



# Philatelic tips and tricks

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**Elective Title – Computer Tips and  
Tricks for Stamp and Cancel ID,  
Measurement, and Rate Charting**

Stamp-related  
questions we  
hear all the  
time...

- I've inherited my Grandfather's collection
- I found this on eBay - BTW...
  - More on this later!
- Are these stamps worth anything?
- Is this real – or fake?
- I wonder if this might be an early date cancel
- Is this a scarce variety?
- How does this cover rate out?

Here are  
some  
examples:

Found this in  
the old box...

“Looks like a Type 1a...”



Easy peasey.



Attributes  
easy to see:

**“Looks like a Type 1a...”**

Color; Heavy Toga Button; “Tic Mark”



**“Good. Scott 500... Sold!”**





Turning  
Something  
into Nothing?

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Could it be real?

Pan Am  
4¢ Invert!  
Scott 296a

Ahh! I see...



- Special printing and not regularly issued
- Gum on the majority of stamps without "Specimen" overprint was disturbed
- 2017 Scott Specialized: \$85,000.00
- Sale no. 1180 — Lot no. 298 — 2018-04-11





No! Look again!  
This one!

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Wait a minute... It's USED!

Does it even exist?

Let's look at the catalog!



- “Specimens... Back section of catalog
- Not a “Used” stamp
- Specimen” often “erased” to mimic unused stamp
- Genuine Specimen

Fake Specimen



“IT IS NOT SCOTT 296a, RATHER IT IS A PREVIOUSLY HINGED SCOTT 296Sa, WITH THE "SPECIMEN" LIGHTENED, A SMALL SEALED TEAR AT UPPER LEFT, AN ADDED PERFORATION AT BOTTOM, AND REPERFORATED AT TOP.”

SPECIMEN STAMPS		951
<p>black, Except As Noted</p> <p>Handstamped in Dull Purple</p> <p>1890-93</p> <p>2195 1c dull blue</p> <p>2205 2c carmine</p> <p>2215 3c purple</p> <p>2225 4c dark brown</p> <p>2235 5c chocolate</p> <p>2245 6c dull red</p> <p>2255 8c lilac</p> <p>2265 10c green</p> <p>2275 15c blue</p> <p>2285 30c black</p> <p>2295 60c orange</p> <p>1897-1903</p> <p>2795 1c deep green</p> <p>2795a 2c light red, type IV</p> <p>2795b 2c light red, type IV (Bk)</p> <p>Never hinged</p> <p>With plate number</p> <p>Never hinged</p> <p>As No. 2795S, inverted overprint on all stamps</p> <p>As No. 2795S, double impression of overprint on bottom two stamps</p> <p>2895 4c rose brown</p> <p>2815 5c dark blue</p> <p>2825 6c lake</p> <p>2835 10c brown, type I</p> <p>2845 15c brown, type II</p> <p>2855 15c olive green</p> <p>Special Printing</p> <p>In March 1900 one pane of 100 stamps of each of Nos. 279, 279B, 288, 280-282, 272, 282C, 284 and 275-278 were specially handstamped type E "Specimen" in black for displays at the Paris Exposition (1900) and Pan American Exposition (1901). The 2c pane was light red, type IV.</p> <p>These examples were handstamped by H. G. Mandel and mounted by him in separate displays for the two Expositions. Examples from the panes in addition to those displayed were handstamped "Specimen," but most were destroyed after the Expositions. Examples of all issues that were handstamped are known.</p> <p>Additional stamps, not from the mounted display panes, do exist with a black "Specimen" handstamp, but it is believed Mandel applied such handstamp to regularly issued stamps from his personal collection. These include Nos. 267, 267a and 279B in pale red.</p> <p>TRANS-MISSISSIPPI ISSUE</p> <p>Type F</p> <p>1898 1c dark yellow green</p> <p>2895 8c violet brown</p> <p>Overprinted in Dull Purple</p> <p>Specimen.</p> <p>Overprinted in Magenta</p> <p>Type F</p> <p>2305 1c deep blue</p> <p>2325 3c green</p> <p>2335 4c ultramarine</p> <p>2345 5c chocolate</p> <p>2355 6c purple</p> <p>2365 10c black brown</p> <p>2375 15c dark green</p> <p>2385 30c orange brown</p> <p>2395 50c slate blue</p> <p>2415 \$1 salmon</p> <p>2425 50c brown red</p> <p>2435 50c yellow green</p> <p>2445 50c crimson lake</p> <p>2455 50c</p> <p>Overprinted Type H in Black or Red</p> <p>2315 H 2c violet (Bk)</p> <p>2325 H 4c ultramarine (R)</p> <p>2345 H 5c chocolate (R)</p> <p>Overprinted Type I in Black or Red</p> <p>2315 I 2c violet (R)</p> <p>2325 I 4c ultramarine (R)</p> <p>2345 I 5c chocolate (Bk)</p> <p>2355 I 6c purple (Bk)</p> <p>2365 I 10c black brown (R)</p> <p>2375 I 15c dark green (R)</p> <p>2385 I 30c orange brown (Bk)</p> <p>2405 I 50c slate blue (R)</p> <p>Handstamped Type E in Purple</p> <p>1895 1c blue</p> <p>2675 2c carmine, type III</p> <p>2675a 2c pink, type III</p> <p>2685 3c purple</p> <p>2695 4c dull brown</p> <p>2705 5c chocolate</p> <p>2715 6c dull brown</p> <p>1901 1c green &amp; black</p> <p>294S 2c carmine</p> <p>295S 4c chocolate &amp; black</p> <p>296S 5c center inverted</p> <p>297S 5c ultramarine &amp; black</p> <p>298S 8c brown violet &amp; black</p> <p>299S 10c yellow brown &amp; black</p> <p>1902 1c blue green</p> <p>301S 2c carmine</p> <p>302S 3c bright violet</p> <p>303S 4c brown</p> <p>304S 5c blue</p> <p>305S 6c slate</p> <p>306S 8c violet black</p> <p>307S 10c pale red brown</p> <p>308S 15c purple black</p> <p>309S 15c olive green</p> <p>310S 50c orange</p> <p>311S \$1 black</p> <p>312S 50c dark blue</p> <p>313S 55 dark green</p> <p>1903 2c carmine</p> <p>1904 1c green</p> <p>324S 2c carmine</p> <p>325S 3c violet</p> <p>326S 5c dark blue</p> <p>327S 10c red brown</p>		
<p>PAN-AMERICAN ISSUE</p> <p>1901 1c green &amp; black</p> <p>294S 2c carmine</p> <p>295S 4c chocolate &amp; black</p> <p>296S 5c center inverted</p> <p>297S 5c ultramarine &amp; black</p> <p>298S 8c brown violet &amp; black</p> <p>299S 10c yellow brown &amp; black</p>		
<p>LOUISIANA PURCHASE ISSUE</p> <p>1904 1c green</p> <p>324S 2c carmine</p> <p>325S 3c violet</p> <p>326S 5c dark blue</p> <p>327S 10c red brown</p>		

