

The  
Chronicle  
of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues



The pioneer Ocean Line steamship *Washington*, the first vessel to carry transatlantic mails under contract with the U.S. Post Office. In a survey article in our Foreign Mails section, Friedrich A. Meyer describes the genesis of the U.S.-Bremen mail treaty, announces new discoveries and looks at the covers known to have been carried (in both directions) on *Washington*'s first three round trips.

August 2017

Volume 69, No. 3

Whole No. 255

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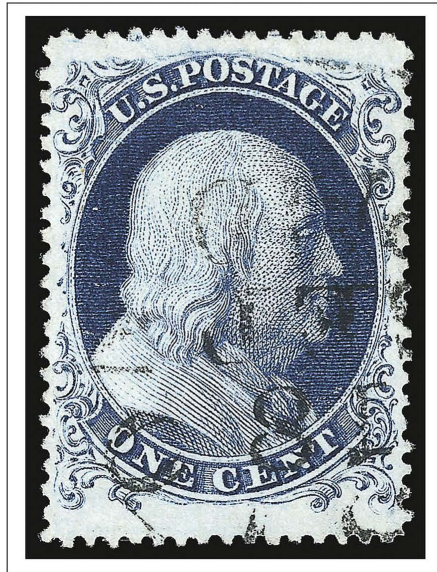
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**THE CHRONICLE of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues** is published quarterly in February, May, August and November by the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., at 100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte, PA 16823. Periodicals-class postage paid at Bellefonte, PA 16823 and additional mailing office. Subscription price \$35.00. Printed in U.S.A. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to P.O. Box 750368, New Orleans, LA 70175.

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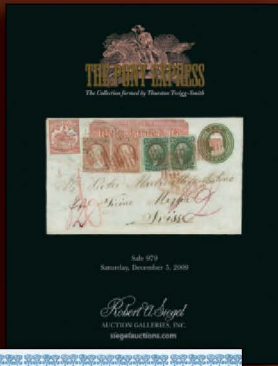
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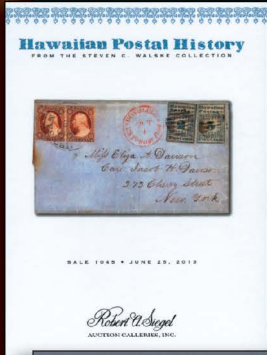
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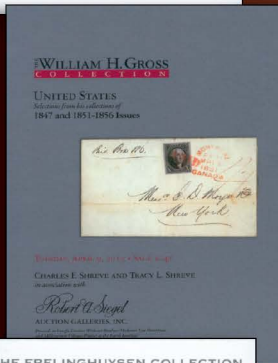
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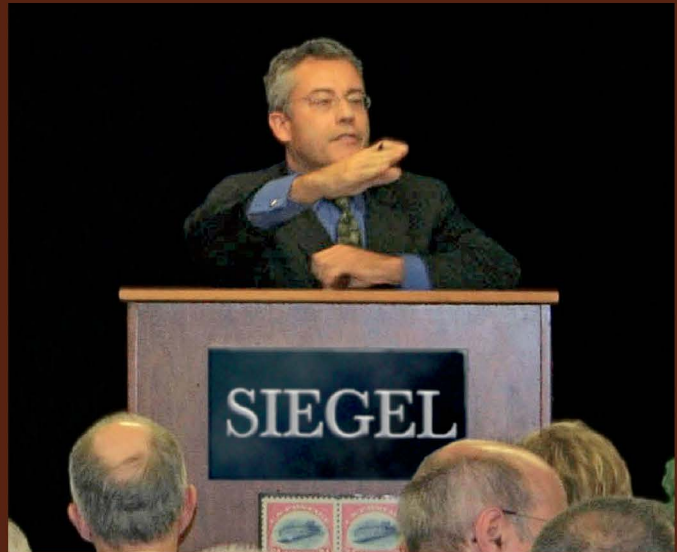
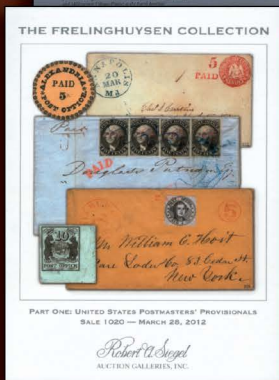


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# The Chronicle

## of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues

August 2017  
Whole No. 255

Published quarterly in  
February, May, August and November

Volume 69  
Number 3

*\$8.75 Members*  
*\$10 Non-Members*

*Official publication of the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc.*  
(Unit 11, A.P.S.) [www.uspcs.org](http://www.uspcs.org)

*Annual Dues*  
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## IN THIS ISSUE

The Google-era transformation of 19th century newspaper archives—from hard-bound folios and hard-to-read microfilm into searchable digits—has been a boon to postal history research and to the *Chronicle*. In a special feature commencing on page 218, our past president John H. Barwis presents information gleaned from newly-accessible early newspapers about a government express mail service that ran fitfully between Philadelphia and New York for five weeks in 1833. It's a fascinating tale, well told through multiple contemporary sources—and all the more intriguing because not a single cover has so far been recorded. In his conclusion, Barwis tells what a surviving cover might look like, in hopes that the publication of his article will bring one to light.

Our cover this issue shows a wood engraving of the pioneer steamship *Washington*, the first vessel to carry transatlantic mails under U.S. Post Office contract. Along with some scarce and historically important covers, this woodcut serves to illustrate an article in our Foreign Mails section by Freidrich A. Meyer, a preeminent German author and exhibitor. “An Early Westbound Bremen-Mail Letter and the First Three Round Trips of the Pioneer Steamer *Washington*,” begins on page 295. This is Meyer's first contribution to the *Chronicle* and we hope there will be more. German mail is also the subject of our Bank Note section, where H. Jeffrey Brahin looks at Bank Note covers sent from the U.S. to Germany prior to the rate reductions of 1 July 1870. As Brahin observes, there aren't many covers.

James W. Milgram, editor of our stampless section, has for many years nurtured collecting and scholarly interests in stencil markings on postal correspondence. With “Stencil Postmarks on Stampless Covers” on page 227, Milgram launches a planned series of articles exploring usage of stencil markings on 19th century mail. This initial article describes all the different stencil postmarks so far recorded on stampless covers—and presents full-cover illustrations for almost all the markings. Stencils are a fascinating postal history byway. Some of the markings are very striking. As are the press-printed postmarks of Kelley's Island, Ohio. These are well known and well documented, but in a bonus article on page 247, Milgram announces the discovery of a new state of this iconic marking, earlier than previous examples and very different.

In our 1847 section, page 252, Gordon Eubanks examines two 5¢ 1847 covers that have in common several unusual features. Eubanks' thoughtful analysis reveals another common element—that both covers are fake.

Our Carrier and Locals section features two articles. Thomas C. Mazza goes directory diving to correct a long-standing misattribution of the Hall in Hall & Mills Despatch Post. And John Bowman and Gordon Stimmell join forces to extend into the 1860s the operating lifetime of the Union Square Post Office.

In a reversal of roles, 1861 editor Chip Gliedman fills our 1851 section (with a plausible and charming explanation of the enigmatic “Circular, Paid” labels of Lockport, New York) while 1851 editor Wade Saadi contributes to the 1861 section (an article on using digital graphic tools such as Photoshop to help understand complicated covers). Rounding off the 1861 section is a short piece by Gliedman on a free-franking label created by the postmaster of Columbus Grove, Ohio.

And in our Officials section, editor Alan Campbell provides a highly personal essay in which (among other things) he explains why he prefers collecting Officials plate varieties in multiples. An enjoyable read. ■

## THE U.S. GOVERNMENT EXPRESS OF 1833

JOHN H. BARWIS

This article discusses the origin and operation of a short-lived express mail service run by the United States Post Office between New York, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C. in early 1833. It describes the reasons for the service's origin and failure, and how the Post Office's experience may have influenced formation of the successful express mail service of 1836-39. No covers are recorded to have survived from the abortive 1833 express service, and it may be that none exist. The conclusion of this article provides specifics about the dates and postmarks that surviving covers might bear.

The existence of the 1833 government express is not a new discovery; it was the subject of an 1836 newspaper editorial, which is reproduced in its entirety in James Milgram's *The Express Mail of 1836-1839*.<sup>1</sup> But since that book was published, the vastly increased accessibility of online newspaper archives has brought much new information to light.

### Background

In 1833 the efficiency of intercity mail service along the U.S. eastern seaboard was hindered by poor roads and the inherent limitations of horses. The Hudson and Delaware rivers could be crossed by steamboat, but the Camden and Amboy Railroad Company's line ran only as far south as Bordentown, New Jersey, where a stagecoach ran to Philadelphia via the Delaware River bridge at Trenton, and another ran to Camden to connect with the ferry to Philadelphia.<sup>2</sup> No rail service existed between Philadelphia and Washington.

Newspaper publishers in New York and Philadelphia were in stiff competition to provide timely, commercially important news to their readers. They frequently editorialized about the slowness and irregularity of the mail that brought such news. Of particular interest to the editors of business journals were Congressional proceedings, which at the time involved potentially impactful debates about tariffs. To expedite receipt of Washington news, several New York publishers dealt with slow mail service by establishing private expresses. Among those was *The New York Standard*.<sup>3</sup>

### OUR EXPRESS

We are particularly indebted to Mr. Abraham C. Schenk of Philadelphia, the contractor who arranged our express—and to Messrs. A. M. Cumming, of Baltimore, and A. Fuller of Washington, who provided the relays—for the enterprise, activity and punctuality with which they discharged their respective engagements. The message was received in Jersey City at ten minutes past twelve last night, having been brought from Philadelphia in FIVE HOURS AND TWENTY-EIGHT MINUTES; and if the express left Washington as intended at half-past noon, the whole distance was accomplished in less than twelve hours, being a performance hitherto unequalled in the annals of posting.

One of the most vocal critics of the postal service was New York's *Journal of Commerce*, which also arranged for their own express:<sup>4</sup>

### DAILY EXPRESS—IN ADVANCE OF THE MAILS

The great interest which is felt in the proceedings of Congress at the present session, as well as in the affairs of South Carolina, has induced the Editors of the *Journal of Commerce* to establish a DAILY EXPRESS from Philadelphia to this city, by means of which they will be able to publish regularly the proceedings of Congress, and the news of the South generally, in advance of the mail, and to forward the same by the Eastern and Northern mails *one day sooner than any other New York paper*, whether issued in the morning or evening.

In this city, we shall publish the same intelligence, and lay it before our readers, some hours before the Southern mail arrives, and still longer before its contents will be accessible to the public.

Furthermore, as we employ a Reporter at Washington, who will regularly forward us a sketch of every important debate by the next mail after it occurs, and as the Washington papers seldom or never contain the debates of the previous day, we shall be able, not only to anticipate the said papers in this city, but in a considerable measure throughout New England and the State of New York.

For the convenience it will afford to our brother editors at the North and East, we shall feel ourselves sufficiently compensated by their giving this notice an insertion in their columns.

HALE & HALLOCK, *Editors Journal of Commerce*

Evidently the annoyances expressed by publishers were not lost on Postmaster General William T. Barry, whose portrait is shown in Figure 1, as was reported less than two weeks after Hale and Hallock's announcement.<sup>5</sup>

The New York editors complain, loudly and very justly, of the irregularity of the mail from this city; or rather, between Philadelphia and New York, for there the fault seems to lie. We have heard the Postmaster General has determined to have a "reform" in that quarter: he is not particularly pleased that the New York Editors, at their private cost should distance the United States Mail to nothing, with all his vast aggregate of expenditure.

Note that PMG Barry's expression of displeasure was primarily directed not at the performance of the postal service, but at the business attempting to remedy an unsatisfactory situation. He must have reconsidered, as only five days later in New York appeared the following announcement.<sup>6</sup>

The Postmaster General has made arrangements which go into immediate effect, for establishing an express mail to be carried on horseback between New York and Philadelphia, by which letters and exchange papers will be conveyed. The post office in this city will be open this evening for the purpose.



Figure 1. The author of the short-lived 1833 express scheme was William T. Barry, who was Postmaster General from 1829 to 1835, during most of Andrew Jackson's administration. Detail from a 20th century portrait by Benedict Anton Osnis, based on a contemporary original by Charles Bird King. Image courtesy Smithsonian Institution, National Postal Museum.

The next day, February 1, PMG Barry released to the press a few details of his plans for an express mail service.<sup>7</sup>

#### THE POSTMASTER GENERAL'S EXPRESS

We learn with pleasure that the Postmaster General, determined not to be outdone by the enterprising editors of New York, has caused a daily express to be established between New York and Philadelphia, by which the *letters and exchange papers* will pass between the two cities in so short a space of time as *six hours!* The express will leave Philadelphia each day, immediately after the arrival of the Southern Mail, and will reach New York in six hours at the utmost, and in a shorter time, if practicable. So, immediately after arrival of the Eastern

Mail in New York, the express will start for Philadelphia, laden with the exchange papers and letters. Hence, as the Eastern Mail arrives at New York never later than eleven o'clock, A.M., we shall receive our exchanges from the east at five o'clock the same evening and in time to give the news in our paper of the ensuing morning.

Major Barry deserves credit for this arrangement. It will prove a great accommodation to the public, and obviate the necessity of an express on the part of the New York editors. We learn further that it is in contemplation to run an express between this city and Baltimore, the distance to be travelled in *eight hours*. When this arrangement goes into operation, the Washington papers will reach Philadelphia in twelve, and New York in eighteen hours. Surely this is the age of improvement and reform!

The Postmasters at New York and Philadelphia had been briefed prior to the PMG's announcement, as evidenced by this press release:<sup>8</sup>

**THE EDITORS OF NEWSPAPERS published in this city, are requested to place all papers for the Editors in Philadelphia in one package, to be forwarded by the EXPRESS MAIL DAILY, which will be closed as soon after the arrival of the Eastern Mail as it can be prepared. All facilities afforded by Editors, to give full effect to the late arrangement of the Department, establishing an Express Mail between the cities of Philadelphia and New York, will be thankfully received at this Office.**

SAMUEL L. GOUVENEUR, P.M., New York, January 31, 1833.

The rapid introduction of PMG Barry's initiative provided very little preparation time for the post offices in New York and Philadelphia.

### The express route

The mail route in 1833, as shown in the map in Figure 2, ran northeast from Philadelphia along the stage road to Morrisville, Pennsylvania, where it crossed the bridge to Trenton. From Trenton it closely followed the Assunpink Indian Trail, via Princeton, New Brunswick, Rahway, Elizabethtown and Newark to Jersey City, then by ferry to Manhattan. The original stage road, as authorized by the Proprietors of New Jersey in 1665, ran from Elizabethtown to Highland Park on the Raritan River, from where mail and passengers were taken to Manhattan by ferry.<sup>9</sup> The New Jersey terminus moved north to Perth Amboy and then to Jersey City (Paulus Hook) in 1795, when bridges were completed along the old Newark Plank Road across what is now the Meadowlands.<sup>10</sup>

As results would later demonstrate, planning was woefully inadequate to deliver on the PMG's six-hour promise. Suppose the time required to move the mail between the New York post office and Jersey City was only 30 minutes. That would have left just five and a half hours for a relay by horseback between Jersey City and Philadelphia via Trenton, a distance of about 90 miles. A relay using ten trotting horses would consume about eight hours one way. Galloping horses, each covering three miles at 16 miles per hour, would have required 30 horses one way. Each horse would have needed a day's rest, so an additional 30 horses would have been needed for the immediate return trip. At least several weeks of planning would have been necessary to establish the transfer points, to engage competent and reliable riders and their horses, and to make arrangements for feed and water. It is not known how many horses or riders were actually employed.

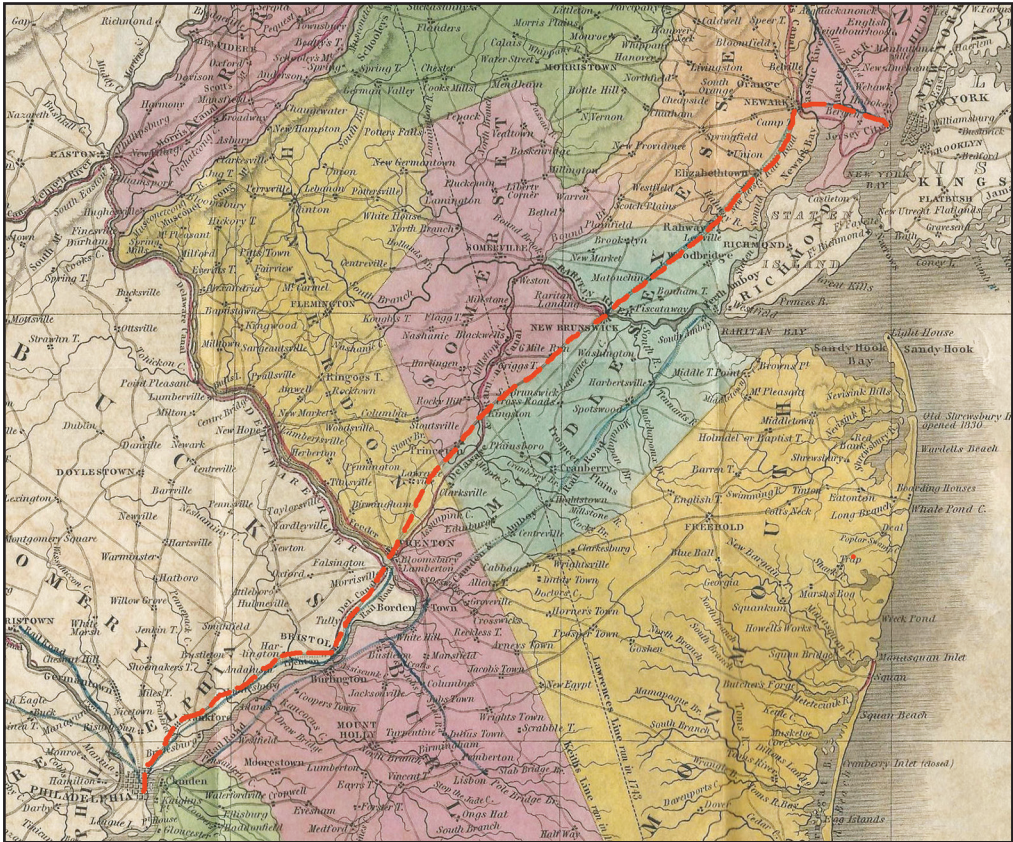
### Editors' reactions

Some newspaper editors met the Postmaster General's announcement with anger and derision. Editors of newspapers in towns outside the government express route were concerned that their news would never be current. This included editors in Washington, given that only New York and Philadelphia were part of the original scheme:<sup>11</sup>

**THE POSTMASTER GENERAL has just begun an experiment which cannot be successful, because it is oppressive, unequal, and vexatious in its operation. It consists in the establishment of an Express Mail from Philadelphia to New York, and from New York to Philadelphia, to carry the Exchange Papers of Printers between the two cities, leaving the bulk of the News-**

paper Mail to find its way to and fro as it can! Under this happy conception of a plan for expediting the Mail, the New York subscribers to all newspapers south and west of Philadelphia, may whistle for their papers. If one of our subscribers in New York, for example, gets this day's paper by this day next week, he will be in great luck. We should not be surprised, indeed, if he did not get it till Christmas. This will never do. The new arrangement is well meant, no doubt, but it will be found in practice to be intolerable, and must be abandoned.

