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SECTION II

COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST

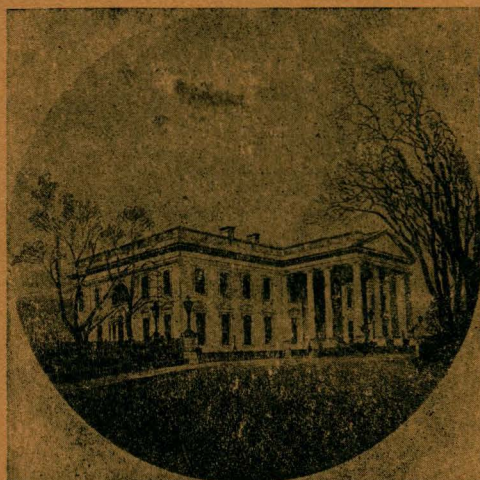
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SUPPLEMENT TO THE HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE UNITED STATES

—BY—

EDWARD STERN



FRANKING PRIVILEGES OF THE PRESIDENTS' WIDOWS

Entered as second-class matter July 5th, 1927, at the Post Office at Federalburg,
Maryland, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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Section II

The Free Franking Privilege of the President's Widows

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Supplement to the History of the "Free Franking" of Mail in the United States

THE FREE FRANKING PRIVILEGE OF THE PRESIDENT'S WIDOWS

By EDWARD STERN

Perhaps in the past there has been too little cognizance given to the great part portrayed by the wives of the president during their various administrations, and yet we are precisely aware of the fact that these "Ladies of the White House" were the powers behind the throne, and in many instances bore a very effectual influence upon their husbands' lives in a manner both social and political.

The widow of a president is granted the privilege to "Free Frank" mail during her natural life which requires a special Act of Congress in each case, and to date seventeen widows have been so privileged.

The collecting of these franks has been a most fascinating hobby. They have been acquired through various channels over a period of years. Pages 153 to 159 in my book, "History of the 'Free Franking' of mail in the United States" are directly relative to this subject. Since the book appeared, I have been most successful in accumulating a vast amount of additional material and interesting data, and therefore amalgamated all the new material into one supplement. All illustrations of both franks and letters are from the originals in my collection with the exception of the Martha Washington item.

The full text of the statutes are quoted in each case in the following pages with full information of the Acts of the Legislature granting the privilege for franking to each of the seventeen widows of the presidents of the United States. The reference to "Stat" pertains to the United States Statutes at Large. The date given in each case signifies when the law was approved by the president, and thus became effective.

The earlier statutes authorized the widows to receive mail free of postage (see Dolly Madison cover) because that was the only real value of the frank at that time. Mail was then customarily sent with postage charges to be collected from the recipient, and the real courtesy to the widows was thus to allow them to receive mail free of postage. The frank was put in the early statutes in that form. Then the early statutes were simply copied verbatim without any particular thought, even after postage stamps were introduced and it became customary to pre-pay the postage charges. Only in 1902 when Mrs. McKinley's franking privilege was granted did someone catch this, and change the statute so as to apply only to mail sent by the widow. Since that time the new form has been used.

Although this article is based entirely upon autographed free franked envelopes, I have included a most unusual cover addressed to Dolly Madison and received by her free of postage. This cover is dated 1837, and of course prior to the issuance of postage stamps (the first stamp was issued in 1847). Such covers as these were marked with the amount of postage which was to be collected from the recipient. This is the case with the Dolly Madison cover—it shows a rating of the amount of postage (12½c) which normally would

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.

have been collected. This was crossed out by the delivery office because of her right to receive mail free of postage.

The copies of the texts and statutes were kindly supplied to me by the courtesy of Mr. Erwin N. Griswold, of Cambridge, Mass.

In point of scarcity Margaret S. Taylor tops the list. Although she had the privilege for over two years none have ever come to light. The next is Louisa C. Adams, the only known cover to my knowledge is the one illustrated and from my collection. Then comes Mrs. Sarah Polk—two of these were found among family papers, the writer possessed both (refer to Hillman letter for story). There are at least three known of Martha Washington.

Next in line I consider Mrs. Lincoln, Mrs. Grant, Mrs. McKinley, and Mrs. Harding (the latter only lived ten months after her privilege was granted).

The autographed franks of Edith Bolling Wilson are quite uncommon due to the fact that within fifteen days after she was granted permission to frank she also obtained permission to use a stencil facsimile signature.

Due to the great abuse of the franking privilege it has cost Uncle Sam a vast loss of income every year, therefore only members of Congress and widows have the privilege. Penalty envelopes are common in use in all branches of the government service, these travel without postage stamp or autograph, and postal employees are familiar with these covers knowing full well that they pertain to government business and are duly passed along. It is quite likely that a very small percentage of postal employees have ever heard of, or observed, the frank of a president's widow. It is a known fact that in many cases where the envelope with the signature of the widow was used in place of a stamp, the cover has been held up by the postal authorities as illustrated in the following pages, and in a number of instances the postage was collected from the recipient upon delivery. There even have been cases occasionally where stamps have been affixed in addition to the autographed frank. It is most strange that this oversight should occur when we consider the fact that there are only five widows alive enjoying the free use of the mails for personal matters in this vast country.

The widows of five of the presidents are living at the time that this article is written, and they are, respectively—Frances Folsom Cleveland, (now Mrs. Preston), widow of Grover Cleveland! Mary Lord Harrison, widow of Benjamin Harrison; Edith Carow Roosevelt, widow of Theodore Roosevelt; Edith Bolling Wilson, widow of Woodrow Wilson, and Grace Goodhue Coolidge, widow of Calvin Coolidge.

Quite frequently letters are found written by the wives of the presidents and franked by the president while in office.

It is of great interest to note that among the remaining eleven wives of the presidents ten died before their husbands, namely—

<i>Wives of the Presidents</i>	<i>Date of death</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>Date of death</i>
Abigail Smith Adams	Oct. 28, 1818	John Adams	July 4, 1826
Martha Wayles Skelton Jefferson	Sept. 6, 1782	Thomas Jefferson	July 4, 1826
Elizabeth Kortright Monroe	, 1830	James Monroe	July 4, 1831
Rachel D. R. Jackson	Dec. 2, 1828	Andrew Jackson	June 8, 1845
Hannah Hoes Van Buren	Feb. 5, 1819	Martin Van Buren	July 24, 1862
Letitia Christian Tyler	Sept. 9, 1842	John Tyler	Jan. 17, 1862
Abigail Powers Fillmore	Mar. 30, 1853	Millard Fillmore	Mar. 8, 1874
Jane Means Appleton Pierce	Dec. 2, 1863	Franklin Pierce	Oct. 5, 1869
Lucy Ware Webb Hayes	June 25, 1889	Rutherford B. Hayes	Jan. 17, 1893
Ellen Lewis Herndon Arthur	Jan. 12, 1880	Chester A. Arthur	Nov. 18, 1886

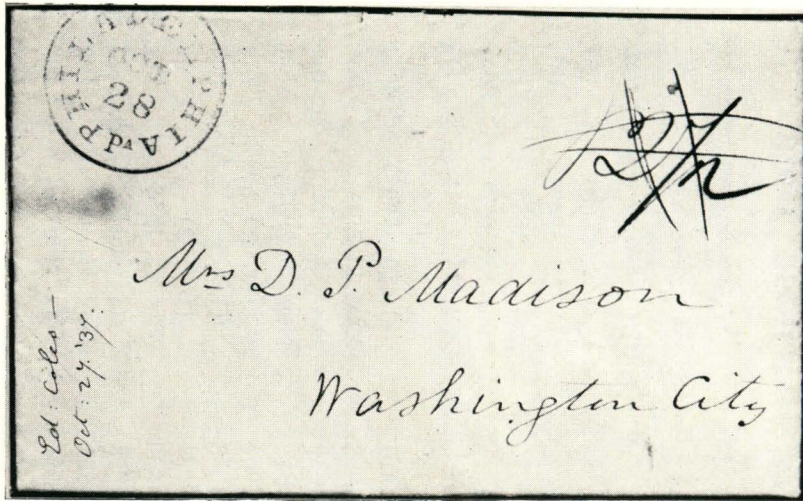
Although Eliza M. Johnson survived President Andrew Johnson she did not have the franking privilege. James Buchanan was the only bachelor president. Both Mrs. Lou Henry Hoover and Ex-President Herbert Hoover are living; also Mrs. Anna Eleanor Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Franking Privilege Data

Data as to time when Franking privilege was granted by Act of Congress, dates of birth and death, and length of time used, named in the order when privilege was granted.

<i>Widow</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Deceased</i>	<i>Date Granted</i>	<i>Time Used</i>
Martha Washington	June 2, 1731	May 22, 1802	Apr. 3, 1800	2 yrs. 1 mo.
Dolly Payne Madison	May 20, 1772	July 12, 1849	July 2, 1836	13 yrs. 10 da.
Anna Harrison	July 25, 1775	Feb. 25, 1864	Sept. 9, 1841	23 yrs. 6 mo.
Louisa Catherine Adams	Feb. 12, 1775	May 15, 1852	Mar. 9, 1848	4 yrs. 2 mo.
Sarah Polk	Sept. 4, 1803	Aug. 14, 1891	Jan. 10, 1850	41 yrs. 7 mo.
Margaret Smith Taylor	, 1788	Aug. 18, 1852	July 18, 1850	2 yrs. 1 mo.
Mary Todd Lincoln	Dec. 13, 1818	July 16, 1882	Feb. 10, 1866	16 yrs. 5 mo.
Lucretia Rudolph Garfield	Apr. 19, 1833	Mar. 13, 1918	Dec. 20, 1881	37 yrs. 3 mo.
Julia Dent Grant	Jan. 26, 1826	Dec. 14, 1902	June 28, 1886	16 yrs. 6 mo.
Ida Saxon McKinley	June 8, 1844	May 26, 1907	Jan. 22, 1902	5 yrs. 4 mo.
Frances Folsom Cleveland	July 21, 1864	(Living)	Feb. 1, 1909	
Mary Lord Harrison	Apr. 30, 1858	(Living)	Feb. 1, 1909	
Edith Carow Roosevelt	Aug. 13, 1861	(Living)	Oct. 27, 1919	
Florence Kling Harding	Aug. 15, 1860	Nov. 22, 1924	Jan. 25, 1924	10 mo.
Edith Bolling Wilson	Oct. 15, 1872	(Living)	Mar. 4, 1924	
Helen Herron Taft	June 2, 1861	May 22, 1943	June 14, 1930	12 yrs. 11 mo.
Grace Goodhue Coolidge	Jan. 3, 1879	(Living)	June 16, 1934	

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.



This is a good example of a letter received by the recipient (D. P. Madison) without payment of postage. It will be observed that the act passed by Congress gave her the privilege to receive mail free of postage as well as frank her mail. This cover shows the amount of postage ($12\frac{1}{2}$) that would be normally required or collected upon delivery, however the ($12\frac{1}{2}$) was crossed out by the delivery office. The letter attached to this addressed sheet as above illustrated is dated Oct. 27, 1837, slightly over one year after the privilege was granted to her. Of course there were no postage stamps in use until 1847, and the amount of postage to be collected at that time was always marked on the face of the envelope by the Post Office Department. (*This cover was loaned by Mr. Erwin N. Griswold*).

