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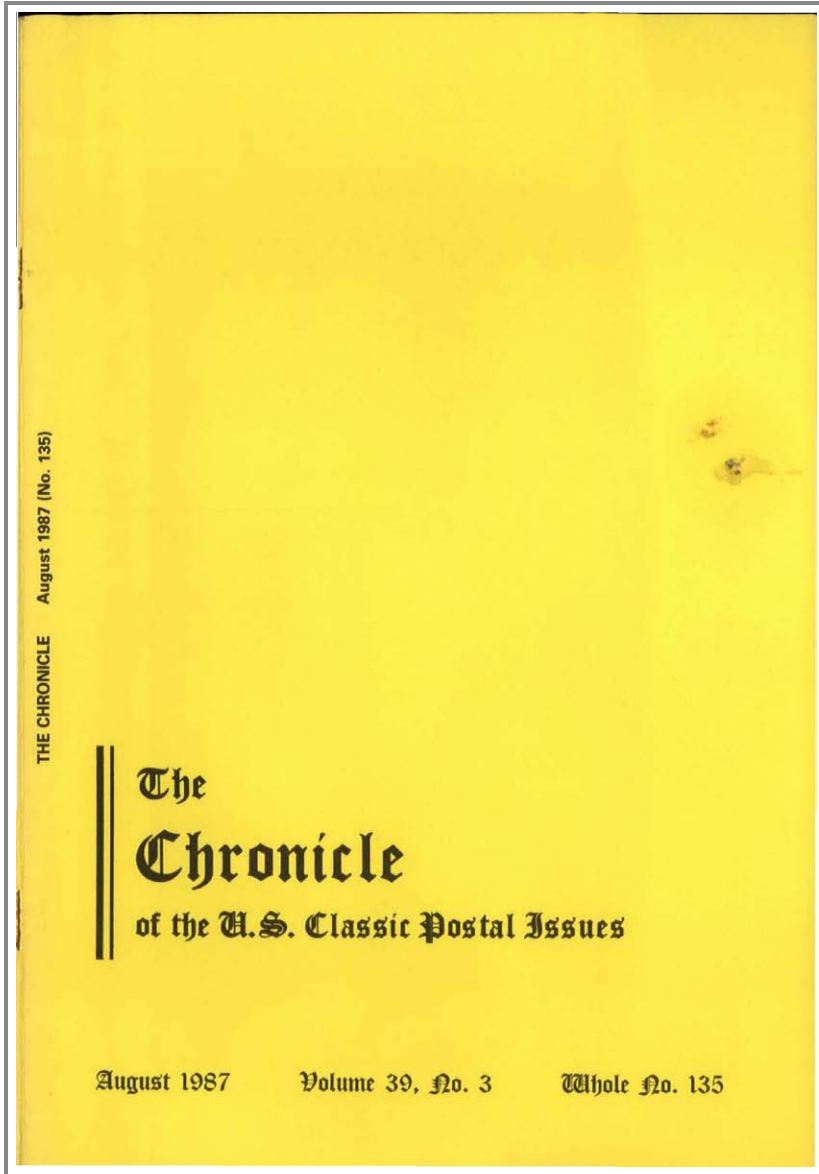


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**WHARTON SINKLER:
A PHILATELIC TINKERS TO EVERS TO CHANCE****STANLEY M. BIERMAN, M.D.**

