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Volume 57, No. 4

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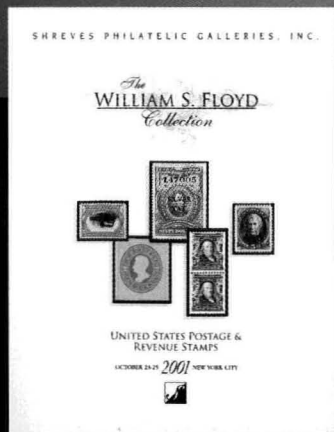
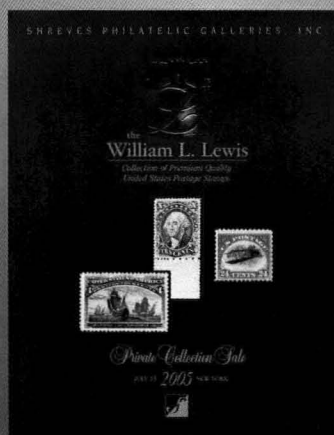
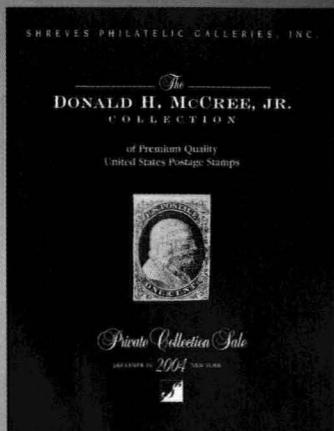
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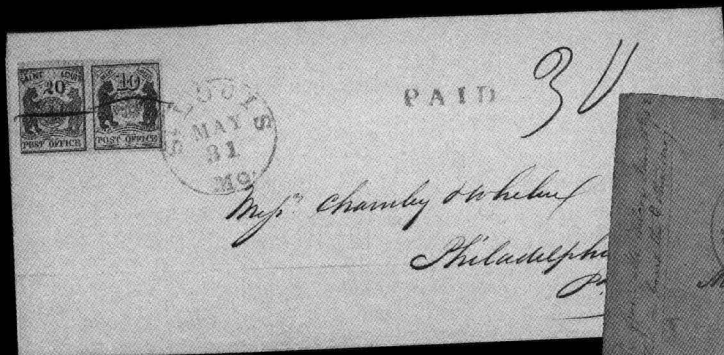
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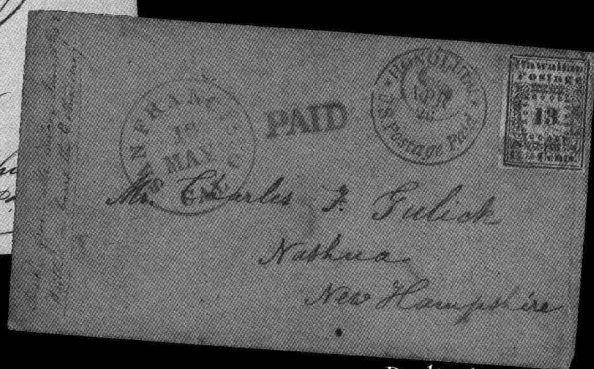
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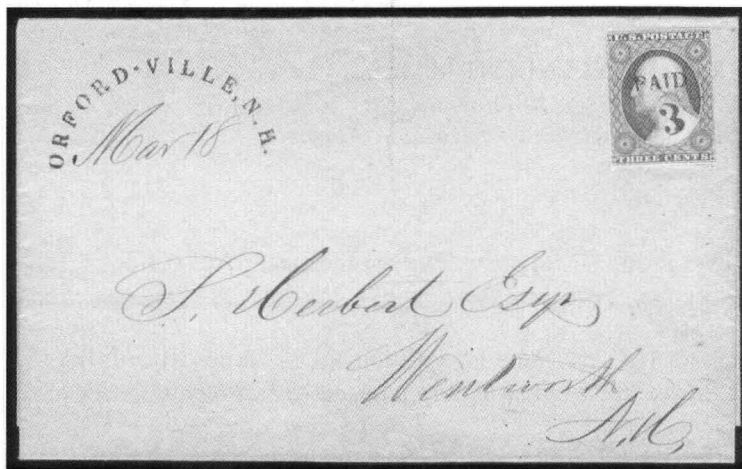
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## **NEGATIVE LETTERING IN POSTMARKS ON STAMPLESS COVERS**

**JAMES W. MILGRAM, M.D.**

This article is the second in a series on the stampless cover markings that are generally termed fancy postmarks. A few of these markings are also known on covers from the 1850s bearing stamps.

With a very few exceptions, the postmarks on stampless covers can be separated into four groups: (1) straightlines; (2) arches; (3) ovals; and (4) circles. Examples of all four groups are known with the modification of negative lettering. However, since there are so few such postmarks with negative lettering known, only a little over two dozen, the present article discusses each marking in alphabetical order rather than dividing them by postmark shape or state.

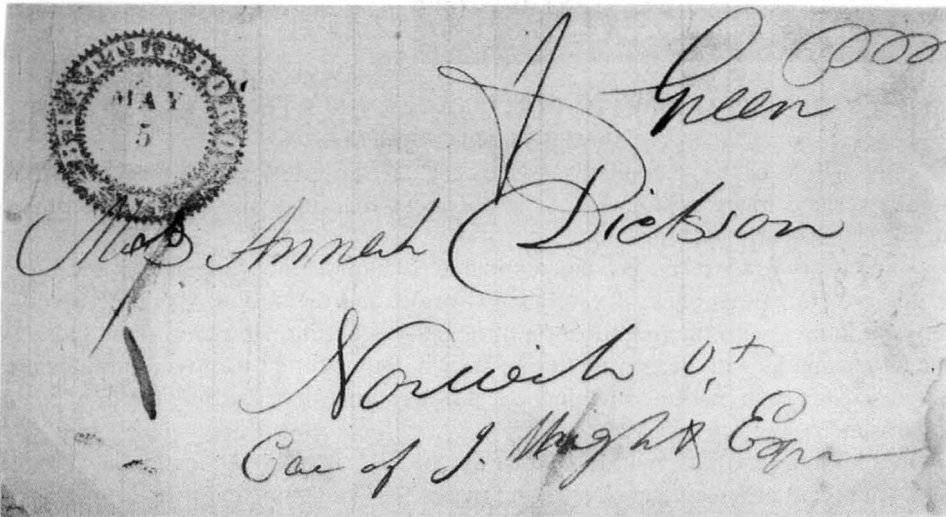
In addition, auxiliary markings such as "FREE" and "PAID" can exist in negative letters. And there are many negative rating marks, "5" and "10" and their Roman numeral counterparts marks from 1845-1851, and "PAID 3" markings after then. These auxiliary markings were discussed by Frank Mandel in the *Fifty-first American Philatelic Congress Book* of 1985 and will not be described here except for a couple of examples on covers with negative town postmarks.



**Figure 1.** "POST OFFICE ANNAPOLIS MD" with eagle all in negative, matching blue "2" on undated drop letter

### **ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND**

The marking "POST OFFICE ANNAPOLIS MD" with a negative eagle as well as the lettering in negative (1840s) has been listed as a postmaster's provisional. However, this writer feels it was usually just a postmark, such as on the nice little drop cover shown in Figure 1 which is rated with a 2 for a drop letter local usage. The marking shown is in blue, but it is listed in red and black also.



**Figure 2. "BRATTLEBORO Vt. MAY 5" (1835) in red with serrated inner and outer surfaces of circular doughnut of color, fancy decorations around state abbreviation, used on free franked cover front**

#### BRATTLEBORO, VERMONT

This rare 1835 circular marking (Figure 2) is struck in red. It has two additional fancy features as well as the negative lettering; both the inner and outer margins of the circle have sawtooth marks, and there are two geometric decorations between the town name and state abbreviation. There is handstamped dating within the center of the clear field. It is said that only this one example exists, a front. The marking has been reported previously as existing in black, but none of the specialists who collect Vermont postmarks are aware of any such cover.

#### BRUNSWICK, MAINE

The *American Stampless Cover Catalog* lists three types of this 1815 postmark, all of which are war rates. According to Bruce Hazelton there is only one example known of each type. However, there is evidence that at least four covers with the marking exist. I have been lucky enough to obtain illustrations of three which I will show here.

The marking is really very unusual. It is an oversized circle (36mm diameter) in red ink with carved lettering in negative. The "MAR" month abbreviation is carved into the marking; it is not a slug which was inserted as in the Sackets Harbor, N.Y. oval. The earliest example is shown in Figure 3. It is manuscript dated with an "8" for March 8. The usage is the 15¢ war rate for the 40 to 90 mile distance. There is a full letter dated February 24, 1815 enclosed.

The second cover, in Figure 4, illustrates an example with March 15, 1815 dating. This marking is usually described as circular, but according to the writer's more strict nomenclature for town postmarks, this is an arch postmark in circular format, since the town's name is in an arch and the state abbreviation is on a level line in relation to that. The third cover is the example depicted in the *American Stampless Cover Catalog*, Volume I. It has a March 27 dating.

Although damaged since someone cut the address out, the fourth cover (Figure 5) shows the best strike of the marking. It has "April 11" written over the MAR of the handstamp. It also shows a woodcut "PAID" with negative lettering also. This seems to be

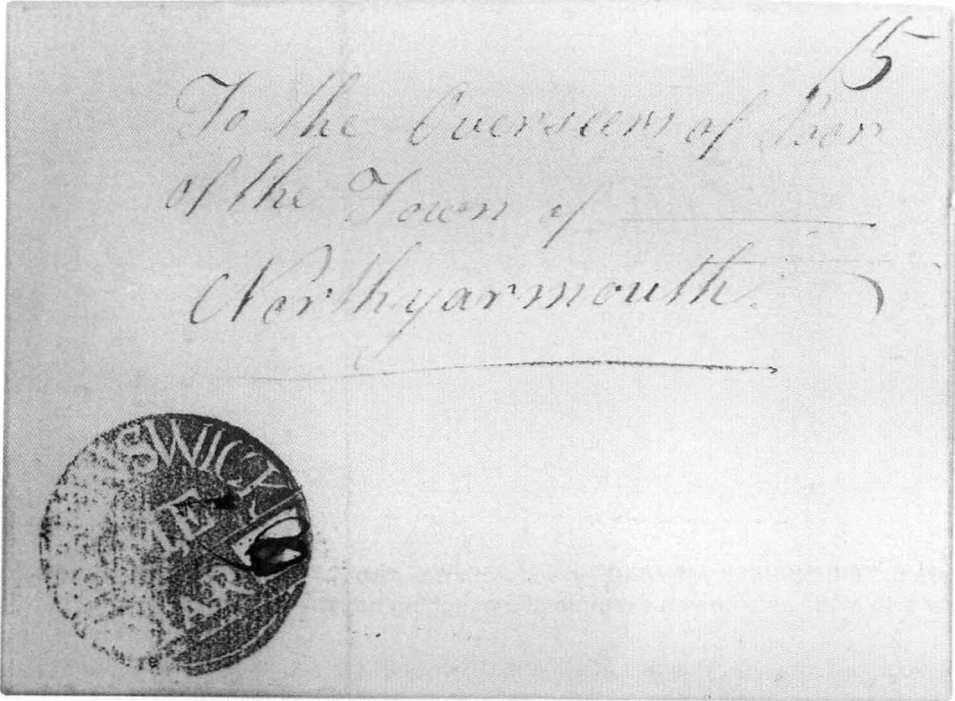


Figure 3. "BRUNSWICK ME MAR" (1815) in red with ms. "8" date with internal lines paralleling the two abbreviations, 15¢ war rate to North Yarmouth, Maine

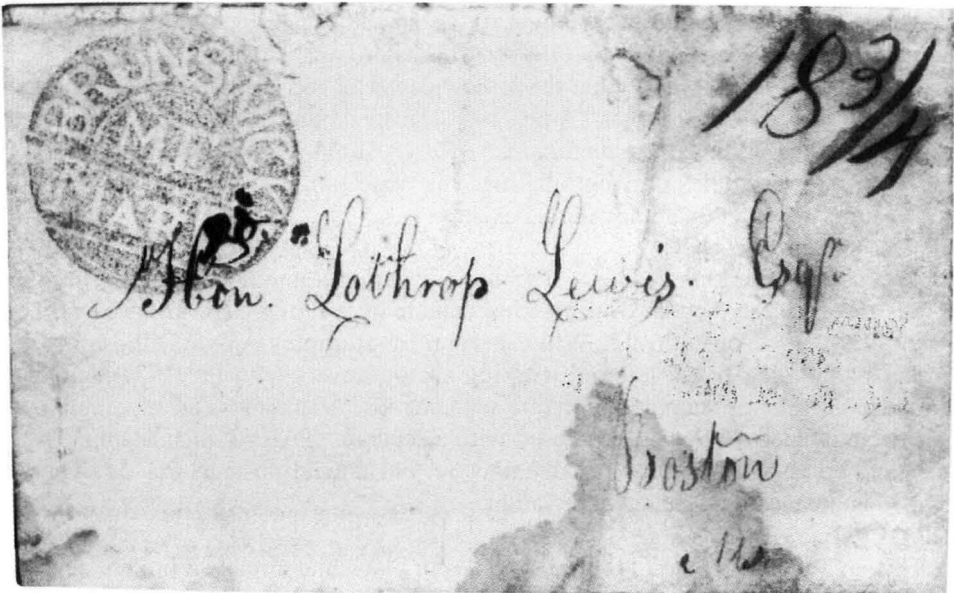
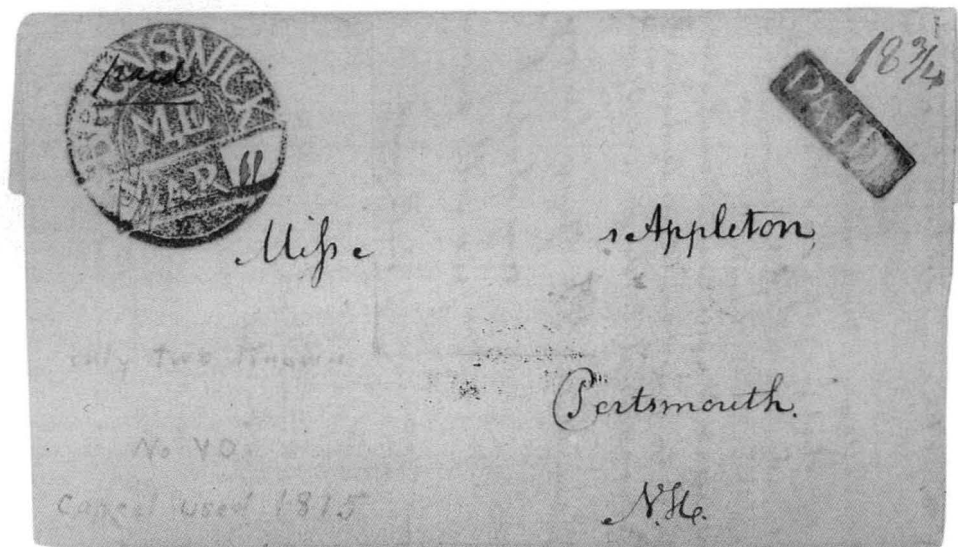


Figure 4. "BRUNSWICK ME MAR" in red with ms. "15", 1815 dating during the period of war rates ( $12\frac{1}{2} + 6\frac{1}{4} = 18\frac{3}{4}$ ¢) to Boston



**Figure 5. "BRUNSWICK ME MAR" in red with ms. "April 11" (1815), 18<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>¢ war rate; this cover also is the only known example of a matching negatively lettered "PAID"**

somewhat different from the catalog listings, but until the actual cover with the March 27 marking surfaces, I am going to assume that only the cover in Figure 5 has the negative "PAID" marking. It is another example of the 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>¢ rate subject to a 50% increase, an 18<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>¢ rate.

Since the word March is incorporated into the marking, this seems to be the reason that the marking was only used for about a month.

#### CANTERBURY, NEW YORK

This circular marking (1822) (Figure 6) has an additional line around the black field containing the letters. It contains two flowers for decoration. The date "4<sup>th</sup> Sept" (1822) is in manuscript and was placed within the hollow center of the postmark. Another example also in the writer's collection has "Augt. 20" (1829) dating due 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>¢ to Albany. This marking was listed in the *American Stampless Cover Catalog* from these two covers. I am unaware of other examples although the marking appears to have been used over a long period of time and other examples should exist.

#### CLOVERPORT, KENTUCKY

This circular marking (1853-4) (Figure 7) is one of a number of unusual postmarks from this town. I described an oval marking containing a flying eagle from Cloverport in *Chronicle* No. 178, pp. 126-27. While known on stampless covers, the more usual examples of this negatively lettered marking are on covers with the 1851 stamps. The marking is very rare as stampless and rare with stamps. A stampless cover example bears the handstamp dated 17 Sept., 1853, used with a separate "PAID 3" handstamp. This was during the period when prepaid postage was 3¢, but unpaid postage was 5¢. There is a colorless band beneath the state abbreviation.

#### DERBY-LINE, VERMONT

This arch style postmark (1836-37) comes in black and a reddish brown, and maybe also in red. Figure 8 shows two covers overlapped. The example shown fully is in black, while the other cover is in brown. The brown example was sent to London and is postmarked with a tiny "PAID," "18<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" and "via New York," and was charged 1/4 ship letter charge.

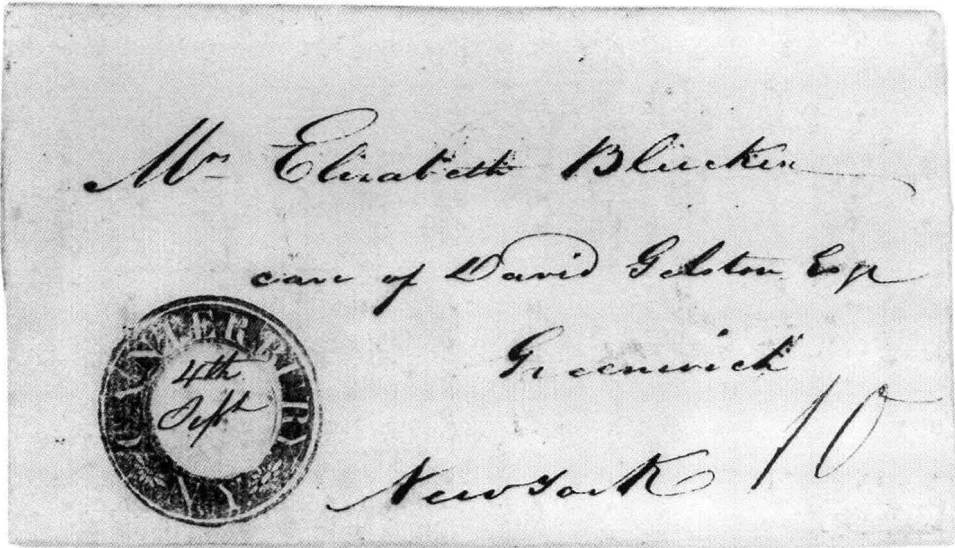


Figure 6. "CANTERBURY N.Y." with "4<sup>th</sup> Sept" in manuscript, 1822 letter enclosed with postage 10¢ due

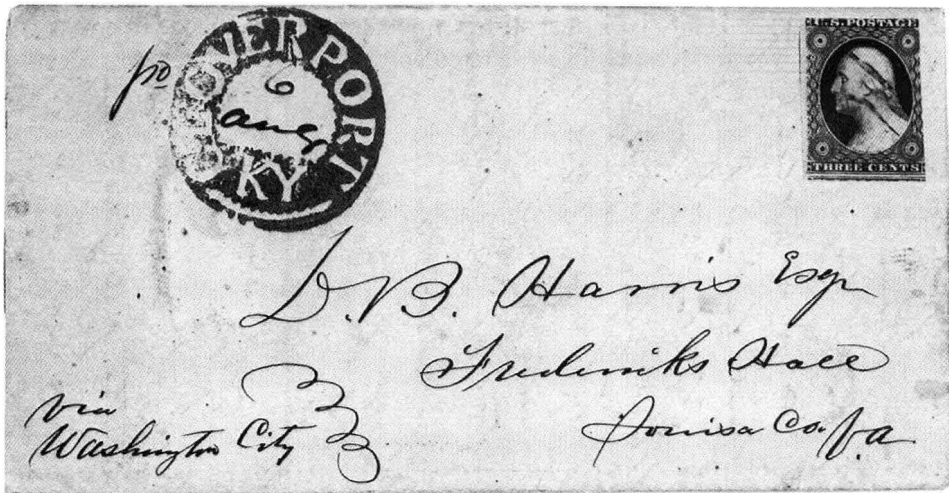


Figure 7. "CLOVERPORT KY" ms. "6 aug", pen canceled 3¢ 1851 on 1853 dated cover

The top of the arch is notched and is meant to depict a banner. The separate banner with the state abbreviation has notches on its bottom surface. The marking is scarce but not rare. The writer has seen at least eight examples, and I would estimate that quite a few more exist.

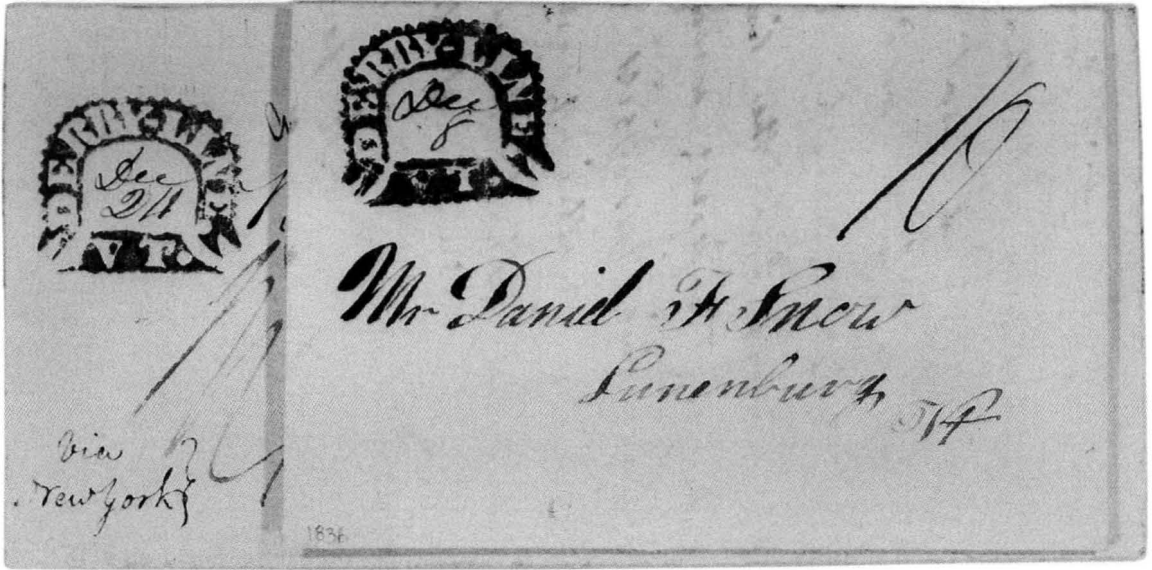


Figure 8. "DERBY-LINE VT." arch style marking in two banners, overlapping 1836 covers with left marking in reddish brown and right cover with marking in black

FREDERICA, DELAWARE

This oval marking (Figure 9) docketed 1836 is Quaker dated and is in red. Although the ASCC catalog lists a span of dates for this marking, only this one cover is known, so the catalog listing apparently is in error. It has an outer oval of red dots around the color band, an unusual feature for a negatively lettered postmark. Negative lettering is known in only three oval postmarks.

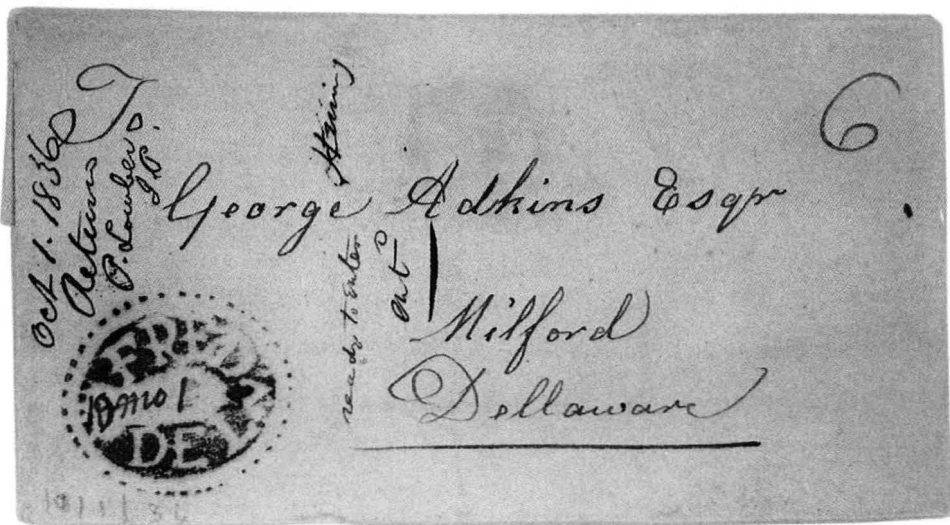


Figure 9. "FREDA DEL." in red with "10 mo 1" Quaker dating, docketed "Oct. 1, 1836," ms "6" to Milford, Delaware



Figure 10. "HADDONFIELD N.J." ms. "May 5<sup>th</sup>" (1841), ms. "Paid 10" to Salem, N.J.

