

THE CHRONICLE August 1999 (No. 183)

The

Chronicle

of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues

August 1999

Volume 51, No. 3

Whole No. 183

**COMPREHENSIVE STOCK
OF
U.S. CLASSIC ISSUES AVAILABLE**

**Very strong in COVERS and STAMPS, including
ESSAYS and PROOFS**

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?

**SELECTION GLADLY SENT ON APPROVAL
AGAINST SPECIFIC REQUESTS**

MAY WE HEAR FROM YOU?

Satisfaction or Immediate Refund

Installment Payment Terms If Desired — (No Interest or Carrying Charges)

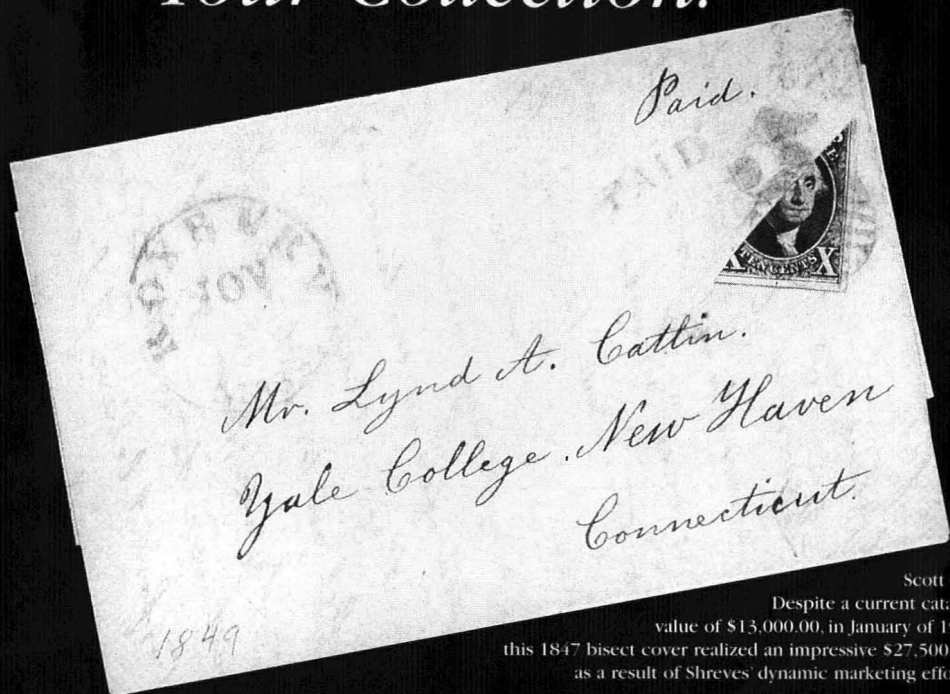
Jack E. Molesworth, Inc.

APS
BIA
UPSS

88 Beacon Street
Boston, Mass. 02108-3319
Phone: 617-523-2522
Fax: 617-523-2265

CSA
USPCS
CCNY

Results as Spectacular as Your Collection.



Scott #2a
Despite a current catalog value of \$13,000.00, in January of 1998 this 1847 bisect cover realized an impressive \$27,500.00, as a result of Shreves' dynamic marketing efforts.

If you want an auction firm that invests more resources in the promotion, presentation and successful sale of your stamps or covers, call Shreves Philatelic Galleries. Our results speak for themselves.

Expect the Extraordinary. Accept Nothing Less.



SHREVES PHILATELIC GALLERIES, INC.
1•800•556•STAMP
(556•7826)

DALLAS

14131 Midway Road • Suite 1250
Dallas, Texas 75244-9984
972/788-2100 • FAX 972/788-2788

Auction License: New York • Tracy L. Shreve #914454, #914455

NEW YORK

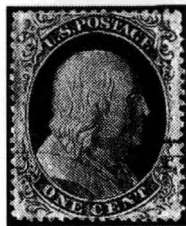
145 West 57th Street • 18th Floor
New York, New York 10019
212/262-8400 • FAX 212/262-8484

SPINK

A M E R I C A

A MEMBER OF THE CHRISTIE'S GROUP

SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS FROM SPINK AMERICA'S APRIL 9, 1998 NEW YORK
PUBLIC AUCTION WHICH REALIZED IN EXCESS OF ONE MILLION DOLLARS



US no. 22, used,
Scott \$375
realized \$1,265



US no. 63b, o.g., l.h.,
Scott \$450
realized \$1,840



US no. 67, used,
Scott \$660
realized \$1,725



US no. 96, o.g., l.h.,
Scott \$1,750
realized \$4,025



US no. 315
Schermack Private Vending
Machine Coil type II, o.g.,
Scott \$3,500, realized \$10,350



US no F1, n.h.,
Scott \$110
realized \$552

Other Realizations Include:

US no. 136 l.h. realized \$1,150, US no. 154 used realized \$552, US no. 211D ex. Lilly realized \$13,800, US no. 233a n.h. fine realized \$15,525, US no. 239 block of eight, dist. OG realized \$2,415, US no. 245 l.h. realized \$5,175, US no. 437 plate block l.h. realized \$1,800, US no. 480 plate block n.h. realized \$5,750, US no. 20 on cover to Italy realized \$978

PLUS strong prices for additional US classic stamps and postal history, as well as intact US and Worldwide collections and accumulations.

You have spent considerable financial resources building your collection. When you have decided to sell your holdings, please allow us to present your stamps and postal history in one of our magnificent and extremely attractive auction catalogues. We offer reasonable commissions and provide prompt settlement 35 days after the auction. For inquires, please call Brian Bleckwenn.

Spink America 55 East 59th St., 4th Floor, NY, NY 10022 tel: 212 546 1087 fax: 212 750 5874

The Chronicle

of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues

ISSN 0009-6008

August 1999	Published Quarterly, in February, May, August, and November	Vol. 51, No. 3 Whole No. 183
-------------	--	---------------------------------

\$4.50 Members	Official publication of the U. S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc.	Annual dues
\$6.00 Non-Members	(Unit 11, A. P. S.)	\$22.50

SOCIETY OFFICERS

VAN KOPPERSMITH.....	P.O. Box 81119, Mobile, AL 36689	President
PATRICIA STILWELL WALKER	Briarwood, Lisbon, MD 21765	Vice-President
MARK D. ROGERS	P.O. Box 80708, Austin, TX 78708-0708	Secretary
DWAYNE O. LITTAUER.....	P.O. Box 750368, New Orleans, LA 70175-0368	Treasurer
RICHARD M. WRONA.....	P.O. Box 7631, McLean, VA 22106-7631	Advertising Manager
CARL ALBRECHT	P.O. Box 82252, Columbus, OH 43202	Membership Chairman
WALTER DEMMERLE	821 Winthrope Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23452	Publication Sales Chairman
DALE R. PULVER	7725 Beaver Creek Dr., Mentor, OH 44060-7121	Editor of Chairman's Chatter
JEFFREY C. BOHN.....	P.O. Box 2301, Columbia, Md. 21045	Exhibition Photocopy Chairman

Directors: JAMES CATE '00; ROGER CURRAN '01; WALTER DEMMERLE '02; SHIRLEY GALLAGHER '00; WILSON HULME II '02; VAN KOPPERSMITH '01; DWAYNE O. LITTAUER '01; MICHAEL J. MORRISSEY '01; MARK D. ROGERS '00; ROBERT ROSE '02; KEIJI TAIRA '00; PATRICIA STILWELL WALKER '02, *ex officio*; THOMAS J. ALEXANDER, THOMAS F. ALLEN, RICHARD F. WINTER.

EDITORIAL BOARD

CHARLES J. PETERSON	P.O. Box 5559, Laurel, MD 20726-5559	Editor-in-Chief
JAMES W. MILGRAM, M.D.....	Water Tower Place Suite 922E, 845 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611-2213	Photo Editor
FRANK MANDEL.....	P.O. Box 157, New York, NY 10014-0157	Prestamp & Stampless Period
JAMES W. MILGRAM, M.D., <i>Assistant</i>		
STEVEN M. ROTH.....	P.O. Box 57160, Washington, DC 20037-2343	U.S. Carriers & Independent Mails
THOMAS E. STANTON, <i>Assistant</i>		
WADE E. SAADI.....	93 80th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11209-3511	1847 Period
HUBERT C. SKINNER	P.O. Box 4097, New Orleans, LA 70178-4097	1851-61 Period
MICHAEL C. McCLUNG	4809-D Kingshill Dr., Columbus, OH 43229-7215	1861-69 Period
SCOTT R. TREPEL	Park Avenue Tower, 65 East 55th St., New York, NY 10022-3219	1869 Period
JEFFREY FORSTER, <i>Assistant</i>		
JOE H. CROSBY.....	5009 Barnsteep Court, Oklahoma City, OK 73142-5405	Bank Note Period
ALAN CAMPBELL	2746 29th Street, San Diego, CA 92105	Officials et al.
LESTER C. LANPHEAR III, <i>Assistant</i>		
RICHARD F. WINTER	11 Teal Court, Greensboro, NC 27455-1380	The Foreign Mails
JEFFREY C. BOHN, <i>Assistant</i>		
RAYMOND W. CARLIN	9068 Fontainebleau Terrace, Cincinnati, OH 45231-4808	The Cover Corner
GREG SUTHERLAND, <i>Assistant</i>		

Address changes should be sent to Secretary, back issue orders to Publication Sales Chairman, other correspondence to Editor-in-Chief. Reports of new items or articles should be submitted to appropriate Section Editor or Editor-in-Chief. Do not send stamps or covers unless requested. Any items sent will be carefully guarded but no liability attaches to an editor or the Society.

Our *Passion* for Philately is equalled only by our
Compassion for both the Buyer and Seller alike.



The One Cent Magenta

The epitome of Classic Stamps.
Owned by one of our clients.

We will build your
Great Collection as well.

Victor B. Krievins
Professional Philatelist

P.O. Box 373

Bryn Mawr, PA 19010-0373

Tel/Fax (215) 886-6290

E-Mail: VBKpostamp@aol.com

IN THIS ISSUE

THE 1847 PERIOD

1847 Issue Cross Border Update, *by Harvey Mirsky*.....164

SPECIAL PRINTINGS 1875-84

Scissor Cutting of the 1875 Special Printing Issues, *by William E. Mooz*169

OFFICIALS *ET AL.*

What Have We Done? Congress Probes the Departmentals, 1873-1874,
by Warren S. Howard209

THE FOREIGN MAILS

Pre-Statehood California Mail to Great Britain, *by Richard F. Winter*.....219

THE COVER CORNER

Additional Answer to Problem Covers in Issues 181227
Answers to Problem Covers in Issue 182227
Problem Covers for Issue 183230

FROM THE EDITOR

Recent Publications234

Looking for a professional who shares your passion for collecting? Glad to meet you.

Our clients sometimes wonder why we get so excited about a superb stamp, a rare cancellation, or an unusual cover.

The answer? We love stamps.

In fact, if we weren't America's premier stamp auctioneers, we would probably be America's premier stamp *collectors*.

Each auction is like our own collection. We hunt for the best material. We carefully present it in one of our award-winning catalogues. And when it's done, we get to start again!

So, how can our passion benefit you?

Think about it. In any field, the best professionals have it in their blood.

Sports, music, medicine...stamps.

When you want the best, you want someone who loves what they do, because

their enthusiasm and experience will work for you.

Sure, there are stamp firms who can do the job by the book. But the philatelists at Siegel have something the other guys don't.

Passion.



Robert A. Siegel

AUCTION GALLERIES, INC.

For information about our auctions or to request a copy of the next sale catalogue and newsletter, please write to:

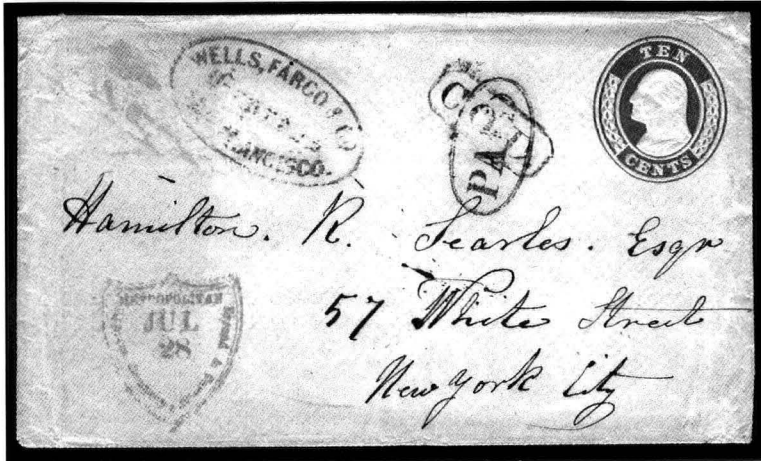
Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc. (Dept. CS)
65 East 55th Street, New York, NY 10022.

Telephone (212) 753-6421. Fax (212) 753-6429.

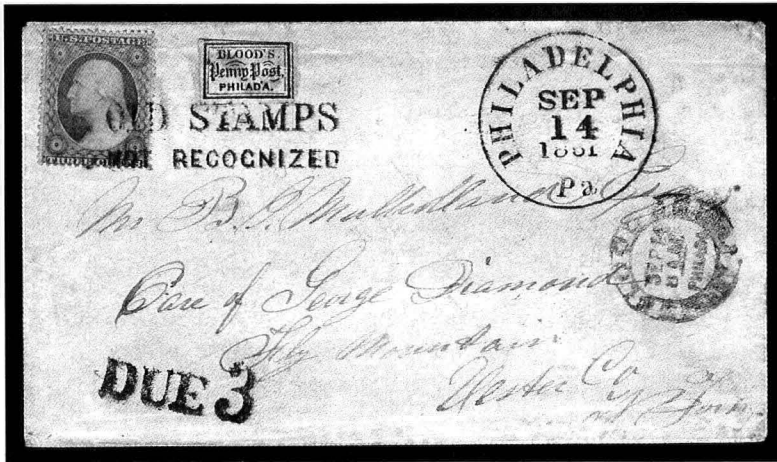
For on-line catalogues and private treaty offerings, please visit our website:

<http://SiegelAuctions.com/home.htm>

How may we help you?



Sold for \$1870, April 1999



Sold for \$27,500, April 1999

Consign now for our Fall and Spring Auctions

Schuyler
Rumsey
Philatelic
Auctions

11 Tillman Pl.
San Francisco, CA 94108
tel: 415-781-5127
fax: 415-781-5674

1847 ISSUE CROSS BORDER UPDATE
HARVEY MIRSKY

A series of articles by Susan McDonald (*Chronicle* # 67, 75, 88 and 89) and Creighton Hart (*Chronicle* #79-81 and 98) provide virtually a complete picture of cross border mail between the U.S. and Canada during the 1847-51 period.

These articles were an invaluable resource in helping me to prepare a talk on 1847 cross border usages for a recent meeting of the New York Chapter of the U.S. Classics Society. During the course of preparing the material to illustrate the talk, I realized that among the covers was one which answered a question raised by Ms. McDonald, and another which confirmed a prediction made by Mr. Hart.

The purpose of this article is to put this information on record, and also to present a new find which adds its own small bit to the storehouse of cross border data already provided by Susan McDonald and Creighton Hart.

Background

All three points of information—the confirmation of Creighton Hart’s prediction, the answer to Susan McDonald’s question, and the new cover find—relate to the new rate period that began on April 6, 1851.

On that date, Canada took over control of its postal system from the Imperial Postal Authorities in London, England. It is also the date on which a new postal agreement took effect between the U.S. and Canada. That agreement established a new “through rate” of 10¢ (6 pence) per ½ oz. for mail carried to or from the United States and Canada.¹

Mr. Hart’s Prediction

In discussing the new through rate which went into effect on April 6, 1851, Creighton Hart noted (*Chronicle* #98): “So far, I have been unable to find any advance notice to the public, which fact must account for some unusual covers.” Mr. Hart was right. Figure 1 shows just such an unusual cover.

Writing a letter dated April 4, 1851, the correspondent was apparently unaware of the new through rate and, after placing a 10¢ stamp on the cover, only marked it as “Paid to the lines.” However, by the time his letter crossed the border inside the sealed through bag to Montreal, the new rate had come into effect. For that reason, the cover was not marked with any Canadian postage due—the 10¢ stamp served to carry it through from Philadelphia, via New York, and on to Montreal under the new, single rate that had been established.

Thus, although there is a “first day cover” known for the new 10¢ through rate that is postmarked April 6, 1851, the cover in Figure 1 is, in fact, the “earliest known usage” (eku) for the new through rate.

Ms. McDonald’s Question

In *Chronicle* #67, Ms. McDonald discussed another aspect of the U.S.-Canada agreement of April 6, 1851—the fact that an Exchange Marking (*i.e.*, the country of origin) was not required to be shown on all mail sent between U.S. and Canada.

These country of origin markings were affixed at the border Exchange Offices, where mail was passed (“exchanged”) from one country to the other. The Canadian mark-

¹The only exception was for mail to or from the West Coast and Canada, for which the rate was 15¢, or 9 pence, per 1/2 oz.

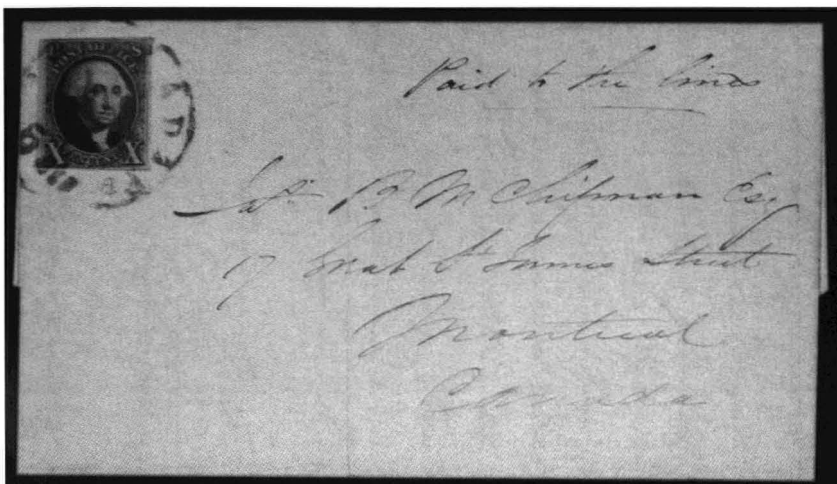


Figure 1. The earliest known use of the 10¢ through rate between the U.S. and Canada, established under agreement dated April 6, 1851. Writing a letter dated April 4, 1851, the correspondent was apparently unaware of the new through rate and, after placing a 10¢ black stamp on the cover, only marked it as “Paid to the lines.” However, by the time his letter crossed the border inside the sealed through bag to Montreal, the new rate had come into effect. For that reason, the cover was not marked with any Canadian postage due—the 10¢ stamp served to carry it through from Philadelphia, via New York, and on to Montreal under the new rate. Property of the author.

ing was usually just a straightline or simple arc with “CANADA” written inside. There were, however, several different (and sometimes more elaborate) U.S. country of origin markings that were applied to covers passing through the various Exchange Offices on their way to Canada.

In her article, Ms. McDonald listed 13 covers sent from the U.S. to Canada between April 6, 1851 (the day the through rate was initiated), and June 30, 1851 (the last day the U.S. 1847 issue could be used to legally pay the through rate to Canada).

That number was subsequently raised to 17 covers, and there may even be 2 or 3 more such covers still unrecorded. The point, however, was that among the covers on Ms. McDonald’s list was one dated April 23, 1851 from Troy, N.Y. to Perth, Upper Canada (Figure 2). This cover had been in the Ackerman collection, and what made it particularly interesting was the fact that it only carried one U.S. 5¢ stamp. It was marked “Due 5” by the sender, and “3” by the Canada postal authorities, for the $\frac{1}{2}$ postage (5¢ or 3 pence) still due.

This situation is noteworthy because the April 6, 1851 agreement stated that mail had to be sent entirely prepaid or entirely unpaid. Partial payment was specifically prohibited, yet this cover was delivered with partial prepayment allowed.

All of this, of course, was known by Ms. McDonald at the time she wrote her article. What was unknown (and remember, her article was about exchange markings), was which particular exchange marking had been applied to this cover; Ms. McDonald had not seen the cover, and Sen. Ackerman’s notes only state that it was the “U. STATES” in arc with a shield below. Was it the marking whose shield slanted right (used at Ogdensburgh and known as marking A-15), or was it the marking whose shield slanted left (used at Rouse’s Point and known as marking A-14)?



Figure 2. This letter dated April 23, 1851, was sent from Troy, N.Y. to Perth, Canada West. It is marked with U.S. country of origin marking A-15, "U. STATES" in arc with right-slanting shield below. It is also one of only two covers known with partial prepayment of the 10¢ through rate established under the April 6, 1851 agreement with Canada. Property of the author.



Figure 2 answers the question. The cover was acquired at the Siegel Galleries' 1998 Sevenoaks Sale; it is the cover in question, and it shows "U. STATES" in an arc with a right-slanting shield below. This marking, designated A-15, was used at the Ogdensburgh Exchange Office (the sender had marked the cover for routing "Via Cape Vincent or Ogdensburgh"); it is the 7th different cross border exchange marking identified as used on covers to Canada bearing the 1847 issue.

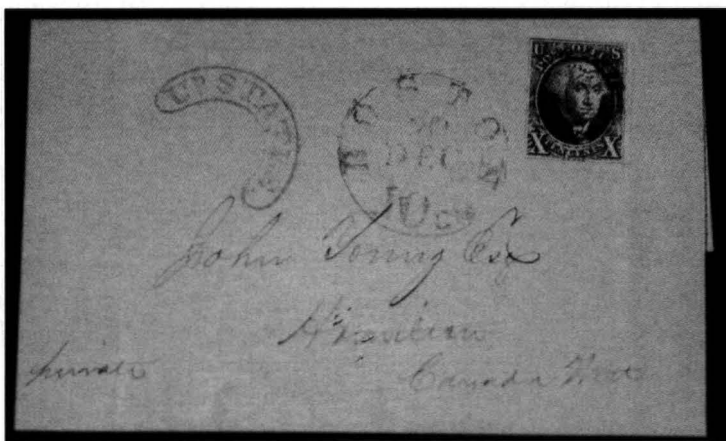


Figure 3. This folded letter is dated Dec. 19, 1851 and bears an 1847 10¢ black stamp and a 20 DEC Boston cds. The 1847 issue was no longer valid for postage after July 1, 1851. Therefore, this usage was illegal. Nonetheless, the stamp was accepted for postage, as were many post-demonetization uses of the 1847 issue. This, however, is the only recorded post-demonetization usage of the 1847 issue to Canada. Property of the author.

A Recent Find

Figure 3 is a cover which also relates to the April 6, 1851 agreement with Canada. It is franked with a 10¢ 1847 to pay the 10¢ through rate from Boston to Hamilton, Canada West, and bears the well-known "U^D States" (A-2) exchange marking. The only thing that's "wrong" is that the letter is datelined December 19, 1851.

In other words, this is a post-demonetization usage of the 1847 10¢ stamp to pay the through rate from the U.S. to Canada. Many post-demonetization usages of the 1847 issue were accepted for postage. It is, however, the only example of a post-demonetization use of the 1847 issue to Canada. It is also the latest cross border use of the 1847 issue to Canada, albeit an illegitimate use.

F A K E !

A dreaded word to any collector or dealer who's stuck with faked, fraudulent, forged, or otherwise counterfeit U.S. related philatelic material

S O L U T I O N ?

Donate your spurious philatelic material to

S.C.R.A.P.

**Stamp & Cover Repository & Analysis Program
U.S. Philatelic Classics Society**

To arrange a potentially tax deductible donation, contact:

**Michael J. Brown
S.C.R.A.P. Administrator
U.S. Philatelic Classics Society**

**P.O. Box 300, Lightfoot, VA 23090
Telephone: (757) 565-4414
E-mail: Brown621@aol.com**

Your Confidence is our Guiding Value!

At Ivy & Mader,
*we take pride in our
integrity, reliability, and personal service.*

*But
all the principals can be summed up in one:
your confidence that we are the right choice
to handle the sale of your collection.*

*All of our efforts
are directed toward assuring you that your
valuable stamps are in the best of hands!*

*Call or write Walter Mader or Rex Bishop
to inquire further how
Ivy & Mader, Inc.
can assist you in the sale or the building of your collection.*

*Past or current catalogs available free of charge to
Classics Society Members*

1-800-782-6771

**IVY
&
MADER**
Philatelic Auctions, Inc.



32 East 57th Street, 11th Floor
New York, New York 10022-2513
212-486-1222
Telefax 212-486-0676



SCISSOR CUTTING OF THE 1875 SPECIAL PRINTING ISSUES
WILLIAM E. MOOZ

All serious collectors of U.S. postage stamps know that some of the rarest resulted from the program of special printings that was begun in 1875. In conjunction with the planned Centennial Exhibition of 1876, and in order to satisfy stamp collectors who wished to buy "old stamps" from the Post Office Department, the Department authorized the printing and sale of all stamps that had been sold by them from the 1847 issue to the then current issues. In addition to the regular postal issues, the 1¢ Eagle and Franklin Carriers were reprinted, as were the 1873 Departmental (or Official) stamps, and both the 1865 and the 1874 Newspaper and Periodical sets. All of the stamps in this program first became available in 1875, and the program continued until it was terminated in 1884.

The issues which were involved, their corresponding catalog numbers and the dates of payment for them by the Post Office Department are listed in Table 1. They total over 200 different stamps, and thus represent an important part of the philatelic history of the U.S.

The Scott catalog is usually the first source of information about stamps that collectors turn to. When it is consulted on these stamps, there is a note that accompanies the special printing¹ of the 1873-75 regular issue (Scott catalog numbers 167-177) that reads as follows:

Although perforated, these stamps were usually cut apart with scissors. As a result, the perforations are much mutilated and the design is frequently damaged.²

A similar note appears with the special printing of the 1873 Departmental issue, which reads

Although perforated, these stamps were sometimes (but not always) cut apart with scissors. As a result, the perforations may be mutilated and the design damaged.³

Although these two sets are the only ones that bear notes about the scissor separations, knowledgeable philatelists know that these scissor separations also occur on the 1857-60 issue (Scott 40-47), the 1861-66 issue (Scott 102-111) and the 1869 issue (Scott 123-132). They also exist of necessity on the imperforate issues, *e.g.*, the 1847 issue and the 1851 Carriers. They do not appear to exist at all on the 1874 Newspaper and Periodicals, or on any of the stamps that first became available after the first printing in June 1875.

While these scissor cuts could be viewed mostly as an annoyance and an impediment to obtaining examples of these stamps in fine condition, they also can be viewed as a phe-

¹It has become customary to distinguish among the various sets that were available in this program by designating them *reproductions* (the 1847 issue), *reprints* (the 1851 regular and Carrier issues and the 1865 Newspaper and Periodicals), *reissues* (the 1861 and 1869 issues) and *special printings* (all the rest, plus the later reprintings of the Carriers). In this discussion, all such references will be subsequently dropped, and the stamps will be identified by their *original issue designation*, but it will be understood that we are discussing the reprinting of these issues in the special program that began in June 1875. Where necessary, for positive identification, the correct catalog number will be used. Thus, for example, when the discussion states "the 1874 Newspaper and Periodical Stamps," it should be understood that the reference is to the *special printing* of this particular issue.

²Scott 1999 *Specialized Catalog of United States Stamps* (Sidney, Ohio: Scott Publishing Company, 1999), page 31.

³*Ibid.*, page 230.

nomenon which can teach us something about the individual stamps involved, as well as about the entire program of reissuing these stamps.

Moving from the Scott catalog to the work of Luff, we find the 1873-1875 issue described as follows:

A notable feature of this set is that the perforations are seldom perfect. The stamps were not separated in the usual way, by tearing them apart, but were cut apart with scissors and very carelessly. As a result, the perforations were usually much mutilated and the design is frequently damaged.⁴

Luff also repeats this note for the Departmental stamps by observing, "Many of the stamps show the mutilation by scissors that was noted in the special printing of the regular issue of 1873."⁵

It is easy to see that Luff's observations are the basis for the notes in the Scott catalog. Luff and the catalog are also consistent in that no mention of scissor separations is made for the other sets in which they are observed.

Brookman goes into a bit more detail than Luff did, by quoting from the notes of a series of lectures by Eustace B. Powers at Rockefeller Center, New York City, on February 12, 1934. Powers' notes about the 1873-1875 issue state

. . . they were issued without any gum and apparently the stamps are not separated in the usual way, but were cut apart carelessly with scissors, resulting in many mutilated stamps. . . . I presume that they were cut apart because I remember mounting in the collection of the late Senator Ackerman a set of little sized envelopes which I believe he bought at the Centennial Exhibition and on the outside of these little white envelopes was printed the year of issue and the denominations of the stamps, and it is quite possible that the person putting up these small envelopes was a different person than the one who put up the previous issues. But in any case, whoever cut these stamps apart was guilty of a heinous philatelic crime.⁶

An example of the envelopes used is shown in Figure 1. Powers evidently felt that the 1873-1875 issue was separated by scissors, but that the previous issues, *i.e.*, the 1851, 1861 and 1869 issues, were not separated in that way because they may have been assembled into their envelopes by someone who did not use scissors. As noted above, the previous issues also display examples of scissor cutting, but, as we shall see, probably to a lesser degree than the 1873-1875 issue, or than the 1873 Departmental issues. Consequently, Powers' observation and conclusion were reasonable.