If anonymity be the chosen cloak that guards one from undesired inquiry to insure privacy, Wharton Sinkler took considerable care to shield his own involvement from public view in gathering one of the finest collections of United States General Issues in blocks of four then extant. Little biographic material concerning this distinguished collector ever appeared in the philatelic periodicals of the era even though he possessed a world class collection. In a brief period from 1924 to 1926 Sinkler quietly put together one of the world's finest specialized collections of U.S. General Issues and, following a moment of philatelic indecisiveness, burst upon the philatelic scene with a wonderful display at the 1926 International Philatelic Exhibition held in New York City. With a rebirth in his interest in the hobby, he formed a second major U.S. collection, and then quietly sank into philatelic obscurity. Except for periodic displays of specialized portions of his collection to the philatelic elite at the Collectors Club of New York, he retained his quiet anonymity until the dispersal of his great collection at two epochal sales held by Eugene Klein (#116 and 117) in the 1940s. This peculiar "amalgamated" collection which had been assembled, sold off in near entirety, and then reassembled from various Philadelphia owners, as viewed in the pages of Klein's March 8, 1940, and May 16, 1940, auction catalogs is an awesome statement of philatelic completeness in its remarkable display of U.S. General Issues in blocks of four. The means whereby this remarkable philatelic collection was formed can generally be pieced together from knowledge of stamps in the possession of Philip H. Ward, Jr., Henry C. Gibson, Sr., and Captain Edward H. Wood: a sort of philatelic Tinkers to Evers to Chance.

Sinkler could trace his ancestry to forebears who came to America from Scotland in the 18th century. James Sinkler, a Scottish farmer, settled with his wife and four children in 1742 at Belvedere Plantation, St. John's Parish, some 60 miles from Charleston, South Carolina, where the family raised cotton and the Scottish immigrant's enterprise prospered. Sinkler's own father, Wharton Sinkler, was born in Philadelphia on August 7, 1845, the son of Charles and Emily Wharton Sinkler. There was a family tie by Sinkler's wife to Joseph Wharton (1826-1909) who was one of the founders of Bethlehem Steel, and which patriarch helped found in 1881 the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce at the University of Pennsylvania with an initial grant of \$100,000. With the outbreak of the Civil War, Wharton Sinkler joined the Confederate Army where he saw service as a Major in the 2nd South Carolina Cavalry. Following the cessation of hostilities he entered medical school at the University of Pennsylvania and following graduation in 1868 began specializing in the field of neurology. He became a pioneer in the study of epilepsy, and contributed many publications to the scientific literature. He was married in February 1872 to Ella Brock from which union five sons and three daughters were born, of which Wharton Sinkler, his namesake, was the seventh child.

Wharton Sinkler, the subject of this biography, was born on July 2, 1885, at Jenkintown, Pa., into this large, prosperous and distinguished family. His early education was at Episcopal Academy located in Merion, Pa. Given the strong family ties with the University of Pennsylvania where his father was a trustee, Sinkler entered the University and graduated with a bachelor of Arts degree in 1906. Sinkler was a natural athlete and played for the All American football team in 1904 and also enjoyed track and rowing events. There is little doubt that a youthful Wharton Sinkler met Henry C. Gibson while the two were students at the University of Pennsylvania. Whether the two cemented philatelic friendships in college

can only be surmised, but both went on to gather world famous collections through the friendly and persuasive auspices of another Philadelphian, Philip H. Ward, Jr., who was the city's leading stamp dealer.

Wharton Sinkler



Following graduation Sinkler entered the family business as an investment broker and set about managing his not inconsiderable portfolio of stocks and investments along with coal mining and banking interests as Director of Jenkinstown National Bank. Sinkler was a partner in Elkins Morris & Co. investment bankers which merged with another firm (Stokes) in later years. In 1910 he married Louise Bromall Elkins, a literate, gifted and charming Philadelphian. Daughter of financier George W. Elkins who helped found the Philadelphia Transit Authority, Louise was early on taught by her father that attention to civic duty and the common good was the inescapable responsibility of wealth and social position. She was in time to become one of the important figures of Philadelphia philanthropy and an active and energetic patron of the arts. Three children were born to the union: Wharton Sinkler, Jr. (1914), William (1919), and Louise (1926).¹

With the outbreak of World War I, the 32 year old Sinkler joined the armed services and received his officer's training at Fort Niagara, N.Y. Elevated to the rank of Captain, he was attached to the 312th field artillery and sent to France. While on active duty, Sinkler was struck with a near fatal case of viral influenza. He returned home after the war to resume his business career with the Elkins Morris Co. In addition he served on the boards of trustees of several institutions including Jenkinstown Bank and Trust, Meadowbrook School, and Huntington Valley Chapel. He had far-flung interests including horticulture and raised prize

1. Louise E. Sinkler, *Leaves Folded Down*, Raverford House, 1971.

orchids which were shown at numerous horticultural shows.