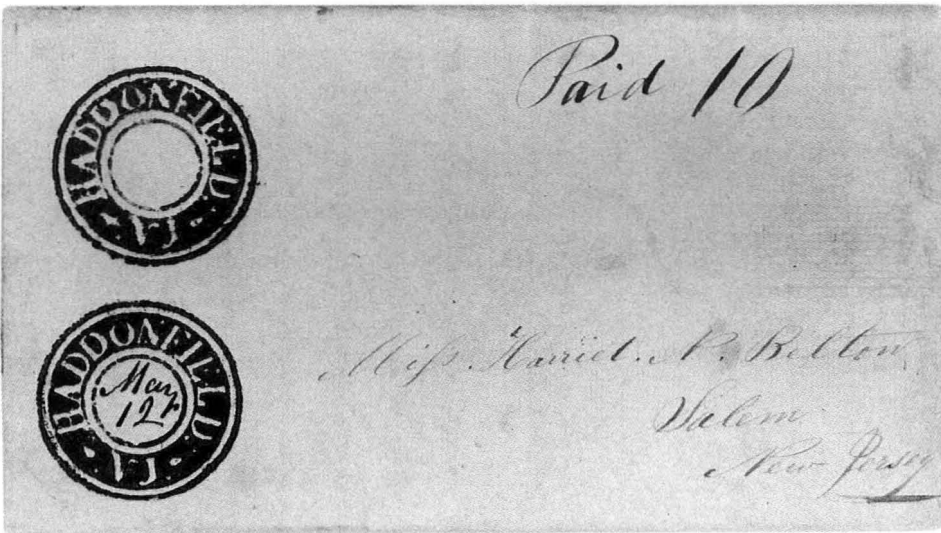


Figure 11. "HADDONFIELD N.J." ms. "May 12" (1841) in one strike, second undated strike, ms. "Paid 10", same correspondence as cover in Figure 8; this is only known cover with two strikes of a negative lettered postmark

#### HADDONFIELD, NEW JERSEY

This is one of the more common types of negative lettered circular postmarks. Examples are from 1841 or 1842. It is a very striking marking because of the additional outer and inner circular heavy framelines. There are diamonds around the state abbreviation (Figure 10). One cover is known with a double strike (Figure 11). Note the different styles in the postmaster's written "P" although these two covers are obviously in the same handwriting. A third cover from the same correspondence postmarked May 17 shows yet another type of "P" style. This is one of the negatively lettered postmarks that was used to cancel stamps.

HANOVER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

This marking shown in Figure 12 is not rare (1827). It usually comes in a greenish blue although it is known in red according to the catalog. This is a straightline postmark with fancy lettering in the state abbreviation and notches around the rectangular formatted marking. The month and day are handwritten in a clear space in the lower right corner of the marking. Note it is written on the diagonal in the illustration, parallel to the rectangle of the marking. The negative "PAID" also has an outer frame of dots. The blue marking, with or without the "PAID", is one of the more commonly seen negative lettered postmarks.

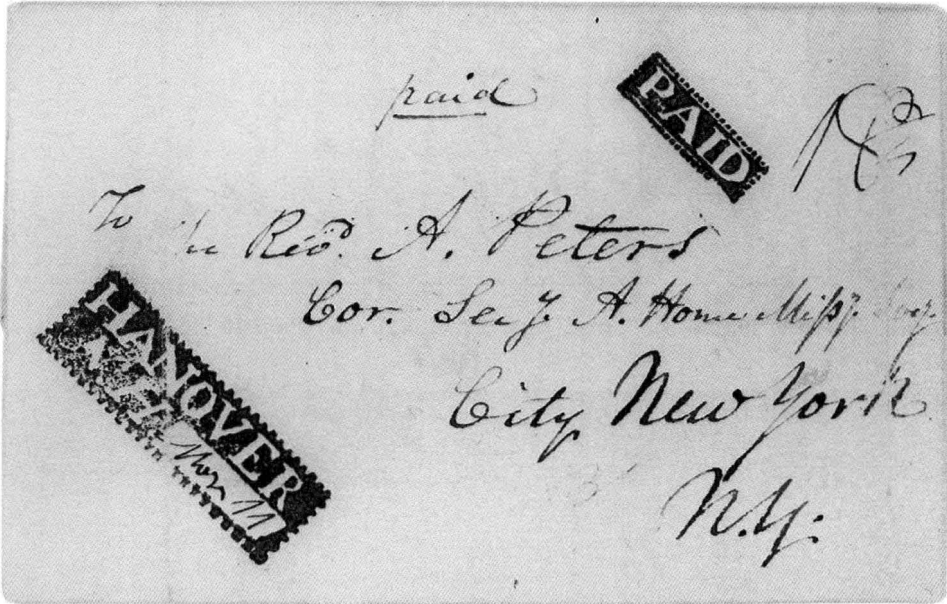


Figure 12. " HANOVER N.H. Mar 11" (1827) and "PAID" with ms. "18<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>", ms. "paid" notation by sender

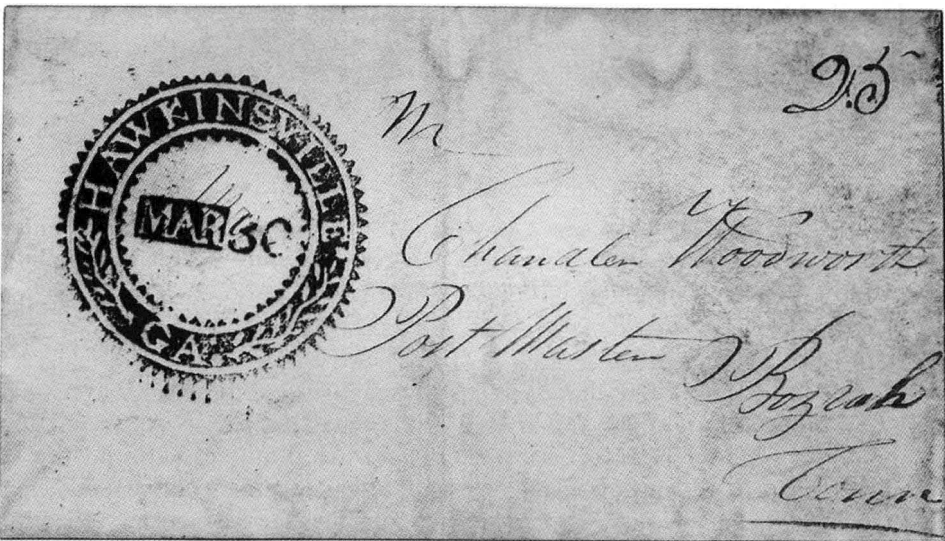


Figure 13. "HAWKINSVILLE GA. MAR 30" (1833) in red; there are notched inner and outer frame lines and negative lettering in month slug



## HAWKINSVILLE, GEORGIA

This very fancy circular marking of 1833 (Figure 13) shows considerable decoration as well as notching; it is in red ink. It is a newly discovered mark and only the one example is known to exist. Note that the month slug is also in negative lettering. The only other postmarks with negative lettered months are those from Brunswick, Maine and Sacketts Harbor, New York.

## HEMPSTEAD COURT HOUSE, ARKANSAS TERRITORY

This December 12, 1831 cover (Figure 14) shows a very primitive marking reading "HEMPSTEAD C.H. A.T.". This is unlisted in the catalog. The usage from a territory is very rare; the only other postmark from a territory with negative lettering is the shield marking of Little Rock. Note this cover comes from the same Brigham correspondence as the Hanover, N.H. cover shown in Figure 12.

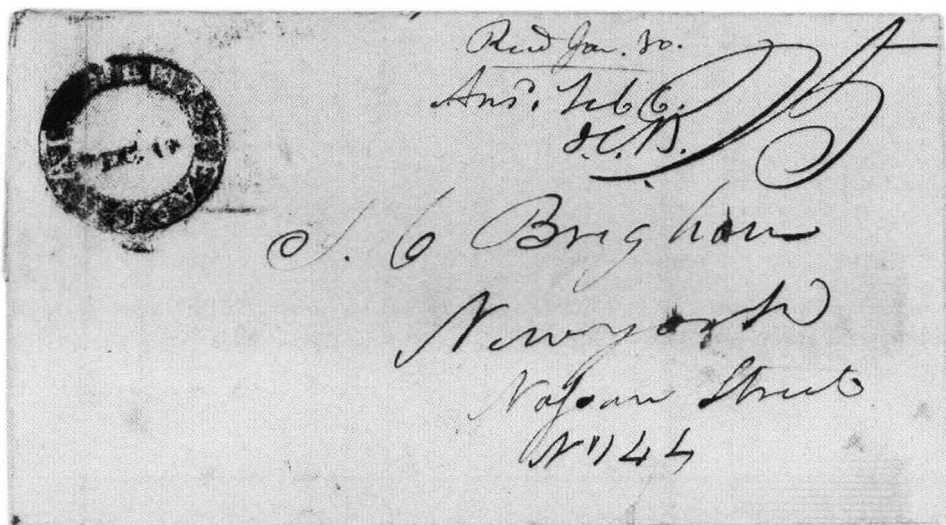


Figure 14. "HEMPSTEAD C H A T DEC 12" (1831) with "25" due

## LAMBERTVILLE, NEW JERSEY

This is a simple circular marking, which is usually well struck. There is a period on both sides of the state abbreviation which is inverted in relation to the lettering in the town's name. The marking was used during 1835-1841; about six covers have been recorded. Most covers are rated in manuscript, but there is a nice "FREE" with negative lettering known (Figure 15). A matching "PAID" is shown in William C. Coles, Jr., *The Postal Markings of New Jersey Stampless Covers* (Chicago: Collectors Club of Chicago, 1983).

## LANG TAV (Langhorns Tavern), VIRGINIA

This circular marking from November 11, 1828 (Figure 16) is a newly discovered example. It was missent to Charlotteville. Only the one example is known to exist. This town also used an arch postmark in hollow lettering.

## LEONA, TEXAS

This 1848 large bold black circular marking with shaded lettering in the central numerals is found with a negative "5" rating marking (Figure 17). There is a large colorless dot separating the town's name from the "TEXAS." This example shows shaded lettering in the month and date. A second example (Figure 18) is known from a few months later without the shaded lettered month and day. Also, the outer frame around the "5" has worn down so it is visible only in a few spots.

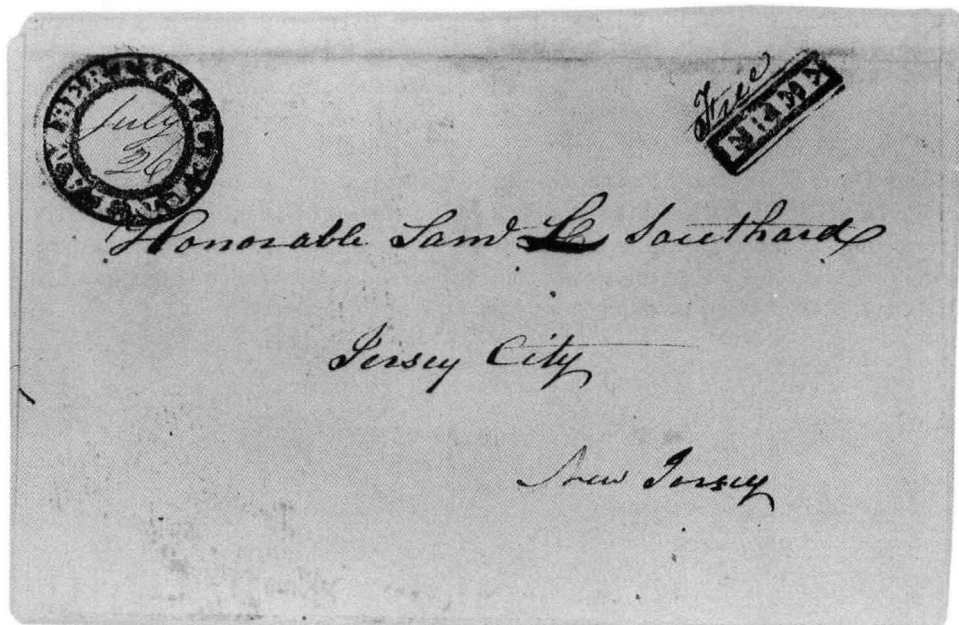


Figure 15. "LAMBERTVILLE N.J." ms "July 26" (1839) with "FREE" also in negative lettering (addressee was a U.S. senator)

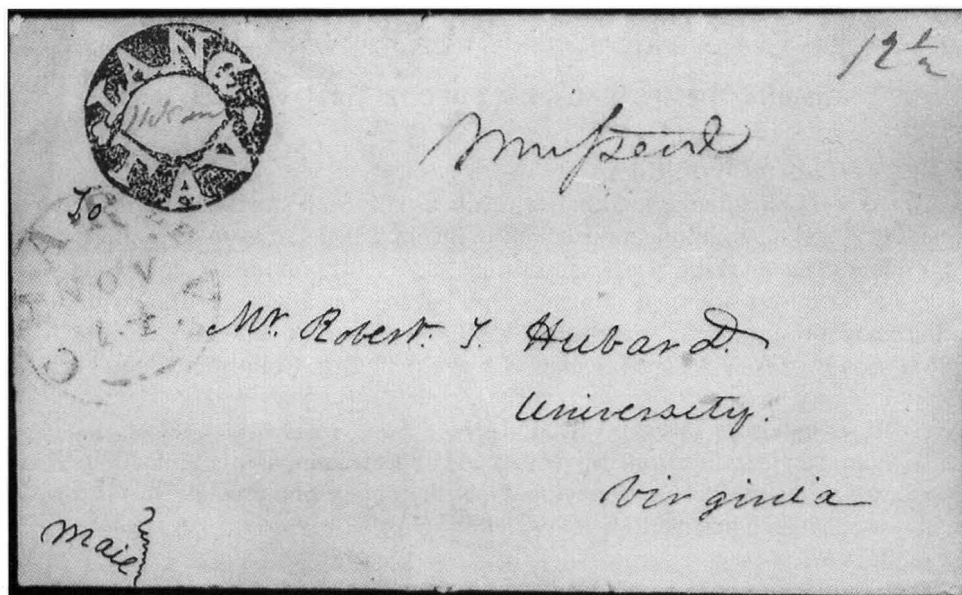


Figure 16. "LANG TAV" separated by spots within the band of black color, ms. "11 Nov" (1828) with "missent" and red "CHARLE VA. NOV 14," rated "12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" at Langhorne Tavern, Virginia

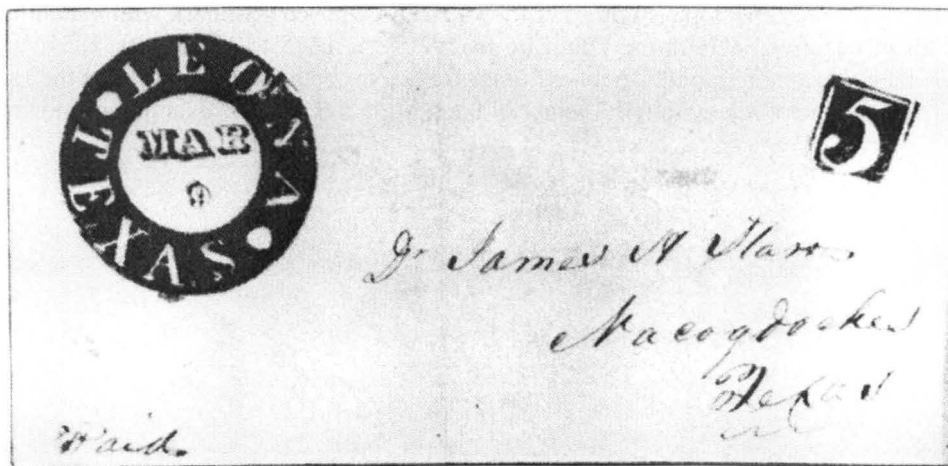


Figure 17. "LEONA TEXAS MAR 9" with separate fancy "5"

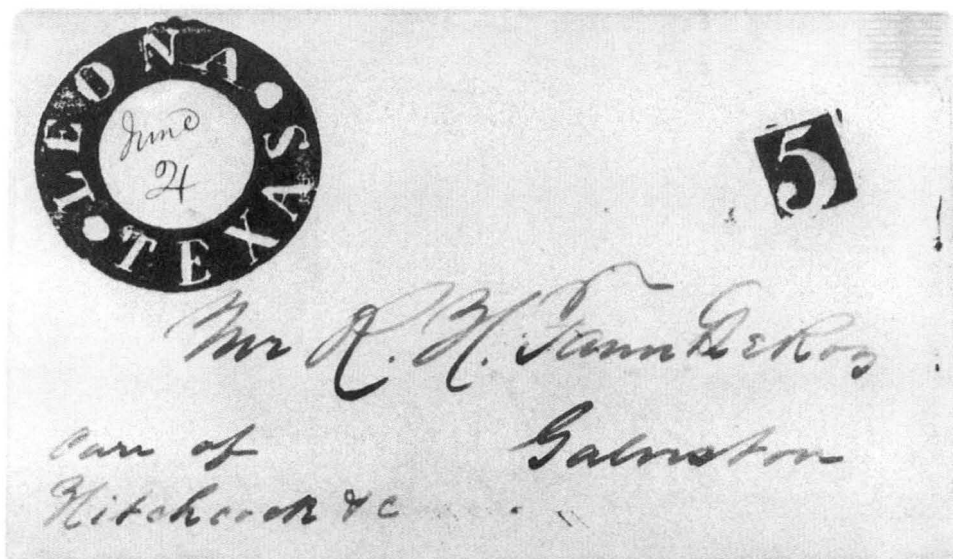


Figure 18. "LEONA TEXAS"ms "June 4" with separate fancy "5"

By price realized at auction, this is the most valuable stampless cover negative marking. This is surprising because several other of the fancy negative lettered postmarks are considerably more intricate in design. Perhaps the appeal is that it comes from Texas. LISBON, IOWA

This undated envelope (Figure 19) shows an embellished postmark with matching "5 cts" all in negative. This rating could be from July 1, 1845 to March 30, 1855, when prepayment became required. There are outer frames on both the postmark and the rating mark and an inner circle within the center of the postmark. Only this example is known.



Figure 19. "LISBON IOWA" ms. "March 21", separate "5 cts" script lettering in negative

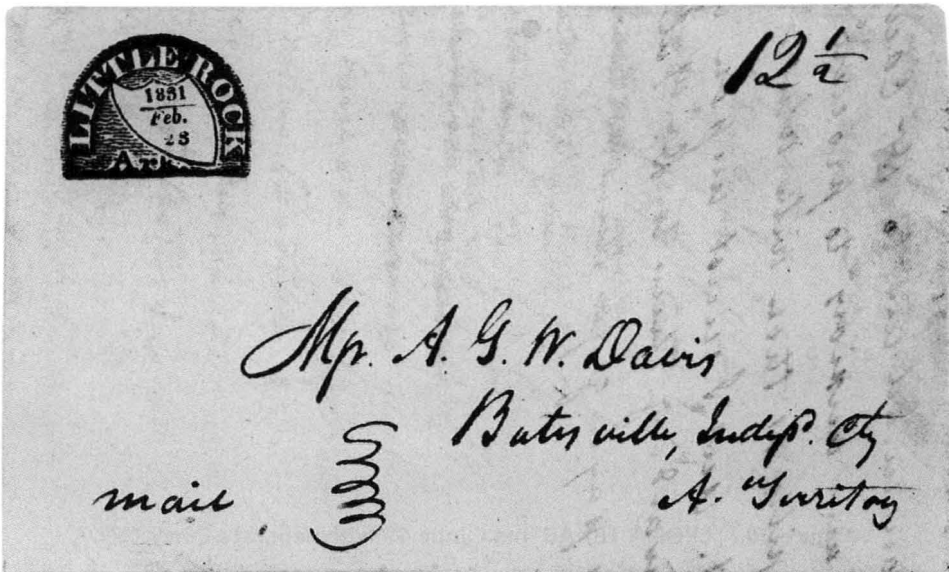


Figure 20. "LITTLE ROCK Ark. 1851 Feb. 23" with shield and decorated space, "12 1/2" rating mark for usage to another town in Arkansas Territory; this in the writer's opinion is the most artistic postmark with negative lettering

## LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS TERRITORY

This marking originally was rectangular in design. A tracing is shown in the *American Stampless Cover Catalog* where it is listed in red and black inks, one known example each, both from September 1830. This is actually incorrect. Both of these listings are from cover fronts. The September 9 listing shows a full rectangle in black (Robert A. Siegel auction, January 9, 1968, Howard Lehman Collection). However, the red marking from September 30, 1830 shows the marking modified with the upper margin curved in an arch just like the negative lettering "LITTLE ROCK" (Figure 20). The marking is known in this more attractive format until June 1832 (a cover of this date was in the same auction). The year, month and date are moveable type within the shield at the center of the marking. This certainly is one of the most appealing postal markings known. Fortunately, a small number of examples exist, mainly from 1831.

## NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS

These are really Spanish postmarks from the 1820s and 1830s from a town that later became a part of Texas. The earlier marking is a solid black circle surrounded by an outer frame. The example shown in Figure 21 has a matching "FRANCA" ("paid," in Spanish). The usage is from 1828 and the cover was rated on its reverse 3 reales. The next marking comes with an outer circular frame of tiny triangles (Figure 22), both in red and in black.

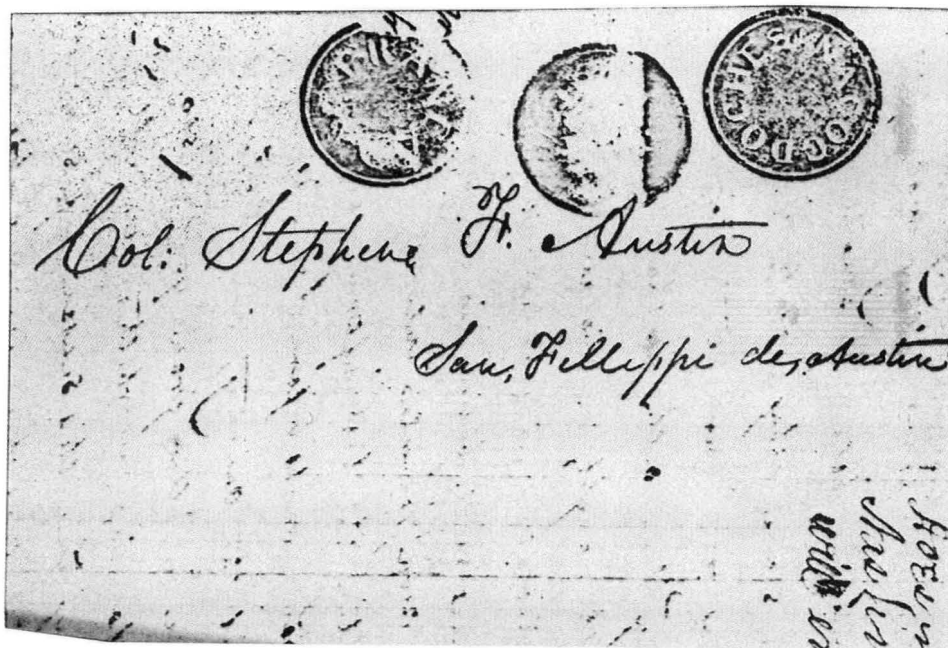


Figure 21. "NACOGDOCHES" in black, "FRANCA" in black, 3 reales to Austin

## OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA

This small circular postmark is the smallest type I know with negative lettering (Figure 23). There are additional ring frame lines inside and outside of the black field of lettering. Two nice examples known are from September and November 1828 with red manuscript dating. The example shown has a black "FREE" which is not fancy; the other has manuscript rating for "25" cents due (shown in Jarrett Collection, Christies, October 10, 1990). A third example in only fair condition is dated October 8, 1828. It is shown in the Nutmeg sale, October 26, 2004, lot 1033.

