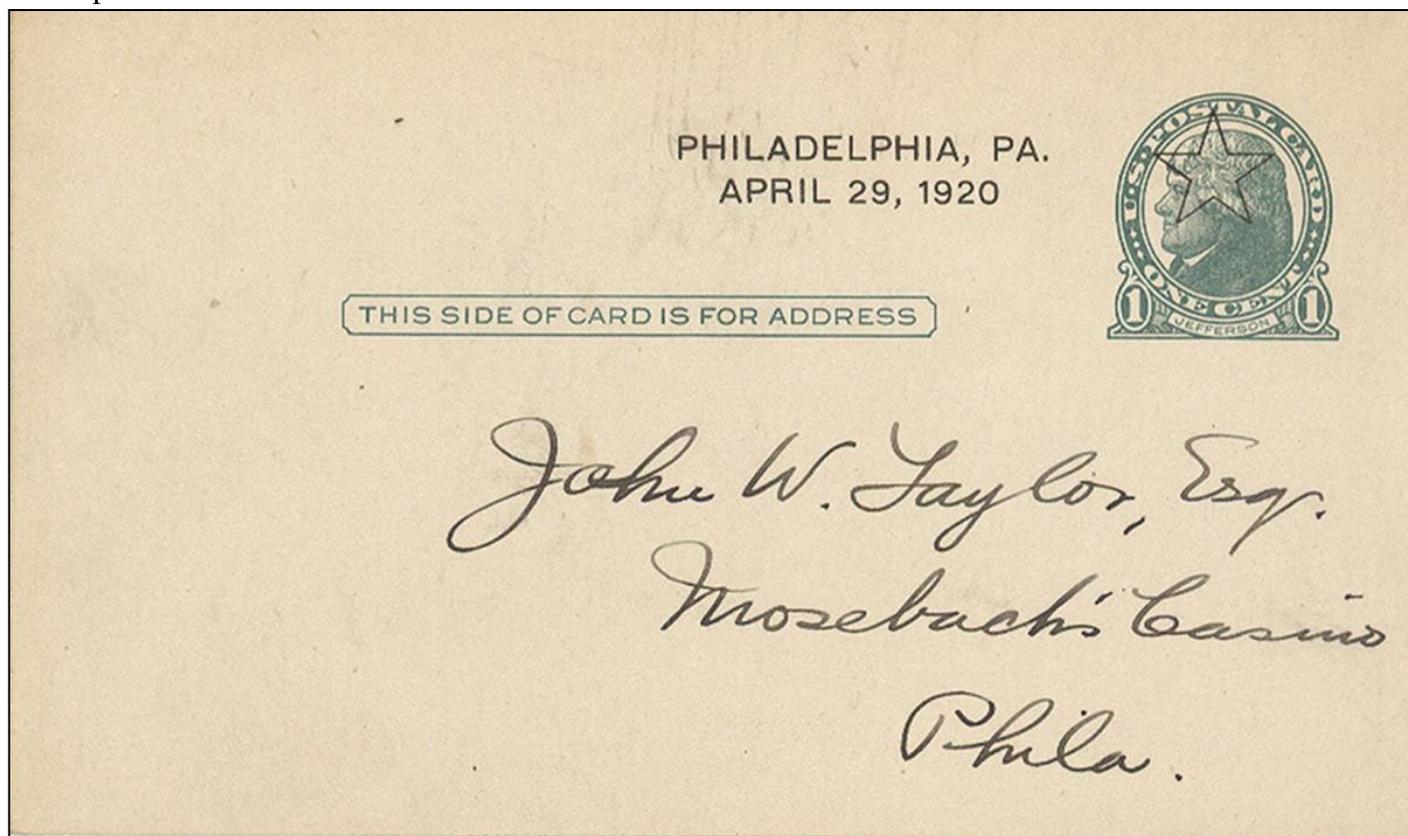


MY FAVORITE PIECE OF POSTAL STATIONERY

By Josh Furman

When I am asked about my favorite piece of Postal Stationery, many pieces come to mind. The scarce mint UX1, is one; a Grant Lettersheet is another. But I generally settle on this one, a card with a two-line Philadelphia cancel dated April 29, 1920, and addressed to John W. Taylor, Esq. at Mosebach's Casino in Philadelphia. Here it is:



Mosebach's Casino and Drawing Room was at 1209 N. 13th Street in Philadelphia, a hall, restaurant and theatre. It hosted assorted affairs, including company and organization dinners.

At the time I first saw it, I was working on my book, *U. S. Precanceled Postal Cards 1874 - 1961*, and I was excited to have this card and planned for its inclusion as a scarce example of this Philadelphia cancel.

Then, of course, came the research to confirm that it was, in fact, a precancel.

