The Postal and Treasury Savings Stamp Systems:
The War Years

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2008 Blount Postal History Symposium
Smithsonian National Postal Museum
Outline

- Background
- Initial Postal Savings Stamps
- World War I
  - Thrift Stamps
  - War Savings Certificate Stamps
- Between the Wars
- World War II
  - Postal Savings Defense Stamps
  - War Savings Stamps
- After WWII – Savings Stamps
- Summary
Background

- It took approximately 40 years for the United States Congress to create a Postal Savings System.
- Opposition to the System came mainly from bankers and money lenders, especially from those in the Western States and territories.
- The System was created for the following three reasons:
  - to attract the savings of a large number of immigrants who were accustomed to saving at Post Offices in their own countries
  - banks were not regulated and many were unstable, thus people did not trust banks and hoarded money
  - even if banks were honest and stable, they did exist in many rural areas, but Post Offices did
Background (2)

- The Postal Savings System was created in 1910 by an act of Congress (approved June 25, 1910 and further amended on March 4, 1911).

- The System officially started operation on January 1, 1911, and on March 26, 1911, the first postal savings banks were established at one post office in each of 19 states. On March 27th (next day) addition offices in 25 other states were opened.

- Four hundred depositories were open by June of 1911 and almost 13,000 depositories were in operation two years later with over $33 M on deposit.

- An account could be opened by any person 10 years of age or older (each person was limited to one account).

- Deposits could be made only in even dollar amounts with an initial account limit of $500 exclusive of interest (raised to $1,000 in 1916 and $2,500 in 1918).

- Since the minimum deposit in a postal savings account was a $1.00, a means for incrementally accumulating the dollar was necessary and hence the introduction of Postal Savings stamps.
Postal Savings System - First Stamp (Jan. 3, 1911)

$0.10 Orange, Pref. 12, USPS Double Line Watermark, 18 X 21.5 mm

Deposit Card
Imprinted $0.10 Orange Stamp,
Card no watermark
79 X 137 mm

$1.00 Deposit Cards

“Canceled” Deposit Cards
Blank for Date Stamp

Date Stamp
Postal Savings System – Second Stamp (Aug. 14, 1911)

$0.10 Deep Blue, Pref. 12, USPS Single Line Watermark, 18 X 21.5 mm

$1.00 Deposit Cards

Deposit Card
Imprinted $0.10
Deep Blue Stamp
Card no watermark
78 X 133 mm

“Canceled” Deposit Card
With 9 Added Stamps
Treasury Savings System - War Savings Stamps

World War I Era Stamps:

1917

1919

1920

1920
War Savings Stamps – $0.25 Thrift Stamp (Dec. 1, 1917)

$0.25 Deep Green, 28 X 18.5 mm, Unwatermarked, Perforation 11

Front/Back Large Thrift Card – Tall
82 X 188 mm

Small Thrift Cards
108 x 152 mm

(Plates of 300,
Six Panes of 50)
War Savings Stamps – First $5.00 Issue (Nov. 11, 1917)

$5.00 Deep Green, 39 x 55 mm, Unwatermarked, Perforated 11

Washington
(Plates of 80,
4 Panes of 20)

Tri-fold Certificate

Certificate Exterior – Side 1
Spaces for 6 Stamps

Certificate Interior – Side 2
Spaces for 14 Stamps
292.1 X 203.2 mm
War Savings Stamps – First $5.00 Issue (Nov. 11, 1917)

$5.00 Deep Green, 39 x 55 mm, Unwatermarked

Perforated 11

Rouletted 7
War Savings Stamps - Specimens

$5.00 War Savings Certificate Stamp, Deep Green

84 X 127 mm

“SPECIMEN”
Double Line in Violet
25 mm long
X 5 mm high
War Savings Stamps - Specimens

$0.25 Thrift Stamp

84 X 127 mm

“SPECIMEN”
Double Line in Violet
25 mm long
X 5 mm high
War Savings Stamps – Second $5.00 Issue (July 3, 1919)

$5.00 Deep Blue, 27 X 36 mm, Unwatermarked, Perforation 11

Franklin
(Plates of 150.
6 Panes of 25)

Bi-fold Blue on Buff Card, 195.6 X 203.2 mm
Counterfeit:

- Beige Paper
- Lack of Portrait Detail
- “5” and Other Numbers Less Sharp
War Savings Stamps – Third & Fourth $5.00 Issues

Unwatermarked, Perforation 11:

Washington, Carmine

Lincoln. Orange (Green)