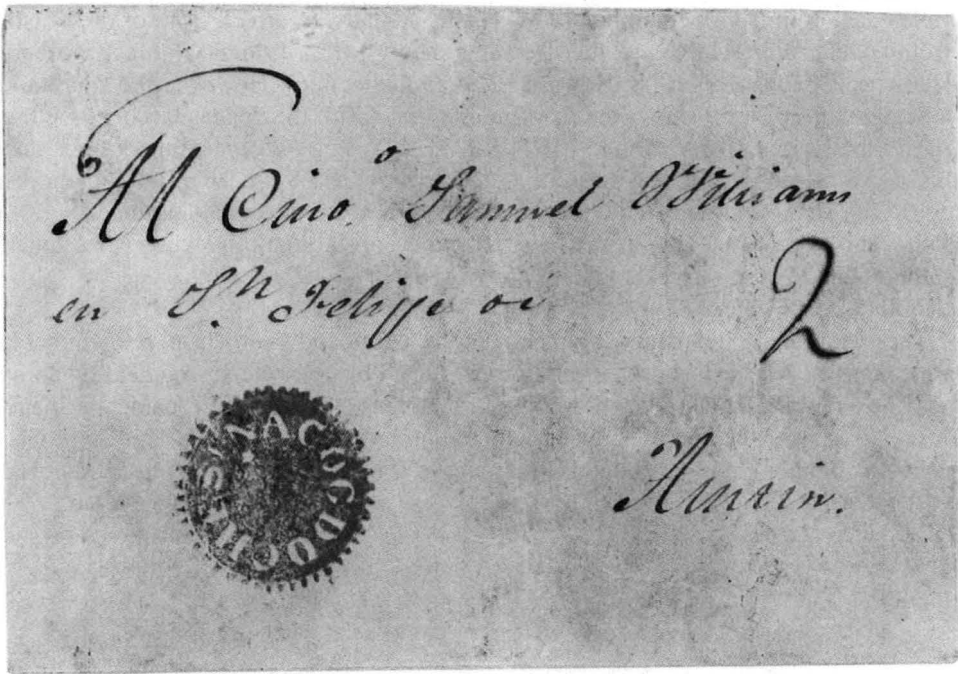


Figure 22. "NACOGDOCHES" in red, 2 reales to Austin

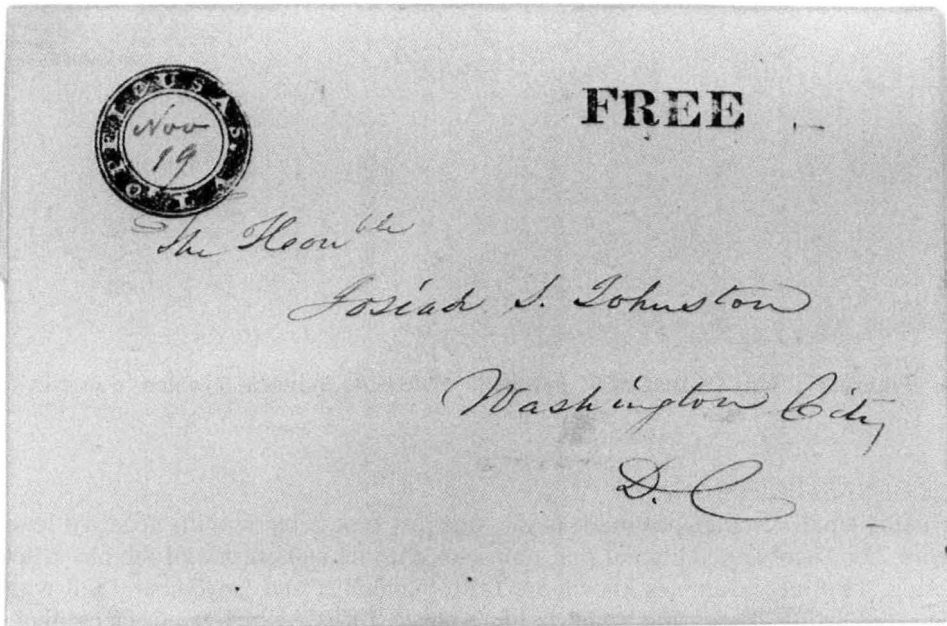


Figure 23. "OPELOUSAS LA", ms. "Nov 19"(1828) in small circle with both outer and inner circular frame line, and black "FREE"

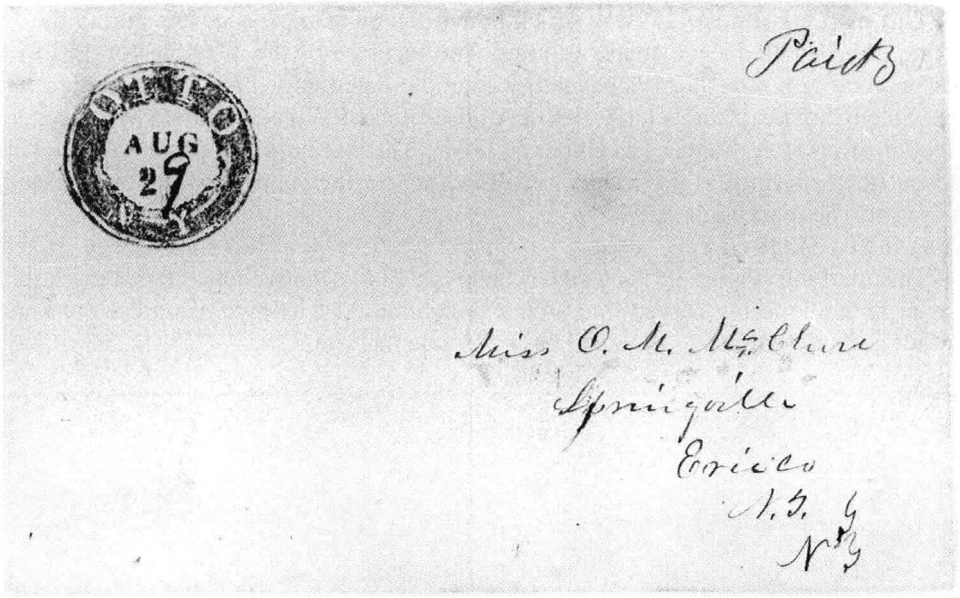


Figure 24. "OTTO N.Y. AUG 29" with manuscript "Paid 3" with usage 1851-55 period

OTTO, NEW YORK

This marking (Figure 24) has an outer frame and moveable type for month and date. It is a postmark from the early 1850s and is rarely struck stampless like this. It was also used as a canceler on the 1851 series of stamps. The negative curved spaces seen within the band of black are not part of the design; other strikes show a solid black around the lettering. It is a fairly scarce marking.



Figure 25. "RANDOLPH Vt." in maroon ms. "July 3" (1815) with ms "25 1/2" war rate

## RANDOLPH, VERMONT

This marking (Figure 25) was struck in maroon on stampless covers during the 1815 war rate period with 50% increase in rates. The increase of the 17¢ rate for 150 to 300 miles resulted in a rate of 25½¢. Another example dated July 17, 1815 is shown in the Jarrett Sale (Christies, October 10, 1990). A third franked "Free" is shown in the Bingham Collection (Robert A. Siegel, December 5, 1967). There is no inner circle so the lettering is sometimes incompletely struck towards the center. The marking was dated in manuscript. The marking is rare.

## RAYSVILLE, GEORGIA

This marking (Figure 26) is listed as being an 1848 negative lettered postmark in red. It has primitive lettering carved into a cork doughnut. At least two examples are known; the other is dated March 31, 1848 and has a "5" rate marking.

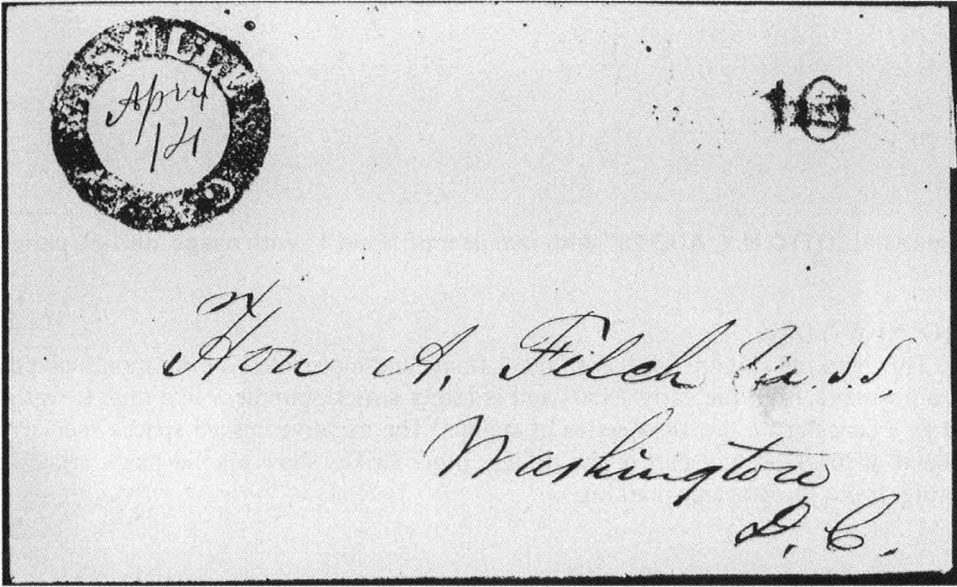


Figure 26. "RAYSVILLE GA" in red ms. "April 14" (1848), separate "10"

## SACKETS HARBOR, NEW YORK

This is one of the more interesting negative postmarks. All examples known are from a few months in 1815 when the war rate was in place. The earliest known example (Figure 27), from April 20, 1815, shows an ill-defined eagle in the center of the marking. I took this photograph of the cover when it had just been found. The month slug, "APR" in this case, fit into a rectangular slot below the center, and the day was written in pen below the handstamp. The rating is 25½¢ for 150 to 300 miles. The other figure (Figure 28) shows three other covers that are overlapped to show postmarks with April 30, May 20 and June 25 dating. The month slugs are all in negative lettering. The "H" of the April cover shows clear vertical embellishment. But most interesting is the loss of the eagle in the center which is almost gone in the postmark ten days after the early example and is entirely missing in the June example. I have seen another cover from May as well.

## ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI

This unusual postmark consists of an arch with the town's name, and a level abbreviation of the state's name; thus it is an arch type of postmark. All examples known are from 1822-23. Four examples exist with red postmarks, with Figure 29 the earliest known. The majority, said to be eight examples, are in black (Figure 30). Dating is by manuscript as are the postal rates.



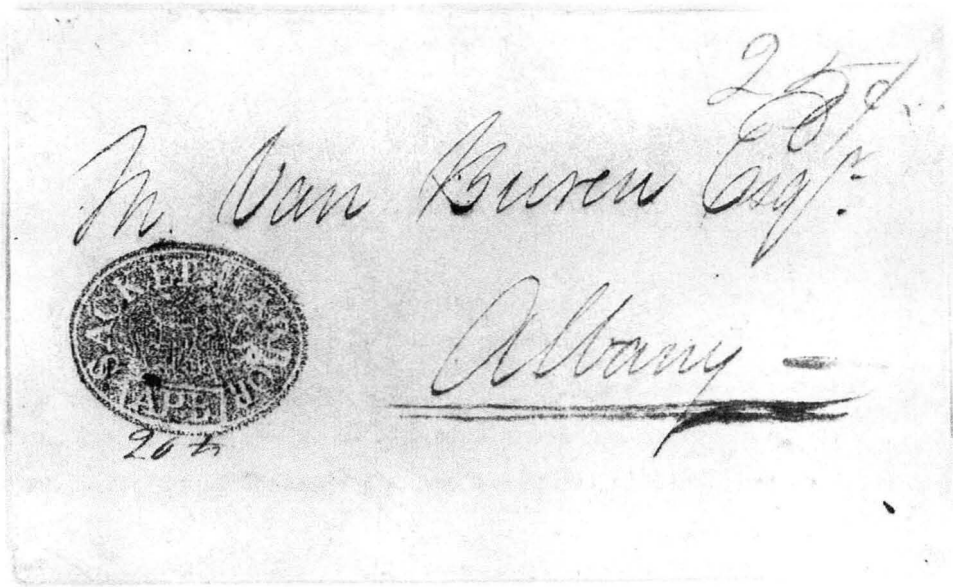


Figure 27. "SACKETS HARBOR APR" ms. "20<sup>th</sup>" (1815) with ill-defined eagle in center, ms. "25 1/2" war rate



Figure 28. "SACKETS HARBOR APR (MAY, JUNE), three overlapped covers from 1815 showing the aging of the marking; there are different slugs for the month date



Figure 29. "ST CHARLES MO" in arch format, struck in red with "Sept 3" (1822) dating

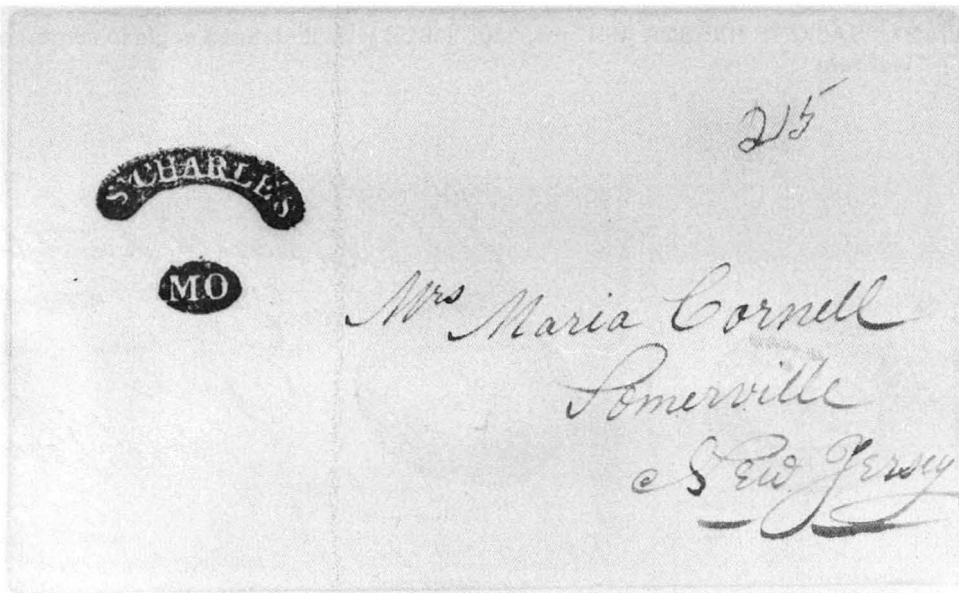


Figure 30. "ST CHARLES MO" in arch format, struck in black with no month or date (1823?)

#### SAN AUGUSTINE, TEXAS REPUBLIC

This unusual marking (Figure 31) is known from two examples. The arms of the black star contain negative letters: "SAN"; "AUG"; "UST"; "INE"; "TEX." There is faint manuscript dating and a manuscript "50" for the double rate to Houston. This is the only postmark with negative lettering which does not fit one of the four styles usual to stampless postmarks.

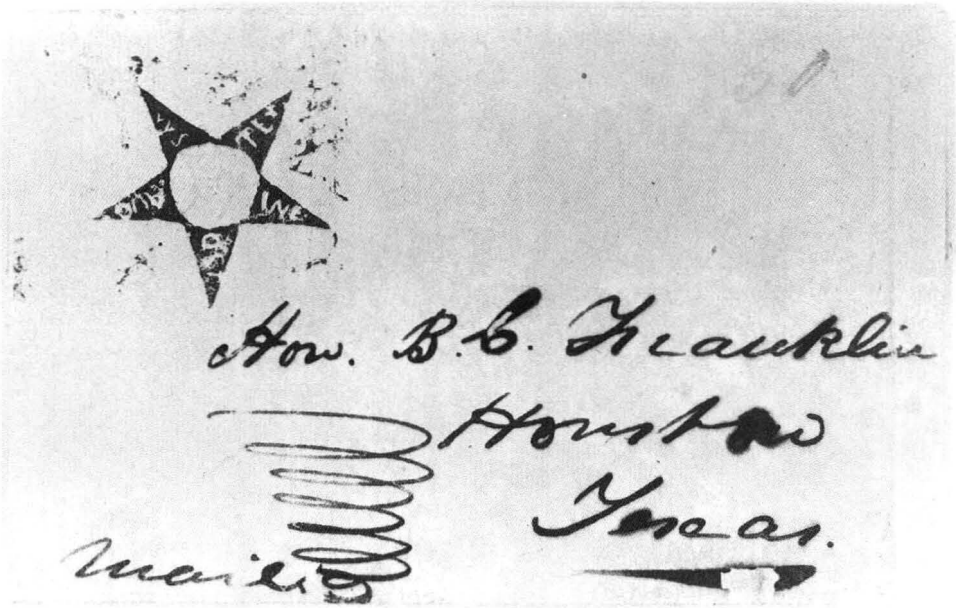


Figure 31. "SAN AUG UST INE TEX" negative lettering in five arms of star, faint ms. dating, "50" double rate during Republic Period in Texas

SHELBYVILLE, KENTUCKY

This marking (Figure 32 ) is one of the more fancy types of postmarks with negative lettering. The "kentucky" is in lower case Old English type lettering. There is a serrated inner frame line, and the outer frame line clearly shows that it has been cut into a series of connected triangles. This example, the finest known strike, is dated July 12, 1821. The marking was used for a number of years, and an example dated September 6, 1829 is shown in the next illustration (Figure 33). This allows for a rare look at the aging of a special postmarking device. The triangles can no longer be discerned in the outer band of black. The detailed lettering is gone and the letters are all thicker than in the original marking. But the serrations of the inner frame line are still visible. A new plain type replaced the italics for the month and day with no year date.

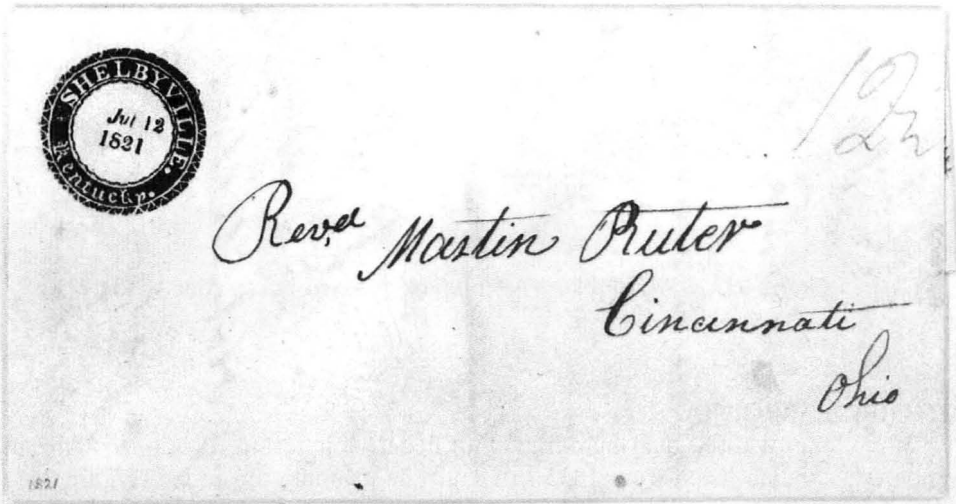


Figure 32. "SHELBYVILLE kentucky Jul 12 1821", ms. "12 1/2," clear early strike



Figure 33. "SHELBYVILLE kentucky Sept 6" (1829), worn late strike

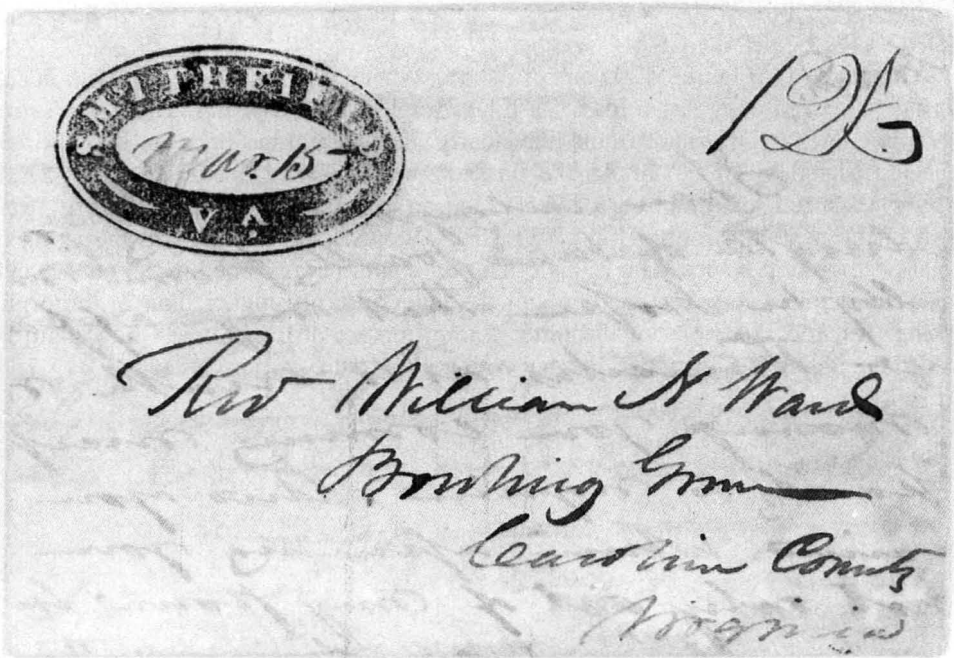


Figure 34. "SMITHFIELD VA" in black oval with ms. "Mar 15"

#### SMITHFIELD, VIRGINIA

This is one of three oval markings with negative lettering. It is one of the more common types, being listed from 1835 to 1839. The example illustrated (Figure 34) is a good strike and shows arc decorations to the side of the state abbreviation. There is an outer oval frame. The date is always written in manuscript.

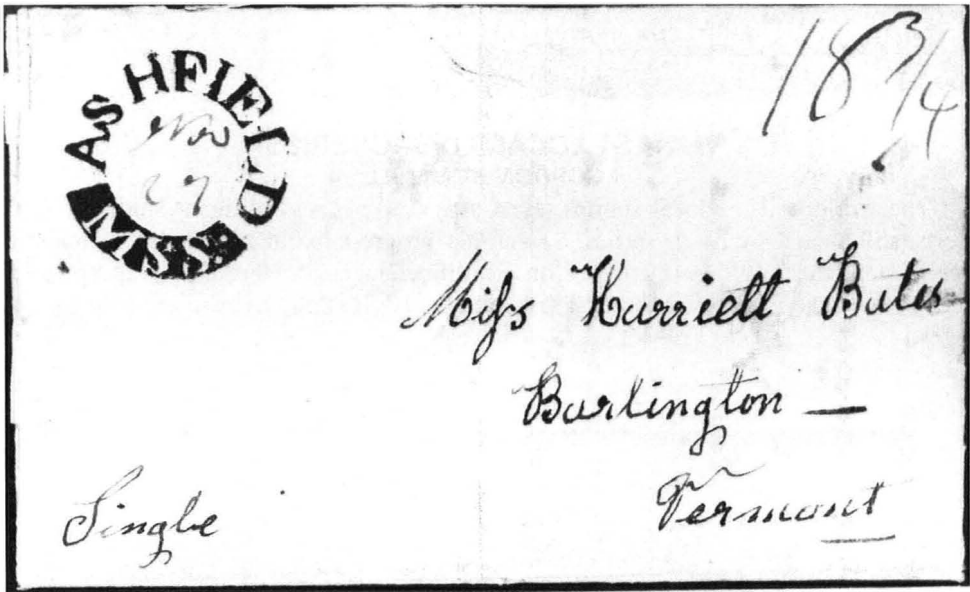


Figure 35. "ASHFIELD MSS." upper portion rimless, lower portion in negative lettering, date "Nov 27" written in the center

In addition to the 27 postmarks that are lettered entirely with negative lettering, there are a few postmarks with partial negative lettering. Shown in Figure 35 is an example from Ashfield, Massachusetts with the "MSS" in negative letters. This marking also comes in red and blue inks. The writer has Watertown N.Y. with the "N.Y." in negative (1838); Salem, N.Y. with fancy cogged teeth outer frame and negative "N.Y." (1825)(Figure 36); and Waterford, N.Y. with negative month "SEP" and handwritten "26" (1837). There are probably other examples with partial lettering, but I believe this includes all of the recorded full negative lettered postmarks.

#### Acknowledgments

Joseph F. Antizzo, Nancy Z. Clark, William C. Coles, Jr., Frank Crown, David L. Jarrett and Richard J. Marek made illustrations available.



Figure 36. "SALEM N.Y.", ms. Oct 11" (1825) with fancy cogged outer frame and smooth

**LATEST LOCALS DISCOVERIES**  
GORDON STIMMELL

The world of U.S. local stamps, even after 150 years of diligent study by leading experts, still abounds with mysteries. Sometimes progress in our knowledge seems to take place in steps that could be measured on a millimeter gauge. Here is a wrap-up of some discoveries I have made over the past few months. Each is one more small step for stamp kind.



**Figure 1**

**NEW YORK.** The Broadway Post Office in New York City issued its antique locomotive stamp in the early 1850s (Scott #26L1). On the genuine stamp, a whirl of dust behind the locomotive looks like the center of a fingerprint, enabling us to distinguish it from a flock of forgeries created in the dawn of stamp dealers in the 1860s. Except on one stamp in the sheet, which has a series of parallel, nearly vertical lines overlaid on the whorl of dust behind the engine. I first noticed this major plate flaw in the upper left corner stamp of the block of 11 offered in the Siegel Golden Sale as lot 800. I wondered if this could be a constant plate flaw, and now a second example has turned up (Figure 1). Owner John Bowman notes as well “some marks that could be alphabetic characters along and to the right of the line separating the locomotive design from ‘POST-OFFICE.’ There is also a mark between the frame lines above the ‘AY’ in ‘BROAD-WAY.’ The two examples confirm that this is a constant plate variety in the sheet.” The flaw should also be present in the much rarer gold on black Broadway stamp (26L2) but no example seems to

have survived. While Donald Patton stated in his *Private Local Posts of the United States of America* that the stamps were printed by typography from a woodblock, Leonard Hartmann says “there is no doubt in my mind that the stamp is a lithograph . . . however I strongly think the original master engraving was a woodblock.” Patton noted blocks of 32 (4 x 8) and eleven, as well as smaller blocks of four and strips. He suggested the stamps were probably printed in sheets of 100 subjects. Scott Trepel noted in the Golden Sale catalog that the ex-Jarrett block of 32 had been broken up into four blocks of eight. The largest surviving multiple is a bottom sheet block of 25 sold in the Hall Collection (Siegel sale 830) which of course does not contain the major flaw shown in Figure 1 from the top of sheet block of 11.



