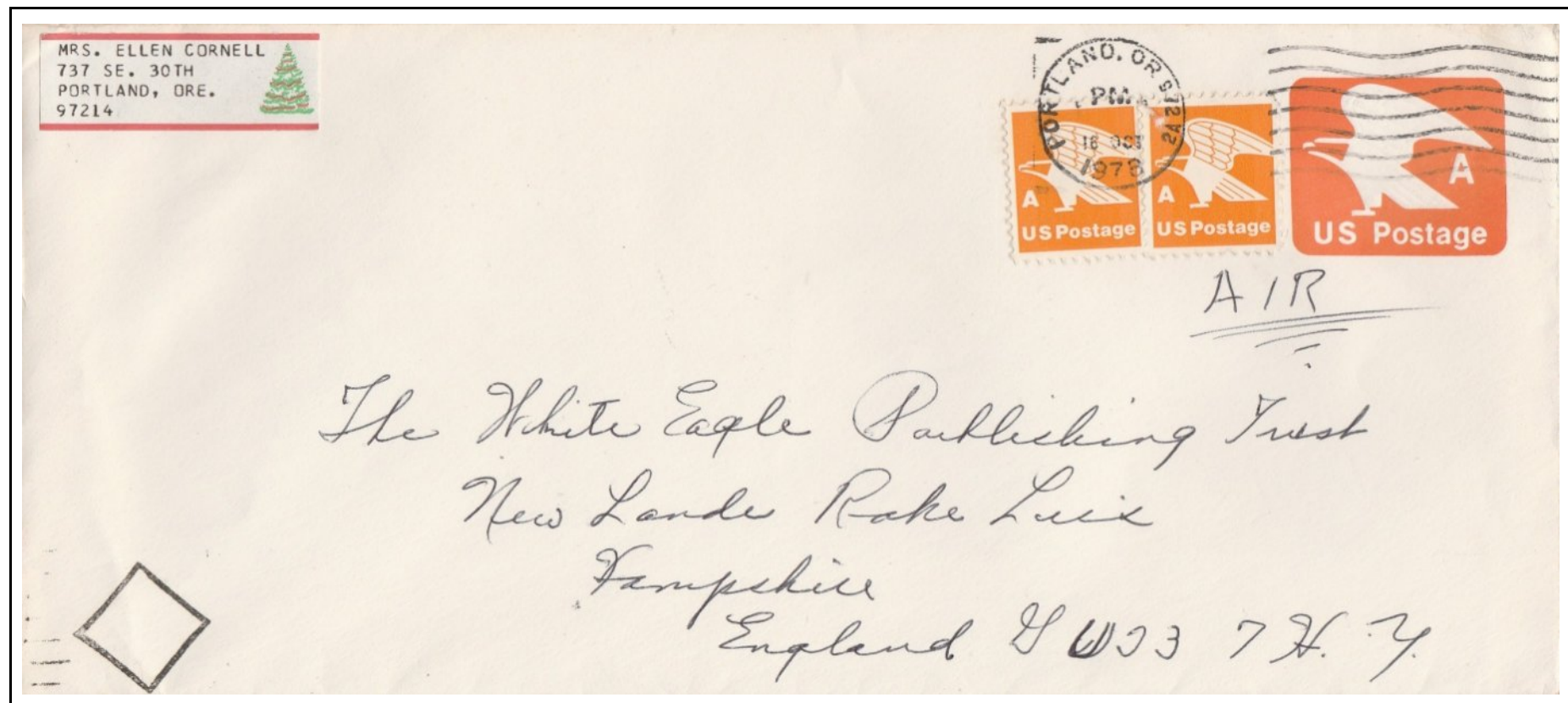
Farmingdale, NJ, 8.08.1978, overpaying the international postcard surface rate of 14¢

Direct Trans-Atlantic air mail letter: per ½ oz.	31¢	From 3 <sup>rd</sup> January 1976
International surface postcard	14¢	From 29 <sup>th</sup> May 1978
International (UPU) surface letter rate 1 <sup>st</sup> ounce	20¢	From 29 <sup>th</sup> May 1978



Palm Springs, CA, 17.10.1978, underpaid air mail and taxed 'T 16/31' in manuscript for 16¢ deficiency. Taxe fraction should have been 16/20. No charge raised in the UK.

Portland, OR, 18.10.1978, domestic 1<sup>st</sup> ounce letter rate Eagle A pse. uprated by two further Eagle A stamps to pay 3x 15¢, thus overpaying the international air mail rate of 31¢.



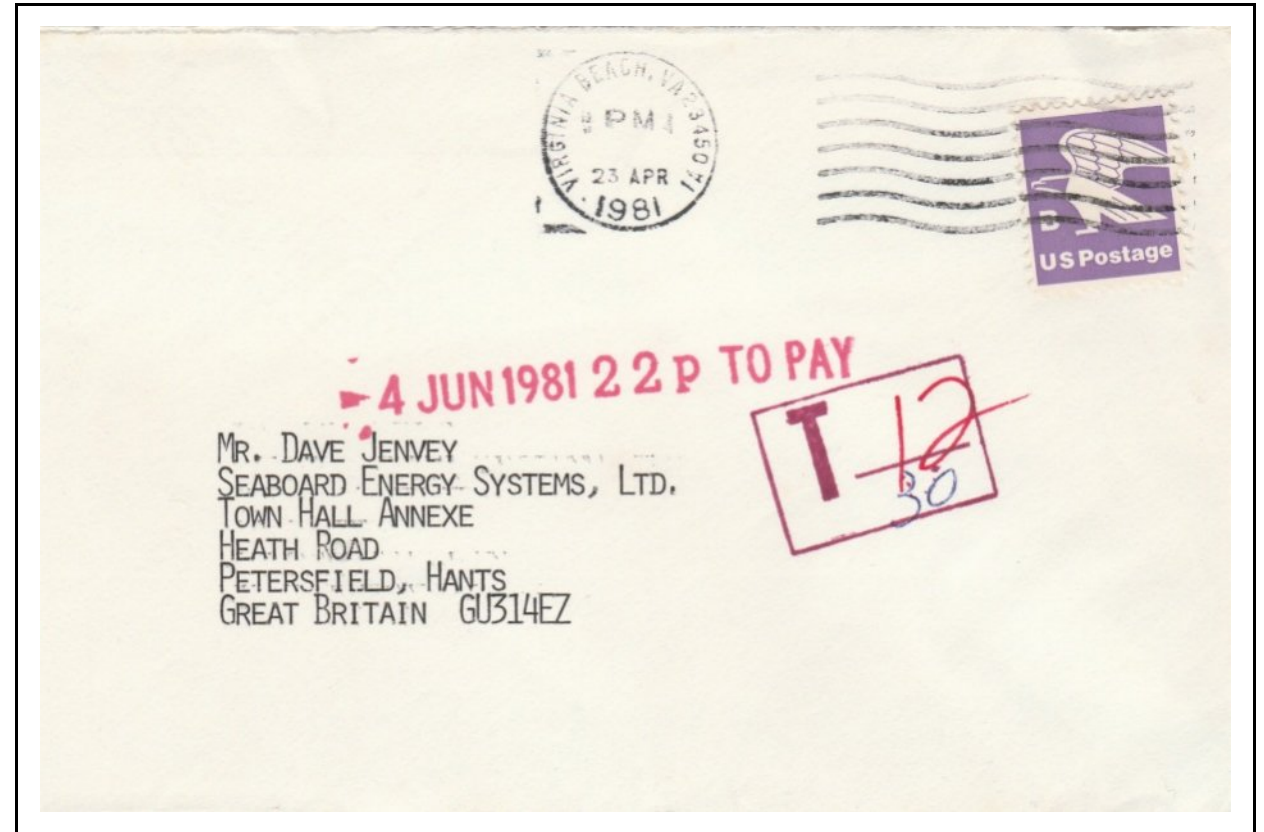
**"Eagle B", 18¢, 15<sup>th</sup> March 1981**

