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November 1994

Volume 46, No. 4

Whole No. 164

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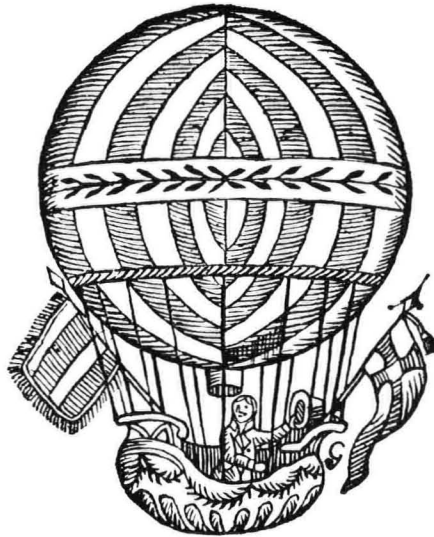
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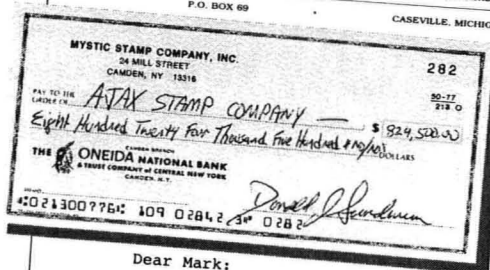
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MOODY'S "HENNY DISPATCH" ERROR
SCOTT R. TREPPEL

A previously unrecognized spelling error on one of the stamps issued in 1856 by Moody's Penny Dispatch is reported in this article. At the same time, the author has located and convened as many Moody stamps as possible, in an effort to reconstruct the original setting from which they were printed.



Figure 1. Cover bearing Moody's 1856 1¢ local post stamp showing "Henny Dispatch" error, used in combination with 3¢ 1851 issue. The Moody's stamp is tied by the blue circular company datestamp. The 3¢ 1851 is tied by the "CHICAGO ILL. SEP. 18, 1856" circular datestamp. The local post carried the letter to the mails.

The discovery stamp itself—the "Henny Dispatch" error—is not new to philately. It is found on the cover illustrated in Figure 1, bearing a 3¢ 1851 issue and the Moody's Penny Dispatch 1¢ black on red surface glazed paper (Scott 110L1). This cover was sold in the Robert A. Siegel 1966 "Rarities of the World" auction to the late Paul Rohloff. It was illustrated in Harvey Karlen's book on Chicago postal history¹ and was most recently sold in Richard A. Frajola's 56th auction, which included the Rohloff collection of Illinois postal history. The author acquired the Moody's cover in the Frajola auction, without knowing in advance that the stamp contained the error. In all references to this cover it was never noted that "Penny" was misspelled "Henny."

Therefore, it is something of a revelation that, on this particular stamp, the title of the post, "Penny Dispatch," is actually spelled "H-e-n-n-y." Seeing is believing, and the reader

¹Harvey M. Karlen, *Chicago Postal History* (Chicago: Collectors Club of Chicago, 1971), p. 118.

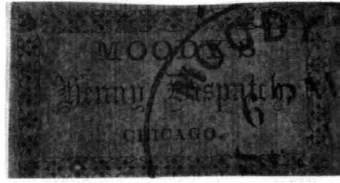


Figure 2A. The “Henny Dispatch” error.

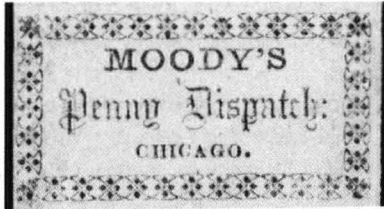


Figure 2B. The normal “Penny Dispatch” stamp.

is referred to the enlargements and comparisons in Figures 2A and 2B to confirm that the character is, in fact, an “H” and not a “P.” The font, known generally as Old English, is similar to the typeface used on the cover of the *Chronicle*. Once the difference between the two characters is recognized, this misspelling can be easily distinguished from the correctly spelled version. To date, only this one example has been found. Others may exist.

Spelling errors in stamps are known on other issues, particularly those composed of printer’s type. Among carriers and locals there are several, including the typographed Baltimore semi-official carriers with “Sent” instead of “Cent” (Scott 1LB8a and 1LB9a); the Honour’s stamps with “Cens” (Scott 4LB8b) and “Ceuts” (unlisted in Scott)²; the Glen Haven “Gien” (71L1a); the Homan’s Empire Express adhesive showing “1” for “I” in “Paid” (83L1a); the Hoyt’s adhesive with “Letter” for “Letter” (85L1a); and the hand-stamped Union Post adhesive spelled “UNOIN” (140L3). In Confederate provisionals there are the Baton Rouge “McCcrnick” error and the Goliad “Goilad” transposed letters. Missing characters occur in various settings used for the Hawaiian numeral stamps, although these are not quite the same as spelling errors.

The intriguing aspect of the Moody’s “Henny Dispatch” error is that such a rare stamp in any form should escape careful scrutiny and that the difference in characters should go unnoticed for so many years. It is almost as if everyone had been fooled by the mistake. As the author will suggest, it is possible that deception was the typesetter’s original intent.

The Moody stamps were previously studied by the late Dr. Clarence Hennan and the late Henry E. Abt in serialized articles appearing in *The American Philatelist*.³ The

²The existence of the Scott 4LB8c varieties “Bents” and “Conours” was doubted by John R. Boker, Jr., which seems justified considering the absence of any examples among the auction offerings surveyed by this author.

³Clarence Hennan, M.D., “Chicago—The Stamps and Mail Services of the Private Posts,” *The American Philatelist*, Vol. 50, No. 9 (June 1937), pp. 447-48, 454-56; Henry E. Abt, “The Tale of One City: The Private Posts of Chicago,” *The American Philatelist*, Vol. 70, No. 10 - Vol. 71, No. 1 and No. 3-4 (June-October 1957 and December 1957-January 1958)[for specific treatment of Moody’s, see Vol. 71, No. 1, pp. 185-92].

Hennan-Abt census of Moody stamps has been supplemented with the author's records and the records of The Philatelic Foundation (see Table A). A summary follows:

- Three stamps in an unused vertical strip
- Five stamps, including at least three genuinely used on separate covers, each tied in combination with U.S. government postage
- One stamp affixed to a cover that probably did not originate
- Three stamps on separate pieces
- Five off-cover stamps

Not all of these examples have been seen or verified, but it is reasonable to assume that seventeen Moody stamps exist.

On the issue of scarcity, it might seem improbable that a thorough search of records produced only ten or twelve examples of a stamp listed in the Scott catalogue with values of just \$200 unused and \$250 used. The reader might be led to believe that the author has grossly overstated the rarity of the Moody stamp. In reality, the Scott listings for carriers and locals—the rarities in particular—have always been filled with anomalous pricing entries. Apparent contradictions between rarity and value actually reflect a cause-and-effect relationship. The rarest stamps trade so infrequently that the prices remain static for years or decades. The value shown in Scott might actually reflect a transaction that took place 20 years ago. In the case of the Moody stamps, the 1995 prices for off-cover examples are, in fact, about equal to the 1975 valuations. Therefore, the reader is assured that a careful census is a far better indication of rarity than the Scott catalogue valuations.

Robert J. Moody's Local Post

What little is known about Moody's Penny Dispatch comes from the research into Chicago local posts by Dr. Hennan and Mr. Abt. A useful overview was provided by Robson Lowe in *The Chronicle* (133:28),⁴ which was a compilation of the Hennan-Abt series and notes by Elliott Perry and Donald Patton. Source documentation of Chicago local post operations has been hindered because much of the original source material perished in the Great Fire of 1871. City directories, newspaper advertisements and surviving philatelic material are among the few sources still available to researchers.

Contemporary city directories point to Robert J. Moody as the proprietor of Moody's Penny Dispatch. Hennan and Abt placed the operation's establishment in January 1856, although it is unclear if this commencement date is based on any evidence other than the January 5th cover in the Hennan collection (see Table A, No. 10). If so, this date is questionable, because the stamp on the January 5th cover does not appear to have originated, in the author's opinion. As noted in the Christie's auction description (written by this author when the cover was offered), the stamp is canceled but not tied and shows no other supporting evidence of usage on the cover. The January 5th date precedes the other dated examples by at least nine months, whereas all of the other dates fall into September, October and November 1856.

Based on information from the 1856-57 Gager's Chicago Directory, Moody's business was located at 30 Dearborn, at the corner of Lake Street. It is probable that Moody's local post did not operate for more than a six-month period during the second half of 1856 and into early 1857.

The Moody's Penny Post Dispatch Stamps

The rarity of Moody's 1¢ adhesive stamps has already been mentioned. However, there are many rare carrier and local stamps. The exceptional character of the Moody stamps lies in the diversity of the few surviving examples. Consider the characteristics of the items that exist:

⁴Robson Lowe, "Chicago Local Posts," *Chronicle*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Whole No. 133)(February 1987), pp. 28-31.

TABLE A
Recorded Examples of Moody's Penny Dispatch Stamps

Item No.	Pos No.	Type	Size	Variety	Item	Source
1 Fig. 4	3	Ia	14.5mm	Period after "Dispatch"	Top stamp in unused strip of three	Ex Lilly, Boker
2 Fig. 4	5	Ib	14.5mm	Colon after "Dispatch"	Middle stamp in strip of three	Ex Lilly, Boker
3 Fig. 6	4	Ic	14.5mm	Comma after "Dispatch"	Tied on cover with 3¢ 1851, blue Moody's cds, 11/15/56 2pm	Ex Hennan
4	4	Ic	14.5mm	Comma after "Dispatch"	Tied on piece, blue Moody's cds, 10/29/56 6pm	Ex Rohloff
5 Fig. 4	7	Ic	15.5mm	Comma after "Dispatch"	Bottom stamp in unused strip of three	Ex Lilly, Boker
6 Fig. 5	7	Ic	15.5mm	Comma after "Dispatch"	Tied on cover with three 1¢ 1851, blue Moody's cds, 11/14/56 6pm, wide left margin	Ex Caspary, Boker
7	7	Ic	15.5mm	Comma after "Dispatch"	Off-cover, blue Moody's cds	Christie's NY 9/82
8 Fig. 7	9	IIb	15.5mm	"CHICAGO" 12.5mm and sans-serif with Comma after "Dispatch"	Tied on piece, blue Moody's cds ("Nov"), wide left margin	Ex Caspary
9 Fig. 1	8	III	15.5mm	"Henny Dispatch" error	Tied on cover with 3¢ 1851, blue Moody's cds, 9/18/56 6pm, wide top margin	Ex Rohloff
10	?	?	?	?	Affixed to 1/5/56 cover (probably does not belong)	Ex Worthington, Hennan
11	7	Ic	15.5mm	Comma after "Dispatch"	Blue Moody's cds, Oct. month, 6pm	Illust. in Abt
12	5	Ib	14.5mm	Colon after "Dispatch"	Off-cover, blue Moody's cds, 10/21/56 6pm, part of black Chicago cds	Illust. in Abt
13	?	Ic	?	Comma after "Dispatch"	Uncancelled	Abt article
14	?	?	?	?	Used on cover, blue Moody's cds, 10/9/56 6pm	Ex J. W. Kline, Abt article
15	?	?	?	?	Used on cover to Dover N.H., blue Moody's cds, no other details	Ex Knapp, Brown, Abt article
16	9	IIb	15.5mm	"CHICAGO" 12.5mm and sans-serif with Comma after "Dispatch"	Uncancelled	PFC 21361
17	10	IIa	15.5mm	"CHICAGO" 12.5mm and sans-serif with Period after "Dispatch"	Tied on piece, blue Moody's cds, 10/30/56 6pm	PFC 76813

- An unused *se-tenant* strip of three showing three varieties of punctuation after the word “Dispatch” (period, colon and comma) — Types Ia, Ib and Ic, respectively
- One example of the “CHICAGO” sans-serif variety with a period after “Dispatch” (Scott 110L1a variety) — Type IIa
- Two examples of the “CHICAGO” sans-serif variety with a comma after “Dispatch” (Scott 110L1a) — Type IIb
- One example of the “Henny Dispatch” error (unlisted) — Type III
- Two different sizes of designs: 14.5mm tall and 15.5mm tall (see Figures 3A and 3B for points used to measure design)

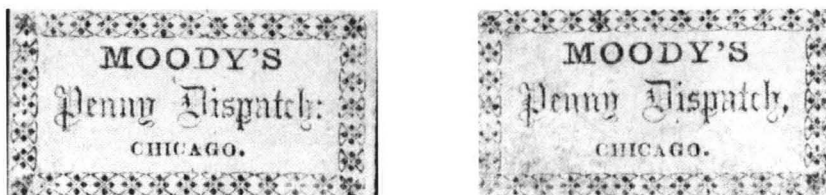


Figure 3. Two sizes of Moody stamp, measuring 14.5 mm (3A, at left) and 15.5 mm (3B, at right) from the top edge of the upper horizontal border to the bottom edge of the lower horizontal border. The distance from the top of MOODY’S to the bottom of CHICAGO is 8 mm in Figure 3A and 9 mm in Figure 3B. (Illustrations approximately 2x actual size.)

The fact that at least seven different cliché varieties exist—showing a distinct variation in font style and character substitution—leads to the conclusion that the typesetter experienced great difficulty achieving uniformity in the setting. Presuming that a 10-subject setting was used, as did Hennan and Abt, the numerous instances of typographical errors and font substitution suggest a circumstance beyond mere incompetence. This same lack of uniformity and the existence of a multiple also present the opportunity to reconstruct the original setting.

Reconstructing the setting of typeset stamps is analogous to putting together a jigsaw puzzle, but is made more complicated when there is uncertainty about whether all of the pieces are present. In the case of the Moody stamps, it is possible to identify seven different clichés from the supposed setting of ten. However, it is difficult to arrange these clichés in correct positions within the setting.⁵

The vertical strip of three in Figure 4 shows the relative positions of Types Ia (with period after “Dispatch,” 14.5 mm height), Ib (with colon, 14.5 mm height) and Ic (with comma, 15.5 mm height) and also shows part of the border of the adjoining stamp in the top margin. Type Ic with comma after “Dispatch” was produced from at least two clichés in the setting: one measuring 15.5 mm in height (as in the bottom stamp in the strip) and the other measuring 14.5 mm in height. Another example of the Type Ic 15.5 mm cliché is found on the cover in Figure 5 (from Table A, No. 6), this one showing a wide left margin. Therefore, the Type Ia/Ib/Ic clichés in the strip were presumably from the left column of the printed sheet, and the presence of the adjoining border in the margin at top indicates at least one other cliché above the Type Ia.

⁵A *type* shows characteristics that can be produced from more than one *cliché*. A *cliché* is a specific subject on the plate (or, in the case of typeset stamps, the setting). A *position* is the confirmed location of a cliché within the setting. Thus, a Type Ic stamp can be produced from two different clichés, each of which is assigned to positions in the setting.

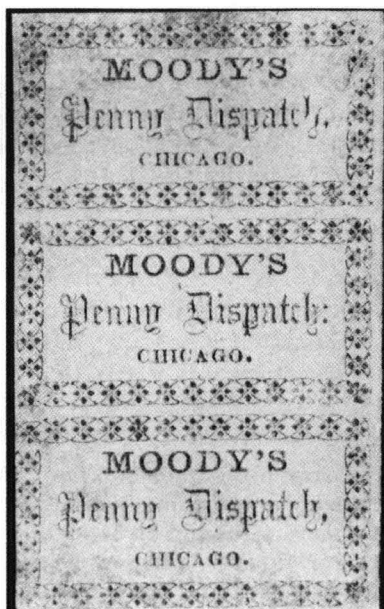


Figure 4. Nos. 1, 2 and 5 in Table A. Comprising Types 1a, 1b and 1c—with period, colon and comma, respectively—believed to be positions 3, 5 and 7 in setting.



Figure 5. No. 6 in Table A. Moody stamp (Type 1c) tied by Nov. 14, 1856 blue company circle on cover with three 1¢ Blue Type IV (Scott 9). Ex Caspary and Boker. Stamp shows wide left margin.

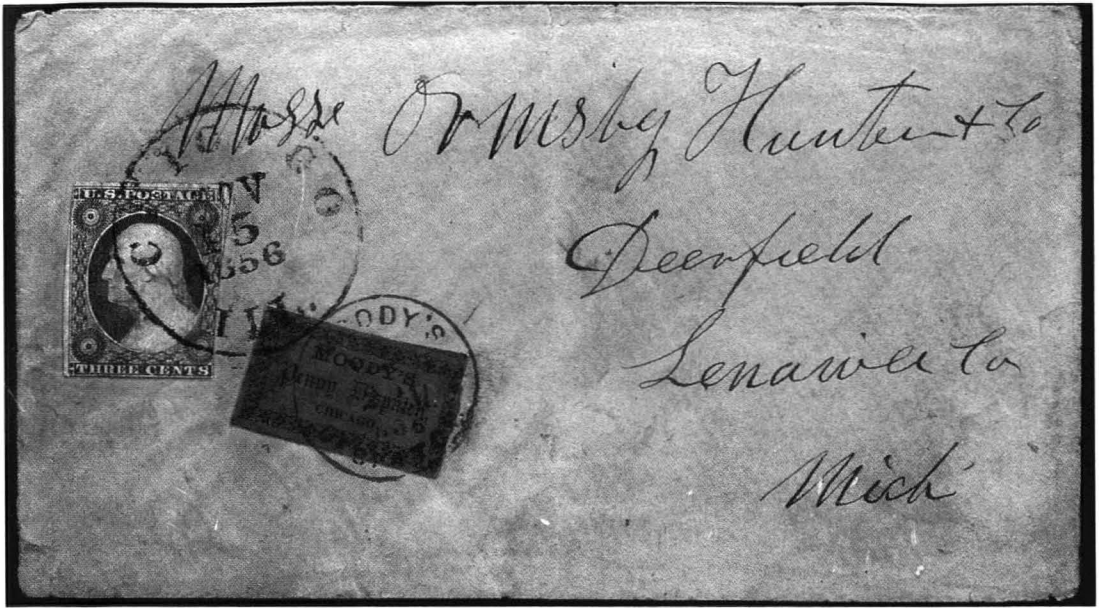


Figure 6. No. 3 in Table A. Moody Type Ic stamp measuring 14.5 mm tall and showing parts of ornamental borders from adjoining stamps above and below. Tied by Nov. 15, 1856 blue company circle with 3¢ dull red (Scott 11) tied by "CHICAGO ILL. NOV. 15, 1856" cds. Ex Hennan.

There is no record of another Type Ia stamp with period after "Dispatch." There is a second example of Type Ib with colon after "Dispatch" (Table A, No. 12), used on piece, which appears to come from the same cliché as the Type Ib stamp in the unused strip.

Type Ic with a comma after "Dispatch" is the most common of the different varieties, with at least seven examples known (in 15.5 mm or 14.5 mm sizes), including the stamp in the unused strip. The Type Ic stamp tied on the cover in Figure 6 (Table A, No. 3) measures 14.5 mm and shows parts of the ornamental borders from adjoining stamps above and below. If the rows are equal in height, it is reasonable to place this 14.5 mm Type Ic cliché in one of the right-hand positions adjacent to the top and middle stamps in the strip of three. Those are the only available 14.5 mm positions (4 and 6) that could show a Type Ic cliché with adjoining stamps at top and bottom.



Figure 7. No. 8 in Table A. Moody Type IIb with "CHICAGO" sans-serif and comma after "Dispatch." Ex Caspary.

