

World War I Savings Stamp and Liberty Bond Auxiliary Markings



Apr. 12, 1919
McPherson, KS to Newton, KS
"THE PRICE OF PEACE/Help Pay It — / Victory Liberty Loan"

This exhibit presents handstamp auxiliary markings affiliated with the sale of War Savings Stamps, Thrift Stamps, and Liberty Bonds during World War I. The "Great War" required massive public financing. The United States Post Office Department financially supported the war effort in two significant ways.

First, post offices, letter carriers, and rural carriers sold two types of Savings Stamps. The War Savings Stamp was a form of bond; it was sold at a discount that varied by month and could be redeemed for its \$5 face value in 5 years. The 25-cent "Thrift Stamp" was saved on a card; 16 Thrift Stamps, plus a small amount of cash, could be redeemed for a War Savings Stamp.

Second, the Post Office Department solicited and promoted the sale of "Liberty Bonds." Although Liberty Bonds were not sold over the post office counter, smaller post offices twice received government-authorized rubber handstamps that were required to be used on mail received at their offices during the first and second "Liberty Loan Drives."

Other handstamps promoting the sale of Thrift Stamps, War Savings Stamps and Liberty Bonds exist for which clear government authority cannot be found. They may have been used by sending receiving post offices or may have been privately used by some senders of mail. Regardless of their source, each of these markings is a reminder of the intense public and private pressure placed on private citizens to financially contribute to the World War I effort.

Official Markings – “Do your bit!”

Jun. 4, 1917.

Middleboro, MA.

Use from USS
Delaware



Jun., 1917.

Pullman, WA.

Jun. 15, 1917.

Parksville, NY.

Last Day of First
Liberty Loan.



A handstamp reading “Do your bit! / BUY A LIBERTY LOAN BOND / Inquire at any bank or post office” was distributed to 2nd, 3rd, and 4th class post offices for use during the First Liberty Loan on mail *received* by such offices. Use of the marking was dictated by the *Postal Bulletin* of May 21, 1917 (#11352a). A notice in the June 15 *Postal Bulletin* (#11373) - the last day of the First Liberty Loan - directed discontinuance of use.

Official Markings – “Do your bit!”

Jun. 11, 1917.

Hanover, PA.

Red ink.



Jun. 11, 1917.

Mechanicville, NY.

Blue ink.



Oct. 9, 1917.

Delaware, OH.

Incorrect use of marking during Second Liberty Loan.



The *Postal Bulletin* specified that red ink was to be used (or black, if red was not available), but most examples are purple. Late use of the marking (during the Second Liberty Loan) exists.

Official Markings – “Back the Boys in the Trenches”



Oct. 17, 1917, Centredale, RI.
Use on forwarded cover.

Oct. 25, 1917.

Penn Yan, NY.

Drop rate usage.

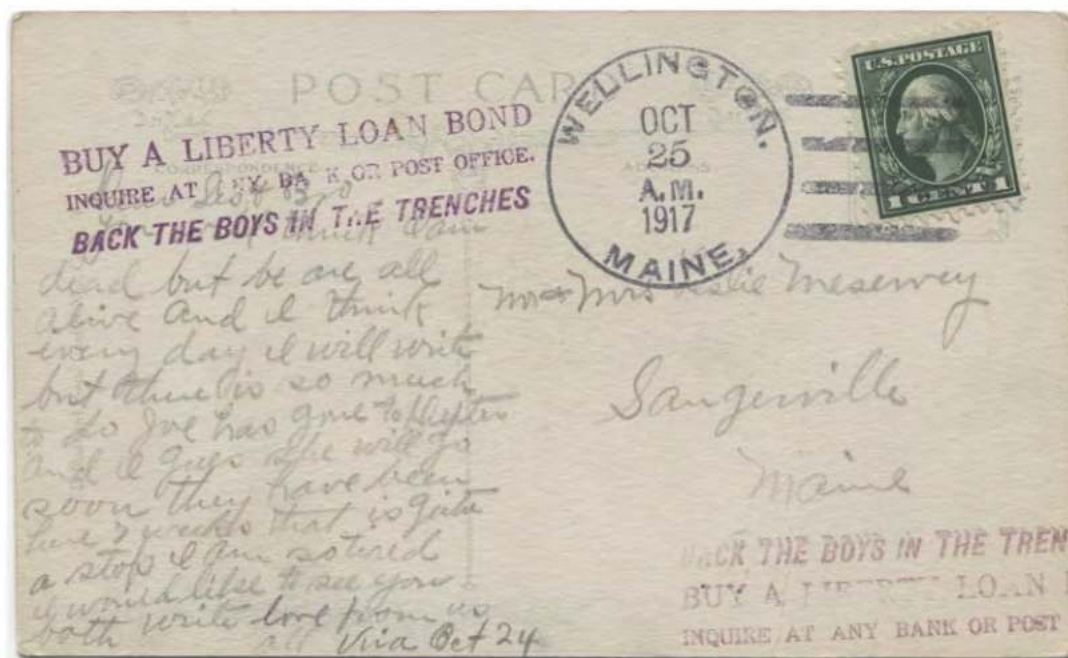


Oct. 27, 1917
Flemington, NJ.

Last Day of Second
Liberty Loan.

A second handstamp was distributed to 2nd, 3rd, and 4th class post offices for use during the Second Liberty Loan (October 1—October 27, 1917) on received mail, as indicated in the Postal Bulletin of September 27, 1917 (#11460).