... used on international surface mail and tolerated by the Post Office

Direct Trans-Atlantic air mail: per ½ oz.	40¢	From 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1981
International surface letter 1 <sup>st</sup> ounce	30¢	From 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1981



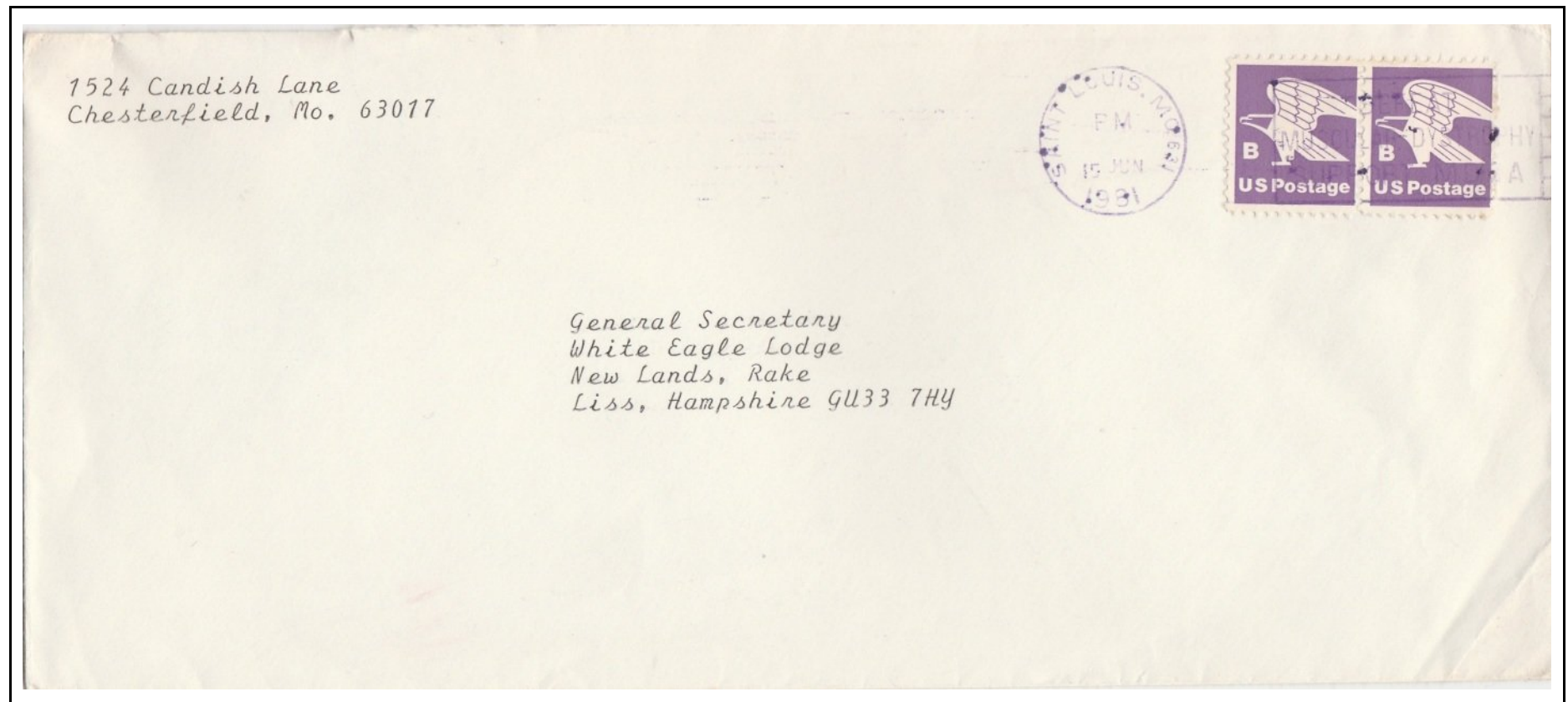
Industry, CA, 10.04.1981, paid 3x 18¢ (54¢) which overpays the 30¢ + 17¢ 2 oz surface rate of 47¢



Virginia Beach, VA, 23.04.1981 paid 18¢, 12¢ short of the surface rate of 30¢. US Tax mark 'T 12/30': charged in UK at 12/30ths of 18p + 15p fee = 7p + 15p = 22p.\* UK Post Office charge mark '4 JUN 1981 22p TO PAY'.

\* Snelson, K., Postage Due and the UPU in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century, Journal #33, Postage Due Mail Study group, March 2005

Saint Louis, MO, 15.06.1981, paid 2x 18¢, sufficient for 1<sup>st</sup> oz. surface rate of 30¢.



The Notice to Customers on the back panel of the booklet clearly states that the B-series stamps are not for international postage. A similar notice also appeared on A-series stamp booklets.

**"Eagle C", 20¢, 11<sup>th</sup> October 1981**

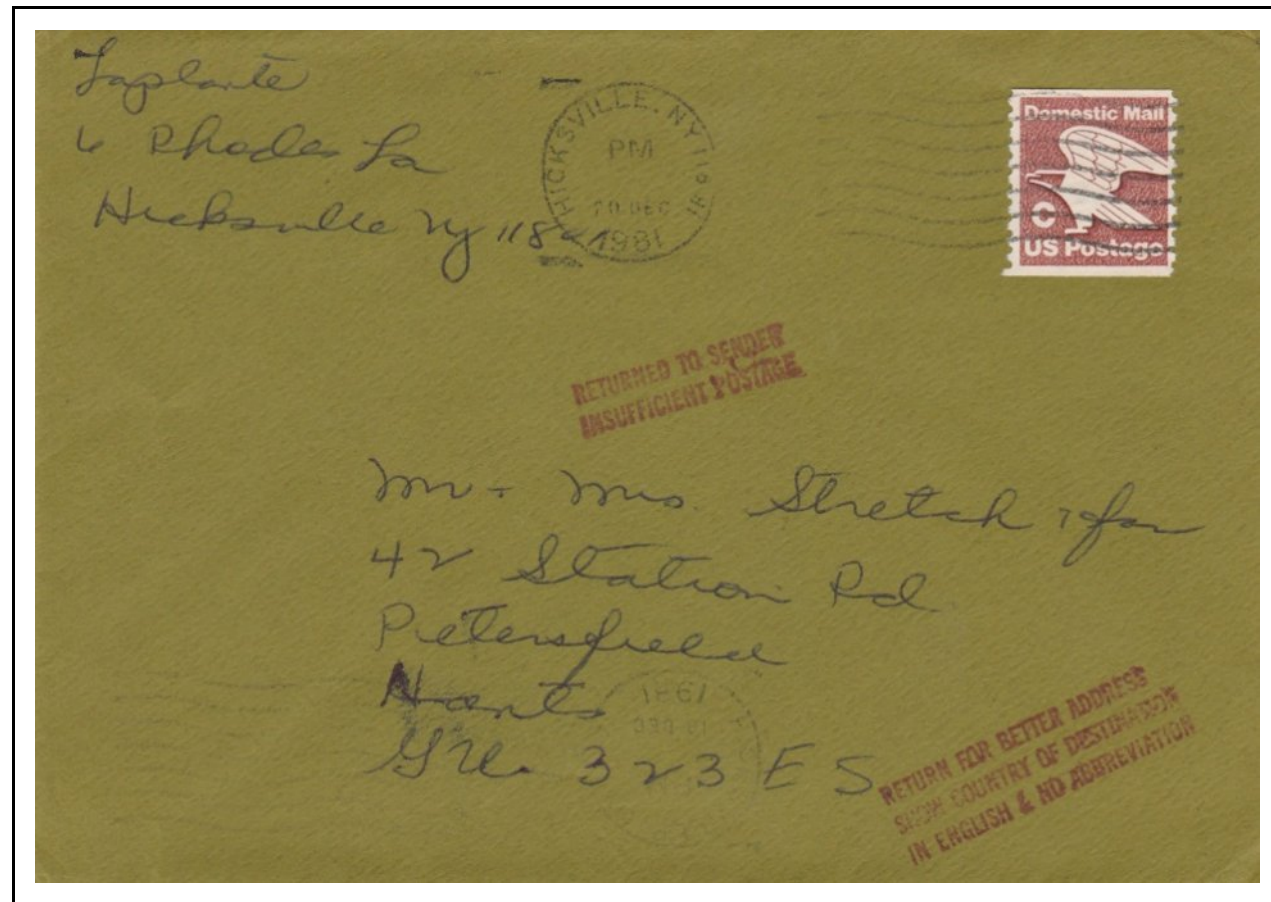
... "Domestic Mail" injunction still ignored by the public and tolerated on surface mail by the PO