Took it to -  
StampSHOW  
2017  
Richmond







- Dealer Friends said it looks “Good!”
- USSS Friends said it looks “Good!”
- Expertiser Friend said it looks “Good!”
- Get it Certified...



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# Good News!

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	No. <b>01335533</b>	<b>8/24/2017</b>	
			
<b>Professional Stamp Experts</b> P.O. Box 6170, Newport Beach, CA 92658 gradingmatters.com			
<b>Expert Committee</b> We have examined the enclosed item submitted to PSE, of which an image is shown below, and are of the opinion that:			
<b>Cat No.</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Denom.</b>	<b>Color</b>
<b>Scott 296a</b>	<b>1901</b>	<b>4c</b>	<b>Dp rd br &amp; blk</b>
<b>USA</b>			
<b>"it is genuine used, with a short corner perf at the bottom right."</b>			
			
 <b>For The Expert Committee</b>			
<small>THIS CERTIFICATE IS PRINTED ON WATERMARKED PAPER AND IS NOT VALID WITHOUT WATERMARK</small>			

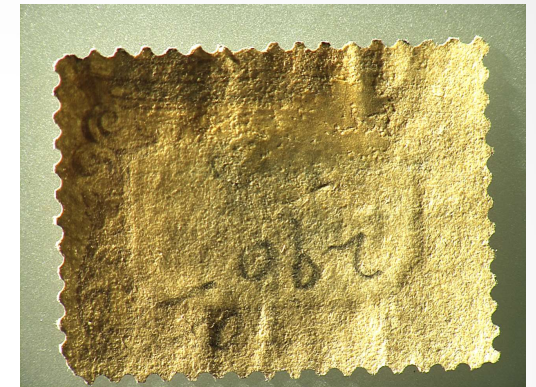
## Ding! Ding! Ding!