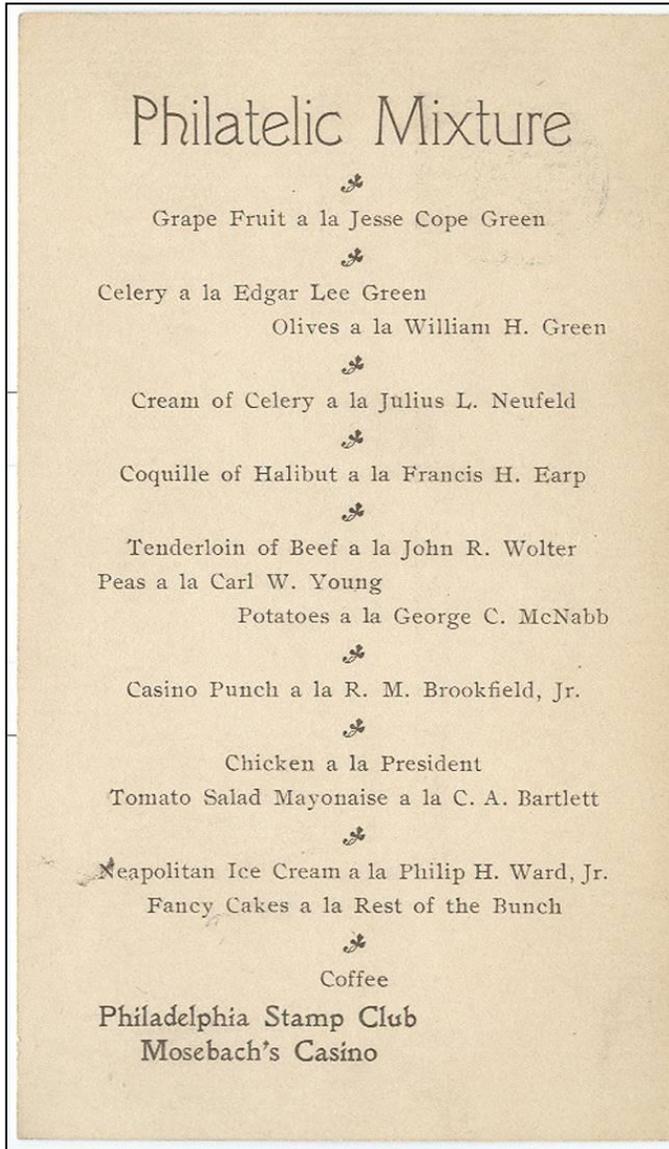
Arnold Selengut, my inspiration in this field, was doubtful. He said we needed to find more of these and confirm somehow that they went through the mail.

Inquiries to the APRL seemed to bring a confirmation. The first source was a book by Tom Clark, *A Catalog of Philadelphia Postmarks*, in which he characterizes the card as "experimental", "possibly a club novelty; apparently sent through the mails." Aha!

But then there's an article in *Pennsylvania Postal Historian* by Scott Shaulis in which he illustrates the card, describes it and then writes: "This precancel was used by the Philadelphia Stamp Club. There is a printed advertisement of the reverse entitled, 'Philatelic Mixture'. The ad was arranged to look like a menu with eleven members of the club named, including the well-known Philip H. Ward, Jr....Although this item was philatelically inspired, it is still somewhat difficult to come by."

Here's what the back looks like:

Clark says it was sent through the mail. Shaulis uses the terms "precancel" and "philatelically inspired". The latter term could probably be applied to a number of pieces of precanceled postal stationery, but the use of the term "precancel" is telling.



So are we there yet? Well, no.

Correspondence with Herb Trenchard, a noted Philadelphia philatelist, confirms the true story as implied by Scott Shaulis. It is an unusual form of club souvenir, similar to others seen by Trenchard to publicize philatelic events. The card was hand-delivered to the attendee's place at the club dinner, with the menu for the dinner printed on the back.

So it reposes in the Appendix of my book, not in the main Precancel section.

Why is it my favorite? For one, doing the research was a joy. I corresponded with interesting and knowledgeable people, and we were able to exchange sources and opinions along the way. For another, it has a great connection with philatelic history. In 1920, the Philadelphia Stamp Club numbered one hundred fourteen members including juniors and honorary members, many of the most active in the philately of the day.

For me, this is what philately is all about. What's your story?

[Editor's note: I can attest to the fact that many times the most common looking of items turn out to have a wonderful and interesting history – if one just takes the time to do the research.]

Take Home Quiz on the First Ladies of the White House

Included with the March newsletter you will find a light pink colored page with a quiz. Pick up the pink quiz page at the meeting or find it on the web site in the MEMBERS ONLY section – either way take the quiz and return it to the Editor at the SECOND meeting of March before 7:00pm. In event of the inevitable multiple perfect scores – three will be randomly selected to be awarded a \$10 Door Prize. If no perfect scores are received than ties will be broken by random drawing until three winners are identified.

Yes -- it is open book and put your name on it!