

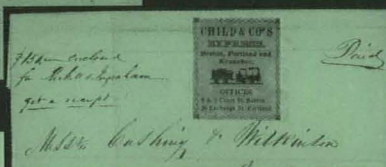
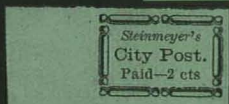
The
Chronicle
of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues

November 2007

Volume 59, No. 4

Whole No. 216

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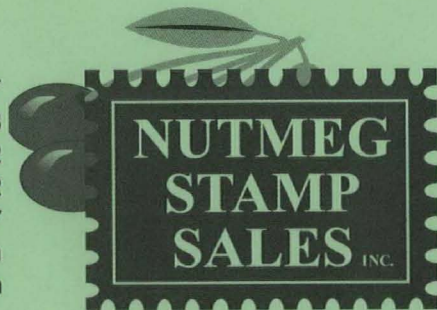
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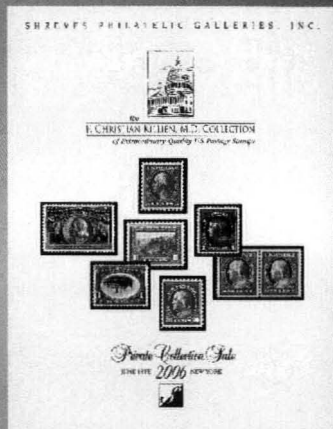
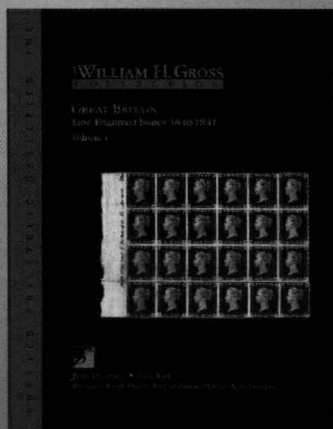
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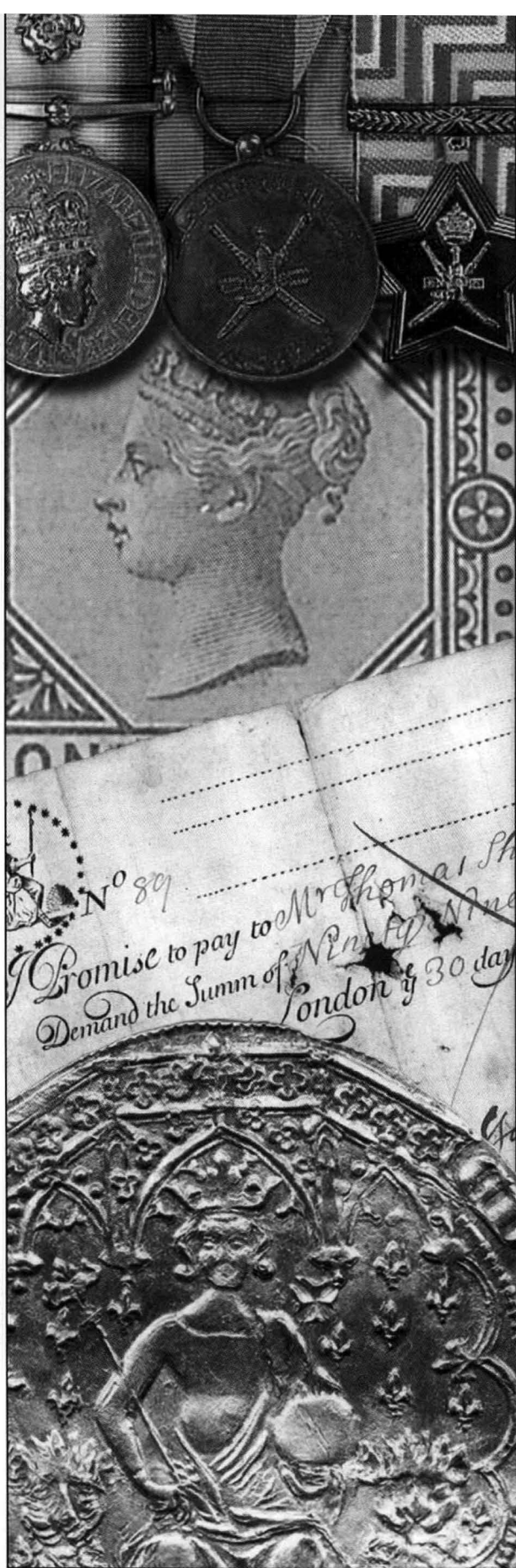
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CONTENTS

THE EDITOR'S PAGE	
In This Issue	
<i>by Michael Laurence</i>	263
PRESTAMP & STAMPLESS PERIOD	
Integral Domestic-rate Postmarks Within the Townmark: 1845-1851	
<i>by James W. Milgram, M.D.</i>	264
THE 1847 PERIOD	
A Turned Cover with a Twist	
<i>by Wade E. Saadi</i>	279
THE 1851-61 PERIOD	
1856 Circular on Environment and Health	
<i>by Hubert C. Skinner</i>	283
THE 1861-69 PERIOD	
Black Chattanooga Straight-line Cancellations of 1863	
<i>by Jim Cate</i>	286
THE 1869 PERIOD	
Evansville, Indiana, Fancy Cancels on 1869 Stamps	
<i>by Irvin L. Heimbürger</i>	290
THE BANK NOTE PERIOD	
The Japanese Fan Cancel	
<i>by Joe H. Crosby</i>	298
OFFICIALS	
Quest for Perfection: Observations on Grading and Perforating Official Stamps	
<i>by Alan C. Campbell</i>	300
THE WESTERN MAILS	
Early Sacramento Provisional Postmarks and Rate Markings	
<i>by Steven C. Walske and William Tatham</i>	317
GUEST PRIVILEGE	
Rates and Denominations of the 1875 and 1895 Design Newspaper Stamps	
<i>by William E. Mooz</i>	327
THE FOREIGN MAILS	
The <i>New York Herald</i> as a Philatelic Research Tool	
<i>by Theron J. Wierenga</i>	332
REVIEW: ROY WEBER THREE CENT 1851 ESSAY BOOK ON CD-ROM	
<i>by James E. Lee</i>	338
THE COVER CORNER	340

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IN THIS ISSUE

The numerical grading of stamps is a subject much in the news these days. To many collectors of classic United States stamps and postal history, it's still unclear how grading will ultimately impact what goes into (or comes out of) our albums. To shed some light on this subject, Alan Campbell, editor of our Officials section, presents (starting on page 300) a detailed, provocative and interestingly-illustrated analysis of how the Official stamps were plated out and perforated. He then explores how those processes, more than a century later, contribute to the scarcity of Official stamps in the sought-after highest grades. Campbell judiciously limits his analysis to Officials, but the thoughtful collector will see how it can be extended to all the large Bank Note stamps and possibly to other stamp series from the pre-Bureau era.

Irvin L. Heimburger, a newcomer to these pages, is well known for his exhibition collection of the U.S. 1869 stamps. He's a resident of Evansville, Indiana, where he practiced medicine for many years. And like a lot of us, he maintains a hometown postal history collection. A sort of Hoosier Waterbury, Evansville produced some eye-catching artifacts during the 1869 era, as Heimburger makes clear in a charming and useful article starting on page 290. Heimburger identifies Evansville as the source of several well-known but previously unattributed fancy cancels, and casts new light on the evolution of his home town's most enduring postal historical contribution, the Evansville Shoo Fly.

There's lots more postal history in this issue. In our Western Mails section, starting on page 317, Steven C. Walske and William Tatham team up explore provisional postmarks and rate markings from the earliest months of the Sacramento, California, post office. In addition to some nifty covers, the Walske-Tatham article includes a detailed cover census. In our 1861-69 section, starting on page 286, Jim Cate establishes beyond any doubt the existence of a black Chattanooga straight-line cancel, used on Christmas Day in 1863. And starting on page 264, James W. Milgram continues his exploration of town markings that include rate notations, here discussing integral-rate markings from the 1845-51 era.

Theron J. Wierenga is a highly regarded researcher in the area of steamship markings and sailings. His books on these subjects, published by this Society, are the basic references in that field. In our Foreign Mails section this issue (page 332) Wierenga discusses his favorite source of sailing data and other steamship information, the *New York Herald*, and tells why he prefers the *Herald* to the more readily available *New York Times*.

In a Guest Privilege column beginning on page 327, William E. Mooz explores the connection between the bulk charges on periodical shipments and the denominations of the stamps that were devised to account for them. Rounding out this issue are three shorter features: Wade Saadi on a turned 1847 cover (page 279), Hubert Skinner on an environmentally-aware circular from 1856 (page 283), and Joe Crosby on the design source of a scarce cancellation (page 298).

In the summer of 1948, the first issue of the *3¢ 1851-57 Chronicle*, ancestor of the publication you now hold in your hands, was created (by founding editor Tracy W. Simpson) in black and white on a mimeograph machine. After the passage of almost 60 years, this is our last issue as a black-and-white publication. Assuming all goes as planned, the February 2008 *Chronicle* will have full-color images throughout. We appreciate your forbearance as we transition into a new era. ■

**INTEGRAL DOMESTIC-RATE POSTMARKS WITHIN THE TOWNMARK:
1845-1851**

JAMES W. MILGRAM, M.D.

This is the third in a series of articles dealing with dated mostly circular town markings containing information about the postal rate or prepayment. The first two articles, in *Chronicles* 213 and 214, dealt with attached rate markings, those on which the rate indicator (or PAID or FREE) is attached outside the circle. This and subsequent articles will discuss integral rate markings, on which similar information is contained within the circular town mark.

When the change of domestic postal rates on July 1, 1845 resulted in just two different single rates (5¢ for under 300 miles and 10¢ for over that distance), it seemed practical at some towns and cities with high mail volume to combine the rate marking with the town postmark so that the clerk could strike both at one time. During the six-year period after 1 July 1845, postal rates were the same whether a letter was sent prepaid or collect. Typical practice was to rate all letters and then to add a "PAID" marking (either handstamped or in manuscript) when postage was prepaid. Integral rate postmarks became the standard at many larger communities, and some examples are quite common. Four towns (York, Michigan; New York City and Oswego, New York; and Hecktown, Pennsylvania) included an integral PAID along with the integral rate marking.

Of course, this is the period when stamps were first introduced in the United States. In many instances, these postmarks intended for stampless covers were adapted for use on covers bearing 5¢ and 10¢ 1847 stamps. I discussed this overlap of postmarks in an article in *Chronicle* 201, "1847 Covers Reflect Stampless Usages."

It is very interesting that prior to the 1845-51 rate period, I have not found a single postmark incorporating the postal rate within the marking.

From an examination of the postmarks themselves, it is obvious that the Post Office Department issued no directives concerning postmark size or appearance. There is quite a variety of styles and even numeral placement among the different postmarks.

One word of caution is needed. Some postmarks containing the numeral 5 continued to be used in the rate period after July 1, 1851, when unpaid mail was charged five cents regardless of distance (except to the Far West, which will be covered in a future article). When the contents are missing and a cover is not otherwise dated and is not marked "Paid," a 5¢ integral rate postmark might represent a use from this later period.

The cover listings in Table 1 are taken from the current (1997) edition of the *American Stampless Cover Catalog*, updated with subsequent discoveries added to the listing. States are listed alphabetically and individual markings are listed alphabetically by town.

The first column in Table 1 shows origin information and the rate marking as it appears in the circular datestamp. The second column shows the period of use, based on surviving cover evidence. Markings that continued to be used on due letters in the subsequent period are so noted "(continue)".

Any integral rate markings from this period that are not represented in Table 1 should

ALABAMA		Binghamton, N.Y. 5	1850 (unlisted)
Mobile 5	1850-51	Buffalo, N.Y. 5	1848-51
Mobile 10	1850-51	Buffalo N.Y. 10	1848-51
CONNECTICUT		New York 5 PAID	1845-47
Bridgeport CT 5 cts	1850	New York 5 cts	1845-51 (several types)
Bridgeport CT 5	1851 (uncertain)	New York 10 cts	1845-51 (several types)
New Haven Ct 5	1847	New York 20	1850-51
New Haven Ct 10	1850	Oswego N.Y. 5	1850
Plymouth Hollow Ct 5	1850	Oswego N.Y. PAID 5	1851
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA		Pitcher N.Y. 5 cts	1850
Washington D.C. 5 cts	1850	Salem X Roads N.Y. 5	1850 period (unlisted)
Washington D.C. 10cts	1850	Schenectady N.Y. 5 cts	1845
GEORGIA		Sing Sing N.Y. 5	1846-51
Savannah Ga 10	1846-51	Sing Sing N.Y. 5cts	1848
Savannah Ga 5	1847-51	Troy N.Y. 5cts	1849-50
MAINE		Troy N.Y. 10cts	1847-51
Augusta Me 5	(continue)	West Point N.Y. 10	(uncertain)
Bangor Me 5ct	1851 (uncertain)	OHIO	
Portland Me 5	1847	Burlington, O 5	1851
Portland Me 10	1848	Burlington, O X	1851
Saco Me 5	1848 (red)	Cincinnati O 5cts	1846-51 (continue)
Saco Me 5	1848-51 (blue)	Cincinnati O 5	1847
MASSACHUSETTS		Cincinnati O 10	1847-51
Boston 5 cts	1846-51 several types	Cleveland O 5cts	1851 (continue)
Boston 10	1846-50	PENNSYLVANIA	
Chicopee 5	1848-50	Hecktown PA PAID 5 cts	1848
Roxbury Mass 5	1851 (continue?)	Kennett Square PA 5	1847
South-Easton Mass 5cts	1850-51	M'Connellsburg Pa 5	1845
Swampscott Mass 5	1845-51 (continue)	Philadelphia 5	1846-47
Taunton Mass 5cts	1847-49	Philada Pa 5 cts	1847-51
Taunton Mass 5 CTS	1848	Philada Pa 5	1848-49
Taunton Mass 5	1849 (unlisted)	Philada Pa 10 cts	1847-48
Taunton Ms 5cts	1849-50	Philada Pa 10	1848-51
Taunton Ms 10cts	1849-50	RHODE ISLAND	
Waltham Mass 10	1849 (unlisted)	Providence R.I. 5 cts	1850
MICHIGAN		SOUTH CAROLINA	
York Mich X	1849	Charleston S.C. 5	1847-51
York Mich X Paid	1848-49	Charleston S.C. 10	1847-51
MISSOURI		VERMONT	
Saint Louis Mo 5	1847-50	Burlington Vt. 5	1851 (two types)
Saint Louis Mo 10	1847-50	Woodstock Vt. 5 cts	1849-51
NEW JERSEY		Woodstock Vt. 5	1849-51
Newark N.J. 5	1849-50	VIRGINIA	
Newark N.J. 10	1849-50	Etna Hanover Va 5	1849 (unlisted)
Somerville N.J. 5	1847	Norfolk Va 5	1847-50
Somerville N.J. 5cts	1849-51	Norfolk Va 10	1847-50
NEW YORK		Petersburg, Va 5cts	1846
Berlin N.Y. 5cts	1845-50	Petersburg, Va. 10 cts	1846

Table 1. Towns known to have used integral rate markings, on which the rate indicator is contained within the circular town mark. The left column shows origin information and the rate marking; the right column shows the period of use.

be brought to the attention of Van Koppersmith or this writer, so that the marking can be included in the forthcoming revision of the stampless cover catalog, now in preparation. All reports should include a photocopy or a scan of the cover.

The cover in Figure 1 shows a well-struck example of a postmark (in red) with a "5" inserted just below the date, within a circular postmark reading "PLYMOUTH HOLLOW.

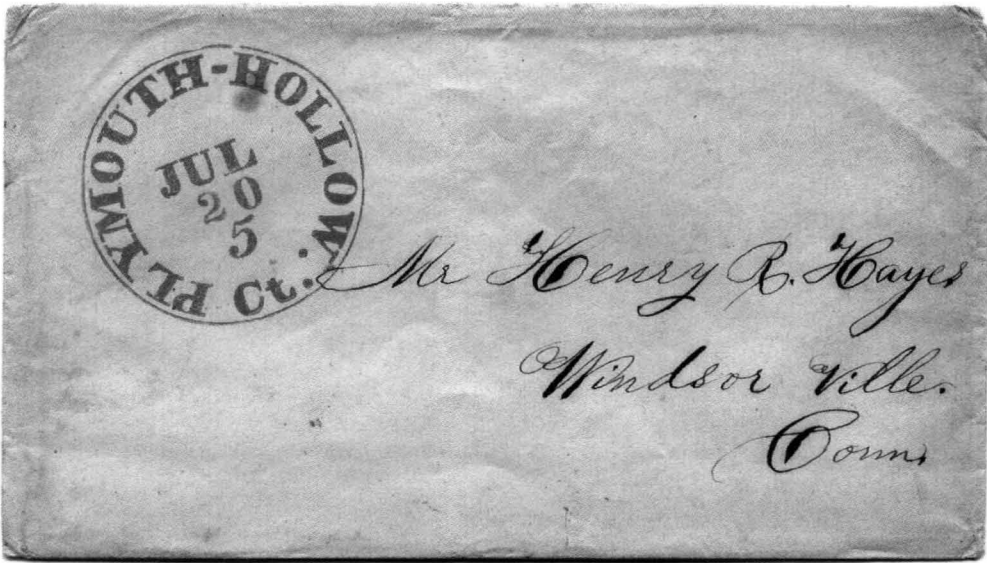


Figure 1. Red postmark of Plymouth Hollow, Connecticut, showing a “5” rate within the circular date stamp, on an 1850 cover.



Figure 2. 1849 cover to Connecticut bearing red Washington D.C. postmark with “10cts” integral rate for the over-300-mile distance to Connecticut. These postmarks are also found in black.

Ct. JUL 20 5.” This 1850 cover was sent unpaid, so only the integral rate marking was struck. Plymouth Hollow is well known for its large “V” and “X” markings.

Washington, D.C. dispatched a large volume of mail throughout the country. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that this city used integral rate handstamps. During the 1845-1851 period, Washington used both 5¢ and 10¢ integral rate markings. The 1849 cover in Figure 2 shows the higher rate, stamped in red, on an unpaid lady’s cover, very pretty. Here the rate is included within the encircling text just inside the rim of the marker. The distance between Washington and Middletown, Connecticut, was more than 300 miles, thus requiring the 10¢ rate. The absence of a PAID marking indicates that this cover was also sent collect. These markings are also found in black.

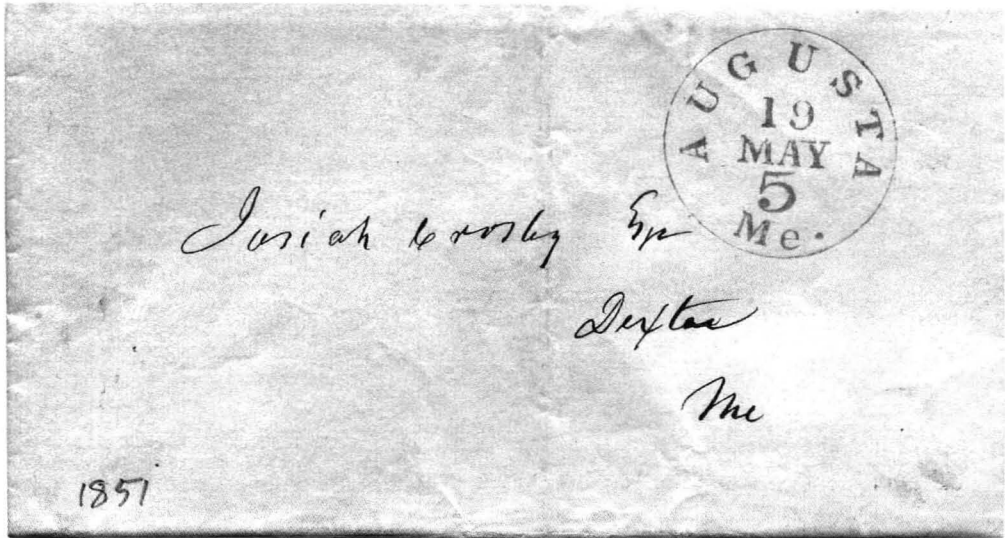


Figure 3. Red integral “5” unpaid postmark on a cover from Augusta, Maine to Dexter, Maine in 1851.

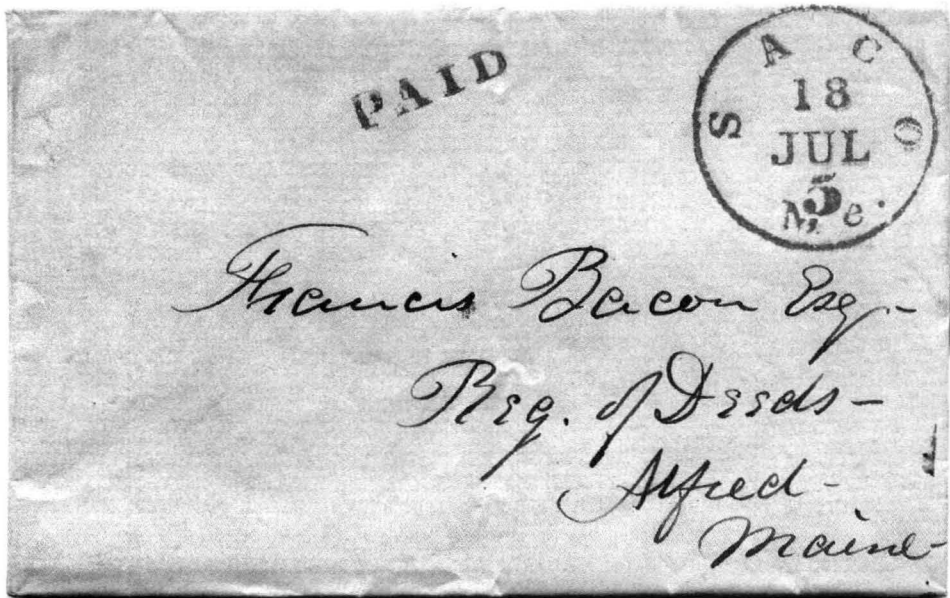


Figure 4. Blue integral “5” postmark from Saco, Maine, used with separate “PAID” handstamp on an 1850 cover to Alfred, Maine.

Figure 3 shows a red “AUGUSTA Me. 19 MAY 5” postmark. Because the content is dated May 19, 1851, this is unquestionably an example of the 1845-1851 unpaid 5¢ rate. If the letter had been missing, making the cover undateable, one could not definitively assign this cover to a certain rate category, because the unpaid rate was still 5¢ after July 1, 1851 and this postmark could have been used then.

The same discussion could apply to the blue integral “5” postmark (“SACO Me. 18 JUL 5”) shown in Figure 4. The letter happens to be present and dates the cover as 1850. However, this cover was prepaid and bears a matching blue “PAID” handstamp. Thus, even

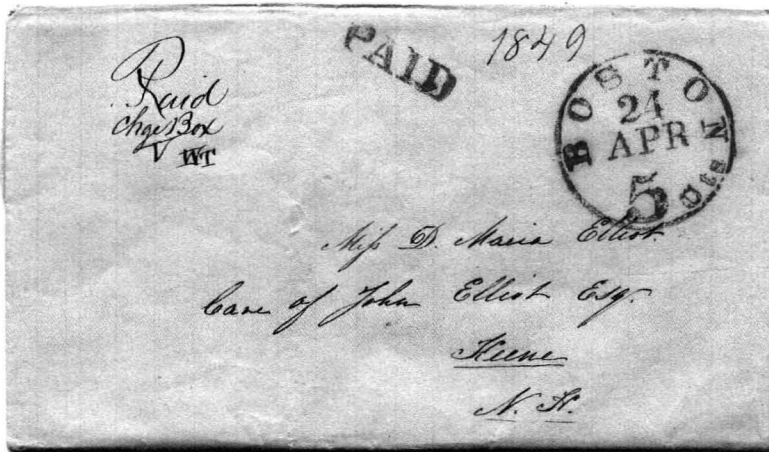


Figure 5. Postage on this prepaid 1849 letter was charged to a post office box account (per the notation at upper left). The “BOSTON 5 Cts 24 APR” and “PAID” are both struck in matching red ink.



Figure 6. The marking on this cover is similar to the marking on the cover in Figure 5. But this is an unpaid cover. The Boston cds is struck in black and there is no PAID marking. A separate handstamped “5” reinforces unpaid use.

without year-date evidence, one can date this cover as an example of the 1845-1851 rate period because that was the only time (in the 19th century) when domestic postage was 5¢ for a prepaid letter. Note that on the Saco circular datestamp, the “5” rate numeral displaces part of the state abbreviation.

Figure 5 shows a “BOSTON 24 APR 5 Cts” postmark in red with matching red “PAID” and also “1849” in contemporary pen. The cover shows a notation “Paid Chge Box V WT,” directing that the 5¢ postage be charged to the post office account of the box holder, W.T.

By contrast the cover in Figure 6, also from Boston, is an unpaid cover with markings stamped in black ink. This is an undated envelope, and the 5 in a circle handstamp was

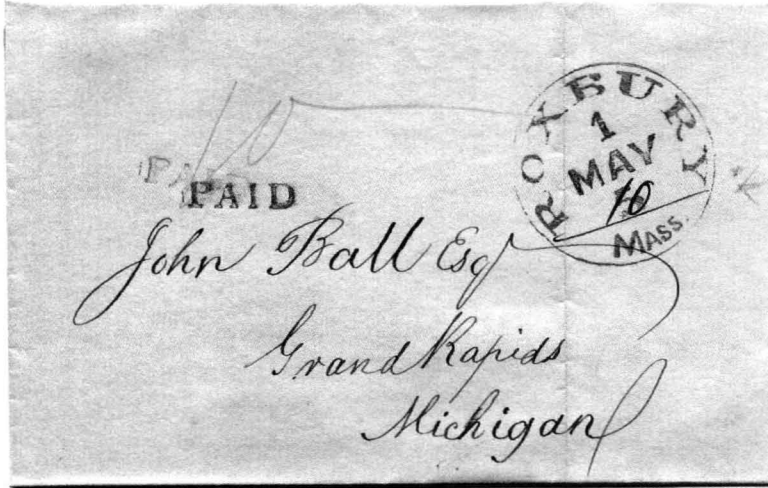


Figure 7. This prepaid 1851 cover to Michigan bears a blue postmark with internal 5 rating from Roxbury, Massachusetts, re-rated in manuscript to “10” reflecting the over-300-mile rate.

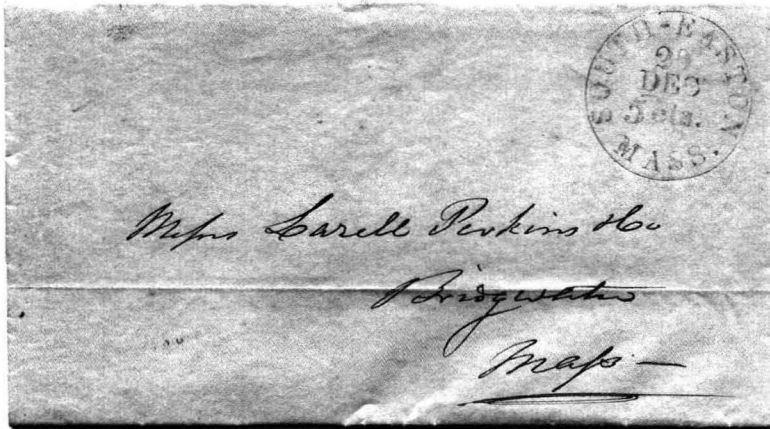


Figure 8. An 1849 cover from South Easton to Bridgewater, Massachusetts. This unusual integral rate postmark shows “5cts” as a third line in the date section of the postmark.

certainly used in the 1845-51 period. But the year of use of this cover is not certain. It could date from either period.