The second major type of Moody stamp is the "CHICAGO" 12.5 mm sans-serif variety, of which there are three recorded examples, each off cover (Table A, Nos. 8, 16 and 17). Type IIa with period after "Dispatch" and Type IIb with comma after "Dispatch" both measure 15.5 mm in height. The stamp in Figure 7 (Table A, No. 8) is a wide left margin stamp. Therefore, Type IIb would logically come from the left-hand column; whether it is Position 1 or 9 cannot be determined. The author tends to favor Position 9, because that would create a block of 15.5 mm clichés: Position 7 being the bottom stamp in the unused strip (Type Ic, 15.5 mm); Positions 9 and 10 being Type IIa/b stamps; and, finally, the "Henny Dispatch" error (Type III, 15.5 mm) as Position 8.

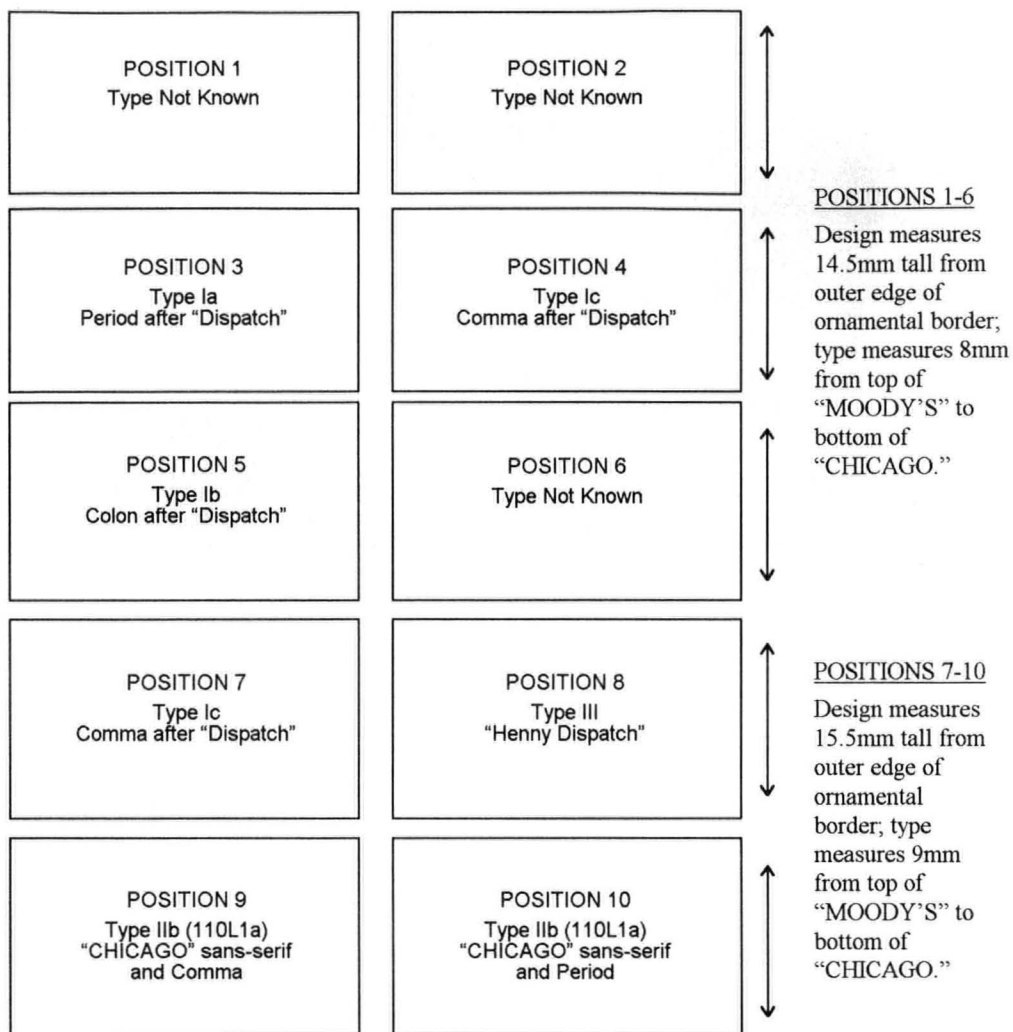


Figure 8. Author's reconstruction of setting based on 10-subject form.

The "Henny Dispatch" error, Type III (No. 9, Figure 1), measures 15.5 mm tall and has a wide top margin without any trace of the ornamental border from the adjoining stamp above. By overlapping the Type III "Henny Dispatch" stamp with No. 3 (Type Ic, Position 4 or 6), which shows parts of the stamps above and below, it is evident that the "Henny Dispatch" error cliché could not come from the position directly below the Type Ic Position 4 or 6. If it did, part of the ornamental border would show in the top margin at upper left. By placing the Type Ic 14.5 mm cliché in Position 4, the problem is solved for now.

In the final analysis, the setting shown in Figure 8 seems to be a reasonable hypothesis based on the characteristics of the stamps examined. We have the Type Ia/b/c strip of three accounting for Positions 3/5/7. Across from Position 3 is the 14.5 mm Type Ic cliché. At the bottom of the setting in Positions 9 and 10 are the two Type II clichés, one with period (Type IIa) and one with comma (Type IIb). Completing the block of 15.5 mm clichés is the Type III "Henny Dispatch" error in Position 8. The only positions left open are 1, 2 and 6.

Re-reading this step-by-step reconstruction makes the author's head swim; he can only imagine the reader's reaction. However, it is necessary to labor through each point of reference to make the author's case for the reconstruction presented in Figure 8. In the event that a complete mint sheet or multiple surfaces, the author's reconstruction might seem prescient, or it could go the way of Ptolemy's theories (close but no cigar).

Mistake or Deception?

Ordinarily it would be assumed that the use of the character "H" instead of "P" was a mistake on the typesetter's part. However, in the case of the Moody stamps, it is not one error, but at least five instances of character substitution: a colon after "Dispatch," a comma after "Dispatch" on two positions, a font change for "CHICAGO," and the "Henny Dispatch" error.

Before linotype and hot-type machines, cold-type setters worked with individual characters organized in font, or "job," cases. The compartments of a job case had to be carefully maintained to prevent a confusion of characters. Anyone who has had the opportunity to observe the nearly lost trade of cold-type composition and disassembly will attest to remarkable accuracy of the process.

Although 19th century printers were not uniformly competent in their trade, it seems inconceivable that a small 10-subject form should contain so many errors and substitutions. In the author's view, the more likely scenario is that this printing job was done by someone whose font supply had become limited for a reason. Job cases normally contain a large quantity of periods, uppercase "P" and "C-H-I-C-A-G-O" characters, or at least enough to fill a 10-subject form. Why would punctuation and font substitutes be used? Why would the similar "H" character be used instead of the "P"? If accidental, why would the printer fail to correct them after examining the proof impression?

One explanation is that this job was run simultaneously with another job that used up a large quantity of type. Printers would often combine jobs into one form in order to use time and paper more efficiently. The relatively small Moody stamp setting could have been locked into a form with another unrelated setting. In this scenario the shortage of characters would be understandable. The use of the similar "H" for "P" and other font and punctuation substitutes would be a practical means of completing the setting. This is hypothetical, obviously, but it seems more plausible to the author than attributing all of the typesetting mistakes to shoddy workmanship.



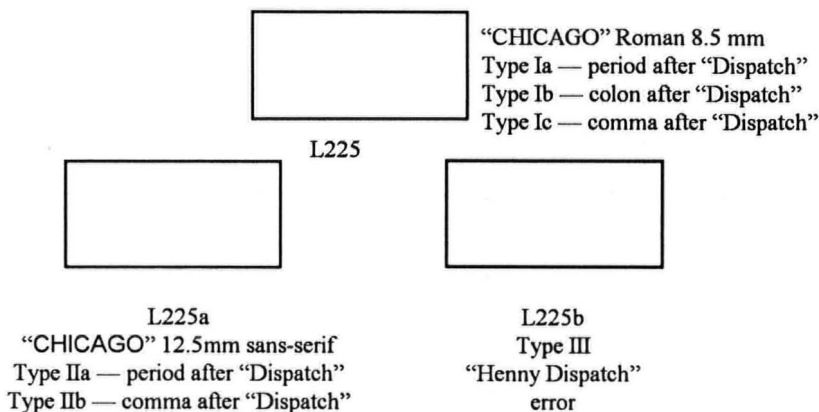
Figure 9. Unique McMillan's Dispatch stamp showing similarity to Moody's design.

There is one last point to make about the printing of Moody's stamps. Comparing the design with another Chicago local post stamp, the unique McMillan's Dispatch of 1855 (Scott 100L1, black on rose—see Figure 9), there is a distinct similarity between the two. The ornamental border, format and font style of "McMillan's" are similar to the Moody stamp. It is also interesting that both designs spell "Dispatch" with an "i," while Moody used a circular handstamp spelling "Despatch" with an "e." The "i" might have been the printer's choice, not Moody's, and the same printer might have been responsible for both issues. This is also conjectural, but plausible.

Scott Catalogue Revision

There is a need for revision among many of the carrier and local listings in the Scott U.S. specialized catalogue. The Moody stamps should be revised to include the "Henny Dispatch" error and to correct pricing anomalies. The author suggests the following:

Moody's Penny Dispatch, Chicago, Ill. Robert J. Moody, proprietor



1856	Glazed Surface Paper	Typeset
110L1	L.225 (1¢) black, red, type Ia/b/c Vert. strip of 3 showing types Ia, Ib and Ic se-tenant Type Ic, on cover with 3c #11 Type Ic, on cover with three 1c #9	— 1,200. — 4,500. 25,000.
a.	L.225a "CHICAGO" sans-serif, type IIa/b	—
b.	L.225b "Henny Dispatch", type III, on cover with 3c #11	25,000.
One example of No. 110Lb is known.		
Cancellations: blue circle "Moody's Dispatch"		

Conclusion

While fourteen of the Moody stamps in collectors' hands have been identified in this article, there are at least three others, and possibly more, that still require close scrutiny. The potential for discovering another "Henny Dispatch" error or a new and different variety still exists. The author hopes that this article will inspire collectors and dealers to examine their Moody stamps and report any examples not listed in Table A to the author. □

**THE PLATING OF THE EIGHT CORNER POSITIONS
OF THE FIVE CENT 1847 STAMP**
JEROME S. WAGSHAL

For about forty years now, collectors interested in the plating of the 5¢ 1847 stamp have been tantalized—frustrated is perhaps the better word—by the unavailability of plating information regarding all eight corner positions of the 5¢ 1847 plate, even though they knew that the plating had been done. This article presents that hitherto unavailable plating information.

**The Unavailability, Until Now, of Plating Information
Regarding Seven of the Eight Corner Positions**

Up to this time, a plating diagram of only one of the eight corner positions had been published, namely, 10R¹. In the original Brookman work on 19th Century U.S. stamps, this position was illustrated by a plating drawing, *Fig. 47*, and an actual example, *Fig. 48*.² The plating drawing was done by Stanley B. Ashbrook. The printing on the drawing, which was clearly Ashbrook's, states that the position is unknown, but the caption under *Fig. 47* states that it is 10R, indicating that Ashbrook may have given this information to Brookman shortly before publication. Accordingly, since this first Brookman edition was published in 1947, 10R must have been identified about this time. Ashbrook's drawing and the caption were carried over without change in Brookman's second edition, published in 1966.³ We must conclude that Ashbrook provided no further information to Brookman between 1947 and Ashbrook's death in 1958.

However, after 1947 Ashbrook continued his research on the eight corner positions, and by 1955 he claimed to have plated all eight positions. In October 1955, Ashbrook wrote:⁴

For many years I photographed every sheet margin or corner copy [of the 5¢ 1847] that I could locate. Way back in the nineteen thirties I had the late Judge Emerson loan me a great many such copies from his fine collection, and I made photographs of each and recorded on diagrams all consistent plating marks. My main object was to learn if I could find and identify more than eight corner copies. If not more than eight, then this would indicate only one plate of 200, if more than eight, then there must have been two plates. From many sources I borrowed sheet and corner copies and in time *I identified and plated the eight corner positions of the 5c plate*. I believe that there was only one 5c plate because *I have never been able to find a corner stamp that was not from one of my eight plated positions*. In other words, I have never been able to find a ninth corner copy. [Italicized emphasis added; underscoring as in the original.]

With the exception of the diagram of 10R published by Brookman, Ashbrook's successful plating of these eight corner positions has been lost to philately until this time.

¹I omit the number "1" in plate position designations for the 5¢ 1847. It has now become generally accepted that only one plate of 200 subjects was used to produce the 5¢ 1847 stamp. Moreover, there is no evidence that this single plate had a number. Accordingly, it seems to me that inclusion of "1" in plate position designations is at best superfluous and at worst misleading.

²Lester G. Brookman, *The United States Postage Stamps of the 19th Century*, 1st ed. (New York: H.L. Lindquist Publications, Inc., 1947), Vol. I, p. 40.

³In the 2nd (1966) 3-volume edition, these illustrations appear at p. 42 as Figures 50 and 51.

⁴Stanley B. Ashbrook, *19th Century U.S. Postal History: A Special Service* (Ashbrook, 1951-57), p. 434.

Readers of this section will recall that in my initial essay as editor of the 1847 Section, I noted that Ashbrook died in January 1958, and his research materials on the plating of the 5¢ 1847 were sold at auction on November 25, 1958.⁵ According to the description, the lot consisted of “2 large albums with corresponding drawings and illustrations” The description went on to state that these showed “plating marks of far more plated positions than has heretofore been revealed.”⁶ I stated that “the present whereabouts of this material . . . is unknown.”

Since that time, I have had the good fortune to locate and acquire this Ashbrook research material. The events surrounding the retrieval of this material make a fascinating story which may be recounted in a future report. However, at this time I will only state that much credit belongs to three men: Stanley J. Richmond, one of the most respected and knowledgeable dealers in the philatelic community, and the owner of the Kelleher firm in Boston; and Messrs. Philip G. Rust, Jr. and Richard Rust, sons of Philip G. Rust, a major collector of some years back whose philatelic accomplishments merit greater recognition than he has thus far received. All three, Stanley J. Richmond and the brothers Rust, are marked by a sincere appreciation and support of philatelic research, and all three merit the gratitude of the philatelic community, as well as my personal thanks.

Thus the plating information regarding the eight corner positions presented in this article was compiled approximately 40 or more years ago by Stanley B. Ashbrook. I say this to give credit where it is due, rather than to disclaim any error which might be incorporated in it, since I have examined only photographs and not the original stamps from all eight positions.

The Importance of the Eight Corner Positions

Ashbrook’s comments quoted above indicate the importance of the eight corner positions, but a more detailed explanation may be of value. The eight corner positions are important because they constitute the gateway to the plating of the 5¢ 1847, or at least to the start of such an effort. A few important pieces and some contemporaneous documentation, taken together, have established that the 5¢ 1847 plate was composed of two rectangular panes of 100 each (10x10), side by side, which means that there must be eight corner positions, four corner positions on each pane. A stamp with full corner margins is an important plating aid because its corner margins narrow its possible plate position to the indicated corner on either the left or right pane. Thus these corner stamps can provide a base for a plating study which expands out from the eight corners.

The plating of the corner positions may possibly help to determine two things:

(a) As indicated by Ashbrook, how many plates were used in the production of the 5¢ stamp. Identification of 16 plated corner positions rather than just eight would have indicated that two plates were used, 24 positions would have indicated three plates, and so on. The consensus of present 1847 issue scholars is that Ashbrook was correct in his conclusion that only one plate was made.

(b) Even if there were only a single plate used, study of the corner positions may help determine whether that plate was reworked at some point in its existence.

The question of whether the 5¢ 1847 plate was ever reworked, and has a late state, is one of the most important unsettled issues in the study of the 5¢ 1847 stamp. The evidence suggesting that the plate was reworked is not derived from the study of the corner positions of the plate, but rather from the disparity in rarity among the five double transfers of the 5¢ 1847. Thus, Ashbrook reported that, although he had not found any ninth separately identifiable corner position, he nevertheless concluded that the 5¢ plate had indeed been

⁵*Chronicle*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (Whole No. 159)(August 1993), pp. 170-71.

⁶The description further states that Ashbrook “had been planning to publish this work.” I have not found any evidence to substantiate this statement, though it is a reasonable surmise given Ashbrook’s history.

reworked, basing his conclusion primarily on the existence of the two double transfers, "C" and "D," which are far scarcer than the "A" and "B" double transfers. Ashbrook believed that the two rare double transfers resulted from the reworking of the plate into a late state, prior to the fifth delivery of these stamps on December 9, 1850.⁷ Added support for Ashbrook's position has been provided in recent years by the discovery of a fifth major transfer variety, the Wagshal Shift, Scott's double transfer "F," of which even fewer copies have been found than of the "D" double transfer. However, discovery of a ninth corner copy, or one of the eight known corner copies with discernible alterations, would be powerful confirmation that the single 5¢ 1847 plate was reworked into a late state at some point during its useful life.

A final aspect of the importance of this plating should be noted. A theory has been circulating for some time among 1847 scholars that while the 5¢ 1847 stamp was current, the plate might have been cut in half, vertically between the two panes, and one pane may have been used more than the other.⁸ If a census is kept of corner positions, statistical evidence regarding the validity of this theory might be accumulated. As stated in the concluding section of this article, if reports are made to me of known and *plated* corner copies, I will keep such a census.

Don't Give Up the Search: We Have Not Yet Begun to Look

The failure of Ashbrook or anyone coming after him to discover evidence of either an altered eighth position or a completely new ninth position should not discourage collectors from continuing the search. There are a number of reasons, all cumulative rather than mutually exclusive, why such a position, if it exists, might have eluded discovery all these years:

- A major reason is of course the small number of surviving examples. If the 5¢ 1847 plate was reworked just prior to the fifth and last delivery, it is statistically probable that very few examples of such a position would have survived, possibly less than a dozen copies of each position at the higher end of the scale of a conservative estimate.⁹ Even if all eight corner positions had been altered in some discernible manner, this would mean less than 100 stamps in total.

- For a corner copy to be identified as such by its margins, the two large corner margins must be intact. Doubtless a number of corner copies were trimmed down and became indistinguishable as corner copies, particularly when the plating marks of the corner positions were unknown.

- Even with the two large corner margins intact, it is more likely that a ninth corner position, *i.e.*, a reworked eighth position, might have escaped identification over the past several generations than a previously unknown major transfer variety because more people have been able to identify a previously unknown double transfer. Four of the major 5¢ 1847 double transfers have been well known to philately for over half a century, when

⁷Ashbrook, *Special Service*, p. 435; see quotation in *Chronicle*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Whole No. 163)(August 1994), pp. 165-66. Elliott Perry was of a similar opinion; see the compiled edition of his *Pat Paragraphs* (Takoma Park, Md.: Bureau Issues Association, Inc., 1981), pp. 31-32.

⁸See "Observations on Lot 22 in the Ishikawa Sale: A Letter from Malcolm L. Brown," *Chronicle*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Whole No. 161)(February 1994), pp. 161-62.

⁹In the past I have estimated two to three surviving examples of each fifth delivery position, this estimate having been based on C.C. Hart's estimate of the number of surviving covers. See Jerome S. Wagshal, "The Discovery of a Fifth Major Double Transfer on the 5c 1847 Stamp—The Wagshal Shift," *Opinions V* (New York: The Philatelic Foundation, 1988), pp. 20-23. Since that piece was written, Tom Alexander has reported that he has recorded approximately 9,000 surviving 5¢ 1847 covers, or about one out of every 400 stamps issued. This would mean that Hart's earlier estimate of seven surviving covers per 10,000 stamps issued was far too low. Thus a survival estimate of two to three examples for each of the 200 positions on the plate used to produce the fifth delivery perhaps should be raised to between eight and eleven.

