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November 1995

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TOWN MARKINGS LACKING DATE LOGOS:
DROP AND CIRCULAR MAIL
FRANK MANDEL

Simpson's U.S. Postal Markings 1851-61 (ed. Thomas J. Alexander, 1979) deals succinctly with this subject (pp. 225-26):

The regulations did not prescribe special markings for drop letters or circulars, and as a result such special markings as exist were adopted by individual postmasters on their own prerogative. These may be either townmarks or rating marks. Since 1¢ was the rate charged on all drop letters and 1¢ was by far the most common rate found on circulars [during the 1851-61 period], these specialized markings... were often used interchangeably on both types of mail.

The two usages may be distinguished by their content, or, in the case of a drop letter, by the fact that it is addressed to the same town as appears in the townmark, assuming the cover bears a townmark. Unfortunately, townmarks often were not applied to either drop letters or circular mail, despite the regulations. If a townmark is not present and the cover contents are missing, it may be impossible to assign the cover to either drop letter or circular usage.

This brief note will focus on one particular style of marking associated with drop and circular mail, the familiar townmarking in a circle, except that it lacks one of the essential features — a central date logo. This commonest of markings is often referred to as a “circular date stamp,” or “cnds,” and for regular letters that is fine. All of the regulations during the stampless period required postmasters to include the date of mailing on regular letters, whether that was applied in manuscript or by a handstamp.

For example, the *PL&R* of 1855 (Regulations, Ch. 8, Sec. 63):

Letters received to be sent by mail, should be carefully marked with the name of the post office at which they are received, and the abbreviated name of the State or Territory, **the day of the month on which they are forwarded in the mail**, and the rate of postage chargeable on them; or if they be free, with the word *Free*. The name, date, and *Free*, may be either written or stamped. [boldface emphasis added]

As Simpson implies, this date requirement does not seem to have applied to drop letters — letters handed in to a post office for delivery to an addressee at the same office—which never really entered the mail, or as the regulation cited above puts it, were never “received to be sent by mail.” Printed circulars containing ads, notices, etc., seem to have been similarly exempted. They were the “junk mail” of those times, and technically may not have been considered “letters” at all.

It appears that the objective of some post offices in dealing with these classes of mail was to process them and get them out of the way as soon as possible while expending as little energy as possible. They were hardly worth the trouble of changing the date logo on a daily basis, and since they did not seem to fall into the category of “letters” requiring dates, it is not surprising that they were sometimes dealt with in a summary manner.

In the simplest cases, they bear no townmarking at all, just an indication of the rate paid or due. Some covers just have the single word “PAID.” In other instances, they are encountered with a circular townmarking that lacks a date, or anything else in the central area where one might expect to see the date.

I shall illustrate examples of the circular style with items other than dates at their center. One point that seems to have been neglected in writings about this class of marking concerns the origins of the handstamps that created the markings. I have noticed that in many instances the basic townmark used is of an old or obsolete style. This makes sense, too. Operating post offices probably did not use their newest or current handstamps for drop and circular mail, since those handstamps were tied up in processing regular letters. Where they wished to have a townmarking dedicated to drop letters or circulars, or both, they sometimes pulled out an old or superannuated handstamp, dusted it off, and fitted it up with characters appropriate to its new life.



Figure 1. Drop letter, KINGSTON N.Y., DROP/2, orange red 31 mm. townmarking with integral rating substituted for the date. Ex-Salzer. (Photo courtesy James W. Milgram, M.D.)

Figure 1 illustrates the drop letter marking of Kingston, N.Y., where “DROP/2” has been substituted for the date. This rate was in effect from 1845 to 1851, and I would guess that since this example is on an envelope it probably dates from the later years of this span. Like many drop letters, it is addressed to “Present.” The style of the marking may be of the “large letter” type mentioned in the *American Stampless Cover Catalog* as in use as early as 1831; I am not certain about this. Kingston was a flourishing office, situated in a town on the right bank of the Hudson River, about 90 miles north of New York City. The 1849 *Official Register* places its total receipts at \$1,991.15, a very substantial sum. It must have been a busy office, and its use of a “dedicated” handstamp for drop letters would not be unusual, although this particular style is not common. In fact, the use of the word “Drop” before 1851, either within a townmarking or a rating stamp or as a separate handstamp, is not common at all.

The handstamp used at Detroit, Mich., on a circular, illustrated as Figure 2, has a simple “PAID” substituted for the date. The interior printed message is headed “Abbott Block, April, 1853,” and has a handsome letterhead illustrating the buildings connected with Z. Chandler & Co.’s dry goods concern as well as soliciting orders. Detroit, of course, even then, was a huge office; the 1853 *Register* puts the total receipts at \$7,772.94. The



Figure 2. DETROIT Mich. PAID, black 31 mm. townmarking on a printed circular to Algonac P.O., Mich., datelined April 1853. The 1¢ rate is not indicated, which is not uncommon on circulars. Ex-Preston. (Photo courtesy David L. Jarrett)

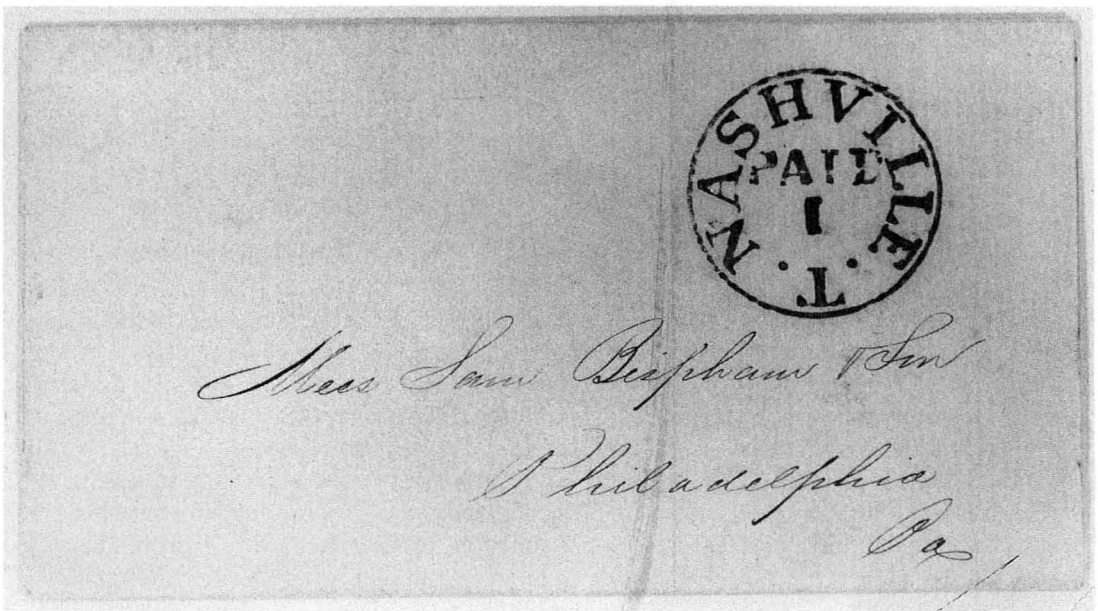


Figure 3. NASHVILLE. T. PAID/1, blue 32 mm. townmarking on a printed circular to Philadelphia, Pa., datelined as Nov. 1, 1855. The style of townmarking is "archaic," known on regular letters as early as 1830. Ex-Salzer. (Photo courtesy James W. Milgram, M.D.)

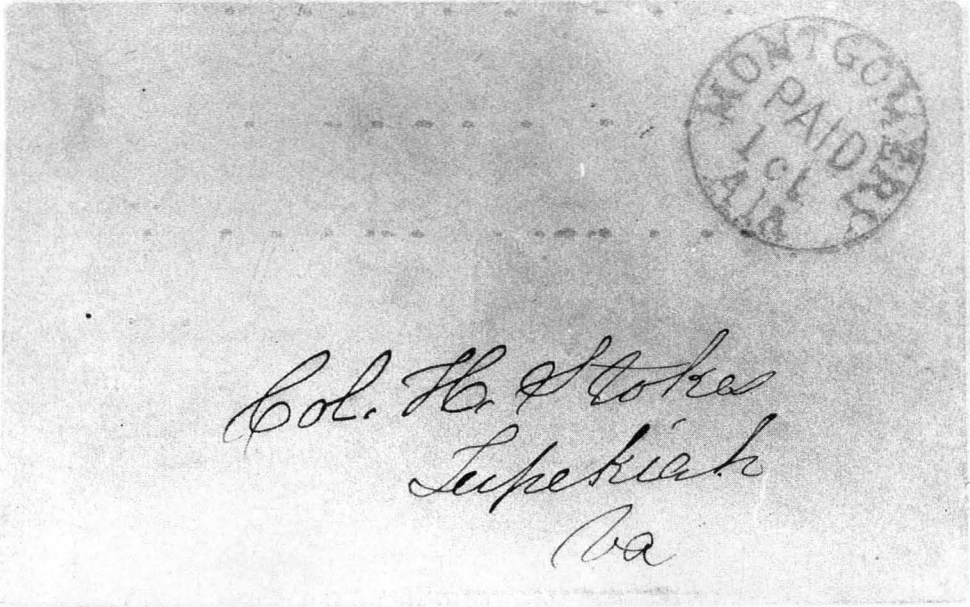


Figure 4. MONTGOMERY Ala. PAID/1 ct., pale red 31 mm. townmarking on an envelope that contained a printed circular, to Tussockia, Va. Ex-Salzer. (Photo courtesy James W. Milgram, M.D.)

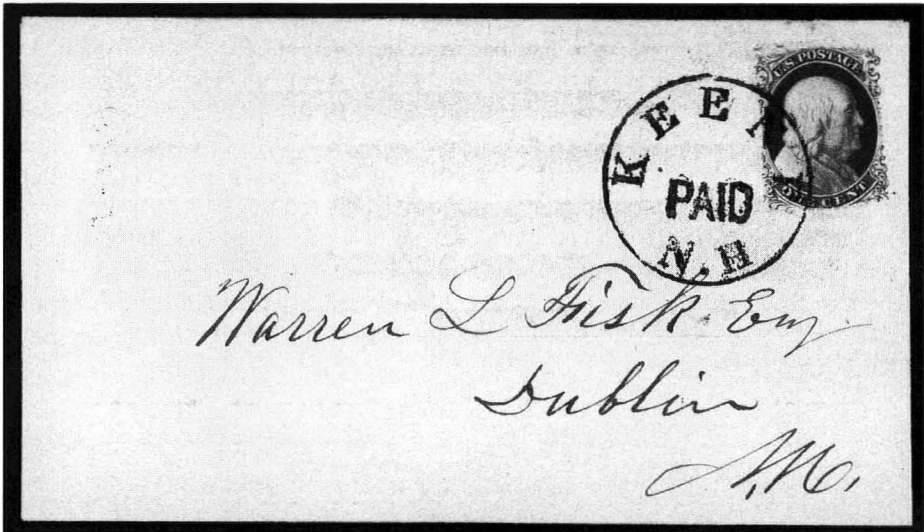


Figure 5. KEENE N.H. PAID, black 32 mm. Townmarking on envelope containing a printed circular, datelined Sep. 1857, to Dublin, N.H., cancels 1¢ blue Type IIIA, pos. 53L4. It is probable that this marking also was used on stampless drop and circular mail during this period. (Photo courtesy David L. Jarrett)

Detroit post office was not going to waste much time on Chandler's junk mail, or anyone else's. This circular is not even rated. The style of the marking is somewhat obsolete, dating from a handstamp known to have been in use on regular letters between 1837 and 1850.

The handstamp of Nashville, T., illustrated as Figure 3, adds a "1" rating to substitute "PAID/1" for the date on a circular. The interior printed notice, datelined Nov. 1, 1855, informs the public that Mr. D.T. Scott has taken charge of the management of the St. Cloud Hotel in Nashville, and invites them into his commodious establishment, "central to all the churches." Located in the capital of Tennessee, the Nashville post office was huge. The 1855 *Register* places its annual receipts at a total of \$8,809.30, and indicates that in addition to the postmaster there were six or seven clerks working there. Perhaps one of them had charge of the raft of circular mail that office must have had to handle. For that purpose he had a handstamp that had seen service on regular letters as early as 1830, and was now fitted out to help Mr. D.T. Scott's house guests who were no doubt anxious to visit all of Nashville's 14 (white) churches, and maybe the state lunatic asylum as well.

The process of substitution is escalated with the inclusion of "PAID/1 ct." within the handstamp of Montgomery, Ala. (Figure 4). Although the contents unfortunately are missing, this is almost certainly a circular use since it is addressed not only out of city but out of state, to Tussekiah, Va. I believe this was sent circa 1853-55. Montgomery, another state capital, and another large office, reported total receipts of \$2,533.03 in the 1853 *Official Register*, and had about six clerks working there. The handstamp used here resembles an obsolete style used on regular letters as early as 1840.

These markings overlap the period when adhesive stamps came into use, and are sometimes found on covers with stamps. Figure 5 illustrates the handstamp of Keene, N.H., canceling a 1¢ Type IIIa, where the word PAID has been substituted for the date. This is very similar to the simple style of the Detroit marking discussed earlier. The circular within the unsealed envelope advertises the hats, caps, furs, gloves, mittens and umbrellas of H. Pond & Co., and is datelined Sep. 1857. Keene's office was located in a town that was celebrated (according to the most loquacious gazetteers of the time) for the "extent, width and uniform level of its streets. Main Street, extending a mile in a straight line, is almost a perfect level..." Keene also had six churches, but the Pond circular does not take the opportunity to mention their proximity to that company. The state lunatic asylum was not located there. The total postal receipts listed in the 1857 *Official Register* were substantial: \$2,850.04, but no clerks are recorded in this edition. Nevertheless, it appears that the postmaster may have resuscitated another obsolete handstamp to create this marking; it conforms to a style that was used as early as 1838.

Our ancestors generally lacked our devotion to waste and expendability, and knew about recycling long before the modern fashion arose. My observation and conjecture about the reuse of old handstamps at a later date to create dedicated devices for marking drop letters and circulars does involve a bit of guessing, but I believe that further investigation in this area will bear me out. □

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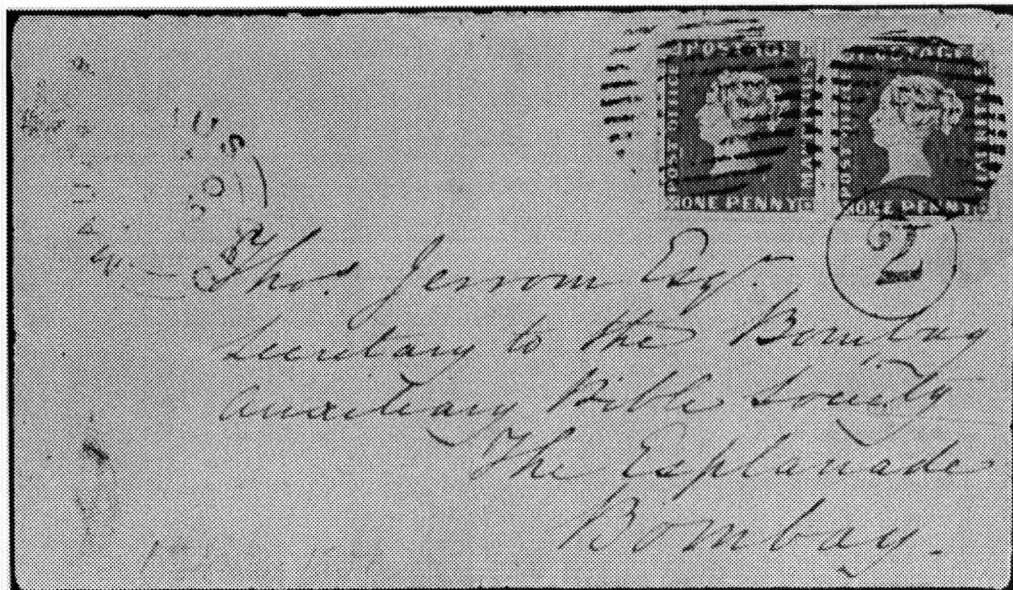
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**DETECTING CARRIER SERVICED COVERS
IN THE FEE PAID PERIOD: A PRIMER**

STEVEN M. ROTH

I. Introduction

Collectors who accumulate and study folded letters and covers that have been serviced by a letter carrier approach their preoccupation in many different ways. Some collect according to city; others focus on the official and/or semi-official adhesives; some study the cover and the fees. There is room enough for all of these approaches in this alluring field of postal history. The subject matter is ambiguous and difficult enough to support everyone's criteria for selecting a subject matter for study and collection.

In this brief article I will examine carrier serviced covers from the point of view of identifying them when there is no carrier adhesive or special handstamp marking to provide the clue. I will proceed from the most obvious circumstances to the most enigmatic, and then even into the questionable.

II. Terms

The phrase "*carrier service*" refers to the collection and/or delivery of mail by a letter carrier acting under the auspices of the local postmaster or local carrier department or, after 1836, as an employee of Washington, D.C. The phrase is not used in connection with the employees of any private post.

The phrases "*letter carrier*," "*carrier*" and "*post boy*" describe a person who collected and/or delivered the mail for the government.

The phrases "*to the mails*," "*collection*" and the like refer to the taking of mail from lamp post letter boxes or other collection boxes and delivering it to the post office for processing.

The phrase "*from the mails*" refers to the delivery of letters from the post office to street addresses. Such letters may have arrived from other post offices or might have been deposited into the general delivery window of the post office.

"*City letters*" or "*city mail*" is mail that was deposited for delivery within the same city. It is said not to have entered the mails because it was processed solely by the Carrier Department of the local post office.

The phrase "*fee paid period*" refers to June 30, 1863 and before when a fee was required to be paid for carrier service.

III. A Brief Description of Carrier Service in the Fee Paid Period

The operation of a penny post/carrier service antedated the first postal act¹ passed by Congress under the Constitution—a statute in which carrier service was not even mentioned. But carrier service had indeed existed in North America long before the ratification of the Constitution. For example, provision was made for a penny post in the Neale Patents in 1692. A penny post also was provided for in the Act of Queen Anne 1710. And Hugh Finlay in his journal entry for October 11, 1773 noted the absence of [and the need for] a "runner" (*i.e.*, a post boy) in Boston.³

¹Act of February 20, 1792; effective March 1, 1792.

²For a good discussion of the historical predecessors to the Constitution-based penny posts, see Calvet M. Hahn, "Letter Carrier Service in New York," *Chronicle* 80 (Vol. 25, No. 4)(Nov. 1973), p. 246-48; Steven M. Roth, "The War Against the Private Expresses: An Examination of the Post Office's Monopoly Power," *Chronicle* 161 (Vol. 46, No. 1)(Feb. 1993), pp. 14-17.

³Hugh Finlay, *Journal Kept by Hugh Finlay, Surveyor of the Post Roads on the Continent of North America During his Survey of the Post Offices . . . 13th September 1773-26th June 1774* (reprinted, 1975), pp. 29-30.32

In addition to antecedents that had their origins abroad, there also is evidence that home grown pre-Constitution penny posts operated in North America. For example, a penny post was mentioned in the *New York Post Boy* in 1753, where it was written,

All letters for Persons living in the Town
that remain uncall'd for on Post Nights
will, on Monday Morning, be sent out by
a Penny Post provided for that purpose...⁴

Benjamin Franklin established a penny post in Philadelphia in 1753. In July 1762, Philadelphia postmaster William Dunlap placed the following notice in William Bradford's *Pennsylvania Journal*:

The lad who was lately employed at the
Post office as penny-post having
ran away, the gentlemen who expect
letters are requested to call for them
until a suitable person can be procured
to carry them.⁵

Even Goddard, in his proposal to create a constitutional post to operate in opposition to the parliamentary post, included a penny post in his proposal.⁶

Postal historians long have known that penny posts operated during the founding decades of the United States in such large cities as New York and Philadelphia. Now, recently published scholarship by postal historian Robert J. Stets and others has established that penny posts operated in such smaller towns as Harrisburg, Pa., Middletown, Pa., Alexandria, Va., Catskill, N.Y., Fredericktown, Md., Portland, Me., Richmond, Va., Baltimore, Md., Washington City and Wilmington, Del.⁷

Such service was decentralized from the Post Office Department in Washington, was mostly unregulated except for statutory outer-boundaries on the fees that could be charged for service, and appears to have functioned generally on an *ad hoc* basis, subject to the will of the local postmaster.

