

The "Presidential" series of definitive stamps was initiated in 1938, with all values of the sheet stamps and booklets appearing that year. The coil stamps appeared in two consecutive weeks of January 1939. Beginning with the I¢ stamp, the dates of issue follow in step with the increasing denominations up through the 50¢ value.

The stamp subjects are busts of all deceased United States presidents in the order in which they were elected and the "cents" values are denominated to match until Grover Cleveland, whose two terms were non-consecutive. As was customary at the time, the fractional cent values depicted non-presidential subjects.

Other than shades, there are relatively few varieties except the 1-1/2¢, 2¢ & 3¢ values, which were used for experimental "electric eye" alignment of the perforating machinery, which had markings discoverable in the selvage markings. A variety of the \$1.00 stamp was mistakenly printed on USIR watermarked paper in 1951, and the color of the \$1.00 was changed distinctly in 1954.

The series continued without additions or changes until 1954, when the "Liberty" series was introduced. The issue date of the stamp appears below its identification, while the president's term of office is above the stamp itself. Non-presidential personages have their birth and death dates instead, and the White House shows the initial date of construction.

1938 - 1939

ROTARY PRESS PRINTING PERFORATED II X 10 1/2

1706 - 1790



Benjamin Franklin May 19, 1938

There was no use for a single 1/2¢ stamp, so these stamps were used for make-up rates with other stamps. They were also used to make change when other stamps were purchased.

George Washington April 25, 1938

The 1¢ stamp was most often used for postcards, but filled the rate for drop letters where there was no carrier delivery, second class mail, bulk mail and certificates of mailing.

1789 - 1797



1731 - 1802



Martha Washington May 5, 1938

1-1/2¢ was primarily a third class rate, which included circulars and books and catalogs into the early 1950's. Non-profit organizations could use the stamp for two ounce franking from 1952 - 1958, and it could be used to mail unsealed greeting cards.

1938 - 1939

"ELECTRIC EYE" PRINTINGS

In 1939 and 1941, in an effort to improve the accuracy of perforating sheets of stamps, the Post Office Department experimented on three values of the Presidential Series, using a photoelectric sensor to detect lines and blocks printed on the selvage of the sheets and adjust the alignment of the perforating pins to run exactly between the stamps.

The 2¢ and 3¢ values were isssued on April 5, 1939. Blocks from these issues may be identified by the plate number, or by the fact that the plate number appeared on the selvage next to the third stamp from the corner, not

the traditional position adjacent to the corner stamp.

The 1-1/2¢ value was issued on January 16, 1941 and the position of the plate number reverted to the standard of placement next to the corner stamp. Vertical blocks and horizontal lines apeared in the selvage.

Eventually, all or most of the rotary press values of the series were printed with markings for the "electric eye," as it was called, for the method was very effective in reducing off-center stamps to a great degree.



1938 - 1939

1797 - 1801



John Adams June 3, 1938

2¢ was a drop-letter rate as well as the postcard rate to Canada, Mexico and the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain. It became the domestic postcard rate in 1950. Magazines mailed for local delivery could be mailed until 1954, and it covered certain third class mail rates.

Thomas Jefferson June 3, 1938

The first class letter rate was covered by a 3¢ stamp during the life of this stamp, and it paid for postcards with attachments as well. It also covered the third class rate for two to four ounces, the fourth class book rate and surface mail to Canada and Mexico.

1801 - 1809



James Madison July 1, 1938

1809 - 1817



4¢ paid the domestic air mail rate for postcards and also the postcard surface rate to UPU members. The return receipt fee was 4¢, and it was used for international printed matter, books and merchandise samples.

"ELECTRIC EYE" PRINTINGS

APRIL 5, 1939

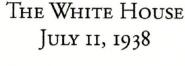


1938 - 1939

"ELECTRIC EYE" PRINTINGS



Cornerstone Laid 1792





The 4-1/2¢ stamp paid for multiple third class postage and multiple international printed matter rates. It also covered third class postage with insurance and fourth class book rate with third class matter enclosed.

James Monroe July 2, 1938

The 5¢ stamp paid for domestic air mail as well as that to Canada and Mexico. The most common early use is on international surface mail to UPU countries. Other solo uses were the minimum insurance fee, the dead letter return fee and certificate of mailing fee.

1817 - 1825



John Quincy Adams July 28, 1938

1825 - 1829



The primary use of the 6¢ stamp was to pay the domestic air mail rate from 1934 to 1944 and again after 1949, as well as air mail to Mexico and Canada. Contractors and civilians using military post offices could use the rate, and it applied to mail sent to prisoners of war in foreign countries

1829 - 1837

Andrew Jackson August 4, 1938



There were few uses for a single 7¢ stamp until the domestic air mail rate was set there in 1958, long after it had been replaced by the Liberty series. It could be used on international postcards or surface mail to a UPU country, or the return receipt fee on diplomatic mail.

Martin van Buren August II, 1938

The 8¢ stamp did not see much use until domestic and Canadian air mail rate was raised to that figure in 1944. The rate also paid for air mail within the U.S. combined with surface mail to other UPU countries, or surface mail to Europe and air mail beyond that. Other uses were special second and fourth class mail rates and the parcel post fee to zones 1 and 2.

1837 - 1841



William Henry Harrison August 18, 1938

UNITED STATES POSTAGE

The usual usage of the 9¢ stamp was on a three ounce first class letter, while one of the more exotic uses was surface transport of a postcard abroad, but with air service on both ends. A special rate for the mailing of library books or international samples also involved the 9¢ stamp.

John Tyler September 2, 1938

1841 - 1845



10¢ was an airmail rate to a number of countries in the lifetime of this stamp, including Mexico, Haiti, Bermuda, Cuba, Jamaica and other Caribbean islands, later including all of Central and South America. It also paid for postage between American island possesions in the Pacific. Other domestic uses include second and fourth class mail, return receipts and customs clearance fees.

James K. Polk September 8, 1938

The 11¢ stamp had no designated single-rate usage during the period it was issued. It was occasionally used for second class transient payment or parcel post over one pound. Another single usage could be international surface postage for two or three ounce items. Prior to 1944, the 11¢ stamp covered the rate for a domestic special delivery postcard rate as well.

1845 - 1849



ZACHARY TAYLOR SEPTEMBER 14, 1938

1849 - 1850



Almost all of the single-rate usages of the 12¢ stamp were for fourth class mail, but it also covered airmail postage to Central America for one half ounce letters. Early in its period, it paid the fee for a local special delivery letter or special delivery postcard to Canada. All other uses were for multiple rates, such as a four-ounce first class letter.

MILLARD FILLMORE SEPTEMBER 22, 1938

1850 - 1853



The 13¢ stamp was used primarily to pay for special delivery of a first class letter domestically or to Canada before the fee was raised to 15¢ in 1944. It also paid the special delivery fee on a letter not otherwise requiring postage. Most other usages were on third or fourth class mail.

Franklin Pierce October 6, 1938

There were very few occasions where a single 14¢ stamp was sufficient, and this issue is one of the least used of the Presidential series. It covered a special delivery postcard, business reply mail and several parcel post rates. It also paid the international four-ounce surface rate and had international parcel post usage.

1853 - 1857



James Buchanan October 13, 1938

1857 - 1861



The 15¢ stamp was most often used to pay airmail rates, but frequently was used for the minimum registry fee or the special delivery fee on otherwise free mail. It covered the minimum charge for first class COD fees as well. 15¢ was also the international small packet rate, and it could be used to pay customs clearance fees.

1861 - 1865



Most solo uses of the 16¢ stamp involve special delivery, such as air mail special delivery to the U.S. and Canada until 1944. A regular special delivery letter cost 16¢ from 1944 to 1948, or a special delivery postcard from 1949 to 1951. Some parcel post rates could be paid with a 16¢ stamp, as could book rates.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

OCTOBER 20, 1938

Andrew Johnson October 27, 1938

The most common, but still infrequent, use for the 17¢ stamp was on registered letters delivered locally until 1944. Other solo uses were on third class mail with insurance or a five-ounce letter sent to a UPU country.

1865 - 1869



1869 - 1877



Ulysses S. Grant November 3, 1938

Single 18¢ stamps were most commonly used to pay postage and registry fees on a first class letter until 1944. It also covered air mail special delivery letters until 1948. A domestic special delivery surface letter cost 18¢ from 1946 to 1948 as well as to Canada.

RUTHERFORD B. HAYES NOVEMBER 10, 1938

1877 - 1881



The solo usages of the 19¢ stamp were very few. Some possibilities were a special delivery air mail postcard from 1949 to 1951, a double weight special delivery letter from 1944 to 1948 or a special delivery letter from a member of the armed forces serving outside the U.S. until 1946. Most other uses are for parcel post.

James A. Garfield November 10, 1938

The 20¢ stamp was very frequently used to pay the air mail rate between the continental U.S. and Hawaii and Guam as well as to a number of latin American countries. For a brief period it was used singly on surface mail to certain African countries, too. Most other dometic uses combined registry, special delivery or fourth class charges.