Ashbrook reported the confirmation of the “D” double transfer in 1942.¹⁰ Thus, since 1942 a fifth double transfer could be identified as such by anyone familiar with Ashbrook’s report, or with the same information in the Scott specialized catalogue. However, up to the time of the publication of this article, only one person in the philatelic community is known to have had the knowledge necessary to identify a ninth corner copy.¹¹ In short, when Ashbrook wrote in 1955 that he had “never been able to find a ninth corner copy,” he essentially had been working alone; though others provided him with stamps to study, he alone had the ability to do the study itself. Now that the plating characteristics of the eight corner positions which Ashbrook identified are being disclosed to the philatelic community, all collectors of the 1847 issue will have an opportunity to examine corner copies, doubtless including some which Ashbrook never saw, in an effort to discover a possible ninth position.

The Plating Characteristics of the Eight Corner Positions

Since Ashbrook made a separate plating diagram of each corner copy he inspected, each of the corner positions is represented in his research material by several diagrams. The diagrams selected for reproduction here are those which appear to be the most informative. Several have had Ashbrook’s marks enhanced or supplemented for clarity.

In addition to the diagrams, I herewith provide a description of the plating features of each position. In order to locate marks precisely, reference will sometimes be made to the horizontal shading lines which form the background of the area outside the vignette. The horizontal plane of the extension of these shading lines will give the approximate location of a mark on the vertical axis of the design. Also, for ease of expression, the conventional abbreviations UL, UR, LL and LR will be used interchangeably with NW, NE, SW, and SE, respectively.

It should be kept in mind that any stamp showing corner margins is inherently identifiable as being from one of two positions, that is, from the corner indicated by the margins of either the left or right pane. Therefore, plating can sometimes be accomplished by eliminating one of the two potential positions.

A. The Left Pane

Position 1L. (Fig. 1) There is a tiny horizontal line—I call it a “tick”—extending from inside the left frame line, about 2.5 mm. below the UL corner of the frame line rectangle, or, on a horizontal plane, about 14 to 15 horizontal background lines from the top. This tick, although a very small mark, is consistent and adequate to distinguish this position from 1R. There is no guide dot in the left trifoliate, as is true of all positions in the first vertical row of both panes, including, of course, 1L, 1R, 91L and 91R.

Position 10L. (Fig. 2) A number of marks distinguish this position:

- There are two tiny dots just outside the UR corner, in a diagonal line which if extended would end just to the left of the UR corner itself.
- Another, slightly larger dot is about one-half mm. above the top frame line, above the center of the “S” of “U S.”

¹⁰Ashbrook, “The Five Cent of 1847 Double Transfers,” *Stamp Specialist*, Yellow Book (1942), pp. 3-13.

¹¹That is, Ashbrook up to the time of his death in January 1958, and Philip G. Rust, the purchaser of Ashbrook’s research material, thereafter. I have found no information that Ashbrook ever shared his plating information regarding the eight corner positions prior to his death. Subsequently, that information was only available to Mr. Rust, who died in 1986, who never reported the discovery of a ninth corner position and thus presumably never found such a position. It may be that one or more other individuals working privately, and without benefit of Ashbrook’s research, have succeeded in acquiring the requisite knowledge to identify a ninth corner position, but until the public record shows otherwise Ashbrook’s legacy must be considered to be unique.



Figure 1. Plating characteristics, 5c 1847, Position 1L.



Figure 2. Plating characteristics, 5c 1847, Position 10L.

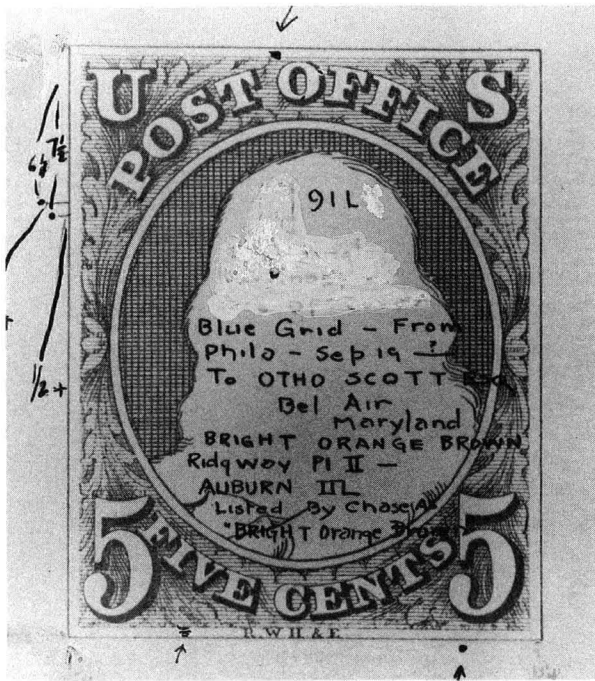


Figure 3. Plating characteristics, 5¢ 1847, Position 91L.

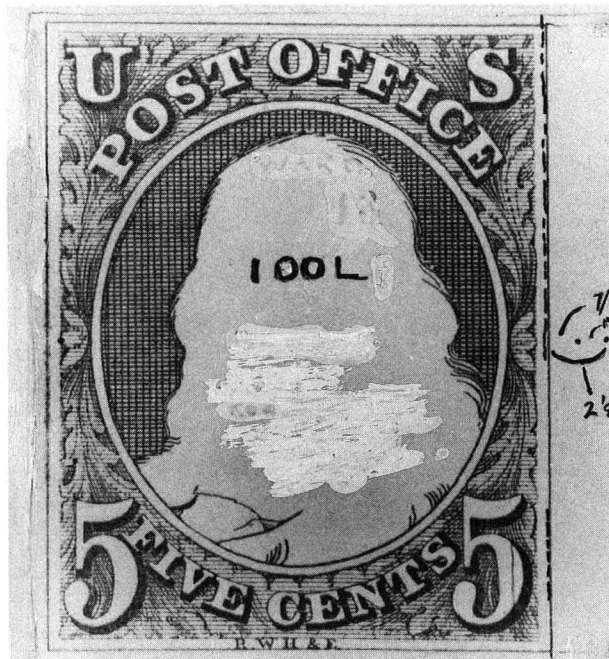


Figure 4. Plating characteristics, 5¢ 1847, Position 100L.

- A horizontal line extends from the single position dot in the left trifoliate to the inside of the left frame line. This is a prominent plating mark.

- There are two dots barely outside the left frame line, one above the other and separated vertically by about a scant mm., with the top dot on a horizontal plane just below the bottom leaf of the left trifoliate.

- There are two dots on a horizontal line with one another and outside the right frame line on a line with the upper edge of the middle leaf of the left trifoliate. The spacing of these dots is as shown in the diagram. These two dots are almost certainly transfer roll position dots and are characteristic of most positions in the right vertical rows on both panes.

Position 91L. (Fig. 3) There is a blur of color in the white border, inside the bottom frame line, in a vertical line below the left edge of the “V” of “FIVE,” but this may not show on all copies. There is a tiny dot just outside the bottom frame line below the tail of the right “5” and this seems to be consistent. Another consistent mark is a blur in the white border inside the top frame line above the left edge of the “O” of “OFFICE.” No guide dot in the left trifoliate in this left row position. The two dots outside the left frame line are probably constant, but are not fully confirmed.

Position 100L. (Fig. 4) The most distinctive plating mark on this position is a faint, generally vertical, but irregular and somewhat broken, scratch-like line just inside the right frame line. It shows most clearly inside the top half of the right frame line. I cannot suggest any satisfactory explanation as to the cause of such a mark. It was obviously not drawn in purposely, as with a straightedge. Several copies of this position show a faint vertical line through the fat part of the curve of the right “5,” but this may not show on all copies. The two position dots in the right margin which are characteristic of right row positions are generally on a line with the center of the middle leaf of the right trifoliate, but with the right dot slightly higher than the left dot. The left dot is about $\frac{7}{8}$ mm. from the right frame line, and the right dot is about $1\frac{1}{4}$ mm. from the left dot. Guide dot in the left trifoliate.

B. The Right Pane

Position 1R. (Fig. 5) Five marks distinguish this position:

- A faint scratch-like line, generally vertical but gently curved, extending from above and slightly to the left of the NW corner, through that corner, adhering to the left frame line for a short distance and then curving into the colorless border inside the left frame line, down the left edge of the design and then curving back to the left and touching the left frame line at a point which on a horizontal plane is slightly below the lowest point of the “P” of “POSTAGE.”

- A blur, generally vertical in character, about 1 mm. outside the lower part of the left frame line, extending from a horizontal plane of about the top of the ball in the tail of the left “5” to slightly below the bottom frame line.

- A dot in the NW section of the colorless frame of the vignette, on a horizontal plane about two horizontal shading lines above the lowest portion of the base of the “P” of “POST.”

- A dot in the center of the stem of the second “F” of “OFFICE,” a little more than halfway up the stem.

- A vertical tick just outside the bottom frame line on a vertical plane below the left bottom point of the “W” of “RWH&E.” This mark also is found on position 10R, and it probably exists on a number of other positions as well.

Of course there is no guide dot in the left trifoliate.

Position 10R. (Fig. 6) This is the position illustrated in Brookman. The two most prominent plating marks are the two horizontal lines in the right side colorless border. One line is on a horizontal plane with the top of the right trifoliate, extending to the right just beyond the frame line; there is a small dot at the right end of this line. The other is on a

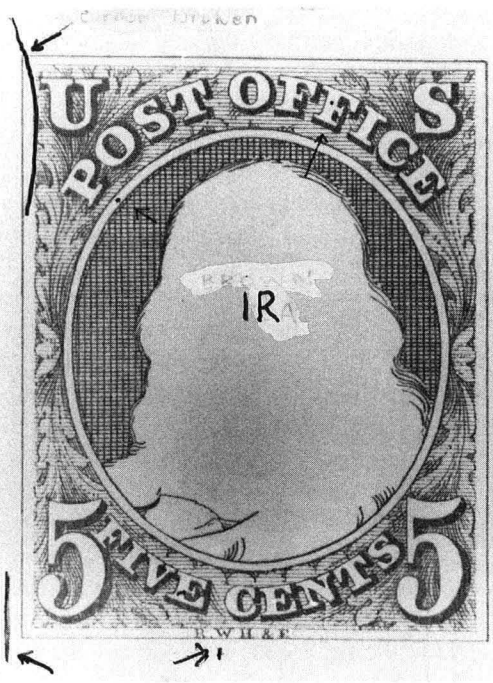


Figure 5. Plating characteristics, 5¢ 1847, Position 1R.

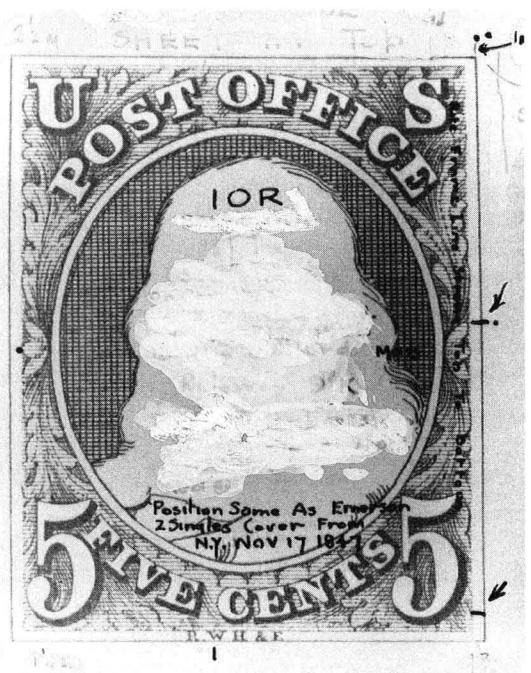


Figure 6. Plating characteristics, 5¢ 1847, Position 10R.

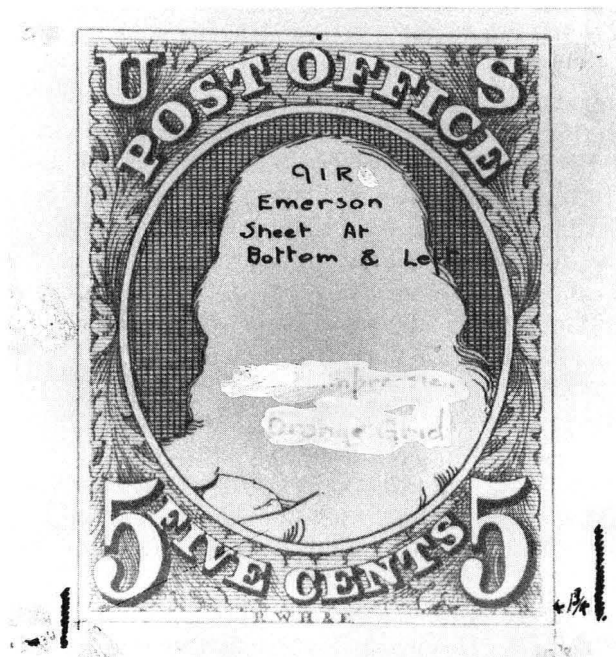


Figure 7. Plating characteristics, 5¢ 1847, Position 91R.



Figure 8. Plating characteristics, 5¢ 1847, Position 100R.

horizontal plane of the fifth shading line from the bottom of the design. Ashbrook notes on the illustrated diagram that "Rite Frame Line Strong Top To Bottom." There is a "nipple guide dot," so named because it juts out from the left trifoliate. There are two dots outside the UR frame line corner, on a NE-SW diagonal, with the lower dot about 1 mm. above the UR corner. This position also shows the vertical tick just outside the bottom frame line, as described above for position 1R.

Position 91R. (Fig. 7) A generally vertical blur of color marks the LL corner about 1/2 mm. outside the LL frame line, starting on a horizontal plane about the middle of the tail of the left "5" and continuing down for about 2 mm. below the horizontal plane of the bottom frame line. Although generally vertical, the blur slants slightly from NE at the top to SW at the bottom. It may vary in strength depending on the nature of the impression and the degree of wear on the plate since it is probably a shallow depression on the plate.

If one were to lay a straightedge from the junction of the top serifs of the "V" and "E" of "FIVE" diagonally to the LL corner, and extend it about 3 mm. SW, there is to be found a small horizontal tick.

If the position to the right shows, it may help in plating. 92R is slightly higher than 91R, and it, too, has a vertical blur at LL, outside the bottom of the left frame line. The 92R vertical blur is, however, somewhat different from that near 91R, the one near 92R being very slightly further away from the left frame line. It begins at the top slightly higher than the one to the left of 91R, and ends at the bottom on a horizontal plane just about at the bottom frame line.

No guide dot in the left trifoliate.

Position 100R. (Fig. 8) This position is among the easiest of the corner positions to identify because of several distinctive marks. There is a generally circular blur of color in the "S" of "POST" which disfigures the bottom of the top serif and impinges on the top of the lower curve of that letter. In addition, there is a blur of color in the shaded background above the flag of the right "5" which deepens the indentation of the leaf-like ornament. Finally there is a short horizontal line outside and directly below the LR corner. These features, particularly the last one, may be seen in the Brookman photo of the rejoined vertical strips of three (Fig. 49 of the original edition, Fig. 52 of the three-volume second edition). The left frame line is stronger than normal opposite the left trifoliate and for a short distance above and below the extremes of that ornament. The nipple guide dot extends from the upper tip of the middle leaf of the left trifoliate. The blur at the bottom of the "E" of "FIVE" may not be a constant mark.

If the bottom of the frame line of the stamp immediately above shows, it should be doubled, this being position 90R, double transfer "B."¹²

Some Concluding Thoughts

This plating of the eight corner positions should be regarded not so much as a discovery in itself, as it is a tool to help make a possible future discovery, namely evidence that the 5¢ 1847 plate had been reworked into a late state, in the form of the much discussed but never found ninth corner position. If such a corner position *is* found, it would be a major milestone in the research of the 1847 issue. Conversely, the continued absence of such a discovery will tend to indicate no reworking, and no late state of the plate, although of course it is not possible conclusively to prove a negative.

Just as any experienced fisherman knows locations where he thinks the big ones bite best, so, too, there is an area in which I would urge interested readers to look most carefully for evidence of a late state, or reworked, 5¢ 1847 corner copy. That is on covers showing usages in the first half of 1851, the last six months before the 5¢ stamp was demonetized. The reason this may be a fertile area of investigation is Ashbrook's opinion (which

¹²See the comments regarding the location of the "B" double transfer in the subsequent article, "Correction of a (Probable) Error."

is generally accepted) that if the 5¢ plate was reworked, it would have been done immediately before the December 9, 1850, fifth delivery, and the products of that fifth delivery would most likely have been used in the first half of 1851.¹³

One word of caution: corner positions may be difficult to plate, since they are particularly vulnerable to dry printing. This is caused by premature drying of the dampened blank sheets of stamp paper, which usually occurs first, and with greatest impact, at the outer edges and corners. Such dry prints may not pick up plating marks, and this is true of the four sheet corner positions especially, that is, 1L and 91L, 10R and 100R.¹⁴ Also, plate wear in the latter part of the period of use of the plate may have caused some of the marks to disappear or become fainter.

In summary, the thrust of this article is to give the opportunity for further research to the population of *Chronicle* readers. I would welcome the following information for future report in the *Chronicle*:

- All reports of *plated* corner copies, accompanied by clear photocopies sufficient to distinguish the stamp and/or cover from any other; and
- even more important, any report of what appears to be a corner copy showing evidence of reworking, and thus of a late state of the plate. □

¹³Ashbrook, *Special Service*, pp. 434-35.

¹⁴See Carroll Chase, "The United States 1847 Issue," *The Philatelic Gazette*, Vol. 6, No. 8 (Whole No. 84)(August 1916), p. 227.

CORRECTION OF A (PROBABLE) ERROR

JEROME S. WAGSHAL

After publication of the last *Chronicle* issue, featuring the interview with "Lone Star," several alert readers—the first being Wade Saadi, discoverer of the "T" crack—called or wrote to advise me of a bobble in the commentary. At page 167, I referred to the 5¢ 1847 "A" and "B" double transfers as being on the left pane of the plate. That was the product of a flat spot in my philatelic brain waves, and my thanks to all who wrote or called to correct me. It is encouraging to find that this section is being read so carefully by good students.

For decades it has been so well accepted that these two plate varieties are located on the *right* pane that their positions are listed as such in the Scott U.S. specialized catalog.

Nevertheless, this lapse caused me to wonder how the pane location of the "A" and "B" double transfers had been established. The answer is that, as with almost everything having to do with the plating of the 5¢ 1847, Dr. Chase started it and Ashbrook carried it forward. Chase established that "A" and "B" were from positions 80 and 90 in the pane, but without knowing which pane.¹ Ashbrook later explained that he had established that these two varieties were from the right pane by a single of the "B" double transfer which had a 7³/₄ mm. sheet margin at the right, without any trace of a stamp at the right edge of that margin. The width of the gutter between the two panes was approximately 7 mm., a fact established by the famed Emerson "straddle pane" copy.² At the time, Ashbrook stated that "while the proof is not conclusive, I think there is little question of a doubt" that the

¹So stated in Stanley B. Ashbrook, "The Five Cent of 1847 Double Transfers," *Stamp Specialist*, Yellow Book (1942), p. 3.

²Ashbrook described this process of identification in Ashbrook, "The United States Five Cent Stamp of 1847," *Stamp Specialist*, Vol. 1, Part 1 (1939), p. 43. The wide margined "B" double transfer was stated to be in the well-known Stephen D. Brown collection. The 1939 sale catalog of that collection does not picture such a stamp, but from the description it is probably Lot 83. The "straddle pane" copy is pictured in Lester G. Brookman, *The United States Postage Stamps of the 19th Century*, 2nd ed., Vol. 1 (New York: H.L. Lindquist), p. 13.

