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An American Postal Portrait: A Photographic Legacy

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The mail has a powerful connection with the American people. Who hasn't shared the experience of waiting eagerly for a letter to arrive or felt the rush of excitement at hearing footsteps near the door signaling the arrival of a delivery?This first-ever photographic history of the United States Postal Service pays tribute to the everyday people who have worked through rain, sleet, and snow to bring mail to American families. In over 200 rarely seen photographs, beginning with the advent of photography in 1860 and continuing to the present, An American Postal Portrait celebrates the fascinating behind-the-scenes stories, the innovative technological accomplishments, and the unique imprint the Postal Service workforce has made on American life.Starting with the earliest Post Office outposts

on the remote western frontier, the photographs highlight the great events, ideas, and inventions of the past century and a half--from mail delivery by stagecoach and horseback to the rapid utilization of the railroads and airplanes to the sophisticated sorting machines automating the processing of mail today. Captivating and unforgettable, these pages trace our nation's progress from its rural and isolated past to the high-tech, information-driven present, revealing a Postal Service that has helped to bind our growing nation together--one that continues to march in unison with America into the future. Compiled from the collection of the United States Postal Service, the National Archives, the Library of Congress, and other sources, *An American Postal Portrait* is a well-deserved tribute to our nation's foremost communications institution and the enduring American spirit. For more than 200 years, the United States Postal Service has provided the American people with a secure and efficient delivery connection that binds our nation together. Today, postal employees handle approximately 41 percent of the world's volume--more than 650 million pieces every day, 3.9 billion pieces every week--delivering to a total of 130 million households and businesses. The United States Postal Service is the universal gateway to the American household.

About the Author John E. Potter is the Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer of the United States Postal Service. James L. Bruns is Director of the National Postal Museum, Smithsonian Institution, located in Washington, DC.