

The

Chronicle

of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues



A remarkable block of eight Type V perforated stamps (Positions 53-66R7) showing ink blurs on the head and shoulders of the bust of Benjamin Franklin. David Zlowe explains these features—which he calls relief bruises—in our 1851 section. The top row in this block consists of F relief stamps, the bottom row consists of C relief stamps.

February 2016

Volume 68, No. 1

Whole No. 249

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THE CHRONICLE of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues is published quarterly in February, May, August and November by the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., at 2855 Willowmere Woods Dr., Vienna, Virginia 22180. Periodicals-class postage paid at Madrid, IA 50156 and additional mailing office. Subscription price \$35.00. Printed in U.S.A. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to 12751 W. Alameda Dr., Lakewood, CO 80288.

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The Chronicle

of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues

February 2016
Whole No. 249

Published quarterly in
February, May, August and November

Volume 68
Number 1

\$8.75 Members
\$10 Non-Members

Official publication of the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc.
(Unit 11, A.P.S.) www.uspcs.org

Annual Dues
\$35

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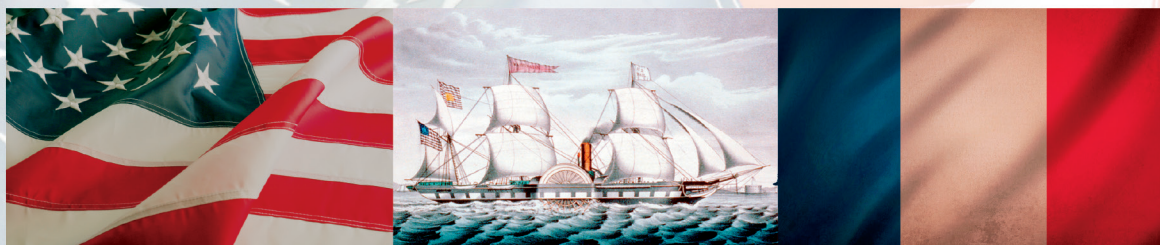
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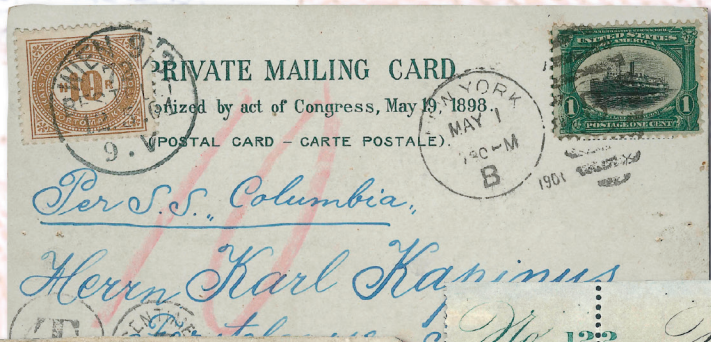
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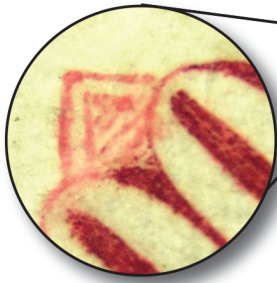
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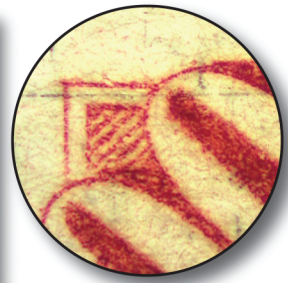


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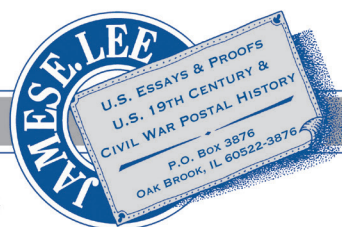
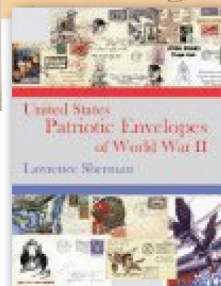
The Various Kinds
Of
United States
Essays and Proofs

By Clarence W. Buzant, D.S., 1955, 1947
Illustrated by James E. Lee, 2015



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IN THIS ISSUE

In our May 2014 issue (*Chronicle* 242), David Zlowe provided a long, thoughtful and in some ways iconoclastic examination of the evolution of the various types of the 1¢ 1851 stamps. That essay went on to win our McDonald Prize, awarded annually by the *Chronicle* Section Editors, for the best *Chronicle* article of the year. In our 1851 section this issue, commencing on page 20, Zlowe returns to the 1¢ Franklins with an important article examining the perforated Type V/Va stamps. In this first installment of a three-part series, Zlowe describes features he calls “relief bruises” that appear on a majority of the Type V/Va stamps. Each of the six reliefs shows its own characteristic bruises, enabling naked-eye differentiation of reliefs, a feat that was previously difficult or even impossible. Our cover this issue features a block from Zlowe’s article that well illustrates the relief-bruise phenomena. Before reading his article, look at the cover and see if you can discern the features under discussion.

Because of the length of this and other articles, assembling this *Chronicle* was more difficult than usual. Even at our technical maximum of 104 interior pages, we had much more material than we could publish. That bodes well for the future, of course, and ultimately makes my job easier. Bumped for lack of space this issue was our Stampless section, which will return to its usual position in May. In the lead-off spot this time, Stampless editor James Milgram makes a guest appearance in our 1847 section, with an article on registered covers bearing 1847 stamps. A full census of such covers (39 in all) accompanies, based in part on information gleaned from the on-line database of 1847 covers maintained by this Society. This follows Milgram’s November piece on stampless registered covers. In future, Milgram will discuss registered covers with 1851 stamps and subsequent stamps.

On page 64, Milgram reappears in our Bank Note section, with a wide-ranging essay that uses covers created by a Cumberland, Maine printer and direct-mail merchant to launch a broader discussion of postmarking devices and postmarking inks, concluding with observations on this subject taken from Postmaster General reports from the 1870s.

In our 1861 section (page 49), Chip Gliedman showcases two Baltimore covers that bear soldier letter endorsements (necessary to enable Civil War soldiers to send letters collect) applied via adhesive labels. Both examples seem to have been created by the same army chaplain. Very unusual.

Michael Mahler is well-known as a specialist in the uses of United States revenue stamps. He has written the definitive book on this subject and one of his exhibition collections won the American Philatelic Society’s Champion of Champions prize. In our 1869 section (page 54), Mahler compares survival rates for scarce classic U.S. covers and on-document uses of scarce classic revenue stamps. The parallels are astonishing, and the accompanying illustrations will take your breath away.

Long-time Society member Gerald Moss has a well-developed collecting interest in plate cracks, a subject he wrote about, from a metallurgical perspective, in *Chronicles* 197,

(concluded on page 104)

**UNOFFICIALLY REGISTERED COVERS
FRANKED WITH 1847 STAMPS**

JAMES W. MILGRAM, M. D.

Introduction

Official registration of mail in the United States began on July 1, 1855, four years after the 1847 stamps were no longer valid for postage. Thus, usage of 1847 stamps took place entirely within the ten-year period (1845-1855) in which unofficial registration was the only type of registration available.

Table 1 (next page) presents a chronological listing of the 39 covers known to show 1847 stamps with some sort of registered marking, which indicated the covers were tracked in the unofficial registry system. The covers date from March 27, 1848 to June 26, 1851, a few days before the rate reduction to 3¢ (prepaid) eliminated the use of 1847 stamps.

For each cover listed, Table 1 shows the date it entered the mails (as indicated by the circular datestamp, with the year taken from contents, docketing or other evidence); the stamp on the cover; the origin and destination; the registry marking(s); and a reference notation that will lead to more information about the cover. The four- and five-digit numbers in the "Reference" column are the cover ID numbers in the census of 1847 covers maintained by this Society as a searchable on-line database.¹

Twelve of the covers are franked with 10¢ 1847 stamps; 27 covers are franked with 5¢ stamps. Since there was no charge for unofficial registration, the stamps in every instance pay letter postage only.

Philadelphia was the first city to mark unofficially registered letters, using a capital letter "R" in two sizes that was applied on incoming registered mail. Outgoing registered mail from Philadelphia was never so marked; the "R" appears only on incoming letters. All but one of the covers in Table 1 was sent to Philadelphia.

All the registered 1847 covers entering Philadelphia received the "R" handstamp struck in blue. During the lifetime of the 1847 stamps, the large "R" was used until around mid-October, 1849. Thereafter (with one exception, discussed below) the small "R" was used. This information is helpful in year-dating the covers, many of which have been disengaged from their content and thus lack docketing. The "R" in both sizes also appears in red, but only on covers from late 1851 until 1855, after the 1847 stamps had been withdrawn and demonetized.

Philadelphia large blue "R"

Five 5¢ 1847 covers and one 10¢ cover are known bearing Philadelphia's large blue "R." Three of the 5¢ covers originated at Havre de Grace, Maryland. Figure 1 shows one of these, which is likely the earliest known registered cover bearing an 1847 stamp. The "HAVRE de GRACE Md. MAR 27" circular datestamp is struck in blue and a matching blue "PAID" is struck squarely on the stamp, which is fresh and very crisply printed. This and the other two covers from Havre de Grace (dated April 11 and June 1) come from the same large correspondence, addressed to a bank cashier, W. L. Schaffer, in Philadelphia. Each has a similar "PAID" cancellation on the stamp, but for all three covers the year is not present. Based mainly on the crisp impressions of the stamps, I am using the presumptive year date of 1848 for all three covers, but 1849 is possible.

Date	Stamp	Origin/destination	Registered marking(s)	Reference
Mar 27, 1848	5¢	Havre de Grace, Md./Phila.	large blue "R"	2832, Figure 1
Apr 11, 1848	5¢	Havre de Grace, Md./Phila.	large blue "R"	21527
Jun 1, 1848	5¢	Havre de Grace, Md./Phila.	large blue "R"	2836
Jun 3, 1848	10¢	Nashville/Phila.	large blue "R"	13671
Mar 27, 1849	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	large blue "R"	Figure 2
May 7, 1849	5¢	Reading, Pa./Wilkes-Barre	ms. "R"	12105, Figure 3
Oct 19, 1849	10¢	Boston/Phila.	small blue "R"	3917, Figure 4
Apr 5, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2286
Apr 13, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2290
Apr 16, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2292
Apr 17, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2293
Apr 18, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2294
Apr 22, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2295
Apr 23, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2296
Apr 27, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	21653
Apr 29, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2299
Apr 30, 1850	10¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2702, Figure 6
May 1, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2300
May 2, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2301
May 6, 1850	10¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2703
May 9, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2305
Aug 7, 1850	10¢	Nashville/Phila.	small blue "R", number	13678
Sep 9, 1850	2-10¢	Boston/Phila.	small blue "R", number	4032
Sep 16, 1850	10¢	Dayton, Oh./Phila.	small blue "R", number	10062
Sep 18, 1850	10¢	Louisville, Ky./Phila.	small blue "R", number	1594
Oct 3, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2350
Oct 4, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2351, Figure 5
Oct 5, 1850	10¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2715
Oct 15, 1850	5¢	Richmond, Va./Phila.	small blue "R", number	14153
Oct 24, 1850	5¢	Richmond, Va./Phila.	small blue "R", number	21419
Oct 25, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2580
Nov 4, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2369
Nov 9, 1850	10¢	Nashville/Phila.	small blue "R", number	13681, Figure 7
Nov 25, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2580
Dec 12, 1850	10¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2719
Dec 17, 1850	10¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2720
Dec 25, 1850	5¢	Baltimore/Phila.	small blue "R", number	2604
Mar 29, 1851	5¢	Wilkes-Barre/Phila.	small blue "R", number, black "Registered"	12171, Figure 8
Jun 26, 1851	5¢	[Providence]/Phila.	large blue "R", number	12866, Figure 9

Table 1. Registered covers franked with 1847 stamps. The fourth column shows the registry markings that appear on the individual covers. The numerals in the "Reference" column are the covers' ID numbers in the on-line census of 1847 covers.

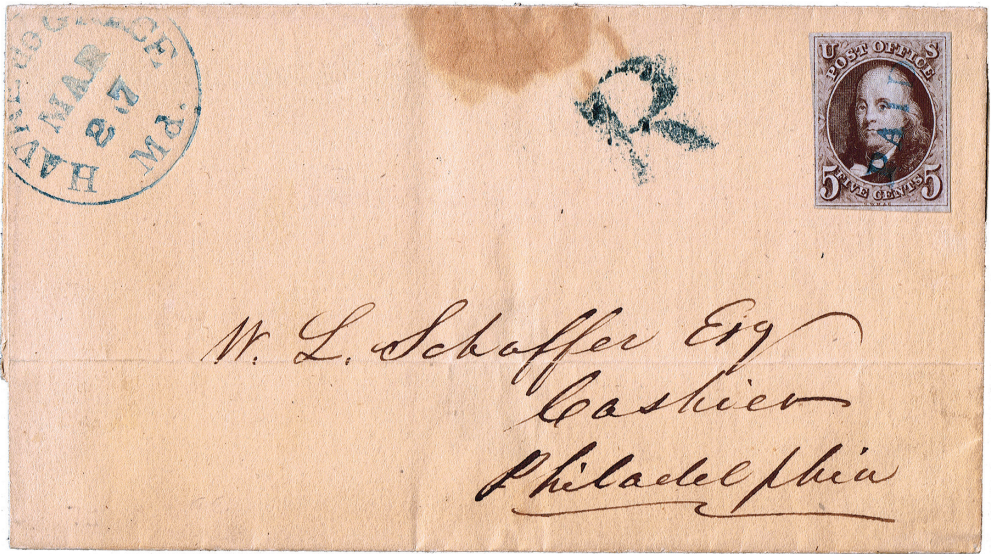


Figure 1. "HAVRE de GRACE Md. MAR 27" (1848) with 5¢ 1847 stamp canceled with blue "PAID." Addressed to a bank cashier, this cover was struck at Philadelphia with the large blue "R," indicating registration. Illustration courtesy Gordon Eubanks.



Figure 2. A recent discovery, this cover is postmarked "BALTIMORE Md. MAR 27" (1849) and bears two strikes of the large Philadelphia "R," one on the 5¢ stamp.

Another March 27 cover with the large "R," shown in Figure 2, is likely from 1849. This is addressed to Dr. Alfred Elwyn in Philadelphia, in his capacity as treasurer of an unnamed organization. A prominent philanthropist and a pioneer in the care of the mentally disabled, Elwyn was treasurer of the American Association for the Advancement of Science from 1849 to 1870. Note that Baltimore pen canceled the stamp, an unusual practice for that city. The cancel is partly obscured, but it may be a cross, symbolic of registration. Philadelphia followed up by using a second strike of its large blue "R" as a further cancellation.

This cover surfaced just a few years ago, sold at a small east-coast antiques auction. Thanks to the Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries for providing this illustration.

Another cover from the era of the large “R,” not illustrated, originated in Nashville, addressed to the Bank of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia. The circular datestamp reads “NASHVILLE TE JUN 3” (1848). The distance between Nashville and Philadelphia is over 300 miles, so a 10¢ stamp was required to pay the single rate of postage. Two other registered 10¢ 1847 covers from Nashville date from 1850 and will be discussed below.



Figure 3. “READING Pa./ MAY 7” (1849) with 5¢ 1847 stamp canceled by manuscript “X” on a cover addressed to Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. The enclosed letter included \$5 in currency. The manuscript “R” at lower left is the earliest registry marking applied at the point of origin to a registered letter franked with postage stamps.

Shown in Figure 3 is the earliest stamp-bearing cover showing a registry marking applied at the office of origin. This cover originated at Reading, Pennsylvania and was sent to Wilkes-Barre. It never passed through the Philadelphia post office. The 5¢ 1847 stamp is tied by a bold manuscript cross cancel. The postmark is a red “READING Pa. MAY 7” (1849) handstamp. Most noteworthy is the manuscript “R” applied at the lower left. The record of stampless registered covers shows other Reading covers with this manuscript “R” and in at least one instance a handstamped “REGISTERED.”² Some of these covers are from the 1847 stamp era, even though they are stampless. Registration markings from Reading all appear on the lower left portion of the cover.

Philadelphia small blue “R”

The second registration marking used at Philadelphia was the small blue “R.” Figure 4 shows a 10¢ 1847 cover from Boston to Philadelphia. The red Boston circular datestamp with integral “10 cts” is dated “19 OCT” (1849). This is the earliest appearance of the small Philadelphia “R” on an 1847 cover. One earlier strike of the marking is known on a stampless cover. Registered covers arriving Philadelphia in October 1849 received the small “R” and no other marking associated with registration. But all subsequent registered covers arriving in Philadelphia show a two-digit registration number in manuscript. The “registered



Figure 4. Philadelphia small blue “R” on 10¢ 1847 cover with “BOSTON/19 OCT/10 cts” and matching grid. This cover dates from 1849 and represents a very early use of the small “R.” Philadelphia began using registration numbers shortly afterwards.

markings” column in Table 1 indicates this. Most of the registered covers with 1847 stamps and the small blue “R” date from 1850. Philadelphia continued to use the small “R” until November 1, 1851, four months after the 1847 stamps had been demonetized.³

More than half the covers in the Table 1, 23 covers in all, originated in Baltimore and were struck with the small Philadelphia “R.” Five of these bear 10¢ stamps and 18 show 5¢ stamps. Figures 5 and 6 are typical examples. Note that both covers show manuscript registry numbers at lower left. On the 5¢ cover in Figure 5, the blurred number says “34.” On the 10¢ cover in Figure 6, the number seems to be “36.”



Figure 5. “BALTIMORE Md. OCT 4” (1850) with 5¢ 1847 stamp tied by red grids. Philadelphia added the small “R” in blue and the manuscript registration number “34.”



Figure 6. The 10¢ 1847 stamp in this cover is canceled with a red “10” and tied by a “BALTIMORE Md. APR 30” (1850) circular datestamp in blue. At Philadelphia the cover received the small blue “R” and manuscript “36” (below the stamp). The letter of the same date enclosed transmittal documents for collection totalling more than \$10,000.

Both covers are addressed to the same Schaffer seen on the Havre de Grace covers, one of which was shown in Figure 1. In fact, this one banking correspondence is the source of the majority of the covers in the Table 1 listing.

Registered 1847 covers not part of this Shaffer correspondence include a September 16 (1850) cover from Dayton, Ohio addressed to Henry Farnum and Co.; two covers from Richmond to Ludlow, Beebe and Co.; a cover from Louisville, franked with a 10¢ 1847 stamp and posted September 18, 1850; and two 10¢ covers from Nashville, dated August 7 and November 9, 1850. The later of these two covers is shown in Figure 7. Along with



Figure 7. 10¢ 1847 stamp on cover with blue “NASHVILLE TENN. NOV 9” (1850). Two matching grids tie the stamp. Philadelphia added the small blue “R” and manuscript “20.”



Figure 8. “WILKES BARRE Pa. MAR 29” together with 5¢ 1847 stamp tied by 7-bar grid and “Registered” straightline. The cover was addressed to Philadelphia where small “R” and registry number “25” were added. This cover shows both origin and receiving registration postmarks. Illustration courtesy Robert A Siegel Auction Galleries.

the very nice 10¢ 1847 stamp, the three blue markings on this bluish-tinted cover make an attractive combination. Note the manuscript registry number “20” at lower left.

The finest registered cover bearing an 1847 stamp is the March 29, 1851 cover shown in Figure 8. This was one of the gems in the Harvey Mirksy collection. Unusually, this cover bears registry markings applied both at origin (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania) and destination (the small Philadelphia “R”). In my article on stampless registered covers in the previous *Chronicle* (see note 2), I illustrated as Figure 19 this same Wilkes-Barre straightline, struck in red on a stampless cover. The strike on the cover in Figure 8 is the only example of a “Registered” handstamp struck on a cover franked with 1847 stamps. Philadelphia’s manuscript registry number is the “25” at lower left between the address lines.

For a brief period in the summer of 1851, Philadelphia revived the large “R” marking. Known covers date from June 24, 1851 to July 12, 1851.⁴ The only 1847 cover showing this usage is the cover illustrated in Figure 9. This is also the latest known registered 1847

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cover, posted just a few days before the letter-rate reduction to 3¢ eliminated need for the 1847 stamps. This cover originated at Providence, where it was put on board the Boston-New York express mail train. The 5¢ 1847 stamp is tied by double pen crosses. The red “EXPRESS MAIL BOSTON” cancellation is dated June 26. Philadelphia applied its large blue “R” and added the manuscript registry number “18,” placed (unusually) at upper left.



Figure 9. 5¢ 1847 stamp tied by double cross manuscript cancellation. This cover with “U.S. EXPRESS MAIL” postmark entered the mails at Providence on 26 June 1851, a few days before the 1847 stamps were obsolete. It shows Philadelphia’s large blue “R” and a registry number “18.” Illustration courtesy Gordon Eubanks.



Figure 10. Large blue “R” on cover with New York Postmaster Provisional stamp tied by manuscript cancel. Circular datestamp reads “NEW-YORK 5 cts 22 JAN” (1846).

Conclusion

On a letter containing valuables, one would think that the sender would prepay the postage. Yet during the lifetime of the 1847 stamps, the evidence of surviving covers suggests that more registered covers were sent stampless, with postage due. The concept of prepayment was just beginning to take hold, and would not dominate until it was made compulsory in 1855. So the number of registered covers bearing examples of the 1847 issue stamps is relatively small, a total of 39 by this census.

One should not forget that the 1847 stamps were not the earliest stamps to appear on registered letters. Our concluding illustration, Figure 10, shows a folded cover on which a New York Postmaster Provisional stamp pays the 5¢ postage to Philadelphia, where the large blue “R” was applied. The date of this cover is January 22, 1846, 178 months before the 1847 stamps came into use.

Endnotes

1. The on-line census of 1847 covers can be accessed at USPCS.org. For more information about the on-line census, see Mark Scheuer, “1847 Cover Census Now On Line,” *Chronicle* 240, pp. 329-35.
2. James W. Milgram, “Registration of Stampless Covers,” *Chronicle* 248 (2015), pp. 298-315.
3. —, *United States Registered Mail 1845-1870*, David G. Phillips, N. Miami, 1998.
4. —, “Unofficial Registration of Mail in the U.S.: 1845-1855,” *Chronicle* 221 (2009), pg. 14. ■

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**RELIEF BRUISES:
A REMARKABLE FEATURE OF THE 1857-61 1¢ STAMP**

DAVID ZLOWE

Introduction

A remarkable feature of the Type V and Va 1¢ postage stamps produced between 1857 and 1860 has hidden in plain sight for a century and a half, inadequately described and underappreciated both in its extent and its significance. Many impressions of most of the 1,000 positions display blurred areas of ink, often on the head of Franklin's portrait in the central medallion and elsewhere, and much of the feature is consistent by relief. Stanley Ashbrook described this effect in general terms, illustrating only a single, tantalizing example, in 1938.¹ These marks vary in intensity (strength or darkness of the feature) and extent (area over which the feature appears), but show similar characteristics differentiated across the six reliefs used to create the ten columns of ten entries on each pane of each plate. The two plates created and used in late 1860 and 1861 share this remarkable feature as well. This article shows typical aspects of the feature to aid identification, and which were not previously described. Also, this investigation yields unprecedented insights into the stamp-making process, and suggests several areas for further research.

Background

The postage stamps under study here were created from a series of plates, numbered 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, each of which contains two side-by-side panes of 100 positions. Those panes are arranged in 10 rows of 10 vertical columns. Convention dictates that the upper left stamp on each printed pane is called position number 1, the upper right stamp at the end of the first row is position number 10, the bottom left stamp of the pane (the first stamp in the tenth row down) is position number 91, and the bottom right stamp is position number 100. For example, the second stamp on the second row of the right pane of Plate 9 is termed "12R9." This position number, pane side and plate number identification scheme is used in this article.

A six-relief transfer roll was used to enter the stamp images on Plates 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10, and three-relief transfer rolls were used on Plates 11 and 12. The transfer roll is so called because it was a cylinder of unknown diameter, fabricated from a disk of metal a bit thicker than the short side of the stamp, with six (or three) images of the stamp embossed on its edge, protruding above the surface in order to create (or "transfer") a recessed, mirror image onto the flat plate of steel.

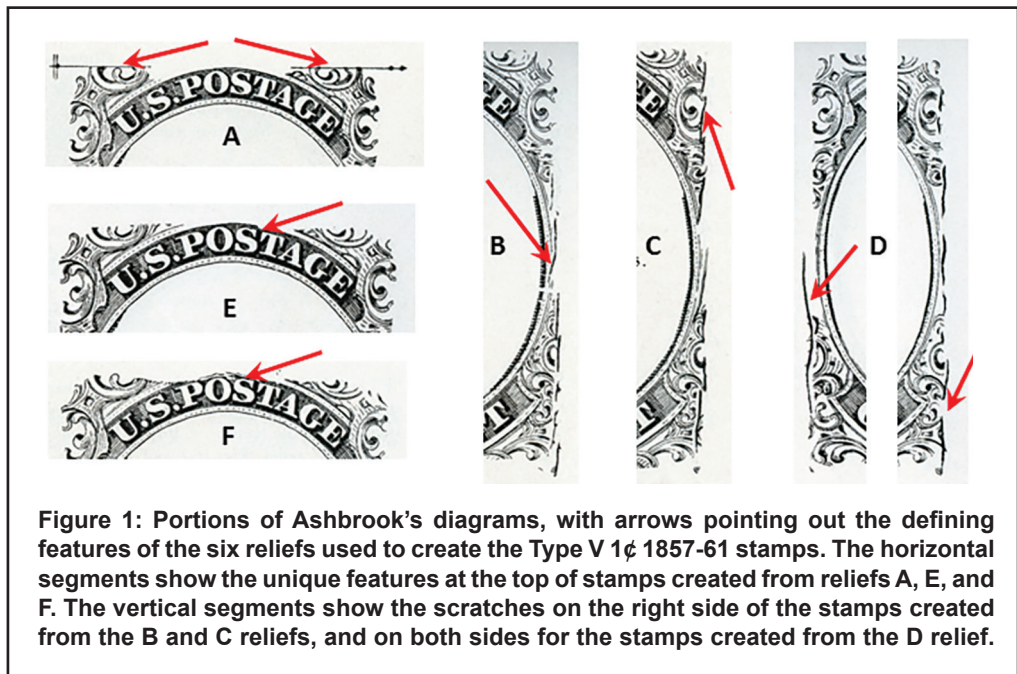
Physically, the upper left position is thought to have been entered first on the mirror-image plate, thereby becoming 10R when printed. So, Position 10R would have been entered first, then 20R, 30R, 40R, 50R and 60R. Through the guide relief process, the second image on the transfer roll was aligned into Position 60R to correctly enter Positions 70R, 80R, 90R and 100R with the third through six entries on the transfer roll. Then, the second column (beginning with Position 9R) was entered, and so on across the twenty columns from left to right, but appearing from right to left on the finished stamps.²

Thus the entirety of the stamp design used for each relief (or row) can be found on each of the respective entries of the transfer roll. To the extent that the stamp design was “cut away,” or truncated, on each side of the finished stamp for Plates 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10, which is a distinguishing characteristic of the Type V/Va stamps, each of the transfer roll entries had such appearance. In this way, then, each row of the six-relief plates (5, 7, 8, 9 and 10) displayed one of the reliefs for all 20 positions in the row. The bottom four reliefs from the transfer roll were entered on the bottom four rows.³ The arrangement of the transfer rolls for Plates 11 and 12 will be discussed in a later installment of this article—they did not produce any Type V/Va stamps.⁴

Six relief types

Plate 6 was not used in production, presumably due to damage when it was being hardened for use, but after the numerical designation was entered on its surface. For plates 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10, the six reliefs are called by students reliefs A, B, C, D, E and F. Going down each entered column for these plates, which are said to have produced all the Type V and Va stamps, the order of entry is A B C D E F C D E F.⁵ On each 100-position pane, therefore, there are 10 A relief stamps, 10 B relief, 20 C relief, 20 D relief, 20 E relief, and 20 F relief stamps.

Identification of the reliefs heretofore has relied on the pattern of side scratches (mostly on the right side ornaments of reliefs B, C, and D, but sometimes not on Plate 5 stamps),⁶ or, for reliefs E and F, the condition of the top label containing the words “U.S. POSTAGE”. Relief A stamps, always from the top rows, have their own typical arrangement of ornaments, lines and guide dots at top. Ashbrook first provided diagrams highlighting these reliefs’ differences.⁷ These are partially reproduced in Figure 1 with the addition of red arrows to specify the most significant distinctions. As may be supposed, since these distinctive marks are in the ornaments surrounding the stamp or in the outer part of the top label, intruding perforations or cancels are the natural adversaries of relief identification. Moreover, as the plates were used for extended periods of time, and the paper is reckoned to be less likely to generate fine images than that used for the earlier plates, a good number of



impressions lack adequate clarity to enable viewers to identify fine scratches or often-truncated elements of the design.

When Mortimer Neinken published his drawings of individual positions on these plates for the first time, additional plating marks unique to each position (or group of positions) helped further specify to which position on which relief on which plate each stamp belonged.⁸ Sometimes, these position-specific plating marks are visible when the conventional relief identifiers are indistinct or cut away by separation or perforation, allowing platers to deduce the relief, or plate, from the unique position marks. Unfortunately, there are still many positions which are recorded as “no information,” or having no distinctive markings (over 50 positions on Plate 8, over 65 positions on Plate 9, and over 70 on Plate 10—nearly one-third of the 600 positions on these plates). Considering the possibility of a poor impression, obscuring cancels (or, literally, “obliterators”), imprecise perforations and positions with no plating information, it has sometimes been a frustrating and futile experience for students who have attempted to use the Neinken volume to assign a perforate stamp to a specific plate position. The feature described in the following pages provides a new way to appreciate the distinct reliefs of both the six-relief plates and their three-relief successors on Plates 11 and 12. Such appreciation rarely requires much (if any) magnification.

A final, significant reminder is in order, and is followed by an important claim to be examined in due course. There are few existing records documenting the production of these Toppan, Carpenter and Co. (TC) stamps. Much of what is known has been prized from stamps themselves, for they are the fossil record of the complex steps which created them. What is said to be “known” or “understood” is the most likely explanation for observed phenomena. Following Occam’s razor, this investigation provides as simple an explanation as possible of a remarkable feature of the 1857-1861 1¢ stamp. The result will be a conclusion that no single, simple process accounts for what is documented, and that even the simplest explanation which captures the array of data is likely to be a complex interaction of multiple systems, including the paper, ink and printing plates, in ways which have not heretofore been considered for U.S. classic stamps.