The cover in Figure 7 bears a “ROXBURY MASS 1 MAY 5” marking in blue. This letter was addressed to Michigan, a distance of more than 300 miles, so the handstamped “5” was re-rated “10” in manuscript. This letter was clearly prepaid. Note the matching blue “PAID” marking as well as “10” in pencil. The date is May 1, 1851, shortly before the July 1 rate change.

One of the more unusual integral postmarks is shown on the cover in Figure 8, which bears a “SOUTH-EASTON MASS 29 DEC 5 cts.” in red. Here the rating information takes up a third line in the date area. The accompanying letter, dated 1849, establishes this as an unpaid use from the 1845-51 rate period.



Figure 9. Two different integral rate markings on the same 1847-48 cover. The red Boston “5” marking with matching PAID indicate prepayment. The cover was missent to Taunton which applied its “5” marker plus the “MISSENT & FORWARDED,” both in a distinctive greenish color.



Figure 10. This unpaid cover from 1848 shows a Taunton marking with larger “5CT,” struck in blue.

The town of Taunton, Massachusetts used a number of different types of integral rate postmarks in the late 1840's, and they are usually found very well struck. The earliest type is shown in Figure 9, a very interesting cover, from 1847-48, with two different integral rate postmarks, the first (in red) from Boston and the second (in green) from Taunton, which also applied an unlisted “MISSENT & FORWARDED” postmark in matching green. Prepaid in Boston, the cover was probably not charged the 5¢ collection suggested by the Taunton handstamp, because of the post office routing error.

This Taunton postmark contains, under the date, a relatively small “5cts” rating indicator. The Taunton postmaster must have felt it was too small. The marking was revised the



Figure 11. A year later the Figure 10 postmark was modified to drop the “CT.” Unpaid cover to New Bedford, 1849.

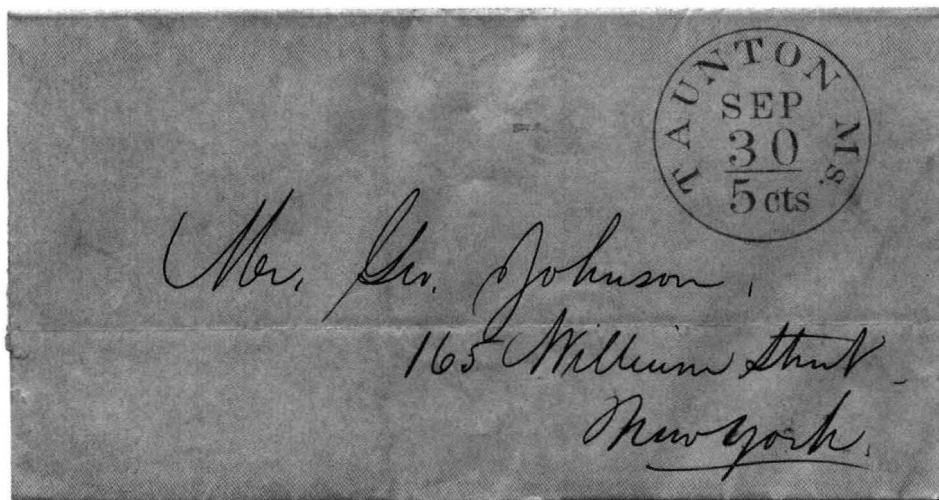


Figure 12. This cover to New York from 1850 shows that Taunton by then had adopted an entirely new type of postmark that shows the integral rate much more clearly.

following year (although I have seen the small “5cts” as late as 1850) with a similar circular datestamp with a much larger rate marking. An example is shown in Figure 10, here on a cover from 1848.

A postmark from Taunton in 1849 shows an unlisted modification—the removal of the word “CT” from the marking. An example is shown in Figure 11. Finally, a completely new type, similar to markings found throughout the 1850s, was adopted sometime in 1850. An example is shown on the cover in Figure 12.



Figure 13. The marking on this 1849 Waltham cover incorporates a large "10" in a double circle, here in red. The "10" is so big that it pushes the date up toward the top of the circle.

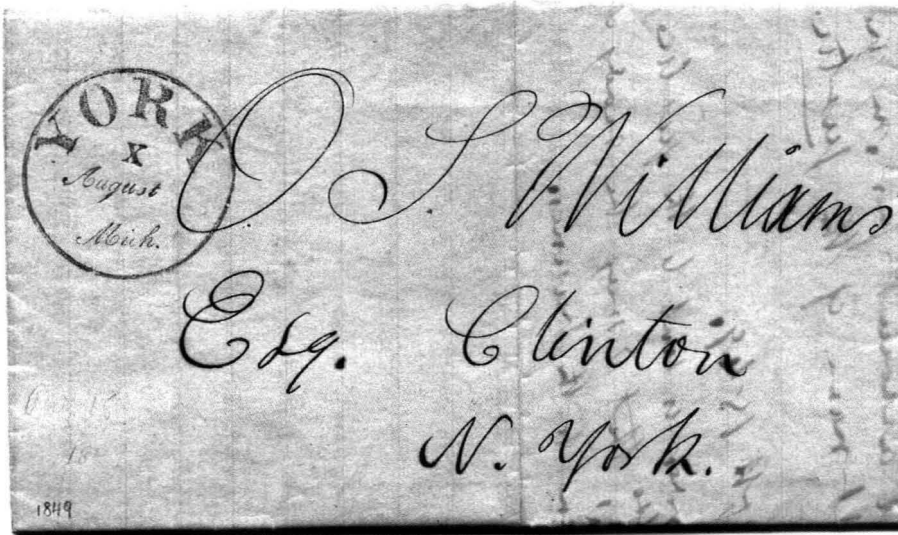


Figure 14. This cover from York, Michigan, and the companion cover in Figure 15 show red markings that are among the fanciest examples of integral rates. On this 1849 cover to Clinton, N.Y., the month and state abbreviation are in script type and a Roman numeral "X" is used to indicate the 10¢ rate.

A quite strange postmark was made by the postmaster at Waltham, Mass., incorporating an oversize "10" within a double circular townmark. The discovery example, unlisted in the current stampless catalog, is struck faintly, in red, on the 1849 cover to Pennsylvania shown in Figure 13. We've enhanced the contrast on the image in Figure 13 to bring out details of the marking. This cover is dated 1849. One might expect a matching 5 in this style as well.

Michigan only had one town, York, using an integral rate in the 1845-51 period. However, this postmark, shown in two varieties in Figures 14 and 15, is among the fanciest of



Figure 15. This second example of the York, Michigan integral “X” rate shows the word “Paid” in a fancy type face.



Figure 16. This black postmark from Berlin, New York, struck here on a cover to Lakeville, New York, is one of the few oval postmarks showing an integral rate. With its large “5 Cts.,” the Berlin oval makes a striking postmark

integral rate postmarks. Both the month and the state abbreviation are in script type, and the “10” (both paid and due) is indicated by a Roman numeral “X”. Both these covers are from 1849, sent to Clinton, New York, just a few days apart.

Another very fancy integral rate postmark is the black oval of Berlin, New York, in use for most of the 1845-51 rate period. Figure 16 is a representative example, from 1846. Ovals with integral rates are not common. The Berlin postmark did not contain a removable date slug. Date information had to be added in manuscript. This probably explains why the marking lasted so long.

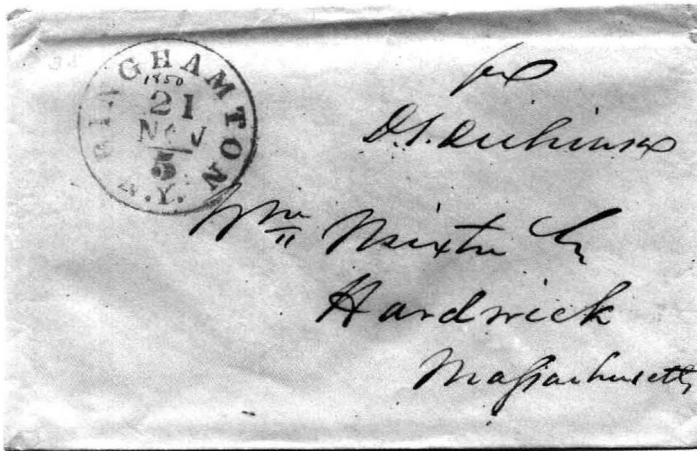


Figure 17. Integral 5 postmark from Binghamton, N.Y., here used with a free frank in 1850. Because of the postmaster's frank, the indicated 5¢ collection was disregarded.



Figure 18. Buffalo, N.Y., integral "10" with matching blue fancy "PAID" in a scroll, on a transatlantic cover from 1846. The 10¢ prepayment paid the postage to New York. From there the cover was sent collect to Wurttemberg.

The red "BINGHAMTON N.Y. 21 NOV 5" marking on the cover shown in Figure 17 is not listed in the current stampless catalog. On this 1850 cover the marking was used along with the postmaster's free frank, so the collection suggested by the rate was disregarded at the receiving office.

Figure 18 shows a transatlantic stampless cover with blue "BUFFALO N.Y. OCT 31 10" and matching scroll "PAID." The 10¢ prepayment took the cover to New York City, whence it was sent unpaid, with subsequent charges collected from the recipient in Wurttemberg, one of the old German states.



Figure 19. This 1848 cover bears a red “5 cts” integral rate postmark from New York City, indicating postage due from the addressee. It also shows a “Penny Post Delivery” instruction, so the carrier presumably collected 6¢ from the Boston recipient.

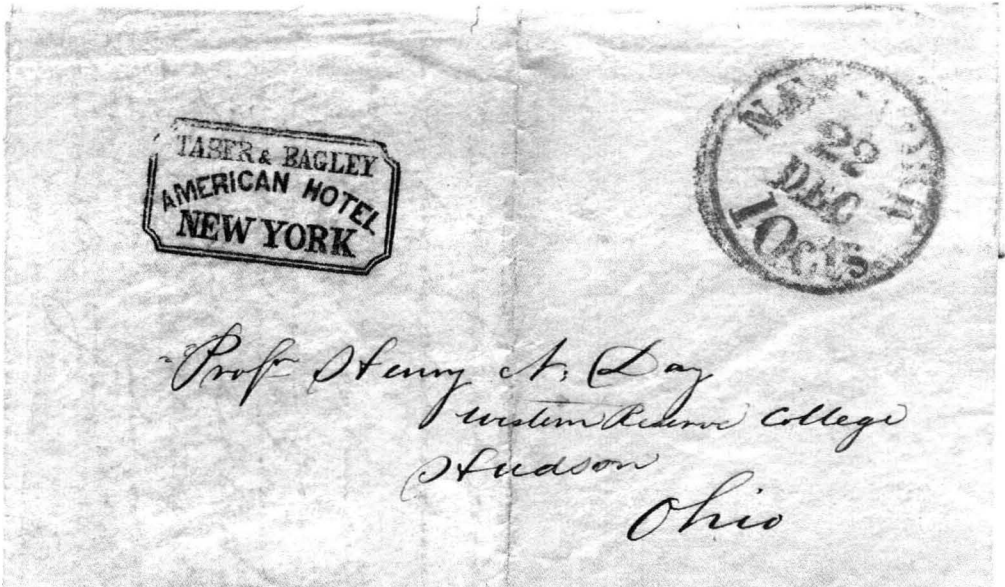


Figure 20. Also from 1848, this cover from New York City to Ohio shows the higher “10cts” New York integral rate postmark, in red, for a due letter sent beyond 300 miles. The hotel forwarding marking, privately applied, is black.

New York City, the largest post office in the country, used a number of integral rate postmarks for different purposes. A red 5¢ integral rate marking from the 1845-51 period is shown in Figure 19. This cover, from 1848, also bears a manuscript “Penny Post Delivery” notation, calling for delivery by carrier to a street address in Boston.

Figure 20 shows a cover with a New York integral “10cts.” Posted in 1848, this cover bears a “NEW-YORK 22 DEC 10cts” postmark in red, along with a black “TABER & BAGLEY AMERICAN HOTEL NEW YORK” marking in a fancy frame. This is a private marking. A hotel staffer carried the letter to the post office, probably for no fixed charge but a likely tip.



Figure 21. An 1851 cover from New York to Cleveland showing an unusual integral rate “20,” struck in red, for double-weight covers at the 10¢ rate.

New York was the only town to create a handstamped integral-rate postmark for double-rated letters at the 10¢ rate. An example (“NEW-YORK 5 FEB 20”), struck in red on a double-rated 1851 cover to Cleveland, is shown in Figure 21.

The green marking on the cover shown in Figure 22 is a very interesting integral-rate marking (“SALEM X ROADS NY 5 MAR 13”) from Salem Crossroads, New York. Here



Figure 22. Cover from Salem Crossroads, N.Y. to Rome, N.Y. with an unlisted postmark, struck in green, showing an integral “5” for the under-300-mile rate. The sender had the option to pay the postage or to send it due. This cover bears a matching green “PAID” to show that postage was prepaid. The “X” for “Cross” is an interesting touch.

the rate indicator appears above the date. The odd typography, the green color and the use of the “X” to abbreviate “Crossroads,” all contribute to making this marking special. This is an undated envelope without contents. However, the “PAID” handstamp indicates prepayment of the 5¢ rate of 1845-51, so this cannot be from the next period when the prepaid rate was three cents. This is another unlisted postmark that will be added to the new catalog.

The Hecktown, Pennsylvania, postmark is one of two postmarks during the 1845-51 rate period showing both integral rate and integral PAID. York, Michigan, is the other. Hecktown is also one of the rare integral rate oval markings. The catalog listing is taken from a Samuel C. Paige auction half a century ago. The first Philadelphia marking shows a rather crude “5” which is similar to the attached “2” used at the same time.

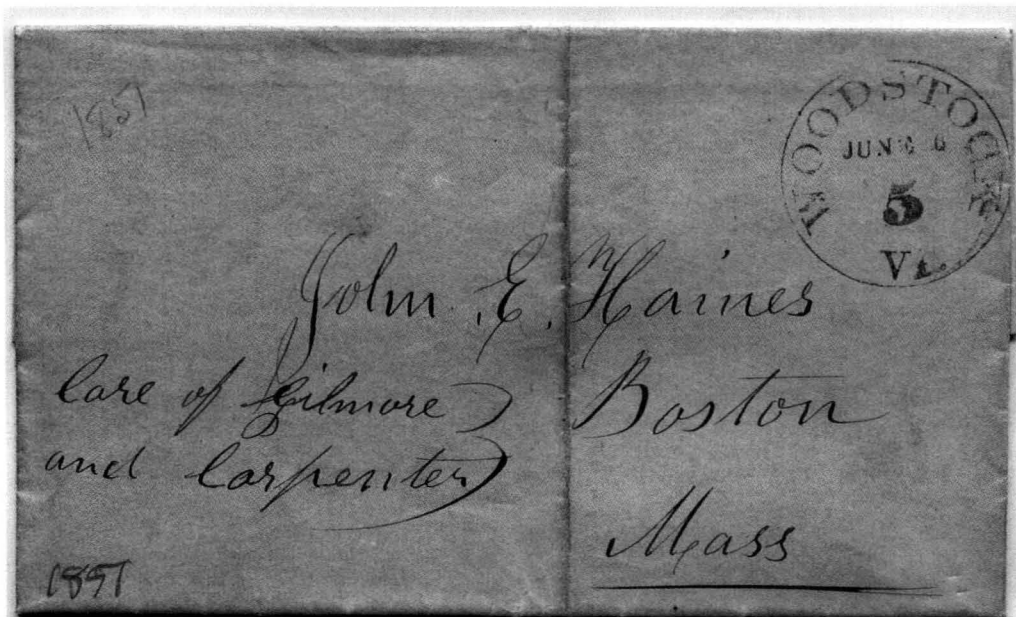


Figure 23. This 1851 cover from Woodstock, Vermont, to Boston, was posted just a few weeks before the change in rates. The integral “5” is bold and highly serified.

Woodstock, Vermont, was one of the towns that used attached rates in the early 1830’s. But it adopted integral rates during the 1845-1851 era, and Figure 23 shows the earliest of several types. Woodstock continued to use postmarks with integral rates after the 1845-1851 period and these will be discussed in a subsequent installment of this series. From its appearance alone, the Figure 23 cover could have been posted during the 1851-1855 period. However, it is dated by an enclosed letter, so we know that it entered the mails in 1851.

Our final cover, Figure 24, shows an integral-rate postmark within a circular date-stamp that also contains the county name: “ETNA, HANOVER, VA 5 29(ms) OCT” (1849). This is another postmark unlisted in the current catalog. This writer has seen a second example that shows a handstamped “AUG” within the frame (in the same position as “OCT” in Figure 24) but the date is written after the “AUG” at the bottom of the circle. The “5” occupies the same position within both strikes, proving that the marking is a true

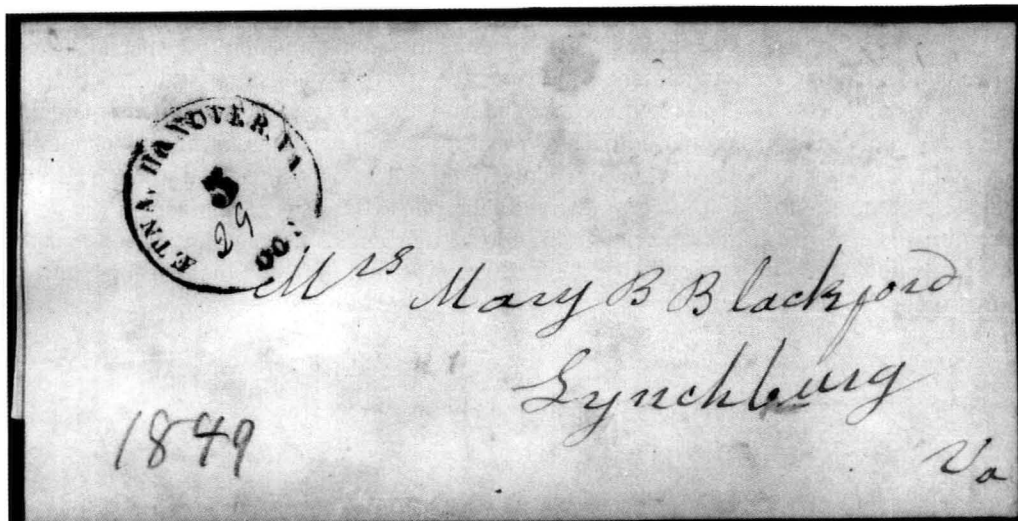


Figure 24. An 1849 cover from Etna, Virginia, to Lynchburg. The Etna marking shows an integral "5" dead center in the postmark. The month is shown within the circular frame at bottom, and the frame information includes the county name, Hanover.

integral-rate postmark, not just a rating marking neatly struck within the circle. For the period under discussion, this is the only recorded integral rate marking that includes a county designation.■

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A TURNED COVER WITH A TWIST

WADE E. SAADI

A turned cover, a cover sheet that was turned over and addressed on the other side, thus being used twice to enclose a letter, is unusual to find, especially involving the 1847 stamps. The turned cover featured here has another interesting story, told entirely by its stamps, cancels and markings.

The first use of this cover sheet was stampless, shown in Figure 1. The cover was addressed to "Elbridge G. Howe Esq, Waukegan, Lake County, Illinois." It was sent unpaid, as evidenced by the absence of a "PAID" marking and by the red "10," 10¢ being the correct rate for a letter traveling over 300 miles. A matching red "PLATTSBURGH/N.Y./MAY/21" postmark is struck at left.

The second use of the cover sheet is shown in Figure 2. The cover was sent back to its town of origin, addressed to "A.C. Moore, Attorney, Plattsburgh, N.Y." This time it was franked with two 5¢ 1847 stamps, 10¢ again being the proper rate. Each stamp is cancelled with a large red five-bar circular grid, a well-known and distinctive marking from Waukegan. A matching red "WAUKEGAN/ILL./MAY/27" postmark is struck at left.

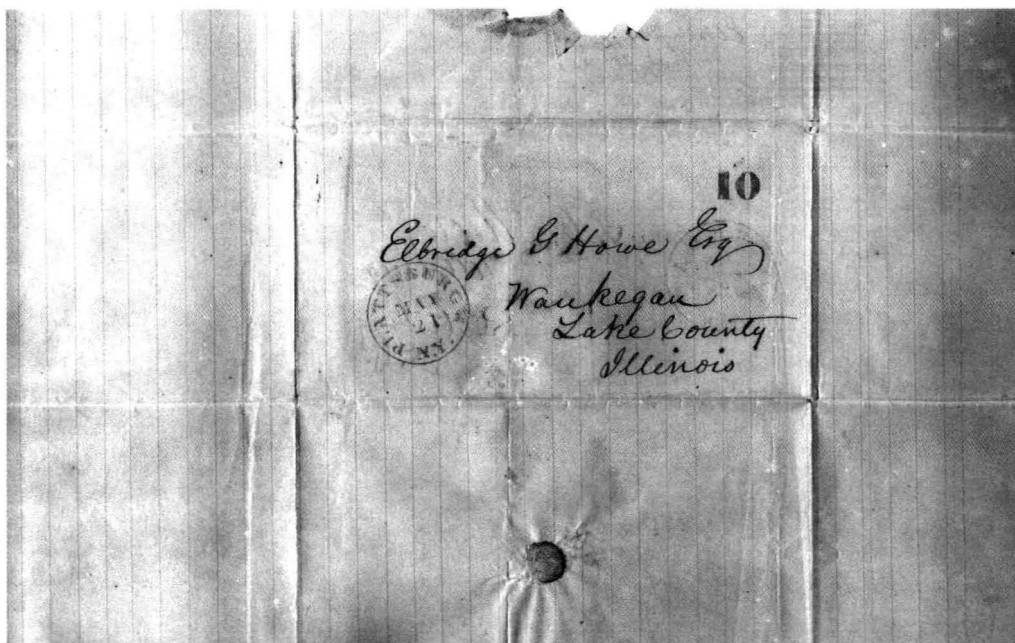


Figure 1. Initial use of the cover sheet discussed here. May 21, 1851, stampless cover from Plattsburgh, N.Y. to Waukegan, Illinois, with 10¢ collected from the recipient.



Figure 2. Reverse of the Figure 1 cover sheet, franked one week later with 5¢ 1847 stamps and sent from Waukegan back to Plattsburgh. On this trip the 10¢ postage was prepaid by stamps.

By all appearances, this is an easy-to-explain example of a turned cover. But there is more here than first meets the eye. Figure 3 is a blow-up of the stamp corner of the cover in Figure 2. Notice the manuscript “Due 5¢” (in reddish-brown) at the top. Apparently, the sender in Waukegan originally franked the cover with just one 5¢ stamp (the stamp on the right) for the return journey to Plattsburgh. That would make the cover underpaid, the correct rate being 10¢. This was noticed by the Waukegan postal clerk, who wrote the manuscript “Due 5¢” above the address.

The letter was probably held at the post office until the sender returned, whereupon the second 5¢ stamp was affixed to the left of the first one, narrowly covering the upper left



Figure 3. Enlargement of the stamp corner from the cover in Figure 2. Note the crossed-out “Due 5” and note how the left stamp overlaps the right.



Figure 4. Enlargement of the overlap area in Figure 3. The left stamp covers the edge of the right stamp and part of its cancel. This indicates that the right stamp was affixed and cancelled first, and the left stamp was affixed and cancelled sometime afterwards.

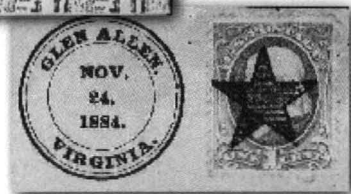
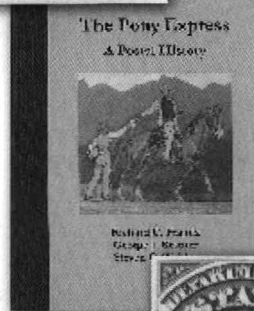
side of the right stamp. See the enlargement in Figure 4. The postal clerk then crossed out the “Due 5¢” manuscript with two lines. As Figure 4 shows, the left stamp covered part of the cancellation on the right stamp. This proves beyond any doubt that each stamp was applied and cancelled separately. The left stamp also covers part of the manuscript “Due 5¢.” Both stamps are tied to the cover.

One of the joys of postal history is to determine the sequence of events that took place during the time the letter was active in the mails. This turned cover certainly allows that, providing glimpses of the way mail was handled over 150 years ago.■

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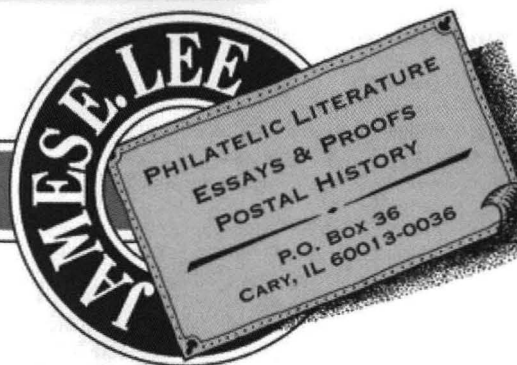
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1856 CIRCULAR ON ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

HUBERT C. SKINNER

The unsealed circular rate was 1¢ during the period of use of the 1851 stamps. Many different products and services were advertised by press-printed circulars during this time. In a relatively few cases, the address portion bears the word “CIRCULAR” press-printed as an indication of the postal rate and usage.

The circular illustrated in Figure 1 bears a great deal more than that. The legend says: “CIRCULAR.--GUTTA PERCHA PIPE,” underscored by a double-line rule. This endorsement is printed along the top edge of the middle third/address portion of the folded circular.

The circular is franked by an imperforate 1¢ cent adhesive stamp, a type II design, of the 1851 issue. The stamp is cancelled and tied by a Boston PAID circular date stamp. Month and day are not legible.