Other philatelic authors, such as Bacon, also mention the scissor cutting, but it is clear that most of them have leaned on the statements of Luff. Consequently, their words will not be repeated here.

W. V. Combs adds to our knowledge of the phenomenon in his exhaustive study of the special printings of the Departmental stamps.⁷ He refers to the same envelopes that Powers recalled, and states

⁴John Luff, *The Postage Stamps of the United States* (New York: Scott Stamp & Coin Co., Ltd., 1902), page 352. Although Luff refers to the issue of 1873, he previously states (on page 351) "To speak correctly, this was not a reissue of the stamps of the 1870 series, but a special printing of the 1873 and 1875 issues, which were then current." I refer to this issue by its common terminology, even though the orders for these stamps by the Post Office Department used the identification shown in Table 1.

⁵*Ibid.*, page 356.

⁶Lester G. Brookman, *The United States Postage Stamps of the 19th Century*, Vol. III (New York: H. L. Lindquist Publications, Inc., 1966), p. 206.

⁷W.V. Combs, *U.S. Departmental Specimen Stamps* (State College, Pa.: American Philatelic Society, Inc., 1965), also previously published as a series in *the American Philatelist*, Vol. 78, Numbers 1 through 6, October 1964-March 1965.

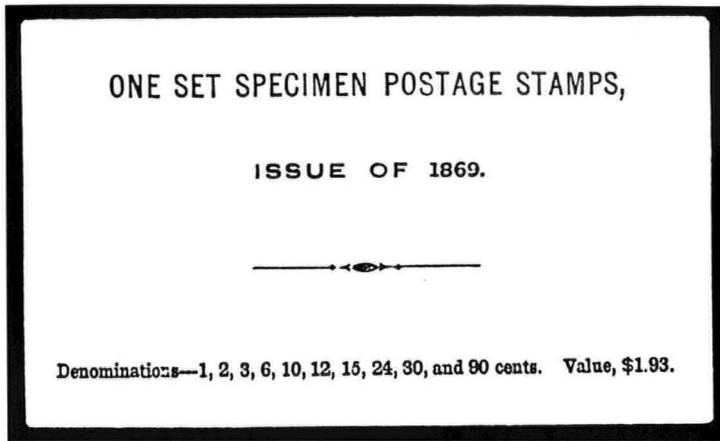


Figure 1. Face of envelope used by the Post Office Department for sets of special printings of the 1869 issue postage stamps.

Sales of Complete Sets - The complete sets were put up in small white envelopes, measuring 2 by 3 inches, marked for the various departments as shown in the following example:

‘One set SPECIMEN OFFICIAL Postage Stamps,
War Department, Issue of 1873’

Below these appeared a fancy dash about one inch long. The last line read: ‘Denominations (itemized) and value (\$2.00)’

The late Philip H. Ward Jr., advised that he had in his collection an original letter from the office of the Third Assistant Postmaster General, together with the accompanying set of Executive Specimens, and a few low values of the Newspaper and Periodical stamps. He notes that the set of Executives is in a plain envelope, not imprinted in any way. Possibly this is an unusual occurrence, or perhaps the Department exhausted its supply of printed envelopes. It appears, however, that imprinted envelopes were used part of the time, at least.

It seems reasonable to presume that quantities of sets were prepared in advance so that orders could be efficiently and quickly filled. It was, of course, anticipated that the public would buy these specimens by the set, for the basic instruction had explicitly stated that they would be sold only by the set or of such quantity of one denomination so as to equal or exceed two dollars in value. For reasons unknown, those preparing the envelopes for sale found it easier to separate the stamps using scissors rather than tearing them along the line of perforations as one would expect. Whether all envelopes contained sets which had been separated by scissors is not known. Perhaps some clerks preferred to cut; some to tear. Result: mixed sets in envelopes. Figure 13 [of the Combs publication] illustrates a set of Interior Department specimens showing extensive and careless use of scissors.

Whereas Luff simply observed that certain of these stamps had been separated by scissors,⁸ both Powers and Combs advanced some further reasoning. Powers appeared to think that there were several people involved in filling the envelopes, and that some used scissors and some did not. He further seemed to think that the people involved each handled discrete sets, *i.e.*, one person would fill one envelope with all of the individual stamps in the set. Thus, the person with the scissors would presumably fill an envelope with stamps, each of which was separated by the scissors, and the entire set would then display scissor cutting.

⁸That scissors were used was, of course, a supposition on his and other observers' parts, since they could not know what kind of cutting device was used. That it was almost certainly an accurate supposition will be shown later.

Combs' perspective was somewhat different. Powers was commenting on the 1873-1875 issue in contrast to other issues, and Combs was examining only one issue, the 1873 Departmentals. Combs appears to agree with Powers when he says "Perhaps some clerks preferred to cut; some to tear," but he then adds, "Result: mixed sets in envelopes." This added statement could mean that envelopes contained some stamps that were cut and some that were torn, or it could mean that some envelopes contained only cut stamps and others contained only torn ones. We are not sure, but we might guess that the former is what he meant. This would follow from the illustrations in his text, and particularly his illustration in Figure 13 (of the Combs publication), which he referred to immediately following his "mixed sets" statement. His Figure 13 shows a set of Interior Department stamps consisting of six denominations that show scissor cutting and four that do not; a truly "mixed set."

If this supposition is correct, then Combs might have thought of the clerks running a little production line, perhaps passing the envelopes from one person to another, with each adding a stamp until the envelope was complete. This description would be one way of obtaining mixed sets, and it would result in some stamp denominations being consistently more scissor cut than others, in contrast to some entire sets being consistently more scissor cut than others.

In this respect, Powers' observation about the 1873-1875 issue is pertinent. Both he and Luff singled the issue out as different from the other issues. They noted that as an entire issue, it appeared to be different. Presumably this was because most of the examples that they had seen were scissored, whereas most of the examples of the other *regular issue* sets they had seen were not.

Combs provides us with an important clue when he says "For reasons unknown those preparing the envelopes for sale found it easier to separate the stamps using scissors rather than tearing them along the line of perforations as one would expect." This enormously provocative statement provides the basis for further inquiry into the subject. From it, Combs implicitly assumed the following:

- a. That the sets of stamps, each in their envelope, were prepared for sale prior to the actual sale,
- b. that one would expect the stamps to be torn apart,
- c. that it was easier to separate the stamps using scissors than by tearing them, and
- d. that there were reasons for this, albeit unknown ones.

We will examine these assumptions further.

The Preparation of Stamps for Sale

Let us begin by assuming that Powers was correct, and that some sets were prepared with scissors and some were not.⁹ Then let us look at Combs' first assumption, namely that the stamps were prepared for sale prior to the sale date by (scissor) separating the sheets so that single stamps could be put into their respective envelopes. If this assumption is correct, then we would expect the following:

- a. All stamps that were to be sold in sets would exhibit examples of scissor cutting,
- b. stamps which were not to be sold in sets would not show examples of scissor cutting,
- c. stamps which were printed after the initial 1873-1875 printing would not exhibit scissor cuts, and
- d. perhaps about the same number of scissor cut sets of each issue would be found.¹⁰

To address the first two points, we can refer to the official notice circular dated March 27, 1875. This read (in part) as follows:

⁹Powers assumed that some clerks used scissors and some did not. It is also possible that the same clerk sometimes used scissors and sometimes did not.

¹⁰Note that this does not mean "proportion," but absolute number.

The stamps will be sold in sets, and application must not be made for less than one full set of any issue, except the State Department official stamps and the Newspaper and Periodical stamps of the issue of 1874. . . any or all of the [State Department] other denominations [\$2, \$5, \$10, and \$20] will be . . . sold separately from the regular set, as desired.

The Newspaper and Periodical stamps of 1874 will be sold in quantities of not less than two dollars worth in any case, of any denomination or denominations that may be ordered.

Thus we would expect scissor cutting of all issues supplied in early 1875 except the dollar values of the State Department, and all of the 1874 Newspaper and Periodicals. These were not required to be sold in sets. However, there were envelopes printed for the 1874 Newspaper and Periodical stamps, which were different than the envelopes prepared for the complete sets of stamps in that the Newspaper and Periodical envelopes had an underlined space for the clerk to write in the denominations of the enclosed stamps. One of these envelopes is illustrated in Figure 2. It is not known whether or not there were envelopes prepared for the dollar State Department stamps.

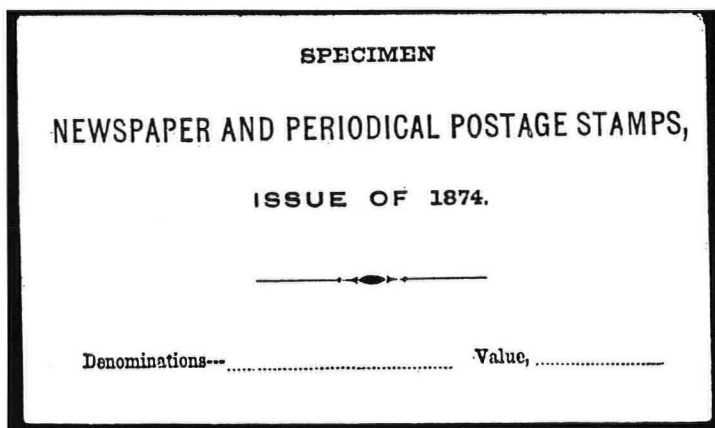


Figure 2. Face of envelope used for sale of special printings of the Newspaper and Periodical stamps.

Referring to Table 1, we note at once that the 1847 issue and the 1851 Carriers were imperforate, and thus were scissor cut. We have already noted that scissor cut examples are commonly known for the 1857-60 regular issue, the 1861-66 issue, the 1869 issue and, of course, the 1873-1875 regular issue. The 1873 Departmentals consist of nine separate sets, and if we omit the dollar State Department denominations, all of those printed in early 1875 contain scissor cut examples.

The two issues in which there are no recorded examples of scissor cutting are the dollar values of the State Department and the 1874 Newspaper and Periodicals.¹¹ Consequently, two of the four expectations are met.

¹¹I do not mean to imply that no scissor cut example exists, because this clearly could not be proven, and even if one or more examples were to be found, there would be no way to prove that the cutting was done at the office of the 3rd Assistant Postmaster General, or at some later date by some other person. What this statement implies is that neither the 1874 Newspaper and Periodical stamps nor the dollar value State Department issues are known by any professional philatelist or any serious student to be scissor cut, in the same sense that the 1869 pictorial issue is, for example. One expects an occasional 1869 stamp to be scissor cut; one does not expect it of these others. I have examined over one third of all the dollar State Department values and not found any examples of scissor cutting. I have also examined hundreds of the 1874 Newspaper and Periodical stamps without finding any scissor cuts at all.

TABLE 1 - DATES OF PAYMENT FOR PRINTING, AS RECORDED IN BILL BOOKS		
DATE PAID	IDENTIFICATION	CATALOG NUMBERS
June 1875	1847 issue	3,4
	1851 issue (Commonly called 1857-60)	40-47
	1851 Carriers	LO3, LO4, LO5, LO6
	1861 issue (Commonly called 1861-66)	102-111
	1869 issue	123-132
	1865 Newspaper and Periodicals	PR5-PR7
	1875 Departmentals	O1SD-O93SD
	1874 Newspaper and Periodicals	PR33-PR56
	1870 issue (Commonly called 1873)	167-177
	1870 issue (Commonly called 1875)	180, 181
December 1875	1874 Newspaper and Periodicals	PR33, PR34 (ribbed paper)
	1851 Carriers	No catalog number assigned
	1873 Departmentals	O1SDc, O10SDc, O25SDc, O57SDc
	1879 Postage Dues	J8-J14
October 1879	1879 Postage Dues	No catalog number assigned
November 1879	1879 Postage Dues	No catalog number assigned
March 1880	1869 issue	133
July 1880	1870 issue (Commonly called 1879)	192-204
February 1881	1851 Carriers	No catalog number assigned
	1865 Newspaper and Periodicals	PR8
	1873 Departmentals	O35XSD, O82XSD, O10XSD
August 1881	1851 Carriers	No catalog number assigned
	1869 issue	No catalog number assigned
	1873 Departmentals	O57XSD
February 1882	1882 issue	205C
March 1882	1870 issue	No catalog number assigned
August 1882	1869 issue	No catalog number assigned
April 1883	1874 Newspaper and Periodicals	PR80
August 1883	1879 Postage Dues	No catalog number assigned
December 1883	1883 issue	211B, 211D
	1873 Departmentals	O1SD, O10SD
February 1884	1874 Newspaper and Periodicals	No catalog number assigned
May 1884	1874 Newspaper and Periodicals	No catalog number assigned

Those stamps printed after the first 1875 printing do not comprise full sets except for the case of the printing of the 1879 regular issue in the summer of 1880 and the printing of the set of Postage Due stamps in 1879. For those that do not comprise full sets, there would be no reason to try to assemble them in sets, for it could not be done, and in addition, there were likely no envelopes for them. But in any case, circumstances had changed, especially since early 1875. Before the program began, there was no idea how many orders would be received. Each of the stamps in the program (except for a few) were ordered in quantities of 10,000¹² and this might provide a clue as to the expectations of sales. In anticipation of a brisk business, the postal officials might well have prepared themselves by putting up sets in envelopes before the sale was announced. But by 1879 and 1880, when the Postage Dues and the 1879 issue were printed, the personnel in the Office of the Third Assistant Postmaster General were far wiser. Only 100-200 of the 1873-1875 sets had been sold in five years, and since the 1879 issue was almost identical to the 1873-1875 issue, there was no rush to put up sets. We do not even know if envelopes had been provided for the 1879 issue, but the question is essentially moot. No scissor cut examples of the 1879 issue are known to exist, nor are they found for any other stamps (other than the 1851 Carriers) printed after the Fall of 1875. Thus the third expectation above is met.

¹²Records of the Post Office Department, Record Group 28, Bill Book #3, entry for June 30, 1875.

TABLE 2 - SCISSOR CUT ESTIMATES				
Set Identification	Catalog numbers	Estimated number of sets sold*	Percentage observed to be scissor cut	Number of scissor cut sets
1857-60	40-47	480	10--20	48-96
1861-66	102-111	400	12--25	48-100
1869 Pictorial	123-132	1500	3--6	45-90
1873 Regular issue	167-177	150	33-66	50-100
1873 Agriculture	O1SD-O9SD	350	14-28	49-96
1873 Executive	O10SD-O14SD	3500	1.5-3	53-106
1873 Interior	O15SD-O24SD	75	67-100	50-75
1873 Justice	O25SD-O34SD	150	33-66	50-100
1873 Navy	O35SD-O45SD	100	50-100	50-100
1873 Post Office	O47SD-O56SD	80	63-100	50-80
1873 State**	O57SD-O67SD	250	20-40	50-100
1873 Treasury	O72SD-O82SD	75	67-100	50-75
1873 War	O83SD-O93SD	100	50-100	50-100
*Estimated by author from catalog and other data. Note that this is an estimate of the number of sets sold, and not the number which might have been prepared in advance.				
** Excluding the dollar values				

The last expectation can be checked by noting the incidence of scissor cutting that is actually found. This has been done by reviewing reasonable numbers of actual stamps, or their photographs in auction catalogs, and then calculating the percentages which are scissor cut. This has been done for selected stamps, and the data appear in Table 2. These data have been extended in Table 2 to estimate the number of sets that were scissor cut. There are several ways to do this, and using single stamps as the basis has some advantages. For example, although it was the intention to sell most of these stamps in complete sets, a provision for getting around this existed, since the March 27, 1875 circular stated, "Stamps of any one denomination of any issue will be sold in quantities of two dollars worth and upward."¹³ Besides this provision, the clerks habitually accepted orders for single stamps without regard to the amount of the order. Thus we find that while most of the stamps in the 1873 Agriculture set were sold in quantities of about 350, the 1¢ denomination which was printed in early 1875 sold 10,000 copies, and the 2¢ denomination sold 4,182 copies. The higher denominations sold between 352 and 390 copies. Making observations about the scissor cutting on individual stamps allows us to cross check from one to another, since the percentage of 6¢ Agriculture scissor cut examples should work out to be the same as the percentage of the higher denominations.¹⁴ This, of course, assumes that the scissor cutting was only used on full sets, something which will be examined later.

Combs assumed that one would expect the stamps to be torn apart on the lines of perforations. This statement is tautological, since one of the great advances in the manufacture of postage stamps in the late 19th century was the invention of perforations. Imperforate stamps had to be cut apart with scissors, which was time consuming and a nuisance if it was to be done carefully. Perforated stamps eliminated this problem, and with such resounding success that today it is the only commonly accepted way to separate them. Post Office clerks probably have always separated sheets of stamps in the same way

¹³Circular dated March 27, 1875.

¹⁴In theory this is correct, but in practice the percentages observed might be different because of the existence of multiples of the stamps. In any event, this method is not intended to be quantitatively accurate, but rather to indicate whether the expectation was reasonable.

as it is done today: a sheet is folded and creased on the perforation line, then torn neatly, separating one row from the sheet. The row is then broken up by separating stamps one at a time.

Was this procedure used by those who prepared these sets? First it is helpful to look at the context of the sale of these stamps. The announcement of their availability was made on March 27, 1875,¹⁵ although the first sale was apparently made on February 25, 1875.¹⁶ The stamps were *only available* at the Office of the 3rd Assistant Postmaster General in Washington. It is hard to believe that this office had many people working in it at that time. The entire Post Office Department appeared to be modest enough in size that its accounts were kept by hand in simple ledgers that have only a few pages per month for entries.¹⁷ Similarly, the invoice copies for the sale of these stamps, which have survived until today (for the period from May 7, 1879 to July 26, 1882) show only three separate handwritings, and it is difficult to believe that a very large number of people were actually working there, or involved with the handling and sale of these stamps.

Accepting this as fact, one can imagine the joy with which the news of this new program was met in this office. In addition to their regular duties, these few people suddenly had the task of packaging 14 different issues of stamps into small envelopes to prepare them for sale, and then the job of filling orders for them. The first sale was apparently made in February of 1875, and we do not know how much earlier the stamps might have arrived from the printer. (Note that Table 1 shows that the first payment was made to the printer in June 1875.) It could have been that there was some time pressure on the clerks to prepare the sets.

Picture then the dilemma of a clerk whose supervisor hands him one sheet of 100 stamps of each denomination from 1¢ to 90¢—eleven sheets in all—of the 1873 issue, plus 100 little envelopes, and instructs him to separate the sheets into singles and to make up the sets in envelopes. Not only is this to be done, but quickly, if you please, and at a desk which already has the day's paperwork on it.

Try to imagine doing this on a desk, and perhaps a desk with other work on it. Merely laying out the eleven sheets and the 100 envelopes would crowd the desk, to say nothing of the confusion that could result from attempting to separate the sheets into piles of singles. The situation would be even worse if less than 100 sets were to be assembled, since it would result in piles of single stamps, and the remaining part of each sheet. Last, if making up these sets was to be done in odd moments between other tasks, then the desk could not be dedicated to the task. This would mean that covering it with little piles of stamps could not be tolerated.

One possible solution to this dilemma was for the clerk to tear out one stamp at a time from the sheets, placing each stamp in an envelope as he worked his way through the set. There is some evidence that this was done for at least some sets, even though it does not seem to be an efficient way to put the sets together quickly.

Consequently, Combs' expectation that the stamps would have been torn apart is probably correct in the context of a post office clerk with proper equipment and the sole task of making up the sets. The expectation loses some of its appeal, though, when we think about inexperienced clerks without stamp drawers, working on crowded desks, under time pressure, and fitting the task in between other jobs—especially if there was a more attractive alternative.

¹⁵Combs, *op. cit.*, page 3.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷See, for example, Records of the Post Office Department, Record Group 28, Press copies of Invoices, 1879, GSA, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C.

Scissor Cutting

The last two of Combs' assumptions need to be examined together. These are that it was easier to separate the stamps with scissors, and that there was a reason for this.

It is probably relevant that the clerks had to use scissors in this operation at least part of the time. The 1847 issue and the 1851 Carriers were imperforate, and it was the only way that they could be separated. The clerk, or clerks, as the case may be, then must have been working with scissors on these imperforate issues at least part of the time. This must have been particularly vexing on top of everything else, except that an ingenious (or lazy) clerk may have found a way to turn this added imposition into a way to make the job quicker and easier. This clerk may have found that he could cut more than one sheet at the same time, simply by stacking them and cutting with the uppermost sheet as a guide. We do not know that the clerks started with the imperforate issues, but it fits with this hypothesis. When the perforated stamps were to be separated, it was probably quickly found that tearing the stamps apart when the sheets were stacked was difficult, but that they could be cut with scissors just as the imperforate ones were.

We do not know yet if this supposition is correct, but it satisfies Combs' assumptions neatly. It *is* easier to separate the stamps from *stacked* sheets with scissors, and the reason is that (a) they will not tear easily when stacked, and (b) more than one stamp is separated at a time. Thus this could be thought of as a labor saving practice, as well as a time saving practice.

There are a number of ways that the scissor separation process could be done. These will be listed, then examined for what seems reasonable, then tested against what is found in the stamps themselves.

a. The stamps could be cut in single sheets. We have already partially discarded this supposition, but we will list it for testing.

b. The stamps could be stacked in piles of the same denomination and set and then cut.

c. The stamps could be stacked in piles of mixed denominations of the same set and cut.

d. The stamps could be stacked in various combinations of sets and denominations and then cut.

Returning to the picture that was painted of the ill equipped, inexperienced (and possibly recalcitrant) clerk who was to make up the sets, the first method makes no sense. If single sheets were handled, it would have been far easier to tear them than cut them. Similarly, the fourth method described above would only contribute to the difficulty of assembling sets. Once a stack of stamps had been cut out by this method, they would have to be separated into sets, and the proper denominations assembled for an envelope. This would have entailed more work than it was worth. Both the second and third methods described above have appeal. The second method would work as follows:

The clerk would take a few envelopes, say about five as an example, for the set which he was assembling. Then he would arrange stacks of five sheets of each denomination in the set. Proceeding with the first denomination, he would cut out a stack of five stamps, place them individually in the envelopes, then move on to the next denomination and repeat the act. This would continue until the five sets were complete, at which time he would take another five envelopes and continue in the same way.

The third method would work by assembling one set of sheets that included all denominations in the set. These could be stacked in one or more piles. Then the clerk would take a single envelope, cut out one stack of stamps from the stacked sheets of mixed denominations (which could contain all denominations in the set) and place them in the envelope. If one pile of sheets held all denominations in the set, then a couple of snips of the scissors would make up a complete set. The clerk could then take another envelope and continue the procedure.

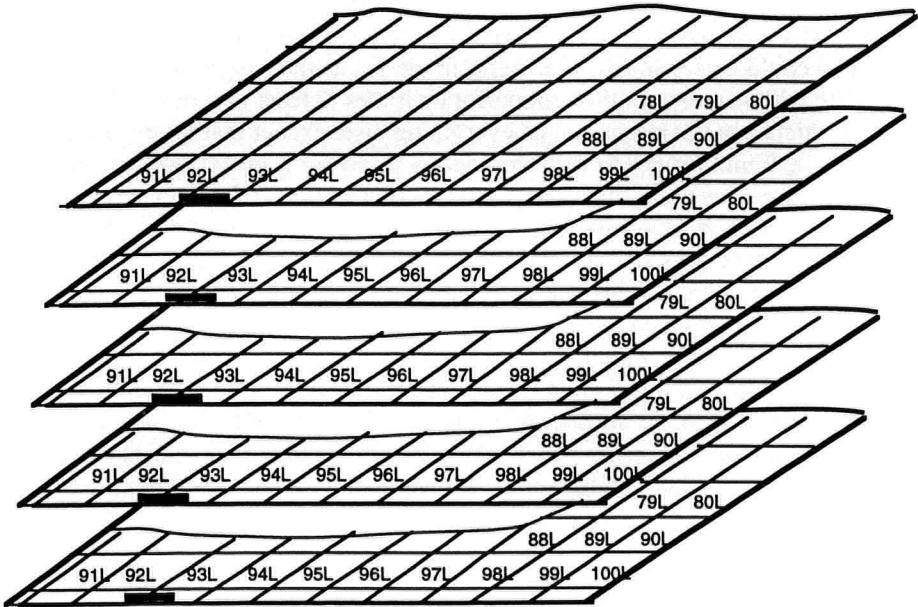


Figure 3. Stacking of symmetrical sheets, with plate positions coinciding.

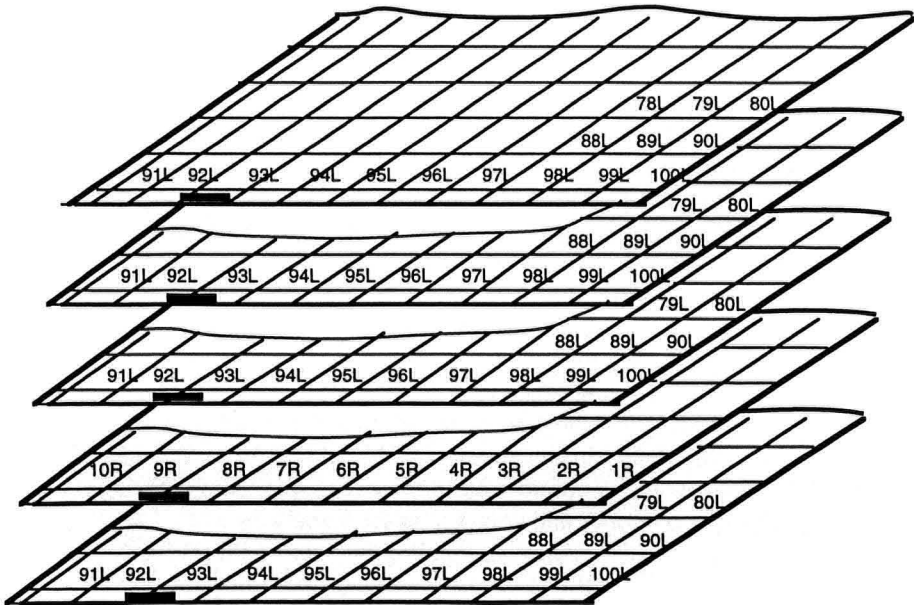


Figure 4. Stacking of sheets with one sheet inverted.

While both the second and third methods are plausible, the third is more appealing. It involves only one or two stacks of sheets on the desk, while the second method requires a stack for each denomination—up to eleven stacks for a set. The third method does not require that the snipped out stack of stamps be separated in any way, because they have been prearranged in sets by stacking the proper denominations. The second method requires that the snipped out stack be separated and distributed in the envelopes. If we choose which method might be the more appealing to the clerk we have pictured, the third seems more attractive. And, if we insist that the clerk probably pushed the scheme to its fullest potential, we might believe that he indeed stacked full sets together, which meant up to eleven sheets.

If this was done, then all of the sets which were prepared in this way would contain stamps which would be from the identical position on the sheet, if the sheets were stacked so that the plate positions coincided. This could be done in those instances where the sheets were symmetrical, *i.e.*, when the selvedge on each sheet was in the same location as the selvedge on each other sheet. In this instance, all denominations in a stack would be from the same plate position, as shown in Fig. 3. There is some evidence that the plate positions could not always coincide, particularly when two panes were cut from a larger plate, so that there was a straight edge between the two panes. We will examine this later, but it is significant, that regardless of symmetry, there is a way that the sheets can be stacked so that the stamps are aligned in a manner allowing a complete set to be cut out. It may require inverting some sheets so that the design is upside down in relation to the other sheets, or even turning a sheet over so that the printed side is down. But it can be done if one is clever. An example of how this would work is shown in Fig. 4.

Cutting out sets by stacking the sheets would produce better results when the number of stamps in the set was small, as in the 1847 issue or the 1851 Carriers. When more stamps are involved, the process becomes the victim of “cutter draw,” and the scissor cuts become less and less accurate as the scissors progress through the stack from top to bottom. There will be more discussion on this below.

There is one further subject which must be examined. Luff, Power and Combs (as well as others) have all described these stamps as scissor cut. Clearly they could have been cut by other devices, including blade cutters that are fairly common in offices. In fact, using a blade cutter might have been more efficient in terms of the speed of separating stacked sheets. If a blade cutter had been used, one would expect a large proportion of straight cuts, no discontinuities, and possibly even less cutter draw. Observing the stamps, one can find straight cuts, but more often they are either not straight, or the straight cuts are at an angle to the line of perforations, and do not resemble what would be produced by a blade cutter. Also there are many stamps (see Figure 5) which show cutting discontinuities such as would result from cutting slightly past one stamp with scissors and then returning later to that spot to cut again.

Cutter draw becomes an important part of the explanation of what happened. Cutter draw is a printer's term for what happens when a stack of paper is cut without being securely clamped together immediately adjacent to the cut. It happens particularly when scissors are used, and when the stack of paper is held by hand. Scissors made for the right hand have a blade on the left which moves upward to cut, and a blade on the right which moves downward at the same time. The blades are offset so that they pass each other in making the cut. As pressure is applied to the paper stack by the scissors, what is known to



Figure 5. An example of cutting discontinuities caused by scissor cutting.

engineers as a “couple” is set up. This couple causes the stack of paper to rotate slightly where the pressure is applied by the blades. As a result, the bottom sheets of paper shift to the left, actually buckling a bit, and the top sheets shift to the right, as the right scissor blade drags them down and over the sheets beneath. Of course, the person doing the cutting guides the cut by looking at the top sheet, which will usually have a straight cut. But the lower sheets will be cut farther and farther to the right of the top cut because the paper has shifted to the left. When the cut is complete, the buckled bottom sheets spring back into flat position, and the cut then looks like it was made diagonally through the paper stack. This is illustrated in Fig. 6.