This installment addresses the first five perforate plates, the postage stamp plates created after the contracted introduction of perforations in 1857 by TC. These plates produced all the Type V/Va stamps. A subsequent installment of this article will advance this discussion and explore the final two plates (numbered 11 and 12) which were created from three-relief rolls and produced different types of 1¢ stamps. While TC produced the stamps, as far as is known they used only the plate number (which they entered on both the right and left sides of the printing plate on all the plates discussed here) to distinguish the elements of their work. The position number designations, type designations and alphabetic terms for the reliefs are all later inventions by students of the stamps.

Figure 2 is the most remarkable of all the multiples seen during the study of this phenomenon. It shows extensive (i.e., widespread) and intense (i.e., strongly or darkly colored) marks on each of its eight stamps, the top row being the “F” relief and the bottom being the “C” relief stamps. The block is not cancelled in blue ink (it has full, original gum on the reverse), although it appears defaced with blue obliterations. In remarkable fact, close examination of each row makes clear that there are colored blurs, often in consistent patterns (and not part of the intended design) on each stamp in both rows of the block. This block shows additional and related features which, however, are not necessarily consistent, including extraneous colored blurs on the back shoulder of the Franklin bust, and similar types of marking in the side ornaments and elsewhere. This article addresses what these and other similar features may be, how they are typically arranged, their significance, and in the third installment, how they might have arisen. There will be ample cause to return several times to this important block during the analysis.



Figure 2: Positions 53-66R7 form a remarkable block of eight Type V stamps. The top row consists of F relief stamps and the bottom row C relief stamps. The block is not cancelled in blue, but shows ink blurs on the head and shoulders of the bust.

While the marks vary in extent and intensity, significant portions of them are consistent. In Figure 2, for example, the last vertical pair has less excess ink on the marks in the head relative to the other three stamps in each row. This variability will also be explained, and it represents an important element in understanding the phenomenon.

Specifically, the F relief stamps in the first row have a particular mark in common, despite varying in intensity and extent of additional areas of unintended ink.⁹ Notice in the back, bottom area of the head (i.e., the occipital area) where the image of Franklin's hair bumps out in horizontal alignment with the bridge of the nose. There is a slanted blur of ink that begins along an imagined plumb line from the "U" in "U.S." and extending to the upright in the "P" of "POSTAGE." It is prominent toward the back of Franklin's head in the first stamp in the first row, and increases intensity in the second and third stamps of the row. The fourth stamp shows a less intense example (but shows the most excess ink in the shoulder, for example). The F relief stamps frequently show this "baseball cap" mark (imagined as being where the strap of a baseball cap hugs the back of the head and may compress the hair).

The C relief feature is the most typically elaborate of the six relief marks. It has three parts, the first of which is somewhat like the "baseball cap" mark of the F relief stamps, but that portion of the array has a more angled slope (it aims at Franklin's brow line while the F relief feature is angled toward the eye). Moreover, there is a parallel, blurred line just above the first. Both lines begin on either side of a plumb line from the dot after the "U" in "U.S." and both tend to extend further forward than does the F relief feature. Perhaps the most prominent element of the C relief array is the "dot" under the "P" in "POSTAGE". Again, all these feature elements, even though described as "dots" and "lines," are blurred areas of ink which do not require magnification to appreciate, unlike almost all previously documented plating marks. In fact, magnifying these features often leads to them seeming to lighten or fade because they are composed of the merest film of ink—magnifying them just serves to focus on smaller quantities of ink. The slight magnification resulting from the

layout of the figures in this article is sufficient for most viewers, and makes this topic ideal for the *Chronicle* format. A number of blocks are shown in this article, and once one knows what to look for, even smaller-than-life images suffice to highlight the feature.

Existence on all reliefs

Reliefs A, B, D, and E also present this feature. Figure 3 shows stamps of each of the reliefs with marks highlighted by red arrows, including two stamps from the block of eight of reliefs F and C shown in Figure 2. The C and F relief features are often the most intense and easiest to identify. Most observers new to this phenomenon are quickly able to appreciate C and F relief marks on their own stamps, for example, while the feature on other reliefs is often more subtle and appears less frequently. The A relief most commonly has a “dot” that appears over the strong, curved line abutting Franklin’s ear. The mark seems to be the dot over a cursive, lower case “i” and is along the plumb line from the leading edge of the

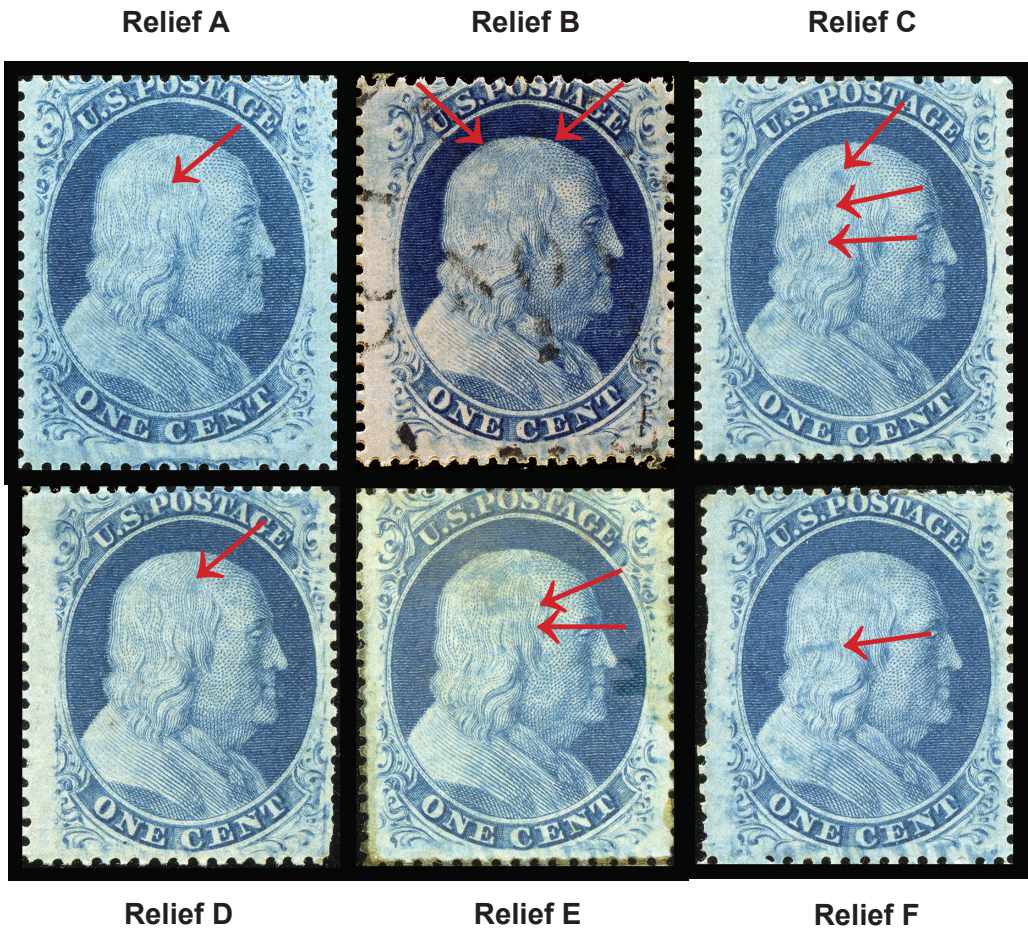


Figure 3: Arrows point to the relief bruises most typically seen on the six reliefs of the Type V/Va stamp. The relief A stamp (in this case Position 9R7) shows a large dot on Franklin’s head. The B relief (this example is 12R7) shows as a “crown” at the top of Franklin’s head. The C relief bruise (here on 64R7) shows as a dot with two lines beneath it. The D relief bruise (here on 72R7) is a dot similar to the A relief, but higher and farther forward. The E relief bruise (on 47R7), dubbed “the Oreo cookie,” is a light band surrounded by two dark ones. The F relief bruise (shown on 53R7) is a horizontal mark on the back of Franklin’s head; this feature has been called “the baseball cap.”

“O” in “POSTAGE” and aligned with the middle of Franklin’s forehead. There are other marks on the head, but the prominent dot is most often seen.

As shown in Figure 3, the B relief appears typically as a “crown” at the top of Franklin’s head, with a relatively lighter area in a central ellipse rimmed with a blurred crescent. This example is both relatively intense and quite extensive with excess ink over much of Franklin’s hair and the top of his head. Often the feature is not so intense.



Figure 4: Two B relief stamps from the same position (12R7) as the B relief stamp shown in Figure 3. Both stamps show intense and extensive relief bruises, not just on the crown of Franklin’s head, but involving the forehead and extending further down the side of the head.

Figure 4 shows two additional examples from the same position (12R7) for comparison. The B relief stamp in Figure 3 is from a strip of three (Positions 11-13R7) on cover. The two stamps in Figure 4 both show the B relief feature quite strongly as well. But as will be seen, this consistent intensity and extent of the relief feature on a particular position may be the exception, rather than the rule. Also, the right-hand stamp in Figure 4 demonstrates the value of having plating or relief marks associated with other than the ornaments. The telltale side scratches on this example are cut away by perforations.

The D relief is often the most difficult to observe as it is often lightly displayed when it is displayed at all. For the D relief stamp shown in Figure 3, there is a “dot,” but it is both higher up Franklin’s head and more forward than the feature on the A relief. The D relief feature is along the plumb line between the “O” and “S” in “POSTAGE.”

Finally, the E relief feature may be the strangest, because it seems to appear as an “Oreo cookie” right in the middle of Franklin’s head, with a distinguishing light, horizontal band aligned with the brow line and extending from the front of the ear to the back of the head, with darker, horizontal blurred lines just on top of it, and just underneath. An example of this interesting feature is clearly evident on the E relief stamp shown in Figure 3.

Thus we have quite a menagerie of new marks to appreciate! There are dots, baseball caps, Oreo cookies and crowns. It may seem that we are attending a raucous sporting event, rather than studying the finer points of philately. But on a more serious note, we can now begin to appreciate a significant system of unintended inking on the Type V/Va stamps. The feature consists of systematic, regularly shaped printing ink marks appearing intermittently on all six reliefs (and on Plate 11, and to some extent on Plate 12) of the 1¢ stamps produced between 1857 and 1861. When the marks appear, as they do frequently, they appear consistent by relief on all perforate plates. This fact suggests a common origin that is systematic on the relevant plates. However, not all impressions demonstrate the phenomenon, presumably due to variable plate ink wiping, related aspects of printing, or other causes. (These are

the conventional explanations for how such a feature could exist and vary from impression to impression. That standard explanation will suffice while evidence is marshalled in the first two installments, but it will be questioned in the third.)

In any given sample of Type V/Va stamps, more than half of the population shows such marks and over a tenth show the feature strongly, as will be discussed at the end of this installment. Each relief has its own pattern of such marks, and 1¢ stamps other than the perforate plate stamps (including the Eagle and Franklin carrier stamps) do not show this feature.

While the feature is of interest in its own right, there is at least one significant additional reason for this finding to be of interest to philatelists. Even for those who do not seek to identify a 1¢ stamp to its plate and position, many may wish to identify a candidate as being Type V/Va or not. A 1¢ stamp with this feature in the head will be a Type V/Va stamp, or later (Plates 11 and 12 also show some of this feature in their own way, but also have a typical film of ink which may tend to render them distinct from earlier plates), particularly if the pattern is similar to one of those shown on the stamps in Figure 3. Such evidence will confidently identify a stamp as being used in 1857 or later without the need to identify side scratches or the like.

Mottles and blisters

The feature under discussion is alluded to in the existing literature, but as a non-systematic, isolated and ephemeral phenomenon. Ashbrook, who initiated philatelic study of the 1¢ stamp on a large scale, made note of the general phenomenon of “mottles,” which he correctly pointed out are regular by relief.¹⁰ But the “mottles” phenomenon is more complex than Ashbrook described, and he did not go into detail on what he saw. Neinken only showed one position from Ashbrook with mottles, Position 65R8, with the typical C relief “mottle” noted. Ashbrook suggested that specific positions consistently possessed strong mottles, which, as will be shown, is not necessarily the case.

In several other references to specific instances of “mottling,” Ashbrook sometimes refers to the consistent marks in the head, but he also refers to involvement of the shoulder and margins, which are evident on extensively marked examples, but do not necessarily repeat their pattern on other positions of the same relief. The marks on the head described



Figure 5: In his extensive work on the 1¢ 1851 stamps, Stanley Ashbrook made only two references to “mottling.” At left, the image of “14R6” (probably 14R5), from the Ashbrook archive, shows a regular relief mark in the head, which he called a “mottle.” The word also appears on the photo of Position 65R8 in his book, shown at right.

above and shown in Figure 3 are typical of each of the six reliefs. The backing cards for Ashbrook's own reconstruction of these plates do not note any examples or positions with "mottles" designated, despite his mentioning a number of specific examples, and illustrating several, in his book. The U.S. Philatelic Classics Society recently put online the entire archive of Ashbrook's photographic images. Of the thousands of images of 1¢ stamps, only one is annotated as having a "mottle."¹¹ This is the item shown on the left in Figure 5. It is a 1953 photo on which Ashbrook credits J. A. Farrington as the source. While Ashbrook attributes this to Position 14R6, it probably represents 14R5. Ashbrook never clearly indicated what was the scope of the repeated marks he observed: whether or not specific positions consistently showed specific portions (head, shoulder, or other marks), nor how they varied, much less a description such as that given above for each relief. This lack of clarity may be why Neinken edited out most discussion of "mottles" for his 1972 edit and augmentation of Ashbrook.

Another phenomenon described by Ashbrook was "blisters," but this phenomenon is not explained as pertaining to specific positions and is offered by him without further explanation.¹² Figure 6 shows one position from Ashbrook's plating reconstruction, on which the notation on the backing card indicates a stamp showing "Shoulder Blister." Unfortunately,



Figure 6: Ashbrook's own plate reconstructions never use the word "mottle" on the backing card for any position. The term "blister" is here used in reference to the shoulder of position 81R7. However, the reference stamp no longer accompanies the reconstruction, and other entries in the reconstruction do not mention such a feature.

the stamp no longer accompanies the reconstruction. In the final installment of this article, the idea of "blisters," and what they could be, will be investigated more closely.

Neinken repeated the explanations that Ashbrook originated, but due to editing requirements (i.e., removing incorrect references to Plate 6) tended to lessen the sense of Ashbrook's presentation. Notwithstanding the notation for Position 81R7, Neinken showed a block including that position and stated that the "shoulder markings and blurs on the head... are not prominent"—and Neinken owned Ashbrook's platings.

Earlier, Ashbrook had claimed that the phenomena were ephemeral in that they faded as the plates wore, and Neinken was clearer: "This mottling is very pronounced on early impressions from the plate [7], but apparently the plate wore very rapidly. Late impressions show little evidence of the mottling...."¹³ As will be shown below in the discussion of Plate 9, that is not the case. The features which Ashbrook and Neinken both ascribe to reliefs, but more pointedly to specific positions, and variously as "mottles," "blister mottles," "blisters," and "blurs," and as only an early phenomenon of the earlier perforate plates, are both more regular and widespread than they concluded. They also conflated position-specific markings with markings which occurred only when the inking feature was very intense and extensive. But that variety of effects can now be separated from one another and a consistent schema presented to provide an interpretive lens that makes clearer what happened and how it may have happened.

To continue to use Ashbrook's terms would seem to perpetuate imprecision, and require further annotation and qualification, since, for example, a "mottle," may be plate-specific or relief-specific, and "blisters" were not shown.

Relief bruises

The feature under review shows consistency by relief, so that word is included in the name of the phenomenon. And since the most obvious appearance of the feature is on the head of Franklin's portrait in the central medallion of the printed stamp, an anatomic reference seems both suitable and mnemonic. Moreover, since ink appearing systematically on printed stamps is due to recessed areas on the printing plate for intaglio production, the term "bruise," referring to the result of impact (initially thought of as a potential cause of the phenomenon), is suggestive of a possible origin of the feature. I call these remarkable features "relief bruises."

So far, the examples shown of relief bruises appear on Plate 7 stamps as illustrated in Figures 2, 3 and 4. Additional examples will be shown of Plate 7 stamps to demonstrate the variation of intensity and extent of the relief bruises for a given position. Then Plate 8 stamps will be shown with an emphasis on variability of the bruises on overlapping position multiples (that is, blocks comprised of stamps with the same plate positions, often requiring a visual crop of the blocks used as illustration). Plate 7 and 8 stamps display the relief bruises profusely—they are hard to miss. Then, Plate 5 will show finer impressions which nonetheless have relief bruises. The same relief bruises are common to both Type V and Type Va stamps on Plate 5.

Plates 9 and 10 are more subtle in the appearance of relief bruises, with Plate 9 providing a challenge, but both plates possess the relief bruises. Plate 9 allows us to uniquely conclude that the relief bruise phenomenon was not, as Ashbrook and Neinken believed, a feature that quickly wore away during the use of the printing plates. Plate 10 confirms the ubiquity of the relief bruises and permits us to analyze the extent of relief bruises on all five Type V/Va plates using statistical methods.

Inconsistent appearance of relief bruises

As would be expected, relief bruises tend to reflect the intensity of the ink on the printed stamps. For those plates that show deep, dark impressions on the printed stamps, the relief bruises are similarly intense and sometimes quite extensive. Lightly printed stamps may display little or no relief bruising, while the same position on a more darkly inked example may display the relief bruise strongly. While this response is similar to other plating marks, it will be shown on several blocks of duplicate positions that relief bruises may appear strongly on one impression, but not on another impression that seems to be just as strong. Or, they may appear strongly on one position in a row, but weakly on its neighbor, while the next row in the same block may swap intensities. These effects are very unlike plating marks as they have been traditionally understood. That may be one of the reasons why Ashbrook and Neinken (and later students) did not provide a detailed discussion of these features. They cannot be pigeon-holed neatly the way an isolated tick mark or curl can be, and their messiness can seem overwhelming.

This article is intended to make this phenomenon better understood and appreciated. Once relief bruises are understood, they offer a very satisfying realm of collecting and lead to deeper lessons about the 1¢ stamp.

For example, Figure 7 shows two pairs from the same positions from Plate 7: Positions 8-9R7. The top pair was electronically extracted from a block of 12 and the bottom pair from the block of 72 of this pane (the largest known multiple from Plate 7). On the top pair, the A relief bruise (the "dot over the i") is readily visible. In fact, the right stamp from this pair is used in Figure 3 to illustrate the A relief bruise. But on the bottom pair in Figure 7, the dot is much less prominent on each stamp. Both pairs were scanned with the same equipment and software, but they differ in that the top pair is clearly more deeply inked and appears to be a crisper and better defined impression. In the top and bottom labels, for instance, look at the stacked lines at the side of each label within their curved limits. The top



Figure 7: The A relief bruise on two pairs from the same positions, 8-9R7. The top pair is from a strongly inked block of 12; the bottom pair is much more lightly inked.

pair more clearly shows the separation of each line than does the bottom pair. This effect is often called “fineness of impression” as it shows finer lines clearly. Likewise, the lines that define Franklin’s shoulder are stronger and clearer on the top pair.

It should not be surprising that a finer impression shows the relief bruises more clearly. Besides the dot, the top pair in Figure 7 shows other aspects of the relief bruise for relief A which rarely are visible. The A relief bruise is more intense (darker) and more extensive (widespread) on the top pair. In fact, the Position 8 stamp on the second, lighter pair has the barest indication of the typical relief bruise for first-row stamps.

Relief bruises appear on stamps because they are caused by very shallow depressions on the plate that hold color pigment. The color appears as a highly transparent and diffuse blur of printing ink. Even slight differences in the intensity of the printed impression, whether due to the amount of ink used, how it was wiped off the plate, the viscosity of the remaining ink, the level of absorption of the wetted sheets, the condition of the printing plate, or other causes, appear to result in significantly different intensity in the displayed relief bruises. In other words, relief bruises are sensitively dependent upon the state of the other systems (paper, ink, and printing plate) in stamp production, and as such may provide valuable insights into their details and potential interactions.

As we will see, the distinction between ink and pigment will be important. Pigment is an ingredient of ink providing color; it is mixed with “mucilage” (consisting of oil, soap and

other ingredients) which give the ink desirable properties. The pigment is the costly part of the proprietary recipes used to create ink. In the case of postage stamp production, not only must the ink be durable and capable of rendering fine lines, but it must also be “fugitive,” in the sense that attempting to remove a cancel will result in damage to the printed stamp.

Different components of the ink can be manipulated to provide desired attributes. Intaglio printing is possible because ink adheres to recessed grooves or areas on the printing plate. The plate is inked overall and then excess is wiped away leaving the recessed areas with a small volume of ink to be transferred under pressure to wetted paper.¹⁴ In fact, the plates are actively rubbed, nearly polished, to remove as much ink as possible from the surface’s mirror finish. It is the contrast between the inked portions of the printed stamp and the areas without ink that makes engraved printing appear three-dimensional (indeed, raised ink can be felt on engraved printing) and produces impressive results.

By our conventional understanding, though, areas with relief bruises would seem somehow to resist such rubbing and polishing—traces of ink remain in unintended recesses and are transferred to the finished sheet. Some entries may have been more heavily impressed by the transfer roll than others. This was an era before precise pressure gauges, when printing steel was inconsistent in its physical attributes. Since the relief bruises must have been on the transfer roll in order to appear on so many of the plates’ positions, and the roll may have impressed entries on harder or softer parts of the plate and with greater or lesser pressure, it is understandable that some positions could have a greater capacity to show shallow features such as the relief bruises. Apparently, this is what Ashbrook thought, too, but we will see that theory does not fit all the evidence, even if may be contributory.

This article shows the most consistently visible relief bruises, and those elements of each bruise that appear most typically. When a relief bruise is visible, these most consistent features are likely to be seen. Moreover, many of the stamps shown in this article have fairly prominent relief bruises. To unfamiliar eyes it can be difficult to see these bruises without assistance, much less distinguish among them, and the many engraved lines among which they reside sometimes add to the confusion. However, after repeated exposure, even beginning students are quickly able to discern the unintended ink marks. The “baseball cap” line of the F relief and the “dot-line-line” of the C relief quickly become acquaintances. The challenge is to not see them when they do not in fact exist—a task made more difficult, ironically, on stamps with extensive relief bruising displaying ink all over Franklin’s head, since the correct assignment of a relief bruise mark can be lost in the haze.

Experienced viewers are able to observe bare traces of the typical relief bruises when the display is not extensive or intense. For anyone exposed to relief bruises, however, once they become trained to see them (as will be readers of this article), they are rarely overlooked and provide a new dimension of appreciation of the little blue stamp. A valuable assistance in spotting relief bruise patterns on a candidate stamp is to place it (or its image) alongside a dissimilar relief bruise, or an impression with absolutely no evidence of any relief bruise. Once again, the mind’s eye will clearly distinguish one from the other, and the evidence of a subtle relief bruise may become more evident.

A further look at Plate 7

The block shown in Figure 2 is not only the most exceptional of all relief bruise multiples extant, but it allows us to begin the exploration with Plate 7, which tends to display relief bruises extensively (on many positions, or across a large extent of a single stamp) and intensely (strongly inked on given impressions). Plate 7 impressions are often crisp and dark with a distinctive, deep shade of blue, and so even a slight blur of ink is visible. As for the Prussian blue pigmented ink used on these stamps, a very little pigment goes a very long way—the blue is very blue. Prussian blue is intensely colored and for this reason has been well-known to generations of printers.



Figure 8: Two stamps from Position 10L7, both showing the distinctive A relief bruise, the dot on Franklin's head. The stamp at left shows additional ink blurring on the back of the head, and both stamps show additional unintended ink on the shoulder. The dot is the most reliably seen element of this bruising effect on the A relief stamps.

Figure 8 shows two single stamps, both from position 10L7, the upper right corner of the left pane of Plate 7. These are A relief stamps with centerlines in evidence. Both show the typical A relief bruise dot on Franklin's head. The left stamp has additional ink in the back of the head, and both stamps show excess ink on the shoulder, which is not uncommon on strongly bruised Plate 7 stamps.

Figure 9 shows a strip of three stamps, Positions 11-13R7. The center stamp from this strip is our exemplary B relief in Figure 3. On this strip of three, even the right stamp displays the B relief bruise very extensively, but with less intensity than the other two stamps. Position 11 shows significant involvement of the shoulder area, as well. This strip is an exceptional example of the B relief bruises, which appear like a crown at the top of Franklin's head. The B relief is confirmed by the traditional side scratches along the right of Franklin's head. The B relief is confirmed by the traditional side scratches along the right



Figure 9: A strip of three Type V stamps, Positions 11-13R7, digitally removed from a cover, showing intense and extensive B relief "crown" bruises at the top of Franklin's head. The relief is confirmed by the traditional side scratches on the right side of the stamp across from Franklin's nose, and along the outer ornaments on the bottom right.

side of the stamp, just across from Franklin’s nose, and barely along the outer ornaments on the bottom right.

Figure 10 shows three single stamps, all from Position 63R7. These images have been electronically clipped from, respectively, blocks of nine, four and eight stamps. From left to right, the impressions are progressively more darkly inked and progressively finer (again,



Figure 10: These three singles from Position 63R7 show progressively stronger inking and show the C relief bruise (“dot, line, line”) growing progressively stronger. The two impressions on the right additionally show bruises in the shoulder, and the far-right example shows extensive relief bruises, particularly on the bottom right side.

scanned with the same equipment at the same time). The three stamps also show the C relief bruise (“dot, line, line”) growing progressively stronger. The two impressions on the right additionally show bruises in the shoulder, and the far-right example shows extensive relief bruises at the sides, particularly on the right side ornaments along the bottom half. Keen observers will find traces of blurred ink on the side ornaments on all three stamps. All examples seen of this particular position have at least a trace of the C relief bruise, but the presence of a C relief bruise does not indicate that a stamp is from a particular position, just that it is from a particular relief.

Figure 11 shows two single stamps, the stamp on the left being Position 78R7 (from the block of 72) and the right stamp being Position 40L7 (from the top of a pair with 50L7) showing the centerline at right. The D relief bruise is often subtle, as on the stamp at left in Figure 11. But the stamp on the right shows as strong an example of this phenomenon

Figure 11: The D relief bruise is often subtle, as on the example at left, from Position 78R7. But it is exceptionally intense on the cancelled stamp at right, from Position 40L7. The most typically seen element of the D relief bruise is the dot toward the top of Franklin’s head beneath the “O” and “S” in “POSTAGE.”



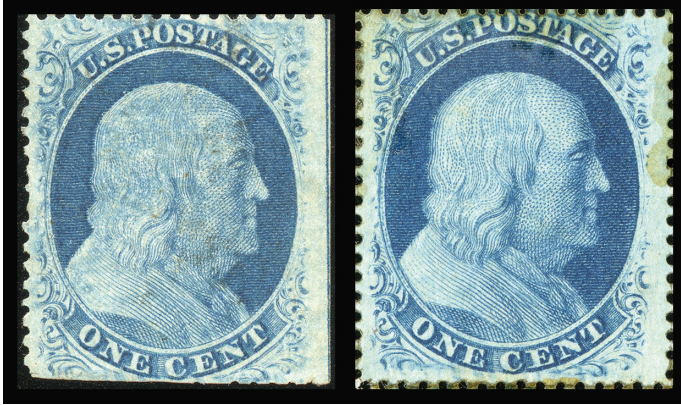


Figure 12: E relief bruise stamps. Both display extra unintended ink toward the top of head above the “Oreo cookie” farther down. The stamp at left is Position 50L7 and the stamp at right is 49R7. The left stamp shows an extensive array of relief bruising—the entire head is obscured with ink, which extends to the shoulder.

as is likely to be seen on a D relief stamp. On both stamps, the central dot under the “O” and “S” is evident, while the left stamp suggests additional bruises which the second stamp expresses strongly, including along the forehead and down through the shoulder.

Figure 12 shows two E relief bruise stamps. Both the left stamp (which is the bottom of the pair whose partner appears in Figure 11) and the right stamp present an additional area of ink toward the top of the head. This tends to appear somewhat less commonly than the “Oreo cookie.” However, the centerline stamp at left has such an extent of ink on the head, shoulder and side ornaments, that without the traditional “notch” in the outer label between the “S” and “T” in “POSTAGE,” it would difficult to distinguish the specific relief bruise at all. Very few examples show this extent and intensity of relief bruises, whatever the relief.

Finally, from the extravagantly endowed Plate 7, Figure 13 shows a pair and single with the F relief bruise. The pair at left in Figure 13 represents Positions 99-100L7 with the centerline. The imprint single at right, from a block of 16, is from Position 60R7. Lightly but not atypically, the single shows the F relief bruise line in the back of Franklin’s head. The pair shows the bruise strongly (this is the “baseball cap” line), with involvement of the shoulder and to a lesser degree at the sides.



Figure 13: The pair of F relief stamps at left (from Positions 99-100L7) shows intense and extensive relief bruises. The single stamp at right, Position 60R7, presents a more typical appearance for the F relief bruises—the feature called the “baseball cap” line.

Extent across the plates

Figure 14 shows a hint of the fascinating display on Plate 8. This is a block of 24, being Positions 52 through 79L8 (comprising 52-59, 62-69, and 72-79L8), and containing partial rows of F, C and D reliefs. The first two stamps of the first row not only show the F relief bruise strongly, but there is an excess of ink on Position 52 in the head area. Likewise, the first C and D relief stamps in Positions 62 and 72 show the expected relief bruises to an unexpected degree (the remarkable D relief bruise on Position 72 may be more of a smudge of stray ink; nevertheless, it is a strongly inked feature).



Figure 14: A block of 24, Positions 52-79, from the left pane of Plate 8, containing partial rows of F, C and D reliefs, and showing a marked change in inking from left to right, highlighting relief bruises on the strongly inked left side. The lightly inked right side shows relief bruises much less intensely. Such a transition is uncommon.

It is also apparent that except for the dot in the C relief bruise, the appearance of bruising rapidly falls off as we move across the horizontal block toward the right. However, notice also that the overall inking of the block varies considerably from the intense, dark blue on the left (particularly at top left), to a relatively lighter blue at bottom right. While the relief bruises at left are exceptional, so is the change in inking from left to right. In such a block, any plating feature would be easier to see on the left stamps than on the right stamps.

