

THE TWO CENT HARDINGS

The **purpose** of this **first day cover exhibit** of the Harding Memorial Issues (Flat Plate Perf. 11, Rotary Perf. 10 and Flat Plate Imperforate) is to demonstrate the unique first day cover features as well as the pre-production, production and usage. The exhibit, in which **all covers are first day covers** except for those in Commercial Usage, includes an original photograph model, an original essay model, large die proofs, production amounts and plate numbers, an uncut flat plate imperf. press sheet and panes to demonstrate marginal markings, perforations, the first cachet, mourning covers, U.S. departmental corner cards, official and unofficial postmarks and cancellations, pioneer servicers and commercial usage. **A previously unreported first day plate number position has been discovered by this exhibitor** and is demonstrated.



“POST OFFICE—MARION, O—Waiting for 9 A.M. opening of ‘First Day’ Sale Harding Stamps, 9/1/1923” Immediately to the left of the table is Michael Eidsness, Jr., Superintendent of Stamps, and with elbow on table to the right is Dr. George Harding, the President’s father.

Only two days after the death of President Warren G. Harding on August 2, 1923, a mourning stamp was suggested to the Post Office Department. On August 17th it was announced that a Harding Memorial stamp would be issued September 1, 1923, allowing first day cover servicers and collectors to prepare. “Black Harding” first day covers are known for the first commercial cachet and for multiple unofficial first day cancellations.

Initially 300 million copies of the Harding Memorial stamp were ordered, but because the slower flat plate presses were not able to produce the needed number of stamps, on September 10th the POD announced that rotary press stamps would be placed on sale on September 12, 1923, giving FDC servicers little notice. This was the first commemorative or memorial stamp to be issued in two types of printing. On October 31st the POD announced that the Harding stamp would also be issued in imperforate form on November 15th to meet the demand of collectors.

EXHIBIT PLAN

1. Preproduction
2. Issued Stamps
3. First Day Covers
4. First Day Cover Servicers
5. Postmarks and Cancellations
6. Usage and Postal Rates
7. Conclusion