

Hope Diamond Delivered by Mail

When New York jeweler Harry Winston donated the famous Hope Diamond – all 45.52 carats of it – to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., he chose a familiar, trusted carrier to transport the jewel: the Post Office Department. “It’s the safest way to mail gems,” Winston told *The Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.). “I’ve sent gems all over the world that way.”

On November 8, 1958, he sent the precious stone via registered, First-Class Mail, from New York City to the Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. The postage cost him \$2.44, plus \$142.85 for \$1 million worth of insurance.

On November 10, Letter Carrier James G. Todd picked up the diamond at the City Post Office and drove to the Natural History building. He entered by a side door, took the elevator to the Gem Room, and delivered the package to Leonard Carmichael, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. Todd admitted to being a little "shaky," according to a story in *The Washington Post* the next day, not because of the diamond’s value or reputed curse but because he was unused to so much attention when he did his job.

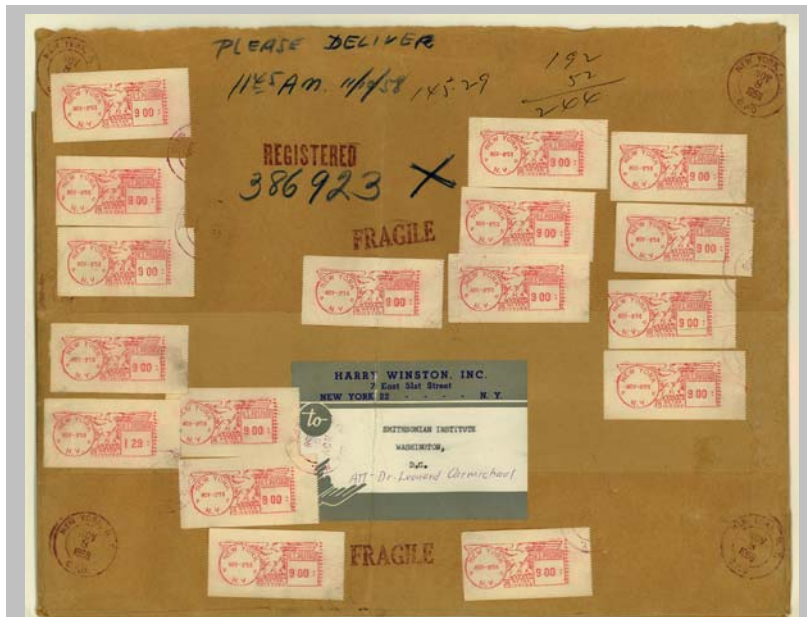


Photo courtesy of the National Postal Museum, Smithsonian Institution

This paper, which covered the package containing the Hope Diamond, is part of the collection of the National Postal Museum in Washington, D.C.