PRESIDENTIAL WIDOWS' FRANKS

Martha Washington

Born—June 2, 1731
Died—May 22, 1802

Franking Privilege
granted April 3, 1800.
Length of time used
2 years and 1 month.



Maiden name

Martha Dandridge

Custus

(of Virginia)

Widow of President
George Washington.
Died Dec. 14, 1799.

First President of
the United States.

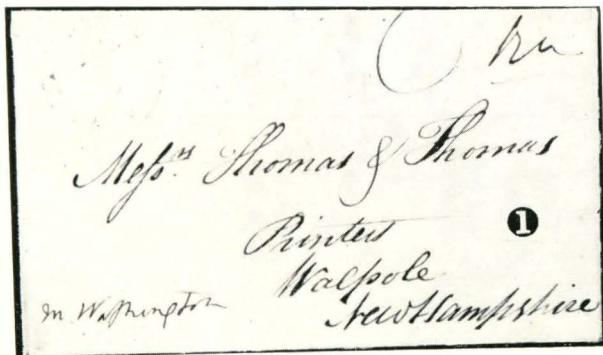
The Washingtons were well known for their hospitality and lavish entertainment while in the Capitol at Philadelphia. Martha Washington was the first widow to have the privilege to frank and receive post free all mail during her life by an Act of Congress. She was also the first woman to have her likeness on a postage stamp of the United States.

2 Stat. 19:

Chap. XVIII.—An Act to extend the privilege of franking letters and packages to Martha Washington.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all letters and packages to and from Martha Washington, relict of the late General George Washington, shall be received and conveyed by post free of postage, for and during her life.

Approved, April 3, 1800.



Franked—"M. WASHINGTON"

Attached to letter written by "Tobias Lear," who was private secretary to the Washingtons. Letter dated Oct. 6, 1800, and franked by Martha Washington, six months after privilege was granted to her. —Loaned by Mr. Henry Haiken.

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.

**Dorothy Payne
Madison**

Born May 20, 1772
Died July 12, 1849.

Franking privilege
granted July 2, 1836.
Length of time used
13 years and 10 days.



Maiden name
Dorothy Payne Todd
(of North Carolina).
Widow of President
James Madison.
Died June 28, 1836.
Fourth President of
the United States.

She became known in history as the charming "Dolly" Madison, and was a social leader at Washington. Her handwriting was unusual, it had the effect as if a line were drawn and the writing placed on the line. This is apparent both in the frank and in her letter writing. When the British took Washington she cut the portrait of George Washington from its frame and wrapped it under her dress before she fled to Virginia. This episode made her a popular heroine. Her mother was a cousin to Patrick Henry.

5 Stat. 107:

Chap. CCXC.—An Act to extend the privilege of franking letters and packages to Dolly P. Madison.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all letters and packages to and from Dolly P. Madison, relict of the late James Madison, shall be received and conveyed by post, free of postage, for and during her life.

Approved, July 2, 1836.

DESCRIPTIONS OF FRANKS ILLUSTRATED.**Plate A**

- Cover #1 Franked "Free D. P. Madison." The letter attached inside sheet is dated Feb. 8, 1840, it relates to her inability to meet her debts. It is entirely in her own handwriting, manuscript postmark.
- Cover #2 Franked the same, postmarked Washington, D. C. and "Free" in blue.
- Cover #3 Franked the same, with similar postmark in red.
- Cover #4 Franked the same, with Washington postmark having "Free" added. All above 4 covers are entirely in the handwriting of Mrs. Madison. Note the imaginary line under each word as above alluded to.

PRESIDENTIAL WIDOWS' FRANKS

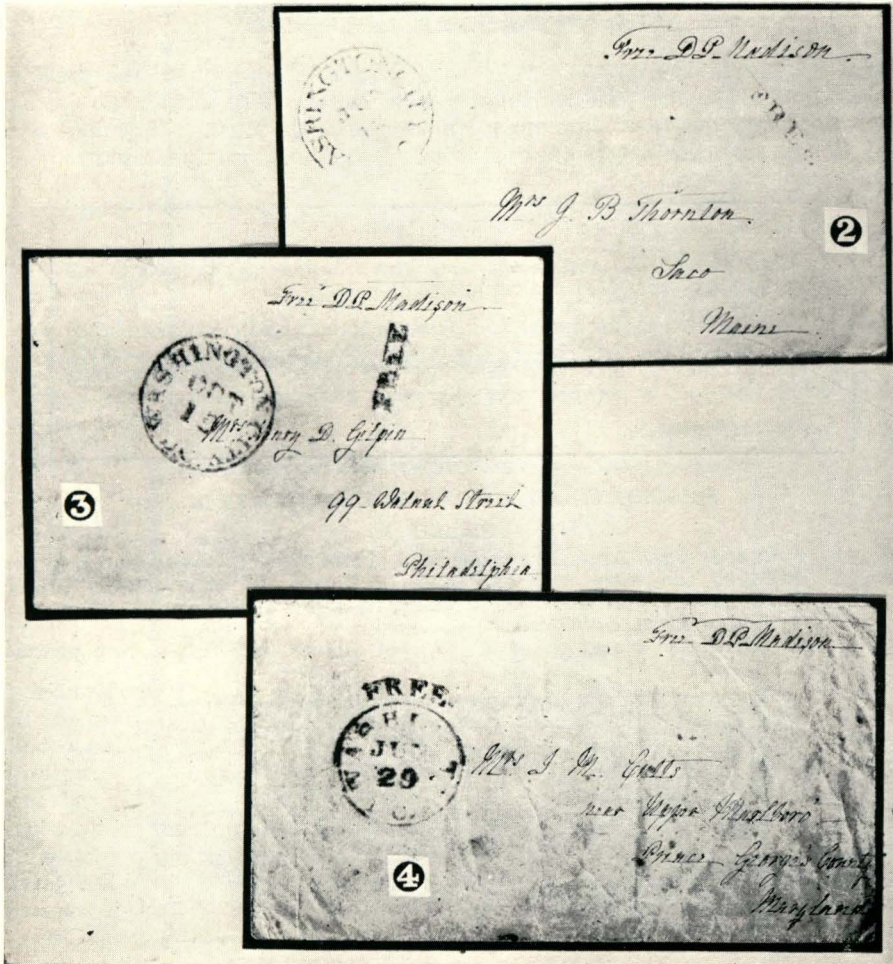
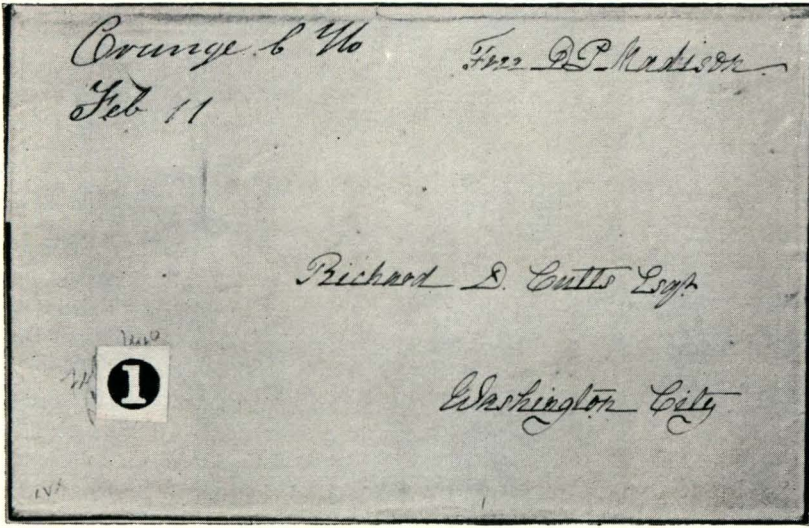


Plate A

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.

Anna Harrison

Born July 25, 1775

Died Feb. 25, 1864

Franking privilege
granted Sept. 9, 1841.
Length of time used
23 years and 6 months.



Maiden name

Anna Symmes

(of New Jersey)

Widow of President

William Henry

Harrison

Died April 4, 1841.

Ninth President of
the United States.

She was an invalid at the time of her husband's election to the presidency and did not go to the White House. She remained at her home in North Bend, Ohio, and out-lived him by a quarter of a century. They had 6 sons and 4 daughters—the greatest number of children of any president.

5 Stat. 461:

Chap. XLX.—An Act authorizing the transmission of letters and packets to and from Mrs. Harrison, free of postage.

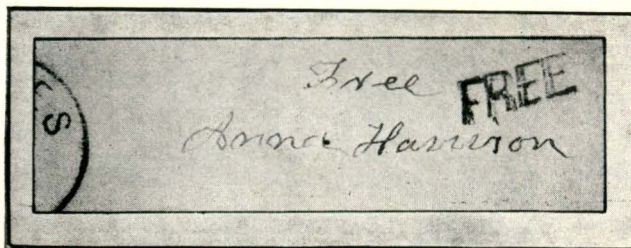
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all letters and packets, carried by post to and from Mrs. Harrison, relict of the late William Henry Harrison, be conveyed free of postage during her natural life.

Approved, September 9, 1841.

DESCRIPTION OF FRANKS ILLUSTRATED.**Plate B**

- Cover #1 Franked "Free Anna Harrison" and postmarked Lawrenceburgh in black.
 Cover #2 Franked the same with the town of Cleves in manuscript. This is a small town in Ohio, founded and named by Judge Cleves Symmes, the father of Anna Harrison.
 Cover #3 Franked the same with the town of Cleves in straight line postmark.

This is only a portion of a cover, but the first time I have ever seen the "Free" applied to other than a manuscript.



Franked the same as those on opposite page with "Free" applied by a hand stamp. The postmark is apparently Cleves.