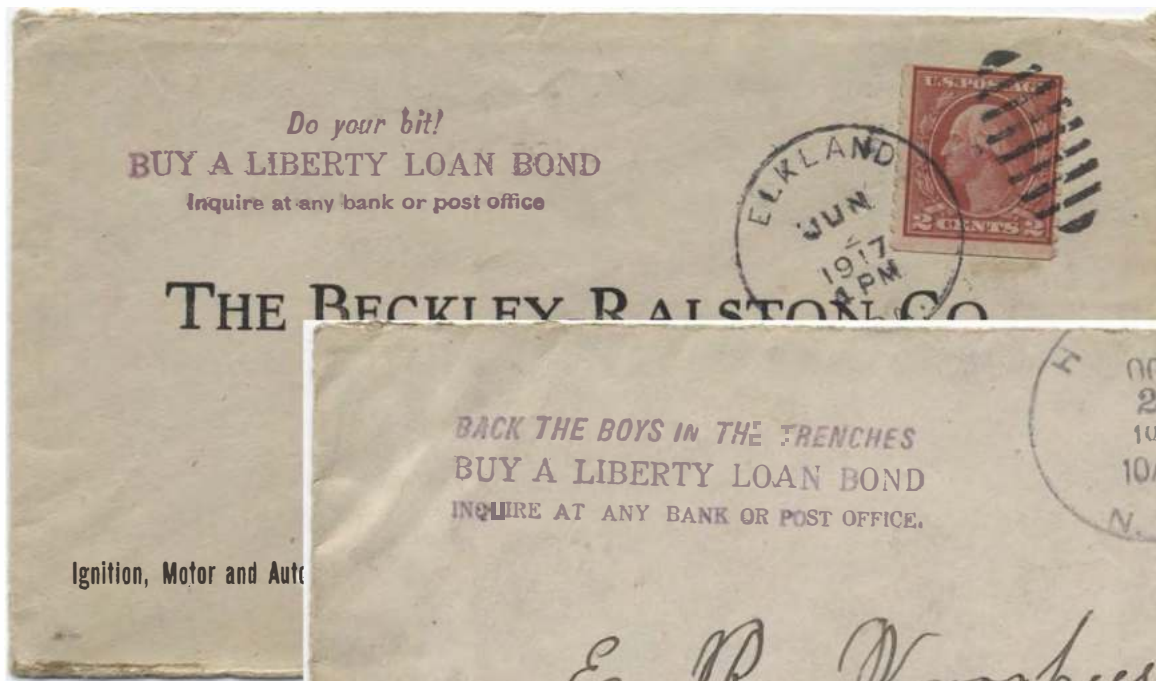
Official Markings – Variations



Oct. 25, 1917

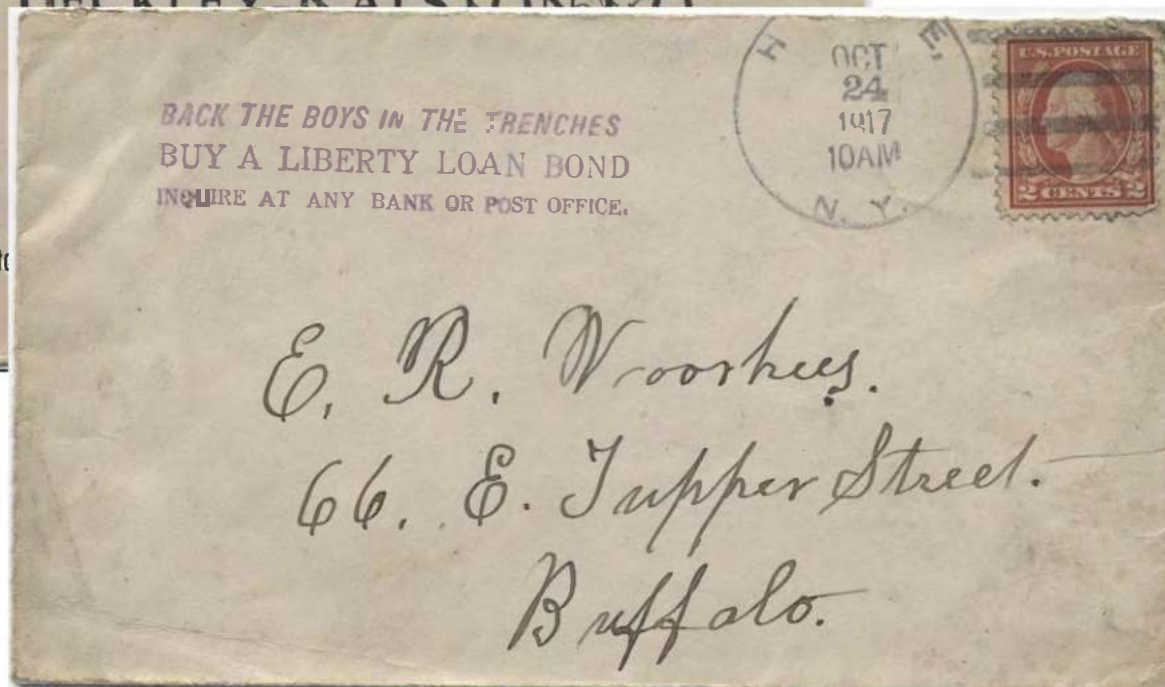
Wellington and Sangerville, ME; use at origin and receiving offices

A variation of the “Back the Boys” marking, with the top line of the marking appearing at bottom, was used by at least one post office, as seen in the cover above.



Jun. 4, 1917.

Elkland, PA to Chicago, IL.



Oct. 24, 1917.

Hague, NY to Buffalo, NY.

The Postal Bulletin required that the marking be used by the *receiving* post office, but the requirement was sometimes disregarded.

Official Markings – Incoming Foreign Mail



May 1917

Arcadia, Florida.



September 1917

Penn Yan, NY.

Use on incoming international mail—fewer than ten reported—demonstrates use of these markings at the receiving post office.

Unofficial Markings— “Buy Liberty Bonds To-Day”

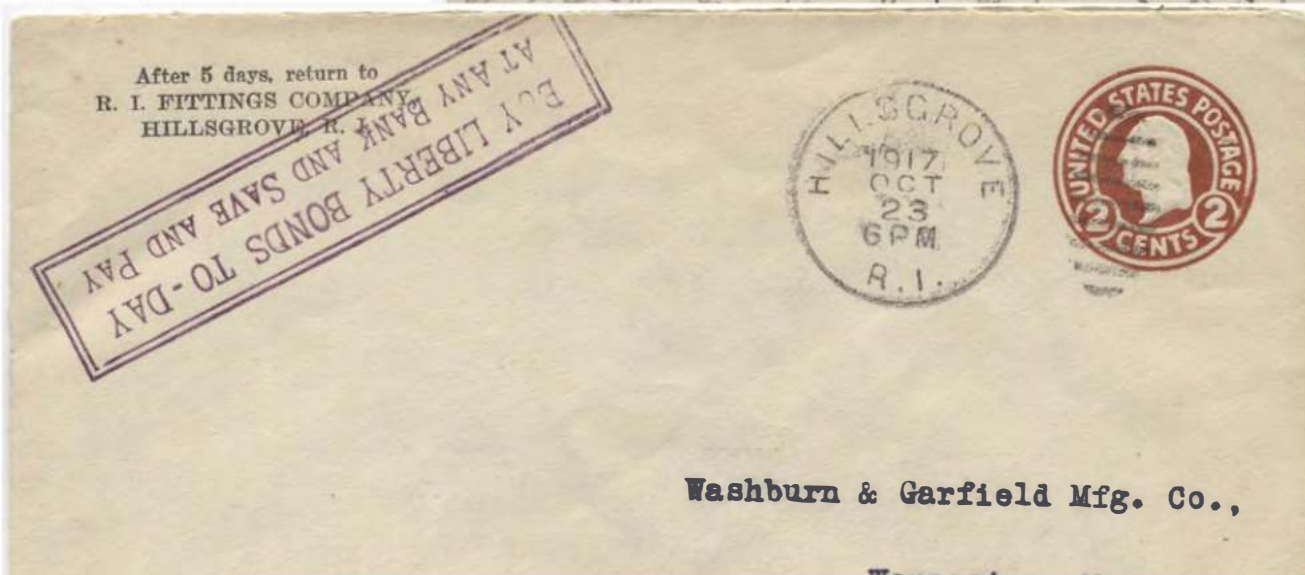
Oct. 22, 1917.