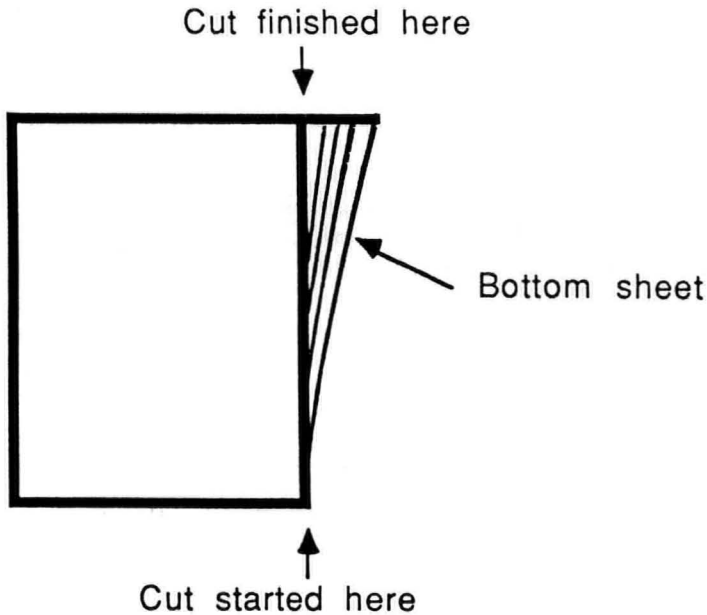


Figure 6. Schematic of the effects of cutter draw.

This phenomenon can be easily demonstrated. Take a stack of ten sheets of paper and mark the top sheet with a ruled straight line near the right edge. Then hold the stack with the left hand near the left edge, and cut along the line with a pair of scissors. When the cut is completed, even though the top sheet is cut exactly along the ruled line, the sheets below will not be cut in the same place.

If scissors were used to separate these stamps in the manner suggested, we can expect cutter draw, and further, because of the cutter draw, we can expect that the sheets on the bottom of the stack will be the least likely to be accurately cut in relation to where the cut was made on the top sheet. If a single denomination was always on the bottom of the stack, then that particular denomination could always be expected to be the most mutilated, as the scissor cuts veered from their position on the topmost stamp.

This provides a framework or an hypothesis of what might have been done by those using scissors, and it gives clues of what to look for in the way of corroborating evidence. However, as Powers pointed out, perhaps not all of the clerks used scissors, or, expanding on this idea, perhaps those who used scissors did not use them all of the time.

If we assume that there were one or more clerks who assembled complete sets without using scissors, one way that this might have been done would have been to begin with full sheets of stamps comprising all of the denominations in a particular set, and remove

one stamp at a time from each sheet, placing it in the envelope. If done systematically, this could result in complete sets in which all stamps were from the same sheet position. This is in slight contrast to some of the sets which were scissor cut, because the position of the selvage on some sheets might have required them to be inverted or turned upside down, in which case the position numbers would not all be the same.

These suppositions and hypotheses provide a clue to what one might look for in the way of evidence. Specifically, the evidence might consist of one or more of the following:

a. A complete, or partially complete, set of stamps in which it is possible to see that some or all were scissor cut in a way which shows that the sheets of the various denominations of the set had been stacked and then cut, probably with most or all of the denominations from the same position on the sheet.

b. A complete, or partially complete, set of stamps in which it is possible to see that some or all were separated normally, without scissor cutting, and which show that most or all denominations were from the same position on the sheet.

c. A complete, or partially complete, set of stamps in which it is possible to see that some or all were scissor cut, but where the sheets of the various denominations had been inverted, turned upside down, or otherwise manipulated to allow a partial or complete set to be scissor cut at one time.

All of this, of course, is supposition. In order to prove it, one would have to find one or more sets of stamps which were still intact as sold; an original set, just as it was received from the Office of the Third Assistant Postmaster General. Then, if the set had been scissor cut, one would have to examine the scissor cutting of each of the stamps to see if they appeared to have been cut from sheets which were stacked, or if not scissor cut, to see if they were from the same plate positions. For many of the stamps sold in this program, this would be virtually impossible. One of the more notoriously scissor cut sets is the reissue of the issue of 1873, Scott numbers 167-177. The individual 1999 Scott catalog values of the stamps in this set range from a low of \$2,250 to a high of \$10,500. Because of this, there are probably few, if any, surviving intact sets, since all of these have probably been broken up long ago and the stamps sold individually. An important exception to this will be discussed below.

But not all of these special printings have reached these astronomical catalog values, and a number of these issues are still often sold in complete sets. It is there that one has the opportunity to find what is needed to examine this hypothesis. What one needs to locate is a complete set which was originally sold as a complete set by the 3rd Assistant Postmaster General's office, and which has not been altered since, or at least has not been altered so much as to destroy the telltale evidence that could be used to test the hypothesis. As mentioned, looking for this kind of evidence is compounded by the fact that many (or most) of these stamps are rarities. This means that the chances of finding an original set, or original partial set, of the 1873-1875 issue, for example, are not only small, but would involve a catalog value of \$75,550. Further, there is hardly any way to really know that a set is "original," since any set may have passed through many hands and have been broken up and reassembled several times, without any attendant history accompanying it. It is fortunate for us that the incentive to break up sets did not apply across all of these issues. Although they are as rare as the regular issues, and in some cases rarer, the 1873 Departmentals have been treated by many philatelists as "nature's stepchildren." Unknown by many (if not most) stamp collectors, they are neglected by all but a few, and have catalog values that are far below their fellow regular special printing issues. Thus they are frequently sold in full sets, in contrast to the regular issues, which are rarely sold that way. Therefore, it is possible that "original" sets still can be found.

Now that I knew what to look for, the hunt was on. But first I had to face up to another question. There was no way to know whether there had been only a single clerk working on putting up these sets, or whether there was more than one, and if so, whether

they followed the same practice of scissor cutting. It also could be that if there was only one clerk, his boss could have stopped him from using the scissors at some point, and instructed him to continue the job by separating the stamps in the usual way. We do not know. But there was a good chance that regardless of the circumstances, and irrespective of the method of separating the stamps, the stamps would have been removed systematically, and that each stamp in the set could be from the identical plate position. If this were the case, there were two things to look for. In the case of the scissor cut sets, one could look for evidence that the scissor cuts on the various denominations matched. In the case of sets which were normally separated, one could look for other evidence that the stamps were from the same position. With diligence and patience, this search turned out to be not as difficult as one might first think. The first opportunity came to me in an unexpected way in 1974. In Rasdale's 227th sale there was a set of the 1¢ to 90¢ special printing State Department stamps which was illustrated, and which seemed to leave no doubt that the stamps were scissor cut from their sheets by stacking them and then snipping out the complete set. This set is shown in Fig. 7, and after I had purchased it, I found that it was relatively easy to see that the sheets of the 3¢ through 90¢ denominations had been stacked and then cut.



Figure 7. 1¢ through 90¢ State Department special printings, from Rasdale's 227th sale.

There was one other obstacle. As we have noted, the original notice stated that only complete sets would be sold. Apparently the P.O. Department overestimated how popular these stamps would be, because at some point they abandoned this practice and began to sell individual stamps, a fact which is clearly recorded in the surviving invoices for sales after May 1879. When they abandoned the notion of selling only complete sets, the clerks were faced with providing individual stamps of various denominations. One place where they could easily and logically get these was from the envelopes which were sitting there, full of sets which were not selling. These envelopes, by the way, then became almost useless as people ordered stamps in less than full sets, because the envelopes had been printed with information relating only to full sets. I suspect that many of the envelopes were "raided" for single stamps. This may be a reason why the set of stamps shown in Figure 7 does not have scissor cut 1¢ and 2¢ denominations. (In fact, the 1¢ denomination is on ribbed paper from the second printing of this stamp, which was made late in 1875, almost a year after the stamps were first offered for sale.) But the point to be made is that when an "original" set is located, whether scissor cut or not, it might have replacement denominations in



Figure 8. Set of Agriculture Department special printings, position 91.



Figure 9. Set of Justice Department special printings, all position 93 and all with plate numbers.

it that resulted from the set having been raided at one time or another, and then having been “filled out” by replacing the stamps with ones from a sheet or from a different envelope.

Conversely, the set could have had single stamps sold from it by the owner, and then these could have been replaced later. There is also another situation which might be a factor. Suppose that the clerks found that stacking a full set of all denominations made a pile of stamps which was too thick to escape severe cutter draw. They might then have reduced the number of sheets in the pile, so that perhaps three or four stamps were cut out together. Perhaps one clerk did this, and then passed the little envelope to a second clerk who might or might not have used scissors. This situation could result in complete sets, sent to the original purchaser, in which there were both scissor cut and normally separated stamps.

Despite the seeming difficulties of obtaining sets which could demonstrate these theories, it was possible to gather convincing evidence. What was required was to look for complete sets of the stamps. With luck, the history of such a set would be that it was complete as issued, and that it had not been tampered with since it had left the Post Office Department. Sets of relatively low catalog value are particularly prone to fit this description, but some sets of higher value also can occasionally be found. What one must be wary of is a set with a relatively high catalog value which has been “assembled” by a collector who patiently put the set together by buying one stamp at a time. As mentioned above, and discussed at greater length below, one also must be aware that there is a reasonable chance that some of the sets which were put together in the Office of the Third Assistant Postmaster General may have had stamps removed from them, and then replaced at a later date. Sometimes one has the advantage of a photograph of the set, as I did in the Rasdale auction, and if so, it is often possible to decide from it whether or not the set has the sought-after characteristics. Some of these “original” sets are illustrated below, and where helpful, the relevant scissor cuts or other features are identified with arrows.

Figure 8 shows a lovely set of Agriculture stamps which are all from position 91 with both left side and bottom selvedge; that is, all except possibly the 12¢ denomination, which lacks any selvedge which might prove that it is from this position, and the 3¢ denomination, which lacks selvedge on the left side. Note that although this set was from position 91, and had selvedge on the left, it was still scissor cut on the left, as can be seen from the varying widths of the selvedge, which decreases to nothing on the 1¢ denomination, leaving only the evidence of the scissor cut. Note also the scissor cuts on the tops of the stamps, and the apparent lack of them on the right side.

Figure 9 shows a lovely set of Justice stamps which are all from position 93, and which all have plate numbers on the selvedge. This set shows clear evidence of scissor cutting on the left, right and top of the stamps.

At this point, a word about the statistical probability of obtaining a set like this “by accident” is in order. The statistical probability of randomly receiving one Justice stamp from position 93 is one in one hundred, or one percent. The statistical probability of randomly receiving two denominations from position 93 is one in a hundred times one in a hundred, or one in ten thousand. Receiving an entire set in which each of the ten stamps had been randomly selected from position 93 has a probability of $(1/100)^{10}$, or one in one hundred quintillion. For the Agriculture set pictured, the probability is $(1/100)^7$, or one in one hundred trillion, even leaving out the two stamps which cannot be verified to be from position 91.

Following along these lines, we have examples of other sets in which either the scissor cuts show evidence of stacking, or in which there is convincing evidence that the stamps were systematically removed from the sheets, with each denomination being from the same plate position.

Figure 10 shows a second set of Agriculture stamps in which four of the stamps show evidence of either being scissor cut together on the right, or being from the same po-

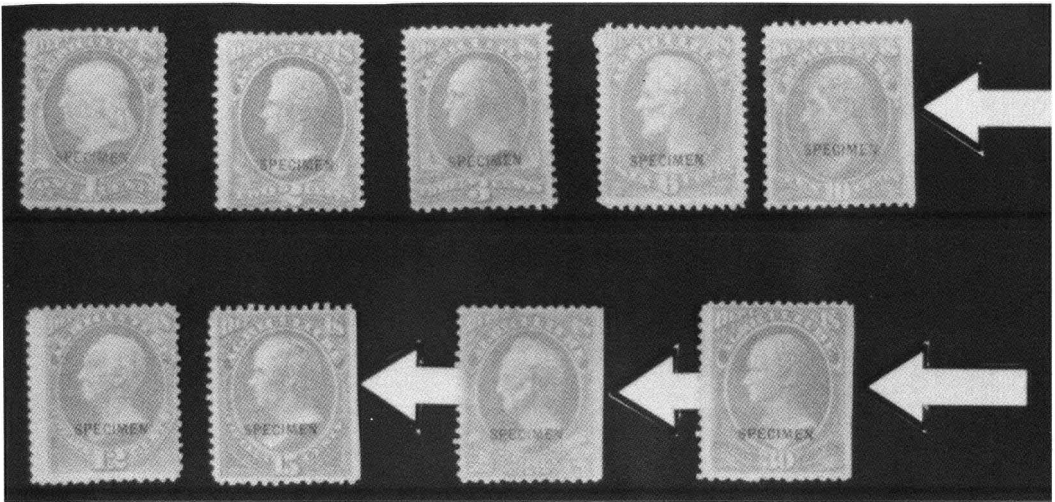


Figure 10. Set of Agriculture Department special printings, four stamps with evidence of being scissor cut together or being from same position.

sition on the right column of the pane.

Figure 11 shows a set of Executive stamps which are either all scissor cut on the right, or are all from the right column of the pane. The 2¢ denomination of this set is from position 40, and it is probable that the other denominations (except for the 1¢) are from the same position. Figure 12 shows another set of Executive stamps in which all the positions again appear to be from the right column except for the 3¢ denomination. The statistical probability of these stamps being randomly selected from the right column is one in ten thousand. If the stamps are all from the same position, then the statistical probability that they were randomly selected is one in one hundred million. (This assumes that there is one stamp in each set that is not from the same position or column.)

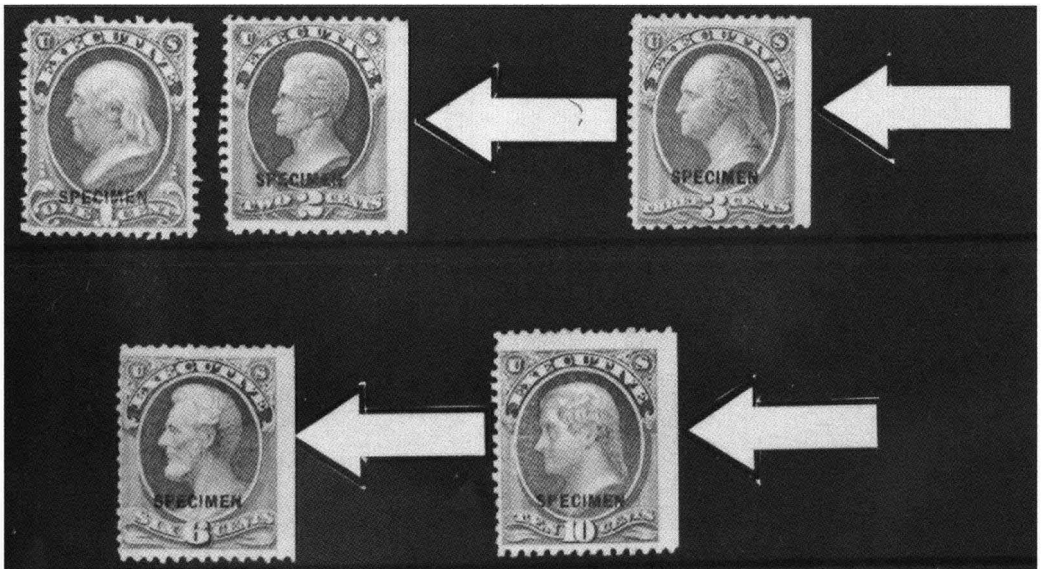


Figure 11. Set of Executive special printings, either all scissor cut on right or all from the right column of the pane.

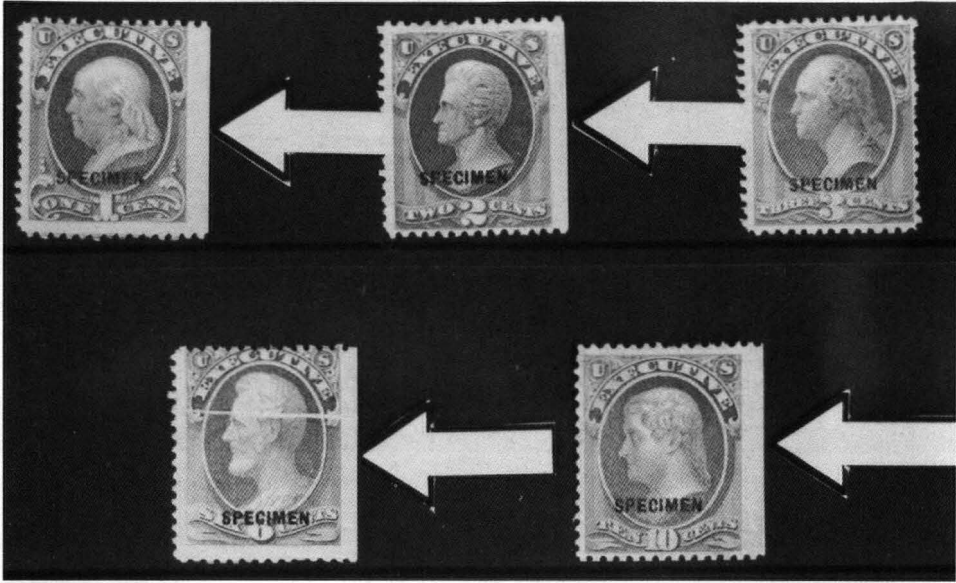


Figure 12. Set of Executive special printings, with all except the 3¢ denomination apparently from the right column of the pane.

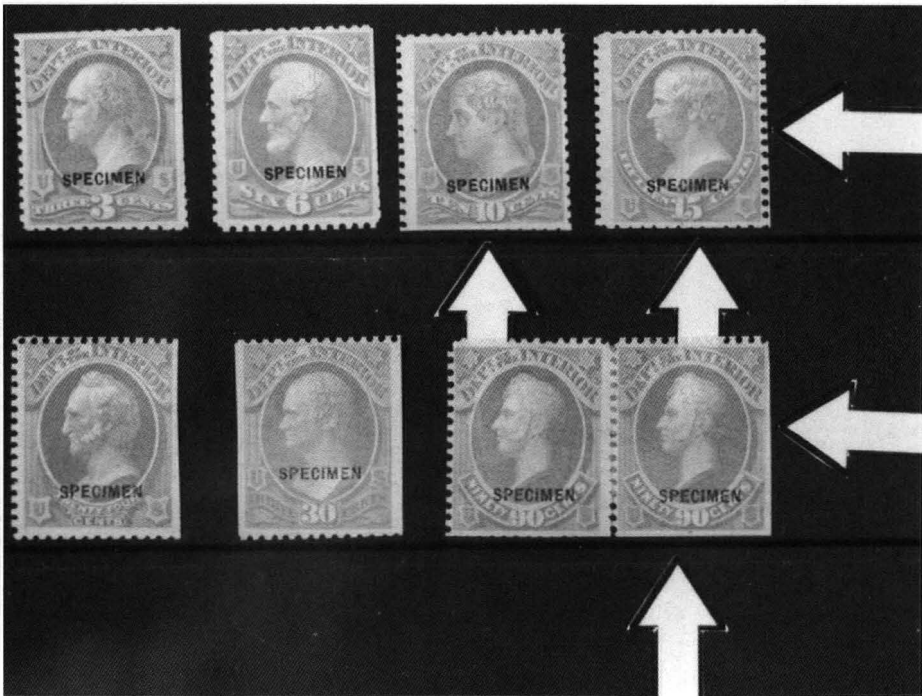


Figure 13. Stamps from a set of Interior Department special printings showing evidence of stacking and scissor cutting.

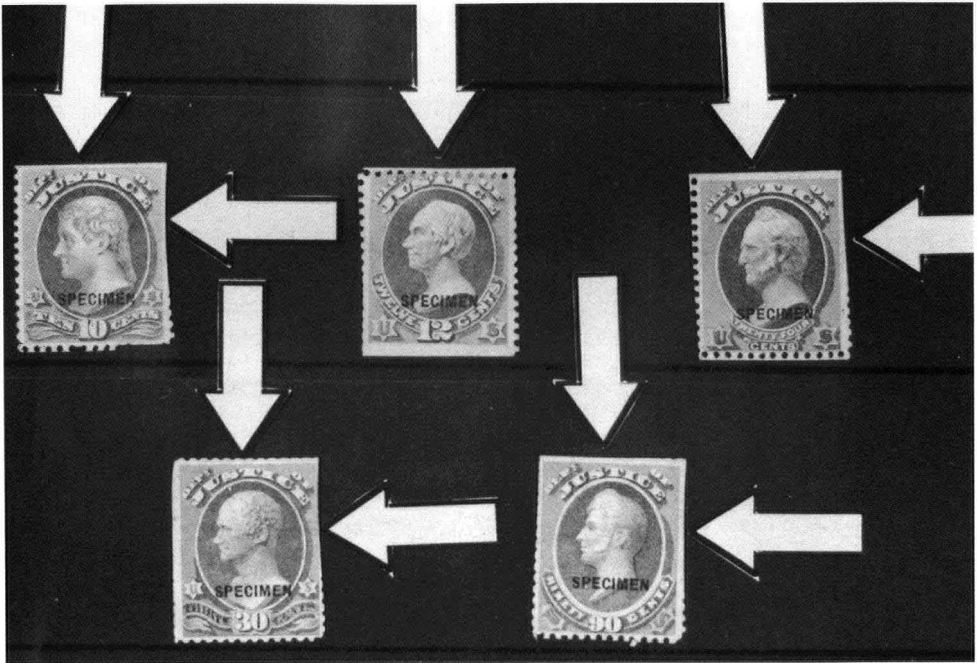


Figure 14. Stamps from a set of Justice Department special printings with several stamps appearing to have been scissor cut together.

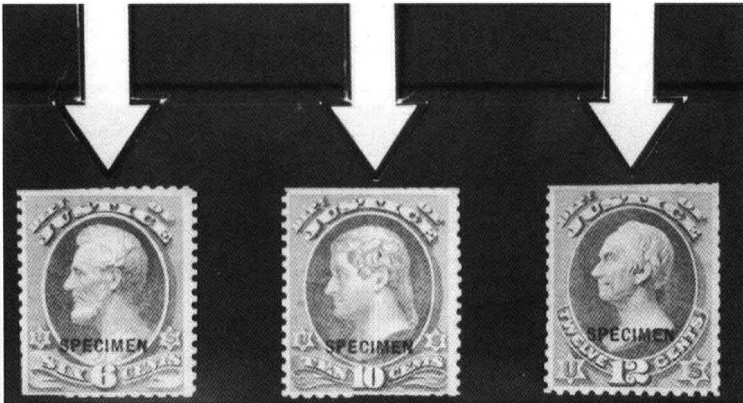


Figure 15. Stamps from another set of Justice Department special printings with several stamps appearing to have been scissor cut together.



Figure 16. Three stamps from a set of Navy Department special printings which have evidence on the bottom of being cut together.

Figure 13 shows stamps from a set of Interior Department with evidence of stacking and scissor cutting on the right and bottom sides of the 10¢, 15¢, 24¢, 30¢ and 90¢ denominations.

Figures 14 and 15 show stamps from other sets of the Justice Department, each set of which has several stamps which appear to have been scissor cut together. Compare the scissor cuts on the top and right sides of the stamps in Figure 14, where it is particularly evident that the cuts were made with the stamps stacked.

Figure 16 shows stamps from a set of the Navy Department which have evidence on the bottom of being cut together.

Figure 17 shows stamps from the State Department with right margin stacking cuts, and Figure 18 shows another State Department set with right margin stacking cuts.

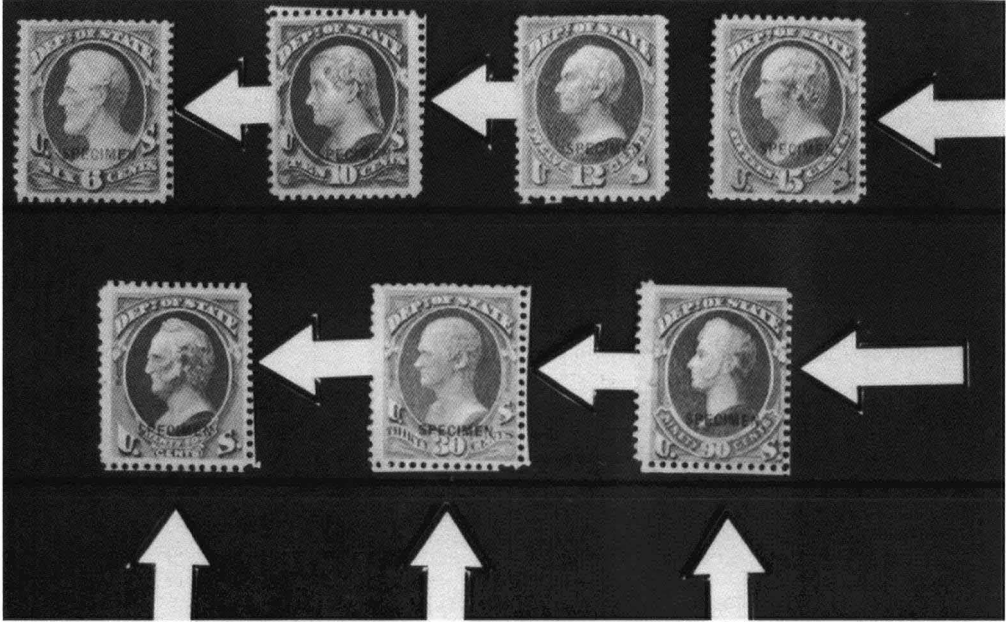


Figure 17. State Department special printings with right margin stacking cuts.

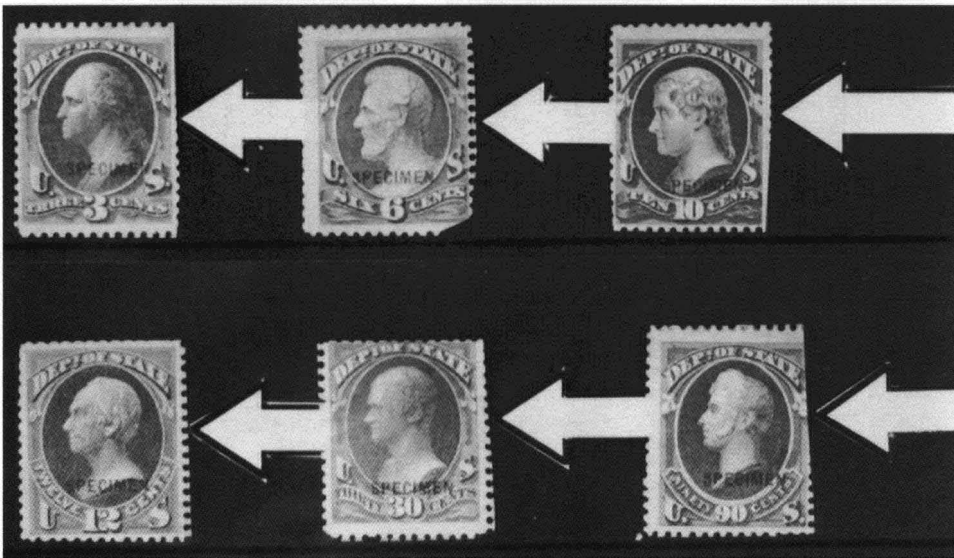


Figure 18. Additional State Department special printings with right margin stacking cuts.



Figure 19. Set of Treasury Department special printings with bottom margin stacked cuts.



Figure 20. Set of War Department special printings, 8 stamps from the same position and with right margin scissor cuts.

Figure 19 illustrates bottom margin stacked cuts on a set of the Treasury Department stamps.

Figure 20 shows a magnificent grouping from a War Department set, eight stamps of which appear to clearly be from the same position, and which show the right margin scissor cuts. (Random probability of one in ten quadrillion.)

Figure 21 illustrates a set of Justice Department which shows similar scissor cuts on the right sides of about half of the stamps, and Figure 22 shows a partial Navy set with similar scissor cuts on the bottom of six of the seven stamps.

A Justice set with scissor cut bottoms is shown in Figure 23, and a Justice set of which there are five denominations with a right straight edge is shown in Figure 24.



Figure 21. Set of Justice Department special printings with similar scissor cuts on a number of the stamps (Christie's Robson Lowe sale of June 25, 1996, lot 400).



Figure 22. Partial set of Navy Department special printings with similar scissor cuts on the bottom of 6 of the 7 stamps (Christie's Robson Lowe sale of June 25, 1996, lot 401).



Figure 23. Set of Justice Department special printings with scissor cut bottoms (Sotheby Parke Bernet sale of May 13-14, 1981, lot 1399).



Figure 24. Set of Justice Department special printings, 5 stamps with right straight edge (Sotheby Parke Bernet sale of March 18, 1980, lot 1319).

