

The PhilateliKid

The newsletter for Stamp Collecting Clubs for Kids (SCCFK)

Collect Stamps (The Most Educational Hobby)

www.stampcollectingclubsforkids.org

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In the May 2022 issue of *The PhilateliKid*, we began brief descriptions of various "Back of the Book" ("BOB") listings in the Scott Catalogues. In subsequent issues we looked at stamps which begin with the letter "B," "BK," "C," "CB," "CBO," "CE," "CL," "CM," "CO," "CP," "CVP," "D," "E," "F," "FA," "J," "JQ," "K," "L," "LO," "LOX," "M," "MR," "NSC," "O," "OXF," "P," "PC," "PN," "PR," "PS," "Q," "QE," "QI," "R" (Part 1), "R" (Part 2), "RA," "RC," "RD," "RE," "REA," "REF," "RF," "RG," "RH," "RJ," "RK," "RL," "RN-D," "RO," "RS," "RV," "RX," "RY," "RZ," "S," "SPCVP," "TD," "U," "UC," "UX," "UXC," "UY," "UZ," "WS," "WX," "#X," and State, followed by a number. This month we will look at "PM," and "EP." All stamps illustrated are from the author's personal collection, unless otherwise noted.

Stamps Beginning with the prefix "PM"



"PM" are the initials of "Priority Mail." Priority Mail is the term that the United States Postal Service (USPS) uses to describe mail that is expedited – that means faster – than ordinary first-class mail. In addition to being faster, the Post Office also provides **tracking** of Priority Mail, so that the sender (and anybody else that the sender provides the tracking number to) can go online and find out where the Priority Mail item is at any given time – right up until the time of delivery to the recipient. Items sent by Priority Mail also have a base amount of insurance included in the price. Another optional feature of Priority Mail is that the sender can specify that a signature is required by the recipient.

The predecessor to the

USPS, the United States Post Office Department (USPOD,) began offering Priority Mail services in 1968. (The USPOD became the USPS on July 1, 1971.)



Flat rate envelopes began being provided for free by the USPS, in 1991, but, of course, they required that postage be affixed. When a customer brings an Express Mail item into a post office, and purchases postage for it, invariably (100% of the time according to my own experience) the postal clerk will automatically print out a postage sticker, and not even offer to sell one of the stamps made especially for Express Mail. As a result, finding a used Express Mail Stamp is uncommon. The main exception is that stamp collectors will use Express Mail stamps, which is done by insisting on using stamps, and not accepting the postage sticker. This is not liked very much by the postal clerks, because they then have to make a "zero cents" sticker. Why? Because that is how the tracking number is established.

I have reviewed my own collection of Express Mail stamps. There have been about 60 stamps issued by the USPS since 1991 that are denominated especially for the rate then in effect for Priority Mail and Express Mail. However, just like the first four Air Mail stamps (Scott C1 through C4) that the United States issued, the type of mail is not specified on Priority Mail and Express Mail stamps. (Most of the First Class Mail stamps issued by the USPOD and USPS do not identify themselves as First Class Mail stamps either, with just a few exceptions.) The denominations have ranged from \$2.40 (issued in 1991) to the most current Express mail

stamps issued in 2025: \$31.40. This has resulted in Express Mail stamps being the highest denomination stamps ever issued by the USPOD or USPS.

There are two different types of Priority Mail service. The first, and lower priced service, normally delivers the item within 2 to 3 days of mailing. That service is called simply "Priority Mail." The second type of Priority Mail is a higher priced service that normally promises delivery "overnight." That faster delivery is called "Express Mail." There are exceptions to the speed of service based on the post office where the item is originally mailed, and the post office where the item is sent.

Those readers who know Scott well now see the joke I have made about PM prefixes. In reality, Scott does not use PM prefixes for Priority Mail or express Mail. In Scott, these stamps are mixed in with all the regular definitive and commemorative stamps. Hence, no such prefix exists in Scott. (I wish it did, though.) – Ed.

Stamps Beginning with the prefix "EP"



Stamps beginning with the prefix "EP" in the Scott Catalogue (Scott) are **Encased Postage stamps**. There are eight different denominations of U.S. postage stamps that were encased in metal holders with a clear mica cover to protect the stamp. The denominations were 1¢, 3¢, 5¢, 10¢, 12¢, 24¢, 30¢, and 90¢. Advertising was permitted on

the **Scott EP 13 obverse** **Scott EP 13 reverse** reverse side (backs.) The 1¢ encased postage shown here has advertising to the Ayers Company that was located in Lowell, Massachusetts, approximately 30 miles northwest of Boston. In Scott the prices for very fine examples range from a low of \$350 to a high of \$20,000. 141 of the 183 listed in Scott have a catalogue value of \$1,000 or more. Scott categorizes encased postage alphabetically according to the name of the company that is advertised on the reverse side. 34 different companies are identified by Scott.

The U.S. Civil War began on April 12, 1861. Within a few months, because of hoarding, coins disappeared from circulation. People began using U.S. postage stamps instead of coins to give change for items purchased. However, stamps did not last long before getting torn and/or stuck to paper, etc. An enterprising man named John Gault invented encased postage, thus solving that problem. Companies advertising on encased postage stamps were located in six different states that were part of the Union, including Massachusetts, New York, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio. One company, Weir and Laramie, was located in Canada. It is estimated that only 750,000 encased stamps ever were made. According to Scott Catalogue, encased postage stamps that survive today are estimated to be fewer than 7,000.

Stamp Collecting Clubs for Kids is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are greatly appreciated and if \$10 or more you will be sent a written receipt. You also can donate via PayPal on our website: www.stampcollectingclubsforkids.org or www.yummystampcollecting.org which redirects you to the same website.

