

## VERMONT PHILATELIC SOCIETY

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### THE 7/1/71 AFFAIR

In my Vermont ski resorts post offices article beginning on *page 14*, the 7/1/71 first day cover for Scott 1396 from Stratton Mountain that sold on eBay on October 17, 2014, triggered the thought that as collectors grow older and drop out of philately that often their accumulated knowledge is not being passed on to new collectors.

The Stratton Mountain cover sold for \$61, which is amazing for a FDC from the 1970s of a stamp that was readily available on the date of issue. This shows there probably are still a number of collectors continuing to search for new additions to their 7/1/71 collections.

To older collectors 1971 probably seems just like yesterday. It is hard to believe it was forty-four years ago. To the new collector the 7/1/71 *Affair* might seem to be some juicy sex or government scandal that has no relevance to stamp collector. It is not so!

In the July 2011 *Stamp Insider*, my FDC column was about the 7/1/71 *Affair*, the name given to the date the US Post Office Department changed from a government department to a quasi-governmental/private corporation (*USPS Turns 40*, page 41).

To commemorate the change the new United States Postal Service issued an eight-cent stamp on July 1, 1971, ergo 7/1/71. It had a special cacheted envelope available at each post office for patron use. As the new stamp was on sale at every US post office on that date, it was easy for collectors to make their own FDCs. Some decided to obtain FDCs from post offices in their area. Usually this involved all the offices and branches in larger cities or their county.

The August 1971 *Vermont Philatelist* reported that one collector visited twenty-six post offices between White River Junction and Brattleboro. The collector noted that at least three post offices served punch and cookies and that the Windsor post office had a stamp exhibit, a receptionist, and a guest book in the lobby.

In 1971, Vermont had 327 post offices and stations. Of those, there are examples known from at least 274 or eighty-four percent. Addison (19 offices), Caledonia (24), Franklin (20), and Lamoille (15) counties post offices have been completely accounted for. Of the remaining eleven counties, the lowest percentage known are Bennington (12 out of 19 or 63%), Windham (20/31, 65%) and Rutland (25/33, 76%). I have uploaded a listing of known examples at [WWW.VERMONTPS.ORG/VP/PROJECTS/VT71TOWNS.HTML](http://WWW.VERMONTPS.ORG/VP/PROJECTS/VT71TOWNS.HTML). ■

