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MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION STAMPS
JOHN D. BOWMAN, LARRY NIX AND GORDON STIMMELL

The stamps of the Mercantile Library Association of New York (hereafter, MLNY) were issued to prepay local delivery of library books ordered by patrons. *The Scott U.S. Specialized Catalogue* states:

Stamps paid for special delivery service of books ordered from the library, and of forms especially provided to subscribers. The forms bore a government stamp on the outside, a library stamp inside. . . . The stamps "on cover" are affixed to cutouts from order blanks showing order number, title of book desired, and subscriber's name and address. When canceled, the stamps and order blanks show a dull blue double-lined oval inscribed "MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION" and date in center. The stamps are really more a form of receipt for a prepaid parcel delivery service than postage stamps.

As noted later in this article, the use of the U.S. mail system became an integral part of the home delivery service of the MLNY for which these stamps served as proof of payment.



Figure 1. MLNY 6¢ on maroon stamp (Scott 105L5)

The first membership library, as opposed to previous private libraries, was the library company of Philadelphia founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1731. However, mercantile libraries were one of several types of membership libraries which preceded and then competed with America's free public libraries. Mercantile libraries were started by young merchants' clerks embarking on their business careers. The Boston Mercantile Library, founded on March 11, 1820, was the first of the mercantile libraries. It was quickly followed by the MLNY on November 9, 1820, and the Mercantile Library Company of Philadelphia on December 1, 1821. Other mercantile libraries sprang up in most of America's major cities including Cincinnati, St.

Louis, Brooklyn and San Francisco. But only the NYML is attributed with officially issuing stamps, and in fact all of the catalogued items are difficult to find today because of their scarcity.

Two of the MLNY stamps are true first-class rarities among U.S. local posts: these are the 6¢ on maroon (105L5)(Figure 1) and the postal card (105LU1)(Figure 2). Of each, only a few are known today. The rest of the stamps are scarce.

The purpose of this article is to review the known historical data about these stamps, to describe a chronology of issuance and to list examples known to the authors.

Philatelic Records

Although the stamps were issued in the 1866-1877 period, the earliest philatelic record of their existence was noted in 1890 by Dr. William H. Mitchell, a dentist from Bayonne, NJ. Dr. Mitchell edited two philatelic journals, the *Bayonne Philatelist* in 1883 followed by the *Independent Philatelist*.¹ In Vol. III, No. 1 of the *Independent Philatelist*,

¹Calvet M. Hahn, "Dr. Mitchell and His Stamp Journals," *The Penny Post*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (April 1996), pp. 12-25.

Rules to be Observed in Using Stamped Orders.

1. Write your name and address distinctly in ink.
2. Give the names of the Authors of all books applied for.
3. Put the names of several books on every order. One of the books named will then be sent.
4. Have the Return Book ready for the carrier when he calls for it.

{ FOLIO. } *Returns,*

Wants one of the following:

.....

.....

.....


.....

Name, *Address,*

Figure 2A. MLNY, 10¢ black on yellow printed on U.S. postal card (Scott 105LU1)

United States
POSTAL CARD.

WRITE THE ADDRESS ONLY ON THIS SIDE - THE MESSAGE ON THE OTHER



To _____ **Mercantile Library,** _____
 _____ **Astor Place,** _____
 _____ **City.** _____

Figure 2B. Address side of MLNY 105LU1

Nov. 1890, Dr. Mitchell wrote about the history of the Mercantile Library of New York City from its 1870 library report, and also reported a listing of the stamps and stationary known to him. Because Hahn reproduced almost Mitchell's entire article, the reader is referred to this citation.

Charles Coster wrote a monumental work summing up existing knowledge of U.S. local posts in 1877 but did not mention the Mercantile Library Association.² If Coster knew of these stamps, it is not surprising that he did not write about them, because of his disregard for any labels not used for what he believed to be truly postal delivery purposes, such as the many express labels that he implored collectors to discard. The next major philatelic historian of U.S. local posts after Coster was Henry C. Needham, a controversial figure in philately whose observations have been much maligned, at times for good reason as his research was plagued with unresearched suppositions. Yet for MLNY, he was accurate in his "Concise History and Memoranda of United States Local Post Stamps," published serially in *The Philatelic Gazette* and *The American Philatelist* from 1915-27.

Needham wrote:³

The Mercantile Library, Astor Place, New York, used stamps from 1869 to about 1875 to pre-pay the charges for delivering books by special messengers. The stamps used were not only adhesives but were also impressed on the reverse centre of U.S. postal cards. The system was instituted in 1869 and largely discontinued October 1st, 1873, although used as late as December, 1875. The following memoranda is taken from the books of the Association:

"In September last (1869) your Board resolved to try the system of delivering books at residences of members. Charge to any part of the City below 60th Street, ten cents. Messengers are employed in addition to horses and wagons. The delivery of books has steadily increased and the Department is now nearly self-supporting. Boxes were attached to lamp posts within the City limits, thus being easy of access to every member. The orders deposited therein were collected with Postal precision, and are delivered to the Library several times each day. The delivery of books thus called for follows promptly as a matter of course. Book deliveries in 1870, 11,880; in 1871, 12,869; in 1872, 12,306."

