

# *Yesterday in U.S. Stamp News:* **Rutherford B. Hayes and The Electoral Commission**

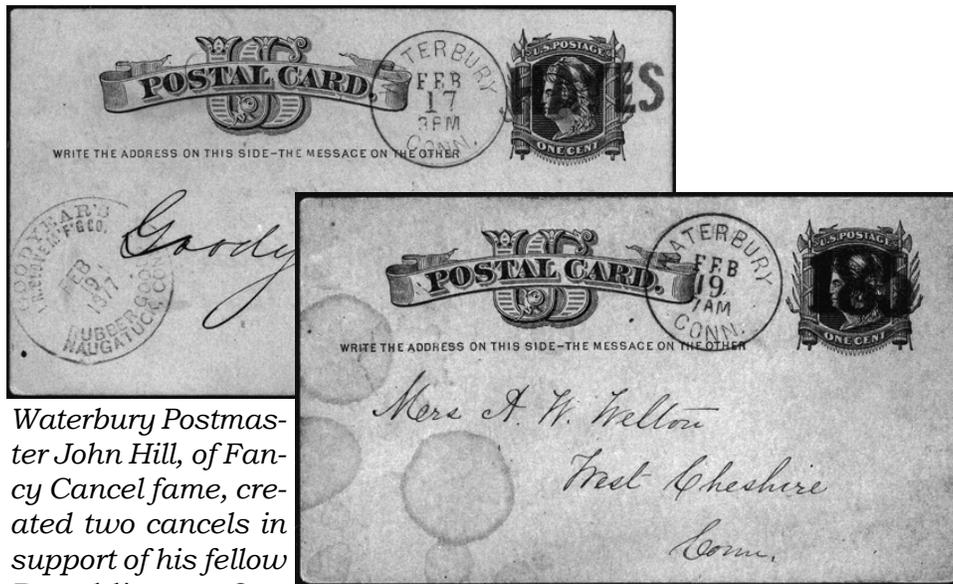
by Patricia Davis

(From *U.S. Stamp News*, January-February 2001)

It was thought that the experience with George W. Bush and Al Gore, after the general election in November 2000, was unusual. Gore had received the popular vote, but did not ascend to the presidency.

For 36 days, some say 37, the presidential election was in doubt until the U.S. Supreme Court closed off Democrat Party efforts to prevail. George Bush would eventually be inaugurated on January 20, 2001.

However, as postal historians reminded us during the Bush-Gore post-election contest, a search of records of past elections revealed a situation of even greater turmoil. That notable election occurred in 1876, when Rutherford



Waterbury Postmaster John Hill, of Fancy Cancel fame, created two cancels in support of his fellow Republican. One

read HAYES and is seen on the top postal card as part of the Feb 17, 1877 cancel, while the other read 185 (the number of electoral votes Hill advocated as belonging to Hayes) and is seen above used on Feb. 19. After Hayes took office, he reappointed Hill as the Waterbury Postmaster.

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B. Hayes and Samuel J. Tilden ran for the U.S. Presidency. Republican Hayes of Ohio received 47.9% of the popular vote. Democrat Tilden of N.Y. had 51%.

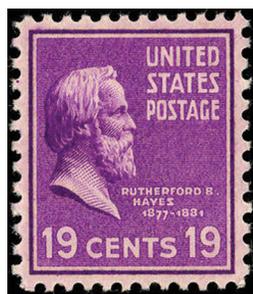
The problems that arose were similar to the Bush-Gore election. However, more states than Florida were involved. Democrats in the 1876 election claimed that they had carried New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Indiana and the entire South. Republicans insisted that they had the votes of Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina. The state of Oregon had a contested vote. There were disputed ballots in 1876, also.

Four months of wrangling ensued. Violence was threatened and the whole country was in an uproar. Ultimately, at 4:10 a.m. on March 2nd the electoral commission (college), with another Republican added when an independent could not be a member, voted to give the disputed votes of Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida to Hayes. He was installed, two days later, on March 4th, 1877.

(Because of the frequently bad weather in March, the 20th amendment to the Constitution, adopted in 1933, decreed that the inauguration date be moved forward to January 20th.)

Tilden and the Democrats, although deeply disappointed, accepted the decision. Historians Todd and Curti in their textbook, *Rise of the American Nation*, say, “The election proved to be a victory for the process of orderly government. Equally important, by their moderation, the American people in general saved the country from violence and bloodshed.”

Hayes suffered some indignities. Some Democrats called him, “His Fraudulency” so he would be reminded that they questioned his right to the presidency.

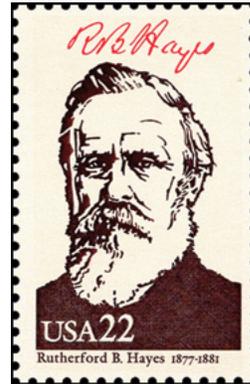


Sc. 824

Hayes' profile is pictured on a 19¢ stamp in the Presidential Series of 1938. While by no means rare, this stamp is one of the scarcer in the series. The Scott 2013 Specialized Catalogue lists an unused stamp for \$1.30 while a used example is 35¢. Most of the lower denominated

used issues in that series list for the base price of 25¢. The higher denominations, of course, are more expensive.

The Ameripex '86 set of four Presidents of the United States Souvenir Sheets was issued by the USPS to honor the International Stamp Show in Chicago, Ill. These sheets of nine use line drawings to show the Presidents up to the Lyndon Johnson presidency. In the 1986 series Hayes is facing toward the front. His beard is a prominent feature.



*Sc. 2218a*

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