If it's too  
good to be  
true...

It probably is!

Gum Side:  
Genuine 296      Fake "Patient"



- Red flags... We see a scrape on the vignette.
- Why is it taking so long? (The owner is...)
- "This is a Serious stamp!"
- We need to test it with the VSC-6000
- After four months and probably six reviews:

# Bad News!

**IT IS NOT SCOTT 296a, RATHER, IT IS A SCOTT 296, WITH ORIGINAL VIGNETTE REMOVED, THEN FRAUDULENTLY PLACED BACK TO SIMULATE A 4¢ PAN AMERICAN INVERT.**

**The Philatelic Foundation** No. 547855  
22 East 35th Street • 4th Floor  
New York, NY 10016  
EXPERT COMMITTEE  
02/12/2018

We have examined the enclosed item, of which a photograph is attached, and described by the applicant as follows:

Country: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Cat. No.	Issue	Denom.	Color
296a	1901	4¢	deep red brown & black

Scott's unless otherwise specified.  
USED, CENTER INVERTED.

**OUR OPINION**  
**IF THIS ITEM IS ALTERED OR COUNTERFEITED**  
**READ YOUR CERTIFICATE**

AND WE ARE OF THE OPINION THAT IT  
IT IS NOT SCOTT 296a, RATHER, IT IS A SCOTT NO. 296, WITH ORIGINAL VIGNETTE REMOVED, THEN FRAUDULENTLY PLACED BACK TO SIMULATE A 4¢ PAN AMERICAN INVERT; THE STAMP ITSELF WITH ADDITIONAL SCRAPES AND FAULTS. \*\*\*\*\*



547855

For The Expert Committee  
Chairman

Photocopies of this Certificate are not valid.

Submitted by  
ROBERT G. RUFÉ

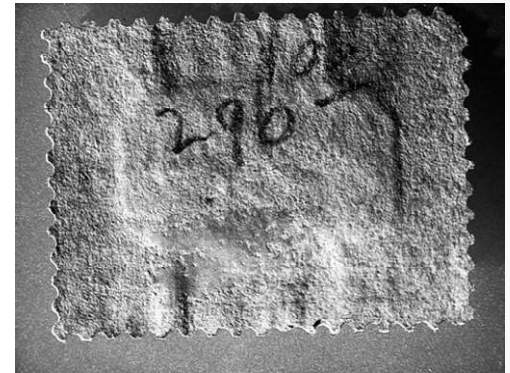
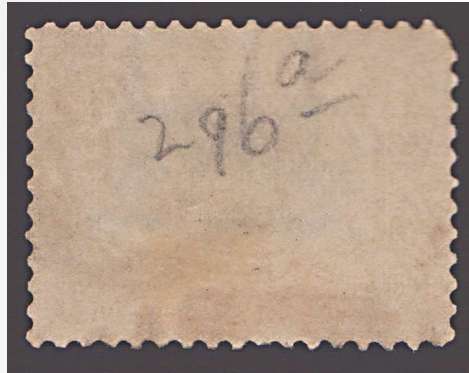
H 310742

**WARNING!**



Could we  
have saved  
some time  
and money?

Try: [RetroReveal.org](http://RetroReveal.org)



- Results depend on image quality
- For the studios:  
<http://retroreveal.org/glossary#HSL>
- VSC-6000 offers alternate lighting modes
- Be optimistic, but diligent!





How about this  
one on **eBay**?

Missing a stamp?

What's the date?

No details on address side

Turning  
Nothing  
into  
Something...

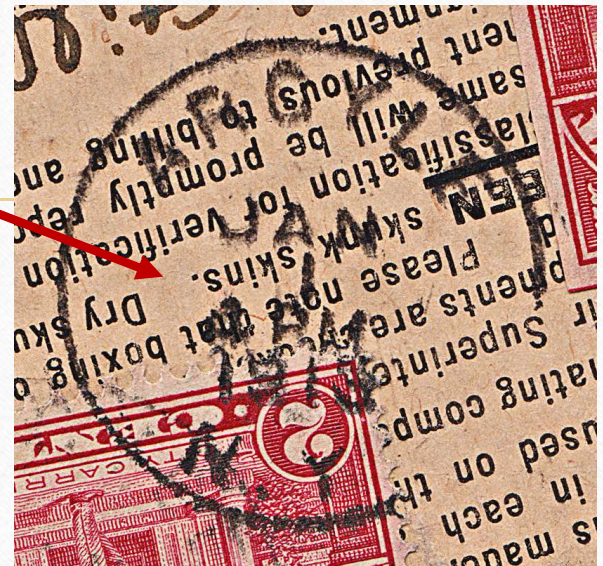
- “I found this on eBay” - BTW...
  - “Ask the Seller a Question”
    - 1. Will he take “Buy It Now?”
    - 2. Character analysis
    - 3. Knowledgeable?
- You just paid for your week, next year!
- I wonder if this might be an early date?
- Research, research, research!



