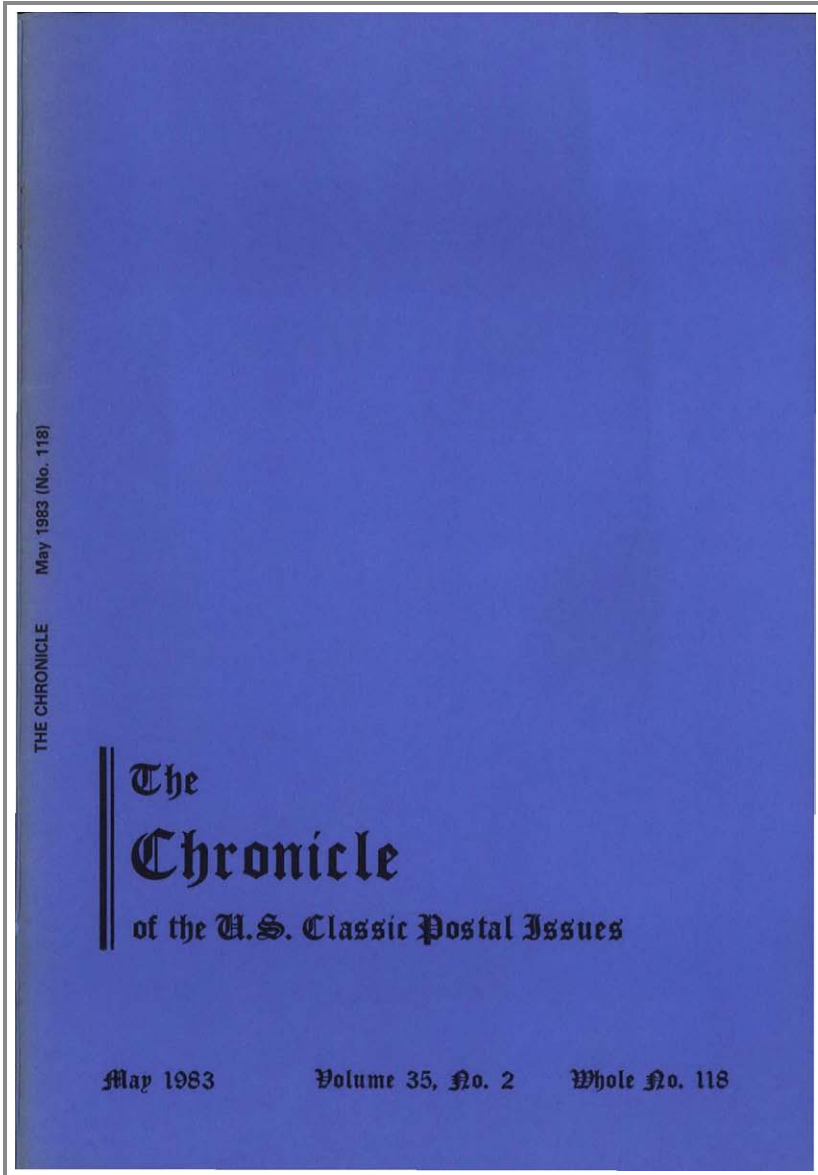




# U.S. Philatelic Classics Society

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Author(s): Elliott Perry, Robert B. Meyersburg



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**THE CARRIER STAMPS OF THE UNITED STATES**

ELLIOTT PERRY

ROBERT B. MEYERSBURG, EDITOR

PHILADELPHIA

(Continued from *Chronicle* 117:30)**GROUP D, SCOTT TYPES C31 AND C32 AND PERRY C33**

The two handstamps Scott C31 and C32, and a third variety which will be called C33, are formed of concentric horizontal ovals having between them "U.S.P.O." above and "DESPATCH" below, separated by a star at each side. "PRE-PAID-ONE CENT" appears in two lines in the inner oval. On type C31 the outer oval measures 21x14 mm. and is surmounted by the head and wings of an eagle (Figure 49). The other two types are larger — about 27x18mm. On type C32 all the inscriptions are in sans serif capitals (Figure 50). On type C33 "PRE-PAID" is in sans serif type and the other letters have serifs (Figure 51). The legend is merely a rearrangement of the inscriptions on the Eagle carrier stamp which was in use in Philadelphia at about the same period, and has the same meaning, *i.e.*, it indicates prepayment of a U.S. carrier fee of one cent.