This variability across panes and even from stamp to stamp and impression to impression may be of concern to some observers. Cracks, curls, and other traditional plating marks tend to display clearly under most circumstances. They are often reliable indicators of a position or localized phenomenon, even if they are so localized that they require magnification to observe. Relief bruises just don't appear as reliably. However, they are so extensive (appearing on each pane of all five Type V/Va plates, as well as Plates 11 and 12), so regular by relief when they are present, and so strikingly visible by the unaided eye, that they demand our acknowledgement and an effort to appreciate and understand them. Even the smaller-than-life-size stamps in Figure 14 permit appreciation of relief bruises without magnification. In fact, relief bruises are the most prominent aspect of the 1¢ stamp to be described since the explication of the reliefs by Ashbook in his 1938 book.

A key means to investigate relief bruises is to compare their appearance in rows, blocks, and across multiple blocks that share the same positions on the pane. Such duplicate position blocks permit observations of the varying displays of relief bruises based on different impressions as well as position-by-position variation. There are many instances in which one stamp may display relief bruises more intensely than its neighbors do on a

given impression, but may swap relative intensity of the appearance of the relief bruises on another impression or adjacent position. Or, both positions may show the feature strongly or not at all. Plate 8 multiples provide this perspective.

Plate 8

While Plate 8 single stamps may show relief bruises as spectacularly as their Plate 7 brethren, the availability of large blocks makes Plate 8 unique. With multiple blocks of duplicate positions, it is apparent that not only does the intensity of relief bruises vary frequently by position, but also that the intensity can vary from impression to impression for the same position. Moreover, the relative intensity of impressions can vary among neighboring positions.

Figure 15 shows three vertical blocks of six from the same position on Plate 8 (Positions 6-7, 16-17, 26-27R8), electronically extracted from a block of 15, a block of 12 and a block of 20 stamps. The colors and fineness of the three blocks show the gamut of typical Plate 8 impressions. The top pairs are relief A, the middle pairs relief B, and the bottom pairs are relief C stamps. Only a fanciful imagination would allow us to see any A relief bruises, although some may perceive the typical dot faintly on the first block's top pair. It is faint by any measure of the term.

And while the left block shows the B relief "crown" bruise (more so on the right stamp of the second row), it is the middle block that shows the C relief bruises strongly (certainly the dot, and the line and dot on the right stamp, particularly). The block at right shows a trace of the B relief bruise, but on the left stamp, instead of the prior blocks' right stamps. Likewise, the C relief bruise dot element in the right block shows more strongly on the left stamp, but more faintly than on either of the other blocks.

In Figure 15, the first and second blocks are not very dissimilar in apparent intensity of inking (although the first block has a greater fineness of impression when magnified),



Figure 15: Three blocks of six stamps, from the same positions on Plate 8 (6-7, 16-17, and 26-27L8). The top pairs are relief A, the middle pairs relief B, and the bottom pairs are relief C stamps. None of the blocks show the A relief bruise in the top row, and each shows differing displays of relief bruises on the middle row of B relief stamps and the bottom row of C relief stamps. The block on the right is clearly more lightly inked.

and the third is clearly more lightly inked (the block's damage is apparent, as well). However, the appearance of the relief bruises seems to swap from pair to pair and row to row. A reasonable explanation is that the nature of the ink itself, and the apparent, relative state of wear of the plate, is supplemented by the actual wiping of the ink across the plates from impression to impression, or by related phenomena. The traditional small plating marks which approximate the dimensions of the engraved lines—such as curls, small dots, fine lines, scratches, and the like—may hold ink from impression to impression irrespective of inking, but the shallower and larger relief bruises seem more sensitively dependent on the inking or wiping process, among other possible causes. What is striking, whatever the cause, is that the relatively large relief bruises would not in themselves suggest that these three blocks share the same positions on the left pane of Plate 8, or any pane of any particular plate. Looking for such consistency is futile with relief bruises. The mind may reel to consider what aspects of stamp production could possibly cause such significant features to appear so heterogeneously.



Figure 16: Two blocks of nine stamps from the right pane of Plate 8, showing Positions 63-65, 73-75, and 83-85R8. The upper left stamps (both Position 63R8) display the C relief bruise very differently, much more so than the other eight stamp positions. The C relief bruise on the stamp at upper left on the left block is both extensive and intense.

While variable wiping of ink from the plate may contribute to the appearance of relief bruises, ample evidence beggars belief that simply wiping across a plate can explain all that is seen. For example, Figure 16 shows two blocks of nine from the same positions (63-65, 73-75, and 83-85R8) electronically extracted from a block of 12 and a block of 72 stamps. Both blocks in Figure 16 contain rows of C, D and E reliefs. In the block at left, the upper left stamp, Position 63R8, is an impressive example of the C relief bruise that is both extensive and intense. While Positions 64-65R8 in both blocks have a roughly similar appearance (and both blocks are similarly inked and have similar fineness of impression), Position 63R8 differs about as much as might be thought possible between the two blocks. Certainly the left block tends to show relief bruises on most positions a little more intensely than the right, and while the upper left of the left block is somewhat more heavily inked than its bottom right, inking and impression variance alone cannot explain the strikingly

different appearance of Position 63R8 between the two blocks. Is it reasonable to imagine that the paper was more heavily inked in just that position? Or that the printing press cylinder would impress the paper into the bruise areas on that position for that impression but not the others? At such a point, we are left to suppose that ink was somehow retained in the depressed areas of Position 63R8 to a greater extent in the left block than in the right, in a way that suggests something more than mere differential wiping of an inked plate. A lack of eyewitness testimony means that we may never know for sure how such variation arose, but the final installment of this article will suggest some possible explanations.

While readers mull the significance of the two blocks in Figure 16, some will note that the previous paragraph, and the illustrated blocks, included Ashbrook's famous Position 65R8—the only position shown by him (or, later, Neinken) as possessing definitive “mottles,” as he called the phenomenon, and the photo of which is shown in Figure 5. As the Figure 16 blocks show, there does not appear to be much exceptional about 65R8, which is the upper right stamp in each block. If one were to nominate a position for the pantheon, it might be Position 63R8 from the left block, but certainly not the Position 65R8 stamp. In fact, only rarely does 65R8 display the relief bruise as prominently as its neighbors. This is not so much a matter of degree, or of comparison, as it is of mindset. If relief bruises are viewed in the traditional context of plate marks, then they are either present or not, and on a position-by-position basis. However, as we are seeing, things are not that simple with the relief bruise phenomenon. More evidence is needed before speculation can be offered as to causes, and there is quite a bit more evidence available. Ashbrook's 65R8 is the merest lead to a much broader subject, one that requires readers to expand their understanding of unintended marks in the production of postage stamps.

There are a great number of examples from Plates 7 and 8 that demonstrate both the existence of relief bruises and their seemingly random distribution (albeit with similar elements distinguished by relief) and intensity. A fair number of other duplicate position multiples, like those in Figure 16, could be mustered to further demonstrate the variable expression of relief bruise marks, but the essential point has been established—relief bruises are not like previously described relief marks or position-specific plating marks. Relief bruises seem to be some sort of hybrid. The other Type V/Va plates, as we shall see, possess the same style of relief bruises, but for a variety of reasons they tend to show them with less intensity and extent than Plates 7 and 8.

Plate 5

The discovery aspects of Plate 5 relief bruises are less promising because Plates 7 and 8 are represented with more large multiples. That's also why this discussion has not proceeded in plate number order. However, Plate 5 stamps show relief bruises in abundance, albeit with more subtlety than their later brethren on Plates 7 and 8. In fact, these three plates, due to the generally clearer and crisper impressions of the finished stamps, show relief bruises more reliably and extensively than do Plates 9 and 10. The earlier plates, therefore, are better for providing an initial presentation of this remarkable feature.

Previous scholarship has dictated that there is a clear break between the Type V stamps and the so-called Type Va stamps which appear on the earlier entries on the right pane of Plate 5.¹⁵ The latter type is said to have more complete side ornaments, and while it is not always explicitly stated, it is inherent that these Type Va stamps consequently also lack the “side scratches” of their Type V neighbors, since the assumption has been that the completeness of the side ornaments disappeared due to whatever caused the side scratches to overwhelm them. Neinken cited a variety of theories about the break between Type V and Type Va stamps, but a full investigation must await another day. For purposes here, however, there does not appear to be a difference between the six relief bruises on Type V stamps as opposed to Type Va stamps.



Figure 17: Relief bruises from Plate 5. The single stamp at left (from Position 2L5) is a Type Va stamp that shows an A relief dot bruise in the expected location. The pair at right (24-34L5) shows intense relief bruises on the C-relief stamp at top and even on the D-relief stamp at bottom. The scarce imprint strip below (Position 51-53L5) shows F-relief bruises.

The single stamp in Figure 17 shows a nice A relief dot bruise in the expected location. The stamp is Position 2L5 and it is a typical Plate 5 crisp impression. All top-row Plate 5 stamps are reckoned to be Type Va. This particular example is inked more darkly than many of the typical Plate 5 stamps.

The vertical pair in Figure 17 shows two Type V stamps, from Positions 24-34L5. Side scratches are visible, as are moderately extensive and intense relief bruises on the C relief stamp at top and even on the D relief stamp at bottom. In fact, this pair (which along with a 3¢ stamp survives on a part-paid cover from Terre Haute to the American consul in Messina, posted in early 1858) is one of the strongest relief bruises on a Plate 5 item.

Figure 17 also shows a very scarce imprint strip of three Type V stamps (Positions 51-53L5) with F relief bruises. The slanted line at the back of Franklin's head in the middle stamp is strong (it is light on the left stamp and obscured by the black cancel on the right stamp). Not all Plate 5 relief bruises are as strong as these, but it should be evident that they are the same relief bruises seen on Plates 7 and 8.

For Plates 9 and 10 it is not necessary to exhaustively demonstrate examples from each relief, but a few items will be shown to illustrate the relatively lower intensity and lesser extent of the relief bruises on those two plates. What will be seen, however, is that the most typical patterns described previously are confirmed.

Plates 9 and 10 are the red-headed stepchildren in what has for too often and for too long been a philatelic ghetto consisting of all the Type V stamps. In truth, the impressions of many Plate 9 and 10 stamps are disappointing relative to their brothers and sisters on Plates 5, 7 and 8, much less to their richer cousins on Plates 1 through 4. Perhaps the most encouraging observation is that when one becomes reasonably adept at identifying relief bruise prospects from Plates 9 and 10, then turning to the earlier perforate plates is (may I say it?) a relief.

Despite this cavil, Plate 9 provides a unique circumstance that no other perforate 1¢ plate offers. While there is ample evidence (presented below) of early-dated covers from multiple plates demonstrating that the relief bruises are a phenomenon of early impressions, the unique plate proofs of Plate 9 confirm that even much later impressions of the plate still



Figure 18: Strip of three Type V stamps from Plate 5 (from Positions 56-58L5) showing the F relief bruises on the two right stamps. The JAN 5 1858 datestamp shows these stamps were cancelled soon after the earliest documented use of Plate 5.

show relief bruising. This is important because it indicates that the presence of relief bruises is not wear-dependent. The Plate 9 proofs demonstrate that the capability of the plate to display relief bruises endured from the earliest printings to much later impressions.

Figure 18 shows a strip of three Type V stamps from Positions 56-58L5, conveniently dated “JAN 5 1858” with two strikes of a black New York circular datestamp. The two stamps on the right show a typical F relief bruise at the back of Franklin’s head and the impression is proof-like in its fineness. The current earliest documented use (EDU) of Plate 5 is December 2, 1857, so this use is less than five weeks into the life of the plate. That means it could not have been printed after January, indicating that the relief bruises were present early in the life of the plate.

Figure 19 shows an E relief stamp from Plate 7 (Position 86L7) electronically cropped from a circular dated June 1, 1858. The city delivery handstamp reads “JUN 2.” The EDU



Figure 19

Figure 20

Figure 21

Figures 19-21: Three singles from covers with confirmed dates of use. Figure 19 (Position 86L7) shows elements of the E relief bruise and was used June 2, 1858, within six months of the initial use of Plate 7. Figure 20 (from Position 96R8) shows an F relief bruise, on a circular posted November 28, 1857, 11 days after the earliest documented use of Plate 8. Figure 21 (Position 21R10) shows a C relief bruise with a JUN 14 1860 circular datestamp, less than six weeks after the earliest documented use (May 5, 1860) of Plate 10.

for Plate 7 is December 31, 1857, so this is within the first six months of its use. The stamp presents elements of the E relief bruise.

Figure 20 shows another F-relief stamp, this one from Plate 8 (Position 96R8), with a typical F relief bruise, used on November 28, 1857 (based on the cancel and the dated circular on which it is used). The EDU for Plate 8 is November 17, 1857, just 11 days earlier.

Figure 21 is a single from Plate 10 (Position 21R10) with a C relief bruise. This stamp is affixed to a drop cover with a circular date stamp of “JUN 14 1860,” which is less than six weeks after the May 5, 1860 EDU for Plate 10.

Thus, Figures 18-21 confirm that relief bruises were an early phenomenon of the plates. Ashbrook stated¹⁶ and Neinken repeated, that “many positions [of Plate 5] that are undoubtedly very early impressions show mottling....” The strip of three from Plate 5 (Figure 18) confirms this assertion. Ashbrook, and presumably Neinken, who possessed the editor’s blue pencil and so could have deleted Ashbrook’s assertion, believed these mottles wore off the plates quickly. But this is not necessarily the case.

Typically, it is not possible to state definitively that a particular impression occurred well into the use of the plate, because it is usually impossible to state with confidence that a given stamp was printed after, or even near, a specific date. In rare cases, a crack or flaw may emerge during the use of the plate. Comparison with earlier, undamaged impressions



Figure 22: Plate proofs from the unique proof sheet from Plate 9. The single (Position 97L9) shows the expected F relief bruises and the pair (Positions 23-24L9) has typical C relief bruises. Evidence in the Travers Papers indicates these proofs were pulled in late February, 1861, 18 months after the earliest documented use of Plate 9. The enlargement above shows a portion of the bottom label from the Position 97L9 proof at upper left, exhibiting what appears to be a plate crack starting in the scroll beneath the “N” and extending through the “E” and into the “C” of “CENTS.”

(confirmed by dated cancels) can suggest a later production date for copies showing the flaw. The Travers papers record a circumstance along these lines that strongly suggests a “no earlier” date—a date that approximates the actual use of a plate (in this case, Plate 9) well into its useful life, and likely within a very few days of a known date.

In early 1861, Third Assistant Postmaster General A.N. Zevely requested that TC print a proof sheet of each of the denominations then in use by the Post Office Department so that sample stamps could be forwarded to the Sardinian government. On February 27, 1861, TC responded to Zevely’s request, stating, “We have sent you the proofs....”¹⁷ Very likely these proofs were pulled within days of the response, using the plates then in production. The EDU for Plate 9 is August 2, 1859, or more than 18 months before the proof sheets were pulled.

Figure 22 shows two of the proof items from this unique sheet. The single shown at top left in Figure 22 is a bottom row proof stamp, being Position 97L9. This shows the typical F relief bruise on an item known to have been created more than a year-and-a-half after its plate was first put in use. The pair at top right in Figure 22 plates from Positions 23-24L9. The left proof stamp in the pair shows the C relief bruise well, while its neighbor barely shows the typical dot element of the array. A number of the plate proof positions show the expected relief bruises.

As luck would have it, the single in Figure 22 appears to have a crack extending from the bottom right scrollwork under the “N” in “CENT” through the lower half of the “E” and into the “C”. Moreover, there are traces of another element of the crack displayed lower across the “C”. Other impressions of this position on the issued stamp show the crack, or, more precisely, what appears to be earlier states.¹⁸ Therefore, there is both a rare example of a maturing crack showing the proof was pulled well into the use of the plate, and the Travers letter helping to focus the date even more precisely. There can be no doubt that even on Plate 9, which shows relief bruises only to a limited degree, this remarkable feature endured well into the use of the plate. Relief bruises are not specific to early impressions. They can and do occur throughout the use of the plate if conditions are conducive to their expression.



Figure 23: Relief bruises from Plate 9. While both stamps in this C-relief pair (Positions 22-23R9) show the expected relief bruises, the right stamp is more intense.

Typical relief bruises for Plate 9 are shown in Figure 23, which is an enlargement of positions 22-23R9 from the block of 90, with a subtle C relief bruise on the stamp at left, and a more easily recognizable one on the stamp at right. The appearance of the relief bruises on Plate 9 is often subtle or not visible at all, so the appearance of the proofs in Figure 22 is a favorable depiction of what was visible on the issued stamps.

Plate 10

Plate 9 and Plate 10 stamps are the most challenging cases for the appearance of relief bruises. Impressions are rarely striking, and relief bruises are neither extensive nor intense. The plates may have experienced changed production techniques, such as hardening or polishing differences, that impaired the crispness of their printed features (including relief bruises), as well as printing techniques (i.e., more viscous ink formulation or use, or less uniform paper) that made it less likely that any relief bruising on the plate would transfer to the printed impression. Ashbrook speculated that the transfer roll itself wore from repeated entries (earlier on Plates 5, 6, 7, and 8),¹⁹ but it is likely that a combination of effects rendered many of the impressions less striking than their earlier brethren.

Despite the tougher odds, relief bruising is apparent on many Plate 10 stamps. Figure 24 is a block of 12, being Positions 2-4, 12-14, 22-24, 32-34R10. The first two stamps in the top row have subtle A relief bruises. The B relief bruise “crown” is most visible in position 12, with the C relief bruises visible on all three third-row stamps, but most visible on the left stamps. Finally, the often-disappointing D relief bruise is not apparent on the bottom row. Nevertheless, this block is a reasonably clear impression and it shows the relief bruises widely if not intensely. Occasional darker inking on Plate 10 impressions means that relief bruises tend to be somewhat more apparent on this plate than on Plate 9. Overall, Plates 7 and 8 show relief bruises most often, Plate 5 less intensely but the next most often, with Plates 10 and 9 much less frequently, and often with little intensity.

Variability in appearance of relief bruises from plate to plate, position to position, or even from impression to impression on a particular position may be of concern to those for whom identifying stamps to a particular position is a manifest goal. However, relief bruises offer a different sort of insight about the stamps and serve to highlight inking differences intended and unintended. Not only are relief bruises a remarkable feature in and of themselves, but they serve as an extraordinary and unique lens into the creation of early classic postage stamps.

Analysis of frequency

The examples shown in this analysis, including the larger multiples, have been selected to show relief bruises most favorably, as might be expected in a first presentation on a new subject. That said, a student can train himself to be a more sensitive observer of the phenomenon. Once a collector spots a strong relief bruise in his own holdings, he is soon able to see more subtle examples that moments earlier he dismissed as ordinary, unbruised stamps. With helper images, such as those included in this article, students are quickly able to observe even quite subtle relief bruises. Putting a slightly visible E relief bruise stamp, with its horizontal banding, for example, next to a B or D or C relief stamp with a similarly subtle relief bruise, often immediately highlights that they are different.

The observation of relief bruises is not always a science; it can be a matter of interpretation. But that is the case for every aspect of plating stamps (except for the reading of plate numbers from the attached selvedge). There are often matters of degree and some students will immediately see a feature that to their friend is elusive.

Skeptics will exclaim, “You rascalion, you’ve cherry-picked the only visible examples with these contusions!” For such individuals, the results of an earlier frequency study might be helpful. However, since observations of such features may be uncertain, and different observers might obtain different frequencies of appearance of the relief bruises, it will require convincing evidence. For example, if only a few percent of randomly selected Type V/Va stamps show relief bruises, then the phenomenon, while interesting, might not be quite as significant as hoped.

That result was not the case. Over the course of half a year, nearly 1,300 stamps were



Figure 24: Relief bruises on Plate 10. These are Positions 2-4, 12-14, 22-24 and 32-34 from the right pane, showing relief bruises on several impressions of the A, B and C reliefs (top three rows), but none on the bottom row D relief stamps.

reviewed at a series of public bourses involving 61 non-repeated sources of stamps (i.e., dealers). This sampling occurred over 15 years ago before any discussion of relief bruises had been made public, thereby making the observations single-blind (in that the dealers who owned the stamps did not know about the phenomenon the researcher was studying). Stamps owned by dealer experts in the issue were not included, nor were any items in my collection. Nearly 200 examples were not able to be identified by relief by any means primarily due to obscuring cancels (or sometimes, being off-center so as to eliminate confirming, traditional relief indications).

On the remaining 1,100 stamps, relief bruises were determined to be either not visible, visible or strongly visible. While it is tempting to assert that the criteria and thresholds were precise, that is not the case. The interpretations were judgment calls in ill-lit conference halls and meeting rooms. For interpretive purposes, a “strongly visible” relief bruise would be a relief bruise (atypically extensive and/or intense) that even an untrained eye would register as “something unusual.” A “visible” relief bruise was one which did not require pattern matching with another stamp—it had marks clearly like those shown in this article and a specific relief could be identified. What have been described in this article as “subtle” bruises were usually judged to be “not visible.”

Relief Type	Obscured	Not visible	Visible	Strongly visible	Total
A	20	44	54	11	129
B	8	39	57	15	119
C	26	66	102	50	244
D	34	138	64	4	240
E	30	71	98	15	214
F	36	81	109	38	264
Unknown	39	42	2	0	83
Total	193	481	486	133	1,293

Table 1. Results of a random sampling of nearly 1,300 Type V/Va stamps. More than half of the items examined showed evidence of plate bruising, visible or strongly visible without magnification.

The results of the survey are shown in Table 1. The sampling process yielded 481 examples with relief bruises “not visible,” but five more than that, 486 stamps, were categorized as having relief bruises “visible” and a further 133 as “strongly visible.” Therefore, 619 out of 1,100 stamps (56 percent) that could be judged showed relief bruises to some extent. The “strongly visible” relief bruises occurred 12 percent of the time. For statisticians, the following claim is relevant: “If 100 random 1¢ Type V/Va stamps without obscuring cancels are examined, then at a 95 percent confidence interval there would be visible relief bruises on 56 of the stamps, plus or minus 10 stamps.” In other words, it is highly likely that a reader will see relief bruises at the next stamp show or gathering he attends, assuming that 1¢ 1857 stamps are present to any meaningful degree.

Table 1 provides some confidence-building results. Overall, the A and B relief totals are about half of the numbers for the C, D, E, and F reliefs, as is consistent with their distribution on the plates. The two stamps listed in the “visible” column with “unknown” reliefs showed extensive relief bruises which made it impossible to reliably identify a particular relief based solely on their bruising. That is the case, as well, with the left stamp in Figure 12, the E relief stamp with relief bruises so extensive that it could be almost any of the

relief bruises. That stamp was assigned a relief based on its traditional relief and position marks that showed it to be Position 50L7.

As might be expected by the examples illustrated in this article, the C relief bruise appeared slightly more (62 percent) than the B relief bruise (60 percent) and F relief bruise (56 percent). The E relief bruise appeared 52 percent of the time, with the A relief at 50 percent. The only relief that showed the bruises less often than 50 percent was the D relief at 28 percent, and that bruise appeared strongly in less than 2 percent of cases. On the other extreme, the C relief bruise appeared strongly on more than 20 percent of those rows' stamps. These values include both obscured and unobscured stamps, as might be typically found in stock books. Also, in the stock of every one of the 61 sources of stamps, at least 25 percent of the Type V/Va stamps showed relief bruises, meaning that the average bourse-goer is very likely to find examples if he seeks them out.

In fact, when picking up an example of a Type V/Va stamp without an obscuring cancel, a collector is more likely to see a relief bruise than not see one. The "ordinary" Type V/Va is a rarer stamp than one with a relief bruise. The relief bruise stamps are the most common variety on any of the classic U.S. stamps.

The statistical investigation would have been better if every one of the 1,100-plus stamps had been plated to a specific plate or position, since it would have provided some objective evidence for the frequency of relief bruises by plate. That goal was unrealistic, if for no other reason than many positions on Plates 8, 9 and 10 are identified in the standard plating charts as having "no information." Currently, we are left with the subjective observation that Plates 7, 8 and 5 (in that order) more commonly display relief bruises than Plates 10 and 9 (also in that order). However, we can say, based on the survey results, that reliefs C, B and F show bruises more often than the other reliefs.

Given all the data, the more challenging task would be to try to find a particular position out of the 1,000 that *never* shows a relief bruise. Since the D reliefs are scarcest (in the appearance of relief bruises relative to frequency of the relief on a plate), one might look at impressions on Plates 9 and 10 for such a pristine position. However, such seekers of a "null" result are reminded of the challenge of proving a negative.

On the common perforate plates of the 1857 1¢ stamp, relief bruises appeared from the start of their use, on each pane of every plate, and with great frequency, likely until the plates were removed from service. This is the first comprehensive explanation of a remarkable feature that varies in intensity and extent from impression to impression based on contributing factors both from the creation of the plates and from their use.

I previously revealed to some advanced students the nature of relief bruises on Plates 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 as explained thus far,²⁰ and created a short-lived website featuring the phenomenon in 1999-2000, but this is the first time that a thorough presentation has been offered. The following installments of this article, however, have not previously been disseminated and serve to importantly broaden and deepen the findings. .

The next installment of this article will examine another aspect of the six-relief plates and explore the final two plates (numbered 11 and 12) which were created from three-relief rolls and produced different types of 1¢ stamps. Once all the evidence is marshaled, the final installment will examine finer aspects of the possible causes and varying appearance of relief bruises. As we will see, relief bruises may signify something of the fundamental nature of the production of the plates and stamps, possibly in surprising ways.

Endnotes

1. The example was a photograph of position 65R8 (shown at right in Figure 5) with arrows and the word "mottle" in Stanley B. Ashbrook, *The United States One Cent Stamp of 1851-1857*, Volume 1, New York: H.L. Lindquist, 1938, pg. 284. Hereafter referred to as "Ashbrook."

2. Elliott Perry, *Pat Paragraphs*, #35, reprint edition. Takoma Park, Md: Bureau Issues Association, 1981, pp. 76-80.

Additionally, Perry amplifies his “discovery” of the guide relief process in several *Chronicle* articles: “Discovery of the Guide Reliefs on the Multiple Relief Transfer Rolls of 1851-60,” *Chronicle* 50 (June, 1965), pp. 97-99; “Relief-Roller Entry on Certain Plates for 1851-Issue Stamps,” *Chronicle* 53 (October, 1966), pp. 120-121; “Guide-Relief Process for Manufacture of 1851-’60 Plates,” *Chronicle* 60 (November, 1968), pp. 126-129. Perry’s material was supplemented and expanded in Richard Celler, “Reexamining the Origin of Plate 1 of the 1-cent Stamp of 1851,” in *The 1851 Issue of United State Stamps: A Sesquicentennial Retrospective*, New Orleans: The U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc. 2006, pp. 39-56.

3. The creation of postage stamp printing plates (using intaglio printing with entries created on softened steel and then transferred once hardened) is a subject worthy of considerable study, and most of its detail is beyond the scope of this article. One of the earliest definitive explanations was provided by Edward Denny Bacon who in 1920 reproduced the Perkins’ patent, which explains the process used by Perkins and Bacon (the makers of the British postage stamps, the world’s first, in the 1840’s), as well as Toppan, Carpenter and Co. (TC). The principals of TC, creators of the stamps under study here, were well acquainted with these methods. For example, Charles Toppan, who was an expert engraver, was a former employee of the British firm.

Bacon (1920) writes: “A die of soft steel, on which the original sketch of the stamp or other design was engraved reversed, was made so hard in a suitable furnace, that ordinary files or chisels would not even scratch it. A soft steel roller of a suitable size – for postage stamps about three inches in diameter and seven-eighths to one inch wide on the edge – is put in a machine called a transfer press, and rolled under great pressure backwards and forwards over the hardened die, until all the design on the die is transferred in a reversed form to the roller. That is to say, the sunk lines on the original die is transferred in a reversed form on the roller. Now the roller is in its turn hardened and from it by a similar action in the transfer press, any number of reproductions of the design, exactly similar to the original die, can be produced, or ‘laid down’ on a soft steel plate. The lines standing up on the roller become sunk in the plates, as they are on the original die. When we say exactly the same as in the original die, we must qualify this by saying that a loss, infinitesimal it is true, but still a loss of strength and depth, takes place on the transfer from die to roller and again from roller to plate, so that it is customary to engrave the original die slightly deeper than it is intended the design on the printing plate should be, to allow for this loss. After the steel plate has been hardened it is ready for printing impressions....

“In engraving the die, it can readily be understood that the deeper and thicker a line is cut, the darker will be the colour of the print at that particular spot, as a deep line must necessarily hold more ink than a shallow line, and thus the feature peculiar to intaglio, i.e., the form of printing we are considering, is produced, viz. the half tone, hence the beauty attaching to well engraved plate prints, due to the graduations of colour ranging from very dark to very light, thus giving the full contrast necessary to reproduce the original picture.

“The method of printing from the plate consists in mounting it on the bed of a hand printing press, which has a gas-jet fixed underneath the plate in order to warm it. The colour (or ink as it is called) is then rolled or dabbed over the whole of the plate. All the ink lying in the parts that stand up has then to be cleaned off with a rag, taking care however that the ink is left in the lines forming the design. The plate is finally cleaned and polished by the palm of the hand, after the application of a little whiting [lead oxide or aluminum oxide, presumably], a manipulation that required a good deal of practice and skill, and the sheet of paper to receive the impression, which has been previously damped, is laid smoothly on the plate. On the printer turning the wheel of the press, the paper is pressed into the sunken lines by the elasticity of the material – usually a sort of felt or cloth, called the blanket – on the cylinder that makes the pressure, and the design on the plate is thus transferred to the paper, the design, so to speak, standing up on the surface of the paper. The presses were so constructed that after the plate had passed under the cylinder it returned automatically to the operator, who then removed the sheet of paper covered with the design, and at once proceeded to ink the plate again for printing another sheet.” Edward Denny Bacon, *The Line-Engraved Postage Stamps of Great Britain, Printed by Perkins, Bacon & Co.*, Volume 1, London: Charles Nissen & Co., Limited, 1920, pp. 11-12. This volume is scarce in print, and on-line links are available to the file: [lineengravedpost01baco.pdf](#) at [archive.org](#). Perkins’ patent is in appendix B in Volume 2 at [lineengravedpost02baco.pdf](#), also at [archive.org](#). While similar such explanations are often cited in later publications about line-engraved postage stamps, and they originate in the United States (see, for example, James H. Baxter, *Printing Postage Stamps by Line Engraving*, American Philatelic Society, 1939) the above citation benefits by being a second-hand account of the actual process likely known and used by TC, while later publications are third-hand or fourth-hand accounts and sometimes conflate later (or more ancient) processes with the TC-era processes. For a brief biography of Charles Toppan and his involvement with Perkins, Bacon, see Gary W. Granzow, “Appendix C” in *Line Engraved Security Printing: The Methods of Perkins Bacon, 1790-1935, Banknotes and Postage Stamps*, London: Royal Philatelic Society London, 2012, pg. 290.

