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A PHILATELIC HISTORY OF HERBERT HOOVER

BY WILLIAM J. (BILL) WAGNER
IOWA ARTIST AND ARCHITECT

The following is Mr. Wagner's collection of philatelic items associated with Herbert Hoover dating from the time of his presidency (1929-1933) until his death in October, 1964, and including various First Day of Issue covers bearing the Herbert Hoover Commemorative Stamp, August 10, 1965.

Collecting stamps has been a continuous hobby of mine since I was about twelve years old. I never was a general collector, for maybe I realized early that one could never come near collecting every stamp that was issued throughout the world. Until I went to college I collected only American commemorative stamps and the regular issues that I could easily acquire. During college I quit collecting commemoratives, concentrating only on new issues of stamps; but after graduation, I started up again.

I guess you could call me more of a topical collector than any other kind of stamp collector. From 1942 through 1946 I was in Bermuda and there I became interested in Bermuda stamps, managing to complete a collection of them in those four years. While there I married an English girl and so became interested in English stamps. When I came back to the States I somehow got involved in Boy Scout work, and so I turned to collecting Boy Scout stamps issued around the world. This collection became nearly complete until within the last year or two when there have been almost countless countries coming into existence. It seems the first thing they do is issue Boy Scout stamps; and some, I am sure, issued more Scout stamps than there were Scouts in their new countries.

On top of that, they charged enough for them to run their governments. To me this was becoming a racket . . . so I quit.

I first became interested in Presidential franks in 1960. I had written Mr. Hoover inquiring whether there was a portrait of himself that could be made available to Iowa. At that time there was no portrait in Iowa of one of this state's greatest native sons. One day a letter came from the Key Largo Anglers Club in Florida. I have a running and losing battle with concerns who send bulk mailings wanting me to buy. Unless the mail carries a 5¢ stamp, I almost always throw it away unopened. The letter from Key Largo had no stamp. The envelope looked like another letter trying to catch a sucker for a fishing trip, or telling me I had won myself a lot, if I would come and claim it within thirty days. For some reason I took a third look and came near breaking out in a cold sweat, for under the cancellation was a very faint signature of Herbert Hoover's, or at least then I thought it was his signature. Some time later I found out that it was one of the two rubber stamps he used when he was away from his Waldorf office. This was the first Presidential frank I had ever seen, or maybe I should say noticed. I had had previous letters from the Waldorf office, saving the letters but never the envelopes. Throwing away the envelopes is a common practice among people, I have discovered.

This first frank that I noticed gave me the idea of starting a collection of postal items pertaining to Herbert Hoover. I searched through stamp catalogs and I simply couldn't believe what I had found—not one country in the world had ever issued a postage stamp honoring Herbert Hoover! In the United States no stamp may bear the likeness of a living American. However, many prominent Americans—among them Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and Dwight Eisenhower—have been honored during their lifetime with stamps issued by foreign countries. I visited with Senator Bourke Hickenlooper one day early in August, 1964, and told him what I had discovered. He too was amazed and even more amazed that Belgium had done nothing, for it was this country that benefited so much from the aid which

Herbert Hoover had made possible. He said he would visit with his friend the Belgium Ambassador and make a suggestion; but the project was never undertaken, for it was very soon after this that Mr. Hoover became ill and then finally passed away.