Editors who already had private-express arrangements in place were annoyed because if the government express actually worked as promised they would have lost their



**Figure 2. The short-lived 1833 express (red dotted line) followed the existing mail route from Philadelphia to Morrisville, Pennsylvania, where it crossed the bridge to Trenton. From Trenton it continued along the stage road via Princeton, New Brunswick, Rahway, Elizabethtown and Newark to Jersey City, then by ferry across the Hudson to Manhattan. Mail route overlaid on map published by A. Finley, Philadelphia, 1834.**

one- to two-day news lead over competitors. Chief among the objectors in New York were the editors of the *Journal of Commerce*, who threw down the gauntlet to the Post Office Department:<sup>12</sup>

**DAILY EXPRESS, One Day in advance of the Government Express**

The Editors of the *Journal of Commerce* have made arrangements to receive the Washington papers, during the remainder of the session of Congress, **ON THE SAME DAY THAT THEY ARE PRINTED; being one day in advance of the Government Express, and two days in advance of the mail.**

If the former arrangement was acceptable to the public, it is fair to presume that this will be still more so. There is no excuse for the dilatory course of the mail, at a time when the whole community is on the alert for the news which it brings; nor in fact is the Government Express at all up to the mark, when such important interests are pending. As the government have

deigned to become imitators of our former enterprise, we shall be curious to learn whether they will imitate us also in the present. At any rate, our readers may rest assured, that barring incidents, the proceedings of Congress, in one way or another, shall be inserted in the *Journal of Commerce*, during the remainder of the session, *the next morning after they are published in Washington*.

We shall thus be able still to publish these important proceedings one day in advance of any of our morning contemporaries, and to send them off by the Eastern and Northern Mails, *one day sooner than they can be obtained through any other paper whether published in Washington or New York*.

Our arrangements are nearly or quite completed, and we *expect* to receive this evening the Washington papers of this morning. At all events the operation will not be delayed beyond a day or two at farthest. The distance from Washington to this city is 227 miles.

HALE & HALLOCK, New York, Feb. 7, 1833.

Editors in cities both south and north of the Government Express route published testy editorials criticizing the route's limited scope. By the end of the first week of February 1833, there was still no word whether government express service would be extended to Washington, which would have been advantageous to businesses in Baltimore:<sup>13</sup>

**EXPRESSES** – The Postmaster General has established an Express Mail between New York and Philadelphia, by means of which the Editors in those cities are supplied with their exchange papers much earlier than formerly. We hope that measures will be taken to extend the benefit to other cities also. There should be, and we hope will be, no partiality in the application of Government favors. Baltimoreans will, perhaps, be as much pleased to receive early intelligence as the people of either Philadelphia or New York. Let us all start fair.

Cities northeast of New York perhaps had the least to gain from the government express. The Editor of the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, rather than complaining only about being unable to participate, questioned the entire premise of the express. Excerpts follow:<sup>14</sup>

We are surprised at this innovation upon the general system of mail arrangement for the local benefit of those two cities. The mail between Washington and this place is detained, at and between Philadelphia and New York, 20 or 22 hours.... The Post Office Department, as if goaded into a little exertion by seeing the mail, which is supported by the public at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars, thus outdone by the printers of New York, has undertaken to maintain this express at the charge of the public. We humbly submit that this *is not the proper remedy*. Let the mail be forwarded with proper speed, and there would be no need of expresses.... After all the boasted improvements in the mail arrangements, under successive administrations, it will surprise our readers to learn, that the period allotted for the transmission of the mail from Washington to this city, except when it is brought by steamboats, is several hours longer than it was twenty years ago; and that there is not one day in four in which it does not exceed the allotted time.

### Performance of the government express

Early in its operation, the government express appears to have been severely understaffed, as evidenced by this report of a 1 February New York arrival:<sup>15</sup>

The Government Express was on Friday evening brought into town, by a lad only twelve years of age, he having performed the whole distance alone, in the short space of seven hours, with his mail bag, weighing forty pounds, lashed before him on the withers of his horse. He broke down two horses, which detained him some time, so that his rate of travelling could not have been less than fourteen miles an hour. His name is William Cisco, a native of Jersey City, a short, chubby little rogue, as tough as a Jersey oak knot, and has never till lately, worn shoes or stockings, even in winter. He came in apparently as fresh as when he started.

In the same week one express arrived in Philadelphia in an unexpected way:<sup>16</sup>

The Government Express arrived last evening without its regular rider. The horse was met by a countryman in the vicinity of Frankford, who, seeing the saddle-bags, and thinking they might contain news of importance, mounted the animal and hastened to the city. The fate of the regular rider is not known.

It was later reported that the regular rider's horse bolted when he dismounted to tighten the cinch belt; he turned up uninjured the next day. Now a part of Philadelphia, Frank-



ford was a town about seven miles upriver from the 1833 Philadelphia post office, which is conclusive evidence that riders crossed the Delaware via the bridge at Trenton rather than by ferry from Camden.

Very little of the government express operation seems to have gone as intended. The *New York Journal of Commerce* reported that of the ten government express deliveries that reached them on or before on 2 March 1833, four arrived too late to use the information for their morning edition, five others were either missing newspapers or mail, and only one “succeeded well.”<sup>17</sup>

### **Post Office attempts to quash a private express**

The newspaper excerpts presented here are only a fraction of the criticisms and objections that appeared in the eastern press during February and March of 1833. It was clear that the government express was underperforming the private arrangements that newspapers had made, at their own expense, for rapid exchange of information. This must have embarrassed PMG Barry, given that he had personally initiated the service, and had made a public pledge to deliver better performance than was being achieved by the private sector. Instead of improving his own service, Barry’s approach to this problem was an attempt to hinder or eliminate the *Journal of Commerce’s* private express operation between Washington and Philadelphia. The letter below refers to the *Journal of Commerce’s* agent in Philadelphia, who had received a private express shipment from his equivalent in Washington, and wished to forward it to New York by government express.<sup>18</sup>

*The plot thickens* – By the mail of yesterday evening, we received the following letter from a gentleman in Philadelphia, who has taken an interest in facilitating the objects of our express:

“PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 12.

“*The mail is now closing. The post office refuse anything that comes by express. I have forwarded an express to you, so that you will lead the government.*”

Now it so happens that whether the post office receive the packages brought by our express, or not, will make no difference in the result as, in either case, we shall have the Washington news one day in advance of the Government Express; and two days in advance of the mail. But it is worthy of inquiry, *by what right* the Postmaster General, or others acting under him, assume the power to deprive any particular citizen of the privileges afforded by the Post Office establishment, or of excluding letters and papers from the mail, because they bear a particular date? We take it for granted, that if the Postmaster General possesses this right in one case, he does in another; and it may come to pass, that in the exercise of his sovereign caprice, he will issue an order disenfranchising the whole population of New York, so far as respects the privileges connected with his Department. – *Jour. of Commerce.*

Meanwhile, in Washington a postal agent pressured the *Journal’s* local representative into sending via government express the materials he had intended to send by the *Journal’s* private express.<sup>19</sup>

### **FROM THE NEW YORK JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, Feb 22.**

We learned yesterday that our agent at Washington, relying too much upon the energy of the Post Office Department, had suspended the running of our express, under the assurance that the Government Express would bring us the same intelligence with the same despatch. This procedure, although prompted by the best intentions, was entirely contrary to our wishes, and we forwarded immediate orders to have the express resumed. All will be right again, after tomorrow morning, and possibly sooner. As yet we have seen no evidence that the Government Express will answer our purpose.

A spirited debate could be held about whether the Postmaster General could have simply ordered the *Journal of Commerce* to cease and desist from carrying letters and newspapers on the post roads between Washington and New York. The *Journal* may have responded that employees of their company, rather than third parties, were carrying the company’s own property. Exploration of this issue is beyond the scope of this article; postal historians should refer to Steven Roth’s superb series published in *Chronicles* 161-163 (1994).<sup>20</sup>

## Demise of the government express

After operating for less than six weeks, the government express was abruptly terminated in early March of 1833.<sup>21</sup>

*Government Express* – The Government express from Washington to New York is not to be continued, now that the session of Congress is brought to a close. We learn from the New York Journal of Commerce, that it was run sixteen times; in four instances, it reached New York too late for the morning papers; twice it brought no Washington papers; four times it brought nothing later than had been before received; twice it brought Washington papers two days old instead of one; once it arrived so late that only one of the morning papers availed itself of the news: and once it succeeded well. The express of the Journal, on the other hand, never failed to arrive at the appointed time, or of bringing later accounts of Congress than those previously received. It brought the President's Inaugural Address three days in advance of the mail and Government Express.

What was the Postmaster General's rationale for launching the government express? Those most likely to benefit, who were also the loudest complainers about postal inefficiency, already had their own system with a performance on which, in the end, the Post Office department was unable to improve. Revenue was certainly not a driver, because rate increases were never announced as a way to pay for the express.

Barry may have had political and budgetary reasons behind his plan. In 1832, Post Office Department revenues exceeded expenditures by \$100,000. On 31 December a resolution was introduced in the Senate to remedy this overcharge by reducing the rates of postage as a way of preventing further surpluses. The House began discussions on the topic on 3 January 1833.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps Barry realized it was not a good idea to leave revenues unspent, and saw introduction of a government express as a way both to use the funds while improving postal service. Having the luxury of income exceeding expenditure obviated the need to charge more than the existing postal rates for the express. Increasing postal rates would have created additional recalcitrance among publishers who already had their own expresses in place.

Pride of office and the belief that the law was on his side may have played a part in refusing to give up after it was manifestly obvious that the government express would be unable to match private express services already in place. Barry was an influential man who had occupied high offices in Kentucky. He was the first Postmaster General to hold that position at the Cabinet level.

Corruption also may have played a role in both initiating and operating the 1833 government express. Subsequent congressional investigations substantiated charges that Barry routinely advanced allowances and credits to mail contractors for extension of mail service. The investigation revealed that postal officials told favored coach companies the amounts of competing bids and frequently withheld contracts from low bidders. Postal officials would then receive kickbacks from contract awardees.<sup>23</sup>

President Jackson was forced to ask for Barry's resignation in 1835, then named him envoy extraordinaire and minister plenipotentiary to Spain. But he never served, dying of heart failure in Liverpool on his way to Madrid.<sup>24</sup>

## Lessons learned

When President Jackson appointed Amos Kendall as Postmaster General in 1835 it was quickly evident that postal operations, and ethics, would undergo a profound transformation. In 1836 Kendall changed the organizational structure of the Post Office, creating separate divisions for contracts, finance, and political affairs. He installed checks and balances to prevent padding of contracts and improper contract extensions, and forbade postal employees from having contacts with contractors. Congress later transferred control of Post Office Department finances to the Treasury Department.<sup>25</sup>

PMG Kendall then attacked sources of corruption more directly:<sup>26</sup>

Kendall later refused to pay the coach company of Stockton and Stokes \$45,462 in compensation for “gratuities” that were not based on service to the department. (U.S. Congress, House, 1845, pg. 1). Stockton and Stokes controlled mail service from Philadelphia to New York City, Baltimore to Washington DC, and other major routes. In 1837, they were fined dozens of times for failure to carry the mail, and for carrying mail without reporting it to the GPO (U.S. Government, Executive Document, 1838, pg. 50). Like many carriers, Stockton and Stokes regularly carried first class mail at lower rates than the post office and reported only a fraction of the mail business to the postmasters to whom they were contracted.

Stockton and Stokes had held the mail contract for the New York-Philadelphia route continuously since 1827.<sup>27</sup>

The subsequent 1836-39 express mail was effective because there was a need for it at the time, and it was better organized and operated than the 1833 attempt. PMG Kendall’s express mail avoided several pitfalls inherent in the 1833 effort. He had more than 18 months to plan the operation, as opposed to less than a month’s work done by his predecessor. He knew that additional postage would be needed, and shepherded the increase through both houses of Congress well before the service was to begin. He solved the problem of a single daily express being outrun by offering two expresses per day between Philadelphia and New York. He prohibited the transport of entire newspapers by express; 1833 riders had been weighed down by too many papers. And by extending the service beyond the Washington-Philadelphia-New York corridor, thus improving national communication, he established a sense of inclusion for towns that had previously voiced disenfranchisement.

### Covers

Had the 1833 government express mails traveled according to plan, letters to Philadelphia from New York would be on their way shortly after the daily arrival of the Eastern Mail at 11 a.m. and would arrive at Philadelphia by 6 p.m. But since most expresses did not run on time, in either direction, a letter carried by express may or may not bear same-day datestamps of both cities. There was no requirement to write “Express” on the cover, nor will the rate marking help since there was no special rate. A “proving” cover would be one that was sent between appropriate destinations during the proper time period in which the text of the letter mentions an intent to send the letter by “express.” Absent that, look for a cover sent between New York and Philadelphia that is docketed as received on the same day as the origin postmark. Sending dates should be between 1 February and 10 March, 1833. Good hunting!

### Acknowledgements

Thanks to Richard Frajola for finding and sharing an article mentioning the 1833 express while researching another topic in an online newspaper archive. Additionally, I am grateful to Steven Roth and Robert Rose for helpful conversations about postal routes, and to Dan Piazza at the National Postal Museum for providing the image of PMG Barry.

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## **STENCIL POSTMARKS ON STAMPLESS COVERS**

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

### **Introduction**

This is intended as the first of several articles illustrating and describing the use of stencils on United States covers during the classic era. This initial installment discusses stencil markings on stampless covers, a subject for which we have much definitive information, though it is not easily accessible, being scattered throughout the stampless cover catalog. In future articles I will discuss stencil markings on stamp-bearing covers, a subject that has been less thoroughly examined.

There are only a few methods that can be used to apply information onto a cover. Stenciling is the rarest type of marking.

### **Background**

A stencil image is created by brushing ink onto a template—often a brass plate—that has holes cut into it to form a design or writing. The plate, called a stencil, is laid onto the object intended to receive the image. Ink or paint is then applied over the template, usually with a brush, so that the stencil design is transferred. On stampless covers and envelopes, stencils have been used for postmarks, addresses, return addresses and advertising cornercards. The fixed template meant that the stencil image could never be changed, but the image was often sharp and distinctive, so it could be attractive to the eye.

Using different materials and pigments, the history of stencils is ancient. Hand outlines on cave walls are a form of stencil painting, and they go back to prehistory. The Chinese developed paper stencils 2,000 years ago, and stencils are still being manufactured today, useful to affix lettering to many different objects. I have a set of brass stencils, 26 letters and 10 numerals, that I last used with paint to label my garbage cans.

The nature of stencil lettering presents certain unique characteristics. To produce the letter “O” by stencil, the letter has to be broken into two halves (because if you punched out the full circle of an O, the center would fall out). In a stencil the center parts of letters and numbers are called islands. These islands must have solid material, called bridges, connecting to the stencil to prevent the islands from falling out. Islands and bridges make stenciled lettering distinctively different from all other handstamped and printed markings.

An advantage of a stencil as a postal marking device is that it can be reused to produce the same image repeatedly and swiftly. An entire complex design can be applied with one swipe. A disadvantage is that easily changeable dates are not possible. For this, handstamps are superior. With stencil postmarks, month and day have to be written in separately. Thus we do not often find stencils used as postmarks, except from small towns with low mail volume. Stencils can also be messy.

To use a stencil to create a circular or oval postmark, the outer frame has to be punctuated by enough bridges to hold the entire central portion of the design. For this reason, many stencil postmarks create the frame from decorative holes, rather than attempting a solid line. If a linear frame is desired, it must be broken at intervals to create bridges to hold the central portion. Any postmark whose frame is an unbroken line of ink cannot have been created from a stencil.

This article describes every stenciled postmark known on stampless covers and illustrates the great majority of them on their original covers. Following stampless convention, the organization is alphabetical by state. I have taken dates from Volume 1 of the *American Stampless Cover Catalog* (ASCC) and from the covers that are illustrated here.

### Listing of stencil markings on stampless covers

**CLINTON, CT.** While the postmark on the cover shown in Figure 1 is not listed in the stampless cover catalog as a stencil, the several examples I have seen meet stencil criteria. Note that the letters L, N, O, and C (in CT) all show bridges, and the date has been added in manuscript. The marking was applied in a watery ink that is very typical of stencils. Some strikes of this marking show an outer frame with breaks (suggested here at left between the two Cs); other strikes show no outer rim.

The cover in Figure 1 was sent from Clinton, Connecticut to New Haven on February 15, 1842, prepaid 6¢ for a distance under 40 miles. On February 25 it was remailed from New Haven to Hudson, Ohio, rated for 25¢ collection (distance over 400 miles).



Figure 1. “CLINTON CT.” (1842) stencil townmark with bridges (a stencil characteristic) evident in the L, N and O of CLINTON, on a prepaid cover (“Paid 6”) to New Haven, then remailed to Hudson, Ohio with 25¢ postage due.

**MIDDLE-HADDAM, CT.** Figure 2 shows the only example I record of this postmark, which was illustrated in *Chronicle* 155 and is reproduced here from that source. Struck in purplish brown ink, this bold and attractive marking reads “MIDDLE-HADDAM Ct.” within a circle of alternating dots and triangles. The manuscript date within the marking reads “Feby 4” and the cover is internally dated 1842. A matching stencil “Paid” was applied as a separate marking (note the bridges in the P, a and d) and the prepayment of 10¢ indicates a distance between 30 and 80 miles.

**WOODBURY, CT.** As with Figure 1, the marking on the 1839 cover shown in Figure 3 is not listed as a stencil, but signs of stencil origin are very evident. The breaks in the outer lines of the oval are typical for a stencil marking, bridges are evident in all the letters in the town name except the first and last, and the date has been added in manuscript. The red ink is very unusual for a stencil postmark. A collection of 18¾¢ was made in Northville, in Fulton County in upstate New York, for a distance of 150-400 miles

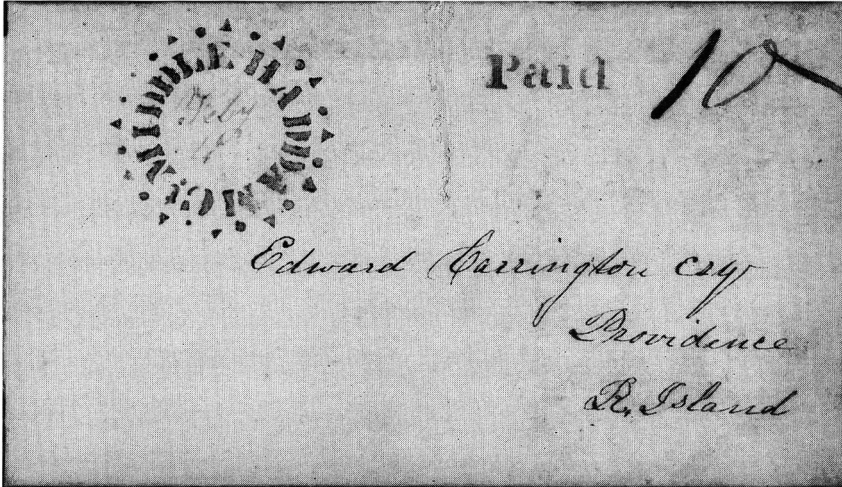


Figure 2. "MIDDLE-HADDAM Ct." (1842) stencil townmark in brown with a border of alternating dots and triangles, along with a matching stencil "Paid," on a cover to Providence, Rhode Island. Prepaid 10¢ for a distance between 30 and 80 miles. Illustration from an article in *Chronicle* 155.