Direct Trans-Atlantic air mail: per ½ oz.	40¢	From 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1981
International surface letter 1 <sup>st</sup> ounce	30¢	From 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1981



Baltimore, MD, 2.02.1982 paid 20¢, 10¢ short of the surface rate of 30¢.  
 US Tax mark 'T 10/30':  
 Charged in UK at 10/30ths of 19½p + 20p fee = 6.5p + 20p = 26.5p.\*  
 UK Post Office charge mark '24 MAR 1982 26p TO PAY'.

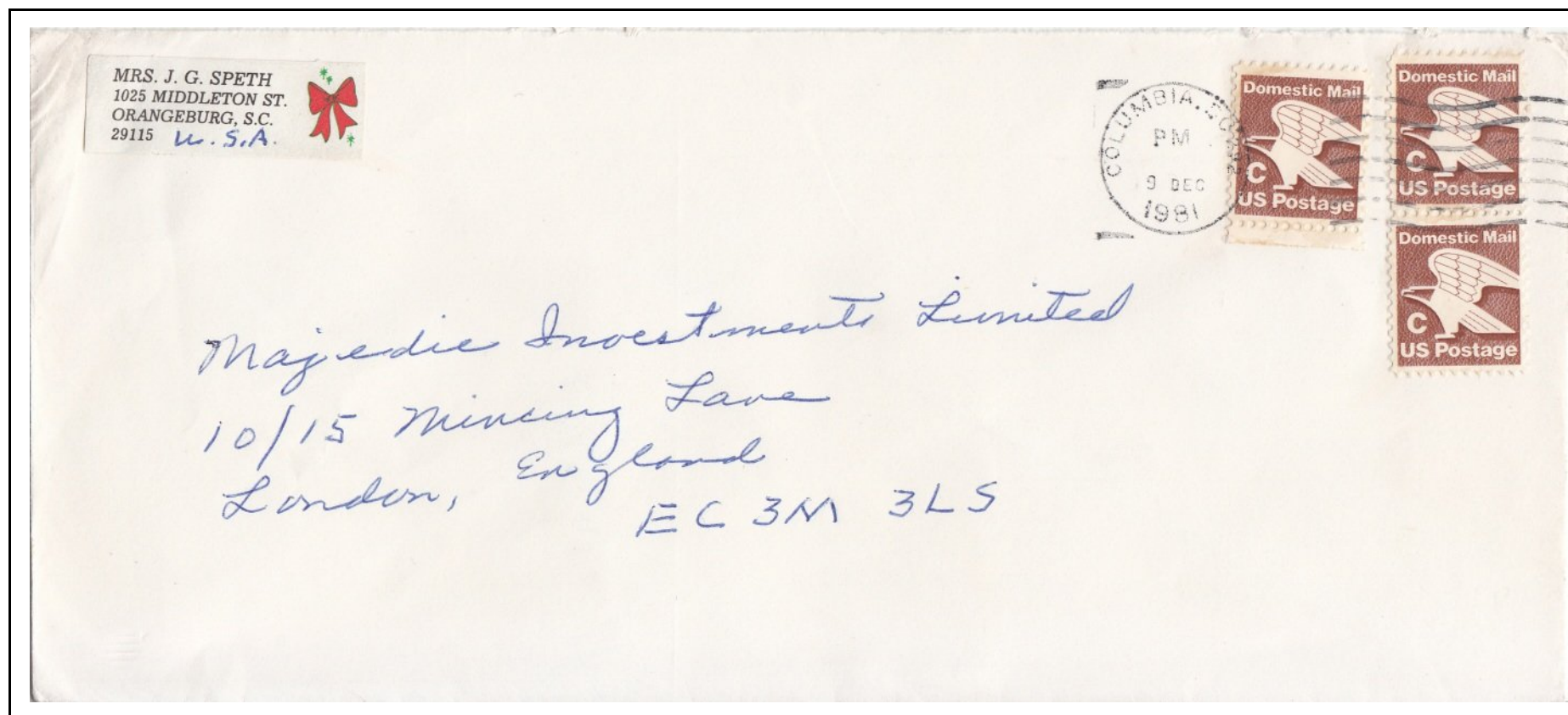
\* Snelson, K., Postage Due and the UPU in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century, Journal #33, Postage Due Mail Study group, March 2005



Hicksville, NY, 20.12.1981, paid 20¢, 10¢ short of the surface rate of 30¢.  
 US PO instructional marks: 'RETURN TO SENDER / INSUFFICIENT POSTAGE'  
 'RETURN FOR BETTER ADDRESS / SHOW COUNTRY OF DESTINATION / IN ENGLISH & NO ABBREVIATION'.  
 All seemingly ignored!

Columbia, SC, 9.12.1981, paid 3x 20¢, sufficient for 2<sup>nd</sup> oz. surface rate of 30¢ + 17¢.

Surface rate increases by 17¢ per additional ounce up to 8oz.