PRESIDENTIAL WIDOWS' FRANKS

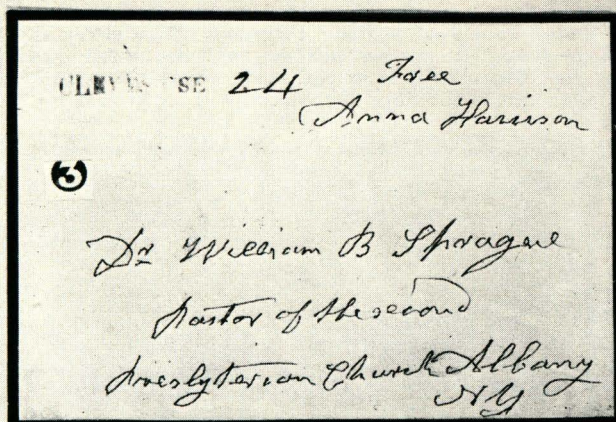
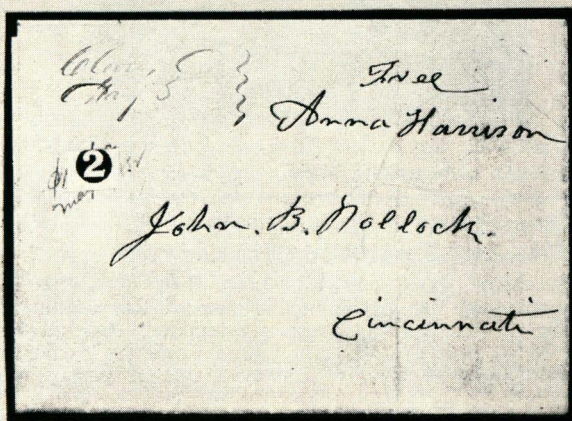
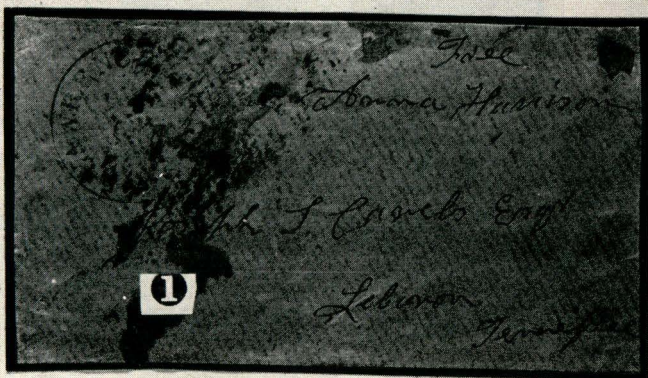


Plate B

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.

**Louisa Catherine
Adams**

Born Feb. 12, 1775
Died May 15, 1852.

Franking privilege
granted Mar. 9, 1848.
Length of time used
4 years and 2 months.



Maiden name

**Louisa Catherine
Johnson**

(of Maryland)

Widow of President
JOHN QUINCY ADAMS
Died Feb. 23, 1848.

Sixth President of
the United States.

She was born in London. Her father was fiscal agent for the colonies. Mr. Adams met Miss Johnson at her father's home in London, and they were married there and lived abroad for many years while he was Minister.

9 Stat. 213 (this also appears among the private Acts at 9 Stat. 710):

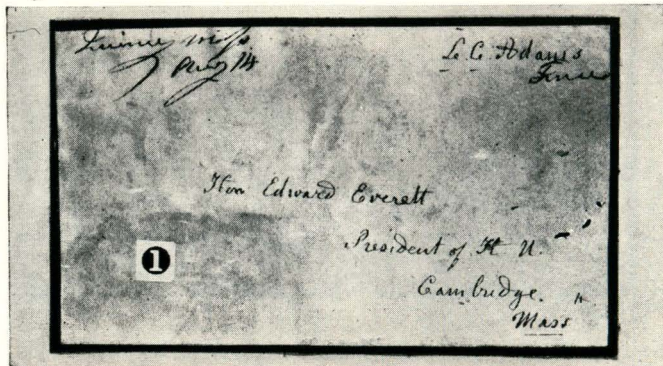
Chap. XVI.—An Act granting the Franking Privilege to Louisa Catherine Adams.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all letters and packets carried by post to and from Louisa Catherine Adams, widow of the late John Quincy Adams, be conveyed free of postage during her natural life.

Approved, March 9, 1848.

DESCRIPTION OF FRANK ILLUSTRATED.

Cover—Franked "L. C. Adams" and "Free"—addressed to Edward Everett, Cambridge, Mass., who was president of Harvard University, and Secretary of State under President Millard Fillmore. The cover shows the town of "Quincy, Mass." in upper left corner, the word "Free" was applied at the Post Office as it is in the same handwriting as "Quincy." To my knowledge this is the only known franked cover of Mrs. Louisa C. Adams.

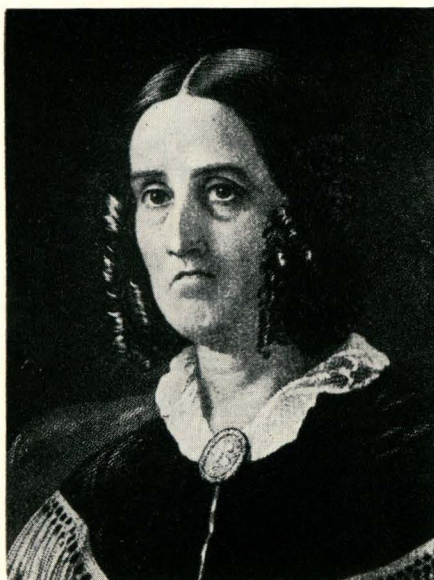


PRESIDENTIAL WIDOWS' FRANKS

Sarah Polk

Born Sept. 4, 1803
Died August 14, 1891.

Franking privilege
granted Jan. 10, 1850.
Length of time used
41 years and 7 months.



Maiden name

Sarah Childress

(of Tennessee)

Widow of President

James K. Polk.

Died June 15, 1849.

Eleventh President of
the United States.

She was strict about temperance observance, and abolished wine and dancing at the White House receptions. However in spite of her reforms Mrs. Polk was extremely popular. After the death of the President she adopted her niece Eunice Polk Hillman (Mrs. George H.) Mr. G. H. Brownell, who was an ardent collector of "Widow's Franks," was most fortunate in contacting Mrs. Hillman and secured from her two franked envelopes of Mrs. James K. Polk. This event occurred in 1930, and it was through this incident that I was able to obtain one of these franks for my collection. After the death of Mr. Brownell I purchased his entire collection from his widow, and thereby had in my possession the only 2 known examples of Mrs. Polk's franked mail known. Among the contents of the Brownell collection is the following letter written by Mrs. Hillman pertaining to the above two franks here mentioned:

9 Stat. 421:

Chap. I.—An Act to extend the privilege of franking Letters and Packages to Sarah Polk.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all letters and packages to and from Sarah Polk, relict of the late James K. Polk, shall be received and conveyed by post, free of postage, for and during her life.

Approved, January 10, 1850.

Dec. 6, 1930.

Dear Mr. Brownell:

We have a number of letters franked by Mrs. Polk. They are all "Mrs. Jas. K. Polk." In fact I don't think she would have considered it dignified to write "Sarah Polk" on the outside of an envelope. No matter what the frank *was*, she certainly never used any other than "Mrs. Jas. K. Polk." The earliest recollections of my childhood was seeing Aunt Sarah go into her parlor to receive visitors with kid gloves on, lace mits in hot weather and always, everything was done with the greatest dignity. She was a wonderfully intelligent woman, kept up with all the news of the day, especially political. In those days they did not have the overburden of politics that we have. The State Legislature called on Mrs. Polk in a body New Years Day. It would be fine if we had something left of that real dignity.

Sincerely Yours

EUNICE POLK HILLMAN—(Mrs. George H.)

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.

DESCRIPTION OF FRANKS AND LETTER ILLUSTRATED.

Plate C

- Cover #2 Franked "Mrs. J. K. Polk" and "Free" (her privilege to frank was granted under the name of Sarah Polk). The cover is postmarked Nashville, Tenn., dated September 26, 1858, and entirely in her own handwriting. It is in excellent condition. There is only one other known to exist and it does not bear a postmark. Strangely she enjoyed the privilege for over 41 years, the longest period of all of the widows, and it is one of the rarest of all franks.
- Cover #3 Franked "Sarah Polk" and "Free." Although this is only a portion of a cover it nevertheless shows the frank under the proper name which was granted to her by Act of Congress. Attention is called to the second paragraph in the letter of Mrs. Eunice Polk Hillman (translated). She denies that Mrs. Polk ever used "Sarah Polk" as a franking signature on an envelope, nevertheless the one illustrated bears out the fact that Mrs. Hillman was in error.
- Letter #4 Written and signed by Mrs. Sarah K. Polk. It is in response to a request for an autograph of her husband—the former President of the United States, and is dated January 27, 1865.

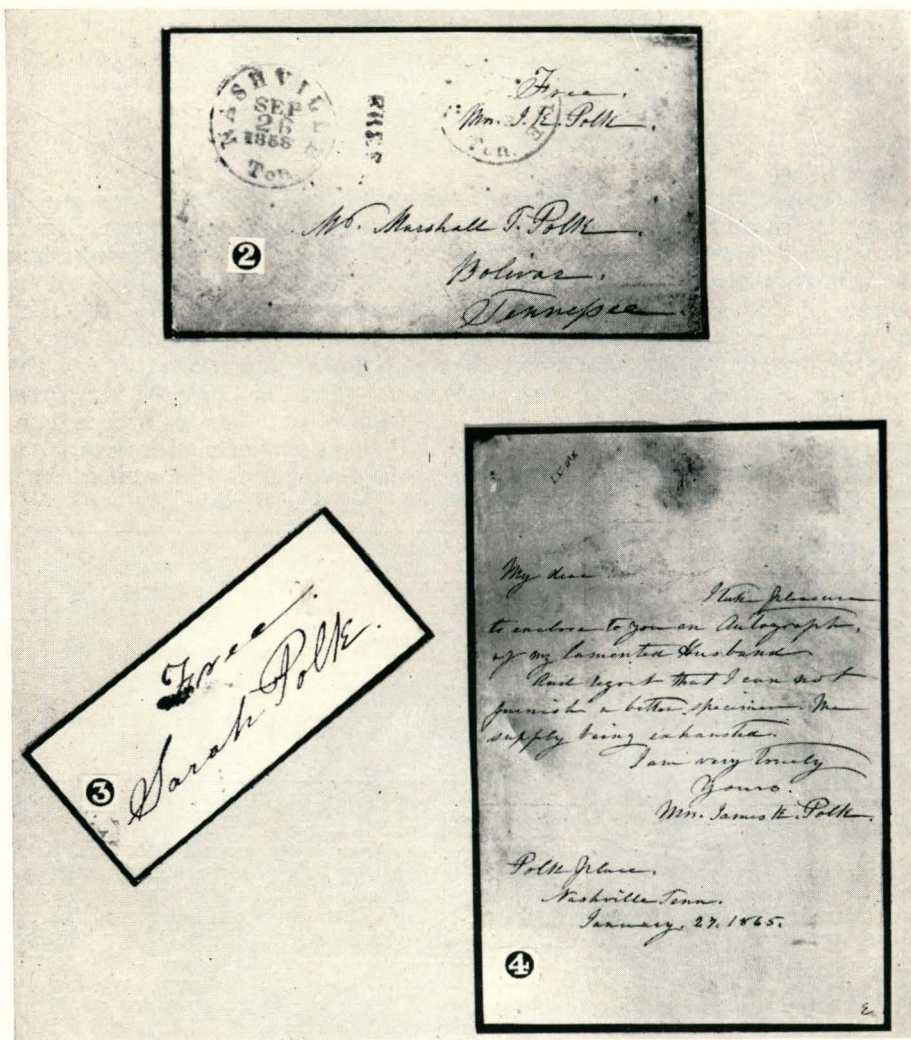


Plate C

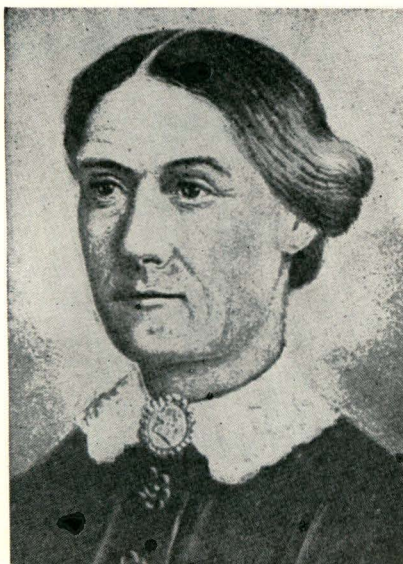
PRESIDENTIAL WIDOWS' FRANKS

Margaret Taylor

Born — —, 1788

Died Aug. 18, 1852.