Figure 49. Scott type C31 handstamp.



Figure 50. Scott type C32 handstamp.

In the Luff book type C31 is noted in blue and in red, and type C32 in black, blue, and red. Type C33 has been found in red only. The Scott catalogue agrees with these colors, and adds a black variety of C31. Although each of these three handstamps evidently was not used in all three colors, or as a postmark or cancellation or to make adhesive stamps and stamped envelopes, nevertheless the number of varieties or combinations of type, color and use that are known is formidable, especially if the colors of paper are also included.

The following periods of use have been noted. They include all the purposes for which any of these handstamps were employed; but, as covers showing these handstamps frequently have no year dating, any of the three types may have been used earlier, or later, or not continuously as regards the periods noted here:

C31 — June 4, 1852 to May 20, 1856.

C32 — February 27, 1852 to August 21, 1860.

C33 — October 23, 1852 to March 1, 1853. Also struck as a cancellation on a three cent postage stamp of 1857-60, and hence used in 1857 or later, as reported by George B. Sloane.

Postmarks that indicated prepayment of ordinary postage in some manner other than by stamps were employed in many post offices; and, beginning in 1856, several of the carrier



Figure 51. Perry type C33 handstamp.

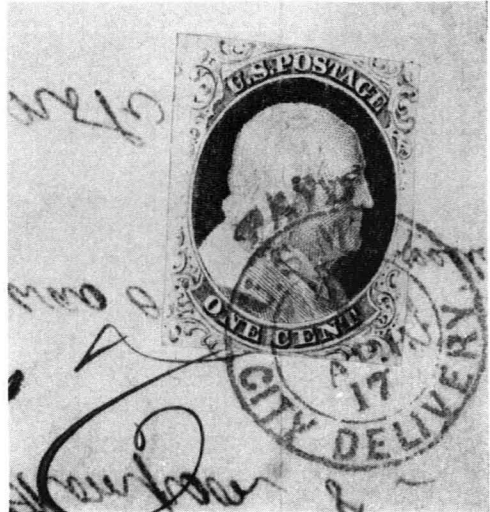


Figure 52. New York carrier postmark used to cancel one cent 1851 stamp which is paying city delivery carrier fee.

postmarks of New York were struck on stampless letters to show similar prepayment of carrier fees. A marking put on a letter to show prepayment, either in cash at the time of mailing or by charge against an account in a post office, may be in writing or may be handstamped. But to handstamp a marking such as "PAID 3" or "PAID 5 Cts" instead of writing it does not make that handstamped impression a postage stamp of any kind, unless the envelope or paper on which that marking is impressed is *sold as evidence of prepayment* and is recognized as valid prepayment then or later.

In New York, carrier postmarks including "PAID" and a rate numeral "1" (cent) or "2" (cents) were regularly employed to cancel the one cent postage stamp when this stamp was used to prepay a carrier fee (Figure 52). Examples of similar use of the U.S.P.O. Despatch postmark type C32 on the Eagle carrier (see Figure 46) and on one (Figure 53) and three cent (Figure 54) postage stamps are illustrated in this chapter, but they are rarely found and have not been noted on any carrier stamp of type C30. These facts lead to the conclusion that the original purpose of the type C31, C32 and C33 handstamps was to mark letters on which the carrier fee was prepaid other than by stamps.