Figure 2

**SAN FRANCISCO, Part One.** The Wells Fargo Pony Express stamps have an enduring fascination as milestones in U.S. history, in linking the wild west to the more civilized east. Scott R. Trepel wrote and published a monograph on the running pony stamps entitled *Wells, Fargo & Company 1861 Pony Express Issues* in 2005 that is a must for students of these stamps. This 40-page treatise delves into contextual issues, the fact the stamps were only used from west to east, and provides dates of usage and census information. But chief among the treatise’s highlights is a highly detailed plating guide to the various pony stamps. The most famous stamp flaw in the series occurs in one position in the \$1 red sheet of 40 (Scott #143L3) position R09, where the horse’s right front leg is cut off where the background shading lines terminate. The famous missing hoof variety is listed at \$1,250 in the *Scott 2006 US Specialized Catalogue* in mint condition—no value is

given for a used stamp. Trepel notes he has seen “eight examples of the Broken Leg, including four in sheets, two in blocks and two singles, all unused without gum. The author has been unable to locate a used example on or off cover. One unresolved question is whether Position R09 exists without the flaw, which would prove that some sheets were printed before the flaw occurred on the printing stone.” Now a single used off cover example has surfaced, shown in Figure 2. It has the missing hoof, and is handstamped with the famed running pony blue San Francisco handstamp dated October. So far, this is the only used example known. Check your holdings for used missing hoof \$1 pony stamps. But beware, forged running pony handstamps exist (some quite deceptive) as well as more than 25 different forgeries of the running pony stamps. In addition, reprints were made in 1897, distinguished by the “white hat” of the pony rider.



Figure 3

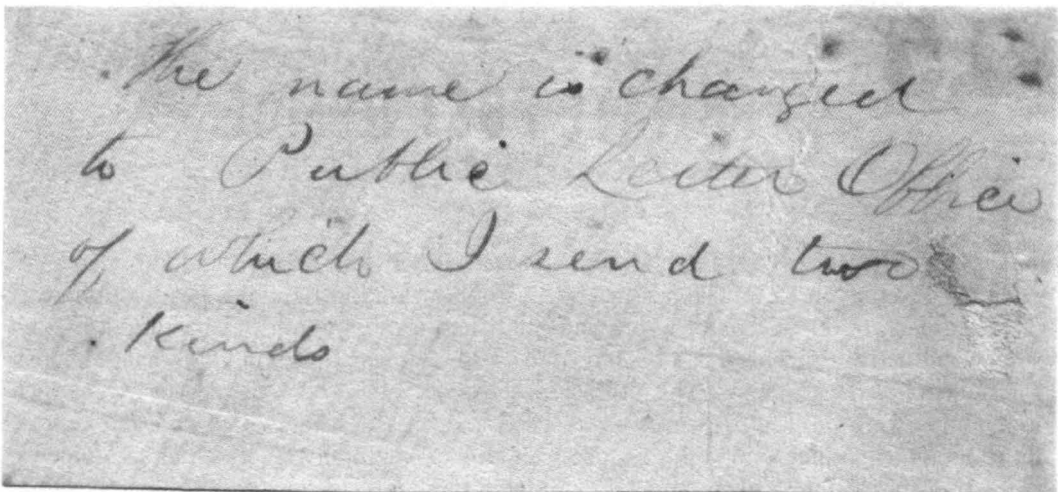


Figure 4



**SAN FRANCISCO, Part Deux.** In the *Penny Post* October 2005 issue, I co-authored an article with John Bowman entitled “Were the San Francisco Private Post Office and Public Letter Office the Same Local Post?,” based on a corner cut out I picked up at auction of the Private Post Office (Scott #s 125LU1-LU4) with a note on the reverse referencing the Public Letter Office (Scott #s 125LU1-LU4). The link between the two separately listed San Francisco posts, both located at 5 Kearny Street, comes in the message scrawled on the back: “The name is changed (or charged) to Public Letter Office of which I send two kinds.” The two kinds would refer to the 15¢ and 25¢ denominations of these pre-printed envelopes. Why would the proprietor be sending “two kinds”? I feel this message was from the proprietor—who is still unknown—sending out samples to existing customers of his new Private Post Office forms. Figure 3 is the sample, with Figure 4 the message on the reverse. Which would mean that Private Letter Office replaced Public Letter Office in sequence. If one reads the message as “charged to” that would hold true. However, if one reads the message as “changed to” then Private Post Office preceded Public Letter Office. What do you think? Is it “charged to” or “changed to”? The date cited in the *Scott Specialized 2006 Catalogue* is 1864, however, Larry Lyons adds: “A recent search of the SF directories indicates that this company existed in late 1868 or early 1869 and not 1864-5. The listing first appears in 1869. In a conversation with George Kramer I learned that we both believe this to be the same company as the SF Private Post Office. I don’t know of an official linking document.” So the Scott Catalogue should list them together, but in what order? The writing is not exactly clearly on the wall.

**CHICAGO.** When the very patriotic John R. Floyd joined the Civil War effort in 1861, he left his prosperous Chicago Penny Post (Scott 68L1-3) in the hands of Charles W. Mappa. My detailed analysis of Floyd’s Penny Post appeared in the January 1997 *Penny Post*. In the Bailey 1863-4 directory for Chicago, John R. Floyd is listed as “USA,” i.e., the US Army, and by 1867 was working as a clerk for the American Express company where he continued working through at least 1881. After founder Floyd joined the troops, Charles W. Mappa took over. While Floyd issued the blue and brown stamps, dated covers



Figure 5

show Mappa likely issued the green stamps. In the Halpin & Bailey 1861-2 Chicago directories is this entry: PENNY POST - FLOYD'S, Charles W. Mappa, propr., 124 Randolph; and Floyd is also listed as Superintendent, penny post at 124 Randolph. By 1862-3 Mappa is listed as "prop. Penny Post and Mappa & Collins Real Estate" at 124 Randolph. At some point in the fall of 1862, a similar local post arose from the Floyd/Mappa ashes. On Oct. 18, 1862, the Chicago *Tribune* stated: "A new Penny Post has been established in this city by John Johnson and Joseph F. Coupe, the office of which is at 113 Randolph Street" with a general office in the Randolph Block. This was the post that issued the Beehive Stamp (Scott #38L1). A diligent search of directories has not turned up any such business in the Randolph Block. While Joseph Coupe has left no record in directories or censi, John Johnson is listed in the 1862-3 Bailey directory as "Johnson, John (col'd) expressman". He later shows up in Bailey's 1867 directory, as a letter carrier. The handstamp of the Beehive Chicago Penny Post survives on a few stamps and blundered on covers, and has always been interpreted as saying: "CHICAGO PENNY POST, Edward T. Cooke, Supt" or "E.T. Cooke, Supt". In the 1862-63 Bailey directory, Edward Cooke is listed as "newscarrier" but no link to the beehive Chicago Penny Post is shown. Now the only existing clear handstamp of this short lived post has surfaced (Figure 5), on a battered cover with the U.S. stamp cut out. And it deepens the mystery. The handstamp does not say "Edward T. Cooke" or "E.T. Cooke," it says "A. E. Cooke". Just when I thought I was making progress. One hopes this is Edward, otherwise it's back to the drawing board, as no A.E. Cooke is listed in the dozens of directories at hand. Sometimes distance does not make the heart grow fonder.



**Figure 6**

**BOSTON.** The enduring mystery of Cheever & Towle is simple: Who was Cheever? A search of every Cheever in the Boston directories provides not one snip of evidence of any so-named individual connected with any local post. The 1850 Boston U.S. census

provides a tantalizing clue at last. William R. Towle is listed with profession "City Post" in the North Chelsea, Suffolk County, Mass. census. He is 35 years old, living with wife Elizabeth age 34, daughter Elizabeth S. age 8 and son William B., age 4. Amazingly, right next door, dwelling alone in her own big house, is Eleanor Cheever, age 65, a widow for more than 20 years with no children, going by the 1840 and 1830 U.S. censi. So she was likely not a mother-in-law to Towle. The fact she was Towle's next door neighbor, with independent means, plus the evidence that survives that the name Cheever does not appear on even the earliest handstamps in 1847, nor the one surviving wooden letter box marked "CITY DESPATCH POST/ W.R. TOWLE" of 1848-50, argues that perhaps she was an early financial backer, and subsequently withdrew, was bought out or paid back. The stamps survive, bearing the name Cheever & Towle, used from 1848 to 1850, through at least three printings. The stamp (37L1, see Figure 6) shows a pile of folded letters piled in a circle, an echo of the Boston Hale stamps of 1844-45, which makes sense, as William R. Towle was an agent for Hales during the great blossoming of the Independent Mail companies before they were killed by an Act of Congress in July 1845.

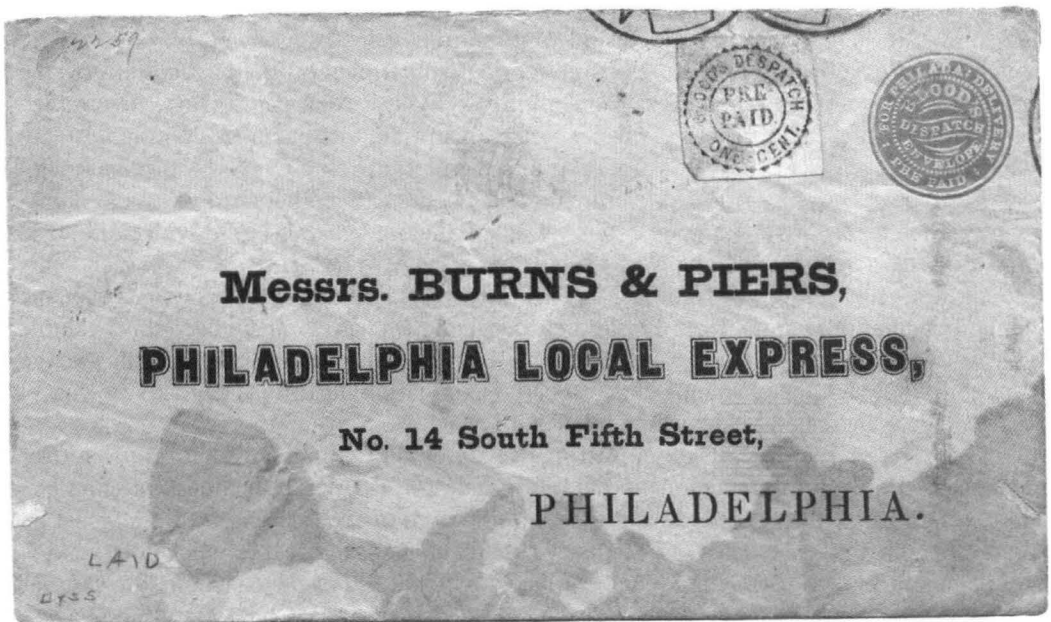


Figure 7

**PHILADELPHIA.** I thought I knew all the wrinkles associated with Blood's Penny Post of Philadelphia. From their first primitive cut outs in the predecessor Robertson days (Scott 15L1-2) to their last throes under Charles Kochersperger (15L18). Then I encountered Figure 7, an embossed Blood's buff envelope (15LU9) addressed to "Burns & Piers, Philadelphia Local Express." Now I have seen unused embossed Blood's envelopes to this same expressCompany. But this example had a pasted on earlier period "PRE PAID" handstamp with the cogwheel rim. Why would one need two indicators of pre-paid postage, since the embossed design also has these words? Was it some kind of rate change? Or was it a simple indicator of the "ONE CENT" fee which happens to be missing from the embossed design? Adding to the mystery are the remains of very unusual single circle handstamps above the adhesive and to the right, with odd geometric patterns within them. Were these handstamps of the recipient, the Local Express? I remain puzzled and hope someone out there can help solve the mystery. The last time this cover surfaced, it was part of the prestigious Col. Green collection, sold by Laurence & Stryker as auction lot 42 on Oct. 5, 1942. □

## OFF-COVER POSTAL HISTORY AND "EARLIEST INDICATED USES (EIU)"

JAMES A. ALLEN AND ROGER D. CURRAN

### Case Study of the New York City Square Grids –

#### Earliest Indicated Use of Scott US #17 and the 1847 5¢ That Didn't Get Away!

"EKUs" (earliest known uses, sometimes referred to as "EDUs," earliest dated uses) are often a collecting interest along with traditional first day covers. Such dated uses also allow stamp and postal historians to correctly define when postal events and changes were made, thus adding to the total understanding of postal history. Besides the reliance on year-dated postmarks, docketing or enclosures to date covers, several other approaches exist for establishing at least probable dates of use of stamps, covers or cancels. In fact, these approaches are used frequently. Some examples include: (1) specific stamp print characteristics which indicate "earlier" vs. "later" plates; (2) specific printing colors that are known to have been used in certain time periods, usually as dated by covers with postmarks, docketing or enclosures as above, but sometimes officially recorded by the printer of the stamps; (3) stamps correlated directly with certain dates of use determined separately from (2) above; and (4) paper types, overprints, plate changes and handstamp deterioration as evidenced by postal markings which have been previously correlated with dates of recorded use or official government dates of issue. Another form of usage dating occurs when an off-cover stamp is explicitly dated, that is, when the CDS with full date is struck on the stamp. Such is the well-known case for a copy of Scott US #63 which bears the earliest recorded date of August 17, 1861 for the 1¢ 1861 issue, relying upon the explicit circular date stamp from Baltimore, Maryland. Richard Graham used this example in discussing various aspects of "The Earliest Known Use."<sup>1</sup> He also stressed the desirability of such dated stamps existing on covers that might further validate the cancel usage dates as indicated by the stamp in question.

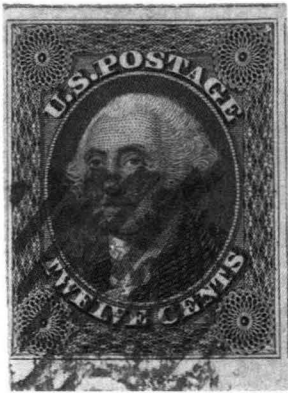
Moreover, records of cancellation use dates can sometimes be employed to advantage, allowing inference of the likely use date for a particular stamp. For example, the "earliest known or recorded" and the "latest known or recorded" *use of a cancel* can bracket the probable use dates of a stamp. While this type of indirect reference dating may not be definitive (*e.g.*, the stamp may bear an exceptional use of the cancel in question far outside the recorded known range of use), it is at least indicative, if statistics are a measure, of a time period of probable use. When the recorded cancel use dates are employed to date an off-cover stamp, but no date is explicitly struck on the item in question, the authors have taken the liberty to coin the descriptor "Earliest Indicated Use (EIU)" or "Latest Indicated Use (LIU)" in describing the usage date ranges. These recorded cancel use dates are taken to *indicate* that the stamp was *probably* used in that same range of dates based on best available, albeit sometimes tangential, information.

#### Case Study -New York City Square Grid Cancels

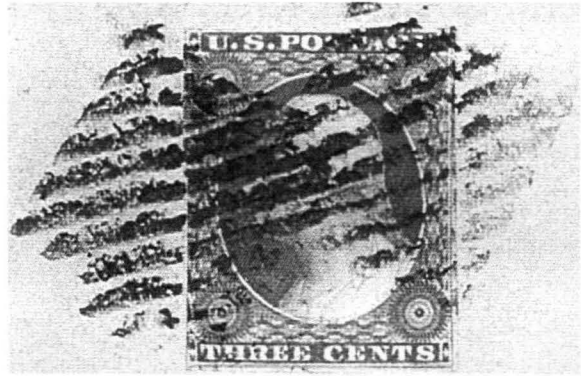
Figures 1 and 2 introduce selected New York City (NYC) cancels which, when combined with the information that follows in the next few paragraphs, will be used to illustrate or develop the foregoing points. Shown in Figure 1 is a poor to fine strike of an NYC 11-bar square grid in black used on an 1851 12¢ stamp, Scott #17 (plate position 93L1). It is on the characteristic stiffer linen paper of the earliest 12¢ printings that also

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<sup>1</sup>Richard B. Graham, "The Earliest Known Use," *The American Philatelist*, Vol. 86, No.5 (May 1972), pp. 423-24, 442.



**Figure 1. NYC 11-bar square grid in black on 1851 12¢ stamp, Scott #17 (plate position 93L1)**



**Figure 2. NYC 11-bar grid cancel on 1851 3¢ stamp, cover postmarked August 7, 1851**

has a slight ribbed appearance. This is indicative of the earliest 1851 delivered stamps but not sufficient to be definitive as to any specific date. Similar strikes of the 11-bar grid in black on an 1851 3¢ stamp are shown in Figure 2 (cropped, cover postmarked August 7, 1851). Better defined, more representative strikes used on the 1851 3¢ stamp are shown in Figure 3 (cropped, cover postmarked August 1, [1851]) and on the 1¢ 1851 shown in Figure 4 (dated July 23, 1851). The 11-bar black grid is not rare on the 1851 1¢ or 3¢ stamps, but its use on the 1851 12¢ stamp, at least based on examples recorded, is rare. Several aspects of the NYC 11-bar cancel's use, nature and occurrence were discussed by Skinner.<sup>2</sup> Skinner noted that the 11-bar square grid of NYC has been mistakenly categorized with other square grid cancels from New York, notably the 13-bar black grid which will be discussed shortly. Indeed, square grid cancels are known from other cities, but those have their own characteristics and characteristic time periods of use.<sup>3</sup>



**Figure 3. NYC 11-bar grid cancel on 1851 3¢ stamp, cover postmarked August 1, [1851]**



**Figure 4. NYC 11-bar grid cancel on 1851 1¢ stamp, dated July 23, 1851**

<sup>2</sup>Hubert C. Skinner, "Early Cancellations of New York City: Part 1 1842-1852," *Chronicle*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (Whole No. 167)(August 1995), pp. 171-78.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas J. Alexander, *Simpson's U. S. Postal Markings 1851-1861* (Columbus, Ohio: U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., 1979), pp. 127-53.



**Figure 5. NYC 13-bar grid cancel on cover postmarked July 14, [1851]**

on the 1¢ 1851. Note that the end “triangles” or “caps” in Figures 5, 6 and 7 are fairly distinctive (if the cancel is well struck) and slightly rounded, but also pointed. It has been hypothesized by the late Creighton Hart, one of the great students of the 1847 stamps, that the NYC 15-bar red grid (see example shown in Figure 8), eventually wore down to yield the 13-bar cancel that became so common. Presumably this cancel’s use would then carry over into usages on the 1851 series. While this wear may have been expected and may have occurred on some devices, close examination of the end caps or triangles on either the 15-bar or 13-bar cancels and their distinctive shape and thickness leads us to the final conclusion. The observation that the wear which would have had to occur *out of the horizontal plane of the bars* to affect the end caps and would not likely yield a distinct or a “sharp strike” at the corners of the cancels (especially both corners at once) seems to refute the notion that wear of the 15-bar cancels gave rise to the 13-bar cancels. Both 11-bar and 13-bar grids measure quite close to 18mm x 18mm throughout the 1851 use period with little if any variation, in contrast to the 15-bar grid which is slightly larger. Moreover, the authors believe there are likely several varieties of the NYC square grids, especially of the 13-bar grid. This area needs more study given these cancels’ probable value to off-cover postal history.

Shown in Figure 5 is an example of the NYC 13-bar grid (18mm x 18mm) in black used on a cover postmarked July 14 [1851], based on the internal dateline. Its shape and overall appearance are rather typical of a very fine strike of this cancel. Shown in Figure 6 is the cancel used on a strip of 3 1851 1¢ stamps. Note the wavy appearance of the individual bars. This is not an uncommon variation for the 13-bar NYC cancel. The “waviness” is not always evident in cancels from the first week or two of July 1851. These inconsistencies in examples probably occur because the cancels from this short time period are from multiple handstamps, which would certainly be expected at the New York Post Office given its size and activity demands. Shown in Figure 7 is a 13-bar cancel in red



**Figure 6. NYC 13-bar grid cancel on strip of 3 1851 1¢ stamps**

<sup>4</sup>Creighton C. Hart, “1847 Covers From New York City,” *Chronicle*, Vol. 30, No.1 (Whole No. 97)(February 1978), p.24.



**Figure 7. NYC 13-bar grid cancel in red on 1851 1¢ stamp**



**Figure 8. NYC 15-bar red grid cancel**

#### **Some Post June 30, 1851, Recorded Dates of Use for the NYC 11 and 13-Bar Grids**

The 13-bar grid was a holdover from use on 1847 stamps as evidenced by its occasional appearance on early uses of the 1851 series. Early uses of the red 13-bar grids on the 1851 series are noted in Christie's Grunin sale (3/25/87), lot #1 (3 x 1¢) dated July 1, 1851, lot #15 (1 x 3¢) dated July 1, [1851], lot #16 (1 x 3¢) dated July 3, [1851] and lot #32 of Grunin Part IV, dated July 2, [1851].

Ashbrook reported a black square grid on a manuscript dated circular [July 1, 1851].<sup>5</sup> It is not known if this was the actual mailing date or whether an 11-bar or 13-bar grid cancel was used. This is an example of a relatively inconclusive indicator derived from cancel use information, *i.e.*, noting an internal cover date, not definitively a mailing date, and referencing an ill-defined cancel which, if better defined, might have been used to place the actual cover date of use more accurately. Chase reported a July 3, 1851 use of a black square grid from NYC.<sup>6</sup> We presume the latter is a 13-bar grid but cannot confirm this cancel type. Dr. B.R. Tilden reported a July 3, 1851, black 13-bar New York grid on a 3¢ pair cover.<sup>7</sup> The authors have additional 13-bar black examples confirmed and documented for July 3, 5(4 examples), 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14(3), 15, 16, 17(3) and 18. At this time the earliest confirmed use of any black 13-bar NYC grid is July 3, 1851, and the latest use is July 20, 1851 (in the Frajola sale of 5/16/92, lot 459.) These recorded dates of use *indicate* to us that off-cover stamps with these cancels would *probably* have been used in or near this date range.

<sup>5</sup> Stanley B. Ashbrook, *The United States One Cent Stamp of 1851-1857*, Vol. II (New York: H.L. Lindquist, 1938), p. 114.

<sup>6</sup> Carroll B. Chase, *The 3¢ Stamp of the United States 1851-1857 Issue*, rev. ed. (Lawrence, Mass.: Quarterman Publications, Inc., 1975), p. 347.

<sup>7</sup> Tracy W. Simpson, "New York 13-Bar Square Grid in Black", *Chronicle*, Vol.21, No.1 (Whole No.61) (February 1969), p.16.



**Figure 9. Only recorded copy of NYC 13-bar grid cancel on 1851 12¢ stamp (in black ink)**

### **Earliest Indicated Use for Scott #17**

Shown in Figure 9 is our *only recorded example* of the NYC 13-bar grid on the 1851 12¢ stamp. It is in black ink. The bar dimensions, inter-bar distances and the slight waviness in the bar shape are all present and are characteristic of this NYC cancel. The stamp is fairly stiff and characteristic of the linen paper used in the early printing period. The cancel would then “indicate” that the stamp was likely used between the dates of July 3 and July 20, 1851. This would make this item the Earliest Indicated Use (EIU) of this stamp. The Earliest Known Use (EKU) or Earliest Documented Use (EDU) – the latter being perhaps the more accurate description – of this stamp is August 4, 1851, on a cover front from Brattleboro, Vermont. It has long been a curiosity why such a large city as New York had not produced some surviving, verifiable early

usages of the 12¢ stamp. Perhaps the stamp in Figure 9 is just such an early usage. Usage outside the July 3-20, 1851 period is less likely but, of course, possible. If it is earlier than July 3, we have the remarkable circumstance of an EKU of the stamp and of the cancel (in black ink) that was used on it. If the use of the stamp is later than July 20, then it is the Latest Indicated Usage (LIU) of the subject cancel *and* a presumed very early use of the 12¢ stamp, still probably in July 1851, based on recorded uses to date.

### **NY 11-Bar Use Dates and a Surprise**

The earliest date we have for a confirmed black 11-bar NYC grid is July 17, 1851 (see Figure 10), with other recorded July uses on July 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26 and 30, 1851. The latest 11-bar grid recorded by Chase was December 11, 1851, with just occasional examples after mid-August 1851, of which we have confirmed several examples ourselves. Lot 1185 in the Siegel sale of February 27-28, 2003, was a folded letter addressed to NYC with a 3¢ 1851 stamp canceled by the 11-bar grid. The internal Philadelphia dateline is December 17, 1851. We assume the cancel was applied on or about December 18. This is the latest recorded use of this cancel in the 1851 time period.

The 11-bar NYC grid is known used as a cancellation device on a Canada cross-border cover in October 1851, and on other mails into New York, such as the above example from Philadelphia, where the stamp had not received the originating city’s cancel. The authors recently discovered a very late example of what appears to be the NYC 11-bar grid in the Kenneth Kutz mining postal history sale by Andrew Leavitt, Nutmeg Sale No. 25, p. 107. The subject lot 1761 was a printed circular originating in NYC with a printed internal date of 1853, destination Windsor, Vermont. The dimensions (18mm x 18mm) and other characteristics of this very clear 11-bar grid fit all the characteristics of the NYC grid used in 1851 (cropped image in Figure 11). This may be a rare, statistically “outlying” use of a handstamp that just happened to be available. Based on the evidence we have seen to date, we believe this was likely the case, and, currently, it is the only example we have of this cancel later than the cover datelined December 17, 1851. However, as new information is revealed about cancels and their explicit use dates, no matter what the source or venue, old conclusions must sometimes be reconsidered.