In theory, at least, postmasters in all towns and cities for which the Postmaster General had directed the establishment of carrier service should have tendered a penny post to the public. Such postmasters should have offered to deliver letters from the mails except in those cases where the recipient had lodged a written instruction with the local postmaster to hold his mail. This is because the postal statutes, beginning with the Act of 1794, and continuing with all major postal legislation over the next forty years, provided for such service, subject only to the two conditions noted above.⁸

While we have only scant evidence to determine much about how the early penny posts actually operated on a day-to-day basis, surviving folded letters suggest that the most common available service was the delivery of letters from the mails to a street address, and

⁴Quoted in Hahn, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

⁵Quoted in Watson, *Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania in the Olden Time*, Vol. III (Hazard, 1891), p. 475.

⁶Calvet C. Hahn, "The Provisional Post in the United States," *Collectors Club Philatelist*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (May 1974), p. 158.

⁷Robert J. Stets, "Penny Posts in the United States Before 1809," *The Penny Post*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (July 1993), pp. 4-12; Steven M. Roth, "The Harrisburg Post Boy," *The Penny Post*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April 1994), pp. 10-15; Steven M. Roth, "An Early Carrier Delivered Cover from Middletown, Pa.," *The Penny Post*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Oct. 1994), pp. 5-6.

⁸Act of May 8, 1794; effective June 1, 1794. This subject was extensively discussed, with all the statutory citations, in Steven M. Roth, "A 5¢ Letter Revisited: Was it a Carrier Delivered Overpaid Drop Letter?," *Chronicle* 157 (Vol. 45, No. 1)(Feb. 1993), pp. 21-29.

to a lesser extent collection service to the mails. City mail service appears not to have existed prior to the reforms in 1836.

In 1836 Congress enacted comprehensive legislation affecting the entire postal system.⁹ Section 41 of that Act substantially reorganized the carrier system, bringing it under the centralized control of Washington.¹⁰ In addition, the statute provided for (i) the collection of letters to be taken to the mails, (ii) the giving of some discretion to each local postmaster to establish carrier fees within his jurisdiction, (iii) the authorization to each postmaster to create a general fund to be used as a source of payment to the letter carriers, and (iv) the bonding of all letter carriers.

On June 30, 1863, the fee paid period came to an end.¹¹

IV. Recognizing Carrier Serviced Covers

The detection of carrier serviced covers runs the gamut from the most obvious identifying clues through the subtle and complex examples, including those in the gray spectrum—the “could be” examples about which we will never be sure. This, then, is the order in which we will proceed.

A. Covers that were definitely carrier serviced

The most obvious candidates for this category are those covers which contain adhesives¹² specifically issued to show prepayment of a carrier fee. Two examples are illustrated as Figures 1 & 2. The Franklin carrier adhesive (Scott LO1)(Figure 1) was issued in 1851 to evidence prepayment of the carrier fee and to offer the convenience of prepayment to the postal customer. This adhesive was distributed to New York, Philadelphia and New Orleans. The Eagle carrier adhesive (Scott LO2) was the successor to the Franklin carrier stamp, and was distributed to New York (although the question whether the few covers showing its use in New York are genuine applications remains debated), Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. and Cincinnati. One example each of Eagle carrier use from Cleveland and from Andalusia, Pa. has been reported, as well as several examples from Kensington, Pa., although there is no evidence that the stamp was distributed to any of these cities.¹³ If a cover which originated in a city that received the stamps (as noted above) contains an Eagle carrier stamp, it is safe to assume that carrier service was provided — generally, but not always, to prepay the collection fee to the mails — although there are examples where three Eagles were unsuccessfully used on a cover to attempt to prepay the ordinary postage.

Prior to the issuance of the Franklin carrier adhesive in 1851, several postmasters issued their own adhesives, now known as semi-official carrier stamps. An example is shown at Figure 3. Cities in addition to Philadelphia where semi-officials were issued are Baltimore, Boston, Charleston, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Louisville, New York and St. Louis.

Some covers are recognized as having been carrier serviced even though they do not bear a carrier adhesive, because the covers contain handstamps that were used by carrier departments to show prepayment.¹⁴ Two examples are Figures 4¹⁵ & 5.

⁹Act of July 2, 1836; effective same date.

¹⁰The reforms are treated in Steven M. Roth, “The Reform of the Penny Post in 1836,” *Chronicle* 159 (Vol. 45, No. 3)(Aug. 1993), p. 161-67.

¹¹Act of March 3, 1863; effective July 1, 1863.

¹²For the purpose of this article, I will make two assumptions that will apply throughout: (i) that the adhesive on each cover is a genuine specimen, not a forgery or reprint; and (ii) that each adhesive originated on the cover and was legitimately used.

¹³It has also been reported that the adhesive was distributed to the offices in Boston and Baltimore. I am not aware of any uses from either city.

¹⁴Such handstamps sometimes also were used to cancel carrier stamps, but that subject is not relevant to this article.

¹⁵Discussion of the several “types” of handstamps is outside the scope of our subject; I will not treat that here.

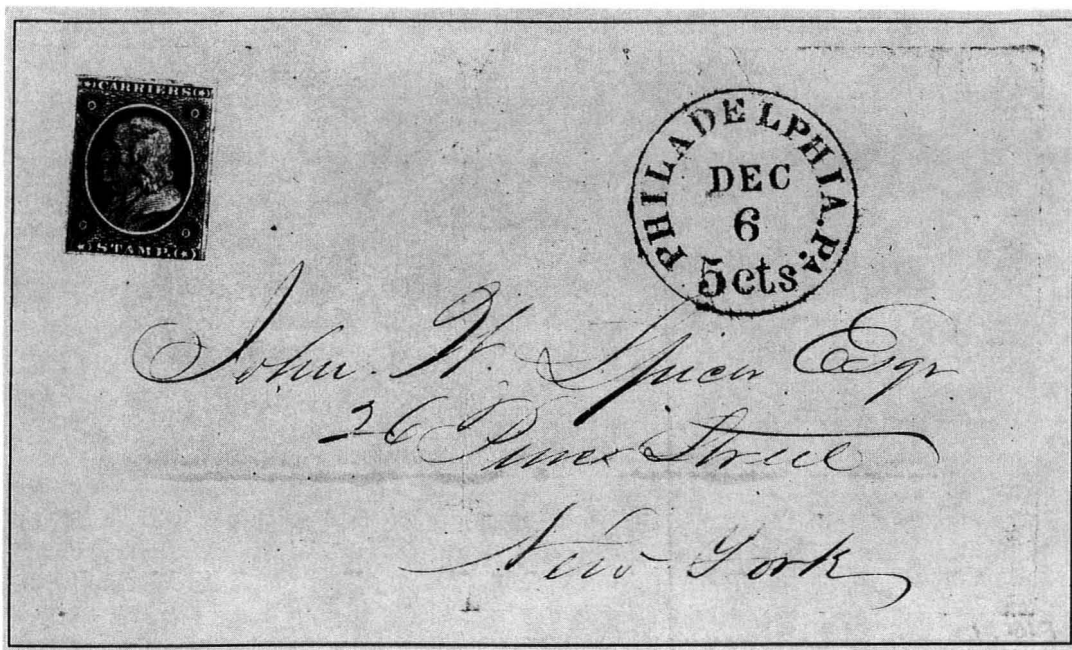


Figure 1. Franklin carrier adhesive on cover with Philadelphia postmark.

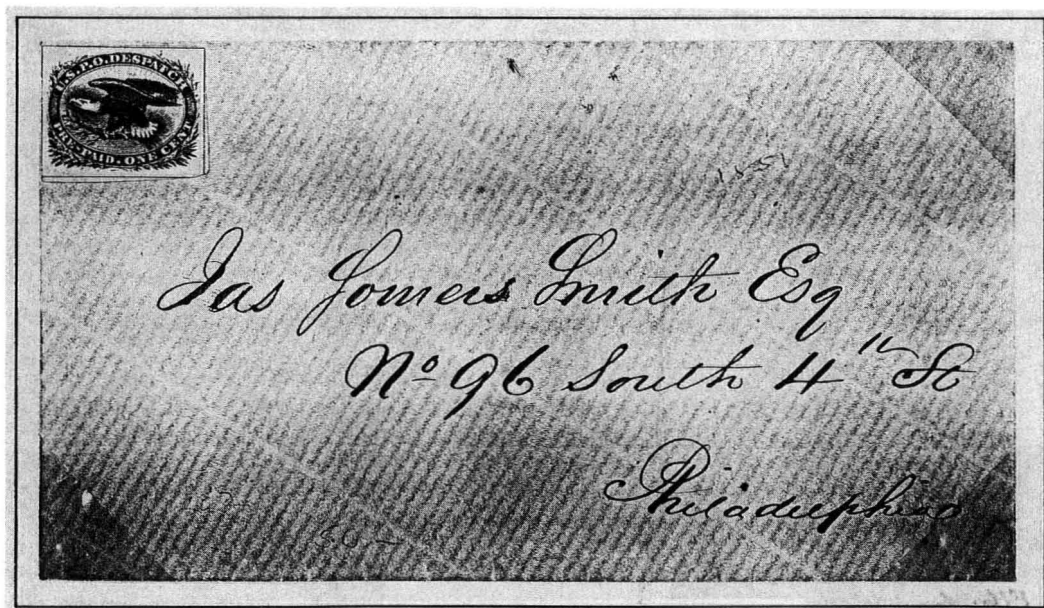


Figure 2. Eagle carrier adhesive on cover.

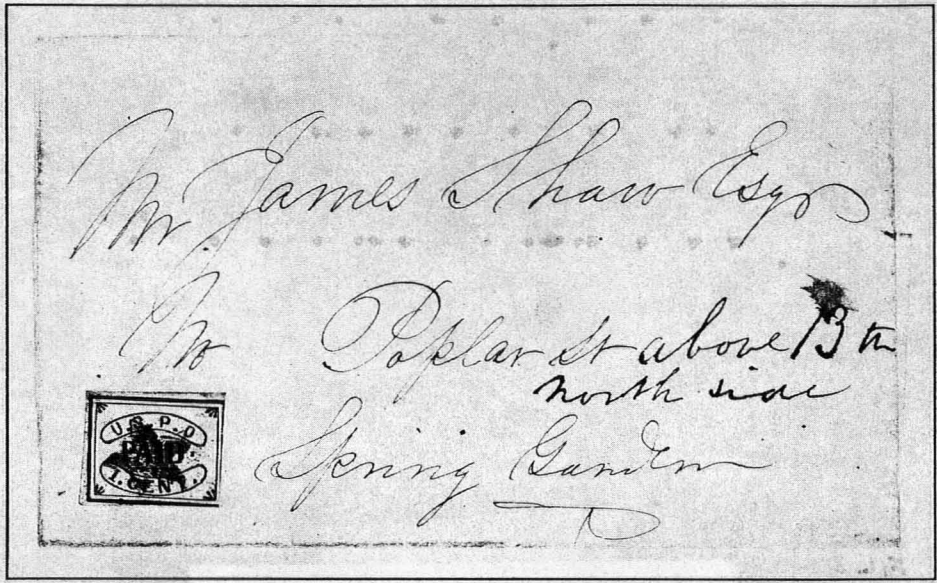


Figure 3. Philadelphia U.S.P.O. semi-official carrier on cover.

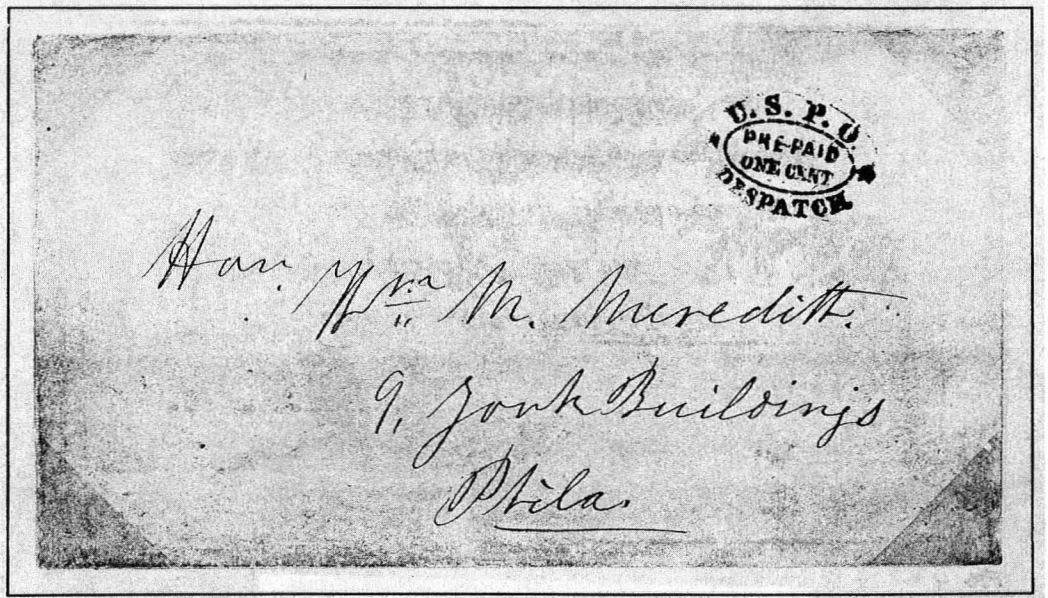


Figure 4. Philadelphia U.S.P.O. * DESPATCH handstamp on cover.

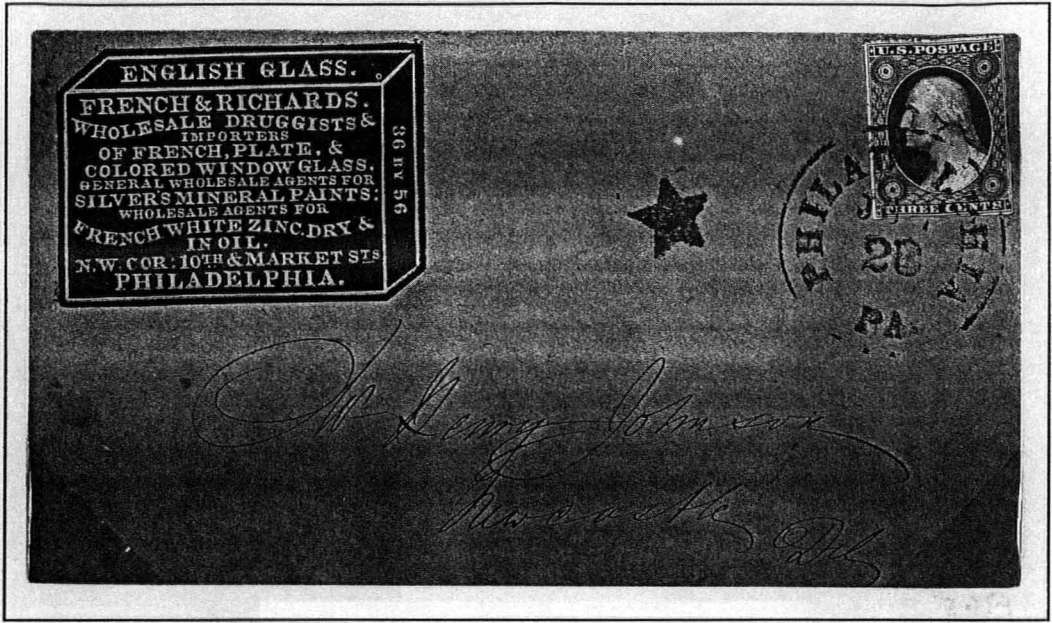


Figure 5. Philadelphia to Newcastle, Del. cover with Philadelphia carrier cancel on U.S. 3¢ 1851 issue.

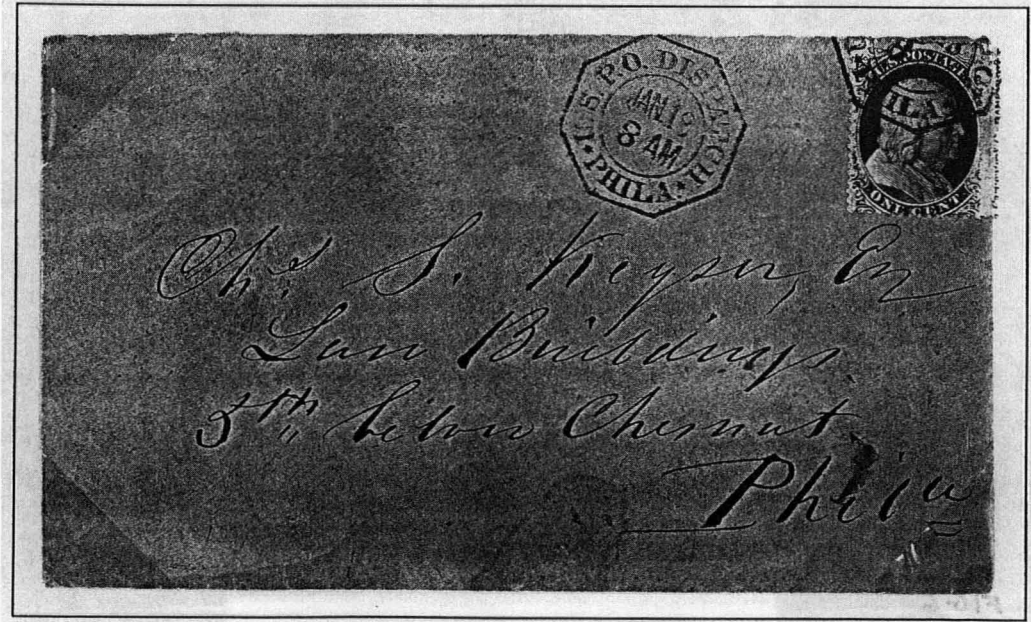


Figure 6. U.S.P.O. DISPATCH * PHILA. carrier cancel on U.S. 1¢ 1851 issue.



Figure 7. Philadelphia to Harrisburg cover, 1813, annotated "post boy 2."

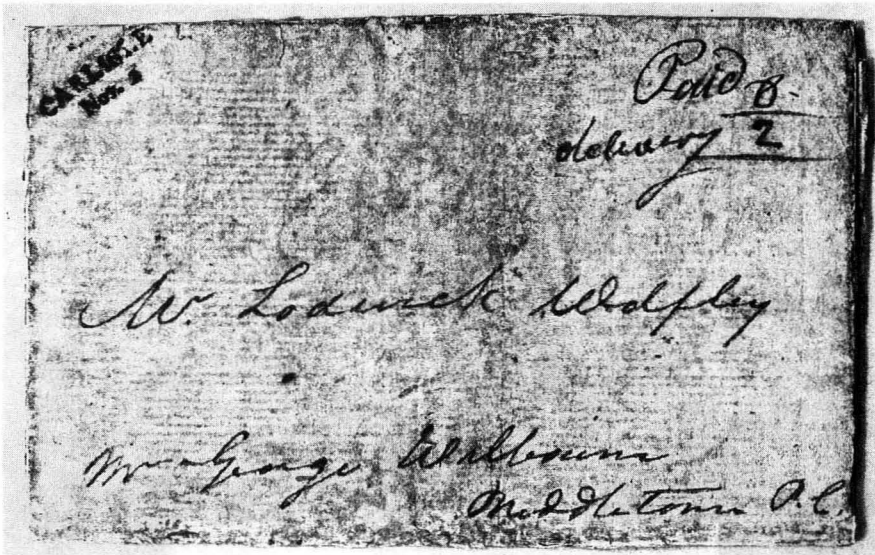


Figure 8. Carlisle to Middletown, Pa. folded letter, 1800, annotated "delivery 2."

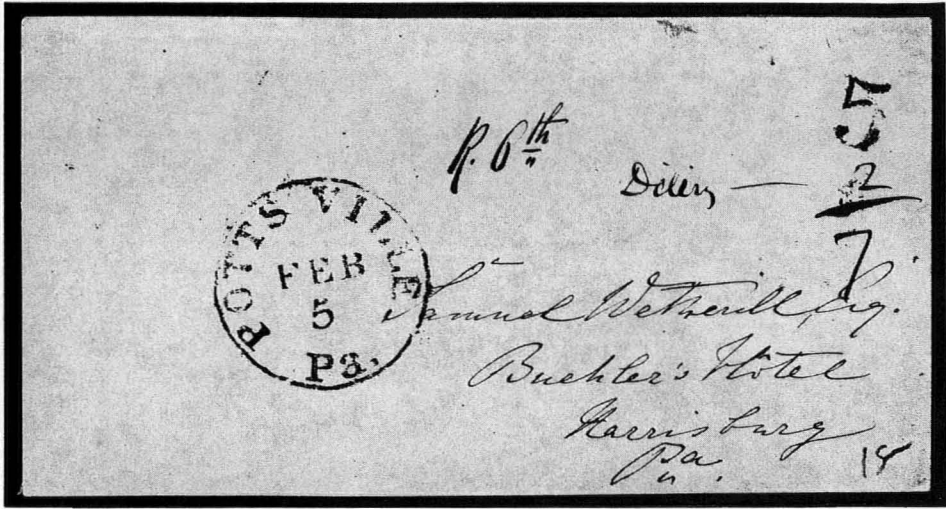


Figure 9. Pottsville to Harrisburg, Pa. cover, annotated "delivery 2."