³Ashbrook, "The United States Five Cent Stamp of 1847," p. 43.

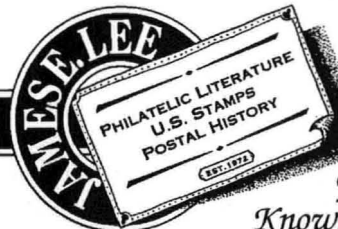
"A" and "B" varieties came from the right pane.³ Thus a mere three-fourths of a millimeter of sheet margin has served to place the "A" and "B" double transfers in the right pane. If the gutter at the lower part of the sheet in the area of 80L and 90L is wider than 7³/₄ mm., then Ashbrook's proof would be undercut.

It might be suggested that a horizontal multiple of either double transfer with a stamp to the left might provide proof that it was from the right pane if the stamp at left is not the "Dot in 'S'" variety. This is because all ninth vertical row positions of the left pane have long been thought to contain the "Dot in 'S'" variety. However, this generalization has been opened to question by the Ishikawa strip of ten, a horizontal strip from the left pane (as attested by the nine mm. margin at left) which mysteriously lacks the "Dot in 'S'" variety on the ninth stamp.⁴

Another suggestion is that the reconstructed block of six pictured as Fig. 52 in Brookman (1966 three-volume edition, Vol. 1, p. 43) provides evidence of the pane position of the "A" and "B" double transfers, because the bottom stamp of the right-hand strip plates as 100R. However, the validity of this conclusion depends on the correct plating of 100R by Ashbrook, as presented in the preceding article. I believe, but have not had the opportunity to verify, that the pane locations in the eight corner positions were correctly established. Verification by plating analysis of a number of related positions, however, would be complex and beyond the scope of this note.

Accordingly, although I accept the fact that I misstated the pane locations of the "A" and "B" double transfers, all presently known avenues of proof of the right pane locations are open at least to technical challenge. Who can conclusively resolve the issue? □

⁴See the learned discussion of this point by Mal Brown, in "Observations on Lot 22 in the Ishikawa Sale: A Letter from Malcolm L. Brown," *Chronicle*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Whole No. 161)(February 1994), pp. 161-62.



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QUINTESSENTIAL COVERS: PART III
HUBERT C. SKINNER

This is the third part in a series of short articles on what I have termed “Quintessential Covers” (see *Chronicle* 162, p. 103; *Chronicle* 163, p. 169). A quintessential cover is highly desirable and collectible for a number of compelling reasons—not merely another attractive and presentable example of a certain stamp used on cover. As defined, a quintessential cover commonly is unique in several of its aspects, and in its combination of stamp varieties and usages is “matchless” and clearly “one of a kind.”

The quintessential cover here described is a large valentine envelope used on “FEB 12” [1852] from “DEEP RIVER/Ct.” to Westbrook, Connecticut (see Figure 1). The quadruple rate of postage was prepaid with three 1¢ stamps and three 3¢ stamps from the imperforate issues of 1851-1856. The envelope measures 8½ by 10⅞ inches and bears an all-over printed floral and ribbon design (front and back) in bronze ink. It is accompanied by the elaborately blind-stamped enclosure with an ornamented smaller blind-stamped envelope attached at center containing a card with a valentine poem. The whole is embellished with added colorful floral and ribbon pattern motifs (see Figure 2). A green seal closing the smaller envelope bears the inscription “A LETTER SOFTENS THE PAIN OF ABSENCE,” printed in gold ink. On the cover itself, a vertical pair of 1¢ stamps was placed in the lower left corner of the envelope with a single 3¢ stamp affixed at each of the other corners. These stamps are canceled and tied by the cds of Deep River, Connecticut, symmetrically struck at each of the corners—a most attractive arrangement. The third 1¢ stamp was attached to the back of the envelope to close the flap. The name and address of the recipient, Miss Eunice M. Chittenden, is inscribed at the center of the cover.

Such large ornamental valentine envelopes, though not too common, are fairly typical of the late 1840s and 1850s. Several other similar valentine covers are recorded bearing the 1847 or 1851-60 adhesive issues. The unusual and quintessential nature of this cover pertains to the stamps with which it was franked. All three of the 1¢ stamps are from Plate One Early, are different types and, thus, have different catalogue numbers. The vertical pair (see Figure 3) is from positions 7-17R1^E and the single is from position 3R1^E. The top stamp in the vertical pair is Type I, the rarest general issue United States postage stamp (Scott No. 5)*. The bottom stamp in the pair is a Type IIIa (Scott No. 8A) with a wide break at the top and the single stamp on the flap is a “distinct example” of Type Ib (Scott No. 5A). The three imperforate 3¢ stamps are brownish carmine (Scott No. 11), the typical color of 3¢ stamps printed in 1852 after the mixture of pigments was changed (very late in 1851) from the 80% Venetian red (iron oxide pigment) and 20% vermilion (mercuric sulphide pigment) used for the earlier orange brown paintings to “a very good quality of Venetian red without admixture of vermilion.” (Chase, 1929, pp. 150-51). One additional cover is recorded with the rare 1¢ Type I used in combination with two other types of the 1¢ designs; however, it is a single rate intercity cover and does not bear any additional adhesive stamps. Thus, our quintessential cover is unique in its combination of three 1¢ types with, in addition, the 3¢ stamps. Further, this cover bears the only Type I 1¢ stamp known used on a valentine envelope.

In Figure 3, the vertical pair is illustrated in natural size. At the right of Figure 3 is a reproduction of Stanley B. Ashbrook’s drawing of position 7R1^E, the single position on

*There are fewer recorded examples of certain catalogue-listed “stamps” impressed with grills of unusual sizes, but these are not considered by this writer to be separate general issue postage stamps.

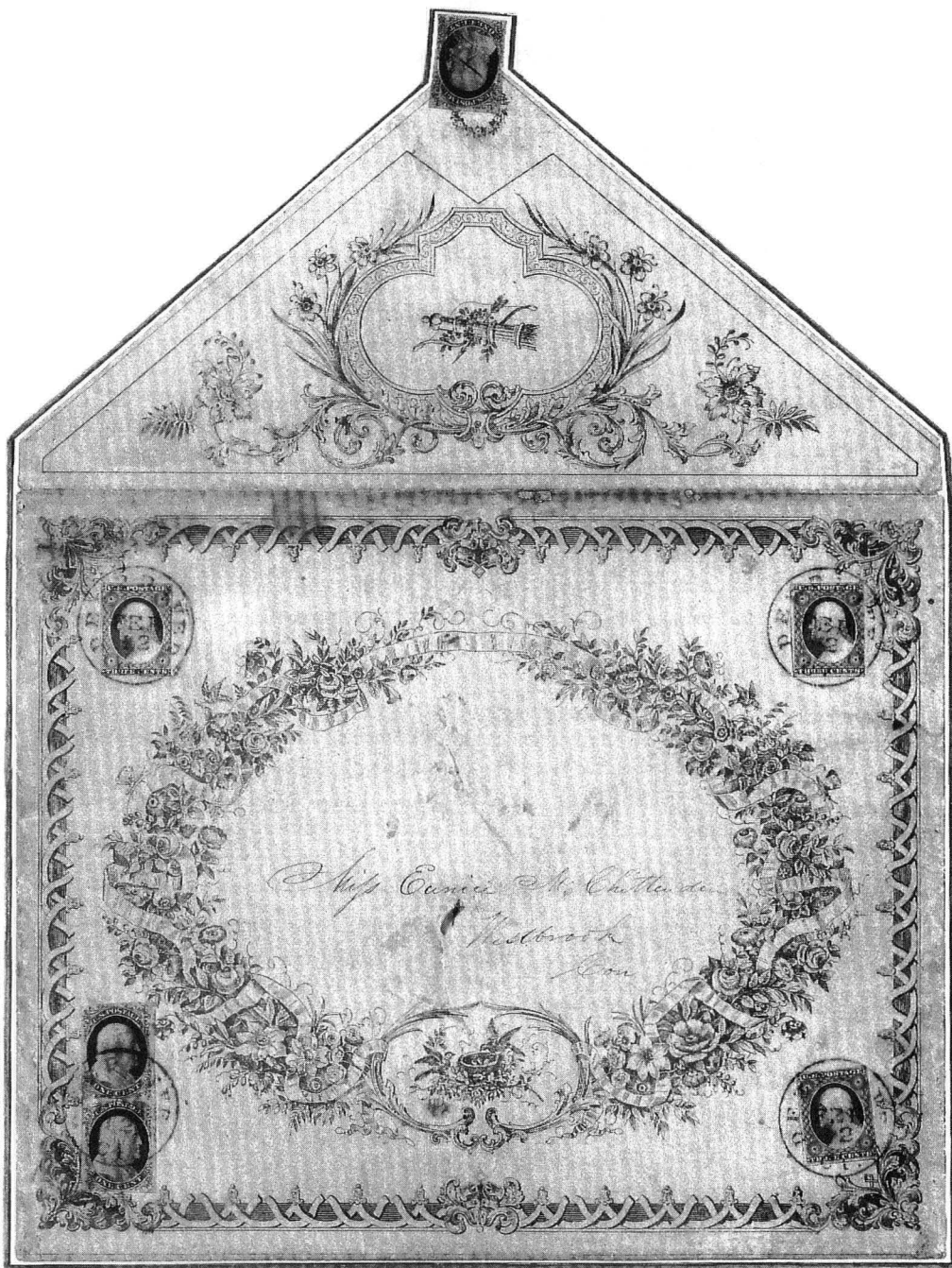


Figure 1. The large valentine envelope from "DEEP RIVER/Ct." to "Westbrook, Con.," a quadruple rate cover bearing three 1¢ stamps (7-17R1^e and 3R1^e)(Scott No. 5, 8A, 5A) and three 3¢ stamps (Scott No. 11) from the 1851-56 issues, a unique combination franking.

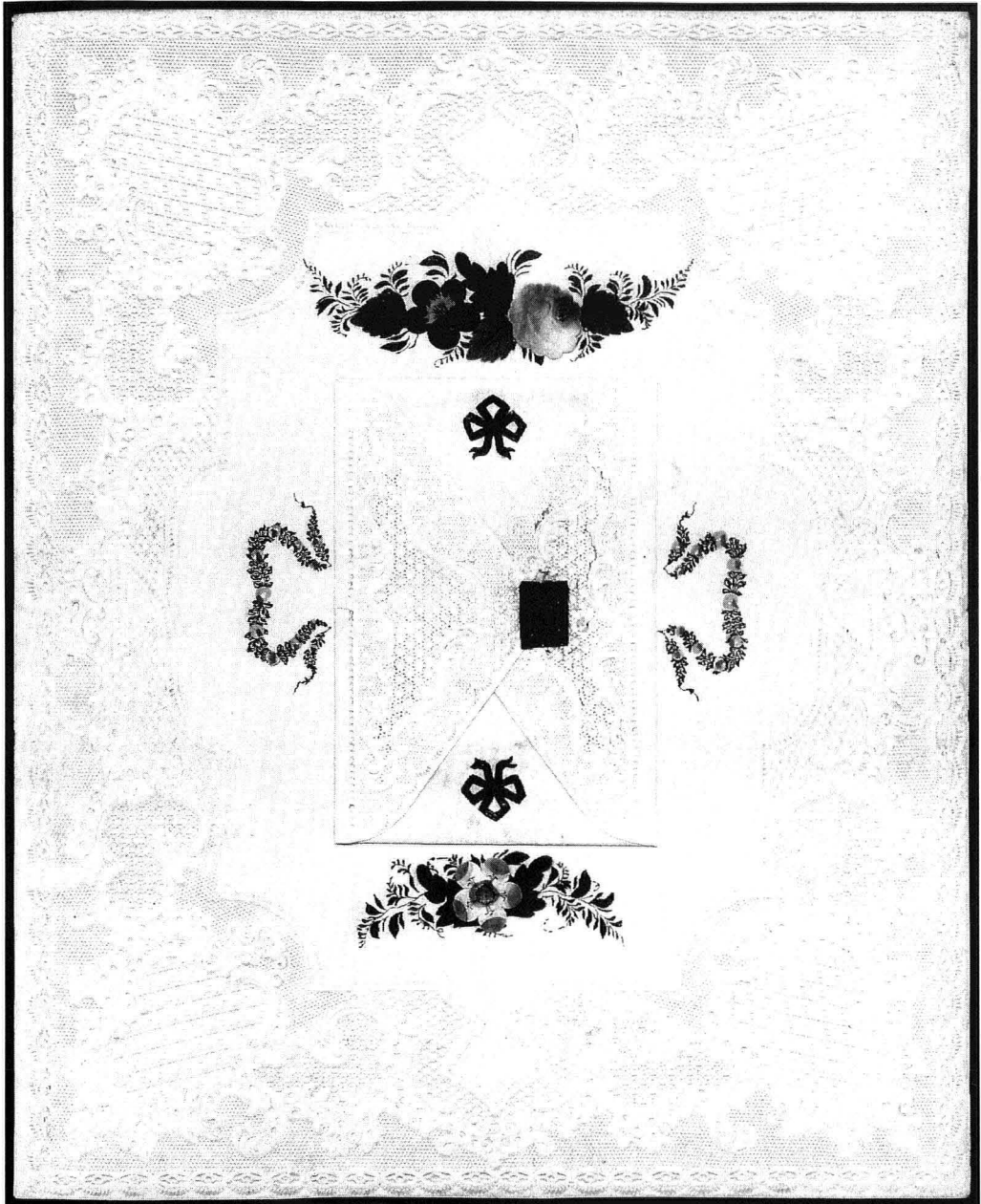


Figure 2. The blind-stamped valentine enclosure which accompanies the cover illustrated in Figure 1. A card with a valentine poem is enclosed in the smaller envelope.



Figure 3. A close-up view (natural size) of the vertical pair of 1¢ stamps, positions 7-17R1^E, with Ashbrook's drawing of the rare Type I position placed alongside (Ashbrook, 1938, Vol. I, p. 78; Neinken, 1972, p. 35).

Plate One Early which produced all imperforate Type I stamps (Ashbrook, 1938, Vol. I, p. 78; Neinken, 1972, p. 35). Note the full and complete Type I design (which occurs only in this position on the plate), especially the full plumes and the scrolls complete with turned-under balls at the bottom. This position is one of the most prominent double transfer positions on Plate I, as shown by the fully doubled top right corner, the strong shift of the vignette at the right, and the very prominent doubling throughout "POSTAGE" and "ONE CENT." The most unusual and salient characteristic produced by doubling of the design in 7R1^E is the four quadrilaterally placed short dashes which are clearly visible in the "O" of "POSTAGE." These four dashes in the "O" can be used as a quick and convenient key to the recognition of this position.

The bottom stamp in the vertical pair, 17R1^E, is shown at the right in Figure 4. The design was short transferred at the top, leaving the design incomplete. Note the wide break in the top line at top center which makes this position an excellent example of Type IIIa. As 7R1^E was entered with Relief "T" in its original state or "First Condition" (which was complete at top and bottom) and 17R1^E was entered with Relief "A" (which was not complete at the bottom), some of the design differences are due to differences in the two

reliefs. Thus, 7R1^E is complete at top and bottom (as in Figure 3) and 17R1^E is incomplete at top and bottom. The reader is referred to the classic volumes on the 1¢ stamps by Ashbrook (1938) and Neinken (1972) for further definition of the differences in the various design types and the transfer roll reliefs.

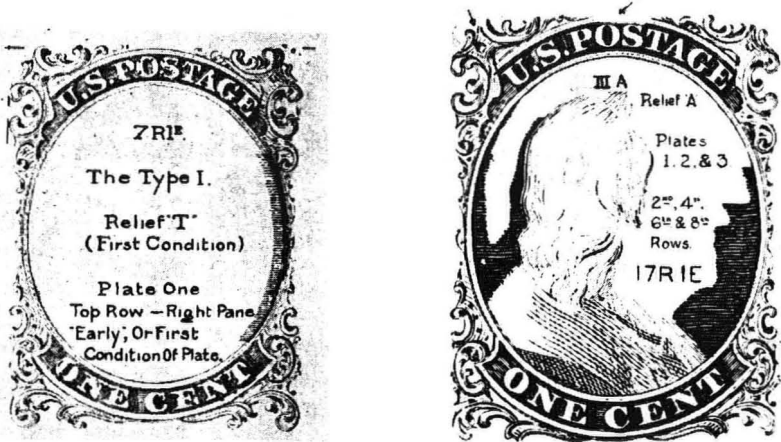


Figure 4. Ashbrook’s and Neinken’s drawings of the two positions in the vertical pair of 1¢ stamps, position 7R1^E on the left (Type I)(Ashbrook, 1938, Vol. I, p. 103; Neinken, 1972, p. 58) and 17R1^E on the right (Type IIIa)(Neinken, 1972, p. 96).

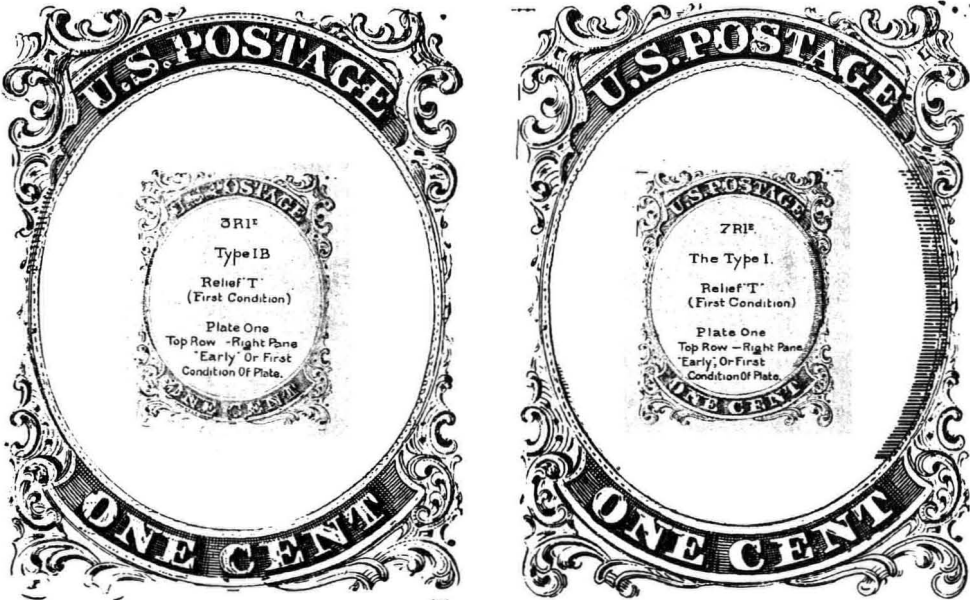


Figure 5. Ashbrook’s drawings of 3R1^E (Type Ib) and 7R1^E (Type I), the two top row positions from Plate One Early which show complete or nearly complete designs. (Ashbrook, 1938, Vol. I, pp. 107 and 103; Neinken, 1972, pp. 62 and 58). Both are major double transfers.

The single stamp closing the flap of the envelope is from position 3R1^E, a Type Ib stamp from the top row of the right pane of Plate One Early. Type Ib is complete at the top and nearly complete at the bottom, missing only the lower portion of the plumes and part of the turned-under balls on the scrolls (see Figure 5). Position 3R1^E is another major double transfer position from Plate One Early. See Figure 5 for a comparison of the details of the designs of 3R1^E (Type Ib) and 7R1^E (Type I). Both positions were entered by Relief "T" in its "First Condition" (complete Type I design). Position 3R1^E is full and complete at the top with strong doubling at the top left and top right and throughout "U.S.POSTAGE" and "ONE CENT."

