



The USPS Postal Service:

- The National Postal Museum opened July 30, 1933. It was created November 6, 1990 under a joint agreement between the USPS and the Smithsonian Institution. It is across from Union Station in Washington, D.C., in the former Main Post Office building.
- The items in the Postal Museum’s collections illustrate the history and development of the U.S. postal system from colonial times to the present.
- Philately, or stamp collecting, is one of the world’s most popular hobbies. The William H. Gross Stamp Gallery opened in 2013, the world’s largest gallery for philately. Many enthusiasts collect regular stamps, others collect special-use issue stamps.
- When the Smithsonian obtained its philatelic and postal operations collections, it also acquired original images and photo-reproductions of the history of the Postal Service in the U.S. and other countries. The collection includes pictures of post offices, postal workers, postal delivery systems (airmail, railway ship, etc.), postal vehicles (bicycles, carts, wagons, trucks, etc.), postal equipment, and historic events affecting the Postal Service (e.g. the Civil War, the Gold Rush, postal strikes, etc.).
- The Museum’s “Systems at Work” exhibit features a “behind the scenes” view of how USPS processes and delivers mail. A video puts viewers in a mail-processing center, encircled by high-velocity automated sorting machinery. Museum visitors can try the many mail-processing methods used by the USPS. They can toss packages into mail pouches, work a multi-position letter sorting machine, and operate hand-held scanning devices! (Visit www.postalmuseum.si.edu to learn more.)
- *Mail Call* (pictured below) looks at the military postal system and why the mail is an important resource.

