



Smithsonian

National Postal Museum

Minneapolis, Minnesota Postal Operations History Collection

Mitch Toda, Head Archivist

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Postal Museum Archives
Title:	Minneapolis, Minnesota Postal Operations History Collection
Date:	1871-1971
Identifier:	NPMA.2024.8
Extent:	2.42 Cubic feet (Three (3) legal size document boxes; one (1) flat box (19 x 15 x 3 in.); one (1) flat box (12 x 15.5 x 3 in.); and two (2) oversize folders)
Language:	English .
Summary:	This collection consists of scrapbooks, photographs, forms, manuals, a ledger book, brochures and clippings related to postal operations and postal related activities in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Subjects covered include Christmas delivery preparation and display guides; photographs of postal employees, postal buildings, postal operations and processing facilities, letter carrier bands, and conferences; postal exhibits; Postal People Day activities; Postal Week for Our People and Families activities; a register of postal position appointments; and accounting forms. The materials in this collection document postal operations and activities in the post offices in Minneapolis, revealing the day-to-day activities that occurred and the people behind those activities.
Digital Content:	Image(s): Christmas mailing season scrapbook (Folder 2 of 2)

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated by Laura Utke, 2024.

Related Materials

The National Postal Museum's collections also contain materials related to [Minneapolis](#) . This includes examples of convention badges, Owney tags, and a banner.

Processing Information

Processed by Mitch Toda, Head Archivist, September-October 2024

Preferred Citation

Minneapolis, Minnesota Postal Operations History Collection, NPMA.2024.8, National Postal Museum, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

Collection is open for research. Access to original archival materials is by appointment only. Researchers must submit request for appointment in writing. Please direct reference inquiries to the National Postal Museum Archives: NPM_Archives@si.edu.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

The first post office in the Minneapolis area dates to 1847 when a post office and sawmill office was established at St. Anthony Falls on the bank of the Mississippi River, facing Main Street, near the end of Second Avenue, Southeast. Ard Godfrey, of Maine, was commissioned to build the sawmill and was appointed the first postmaster. Before the building of the post office, mail was inconsistently being brought by carrier from Fort Snelling, but now the new post office became part of a regular stage delivery route between St. Anthony and St. Paul. Now mail would arrive every ten to fourteen days.

While St. Anthony Falls was on the east side of the river, a lumbering town of some 300-400 inhabitants, Minneapolis, on the west side of the river, started as a portion of the Fort Snelling military reservation that was opened for settlement. Among its first inhabitants was Hezekiah Fletcher who served as assistant to the St. Anthony Falls postmaster. As assistant, Fletcher would go across the river once or twice a week for the mail and carry it around his hat until he came across the parties that the correspondence was for.

On January 7, 1854, Fletcher was appointed the first postmaster of Minneapolis, with the post office first located in a two-story frame building at the corner of High Street and Second Avenue South. Fletcher remained as postmaster until December 22 of the same year, when Carlos Wilcox, who had opened the first United States land office in Minneapolis, was appointed postmaster. Wilcox moved the post office to a double two-story frame building at the southeast corner of Washington Avenue and Ames Street (now Eight Avenue South) where it flourished, receiving mail by stage by way of St. Paul which received mail from eastern points by steamer two to three times a week.

In 1856 the first suspension bridge over the Mississippi River was built which created a second business center at Bridge Square where the post office has remained located ever since. In August 1873 the St. Anthony Falls post office merged with the Minneapolis post office. The exact location of the post office changed frequently during the earlier years due to development and mail volume which outgrew existing facilities. Between 1854 and 1889, the post office was in eleven different places for periods varying from one to four years.

The current Minneapolis main post office was completed in 1934 and is very close to occupying the same area where that first post office was in 1854. At a cost of \$5 million at the time, it consists of four stories and a basement, consisting of an area of approximately 362,000 square feet.