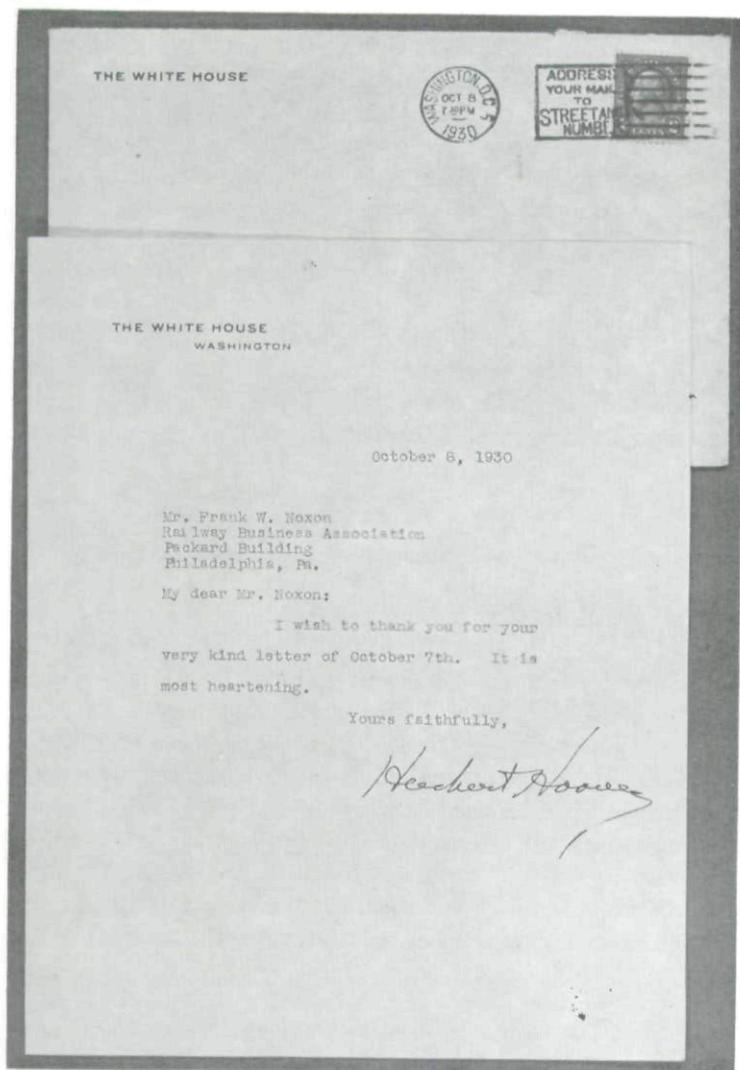


PLATE I. Almost all of the items in this postal collection I collected myself through correspondence with Mr. Hoover, members of the Hoover family, and others. The one item that for a long time I thought I would never be able to find was a letter written by Herbert Hoover while he was President and mailed from the White House complete with stamped envelope. (In 1873 during the second term of President Grant, the franking privilege for Presidents was cancelled. Since that time all outgoing mail from the White House has been stamped with U. S. Postage.) In writing to the Herbert Hoover Institute in Stanford, California, I received the reply that no envelopes originating from Herbert Hoover had been preserved in the files containing his correspondence. Every place I tried, the answer was the same. There were many letters available, but without their envelopes. Finally, I commissioned a dealer to do the searching for me. This was successful. I received the letter which starts my collection of postal items related to Herbert Hoover. (If of interest its price was \$45.00, but probably no one should tell Mrs. Wagner.)

PLATE II. These two items are Boulder Dam First Day Cancellations at Boulder City, Nevada. The stamp would have been called Hoover Dam had not history been changed. On December 17, 1921, President Harding appointed his Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover, to be the federal representative on the Colorado River Commission. It took nearly ten years of negotiation and planning before construction could be started. By then Herbert Hoover had become President and he had the honor of signing the bill that started construction on this greatest engineering work of its kind yet attempted by man. Construction began on March 11, 1931, with contracts totaling \$48,890,995.50, which was the largest labor contract let by the United States up to that time.

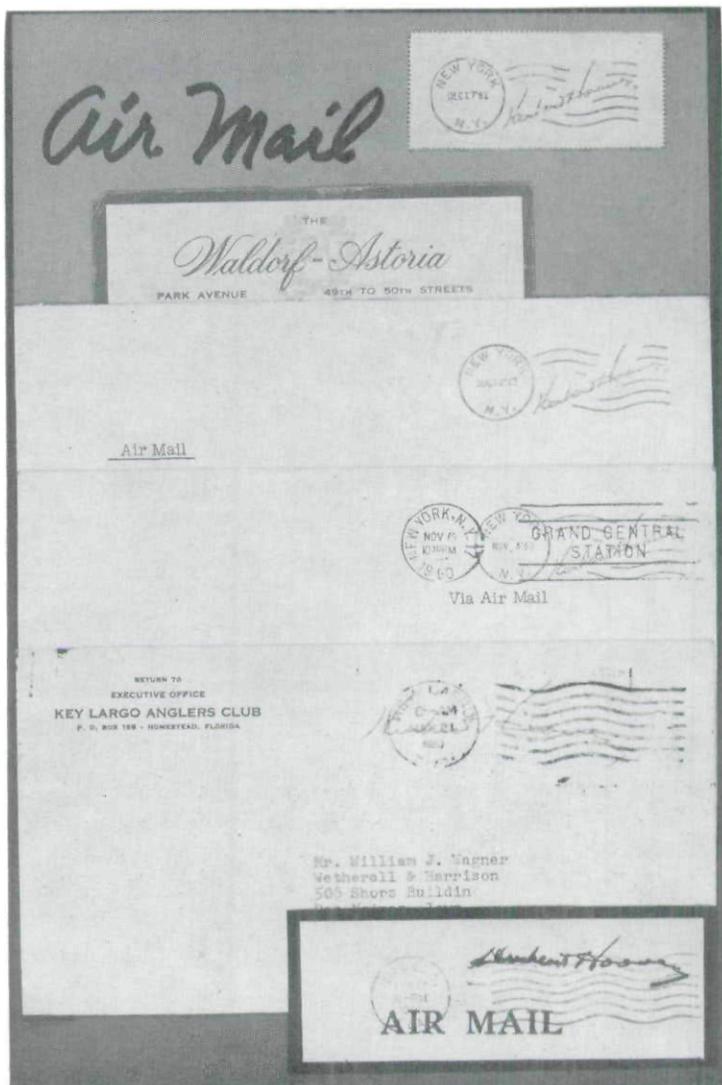
During Roosevelt's term the name of the Hoover Dam was changed to Boulder Dam. On September 30, 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicated Boulder Dam, this event