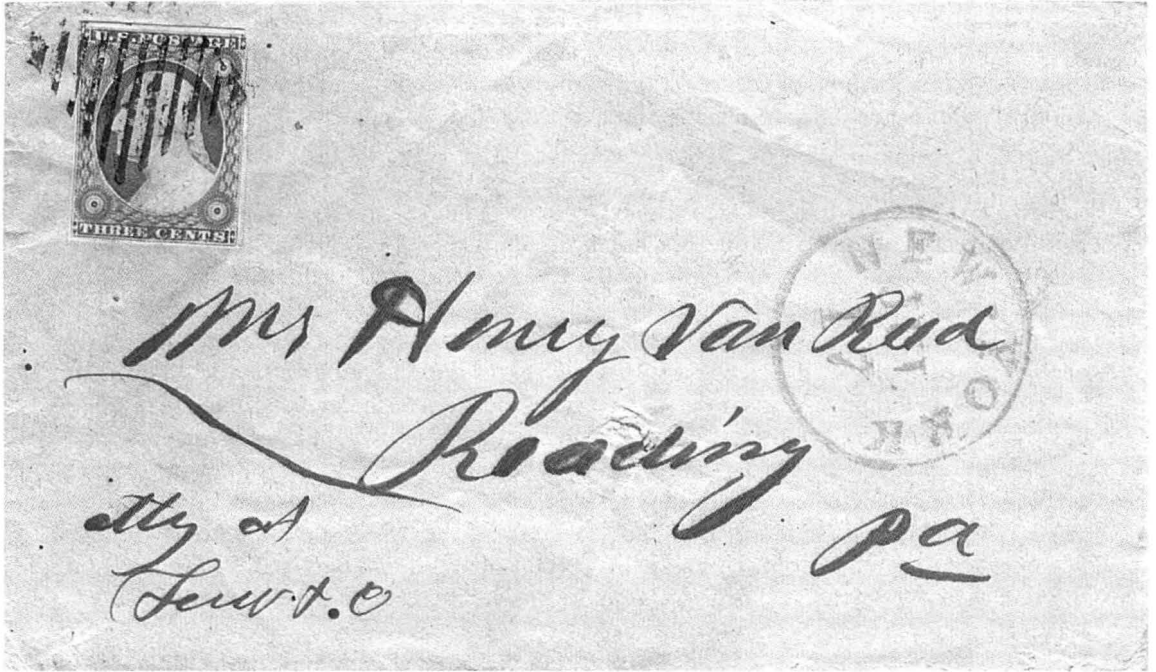


Figure 10. NYC 11-bar grid cancel on 1851 dated July 17, 1851 (earliest date recorded)



Figure 11. NYC 11-bar grid cancel used to mail 1853-dated circular, from Kenneth Kutz sale (Nutmeg Sale No. 25, p. 107)



Figure 12. NYC 13-bar black grid cancel on 1847 5¢ orange, Scott #1c

## Putting Cancel and Date Knowledge to Work - The Transition from the 1847 to the 1851 Series

While one of the authors (JAA) was working on this article, an interesting stamp was discovered. It is pictured in Figure 12. First impressions would lead one to describe it as a Scott #1 with a fairly heavy black grid cancel (by 1847 standards). The author became very interested in this because of several factors, not the least that the cancel was the NYC 13-bar black grid:

1. The NYC 13-bar grid transitioned to black from red the first week in July 1851, based on recorded covers. While black cancels on the 5¢ 1847 gradually became more common in 1850 and 1851, and typically these were circular grids, this was not at all true for NYC.

2. A quick check of 10 major 1847 collections of the past revealed, amazingly enough, no examples of the New York 13-bar black grid used on the 5¢ or 10¢ 1847 on or off-cover. Additionally, in his 1847 issue census book, Alexander lists more than 2500 covers posted in NYC and states the following, “. . . black was not used for either the townmarks or cancels before the end of the 1847 period.”<sup>8</sup> A review of all 1791 NYC 1847 5¢ covers in the same census revealed *not a single black square grid used as a cancel*.

3. With the introduction of the 1851 stamps, the 1847 stamps were officially demonetized. Therefore this stamp should be considered a demonetized usage based on the recorded date range of the NYC square grids. These demonetized 1847 uses are relatively scarce, regardless of the cancel type.

4. During the 1847 to 1851 series transition period, the New York Post Office was a very busy place. The 1847 series stamps were being supplied and consumed at a high level. New York had received over 20% of all 1847 5¢ stamps delivered.<sup>9</sup> Because of this great real-time consumption of stamps, the author (JAA) assumed some correlation of the colors contained in the various deliveries of the 5¢ stamp and their subsequent use dates.

5. The last two deliveries of 5¢ 1847 stamps were the ones that contained the majority of the orange color variations. Specifically, the December 1850 (fifth) printing produced the broadest range of orange related colors. These are generally categorized as Scott #1b for the orange brown or brown orange shades and Scott #1c for the rare orange and red-orange shades.

6. The 13-bar black cancel on the stamp, based on all that we have presented, *indicated* to the author a very late use of the 5¢ 1847, making it much more likely to be from the fifth printing and one of the rare colors. However, the author was not in a position to accurately determine the color of the stamp.

The subject stamp was acquired based on the above information and has since been analyzed by Wade Saadi, an 1847 specialist and 1847 section editor for *The Chronicle*, and determined to be Scott #1c, one of the rare orange shades. This is an example of how the “indicated use period” concept can be usefully applied.

### Summary

Verifiable 1851 uses of the 12¢ 1851 stamp are very few in number. Related on-cover cancellation information, in this case for the 13-bar and 11-bar NYC square grid cancellations, served as an important means to narrow the dates of *probable* use of off-cover stamps bearing these cancels. The authors would note that quality on-cover date information is the ultimate verification of use dates of stamps and cannot be

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<sup>8</sup> Thomas J. Alexander, *The United States 1847 Issue: A Cover Census* (Austin, Texas: U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., 2001), p. 382.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 380.

overemphasized. While dating off-cover stamps will always have its limitations, it can have great value. Quality collection of information on cancel dates can continue to improve the value of the approaches outlined. We hope this article has demonstrated how the knowledge of cancels can have value well beyond collecting cancels for the cancel's sake alone. Just as the authors have discovered some new things in this research and perhaps challenged some previous reports, they hope others will bring forward new information to do the same with this work.

We invite all contributions of new information impacting the recorded uses, use dates and cancels on 1851 1¢, 3¢, and 12¢ stamps, particularly from NYC.

#### Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank Tom Mazza, Robert Hegland and Roy Weber for select dated cancel examples, Hubert Skinner for his support for and validation of this work, Tom Alexander for thoughtful comments early in this work and his comprehensive census work, and Wilson Hulme for critical records.

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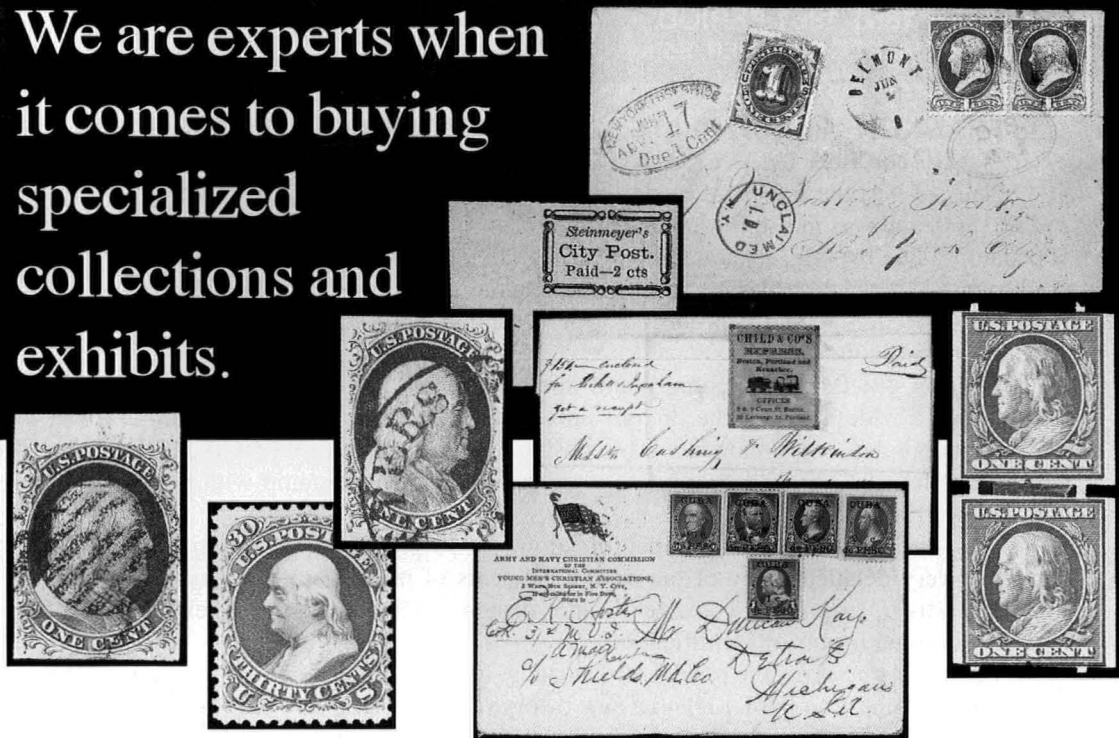


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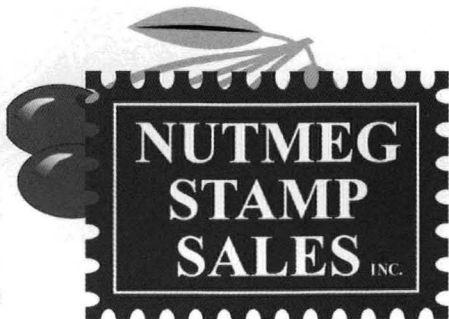
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**1¢ FRANKLIN 1851-57, PLATE 12, POSITION 46L12, TYPES III AND IIIA**  
**TRANSCRIPT BY JAY KUNSTREICH, RESEARCH BY RICHARD CELLER**

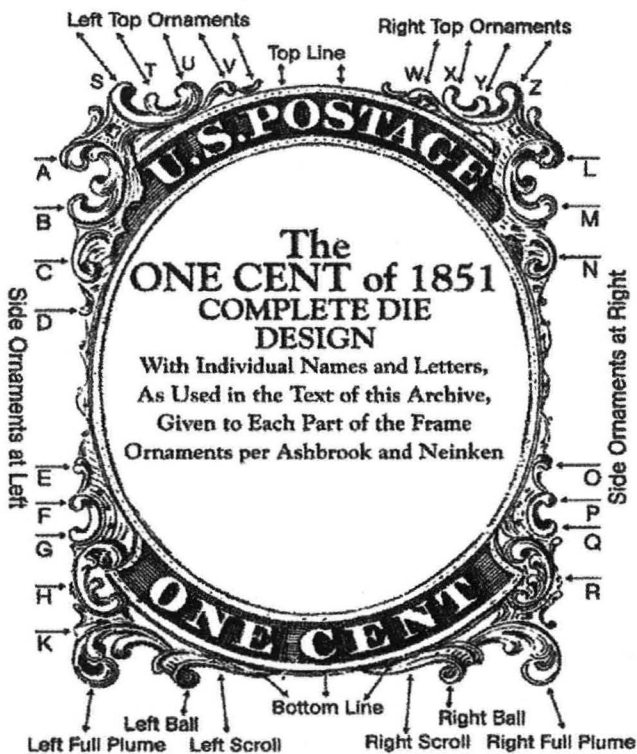
Plate 12 was the last plate made for the 1851-57 1¢ stamp. It was made around the end of 1860, and was in use for less than a year. The plate consisted of two 10x10 panes of 100 stamps, side by side, separated by a vertical dividing (or center) line. The transfer roll used to make this plate had three different reliefs on it, designated by philatelists as reliefs A, B and C. Reliefs A and B produced Type II stamps (Scott #20), and relief C produced Type I stamps (Scott #18).

Position 46L12 is an anomaly and does not match any of the three reliefs. This position has a wide break in the bottom line, a fairly complete plume ornament at lower left, and incomplete top ornaments. This position is classified as either a Type IIIa stamp with the bottom line broken or, on late impressions, a Type III stamp with both top and bottom lines broken.

In an attempt to confirm the identification of a suspected 46L12 stamp cut in at the bottom, a very detailed study of the design elements of plate 12 reliefs was undertaken. The hope was to try to find consistent minor design differences in the reliefs that might lead to additional means of identification.

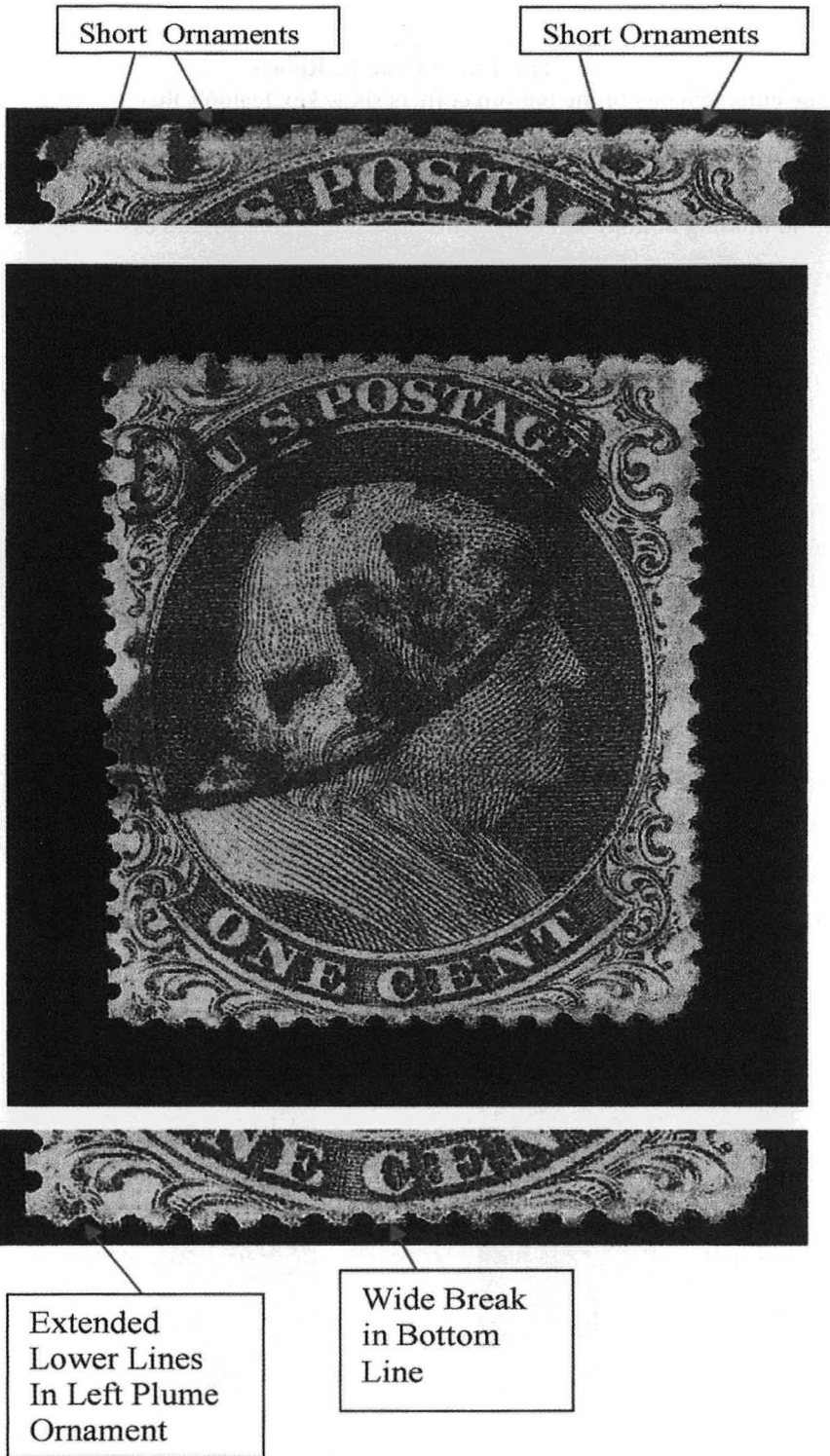
This article presents the results of that study. It presents a detailed examination of the three Plate 12 reliefs and 46L12, and a new theory of how 46L12 may have originated.

When referring to various parts of the stamp design, the diagram below (Figure 8-A on page 33 of Neinken's 1972 1¢ book<sup>1</sup>) will be used.



Revised image  
 ©2003 Boris Imagery Labs  
 and Richard Doroorty

<sup>1</sup>Mortimer L. Neinken, *The United States One Cent Stamp of 1851 to 1861* ([United States]: U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., 1972).



As will be seen, the features indicated above do not match any of the three reliefs of Plate 12. Neinken comments on and illustrates position 46L12 as a B relief in his book on pages 495 and 507, respectively, and concludes it cannot be a B relief stamp.

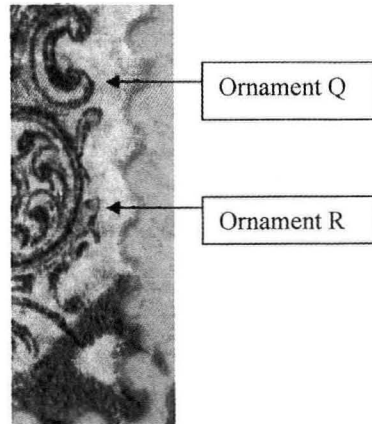
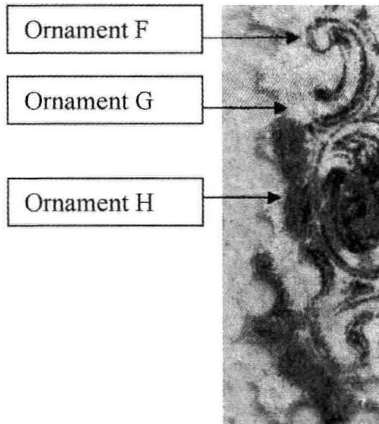
### The Three Plate 12 Reliefs

(The enlargements of the bottom corners show key features that will be referred to in this article.)

**Relief A, Type II:** The A relief occurs only on the top row of the plate, 20 positions in all. It is a Type II stamp with unbroken top and bottom lines, shortened bottom corner plumes and missing bottom ball ornaments. The side ornaments are essentially complete.



Position 6L12,  
Relief A

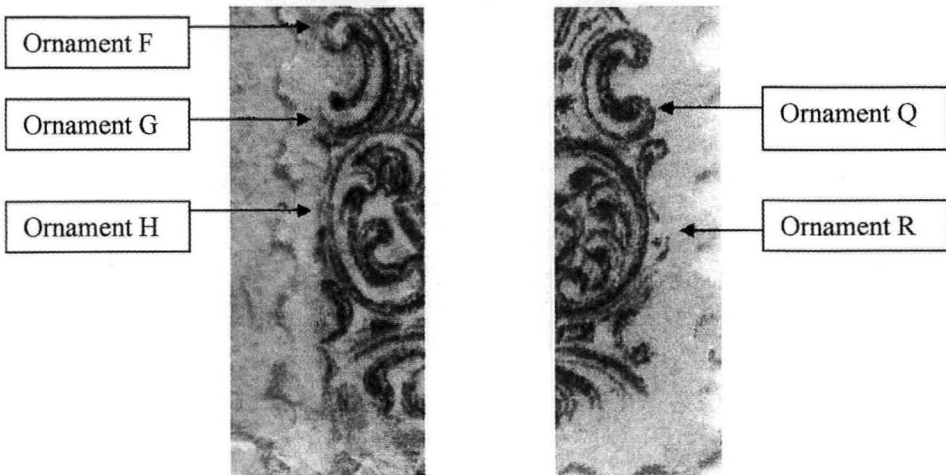




**Relief B, Type II:** The B relief occurs only in the body of the plate, normally rows 2, 4, 6 and 8, but the left pane has many exceptions to this pattern. It is also a Type II stamp and is similar to the A relief, with a few minor distinctions (the top left ornaments are not as complete as in the A relief, and both lower scrolls are slightly shorter than those of the A relief).



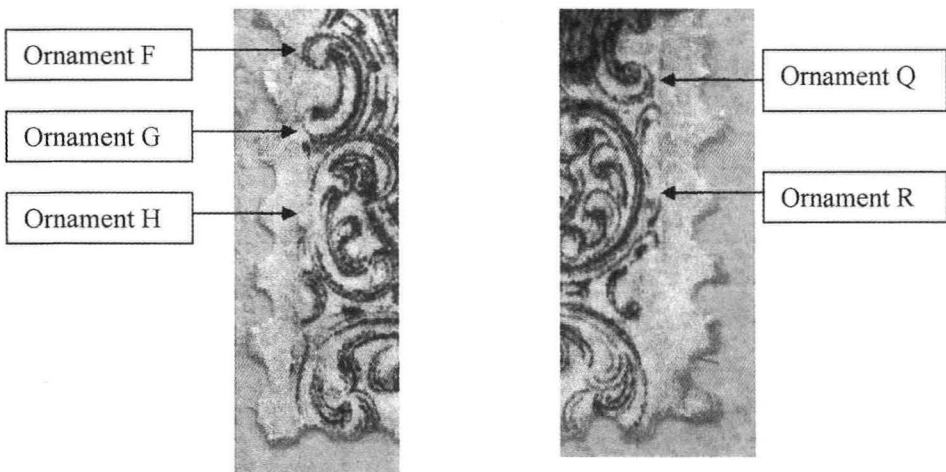
Positions 16L12,  
Relief B



**Relief C, Type I:** The C relief is a Type I stamp and normally occurs in rows 3, 5, 7, 9 and 10. The left pane has many exceptions to this pattern, with the C relief sometimes occurring in rows 4, 6 and 8. The C relief closely resembles the original die design in that all ornaments are complete at the top and bottom, except for the top left corner which is missing its top line.



Position 26L12,  
Relief C



### Additional Features Found on the Three Reliefs

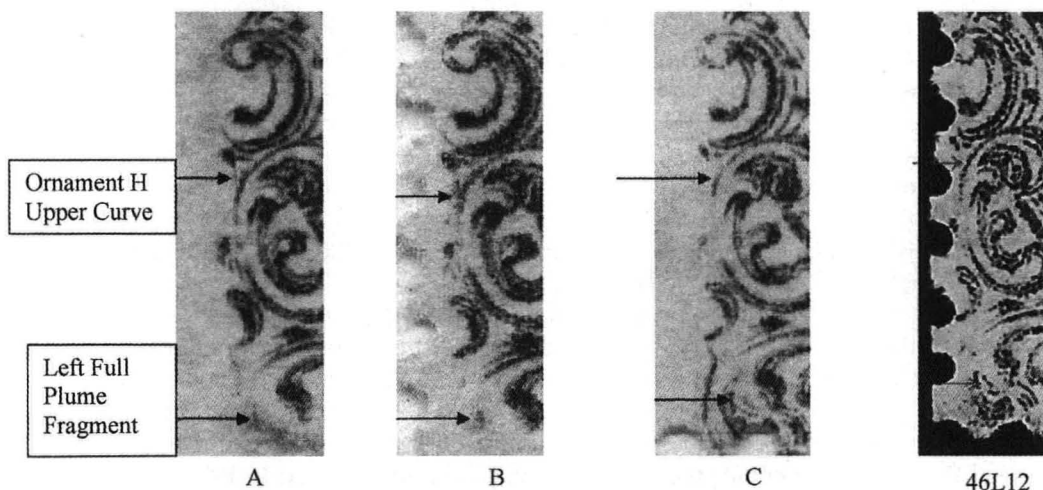
This study has identified some additional minor differences between the three reliefs. A few of the tiny ornaments at the edges of the design, particularly at the sides near the bottom, are not identical on each relief. These differences are most noticeable on Ornament H on the left side, and Ornament R on the right side.<sup>2</sup>

During the manufacture of the 3-relief transfer roll, some of the edge ornaments became shortened. However, this shortening was a bit different on each relief, and thus there are additional subtle characteristics to look for when identifying the reliefs.

It is important to be aware that individual positions on the stamp plate often have their edges slightly weakened or shortened in the plate manufacturing process and thus can be less complete than the design on the transfer roll. In addition, plate wear tends to weaken the edges of the stamp design over time. One has to study many stamps from each of the reliefs to determine whether a particular part of the design may actually have been shortened on the relief, or merely on a particular position.

