

Precious packages: Frugal US parents 'mailed' their children through the Postal Service after the weight limit on packages was increased in 1913

- Postal officials increased the allowable weight of parcels from 4lbs to 50lbs in 1913
- That's when all kinds of strange goods showed up in the mail, including children
- At least seven children were stamped, mailed and dutifully delivered by the service between 1913 and 1915

By [JORDAN GASS-POORE FOR DAILYMAIL.COM](#)
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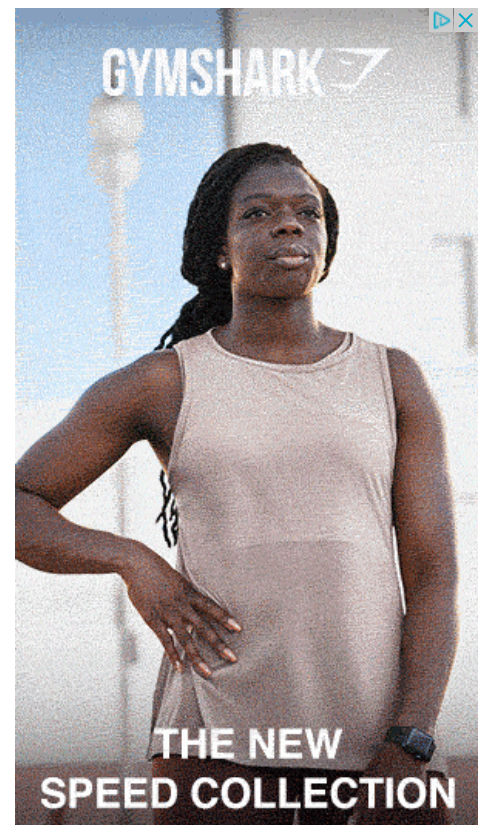


It was 1913 in Glen Este, Ohio. Jesse and Mathilda Beagle wanted to send their 10lb infant son to his grandmother's home about a mile away in Batavia but didn't have the money for a train ticket. So, they took advantage of recent changes to Postal Service regulations and paid 15 cents in postage to 'mail' him off.

This precious package was just one of a number reportedly sent by resourceful parents during the early years of the Parcel Post Service, which began on Jan 1, 1913, and allowed millions of Americans access to goods and services that were previously unavailable. The service allowed for packages that weighed more than 4lbs.