1881



CHESTER A. ARTHUR NOVEMBER 22, 1938

1881 - 1885



Single 21¢ stamps were largely confined to use on special delivery air mail letters from 1944 to 1946 and again from 1949 to 1951. These rates applied to this service to Canada also. Almost all other usages are for a combination of services, usuall involving registered mail.

1938 - 1939

GROVER CLEVELAND NOVEMBER 22, 1938

1885 - 1889 1893 - 1897



Solo use of 22¢ stamps is far rarer than in combination with other values. One of the commoner uses was to pay the registration fee plus 1¢ for excess value. There were several short periods where international special delivery postcards cost 18¢ postage, and another usage was a double weight registered local letter with return receipt requested.

Benjamin Harrison December 2, 1938

Registered mail was the primary use of the 24¢ stamp, as a registered airmail letter with return receipt cost that. Other registry rates applied, but the other main usage was for fourth class mail or multiple rates.

1889 - 1893



William mcKinley December 2, 1938

1897 - 1901



The 25¢ stamp paid the rate for registered air mail to the U.S., Canada and Mexico until 1948. A certified letter with return receipt cost the same. Early in its life it covered surface postage to parts of Africa and air mail to Latin America. In 1946, air mail to Asias was included.

1938 - 1939

Theodore Roosevelt December 8, 1938

DECEMBER 8, 1938



30¢ was the minimum registry rate late in the usage period It could cover air mail special delivery to Hawaii or air mail to Midway and Canton Islands. Air mail to Europe or some parts of South America were other common uses for the stamp from 1939 to 1945.

William Howard Taft December 8, 1938

Other than registered mail usage, the 50¢ stamp was used mainly to pay the half-ounce air mail rate for letters to the Philippines and also to certain African countries via Miami and Brazil. Surface rates to Africa through Europe and to Pakistan and India required 50¢ postage also.

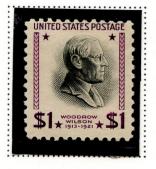
DECEMBER 8, 1938



FLAT PLATE PRINTINGS PERFORATED II

Woodrow Wilson August 29, 1938

1913 - 1921



No single rate uses for the \$1.00 stamp exist, but it nicely paid the double weight air mail rate to the Philippines and New Zealand, four times the rate to Asia, or for 2-1/2 ounces from Hawaii to the mainland.

1938 - 1939

FLAT PLATE PRINTINGS PERFORATED II

1913 - 1921



Woodrow Wilson August 31, 1954

Just before its replacement by the Liberty Series in 1954, The \$1.00 Woodrow Wilson stamp was reissued with its border in a distinctly different color, much lighter and redder than the earlier stamps.

Warren G. Harding September 29, 1938

The \$2.00 stamp has no specific rate for its single use, so it is primarily found on parcels or foreign air mail. One example of its use is for quintuple weight for air mail to Argentina.

1921 - 1923



Calvin Coolidge November 17, 1938

1923 - 1929



Again, their are no specific rates requiring a single \$5.00 stamp, but one is known on part of a parcel wrapper, and is suspected to be an overpayment of 20¢ just for the convenience of using one stamp. There are several instances on parcel tags from Puerto Rico combined with a postage meter strip.

1938 - 1939

COIL STAMPS PERFORATED IO VERTICALLY

January 20, 1939



i¢ George Washington



1-1/2¢ Martha Washington



2¢ John Adams



3¢ Thomas Jefferson



4¢ James Madison

1938 - 1939

COIL STAMPS PERFORATED IO VERTICALLY

January 20, 1939



4-1/2 ¢ White House



5¢ James Monroe



6¢ John Quincy Adams



10¢ John Tyler

1938 - 1939

COIL STAMPS PERFORATED IO HORIZONTALLY

January 27, 1939



i¢ George Washington



1-1/2¢ Martha Washington



2¢ John Adams



3¢ Thomas Jefferson

1938 - 1939

BOOKLET STAMPS
PERFORATED II X 10 1/2

May 19, 1938



i¢ George Washington

JUNE 3, 1938



2¢ John Adams

June 16, 1938



3¢ Thomas Jefferson

1938 - 1939

CANAL ZONE OVERPRINTS

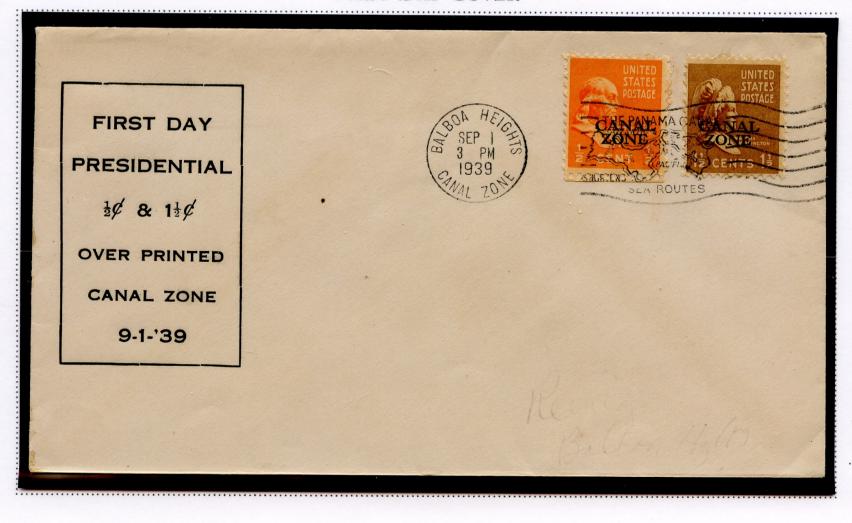
Benjamin Franklin September 1, 1939 Martha Washington September 1, 1939

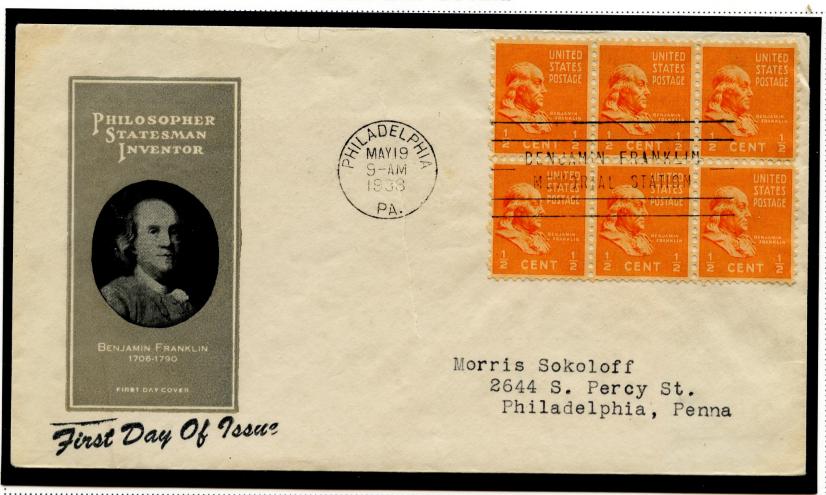




The 1/2¢ and 1-1/2¢ values of the Presidential Series were overprinted "CANAL ZONE" in two lines in 1939 for use in that territory. They were the only denominatios so treated.