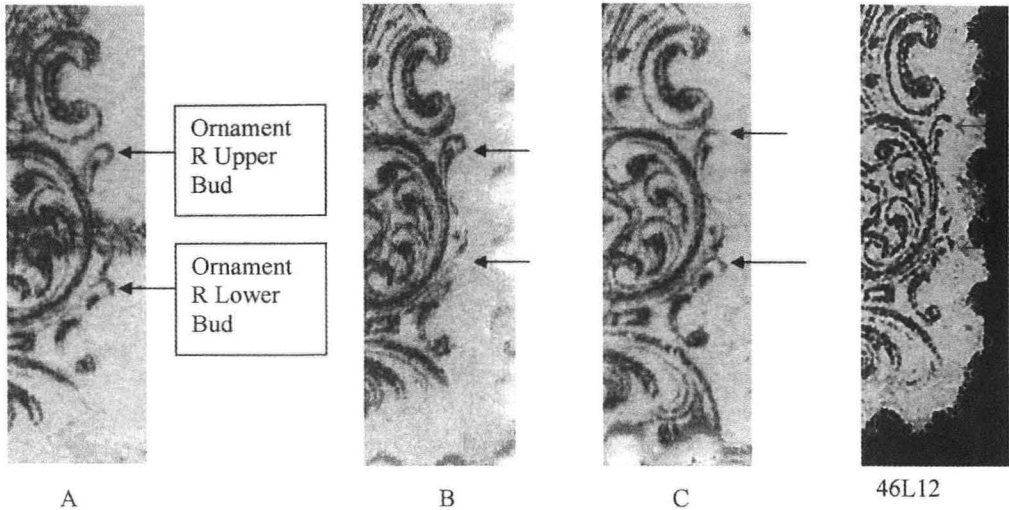
The key point is that if a certain ornament was shortened on the relief, an entry on the plate from that relief can never have that particular ornament more fully complete than it was on the relief. The plate manufacture process or plate wear can further shorten such an ornament, but can not make it more complete.

The discussion below will focus on three areas, which we will call: the "Ornament H Upper Curve," the "Ornament R Upper Bud," and the "Ornament R Lower Bud." Each of these ornaments was shortened on only one of the three reliefs. Additionally, a fragment of the left full plume will be compared.



On relief B, the "Ornament H Upper Curve" has a faint second curve of shading just to its left. There is almost no trace of this second curve on Reliefs A, C or 46L12. There is a very faint "Left Full Plume Fragment" on reliefs A and B. This fragment is strong on 46L12 and Relief C.

<sup>2</sup>Thus, on a Plate 12 stamp which has the perforations cut into the bottom, these additional characteristics help identify whether a stamp is Type I or Type II, even when the bottom of the design is not visible.



The "Ornament R Upper Bud" is complete on Reliefs A and B, but the right edge of it is missing on Relief C and 46L12. The "Ornament R Lower Bud" is nearly complete on Reliefs A and C and 46L12, but the right edge of it is far less complete on Relief B, the "hook" to the right is missing.

These characteristics are summarized in the following table:

	<b>Relief A</b>	<b>Relief B</b>	<b>Relief C</b>	<b>46L12</b>
<b>H upper curve</b>	no shadow	shadow	no shadow	no shadow
<b>Plume Fragment</b>	faint	faint	strong	strong
<b>R upper bud</b>	complete	complete	incomplete	incomplete
<b>R lower bud</b>	complete	incomplete	complete	complete

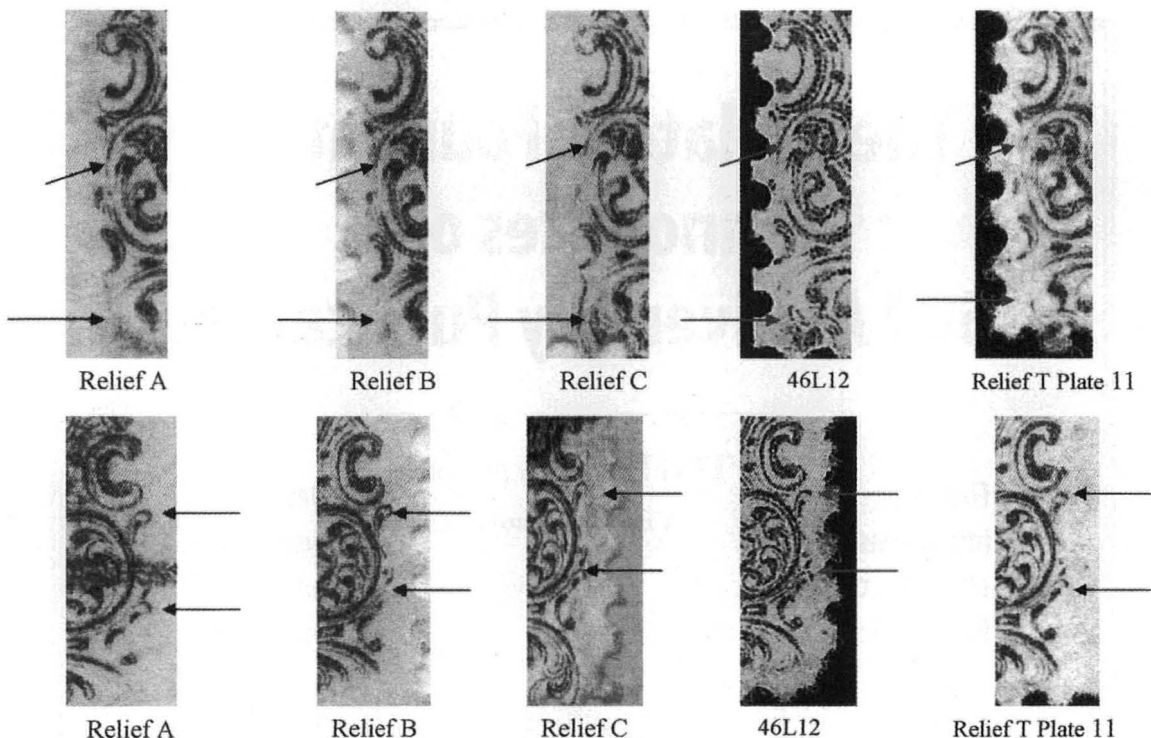
The table demonstrates that the only plate 12 relief that position 46L12 agrees with, is the C Relief, and clearly not the B Relief.

#### **What Relief is Position 46L12?**

Over the years, this position has been studied by many knowledgeable stamp people—Elliot Perry, Mort Neinken and Jerome Wagshal to name a few. Their conclusions were that since the relief from this position is quite different from all other B Reliefs from Plate 12 (principally, the left plume is far more complete at the bottom than a normal B relief), that perhaps the siderographer picked up the Plate 11 Relief T (top row) transfer roll in error and made a single entry in position 46L12.

To test this theory, a Plate 11 T relief has been added to the illustrations below. As can be seen, it has a "complete" upper bud of Ornament R which *does not* match position 46L12, while the lower bud of Ornament R does have a matching complete lower bud.

The characteristics on the left side of the design of 46L12—the lack of shadow on the upper curved line of ornament H and the more distinct plume fragment—only show on 46L12 and are closely matched by a Relief C stamp. The characteristics on the right sides of the design of 46L12, the incomplete upper bud of Ornament R and the complete lower bud of Ornament R also conform to those found on a Relief C stamp (that has been "erased" at top and bottom).



### Conclusion

Thus, the conclusion is suggested that position 46L12 is an underlying C relief which, for reasons unknown, was severely shortened at the top and bottom after being entered on the plate.

As well, by focusing on the newly found salient features and their distinguishing characteristics and differences, it is our hope that identification of Plate 12 stamps in general, and position 46L12 in particular, will become more of an exact endeavor.

As Mort Nienken's work has added and thus improved upon the legendary work started by Stanley Ashbrook, we hope this study has done the same.

### Acknowledgments

The following Philatelic Foundation (PF) certificates were used by the Researcher for this study; all of the items certified are from position 46L12.

Certificate # 51016—filed under Scott #20

Certificate # 140998<sup>3</sup>

Certificate # 248099—filed under Scott #20

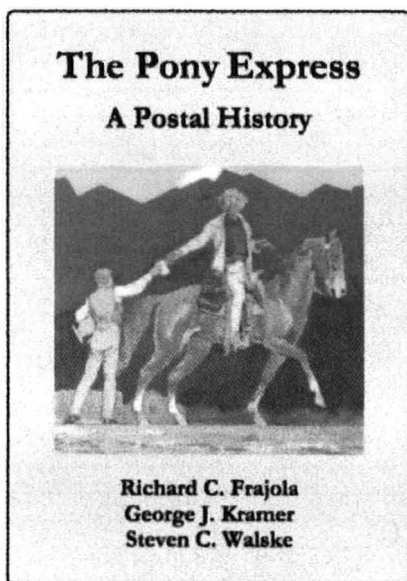
The complete illustration of 46L12 shown in this article (lot 258 in Siegel sale #865, October 8-10, 2003) was provided by John Zuckerman of Robert Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc. □

<sup>3</sup>Regarding certificate # 140998, an article appeared in *Opinions III*, page 34 (1985) describing a block of 9 in which position 46L12 was the furthest right stamp in the middle row.

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## UNUSUAL PRISONER OF WAR COVERS FROM ALEXANDRIA

MICHAEL C. McCLUNG

Figure 1 shows two covers, each addressed to “Mr. W.B. Greene/Prisoner of War/Sickel’s Barracks Ward C/Alexandria/Va.” One also reads, “Care of the Officer in Com.” They are postmarked at Alexandria on March 20 and 27 [1865]. At first glance, these appear to be letters written to a Confederate POW. Galen Harrison, in his excellent work *Prisoners’ Mail from the American Civil War*,<sup>1</sup> wrote that both Confederate prisoners and Federal parolees were held in Alexandria, but he did not record Sickel’s Barracks as one of the camps. He reported that there are no known Confederate prisoner letters and four known parolee letters from Alexandria, which was under Federal control throughout the war.

Figure 2 shows a third cover from this correspondence. It has the same original address and an Alexandria postmark of April 1, but it was forwarded to Raymond, New Hampshire. This certainly casts doubt on the notion that these were letters to a Confederate prisoner, since there were no POW camps in Raymond during the Civil War. However, the Raymond Historical Society website tells us that a William B. Greene was a native of Raymond and is listed in the town’s roster of Civil War veterans. Greene was a member of Company G, 2<sup>nd</sup> United States Sharpshooters, Army of the Potomac from December 1861 until the end of the war. This turned out to be more than a coincidence.

While doing the research to learn the above information, I was surprised at my good fortune to find that a book had been written about the Civil War letters of this same William B. Greene. The book is titled *Letters from a Sharpshooter*.<sup>2</sup> It is 329 pages long and was available online at a nominal price.

William Greene was a very prolific writer, and he received letters from a variety of friends, family members and acquaintances. Although the book is filled with transcripts of hundreds of letters to and from William Greene, it is far from complete. There are obvious gaps in the chronology, where the letters were lost, destroyed or withheld from the book. The contents of the covers in Figures 1 and 2 are not in the book, but there is one letter from Sickel’s Barracks, which Greene also referred to as Sickel’s Hospital. It is dated March 8, 1865, and in it Greene informed his mother that he had been very sick with the “Brain Fever.” On April 2, he left for home on a 30 day “sick furlough” – this is why the cover, dated April 1, was forwarded to Raymond. Figure 3 is a copy of Greene’s furlough recommendation. He was mustered out without returning to duty, as the Army of the Potomac was disbanded after Lee’s surrender on April 9. Figure 4 is a picture of Private William B. Greene.

So, why were the covers addressed to a “Prisoner of War?” It seems that Private Greene had a problem with attendance. The letters in the book indicate that he had been arrested at least four times for being AWOL. Figure 5 shows a copy of an 1863 reward voucher for capture of Wm. Greene, “deserter from the Military service of the United

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<sup>1</sup>Galen D. Harrison, *Prisoners’ Mail from the American Civil War* (Dexter, MI: G.D. Harrison [Printed by Thompson-Shore Inc] [Newell, NC: Distributed and underwritten by the Confederate Stamp Alliance], 1997).

<sup>2</sup>*Letters from a Sharpshooter* : the Civil War letters of Private William B. Greene, Co. G, 2nd United States Sharpshooters (Berdan’s) Army of the Potomac, 1861-1865, transcribed by William H. Hastings, 1st Historic Publications ed. (Belleville, WI: Historic Pub., 1993).

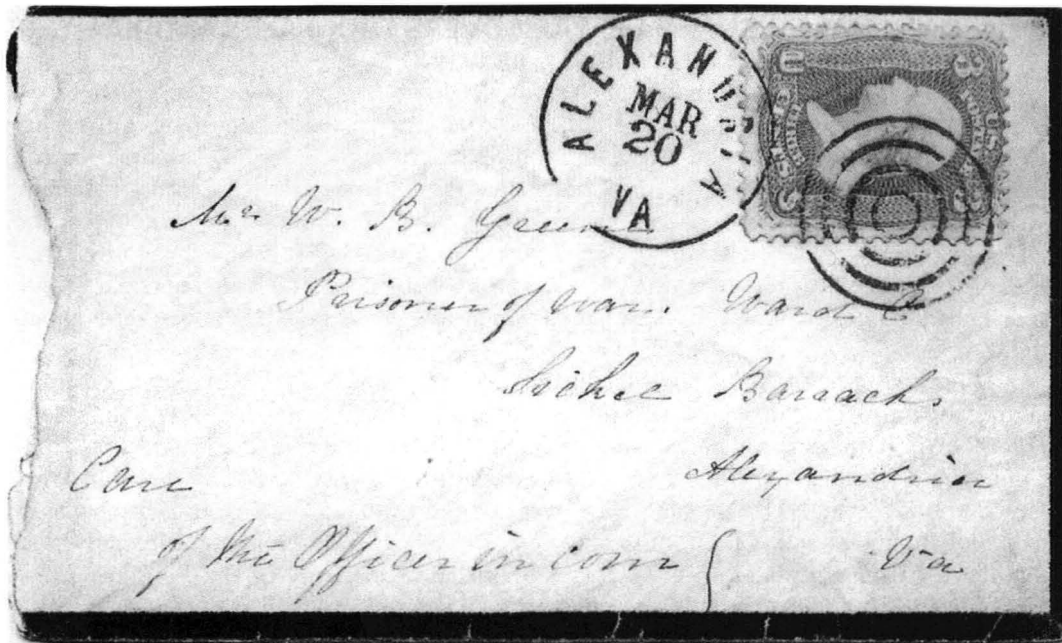


Figure 1. Two covers addressed to W. B. Greene, Prisoner of War



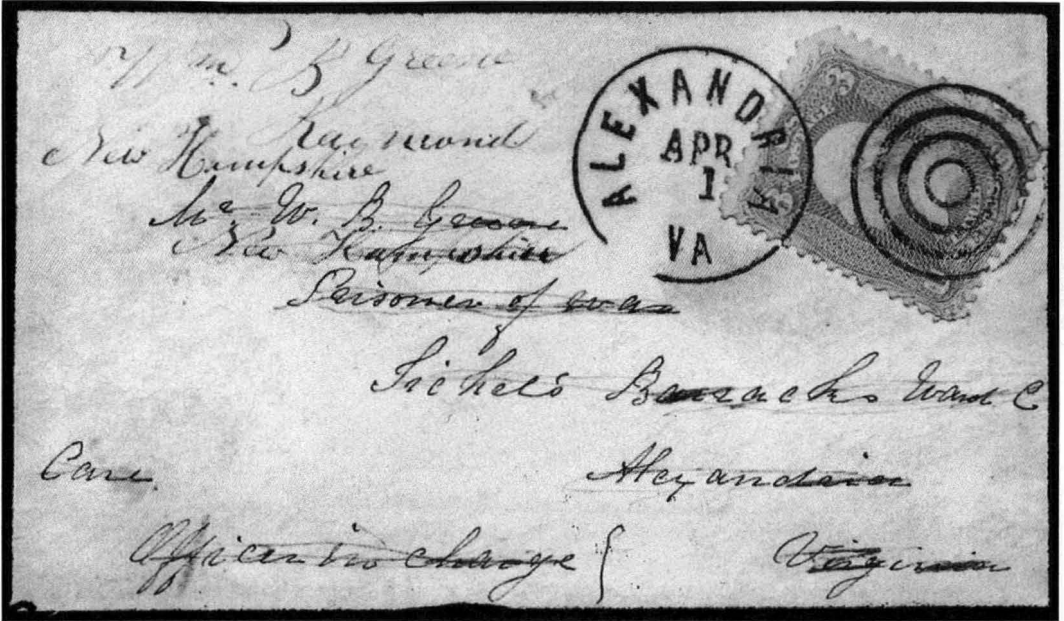


Figure 2. Cover addressed the same as those in Figure 1, but forwarded to Raymond, New Hampshire

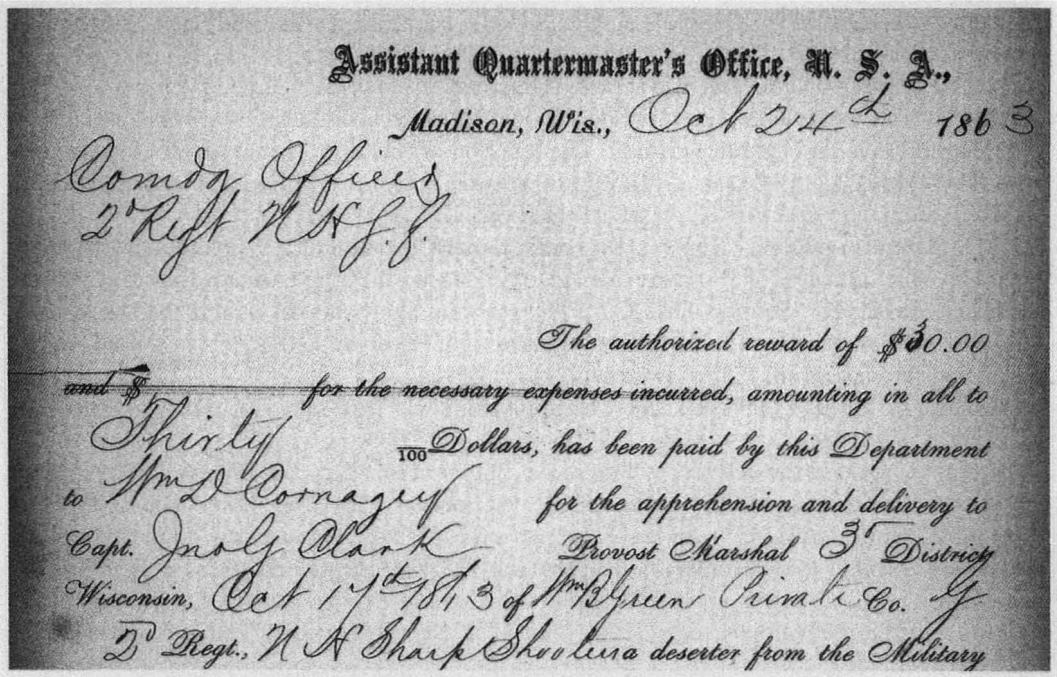
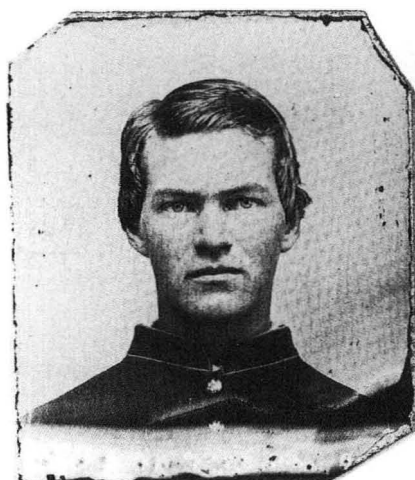


Figure 3. Recommendation for Private Greene's furlough



Private William Greene      Courtesy of Raymond Historical Society

**Figure 4. William B. Greene, Co. G 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters**

States.” Greene avoided a conviction of desertion on this occasion, and was eventually returned to duty. In a letter dated February 10, 1865, he wrote that he was again late returning from leave. So, Greene’s stay in Sickel’s Barracks was not only as a patient, but as a prisoner as well. I’ve found only a few other references to Sickel’s Barracks or Sickel’s Hospital. It appears that it was a hospital for sick or wounded Union soldiers, some of whom were under guard for desertion or other misconduct, and it was a branch of the Second Division General Hospital. The location of Sickel’s Barracks is not known, but it was probably named after Colonel Horatio G. Sickel of Philadelphia and the 32<sup>nd</sup> Pennsylvania, who was Provost Marshall in Alexandria in 1862.

Apparently, while in Sickel’s Barracks, Greene had found a sympathetic doctor—or one who was unaware of his record—to recommend his furlough. According to a March 31 letter, datelined “Second Div. Gen. Hospt.,” the sharpshooter stated that he had to “work sharp” in order for the furlough to go through. He urged his brother to tell no one of his plans; he was afraid that anyone who knew of his prior transgressions would prevent his furlough. It seems less like he was applying for a furlough and more like he was planning a jail break.

The writer of the letters, which were once enclosed in the covers illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, is unknown. However, in the February 10 letter, noted above, Greene wrote that, while returning from leave, he met a young lady who was traveling to Virginia and whose brother had recently died in the war. He also mentioned trying to correspond with her. It’s possible that she is the writer; that would explain the Alexandria postmark and the mourning envelopes. □

[ FOR FURLOUGH FOR SICK MAN. ]

Head Quarters Second Division U. S. Gen'l Hosp'l,

Alexandria, Va., March 31, 1865.

We hereby certify, that we have this day carefully examined  
W<sup>m</sup> B. Green Capt., Co "G", 2<sup>d</sup> Reg't U. S. S. I.  
Vol's, who was admitted to Sickel Branch,  
July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1865, with emaciation consequent to  
Typhoid Fever from which he has sufficiently  
recovered to enable him to travel to his home with safety, and he will not be  
fit for duty in a less period than thirty [30] days. We also be-  
lieve that a change of air is necessary to save life or prevent perma-  
nent disability. We therefore respectfully recommend that a furlough  
be granted him.

P. O. Address:

Raymond  
Rockingham Co  
N. H.

Medical Board for  
examination of patients  
for furlough and discharge.

W. A. Harvey  
Act'g Ass't Surgeon, U. S. A.

J. G. Calneil  
Act'g Ass't Surgeon, U. S. A.

Act'g Ass't Surgeon, U. S. A.

Figure 5. Reward voucher for capture of Greene in Wisconsin at a time when the rest of his outfit was in Virginia

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## THE POSTMARKS OF SHIP ISLAND, MISSISSIPPI: A CIVIL WAR ENIGMA JAMES W. MILGRAM, M.D.

There are not many areas in Civil War postal history that involve controversy, but one aspect that has elicited much interest concerns the postal usages found during the New Orleans campaign in 1862. The reason for this is two-fold. First, the Union troops under General Benjamin F. Butler were staged for a land attack on a small island, Ship Island, Mississippi, that lies near the mouth of the Mississippi River. And while there the temporary postmaster, John M.G. Parker, devised a number of provisional postmarks which are avidly collected today, manuscripts, a straight line type, and a dated circle, each with different periods of usage during March to June 1862. Parker is reported by General Butler as being the Quartermaster of the Eastern Bay State Regiment, No. 2, Massachusetts Volunteers as of December 20, 1861.<sup>1</sup> Butler later appointed him temporary postmaster (an illegal action since only the Post Office Department can appoint postmasters).

But it is the postulation by Richard B. Graham that the circular marking was taken to New Orleans and used there on soldiers' letters for a period of time which has aroused the controversy. This would be a highly unusual situation, a postmark with one name being used at a different location. Graham, in his article in *The American Philatelist* of December 1973, stated that the Post Office Department "sent a Special Agent with stamps, new postmarking instruments and other supplies to New Orleans. . . . The earliest New Orleans postmarked cover, seen by the writer, from the occupation period, is of June 2, 1862."<sup>2</sup> This information is repeated in Graham's latest article on the subject in *The Chronicle*<sup>3</sup> Graham postulated that the round Ship Island postmark was used at New Orleans until about the end of May; later it was returned to Ship Island. Graham reports June 11 as the latest date of usage. I show two early uses as May 1 (two certified covers from soldier 13<sup>th</sup> Maine); Graham states that an April 30 usage exists. In a report to Brigadier General Shepley on April 30, 1862, Major General Butler describes moving camp equipment of the regiments in New Orleans and provisions to the city. He also adds "Let the postmaster transfer himself to near New Orleans."<sup>4</sup>

The date that the Special Agent Major Robert Scott arrived at New Orleans has not been found. But a newly discovered cover (Figure 1) provides some information on this subject. This is a cover sent from a soldier of the 13<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Regiment (therefore a Union soldier) with the 3¢ 1857 stamp intended to pay postage. That stamp had been demonetized (not good for Union postage) and it was not canceled. The cover was rated with the well-known "3" postmark (12mm high) used at New Orleans during the Union occupation until the end of the war. But the postmark is dated May 23, 1862, showing that this double circle New Orleans postmark was in use by this new early date. The marking also ties a patriotic label to the envelope.

Figure 2 shows the circular Ship Island postmark on an entire with May 6 date; the enclosed soldier's letter on patriotic lettersheet has the same date. This is the same date as

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<sup>1</sup>Official Records Army, III, 1.

<sup>2</sup>Richard B. Graham, "1861-1865 Postal History of Ship Island, Mississippi," *American Philatelist*, Vol. 87, No. 12 (Whole # 875)(December 1973), pp. 1077-79.

<sup>3</sup>Richard B. Graham, "Ship Island, Mississippi, an Update and a New Marking," *Chronicle*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Whole No.127)( August 1985). , pp. 184-90.

<sup>4</sup>Official Records Army, I, 6, p. 717.