Franking privilege
granted July 18, 1850.
Length of time used
2 years and 1 month.



Maiden name

Margaret Smith

(of Maryland).

Widow of President
Zachary Taylor.

Died July 9, 1850.

Twelfth President of
the United States.

There has been extremely little written concerning her. The date of her birth is a matter of controversy, the month and the day is unknown and the year is uncertain. Various authorities give the year as 1787 — 1788 — and 1790.

Mrs. Taylor was of delicate health. She had one son and five daughters, Betty, who married Major W. W. S. Bliss did the honors at the White House; another daughter (Sarah) married Jefferson Davis who became president of the Confederacy.

9 Stat. 440:

Chap. XXV.—An Act to grant the Franking Privilege to Mrs. Margaret S. Taylor.

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that the franking privilege heretofore accorded to the Widows of the deceased Presidents be, and the same is hereby, granted to Mrs. Margaret Smith Taylor, relict of Zachary Taylor, late President of the United States.

Approved, July 18, 1850.

Even though Mrs. Taylor had the privilege for over two years there has never been a frank discovered to my knowledge.

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.

Mary Lincoln

Born Dec. 13, 1818

Died July 16, 1882.

Franking privilege
granted Feb. 10, 1866.
Length of time used
16 years and 5 months.



Maiden name

Mary Todd

(of Kentucky)

Widow of President

Abraham Lincoln

Died April 15, 1865.

Sixteenth President of
the United States.

She had little occasion for social distinction. Owing to the war she devoted her time to war work. They had four sons: Edward Baker, William Wallace, Thomas "Tad," and Robert Todd, who died in 1850, 1862, 1871, and 1926 respectively. After Robert Todd died he left vast amount of letters to and from the President to the United States Government with the instructions that they be kept sealed until 21 years after his death. (1947).

14 Stat. 3:

Chap. IX.—An Act granting the franking privilege to Mary Lincoln.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all letters and packets carried by post, to and from Mary Lincoln, widow of the late Abraham Lincoln, be conveyed free of postage during her natural life.

Approved, February 10, 1866.

DESCRIPTION OF FRANKS ILLUSTRATED.**Plate D**

- Cover #1 Franked "Mary Lincoln." This is the first envelope with a mourning band on the edges. It shows an illegible postmark of a town in Pennsylvania, addressed entirely in her handwriting.
- Cover #2 Franked "Mrs. A. Lincoln," also with mourning band about twice the width as Cover #1. Her privilege was granted under the name of "Mary" and this is the only one known to my knowledge of "Mrs. A. Lincoln." Few widows used "Mrs." in their franking signature.

PRESIDENTIAL WIDOWS' FRANKS



Plate D

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.

Lucretia R. Garfield

Born April 19, 1833,

Died March 13, 1918.

Franking privilege
granted Dec. 20, 1881.
Length of time used
37 years and 3 months.



Maiden name

Lucretia Rudolph

(of Ohio)

Widow of President

James A. Garfield.

Died Sept. 19, 1881.

Twentieth President of
the United States.

Her stay at the White House was brief and ended after the assassination of the president. She enjoyed the franking privilege the second longest of all widows (37 years).

22 Stat. I:

Chap. I.—An Act granting the franking privilege to Lucretia R. Garfield.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all mail matter carried by post to Lucretia R. Garfield, widow of the late James A. Garfield, or sent by her, under her written autograph signature, be conveyed free of postage during her natural life.

Approved, December 20, 1881.

DESCRIPTIONS OF FRANKS ILLUSTRATED.**Plate E**

- Cover #1 Franked "Lucretia R. Garfield," cover is dated July 10, 1882, about 1½ years after the privilege was granted, a very early usage. It bears the unusual town cancellation of West Mentor, Lake Co., Ohio, and the name of P. M.
- Cover #2 Franked the same, postmarked Cleveland, Ohio, and dated September 18, 1883.
- Cover #3 Franked the same with "Free" added, postmarked West Menton, Ohio, and dated July 1892.
- Cover #4 Franked the same as Cover #3, showing the same town cancellation 15 years later (June 1907).
- Cover #5 Franked the same, postmarked South Pasadena, California, where Mrs. Garfield spent a great part of her life after the death of her husband.
- Cover #6 Franked the same, postmarked both South Pasadena and Los Angeles, California, December 1908.

Above six covers are entirely in the handwriting of Mrs. Garfield.

PRESIDENTIAL WIDOWS' FRANKS



Plate E

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.

Julia Dent Grant

Born Jan. 26, 1826

Died Dec. 14, 1902.

Franking privilege
granted June 28, 1886.
Length of time used
16 years and 10 months.



Maiden name

Julia Dent

(of Missouri)

Widow of President
Ulysses S. Grant

Died July 23, 1885.

Eighteenth President of
the United States.

She was the daughter of Judge Frederick Dent of St. Louis, and was considered a social favorite in that city when Mr. Grant as a young officer won her. Their daughter Nellie was married at the White House to Capt. Algernon Sartoris of London. Their son Frederick Dent Grant was a General in the Spanish American War.

24 Stat. 819:

Chap. 561.—An Act granting a franking privilege to Julia D. Grant.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all mail matter carried by post to Julia D. Grant, widow of the late Ulysses S. Grant, or sent by her under her written autograph signature, be conveyed free of postage, during her natural life.

Approved, June 28, 1886.

DESCRIPTION OF FRANKS ILLUSTRATED.**Plate F**

- Cover #1 Franked "Julia D. Grant" and addressed entirely in her handwriting. Cover is addressed to Mrs. Geo. W. Childs, wife of the noted publisher, postmarked New York and dated March 26, 1889.
- Cover #2 Franked the same, and postmarked only 3 days later than the one above, March 29, 1889. It is apparent that this letter was given to a friend to mail by Mrs. Grant who evidently was not aware of the "frank" value, and out of goodness of his heart he purchased a stamp to cover its postage requirements.
- Cover #3 Franked the same, the cover is addressed to the United States Pension Office, New York. Her frank was apparently not recognized by the Post Office clerk, a postage due stamp was affixed and 2 cents was collected upon delivery of the letter. It is quite obvious how important it is for the person that franks mail to add the word "Free" which in many cases avoids delay and aids free delivery. Many clerks are unfamiliar with Franks, and the word "Free" would undoubtedly attract attention to the cover.

Note—Although Mrs. Grant had the privilege for over 16 years, it is a strange coincidence that the above 3 covers are all postmarked the same year (1889), and they all have mourning bands.

PRESIDENTIAL WIDOWS' FRANKS



Plate F

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.

Ida S. McKinley

Born June 8, 1844

Died May 26, 1907.

Franking privilege
granted Jan. 22, 1902.
Length of time used
5 years and 4 months.



Maiden name

Ida Saxton

(of Ohio)

Widow of President
William McKinley.

Died Sept. 14, 1901.

Twenty-fifth President
the United States.

She was an invalid for years and her two daughters died in childhood. She presided at the White House and accompanied the President everywhere. He likewise spent a great deal of time with her in her room, and derived rest and courage from this contact. Mrs. McKinley was with the President at Buffalo when he was assassinated.

32 Stat. 1237:

Chap. 4.—An Act providing for the free transportation of all mail matter sent by Mrs. Ida S. McKinley.

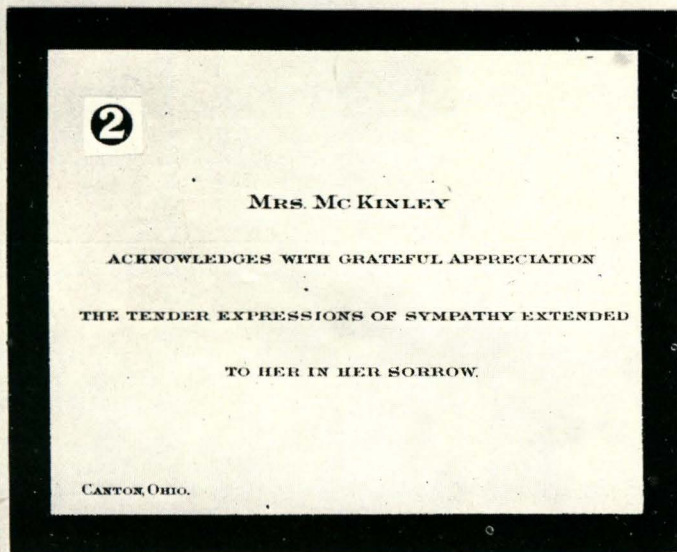
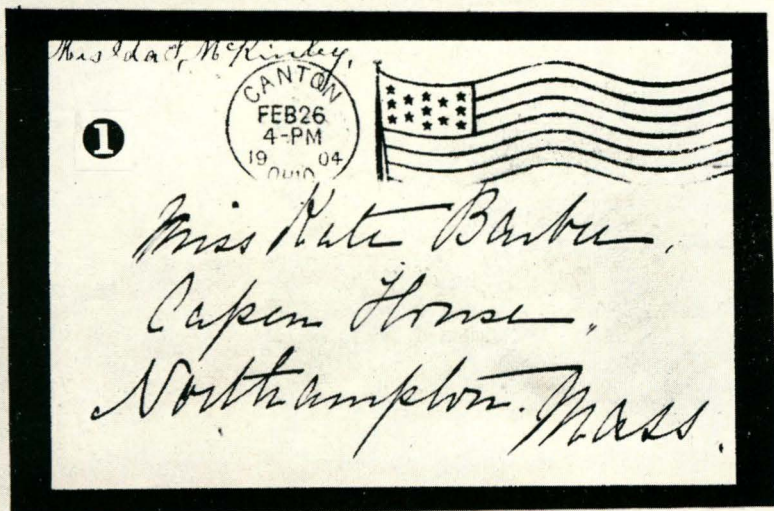
Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all mail matter be sent by post by Ida S. McKinley, Widow of the late William McKinley, under her written autograph signature, be conveyed free of postage during her natural life.

Approved, January 22, 1902.