Sinkler was a strikingly handsome man with angular features and a dapper mustache. His distinguished visage belied a genuine puckish sense of humor. He was articulate in his written words and was a warm and generous individual. Despite his busy business career he found time to involve himself with many charitable enterprises. Most of the Sinklers' philanthropic activities were done in a quiet, anonymous fashion. He employed many down-and-out workers during the painful and troublesome time of the Depression and was known to have underwritten the costs of sending a young girl with polio to Warm Springs, Georgia, to undergo treatment for the crippling affliction. Sinkler was an enthusiastic yachtsman and avid horseman; a painting of him shows him as Master of the Hounds at the Huntington Valley Hunt. He also was a collector of decorative arts and donated fine paintings by such artists as John Singer Sargent, Benjamin West, and Gilbert Stuart to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. He had an abiding interest in music, played the violin, and along with his wife devoted much of his time to the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra.

Sinkler was first bitten by the philatelic bug in the early 1920s having begun his stamp collecting career as a child. Philip H. Ward, Jr., the Philadelphia stamp dealer, came to play a major role in the formation of many world class collections.² Ward's position as philatelic advisor to the Philadelphia elite was well ensconced by this time. Ward's philatelic association with Henry Gibson has been previously chronicled.³ Ward was also to build the "Mr. X" collection, sold by him in the 1938-39 era and later determined to be the property of a Philadelphia banker named George Tyler who was married to Stella Elkins, Louise Sinkler's sister. In May 1924 Ward sold Sinkler his magnificent collection of U.S. General Issues which he had assembled over a 25 year period. Consisting of mint specimens of nearly all early General Issues, and blocks of four of issues from 1890 to 1925, the acquisition established Sinkler as one of the nation's leading philatelists. From that time forward, Sinkler acquired most of the important philatelic items that came to market by auction or by private treaty. Ward traveled to London on behalf of his client for the Nicholas Waterhouse sale held by Puttick and Simpson on November 11-14, 1924. Most of the "rara avis" of this sale, including the finest known used block of eight of the 5¢ US 1847 issue (ex-William Aldrich, \$300) were acquired for Sinkler for \$3,800. Further rarities were purchased at the Carroll Chase sale of 1851-1857 issues held on May 23, 1925, by Daniel Kelleher, and at the John Bister sale of October 23, 1925, held by J.C. Morgenthau. When the great Joe T. Lozier collection was purchased by Scott Stamp and Coin Co. on July 24, 1924, Ward acquired upwards of half of the collection at a reported price of \$60,000 for Sinkler. Perhaps the most notable item in the collection was a pair of the 2¢ Pan American inverts in blocks of four, one of which was to end in Sinkler's collection and the other to later appear in Col. Edward Green's collection. Lozier himself had the pick of rarities from the Worthington collection; these now found a new home in Sinkler's album. Sinkler owned a profusion of 1851 and 1861 issues in large blocks, and his 1869 Pictorial collection was certainly the finest extant from the pick of large ex-Worthington blocks including a block of 32 of the 1¢ and a block of 20 of the 15¢; he also acquired a block of four of the 1918 C3a.

In a two year span from 1924 to 1926, the philatelically possessed Sinkler spent \$200,000 under Ward tutelage. When a friend chastened Sinkler that he would not see a quarter of his stamp investment at resale, Sinkler, under the pressure of this advice and his own keen business sense, turned to Ward who magnanimously took back the entire collection. An advertisement was placed in the January 4, 1926, issue of *Mekeel's Weekly*

2. Philip H. Ward, Jr., "The Wharton Sinkler Collection of United States Stamps," *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News*, XXXIX, 565-66 (#1820, Nov. 23, 1925).