coinciding with the issuance of the Boulder Dam Stamp. In 1947 President Harry S. Truman signed the bill which officially designated that the Boulder Canyon project's key structure be called "Hoover Dam" instead of Boulder Dam.



Pl. II

PLATE III. This shows the Pitney-Bowes meter franking stamps used on packages and letters being sent from Herbert Hoover's Waldorf-Astoria office and the two different rubber stamps that he used when he was away from his office. On

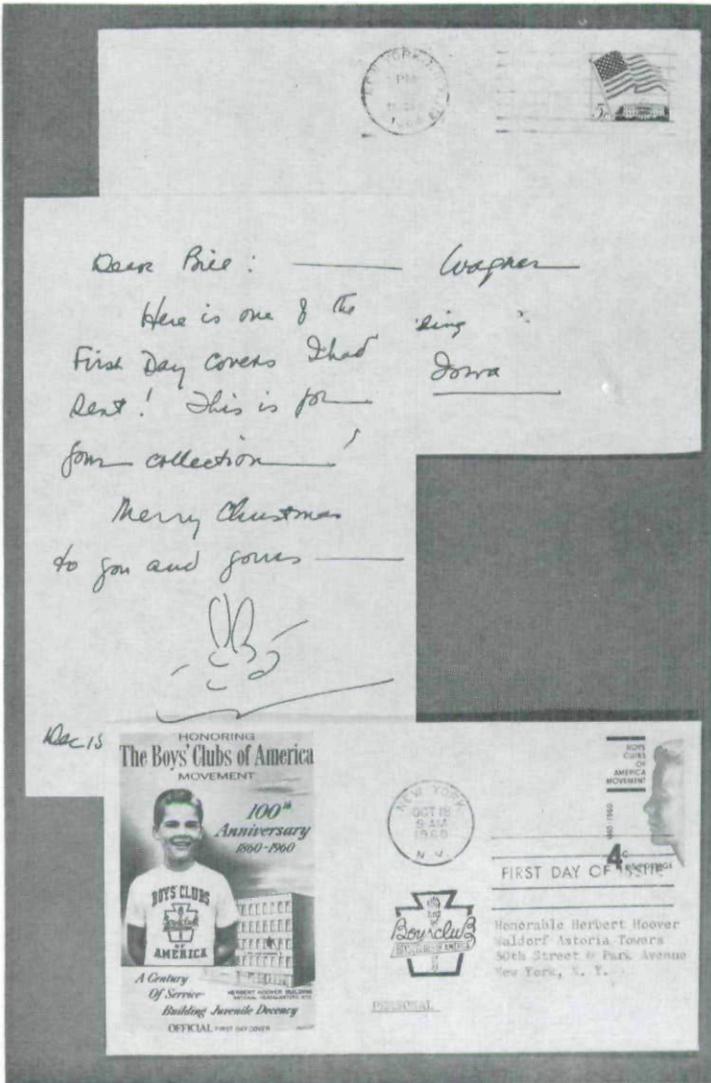


Pl. III

August 25, 1958, Law No. 85745 was passed, granting the franking privilege to former presidents. On November 3, 1958, Pitney-Bowes installed a postage meter machine in the Waldorf office. Herbert Hoover was the first former president to have a postage meter containing a facsimile of his signature for franking his mail. The first of the two rubber stamps (see the Key Largo envelope) appears to be carrying his own signature, but again, this is a facsimile. Mr. Hoover's office stated that he never franked an envelope using his own signature. Upon quite rare occasions while Herbert Hoover was President, he did unofficially sign an envelope for a close friend. There is one printed frank on an envelope which was used for mailing between six and seven hundred letters from a Republican Convention held in California a few years ago, but no copy of this has been located.