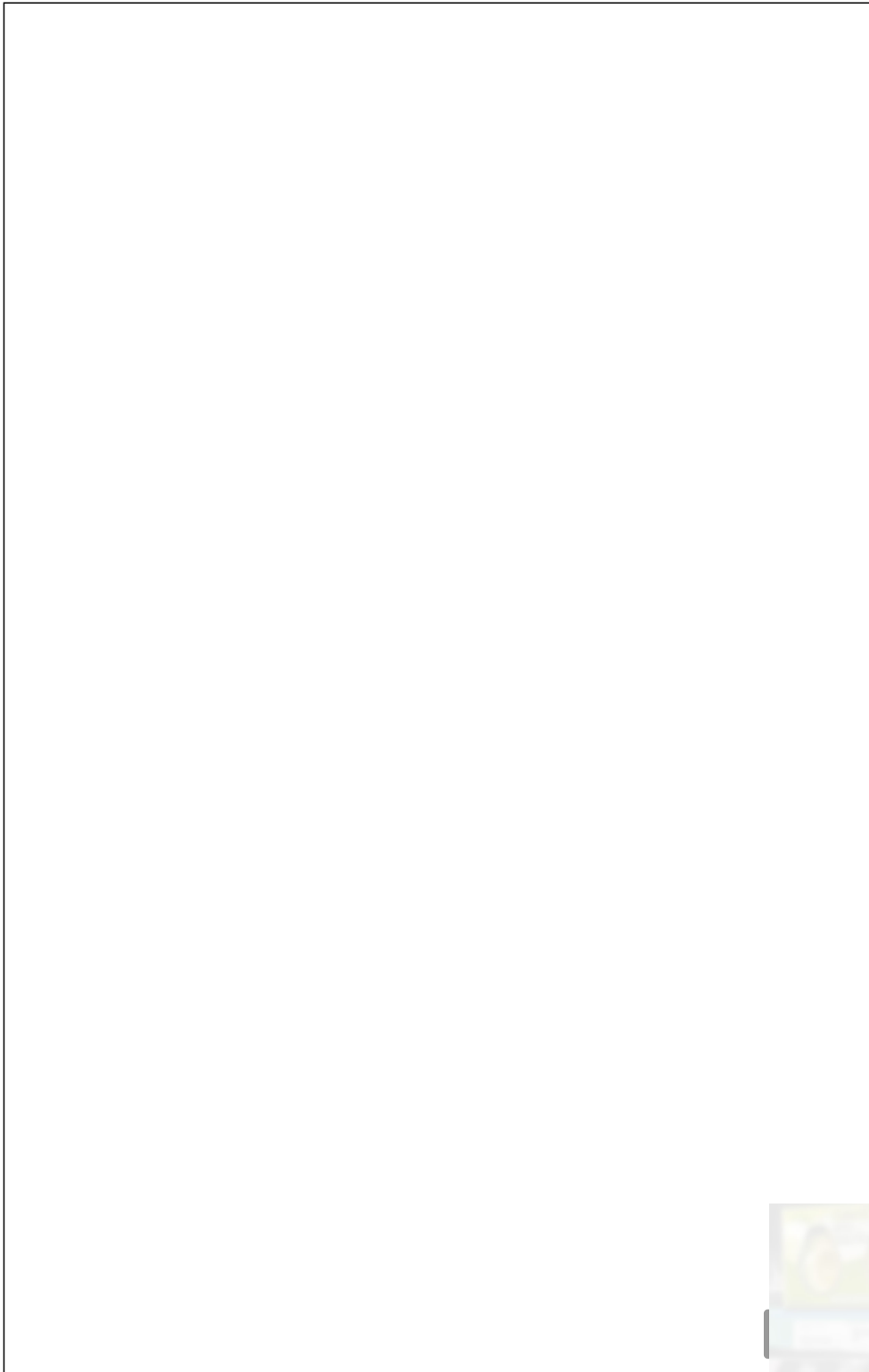
This was one of the most overlooked, yet significant innovations of the 20th century. Finally, package service was provided to people in rural America right from

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mailbox. Prior to the Parcel Post Service, they had to take their goods to the nearest town large enough to have a private delivery company, which added to their shipping costs. These companies didn't have standard delivery prices like the Parcel Post Service and often farmers felt short changed. The service's popularity led to postal officials increasing the maximum weight of parcels to 50lbs.

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This unidentified United States letter carrier posed for a humorous photograph with boy in his mailbag in 1900. Several children were stamped, mailed and dutifully delivered to the US Post Office between 1913 and 1915

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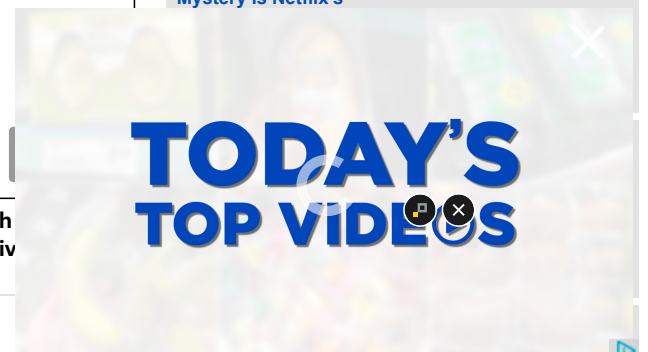
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That's when all kinds of strange goods showed up in the mail, including a bank, coffins and even children. Some parents noticed there were no provisions in the parcel post regulations specifically concerning sending a human through the mail. And when a spouse became sick and there was no one else to care for their young, parents sometimes relied on their local mail carrier to take them to the child's grandparents' house - even if that was just a mile down the road.

'It was cheaper than a train ticket,' said National Postal Museum historian Nancy Pope.

