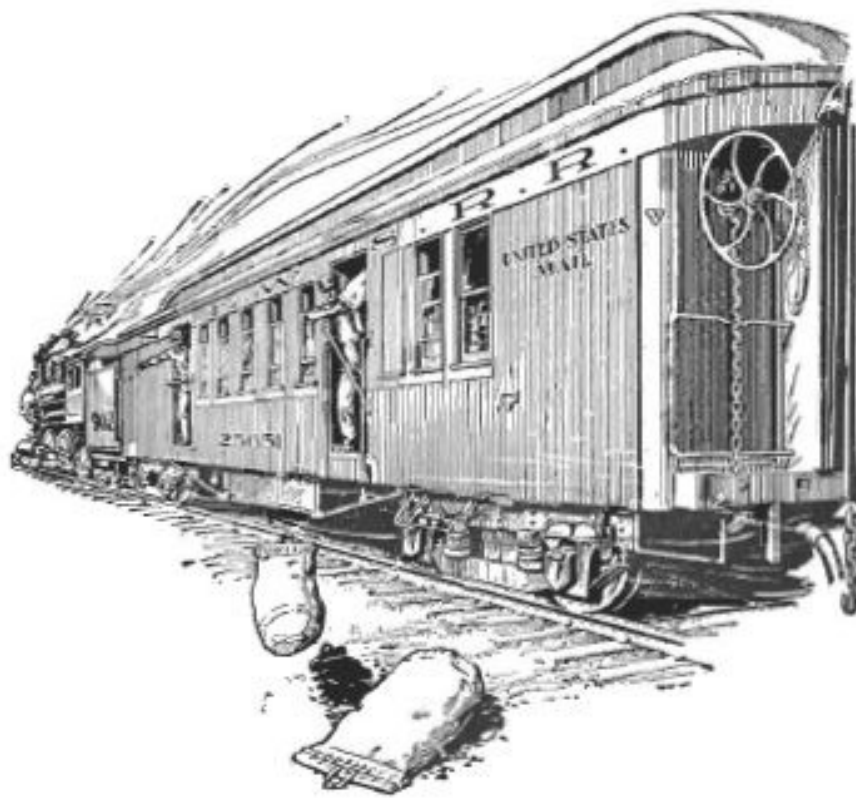


MOBILE POST OFFICE SELECTIONS

VOLUME No. 11



“A COLLECTION OF ARTICLES SELECTED IN THE
FIELD OF TRANSIT POST OFFICES –
MARKINGS, HISTORY, MODES OF CONVEYANCE, ROUTES, ETC.”

Mobile Post Office Society

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Plus RMS Notes, RFD News, and More!

*Opinions expressed by the authors are not necessarily those of the
Mobile Post Office Society.*

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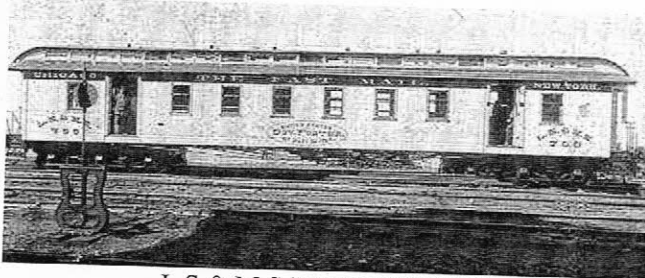
INTRODUCTION



elcome to Volume No. 11 of SELECTIONS, the anthology series of the Mobile Post Office Society. Again offered is an eclectic range of transit mail topics brought together to preserve them in one place. Publication is a major commitment of MPOS, from comprehensive catalogs of waterway, railway and highway post office routes and postal markings, to our award-winning society journal *Transit Postmark Collector*, and in-depth single topic monographs. Still there are writings of interest to our membership which are perhaps too long for *TPC* but too short for a stand-alone publication, or which were first published elsewhere. *SELECTIONS* serves that niche. We trust you will find something of interest among our articles.

IF ANY of our readers still hold romantic notions of life aboard an R.P.O., the next item should snap the spell. It's a tale so tough the title ought to be appended with "and I Survived!" You wonder how many pads of Trip Report forms were required to document the events for management. "A Night in the R. P. O." by Willard D. Eakin appeared originally in *Railroad Man's Magazine*, April 1910. In the spirit of full disclosure, while this tale was offered as a true story, this editor was unable to find the author's name listed as a railway mail clerk in the *Official Register* of federal employees.