4. This subject has any number of pitfalls for readers trying to make sense of the production of stamps. One of those is the multiple meanings of the word “relief.” As may be inferred from the prior endnote, a stamp image on a roll is “in relief,” in that it is raised (or protrudes) above the otherwise curved level of the steel. However, the stamp image, or entry, particularly when describing the multi-image transfer roll, is also said to be “a relief,” thus a “six-relief transfer roll” or a “single-relief die.” Technically, all images on the curved transfer rolls are both “reliefs” and “in relief,” hence the term often is used interchangeably and as shorthand. This convenient term has also come to be used when referring to flat steel, however, such as a “multi-relief laydown,” being a flat piece of steel sufficient to fit the images from the transfer roll. That is the confusing bit. In this article, where possible, the term “in relief,” will be replaced by “raised,” (or a closely similar term) so that when “relief” appears, it is used to refer to the stamp image, whether in mirror form

on a flat plate or die, or curved and raised on a roll. Flat = mirror image and recessed. Curved (or stamp paper) = right way and raised.

5. The physical dimensions of the transfer roll are unknown. Despite Bacon's (1920) assertions about the Perkins, Bacon device mentioned in Endnote 3, TC never used more than a six-image transfer roll (they also used six-subject transfer rolls for the 3¢ stamp). This number of entries provided, apparently, a good balance between economy of effort and straight columns. A ten-relief transfer roll might have been conceptually ideal, but may have been impractically large. Recall that high-quality steel was scarce and that the transfer roll withstood all the pressure of a transfer press (hardened steel into soft steel) on each and every relief 120 or 240 times (counting Plate 6), 120 times for A and B relief stamps, and 240 for the other reliefs. Obtaining steel of that size, sufficiently hardening it, and ensuring that such a large cylinder could be appropriately aligned on the transfer press so many times might have militated in favor of a six-relief transfer roll as a smart compromise.

6. Plate 5 produced the Type Va stamps, which are described as having almost complete ornaments on the sides, and not having any side scratches. The distinction between Type V and Type Va stamps is not always so clear, but a complete discussion awaits another day.

7. Ashbrook, pp. 252-258.

8. Mortimer L. Neinken, *The United States One Cent Stamp of 1851 to 1861*. U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., 1972. Hereafter referred to as "Neinken."

9. All of the features presented herein are "unintended ink" in the sense that they were not supposed to appear on the finished stamp. Since there is no die proof known for these stamps, this assertion cannot be said to be provable. However, such patterns do not exist on stamps from Plate 1E, the first state of the first TC plate in 1851, and so it is inferred that the patterns described were unintended and unwanted. Why an unwanted, prominent element should make such an appearance, and not have been expurgated by TC, will be discussed in a subsequent installment of this article.

10. Ashbrook, pp. 262-263.

11. The Ashbrook Archive, 2015. Photo labeled: ASH_Black_Binder_1-23.jpg. In U.S. Philatelic Classics Society website. Accessible at www.uspcs.org/ashbrook-archives/ashbrook-black-binders/.

12. Ashbrook, pg. 265 and pg. 268. However, here Ashbrook confusingly refers to the feature as "blister mottling."

13. Ashbrook, pp. 262, 268. Neinken, pg. 362-63.

14. See explanation in Endnote 3. Also, Bacon, pg. 111 and Baxter, pp. 116-117.

15. Ashbrook, pp. 250-261. Corrected by Neinken, pp. 309-325.

16. Ashbrook, pg. 262.

17. Wilson Hulme told me nearly 20 years ago that this letter existed, and thus that the Plate 9 proofs were almost certainly created in early 1861. This information was documented in Hulme's posthumously published typescript of the Travers Papers, now accessible on the website of the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society.

18. The Neinken plate drawings show no such crack despite the fact that the unique pane shows evidence of it and is known to have been owned by Neinken. Four of five examples in my collection show the crack as it matured.

19. Ashbrook, pp. 289, 298.

20. At a March, 1998 seminar including my presentation the following Route Agents provided feedback and encouragement: Bernard Biales, E. Fritz, W. Wilson Hulme, Rob Lund, Elliot H. Omiya, Mark D. Rogers and K.G. Tiara. During this time, as well, Route Agents Richard Celler, Robert Hegland, Steven M. Roth and Jerome S. Wagshal provided valuable feedback. But all errors of fact or interpretation in this article are solely the responsibility of the author. ■

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CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS' LETTER ENDORSEMENT LABELS

CHIP GLIEDMAN

The desire to ease the ability for Civil War soldiers to communicate home led the United States Congress to enact legislation allowing properly endorsed letters from troops to be sent with postage collect as of July or August of 1861, superseding the 1855 requirement that all mail be prepaid by postage stamps. As the war progressed, extensions to the regulations and nuances in their execution created a wide range of examples of this class of mail. The topic of Civil War Soldiers' Letters has been covered extensively in numerous issues of the *Chronicle* over the past 50-plus years, notably in a long series of articles by Richard B. Graham. The majority of soldiers' letters are endorsed in manuscript with "Soldier's Letter" or "Naval Letter," the signature of an officer, and the regiment number and state, as per the postal regulations. A smaller fraction of soldiers' letters had handstamped endorsements that contained some or all of the required information.¹

Shown as Figures 1 and 2 are two covers with handwritten adhesive labels that present an alternate means of applying the Soldier's Letter endorsement. The covers were sent by different correspondents to different destinations. Both covers entered the mails at Baltimore within 10 days of each other in late 1864 and both show blue double-circle Baltimore datestamps and "Due 3" handstamps.

The labels contain the same text: "Soldiers Letter/T.W. Simpson/Chaplain/U.S.A." handwritten in pen on what appears to be lined ledger paper. The labels themselves are approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1" tall by $1\frac{1}{4}$ " to $1\frac{1}{2}$ " wide. Both show remnants of penned outlines at the edges, suggesting they were created in multiples and then cut apart. The nature of the glue used to affix the labels to the envelopes cannot be determined, but the widespread use of postage stamps set ample precedent for affixing a piece of paper to an envelope.

These are the only examples of Soldiers' Letter label-endorsements that I know of. In addition to the unusual way in which they met the endorsement requirement, these labels demonstrate an extension to the Soldiers' Letter regulations and tie into the broader narrative about this period of the War.

The initial July 1861 act specified that the regimental Major or Acting Major endorse soldiers' letters. This was broadened a month later to include any acting field or staff officer and extended in January 1862 to include sailors and marines.² On May 1, 1862 the endorsement privilege was extended to include Chaplains and Surgeons. The text of this last order is published in the May 1862 issue of the *United States Mail and Post Office Assistant*:

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

12th April, 1861.

ORDERED. That the certificate "Soldier's Letter," when the letters are written by soldiers at detached posts or hospital, may be signed by the Chaplain or Surgeon at such post or hospital, as well as by any field officer, and shall be equally recognized by Postmasters; postage to be collected on delivery.

JOHN A. KASSON,

First Ass't P.M. General

By 1864, the War had taken a heavy toll on troops on both sides. Battles raged in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Northern Virginia. In July 1863, Gettysburg alone created

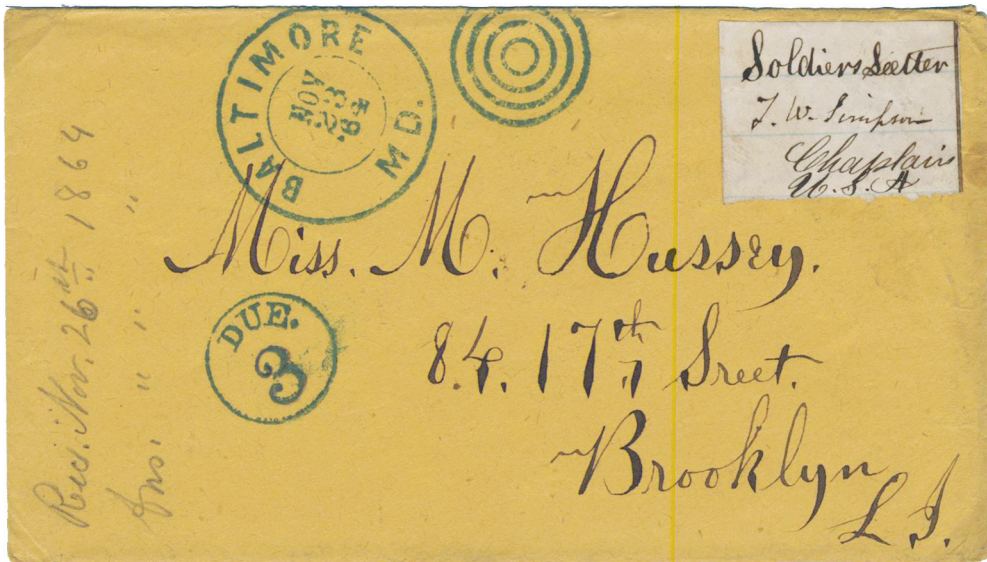


Figure 1: November 23, 1864 cover sent from Baltimore to Brooklyn, New York, with Soldier's Letter endorsement label affixed. Collection of Patricia Stilwell-Walker.

almost 15,000 wounded Union soldiers. To address the needs of these wounded, 14 military hospitals had been established in Maryland, with seven of them located in Baltimore.

Clergymen, often affiliated with local chapters of the United States Christian Commission, ministered to the spiritual needs of soldiers within these facilities as well as within the regimental camps. T.W. Simpson, the Chaplain whose signature appears on these labels, is listed as a Director of the Baltimore Christian Association, an auxiliary to the Christian Commission. In its final report before the commission disbanded at the conclusion of the war, Simpson is listed as having served at both Newton University Hospital and Hicks Hospital.³ As Hicks Hospital did not open until 1865, it is likely that the letters originated at Newton University Hospital.

Newton University Hospital occupied buildings of Newton University which was by then defunct. From the same Christian Commission report:⁴

This Hospital was established in a pressing emergency in the single building, that was occupied by the Newton University. It was enlarged as necessities required, until it occupied the row of five large buildings on Lexington street, two on North street, and a small dwelling on Davis street. On several occasions, after battles, the wards were filled to their utmost capacity.

The original buildings still stand on East Lexington Street between Davis and Guilford Streets. The 1890 date on the current façade of one of the buildings represents the date of a later renovation.

Each of the envelopes was addressed in a different hand with one destined for Brooklyn, New York and the other for Westbury in Cayuga County, New York. There are approximately 150 people with the surname "Hussey" listed in the 1865 state census, with five or six with a potential first initial "M" recorded in Brooklyn. Although we have the street address of the recipient, the sender of the Figure 1 cover is not easily determined.

Amanda J. Hoffman, addressee of the Figure 2 cover, is listed in the 1860 United States Census residing in Fayette, New York, approximately 30 miles southwest of address on the envelope.⁵ David J. Hoffman, a farmer born in neighboring Geneva, New York, enlisted June 21, 1862 at the age of 19. He saw action with the 126th Regiment Infantry (New York), was wounded at Gettysburg on July 3, 1863 and later discharged because of his wounds.⁶ Although the Figure 2 cover dates many months later, he is possibly the sender.



Figure 2: December 1, 1864 cover from Baltimore to Westbury, New York with similar endorsement label affixed. The signer, T.W. Simpson, was the Chaplain at Newton University Hospital in Baltimore, which treated Union troops during the Civil War.

Both covers received similar postal markings upon their entry in the mails. The earlier cover, Figure 1, is dated “NOV 23 ‘64” in the Baltimore double-ring datestamp with a duplexed four-ring target obliterator intended to cancel a postage stamp. The date is confirmed by the penciled “Rec. Nov 26th 1864” docketing. The later cover, Figure 2, is dated “DEC 1.” The year date is somewhat smudged, but 1864 year can be presumed. Additionally, both covers have circular “DUE 3” handstamped markings, confirming that the post office treated these as single-rate, unpaid soldiers’ mail to be sent with the postage collect, as permitted by the regulations. All postal markings are in the blue ink typically used in Baltimore at that time.

Just as the necessities of war spurred the government to modify postal regulations to meet the needs of servicemen, it appears that Reverend Simpson came up with a unique way to facilitate patients’ communications home by “pre-endorsing” these labels for later use on their letters.

Endnotes

1. Examples of Soldiers’ Letter endorsement handstamps are shown in Richard B. Graham’s articles in *Chronicles* 133 and 135.
2. Copies of the orders or contemporary reports of them are included in Graham’s article in *Chronicle* 50.
3. *United States Christian Commission, Fourth Report of the Committee of Maryland*. Innes & Maguire, Printers; Baltimore 1866; pp. 107-109. Digitized by Google.
4. *Ibid.* pg. 108.
5. “United States Census, 1860,” database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MC4X-FGL> (last viewed 13 October 2015), Amanda J Hoffman in household of Charles Hoffman, The Town Of Fayette, Seneca, New York, United States; from “1860 U.S. Federal Census - Population,” database, Fold3.com (<http://www.fold3.com> : n.d.); citing pg. 208, household ID 1591, NARA microfilm publication M653 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 803, 861.
6. Willson, Arabella M. *Disaster, Struggle, Triumph: The Adventures of 1000 “Boys in Blue,” from August 1862 to June 1865*. 1870, Argus Company, New York. pg. 527. Digitized by Google. ■



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THE 1869 PERIOD

SCOTT R. TREPPEL, EDITOR

NOTE FROM THE SECTION EDITOR

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Mike Mahler's article on the remarkable parallels between the high-denomination revenue stamps and their postal counterparts, particularly in the stamps' usage and the surviving examples on covers. Cover collectors have always considered the U.S. 19th Century "Nineties" to be the most desirable of basic stamp frankings. These are the 90¢ stamps of 1860, 1861-68, 1869, 1870-88 (Large Bank Notes) and 1890 (Small Bank Notes). Chronicle readers will be surprised to learn what Mike reveals about the relationship between the 90¢ postage stamps and the corresponding big-ticket revenue stamps, denominated in hundreds of dollars, not dimes.—SRT

UNCANNY PARALLELS: CLASSIC 90¢ POSTAGE STAMPS AND \$200 AND \$500 REVENUE "RUGS"

MICHAEL MAHLER

Four strong similarities link the three 90¢ postage stamps of the 1860s and the three highest value revenue stamps of 1864-71. The similarities are analogous purpose, use during the Civil War era, duration of use, and uncanny parallels in the numbers of surviving examples on cover or on document.

The unique \$500 "Persian Rug" on document is the fiscal analog of the unique 90¢ 1869 "Ice House" cover. Documents bearing the Second Issue \$200 "Small Rug" (five known) are the fiscal analogs of covers bearing the 90¢ stamp of 1860 (six known). And documents bearing the First Issue \$200 "Baby Rug" are analogous to covers showing the 90¢ 1861 stamp. These striking parallels are the result of two near miracles of probability, explored in this article.

Analogous purpose

The recently uncovered Travers documents shed light on the timing and the rationale for creating high-value postage stamps. On 25 May 1860 Postmaster General Joseph Holt eliminated the practice of sending foreign letters collect—except where postal treaties explicitly permitted this. This decision, fostering an immediate need for higher-denomination stamps, created a public outcry that resulted in the hasty production of 24¢, 30¢ and 90¢ stamps.¹ One might have expected a \$1 denomination, but 90¢ became the highest value, possibly because it was conveniently double the 45¢ British Mail rate to Hong Kong via Marseilles, and six times the 15¢ rate to France or Germany.

The \$200 and \$500 revenue stamps of 1864-71 had a similar purpose: to facilitate payment of large amounts of tax, in this case necessitated by the huge expense of a civil war. Because of its size and intricate, tricolored, engine-turned design, the \$500 Second Issue revenue stamp (Scott R133) has long been dubbed the "Persian Rug." By extension the Second Issue \$200 stamp (R132), also large and tricolored, became the "Small Rug." And the First Issue \$200 of 1864 (R102), the largest of the First Issues and the only bicolor, became the "Baby Rug."

The need for these high denominations emerged only gradually. The original slate of First Issue revenue stamps, delivered by the printers between September 1862 and April

1863, included no denomination larger than \$25. The First Issue \$200 did not appear until July 7, 1864. Similarly the benefits of high-denomination postage stamps became clear only after some years of making do without them. The perforated 1¢ through 12¢ stamps were first issued in 1857, but the 24¢, 30¢ and 90¢ denominations did not appear until 1860.

These similarities apply equally well to, say, the 90¢ stamps of 1870-90; the \$100, \$500 and \$1,000 revenues of 1898-1902; and the various subsequent dollar-value postage stamps or high-denomination revenues. What distinguishes the issues under discussion is that they were the earliest high-denomination postage and revenue stamps.

Duration of use

Similarity of purpose and era is straightforward and unsurprising. But the remaining similarities, presented in Table 1, are remarkable. Consider first the durations of usage of the 90¢ stamps. The 1860 90¢ first appeared August 13, 1860, and was demonetized a year

Stamp	Scott #	Duration	# surviving covers/docs
90¢ 1869	122	13 months	1
Second Issue \$500	R133	12 months	1
90¢ 1860	39	12 months	6
Second Issue \$200	R132	10.5 months	5
90¢ 1861	72, 101	7.6 years	64
First Issue \$200	R102	7.3 years	~25

Table 1. High-value postage and revenue stamps from the 1860s and early 1870s: Length of time the stamps were on sale (“Duration”) and the number of surviving covers or documents.

later. The wartime 90¢ stamp was first issued August 20, 1861 and remained current nearly eight years until it was replaced by the short-lived 90¢ 1869 stamp, issued March 9, 1869. A mere 13 months later, the 90¢ 1869 was in turn replaced by the 90¢ National Bank Note stamp, issued April 12, 1870.

On the revenue side, the First Issue \$200 stamp was first delivered by the printer on July 7, 1864, and was replaced more than seven years later, on November 11, 1871, by the Second Issue \$200 stamp. The Second Issue \$500 had already appeared on October 3, 1871. One year after the Second Issues were introduced, all documentary taxes except the 2¢ levy on bank checks were rescinded, effective October 1, 1872.

The durations of usage presented in Table 1 are useful approximations. Certainly it took a short time for the revenue stamps to pass from the government’s stamp agent to the public. And certainly all stamps, with the possible exception of the demonetized 90¢ stamp of 1860, were used beyond the periods shown in the table. To cite the most visible examples, the Ice House cover bearing the 90¢ 1869 stamp was mailed in August 1873, and roughly 10 percent of \$200 and \$500 “Rugs” were used as late as 1877 to retroactively stamp documents executed before October 1872.

The data as summarized in Table 1 make clear that duration of use of the First Issue \$200 revenue stamp closely matches that of the 1861 90¢ stamp, and the durations for the Second Issue \$200 and \$500 closely approximate those of the 90¢ 1860 and 90¢ 1869 stamps. At first blush this appears to be nothing more than an interesting curiosity. But in the light of the final set of similarities, it seems both significant and amazing.

Surviving covers and documents

We pass now to the business end of these and all similar comparisons: the number of surviving examples on cover or on document. Again the similarities are striking. Only one cover bearing the 1869 90¢ Lincoln is known, the legendary Ice House cover to Calcutta, shown here in Figure 1. This iconic cover, stolen from the David Baker collection and recovered decades later, bears a 90¢ 1869 stamp, a 12¢ Bank Note stamp and a 10¢ Bank Note stamp, a replacement for the 10¢ Bank Note that must have originated but has been missing for at least a century. The \$1.12 postage pays four times the 28¢ rate from the U.S. to India via British mails via Brindisi.



Figure 1. The iconic “Ice House” cover, the only cover known bearing a 90¢ 1869 stamp. Posted in Boston in 1873, the cover is franked with \$1.12 in postage (four times the 28¢ rate from the U.S. to India via British mails via Brindisi) paid by the 90¢ 1869 stamp and 10¢ and 12¢ Bank Note stamps. The 90¢ stamp, now repaired, was torn in two when the envelope was opened and the 10¢ stamp is a replacement. Despite these problems, this unique cover fetched \$375,000 (plus fees) when auctioned in 2009.

Similarly, only one \$500 “Persian Rug” stamp is known on document, on the final page of the 1871 \$5 million mortgage of the Morris and Essex Rail Road Co. This is shown in Figure 2. This mortgage originally bore ten \$500 stamps, and was in the possession of a New Jersey stock broker for some 20 years before being sold by auctioneer Hugh Barr in 1949. Barr’s description stated, “The document with all the stamps is such a remarkable showpiece that it would be the cynosure of all eyes in any philatelic Exhibition and it should really be preserved in its entirety if a buyer who appreciates the value of such an item can be found.” Many years later, a photograph surfaced from the George Sloane reference collection which amply confirms this judgment. Three pages bore three stamps apiece, filling the legal margin at left from top to bottom. The photograph shows the stamped portion of the final page placed sideways and overlaid by the closely overlapped stamped portions of the other three pages, forming a massive array of ten “Rugs.”² At the Barr sale, all stamps save that on the final page were removed, but numbered so they could be replaced on the document. They were first offered singly, then together with the document as one lot, to be executed if its top bid exceeded the total for the ten single lots. This was not to be. A touted potential buyer of the complete document, Morton Dean Joyce, the deep-pocketed “dean of revenueurs,” expressed a distinct lack of interest. The stamps went their separate ways, with the final page kept intact, the sole remnant of what was and might have been. It was in the collection of Edward Lipson, who acquired it at its last public sale by H. R. Harmer in 1969, and held it some 35 years.



Figure 2. The fiscal counterpart to the Ice House cover is this unique document bearing the 1871 \$500 "Persian Rug" revenue stamp. This is the final page of a \$5 million mortgage document, executed in 1871, involving the Morris and Essex Rail Road. The document originally bore ten \$500 stamps, nine of which were affixed to the previous pages of the mortgage.

Six covers bearing the 90¢ 1860 stamp have been recorded and five documents bearing the \$200 “Small Rug.” The six 90¢ 1860 covers have been amply documented.³ One of them is shown in Figure 3. This too is a cover to India, franked with 30¢ and 90¢ stamps of 1860 and an 1857 12¢, totaling \$1.32, presumably prepaying four times the 33¢ rate



Figure 3. This cover to India is one of six covers known bearing a 90¢ 1860 stamp. Despite the “via Marseilles” routing, this cover was franked with \$1.32 in postage (90¢+30¢+12¢), paying four times the 33¢ rate to India via British mails via Southampton.

from the U.S. to India via British mails via Southampton. The cover is endorsed to travel on the faster, more expensive route via Marseilles, but was not adequately franked for that purpose.

The five recorded documents bearing a Second Issue \$200 are: (1) Dec. 9, 1871, manuscript deed with custom calligraphy, Clifton Iron Co. to Luther C. Clark, shown here in Figure 4 and discussed more extensively below; (2) Dec. 14, 1871, manuscript will of Wm. Thomson, N.Y., with 2nd Issue \$50; (3) February 12, 1872, deed to New York City property formerly owned by John Jay, with 2nd Issue \$10, \$50 (x3); (4) June 5, 1872, manuscript deed with custom calligraphy, Luther C. Clark to Clifton Mining Co., with 3rd Issue \$5, \$10 (x5); and (5) 1871-72 manuscript will of Louisa Lynch of New York, made Oct. 19, 1869, on which the stamp with manuscript cancel has been removed from the document, which still accompanies it.

The document shown in Figure 4 bears an 1871 \$200 Second Issue revenue stamp (the “Small Rug”) along with two Second Issue \$10, three Third Issue \$10 and a Third Issue \$5, adorning the first page of a deed made December 9, 1871, from George Ingraham, referee in the case of Luther C. Clark and John J. Cisco, trustees, vs. the Clifton Iron Co., conveying all land and property of that company, including its “tram or railroad,” to Clark. This document was discovered *circa* 1941 along with the deed dated June 5, 1872, similarly stamped with \$255 in Second and Third Issue revenues, including a choice \$200 “Small Rug,” by which Clark and his wife conveyed the same property, comprising 23,320 acres in Pierrepont, New York, to the newly-formed Clifton Mining Co. The consideration was a token \$5 plus 23,450 shares of the company’s stock. Philip Ward, describing the find, opined “we are under the impression that the days are coming when the revenue stamp on the entire document will be just as much sought after as the postage stamp on the cover.”⁴ The



Figure 4. The fiscal counterparts to 90¢ 1860 covers are documents bearing the 1871 \$200 “Small Rug” revenue, of which five examples are recorded. On the document shown here, the \$200 stamp pays most of the \$255 tax required on a deed.

second deed clears up an inconsistency concerning the first. The stamps on the latter have cancels dated December 9, 1871, but the Third Issue \$5 and \$10 were not delivered until January 31 and February 29, 1872, respectively. Probably both documents were stamped at the same time, in June 1872, with the cancels on the earlier deed backdated to match the date of execution. Such backdating was commonplace and not illegal.



Figure 5. Approximately 60 covers are known bearing the 90¢ stamp of 1861. This 1868 cover to India, from the Bissell correspondence, is franked with 90¢, 12¢ and 10¢ 1861 stamps, prepaying four times the 28¢ rate via British mail via Southampton.

Around 60 covers have been recorded bearing the 1861 90¢ stamp⁵ and about 25 documents survive stamped with the First Issue \$200 “Baby Rug.”⁶ Figure 5 shows a 90¢ 1861 stamp (along with 12¢ and 10¢ stamps) on yet another cover to India, this from the famous Bissell correspondence, a find that was unearthed by New York dealer J. Murray Bartels, who as it happens was the same dealer who discovered the Ice House cover. Mailed from Boston in 1868, the Figure 5 cover is franked with 90¢, 12¢ and 10¢ 1861 stamps, prepaying four times the 28¢ rate via British mail via Southampton.

Figure 6 shows three \$200 “Baby Rug” revenues and three \$50 stamps on the final page of an 1867 deed made at Philadelphia, conveying the Pennsylvania Canal between Columbia and Hollidaysburg, a distance of some 175 miles, from the Pennsylvania Railroad Co. to the newly-formed Pennsylvania Canal Co. for \$2,750,000. This was an in-house transaction, as both companies had the same president and secretary. The \$2.75 million was paid, not in cash, but via 55,000 shares of stock in the Pennsylvania Canal Co., par value \$50 each, and herein lies a puzzle. The appropriate tax on a conveyance for property valued at \$2.75 million would have been \$2,750, not the \$750 paid here. What has happened to the “missing” \$2,000? No stamps are missing: to the left of the seals is written “U.S. Internal Revenue stamps of the value of Seven hundred and Fifty dollars being first affixed hereto.” But before “Seven” a word has been scuffed out, red lines drawn through to show the correction was authentic, the deleted word almost certainly “Twenty.” Moreover, to the right of the larger green seal is an embossed seal reading “STAMP DUTY PAID/COLLECTOR OF INTERNAL REVENUE,” appropriately signed. Most probably the \$750 tax was based on an estimated value of \$750,000 for the property itself. The stock given in exchange for it was newly issued, its value untested and likely difficult or impossible to estimate. In such cases the stamp duty was properly based on the value of the property itself.⁷ Each stamp



Figure 6. The fiscal counterparts of the 90¢ 1861 covers are documents bearing the \$200 "Baby Rug" revenue stamps. Around 25 such documents are recorded. Here three "Baby Rugs" (plus three \$50 stamps) pay the \$750 tax on a deed to a canal.

was fastened to the page with a small metal grommet, which cut a 5 millimeter hole in the process. Some might consider this a philatelic tragedy, but as a fiscal historian, I do not. The grommets greatly increased the probability that this very beautiful document would survive with its stamps intact. Moreover, other than the grommets, the stamps are uncanceled,

which allows the full beauty of their designs and colors to be seen without interference, an effect especially fortunate in view of the rich colors and exceptional freshness of these particular copies.

Perhaps the makers of the deed concluded that as the grommets virtually guaranteed the stamps would not be re-used, which is after all the essential purpose of any cancellation, it was unnecessary to inscribe the customary names or initials and date. If this conjecture is correct, the grommets can legitimately be thought of as a forerunner of the defacing cancels that came into common use a few years later. In 1870 the Commissioner of Internal Revenue ruled that all handstamp or machine cancelers would henceforth be required to break the paper of the stamp. This was part of an ongoing effort to eliminate re-use of stamps, which eventually led to the Second and Third Issues. Fiscal history concerns itself with the uses of revenue stamps, and if that sometimes included defacing cancels, so be it. I prefer to think of the grommets as part of that panorama of fiscal usage, rather than as defects in the stamps.

The analogy between the 90¢ 1861 stamps and the Baby Rugs extends even further. The 90¢ stamps of 1861-68 can be considered to consist of the normal ungrilled stamp (Scott 72) and a rare subtype, the 1868 F-grill stamp (101), used for less than a year, and for which, according to the 1988 Starnes/Herzog census cited at Endnote 5, just one example is known on cover and one more on a cover front. Likewise the First Issue \$200 has a significant subtype, the imperforate variety (Scott R102a), in general use only a bit over a year (beginning in July 1864) and similarly rare. Just three examples have been recorded on document.⁸

Underlying mechanisms

The number of stamps surviving on covers or documents is a function of three factors: quantity issued; number reaching collector hands; and number removed by collectors. In the first two categories, the numbers for the postage and revenue stamps under discussion are wildly different. Far more 90¢ stamps were issued, by factors of more than 50: 351,150 of the 90¢ 1861 stamp, 55,500 of the 1869 stamp; and 24,280 of the 1860 stamp. For the high-value Revenues, the figures are 6,556 for the First Issue \$200, 446 for the Second Issue \$200, and 210 for the \$500.

On the other hand, documents bearing the \$200 and \$500 revenues were far more likely to reach collector hands. The \$200 stamp paid the tax on a deed or mortgage for property valued at \$200,000, or transfer of a \$400,000 estate, equivalent to many millions today. Records of such significance were likely to survive for decades. Of the 210 \$500 “Rug” stamps sold, Kingsley in 1993 recorded 76 survivors, a total that has slightly increased since.⁹ Surely this is one of the highest stamp survival rates in all of philately.