The Rules, as established by the Association and impressed on U.S. postal cards and letter sheets whereon is impressed the two cent black Jackson of 1863-4 and on blank orders, follow:

1. Write your name and address very distinctly in ink.
2. Never apply for a book the title of which you do not find in the Library Catalogue, or in one of its Supplements.
3. Be careful to give the names of the Authors of all books applied for except Novels.
4. Put the names of several books on every order. One of the books named will then be promptly sent. If your order bears the name of one book only, it may remain in the Library for weeks before the book can be procured.
5. Have the Return Book ready for the Carrier when he calls for it.
6. Address complaints or suggestions to the Librarian. They will, in all cases, receive immediate attention."

Evidently the ten cent rate noted above was later reduced to five cents.

² Charles H. Coster, *The United States Locals and Their History* (New York: Scott & Co., 1877). This book was reprinted in J. Walter Scott's 1879 revised catalog, and again by the United Stamp Company Herald in 1912. Coster later updated his 1877 book, writing serially in the Belgian journal *Le Timbre-Poste* between 1878 and 1884.

³ Henry C. Needham, "U.S. Local Posts – A Concise History and Memoranda," *The American Philatelist*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (January 1920), pp. 117-18.

Needham listed the following items:

- 5¢ Black on maroon red
- 5¢ Black on yellow
- 5¢ Blue on pinkish white
- 10¢ Black on yellow
- 10¢ Yellow impressed on U.S. postal card

Because the Mercantile stamps were thought to serve a type of private local delivery service, Donald Patton wrote about them in his 1967 book.⁴ Patton identified the five types in the Scott catalog as Types A through E, and points out for the first time that there are design differences among all these stamps.

In 1945 Harry Konwiser published a brief article in the *SPA Journal* about the Mercantile adhesive stamps.⁵ He referred to Mitchell's article in regard to Mitchell's attempt to get information from the Philadelphia library personnel about a possible adhesive stamp used by their home delivery service. Konwiser goes on to state:

At any rate there apparently is no written word (in philatelic circles) about any Philadelphia Library adhesive, and it is hoped that someone in Philadelphia, or nearby, will make a proper effort, by studying the record, approaching the Public Library files and by doing this philatelic job produce another entrant to the United States Stamp Catalog.

The U.S. Stamp Catalog groups four stamps (design as illustrated) as existing in the 1869-1875 period. The factual story of these stamps giving the correct dates of issues for the two values were contained in a Manuscript (compiled by your correspondent) but this data Manuscript went astray some years ago.

Your writer recalls he "searched" the library records, as made available, talked with library officials who had definite recollections about "stamps" and there were at least two library officials who had used the stamps to procure delivery service for books. The notes, hereafter made, are from notes in the writer's file and one such note reports a Library Report for 1870, from which is quoted:

"The Cause for the Mercantile Library Stamps are as follows: *** the managers of the library *** to accommodate the persons who for any reason have found it inconvenient to make personal application for books."

Notes at hand indicate the adhesives were sold at five cents each, that boxes throughout the city were cleared out daily. There were quite a number of boxes to hold books to be returned, throughout the city streets. But (according to filed note) in connection with these boxes the 1870 report indicates that while the box plan was commendable it was not entirely satisfactory, as it failed to reach many library members.

In 1870 (per notes) "blank orders in the form of a square envelope imprinted with a two-cent U.S. Envelope, with a five-cent library stamp on the inside were sold at seven cents each or fifteen for a dollar."

The order blanks, when properly filled out were deposited in the U.S. mail boxes, widening the service, aiding in prompt delivery of books wanted, these then being delivered by horse and wagon.

During the 1869 period prior to the adoption of delivery stamps the members borrowed 8,428 books. The total, for an equal period with stamps used, was 11,184.

My notes as gleaned for the "complete story that got itself lost" indicates that the Library delivered 11,880 books in the 1870 year seemingly a large increase over other years. The 1873 note, that is the reference to the 1871 year, indicates the total number of stamp deliveries to have been 12,869, and the year 1873 report of the Library says the operation is paying its way.

⁴ Donald S. Patton, *The Private Local Posts of the United States*, Volume I (London: Robson Lowe Ltd., 1967).

⁵ Harry M. Konwiser, "Mercantile Adhesives," *SPA Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (November 1945), pp. 151-52..