The most interesting aspect of this printed circular is that the first of its seven printed pages defines and describes gutta percha pipe and compares its “freedom from poisonous

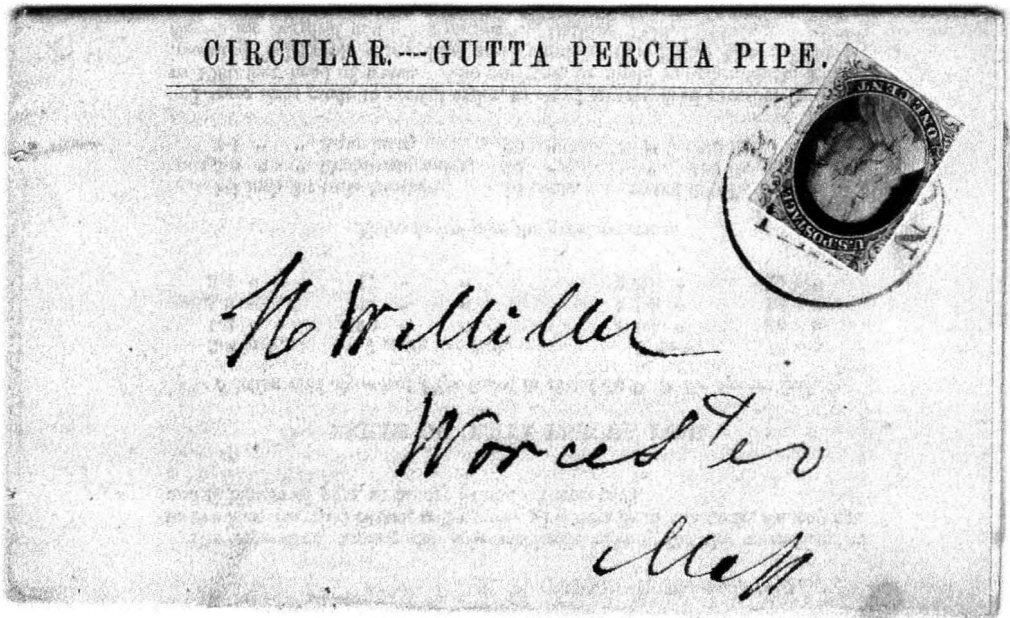


Figure 1. The address panel of the printed circular described here, bearing the printed heading “CIRCULAR -- GUTTA PERCHA PIPE” underscored with a double-line printer’s rule. The 1¢ stamp is a type II of the 1851 issue, cancelled and tied by a PAID circular date stamp of Boston, Massachusetts. The month and day are not legible, but the year of usage is 1856. The circular is addressed to Worcester, Mass.

P A T E N T

GUTTA PERCHA PIPE,

Manufactured by S. C. BISHOP.

For Pumps, aqueducts, Hydraulic Rams, &c. Plumbers, Pump Dealers, Real Estate Owners and Tenants, are invited to examine for themselves, and be satisfied of the merits of GUTTA PERCHA PIPE. The injurious effects on health consequent on using water from lead and copper pipes, and the rapid rusting of iron pipe, has for a long time rendered it highly desirable to obtain some material for water pipes that would combine at once the requisite strength, freedom from poisonous salts, and economy. Gutta Percha Pipe has now been in use for this purpose seven years in this country, and two or three years longer in England, and experience proves that, (when properly made of pure material,) it is not acted on by strong fluoric, and muriatic, or dilute nitric and sulphuric acids, soda water, cider, or alkalies, agencies which are most active in destroying pipes in common use. It is stronger than lead or cast iron; is sixteen times lighter than lead, consequently is cheaper to transport and handle; it is cheaper to work and lay in the ground than any other pipe; — will stand frost better than any other material; the bore is so smooth that it will discharge more water than any other pipe. But what is of the first and greatest importance, it imparts *no poison* to the water that passes through it. The numerous cases that have occurred in the last twenty years, of disease and death from lead poison, have awakened a very general attention to this subject. The following letter, from an eminent English physician, is so full on this point, that nothing need be added to it:

From Thomas Smith, M. D., of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, London, dated Portland House, Cheltenham.

“As a general rule, I am decidedly opposed to the practice of testimonial writing, believing that in the majority of instances, the laudatory encomia which usher in the advent of any new discovery or process, are formed from a too hasty generalization and credulous opinion, by which the public are too frequently beguiled into the purchase or use of a flimsy and worthless production. Had I not been strongly impressed, from an experience of *three*

Figure 2. Page one of seven in the printed circular shown in Figure 1. The pamphlet defines and describes Gutta Percha Pipe and its advantages over lead, copper, and iron pipes. Gutta percha is said to be cheaper, less costly to work and lay in the ground, and safer because it imparts no poisons to the water passing through it.

salts," its advantage of being 16 times lighter than lead, its greater economy, and the fact that it is "cheaper to work and lay in the ground than any other pipe."

Gutta percha is an early form of natural rubber. By the late 1840s, it had been successfully employed in the fabrication of flexible tubing in lengths up to 1,000 feet.

The circular further states that the smooth bore of gutta percha piping will conduct and discharge more water than any other pipe, and that of "first and greatest importance" it "imparts no poison to the water that passes through it." The dangers and incidence of lead poisoning leading to "disease and death" are cited and documented with statements from medical experts and citations of chemical studies showing that soluble salts of copper, tin, zinc and lead are poisonous and should not be used in water pipes.

This writer finds it surprising, indeed, amazing, that the dangers of lead poisoning and the risks of soluble salts of other heavy metals were understood and described in the 1850s. The circular continues to a total of eight pages of description, documentation, and testimonials from individuals who have used gutta percha pipe and are satisfied with its utility and safety. It is signed by the purveyor of this new type of pipe, Charles Stodder, 75 Kilby Street, Boston, Massachusetts.■

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Note from the Section Editor: Over the years, the black Chattanooga straight-line has taken on almost mythical status. When asked about it, some collectors say they might have seen one a long time ago, some say they know someone who might have seen one, some say they heard about a collector who might own one, but no one seems to offer positive proof of the existence of the marking in any color besides blue. To me it has been like Bigfoot—lots of rumors and hearsay, but no hard evidence. Until now. The following article by Jim Cate provides facts and photographs that establish the Union-occupation, straight-line provisional marking from Chattanooga, in the black color, as a reality.—M.C. McC.

BLACK CHATTANOOGA STRAIGHT-LINE CANCELLATIONS OF 1863

JIM CATE

The Union Army Chattanooga straight-line provisional field cancellations were improvised out of necessity. The Confederate Army withdrew from the occupation of Chattanooga, Tennessee, to north Georgia on September 8, 1863. Harvey T. Phillips, the postmaster, accompanied the withdrawal and took the Chattanooga postal cancellation devices with him. The Union Army immediately occupied Chattanooga and quickly came under siege by the surrounding Confederate forces. Essentially the siege remained, with little mail getting into or out of Chattanooga, until the Union Army gained control of the area after the Battles of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge in late November, 1863.

CHATTANOOGA, TENN.

December 14, 1863.

CHATTANOOGA, TENN.

December 25, 1863,

CHATTANOOGA, TENN.

January 5 1864

The Union Army immediately occupied Chattanooga and quickly came under siege by the surrounding Confederate forces. Essentially the siege remained, with little mail getting into or out of Chattanooga, until the Union Army gained control of the area after the Battles of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge in late November, 1863.

The Union forces in the East Tennessee and Knoxville area were supported via the East Tennessee and Georgia Railroad from Chattanooga. With the concentration of forces in the Chattanooga area, it was decided to process mail at Chattanooga. Unfortunately, no cancellation devices existed. Consequently, the provisional Chattanooga "straight-line" cancellation was improvised from available printer's type until an official canceling device could be obtained from the Post Office Department in Washington.

From December 9, 1863, to January 17, 1864, a period of 40 days, three types of Chattanooga straight-line cancel were used. These are

Figure 1. From top: the three types of the Chattanooga straight-line. Type 1 is recorded December 9-22, 1863. Type 2 is recorded December 23-31, 1863, with four black strikes dated December 25. Type 3 is recorded January 1-17, 1864.

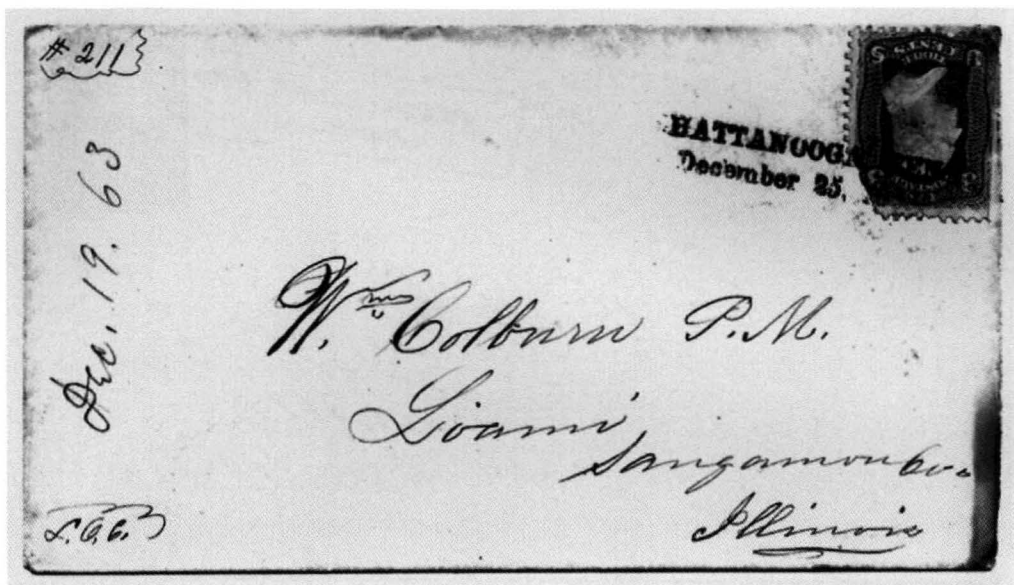


Figure 2. Crisp strike of the Chattanooga straight-line, in black, clearly dated December 25, 1863, tying a 3¢ rose stamp on a cover to Illinois.



Figure 3. Another black Chattanooga straight-line, also dated December 25, 1863, here on a government entire envelope to Clayton, Illinois.

shown in Figure 1. The Chattanooga straight-line has been reported for 36 of the 40 days, including use on all six Sundays and on Christmas and New Year's Day.

The cancellation is commonly known in blue. There is one reported exception date, Christmas Day, December 25, 1863. On that day only, cancellations were struck both in blue and in black. The writer is aware of four covers showing strikes in black ink. The black cancellation occurs only on Type 2 markings (see Figure 1). This marking type was used

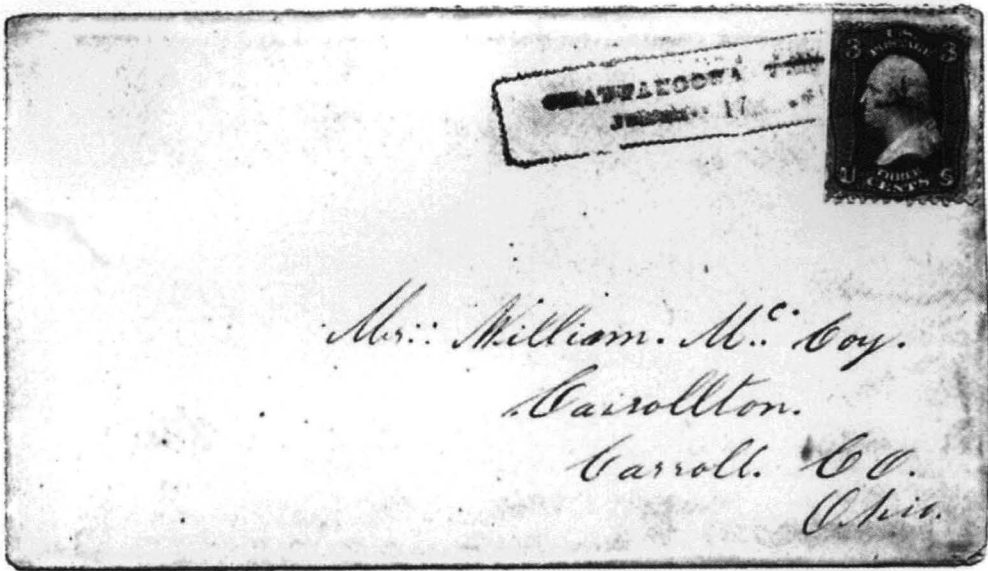


Figure 4. Last day of use of the boxed Chattanooga straight-line (Type 3), dated January 17, 1864, on a cover to Carrollton, Ohio.

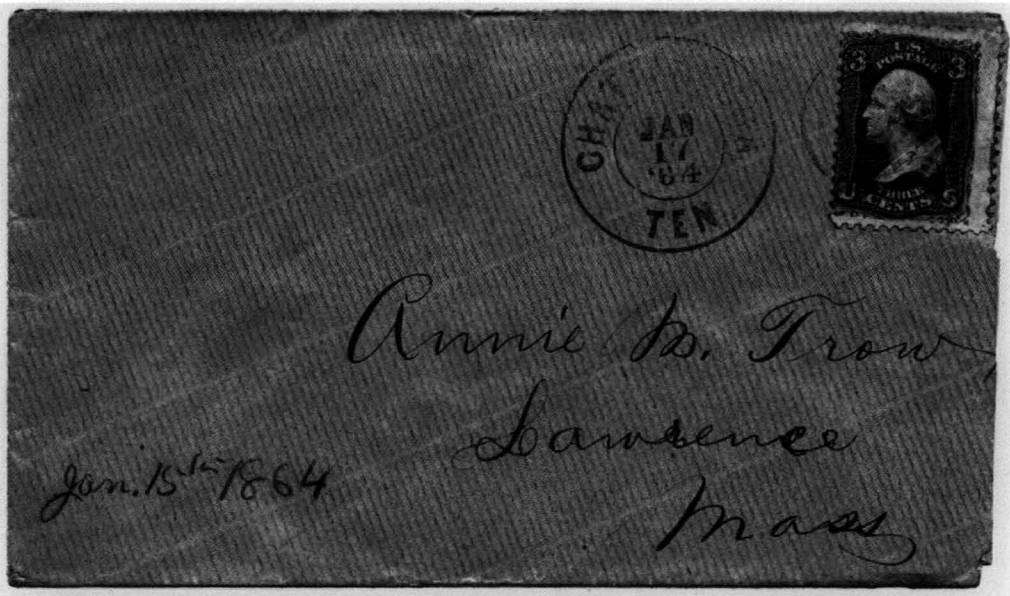


Figure 5. 3¢ rose stamp on a cover to Lawrence, Mass., showing the first day of use of the government-issued double-circle datestamp with duplexed target killer, which replaced the Chattanooga straight-line on January 17, 1864. See Figure 4.

December 23-31, 1863. The black strikes have been designated Type 2a, with the “a” indicating the black ink color. The clearest of the four examples, owned by the writer, is shown on the cover in Figure 2.

This writer first had a cover with a black Chattanooga straight-line cancellation in his possession for a couple of weeks in 1991. The cancel was not an exceptionally clear

strike, on a cover addressed to Detroit, Michigan. Several months later this cover was listed in a David G. Phillips Company, Inc., auction—Sale 76, June 6, 1992, lot 416. Richard B. Graham made reference to this auction listing in *Chronicle* 155 (August 1992, page 189) in a brief note seeking examples of the black straight-line. The writer has seen a photograph of another black Chattanooga straight-line cover owned by a prominent collector and philatelic author.

At the APS Winter Show in Riverside, California, in February 2007, I acquired a black Chattanooga straight-line on a pink-on-buff entire envelope, Scott U35. This cover, shown here as Figure 3, is the only reported strike of the Chattanooga straight-line on a government envelope. All other strikes are stampless with postage due, or franked the 3¢ rose stamp of 1861, Scott 65.

To summarize, all reported black Chattanooga straight-line cancellations date from December 25, 1863, with four examples now recorded. All the other Chattanooga straight-lines are blue. The last reported straight-line date is January 17, 1864. A cover from this date is shown in Figure 4. The marking was replaced that day with the arrival of the official double circle datestamp with a duplexed target (Figure 5). Both cancel types are known from that same date, as evidenced by the covers in Figures 4 and 5. The double-circle cancels were struck in blue ink until sometime between February 5, 1864 (blue ink) and February 9, 1864 (black ink). Use of the double-circle marking in black continued until November 22, 1864, the last date known to this writer. The double-circle marking was replaced in December 1864 by a smaller, single-circle datestamp. ■

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EVANSVILLE, INDIANA, FANCY CANCELS ON 1869 STAMPS

IRVIN L. HEIMBURGER

For collectors of fancy cancellations, Evansville, Indiana, is best known for its Shoo Fly cancel. When the Shoo Fly makes an appearance, this elusive Evansville marking is usually found on a cover bearing one or more 1869 stamps. Many collectors are not aware that the Shoo Fly is just one of a long series of individually carved cancels, some of them quite fancy and some of them less so, used at Evansville at the peak of the fancy-cancel era, between 1868 and 1872.

This study describes the carved fancy designs that were used at Evansville to cancel stamps of the 1869 issue. A total of 30 covers and two dated pieces were examined, either in auction catalog illustrations or in real life. Twenty eight of the markings were clear enough to be identified.

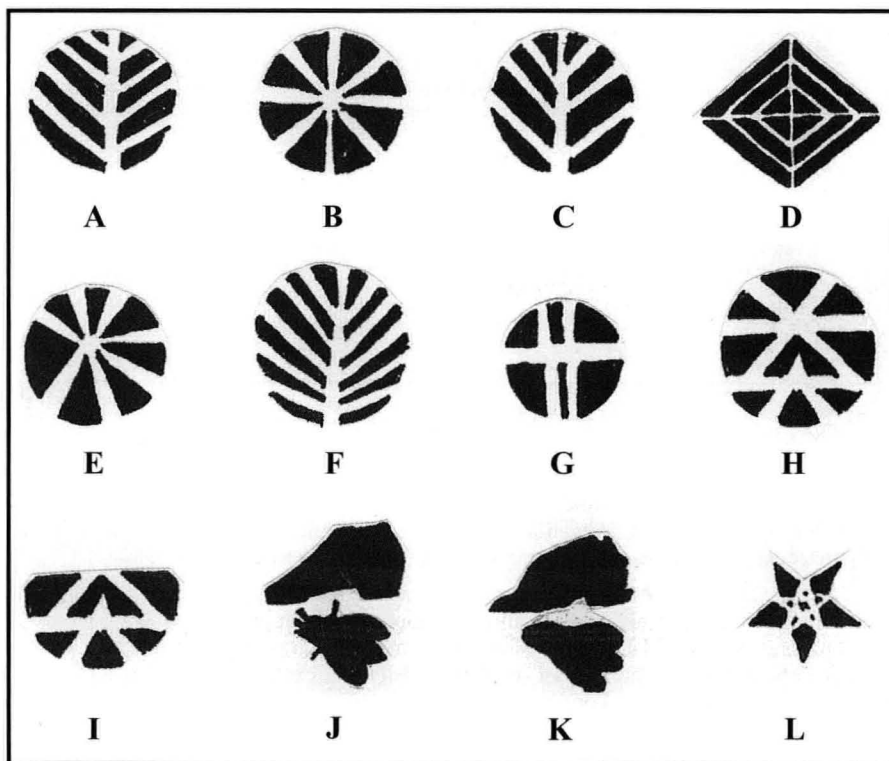


Figure 1. Tracings of fancy killer cancellations from Evansville, Indiana, found on covers franked with U.S. 1869 stamps.

Individually carved killer cancels, probably made from cork, are recorded from Evansville between 1868 and 1882. In earlier years, from 1851 to 1862, the circular date stamp was used as the killer. Between 1862 and 1867, three different government-issued duplexes were used. Fancy cork killers, duplexed with a circular datestamp, began in early 1868.

Twelve types of Evansville killer cancels have been found used with 1869 stamps. Tracings of these markings are presented in Figure 1. I have given the markings letter designations, A through L. The covers in this study are listed chronologically in tabular form in Figure 2. Chronological arrangement is made easier by the survival of two fairly large correspondences whose contents are well dated. The Gillett correspondence to London is the source of some striking Evansville covers, many of which bear the double-oval B.F. Stevens forwarder marking. The covers in the later Daddow correspondence, all domestic, are also well dated. The killers on four covers examined but not included in this study were so lightly struck that they could not be identified. These four were dated September 9, 1869 and January 3, 10 and 30, 1870.

Date	Addressee	Stamps	Marking	Type	Notes
15 Jul 69	W.G. Moorewood, London	117	10-frond leaf	A	Siegel 1/71-1260
25 Oct 69	S.P. Gillett, USN, London	117	8-wedge circle	B	Siegel 7/81-530
1 Nov 69	S.P. Gillett, USN, London	117	8-wedge circle	B	Hessel 2-705
22 Nov 69	S.P. Gillett, USN, London	117	8-frond leaf	C	Siegel 1/80-1221
29 Nov 69	S.P. Gillett, USN, London	117	8-frond leaf	C	Figure 4
4 Dec 69	H.B. Shaw, Alfred ME	114	3 diamonds	D	Figure 7
6 Dec 69	S.P. Gillett, USN, London	117	3 diamonds	D	SPBAG 10/79
18 Dec 69	M. Foster, Middletown, CT	114	7-wedge circle	E	Figure 6
20 Dec 69	S.P. Gillett, USN, London	117	7-wedge circle	E	Forster coll.
24 Jan 70	S.P. Gillett, USN, London	115	7-wedge circle	E	SPB 10/79
7 Feb 70	T. Garrett, Clarksville, TN	113	12-frond leaf	F	Figure 5
7 Feb 70	dated piece only	114	12-frond leaf	F	author
8 Feb 70	S.P. Gillett, USN, London	115	12-frond leaf	F	author
18 Feb 70	S.P. Gillett, USN, London	115	Circle, 3 lines	G	Figure 8
25 Feb 70	S.P. Gillett, USN, London	115	Circle, 3 lines	G	Siegel 3/06
11 Mar 70	S.P. Gillett, USN, London	115	9-pc geometric	H	Siegel 2/81
14 Mar 70	P. Euler, local	112	9-pc geometric	H	Figure 9
18 Mar 70	S.P. Gillett, USN, London	115	9-pc geometric	H	Gibbons 4/81
22 Mar 70	D.C. Ashby, Petersburg, IN	114	9-pc geometric	H	author
28 Mar 70	S.P. Gillett, USN, London	115x2	9-pc geometric	H	Siegel 2/81
11 Apr 70	P. Viele, Ft. Madison, IA	114	6-pt geometric	I	Figure 10
18 Apr 70	S.H. Daddow, St. Clair, PA	114	Shoo fly (early)	J	Haas collection
18 Apr 70	M. Stimson, Statesville, NC	114	Shoo fly (early)	J	Siegel 12/06
27 Apr 70	M. Fairchild, Salem, NY	114	Shoo fly (early)	J	Figure 11
30 Apr 70	Courthouse, Indianapolis	114x4	Shoo fly (early)	J	Figure 12
24 May 70	S.H. Daddow, St. Clair, PA	114x2	Shoo fly (late)	K	Skinner-Eno
13 Jun 70	S.H. Daddow, St. Clair, PA	114	Shoo fly (late)	K	Figure 13
30 Dec 70	dated piece only	115	Star-in-star	L	Harmer 11/50

Figure 2. Chronological listing of Evansville 1869 covers and their cancellations.

Type	July 69	A	S	O	N	D	Jan 70	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
A	X																	
B				X														
C					X													
D						X												
E						X	X											
F								X										
G								X										
H									X									
I										X								
J										X								
K											X	X						
L																		X

Figure 3. Usage of Evansville fancy cancels, by month.

Arranging the covers in chronological order enables observations about the sequence and longevity of the individual killers. This in turn permits us to make some additions and corrections to the fancy-cancel record.

The tabular chronology in Figure 3 shows the months in which each marking was used. Despite the relatively small sampling, it's clear that each killer had a useful life of no more than a month or two. This supports the speculation that the markers were carved out of cork, rather than boxwood or some other substance that would have been more enduring.

The earliest Evansville fancy cancel to occur on an 1869 cover was a leaf design. There were actually three different leaf designs: 10 fronds (marking A in Figure 1), then eight (C) and finally one with 12 fronds (F). The earliest of all these is a 12¢ 1869 cover with the 10-frond leaf (A) that was posted on July 15, 1869. This was last seen in a 1971 Siegel auction.

The 8-frond marking (C) is shown in Figure 4, on a 12¢ 1869 cover to London posted at Evansville on November 29, 1869. The red New York exchange office marking is unclear, but appears to say "DEC 2." The single-circle London paid marking is clearly dated "DE 13 69," and the same date appears on the crisply struck (in red) "B. F. Stevens Des-



Figure 4. 12¢ 1869 stamp, tied by 8-frond leaf killer (C in Figure 1), on 12¢-rate cover from Evansville to England, 29 November 1869.

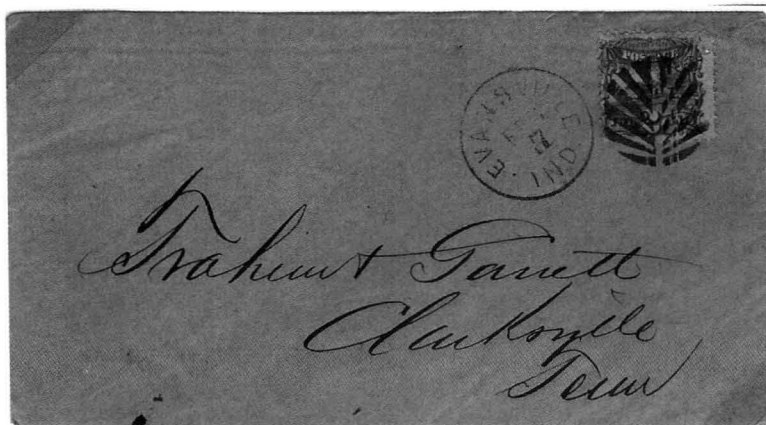


Figure 5. 2¢ 1869 stamp, tied by 12-frond leaf killer (F in Figure 1), paying printed circular rate, 7 February [1870].

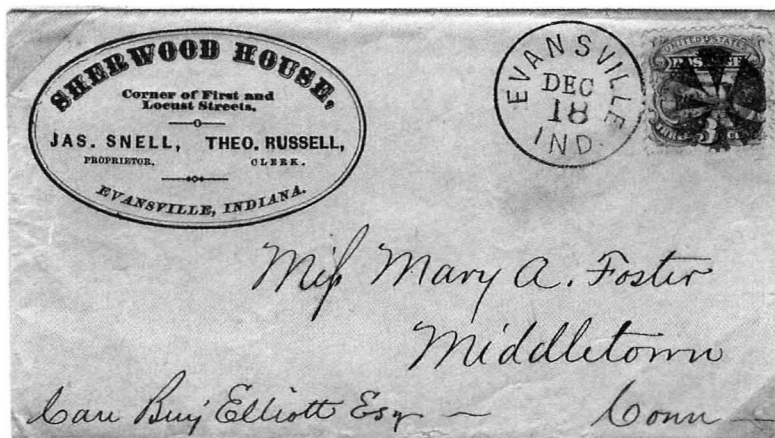


Figure 6. 3¢ 1869 stamp, tied by 7-wedge killer (E in Figure 1) on cover to Middletown, Connecticut, 18 December 1869.

patch Agt.” double oval. The cover is addressed to Lt. Commander S. P. Gillett on the U.S. Navy frigate *Franklin*, then on duty in the Mediterranean. Stevens, acting as a forwarding agent, arranged for the cover to be sent privately to the addressee. Joe H. Crosby has written extensively about Stevens, his activities and his markings, most recently in *Chronicle* 214. Leaf markings similar to tracings A and C, most likely representing the Evansville markings, are listed in Skinner-Eno (as “PP-L 7” and “PP-L 11”) with no origin attributed.¹ A 2¢ 1869 cover with the 12-frond leaf (F), posted at Evansville on 7 February [1870], is shown in Figure 5. This unsealed envelope carried a printed circular at the 2¢ circular rate to Clarksville, Tennessee.