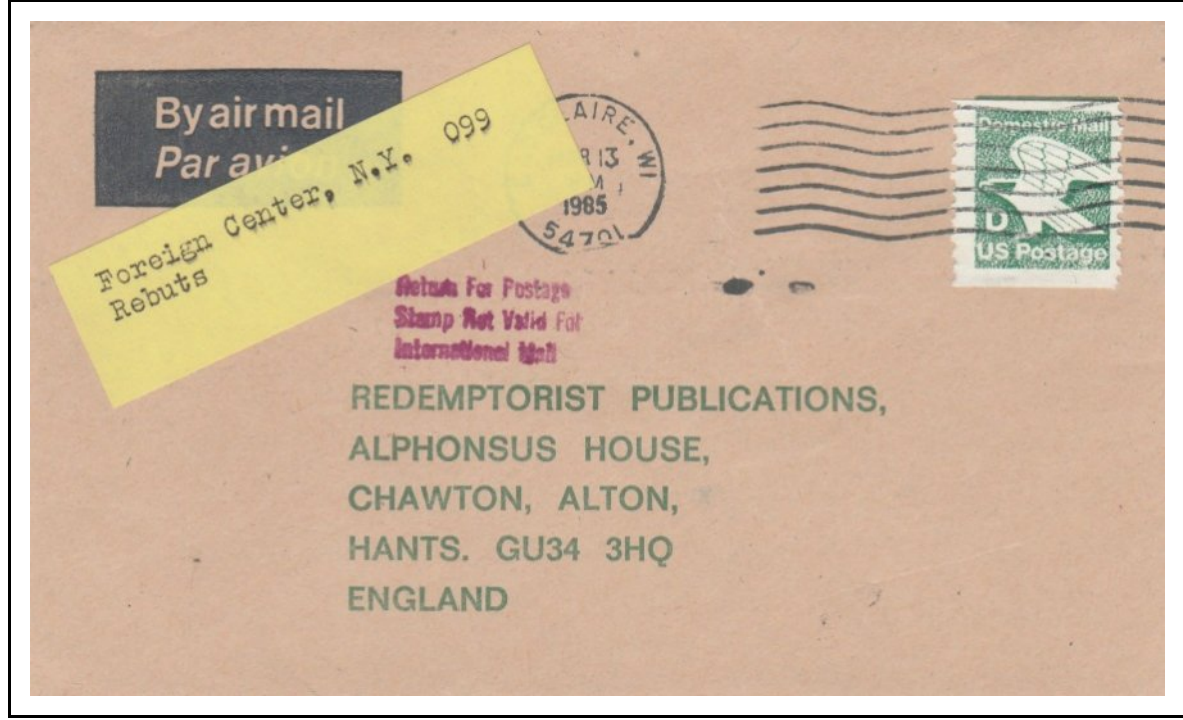
**UPU rules** require that postage stamps clearly show the name of the issuing country and a value when used on mail to be sent between countries.

Thus "contingency" or non-denominated stamps do not meet this regulation.

**“Eagle D”, 22¢, 1<sup>st</sup> February 1985**

... Post Office intervention mostly ignored!

Direct Trans-Atlantic air mail: per ½ oz.	44¢	From 17 <sup>th</sup> February 1985
International surface letter 1 <sup>st</sup> ounce	37¢	From 17 <sup>th</sup> February 1985



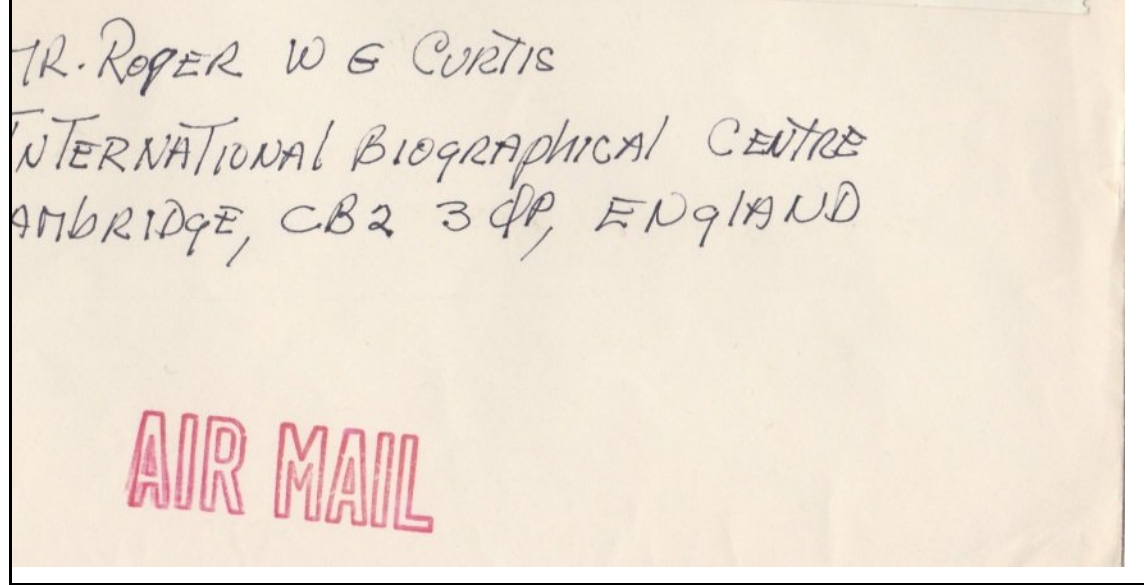
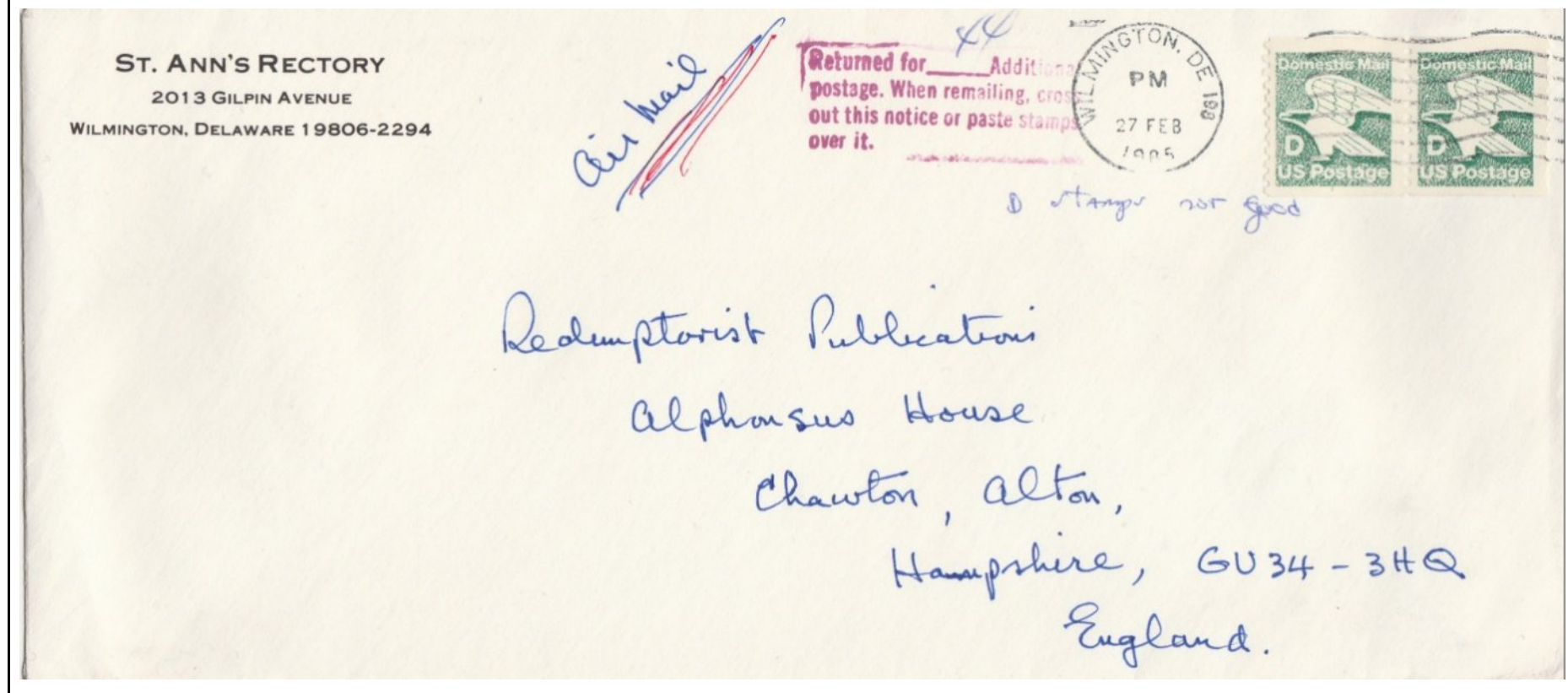
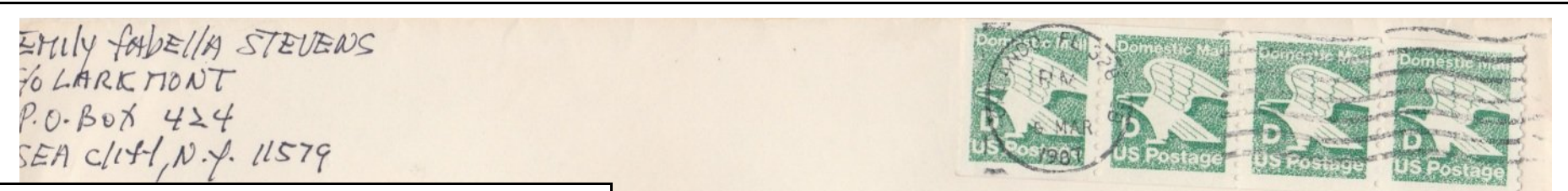
Eau Claire, WI, 13.03.1985, paid 22¢. Local PO instructed 'Return for Postage / Stamp Not Valid For / International Mail'. However, forwarded to the NY exchange office which “Rebutted” the instruction.