In 1874 and later, books were delivered to their subscribers at their residences, at which time the rate was made ten cents for certain districts, thus bringing forth the 10-cent value in yellow. (The 5-cent values are in maroon or in yellow on white, also blue on pink paper).

The ten-cent fee, the special messenger service, seems to have been maintained for a number of years.

A writer listed as "Ixtlan" wrote in 1956 that the issues from MLNY likely never were used on packages of books being delivered, and were simply a convenient form of record-keeping.⁶ Thus, he places them at most in the category of parcel and express labels rather than catalog-listed local stamps.

Charles Fricke illustrated the 10¢ imprinted library stamp (105LU1) on the first issue U.S. postal card in *Postal Stationery* in 1973.⁷ Fricke states:

The illustration in Figure 4 is of an unused copy of the rare Mercantile Library Association local stamp (Scott 105LU1) printed on the back of a first issue postal card (UPSS S2 – small watermark). This is the only local stamp that is listed in the catalog as being imprinted on and used in conjunction with a government issued postal card. The illustration in Figure 5 shows the address side of this card and indicates its intended use as a paid-reply postal card. Message and Reply cards were not officially issued by the United States until 1892 (UPSS MR1). It has been reported that only two copies of 105LU1 are known, and both are unused. It is presumed that these two were purchased by members of the Library Association, but never used. It is also quite probable that used copies do not exist in that they may have been destroyed by the association after fulfilling the order for books as requested by the member on the postal card.

This item has been listed for some time in the *U.S. Postal Stationery Catalog*, and the 1995 edition states the date of issue as unknown, but suggests 1874. It is described as yellow on buff.

Calvet Hahn⁸ presented a detailed history of Mercantile, largely based on Dr. Mitchell's article in the *Independent Philatelist*. Hahn attempted to associate Mitchell's series with that listed in the *Scott Catalogue*. Hahn's analysis suggests that the 5¢ blue (105L3) was the first item issued in April 1867. Hahn suggests that the postal cards (105LU1) were probably Mitchell's ochre of 1875. He further suggests that the 10¢ black on yellow (105L6) is the issue of 1874. He says there is a fair probability that 105L2 (5¢ black on yellow) is either the 1869 black on white reported by Dr. Mitchell or else the 1871 5¢ item found inside government 2¢ envelopes. Hahn notes that Mitchell does not record either maroon stamp, the 5¢ (105L1) nor the 6¢ (105L5), and wonders if the 6¢ stamp might have been issued by the Philadelphia Mercantile Library, not the MLNY. In the same issue, Gordon Stimmell illustrates two examples of used 6¢ stamps, each with a double circle handstamp with "M L A" in its outer ring in the 9-12-3 o'clock positions with an asterisk in the 6 o'clock position. In the center on one example is a date of ??? 30, 1867.⁹ This handstamp is very different from the oval stamp often seen on THE NEW YORK CITY issues.

⁶Ixtlan, "Stamps of the Mercantile Library Association, New York City," *Weekly Philatelic Gossip*, May 26, 1956, p. 414.

Charles A. Fricke, "Centennial of the First Issue Postal Card – 1873-1973," *Postal Stationery*, Vol. 15 (March-April 1973), pp. 49-50.

⁸Gordon Stimmell, "Marooned in Philly," *The Penny Post*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (April 1996), p. 30.

⁹The Philadelphia Mercantile Library initiated a home delivery service in 1867 and continued at least through 1878. However, the fee charged for home delivery was 5¢ from the beginning, and there is no evidence that adhesive stamps were ever employed as a component of its service.

Historical Notes

Home delivery service was first reported by the MLNY in its 46th Annual Report, covering the May 1865 to April 1866 fiscal year. This report states “The new delivery system, adopted last year [1865-1866], although yet in its infancy, fully demonstrates its practicability and usefulness. There are at present fourteen order boxes arranged in convenient localities, and it is estimated that about 3,000 books have already been delivered by this system.” The report notes receipts of \$437 from delivery stamps, and that it had expenses of \$60 for these stamps. The 49th Annual Report of 1869-1870 is heavily reported in the Mitchell and Hahn articles, and describes their new system of using USPO collection boxes. (Home delivery continued into the 1920s, using a variety of methods including horse and wagon, messenger, mail and express.)

In an effort to streamline the method of circulating books at the library, the entire circulation system was overhauled during the library’s 1865-1866 fiscal year. In place of a ledger system in which a permanent page or “folio” was maintained for each member, a temporary slip system was implemented. The temporary slip contained information about the member, the item checked out, and a unique folio number assigned to the member. The slip was stamped with a handstamp indicating the date a book was checked out and the slip was filed by folio number. When the book was returned, the temporary slip was destroyed.

In 1866, the library initiated a home delivery option for its members. To facilitate this option, the library established boxes at convenient locations in the city to collect the forms on which requests for books were made by members. When the book order was filled, the book was delivered by horse and wagon to the member’s home. Members were required to pay a fee for home delivery, and this is where the delivery stamps come in. Delivery stamps were purchased by the member at the main library, and then affixed to the order form which was deposited in the library’s collection boxes.