By comparison with their more common cousins, a much greater percentage of both 90¢ stamps and revenue “Rugs” must have been removed from their original settings by early collectors. Probably the removal rates were very roughly similar—within, say, an order of magnitude.

Miracles of probability

The upshot of all this is that for a given stamp, the interplay of these factors produces a survival rate for covers or documents that can be known only by observation. Amazingly, for the pairs of postage and revenue stamps in question the survival rates are again very closely matched. Expressed as functions of time, for the 1869 90¢ or 1871 \$500, about one per year; for the 1860 90¢ or 1871 \$200, about six per year; for the 1861 90¢ and 1864 \$200, about four and seven per year. How such similar values can have occurred given the highly different numbers issued can only be marveled at.

With this data in hand the significance of the similarities in duration of use emerges. For each pair, given their closely matched survival rates, the matching overall numbers of

survivors can *only* have occurred if their durations of use were also closely matched. Again one stands awestruck at the extraordinarily improbable combination of circumstances that restricted use of the 1860 90¢, 1869 90¢ and 1871 \$200 and \$500 to only about a year for each. In the first case, demonetization due to civil war; in the second, to unexpected unpopularity with the public; and in the third, to spectacularly poor coordination between the Commissioner of Internal Revenue and the federal legislature. That the 1861 90¢ and 1864 \$200 should both remain in use about seven years is only slightly less improbable.

In summary, the numbers of surviving covers and documents bearing the high-value postage and revenue stamps of the classic era are the unpredictable result of a web of underlying factors. That these results can be so simply and memorably stated as in Table 1 is so improbable as to evoke notions of philatelic predestination. Better to simply revel in the results!

Endnotes

1. See *Chronicle* 246, pp. 139 *et seq.*, particularly endnote 39.
2. Bill J. Castenholz, "The Legendary Persian Rug Revisited," *The American Revenuer*, June 1996, pp. 167-169.
3. An accessible listing of the six recorded covers franked with a 90¢ 1860 stamp can be found in the description for lot 1036, Robert A. Siegel auction #1000 (December 8, 2010).
4. Philip Ward, *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News*, Vol. 57, 1941, pg. 267.
5. Charles J. Starnes and William K. Herzog, "Cover Usages of the 90¢ 1861 and 1868 Issues," *Chronicle* 140 (November 1988), pp. 260-265.
6. Michael Mahler, "Big Rug, Small Rug, Baby Rug: U.S. Civil War Era \$200 & \$500 Revenues, Their Purpose Illustrated," *The American Philatelist*, September 2015, pp. 834-842.
7. Michael Mahler, "A Pretty Puzzle," *The American Revenuer*, July-August 1991, pp. 146-148.
8. Michael Mahler, "Was the U.S. First Issue \$200 First Issued Imperforate?" *The American Revenuer*, Second Quarter 2015, pp. 40-46.
9. Thomas C. Kingsley, *The Legendary Persian Rug* (Pacific Palisades, Cal.: Castenholz and Sons, 1993). ■

*When you think of United States postal history provenance,
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CUMBERLAND, MAINE PRECANCELS
WITH SOME REMARKS ON POSTMARKS AND POSTMARKING INKS

JAMES W. MILGRAM, M. D.

On United States stamps, the earliest precancels that can be identified with a city of origin are those from Cumberland, Maine. A discussion of Cumberland's press-printed postmarks can be found in *Maine Postal History and Postmarks* by Sterling T. Dow.¹ There Dow suggested that the book publishing firm of Sanborn and Carter may have used Horace I. Gray, a Cumberland printer, to produce circulars. This is important because all known examples of Cumberland precancels can be traced to Gray.

I discussed the Cumberland precancels in *Chronicle* 206 (May 2005).² Since then a cover has come to light that was missing when I wrote the 2005 article. This is shown in Figure 1. Observe that the typography of the printed portion of the address shows the same type font as the printed postmark. It's clear that all the printed words on this cover were created in one printing. It happens that the contents of this cover survive to provide the main subject of this article, and to date the cover to late 1857. If the manuscript markings that cancel the stamp on this cover are indeed a precancel (as discussed in my article in *Chronicle* 206), then this represents one of the earliest precancels that can be dated definitively.

The pre-printed "Cumberland, Me," town marking at upper left on the cover in Figure 1 is notable because its typeface is suggestive of other Cumberland markings that were printed on stamp-bearing covers. These are unarguably precancels. A straightline marking using this same type face (in a different arrangement) appears on a cover that was illustrated

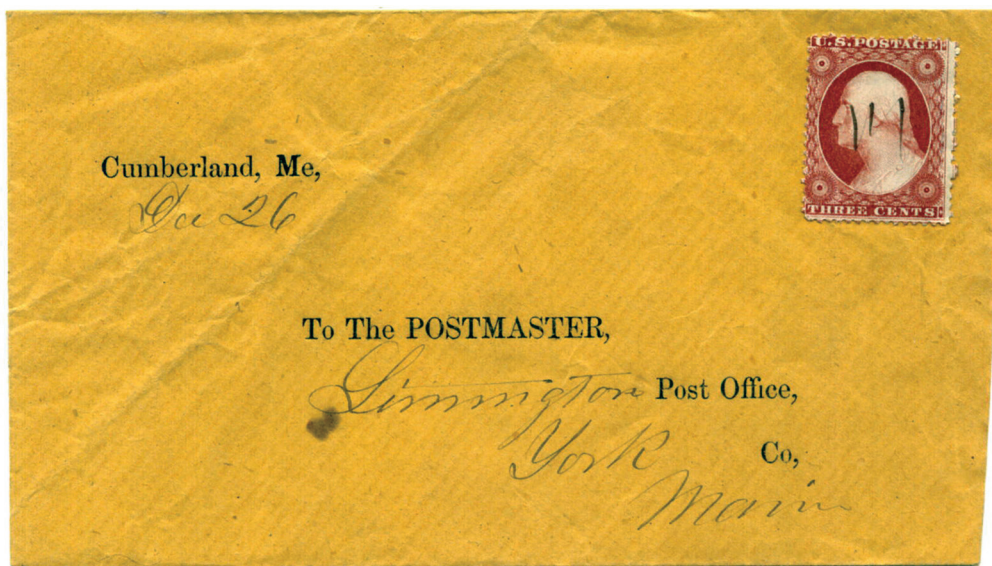


Figure 1. The "Cumberland, Me." townmark on this 1857 cover was preprinted at the same time as the printed portions of the address. This is a creation of Horace Gray, an early direct-mail entrepreneur. The contents are shown in Figures 6 and 7.

by Stanley B. Ashbrook in Volume 2 of *The United States One Cent Stamp of 1851-1857*.³ Dow discussed how 3¢ 1857 covers from this source in Cumberland bear Type 1 3¢ stamps and “were probably mailed soon after the perforated stamps came into use.” I showed as Figure 5 in my *Chronicle* 206 article a faulty 3¢ 1857 cover with a printed two-line Cumberland “Nov. 6” straightline tying the stamp. The straightline marking shows this same typeface and was most likely posted in November, 1857, a few weeks before the cover shown here in Figure 1.

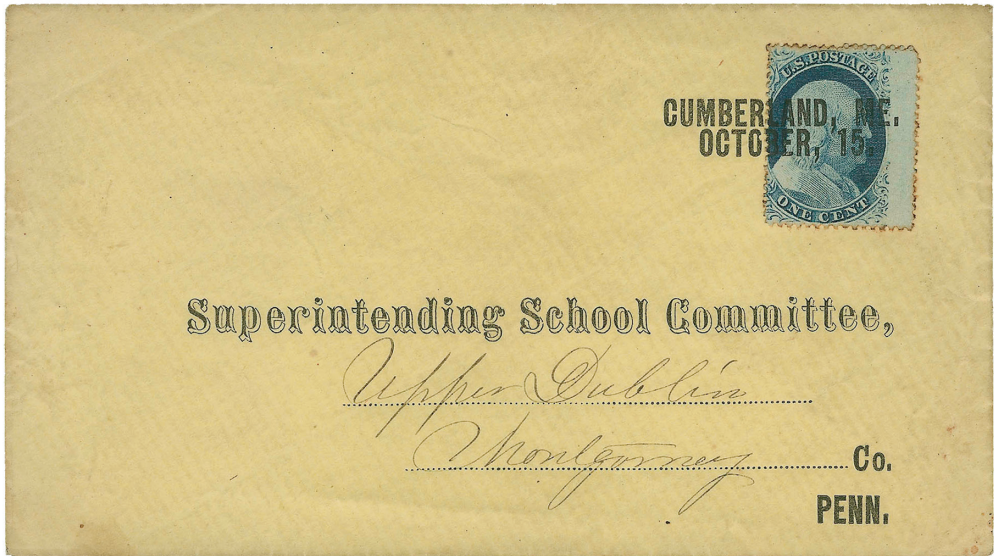


Figure 2. This Cumberland cover carried a sales pitch Gray sent to school boards. The stamp was affixed to the envelope first, the printing was then done in one press run, with the manuscript elements of the address added last. The contents date this to 1859.

Two years later, Gray used a different typeface on similar Cumberland covers. Three covers bearing 1¢ stamps and a surviving off-cover 1¢ stamp show October 15 dating. The circulars they carried indicate they were created in 1859. An example is shown in Figure 2, from a mass mailing to various school boards. As we will see, Gray sold stationery and other office supplies via direct mail. Note on the Figure 2 cover that the state address (“PENN.”) at bottom is printed in the same type as the two-line Cumberland straightline marking that ties the perforated 1¢ stamp. All the printing on this cover was done in one pass.

Then there are a few covers with a large single-rimmed circle with dates JAN 29, MAY 15, and MAY 20, year not known. An example, addressed to the postmaster of Erving, Massachusetts, is shown in Figure 3. As with the two previous covers, the type face in the circular marking is identical to the type in the preprinted portion of the address. This cover was first affixed with the stamp, then run through a printing press to receive both the circular datestamp and the printed portions of the address. Only then was the manuscript portion of the address filled in. I suspect this large circular marking was launched in 1860 or 1861.

The final Cumberland marking of this genre is a double-rimmed circle with the month MAR preprinted but the date handwritten. Some of these covers survive with their contents, a printed circular from Gray, but they can also be year dated by the manuscript precancel year notation that usually appears on the stamp. Figure 4 is an example. Again, this is part of a larger mailing, here a circular sent to tax collectors. All the printed matter was done in one pass, with the manuscript date (“11”) and town information (“Raymond”) added



Figure 3. This cover carried a sales letter to postmasters. Year date for the CUMBERLAND, ME. circle is not known. Again the typefaces match; postmark and address printing were done simultaneously. Illustration courtesy Arnold H. Selengut.

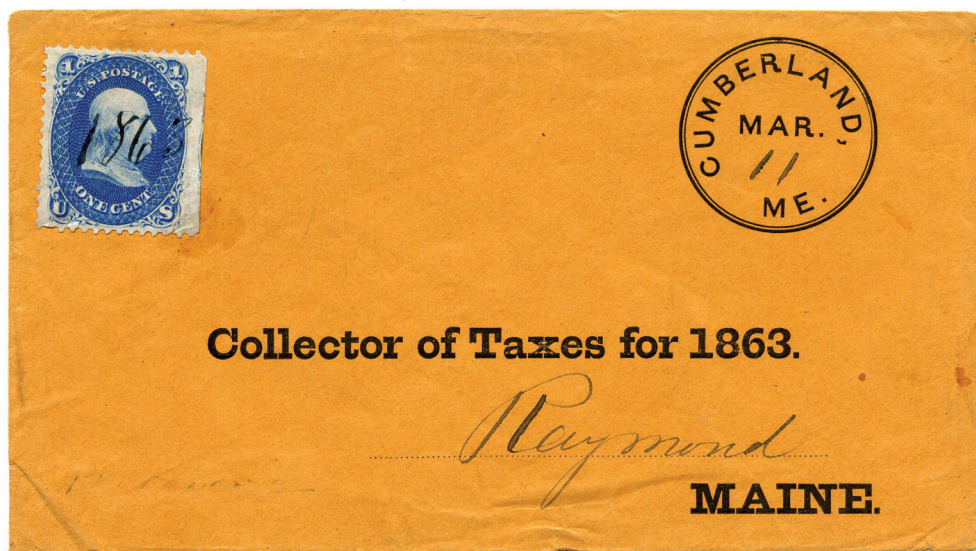


Figure 4. Cumberland double-rimmed circle on another Horace Gray envelope, which carried a sales letter trying to sell stationery to tax collectors. A manuscript “1863” cancels the 1¢ stamp, which might have been applied before the printed information.

afterwards. We can't know for certain at what point in the process the 1¢ 1861 stamp was applied. The “1863” year date on the stamp appears to have been written in a different hand than the other manuscript information. The circular rate in March 1863 was 1¢.

Figure 5 is another example, similarly preprinted, but here with a Black Jack stamp properly positioned to receive the “MAR” circular datestamp, to which a manuscript day (apparently “2”) was added. The circular rate was 2¢ in March, 1864. This cover was featured in the 2011 Siegel Rarity Sale (lot 42) where it was hammered down for \$6,500. It

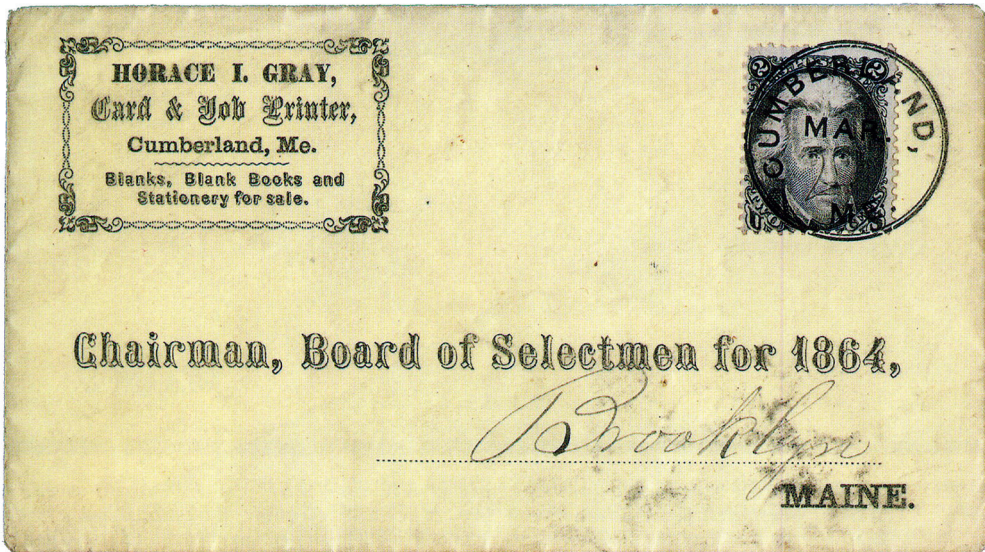


Figure 5. Unlike Figure 4, on this cover the stamp was positioned to receive the printed circular datestamp. Unusually, the envelope shows Gray's corner cachet, listing in detail his various enterprises. Illustration courtesy Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries.

was followed by an almost identical lot from the same mailing with the same franking, addressed to the selectmen of another Maine town. But on this cover (lot 43) the Black Jack stamp was placed in the middle of the envelope, between the corner cachet and the circular datestamp. Thus it was not tied by the preprinted cancel. Instead, it bears a manuscript "28" date. This cover realized \$2,200.

The Figure 5 cover is also of interest because the corner advertisement well defines Gray's business. He was a job printer who also sold stationery supplies. Collectively, the surviving Cumberland covers suggest that Gray was an early direct-marketing pioneer who was responsible for a lot of unsolicited mail.

One of his specialties was ink, both for penmanship and for postmarks. He apparently sold not the ink itself, but (in good 19th century tradition), the recipe for making it. The contents of the Figure 1 cover, mentioned briefly at the outset, are shown in Figures 6 and 7. Figure 6 shows the cover letter with the sales presentation. The ink recipe accompanied in a separate, sealed envelope. If the recipient wanted the recipe, he could open the envelope—and then send Gray 18¢ (marked down from 20¢, with "postage stamps received as money"). Figure 7 shows Gray's recipes for black, blue and red ink. The ingredients would have been readily available in the 19th century. I find it interesting that the colored inks contain gum Arabic (sap of acacia trees from the African sahel) but the black ink does not.

The subject of inks and postmarkers furnished to postmasters by the Post Office Department or others is of great interest to those who collect or study postal markings from the classic era. During the Civil War, as mail use and the whole number of post offices expanded rapidly, the Post Office Department began to charge postmasters for material and information that was previously provided gratis.

The semi-official *United States Mail and Post Office Assistant (U.S. Mail)*, a subscription publication, was launched in 1860. It soon became the source through which many official announcements reached postmasters. The 1862 list of post offices was sent free to postmasters, but the May 1867 list was advertised in the April (1867) issue of *U.S. Mail* at a cost of \$2. This new directory was created by a private publisher, J.W. Disturnell, not by the Post Office itself.


Post Office, Cumberland, Me., Dec. 1857.


To The Postmaster,

Dear Sir:— Being employed in this office, and finding it difficult to procure good black writing ink, I have obtained at some expense a recipe for making a nice article, by which a gallon can be manufactured for a few cents, and thinking that other Postmasters would like to receive some benefit from it, I have taken this method of circulating it among them. Also recipes for red and blue inks.

As I shall probably dispose of a large quantity, I am able to offer the three for ~~20 cts.~~ *18 cts*

If you wish for the three at this rate you will find them in the sealed envelope, and send the above amount in the ready directed envelope, filling up the other paper. If you do not want them, please erase your Post Office name on the outside, and forward to this office.

 I can also supply type of this size at one ct. a letter postage paid.

 Also, printers' ink in boxes 2 1-8 inches diameter by 3-4 of an inch deep, sent free of postage for 20 cts.

Postage stamps received as money.

Respectfully Yours,

HORACE I. GRAY.

Figure 6. Contents of the Figure 1 cover, which was sent to a Maine postmaster. Here Gray promotes a recipe for ink, presumably suited for postmarks. The recipe was included in a separate envelope. A postmaster desiring the information could open the envelope and send Gray 18¢. The recipes are shown in Figure 7.

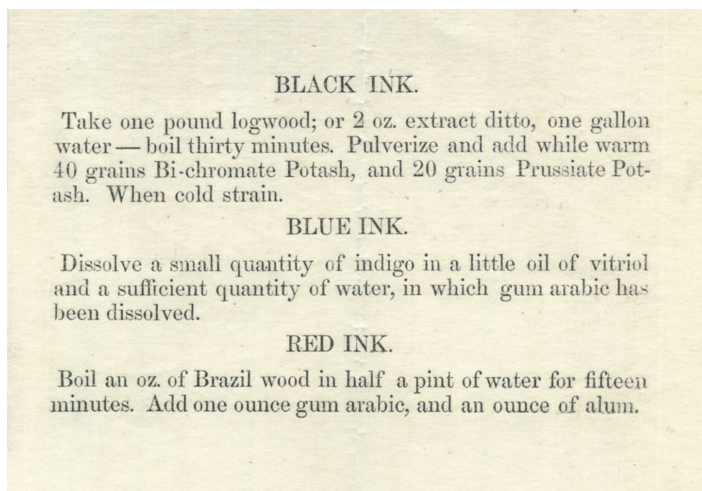


Figure 7. Horace Gray's 18¢ recipe for ink in three different colors. The ingredients sound exotic today, but in the 19th century all would be available from a local apothecary or even a dry-goods store. "Oil of vitriol" is sulphuric acid.

At about the same time, advertisements began to appear in the *U.S. Mail* offering ink for postmarks and postal marking devices as well. Here is an early example:

**Important to Postmasters
IMPROVED STAMPING INK**

All know the great want of a good Stamping Ink. We offer a superior article now used by the New York, Boston, and Philadelphia Post Offices. Our Stamping Ink is always ready for use, does not dry up, evaporate or gum the stamp, and is indelible. Price for the Black, \$2; Blue \$3; Red. \$3 per can, containing 1 lb. Can be sent by Express or Mail; if sent by Mail, Letter Postage to be added.

FRANCIS & LOUTREL
45 Maiden Lane, New York.

In the November 1867 issue of *U.S. Mail* appeared a remarkable article that recapitulated the history of post office handstamps. While presented in the form of a letter to the editor, this was almost certainly written by the editor himself, John Holbrook, who was both a career postal employee and a journalist. This lengthy but important history is worth quoting in its entirety. The modern reader should understand that the author's references to "stamps" refer to handstamps, not adhesive postage stamps.

Marking and Rating Stamps

Editor, *U.S. Mail*: As the history of those unobtrusive but useful tools, handstamps for marking and rating letters in post offices, has I believe not yet been written, I propose herein to give a few items, which may perhaps be of interest.

In days lang syne—that is to say, perhaps forty years ago, prior to the burning of the old post office and patent office building in Washington, December 15, 1836—the Post Office Department was in the habit of furnishing certain offices with stamps made of brass. These were made by Wm. J. Stone; price, \$15 for an office stamp.

About 30 years ago, Benjamin Chambers, an ingenious engraver of Washington City, began to make stamps of steel, and furnished them to the Department for some years. He invented ingenious machinery to aid him, made good stamps and received good prices. He made two qualities of office stamps at \$10 and \$15 (rating stamps, 50 to 60 cents) and had the entire work for 14 years at these prices, when other parties began to look after the stamp business, and he then made some little improvements and obtained a contract for four years, at \$12. The first contract for stamps made by the Department was during Mr. Wickliffe's term of office as Postmaster General.

About the year 1850, or 18 years ago, necessity, which is ever the parent of invention, was the means of introducing a much cheaper stamp to the notice of the Department and the public; and had it not been for this the Department would probably even now be paying much higher prices for stamps than it is paying. In that year, E.S. Zevely, then Postmaster at Pleasant Grove, Allegany county, Maryland, and engaged in teaching school, who had previously been a printer, editor and amateur engraver, after supplying his own office with stamps, conceived the idea of supplying others also. He was the first person who ever exhibited specimens of wooden post office stamps in the Post Office Department—which were approved, and an order obtained—at prices, however, which experience has since shown, were too low: only \$1 for an office stamp, with dates &c. These stamps have since been improved and largely manufactured, and wherever used with any sort of care and judgment, have given satisfaction, even in large offices.

At his solicitation the Department regulations as to furnishing stamps have been repeatedly modified, so that now all offices collecting, gross, even \$50 or more a year, can procure stamps from the Department without cost to themselves—thus conferring a favor upon thousands of postmasters, amounting in the aggregate to thousands of dollars, while the manufacturer (who has been a sort of post office benefactor) like many other pioneers, has not been adequately repaid for his years of toil and care. His idea has ever been—and in this he has been sustained by various officers of the Department—that ALL offices should be supplied with stamps, as with blanks and other matters, so soon as established. Not many years ago an office had to be worth \$300 a year before being entitled to receive stamps free from the Department.

The late Major S.R. Hobbie, of the Post Office Department, was a warm friend of wooden stamps, and in an official report of his visit to Europe, on Department business, made special mention of the wooden stamps used in England, and recommended their introduction for various reasons—among the rest, not only on account of their cheapness, but from the fact that stamping with wooden stamps can be more rapidly and effectually done than with a metal stamp, since two of three impressions can be made with one inking.

Handstamps continue to be exclusively used in post offices, notwithstanding that various ingenious self-inking patent stamps and stamping machines have been from time to time brought to the notice of the Department, and tested in various ways. Practically these improvements do not seem to be available in post offices.

In the London post office wooden stamps have been used, an engraver being employed in the establishment, and this might be adopted with advantage in our largest cities.

The Department now lets the contract for stamps for four years to the lowest bidder, but the time will doubtless come when a stamp maker will be a salaried officer in the Department, located in the Department building.

Within the last 12 years contracts have been twice awarded to parties in New York, to Messrs. Edmund Hoole and Fairbanks & Co., at present the contractors are Messrs. Chambers, Jr. of Washington city, and Zevely, of Cumberland, Maryland.

The same issue of the *United States Mail and Post Office Assistant* contains a display advertisement for "P.O. MARKING AND RATING STAMPS" from E.S. Zevely & Son, Cumberland, Maryland. The stamps varied from \$1.25 to \$3.00 with less for rating marks, and the ad included ink and pads for 30 cents each.

The *U.S. Mail* for October 1871 mentions that post office marking stamps are issued to offices with receipts over \$100 a year. Postmasters were to be charged \$2 for the *Post Office Laws and Regulations*.

Ink is discussed in a letter that was summarized by the *U.S. Mail* editor in the September 1868 issue. "Its results—clear, legible postmarks, and thorough canceling of postage stamps—are among the very essentials of postal efficiency....It happens in the course of our official investigations, that the indistinctness of a postmark is a cause of much delay and uncertainty, and sometimes puts us at fault entirely. Clean stamps and good ink are two requisites for a legible postmark; a third is a good pad, not too thickly spread with ink; with these it is almost impossible but that a postmark will be as legible as though printed on a press....We have from time to time published in our paper directions for procuring ink and pads, and for cleaning marking stamps. Good printers' ink is as good an article as can be used; pads are readily made by stretching two or three thicknesses of woollen cloth over a block, or, as our correspondent suggests, buckskin stuffed with wool. To clean stamps, any good solvent of grease, as benzine, soda, lye, etc., is sufficient, only be careful, if either of the latter two is used, that the stamps are thoroughly rinsed and wiped dry...."

Inks and handstamps even appeared in the annual Postmaster General's report. This from the report of the Postmaster General for 1873:⁴

Before concluding my remarks on this [registered mail] branch of the service and its necessities, I would call attention to the great number of post-offices which now remain unsupplied with postmarking stamps. It is believed that at least one-third of all the offices in the United States, from want of a proper stamp, now postmark all letters with a pen. As the registration regulations require the postmark to be stamped or written on the seal of the registered package-envelope, as well as on the envelope itself, it has been ascertained that the want of a stamp has materially aided in the rifling of a package by a dishonest postmaster or his clerks. Where the name of the office is written the seal can be removed or destroyed, the tongue of the package cut, the flap raised, the contents rifled, the envelope regummed together, a new seal put on, on which the name of the post-office is written, and then, to all appearances, the package is as perfect as when it left the mailing office. In tracing depredations on registered letters, it has been found that the primary cause of a great number has been the ease by which the name of the sending post-office can be imitated on a new seal. Were post-marking stamps furnished all offices, the danger would be diminished in proportion to the difficulty of counterfeiting them....I respectfully and urgently recommend that every office in the country be supplied with a post-marking stamp.

The seals discussed here are the registered mail seals of 1872 used on registered mail package envelopes (those envelopes transmitted between post offices and which contained the registered letters). What is of interest is the assertion that so many post offices still had no handstamps.

The PMG report for the following year contains an interesting commentary on the

ease with which postmarks (whether written or handstamped) could be removed from stamps because of inadequacies in the canceling ink.⁵

Almost immediately after assuming charge of this Bureau my attention was called to the number of reports from postmasters and special agents of the Department concerning letters on which postage was attempted to be paid by means of previously used stamps. Careful investigation into the matter leads to the conclusion that a large number of postage stamps after being once properly used are detached from letters, and, the canceling marks being removed therefrom, used again in payment of postage.

This proportion will, I believe, probably reach five percent of the value of all the stamps sold each year, causing an annual loss of a million of dollars to the revenues of the Department. My belief is confirmed, not only by the number of such letters forwarded to the Dead Letter Division of this Office as "held for postage", but also by the proffer of canceled stamps for sale to the Department and to the contractors for furnishing the postage stamps.

The ease with which the cancellation marks can be removed from stamps is a great incentive to this fraud, especially in view of the fact that in the larger offices throughout the country it is impossible to critically examine every letter posted in order to ascertain whether or not the stamp thereon has previously been used. Such an examination would either cause serious delay in dispatching the mails or involve the Department in a greater expenditure than would be warranted in attempting to protect it from loss.

None of the post-offices throughout the country are furnished with canceling-ink by the Department, and many of them are not even provided with postmarking and canceling stamps. The larger offices are permitted to buy such ink as may be selected by them for that purpose, but the Department has never undertaken to furnish indelible canceling-ink to those offices supplied by it with the postmarking and canceling stamps. At many of the smaller offices, not supplied with such stamps, no trouble whatever is taken to cancel the postage-stamps by drawing lines thereon with writing-ink, and, consequently, no difficulty is presented to the re-use of such uncanceled stamps.

In this connection the recommendations made in my last annual report, as well as my remarks in this report under the head of "registered letters" especially apply. If the furnishing of postmarking and canceling stamps to all offices is essential to the proper workings of the registered-letter system, such articles are of more importance to the general postal service. The postmarks on undelivered foreign letters received at the Dead Letter Division of this Office are generally clearly and sharply imprinted, while the cancellation of their postage-stamps is almost, if not quite, perfect. I am informed that the English government paid quite a large sum for the recipe setting forth the component parts of an ink which, after repeated tests, was found to be nearly, if not quite, irremovable, and throughout Europe every post-office is furnished with postmarking and canceling stamps and canceling ink.

Postal officials have always been excessively concerned with the dangers posed by reused stamps. I think this document greatly exaggerates the problem which existed at the time. But it confirms that the Post Office Department did not supply ink or handstamps to a great many post offices. I found no subsequent remarks on this subject by successive Postmasters General in following years, so this might represent one individual's misapprehension of the problem.

Endnotes

1. Sterling T. Dow, *Maine Postal History and Postmarks* (Portland, Maine, Severn-Wylie-Jewett Co., 1943) pg. 79.
2. James W. Milgram, "The Printed Postmarks of Cumberland, Maine," *Chronicle* 206 (2005), pp. 90-96.
3. Stanley B. Ashbrook, *The United States One Cent Stamp of 1851-1857*, Vol. II (New York, H.L. Lindquist, 1938), pp. 94-97.
4. *Annual Report of the Postmaster-General of the United States*, June 30, 1873, pp. 16-17.
5. *Annual Report of the Postmaster-General of the United States*, November 14, 1874, pp. 49-50. ■

A PRINTER'S NIGHTMARE

GERALD L. MOSS AND STANLEY M. PILLER

The subject of this article is a United States Newspapers and Periodicals stamp, the 5¢ dull blue stamp from the 1875 reprinting of the large-format stamps first issued in 1865. A problem involving this stamp, which Scott designates as PR5, was recognized many years ago by Edward Young, then a faculty member of the University of Illinois, who noted damage on a PR5 plate. Young's collection of PR5 stamps and related notes had not been seen since the mid-1930s, but were recently purchased by Stanley Piller and James Lee.