Content Description

This collection consists of scrapbooks, photographs, forms, manuals, a ledger book, brochures and clippings related to postal operations and postal related activities in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Subjects covered include Christmas delivery preparation and display guides; photographs of postal employees, postal buildings, postal operations and processing facilities, letter carrier bands, and conferences; postal exhibits; Postal People Day activities; Postal Week for Our People and Families activities; a register of postal position appointments; and accounting forms.

The materials in this collection document postal operations and activities in the post offices in Minneapolis, revealing the day-to-day activities that occurred and the people behind those activities. Additionally documented are activities outside the scope of postal operations including letter carrier bands, the National Association of Postmasters of the United States, and the National Association of Post Office Mechanics.

Minneapolis postmasters documented include Cyrus Aldrich, 1867-1871; George H. Keith, 1871-1882; Orlo M. Laraway, 1882-1886; John J. Ankeny, 1886-1890; William D. Hale, 1890-1894; Franklin G. Holbrook, 1894-1898; William D. Hale, 1902-1914; Edward A. Purdy, 1914-1922; John R. Coan, 1935-1952; Leonard F. Ramberg, 1953-1957; Cleve R. Austin, 1957-1965; Walter John Hogan, 1966-1970; and Morton E. Layer, 1970-1979.

Arrangement

This collection is unarranged.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Bands (Music)
- Celebrations
- Christmas
- Christmas decorations
- Letter carriers -- United States
- Post office buildings
- Post office stations and branches
- Postal service -- Employees
- Postal service -- Equipment and supplies
- Scrapbooks

Names:

- Aldrich, Cyrus
- Ankeny, John J.
- Austin, Cleve R.
- Coan, John R.
- Fletcher, Hezekiah
- Godfrey, Ard
- Hale, William D.
- Hogan, Walter John
- Holbrook, Franklin G.
- Keith, George H.
- Laraway, Orlo M.
- Layer, Morton E.
- Purdy, Edward A.
- Ramberg, Leonard F.
- United States Postal Service
- Wilcox, Carlos

Places:

- Fort Snelling (Minn.)
- Minneapolis (Minn.)

Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1	Postmaster appointment notice for C. Sorgaard - Tordenskjold, Otter Tail County, Minnesota, June 17, 1884
Box 1, Folder 2	Minneapolis Letter Carriers - Blackwell Durham Tobacco Company bag contest, 1884
Box 1, Folder 3	Quarterly Postal Account - Presidential Office - Class: First (free delivery) - Minneapolis, Minnesota - George H. Keith, Postmaster, January 1, 1875 to June 30, 1879
Box 1, Folder 4	Quarterly Postal Account - Presidential Office - Class: First (free delivery) - Minneapolis, Minnesota - John J. Ankeny, Postmaster, July 1, 1887 to July 31, 1890
Box 1, Folder 5	Quarterly Postal Account - Presidential Office - Class: First (free delivery) - Minneapolis, Minnesota - William D. Hale, Postmaster, August 1, 1890 to July 31, 1894
Box 1, Folder 6	Quarterly Postal Account - Presidential Office - Class: First (free delivery) - Minneapolis, Minnesota - Franklin G. Holbrook, Postmaster, August 1, 1894 to December 31, 1895
Box 1, Folder 7	Quarterly Postal Account - Presidential Office - Class: First - Minneapolis, Minnesota - Cyrus Aldrich, Postmaster, April 1 to May 16, 1871
Box 1, Folder 8	Quarterly Postal Account - Presidential Office - Class: First - Minneapolis, Minnesota - George H. Keith, Postmaster (Folder 1 of 2), May 17, 1871 to December 1876; July 1, 1879 to July 9, 1882
Box 1, Folder 9	Quarterly Postal Account - Presidential Office - Class: First - Minneapolis, Minnesota - George H. Keith, Postmaster (Folder 2 of 2), May 17, 1871 to December 1876; July 1, 1879 to July 9, 1882
Box 1, Folder 10	Quarterly Postal Account - Presidential Office - Class: First - Minneapolis, Minnesota - Orlo M. Laraway, Postmaster, July 10, 1882 to August 1, 1886
Box 1, Folder 11	Quarterly Postal Account - Presidential Office - Class: First - Minneapolis, Minnesota - John J. Ankeny, Postmaster, August 1, 1886 to July 1887
Box 2, Folder 1	United States Official Postal Guide, December 1904
Box 2, Folder 2	Minneapolis Post Office Guide: A Complete Local Postal Guide of Interest to the Public, T. E. Hughes, Assistant Postmaster, 1910
Box 2, Folder 3	Post Office Department (POD) - Regulations Governing the Operation of Postal-Savings Depositories (Form PS1), 1911