Note:  
UK sorting desk  
phosphor dots and desk  
ident numbers '6' and '3'.

Oakland, CA, 15.02.1985. Originally underpaid 20¢ (by 'Flag over Capitol' 20¢ coil stamp, under Eagle D coils). 'Returned for \_\_\_ Additional / postage When remailing, cross / out this notice or paste stamps / over it'. [For airmail service – although not requested]. By the time it was re-mailed the new airmail rate was in force, so paid 2x 22¢ for 44¢.

Wilmington, DE, 27.02.1985. Paid 2x 22¢ for 1<sup>st</sup> airmail step of 44¢. Local PO annotated “D stamps not good” and added the instructional hand stamp: 'Returned for \_\_\_ Additional / postage. When remailing, cross / out this notice or paste stamps / over it'.



Orlando, FL, 6.03.1987. Paid 4x 22¢ for 1 oz. airmail of 88¢. No Post Office intervention.

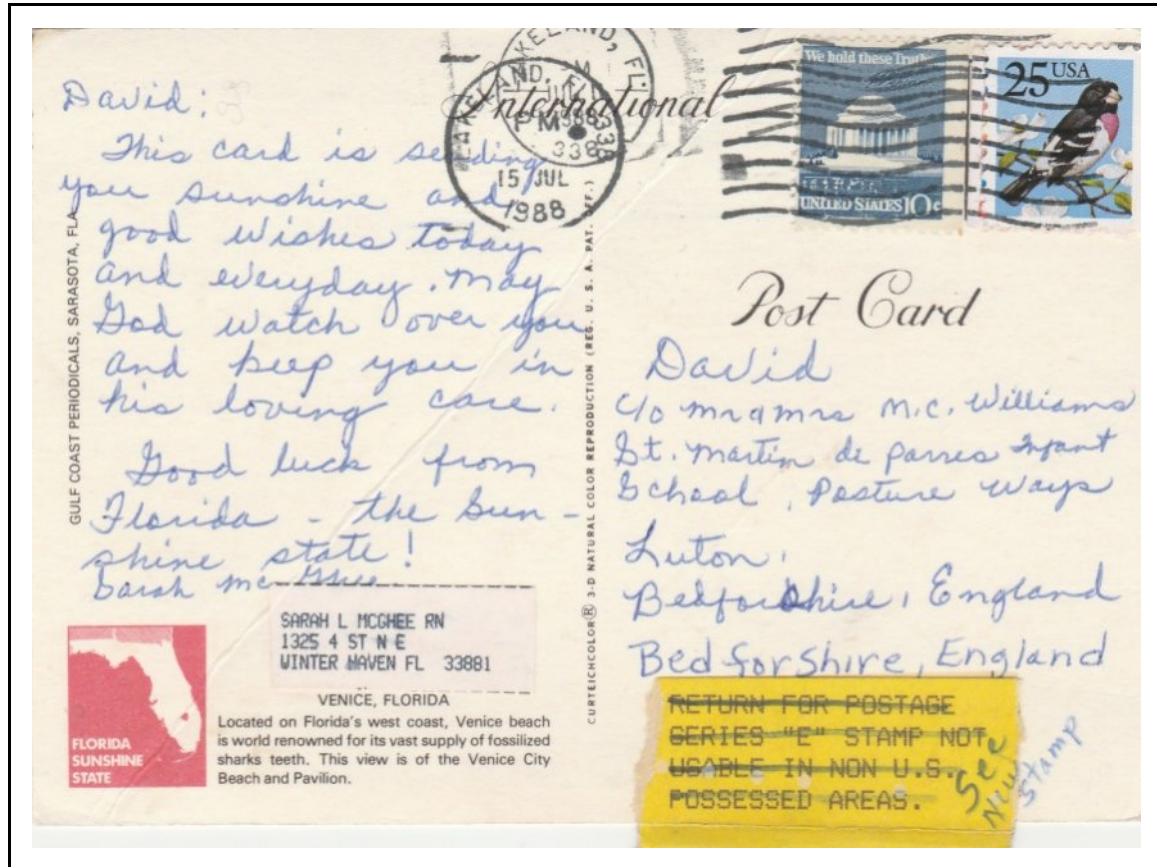
**"E Earth", 25¢, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1988**

... inconsistent Post Office intervention continues.

The 1<sup>st</sup> step surface and airmail rate difference is growing smaller as rates increase.

Direct Trans-Atlantic air mail: per ½ oz.  
International surface letter 1<sup>st</sup> ounce

45¢ From 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1988  
40¢ From 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1988



Lakeland, FL, 11.07.1988,  
originally paid 25¢, (Earth  
E under new stamps).

PO Instruction label:  
'RETURN FOR POSTAGE  
/ SERIES "E" STAMP NOT  
/ USABLE IN NON U.S. /  
POSSESSED AREAS.'

Paid additional 35¢  
towards the new  
international pc surface  
rate of 28¢ or airmail pc  
rate of 36¢.

