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ANSWERS TO PROBLEM COVERS IN ISSUE 186

The Figure 3 cover from Brownsville, Pa. to a well known cashier in Hagerstown, MD was rated for a collection of "12½" (cents) as shown in black in upper right. But beneath this is a black manuscript "37 2" preceded by a scribble. What do these markings mean and where were they added? A multiple choice was provided, and the best answer was choice F) Add your own meaning.

Agents Milliard Mack, Greg Sutherland and Bernard Biales all concluded that when the cover reached Hagerstown it was checked for enclosures and it had at least three (corroborated by the text inside dated July 24, 1834). Since at this period postage was calculated on number of sheets and distance, the number is 37½, representing the short postage charge. Greg and Bernard both concluded that the scribble preceding the 37½ stands for "undercharged" and wondered why the numbers were not added to show the total due of 50 (cents).

MORE ANSWERS TO THE U.S. "STEAMBOAT" COVER PARADE

Thanks to Bernard Biales for his contributions to three problem cover topics in this issue! He provided a host of information about Steamboat postal regulations, improved the accuracy and scope of the Chart of Rates for "Ship and Steamboat Letters," and instructed your editor regarding the difference between the "Effective Date" (as published), and the "Lawful Effective Date" (as legally defined) for postal regulations. A new chart is provided - see Figure 4.

The revised Figure 4 incorporates:

- Two arcane rates to / from the U.S. Pacific coast, *viz.*, 42¢ in 1847, and 14½¢ in 1848 for within California.
- Reduced postage rates in 1851 for prepaid letters.
- Adjusted 1812 single war rates and some effective dates (but "Effective Date" column continues to show the common published dates rather than the more obscure legal lawful effective dates).

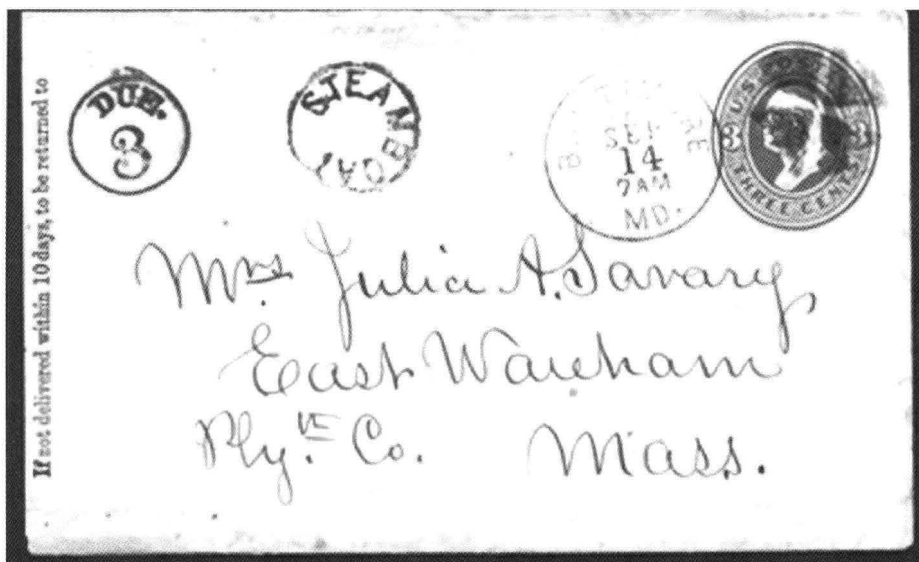


Figure 5. Cover with "STEAMBOAT" in circle to East Wareham, Mass.