I really can't decipher  
the cancel.

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Seller says it looks like 1918,  
confirmed by “another bidder.”

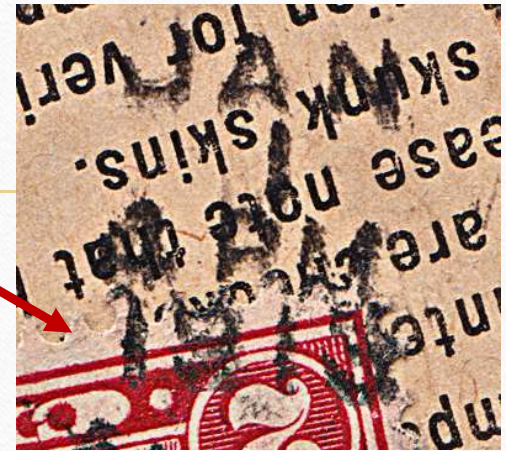




Blow it up!

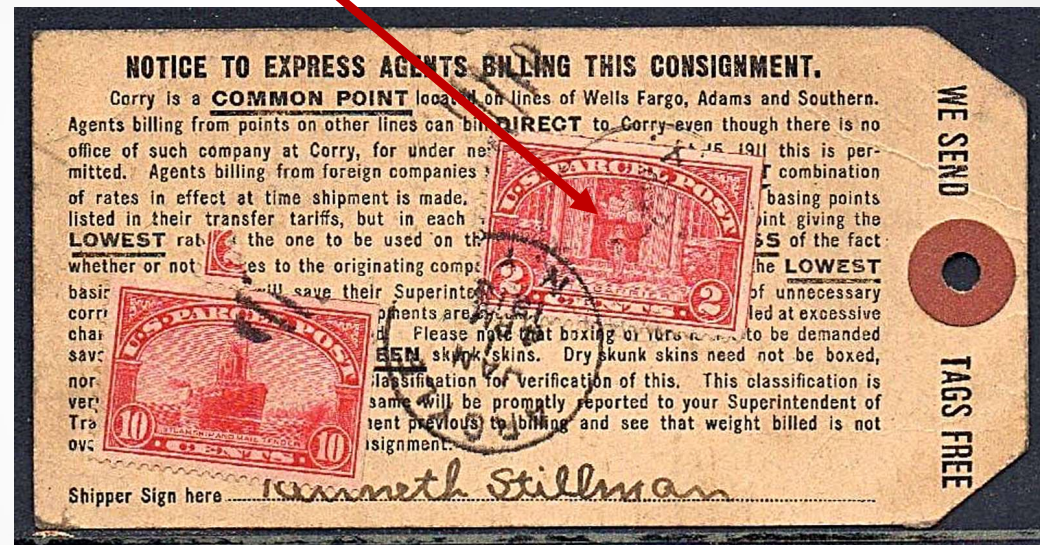
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If it is possibly 1913,  
it would be a First Day Cover.  
Photoshop high contrast – no help.



Look More  
Closely –  
at the  
Whole  
Tag!

What's this?



Another cancel!



Promising...

Try: [RetroReveal.org](http://RetroReveal.org)

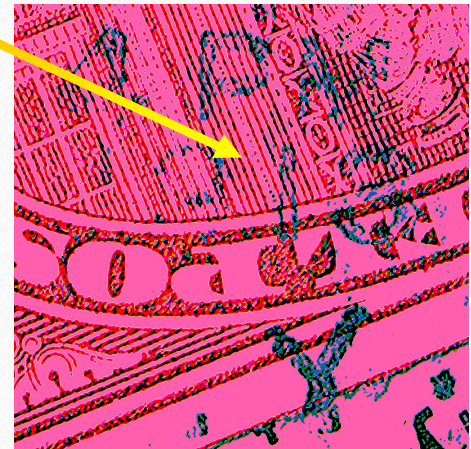


- Results depend on image quality
- Excellent screening tool
- Take it to the VSC-6000

Bingo!