Re-mailed 15.07.1988

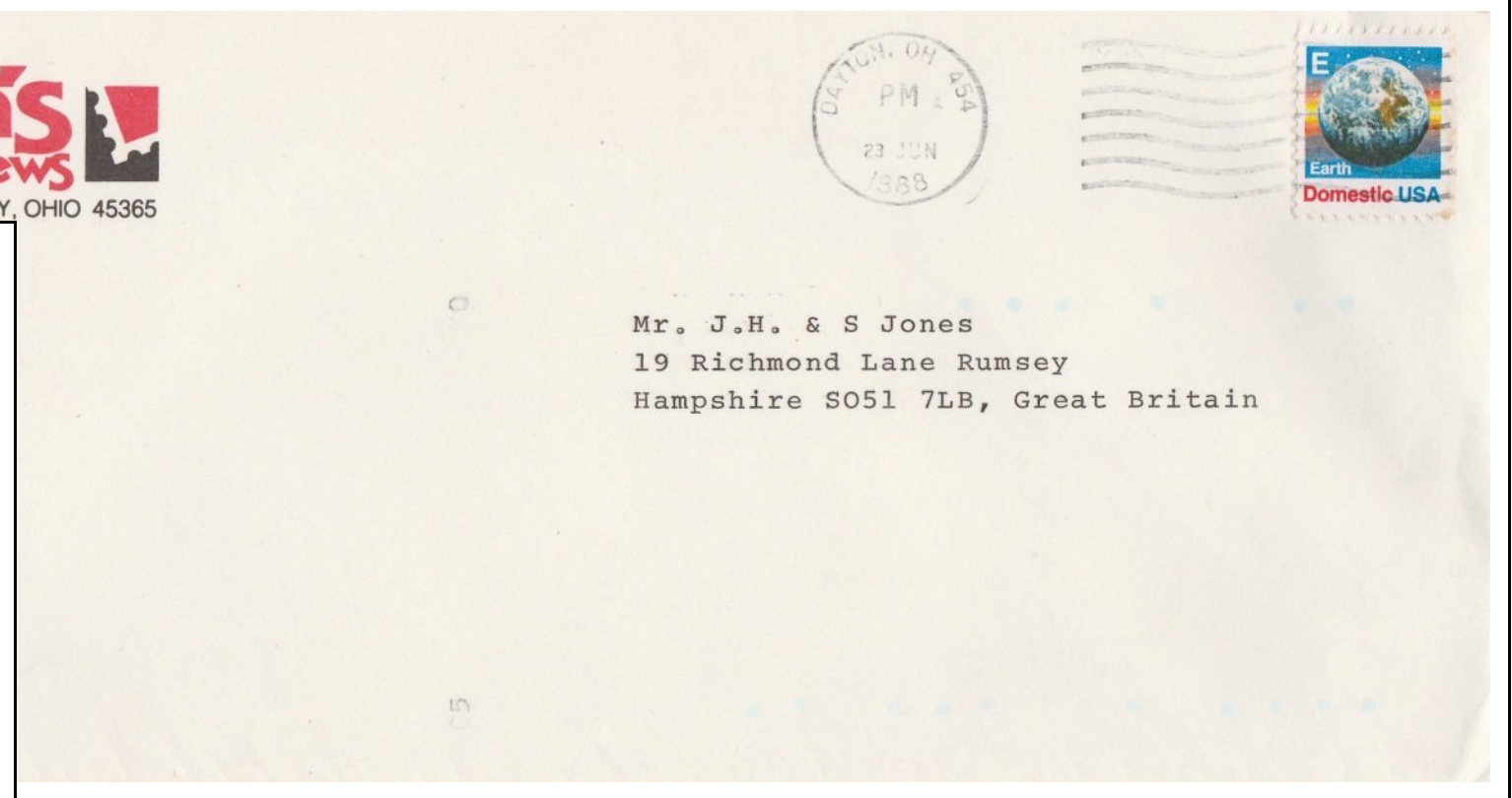
Wilmington, DE, 25.04.1988, paid  
25¢ for pc surface rate of 28¢.  
Manuscript Tax fraction  
'CANCELLED'.



Atlanta, GA, 23.04.1988. Paid 4x 25¢ overpaying the 1 oz airmail rate of 90¢.



**Linn's  
Stamp News**  
P.O. BOX 29 SIDNEY, OHIO 45365



Dayton, OH, 23.06.1988, paid at 25¢ first class domestic letter rate to Great Britain!

British foreign sorting desk blue phosphor dots in evidence on the letters with some coding desk ident letters also visible.

**"F Flower", 29¢, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1991**

... 4¢ make-up stamp introduced to bridge from old to new domestic first class rate. Plus an additional "F Flag" contingency stamp.

The 1<sup>st</sup> step surface rate exceeds the 1<sup>st</sup> step airmail rate.

Direct Trans-Atlantic air mail: 1<sup>st</sup> ½ oz.  
International surface letter 1<sup>st</sup> ounce

