

## A “Vera Cruz Incident” Postcard

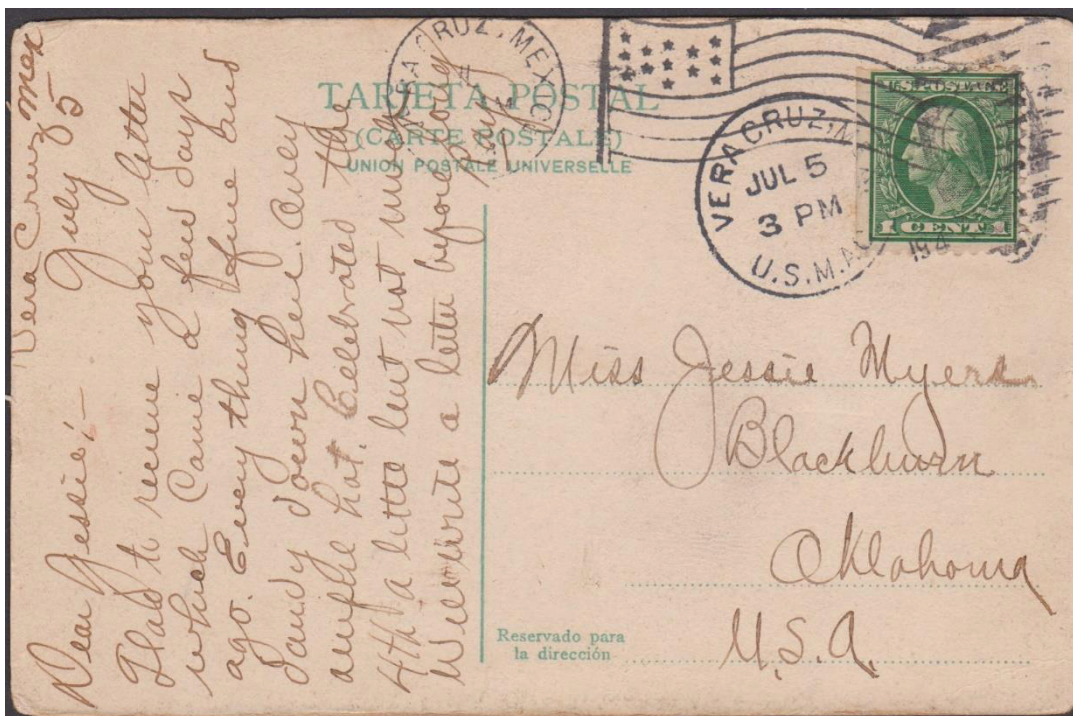
By Patrick Crosby

President Woodrow Wilson had slapped an arms embargo on Mexico, then he felt that that the United States had been snubbed by what he considered the illegitimate military regime of General Victoriano Huerta. So, on April 21, 1914, the U.S. invaded the important Gulf of Mexico port at Vera Cruz (or Veracruz), then quickly the rest of the city was occupied. This occupation lasted 6 months. As the description on a view card rationalized it:

Vera Cruz Port, to which hastened the United States Battleships “Vermont,” “Georgia” and “Nebraska” in order to protect the American lives, interests and property endangered by the Revolution.

The Vera Cruz Incident created a great deal of foreign anti-American sentiment. By July, General Huerta was forced into exile and the Constitutionalists took control.

On April 24, 1914, the U.S.P.O.D. established the United States Mail Agency, Vera Cruz, Mexico, for the use of the approximately 2300 U.S. Marines and Naval personnel, as well as for the use of locals and foreign citizens. The postmaster of New York City sent a spare hand power canceller (flag killer already in place) made by the American Postal Machines Company with a new dial reading “VERA CRUZ, MEXICO”, put in use about May 11th.

