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The last letter now recorded is dated March 18, 1850. It is probably the final one as shortly after that date Samuel Damon went to Monson to be with his wife in the terminal stages of her illness. The last previous date listed is January 8, 1850.

One item survives from the correspondence during the two month interval between the dates of the last two letters. This is a Valentine from Julia to her husband at his place of business. The stampless envelope, prepaid at the drop letter rate, is postmarked "BOSTON Mass. FEB 14" and addressed to "Mr. S. G. Damon, 53 Hanover St., Boston, Mass." Since it is unlikely that Julia ever returned to Boston after her illness began, the envelope was probably carried outside the mails from Monson to Boston by a friend who deposited it at the Boston Post Office. Although neither the envelope nor enclosure is dated, the address proves the year was 1850, because it has been established that Damon's business was still at the Blackstone Street address as late as August 1849. The handwritten Valentine enclosure is shown in Figure 3.

Samuel Damon was immensely griefstricken by the untimely death of his young wife. He did not remarry until 17 years later on July 24, 1867, when he married Ella Whitman. There were five children of this marriage, the middle child being Frederick Whitman Damon, born December 1, 1873. All five were born in the little yellow house on Broadway in Arlington, where Rev. Damon lived when he first came to West Cambridge, as it was then known, the same location where the 5c 1847 covers were found more than a century after they had been carefully stored away.

MORE ABOUT THE "KNAPP SHIFT"

CREIGHTON C. HART

Soon after the article entitled "The Knapp Shift as Told to me by Elliott Perry" appeared in the August 1971 *Chronicle*, Herman "Pat" Herst, Jr. wrote me that Paul Albertis was still living. Paul Albertis is the dealer who had told Elliott Perry at the International Philatelic Exhibition of 1936, that he had sold the 10c 1847 "shift" to Edward Knapp at an earlier date. After several inquiries I learned that Albertis is living in Florida.

On November 8th I wrote as follows and sent a copy of my letter to Ezra Cole:-

Dear Mr. Albertis:

As you can see from this letterhead my philatelic specialty is the 1847 issue of United States stamps. One of the subjects I have been studying is the 10c stamp with a large shift very similar to the big shift in "POST OFFICE". This extra large shift has become known as the "Knapp shift" because it was once in the collection of Edward Knapp, an active collector earlier in this century.

Elliott Perry recalls that you told him, at an International stamp show about 1936, that you had sold the 10c "shift" stamp to Knapp at about the then current price for the big shift in "Post Office", also known as 31R.

The purpose of this letter is to ask if you remember selling the stamp to Knapp and, if so, at what price? I understand you were a prominent dealer in New York and probably bought stamps from several sources including from other dealers. Do you remember from whom you acquired this particular stamp? It has been a long time since the sale happened and I hope your memory is still clear about details of this well publicized stamp. Even if you cannot remember specific details, any information, especially about the source of this stamp, will be appreciated.

Several of the professionals who are still active remember you favorably and it is from them I have obtained your address. Ezra Cole is a long

time friend of mine and has said I may use his name as an introduction reference.

Many thanks for your time taken to answer this request. I do not know the present whereabouts of this stamp and my only interest is to establish any available facts about it. If you prefer, your answer will be kept confidential.

Sincerely yours,
Creighton C. Hart

cc: Mr. Ezra Cole

On November 18th, he answered and I'm pleased to quote his letter here.

Dear Mr. Hart:

Sorry not to have answered yours of the 8th sooner, but I have been a bit tied up. Now about the "Knapp Shift" on the 10c '47. I knew Mr. Knapp well as he was a frequent visitor—and customer—at our Madison Stamp Co. at 566 Madison Ave. N.Y.C. And well do I remember selling this stamp (for about \$100.00 as I recall) to him. If my recollection serves me correctly it was in an old stuck down collection which I bought over the counter. Have no idea who the original owner was—and probably never knew. I had not noticed the big shift at the time of purchase but in soaking and drying the stamps it hit me in the eye so I put it to one side to save for some one who would appreciate a striking variety such as this. The next time Mr. Knapp came in I showed it to him, he was intrigued, and purchased it. And that's about all I remember about it. Have often wondered (since it appeared to be a plate rather than a printing variety) how it could happen that with all the 10c '47s in existence no other has ever shown up. Do you have a theory?

Please give Ez Cole my regards when you are in touch. My acquaintance with him goes back to around 1930 when he was with Spen Anderson.

Sincerely,
Paul Albertis

Theodore Behr has two small volumes of photographs of letters exchanged between Knapp, Ashbrook and Perry concerning the cause and authenticity of the Knapp Shift. These letters cover a period of about a year and a half, between November 1935 and May 1937. I've been privileged to read them but they are much too long to repeat here. Some of them are thoughtful and conciliatory, others are harsh and acrimonious. They are all interesting because of the subject, but the arguments are not, in my opinion, conclusive on either side.

At that time Ashbrook was editing the Stamp Specialist column in the *American Philatelist*, the official publication of the American Philatelic Society. If any member wishes to explore further this already well publicized subject, he may read Ashbrook's articles and the two volumes of letters belonging to Mr. Behr, of New York City.

NEXT ISSUE: "New York City Postal markings on 1847 Covers."

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