Dec. 11, 1919 (36 x 41.5 mm)
Black on Beige Card, Tri-folds 290 X 204 mm
Dec. 21, 1920 (39.5 x 42 mm)
Treasury Savings Stamp – $1.00 Issue (Dec. 12, 1920)

$1.00 Red (Green), 33.5 X 33.5 mm, Unwatermarked, Perforation 11

Hamilton

Black on Beige Card, Tri-folds 259 X 178 mm
War Savings Stamps – Involving Business Leaders

War Savings Dinner:

War Savings Dinner Information Certificate, Menu, and Pledge Card
Black on Beige Card, Tri-fold, 278.1 X 203.2 mm
War Savings Stamps – Soliciting the Household

The Postman Delivers:
War Savings Stamps – Soliciting at Work

Pay Envelope, Information Flyer, Mail in Card:
War Savings Stamps- Reminders at Bill Time

Corporate Support:

Encouraging & Supporting War Stamp Sales

April 6, 1918

May 22, 1919
War Savings Stamps - Involving the Children at Play

Dolly Dingle Paper Doll Series was created by Grace G. Drayton. Grace Drayton is most famous for her drawings of the “Campbell Soup Kids”

Pictorial Review, January 1919
War Savings Stamps – Involving Children at School

School Savings Kit:

- **Penny Book (W.S. 12A)**
  - 100 Spaces = 4 Thrift Stamps
  - 88.9 X 153.7 mm

- **Nickel Book (W.S. 11A)**
  - 100 Spaces = 20 Thrift Stamps

- **Small Thrift Card (WS 1A)**
  - Holds 16 Thrift Stamps
War Savings Stamps – Thrift Stamp Gift Cards (Circa 1917)

Christmas

68 X 102 mm

New Year’s

68 X 102 mm

Slot for Stamp
War Savings Stamps – Awards for Sales of Stamps

Certificates & Stamps:
- Illinois War Savings Committee
- Massachusetts School Award
- Ohio War Savings Committee
- Wilson $10,000
Postal Savings System – Stamps Between the World Wars

1936 – 1940 Stamps:

1936

- Deep Blue
- Violet Blue

1940 Series
Postal Savings System – Second Stamp & Third Stamps

$0.10 Deep Blue, Pref. 12, 18 X 21.5 mm
Aug. 14, 1911

Solid Star Plates
Uniform Spacing

Open Star Plates
2 mm & 3 mm Spacing

Single Line Watermark: USPS

Replacement 1936

Unwatermarked
Postal Savings System – Third Stamp (1936)

$0.10 Color Variation: Violet or Violet Blue Instead of Deep Blue

Deep Blue

Violet/Violet Blue
Postal Savings System – 1940 Stamp Series (April 1940)

Perf. 11, Unwatermarked, 19 X 22 mm ($0.10 April 3, Others April 1):

- Deep Ultramarine
- Dk. Blue Green
- Gray Black
- Dk. Carmine Rose
Postal Savings System – 1941 Stamp Series

America on Guard:
Postal Savings System – 1941 Stamp Series, Booklets

The Battleship Booklets:
Postal Savings System – 1941 Stamp Series, Booklets

The Battleship Booklets, First Day of Issue:
Postal Savings System – 1941 Stamp Series (May 1, 1941)

Perf. 11 X 10.5, 19 X 22.5 mm, Unwmkd (Plates of 400, 4 Panes of 100):

- Rose Red
- Blue Green
- Ultramarine
- Gray Black
Postal Savings System – 1941 Stamp Series (July 30, 1941)

$0.10 Rose Red, Booklet Panes:

- Electric Eye Markings
- Type I
- Plain
- Type II
Postal Savings System – 1941 Stamp Series (July 30, 1941)

$0.10 Rose Red, Booklet Panes (Perforated Edges):
Postal Savings System – 1941 Stamp Series (July 30, 1941)

$0.25 Blue Green Booklet Panes:

- Electric Eye Markings
- Type I
- Type II
- Plain
Postal Savings System – 1941 Stamp Series (May 1, 1941)

$5.00 Sepia, Perf. 11, 36 X 46mm, Unwatermarked (May 1, 1941)

(Plate of 100
4 Panes of 25)
Postal Savings Stamps – 1941 Stamp Series

The Home Front-Stores Help:
Postal Savings System – 1941 Stamp Series, Booklets

Embedded Booklets in Christmas Cards:
Postal Savings System – 1941 Stamp Series, Booklets