There is no indication in the MLNY reports of the fee for home delivery services. We speculate that the 6¢ black on maroon stamp was issued first, followed by the 5¢ black on maroon. Only one year-dated 6¢ stamp is known to the authors, with the 1867 double circle cancel mentioned previously. Although this adhesive could have been issued by another library, the similarity to the 5¢ black on maroon stamp suggests a connection. Because the temporary slips used in the new circulation system were routinely destroyed after the return of the book, we may never resolve the mysteries surrounding these stamps.

Not satisfied with a home delivery system in which the library maintained its own collection boxes, the library implemented a new system for handling delivery requests in 1870 using U.S. Post Office boxes. In an extensive article on the Mercantile Library of New York in February 1871, *Scribner’s Monthly* describes the new system.

Of late years a postal order scheme has been perfected and for convenience and simplicity it could hardly be improved. Its design is to enable members to draw books without visiting the library. Blank forms are obtained from the Post-office Department, about the size and shape of a newspaper wrapper, bearing on one side a two-cent postage stamp, and the printed address, “Mercantile Library, Astor Place, City,” and on the other a blank application with a five-cent “Mercantile Library, delivery stamp,” and some printed directions. You fill up the application in the usual way, fold the wrapper like a note (it is already gummed), and drop it in the nearest Post-office box. In a few hours at furthest a messenger brings to your house the book you have asked for, and takes away the volume you want to return. The system is fast increasing in popularity. A horse and wagon are constantly employed in the collection and delivery, and the number of volumes sent out in this way is about 12,000 annually. The delivery blanks are sold at the rate of seven cents each – two cents representing the postage and five the cost of the delivery.

The MLNY also utilized a 10¢ black on yellow stamp, which Scott lists as 105L6, to pay the new 10¢ fee. There is at least one known example of this stamp on cover. It was illustrated in Donald Patton's *The Private Local Posts of the United States*, p. 226. That example shows several strikes of the MLNY handstamp dated from February 22, 1877 to April 16, 1877.

At least one other method was used to pay the 10¢ fee. That method involved the use of the first issue U.S. postal card addressed to the Mercantile Library with a preprinted order form on the reverse and an imprinted 10¢ black on yellow delivery stamp. Scott lists this card as 105LU1. Our records include only two known examples of this postal card, both unused.

Observations for Each Issue

The 5¢ black on maroon stamp (105L1) (Figure 3) is not known used on folio. The authors believe that this is the second stamp issued by MLNY, after the 6¢ black on maroon (105L5). We have seen one stamp apparently used with the blue double oval handstamp that is seen on 105L3. No multiples are known. There is no frame line around the stamp design.



Figure 3A. MLNY 5¢ black on yellow stamp (Scott 105L1), used



Figure 3B. MLNY 5¢ black on yellow stamp (Scott 105L1), unused

The 5¢ black on yellow stamp (105L2) may have been the third adhesive employed. All known examples are uncanceled and usually affixed to the inside of a preprinted and unused 2¢ Black Jack wrapper. No multiples are known.

The 2 ¢ Black Jack wrapper with MLNY form and 105L2 affixed inside was reportedly purchased by library patrons from the U.S. Post Office, according to the *Scribner's Monthly* article. This marked an innovation for the library, which previously had placed their own collection boxes around the city for patron book requests. Auction reports list the wrapper as Scott W55, W57 and even W51. These have not been verified by the authors, and the paper types for W55 and W57 are buff and light manila respectively, which could be confused.

The printing format for 105L2 may have been as illustrated from this photocopy in the authors' records (Figure 4). It is a "Mercantile Library Delivery Check" which contains a single example of 105L2 with control or folio number printed below the stamp. A number which is a duplicate of the number below the stamp is printed along with the message, "Detach the annexed Stamp and affix it to the Order Blank. Retain this Check to be given to the Carrier, upon filling the order." This delivery check has a thick black border around the outside of the check. An example of the Scott 105L2 with a number below (Figure 5) is also illustrated. All other examples we have seen are cut to stamp shape and have the heavy outer border at top and left. Stamps seen used on folios are cut



Figure 4. Apparent printing form for Scott 105L2



Figure 5. Scott 105L2 with number at bottom

to shape, and one includes a portion of the top of the “N” in “No” in the margin at bottom left. Thus we conclude that the stamp printed on Mercantile Library Delivery Check may have been used initially, but later the stamp was cut out and placed on the Black Jack wrappers printed with the same rules as on the smaller slips used with the blue 105L3. The front of the wrappers are preprinted with the instruction “Drop this in any P.O. Box” and the address “Mercantile Library, Astor Place, City.” (Figures 6A, 6B)

The 5¢ blue stamp (105L3) (Figures 7, 8A, 8B, 9A, 9B) was handstamped with a dated blue company double oval. The dated examples known to the authors were used

from Nov. 15, 1875 until Dec. 18, 1875. The stamp is framed by lines that extend in each direction suggesting they are plate layout lines for a multi-subject printing. Pairs are known.