Figure 3. "WOODBURY Ct." in red (unusual for a stencil postmark) with manuscript dating, rated "18<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>," on a cover sent to Northville, New York, in 1839. The breaks in the border of the marking are the bridges that hold the center of the stencil in place.

**BURKESVILLE, KY.** The marking on the cover illustrated in Figure 4 is the only example I have seen. This is a very handsome stencil cancel that shows the method to good advantage, in the brown-black ink that is common for stencil postmarks. The frame is a circle of consistently sized dots and most of the letters show bridges. Note in the upper right quadrant of the marking that the frame dots and letters seem bloated. In this location the template was not pressed tightly to the paper so that ink crept out underneath, a danger



Figure 4. “BURKESVILLE KY” (1831) with dots for outer rim, manuscript “Paid 25” on a cover to Richmond. Illustration courtesy Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries.



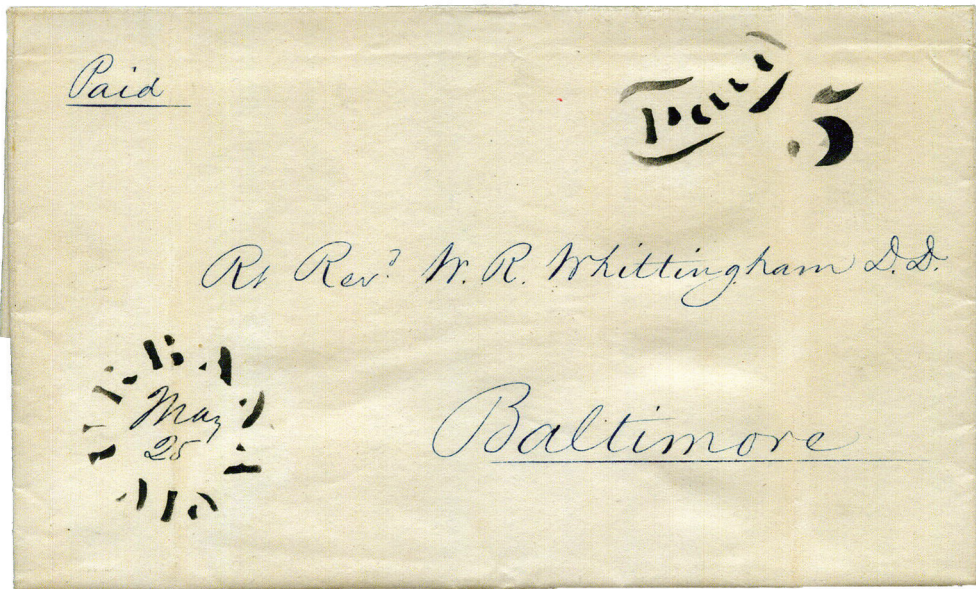
Figure 5. The upper cover shows “URBANA MD” with manuscript “Mar 19” and stencil “5,” both in red. The lower cover originated with “BALTIMORE Md. SEP 13,” “PAID” and “5,” addressed to Urbanna, Va. Understandably missent, it shows stencil “URBANA MD” and manuscript “Sep 15” and “Missent & Forwarded.”



in the application of stencil markings. In the center of the marking was added a manuscript date ("Feb 6") and the manuscript rating indicates a prepayment of 25¢ for the distance (over 400 miles) between Burkesville and Richmond, Virginia. Contents indicate a year date of 1831.

**URBANA, MD.** This is one of just two towns that used different stencil townmarks. Urbana's were designated Type 1 and Type 2 in Homer Kendall's 1984 book on Maryland stampless markings. The two covers in Figure 5 both show the red Type 1 townmark. The cover at top shows a matching stencil "5" in red (observe the two bridges in the 5) and the bottom cover shows a more complete strike of the stencil townmark, on a cover from Baltimore addressed to Urbana, Virginia (a town named after Queen Anne which thus requires two Ns) that was missent to Urbana, Maryland. Measuring only 22 millimeters in diameter, the Urbana double circle is the smallest town postmark in stencil known on stampless covers. Note that bridges are prominent on both the inner and outer circles, and on all the letters. I have seen this marking only in red, but Kendall lists it in black and brown as well.

Figure 6 shows the Type 2 marking. This clean and attractive folded letter is the cover from which Kendall made his tracings. The rimless town postmark, the fancy framed "Paid" and the "5" rater are all stencils, each of which had to be applied separately. The "5" is the same marking that appears in red on the upper cover in Figure 5. I have three examples of the rimless stencil townmark, all from 1848. The ink is a watery black and the stencil characteristics are unarguably evident.



**Figure 6.** This 1848 cover shows the Type 2 "URBANA Md" rimless townmark with free-form stencil "Paid" in a fancy frame and the same "5" rater as shown in Figure 5.

**LEMPSTER, N.H.** The examples I have seen of this marking are all in a reddish brown ink, but black is also listed. The drawing in the catalog (page 214 of the current 1985 edition) is just that, a crude sketch that grossly distorts the appearance of the marking. Two covers bearing the actual marking are shown in Figure 7. The upper cover, from 1834, shows the marking in a reddish color; the lower cover, from 1835, shows the same marking in brown. Note that the "N.H." is at the center of the marking with the town name in a semicircle above it. Thus, this is technically an arch marking (determined by the lettering) in a circular frame. The frame consists of a ring of dots or circles and of course there is manuscript dating.



**Figure 7. The cover at top, from 1834, shows the “LEMPSTER N.H.” stencil town-mark in a red-brown hue. This is an arch marking, surrounded by a circular border of dots. The full cover at bottom, from 1835, shows the same marking in brown ink addressed to Franklin, Tennessee, apparently missent to Frankfort, Kentucky.**

The upper cover in Figure 7 is addressed to Alstead, N.H. and rated for 6¢ collection (for a distance under 30 miles). The lower cover, addressed to Franklin, Tennessee, was rated for 25¢ collection (over 400 miles). It was initially missent to Frankfort, Kentucky and rerouted from there.

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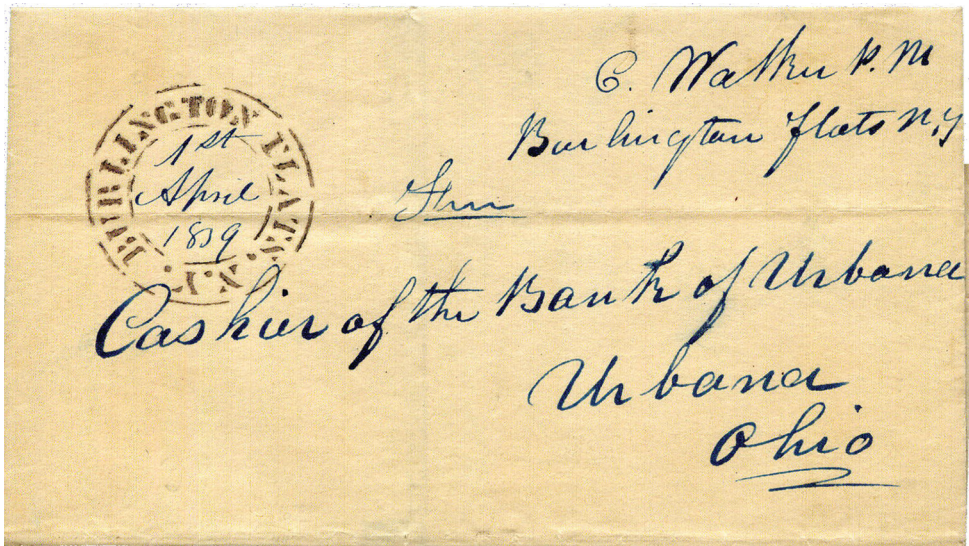


Figure 8. Brown double-circle “BURLINGTON FLATS N.Y.” (1839) stencil townmark with manuscript date “1st April 1839,” free-franked by postmaster: “C. Walker, P.M.”

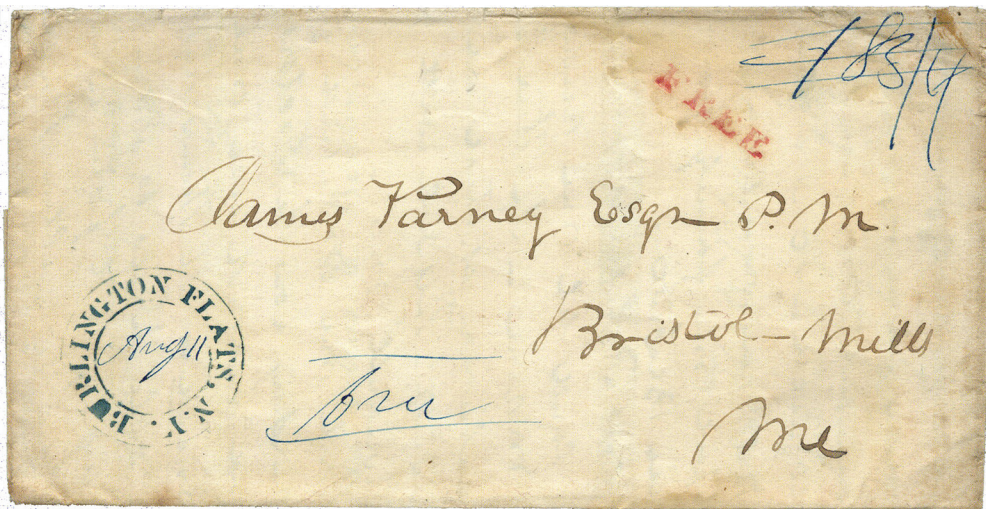


Figure 9. The same double-circle stencil “BURLINGTON FLATS N.Y.” townmark as on the cover in Figure 8, but here struck in blue, addressed to the postmaster at Bristol Mills, Maine. This cover was originally rated “18 $\frac{3}{4}$ ” but subsequently rerated “FREE.”

**BURLINGTON FLATS, N.Y.** More stencil cancels are known from New York than from any other state. The markings vary widely, suggesting multiple manufacturers. The cover in Figure 8 shows a double-circle stencil marking used at Burlington Flats, N.Y. This cover bears the postmaster’s franking signature and was sent free to Urbana, Ohio. Struck in brown ink, the marking shows the broken lines in the outer and inner circular frames that provide bridging to hold the center in place. The manuscript dating reads “1st April 1839.”

Figure 9 shows the same marking struck in blue on a cover from 1840. It also bears a red “FREE” handstamp since the letter was addressed to a postmaster. It was originally misrated at 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ ¢ due, for a distance of 150-400 miles. Note the manuscript “free” is written in the same handwriting and ink as the dating, rating and cross-out marks, indicating that the correction was probably made at the mailing post office.



**Figure 10.** “HOLLISTERVILLE PA. JUN 6” and “FREE” with manuscript postmaster frank, addressed to Butternuts, New York. There someone placed this huge stencil “E.F. WAIT” on both the front and back of the cover. The ASCC credits Butternuts with using a stenciled postmark in 1835. This has not been seen by today’s collectors.

**BUTTERNUTS, N.Y.** A 32-millimeter circular stencil marking in black ink from this small Otsego County town is listed (but not illustrated) in the stampless catalog as dating from 1835. I have never seen an example and it is not known to other collectors of stencil postmarks. However, Figure 10 shows a cover addressed to Butternuts that bears a huge and spectacular personal stencil—E.F. WAIT with decoration—applied on both the front and the back. The cover was sent from Hollisterville, Pennsylvania and franked by the postmaster there. The franking postmaster is James Waite and the addressee is E.F. Waite, Esq., the same name (different spelling) that appears in the stencil. Perhaps there is a connection between this odd cover and the unconfirmable stencil listing in the ASCC.

**DURHAM, N.Y.** The catalog lists a stencil postmark from this town in several colors over a long time span (1830-41). The full cover in Figure 11 shows this marking in brown on a free-franked folded letter from 1837. The partial Durham cover in Figure 11 is from 1850. While the town mark on this cover seems to show stencil characteristics, the circular frame is complete and intact, so this marking cannot have been created from a stencil. I believe the Durham stencil townmark is not as common as the catalog suggests, possibly because this later marking has been mistaken for it.

**E. RICHFIELD, N.Y.** I have never seen a cover bearing the “E. RICHFIELD, N.Y.” stencil marking which ASCC lists as a black 33-millimeter circle dating from 1835. The catalog tracing, shown at left in Figure 12, depicts a simple stencil postmark with a single circular frame and 11 wide bridges. Note that there’s another stencil marking, not from E. Richfield but from Richfield, N.Y., discussed and illustrated below as Figure 16.

**HOBART, N.Y.** This is a rimless black marking, now listed in the catalog. The only cover I know of dates from 1835. I cannot provide a photo of the cover, but a drawing of the marking is shown at right in Figure 12.

**KINGSTON, N.Y.** While this is one of the more common stencil postmarks, it is seldom found in a nice strike. The catalog dates usage as 1829-32. The cover in Figure 13 dates from 1829 and shows the marking very well struck. Addressed to Honesdale, Penn-

Figure 11. The lower cover bears an example of the stencil postmark "DURHAM N.Y." with postmaster's free frank. The cover at top shows a later handstamped postmark from the same town that superficially resembles it but is actually a handstamp.

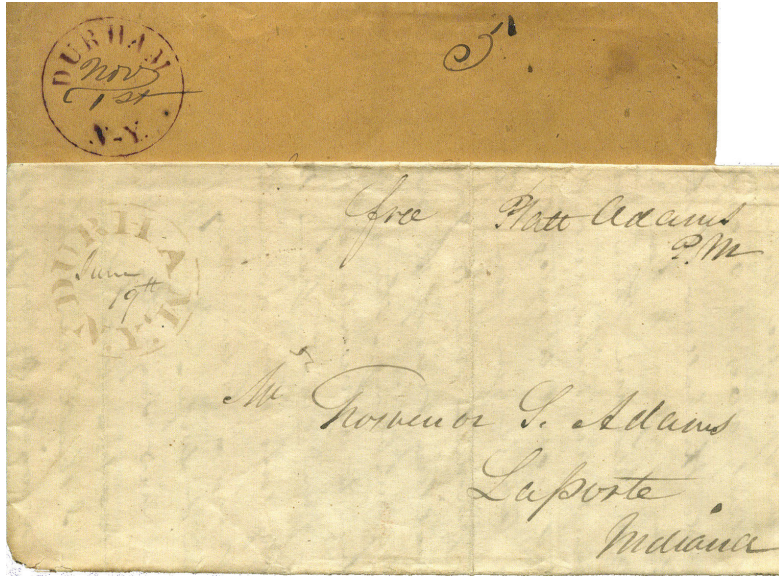


Figure 12. Drawings of stencil postmarks from East Richfield and Hobart, New York. The East Richfield marking, at left, is a black 35-mm single circle used in 1835. The rimless Hobart marking at right, listed in the *American Stampless Cover Catalog*, is also from 1835.



Figure 13. "KINGSTON N.Y." showing breaks in the outer frame. This cover also shows a fine strike of the "PAID" between decorative lines, also a stencil mark. The year date is 1829, which makes these possibly the earliest known stencil postmarks.

sylvania, this cover was prepaid 12½¢ for a distance of 80-150 miles. Note that the fancy scroll "PAID" is also a stencil marking, with bridging clearly evident. This cover, dated July 15, 1829, may be the earliest known cover bearing a stencil postmark.

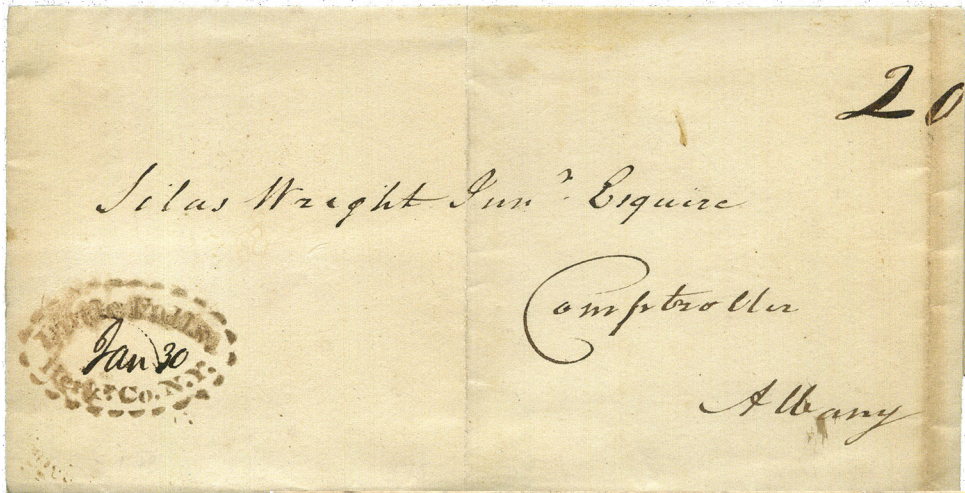


Figure 14. Oval stencil townmarks from "LITTLE FALLS HERKR Co. N.Y." in 1830. This is one of very few oval stencil markings, and the only stencil townmark that contains a county designation (indicating Herkimer County). The frame oval is made up of a series of bold dashes. The cover at top shows the marking in brown on a double-weight letter to Albany, rated for a collection of 20¢ (2x10¢). The twice-forwarded cover at bottom shows the Little Falls stencil marking in red. This is the only known stampless cover bearing three different fancy town postmarks. In addition to the stencil oval, it shows the red Cleveland double straightline within a double rectangle, and a second forwarding with two strikes of double-oval townmark of Columbus, Ohio. The forwarding postages are neatly tallied at right, totaling 47½¢.



brown on a double-weight letter to Albany, rated for a collection of 20¢ (2x10¢). The twice-forwarded cover at bottom shows the Little Falls stencil marking in red. This is the only known stampless cover bearing three different fancy town postmarks. In addition to the stencil oval, it shows the red Cleveland double straightline within a double rectangle, and a second forwarding with two strikes of double-oval townmark of Columbus, Ohio. The forwarding postages are neatly tallied at right, totaling 47½¢.

**LITTLE FALLS, N.Y.** This marking, which reads "Little Falls, Herkr. Co., N.Y." is the only stencil postmark that bears a county designation. It is also one of few stencil postmarks in an oval format. This marking is listed in the *American Stampless Cover Catalog* but not described there as a stencil marking. The montage in Figure 14 shows at top an 1830 example in brown ink with manuscript dating ("Jan. 30") in the center. The oval frame consists of semicircles punched into the stencil plate. Bridges can be seen in the "a" in "Falls" and the "o" in "Co."

The other cover in Figure 14 shows the same marking in a bright red ink, with no dating in the center. This spectacular cover bears fancy postmarks from two other towns, Cleveland and then Columbus, to forward the cover finally to Newark, Ohio, where a long list of forwarding charges, totaling 47½¢, was collected from the recipient.