3. S.M. Bierman, "Henry C. Gibson, The Centennial Philatelist," *Chronicle* 128:224-31 (Vol. 37, No. 4, Nov. 1985).

THE WHARTON SINKLER UNITED STATES COLLECTION - FOR SALE

Choicest Lot of Mint U. S. General Issues Ever Offered Not Excepting the Worthington Sale

PRACTICALLY EVERYTHING IN MINT SINGLES, MINT BLOCKS AND COVERS

The Great Rarities All Here

Items Sold Individually -- Want Lists from Serious Collectors Solicited -- Fair Prices Based on Rarity and Quality

It gives me great pleasure to announce that I have acquired for private sale the wonderful collection of United States General Issues, Departments, Newspapers, Dues and Special Deliveries, formed by Wharton Sinkler, Esq., of Elkins Park and Philadelphia. Mr. Sinkler has been a large purchaser of superb United States and his collection is the pick of the finest things that have been offered.

In the field that it covers it contains practically everything, including the great rarities, and throughout the condition is of the highest. The early issues are all present in most cases in mint singles and mint blocks with a wonderful array of covers. In the late issues he has every 20th century variety known and this includes several pieces absolutely unique. In Departments there are dozens of blocks, sheets such as the \$10 State and many "Specimen" errors.

Some idea of the magnitude of the collection will be appreciated when I state that its itemized value reaches a total of \$241,530.05—the most valuable collection of the United States general issues ever before offered.

Every piece has been individually priced and will be individually sold. Until February 15, 1926, the collection will remain in Philadelphia, where serious clients may view it by appointment and select those specimens of interest. After that date, want lists will be filled. In the meantime, correspondence relative to purchases is solicited.

The following are some of the "high lights" of the collection, all mint unless otherwise stated. It must be remembered that the less valuable pieces are all present, most of them in many shades, both singles and blocks.

1847
5c—Several singles in shades—Block of six Used block of eight (Largest known)
Singles and pairs on cover
10c—Single, pair, used block four
Strip four, pairs, singles on cover

1851
1c—Singles, pairs and blocks
Fine covers, types Ia, Ib, III, IIIa
3c—Many singles, blocks four, block twelve
Block ten and strip of ten both on cover
Railroads, Steamships, etc.
5c, 10c, 12c—Singles, blocks
Covers, including several 12c splits from Chase sale.
24c, 30c, 80c—Superb singles

1857
1c, 3c—Singles and blocks—sheets
Blocks 1c with curl on shoulder
Pair 3c imperf. between on cover
5c—Dozens of singles, blocks
Block six type I
Strip three 5c brick red on cover, etc.
10c—Singles and blocks various types
Several covers
12c—Single, block four, block nine
Block twenty-four with gum (Unusual this way)
Various covers, including block five on cover
24c—Singles, block four
Plate block of twelve
Several covers
30c—Singles, block four, block six
Several covers including combinations
90c—Singles, block four, block six
Reprints—all.

1861 AUGUST
Complete set of singles
Blocks of 3c, 10c
Pair 80c imperf.
Several covers
Strip three 10c on cover with 3c September

1861 SEPTEMBER
1c to 90c numerous singles in shades
Numerous blocks 1c, 3c, 3c pink, 3c lake, 10c, 12c, 24c, 30c, 80c
Numerous covers of importance
Reprints—all

The breaking up of a collection of this size offers an unusual opportunity. The serious collector may obtain pieces that he has been looking for for years, priced at fair figures based on rarity and quality.

I strongly recommend the purchase of the general issues of the United States, for at today's prices they are the best field for investment that philately offers. The demand seems unlimited—a supply is only available when a collection such as this comes upon the market.