Figure 10. Blue 1[¢] due marking on Philadelphia carrier cover.

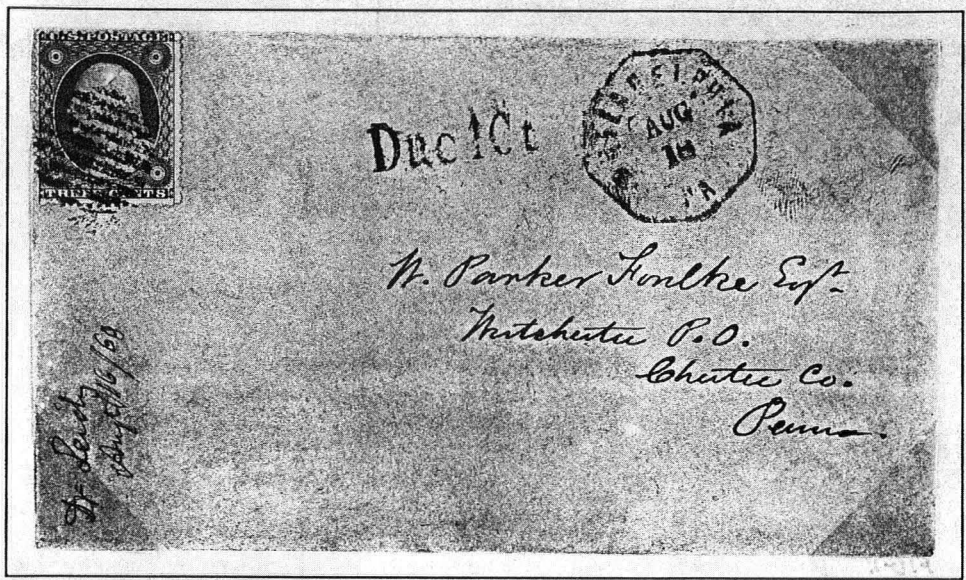


Figure 11. August 18, 1860 cover with "Due 1 Ct" carrier fee marking.



Figure 12. Carrier service indicated by addition of 1¢ adhesive to 3¢ cover.

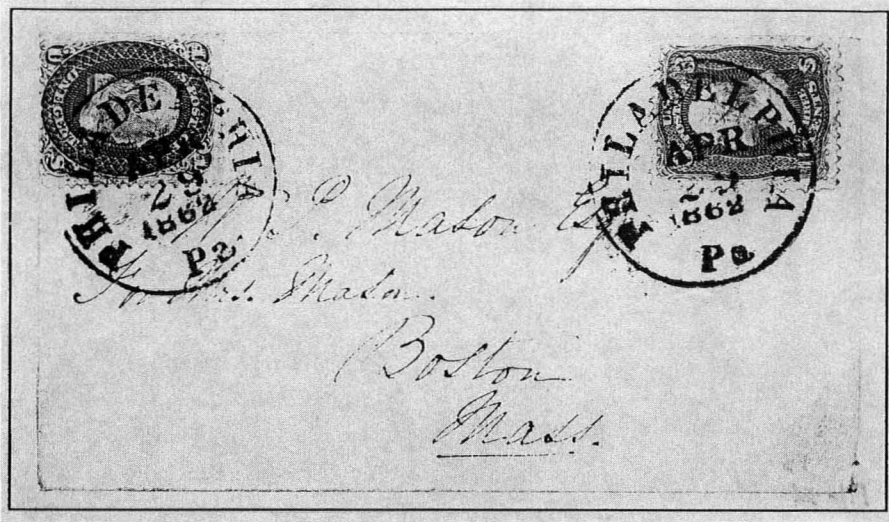


Figure 13. 1862 Philadelphia to Boston cover, 1¢ adhesive added to 3¢ cover for carrier fee.



Figure 14. Carrier service indicated by "Not found/Kelly" carrier's note.

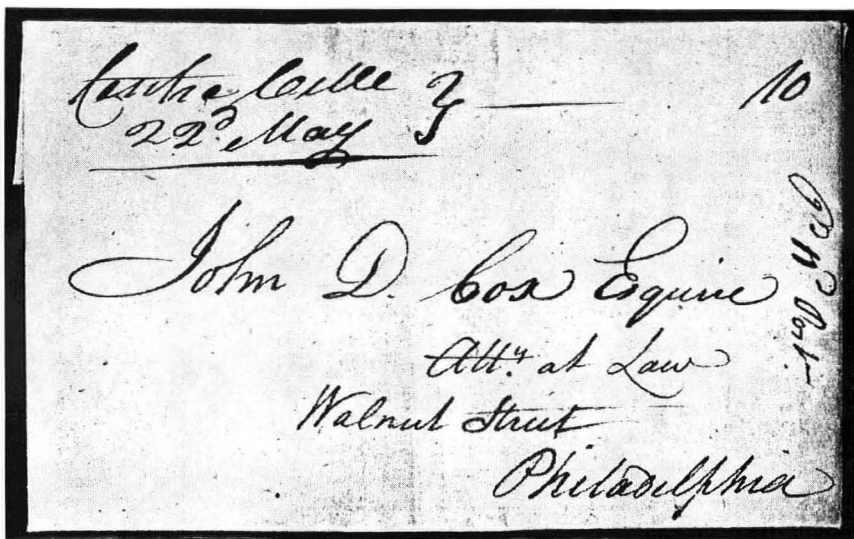


Figure 15. 1797 Carlisle to Philadelphia cover, docketed "Pd 11c Post."

On some occasions, the carrier department would use a special handstamp in conjunction with a non-carrier type adhesive. An example is the "U.S.P.O. DISPATCH * PHILA" shown in Figure 6.

Even though neither a carrier adhesive nor a special handstamp is present on a cover, it sometimes is obvious that the cover received carrier service from the postage rates and fees present. These are evidenced in any one of three ways: fees written in hand on the cover; handstamp fee markings; and, regularly issued postage stamps.

The 1813 cover shown as Figure 7 illustrates the notation of a fee to indicate carrier service. The folded letter originated in Philadelphia, destined for Harrisburg. The Philadelphia clerk rated the cover with the correct single rate postage (12½ cents) for the distance (96 miles). When the letter arrived in Harrisburg, someone added (in an ink of a different color than the postage rate ink) the phrase "Post boy 2." The postage and the carrier fee were then totaled.

Figure 8 is comparable. This 1800 folded letter shows the addition of the written phrase "delivery 2" below the postage rate. Undoubtedly, this reflected the charge for the post boy in Middletown, Pa.

Finally, Figure 9, too, illustrates this identification tool.

Handstamp markings that are not special markings of the Carrier Department, but which provide evidence of carrier service, usually are indications that the fee is due. In the case of Figure 10, the letter was handled only by the Philadelphia Carrier Department so that the 1¢ carrier fee (represented by the blue handstamp) was charged, rather than both the carrier fee and drop letter postage. Figure 11 illustrates a nice example of the flip side. In Philadelphia, Boston and New York, from approximately August through October or November 1860, each city's postmaster permitted the collection fee (to the mails) to be passed on to the addressee in another city. Thus, carrier service was indicated by the "Due 1 Ct." handstamp. Beginning in October or November 1860, such partially unpaid carrier serviced letters were held for payment of the fee by the sender.

Carrier service sometimes is revealed by the addition of an ordinary stamp to prepay the fee. Figures 12 and 13 illustrate this point.

Occasionally a notation added to the cover by the letter carrier or even by the recipient will provide the clue. The former was noted in the illustrations for Figures 7, 8 and 9 [the latter bearing the phrase "delivery 2"]. But the carrier's notation might be more subtle. For example, the cover shown as Figure 14 contains the letter carrier's penciled note, "Not found/Kelly." A review of *McElroy's Philadelphia City Directory* for 1854 and 1855 (the correct years for the embossed envelope) reveals a Malachi Kelly listed as a letter carrier.

Docketing by the recipient might provide the key. For example, the cover shown as Figure 15 originated in Carlisle, Pa. in 1797. There it was rated "10," for 10¢ due for the distance to Philadelphia. Upon arrival, the folded letter was carrier delivered to Mr. Cox, for which service he paid one penny. How do we know? Docketed vertically on the right edge of the letter is the phrase "Pd 11c Post." The extra one penny paid was for carrier service.

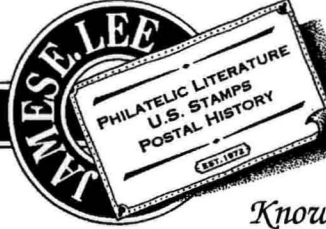
(to be continued)

SECTION EDITOR'S NOTE

Beginning with issue No. 167 of the *Chronicle*, this Section has a new name. This change has been made to descriptively reflect what has always been the case—that articles for this Section involving local posts, independent mail companies and government carriers are all welcome.

Also, with this issue of the *Chronicle* I welcome my friend Thomas Stanton as our new Assistant Section Editor. To those of you who do not know him, Tom is an indefatigable researcher in many fields of postal history, including that involving government carriers. I look forward to working with Tom.

— Steven M. Roth □



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EARLY CANCELLATIONS OF NEW YORK CITY: PART I
1842-1852
HUBERT C. SKINNER

(Continued from *Chronicle* 167:178)

Integral Obliterator/Postmarks

In late 1851, the first of several experimental integral postmarks appeared on domestic letters and circulars at New York City. In each of these markers, a "killer" or obliterator of one to four bars was inserted at the center of the circular postmark "sandwiched" between the month and day of the device. The four-bar integral killer (see Figure 3: NYDM 51-3) measures 6x14 millimeters and is recorded on domestic mail between early September and late November 1851; most are inter-city letters franked by the 3¢ orange brown stamp [Scott 10]. The three-bar integral cancel (see Figure 3: NYDM 52-1) measures 5½ x12 millimeters and appears on domestic letters and circulars postmarked between early January and December 1852. The two-bar integral device (see Figure 3: NYDM 52-4) measures 3½ x12 millimeters and is recorded between August 1852 and April 1853; this type is relatively scarce. A small number of covers franked with the 3¢ orange brown stamp of 1851 have been noted with a single bold bar which measures 5½ x12 millimeters at the center of the postmark (see Figure 3: NYDM 51-4 and Figure 4); all usages recorded are from August 1851. This postmark has a wider single bold bar than the similar single-bar **below** the month and day recorded from late 1856; the 1856 bar measures only 3x11 millimeters and possibly is an inverted year date slug. As the wide bar from 1851 is the exact size of the three-bar integral design, it possibly could represent the three-bar slug inverted. However, the bold single slug is from August 1851 and the three-bar marking is not recorded earlier than January 1852.

Perhaps the most intriguing of the experimental integral postmarks is the one with an enormous bold slug at the center which measures about 13x20 millimeters (see Figure 3: NYDM 51-5). This marking is known only on circulars from late 1851; it is not common. As most circulars are undated, the exact span of usage is uncertain. However, as this marking appears struck principally on clear early platable impressions of 1¢ 1851 stamps from plate one early, the late 1851 dating is reliable. Most impressions of this marking appear quite worn with an irregular and incomplete outer circle and a less than clear impression of the large central slug which commonly is indistinct and quite uneven. Many have a clearly discernible crack or break in the design about two millimeters in from the left side. Recently, an example with a remarkably clear impression of the central slug [struck on a piece] surfaced in a West Coast auction sale (see Figure 5). This item is most revealing. The central slug is not only clearly struck, it is divided into six horizontal bars and has the vertical break about two millimeters in from the left side! Thus, it seems probable that the strikes previously seen and recorded are later usages, either so worn or badly inked that the six bars appear to have merged into one. Further, in this example the outer circle of the postmark is incomplete, worn and irregularly dented at the bottom. This reveals that the marking was adapted from an existing postmark which had been used extensively on stampless prepaid carrier mail in 1849-1851 (see Skinner, 1987, p. 73; also, see Figures 6 and 7a). The six-bar large slug was inserted into the center of this worn postmark in place of the type bars reading "U.S./CITY/MAIL," thus accounting for the clear central "killer" design in combination with the worn outer circle; it never was the clean and sharp marking shown in Figure 3. In Figure 7b, Ashbrook's drawing of this marking is reproduced

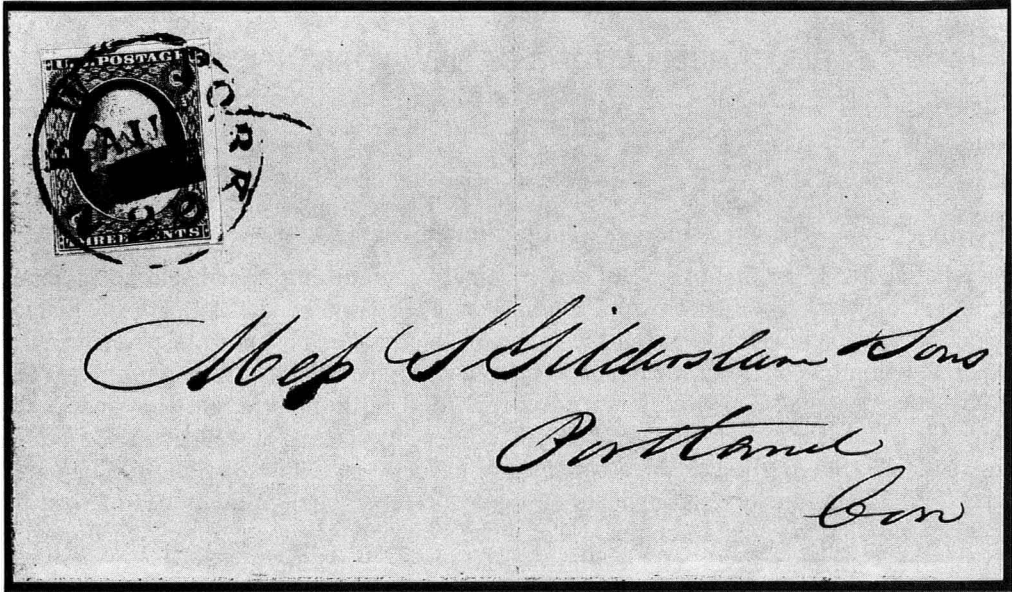


Figure 4. A letter from New York City to Portland, Connecticut, postmarked and canceled on "AUG 22" [1851] with the scarce single bold bar integral device from 1851. [Full scale]



Figure 5. The 1¢ stamp of 1851 (Plate One Early) with an early, clear strike of the "large slug" marking used only on circular mail at New York City [struck on a piece]; note the vertical "crack" at left in the "slug" and the badly damaged and worn outer circle. Later strikes of this "large slug" appear irregular and worn and the individual bars cannot be distinguished [see text]. [Full scale]

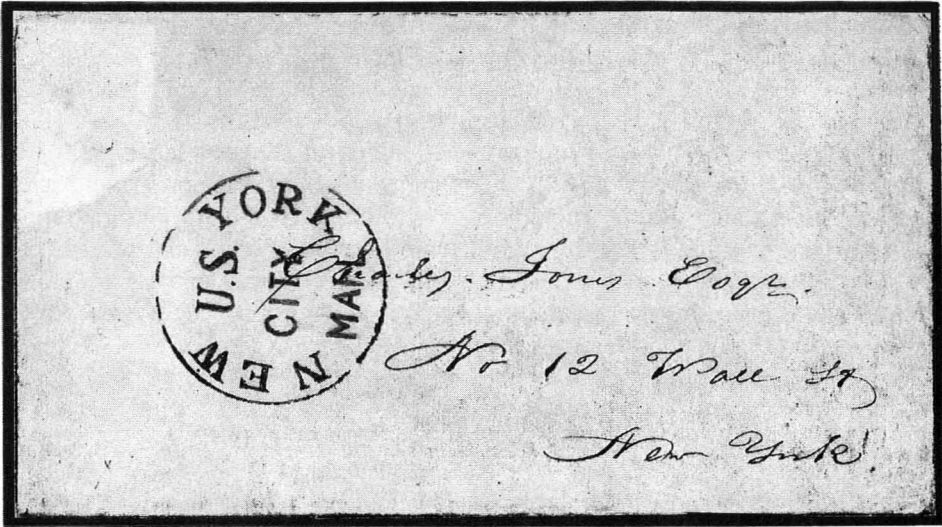


Figure 6. A city letter delivered by the NEW YORK U.S. CITY MAIL which operated from 1849 to early 1851. Evidently, the type bars reading "U.S./CITY/MAIL" were removed and the "large slug" was substituted to produce the marking used on circular mail as illustrated in Figure 5. [Full scale]



Figure 7. The "NEW YORK U.S. CITY MAIL" postmark in "transition" [see text]: (a) the marking reproduced from the *American Stampless Cover Catalog* (Skinner, 1987, p. 73); (b) the badly dented marking as reproduced by Ashbrook (1938, p. 183); (c) a tracing taken from the postmark shown in Figure 5; (d) a partial strike traced from a single 1¢ stamp by Ashbrook (1938, p. 113). [Full scale]

(Ashbrook, vol. 2, p. 183); compare the damaged area shown at the bottom of his tracing which is nearly identical to the damaged area in the same position on the item illustrated in Figure 5 and on the tracing of this postmark presented in Figure 7c. This dented area can be seen in other recorded strikes of the marking. Finally, we can now recognize Ashbrook's partial tracing taken from another off-cover 1¢ stamp (Ashbrook, vol. 2, p. 113) as another early strike of the large slug (see Figure 7d); it was listed by Skinner-Eno (1980, p. 28, as SD-G 85) but no one has recognized it previously as being the "large slug" postmark used at New York City on circulars in late 1851!

Late 1851—A Period of Innovative Changes and Experimentation

Together with new rates of postage, new stamps in different denominations and new and innovative canceling devices including the experimental integral designs, it seems clear that the latter half of 1851 represents a dynamic period of reorganization and change in all aspects of the handling of the mails at New York City. For example, the 11-bar grid cancel was in use for less than six months; red strikes are known for only a few days or at most a few weeks; black square grids are unrecorded after December 1851. Though the postmaster at New York experimented with integral postmarks combining the obliterator with the town circle, none of these early integral postmarks remained in use very long. Three of these are recorded only from late 1851; one from only 1852; and the fifth one is known only from late 1852 and early 1853. Evidently, these experimental devices were less than satisfactory as each, in turn, was soon abandoned and the New York Post Office reverted to the use of ordinary circular dated handstamps to serve the dual purpose of postmarking the letter and canceling the adhesive stamp on the inter-city mails. This practice continued largely unchanged until 23 July 1860 when Postmaster General Joseph Holt issued an order prohibiting the use of townmarks or rate marks to cancel postage stamps.

Further, neither the 11-bar square grid nor any of the experimental integral postmarks are known to have been struck on letters to trans-Atlantic destinations. However, the seven-bar round grid was used to cancel adhesives on foreign letters as early as late November 1851 and was so used for some time thereafter— and, struck not in red, but in *black ink!* After this date, *no* strikes from New York City of the seven-bar encircled grid have been found on domestic letters after an exhaustive search (over the past eight years) by the present writer. Thus, it appears (based on the physical evidence available) that the overseas letters were separated from letters and circulars directed to domestic addresses *before* the adhesives on these letters were canceled. Further, the mails to Canada dispatched overland appear to have been marked the same as domestic letters. During the latter part of 1851 and during subsequent months and years the fact that different "classes" of mail were delivered to separate stations before being postmarked and dispatched becomes even more apparent. These "classes" of mail include: the maritime mails to British North America, the contract steamship mails to Caribbean ports and to Mexico, the New York Ocean Mail and letters directed to South America. After mid-1851, *no longer* were all letters treated and canceled alike at New York City, regardless of their destination.

Many more elements of information (more recorded letters) are needed before more precise descriptions of mail handling at the New York Post Office during this period of transition and change can be accomplished. Readers are invited to submit photocopies of dated letters (local and inter-city) and circular mail, especially to foreign destinations, to this Section Editor for his chronological archive of New York City postmarks and cancellations. Such assistance will be most sincerely appreciated and will be properly acknowledged in future articles.