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“1913!” FDC and new EDU.  
Now resides in a good friend’s exhibit.  
Worth a trip to the NPM!





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# Online Shopping?

**eBay** Advice...

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## Use a Bidding Service:

- “Play by the rules!”
- Why?
  - Convenience
  - Discipline
  - Competitive Advantage
- I use “AuctionSniper.com”  
<https://www.auctionsniper.com/register.aspx>
- Also – “E-Snipe”

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# Computer Tips, Tricks and Shortcuts

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## Some Tips on Excel:

- Paper Cutouts
- Crop to Shape
- Lock Aspect Ratio
- 'Print Screen' Captures
- Rate Charting
- Measuring
- Cautions



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Old Technology

Class Exercise ...

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**Paper Cutouts...**

Use a Scissors!

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## Markovits Discovery:



## Take a Favorite Stamp Variety

- “On Special Paper” Variety
- 2017 Scott: Not Listed (\$450 \*)
- 2016 Durland: \$2,000
- 2018 Hebert PNS: \$1,000
- Measurably Different from Sheet Stamps on Regular Paper



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## Old “Technology” Paper Cutouts



Scott E13 Lot on **eBay**

- Print the Image
- Cut Out One as a Template
- Compare the rest
- If All are the Same:
  - Probably Not the Rarity
  - But – Maybe SBP!



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From this,



Cutout this -



Classroom Exercise...



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## New Technology “Crop to Shape”



## Scott E13 Lot on **eBay**

- ‘Print Screen’ Captures
- Lock Aspect Ratio
- Crop out a Mint Single
- Transparency for Perfs
- Crop to Shape
- Measurement Comparisons
- Cautions

# Paper Cutouts...

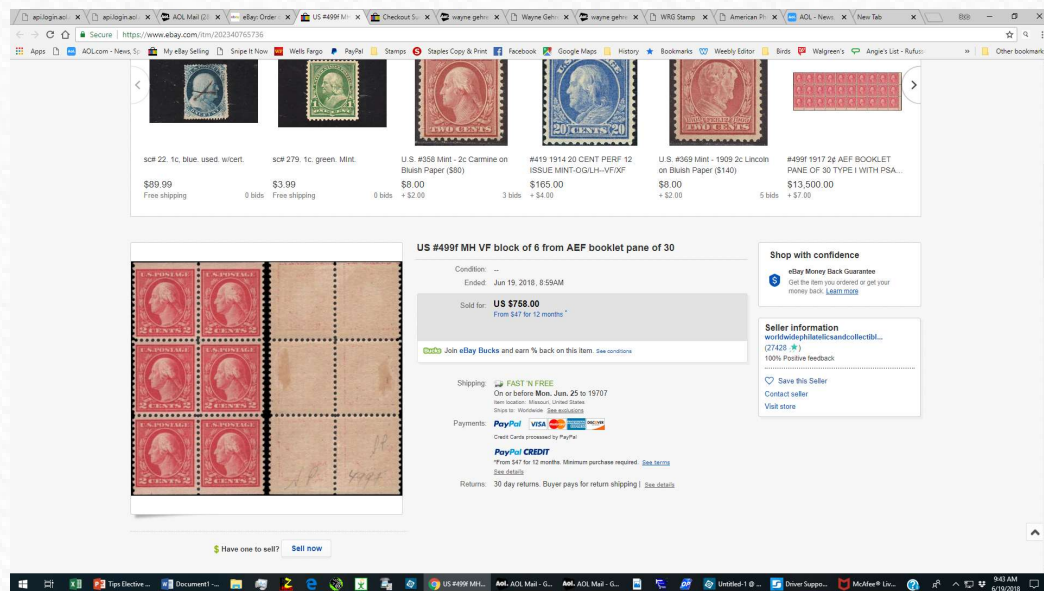
- Print Screen
- Lock Aspect Ratio
- Crop to Shape

From **eBay** last week:

Did not use an agent.

Made an offer

(Start at 60%)







Let's compare images!