For personal, telegraph and phone calls—address my office at 112 South 16th Street, Philadelphia (Phone, Rittenhouse 8734) but continue to address mail as heretofore to—

PHILIP H. WARD, JR.

P. O. Box 4216, Germantown

CABLE ADDRESS "WARD" PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

1867 GRILLS
Grilled all over 3c singles and block
13 x 18—3c singles and block, also imperf. block
12 x 14—2c, 3c singles and blocks
11 x 13—All values, singles and blocks
12c "Z" grill, unique block nine
9 x 13—All values, singles and blocks
24c plate block eight, 30c block twelve

1869
1c—Singles, two blocks four, block 32
2c—Singles, several blocks
3c—Singles, blocks, sheet
6c—Singles, block four, block ten
10c—Singles, block nine
24c—Singles, block six, block nine
15c—I, singles, block nine
15c—II, singles, block four, block 20
Invert used
24c—Singles, block nine
Invert used
30c—Singles, block used
Invert mint (Finest known)
80c—Singles, block four
Without grills—all
Reissues—all including blocks 2c, 10c

1870-1879 BANK NOTES
Singles—everything
Blocks practically complete, including 24c from Worthington Sale described as "Continental"
Many minor varieties and covers
Special Prints all including 9c, 5c on both hard and soft paper

1890-1898
Everything in singles and blocks
Columbian 4c error, 2c imperf. block
1895 imperf.—set in blocks
8c Revenue paper, mint plate strip
Sheet 2c 1890 left cap

1901
Inverts, singles 1c, 2c, 4c
Inverts in blocks 1c, 2c (two known), 4c

1902-1903
Complete in blocks—pair 4c Schermack
2c part perf.—2c San Francisco roulette

1904
Blocks—2c part perf.

1908-1912
Singles and blocks, shades
Blue paper—set complete with sheet margins showing blue paper distinctly
Blue paper—blocks—3c, 5c, 10c, 13c, 15c

1914-1917
Singles and blocks in shades, everything
Every variety including 5c (504a) (two pairs known), 50c (517b) unique—
6c error imperf. in block of thirty (No. 488)

1918-1921
Singles, blocks, all minor varieties, part perfs., etc. 525c-528f, 536a-539a
2c invert, single and block

1922-1925
Everything in blocks and singles
2c imperf. vertically, 2c imperf. horizontally
4c unique pair imperf. horizontally
5c imperf. (unique pane) will be cut into pairs and blocks
10c imperf. (unique pane) will be cut into pairs and blocks
10c part perf. blocks
2c Harding, block part perf.

COILS AND BOOKLETS
Every known coil including unique strips of four of Nos. 321-389 together with rare dies of the rotary prints—All normal booklet panes including 2c A. E. F.

DEPARTMENTS
Everything in singles
All blocks with the exception of about fifteen
Strip and block four \$20 State
Complete sheet \$10 State
"Specimens"—Practically all including State 9c, \$5, \$10, \$20
"Specimen" errors—several unique such as 24c, 36c Justice
Post Office 1c, inverted surcharge

NEWSPAPERS
Practically everything in singles, many blocks
\$3 Special print, block six 80c imperf. (No. 2039a)

SPECIAL DELIVERY, DUES
Singles and blocks
Plate block six imperf. (No. 1894a)
1881 Dues—Complete in imperf. blocks four

Ward's advertisement of the Sinkler collection, *Mekel's*, January 4, 1926.

Stamp News designating the contents of the collection which was appraised at \$241,530.50 (see accompanying reproduction of Ward's ad) and described as the most valuable collection of U.S. General Issues ever offered at private sale. The advertisement stated that each piece, including the recently acquired Waterhouse block of eight of the 5¢ U.S. 1847 was individually priced, and would remain in Philadelphia until February 15, 1926. It is believed

that nearly the whole of the U.S. specialized collection was acquired through Ward by another well-heeled Philadelphian, Capt. Edward R. Wood, Jr., a prominent banker and engineer in the city. Already mounted and annotated by Ward, the collection was entered by Wood in the October 16-13, 1926, International Philatelic Exhibition held in New York City. It may be assumed that Sinkler was much chagrined when the Wood entry of 19th Century U.S. General Issues presented in four frames won a gold medal at the Exhibition against Sinkler's single frame entry of remainders from his own collection which won a silver.