Little Falls also used a straightline postmark, not a stencil, with the same county designation.



Figure 15. "MILFORD N. Y." oval stencil townmark in blue, November 17, 1842.



Figure 16. "RICHFIELD N.Y." (1847), brown stencil townmark, used with a hand-stamped "V" for rate marking. This marking is later than the similar Richfield stencil mark shown in Figure 12. The notation at lower left indicates that the letter should be left at the post office in New Berlin, New York, presumably for the addressee to pick up.

**MILFORD, N.Y.** This stencil postmark is listed as used in 1842-43 in blue and black inks. It is also an oval type. The cover in Figure 15 shows a blue example from late 1842.

**RICHFIELD, N.Y.** It seems interesting that the Richfield stencil postmark was used many years after the East Richfield stencil discussed at Figure 12. Examples from Richfield date from 1847 and 1848. Figure 16 shows an example in brown from 1847. Bridges and islands are both evident when you look for them, but this marking does not immediately

jump out as a stencil. Note that the accompanying “V” rating marking (representing the simplified rates after 1 July 1845) is a handstamp, not a stencil.

**SHERWOODS CORNERS, N.Y.; SHERWOODS, N.Y.** The stencil markings from this town (which shortened its name) are certainly among the most interesting of all stencil postmarks. The town used stencils for years. The ASCC lists 1841-1850, but the examples I have seen fall within the period 1843-48.

It is the variety of colors used that make these markings so distinctive. Figure 17

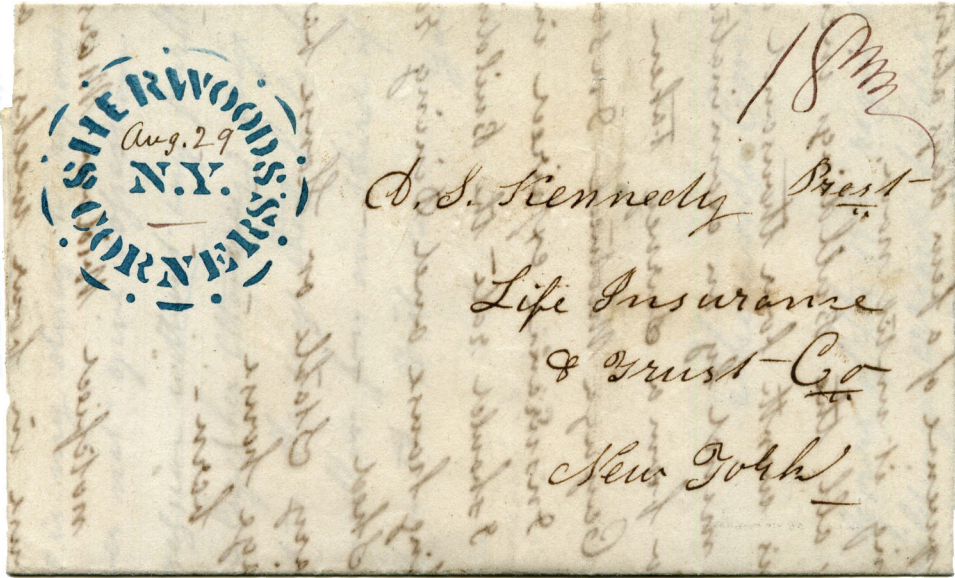


Figure 17. “SHERWOODS CORNERS N.Y.” in blue on 1843 cover to New York. This is the earliest stencil postmark from this town, which used many marking colors. This cover was rated for a collection of 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ ¢ for carriage between 150 and 400 miles.



Figure 18. “SHERWOODS CORNERS N.Y.” in green on 1845 cover to Philadelphia. Sometimes the green is a bit darker in color. “Paid 10” at the new simplified rates.



shows an example in blue ink on a cover to New York City from August 1843. The circular frame consists of alternating dots and curved dashes. Figure 18 shows one of three covers between March and July, 1845 in green ink. Some examples are even greener than this. Then the cover in Figure 19 shows a true violet ink used in May, 1846. This is the only purple stencil marking known. Later in the same year a true brown made a fourth color. An example is shown in Figure 20. All these covers show manuscript dating and rating.

Then in 1846 the town's name was shortened from Sherwoods Corners to Sherwoods. The thrifty postmaster modified his stencil template by removing or covering the lower half of the circle (which contained the word "CORNERS") to produce an arch stencil marking still capable of containing a manuscript date. Figure 21 shows two strikes of the new mark-



Figure 19. "SHERWOODS CORNERS N.Y." in purple on 1846 cover to Auburn, New York. This is the only purple stencil marking known.



Figure 20. "SHERWOODS CORNERS N.Y." in light brown on 1846 cover to Oswego, N.Y. The 5¢ due rating represents the lower, simplified rates effective in 1845.



Figure 21. When Sherwoods Corners shortened its name, the postmaster shortened his stencil, creating “SHERWOODS N.Y.” (1847) as an arch marking. The upper cover shows an example in green. The lower cover shows the marking in dark blue along with a 5¢ 1847, the only stencil marking known with an 1847 stamp.

ing, both in green. The upper cover, from 1847, shows a manuscript “Paid 5” rating. The bottom cover shows the same rate paid by a 5¢ 1847 stamp. This is the only 1847 cover known with a stencil marking, and probably dates from 1849 or later. The stencil marking here appears to be a deep blue but it could be deep green. This marking is known in blue on stampless covers.

**STAMFORD, N.Y.** This marking, known used in 1835 and 1836, is usually found in a brown ink but it can appear in black too. The top cover in Figure 22, from 1835, shows the effect of overinking. Narrow bridges, especially within the letters, diminish. In extreme cases, the bridges can disappear entirely, making stencil identification difficult. That’s not the case here; despite overinking, the bridges in the outer rim show clearly. The bottom cover in Figure 22, from the same correspondence but sent in 1836, shows a very fine strike of the marking, exemplifying the crisp, elegant appearance of stencil markings at their best. The comma after the town’s name is a nice touch. But the overinked marking at top shows that stencil strikes can vary tremendously.

**STONY BROOK, N.Y.** This is one of the most attractive stencil cancels. The cover in Figure 23 shows a pretty blue postmark with strong letters within a circular frame of alternating dots and dashes. The manuscript date is June 13 and the contents indicate the year is 1843. Another well-known Stony Brook cover with this marking, from 1841, shows a PAID handstamp, not a stencil marking.

**WORCESTER, N.Y.** I would describe the ink color on the two examples of this marking that I have seen as black, but the ink seems watery. The manuscript marking on

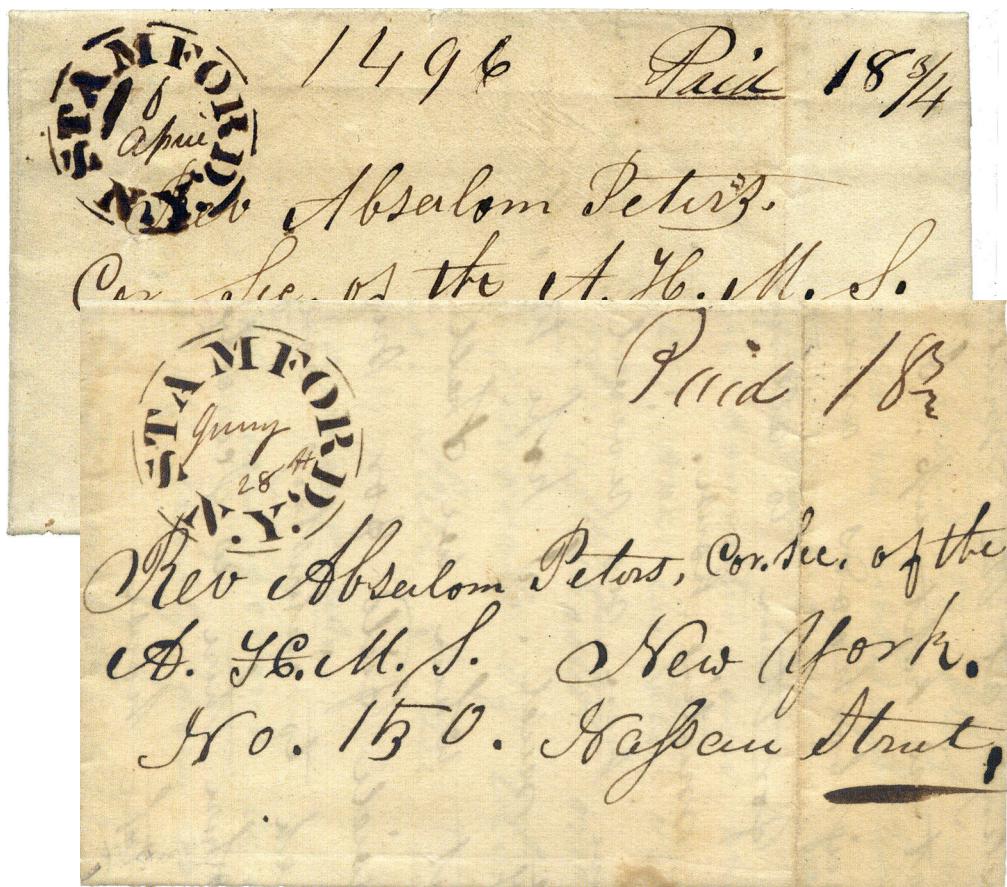


Figure 22. Two covers from the same correspondence, showing the effect of overinking. The upper "STAMFORD N.Y." stencil in brown (1835) is overinked. The lower cover shows an attractive and well-inked imprint from 1836.



Figure 23. "STONY BROOK N.Y." (1843) blue stencil marking boldly applied. The dot-dash rim is quite attractive in this marking; 18<sup>3/4</sup>¢ collected from the recipient.



Figure 24. "WORCESTER N.Y." stencil townmark in black ink with with manuscript date "March 31st 1842," on a cover sent to New York City with 18<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>¢ due.

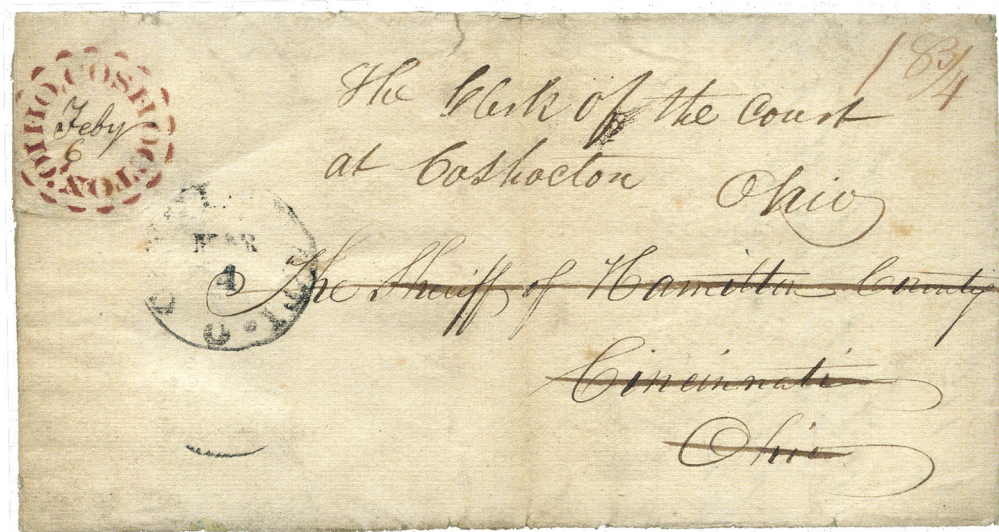


Figure 25. "COSHOCKTON, OHIO" (1833) in reddish ink on a cover to Cincinnati. From there it was forwarded back to the town of origin without more due postage.

the cover in Figure 24, applied in the center of the circle as is typical, is dated "March 31st, 1842." The other cover I record is from March 1841 and the ink in the marking appears similar to this. Both strikes well show the bridging of the outer circle.

**COSHOCKTON, OHIO.** ASCC lists this marking as brown, but to my eye it has more of a reddish hue. An example is presented in Figure 25. The outer rim is a circle of half-moon dashes and there are two large commas between the town and state names. The listed dates are 1829 to 1834; both examples in my collection are from 1833. The Figure 25 cover was sent from Coshocton to the county sheriff in Cincinnati. From there it was forwarded back to the town of origin, apparently without more due postage being assessed.

**DEERSVILLE, OHIO.** The covers from this village in eastern Ohio (2010 population: 79) are arguably the most interesting group of stenciled postmarks on stampless covers. The stampless cover catalog lists varieties from 1846 to 1852. Writing in the *Ohio Postal History Journal* for June 2005, Scott Pendleton classified the markings into three types based on the letter array and number of dashes in the outer circle (14 or 15). The two covers in Figure 26 show Types 1 and 2 in black from 1846. The full cover with manuscript date “Oct 28” is Type 1. The overlapped cover, dated July 16, is Type 2. On first glance it may appear that one marking is an overinked version of the other, but if you count the dashes in the frames, you will see that the upper cover has 15 dashes and the lower cover has 14. The encircled 5 rate markings on both covers are handstamps, but the “PAID” on the full cover was also created by a stencil. An example from 1847 appears to be in a deep green ink. Two covers from Deersville to England from around this time show encircled 10 handstamps. One of these has a straightline postmark but bears the stenciled PAID marking.



**Figure 26.** Two types of Deersville, Ohio, stencil postmarks, both on covers from 1846. The Type 1 marking, on the top cover, contains 15

dashes in the border of the stencil townmark. The border on the Type 2 marking (lower cover) contains 14 dashes. On both covers the encircled 5 rater is a handstamp, not a stencil. But the PAID within a border of dashes (lower cover) is a stencil.

The cover in Figure 27 is another Type 1, here struck in blue. It dates from 1844, two years earlier than the catalog listing for these markings. It also bears a matching stencil “FREE” and the handwritten signature of the postmaster. This is the only stencil “FREE” recorded. Originally addressed to Pittsburgh, this cover was then forwarded to a different individual, a doctor, in New York City, with no forwarding postage assessed.

The Type 3 townmark is shown on the cover in Figure 28, a very pretty cover that also shows Deersville’s handsome stencil PAID 3 marking, which must have been created for the new rate structure that came into effect in mid-1851. It’s not certain whether this marking was created from one stencil or from two. The letter within is datelined January 13, 1852. Both stencil markings are applied in an unusual shade of blue. The Type 3 marking



Figure 27. “DEERSVILLE OHIO” Type 1 stencil townmark in blue on an 1844 cover bearing the postmaster’s franking signature and a stencil “FREE” in matching blue ink. The cover was forwarded free from Pittsburgh to New York.

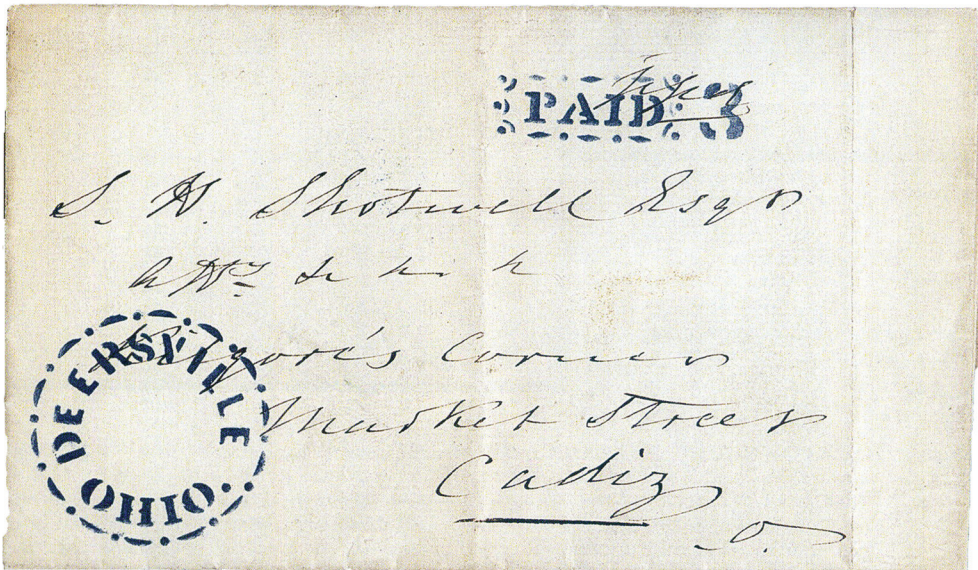
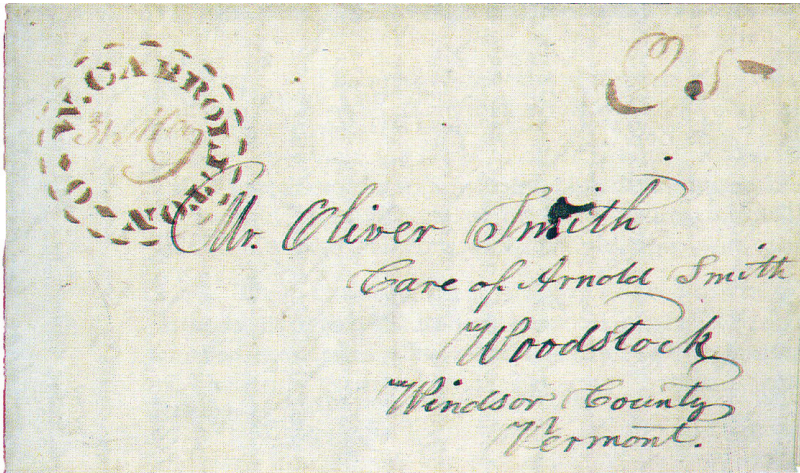


Figure 28. “DEERSVILLE OHIO” Type 3 stencil townmark (1852) in blue, no dating within the stencil townmark, with matching stencil “PAID” and “3” designating 1851-period postage to Cadiz, Ohio. Illustration from Siegel auction, October 2016.

has 14 dashes, similar to Type 1, but the placement of the town and state names is different.

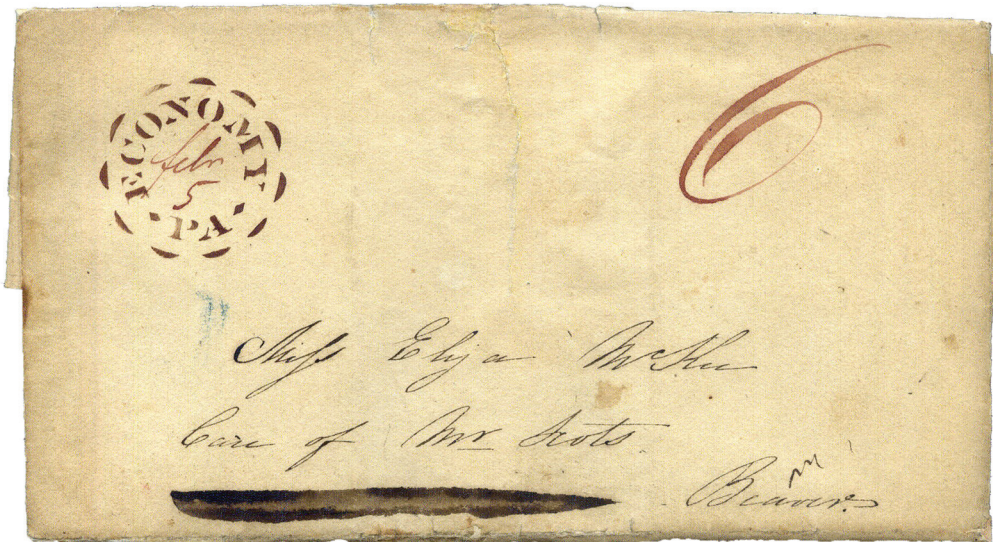
It is interesting that the earliest and the latest examples of the Deersville stencil are in blue ink while many of the known covers are in black. So this tiny town used three different townmarks, a “PAID,” a “FREE” and a “3”—all in stencil lettering. As I noted, it is possible that the 1852 rater is a single “PAID 3” stencil marking.