Houston, TX Logan Branch
to East Dedham, MA.



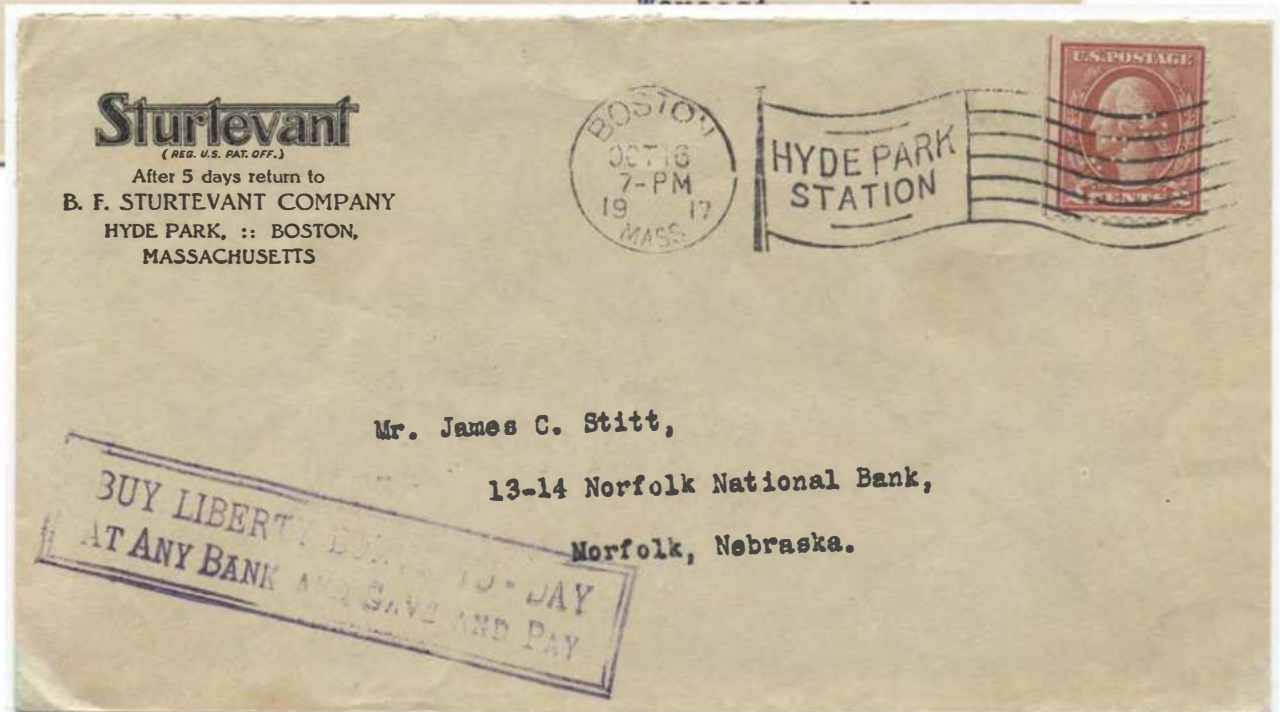
Oct. 23, 1917.

Hillsgrove, RI to
Worcester, MA.



Oct. 16,
1917.

Boston, MA
Hyde Park
Station to
Norfolk, NE.



A double-line boxed marking reading “Buy Liberty Bonds To-Day / At Any Bank and Save and Pay” also appears to have been used by several post offices. Reported examples were sent to or from Massachusetts.

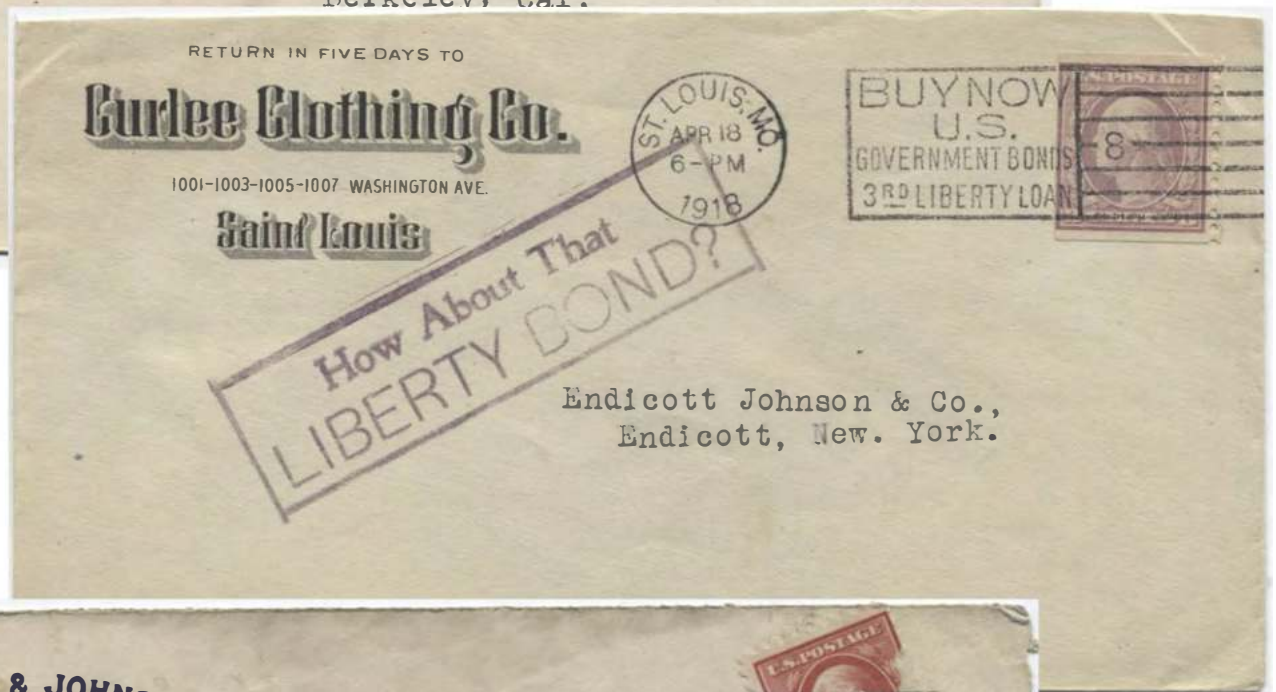
Unofficial Markings— Liberty Bonds



Oct. 23, 1917

"Show Your Patriotism / Buy Another Liberty Bond"