Used between the Evansville leaf designs were two different multiple-wedge designs. The 8-wedge circular marking (B) was used in October and November of 1869. The 7-wedge design (E) was used from late December, 1869 through January, 1870. A nice strike of the 7-wedge design, struck at Evansville on December 18, appears on the 3¢ 1869 cover illustrated in Figure 6. This is an ordinary domestic use, to Middletown, Connecticut, enhanced by a pleasant little hotel corner cachet.

¹ Hubert C. Skinner and Amos Eno, *United States Cancellations 1845-1869*, American Philatelic Society, 1980.

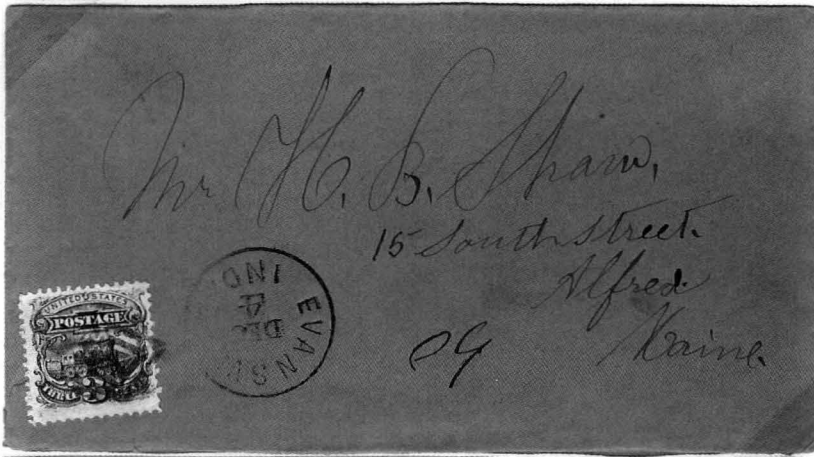


Figure 7. 3¢ 1869 stamp, tied by 3-diamonds killer (D in Figure 1) on cover from Evansville to Alfred, Maine, from the famous H.B. Shaw correspondence, 4 December 1869.

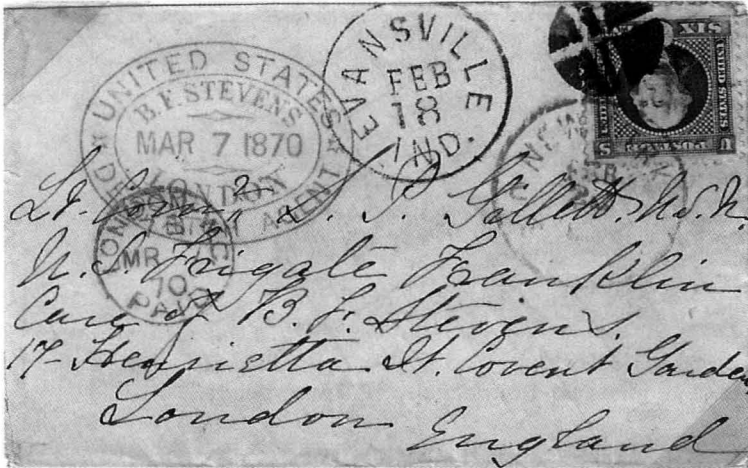


Figure 8. 6¢ 1869 stamp tied by small circular killer (G in Figure 1) on 6¢-rate cover to England, 18 February 1870.

There are also a number of geometric designs unique to Evansville. The earliest of these was used in December, 1869. This consists of concentric diamonds. Like the two leaves, this marking is illustrated in Skinner-Eno (as "GE-D 20") with no city of origin cited. Tracing D in Figure 1 is taken from that reference. An incomplete strike, on a 3¢ 1869 cover from the famous H. B. Shaw correspondence, postmarked at Evansville on 4 December 1869, is shown in Figure 7. A nicer strike on a 12¢ 1869 cover to London, from the Gillett correspondence and dated 6 December 1869, sold in a Sotheby Parke-Bernet auction in 1979. Nick Kardasis has a perfect strike on an off-cover 3¢ 1869 stamp. This is certified by the Philatelic Foundation as having originated in Evansville.

The second geometric design is a small, solid circular design crossed with 3 negative lines (G). This is shown on the 6¢ 1869 cover in Figure 8, another cover from the Gillett

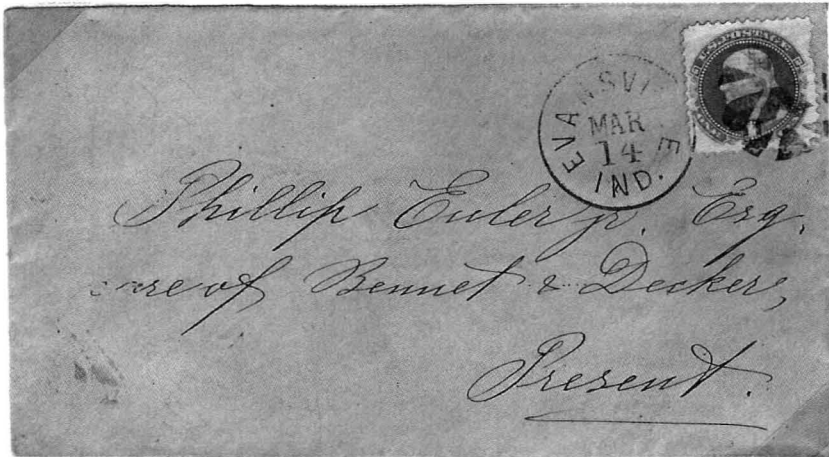


Figure 9. 1¢ 1869 stamp tied by 9-piece geometric killer (H in Figure 1) on Evansville drop-rate cover, 14 March 1870.

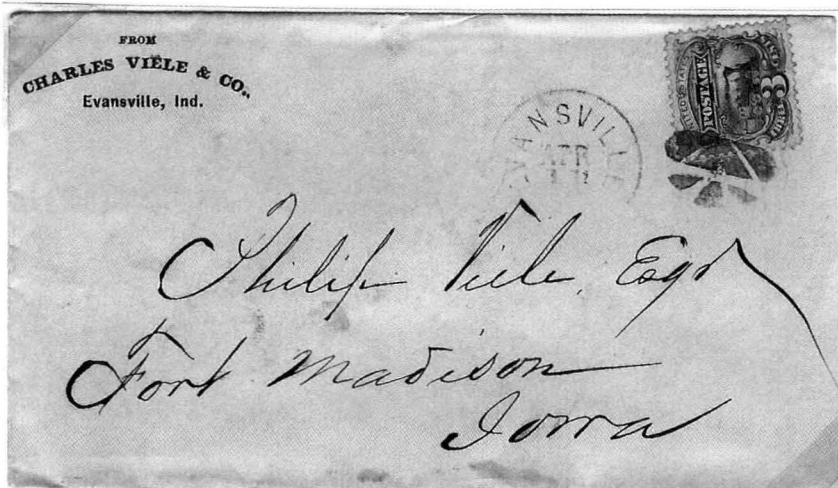


Figure 10. 3¢ 1869 stamp, tied by 6-piece geometric killer (I in Figure 1) on cover from Evansville to Fort Madison, Iowa, 11 April 1870. The type I killer on this cover is a diminished state of the type H killer in Figure 9.

correspondence, here postmarked 18 February 1870. The rate from the U.S. to England was reduced from 12¢ to 6¢ starting January 1, 1870. The covers in Figures 4 and 8 tell the before-and-after story very effectively.

A third Evansville geometric design is an elaborate, round marking made up of nine triangular elements (H) and used during March, 1870. This was just before the Shoo-Fly cancel appeared. It is shown not quite completely struck on the 1¢ 1869 cover illustrated in Figure 9. This represents the drop rate, which was 1¢ in Evansville, a town too small for carrier service. In just a few weeks, three of the nine elements of the marking had broken off, yielding a new marking, which is designated as (I) in Figure 1. A completely struck example of this 6-piece design, from April 1870 (specific date unclear) is shown on the 3¢ 1869 cover in Figure 10, addressed to Fort Madison, Iowa. The killer is clearly the same design as marking H, but missing the top three elements.



Figure 11. 3¢ 1869 stamp tied by the Evansville Shoo-Fly cancel (J in Figure 1), on a cover to Salem, New York, 27 April 1870. This is from the first 10 days of the usage of the Shoo Fly, when the killer shows distinctive side protrusions.

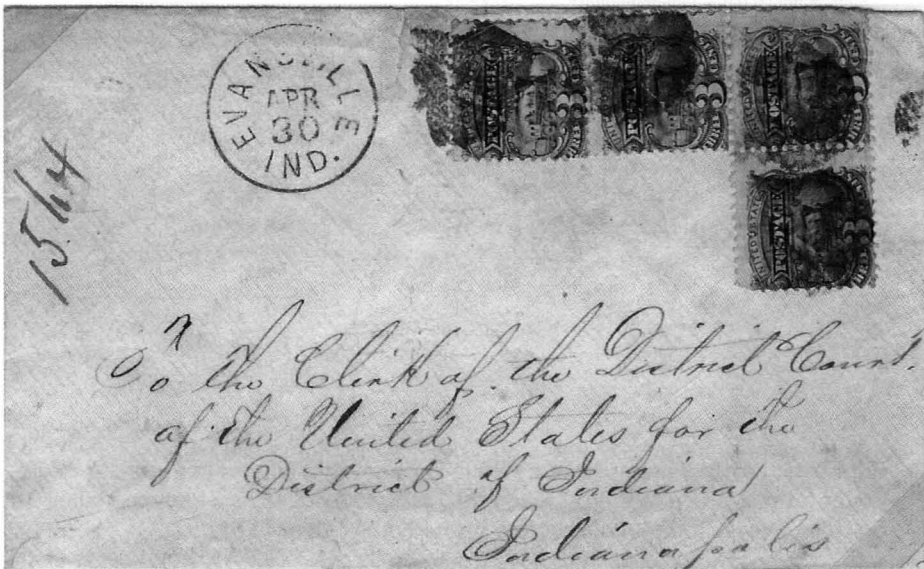


Figure 12. L-shaped strip of four 3¢ 1869 stamps, tied by multiple strikes of the Shoo Fly on a quadruple-rated courthouse cover to Indianapolis, 30 April 1870.

The famous Shoo Fly derived its design and its name from a popular song of that era, “Shoo Fly, Don’t Bother Me!” Shoo Fly was also the name of a popular packaged candy. Musical annotation for the song and an illustrated flyer promoting the candy are both reproduced in the Herst-Sampson reference.²

The Skinner-Eno reference lists three different types of Evansville Shoo-Fly cancel, but they are all probably variants of the same marking, which was used from mid-April to

² Herst-Sampson, *19th Century United States Fancy Cancellations*, 1963, pp. 230-231.

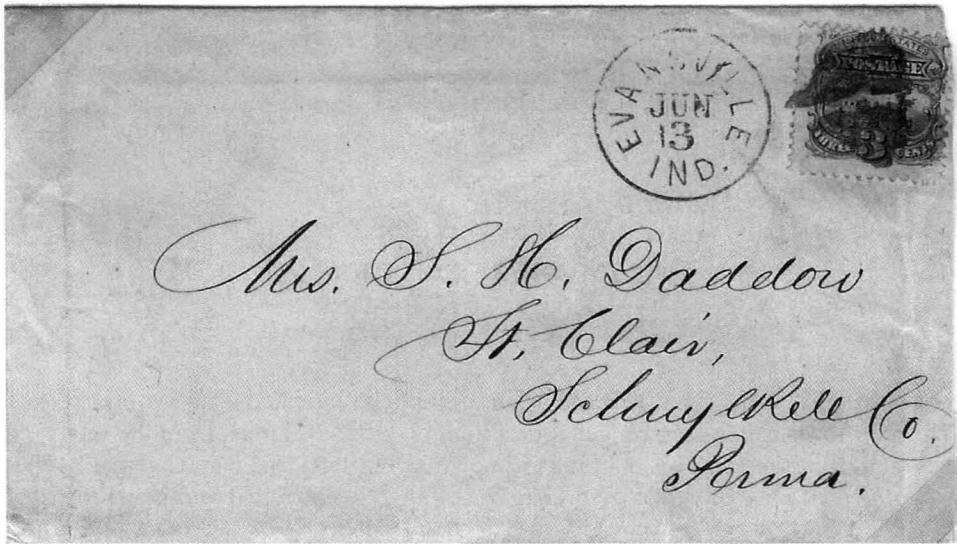


Figure 13. Late use of the Shoo Fly, 3 June 1870, on a 3¢ 1869 cover from Evansville to St. Clair, Pennsylvania. By this time the marking had worn down and its distinctive elements were much less pronounced.

the end of June, 1870. Examination of six Shoo Fly covers, dated between April 18 and June 13 (see cover listing in Figure 2), shows a progressive deterioration of the marking. Early strikes show delicate side projections (J) that are not evident on later examples (K).

Figure 11 shows a 3¢ 1869 cover, from Evansville to Salem, New York, postmarked April 27, that bears the Shoo Fly killer classified by Skinner-Eno as Type 3. This is from the first 10 days of usage of the Evansville Shoo-Fly, and the side-projections are visible, though they may not show well in the Figure 11 photo.

Figure 12 shows a courthouse cover with four times domestic postage paid by four 3¢ 1869 stamps, posted from Evansville to Indianapolis on April 30, 1870. This bears four strikes of the Shoo Fly. Since the marking was duplexed with the circular datestamp, the device had to be turned slightly to use just the killer portion, resulting in three incomplete strikes on this cover. But the first strike (far left in Figure 12) was clearly and fully struck, and on that strike the fly shows the side protrusions.

The marking that Skinner-Eno calls Type 1 came later. An example is shown on the cover in Figure 13, postmarked June 3. This is a 3¢ 1869 cover from the Daddow correspondence. The fly shows very little definition. I have another Daddow cover, a 3¢ Nesbitt envelope postmarked at Evansville on June 28, not listed in this data because it lacks an 1869 stamp, on which both shoe and fly show very little definition. This is the latest use I know of the Evansville Shoo Fly.

Skinner-Eno also shows a "Type 2" Shoo Fly, which seems to be just a poor strike (or a bad tracing) of an intermediate stage in the deterioration of the marking.

The double-star design shown as L in Figure 1 is something of an outlier. Dated December, 1870, it appears on a 6¢ 1869 stamp, on a piece of a cover that was sold in a 1950 Harmer auction. Other examples of this Evansville star marking are found primarily on Bank Note covers. The instance recorded here represents a late use of a 6¢ 1869 stamp.

While carefully assembled, this listing is surely incomplete. The author would appreciate learning of additional covers or dated pieces from Evansville that expand, correct or supplement this data. ■

THE JAPANESE FAN CANCEL

JOE H. CROSBY

In *Chronicle* 211, pages 227-228, Alan Campbell illustrated what he referred to as a vulcanized rubber handstamp cancellation found on Official stamps from the Interior and Agriculture departments. This marking is known as the Japanese Fan. Campbell called it the *pièce de résistance* of vulcanized rubber markings. He noted that Matthew Kewriga has an excellent strike on cover from Belfast, Allegheny County, N.Y., bearing a 2¢ vermilion Bank Note stamp (Scott 183). Kewriga's cover is shown here as Figure 1.

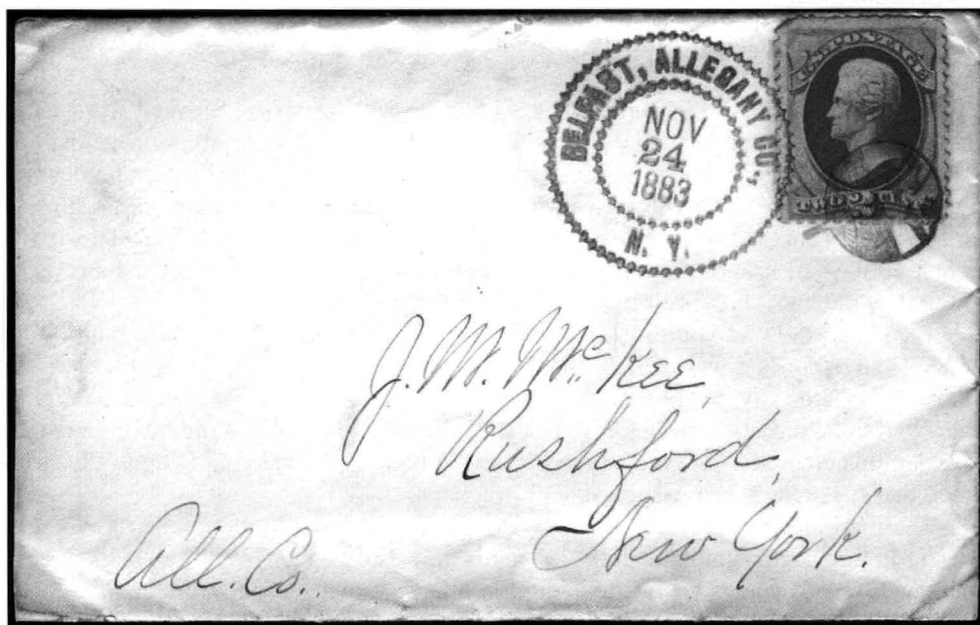


Figure 1. Japanese Fan cancellation, perfectly struck on a 2¢ vermilion Bank Note cover postmarked "Belfast, Allegheny Co., N.Y." on 24 November 1883. Cover courtesy Matthew Kewriga.

Campbell also noted that the Japanese Fan cancel was reported on the 2¢ red brown Bank Note stamp (210) by Willard¹ and that the marking is illustrated in Whitfield.² That caused me to wonder why Belfast would have occasion to cancel both Agriculture and Interior stamps. A diligent search did not produce any direct connection between either depart-

¹ Edward L. Willard, *The United States Two Cent Red Brown of 1883-1887*, Volume Two, H.L. Lindquist Publications, 1970, illustration 182, pp. 30-31.

² Kenneth A. Whitfield, *Cancellations Found on Nineteenth Century U.S. Stamps*, U.S. Cancellation Club, 2002, illustration #768, pg. 27.

ment and the Belfast area. However, collectors of Official stamps are aware that both those departments often sent out pre-stamped envelopes for reply correspondence.

Then I acquired a fascinating government postal card (Scott UX7), postmarked at Massillon, Ohio, on 19 October 1884. The address side is very ordinary. But the message side contained the printed salesman's advertisement illustrated in Figure 2. Note that in



Figure 2. Ornate printed advertisement on reverse of a government postal card (Scott UX7) posted in 1884 at Massillon, Ohio. The Japanese Fan in the upper right corner is presumably the source of the design used to create the cancel.

the upper right corner is a perfect rendition of the Japanese Fan design. This is part of the printed elements of the card, not a postal marking. It seems likely, indeed close to certain, that the Japanese Fan cancel was based on this design.

From the enlargement shown in Figure 3, it's easy to see why this cancellation is difficult to find in a perfect strike. The intricate design seems to contain details not shown in Whitfield's illustration (#768) and not visible in the marking on the Figure 1 cover. I'm not sure all the details (the tiny sailboat, for instance) actually appear in the cancel itself.

Although I have not yet found the printing company that created this stock print-shop card, the generic advertising text makes it obvious that the design was widely available and could have been adopted at any number of post offices, not just Belfast. Was it provided to the Belfast postmaster by some national supplier of postal markings, similar to the wheel-of-fortune cancel designs? Or was it procured by the Belfast postmaster from his local print shop?

So the questions are now raised: Where else is the Japanese Fan cancel known to have been used and what company supplied it? It's amazing what we can still learn about postal markings used over 120 years ago. If you have information that can help complete this puzzle, please share it. ■



Figure 3. Enlargement of the fan design from the Figure 2 card.

**THE QUEST FOR PERFECTION:
OBSERVATIONS ON GRADING
AND ON PERFORATING THE OFFICIAL STAMPS**

ALAN C. CAMPBELL

Introduction

In recent months, numerical grading of stamps has been developing increased momentum, with breathless reports in the philatelic press of stamps in the highest grades achieving unprecedented prices. Centering—the relative equality of the margins around the stamp image—remains the primary focus of the grading process, although other factors are considered, especially the identification of defects.¹

For my own collection of Official stamps (now focused primarily on marcophilately), I began by assembling a set of unused singles, O1-O120, more than 25 years ago. Over time, I have sought in a desultory fashion to improve the quality of this set by buying individual stamps with better centering and larger margins. During this search, I began to notice that while spectacular copies of certain values seemed readily available, others were not. Furthermore, this discrepancy was not simply a factor of rarity: just because a given stamp was relatively common and inexpensive did not necessarily mean that well-centered, large-margined copies were easily obtained. Recently, a veteran dealer who has long made the Official stamps a specialty reported to me that he had complained to the PSE about their grading of Official stamps because in his experience, well-centered Official stamps typically have larger margins on the top and bottom than on the sides, so that a copy with balanced but unequal margins would receive a lower grade than it actually deserves. So far, the PSE has relaxed its standards only for the 1857 issue, where the horizontal and vertical gutters on plates originally laid out for scissor separation are very narrow.² Although I respect this dealer's vaunted eye and sharp memory, and his observation at first blush rang true, I decided that it deserves empirical testing. The purpose of this article is to determine, by researching how the plates were laid out and the sheets perforated, if there is a scientific explanation for why exceptional copies of certain Official stamps are notoriously difficult to find.

¹ Professional Stamp Experts of California (PSE) of Newport Beach, California took the lead in numerical grading of stamps, and was followed five years later by the venerable Philatelic Foundation (PF). The numbers used correlate to previously developed terms—30 (Good), 50 (Very Good), 70 (Fine), 75 (Fine-Very Fine), 80 (Very Fine), 85 (Very Fine-Extremely Fine), 90 (Extremely Fine), 95 (Extremely Fine-Superb), 98 (Superb), 100 (Gem)—and objectify standards that were previously subject to unwarranted hype. Some dismiss numerical grading as a ploy adapted from the much larger numismatics market to sell expensive stamps to unsophisticated investors. In one sense, though, the PSE standards are quite conservative, since aside from the designation (J) for oversized copies in the higher grades, the relative size of the margins—although considered as one of several factors—is not otherwise explicitly expressed. A preference for copies with large margins has prevailed since the 1960s: size does matter, when it comes to stamp margins. But those whose collections consist exclusively of wide-margined copies have been grumbling lately, when they see higher grades awarded to perfectly centered copies with relatively ordinary margins.

² William A. Litle and Michael Sherman, *A Guide to Grading and Expertizing United States Postage Stamps*, 2006 edition, Collectors Universe, Inc., pg. 9.

In a recent public auction, a beautiful never-hinged corner margin copy of the 2¢ Interior on hard paper, (position 91, valued in the *Scott Specialized Catalogue* at \$70) graded 95J, had an opening bid of \$950 plus 15%.³ To set the stage with an even more dramatic example, we illustrate in Figure 1 a spectacular copy of the 1¢ Agriculture on soft paper, Scott O94. This is a rare stamp, un gummed and not regularly issued, which most students consider a special printing (Scott O1S) with the “SPECIMEN” overprinting omitted in error. Because of the lack of gum and the soft paper, many copies have been thinned during hinge removal over the years. In the 2007 edition of the *Scott Specialized Catalogue*, this stamp in very fine condition is valued at \$6,000. The example shown here, graded 98J by PSE and slabbed, is from the bottom right corner of the sheet, position 100, with selvages intact. As I write these words, it is offered for sale on the web site of Jay Parrino’s The Mint, priced at \$42,500.⁴ Some commentators have been expressing reservations about inflated prices for graded stamps, since at this point, with grading in its infancy, claims of the highest grade yet awarded for a given stamp are not meaningful when only a tiny fraction of the best examples have been submitted.⁵ However, I predict this particular copy of O94 will stand the test of time.



Figure 1. 1¢ Agriculture stamp, position 100, graded 98J.

The Perforating Process

Perusing stamp auction catalogs and feeling the onset of adjectival fatigue after reading of yet another “jumbo stamp with boardwalk margins, perfectly centered amidst them,” a cynic might wonder, where are all the dwarf stamps with tiny margins (aside from the back of my stockbook)? Well, as we shall soon discover, in reality they don’t exist.

From 1857 on, United States stamps have been perforated by rotating perforating machines. An original patent drawing showing a cross-section of the Bemrose machine is shown in Figure 2.⁶ Basically, the upper rotating roller with pins (male) punches holes through the paper, which exit holes in the lower counterpart roller (female), the spindles of the rollers being activated by a treadle-driven crankshaft. A sliding guide table on the left restrains the sheet as it is being fed, much like a fence on a table saw. The rotation pulls the sheet of stamps through, and an arrangement of wires prevents the sheet from wrapping around the rollers. The perforating rollers, secured to the spindle by set screws, can be adjusted in quantity and spacing. For the Official stamps, typically 100-subject plates, eleven perforating rollers would be required to create selvages on the sides. Perforating a sheet

³ Schuyler Rumsey, Sale #26, Lot 2069.

⁴ This business, www.jayparrino.com, based in Kansas City, dealt originally in coins, currency, comics, and movie posters, and has recently gone into U.S. stamps and vintage photographs. This stamp is reproduced from the web site with Mr. Parrino’s kind permission.

⁵ As of this writing, for O1-O120, the PSE has so far graded only 260 stamps. No other Official stamp has been awarded a grade of 98J. The only original gum copy of the 30¢ Agriculture to be evaluated earned a miserable score of 30 (in the case of this submitter, the triumph of hope over experience). Presumably, whoever submitted the O114 (current catalogue value: \$6) that also earned a score of 30 must have thought it was an O83.

⁶ L. N. Williams, *Fundamentals of Philately*, American Philatelic Society, 1990, pg. 655.

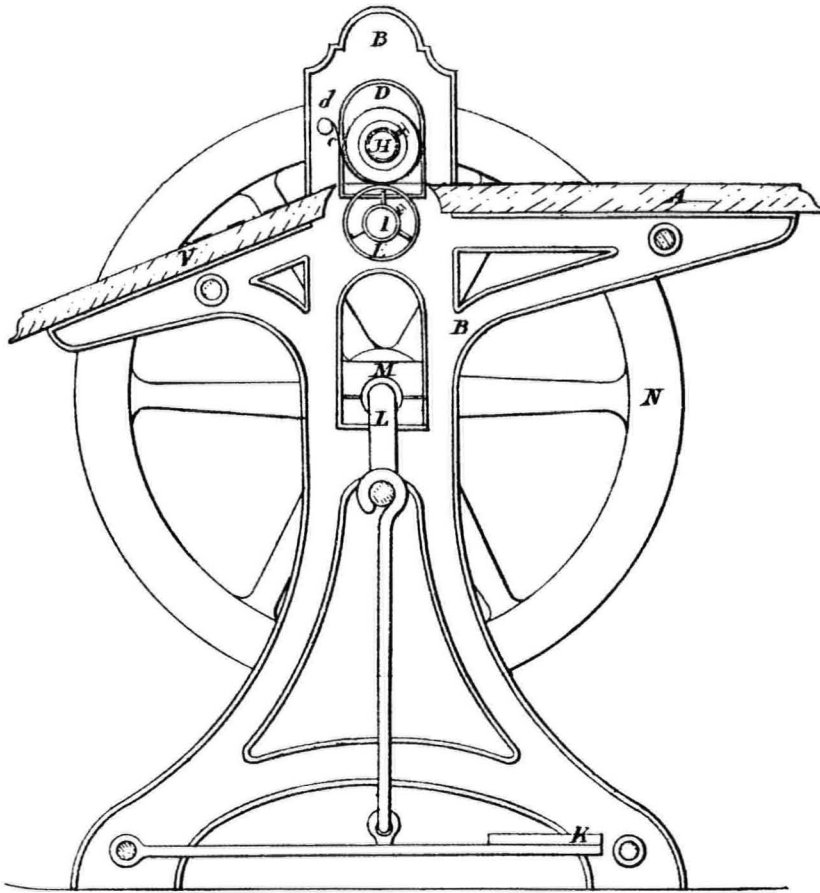


Figure 2. Patent drawing of the Bemrose rotating perforating machine.

in both directions is a two-step process, with one machine calibrated to create the vertical perforations, and a second machine calibrated differently for the horizontal perforations.