In summary, the presence of three rare and spectacular examples of the 1¢ imperforate stamps combined with three 3¢ stamps to make up the quadruple rate ($4 \times 3¢ = 12¢$) on an overweight valentine cover, together with the fairly early usage of the 1851-56 issues and the attractive arrangement of the stamps on the envelope, clearly qualifies this as a quintessential cover. □

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- Skinner, Hubert C. "Quintessential Covers: Part II." *Chronicle*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Whole No. 163)(August 1994), pp. 169-173, 4 figs.

LETTERS OF GOLD

by Jesse L. Coburn

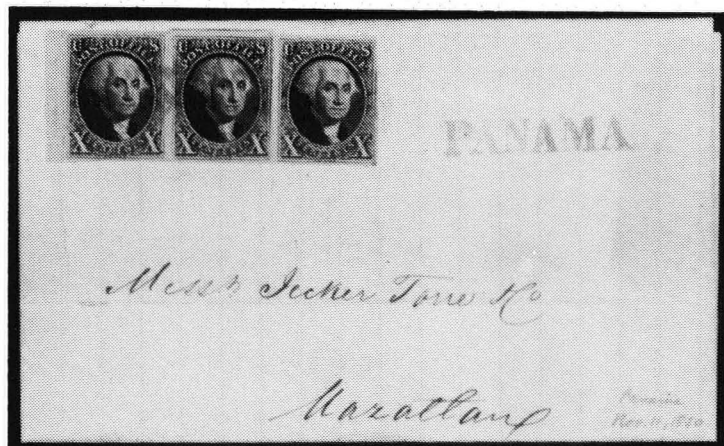
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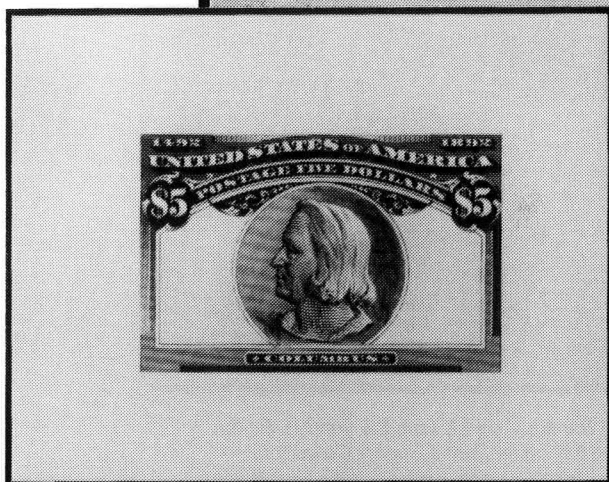
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SOLDIER'S LETTER OVALS
RICHARD B. GRAHAM

Section Editor Mike McClung ran a table of known covers with the large oval marking "Soldier's Letter" on pages 114-17 of *Chronicle* No. 154 (May 1992). Since he also ran a bibliography listing previous articles on the same subject that have appeared in the *Chronicle*, it doesn't seem necessary to repeat such data here. Covers with the large oval marking followed a pattern of being sent to the Dead Letter Office because they lacked prepaid postage or a satisfactory "soldier's letter" certification so they could be sent collect. These covers usually have a backstamp, in accordance with regulations, of the town where they entered the mails and from whence they were sent to the Dead Letter Office.

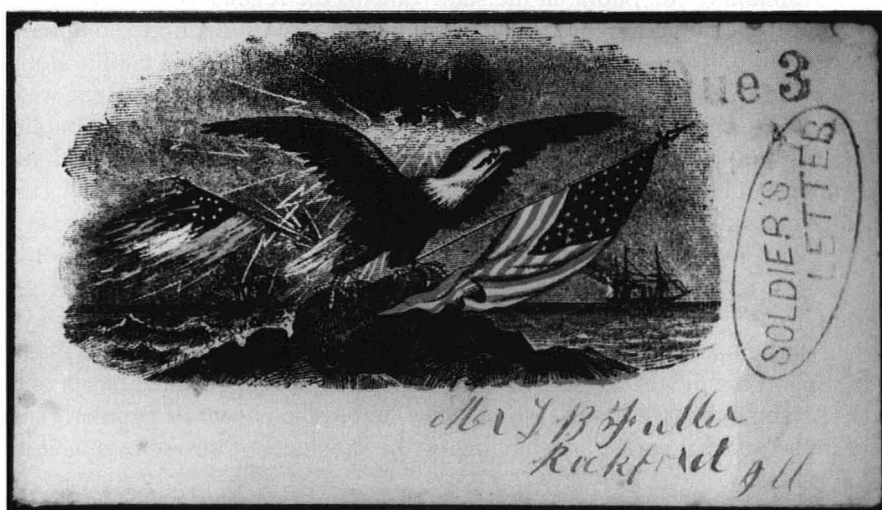


Figure 1. "Soldier's Letter" oval on unpaid "Due 3" patriotic cover addressed to Rockford, Illinois.

Strong evidence suggests that the large ovals and the accompanying due markings were applied at the Dead Letter Office, and the covers then mailed, as normal correctly certified soldier's letters, to their addressees rather than being returned to unidentified soldier senders in the field.

The cover shown here has a Rockford, Illinois, backstamp dated April 18, 1863, with the year date inverted in the small double circle backstamp. The design is a quite pretty patriotic; the cover was shown me by Bob Baldrige. □

**THE SPECIAL PRINTINGS OF THE 1¢ AGRICULTURE AND
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTAL STAMPS
WILLIAM E. MOOZ**

This article continues the series of articles which deal with the special printing program begun in 1875 and terminated in 1884. The purpose of these articles is to bring together data from several sources in a way that builds a story about these elusive stamps, and which determines how many of the stamps there were, who printed them, when the printings were made, and how the printings differ from each other.

This article focuses on the special printing of the 1¢ Agriculture and Executive Departmental (or Official) stamps, often called Departmental Specimens. These stamps were printed and available to the public at the same time as the regular Departmental (or Official) issue was in use, although the postal regulations in force at the time did not allow the legal ownership of unused regular Departmental stamps by the general public. Both of the stamps described in this article had an initial printing of 10,000, consistent with other stamps in this series. There was, however, the problem of assuring that the public could not use these special printings for postal purposes. To assure that this was not done, these Departmental special printings were overprinted with the word "SPECIMEN." This word was probably chosen because the Post Office Department described all of these special printings as "SPECIMENS," and all correspondence relating to them uses this wording.

The subject of these stamps has been previously treated in an exhaustive study by Rear Admiral W. V. Combs, USN (retired).¹ This article does not try to in any way restate the excellent and pioneering Combs study, except to use some of its data and illustrations to provide support for the text. The article attempts to expand upon some facets of the history of these stamps that were not easily studied before the advent of popularly available computers. In a very real way, I am standing on the shoulders of the Admiral and carrying his work a bit further.

The 1¢ Agriculture

The records of the Post Office Department indicate the following purchases of the 1¢ Agriculture stamp:

Purchased from Continental Bank Note Company, 7/21/75	10,000
Purchased from Continental Bank Note Company, 12/31/75	10,000
Purchased from American Bank Note Company, 12/31/83	5,000
Total	25,000

Copies of the payment records for these purchases appear in Figs. 1, 2, and 3.²

There are no surviving sales records until May 1879, when we are fortunate to have press copies of the invoices of the sales of these special printings by the office of the 3rd Assistant Post Master General.³ These records cover the period from May 1879 to July 1882. The program of sales continued beyond that date until July 16, 1884, when it was

¹W.V. Combs, *U. S. Departmental Specimen Stamps* (State College, Pa.: American Philatelic Society, 1965).

²Records of the Post Office Department, Record Group 28, Bill Book #3, entries for June 30, 1875, December 31, 1875, and December 31, 1883

³Records of the Post Office Department, Record Group 28, Press copies of Invoices, 1879, GSA, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D. C.

Specimens

June 30, 1875.

Official stamps, (with word "specimen" imprinted on face) furnished for sale as specimens by the Department to Stamp-gatherers. - Continental Bank Note Co., contractors. - Bill approved July 6, 75.

Nominations	Post Office	Treasury	Interior	War	Navy	Agriculture	Justice	States	Insular	Total
1. cent	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	90,000
2. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	90,000
3. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	90,000
6. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	90,000
7. "	-	10,000	-	10,000	10,000	-	-	10,000	-	40,000
10. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	90,000
12. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	-	80,000
15. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	-	80,000
14. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	-	80,000
20. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	-	80,000
40. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	-	10,000	10,000	-	70,000
2. dollar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	1,000
5. "	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	1,000
10. "	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	1,000
10: "	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	1,000
Total	100,000	110,000	110,000	110,000	110,000	90,000	100,000	114,000	50,000	984,000

984,000 stamps in all, at 80 cents per thousand. \$ 707. 20

No extra charge made for printing the word "specimen" on above stamps.

Figure 1. Bill Book record of June 30, 1875, for initial purchase of 1¢ Departmental specimens from Continental Bank Note Company.

terminated.⁴ We are also fortunate to know the total number of copies sold, since we know the total number delivered, and we also know that 4,766 copies were destroyed at the end of the program.⁵ The number sold was 25,000 less 4,766, or 20,234 copies.

Sales during the period from May 1879 and July 1882 are recorded in the "Press Copies of the Invoices," and are tabulated in Table 1. During this period, there was a total of 4,604 individual 1¢ stamps sold, and there were an additional 67 1¢ stamps sold as part of complete sets. The total number of the 1¢ stamp sold during this period was thus 4,671

⁴John Luff, *The Postage Stamps of the United States* (New York: Scott Stamp & Coin Co., Ltd., 1902), page 357.

⁵*Ibid.*

December 31, 1875.

Specimen Postage Stamps of various issues furnished for sale as specimens to stamp-gatherers during the quarter ending as above. Continental Bank Note Co. Contractors. - Bills rendered separately - Rec'd Jan. 6, 1876 Jan. 10, 76

Issue of 1850 (Current)	10,000	Two-cent (vermillion)	
	10,000	Five-cent	
	20,000	Stamps, at 14.99 each per thousand	\$ 3.00
Issue of 74-cent. Abolished	10,000		
	10,000		
	20,000	Stamps, at \$1 per thousand	\$ 20.00
Issue of 1851	10,000		
	10,000		
	20,000	Stamps, at 80 cents per thousand	\$ 16.00
Issue of 1873 (Officials)	10,000		
	10,000		
	10,000		
	10,000	Stamps, at 80 cents per thousand	\$ 32.00

Figure 2. Bill Book record of December 31, 1875, for purchase of 1¢ Departmental specimens from Continental Bank Note Company.

31st December 1883.

Specimen Postage Stamps furnished during month ending as above by The American Bank Note Company of New York

Number	Denomination & Issue	
5,000	1 Cent - Executive	
5,000	1 " - Agriculture	
2,000	2 " - Washington (1883)	
2,000	4 " - Jackson. (")	
14,000	\$ 15.00	

allow fifteen dollars @ charge to appropriation for the manufacture of Postage Stamps for fiscal year ending 30 June 1884. These articles, not provided for by contract were purchased in open market the exigencies of the service requiring their immediate delivery.

Figure 3. Bill Book record of December 31, 1883, for purchase of 1¢ Executive and Agriculture specimens from American Bank Note Company.

Table 1 - Sales of 1¢ Agriculture Stamp			
Date	Singles	Sets	Total
May-79	0	2	2
Jun-79	1	3	4
Jul-79	1	3	4
Aug-79	17	7	24
Sep-79	67	9	76
Oct-79	68	9	77
Nov-79	143	11	154
Dec-79	353	12	365
Jan-80	353	15	368
Feb-80	353	19	372
Mar-80	665	21	686
Apr-80	715	24	739
May-80	915	26	941
Jun-80	915	26	941
Jul-80	1316	27	1343
Aug-80	1321	28	1349
Sep-80	1321	28	1349
Oct-80	1323	28	1351
Nov-80	1344	31	1375
Dec-80	1723	31	1754
Jan-81	1724	31	1755
Feb-81	2026	32	2058
Mar-81	2560	34	2594
Apr-81	2660	45	2705
May-81	2986	49	3035
Jun-81	3212	50	3262
Jul-81	3213	50	3263
Aug-81	3214	50	3264
Sep-81	3719	51	3770
Oct-81	3756	51	3807
Nov-81	3756	53	3809
Dec-81	3770	54	3824
Jan-82	4092	55	4147
Feb-82	4092	55	4147
Mar-82	4592	56	4648
Apr-82	4602	61	4663
May-82	4602	62	4664
Jun-82	4603	64	4667

Table 2 - Sales of 1¢ Executive Stamp			
Date	Singles	Sets	Total
May-79	0	14	14
Jun-79	0	25	25
Jul-79	0	29	29
Aug-79	15	45	60
Sep-79	15	50	65
Oct-79	16	62	78
Nov-79	266	70	336
Dec-79	521	93	614
Jan-80	721	133	854
Feb-80	721	147	868
Mar-80	734	166	900
Apr-80	834	177	1011
May-80	834	189	1023
Jun-80	835	200	1035
Jul-80	1235	203	1438
Aug-80	1237	207	1444
Sep-80	1237	210	1447
Oct-80	1239	219	1458
Nov-80	1260	233	1493
Dec-80	1660	274	1934
Jan-81	1661	279	1940
Feb-81	1962	287	2249
Mar-81	2482	310	2792
Apr-81	2582	349	2931
May-81	2896	428	3324
Jun-81	3601	470	4071
Jul-81	3611	526	4137
Aug-81	3614	530	4144
Sep-81	4019	544	4563
Oct-81	4060	550	4610
Nov-81	4260	581	4841
Dec-81	4280	588	4868
Jan-82	4601	590	5191
Feb-82	4602	614	5216
Mar-82	4602	659	5261
Apr-82	4602	708	5310
May-82	4602	751	5353
Jun-82	4803	778	5581

Tables 1 and 2

Tabulations of monthly sales, 1¢ Agriculture and Executive special printings

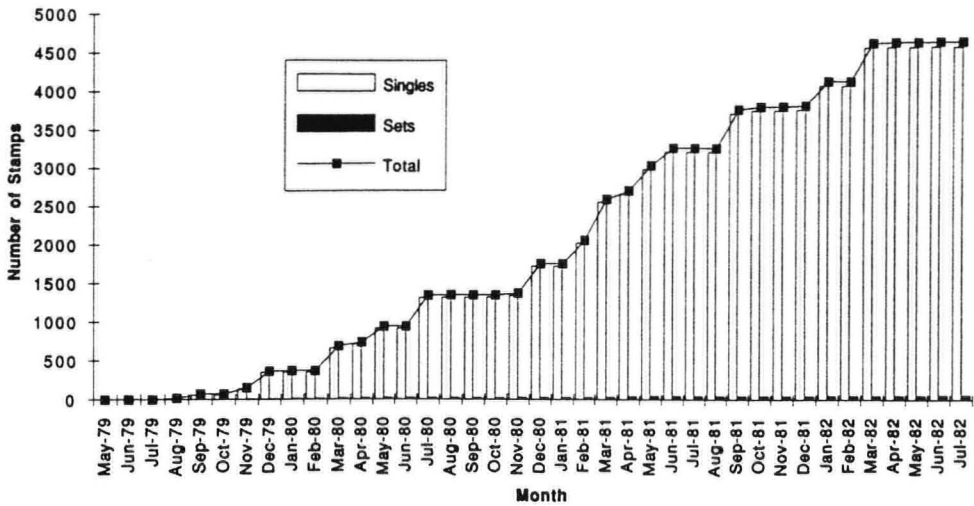


Figure 4. Sales of Agriculture special printing sets and 1¢ singles.

stamps. A chart showing the pace of the sales appears in Figure 4.

As in previous articles in this series, these data from the invoices may be combined with data about the receipt of the stamps, and the known total quantity sold, to produce a simulation of the sales over the entire program. This chart is shown in Figure 5, and demonstrates reasonably brisk sales at the beginning of the program, followed by a relatively moderate pace, and then a modest upward trend to the sale of the stamps towards the end of the program. Probably most of these were made to dealers. The records show the following sales to dealers during the period covered by the invoices:

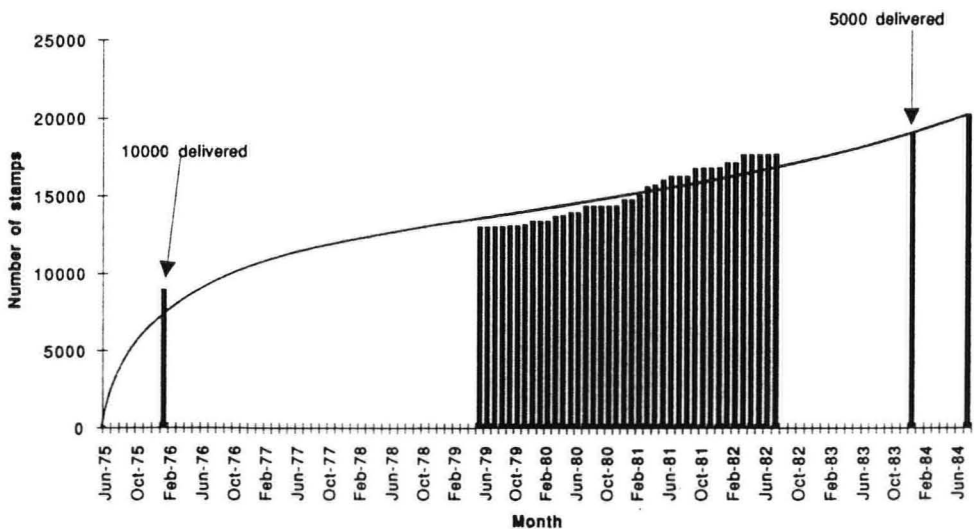


Figure 5. Total 1¢ Agriculture special printing stamps sold.

Whitfield, King, & Co.	1,319
Stanley Gibbons	700
C. N. Butler	500
Edward Peck & Co.	400
E. A. Holton	200
R. R. Bogert	150
C. W. Campbell	100
W. A. Trider	100
Paul Lietzow	100
National Stamp Co.	100
William W. Phair	100
N. F. Seebeck	25
Total	3,794

This is slightly more than 82% of the total number of 1¢ stamps sold during this period, without being part of complete sets. If the sale of sets to dealers, and the sale of smaller quantities of the 1¢ stamps to dealers are added, probably over 85% of the sales were to dealers. This is consistent with what has been found for the other 1875 special printings examined in earlier articles. It has been thought that the sales to dealers were for the purpose of using these stamps in packets. These low value stamps were ideal for packets, since the regular official stamps could not be obtained, and therefore the persons who bought the packets would receive stamps that they could not otherwise get. Whether this is true or not, we will later see that as this special printing program drew to a close, the sales of these stamps accelerated. We have no records of who purchased these stamps at the end of the program, but it appears safe to assume that most of them were bought by dealers, and that their purchases commonly included one or more full sheets. This concentration of full sheets in dealers' hands led to an interesting phenomenon. Despite the relatively small number of these stamps sold, it is not uncommon to find multiples of various sizes, and even intact full sheets. The number of these multiples is out of proportion with what might be expected from the number of stamps sold. It is not the purpose of these articles to make a listing of the various sizes and numbers of multiples which are known to exist, but rather to suggest that they are more common than might be thought.

The identification of the first two of the three printings was established by Admiral Combs. The first printing is on hard white paper, and the second printing is on horizontally ribbed paper. These are illustrated in Figures 6 and 7, and to emphasize that the identification is correct, the SEPCIMEN error is shown for the first printing, and the lower case "i" SPECiMEN error is shown for the second printing. The SEPCIMEN error resulted from an incorrect setting of the type during the first printing in position 21. Part way through the printing of these official stamps, the error was discovered and corrected. The error only exists on the first printing, and is proof of that printing.

When the overprint plate for the second printing was typeset, an error was made in position 7 and position 26, where a lower case "i" was used instead of an upper case "I." Again, this only existed on the second printing, and it is proof of that printing. There are more multiples of the second printing than of the first, which is what might be expected from the pattern of sales. Various sized blocks are known, as are strips, and a full sheet. The second printing is on horizontally ribbed paper, and the ribbing appears either on the face of the stamp or the reverse, depending upon the way that the blank sheets were stacked and the way that the printer put them into the press. About $\frac{2}{3}$ of the second printing was made on paper on which the ribs appear on the back, and $\frac{1}{3}$ have the ribbing on the front.



Figure 6. 1¢ Agriculture special printing, first printing (with "SEPCIMEN" error).

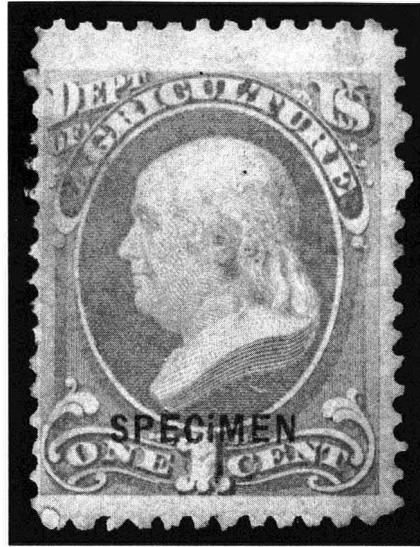


Figure 7. 1¢ Agriculture special printing, second printing (with "SPECiMEN" error).

Positive identification of the American Bank Note Company fifth printing* has yet to be made, and scholars are divided into two camps. The first camp alleges that the fifth printing is on soft paper but did not have the SPECIMEN overprint. The stamp is known, and appears in the Scott catalog as number O94. It is perhaps the result of the delivery of 65 stamps to the Agriculture Department by the Stamp Agent in 1883, and the delivery of 150 stamps in 1884.⁶ Why these stamps were delivered is an unsolved mystery, since the number of 1¢ Agriculture stamps on hand was far more than was needed at the time. Further contributing to the confusion is the fact that the stamp was ungummed.

The second camp notes that the 1¢ Agriculture stamp with SPECIMEN overprint exists on an intermediate soft paper, and alleges that this may be the fifth printing. An intermediate soft paper example is shown in Figure 8. Much has been written about the subject, and those interested in further details may find them in the reference listed below.⁷ Suffice it to say that a positive identification has yet to be made, and that only approximately 234 of this fifth printing were sold.

The Scott catalog lists the first and second printings, but does not distinguish between them other than to refer to the differences in paper. The first printing is identified

*The convention established by Admiral Combs is used here. There was a total of five printings of the 1¢ official stamps. The first printing included all stamps in the series. The second printing consisted of the 1¢ stamps of the Agriculture, Executive, Justice and State Departments. The third printing included the 1¢ Executive, Navy and War stamps. The fourth printing consisted of the 1¢ State Department stamp. The fifth printing consisted of the 1¢ Agriculture, 1¢ Executive and 1¢ War Department stamps.

⁶*Ibid.*, page 280.

⁷W.E. Mooz, "The 1¢ Agriculture Stamp of 1879," *The American Philatelist*, Vol. 101, No. 11, November 1987.

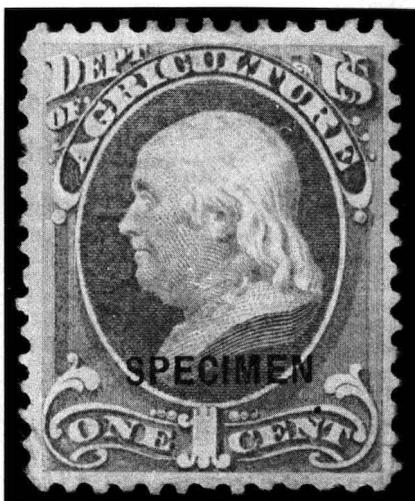


Figure 8. 1¢ Agriculture special printing, on intermediate soft paper.

as O1SD, and the second printing is referred to as O1SDc. This is a rather peculiar designation, since it follows O1SDb, which is the small dotted “i” error which only appears on O1SDc. Scott does not mention the fifth printing, and they correctly list the total number of stamps sold as 20,234. They have not broken these down into the 10,000 which were sold from the first printing, the 10,000 from the second, and the 234 from the fifth.

A more correct catalog listing for this stamp would be as follows:

1875 (July) SPECIAL PRINTING
 Overprinted in Block Letters **SPECIMEN**
 Produced by the Continental Bank Note Company
 Perf. 12
 Hard white paper, issued without gum
 Type D
 Carmine Overprint

OIS D 1¢ yellow (10,000)
 Block of four
 a. “SEPCIMEN” error

1875 (December) Horizontally Ribbed Paper

OIS D c. 1¢ yellow (10,000)
 Block of four
 b. Small dotted “i” in “SPECiMEN”

1883 Produced by the American Bank Note Company

OIS D d. 1¢ yellow (234)
 Positive identifying characteristics of this stamp have not yet been determined.

This latter listing should appear after the 1875 listings, and under the 1883 heading. This is in accord with the convention for the regular issue stamps.

The 1¢ Executive

The records of the Post Office Department indicate the following purchases of the 1¢ Executive stamp:

Purchased from Continental Bank Note Company, 7/21/75	10,000
Purchased from Continental Bank Note Company, 12/31/75	10,000
Purchased from American Bank Note Company, 2/28/81	5,000
Purchased from American Bank Note Company, 12/31/83	5,000
Total	30,000

Copies of the payment records for these purchases have already been shown in Fig. 1, 2, and 3 except for the 1881 purchase. A copy of this record appears in Fig. 9.⁸

February 28th 1881.

Specimen postage stamps furnished during the month ending as above to the American Bank Note Company of New York, Contractors.

<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Denomination</i>	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Particulars</i>
<i>10000</i>	<i>1c</i>	<i>1851</i>	<i>Engle.</i>
<i>5000</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1851</i>	<i>Banklin.</i>
<i>5000</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>1865</i>	<i>A & P.</i>
<i>5000</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>Navy Department</i>
<i>5000</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>Mad "</i>
<i>5000</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>Executive "</i>
<i>35000</i>			<i>\$50.00</i>

The above articles not provided for by contracts, were purchased in open markets - the exigencies of the service requiring their immediate delivery.

Figure 9. Bill Book record of February 28, 1881, for purchase of 1¢ Executive specimens from American Bank Note Company.

We know that 5,348 copies were destroyed at the end of the program, and thus the number sold was 30,000 less 5,348, or 24,652 copies.⁹ Note that the number of copies destroyed exceeds the 5,000 copies supplied on 12/31/83, and thus we assume that the entire 5,000 copies of this fifth printing were destroyed.

Sales during the period from May 1879 and July 1882 are recorded in the "Press Copies of the Invoices," and are tabulated in Table 2. During this period, there was a total of 4,804 individual 1¢ stamps sold, and there were an additional 780 1¢ stamps sold as part of complete sets. The total number of 1¢ stamps sold during this period was thus 5,584 stamps. A chart showing the pace of the sales appears in Figure 10.

As shown above, these data from the invoices may be combined with data about the receipt of the stamps, and the known total quantity sold to produce a simulation of the sales over the entire program. This chart is shown in Figure 11. The records show the following sales to dealers during the period covered by the invoices:

⁸Records of the Post Office Department, Record Group 28, Bill Book #3, entry for February 28, 1881.

⁹Luff, *op. cit.*, page 357.

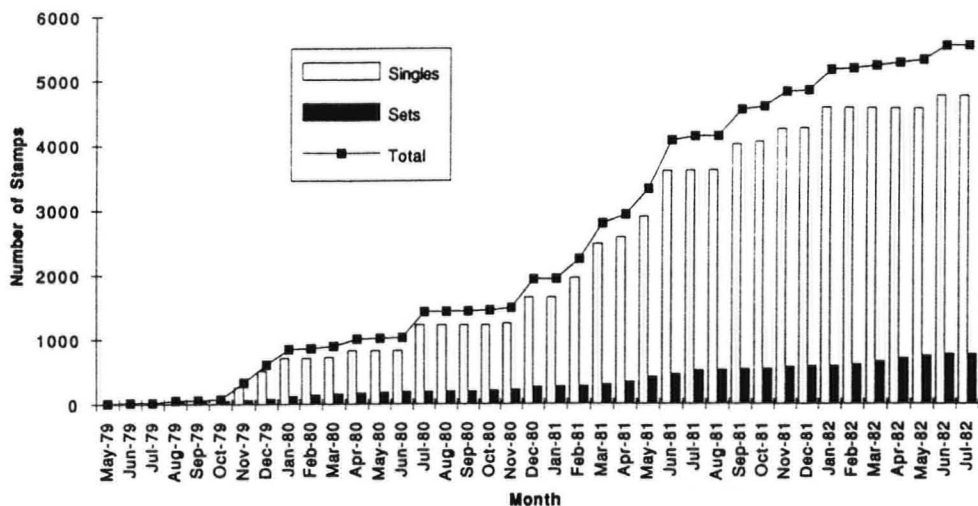


Figure 10. Sales of Executive special printing sets and 1c singles.

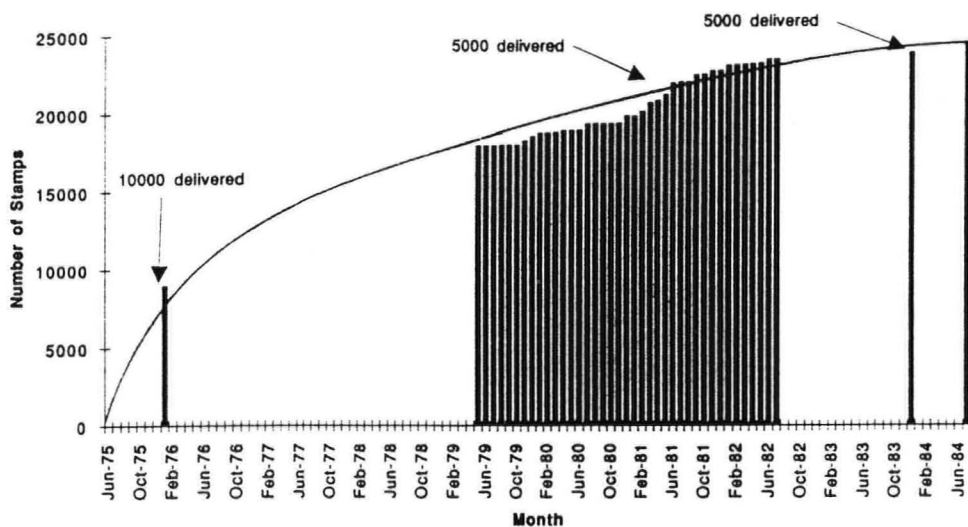


Figure 11. Total 1c Executive special printing stamps sold.

Whitfield, King, & Co.	1,500
Stanley Gibbons	700
C. N. Butler	500
Edward Peck & Co.	400
Paul Lietzow	345
Julius Goldner	300
E. A. Holton	200
R. R. Bogert	150
National Stamp Co.	104
W. A. Trider	100
J. T. Handford	100
William W. Phair	100

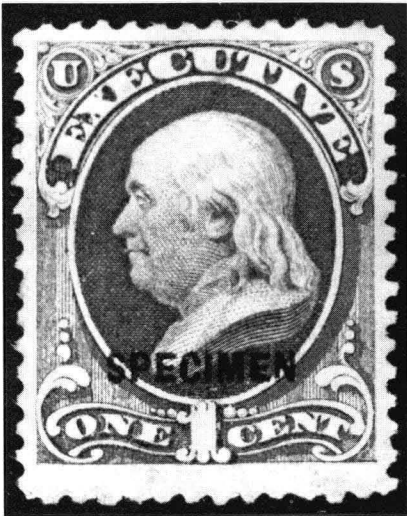


Figure 12. 1¢ Executive special printing, first printing.

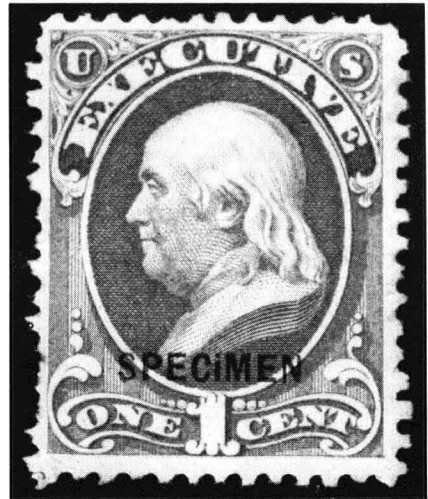


Figure 13. 1¢ Executive special printing, second printing.

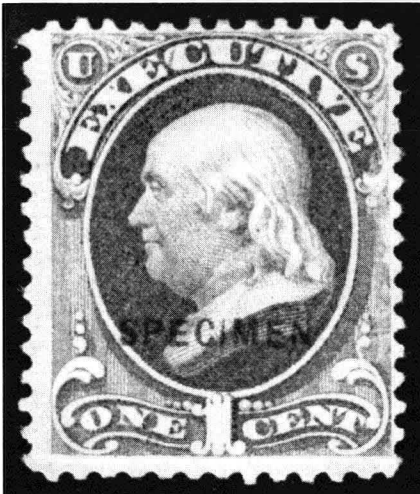
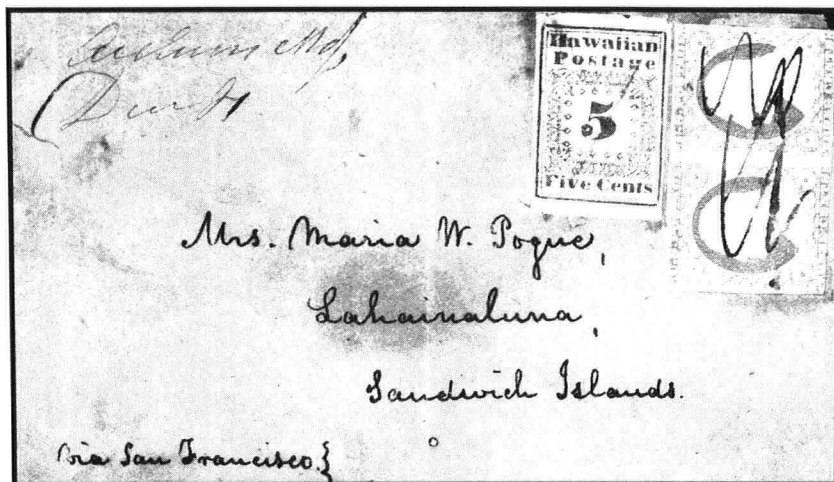


Figure 14. 1¢ Executive special printing, third printing.

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TWO TICKETS TO PITTSBURGH **ALAN C. CAMPBELL**

Introduction

For collectors of United States Official stamps, the Champion of Champions competition at APS STaMpsHOW in Pittsburgh, August 1994, was an historic occasion, since not one but two great exhibits surveying this neglected field were on display. After John Hagen's collection was sold in August 1984, the only survey exhibits of Official stamps on the national scene were those of Rollin C. Huggins, Jr., shown principally in the Midwest, and my own, shown exclusively on the West Coast. But among the cognoscenti, it has been acknowledged for years that the collections being formed by Lester C. Lanphear, III and Robert L. Markovits were the most powerful holdings in this area since Rae Ehrenberg's collection was dispersed at auction in 1981 (Robert A. Siegel, #577) and the late Charles Starnes' collection was stolen in March, 1983. Given the limitations of the material that has survived, both the Lanphear and Markovits collections are now virtually complete and worthy of public display.

Lanphear has in the past whetted our appetites by exhibiting various specialized portions of his collection, including penalty envelopes, Official stamped envelopes, the Post Office Department, the Navy and War Departments combined, and most notably the Department of the Interior, six frames of which attained an international gold medal. Previously Markovits had shown competitively only one frame of the Department of State dollar values, which won the grand award at the first AmeriStampExpo in Kansas City, 1993. Lanphear first showed an eight frame survey collection at WESTPEX in San Francisco, May 1993 that received a vermeil medal, a disturbingly low award that left many shaking their heads in disbelief. This same exhibit went on to win a gold medal at Bangkok in October 1993. Lanphear then expanded the exhibit to nine frames and qualified for the Champion of Champions by winning the grand award at SANDICAL in San Diego, February 1994. Meanwhile, Markovits qualified by winning the grand award on his first outing at NOJEX in Secaucus, New Jersey, May, 1994.

The "Battle of the Titans" at Pittsburgh was a fortunate circumstance for the rest of us, since it is unlikely that in the future these collectors will knowingly choose to exhibit against each other in direct competition, simply because each exhibit contains numerous unique pieces absent in the other exhibit which will tend to work—in the eyes of the judges—to the mutual detriment of both collectors. So on this occasion, I felt it would be valuable to summarize my impressions of both exhibits, which contain many pieces with provenances that can be traced back through the collections of Ehrenberg, Korff, Lilly, Sheriff, Stone, Waud and the Weill brothers to Ackerman, Hughes, Knapp and Ward. In my informal conversations with onlookers at the frames, no clear consensus emerged as to the superiority of either exhibit, which was gratifying since both collectors are close friends of mine (Lanphear and I at one time—by eerie happenstance—had our collections in adjacent safety deposit boxes at a small local bank.)

Exhibit Organization

A general collection of United States Official stamps encompasses so many aspects of philately—essays, proofs, stamps, special printings, used and unused multiples, cancellation studies, covers and postal stationery—that the national level space limitation of ten frames forces one to exhibit selectively rather than comprehensively. Both of these great collections contain vast reservoirs of interesting material that did not survive the final cut.

In the end, there are significant differences in emphasis between the two exhibits. Both show the basic stamps and many extraordinary covers. In addition, Lanphear shows great strength in the area of used multiples and unused plate number and imprint pieces, while Markovits concentrates on essays, proofs, and unused blocks. Both exhibits are elegantly mounted and employ state-of-the-art computer generated write-ups. At the bottom of eight of his ten frames, Markovits uses a row of three oversized pages in order to exhibit six of the typical legal-sized covers horizontally. Facing the same dilemma, Lanphear adheres to a constant page size and a diagonal format for the legal covers and long plate strips.

Markovits achieves a stately balance in his exhibit by devoting one frame to each department, with an additional frame dedicated exclusively to the Department of State dollar values. Few yet understand that an entire frame of material from any of the “difficult” departments—Justice, Navy, State, and especially Agriculture and Executive—is an astonishing achievement. Lanphear makes no attempt at artificial balance and his exhibit honestly reflects the varying quantities of interesting usages available from the different departments.

Lanphear’s exhibit also includes postal stationery usages from the Post Office and War Departments, while Markovits’ exhibit excludes this in favor of only stamp-related material. Both exhibits are arranged by department, and both reject the simple-minded alphabetical sequence used in the Scott catalog. Markovits’ exhibit is organized according to the order of signatures on the displayed autographed letter sheet of President Grant’s cabinet, while Lanphear’s deviates slightly by following the sequence in the displayed original announcement of 1873 for the official stamps.

Essays and Proofs

The Markovits exhibit displays the original artist’s model by Joseph Claxton for the frame design of each department (excepting Treasury, which apparently did not survive). It also includes a complete set of artist’s models and essays for the Post Office Department, showing the evolution of the distinctive numeral vignette. Both exhibits show the incomplete die essay for the 6¢ Post Office, the Executive die essay prior to the deletion of “Dep’t.,” and the frame die essay for the Department of State dollar values surrounded by value tablets.