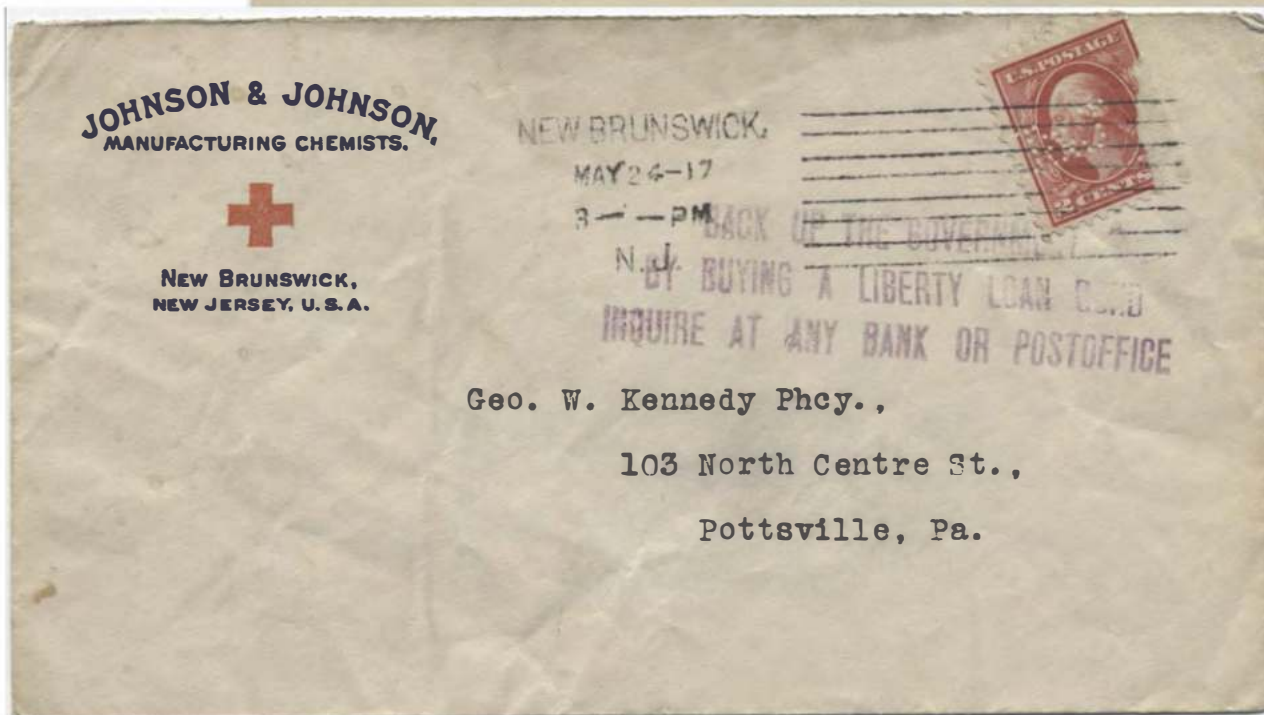
Berkeley, Cal.



Apr. 18, 1918.

"How About That /LIBERTY BOND?"

Endicott Johnson & Co.,
Endicott, New. York.



May 24, 1917

"Back up the Government / By Buying a Liberty Loan Bond / Inquire at any Bank or Post Office"

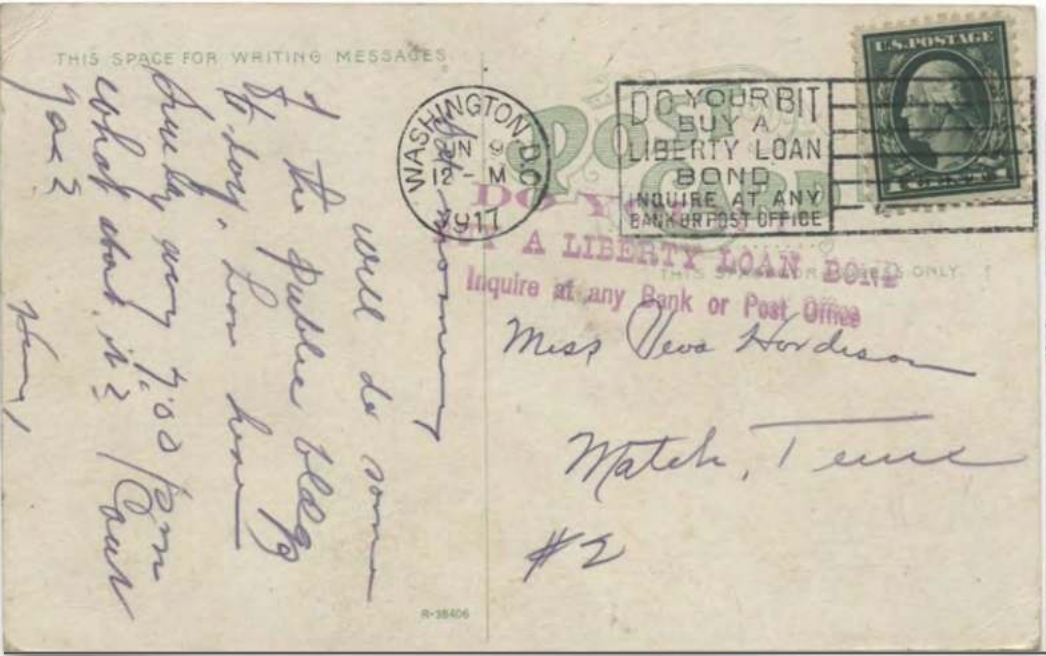
A variety of other Liberty Bond related markings exist from during the first, second, and third Liberty Loan drives.

