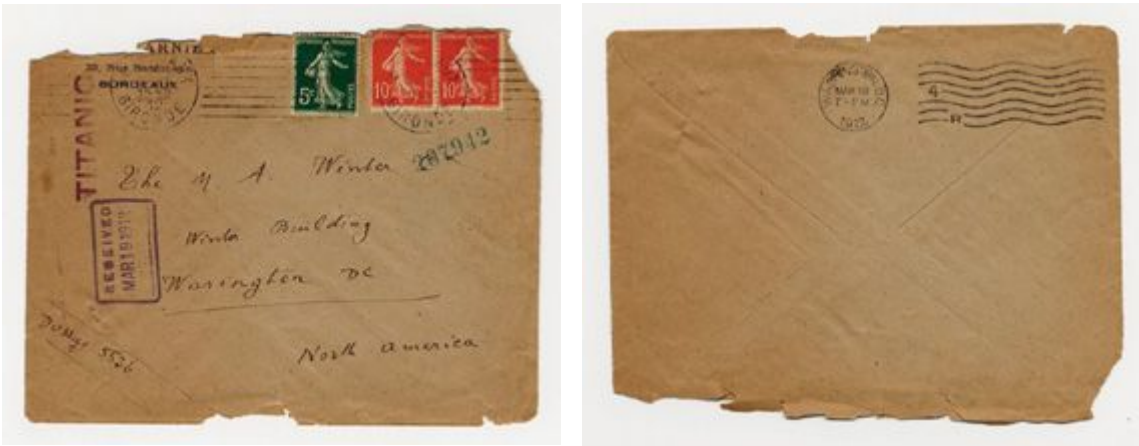


Rare Titanic Cover Find

Sandafayre, a British stamp auction firm, has discovered a rare bit of Titanic postal history - a cover bearing the 'TITANIC' cachet, intended for the liner's maiden voyage.

That voyage was first set for March, 20, 1912, but was postponed because the liner was not ready to put to sea until April 10. Four days later, it struck an iceberg and sank off the coast of Newfoundland.



Found in a carton lot from North America consigned to auction, this cover was posted in Bordeaux, bears one French 5-centime and two 10c Sower definitives and has the distinctive 'TITANIC' cachet handstamped in violet. It is one of only three recorded - one is in private hands, the other in a prized exhibit at the Manitoba Museum of the Titanic - all from the same Washington correspondent with a U.S. arrival postmark (inset at right) and the White Star Line's dated 'RECEIVED' handstamp.

As Andrew Morris of Sandafayre explains, 'For her original March maiden voyage, Titanic was due to call at Cherbourg in France for passengers and mail. Mail bound for the United States was handstamped with a violet straight line 'TITANIC,' presumably at the White Star offices in Cherbourg, as she was the next ship due to make the crossing. When she failed to make the March crossing, the mail was switched to another White Star liner . . .'

Morris believes this cover may be rarer than the few that actually traveled on the ill-fated vessel.

Sandafayre will offer the cover in one of its weekly auctions in January 2001. For details, visit the firm online at www.sandafayre.com, or write to Sandafayre Ltd., Parkgate, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 8XN, United Kingdom.