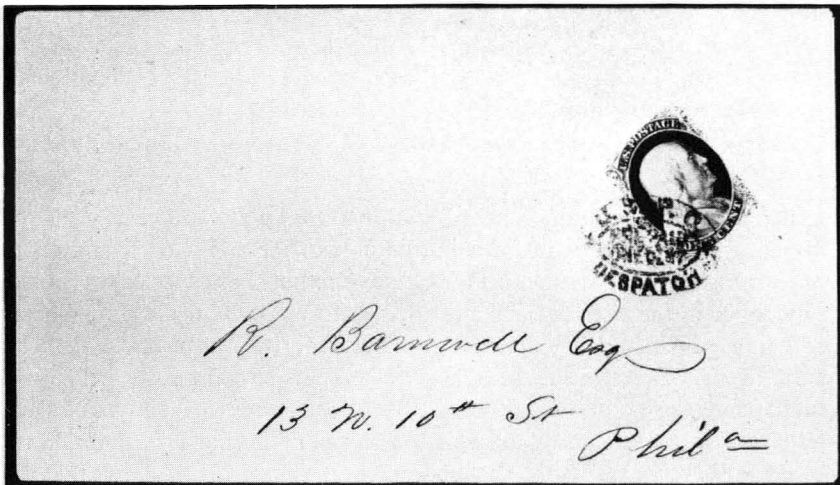


Figure 53. One cent U.S. postage stamp of 1857-60 (type V) cancelled with black type C32 carrier oval, on buff envelope to a local address.

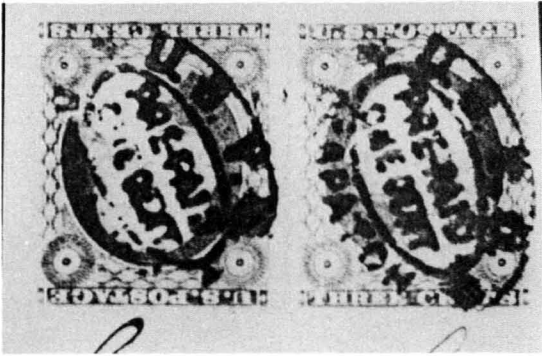


Figure 54. Scott type C32 handstamp used as a canceller on the three cent 1857 postage stamp.

#### ADHESIVES — SCOTT TYPES C31 AND C32

Handstamps C31 (Figure 55) and C32 (Figure 56) were impressed on the margins cut from sheets of the one cent postage stamp of 1851 (Plates one late and two) and were affixed to letters and cancelled. Some of them show part of the plate imprint (Figure 57). If these impressions constituted documentary evidence of the buyer's right to have a service performed, either at the time of purchase or at some future date, they are carrier stamps. If they could be taken out of the post office and used later at the buyer's convenience, it is clear that the buyer was not obtaining a service. Instead, he obtained ownership of tangible evidence that the carrier department of the Philadelphia Post Office was obligated to perform a service.

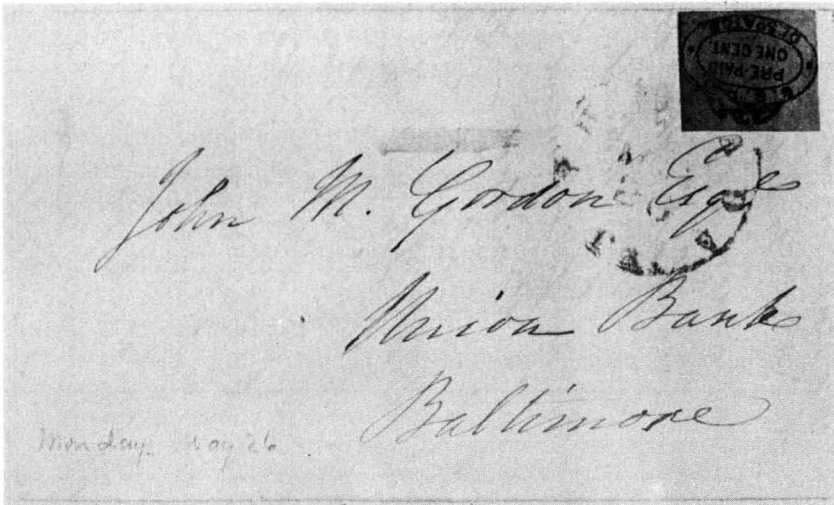


Figure 55. Scott type C31 adhesive on a May 26, 1851, unpaid letter to Baltimore. The stamp does not belong on this cover.

When such a "stamp" (or any other official marking) was valid only at the moment of purchase because it could not be taken from the post office and used whenever the buyer chose, the governing factor is whether the buyer was purchasing service or was obtaining title to tangible evidence of the right to have a service performed. Ownership in adhesive labels such as are being considered here passed constructively to the buyer, whether physical possession did or not. Therefore these adhesives are carrier stamps.