But perhaps the evidence which is the most convincing can be found in some sets of stamps which were sold by Kelleher in October 1973. This auction featured sets of the Interior, Navy, Post Office, Treasury and War Department special printings which were accompanied by the original envelopes in which they had been sent by the 3rd Assistant Postmaster General's office. It is highly likely that these sets are exactly as put together by the clerks. The sets are illustrated in Figures 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29, together with their respective envelopes. The first thing that is obvious is that not every stamp in every set is scissor cut. But it is fairly easy to see evidence of scissor cutting in each set, where the stamps appear to certainly have been stacked and cut together.

ONE SET SPECIMEN OFFICIAL POSTAGE STAMPS,

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR—Issue of 1873.

Denominations—1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 12, 15, 24, 30, and 90 cents. Value, \$1.93.



Figure 25. Set of Interior Department special printings, with original envelope (Kelleher sale, October 1973).

What is noteworthy about these sets is that the evidence of scissor cutting differs from what was seen in figure 7. The set pictured in Figure 7 seems to have been cut out from a stack containing all denominations. The result, no doubt due in part to cutter draw, is an abominable set, missing all perforations. Such an experience might well have convinced the clerk to reduce the number of sheets in the stack as he cut them apart. There would be a bit more work involved, but the results would be better looking sets. Early experience with trying to completely cut out one set of stamps may have also resulted in a modification of the technique, so that a row of stamps was cut from the stacked sheets, and then the individual denominations were normally separated on the perforations from the snipped out row.

The Interior set shows clear evidence of similar scissor cuts on the top and bottom of each stamp except the 2¢ denomination. All denominations appear to have been normally separated on the sides, and this set may have been prepared by the modified method just described, with a 2¢ denomination which was later substituted.

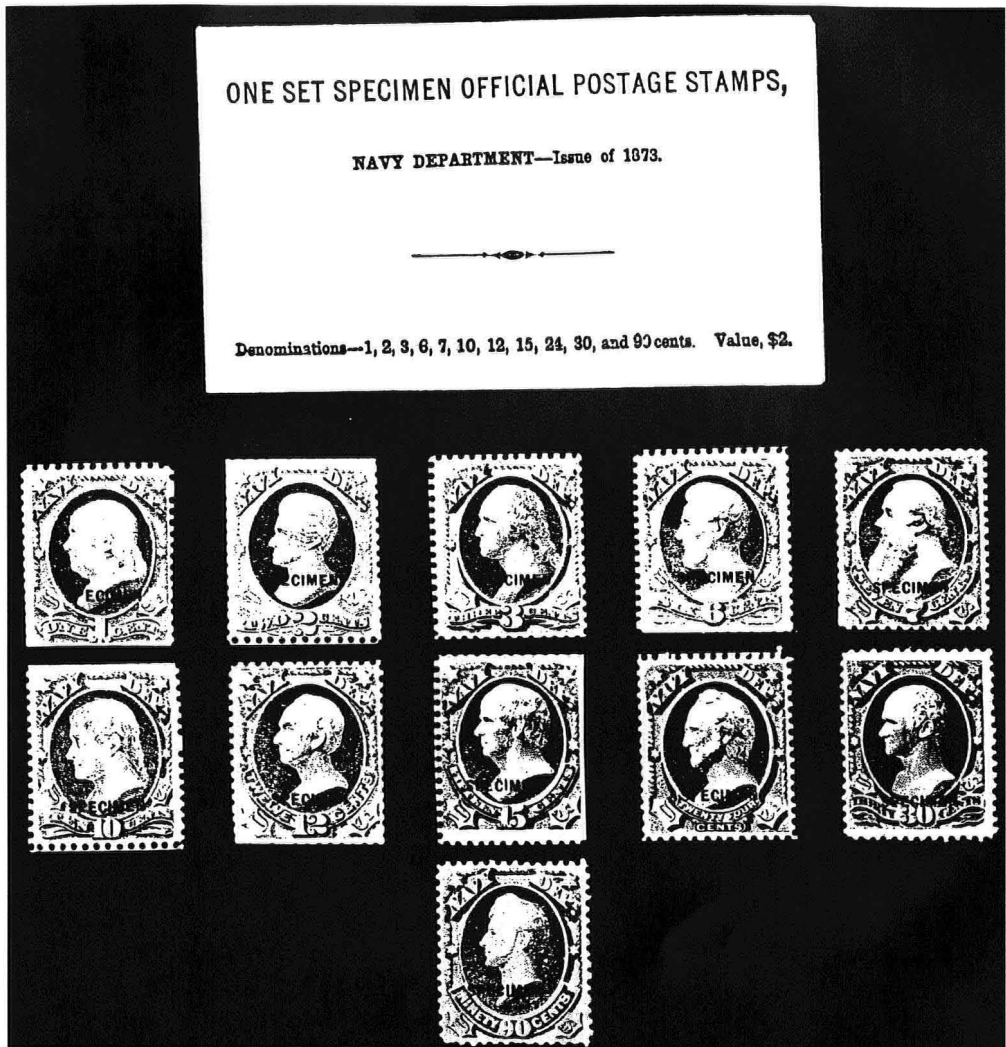


Figure 26. Set of Navy Department special printings, with original envelope (Kelleher sale, October 1973).

The Navy set shows strikingly similar cuts on all denominations except the 30¢ and 90¢ denominations. Especially similar are the top and bottom of the 2¢ and 10¢ denominations, and the top and bottom of the 1¢, 6¢ and 12¢ denominations.

Similar cuts appear on the 6¢ through 90¢ Post Office denominations, except perhaps on the 24¢ and 30¢ denominations.

Notice that the Treasury Department set contains a 7¢ denomination which has a natural straight edge at the right, implying that it came from a different position than the other stamps in the set. The 7¢ denominations of these stamps were vastly more popular than the other denominations, and it is entirely possible that this particular set had a 7¢ stamp removed from it to satisfy an order, and then, when a full set was ordered, the replacement straight edge stamp was added. This set shows scissor separations on top and bottom, but not on either side. It could be a set which had been made up from a row of stamps which had been scissor separated, and then the individual denominations separated normally.

It is noteworthy that the War Department set contains no scissor cuts at all. This is similar to other sets of the War Department, which show little or no evidence of scissor

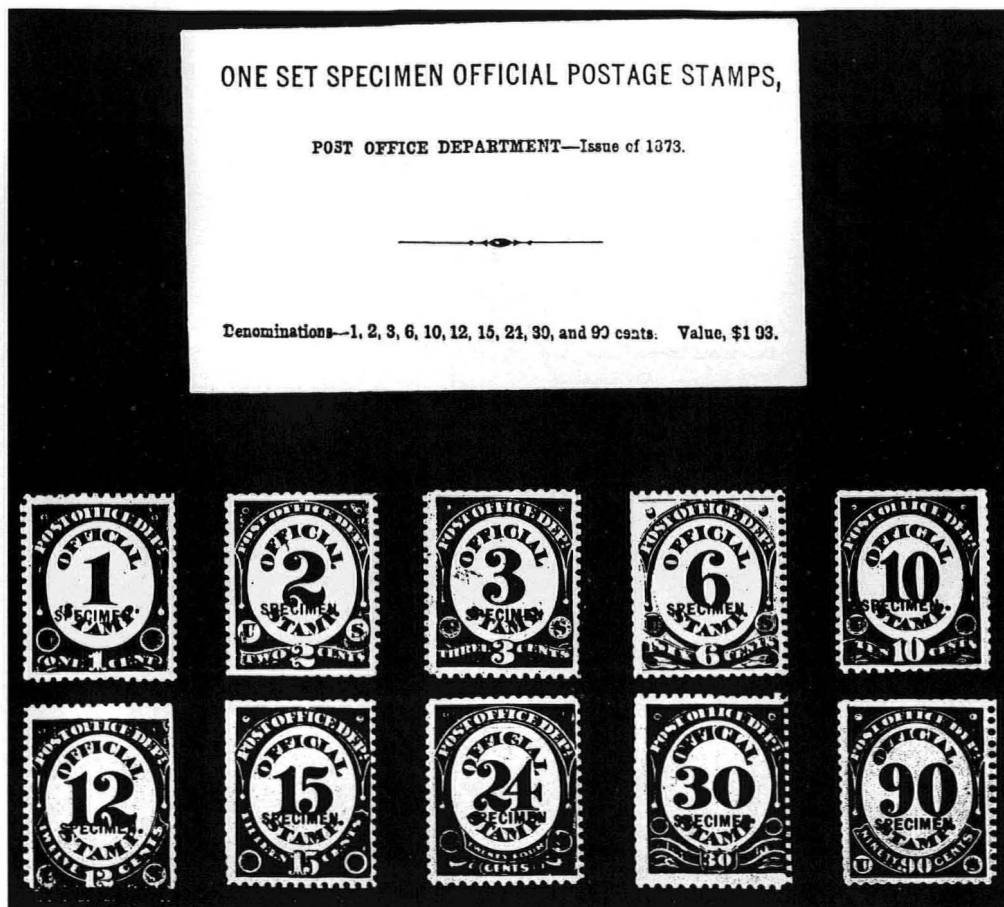


Figure 27. Set of Post Office Department special printings, with original envelope (Kelleher sale, October 1973).

cuts, due possibly to having been assembled by a clerk who did not subscribe to the scissor cutting method of saving time.

Not illustrated is the famous set of War Department stamps which were all SEPCIMEN error stamps, and therefore were all from position 21 in the sheets. This set is described by Combs.¹⁸ He writes as follows:

Elmer F. Gould, a mover of Framingham, Mass., was not only a lucky man, but he saved for philately a wonderful accumulation of War Department SEPCIMEN errors. As explained in 1940 in *Mekeel's Weekly*, Gould took as part payment on a moving job, several pictures of horses, and one frame of postage stamps. Finding the latter attractive, he hung the frame in a house where it was ultimately noted by a friend who suggested that the stamps might be valuable. They were. In addition to practically all of the special printings of 1875, the frame contained four sets of Departmental SPECIMENS. But the War Department set was complete with the SEPCIMEN error on each and every denomination. These proved to be the discovery copies of the 6¢, 12¢, and 15¢. (The report stated that this was also the discovery copy of the 24¢, but Phillips had estimated in 1933 that a copy of this denomination existed).

This set is reported to be faded somewhat from its exposure to light. It is also reported that it was offered for sale by a dealer for \$2,000 about 1950. The present location of

¹⁸Combs, *op. cit.*, page 41 *et seq.*, partially taken from Frederick B. Fitts, "Four Heretofore Unknown Stamps Discovered," *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News*, Vol. 54 (May 6, 1940) p. 366.

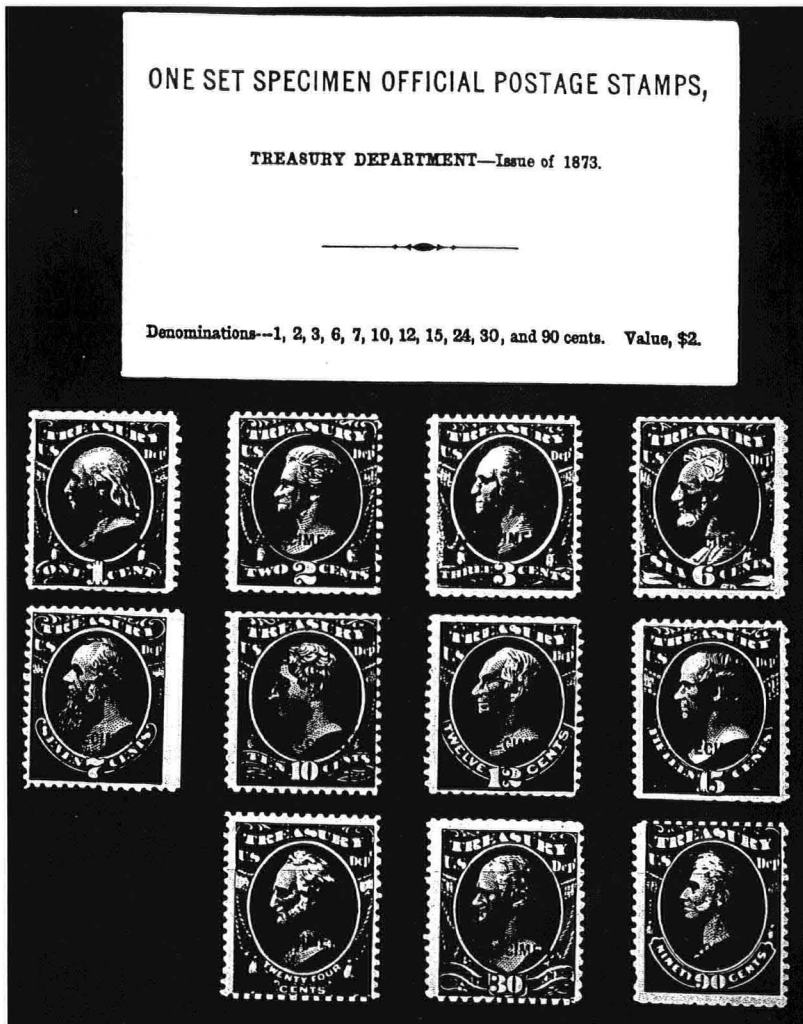


Figure 28. Set of Treasury Department special printings, with original envelope (Kelleher sale, October 1973).

this wonderful set is unknown to the author, and it is assumed that the set is no longer intact. The probability that this set was randomly chosen is one in one ten sextillion, or one one hundredth the probability of the plate number single Justice set.

These illustrations seem to offer reasonable proof that many of the sets had been prepared by stacking the sheets and then cutting out a full or partial set of stamps. And there is some evidence, particularly in the Agriculture, Executive and War sets which are illustrated, that some sets had been assembled without scissor cutting, or with only partial scissor cutting, but from the same positions in the sheets.

These sets seem to satisfy the first two of the three possibilities which were outlined above. The third possibility supposes that sheets of stamps were stacked in ways which accommodated the selvedge being on different sides of the sheets, which involved assembling the sets of sheets in various and diverse ways. This possibility is extremely interesting, and deserves some special attention.

While all of the previously referenced sets have been examples from the special printing of the U.S. Departmental stamps, a prime example also exists in the form of the

Here's surprising news...

From expresses and waterways to important classic stamps (including properties like Gallagher, Boker, & Rudman), you won't find a better source of classic U.S. material than...

Call or write us for your FREE catalog for our next sale!



As a U.S. classics specialist, you'll find Nutmeg to be a key source for thousands of auction lots of outstanding specialized United States stamps and covers. **Selling?** We have a voracious need to buy every kind of quality collection, large or small. Call us at (203) 743-5291 and let's have a chat about what you have for sale.



From the renowned Waterbury "Running Chicken" cover to the "Z" Grill, we have handled countless major rarities.

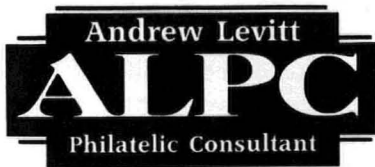
When you sell: Place Your Trust In Our 38 Years Of Experience In Working With Many Of The Great Collectors Club Members.

We are America's #1 buyer of U.S. and world-wide stamps and postal history...and have enjoyed our lasting relationships with many Classics Society members. With over \$5 million available at all times, we urge you to give us the opportunity to compete for your collection when it is for sale. Call, write or e-mail us today for our bank letters of credit.

No Matter What You May Have For Sale...

Find out today why we're paying the highest prices we have ever offered to purchase practically every kind of philatelic property you can imagine. We're very anxious to talk to you personally—and today—about all stamps, covers and collections you have for sale. Call for our bank letters of credit. Find out how serious we are! Phone: 203-743-5291.

Post Office Box 342
Danbury CT 06813



(203) 743-5291
Fax: (203) 730-8238
E-mail: levstamp@mags.net

When You Sell, Trust The Reliability Of The Firm That Has Handled Most of America's Greatest Classics.

So many of the world's great collections have always come to us.

Our 38 years of active buying are virtually unmatched in philately. They represent a record of integrity and comfort for the seller who always must trust, implicitly, the individual who buys his collection.

Andrew Levitt is the most competitive buyer in philately. We have handled properties as diverse as those of Grunin, Haas, Boker, Chapin and Jennings. When the serious U.S. classics philatelist thinks of selling his collection there is no doubt that he should come to Andrew Levitt first.

We have \$5 million ready to purchase your philatelic property...from the smallest collection to entire carloads of albums. Our letters of credit can be sent to you today. And for larger holdings we can come right to your home.

Can Andrew Levitt pay you more for your stamps? We keep our finger on the pulse of the market and will pay you the most competitive market value for your stamps & covers. And not tomorrow or in installments, but full payment right on the spot. This is always our guarantee.



The renowned Pony Express cover addressed to The Hon. Abraham Lincoln when he was running for president in August 1860. One of the most spectacular covers in American postal history.

Allow Us To Compete For Your Collection. Call, Write or E-Mail Us Today!



Andrew Levitt

We are extremely vigorous buyers of all kinds of important specialized collections and exhibits. Over \$5 million is available now and, after looking at your material, payment from us is immediate. Find out why we are the most active philatelic buyer in America. Bank letters of credit available. Call or write us...or if you're a computer user, just e-mail us and tell us about what you have to sell.

Post Office Box 342
Danbury CT 06813

Andrew Levitt
ALPC
Philatelic Consultant

(203) 743-5291
Fax: (203) 730-8238
E-mail: levstamp@mags.net



Figure 29. Set of War Department special printings, with original envelope (Kelleher sale, October 1973).

famous “Earl of Crawford” set of the special printing of the 1873-1875 issue. This set appeared upon the modern philatelic scene as margin and imprint strips of four, and has since been reduced to four sets of singles. The set is illustrated in Figures 30 and 31. (The perforations are not clearly visible in these illustrations because the stamps were mounted on backing paper.) There are two striking features of this set. The first of these is that the strips are not identical, *i.e.*, they are not all from the identical plate positions. The second is that some of the strips are from the top margin, and some are from the bottom margin. Figures 32, 33 and 34 illustrate the plate positions which these strips of four occupied. The positions of the four stamps are shown in cross hatching. There are many philatelists who believe that the set of War Department stamps which were all SEPCIMEN errors resulted from a collector requesting these. The same has been said about the set of Justice Department plate number singles illustrated in Figure 9. The first feature of the Earl of Crawford set argues against this theory by not having a completely matched set of stamps, in that some are strips from the top margin, and some are strips from the bottom margin. It would have been just as easy for the clerk at the Third Assistant Postmaster General’s office to sell a completely matched set of strips, if he was requested. After all, he had

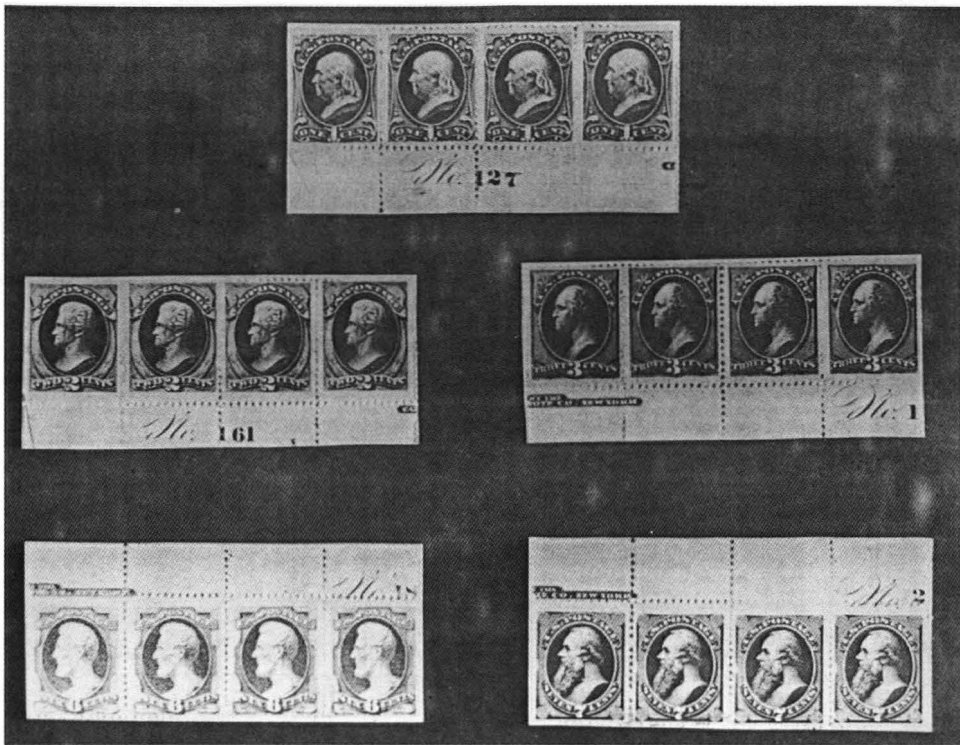


Figure 30. Part of the "Earl of Crawford" set of the special printing of the 1873-1875 issue.



Figure 31. Part of the "Earl of Crawford" set of the special printing of the 1873-1875 issue.

	No 8	██████████								
1R	2R	3R	4R	5R	6R	7R	8R	9R	10R	
11R	12R	13R	14R	15R	16R	17R	18R	19R	20R	
21R	22R	23R	24R	25R	26R	27R	28R	29R	30R	
31R	32R	33R	34R	35R	36R	37R	38R	39R	40R	
41R	42R	43R	44R	45R	46R	47R	48R	49R	50R	
51R	52R	53R	54R	55R	56R	57R	58R	59R	60R	
61R	62R	63R	64R	65R	66R	67R	68R	69R	70R	
71R	72R	73R	74R	75R	76R	77R	78R	79R	80R	
81R	82R	83R	84R	85R	86R	87R	88R	89R	90R	
91R	92R	93R	94R	95R	96R	97R	98R	99R	100R	
	No 8	██████████								

↑
10, 12, 24, 30¢

Figure 32. Positions of some of the "Earl of Crawford" set.

						██████████					No 18
1L	2L	3L	4L	5L	6L	7L	8L	9L	10L		
11L	12L	13L	14L	15L	16L	17L	18L	19L	20L		
21L	22L	23L	24L	25L	26L	27L	28L	29L	30L		
31L	32L	33L	34L	35L	36L	37L	38L	39L	40L		
41L	42L	43L	44L	45L	46L	47L	48L	49L	50L		
51L	52L	53L	54L	55L	56L	57L	58L	59L	60L		
61L	62L	63L	64L	65L	66L	67L	68L	69L	70L		
71L	72L	73L	74L	75L	76L	77L	78L	79L	80L		
81L	82L	83L	84L	85L	86L	87L	88L	89L	90L		
91L	92L	93L	94L	95L	96L	97L	98L	99L	100L		
					██████████					No 18	

6, 7, 15¢
↓

↑
3¢

Figure 33. Positions of some of the "Earl of Crawford" set.

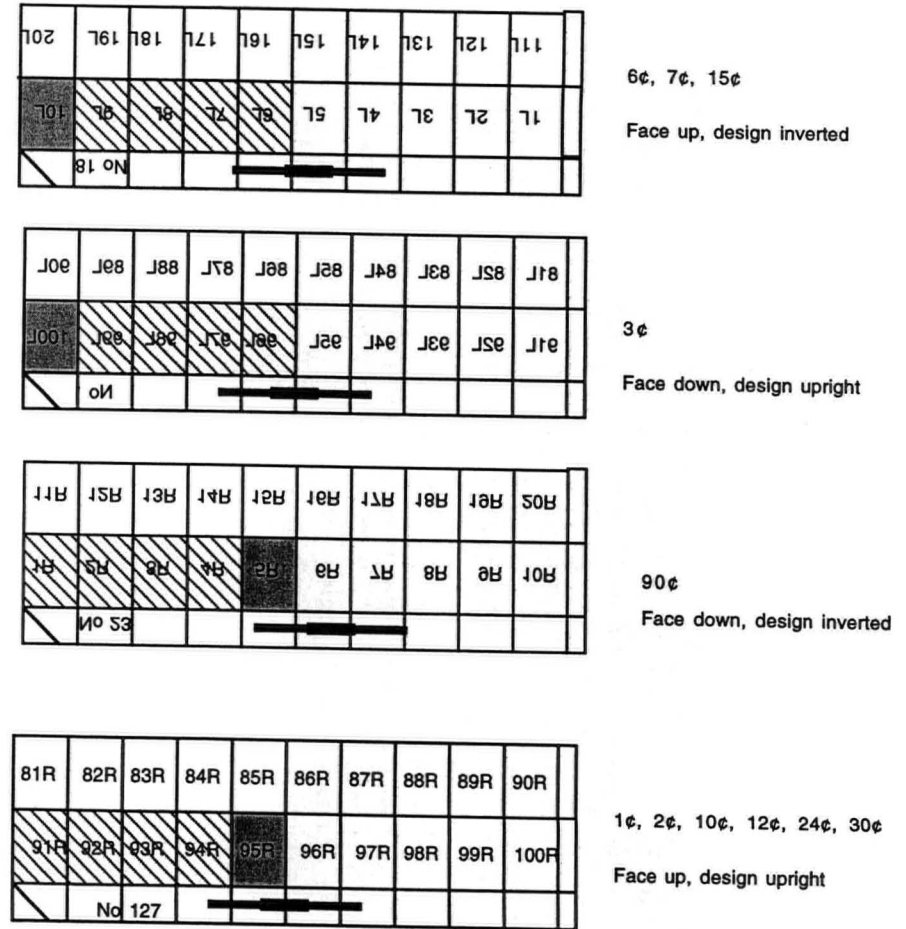
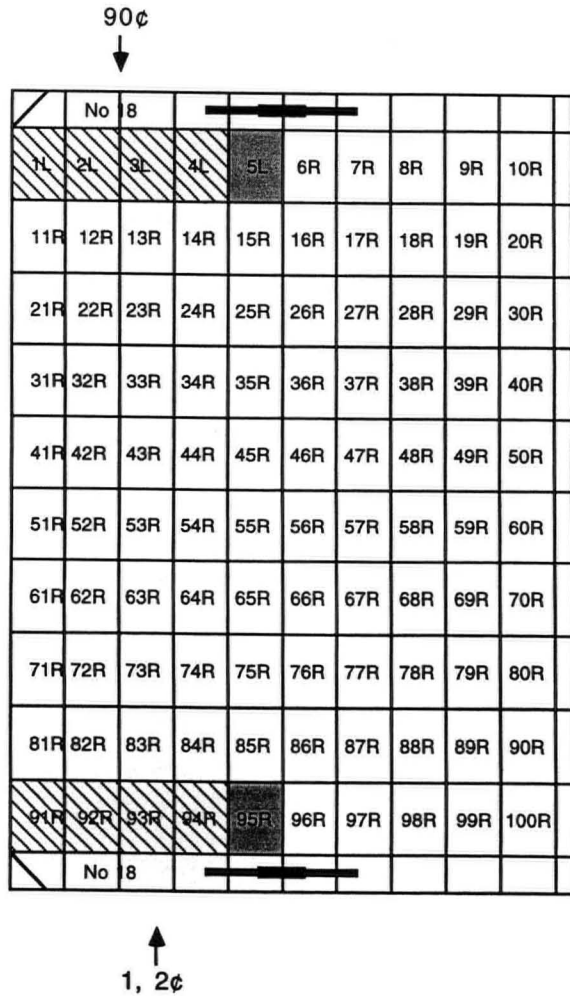


Figure 34. Positions of some of the "Earl of Crawford" set.

Figure 35. Orientation of the sheets for scissor cutting of the "Earl of Crawford" set.

10,000 copies of each stamp, and less than 500 of them were sold. I believe that what happened was that a customer, either by mail or in person, requested four (or more) sets of these stamps. The strips of four which comprise this set just happened to be the ones which were "next in line" on the sheets which were then being used. In this particular case, the clerk apparently did not choose to remove the selvedge, thus endowing us with a rather priceless heritage.

Why were these strips taken from both top and bottom margins, and from both left and right sheets? I believe that this is due to the fact that there were two panes on each plate, and to the way that the panes or sheets were stacked. I believe that this was done intentionally because the vertical selvedge was on the left side of some sheets and on the right side of others. By stacking the sheets with the selvedge all on one side, the stamps were then aligned so that they could be cut out with scissors. It is instructive to try to puzzle out exactly how this set of strips of four was separated from the sheets. Careful examination shows that all denominations were probably removed together, or, alternatively, that they were removed in several steps (probably to diminish the number of sheets in the stack, so as to lessen the effect of cutter draw). These sheets were oriented as follows:

The 1¢, 2¢, 10¢, 12¢, 24¢ and 30¢ stamps were oriented with the printed side of the sheet facing up, and the design upright.

The 3¢ stamp was oriented with the printed side of the sheet facing down and the design upright.

The 90¢ stamp was oriented with the printed side of the sheet facing down and the design inverted.

These eight strips of four were removed together, and if they are stacked as described, the scissor cuts which exist at one end of the strip line up, as would be expected.

The 6¢, 7¢, and 15¢ stamps were oriented with the printed side of the sheet facing up, and the design inverted.

An illustration of these appears in Fig. 35, and clearly they could have either been stacked as shown and cut together, or stacked and cut in several separate piles. However, the positions of the stamps in the set argues for the complete stacking of all of the sheets.

Because the 1¢, 2¢ and 90¢ denominations are clearly left margin copies, while the remaining denominations are not, these might appear at first glance to have been removed from their sheets in a separate "snipping," but this is because of what happened after they were sent to the purchaser.

