

Synopsis of Exhibit

IndyPEX 2025,
Hendricks Co
Fairgrounds
Danville, IN
September 19-21.



\$5 Bret Harte, 39th in
Great American series,
August 25, 1987.
issued a year after his
birth sesquicentennial.

Exhibit Plan

Introducing the Stamp

- Production
- Unveiling
- FDOI Ceremony
- UO City Cancels

Cachet Subjects

- Where Lived
- Gold Rush
- Local Color
- Portrait Photos
- Off the Mark

Usage and Epilogue

- Bulk Mailing
- Postage Due
- Registered Mail
- Other \$5 Cachets

The 1987 Bret Harte \$5 Stamp on FDCs with Cachets

The sources of information available to makers of cachets in 1987 influenced their design ideas for the Bret Harte stamp.

Introduction

In August 25 of 1987, the 39th definitive stamp in the Great American Series was issued, this time honoring author and poet Bret Harte. Despite the high cost of the stamp (\$5) many collectors and First Day Cover producers eagerly attended the Twain-Harte California unveiling in 1986 and returned for the First Day Ceremony the following year.

Theme

As the title implies, **cachets** are the main focus of this exhibit. Cachets are organized in **subject categories** that relate to 1) the Gold Rush setting, 2) his local color stories, 3) his portraits, and 4) what I call “off the mark” cachets that are misleading.

Scope

The time span covered begins with cachets and ephemera created in 1986, the year before the stamp became available. The exhibit includes stamp issuing data and the design unveiling.

The main body of covers have the First Day of Issue date August 25, 1987. Most FDCs shown are philatelic creations with excessive postage (\$5 v. \$0.22 for First Class) and were not intended to travel through the mail stream.

Stamp Purpose

items mailed on or after the issue date demonstrate the intended purpose of the five-dollar stamp. Examples include two registered mail pieces, a postage due, and a bulk mail payment.

One registered mail cover has a hand-painted cachet by Ralph Dyer, with his autograph. On the same page is a trial design he sketched (one of many) before making the cachet. The cover was serviced by Select Cover Cachets of Crystal Lake, Illinois.

The second registered mail piece was sent in 1993 by a stamp dealer to the prominent collector William O. Schuman.

Hand-Painted Map

Robert T. Iwamasa (RTI) traveled the winding roads of the Gold Country and other highways to obtain seven unofficial town cancels on a full sheetlet of stamps affixed to a large envelope. His hand-painted cachet, a map of the route taken, is one-of-a-kind.

Hand Painted Cachets

Twenty-eight FDCs have hand painted cachets. Some were created directly on the envelope. Other original designs were printed first and then hand painted.



Portrait Photographs

Small images of Harte photos are placed near portrait cachets to show cachet source of design. The date taken and the photographer's name are mentioned when known.



The 1987 Bret Harte \$5 Stamp on FDCs with Cachets

Theme

As the title implies, **cachets** are the "meat" of this exhibit, sandwiched between the (introductory) top and the bottom (usage and epilogue) slices of "bread." The exhibitor believes this 5-dollar stamp was more popular with cachet makers than others that followed and will show the themes and sources of their design ideas.

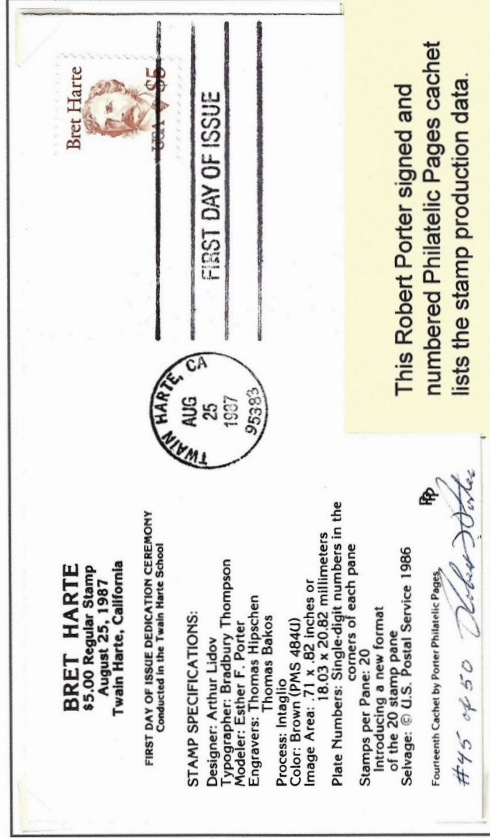
Scope

The time span covered begins with cachets and ephemera created in 1986, the year before the stamp became available. It continues through the First Day of Issue date in 1987 when FDCs were produced and concludes with 1993 examples of proper postal usage.

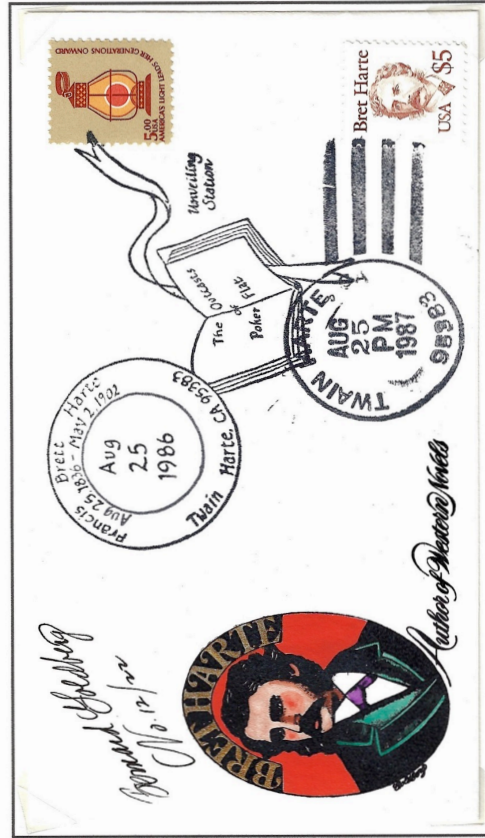
Introducing the Stamp
The \$5 Bret Harte stamp, is the 39th in the Great American series, issued August 25, 1987—one year after his birth sesquicentennial.

Stamp Production

The USPS tried something new with this issue: **20-stamp sheetlets**. They decided to avoid the large amount of waste common on regular panes of 100 stamps created when collectors wanted plate block corners but not the middle mass of stamps. This was one of the last definitive stamps printed using the intaglio process and backed with moisture-activated adhesive.



This Robert Porter signed and numbered Philatelic Pages cachet lists the stamp production data.



Bernard Goldberg, famous for his calligraphy skills as well as his vivid hand-painted colors, paid attention to the face value of the new stamp. At the **unveiling in 1986**, he affixed the current five-dollar Lantern stamp and left room on the cover for the five-dollar Bret Harte issued the following year.

Exhibit Plan

- **Introducing the Stamp**
 - Stamp Production
 - Stamp Unveiling
 - FDOI Ceremony
 - Unofficial City Cancels
- **Cachet Subjects & Sources**
 - Where Harte Lived
 - California Gold Rush
 - Local Color Stories
 - Portrait Photos
 - Off the Mark
- **Usage and Epilogue**
 - Bulk mailing transaction
 - Postage Due payment
 - Registered Philatelic Mail
 - Other \$5-stamp Cachets

Two plate numbers (1 and 2) are known on all four corners of the sheetlets. Plate number 1, to right.



This plate number 2 example, to left, has wider selvage than the plate number 1 above.