Box 2, Folder 4	POD - Regulations for the Guidance of Banks (Form PS2), 1911
Box 2, Folder 5	POD - Instructions to Postmasters at Postal Savings Depository Offices (Form PS3), 1912
Box 2, Folder 6	Quarterly Postal Account - First and Second Class Offices - Minneapolis, Minnesota - William D. Hale, Postmaster, January 1, 1912 to December 31, 1914
Box 2, Folder 7	Quarterly Postal Account - First and Second Class Offices - Minneapolis, Minnesota - Edward A. Purdy, Postmaster, January 1 to March 31, 1915
Box 2, Folder 8	Minneapolis Postal Employees Union No. 125 - Membership certificate - Elmer J. Anderson, 1912
Box 2, Folder 9	Holiday greeting card from James A. Farley, Postmaster General, to Postmasters, 1930s
Box 2, Folder 10	Minnesota Territorial Centennial cachets and related materials, 1949
Box 2, Folder 11	Souvenir booklet - "Minneapolis Post Office: Historical Sketch, 1854-1956", 1956
Box 2, Folder 12	Information postcard - United States Post Office, Minneapolis, Minnesota - Cleve R. Austin, Postmaster, circa 1958
Box 2, Folder 13	New, cull, face and cancel equipment - Main Post Office, Minneapolis, Minnesota, circa 1960s
Box 2, Folder 14	History of the Bloomington, Minnesota Post Office, April 1969
Box 2, Folder 15	Christmas mailing season scrapbook (Folder 1 of 2), 1971
Box 2, Folder 16	Christmas mailing season scrapbook (Folder 2 of 2), 1971
Box 3, Folder 1	Postal Week for Our People and Families - Correspondence, 1973
Box 3, Folder 2	Postal Week for Our People and Families - Scrapbook, 1973
Box 3, Folder 3	Postal Week for Our People and Families - Photographs and negatives, 1973
Box 3, Folder 4	National Association of Postmasters of the United States - 72nd Annual Convention, Minneapolis, Minnesota - Program, August 29 to September 2, 1976
Box 3, Folder 5	Group portrait photograph - 4th Annual Convention of the Missouri Association of the National Association of Post Office Mechanics (NAPOM), Jefferson City, Missouri, July 11-12, 1941