**W. CARROLLTON, OHIO.** The two examples of this marking that I have seen both date from 1837 and are both applied in the same brown ink. As can be seen from the cover in Figure 29, the outer rim, made up of half-moon dashes, resembles that of the Coshocton marking on the cover in Figure 25. Since those two towns are less than 50 miles apart, it is conceivable the two stencils came from the same local source. But this same general frame arrangement is found on stencils used in many different locations. Note, on the cover in Figure 29, that there are two diamonds around the O for Ohio. The letters are quite wide. This image may not be as clear as the others that accompany this article, since it was taken directly from the Christie's sale catalog of the David Jarrett stampless cover collection.



**Figure 29. "W. CARROLLTON O" (1837), circular stencil townmark in brown on cover to Woodstock, Vermont. Illustration taken from the catalog of Christies' sale of the Jarrett Collection.**

**ECONOMY, PA.** As can be seen on the cover shown in Figure 30, the western Pennsylvania town of Economy used a very attractive stencil marking with half-moon dashes in the outer circle and diamonds around the "PA" abbreviation, similar to features on the West Carrollton cover in Figure 29. The Figure 30 cover is dated February 5 and the internal year date is 1833, fairly early for a stencil. The stencil marking is dated in ASCC as 1832-37. The ink color I would call brown.



**Figure 30. "ECONOMY PA," brown stencil townmark (1833) on cover to Beaver, N.Y.**



Figure 31. "CHATOWN VA" (presumably today's Charleston, West Virginia), crude black stencil townmark on 1847 cover addressed to Wyalusing, Pennsylvania.



Figure 32. "PARKERSBURG VA." (1833): handsome brown stencil townmark on folded letter addressed to Upper Marlborough, Prince Georges County, Maryland.

**CHATOWN, VA.** Presumably applied by the town that is today Charleston, West Virginia, the crude marking on the cover in Figure 31 appears to show stencil lettering with several bridges evident. But I have seen just this one cover, from 1847, so I am not certain this is a stencil marking. The rim, such as it is, does not appear to be intact, a characteristic that would fit with a stencil.

**PARKERSBURG, VA.** This is one of the more handsome stencil markings, again with an outer rim made by a circle of half-moon dashes. While the catalog describes the ink as black, I have seen several examples, including the cover illustrated in Figure 32, that appear to be applied in brown. The three covers I have are dated between 1833 and 1834. The dates in the catalog are 1832-1836, probably correct since this is one of the more plen-



tiful stencil markings. The dating and rating are always in manuscript as would be expected with a stencil postmark. Addressed to Upper Marlborough, Maryland, the Figure 32 cover was rated for 18<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>¢ collection, for a distance of 150-400 miles.

**NEW HAVEN, VT.** This listing concludes with a stencil marking used as a postmaster's free frank. This is shown on the cover in Figure 33. Had I known this cover existed, I would have included it in the listing of handstamped and printed postmaster free franks that



**Figure 33. “NEW HAVEN VT. FEB ?” blue handstamp used with black stencil “R.P. LIVERMORE” with “P.M.” added in manuscript. The 1862 year date may be spurious.**

accompanied my article on “Postmaster Free Franking” in *Chronicle* 245. This new marking, obviously applied by stencil, is from New Haven, Vermont. The date on the circular datestamp seems to say FEB, but day and year are not known. The “1862” at left could be spurious. The stencil marking itself, in bluish-green, reads “R.P. LIVERMORE” between wavy dashes. Livermore added the manuscript “P.M.” to assert his franking privilege.

### Conclusion

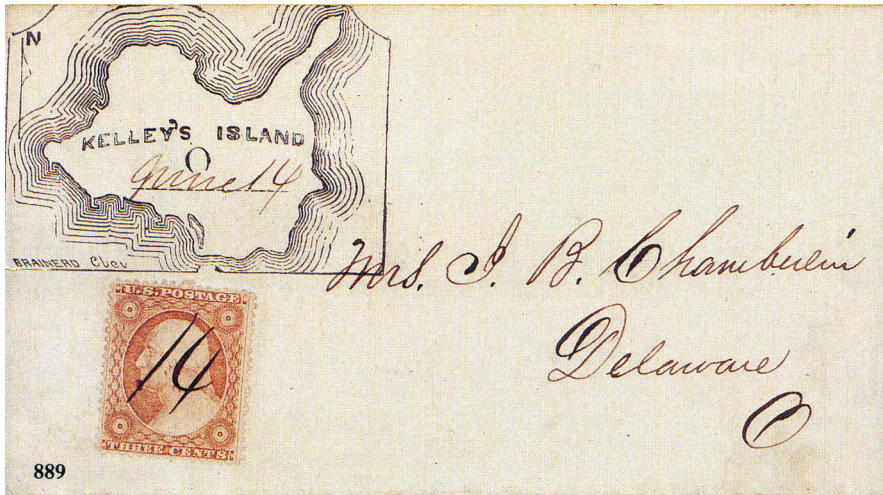
Stencil markings are an elusive and challenging facet of postal history collecting. This article has listed and illustrated all the stencil markings I know of that appear on stampless covers. In future, I plan one or more articles discussing stencil markings on stamp-bearing covers. Readers who have additional information are encouraged to provide it. My contact information is in the masthead of this publication, page 213. ■

## NEW TYPE OF KELLEY’S ISLAND PRINTED POSTMARK

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

Kelley’s Island, Ohio, is a small island in Lake Erie which is north of Marblehead and near Sandusky, not far from Cleveland. Members of a family named Kelley owned the island from the 1840s. Delf Norona, one of the first important postal historians, described in *Chronicle* 76 two types of a cornercard postmark from Kelley’s Island. This postmark, which shows a drawing of the island, is generally considered to be the fanciest printed postmark used in the United States during the classic period.

Norona described how mail to and from the island was transported first by a sailboat and then later by steamboats to Sandusky. A post office was established on the island in 1852, with George Kelley appointed postmaster on May 13. The population was around 500 at this time.



**Figure 1. “Kelley’s Island, O” preprinted map design postmark with “BRAINERD, Clev” engraver’s imprint and frame all around. The 3¢ 1857 stamp is canceled with a “14” that matches the “June 14” date within the postmark.**

It is not known who devised the pre-printed map postmark or where the envelopes were actually printed. Two types have long been recorded, with and without a frame. The earlier covers, said to date from 1853 to 1860, show the frame and contain the engraver’s signature—“BRAINERD” and “Clev” (for Cleveland). The example illustrated in Figure 1 was in the David Jarrett collection and is franked with a single 3¢ 1857 stamp canceled in manuscript. The printed map bears a broken line under the legend “KELLEY’S ISLAND

---

*When you think of United States postal history provenance,  
what names should come to mind?*

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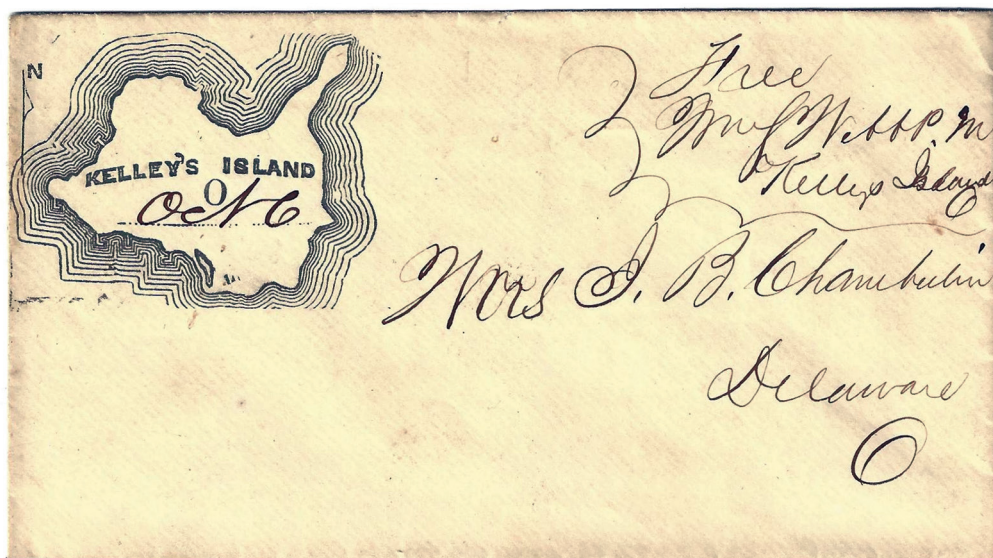


Figure 2. The same preprinted “Kelley’s Island, O” map postmark, with no imprint and no frame, here franked by postmaster William S. Webb, who was appointed to that office in 1854 and apparently served for many years.



Figure 3. Preprinted “Kelley’s Island, O” map postmark, with no imprint and no frame, posted in 1859. The 42¢ franking pays double the 21¢ (per quarter ounce) French-mail rate to Switzerland. The stamps are three 10¢ Type II 1857 stamps and one Type III, with a pair of 1¢ 1851 stamps, both Type II.

O” where the date was to be written—in this case, June 14 (year not known). Note that the “14” of the date was repeated on the stamp.

Later envelopes lack both the frame and the engraver’s imprint. One such cover, a stampless cover taken from Richard Frajola’s “PhilaMercury” on-line cover archive, is shown in Figure 2. Addressed to Delaware, Ohio, this bears the franking signature of William S. Webb, who was appointed postmaster of Kelley’s Island on June 3, 1854 and appar-

ently held the office for many years. So this cover with manuscript “Oct 6” must date from 1854 and probably dates from years later.

A frameless example posted in 1859, from the collection of David T. Beals III, is shown in Figure 3. This is a French-mail cover addressed in old German script to Switzerland. The double 21¢ rate is paid by four 10¢ 1857 stamps (three Type II, one Type III) and a pair of imperforate 1¢ 1851 stamps (Type II). The manuscript date in the Kelley’s Island printed postmark is “Jany 4.” The cover bears an 18¢ credit to France (red “NEW YORK PAID 18 JAN 8”) and an octagonal French marking showing entry at Le Havre on 22 January 1859.

All this is to establish the traditional history of the Kelley’s Island imprints. The main purpose of this article is to present a new type of printed cornercard design, which must be earlier than any of the other known printings.



**Figure 4. Discovery:** a new type of Kelley’s Island imprint that must be earlier than the marking on the cover in Figure 1. The black printed map design shows heavy shading within the outline of the island. Also hollow lettered “KELLEY’S ISLAND” with engraver’s imprint “BRAINERD, Clev” and full frame. The manuscript date is “Feby 11th” and the 3¢ 1851 stamp suggests a year date of 1852 or possibly 1853.

The discovery example is shown in Figure 4, on a cover bearing a 3¢ 1851 stamp, suggesting use in 1852 or possibly 1853. The manuscript date within the marking is “Feby 11.” The frame, imprint and details of water around the island resemble the imprint shown on the cover in Figure 1, but the island itself is very heavily shaded, so heavily that it is not easy to read the printed “Kelley’s Island” (with no state designation) against the dark background. I presume this was a first design, soon modified to achieve greater legibility by removal of all the black shading within the outline of the island—except the name, beneath which a typeset “O” was added.

So far, this is the only example of this early design that has been seen by collectors of Kelley’s Island covers. ■

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REVISITING UNDERPAID AND ACCEPTED 1847 COVERS  
GORDON EUBANKS

In *Chronicle* 222, Harvey Mirsky published an article making the case that a cover from Baltimore to Albany was underpaid yet accepted as fully prepaid.<sup>1</sup> This cover is shown in Figure 1.

A cover that suggests similar handling is shown in Figure 2. This is a cover that has been known for decades and has inhabited a number of esteemed collections. It was sent from Wyocena, Wisconsin to Syracuse, New York. Both of these covers are now in my collection.

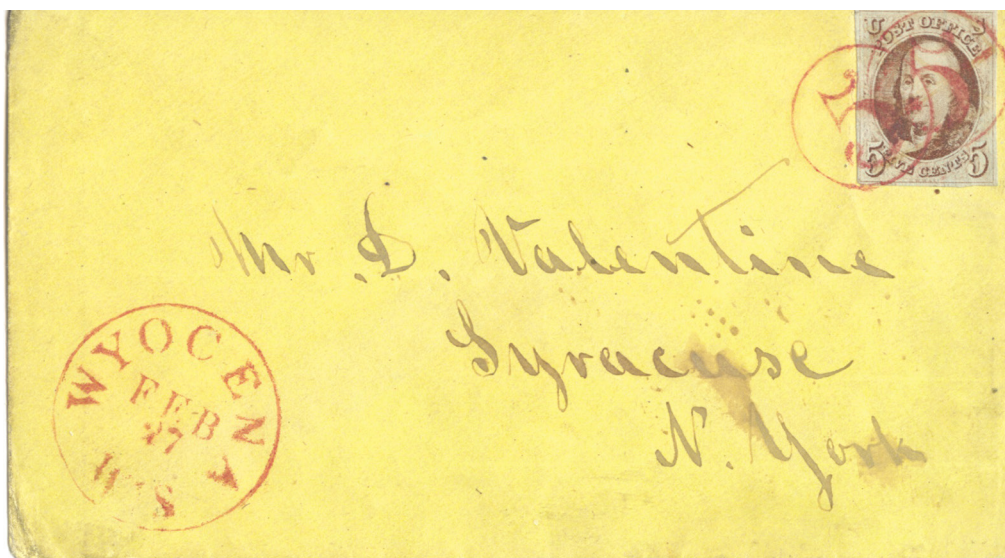
As classics collectors well know, the postage rate in effect during the lifetime of the 1847 stamps was 5¢ for a distance under 300 miles and 10¢ for a distance beyond that. Both these covers traveled distances well over 300 miles and should have been franked with 10¢ postage.<sup>2</sup> Both appear to be underpaid but still accepted.

But are they actually?

Over 9,000 covers have been recorded with 5¢ 1847 stamps. With the exception of these two covers, there are no recorded domestic covers that were sent underpaid but ac-



Figure 1. Baltimore, Maryland to Albany, New York, franked with a 5¢ 1847 stamp. The distance traveled between these two cities was more than 300 miles, so the cover should have been franked with 10¢ postage. If genuine, this would be the only Baltimore cover known bearing this very unusual fancy "5" rate marking.



**Figure 2. Wyocena, Wisconsin to Syracuse, New York, franked with a single 5¢ 1847 stamp. The two cities are over 850 miles apart, requiring 10¢ in postage. The stamp is tied by two strikes of a fancy encircled "5" rate marker which seems a perfect match for the similar marking (in blue) on the cover in Figure 1.**

cepted as fully prepaid. For an underpaid letter to slip past two different postmasters was very unlikely. This article will make the case that both the Figure 1 and the Figure 2 covers are fakes. The stamps don't belong and the covers were not mailed during the 1847-51 period.

Wyocena is a small town in Columbia County, in south central Wisconsin. The first settler, Major Dickason, drew the name from a dream. The first postmaster, appointed in 1845, was Harvey Bush. By 1850 the town had a population of 100. In 1852 John Weiting became postmaster, remaining in the job through the Hayes administration. There were perhaps 25 families in Wyocena in the mid 1850s so the postmaster handled a few dozen letters a month.

A key question is: Would the postmaster have paid for an expensive brass Wyocena handstamp to use on such a small number of letters? For Wyocena the *American Stampless Cover Catalog* reports manuscript postmarks only.

Baltimore, on the other hand, was a major seaport and commercial center, with a population of over 150,000 in 1850. The Baltimore post office handled a large number of letters every day and used a variety of postmarks and canceling devices.

Besides being underpaid but accepted, both covers have other similarities. Most notably, the stamps on both covers are canceled with what appears to be the same rate marking, a striking fancy "5" within a 19 millimeter circular border. Other than these two covers, there is no evidence that either Baltimore or Wyocena ever used this fancy cancel. In fact, this very unusual "5" is not listed in the Skinner- Eno book or in other references showing United States cancellations.<sup>3</sup>

A vaguely similar encircled "5" is listed in the Remele book as having been used by railroad route agents on the Baltimore and Ohio railroad and on certain unnamed New York railroads, but the tracings are crude and the numerals do not at all resemble the highly distinctive "5" that appears on the covers illustrated in this article. Its swirling top bar, ending in a dramatic serif, is unlike anything I've been able to find in the literature.

An additional common feature is that each cover has a certificate of authenticity from

the Philatelic Foundation stating that while the cover is genuine, the stamps show lightened manuscript postmarks. Enlargements of both stamps are presented in Figure 3, in an attempt to show details including the lightened pen cancels.

There are also some differences. While Baltimore, a major post office, received a large number of 1847 stamps, Wyocena received none. Two towns within 50 miles of Wyo-



**Figure 3.** Enlargement of the stamp portions of the covers in Figures 1 and 2, showing the distinctive encircled "5" rating marker that appears on both covers. These images have been enhanced to show pen cancels that have been washed off both stamps. The top stamp shows pen lines crossing just under Franklin's left eye. The lower stamp shows similar pen strokes crossing around the left ear. In both cases, the pen lines don't extend onto the cover, suggesting the stamps didn't originate on these covers. On the top stamp, the blue circular datestamp appears to have been painted in. The "5" on both stamps seems struck from the same device. Examples on genuine covers have not yet been seen.





cena did receive 5¢ stamps: Baraboo (100 stamps) and Madison (500).

Wisconsin covers bearing 1847 stamps are scarce. There are only 24 Wisconsin 1847 covers listed in the on-line census maintained by our Society and searchable on our website. No other cover is from Wyocena. And after an extensive search, I could find no other Wyocena covers, with or without stamps, showing this distinctive 31-mm town postmark (see Figure 2) used before the late 1850s.

Baltimore is another story. Our census records 500 5¢ 1847 covers from Baltimore. Only Figure 1 is underpaid and accepted. In Homer Kendall's two-volume 1984 book on Maryland postal markings, the Baltimore circular datestamp on the cover in Figure 1 is listed as cancel type 42, first recorded used in 1855. This cancel is part of a family of similar cancels (Kendall types 40-42) that all have their first recorded use after 1851.<sup>4</sup>

So what are the possibilities?

First of course, the two covers could be completely genuine, representing previously unrecorded early uses of circular datestamps not otherwise seen until years later, and previously unrecorded uses of a highly distinctive fancy "5" rate marker, both coincidentally struck on illegal reuses of stamps from which pen cancels had been removed.