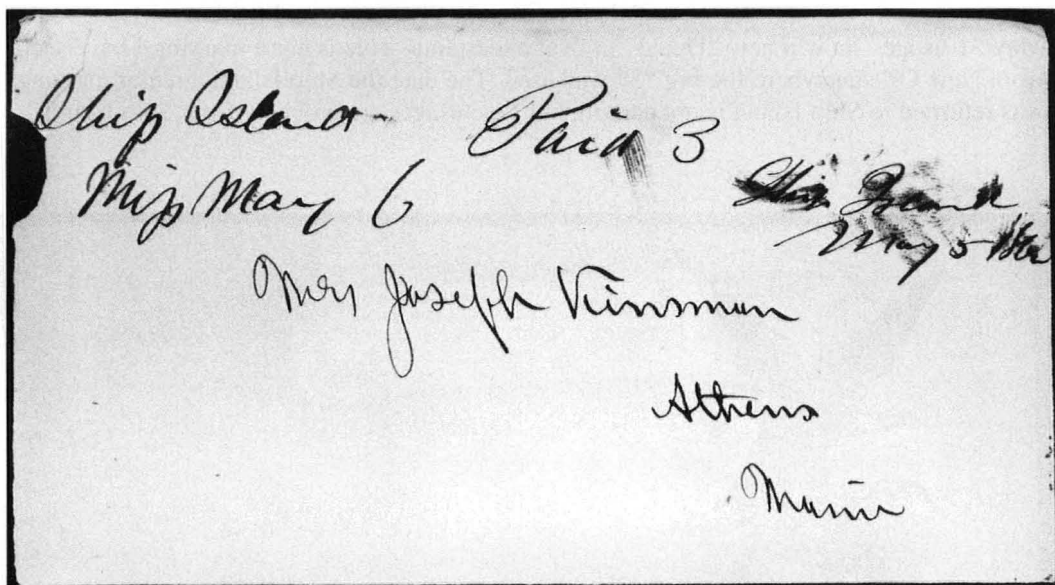


Figure 1. "NEW ORLEANS LA MAY 23 1862" postmark with "3" on cover bearing old stamp not recognized as good for postage, also patriotic flag label, a new earliest known usage of occupation period postmark.



Figure 2. "SHIP ISLAND MISS MAY 6" postmarked 3¢ entire with letter showing same date and Ship Island origin.

the cover shown by this writer in the November 1983 issue of *The American Philatelist*.<sup>5</sup> So there is no doubt about the postmark being on Ship Island at this date. But May 6 is also the date of several of the second period manuscript covers. May 5 and May 10 manuscript usages are also in my collection, and Graham reports May 12 as the latest date of these. One of these manuscript May 6 covers shown to the writer by Van Koppersmith encloses an unused Confederate "New Orleans, La." post office waybill. The writer had dated it "May 5" (the 1862 is printed) and mentions he has only Confederate money and stamps and cannot prepay postage. The letter appears to be missing. Since he writes on an unused waybill, he must have obtained it at the New Orleans post office (where he would also have found Confederate money and stamps). Since the letter was not postmarked until the following day, I think this suggests that the postmarking was not done at the New Orleans post office where the note on this souvenir was written. However, the delay could have been for other reasons such as to obtain the adjutant's signature to certify it as a soldier's letter.



**Figure 3. "Ship Island Miss May 6" in manuscript, different obliterated postmark of May 5 with payment in cash, no stamps available. Letter dated at New Orleans May 5, 1862.**

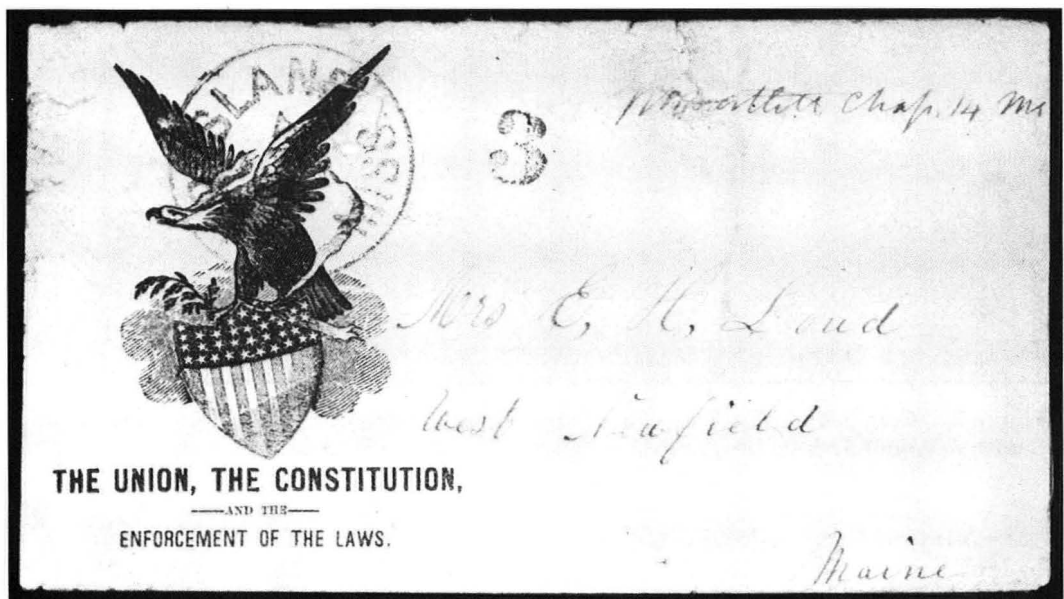
A second letter, collection of Bruce Hazelton, was written at St. Charles Hotel May 5, 1862 and was postmarked in manuscript "Ship Island May 6 Paid 3" (Figure 3). This cover also bears a manuscript "Ship Island May 5 1862" which is crossed out. Both postmarks are in different handwritings and differ also from that of the address. I have a third cover without letter certified by "J.P. Cleaveland Chaplain Mass. 30" with "Soldiers Letter" written by the sender. This unit was in New Orleans at the time, but it is postmarked manuscript "3" and "Ship Island Miss May 5." Interestingly, it was rerouted to "4 cents" due in Philadelphia where it was delivered to a specific street address by a mail carrier. So if the practice suggested by Graham is true, it probably began on May 5, 1862

<sup>5</sup>James W. Milgram, M.D., "The Ship Island, Mississippi, Circular Cancellation," *American Philatelist*, Vol. 97, No. 11 (Whole # 994)(November 1983), pp. 1005-06.

with manuscript usages. A May 10 circular marking is found with a 10 mm. high "3" on the cover with a matching letter datelined "Ship Island May 10th 1862," so the circular marking was still at Ship Island on that date.

I have photocopies from Bruce Hazelton of a cover with enclosed letter postmarked with the circular "SHIP ISLAND MISS MAY 23", the same date as the cover in Figure 1 with the earliest known New Orleans postmark. The letter was written at New Orleans the day before, May 22, and is prepaid with stamps so no officer had to certify it. The letter describes his receiving mail that morning dated May 1 from New London, Connecticut. The soldier was doing guard duty at the Customs House in New Orleans. Could the letter have been taken to Ship Island or was it postmarked in New Orleans? Ship Island is 40 miles from New Orleans, so I am of the belief it was postmarked at New Orleans. But if sent from New Orleans, why not use the new postmark device that is proved to have been there on this date? I don't have a good reason as to why there were two different markings used the same day.

Certainly the "3" due marking on covers with the Ship Island circular postmark is smaller than the "3" on the New Orleans cover in Figure 1 (see Figure 4). May 30 and May 31 usages show a new "Due 3" in oval handstamp. This is not a marking I have seen from New Orleans where the big "3" was used. The date the Ship Island circular marking was returned to Ship Island is not certain, but June usages are probably from Ship Island.



**Figure 4. "SHIP ISLAND MISS MAY 3" on patriotic cover with the smaller "3" for soldier's postage due.**

Another interesting usage is in the author's collection. It is a cover with the circular marking well-struck with May 28 date tying two 3¢ stamps to North Granville, N.Y. But it also bears "Fort Pike La. May 24 1862" across the top of the envelope like a postmark, in handwriting different from that of the letter the writer (however there are no manuscript marks on the stamps). While the letter carried by this cover is gone, an earlier letter from the writer on May 4, 1862 is present. That letter reads in part:





Figure 5. Inverted "SHIP ISLAND MISS" straight line postmark without manuscript date on 3¢ 1861 stamp. Separate "JUN 5" handstamped date and sender's inscription "From Ship Island". Latest known usage of straight line.

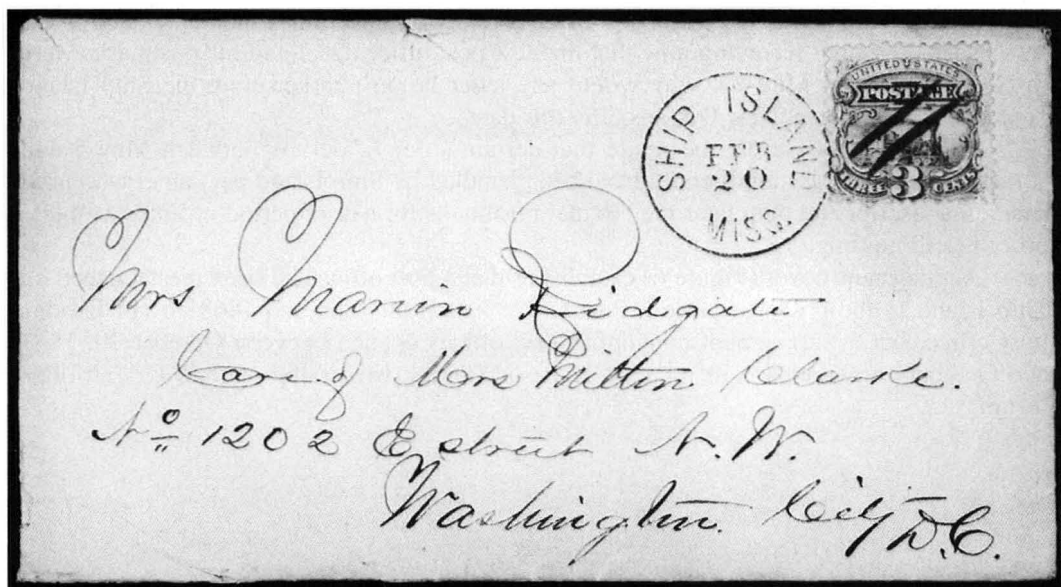


Figure 6. "SHIP ISLAND MISS. FEB 20" postmark ties 3¢ 1869 purple manuscript cancel also. Earlier letter from writer shows him aboard U.S. Rev. Str. *Wilderness* at New Orleans.

Fort Pike La.  
May 5, 1862

My dearest Sister

I thought when I wrote you two or three days ago at Ship Island that your next letter would have to be sent on to our regiment at some other place, but I did not expect it would be quite so soon. I wrote your letter at night May 2nd and the next day at 11 o'clock A.M. Co's B & C, a part of Co.D and I were ordered to go on board the Gunboat "New London" for Fort Pike. It is situated about forty miles from Ship Island and thirty from New Orleans. . . . We arrived at the Fort all keyed up ready to make a charge on the enemy but soon discovered that the Fort had been deserted the most of the gun carriages burned and all of the guns spiked. The mechanics were mustered and to day they have unspiked six. There is twenty eight guns in the Fort. The Fort is built of brick larger and different style from Fort Massachusetts at Ship Island. It is on a small island or marsh which is filled with snakes and alligators; the boys have grand sport shooting them [letter includes drawing of a Confederate flag found in a bag on a seized vessel]

Your brother Daniel

So here we have a late usage of the circular marking on a cover from a location other than New Orleans. It would seem that the cover went back to Ship Island for postmarking.

One unusual usage is the double straight line with additional "JUN 5" handstamp (Figure 5). The illustrated cover says "From Ship Island" A second example of this June 5 handstamped usage has also been seen. But other than these two covers, the straight line device was used earlier. Don Garrett found a double lined C.D.S. postmark from Ship Island dated July 17 (reported by Graham, 1985).

So where are we? The Ship Island postmarks were all used at Ship Island at first, including the circular marking. That marking was definitely at Ship Island on May 10. Manuscripts with letters from New Orleans date from May 5. It is reasonable to postulate these were done at New Orleans. Covers with the circular marking and letters dated at least a day earlier at New Orleans or its surroundings also exist during a two to three week period in late May. Could such letters have been taken to Ship Island in a day? Probably not, but no letters are known with New Orleans contents and a Ship Island postmark on the same day. Why not? Knowing now that the new post office agent and his postmarks were in New Orleans on May 23, why would any letter be postmarked with the Ship Island postmarking devices at New Orleans after this date?

Still I feel a case can be made that certain soldiers' letters between May 5 and sometime later in the month could have been handled by Ship Island personnel who used first a manuscript and then later the circular postmarks for a brief period of time. Absolute proof is still missing.

Another new cover (Figure 6) establishes that a post office had been reestablished on Ship Island in the post-war period. Post Office lists from 1866 and 1868 do not list this post office, but a Supplement containing new offices opened between October 20, 1867 and October 1869 contains its name in Harrison County, Mississippi with W.C. Carroll as postmaster. □

## SPECIAL PRINTINGS

### UNIQUE SET OF AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT SPECIAL PRINTINGS WILLIAM E. MOOZ

The method by which clerks in the Office of the Third Assistant Postmaster General prepared sets of the 1875 special printings for sale was discussed in a previous article.<sup>1</sup> It was shown that as one of the consequences of this method, sets of the stamps often were made up of denominations which were all from the same positions on the pane. As one example of this, Figure 8 of that article illustrated a set of Agriculture stamps, all of which are from position 91 except for the 12¢ denomination, and all of which had been removed by scissor cutting except for the 12¢ stamp. Figure 1 of this article reproduces that earlier illustration.



Figure 1. Set of 1875 Department of Agriculture Special Printing stamps, all from Position 91 except 12¢ denomination



Figure 2. 1875 Department of Agriculture Special Printing stamp, 12¢ denomination, Position 91, which appears to come from set shown in Figure 1

The previous article postulated that the set had originally been prepared by scissor cutting the complete set, and that each denomination in the set was from position 91, including the 12¢ stamp. It continued with the hypothesis that when a customer wanted to buy a single 12¢ stamp, the clerk removed one from this set and sold it. Later, when a different customer wanted a full set, the clerk replaced the missing 12¢ stamp with another one, which, of course, was not from position 91. This implied that somewhere there was the missing position 91 stamp, just as somewhere there was the set of position 91 stamps without the 12¢ denomination.

Recently the missing 12¢ stamp showed up on eBay, and it is illustrated in Figure 2. The author contacted the seller to try to determine the origin of the stamp, but no useful information was obtained. The stamp had simply been found in the remainders of a major collection which had been auctioned many years ago, probably in Europe. But the thesis that the stamp had originally been part of the set shown in Figure 1 is proven to be correct, and the hypothesis that it was removed from the set and sold separately is also probably correct. □

William E. Mooz, "Scissor Cutting of the 1875 Special Printing Issues," *Chronicle*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (August 1999)(Whole No. 183), pp. 169-206.

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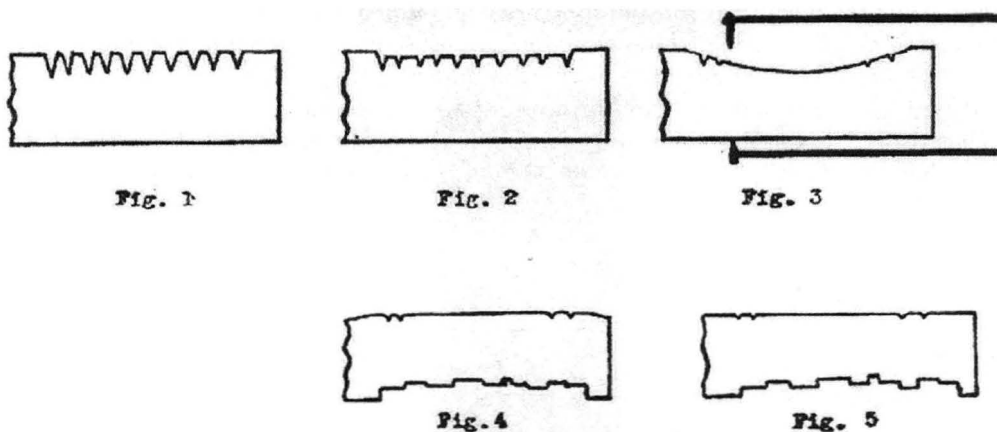


**Durland Plate Number Catalog**

## FOREIGN ENTRY AND ERASURE OF THE 1¢ EXECUTIVE IN THE 6¢ STATE POSITION 11

GEORGE G. SAYERS

In his 1998 *Chronicle* article,<sup>1</sup> Ralph Ebner documented the six positions in the first column of the 6¢ State plate showing the underlying foreign transfer of the 6¢ Executive. These are positions 41, 51, 61, 71, 81 and 91.<sup>2</sup> On two separate occasions in 2004, the author purchased used copies of stamps from the first column of the 6¢ State plate, as shown by their wide left margin. Both showed evidence of a double transfer unlike that



### Five Stages In Erasing An Engraved Plate

1. Cross section of a portion of a stamp plate showing engraved lines (exaggerated which are to be "erased.")
2. Cross section of the plate after it has been "stoned."
3. Cross section after it has been "scraped" to form a saucer-like hollow. (Note how deep engraving at both outer edges still remains). Shown also are the two prongs of the calipers used to mark the back of the plate to guide the workman in hammering
4. Cross section showing how the hammer-punches from the back fill up the hollow and force the "erased" section above the level of the plate's surface.
5. Cross section of the plate after the "erased" portion has been burnished. Note how the remnants of the former engraving still remain when the "erasing" has not been perfectly completed. Unless the next transfer relief does not strike these "remnants" they will print as "double transfers."

**Figure 1. "Five Stages In Erasing An Engraved Plate," the illustrated explanation from Ernest A. Kehr's article, "Erasing a Stamp Plate."**

<sup>1</sup>Ralph Ebner, "The 6¢ State Foreign Entry Variety," *Chronicle*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (Whole No. 178)(May 1998), pp. 138-149.

<sup>2</sup>Copies of the approximately 6 inch by 9 inch enlarged and annotated scans of these positions, except position 51, from the author's book, *Departmentals Plate Varieties*, are available from the American Philatelic Research Library.

previously described in positions 41-91. Careful analysis of the additional lines as described below led the author to conclude the double transfer represented remnant lines from the hammering out and erasing of a complete transfer of the 1¢ Executive. This process of erasure is precisely described and illustrated in Ernest A. Kehr's article, "Erasing A Stamp Plate," in *The Essay-Proof Journal*, Vol. 1, 1944, pp. 11-13. This newly identified position shows a textbook example of the results of a hasty less-than-thorough erasure, and Mr. Kehr's illustrations are included as Figure 1 to aid the student in understanding the process. Most double transfers do not show evidence of erasure as extreme as position 11.<sup>3</sup>

The discovery of a foreign entry is a rare and exciting event, as they have been identified on only five different U.S. postage stamps.<sup>4</sup> The author's reporting of a second source of foreign entry on this plate was initially greeted with some skepticism by other specialists since it implies a state of disorganization among the Continental Bank Note Co. siderographers bordering on chaos. However, that view is consistent with other information about the three month period in 1873 during which the production of Official stamps began. While the previously described foreign entries on the 6¢ State plate were identified largely based on lines in the right and bottom margins of the stamps, the characteristic lines of the foreign entry for position 11 are in the interior of the design. The author has attempted to illustrate with two different graphics the identification of the remnant lines of interest as part of the 1¢ Executive design. Two facts should be observed from Mr. Kehr's illustrations. First, only the parts of the image that are the deepest, darkest lines of the engraving being erased will survive the hammering-out and erasing, and these are not the edges of the lines, but the bottoms. Second, the hammering distorts the engraved surface of the plate into a convex plane, which distorts the original flat plane relationships of the design elements. Attempts to identify the source of the remnant lines using transparencies enlarged to scale were not successful until the author realized the magnitude of the distortions caused by the hammering-out process.

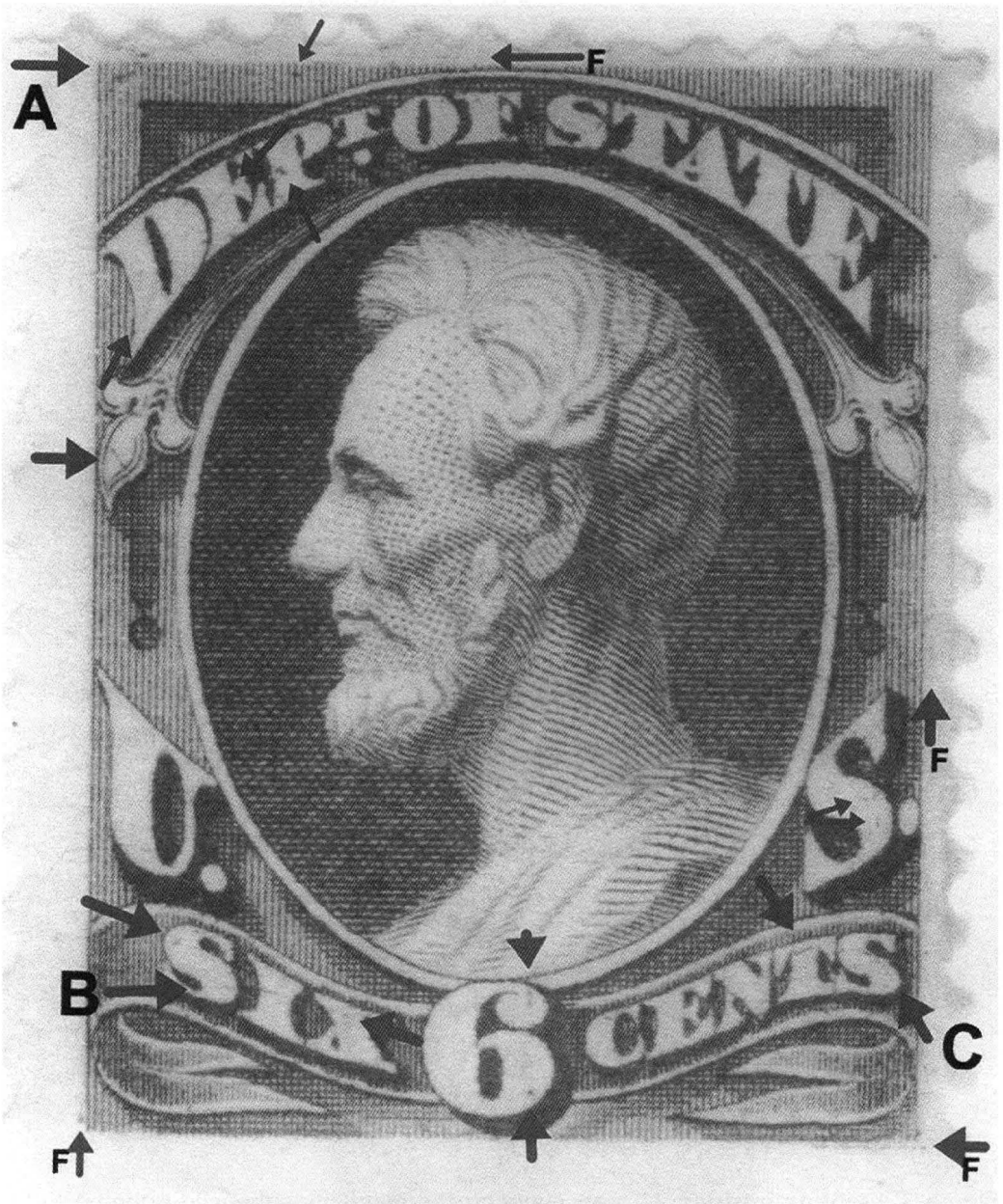
Figure 2 is scanned from a mint copy of the 6¢ State position 11, courtesy of Alfred E. Staubus. Dr. Staubus also allowed the author to examine a high resolution TIFF scan of the negative of the proof sheet photographed by Elliott Perry, by which this position was identified as position 11. The two dots in the body of the "6" and the crescent at the top left corner are readily identifiable characteristic marks of this position and remnants of the erased transfer. The several arrows show some additional remnants. The curves labeled A, B and C are most significant. Note the frame remnants marked "F." These remnants of the original 1¢ Executive frame exist on all four sides of the 6¢ State design which demonstrates the stretching of the image during the hammering out process.<sup>5</sup> Figure 3 shows position 11 with the "fingerprint" curves at A, B, and C and a few others manually enhanced. The elements of the 1¢ Executive design from which the foreign transfer remnant lines originate have been manually enhanced in the Figure 4 scan of an "Atlanta" scarlet proof of this design. Figure 5 shows an "Atlanta" black proof of the 1¢ Executive in which the parts of the design surrounding the lines of interest have been erased. Careful

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<sup>3</sup>Mr. Kehr continues, "Ordinarily an erasure is so perfect that not a trace of the previously entered design is visible, but in the 'old days' when lighting was not what it can be today, or even today, when a plate must be rushed through in a hurry, it is quite possible for a workman to do his job imperfectly enough to allow engraved or transferred lines of the 'erased' entry, to remain visible because he had not 'stoned' or 'scraped' enough of the steel down. In such cases the philatelic student - I prefer the word 'student' rather than 'expert' - will find evidence of the double transfer or partially removed 'erasure'."

