



POSTMASTER-GENERAL HITCHCOCK

UNCLE SAM TO PRINT HIS OWN POSTAL CARDS

By WALDEN FAWCETT



went to find particles clinging to and clogging the pen while writing with ink on the present style card. While the new grade of postal card will be of finer quality than the old, it will also be lighter in weight and this latter consideration will mean hundreds and mayhap thousands of dollars saved to the government every year, for Uncle Sam has to pay for the transportation of all postoffice supplies by weight and the new postal cards will have reduced "traveling expenses" on all the journeys they make, from the time they leave the printing office until they reach the "ultimate consumer."

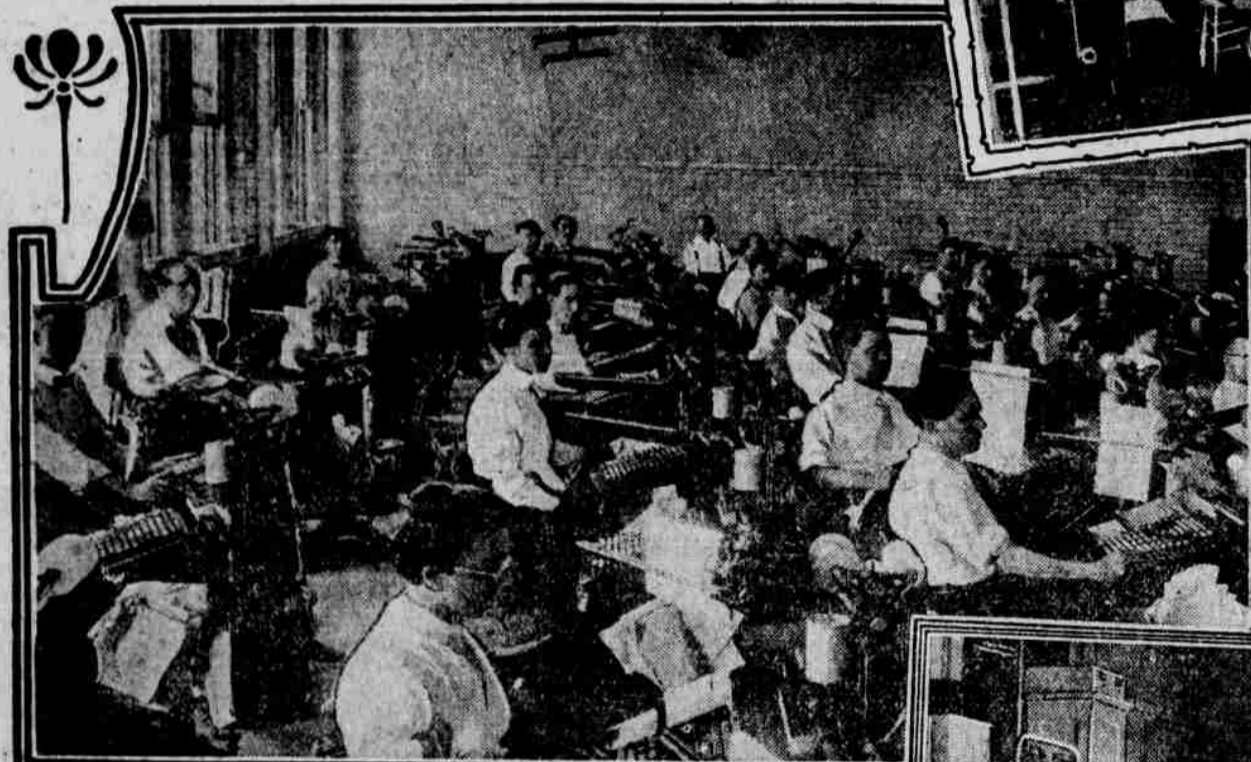
It is also the ambition of Postmaster General Hitchcock to make our postal cards more artistic—to put them, in fact, on a plane with the very handsome postal cards issued by some foreign countries, and to that end he plans to change the tint of the card and to change the color of the ink in which it is printed. Just what tints and colors will be selected for the new color scheme cannot be determined until experiments have been made.