Through study of surviving large multiples and full sheets, students of the large Banknote regular issues and Official stamps have long observed that the setting of the perforating rollers for the perimeter rows, both vertically and horizontally, were consistently wider. This phenomenon was discussed in great length by M. Jack Reinhard in 1973.⁷ His article was devoted to the regular issues, but his observations are valid when applied to the Official stamps, with the principal exception being that the regular issues were 200-subject plates, whereas most of the Official stamps were 100-subject plates.

The deviation in perforation settings for the outer rows results in four basic stamp sizes: ordinary from the interior of the sheet (64 stamps), tall from the top and bottom rows (16 stamps), wide from the side rows (16 stamps), and jumbo (both tall and wide) from the corner positions (4 stamps). If a sheet of stamps were fed perfectly aligned and plumb into the machines on both passes, the interior stamps would be well-centered, whereas the perimeter stamps would show a wide or tall wing margin, and the corner copies would show two wing margins. Figure 3 is a diagram of a schematic sheetlet of nine, showing how the perimeter stamps might look on a well-centered sheet. For any one row of the perimeter

⁷ M. Jack Reinhard, "Basic Plate Positioning the Bank Note Issues (1870-1890)", *The Congress Book*, 1973, 39th American Philatelic Congress, pp. 127-149.



Figure 3. Virtual sheetlet of nine of the 3¢ Treasury, showing centering of the various perimeter stamps in a well-centered sheet.

stamps to have balanced margins, the bulk of the sheet would have to be off-center in one direction, and for any corner jumbo to be well-centered, the rest of the sheet would have to be off-center in two directions. In Figure 4, we reproduce an illustration from the Reinhard article to show this rose-in-a-weed-patch phenomenon.⁸ The image is necessarily a poor one, but the centering of the corner stamp should be clear enough. In order to fully appreciate the *lusus naturae* of a well-centered jumbo corner stamp, bear in mind that the other three corner stamps will all by definition be off-center, two with three huge margins and cut in one side, the opposite corner a hideous monstrosity with two huge margins and cut in on two sides. I am reminded of a power seller on eBay who regularly hawks “TWO HUGE MARGINS!”—a helpful hint that this listing is not worth examining.

The essential point is that unaltered Official stamps will be found in four basic sizes. Measuring from the centerline of the perforation holes, a basic stamp from the interior of the sheet will measure 22.34



Figure 4. “Jumbo gem” 3¢ Banknote stamp, with adjoining stamps horribly off-center.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 148, Figure 38.



Figure 5. Plated top-row copies (positions 2-9) showing typical centering. From left: 10¢ Navy, scratch thru face (Position 3); 2¢ Treasury, scratch at top, (3R); 90¢ Navy, short transfer at upper left, (6); 6¢ State, scratch at top (6).



Figure 6. Plated bottom-row copies (positions 92-99) showing typical centering. From left: 24¢ Navy, re-entry at upper right (Position 92); 15¢ State, scratch at right (95); 15¢ State, scratch at left (96); 24¢ Justice, short transfer at lower left (98).

millimeters wide by 27.51 mm tall. I have measured perimeter stamps on about 40 large multiples from all departments except the Executive. Stamps from the left or right columns are typically 23.5 mm–24.0 mm wide. Stamps from the top and bottom rows are typically 28.5 mm–29.5 mm tall, despite a few anomalies (30¢ War top 27.0 mm, 24¢ War bottom 31.0 mm). Inasmuch as the typical stamp image was 20.09 mm wide by 25.24 mm tall, with standard gutters of 2.25 mm horizontally and 2.27 mm vertically, the increased width on the side columns of 1.16 mm–1.66 mm and increased height on the top and bottom rows of 0.99 mm–1.99 mm constitutes a significant and obvious enlargement in the margins.⁹ Deviation from these standard sizes, the “slightly irregular,” were caused by episodes of perforation rollers becoming uncalibrated.

To show that the perimeter stamps on the Official sheets were consistently oversized, one can group together various constant plate varieties, their positions on the plate all confirmed independently, known to have originated from the top and bottom rows, the left and right columns, and the four corner positions. Because these copies were collected for the plate varieties, not for their centering or size, the author deflects criticism that these are not typical wing margin copies. Figure 5 depicts tall stamps from the top row (positions 2-9), Figure 6 depicts tall stamps from the bottom row (positions 92-99), Figure 7 depicts wide stamps from the left column (positions 11, 21, 31, 41, 51, 61, 71, 81), Figure 8 depicts wide

⁹ Gutter widths computed by taking overall dimensions vertically and horizontally twice on a sheet and subtracting the combined overall dimensions of the ten stamp images, then averaging the results from five sheets. Gutter widths measured individually can be quite deceptive because of misaligned and skewed entries. Stamp image sizes were calculated by Fran Adams utilizing 600 dpi scans of unused singles. Great care was taken to get the stamps aligned squarely on the scanner. Using the graphics program Photoshop, the scans were enlarged (using the magnifying glass feature) until the perimeter frame lines became distinct. The bottom frame line was set as a control level and the upper right corner was used as a plumb line. The cropping feature was then utilized, bringing in framing bars on all four sides to kiss the outer frame lines. Photoshop contains a built-in tool, whereby the dimensions of the image (in millimeters) were automatically calculated. To create the virtual stamp blocks illustrated further on, the scans were imported into the Adobe InDesign program, which generated the final PDF files readable by Adobe Acrobat.



Figure 7. Plated copies from the left column (positions 11, 22, 31, 41, 51, 61, 71, 81) showing typical centering. From left: 1¢ State, scratch at upper left (Position 51); 30¢ Treasury, short transfer at top (41); 6¢ State, foreign entry (61); 24¢ Treasury, short transfer at top (61).



Figure 8. Plated stamps from the right column (positions 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90) showing typical centering. From left: 12¢ Navy, short transfer at lower right (Position 10); 2¢ Executive, foreign entry (40); 12¢ Navy, double transfer at left (50); 2¢ Interior, short transfer at right (70).



Figure 9. Plated jumbo stamps from the four corners. From left: 90¢ Navy, short transfer at upper left (Position 1); 24¢ State, short transfer at lower left (10); 15¢ State, scratch at lower left (91); 12¢ Post Office, scratch at bottom (100).

stamps from the right column (positions 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90) and Figure 9 depicts jumbo stamps from the four corners (positions 1, 10, 91, 100).

There were numerous complaints about the poor quality control in the production of the short-lived 1869 pictorial issue, with perforating being a major problem. It seems plausible to me that when the National Banknote Company was forced to redesign the stamps, under the terms of their government contract at no additional expense, the perforation spacing on the sides might have been enlarged for no other reason than to avoid wherever possible perforations impinging on the stamp design, at least on the outer edges, where it was most noticeable. However, I would not want to be accused of projecting a philatelic aesthetic onto their motives: perhaps, as John Donnes suggested to me, there was a more practical necessity, such as getting the sheets to feed cleanly on and off the rollers.

In actually perforating the sheets, the results were often imperfect due to human er-



Figure 10. 3¢ Treasury, Plate 29R, bottom strip of 10, skewed horizontal perforations.



Figure 11. 10¢ Interior, Plate 109, bottom block of 20 with variable centering.

ror and mechanical factors. Misalignment was a constant problem familiar to collectors. Boggs attributed misaligned perforations to stresses in the paper.¹⁰ I am inclined to blame it on inconsistent trimming of the sheet, in which the selvage widths varied, requiring constant resetting of the moveable guide table. Also, some sheets did not enter the perforating machine plumb, resulting in stamps where the perforations are not parallel to the images. In Figure 10, we illustrate a 3¢ Treasury bottom plate strip on which Position 91 has a tall bottom margin and position 100 has a tall top margin. When originally printed, the stamp paper was somewhat larger than the plate itself, and no extreme care was taken to see that the edges of the paper were exactly plumb to the plate. Subsequently, the sheets were trimmed on all four sides. If, in the trimming process, the cuts were slightly untrue to the stamp images, then the edge of the sheet, held against the guide table during the initial feed into the perforating machine, would not be reliable.

In some cases, if a set screw came loose and a perforation roller migrated on the spindle, the width or height of two adjacent rows of stamps would come out unequal. In measuring interior perforation spacing on large multiples, I found deviations of 0.5 mm in the width of the stamp paper, and 1.0 mm in height. Certain stamp dealers in the habit of harvesting never-hinged well-centered singles out of plate blocks will be intimately familiar with the problem of variable centering across a block, where each single stamp merits a different grade and price. In the trade, this phenomenon is called “creep.” Figure 11 is a relatively well-centered bottom plate block of 20 of the 10¢ Interior stamp on soft paper. The horizontal perforations are slightly out of plumb. The corner stamps, Positions 91 and 100, are oversized, as we would expect. As for the vertical perforations, the stamp at position 87 is well-centered, but the stamps to its left are centered to the left, and the stamps to its right are centered to the right. The chief causes of variable centering such as this would be miscalibration of the perforation rollers and misalignment of the stamp images.

Attributing perforation alignment problems to variable paper shrinkage seems like

¹⁰ Winthrop S. Boggs, “Early American Perforating Machines and Perforations, 1857-1867,” *Collectors Club Philatelist*, Volume 33 (1954), pp. 61-84 and 145-156.

a red herring. I compared the size of Official stamp images from the corner of a sheet to the deepest interior and did not find a significant difference. The stamp paper had been dampened twice, once during the initial printing and again during the gumming process. In theory, as the paper dried, it might have dried faster at the margins of the sheet and slower in the interior, resulting in minute graduations in stamp image size. Although wide and narrow impressions are known in philately (Boggs cites the 10d of Canada), it is not an important factor here.¹¹

Other factors also come into play. In Figure 12, we show a freakish 3¢ War strip used in New Orleans, where one roller came loose and started sliding on the spindle during per-

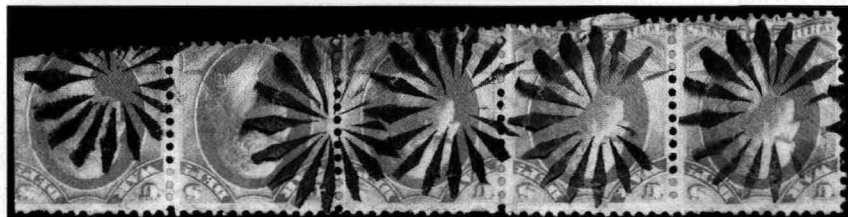


Figure 12. 3¢ War strip of five, showing wildly skewed perforations.

foration, resulting in one aberrant row of diagonal perforations. The most common cause of freak or wild perforations on Official stamps was for a portion of the sheet on a long side or corner destined to become selvage to be accidentally folded under when fed through the perforating rollers. If the fold was close enough to the stamp images themselves, one side



Figure 13. Freak perforations caused by preperforating paper folds.

would be left imperforate: otherwise, double perforations would occur in the selvage. A selection of such interesting freaks worthy of Todd Browning is shown in Figure 13. Double perforations are also occasionally found on Official stamps, resulting from the sheet being misfed initially, backed out and refed.

Plate Layout

In the interest of production efficiency, the plates for the many different Official stamps would have been laid out uniformly in identical dimensions, so that the subsequent perforating operation would not require recalibrating the machines for each different stamp, especially considering that there were to be so many different stamps, printed for the most part in very small quantities. But in their haste to produce 92 different plates in the spring

¹¹ *Ibid.* Boggs' remarks on the effect of paper shrinkage on stamp perforations are amusing: "Thus it can be seen that the sheets were pre-shrunk before they went to the perforating machines. Later wettings by collectors would have little effect. There is a limit to which shrinkage occurs; if that were not so, the stamp would eventually disappear. Stamps are known to disappear but not from shrinkage.... Furthermore, these stamps were printed on a paper made of cotton and/or linen rags. To apply an everyday analogy, our cotton or linen garments shrink the first time they are washed, and to a slight extent the second time, but successive later washings apparently have no noticeable effect, a circumstance which is perhaps fortunate for all concerned."

of 1873, many sideographers were working long hours at the Continental Bank Note Company. If some used a wider spacing of layout lines and position dots, the plates would not be of uniform size and the gutters between the stamp would vary in width, which might explain why some stamps are harder to find with generous margins than others.

Because complete sheets of Official stamps are no longer available for most values, my assistant editor Lester C. Lanphear III allowed me to examine the contact proof photographs of the Earl of Crawford proof sheets on card made for Elliot Perry in 1967. In this holding the 15¢ Interior plate was missing, and only one pane for each of the 200-subject plates was included (1¢, 3¢, 6¢ Post Office, 3¢ Treasury, 2¢ War), and only one pane for those stamps where multiple plates were produced (2¢, 3¢, 6¢ Post Office, 3¢ Treasury).¹² Two prints were required to show each plate in its entirety, so I had to overlap the prints to take a vertical dimension. So, disregarding the Department of State dollar-value sheetlets of ten, I measured 87 plates, from the left side of position 1 to the right side of position 10, and from the top of position 1 to the bottom of position 91. The results of this exercise confirmed that the Official plates were essentially of uniform size, typically measuring 216.5 mm–220.0 mm in width and 277.0 mm–280.0 mm in height, with a few aberrations.¹³

As a control, I compared the overall perforation dimensions on five sheets of Official stamps, omitting the wider settings on the perimeter. For the interior block of 64 stamps, the width varied from 178 mm–179.5 mm, and the height from 219 mm–222 mm. The variance is about 1%, slightly less than observed for the overall plate dimensions.

I am therefore convinced that standard settings for the rollers were employed in perforating all the Official stamps, and that they were not painstakingly readjusted to accommodate minor deviations in the plate sizes. If this is true, then a one-size-fits-all perforating approach will of course not work perfectly on every plate, which may offer a further explanation for the creep phenomenon of variable centering across a large multiple.

Although the Official plates were laid out with great discipline and uniformity, some relief transfers were rocked in skewed, and others were misaligned. George Sayers, who has carefully studied the plates for the Official stamps, casts a jaundiced eye on the hasty work of sideographers employed by the Continental Bank Note Company. Consider that when a given relief was rocked in 0.5 mm off from its ideal position, this will increase the gutter on one side to 2.75 mm and reduce the opposite gutter to 1.75 mm. The 1¢ Justice plate is notorious for consisting almost entirely of twisted entries. Looking at individual stamps, it is not possible to tell whether the stamp image itself or the perforations are skewed, except in extreme cases where the stamp is obviously a parallelogram. Still, since skewed entries cannot be perforated squarely, they contribute to the overpopulation of mis-centered stamps that collectors concerned about centering must winnow through.

The Dies

It was Rollin C. Huggins Jr. who first noticed that certain of the Official dies were oversized. Writing in the July 1985 issue of his house organ, *Official Chatter*, Huggins had this to say:

“Did you think that all of the Official stamps issued in 1873 were the same size? Superficially, one might think so, but look again. Actually there is as much as 1 mm. difference in the sizes of some of these stamps. Examples of stamps that are larger than normal are the 3¢ Justice and the 24¢ Post Office. Because the design of these stamps is large, there

¹² Alan C. Campbell, “Plating the Official Stamps,” *Chronicle* 175, (August 1997), pg. 199.

¹³ Of the 87 plates measured, three were narrower and three were wider than the cited range. Two of the wider plates were from 200 subject plates, but aside from that, I can only attribute the deviations to some factor in the photographic reproduction process. The six sheets of actual stamps I measured varied in width from 219.5 mm - 222.5 mm, and in height from 271.5 mm–274.5 mm. Note that the stamp paper shrinks less in width but more in height than the proof cardboard.

was less room for the perforations in the margins between the stamps. This increased the likelihood that the perforations might cut into the design.”

Poised, key in hand, to unlock the mystery, the narrative requires that I first step back and state for the record what I expect to find, based on years of searching for well-centered wide-margined copies of relatively inexpensive Official stamps. I have found the following stamps especially difficult: 30¢ Agriculture, 2¢ Interior, 3¢ Justice, 3¢ State, 6¢ and 24¢ Post Office and 2¢ Treasury. Therefore, I would expect the dies for these stamps to be slightly larger than normal. Conversely, over the years I have encountered a disproportionate quantity of wide-margined copies of the following stamps: 10¢ Interior, 1¢ Justice, 6¢ and 30¢ Navy, 10¢ and 15¢ Post Office, 2¢ and 7¢ State, and 6¢ and 90¢ Treasury. I would expect the dies for these stamps to be slightly smaller than normal.

In measuring the die images, I used copies of unused issued stamps, all printed by the Continental Bank Note Company on thin hard paper. I did this so that the die images could be accurately related to the perforation spacings, which obviously occur only on the issued stamps. The results are presented in Table 1. As a control, I also measured the die images on a set of card proofs, which I could then relate to the contact-print photographs of the Earl of Crawford’s card proof sheets. Due to variable shrinkage, I expected the die images on stamp paper and card to differ, but was surprised to discover that the die images on card were consistently 0.2 mm taller, but 0.1 mm narrower than those on stamp paper. On stamp paper, I found that the average stamp image was 20.09 mm wide x 25.24 mm tall, although very few of the stamp images were actually this size. In evaluating what I found, I decided to classify a deviation of 0.18 mm from the average width or height as an unusually tall, short, wide or narrow stamp image, and a combined deviation of 0.35 mm from the sum of the average height plus width as an unusually large or small stamp image. Overall, I classified 56 of the total 88 stamp images as aberrant in size.

I found 13 stamp images that were unusually large, both tall and wide: 3¢ Agriculture, 2¢, 3¢, and 90¢ Interior, 12¢ Justice, 12¢ Navy, 6¢ and 24¢ Post Office, 2¢ and 90¢ State, 2¢ and 24¢ Treasury and 24¢ War, the largest of all being the 3¢ Interior (20.45 mm wide x 25.74 mm tall). I also found 16 stamps that were unusually small, both short and narrow: 6¢ and 10¢ Agriculture, 10¢ Interior, 1¢ and 90¢ Justice, 6¢, 10¢, and 30¢ Navy, 2¢, 3¢, 10¢, 15¢, and 90¢ Post Office, 6¢ and 90¢ Treasury and 6¢ War—the most miniature of all being the 10¢ Post Office (19.81 mm wide x 24.77 tall) and the 90¢ Post Office (19.73 mm wide x 24.85 mm tall). I found six stamps that were unusually tall (25.44 mm and up): 1¢, 2¢, and 3¢ Executive, 1¢ and 12¢ State and 10¢ Treasury. I found four stamps that were unusually short (25.04 mm or less): 12¢ Agriculture, 2¢ Justice, 12¢ Post Office and 1¢ Treasury. I found six stamps that were unusually wide (20.29 mm and up): 24¢ Agriculture, 3¢ Justice, 15¢, and 90¢ Navy, 6¢ State and 1¢ War. I found four stamps that were unusually narrow (19.89 mm or less): 12¢ Interior, 6¢ and 30¢ Justice and 7¢ Treasury. I found five stamps that were attenuated, both tall and narrow: 2¢ Agriculture, 1¢ and 30¢ Interior and 12¢ and 90¢ War. I found two stamps that were squat, both short and wide: 1¢ Post Office and 3¢ State. The extreme variations in both height (24.77- 25.74 mm) and width (19.73-20.53 mm) were 0.97 and 0.8 mm respectively, but with standard gutters of 2.25-2.27 mm, this represents a significant differential in margins, as we shall see.¹⁴

For a long series with all dies (except for the later supplemental 24¢ Agriculture and

¹⁴ These measurements were taken from greatly enlarged scans on the computer by bringing in framing bars on all four sides until they contacted the frame lines. Incredibly, many of the stamp images were found to be out of square! Earlier, we reported that the plate proof sheets for the most part varied from 216.5-220.0 mm in width. If the gutters between stamp images of different sizes had been kept constant, the plates would vary in width from 217.35 mm for the 90¢ Post Office to 224.75 mm for the 3¢ Interior. Instead, I found that the 3¢ Interior plate was actually narrower (216.5 mm) than the 90¢ Post Office plate (220.0 mm), which would hence exaggerate the difference in margins between these two extremes—the narrowest and widest Official stamp images—even more.

Scott	Val	Dept	W	H	Desc	Scott	Val	Dept	W	H	Desc
O1	1¢	Agriculture	20.24	25.32		O47	1¢	Post Office	20.40	24.98	Squat
O2	2¢	Agriculture	19.81	25.40	Attenuated	O48	2¢	Post Office	19.90	25.06	Small
O3	3¢	Agriculture	20.36	25.48	Large	O49	3¢	Post Office	19.85	24.98	Small
O4	6¢	Agriculture	19.85	24.89	Small	O50	6¢	Post Office	20.28	25.44	Large
O5	10¢	Agriculture	19.90	24.98	Small	O51	10¢	Post Office	19.81	24.77	Small
O6	12¢	Agriculture	20.15	24.85	Short	O52	12¢	Post Office	20.07	24.77	Short
O7	15¢	Agriculture	20.19	25.15		O53	15¢	Post Office	19.90	25.02	Small
O8	24¢	Agriculture	20.53	25.32	Wide	O54	24¢	Post Office	20.32	25.48	Large
O9	30¢	Agriculture	20.24	25.40		O55	30¢	Post Office	20.02	25.10	
						O56	90¢	Post Office	19.73	24.85	Small
O10	1¢	Executive	20.15	25.65	Tall						
O11	2¢	Executive	19.98	25.48	Tall	O57	1¢	State	20.07	25.57	Tall
O12	3¢	Executive	20.11	25.53	Tall	O58	2¢	State	20.32	25.40	Large
O13	6¢	Executive	19.98	25.23		O59	3¢	State	20.32	25.06	Squat
O14	10¢	Executive	20.02	25.15		O60	6¢	State	20.36	25.27	Wide
						O61	7¢	State	20.07	25.15	
O15	1¢	Interior	19.90	25.61	Attenuated	O61	10¢	State	19.98	25.36	
O16	2¢	Interior	20.24	25.53	Large	O63	12¢	State	20.07	25.44	Tall
O17	3¢	Interior	20.45	25.74	Large	O64	15¢	State	20.17	25.19	
O18	6¢	Interior	19.98	25.32		O65	24¢	State	19.94	25.10	
O19	10¢	Interior	19.85	25.06	Small	O66	30¢	State	20.02	25.23	
O20	12¢	Interior	19.81	25.23	Narrow	O67	90¢	State	20.32	25.53	Large
O21	15¢	Interior	20.07	25.23							
O22	24¢	Interior	20.02	25.10		O72	1¢	Treasury	19.98	25.06	Short
O23	30¢	Interior	19.90	25.40	Attenuated	O73	2¢	Treasury	20.24	25.61	Large
O24	90¢	Interior	20.28	25.53	Large	O74	3¢	Treasury	20.07	25.27	
						O75	6¢	Treasury	19.90	24.85	Small
O25	1¢	Justice	19.94	24.93	Small	O76	7¢	Treasury	19.90	25.36	Narrow
O26	2¢	Justice	20.07	24.89	Short	O77	10¢	Treasury	20.15	25.61	Tall
O27	3¢	Justice	20.45	25.27	Wide	O78	12¢	Treasury	20.24	25.32	
O28	6¢	Justice	19.85	25.23	Short	O79	15¢	Treasury	20.19	25.32	
O29	10¢	Justice	20.07	25.10		O80	24¢	Treasury	20.28	25.44	Large
O30	12¢	Justice	20.40	25.36	Large	O81	30¢	Treasury	20.15	25.32	
O31	15¢	Justice	20.02	25.27		O82	90¢	Treasury	19.94	24.85	Small
O32	24¢	Justice	20.07	25.36							
O33	30¢	Justice	19.90	25.36	Narrow	O83	1¢	War	20.28	25.27	Wide
O34	90¢	Justice	19.94	24.93	Small	O84	2¢	War	20.15	25.19	
						O85	3¢	War	20.07	25.10	
O35	1¢	Navy	20.07	25.15		O86	6¢	War	19.90	24.81	Small
O36	2¢	Navy	20.19	25.32		O87	7¢	War	20.07	25.19	
O37	3¢	Navy	20.02	25.40		O88	10¢	War	20.11	25.40	
O38	6¢	Navy	19.90	25.06	Small	O89	12¢	War	19.94	25.65	Attenuated
O39	7¢	Navy	19.98	25.40		O90	15¢	War	20.07	25.19	
O40	10¢	Navy	19.81	25.15	Small	O91	24¢	War	20.32	25.40	Large
O41	12¢	Navy	20.28	25.40	Large	O92	30¢	War	20.24	25.40	
O42	15¢	Navy	20.45	25.23	Wide	O93	90¢	War	19.90	25.44	Attenuated
O43	24¢	Navy	20.15	25.10							
O44	30¢	Navy	19.94	24.89	Small						
O45	90¢	Navy	20.32	25.32	Wide						
									20.09	25.24	

Table 1. Precision measurements of the image sizes of Official stamps. The Description columns ("Desc") call attention to individual stamps that deviate 0.18 millimeters or more from the average width ("W") or height ("H"). The average for all 88 stamps was 20.09 mm wide and 25.24 mm high. Extremes are boldfaced.

Treasury values) engraved in a span of less than two months (April 18--June 13, 1873), that the actual image size should vary so much seems bizarre. How could this have happened?

First, we have to remember that the engravers were not working inward from established framelines but outward from a portrait vignette, numeral and value tablet inherited from the National dies for the regular issues. In Figure 14, we illustrate a progressive die

essay of the 6¢ Post Office, abandoned when large numerals were substituted for the portrait busts for this department, which shows the process clearly. In fact, many of the Official stamps lack a defined top or bottom frame line altogether. Secondly, in the rush to complete all 92 dies, a team of engravers was employed by Continental. The dies were prepared in the order of anticipated need, with low values being completed first, as confirmed by dates and the initials of William M. Ireland, Acting Third Assistant Postmaster General, in an important bound album of large die proofs.¹⁵ Also, certain design inconsistencies in the frames common to all values of a given department suggest that several engravers worked on each set of dies.¹⁶ Clearly, the work of this team putting in long hours of overtime could not be perfectly coordinated.

Centering

Stamp images oversized in two directions, such as the 3¢ Interior, are problematic. Copies with large equal margins could only derive from one of the four corner positions. Other stamps from the sheet perimeter could have balanced but unequal margins. In the interior of the sheet, even if the stamp is perfectly centered, the margins will appear narrow.