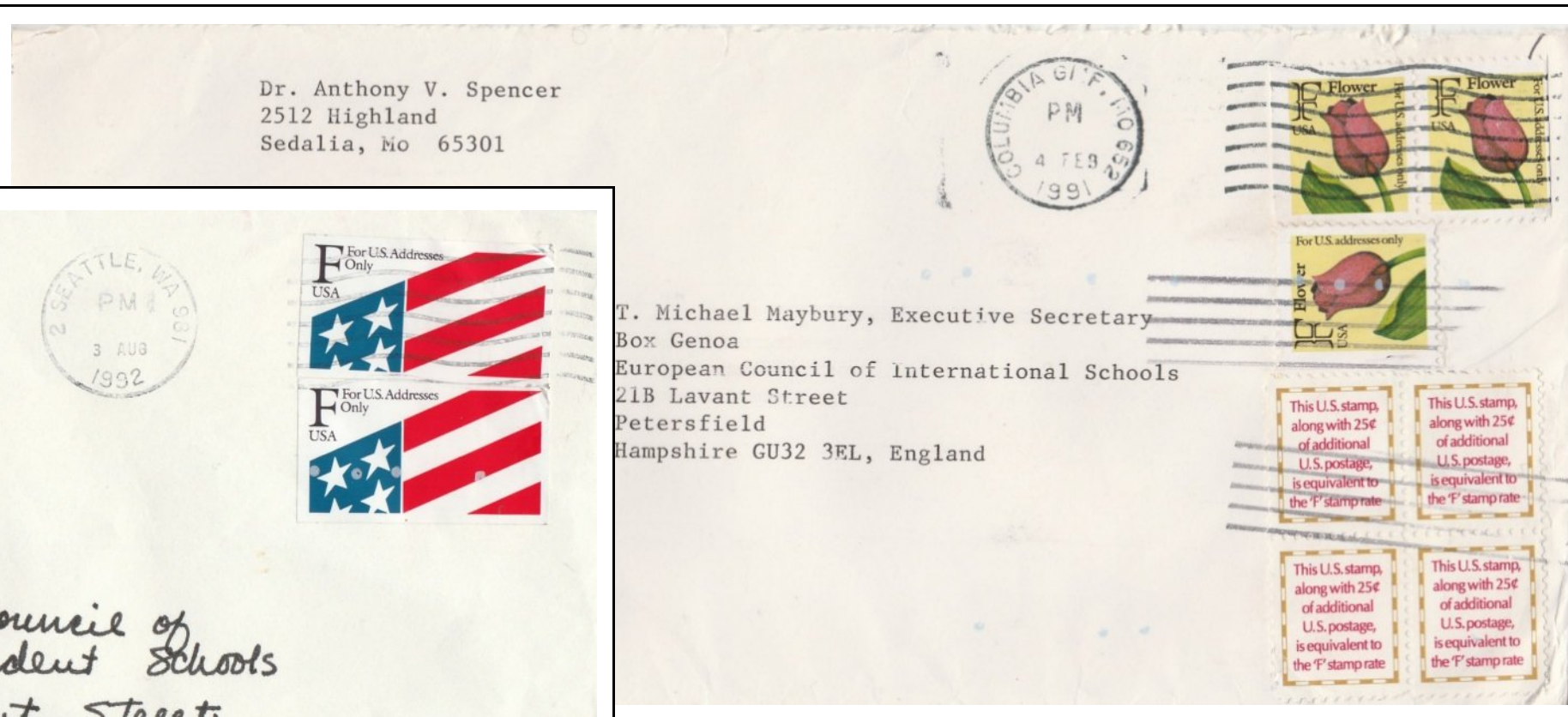
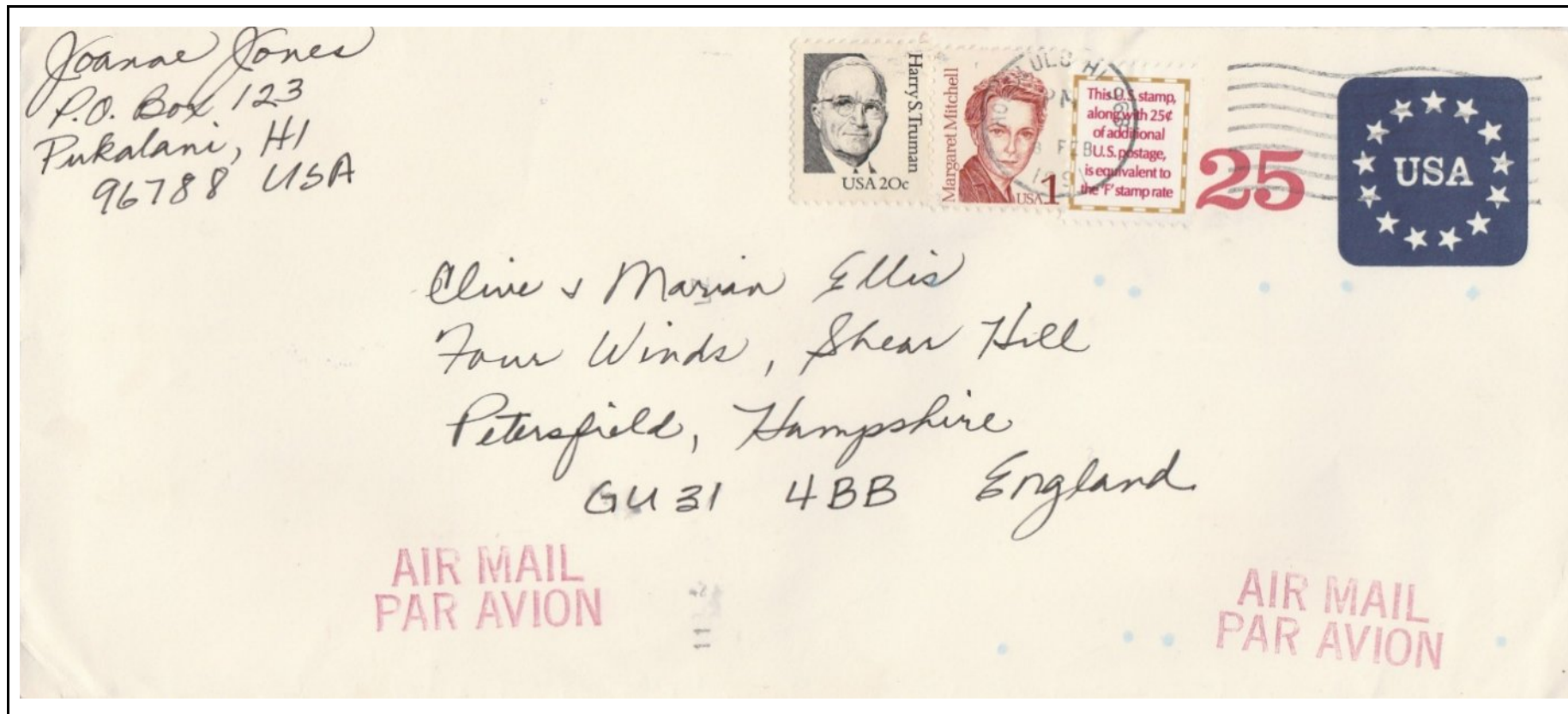
50¢ From 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1991  
70¢ From 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1991



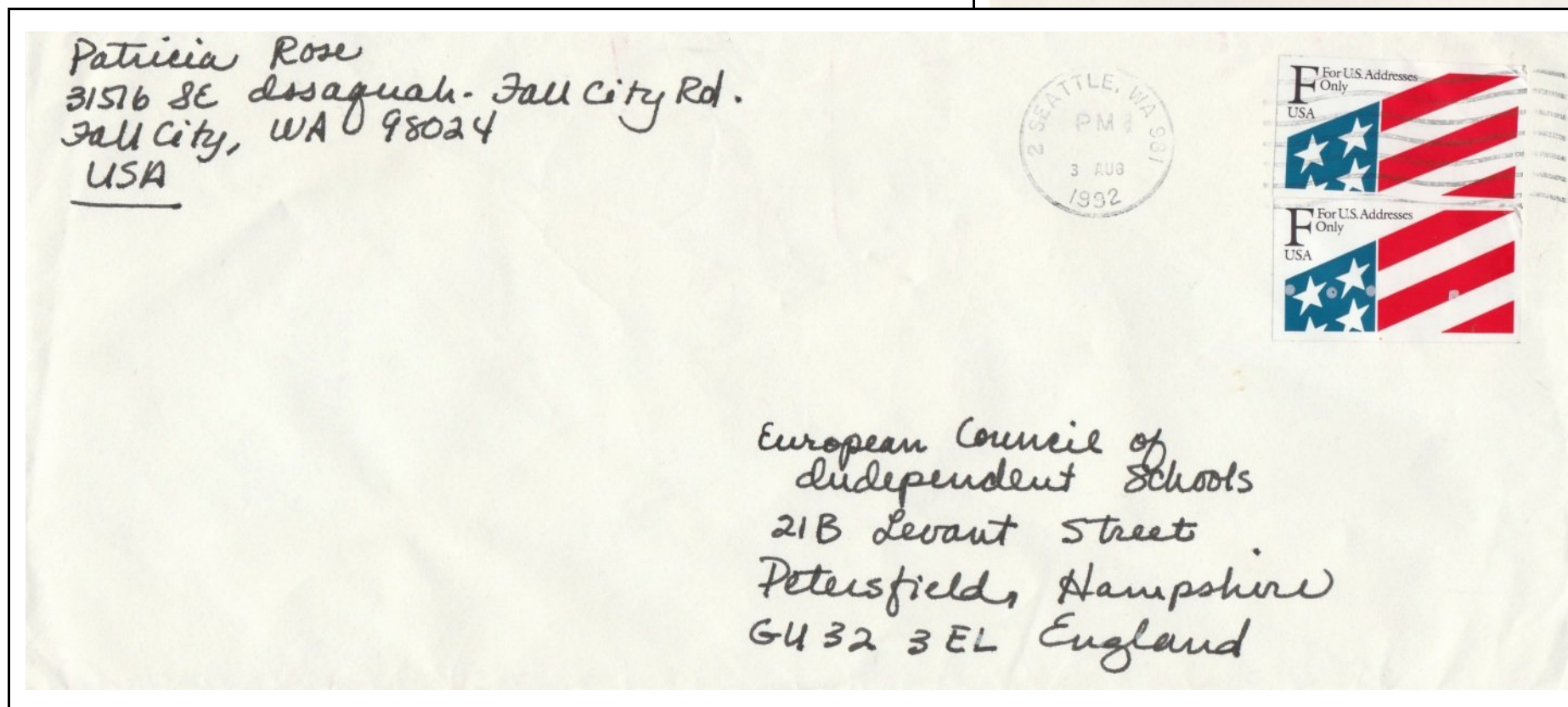
Burlington, VT, 22.02. 1991, paid 29¢, but addressed to England and endorsed for Air Mail! Stamp specifies "For U.S. Addresses only".