Acknowledgments

This writer is indebted to many fellow collectors and postal historians who have generously shared with him their notes, records and the contents of their album pages and "cover boxes." Special thanks are extended to Keiji Taira for his records of round red grids on 1851 covers. □

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BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE EXPERTS:
THE 15¢ Z GRILL STAMPS OF 1861 AND 1862

KEN LAWRENCE

Among the rarest stamps listed in the 1995 *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps* is the 15¢ Z grill of 1868, Scott Number 85F, known only in used condition, valued at \$100,000. It was one of the last of the classic nineteenth century stamps to have been given a catalog number, in the 1962 edition. In a fair world, this would be the most highly sought U.S. stamp if it were genuine, because only two have been recorded.

With only two recorded examples, the 15¢ Z grill is a key U.S. stamp, at least equal in rarity to the legendary 1¢ Z grill, Scott Number 85A, although one copy of the 1¢, in the Benjamin K. Miller collection at the New York Public Library, has not been available to the philatelic market since 1918. But the odd way that the 15¢ Z grill was discovered and authenticated makes legend-building for it a risky business. To understand why, it may be helpful to examine the stamp's history, including previously unpublished correspondence in the Elliott Perry papers at the American Philatelic Research Library. First, let us go back to the beginning.

The lettered designations used to categorize U.S. grill types were assigned by William L. Stevenson in a series of studies published in *Collectors' Journal* and *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News* between 1913 and 1916. Stevenson also was the discoverer of the Z grill, a points-down type about the size of an E grill, usually strongly impressed, but with horizontal ridges. All other grill types on 1861 Series stamps have either so-called "biscuit" shapes or else vertical ridges.

Stevenson initially assigned this grill the letter Z because he was uncertain of its position in the sequence of grills issued in 1867 and 1868. The alphabetized A through F grills on 1861 series stamps reflected his interpretation of their order of manufacture. Eventually, Stevenson placed the Z grill between D and E, as they are still found in the Scott catalog.

At first Stevenson thought a Z grill might exist on the 15¢ value of the set, but by the time he completed his study, he felt it unlikely:

Is the Z grill to be found on the 15c, 1867? I don't know, but I do know that it is extremely doubtful. The Z grill was evidently used on issued stamps only up to about March, 1868, [at] the latest, possibly not after February, 1868. Grilling of the 15c did not begin before about May, 1868. It is highly improbable that anyone will find this value showing the Z grill.

That was Stevenson's final comment on the subject, in the July 22, 1916, issue of *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News*.

The first example of the 15¢ Z grill stamp was discovered in 1961, when Robert A. Siegel sold the Saul Newbury collection. It was certified as genuine by the Philatelic Foundation, and became the basis for the Scott catalog listing.

Shortly after he discovered the stamp, Siegel showed it to Elliott Perry, who agreed with Siegel's Z grill identification. But on reflection he was less certain, and sent these thoughts to Siegel on May 12, 1961:

Referring to the 15c grilled Lincoln stamp, another idea has occurred to me. Stevenson's idea of classifying the grill by "families" and identifying each "family" by a letter, was based on the fact that each family represented the condition of a grilling roller at a certain time. Consequently, altho there could be a variation of a row

or two of grill areas in any family, no grill of one family will occur in [a] pair with the grill of another family. The only exception is the "B" grill-and-a-half variety which occurs as a block of four on the "C" roller. (Now listed correctly as #82.)

The 15c stamp has correct measurements for the "Z" family, but not for any other family, and has some details which appear to agree with "Z" consequently it could have a Z grill.

Z and D occur with the same height [*sic*], but Z is one or two rows of points narrower than "D."

Suppose there was one row of areas on the D roller which was one row narrower than the normal D, and was 17 rows of points high. It would have 14x17 rows and would agree with many areas on the E roller. Probably it would be indistinguishable from E unless it was in a multiple with a normal D.

One row (ten grill areas) on a sheet of 200 could be only 5% of the total D grills on any sheet. Consequently, and because so few multiples of D are known, some of the grills classed as from the E family, may be slightly undersized grills from the D family.

I suggest therefore, that the 15c Lincoln either has a Z grill in the largest recorded size 14x18 rows of points, or the grill is full height and one row narrower than is commonly found on the D roller, and came from a narrower row of areas on the D roller.

As neither D nor Z have been found before on the 15c stamp, its interest and value does not depend upon which grill it has.

A similar argument does not apply to the E roller that is, a row of areas 14 wide and one row too tall (18), because E grills are relatively common and an area 18 rows tall could hardly have escaped notice all these years.

In my opinion it would help if you can show that the Z grill was not always as sharp as it usually appears.

Unaware that Perry had seen the stamp or expressed an opinion about it, Lester G. Brookman wrote to Perry as follows on June 30:

I have heard through the grapevine that the Foundation has issued a Certificate on a 15¢ "Z" Grill that came from the Newbury Collection.

I saw this stamp in Siegel's office and in my opinion the grill is definitely not good. If you get a chance to take a good look at it I wish you would give me your opinion on it. . . .

[The Philatelic Foundation] did not submit the 15¢ to me or I would have had to tell them that in my opinion it was definitely not good. Now I would have much disliked to have had to do this since it is owned by my friend Mike Newbury and submitted by my good friend Bob Siegel but I have to call them as I see them without regard to personal feelings.

The worst thing about this deal is that I have been told it will be listed by both Scott and Minkus which is a damned shame if my opinion is correct.

Under the circumstances, I feel that my hands are rather effectively tied. It is really none of my business unless it should happen that someone will get badly hurt on this item. If it was good I would be delighted to fight "for" it but to fight "against" it when it is almost none of my business is quite another matter! By the way, if you can examine the stamp, take a good look at the shape of each unit and try and see the shape of the whole unit in addition to the - - - - - [*sic*, indicating the grill ridges] that show up. COMPARE it with the units of a genuine "Z" and you'll see that plenty is LACKING on the 15¢.

I suppose you had better keep this letter confidential.

Perry answered his friend Brookman on July 3:

I am very glad to have your letter about the 15c Z grill (?) because I have some responsibility for the Scott cat[alog] listing.

Bob showed me the stamp in his office before it was submitted to the Foundation. That was the only time that I saw it and I never had an opportunity to make another study. Bob compared it with a 2c Z and noticed right away that the grill on the 15c was not as sharp, clear and definite as on the 2c, and is common with the Z grill.

It did not look to me under those circumstances as being a fake and I told Bob that my opinion was inclined to be favorable. He said it would be submitted to the Foundation and I told him he could tell what I had said to him. I saw him week before last and he told me the Foundation had O.K.'d it.

That's all I know except that a day or two after I saw the 15c I wrote Bob that it might have a D grill. Some characteristics looked to me more like D than like Z, and the measurements were so close to normal D that a slightly abnormal D area could have been that size. . . .

I don't know whether or not Bob told the Foundation what I said about the 15c Z grill, but even if he did, I would not consider an examination made under such circumstances would have been sufficient to warrant listing that grill. My letter would have convinced Bob that I was not convinced the grill was from the Z roller.

If the stamp is submitted to me you may be sure it will be examined very carefully. . . .

If the Z grill is bad the fact that I happened to be rather favorably impressed on short acquaintance doesn't make it any better.

On this issue though, without having another opportunity to examine the stamp, Perry's opinion continued to vacillate. Contacted by Scott catalog editor Eugene Costales, who was concerned about whether the Scott listing had been justified, Perry gave this August 23 response:

This will confirm what I told you about the 15c Z grill on the phone. One day in Bob's office Bob asked me to look at it which I did as a friendly accommodation or courtesy not as an expertizing job for a fee. He compared it with two 2c Z grills on which the grills were much stronger and sharper, as is common in my experience. I saw nothing which suggested it was not good, and told Bob that my opinion under the circumstances was inclined to be favorable. He said it was to be submitted to the Foundation and I told him he could say I had seen it if he so desired. After a bit of thought I told him it might be better if he did not mention me. I don't know that he did, or did not.

After I got home I thought about it more and remembered that I had seen on it indications which I have seen on D grills and wrote Bob that there was a possibility it might be from the D roller on which there was a grilling area differing from the accepted D grills.

The next time Bob mentioned the 15c he told me the Foundation had OK'd the Z grill on it and it was to be listed.

That was the only time I saw the stamp and then only for maybe ten or fifteen minutes, if that long.

I heard nothing more about it until a letter from Les B. stating his strong opinion that the grill is not authentic. I replied immediately, stating the facts as written here. I don't know that my opinion had anything to do with the Foundation's decision, but I do not believe that such an examination under such circumstances as the short time in Bob's office would justify listing such a variety. It was not enough.

Now that you have seen the stamp and are satisfied of its authenticity it seems to me the listing should be let to ride unless Les can prove the grill to be bad, to the Foundation's satisfaction and yours.

Shortly afterward, Costales himself duplicated Siegel's miracle discovery. On January 31, 1962, he sent Perry a 15¢ Z grill that he had "found in a junkie collection some time ago." Perry approached it with caution, acknowledging receipt of the stamp the

following day, and registering a favorable first impression. On February 6 Perry notified Costales that he had taken comparison photographs and would await the results before expressing a firm opinion.

On the fifteenth Perry wrote that he had not yet had time to check the prints, but added a lengthy postscript explaining that sometimes it is impossible to prove a grill is genuine even when one cannot prove it is counterfeit, and other elementary points about expertizing. They may have been intended to cushion an anticipated negative or decline opinion, but it is hard to see how Costales, as experienced a professional as Perry, could have been anything but insulted by the condescension.

However, Costales was no ordinary submitter. He was the man who had the power to change the B grill listing in a way that would handsomely benefit Perry, and Perry had been pressing him to do so for more than a year. [This will be the subject of a future article.] Perry's February 16 letter authenticated Costales' stamp in spite of its noted difference from the comparison Z grills:

Here are the grill enlargements. Your 15c, a 12c Z, 2c Z and 2c E. The only difference I see between the three Z grills is that the impression on the 15c is not as strong as on the 2c and 12c, and which is usual, on the Z grill. The fact that the other 15c Z is not as strong as is usual on the 2c and 12c suggests that the weaker impression is normal on the 15c stamp.

John [Sherron, Perry's private secretary] and I have examined the stamps and the prints. Our opinion is favorable to the 15c having [a] genuine Z grill.

I would be willing to buy it or sell it as a genuine Z grill, whenever circumstances permitted, which I certainly would not do if I had reasonable doubt of its authenticity.

Perry had adroitly put a positive gloss on the most damning evidence. The similarity of the subject stamp to one that Brookman regarded as counterfeit, and that Perry had thought might be a D grill, now enhanced the likelihood of this second one being a genuine Z grill! Costales thanked Perry and sent a \$75 check for his opinion, but made no response to Perry's offer to buy the stamp. The 1963 Scott catalog gave Perry the B grill listing he had sought.

Certainly if Brookman's opinion of the Newbury stamp had been made public, the credibility of the catalog listing for the 15¢ Z grill might have been questioned widely. Even without a published debate, disquiet among experts has kept the 15¢ Z grill from achieving the status in stamp lore that such a presumed rarity would typically command.

In the 1966 edition of *The 19th Century Postage Stamps of the United States*, Brookman simply lied. Although he had confidently branded the Newbury copy of the stamp a fake after having examined it at Siegel's office ("definitely not good," his emphasis), he pictured the front (Figure 1 here) beside Siegel's lot description, and, beneath a huge blowup of the back side (Figure 2) that showed the feeble impression of the grill, he wrote, "It has been a source of regret to the author that I have not had an opportunity to study this particular item at first hand."

Brookman may have salved his conscience with the thought that no one who paused to read his caption could blame him for authenticating the stamp, that the grill in the enlarged photograph would look suspicious to anyone familiar with the appearance of a genuine Z grill, and that no one could mistake the grill in the picture for a D grill.

Brookman clearly agreed, at least privately, with Stevenson's judgment that a genuine 15¢ Z grill probably did not exist. But why had Stevenson raised the question at all, in contrast to other unreported denominations of various grills? One reason, I think, is because some very early records could be interpreted as having included 15¢ stamps with Z grills.

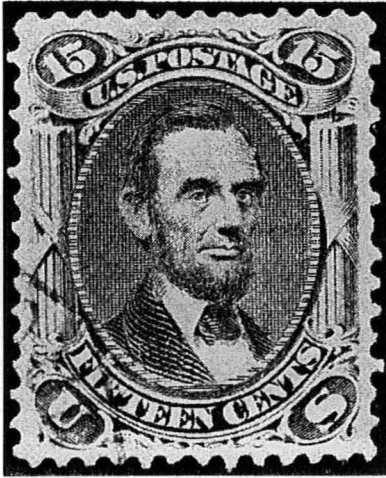


Figure 1. The 15¢ stamp with Z grill, as illustrated by Lester Brookman in the revised edition of *The United States Postage Stamps of the 19th Century*, page 137.

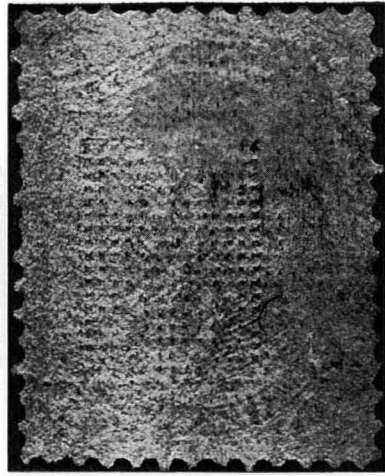


Figure 2. The back of the Figure 1 stamp, as illustrated by Brookman.

In the January 1886 issue of *The Collector's Companion*, Edward B. Hanes wrote that in January of 1868, "the size of the grilled space was still further reduced to 11x14 M. M. and the 1, 2, 3, 10, 12 and 15 cent stamps were issued in this form." Hanes had begun his collection in 1861 at age 10, and he may have been the first specialist to collect every variety of grill he could identify at the time the stamps were in use. His 11x14-millimeter category probably included both Z and E grills.

In 1896, Joseph B. Leavy and John N. Luff listed 15¢ stamps with both 11x13½- and 11x13-millimeter grills with points down, which plausibly could be regarded as Z and E grills, respectively, once the specific characteristics of each had been recognized. With this much already in the published record, Stevenson probably felt obliged to comment. In effect, he concluded that the genuine examples were E grills, and his statement covered all the known cases for the next 45 years.

When Siegel found what he believed to be a Z grill on Newbury's 15¢ stamp, both Perry and Brookman realized that it posed a problem, because it defied Stevenson's analysis. From there, each took an opposite path of reasoning. To Perry, the stamp looked odd, but plausibly genuine. Later, though, troubled by its failure to fit Stevenson's categories, he hatched the D grill hypothesis as he grasped for a straw of plausibility that would allow him to continue regarding it as legitimate.

Brookman did the opposite. He knew as well as Perry did that a 15¢ Z grill should not exist. For him, the unusual appearance of the stamp provided sufficient additional evidence to warrant its condemnation. Despite his public hypocrisy, Brookman privately remained true to his belief. Perry, however, having relented to Costales after the first example had been certified for Siegel, was scarcely in a position to challenge the second one, submitted by Costales himself.

Both Brookman's silence and Perry's acquiescence contributed to a consequence that has deceived the hobby as a whole, and has opened the door to further mischief. In the August 8, 1994 *Linn's Stamp News* "U.S. Stamp Facts" column about the 15¢ Z grill stamp, Richard Drews wrote, "Another copy with a points up grill has received decline opinions from expertization groups and favorable private opinions." Lest this beatification

become the first step toward eventual canonization of an even more dubious entry, I urge philatelic scholars to scour existing archives for any primary sources on the 15¢ Z grill that may have escaped attention.

It is no tribute to our literature that the rarest and most expensive of our country's classic stamps are the most shrouded in mystery and the least understood. □

EDITOR'S NOTE

In the preceding article, Ken Lawrence points out that Brookman, Perry and Stevenson all believed that a 15¢ Z grill should not exist. This belief is based on the records of the Stamp Agent who began differentiating between grilled and non-grilled stamps delivered by the printer in the first quarter of 1868—the reason for this differentiation is that the USPOD paid 8¢/1000 more for grilled stamps. The Stamp Agent's records show that no 15¢ grilled stamps were delivered in the first quarter of 1868, and since the Z grills seem to have been produced in January, 1868, there should be no 15¢ Z grills. Given the above set of circumstances, we see two possible scenarios in which a 15¢ Z grill could exist:

1. The 15¢ stamps were grilled by the Z roller after the first quarter of 1868. This is highly unlikely because the Z roller was experimental and was probably in use for only one or two days in December 1867 or January 1868. By the second quarter of 1868 the experiment was over, and all the stamps were being grilled with the E and F rollers.

2. The 15¢ Z grills were made before the Stamp Agent began keeping records of grilled stamps. This could happen if:

a) The Z grills were made in December 1867, or . . .

b) The Z grills were made in January 1868, but the Stamp Agent did not begin keeping records until sometime later in the first quarter. There is no proof that record keeping of grilled stamps began on January 1, 1868; we only know that the first period of record keeping ended on March 31, 1868, and that subsequent records were kept on a quarterly basis.

So it is possible that a 15¢ Z grill could exist, but the intriguing aspect of Lawrence's article is the personal dialogue between Perry and Brookman. The letters between these famous philatelists give us some insight regarding the men themselves as well as the business and politics of the philatelic community at the time. These letters and the rest of Elliott Perry's lifetime of correspondence have recently become available for study and currently reside at the APRL in State College.

— Michael C. McClung □

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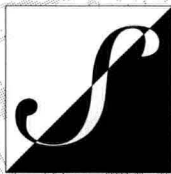
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THE BANK NOTE PERIOD

M. JACK REINHARD, Editor

Review: *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894*, by James M. Cole. Published 1995 by the U.S. Classics Society, Inc., clothbound edition available at \$49.50 postpaid from U.S.P.C.S., P.O. Box 455, Wheeling, IL 60090.

Oh sad Neglect! Thou child of mystery, what lies at the bottom of thy abysses unlimited? And more particularly, why have the subjects of this reference, the cancellations of the period 1870-1894, been so neglected? I believe that one of the keys to answering this is the nature of the stamps on which they are found. These "Banknote" issues (some students insist on "Bank Note," but since the subject book seems to lean mostly in the other direction, I shall be using the contracted form) were not considered "classics" by many collectors until quite recently, and so some famous old collections ended with the 1869 pictorials.

Visually, these stamps clearly are not as exciting as the issues that preceded them. I realize that they have always had a few ardent admirers, but they strike me as being typical representatives of late Victorian dreariness. They are perhaps more stimulating and memorable than the inaugural address of Rutherford B. Hayes, and they certainly are more colorful than the widow's weeds of that mournful queen who made the era eponymous.

The cancellations were often more variable and exciting than the stamps, but were also made subject to the injunctions of the stolid and stodgy Post Office bureaucrats of those times. In their everlasting pursuit of regulations and standardization, they would wage war against independent creativity and colored cancellations, and by the end of the Banknote period would largely succeed in their efforts. They wrought a monument far more lasting than bronze, for the vapid machine cancels they introduced are still with us today, in all their glorious banality.

Mr. James M. Cole has attempted to close this gap somewhat, at least in a visual sense. His book is clearly a labor of love, for the tracings he prepared and arranged must have occupied an enormous amount of his time and energy. His patience and dedication are truly commendable. I fear however that knowledgeable students of Banknote period postal markings are likely to be disappointed and vexed by the final version. This work has been in production for several years, and has been eagerly awaited by many, including myself. With expectations running high, perhaps a little too high, it is dismaying to receive a book which clearly needed much more editorial supervision and help. This does not say that the book is without merit. It does in fact provide a very good gloss on the markings of the period it covers. Despite its obvious oddities and occasional lapses, it most definitely deserves a place on the reference shelf.

There is some introductory material worthy of comment. Mr. Clyde Jennings provides a small piece, "Collecting Cancels of the Banknote Era," which is as entertaining in a rambling sort of way as that gentleman himself. More to the point is a longer article by editor Richard B. Graham on "Postmarks and Postmarking Devices of the Banknote Era." This well illustrated section is one of the most valuable and important contributions to the subject of postmarking device manufacturers and distribution since Arthur H. Bond's long article in J. David Baker's *The Postal History of Indiana* (Vol. I, published 1976 by Leonard J. Hartmann). I admit that this subject is very dear to my heart, but even so, one of the strong points of Mr. Cole's book is the way in which information about the makers and distributors of handstamps has been used to illustrate how and why the designs from so many different offices were physically similar.

