

The Cover Story

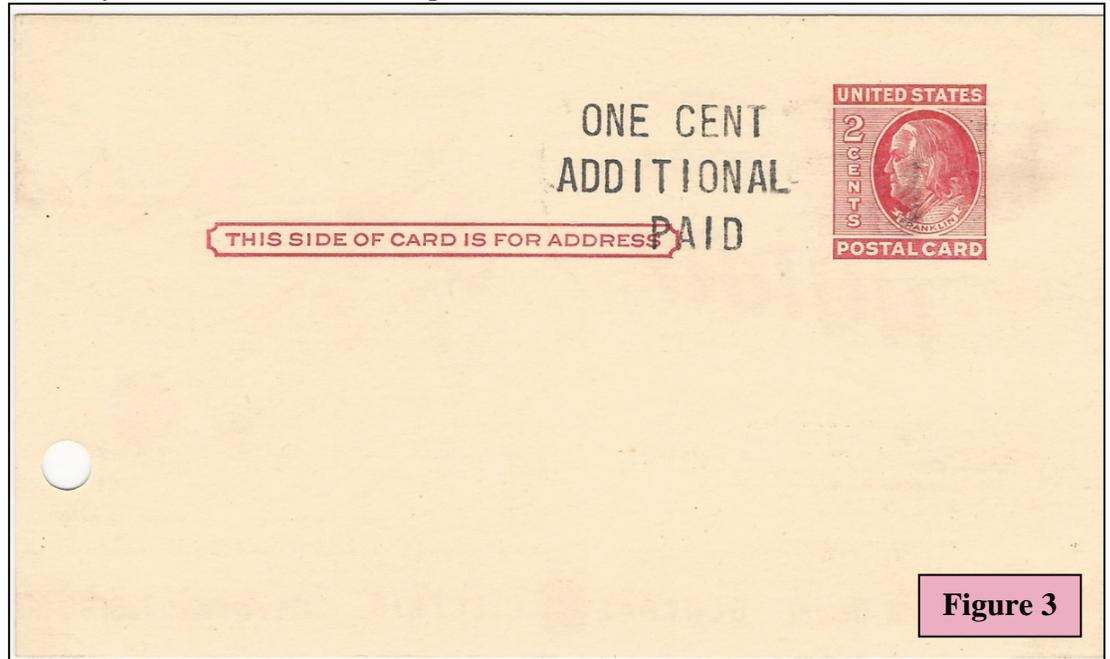
The G. E. Card(s) by Josh Furman

As far as articles go, it looks like I'm stuck on the letter G for the time being.

Anyhow, for you Postal Card collectors, this is an interesting card topic, and a fun area to try to collect. In 'restaurant' parlance, these are \$\$ to \$\$\$ items, but quite available if you are willing to pay the price. That out of the way, let's see what's involved here.

Back in the 1950s, in pre-transistor days, General Electric was a major producer of radios and televisions. They had authorized dealers across the country, not only to sell the devices, but to provide repair services when vacuum tubes burnt out or other components degraded. So they sought to provide those dealers with a marketing way to contact their buyers, both for sales and repair services.

For this endeavor, G. E. bought a bunch of postal cards, the 2[¢] UX38 to be exact, (see Fig. 1) and offered a variety of printed backs to their dealers. **Figure 1 (on front cover)**. We don't know if a fee to dealers was involved. Each of the different advertising copy backs was assigned an "ETR" number. See **Figure 2 (on front cover)** for a sample of what one of the backs looks like.



Looks like a great idea, right? So here is the fly in the ointment: On August 31, 1958, the postal card rate was increased from 2[¢] to 3[¢]. Faced with thousands of already printed 2[¢] cards, G. E. requested and received the ability for these 2[¢] cards to be surcharged an additional 1[¢] to meet the new rate. In the letter from the Finance Officer of the Post Office Department, Mr. Marks advised G.E. that it could show the letter to anyone who questioned the revaluing of these cards.

Here is what the revalued cards look like from the front. (See **Figure 3**)

As you can see, what appears as a black circle on the back of the card is a hole through which the dealer can attach a string so that the card stays attached to the product until it is needed.