The children weren't shoved into a canvas sack along with the other packages. Instead, they were supervised by rural mail carriers, Pope said.

'There was this level of trust between the parents and the mail carriers, who were often friends, neighbors or family members,' she said.

The Beagles' quirky story made headlines, and for the next several years, similar stories occasionally surfaced as other crafty parents accomplished the same end by 'mailing' their children.

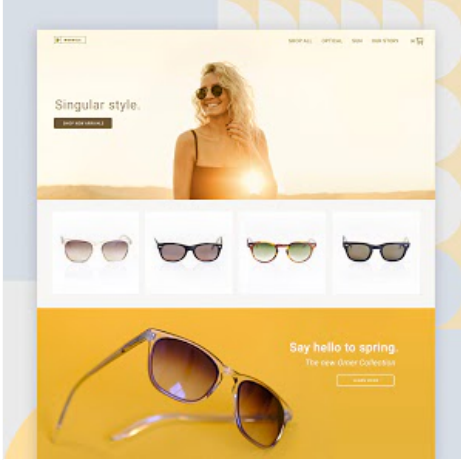
On January 27, 1914, the Savis of Pine Hollow, Pennsylvania, paid 45 cents, or \$11 today, for their 40lb daughter to be delivered by rural carrier James Byerly that afternoon to relatives in Clay Hollow.

The most famous mailed child, five-year-old Charlotte May Pierstorff had dreamed of visiting her grandmother Mary who lived 'a million miles away through the rough old Idaho mountains', but May's family couldn't afford the train ticket that cost \$1.55, or \$37.90 today. So, they came up with the creative solution of 'mailing' her on February 19, 1914, to her grandparents' house in Grangeville, Idaho, about 73 miles away.

Stuck on her coat were 53 cents worth of stamps, the equivalent of \$12.96 today.

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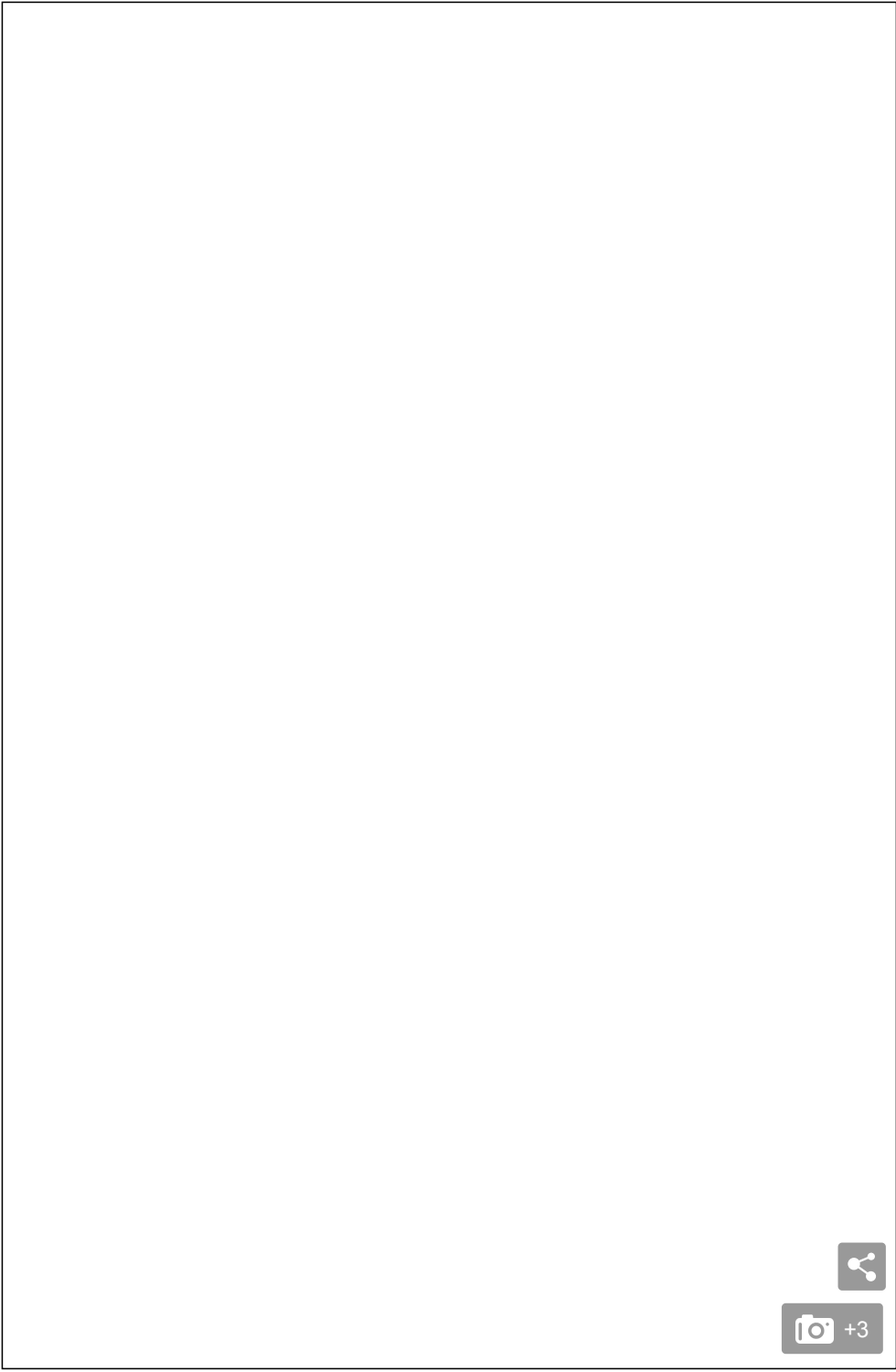
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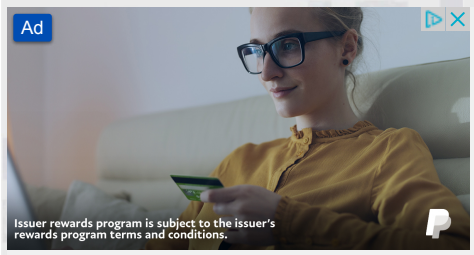