As to Mr. Cole's tracings, the manner in which they are presented immediately reminded me of another period book on markings (*United States Cancellations 1845-1869*, by Dr. Hubert C. Skinner and Amos Eno, published 1980 by the American Philatelic

Society), and the similarity is so strong as to invite some comparisons. The Skinner-Eno book focuses on the “fancy” or unusual designs used on early classic stamps. It does include some designs which are common or standard, such as grids and target cancels, but on the whole it tries to identify markings that were distinctive enough to be associated with particular post offices. One of the claims made in a preface to Mr. Cole’s book is that it records the *common* types as well as the unusual, with no particular bias toward the unusual. This assertion is coupled with an expressed objective of helping collectors of off-cover stamps more precisely identify what they own. Unfortunately, these two objectives—“democratic” representation and specific identification—do not always work well together, which may be the reason Mr. Cole’s book seems to be so in need of editorial help.

The use of tracings instead of photographs of markings is a compromise which is not without its down side. Tracings are, at best, a concise and uniform way of illustrating markings, but they can only convey a general feeling about what is being represented. As such, they have been valuable adjuncts in the hands of serious students, including Stanley B. Ashbrook, Tracy Simpson, Thomas J. Alexander and the aforementioned Messrs. Skinner and Eno. Tracings also have to be regarded with a measure of caution: they are not very satisfactory for purposes of expertization; there one should have access to an actual reference copy or at least a good quality photocopy. If one’s objective is something less rigorous than expertizing a marking, then a tracing might be useful as an *indicator*, and nothing more.

This understood, Mr. Cole’s work is problematic in at least these respects:

While the author seems to have been very diligent in seeking out and tracing many markings for this book, comparison to actual copies reveals many deviations. Perhaps he was sometimes working from enlargements of auction catalog photographs, and so lost some sense of scale and detail? However, the tracings still convey a good sense of what is being represented, even if they are not especially accurate.

But what is the sense of filling page after page with tracings of very similar styles, such as the common solid five point stars, when a few generic examples and more details about the offices that used them would have provided collectors with much more useful information? If the object was to suggest that many different offices used these styles during the Banknote period, this has been accomplished very nicely, but detailed lists would have done that as well and been less tedious. Tracings of very similar markings are of limited utility in identifying cancellations on off-cover stamps, which was one of the stated objective of this work.

In at least one instance, for the so-called “Wheel of Fortune” distributed by F.P. Hammond, one will find lists of the offices that used them neatly arranged by state. I suspect that this is due partly to the fact that these finely detailed cancellations would have been very difficult to trace. They do have a number of interesting sub-types, but these are not illustrated in Mr. Cole’s book. They were used at many hundreds of different offices throughout the country, but some of the likely places, such as Maryland and Wyoming Territory, seem to have been completely missed by his survey. While the book carries a disclaimer on its jacket that it “has to be representative rather than attempt to include all existing markings,” it seems to me that if one is dealing with a distinctive and unusual stock style, such as the Wheel of Fortune, some editorial pressure should have been exerted to make the listings a bit more complete and informative. This makes me wonder exactly who was contacted to provide material for this book, since several well-known collectors connected with the Classics Society have extensive holdings in this area, and could have been prevailed upon to supply information.

The information that accompanies the tracings as to color, issues on which found and office of use where known is very similar to that found in the Skinner-Eno book. In addition, Mr. Cole’s work has a “rating system” intended to “assist the user in determining a

general idea of desirability.” Any author who attempts this is sticking his neck out; Mr. Cole must be an intrepid soul. He has complicated his self-appointed appraiser’s role by adding “+” or “-” after many of his valuations. The real problem here is that “desirability” is at best a very subjective thing. To paraphrase a modern U.S. Supreme Court Justice: “I know when a piece is desirable when I see it.” Mr. Cole’s editor should have intervened by suggesting alternatives or refinements or avoidance altogether of this pitfall.

On the other hand, there is at least one bit of information that I would have loved to see included with the tracings, and I believe it would have been fairly easy to provide. By 1870, the practice of duplexing cancellation devices to townmarking handstamps had become very common. It would have been helpful to know whether particular cancelers were known to be so duplexed, and this might have been of some assistance in verifying and expertizing off-cover stamps. Mr. Cole’s work does include quite a few photographic illustrations in addition to tracings, and these often reveal associated townmarkings very nicely; I just wish there had been more.

The Skinner-Eno book is perhaps more limited in its scope described for the Cole work, but the arrangement of the tracings within it is very logical and it is usually easy to match those tracings against unknown markings. The same cannot always be said about Mr. Cole’s book. For example, it groups together “geometrics” from New Orleans, or Chicago, and includes therein items that logically belong elsewhere in the various categories of markings. This may cause some difficulty in locating listings of interest, particularly when dealing with off-cover stamps.

One of the groupings in Mr. Cole’s text is that of the New York Foreign Mail markings. This is one area which has *not* suffered from neglect in the past, having been studied in a 1968 publication by Arthur Van Vliissingen and Morrison Waud (published by the Collectors Club of Chicago), and more recently in a book by William R. Weiss, Jr. (1991, published by Mr. Weiss). Both of these works have their own cataloguing/numbering systems, and Mr. Cole’s book further muddies these waters by providing a third, with no cross-reference to the earlier texts. Similar redundancies arise in the treatment of Boston negative markings (catalogued in the well-known 1949 *Postal Markings of Boston, Massachusetts to 1890* by Maurice C. Blake and Wilbur W. Davis), and the Chicago geometrics (covered in large part in Paul Berg’s 1992 study of *Chicago Blue Postal Markings 1870-1877*). Everyone is “doing their own thing,” which is fine, I suppose, but where does it end except with a saturated and confused readership?

In one slightly perverse sense I was relieved to discover that Mr. Cole’s treatment of his subject was not altogether perfect. I confess that I had a private worry that his work would be so complete and exhaustive that there would be little room for further research and publication. This is certainly not the case. This book is not a *magnum opus* or encyclopedia. It is rather more a “teaser” which provides a suggestive panorama of the scope of markings of the Banknote era. The very defects to which I have alluded should stimulate us to take up our pens (or, for those who are so inclined and equipped, to repair to your computer keyboards) and fill in all of the missing pieces. The Wheels of Fortune from Maryland and Wyoming Territory should be run to ground, forthwith. The game is (still) afoot! The pages of this journal, for one, should serve to amplify the information in Mr. Cole’s book, while that book needs to be carefully studied, for the field is a very rich one.

—Frank Mandel □

**THE SPECIAL PRINTINGS OF THE 1¢ JUSTICE AND
NAVY DEPARTMENT STAMPS
WILLIAM E. MOOZ**

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

This article focuses on the special printings of the 1¢ Justice and Navy Department stamps. Both of the stamps described in this article had an initial printing of 10,000, consistent with other stamps in this series, and they were overprinted with the word "SPECIMEN."

The 1¢ Justice

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

Purchased from Continental Bank Note Company, 7/21/75	10,000
Purchased from Continental Bank Note Company, 12/31/75	10,000
Total	20,000

Copies of the payment records for these purchases appear in Figs. 1 and 2.¹

Since there were 20,000 stamps delivered, and since we also know that 271 copies were destroyed at the end of the program,² the number sold was 20,000 less 271, or 19,729 copies.

Sales during the period from May 1879 and July 1882 are recorded in the "Press Copies of the Invoices",³ and are tabulated in Table 1. During this period, there was a total of 4,240 individual 1¢ stamps sold, and there were an additional 28 stamps sold as part of complete sets. The total number of the 1¢ stamp sold during this period was thus 4,268 stamps. A chart showing the pace of the sales appears in Figure 3.

As in previous articles in this series, these data from the invoices may be combined with data about the receipt of the stamps, and the known total quantity sold, to produce a simulation of the sales over the entire program. This chart is shown in Figure 4, and demonstrates reasonably brisk sales at the beginning of the program, followed by a relatively moderate pace, and then shows a modest upward trend to the sale of the stamps towards the end of the program. Most of these sales were made to dealers. The records show the following sales to dealers during the period covered by the invoices:

Whitfield, King, & Co.	900
Stanley Gibbons	700
C. N. Butler	500
Edward Peck & Co.	400
Julius Goldner	300
E. A. Holton	200

¹Records of the Post Office Department, Record Group 28, Bill Book #3, entries for June 30, 1875, December 31, 1875, and December 31, 1883.

²John Luff, *The Postage Stamps of the United States* (New York: Scott Stamp & Coin Co., Ltd., 1902), page 358.

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

Specimens

233

June 30, 1875.

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

Denomination	Post. Office	Treasury	Interior	War	Navy	Agriculture	Justice	States	Executive	Total
1. cent	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	90,000
2. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	90,000
3. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	90,000
6. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	90,000
7. "	-	10,000	-	10,000	10,000	-	-	10,000	-	40,000
10. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	90,000
12. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	-	80,000
15. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	-	80,000
24. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	-	80,000
30. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	-	80,000
40. "	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	-	10,000	10,000	-	70,000
2. dollar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	1,000
5. "	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	1,000
10. "	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	1,000
20. "	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	1,000
Total	100,000	110,000	100,000	110,000	110,000	90,000	100,000	114,000	50,000	884,000

884,000 stamps in all, at 80 cents per thousand. \$ 707. 20

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

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

December 31, 1875.

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

<i>Specimen</i> Issue of 1876 (Current)	10,000	Two-cent (vermillion)	
	10,000	Five "	
	<u>20,000</u>	Stamps, at 114¢ per thousand	\$ 5.00
Issue of 74-cent. Historical	10,000		
	10,000		
	<u>20,000</u>	Stamps, at 91¢ per thousand	\$ 20.00
Issue of 1851:	10,000		
	10,000		
	<u>20,000</u>	Stamps, at 80 cents per thousand	\$ 16.00
Issue of 1873. (Official)	10,000		
	10,000		
	10,000		
	<u>10,000</u>	Stamps, at 80 cents per thousand	\$ 8.00
	<u>10,000</u>	Stamps, at 80 cents per thousand	\$ 8.00

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

R. R. Bogert	150
J. T. Handford	100
L. W. Durbin	100
W. A. Trider	100
Paul Lietzow	100
National Stamp Co.	100
William W. Phair	100
G. B. Calman	50
C. H. Mekeel	45
Collins and Mills	30
W. Leckie	30
F. T. Iceubarger	20
Ernst Petritz	15
J. H. Isaacs	15
Total	3,955

This is slightly more than 93% of the total number of single stamps sold during this period. If the sale of sets to dealers and the sale of smaller quantities of the single stamps to dealers is added, probably over 95% of the sales was to dealers. This is consistent with what has been found for the other 1875 special printings examined in earlier articles. The sales of full sheets to dealers led to the eventual breaking up of some of these sheets into multiples of various sizes. As with the 1¢ Agriculture and Executive stamps, the number of these multiples which exist is out of proportion with the number of stamps sold. Pairs, strips, and blocks of both printings exist, with blocks of as many as 20 or more stamps known, and at least one full sheet of the second printing.

Table 1 - Cumulative sales of Justice sets and 1¢ singles			
	Singles	Sets	Total
Aug-79	15	1	16
Sep-79	15	2	17
Oct-79	15	2	17
Nov-79	65	2	67
Dec-79	275	3	278
Jan-80	275	4	279
Feb-80	275	4	279
Mar-80	476	4	480
Apr-80	527	4	531
May-80	677	5	682
Jun-80	677	5	682
Jul-80	1077	5	1082
Aug-80	1080	6	1086
Sep-80	1080	6	1086
Oct-80	1082	6	1088
Nov-80	1098	8	1106
Dec-80	1208	9	1217
Jan-81	1209	9	1218
Feb-81	1410	9	1419
Mar-81	2093	10	2103
Apr-81	2193	15	2208
May-81	2628	17	2645
Jun-81	2853	17	2870
Jul-81	2854	17	2871
Aug-81	2856	17	2873
Sep-81	3361	18	3379
Oct-81	3398	18	3416
Nov-81	3598	18	3616
Dec-81	3613	19	3632
Jan-82	3935	19	3954
Feb-82	3935	19	3954
Mar-82	4235	21	4256
Apr-82	4240	28	4268
May-82	4240	28	4268
Jun-82	4241	30	4271

Table 2 - Cumulative sales of Navy sets and 1¢ Singles			
	Singles	Sets	Total
Jul-79			
Aug-79	15	0	15
Sep-79	15	1	16
Oct-79	16	2	18
Nov-79	216	2	218
Dec-79	216	4	220
Jan-80	216	5	221
Feb-80	216	5	221
Mar-80	218	5	223
Apr-80	218	6	224
May-80	218	7	225
Jun-80	257	7	264
Jul-80	658	7	665
Aug-80	662	8	670
Sep-80	662	8	670
Oct-80	662	8	670
Nov-80	678	10	688
Dec-80	688	10	698
Jan-81	688	10	698
Feb-81	690	11	701
Mar-81	994	11	1005
Apr-81	1006	16	1022
May-81	1156	16	1172
Jun-81	1206	16	1222
Jul-81	1207	16	1223
Aug-81	1207	16	1223
Sep-81	1307	17	1324
Oct-81	1419	17	1436
Nov-81	1894	17	1911
Dec-81	1909	17	1926
Jan-82	2110	17	2127
Feb-82	2110	17	2127
Mar-82	2110	18	2128
Apr-82	2120	22	2142
May-82	2121	23	2144
Jun-82	2322	26	2348
Jul-82	2323	26	2349

Tables 1 and 2. Tabulations of monthly sales, 1¢ Justice and Navy special printings.

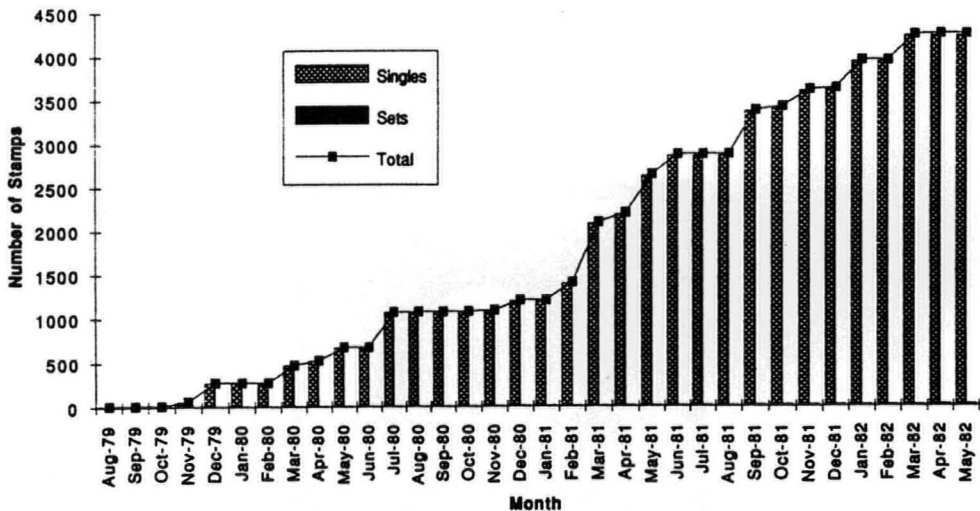


Figure 3. Sales of Justice special printing sets and 1¢ singles.

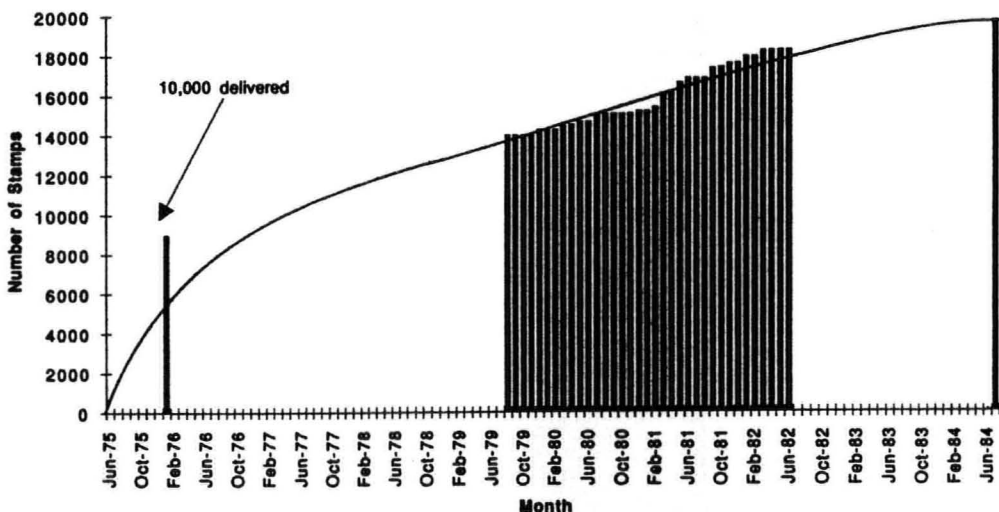


Figure 4. Total 1¢ Justice special printing stamps sold.

The identification of the two printings was established by Admiral Combs.⁴ The first printing is on hard white paper, and the second printing is on horizontally ribbed paper. These are illustrated in Figures 5 and 6, and to emphasize that the identification is correct, and to be consistent with the descriptions used in a previous article, the SEPCIMEN error is shown for the first printing, and the lower case "I" SPECiMEN error is shown for the second printing. The first printing is identified as O25SD in the Scott catalog, and the second printing is referred to as O25SDc. This is a rather peculiar designation, since it follows O25SDb, which is the small dotted "I" error which only appears on O25SDc. Scott does not break the printings down into the 10,000 which were sold from the first printing and the 9,729 from the second. A more correct catalog listing for this stamp would be as follows:

⁴W.V. Combs, *U. S. Departmental Specimen Stamps* (State College, Pa.: American Philatelic Society, 1965).

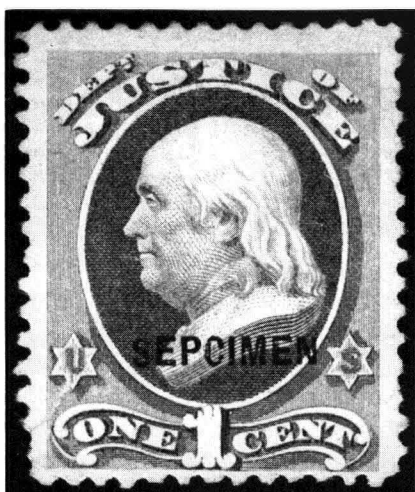


Figure 5. 1¢ Justice special printing, first printing (with “SEPCIMEN” error).

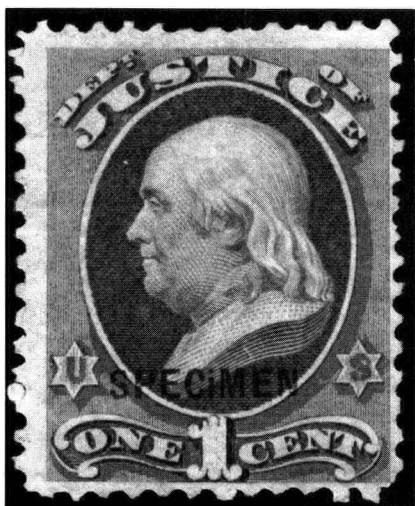


Figure 6. 1¢ Justice special printing, second printing (with “SPECiMEN” error).

1875 (July)

SPECIAL PRINTING

Overprinted in Block Letters **SPECIMEN**
Produced by the Continental Bank Note Company
Perf. 12
Hard white paper, issued without gum
Type D
Blue Overprint

O25S D 1¢ purple (10,000)

Block of four

a. "SEPCIMEN" error

1875 (December)

Horizontally ribbed paper

O25S D c. 1¢ purple (9,729)

Block of four

b. Small dotted "I" in "SPECIMEN"

The 1¢ Navy

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

Purchased from Continental Bank Note Company, 7/21/75	10,000
Purchased from American Bank Note Company, 2/28/81	5,000
Total	15,000

February 28th 1881

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

<i>Amount</i>				
<i>10000</i>	<i>10000</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Specs 1851</i>	<i>Engle.</i>
<i>5000</i>	<i>5000</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>" 1851</i>	<i>Franklin.</i>
<i>5000</i>	<i>5000</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>" 1865</i>	<i>A & C.</i>
<i>5000</i>	<i>1000</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Navy Department</i>	
<i>5000</i>	<i>1000</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>What</i>	<i>"</i>
<i>5000</i>	<i>1000</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Executive</i>	<i>"</i>
<i>35000</i>				<i>\$50.00</i>

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

Figure 7. Bill Book record of February 28, 1881, for purchase of 1¢ Navy specimens from American Bank Note Company.