POSTMASTER GENERAL HITCHCOCK recently signed a contract for the supply of postal cards that will be used by the American people during the next four years. The mere magnitude of the manufacturing project involved is calculated to make this of general interest, for, be it known, the head of the postoffice department has ordered approximately three and one-half billion postal cards for use during the four years beginning January 1, 1910. This means that the American people who adopt the very convenient scheme of allowing Uncle Sam to furnish the stationery for their correspondence will purchase and send through the mails nearly a billion cards every twelvemonth. In other words, on an average, every man, woman and child in the United States will use 10 or 11 postal cards every year. In actual practice there are, of course, hundreds of thousands of persons, including young children, who never buy a postal card from one end of the year to the other, but, on the other hand, the above-mentioned average is attained through the firms and business houses which, in many instances, use hundreds or thousands of postal cards a day.

It will be understood that the trainloads of postal cards for which Postmaster General Hitchcock has just given the order are the regulation official cards



THE GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE



A CORNER OF THE BIG COMPOSING ROOM

which are sold in postoffices all over the land. This takes no account of the souvenir or picture postcards which are sold in the United States by the millions every year. Of course, there is nothing official about these illustrated postcards. They do not bear on their face, as do federal postcards, a stamp entitling them to transmission through the mails, and such souvenir card is carried in the mails only when a one-cent stamp is affixed to it. Consequently it is the enormous swelling of the sales of one-cent stamps and not the expansion of the governmental postcard trade that indicates the enormous and widespread popularity of the souvenir postcard in recent years.

The postmaster general is going to pay upward of a million dollars for the postal cards which will be issued to the patrons of our postal system between now and New Year day, 1915. However, this new contract is characterized by several features of great interest aside from the large amount of money represented. Foremost among these is the fact that Uncle Sam is, in effect, contracting to supply himself with postal cards of his own manufacture. Heretofore all the postal cards required in this country have been turned out by private manufacturers and, indeed, for years past, the manufacture of postal cards has been the principal industry of the little city of Rumford Falls, Me. Henceforth, however, the government will print its postal cards at the great government printing office in Washington, the largest printing plant in the world.

The postoffice department will continue to pay for the postal cards, just as it did when they were obtained from private manufacturers, but the process will amount to Uncle Sam taking money out of one pocket and putting it into another. At the same time the government will save money by the new plan of obtaining its post card supplies. It has been realized for some time past by the postoffice officials that it would be a great convenience if the government could print its own postal cards at Washington (the point from which they are distributed to all parts of the country) instead of having them manufactured in Maine, with the consequent loss of time in sending them to Washington for distribution. The government had proven by years of practice that it could produce its postage stamps and its paper money more cheaply than if the work were given to outsiders, and accordingly Postmaster General Hitchcock, who is a live business man, determined to see if a similar saving, combined with more efficient service, could not be effected in the case of the postcards. The government printing office submitted competitive bids on the same basis as its outside rivals and it underbid them all.

A second important feature in connection with the new contract for postal cards is found in the fact that this new deal contemplates cards of better quality than have heretofore been in use. Especially will there be a marked improvement in the surface of the card and this will enable it to take ink more readily. In future, probably, there will be few complaints from people who are