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Charlotte May Pierstorff (pictured), 5, was 'mailed' February 19, 1914, to her grandparents' home in Grangeville, Idaho, about 73 miles away

May was accompanied on her trip by her mother's cousin, Leonard Mochel, who worked as a clerk in Lewiston, Idaho, for the railway mail service. It's likely that his influence and willingness to chaperone the youngster convinced local officials to send her along with the mail. Her adventure has become so legendary it made its way into a 2000 children's book, 'Mailing May'. A photo of May from this time survives, but no physical evidence of her trip.

There are no known artefacts from the children who were 'mailed', most of which were reported in news outlets unnamed and with no accompanying photos.



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Inspired by stories of the children's travel and an inquiry about mailing children that month, Second Assistant Postmaster General Joseph Stewart, who was in charge of the Parcel Post Service, officially decreed on February 13, 1914, that humans could no longer be sent through the mail, Pope said.

'All human beings and animals are barred through the mail, except queen bees,' newspapers around the country quoted Burlison. Queen bees are still allowed to be mailed because of their agricultural importance, she said.

Of course for some, laws were made to be broken. Merely a month after Stewart's announcement rural carrier BH Knepper carried a 14lb baby from its grandmother's home in Clear Spring, Maryland, to the mother's house in Indian Springs, 12 miles away. A local newspaper reported the baby slept through the entire trip.

Unburdened by the new regulations against mailing children, three more trips were made after the baby's the following year. On February 25, 1915, rural carrier Charles Hayes of Tarkin, Missouri, carried the Combs' daughter Helen by parcel post for 10 cents, or \$2.42 today. Hayes delivered the child to her grandmother, CH Combs, whose home was also on his route.

'For some of these babies it was basically taking them down the road,' Pope said.