DESCRIPTION OF FRANKS ILLUSTRATED.**Plate G**

- Cover #1 Franked Mrs. Ida S. McKinley. Only one other widow (Mrs. Lincoln) used "Mrs." in franking signature. Being an invalid it was an effort for her even to sign her name. Postage was usually paid on her mail to avoid exertion and bother. Her franks are quite scarce, and all of those that I have seen were without "Free."
- Card #2 A condolence card sent out by Mrs. McKinley acknowledging receipt of sympathies extended upon the death of the President.

PRESIDENTIAL WIDOWS' FRANKS



HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.

Frances Folsom Cleveland

Born July 21, 1864

Living —————

Franking privilege
Granted Feb. 1, 1909.

Maiden name

Frances Folsom

(of New York)

Widow of President
Grover Cleveland

Died June 24, 1908.

Twenty-second President of
the United States.

She was the only White House bride of a President. Mrs. Cleveland re-married in 1914 to Mr. T. J. Preston, but this did not interfere with her franking privilege. As will be noted above, it was granted to her by an Act of Congress during her natural life, the only modification was a change of signature. She is the only widow of a president to re-marry, and to use two names in franking.

35 Stat. 591:

Chap. 55.—An Act granting a franking privilege to Frances F. Cleveland.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all mail matter sent by the post by Frances F. Cleveland, widow of the late Grover Cleveland, under her written autograph signature, be conveyed free of postage during her natural life.

Approved, February 1, 1909.

DESCRIPTIONS OF FRANKS ILLUSTRATED.**Plate H**

- Cover #1 "Frances F. Cleveland," addressed entirely in her handwriting to the Governor of New Jersey, postmarked Princeton, New Jersey, dated March 15, 1911. Mr. Woodrow Wilson was Governor at that time.
- Cover #2 Franked and postmarked the same, cover is type-written and dated January 24, 1912.
- Cover #3 Franked "Frances F. Cleveland Preston" and "Free." In February 1914, Mrs. Cleveland married Professor Thomas Joseph Preston a member of the faculty at Princeton University and continued the use of her franking privilege. By order of the Postmaster General her new franking signature should have "Preston" added. This cover is autographed in like manner with "free," dated Princeton, June 1924, addressed and franked entirely in her own handwriting.
- Cover #4 Franked similar to above without "Free," postmarked Princeton, N. J. and dated April 17, 1929.
- Cover #5 Franked similar, with her corner card inscribed Mrs. T. J. Preston, Jr., dated Jan. 3, 1929.
- Cover #6 Franked similar, postmarked Baltimore, Md., dated May 10, 1931.

PRESIDENTIAL WIDOWS' FRANKS

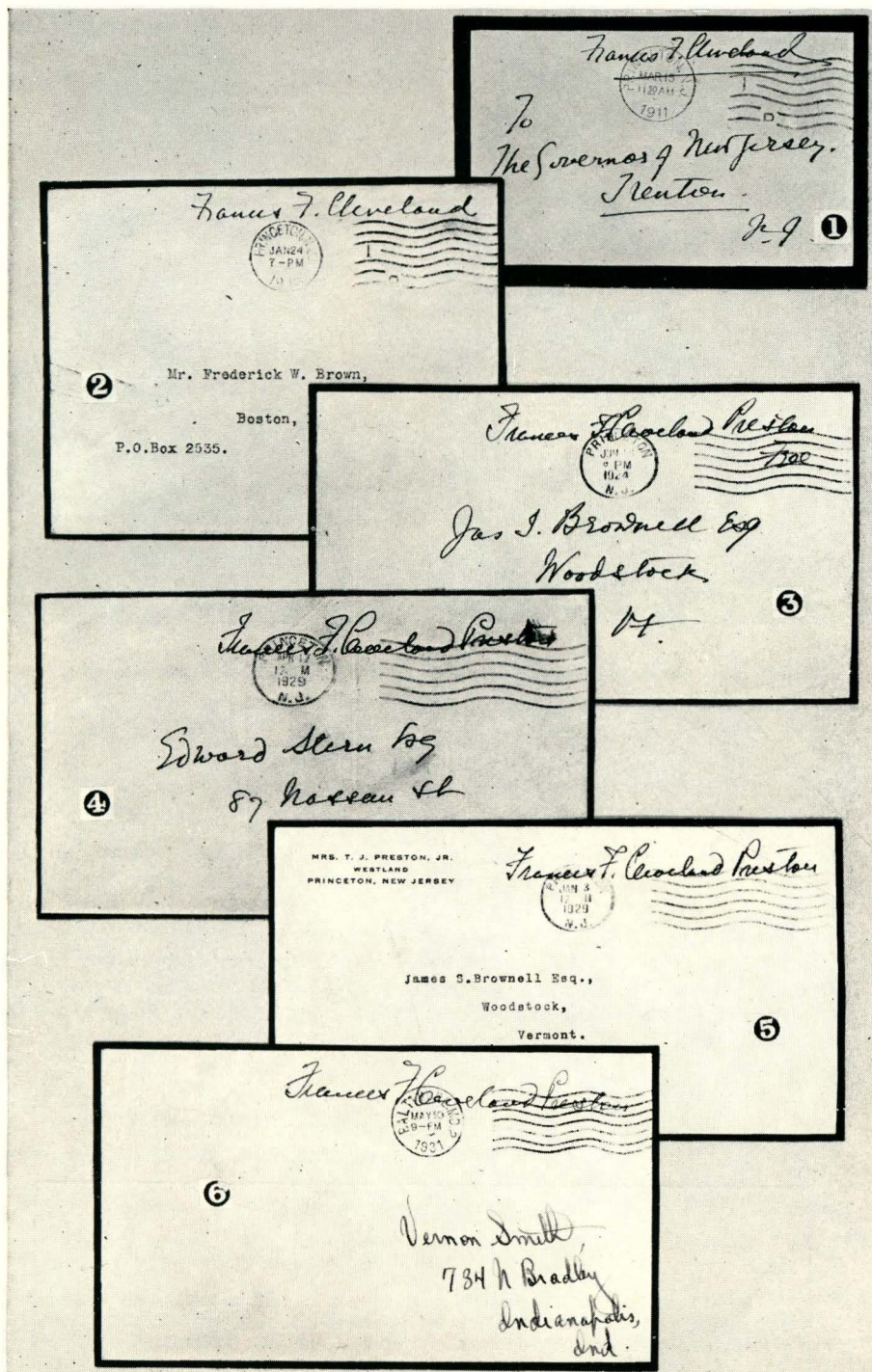


Plate H

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.

**Mary Lord Harrison**

Born April 30, 1858—Living. Franking privilege granted February 1, 1909. Maiden name—Mary Scott Lord (of Ohio). Widow of Walter E. Dimmick who died at sea. Widow of President Benjamin Harrison, who died March 13, 1901—23rd President of the United States. Mrs. Harrison was the second wife of the President, and a niece of his first wife (Caroline Lavinia Scott), and she spent two years at the White House during her aunts' life. She did not apply for the franking privilege until eight years after the death of the President.

During the International Stamp Exhibition in 1936 it was my good fortune to meet Mrs. Harrison, and I shall always recall this noteworthy occasion.

It is rather difficult to conceive other than through actual experience the fascinating personality she possesses, her keen mind and charming dignity are her outstanding characteristics, and leave upon one's mind a lasting imprint.

In the process of viewing my collection, her keen interest was greatly attracted to the fact that along with her frank I possessed an old photograph of her while in the White House during her husband's presidential administration, approximately 35 years previous to the date of this occasion. She exclaimed with enthusiasm "I even remember the chair the picture was taken in," and then remarked "you ought to have one that looks like me now." Mrs.

35 Stat. 591:

Chap. 55.—An Act granting a franking privilege to Mary Lord Harrison.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all mail matter sent by the post by Mary Lord Harrison, widow of the late Benjamin Harrison, under her written autograph signature, be conveyed free of postage during her natural life.

Approved, February 1, 1909.

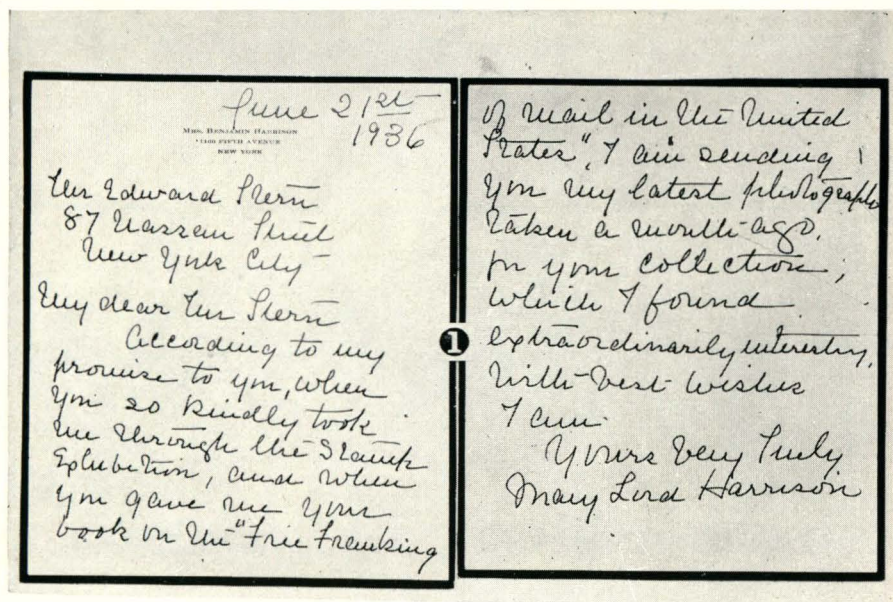
PRESIDENTIAL WIDOWS' FRANKS

Harrison very graciously fulfilled her statement and had another photograph taken (the first since she left the White House) and autographed the picture and sent it to me, as above illustrated.

DESCRIPTION OF FRANKS ILLUSTRATED.

Plate I

- Cover #1 Franked "Mary Lord Harrison" and entirely in her handwriting, postmarked Grand Central Station, New York, and dated Dec. 25, 1921.
- Cover #2 Franked the same and addressed entirely in her own handwriting, postmarked New York, and dated Jan. 18, 1943.
- Cover #3 Franked the same and postmarked New York, dated April 13, 1930. Apparently the Postmaster at Appleton, Wisc., did not know the value of the widow's frank and applied four cents postage due stamps which was collected from the addressee.
- Cover #4 Franked the same, this wrapper contained the photograph of Mrs. Harrison referred to and illustrated, it is entirely in her handwriting, and although it was autographed and specified "Free," it bears a five cent postage stamp which was unnecessary, apparently affixed by someone who did not realize that it could be sent free of postage.



Above—Copy of letter containing photograph of Mrs. Mary Lord Harrison.

The letter above is translated as follows:

Mr. Edward Stern
87 Nassau St.
New York City.

My dear Mr. Stern,
According to my promise to you, when you so kindly took me through the Stamp Exhibition, and when you gave me your book on the "Free Franking

of Mail in the United States," I am sending you my latest photograph taken a month ago, for your collection, which I found extraordinary interesting.

With best wishes I am,

Yours Very Truly

Mary Lord Harrison.

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.