A copy of the payment record for the first purchase was shown in Fig.1. A copy of the 1881 record appears in Fig. 7.⁵

We know that 818 copies were destroyed at the end of the program, and thus the number sold was 15,000 less 818, or 14,182 copies.⁶

The sales during the period from May 1879 and July 1882, recorded in the "Press Copies of the Invoices," are tabulated in Table 2. During this period, there was a total of 2,323 individual 1¢ stamps sold, and there were an additional 26 stamps sold as part of complete sets. The total number of the 1¢ stamp sold during this period was thus 2,349 stamps. A chart showing the pace of the sales appears in Figure 8.

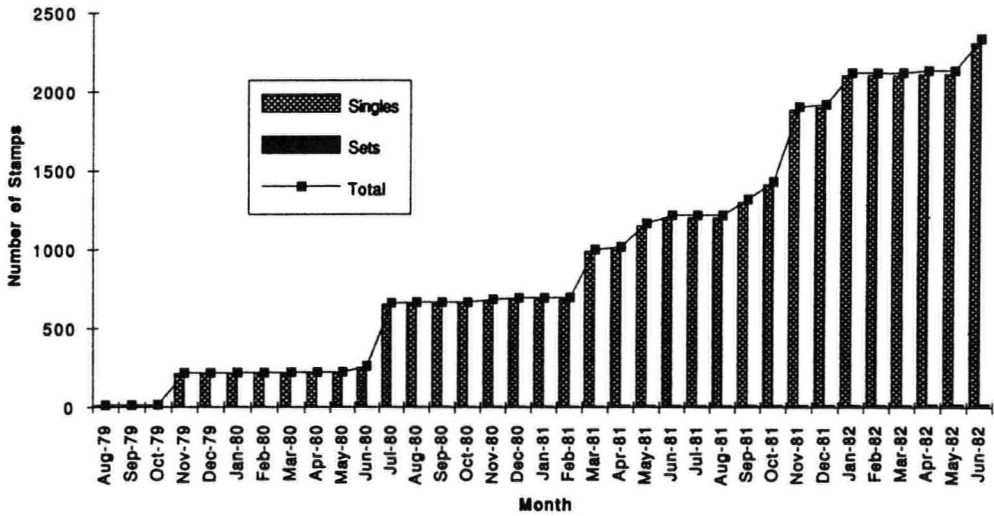


Figure 8. Sales of Navy special printing sets and 1¢ singles.

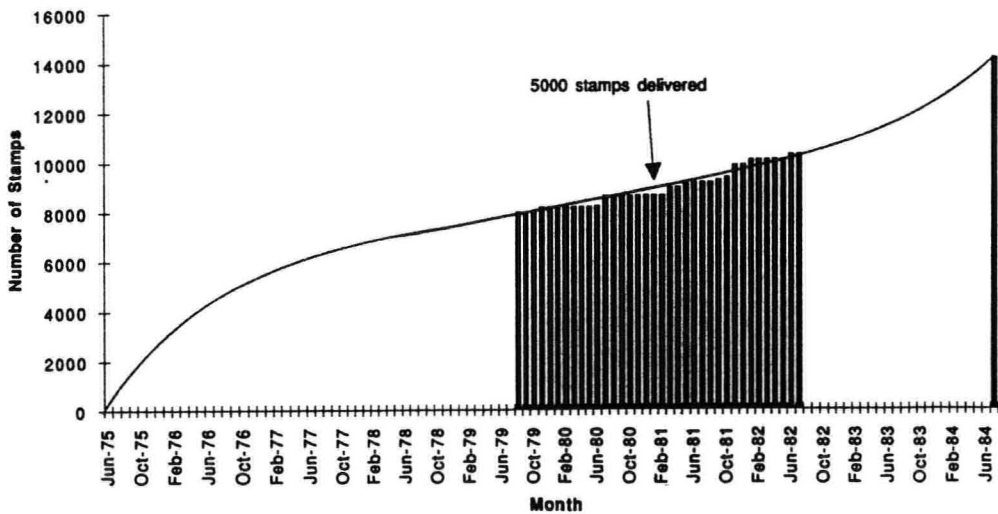


Figure 9. Total 1¢ Navy special printing stamps sold.

⁵Records of the Post Office Department, Record Group 28, Bill Book #3, entry for February 28, 1881.

⁶Luff, page 358.

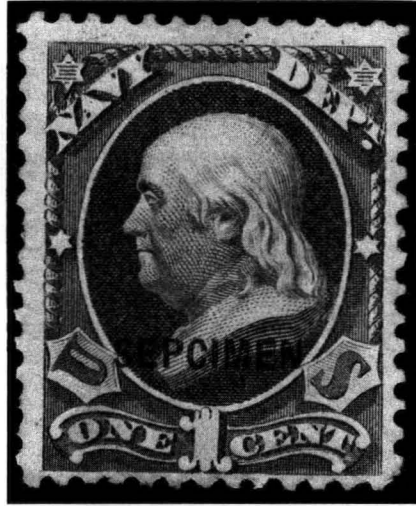


Figure 10. 1¢ Navy special printing, first printing (with “SEPCIMEN” error).

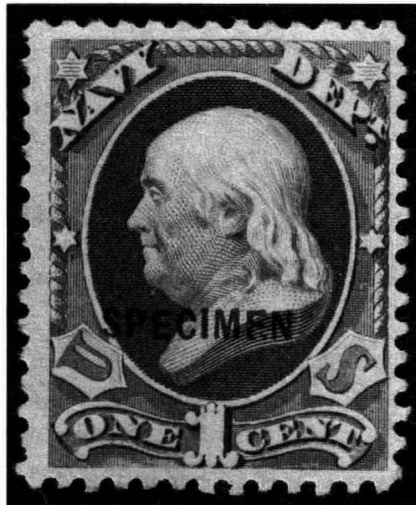


Figure 11. 1¢ Navy special printing, third printing.

THE DESIGN EVOLUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICIAL STAMPS

ALAN C. CAMPBELL

Introduction

For many years, collectors of official stamps have been fighting entrenched prejudices against these “back-of-the-book” issues. Because their designs were adapted from the regular issue Bank Note stamps and because a single color was used for all denominations of a single department, they are often criticized for being derivative and monotonous in appearance. One prominent collector, whose exhibit had just won the grand prize at an APS national show, was informed that he was unlikely to fare well in international competition, the importance of his material being debatable since these stamps were never used by the general public. So much for the romance of covers addressed in the hand of President Ulysses S. Grant or Rutherford B. Hayes and franked with the special stamps prepared for their exclusive use!

The great scarcity of surviving official covers might incline the casual observer to conclude that the volume of mail carried by these stamps was relatively slight and insignificant, but this was definitely not the case. Prior to the introduction of penalty envelopes in 1877, official stamps accounted for 4.3% of the total face value of all postage stamps issued in this country. For the higher values, 6¢ and above, the proportion was much higher: 19.6%. These figures were arrived at by comparing the total requisitions for official stamps in the fiscal years 1874-1877 with the prorated figures for the Continental Bank Note Company regular issues over the same period, based on the quantities indicated in Brookman.¹ Between 1873 and 1879, Continental delivered to the stamp agent 312,000 copies of the 90¢ Treasury stamp alone, fully 59% more than the 90¢ regular issue over the same period.

So in the hope of earning some respect at last for these stamps (the downtrodden “Rodney Dangerfields” of U. S. philately), this article will address certain basic questions about their much accelerated schedule of production. Because the archives of the American Bank Note Company (Continental’s successor), dispersed at public auctions in 1990, contained no pertinent documents, and because the annual reports of Postmaster General Creswell tend to be laconic at best, the explanations advanced here will of necessity be speculative in nature. We will examine universal precedents for official stamps, political considerations at the time of their issuance, the rapid evolution of their designs, the logic behind the choice of colors, the sequence of die and plate production, the cause for certain amusing inconsistencies in engraving, and the cost of production.

International Precedents for Official Stamps

In an overview of worldwide philately, the United States official stamps of 1873 constitute by a wide margin the most elaborate production for its intended purpose before or since. The potential for abuse in either a free-franking system or a system where regular postage stamps are furnished gratis to government officials is a universal problem which every postal administration at one time or another has had to confront. To understand the motivations behind the creation of the U. S. official stamps, it is necessary to review alternative strategies developed in other countries prior to 1873. This is not to suggest that any of the foreign schemes served as a direct model for our own system, even though the Postmaster General might have had a passing familiarity with some of them, through the

¹Lester G. Brookman, *The 19th Century Postage Stamps of the United States*, Vol. II (New York: H.L. Lindquist, 1947).

open exchange of information with his counterparts in England, France and Germany just prior to the establishment of the General Postal Union in 1875. Lacking adequate documentation of the specific rationale behind the preparation of these stamps, we must attempt an explanation on the principle of parallel evolution, by extrapolating from other similar issues where archival materials have allowed the story to be more fully told.

The history of official stamps is as old as postage stamps themselves. In Great Britain, where abuse of the franking privilege was a serious problem, Sir Rowland Hill in 1840 had a stamp prepared for official use with the initials "V. R." (Victoria Regina) in the upper corners. 500,000 copies were printed but were withdrawn shortly before the announced date of issuance (see Figure 1).² Later, regular postage stamps were perforated with initials (and sometimes with a crown) and these controlled stamps were furnished for official use. In 1882, overprinted initials such as "I.R." (Inland Revenue) began to replace the perforated initials, and for twenty years this system of departmental overprints was expanded.



Figure 1. Great Britain's first official stamp (Scott #O1), unissued, 1840.



Figure 2. Indian official stamp (Scott #O10).

To Spain goes the honor of having printed the first stamps exclusively for official use, in 1854. Four values denominated by weight were supplied to the Royal House and a long list of ministries. These stamps shared a single coat-of-arms design and were all printed in black, but on differently colored papers. Prior to this, government mail had been franked with regular postage stamps. In 1866, the official stamps were replaced with a free frank system employing specially prepared handstamped cachets.³

In 1866, India introduced the expedient system of overprinting regular postage stamps with "SERVICE" in black and revenue stamps with "SERVICE POSTAGE" in green, and furnished both of these for official use (see Figure 2). Over time, the overprinting of regular postage stamps for official use proved to be the most popular way worldwide of discouraging the misappropriation of official stamps for private, illegitimate usage.

In South Australia, an extremely complicated and fascinating system was initiated in 1868, in which regular issue postage stamps were overprinted with the initials of 54 different departments (such as "L. A." for Lunatic Asylum and "P. A." for the Protector of Aborigines) and furnished free for official use. Prior to this, when regular stamps were furnished unoverprinted, there had been lax oversight and widespread misappropriation of stamps, which were sometimes then converted to cash (Dan Rostenkowski, take note!). In Figure 3, we illustrate one of the two surviving covers franked with the stamps overprinted "P.S." for the use of the Private Secretary. The stamps furnished for official use constituted a significant portion of all postage in South Australia, varying annually between 5.8% and 11.5%. Postmaster General J. W. Lewis, reporting on the success of his idea three months after it had been adopted, proudly stated:

²All foreign official stamps and covers illustrated courtesy of Ivy & Mader Philatelic Auctions, Inc., auctions June 28-30, 1995.

³Theo. Van Dam, *A Postal History of Spain*, Collectors Club Handbook No. 24 (New York: The Collectors Club, Inc., 1972), p. 107.

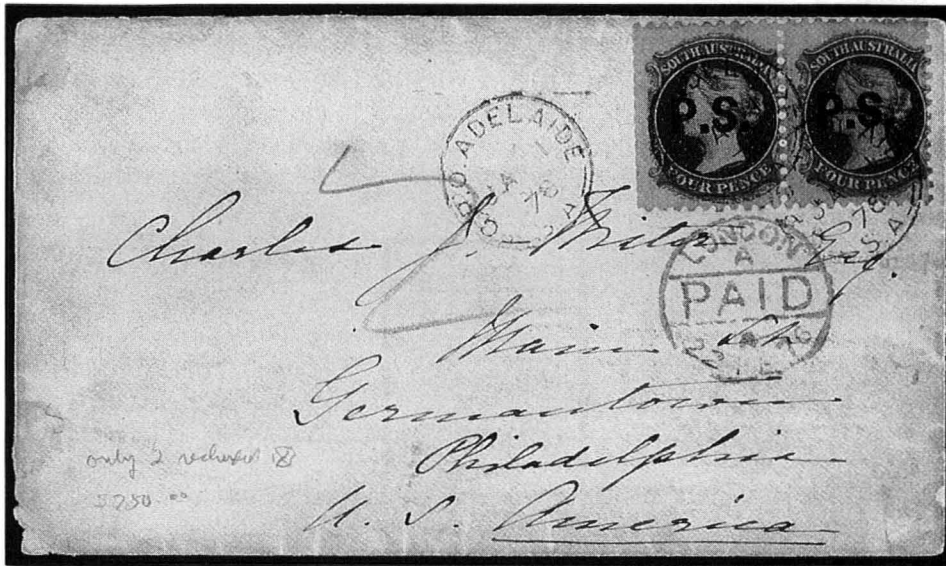


Figure 3. South Australian departmental stamps (Scott #O16PS), 4p regular issue overprinted "P.S.", used on cover from Adelaide, January 1, 1876.

The *initials* of the Departments being upon the stamps, has enabled a better check to be kept upon their improper use, than if the official sign had been a general one for service, as it enabled me to make enquiries at once, where there has been reason to suppose that official stamps were used for private correspondence, and in nearly all such instances a satisfactory explanation has been given.⁴

Lewis seems to have had a policy of zero tolerance for the misuse of official stamps, to the point of even opening mail from the Governor's Private Secretary to check if it was truly official business:

... since the official stamps have been initialled the clerks have on several occasions drawn my attention to their being affixed to letters from the Private Secretary's family and I now beg to forward an envelope addressed by that gentleman himself which covered a letter upon strictly private business.⁵

The printer for South Australia's stamps made the astonishing admission that he reserved his defective production—overinked, underinked, or misperforated sheets—to be overprinted for official use, thereby causing a real dilemma for specialist collectors in this area. The principal defect of this system was that it forced the Postmaster General to keep on hand a large number of stamps of every denomination for each department, so in 1874 the overprint was converted to a generic "O.S." (On Her Majesty's Service). In 1875, the departments finally began paying for the stamps they requisitioned, which in theory ought to have inspired the personnel in charge of the official stamps to be more vigilant about their misappropriation.

In 1871, Denmark prepared special stamps for official use. The design incorporated a small state seal, and a master die with no indication of value was used to produce three different values, whose colors corresponded to the central vignette of the bicolored regular

⁴A.R. Butler, *The Departmental Stamps of South Australia* (London: Royal Philatelic Society, London, 1978), p. 11.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 12.

issues (see Figure 4). Previously, government officials had enjoyed the privilege of free carriage of mail, but the system was abused, as attested by surviving *fri-bref* letters whose contents are clearly not of an official nature. When Iceland first issued its own stamps in 1873, the two official stamps produced were identical to the regular issue except for the abbreviation “PJON. FRIM” in the base of the oval (instead of “POSTFRIM”) and the different colors.⁶ The North German Postal District also issued a set of nine official stamps in 1870.



Figure 4. Danish official stamp (Scott #03a), 1871.

These predecessors of the United States official stamps demonstrate all the basic ways of differentiating official stamps from regular postage stamps: overprints, either generic (“O.S.” or “OFICIAL” or some variation thereon) or specific to a department or ministry; perforated initials, either generic or specific; and specially prepared official stamps. Argentina in 1913 adopted the system used by South Australia and Great Britain, overprinting regular issues with departmental initials. Most independent (as opposed to colonial) postal administrations at one time or another experimented with the concept of official stamps. Somewhat surprisingly, the only other country whose official stamps betray the slightest bit of artistic concern or imagination is Paraguay, which produced a set of seven stamps in 1886, a different design for each denomination, which were then overprinted “OFICIAL” diagonally on the front and had various control marks and letters printed on the back. Most countries, though, employed a uniform uninspired design for all values, so that by comparison the United States official stamps of 1873 are masterpieces of design and engraving.

Political Considerations in 1873

In order to fully understand why the United States official stamps were issued in the way they were, it is necessary to review the political climate in this country in 1873. President Grant’s second term stands midway in a long period of Republican supremacy (1861-1885) in which, due to the patronage system, bureaucracy personnel within the government was much stabilized. Although the evils of the patronage system were manifest to all and President Grant sought reform, it was not forthcoming until the Civil Service Commission was created in 1883. In this era, power in the federal government rested predominantly in the hands of Congress. While the departments carrying out the administrative work of government were technically part of the Executive branch, Grant took a passive role in their day-to-day operations and saw his main duty as making appointments. But even in this limited capacity, he was both inept and unlucky.

The post-war moral slump and rampant corruption in government came to a head in a series of scandals which focused closely on the immediate members of Grant’s cabinet during his second term. His private secretary, General Orville E. Babcock, was indicted in the investigation of the Whiskey Ring. His Secretary of the Treasury, William A. Richardson, guilty of gross negligence and incompetence in the case of the Sanborn contracts, was transferred to the Court of Claims. Grant nominated his Attorney General George E. Williams for Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, but had to withdraw the nomi-

⁶Ernest H. Wise, *Stamps of Denmark, Iceland, and Norway: The Earlier Issues* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1975), pp. 53-54.

nation after irregularities were discovered in his confirmation hearing. His Secretary of War, General William W. Belknap, was forced to resign before impeachment proceedings were brought over bribes taken from the award of a lucrative Indian post tradership. His Secretary of the Navy, George M. Robeson, was almost impeached for the conflicts of interest by which he enriched himself as a partner with various Navy suppliers. Vice Presidents Colfax and Wilson were disgraced in the scandal over the Credit Mobilier, and Grant's Second Assistant Postmaster General, Thomas J. Brady, was subsequently prosecuted in the trials over the star route frauds.

In this climate of pervasive corruption, it is no surprise to find that Congress did not trust the Executive departments any further than necessary. In order to prevent the misuse of public funds on lavish expenditures and unnecessary sinecures, Congress attempted to closely control the departments by means of meticulously itemized appropriation bills enacted by the House Committee on Appropriations and other competing committees, spelling out in minute detail the specific number of clerks and their salaries, the amount to be spent on horse feed, and even the amount to be spent on postage stamps.⁷

The flagrant and often hilarious abuses of the franking privilege have previously been well-documented.⁸ Congressmen, of course, were among the worst offenders. They too lost the franking privilege but were soon able to gain an increase in salary to offset their postage costs. It seems both hypocritical and vindictive that Congressmen should reserve for themselves the right to use (and abuse) regular postage stamps, while at the same time sanctimoniously requiring the untrustworthy bureaucrats in the Executive departments to use special official stamps. Still, it is important to bear in mind that Congress' primary motive in abolishing the franking privilege and replacing it with the new system of official stamps was reform, to prevent the misuse of public funds. Early in the 1870s, various plans were put forth to make the departments—and even divisions within the departments—accountable for their own mailing expenses. While a general set of official stamps, requisitioned and paid for on a quarterly basis by each department, would have solved the budget problem for the Post Office, it would not have provided the strict measure of security and accountability that was felt to be needed. To this end, an Act of Congress approved March 3, 1873 specified: "That the Postmaster General shall cause to be prepared a special stamp or stamped envelope, to be used only for official mail matter for *each* of the executive departments . . ."⁹ (Author's emphasis.) This and subsequent acts appropriated the funds necessary for each department to purchase its stamps on a quarterly basis. Then at the first session of the 43rd Congress held on January 5, 1874, the following resolution was passed:

Resolved, That the Secretaries of the Treasury, of State, of War, of the Navy, of the Interior Departments, the Postmaster-General, and the Attorney General, be requested to furnish the Senate with the number of officers and employs in or connected with their respective departments (classified so as to designate the name of the office) who are furnished directly or otherwise, with official postage stamps for the purpose of paying postage on official correspondence, and also to state whether or not it is customary when letters are written to persons not officers or employs of their respective departments asking for information, to enclose official stamps for return postage.¹⁰

(to be continued)

⁷Leonard D. White, *The Republican Era: 1869-1901, A Study in Administrative History* (New York: Macmillan, 1958).

⁸Fred Boughner, "Official Antics," *Linn's Stamp News*, issues of Oct. 23, Nov. 6, Nov. 20 and Dec. 4, 1978.

⁹John N. Luff, *The Postage Stamps of the United States* (New York: Scott Stamp and Coin Co., Ltd., 1902), pp. 201-02.

¹⁰Rae D. Ehrenberg, "Authorized Use of the U.S. Official Stamps by the Various Departments," *33rd American Philatelic Congress Book* (n.p., American Philatelic Congress, Inc., 1967), p. 36.