FIRST DAY COVER

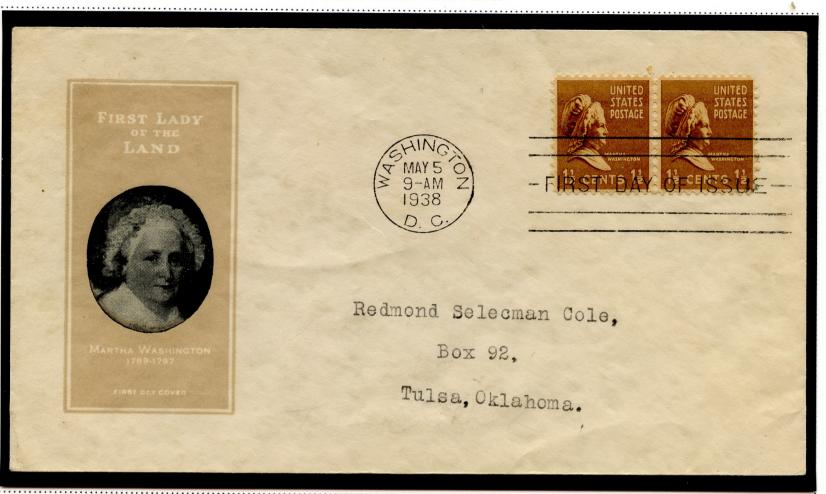




1/2¢ Benjamin Franklin



I¢ George Washington

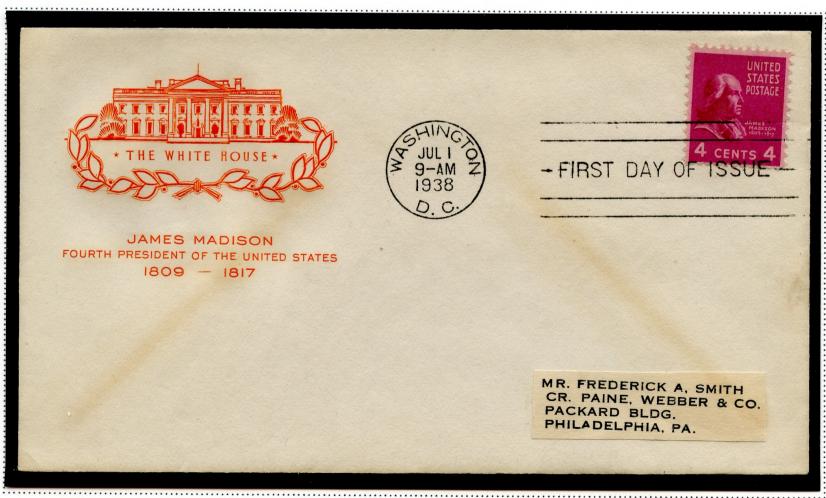


1-1/2¢ Martha Washington

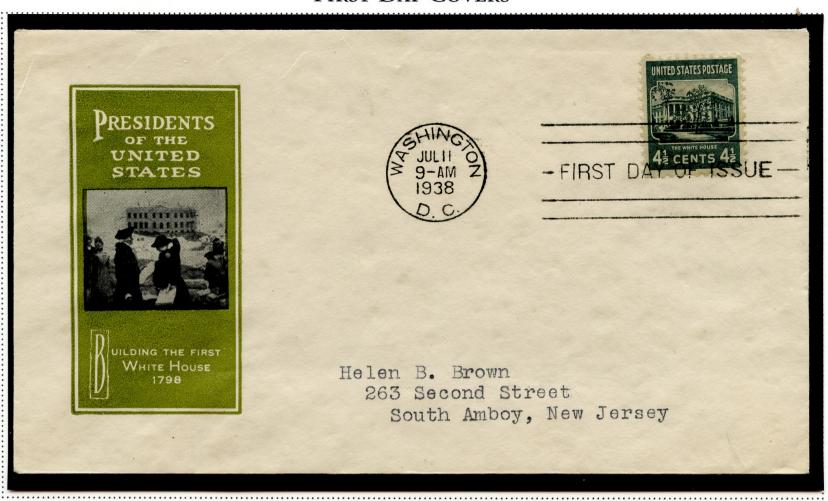




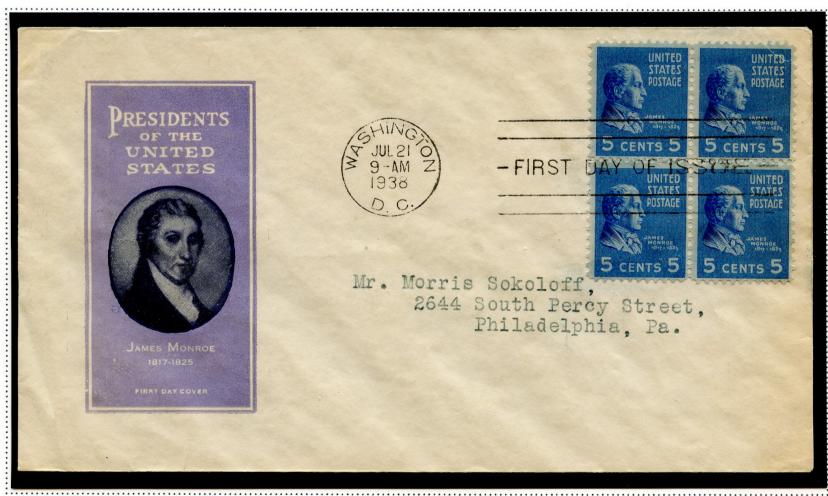
3¢ Thomas Jefferson



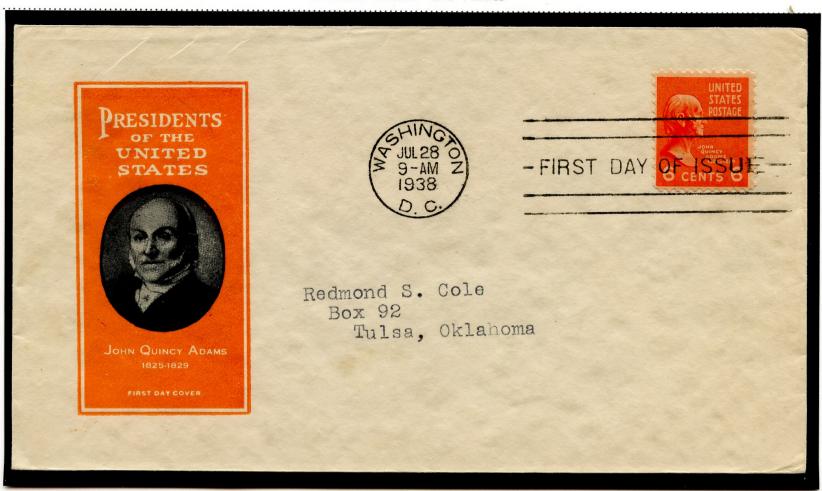
4¢ James Madison



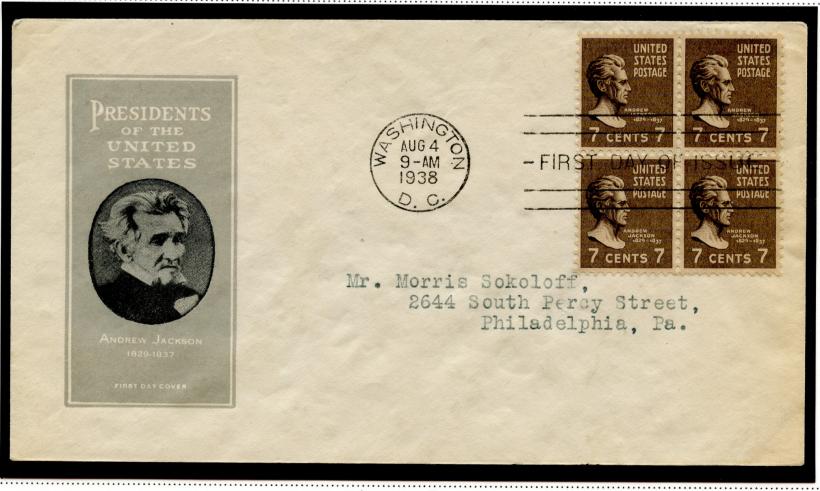
4-1/2¢ White House



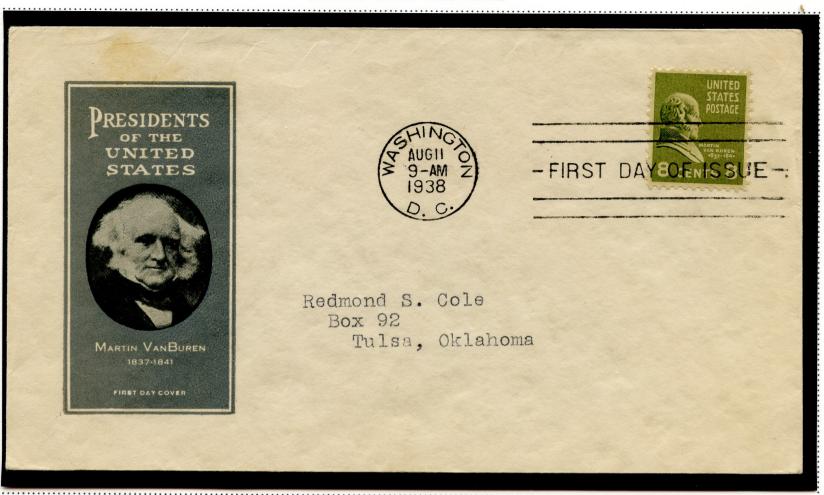
5¢ James Monroe



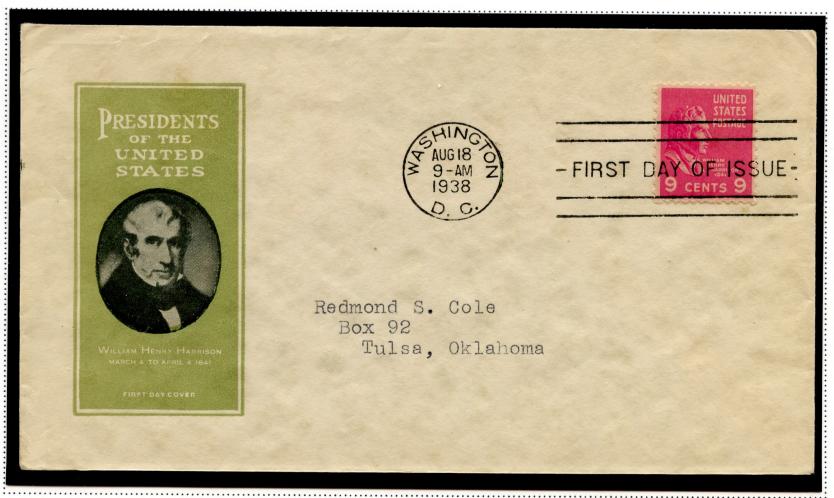