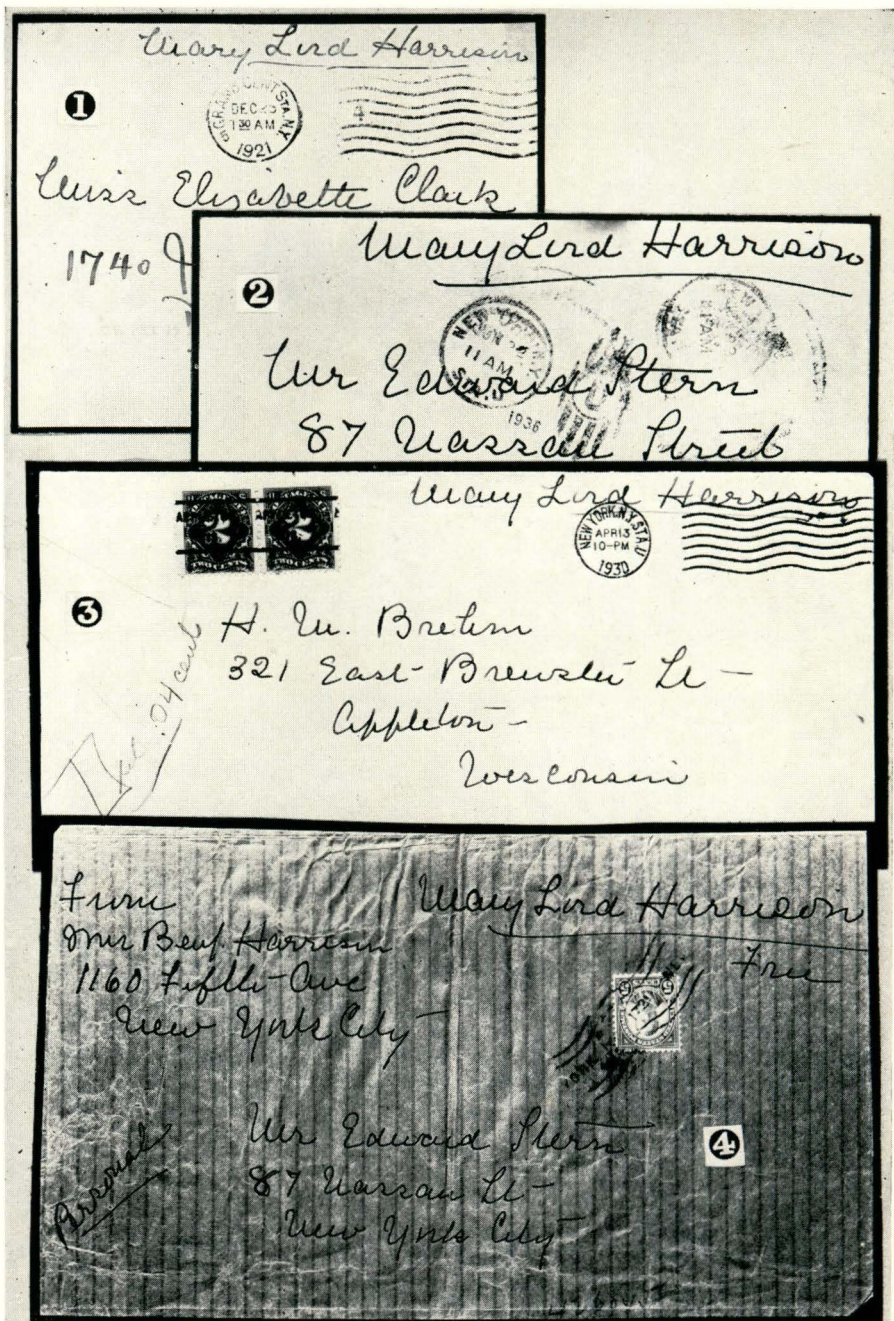


Plate I

PRESIDENTIAL WIDOWS' FRANKS



Plate J

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.

**Edith Carow
Roosevelt**

Born August 13, 1861

Living —————

Franking privilege
Granted Oct. 27, 1919.Maiden name
Edith Kermit Carow
(of New York)Widow of President
Theodore Roosevelt
Died Jan. 6, 1919.Twenty-sixth President
of the United States.

She was known as a charming mistress of the Executive Mansion, and leader of the social life at the Capitol. The Roosevelts were married in London in 1886, and had four sons and one daughter.

41 Stat. 1449:

Chap. 84.—An Act granting a franking privilege to Edith Carow Roosevelt.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all mail matter sent by the post by Edith Carow Roosevelt, widow of the late Theodore Roosevelt, under her written autograph signature, be conveyed free of postage during her natural life.

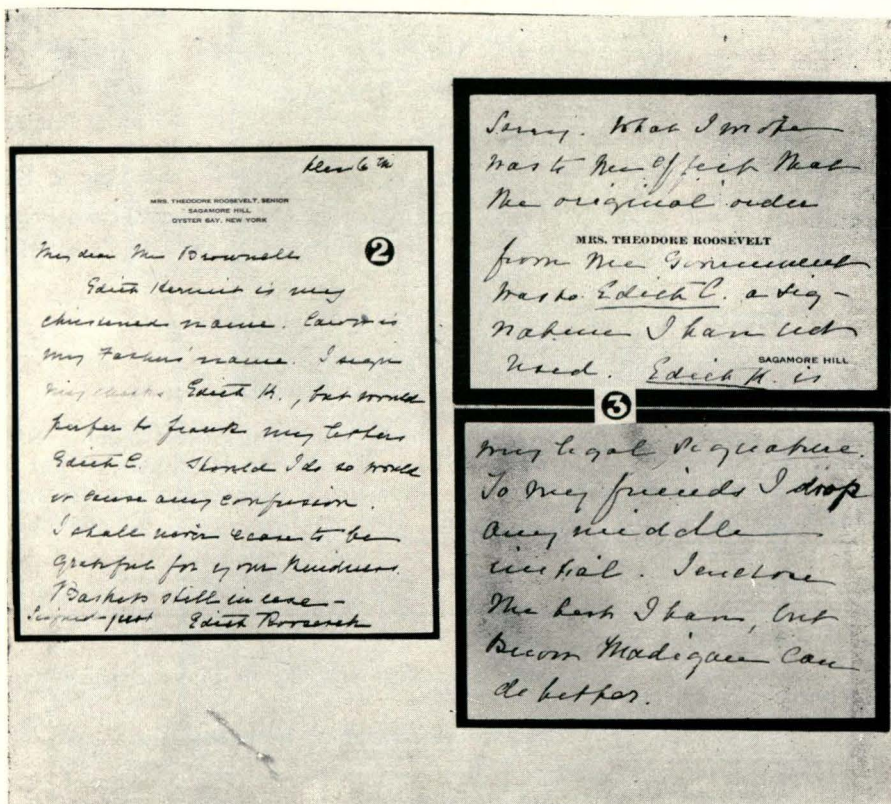
Approved, October 27, 1919.

DESCRIPTIONS OF FRANKS ILLUSTRATED.**Plate J**

- Cover #1 Franked "Edith K. Roosevelt," and addressed entirely in her handwriting, dated December 8, 1921, Oyster Bay, New York; also receiving postmark Woodstock, Vt.
- Cover #2 Franked the same, addressed to the President, The White House, Washington, D. C., postmarked Oyster Bay, N. Y. and dated Sept. 17, 1922. At that time President Warren G. Harding was in office.
- Cover #3 Franked the same, addressed to Mr. A. B. Roosevelt Jr., postmarked Oyster Bay, N. Y. and dated July 29, 1926.
- Cover #4 Franked the same, postmarked Oyster Bay, N. Y., dated Aug. 11, 1931, apparently her franking signature was not recognized and 4 cents was collected from the addressee.
- Cover #5 Franked the same, this envelope contained letter #3 (illustrated) which was in response to my request for a free franked envelope under her name of Edith C. Roosevelt. This is the name which Congress granted her privilege to use in franking, nevertheless only on rare occasions does she use it, and cover #7 is the only one to come to my notice. All others that I have seen are signed Edith K. signifying "Kermit."

PRESIDENTIAL WIDOWS' FRANKS

- Cover #6 Franked the same with "free" added. She rarely uses the word "free." This cover is postmarked Brooklyn, Conn., and dated July 5, 1934.
- Cover #7 Franked Edith C. Roosevelt the proper franking signature, dated Dec. 7, 1928. The initial (C) is for "Carow," her maiden name (note remarks under Cover #5). Franks under this signature are unusual.



Letter #2 accompanied Cover #7.

- Letter #2 From Mrs. Roosevelt to Mr. Brownell, relating that Edith Kermit is her Christian name, and Carow is her father's name; also mentions that she prefers to frank her letters Edith C. however she rarely uses that form.

The letter reads: "Edith Kermit is my Christian name. Carow is my father's name. I sign my checks Edith K., but would prefer to frank my letters Edith C. Should I do so would it cause any confusion. I shall never cease to be grateful for your kindness. Baskets still in use."

- Letter #3 A letter to the writer in which she confirms the fact that "Edith C" is the original order of the government, but prefers and does frank "K" (for Kermit), it being her legal signature.

The full note reads as follows: "Sorry. What I wrote was to the effect that the original order from the Government was to Edith C., a signature I have not used. Edith K. is my legal signature. To my friends I drop any middle initial. I enclose the best I have, but know Madigan can do better."

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.

**Florence Kling
Harding**

Born August 15, 1860

Died Nov. 22, 1924.

Franking privilege
granted Jan. 25, 1924
Length of time used
10 months.

Maiden name

**Florence Kling
De-Wolff**

(of Ohio).

Widow of President
Warren G. Harding
Died Aug. 2, 1923.Twenty-ninth President
of the United States.

She helped her husband develop a small newspaper, the "Marion Star," into a highly successful publication. She was with the President on the trip to Alaska and the West when he died. Her death occurred about 10 months after the franking privilege was granted. Her privilege lasted for the shortest duration of any of the widows.

43 Stat. 1359:

Chap. 4.—An Act granting a franking privilege to Florence Kling Harding.

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all mail matter sent by the post by Florence Kling Harding, widow of the late Warren Gamaliel Harding, under her written autograph signature, be conveyed free of postage during her natural life.

Approved, January 25, 1924.

DESCRIPTIONS OF FRANKS ILLUSTRATED.**Plate K**

- Cover #1 Franked "Florence Kling Harding" and addressed entirely in her handwriting, postmarked Washington, D. C., Jan. 28, 1924, only three days after the privilege was granted. Cover is addressed to Charles Schaffner who was appointed executor for the estate of the President.
- Cover #2 Franked the same, and in addition to the Washington postmark it shows Woodstock Vt., the former dated March 1, 1924 slightly over one month after the privilege was granted, and the later March 8, 1924 designating when it was received at Woodstock.
- Cover #3 Franked the same, postmarked Marion, Ohio, the President's home town dated Oct. 4, 1924, and addressed to the Hon. C. B. Slemp, when secretary to President Calvin Coolidge. Mrs. Harding died about six weeks after franking this letter, and it is probably one of her last. The envelope has a mourning band.