Unofficial Markings— “Your Patriotic Duty”



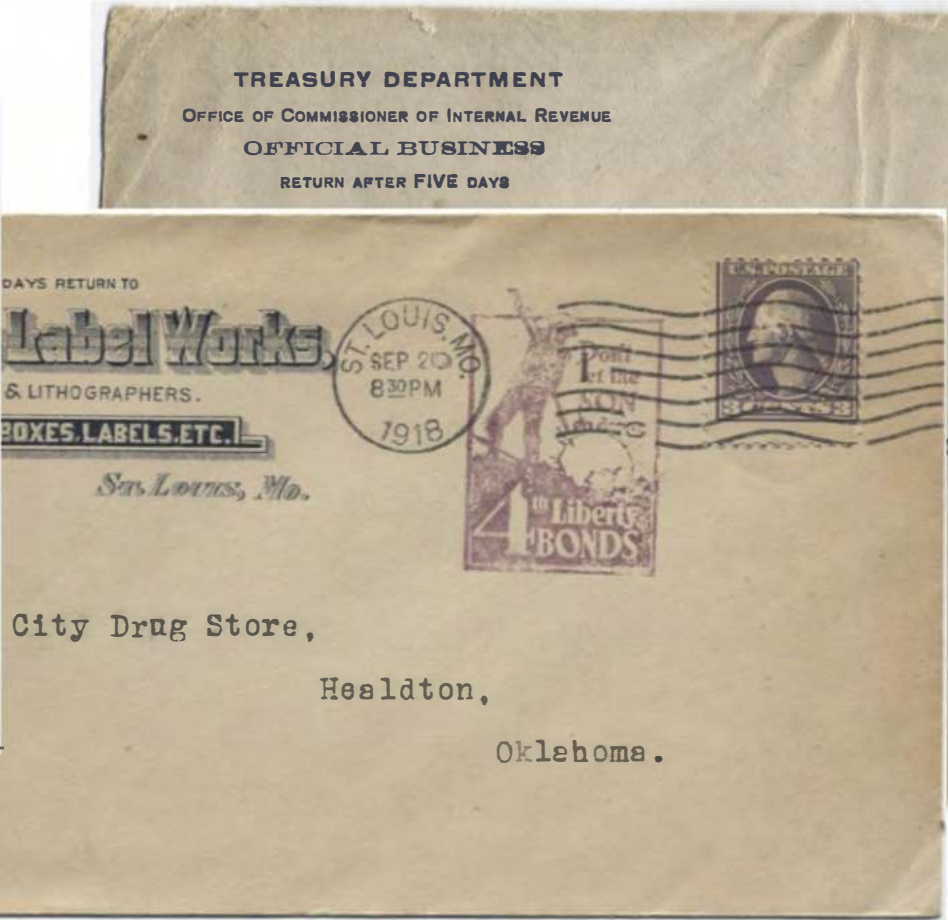
A variety of different markings reading “Your Patriotic Duty—Buy a Liberty Loan Bond” appear on mail originating from federal government offices. The markings appear to have been mostly used during the First Liberty Loan (May and June 1917) and the Second Liberty Loan (October 1917) but also exist during the Third Liberty Loan.

Unofficial Markings— Other Liberty Bond Markings

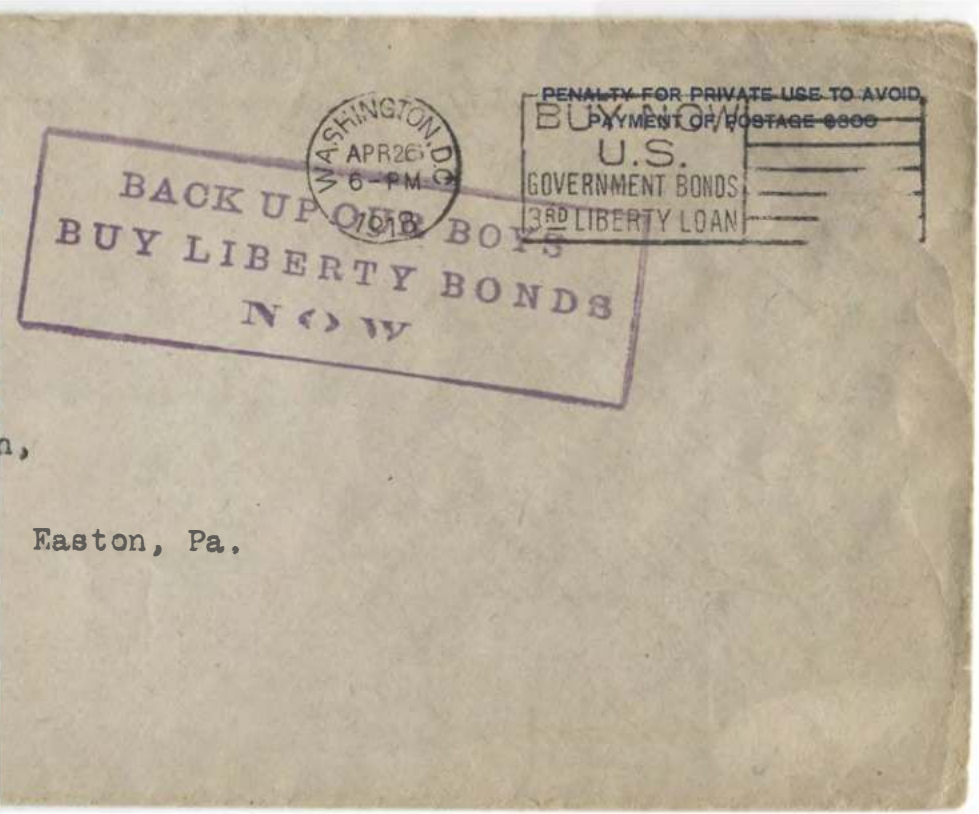


Jun. 9, 1917
Washington, DC to Match, TN
“DO YOUR BIT! /BUY A LIBERTY LOAN BOND / Inquire at any Bank or Post Office”