There were at least nine dealers located across the country from New York to California who utilized these cards; there may be more that have not yet been discovered.

As far as backs are concerned, there were about twenty-seven different ETR numbers offered by G. E. in three series. Those in the 1000 series seem to emphasize "Service". Again, see the card back in **Figure 2**. Those in the 1300 series seem to focus on "Tubes", and those in the 1700 series aimed at "Professional". Shown in **Figure 4** is an example of a 1700 series back. Note the emphasis of the word, "Professional". Note also that there is a slight red line next to the hole. In these cards the die cut a slit at the hole to make it easier to attach the card to the product's power cord.

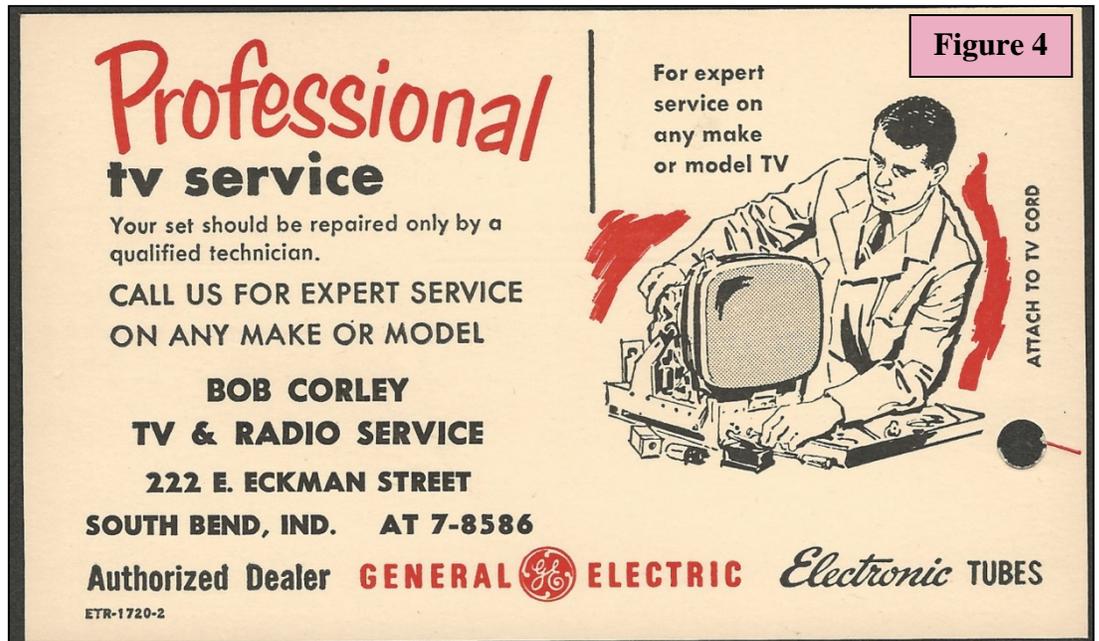


Figure 4

Now there's one more wrinkle to collecting these G. E. cards. There were two type of re-valuing overprints. Type 1 has the letter "P" under the "T" of "ADDITIONAL". Type 2 shows the letter "P" under the left "I". See **Figure 5A & B** for an illustration of the different overprints.

Some of the cards exist with both types of overprints, indicating that some cards were probably used by more than one dealer; therefor reprinted by General Electric.

So there's plenty here to collect, and these G.E. cards are a fun addition to one's Postal Card collection. The illustrations in this article are all from cards in my collection. Some of the details about these cards (and a good deal more) can be found in an article by Lewis E. Bussey's U.S.A. Postal Card Column in the May-June 2016 issue of *Postal Stationery*.

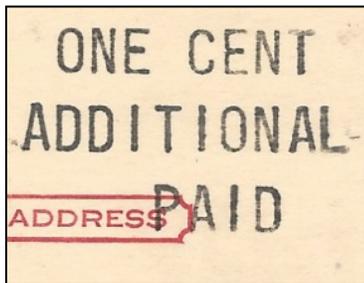


Figure 5A

Figure 5B