In an effort to help Moss in his quest for plate cracks, Piller spread out Young's variety-laden collection of PR5s and immediately was faced with a question about the nature of vertical blue lines in the top left corner of three of stamps from the same plate position. Are they plate cracks?

One would wonder because the stamps are typographic prints, and plate cracks printed typographically are typically paper white, not the ink color (in this case, blue).

Piller suggested the feature was a plate crack. With examples available, the challenge was to substantiate the suggestion and possibly determine how the crack occurred.

We begin by addressing the following questions: What can be gleaned from the subject stamps that would help us understand what happened to the plate? Are there cracks in the typographic prints? Why are there different stages of damage? How could intaglio prints of cracks occur? Observations and what they suggest are described below, along with interpretations. Ultimately, the questions are addressed.

Identification of PR5, Plate 38, Position 1

One item in Young's collection is a complete imprint from Plate 38, which was constructed by the National Bank Note Co. The pane of 10 from the top of this sheet is shown in Figure 1, where it can be seen that all the stamps from this pane have white borders. It can also be seen that the two stamps on the left edge show a slightly inclined strip of blue to the left of the white border. None of the other stamps on Plate 38 show a blue edge on their left side, and there is no mention of this variety in Scott's specialized catalog. These must be PR5 stamps since the frame-line on PR8 (the only other 5¢ Newspapers and Periodicals stamp with a white border) is different from the frame-line on PR5. Therefore, the strip of blue serves to identify PR5 stamps from Position 1 with certainty.

In the top left corner of the Position 1 stamp in Figure 1 is a tiny, slightly curved, vertical blue line. This appears in a portion of the white border which should not have been inked. Because these stamps were printed by typography, a form of surface printing also known as letterpress printing, there should be no inked features in the white border. This makes the line in question a bit of a puzzle. After the clues from the plate damage have been described, a plausible explanation of what happened to the plate emerges, and the questions will be answered.

Plate damage and its implications

Figure 2a shows a scan of the Position 1 stamp from the block of ten in Figure 1, with the tiny vertical blue line indicated by an arrow and shown greatly enlarged as an inset. Figures 2b and 2c show two other Position 1 stamps from the same plate. Inspection of the upper left corners of these three stamps is enough to reveal that progressive plate damage is evident on the upper left side of each example. Note that plate damage on the stamp in



Figure 1. 5¢ dull blue, 1875 reprint (PR5), pane of ten from the top half of the sheet, imprint and plate number 38 at top, with signs of damage in the upper left corner of the Position 1 stamp, including a small vertical line in the white border area.



2a

2b

2c

Figures 2a, 2b and 2c: Three stamps from Position 1 of Plate 38, showing progressive damage in the upper left corner of the design. Figure 2a is the upper left stamp in Figure 1. The arrow points to the tiny vertical line (enlarged in the inset) that suggests the beginning of damage that became progressively more severe as the plate was used.

Figure 2b is greater than on the stamp in Figure 2a, and that the damage in Figure 2c is greater still. In fact, in the example in Figure 2c, the damage appears to extend all the way through the frame-line, which is the striped ribbon (thin white line bounded by two blue bands) that surrounds the stamp.

In Figure 2a, in the vicinity of the numeral “5” on the left side of the stamp, the outer side of the frame-line is significantly irregular, the left edge is misaligned from the vertical, and the blue stripe on the left tapers to practically no width at all.

In Figure 2b, the same part of the frame-line that revealed damage in Figure 2a shows additional damage, and the inner blue line of the frame-line is tapered all the way down to the scallops above “NEWSPAPERS.” Partly because of centering differences, the tiny, slightly-curved vertical line that we saw in the top-left corner of Figure 2a is missing. But there are two new approximately vertical lines in the top left corner of the stamp. These are similar to, and longer than, the erased line. They are crack-like enough to serve for our study.

In Figure 2c, the frame-line is repeated about as it was in Figure 2b. The outer side of the frame-line is missing from the top of the stamp down to the scallops above “NEWSPAPERS,” but there are three additional somewhat curved, bold, blue vertical lines in the white margin. The line at the top looks like one in Figure 2b, although it is curved slightly differently, which suggests plastic deformation. All of this suggests that the Figure 2c stamp was from a later printing than the printing that produced the Figure 2b stamp.



3a. Damaged



3b. Undamaged

Figures 3a and 3b. Figure 3a shows an enlargement of a portion of the left edge of the Position 1 stamp shown in Figure 2a. The same portion of an undamaged stamp from the same plate is shown in Figure 3b. This shows the white border area as it was intended to appear.

Although Young noted that the PR5 plate had been damaged, he did not describe the damage or its causes and consequences. To get a better understanding of the damage, a portion of PR5 Position 1 (the stamp shown in Figure 2a) was magnified for further investigation. The magnified view, shown in Figure 3a, is particularly revealing. By way of comparison, a similarly magnified view of the undamaged stamp from Position 6 is presented in Figure 3b—to show the white border on the left side of the stamp as it was intended to be.

As expected, there are several features associated with the plate damage that are discernible in Figure 3a. Notable features in Figure 3a are as follows:

1. The entire left edge of the border portion shown in the photo is concave. It is significantly dented into the printing plate.

2. In the damaged outer blue stripe of the frame line, there are several multi-pointed white star-like shapes, outlined with blue ink. These may not show well in the Figure 3a illustration; they are aligned in a vertical row in what was the blue frame-line, across from the upper three perforations.

3. Further down in the damaged blue stripe, there are two distinct, white disks, about half the size of the perf holes, outlined with blue ink. These can be seen in the blue frame-line across from the second and third perforations from the bottom. There is a hint of another disk as well.

4. There is a considerable whiteness in the outer blue stripe of the frame-line.

5. There are vertical, irregular white lines in the outer blue stripe of the frame-line. These can be seen most clearly across from the second to fourth perforations from the top. There's another across from the third perforation from the bottom. These are plate cracks, because typographic prints of plate cracks show as white.

6. There are narrow, roughly horizontal, white lines in the outer blue stripe of the frame-line. These are also typographic prints of plate cracks.

Given these observations, it becomes possible to develop an understanding of how the damage affected subsequent printings.

As a starting point for discussion, we chose the concave edge (a dent in the printing plate). This is likely to have been the initial point of impact. Clearly, the plate was plastically deformed. Since the density of steel is only slightly changed by plastic deformation, the steel was forced to spread somewhere else. But where? The printing plate would have been bolted to a rigid, underside support, so the steel must have expanded at the nearest free surface, the top, where a bulge must have formed on the border and frame-line.

Such a bulge would prevent the printing paper from reaching the inked plate. The whitened region in the blue outer frameline in Figure 3a clearly illustrates the area the bulge covered. Evidently, the entire right corner of the printing plate (left corner on the print), namely the bulge, became elevated above the rest of the plate. Accordingly, restoration measures had to be taken. The requirements would have been to flatten the plate clear through to the right end of the outer frame-line and to render the border lower than the rest of the plate.

The star-like features mentioned at #2 above might be scars left on the plate from a hammer-driven, point-ended punch. One can guess that these blows were intended to lower the bulge to the level of the rest of the plate.

The disk-like features mentioned at #3 could be scars from a hammer-driven, blunt-ended punch. This is analogous to the hammer-driven, point-ended punch. The blunt-ended punch would have distributed the force more than the point-ended punch.

Were the punches successful? Maybe not, but there are vertical plate cracks in the areas of both of these features.

What appears to have been the solution that finally worked is revealed by the tapered, inner blue stripe of the frame-line. It is clearly irregular, with a few adjacent streaks and the left edge not perfectly vertical (Compare Figures 2a, 2b and 2c). This undoubtedly represents hand workmanship, and it is supposed here that this involved manual filing to dress the steel plate, to shave the bulge to the proper levels. The frame-line should be level with the rest of the stamp, and the border area should be a bit lower so it wouldn't be inked. While the repair wasn't perfect, it did allow the entire stamp to be printed.

At this point, many of the details of the plate damage have been identified and described, including the typographic prints of the plate cracks in the frame-line. Now, for the promised study to establish whether there is a plate crack in the border. It took no more than

a ten-times magnification to reveal that the blue, roughly vertical lines in Figures 2c and 3a are, without doubt, plate cracks.

Figure 4 shows a greatly enlarged photo of the crack on the stamp in Figure 2c. The defining features are the long parts of the lines where their edges are notably darker than their interior. These dark edges are probably due to the ink having a low-enough surface tension to wet the crack surfaces. Another factor could be that plate wiping piled ink onto the edges of the cracks. Similar intaglio prints of plate cracks that show darker edges than their interior have been identified on the 1¢ 1855 “Big Crack” and on the 4¢ Dr. J. Walker’s proprietary revenue stamp.¹ Another print of this type occurs on a cardboard plate proof of 1¢ 1851 Carrier stamp.²



Figure 4. This rotated enlargement of the upper left corner of the stamp in Figure 2c shows an intaglio print of a plate crack in the margin area of the plate—novel because plate cracks shown via relief printing are typically white lines, not inked.

The irregular, approximately vertical, blue lines in the three stamps shown in Figures 2a, 2b, and 2c must all be intaglio prints of plate cracks. Furthermore, the tiny crack, printed in the white border of Figure 2a, must surely have been a result of the impact that caused the damage that Young noted.

Why did the extensive nucleation and growth of cracks occur with subsequent printings, as shown in Figures 2b, 2c and 4? An answer to this question is suggested by two features on Plate 38 that haven’t yet been mentioned. These are easily seen and just as easily ignored. They are the two white disks that show in the upper-right corner of the printed pane (see Figure 1).

These were undoubtedly bolt or screw holes, which is why they’re colorless. Bolts or screws through the holes would have held the printing plate firmly in place with the printing press, and likely, with the engraving and embossing machines as well. Presumably, there were holes in every corner of the plate, as has been verified by another print from Plate 38 that was offered for sale by the Robert A. Siegel firm after this study was first written.³ There are two holes in three corners of this pane, and one of these corners is just beyond the top-left corner of Position 1. Because these alignment holes are so near to the damage described in this article, it’s reasonable to believe that the impact that initiated the damage also distorted the bolt (or screw) alignment holes and whatever was in them during the impact. Thereafter, extreme force would be required to locate the alignment bolts (or screws). This suggests a repetitive process: Every time the equipment would be set up for another printing, more damage would occur, and additional repairs would be required. This is consistent with the extensive crack nucleation and growth delineated in Figures 2a, 2b and 2c.

Now that it’s certain that the blue lines in the border are from cracks rather than from

other causes, their nucleation and growth with successive printings are understandable in view of the repetitive damage and repairs.

Printing from an ink-filled crack is an intaglio process, but how could this occur while the stamps were being printed in a typographic process? The ink being in the cracks isn't an issue because the border had been cleaned, except for the cracks. But, how did the printing paper come into contact with the border on the plate? As already noted, the damage to the top-right corner of the plate, which corresponds to the top-left corner of the pane of stamps, had to be filed down after every printing to ensure the printing surface of the plate was elevated relative to the surface of the border. The time-consuming and labor-intensive nature of filing metals undoubtedly resulted in the least filing deemed necessary. With this mindset, the repetitive filing would have consistently left the printing surface only slightly elevated relative to the border. Under this condition, a typographic printer's procedure, often used to ensure well-inked stamps, would likely come into play and cause the intaglio printing of the plate cracks. The procedure was to use a make-ready, a spongy material placed between the press and the printing paper.⁴ This procedure can press printing paper into micro-flaws on the plate. It can also push the printing paper into recessed regions, such as machined engravings, and it certainly pushed the printing paper into the border of PR5, Position 1. Evidently, the printer was just as responsible for the intaglio printing of the plate cracks as he was for the well-inked stamps.

The bottom line is that often-used typographic procedures, which are known to have resulted in stray color from recessed regions, have again resulted in inappropriate inking, but this time from the ink in cracks in the border. Piller was right in the first place.

Summary

Systematic observations and interpretations of a Newspapers and Periodicals stamp—PR5, Plate 38, Position 1—have revealed the following:

There was a period during which perfect stamps were printed from Plate 38, but at an unknown time, the plate was damaged to the extent that minute plate cracks were left in the frame-line. On the stamp, these were colorless, which is typical of typographic prints. On the same stamp, there was a tiny, dark blue, roughly vertical line in the top-left white border.

With each subsequent printing, new blue lines formed in the border, and they became longer with each printing. Observations at tenfold magnification (Figure 4) revealed that the blue lines were from printing ink trapped in plate cracks that had formed in the border. This would be an intaglio print.

A description of conditions and procedures that led to a simultaneous typographic and intaglio printing of plate cracks is offered for this previously unrecognized situation. The simultaneous typographic and intaglio printing is conceivably unique in U.S. philately.

Acknowledgment

David Fields made the high-resolution images of the stamps, which are essential for the communication of this report. His furnishing of technical guidance in using electronic magnification and his many suggestions regarding computer efficiency and security are greatly appreciated.

Endnotes

1. Gerald L. Moss, "New Views of the 1-cent 1855 'Big Crack,'" *American Philatelist*, Bellefonte, Pa., Nov. 1999, pp. 1062-1070.
2. Robert A. Siegel Sale 817, Lot A12, Nov. 15-17, 1999.
3. Robert A. Siegel Sale 1094, Lot 165 March 25, 2015.
4. L. N. Williams, *Fundamentals of Philately*, American Philatelic Society, Bellefonte, Pa. 1990, pp. 165-166. ■

THE NEW YORK AND CHARLESTON STEAM PACKET COMPANY

JAMES BAIRD

The New York and Charleston Steam Packet Company operated from mid-1832 until early 1838, employing five ships, the *David Brown*, the *William Gibbons*, the *Columbia*, the *New York* and (briefly and tragically) the *Home*. What follows is a short history of the line and the story of how its owners managed to gain a contract with the United States Post Office, the first such contract granted to an offshore “coastal” steamship line.

The *David Brown* was a small ship, 130 feet long and about 190 tons. James P. Allaire designed and built it to carry the output of his New Jersey casting works (the Howell Works) up to New York City. The *Brown* made a few trips in this role before Allaire began running her on a fortnightly schedule between New York and Charleston. The *Brown*'s first voyage to Charleston was on November 17, 1832. She made four round voyages (New York-Charleston-New York) before she was taken off the line for the winter on January 20, 1833. While waiting for spring she had new boilers installed, which would permit burning anthracite coal. Operations resumed on April 20, 1833. She then operated more or less continuously, interrupted by a two-week layover in Charleston for maintenance and by delays in New York caused by a cholera outbreak. In early December, after *Brown* had completed 15 round trips over a period of 35 weeks, the partners again laid her up for the winter.

The success enjoyed in 1833 convinced Allaire and his new partner, Charles Morgan, that the route had sufficient promise to run two ships, and they ordered another to be built. The *William Gibbons* was a larger ship of 294 tons—but still lightly built for the route to and from Charleston, skirting Cape Hatteras. *Gibbons* was chosen to commence the season on March 1, 1834 with *David Brown* following on March 10, setting up a schedule that had one or the other vessel leaving a port every week. As a general rule, departures were scheduled for Saturdays. Running time was generally three to four days, although weather, mechanical problems and cholera outbreaks that mandated quarantines occasionally interrupted the intended schedule.

Covers carried by the *Brown* are so scarce as to be almost nonexistent. In a number of years of searching, I have found only one, which is shown as Figure 1, a cover sent from New York City to Augusta, Georgia. The paucity of *Brown*-carried covers seems remarkable for a ship that ran more or less continuously over a period of several years. In fact, any cover carried by a ship of this line is a good find, and more than half of those determined to have been so carried cannot be identified by manuscript endorsements. This makes knowing the sailing dates very important.

In the case of the Figure 1 cover, its New York dateline and the *Brown* sailing date are both November 15, 1834. The Charleston postmark and *Brown* arrival date are both November 20. Charleston struck its STEAM-BOAT straightline handstamp and rated the cover due 25¢—for a distance greater than 400 miles (New York to Augusta). Finding this



Figure 1. Folded letter dated November 15, 1834 carried by the *David Brown* from New York to Charleston where it was marked STEAM-BOAT and rated due 25¢, the rate for over 400 miles, the distance between New York and Augusta.

cover was a very pleasant experience.

Brown and *Gibbons* ran an alternate-week schedule into 1835 when a third vessel, *Columbia*, was brought on, making its first voyage on March 21, 1835. The *Brown* was taken off of the line to undergo repairs and refurbish her equipment. She would be used for additional trips as demand dictated until she was sold early in 1836. The new owners ran her for a time between New York and Norfolk.

Gibbons and *Columbia* carried on the schedule, continuing on into the fall of 1836 when the line's sterling record of safely completing scheduled voyages came to an end. On October 8, 1836, *Gibbons* headed south out of New York for Charleston under command of her former captain, Edward Halsey, whom Morgan had chosen to replace Captain Spinney, who was ill. Just north of Cape Hatteras on October 10, in a gale and believing that the Cape had been cleared, Halsey ran the *Gibbons* aground. In a scene described over and over by the local newspapers, while some crew members were saving passengers by carrying them onto shore in boats, others in the crew began drinking and looting passengers' luggage. Incredibly, there was no loss of life. All 128 passengers and crew were saved, but the line was faced for the first time with a public wary of travelling on it. And the situation would only get worse.

With *Gibbons* lost, *Columbia* carried on alone, finishing out 1836. There were no trips made in January and February of 1837 but *Columbia* recommenced in mid-March. The owners commissioned a fourth vessel, the *New York*, that came off of the ways in early June. Her maiden voyage was on June 29, providing the second vessel needed to reestablish weekly arrivals and departures from the two cities. Unfortunately, it didn't work out that way. It is not clear just what the problems were, but *New York* did not maintain a regular schedule. She made two round trips and was then laid up in Charleston with "machinery damage." She attempted to re-start in August, but had to return to Charleston.

Faced with the need for a second vessel to alternate with *Columbia*, Morgan added yet another vessel, the steam packet *Home*. It belonged to Allaire, founding partner of the



NEW STEAM PACKET
FOR NEW-YORK—The new and
splendid Steam Packet **HOME**, of 700
tons burthen, Capt. C. White, (formerly of the ship
Natchez) having been engaged by the New-York Steam
Packet Company, to supply the place of the steam packet
New-York, (which boat has been delayed for the purpose
of being coppered) will leave this port for New-York
next *Thursday Morning*, at 10 o'clock, the 14th inst. For
Passage only, apply at my office, 6 Fitzsimons' wharf.
§ 12
WILLIAM PATTON, Agent.

Figure 2. An advertise-
ment published in the
September 15, 1837 issue
of the *Charleston Courier*,
announcing that the “new
and splendid steam packet
Home” has been added to
the New York-Charleston
service.

line, who had withdrawn after the loss of *Gibbons*. Figure 2 is a September 15, 1837 announcement from the *Charleston Courier* of *Home's* charter for this purpose.

Home was constructed very lightly, long and with a narrow beam. Allaire had run her up and down between New York and Charleston breaking speed records for transit time. Unfortunately, on October 9, 1837 during a trip between New York and Charleston, *Home* encountered a gale off Hatteras and after some pretty serious miscalculations and poor seamanship by the vessel’s captain, she ran ashore at Ocracoke Inlet (Hatteras) where she broke up in tumultuous seas. Of the approximately 135 persons on board, various contemporary newspaper accounts placed the loss of life at about 90 persons.

There is a long and tragic story here, but our focus is on postal history. Suffice it to say that the newspapers of the day reported the disaster in grim detail for weeks on end, turning the public away and further draining vitality from the business. Morgan soon pulled the *Columbia* off the line and sent her to operate between New Orleans and Galveston. The *New York* continued to make fortnightly trips between New York and Charleston through 1837 and into 1838, when Morgan sent her to join *Columbia* in the Gulf. That was the end of the New York and Charleston Steam Packet Company.

Let’s take a break from historical narrative and turn to postal history of the line. I know of 21 covers carried by ships of the line. These have been recorded by Cliff Alexander, Van Koppersmith, Steve Roth and myself. Table 1 (page 82) offers salient information for each cover. For simplicity, covers are arranged chronologically by their date of origin. As will be seen, 17 of the covers originated in Charleston with the remaining four carried from New York. Seven of the covers, all of them from Charleston, were carried in locked mail bags and as a consequence show only a Charleston circular date stamp. The remaining 14—but for one—bear steamboat markings.

That one odd cover, which bears no postal markings at all, is shown in Figure 3. Its contents are a printed “prices current” published by the *Charleston Courier* and dated December 27, 1834. It was probably included in a larger package that was either mailed or carried privately to New York. Interestingly, the cover was endorsed to the *Gibbons*—and its stated date of publication corresponds with its departure from Charleston on the *Gibbons*.

The column in Table 1 entitled labeled “Fwd. Off.” (for “Forwarding Office”) needs some explanation. In the postal laws and regulations (PL&R) of 1832, the Post Office Department prescribed how postmasters were to handle “loose letters” carried into their offices by steamboat masters. Hold on to your seat, because I am about to counter a long-held belief in postal history circles. The regulations stipulated that *all* loose letters carried into post offices by steamboat captains—*whether or not their vessels were under contract*—were to be marked “steamboat.”

As discussed in greater detail below, the date of the contract between the Post Office Department and the New York & Charleston line was March 7, 1834. Accordingly, all of the covers in Table 1 were carried while the line was under contract. The earliest cover in the table, shown as Figure 4, is dated one day after the initiation of the contract and was

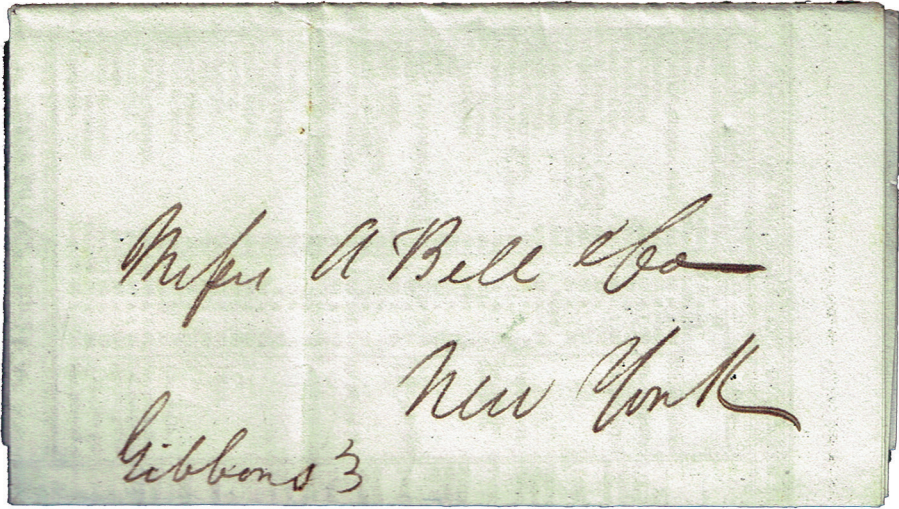


Figure 3. Prices current dated December 27, 1834, routed per *Gibbons* and presumably carried on that vessel. Since this was carried to New York outside the mail (probably in a larger package), it bears no postal markings.

postmarked by the New York post office a week later. It is noteworthy that both the New York and Charleston post offices marked the cover correctly.

A second requirement of the regulations was that steamboat-marked letters were to be rated based on the distance between the letter's origin and the destination post office. The Figure 4 cover, which was datelined Charleston March 8, 1834 and addressed to Providence, was treated as originating in Charleston (the port from which *Gibbons* departed, even if the letter was posted en route between Charleston and New York). Since the letter entered the mails in New York on March 14, 1834, the table lists New York as the “forwarding office.” A New York clerk rated the cover due 50¢ in Providence—which was the correct double rate postage for over 400 miles between Charleston and Providence.



Figure 4. Loose letter to Providence, Rhode Island, and datelined Charleston March 8, 1834, carried by the *Gibbons*. Entered the mails March 14 in New York, which marked STEAM BOAT and 50¢ due for double the over-400 mile rate from Charleston.

Date (origin)	Origin/Destination	Fwd. Off.	CDS Date	Steam-boat mark?	Rat-ing	Vessel	En-dorsed?	Refer-ence
3/8/34	Charleston/Providence	NY	14-Mar	Yes	50¢	Gibbons	Yes	Figure 4
11/12/34	Charleston/Hartford		15-Nov	Mail bag	25¢	Gibbons	Yes	
11/15/34	New York/Augusta	Chastn	20-Nov	Yes	25¢	D Brown	No	Figure 1
12/26/34	Charleston/Southington	NY	1-Jan	Yes	25¢	Gibbons	No	
12/27/34	Charleston/New York			No	none	Gibbons	Yes	Figure 3
2/21/35	Chastn/Newburyport	NY	26-Feb	Yes	25¢	Gibbons	No	Fig. 11
8/15/35	Charleston/New York			Yes	25¢	Columbia	No	
10/31/35	Charleston/New York		31-Oct	Mail bag	25¢	Columbia	Yes	Figure 8
3/23/36	Charleston/New York		21-May	Mail bag	50¢	Columbia	No	
4/10/36	New York/Savannah	Chastn	21-Apr	Yes	25¢	Columbia	No	
4/16/36	Charleston/Philadelphia		16-Apr	Mail bag	25¢	Gibbons	Yes	Figure 7
4/29/36	Charleston/New York		30-Apr	Mail bag	\$1	Gibbons	Yes	Fig. 10
4/30/36	Charleston/Philadelphia	NY	4-May	Mail bag	25¢	Gibbons	Yes	
5/7/36	Chastn/Holmes Hole	NY	14-May	Yes	25¢	Columbia	No	
5/21/36	Charleston/New York			Mail bag	50¢	Columbia	No	
6/30/36	Charleston/New York			Yes	25¢	Columbia	No	Figure 9
10/15/36	New York/Augusta	Chastn	20-Oct	Yes	25	Columbia	No	Figure 5
11/5/36	Charleston/New York			Yes	25¢	Columbia	No	
11/18/36	Charleston/New York			Yes	25¢	Columbia	No	
11/19/36	Charleston/New York			Yes	25¢	Columbia	Yes	
6/28/37	New York/Charleston			Yes	25¢	New York	No	Figure 6

Table 1. Chronological listing of covers carried on vessels of the New York and Charleston Steam Packet Company. “Steamboat mark?” column shows presence (or absence) of a “STEAM BOAT” marking. “Fwd. Off.” = Forwarding Office. “Endorsed” column indicates presence (or absence) of a specific ship-name endorsement.

Note that when the postmaster in Providence received the Figure 4 letter he could not have determined its origin from its markings. Without the steamboat marking, he might well have concluded the letter was rated incorrectly. If he thought the letter originated in New York, he might have re-rated it due 37¢ (twice the 18½¢ rate for the 160 mile distance from New York to Providence). The steamboat marking informed him that the letter had been carried into New York from somewhere else—and that the New York clerk no doubt got it right. If, as some hold, the steamboat marking was to be applied to loose mail carried only by non-contract vessels, on this letter carried by a contract vessel, the regulation probably would not have been followed and the post office might have been shorted 13¢. So the steamboat marking requirement was the Department’s way of assuring that the correct postage would be collected.

A cover sent in the opposite direction that was handled similarly is shown as Figure 5. This was datelined New York October 15, 1836, addressed to Augusta, Georgia, and carried into Charleston by *Columbia*. On October 20, 1836, the Charleston post office appropriately applied its STEAM BOAT marking, rated the cover (very weakly, at upper right) due 25¢ for a distance over 400 miles, and sent it on to Augusta.

As noted earlier, I have seen only one cover carried by *David Brown*, which was identified because its departure and arrival dates perfectly match the *Brown's* departure and arrival dates. Similarly, I have found only one cover carried by *New York*. This is shown in Figure 6. The dateline reads New York, June 28, 1837. The *New York* sailed south for Charleston on June 29. Incidentally, it seems strange that more *Brown*-carried covers have

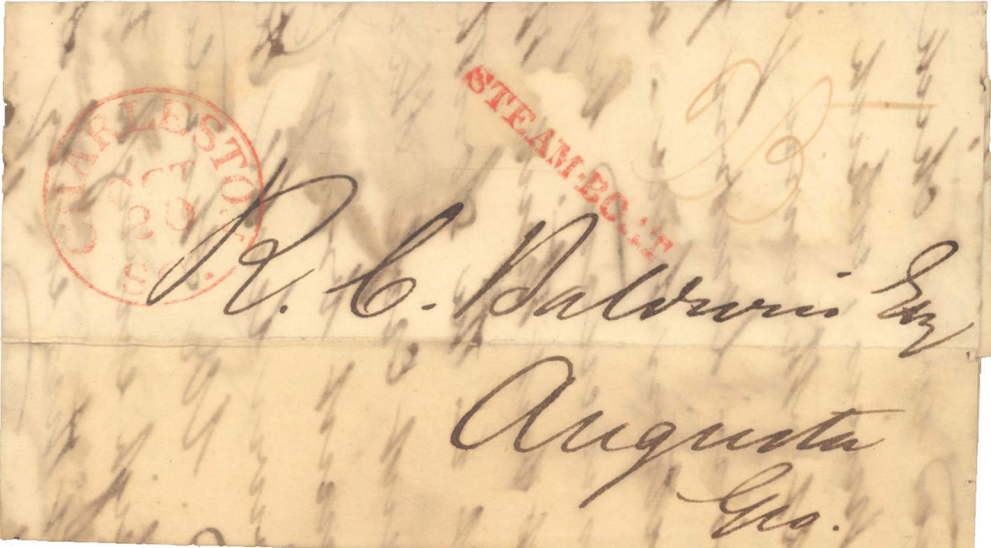


Figure 5. Loose letter datelined New York October 15, 1836 to Augusta, Georgia, carried by the *Columbia*. Entered the mail at Charleston October 20, 1836, which marked STEAM BOAT and rated 25¢ due for over 400 mile rate from New York.