But this seems to me to be a very remote possibility. Mirsky made a strong case that postmasters of this era were diligent and unlikely to miss an opportunity to collect money properly owed them. The Wyocena letter covered well over 300 miles, more like 850. The Wyocena postmaster handled only a few letters each month and would surely give each one careful attention. He would know that New York was well beyond the 300-mile radius from Wyocena. While the Syracuse postmaster may not have known where Wyocena was or much about it, he certainly knew that Wisconsin was not within 300 miles of Syracuse. In the case of the Baltimore postmaster it is possible (if unlikely) that he was unaware of the distance from Baltimore to the capital of New York State and likewise that the Albany postmaster also did not know the distance to Baltimore.

A much more likely explanation is that both covers passed through the mails, but after 30 June 1851, when the 5¢/10¢ rate structure was repealed and new stamps were introduced to pay newly reduced rates. I believe both these covers started life franked with 3¢ 1851 stamps, paying the under-3,000-mile rate. In the case of the Wyocena cover, the stamp got socked on the nose and thus was never tied to its cover.

Years later, in both cases, the 3¢ stamp was removed and a 5¢ 1847 stamp, manuscript cancel carefully washed off, was affixed in its place. For the Baltimore letter, the town postmark was drawn in on the stamp to complete the postmark. (Evidence of this, along with the washed-off pen cancels, can be seen in the enlargement in Figure 3.) Adding support that the Baltimore cover was used later in the 1850s is the fact that the addressee did not marry and move the Maryland until mid 1851.

Icing on these cakes was that the faker possessed a rate handstamper capable of making a lovely encircled "5." This he used to embellish both covers. Baltimore never used a "5" in circle, always a "5" in an oval.

Thanks to all the Wisconsin and Baltimore collectors (and the other usual suspects) who helped me over the last few years while I was working through this mystery. The conclusions here are mine and mine alone, recognizing that the data is not 100 percent conclusive—only 99 percent.

### Endnotes

1. Harvey Mirsky, "Underpaid and Accepted: These Got Through," *Chronicle* 222 (May 2009), pg. 127.
2. The crow-flies distance from Baltimore to Albany is 275 miles. But in 1847 the distance this cover actually traveled in the mails, which was the basis for postal rating, was much greater, around 400 miles. Even today the driving distance is more than 300 miles.
3. Hubert C. Skinner and Amos Eno, *United States Cancellations 1845-1869*, American Philatelic Society, 1980.
4. This information from an email correspondence with Baltimore specialist Patricia Stillwell Walker, June 2017. ■

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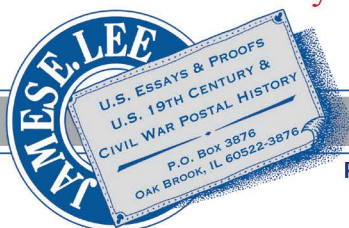


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### 63 – Carrier fee to England

1c Blue, tied by New York exchange office CDS on cover to Strasbourg, France, Mar 8, 1862. The fifteen-cent rate to France is unpaid with eight decimes due. However, the domestic carrier pick-up fee of one-cent is paid as was required. A marvelous usage, from Don Evans gold medal collection and still on the original exhibit page. **\$1,500.00**

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**A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY:  
FAREWELL TO A.C. HALL, WELCOME TO E.R. HALL**

**THOMAS C. MAZZA**

Many of the New York City local posts do not have a great deal of documented or documentable history. This is understandable. There are no archives of business registrations or filings. The city directories gathered information in May and June for early July publication, without updates during the year. Short-lived operations often fell through the cracks.

One of these operated as “Hall & Mills” for a short while before continuing for another brief period under the single name “G.A. Mills.” Their adhesive stamps are listed by Scott as 76L1 and 109L1.

The earliest report of this post, as often, was by Charles Coster, brilliant investment banker by day, stamp enthusiast in his spare time. In his book he gave a brief description of the adhesive stamps of both posts, followed by a terse observation: “I find G.A. Mills’ Express in the Directory for 1851-52, and infer that these labels were in use about that time.”<sup>1</sup>

The attempt to date the operation by directory listing is understandable, if incorrect. Coster made no mention of Hall, nor any further attempt to identify the individuals involved.

Fast forward 40 years. Henry Needham, with his typical mix of fact and fiction, identified the partners as Gustavus A. Mills, and A.C. Hall, who ran a “large and profitable business” which:<sup>2</sup>

**...was evidently established about 1847....largely in transporting mail and express matter between New York and Paterson, N.J., with deliveries at intermediate points. Some little business was done in collecting and delivering mail matter to the New York Post Office. Very little activity is shown in the delivery of local New York letters.**

The date of operation was moved back, perhaps to match the surviving uses, and full names were put to the proprietors. Directory diving was the likely source of the identification. I assume that identification of Mills was made easier since his initials appeared on the later adhesives. The choice of A.C. Hall for the other partner was not explained.

Patton, in his compendium on New York posts, largely repeats:<sup>3</sup>

**Hall & Mills’ Despatch Post was established about 1847 or earlier by Amasa C. Hall and Gustavus A. Mills and a stamp was issued bearing the name of both partners.**

**Covers are recorded with date in 1847 bearing the Hall & Mills’ stamp. Hall appears to have relinquished his interest in the post, probably during the latter part of 1847, leaving Mills as sole proprietor. Mills issued a second stamp, similar to the Hall & Mills’ Despatch Post adhesive but with Hall’s name omitted and this is known used on cover in December 1847.**

Patton goes on to include what must be Elliott Perry’s summary of city directory information through the late 1850s. It is interesting to note that no entries were found for Hall for 1847 to 1850, and those that appeared in directories for 1851 to 1853 listed him as

an agent. Patton went to some length to locate the directory addresses near rail or shipping locations.

In any case, Amasa C. Hall was designated, somehow, and there the matter stood for the last century. But the advertisement in Figure 1, from the *New York Daily Tribune* for August 26, 1847, suggests a totally different origin and location for the early business of the enterprise, a bookstore at 143 Canal Street.

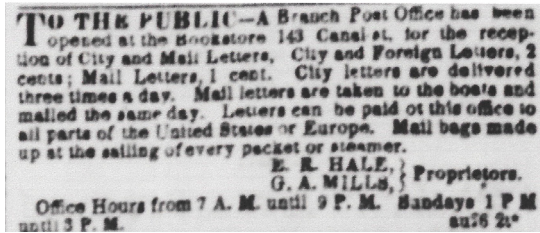


Figure 1. Microfilm enlargement from the *New York Daily Tribune* for August 26, 1847, locating a "Hale and Mills" "branch post office" at 143 Canal Street in New York City.

Note that the name in the Figure 1 advertisement appears as "E.R. Hale." As no corresponding name has been located in the Doggett's Directory for that year, and an Edwin R. Hall, expressman, at 178 Third Avenue does appear, we are probably safe in considering the "Hale" in Figure 1 a misprint. It would seem as well that an expressman is a better fit to run a local post than an agent of an undisclosed shipping endeavor.

So based on the Figure 1 information, we can for the first time locate the Hall and Mills post, a "Branch Post Office" at 143 Canal Street. In view of the other activities of Messrs. Hall and Mills, it is not clear that the book store mentioned in the ad was operated by them, or whether (as was done by Boyd and Swarts) a "branch" was established in a convenient location. The latter alternative seems more likely.

The Hall & Mills' adhesive stamp is without denomination. This becomes more interesting in view of the different pricing for the services of the post—1¢ for "to the mails" and 2¢ for foreign and city mail. This would make it unlikely that the adhesive would be pre-sold for all services. All the recorded surviving covers represent "to the mails" uses.

The cover shown in Figure 2 is a nice example. The dateline indicates the letter was



Figure 2. Hall & Mills' Despatch Post, black on green glazed paper, Scott 76L1, paying carriage to the post office, from which this cover was sent to Greenhurst, New York.

written on October 13, 1847. The cover is addressed to Greenhurst, New York, now a suburb of Albany. The Hall & Mills' stamp carried the cover to the New York post office, where it was rated for 5¢ collection from the recipient (for a distance under 300 miles). The monogram at lower left is the owner's mark of Clarence E. Chapman, well known early collector of U.S. locals. The cover later graced the collections of Alfred Caspary and Gordon Stimmell.

Finally, the dates of operation of the Hall and Mills' Despatch Post appear now to be from late August until late November, 1847, when the newly identified Edwin R. Hall exited the scene.

### Endnotes

1. Charles H. Coster, *United States Locals and Their History*, Scott and Company, New York, 1877, pg. 35.
2. Henry C. Needham, "United States Local Stamps, A Concise History and Memoranda," *Philatelic Gazette*, Vol. 8, 1918.
3. Donald Scott Patton, *The Private Local Posts of the United States, Volume I, New York State*, Robson Lowe Ltd, London, 1967, pg. 182. ■

## LONG LIVE THE UNION SQUARE POST OFFICE! JOHN D. BOWMAN AND GORDON STIMMELL

Figure 1 shows the top portion of an issue of the *New York Daily Tribune* for 25 May 1861 that bears a black circular handstamp for Godfreys Union Square Post Office. The



**Figure 1. "Godfreys Union Square Post Office," black circular handstamp, struck at the top of an issue of the *New York Daily Tribune* dated 25 May 1861.**

marking is shown approximately lifesized in Figure 2. This marking date is later than previous records of existence for this private local post, and is a very late use of a private post handstamp on a newspaper. This article will provide evidence that Godfrey handled letter mail at least until 1860, and perhaps to 1866.

Union Square is an area in lower Manhattan that was the intersection of the two main thoroughfares in New York City in the 19th century: the Albany Post Road (Broadway) and the Boston Road (Bowery, now Fourth Avenue). The name refers to the juncture or "union" of the two roads.

Launched by Charles Messenkope in late 1847 or early 1848, the Union Square Post Office was acquired by Joseph E. Dunham in 1850, who operated it until late 1853 or early 1854.<sup>1</sup> At that point (according to Patton) Phineas C. Godfrey took over the post, using the shield-shaped stamps prepared by Dunham. Godfrey continued to operate the post until late 1855 or early

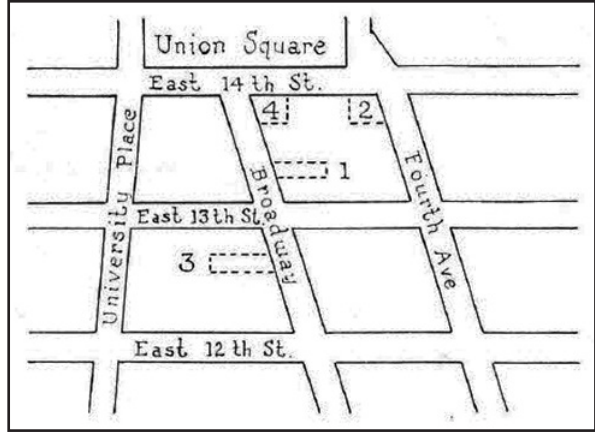


**Figure 2. The Godfreys handstamped marking from Figure 1, rotated and enlarged.**

1856. Supporting this succession, Patton noted entries in New York directories in this period.<sup>2</sup> Calvet Hahn wrote an exhaustive treatise and census on this post in 2002.<sup>3</sup>

We found the following directory listings for the progression of owners of the Union Square Post Office from Dunham to Godfrey. Trow's *New York City Directory* for 1852-53 lists "Dunham Joseph E. post office, 64 E. 14th." Trow's directory for 1853-54 does not list either Joseph Dunham or Phineas Godfrey. In Trow's 1854-55 directory, P.C. Godfrey is listed as "Books and Post Office, 831 Broadway." The same directory for the year ending May 1, 1856 lists "GODFREY P C Books, 831 Broadway," and this entry is repeated in 1857-58 and 1859-60 directories. In the 1858-59 and 1861-62 directories, Godfrey is listed simply as "stationer."

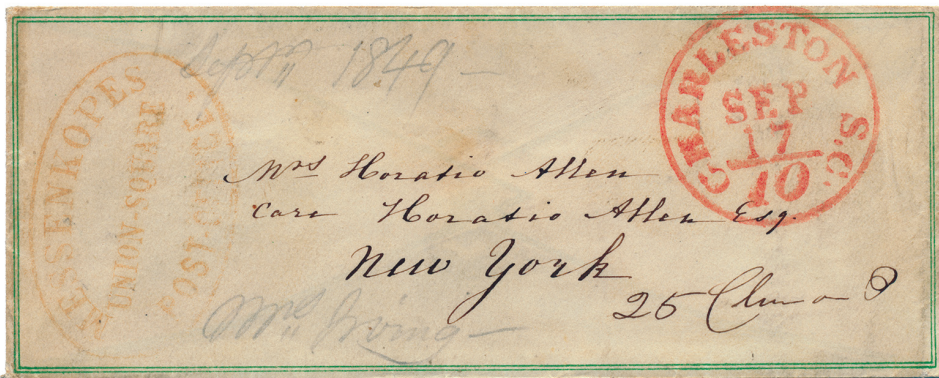
Figure 3, adapted from Patton, shows the Union Square area during this era. The plots (dotted lines) numbered 1 and 2 show Dunham's 1850 and 1852 locations; Godfrey's 1854 bookstore/post office at 831 Broadway is 3; and 4 is the United States post office at 856 Broadway.



**Figure 3. The Union Square area during the era under discussion. 1 and 2 are Dunham's locations; 3 is Godfrey's bookstore; 4 is the U.S. post office.**

Hahn's analysis concluded that Godfrey was winding down his operations in 1856, probably based on the directory entries just cited and Hahn's belief that two covers with the shield-shaped Union Square adhesives were used in 1859. However, most Union Square covers are not dated, making associations between adhesives and proprietors tenuous. Covers dated after 1852 are rare.

Messenkope used a handstamp and adhesives for mail. Figure 4 shows a very rare (possibly unique) Messenkope handstamp on a cover sent from Charleston, South Carolina, to New York City. The pencil docketing at top indicates 1849. This appears to represent an unusual "from the mails" service provided by the private post to a local address. The letter was likely held in the New York Post Office at the request of the recipient, and was picked up by Messenkope for local delivery.



**Figure 4. Messenkope handstamp on an 1849 cover from Charleston to New York City, representing a most unusual "from the mails" service to a private address. This is the only recorded use of this Messenkope handstamp.**



**Figure 5. Mourning envelope, cut down at right, with 5¢ 1847 stamp and black-on-green Messenkope stamp (Scott 106L1), on which the proprietor's name has been carefully obliterated, suggesting use of the stamp after the post was sold to Dunham.**

Figure 5 shows a partial mourning cover with a 5¢ 1847 stamp tied by New York grid, below a black-on-green Messenkope stamp (Scott 106L1) on which the proprietor's name has been carefully crossed out. This suggests use of the Messenkope stamp under Dunham's ownership.

Another example of the use of Messenkope stamp by Dunham is illustrated on the cover front in Figure 6. Here Dunham's curved red PAID handstamp twice cancels the stamp (one strike is faint). This locally delivered cover also bears Dunham's large oval handstamp.



**Figure 6. Another Messenkope cover, delivered locally in New York. The stamp was struck twice by Dunham's curved PAID and the cover also shows Dunham's large oval "UNION-SQUARE POST-OFFICE" handstamp.**



**Figure 7. Philadelphia to New York, 5¢ government postage prepaid, cover dated internally 7 February 1850, delivered locally by Dunham's. The manuscript "1" indicates 1¢ collected from the recipient on this incoming letter.**

A second example of incoming mail to the New York post office is illustrated in Figure 7. This envelope originated in Philadelphia and bears a Feb. 7 (1850) datestamp with integral "5cts."<sup>4</sup> This indicated the government postage was prepaid. The recipient had likely requested that his mail be held for pick up and local delivery by Dunham's. The manuscript "1" indicates 1¢ charged by Dunham's to the recipient.

A rare "NOT PAID" handstamp is struck on the cover in Figure 8, which also bears Dunham's oval. This cover is addressed to "Pick" office, which probably means the sender dropped it off at Dunham's post office for later pickup by the recipient. Dunham's maintained letter boxes for customers, including this recipient, who had to pay Dunham when he retrieved his letter.

As the U.S. Post Office attempted to stifle competition for letter mail collection and



**Figure 8. Undated cover with Dunham's oval handstamp and scarce "NOT PAID" in circle, addressed to "Pick" office, probably indicating that the recipient would pick up the letter at the office of the local post.**



delivery, private posts turned to circular and magazine delivery. It seems likely that Godfrey distributed newspapers such as the *New York Daily Tribune* in his bookstore/post office. Other than the very few *circa*-1855 dated covers franked with Union Square shield stamps, there is little to suggest that he took mail to the post office for a fee. In fact, Godfrey's office was just a short block from the nearest United States post office (see Figure 3).

There is additional circumstantial evidence supporting the existence of the Union Square Post Office beyond the dates surmised by previous authors. On 3 January 1860, the *New York Commercial Advertiser* reported a fire at 831 Broadway where Godfrey's "book store and branch post office" were located. Figure 9 shows a clipping from the *Commercial*

About 12½ o'clock yesterday afternoon, a fire broke out in the building No. 831 Broadway, occupied by Phineas & Godfrey as a book store and branch post office. The damage sustained will probably amount to \$1,100—fully insured. Miss J. Carr, hoop skirt manufacturer, occupied the second floor. Her loss will be about \$500. The adjoining building was occupied by Charles Hobbs & Sons, paper hanging manufacturers. Loss about \$1000—fully insured. W. H. Gibron's confectionary, next door to the store of Messrs. Hobbs, was damaged to the amount of two hundred dollars.

Figure 9. Clipping from the *New York Commercial Advertiser*, 3 January 1860, telling of a fire that destroyed Godfrey's "book store and branch post office." In a follow-up letter to the *New York Times*, Godfrey emphasized that no mail had been destroyed.

*Advertiser* report. The fire was also noted in the January 4 *New York Times*, which the next day published a letter from Godfrey, seeking correction: "I noticed in your paper this morning that at the fire at No. 831 Broadway—Union Square Post Office—all the letters were destroyed. Will you be so kind as to contract (sic) that statement, as every one of the letters were saved, they being the first things moved."

Why Godfrey's bookstore had letters is a matter for conjecture. Was his store a drop-off point for customer letters, picked up by the post office carrier serving his area? Was he picking up mail held by the post office on request of Godfrey's customers?

Finally, the *Stamp-Collector's Magazine* of 1 January 1866, pp. 10-11, carries the following statement: "At present, in the city of New York we know of only three of these [private] offices still existing; the new free delivery system having curtailed their resources sadly. Those still in successful operation are the Broadway P.O., Chas. Miller, proprietor, 422½ Broadway; the Union square P.O., P. C. Godfrey, proprietor, 831 Broadway; and the Madison square P.O., J. Thompson, proprietor, Broadway and 23rd street."

The newly discovered handstamp shown in Figures 1 and 2 may have signaled a newspaper delivery role, or possibly served as an advertising handstamp for a local post that had many lives.