PRESIDENTIAL WIDOWS' FRANKS

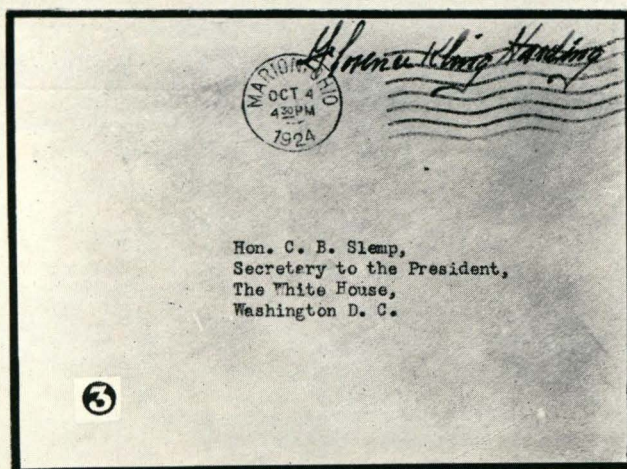
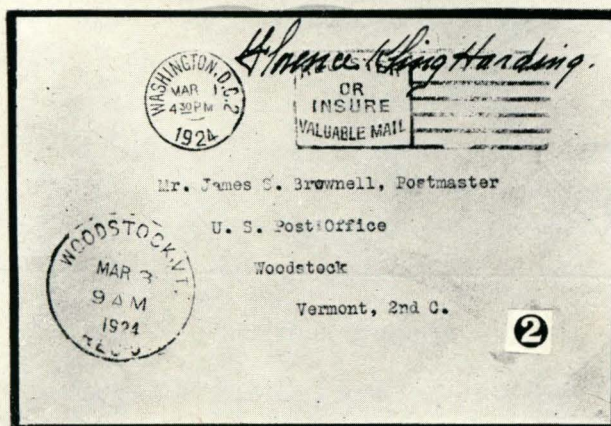
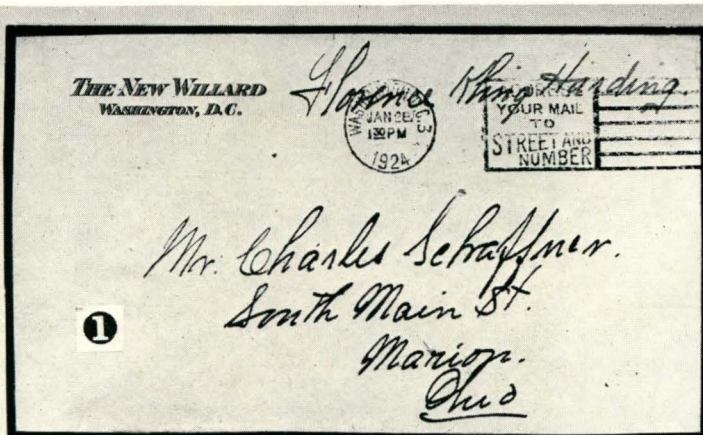


Plate K

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.

Edith Bolling Wilson

Born Oct. 15, 1872

Living —————

Franking privilege
granted Mar. 4, 1924.

Maiden name

Edith Bolling Galt

(of Virginia).

Widow of President
Woodrow Wilson
Died Feb. 3, 1924.Twenty-eighth
President of
the United States.

She was with the President during the Peace Conference at Versailles following the World War I, and nursed him during his illness at the White House and until his death.

43 Stat. 1359:

Chap. 45.—An Act granting a franking privilege to Edith Bolling Wilson.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all mail matter sent by the post by Edith Bolling Wilson, widow of the late Woodrow Wilson, under her written autograph signature, be conveyed free of postage during her natural life.

Approved, March 4, 1924.

DESCRIPTIONS OF FRANKS ILLUSTRATED.**Plate L**

- Cover #1 Franked "Edith Bolling Wilson," postmarked Washington March 12, 1924, only 8 days after privilege was granted to frank. Cover is addressed to the Hon. C. B. Slemph, The White House, who was secretary to the President. The envelope bears a mourning band, and the card illustrated with this cover also has a mourning band—an acknowledgment of sympathies extended after the death of the President.
- Cover #2 An envelope mailed from the White House, also mourning card which was enclosed acknowledging receipt of sympathies over the loss of the first wife of the President (Ellen Louise Axson). The private seal of the President is embossed thereon.
- Cover #3 Franked "Edith Bolling Wilson" by means of a facsimile die, an imitation of her signature within 15 days after she was granted the privilege to frank. She used this die continuously thereafter, thereby making envelopes with her autograph signature quite scarce. She was the only widow who franked mail by means of a stencil.

PRESIDENTIAL WIDOWS' FRANKS

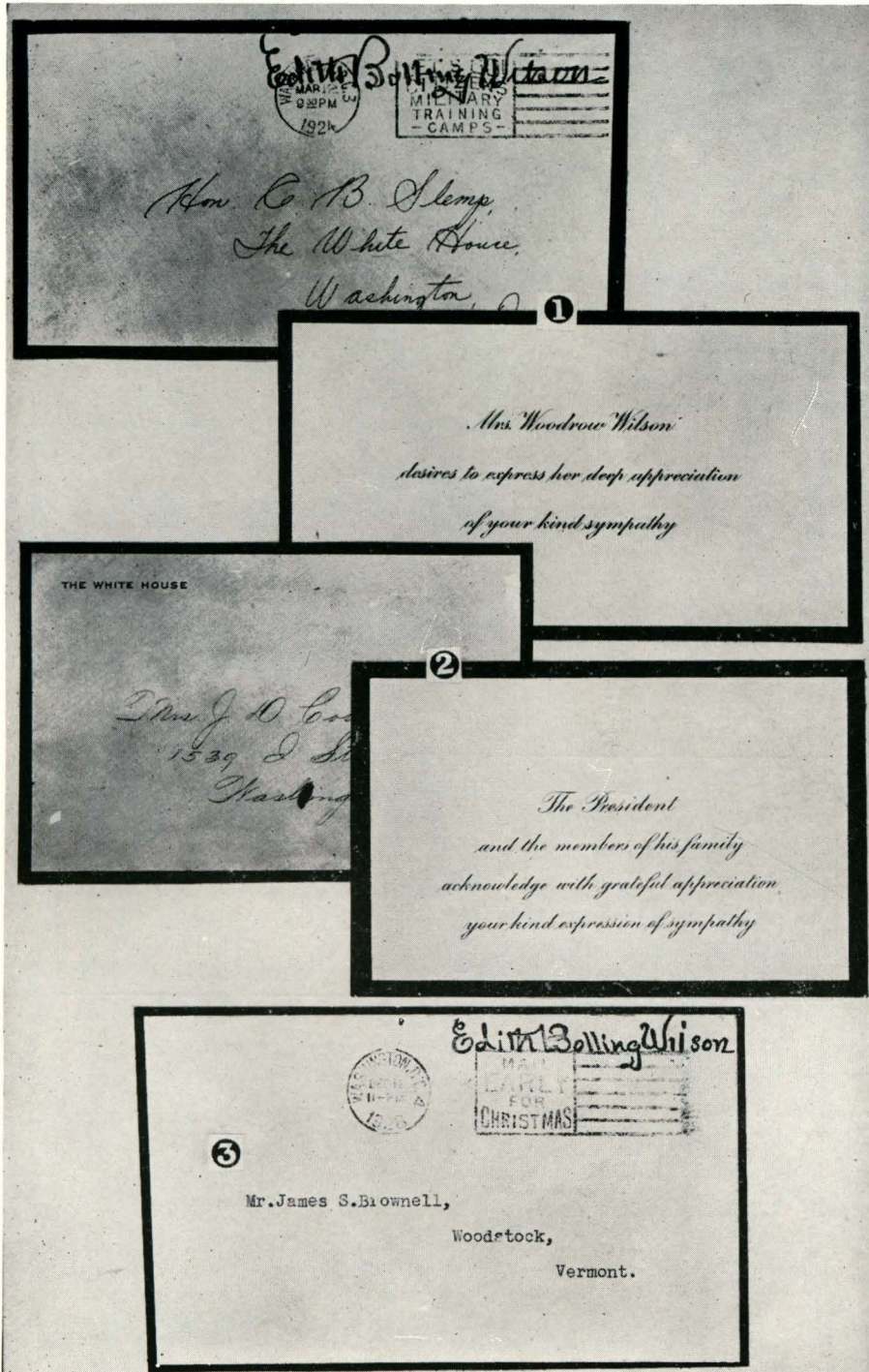


Plate L

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.

Helen Herron Taft

Born June 2, 1861

Died May 22, 1943.

Franking privilege
granted June 14, 1930
Length of time used
12 years and 11 months.



Maiden name

Helen Herron

(of Ohio).

Widow of President
William Howard Taft.
Died March 8, 1930.

Twenty-seventh
President of
the United States.

Her social regime at the White House was limited. She was ill during part of her husband's term, and her sister Mrs. Louis More presided at official entertainments. Mrs. Taft was a talented musician and founded the Cincinnati Orchestra.

46 Stat. 1906:

Chap. 493.—An Act granting a franking privilege to Helen H. Taft.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all mail matter sent by post by Helen H. Taft, widow of the late William Howard Taft, under her written autograph signature, be conveyed free of postage during her natural life.

Approved, June 14, 1930.

DESCRIPTIONS OF FRANKS ILLUSTRATED.

Plate M

- Cover #1 Franked "Helen H. Taft," and addressed entirely in her handwriting, postmarked Washington D. C., and dated October 17, 1930, four months after her privilege was granted.
- Cover #2 Franked the same, postmarked Washington, D. C., and dated Oct. 21, 1930. Envelope has mourning band.
- Cover #3 Franked the same, with "Free" added and all in her handwriting, postmarked Charleston, S. C., dated March 25, 1935.
- Cover #4 Franked the same with "Free" and postmarked Pointe-aux-Lacs, P. Q., dated July 29, 1931. It is quite interesting, due to the fact that the Canadian Authorities recognized her frank, as the privilege to frank is intended only for use in the United States, and rarely does a foreign country permit its use. Apparently she was well-known in this town.