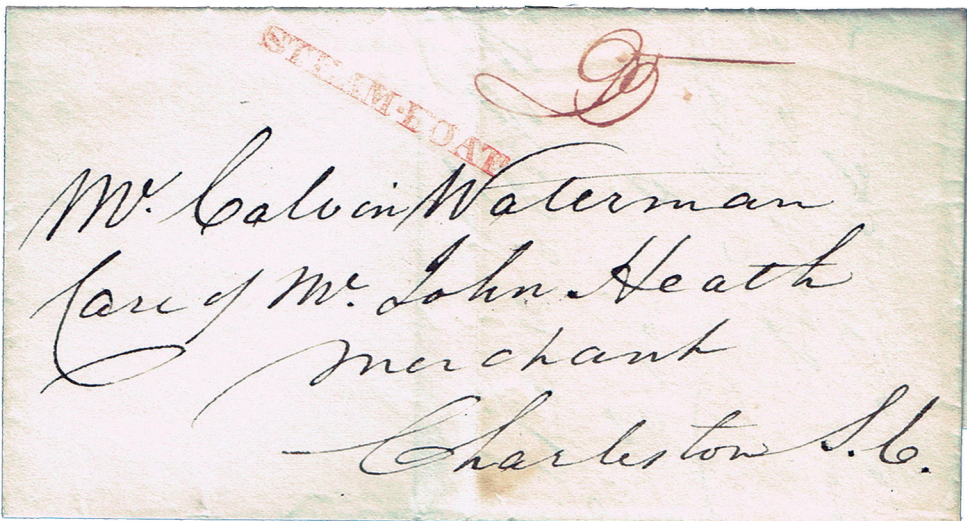


Figure 6. Folded letter dated June 28, 1837 carried by the *New York* to Charleston, which rated it due 25¢ based on the distance between New York and Charleston.



Figure 7. Folded letter dated April 16, 1836, carried by the *William Gibbons* from Charleston to New York. The Charleston post office rated it 25¢ due, for the distance (greater than 400 miles) between Charleston and Philadelphia.

not surfaced. The ship made 35 round trips, 18 of which were before the line gained its mail contract.

At the end of this article, readers will find sailing tables for the New York and Charleston Steam Packet Company over the period 1832 to mid-1838. Five ships were involved: *Brown*, *Gibbons*, *Columbia*, *New York* and *Home*. I am unaware of the existence of any cover carried by *Home*. The sailing data was largely assembled from announcements in newspapers published in Charleston and New York. In some cases, dates were taken from published schedules (advertisements) rather than arrival or departure announcements. Such information is presented in brackets. Where no information could be found, this is indicated by “NA”. If there was a scheduled date of departure with no confirmation of the actual sailing date, it is shown as [day] month. I hope that readers will find this information useful.

Figure 7 shows a cover from Charleston to Philadelphia, meticulously endorsed “Via New York pr Stm Bt Wm Gibbons.” The endorsement at top is “16th April 1836” and the red Charleston circular date stamp shows “APR 16.” The newspaper data confirms that April 16 is the correct 1836 departure date for *Gibbons*. Charleston rated the cover 25¢ due for a distance over 400 miles. This cover was carried in a mail bag from Charleston, which is the post office that rated it. There is no steamboat marking since it was not a loose letter and it bears a Charleston datestamp.

The cover in Figure 8 was carried from Charleston to New York by *Columbia*, as endorsed (“Per Steamer *Columbia*”). Its dateline reads Charleston, October 31, 1835, with the October 31 date confirmed by the Charleston circular datestamp. This is a folded three-sheet “prices current” with accompanying form letter. It was rated, perhaps erroneously, at the 25¢ letter rate for over 400 miles.

Figure 9 was also carried by *Columbia* from Charleston to New York. The letter within is dated June 30, 1836. Like the Figure 6 cover, it bears no post office town and date marking. The PL&R’s of the period specified that a postmaster was to postmark a letter when it was to be forwarded to another office. Given that postmarking a letter in a delivery



Figure 8. A three page “prices current” with letter dated October 31, 1835, which was published by the *Charleston Courier* and carried by *Columbia* to New York. Due postage was rated, perhaps erroneously, at the 25¢ letter rate for over 400 miles.



Figure 9. Dated June 30, 1836, and carried from Charleston to New York by *Columbia*, departing July 2. Charleston added its STEAM-BOAT and 25¢ due rating for the over 400 mile distance to New York.

post office would add work and presumably delay delivery, postmasters often chose to skip postmarking when a letter was for their delivery. In this case, the Charleston post office marked this cover STEAM BOAT and rated it 25¢ due for the distance over 400 miles. The distance between New York and Charleston is 635 miles.

An interesting cover is shown as Figure 10. It is rated one dollar, the over 400 mile rate for four or more pieces of paper, or one or more other articles, and weighing up to one ounce. The sender may have bundled multiple letters to take advantage of the bulk weight rate.



Figure 10. Folded letter from Charleston datelined April 30, 1836, addressed to New York, endorsed to and carried by *Gibbons* and rated due \$1.00, the over 400 mile rate for four or more pieces of paper, or other articles, weighing up to one ounce.



Figure 11. Folded letter from Charleston February 21, 1835 to Newburyport, Massachusetts. New York rated it due 25¢ for over 400 miles. It also struck STEAM BOAT, to indicate it was carried by *Gibbons* as a loose letter, and 2ND DELIVERY, to explain the delay in handling.

Our last cover is Figure 11, and it invites some head-scratching. It originated in Charleston on February 21, 1835 and is addressed to Newburyport, Massachusetts. As we now understand, it was forwarded by the New York post office, which struck its STEAM BOAT to indicate it was carried by *Gibbons* as a loose letter. But it also has another mark-

ing—and one that is unusual. The marking reads 2ND DELIVERY. The *American Stampless Cover Catalog* lists this as a New York City marking. The sixty-four dollar question is: What does it mean? To my eye, there is a difference in the ink color between the 2ND DELIVERY marking and the other two New York markings, the circular datestamp and the steamboat marking. That would suggest it may have been applied by a different clerk in the New York post office. It probably was intended to explain a delay in handling the letter. The marking most likely means the letter was not included in the first batch of mail delivered from *Gibbons* to the New York post office.

The story of how the New York and Charleston line gained a mail contract shows in microcosm the effect steam technology had on moving the mails. There are many interesting angles, including jealousy within the southern business community for what they saw as the Post Office Department attending to mail service in the North while ignoring the needs of the South. I will tell the story based on clippings from newspapers of the day.

STEAM BOAT DAVID BROWN.—This fine packet which left New York on the 17th inst. for Charleston, returned on Tuesday. Although the mails travel with great rapidity between New York and Charleston, yet Captain Penoyer has made his voyage before the mail announced his arrival out. The David Brown has had a return passage of 74 hours from Charleston, and to Capt. P. we are indebted for files of Charleston papers to Saturday last, inclusive.

Figure 12. This brief news item, from the *New York Spectator* of November 29, 1832, reports the return of the *David Brown* from Charleston and makes pointed note of how the vessel beat the regular mails.

Recall that *David Brown's* maiden voyage was in November 1832. The first mention I found of the *Brown* in a newspaper is shown as Figure 12. This is from the November 29, 1832 *New York Spectator*, and marvels at *Brown's* speed compared to land mail: “Although the mails travel with great rapidity between New York and Charleston, yet Captain Penoyer has made his voyage before the mail announced his arrival out.”

So almost no time passed before the editors threw down the gauntlet, even if the Post Office Department wasn't listening. In point of fact, the PL&R of 1825 specifically expressed the Post Office Department's default preference that mail travel on land. In Section 34, under the heading “Making up the Ship or Steam-Boat Mail,” the regulations specified that “Letters are not to be sent by steam-boats, excepting they are marked by Steamboat, or there are special instructions on the subject.”

FOR CHARLESTON, South Carolina.
THE New Steam Packet **DAVID BROWN**, James Penoyer, Master, will leave the E. R. Steam Boat Place, foot of Beekman street, on Saturday afternoon, the 5th January, at 2 o'clock precisely. For Passage, apply to the Captain on board, or at the office of the Howell Works Company, 261 Front st.
 No steerage passengers or freight taken, except Letters and small Packages. Letters will be charged One Shilling each, and Packages in proportion.
 N.B. Passengers are particularly requested to be on board precisely at 2 o'clock, as the Packet will positively sail at that hour. j2

Figure 13. This advertisement placed in *New York Evening Post*, January 2, 1833, announces the January 5 departure for Charleston, declares that the *David Brown* will not carry steerage passengers or freight, but says very specifically that the vessel will carry letters at one shilling (12½¢) and small packages ratably.

To match the editorial comment offered by the editor of the *Spectator*, Figure 13, from the *New York Evening Post* of January 2, 1833 shows the first advertisement found soliciting passengers for travel to Charleston on January 5, 1833—the last trip south of the 1832-33 season. Note that the steamship operators offered to carry letters addressed (in this case) to Charleston at a charge of one shilling each and small packages for some additional charge.

It was clearly illegal for a steamship running parallel to an established mail route to advertise and/or carry mail. Further, it is highly unlikely that the steamship line's owners

didn't know it. They all were experienced businessmen. Their "argument," if you will, was that they were not competing with the post office, but rather offering a freight service to businessmen. Once the vessel reached its destination, the captain delivered the letters to the post office.

Upon returning to New York from this trip to Charleston, the *Brown* was laid up until the beginning of May to install a new boiler that would burn the more efficient anthracite coal.

A larger advertisement, shown in Figure 14, placed again by *David Brown's* owners in the May 3, 1833 *New York Evening Post*, tossed another chip on the pile. Not only would the *Brown* carry letters at one shilling apiece; it would convey them (in this case) to Charleston substantially ahead of mail carried on the land route. Note the postscript in Figure 14: "N.B.—Letters by this conveyance will be three days in advance of the mail and will be charged one shilling each."

Whatever its legal status, the service offered would have been compelling for many citizens and businessmen, particularly newspaper managers and editors who were probably the clientele wanting to transport "packages in proportion."

The question of how the letters would be delivered to their addressees was left unanswered, but it seems probable that they would be taken to the post offices in New York and Charleston where the postmasters would have been obliged to pay the steam line 2¢ for each of them. Here is what the 1832 PL&R said about that:

170. Masters or managers of all other [non-contract] steam boats, are required by law, under penalty of thirty dollars, to deliver all letters brought to them, or within their care or power, addressed to, or destined for, the places at which they arrive, to the Postmasters at such places....

171. This law is often violated. You will use diligence to correct the evil, and prosecute for the penalty, in every case where you can obtain testimony.

172. For every letter or packet, delivered by the master of a [non-contract] steam boat, you will pay him two cents . . ."

The first suggestion that there might be trouble brewing between the steamship line and the Post Office Department is to be found in an editorial that appeared in the *Charleston Courier* on May 13, 1833. This is presented as Figure 15. This exhortation makes pretty clear that a contract was being bargained for by the steamship interests, that the Post Office Department wasn't listening, and that the newspapers were going to exert whatever influence they might in bringing the issue to the public. Then and now, timely information was critical to commercial success. The reader should also keep in mind that although "letters" are the subject of the editorial discussion, newspaper publishers had an enormous interest in seeing that the newspapers of other cities reached their destination as rapidly as possible. Newspapers of this era were critically dependent on the mails; before the telegraph there was no faster means of communication.

Keeping up the pressure, about two weeks later the May 25, 1833 *Charleston Courier*

For CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA.

THE new steam packet **DAVID BROWN**, James Pennoyer, master, will leave for Charleston, S. C. Saturday next, the 4th of May, at 3 o'clock, P. M. precisely, from the wharf west side of Catharine street slip.

The success of steam communication being no longer a matter of experiment, has induced the proprietor (since the packet discontinued her trips last winter,) to fit her up in a first rate style: and her accommodations will be found to be superior to any packet plying between New York and Charleston. A very pleasant dining and sitting cabin has been put up on deck, 40 feet long—in fact no expense has been spared to render the accommodations of this packet worthy the patronage of the public.

For passage, apply on board; at the office of the Howell Works Company, 261 Front street, or to
JOHN J. BOYD, Broker 49 Wall st.

N. B.—Letters by this conveyance will be three days in advance of the mail, and will be charged **1s.** each—packages in proportion.

The *David Brown* will leave Charleston on her return for New York Saturday the 11th May. a27

Figure 14. Advertisement for *Brown* 4 May 1833 sailing placed in May 3 *New York Evening Post*.

Steam Packet David Brown.—The great advantage which would accrue to the citizens of Charleston, as well as to the whole country, to the south and south west of this city, were the mail transported by this vessel, are so apparent, that we are surprised the Postmaster General did not at once accede to an arrangement which we understand was offered by the proprietor of the *David Brown*, through the Postmaster at New-York. The present mode of demanding freight for letters must be unpleasant both to the proprietor and to the public; but as long as the vessel continues to run, so long will it be necessary for business men to despatch their letters by her; it would, therefore, it seems to us, be advisable to get up petitions in this city, as well as at Savannah, Augusta, and even Mobile and N. Orleans, requesting the Postmaster General to enter into a contract, to have a mail between Charleston and N. York despatched, whenever the *David Brown* leaves either port. This contract, we are authorized to say, can be made for a very small consideration, and would give us an opportunity of availing ourselves of a line of communication which shortens the distance between N. York and the southern cities, at least three days, without being subjected to additional postage, to which, under present circumstances, the proprietor of the boat is certainly entitled. We observe that the Department has made great exertions to facilitate the transportation of the mail at the North; and even established *extra stages*, and we have a right to expect that the interest of the south will not be neglected in this instance.

The Mails.—No Northern Mail yesterday from beyond Fayetteville.

The Western mail was not received when the Post Office closed last evening.

In former years, agents were sent on by the Postmaster-General, whenever failures were frequent, to discover the cause; and where neglect was apparent, either in Postmasters or Mail Contractors, *effectual* measures were *immediately* adopted to remedy the evil—if found to be unavoidable, the public had at least the satisfaction of having the causes of failure explained. The state of affairs is different now; the most gross irregularities are suffered to pass off without notice, and those who are engaged in the transportation of the mail, can consult their own case and convenience, with impunity, while the interests of the public are entirely disregarded.

From the following correspondence, we should judge that instead of endeavoring to afford facilities to the transmission of information, there is a disposition to obstruct it. It will be seen that the privilege the public have heretofore enjoyed, of carrying on a correspondence with New-York by the *David Brown*, is to be hereafter denied us. A public meeting should be called to take the whole subject into consideration. Let the voice of the people be heard—*and obeyed*.

Figures 15 and 16. Editorials from the *Charleston Courier*, May 13, 1833 (at left) and May 25, 1833 (above) advocating a postal contract for the *Brown*.

ramped up the argument by calling on the public, in the editorial seen in Figure 16, to demand action to “remedy the evil” of the “gross irregularities” they were suffering in having their interests ignored by the Post Office Department.

The “correspondence” to which the Figure 16 article refers was a letter the Assistant Postmaster General sent to the postmasters of both New York and Charleston instructing them to advise the captain and ship’s agent that they were breaking the law. The text of this letter, dated May 14, 1832 and sent to the Charleston postmaster, is reproduced in the clipping shown in Figure 17, which was published in the *Charleston Courier* for May 24. The year was obviously 1833; the 1832 designation in the clipping is a typographical error. The Post Office Department letter notes that the *Brown* “obtains 12½ cents for the conveyance and direct delivery” of letters and quotes the 1823 PL&R that declared all regular steamboat routes to be post roads.

The *David Brown* principals responded promptly, denying the charge that they were competing with the Post Office by delivering letters. Their response is shown in Figure 18, from the May 25, 1833 *Charleston Courier*. They argued that the charge of direct delivery of letters was totally incorrect, because “letters by the boat, which were under the captain’s control” have always been delivered immediately to the post office. The notice concludes with a defiant PS: “Letters and packages received on board, as heretofore.” The firm obviously felt that their delivering the letters to the post office (which then charged recipients the full postal rate as if the letters had been carried by land) put them in compliance with the law.

As the months passed, the ship’s owners stuck to their guns. Advertisements promoting the line’s carriage of mail continued to be run in newspapers in the cities at both ends of the route. The advertisement shown in Figure 19 (from the September 10, 1833 *New*

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
Southern Division, 14th May, 1832, }
T. W. BACOT, Esq. P. M. Charleston.

Sir—It has been reported to the Department that the Captain or Master of the Steam Packet "*David Brown*," now plying between the ports of New-York and Charleston, S. C., obtains 12½ cents for the conveyance and direct delivery of each letter and packet, sent by his vessel from either of those cities to the other

By the third section of the act of 1823, "all waters on which Steam Boats regularly pass" are declared to be "Post Roads," subject to the provisions of the several acts regulating the Post Office Establishment, and the 6th and 19th sections of the act of 1825 impose heavy fines for this violation of the Post Office Laws.

You will make the Captain, Agent or Agents of the above named packet aware of these facts, and exert your utmost vigilance to detect, and prosecute in future all similar infractions of the law.

[Sec. 17.] Very respectfully, &c.
(Signed,) C. K. GARDNER,
A. P. M. General.

P. S.—A copy of this letter, has this day been transmitted to the P. M. at New-York.

MESSRS. EDITORS.—In consequence of the publication in yesterday evening's papers of a letter of the Assistant Postmaster-General, the Captain and Agent of the *David Brown*, consider it their duty to inform the public, that the "report" made to the Department, as to the "direct" delivery of letters, is totally incorrect—and they respectfully refer to the Post Masters of this city and of New-York, for proof, that the letters by the boat, which were under the Captain's control, have always been delivered to them immediately after the boat's arrival.

While they respect the laws, they deny any right of the Department to interfere with the *freighting* business of the boat.

N. B.—Letters and packages received on board, as heretofore.

Figure 17 (left). PMG Letter of May 14, 1833 (the 1832 year date is a typo) advising the Charleston postmaster to prosecute the *Brown* captain for law-breaking. Figure 18 (right) shows the captain's defiant response: He always delivers letters immediately to the post office and he denies the Department's right to interfere with his freighting business.

York Evening Post), declares that "Letters by the *David Brown* will be three to four days in advance of the mails and will be charged one shilling each."

While the Post Office Department might have had the law on its side, it clearly did not have the support of businessmen in New York and Charleston. The reality was that the Department's horse-and-buggy carriage of the mail by land was simply no match for the speed of the steamboats on this route. A non-contract steamboat was carrying mail between the two cities three to four days in advance of the Department's contract carriers on the land route. Newspaper editors, themselves greatly in need of speedy delivery of newspapers and information, would not let up on the issue. They continued to editorialize against the Department.

Finally, in the spring of 1834, the parties came to an agreement. The Post Office Department entered into a contract with the New York and Charleston Steam Packet Company to carry closed mail sacks north and south on the route. No mention was made in the announcements about compensation, but the official register of 1835 reported that Charles

FOR CHARLESTON, S. C.
THE new Steam Packet **DAVID BROWN**, James Coffey, master, will leave for Charleston, S. C. from the wharf west side Catharine street slip on Saturday the 21st Sept, at 3 o'clock, P. M. precisely. In order that passengers out of the city may know when to meet the packet, the following arrangements is announced for the month of September, upon which days the packet will positively sail at 3 o'clock, P. M. precisely, viz:—
From New York—Saturday, Sept. 21st.
From Charleston—Saturday, Sept. 28th.
Letters by the *David Brown* will be from three to four days in advance of the mails, and will be charged one shilling each—packages in proportion. The freight of letters in all cases to be paid at the office when left.
☞ No freight taken.
For passage, having superior accommodations, apply at the office of the Howell, Works Co. \$20 2tis

Figure 19. The impasse continued for the remainder of 1833. This advertisement from *New York Evening Post* of September 10, 1833, presents the *Brown's* forthcoming sailing, boasts of superior accommodations for passengers, and defiantly declares that the ship will carry letters (no freight) at one shilling apiece, which will reach their destination three or four days in advance of the regular mails.

POST OFFICE NOTICE.
 Post Office, New York, March, 6, 1834.
 Notice is hereby given, that Mails will be made up at this office every Saturday for Charleston, S. C. and other offices south of that place, and forwarded in the steam packets David Brown and William Gibbons. The Mail will be closed at 2 o'clock, P. M.
 m7 6: SAMUEL L. GOUVERNEUR, P. M.

Figure 20. The Post Office gives up. This notice from the New York Postmaster, published in the *New York Post* of March 7, 1834, acknowledges that U.S. mails will be made up every Saturday for transit to Charleston via steamers *Brown* and *Gibbon*.

Morgan & Co. received \$7,200. I have been unable to confirm that the Postmaster General put the water route to competitive bidding.

A terse announcement of the new post office mail service appeared in the March 7, 1834 issue of the *New York Post*. This is shown in Figure 20. In Charleston, a more expansive announcement was published in the March 15, 1834 *Charleston Courier*. This notice is shown in Figure 21. It mentions the existence of a new mail contract and specifies that letters intended to travel by this route must be marked "Steam Packet" on the front of their envelopes. Thereafter, the ships of the New York and Charleston Steam Packet Company would play by the Post Office Department's rules.


<p style="text-align: center;">POST OFFICE. CHARLESTON, S. C. } March 14, 1834. }</p> <p>A CONTRACT having been entered into with the Proprietors of the Steam Packets William Gibbons and David Brown, to transport the Mail between New-York and Charleston, once a week, notice is hereby given, that the Mail for New-York, <i>City and State</i>, and for all other States East of New-York, will be made up at this office every Saturday, at 2 o'clock P. M. to be despatched by one or other of the above mentioned Boats.</p> <p>All letters to be forwarded by <i>this route</i> must be so designated by the words Steam Packet on the <i>front</i> of their envelopes, otherwise they will be despatched by the <i>land Mail</i>, at 4 o'clock P. M.</p> <p>A Bag will be kept on board, for the reception of Letters, which may be written between the hours of closing the Mail, and that of the departure of the Boat.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">THOMAS W. BACOT, Post Master. March 15 1</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FOR NEW-YORK.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>The splendid new steam packet WM. GIBBONS, Captain James Pennoyer, will depart <i>punctually Tomorrow, the 22d inst. at 4 o'clock, P. M.</i> For Passage, having elegant accommodations, apply on board at Fitzsimons' wharf, or to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WILLIAM PATTON, Agent.</p> <p>N. B. The Steam Packet DAVID BROWN, will succeed the WILLIAM GIBBONS and depart hence for New-York on <i>Saturday</i>, the 29th inst. at 4 P. M. These Boats carry the <i>U. States Mail</i> agreeably to advertisement of the Postmaster, which is closed at the Post Office, at 2 P. M. after that hour, Letters will be received on board. Each of these Boats have an Engine Hose attached to their Machinery which is capable of throwing water all over the Vessel and over the mast head. March 21</p>
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Figure 21. More expansive than the New York announcement, the Charleston announcement makes clear that a postal contract has been awarded.

Figure 22. Typical of the regular announcements after the postal contract was awarded is this ad that appeared in *Charleston Courier* for March 21, 1834.

The advertisement in Figure 22, from the *Charleston Courier* for March 21, 1834, is typical of the firm's announcements after it received a postal contract. "These boats carry the U. States Mail agreeably to advertisement of the Postmaster, which is closed at the Post Office, at 2 P. M." The advertisement makes clear that after the post office mail closed, letters could still be received onboard the ship, apparently at no extra charge.

To my knowledge, this was the Post Office Department's first offshore coastal mail contract. It was a long time coming. The four pages that follow present full sailing data for the vessels of the New York and Charleston Steam Packet Company, gleaned from news reports in various New York and Charleston newspapers. Brackets indicate information taken from an advertised sailing schedule; "NA" indicates no information is available. ■

NEW YORK AND CHARLESTON STEAM PACKET COMPANY

VESSEL	DEP NY	ARR CH	DEP CH	ARR NY	NOTES
1832					
Brown	17 Nov	22 Nov	24 Nov	27 Nov	First voyage
Brown	1 Dec	5 Dec	9 Dec	13 Dec	
Brown	22 Dec	27 Dec	29 Dec	3 Jan	
1833					
Brown	5 Jan	9 Jan	15 Jan	20 Jan	In port for boiler upgrade
Brown	20 Apr	24 Apr	27 Apr	1 May	
Brown	4 May	8 May	11 May	15 May	
Brown	18 May	23 May	25 May	29 May	
Brown	1 Jun	5 Jun	8 Jun	12 Jun	
Brown	15 Jun	19 Jun	22 Jun	26 Jun	
Brown	29 Jun	15 Jul	20 Jul	24 Jul	
Brown	27 Jul	1 Aug	3 Aug	7 Aug	
Brown	10 Aug	15 Aug	17 Aug	29 Aug	
Brown	21 Sep	25 Sep	28 Sep	3 Oct	
Brown	5 Oct	9 Oct	12 Oct	16 Oct	
Brown	19 Oct	23 Oct	26 Oct	31 Oct	
Brown	2 Nov	6 Nov	9 Nov	13 Nov	
Brown	16 Nov	20 Nov	23 Nov	27 Nov	
Brown	30 Nov	4 Dec	7 Dec	12 Dec	In port for winter
Brown	14 Dec				
1834					
Gibbons	1 Mar	5 Mar	8 Mar **	14 Mar	**first sailing under PO contract; Figure 4
Brown	10 Mar	14 Mar	16 Mar	19 Mar	
Gibbons	16 Mar	19 Mar	22 Mar	26 Mar	
Brown	23 Mar	27 Mar	29 Mar	2 Apr	
Gibbons	29 Mar	2 Apr	5 Apr	10 Apr	
Brown	4 Apr	10 Apr	12 Apr	16 Apr	
Gibbons	12 Apr	16 Apr	19 Apr	23 Apr	
Brown	20 Apr	25 Apr	26 Apr	30 Apr	
Gibbons	26 Apr	30 Apr	3 May	7 May	
Brown	3 May	8 May	11 May	14 May	
Gibbons	10 May	14 May	17 May	20 May	
Brown	17 May	22 May	24 May	29 May	
Gibbons	24 May	28 May	31 May	4 Jun	
Brown	31 May	4 Jun	7 Jun	11 Jun	
Gibbons	7 Jun	11 Jun	14 Jun	17 Jun	
Brown	14 Jun	19 Jun	21 Jun	25 Jun	
Gibbons	21 Jun	25 Jun	28 Jun	2 Jul	
Brown	26 Jun	31 Jun	3 Jul	5 Jul	
Gibbons	5 Jul	9 Jul	[12] Jul	16 Jul	
Brown	9 Jul	12 Jul	17 Jul	19 Jul	
Gibbons	[19] Jul	23 Jul	26 Jul	29 Jul	
Brown	23 Jul	26 Jul	31 Jul	2 Aug	
Gibbons	[2] Aug	5 Aug	9 Aug	13 Aug	
Gibbons	16 Aug	20 Aug	23 Aug	27 Aug	
Brown	23 Aug	27 Aug	6 Sep	11 Sep	Repairs 3 wks, then quarantined in Chaston
Gibbons	27 Sep	1 Oct	4 Oct	8 Oct	
Brown	4 Oct	8 Oct	11 Oct	17 Oct	
Gibbons	11 Oct	14 Oct	18 Oct	22 Oct	
Brown	18 Oct	22 Oct	25 Oct	30 Oct	

VESSEL	DEP NY	ARR CH	DEP CH	ARR NY	NOTES
Gibbons	25 Oct	29 Oct	1 Nov	5 Nov	
Brown	2 Nov	5 Nov	8 Nov	12 Nov	
Gibbons	8 Nov	12 Nov	15 Nov	20 Nov	
Brown	15 Nov	20 Nov	22 Nov	27 Nov	Figure 1
Gibbons	22 Nov	26 Nov	29 Nov	2 Dec	
Gibbons	6 Dec	NA	13 Dec	16 Dec	
Gibbons	20 Dec	23 Dec	27 Dec	2 Jan	
1835					
Gibbons	3 Jan	7 Jan	[10] Jan	15 Jan	
Gibbons	14 Feb	17 Feb	21 Feb	25 Feb	Figure 11
Gibbons	28 Feb	[4]Mar	7 Mar	11 Mar	
Gibbons	14 Mar	18 Mar	22 Mar	25 Mar	
Columbia	21 Mar	25 Mar	28 Mar	2 Apr	First voyage
Gibbons	28 Mar	1 Apr	4 Apr	8 Apr	
Columbia	4 Apr	8 Apr	11 Apr	15 Apr	
Gibbons	11 Apr	15 Apr	18 Apr	22 Apr	
Columbia	18 Apr	22 Apr	25 Apr	29 Apr	
Gibbons	25 Apr	29 Apr	2 May	7 May	
Columbia	2 May	6 May	9 May	13 May	
Gibbons	9 May	[13] May	16 May	21 May	
Columbia	16 May	19 May	23 May	28 May	
Gibbons	23 May	26 May	30 May	3 Jun	
Columbia	30 May	3 Jun	6 Jun	10 Jun	
Gibbons	6 Jun	9 Jun	13 Jun	17 Jun	
Columbia	13 Jun	16 Jun	20 Jun	24 Jun	
Brown	17 Jun	21 Jun	24 Jun	28 Jun	
Gibbons	20 Jun	23 Jun	27Jun	1 Jul	
Columbia	27 Jun	1 Jul	4 Jul	8 Jul	
Brown	1 Jul	5 Jul	8 Jul	12 Jul	
Gibbons	[4] Jul	8 Jul	11 Jul	14 Jul	
Columbia	[11] Jul	16 Jul	18 Jul	22 Jul	
Gibbons	18 Jul	22 Jul	25 Jul	29 Jul	
Brown	22 Jul	26 Jul	30 Jul	2 Aug	
Columbia	25 Jul	29 Jul	1 Aug	5 Aug	
Gibbons	1 Aug	4 Aug	9 Aug	13 Aug	
Brown	8 Aug	13 Aug	16 Aug	19 Aug	
Columbia	NA	10 Aug	NA	NA	
Gibbons	15 Aug	20 Aug	22 Aug	26 Aug	
Brown	22 Aug	26 Aug	30 Aug	2 Sep	
Gibbons	29 Aug	2 Sep	5 Sep	8 Sep	
Columbia	5 Sep	9 Sep	12 Sep	16 Sep	
Gibbons	[12] Sep	NA	NA	19 Sep	
Brown	12 Sep	16 Sep	19 Sep	23 Sep	
Columbia	19 Sep	24 Sep	[26] Sep	30 Sep	
Gibbons	21 Sep	24 Sep	26 Sep	30 Sep	
Brown	28 Sep	5 Oct	7 Oct	12 Oct	
Columbia	3 Oct	6 Oct	[10] Oct	14 Oct	
Gibbons	[3] Oct	8 Oct	10 Oct	14 Oct	
Brown	14 Oct	18 Oct	21 Oct	*31 Oct	Figure 8
Columbia	17 Oct	[21] Oct	31 Oct	5 Oct	
Gibbons	18 Oct	21 Oct	24 Oct	1 Nov	
Brown	1 Nov	5 Nov	7 Nov	11 Nov	