Box 3, Folder 6	Portrait photograph of James Cornelius Crowley - Oldest employee in length of service (53 years, 4 months) in the history of the Minneapolis Post Office, circa 1941
Box 3, Folder 7	Photographs, slides, and negatives - Minnesota post office buildings and cityscapes, 1870, 1890-1968
Box 3, Folder 8	Photographs - Postal employees and postal operations (Folder 1 of 2), 1883-1969
Box 3, Folder 9	Photographs - Postal employees and postal operations (Folder 2 of 2), 1883-1969
Box 3, Folder 10	Minneapolis, Minnesota - Post office related clippings, 1908-1969
Box 3, Folder 11	General materials, 1905-1915
Box 3, Folder 12	Ephemera (Folder 1 of 2), 1879, 1957, and undated
Box 3, Folder 13	Ephemera (Folder 2 of 2), 1879, 1957, and undated
Box 4, Folder 1	Photographs - Postal employees and postal operations (Folder 1 of 2), 1924, 1938-1939, 1960s
Box 4, Folder 2	Photographs - Postal employees and postal operations (Folder 2 of 2), 1924, 1938-1939, 1960s
Box 4, Folder 3	Group portrait photograph - 2nd Annual Convention - Missouri State Association, National Association of Post Office Mechanics - Columbia, Missouri, by Smith's Studio, July 7-8, 1937
Box 4, Folder 4	War savings posters used to stimulate sales of war stamps - Jess Stevens, circa 1957
Box 4, Folder 5	Photograph - Interior of First Minneapolis Post Office - St. Anthony, Minneapolis Post Office Historical Society, undated
Box 5, Item 1	Ledger book - Postal appointments, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1884-1916
Map-folder 1, Item 1	Photograph collage - Early Scenes in Minneapolis, 1849-1875: A Pictorial History of Pioneers Days, by Edward A. Bromley, 1903
Map-folder 1, Item 2	Mounted photographs - Minneapolis Post Office, circa 1904
Map-folder 1, Item 3	Group portrait photograph - Banquet, West Hotel, Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 10, 1912
Map-folder 1, Item 4	Group portrait photograph - Minneapolis, Minnesota Post Office, Washington Avenue and 3rd Avenue, by O. J. Hibbard and Company, Commercial Photographers, 1915

Map-folder 1, Item 5	Mounted photographs - Post Office, Washington Avenue and 3rd Avenue, January 1915 to March 1935 - Mailing Division, 1920; Cancelling Machine Section, 1920; and Parcel Post Section, 1920, 1920
Map-folder 1, Item 6	Group portrait photograph - Carrier-Clerk Joint Convention, St. Cloud, Minnesota, by George F. Coan, 1926
Map-folder 1, Item 7	Group portrait photograph - Minneapolis, Minnesota Parcel Post Station, February 1925
Map-folder 1, Item 8	Group portrait photograph - Minneapolis, Minnesota Post Office, Washington Avenue and 3rd Avenue, 2nd Street entrance, August 1928
Map-folder 1, Item 9	Group portrait photograph - National Association of Letter Carriers convention, Kansas City, Missouri, September 5-11, 1937
Map-folder 1, Item 10	Group portrait photograph - Minneapolis, Minnesota Post Office, by Hafford Photo, October 26, 1937
Map-folder 1, Item 11	Group portrait photograph - 2nd Annual Convention - National Association of Post Office Mechanics, Portland, Maine, 1938
Map-folder 1, Item 12	Group portrait photograph - 3rd Annual Convention - National Association of Post Office Mechanics, Birmingham, Alabama, by J. F. Knox, August 28-31, 1941
Map-folder 1, Item 13	Group portrait photograph - 3rd Annual Convention - National Association of Post Office Mechanics - Banquet, Thomas Jefferson Hotel, Birmingham, Alabama, by J. F. Knox, August 31, 1939
Map-folder 1, Item 14	Group portrait photograph - 4th Annual Convention - National Association of Post Office Mechanics, Cincinnati, Ohio, August 15-28, 1941
Map-folder 1, Item 15	Group portrait photograph - Minneapolis, Minnesota Post Office, Washington Avenue and 3rd Avenue, undated
Map-folder 1, Item 16	Group photograph - Postal employees sorting mail, undated
Map-folder 1, Item 17	Poster - Weight of United States Mail Sacks, Post Office, Chicago, Illinois, undated
Map-folder 2, Item 1	Group portrait photograph - Convention Committee, Minneapolis Branch, no. 9, 1901
Map-folder 2, Item 2	Group portrait photograph - Convention Committee, Minneapolis Branch, no. 9, with annotations on front, 1901
Map-folder 2, Item 3-4	Portrait photograph collage - Minneapolis, Minnesota Post Office - Officers and clerks, by Larson Photo Co. (two copies), 1904

Map-folder 2, Item 5

Portrait photograph collage - Minneapolis, Minnesota, Post Office - Letter carriers,
by U. G. Herrick, September 22, 1939