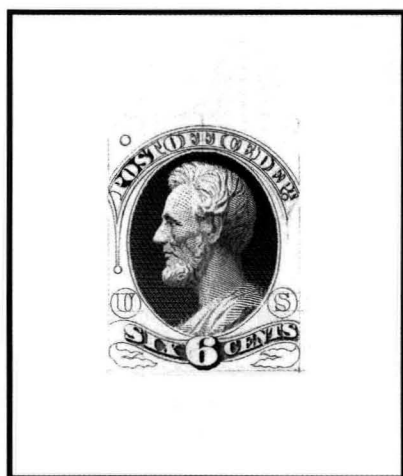


Figure 14. Abandoned progressive die essay for the 6¢ Post Office stamp, showing how the engraving of the Official stamps was done beginning with the inside design and working out to the edges.

With narrower gutters, any misregistration between the perforations and the gutter midpoint will result in perforations uncomfortably close to the frameline. For stamp images undersized in both directions, such as the 10¢ Post Office, margins will be more generous everywhere on the sheet, but unbalanced on the perimeter except at the four corners.

In the trade, except for the four corner positions, sheet perimeter stamps have the reputation of producing stamps with the horizontal margins unequal to the vertical margins. As we have seen, when sheets were properly aligned and fed into the perforating machines, these stamps would not be well-centered but would each have a wing margin, two at the corners. Perimeter stamps are the most susceptible to re-perforating, because they can be reduced in size and yet still not end up smaller than an unaltered stamp from the sheet interior. But for the Official stamps, with the proportions of so many stamps distorted, the non-standard stamp paper sizes on the sheet perimeter could prove forgiving and useful, if the stamp image is not oversized in both width and height. With a slight shift in either direction on

one perforating machine, a tall stamp image such as the 10¢ Treasury, or a narrow stamp image such as the 12¢ Interior, or an attenuated stamp image such as the 12¢ War could be accommodated by the taller paper sizes on either the top or bottom rows, resulting in eight stamps with reasonably balanced margins. Likewise, a wide stamp image such as the 24¢ Agriculture, a short stamp image such as the 12¢ Post Office, or a squat stamp image such as the 1¢ Post Office would be better accommodated by the wider settings on the long sides of the sheet.

Returning to the dealer's complaint cited in the introduction, that choice Official stamps typically have wider margins on the top and bottom than on the sides, there is

¹⁵ Alan C. Campbell, "The Design Evolution of the United States Official Stamps", *Chronicle* 169 (February 1996), pg. 54.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-61.

clearly an element of truth here, if we surmise that most of the stamps in question derive from the elongated top and bottom rows of the sheet. An average stamp image (20.09 mm x 25.24 mm) will show larger top and bottom margins on stamp paper 22.34 mm x 29.0 mm. For tall, narrow or attenuated stamp images, the degree of inequality will be less but not eliminated entirely. As for short, wide or squat stamp images, the left and right columns will yield an even better balancing of the margins. This is a theoretical analysis of how centering will vary, based on the fluid dimensions of Official stamp image sizes. In reality, for certain of the Official stamps, a grade of 100, indicating perfectly balanced “blocked” margins, may be impossible to obtain from any of the standard stamp paper sizes.

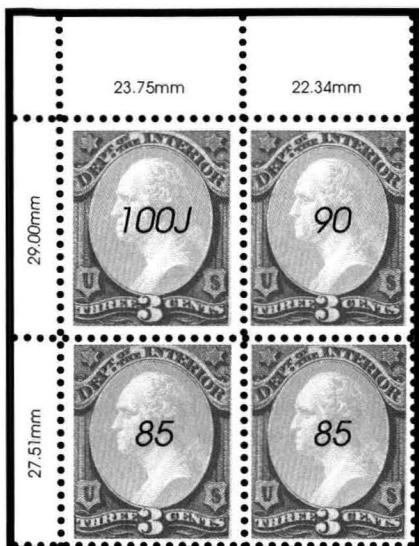


Figure 15. Virtual block of the 3¢ Interior, a large stamp image.

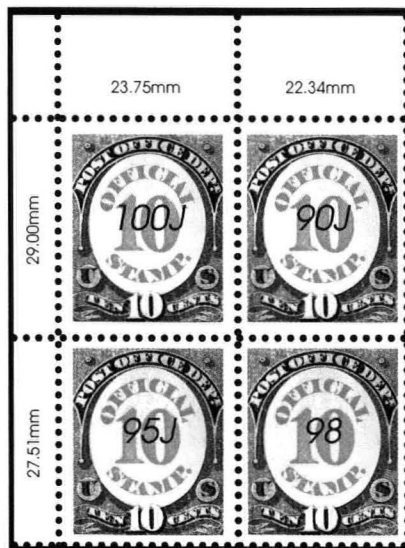


Figure 16. Virtual block of the 10¢ Post Office, a small stamp image.



Figure 17. Virtual block of the 10¢ Treasury, a tall stamp image.



Figure 18. Virtual block of the 12¢ Post Office, a short stamp image.

“Virtual” blocks

We now present a series of schematic diagrams of upper left corner blocks showing the standard perforation settings employed by the Continental Bank Note Company. At each position, the stamp image has been manipulated to optimize the centering within the different standard paper sizes. No such idealized blocks could occur naturally, because the gutters between the stamp images have been artificially enlarged. Each of these virtual stamps was graded for me by PSE. The grade is printed at the center of the stamp image.

In Figure 15, we show the 3¢ Interior, a large stamp image (20.45 mm x 25.74 mm).

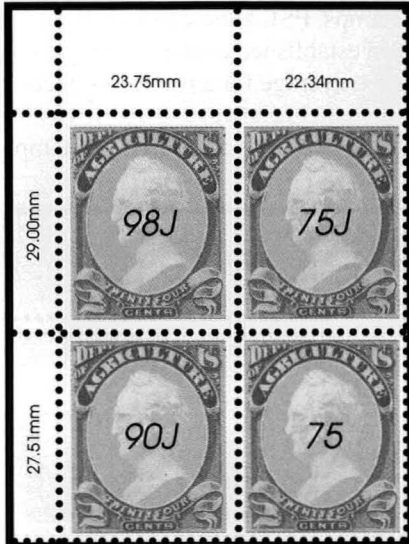


Figure 19. Virtual block of the 24¢ Agriculture, a wide stamp image.

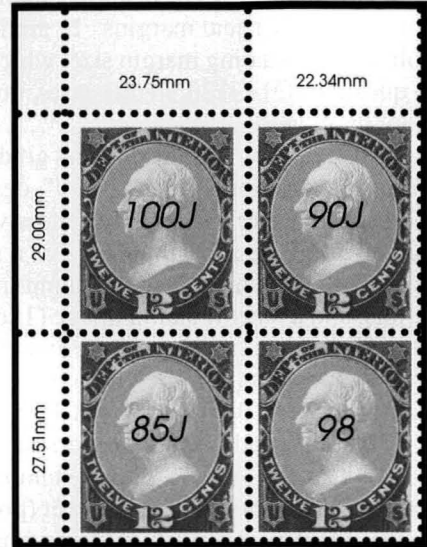


Figure 20. Virtual block of the 12¢ Interior, a narrow stamp image.

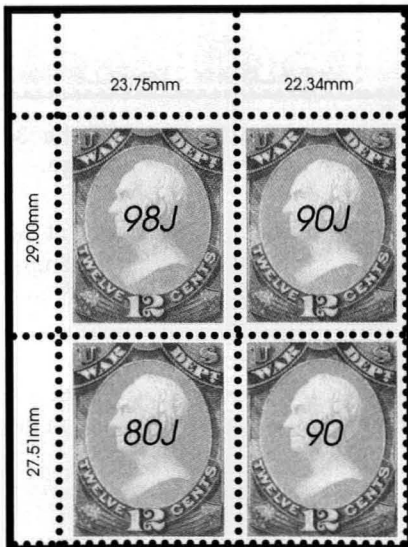


Figure 21. Virtual block of the 12¢ War, an attenuated stamp image.

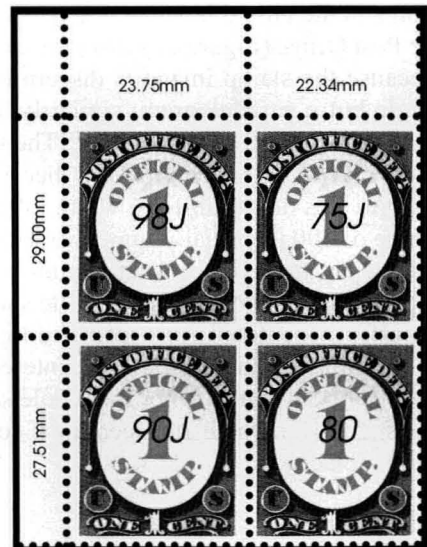


Figure 22. Virtual block of the 1¢ Post Office, a squat stamp image.

In Figure 16 is illustrated the 10¢ Post Office, a small stamp image (19.81 mm x 24.77 mm). In Figure 17 we show the 10¢ Treasury, a tall stamp image (20.15 mm x 25.61 mm). In Figure 18 we show the 12¢ Post Office, a short stamp image (20.07 mm x 24.77 mm). Figure 19 shows the 24¢ Agriculture, a wide stamp image (20.53 mm x 25.32 mm). In Figure 20 we illustrate the 12¢ Interior, a narrow stamp image (19.81 mm x 25.23 mm). Figure 21 shows the 12¢ War, an attenuated stamp image (19.94 mm x 25.65 mm). In Figure 22 we present the 1¢ Post Office, a squat stamp image (20.40 mm x 24.98 mm). In Figure 23 we show the 3¢ Treasury, a relatively normal stamp image (20.07 mm x 25.27 mm). By inspecting these diagrams, it should become obvious where on the sheet, for each of the different types of distorted stamp images, there is the best opportunity to find copies with relatively equal margins. In grading these virtual stamps, PSE adhered to its standard policy on evaluating margin size, which is to work from an established average for the issue in question (O1-O120, in this case), not from an established average for a particular department or an individual stamp.

In all the blocks, the highest grades were achieved at the corner position 1. All stamps from this position earned the “J” designation, and the margins were sufficiently excessive to raise the numerical grade substantially. For a normal stamp image (3¢ Treasury), a small stamp image (10¢ Interior), and a narrow stamp image (12¢ Interior), the next highest graded stamps derive from the sheet interior (position 4 in the virtual blocks). For a tall stamp image (10¢ Treasury), a large stamp image (3¢ Interior), and an attenuated stamp image (12¢ War), the next highest graded stamps derive from the top or bottom rows of the sheet (position 2 in the virtual blocks). For a short stamp image (12¢ Post Office), a wide stamp image (24¢ Agriculture), or a squat stamp image (1¢ Post Office), the next highest grades derive from the left or right columns (position 3 in the virtual blocks). The virtual block of the 1¢ Post Office (Figure 22) was problematic to grade, because the stamp image is discernibly not a rectangle but a parallelogram; similarly, the 24¢ Agriculture proved to be a trapezoid. The virtual stamps were downgraded accordingly, because each side margin was not of uniform width. As postulated, a grade of 100 is virtually impossible to achieve for some of the Official stamps, even at the corner positions. Of greater significance, though, is that for certain of the Official stamps, a perfectly-centered copy from the sheet interior merits a grade no higher than 75-85, and a perfectly-centered copy from the top or bottom rows earns only a 90. Virtual copies of these stamps, although as well-centered as possible, came up short, because when assessed by a constant standard for the whole series, their margins were deemed subpar. These are the stamps for which an exceptional copy deserves to command the highest premium in the marketplace.



Figure 23. Virtual block of the 3¢ Treasury, a normal stamp image.

Conclusion

In catalogs prepared by Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, when an exceptional copy of a rare stamp comes on the market, the description will sometimes offer detailed comparisons with other examples sold in recent years. Also, the description may mention that

for this particular stamp, an example in an exalted condition grade is “notoriously difficult to find.” Veteran dealers in classic U. S. stamps will sometimes describe a copy as the best they have personally handled. The Official stamps, O1-O120, are for the most part not valuable enough to warrant this sort of analysis. But let us suppose that a patient collector has accepted the challenge to assemble a complete unused set with the best centering and margins possible. He will have studied the quantities issued as tabulated by John N. Luff, and what percentage of these were postally used.¹⁷ From the foregoing presentation, he will have learned that due to variations in the stamp image size, some values will be relatively easy to find, and others virtually impossible. When presented with an exceptional copy of a given stamp, he will then be able to make an informed decision about whether to pay the premium asked.

We have seen that because the Official stamp images vary in size, the gutters between them vary inversely: the larger the stamp image, the smaller the gutter. Thus it would be impossible to establish for the Official stamps a single criterion of a standard margin size for the issue. For this issue, the PSE considers a standard perforation diameter to be 1.00 mm, and a standard margin size to be .7 mm. In actuality, for a perfectly centered Official stamp of normal image size (20.09 mm x 25.24 mm) from the interior of the sheet, typical side margins would .625 mm, while the top and bottom would be .635 mm. But depending on the stamp image size, the side margins can vary from .40 mm on a wide stamp image to .80 mm on a narrow stamp image. The top and bottom margins can vary from .385 mm on a tall stamp image to .87 mm on a short stamp image. On a perfectly-centered corner jumbo, a normal stamp image size will show side margins of 1.33 mm and top and bottom margins of 1.38.

Through the examination of surviving multiples, PSE has established a standard margin size for each basic U. S. stamp issue, and for each stamp evaluated, a deficiency or excess in the margins does factor into the final grade awarded, typically raising it or lowering it one level. However, aside from the “J” for “Jumbo” designation awarded to stamps in the grades of 70 (F) and better, this factor of relative margin size is not otherwise explicitly expressed. As I understand it, the evaluation of centering is based on eight measurements taken in the margins, and some mathematical formulae to relate balanced margins (balanced top to bottom, and right to left) vs. “boxed” margins (all four sides equal). Stamps off-center left to right, versus top to bottom, are downgraded more harshly, because the eye detects this imbalance more readily. This is a strict protocol, which multiple expertizers can be trained to perform, as opposed to a visual impression. Because the relative size of the margins is more difficult to quantify, it now contributes less to the final numerical grade awarded. In the market today, with auctions dedicated solely to graded stamps, stamps with wide margins are now getting short shrift, with a stamp graded 100 with ordinary margins vastly outperforming a huge stamp graded 95J.

Some serious advanced collectors use the grading services as a scientific control check for their own visual responses. Others ignore them, and dismiss the whole enterprise as a ploy for marketing expensive stamps to unknowledgeable investors. But some of those complaining loudest about the influence of grading in the stamp marketplace tend to be dedicated postal historians, who never appreciated this particular quest for perfection in the first place. My own preference is for stamps with generous margins, but I have to ponder, how was this taste cultivated? Was it too much exposure to the early Ivy, Shreve, Mader catalogs, printed in luscious full color? In undertaking this research, it has been a revelation to discover how few of my own best Official stamps would ever achieve an exalted grade. I know a few recalcitrant collectors who have yet to meet a jumbo they liked, shunning them as bizarre freaks. Others express a grudging admiration, but committing the necessary

¹⁷ Alan C. Campbell, “The Scarcity of Used United States Official Stamps,” *Chronicle* 165, pp. 38-52.

capital to own them has never been high among their collecting priorities. The traditionalists may view a correction in the market for oversized stamps as a healthy trend. But it is wrong to assume that most of the highest-graded stamps are being sold to unsophisticated investors and not to true collectors. The people who buy them are often passionate, patient, and extremely knowledgeable. My own preference would be for additional refinement in the grading system that would properly honor larger margins, and I understand that at the PSE, there are ongoing discussions toward this end.

Finally, I would like to suggest that the simple observation on which this research was based—that the variable availability of large-margined well-centered Official stamps depends on the underlying stamp image sizes—may be applicable to other classic issues of United States postage stamps. For example, could this be the simple explanation why gem copies of the \$2 Trans-Mississippi are so difficult to find?

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Lester C. Lanphear III and George G. Sayers for reviewing an earlier draft of this article. William A. Litle and Scott Murphy at PSE spent long hours grading my virtual stamp images and explaining the intricacies of their stamp grading system. I am especially indebted to Fran Adams for patiently scanning the material, computing the size of the stamp images, and creating the idealized virtual blocks. ■

EARLY SACRAMENTO PROVISIONAL POSTMARKS AND RATE MARKINGS

STEVEN C. WALSKE AND WILLIAM TATHAM

Early California post offices generally had to design and manufacture their own postal markings, resulting in an attractive array of crude, non-standard devices. Sacramento was no exception to this, and employed three different provisional postmarks in the August 1849 to April 1850 timeframe. Following this period, Sacramento adopted a series of circular datestamps which generally conformed to normal United States (US) postal markings of the period. This study employs a census of 58 Sacramento covers from the provisional postmark period to determine the patterns of usage of these early postmarks, in corroboration with the historical record. The cover census has been compiled from literature, auction listings, and examination of collections. The census data is arranged chronologically. For convenience in presentation, the data has been divided into two groupings. Table 1 lists covers bearing manuscript and straight-line markings, and Table 2 lists covers bearing the oval markings that followed them.

Establishment of the United States Post Office at Sacramento

News of the war between Mexico and the US reached Mexico-controlled California in July 1846. This precipitated a series of small local military engagements. By January 1847, all of Upper California was under US control.¹ California was ceded to the US as part of the February 2, 1848, Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and formally came under US jurisdiction at that time. On November 1, 1848, William Van Voorhies was named Special Postal Agent for California and Oregon, and his arrival in San Francisco on February 28, 1849, inaugurated the US postal system in California. Voorhies' replacement, Colonel Allen, arrived in San Francisco on June 13, 1849, and immediately began expanding the California postal system.² His travels took him to Sacramento sometime in July, when he established the post office there.³ In confirmation, the August 1, 1849, *Placer Times* of Sacramento reported that "we learn that Henry E. Robinson, Esq. has been officially appointed Postmaster for Sacramento City."⁴

Early Sacramento Postmarks

Accordingly, the Sacramento post office began operation in July-August 1849. At the outset, it had no postal supplies and, like many other early California post offices, initially used manuscript postmarks and rate markings. The earliest recorded Sacramento manuscript postmark is dated August 7, 1849, and is shown in Figure 1. This cover was photographed by Stanley Ashbrook in 1935, but has not been seen on the philatelic market since. Internally datelined July 30, 1849, it bears a manuscript postmark, apparently in

¹ Jesse L. Coburn, *Letters of Gold*, (USPCS: New York, 1984), pp. 15-16.

² Coburn, pg. 46.

³ M.C. Nathan, "Early Sacramento, California Post Office Cancellations," *Stamps*, July 8, 1950, pp. 50-53.

⁴ Nathan, pg. 50.



Figure 1. The earliest recorded Sacramento manuscript postmark, on a letter posted August 7, 1849 and sent to Goodings Grove, Illinois, with 40¢ transcontinental postage due, as indicated by the manuscript “40.” (Ashbrook photo courtesy of Michael Perlman.)

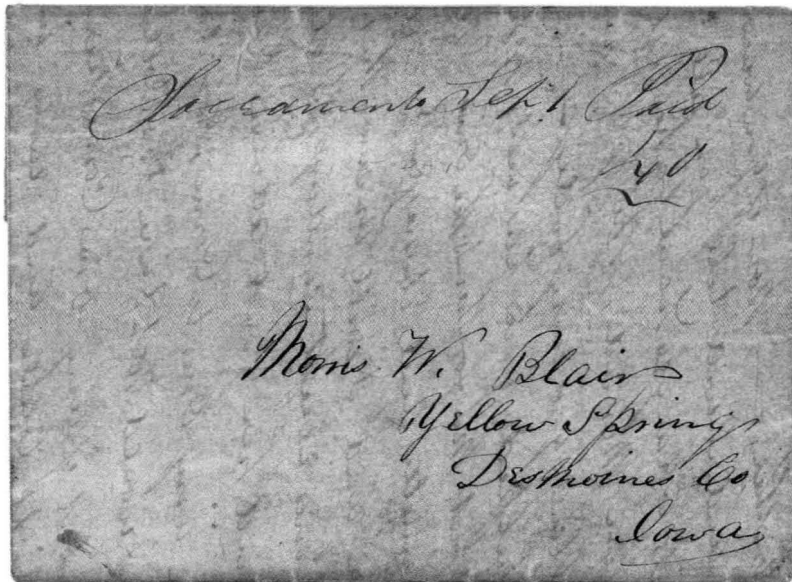


Figure 2. Letter posted at Sacramento on September 1, 1849 and sent to Yellow Spring, Iowa, with 40¢ transcontinental postage pre-paid, as indicated by the manuscript “Paid 40.”

black, which reads “Sacramento City Aug 7th.” Addressed to Illinois, it was rated for 40¢ due per the manuscript “40,” representing the half-ounce transcontinental rate. It left San Francisco on September 2 aboard the Pacific Mail Steamship Company (PMSC) steamship *Panama*, which arrived in Panama on September 22.⁵ After an overland journey across the

⁵ All steamship sailing dates in this article are drawn from Theron J. Wierenga, *United States Incoming Steamship Mail, 1847-1875*, (USPCS: New York, 2000), Appendices II and III.

Date	Rate Marks	Destination	Notes	Source
Black (?) Manuscript "Sacramento City" Postmark				
7-Aug-49	ms 40	Goodings Grove, IL	dl July 30, 1849	Jessup papers/Ashbrook
Red Manuscript "Sacramento" Postmark				
24-Aug-49	red ms 40	Bristol, CT	1849 docket in pencil	Frajola 12/85 (Haas) #24
1-Sep-49	red ms Paid 40	Yellow Spring, IA	dl Sutters Mills Aug 19 '49	Rumsey 4/05 (Straley) #1
5-Sep-49	red ms Paid 80	Perrysburg, OH		Rumsey 4/05 (Straley) #2
20-Sep-49	red ms Paid 40	Greenbush, NY	dl Sacramento City Sep 6/49	Kelleher 11/82 (Polland) #831
24-Sep-49	red ms Paid 40	New York, NY	dl Sacramento Sept 24, 49	Kelleher 1/88 #2710
30-Sep-49	red ms Paid 40	East Lyman, NH	dl Sierra Nevias 1849	Frajola 5/92 #125
30-Sep-49	red ms 40	Marseilles, IL		Levi Records/RAS 8/75 #226
30-Sep-49	red ms Paid 40	Milan, IN	dl Weaverville Sep 23 1849	<i>Western Express</i> 10/65 pg. 15
7-Oct-49	red ms Paid 40	Shelbyville, TN	dl Sacramento Oct 1 1849	Rumsey 4/05 (Straley) #4
Black Straight-line "SACRAMENTO" Postmark				
21-Oct-49	black 40	Covington, KY		<i>Stamps</i> 7/8/50, pg. 51
21-Oct-49	black 2-line PAID 40	Elk Grove, IL		RAS 9/07 (Goldberg) #45
23-Oct-49	black 2-line PAID 40	High Creek, MO		Private collection
24-Oct-49	black 2-line PAID 40	Yellow Spring, IA	dl Cold Spring Oct 21st 49	Kelleher 11/82 (Polland) #832
28-Oct-49	black 40	New Brunswick, NJ	dl California Gold Diggins'	Christies 10/90 (Jarrett) #463
28-Oct-49	black 40	Worcester, MA		Knapp 5/41 #1394
29-Oct-49	black 2-line PAID 40	New York, NY		Rumsey 4/05 (Straley) #6
10-Nov-49	black 2-line PAID 40	Erie, PA		Rumsey 4/07 #132

Table 1. Early Sacramento provisional postmarks, August–November 1849: manuscript and straight-line markings.

Isthmus, it caught the United States Mail Steamship Company (USMSC) steamship *Empire City*, which left Chagres on September 28, and arrived in New York on October 9. There are no arrival markings.

Figure 2 illustrates a letter written by a gold miner at Sutter's Mills on August 19, 1849. It was posted in Sacramento on September 1, and received a magenta manuscript postmark of that date. It was prepaid 40¢ for the transcontinental rate (in this case, to Iowa) and accordingly marked "Paid 40" in magenta. It was carried east on the same steamships that carried the letter in Figure 1.

The handwriting in the postmark in Figure 2 is distinctly different from the handwriting in Figure 1. Table 1 lists ten covers with manuscript postmarks dated from August 7, 1849 to October 7, 1849. Nine of the ten covers show the same magenta handwriting seen in Figure 2, and range in date from August 24 to October 7. Three covers were sent unpaid and marked with a manuscript "40." All the others were marked "Paid 40" in magenta manuscript. Another cover, not in the census, has a Sacramento August 1, 1849 dateline, and an undated "Sacramento City" in red manuscript at the upper left front of the cover. The handwriting of this notation is different from other known manuscript Sacramento postmarks, and the cover has a September 1 San Francisco postmark along with a red manuscript "40" of the style in use at San Francisco at that time. It may have passed through the Sacramento post office, but the San Francisco markings indicate that the letter entered the postal system at San Francisco.

The data in Table 1 indicates that the first fabricated Sacramento postmark, a black



Figure 3. Letter posted at Sacramento on October 23, 1849, and sent to High Creek, Missouri, with 40¢ transcontinental postage prepaid. The straight-line marking on this cover is an example of the first fabricated Sacramento postmark.

straight-line, came into use in October 1849. Figure 3 shows an example of this marking. Addressed to Missouri, this letter was posted in Sacramento on October 23, 1849, and post-marked using the two-line “SACRAMENTO OCT 23 1849” postmark. It was prepaid 40¢ transcontinental postage, and the two-line “PAID 40” rate mark is aligned with the postmark, suggesting that they were locked together into one unit. This letter was carried by the PMSC *California* from San Francisco on November 1 to Panama on November 22. The USMSC *Falcon* then carried it from Chagres on November 27 to Havana on December 2. The USMSC *Ohio* then carried the letter from Havana on January 3, 1850 to New York on January 9. It then proceeded overland to Missouri, where it received a red Paris, Missouri, January 26 forwarding marking. There are no other arrival markings.

Table 1 lists eight examples of letters with Sacramento black straight-line postmarks, used between October 21 and November 10, 1849. Five show the attached “PAID 40” rate marks, and three unpaid letters bear a simple “40” aligned with “SACRAMENTO.”

Postmaster Robinson left office in late 1849, probably in November. The *Placer Times* of January 26, 1850, reported that “The Post Office has re-opened on J Street, opposite the office of Priest, Lee & Co. The Postmaster, Mr. Freeland, deserves the thanks of the business community for his efforts in trying to sustain the Post Office on his own responsibility.”⁶

It is likely that Freeland introduced the Sacramento black oval postmark upon taking office. The census indicates that this device came into use on November 10, 1849. In all, the census includes 40 examples of the oval postmark, used in conjunction with a variety of rate markings. Covers bearing the oval markings are listed in Table 2.

Figure 4 shows an example with a rare integral “40” rate marking. Addressed to Mich-

⁶ Nathan, pg. 51.



Figure 4. Letter posted at Sacramento in November 1849 and sent to Tecumseh, Michigan, with 40¢ transcontinental postage due. Only two examples of this integral 40 oval marking are recorded.