The fundamental principle which is involved here applies to many cases where it is desired to determine whether a postal marking is a postmark or a postage stamp. For example, when a package is sent by express the sender receives a receipt which shows that he has paid for the service. When a railroad ticket is purchased the buyer obtains the right to have a service performed, immediately or at any time during which the ticket remains valid. The



Figure 56. Scott type C32 adhesive with imprint, affixed to local cover bearing one cent 1851 cancelled in black with C32 handstamp.

ticket is the tangible evidence of that right. Similarly, a postage or carrier stamp is tangible evidence of the right to have a postal or carrier service performed.

Figure 57. Strip of three one cent 1851 issue (type II) on piece with adhesive carrier stamp C32 cut to shape and showing marginal imprint.



The handstamped adhesives of types C31 and C32 cost practically nothing to make and were as suitable for marking prepaid-in-cash letters as were the handstamps from which they were made. An ample supply of the Eagle carrier stamp evidently was available and no real necessity for the handstamped adhesives is apparent. A carrier fee could be prepaid in cash at the carrier window in the post office or by handing it to a letter carrier on his route. A carrier stamp could be affixed to a letter when the letter reached the post office. It is suggested that these homemade makeshifts were not sold "over the counter" and taken from the post office to be used at the convenience of the purchaser, as were the Eagle and the earlier carrier stamps. They may have expressed a whim of an employee who preferred to stick them on prepaid-in-cash letters instead of marking the letters directly with one of the carrier handstamps.

Another possibility has been suggested. Each letter carrier carried a supply of the handstamped adhesives, and whenever one or more letters were handed to him on his route, with cash for the carrier fee, he affixed one of the adhesives to each letter, in the presence of the sender, to show that he had received payment for the fee which it represented. The Franklin and Eagle stamps were sold at the carrier department office. The handstamped adhesives were "issued" by letter carriers on their routes and were used at the time of sale.

But whether or not the manner of use was as has been suggested, the handstamped impressions that were in use as adhesives are nonetheless U.S. carrier stamps.

In the summer of 1860 the C32 handstamp was used as a cancellation on three cent postage stamps on mail letters (Figure 58). It is believed that such use indicates prepayment in cash of the one cent collection fee "to the post office for the mails." Consequently, the total

charge was four cents (three cents postage plus one cent carrier) on single letters, seven cents (six plus one) on double rate letters, and so on.

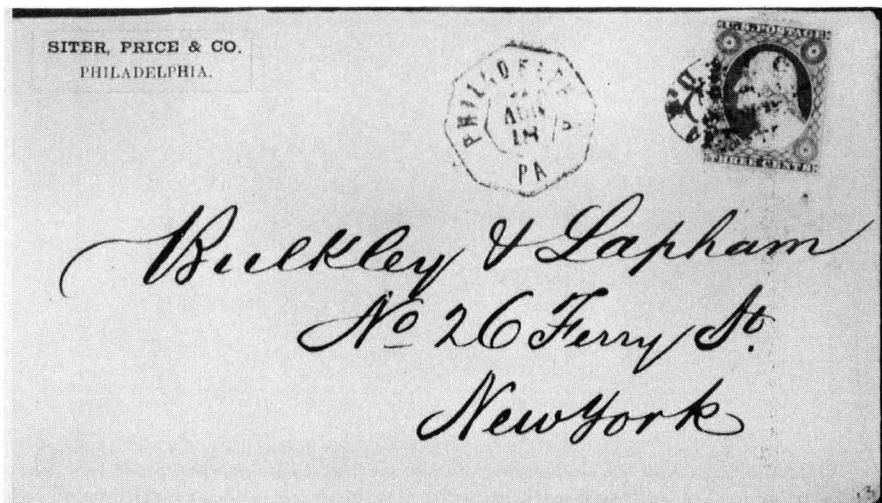


Figure 58. August 18, 1860. Three cent postage stamp cancelled with the carrier C32 oval in black, paying postage to Boston. The one cent carrier fee to the Philadelphia Post Office was prepaid in cash.

(To be continued)

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

**WANTED:** U.S. No. 11 with four margins, on complete folded letters. Edward McGrath, 223 Ontario St., Apt. 16, St. Catharines, Ont. L2R 5L2, Canada.

**WANTED:** The *Chronicle*, whole numbers 47, 55, 58 and 62 by Classics Society member. Will pay reasonable but generous price for excellent condition copy of each. Ronald D. Mitchell, P.O. Box 25458, Dallas, TX 75225.

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