6¢ John Quincy Adams



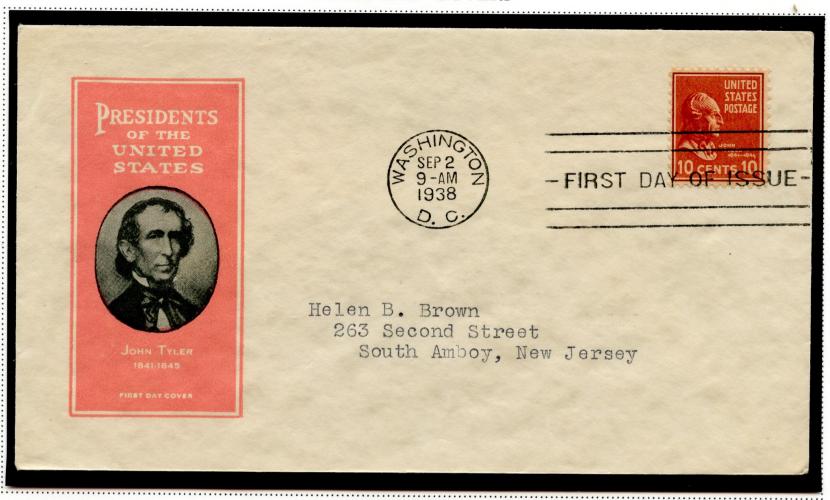
7¢ Andrew Jackson



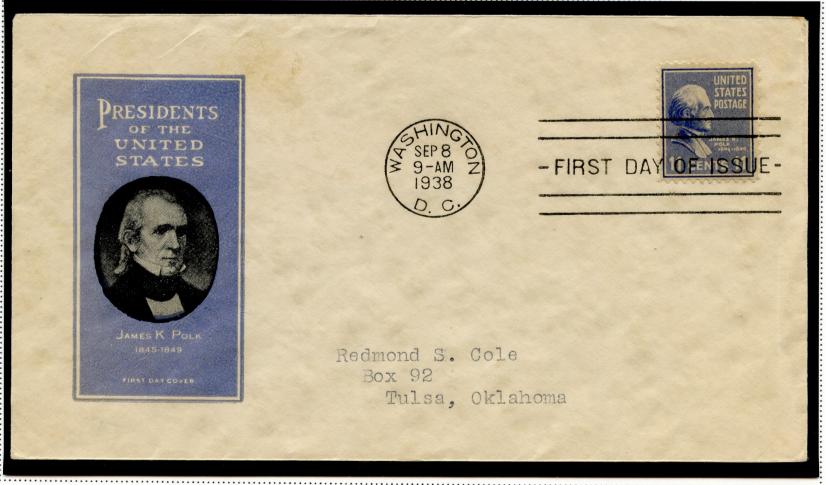
8¢ Martin Van Buren



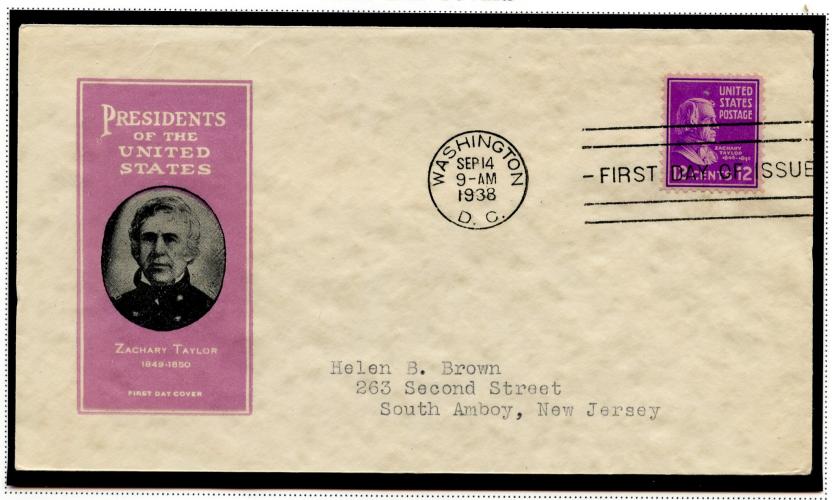
9¢ William Henry Harrison



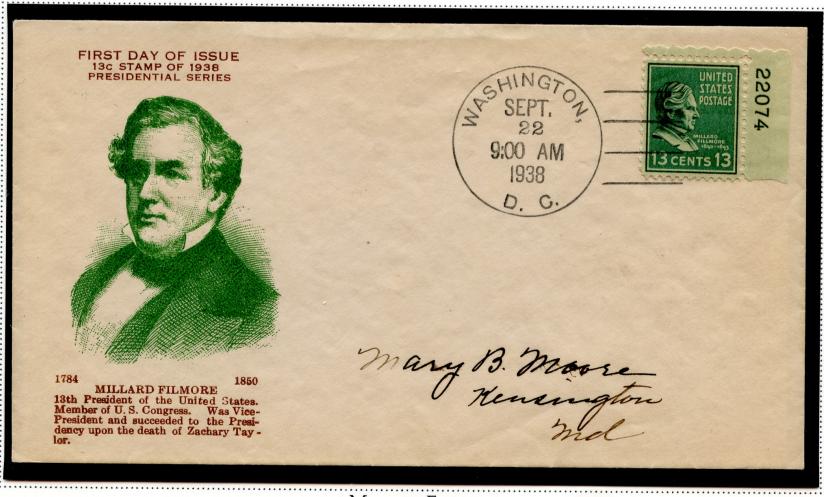
10¢ John Tyler



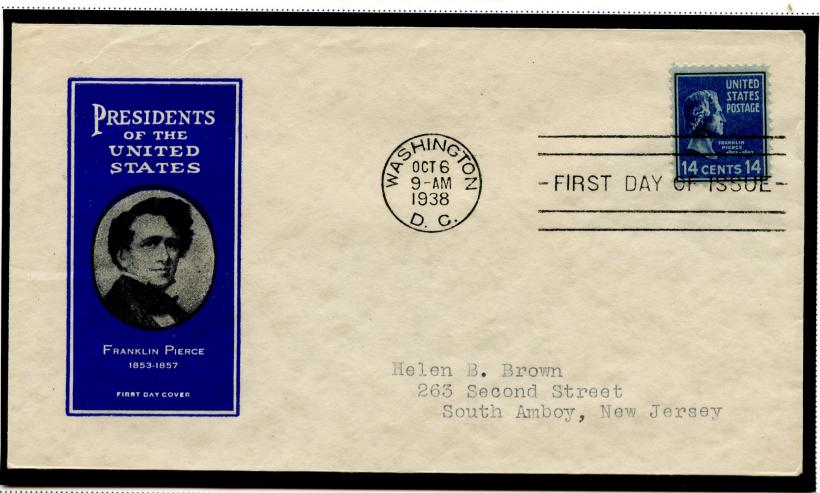
11¢ James Polk



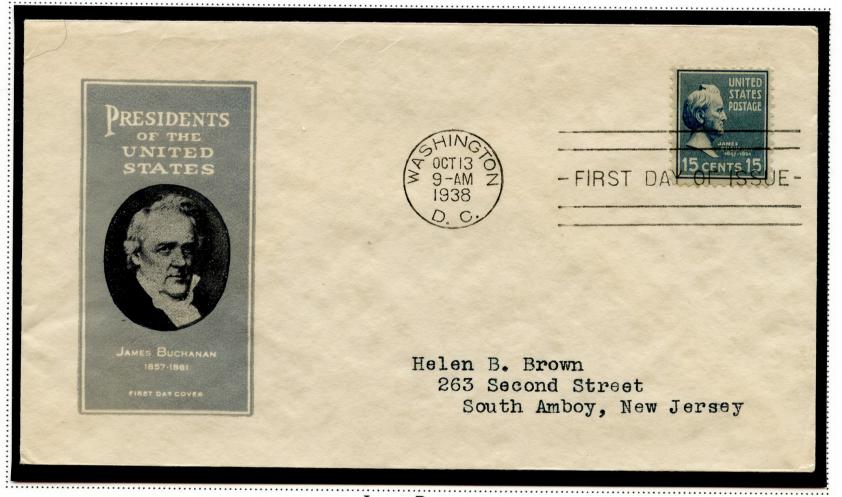
12¢ ZACHARY TAYLOR



13¢ Millard Fillmore



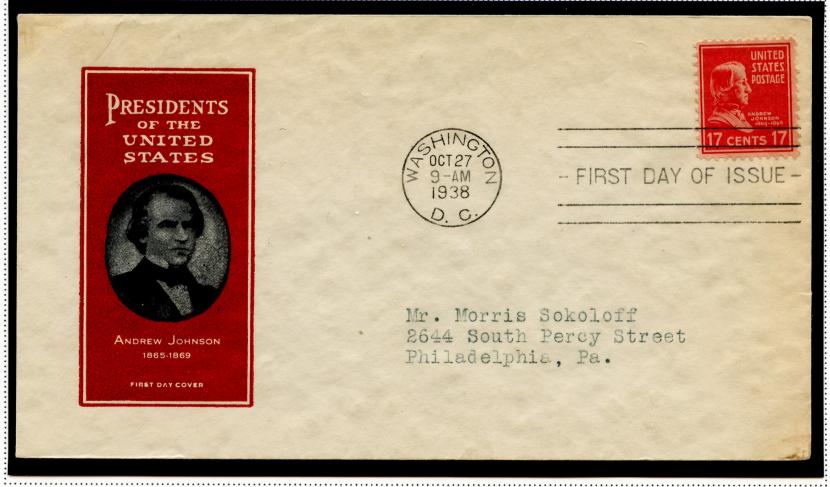
14¢ Franklin Pierce