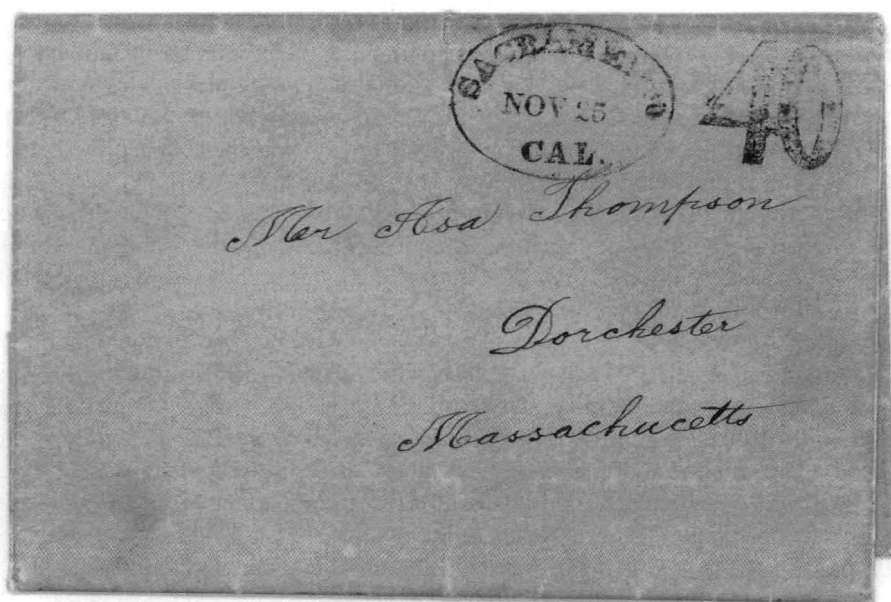


Figure 5. Letter posted at Sacramento on November 25, 1849 and sent to Dorchester, Massachusetts, with 40¢ transcontinental postage due. This bold “40” replaced the integral “40” marking shown in Figure 4.

igan, the letter in Figure 4 was written on October 7, 1849 in a Feather River gold mining camp. It was posted in Sacramento sometime between November 11 and November 14. The actual date is unclear because the second digit in the datestamp was not put into the form, but the alignment shows that it was a two-digit date. The letter was sent unpaid, as indicated by the small “40” placed above the date in the postmark. Only two examples of this integral 40 postmark are known, and the other (in the Wiltsee collection at the Wells Fargo Museum) is dated November 10. This letter was carried by the PMSC *Panama* from San

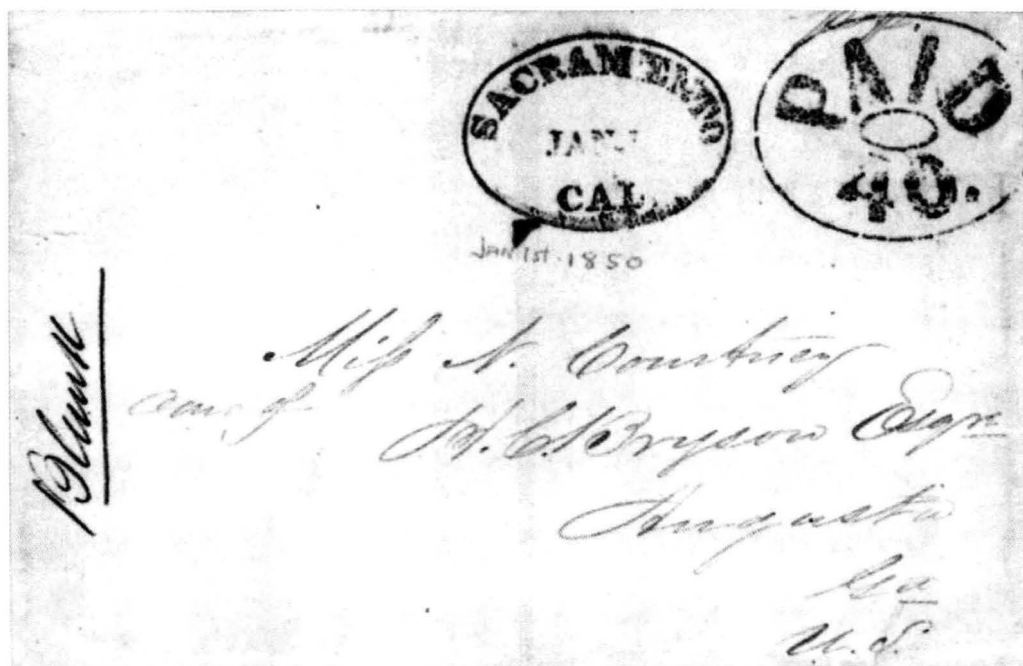


Figure 6. Bold double-oval PAID 40 on a cover posted at Sacramento on January 1, 1850 and sent to Augusta, Georgia. The 40¢ transcontinental postage was clearly prepaid.

Francisco on November 15 to Panama on December 4. It was then carried by the USMSC *Ohio* from Chagres on December 29 to New York on January 9, 1850.

In mid-November 1849, Sacramento introduced a new bold “40” auxiliary due rate marking to go along with the oval postmark device. The integral “40” rate marking shown in Figure 4 was discontinued at this time. Table 2 includes eight examples of the new rate marking, used from November 19, 1849 to January 1, 1850.

Figure 5 shows a letter with the bold “40” rate marking used in conjunction with an oval Sacramento postmark. It was written on November 20, 1849 in the “California gold mines,” and posted in Sacramento on November 25. The letter was sent unpaid, as indicated by the bold “40” due marking. This letter was carried by the PMSC *Unicorn* from San Francisco on December 1 to Panama on December 28. It left Chagres on January 1 aboard the USMSC *Falcon*, which arrived in New Orleans on January 8, 1850. It was received in Massachusetts on January 14.

Prepaid mail was marked differently, so an auxiliary double oval “PAID 40” marking was used concurrently with the auxiliary due markings. Figure 6 illustrates an example of this rare marking, which was lot 10 in the April 2005 Schuyler Rumsey auction. The letter in Figure 6 was posted in Sacramento on January 1, 1850, and was sent prepaid, as indicated by the distinctive double oval “PAID 40” auxiliary rate marking. It was carried by the PMSC *California* from San Francisco on January 15 to Panama on February 4. It left Chagres on February 27 aboard the USMSC *Georgia*, which arrived in New York on March 8, 1850. Only four examples of this rate marking appear in Table 2, used between November 31 (sic), 1849 and April 18, 1850.

The August 14, 1848 US Postal Act established a 12½¢ rate (per half ounce) for mail between points on the West Coast, so a “12½” auxiliary rate marking was also created in late 1849. Seven examples of the bold “12½” auxiliary due marking appear in the census, used between December 7, 1849 and April 24, 1850. The letter in Figure 7 illustrates this

Date	Rate Marks	Destination	Notes	Source
Black Oval "SACRAMENTO CAL." Postmark with Integral Rate Marking				
10-Nov-49	black 40 (above date)	Savannah, MO		Wells Fargo Museum (Wiltsee)
1(?) -Nov-49	black 40 (above date)	Tecumseh, MI	dl Feather R Oct. 7 1849	Private collection/ex-Salzer
Black Oval "SACRAMENTO CAL." Postmark with Auxilliary Rate Markings				
19-Nov-49	black thick 40	?		Fox 7/80 (Chalconer) #39
25-Nov-49	black thick 40	Dorchester, MA	dl Nov 20 1849	Rumsey 4/05 (Straley) #7
27-Nov-49	black thick 40	Mt Pleasant, IA	dl Creek, CA 1849	Kelleher 11/82 (Polland) #834
27-Nov-49	black thick 40	New York, NY		ex-Haas
30-Nov-49	black thick 40	Bordentown, NJ	dl Sacramento Nov 29	<i>Western Express</i> 10/63 pg. 9
31-Nov-49	black DO PAID 40.	Bath, NY	dl Sacramento	Spellman 5/77 #22
7-Dec-49	black thick 12 1/2	San Francisco, CA		Rumsey 12/00 #23
25-Dec-49	black 40x3, ms 1.60	New York, NY	Pr Steamer 1st Jan/50	Rumsey 4/05 (Straley) #8
1-Jan-50	black DO PAID 40.	Augusta, GA		Rumsey 4/05 (Straley) #10
1-Jan-50	black thick 40	Boonsborough, MD		Tatham reference
1-Jan-50	black manuscript 40	Lagrange, GA		Rumsey 4/05 (Straley) #9
1-Jan-50	black thick 40	?, VA	docket ? Valley/1849	Spellman 5/77 #23
7-Feb-50	manuscript 12 1/2	San Francisco, CA		Tatham reference
10-Feb-50	manuscript 40	?	Feather R mines 1-19-50	Fox 3/68 (Denver) #113
13-Feb-50	red manuscript 40	North Goschen, CT	dl Placerville	Rumsey 12/05
14-Feb-50	red manuscript 80	Mt Pleasant, IA		Tatham reference
16-Feb-50	red manuscript 40	Alton, IL	dl Feather River 1850	Kelleher 1/88 #2711
23-Feb-50	red manuscript 40	Amelia, OH		Rumsey 4/07 #133
28-Feb-50	black thick 12 1/2	San Francisco, CA		Private collection
?-Mar-50	black DO PAID 40.	Mt Pleasant, IA		Levi Records/RAS 9/70 #329
4-Mar-50	black thick 12 1/2	San Francisco, CA	dl Mud Spring 1850	Rumsey 12/02 (Pearce) #5
5-Mar-50	black thick 12 1/2 x 2	San Francisco, CA		Tatham reference
6-Mar-50	black thick 12 1/2	San Jose, CA	Expr from Sacramento	Rumsey 4/05 (Straley) #12
12-Mar-50	red manuscript 40	Cleves town, OH	N Fork Amer R 3/1/50	Tatham reference
20-Mar-50	red manuscript 40	Goshen, PA	Union Bar Feb 27 1850	Private collection
22-Mar-50	black thick 12 1/2	San Francisco, CA		Rumsey 4/05 (Straley) #13
24-Mar-50	red manuscript 40	Boston, MA		Spellman 5/77 #24
25-Mar-50	red manuscript 40	?, MI		Levi Records/RAS 8/60 #164
25-Mar-50	red manuscript 80	York, IL	dl Oro, Cala Mar 20 50	Rumsey 4/05 (Straley) #14
28-Mar-50	red manuscript 40	Amelia, OH		Rumsey 4/05 (Straley) #15
28-Mar-50	red manuscript 40	Burlington, VT		Kelleher 11/82 (Polland) #833
28-Mar-50	red manuscript 40	Madison, WI		Rumsey 4/05 (Straley) #16
28-Mar-50	red manuscript 40	?	dl Placerville	Frajola 6/88 #223
4-Apr-50	red manuscript 40	Boston, MA	SF Rec'd APR 9 transit	Kelleher 11/82 (Polland) #836
6-Apr-50	red manuscript 40	Downers Grove, IL		Spellman 5/77 #26
11-Apr-50	red manuscript 40	Springfield, IL		<i>Letters of Gold</i> , pg. 71
18-Apr-50	black DO PAID 40.	Erie, PA		Tatham reference
24-Apr-50	black thick 12 1/2	San Francisco, CA	dl Old Dry Diggings (50)	Frajola 12/85 (Haas) #25

Table 2. Early Sacramento provisional postmarks, November 1849 through April, 1850: oval markings.

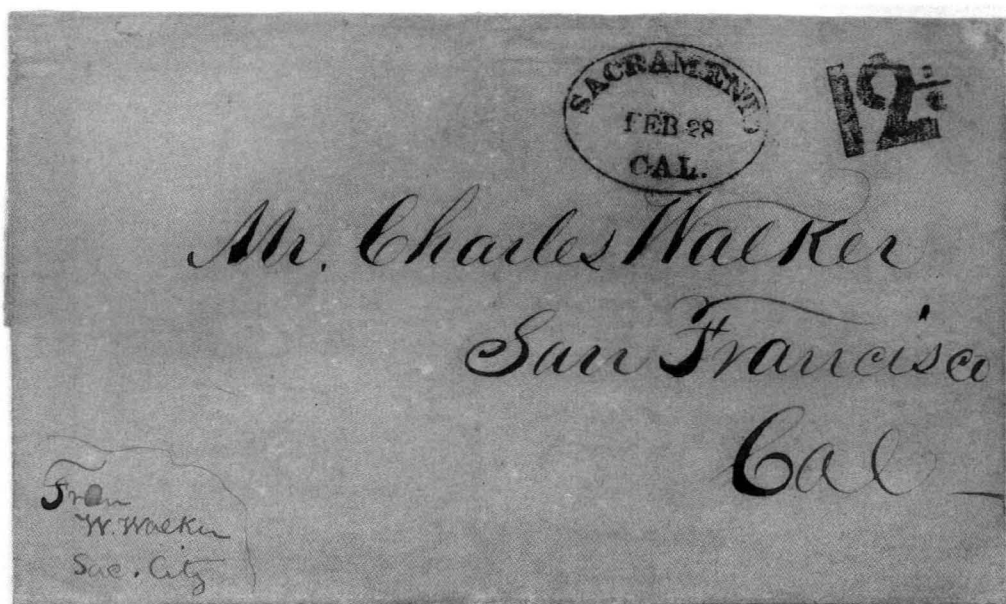


Figure 7. Letter posted at Sacramento on February 28, 1850 and sent to San Francisco with postage due; 12½¢ was the rate for mail between points on the Pacific coast.



Figure 8. Letter posted at Sacramento on March 20, 1850 and sent to Goshen, Pennsylvania with 40¢ transcontinental postage due, as indicated by the manuscript “40.”

marking. It was posted in Sacramento on February 28, 1850, where it was rated for 12½¢ due for the postage to San Francisco.

In January 1850, the bold black “40” due rate marking was replaced by manuscript due rate markings, probably because the canceling device was lost or broken. Figure 8 shows a manuscript “40” used in conjunction with the Sacramento oval postmark. Some

deterioration of the oval postmark is evident.

The letter in Figure 8 was written on February 27, 1850, at “Union Bar, North Fork of American River,” and posted in Sacramento on March 20. The letter was sent unpaid, as indicated by the manuscript red “40” due marking. This letter was carried by the PMSC *California* from San Francisco on April 1 to Panama. It left Chagres on April 29 aboard the USMSC *Georgia*, which arrived in New York on May 7, 1850.

The latest known use of the Sacramento oval postmark in the census is April 24, 1850. The earliest known use of the first Sacramento one-ring circular datestamp is April 26, 1850, so this marks the end of Sacramento’s provisional datestamp period.

The authors would appreciate information on any covers from the provisional postmark period not recorded in the census data in Tables 1 and 2. A comprehensive census forms a good basis for accurate entries in the *American Stampless Cover Catalog*, which the United States Philatelic Classics Society is in the process of updating. ■

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**POSTAL RATES AND DENOMINATIONS OF THE 1875 AND 1895 DESIGN
NEWSPAPER AND PERIODICAL STAMPS**

WILLIAM E. MOOZ

At the close of the Civil War, the Post Office Department began to compete for the business of transporting bulk shipments of newspapers and periodicals. The first Newspaper stamps were issued in 1865 and were used until about 1869, when they were discontinued and the postage was collected in cash. That system failed due to lack of accountability. The Post Office then decided to get serious about this source of revenue, and designed a special series of stamps that could be used to pay for shipments of up to one ton of bulk newspapers. These stamps were issued in 1875, and are identified by the Scott numbers PR9-PR32.

The denominations of these stamps were decided very carefully based on three considerations. The first consideration was that the rates to be accommodated were 2¢ per pound for publications published at least weekly, and 3¢ per pound for publications published less than weekly. The second consideration was that any weight of shipment, in one pound increments, could be accommodated. Last, the denominations were contrived so that any weight could be paid for by using no more than five stamps. This requirement might have been dictated by the fact that the stamps were to be affixed to a receipt book, in which each shipment was allotted a fixed space for the stamps. Five stamps completely filled this space. A portion of a page from a receipt book used for the 1875 issue, showing space for calculations at both the 2¢ rate and the 3¢ rate, is shown in Figure 1.

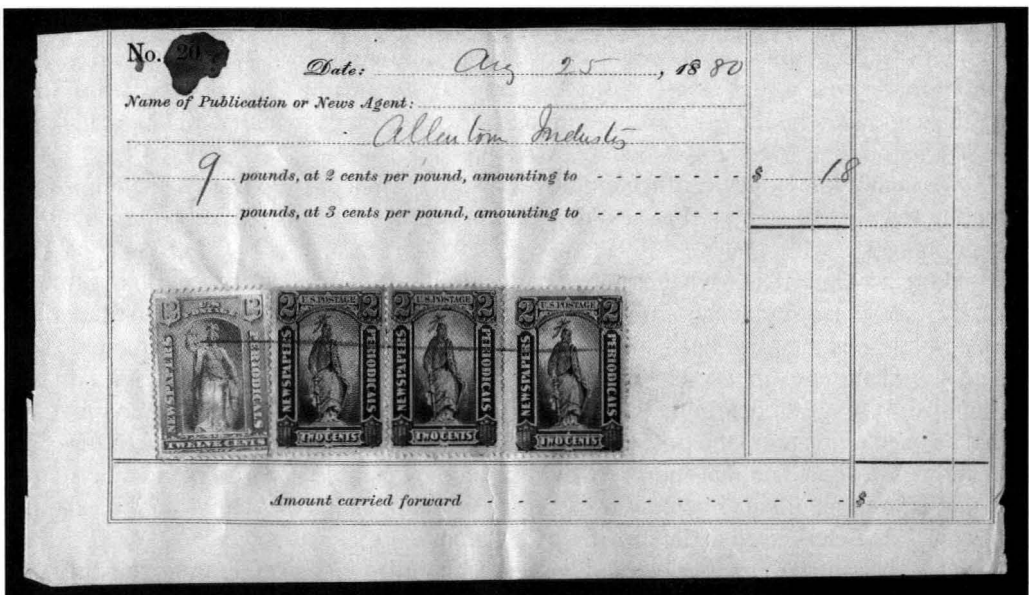


Figure 1. Portion of a page from a Post Office receipt book used to record bulk shipments of periodicals. This format provided space for payments at either the 2¢ or the 3¢ per pound rate. The 1875 Newspaper stamps (a 12¢ rose and three 2¢ black) here affixed represent 18¢ paid to ship nine pounds of a publication called *Allentown Industry*.

Fulfilling these requirements resulted in an eloquent system of denominations that was almost certainly the result of a careful mathematical exercise. There were 24 stamps in the series, with the following denominations: 2¢, 3¢, 4¢, 6¢, 8¢, 9¢, 10¢, 12¢, 24¢, 36¢, 48¢, 60¢, 72¢, 84¢ and 96¢; and \$1.92, \$3, \$6, \$9, \$12, \$24, \$36, \$48 and \$60. This 1875 issue was printed by the Continental Bank Note Company (CBNC).

Note that all of these denominations except for the 3¢ and 9¢ stamps represent even numbers, to pay for the 2¢ rate. The two odd denominations, 3¢ and 9¢, were required to allow for the 3¢ rate.

Examples of how the stamps were used are shown in Table 1, for various weights, to accommodate the 2¢ rate. The design of the system is apparent in this table, and can be

Weight in pounds	Postage at 2¢/lb	First Stamp	2nd Stamp	3rd Stamp	4th Stamp	5th Stamp	Total
1	0.02	0.02					0.02
5	0.10	0.10					0.10
10	0.20	0.12	0.08				0.20
20	0.40	0.36	0.04				0.40
500	10.00	9.00	0.96	0.04			10.00
501	10.02	9.00	0.96	0.06			10.02
502	10.04	9.00	0.96	0.08			10.04
975	19.50	12.00	6.00	0.96	0.48	0.06	19.50
976	19.52	12.00	6.00	0.96	0.48	0.08	19.52
977	19.54	12.00	6.00	0.96	0.48	0.10	19.54

Table 1. Examples of the use of the newspaper-stamp denomination scheme.

extended to the point where the very high denominations come into play. For example, a shipment of 822 pounds would require postage amounting to \$16.44 at the 2¢ rate. This could be made up of one \$12 stamp, one \$3 stamp, one 96¢ stamp and one 48¢ stamp. Shipping the same weight at the 3¢ rate required \$24.66 in postage, which could be made with one \$24 stamp, one 60¢ stamp, and one 6¢ stamp.

We do not know if post office employees were given a chart to use for the purpose of selecting the correct stamps. Perhaps they were given a set of instructions on making the proper choices.

Human nature being what it is, we can imagine that the post office employees who actually used these stamps soon found that it was possible to employ other combinations of denominations than had been suggested by the design of the system. For example, a six pound shipment was supposed to use a single 6¢ stamp, but could also be paid for with two 3¢ stamps. If the right denominations of stamps were not at hand, alternate denominations could be used to make up the postage required. Figure 1 illustrates an example of this. The scheme was designed so that the 18¢ would be paid by using a 12¢ stamp and a 6¢ stamp. But that amount could also be paid by using a 10¢ stamp and a 6¢ stamp. In the example in Figure 1, the clerk used a 12¢ and three 2¢ stamps.

This scheme presumably worked well enough until 1879. At that time, the bulk rate was changed to a uniform 2¢ per pound. The result of this change was that only even denominations were needed. The 3¢ and the 9¢ stamps were no longer necessary. It was decided to discontinue them, but to maintain the other denominations.

Concurrent with this rate change, the printing contract was awarded to the American Bank Note Company (ABNC). ABNC began printing and delivering the stamps in Sep-

Post Office at _____

Amount brought forward - - - - - \$ 1.4

No. 3 Date: April 30, 1880.

Name of Publication or News Agent: Allen's Industrial

4 pounds, at 2 cents per pound, amounting to - - - - - \$ 10




Figure 2. After the bulk rate was changed to a uniform 2¢ per pound, the receipt sheets were simplified to reflect this. This form bears five 2¢ stamps representing a five-pound shipment at 2¢ per pound. The five stamps just fill the space allotted on the form.

tember, 1879, and this printing initially omitted both the 3¢ and the 9¢ denominations. The CNBC plates were used for this printing, which kept the CNBC marginal makings. Although the 3¢ denomination was no longer required and was initially deleted, it was included in deliveries by ABNC from June 1885 onwards until September 1894. These must have been used in pairs. Their inclusion was obviously not required, and the fact that they were included (and regularly ordered by postmasters) hints that the original scheme of denominations was beginning to fray. This 1879 issue is identified as Scott numbers PR57-PR79. The receipt books changed with this issue, dropping reference to the 3¢ rate. A portion of a receipt-book page in the new format is shown in Figure 2. Figure 2 also shows how postage could be paid by a combination of stamps not envisioned in the denomination plan.

In 1885 a second rate change was made, and the rate was dropped to 1¢ per pound. The original set of stamps issued in 1875 could accommodate all weights of shipments except for one pound, for which a 1¢ stamp was required. Accordingly, a 1¢ stamp (Scott PR81) was designed with the same format as the existing 2¢ stamp. The marginal marking is that of ABNC. The first deliveries of this 1¢ stamp were made in June 1885. With the addition of the 1¢ stamp, a 3¢ denomination was no longer required, but it was continued anyway. The 1¢ denomination was printed in 1885, with eight other denominations that were presumably required to fill the needs of the system. This 1885 ANBC-printed set is identified as Scott PR81-PR89.

By 1894, it was apparently determined that the denominations of the 1875 issue, as modified by the addition of the 1¢ stamp and the deletion of the 9¢ stamp, were no longer appropriate for the prevailing rate and the experience gained with various weights of shipments. Accordingly, a new set of stamps was designed that had a much simpler array of denominations. There were 12 stamps in the new set, with denominations of 1¢, 2¢, 5¢, 10¢, 25¢ and 50¢; and \$2, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100. The eloquence of the design of the 1875

denominations was consigned to history, and determining combinations of the various denominations to make up the required postage was presumably left to post office employees. The new set of stamps was first issued in 1894, but is popularly known as the 1895 issue. It first appeared on unwatermarked paper as Scott PR102-PR113, and was subsequently issued on watermarked paper as Scott PR114-PR125.

Now there was the question of a transition from the 1875 designs and denominations to the 1895 designs with the different denominations. While this might have been fairly simple under ordinary circumstances, there was a complication. On July 1, 1894, the printing contract for these stamps had been awarded to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) so there was the additional transition from ABNC to the BEP.

Several factors came into play. The BEP had no experience printing stamps, and was

	Three quarters ending 3-31-1895		First Q 1895		Three quarters ending 3-31-1895		First Q 1895
	1875 ANBC	1875 BEP	1895 BEP		1875 ANBC	1875 BEP	1895 BEP
1¢	45,936	569,914	157,880	96¢	64,523	7,827	
2¢	111,618	393,182	147,410	\$1.92	13,650	0	
3¢	48,150	0		\$2			16,973
4¢	63,829	344,371		\$3	23,756	9,215	
5¢			158,750	\$5			6,140
6¢	40,545	9,705		\$6	12,745	5,250	
8¢	70,400	0		\$9	3,640	0	
10¢	90,888	275,432	124,940	\$10			2,528
12¢	44,521	157,404		\$12	10,215	0	
24¢	29,486	142,764		\$20			885
25¢			70,630	\$24	5,085	0	
36¢	4,390	9,935		\$36	595	0	
48¢	19,625	0		\$48	1,087	0	
50¢			50,575	\$50			15
60¢	28,498	45,732		\$60	8,115	0	
72¢	10,350	0		\$100			1,515
84¢	39,700	0					

Table 2. Newspaper stamp deliveries, 1894-95.

perhaps a bit nervous about this. So, in preparation for this new role, the Third Assistant Postmaster General had placed an order with ABNC on March 7, 1894 for the following: one sheet of each denomination, printed; one sheet of each denomination, printed and gummed; and one sheet of each denomination, printed, gummed, and perforated. These included both the 1¢ and 9¢ denominations, the only set to include both of these denominations. This set has an unusual history that is detailed in a previous article. It is unlisted in the Scott catalog, and has no Scott number identification.¹

The BEP was presumably studying these examples after the commencement of their contract in preparation for printing stamps. But as they were doing this there was a need for stamps at the various post offices, and orders were placed for stamps with the office of the Third Assistant Postmaster General. ABNC had some of the stamps that were needed on hand, and these were shipped to the post offices, even after the BEP contract took ef-

¹ Mooz, William E., "1894 Newspaper Stamps are Unlisted," *The American Philatelist*, Vol. 103, No. 8, August 1989.

fect, and as late as the quarter ending March 31, 1895. The new 1895 issue plates were not quite ready, so the BEP was also pressed into printing some of the 1875 design stamps from plates that they had from ABNC. The stamps printed were the 1¢, 2¢, 4¢, 6¢, 10¢, 12¢, 24¢, 36¢, 60¢ and 96¢ denominations, and the \$3 and \$6 dollar stamps. This set is known as the 1894 issue, Scott numbers PR90-PR101. However, after printing these, the plates for the 1895 issue became available, and the BEP printed this new set, which was issued on February 1, 1895. The result was that in the three quarters ending March 31, 1895, there were stamps supplied to the post offices of three different types. There were ABNC-printed 1875-design stamps, BEP-printed 1875-design stamps, and BEP-printed 1895-design stamps. The quantities and denominations of these three shipments are shown in Table 2. The data is from John Luff's book.²

We do not know how the interaction among these different issues played out with the use of the stamps. Post office employees who used the stamps were almost certainly unaware that there was a difference between the 1875 design stamps printed by ABNC and BEP. And although we have no recorded evidence for it, it seems likely that postmasters were directed to use the 1895 issue in preference to the 1875 designs, as soon as they had received the newer issue. In any case, the 1875 designs printed by BEP seem to have had extremely limited use. They are very scarce stamps, and particularly so in used condition. This scarcity is probably at least the result of the combination of stamps originating from three different sources during the three quarters ending March 31, 1895. The 1895 issue was the last issue of stamps created specifically for the shipment of newspapers and other periodicals.■

² Luff, John N., *The Postage Stamps of the United States*, New York, The Scott Stamp & Coin Co., Ltd., 1902

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THE NEW YORK HERALD AS A PHILATELIC RESEARCH TOOL

THERON J. WIERENGA

Sailing data and other information obtained from period newspapers is of great value to postal history students. Walter Hubbard and Richard F. Winter covered this subject in detail in their book, *North Atlantic Mail Sailings, 1840-75*.¹ I have used a number of newspapers over the years, but one of my primary sources has always been the *New York Herald*. No other newspaper of the period contains as much detailed maritime information.