We believe that the use of this stamp began before the termination of the service in 1873 and was also used after the service resumed in 1874. Our belief is based on the fact that there are examples of a single Scott 105L3 on preprinted unused forms and examples of pairs (or two single stamps) on used forms. The single unused form examples may have been remainders after the service terminated, while the use of two stamps for 10¢ might have coincided with resuming delivery service in 1874. There is one item on part notice with a single uncanceled stamp on handwritten folio with two handstamps dated Dec. 15 and Dec. 17, 1875. It is possible that a second stamp was attached to the part of this notice which was cut out.

The format of the forms varies. In one interesting example an advertisement promoting membership in the library is on the reverse of the request form. It notes, among

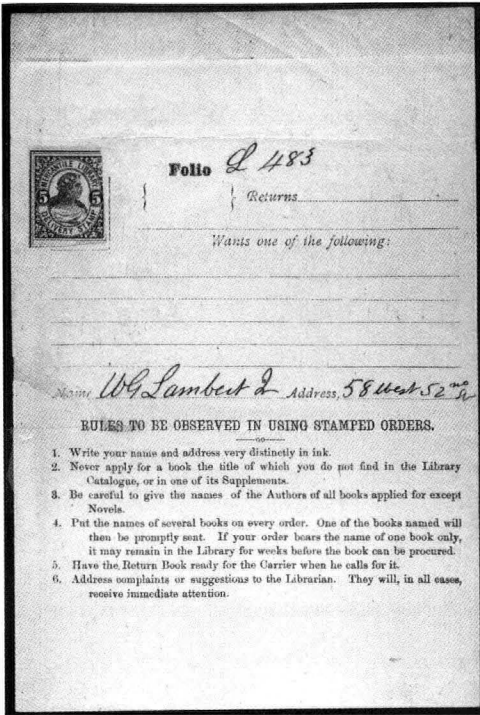


Figure 6A. 5¢ blue stamp (Scott 105L3) on wrapper

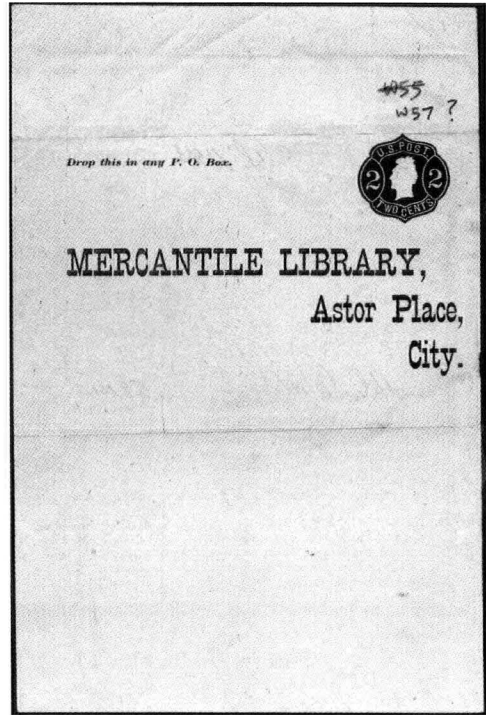


Figure 6B. Address side of wrapper shown in Figure 6A



Figure 7. 5¢ blue MLNY stamp (Scott 105L3)

other things, that the fee for membership for clerks is \$1.00 for initiation and \$4 annually and for others \$5 a year. It also indicates that “Books are delivered at Residences for 10 cents each.” In another example, the book request information is in free form on the back of a Scott UX6 postal card.

The 1870-71 Reay-printed U79 envelope is known preprinted with the library instruction and address, except “Clinton Hall” added before “Astor Place.” It is possible these were used in conjunction with the 105L3 forms, which are on regular weight paper and not card stock.

There is a single example known of a pair used on an unidentified 1¢ U.S. postal card. The reverse includes the pair pasted over a handwritten message returning a book and requesting another. Apparently the library patron purchased the two 5¢ stamps and attached them to a postal card, which was then handstamped on receipt.

The 6¢ black on maroon (105L5) (Figure 1) is known only off-folio, and two items are handstamped with a double circle, one with a date of 1867 or perhaps 1869.

The 10¢ black on yellow (105L6) (Figures 10A, 10B) is known on a folio handstamped Feb. 22, 1877 with five additional strikes dated to Apr. 16, 1877. It was illustrated in Donald Patton’s *The Private Local Posts of the United States*, p. 226. An off-folio example is struck twice with the blue oval dated 187?. This stamp has an outer frame line.