The Battleship Booklets – Stars Support Bond/Stamp Sales:

Lionel Barrymore

Joan Crawford
Postal Savings System – 1942 Stamp Series, Booklets

The Eagle & Flag Defense Booklets:
Treasury Savings System – “1942” Stamp Series

War Savings Stamps:

1942 1943 1945
Postal/Treasury Savings System – Transition to War

The Eagle & Flag Defense to War Booklets:
Treasury Savings System – 1942 Stamp Series, Booklets

The Eagle & Flag War Savings Booklets:
War Savings Stamps – 1942 Stamp Series (1942)

Perf. 11 X 10.5, Unwmkd, 19 X 22.5 mm (Plates of 400, 4 Panes of 100):

- Rose Red
  - Oct. 29th

- Ultramarine
  - Nov. 12th

- Dark Blue Green
  - Oct. 15th

- Gray Black
  - Nov. 17th
War Savings Stamps – 1942 Stamp Series

$0.10 & $0.25 Booklet Panes:

- **Plain**
- **Type I**
- **Type II**

**Rose Red** (Oct. 27, 1942)

**Dark Blue Green** (Nov. 6, 1942)
War Savings Stamps – “1942” Stamp Series (Aug. 5, 1943)

Coils, Perf. 10 Vertically, Unwatermarked

Line Pair

Leader Strips of 4
War Savings Stamps – “1942” Stamp Series (1945)

$5.00 Violet Brown, Perf. 11, Unwatermarked, 36 X 45 mm

(Plate of 100, 4 Panes of 25) No Date
War Savings Stamps – 1942 Stamp Series, Booklets

Embedded Booklets:

- Christmas Card
- Dance Card

University of California
War Savings Stamps – 1942 Stamp Series, Private Booklets

Corporate Savings Plans/Books:
War Savings Stamps – 1942 Stamp Series, Private Booklets

War Savings Calendar:
War Savings Stamps – 1942 Stamp Series

The Home Front-Food Stuffs:
Savings Stamps - Series (1954-1961)

Minute Man Stamps 1954-1961:

- Nov. 30, 1954
- Dec. 31, 1956
- Nov. 18, 1958
- Nov. 30, 1956
- Dec. 30, 1954
- Mar. 13, 1957
- 1961
Savings Stamps- Series (1954-1961)

Minute Man Stamps, 1942 & 1954-1956:

- **1942**
  - No 1942
  - No “Arch”

- **1954-1956**
  - War Savings
  - Savings Stamp

Example Collection Booklets:
Savings Stamps- “1954” Series

$0.10 Minute Man Stamps:

Perforation: 11 x 10.5  
Imperforate-Trial Printing
Savings Stamps- “1954” Series (April 1955)

$0.10 & $0.25 Booklet Panes:

Electric Eye Markings

Type I

Type II

Plain

Blue Green, April 15th

Rose Red April 22nd
Savings Stamps- Series (1954-1961)

Flag & Minute Man Stamps Comparison 1958-1961:

Nov. 18, 1958
48 Star Flag

“1961”
50 Star Flag
Savings Stamps - Series (1954-1961)

Flag & Minute Man Stamps 1961:

Red & Blue (on White)  Red & Light Violet (on White)
Savings Stamps- “1958” Series

Flag & Minute Man Booklet Panes 1958 & 1961:

Nov. 18, 1958

1961
Savings Stamps – Involving Children at School

School Savings Program:
Savings Stamps – Involving Children at School

School Savings Clubs:
Postal Savings System-Last Day

Postal Savings System-Last Day:

[Image 1: Postal Savings System-Last Day with a stamp and date.

Image 2: United States Savings Stamp Album with a page that includes a stamp and text about savings stamps and bonds.

Image 3: A page from the album showing the stamp's value and a section for personal information, including name, street, city, state, issue date, and cost.

Text: These stamps are for the property of [Name], [Street], [City, State]. The total value is $[value].

THrift is a wonderful thing—the ANTICIPATION OF TOMORROW. The regular purchases of Savings Stamps and Bonds will help you gain the worthwhile things you want to have or do. For education, for all the big opportunities in your future—be ready with guaranteed-safe U.S. Savings Bonds—SHARES IN AMERICA.

The Savings Stamps in this Album will be accepted by a bank in full or part payment for a United States Savings Bond, Series E.
Postal Savings System was in operation for about 60 years.

Over the years the emphasis shifted from the sale of stamps to accumulate even-dollar amounts for account deposit to the saving of stamps to purchase bonds.