PRESIDENTIAL WIDOWS' FRANKS

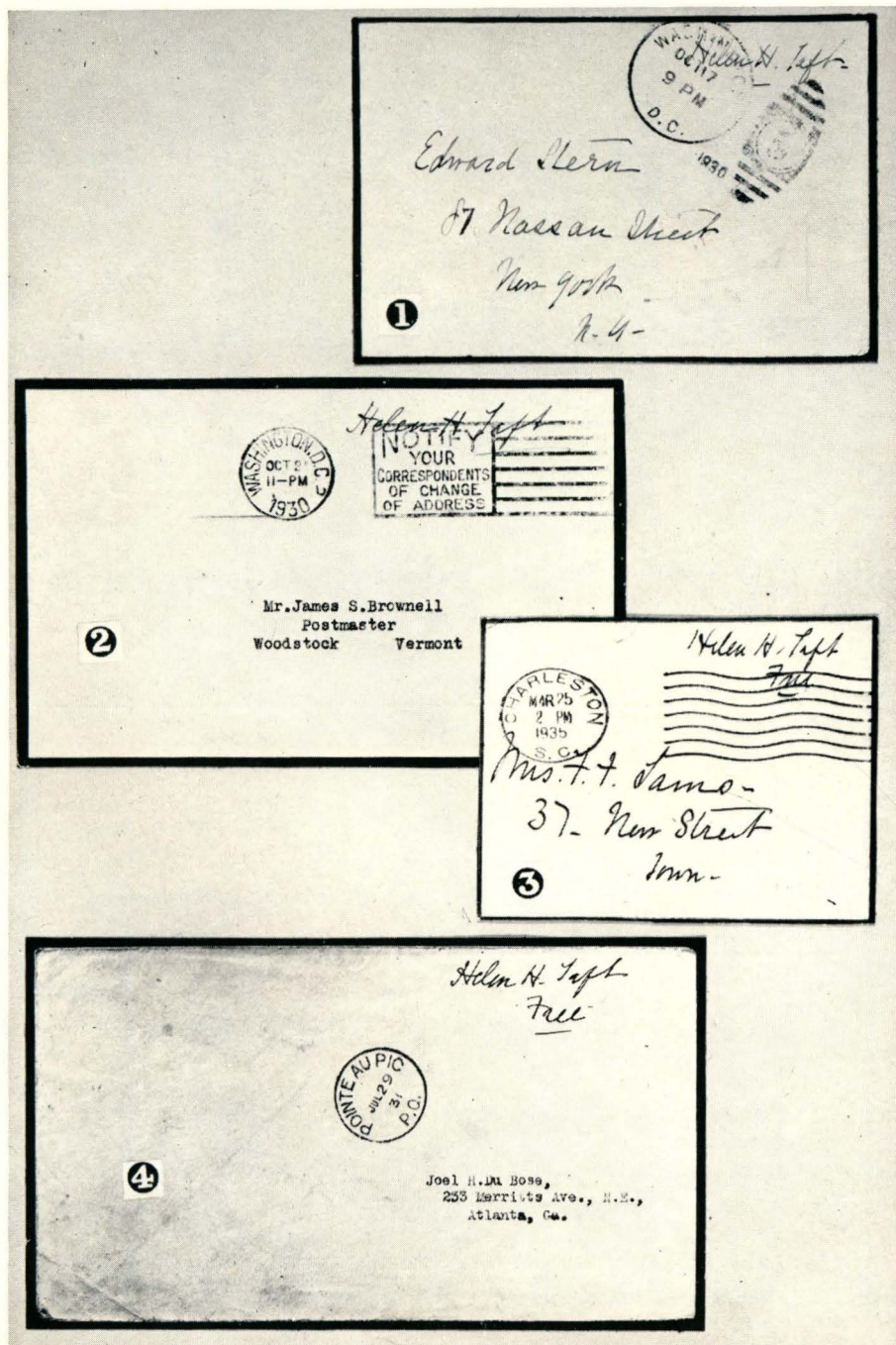


Plate M

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.

**Grace Goodhue
Coolidge**

Born Jan. 3, 1879.

Living —————

Franking privilege
granted June 16, 1934.



Maiden name

**Grace Anna
Goodhue**

(of Vermont)

Widow of President
Calvin Coolidge.

Died Jan. 5, 1933.

Thirtieth President
of the United States.

She was considered a skillful housewife, and a gracious and courteous hostess. She also was a teacher at the Clarke Institute.

48 Stat. 1395:

Chap. 560.—An Act granting a franking privilege to Grace G. Coolidge.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that all mail matter sent by post by Grace G. Coolidge, widow of the late Calvin Coolidge, under her written autograph signature, be conveyed free of postage during her natural life.

Approved, June 16, 1934.

DESCRIPTIONS OF FRANKS ILLUSTRATED.

Plate N

- Cover #1 Franked "Grace Coolidge," and addressed entirely in her own handwriting, postmarked North Falmouth, Mass., and dated Sept. 21, 1934, three months after the privilege to frank was granted.
- Cover #2 Franked the same, with "Free" added, entirely in her own handwriting, and postmarked Northampton, Mass., her home town, dated June 26, 1934, only 10 days after her privilege to Frank.
- Cover #3 Franked the same, and postmarked Coolington, N. C. dated Dec. 8, 1934. This is a very small town and apparently the Post Office clerk did not realize the value of the autographed frank of Mrs. Coolidge and as the envelope lacked a stamp he rubber stamped it (postage due 3 cents) which was then collected from the recipient.
- Cover #4 Franked the same, and postmarked Northampton, dated March 17, 1938.

PRESIDENTIAL WIDOWS' FRANKS

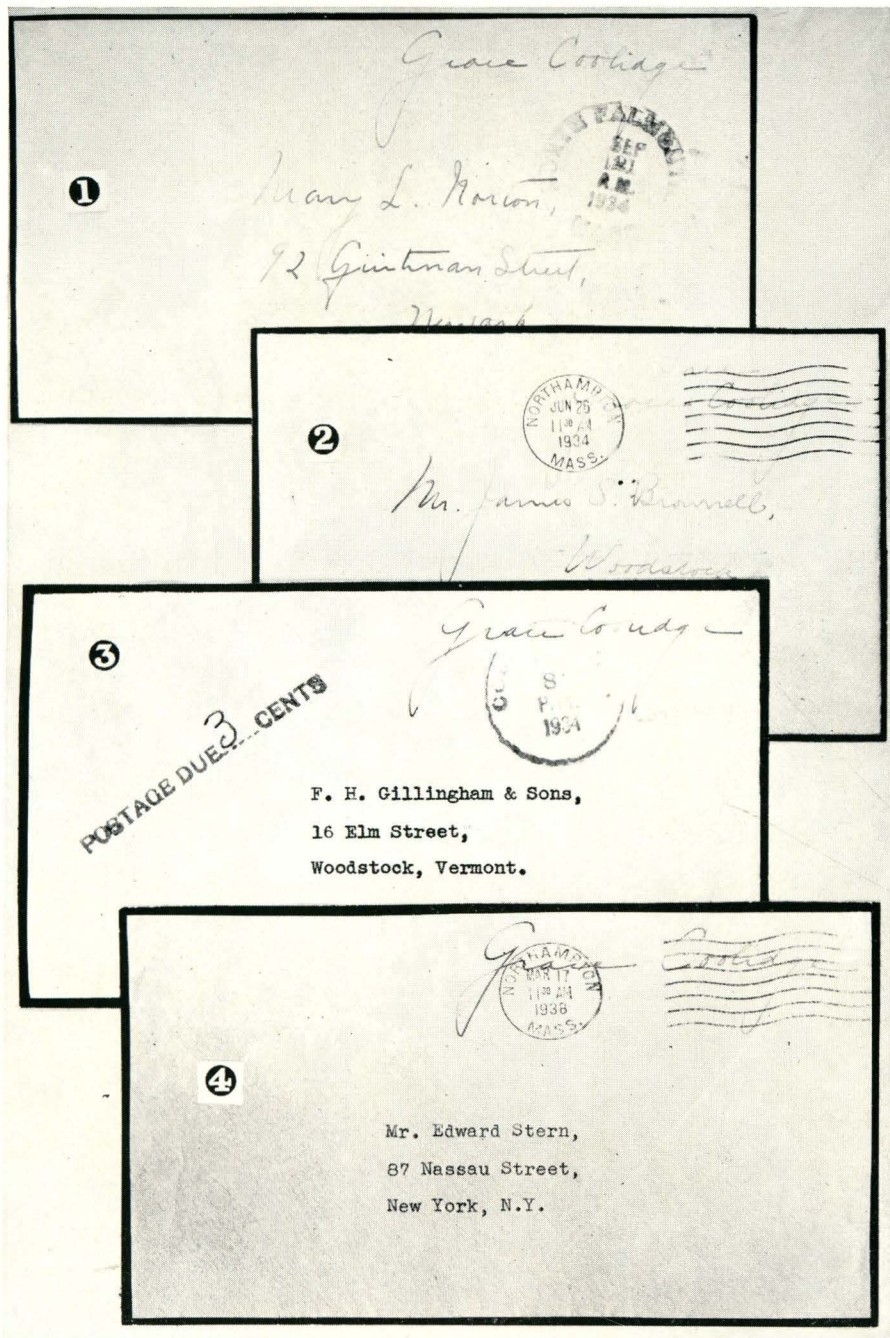
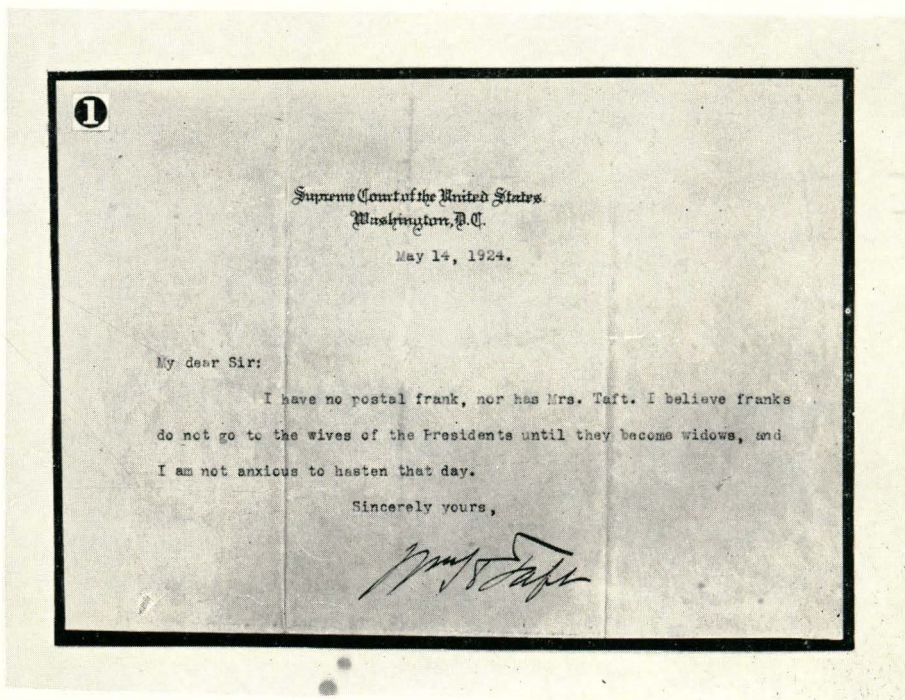


Plate N

HISTORY OF THE "FREE FRANKING" OF MAIL IN THE U. S.



Above is a reply to a request of Mr. William H. Taft
for a "Free Frank."

Letter #1 (Translation of above letter). Dated May 14, 1924.

"I have no postal Frank, nor has Mrs. Taft, I believe Franks do not go to the wives of the Presidents until they become widows, and I am not anxious to hasten that day."