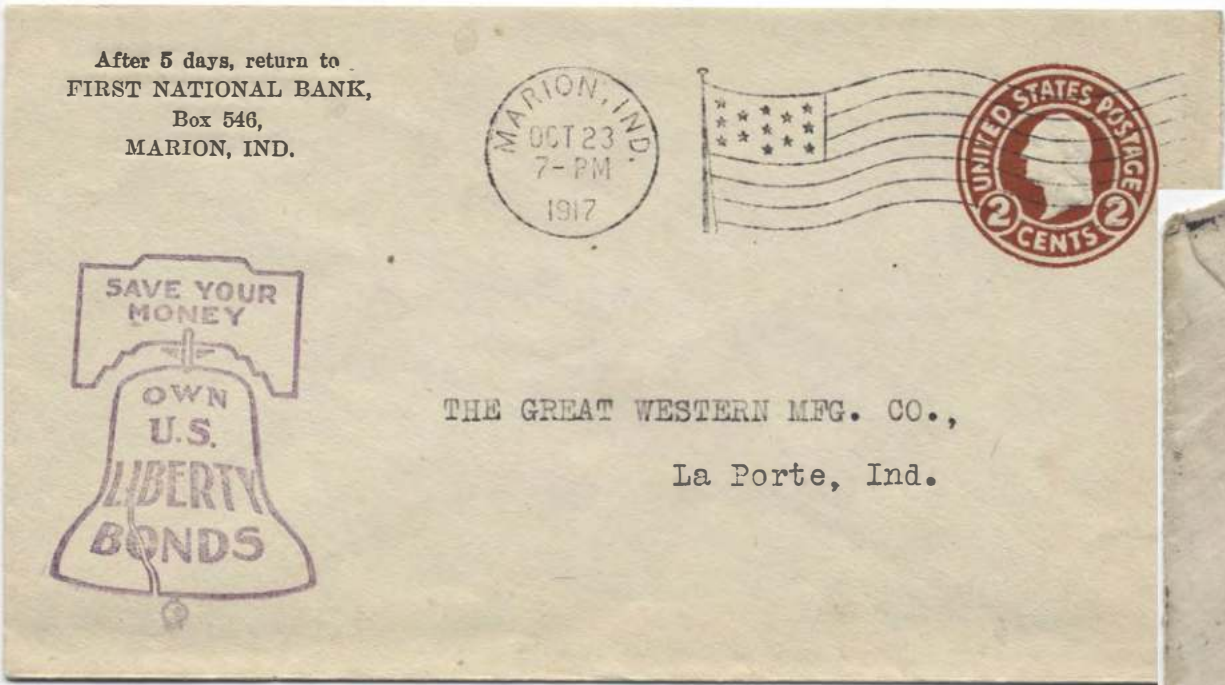
Mimic of official handstamp



Sep. 20, 1918
St. Louis, MO to Healdton, OK
“Don’t Let the SON go down / 4th Liberty Bonds”



Apr. 26, 1918
“BACK UP OUR BOYS / BUY LIBERTY BONDS / NOW”



Oct. 23, 1917
Marion, IN to La Porte, IN
“SAVE YOUR MONEY / OWN U.S. LIBERTY BONDS”

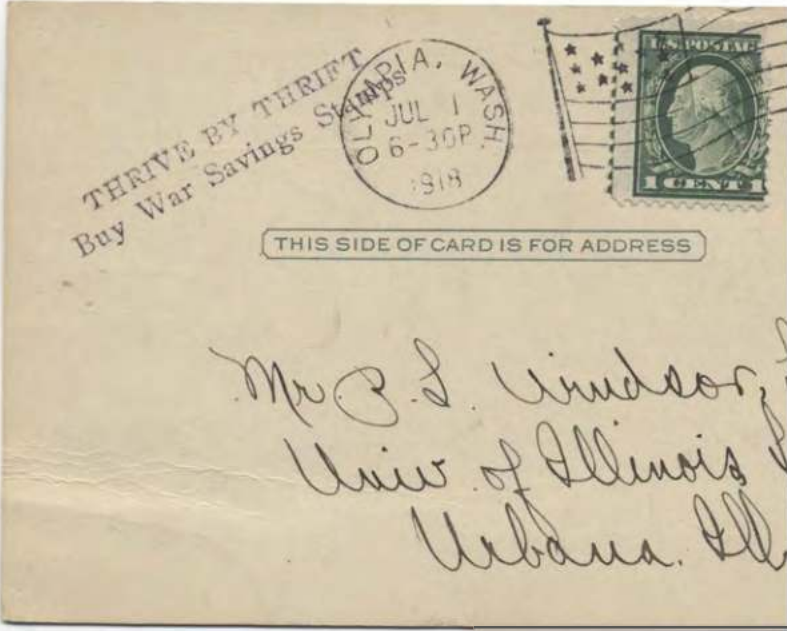
Apr. 3, 1918
Berkeley, CA
“BUY BONDS BUY IN BERKELEY”



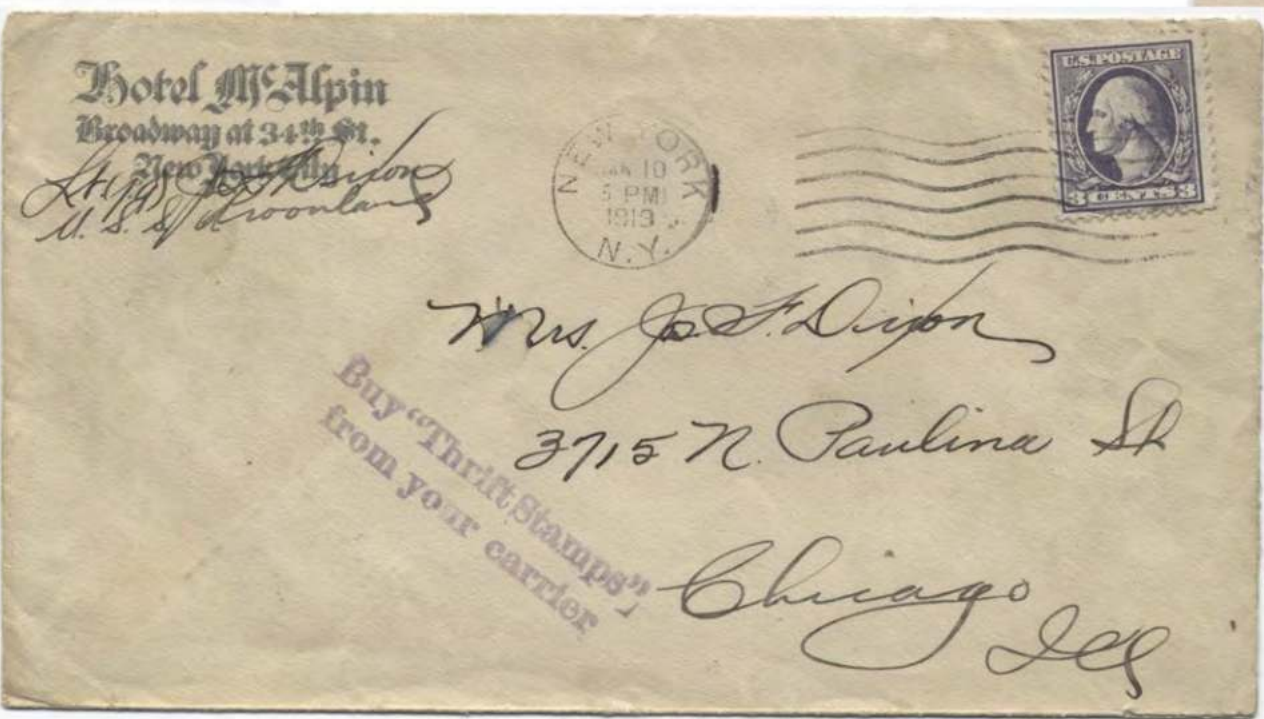
Oct. 10, 1917
Cincinnati, OH to Seymour, CT