I believe that the strips of four were originally strips of five, and that they are perhaps stamps that were ordered by Mr. H.S. Henry. The Press Copies of Invoices of the sales of these stamps records a sale of five sets of this issue to Mr. H.S. Henry, Esq., a New York stamp dealer, on April 4, 1881.¹⁹

It is possible that this could be the origin of this set. The order for these five sets was part of a much larger order that Mr. Henry placed, and which included, among others, 20

¹⁹This date is subsequent to the delivery to the 3rd Assistant Postmaster General's Office of the American Bank Note printing of this same issue. Because of this, one might conclude that Mr. Henry was sent sets of the American printing instead of the Continental printing. However, either of two possibilities can explain why this set is a Continental printing. The first is that the five sets were assembled from broken sheets of the Continental printing which were on hand at the time that the American printing was received, and that these broken sheets had been put on top of the sheets of the American printing. The second possibility is that Mr. Henry actually received five sets of the American printing, and that the Earl of Crawford set resulted from five different sets of stamps that had been ordered prior to the delivery of the American printing. They could have been ordered by Mr. Henry or by some other dealer. The evidence is quite clear that the Earl of Crawford set was originally sold in strips of five stamps.

sets of the 1847 and 10 sets of the 1869 issues. I suggest that the five sets were sent in strips of five which had been snipped from sheets which had been stacked in the order that I suggest above. Then I suggest that Mr. Henry sold one set of these stamps. When he did this, the positions of the stamps that he sold were such that they were at the end of the strips of five, which is not illogical. I believe that Mr. Henry arranged the strips of five in order of their denominations, and with the designs upright and facing up. Then he removed the 1¢, 2¢, 3¢, 6¢, 7¢, 15¢ and 90¢ denominations from the right end of the strips, and the 10¢, 12¢, 24¢ and 30¢ denominations from the left end of their strips. The plate positions of the stamps in the set he sold were as follows:

1¢, 2¢ - 95R, leaving strips of four from positions 91R, 92R, 93R, and 94R

3¢ - 100L, leaving a strip of four from positions 96L, 97L, 98L, and 99L

6¢, 7¢, 15¢ - 10L, leaving strips of four from positions 6L, 7L, 8L, and 9L

10¢, 12¢, 24¢, 30¢ - 91R, leaving strips of four from positions 92R, 93R, 94R, and 95R

90¢ - 5L, leaving a strip of four from positions 1R, 2R, 3R, and 4R

This separation removed any existing traces of the scissor snip on the 1¢, 2¢ and 90¢ denominations, since these stamps were sold. The other stamps in the set which was sold were all straight edge copies, and I will wager that if a careful search is made, these copies could be located in auction catalogs, and their perforations would match up with these strips of four.

The location of these strips (of five) stamps on the plates is shown in Figures 32, 33 and 34. The strips of four from the Earl of Crawford are cross hatched for identification, and the fifth stamp in the set, which I suggest was sold by H. S. Henry, is shown with a dotted background. The interesting thing about these sheets is that all of the stamps in the set apparently could have been separated together by either folding the right sheets over the left sheets, so that they faced each other, or the right sheets could have been inverted and placed over the left sheets. This was clearly not done, and a combination of the two methods was used. The reason for this is unclear, but arranging them as was done probably resulted in a better alignment of the stamps from the top of the stack to the bottom of the stack.

If these strips of four actually were from the five sets ordered by Mr. Henry, it also reveals how insignificant the collectors and dealers of the day thought that the plate numbers and imprints were. From the above figures and illustrations, it is easy to see that the set of singles sold by Mr. Henry cut off half of the plate number on both the 3¢ and the 7¢ stamp. And even if these strips are not what was sold to Mr. Henry, it seems obvious that the Post Office clerk who sold them also did not care about the plate numbers. I believe that it was left to succeeding generations of philatelists to become more sophisticated.

It is possible that the stacked sheets were initially cut with scissors, and that after the snipping process was abandoned, the sheets remained in the same orientation, resulting in the sale of this set with both top and bottom selvages. There were undoubtedly other cases where this method of stacking the sheets occurred, and in those cases the resulting sets were taken from several sheet positions, instead of just one. One might test this hypothesis by taking an original set of scissor cut stamps and restacking them to see how the scissor cuts lined up, that is, whether certain stamps lined up better when they were inverted. This might be expected on stamps which were printed from plates of two sheets. The phenomenon of cutter draw interferes with this. I believe that cutter draw is one of the main reasons that so many of the scissor cut special printings are mutilated. The lower in the stack the stamp was, the greater the effect of cutter draw and the further the scissor cut deviated from its position on the top sheet of stamps, often cutting into the design. But this consideration aside, one can examine the examples which were illustrated above for indications that some of the sheets were inverted.

What conclusions can be drawn from the evidence and inferences presented above? There are a number of them, because it is apparent that not one, but several methods of separating these stamps were used, either at different times, or by different clerks, or some combination of these. The following appear to be sound conclusions:

a. Scissor cutting appears on only those sets of stamps which were to be sold as complete sets, and which were to be put into the small envelopes.

b. Scissor cutting does not appear on the initial issues of the dollar State Department denominations or the Newspaper and Periodical stamps, since neither of these issues was to be sold in sets.

c. Scissor cutting does not appear on any of the later printings of these stamps, since these later printings were not used to make up sets.

d. There were complete sets of stamps in which all denominations were stacked, and the complete set cut out at once, with scissor cuts evident on all four sides.

e. There were complete sets of stamps in which fewer than all denominations were stacked and cut out at once. The set would consist of several scissor cut stacks, with the scissor cuts on all four sides.

f. There were instances where some or all denominations in a set were stacked, and a horizontal row of the stamps was scissor separated. Sets were then formed by normally separating single stamps from these strips.

g. There were instances where the stamps were not scissor cut, but were normally separated.

h. Regardless of the separation method, the stamps in a set were in many cases from the same sheet positions, since the clerks were working systematically through the sheets. Exceptions to this were those cases in which a sheet needed to be inverted or placed upside down in order to make the scissor cutting easier.

i. It seems probable that the clerks "raided" envelopes which contained full sets in order to easily retrieve single denominations to fill orders for these.

j. It also seems probable that envelopes which had first been "raided" were later replenished with the missing denominations, which then might then have no scissor cuts, since the campaign to fill envelopes had ended, eliminating the need for speed or efficiency.

How many of these individual sets, in their small envelopes, had been prepared? If sets had been prepared only on order, and not prepared in advance, conventional wisdom would say that only the number of sets which were actually sold had been prepared. But we have already hypothesized that the sets were prepared in advance. There is a way that this hypothesis can be demonstrated to be correct, and which will give us an idea of the number of sets prepared in advance.

The method was suggested to me in 1985 by a peculiar event which I did not fully understand or appreciate at the time. I owned a 12¢ Navy Department SEPCIMEN error, and my friend, Leonard Sheriff, also owned one. We "knew" that there were no more of these errors since all references, and particularly Combs, had made the assumption that there could be no more of them than the number of sheets which were required to sell the number of stamps sold. Leonard and I talked about writing an article jointly which was centered on these two stamps. The article was to be titled "A Tale of Two Rarities." I began to lay out the article, and I decided that one of the things which we would discuss was the fact that our two stamps came from different sheets, and that we might be able to discern which stamp came from which sheet. According to Combs and other students of these stamps, there were 107 of this denomination sold, and I reasoned that if the overprints on the two sheets were in sufficiently different places, the two sheets could be separately identified. Further, by researching the overprint position on a reasonable number of the non-error stamps, it should be possible to identify which sheet sold 100 stamps, and which



Figure 36. Navy Department special printings, 12¢ “SEPCIMEN” errors.



Figure 37. Post Office Department special printings, 24¢ “SEPCIMEN” errors.



Figure 38. War Department special printings, 30¢ “SEPCIMEN” errors.

sheet sold 7 stamps. Well, my idea did not work. The reason for this was that the overprint position on the two stamps was not in accord with my theory. I was able to identify two different overprint positions on the 12¢ non-error overprinted stamps, but the SEPCIMENs did not follow suit. The logical reason for this escaped me for a long time, probably because I had never thought that there had been a supply of sets prepared in advance which might have exceeded the number of stamps sold. I finally came to my senses when I saw a third copy of the 12¢ SEPCIMEN error appear on the auction market, and I realized that more than two sheets of stamps must have been used to make up the sets in advance, and that a clerk, in later need of a single 12¢ Navy stamp, had reached into a set which had the error stamp in it. Actually, it is highly likely that the entire set consisted of SEPCIMEN errors, but that perhaps only the single stamp was taken from it. This discovery of a third 12¢ Navy SEPCIMEN error was followed by the realization that there are two known 24¢ Post Office Department SEPCIMEN errors, when only 84 of the stamps had been sold, and that there are at least three 30¢ War Department SEPCIMENs, compared to 104 stamps sold. These are illustrated in Figs. 36, 37 and 38.

This evidence would tend to indicate that perhaps as many as 300 sets of some of the stamps had been prepared in advance, which was far more than ever were sold. It is not possible to judge whether this many sets of every issue had been prepared, but it is my estimate that 200 to 300 sets is probably the high estimate, and that some other issues might have had far fewer envelopes prepared. Table 2 does not appear to support the high estimate of 300 sets, but the existence of the SEPCIMEN errors does, at least for some of the departmental issues. This is what one might expect, since the departmental issues were difficult for the public to obtain, and therefore might be expected to be in high demand. On the other hand, sets of the 1873-1875 issue, which was the then current issue, could have been expected to be less. Consequently, perhaps fewer than 100 sets of this issue were prepared in envelopes. □

WWW. BRADSHEFF.COM

Featuring 19th century

U.S. POSTAL HISTORY ON-LINE

Browse through my on-line catalogs with all items
photographed

Want list register form to list the areas you are looking for

Photocopies also available by regular mail

Brad Sheff

P.O. Box 246, Northfield, VT 05663

Brad@bradsheff.com

GUIDO CRAVERI
is buying at top prices

1847 issue

(covers only)

and 1851 issue (covers only)

used in

**Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico,
Oregon, Oklahoma, Utah and Washington Territories**

**Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, Louisiana,
Mississippi, Missouri, Texas and Wisconsin cancellations**

Rail Road cancellations

Waterway usages and cancellations

**Way cancellations and foreign destinations
and unusual covers**

Please send your offer by fax or mail with the price requested.

Our fax no. is:

011.41.91.6494294

(Please do not send original items without prior notification)

**GUIDO CRAVERI
HARMERS AUCTIONS SA**

**Via Pocobelli, 16. CH-6815 MELIDE, Switzerland
Tel: 011. 41.91. 649.42.85 Fax: 011. 41.91. 649.42.94**

MATTHEW BENNETT, INC.

Serving the Philatelic World for Over 50 Years



MATTHEW BENNETT, INC.



#38 Superb

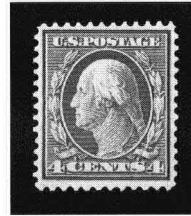
Cat. Value
\$400.00

Realized
\$7425.00

*T*hese stamps are just two of the more than 2,200 lots sold in our public auction of March 29–31, 1999. Judging from the realizations in this sale, prices for U.S. stamps are simply astounding! Given this market, if you are slowing down in one or more areas of your collecting interest, this would be a most propitious time to turn

a portion of your hobby into a financial asset.

As a family-owned auction house, we can offer our highly personalized service, expert staff and state-of-the-art catalogues to ensure that every stamp in your collection achieves its highest potential. If you wish to participate as a consignor in what already promises to be a very exciting Fall auction, just call Harvey Bennett or George Eveleth to discuss your holding.



#360
Extremely Fine,
Ex-Hill

Cat. Value
\$19,000.00

Realized
\$35,750.00

601 Washington Avenue The Penthouse, Suite 401 Baltimore, MD 21204
(410) 823.3714 (800) 638.4223 FAX (410) 321.5747

E-MAIL: info@bennettstamps.com

Professional Philatelists Licensed Auctioneers Member: ASDA, APS, USPCS, CSA

**WHAT HAVE WE DONE?
CONGRESS PROBES THE DEPARTMENTALS, 1873-1874
WARREN S. HOWARD**

One of the greatest feats of American stamp printing was the production of nine sets of official stamps in 87 days during the spring of 1873. The Continental Bank Note Company's overtime effort created a wealth of philatelic material. There are ninety hand-somely-engraved stamps, in sheets enhanced with plate numbers, carefully-crafted imprints and guide arrows. Along with the stamps came a variety of production errors: inconsistently engraved dies, double and short transfers, foreign entries and irregular plate number spacing. This production effort and its accompanying errors have been very ably described in the *Chronicle* and other philatelic journals.¹

When the official stamps first went into service, they were typically applied on envelopes which had been designed for signature franks.² (Figure 1.) Once these old-fashioned envelopes were used up, they were redesigned for use with official stamps, by eliminating the space for the clerk's signature and moving the corner card to the upper left so it would not be obscured by the stamp affixed in the traditional upper right. (Figure 2.) The Post Office Department went so far as to have a little box printed with simulated perforations, instructing "here affix official stamp." (Figure 3.) Still, as late as 1875, the old style envelopes were still being used in Washington, D.C. (Figure 4.) All of these covers show the results of careful weighing to comply with the postal rates of the time. Embossed envelopes from the War and Post Office departments add variety to these early covers.

While these philatelic events were occurring, another story, much less known, was also unfolding. The arrival of the official stamps forced major changes in the mail systems of the executive departments. Part of that story was uncovered by the 43rd Congress, which passed a series of resolutions in December 1873 and January 1874 asking the cabinet level departments (thereby excluding Agriculture, which was still technically a commission) about the costs and consequences of the change from franked mail to official stamps. The replies were prompt. While they told little about the use of official stamps in the field offices, they do give us a rare picture of the effects of the official stamps upon the great departmental headquarters in Washington, D.C.³

The Pre-Stamp Scene

Prior to the introduction of official stamps on July 1, 1873, the departments in Washington sent most of their mail with signature franks. The department secretaries, their

¹Alan C. Campbell, "The Design Evolution of the United States Official Stamps," *Chronicle*, November 1995, 267ff., February 1996, 45ff., May 1996, 115ff.; W. V. Combs, "Designs of the U. S. Departmentals," *American Philatelist*, September 1959, 891ff.; Alfred J. Barcan, "United State Official Stamps and the Just Petition," *Collector's Club Philatelist*, May 1960, 117ff. Recent articles in the *Chronicle* relating to plate varieties include those by Alan C. Campbell, August 1996, 183ff., August 1997, 199ff., November 1997, 275ff.; Ralph Ebner, May 1998, 138ff.; Roy D. Craig, Jr., August 1996, 190ff.; and Alfred E. Staubus, August 1991, 198ff., February 1991, 47ff., November 1991, 272ff.

²Lester C. Lanphear III, "Department of the Interior First Day Usage," *Chronicle*, May 1996, 111ff.

³The resolutions were addressed to the secretaries of War, Navy, Treasury, Interior, Justice, State, and Post Office. The Commissioner of Agriculture and the President were not included, so we have no reports on the Executive and Agriculture official stamps.

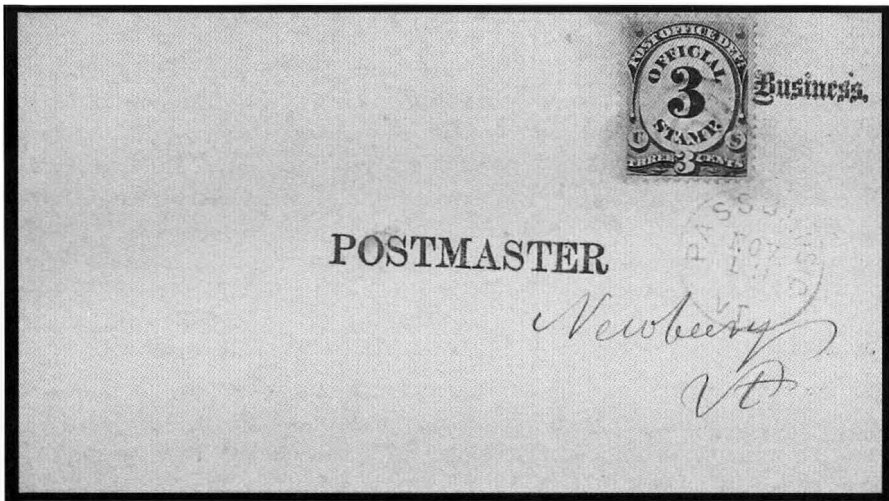
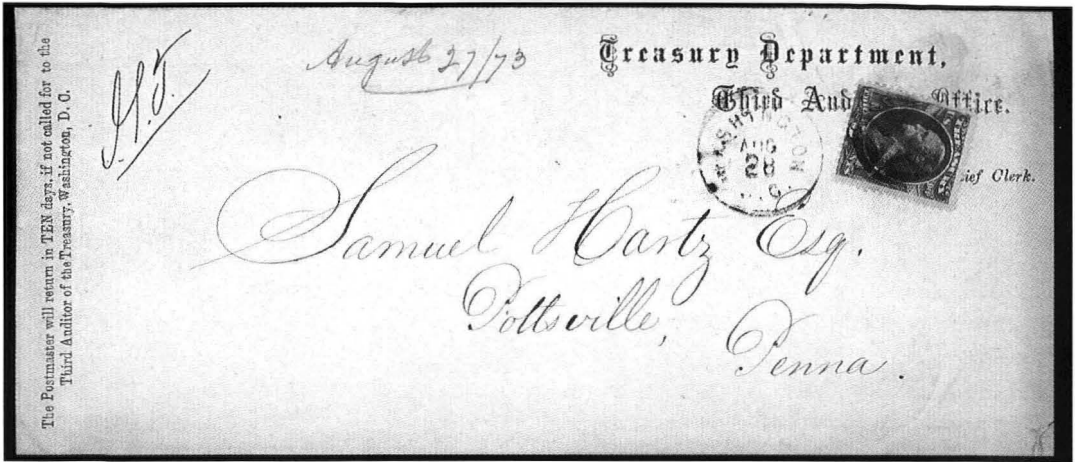


Figure 1. A. Treasury Department, Third Auditor, Washington, D.C., August 1873, half ounce rate; B. Post Office Department, Passumpsic, Vermont, November 1873 (?), half ounce rate.

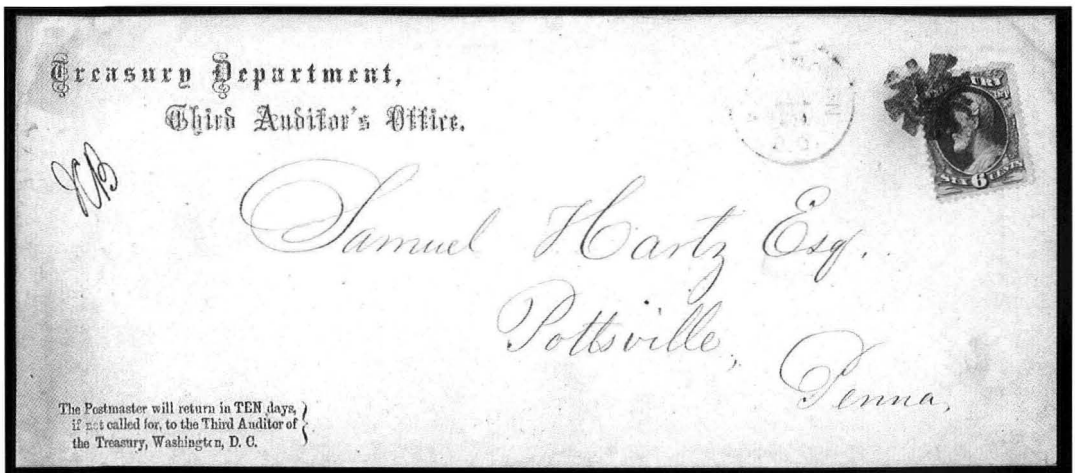


Figure 2. Treasury Department, Third Auditor, Washington, D.C., December 1873, one ounce rate.

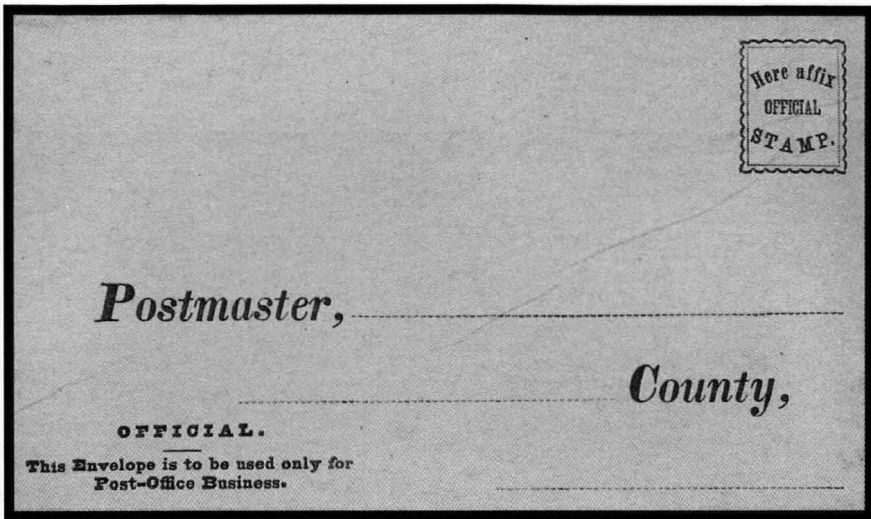


Figure 3. Post Office Department, unused envelope with printed box for official stamp.

bureau chiefs and their chief clerks were authorized to frank mail.⁴ Envelopes usually had a labeled space in the upper right corner for the franking officer's signature. Since the envelopes had no postal validity until signed, they did not need to be controlled. Most did not require weighing. The departments used postage stamps only for foreign and registered mail.

The departments' field offices sent mail postage-free to the franking officers in Washington, so there was a two-way flow of unstamped mail between the departments and their field offices. In addition, postmasters could frank their mail to other postmasters, and Internal Revenue officers to other Internal Revenue officers.⁵ The field offices paid postage only on mail to other field offices and to the general public, as well as on foreign and registered mail. While the field offices were more familiar with postage stamps than the departments in Washington, their use of stamps was limited.

The substitution of official stamps for franked mail delivered a great shock to the mail systems of the departments and their field offices. The stamps had to be purchased with Congressional appropriations, and their use controlled. As we have seen, a new style of envelope had to be printed. In most cases, letters had to be weighed in half-ounce increments, so that the proper postage would be paid. Scales and scales became important pieces of equipment, and extra time had to be spent in requisitioning and controlling the stamps and in weighing outgoing mail.

The Congressional Resolutions

The first resolution came from the House of Representatives on December 8, 1873. It asked the cabinet-level departments to report the costs they had incurred from the introduction of official stamps. Most of the replies came in between December 16, 1873, and January 6, 1874, although the War Department's reply did not arrive until March 11, 1874. The reports included not only the cost of purchasing official stamps, but also costs of personnel and equipment added to put the stamps into service.

As we will see, some of the replies triggered a follow-up House resolution on January 16, 1874. Meanwhile, the Senate had passed a resolution on January 5, 1874, asking the departments to report who had been issued official stamps, and whether any

⁴Act of June 8, 1872, 17 Stat 306.

⁵*Ibid.*

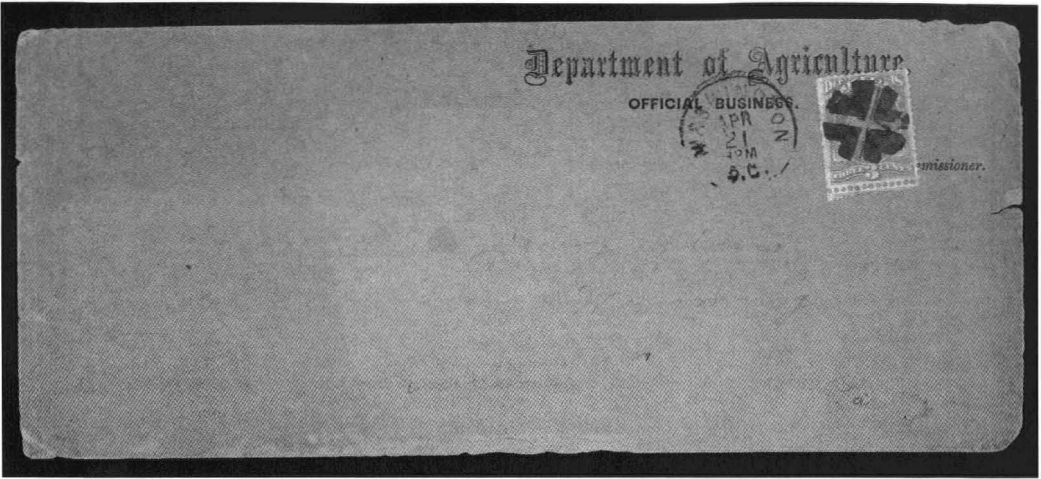
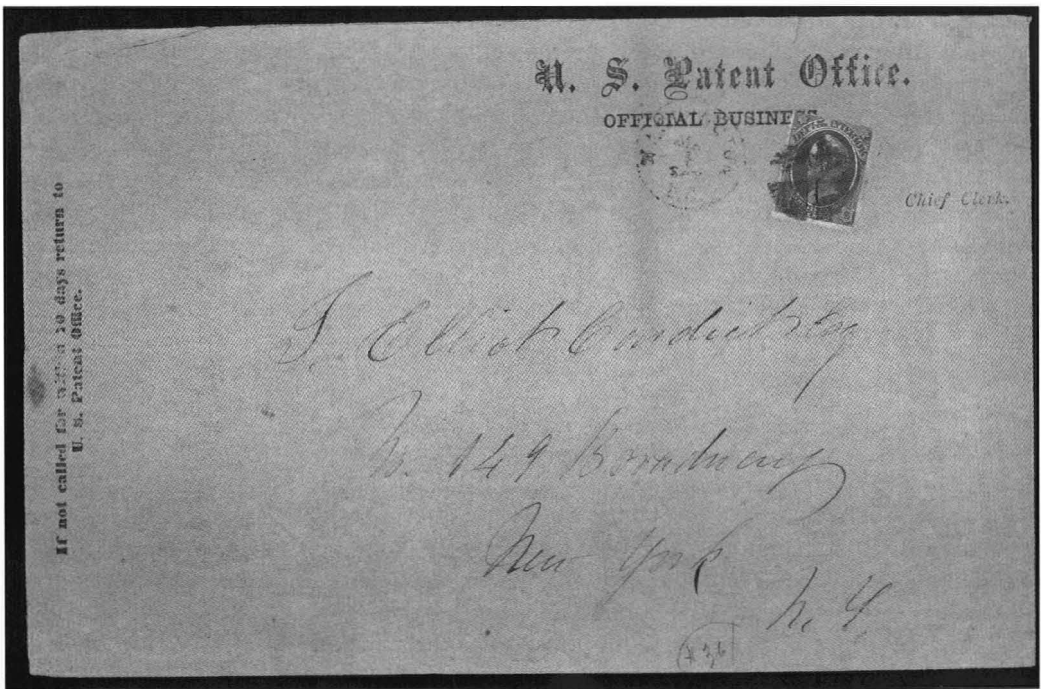


Figure 4. A. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., April 1875, half ounce rate. This cover originally contained twenty 3¢ Agriculture stamps for forwarding seeds and reports to "assistant correspondents." Courtesy of Alan C. Campbell. B. Department of the Interior, Patent Office, Washington, D.C., May 1875, 3½ - 4 ounce rate. Postmarks in Washington, D.C. did not incorporate the hour of the day until 1875. Courtesy of Alan C. Campbell.



stamps had been given to the general public to pay postage on replies to department queries for information. The replies to this resolution arrived between January 6 and January 14, 1874. These three resolutions are closely tied, and we will combine the answers below.⁶

The Department Replies

By far the largest user of official stamps was the Post Office itself. In their first year of use, the department issued almost thirty million stamps to almost 36,000 persons, mostly postmasters. But the Post Office replies to the Congressional resolutions do not indicate that official stamps had any discernible effect upon its operations. The Post Office was familiar with controlling stamps, since it issued several hundred million a year to the general public, and was used to weighing letters. Its only expenses from the official stamps were the paper transaction of purchasing stamps from itself for its own use and the Continental Bank Note Company's claim for extra compensation for producing the official stamps.⁷

It was not so with the other departments.

The second largest user of official stamps was the Treasury Department. By December 8, 1873, the Treasury had purchased a stack of velvet brown sheets approximately forty feet high, and had actually sent out about fourteen feet of sheets to department officers. The stamps were distributed to more than 600 locations, mostly outside the District of Columbia: custom houses, Internal Revenue offices, marine hospitals, revenue cutters, lighthouses, mints, steam vessel inspectors, and others. The department assigned two clerks full-time to issue stamps, and purchased two safes to store unissued stamps. It purchased letter scales and sent them by private express companies to its field offices. The department sent out circulars announcing the stamps, and printed forms to control the requisitioning and issuing of stamps. It distributed stamps by registered mail. The total cost of this distribution effort through December 8, 1873 was estimated at \$6,125.78. Most of it was spent on the two clerks, the two safes, and the letter scales.