PLATE IV. This is a First Day Cancellation of the stamp honoring the Boys' Clubs of America Movement. Mr. Hoover was vitally interested in youth. From 1919 until his death he held official and honorary positions in fourteen different children's service associations. One of these positions was Honorary Director of the Convalescent Home for Children, Des Moines, Iowa, in 1954. In the mid-1930's he became Chairman of the Boys' Club of America and remained active in its management until his death. The First Day of Issue of the Boys' Club Stamp was October 18, 1960. The envelope pictured here was prepared by Miss Bernice Miller, Mr. Hoover's personal secretary for twenty-eight years. Miss Miller's nickname is "Bunny" and is so called by her friends. When she writes these friends she signs her name by drawing a picture of a rabbit in outline.

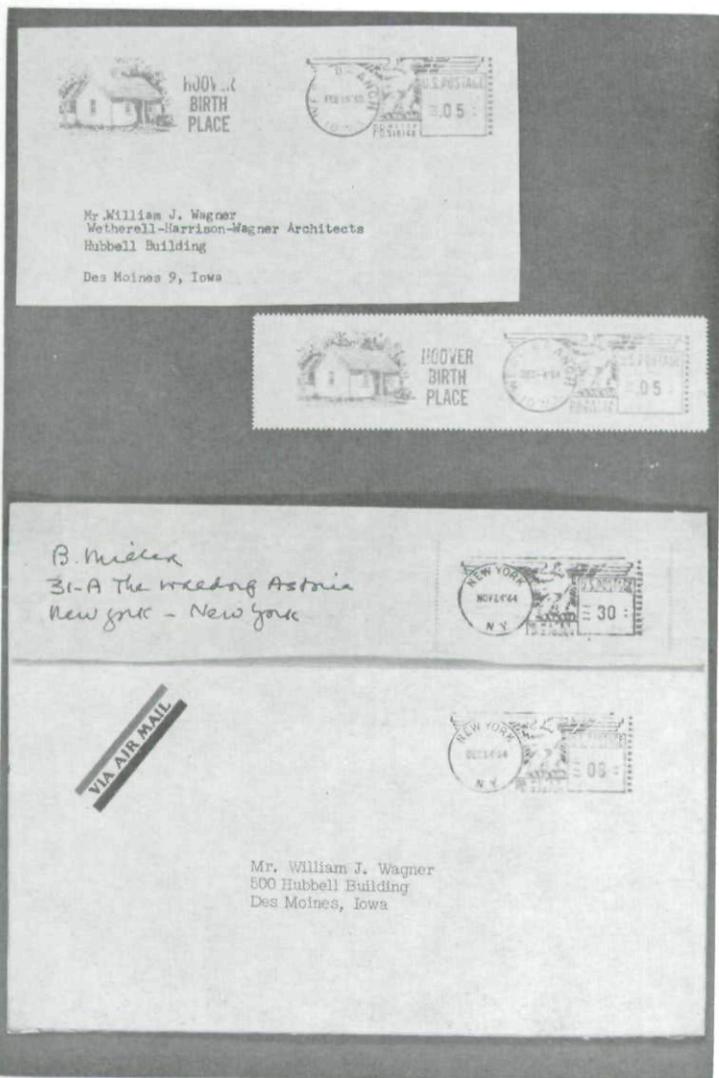
PLATE V. The top two items here carry the Pitney-Bowes meter cancellations used by the First State Bank at West Branch, Iowa, for mailing letters and packages. The slug was first used either the 9th or 10th of June, 1962. This is the first philatelic item anywhere in the world showing something



