

# First U.S. Postal Card Sesquicentennial

By John Walter

This month marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the issuance of the “Lady Liberty” postal card (UX1).

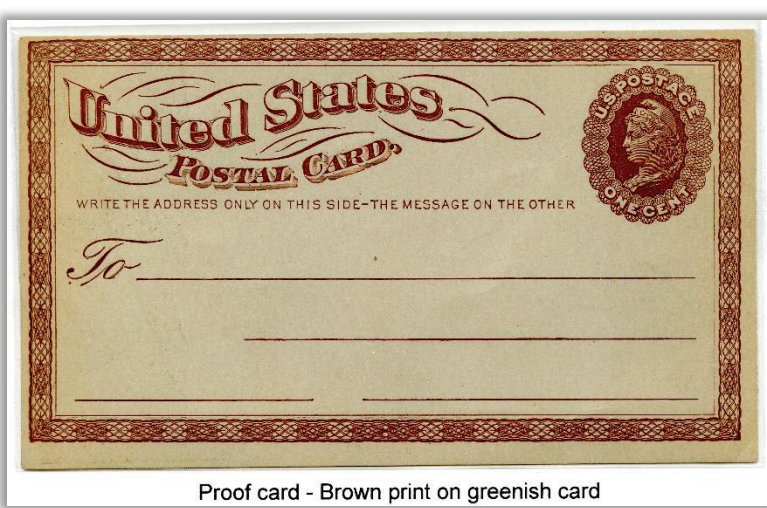
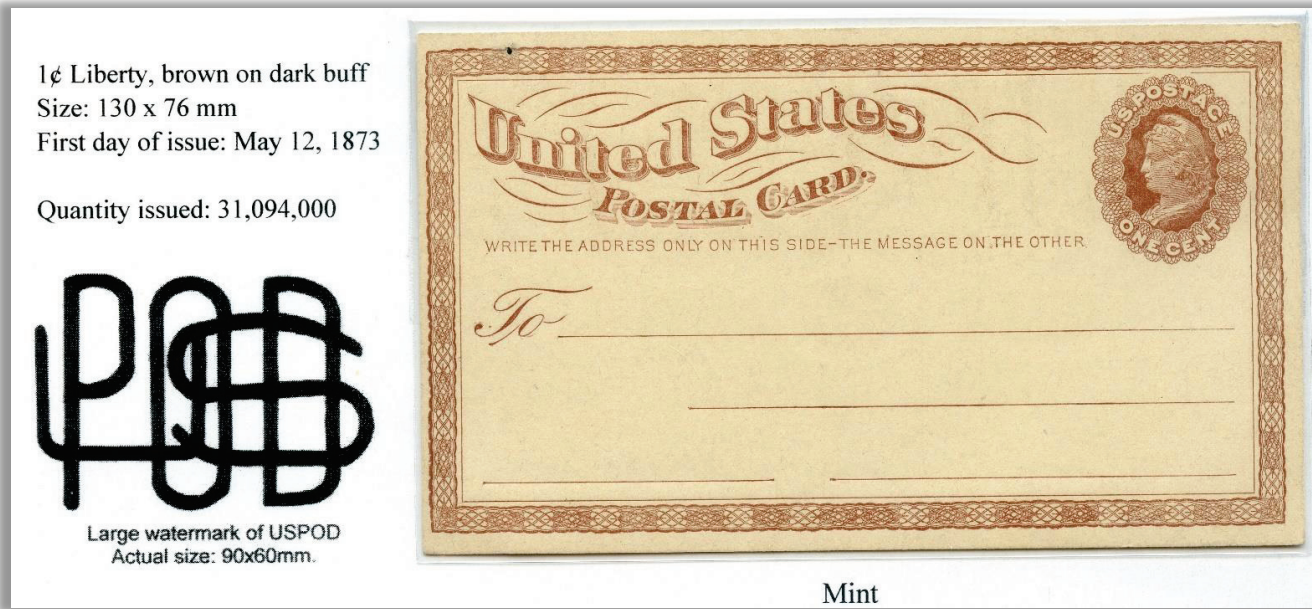
The penny postal card was first put on sale May 12, 1873, in Springfield, MA, and in other cities a day later. The New York Times of May 14, 1873, noted that the cards “at about 11 o'clock were given to the clerks at the stamp windows for sale.

... The result was something unprecedented and proved that the new cards are destined to meet with public favor. Although the arrival of the cards was not generally known, still between eleven o'clock and one and a half, over 200,000 were disposed of, a number definitely larger than the most sanguine advocates of the new system expected.”