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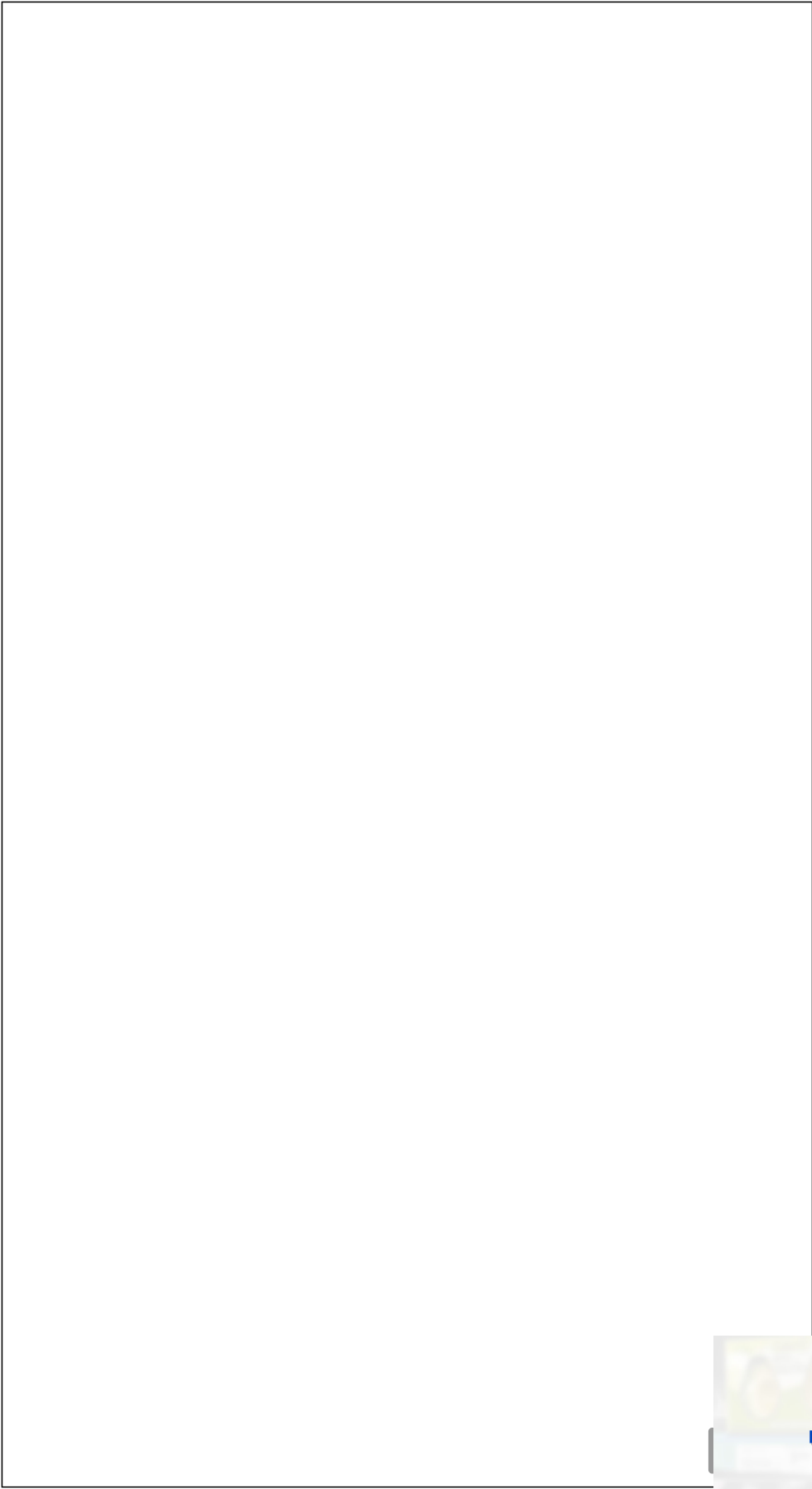
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Hunky twin brothers, 32, from UK TV show My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding died in 'suicide pact' after cancer and depression battles, family reveals






This staged photograph takes the idea a step farther by having the baby be the letter carrier. Postal regulations, being few and far between in 1913, failed to specify exactly what could and could not be mailed via the still very new parcel post service

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Some children were mailed much farther, Pope said. Edna Neff of Pensacola, Florida, was 6 when she was shipped off on March 27, 1915, to her father's home in Christiansburg, Virginia, 720 miles away. There's little information on the specifics of Neff's train trip, other than her weight, recorded as just under 50 pounds and resulting in 15 cents, or \$3.63 today, worth of stamps.

Six months later US Postal Service worker Jim Haddix carried an unusual parcel from the O&K train station to the Jackson, Kentucky, post office. Seated on a pack of mail sacks between the carrier's knees was three-year-old Maude Smith, busily eating candy she carried in a bag. Maude smiled when the curious townsfolk waved and called to her. She wore a pink dress to which was sewn a shipping tag covered on one side with 33 cents, or \$7.99 today, in stamps.

Maude had traveled from her grandparents' home in Caney, Kentucky, to the home of her mother, Celina Smith, of Jackson. This trip was being investigated by postal officials, who were confused as to why the postmaster violated the agency's rules. Perhaps it was because of the investigation, but for whatever reason, this appears to have been the final account of a child being sent through the mail.

But that didn't stop rural mail carriers and newspapers from staging photographs of themselves with local babies in parcel sacks for entertainment. These were never commissioned by the US Postal Service, Pope said.



In 1927, a contract airmail carrier paid homage to 'mail babies' in its video promoting service from Pontiac, Michigan, to Detroit. At this time the US Postal Service had turned over all of its airmail service to private contractors. Four-year-old Russell Nickerson was 'mailed' to Postmaster Charles C Kellogg at the Detroit Post Office. Russell is shown in the video wearing a sailor suit and an oversized mail tag around his neck. He gets into the passenger seat of a small airplane at the then-Pontiac Airport, arriving at Ford Airport 18 minutes later.

More than 100 years later, people remain fascinated with the stories about being mailed, Pope said.

'It is so bizarre and such an opposite to the way we behave today,' she said. 'It's not something we'd do. We can't even imagine doing it, but yet people were doing it, they were being celebrated for it.'

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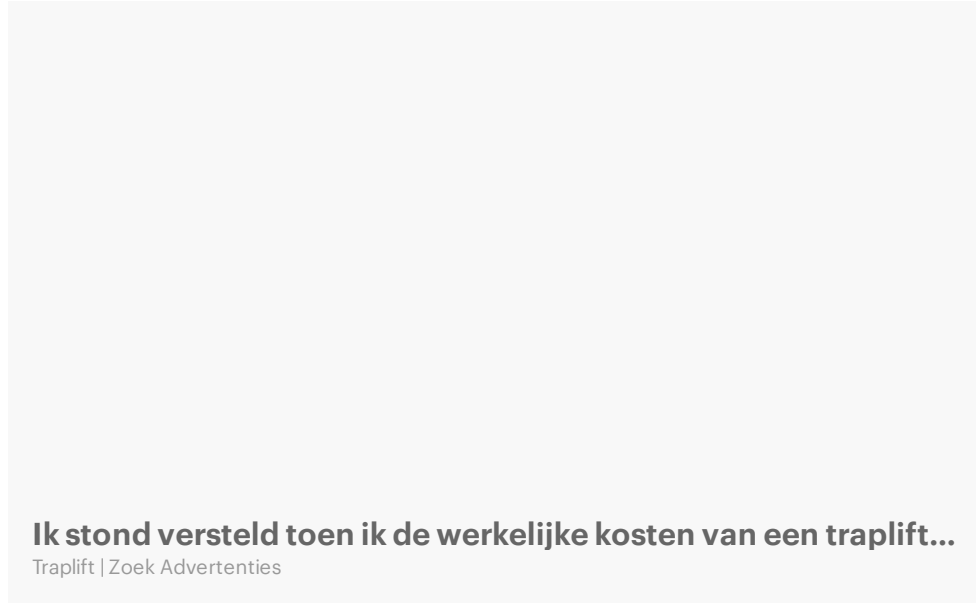
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The 28-year-old supermodel kept her makeup minimal

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Pair hit the town together

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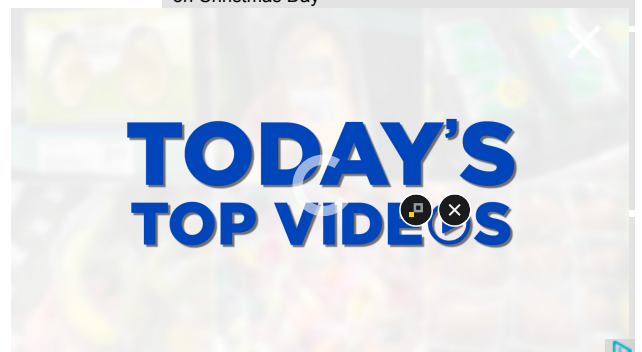
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The Destiny's Child singer

▶ Jessica Simpson hits the slopes with daughter Maxwell and brother-in-law Evan Ross during family trip to Aspen, Colorado
Hitting the slopes

▶ 'I nearly burst into tears': Fatboy Slim became emotional listening to his viral Right Here, Right Now remix that samples Greta Thunberg

▶ Kris Jenner is picture perfect wearing a vibrant green gown for dinner with Corey Gamble in St. Barts

▶ Disney star Devan Leos avoids jail in attempted murder case in LA over car incident with man in 7-Eleven parking lot

▶ Kylie Minogue enjoys a break on Rottneest Island as she glams up for a photo shoot... after starring in a \$15m Tourism Australia campaign

▶ Eyes on the prize: Rafael Nadal jets into Perth for the inaugural ATP Cup... after a brief honeymoon with wife

**TODAY'S
TOP VIDEOS**

▶ furniture shopping with fiancé Alex Rodriguez in Los Angeles

▶ Topless Chloe Green displays her yoga skills with a headstand on a paddleboard... as she shares cryptic caption on getaway without Jeremy Meeks

▶ Teddi Mellencamp enlists the help of her social media followers to choose a name for her unborn baby girl
Options included Shay, Presley and Selena

▶ Tori Spelling looks like BFFs with her husband's ex Mary Jo Eustace in selfie... years after cheating scandal: 'I never thought this pic would happen'

▶ Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker writers weren't trying to 'sideline' Rose Tico... after fans speak out about Kelly Marie Tran's beloved character

▶ Sir Tom Jones, 79, admits he eyes up women in their thirties but confesses 'it's mostly the grandmothers who fancy me'

▶ Mariah Carey braves the snow for a spot of shopping at Louis Vuitton in Aspen with her beau Bryan Tanaka

▶ 'Oh God!' You star Penn Badgley accidentally lets slip that psychotic stalker Joe Goldberg WILL return for a third season of hit Netflix show

▶ Mark Wahlberg's wife



▶ Jenna Dewan flaunts her burgeoning baby bump and gets flirty in animal print to promote her new show
The 39-year-old beauty rocked the bright outfit

▶ Rooney Mara teases potential involvement in film adaptation of The Silent Patient as she carries a copy of the popular book in Los Angeles

▶ Anthony Joshua shows off his sporting prowess as he goes jet skiing off the shores of Barbados during festive break... weeks after huge boxing victory

▶ Vanessa Hudgens is a candid cutie as she enjoys the holidays in Switzerland... after announcing 2020 clothing line and album on Instagram

▶ Tammy Hembrow showcases her sensational figure in a skimpy bikini top and matching pants as she enjoys an idyllic Bali getaway

▶ Victoria Beckham is praised by close pal Eva Longoria as they spend Christmas together... amid claims her fashion empire is battling huge debt

▶ James Packer and girlfriend Kylie Lim trudge through the snow in Aspen as they enjoy a quiet Christmas with friends
Mariah Carey's ex

▶ Suki Waterhouse is in high spirits as she steps out WITHOUT an engagement ring after Robert Pattinson proposal rumors

▶ Disney actor Stoney Westmoreland, 49, who is accused of trying to have sex with a 13-year-old boy, claims the judge in his case has a

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TOP VIDEOS**