VESSEL	DEP NY	ARR CH	DEP CH	ARR NY	NOTES
Columbia	7 Nov	11 Nov	14 Nov	[18] Nov	
Gibbons	NA	14 Nov	19 Nov	21 Nov	
Columbia	21 Nov	25 Nov	28 Nov	2 Dec	
Gibbons	26 Nov	2 Dec	5 Dec	9 Dec	
Columbia	5 Dec	9 Dec	12 Dec	17 Dec	
Gibbons	NA	16 Dec	19 Dec	24 Dec	
Columbia	21 Dec	25 Dec	26 Dec	30 Dec	
1836					
Gibbons	27 Dec	1 Jan	17 Jan	21 Jan	
Gibbons	22 Jan	28 Jan	30 Jan	4 Feb	
Gibbons	21 Feb	26 Feb	2 Mar	7 Mar	Figure 4
Gibbons	12 Mar	17 Mar	19 Mar	NA	
Columbia	19 Mar	23 Mar	26 Mar	30 Mar	
Gibbons	NA	31 Mar	2 Apr	NA	
Columbia	[2] Apr	NA	9 Apr	13 Apr	
Gibbons	9 Apr	13 Apr	16 Apr	30 Mar	Figure 7
Columbia	16 Apr	20 Apr	23 Apr	27 Apr	
Gibbons	23 Apr	27 Apr	30 Apr	4 May	Figure 10
Columbia	30 Apr	4 May	7 May	14 May	
Gibbons	NA	11 May	17 May	NA	
Columbia	15 May	20 May	21 May	25 May	
Gibbons	22 May	25 May	27 May	2 Jun	
Columbia	[28] May	2 Jun	4 Jun	8 Jun	
Gibbons	7 Jun	10 Jun	11 Jun	15 Jun	
Columbia	[11] Jun	15 Jun	18 Jun	21 Jun	
Gibbons	19 Jun	23 Jun	27 Jun	NA	
Columbia	25 Jun	29 Jun	3 Jul	NA	
Gibbons	3 Jul	6 Jul	9 Jul	13 Jul	
Columbia	5 Jul	12 Jul	16 Jul	NA	
Gibbons	16 Jul	20 Jul	23 Jul	27 Jul	
Columbia	23 Jul	29 Jul	30 Jul	3 Aug	
Gibbons	30 Jul	3 Aug	6 Aug	NA	
Columbia	6 Aug	10 Aug	13 Aug	17 Aug	
Gibbons	13 Aug	17 Aug	20 Aug	24 Aug	
Columbia	20 Aug	NA	27 Aug	NA	
Gibbons	11 Sep	14 Sep	17 Sep	21 Sep	
Columbia	17 Sep	21 Sep	24 Sep	28 Sep	
Gibbons	[24] Sep	NA	1 Oct	5 Oct	
Columbia	30 Sep	5 Oct	9 Oct	NA	
Gibbons	8 Oct	10 Oct			Ran aground north of Cape Hatteras 10 Oct
Columbia	16 Oct	20 Oct	22 Oct	26 Oct	Figure 5
Columbia	29 Oct	3 Nov	5 Nov	9 Nov	
Columbia	12 Nov	16 Nov	20 Nov	NA	
Columbia	26 Nov	30 Nov	3 Dec	7 Dec	
1837					
Columbia	11 Mar	16 Mar	18 Mar	22 Mar	
Columbia	25 Mar	[29] Mar	1 Apr	4 Apr	
Columbia	8 Apr	13 Apr	15 Apr	19 Apr	
Columbia	27 Apr	30 Apr	4 May	7 May	
Columbia	11 May	15 May	18 May	21 May	
Columbia	NA	29 May	1 Jun	4 Jun	
Columbia	8 Jun	11 Jun	15 Jun	18 Jun	

VESSEL	DEP NY	ARR CH	DEP CH	ARR NY	NOTES
Columbia	22 Jun	26 Jun	29 Jun	2 Jul	
New York	29 Jun	3 Jul	6 Jul	NA	First voyage; Figure 3
Columbia	6 Jul	9 Jul	13 Jul	17 Jul	
New York	13 Jul	16 Jul	20 Jul	23 Jul	
Columbia	20 Jul	24 Jul	27 Jul	31 Jul	
New York	27 Jul	30 Jul	31 Aug	5 Sep	
Columbia	3 Aug	6 Aug	10 Aug	14 Aug	
Columbia	17 Aug	21 Aug	24 Aug	28 Aug	
New York	7 Sep	NA	28 Aug	NA	
Home			15 Sep	19 Sep	First voyage
Columbia	31 Aug	NA	NA	NA	
Home	23 Sep	26 Sep	NA	3 Oct	
Columbia	28 Sep	2 Oct	8 Oct	12 Oct	
New York	5 Oct	8 Oct	13 Oct	16 Oct	
Home	7 Oct				Wrecked 9 Oct 1837, 90 drowned
Columbia	14 Oct	17 Oct	19 Oct	22 Oct	
New York	19 Oct	NA	26 Oct	2 Nov	
Columbia	28 Oct	31 Oct			Sent to Gulf (New Orleans/Galveston)
New York	NA	7 Nov	11 Nov	15 Nov	
New York	18 Nov	22 Nov	26 Nov	29 Nov	
1838					
New York	13 Jan	17 Jan	19 Jan	22 Jan	
New York	NA	NA	26 Jan	30 Jan	
New York	10 Feb	14 Feb	23 Feb	27 Feb	
New York	3 Mar	NA	NA	10 Mar	
New York	18 Mar	15 Apr	18 Apr		Sent to the Gulf to join <i>Columbia</i>

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BRITISH WEST AFRICA MAIL PACKETS TO 1900: RATES, ROUTES AND SHIPS, OUT AND HOME, BY COLIN TABEART

REVIEWED BY RICHARD F. WINTER

This long-awaited book covering the British mail packets to the West Coast of Africa has finally become available, but only in a very limited print edition of 100 copies. This is unfortunate because the book is a very important one and most likely will sell out quickly, making the valuable packet sailing data unavailable to many.

Since its formation in 1950, The West Africa Study Circle, an international specialist society for the study of stamps, postal stationery and postal history of West Africa, has wanted a detailed record of the 19th century mail service between the United Kingdom and West Africa, where the British had important colonial interests. The principal regions were the Gambia Colony and Protectorate (Gambia today), Sierra Leone, Gold Coast (Ghana today), and the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria (Nigeria today). British West Africa does not include the British colonial interests in southern or eastern Africa. Various attempts to provide this record have started during the past 30 years, but failed to reach satisfactory conclusions.

In 2011, based on his award-winning books of the British packets services to the Australian/New Zealand region, Colin Tabeart was approached and asked if he would undertake the project. When I first met Tabeart in 1985, he was a British naval officer working in London. He showed me preliminary work he had done to document the African Steam Ship Company mail voyages to West Africa up to 1859. It was clear that he had an interest in this area.

The Royal Navy had established the West Africa Squadron in 1808 to suppress the Atlantic slave trade by patrolling the coast of West Africa, an effort that continued until 1870. Even as early as 1820, the Americans assisted in that effort, first with a few ships and later with a permanent squadron of their own. The need to communicate with these squadrons as well as economic interests ashore begged for regular postal communications.

Tabeart always has had a deep interest in Royal Navy history, which soon blossomed into maritime postal history. These interests combined with his successful publications made him an obvious choice to undertake this work, but would he agree to help? The answer was yes, but only if the Study Circle would accept his carefully laid scheme to accomplish the work.

They did, and he started on what he thought might be a two-year project. I think he reluctantly agreed to do the project, not because he collected West Africa postal history, which he did not, but because there was a very obvious hole in existing published information that needed to be filled and he knew how to do it. Well, it took four more years, but he finally completed the work, which is a massive tome and one which the postal history community should be very pleased to have.

Those who know Tabeart's earlier books that provide sailing data for mail steamships will immediately recognize the style in which he presents the West African steamship voyage data in this book. It is organized chronologically by voyage, identifying all the

stops along the way that he can. The trips are in order by year, first the outbound voyages from England followed by the homeward voyages for that year. Since covers often have markings identifying the place of origin as well as the place of entry into the British Isles, it usually will be easy, using the tabular information, to find the mail voyage on which these covers were carried. The key date often is the arrival or departure of the steamer at its home port. Since there were no newspaper sources identifying calls at the many small African ports along the steamship routes, those calls have to be identified by arrival information provided when the ships returned to England.

Tabcart's careful study of each of the mail contracts negotiated between the government and the shipping companies also helps to identify the expected itineraries. Even so, there are many data pieces that don't exist from the voyages. Where there is additional source information related to a particular voyage, he notes that information as it appeared in the sources that he used. This additional information is provided immediately following the voyage listing and not listed as a note at the end of a chapter. This extra information can be quite useful. As the author has stated to me, "at one time or another, these ships seem to have visited just about every mud hut on the West African coast."

My evaluation is that each Tabcart book profits from the author's experience with previous books and each is stronger than its predecessor. It is as if Tabcart places himself in the user's shoes, understands just what information is important to the reader, and then arranges that information in an easy-to-use form in just the right place. This is demonstrated by his use of the powerful tools available today for this type of research. He has extensive experience using the documents held at the Post Office Heritage, the new name for the Post Office Archives at Freeling House, London. He is equally comfortable with the Colonial Office and Admiralty records held at the National Archives, formerly the Public Records Office at Kew, London. But most importantly, he has benefited from the rapid growth of contemporary newspaper sources available on-line.

Unfortunately, digitized newspaper information was not available 30 years ago when I collected sailing data for the pioneer book of the mail steamers operating on the North Atlantic. The growth of digitized newspaper information available on-line has been staggering. Websites such as that of the British Library now provide 19th century newspapers that were absolutely critical for this work. With experience Tabcart has learned which sources are the most reliable and how to maneuver around the available newspaper data, which, by the way, requires considerable learning experience. In his words, "Without these superb facilities, 19th century postal history would be infinitely more difficult to research and the results correspondingly the poorer."

Tabcart's first chapter, "An Overview of the 19th Century," is essential to understanding how his book is organized. Here he provides a summary of the information that will be found in each of the subsequent chapters. His chapters cover the mail sailings of a particular period, mostly influenced by the mail contracts negotiated first with one company and later with two competing companies.

One of my favorite parts of Tabcart's books that cover the Australia/New Zealand mails and this new book on the West Africa mails is that early in each book he devotes a complete chapter to the postal rates for the mails carried by the packets whose voyages he is about to reveal. The rate information in this case is for mail sent directly between the United Kingdom and British West Africa (Chapter 2). It includes packet letter rates as well as ship letter rates, the progression of rates, postcard and registration rates when known, as well as the complex privilege rates for the armed forces.

His comprehensive knowledge of postal rates goes back to his very first book, published in 1990, *United Kingdom Letter Rates Inland and Overseas*, in which he published a very detailed account of British postal rates worldwide. In his subsequent books he con-

tinued to include rate information appropriate to the mail carried by the packets whose voyages he detailed, exactly where it would be immediately useful to the reader. In the current book he provides an excellent summary of the British West Africa rates. At the end of this chapter he provides a very helpful, short section explaining the accountancy markings often seen on British mail to and from West Africa. These red and black numerical markings, sometimes made with handstamps but often in manuscript, have puzzled many collectors and require explanation, which he now provides. This is just one more example of information important to collectors that Tabcart has thoughtfully included.

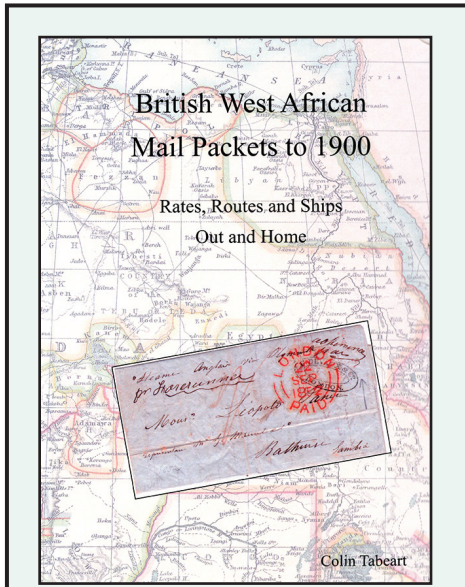
Before 1848, there were no contract mail sailings to West Africa. The Admiralty sent mail by ships of opportunity, including naval vessels to and from the West Africa Squadron. In mid-1847 the Admiralty informed the Postmaster General that it intended to operate a monthly packet service by naval vessels out to the West Coast of Africa, commencing on the first of each month (Chapter 3). This service began in 1848 and lasted until the first mail contract for this area in 1850. Thereafter, HM ships still were used on occasion to convey mails. While naval vessels carried mail out, there was no regular return mail service, that being done again only by ships of opportunity. In this chapter he identifies the Royal Navy vessels that conducted this service.

In 1850, the first contract mail service was initiated with the General Screw Steam Ship Company, a service from England to the Cape Colony, with a stop on the West African Coast (Chapter 4). Since the service to the Cape Colony was more important than any stop on the West Coast en route, this stop was soon eliminated, and it was determined that a separate service just to the West Coast region was needed.

Starting in 1851 the first of three contracts with the African Steam Ship Company went into effect with special service just to the West Coast and calls at the Madeira Islands and the Canary Islands en route (Chapters 5, 6, and 7 for each contract).

In January 1869 the British & African Steam Navigation Company began operations from Glasgow, Scotland, to the West African ports via Liverpool. A serious trade war ensued between the two companies for the West African mail service. A compromise was reached during the period from 1870 to 1872, establishing standard passenger rates, freight fees, and coordinated schedules. The African Steam Ship Company still had a contract until 1872 and the British & African Steam Navigation Company had some agreement with the government to carry mail also.

During the period between 1872 and 1873, there were no contracts and both lines



British West African Mail Packets to 1900, Rates, Routes and Ships Out and Home, by Colin Tabcart. Published 2015 by The West Africa Study Circle. ISBN 978-1-905647-21-7. A4 format (8.3 x 11.7 inches). 560 pages including a bibliography, two indexes, 104 illustrations (covers, documents and ships) and eight maps. Hardbound \$108 including surface postage, inquiries to Ian Anderson at Ghanastampman@aol.com. Also available from Leonard Hartmann, P.O. Box 36006, Louisville, KY 40233, at \$120 delivered to a U.S. address.

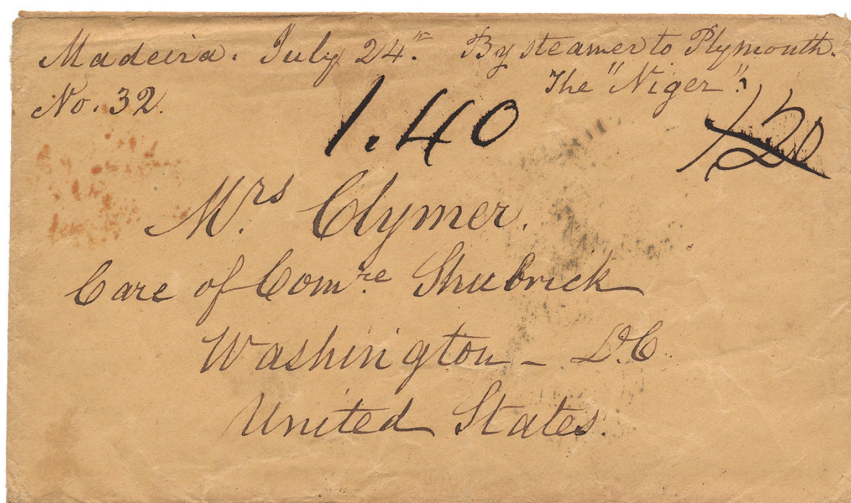


Figure 1. Cover from Funchal, Madeira, carried to London by the *Niger* of the African Steam Ship Company, thence to America in the summer of 1856.

carried mail, not as packet letters but as non-contract ship letters (Chapter 8). The rates charged on the letters and the appropriate accountancy marking were different than when the mail was treated as contract or packet mail. From 1873 to the end of the century, shared mail service existed between the lines (Chapter 11) with postal agreements for both lines to carry contract mail on a bulk-weight payment scheme.

In 1879 the steamship services provided by the two lines branched out to many new and different locations (Chapter 12). While maintaining the regular service to British West Africa, their ships would sometimes leave Liverpool bound for Hamburg, then via Le Havre and Plymouth to pick up mail and passengers for West Africa. Calls at Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and even South American ports were included in some voyages. The voyages began to get very complicated as the ships branched out to more unusual places besides the normal West African ports. As the chapter was getting much too long, Tabcart broke up the period between 1879 and 1900 into multiple sections (Chapters 12 through 15). I can't image how difficult it must have been, even using the modern tools available for data collection, to assemble information for the last 11 years of this book. This period resulted in 65 percent of the 500 pages of voyage data in the book!

As a transatlantic mail student I was anxious to see this work. As expected, it filled a hole that had existed for contract mail sailing data. Mail to and from the West African coast from the United States normally was sent via the United Kingdom and their mail services beyond. Having this data now would enable a much better understanding how the mail was carried to this part of the world.

In 2011, a portion of a very large and exciting correspondence came on the market. It was from the George Willing Clymer archive. Dr. Clymer, a graduate of Princeton in 1823, studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and in Paris, then served in the United States Navy for 37 years. For many of those years he was a naval surgeon attached to various vessels in American naval squadrons operating around the world. During 1855-57 he served as fleet surgeon of the African Squadron, sailing on the USS *Jamestown*, flagship of the squadron operating from Funchal, the capitol town of the Island of Madeira. He had regular correspondence with his family in Morrisville, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C. The covers that came onto the market usually included lengthy letters inside. In those letters as well as in docketing notations on the envelopes, Clymer wrote very detailed comments



Figure 2. Reverse of the Figure 1 cover, showing Madeira origin marking, Plymouth Packet mark (“JY 30 1856”) and Boston exchange-office marking.

about when and on which vessels the letters arrived or left from his location.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the front and reverse of one of the Clymer covers. This envelope, noted in the upper left corner as “No. 32,” was written at Funchal on 23 July 1856, addressed to Clymer’s wife in Washington, D.C. Their home was there as a result of his previous tour of duty (1850-55) at the Naval Observatory. Clymer noted at the top of the Figure 1 envelope that the letter was to leave on 24 July and travel to Plymouth on the steamship *Niger*. This was a contract packet of the African Steam Ship Company, which called at the Madeira Islands on the way home from West Africa. Tabcart documents this voyage of *Niger* on page 69 of his book. The ship called at the Madeira Islands on 23 July and arrived at Plymouth on 29 July 1856. Two post office datestamps on the reverse of the envelope (Figure 2) confirm this voyage, a faint, black datestamp of Madeira dated 23 July 1856 and a black rimless circular datestamp of Plymouth, dated 30 July 1856, showing arrival on a mail packet. From Plymouth the letter was sent to London to be prepared for the transatlantic mail service to the United States. It arrived at London on 31 July 1856, shown by the red circular datestamp on the reverse. Here the letter was placed in the mail bag to be sent to Liverpool for the 2 August sailing of the Cunard steamship *Canada*, which reached Boston on 13 August 1856. A Boston exchange-office datestamp on the reverse confirms the arrival of the letter at Boston. Presumably the letter reached Mrs. Clymer in Washington a day or two later.

At London this unpaid letter was marked in the upper right corner for a debit to the United States of \$1.20. A single-rate letter from the United States to Madeira at the time cost 65¢ per half ounce. Of this amount the United Kingdom was entitled to 60 cents if the letter was carried across the Atlantic by a British contract steamship. Since this letter weighed between one half and one ounce it required two rates, making the debit to the United States \$1.20. At Boston the letter was marked for \$1.40 postage due, apparently in error as the United States was entitled only to 10¢ to be added to the British debit.

I consider this West Africa mail book, the ninth book to be published by Colin Tabcart and by far the largest, to be an essential element of the library of any postal history student interested in maritime mail. Tabcart is to be congratulated for completing a very difficult task. As with each of his previous books, he has provided quality reference information. My hope is there will be sufficient copies for all those interested. ■

EXPLANATION OF PROBLEM COVER IN CHRONICLE 248

Our problem cover from the previous issue, shown as Figure 1, was a folded letter-sheet franked with a lovely New York Postmaster Provisional stamp, sent to Geneva, New York, and bearing a magenta “Due 5” manuscript rating mark. Auxiliary markings are rare on New York Postmaster Provisional covers, and the question was simple: Why was this cover rated for 5¢ due postage?



Figure 1. Our problem cover from February was this attractive cover franked with a New York Postmaster Provisional stamp. The question was: Why “Due 5?”

Several Society members checked in on this cover. The most detailed explanation came to us via email from Route Agent Ronald J. Stauber, who wrote: “I’m not sure of the date of the cover, but assume was mailed in 1845 or 1846—after the New York Provisional was issued and before it was replaced by the U.S. 1847 stamps. I also assume that Robert H. Morris (or a member of his staff) made the determination that the straight-line distance between Geneva, New York and New York City should not be used. Google says the straight line distance is 214 miles and by car today the distance is 269 miles. If (as seems likely) the postal route used in the mid 1840s exceeded 300 miles, the 5¢ due notation was probably added to reflect this. The basic provisions of the Act of March 3, 1845, effective as of July 1, 1845, provided for a uniform provisions of the Act of March 3, 1845, effective as of July 1, 1845, provided for a uniform postage rate for a letter for any distance of 300 miles or less, at 5¢ per half ounce, and for any distance over 300 miles, at 10¢ cents per half ounce.”

Stauber is quite correct as to the rate calculation. An alternative explanation would be that the distance assumption was under 300 miles but the cover weighed over ½ ounce, thus requiring an additional 5¢.

But there's also a third possibility, first suggested by Mark Scheuer, which had not occurred to me when I wrote this cover up in the February Cover Corner. This is that the New York Provisional stamp was added to a stampless cover in an attempt to deceive collectors.

The financial incentive here is fairly modest: the catalog value for the off-cover stamp is \$500 and for the cover, \$625. But a cover this pretty would command a premium price. Scheuer, who created and maintains our Society's on-line database of provisional covers, contacted me to suggest the possibility of fraud, at which time I started my own investigation and ultimately reached the same conclusion. A similar cover (with a New York Provisional and a "Due 5" marking) exists from this same correspondence. The stamp is tied on that cover, but I have my doubts about it too.

As it turns out, unbeknownst to me, the Figure 1 cover had received a fairly recent certificate from the Philatelic Foundation (#504,546) stating that the Provisional stamp did not originate and that the tying magenta cancellation is counterfeit. I was so mesmerized by how nice the stamp looked that I missed the bigger picture. A valuable lesson learned here.

PROBLEM COVER FOR THIS ISSUE

Our problem cover for this issue is not as pretty, but at least it's genuine, and it bears a curious and unusual oval due marking. Illustrated in Figure 2, the cover originated in Providence, Rhode Island. The circular datestamp that ties the imperforate 3¢ 1851 stamp reads



Figure 2. Our problem cover for this issue, franked with an imperforate 3¢ Washington stamp, was sent from Providence to New York City in 1857. At issue is the bold oval “2 CTS TO PAY” marking: What rate does it refer to and where was it applied?

“PROVIDENCE R.I. MAY 12.” The cover is addressed to “Cranford King Esq., Room 128, Longley's Hotel, New York, N.Y.” A light pencil docketing at left dates the cover to 1857: “Ans. May 25/57.” There are no markings on the reverse.

The questions to be answered concern the bold oval “2 CTS TO PAY” marking: What rate does it refer to and where was it applied? ■

(continued from page 9)

198 and 199. In a special feature this issue (page 72), Moss describes a very unusual crack on the large 5¢ Newspapers and Periodicals stamp. This crack is noteworthy for several reasons, not least because it appears as an intaglio crack on a stamp printed by typography.

In our Foreign Mails section (page 78), James Baird tells the story of the New York and Charleston Steam Packet Company, the first offshore steamship line to be awarded a U.S. mail contract. How this came about is revealed in Baird's meticulous research. His article concludes with full sailing data for the ships of this line (1832-38), useful for locating and authenticating covers, which (as Baird shows) are scarce.

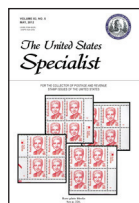
And a warm welcome back to Richard F. Winter, our Foreign Mails Editor *emeritus*, who provides a useful review of Colin Taebert's latest compilation of sailing data and much else, *British West African Mail Packets to 1900, Rates, Routes and Ships, Out and Home*. Winter's behind-the-scenes insights into the creation of this important book are most interesting. His review begins on page 97. ■

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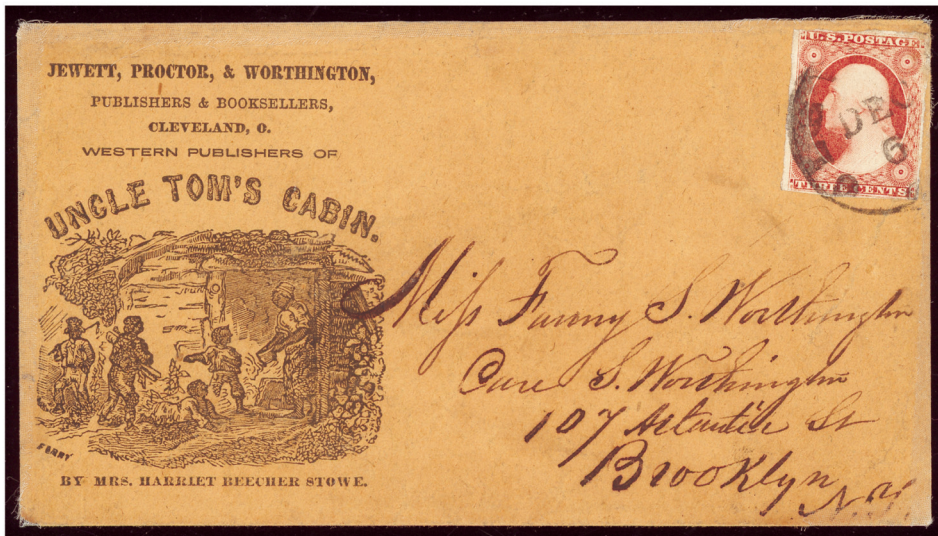


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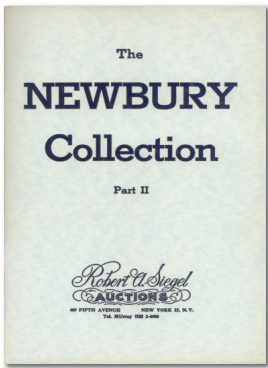
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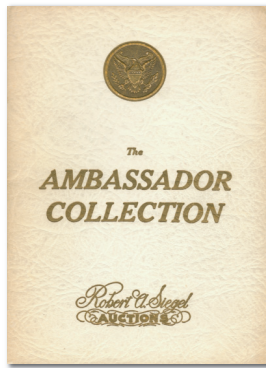
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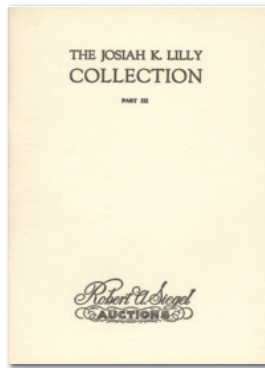
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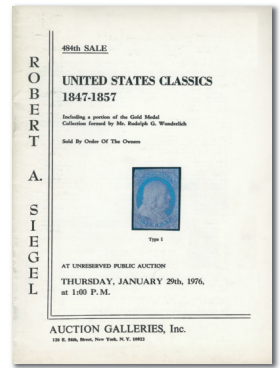
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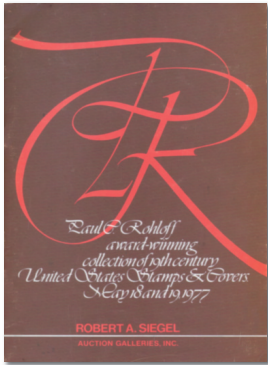
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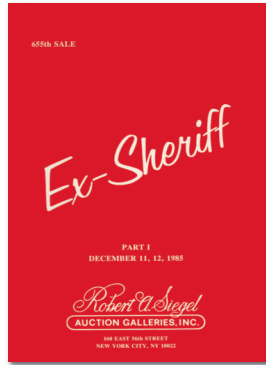
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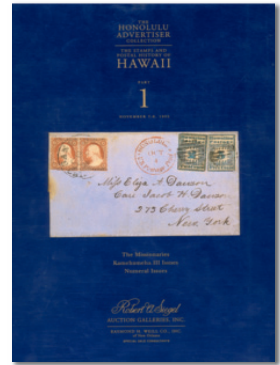
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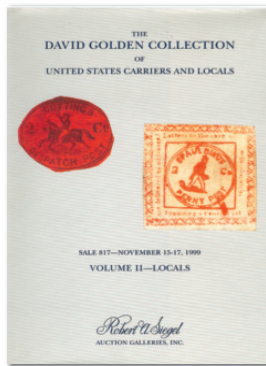
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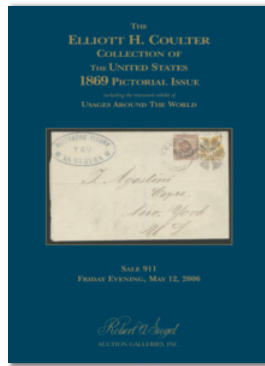
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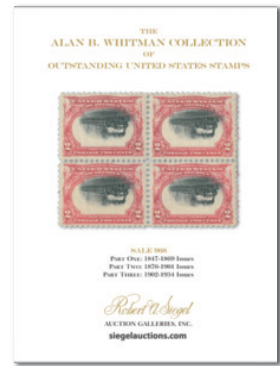
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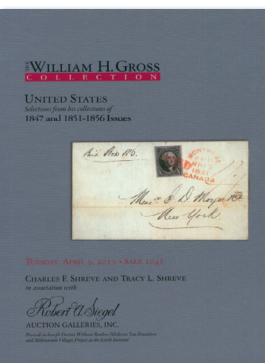
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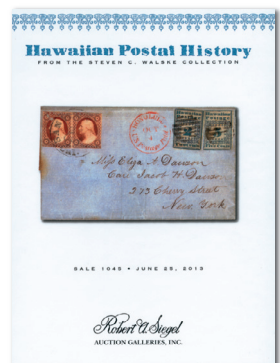
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