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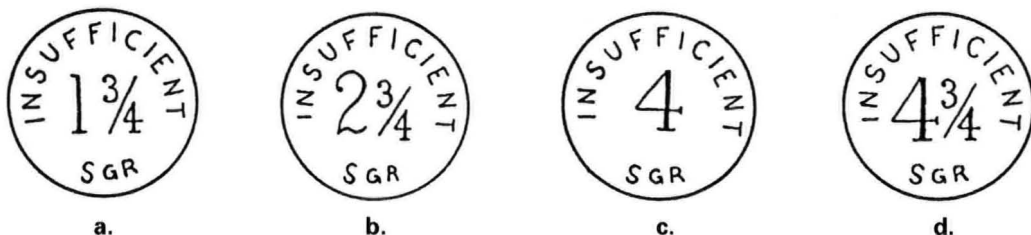
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INSUFFICIENTLY PAID NORTH GERMAN UNION MAILES
RICHARD F. WINTER

Insufficiently paid letters exchanged under the United States-North German Union Postal Convention of 1 January 1868 were subject to specific regulations which resulted in the use of the handstamps shown in Figure 1. These U.S. postal markings are unusual, and are rarely seen on letters from the 1868-1870 period. In fact, even the most experienced collectors are usually unaware of their existence and of their purpose. To the best of my knowledge, the details surrounding the use of these markings have not been addressed in the philatelic literature. This article will attempt to fill this void by discussing the circumstances under which these markings were introduced, documenting their apparent point of application and providing an explanation for their relatively short life. In addition, examples of covers showing usages of these markings will be illustrated and described.



Figures 1a-1d. The known 25mm black markings used at the New York exchange office to indicate deficient payments on letters under the U.S.-NGU convention, effective 1 January 1868.

Three separate postal conventions with the German states¹ terminated at the end of 1867. They were replaced by one new convention between the United States and the North German Union.² George E. Hargest discussed the formation of this new Union and the resulting postal convention in his landmark book.³ His treatment of partially paid and unpaid letters under this convention, however, was very brief and he showed no cover examples. Had he been aware of the markings of Figure 1, I am certain that he would have discussed them because they are so unusual. To date, I have been able to record only seven examples, all on letters processed by the New York exchange office.

The United States-North German Union Convention established exchange offices at New York, Boston, Portland, Detroit and Chicago on the part of the United States, and Aachen, Bremen and Hamburg on the part of the North German Union. Each office was required to make its own arrangements to send the mails and pay the costs of this transportation. Unlike the earlier conventions, no credit or debit accounting was necessary on individual letters exchanged between the two postal administrations. The standard letter

¹a. United States-Bremen Postal Arrangement of 1847 with Additional Articles agreed upon of 4 August 1853, U.S. 16 *Statutes at Large* 953-955.

^bb. Postal Convention between the United States and Prussia signed at Washington on 17 July and at Berlin on 26 August 1852, U.S. 16 *Statutes at Large* 963-967.

^cc. Postal Convention between the United States and Hamburg signed at Washington on 12 June 1857, U.S. 16 *Statutes at Large* 958-960.

²²Postal Convention between the United States and the North German Union concluded at Berlin on 21 October 1867, U.S. 16 *Statutes at Large* 979-1002, effective on 1 January 1868.

³³George E. Hargest, *History of Letter Post Communications Between the United States and Europe 1845-1875* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1971), pp.150-51.

weight was 15 grams (approximately 1/2 ounce or one loth) with a rule of progression of one additional single rate for each additional standard weight. The single rate on letters carried directly by steamers to Bremen or Hamburg was 10¢ or 4 silbergroschen. On letters sent in closed mails via England, the rate was 15¢ or 6 silbergroschen. The applicable articles of the convention for unpaid and insufficiently paid letters are quoted as follows:

Article VII. If, however, the postage on any correspondence shall be prepaid insufficiently, it shall nevertheless be forwarded to its destination, but charged with the deficient postage.

Upon the delivery of any unpaid or insufficiently paid letter, or any other insufficiently paid correspondence, there shall be levied in the United States a fine not exceeding five cents, and in the North German Union an additional charge not exceeding two silber groschen. This fine, or additional charge, as well as the deficient postage on all other correspondence than letters, shall not enter into the accounts between the two offices, but shall be retained to the use of the collecting office.

Under the regulations for the execution of this convention, which were agreed upon in June 1868 (Berlin) and July 1868 (Washington, D.C.), some changes to the list of exchange offices and amplifications of the rules were agreed upon. The list of exchange offices was reduced to New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago in the United States, eliminating offices previously agreed to in Portland and Detroit and adding Philadelphia. The Aachen office was acknowledged to be Traveling Post Office No. 10, which was on the railroad between Cologne and Verviers. The regulations included the following details (emphasis added):

Section VI. When more than a single rate is chargeable upon any letter or other article, the number of rates to which it is subject shall be indicated by the despatching office by a figure in the upper left corner of the address.

Section VII. All letters exchanged between the two offices shall indicate by stamp, or writing thereon, the office of origin.

Correspondence fully paid to destination shall be stamped in the United States "*Paid all*," and in the North German Union "*Franco*." Correspondence insufficiently paid shall be stamped in the United States "*Insufficiently paid*," and in the North German Union "*Unzureichend Frankirt*," and **the amount of the deficient postage expressed in figures (black) on the face in the money of the receiving office.**

For the first time in a bilateral postal convention, the United States had a requirement to mark deficient postage in the currency of the receiving country. This requirement would lead to the creation of United States postal markings stating a foreign currency, a situation not unusual for Europeans but very much so for Americans. It was a matter of practicality. If the postal deficiency was indicated in the receiving country's currency, then that country would have to add only its insufficiently paid letter fine to reach the total postage due to be marked on the letter. It placed the burden of currency conversion on the sending end, where, presumably, there was more time to evaluate letters, than on the receiving end, where the timely dispersal of received mails was desired.

An obvious question is: If the convention with the North German Union was in effect for seven and one half years before the General Postal Union convention went into effect, why don't we see more examples of these markings? The answer lies in the changing requirements of subsequent postal conventions and when the rules actually went into effect. The Regulations for the 1867 North German Union Convention, quoted by Section VII above, were not agreed upon until signed in Washington on 22 July 1868, almost seven full months after the convention went into effect. By 23 April 1870, an additional convention with the North German Union was signed which reduced the single letter rate

to 7¢ (3 silbergroschen) for the direct service route and 10¢ (4 silbergroschen) by closed mail via England.⁴ The effective date of the additional convention was 1 July 1870. This new convention changed the rules for determining the rates to be collected on unpaid letters. Now, unpaid letters were charged double the rate that would have been prepaid in the country of origin. This convention also changed the rules for insufficiently paid letters as follows:

Article II. Insufficiently paid letters shall be charged with postage for unpaid letters, after deductions of the prepaid amount.

The unpaid letter fines were eliminated and there was no longer a requirement to mark the deficient postage in the currency of the other country. The fact that unpaid letters were now charged double was certainly a substantial penalty or fine. As a result of the new convention, the time period when the Figure 1 markings could be used, was, at best, from late July 1868 until the end of June 1870. I have recorded the use of these markings only during the period from late September 1869 until early June 1870, a very short period of time. These markings are seen only on insufficiently paid letters and not on wholly unpaid letters. It is not surprising that more examples have not been seen. A prepayment error of the common 10¢ and 15¢ per 15 gram rates had to have been made by the sender, and it had to occur during a reasonably short period of time. Of the eleven covers that I have recorded from the United States to the North German Union which were insufficiently prepaid during this time period, nine were sent through the New York exchange office, with seven showing the Figure 1 markings. Two covers were sent through the Boston office and show only manuscript markings. I have concluded that the Figure 1 markings were produced and used only by the New York exchange office, which handled almost all of the North German Union convention mails despite the fact that four other offices had been authorized to make up mails under this convention. I have not seen any insufficiently prepaid or unpaid letters under this convention sent through the Chicago or Philadelphia exchange offices. As a matter of observation, unpaid letters during this period are much less common than fully paid letters, probably because the substantial fines made them much more costly.

Table 1 shows the short payments that I have recorded on covers from the United States to the North German Union during the period 1 January 1868 to 1 July 1870, deficient equivalents marked on the covers in silbergroschen currency, handstamps used at New York to show these deficiencies, and the total postage due in silbergroschen.

Table 1

Am't Short Paid in U.S.	Deficiency marked in Sgr.	Handstamp	Postage Due in Sgr.
5¢	1 ³ / ₄	Fig.1a	3 ³ / ₄
7¢	2 ³ / ₄	Fig.1b	4 ³ / ₄
8¢	3	manuscript	5
10¢	4	Fig.1c	6
12¢	4 ³ / ₄	Fig.1d	6 ³ / ₄
21¢	8 ¹ / ₄	manuscript	10 ¹ / ₄

Presumably, New York prepared individual handstamps only for those short payments deemed "typical." Letters showing non-typical short payments were marked in manuscript at New York to reflect the deficient postage in silbergroschen currency. To date, I have recorded only those handstamps shown in Figure 1.

⁴U.S. 16 *Statutes at Large* 1003-1004.

Before discussing cover examples showing the Figure 1 markings, let's examine wholly unpaid letters from the period. Figure 2 illustrates an unpaid envelope originating in St. Louis on 16 October 1869. It was addressed to Dettingen, Württemberg by way of the post office at Rottenburg to distinguish it from another post town in Bavaria with the same name. The New York exchange office struck only their 20 October circular datestamp showing when the letter was forwarded by steamer to Germany. On this day the Hamburg-American Line (HAPAG) steamer *Germania* departed New York, arriving at Hamburg on 2 November 1869. The only backstamp, a circular datestamp of Rottenburg, is dated 4 November. Since the letter was totally unpaid, no deficient postage marking was applied at New York. In Germany, the letter was marked for a postage due of 6 silbergroschen or 21 kreuzer in the southern German currency, both markings applied in blue crayon. The postage due consisted of the deficient postage of 4 silbergroschen plus an unpaid letter fine of 2 silbergroschen.

An example of a wholly unpaid letter sent after the convention change of 1 July 1870 is shown in Figure 3. The treatment of this letter is the same as in Figure 2, although there is a slightly different wrinkle to its routing due to political developments in Europe. This folded letter originated in New York on 9 July 1870 and was addressed to Mittenwald, Bavaria. It was included in the mail bags made up for the same day sailing of the North German Lloyd Line (NGL) steamship *Main*. New York marked the letter for the direct route (7¢ or 3 silbergroschen rate if prepaid, 6 silbergroschen if unpaid). When *Main* arrived in Southampton, en route to Bremerhaven, the North German Lloyd Company decided she would go no further for another three months because of the Franco-Prussian war.⁵ The mails for Germany were put off in Southampton and transported from England through Belgium to Germany, just as the closed mails through England were routed. But, there were no extra charges in the case of this mail. The letter arrived at Bremen on 21 July and at Mittenwald on 24 July 1870, shown by backstamps. Bremen marked the letter for 6 silbergroschen postage due, or the 21 kreuzer southern German States' equivalent, in blue crayon. Note that although the final charge on this cover is the same as that applied to the Figure 2 letter, the unpaid letter fee was now calculated by doubling the ordinary letter rate of 3 silbergroschen per 15 grams. Because this letter was in a closed mail bag between London and Bremen, it does not show the Prussian railway markings of the Verviers-Cologne traveling post office, which are often seen on the mails sent by the non-direct, closed mail route through England and Belgium.

Now to look at the partially paid letters and their treatment. Figure 4 presents an insufficiently paid letter with the least recorded underpayment. This envelope originated in New York on 26 March 1870, and was addressed to Harpstedt, Hannover. It was endorsed to go by way of the HAPAG steamer *Hansa*, which, up until the scheduled sailing date of 24 March, was advertised to carry mails. No public announcement of a change was made, but the mails did not go out for two more days and then they were placed on the HAPAG steamer *Deutschland*, which changed places with the *Hansa* on the sailing schedule. A black NEW YORK DIRECT circular backstamp shows a 26 March date. Backstamps also show an arrival at Bremen on 10 April and Harpstedt on 11 April. This letter was prepaid 15¢ (Type II, 1869 issue, Scott No. 119), the single rate by the closed mail route through England. The letter, however, weighed more than 15 grams and was marked in blue crayon at New York for two rates. New York decided to send the letter by the direct steamer route, a 10¢ rate, which meant the letter was only 5¢ underpaid. While this deficiency was actually equivalent to 2 silbergroschen, in the two examples of a 5¢ underpayment that I have recorded, New York struck the black 1¾ marking shown in Figure 1a. Bremen added the 2 silbergroschen insufficiently paid letter fine to arrive at a total postage due of 3¾ silber-

⁵Walter Hubbard and Richard F. Winter, *North Atlantic Mail Sailings 1840-75* (Canton, Ohio: U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, 1988), p. 249.

groschen, which they marked in blue crayon on the letter face. Note that the New York marking shows not only the required "INSUFFICIENT" wording but also the "SGR" designation for German silbergroschen.

The 7¢ underpayment marking is shown in Figure 5. This envelope originated in Blountville, Tennessee on 5 June 1870 and was addressed to Berlin, Prussia. Notations on the letter face show "5/6-70," the letter date and "17," probably the number of the letter in a series of correspondence marked by the recipient. At some time later, these notations were outlined in red crayon. The letter was sent to New York, where the exchange office prepared it for the 11 June sailing of the NGL steamer *Weser II*, shown by a black New York backstamp. Only the 3¢ regular United States inland rate had been paid for this letter (Scott No. 114), leaving the letter short paid 7¢ for the direct service route. New York struck the Figure 1b marking in black showing a deficiency of $2\frac{3}{4}$ silbergroschen. The letter arrived at Bremen on 23 June and at Berlin on 25 June, shown by backstamps. Bremen marked the letter in blue crayon for $4\frac{3}{4}$ silbergroschen postage due, applying the 2 silbergroschen fine to the deficiency indicated by New York.

Figure 6 illustrates an insufficiently prepaid letter with a 10¢ deficiency. Although quite dogeared in appearance, this cover has some additional unusual features. The cover originated in Indianapolis, Indiana on 7 May 1870, and was addressed to Minden, Prussia. The letter was prepaid for the direct service route with a 10¢ yellow 1869 issue adhesive (Scott No. 116). The letter apparently weighed over 15 grams and was marked by New York for two rates using a curious black handstamp "2" that ties the adhesive to the cover. New York also showed the deficiency in postage with the Figure 1c handstamp in black. The letter was sent on the HAPAG steamship *Saxonia*, which departed New York on its last mail voyage for the line on 10 May and arrived in Hamburg about 24 May 1870. A NEW YORK DIRECT circular backstamp of 10 May confirms this routing. Hamburg applied a boxed "Unzureichend/frankirt." marking in black.⁶ Hamburg also marked the letter in blue crayon for 6 silbergroschen postage due, applying the 2 silbergroschen fine to the New York stated deficiency.

The last of the types of deficiency markings known to me is shown in Figure 7. At first glance, it would appear that this envelope, sent from Detroit, Michigan to Württemberg on 27 September 1869, was an unpaid letter and should not have received the deficient postage marking. However, very careful examination of the lower left corner reveals five small black ink traces of the overlapping edge of a postage stamp killer, just under the endorsement written in German. The outline of a few perforations can be seen in the ink marks. Apparently, this cover had a postage stamp in the lower left corner when it left Detroit and arrived in New York. The subsequent rating of the cover indicates the original postage stamp was a 3¢ denomination paying the United States internal postage only. New York marked the letter with a straightline "INSUFFICIENTLY PAID" handstamp in black and decided to send the letter by the closed mail route via England at the 15¢ rate. This meant the letter was 12¢ underpaid. It received the Figure 1d marking in black. The letter was placed on the Cunard steamer *Scotia* which departed New York on 29 September (black NEW YORK/SEP/29 backstamp) and arrived at Queenstown on 8 October 1869. The closed mail bag was sent to London, then forwarded to Dover and Ostend, and was opened finally on the mail train from Verviers to Cologne. A blue three-line handstamp on the reverse, VERVIERS/10:10 III/COELN, confirms this routing and arrival there on 10 October. The railroad post also applied a two-line blue marking on the front in the upper right, which is very difficult to read, but is the "ungenügend/frankirt" marking used on the Verviers/Cologne railroad for insufficiently paid letters (see Figure 8).⁷ All indications are that the stamp was still on the letter when the mail bags were

⁶James Van der Linden, *Catalogue des Marques de Passage* (Luxembourg: Edition Soluphil, 1993), p. 248, marking No. 2887a.

⁷*Ibid.*, marking No. 2885.

opened on the railway car. Sometime thereafter, but before the docketing was written in the lower left corner (where the stamp had originally been placed), the stamp was removed or fell off. The postal clerks on the railway car marked the letter for 6³/₄ silbergroschen postage due in blue crayon, adding the 2 silbergroschen fine to the deficient postage marked at New York. This was later crossed through, probably in Württemberg, and converted to 24 kreuzer postage due (corrected from 25 kreuzer), again in blue crayon. Backstamps show arrival in the Württemberg cities of Horb (11 October 1869) and Dornstetten (12 October 1869), the latter being the nearest post office to the intended address.

One of the two examples that I have recorded which went through the Boston exchange office is pictured in Figure 9. This cover, addressed to Dresden, Saxony, was made up in the Boston mails of 2 May 1870 and despatched to New York for the next day sailing of the HAPAG steamship *Cimbria*. The letter was prepaid with a 10¢ yellow 1869 adhesive (Scott No. 116) for a single rate by the direct service to Germany, but apparently weighed over 15 grams and required two rates. Handwritten notes by the letter recipient on the reverse indicate that the envelope contained letters from “Mother May 1st/Father 2nd/Julia 1st,” which probably explains why the letter weight was so high. Boston struck a 21 mm circular INSUFFICIENTLY PAID handstamp in black (unlisted in Blake and Davis⁸) and marked the numeral “4” in blue crayon alongside, the deficient postage in silbergroschen currency. *Cimbria* arrived in Hamburg on 15 May 1870 (backstamp). The letter was marked with a black boxed “Unzureichend/frankirt,” as in Figure 6, and rated in blue crayon for a postage due of 6 silbergroschen, after crossing through the blue figure “4” marked by Boston. As before, the total postage due was a combination of the 2 silbergroschen fine and the deficient postage marked in the United States. Note that Boston did not use a handstamp to show the deficient postage in silbergroschen.

The last cover example, Figure 10, illustrates a partially paid letter sent after the 1870 convention change went into effect, providing new rates and different procedures for rating unpaid and partially paid letters. This handsome pre-printed envelope originated in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on 18 July 1870 and was addressed to Bremen. It was prepaid with a 10¢ yellow 1869 issue adhesive (Scott No. 116). Since no routing instructions were written on the envelope, and since new rate reductions (effective on 1 July 1870) made 10¢ the single letter rate by way of England, we don’t know why the letter sender chose the 10¢ prepayment. Whether intended for the direct service route at the old rate or the closed mail service route via England at the new rate, the letter was overweight and required two rates. New York marked “2” in blue pencil in the upper left for two rates and sent the letter by indirect service route through England. As a result, the letter was 10¢ underpaid for this service. It was placed in the mails carried by the Guion Line steamer *Colorado* which left New York on 20 July and arrived at Queenstown on 31 July 1870. The closed mail bags were opened on the Verviers-Cologne railway on 2 August 1870 (backstamp), where the two-line marking “ungenügend/frankirt” (Figure 8) was again marked in the upper right of the letter face, just as in Figure 7. The marking on this letter is quite poorly struck. Postal clerks on the railway rated the letter for 12 silbergroschen postage due. This was determined by doubling the regular letter rate, 2x20¢, and subtracting the value of the adhesive (10¢) for a postage due of 30¢ or 12 silbergroschen. The meaning of the crossed through “10” demonstrates another significant change in the regulations of the 1870 convention. Instead of indicating on insufficiently paid correspondence the amount of deficient postage in the currency of the receiving post office, the 1870 convention regulations stipulated “the amount of the postage stamps affixed to such letters expressed in figures (*black*) on the face in the money of the dispatching country.” This was a complete reversal of the earlier marking policy. The Figure 10 letter arrived in Bremen on 4 August 1870, shown by a backstamp. □

⁸Maurice C. Blake and Wilbur W. Davis, *Boston Postmarks to 1890* (Portland, Maine: Severn-Wylie-Jewett, 1949).