The Treasury reported that it had no shortage of official stamps. Congress had given it an appropriation of \$504,000 to purchase stamps, and the department correctly estimated that it would not need to spend its full appropriation for the year. In response to the Senate's question about giving official stamps to the general public, the department replied that it had given none. When it wanted to prepay postage on replies to official inquiries, it sent ordinary postage stamps.⁸

What the Treasury reported often appears on a smaller scale in the reports of the other departments. But there are differences. While the War and Interior departments each reported the purchase of one safe, the Justice, Navy and State departments did not. Apparently they were able to secure their unissued stamps in existing safes. Two Department of the Interior clerks became absorbed with official stamps, a Department of Justice clerk spent half his time controlling and distributing official stamps, and the War Department hired a clerk to weigh the 3,600 or more letters and packages sent out monthly by the Adjutant General. But no one else reported staff additions to handle the stamps, and much of the extra work—including the weighing of letters in the Treasury

⁶The replies were published in the executive documents of the 43rd Congress 1st Session as follows: House, December 8, 1873, numbers 28, 31, 48, 59, 73, 77 and 188; Senate, January 5, 1874, numbers 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17 and 18; House, January 16, 1874, number 173. The Senate reports are consolidated in Rae D. Ehrenberg, "Authorized Use of the U. S. Official Stamps by the Various Departments," *33rd American Philatelic Congress Book*, 1967, pp. 35-49.

⁷Ehrenberg, *op. cit.*, 40; House Doc. 59; *Report of the Postmaster General, 1874*, p. 63.

⁸Ehrenberg, *op. cit.*, 38; House Doc. 28.

Department—seems to have been taken on by existing personnel. Although all departments sent at least some stamps to field offices, only the Treasury reported the use of registered mail for their distribution.⁹

A few different items of expense show up in other departments. The Department of the Interior reported the purchase of “holding cases” for stamps issued to each of its Washington bureaus. The War Department’s Signal Service purchased eighty “tin boxes” with locks, to hold stamps sent to its weather observation stations throughout the nation. And the Department of State reported an enigmatic expense of \$1,641, paid in cash to the Post Office for its handling of the “closed bags” of incoming diplomatic mail. It appears that the Post Office moved diplomatic pouches free between the department agents in New York and Boston and Washington, D.C., when the franking privilege was in force, but now wanted payment for the work.¹⁰

Most departments followed the Treasury’s practice of not sending official stamps to private citizens for return postage, though no other department report sending ordinary stamps for that purpose. But there were exceptions. The Department of Justice distributed some official stamps for return postage, when the material requested was bulky. The Post Office sent official stamps for the return of inquiries about prospective postmasters, with the idea that this was in the best interest of the postal service. And the Department of the Interior had no general policy about return postage, leaving each of its bureaus free to decide when official stamps should be supplied.¹¹

A small amount of philatelic miscellany appears in one of the reports. The War Department’s response to the December 8 resolution includes a separate report from each of its Washington bureaus, and three of those bureau reports contain tantalizing fragments of information about actual stamp use. The Adjutant General tabulated this by denomination, ranging downwards from 11,845 3¢ and 8,175 6¢ stamps to 118 30¢ and twenty 90¢ stamps. The Paymaster General went further, distinguishing between adhesives and embossed envelopes. His bureau used only 731 3¢ and 465 6¢ adhesives, against 6,150 3¢ and 1,700 6¢ envelopes. The Inspector General was even more detailed about stationery, breaking down the 235 envelopes he had used into 66 3¢ size 3, 157 3¢ size 7, and twelve 6¢ size 8. He also used 1,181 adhesives of four denominations. Regretfully, this is all we have: there are no published statistics for the remainder of the War Department.¹²

Leaving the Postal Service

The Treasury Department’s reports to Congress were uniformly cheerful, reporting no problems from the change to official stamps. But a darker note appears in most of the other reports, going beyond new needs for personnel and equipment to describe the shift of mail away from the United States postal service.

The Department of Justice used half a clerk’s time on the control and distribution of official stamps. but it also used a “considerable portion” of a messenger’s time delivering local letters *outside the postal service*. In effect, the department started its own mail service, to the detriment of drop rate covers from its Washington headquarters.¹³

The Department of the Interior published a weekly *Patent Office Gazette*, which

⁹House Docs. 31, 48, 73, 77, 188. The Adjutant General’s volume of outgoing mail was estimated from the total of 2¢, 3¢, 6¢ and 12¢ stamps used by his bureau July 1 - December 8, 1873; House Doc. 188, p. 2.

¹⁰House Docs. 48, 73, 188 p. 8.

¹¹Ehrenberg, *op. cit.*, 36, 38, 40, 42, 45, 46, 48.

¹²House Doc. 188, pp. 2-3. Statistics on the remaining Adjutant General denominations include 1¢, 6,541; 2¢, 7,110; 7¢, 392; 10¢, 563; 12¢, 599; 15¢, 712; 24¢, 280. The Inspector General’s adhesives included 2¢, 166; 3¢, 275; 6¢, 223; 10¢, 517.

¹³House Doc. 31.

reported new patents to about 3,000 subscribers. It also sent bound volumes of the gazette to schools, colleges and libraries. Under the rates of 1873, the weekly gazette's postage was two cents per copy. The department considered this burdensome and went to the Washington, D.C. post office for relief. It was able to negotiate a special rate for the weekly gazettes of less than one-half cent per copy. With this concession, the gazette remained in the U.S. mails. The bound volumes were another matter. The Patent Office turned them over to the Adams Express Company, a private carrier which offered lower rates than the postal service. During the first five months of official stamp use, Adams Express collected \$225.76 from the Department of the Interior, and the bound gazettes disappeared from the U. S. mails.¹⁴

Adams Express Company figured in several of the replies to the December 8, 1873 resolution, so the House passed a second resolution on January 17, 1874, asking for more information about items which had left the U.S. mails as a result of the abolition of the franking privilege. The department replies add other items to the bound Post Office gazettes:

Department of the Interior: Materials sent by the Pension Office to pension agents, and materials returned to the Pension Office by examining surgeons who had resigned—total express charges, \$104.20.

War Department: Supplies sent by the Signal Service to weather observation stations—now handled by Adams Express for \$225 per month.

Navy Department: Materials sent by the department to its naval shipyards, and materials sent by the shipyards to the department—a two-way flow outside the mails, costing \$220 or more.

The War Department reported that it had considered making a large use of private express companies, but—in an enigmatic statement which does not give the needed explanations—had abandoned the plan when it discovered that by law the items had to be sent by United States mail. Consequently, all it reported in addition to the Signal Service shipments was \$52.25 in express charges for the Quartermaster General, and \$35.62 by the Engineering Department. The Department of Justice could only find \$10 in new express charges, while the Post Office, State and Treasury Departments reported no express charges on items which had been formerly been franked.¹⁵ To date, no examples of official mail carried by private express companies have ever been reported, but at least now we know that such an item—presumably in the form of a parcel label—could potentially exist.

The harshest statement about the official stamps came from Secretary of the Navy George M. Robeson. He asserted that his department had “practiced economy” in the use of official stamps, and as result “much matter which would be useful and instructive to its officers” had not been sent at all, either by U.S. mail or by private express companies. This was the ultimate blow: elimination of useful mail because of the official stamps.¹⁶

Where is the Benefit?

Abolition of the franking privilege brought an end to the postage-free distribution of improved seeds and agricultural information by the Department of Agriculture, and of public documents by Congress and the executive departments. The most biting resolution came from the Senate, which adopted this harsh proposition on December 15, 1873: “The public has been deprived of the general distribution of improved seeds, and has had the distribution of public documents discouraged. . . . What benefit had been gained to offset

¹⁴House Doc. 173.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶House Doc. 77.

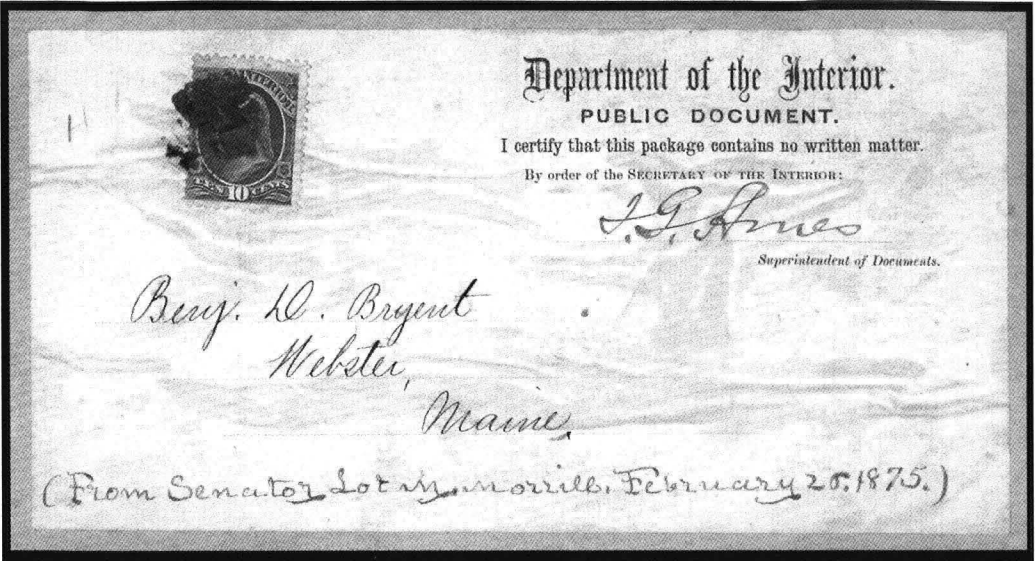
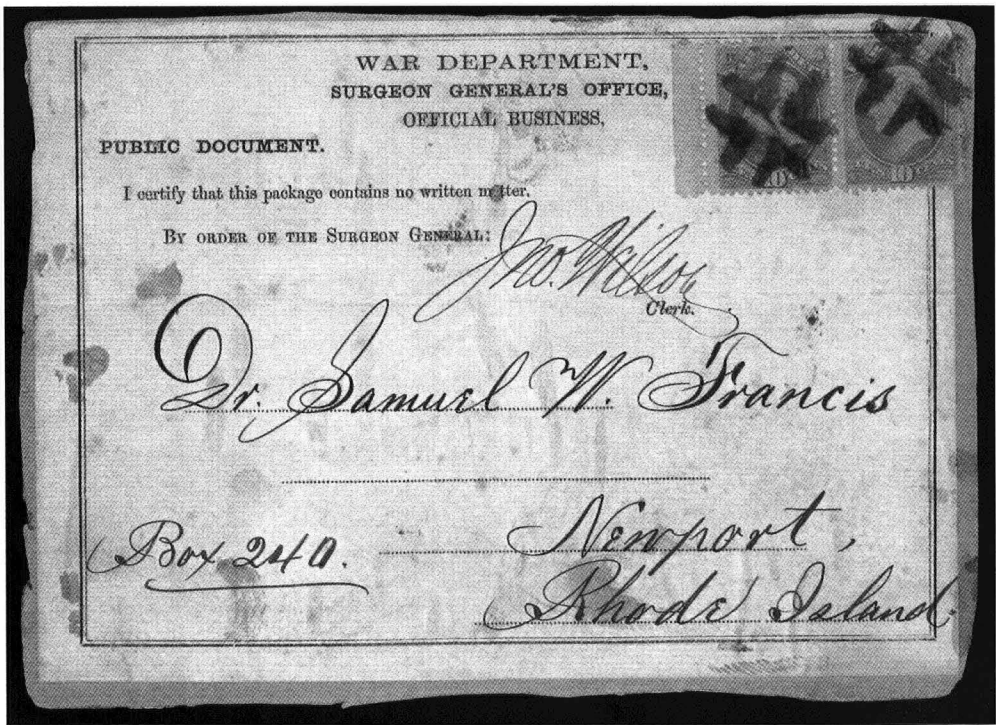


Figure 5. A. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C., February 1875, 10¢ rate for one bound volume of documents. Courtesy of Alan C. Campbell. B. War Department, Surgeon General's Office, Washington, D.C., 20¢ rate for two bound volumes of documents. Courtesy of Alan C. Campbell.



these losses?" This resolution, unlike the others, was directed to the Postmaster General alone. On January 20, 1874, Postmaster General James A.J. Creswell attempted to reply to it. He estimated that the postal revenues had been increased by about four percent through the sale of official stamps, and that 7,000 pounds of public documents a day had been removed from the mails. But he could not show that this had increased the efficiency of postal operations. No postal employees had been laid off, since "the ordinary business keeps them fully occupied." He could not estimate how much official mail had been reduced, since there were no statistics on the number of letters which had been franked, or the amount of regular postage stamps which had been used by the departments and their field offices. In sum, he could not demonstrate that the official stamps had brought any benefit, except for a reduction in the postal deficit.¹⁷

Consequences

The Congressional resolutions and department replies had an immediate effect on the use of official stamps. In 1874, postal rates on official publications were sharply reduced, and effective January 1, 1875, a special rate of 10¢ per bound volume of public documents was instituted. (Figure 5.) Also in 1875, the free franking of seeds and agriculture bulletins was reinstated. Congress adopted a new policy, which lasted into 1884, of appropriating whatever the departments requested for official stamps, so that any shortages of official stamps were due strictly to departmental errors in estimating their needs. And in 1877 Congress began the gradual expansion of penalty mail through the executive branch, thereby restoring the postage-free and weight-free official mail environment which

¹⁷Printed as part of House Doc. 59. The resolution as given here is PMG Creswell's paraphrase; the full resolution is also in the document.

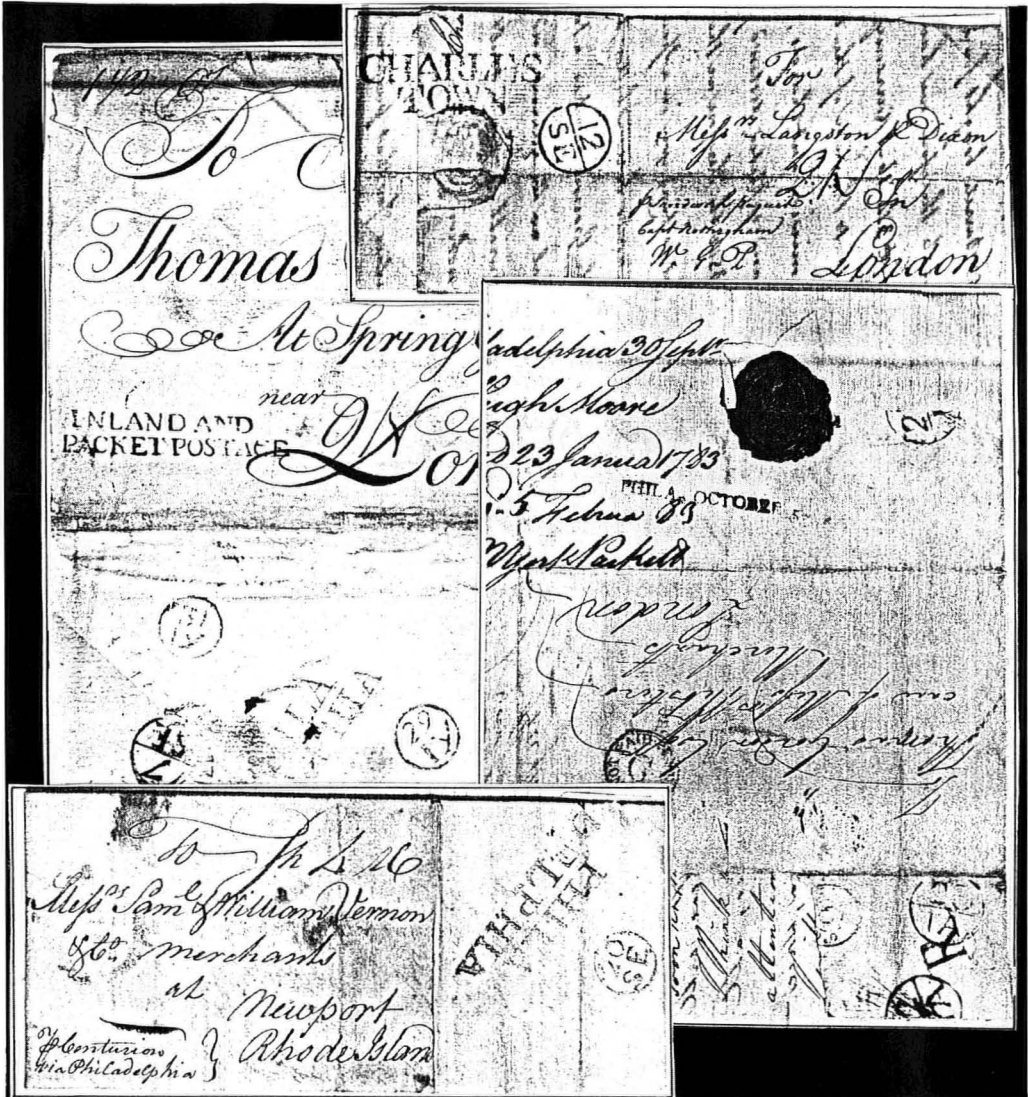
¹⁸Lester C. Lanphear III, "Departmental Used Blocks," *Chronicle*, May 1995, 118-119. The statutes which appropriated money based upon department estimates include 19 Stat 169 (1877), 19 Stat 319 (1878), 20 Stat 206 (1879), 21 Stat 237 (1881), 21 Stat 413 (1882), 22 Stat 255 (1883), 22 Stat 563 (1884). 22 Stat 23 (1880) differs from the others, since it appropriates the same amount of money as was appropriated for 1879.

The U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc. Golden Anniversary Sale - Special Price Reductions

	Members	Non-Members
<i>The Chronicle</i> : #72 to #100 (except #76, 77, 80, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 90, 91)	\$2.00 each	\$2.50 each
<i>The Chronicle</i> : #90 (INTERPHIL issue) or #130 (AMERIPEX issue)	\$4.00 each	\$5.00 each
<i>The Chronicle</i> : #147 Supplement (Winter: U.S.-Spain Mails)	\$2.50	\$2.50
<i>The Chronicle</i> : #100 to current (except #130)	\$1.50 each	\$2.00 each
<i>The Chronicle</i> : Silver Anniversary Book (postal history of Classic period)	\$2.00	\$2.50
<i>1869 Times</i> : up to #53 (except #1, 2, 4, 10, 11, 25)	\$2.00 each	\$2.50 each
<i>1869 Times</i> : softbound volume of #1-#7	\$12.00	\$12.00
Index to <i>The Chronicle</i> , Issues #45 through #72	\$2.00	\$2.50
Index to <i>1869 Times</i> , Issues #1 through #53	\$5.00	\$5.00
Identification Chart, Types of U.S. 1¢ 1851-61 Stamp, by Neinken	\$2.00	\$2.50
Appleby's 1869 Railway Map (reprint)	\$3.00	\$3.00
Special Run Package 1 - Chronicle, #100-177 complete	\$100.00	\$100.00

Order above from Walter Demmerle, 821 Winthrop Dr., Virginia Beach, VA 23452-3939

Our auctions always include
 better postal history,
 especially
 British North America
 and the United States



For a complimentary catalogue contact:

Charles G. Firby
 AUCTIONS

6695 Highland Road, Suite #107
 Waterford, MI 48327-1967
 Telephone (248) 666-5333 • Fax (248) 666-5020

PRE-STATEHOOD CALIFORNIA MAIL TO GREAT BRITAIN
RICHARD F. WINTER

Background

Despite earlier efforts by Americans to declare California a part of the United States, the region was not ceded to the United States by Mexico until the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on 2 February 1848. Governed by a series of military officers, California was never officially designated a United States territory and it never had a territorial government. Nevertheless, California's status during the two and one half year period before statehood, which occurred on 9 September 1850, is usually referred to as "territorial." The formal acceptance of California as part of the United States was, in fact, just a few days after James Wilson Marshall discovered gold on 24 January 1848.¹ The location was a construction site for Sutter's sawmill on the South Fork of the American River, at a place called Coloma. The news spread slowly and skeptically within California until May 1848, when it was confirmed in San Francisco.² Half its population went off to the "diggings." Word spread very slowly to the East. When President James K. Polk confirmed the news in his Annual Message to Congress on 5 December 1848, gold fever start to rage across the country.

While mails were probably sent to California as early as the 1830s, when Americans first took up residence, there was no government mail service before February 1849. Letter writers had to make their own arrangements to get their letters privately to the new western territories, generally by sailing ships that were headed to California. In July 1848, there were 16,159 post offices in the United States.³ None was in its new land of California. The Congressional Act of 3 March 1847, which authorized the printing of the first United States postage stamps, set a rate of 40¢ for letters carried to and from the territories on the West Coast. This rate was in place when California joined the United States in February 1848. Another Congressional Act, that of 14 August 1848, authorized the first three post offices in California at San Diego, Monterey and San Francisco and reaffirmed the 40¢ rate to and from the Atlantic Coast.

Although the inhabitants of California were now citizens of the United States, and entitled to a government-operated postal system, progress in establishing that service was very slow. By January 1850, only three post offices were listed for California.⁴ In his Annual Report of 30 November 1850, Postmaster General N.K. Hall wrote, "The mail service in California and Oregon, and especially in the former, is still in an unsettled state" Again, later in the report he wrote, "The service in California is yet in a crude and unadjusted state." By July 1851, when major reductions to internal United States postage rates were made, of the 19,796 post offices in the United States, only 24 were in California.⁵ Regular mail steamers of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company had begun operations from San Francisco to Panama in May 1849. Thousands of letters were piling up in San Francisco, however, for lack of a mail distribution system to get the mails to other

¹Alan H. Patera, "Coloma, A Brief History," *Western Express* 47, No. 4 (December 1997), p. 6.

²Jesse L. Coburn, *Letters of Gold* (Canton, Ohio: U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, 1984), p. 20.

³*A Gazetteer of the United States of America* (New York: Leavitt and Allen, 1853), p. 832.

⁴*Pratt's United States Post Office Directory 1850*, Wierenga Reprint, 1981, p. 103.

⁵*Report of the Postmaster General, 1851*, Wierenga Reprint, 1976, p. 448 and Coburn, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

California locations. The unique postal problems of California, without good transportation facilities and roads, were further aggravated by having to adjust to an unprecedented population growth caused by the gold rush. In Washington, D.C., more than three thousand miles away, Congress had to authorize the funding needed to correct the situation, but little understood the problems in the West. Having long thought that the postal service should be self-supporting and financed by its own revenues, Congress would not subsidize the California service. According to the Postmaster General, this service cost at least four times as much in California as in other parts of the United States. Private enterprise, namely the private expresses, would step in and keep the communications open where Congress failed to. It would take many years to bring the government service to the level of expectation of the inhabitants of this distant land.

British Mails

When the United States and Great Britain negotiated their first postal convention in December 1848, California was a United States "territory" with a military government. Detailed Regulations to this postal convention were not agreed to until 14 May 1849 and became effective on 1 July 1849.⁶ In these regulations, California and Oregon were listed as places beyond the Post-Routes of the United States, to which mails could be "conveyed via the United States" at a rate of 59¢. If these mails were conveyed between the East Coast and Great Britain on British contract steamships, the United States retained 40¢ per one half ounce, and if carried by American contract steamships, 56¢ per one half ounce. Postmaster General Jacob Collamer wrote instructions to postmasters on 19 June 1849, implementing the new postal convention. He reiterated the British postal convention rates to California stating, "the entire postage is 59 cents the single letter, which may be prepaid or sent unpaid, and of which the British share is 3 or 19 cents, depending on the circumstance whether conveyed by the United States or British packet; and the United States share is 56 or 40 cents, depending on the same circumstance."⁷

In examining my records of early California transatlantic covers,⁸ I have recorded 19 covers to Great Britain via New York prior to statehood on 9 September 1850. Only six covers were sent at the unpaid 59¢ rate. Figure 1 illustrates one of these covers. This 30 April 1850 folded letter to London was posted in San Francisco on 1 May 1850. Because it was unpaid it received the 33 mm. SAN FRANCISCO Cal. red, circular datestamp without an internal rate⁹ and did not receive a PAID handstamp. The unpaid letter rate of 59¢ was written in the upper right corner, by either the sender or the postal clerk at San Francisco. This letter was included in the mails that left San Francisco on 1 May 1850, on the Pacific Mail Steamship Company steamer *Panama*, which arrived at Panama City on 21 May. Transported approximately 60 miles across the Isthmus to Chagres, the letter was placed on board the United States Mail Steamship Company steamer *Georgia*, departing Chagres on 26 May and arriving in New York on 9 June 1850.¹⁰ New York struck the black circle "40" in the upper right over the unpaid letter rate to show the United States debit to Great Britain of 40¢, the American inland rate from California to the East Coast. The letter was placed in the mail bags sent to Boston for the next Cunard steamer. On 12 June 1850, the Cunard steamship *Asia* departed Boston and arrived in Liverpool on 22 June 1850.

⁶U.S. 16, *Statutes at Large*, pp. 788-806.

⁷*Report of the Postmaster General*, 1849, Wierenga Reprint, 1976, p. 836.

⁸My records of California mails to and from Europe, from private collections and auction catalogs, include over 350 covers to about 1860. Among these only 40 covers are pre-statehood covers.

⁹John H. Williams, *California Town Postmarks 1849-1935* (Louisville, Kentucky: Western Cover Society, 1997), p. 934, listed as Cat. No. SAF-260.

¹⁰Theron Wierenga, *The Gold Rush Mail Agents to California and Their Postal Markings, 1849-1852* (Muskegon, Michigan: Theron Wierenga, 1987), pp. 76-77.

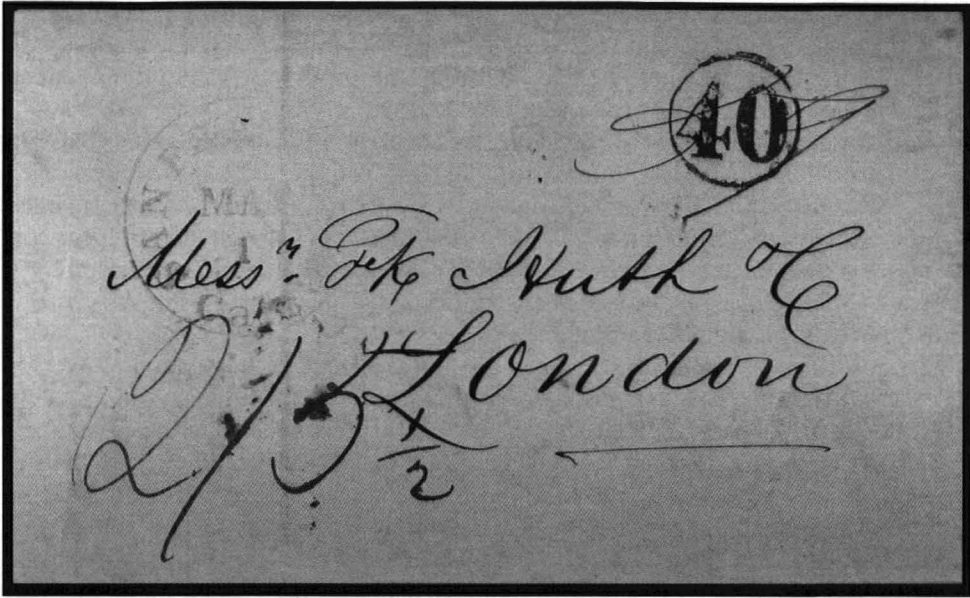


Figure 1. San Francisco (30 April 1850) to London sent at unpaid 59¢ rate. San Francisco marked cds in orange ink. Absence of PAID marking indicated letter unpaid. New York marked 40¢ debit to G.B. and London marked 2s5½d postage due (59¢).

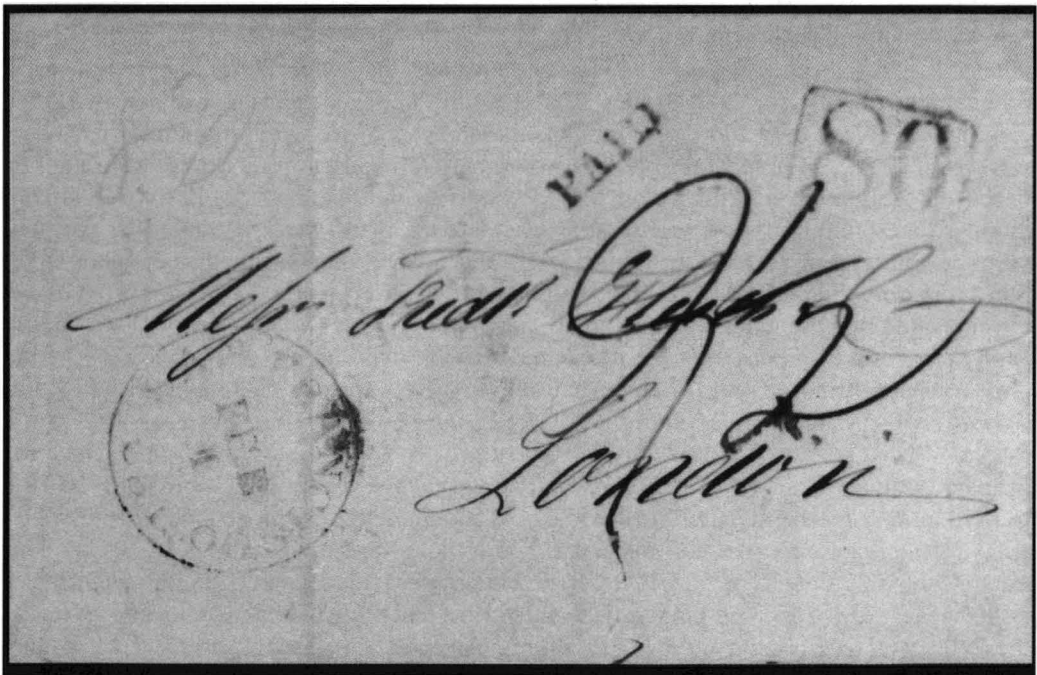


Figure 2. San Francisco (30 Jan 1850) double rate letter to London, fully paid to New York. San Francisco marked cds, "PAID" and boxed "80" in black ink. London considered letter single rate and marked 9½d postage due. Letter paid to New York and unpaid from New York to London. (Carlin coll.)