Pl. IV

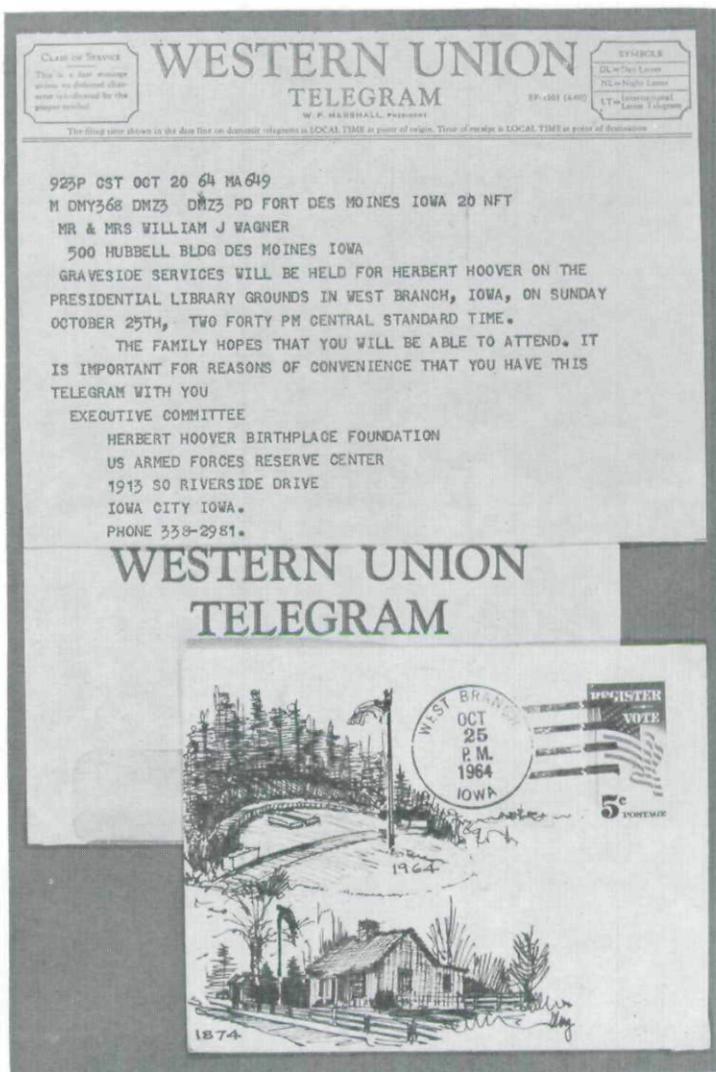
directly connected with Herbert Hoover other than his own personal frank. The lower two items carry impressions produced by the Pitney-Bowes meter machine in Mr. Hoover's office at the Waldorf. Immediately upon the death of Mr.

Hoover, all outgoing mail that had not been deposited in a mail box was re-opened and the covers destroyed. A new conventional slug was ordered and used by Mr. Hoover's office until his affairs had been closed.



Pl. V

PLATE VI. Herbert Hoover died on October 20, 1964, at the Waldorf-Astoria and was buried October 25, 1964, at West Branch, Iowa, in an area on the Presidential Library Grounds referred to for many years as the "Overlook." It is



the highest point in the Park Grounds, looking down over the valley of the Wapsinonoc Creek to the birthplace of Herbert Hoover, the Presidential Library-Museum, and the town of West Branch.

Several people prepared covers and took them to the Post Office at West Branch for cancellation on the day of burial. The pen and ink drawing on this cover shows the Overlook Area as it would look when finished.

Lou Henry Hoover died in 1944 and was buried in California. On November 1, 1964, her remains were brought back to Iowa and buried along side her husband. She was also an Iowan—her early home was Waterloo.

PLATE VII. The item in the upper portion of this picture is the design which I submitted for a stamp commemorating Herbert Hoover. There were several designs submitted to the Postmaster General from around the country, but as far as is known, this was the only one submitted from Iowa.

I felt that the Hoover Commemorative Stamp, which I knew would be forthcoming, probably within the year, should tell a story. Consequently, from the time when I first began thinking about a design for a stamp, I never seriously considered a portrait of Herbert Hoover. A few incidents during my association with Mr. Hoover helped fortify my thinking against the use of a photograph. One I remember quite clearly was in 1962 on one of my trips to New York to see him. I took my oldest daughter and a friend of our family along. The mother of the friend wanted the local newspaper to arrange for pictures of our visit. Nothing came of it because of a strict rule: Mr. Hoover never gave permission to have unofficial photographs taken of him. He was not one to seek publicity by the camera. And probably the strongest argument was my own: Which Herbert Hoover should be pictured? He spent 50 years in public service and over that period of time pictures of him are pictures of many men—the young diplomat of World War I, the man in the White House, the Hoover whom President Truman called back to serve his country, the grand old gentleman of ninety.

During the latter part of August, 1964, I went to New York with a set of drawings showing how the Quaker Meeting House at West Branch would look when restored. Since this was the Meeting House attended by Herbert Hoover as a



Pl. VII

child, I felt that his memories of the old church would help to verify my drawings. While in the Waldorf this time I seemed to sense all at once the great contrast between the home in which Hoover was born with its humble simplicity and the grandeur of the White House and gracious living of the Waldorf. The thought inspired me to do a composite drawing, one which would carry in it a kind of editorial comment, attempting to say that Herbert Hoover of humble birth rose as high as he could in the service to his country—the White House—and as high socially as he could—the Waldorf-Astoria. [The Maximum Card shown in PLATE XI carries a reproduction of this composite work.]