In WWI, the Post Office was a major center for the sale and redemption of thrift and Savings Certificate Stamps.

Post Office Mail Carriers (city and rural) were mobile sales and delivery agents.

The prevailing WWI logo (brand) was “W.S.S.” in a rectangle.
SUMMARY

- In WWII the Post Office was even more involved not just as a sales and distribution agent but also as the developer of the 1941 “Defense Series” and key support agent for War Savings stamp and war bond sales at all levels.

- The prevailing WWII (and after) logo was the ”Minute Man“ adapted from the famous Chester French statue.

- Post WWII the Postal Savings System waned. Banks were secure with higher interest rates and there was no compelling cause (like a war) to justify its need.

- Some recent publications have suggested that it might be time again to start a new Postal Savings System.
Postal Savings System - The Great Debates

Voice of the People, the PMG, and Bankers:

POSSIBLE LAWS

The Postal Savings Bill, introduced into Congress authorizes the establishment of a chief office at Washington, to be called the Central Depository, the money deposited to be deemed public moneys, and the credit of the United States is pledged for the repayment, with interest not exceeding 2 percent per annum, of all sums deposited. The Postmaster General is authorized to open, at suitable money-order post offices, sub-depositories for the receipt on deposit of moneys in sums of not less than $1 nor more than $500, in the aggregate, to the credit of any single depositor. Depositories are not subject to State or local taxation, nor to seizure for debt.

James A. Gary, PMG
Munsey’s Magazine
June 1898

The Courier-Item
December 22, 1881
Santa Cruz, CA

Congressional Hearings
March 1910
Postal Savings System – Initial Depositories* (44)

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*Selected Based on Efficiency
War Savings Stamps – $0.25 Thrift Stamp (Dec. 1, 1917)

Large vs Small Thrift Cards

Space “9” Differences

Many a little makes a mickle.

Many a mickle makes a muckle.

Front/Back Large Thrift Card – Short

82 X 183 mm
War Savings Stamps – First $5.00 Issue (Nov. 11, 1917)

Filled Certificate:

Certificate Exterior – Side 1
Filled with 6 Stamps

Certificate Interior – Side 2
Filled with 14 Stamps
Postal Savings System - Multi-Lingual Card (1920)

Used for $0.10 Stamps Until 1941 (March):

1911 Stamps

1940 Stamps
Postal Savings System – Special Canceling Handstamp

Handstamp:

OCT 30 1917
CATAWISSA, PA.

FEB 2 1916
TYLER, TEX.

JUL 28 1932
NEW YORK, N.Y.
Postal Savings System – Forms PS 333-, Accumulation Cards

PS 333- Series Forms (1920-41):
Postal Savings System – 1941 Stamp Series, Booklets

The Battleship Booklets:
Postal Savings System – 1941 Stamp Series, Booklets

The Battleship Booklets 10-cent Back Differences:
Postal Savings System – 1941 Stamp Series, Bi-fold Card

Embedded Form PS 333/10: Heroic Americans (Merchants)

20 Pages

203.1 X 233.5 mm
Postal Savings System – 1942 Stamp Series, Booklets

The Eagle & Flag $0.10 Defense Booklet Backs:
Postal Savings System – 1942 Stamp Series, Booklets

The Eagle & Flag $0.10 Defense Booklet Pale Eagle:

Pale

Standard-Pink
War Savings Stamps – “1942” Stamp Series (1945)

$5.00 PB(8) & Pane (25):

BEP Bond Program 1992:

BEP Employees are Making Dreams a Reality by Investing in U.S. Savings Bonds

This beautiful 10 cent United States War Savings Stamp, Series 1992, was collected by school children during World War II, a close of a time after seeing $16.75 million brought back from a Nazi War in the bread and the stamp were printed by the intaglio process at the BEP.

The gift education helped them in the young children to be financially secure citizens in future years. Today, BEP Employees make their dreams a reality through U.S. Savings Bonds, payroll allotments.

Bureau Employee Participant June 1992

THE UNITED STATES SAVINGS BOND

Bonds are Non-Transferable

25 DOLLARS

United States of America

Bureau Employee Participant June 1992

Issue Date

June 1992

Fifty Dollars

The United States

Bureau Employee Participant June 1992

Issue Date

June 1992

Fifty Dollars

The United States

Bureau Employee Participant June 1992

Issue Date

June 1992

BEP Bond Program 1993:

BEP Bond Program 1994: