

THE CHRONICLE February 1995 (No. 165)

The

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of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues

February 1995

Volume 47, No. 1

Whole No. 165

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INDEX TO THE CHRONICLE OF THE U.S. CLASSIC POSTAL ISSUES
VOLUME 46 (1994)
Compiled by C.J. Peterson

Vol./Issue	Whole No.	Date	Pages	Editor-in-Chief
46/1	161	February 1994	1-72, i-iv	Charles J. Peterson
46/2	162	May 1994	73-144	Charles J. Peterson
46/3	163	August 1994	145-216	Charles J. Peterson
46/4	164	November 1994	217-88	Charles J. Peterson

This index is in two parts: the **Author Index** includes precise titles of the articles, with parenthetical notation where necessary to indicate the primary subject matter; the **Subject Index** provides subject matter identification, avoiding unneeded citation of titles of articles.

Citations are to Whole Number and inclusive pages. Thus, **161:14-22** refers to the article in Whole No. 161 (Vol. 46, No. 1, Feb. 1994), at pages 14-22.

Author Index

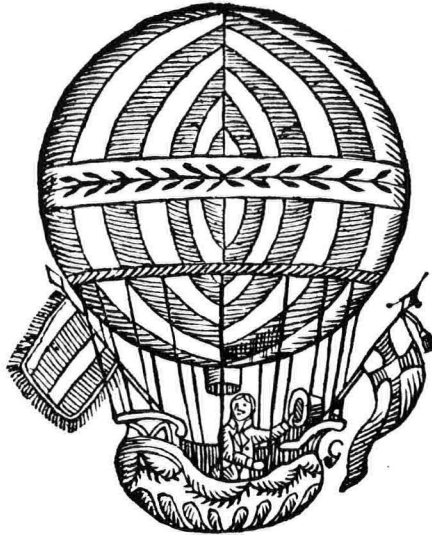
Brown, Malcolm L., "Observations on Lot 22 in the Ishikawa Sale"	161:29-30
Campbell, Alan C., "Two Tickets to Pittsburgh" [top officials material at StaMpsHOW '94 exhibition]	164:269-74
Gallagher, Scott, "The Cover Corner"	161:68-71; 162:139-43; 163:213-15; 164:283-86
Gallagher, Scott, "New Book on Forged Postmarks" [review of <i>Madame Joseph Forged Postmarks</i>]	162:143
Gallagher, Scott, "New Caribbean Postal History Book" [review of <i>Caribbean Neptune</i>]	161:71
Graham, Richard B., "Soldier's Letter Ovals"	164:255
Mandel, Frank, "'Black Letter' Postal Markings"	161:11-12
Mandel, Frank, "Handstamped Multiple Rate Markings—The Chicago '18'"	162:79-80
Meyersburg, Robert B., "Did You Ever Stop to Think About . . ." [how a local post started]	162:91-92
Milgram, James W., M.D., "'Steam China'—The First Postal Markings of U.S. Steamship Mail from China and Japan"	162:132-37
Mooz, William E., "The Reissue of the One Cent 1869 Stamp"	161:48-58
Mooz, William E., "The Special Printings of the 1¢ Agriculture and Executive Departmental Stamps"	164:256-67
Mooz, William E., "The Special Printings of the 2¢, 3¢ and 4¢ 1874 Newspaper and Periodical Stamps"	163:194-204
Peterson, C.J., comp., "Index to the Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues Volume 45 (1993)"	161:i-iv
Reinhard, M. Jack, "Notes from the New Section Editor" [introduction by Banknote section editor]	162:119
Rose, Jon W., "The Ishikawa Sale and the 1869 Issue"	161:33-40
Roth, Steven M., "The War Against the Private Expresses: An Examination of the Post Office's Monopoly Power"	161:14-22; 162:83-88; 163:151-58
Saadi, Wade E., "The Discovery of a Plate Crack on the 5¢ Stamp of 1847"	162:94-102
Searing, Richard M., "Exotic Postal Usages with Two Cent Banknote Stamps from the Barbara Ray Collection—Part I" [no further installments]	161:41-46
Skinner, Hubert C., "Patents and Philately During the 1860s"	163:175-92
Skinner, Hubert C., "Quintessential Covers: Part 1" [1¢ 1851 64-65-66R1E on overpaid drop letter]	162:103-07

Skinner, Hubert C., "Quintessential Covers: Part II" [3¢ 1857 "Big Flaw" on turned cover]	163:169-73
Skinner, Hubert C., "Quintessential Covers: Part III" [1¢ and 3¢ 1851-56 imperf on Valentine cover]	164:245-50
Tabcart, Colin, "By West India Steam Packet" [continues to Vol. 47]	163:206-11; 164:277-82
Trepel, Scott R., "The Ishikawa 1869s: Another Look"	162:109-18
Trepel, Scott R., "Moody's 'Henny Dispatch' Error"	164:223-32
Vogel, Raymond, "Robert A. Siegel, 1913—1993"	161:7-8
Wagshal, Jerome S., "Correction of a (Probable) Error" [A and B double transfers, 5¢ 1847]	164:243-44
Wagshal, Jerome S., "An Editorial Introduction" ["T"-crack on the 5¢ 1847]	162:93
Wagshal, Jerome S., "An Editorial Introduction and Comment"	161:23
Wagshal, Jerome S., "A Not-So-Minor Correction Regarding a Major Piece" ["Beaver" cover in Ishikawa sale]	161:30
Wagshal, Jerome S., "The Plating of the Eight Corner Positions of the Five Cent 1847 Stamp"	164:233-43
Wagshal, Jerome S., "Plating the 5 Cent Stamp of 1847: An Interview Followed by an Editorial Commentary"	163:161-67
Wagshal, Jerome S., "The Use of the 'New York' [City] CDS as a Canceling Device"	161:28-29
Wall, Philip T., "The Round Grid Canceler Used at the New York City Post Office— 1847-1851"	161:23-28
Winter, Richard F., "Charles J. Starnes, April 26, 1912—November 25, 1993"	161:8-10
Winter, Richard F., "Corrigendum" [to "Freight Money Paid in Gardiner, Maine"]	161:67
Winter, Richard F., "Indications of a U.S.-British Mail Arrangement Prior to the 1848 Convention"	161:60-67; 162:120-30

Subject Index

Canada, cross-border mail	161:23-28	Foreign mails:	
Carriers and local posts <i>see also</i> Express companies		Anglo-Pruss. closed mail	162:142-43; 163:213-14
local posts, means of operation	162:91-92	Barbados-Boston cover, 1880	162:139-41
Moody's Penny Dispatch	164:223-32	British-US mail arrangement pre-1848	161:60-67; 162:120-30
post office monopoly power	161:14-22; 162:83-88; 163:151-58	<i>Caribbean Neptune</i> , A (review)	161:71
China, U.S. Agency, cover	161:42-43	<i>Fah Kee</i> , U.S. Mail Steamship	161:68-71
<i>Chronicle</i> , index to Vol. 46	161:i-iv	Spain-Phila. via London, 1870, due 3¢	164:285-86
Civil War: Soldier's Letter ovals	164:255	Starnes, Charles J. (obit)	161:8-10
Collection, major classic U.S.	162:162:109-11	"Steam China" mail	162:132-37
Covers, patriotic	164:255	2¢ Banknote covers abroad	161:41-46
Cross-border mail <i>see</i> Canada		West India Steam Packet	163:206-11; 164:277-82
Dead Letter Office	164:255	Free frankings:	
Drop letters:		Newport, R.I., 1825	161:11
Philadelphia, Numeral 1 octagon cancel	162:103-07	Freight money system	161:67
Express companies:		Hamilton, Alexander, and colonial posts	161:17-18
American Letter Mail Company	163:153-54	Illinois:	
New York express mail, cancels	161:23-28	Chicago "18" rate marking	162:79-80
post office monopoly power	161:14-22; 162:83-88; 163:151-58	Chicago, Moody's Penny Dispatch	164:223-32
Fakes and forgeries:			
<i>Madame Joseph Forged Postmarks</i> (rev.)	162:143		

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IN THIS ISSUE

U.S CARRIERS

A Brief History of Boston Carrier Operations, *by Robert B. Meyersburg*7

THE 1847 PERIOD

The Identification of a Triple Transfer on the 5¢ Stamp of 1847—The Wagshal Shift,
by Jerome S. Wagshal.....18

THE 1851-61 PERIOD

Quintessential Covers: Part IV, *by Hubert C. Skinner and Eugene C. Reed, Jr.*25

THE 1861-69 PERIOD

Pigeon Blood Pink or Passenger Pigeon, *by Michael C. McClung*.....33

OFFICIALS ET AL.

The Scarcity of Used United States Official Stamps, *by Alan C. Campbell*.....38

Meet Me in St. Louis!, *by Alan C. Campbell*.....52

THE FOREIGN MAIL

“By West India Steam Packet,” *by Colin Tabcart*
(continued from *Chronicle* 164:282).....54

Accounting on Earliest North German Lloyd Cover from the United States to
Württemberg via Bremen, *by Heinrich Conzelmann*63

THE COVER CORNER

Answers to Problem Cover in Issue 16367

Answers to Problem Covers in Issue 164.....68

Problem Covers for this Issue70

INDEX TO *CHRONICLE* VOL. 46 (1994).....Supplement, pp. i-iv

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF BOSTON CARRIER OPERATIONS
ROBERT B. MEYERSBURG

[**Editor's Note:** The following article represents an edited and considerably enlarged version of Elliott Perry's notes on Boston carrier operations. Some of the information in Perry's notes was published earlier in his *Pat Paragraphs*, Nos. 33 and 34; that information is repeated here for the sake of completeness.]

The Pilgrims landed on the shores of the New World in 1620, and ten years later founded Boston. In 1639, Boston got its first postmaster, Richard Fairbanks; his appointment allowed him a penny for each letter delivered, so in a sense he could be considered America's first penny postman.

While William Penn was engaged in colonizing Pennsylvania, Boston already enjoyed an active carrier service. In 1693, Section 2 of the Massachusetts Post Office Act authorized the Postmaster to send any letters uncollected from the post office after two days to the addressees, the letter carrier collecting a penny per letter for this service.

In 1794, after the Bay Colony postal system was incorporated into the postal service of the United States, Congress authorized postmasters to engage carriers to deliver letters to residents in such towns and cities as the Postmaster General directed, for a fee of 2¢ per letter (2¢ being equivalent to the colonial penny).

Existing records show the continual presence of penny postmen in the Boston post office from 1829, with the number increasing from one to eight by 1848. In 1846, the post office advised:

There are five Penny Posts, and letters are delivered to all persons in the city who desire so to receive them. Letters dropped in the Post Office for delivery in the same place [i.e., the Boston post office], 2 cents each.¹

This drop letter rate remained in effect until 1851, with the carrier fee for delivery of drop letters being additional until 1860.

Edwin C. Bailey was Superintendent of the Boston Post Office City Delivery from 1846 to the end of 1848. He was succeeded by James H. Patterson, who had been proprietor of Boston Parcel Post at 23 Sudbury Street, where the carrier office remained until 1850, at which time the post office, along with the carrier department, moved to the Merchant's Exchange.

Early in 1849, the Postmaster General directed a reduction of the carrier fee for city letters from 2¢ to 1¢. Delivery of letters from the mails remained at 2¢.

Between 1844 and 1851, several private posts offered modest competition to the Post Office's city mail business, among them Towle's City Post (Cheever & Towle), Libbey & Co. and Hill's Post. The Postal Act of 1851 directed the Postmaster General to declare the streets of Boston (and those of other major cities) post roads, to the exclusion of all private posts. George H. Barker, a local entrepreneur, decided to challenge the government's authority. Late in 1851 he bought Towle's City Post, renamed it Barker's City Post, and operated it until he gave it up in 1859; based on the very few covers extant bearing his postmark, his service made little or no impact upon the U.S. Penny Post, which grew substantially during this period.

Along with the declaration of Boston's streets as post roads, the carrier service was reorganized and a system of nine sub-post offices was established. A postal notice concerning sub-post offices advised:

¹Elliott Perry, *Pat Paragraphs*, compiled edition, Bureau Issues Association, Inc., 1981, p. 243.

Letters for the mails left here and 1 cent paid on each will be deposited in Post-office by carriers. Postage may be prepaid here to all parts of the world. Circulars, notices and wedding billets, received at these offices, distributed by Post-office carriers. Penny post stamps can be bought at all these offices, which placed upon letters will ensure their delivery *free* to all parts of the city, not beyond Dover street.²

The number of sub-post offices increased to 19 by 1857, and these were replaced by 16 “receiving stations” in 1858.

PENNY POST—RECEIVING STATIONS

For Letters for the Mails, and for delivery in Boston.—Letters left here require prepayment of 1 cent, besides the U.S. Postage, and for city letters 1 cent only.³

The following year (1859), there was yet another change. Boston was divided into six collection districts with five to eleven mail boxes in each: a total of 47 boxes. South Boston was one of those districts. The 1¢ collection fee, which had been charged since 1851, was no longer in effect in 1859, but was restored in 1860. The East Boston district was added in 1859 (Figure 1), which brought the number of mail boxes to 60. There were four deliveries: 9:00 a.m. and 1:00, 3:30 and 10:00 p.m.

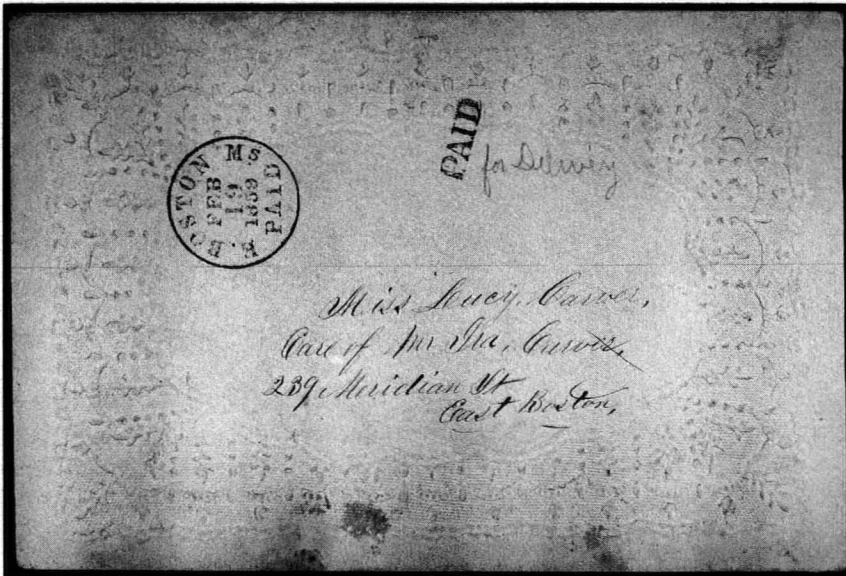


Figure 1. Early East Boston carrier cover, Feb. 19, 1859.

The Boston letter carrier system was described as follows in 1861:

The Penny Post was organized upon its present system in 1849, Hon. Cave Johnson, P.M. General, and the penny postage was then reduced from 2 cents to 1 cent, at which price it has ever since remained. Prior to that time, there was little system or organization. Carriers selected for themselves such letters as they chose to deliver, and they chose to deliver only such as were easily accessible. They did not serve persons who lived in the extreme parts of the city, remote from the business sections.

There are now twenty-five carriers, an increase of sixteen in ten years.

Average delivery, 300 letters each, per day, besides papers, making 7200 letters delivered daily.

²*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*

Carriers serve two years at \$500 per annum, after that time their pay is \$800 per year.

Three deliveries per day are made, viz.: 7¹/₂, and 11 A.M., and 3 P.M. Two-thirds of the mailable matter is sent out by the morning delivery.

There is no connection between the Carriers department and the Collectors department. The latter is under the charge of the Mail department of the Post Office.

A debtor and credit account is kept by the Post Office, with the letter carriers. The cash receipts from them are paid daily to the treasurer of the Post Office. If trust is given for postage, it is done at the risk of the carriers themselves. They must bring back the letters or the cash.

Books are kept, in which the carriers are required to enter the names of all letters which they are obliged to return, with reasons for non-delivery.

We will add, that there is no city in the Union where the Carrier or Penny Post system is better managed, or gives more general public satisfaction than that of Boston. It is very seldom that a complaint is made of the loss or delay of a letter, when once it has reached that department.⁴

This article describes two significant aspects in which Boston differed from other Post Office carrier departments: the carriers were not compensated by letter but instead were salaried; more importantly, and to the best of our knowledge uniquely, they handled only city letters and delivery from the mails. Collection from the letter boxes was not a carrier department function.

The Semi-Official Adhesives

Two adhesive stamps were produced during the carrier department superintendency of James H. Patterson. The first, which appeared in March 1849, was typeset in blue ink on pelure paper, with the words PENNY POST in two lines surrounded by a rectangle of diamonds. Twenty-five covers are recorded showing this adhesive used to the mails, with



Figure 2. Boston PENNY POST semi-official carrier adhesive on cover with 2x5¢ 1847s.

postage prepaid by one or more 5¢ 1847s (Figure 2). Figure 3 shows an 1850 drop letter with the 2¢ drop rate prepaid, along with a Penny Post stamp paying for delivery. The stamp is occasionally found canceled with a small black double circle; otherwise, and more frequently, it is found uncanceled unless struck by the Boston circular date stamp.

⁴*United States Mail and Post Office Assistant*, Vol. I, No. 4 (January 1861), p. (2); in the 1975 2-volume reprint by Collectors Club of Chicago at p. 14.

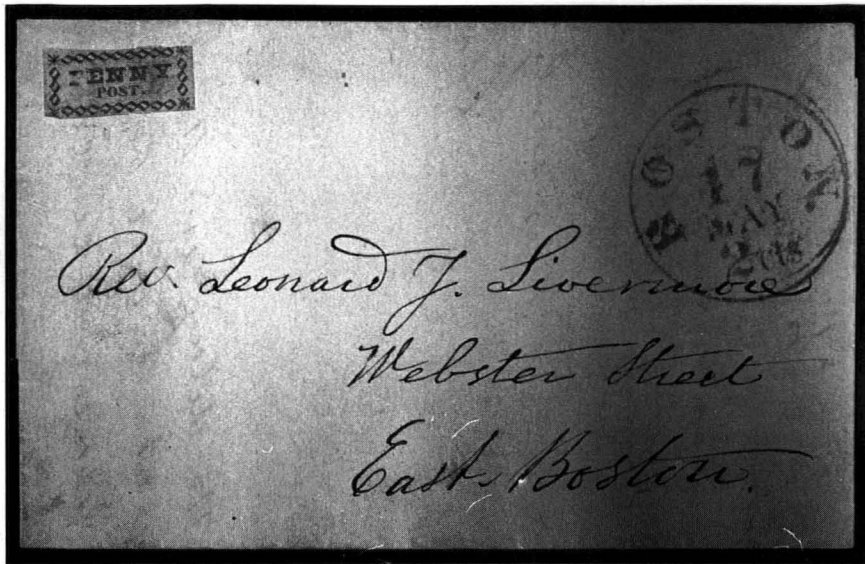


Figure 3. Boston PENNY POST carrier adhesive on 1850 drop letter, 2¢ prepaid.

The second adhesive stamp, also typeset in blue ink, has the words PENNY POST PAID arranged in three lines surrounded by a decorative border. It is printed on wove paper varying in color from grayish to bluish, in sheets of 25 (5x5). The earliest reported use is October 1850. Carrier department postmarks include black and red diamond grids (Figure 4), small fancy circles (Figure 5) and black hollow stars (Figure 6). The latter are very rare, and have to date been seen only on city mail.

A circular PENNY POST PAID handstamp (Figure 7) is known used as a postmark from 1851 through 1859. Struck in red, black or blue, it is evidence of carrier fee prepayment. From 1854 to 1857, it was impressed in black in the upper right hand corner to make prepaid stamped envelopes (Figure 8).

In 1857, the current 1¢ postage stamp began to appear in increasing numbers as the instrument of carrier fee prepayment. This continued until the fee period ended in June 1863.

Incoming mail was occasionally marked with the time of delivery. The Boston carrier department used two distinctive handstamps on the back of the carrier's delivery package (Figures 9 and 10).

Figure 11 shows a block of four 1¢ 1857s paying the collection fee and postage. Two copies of the 1¢ 1857 pay 1¢ drop letter postage and 1¢ city delivery fee in the cover illustrated in Figure 12.

Figure 13 shows use of the 1¢ Star Die envelope to prepay the collection fee while a 3¢ 1861 pays the postage. Figure 14 illustrates a colorful Civil War patriotic cover, with the 1¢ and 3¢ 1861 adhesives paying the collection fee and postage.

A rare combination of collection fee prepayment and British open mail postage, paid by the 1¢ and 5¢ 1861 adhesives, respectively, is seen in Figure 15. 11 annas 4 pies (34¢) was due on arrival in Calcutta.

Between August 22 and October 20, 1860, the Boston post office used a "1 Cent Due" handstamp on letters posted without prepayment of the collection fee (Figure 16). After the latter date, the handstamp was replaced by manuscript due markings. The Boston post office was notoriously guilty of passing demonetized stamps through the mails on a random basis well into the Spring of 1862. Figure 17 shows a mixed franking December 4, 1861, letter canceled with the framed PAID and the red concentric Boston circular date stamp of the period, with the 1¢ collection fee due marked in pencil. □

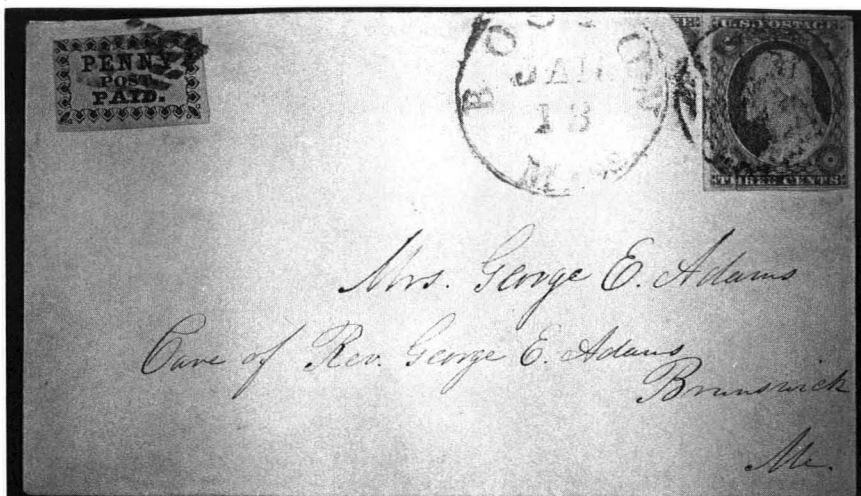


Figure 4. Boston PENNY POST PAID semi-official carrier adhesive on cover, diamond grill cancel, with 3c 1851.

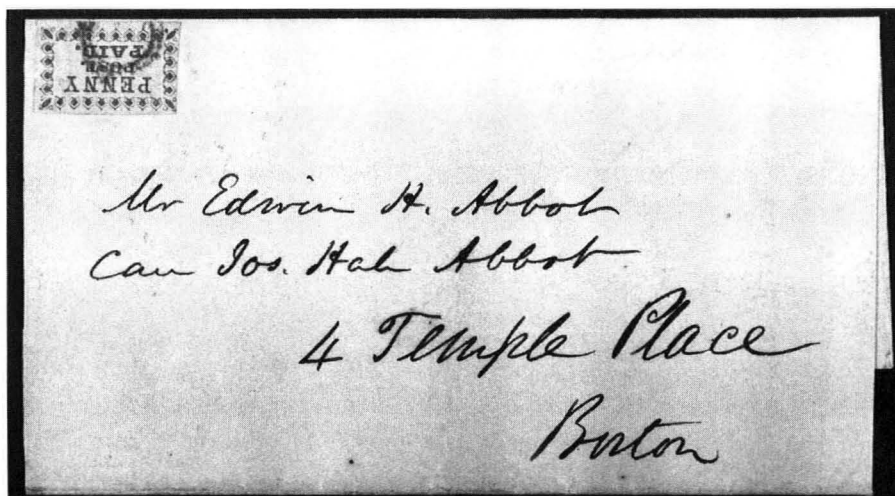


Figure 5. Boston PENNY POST PAID adhesive on cover, small fancy circle cancel.

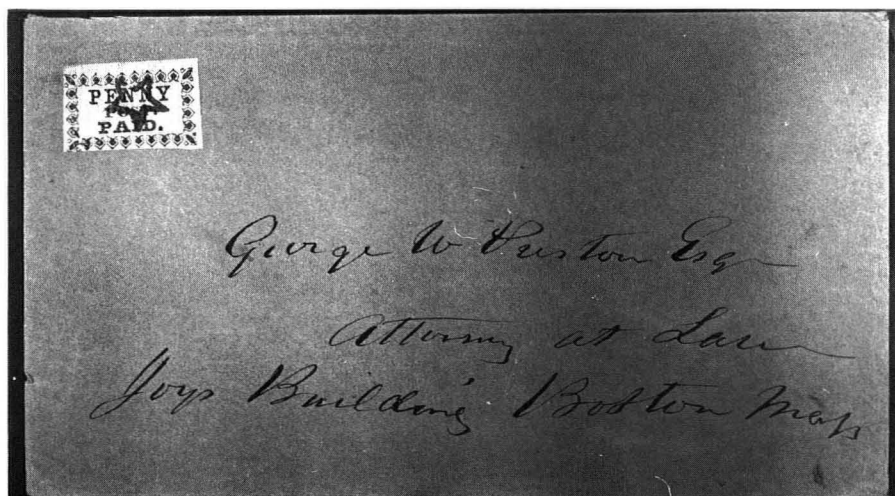


Figure 6. Boston PENNY POST PAID adhesive on cover, black hollow star cancel.

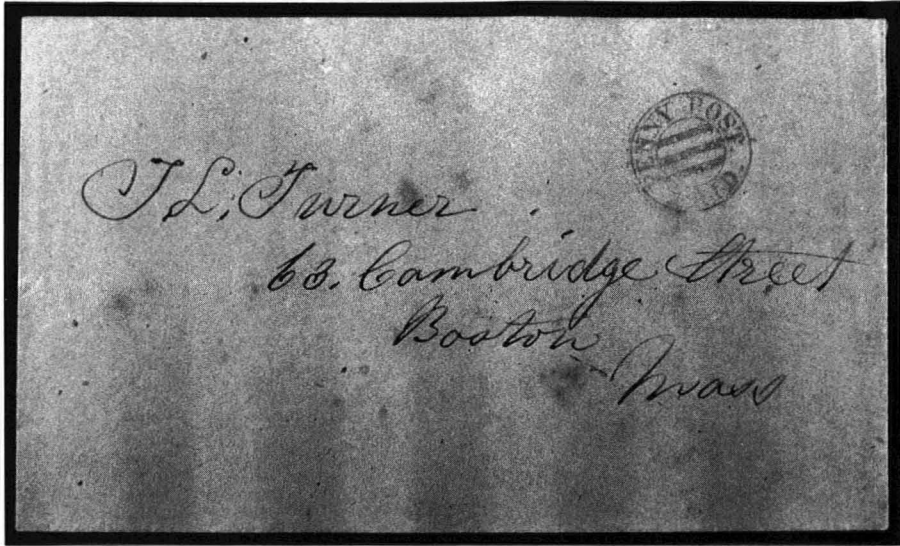


Figure 7. PENNY POST PAID handstamp, Boston.

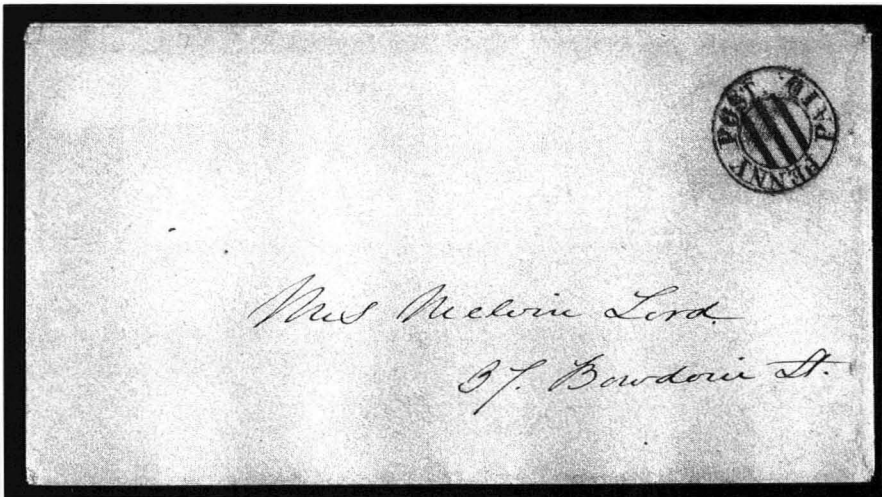


Figure 8. PENNY POST PAID handstamp, Boston, used for prepaid stamped envelope.



Figures 9 and 10. Boston carrier handstamps, time of delivery markings.



Figure 11. 1861 Boston-North Bridgewater cover, block of 4 1¢ 1857s paying postage and carrier delivery fee.



Figure 12. 1861 Boston drop letter, 2x1¢ 1857s for drop letter postage and city delivery fee.

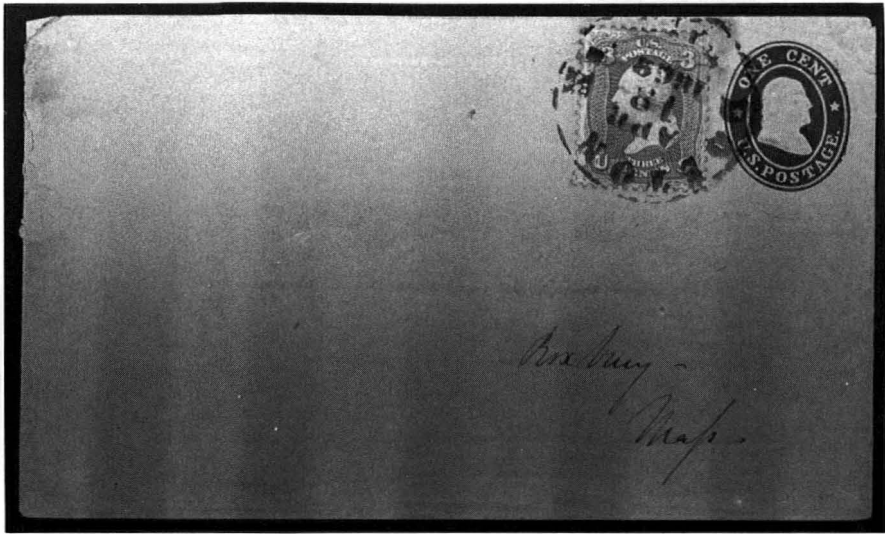


Figure 13. Boston-Roxbury cover, April 18, 1863, 1¢ Star Die envelope and 3¢ 1861 adhesive (1¢ collection fee + 3¢ postage).

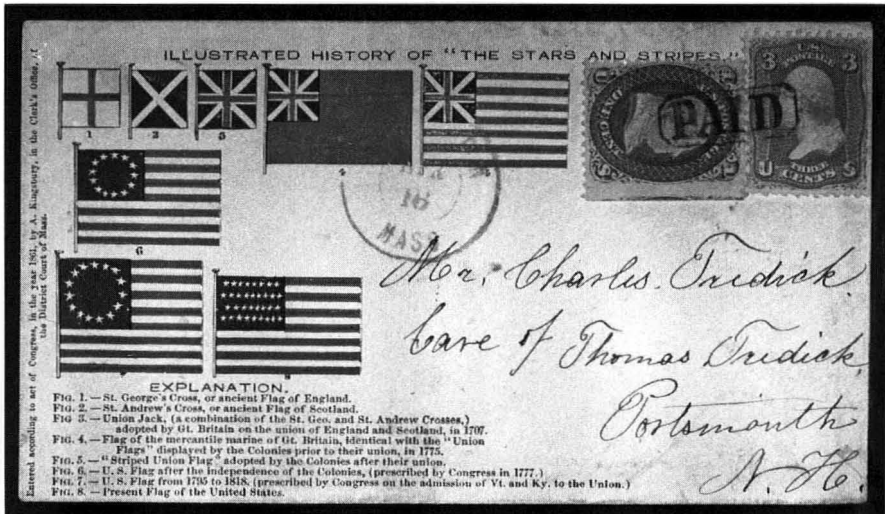


Figure 14. 1¢ and 3¢ 1861 adhesives on patriotic cover, Boston carrier fee plus postage.

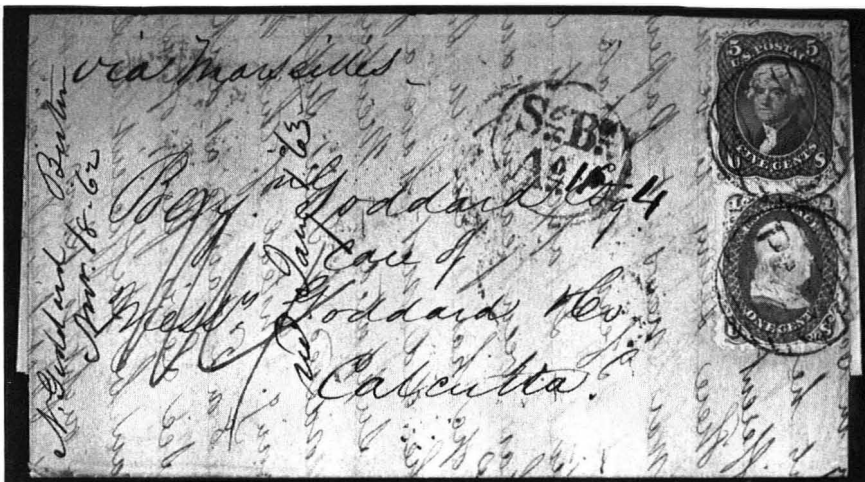


Figure 15. 1862 Boston to Calcutta, India, cover via Marseilles, 1¢ collection fee plus 5¢ British open mail postage, 11 anna 4 pies due at Calcutta.

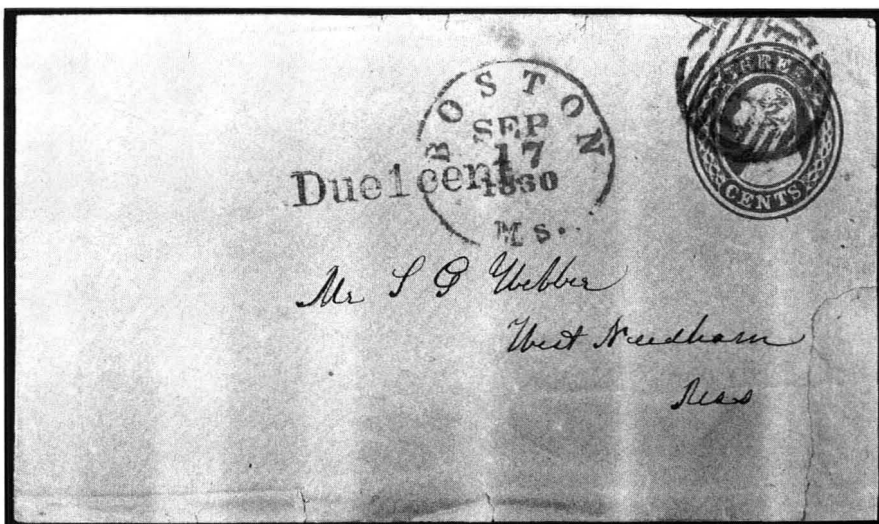


Figure 16. Boston, September 17, 1860 carrier cover, "Due 1 cent" handstamp.

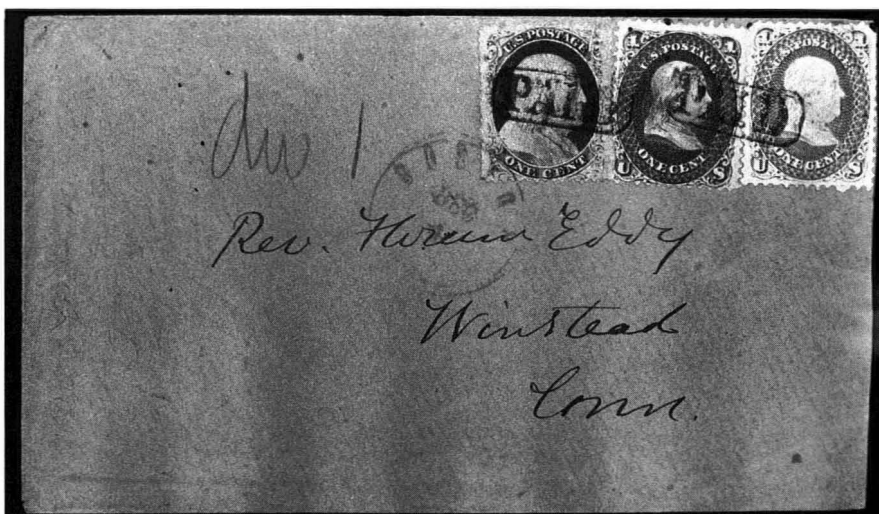


Figure 17. Boston, December 4, 1861 mixed franking cover to Winstead, Conn., framed PAID cancels and red Boston cds, 1¢ collection fee due marked in pencil.

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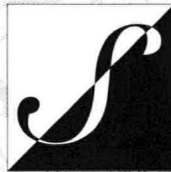
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THE IDENTIFICATION OF A TRIPLE TRANSFER ON THE
5¢ STAMP OF 1847—THE WAGSHAL SHIFT
JEROME S. WAGSHAL

The purpose of this article is to confirm, formally, my tentative conclusion made some seven years ago that the Wagshal Shift, now listed as Scott double transfer "F," is in fact a triple transfer. The discovery of the Wagshal Shift was announced in 1988, in the Philatelic Foundation's *Opinions V* volume.¹ The explanation as to why this announcement was delayed for about seven years, and the reason for confirming my conclusion now, will hopefully be of interest.

The Original Suggestion of a Triple Transfer

At the time the discovery of the Wagshal Shift was announced, I stated that I thought it might be a triple transfer. On this point, I can do no better than quote from the *Opinions V* article:²

An intriguing question which merits consideration is whether the Wagshal shift shows evidence of two prior transfers—one to the left as well as the one which is clearly evidenced to the right in the top lettering. There are four points of particular interest:

1. The upper section of the left frameline. Is it doubled to the right or left? I believe the original transfer was to the left. Using a magnifier with a built-in scale calibrated in units of one-tenth of a millimeter, I have measured the distance from the end of the background shading to the frameline, and my measurements indicate that the right portion of the doubled frame line is the one which goes with the final, principal transfer, and the left portion was from a prior transfer. Absolute certainty is precluded by the fuzzy nature of the lines when subjected to such magnified scrutiny. However, it should be noted that the left portion of the doubled line is also lighter, again indicating an earlier entry.

2. The upper section of the right frameline. As with the upper portion of the left frameline, measurement indicates that the left portion of the doubled upper portion of the right frameline was an earlier transfer, and the right portion of the doubled line was the final transfer. In this case, however, both portions of the doubled line appear to be of approximately equal strength.

3. There is a strong doubling of the curved vertical line to the left of the "U," at the left edge of the background shading. The several illustrations of the Wagshal Shift all show that the left portion of this doubled line is the shorter, and less complete. This is significant in indicating that the left portion was the earlier entry.

4. Finally, there are diagonal lines of shading in the right side of the serif at the top of the left (thin) vertical stroke of the "U." This, also, can be seen in the illustrations of the Wagshal Shift. These lines could not be the result of a prior entry to the right, because such a prior entry would have darkened the left side of the serif, and left a blank area on the right side. Indeed, evidence of the previous entry to the right can be seen nearby in the widened dark area separating the two top serifs of the "U."

. . . . If this is correct then the Wagshal shift is necessarily a triple transfer since there can be no doubt that the doublings in the top lettering are to the right.

Nevertheless, at this point, although I think the proof provided by one stamp plus two photographs is adequate to establish the Wagshal shift as a true double transfer, I am hesitant to claim with equal certainty that it is a triple transfer. It is my view that more than one example of the Wagshal shift should be examined in the original before

¹Jerome S. Wagshal, "The Discovery of a Fifth Major Double Transfer on the 5¢ 1847 Stamp—The Wagshal Shift," *Opinions V: Philatelic Expertizing—An Inside View* (New York: The Philatelic Foundation, 1988), pp. 8-30.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

nailing down this conclusion, and I therefore am particularly hopeful that another example of this plate variety will surface in the near future.

Why Should the Determination of a Triple Transfer Be Announced Now?

Because the determination of whether the Wagshal shift was a triple transfer depended on close observation of a relatively few fine lines, I was reluctant in 1988 to make a definitive statement based on the examination of only one stamp, although it was supplemented by two photographs. Accordingly, as I indicated then, I wanted to be able to examine at least one more example of this variety in the original before fully accepting the initial impression that the Wagshal Shift was a triple transfer.



Figure 1. Photo of “ink shifts” from Ashbrook records at the Philatelic Foundation, showing a pair of 5¢ 1847 stamps, the right-hand copy depicting the Wagshal Shift.

Providentially, the second copy was not long in appearing. In October 1989 the “Elite” collection of the 1847 issue was sold by Robert Kaufmann. Lot 97 was described as being the “D” double transfer—and had a Philatelic Foundation certificate attesting to this identification. It was in fact a Wagshal Shift, not a “D” double transfer. I am still surprised that those who passed on this stamp at the Philatelic Foundation did not recognize the obvious differences between the “D” double transfer and the doubling on that stamp, but I suppose that they may have been misled by the fact that the doubling of stamp did not match any of the more common double transfers known on the 5¢ stamp. Perhaps they classified the stamp as a “D” because they did not have an actual copy of the “D” double transfer for comparison and had no other solution. In any event, I bid vigorously on it, hoping for a “buy,” and, although I do not think anyone else recognized it for what it was, the bidding went far beyond what its value as a “D” justified. I was ambivalent about paying a very high price because I was apprehensive that my recently published discovery in *Opinions V* might cause a number of additional copies of the Wagshal Shift to surface. I nevertheless hung in and won the “Elite” stamp.

However, the *Opinions V* article had greater importance in relation to the “Elite” stamp than merely helping to identify it as a Wagshal Shift. In the *Opinions V* article, I had told the story of how John F. Dunn, then the Philatelic Foundation’s Director of Education, and since then the editor and publisher of *Mekeel’s*, had discovered a blurred photograph of a stamp, “Patient” 11 016, certified by the PF as a “printing variety,” which appeared to



Figure 2. 5¢ 1847, Wagshal Shift variety, Lot 97 in Robert Kaufmann's October 1989 "Elite" sale: the right-hand stamp from the Ashbrook pair shown in Figure 1. (Photo by Dattilo)

be a Wagshal Shift. Shortly thereafter, while researching among the Ashbrook records held by the Foundation, Mr. Dunn had found a file marked "Ink Shifts," in which he discovered a photograph of a pair of 5¢ 1847 stamps (Figure 1) in which the right-hand stamp was clearly a confirming copy of the Wagshal Shift.³ Incidentally, the vertical line which may be discernable between the stamps was a fold in the photograph, and not an indication of any separation in the pair itself.

You, gentle reader, can see for yourself what I discovered when I compared the "Elite" stamp to the right-hand stamp in the Ashbrook pair. Figure 2 illustrates the "Elite" stamp. The "Elite" stamp was indeed the right-hand stamp of the pair illustrated by Ashbrook! In an act of senseless desecration, a philatelic villain had severed the pair at some point after the Ashbrook photograph had been taken.

In the years since 1989, up to the present time, no public report has been made of any other copy. At this time, the two copies I hold and the PF photograph of "Patient" 11 016, illustrated and discussed in the *Opinions V* article, are the only three copies known to me, so I feel my going over-budget for the "Elite" copy has been rewarded.

The discovery copy of the Wagshal Shift is shown in Figure 3 and the photograph of PF "Patient" 11 016, the present whereabouts of which is unknown, is shown in Figure 4.

³In the *Opinions V* article I stated that John F. Dunn's discovery of the confirming photographs entitled him to a place in philatelic history as having made a major contribution to the study of the 5¢ 1847 stamp. I repeat that observation here.

My examination of the original "Elite" stamp confirmed each of the characteristics shown on the discovery copy and on the two photographs which originally led me to consider that the Wagshal Shift could be a triple transfer. Given the passage of so many years without any additional copy of this variety being reported,⁴ I believe it is now appropriate to make a final determination based on the available evidence of the two presently known copies, plus the photograph of the third. Hence this announcement.



Figure 3. Discovery copy of the 5¢ 1847 Wagshal Shift.

Are a Few Doubled Lines Enough to Support the Identification of a Triple Transfer?

Because of the inherent nature of triple transfers, the evidence required to identify them and evaluate their desirability must be considered on a different, more lenient standard than in the case of double transfers.⁵ In a double transfer, the standard of desirability depends upon the extent to which the evidence of the original erased transfer is obvious as well as its degree of offset from the final impression. However, for a triple transfer, *any* discernable evidence of two prior transfers should suffice because the evidence of a triple transfer is the product of four separate consecutive errors and must survive two attempts at

⁴I have been given an informal report of one other copy held by a collector who desires anonymity. I have not seen this copy, and therefore do not consider it in my principal discussion, but I believe it appropriate to cite its reported existence in this footnote.

⁵Many of the thoughts expressed in this section were originally expressed in my article, "The Triple Transfers of Scott No. 26a: A Discussion and Some Long Overdue Plating Diagrams," *Chronicle*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Whole No. 154) (May 1992), pp. 93-103.



Figure 4. Philatelic Foundation "Patient" 11 016, a 5¢ 1847 Wagshal Shift variety.

erasure, whereas a double transfer is the product of only two consecutive errors and need only survive a single erasure attempt.

To spell this out, a double transfer is the culmination of the following events: *First*, an entry of the transfer roll is made out of proper position; *second*, an incomplete erasure of this misaligned original entry is made which leaves traces of the original entry on the plate in the form of extraneous lines. A second impression of the transfer roll is made in a slightly different location, resulting in the doubling of those lines which were not erased—at which point we have a double transfer.

In the case of a triple transfer, however, a *third* error is committed by the second application of the transfer roll being once again out of position, but in a different position from the first misplaced impression. The *fourth* error in this process leading to a triple transfer consists of a second incomplete erasure—this time of the second misplaced plate impression—with this second erasure leaving not only vestiges of the second transfer but also vestiges of the original transfer as well. In other words, although the second erasure may remove some of the lines of the original transfer which were left from the original erasure, it still leaves some of the lines created by the original transfer.

It necessarily follows that the evidence of the first transfer, having been subjected to two efforts of plate erasure, is likely to be far less prominent than evidence of the second transfer. The end result is that a triple transfer may show only minor vestiges of the first transfer as evidence that there was such an original transfer.

Even in the early days of stamp plate production, it was unusual for such a series of four consecutive errors to occur.⁶ It is for this reason that knowledgeable collectors prize a triple transfer as a major plate variety even when there is only a line or two which proves the original entry. As long as it is possible to distinguish *some definite indication of the first entry* from the evidence left of the second entry, and also from the complete design transferred by the third and final entry, the standard for identification—and desirability—of a triple transfer is fully met.



Figure 5. Enlargement showing doubling in the top left corner of the “Elite” copy of the 5¢ 1847 Wagshal Shift stamp. (Photo by Dattilo)

The Wagshal Shift Meets the Standards for Determination of a Triple Transfer

On the Wagshal Shift there is of course ample evidence of a prior, partially erased transfer too far to the right. That cannot be reasonably questioned. But is there also acceptable evidence of an earlier transfer to the left? Here we must review the “points of particular interest” discussed in the *Opinions V* statement quoted earlier.

Of these four points, the most persuasive to me is the doubling of the curved vertical line to the left of the left “U.” The arrow in Figure 5 points to the doubled line in question as it appears on the “Elite” sale copy of the Wagshal Shift, and which provided the confirmation I sought of this point. It seems logical to conclude that the final transfer in this variety would have to be the one which shows the lines of the design more completely, with the shorter line at left being the result of plate erasure. This would have to mean that the shorter line is evidence of an earlier transfer to the *left* of the final one. Since there is, as previously noted, strong evidence of a prior transfer to the *right*, we have a triple transfer.

⁶Within the classic issues of the United States, the greatest concentration of triple transfers occurred on Plate 11 late of the 3¢ stamp of 1857. See the article cited in note 5, *supra*.

A second persuasive point is of course the area of color on the right side of the serif at the top of the left vertical stroke of the "U." The statement in the *Opinion V* article continues to be correct that this area of color, being on the right side of the serif, is consistent with an earlier transfer being to the left. This area of color is undoubtedly the remnant of the dark background area to the right of the serif. The "Elite" copy confirms the discovery copy by establishing that this area of color on the right side of the serif is not a mere printing artifact. The fact that it is somewhat lighter than the dark area of the final design is undoubtedly due to the shallow plate depression which caused it, which in turn resulted from having been almost completely pounded out flat from the back.

Are these several indicia enough to support a conclusion of a triple transfer, even though the doublings of the vertical framelines at the top are ambiguous? For the reasons set out above, I think so. Judged by the standards applicable to triple transfers, I conclude that there is ample evidence on the Wagshal Shift to warrant considering it a triple transfer variety.

Again, analysis of the configuration of these doubled lines suggests that the original transfer was the one to the left. If the original transfer had been the one to the right which left so much evidence of its existence in the upper arch of lettering of "POST OFFICE," there would also be evidence in this lettering of the prior transfer to the left, which, as far as I can tell, is lacking.

So the conclusion presents itself that the original transfer was the one to the left which left evidence of its existence in the top outer parts of the stamp—the upper vertical frame lines and the outer part of the upper left corner. The second transfer was too far to the right, and when it was erased that second erasure did not extend to the outside of the design where the indicia of the original leftward transfer had survived. Although no one now living could have been present at the scene when these events of plate manufacture took place, the circumstantial evidence strongly indicates that this is indeed what occurred when the transfer press artisan fumbled through a series of four errors in finally placing the impression where he wanted it.

The errors he committed a century and a half ago have left us the legacy of several fascinating philatelic remnants. All's well that ends well. □

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QUINTESSENTIAL COVERS: PART IV
HUBERT C. SKINNER and EUGENE C. REED, Jr.

This is part four in the series “Quintessential Covers” (see *Chronicle* No. 162, p.103; No. 163, p. 169; No. 164, p. 245). 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 cover described here is clearly one that deserves the quintessential label. It is a wonderful trans-Atlantic usage submitted by USPCS member Eugene C. Reed, Jr., its former caretaker. The cover (see Figure 1) was in the Reed Collection (1972-1982) and, later (1982-1992), in the famed 30¢ collection of Robert A. Paliapito; its present residence is not known to these writers.



Figure 1. The beautiful trans-Atlantic cover with four-color franking; mailed at New York City on 21 September 1861; carried via Southampton to Parma (Kingdom of Italy) on the HAPAG Steamer *Hammonia* under the new (May 1861) contract to carry the American Packet mails to Europe; bearing the “old” 1¢ dark blue stamp of 1857 used in mixed franking with three values of the new 1861 issue (3¢ pink, 10¢ dark green “first design” (2), 30¢ orange); a unique combination cover posted during the transition from old to new stamps just before the 1857 stamps were demonetized and rendered invalid for postage.

The present subject, though not in pristine condition, is a beautiful four-color combination usage cover which has several unique qualities. It is franked with a single Type V perforated 1¢ stamp of 1857 (Scott No. 24) used together with a 3¢ deep pink (Scott No. 64), two Type I dark green 10¢ stamps (Scott No. 62B), and a single 30¢ orange (Scott No. 71)—all from the then new 1861 issue. This cover, bearing an incredible combination of five stamps in four colors when only two were actually needed (24¢ + 30¢), together with its importance as a document of postal history, is clearly worthy of the quintessential designation.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

POSTMASTER..... FINANCE OFFICE.....1861.

Sir; You will receive herewith a supply of postage stamps which you will observe are of a new style, differing both in design and color from those hitherto used, and having the letters U. S. in the lower corners of each stamp, and its respective denomination indicated by figures as well as letters. You will immediately give public notice through the newspapers and otherwise, that you are prepared to exchange stamps of the new style for an equivalent amount of the old issue, during a period of six days from the date of the notice, and that the latter will not thereafter be received in payment of postage on letters sent from your office.

You will satisfy yourself by personal inspection that stamps offered in exchange have not been used through the mails or otherwise; and if in any case you have good grounds for suspecting that stamps, presented to you for exchange, were sent from any of the disloyal states, you will not receive them without due investigation.

Immediately after the expiration of the above period of six days, you will return to the Third Assistant Postmaster General all stamps of the old style in your possession, including such as you may obtain by exchange, placing them in a secure package, which must be carefully registered in the manner prescribed by Chapter 39, of the Regulations of this Department.

Be careful also to write legibly the name of your office as well as that of your county and state. A strict compliance with the foregoing instructions is absolutely necessary, that you may not fail to obtain credit for the amount of stamps returned.

Instead of sending stamps to the Department you can, if convenient, exchange them for new ones at some city post office, where large supplies are to be found. It being impossible to supply all offices with new stamps at once, you will deliver letters received from Kentucky, Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Maryland and Pennsylvania, prepayed by stamps of the old issue, until September 10th, those from other loyal states east of the Rocky Mountains until the first of October, and those from the states of California and Oregon and from the Territories of New Mexico, Utah and Washington, until the first of November, 1861.

Your Obedient Servant,

A. N. ZEVELY,
Third Assistant Postmaster General.

Figure 2. A transcript of the printed circular letter sent by Third Assistant Postmaster General A. N. Zevely to each individual postmaster in August 1861 along with a supply of the new 1861 stamps, instructing him how to exchange the new stamps for the obsolete ones and how to package and return the "odd style" stamps. [after Luff, 1902, and Perry, 1931]

"Postal

The Postmaster will not be prepared to exchange new postage stamps for old ones before Monday or Tuesday of next week. The order issued relative to fancy envelopes does not include any of the infinite variety of patriotic Union envelopes, but simply those of an obscene or personal character. The number of letters addressed to Southern States continues to be quite large, notwithstanding the notice that all such are forwarded to the Dead Letter Office at Washington. On Saturday 69 were received and on Sunday 5."

(Tribune, Aug. 20, 1861).

"POSTAGE STAMPS.—The new stamps will be ready for delivery on or about Sept. 1, after which time six days are to be allowed for exchange. The Postmaster received a large number of the new stamps a week since; but as his supply was thought to be insufficient, it was deemed prudent to wait until the printers might be able to produce three millions for the New-York office, and then publish the fact of his readiness to adopt the new postal token."

(Times, Aug. 25, 1861).

"Postage Stamps.

The new postage stamps, of which the Postmaster has received a large but insufficient supply, are to be issued on the 1st of September or shortly thereafter, provided at that time there shall be three millions of them in the New York Post Office. The Postmaster thus delays the utterance of the new tokens of postal payment from a sense of justice. As the stamps now in use will be worthless six days subsequent to the appearance of the new stamp, it has been deemed advisable to postpone the day of issue until such time as the Post Office shall have on hand an inexhaustible stock. The printers are busily engaged, and are producing a million daily. The distributing offices throughout the loyal States have received the new stamp, which is already in use in some quarters."

(Tribune, Aug. 26, 1861).

"THE NEW POSTAGE STAMPS"

"New-York has barely a million stamps, as her share of the new stamps, and the postmaster desires to begin with at least three millions. Consequently, notwithstanding the printers are very busy, the new stamps cannot be exchanged before the end of the week. Meantime, the public should not forget that the stamps now in use will be worthless within a week from the time when the Postmaster sends forth the first stamp of the new design. It is scarcely necessary to add that the new stamp will be worthless in the rebel States."

(Times, Sept. 1, 1861).

"The New Postage Stamps

The new postage stamps will be ready for delivery at the Post Office in this city on Monday next. Within six days from that date the old issue can be exchanged for the new, and afterwards they will not be received in payment of postage."

(Tribune, Sept. 14, 1861).

"The New Postage Stamps.—As will be seen by advertisement, the Postmaster of this City has received an ample supply of the new postage stamps, and holders of the old stamps are allowed six days in which to exchange them, commencing tomorrow."

(Times, Sunday Sept. 15, 1861).

"Notice

Post Office, New York, Sept. 16, 1861

The new style of Government Postage Stamps is now ready, and for sale at this office. Exchange will be made of the new style for an equivalent amount of the old issue during a period of

SIX DAYS

from the date of this notice, after which stamps of the old issue will not be received in payment of postage on letters sent from this office.

Wm. B. Taylor, P. M."

(Times, September 1861).

"IMPORTANT TO THE LETTER-WRITING PUBLIC,

The new Postage Stamps have been received at the Brooklyn Post Office. All persons having old stamps on hand are notified that after this week they will be useless. The old stamps can be exchanged for the new issue until Saturday next. After that the new stamps only will pass through the Post Office."

(Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Monday, Sept. 16, 1861).

Figure 3. Transcripts of the series of notices relating to the availability of the new 1861 stamps at his office placed in New York City newspapers by William B. Taylor, P. M., New York, on 20, 25, and 26 August 1861 and 1, 14, 15, and 16 September 1861 on which date [16th] the new issues finally were made available. The similar notice for nearby Brooklyn, N. Y., is included. [assembled from Perry, 1945]

Important Instructions.

The introduction of new styles of government envelopes and postage stamps, has rendered new instructions to postmasters necessary, respecting the disposition of such of the old issues as remain on hand.

These instructions require, that as soon as a supply of the new stamps or envelopes are received by a postmaster, he is to give immediate notice through the newspapers and otherwise, that he is prepared to exchange them for an equivalent amount of the old issue, during a period of six days from the date of the notice, and that after the expiration of the six days, the old stamps and envelopes will not be received in payment of postage on letters sent from his office.

When there is reason to believe that quantities of the stamps or envelopes so offered for exchange, have been sent from any of the disloyal States, they are not to be received without due investigation. The Circular referred to, which is from the finance office of the Department, further instructs postmasters as follows:

Immediately after the expiration of the above period of six days, you will return to the Third Assistant Postmaster General all stamped envelopes of the old style in your possession, including such as you may obtain by exchange; placing them in a secure package, which must be carefully registered in the manner prescribed by Chapter (39) of the Regulations of this Department.

Be careful also to write legibly the name of your office, as well as that of your County and State.

A strict compliance with foregoing instructions is absolutely necessary, that you may not fail to obtain credit for the amount of envelopes returned.

Instead of sending the old envelopes to the Department, you can, if convenient, exchange them for new ones at some city post office, where large supplies are to be found.

It being impossible to supply all offices with new envelopes at once, you will deliver letters received from Kentucky, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Maryland and Pennsylvania, under cover of the old issue, until September 10th; those from other loyal states east of the Rocky Mountains, until the 1st of October; and from the Territories of New Mexico, Utah and Washington, until the 1st of November, 1861.

The instructions to the larger class of post offices, vary somewhat. They are directed to exchange new for old stamps and envelopes, on application from the smaller offices. They will also retain all the old styles in their possession, until a Special Agent calls to count and destroy them, and furnish a certificate of the quantity so disposed of.



J. HOLBROOK, Editor and Proprietor.

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER, 1861.

TERMS—One dollar per year, payable in advance. All communications to be addressed to the Publisher of the UNITED STATES MAIL, New York.

Subscriptions received at any Post Office in the United States.

The postage on this paper, for the year, is six cents if paid for the whole year or quarterly in advance.

Old and New Stamps.

There is, we find, some confusion in many post offices, growing out of the recent change in the styles of postage stamps. The instructions require that on the receipt of a supply of the new stamps, they are to be exchanged for old ones, for one week, after which the old ones are not to be recognised in the pre-payment of postage at that office. In some cases, the supply of new stamps are very soon exhausted, owing to exchanges with neighboring postmasters as well as individuals. In such cases, the question arises, can letters be prepaid in money, or shall the postmaster return to the sale of old stamps until a fresh supply of the new ones can be obtained?

In the absence of official authority on this point, we will venture to advise that as a temporary necessity, the old stamps be used, as the pre-payment in money is an absolute violation of law, while the requirement to cease the employment of the former issue of stamps, after a certain time, is a regulation of the Department.

As the stamp contractors are filling the orders at as rapid a rate as possible, thus enabling the Department to keep up with the demand, all these difficulties will soon be remedied. Post offices of the smaller class should not exchange the new issues for the old, with other offices, but with individuals only.

Figure 4. Notices reproduced from the August 1861 (left column) and the September 1861 (right column) issues of the *United States Mail and Post-Office Assistant* reporting on the release of the new 1861 stamps, instructing postmasters on return of the obsolete stamps, and advising what could be done when supplies of the new issues become exhausted.

The first element of postal history interest is that this is a transition cover posted on 21 September 1861 as the demonetized “old stamps” were being exchanged for the new stamps which were made necessary by the conflict between the North and the South. The “story” of demonetization of the 1857 issue, the history of the involved and uneven transition at northern post offices to required use of the 1861 stamps, and accounts of the numerous attempts later on to use the demonetized 1857 adhesives (including “ILLEGAL STAMP” and “OLD STAMPS/NOT RECOGNIZED” markings, etc.) have been told and retold many times by philatelic students including such noted authors as Tiffany (1887), Luff (1902, 1941-43), Chase (1929, 1942), Perry (1931-52, 1981), Perry in Norona (1933), Ashbrook (1938), Brookman, (1947, 1966-67), and Simpson (1959, 1979). The brief summary presented here is based on these earlier accounts to which the reader is referred for more detailed and complete information.

The 1861 postage stamp issue was printed by the National Bank Note Company at New York City and “substantial quantities of all [eight] denominations” of the new stamps were delivered to the United States Stamp Agent in New York on Friday 16 August 1861 (Luff, 1902, pp. 92-94; Perry, 1931, p. 35). Immediately, the stamp agent began distributing the 1861 stamps to the larger post offices. The date on which the new stamps became available and the date when the “old stamps” became invalid at individual post offices varies widely based on when each office received its supply of the new stamps. A printed circular letter from Third Assistant Postmaster General A. N. Zevely was prepared to accompany the dispatches of the 1861 stamps (see Figure 2). This letter was dated individually in manuscript and directed each of the postmasters addressed to “immediately give public notice through the newspapers and otherwise” that the old stamps could be exchanged for the new designs for a period of [only] six days from the date of the notice and would be invalid after the sixth and last day. In many cases, for various reasons, the exchange period was extended and the 1857 issues remained valid at a given office until after the extension date. Baltimore, if not the first, was one of the first offices to receive the new issues and the exchange began there on 17 August, extended at the smaller post offices in the Baltimore area to 17 September (Perry, 1931, p. 115). By Monday the 19th of August, the new stamps were available at many offices in New England, New York and New Jersey, and in other nearby states including the cities of Albany, Buffalo, Philadelphia, and Wilmington and as far away as Detroit (Perry, 1932, p. 135).

Strangely, New York City was *not* one of the first post offices to receive sufficient quantities of the new stamps to make the exchange effective. Elliott Perry (1945, pp. 1520-23) recorded and transcribed the series of notices which began to appear in the New York City newspapers on 20 August anticipating the availability of the new issue and announcing that new stamps would be exchanged for the obsolete ones; these notices are reproduced here in Figure 3. Note that New York Postmaster William B. Taylor required that “an inexhaustible stock” of three million stamps be on hand before he was ready to effect the exchange in this great city. Obviously, he was concerned about running out of the new stamps. It was not until Monday the 16th of September that the new stamps finally were made available at New York City (see Figure 3). Originally, the 1857 issue would have become invalid in New York City after the sixth day (21 September) but on that date commentaries appeared in the *New York Times* and *Tribune* reporting on the long line of patrons exchanging stamps at the “cashier’s window at the Postoffice yesterday evening” and stating that this “fact alone shows how ludicrously short was the time fixed for the transaction of such an amount of business as this exchange of stamps involved.” Postmaster Taylor responded by extending the period for one week and repeating the published notice for the six days ending Saturday the 28th of September; thus extending the validity of the 1857 stamps (at New York City) through that date (Perry, 1945, pp. 1523-25).

Notices in the *United States Mail and Post-Office Assistant* for August and September 1861 further reveal some of the problems and concerns relating to the exchange of old stamps for new and the disposition of the obsolete stock (see Figure 4). In the September issue (page 2), postmasters who run out of new stamps are advised “as a temporary necessity the old stamps [should] be used, as the pre-payment in money is an absolute *violation of law*, while the requirement to cease the employment of the former issue of stamps, after a certain time, is a regulation of the Department.” This may point to some possible answers and reflect additional clarification on certain late usages and otherwise unexplained combination uses.

Our present quintessential cover was mailed at New York City and dispatched on the HAPAG Steamer *Hammonia* on 21 September 1861, the original last day of validity for the 1857 stamps at New York; thus, a very late *legal* usage at New York of the 1¢ stamp of 1857. Further, the 1¢ stamp was used in combination with very early use at New York City of three different values of the 1861 issue—an incredible transition cover bearing both the old and new issues of postage stamps (used during the exchange period and just before demonetization at that office) to prepay trans-Atlantic postage. The letter is addressed to Parma in the Kingdom of Italy, and prepaid 54¢ for the 1/2oz. rate by French mails.

A second postal history aspect of this cover is that it demonstrates an extraordinary arrangement to transport the trans-Atlantic American Packet mails during the Civil War. Hubbard and Winter report (1988, p. 168): “With the outbreak of the American Civil War, the Federal Government removed all American-owned steamers from the North Atlantic routes. A contract was awarded to the HAPAG Line for regular mail service from New York every two weeks commencing in May 1861. . . . U.S. mails were carried to and from Southampton by these steamers for sea postage on the letters carried.” The New York dispatch marking and the French entry marking (struck at Paris and indicating entry at Calais) both indicate that the letter was carried by the American Packet Service (via HAPAG contract steamer). The stamps are canceled by the eight-bar red grid used on outgoing foreign mail at New York during 1861; the magenta manuscript 36/2 at right representing 36¢ credit to France for a prepaid double letter also was applied at New York. The *Hammonia* left New York on 21 September and arrived at the British port of Southampton on 3 October (see H&W, 1988, p. 176). The mail was offloaded at Southampton and proceeded to Paris in a closed pouch where it arrived on 4 October. The French boxed red “PD” shows full prepayment to destination and the manuscript “2” at upper left confirms the double rating. Backstamped markings read “Torino/6 Oct 61,” “Bologna/6 Oct 61,” and “Borgotaro/7 Oct 61.” The rate is divided as follows: 18¢ U.S. inland and packet postage; 4¢ transit credit to Great Britain; 8¢ to France; and 24¢ to the then newly established (17 March 1861) Kingdom of Italy. Curiously, the cover originated in a country ravaged by Civil War and was directed to an area undergoing *Risorgimento* (“revival” or “resurgence”—the political movement toward national unity and independence) after a generation of tumultuous history.

The third element of postal history interest is related to the identity of the adhesives themselves. The Type V 1¢ stamp of 1857 (Scott No. 24), used very late (but legally), is an attractive, clear example of its type with the characteristic incomplete side ornaments, printed in a rich shade of deep blue. Each of the three values from the new 1861 issue, used very early, has its own intriguing aspects. The 3¢ pink (Scott No. 64) is a fine example of this very scarce stamp printed in a rich deep shade though (sadly) not the pigeon blood variety. The two Type I 10¢ dark green stamps (Scott No. 62B) are from the very scarce “first designs” once listed and catalogued separately as the “August Issues.” Both the 10¢ and 24¢ “first designs” are recognized today as regularly issued and are listed properly with the other stamps of the 1861 issue. Further, the earliest known use of the

Type I 10¢ stamps is only four days earlier. The 30¢ orange stamp (Scott No. 71) is a fine example of this value, which is remarkable primarily for its unique combination with the other stamps. In fact, the desirability and collectibility of each of the adhesives on this cover is greatly enhanced by its very attractive red grid cancel and by the unique combination with the other rare stamps.

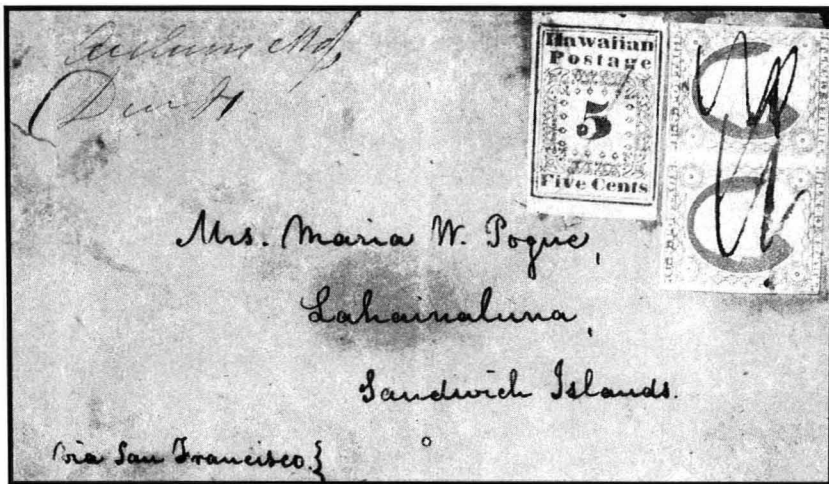
In summary, our quintessential cover is a document of both international history and postal history. It records some of the intriguing drama and confusion of the transition from old stamps to new during the early Civil War period and Italy's *Risorgimento* and illustrates an extraordinary arrangement made because of the outbreak of war to transport the United States mails across the Atlantic. In addition, the destination of the letter is unusual and the rare combination of issues and rare stamps is doubtless unique. □

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PIGEON BLOOD PINK OR PASSENGER PIGEON
MICHAEL C. McCLUNG

At a recent stamp show I overheard a dealer explaining pigeon blood pink to a young collector. He said, "It's like a regular pink, only it has more blue; I call it sky-blue pink." Over the years I've heard a number of other attempts at describing this mysterious shade; some of them are: purplish pink, neon pink, cherry pink, lilac pink, Pepto-Bismol and "It's just like pink, only more so." Are any of these descriptions accurate? What does pigeon blood pink really look like? I asked this question when I first began to study the 3¢ 1861, and my research has resulted in as many questions as answers. Perhaps our readers can help with some of these questions.

Pigeon blood is the term used by gemologists to describe the color of the highest grade of a ruby; it is also used to describe a ruby colored piece of art glass. Does this mean that pigeon blood pink can be translated to mean ruby pink? Lester Brookman tells us that pigeon blood pink was first described by Ashbrook and Perry and that two shades existed—deep pigeon blood and pale pigeon blood.¹ I have examined a number of stamps that were identified as pigeon blood pink by Ashbrook, Perry and recognized expertizing services, but I have never seen a distinction made between pale and deep. Has anyone seen this distinction made?

In examining certified copies² of pigeon blood pinks I have certainly found that some were deeper in shade than others, but I also found that these stamps fell into the same shade patterns as the regular pinks. My studies have shown that the pinks were printed in three separate shades and that each of these shades has its own broad range. I call these shades pink, lavender pink and carmine pink.³ The lavender pink shade appears to be the product of the addition of a small amount of violet pigment to the pink ink. Stamps in this shade have an almost iridescent quality. Carmine pink was produced by adding a carmine pigment to the mix; some of these stamps have so much carmine in them that they are barely recognizable as pinks. I believe that these shades were produced as a result of experimentation by the National Bank Note Company in attempting to solve the problem of fading. The following often quoted passage from the September 1861 edition of the *United States Mail and Post Office Assistant* describes the situation:

We learn from the Department, that the three cents stamp is not quite satisfactory, or what was required of the contractors. It is understood that they will experiment until they get a good, decided carmine, or dark pink—similar to the color of the stamp on the new white envelopes.⁴

The above quote describes events that took place in early August of 1861. By that time the pink stamps had already been printed, and some of them had begun to fade. I believe that the first experiments produced the lavender pink and carmine pink shades which also must have been deemed unsatisfactory since they were quickly replaced by the rose pink and rose shades. Although the pink stamps were not satisfactory, they were

¹Lester G. Brookman, *The United States Postage Stamps of the 19th Century*, Vol. II (New York: H.L. Lindquist Publications, Inc., 1966), p. 17.

²By "certified copies" I mean examples that were identified by Ashbrook, Perry or a recognized expertizing service.

³Michael C. McClung, "Shades of the 3¢ 1861," *Chronicle* No. 159 (Vol. 45, No. 3) (August 1993), pp. 185-87.

⁴*United States Mail and Post Office Assistant*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (September 1861), p. [3].

accepted by the Stamp Agent for distribution, probably because of high demand and because some of the stamps had not faded.

Why didn't all the pink stamps fade? And why are there a few pinks that have survived to the present day with a fresh-off-the-press brightness? One scenario is as follows:

1. Most changes in color occur while the ink is still wet and more susceptible to the agents that can cause change.

2. Some sheets of the pink stamps took longer to dry than others, so they spent a longer time exposed to the elements in a vulnerable state. These are the stamps that faded, while some sheets dried very quickly and did not fade.

3. The reason for the variation in drying time is that the patent dryer was not mixed thoroughly into the pink ink, so some sheets received a high concentration of it and some received very little.

I'm certain there are other explanations for the disparity in the amount of fading, and I would be interested in hearing them.

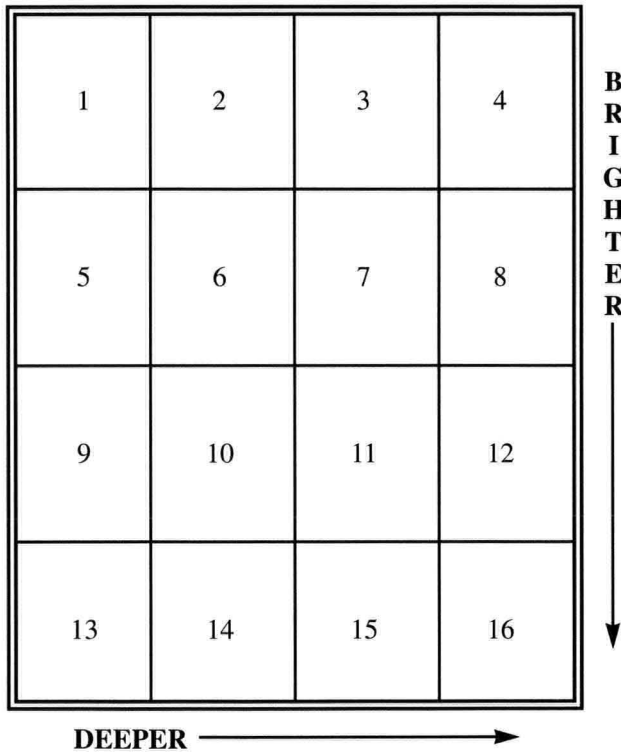


Figure 1. Color chart for the 1861 3¢ pinks.

Figure 1 is a color chart for the pinks. Imagine placing the deepest, brightest possible 3¢ pink in position #16 and placing a dull, pale stamp, that is barely recognizable as a pink, in position #1. Now fill in the other spaces with stamps of appropriate depth and brightness. The next step is to complete similar color charts for lavender pink and carmine pink. The reason for this exercise is to establish a basis for communication of various color shades.

I have seen certified copies of pigeon blood pink which match the following positions on our three color charts: pink 15 & 16; lavender pink 12 & 16; carmine pink 11, 14 & 15. In other words, pigeon blood pink has become more than one color. Some of these certified copies vary so much from each other that they could not possibly be cataloged as the same stamp. Why is there such a variance? Here are a few suggestions I've heard:

Some of the stamps have changed over the years.

Some reference copies have changed over the years.

Some expertizers have inadequate reference material.

Our standards are not as high as they used to be.

Different people see colors differently.

Any other suggestions?

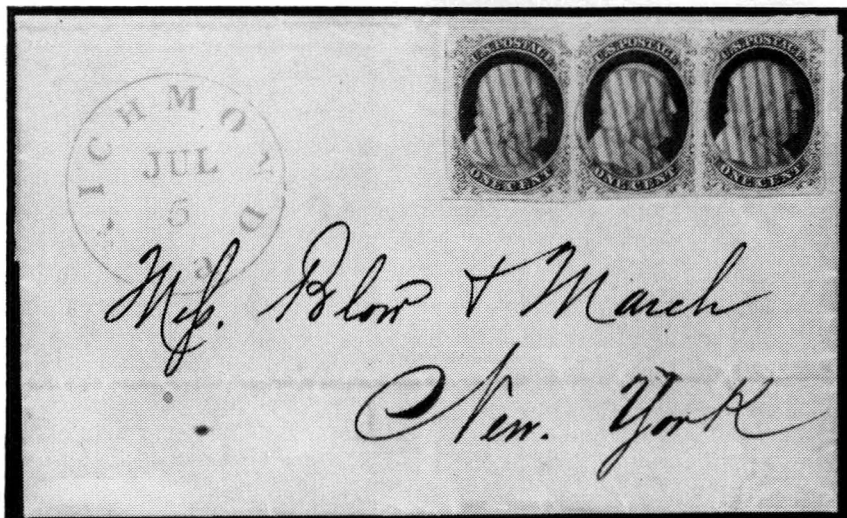
This irregularity in color brings up another question: which ones are genuine? To answer this we need to return to the source, which is Ashbrook. He discovered this shade, and he named it, so if anyone could ever identify a pigeon blood pink, it was he. We know that a number of copies of this stamp exist with Ashbrook identification and signature, and we know that he had a reference collection which included stamps of this shade. Is this reference material still intact? The rumors I've heard all indicate that it is, but they differ widely concerning its current residence. I believe that the only way to arrive at a true understanding of what was meant by pigeon blood pink is to study a quantity of Ashbrook-identified copies, all at the same time, so that they can be compared to each other and to other stamps under the same light conditions. Is such an assemblage of material possible, and if it were, would a group of students be able to reach a consensus? And if so, what would we do about all the certified copies that did not fit into our consensus shade range? Or, what if we can't reach a consensus? What if the Ashbrook material differs as much as the certified copies I've seen? Is it possible that we will find that the pigeon blood pink has literally faded out of existence and gone the way of the Passenger Pigeon? I hope not, and I believe there are a number of people who share this feeling. This stamp has been an important part of any specialized collection or exhibit of the 3¢ 1861 for a long time, and it would be a shame if that were to change. There are other considerations as well. The catalog value of this stamp has been steadily rising; it has reached \$2,500.00 for a used single and \$10,000.00 unused (1995 *Scott*, Vol. 1).

Has the time come to re-examine and re-establish the standards for identification of pigeon blood pink? The risk in doing so is that we may have to devalue some certified copies. Would this be doing more harm than good? Or should we "grandfather" all the old certificates and set the new standards for new certificates only? The alternative to re-establishing standards is to do nothing; this would allow the disparity to continue and possibly worsen to the point where the pigeon blood pink label is placed on such a wide spectrum of shades that it loses its meaning and significance.

This article contains a number of questions, and I invite our readers to supply answers. I am anxious to hear your solutions, suggestions and comments; if you have something to say about this subject, I, like Ross Perot, am all ears. □

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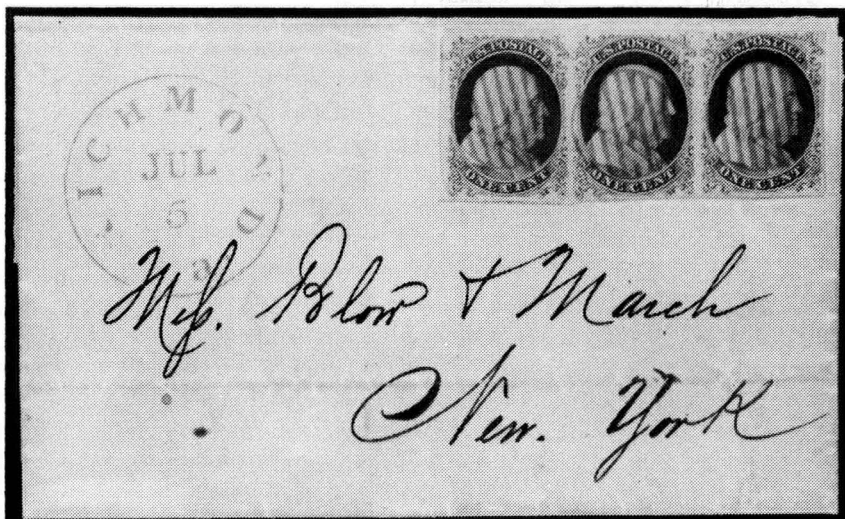
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THE SCARCITY OF USED UNITED STATES OFFICIAL STAMPS

ALAN C. CAMPBELL

Introduction

In 1991, Ralph Ebner, a young collector in Germany, asked for my help in completing his set of used United States Official stamps. Over a period of months, as I searched in vain for relatively inexpensive items in a condition grade that would satisfy his exacting Germanic standards, I came to sense that many of the Official stamps were actually scarcer used than unused, and that this difference was magnified when one focused on premium quality. Dealers reported that they were never able to keep enough nice used Official stamps in stock. The increased demand was attributed by some to the ever-widening discrepancy in the Scott catalogue between the valuations for used and unused stamps: collectors new to the field, so the argument went, were consciously committing to assembling used sets on the basis of the lower outlay involved.

I entered this field as a relatively unsophisticated collector in the early 1980's and began by assembling a mixed used and unused set of stamps. Since at the time most of the scarcer stamps were only slightly more expensive in unused condition, I generally chose that option, betraying a typical beginner's bias that classic stamps ought to be scarcer unused than used and are certainly more handsome and impressive in that state. It never occurred to me to be suspicious of the plentiful stocks I was encountering of unused stamps that in their era of usage had never been available for sale to the general public. Gradually over the years my tastes matured, to the point where I am now more attracted to the elusive used survivors and their fragile beauty, which seems to require a more complex standard of connoisseurship.

The purpose of this article is to establish which Official stamps are scarcer in used condition than unused. I have settled upon three tests. First, to survey the informed and considered opinion of various experts in the field, both specialist dealers and collectors. Second, to inventory whenever possible the more comprehensive stocks of used and unused Official stamps maintained by bourse and mail-order dealers across the country. Third, to analyze earlier editions of the Scott catalogue when the pricing was less distorted by collector and investor preference for unused material. Being fully aware of the many arguments that can be advanced to impeach the scientific accuracy of these tests, I still feel an obligation to put forth whatever evidence I can to prevent the recent pricing trends from being misinterpreted. But before presenting the results, it is necessary to explain how the used and unused Official stamps now available to collectors first came into private hands.

Provenance

From 1873 to 1884, Official stamps were supplied by the Continental and American Bank Note Companies to the stamp agent, who in turn distributed them to the various departments according to their specific requisitions. At no time were they ever made available for sale to the general public. Stamp collectors of the time might formally petition the departments for courtesy examples, and it is presumed that most stamps supplied this way were effectively demonetized by straight pen lines, tiny pen "x"s, or by use of a straight line overprint or receiving hand stamp struck as a sort of favor cancel. Intact sets of these with original gum still exist for some departments.¹ In 1874, when the departments were canvassed as to how their Official stamps were distributed and whether Official stamps

¹In Harry M. Konwiser's column in *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News*, May 24, 1937, he reported that Daniel Schoonmaker had sets of the Navy and Post Office Departments with violet "cancellations" reading "Bureau of Steam, Navy Dept," all with their original gum.

were ever enclosed for return postage, only the Interior, Justice, and Post Office Departments answered in the affirmative.² This explains how a few unused Official stamps could have fallen into private hands, although most of them would have been prefixed to reply envelopes. In passing, I should note that by the term “unused” I encompass stamps both with and without gum, since only a tiny fraction of the uncanceled stamps that have survived were retrieved off envelopes that actually went through the mail.

In the beginning a few unused stamps may have slipped out by collectors importuning government officials who had access to the stamps. However, Resa Dubois’ fascinating account of his Saturday schoolboy visits to the departmental offices in Washington, D.C. makes it clear that what was being sought and provided were large quantities of used stamps torn off incoming mail.³ It is possible that strict accounting of inventories was not maintained in the smaller offices and by the many individual officials who were furnished stamps since they were not valid for postage on private mail. Any attempt to use them so would have been fairly conspicuous on an envelope lacking the characteristic imprinted corner card. (While a number of such ambiguous usages have survived, and a few were even caught by sharp-eyed postal clerks, many of the others were probably legitimate usages where the official was temporarily at a loss for imprinted envelopes and neglected to add a hand-written “Official Business” identification.)

In 1877, a young and brazen Alvah Davidson sent President Grant an unused 6¢ postage stamp and received the 1¢, 2¢, and 3¢ Executive stamps in exchange along with a circular from the Post Office Department explaining that “specimen” stamps could be obtained in sets at face value.⁴ In 1875, a special printing of the Official stamps had been put on sale to the general public at the Office of the Third Postmaster General. The quantities in which these special printings were ordered clearly reflect the difficulty which collectors of the time had in obtaining certain of the regular Official stamps. Except for numerous sheets of the 1¢ and 2¢ values ordered by dealers for packet material, and exempting the Department of State dollar values (too rich for most collectors’ budgets), the Departmental special printings were generally ordered and supplied in complete sets. Predictably, far more sets of the Executive special printings (3,461) were ordered than of any of the departments, and more Agriculture (354) and State (245) sets were ordered than of the “easier” departments: Justice (150), War (104), Navy (102), Post Office (81), Interior (75), and Treasury (72).⁵ Again predictably, disproportionate numbers of the 7¢ values from Navy, State, Treasury, and War were also ordered, since the 7¢ Prussian closed mail rate was superseded by the General Postal Union rates of 1875, so the 7¢ stamps, when used at all, are almost always found in combination with other values to make up a 9¢ triple domestic rate, a 10¢ double UPU rate, or a 10¢ domestic registry fee on a penalty envelope. Some youthful collectors, however, scorned the Official special printings. According to Col. Spencer Cosby:

The specimen stamps were considered poor substitutes for the originals, besides being more expensive in most cases, and no one thought of collecting both. We even made fun of the beginner who would buy a set of specimen “Executives” because they

²Rae D. Ehrenberg, “Authorized Use of the U.S. Official Stamps by the Various Departments,” 33rd *American Philatelic Congress Book*, 1967, pp. 35-49.

³Resa D. Dubois, “Early Days in Stamps,” *Mekeel’s Weekly Stamp News*, March 23, 1899, reprinted in the *S.P.A. Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 4, December 4, 1982.

⁴Harry M. Konwiser’s column, *Mekeel’s Weekly Stamp News*, May 5, 1937.

⁵These numbers, based on the value in each set for which the fewest total copies were sold, in fact represent the quantity of sets which theoretically could have been assembled afterwards. As Bill Mooz has pointed out, we know from Press copies of the original invoices that while many complete sets were sold, a few odd values of each stamp were also ordered separately.

cost only 22¢ while the originals were always good for a couple of dollars, and hard sometimes to get at that unless you were one of the favored few who knew the door-keeper or messenger at the White House.⁶

Penalty envelopes, first introduced in 1877 and gradually gaining widespread acceptance, eventually supplanted the use of Official stamps. Since unused copies of all the Official stamps have survived in quantity, it is obvious that none of the departments — despite their stated intentions—actually exhausted their supplies of stamps before converting over to penalty envelopes exclusively. In the transitional period, 1877-1884, Official stamps retained their postal validity but gradually became superfluous, and so the trickle of dispensations by officials sympathetic to collectors must have grown to a steady stream. Judging from an 1883 J.W. Scott auction containing large quantities of unused Official stamps, the philatelic commerce in these popular issues was surprisingly open and unabashed even during their period of postal validity.⁷ The preface to the catalogue extolled the investment potential of departmental stamps but disparaged the special printings:

Special attention is called to the fact that all the unused department stamps offered, are **originals**, and not the worthless reprint “specimens,” with which the country is flooded.

The preface also showed foreknowledge of the ultimate discontinuance of the Official stamps (“ . . . in 18— [*sic*], they were discontinued, so that these stamps had a circulation of less than — [*sic*] years.”) well over a year in advance.

From the reports of the Postmaster General showing the statistics of the stamps delivered to the different departments over the years, it is clear that the annual requisitions for different values were carefully adjusted to meet anticipated demands, although for a few stamps the original requisitions of 1873 and 1874 had been wildly excessive (10¢, 12¢, 15¢, 24¢, 30¢ Agriculture; \$5, \$10, \$20 State). There were a few departments where Official stamps were still heavily used in 1884: Agriculture, Interior, Navy, and War. However, an Act of Congress which abolished the use of Official stamps and stamped envelopes was approved and made effective on the same day—July 5, 1884.⁸ Thus their entire inventories of stamps for the upcoming year immediately became surplus. According to John Luff:

The official stamps having become obsolete, it is said that the various departments were requested to return to the Post Office Department any unused stamps which they had on hand, and that some of the departments complied with this request while others declined, on the ground that they had paid for the stamps and should not be expected to give them up unless properly compensated.⁹

No sources are given for this statement, but it sounds plausible. Many government officials, even at this early date, must have realized that the stamps in their possession still retained philatelic if not postal value. After all, this is the era when the remainders of many classic issues were starting to come onto the market. Although precise records were kept when the large quantity of unissued Official stamps in the vaults of the American

⁶From Cosby’s reminiscences in the January 1924 issue of *The American Philatelist* (Vol. 37, No. 4, pp. 193-96), cited by W.V. Combs in “U.S. Departmental Specimen Stamps,” *The American Philatelist*, Volume 78, No. 1 (October 1964), p. 30.

⁷“Large and Very Valuable Stock of United States Department Stamps. The Property of H.B. Seagrave of Detroit, Mich.” Scott and Company, No. 48, March 12, 1883: 575 lots.

⁸Act of the 48th Congress, Session 1, Chapter 234, Section 3.

⁹John N. Luff, *The Postage Stamps of the United States* (New York: Scott Stamp and Coin Co., Ltd., 1937 reprint ed.), page 220.

Bank Note Company were destroyed by burning in 1885, unfortunately no similar records were kept for whatever issued stamps had been dutifully returned to the Post Office Department. Without these records, the tables of annual requisitions recorded in Luff are insufficient to tell the complete story of the final quantities issued. The only department that with any certainty can be said to have complied with the directive is the Treasury Department, since none of the Treasury stamps on either hard or soft paper has ever been more common unused than used. Clearly the War Department never complied, as full sheets of the American soft paper printings were given out as souvenirs for years after, and a pad of 40 sheets of the 2¢ value was still intact at the disposition of the Weill brothers' stock in 1990.

Between 1884 and 1886, hundreds of complete sets of unused Official stamps, including the Agriculture, Executive, Justice, and State series, were given away by accommodating government officials to enterprising schoolboy collectors who made the rounds of government offices on Saturdays.¹⁰ Demand was so persistent that complete sets were made up and prepackaged in small white envelopes, and the rarity of certain Official stamps in block form has since been attributed to this practice.¹¹ Some collectors were able to exchange foreign stamps for the coveted Official stamps that had fallen into the possession of the messengers who worked in the offices.¹² Judging from certain form letters that have survived, it appears that by late 1886 some departments were no longer able to supply collectors with unused examples of the discontinued stamps, even using the excuse that their supplies had been returned to the Post Office Department for destruction.¹³

Before the decade was out, dealers in Washington, D.C. were able to offer complete unused sets of all the departments, some priced at below face value. In 1889, C.F. Rothfuchs bought 25 intact sheets of the \$10 and \$20 State stamps, either directly or indirectly from the Department of State mail room. On another occasion, he bought 5,000 unused State stamps, all values from 1¢ to 90¢, for an average price of 4¢ apiece.¹⁴ Thomas Semmes, of Semmes and Bastable, turned down 100 complete sets of the Executive stamps in the form of blocks, offered to him at \$1.00 per set, because his buying price at the time was 75¢ per set. At one point, though, he did have half sheets of 50 of the lower values.¹⁵ In 1895, an anonymous commentator noted that a set of Executive stamps was much scarcer used than unused.¹⁶ In 1915, 125 intact sheets of the 3¢ Post Office stamp were sold at auction for prices ranging from \$1.50 to \$3.75 apiece (face value being \$3.00, catalogue value at the time \$12.00).¹⁷ Clearly, then, the vast majority of unused Official stamps that have come down to us were salvaged from the departmental mail rooms in Washington, D.C. and were in fact remainders.

One might expect that whenever the American Bank Note Company was forced to reprint a value after the original Continental Bank Note Company printing on hard paper had been exhausted, the original hard paper printing would be quite scarce in unused condition. While this is certainly the case for the low value War Department stamps, it does not hold for most of the others. Apparently, even if more stamps were requisitioned for the

¹⁰Robert Stackwell Hatcher column, "United States Philatelic Notes," reprinted in "One Hundred Years Ago . . .," *The American Philatelist*, Vol. 105, No. 4 (April 1991), p. 347.

¹¹J.M. Bartels column, "Comments and Reminiscences," *Stamps*, August 21, 1943.

¹²Harry M. Konwiser column, *op. cit.*, April 5, 1937.

¹³By his kind permission, personal inspection of items in the Lester C. Lanphear collection of Official penalty envelopes.

¹⁴Account of a talk given by C.F. Rothfuchs at the Jollification Meeting of the Boston Philatelic Society, *The Weekly Philatelic Era*, Vol. XV, No. 22, Feb. 23, 1901.

¹⁵J.M. Bartels column, *op. cit.*, December 4, 1937.

¹⁶Anonymous, *The Metropolitan Philatelist*, December 1895, page 136.

¹⁷W.L. Babcock, M.D., column, *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News*, March 14, 1932.

main office in Washington, D.C., the branch offices may still have had plenty of hard paper stamps on hand (or vice versa) and these too must have gotten out into the hands of collectors and dealers after 1884. As we have seen, the Official stamps gradually became superfluous during the transitional period, and then obsolete, retaining no postal validity whatsoever, and were ultimately remaindered, whereas the regular issue large Bank Note stamps, eventually replaced by the new issue of 1890, were still always vulnerable to being used up as postage, and the attrition on the high values must have been severe. It is safe to say that while the total quantity issued for each departmental value was less than its regular issue counterpart, a much higher percentage of Official stamps has survived in unused condition.

As to the survival rate for used Official stamps, it should roughly parallel the survival rate for regular issue large Bank Note stamps. However, as I have previously written:

Departmental covers are much scarcer than covers with regular issues because many of them went to other Government offices where the cover might survive for awhile, docketed with its contents in a file, until the archives were purged. And mail of a personal nature was more likely to be saved for sentimental reasons down through the generations than official mail addressed to private citizens.¹⁸

Thus, after the initial point of reception, when stamps might be torn off covers by watchful clerks, the chances of used Official stamps surviving for discovery by a future generation of collectors decline precipitously. Those of us who collect cancellations on Official stamps are forever indebted to the intervention of such clerks as the kindly lady at the Agriculture Commission who skinned the 3¢ Agriculture stamps off the prestamped reply envelopes containing seed orders that came in from farmers all across the country.¹⁹ She furnished stamps to Resa Dubois, who at age 15 in 1874 haunted the halls of the great departmental offices in Washington, D.C. and later recalled that the going rate for canceled copies of the Agriculture, Interior, Navy, and Treasury stamps was 20¢ a hundred.²⁰ C.F. Rothfuchs recalled having bought a lot of over 500,000 used War Department stamps from a private party.²¹ The Seagrave Sale in 1883 included large quantities of the more common used stamps, including 50,000 copies of the 3¢ and 6¢ Treasury stamps.²² The pioneer dealer J.H. Houston, who sent out a postcard in 1889 advertising complete unused sets of Official stamps and who had worked in four departments himself, once passed up an opportunity to buy a barrel full of Official stamps from a messenger.²³ Of all the used Official stamps that have come down to us, many would be regarded now as uncollectible due to overly heavy obliterations or to damage suffered while being applied or "skinned" from their envelopes.

Survey of Experts

For the first test, the survey of collectors and dealers who specialize in Official stamps, I received responses from nine people, counting myself. The results ranged widely, understandably so since each individual had not recently completed the exercise of assembling high quality used and unused sets of Departmentals, one by one. One expert cited only ten stamps as being definitely rarer used than unused, while another cited 63 stamps. I have tabulated the number of experts who believe a given stamp is rarer used than unused, and have concluded that a majority of five positive votes qualifies for confirmation. This test proved to be the most rigorous of the three and suggests that even among

¹⁸Alan C. Campbell, "Cancellations on United States Official Stamps, 1873-1884," *Chronicle*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Whole No. 156)(November 1992), page 281.

¹⁹George B. Sloane column in *Stamps*, December 12, 1936.

²⁰Resa D. Dubois, *ibid.*

²¹C.F. Rothfuchs, *ibid.*

²²Scott and Company, *op. cit.*, lots 220-239, page 190.

²³Rollin C. Huggins, Jr., *Official Chatter*, September 1993.

a hand-picked panel of experts the consciousness of how many Official stamps are scarcer used than unused is just beginning to dawn.

Inventory of Dealers' Stocks

For the second test, the inventory of dealers' stocks, the statistical validity of the results depends on having a large enough sampling to balance out the vagaries of inconsistent supply, for at any given time one dealer may be stocking up in anticipation of increased demand while another's stock may have been depleted by the same demand. For the more expensive stamps that most dealers cannot afford to stock in quantity, better results might have been achieved by surveying auction catalogues. Of course, I have left out the many dealers who stock exclusively unused material so as not to skew the results. The tabulated results represent the combined total of stamps inventoried from eight mail-order and bourse dealers, all of whom make a conscientious effort to stock these issues. The survey was broad enough to turn up at least one unused copy of every value except for the \$20 State (single copies only of the \$5 State and 6¢ Justice soft); however, on the used side, no copies were found of the 2¢ and 6¢ Executive, the 90¢, \$10 and \$20 State, and the 1¢, 6¢, 10¢, 12¢, and 24¢ Interior soft, and only single copies of the 1¢, 10¢, 12¢, 24¢ and 30¢ Agriculture, 2¢, 10¢, 30¢, and 90¢ Justice, \$5 State, 15¢ Interior soft, 3¢ and 6¢ Justice soft, and 30¢ War soft. In terms of the issues that were not available, there is a striking correspondence between these results and an advertisement placed by Stanley Gibbons in 1931²⁴ (see Figure 1). The number of different Official stamps determined by this test to be scarcer used than unused, 82, coincides closely with the results of the third test.

Historical Analysis of Catalogue Values

The majority of general collectors of classic United States stamps, both here and abroad, have always bought used stamps, primarily because of cost. But in the early years, the Official stamps presented a special case because of the widespread availability of unused material. In the 1880's and 1890's, the Departmentals were the most popular stamps in the entire catalogue, partly because this long series included more face different stamps than had ever been issued in total for regular postage between 1847 and 1873 in this country. A boom in auction realizations—\$40.00 for a 90¢ Justice, \$200.00 for a \$5 State—caused a corresponding rise in catalogue values. Collectors of the time were less concerned with centering and more concerned with matching color shades within a department. This is understandable since then, unlike now, the stamps were typically offered by dealers in complete sets, with the distinctive shades of the Continental and American printings mixed together, and early editions of the Scott catalogue priced them accordingly.²⁵ In the 1900 edition, a complete set of unused Official stamps commanded only a 15% premium over a used set. Who wouldn't have been tempted to pay the premium, especially considering how much easier it would have been to obtain fresh unused copies? For many years, the premium for a set of unused stamps remained fairly insignificant: by 1970, it was only up to 44%. Counterbalancing the naïve enthusiasm of the general collector for unused stamps, there must always have been a dedicated corps of purists who looked askance at the remaindered unused stamps and held out for postally used copies. In 1922, the resonantly named Eustace B. Power, owner of Stanley Gibbons, Inc. in New York, delivered the following wishful pronouncement:

I predict that within the next ten years over 50% of the departments will be priced higher used than unused since there is no doubt they are infinitely rarer thus and

²⁴*Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News*, April 13, 1931, p. 254.

²⁵J.M. Bartels column, *op. cit.*, August 21, 1943.

in addition to this at least half the used copies around are more worthy of the waste paper basket than the album leaf so villainous is the cancellation.²⁶

In 1937, Harry M. Konwiser was maddeningly noncommittal in responding to the question: "Do you regard canceled Department stamps more desirable than unused stamps?"²⁷ Possibly, the taint of their quasi-remainder status had some effect in suppressing the popularity of the Official stamps over the years. However, it is more likely that the gradual displacement backwards in catalogues and albums over time contributed more to their fall from grace. The 1¢ Agriculture stamp, originally Scott No. 500, directly followed the regular issues until the Parcel Post stamps of 1912-1913 intervened: it became Scott No. 1500 in 1920, and Scott No. O1 in 1940. In 1937, J.M. Bartels reported increased interest in the Official stamps, but other writers scoffed that they had never been popular.²⁸ By the time they were rediscovered, along with the rest of the back-of-the-book material, in the 1970's and 1980's, investor preference for pristine mint stamps was driving the premium for unused material skyward, and whatever stigma attached to these remaindered stamps was all but forgotten. The upwards surge for mint stamps is typified by the 2¢ Interior on hard paper, which as late as 1974 catalogued the same used and unused: by 1995 it had risen to \$17.50 unused, but only \$2.00 used.

To show the widening disparity in catalogue pricing for used and unused Official stamps, I have charted the total Scott catalogue value for a complete set at five year intervals between 1900 and 1995. The Official stamps were not priced individually in unused condition until 1884, and the printings of the Continental and American Bank Note Companies were not differentiated until 1897. The totals include 115 different stamps and exclude only the 1¢ Agriculture on soft paper and the 24¢ Interior on soft paper, neither having ever been priced used. Of course, I have also excluded the various intermediate paper printings once attributed to the American Bank Note Company that have since been dropped from the catalogue.²⁹ (See Figure 2)

The results of my historical analysis of the Scott catalogue indicate that between 1885 and the present, 86 of the 117 different Official stamps have at one time or another catalogued the same in used or unused condition. In 1930, 54 stamps were at a par, and even as late as 1970, 21 different stamps were still holding their own in used condition. Between 1925 and 1934, the 10¢ and 30¢ War on soft paper were so scarce used as to be unpriceable, and for years after used copies commanded a substantial premium. Conversely, some of the remaindered soft paper issues were so plentiful unused as to be catalogued below face value: in 1900, the 30¢ War catalogued a heart-breaking 20¢!

It is safe to assume that whenever the valuations for used and unused copies are equal, the stamp is actually scarcer used. Regardless of scarcity, the editors of the catalogue have always been reluctant to price used copies higher than unused for fear of encouraging fraudulent cancellations. The phenomenon that holds in certain classic European collecting fields, such as Heligoland and Roman States, where the remaindered stamps were so prevalent as to be virtually worthless, whereas the few genuinely used commanded a substantial premium, seldom occurs in United States philately, so there has been little call to develop experts adept at distinguishing genuine strikes of nondescript cut-cork obliterations. The records of the Philatelic Foundation show a bewildering number

²⁶[Eustace B. Power], *The Department Stamps of the United States Produced by Continental, American and National Bank Note Cos. and Bureau of Engraving and Printing from 1873 to 1917* (New York: Stanley Gibbons, Inc., 1922), page 12.

²⁷Harry M. Konwiser column, *op. cit.*, May 17, 1937, page 513.

²⁸J.M Bartels column, *op. cit.*, December 4, 1937.

²⁹At various times prior to 1950, the following apocryphal emissions were attributed to the American Bank Note Company: 2¢, 6¢ Agriculture; 30¢, 90¢ Interior; 1¢, 2¢, 3¢, 6¢ Navy; 1¢, 2¢, 6¢, 12¢, 15¢ Post Office; 15¢, 30¢ State; 12¢, 15¢ Treasury; 24¢ War.

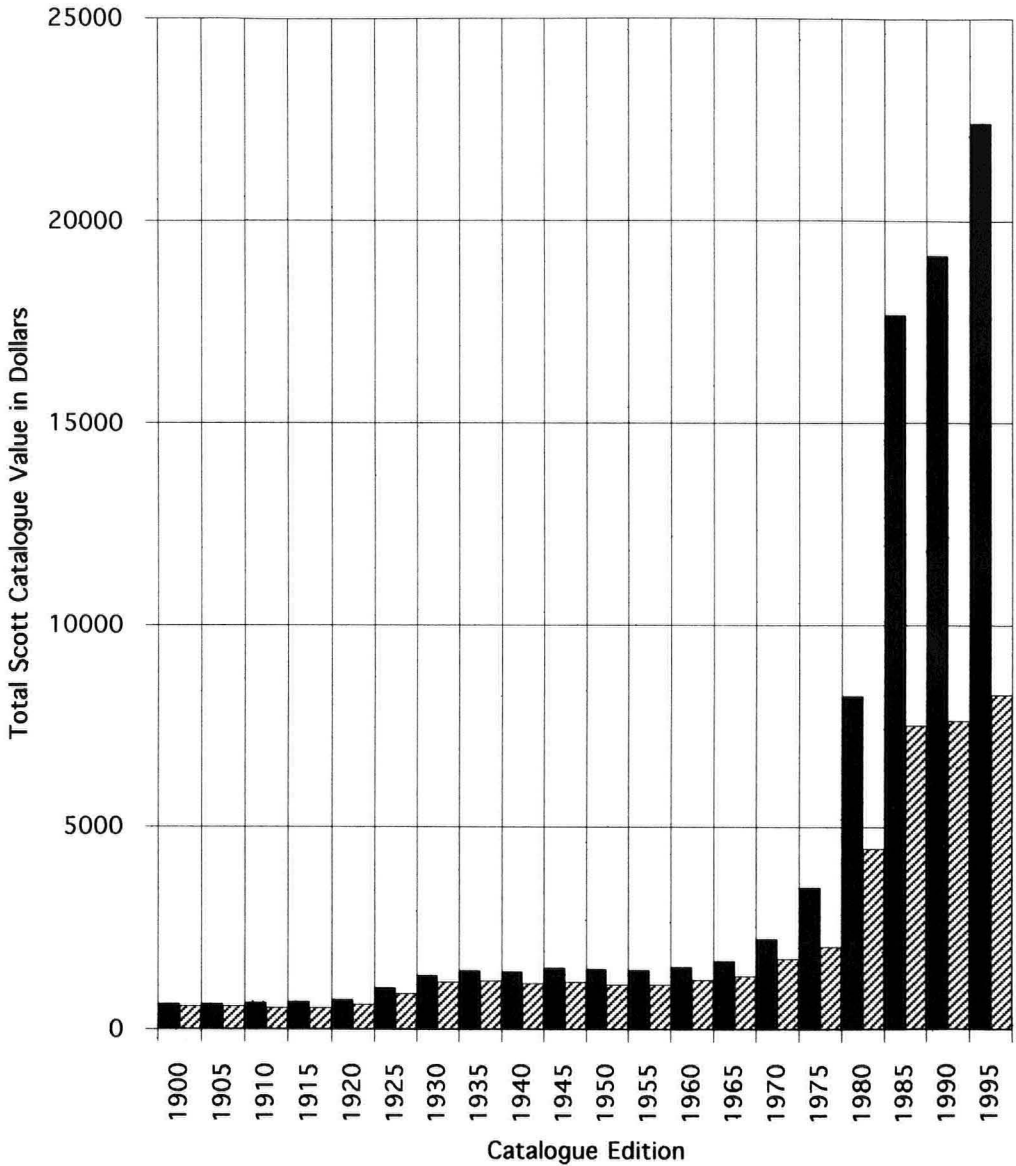


Figure 2. Scott Catalogue value of used versus unused Official stamps. (Solid bar = catalogue value of an unused set; shaded bar = catalogue value of a used set)

of relatively common unused Official stamps having been submitted for expertization over the past ten years, but very few used stamps, and these chiefly for verification of fancy cancellations. One of the fringe benefits of the recent inflation in unused catalogue values is that there is now little incentive for unscrupulous individuals to fake cancellations. But if a major pricing correction were to occur, the languishing overstocks of Officials without gum could become prime targets for the dangerously deceptive photocopied "cancellations" now turning up on dollar value Columbians. Some experts fear that this has already begun to happen in a small way, witnessed by the occasional high value Agriculture stamp that surfaces with an improbably delicate bit of circular date stamp or three-ring target on a lower corner. In general, the collector of used Official stamps now needs to be alert chiefly for false obliterations applied over the "SPECIMEN" overprint on the 1¢ and 2¢ special printings or over the "FACSIMILE" overprint on the German reproductions of the State dollar values, both of which are easily detectable.³⁰

Recent Pricing Trends

When I began this research in early 1993, I was disturbed by the fact that only 28 used Official stamps had reached a new peak in the 1993 edition of the Scott catalogue, whereas 64 numbers had fallen back since having reached their highest valuation some time between 1982 and 1989. I am happy to report that in the latest edition, 1995, this alarming slide has been partially reversed: fully 62 issues have increased in value since 1993 (although only 36 issues have reached new highs), while only one, the 24¢ Treasury, continues to decline. Some of the changes have been dramatic: the 1¢ and 2¢ Justice stamps used have both doubled in value in the span of two years, while all the valuations for unused Official stamps have remained static.

This encouraging trend supports the anecdotal evidence gathered from dealers reporting consistent strong demand for good used Official stamps. Invariably, the stamps that have not increased in value are the more common issues, cataloging less than \$10.00 apiece, suggesting that the market for used Official stamps, while strong, is not particularly deep, and that the supply of the more common stamps is more than adequate for the limited demand. The parameters of this limited demand can be gauged by comparing the 90¢ Continental Bank Note Company regular issue of 1873 (185,000 issued, valued at \$185.00 used in 1995) with the 90¢ Interior (64,377 issued, \$15.00 used), the 90¢ Post Office (65,200 issued, \$7.50 used), and the 90¢ War (48,172 issued, \$10.00 used): all three Official stamps are much scarcer yet are valued at far less. The 6¢ Interior stamp on soft paper, of which not a single used copy turned up in the inventory of dealers' stocks, in 1995 is valued at a paltry \$2.50. In light of this comparison, it is hard to conceive of a time when the demand for Official stamps was so intense that speculators attempted to corner the market on certain issues, yet this was successfully accomplished on the 1¢ State at the turn of the century,³¹ halfheartedly attempted on the 7¢ War by Eustace B. Power in his "early career as a stamp pirate,"³² and unsuccessfully attempted on the Agriculture stamps.³³

What seems to have happened in recent years is that as the Official stamps, limping gamely behind the rest of the back-of-the-back, came out into the light and attracted the attention of general U.S. collectors, inevitably the prevailing taste of a generation of collectors for mint material drove prices upwards to a level where many stamps warranted

³⁰William E. Mooz, "Altered U.S. Departmental Stamps," *The American Philatelist*, Vol. 98, No. 4 (April 1984), pp. 307-12.

³¹Harry M. Konwiser column, *op. cit.*, May 24, 1937, citing an article in the *New York Philatelist*, October 1896.

³²Eustace B. Power, *op. cit.*, page 20.

³³J.M. Bartels column, *op. cit.*, August 21, 1943.

TABLE 1 — RESEARCH RESULTS

Item			Experts		Dealers' Inventory			Cat. Analysis		Conclusion	
Scott Cat. No.	Value	Dept.	# Votes	Pass	# Unused	# Used	Pass	Last Year Priced Equal	Pass	# of Tests Passed	Rarer used than unused
Continental Bank Note Company 1873 thin hard paper											
O1	1¢	Agr.	8	■	15	1	■	1971		3	■
O2	2¢	Agr.	6	■	26	4	■	1976	■	3	■
O3	3¢	Agr.	0		82	67	■			1	
O4	6¢	Agr.	2		17	16	■	1898	■	2	■
O5	10¢	Agr.	7	■	25	1	■	1940	■	3	■
O6	12¢	Agr.	7	■	18	1	■	1945	■	3	■
O7	15¢	Agr.	7	■	30	2	■	1935	■	3	■
O8	24¢	Agr.	7	■	13	1	■	1971	■	3	■
O9	30¢	Agr.	7	■	16	1	■	1971	■	3	■
O10	1¢	Exec.	7	■	9	2	■	1967	■	3	■
O11	2¢	Exec.	7	■	7	0	■	1956	■	3	■
O12	3¢	Exec.	2		15	3	■	1935	■	2	■
O13	6¢	Exec.	7	■	4	0	■	1963	■	3	■
O14	10¢	Exec.	7	■	7	2	■	1940	■	3	■
O15	1¢	Inter.	0		79	25	■	1954	■	2	■
O16	2¢	Inter.	1		103	22	■	1974	■	2	■
O17	3¢	Inter.	0		50	110				0	
O18	6¢	Inter.	0		38	78				0	
O19	10¢	Inter.	1		21	15	■	1967	■	2	■
O20	12¢	Inter.	1		11	48				0	
O21	15¢	Inter.	1		14	48				0	
O22	24¢	Inter.	2		38	31	■			1	
O23	30¢	Inter.	3		18	20		1896	■	1	
O24	90¢	Inter.	3		15	19		1896	■	1	
O25	1¢	Justice	6	■	40	2	■	1979	■	3	■
O26	2¢	Justice	5	■	10	1	■	1951	■	3	■
O27	3¢	Justice	1		20	24				0	
O28	6¢	Justice	1		25	19	■	1896	■	2	■
O29	10¢	Justice	6	■	23	1	■	1934	■	3	■
O30	12¢	Justice	6	■	21	5	■	1974	■	3	■
O31	15¢	Justice	6	■	7	5	■	1935	■	3	■
O32	24¢	Justice	6	■	10	3	■	1905	■	3	■
O33	30¢	Justice	6	■	8	1	■	1905	■	3	■
O34	90¢	Justice	8	■	3	1	■	1905	■	3	■

(continued)

Item			Experts		Dealers' Inventory			Cat. Analysis		Conclusion	
Scott Cat. No.	Value	Dept.	# Votes	Pass	# Unused	# Used	Pass	Last Year Priced Equal	Pass	# of Tests Passed	Rarer used than unused
O35	1¢	Navy	1		30	8	■	1950	■	2	■
O36	2¢	Navy	0		40	27	■	1896	■	2	■
O37	3¢	Navy	0		57	99				0	
O38	6¢	Navy	0		25	36		1896	■	1	
O39	7¢	Navy	5	■	2	6		1896	■	2	■
O40	10¢	Navy	2		24	8	■	1896	■	2	■
O41	12¢	Navy	3		20	17	■	1905	■	2	■
O42	15¢	Navy	4		14	5	■	1905	■	2	■
O43	24¢	Navy	4		13	4	■	1896	■	2	■
O44	30¢	Navy	4		19	9	■	1896	■	2	■
O45	90¢	Navy	5	■	7	2	■	1896	■	3	■
O47	1¢	P.O.	1		26	11	■	1974	■	2	■
O48	2¢	P.O.	0		24	25		1930	■	1	
O49	3¢	P.O.	0		100	188		1935	■	1	
O50	6¢	P.O.	0		87	65	■			1	
O51	10¢	P.O.	1		33	15	■	1945	■	2	■
O52	12¢	P.O.	0		56	18	■	1940	■	2	■
O53	15¢	P.O.	1		32	7	■	1935	■	2	■
O54	24¢	P.O.	2		11	8	■	1905	■	2	■
O55	30¢	P.O.	1		30	29	■	1935	■	2	■
O56	90¢	P.O.	2		45	21	■	1896	■	2	■
O57	1¢	State	6	■	31	2	■	1967	■	3	■
O58	2¢	State	2		10	4	■	1935	■	2	■
O59	3¢	State	1		18	4	■	1905	■	2	■
O60	6¢	State	1		33	2	■	1967	■	2	■
O61	7¢	State	6	■	15	4	■	1905	■	3	■
O62	10¢	State	3		19	6	■			1	
O63	12¢	State	5	■	14	2	■	1935	■	3	■
O64	15¢	State	4		13	4	■	1973	■	2	■
O65	24¢	State	7	■	10	5	■	1905	■	3	■
O66	30¢	State	6	■	9	4	■	1905	■	3	■
O67	90¢	State	8	■	7	0	■	1905	■	3	■
O68	2\$	State	9	■	3	2	■	1945	■	3	■
O69	5\$	State	9	■	1	1	■	1945	■	3	■
O70	10\$	State	9	■	3	0	■	1970	■	3	■
O71	20\$	State	9	■	0	0	■	1970	■	3	■

(continued)

Item			Experts		Dealers' Inventory			Cat. Analysis		Conclusion	
Scott Cat. No.	Value	Dept.	# Votes	Pass	# Unused	# Used	Pass	Last Year Priced Equal	Pass	# of Tests Passed	Rarer used than unused
O72	1¢	Trea.	0		34	88				0	
O73	2¢	Trea.	0		49	141				0	
O74	3¢	Trea.	0		55	316		1930	■	1	
O75	6¢	Trea.	0		66	170				0	
O76	7¢	Trea.	1		38	54				0	
O77	10¢	Trea.	0		41	128				0	
O78	12¢	Trea.	1		24	131				0	
O79	15¢	Trea.	1		38	117				0	
O80	24¢	Trea.	1		16	72				0	
O81	30¢	Trea.	0		29	117				0	
O82	90¢	Trea.	0		30	147				0	
O83	1¢	War	0		70	34	■			1	
O84	2¢	War	0		34	35				0	
O85	3¢	War	1		23	86				0	
O86	6¢	War	1		26	55				0	
O87	7¢	War	3		74	5	■	1971	■	2	■
O88	10¢	War	1		28	35		1956	■	1	
O89	12¢	War	0		55	110				0	
O90	15¢	War	1		99	25	■	1973	■	2	■
O91	24¢	War	2		104	25	■	1977	■	2	■
O92	30¢	War	2		44	75		1954	■	1	
O93	90¢	War	2		84	4	■	1965	■	2	■
American Bank Note Company 1879 soft porous paper											
O94	1¢	Agr.	9	■	2	0	■	N.P.	■	3	■
O95	3¢	Agr.	3		3	10		1930	■	3	
O96	1¢	Inter.	6	■	4	0	■	1956	■	3	■
O97	2¢	Inter.	0		69	114		1979	■	1	
O98	3¢	Inter.	0		67	145		1940	■	1	
O99	6¢	Inter.	3		38	0	■	1979	■	2	■
O100	10¢	Inter.	6	■	12	0	■	1974	■	3	■
O101	12¢	Inter.	8	■	12	0	■	1935	■	3	■
O102	15¢	Inter.	8	■	29	1	■	1940	■	3	■
O103	24¢	Inter.	9	■	2	0	■	1995	■	3	■

(continued)

Item			Experts		Dealers' Inventory			Cat. Analysis		Conclusion	
Scott Cat. No.	Value	Dept.	# Votes	Pass	# Unused	# Used	Pass	Last Year Priced Equal	Pass	# of Tests Passed	Rarer than unused
O106	3¢	Justice	5	■	7	1	■	1935	■	3	■
O107	6¢	Justice	7	■	1	1	■	1935	■	3	■
O108	3¢	P.O.	3		75	28	■			1	
O109	3¢	Trea.	2		29	58				0	
O110	6¢	Trea.	4		9	9	■			1	
O111	10¢	Trea.	4		18	14	■			1	
O112	30¢	Trea.	3		11	2	■			1	
O113	90¢	Trea.	3		14	6	■			1	
O114	1¢	War	2		176	73	■	1980	■	2	■
O115	2¢	War	0		65	59	■	1935	■	2	■
O116	3¢	War	0		44	188		1934	■	1	
O117	6¢	War	0		93	103		1934	■	1	
O118	10¢	War	5	■	25	3	■	1980	■	3	■
O119	12¢	War	4		69	44	■	1935	■	2	■
O120	30¢	War	7	■	26	1	■	1980	■		■
Totals:			41		82			86		73	

LETTERS OF GOLD

by Jesse L. Coburn

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being lotted individually in auction catalogues and their progress could be easily tracked. Meanwhile, the commerce in good used stamps continued unabated, but at such a humble level and in such an episodic way as to escape notice. Perversely, the widening disparity in catalogue prices, rather than describing an actual trend, influenced the market to behave in exactly the opposite way: demand for used material rose because prices were artificially high, while demand for unused material slackened, because prices were artificially high.

Conclusion

The conclusions of my research are presented in the following table. In order to be classified as scarcer used than unused in the final column, it was necessary for each issue to pass two of the three tests. 41 issues passed the survey of experts test; 82 issues passed the dealers' inventory test; 86 issues passed the historical catalogue analysis test. In the end, 73 out of 117 issues were classified as scarcer used than unused. 57 of the 73 have had their used valuations in the catalogue increased between 1993 and 1995: those that didn't were generally the cheaper stamps for which the existing supply exceeds the limited demand. Those stamps which are incontestably much scarcer used than unused are the following: 10¢, 12¢, 15¢, 24¢, 30¢ Agriculture; 10¢ Executive; \$5, \$10, \$20 State; 1¢, 6¢, 10¢, 12¢, 15¢, 24¢ Interior on soft paper; 10¢, 30¢ War on soft paper. The *ne plus ultra* of used Official stamps is the lone authenticated copy of the 24¢ Interior on soft paper.³⁴ Next in order of scarcity would be the \$20 and \$10 State (which may have been in postal use for a very short period of time),³⁵ and the \$5 State. Then would have to come—but not necessarily in this order—the four soft paper Interior values (1¢, 10¢, 12¢, and 15¢), whose scarcity in used condition is much under-appreciated. While some collectors may disagree with the results of this survey for certain individual stamps, it is nevertheless clear that a majority of the United States Official stamps are scarcer used than unused.

Acknowledgments

My thanks to Rollin C. Huggins, Lester C. Lanphear, and especially Robert L. Markovits for bringing to my attention many of the more obscure citations. They, along with Albert Chang, Larry Joseph, Carl Mainberger, Alfred E. Staubus, and Dr. Dennis Schmidt, were kind enough to participate in the survey of experts. I am also indebted to Rollin C. Huggins, Jr., the dean of writers on Official stamps, for reviewing an earlier draft of this article. □

³⁴Clyde Jennings, "A 'Goodie,'" *Chronicle*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Whole No. 155) (August 1992), pp. 208-212.

³⁵John N. Luff, *op. cit.*, page 210, reprinted with some skepticism a letter in the *Philatelic Journal*, February 20, 1875, stating that the \$10 and \$20 stamps were no longer used on packages but were instead used to settle the department's monthly accounts at the City Post Office.

MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS!

In the last issue of the *Chronicle*, I reviewed the exhibit collections of U.S. Official stamps formed by Lester C. Lanphear, III and Robert L. Markovits that were displayed at APS StaMpsHOW '94 in Pittsburgh, August 1994 ("Two Tickets to Pittsburgh").

I am happy to report that both exhibits have already qualified again for the Champion of Champions competition for 1995, Lanphear having won the Grand Award at SESCAL in October and Markovits having won at the New York Mega-Show in November. Minor revisions and improvements have been made to both exhibits. Interested readers are encouraged to travel to St. Louis in August 1995 to see for themselves the extraordinary material in these two great holdings. □

IMPORTANT STAMPS AND COVERS OF THE UNITED STATES SOLD AT CHRISTIE'S



United States: 1847 10c Black, unused block of six,
from the Ryohei Ishikawa Collection,
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"BY WEST INDIA STEAM PACKET"
COLIN TABEART

(continued from *Chronicle* 164:282)

The response of Congress to this report is not known, but there was clearly deep concern about the activities of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, primarily directed at the loss of revenue to the U.S. Post Office, and the impact on U.S. coastal traffic and passenger trade. In his letter to Colonel Maberley of 20 April,¹⁶ James Buchanan lays the hardening of the U.S. attitude squarely on the head of the British Consul at New Orleans, whose competence had been remarked upon by the Foreign Office earlier:

Sir,

I have the honor to address you, and request you to convey to Her Majesty's Postmaster General my deep regret, that the course I pursued in waiting upon the Postmaster General at Washington, has subjected me to such severe censure, while all those in this city, who take a deep interest in the enterprise, considered my doing so at the time important, for although a packet was then daily expected, yet I had not received my full instructions from London, and aware of the jealousy which prevailed, I was confident that by proceeding to Washington (upon the receipt of the letter from the Secretary of the [U.S.] Treasury, a copy of which I had the honor to forward to my Lord Aberdeen, and also Sir to your Department) and express my determination not to do any act or countenance any measure in opposition to the laws or regulations of the Post Office department, more would be effected, than by any other mode of proceeding. As proof of the correctness of such my conviction, permit me sir to entreat you to lay before Her Majesty's Postmaster General, an extract from the message of the Postmaster General at Washington to Congress, wherein it will appear, from the course Her Majesty's Consul at New Orleans pursued, the ground was laid, it is feared for the interference of Congress, to pass a law which will prevent Her Majesty's packets not only from conveying letters, but passengers from one port to another in the United States, in which message my correspondence with the Secretary of the [U.S.] Treasury as to the vessels is referred to, and the course I adopted as to the letters approved; and forgive an old servant of Her Majesty's Government in saying that during a period of above forty years I have never caused a difficulty in the management of any measure entrusted to my care. I deeply deplore that with such motives, (and aware of the benefits which would arise, if I was to be permitted to aid in forming an arrangement with the Department at Washington, if such required) I should have drawn down so severe a rebuke. The expence of my journey I fear I must also suffer, while with others I was considered as acting with praise worthy prudence, in the absence of instructions. I beg to assure you sir, I shall implicitly obey my instructions, and having no discretionary powers, I shall not again be subject to censure. Thereupon praying I may be pardoned and under the circumstances not be subjected to the expence of my journey to Washington,

I have the honor to remain, sir, your humble servant, Jas Buchanan
[ENCLOSURE: a newspaper report from an unknown and undated newspaper quoting verbatim the U.S. Postmaster General's letter of March 26 1842 to the Hon. John White, Speaker of the House of Representatives, omitting only the preamble concerning the laws of the United States as they then stood.]

The letter is endorsed by Maberley on 16 May 1842: "For the Postmaster General. Your Lordship will doubtless approve of copy of this letter, and its enclosure, being sent to

¹⁶Post 29/31 Pkt 615T/1843.

the Treasury and to Lord Aberdeen. The expence incurred by Mr. Buchanan in his journey to Washington will be considered when he sends in his . . . for the other disbursements made on account of this Department. My own opinion is that it ought not to be paid.”

Note the miserly approach of the professional civil servant over the repayment of expenses reasonably incurred. This request for reimbursement was repeated by Buchanan on at least two subsequent occasions, the last being in July 1844, after he had retired, and long after the service had ceased. The poor man probably never was paid, and he certainly received no payment for all his work in connection with the service, although his legitimate expenses and wages for two employees were eventually reimbursed to him after a protracted delay.

On 19 May, Maberley forwarded Buchanan’s letter to Viscount Canning at the Foreign Office.¹⁷ The second paragraph perhaps says it all:

My Lord,

Referring to the letter which I had the honor to address to you on the 18th ultimo, I am directed by the Postmaster General to transmit, for the information of Lord Aberdeen, copy of a further communication received from Her Majesty’s Consul at New York, enclosing copies of correspondence which he has had with the United States authorities, on the subject of the arrangements connected with the Royal Mail Steam Packets.

Mr Buchanan has been informed that the matters to which his letter refers are subject for the consideration of Her Majesty’s Govt and will be more properly discussed between the respective authorities, should it be deemed expedient to enter upon them, but the Postmaster General is desirous of bringing these proceedings on the part of Mr Buchanan under the notice of Lord Aberdeen, as they are calculated rather to raise difficulties than to promote the objects of this Department. I have the honour etc...

Conduct of the Service

The concern expressed earlier by the Foreign Office as to the reaction of Cuba was vindicated in March 1842 when the postal agent of the steamer *Tay* was arrested and jailed for refusing to hand over his mails to the Cuban authorities, and there were other instances of friction. Elsewhere the branch line service was conducted on a shoe-string, best illustrated by the following extract from Ludington’s article,¹⁸ which is reproduced with the author’s kind permission:

The RMSP steamers calling at Havana did not go alongside, but anchored out in the harbour, about a mile from the docks. If mail was to be transferred from one British steamer to another, this was apparently done directly and surreptitiously, perhaps even after dark. If the two steamers did not meet, the mail bags were sent ashore to the British Consulate, under whom the British postal agency operated. All mail in transit was kept separate from the mail for Cuba, and was sent, with a separate letter bill, addressed “On Her Majesty’s Consular Service”

At Nassau, the steamers anchored about 3 miles from the town, and either the ship’s boats, or boats from the shore, ferried the passengers and mails. On at least one occasion the steamer sailed for Savannah without picking up passengers or even mail waiting at the Nassau Post Office for the United States. This was the *Dee* on Sunday 3 April 1842

At Savannah and Charleston, the steamers stayed outside the bars at the entrances to the river and the harbour, respectively, and notified their arrival by hoisting their colours and, if necessary, by firing a gun. This normally would be enough to bring out the pilot boat carrying the mail and passengers leaving by the steamer, and the boat would then return to port with the mail and passengers being landed. . . .

¹⁷Post 29/31 Pkt 615T/1843

¹⁸Ludington, pp. 218-19.

At New York the steamers picked up a pilot off Sandy Hook and were brought up to the city, where they usually stayed about two days, taking on coal if necessary.

It is not known how the consuls at Savannah and Charleston handled their mails, but it seems unlikely that these were of sufficient size to warrant any special arrangements. Robson Lowe states¹⁹ that the income at Charleston was £4.3.2d for the half-year ending 5 July 1842, and it is likely that Savannah's throughput was of a similar, or even smaller, order. It is known that the second mail for Savannah, carried by the *Dee*, consisted of three letter bags from England, one of which was open on arrival (contrary to regulations), as the Consul there complained,²⁰ but the number of letters per bag is not known. At New York, James Buchanan set up an organization separate from his Consulate, based on offices at 7 Pine Street, which was operated by his son, Robert Buchanan, and assistant packet agent John McManus, annual salaries £100 and £50 respectively. Here, from 12th March to 23rd May, they collected foreign postage amounting to £87.3.4d.²¹ It would seem reasonable to suppose that, at that time, at least half of the letters leaving the USA would be to Britain or to British colonies, so the actual traffic outwards was probably of the order of twice as much as this figure suggests, since pre-payment was specifically not to be taken for letters to such destinations. Hence, as calculated in the Introduction, outward letters probably numbered between two and three thousand over the four voyages.



Figure 3. The PAID and date stamps supplied on 15 December 1841 to the packet agents, as shown in the Steel Impression Books, U.K. Post Office Archives.

The Instructions to Agents²² required all letters and newspapers to “be distinctly stamped by you on the sealed side with the Stamp to be furnished for that purpose, shewing the name of the port from whence despatched, and the date when posted.” Article 16 of the Instructions required paid letters and newspapers (i.e., those going to foreign places) to be marked in red ink in English money, and stamped with a PAID stamp to be provided.

¹⁹Robson Lowe, *The Encyclopaedia of British Empire Postage Stamps 1639-1952*, Vol. V, (Perth, Scotland: Woods of Perth, Ltd, 1973), p. 732.

²⁰U.K. Post Office Archives, Post 34, Vol. 39, p. 127.

²¹Post 29/31 Pkt 615T/1843.

²²Post 29/29 Pkt 441S/1841.

The date stamps were of the standard British double arc circular design, with the office name at the top, and the date inside the circle (as shown in Figure 3, reproduced from the Steel Impressions Books at U.K. Post Office Archives).

Very few letters by this service have survived. None are known inwards or outwards for Charleston or Savannah, and very few for New York. A letter from New York to Mexico “pr steamer Clyde” is illustrated by Robson Lowe²³ showing the regulations adhered to in respect of the two handstamps and the manuscript “1/-” in red, denoting the postage paid. A second cover, outward from New York and mentioned in Robson Lowe,²⁴ is shown in Figure 4. The only letter known to the author from the United Kingdom to the United States is illustrated at Figure 5.

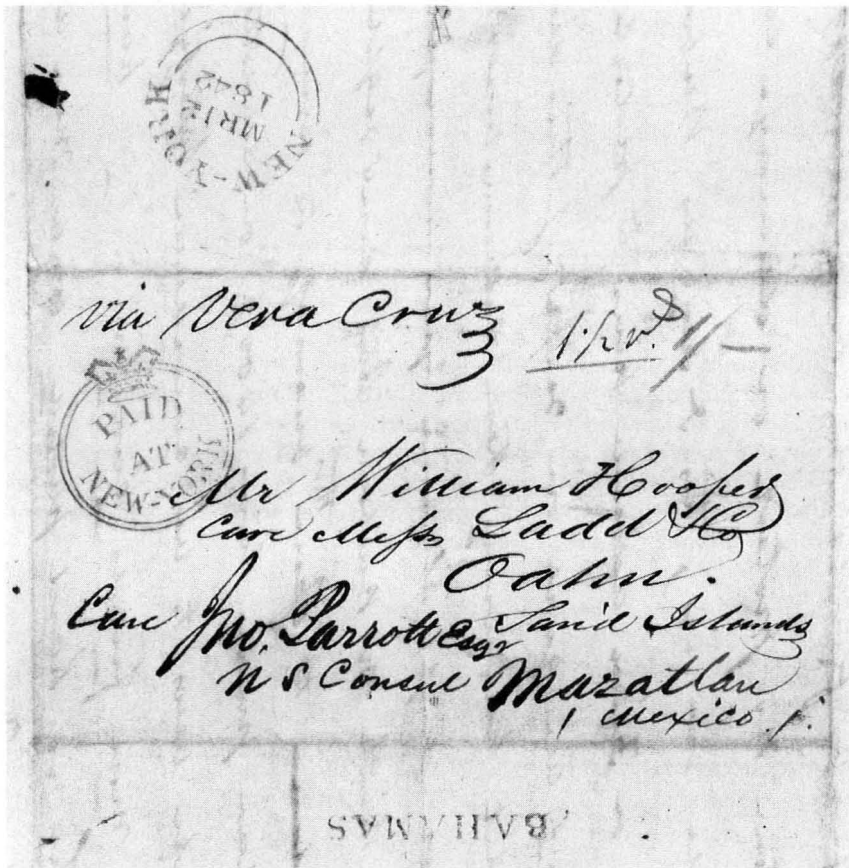


Figure 4. Entire from New York to Oahu, Hawaii by RMSP Co. steamer *Clyde* carrying first mails from New York on 18 March 1842. Letter marked by British packet agent at Nassau, then sent to Havana for later routing by RMSP Co. steamer to Vera Cruz. Pre-paid 1/- to British office in Vera Cruz only. Letter forwarded to U.S. consul at Mazatlan who placed it on ship to Oahu, the most used route for mail to Hawaii before the Mexican War.²⁵ (Photo courtesy of University of Hawaii Library)

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 733.

²⁵See J.F. Westerberg, “Hawaii, Overland Mail Via Mexico, 1842-46,” *The Collectors Club Philatelist*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1 (January 1955), pp. 3-16, for an informative article on this unusual service.



Figure 5. Entire from Manchester to Boston, endorsed "By West India steam packet" as required by GPO Notice 49/1841. Pre-paid 1/- U.K. inland and packet rates, charged 20³/₄¢ for U.S. ship and inland fees. Letter carried on second Royal Mail Steam Packet Company voyage to Nassau (maiden voyage of *Teviot*) and on to New York by *Dee*, where it received the NEW YORK SHIP datestamp of 11 April. [55 days overall transit time.] No backstamps—the British packet agents were required to use the handstamps supplied to them on mail outwards from the U.S. only.

Sailings Data

Four complete voyages are known as compiled by R.F. Winter from newspaper reports, based on an original table published by M. Ludington. During the current research a fifth voyage has been discovered, northward only, from Havana to New York, not touching at the intermediate ports. This mail was carried by the sailing ship *Norma*, for which her captain received the sum of £4.10.0. The mail, received at Havana on 6 August by the steamer *Dee*, consisted of letters for New York, Halifax and Canada.²⁶ It was forwarded to Boston, thence to Halifax by another sailing ship "so as to avoid a detention of 12 days waiting for Her Majesty's Royal Mail of 1 Sep for Halifax," as reported to the U.K. Postmaster General by Buchanan in his letter dated 30 August 1842.²⁷ The date that the mail arrived at Halifax is unknown. Table 1 lists the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company branch line voyages. All dates are 1842, and the figures express day.month, for example 18.2 means 18th February (1842). The symbol "?" means data is not certain, and the symbol "*" means a call was not made at the port.

²⁶New York *Commercial Advertiser*, 18 August 1842.
²⁷Post 29/31 Pkt 615T/1843.

Table 1

	<i>Clyde</i>	<i>Dee</i>	<i>Medway</i>	<i>Trent</i>	<i>Norma</i>
Left Havana	18.2?	1.4	21.4	2.5?	8.8?
Nassau	20.2?	3.4	23.4	4.5	*
Savannah	22.2	5.4	26.4	*	*
Charleston	22.2	6.4	26.4	*	*
New York arr	27.2	11.4	29.4	10.5	18.8
New York dep	1.3	13.4	1.5	11.5	
Halifax arr	3.3	17.4	3.5?	13.5?	
Halifax dep	8.3	20.4	7.5	19.5	
New York arr	11.3 mdnt	23.4	10.5	22.5	
New York dep	16.3	24.4	12.5	23.5	
Charleston	20.3	27.4	16.5?	*	
Savannah	20.3?	27.4?	16.5?	*	
Nassau	22.3	29.4?	18.5?	29.5?	
Havana arr	25.3	1.5?	20.5?	31.5?	

The End of the Service

It is not known for sure why the branch line service to the U.S. east coast ceased. There was the question of U.S. sovereignty—was inter-governmental pressure exerted? None has been unearthed, so Company problems were probably what caused the route to be abandoned. Certainly the original schedule was over-elaborate, and the Company had great difficulty finding enough ships to maintain all their contracted routes. This shortage was exacerbated by the loss of the *Medina* on 12 May 1842, repairs needed to the *Solway* in June/July, and withdrawal of the inter-island steamer *City of Glasgow* over the same period to return to U.K. for machinery repairs, arriving at Southampton on 12 July.²⁸ To add to these problems, the *Teviot* caught fire at Havana on 14 July, being thus delayed 5 days, and so causing the *Thames* to sail for England with half the mail, both ships arriving within 3 days of each other in mid August.²⁹ Thus May, June and July were characterized by a distinct shortage of ships in the Caribbean. As early as 3 June 1842 major changes were contemplated, as Maberley's minute of that date to the Postmaster General states:³⁰

It is evident from this report as well as from an inspection of the accompanying letter bills and abstracts which I have obtained from the Accountant General that the several agents in the West Indies are in want of further instructions as to the Forward duty, and the mode of making out these bills and abstracts. As considerable alterations however may be made in this respect when the present Provisional Scheme is superseded it will perhaps be better to defer for the present taking any steps in the matter.

On 16 June, the Packet Minutes³¹ record a visit by Mr. Lawrence, presumably of the Post Office, to the Admiralty to discuss "alterations in new West India mail arrangements." Perusal of the Company's advertisements supports the view that something changed in June 1842, although not apparently announced by the Post Office. Their advertisement in *The Times* for 27 June continued to list mails for the east coast of the U.S.; that of 30 June specifically omitted the route. This was not a mistake, as subsequent advertisements repeated the omission, and the weekly *Hampshire Advertiser* followed suit. The advertisement in the latter paper for 25th June announced that the *Dee* would take the mails of 1 July, and continued past practice by specifically mentioning the connection by "the Company's steamers, which run twice every month, forwards and backwards, between

²⁸*Hampshire Advertiser* (England), 16 July 1842.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 20 August 1842.

³⁰Post 34, Vol. 39, pp. 175-76.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 217.

Havannah, by Nassau, to Savannah, Charleston, New York, & Halifax” There was no Company advertisement in the next weekly paper, but that of 9 July and all subsequent advertisements specifically omitted the passage quoted immediately above, as did those in *The Times* from 30 June.

In the Caribbean, it seems likely that even earlier action had been taken to curtail the service, quite possibly without reference to the U.K. James MacQueen, in his *Reply to the Chairman and Directors*, written in 1844, states:³² “At a later period of the service, and just as the West Indian portion thereof was restored to order by cutting off the North American line, till the Bristol ships were got ready,³³ first the *Medina* was lost, and next the *Thames* and *Teviot* came to England together” Although this passage cannot be dated precisely, the *Medina* was lost on 12 May, and the *Thames* and *Teviot* left the Caribbean in July 1842, arriving Southampton on 10th/13th August respectively, so it points towards a cessation of the service in about May/June 1842. It is at least possible that *Medina* was scheduled to bring the mails, arriving at Havannah in mid May, north to the U.S., and that her loss, plus the other problems outlined above, caused a temporary cessation of the service.

The Company history³⁴ says that by August 1842 the Admiralty was asked to approve a new scheme eliminating the Havana-New York-Halifax run, plus other changes, and that this plan was put into operation in October 1842. The October date is supported by official Post Office records, but it is clear that negotiations to reduce the routes were commenced well before August 1842. The packet agents appear to have been kept in the dark: Buchanan wrote on 30 August 1842³⁵ that he was “Anxiously looking for orders as to the future operation of the Royal Mail packets.”

Perhaps the final word should be left to the U.K. Postmaster General, Lord Lowther, who wrote to the Treasury on 21 September 1842 as follows:³⁶

My Lords,

I have the honour to state, for your Lordships information, that after the 1st of October, the date fixed for the commencement of the new scheme decided upon by Your Lordships for the service of the West Indies etc, the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company’s vessels will discontinue calling at the following places, vizt New Orleans, Charleston, Savannah, New York, and Maracaibo, and I have therefore informed the various parties at these ports, that after that period their duties as packet agents will cease; requesting them at the same time to make up their several accounts of the postage they have collected, and to send them in to me with a statement of the expences which they have incurred on behalf of this Department.

The demise of the branch line to the U.S. was announced to the public in GPO Notice No. 25 of 1842, dated 12 September, which also reduced the frequency of the Mexico-Isthmus service from twice to once a month, and cut several other ports of call completely as well as the Havana-Halifax line.

The following interpretation of the incomplete evidence is offered, with some diffidence, as to the last few weeks of the “service” to the U.S., May-September 1842:

- a. Last full service per *Trent*, departed Havana 2 May.
- b. *Medina*, due to take next northerly mail, but lost 12 May. No other ship available, so mails forwarded via New Orleans.
- c. Next four mails, no ship available, so taken on to New Orleans for subsequent distribution by the U.S. inland post.

³²U.K. Post Office Archives, Ref. 2B/20, p. 51.

³³*Avon and Severn*, neither ready until 1843.

³⁴T.A. Bushell, *Royal Mail* (London and Bath: The Mendip Press, 1939), p. 28.

³⁵Post 29/31 Pkt 615T/1843.

³⁶U.K. Post Office Archives, Post 1, Vol. 50, p. 233.

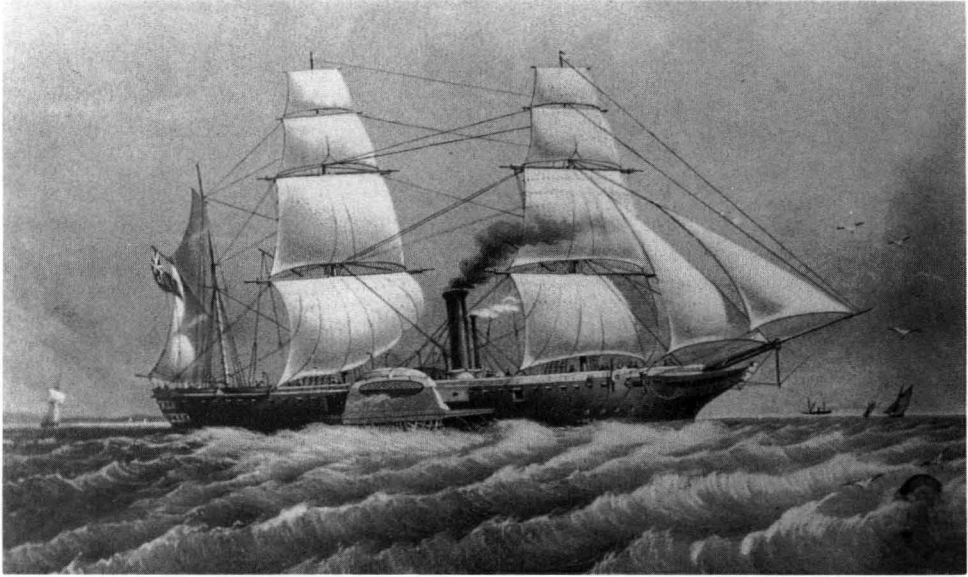


Figure 6. The *Trent* in 1842, one of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company's first fleet; from a print in *A Link of Empire, or 70 Years of British Shipping* [n.p., n.d.; circa 1908?], courtesy of the Reference Library, Southampton.

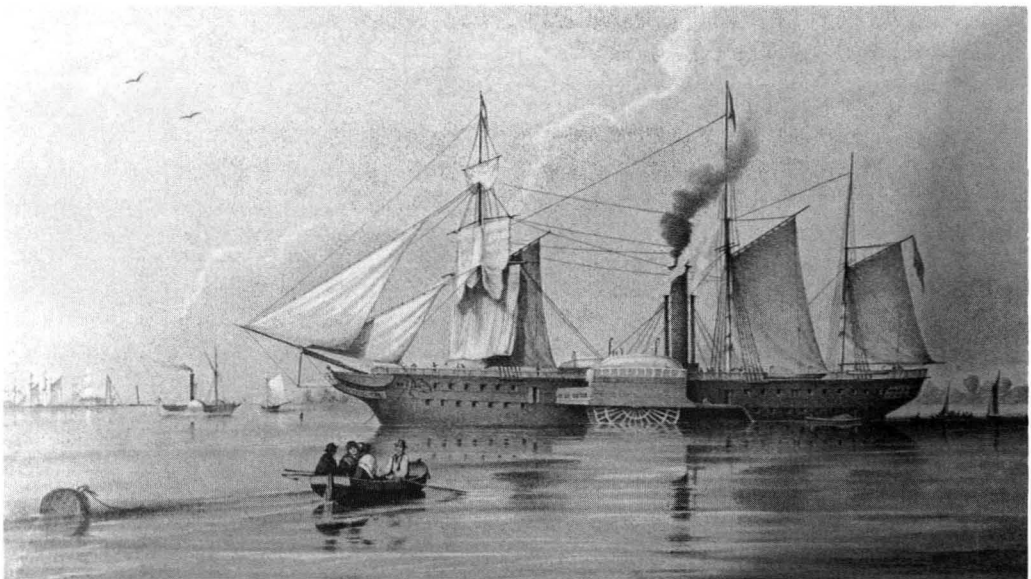


Figure 7. The *Dee* in 1842, the ship which carried the letter illustrated at Figure 5 from Nassau to New York; from a print in *A Link of Empire, or 70 Years of British Shipping* [n.p., n.d.; circa 1908?], courtesy of the Reference Library, Southampton.

d. Mails per *Dee*, departed Southampton 1 July, arrived at Havana 6 August, and were forwarded to New York by sailing ship *Norma*. Note that the mail per *Dee* was still advertised in the U.K. as offering a connection to the eastern U.S. seaboard.

e. Subsequent mails from England for the U.S., until the formal announcement of the end of the U.S. connection in September, either went via New Orleans, or more likely were re-routed via Liverpool and the Cunard Line. Since the Company was no longer advertising the U.S. connection, it seems likely that the mails from the U.K. to the U.S. endorsed to go by this route fell from a very small number to negligible proportions.

With no formal Post Office announcement until September 1842, the treatment of mails between the U.K. and the U.S. from May until October 1842 by this alternative, and little used, route remains open to question. While it is possible that the mails per *Dee/Norma* were sent via the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company by mistake by the Post Office, as far as can be ascertained the route was still officially open, and it appears that the public were still led to expect service by that route. On the balance of probabilities it is suggested that this was an official mail, correctly routed. What is badly needed is cover evidence between May and September 1842 for mails into, and out of, the U.S. to Britain or the Caribbean, or parts of South America, covered by the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, to fill in the obvious gaps in the official record with factual evidence as to handling.

Conclusion

Robson Lowe states³⁷ that: “Buchanan was retired in 1843 for having indulged in unauthorised negotiations with the U.S. Government, which would have greatly favoured both Cunard and the RMSP Co.” This seems to the present author a fitting epitaph to a faithful servant, whose only “mistake” was a desire to further his country’s interests, and who was treated disgracefully by the British Postmaster General. His accounts were constantly queried, and his final account had still not been paid by 7 June 1843, when he wrote to Colonel Maberley as follows:³⁸

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge your despatch of the 3rd of March, forwarded from New York to me here, having on account of my years and long service, been honored by Her Majesty to retire from my official duties as Consul at New York under the provisions of the Act.

In that letter, you are pleased to state, that £93.5.2 has been allowed on my account furnished under date of the 30th December, wherein without any reference to my services, or expense I incurred to which I would intreat to direct your attention, as set forth in my letter of the 31st Oct last, from which so great advantages arose, pardon my observing, that it was impossible to conduct the business in the Consular Office, and forgive me adding that the regard to economy subjected me to much inconvenience, as to the office I hired for the purpose. Forgive my saying, that as an aged servant of Government with which I have had the honour of being connected above forty years, and honored as I have been by the testimonials which I venture to inclose, as not inferior to any ever conferred by an entire community on any public servant, and humbly hope that Her Majesty’s Postmaster General, will in justice to my outlay, and zealous exertion, make such allowance as my case I hope with great respect . . . the claim. Not having received any order for the balance approved, I pray you sir to instruct me herein.

³⁷Robson Lowe, p. 730.

³⁸Post 29/31 Pkt 615T/1843.

Intreating sir, your present pardon, for the introduction of my testimonials, both from the British and American merchants, but from the mayor recorder and public officers, as also from the most respectable citizens, and above all from Chancellor Kent, a gentleman standing high with the Judges of England, with all men.

I have the honor to remain, sir, your humble servant, J Buchanan

It seems doubtful if he was ever allowed the expenses of his journey to Washington, or paid anything for his own work as packet agent: the last letter in the file at Post Office Records³⁹ is dated 4 July 1844 from Buchanan, in which he still seeks remuneration on both these issues. It is almost as if the British Postmaster General was determined to do nothing to assist postal intercourse with the United States, and resented the attempts by Buchanan to get matters onto an agreeable footing, an attitude which is very apparent in R.F. Winter's recent article about separate bagging of mails for various U.S. cities at Liverpool.⁴⁰

Acknowledgements

My grateful thanks are due to:

Morris Ludington for permission to use his sketch map at Figure 1, for reviewing the first draft of this article, and for permission to quote from his article;

Robson Lowe for permission to reproduce the handstamps and map;

Richard F. Winter for providing all the papers quoted from the United States, for reviewing all the drafts, and for many suggestions as to further research needed;

Post Office Archives, London;

G.A. Osborn for early help and advice. □

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰Richard F Winter, "Indications of a U.S.-British Mail Arrangement Prior to the 1848 Convention", *Chronicle* No. 161 (February 1994), pp. 60-67, and No. 162 (May 1994), pp. 120-30.

ACCOUNTING ON EARLIEST NORTH GERMAN LLOYD COVER FROM THE UNITED STATES TO WÜRTTEMBERG VIA BREMEN HEINRICH CONZELMANN

On Bremen convention mails carried by the North German Lloyd (NGL) steamship company, the United States inland portion of the total rate was reduced from 5¢ to 3¢. This fact is indicated by the accounting markings seen on numerous covers. It has always been assumed,¹ but not definitely proved, that the reduction took place when the NGL started operation in mid-1858. No covers from the first eastbound voyage have been reported and primary source data have not been found to support this assumption. This article will show the missing proof of this assumption, a newly reported cover (Figure 1) from St. Louis, Missouri on 13 July 1858 to Württemberg. The cover is of interest for two reasons. First, it shows that the accounting change *did* occur when the NGL started its operation. Secondly, it bears an unrecorded BREM PK PAID marking of New York which shows a credit of 19¢.

On 4 August 1853, additional articles to the postal arrangement of 1847 between Bremen and the United States were signed, altering the compensation of the Bremen mail agent and substantially reducing the postal rates to Germany. The new rates went into effect on 15 August 1853. There were two basic international rates established: 1) a 10¢ rate to Bremen and those states with a German internal postage to Bremen of 5¢ or less; 2) a 15¢ rate to Bremen for those states which insisted on a higher German postage. To each

¹George E. Hargest, *History of Letter Post Communications Between the United States and Europe, 1845-1875* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1971), p. 120.

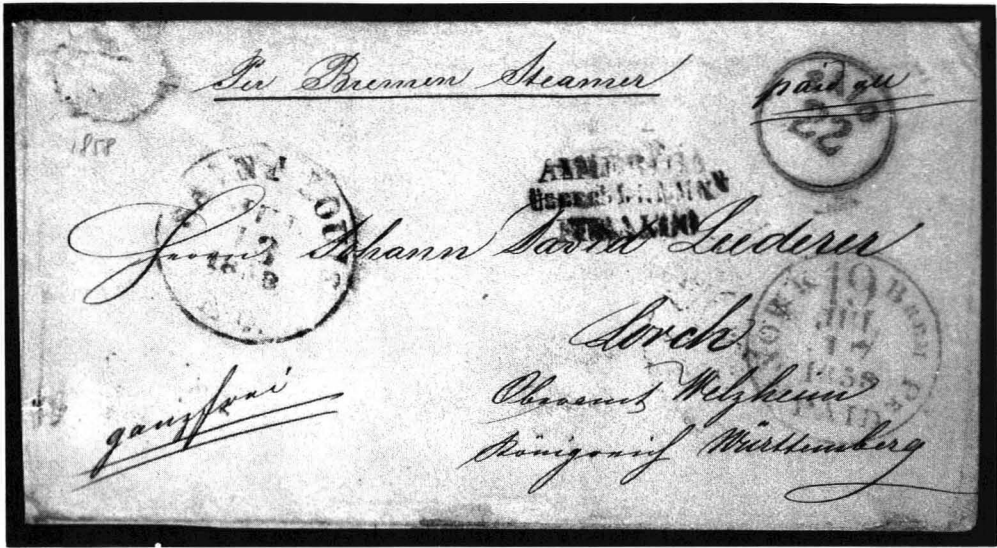


Figure 1. St. Louis, 13 July 1858, to Lorch, Württemberg, carried on maiden return voyage of the NGL steamer *Bremen* and of the line. Red PAID 22 circle of St. Louis, red N.YORK 19 BREM PK PAID datestamp and blue AMERICA ÜBER BREMEN FRANCO marking of Bremen.

international rate was added the German internal postage. Since 7¢ was the postage from Württemberg to Bremen (as well as from other states served by the Thurn & Taxis Post and from Baden), the international rate of 15¢ had to be applied, resulting in a 22¢ postage rate. The red circular PAID 22 marking of St. Louis shows that the cover of Figure 1 was properly prepaid to destination. Bremen applied its blue AMERICA ÜBER BREMEN FRANCO marking as usual to show that the letter was from the United States via Bremen and fully prepaid.

The new articles took into account that mails to Bremen could be sent by United States or German (Bremen) steamships. Both the American Ocean Line and the Bremen firm of W.A. Fritze and Company qualified to carry mails in 1853. There was no difference in the total postage, but Bremen had to be compensated for sea postage if the German steamers carried the mails. Article VI of the new convention discussed the accounting of the fees on the letters and stated: "It is understood and agreed that, of the portion of the postage for which the United States office is to account to Bremen, as well as of what Bremen may collect, all but one cent a single letter is to go to the benefit of the proprietors of the Bremen line of steamers." Since, at this time, the United States inland portion was fixed at 5¢ for a letter prepaid to Württemberg, and carried by a Fritze and Company steamship, Bremen was credited with 17¢ (7¢ German transit + 1¢ to Bremen + 9¢ sea postage to the steamship line). To make accounting easier, New York introduced new exchange office markings which showed the new convention debits or credits to Bremen. This applied only to outgoing mail. On incoming mail, New York stated only the total postage to be collected (black) or that which was prepaid (red). For a detailed listing of accounting under this convention see Table 24 in Hargest.² The Fritze and Company line

²*Ibid.*, p. 111.

was not very successful and ceased operation in May 1857 making only nine round voyages during the four years.³

On 19 May 1858, the Bremen postal authorities announced that the NGL steamers would carry mails every 14 days from Bremerhaven to New York. NGL steamer *Bremen* departed Bremerhaven on 19 June 1858 on her maiden voyage, arriving in New York on the 4th of July. Hargest believed that the return voyage was scheduled for the 10th of July, but was delayed until 30 July.⁴ This is in contrast to the departure date of 17th of July given in *North Atlantic Mail Sailings 1840-75*, which was based on New York newspaper reports and the Bremen State Archives postal records. The exchange office marking (Figure 2) on the cover of Figure 1 shows Bremen packet service and the clearly readable date (intentionally the date of sailing) of 17 July 1858. Additionally, the Frankfurt transit marking (1 August 1858) and the receiving marking of Lorch (2 August 1858), both on the back of the cover, are consistent with a 30 July 1858 arrival of the steamship *Bremen* at Bremerhaven.⁵



Figure 2. Tracing of 31 mm New York exchange office circular datestamp in red showing 19¢ credit to Bremen, designated No. 65a in the Hubbard & Winter listing. Only example reported.

The credit of 19¢ in the New York exchange office marking on this earliest possible NGL cover to Germany shows that New York retained only 3¢ of the total 22¢ prepaid. Although no records in archives have been found which would justify the change in the account of the United States postage, this reduction is known from the exchange office markings of many later covers carried by NGL steamers. Since this cover was carried by the first sailing of an NGL steamer to Bremen, it proves that the lowered United States postage was agreed to from the very beginning of the NGL operation. As mentioned earlier, the new convention allowed Bremen to retain only 1¢ of the international postage. The reduction from 5¢ to 3¢, therefore, meant an increase of sea postage from 9¢ to 11¢, which went to the NGL line. This interpretation is further supported by information in the Bremen State Archive⁶ dated May 1859. Although not explicitly stated, it is apparent from the information which shows the account of the NGL compensation for the year 1858. For

³Walter Hubbard and Richard F. Winter, *North Atlantic Mail Sailings 1840-75* (Canton, Ohio: U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., 1988), p. 127.

⁴Hargest, p.120.

⁵Hubbard and Winter, p.238.

⁶The information on the mails carried by the North German Lloyd line in 1858 was included in the archival information provided by Wolfgang Diesner to Richard F. Winter when research was in progress on *North Atlantic Mail Sailings 1840-75*. In the course of editing this article, Mr. Winter provided the information to me.

every NGL sailing, the departure date of the vessel and the number of letters in the different categories (10¢ and 15¢ international rated letters, newspapers, returned letters) has been listed. On the maiden return voyage of the line on 17 July 1858, 2,543 letters of the 10¢ and only 710 of the 15¢ international rate category were carried. From the archive information it is apparent that Bremen applied a sea postage of 11¢ for the 15¢ international rate category and 6¢ for the 10¢ category letters. This held for all voyages for 1858 since Bremen calculated the compensation to the NGL from the sum of the letters in each category carried by all the sailings in that year. It is remarkable that the HAPAG line of Hamburg did not get the advantage of the higher sea postage until 17 October 1863⁷ even though the 1857 Hamburg postal convention was based on the earlier one with Bremen. The Bremen line seems to have been favored by the United States Postmaster. The situation of the accounting change for the Hamburg convention is very similar to that of Bremen in that no official appendix or change notice to the existing contracts has been found in the archives to justify the change. Beside the document mentioned above, only the circumstantial evidence of cover examples show the changed postal accounting.

In April 1859, the rate to Württemberg (also in 1859, for letters to the Thurn and Taxis Post and to Baden) was reduced from 22¢ to 15¢. Therefore, covers showing the 22¢ rate prepaid and carried by the NGL line are possible for only a short period and are addressed to just a small part of Germany. This may explain why the cover in Figure 1 is only now the first to be reported with the Bremen packet marking showing a 19¢ credit. Later covers all show the more common credit of 12¢ for the 15¢ prepaid rate. □

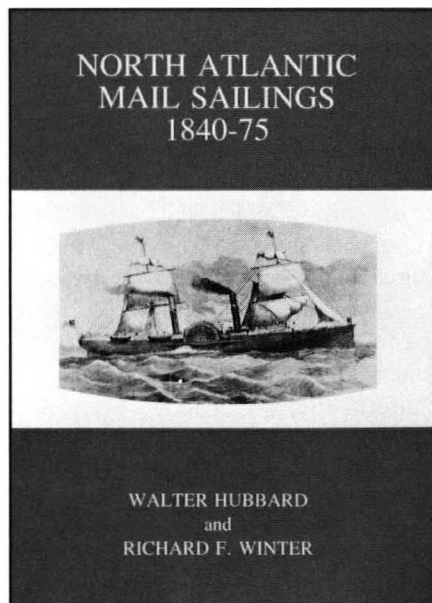
⁷Richard F. Winter, "Hamburg Treaty Accounting Change," *Chronicle* No. 144 (November 1989), pp. 276-77.

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ANSWERS TO PROBLEM COVER IN ISSUE 163

Figure 1 again shows the problem cover in the August 1994 *Chronicle*—an 1899 cover from Mayaguez to Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, with three pen-canceled 2¢ postage due stamps overprinted “PORTO RICO.” The opinion of James P. Gough is that it is a triple rate cover.



Figure 1. 1899 Mayaguez to Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, cover, 6¢ postage due.

In the November 1994 issue, Richard B. Graham provided a thorough review of the 1893 *P.L.&R.*, Sections 480-81, which described procedures for handling unpaid letters found in the U.S. mails, and for delivery of insufficiently prepaid mail. This would assume that the U.S. *P.L.&R.* were applicable in Puerto Rico at this time.

Subsequently, Warren R. Bower has provided a detailed explanation of postal events in Puerto Rico leading up to this cover. He writes:

The cover is a 3 rate unpaid cover (domestic, not military) for which 6¢ was due for nonprepayment. There was no penalty for lack of prepayment. Dues were applied at Cabo Rojo.

Prior to the Spanish-American War, it was not unusual to see Puerto Rico letters mailed, both within the country and to the U.S., unpaid collect. They tended to say ahead of time that no stamps were available, but that was likely an excuse to get out of paying postage.

Rates of postage for Puerto Rico were issued in the P.O. Order of March 22, 1889, and included: “Domestic rates of Postage for letters and other 1st class matter: Two cents per ounce or fraction . . . Prepayment of postage is optional. If no prepayment is made the amount due at the regular rate must be collected of the addressee on delivery.”

The first day of sale of regular U.S. stamps overprinted for Puerto Rico occurred at San Juan on March 15, 1899, but likely smaller post offices got them later, or not at

all. I doubt that the smaller post offices had the time to try to collect postage ahead of time on unpaid domestic postage letters, especially when no return address was listed. This hadn't bothered them before; stamps were often not available in the Spanish system, and the humidity often rendered them unusable anyway.

In the National Philatelic Museum's [bulletin], Volume 1, Number 11, there are several examples of 4¢ dues on double unpaid mailings to San Juan from various cities in Puerto Rico that were more or less marked "4/2," indicating a two rate 4¢ domestic due in early 1900. Some had "Hold for Postage" hand-stamped on the covers, which was obviously a San Juan handstamp that indicated that the 4¢ due was to be paid before delivery at the post office. All had a pair of J2, 2¢ Puerto Rico Postage Dues affixed to them.

Meanwhile, our Cover Corner Editor, Scott Gallagher, has been to Puerto Rico and discussed the problem cover with other collectors of postal history. Scott reports that two other Mayaguez 6¢ rate covers are known, one due, one paid (in manuscript). Collectors there are now seeking others.

The saga continues with an identification by Norman Gahl of the initials "I.B.M." in blue on the front bottom edge of the cover. He writes: "The initials stand for: Imprenta del Boletin Mercantil, located in San Juan. Since being a print shop, besides whatever else it did, it would follow that they printed envelopes, among other items."

Mr. Gahl also notes that the Boletin Mercantil was the private printer of the 1893 commemorative issue of the 400th anniversary of the landing of Columbus in Puerto Rico. How many other examples can be found of these initials on covers of Puerto Rico?

ANSWERS TO PROBLEM COVERS IN ISSUE 164

Now to the problem covers in the November 1994 *Chronicle*. Figure 2 shows a letter from Concord, New Hampshire, in 1846 to Somersworth, the question being the meaning of the manuscript "Paid 165."

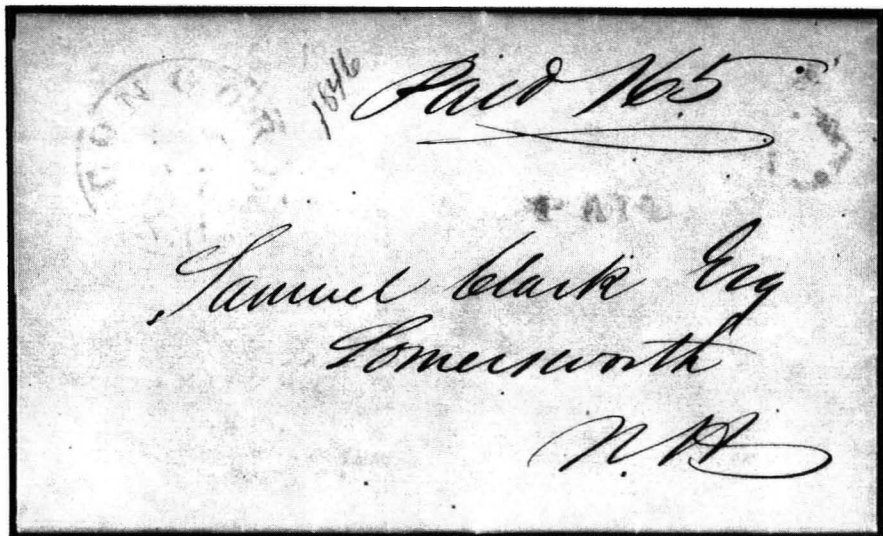


Figure 2. 1846 Concord, N.H., PAID cover, with ms. "Paid 165."

This drew a good response from Donald Thompson, John Ordway, Lewis Leigh, Charlie Peterson, Mike McClung, Allan Steinhart, William Allen and Allan Radin. All concurred that the cover was prepaid 5¢ at Concord, N.H. and the originator indicated that the postage should be charged to account 165, presumably a Post Office Box. This was a

common practice for large mailers, the account being settled with the postmaster at some regular time (weekly, monthly, etc.). It was noted that the "Paid 165" was apparently in the same hand as the address. Some reported similar notations indicating postage paid on covers of the 1840's, '50's and '60's, such as "Charge to Box 165," "Paid Box 165," etc. (in some cases using a handstamp).

Figure 3 shows the front of a cover from Spain to the U.S. in October 1871. It bears a 400 milésimas stamp (Scott #169) and an originating cds of Coruna in black. The London "PAID" cds and "PD" are in red, and the "DUE/3" in black. Why was this letter charged 3¢ due?

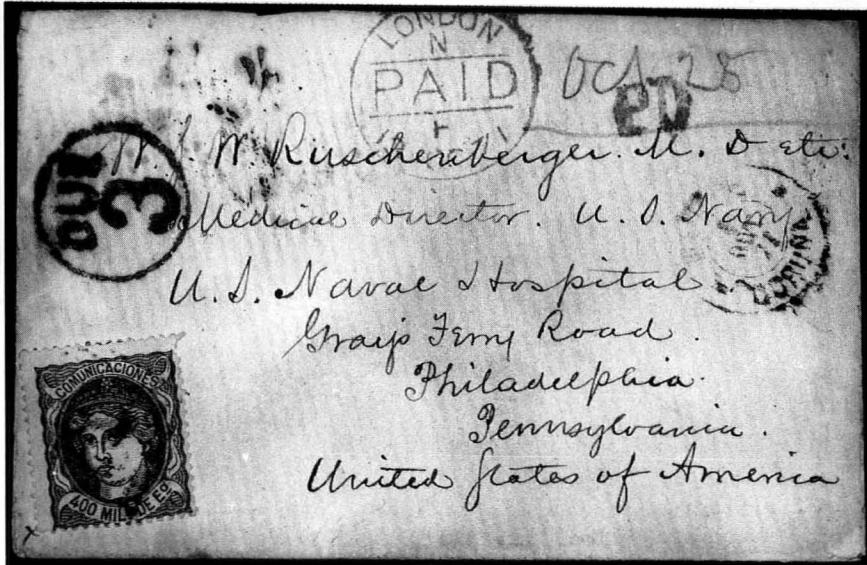


Figure 3. 1871 Spain to Philadelphia cover via London, DUE 3 in U.S.

Extensive analyses were received from Allan Radin and Richard Graham, who essentially concur in the routing and rating of this cover—the only issue being where the "DUE/3" was applied. First, from Allan Radin:

This is a 1871 transit letter in the British Open Mail, and as such had to be delivered to the British Post Office free of accounting charges—debits or credits—to a foreign country. Such transit letters had to be prepaid to a British port to go by American packet, or to a U.S. port to go by British packet.

The fact that only 3¢ was due, the U.S. inland postage, shows sea conveyance by British packet. (While the 3¢ U.S. inland postage established 18 June 1867 [effective 1/1/68] for British treaty mail was reduced to 2¢ on 1 January 1869, the U.S. Post Office Department apparently did not apply this reduction to non-treaty mail.) Postage due markings were customarily applied at exchange offices, New York in this case, not Philadelphia.

The London office marking, which can be read only with extreme difficulty, appears to be "13 OCT 71." The manuscript "Oct 28" at upper right presumably is the date it was received by the addressee. The only British packet under contract to carry mails which reasonably fits these dates is the Cunard liner *China*, departing Liverpool 14 October, arriving New York 26 October 1871.

Richard Graham reminds us all to reference the pamphlet by Dick Winter on *U.S.-Spain Mails via British Convention, 1849-1876*, published as a supplement to *Chronicle* 147, August 1990. A cover similar to the problem cover is shown as Figure 18 on page 22 with the explanation on pages 21 and 22. Dick Graham continues:

The Coruna, Spain marking is 8 OUT [sic] 71. I think "Coruna" is the Spanish province. Can't read the town name very well, but I think it is Ferrol, the important port in the large bay on the northwest tip of Spain.

The Ruschenberger correspondence, to which this cover belongs, was primarily naval, and I imagine that this cover was from a naval officer writing to the Medical Director. Thus, the port of Ferrol would be a logical port of call for cruising U.S. ships.

The rate from Spain was 400 milesimas, equivalent to 20¢ U.S. (or to 4 reales of earlier years), per third ounce, which paid the letter under the British-Spanish mail convention from Ferrol to where the British relinquished it. This was probably by closed bag via Cunard steamer to Philadelphia. The 3¢ due marking was applied at Philadelphia to collect the 3¢ U.S. internal postage, since, as Winter notes, that couldn't be prepaid in Spain as there was no postal treaty or convention between the U.S. and Spain.

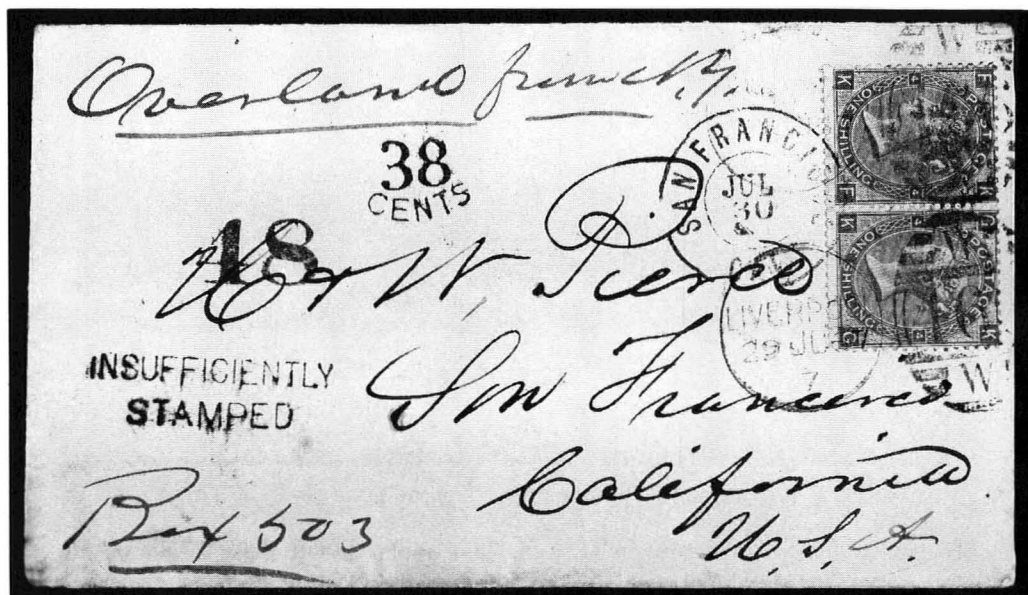


Figure 4. 1867 cover, Liverpool to San Francisco, "INSUFFICIENTLY STAMPED."

PROBLEM COVERS FOR THIS ISSUE

Figure 4 shows the front of a cover mailed from Liverpool to San Francisco. We do not know what, if any, markings are on the back. The cover bears two copies of Great Britain One Shilling stamps (Scott #48 or 54), indicating double rate postage. The Liverpool date is 29 JU 67; the San Francisco receiving date is JUL 30. The cover is endorsed "Overland from N.Y." and, if fully prepaid, would usually go into a closed mail bag to San Francisco, thereby bypassing processing in the port of arrival. But this cover was struck with "INSUFFICIENTLY/STAMPED" and with a "38 CENTS" debit to the U.S. (which indicates conveyance by British packet), as well as with a "48," indicating double treaty rate postage to be collected on delivery.

The questions are many:

1. Since partial payments were not recognized by the U.S.-British treaty of 1848, and this cover, prepaid 2 rates, was apparently underpaid, why was it not charged 72¢ (3 rates), or more, on delivery instead of 2 rates?
2. Where were the various markings applied—Liverpool, New York, San Francisco?
3. Why no indication of the postage to be collected in terms of depreciated currency (U.S. Notes)?

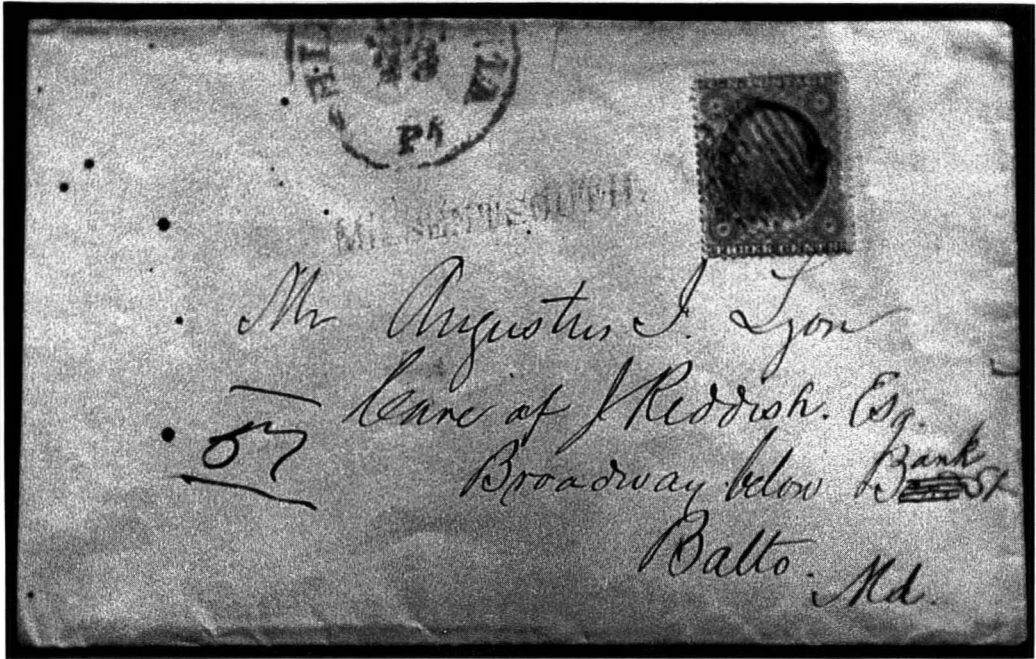


Figure 5. Philadelphia to Baltimore cover, "MISSENT SOUTH."

Figure 5 is a simple cover with a 3¢ stamp for postage from Philadelphia to Baltimore and with two curious markings—a “MISSENT SOUTH” handstamp in a dark blue color, and a manuscript “57” enclosed between two lines. The owner reports that the color is a different hue from that normally associated with Baltimore markings. What do these markings mean and where were they applied?

Thanks to Scott Gallagher for his kind introduction of me in *Chronicle* 164. One minor spelling change—I’m retired from The Procter & Gamble Co. I will not pretend to fill Scott’s shoes, but will certainly try to walk in his footsteps.

Please send your answers to the problem cover(s), and any further discussion of previous answers to other problem covers, within two weeks of receiving your *Chronicle*. I can receive mail at P.O. Box 42253, Cincinnati, Ohio 45242, or at 9068 Fontainebleau Terrace, Cincinnati, Ohio 45231-4808, as well as by Fax at (513) 563-6287. —Ray Carlin

□

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ADVERTISER INDEX

Christie's Robson Lowe.....	53
Guido Craveri	32
Richard C. Frajola, Inc.....	1
Leonard H. Hartmann	71
Edward Hines.....	2
Ivy & Mader Philatelic Auctions Inc.	Inside Back Cover
Victor B. Krievins	4
James E. Lee	72
Andrew Levitt, Philatelic Consultant	36-37
Jack E. Molesworth, Inc.	Inside Front Cover
Shreves Philatelic Galleries, Inc.....	16-17
Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc.	6
Taylor Made Company	24
Raymond H. Weill Co.....	Back Cover
USPCS Publications	
<i>Letters of Gold</i>	51
<i>North Atlantic Mail Sailings 1840-75</i>	66, iv

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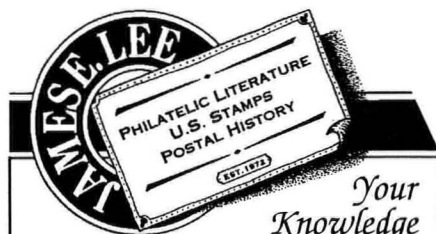
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- Ishikawa, Ryohei, sale of collection
161:29-30,33-40; 162:109-18
- Lanphear, Lester C. III: officials exhibit
164:269-74
- Legislation: post office monopoly power
161:14-22; 162:83-88; 163:151-58
- Local posts:
method of operation 162:91-92
- Louisiana:
New Orleans, separately bagged mail from
Liverpool, 1840's 162:127-28
- Maine: Gardiner, freight money system 161:67
- Markovits, Robert L.: officials exhibit
164:269-74
- Maryland:
Baltimore, separately bagged mail from
Liverpool, 1840's 162:128-29
- Massachusetts:
Boston, and Liverpool mail, 1840's
161:60-67
- CARRIERS DIV. BOSTON MASS.
161:69,71; 162:139-41
- Neale, Thomas, and colonial postal patent
161:17-18
- New York:
Colonial posts 161:17-18
local posts, means of operation 162:91-92
NYC CDs as canceler of 1847 issue
161:28-29
- NYC, separately bagged mail from
Liverpool, 1840's 162:122-26
round grid canceler, NYC 161:23-28
- Newspaper and Periodical stamps *see* Official stamps
- Norton, Marcus P. 163:175-92
- Official stamps
Agric. and Exec. 1¢, special printings
164:256-67
- Lanphear and Markovits exhibits 164:269-74
- Newspaper & Periodical, special printings,
2¢, 3¢ and 4¢ 163:194-204
- Patent cancels 163:175-92
- Patriotic covers *see* Covers, patriotic
- Pennsylvania:
Philadelphia drop letter, Numeral 1 cancel
162:103-07
- Philadelphia, separately bagged mail from
Liverpool, 1840's 162:120-22
- Postage stamps:
Classic issues: how major collections were
formed 162:109-11
- 1847 issue:
5¢, late plate reworking 161:29-30
5¢, plating 163:161-67; 164:243-44
5¢, plating corner positions 164:233-43
5¢, "T" plate crack 162:93-102
- Ishikawa sale 161:29-30
- NYC CDs as canceler 161:28-29
- round grid canceler, NYC 161:23-28
- 1851-56 imperforate issue:
1¢, 3¢ on quad. rate Valentine cover
164:245-50
- 1851-57 issue:
1¢ 64-65-66R1E strip, drop letter
162:103-07
- 1¢ "Big Flaw" 163:169-73
- 1869 issue:
1¢ reissue, special printing 161:48-58
inverts 161:38-40; 162:113-18
- Ishikawa sale 161:33-40; 162:109-18
- Banknote issues:
2¢, usage, destinations (Ray coll.)
161:41-46
- Postal markings:
"Black Letter" markings 161:11-12
- "CARRIERS DIV. BOSTON MASS."
161:69,71; 162:139-41
- Chicago "18" rate marking 162:79-80
- "Due" marking, Knoxville, Tn. 1864
162:140-42
- "Estados Unidos," Hamburg-Spain cover
162:143; 163:214-15; 164:283
- express mail covers 161:23-28
- Madame Joseph Forged Postmarks* (rev.)
162:143
- numeral 1 in octagonal frame, Phila.
162:103-07
- "paid 165" manuscript marking 164:285
- patent cancels 163:175-92
- rate marks, Anglo-Pruss. 162:142-43;
163:213-14
- rate markings on separately bagged mail
from Liverpool, 1840's 162:120-30
- round grid canceler, NYC 161:23-28
- Soldier's Letter ovals 164:255
- "Steam China" mail 162:132-37
- Waterbury "running chicken" 161:33-34
- Postal service:
Colonial 161:17-22
- government monopoly 161:14-22;
162:83-88; 163:151-58
- Puerto Rico: 1889 due cover, 6¢ rate
163:215; 164:283-84

Reviews:

Caribbean Neptune, A 161:71
Madame Joseph Forged Postmarks 162:143

Rhode Island:

Newport "Black Letter" markings 161:11-12

Ship mail *see* Foreign mails

Siegel, Robert A. (obit.) 161:7-8

South Carolina:

Charleston, separately bagged mail from
Liverpool, 1840's 162:129-30

Special Printings:

1869 1¢ reissue 161:48-58
Agriculture and Executive, 1¢ 164:256-67
Newspaper & Periodical, 2¢, 3¢ and 4¢
163:194-204

Specimen stamps *see* Special printings

Spooner, Lysander, private express founder
162:84-88

Starnes, Charles J. (obit) 161:8-10

Steamboat mail

Cunard steamer mail to U.S., 1840's
161:60-67; 162:120-30
Fah Kee, U.S. Mail Steamship 161:68-71
"Steam China" mail 162:132-37
West India Steam Packet 163:206-11;
164:277-82

Tennessee:

Knoxville "Due" marking, 1864 162:140-41
Transatlantic mails *see* Foreign mails
Treaties and conventions *see* Foreign mails
Valentine cover, with 1851-56 imperforates
164:245-50

Vermont:

Waterbury "running chicken" cancel
161:33-34

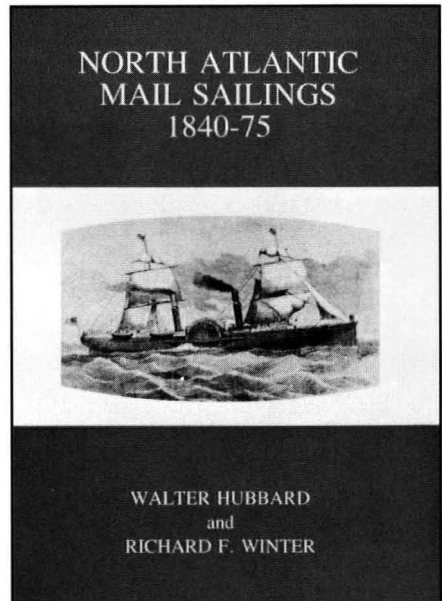
Wisconsin:

Milwaukee, 1¢ 1857 "Big Flaw" cover
163:169-73

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