Since the letter was in a closed mail bag from New York to London, it received no Boston or Liverpool markings. London marked the postage due of 2 shilling 5½ pence or 59¢.

Among the 19 pre-statehood covers to Great Britain previously mentioned, there is no example of a cover showing the 59¢ rate from California fully paid. Of the remaining 13 covers which show some prepayment, one was sent privately to New York and posted there by a forwarding agent. The remaining 12 covers were paid to the East Coast at the 40¢ per half ounce rate, and were forwarded by New York unpaid to Great Britain. These covers characteristically show postage due of 9½ pence or 1 shilling 7 pence, the double rate. Since the postal convention with Great Britain specifically excluded payment of anything less than the whole rate,¹¹ covers showing payment only to the East Coast have long been a mystery to collectors. A more detailed reading of the provisions of the postal convention, however, provides the answer.

Section III of the Letter Bill, agreed upon in the Detailed Regulations, covered letters on which the United States postage had been paid and which required no accounting between the two countries. Article 10 of the Letter Bill, contained under this section, specified "Letters from foreign countries, &c in transit through the United States for the United Kingdom." Since California was beyond the post routes of the United States, as declared by Postmaster General Collamer, its mails fit into this category as long as they were prepaid to the East Coast of the United States. For these letters, the British collected only their fees, 16¢ sea postage if a British contract mail steamer carried the mail to Great Britain, and 3¢ British inland postage allowed under the convention. This was equivalent to 9½ pence. Since the postal convention specifically addressed this special type of mail, these letters were not considered partially paid, which was not allowed by the convention. When California became a state, it was no longer considered "beyond the Post-Routes of the United States," and Article 10 no longer applied for California mails.

The first example of what appears to be a partially paid letter from San Francisco to London, England, is shown in Figure 2. Docketing on the reverse indicated that this folded letter was written on 30 January 1850. The letter was marked in pencil (upper left) for a prepayment of 2x40¢ = 80¢. Today, it is generally believed that these pencil markings were applied when the letters were first taken to the post office window and the postal fees were paid. Later, in a separate operation, appropriate handstamp markings were applied based on the pencil markings. San Francisco struck the black SAN FRANCISCO Cal. circular datestamp of 1 February to show the date the mails were forwarded by the mail steamer. San Francisco also struck the PAID and boxed "80" handstamps in black ink.¹² San Francisco always marked prepaid letters with the word PAID. Absence of this marking indicated that the letter was unpaid as shown in Figure 1. On 1 February 1850, Pacific Mail Steamship Company steamer *Panama* departed San Francisco and arrived at Panama City on 23 February 1850. Transported across the Isthmus to Chagres, the letter was placed on board the United States Mail Steamship Company steamer *Georgia*, which departed Chagres on 27 February and arrived in New York on 8 March 1850.¹³ Since the prepaid postage was just the United States internal fee to the East Coast and not the transatlantic sea postage, New York could not send the letter on the next steamship which was an American mail steamer. Instead, it had to hold the letter for the next, British contract steamship, a delay of 12 days. On 20 March 1850, the Cunard steamer *Canada* departed from New York and landed her mails at Liverpool on 1 April 1850. The next day the letter was received in London (docketing and London datestamp on reverse). Letters

¹¹U.S. 16, *op. cit.*, Article III, p. 784.

¹²The orange color ink seen on most early San Francisco covers appears to have been in use from late February 1850. Before this time black was the color used for all markings.

¹³Wierenga, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.

for London were usually placed in closed mail bags for London and received no Liverpool markings. The only British markings on this cover were the red datestamp on the reverse and the manuscript rating of $9\frac{1}{2}$ pence in black ink on the front. Both markings were applied at London. Had the mail bag been opened at Liverpool a completely different set of markings would have resulted as we shall see in a later example. The postage due of $9\frac{1}{2}$ pence represented the sea postage of 8 pence (16¢) and the British inland portion of $1\frac{1}{2}$ pence (3¢). It is not clear why San Francisco thought the letter required two rates and London thought only one rate. It is probable that each weighed the letter slightly differently.

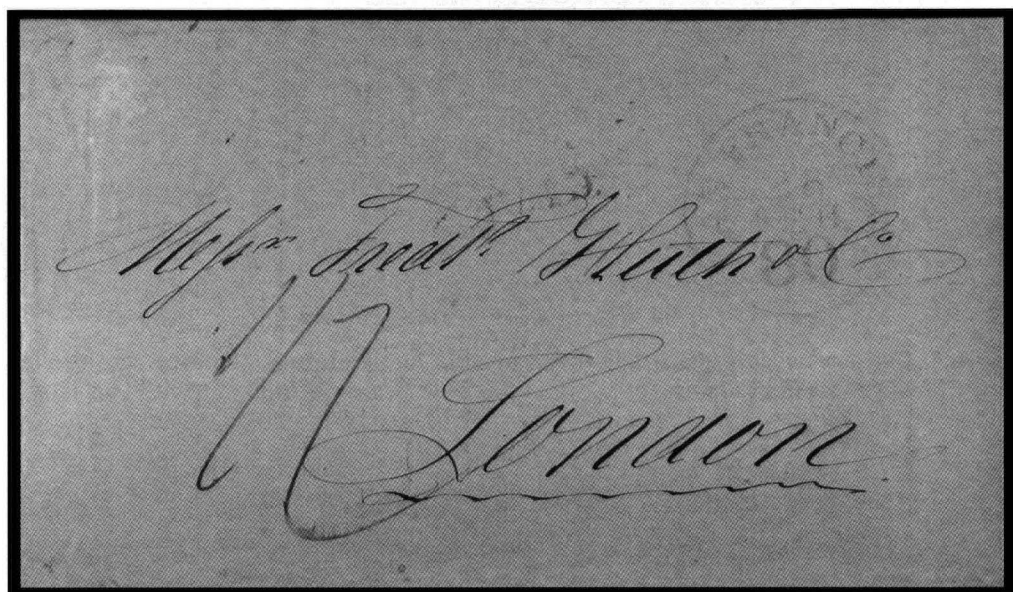


Figure 3. San Francisco (28 Feb 1850) double rate letter to London, fully paid to New York. San Francisco marked cds (with enclosed 80¢ rate) and "PAID" in orange ink. London marked $2 \times 9\frac{1}{2}d = 1s7d$ postage.

Figure 3 illustrates a double rate letter from California to London, the rating of which both the United States and British postal clerks agreed upon. This letter originated in San Francisco on 28 February 1850, and was addressed to London. San Francisco indicated prepayment of $2 \times 40¢ = 80¢$ with an orange, circular datestamp, SAN FRANCISCO 80¹⁴ and a separate PAID handstamp, also in orange ink. This letter shows the earliest use that I have recorded of the shift from black to orange ink at San Francisco. The letter was despatched from San Francisco on 1 March 1850, on the Pacific Mail Steamship Company steamer *Oregon*, and arrived at Panama on 20 March 1850. Carried across the Isthmus, the letter departed Chagres on the Howland & Aspinwall Atlantic Line steamer *Cherokee* on 26 March, and arrived at New York on 5 April 1850 with *Oregon's* mails.¹⁵ New York sent the letter to Liverpool on the Cunard steamer *Europa*, which left New York on 17 April and arrived in Liverpool on 29 April 1850. The letter reached London the next day, where it was rated $2 \times 9\frac{1}{2}d = 1s7d$ in manuscript, the postage due for a double rate letter unpaid from the United States. Again, the absence of any Liverpool markings was consistent with the letter being in a closed mail bag for London.

¹⁴Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 935, listed as Cat. No. SAF-270. This example advances the earliest listed.

¹⁵Wierenga, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.

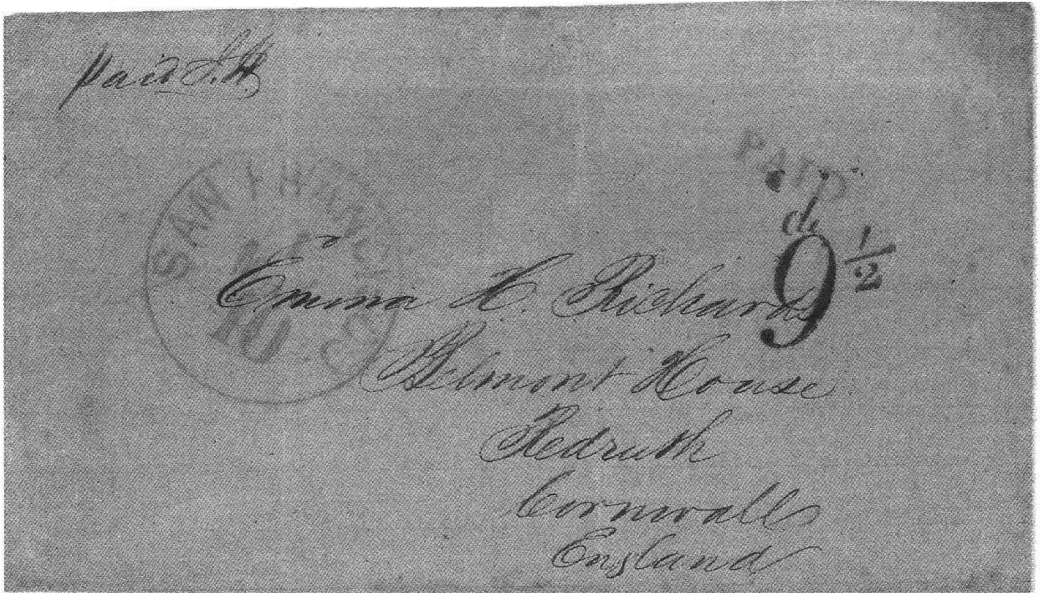


Figure 4. San Francisco (1 May 1850) to Redruth, England, fully paid 40¢ rate to New York. "PAID" and cds in orange ink. Liverpool marked 9½ postage due with special rate marking, quite scarce on transatlantic covers. (Wraith coll.)

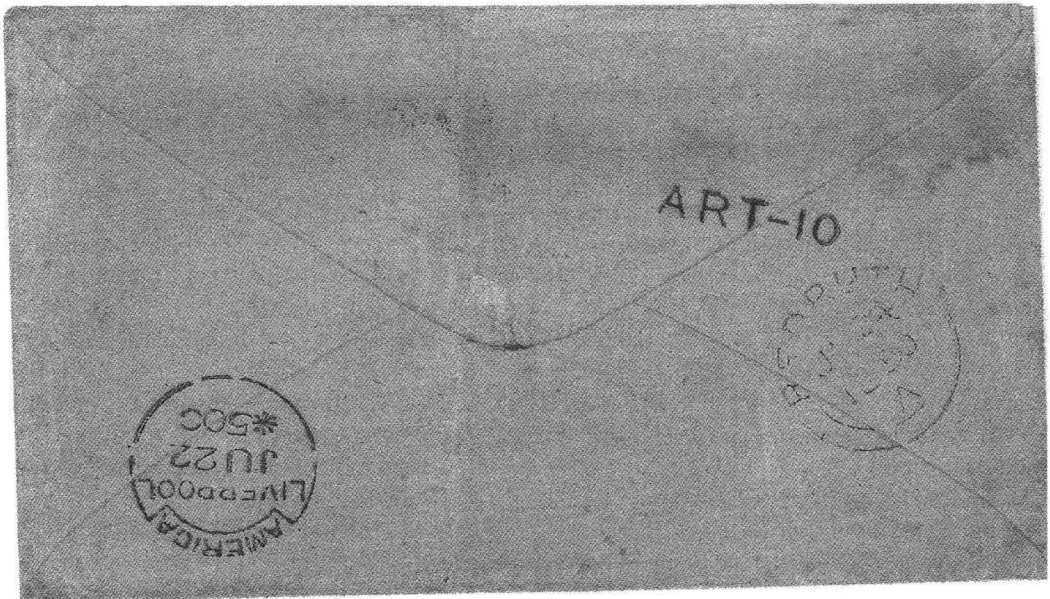


Figure 5. Reverse of San Francisco (1 May 1850) cover showing blue Redruth arrival datestamp, black Liverpool arrival datestamp, and scarce "ART-10" markings. "ART-10" referred to Letter Bill article for "Letters from foreign countries, &c in transit through the United States for the United Kingdom." (California considered a "foreign country" before statehood in September 1850.)

Figures 4 and 5 show the front and reverse of an outstanding cover that was rated at Liverpool. This orange envelope, addressed to Redruth, England, was posted in San Francisco on 1 May 1850. It received a 35 mm. red, circular datestamp with internal rate¹⁶ and a separate PAID marking that showed a prepayment of 40¢, the rate to the East Coast of the United States. As on most letters posted at San Francisco, it showed a pencil marking "40" to the left side of the cover under the circular datestamp, indicating the prepaid rate. It is quite possible that the letter was taken to the post office before the actual date shown in the circular datestamp, which reflects the date the mails were forwarded by the steamer. This letter was included in the mails that left San Francisco on 1 May 1850, on the Pacific Mail Steamship Company steamer *Panama*, which arrived at Panama City on 21 May. Transported across the Isthmus to Chagres, the letter was placed on board the United States Mail Steamship Company steamer *Georgia*, which departed Chagres on 26 May and arrived in New York on 9 June 1850.¹⁷ New York applied no markings to the letter, but put it in the mail bags sent to Boston for the next Cunard steamer. On 12 June 1850, Cunard steamship *Asia* departed Boston and arrived in Liverpool on 22 June 1850. This letter was not placed in the London bag because it was addressed to Redruth, Cornwall, England. Instead, it was placed in the Liverpool bag and subsequently was processed at Liverpool. Figure 5 reproduces the reverse of this cover which shows a clear strike of the Liverpool arrival packet marking.¹⁸ The reverse also shows a strike of the scarce "ART-10" marking of Liverpool. According to the Post Office, London records of the Date Impression Books, this marking was despatched from London to Liverpool on 21 February 1850. I have recorded this marking on only three covers from California. Liverpool marked the letter for postage due of 9½ pence with a special handstamp despatched to that office from London on 19 March 1849. This also is a scarce marking. Although in use for 17 months, I have recorded only 10 examples and only five from California.

My thanks to Ray Carlin and Nick Wraith who provided pictures of covers from their collections to help illustrate this very interesting aspect of early California postal history. □

¹⁶Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 935, listed as Cat. No. SAF-290. Another cover to London shows this marking used as early as 1 April 1850, which is two months earlier than SAF-290.

¹⁷Wierenga, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-77.

¹⁸Colin Tabcart, *Robertson Revisited* (Limassol, Cyprus: James Bendon Ltd., 1997), p. 149, marking P5.

Bibliopole
Since 1965

PHILATELIC BIBLIPOLE
<http://pbbooks.com>
Authoritative Philatelic Literature



US, CSA, Maritime, Forgery, GB and the Empire, etc.

Purchaser of major and minor philatelic libraries, stocking new titles from over 100 publishers. 112 page Stock Catalog: \$3 to a US address, Foreign by air \$5.

PB Blank Pages, Mylar and Page Boxes

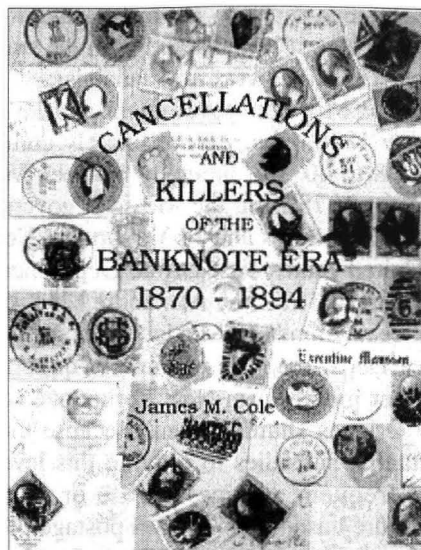
The state of the art for both archival preservation and appearance, our pages are 100% cotton rag, neutral pH and buffered; blank and quadrille. Custom steel engraved page heads and paneling available. Will run on most Laser Jet Printers. All made exclusively for us in the US. Page Sampler: \$3 to a US address. Foreign by air \$7.

Leonard H. Hartmann

P.O. Box 36006, Louisville, KY 40233
Phone (502) 451-0317, Fax (502) 459-8538

**LITERATURE THAT
BELONGS IN THE
LIBRARY OF EVERY
SERIOUS U.S.
SPECIALIST...**

**Order your
copies of these
outstanding
Classics Society
publications today.**



- *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era* by James M. Cole. \$49.50 postpaid.
- *North Atlantic Mail Sailings 1840-75* by W. Hubbard and Richard F. Winter. \$50.00 postpaid.
- *Letters of Gold* by Jesse L. Colburn (California postal history through 1869). \$35.00 postpaid.
- *The 1869 Issue On Cover: A Census and Analysis*. Edited by Jonathan Rose and Richard M. Searing. \$70.00 postpaid. **Limited Deluxe Edition**, leather binding: \$125.00 postpaid.
- *The 1982 Register*, edited by Jonathan Rose. \$15.00 postpaid.
- *The 1978 Register*, edited by Benjamin Chapman. \$10.00 postpaid.
- *The 1977 Register*, edited by Benjamin Chapman (with three-ring binder). \$10.00 postpaid.

• Dealer Inquiries Invited •

U.S. PHILATELIC CLASSICS SOCIETY

P.O. Box 445
Wheeling IL 60090

ADDITIONAL ANSWER TO PROBLEM COVER IN ISSUE 181

Route Agent Jim Milgram provides a different solution to Figure 1, the "STEAM-BOAT" cover to Baltimore with "DUE 2 cts." which was written up in *Chronicle* 181. He writes:

This is a cover written after 1863. At the time the rates for ship mail were 4 cents to port of entry and 6 cents for mail beyond the port of entry. The sender used three one cent stamps paying three cents. Therefore there is one cent unpaid. However, after July 1, 1863 unpaid postage was charged double rates. Therefore, the correct postage due is 2 cents, as marked. The address is to Baltimore which is the port of entry. Although marked steamboat, this probably was a coastal steamer, not a typical steamboat as used on rivers. But it was a vessel without any contract with the post office department, so the captain did receive two cents. HOWEVER, THAT TWO CENTS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE "DUE 2 cts" POSTMARK.

The question of which is a proper solution seems to be the date of the cover, *i.e.*, before or after 1863. Any other opinions?

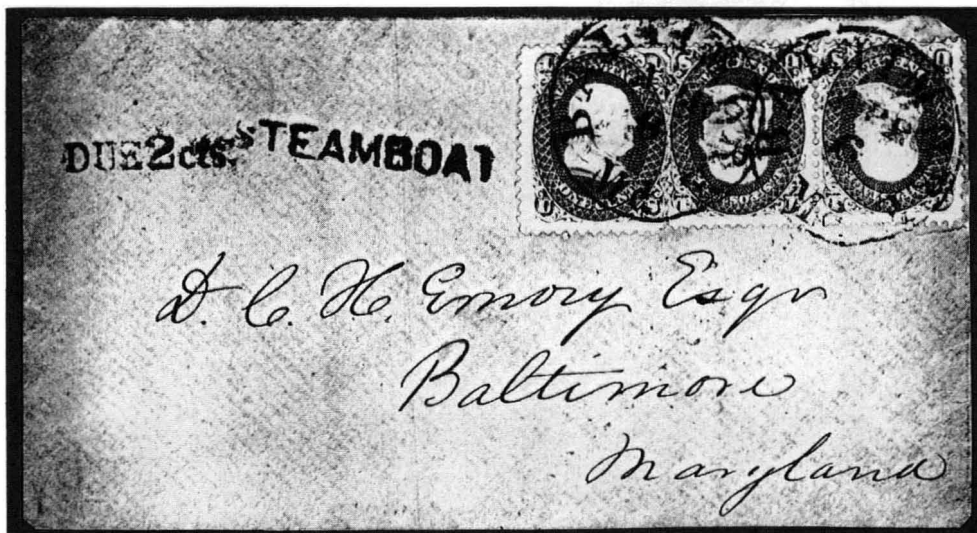


Figure 1. "STEAMBOAT" cover to Baltimore with "DUE 2 cts."

ANSWERS TO PROBLEM COVERS IN ISSUE 182

The large size cover in Figure 2 is franked with 8 shillings in stamps, a very high rate. It was posted in Melbourne, Victoria in 1868 to New York and received the following rate markings—all in manuscript:

- Front — "80" in ink — upper left
- "80" Cents Due in pencil — right
- "H (or is it "\$") 1.80" in pencil — bottom left
- Back — "Collect H ("\$") 1.80"

Explain the postage collected - \$1.80 or 80 cents? Note: Victoria did not join the UPU until October 1891.

No response was received for this problem cover, perhaps because of the short time available. Since an answer may be received from one of our overseas Route Agents we will carry it over until Issue #184 and print the best solution in November 1999.

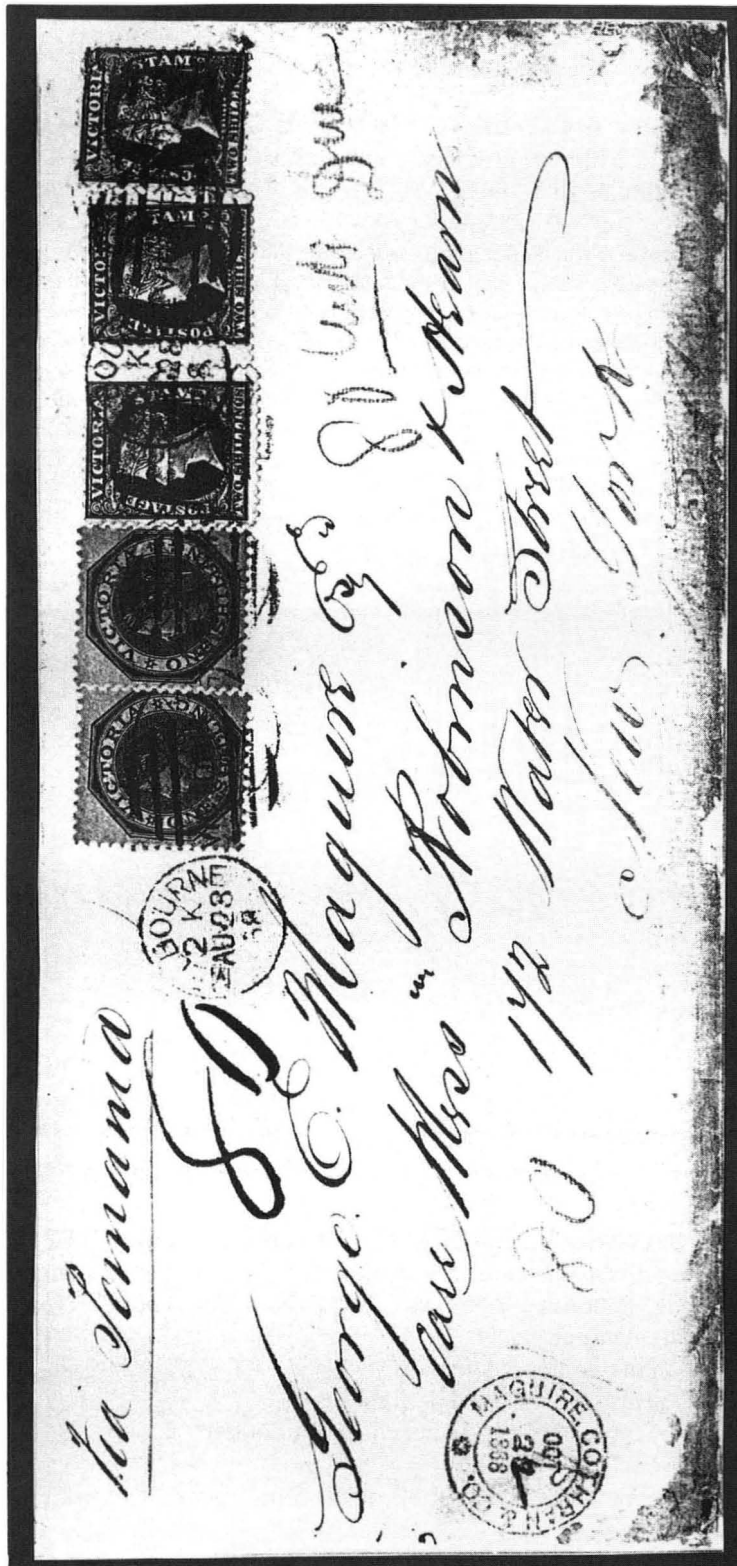


Figure 2. 1868 cover from Melbourne, Victoria to New York via Panama

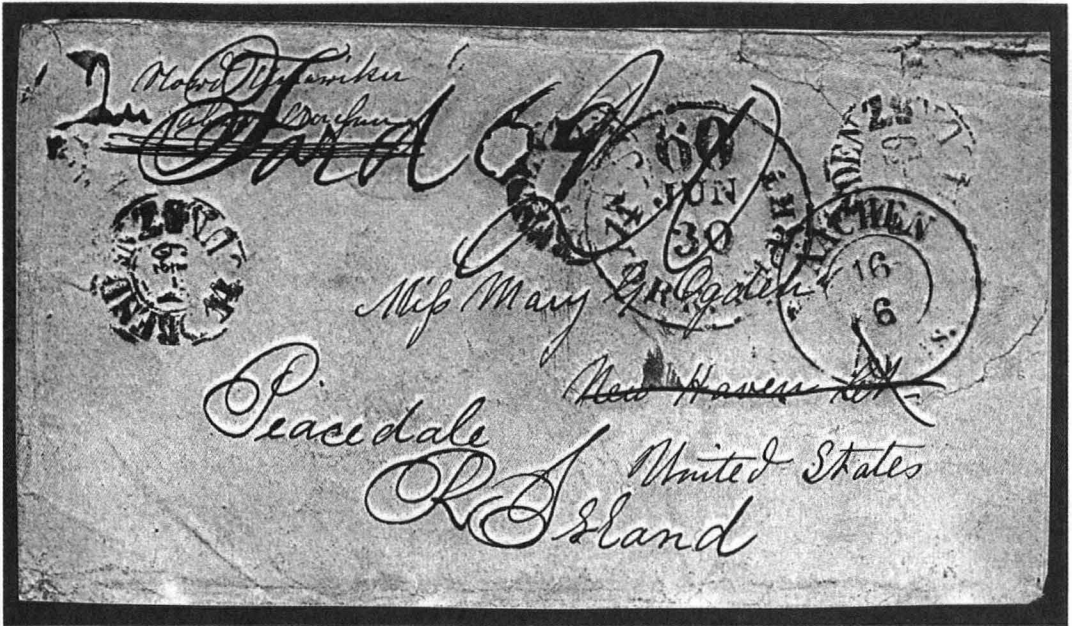


Figure 3. 1857 cover from Germany to New Haven and forwarded



Figure 4. Boston cover, dated 1855, to Providence, R.I.

Figure 3 shows an unpaid Prussian Closed Mail cover from Dresden to the U.S. in 1857. It received an Aachen CDS with "10 cts." debit for a double rate which is crossed through. A "20" in manuscript is overstruck by a New York Am. Pkt. CDS. A smudged blue "2" is next to a bold "FORD 69," apparently the "60" debit in the New York CDS plus 9 cents for forwarding. What is the explanation for the postal markings on this cover?

This is an example of a cover being subject to differing scales of postage for various parts of its itinerary as well as errors (or ignoring) of rating changes. The cover originated in "DRESDEN / 14 JUN / 57" and followed its endorsement at upper left "Nord Amerika / über Aachen." At Aachen the cover was rated as double rate, over 1/2 ounce but not over 1 ounce, and the black CDS "AACHEN / 16 / 6 / 10 cts." CDS applied. However, it must have been observed to exceed the 1 ounce weight and was subject to a quadruple rate, there being no triple rate in the Prussian Closed Mail (which followed the British scale of 1/2, 1, 2, 4, 6, etc. ounces). So the "10 cts." debit to the U.S. was crossed through and apparently replaced with a large "20" in black manuscript. Arriving in "N. YORK / JUN / 30 / AM. PKT." the CDS included a "60" debit. Apparently the New York Post Office ignored the quadruple rate (which would have been a "120" debit). Arriving as addressed in New Haven, Ct. it was forwarded to Peacedale, R. Island. Internal U.S. forwarding postage was not subject to the Prussian Closed Mail scale, but only to the U.S. scale which included a triple rate, in the case $3 \times 3\text{¢} = 9\text{¢}$. Added to the "60" debit (in error) produced the bold "FORD 69" as the postage due.