### Endnotes

1. Donald S. Patton, *The Private Local Posts of the United States, Vol. I*, Robson Lowe Ltd., 1967, pg. 245.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Calvet M. Hahn, "The Mess at Messenkope," *The Penny Post*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (July 2002), pp. 53-68.
4. The 1850 year date was provided by Tom Clarke, in a personal communication to one of the authors. This datestamp was used from 1849 to 1851 and can be year-dated based on deterioration of the device. ■

LOCKPORT, N.Y. "CIRCULAR, PAID" LABELS  
AND A HYPOTHESIS EXPLAINING THEIR CREATION

CHIP GLIEDMAN

Over the past decade, I have accumulated seven covers with applied labels reading "Circular, Paid." Although these labeled covers have been known for many years, I haven't found a credible published theory explaining who created them or why. Now I think I can present a reasonable hypothesis that answers both these questions.

Figure 1 illustrates a typical cover from this set. It bears a 1¢ imperforate stamp from the 1851 series, a Lockport, New York, circular datestamp, and a small, typeset label with the words "Circular, Paid." Unlike any of the other covers, this one also has three penciled numbers, "30," "30" and "34." This cover was part of Roland Cipolla's award-winning collection of printed matter from 1775-1870. The auction lot for this cover included the text from Cipolla's exhibit page, which read as follows:<sup>1</sup>

The reason for the existence of these distinctive labels is not known. It is possible that the label was placed on the uppermost in a bundle of circulars going in the same direction from Lockport. The label on this cover shows a "34" in pencil on the label. That may have indicated the number of circulars in that bundle. The "30" written below may have been the number remaining after four were delivered at an intermediate post office.

Though I cannot confirm the theory on the penciled notations, much of the other unknown information can now be deduced by examining the accumulated covers and collateral information.



Figure 1. Imperforate 1¢ 1851 stamp on cover to Circleville, Ohio, from Lockport, New York, bearing "Circular, Paid" label with ornamental border, printed on yellow paper.

### Printed matter and circular mail regulations

Since the earliest days of our republic, printed matter—whether newspapers, pamphlets, or printed circulars—has been as special class of mail eligible for reduced postage rates. Commencing 1 July 1851, new postal rates went into effect, lowering to 1¢ the rate for printed circulars traveling under 500 miles, with higher rates for greater distances. A 1¢ stamp was issued concurrently, facilitating the payment of this rate.

Quoting in part from the Act of 3 March 1851 (9 Stat. 587-589):<sup>2</sup>

**On other papers and circulars, hand printed matter, unconnected with written matter, of not more than 1 ounce in weight, conveyed not exceeding 500 miles, 1 cent and for each additional ounce or fraction thereof, 1 cent; for any distance exceeding 500 miles and not exceeding 1,500 miles, double these rates; exceeding 1,500 miles, and not exceeding 2,500 miles, treble said rates; exceeding 2,500 miles, and not exceeding 3,500 miles, four times said rates; exceeding 3,500 miles, five times said rates.**

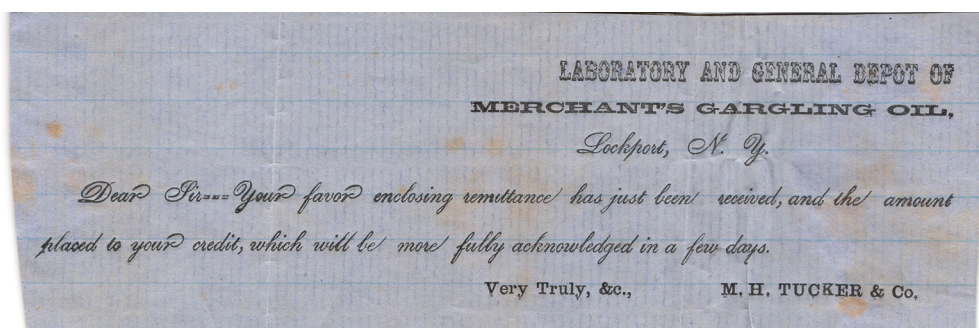
Fourteen months later, Congress amended the 1851 postal act, effective 1 October 1852, by establishing a standard rate for all single printed sheets (with a single message) and newspapers. The new rate was just 1¢ regardless of distance. All printed matter required prepayment and could not be sealed, allowing monitoring by postal officials to insure that impermissible correspondence requiring higher postage was not included.

Frequently, mailers would print or handstamp the face of a printed mailing piece to inform the postmaster that the item was eligible for the reduced printed matter rate. Figure 2 shows a typical example. This printed notice from the Sons of Temperance of Eastern New York, internally dated 1 February 1853, shows “[Printed Circular.]” and “[PAID.]” printed on the face. This folded circular was sent unsealed, payment for the postage was pre-paid in cash, and the item was accordingly marked “Paid 1 ct.” by the New York post office.<sup>3</sup>

All of the covers with the “Circular, Paid” labels discussed here were mailed from Lockport, New York, with imperforate 1¢ stamps from the series of 1851. The 14 March 1857 cover illustrated in Figure 3 is the only one with a year date in the circular datestamp. Docketing on the cover confirms an 1857 mailing and the cover encloses a receipt, also shown in Figure 3, from the Merchant’s Gargling Oil Company of Lockport. The “Circular,



**Figure 2. Folded circular internally dated 1 February 1853. Portions of the address are preprinted, along with notations (“PAID” and “Printed Circular”) alerting the postmaster that the much cheaper circular rate is appropriate for this item.**



**Figure 3. Lockport cover with circular datestamp indicating 1857 use. The "Circular, Paid" label is identical to that on the cover in Figure 1, but printed on white paper. The cover carried a printed receipt from Merchant's Gargling Oil, partly shown above.**

Paid" label on the Figure 3 cover, while printed on white paper, is typographically identical to other examples on yellow paper, including the label on the cover in Figure 1.

The cover illustrated in Figure 4 bears another of these, on an envelope docketed May 1857. The stamp is an imperforate 1¢ Type IIIA from Plate 4. Plate 4 stamps were released starting in April 1857, so the docketing is consistent with the stamp usage.

The montage in Figure 5 presents four additional Lockport covers with "Circular, Paid" labels of various styles, sizes and fonts. As with the other examples, they share use of the 1¢ 1851 stamp and show a Lockport circular datestamp. All the envelope flaps are ungummed and unsealed.

Lockport is named for the set of Erie Canal locks located within the city. The canal reached Lockport in 1824, but the locks were not completed until 1825. By 1829, Lockport had become an established village. It had a population of 12,323 in the 1850 census, growing to 13,523 in 1860. In 1857, about the time the covers discussed here were mailed, Asher Torrance is listed as postmaster. He and his clerks had a total compensation of \$2,612.38 and receipts of \$3,694.17.<sup>4</sup>

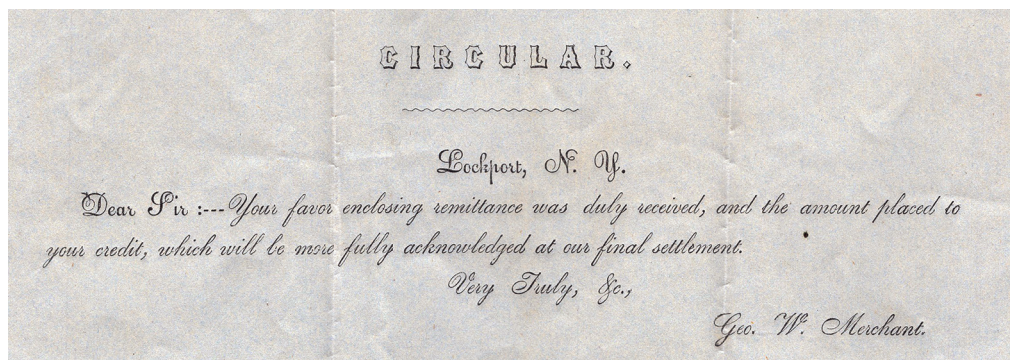
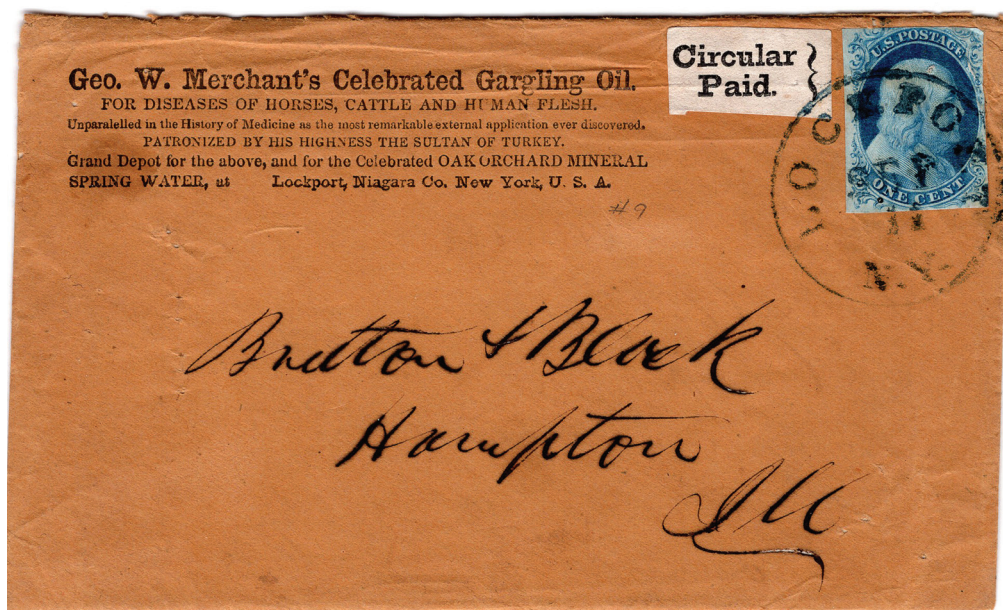
The last label cover in this discussion, shown in Figure 6, ties a number of elements together and points to the likely origin and creator of the labels. The Figure 6 cover bears



Figure 4. Another Lockport label on yellow paper. This unsealed envelope is docketed 1857 and the Type IIIA stamp (from Plate 4) confirms 1857 as the likely date of mailing.



Figure 5. More '51 covers with Lockport labels. Lower image courtesy Siegel Auctions.



**Figure 6. Advertising cover promoting "Merchant's Celebrated Gargling Oil," with label tied by Lockport CDS and printed enclosure prominently labeled "CIRCULAR." On the cover note the fourth line: "Patronized by His Highness the Sultan of Turkey."**

another typeset label and shows three key characteristics. Unlike the other covers illustrated here, this one bears a printed corner card from "Geo. W. Merchant's Celebrated Gargling Oil for diseases of horses, cattle and human flesh." The small "Circular Paid." label is tied to the cover by the Lockport datestamp, confirming its application prior to mailing. And this unsealed cover bears a printed circular from George W. Merchant (also shown in Figure 6).

### **Dr. Merchant's gargling oil**

Founded by pharmacist George W. Merchant in 1833, Dr. Merchant's Gargling Oil Company took advantage of Lockport's location on the Erie Canal. Its main product was a liniment to treat the aching muscles of the horses and drivers traveling the Canal. Fortunately, neither horses nor people had to gargle or ingest the product, as one of the main ingredients in the early iteration of the product was turpentine. Over time, separate, specialized products were developed for man and beast. A label from the mid-1870s reports the liniment contained 44 percent alcohol.

In 1855, Merchant sold the company to Morris H. Tucker, whose name appears on the 1857 receipt contained in the cover shown in Figure 3. Under Tucker, Dr. Merchant's Gar-



**Figure 7. 2¢ private die medicine stamp, Scott RS179, created for Merchant's Gargling Oil, liniment for man and beast. The stamp shows the product being rubbed onto the leg of the Sultan of Turkey's horse. Image from the Golden collection, Siegel Galleries.**

gling Oil Company appears to have ramped up its marketing efforts. One notable scheme involved sending a dozen bottles of Dr. Merchant's Gargling Oil in a satin-lined oak box to the Sultan of Turkey. The Sultan never acknowledged the gift, but American newspapers picked up the story and sales of the gargling oil shot up.<sup>5</sup>

The success of the product led to Merchant's becoming one of the largest businesses in Lockport. Eventually, the company occupied a multi-storied building in town as its laboratory and factory. To give a sense of the scale of the firm, in the mid-1860s the company printed private medicine revenue stamps (Scott RS178 and RS179) in 1¢ and 2¢ denominations. Total quantities printed exceeded 6.6 million.<sup>6</sup>

Nonetheless, these are scarce stamps today. An enlargement of a very nice example of the green 2¢ denomination, taken from the the Siegel website (Scarsdale collection, Siegel sale 1030, lot 742) is shown in Figure 7. An example of the 1¢ denomination, from the same source, is shown in Figure 8. According to the Scarsdale catalog description, fewer than 20 examples of the 1¢ denomination survive, and fewer than 10 of the 2¢. As the Figure 7 image should make clear, the vignette shows a desert scene in faraway Araby, with palm trees and a tent in the background. An elegant spotted stallion, presumably the Sultan's horse, is being treated by two trainers in mufti. In the foreground is the satin-lined oak box, from which one of the trainers has extracted the liniment he applies to the horse's foreleg.

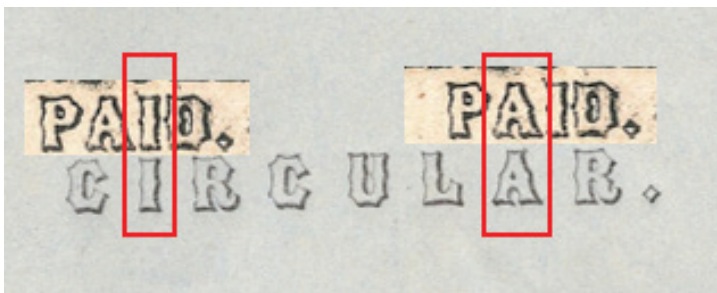


**Figure 8. Black 1¢ denomination.**



**Figure 9.** This illustrated advertising corner envelope promotes Dr. Merchant's Gargling Oil using the same visual elements depicted on the firm's private die stamps: a desert scene with the product being applied to the Sultan of Turkey's horse.

This theme is repeated, in a modified version, in the negative ornamental cachet on the striking advertising cover shown in Figure 9. This cover, which must date from the mid to late 1850s, bears an imperforate 3¢ stamp, indicating that the enclosure required letter-rate postage. Additional examples of this wonderful illustrated envelope exist with perforated 3¢ 1857 stamps, placing its likely period of usage at the same time as the other Merchant's covers shown in this article. The view depicted in this illustration is the one shown on the stamps: desert scene, spotted horse, trainers in mufti applying the product to the horse's leg, even the satin-lined oak box. All this ties back to the Turkish marketing ploy—as does the “Patronized by His Highness the Sultan of Turkey” that comprises the fourth line of type on the cover illustrated in Figure 6.



**Figure 10.** “PAID” from the the label on the cover in Figure 4 and “CIRCULAR” from the enclosure of the cover in Figure 6, aligning the common letters to show their striking similarities in typography and size—probably from the same typescase.

Figure 10 shows a composite image of the word “PAID” from the lower label in Figure 5 and the word “CIRCULAR” from the heading of the enclosure from Figure 6. Lining up the letters common in both words indicates—at least to me—that both were printed from the same typescase, as the size and odd font seem to match perfectly.





Figure 11. A selection of mid-19th century typeset apothecary labels. These particular examples were produced by the Shaker community of New Lebanon, New York.

Stylistically, the framed labels illustrated are quite reminiscent of mid-19th century apothecary labels. Figure 11 shows an assortment of contemporary drug and herb labels, though these examples are from the Shaker community at New Lebanon, New York.

As a druggist and manufacturer, Merchant's likely had access to a small printing press (or a close relationship with a nearby printer) to produce the printed matter, invoices, receipts, and labels for the company's products. Though it is impossible to state conclusively, the preponderance of evidence points to the Merchant's company either printing or contracting for the printing of these "Circular, Paid" labels and then using them, in lieu of a printed or handstamped notation, to ensure the reduced postal rate.

### Endnotes

1. *The Roland H. Cipolla II Collection*, Heritage Auction Galleries, Auction 1111, December 11-14, 2009, lot 31077.
2. *The United States One Cent Stamp of 1851 to 1861*, Mortimer L. Neinken, U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, 1972, pg. 4
3. Additional examples of printed or handstamped "Circular Paid" markings from around this time can be seen in *Chronicle* 72 (1971), pg. 199 and *Chronicle* 243 (2014) pp. 222-224.
4. *Official Register of the United States*, Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1857, pp. 62 and 419.
5. "ERIE CANAL DISCOVERY: Merchant's Gargling Oil's tie to Lockport," *Lockport Union-Sun & Journal*, 13 June 2008.
6. Toppan, Deats, and Holland, *An Historical Reference list of the Revenue Stamps of the United States Including the Private Die Proprietary Stamps*. Boston: Boston Philatelic Society, 1899, pg. 284. ■

## USING DIGITAL GRAPHICS TOOLS TO CLARIFY A COMPLICATED COVER

WADE E. SAADI

Sometimes, too much information can impede understanding. A case in point is the cover shown in Figure 1. This 3¢ 1863 entire envelope, apparently Scott U58, was mailed twice; it has three townmarks, two killers and a negated sender's endorsement.

We live in an age where technology has given us the ability to use image-altering tools, such as Adobe's Photoshop software, to manipulate digital images. Using this type



**Figure 1. A South Carolina cover mailed twice with three townmarks and a crossed-out endorsement complicating understanding of how it was handled and routed.**

of tool, we can recreate images of the Figure 1 cover at various stages on its route, creating a sort of a philatelic timeline that helps to explain what happened along the way. This pictorial method of chronicling the addition of postal markings to a cover may prove a valuable tool going forward. Imagery and graphics are great devices to aid explanation and understanding.

Figure 2 shows what the cover looked like when began its journey in Aiken, South Carolina, addressed to "Col. Joseph E. Jenkins, Adams Run, South Carolina." Across the bottom of the envelope was written, in the same ink and hand, "Care of Cooper & Stones, Charleston S.C." Using Photoshop, the crossed-out lines on the bottom of the cover have been removed, showing the cover as it appeared after cancellation by a clerk in the Aiken post office. We can now see clearly that the extraneous endorsement at the bottom caused

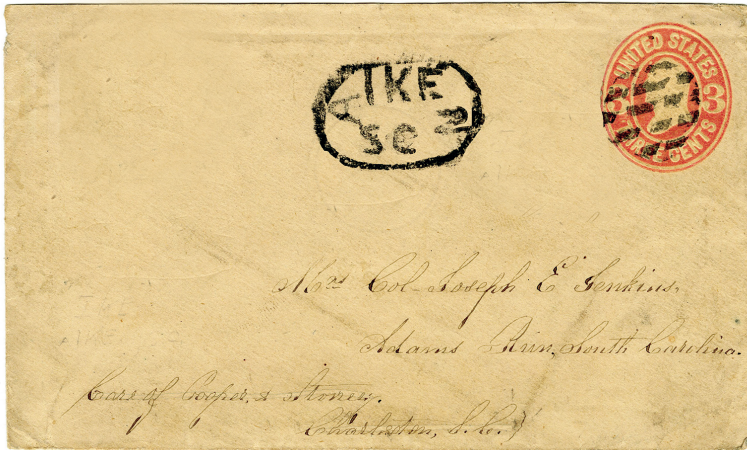


Figure 2. The Figure 1 cover as it must have appeared when it left the post office at Aiken, S.C. Subsequent postal and other markings have been digitally removed from the illustration.

the delayed delivery and double franking of this letter.