It was this theme basically that I felt told a story, and I wanted to use the idea in a design for the stamp. I have included here a portion of an article written by Elizabeth Clarkson Zwart of the Des Moines *Register* and *Tribune* which best explains the design:

During the years Des Moines' William J. (Bill) Wagner worked as an associate architect on the Hoover Library, he came to know several members of the Hoover family, including Mr. Hoover, and he learned many of the ex-president's personal tastes. For example, he learned that Herbert Hoover's favorite color was blue. One secretary even said Mr. Hoover's eyes would light up when she entered the room in a blue dress. But there are blues and there are blues. And Mr. Hoover's delight among them was the deep cobalt he had learned to love when, with Mrs. Hoover, he began collecting Ming and K'ang Hsi porcelains during the years they spent in China. . . . Mr. Wagner's stamp was designed stressing simplicity. Against a sky the blue of the Chinese jars and vases, his drawing shows the white cottage at West Branch and the White House to which the Iowa-born son of a Quaker blacksmith made his way. . . . It was discovered by Mr. Wagner that Mr. Hoover's signature had remained the same from 1922 until the last year of his life. Therefore, he used the Hoover autograph in his stamp sketches. . . . Mr. Wagner showed his early drawings to the Hoover family and after some minor changes, the family approved a design in which the red roof of the white cottage and the flag flying at both buildings made the stamp "red, white and blue."

None of the designs submitted privately were considered. Around the middle of July, 1965, the Honorable H. R. Gross, Iowa Representative to Congress, sent me a photograph of

the new Herbert Hoover Commemorative Stamp, along with a short note, which is self-explanatory, (see lower portion of PLATE VII.) and a copy of PHILATELIC RELEASE NO. 49, which was released Sunday, July 11, 1965. Following is the text of that release:

Postmaster General John A. Gronouski yesterday made public the design of the Herbert Hoover commemorative stamp.

The 5-cent stamp will be first issued with ceremonies August 10 at West Branch, Iowa, where the 31st president was born on that date in 1874. Mr. Gronouski plans to speak at the ceremonies.

It is postal tradition to issue commemorative stamps upon the death of a former president. Mr. Hoover died last October 20 at the age of 90.

The stamp is based on a photograph made by the late Fabian Bachrach, Sr., that was the official portrait for the 1932 presidential campaign. The Bachrach family has photographed every president from U. S. Grant to Lyndon B. Johnson.

Lettering on the vertical stamp completely encircles the portrait, reading *Herbert Hoover—Humanitarian—Engineer—President—United States Postage—5¢*.

The Hoover stamp was designed by Norman Todhunter, art director for a New York City advertising agency and A MEMBER OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL'S CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE. Sam Marsh, also of New York, supplied the lettering.

Engravers are Charles A. Brooks (portrait) and George A. Payne (lettering) of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. One hundred and fourteen million stamps will be printed in red on the Cottrell presses.

Collectors desiring first day cancellations may send addressed envelopes together with remittance to cover the cost of the stamps to be affixed, to the Postmaster, West Branch, Iowa 52358. A close-fitting enclosure of postal card thickness should be placed in each envelope and the flap either turned in or sealed. The envelope to the Postmaster should be endorsed "First Day Covers Herbert Hoover Stamp." Collectors are requested to include their ZIP code on the cover. Orders for covers must not include requests for uncanceled stamps. Requests must be postmarked not later than August 10, 1965.