Some Liberty Bond markings were local in scope or included pictorial elements.

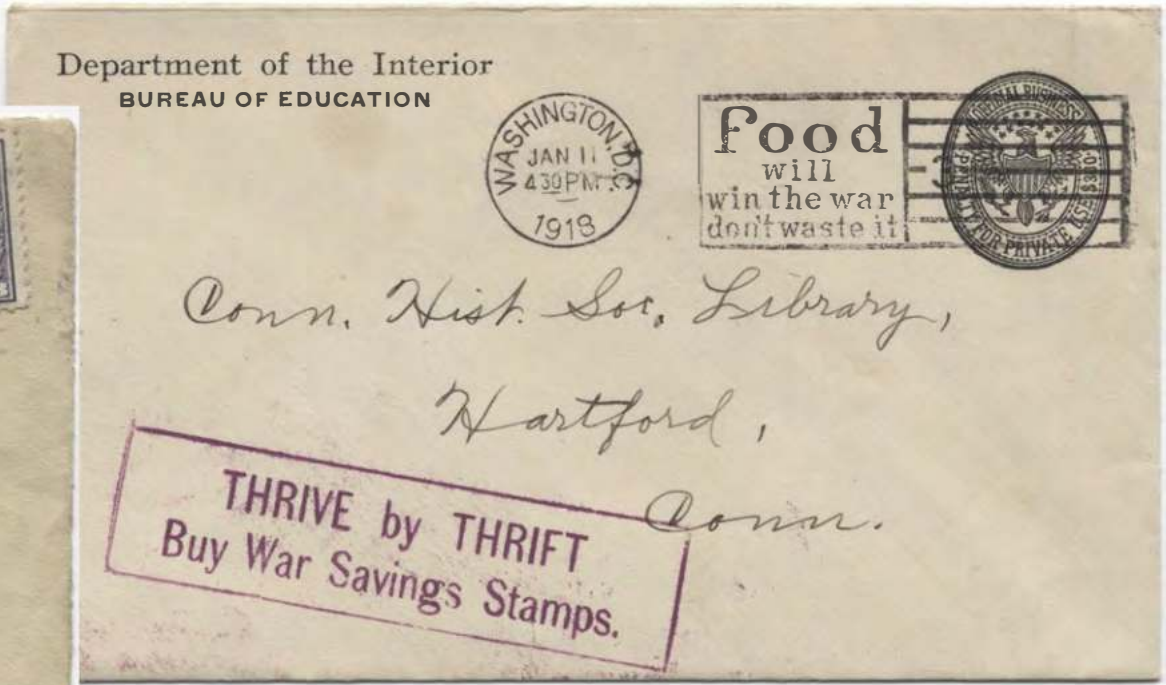
Unofficial Markings— Thrift Stamps



Jul. 1, 1918
Olympia, WA to Urbana, IL
“THRIVE BY THRIFT / Buy War Savings Stamps”



Jan. 10, 1919
New York, NY to Chicago, IL
“Buy “Thrift Stamps” / from your carrier”



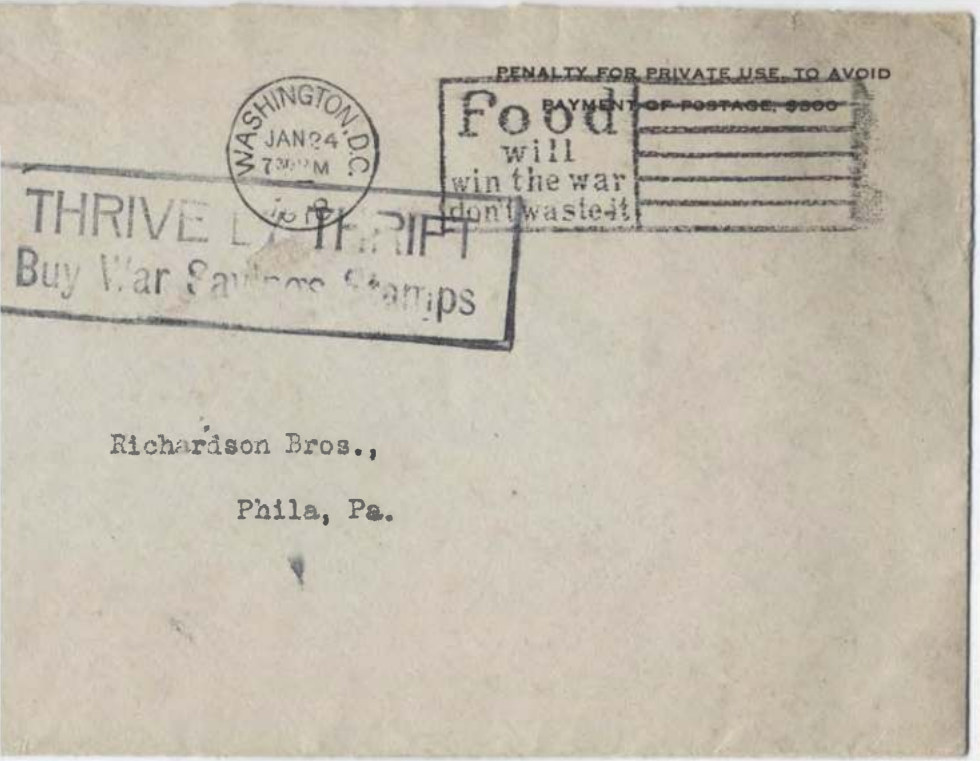
Jan. 11, 1918
Washington, DC to Hartford, CT
“THRIVE BY THRIFT / Buy War Savings Stamps.”