Given second thoughts to the somewhat precipitate sale of his award-winning collection, Sinkler went on to rebuild his U.S. General Collection, purchasing portions of the Gibson dispersal in 1929 which was offered by Ward for a figure in excess of \$100,000. Included were blocks of four of the 1¢, 2¢ and 4¢ Pan American inverts. The remainder of the Wood collection valued in excess of \$250,000 and described in Ward's newsletter of November 1930, and advertised in the October 30, 1930, issue of *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News* was repurchased in part by Sinkler. Additional entries into the growing collection came from dispersals at the Hind and Walcott auctions and by private placements from the Senator Ernest Ackerman collection. Sinkler did exhibit his collection of U.S. Departmentals and Revenues before an appreciative crowd at the Collectors Club of New York in November 1928.⁴ Considered one of the finest Official collections ever formed, and nearly all ex-Wood in provenance, it contained most issues in blocks of four or nine and included ex-Ackerman Department of State dollar values. Sinkler did allow one final showing of his collection by Philip H. Ward, Jr., in March 1935 at the Collectors Club of New York before closing his collection from public view.⁵ It is of some interest that neither Sinkler nor Gibson chose to show his marvelous collection at the 1936 International Philatelic Exhibition.

Perhaps tiring of his collection, Wharton Sinkler chose to dispose of his holdings at two auctions held by Eugene Klein, a Philadelphia stamp dealer, on March 8 and May 17, 1940. With little fanfare in the philatelic periodicals of the day, one of the greatest collections of U.S. General Issues ever formed was put up to auction. In attendance at the sale were Spencer Anderson, Vahan Mozian, Ezra Cole, Daniel Kelleher, Alfred Brigham, H.A. Robinette, Carl Pelander, and other major name dealers including Philip H. Ward, Jr. It is believed that the choice of the Klein auction house over Ward's own auction company was determined by the fact that Ward did not wish any hint of impropriety in bidding on Sinkler's material for his own stock.

Highlights of the first Klein sale (#116) included blocks of four of the 4¢ Columbian color error @\$3,000 and \$4 issue @\$1,600; all the 1908 bluish paper issues in blocks of four were offered with the 8¢ going for \$4,000; the blocks of four of the Pan American inverts sold for \$1,250, \$1,960 and \$10,000 for the 1¢, 2¢ and 4¢ denominations. The latter items were acquired by Y. Souren. Almost every lot in the sale consisted of blocks of four issues. The sale was highlighted by a fine Official, Dues and Newspaper section. The 117th Klein sale was the superior sale and included unused blocks of four of the 5¢ and 10¢ 1847s along with similar sets of the re-issues (ex-Ackerman). While prices realized of the sale are not present in the reference catalogue, the display of General Issues in blocks of four from 1847 to 1869 was of remarkable proportions in respect to completeness. The Pictorial issues were all represented, with the 90¢ as a mint block of four.

With the final sale of his stamp collection, Wharton Sinkler retired to leisurely activities and philanthropy as trustee for Big Brothers and advisor to local hospitals. In 1948 Louise and Wharton Sinkler purchased the "Guildford" located just outside of Philadelphia, near Chestnut Hill. This wonderful house which sits on a 32 acre estate had been built in the 1920s by Samuel P. Rotan, District Attorney for the City of Philadelphia. Rotan disassembled an old English manor house, whose provenance could be dated to Elizabethan times, and