Background on the *New York Herald*

James Gordon Bennett, Sr., founder, editor and publisher of the *New York Herald*, was an ardent supporter of maritime commerce. Major ship, and later steamship, arrivals in the port of New York were reported in detail in his newspaper, along with dates, notable persons on board, and important news they carried. In addition, there was a maritime intelligence column, frequently several columns, detailing ship arrivals and departures, captain's names, origins, destinations, agents and owners. Other headings in this column gave details of ships spoken at sea, reports on whalers, information on navigation and hazards at sea, lighthouses, arrivals and departures at other United States and foreign ports and other miscellaneous information.

Figure 1 shows a photograph of James Gordon Bennett, Sr. (1795 – 1872). He is not to be confused with his son James Gordon Bennett, Jr., who later took over the reins of the paper. It was the son, a flamboyant character to say the least, who sent Henry Stanley to Africa to search for Dr. Livingston.

The stereo view in Figure 2 shows the United States Barge Office, which was located at the foot of Whitehall Street, at the southern-most point on Manhattan Island, the southeastern tip of what is now Battery Park. Figure 3 is the reverse of the stereo view, showing the description of the subject pictured. This view probably dates from the last quarter of the 19th century. In the 1890s, while the Ellis Island facility in New York harbor was under construction, the Barge Office was used for receiving immigrants.

Of postal historical interest in Figure 2 is the building in front of the Barge Office, a small structure with a wooden sidewalk in front. The sign on this little building reads "SHIP NEWS OFFICE/NEW YORK HERALD." It was from this building that the *New York Her-*

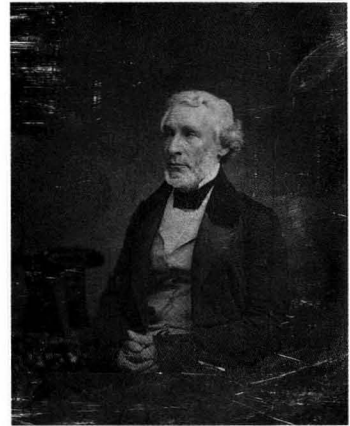


Figure 1. James Gordon Bennett, Sr. (1795-1872), founder, editor and publisher of *New York Herald*.

¹ Walter Hubbard and Richard F. Winter, *North Atlantic Mail Sailings, 1840-75* (Canton, Ohio: U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., 1988), pp. 1-4.



Figure 2. Stereo view of the U.S. Barge Office, at the foot of Whitehall Street, New York. The small building in front is the *New York Herald* ship news office.

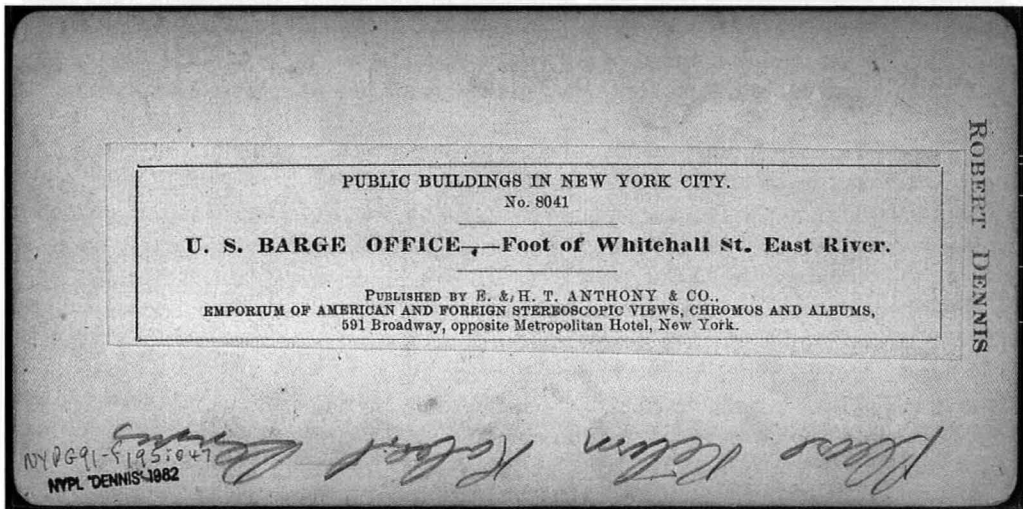


Figure 3. Reverse of the Figure 2 stereo view, identifying the subject shown.

ald collected the volumes of data it printed daily in its Maritime Intelligence column and often as front-page news.

Example of Using the *New York Herald* to Explain a Cover's Inscription.

Three covers, all from the same correspondence and all carried “Via Nicaragua,” illustrate how the *New York Herald* can be the key to unlocking significant information about them. These covers almost certainly originated in San Francisco, but because they were sent over the Nicaragua route, they never entered the San Francisco post office and thus bear no San Francisco postal markings. Such covers were carried privately to Nicaragua and first reached a U.S. post office when they arrived at New York.²

² Stanley Ashbrook, *The United States One Cent Stamp of 1851-57* (New York, H. L. Lindquist, 1938), Vol. II, pg. 265.

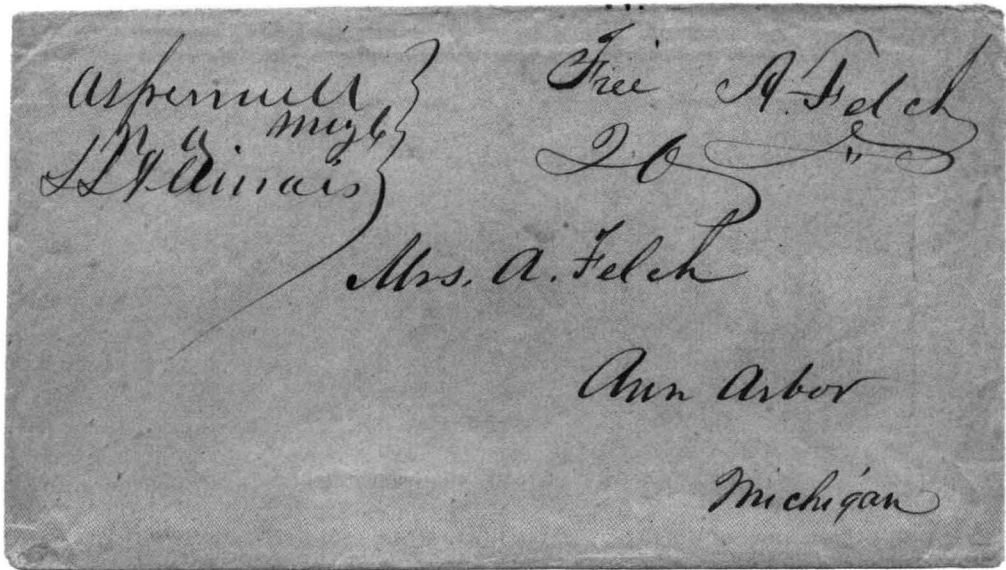


Figure 4. Letter probably from San Francisco to Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1853. Mail agent J. C. Babcock is believed to have written the inscription “Aspinwall NG May 4 SS Illinois.” The steamship *Illinois* arrived at New York May 14, 1853. Alpheus Felch’s free frank was not accepted; New York charged the 20¢ steamship rate from Aspinwall.

The envelope in Figure 4 is inscribed in the upper right corner, “Free A. Felch.” The upper left corner bears an inscription reading, “Aspinwall NG May 4 SS Illinois” with a wavy line to the right. Arrival information found in the *New York Herald* and an analysis of the handwriting can be used to deduce that mail agent J.C. Babcock most likely wrote the inscription in the upper left corner.

Alpheus Felch (Figure 5) was the fourth governor of Michigan, serving from 1846 to 1847. From 1847 to 1853 he was United States Senator from Michigan. At the end of his senate term, in March 1853, President Pierce appointed Felch to be one of the commissioners to settle the Spanish and Mexican land claims in California as provided under the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.³ He went to California in May 1853, and was made President of the Commission. Felch did not return to Ann Arbor until January 1856.⁴

Figure 6 illustrates a second cover, also inscribed, “Free A. Felch,” which helps in analyzing the Figure 4 cover. Felch often used a stylized letter “A” in his free frank that was different from the “A” he used in other contexts. For example, in Figure 4, the “A” in “Mrs. A. Felch” is decidedly different from that used in his free frank, but similar to those used in the address when writing “Ann Arbor.” In Figure 6 he used both styles of “A” in the address, sometimes using the same “A” in his free frank.

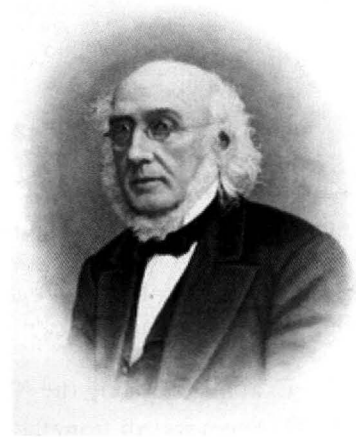


Figure 5. Alpheus Felch, Michigan governor, 1846 to 1847, and U.S. Senator from Michigan, 1847 to 1853.

³ <http://www.memoriallibrary.com/MI/LivIngPB/gov~105-142.htm#Felch> (last viewed 23 September 2007).

⁴ *Ibid.*

The cover in Figure 4 was not accepted at New York as free of postage since Felch was no longer a Senator. It was rated with a manuscript "20" (below the free frank) for the steamship rate from Aspinwall before December 1856. The free frank in Figure 6 was accepted for unknown reasons. The New York clerk marked the face of the envelope **STEAM/SHIP** and **FREE**.

An important question concerns the inscription in the upper left of Figure 4. Is this inscription that of the mail agent on board the steamship *Illinois* or is it a docketing notation of the sender or recipient of the letter? While the "A" in Aspinwall appears similar to that in "Mrs. A. Felch," the handwriting is different. The letters are more closely spaced than those in Felch's handwriting. There is also the squiggly line at the right, which often is seen in conjunction with a town mark or postal marking. Additionally, there is the reference to the "SS Illinois." This endorsement has all the indications of one made by a mail agent.⁵ Much like a town mark, its function was to indicate how the letter entered the U.S. mails.

The United States Mail Steamship Company steamer *Illinois* cleared Aspinwall on May 5, 1853, at 7:30 p.m., arrived at Kingston on May 7 at 6:30 p.m., cleared Kingston on May 9 at 6:00 a.m. and arrived at New York on May 14 late at night.⁶ She brought the San Francisco mails of April 17. In the passenger list of the *New York Herald* is "J C Babcock (mail agent)." This is the person who most likely inscribed the endorsement "Aspinwall N G. May 4 SS Illinois" on Figure 4.

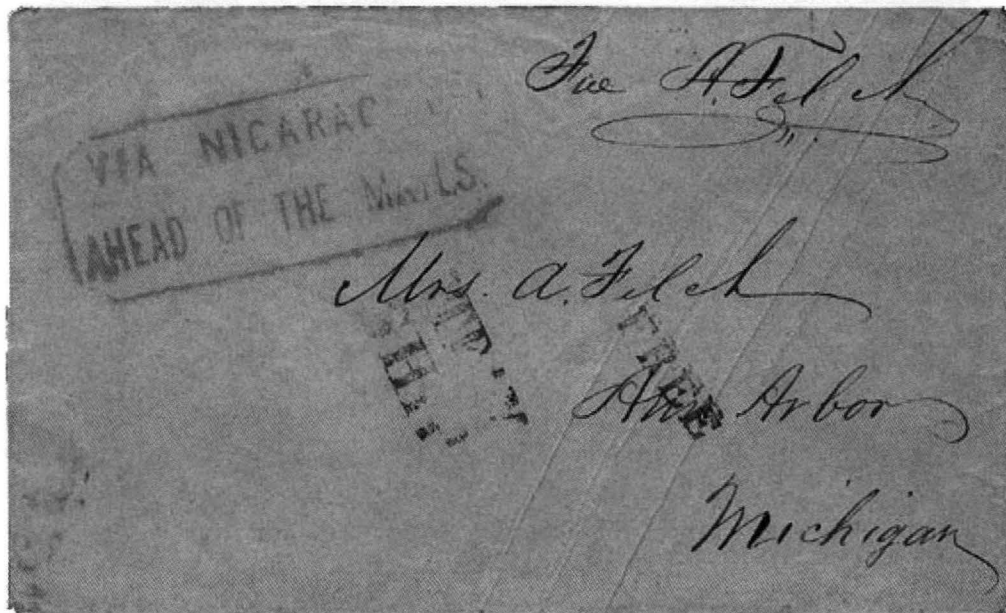


Figure 6. Undated envelope from San Francisco to Ann Arbor, Michigan, carried over the Nicaragua route to New York. Alpheus Felch's free frank accepted.

Felch's free frank was accepted on the cover in Figure 6. Unfortunately, this cover has no date, but it obviously was carried by a Nicaragua Line steamship since it bears a red boxed handstamp, **VIA NICARAGUA/ AHEAD OF THE MAILS**. The operators of the Nicaragua Line in California used this marking to advertise that their route was faster. It also indicates that this letter was probably mailed after Felch arrived in San Francisco

⁵ See Theron J. Wierenga, *United States Incoming Steamship Mail 1847 – 1875, Second Edition* (Austin, Texas: U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., 2000), Chapter XI, for additional examples of mail agent endorsements.

⁶ *New York Herald*, May 15, 1853, pg. 1.

since students of the Nicaragua route believe that a majority of the “Via Nicaragua” markings were applied in the steamship’s office in San Francisco.⁷ If his free frank had not been recognized on this unpaid letter it would have been rated as a ship letter.

Figure 7 is a similar cover with Felch’s free frank. It also bears a red boxed **VIA NICARAGUA/ AHEAD OF THE MAILS**. In this case, the New York clerk did not recognize Felch’s free frank and applied a black **NEW-YORK/SHIP/OCT 10/7 cts** datestamp. The postage due of 7¢ was the ship rate for a letter addressed to a town beyond the port of arrival (2¢+5¢). Unpaid letters carried by the Nicaragua Line into New York were rated as ship letters. The October 10 date is sufficient to establish the year of the letter as 1853. On

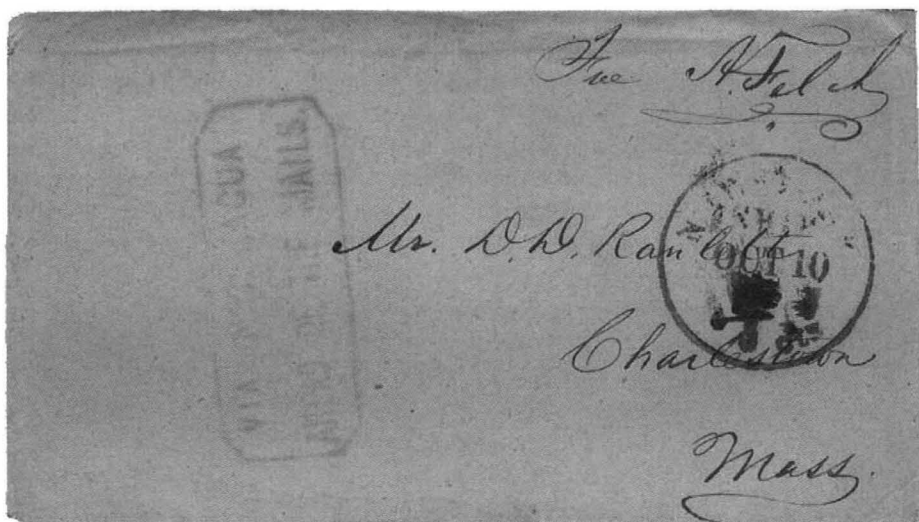


Figure 7. Undated envelope from San Francisco to Ann Arbor, Michigan, carried by steamship *Star of the West* from San Juan del Norte, Nicaragua, on October 1, 1853. Alpheus Felch’s free frank not accepted. New York charged 7¢ postage due: 2¢ ship letter fee plus 5¢ postage for up to 300 miles.

October 9, 1853, Vanderbilt’s Independent Line steamship *Star of the West* arrived at New York from San Juan del Norte, Nicaragua, departing about October 1.⁸ No other October arrival of the Nicaragua Line during the period of their operation is appropriate. Undoubtedly, it was confusing to mail clerks to keep up with those eligible for free franking privileges. Discrepancies found on free-franked mail are not unusual.

Finding Maritime Data in the *New York Herald*

United States Incoming Steamship Mail 1847-1875, Second Edition contains a significant amount of data from the *New York Herald*, as well as from newspapers in other cities. While the bulk of information on steamship arrivals and departures came from the Maritime Intelligence column of the *New York Herald*, a great deal of other data was found elsewhere in the newspaper. Frequently, major ocean steamship arrivals, whether transatlantic or from the Panama and Havana routes, were front-page news articles. These articles often began with details on the steamship’s arrival and departure from various ports. Sometimes they provided additional data on other steamships with which the arriving steamship had been in contact. The arriving steamship often carried newspapers with news from the area

⁷ Wierenga, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

of the world where the steamship originated or from locations on adjoining routes. The *New York Herald* typically included articles based on reports from these foreign correspondents, which also contained information on steamship arrivals and departures from foreign ports.

Finally, the *New York Herald* reported steamship arrivals and departures in small filler pieces that often appeared at the bottom of a column. The majority of these reported on coastal steamships, mostly on the New York to Charleston and New York to Savannah routes, although other coastal routes were sometimes reported as well.

Assembling the sailing tables in *United States Incoming Steamship Mail 1847-1875, Second Edition* was a two-step process. First, I searched each page of the newspaper for articles on steamship arrivals, small filler items that briefly mentioned coastal steamships, and the lengthy maritime intelligence columns. When I found steamship information, I simply entered it in a word processor under the paper's date without worrying about whether I had recorded previously a specific date of arrival or departure for a given steamship. I also copied as complete quotations important information about incidents involving the steamships. Second, after accumulating several months or more of this data, I made computer searches of each steamship name that I was following. This yielded a listing of arrivals and departures in roughly chronological order, which I then entered into a sailing table. Then I added into the tables information about special circumstances as I came across them in my notes. Since most steamship companies had more than one steamship on a route, I searched for each steamship which I knew the company was using before moving on to another company and their group of steamships. This procedure filled out most tables quite nicely. Even with a missing entry here and there, it was fairly easy to follow a steamship's timeline.

Microfilm of the *New York Herald* is harder to find at local libraries than the more popular *New York Daily Times*. The explanation may be that in 1857 the *New York Daily Times* evolved into the *New York Times*, which of course is still in existence today. Libraries prefer to have a continuous collection of microfilm from a single source that they keep up-to-date. Since the *New York Daily Times* began publication in September 1851, it missed the early years of the transatlantic and Panama-route steamship lines. This prompted me to search for an earlier newspaper with good maritime information, and I settled on the *New York Herald*. While *New York Times'* maritime columns contained useful information on steamship and sailing ship arrivals and departures, the information was not as comprehensive nor as ubiquitous as what appeared in the *New York Herald*.

When using newspaper searches, if sailing or other data on a specific cover does not appear in one newspaper, it is worth checking other newspapers from the same port. The amount of detail varies from paper to paper and from day to day. For information about another port city with steamship or packet boat activity, the early newspapers of that city may contain maritime columns or other helpful information.

The Library of Congress document, *Newspapers in Microform*, is the best reference for locating newspaper microfilm in libraries around the country. In the past, it may have been difficult to find copies of this catalog, but this is not true today. The Library of Congress has made this valuable resource easily available to anyone with an internet connection. It can be viewed page by page or the three volumes can be downloaded from the Library of Congress website by searching for "newspapers in microform." A high-speed connection is useful since the file size of the set of three downloadable documents currently is 277 megabytes. This reference work is in Adobe Acrobat format, and it lists the holdings of newspaper microfilm in various libraries throughout the United States. The newspapers are listed by the city of publication with the dates of microfilm coverage and the libraries containing these holdings. Some foreign newspapers are also listed. A local library can assist in ordering rolls of microfilm through inter-library loan from the libraries listed in *Newspapers in Microform*.■

ROY WEBER 3¢ 1851 ESSAY BOOK ON CD-ROM

JAMES E. LEE

Roy Weber was the consummate philatelic researcher. When he passed away in December of 2005, he left behind a work in progress that rivals the scholarship of Ashbrook and Neinken. Under the title *United States Three Cent 1851 Essays for Postage Stamps And Related Topics*, this has recently been released by our Society as a CD-ROM.

When the original hand-engraved die for the "11-E" essay surfaced in the marketplace, Weber put together a consortium to purchase it and donate it to the National Postal Museum. At the same time he began a comprehensive study all of the essays produced by the various bank note companies for what was to become the 3¢ 1851 stamp. For years he traced the origins of these essays. His diligent research created a book that, while still incomplete, went through 12 major drafts. The conclusions he reached will undoubtedly result in a major revision of the section on 3¢ 1851 essays in the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United Stamps and Covers*.

Weber's work provides background on the essays and their provenance, observations on the historical efforts to catalog them, and notes on the engravers involved. There are additional chapters on paper and ink, on the G.F.C. (Fred) Smillie scrapbook, and on the Shernikow reprints.

The CD-ROM is easy to use. It is divided into four sections which include two different introductions, instructions for use, and a color reproduction of the text. The text is in an Adobe Reader PDF file and includes all 328 pages. When you open the disk you will find a page index on the left side of your screen. The color reproduction is superb and closely matches a hard copy that I received from the author in 2005.

It is my hope that someone will pick up the torch and complete this work. Once the manuscript is finished, it would be a great tribute to Roy Weber to have it published in book form.

***United States Three Cent 1851 Essays for Postage Stamps And Related Topics*, by Roy Weber, released in 2007 as a CD-ROM by the United States Philatelic Classics Society. Available for \$24.95 postpaid from USPCS Product Order, P.O. Box 750368, New Orleans, LA 70175-0368. ■**

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ANSWER TO PROBLEM COVER IN CHRONICLE 215

Our problem cover last issue, shown in Figure 1, was a stampless transatlantic cover mailed from Mantanzas, Cuba, to New York City, with forwarding to London, England, in 1849. All routing and rates on the front are black. There's a manuscript "p Washington" routing across the top, a manuscript "25" in the upper right corner, a hand-stamped "42" in



Figure 1. Problem cover from Chronicle 215, an 1849 stampless cover from Havana to London, via New York. All markings are black. The questions were: What do the numerical markings mean? Where were they applied? What rates do they represent? Where were the rates paid?

the middle, and a manuscript "2" in the lower left corner. A circular British receiving marking ("AW 6 JU 6 1849") is struck in red on the reverse. The cover is addressed to Frederick Huth & Co., care Th. Victor & Duckwitz in New York. The questions were: What do the numerical markings represent and do they correspond? And where were the rates paid?

We received responses from Route Agents Yamil H. Kouri, Jr., and Theron J. Wiereenga as follows: This was an unpaid double-weight letter carried on the contract steamer *Falcon* from Havana to New Orleans, thence overland to New York, where it was handled by the forwarding agents Victor & Duckwitz, who paid the 25¢ (12½¢ x 2) steamship rate represented by the manuscript "25" at upper right.

Victor & Duckwitz then sent the cover unpaid on board the American steamer *Washington* (Ocean Line) to London via Southampton. New York debited 42¢ (21¢ x 2) to Great Britain (black handstamped "42") for transatlantic carriage on board an American steamer. *Washington* arrived Southampton June 7, 1849. The addressee in London was charged 2 shillings (manuscript mark at lower left) postage due.

Route Agent Kouri also pointed out that it was not until July 1849 that the transit fees through the United States could be incorporated into the transatlantic rates on letters to Great Britain. This cover was just too early for that. Thus the sender needed the services of a forwarding agent in New York City.

PROBLEM COVER FOR THIS ISSUE

Our problem cover for this month, shown in Figure 2, is another cover from Cuba to England, in this case from Havana to Sheffield in 1856. The cover is routed (at upper



Figure 2. Our problem cover for this issue, front shown above and reverse below. This is another cover from Cuba to England, this time from Havana to Sheffield in 1856. The handstamped "26" is black and the "1/2½" is handstamped in red ink that has oxidized to brown. What do the hand-stamped "26" and "1/2½" represent?



left) "per Empire City via New York." The handstamped "26" is black and the "1/2½" is handstamped in red ink that has oxidized to brown. On reverse are three markings: a black single-circle "New York Am. Packet Mar 1," a brown circular "Liverpool 13MR V5GA" receiver and a green circular Sheffield receiving mark dated "MR14 1850."

The question is: What do the hand-stamped "26" and "1/2½" represent? ■

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Harmers Roosevelt public auction, 1946.

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ADVERTISER INDEX

Matthew Bennett, Inc.....	.260
Alan E. Cohen.....	.278
Charles G. Firby.....	.342
H. R. Harmer, Inc.....	.344
Leonard H. Hartmann.....	.289
Kristal Kare, Inc.....	.331
James E. Lee.....	.282
Jack E. Molesworth, Inc.....	.262
Mystic Stamp Company.....	.339
Nutmeg Stamp Sales, Inc.....	Inside Front Cover
Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions.....	Inside Back Cover
Shreves Philatelic Galleries, Inc.....	.257
Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc.....	326, Back Cover
Spink.....	.258
Stephen T. Taylor.....	.285

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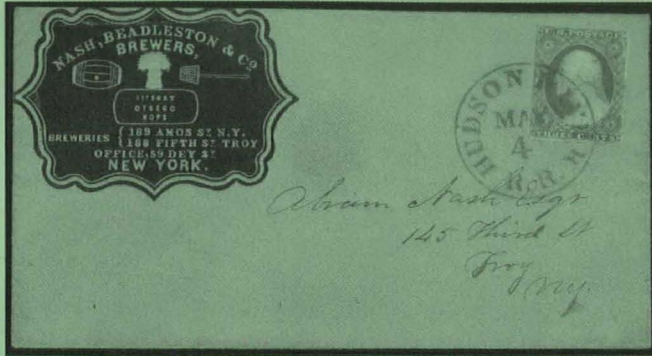
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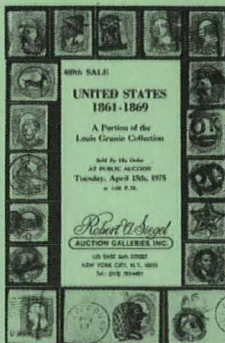
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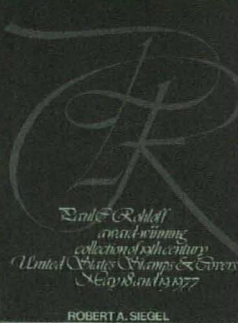
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