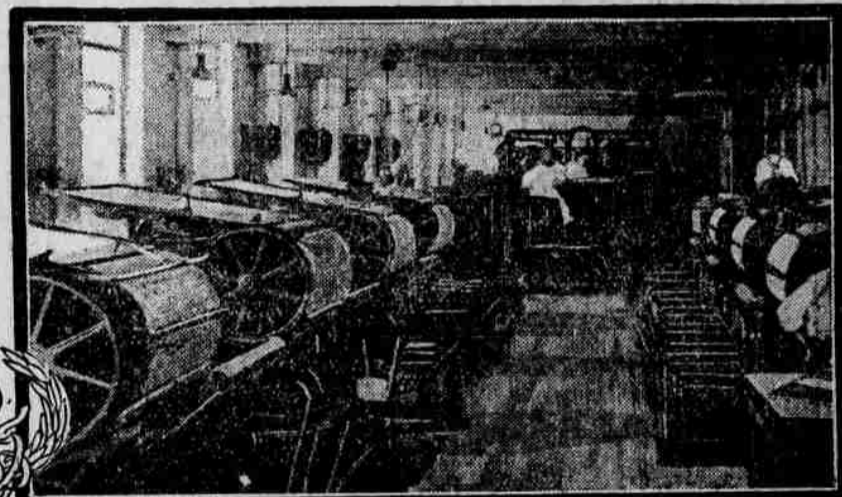


A VIEW OF THE BINDERY

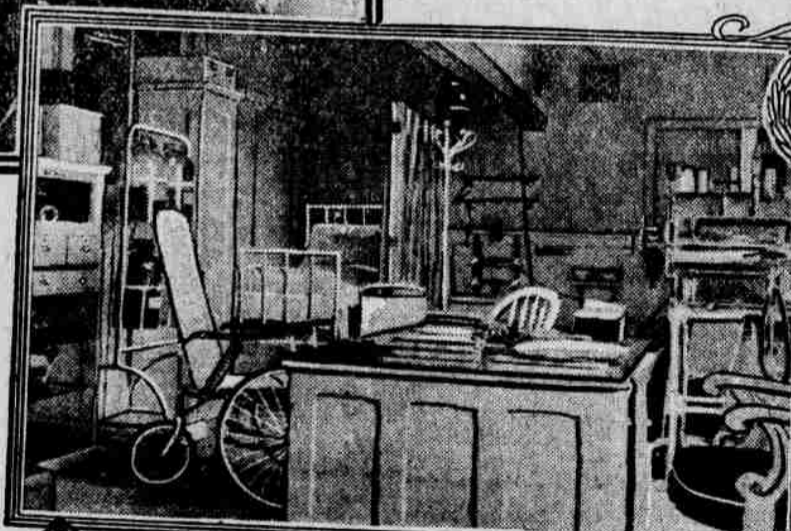
the possible dishonesty of employees in the manufacture, packing and distribution of postal cards. For one thing, the presses used for printing the cards will be controlled by an intricate system of locks, which will render it impossible to release or operate a press until several different officials are in attendance, each with a key that plays a part in unlocking the press. The dies or plates used in printing the cards and which are furnished by the postoffice department, are likewise carefully guarded. When such a plate is given to a printer for use in making impressions he must give a receipt for it to the official in charge of the vault where these precious plates are stored and the printer cannot leave the building at

is no doubt but that the institution can keep the country supplied with postal cards no matter to what proportions the correspondence of the American people may grow. Just as Uncle Sam guards very carefully the manufacture of postage stamps and paper money, so will he take every precaution against "discloses the fact that mass meetings of printers for the purpose of considering trade questions were held in New York as early as 1776 and in Philadelphia in 1786. Continuous organizations were formed in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Boston before the close of the eighteenth century or shortly thereafter and the Typographical Society of New York was in existence from 1795 to 1797. In 1799 the Franklin Typographical society was organized in the same city. In 1809 the New York Typographical society was organized and is still in existence. The Philadelphia Typographical society was organized in 1802 and is also still active.

However, Dr. Barnett asserts that there is some evidence that there had been a printers' society in the Quaker city previous to this, known as the 'Asylum Company.' The date of the first Baltimore organization is equally uncertain, but probably as early as 1803. There was also a society in existence in Boston in that year. The author says that no societies appear to have been formed outside of the four cities named before 1810, in which year the Philadelphia society received a communication from the New Orleans Typographical society, in-



A VIEW OF THE MAIN PRESS ROOM



THE PRIVATE HOSPITAL IN THE GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

be introduced a new style postal card, designed especially for the convenience of business men. This new card will be exactly the size of the standard "card index" card, or somewhat smaller than the regulation postal card and its advantage is found in the fact that it can be filed without trimming or trouble in any card index file or cabinet. This will make the new style card the handiest imaginable vehicle for announcement of price quotations, bulletins of all kinds, reports—as for instance the daily reports of traveling salesmen, etc.

Under the new system of postal card manufacture the work will not be so concentrated as at present. Under the plan now in vogue all the operations of manufacture, from the process of cutting down the forest trees and reducing them to paper to boxing up the completed postal cards for shipment, is carried on in the little Maine city, where about 900 men are employed, in one way or another, in postcard manufacture. Under the new scheme the government will buy the raw material, notably the paper or cardboard and the ink, but all the operations of postcard manufacture will be carried on in the great printing office under the shadow of the United States capitol, where 5,000 men and women are regularly employed. A contract that calls for the delivery of between two million and three million complete postal cards every working day in the year would swamp the biggest private printing plant in the country, but this new responsibility has been treated as merely an incidental at the model printery of the world. The force will have to be increased somewhat and perhaps some new printing presses will be installed—although the officials say the work can be handled with the equipment now in place.