4. Philip H. Ward, Jr., "Sinkler Exhibit," *Collectors Club Philatelist*, VIII, 45 (Jan. 1929).

5. Charles Phillips, "Sinkler U.S. Exhibit," *MWSN*, XLIV, 141 (#2307, March 25, 1935).

transported the ancient stones, panels, woodwork, doors and arches from additional old English estates to Philadelphia where an architect reconstructed the castle. Of some interest, Rotan had married Allethaire Elkins, the widow of Philadelphia millionaire George W. Elkins and thus stepmother to Louise Sinkler. The Sinklers lived at Guildford for almost 20 years until Wharton Sinkler's death at age 82 on September 8, 1967.⁶ Sinkler's modest biography in the obituary column of the day did not mention his philatelic achievements, nor was mention made in the philatelic press of his passing. Nevertheless in looking over the broad landscape of major U.S. General collections formed during the 20th century, Wharton Sinkler's name surely stood high in the ranks of greatness.

In 1971 Guildford was donated to the University of Pennsylvania where the structure is currently used for educational conferences. In 1972 the University of Pennsylvania conferred upon Louise Elkins Sinkler the title of Honorary Doctor of Laws in recognition of a lifetime of philanthropic services to community hospitals and for her work with Philadelphia's Museum, Orchestra and Library.

The author is indebted to Jerry Shenker and Alfred Borie of Philadelphia for their kind and generous help in the research, and to Mrs. Louise Hoffman for her personal family insights.

6. Anon., "Wharton Sinkler Dies at 82," *Philadelphia Bulletin*, Sept. 10, 1967.

VIGNETTES OF EARLY UNITED STATES TRANSATLANTIC MAIL

J. C. ARNELL

3. Ship Letter Markings

Although the requirement that the masters of vessels arriving at a British port were to hand over any letters entrusted to their care to a Post Office official for assessment of postage was established by the Ordinance of 1657 and the Act of 1660, these laws gave no sanction to the Post Office to include the traditional 1d. Stg. captain's gratuity with the assessed inland postage. This payment was finally included in the 1711 Act (9 Anne c.10) and from then until 1796, all incoming ship letters were assessed one penny more than the inland postage.

For the first fifty years, there was no systematic method of identifying such letters, although in most cases manuscript endorsements giving the name of the vessel and/or master, and sometimes its destination, establish with certainty that a particular cover was an

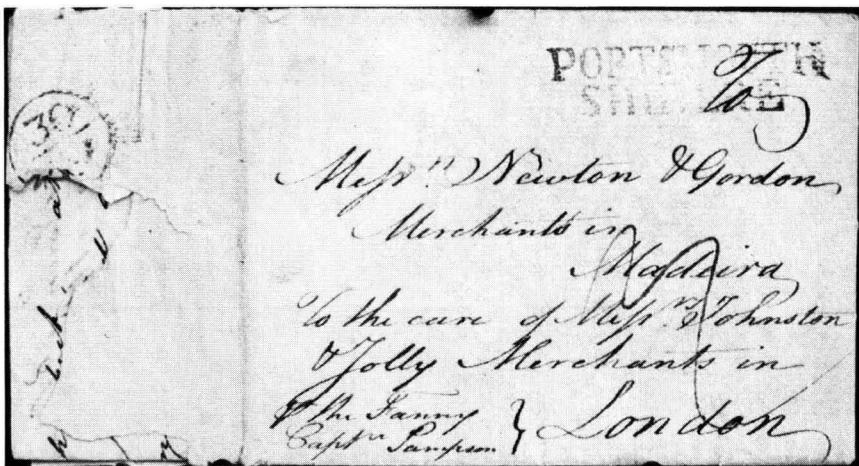


Figure 1. Letter from Charles Town dated 14 June 1766. Carried by the *Fanny*, Capt. Sampson, to Portsmouth, where struck with the newly-issued "PORTSMOUTH/SHIP LRE" and rated 4d. Stg. postage due (3d. inland + 1d. captain's penny — under 80 miles) to London, where it was backstamped on 30 August.