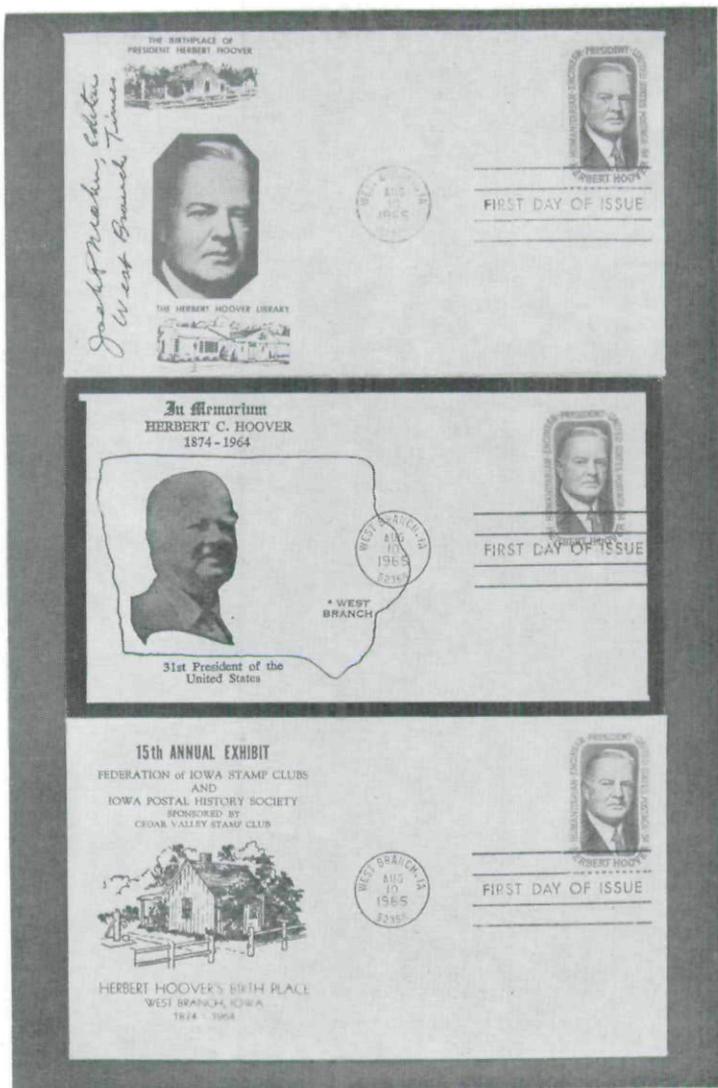
For the plate number collector, there were four plate numbers used—No. 28161, 28162, 28163, and 28164—to print the 114 million stamps in the initial printing. For the collector of precancelled stamps, at least two towns precancelled the Hoover Stamp. This is not normally done because of the size of the stamp. The Grimes precancel is illustrated in PLATE VII.

PLATES VIII, IX, X. These show eight different First Day Covers which were specially prepared by Iowa organizations for the Herbert Hoover Commemorative Stamp—First Day of Issue—August 10, 1965. The following list gives the number of each kind stamped and cancelled:



PL. VIII

(PLATE VIII.)	West Branch Heritage Foundation	82,000
	Des Moines Philatelic Society	7,500
	William Penn College, Oskaloosa	9,000
(PLATE IX.)	West Branch Times	5,000



PL. IX

Cedar Rapids Stamp Club
"In Memoriam"
Federation of Iowa Stamp
Clubs, Waterloo

2,500

P

HONORING
IOWA'S NATIVE SON
Herbert Hoover
31st PRESIDENT
OF THE
UNITED STATES




FIRST DAY OF ISSUE
William J. Wagner
500 Hubbell Building
Des Moines 9, Iowa



HERBERT C. HOOVER



COMMEMORATIVE FIRST DAY ISSUE
in honor of a great American from your friends at
WQAD-TV 8
QUAD CITIES
Moline, Deavenport, Rock Island

FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

LOPE-DO NOT DESTROY



54th
NATIONAL
DAIRY CATTLE
CONGRESS
Oct. 2-10, 1965
Waterloo, Iowa

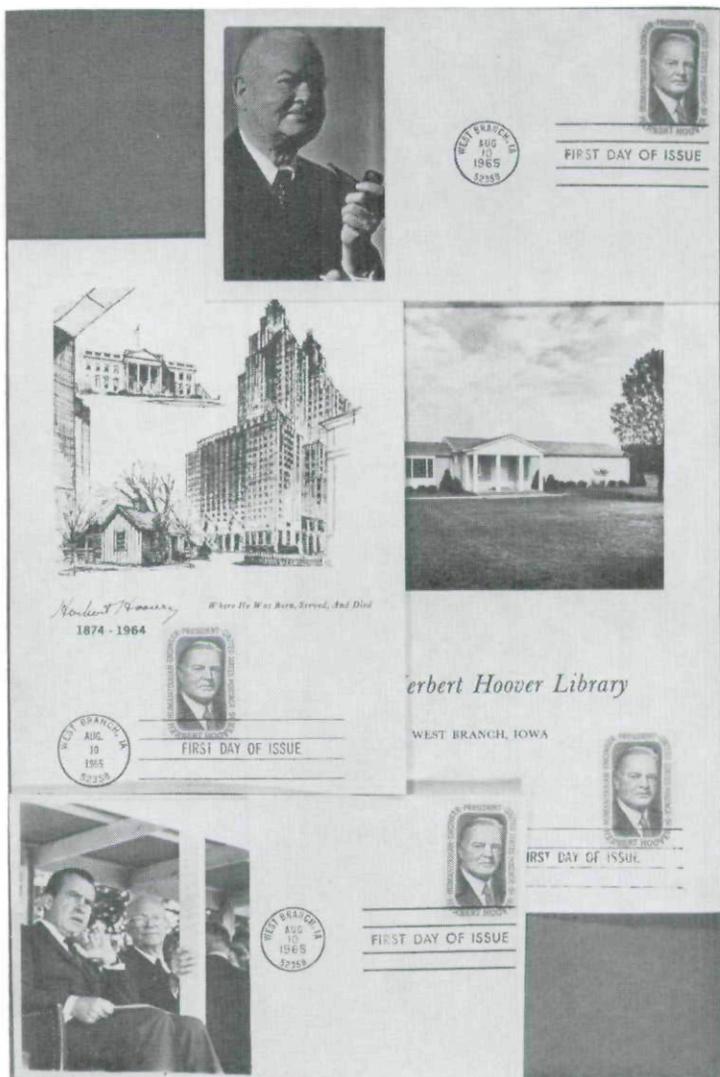
HONORING
HERBERT C.
HOOVER

Both
West Branch, Iowa
August 10, 1874
U. S. President
1929-1933
Buried
West Branch, Iowa
October 25, 1964




(PLATE X.)	Iowa Historical Society	10,000
	WQAD-TV, Quad Cities	1,300

The last cover in PLATE X is not a First Day Cancellation.



Pl. XI

The 54th National Dairy Cattle Congress met in Waterloo, Iowa, October 2 through 10, 1965, and honored Herbert Hoover with this cover.

At least thirty-six different kinds of special covers were prepared for First Day of Issue by organizations outside of Iowa.

PLATE XI. In addition to the covers prepared by the various organizations, many hundreds of covers and other special items were prepared for First Day Cancellations by individuals and groups. In fact, the variety was almost as great as the number of people who wrote and requested special items to be cancelled. In this illustration the cover at the top has attached to it a small, colored picture of Herbert Hoover which was available to the public at the Library desk. The center left item is the Maximum Card [referred to earlier] issued by the West Branch Heritage Foundation—10,000 of these were stamped. The right center item is a small booklet which is given to people visiting the Library. The cover shown at the bottom has attached to it a photo taken of Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Nixon as they were sitting on the speaker's stand during the program, August 10, 1965.

PLATE XII. Besides the "In Memoriam" cover put out by the Cedar Rapids Stamp Club, this group prepared two other items for First Day of Issue cancellations. At the top of PLATE XII is pictured one of 125 kodachrome postcards that were cancelled featuring the Hoover Library. Sandpaper was used to roughen the surface so that the stamp would adhere to the card. This card is somewhat of a unique item in that it bears a machine cancel—most post cards are hand cancelled.

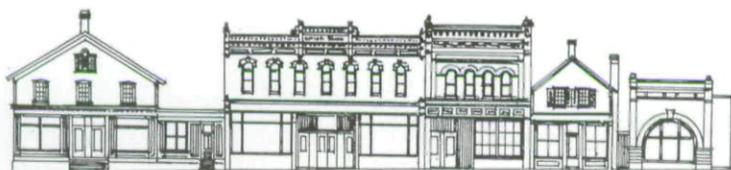
The second item shown here is one of 60 Shiloh covers which the club prepared. It does not honor Hoover in the direct way that the other covers presented here do; rather it commemorates an historic event in which Iowa played a significant role. Eleven regiments from Iowa took part in the

Battle of Shiloh with a loss of 2,381 lives. This is only one example of the many covers depicting prominent events in Iowa history which people prepared in anticipation of the Hoover Stamp—First Day of Issue.



Also pictured in PLATE XII is a special First Day cover honoring Hoover with a photograph of the towboat *Herbert Hoover*.

A few more figures of general interest conclude this philatelic history: There were 999,219 stamps sold the First Day. There were 631,819 machine cancellations and 66,363 hand cancellations. The man hours required to accomplish all the above totalled 5,547.



MAIN STREET, WEST BRANCH, IOWA

THE ROCHESTER LEGEND

BY RUTH BEITZ

For many years a fascinating legend has persisted concerning the village of Rochester, Iowa, not far from West Branch, the birthplace of Herbert Hoover. It originated in an incident that happened one night in 1905:

The evening train snorted up to the tiny station at West Branch and stopped with a ferocious grinding of brakes. From one of the cars descended a woman muffled in a thick veil and carrying a long pasteboard box.

She had hardly set foot on the ground, when the driver of a waiting hack from the local livery stable stepped up to offer his services. He'd been hoping for some business that night, and this lady looked like a good prospect. Anybody could see she was out of the ordinary, all swathed up like that; and then, the way she carried herself . . . head way up in the air, like a queen. Perfume, too! He sniffed deeply. Didn't smell like Bay Rum, or any of that stuff you could get at the local drug store.

"Where'd you want to go, Lady?" He waited eagerly to hear her voice. It was low, throaty, and undefinably accented.

"To Rochester—and back."

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