The government has drawn with great care the specifications for the paper to be used for the new postal cards with a view to obtaining a grade of material with longer fiber than that heretofore in use and presenting a better surface for writing in ink. The paper will be delivered to the government printing office in 600-pound rolls, each containing the material for 90,000 cards, and the printing will be done on presses each of which will reel off 3,000 sheets of postal cards per hour, each sheet being made up of 100 separate cards. It can thus be figured that each press can print upward of one-third of a million postal cards per hour, and since several such presses can be employed if necessary and the government printing office is in operation night and day, there

the conclusion of the day's work until he has returned to this depository the printing plates which have been in his custody. Finally the postal cards will be counted repeatedly during the process of manufacture—perhaps a score of times in all—and thus tab will be kept on the cards until they depart in sealed packages for the various postoffices throughout the country, where they will be issued to the public.

As delivered by the machines the postal cards are mechanically counted and automatically assembled in packs of 25—each pack being secured by a band of white paper. These packs are placed in pasteboard boxes, each of which will accommodate 20 packs or 500 cards. The pasteboard boxes, in turn, are packed in wooden cases, varying in size and ranging in capacity from 5,000 to 100,000 cards. It is in this form that they are shipped upon requisition to the postmasters throughout the land. In order that all orders for postal cards may be filled promptly the government printing office, once the new activity is under way, will constantly keep on hand in its fireproof, burglar-proof vaults a surplus stock of about 30,000,000 postal cards. The precautions that will surround the manufacture and dispatch of postal cards at the government printery will extend to the destruction of the misprinted or otherwise spoiled cards. Officials of the postoffice department will be on duty at the printery at all times to supervise the manufacture of the cards and more especially to inspect the raw material used and to see to it that it at all times and in all respects meets the requirements of the government.

Trade Organization of Printers

Some interesting information in regard to trade organization among printers appears in the Typographical Journal, the official publication of the International Typographical union. It is in the form of a review of a book by George E. Barnett, associate professor of political economy in the Johns Hopkins university. The book, which is just from the press, is entitled, "The Printers: a Study in American Trade Unionism." Mr. Barnett was in Indianapolis for a considerable length of time, several years ago, gathering information at the headquarters of the International Typographical union to be used in his book. "A perusal of Dr. Barnett's book," says the review,

closing a copy of their constitution.' In 1815 societies were organized at Washington and Albany. As far as the information of Dr. Barnett extends, these societies were formed primarily to 'raise and establish prices.'

The article then refers to directly following that date and continues by saying that about 1848 the organization of new unions began to go on more rapidly, and since 1850 have been in existence in practically all the larger American cities.

"The first suggestion that the local associations should form an organization was made in 1834, and two years later delegates from associations at Baltimore, New York, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Washington and New Orleans assembled in Washington and framed a constitution for the National Typographical society. The first session was held in New York in 1837, when the name was changed to the National Typographical association.

"In 1850 a call was issued for a convention which was to be held in New York, at which time delegates assembled from Albany, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Trenton and Louisville. The second convention was held in Baltimore in 1851, and the third in Cincinnati in 1852, which resolved itself into the first session of the National Typographical union."

"Old Pete" Is Dead

Peter Morton, or "Old Pete," a colored man and a quaint character of antebellum days, died at his home in Geneva court recently, the Cincinnati Enquirer says. He did not know his exact age, which was about 80 years, and there is probably no one living who does.

"Old Pete," since the close of the civil war, has at different times been a family servant and man of all work in many prominent families on the hills, and in Avondale and varied his employment occasionally by doing porter work in downtown stores. It is related of him, and the story was confirmed by himself, that before the civil war he was the property of a Kentucky gambler, who went broke, and "Pete," with all other chattels possessed by the gambler, had to be sold to satisfy his creditors.

The officers of a bank in Maysville, Ky., who had taken a liking to the colored man on account of his general good nature and strict honesty, offered to buy his freedom for him if he would execute his personal note in their favor and make his payments upon it, according as he was able, until they were repaid. This he agreed to do, but with the close of the civil war and the scattering of his friends far and wide, Pete fell into hard lines from the lack of a permanent home and steady employment, but he never forgot his financial obligations to his banker benefactors and he continued making his payments to them for 20 years after the close of the war, until the debt was finally paid.