Feb. 8, 1918
Washington, DC to Appleton, WI
“THRIVE BY THRIFT / Buy War Savings Stamps”



Apr. 5, 1918
Elmira, NY to Syracuse, NY
“A Quarter a Day / Keeps the Kaiser Away / (Buy 25 c Thrift Stamps.)”

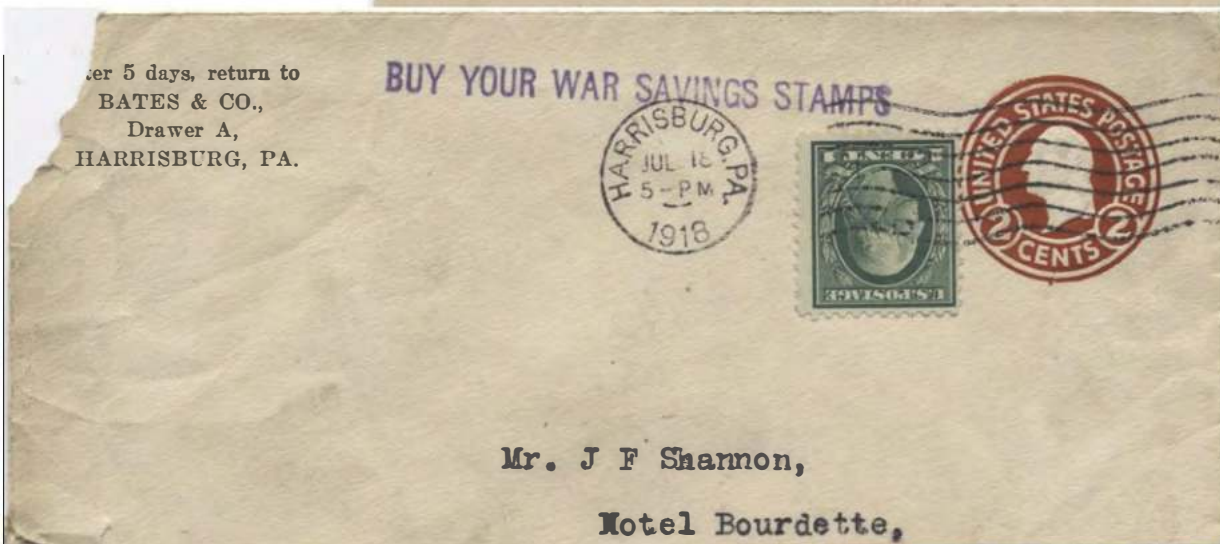


Jan. 24, 1918
Washington, DC to Philadelphia, PA
“THRIVE BY THRIFT / Buy War Savings Stamps”

A different group of markings were sporadically used to promote the sale of Thrift Stamps and War Savings Stamps instead of the much more expensive Liberty Bonds.

Unofficial Markings— Thrift Stamps and War Savings Stamps

Jul. 18, 1918
Harrisburg, PA to
Bellevue, OH
“BUY YOUR WAR
SAVINGS STAMPS”



Apr. 9, 1918
Chicago, IL to
Aurora, IL

“INVEST IN /
UNITED STATES-
GOVERNMENT
WAR SAVINGS
STAMPS WHO
SAVES SERVES”

Apr. 15, 1918
Duluth, MN to
Milwaukee,
WI.

“W.S.S. /
SAVE MON-
EY / BUY
THRIFT
STAMPS /
W.S.S.”



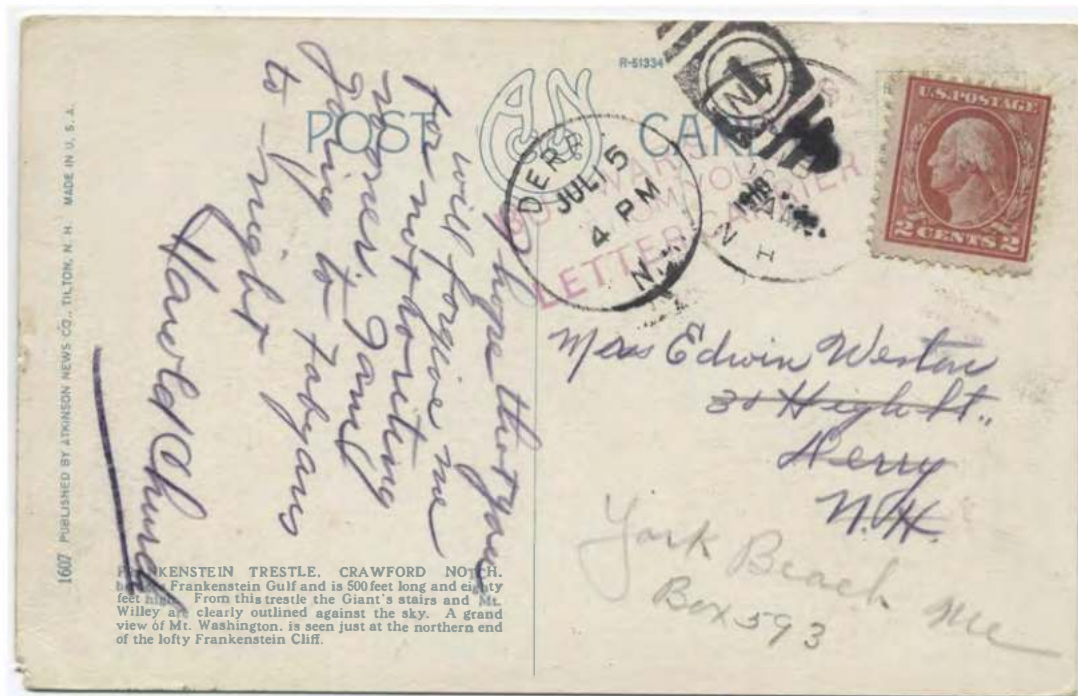
A few markings explicitly promoted the sale of the low-denomination (25-cent) Thrift Stamps instead of the more expensive (\$5) War Savings Stamps.

Unofficial Markings— Thrift Stamps and War Savings Stamps



Dec. 15, 1917
Waukesha, WI to Milwaukee, WI

“WAR SAVINGS STAMPS / WISCONSIN SAVES & SERVES”



Jul. 15, 1918
Intervale, NH to Derry, NH, forwarded to York Beach, ME

“BUY WAR STAMPS / FROM YOUR / LETTER CARRIER”

Some markings are local in scope or appear to have been locally produced.