PROBLEM COVERS FOR ISSUE 183

Route Agent Bernard Biales sends in what he calls a "simple" problem cover in Figure 4. It is dated "Boston, Nov. 26, 1855" and docketed "answd Nov. 27" on a brief note inside. The Boston CDS is in red and indicates a postage of "6 cts." Prepayment of letter mail was required beginning April 1, 1855. What is unusual about this cover?

Jim Milgram chose for analysis the 1856 U.S. territorial cover shown in Figure 5. Addressed to Königreich Württemberg (Germany), it received a "SALT LAKE CITY / MAY 1 / UTAH.T." CDS, and a "46 / JUL 9 / N.YORK BR/ PKT" CDS, both in black. A "48" in a double circle obscures a weak and undecipherable CDS, both in black. At upper left appears a blue mark that could be a 2 or a 3 or a 7, adjacent to a notation in German script. The center of the cover has a "1/30" in red crayon and a large "1/30" in red ink.

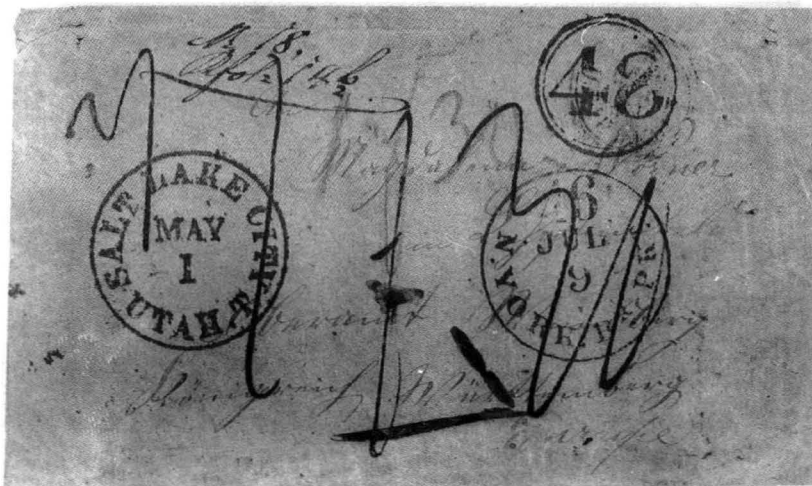


Figure 5. U.S. Territorial cover from Salt Lake City to Württemberg

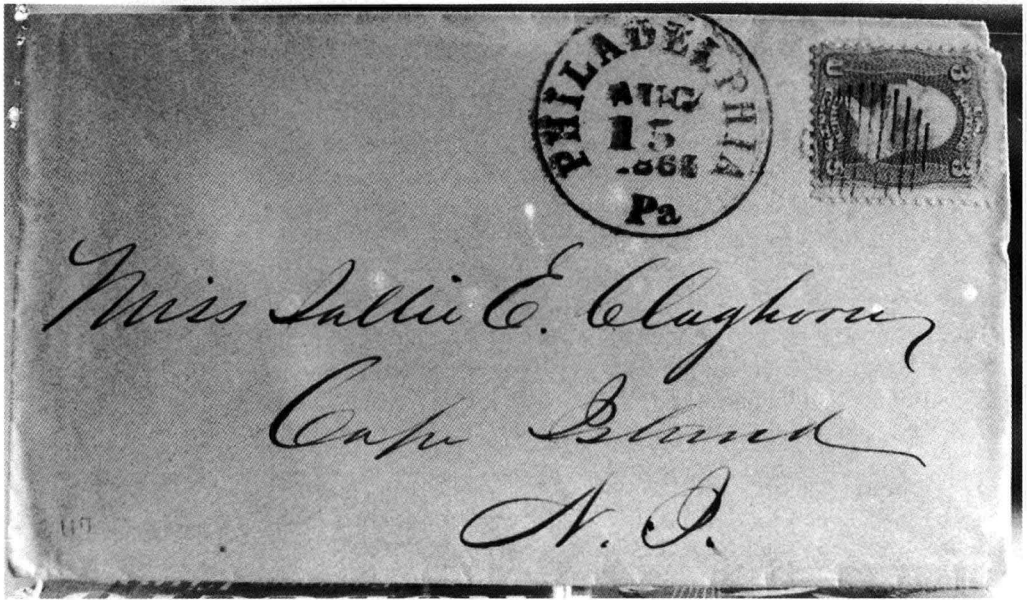
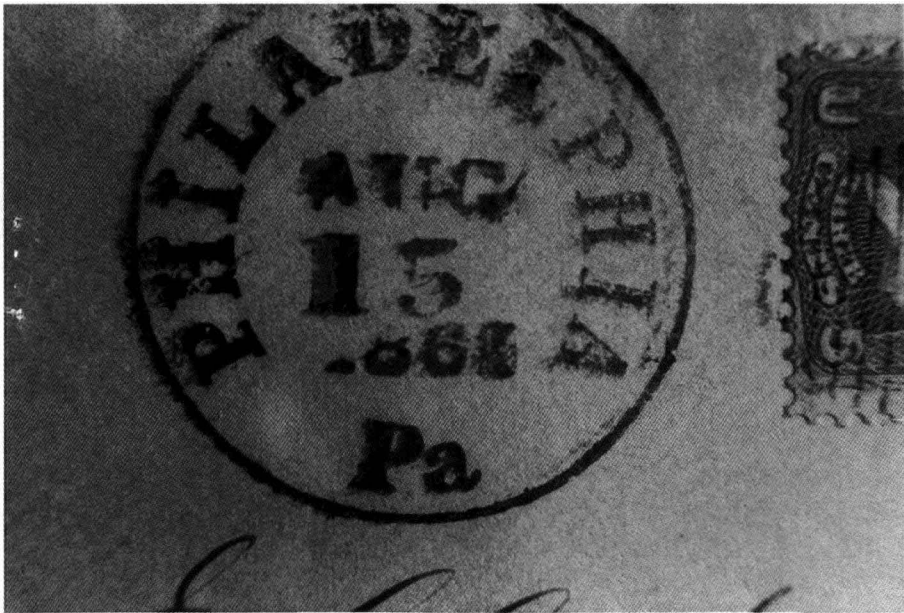


Figure 6. U.S. #65 canceled AUG 15 / 1867 Earliest Date?



The back has four German transit marks, all in black, as follows:

- "AACHEN / 22 / 7" DC
- "EINSBERG / 2(?) JUL 1856"
- "STUTTGART / 24 / JUL / 56" CDS
- "HEILBRONN / 24 / JUL / 1856" CDS

Please describe the rating marks on this cover, especially the "48" on the front.

Figure 6 is submitted by Route Agent Donald Elms. It is a U.S. #65 tied to a cover by a thin-lined grid duplex cancel of "PHILADELPHIA / AUG / 15 / 1861 / Pa," the CDS being enlarged in Figure 6A. If the year is really 1861, this predates the earliest known usage. But the "1" of "61" is smudged and may have been altered. Also the "1" looks more like an "I" with serifs top and bottom. What is the verdict? Is it a true earliest date?

George Kramer sends in Figure 7 with many questions. It is endorsed:

- "R (?) Arnold / Express" - upper left
- "Val (\$) 10.00" and "Paid 50" over "25" - upper right

It's addressed to: "Single Side Yazoo / River Sunflower County / Miss," but Agent Kramer states that the Yazoo River does not run through Sunflower County!

- Where and when could this cover have originated?
- What is known about the "R Arnold Express," when and where did it operate?
- What and where is Single Side? Did county lines change?

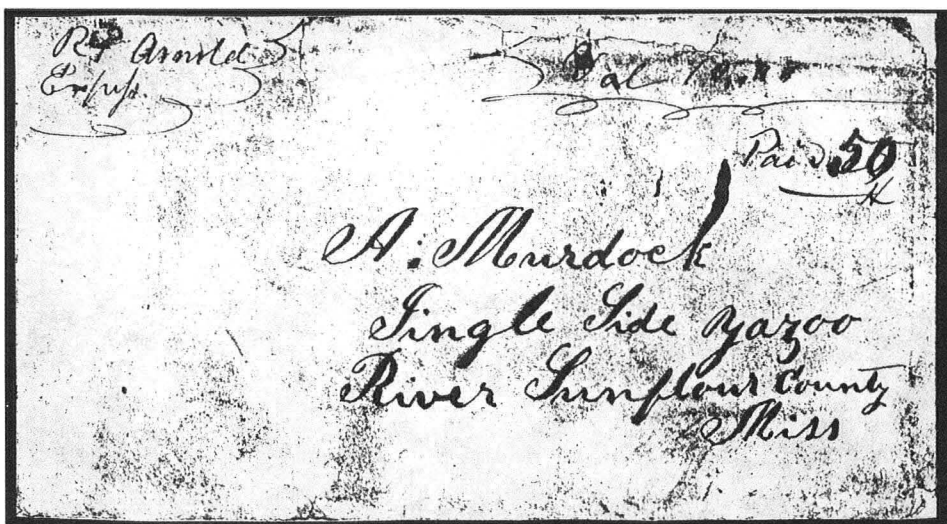


Figure 7. Arnold Express cover to Sunflower County, Miss.

Figure 8 is a New Year's day cover from France to New York. An originator's handstamp, upper right in blue, is dated "DECE / 31 [inverted] / 1875." Two 25¢ stamps are canceled by "1769" (*gros chiffres*) in a rhomboid of dots, which corresponds with the "LE HAVRE / 1E / 1 / JAN / 76" CDS, both in black. The cover is endorsed "by steamer 'Labrador'" and has no markings on the reverse.

What postal history event took place on 1 January 1876? What rate does the 50 centimes postage pay and why are no New York receiving markings on the cover?

The Figure 9 cover to Jerusalem, endorsed "Via Marseilles," is a beauty submitted by Route Agent Jim Milgram. It has a blue "PHILADELPHIA / OCT / ? / Pa." CDS accompanied by a red "PHILA. / 5Cts [altered to "61"] / PAID" octagon with a confirming "61 PAID," both rates in black. The two "61" rates were crossed out in magenta and a large "50" added in magenta ink. The cover passed through London where it received an orange "PAID / 8 NO 8 / 1851" CDS. Two vertical disinfection slits each measure 25 mm long and are 50 mm apart. No markings on the back.

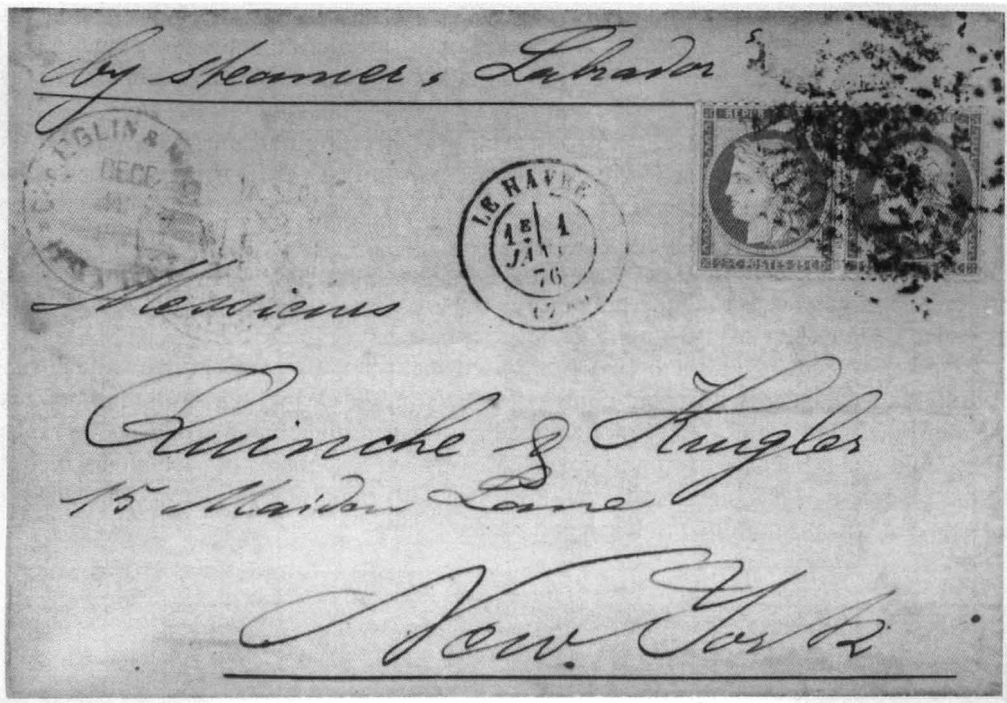


Figure 8. New Year's Day 1876 cover from France to New York

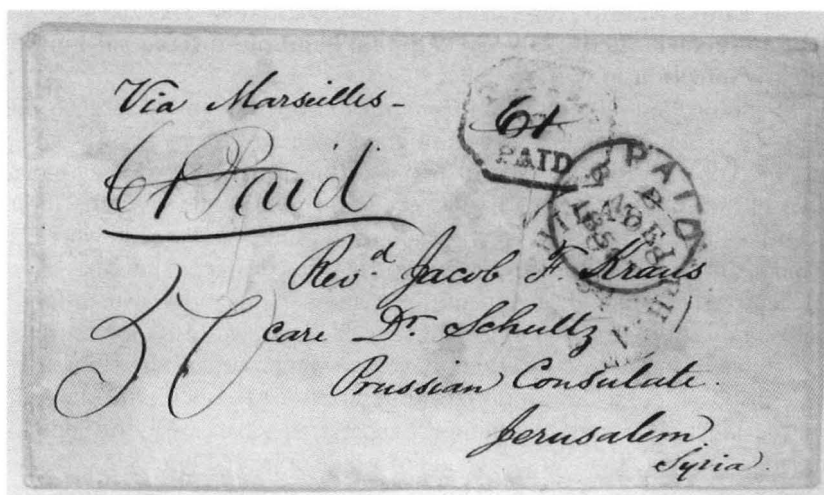


Figure 9. 1851 cover from Philadelphia to Jerusalem

Please explain the "50" rating of this cover and also the basis for the original "61" rating.

Please send to the Cover Corner Editor your answers to the problem covers for this issue, and any further discussion of previous answers to other problem covers, within two weeks of receiving your *Chronicle*. The "go to press" deadline for the November Cover Corner is October 10, 1999. I can receive mail at 9068 Fontainebleau Terrace, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45231-4808, and via an E-Mail address: *RWCarlin@aol.com*.

I have the good fortune to introduce to you Greg Sutherland, who will be the Assistant Editor of The Cover Corner. Greg retired from the U.S. Air Force in 1974. He has been a stamps/covers dealer since 1975, and is an avid collector of philatelic literature. He is married, with three children and two grandchildren, and resides in Huber Heights, Ohio. He brings a wealth of experience in deciphering arcane and unusual postal markings and rates, and has been a significant contributor to solving postal history puzzles which have appeared in The Cover Corner.

New examples of problem covers are needed for The Cover Corner. We have successfully experimented with using copies of covers produced by high resolution copiers, either in black and white or in color, instead of requiring black and white photographs. This should make it easier to submit covers. Please send two copies of each cover, including the reverse if it has significant markings. It is also important to identify the color of markings on covers submitted in black and white. Thanks. □

FROM THE EDITOR

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Several books have appeared recently which warrant the attention of *Chronicle* readers. They all deserve reviews in depth; however, I think that both the publications and the readers are better served by timely presentations in August than by more comprehensive but belated discussions some three months later.

***Linn's United States Stamp Facts 19th Century*, by Eliot A. Landau et al., published 1999 by Linn's Stamp News, Sidney, Ohio. 6 1/4" x 10 1/4", ix+257 pages, illustrated, from the publisher at \$14.95 + \$3 shipping/handling for the softbound version, \$35 + \$3 for the hardbound edition.**

Readers should be eminently familiar with the form of this reference publication. The series of "U.S. Stamp Facts" has been running in *Linn's* for over six years, providing the key data on "all the regularly issued stamps of the 19th century" (i.e., including sub-number types of the 1857s and all the grills, excluding inverts and special printings). Each issue has its own page, with a clear enlargement of the single stamp and, where applicable, a cover. Tabular information includes the subject, printer, designer (but not original source of design), engraver(s), plate arrangement, plate numbers, quantity issued, largest known used and unused multiples, known blocks of four or larger, earliest known use, most typical use(s), estimated number of surviving covers. As appropriate, the summary also provides type description, color description, grill description. The book also includes several appendixes, the most significant containing Landau's trenchant essay on "Identifying the Large Bank Note Stamps" (an earlier version of which appeared in *U.S. Stamps*).

The book compilation was introduced in Eliot Landau's "Preliminary Census of Earliest Dates and Largest Multiples on Scott 1-245" (*Chronicle* 176). That preliminary census has been updated by more than 100 corrections, revisions and additions. The resulting book is an outstanding handy reference to the classic issues: comprehensive, reliable, up to date and inexpensive. Highly recommended.

***United States Registered Mail 1845-1870*, by James W. Milgram, copyright 1998 [sic; publication date 1999], published by David G. Phillips Publishing Company, Inc., North Miami, FL. Size 8 1/4"x10 1/4", iv+177 numbed pages, fully illustrated. Softbound version, \$29.95 + \$2 postage; hardbound, \$49.95 + \$2 postage.**

Jim Milgram has a penchant for collecting postal history relative to a broad aspect of American life and commerce, and doing so in a comprehensive manner that tends to define and delimit his chosen field. Frequently, he has provided fellow collectors a valuable byproduct in the form of a catalog/handbook, such as with his treatment of vessel-named markings on U.S. waterways, the express mails of 1836-39, his coverage of presidential campaign illustrated envelopes/letter paper and of Lincoln illustrated covers and sheets. Now he has done a similar service with his definitive work on the development and early history of registered mail service in the United States.

The book addresses the initiation of an American system for safeguarding valuable mails, and the relationship of that system to its European forerunners. It particularly notes the "unofficial registration" mechanisms in effect prior to the official establishment of a P.O. Department registered mail service, and discusses how to analyze "registered" covers of the 1850s. The latter half of the book forms a catalog (by town of origin) of hand-stamped U.S. registered postal markings, 1845-1870. The book is well researched, clearly laid out, exceptionally well illustrated; it's a very well done work on an important postal history subject of national scope.

***Florida Stampless Postal History 1763-1861: The Standard Reference Text of Florida Stampless Postal History*, by the Florida Postal History Society, Editor-in-Chief Deane R. Briggs, published 1999 by David G. Phillips Publishing Co., Inc., North Miami, FL. Softbound, 8 1/2"x11", perfect bound, 311 pages, maps, illustrations; publication price \$42.50 postpaid.**

The previous handbook on Florida stampless postal history appeared in 1957. This new edition, which has been long awaited, treats only the period immediately prior to the beginning of the Civil War; a separate publication is foreseen covering Florida stampless mail under the Confederacy. The heart of the publication is an alphabetical presentation of each post office in existence during the 1763-1861 period, with narrative description of the office and its location, listing of postmasters with data on quarterly receipts where known, and a cataloging of the known markings with scarcity factors/number known. There's also useful introductory material, including chapters on West Florida pre-territorial postal history, the Republic of West Florida and the patriot rebellion/territory of East Florida; the express mail of 1836-39, with a census of Florida usages; the Seminole Indian Wars; Florida military posts; various postal data including extracts of mail contract reports; and reproductions from 1845 and 1861 Florida maps. Essential for anyone interested in this area. Unfortunately, the binding doesn't support heavy use. (For the record: a short run of hardbound copies—54, to be exact—was made for the Florida Postal History Society. Presumably these have all been spoken for, but there could be a few copies still available from the Society.)

- C.J. Peterson □

ADVERTISER INDEX

Matthew Bennett, Inc.	208
Guido Craveri	207
Charles G. Firby	218
Leonard H. Hartmann	225
Ivy & Mader Philatelic Auctions, Inc.....	168
Victor B. Krievins	160
James E. Lee	Inside Back Cover
Andrew Levitt, Philatelic Consultant.....	196-97
Jack E. Molesworth, Inc.	Inside Front Cover
Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions	163
Brad Sheff.....	208
Shreves Philatelic Galleries, Inc.....	157
Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc.	162, Back Cover
Spink	158

CLASSIFIED

WANTED: Carriage, wagon, harness, livery stable, blacksmith, all horse goods - advertising covers, trade cards, post cards, letterheads, catalogs, nameplates, medals, tokens, etc. All types of paper, celluloid or metal advertising items. Myron Huffman, 12409 Wayne Trace, Hoagland, IN 46745, 219-639-3290. E-mail: *myron.huffman@juno.com* (189)

WANTED—AUCTION CATALOGS: Harmer Rooke, N.Y., 1940-49; H.R. Harmer, N.Y., 1941-49; Robert A. Siegel 1931-48; Daniel F. Kelleher, 1937-60; H.R. Harmer, London, 1925- 69; Robson Lowe, London, 1936-76. Also any Colonel Green sales, 1942-46, any of Sylvester Colby's literature sales, and all sales of Fred Kessler. Dan Barber, P.O. Box 23055, Lansing, MI 48909. (184)

ALASKA, HAWAII and Yukon postal history wanted to the present. Also buy 19th century Hawaiian town cancels off cover, and fancy cancels on U.S. Officials. APS Life Member. Steve Sims, 1769 Wickersham Drive, Anchorage AK 99507. (183)

UNWANTED NY STATE small town covers? Needed by dealer (especially manuscript postmarks). Unusual Rochester also. Contact: Douglas Penwell, P.O. Box 3525, Glendale AZ 85311. (185)

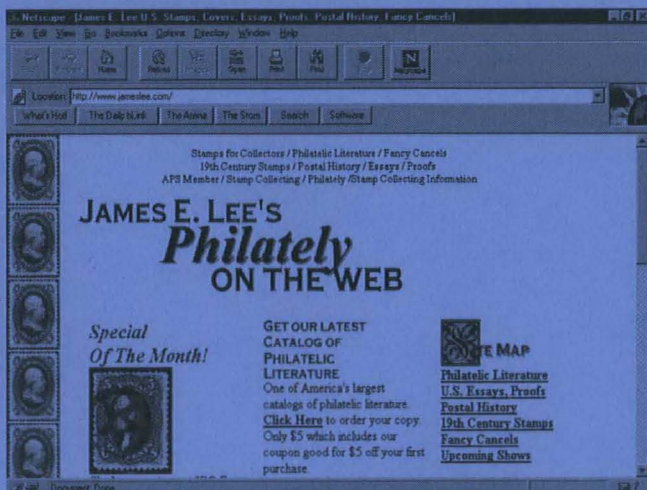
YOUR AD HERE FOR 50¢ A LINE
Send payment to: Richard M. Wrona, P.O. Box 7631, McLean, VA 22106-7631. Next Deadline: October 5, 1999.

Important news for the specialist in U.S.
19th Century Classics and Philatelic Literature...

WE'RE YOUR KEY RESOURCE ON THE INTERNET...

We're Internet-driven, but
with the kind of *personal
touch* you've come
to expect from us.

Visit our website regularly to
view and purchase from our
large stock of 19th century
stamps, fancy cancels, postal
history, essays & proofs, and
philatelic literature.

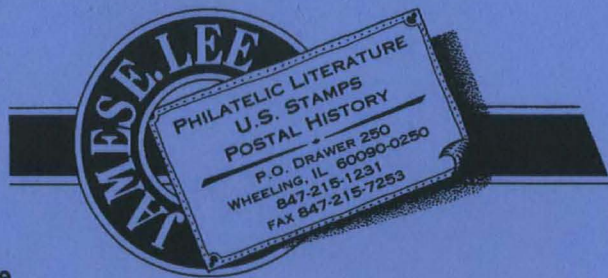


www.jameslee.com

A visit to our Internet website
is much more than just "click" and "buy".

Unlike many websites, ours has become a major resource for the collector of America's classic philately and literature. For not only does our site offer countless examples of outstanding philatelic material and literature, you'll also find important information, articles and resources (including our quarterly newsletter—both the current issue and back issues).

For the astute philatelist, the Internet is no longer the "wave of the future." It is now one of the chief engines for the dissemination of philatelic knowledge and commerce. "Bookmark" our site and visit us often!




Get our newest philatelic literature
catalog #28! Only \$5 refundable
with purchase. Call, write, fax or e-
mail us today! Attn: Dept CL.

E-Mail: philately2@earthlink.net
Website: www.jameslee.com

THE SALE

THE "GEORGE W. HALE"
COLLECTION OF
**UNITED STATES
FANCY CANCELLATIONS**



At Public Auction
THURSDAY, APRIL 26th, 2 p.m.

**Robert A. Siegel
AUCTIONS**

100 EAST 57th STREET NEW YORK CITY

Hale 1954

216th SALE

EMMERSEN C. KRUG
Collection of
**UNITED STATES
COVERS**

AT PUBLIC AUCTION
Wednesday and Thursday
MAY 21 and 22, 1958
AT 11 A.M. SAGE 201

**Robert A. Siegel
AUCTIONS**

100 EAST 57th STREET NEW YORK CITY
Tel. MU 2-3000

Krug 1958

216th SALE

THE HENRY W. HILL COLLECTION
**FIVE CENT JEFFERSON STAMPS
1856-1861 ISSUES**

AT PUBLIC AUCTION
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11th, 1959
AT 1 P.M.


**Robert A. Siegel
AUCTIONS**

100 EAST 57th STREET NEW YORK CITY
Tel. MU 2-3000

Hill 1959

The
**NEWBURY
Collection**

Part I




**Robert A. Siegel
AUCTIONS**

100 EAST 57th STREET NEW YORK CITY
Tel. MU 2-3000

Newbury 1962

THE JOSIAH K. LILLY
COLLECTION
PART I




**Robert A. Siegel
AUCTIONS**

Lilly 1967

216th SALE

UNITED STATES
POSTAL HISTORY COVERS
From the Award Winning Collection of
Miss Katharine Matthies



AT PUBLIC AUCTION
Tuesday, Wednesday
May 28th, 29th, 1969

**Robert A. Siegel
AUCTIONS**

100 EAST 57th STREET NEW YORK CITY
Tel. MU 2-3000

Matthies 1969

204th SALE

The
MORTIMER L. NEINKEN
Collection

AT UNRESERVED PUBLIC AUCTION
Thursday Afternoon, November 19th, 1970 at 1:00 P.M.
Friday Afternoon, November 20th, 1970 at 1:00 P.M.

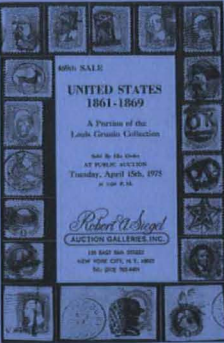
**Robert A. Siegel
AUCTIONS**

100 EAST 57th STREET NEW YORK CITY
Tel. MU 2-3000

Neinken 1970

48th SALE

UNITED STATES
1861-1869
A Portion of the
Leah Grunin Collection



8:00 to 10:00 Hours
AT PUBLIC AUCTION
Tuesday, April 16th, 1972
at 10 A.M.

**Robert A. Siegel
AUCTION GALLERIES, INC.**

100 EAST 57th STREET
NEW YORK CITY, N.Y. 10022
Tel. MU 2-3000

Grunin 1975

*David & Robert
award winning
collection of extraordinary
United States Stamps & Covers
New York, N.Y. 1977*

**ROBERT A. SIEGEL
AUCTION GALLERIES, INC.**


Rohloff 1977

216th SALE

THE AWARD WINNING
POSTAL HISTORY COLLECTION
OF
J. DAVID BAKER

Award for one of its covers

AT UNRESERVED PUBLIC AUCTION



Tuesday, April 4, 1978 at 1:00 P.M.


**Robert A. Siegel
AUCTIONS**

100 EAST 57th STREET NEW YORK CITY, N.Y. 10022

Baker 1978

**UNITED STATES
POSTAL HISTORY**

FROM THE
MARC HAAS COLLECTION



**Robert A. Siegel
AUCTION GALLERIES, INC.**

Haas 1980

216th SALE

Ex-Sheriff

PART I
DECEMBER 11, 12, 1980

**Robert A. Siegel
AUCTION GALLERIES, INC.**

100 EAST 57th STREET
NEW YORK CITY, N.Y. 10022

Sheriff 1985

68th SALE

CLASSIC UNITED STATES
STAMPS AND COVERS

A PORTION OF THE PHILIP G. RUST COLLECTION

JUNE 25, 1987


**Robert A. Siegel
AUCTION GALLERIES, INC.**

100 EAST 57th STREET
NEW YORK CITY, N.Y. 10022

Rust 1987

24th SALE

United States 1978
The Award-Winning Kapioloff Collection




**Robert A. Siegel
AUCTIONS**

100 EAST 57th STREET NEW YORK CITY
Tel. MU 2-3000

Kapioloff 1992

HONOLULU
ADVERTISER
THE HONOLULU
HAWAII

1



**Robert A. Siegel
AUCTIONS**

100 EAST 57th STREET
NEW YORK CITY, N.Y. 10022
Tel. MU 2-3000

Honolulu Advertiser 1995

THE
VERNON R. MORRIS JR. M.D.
COLLECTION

CLASSIC UNITED STATES STAMPS
OF
EXTRAORDINARY QUALITY AND COLOR

Table 705

Friday Evening at 6:30 p.m.
September 28, 1997

**Robert A. Siegel
AUCTION GALLERIES, INC.**

100 EAST 57th STREET NEW YORK CITY
100 W. WARE, NEW YORK 10022 • TEL. (212) 300-8000

Morris 1997

Great collections have one name in common.