

This Day in History... December 1, 1911

First and Only U.S. Registration Stamp

On December 1, 1911, the US Post Office Department issued its first and only Registration stamp. It was used for the prepayment of registry fees, but was often misused and only remained in use for less than two years.



*First and only US
Registration stamp*

The US first implemented a registered letter system on July 1, 1855. For the next 56 years, mailers could pay the registration fee, which ranged from five to twenty cents over these years, with cash or stamps.

Though there wasn't a Registered Mail stamp issued during this time, there were Post Office Seals, also known as Official Seals. They had no franking power, meaning they didn't pay for the delivery of mail, but they did serve an important purpose. The first official seals had one specific role: to seal large "registered packages" containing registered letters that were being transported, thereby preventing tampering with this very secure class of mail.



1872 Registry Seal

Then on December 1, 1911, the Post Office issued US #F1, America's first and only registration stamp for the prepayment of registry fees. This new stamp could only be used to pay the registry fee and was not valid for regular postage. When used in addition to regular postage, this stamp provided special care and handling for an extra fee for a letter or package. Upon

receiving the item, the addressee was required to sign a receipt.

There was some confusion among users and postal clerks around these stamps, which led to their misuse. As a result, the postmaster general abolished the Registration stamp in 1913, but allowed the remaining stock to be used up. After that, the registration fee could be paid by using regular postage stamps.

A similar stamp was issued in 1955. The 15¢ Certified Mail stamp, #FA1. Certified Mail is a form of registration – it gives mail special protection and provides the sender with proof of delivery. A single stamp was issued June 6, 1955, to inaugurate the Certified Mail Service. This was used in addition to the regular postage and required the recipient to sign for his letter or package upon delivery.



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