Picturing an RPO, most of us see a rather drab railcar painted dark green, one supposes. In the post-WWII era, when they tried to draw passenger traffic, railroads often developed distinctive color schemes for their equipment, including the mail cars so they matched. A few generations earlier passenger trains were painted in hues that were definitely not dark green. Chas. E. Foster describes that phenomenon in "The Famous Color Trains of America." This is followed by mail car painting recommendations for 1923.



L S & M S "GOV. FOSTER"

After RPO service ended, the USPS tried hauling containerized mail by train. The idea was not new, as "Container System Expedites Mail Service on New York Central" from 1921 informs us.

In 2017 the Society's series of Streetcar RPO monographs were reissued in digitized form, making long out of print volumes available again. To make up for the lack of attention given this field of transit mail collecting in SELECTIONS, we offer some basic documents pertaining to the St. Louis streetcar mail service.

If you missed it on C-SPAN, we present Victor J. Bradley's 1916 testimony before the Senate post office committee in behalf of the railroads on the railway mail pay question. He was a Pennsylvania Railroad employee at that time after a long RMS career. In SELECTIONS No. 10 he was mentioned as the RMS representative in developing all-steel mail car specifications.

Taking the broadest view of matters related to transit mail, we offer a piece concerning a new water faucet for mail cars developed by J. N. Chadwick.

We inaugurate a new department this time out, the TPC Classic, which reprints something appearing long ago in our Society's journal. The first such item comes from Rick Kunz, a man who wears many MPOS hats. Originally published in 1974, he documented what was possibly the last U. S. post office supplied solely by train (conditions permitting).

Also examined are the Society's own catalog data for the route Rick explored as well as additional research into railroad and postal records, and a summary of where things stand today is presented.

An important postal innovation towards the end of the nineteenth century was Rural Free Delivery, just in time for the revolution in transportation brought by the development of the motorcar. Reproduced here are many items from the early years of this service where the motto "the mails must go through" was a way of life.

RAILWAY REVIEW

November 11, 1916: Pere Marquette R. R. is inquiring for two postal cars.

January 20, 1917: Pere Marquette R. R. has ordered two postal cars from the American Car & Foundry.

With the U.S. P.O.D. requirement that railroads use only steel mail cars, the car builders were quite active in the mid-teens filling the need. The Pere Marquette to meet requirements of its routes needed just two full postal cars.

Despite the standards, AC&F filled this order with an unusual design, as shown by Thomas W. Dixon, Jr. in his recent article concerning PM car numbers 105 and 106, later C&O car numbers 103 and 104.

[That unusual design was not unique. The Pressed Steel Car Co. built postal cars with a similar interior layout that was the Norfolk & Western class Me postal car, and also supplied the Great Northern. Are there others? Ed.]

Another unusual design was the articulated Highway Post Office bus with attached trailer. Must have been an experience walking from one end to the other when it was in motion.

Historically the Railway Mail Service sought publicity, and proudly participated in civic events. Here we present the Postmaster General's report of its experience during the Buffalo Pan-American Exposition.

And the RMS, its clerks and activities were in the news regularly, in both positive and some quite negative contexts. The many examples presented in this volume range over the full spectrum from many sources.

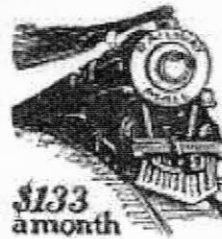
As a finale, "Travels Of A Letter Through The World's Fastest Post Office" tells the story in words and pictures of Chicago's state-of-the-art facility originally published in the September 1914 *Popular Mechanics*.

That's our line-up for Volume 11. We touched a lot of bases this time but there are so many possible topics within the broad scope of transit mail postal history, limited only by the imagination.

To achieve this variety in any individual volume of *SELECTIONS*, the involvement of MPOS members is vitally needed. Please become a contributor to provide the material from which future volumes can be assembled. Of course the funding for this effort is equally vital. Thanks go to our Sustaining and Patron level members for providing the extra amount above regular dues.

Jim Felton, Editor
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NOTICE.

Sept. 6, 1912.

A storage car loaded with periodical mail, the most of which originated at Augusta, Maine, and was addressed to post offices in the State of Illinois, leaving Boston, Massachusetts, at 7.30 p. m., September 1, 1912, in Boston & Albany R. P. O. Train No. 35, caught fire near South Framingham, Massachusetts, and the contents of the car were almost entirely destroyed.