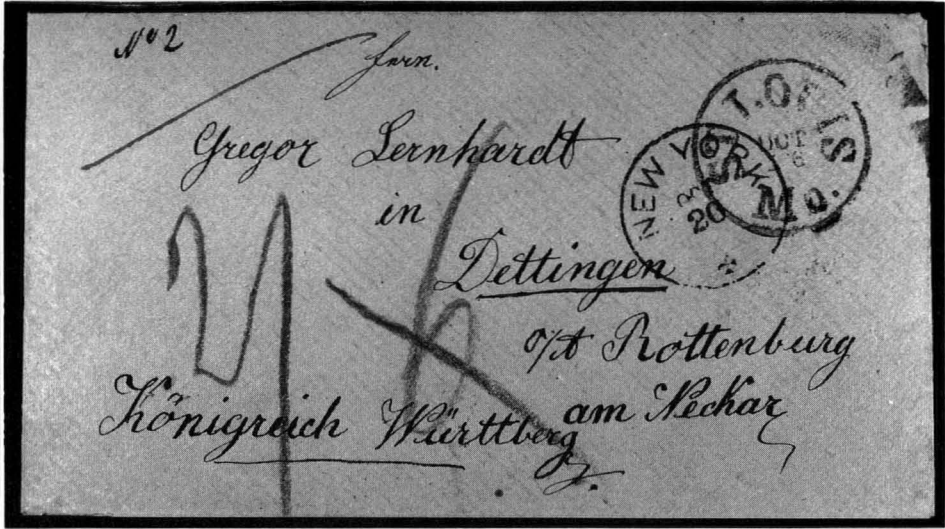


Figure 2. St. Louis, 16 Oct 69, to Dettingen, Württemberg, sent wholly unpaid. 6 silbergroschen or 21 kreuzer postage due marked in blue crayon. Direct service routing to Germany.



Figure 3. New York, 9 Jul 70, to Mittenwald, Bavaria, sent unpaid by direct service route. 6 silbergroschen or 21 kreuzer postage due marked in blue crayon. See text for explanation of interrupted routing.



Figure 4. New York, 27 Mar 70, to Harpstedt, Hannover, prepaid 15¢ for via England route, but insufficiently paid. Letter sent by direct service, underpaid 5¢, and marked $1\frac{3}{4}$ sgr. deficient. (Littauer collection)

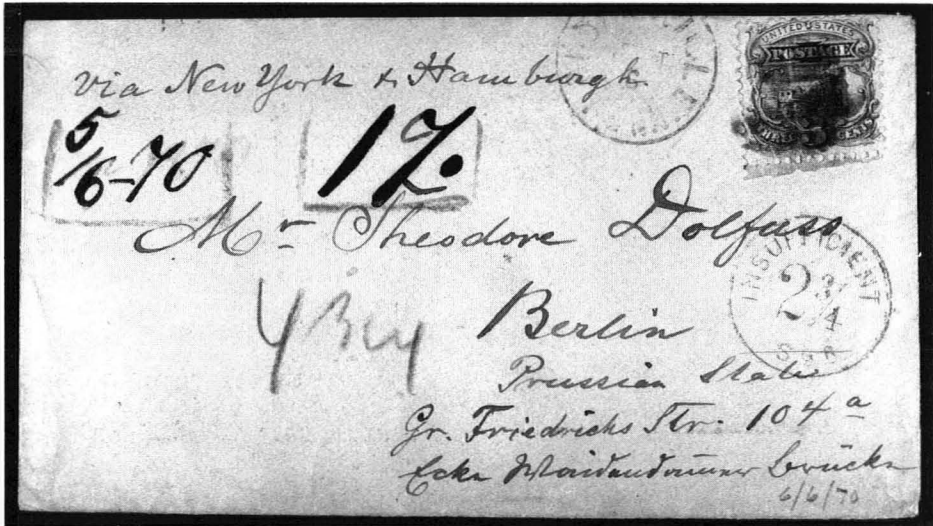


Figure 5. Blountville, Tenn., 4 Jun 70, to Berlin underpaid 7¢ for direct service route. Marked $2\frac{3}{4}$ sgr. deficient in New York and $4\frac{3}{4}$ sgr. postage due upon delivery. (Littauer collection)



Figure 6. Indianapolis, Ind., 7 May 70, to Minden, Prussia underpaid 10¢ for double rate by direct service to Hamburg. New York marked 4 sgr. deficiency and Hamburg marked 6 sgr. postage due, which included 2 sgr. underpaid letter fine. Boxed "Unzureichend/frankirt" of Hamburg struck in black.



Figure 7. Detroit, Mich., 27 Sep 69, to Würtemberg, prepaid with 3¢ adhesive, which came off letter in transit. New York marked 12¢ deficiency, 4³/₄ sgr., for closed mail route thru England. Postage due marked in Germany was 6³/₄ sgr. or 24 kreuzer, both in blue crayon. (Selzer collection)

*ungenügend
frankirt*

Figure 8. Two-lined, script style "ungenügend/frankirt" handstamp of Verviers/Cologne railway office in blue to indicate insufficiently paid letter.



Figure 9. Boston, 2 May 70, to Dresden, Saxony underpaid 10¢. Boston struck 21mm circular INSUFFICIENTLY PAID marking and manuscript "4" in blue crayon to indicate deficiency in sgr. Hamburg crossed thru "4" and rated letter for 6 sgr. postage due, deficient postage plus 2 sgr. fine. (Laurence collection)

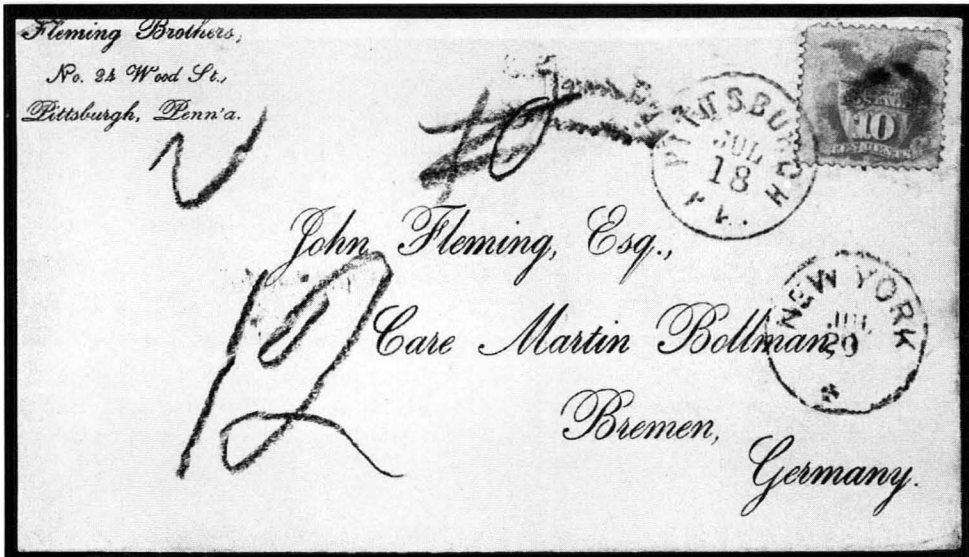


Figure 10. Pittsburgh, 18 Jul 70, to Bremen, underpaid 10¢. Verviers/Cologne railway office marked 12 sgr. postage due, double unpaid letter rate less prepayment, or $2 \times 20\text{¢} - 10\text{¢} = 30\text{¢}$. (Laurence collection)

ADDITIONAL ANSWERS TO PROBLEM COVERS IN ISSUES 165 & 166

Figure 1 shows a cover from Philadelphia to Baltimore with a curious “MISSENTSOUTH.” handstamp in blue. Pat Walker and Scott Gallagher provided extensive discussions of where this marking was applied in the May 1995 *Chronicle*.

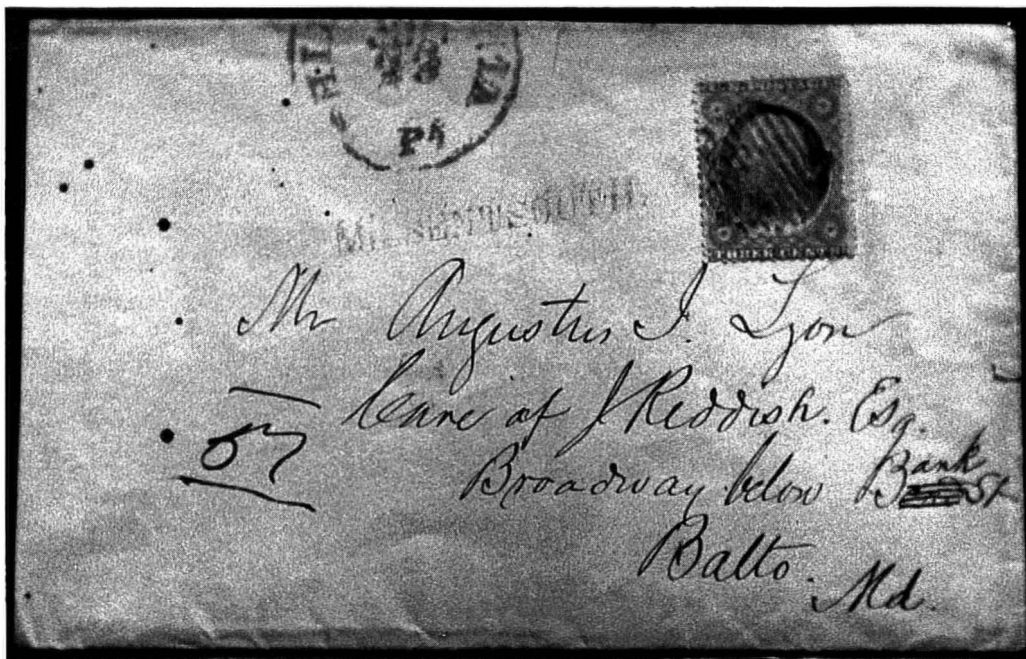


Figure 1. Philadelphia to Baltimore cover, “MISSENTSOUTH.”

Now we have an additional response from Mike McClung, who gives a very plausible analysis of the use of this marking as well as the meaning of the number “57” between parallel lines. Mike writes:

The “MISSENT” markings were applied at Baltimore branch post offices or stations. At this time, all larger cities had established stations at strategic locations to facilitate collection and distribution of mail.

The cover from Philadelphia was received at the main Baltimore post office and sent to the South Station for delivery. It was then discovered that the letter was improperly addressed, possibly after an attempted delivery and check of the City Directory. A clerk made the correction by crossing out part of the street name and writing “ank” above it to spell out “Bank St.” He also wrote the number “57” between parallel lines, probably indicating the correct route number. Since Bank Street was not served by the South Station, the letter was stamped “MISSENTSOUTH.” and returned to the main post office for redistribution.

The cover from Washington City (Figure 2 in the May 1995 issue) was missent to the East Station, probably through a sorting error at the main post office. It was stamped “MISSENT EAST.” to explain the delay in delivery and returned to the main post office.

I believe the handstamps were applied at the stations to explain to a clerk at the main office why letters were being returned (missent rather than undeliverable). The use of these handstamps at the main office, or at post offices outside of Baltimore, would serve no useful purpose. The focus of the receiving and sorting clerks was on where incoming letters are supposed to go, not where they came from. These clerks could not be certain if any piece of incoming mail had been missent unless it arrived so marked.

Next, further agreement was received from James Gough and Greg Sutherland regarding Figure 2, a postage due cover from Tobago to Coeymans, New York. The correct rate was 4d, which includes a 1½d surcharge added to the standard UPU rate of 2½d. Greg points out that the surcharge added for each country was stated separately in the *Annual Table of Exchange Rates & Postage Rates to the U.S.* from 1881 to 1889, when they were combined. Tobago was listed in this manner from 1882 to 1889 when the rate was combined to 4d, which lasted until 1893 when the rate began to be listed as 2½d.



Figure 2. Tobago cover to New York, "COLLECT / POSTAGE."

ANSWERS TO PROBLEM COVERS IN ISSUE 167

Figure 3 is an 1857 stampless cover from Havana to Edinburgh, Scotland with a number of handstamped and manuscript markings. Explain the rates and how the cover traveled to England.

This cover brought good responses from Austin Miller, Stan Piller, Jim Milgram and Allan Radin, who were all in essential, but not total, agreement. A "combined" answer follows:

The oval "STEAM-SHIP" is an origin marking applied at Havana (see *American Stampless Cover Catalog*, Volume II, pp. 91 & 93). The letter was carried from Havana to Charleston, S.C., by the contract steamer *Isabel*. Charleston forwarded the letter to New York which applied the weak cds "NEW YORK / OCT ? / AM. PACKET" and rated the letter due "26" (cents) in black for 10¢ Havana to U.S. (internal postage included), plus 16¢ sea postage to England by an American ship. The letter reached London on "NO 14 / 57" where British inland postage of 1½d (= 3¢) was added, making a total of "29" (cents) or "1/2½"(d) to be collected upon arrival in Edinburgh on "NO 15 / 1857."

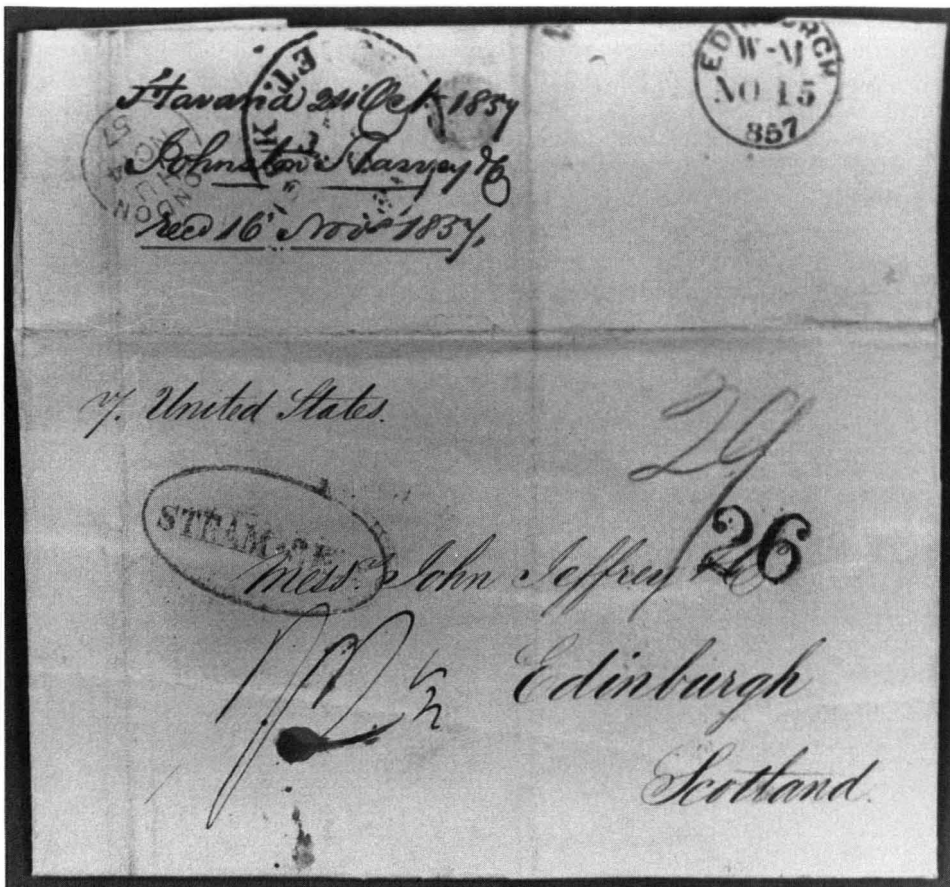


Figure 3. 1857 cover from Havana via New York to Edinburgh, Scotland.



Figure 4. Letter to New York returned by carrier, advertised and unclaimed.

Two respondents, Austin Miller and Allan Radin, identified the transatlantic steamer which carried the letter from New York to England. The Vanderbilt Line packet *North Star* departed New York on 31 October and arrived at Southampton on 13 November with the U.S. mails. The mailbags were not processed until the next day, 14 November, in London.

Figure 4 is an envelope to New York returned by carrier, advertised and unclaimed with two handstamped markings: "UNCLAIMED / I.D. / N.Y." and a bold "C.L."? What are the meanings of the initials "I.D." and "C.L."?

Waiting three weeks, instead of the normal two weeks, we still have had no response to this problem cover. Surely some Route Agents are knowledgeable in the area of New York City markings and can provide the answers. We'll expect to hear from you and will publish your responses in the next *Chronicle*.



Figure 5. Front of cover from Cincinnati to Kilmore, Victoria, "1/1 TO PAY."

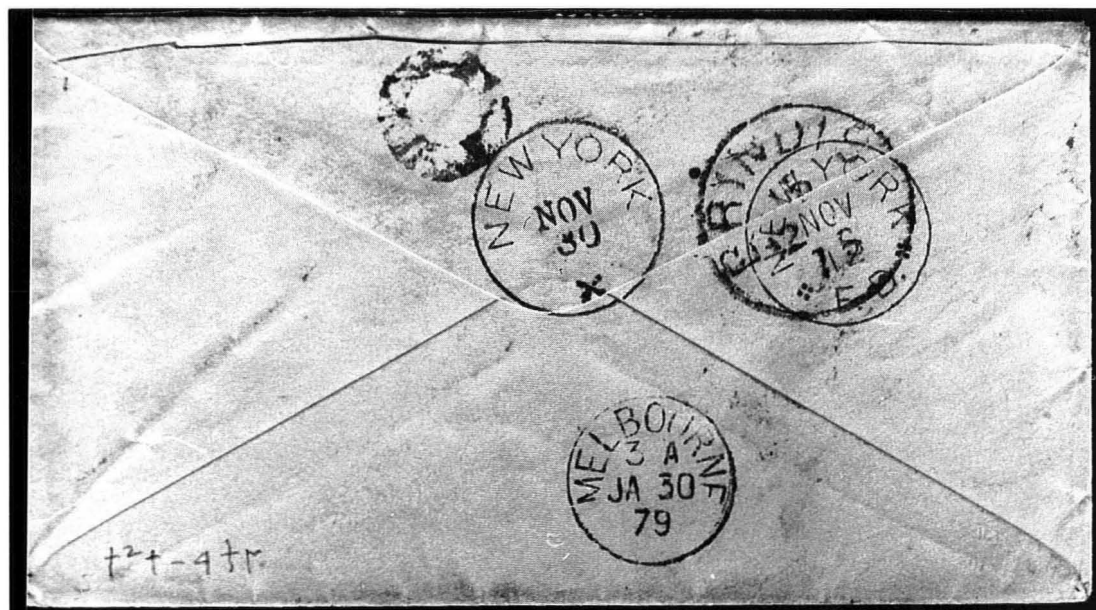


Figure 6. Reverse of cover from Cincinnati to Victoria showing transit markings.

PROBLEM COVERS FOR THIS ISSUE

Figures 5 and 6 show the front and back of a cover from Cincinnati in October 1878 to Kilmore, Victoria, arriving in 1879. The cover is franked with 10¢ in stamps, three 3¢ and one 1¢, canceled by four strikes in blue of a double circle “11,” and a matching blue cds “CINCINNATI / OCT / 28 / 2PM / O.” The front also has three markings in black—a large “T” in a circle with a small “N.Y.” above; a “.KILMORE / JA 30 / 79 / VICTORIA.” receiving, with an adjoining oval “1/1 TO PAY.” The back has a nondescript circular blob, plus four transit markings in black—“NEW YORK / NOV / 12 / F.D.,” “NEW YORK / NOV / 30 / X,” “BRINDISI / 12 ? / 79” and “MELBOURNE / 3 A / JA 30 / 79.” Since the U.S. and Victoria had a postal convention for transpacific mail effective July 1, 1878, why was this cover routed via New York and Brindisi? Also, please explain the “1/1 TO PAY.”



Figure 7. Cover from New Bedford to “Whaling Vessel Mary Carr.”

An embossed “lady’s” cover with a 2¢ brown U.S. Washington and a 2¢ red “Central American Steamship Co.” is shown in Figure 7. The 2¢ brown is tied by a black cds “NEW BEDFORD / FEB / 21 / 10AM / MASS.” and the 2¢ red is tied by a straightline “NOT PAID” in red. The address is crudely written in pencil to “Mr. Fred Rolf, first Mate / Whaling Vessel / Mary Carr” and endorsed “Please Forward / Panama.” The back of the cover has a penciled tabulation of the “Barrels Spermaceti” collected. Is this cover, or any part of it, bogus? Why a 2¢ U.S. stamp to Panama, rather than 5¢? Who applied the 2¢ Steamship Co. stamp, and why only 2¢ (the newspaper rate), rather than 5¢?

In addition, Scott Gallagher, our Cover Corner Editor, will award suitable prizes of philatelic significance for answers to each of the following:

- 1) When and where was the Central American Steamship Co. incorporated?
- 2) Identity of the ship *Mary Carr* and when was it at Panama?

Please send your answers to the problem covers, 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, as well as by fax at (513) 563-6287.

— Roy Carlin □

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