Markovits’ powerful proof holdings are best displayed in the frame of Department of State dollar values, where he shows the complete Atlanta trial color proofs, the complete Goodall \$2 small die trial color proofs, the complete cardboard plate proof sheets, the mysterious “egghead” or hollow frame proofs of the \$2 and \$20 values, and the finest display of the inverted center cardboard proofs ever assembled, including the dazzling \$5 intact sheet of ten.

Between the two exhibits, the controversial 2¢ Navy green receives exhaustive treatment, with examples shown in greenish black and green, perforated and imperforate, on white and pink paper, in singles, pairs, blocks, and top and bottom plate number and imprint strips of the imperforate greenish black variety. All three authenticated used copies were on display, and the different explanations offered in the write-ups confirm that the jury is still out on whether this item is a true error of color or a manipulated trial color plate proof.

Issued Stamps

Both exhibitors naturally show a complete set of the stamps as issued. Lanphear shows a complete set of special printings (excepting the State dollar values) highlighted by the remarkable set of Justice plate number singles. Markovits shows the rare State dollar value special printings with their plate positions noted. His research indicates that only four copies of the \$20 State special printing have survived. He also displays a large num-

ber of "SEPCIMEN" errors, with notations of the quantities surviving based on his original research. The highlights here include a complete Agriculture set, including the unique 6¢ value, the unique 15¢ Post Office, a complete State set through the 90¢ (excepting the 15¢, which is not believed to exist) including the unique 10¢ value, and the unique 6¢ War. Each exhibitor shows one of the two known copies of the 2¢ Interior "Specimen" error: it was during the overprinting of this stamp that the error was discovered and corrected.

In the area of multiples, the Markovits exhibit includes the most complete collection of unused blocks ever formed (109 of 112 possible, five stamps not known in blocks), featuring the only known blocks of the 1¢ Executive (block of six), the \$2 State, the 24¢ Interior on soft paper, and the 90¢ Treasury on soft paper. Also noteworthy are a 2¢ Executive plate number block of four; blocks of four of the 10¢ Executive, 24¢ State and 30¢ State; and blocks of nine—the largest known multiples—of the 1¢ and 7¢ State. Due to space limitations, plate number and imprint pieces are largely absent in this exhibit, and only a few used multiples are shown, but these include the only recorded used block of the 3¢ Navy and the famous strip of five of the 10¢ Executive with Long Branch, New Jersey purple star cancellations.

The Lanphear exhibit, in contrast, includes the most complete collection of unused plate number and imprint strips ever assembled. Highlights here include matched top and bottom strips of six of the 2¢ and 3¢ Agriculture, a strip of six of the 3¢ Agriculture on soft paper, a perfectly centered strip of six of the 24¢ Interior on soft paper (largest known multiple), Navy strips complete through the 15¢ value except for the 7¢, a lower left block of 25 of the 6¢ State, the largest known multiple showing numerous double transfers, and a sumptuous top plate block of twenty of the 10¢ State. Lanphear also shows one of the two most complete collections of used blocks ever assembled, including used blocks of four of the 90¢ Interior and 30¢ Navy, several of the largest multiples known such as a block of ten of the 7¢ Treasury, and the extraordinary used plate number and imprint strip of six of the 30¢ War. Invariably, used blocks of the Official stamps are much scarcer than unused blocks.

As for plate varieties, numerous double transfers, plate scratches, and double impressions were shown by both exhibitors. Markovits displayed both recorded copies of the 3¢ Post Office printed-on-both-sides variety, which paled in comparison to his 90¢ Navy double impression with its staggering horizontal shift, a unique variety that once belonged to Colonel E.H.R. Green.

Neither exhibitor had room for extensive cancellation studies, but instead included a single page of striking examples from each department. The enormous variety of cancellations to be found on regular Bank Note issues of the period is not to be found on Official stamps, so that for example any strike of a New York foreign mail cancellation on an Official stamp is a treasured item. Lanphear shows eight different values of the Treasury Department with green cancellations, a feat that would be impossible to duplicate. Markovits shows 38 different legible fort postmarks on singles, pairs and strips of the War Department, including a remarkable socked-on-the-nose Fort Benton, Montana Territory circular date stamp on a block of four of the 3¢ value.

Postal History

Both collections at Pittsburgh were dominated by overwhelming displays of postal history: between them, virtually every Official stamp known on cover was shown. In all departments, values above the 6¢ are scarce on cover, and Lanphear's write-up included census data based on original research for the scarcest items (less than five covers known). A surprising number of the higher values are not known on cover. So many unusual usages—including mixed frankings, foreign destinations, unusual corner cards, fort and territorial postmarks, and fancy cancellations—were on display that it is worth enumerating them, department by department, with Lanphear's covers discussed first, followed by Markovits' covers.

Highlights of the Lanphear exhibit of Executive usages include a beautiful 3¢ cover from Long Branch, New Jersey with characteristic purple star cancellation, and the recently discovered 2¢, 3¢, 10¢ domestic combination cover, the only known example of the 10¢ Executive stamp on cover. Markovits displays the only two known President Grant free franks from the summer White House at Long Branch and three covers with different frankings to London.

For Department of State usages, all values known to exist on cover were shown between the two collections. Much of this was consular mail carried from overseas in diplomatic pouch to Washington, D. C., where the stamps were applied before entering the regular mail stream. Lanphear displayed a striking 3¢ cover from the Consulate at Chemnitz, Germany with a spectacular engraved eagle corner card, along with a beautiful 10¢ cover forwarded by B.F. Stevens in London from the Legation at St. Petersburg, Russia. Markovits showed three covers forwarded by the Department of State dispatch agent in New York: a 6¢ cover to Hawaii, a 6¢ cover to Norway, and a spectacular 10¢ mixed franking to South Africa. Concluding his overpowering strength in this department were the remarkable oversized combination cover—6¢, 30¢, 90¢—to Matamoros, Mexico and the legendary parcel front to Stuttgart, Germany franked with a 10¢ State, nineteen copies of the 30¢, and a single \$2 stamp, the only known dollar value on cover. In the sale of the Congressman Ackerman sale on December 5, 1933, this piece was described as the “Koh-i-noor” of all Official covers, and it remains so to this day.

For Treasury Department usages, both exhibitors showed values up to the 15¢ on cover. Lanphear showed a penalty cover with the registry fee paid by ten 1¢ stamps, a cover franked with a 3¢ block of four, and a beautiful triple rate registered cover with a unique 7¢, 12¢ combination franking. Markovits showed a 3¢ Treasury first day cover to Canada, three covers to Japan, a quadruple treaty rate cover to London (two 2¢, two 10¢) that stands as the only recorded Official cover with New York foreign mail cancellations, and five mixed franking covers, including the famous registered penalty envelope to Prussia with the postage paid by a 15¢ regular Banknote and the registry fee overpaid by a 12¢ Treasury, in full accordance with postal regulations of the time.

For War Department usages, Lanphear showed the largest grouping of fort covers ever assembled: Forts Apache, Apache Pass (Fort Bowie), Cummings, Grant, Leavenworth, Omaha, Rice, Snelling and Union were shown on full cover, Fort Totten and Fort Abraham Lincoln on piece. He also displayed the only recorded examples on cover of the familiar Fort Leavenworth honeycomb and the Grand Rapids, Minnesota “S in UU,” a commercial canceler also known to have been used at Jefferson Barracks. Highlights of his postal stationery included a 6¢ envelope from General Sherman to his mistress in Paris forwarded to Innsbruck, a 15¢ envelope from Bismarck, Dakota Territory and a 30¢ envelope from Prescott, Arizona Territory. Markovits showed covers from Forts Leavenworth, Sill and Wingate, two covers with mixed frankings, and a package label franked with four 15¢ stamps. Each collector also showed spectacular package labels franked with a combination of 24¢ and 90¢ stamps.

In Navy Department usages, Lanphear displayed a gorgeous 2¢ local rate cover with red cancellation, the only recorded 10¢ usage on a small Naval Observatory cover to Paris, and the only surviving 12¢ cover. Markovits showed an astonishing seven examples of foreign and domestic mixed frankings, where the Navy Department used its Official stamps to forward mail to sailors overseas. He also showed a package label with a combination franking (2¢, three 6¢, 24¢), one of the two recorded surviving 24¢ values on cover. Between the two exhibits, all three surviving 7¢ covers were displayed.

For the Department of the Interior usages, Lanphear showed great strength in his specialty with numerous Territorial usages, unusual corner cards, five foreign destinations, and covers from Forts Berthold and Simcoe. But the highlights of this section were surely his 3¢, 6¢ combination first day cover and the 90¢ single on a penalty cover paying

postage and the registry fee. Markovits countered with covers to Germany and France and a 24¢ usage on a registered penalty envelope.

For Post Office Department usages, Lanphear showed a 6¢ bisect cover, a 15¢ cover, and a series of four closely trimmed pieces showing various high value combination frankings, including a piece of 6¢ stationery franked with a 3¢, a 15¢, and three 90¢ stamps. He also showed Postal Service covers to Austria and Rumania and an ambulance cover to San Domingo (Dominican Republic) forwarding a shipwrecked letter. Markovits showed three mixed franking covers, two 6¢ bisect covers, and a matched pair of 6¢ bisects on pieces of stamped envelopes.

In Department of Justice usages, both collectors showed 1¢ through 15¢ values on cover, many of them from the Frederick Douglass correspondence and the Moore/Goff correspondence to Clarksburgh, West Virginia. Markovits also showed a 6¢, 15¢ combination franking and Lanphear showed a 24¢ on cover (one of two recorded). Markovits concluded with a baffling piece: three copies of the 24¢ value used on part of a registered Department of the Interior Pension Office cover.

It is not widely known that covers from the Department of Agriculture are by far the most difficult to obtain, yet in Pittsburgh virtually the world's supply was on display. Both collectors showed 1¢ through 6¢ values on a selection of covers and wrapper labels. Markovits showed a 10¢ used on a piece of a package label. The only two recorded usages of the 12¢ value were shown, Markovits on a cover, Lanphear on a package label. In addition, Lanphear showed a recent discovery: a 24¢ usage on a package label, believed to be the only known example on cover.

Conclusion

The major pieces that come to mind as missing from both exhibits include the unique irregular block of six of the \$5 State (ex-Weill), unused blocks of the 15¢ and 30¢ Justice, the matching bottom half sheets of the \$2, \$5 and \$20 State card proofs with inverted centers (ex-Ehrenberg), any of the three surviving complete sheets of the \$10 and \$20 State, any of the five extant sets of the imperforate special printings, the lone authenticated copy of the 24¢ Interior on soft paper used (ex-Jennings, now owned by Rollin C. Huggins, Jr.), the 3¢ State first day cover, a 7¢ War cover, and a kicking mule cancellation on cover. Of lesser importance is the absence of any significant multiples of the special printings, other than the crossed-out and corrected plate number on the 1¢ Executive imprint strip, which both collectors show. The extraordinary high value covers once in the Starnes collection are now believed to be irretrievably lost to philately. Given the high level of completion in these two collections, it is astonishing to note how many departmental values—many of them relatively common stamps—cannot be represented by a single used multiple, unused position piece, or example on cover. Some collectors have been repelled by the impossibility of achieving anything approaching completion in these difficult areas. It is to be hoped that some of the onlookers and judges at Pittsburgh appreciated the courageous showings mounted by Lanphear and Markovits.

In the immediate future, it seems extremely unlikely that a new collector could enter the arena collecting United States Official stamps and hope to secure an equally dominant position, regardless of financial considerations, since most of the key pieces are in the hands of these two active and dedicated collectors. Lanphear and Markovits were in a position to buy aggressively when the important collections of one generation—Ehrenberg, Korff, Lilly, Sheriff, Stone, Waud and the Weill brothers—were sold between 1981 and 1993. Many of their most important pieces have distinguished chains of provenance, while others represent new discoveries. It is now time that the considerable research and scholarship which has gone into building and writing up these two great collections be translated into a series of articles, for which this section of the *Chronicle* now represents the most logical forum. Having met what must be the world's youngest collector of

Official stamps (aged seventeen) earnestly taking notes at the frames in Pittsburgh, it is fervently hoped that in the near future either one or both exhibits can be made available through the Classics Society photocopy program in order to stimulate further interest in this emerging field.

Editor's Note: Mr. Lanphear has nearly completed a census of the surviving Official used blocks (O1-O120), and would appreciate hearing from any other readers with material that could be included at the eleventh hour. The publication of this census data will be the basis on which the present woefully outdated catalog listings should be revised. He is also beginning a survey of unused plate number and imprint strips and blocks of the Official stamps, in the hope of finally getting these pieces listed in the catalog. Participants should send photocopies to Lester C. Lanphear, P.O. Box 80843, San Diego, California, 92138. All information will be kept strictly confidential. Your cooperation is sincerely appreciated. □

LITERATURE



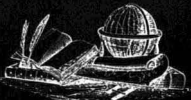
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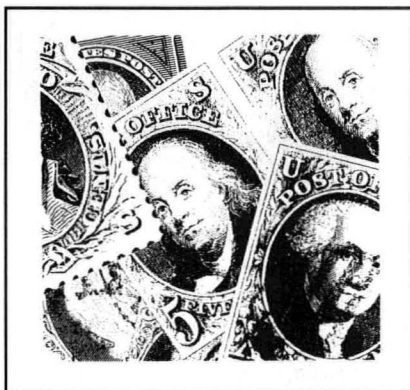
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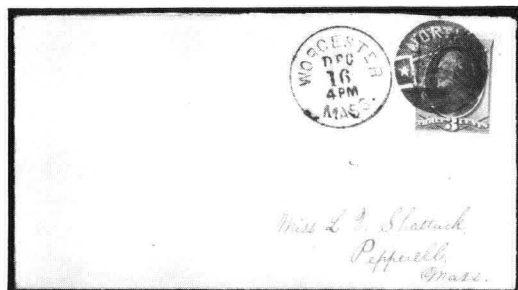
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"BY WEST INDIA STEAM PACKET"

COLIN TABEART

(continued from *Chronicle* 163:211)

Wickliffe replied the next day,¹⁰ the meat of his proposals being:

No Post Office regulation would be violated, by the British steam packet touching at a port for the sole purpose of landing or taking in passengers, provided she is not required to report when she touches for such purpose.

Upon the other branch of Mr. Buchanan's enquiry, there is more difficulty. It would not be in accordance with the Post Office laws of the United States to permit any private individual to convey letters upon a post road, though the postage was pre-paid, to be delivered to a packet, for the purpose of being taken out of the United States. Every object can be attained, desired by Mr. Buchanan, in a mode as expeditious and equally secure, provided it will suit the views of the British Consul, by giving to the deputy post masters in the United States authority to receive not only the postage due to this Government, but that due to the British Government, to be accounted for by such postmasters as other moneys, or directly to the agent of the British Post Office in the United States; the deputy postmasters charging the same rate of commission for this as is charged, by arrangement between the Canadian Post Office, for postage collected for the United States.

If this arrangement will meet the views of Mr. Buchanan, and he will designate what offices he is prepared to authorise to collect the postage due to Her Majesty's Government for letters sent abroad, I will give to the deputy postmasters the necessary instructions.

Buchanan's reply on 19 February¹¹ rejected payment of a commission from the British rate, but counter-proposed that the U.S. Post Office should collect its own and British postage, plus commission, remitting the full British rate to the U.K. agent at New York. He went on to ask if the packets could be excused from landing letters at their first port of call, saving them instead for the most convenient call, e.g., mails from Havana for New York should not have to be landed at Savannah, but delivered at New York, and whether the 2¢ ship letter fee could be paid to the British packet agent for letters landed. He went on to suggest a solution to the vexed question of letters for the U.S. detained in England for postage, requesting a reply by 26th February so that he could communicate the results to the U.K. Postmaster General by the next packet. Not having received a reply in time, on 28 February 1842 Buchanan wrote an important letter to Colonel Maberley, Secretary of the U.K. Post Office, which is reproduced here in full:¹²

Sir,

I have the honor to lay before you for the information of Her Majesty's Postmaster General, the measures I deemed it prudent to submit to the Postmaster General of the United States, in consequence of the proposed channels of communication about to be opened with the United States, through the medium of the Royal West India Mail Steam Packet.

Being apprised from several quarters of the jealousy that such an extended line of communication would create, by interfering with the shipping interest of the United

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 6

¹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 6-9.

¹²Post 29/31 Pkt 615T/1843.

States, and being aware of the delicacy of so conducting the enterprize as to avoid any infringement of the laws, I addressed the Secretary of the Treasury a letter, a copy of which I beg to enclose, to this no answer was received until the communication dated the 9th February, a copy of which I had the honor to forward, and in as much as the United States Postmaster General had not made any communication, though referred to in the letter of the Secretary of the Treasury, I deemed it prudent to proceed to Washington, a copy of my communication on arrival there marked Packet Agent I herewith enclose [presumably his communication to Wickliffe of 14 February], with his answer thereto marked B, during the 2 days I remained in Washington I had much conversation on the subject, being known as I am to the Secretary of State and others, and pardon sir my saying, that the Postmaster General and subordinate officers of that Department did me the honor to say, they were much pleased with the assurance I gave, of the earnest desire not to sanction any infringement of the laws, or regulations of the Department, which was to be apprehended from passengers carrying letters, and thereby evading the postage.

Upon my return I drew up and forwarded to that functionary, the several matters for consideration contained in the enclosed paper marked C, to which I beg your attention, having stated at my interview, as I have therein, that I was unauthorized in the step I had taken, but that not having been honored with any answer I deemed it important to ascertain the views of the department before the arrival of the packet at New York.

To those unacquainted with conducting an interview with the people of the United States, much of what I have done and stated may seem unnecessary, yet sir pardon an old servant of the crown who has been above 25 years here stating, that of all people on earth, a courteous mode of intercourse to effect an object, is truly essential here. There is a jealousy of England not extended to any other people, so that did I not pursue the mode I have adopted, the most trivial measure would arouse a clamor against these Royal Steam Packets, and keeping in mind the people are the sovereigns, I deem it highly important that the people should feel the advantage of the intercourse.

My suggestion to allow the business men of Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburg, Cincinnati &c to reap advantage, as well as New York, Boston, Charleston, and Savannah, has given very general satisfaction.

Permit me sir to draw the particular attention of Her Majesty's Postmaster General to the proposition as to all letters addressed to the United States, coming from foreign countries by way of England, to be forwarded to this office for payment in the manner submitted in my letter to the Postmaster General. And allow me to beg your attention to the increase of revenue that course will draw to Her Majesty's Post Office when generally known.

The citizens of the United States have extended their enterprize to almost all quarters of the globe, many of them sojourn in France, Italy, Germany, and other parts of the continent. By allowing the correspondents from all quarters to participate in the facilities of the extended means of communication which England affords, I may venture to add, that three fourths of all such correspondence would be rendered tributary to augment the revenue of Her Majesty's Post Office.

By making New York the point to which letters for the United States should be sent the inducement to forward such correspondence through England would be increased, as thereby a saving of ten pence sterling on every single such letter would be effected, by coming to New York instead of Boston. Moreover the chief amounts would center at New York, as the port for pre-payment of letters to the West Indies, South America and other parts of the world, which the departure of the Royal Mail to and from Halifax may be arranged, so as to meet with the Boston line for Liverpool at Halifax, coming out, and returning, but I hope a continuation of the line from this port direct to England will be adopted, and I beg to state that Mr Collins, the enterprising owner of the Shakespeare Line of packets between this city and Liverpool, proposed to the United States Government, that he would build four steam packets to ply between this port and Liverpool weekly, and all he would claim was to be allowed the postage

on the letters they would carry, and the Government in time of war was to have these vessels at cost, or at a valuation.