1. Patient from **eBay**
2. Known sheet stamp
3. Certified 499f

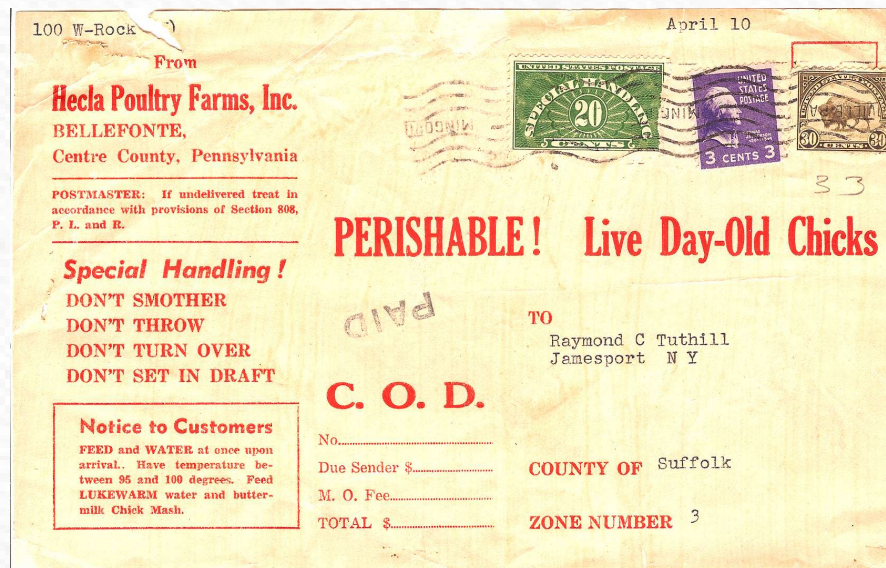


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## Covers & Postal History

### How to Check for Proper Rating

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# Computer Charting for Reference Tables



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Covers & Postal History  
How to Check for Proper Rating

**U.S. Domestic  
Postal Rates, 1872-1993**

**By Henry W. Beecher  
and Anthony S. Wawrukiewicz**

**Old Technology:**

“Look it up!”

Postal Rate Guides, and,  
The “Bible” of Postal Rates

Bellefonte, PA to Jamesport, NY



## Use Distance Calculating Website:

**Geobytes**  
- because everybody's somewhere

**CITY DISTANCE TOOL** | IP ADDRESS LOCATOR | SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

**Distance Calculator – Find the Distance Between Cities**

City Distance, is the "direct by air" distance between cities. It is also known as the "as crow flies" distance, and is calculated using the "great circle distance" method using the city's ICBM coordinates (longitude and latitude). This Distance calculator provides both the by air, and by road distance between cities in both miles and kms, along with a map and driving directions – please scroll down to see it, and a little further for the city to city driving directions.

**Enter Cities**

**Origin**  
Please enter the first few characters of your origin city and then select your city from the drop-down list.  
Bellefonte, PA, United State

**Destination**  
Please enter your destination city in the same way as you did for your origin city.  
Jamespor  
Jamesport, NY, United States  
Jamesport, MO, United States

**Distance Between Cities**

**By Air Distance**

This is the "by air", "as the crow flies" distance between the two cities. For the "by road distance" please scroll down to the map and directions below.

Distance in miles: 269.9

## New Technology:

### Postal Zones - City Distances:

<http://geobytes.com/citydistancetool/>

**Distance Between Cities**

**By Air Distance**

This is the "by air", "as the crow flies" distance between the two cities. For the "by road distance" please scroll down to the map and directions below.

Distance in miles: 269.9

**Destination – 270 Miles = Zone 3**



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## Use Customized Rate Tables!

**Table 3. Parcel Post Rates Effective as of October 1, 1932 to March 25, 1944.**

10 Cent Special Handling Fee - Postal Rates by Weight & Zone	≤2 Lbs.
15 Cent Special Handling Fee - Postal Rates by Weight & Zone	>2 Lbs.
20 Cent Special Handling Fee - Postal Rates by Weight & Zone	>10 Lbs.

Fractional Cents Round Up.

<u>Weight</u>	<u>Local</u>	<u>Zone 1</u>	<u>Zone 2</u>	<u>Zone 3</u>	<u>Zone 4</u>	<u>Zone 5</u>	<u>Zone 6</u>	<u>Zone 7</u>	<u>Zone 8</u>
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This example is for Parcel Post with Special Handling...  
See Charts in Excel Demo.

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## New Technology:

Set up your own...  
Customized Rating Tables

Go to Excel Demonstration...

## References and Resources



## Philatelic tips and tricks

- Retro Reveal: <http://retroreveal.org/>
- AuctionSniper.com:  
<https://www.auctionsniper.com/register.aspx>
- City Distances:  
<http://geobytes.com/citydistancetool/>
- This Presentation:  
[SpecialHandling.weebly.com](http://SpecialHandling.weebly.com)