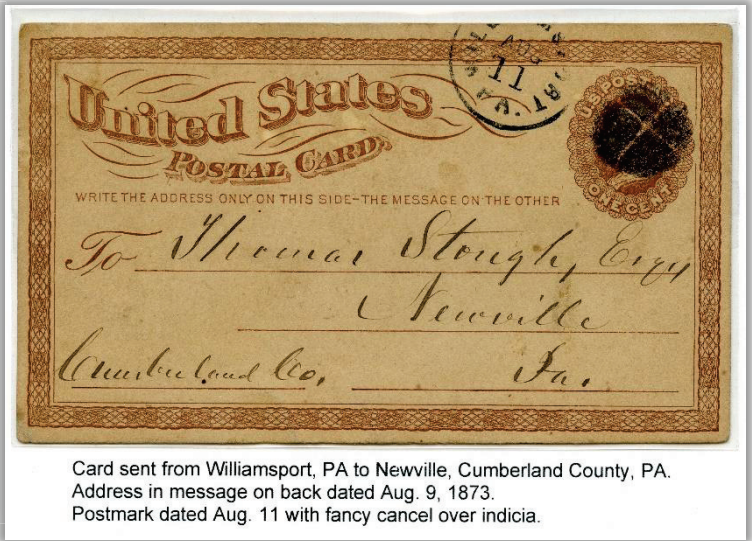
*NY Times Archive.*

There is a wonderful 6-page article in the April issue of the *American Philatelist* that explains the history, has excellent illustration of the large and small watermarks and other facts about the card.

Here are images of the **first issue** from my mounted postal card collection.



Proof card - Brown print on greenish card



Card sent from Williamsport, PA to Newville, Cumberland County, PA. Address in message on back dated Aug. 9, 1873. Postmark dated Aug. 11 with fancy cancel over indicia.



Card addressed to Sydenham College, England. No postmark.  
Short message on back "New York, 10<sup>th</sup> June 1873, With Papa's kind love."  
No evidence card was sent since Great Britain Treaty letter rate per ½ oz. was 6¢. (1 Jan 1870 - 30 Jun 1875).

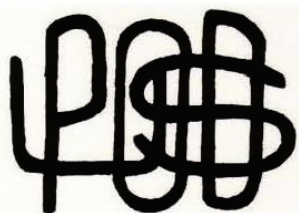


Card sent from Chauncey, Ohio to Newville, Cumberland County, PA.  
The postmark is July 31, the year unknown. Bulls-eye cancel on the indicia.  
The message on the back does not have a date and is asking "Please forward letter addressed to Wm. B. Maccracken to a New York address."

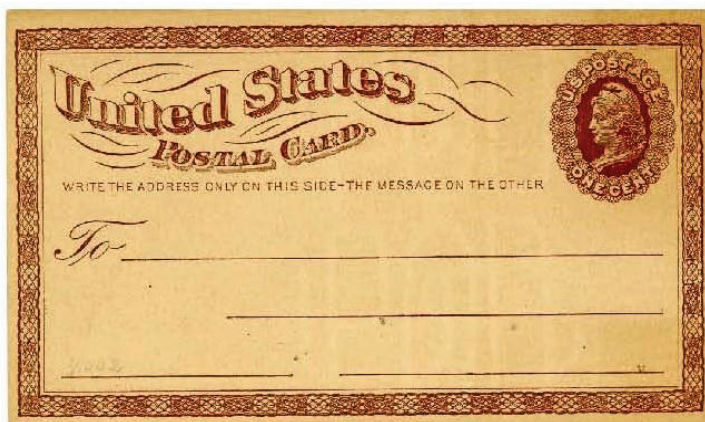
Here are some images from the **second issue** with small watermark issued in June 1873.

### Second issue 1873

1¢ Liberty, brown on dark buff.  
Size: 130 x 76 mm.  
First Day of Issue: Unknown  
Quantity Issued: 207,851,700.  
Small watermark as below.



Small watermark of USPOD.  
Actual size: 55x38mm.



The small watermark is visible without further illumination.



Front and back of card mailed Nov. 25, 1873.

#### References:

Youngblood, Wayne, "A Celebration of the Sesquicentennial of the First U.S. Postal Card," *American Philatelist*, April 2023, pages 327-332.

*United States Postal Card Catalog*, United Postal Stationery Society, 2020.