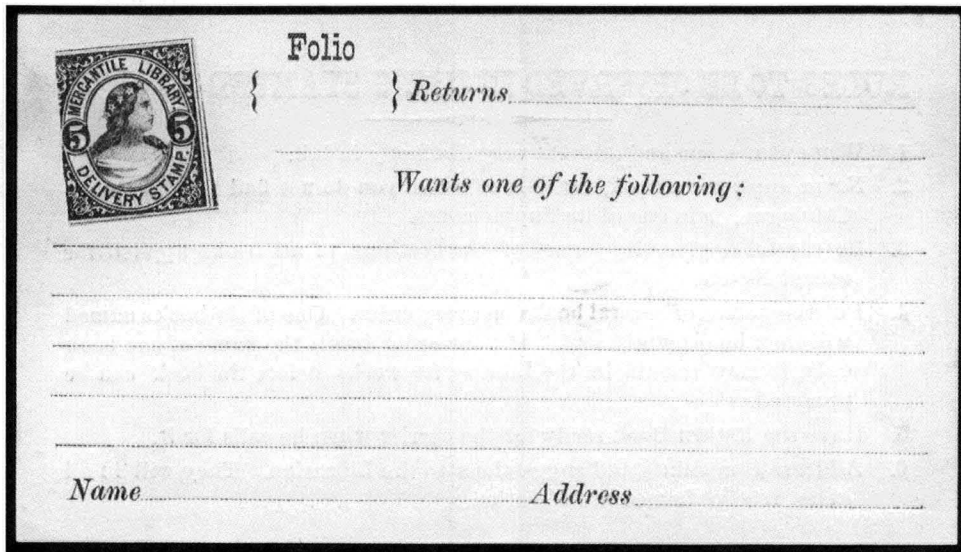


Figure 8A. 5¢ blue (Scott 105L3) on unused form envelope

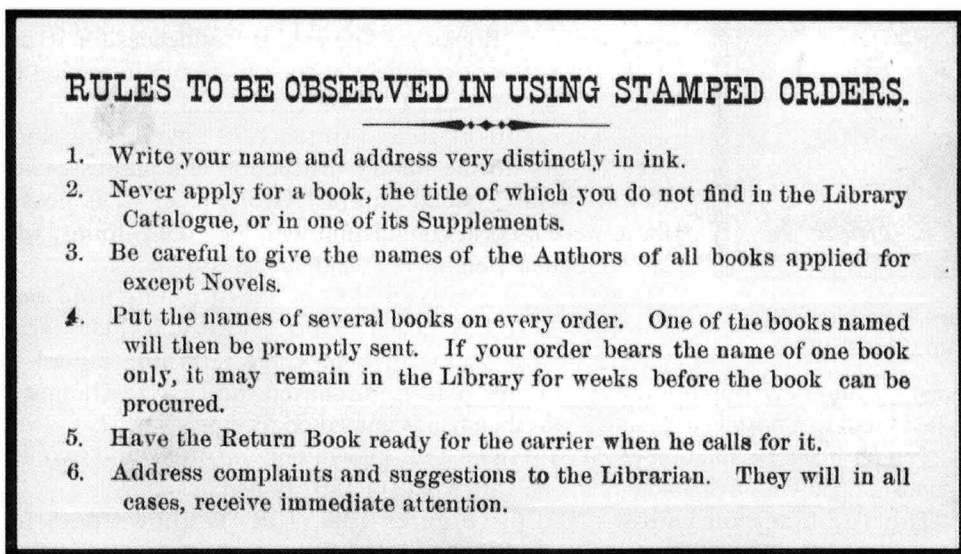


Figure 8B. Reverse of form envelope shown in Figure 8A above



Figure 9A. Pair of 5¢ blue (Scott 195L3) on preprinted unused form envelope

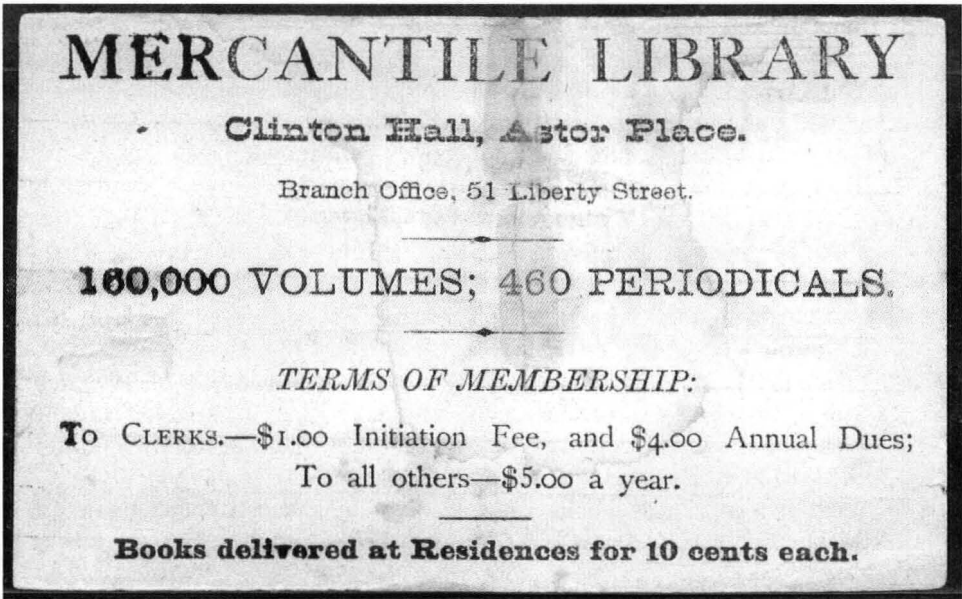


Figure 9B. Reverse of form envelope shown in Figure 9A above



Figure 10A. 10¢ Scott 105L6, unused



Figure 10B. 10¢ Scott 105L6, used

An example with very large margins on three sides is known which is perforated $12\frac{1}{2}$. It is not canceled.

The 10¢ black on yellow imprinted on U.S. postal card UX1 (105LU1) (Figure 2) is only known unused. The MLNY printed an order form on the reverse of the postal card along with their 10¢ stamp, much like revenue stamped paper.

Census of Stamps and Stamped Folios

The authors have compiled a listing of MLNY stamps and stamped folios from auction catalogs, published literature, records and private collections. It is far from complete, and readers are urged to submit new information to the authors. It is entirely possible that some items are listed more than once, if auction descriptions did not adequately describe or illustrate the item.¹⁰

105L1 5¢ Black on maroon

- a. Unused example (Paige sale March 1952, lot 549)
- b. 105L1 (and 105L2-L3 - these are under their own categories below), three unused stamps (Frajola Net Price Sale of Middendorf collection, \$250)
- c. Five unused examples (personal collections known to authors)

105L2 5¢ Black on yellow

