

# Finding Treasures

## The fun of collecting postal history in weird shapes and sizes.

Fred Schmitt



Stamp collectors who exhibit their collections are always coming up with imaginative ways to exhibit the odd-sized pieces—things like package wrappers. Sometimes, for even the biggest of pieces, they have come up with exhibit pages that can be half as large as the exhibit frames used at stamp shows.

It's my opinion that the difficulty of finding ways to exhibit larger postally-used wrappers, covers and packages has caused there to be less of a demand in the marketplace for these kinds of unusual items. In addition, over the years—even before philatelic exhibiting became as vastly popular as it is today—stamp collectors had trouble finding ways to store and protect the larger pieces of postal history. A good friend of ours once had a package wrapper almost as big, in dimensions, as the front door of his

house. He used to store the jumbo wrapper wrapped in some kind of cellophane and then backed with a thin piece of plywood. This he stored in his closet and would bring it out every now and then to show it off as something of an oddity.

The preceding factors don't reduce one bit the importance and long term rising values of odd-shaped pieces of postal history. My friend with the huge wrapper (it was franked with scores of U.S. stamps from the 1922 definitive series, each one very meticulously hand-cancelled) disposed of his oddity years ago for small change. Today, I would estimate its worth at well over \$3,000!

Shown above are several package-related pieces of postal history. At upper left is a German "package card." These were sold at post offices to be used as a package label for both the sender/recipient addresses and the franked postage.

At lower right is a bill of lading from July 1890 from an Adams Express offer—it being proof to the sender that Adams had received the package and sent it on its way.

Below left is an 1890s package envelope which was used both as a mailing label and as a way to include a letter or receipt in the envelope that would end up attached/pasted on to the package.

In the center is a philatelically-inspired piece of fun: a large package wrapper obviously originally wrapped around something that was being sent to a stamp collector. Though colorful and full of inexpensive stamps, it is nevertheless worth in the neighborhood of \$100-150.

Odd-shaped postal history is fun to pursue. There is value in them and it continues to rise. ☒