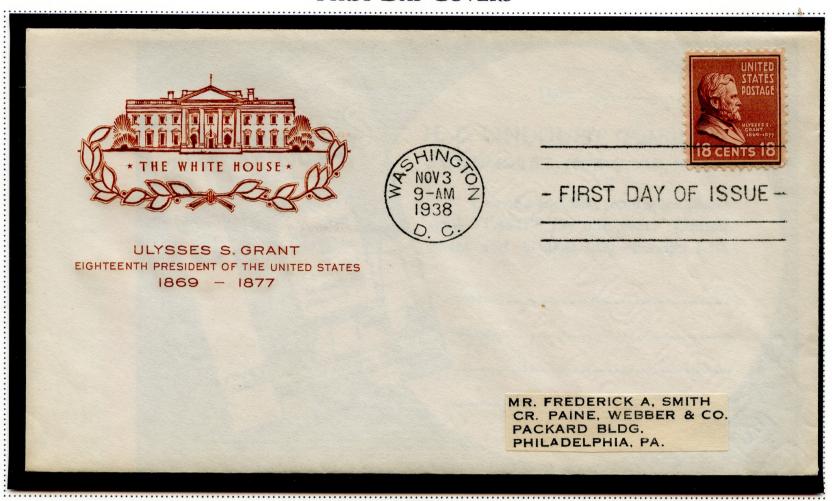
15¢ James Buchanan



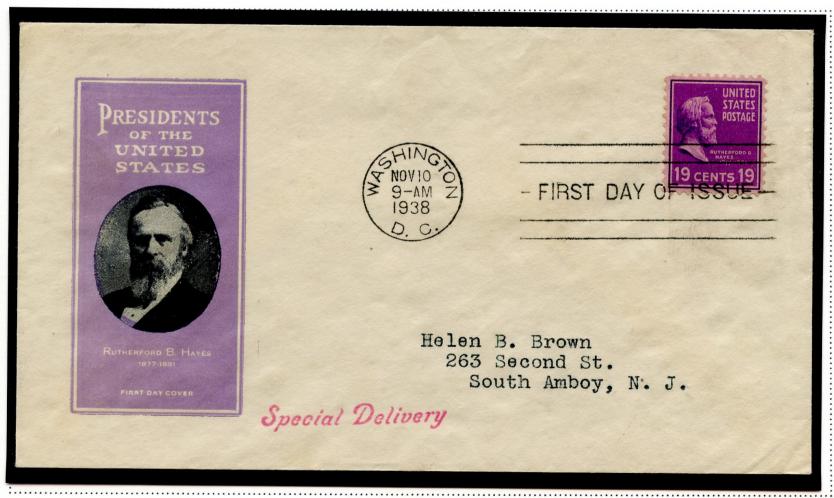
16¢ Abraham Lincoln



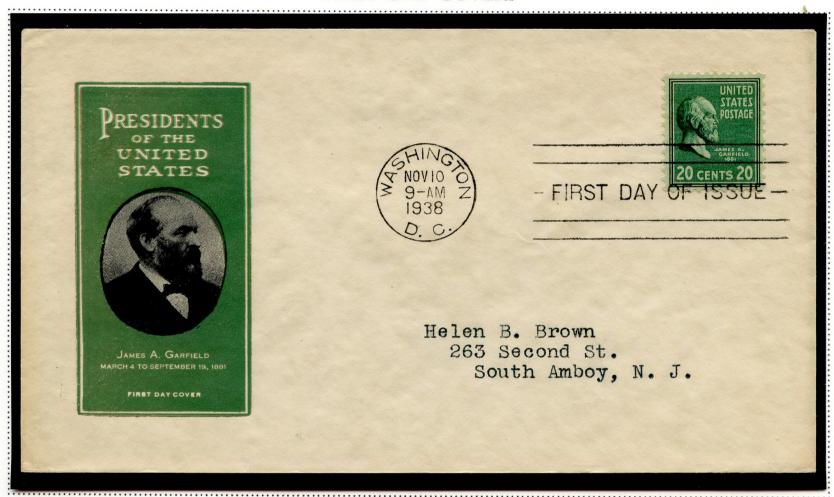
17¢ Andrew Johnson



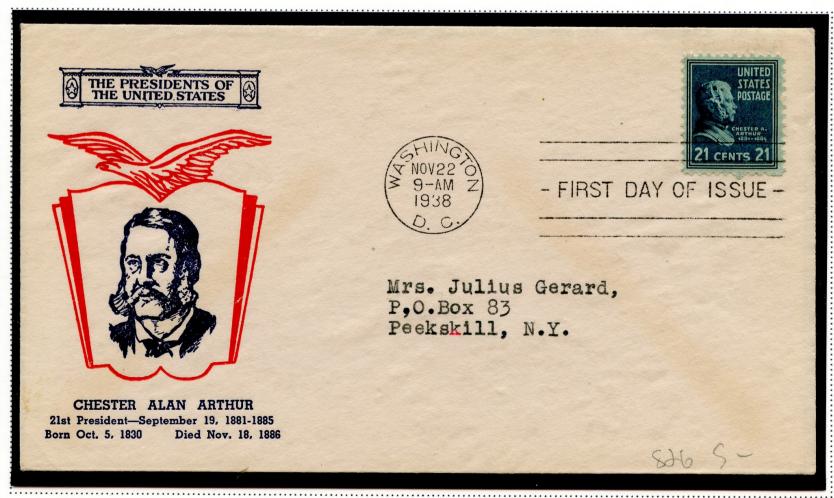
18¢ Ulysses S. Grant



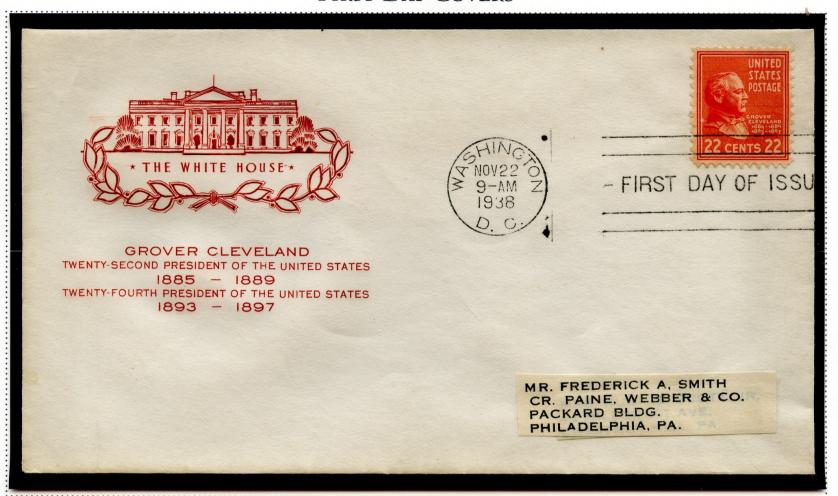
19¢ Rutherford B. Hayes



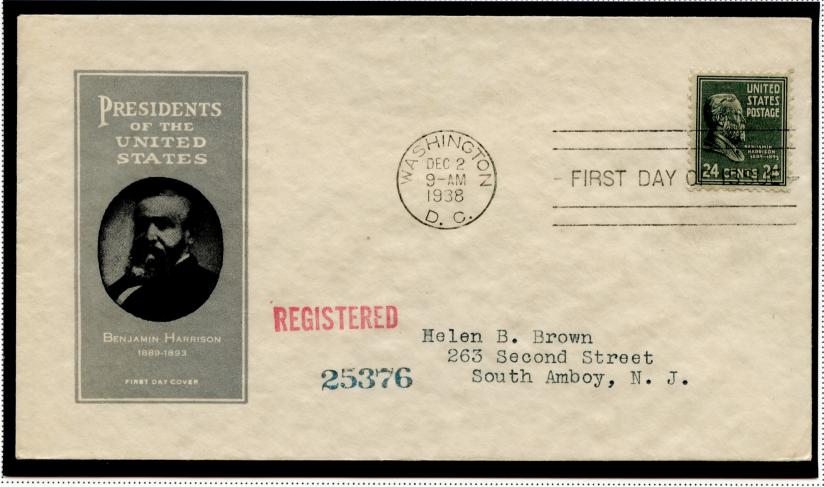
20¢ James A. Garfield



21¢ CHESTER A. ARTHUR



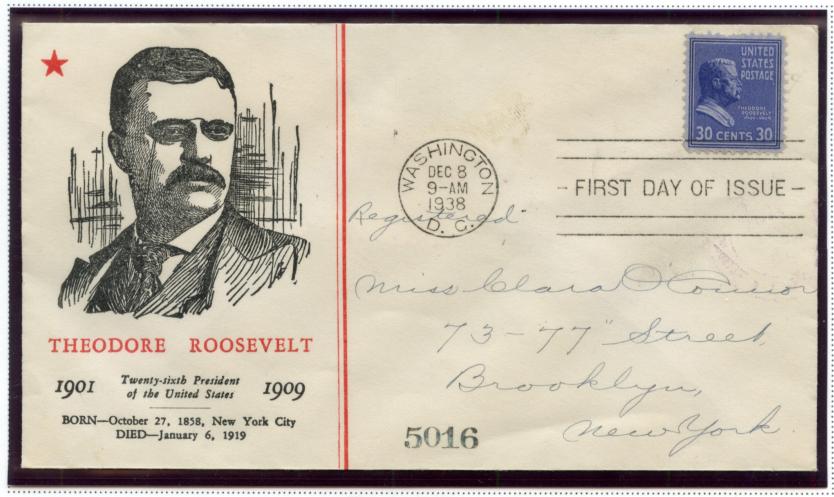
22¢ GROVER CLEVELAND



24¢ Benjamin Harrison

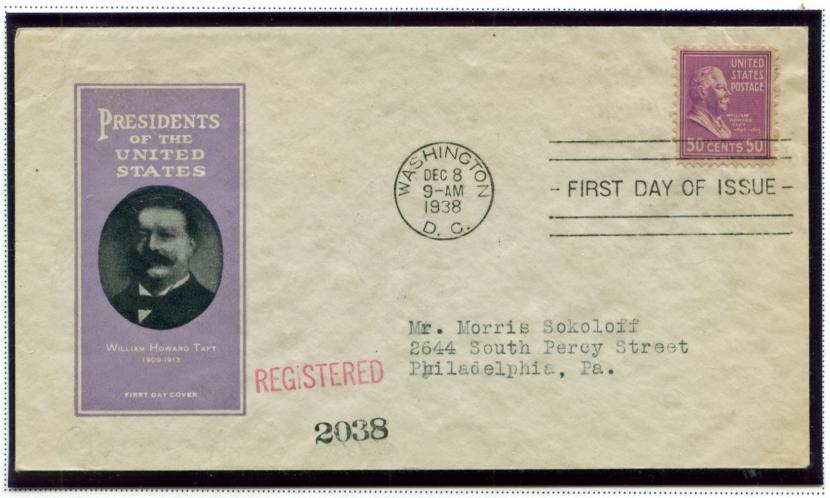


25¢ WILLIAM MCKINLEY

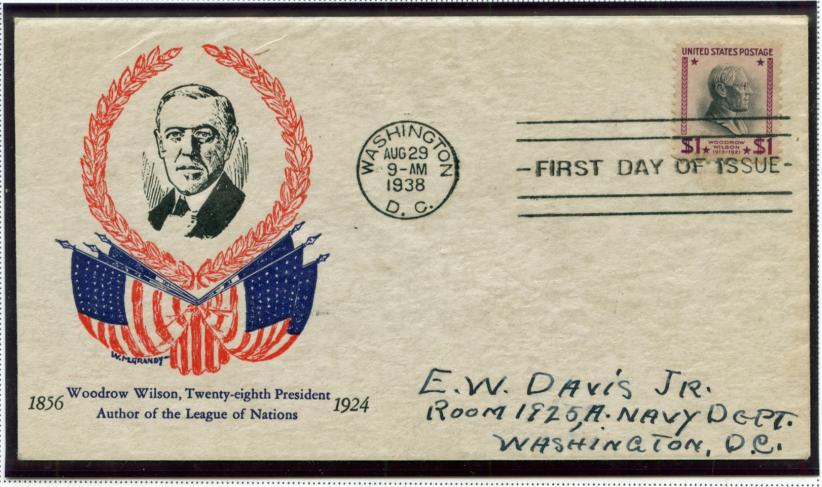


30¢ Theodore Roosevelt

1938 - 1939 First Day Covers

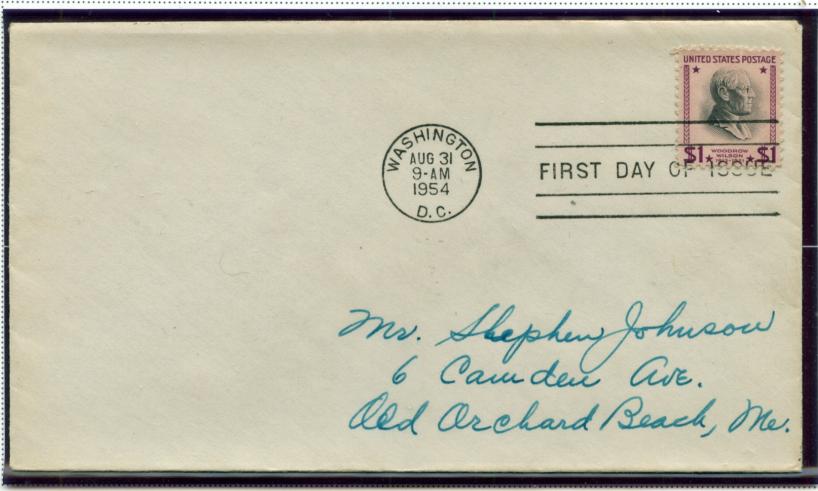


50¢ WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT

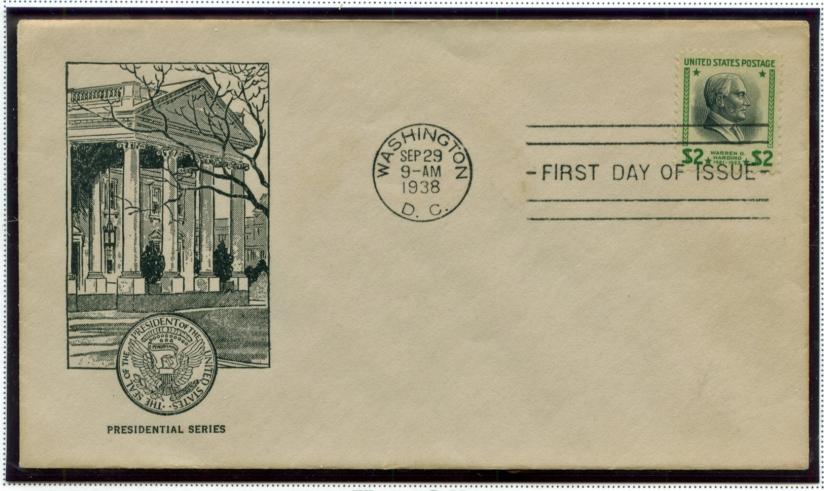


\$1.00 WOODROW WILSON

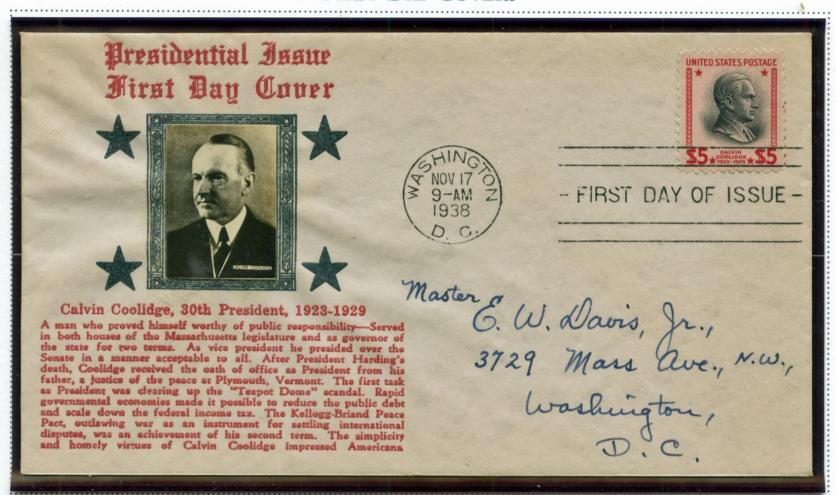
1938 - 1939 First Day Covers



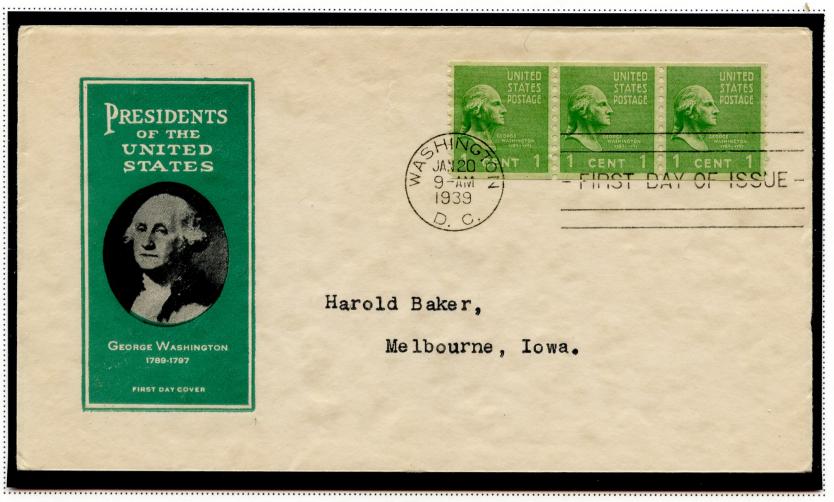
\$1.00 WOODROW WILSON (COLOR CHANGE)



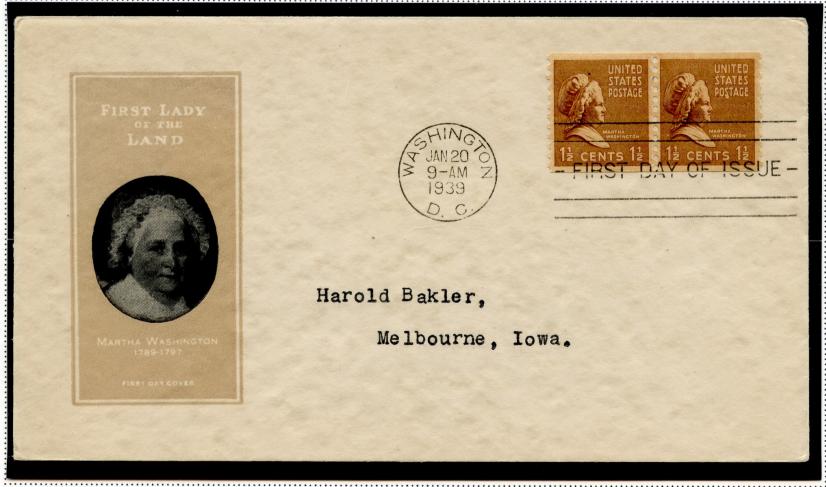
\$2.00 WARREN G. HARDING



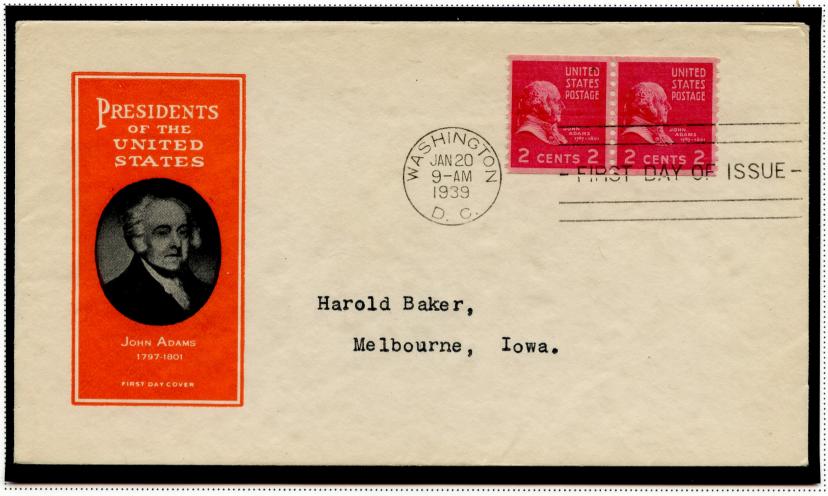
\$5.00 CALVIN COOLIDGE



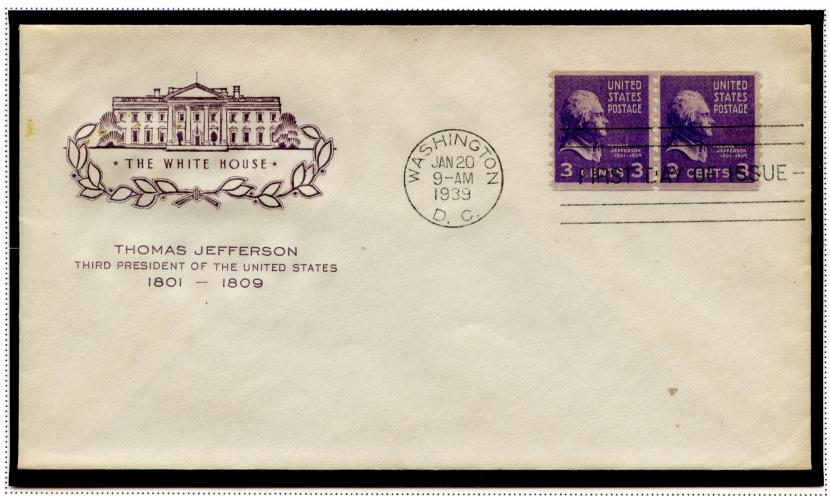
I¢ George Washington



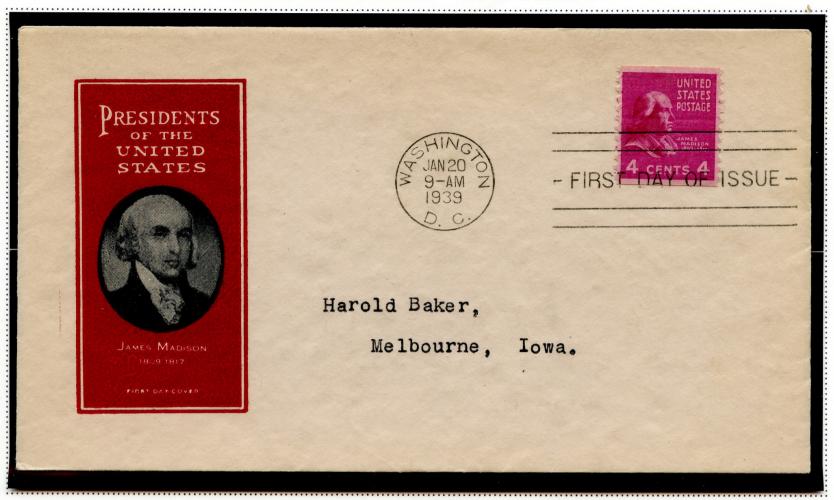
1-1/2¢ Martha Washington



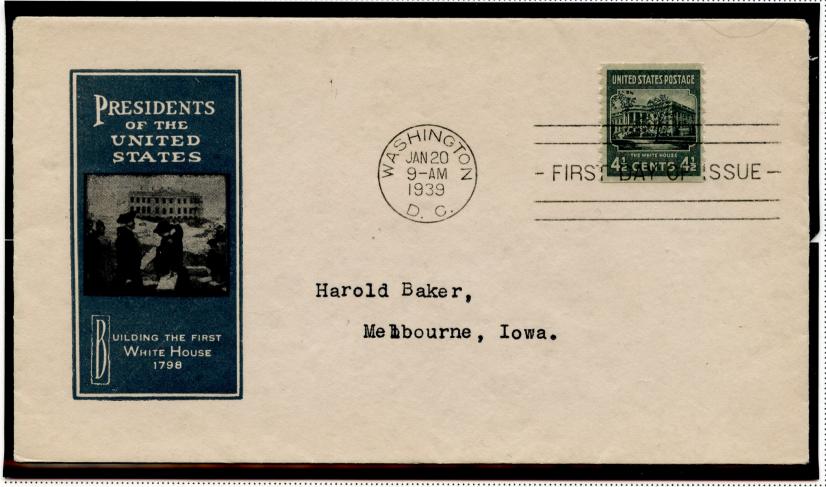
2¢ John Adams



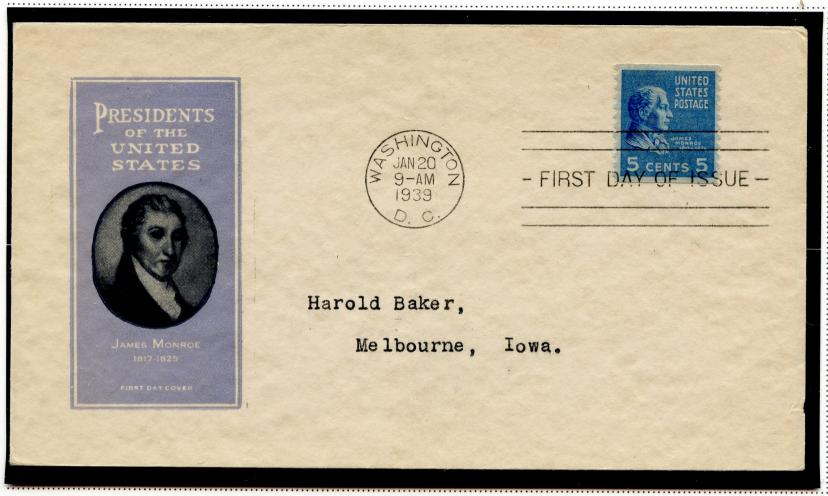
3\$ Thomas Jefferson



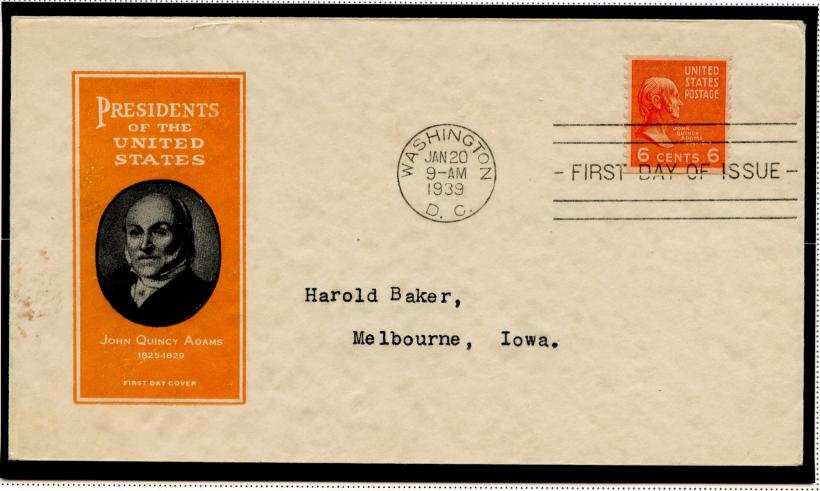
4¢ James Madison



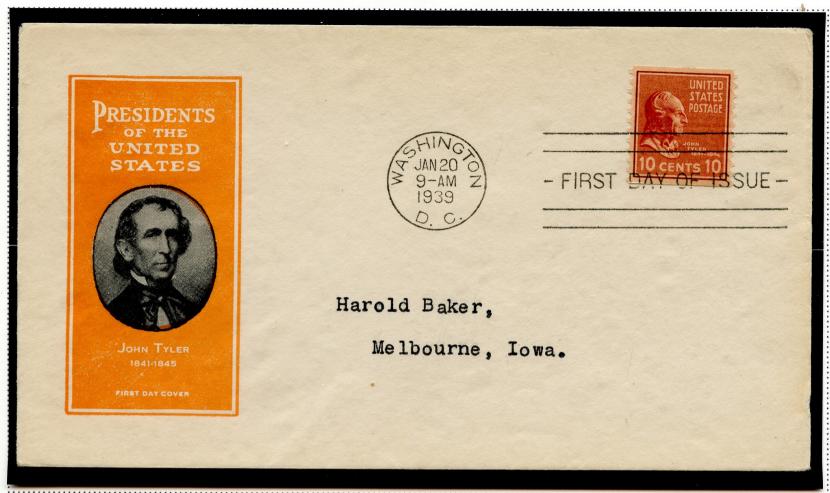
4-1/2¢ White House



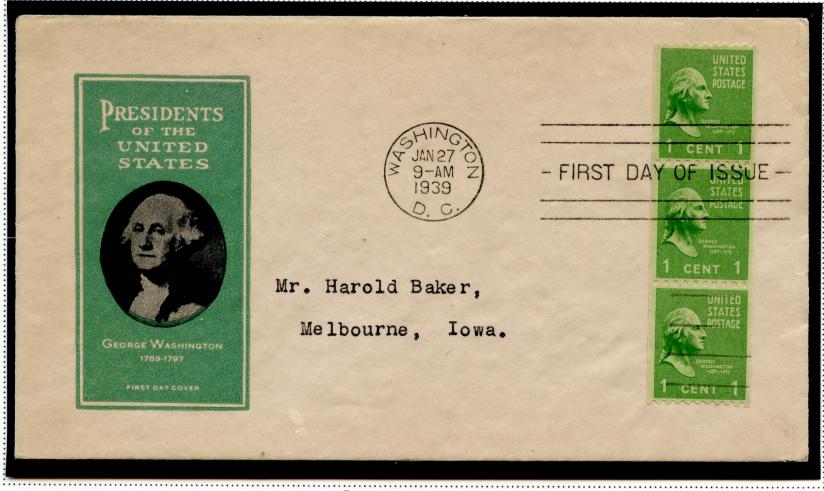
5¢ James Monroe



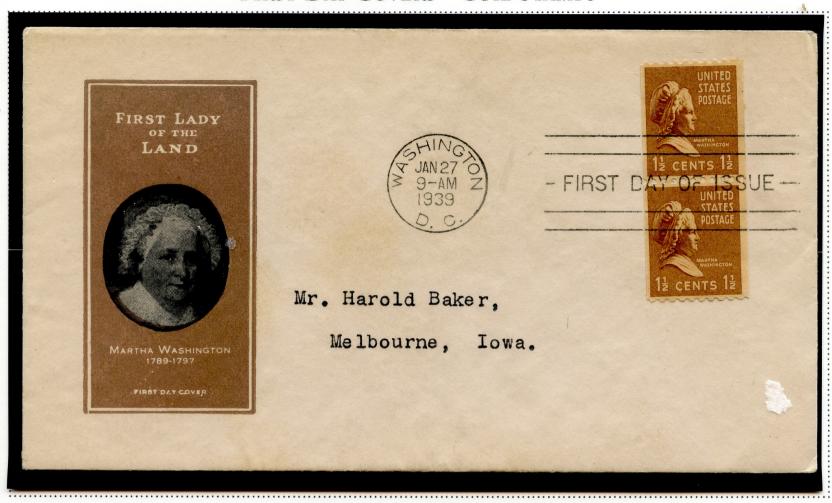
6¢ John Quincy Adams



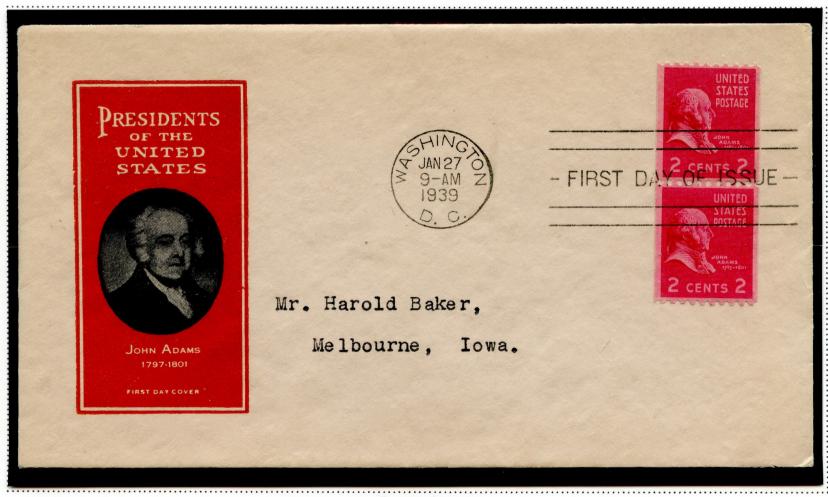
10¢ John Tyler



1¢ George Washington



1-1/2¢ Martha Washington



2¢ John Adams

1938 - 1939 First Day Covers - Coil Stamps



3¢ Thomas Jefferson

1938 - 1939

First Day Covers - Electric Eye Varieties

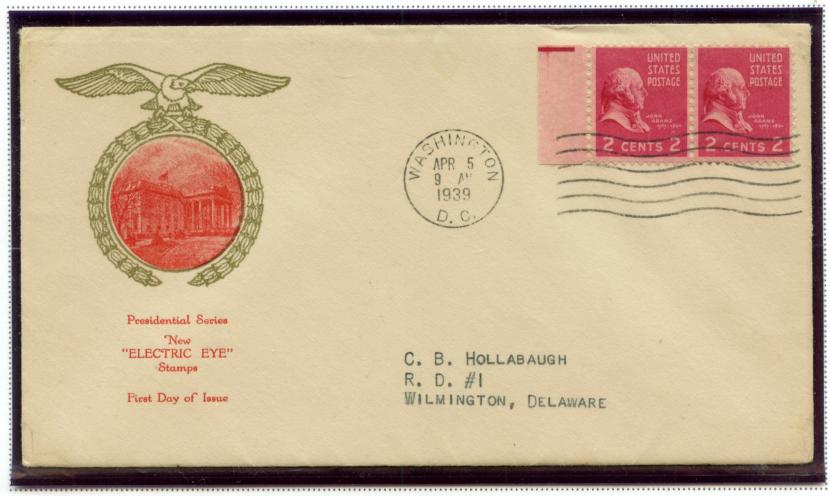


1-1/2¢ Martha Washington - Horizontal Lines



1-1/2¢ Martha Washington - Vertical Blocks

1938 - 1939 First Day Covers - Electric Eye Varieties



2¢ John Adams



2¢ John Adams & 3¢ Thomas Jefferson

THE END