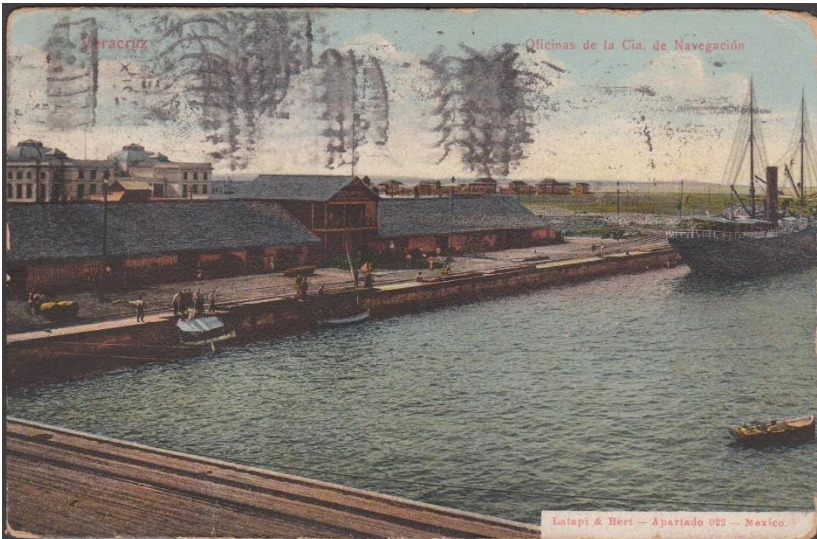


The featured card has this “American flag cancel” and also a handstamp duplex cancel reading “VERA CRUZ, MEX. U.S.M.A.G. JUL 5 1914”. These cancels can be found correctly cancelling a Mexican stamp if the mailed item was for elsewhere in Mexico. U.S. stamps were used for items locally mailed in Vera Cruz and for items to the U.S. or other countries. U.S. postal services ended November 23, 1914.

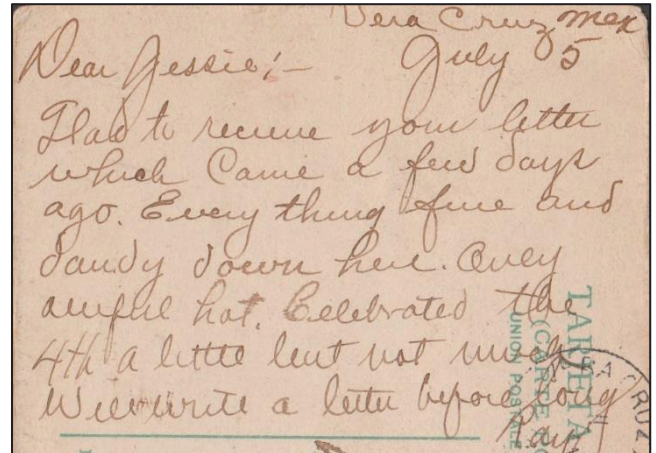
There was no military free mail yet, being instituted in 1917 with World War I. On April 27, 1914, the U.S.P.O.D. said U.S. domestic postal rates applied for mail to or from the U.S. Mail Agency, Vera Cruz, and the U.S. or its possessions. This means 1¢ for the featured card sent to the U.S. mainland.

It's a common looking Washington stamp which is a little special. It is perforated 10 on 3 sides and has one straight edge (on the left) indicating it could be from a booklet pane, which it is. The regular perf 10 sheet stamp, Sc. 424, is first known 3½ months after this card was posted while the booklet variety of this perf 10 stamp, Sc. 434d (pane of 6), had been issued December 18, 1913.

Especially beginning July 6, 1914, many philatelic covers were produced, some quite creative with older U.S. commemoratives and even some with Parcel Post stamps. These covers are much less desirable (even shunned by) some collectors than the covers used for commercial, private and military purposes. This message seems to be from a serviceman.



The view side of the card shows a dock in “Veracruz,” the navigation offices, and a lot of excess ink from the flag cancel machine.



Message from the address side of card.

Vera Cruz Mex July 5

Dear Jessie: Glad to receive your letter which came a few days ago. Everything fine and dandy down here. Celebrated the 4<sup>th</sup> a little but not much. Will write a letter before long. Ray

Conflicts have their consequences, and the Vera Cruz Incident resulted in the death of 22 U.S. servicemen with 70 wounded. Mexico lost about 160 with another 200 wounded. Thankfully, this was the beginning of a relatively calm period in Mexican history.

#### References:

- Frederick Langford, Standard Flag Cancel Encyclopedia, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Pasadena: Frederick Langford, 2008) 73.
- The Daily Postal Bulletin (Washington, DC) issue #10417, 10419, 10597 [www.uspostalbulletins.com](http://www.uspostalbulletins.com)
- [www.Britannica.com/event/United-States-occupation-of-Veracruz](http://www.Britannica.com/event/United-States-occupation-of-Veracruz)
- Anthony S. Wawrukiewicz and Henry W. Beecher, U.S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-2011 (Bellefonte, PA: American Philatelic Society, 2011)
- Scott 2019 Specialized Catalog of United States Stamps and Covers (Sidney, OH: Amos Media, 2018)

*Patrick Crosby is a member of the Nevada Stamp Study Society and collects U.S. postal stationery, stamps, and postcards with an emphasis on postal history.*