Politically it is of importance such ground should be occupied, and sure I am the Royal Mail Company would find it truly profitable to continue the line from the West Indies by way of New York direct to England, thus giving weekly communication, and drawing the conveyance of letters for the continent by way of England.

Pardon in the production of these remarks, which I humbly submit to Her Majesty's Postmaster General. I have the honor to be, sir, Your most obt servt,



Figure 2. Colonel W.L. Maberley, Secretary to the Post Office, 1836-1854. Crown copyright; by courtesy of the Post Office of the United Kingdom.

This letter presumably went in the mails carried by the *Clyde* when she left New York on 1 March for Halifax. Buchanan's proposals were highly advanced for their time, and his warning about the Collins Line was sensible, but his letter must have given grave offense to the Postmaster General of the United Kingdom, as he received a severe censure—see Buchanan's subsequent letter of 20 April 1842. The precise nature of the censure does not appear to have survived, but its substance can be inferred from Maberley's minute to Viscount Canning¹³ of 19 May, reproduced later.

¹³Viscount Charles John Canning, British Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1841-46.

Meanwhile, on another of the branch routes touching at New Orleans, the British Consul had advertised the service, and communicated the gist of his Instructions as packet agent to the local Postmaster, William de Buys. In a letter dated 4 March 1842 to the U.S. Postmaster General,¹⁴ de Buys posed fundamental questions:

Sir,

The annexed is a copy of a letter addressed to me, as Postmaster, by the British consul of this port, acting as agent for the General Post Office, London.

I have the honor to lay said communication before you for the purpose of eliciting instructions on Several points of our Post Office Laws & Regulations with which, I apprehend, the requirements of Her British Majesty's Government will come into conflict.

1. As to the delivery of the mails by the Admiralty Agent to the British Post Office agent here and the examination thereof by the latter, before their delivery over to me. Is this not contrary to the provisions of the 17th section of the Act of 1825? Or does that section refer only to such letters as are brought by sea in any private ship or vessel?

2. As to the prohibition from receiving on board letters, excepting such as are delivered by the British Post Office Agent at the Port of Embarcation to the Admiralty Agent on board the mail packets.

Though the right to exclude such letters would, I suppose, not be denied, yet is not this restriction an interference with the requirements of the 34th sec of the Act of 1825, and those of chapter 37 of the Book of Regulations?

3. The Mississippi River from New Orleans to the mouth is a Post Road, yet letters carried by Ship between New Orleans & any other port in the United States are subject only to the usual ship letter postage. Sec. 165 Chap 20 Book of Regulations.

But these Royal Mail packets do not come up to New Orleans; they deliver and receive their mails and passengers outside of one of the passes, and a Steam Tow Boat engaged here by the British P.O. agent is the conveyance by which the same are transported to and fro between New Orleans & said Pass. Now, should not letters & packets thus conveyed on this post Road, a distance of 90 miles, be charged with postage? Should not the same be mailed at this office and sent under lock & label to the Postmaster at Balize - or, if placed by correspondents or the British Agents on board the Steam Tow Boat should not the Captain thereof deliver them to the said postmaster at Balize there to be rated as tho carried by mail? Likewise, on the arrival of the British Packets off the Pass, should not the same ordeal be gone through with the mails received by the Tow Boat from said Packets?

How would, however, the enforcement of the law (if it is found to apply) operate, until these Mail Packets themselves ascend to New Orleans directly? I must reply that it would undoubtedly give much dissatisfaction to our Community; who would have either to pre-pay here their letters for the distance between this and Balize, or have correspondents at Balize to take out their letters from the Post Office there, a difficulty almost insuperable considering that Balize is but a village of a dozen frame houses inhabited by Pilots and fishermen - and then, the heavy taxation of 12½ cents per single sheet on a sea letter when New Orleans is a sea port, or very nearly so!

4. Can a Foreign Government establish a Branch Post Office in this country? For Mr. Crawford's office is a Post Office, as will appear from the subjoined public notice given by him. Has the British Post Office Department an agency of this kind in Boston? That they may appoint a person to collect for them the postage to foreign intermediate Ports, may be proper & expedient, but this postage money ought, I conceive, be first paid by the writer of the letter into the Post Office and then paid over by the Postmaster to the British agent.

¹⁴*Letters Received, Postmaster General, 1815-1908*, Record Group 28, Post Office Department, The National Archives, Washington, DC.

5. Has the Government of the U.S. recognised these Mail Packets as British Government vessels? In that case are they not entitled to the usual 2 Cents on each letter & packet when delivered by them to the Post Office?

I have taken the liberty of addressing you the above remarks & enquiries solely with a view of making the matter known to you, Sir, so that if you find them judicious and elucidating any infringement of our Post Office Laws & Regulations by the General Post Office of London, you may be pleased to direct me how to act. I would add that, in my own humble opinion, I conceive that every consistent facility should be extended to these Mail Packets in their arrangements for the reception & delivery of their mails, as they will become, I believe, a source of income to the Department and great accommodation to correspondents throughout the whole South & West.

Awaiting therefore your instructions at your earliest convenience, until the receipt of which I shall not act in opposition to the orders given to the British P. O. Agent here.

On 26 March the U.S. Postmaster General submitted to the Honourable John White, Speaker of the House of Representatives,¹⁵ his report indicating a serious hardening of tone, prompted in part no doubt by the letter from the postmaster of New Orleans. After a long introduction on the relevant Laws governing the situation, he goes on:

It may be inferred, from the provisions of the acts above cited, that Congress, in fixing the rates of postage for letters sent by ships or other vessels from one port in the United States to another, and in guarding the interest of the Department, looked alone to such vessels as were permitted by law to sail or navigate in the waters of the United States, under proper authority or license to carry on the coasting trade. It did not then occur to anyone that vessels, owned by the citizens of another Government, would seek to engage in the business of transporting passengers from one port of the United States to another. Foreign vessels are prohibited from engaging in the coasting trade, or in the transportation of *merchandise* from one port to another in the United States. Passengers are not merchandise; consequently there is no law, as I am informed by the decision of the Secretary of the Treasury, "forbidding the conveyance of passengers by foreign vessels strictly avoiding the carrying of merchandise."

If a foreign vessel can enter a port of the United States, and discharge and take in passengers, and not be required to report or make entry, there is no provision of the existing Post Office laws by which she can be compelled to deliver her letters on board to the postmaster at such port. She may depart, not only with all she has on board, but all she may be able to collect at the port for any other port, and deliver or not, as she may please, the letters she has for that port. The Post Office Department can only enforce the delivery of the letters which such foreign vessel has on board, through and by virtue of the laws regulating the collection of the revenue and the coasting trade of the United States. How far it may be consistent with a sound policy to permit foreign vessels to engage in the transportation of passengers from one port to another of the United States, does not appropriately belong to the head of the Post Office Department to say. It may not, however, be deemed officious to suggest that, if allowed, it may not only seriously affect the revenues of this Department, but, by a successful competition, drive American vessels out of the service of the Department, by depriving them of the profits to be derived from the transportation of passengers.

It is proper that I should accompany this report with a copy of a communication which I received, under date of 14th February last, from the British Consul at New York to this Department, upon this subject, to which I gave an answer, in part, on the 15th, also herewith sent.

In that answer I took care only to say to the British consul (not having seen the letter of the Secretary of the Treasury, referred to by him) that no Post Office regulation would be violated by the British steam packet touching at a port for the sole purpose of landing or taking in passengers, provided she was not required to report when she

¹⁵*Executive Document 161*, pp. 1-5.

touched for such purpose. I have received a further communication from the same gentleman, under date of 19th February, desiring a more full and definite answer, and also inviting arrangements to facilitate the transmission of foreign letters from the United States; to which I made answer, more in detail; copies of which communications are hereto annexed. In this latter answer I assumed the position, that a foreign vessel could not be permitted to engage in the transportation of letters on the waters of the United States, without a violation of the spirit and intention of the 17th section of the act of 1825.

It is my opinion that further legislation upon this subject is desired, in order to render clear, by positive enactment, that about which there may exist doubt.

I feel it a duty which I owe to the public, in responding to the resolution of the House, to depart from the course, usually pursued, of confining the response to the precise enquiry propounded by the resolution.

It is not to be disguised, that efforts are being made, by the enterprise of other nations, or the citizens of other nations, to furnish us, not only with the means of transporting passengers and letters from the United States to foreign countries, but to sweep along the entire coast of the United States, touching at all the principal seaports, collecting the correspondence, foreign and domestic, to be transported from port to port within the United States.

I am in receipt of a communication from the very intelligent postmaster at New Orleans, giving me the information that the British consul at that port, acting also as the agent of the General Post Office of Great Britain, has established a letter office in that city, in which he proposes to collect, and does collect, letters, and sends them ninety miles down the Mississippi, passing a Post Office at the Balize, to be shipped in the British steam packet at anchor outside one of the passes at the mouth of the river.

The postmaster at New Orleans, in his letter, remarks: "These mail packets do not come up to New Orleans; they deliver and receive their mails and passengers outside of one of the passes; and a steam tow boat, engaged here by the British Post Office agent, is the conveyance by which the same are transported to and fro, between New Orleans and said pass."

This tow-boat is liable, by the law of 1825, to a small penalty for transporting letters on the Mississippi river, between New Orleans and the mouth, a distance of ninety miles; and, by that law, these letters should be mailed at New Orleans, charged with letter postage, and delivered to the postmaster at the Balize, and there made up for a foreign port by the postmaster at that place.

What is likely to become the course of letter transportation, if this practice be tolerated, is not difficult to conjecture. Those steam packets will collect the letters at New Orleans and other ports, and, after traversing the entire Atlantic coast, touch at New York, there collect the foreign correspondence of that city, and depart for Halifax, where they connect themselves with the Boston and Liverpool line of steam packets, tranship their cargo of letters thus collected—thereby depriving the United States of the postage which would otherwise be paid upon those letters, if sent through the United States mail, as heretofore, to the port in the United States from which the steam packet sails for Europe.

It has therefore occurred to me that further legislation upon this subject, to provide for this new state of things, is called for, in order to protect not only the interest of this Department, but other interests of the United States, of equal, if not greater, importance.

It is due to the British consul for the port of New York, I should state, that he has manifested an anxious desire to conform the action of the agency of the British post office to what is understood by the American authorities to be the law in existence regulating this department.

If, in answering the resolution of the House, I have transcended the limits prescribed, and obtruded upon its attention topics not strictly within the terms of the resolution, I hope to find an apology for it in the deep solicitude I feel in the advancement of the pecuniary interest of the Department, and a desire to extend its usefulness.

(to be continued)

ANSWERS TO PROBLEM COVERS IN ISSUES 162 AND 163

Figure 1 shows again an interesting folded letter to Spain in 1842, with marking ESTADOS UNIDOS. It was one of the problem items in the May 1994 *Chronicle*, with an explanation by Dr. Yamil Kouri appearing in the August 1994 issue. Another answer was received recently from Antonio Torres, who agrees with Dr. Kouri that the clerk at Cadiz had made a mistake, and that the letter came from Hamburg, Germany, not Hamburg, New York. Torres adds the interesting explanation that butter was imported by ship builders to waterproof the timbers used for vessels (oak preferred).



Figure 1. Hamburg-Cadiz cover, July 1842, marked "5R" and "ESTADOS UNIDOS."

Figure 2 shows a letter sent from Mayaguez to Cabo Rojo, both in southwest Puerto Rico. It bears three Scott J39 postage due stamps (issued in 1895 and overprinted in 1899 for Puerto Rico). The mystery is the 6¢ rate. The opinion of James P. Gough is that it is a triple rate (by weight) cover, and that any other surmise would need to be proven.

This cover was once owned by Roger Preston, who died over a decade ago. He was an engineer for G.E. in Puerto Rico, the dean of postal history collectors there, and my mentor. When his collection was sold by Robson Lowe's affiliate in Madrid, Nestor Jacob, Robert A. Siegel and I teamed up to buy a large part of it, this item included.

Preston suggested that there was a carrier fee involved in the 6¢ due rate; he had seen a paid 6¢ (ms.) rate on the same route during the same time period. Preston was a great student, with access to much material, and talented bi-lingually; but he could never prove the carrier fee (which would have been 4¢ of the 6¢) for the Cabo Rojo route. The carrier fee of 5¢ to, from and through Ponce is well documented by covers with a total of 7¢ paid during the 1898-99 period. These carriers were natives hired by the local postmaster, and not directly employed by the U.S. postal system (run in Puerto Rico at the time by the U.S. Railway Mail Service).

Further thorough comments by Richard B. Graham are much appreciated. Dick writes:



Figure 2. 1899 Mayaguez-Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, cover, 6¢ postage due.

Re the problem cover of Puerto Rico mails in the last *Chronicle*, all I can say is that I can find no explanation for the usage in terms of markings on the cover, so one theory is as good as any other—and as unprovable.

Per the 1893 *P.L. & R.*, Sections 480-81, unpaid letters found in the U.S. domestic mails were supposed to be *held for postage*—and so marked, and, if they had a return address, which this cover apparently does not, returned to the sender or the sender notified so that postage would be supplied. This refers to *totally* unpaid letters; letters overweight with one full rate prepaid could be sent on to destination with due postage collected from the sender at normal rates.

If a totally unpaid letter had no return address, then the addressee was supposed to be notified by official gov't postal card and if postage was sent the letter would then be sent on, postpaid. But that doesn't apply here either, because postage due stamps are involved.

In either case, there should be postal markings substantiating the usage. The cover should be marked "Held For Postage."

In the event that the letter did get sent to destination without being caught at the office of mailing, ¶8 of Section 480 might be pertinent. This refers to letters for delivery by carrier with postage due. I cite the ¶:

8. *Delivery of insufficiently prepaid mail at free delivery offices*— At any letter carrier post-office, when matter is deposited addressed to persons within the delivery of such office whose street and number are known or readily ascertained by the postmaster, and upon which the postage is inadvertently wholly unpaid or paid less than the amount required by law, the sender being unknown, the notice of detention (Form 1543) [Ed note: the official postal card] shall not be sent, but such matter shall be presented to the addressee by the carrier, and the deficient postage collected on delivery by means of postage-due stamps affixed to the letter or parcel...

As far as I know, the 1893 *PL&R* was still in effect in 1899.

PROBLEM COVERS FOR THIS ISSUE

We are getting low on candidates for interesting problem covers, and again request submissions. Anything interesting, U.S. related, prior to 1894, will now be considered by Ray Carlin and me. Photography can be arranged. Here are two items submitted several years ago:

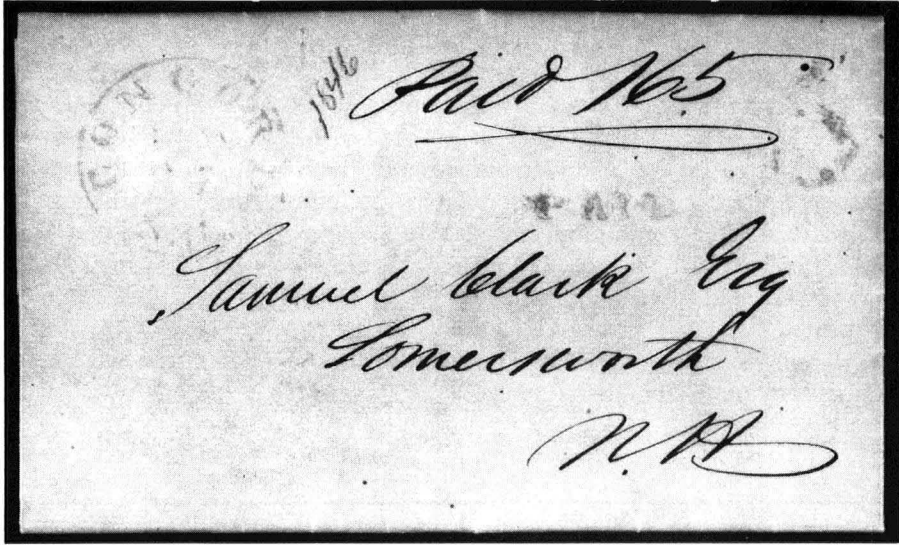


Figure 3. 1846 Concord, N.H., PAID cover, with ms. "Paid 165."

Figure 3 shows a letter from Concord, New Hampshire, in 1846 to Somersworth in southeast New Hampshire. In addition to the cds of Concord there is a PAID and a blurry number which could be a "5," and a manuscript "Paid 165." It is the last number that puzzles the submitter. Any answers will be appreciated.

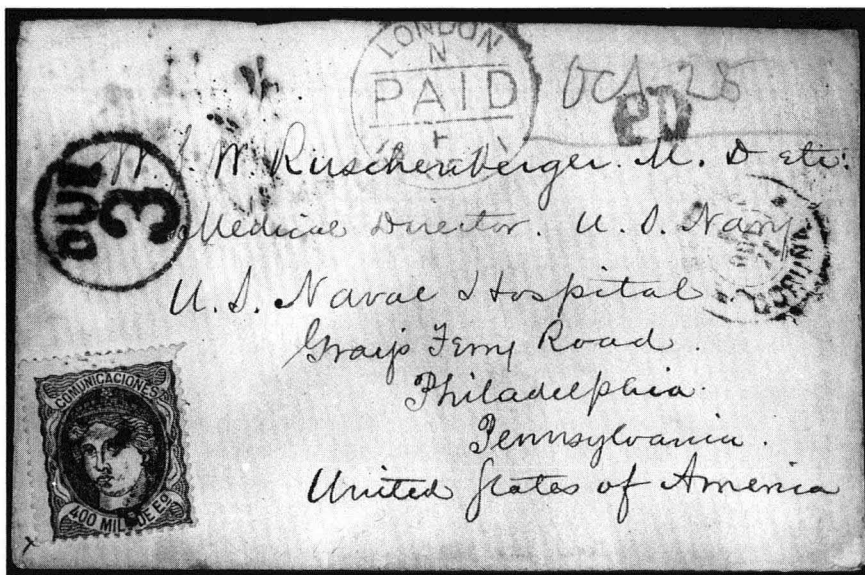


Figure 4. 1870 Spain to Philadelphia cover via London, DUE 3 at Philadelphia.

Figure 4 shows the front of a cover from Spain to the U.S. in October 1871. We have only a photo of the front, and the submitter did not mention what may have been on the back. It bears a typographed Spanish stamp, Scott #169, issued in January 1870. The originating cds of Coruna, Spain, is in black, and the London PAID and PD are in red. The bold circled DUE 3 is in black, and this is the submitter's problem—why did Philadelphia charge 3¢?

My wife Shirley has retired as a teacher and primary leader at a local public elementary school, and we are planning a number of trips. To insure continuance of "The Cover Corner," an Associate Editor has been appointed. He is Raymond W. Carlin, whose address is 9068 Fontainebleau Terrace, Cincinnati, Ohio 45231-4808. His home phone is (513) 931-8674.

Ray is a retired Proctor and Gamble executive with a keen and eclectic interest in postal history. He is a local expert on foreign as well as U.S. stamps, including back-of-the-book material. Please communicate your suggestions to him before the next issue. Mail to him can be sent to the P.O. Box address for this column (P.O. Box 42253, Cincinnati, Ohio 45242), and he can be reached by Fax at (513) 563-6287. Photography can be arranged for items sent by registered mail to the P.O. Box.

Please send your answers to the above problem covers within two weeks, either to the P.O. Box or to the Fax number. Ray Carlin will handle the next issue.



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