- a. Affixed on inside of 2¢ Black U.S. wrapper (Paige sale March 1952, lot 549). Probably same one as referred to in Sloane Reference Collection on same page with 105L3(a) and noted sold to FAH (Frank A. Hollowbush). Cut into B, unused on inside of 2¢ Black wrapper W57, addressed to Merc. Lib. but uncanceled, ex-Green (Fox sale Jan. 5, 1966, lot 1385, Hollowbush collection)
- b. Tied to library slip with company handstamp (Heiman sale Feb. 24, 1965, lot 172)
- c. Affixed to unused folio form which shows a 2¢ Black Jack wrapper impression (Richard Schwartz Records, ex-DeWindt) described as "on yellow." Form is not filled out at all but otherwise like 105L2(a).
- d. Single stamp with panel below showing "No." and handstamped number "19371" (Richard Schwartz Records)

¹⁰ Auction descriptions are provided verbatim, with abbreviations.

- e. Affixed to printed form on inside of Black Jack wrapper W57, unused with preprinted address (Green Collection, Levi Auction Records, Lawrence Stryker Oct. 5, 1942; Siegel sale Nov. 13, 2003, lot 1118 and Siegel sale June 27-29, 2000, lot 1840 \$700). Identical to 105L2(a) but stamp is placed upside down.
- f. Unused affixed inside W55 Black Jack wrapper (Siegel sale 791, lot 382)
- g. Unused affixed inside W55 Black Jack wrapper (Siegel sale 791, lot 383)
- h. Single stamp with panel below showing "No." and handstamped number 2828 (George Sloane Records)
- i. Single stamp affixed to back of Black Jack wrapper (W57?) with printed form and instructions (personal collections known to authors)

