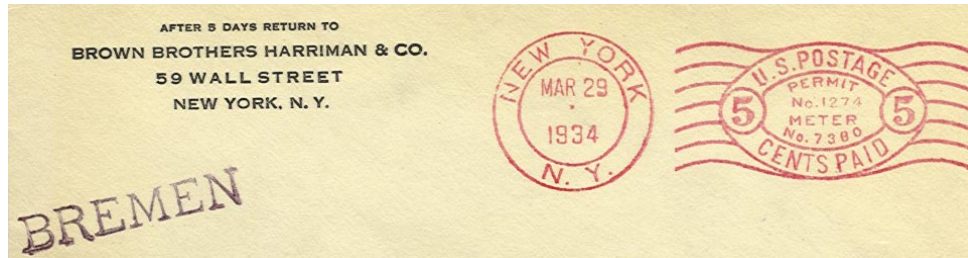


Collect Meters (but not all of them) – by Tom Broadhead

If you are a “stamp purist,” you may want to stop reading here. This month, I want to share with you some postal items that certainly are economically important, but usually do not rate very highly on the want lists of most collectors. Meter imprints today have a certain “sameness” in appearance, but looking back at the 102 years of commercial meter use, there is a lot of variety. Doug Kelsey writes a column on meter stamps for *Linn’s Stamp News*, and I have saved a few of his articles. One of my clippings from one of his articles, which unfortunately does not include the date of publication, indicates that Norway was the first to commercially use meters in 1903, followed by New Zealand in 1905, and the U.S. in 1920. The first U.S. meters were produced by the Pitney Bowes company, whose name has become synonymous with postage meter machines in this country.



- Photographically cropped part of a business envelope with 5c meter postage for the international letter rate, sent via the German packet-boat, Bremen to Berlin in 1934.

A 50c meter imprint was added to the 40c adhesive stamp on this business postcard sent from Lyon, France to the U.S. in 1930. By itself, the 50 centimes postage would have mailed a local letter in France.



Early meters had a rather ordinary, utilitarian appearance, but beginning in the 1930’s, meters with advertising slogans and others with pictures began to appear. These are especially sought after by topical collectors.



- This partial imprint of a 1955 Egyptian meter has a very attractive ancient design, followed by the date stamp showing posting on 5 March 1955 in Cairo and the stamp-like value tablet of 166 millimes.

Advertising honeybees – “the spark plug of agriculture” – this attractive Canadian meter also shows maple leaves draped around the date stamp.



Kelsey’s April 25, 2005 column discusses the new *International Postage Meter Stamp Catalog* by Joel A. Hawkins and Richard Stambaugh. Published this year, it is described as an extensive 1,240 page volume with 6,500 illustrations. I hope we consider buying a copy for the KPS library.

Are you ready to start collecting meters? Before you begin saving all of the window envelopes you receive in the mail, think about being very selective. Look for the catchy slogans and attractive illustrations, and search out those early metered covers from the 1920’s and 1930’s.