<sup>4</sup>Ebner, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

<sup>5</sup>The 1¢ Executive image is in fact slightly smaller than the 6¢ State image.



**Figure 2. 6¢ State position 11 contrast enhanced scan showing remnant lines from the partially erased 1¢ Executive foreign transfer including frame lines at "F" and the "fingerprint" lines at "A," "B" and "C."**

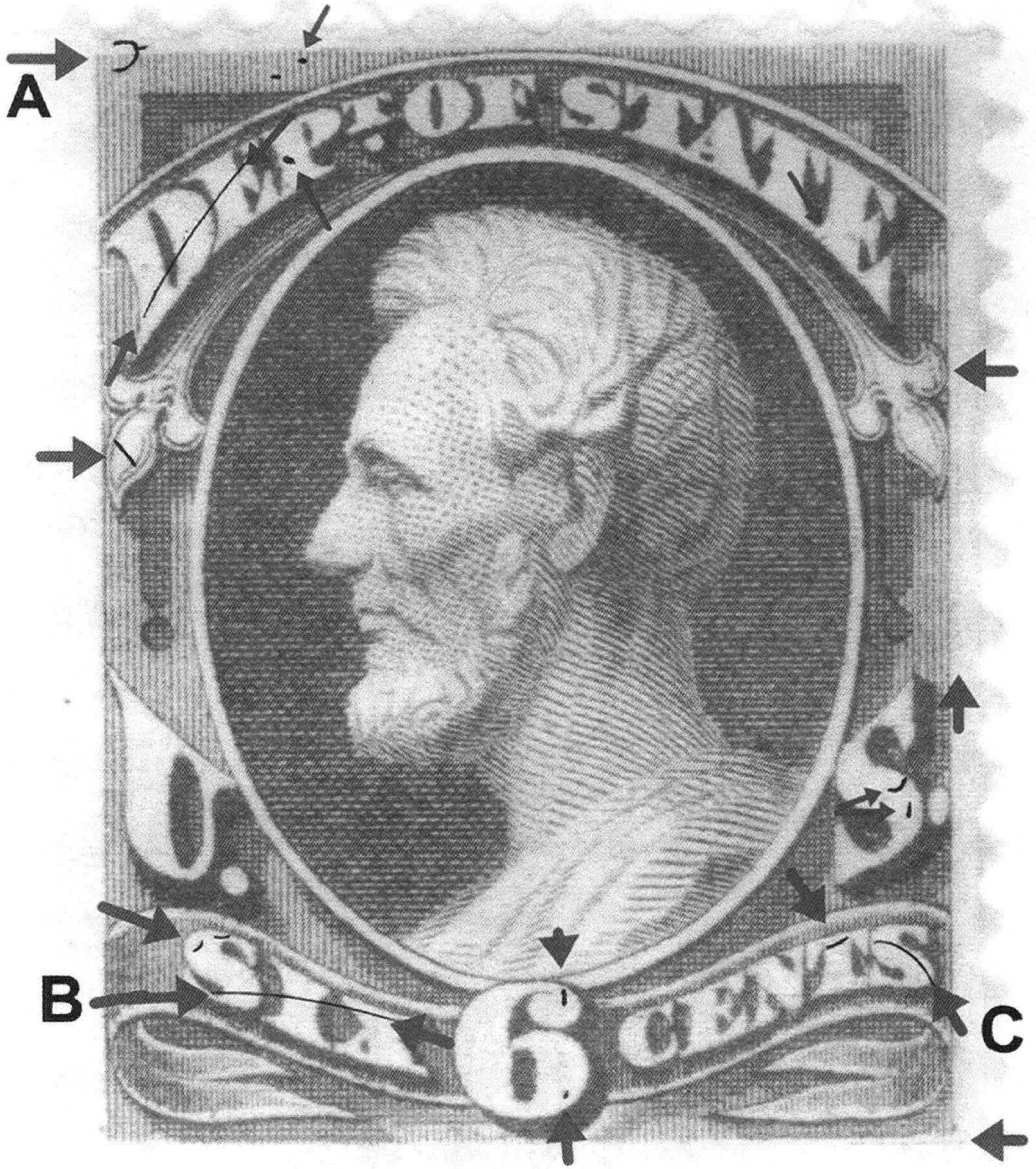


Figure 3. 6¢ State position 11 scan showing the manually enhanced remnant lines including the 1¢ Executive "fingerprint" lines at "A," "B" and "C."



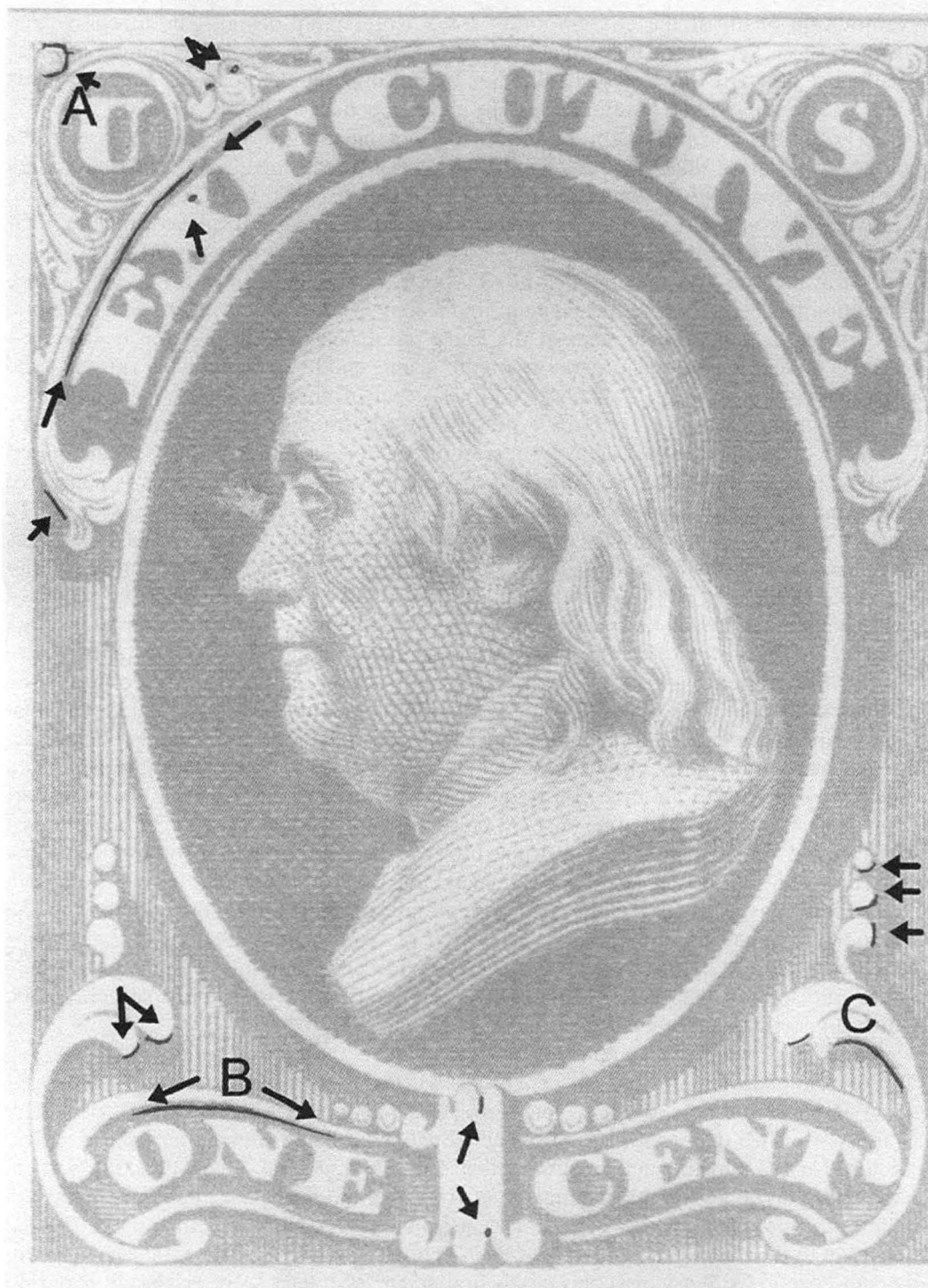


Figure 4. 1¢ Executive "Atlanta" Trial Color Proof in scarlet scan showing the manually enhanced origins of the remnant lines in the 6¢ State position 11. The curve at "A" is the bottom of the dark shading line around the top left corner ornament. The curve at "B" is the bottom of the dark shading line below the top of the left value ribbon. The curve at "C" is the bottom of the dark shading line underneath the top of the ornament at the bottom right corner. Other remnants originate from the bottoms of dark shading lines and dots in the 1¢ Executive design.

examination of all of the contemporary Bank Note stamp designs, both regular and Official, show the curves marked A, B and C exist only on the 1¢ Executive at those locations. Curve A is the heavy shading line of the corner circle ornament. Curve B is the heavy shading line of the bottom part of the value ribbon above the word "ONE." Curve C is the heavy shading line at the bottom of the ornament above the value ribbon in the bottom right corner. Note that the long unlabeled curve in the upper right quadrant through "DEP" is a remnant of the top of the ribbon containing "EXECUTIVE" and is common to the five values of that office. Some smaller curves are similarly displayed to show their origin in the 1¢ Executive design.

Still, the question remained as to why position 11 should show a foreign transfer. The author has recently been fortunate to find a copy of the 6¢ State identified as position 1 using the aforementioned scan of the Perry proof negative. This stamp is shown as Figure 6. A very few remnant markings on this stamp, and in particular what appears to be a remnant of curve A in the same location as that of position 11, lead the author to conclude that position 1 contains a much more thoroughly erased image of the 1¢ Executive. Note that the four areas of interest of position 1 are outside the 6¢ State design on all four sides and therefore indicative of a hammering-out erasure. This is consistent with a more plausible production sequence in which two consecutive entries of the 1¢ Executive at positions 1 and 11 were subsequently erased. This pair of positions illustrates the points made by Mr. Kehr as quoted in footnote 3. Unfortunately, the author has not been able to identify any examples of positions 21 and 31 to determine if the sequence continues. However, this discovery of a second foreign entry source on the 6¢ State plate certainly causes this plate to rank among the most interesting in United States philately.

While students of the issue probably will never know with any certainty the production details of that period, some speculation is possible. Why did the Continental siderographers undertake the laborious erasure on this plate of the six impressions of the 6¢ Executive and the two impressions of the 1¢ Executive? The reasonable approach, especially considering the time constraints, would be to junk the damaged plate and start with clean steel. Remember, this Post Office contract for production of the Official stamps was awarded to Continental on a cost-plus basis, so there was no incentive to conserve raw materials. The author suggests that the demand for over 100 new plates in this two month period may have exhausted the available supply of steel engraving plates, and the siderographers had no choice but to use every plate on hand, including damaged ones which required extensive repair. There is clear evidence of multiple erasures of transfers on the 15¢ Interior plate, the 12¢ Treasury plate, the 12¢ Navy plate and several others, which supports this argument.

Luff<sup>6</sup> documents the assignment of plate numbers during this period. From January 1870 to the end of their contract in April 1873, the National Bank Note Co. produced about 55 plates for the new Bank Note series, less than 20 per year. The Continental Bank Note Co. finished their first plate of the new Bank Note stamp contract on April 7, 1873.<sup>7</sup> By July 1, 1873 they had delivered more than 13 million Official stamps in addition to the normal production of regular stamps, and from the assigned plate numbers about 125 plates were produced in this period. The last plate produced by Continental before the transition to the American Bank Note Co. in February, 1879 was plate 310.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, in the subsequent six years of stamp production about 185 plates were produced, about 30 per year. In less than three months, from April to June, 1873, Continental siderographers

---

<sup>6</sup> John N. Luff, *The Postage Stamps of the United States* (New York: The Scott Stamp & Coin Co., Ltd 1902), p. 95 for the issue of 1870, p. 103 for the issue of 1873, pp. 211-12 for the Official stamps.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

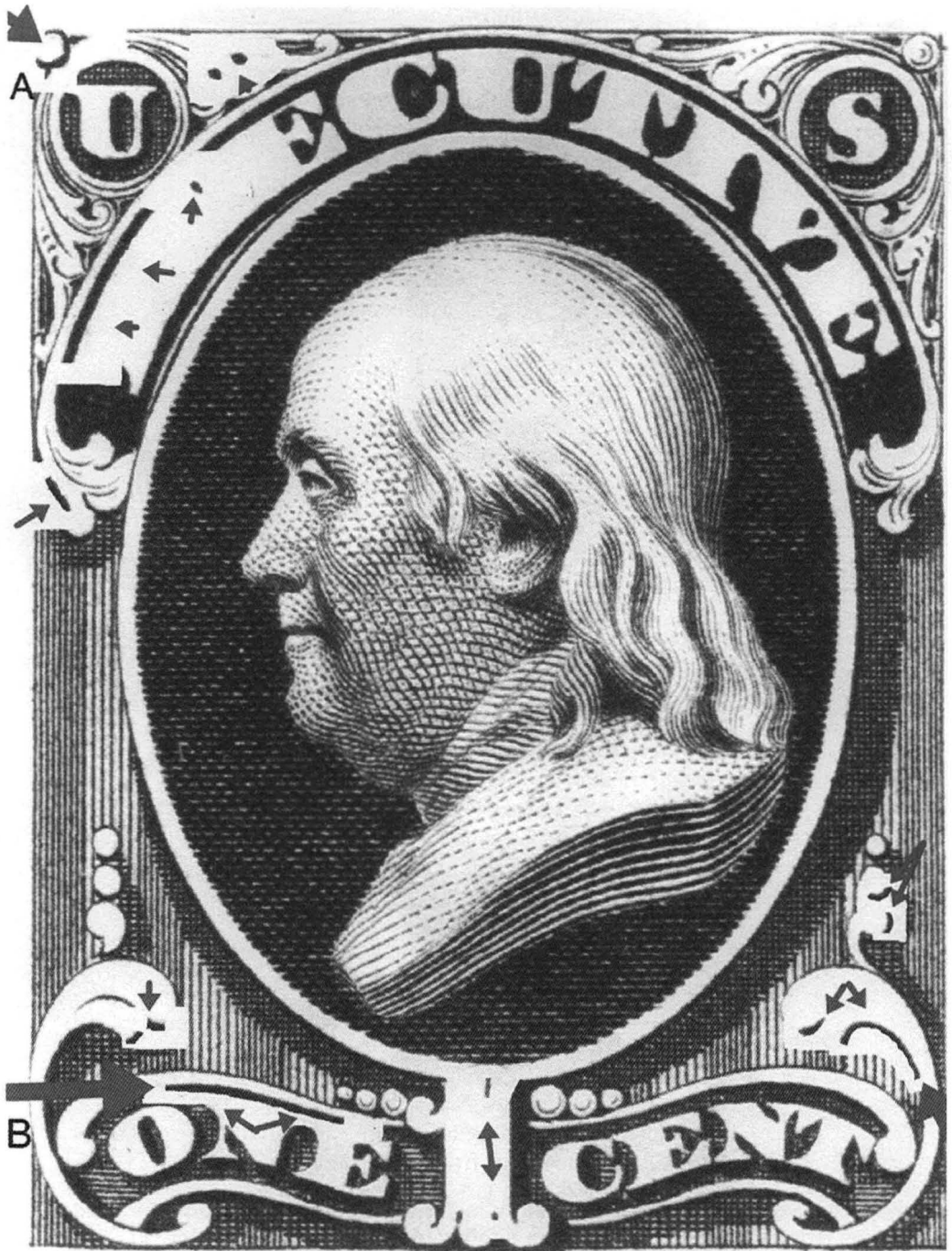


Figure 5. 1¢ Executive “Atlanta” Trial Color Proof in black scan showing the origins of the remnant lines exposed by erasing the surrounding design elements.



**Figure 6. 6¢ State position 1 scan showing the remnant lines from the erased 1¢ Executive. The remnant line at "1" is similar to curve "A" of position 11. The lines labeled "2" are remnants of frame lines. At "3" there is a remnant of the bottom of the ornament in the lower left corner of the 1¢ Executive.**

produced more than five times the annual plate production in the years before, and after increasing their rate of production by more than a factor of 20! It is difficult to imagine how they managed this feat, but a few hints can be found. First, about 80 of the plates for the Official stamps were plates of 100 images. This change would likely reduce the production time by about one third for those plates. Second, examination of the position dots of the Official stamp plates reveals at least four methods were used to locate them, suggesting Continental was able to find at least four teams of siderographers, possibly setting up an around-the-clock plate production operation. Third, several of the plates show skewed<sup>9</sup> images rolled in consecutively in one column, including the 1¢ Justice and the 6¢ Navy. One possible explanation is Continental siderographers used for some plates a worn out roll-in press which had lost the alignment of the transfer roll. This would allow them to have four 12 hour shifts of plate production a day. Fourth, several plates show many “shift” type double transfers, including the 1¢ Treasury and the 90¢ Post Office stamps, suggesting high transfer pressures were used to attempt to complete a roll-in with two press passes. However, even with these possible production changes and the substantially reduced quality standards which must have accompanied them, the production of over a hundred plates in about two months was an amazing feat. More information may be available in the detailed bill submitted to the Post Office Department and subsequently reviewed by Congress. □

---

<sup>9</sup>The vertical axis of the image does not coincide with the vertical axis of the column of images.

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Now, 13 years later, I have the bittersweet honor of passing the editorship on. I began planning my retirement in 1999, and in many respects the thing which kept me going until now was the need to wait for my successor to become available. Michael Laurence was unquestionably the ideal person for the position; I was quite willing to wait the four years it would be until he was free to take the job.

But I will regret stepping away from the great working relationships I have enjoyed with authors and section editors. I don't know where they got all those column inches it took to fill the *Chronicle*—I've been continually amazed at how much truly new information is waiting to be discovered and published, and at how many "new" authors are out there to be discovered.

I also have to publicly thank the USPCS Board for their unfailing support. Editors-in-chief are not necessarily the most docile (nor modest) of people, but I never received anything from Board members except encouragement and collegiality.

And the readership! What a delight to get such positive response, even on occasion of somewhat controversial articles. Quite a few of those readers even developed into authors, to the benefit of us all.

I know you all will give similar support and encouragement to Michael Laurence as he works to bring the *Chronicle* to new heights. He'll have his own name on the masthead the next issue. In the meantime, his address is: 1607 Port Jefferson Road, Sidney, OH 45365; e-mail mlaurence@woh.rr.com.

Now, if you'll pardon me, I think I'll brush the dust off that stamp collection I put away 13 years ago . . . □

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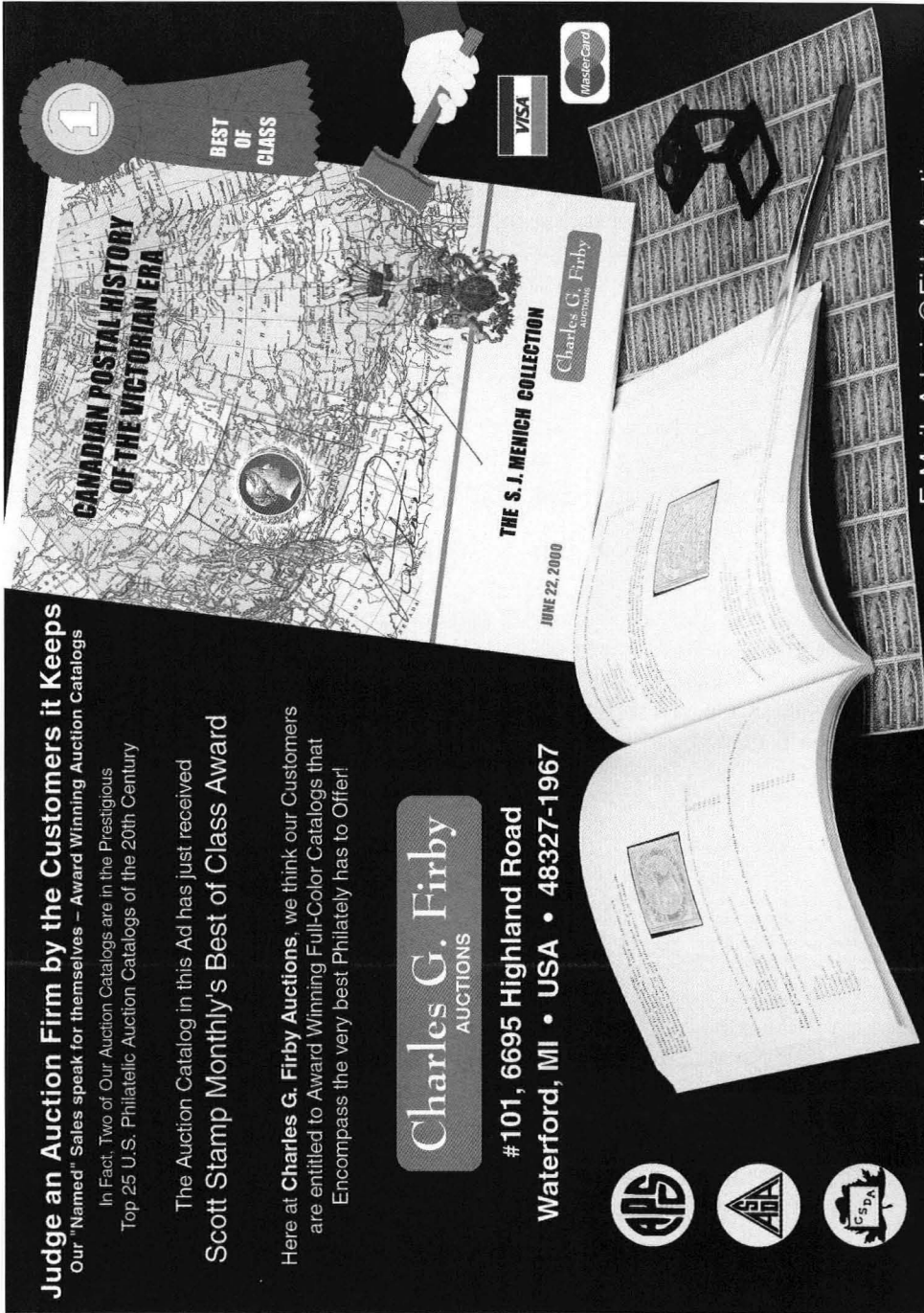
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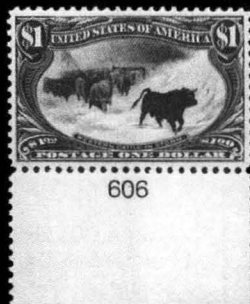


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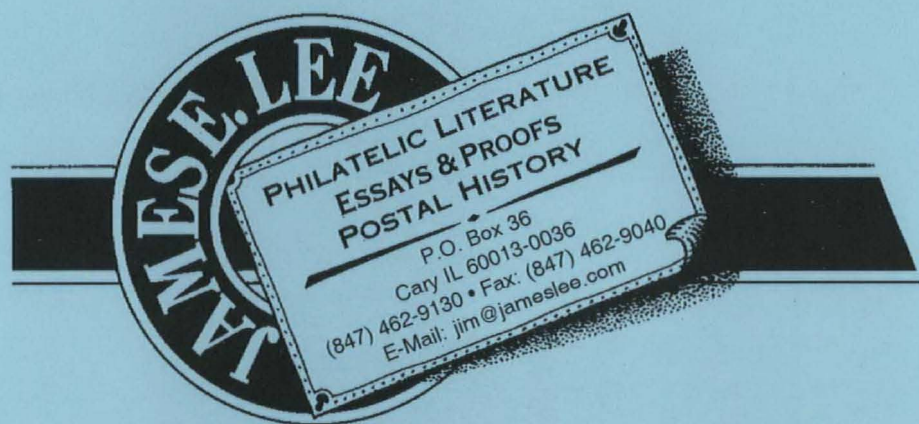
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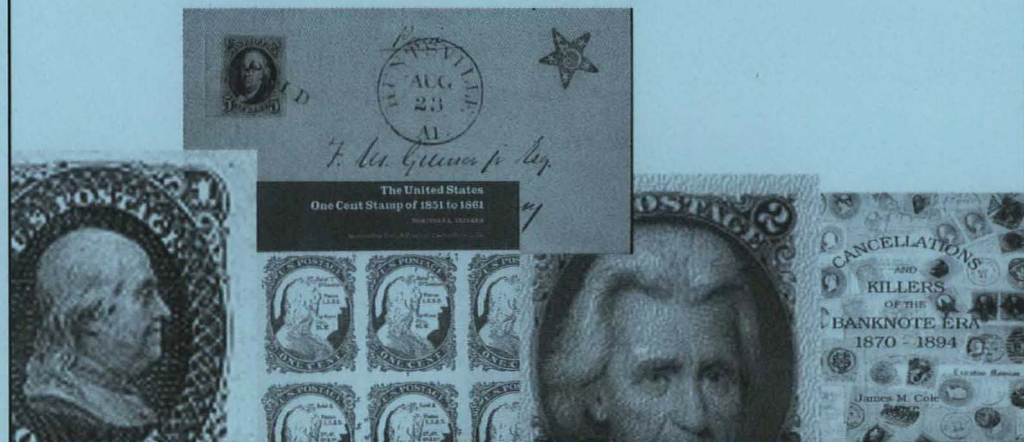
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