Honolulu, HI, 8.02.1991, 25¢ PSE + 4¢ make-up + 1¢ + 20¢ correctly pays 1<sup>st</sup> step airmail rate of 50¢.

Seattle, WA, 3.08.1992, paid 2x 29¢ underpaying the surface rate of 70¢.



Columbia, MO, 4.02.1991, paid 3x 29¢ + 4x 4¢ = 103¢ overpaying the 1 oz airmail rate of 50¢ + 45¢ = 95¢.





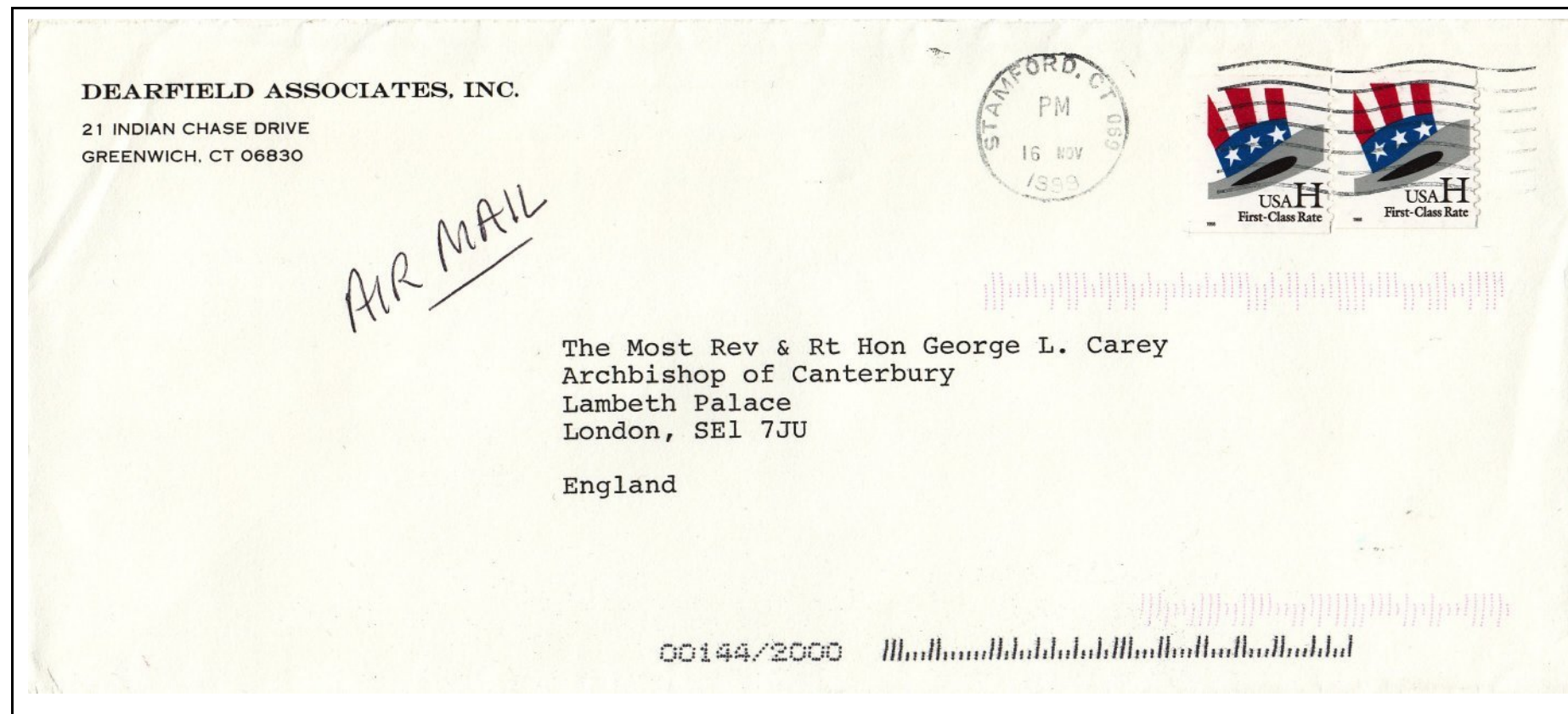
**"H Hat", 33¢, 9<sup>th</sup> November 1998**

... Introduced early, with 1¢ "Rooster" make-up stamp, for 10<sup>th</sup> January 1999 domestic rate rise.

Direct Trans-Atlantic air mail: 1<sup>st</sup> ½ oz.  
International surface letter service withdrawn

60¢ From 9<sup>th</sup> July 1995  
From 8<sup>th</sup> July 1995

Stamford, CT, 16.11.1999,  
paid 2x 33¢ overpaying  
½ oz. airmail rate of 60¢.



The POSTNET (Postal Numeric Encoding Technique) barcode was introduced in 1998 by USPS to encode zip code information to assist automated sorting<sup>1</sup>.

The black POSTNET 9-digit bar code represents the printed digits '00144/2000' which indicates 'GB/ London' for automatic sorting and routing to the US foreign exchange office.\*

The two rows of purple bar codes are applied in Britain for automatic sorting and relate to the target GB postcode.

Northern VA, 11.08.1999,  
2 oz foreign airmail letter:  
60¢ + 3x 40¢ = \$1.80.



### Epilogue

Effective Aug. 13, 1998, the U.S. Postal Service revised its International Mail Manual and Domestic Mail Manual to allow nondenominated stamps, "except for precanceled stamps with rate markings", to be used for international mail. [International Mail Manual Issue 21, Chapter 1, section "152.2 Stamps"]

Post offices were required to accept, process and forward international mail bearing permitted 'G' (and later 'H' series) stamps "if the total postage paid is correct for the class and weight of the mail piece. The mail must not be returned solely because its postage includes one or more of the G stamps."

Source: Anthony S. Wawrukiewicz  
[www.spiritone.com/~tonywaw/For\\_Linn%27s\\_Readers.html](http://www.spiritone.com/~tonywaw/For_Linn%27s_Readers.html)

<sup>1</sup> POSTNET bar codes: New York Times 22 Oct 1998, Section G Page 6

\* 1) <https://postalmuseum.si.edu/exhibition/america%E2%80%99s-mailing-industry-the-united-states-postal-service/1970%E2%80%931993-improving>  
2) <https://www.quine.org/phil-pub.html>