105L3 5¢ Blue

- a. Pair on back of U.S. postal card (Paige sale March 1952, lot 549). Horiz. pair used on 1¢ postal card with Dec. 3, 1875 company handstamp (Siegel sale Nov. 15-17, 1999, Golden collection)
- b. Sheet margin pair on card, two strikes of company oval (Fox sale March 30-31, 1961, lot 657)
- c. Horiz. pair, R stamp cut into, diag. crease, blue co. cancel, not on piece or folio (Fox sale Jan. 5, 1966, lot 1386, Hollowbush collection)
- d. B. R. corner copy, just cut into at L, uncanceled on Library printed form, also unused 2¢ brown entire with printed address of Mercantile Library (Fox sale Jan. 5, 1966, lot 1387, Hollowbush collection)
- e. Two copies (1 vert. tear) on printed library form with 2 strikes blue co. oval dated Dec. 18, 1875 (Fox sale Jan. 5, 1966, lot 1388, Hollowbush collection; Levi Auction Records Siegel Oct. 27, 1968)
- f. Top sheet margin pair, cut in at right, used on library delivery slip, reverse mentions "Books delivered at Residences for 10 cents," blue Nov. 26, 1875 oval, 2 strikes (Frajola Net Price Sale of Middendorf collection, \$275)
- g. Stamp on large piece, not canceled, with two strikes of company oval dated Dec. 17, 1875 (Park Cities Stamps, Net Price Sale, 1992 (?) \$150)
- h. Extremely fine pair tied blue... signed Geo. B. Sloane, the pair has a sheet margin at left and is tied by two company ovals dated Nov. 18, 1875 and Dec. 13, 1875, in addition there is a third oval on the folio form dated Nov. 15, 1875. (Levi Auction Records, was sold in Fox July 10, 1967 and again in Siegel Oct. 27, 1968.)
- i. Top sheet margin pair used on postal card (UX5) hand-addressed to Mercantile Library, with company oval dated Nov. 16, 1875. Stamps applied over writer's message to library (Richard Schwartz Records) [same as (b)?]
- j. Two examples each of two single stamps unused but applied to unused preprinted forms (Richard Schwartz Records)
- k. Two singles used on form from Wm. Bucher (?) with two ovals, one clearly dated Dec. 18, 1875 (Richard Schwartz Records)
- l. Single on unused form (Siegel sale June 27-29, 2000, lot 1841)
- m. Same as above (Siegel sale June 27-29, 2000, lot 1842)
- n. Two singles, moved from original position to disguise tear completely thru on one stamp, used on form with Dec. 18, 1875 oval (Siegel sale June 27-29, 2000, lot 1843)
- o. Top sheet margin pair used on library form, two strikes company oval Nov. 26, 1875. The sender was G. P. Hall at 57 West 52nd. A handwritten number "197098" is noted on the form, as well as the note "Xtra" and initial "P". (Donald Patton's *The Private Local Posts of the United States*, p. 226)
- p. Six singles, used and unused (personal collections known to authors)

105L5 6¢ Black on maroon

- a. Unused with thin (Park Cities Stamps, Net Price Sale, 1992(?) \$475)
- b. Unused, tear across upper right (Elliott Perry Collection, Sloane Reference Collection)
- c. Used with 1867 or 1869 handstamp¹¹
- d. Used, pieces missing at upper left, handstamp as in (c)¹²

105L6 10¢ Black on yellow

- a. Cut close on library form, tied by company oval and five additional strikes dated from February 22, 1877 to April 16, 1877, and each with a handwritten check mark by the date. The Feb. 22 date also on strike tying stamp. From Spalding, 120C 10 St. Handwritten number "196815" (Donald Patton's *The Private Local Posts of the United States*, p. 226)
- b. Unused single, cut close (Elliott Perry Collection)
- c. Unused single, very large margins on three sides (personal collections known to authors)
- d. One unused and one used single with blue handstamp (personal collections known to authors)

105LUX1 10¢ Yellow imprinted on UX3, only known unused

- a. Uncanceled, printed on reverse of 1c Brown Postal Card (UX1), Very Fine, Stated to be unique (Levi Auction Records, Lilly Collection, Siegel, Sept. 14, 1967, Zimmerman June 20, 1972 "The finest of 2 known copies recorded")
- b. Imprinted on UX1, unused, ex-Boker and Richardson (Siegel sale Nov. 15-17, 1999, Golden collection) (same as (a) above?)¹³

Discussion

The authors have compiled a comprehensive review of philatelic records, historical notes and known stamps of the MLNY. All issues are scarce to rare. No forgeries are known to the authors. Although these are not local stamps in the true sense, they are attractive and collectors have included them in their locals collections for many years.

The authors would appreciate receiving any information that would add to our history and chronology of the stamps. In addition, we request that readers send us images or descriptions of items not reported in our census.

Conclusions

The authors believe that the 6¢ black on maroon (105L5) was issued first, followed by the 5¢ black on maroon (105L1), the 5¢ black on yellow (105L2), the 5¢ blue (105L3), the 10¢ black on yellow (105L6) and the imprinted postal card (105LU1). The postal card catalog listing should be changed to 105LUX1.

We suspect that the 5¢ black on yellow was printed on a delivery receipt, and was later cut out and used on Black Jack wrappers. More information is needed to clarify which Black Jack wrapper was used or if more than one was used.

All the MLNY stamps are scarce, and some are very rare. They are not offered often enough to keep catalog values up to date.

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¹¹Gordon Stimmell, "Marooned in Philly," p. 30.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³The Sloane Reference Collection contained a note written by Sloane stating that John Boker told him in March of 1954 that "he has the 10¢ imprinted on postal card, Scott 105LU1. He got it from the Needham collection and Gene [Costales] told him it was unique."