

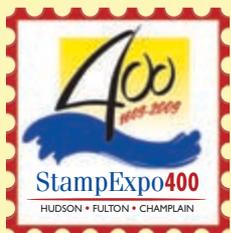
# STAMP INSIDER



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MARCH / APRIL 2009

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Stamp Exposition 2009



Robert Fulton

## StampExpo 400 Souvenir Sheetlet

Henry Hudson



Samuel de Champlain

INTRODUCING CINDERELLAS • PRECANCELS PRIMER III  
ANOTHER LOOK AT THE TITANIC COVERS

*Journal of the Federation of New York Philatelic Societies*

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# A Closer Look at Titanic Covers

## Did They Miss the Boat or Sink the Collector?

By D. Jennings-Bramly, FRPSL

As a long-time collector and student of the Sower issue of France, my eye was drawn to the cover at the top of Tom Fortunato's article about *Titanic* covers that missed the boat, which was published in *La Catastrophe*, journal of the Wreck & Crash Mail Society ([HTTP://WRECKANDCRASH.ORG](http://wreckandcrash.org)). The article also ran in the September–October 2008 issue of the *STAMP INSIDER*.

Having checked the 10 centime Sowers with the expectation they might be postal forgeries and finding them to be genuine, I turned to the article to attempt to find out why Mr. Fortunato declared the envelope, numbered 267914, a gem.

After reading the articles and viewing the eight covers from the references he lists, I can answer the question he poses in his first sentence — “Would you pay \$10 for the cover shown here?” (I failed to raise the ninth, which does not matter because it is also stated to be an envelope, franked 25 centimes, to the Winter Co.) My answer is no. I would not give a nickel for even one of the so-called “missed *Titanic* covers.” Why not? Read on ...

Let me deal with the *junk box* cover first. Despite Mr. Fortunato's assertion, No. 267914 has not been registered by the French State Postes. No. 267909 (from the Titanic Museum) and 267925 are also not registered, because the Courier Convoyeurs (scallop rims) did not offer registration. The other six covers are not registered and none of the nine ever were tendered for registration. Had any been registered, the fronts would have displayed evidence of it and the franking would have been 50 centimes (25c postage plus 25c registration). The reverse of the covers should have shown handling by the U.S. Post Office Department registered mail branch, but they do not. They show only the markings for ordinary mail.

The PARIS R.P. ETRANGER marks are made by the two heads of a cancelling machine working with no bars between heads. Cover 267942 shows the bars *in situ*.

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### ***Titanic Covers — Continued from Page 24***

The backstamp from the Fortunato cover is shown in the inset. Using *registration* in a non-postal sense and taking into account the shape of the digits, I am of the opinion that the six-figure numbers were applied by a registry [sic.] within the Winter Co.

By 1912, the Universal Postal Union had been in existence for more than 30 years and few countries had not joined. The benefits were great, especially as tariffs were now standardized between member countries. There were no more varying rates between shipping lines and even individual ships. The previous tedious and often fruitless searches for the fastest, safest and least expensive route and vessel were over. Prepayment reigned and superscription of line, of captain's favor, of shipping agent or vessel was extinguished.

The post office of a country did not designate or impose a particular vessel's name on an item of mail or a bundle of mail: their remit was to send the mail on the first available packet. Later, sometimes, arrangements might be made specially for propaganda. The SS *Normandie* is an example, but for anyone to advance such a theory in regard to the PTT and the *Titanic* is ludicrous.

The choice of vessel, to carry one's mail, has always been the prerogative of the sender. Governments have tried to control and have spied on mail from the earliest times. The suggestion that the word *Titanic* hand-stamped on the eight covers viewed was carried out by the Foreign Branch of the PTT Paris is completely untenable.

Since the RMS *Titanic* was British, there is no likelihood that La Poste would have arranged a special handling for mail which senders wanted to travel by the *Titanic*.

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### ***Newest Discovery***

This is the most recently discovered cover of the nine known examples, being found by a member of the Titanic Historical Society. A chart showing details of each cover in the census may be viewed online at [www.nystampclubs.org/cny\\_downloads.html](http://www.nystampclubs.org/cny_downloads.html).

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## Titanic Covers — Continued from Page 26

Should anyone in France have desired ocean travel for their mail by that White Star liner, they could have arranged for it to take place by posting to the liners' agency at Cherbourg. That patently was not so done.

Mr. Fortunato finds it interesting that after 20 years searching, only nine covers — all to one firm — have been recorded. I find it suspicious and one more reason why I end up convinced that these covers had the handstamp *Titanic* added to them with fraudulent intent at some time shortly before they started to appear. What I am unable to decide is where the fraud originated — in America or in Britain.

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*D. Jennings-Bramley is a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society, London*

## THOMAS M. FORTUNATO RESPONDS

I am indebted to Mr. Jennings-Bramley for his letter explaining additional details on the Titanic covers I wrote about. Is his conclusion that the *Titanic* markings are bogus or otherwise legitimate mail correct? That remains a possibility.

As stated in my article, how is it that mail handlers could not have known of *Titanic's* maiden voyage being postponed, since it was announced some six months earlier? And of course, why have *Titanic* markings only been found on letters going to one firm — The Winter Company? Fraud would explain it.

Since at least two of these covers have exchanged hands for several thousand dollars over the years, I still consider my \$10 investment a bargain with the hope that future postal historians may uncover more of this story that continues to raise more questions than answers.

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## Pyramids Puzzler

By James Darnell

### Directions

1. Starting with the top box of each pyramid, fill in the box with a letter which is also a proper English word.
2. Then fill in each set of boxes below the previous set by repeating (though not necessarily in the same order) all the letters above and adding one more letter, again being sure that each set contains a proper English word.
3. Continue until the addition of one more letter will produce the words in the bottom set of boxes, which, by the way, spell out the name of your favorite philatelic publication. There are several different solutions. A sample solution is shown on page 46.