When the letter was posted, the 3¢ Washington imprint was canceled with a circular segmented grid and the odd oval “AIKEN SC” town marking was applied. Since there are no route agent or railway post office markings on the cover, it was likely placed on a train by the post office (discussed further below) and sent to Charleston for delivery.

On 19 June 1866, the double-circle receiving mark at upper left was applied at Charleston. This is the first dated notation applied to the cover. It's unclear whether this marking was applied at the Charleston post office or at the Cooper and Stones firm. Whichever the case, once in Cooper and Stones' hands, the cover likely looked as it does in Figure 3.

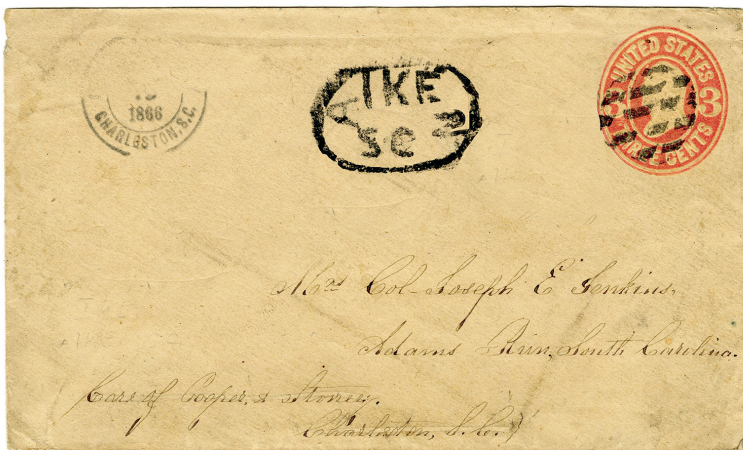


Figure 3. The Figure 1 cover as it appeared when in the hands of its first recipient in Charleston, with a Jun 19 1866 double-circle receiving date-stamp applied at upper left.

Upon inspecting the envelope, Cooper and Stones realized the “Care of...” notation at the bottom had caused the erroneous delivery of the letter to their firm in Charleston, rather than to the addressee in Adams Run. Someone at Cooper and Stones crossed out this notation, affixed a 3¢ 1861 stamp to the cover, and remailed it.

Back at the Charleston post office, a circular datestamp dated JUN 20 was applied and the 1861 stamp was canceled with a circular quartered cork. The cover was then placed again on a train, this time to Adam’s Run, where it arrived and was turned over to the addressee. At this point the cover looked as it does today, as presented in Figure 1.

We can trace the likely route taken on the rails from the invaluable book *Railroad Postmarks of the United States, 1861 to 1886*, by Towle and Meyer.<sup>1</sup> As discussed, the letter was mailed in Aiken and first delivered to Charleston. It was then remailed from Charles-

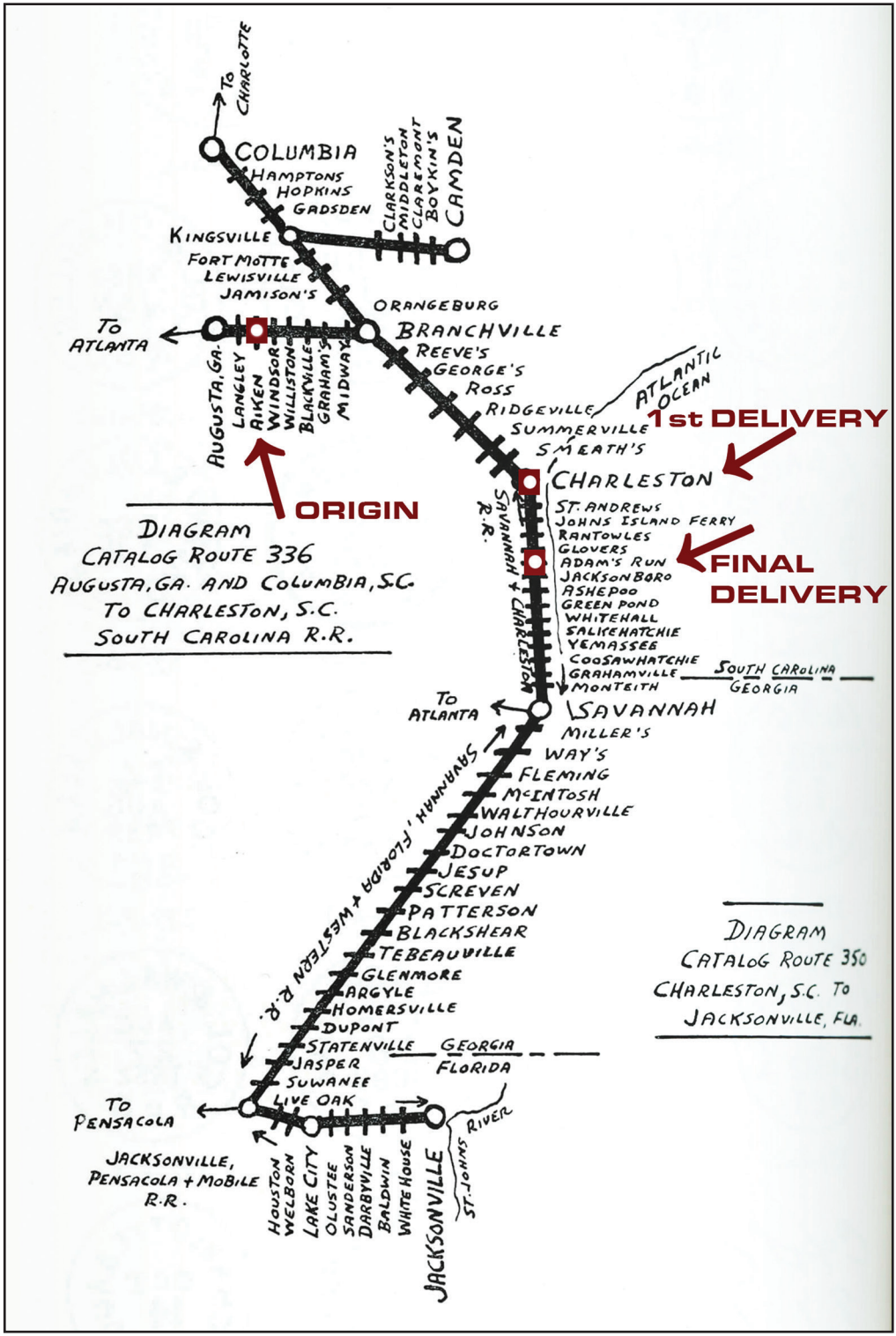
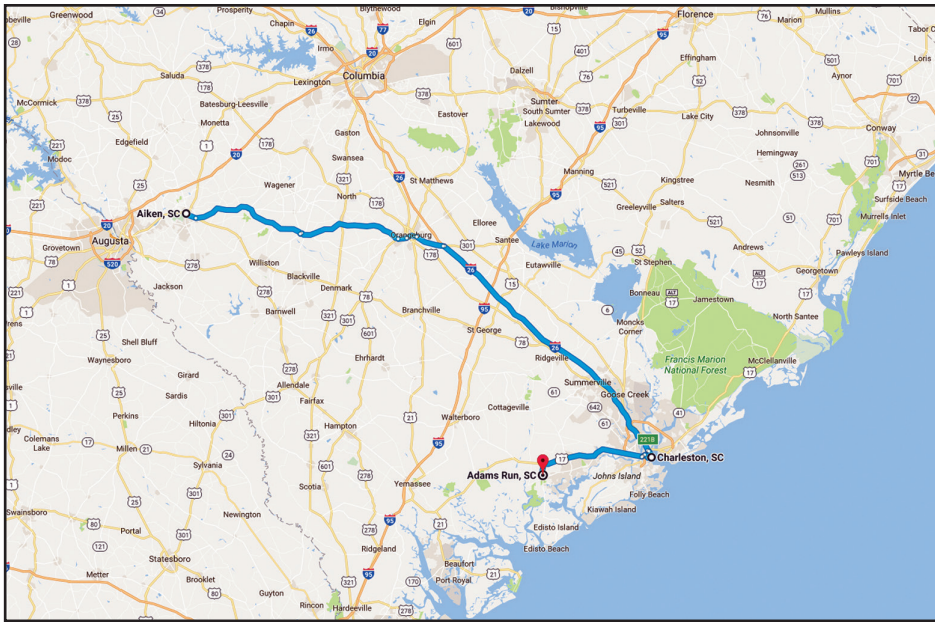


Figure 4. Route diagram from *Railroad Postmarks of the United States 1861 to 1886*, showing the origin point of the cover, Aiken, the first delivery point at Charleston, and the final delivery point at Adam's Run, South Carolina.



**Figure 5. Modern-day Google map showing actual route and relative distances between origin, Charleston, and destination for the cover discussed in this article.**

ton for final delivery in Adam’s Run. The rail lines used can be seen on the route diagram taken from this book, which is reproduced (with modifying annotation) in Figure 4. Since this schematic map is compressed to present all the stops in a linear fashion, I also show, as Figure 5, a Google map depicting the actual geography and the relative distances on the two legs of the journey.

A very interesting facet of this cover is the unusual “AIKEN SC” oval town marking, a tracing of which is shown at left in Figure 6. Again using Photoshop, this marking can be electronically plucked from its cover and a digital “tracing” created. This is shown at right in Figure 6. I leave it to the reader to determine which version he prefers. The marking is obviously hand carved from cork or wood. Its rustic and primitive appearance is quite attractive, much enhanced by the lazy “A” and “N” on either side.



**Figure 6. Comparison of the “tracings” of the AIKEN S.C. townmark from a Richard Graham *Chronicle* article (left) and the present cover (right).**



I found just one reference in *The Chronicle* to this marking, in an early article by Richard Graham, who wittily noted that “This marking has been reported on loose stamps as ‘IKE’, which received considerable publicity during the Eisenhower administration.”<sup>2</sup> There are no listings for this marking in the Skinner-Eno book or the Simpson-Alexander book. Since Graham reported it only on “loose stamps,” Figure 1 may be the only example on a full cover. Can anyone show another?

### Endnotes

1. Charles L. Towle and Henry A. Meyer, *Railroad Postmarks of the United States, 1861 to 1886*, U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, 1968, pg. 136.
2. Richard B. Graham, “Domestic Postal Markings,” *Chronicle* 49 (February 1965), pp. 67-68. ■

## A POSTMASTER-CREATED LABEL FOR FREE FRANKING

CHIP GLIEDMAN

Figure 1 shows a cover mailed on August 1, 1867 to the postmaster of Kingston, Ross County, Ohio, from the Postmaster of Columbus Grove, Ohio. The cover bears a printed label that reads “Official Business/J.B. Sprague, P.M.” This is the first such postmaster franking label seen by the author and many of his colleagues. As such, it deserves a deeper examination and a call for additional information from readers, should such information be available.

For this examination, it’s relevant to review the regulations and procedures for registered mail and for postmaster free franking as they apply to this cover.

July 1, 1855 marks the start of the official registered mail service in the United States. Numerous authors have written about the procedures and postal artifacts from both before this official commencement and during the initial period. Over the next decade, the process, procedures, and forms were revised a number of times. On July 1, 1867, a further revision to the regulations occurred which would affect the creation and use of this envelope.

As James Milgram documents in his book on registered mail,<sup>1</sup> an eight-page pamphlet, *Regulations Respecting the Registration of Letters*, was issued by the Postmaster General documenting the new procedures for registered mail. The February 1867 issue of the *United States Mail and Post Office Assistant* summarized these rules under the banner “The New Registry System.”<sup>2</sup> Relevant changes to the system included: (1) all registered letters were to be enclosed in “Registered Package Envelopes” (manila envelopes with large red horizontal bands across the face and back); and (2) registered letters were not to be sent direct, provided there was a distributing post office between the mailing office and the destination.<sup>3</sup> The registered letter bill and return bill were to be sent in the same mail, in a franked envelope directed to the postmaster of the destination post office.

As to this last point, prior to 1867, the registered letter bill was to be sent in the next mail to the destination office. With this change, the bill was to be included in the same mail as the registered letter itself.



Figure 1. “Official Business” envelope mailed August 1, 1867 from Columbus Grove, Ohio to Kingston, Ohio, containing a return registered letter bill (shown in Figure 2).

RETURN REGISTERED LETTER BILL.

Upon the receipt of this Bill at the office of its destination, the Postmaster will at once detach it from the Registered Letter Bill, enter the date of its receipt, and ascertain whether a corresponding package of registered letters has been received at his office. If it has, he will endorse this Bill *correct*, if it is found so, or *note any error* or difference which may be found in it; and will then inclose and return it by the first mail to the office from which it was received. If it be found that the corresponding package *has not* been received, he will endorse the Bill *not received*, and will return it in the same manner. The Registered Letter Bill will be retained and filed at the office at which it is received.

Post Office *Columbus Grove,*  
*July 31<sup>st</sup>, 1867.*

Registered Letters received from *Kingston Post Co Ohio*

Registered Number of Letter.	TO WHOM ADDRESSED.	OFFICE OF FINAL DESTINATION.	Forwarded in Reg. Package Envelope No.
<i>6</i>	<i>Mrs Mary Martin</i>	<i>Columbus Grove Antwerp, Ohio</i>	<i>6.</i>

*J. B. Sprague, P. M.*

Figure 2. Contents of the cover in Figure 1: A "Return Registered Letter Bill" dated July 31, 1867, signed by Postmaster J.B. Sprague of Columbus Grove, Ohio, and returned to the Postmaster of Kingston, Ohio, documenting receipt of registered letter number 6.

The registered letter bill and return bill referred to in the regulations were a two-part form that served a number of purposes. One side of the form documented the contents of the registered package envelope that should have been found in the same mail pouch. The other half of the form was to be completed by the destination postmaster and returned to the sending postmaster confirming that the registered letters had arrived and were apparently undisturbed.

Figure 2 shows the return registered letter bill that was enclosed in the Figure 1 cover. This form confirms that registered letter #6 from Kingston, addressed to Mrs. Mary Martin in Columbus Grove, arrived safely. The form is dated July 31, 1867 and signed by J.B. Sprague as Postmaster.

The instructions at the top of the form instruct the postmaster to detach it from the Registered Letter Bill, endorse the Bill *correct* if the letter was received, and return it to the office from which it was received. In this case, Postmaster Sprague detached the form at the left, but did not mark the Bill as either *correct* or *not received*.

Per the instructions, Postmaster Sprague did return the form to the postmaster in Kingston. Correspondence of this nature between postmasters could be sent free, so long as

the covers that carried them were appropriately marked. Many postmasters simply applied their manuscript free frank to an envelope. Other offices used preprinted or handstamped envelopes to transmit return registered letter bills.<sup>3</sup> In New York City around this time, Postmaster James Kelly had “Official Business” envelopes printed especially for this purpose, with a printed facsimile of his signature.<sup>4</sup>

Tying this information to the Figure 1 cover, it traveled from Columbus Grove, Ohio, about 100 miles northwest of Columbus, to Kingston, about 40 miles south of Columbus. Columbus had a population of about 18,000 inhabitants during the 1860s, dwarfing both Kingston and Columbus Grove, whose populations were closer to 400 at the time. Though the cover likely passed through the city, Columbus was not a distributing post office at this time, so the original registered letter envelope would not have been opened there.

J.B. Sprague, who both signed the return registered letter bill and whose name appears on the official business label, is Jonas B. Sprague, who was appointed postmaster of Columbus Grove on February 11, 1865. He served in that role until a successor was named on September 13, 1877.<sup>5</sup> In 1867, at the time of this correspondence, his yearly compensation was a modest \$480.<sup>6</sup>

Rather than preprinting envelopes or having a handstamp created, Sprague likely found it more economical to have the ¾ x 2½ inch label printed locally. Perhaps this reflected his uncertainty as to future needs. Once produced, these labels could be applied to envelopes in lots, removing the need to hand-endorse and frank official business envelopes—and simultaneously creating yet another interesting postal artifact for future students and collectors.

### Endnotes

1. James W. Milgram, *United States Registered Mail 1845-1870* (North Miami, Fla.: David G. Phillips Publishing Co., 1998), pg. 56.
2. *United States Mail and Post Office Assistant* reprint (Chicago: Collectors Club of Chicago, 1975), pg. 306.
3. For examples of handstamped Post Office Business covers used for this purpose, see *Chronicle* 243, pp. 214-216.
4. Richard B. Graham, “Registration of Letters, 1861-1869,” *Chronicle* 139 (August 1988), pg. 194. Other handstamped or printed postmaster free franks are listed in James W. Milgram, “Postmaster Free Franking,” *Chronicle* 245, pp. 17-26.
5. National Archives, Appointment of Postmasters, 1832–September 30, 1971, records group 28, microfilm publication M841, roll 101.
6. *Official Register of the United States, 1867* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1868), pg. 583. ■

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## THE BANK NOTE PERIOD

H. JEFFREY BRAHIN, EDITOR

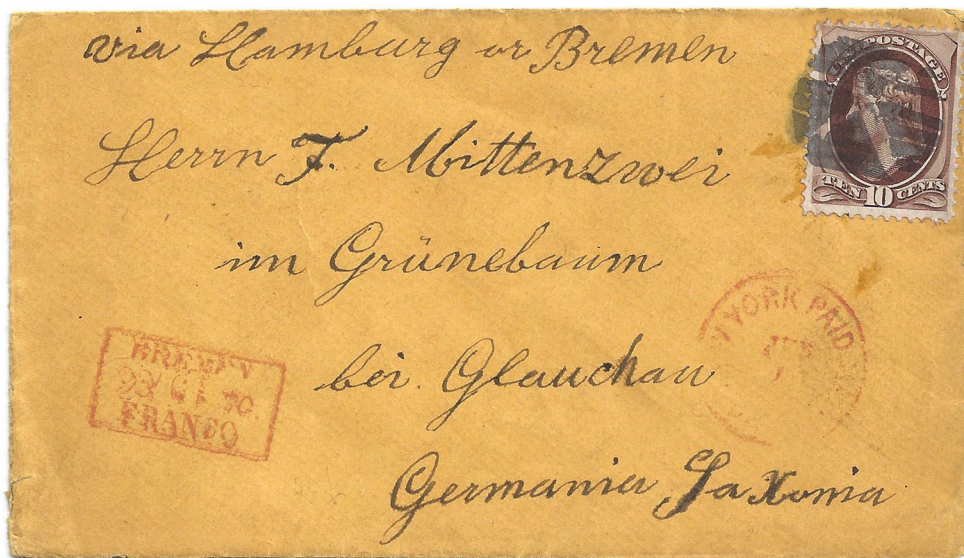
### EARLY BANK NOTE COVERS TO GERMANY AND VIA GERMAN MAIL

H. JEFFREY BRAHIN

The 1867 Postal Convention established two rates from the United States to the North German Union (NGU). Mail from the United States to Germany<sup>1</sup> via the direct route, carried on steamers of the Hamburg-American (Hapag) or North German Lloyd (NGL) lines was 10¢ per half ounce; and mail sent via closed mail through England was 15¢ per half ounce. On 1 July 1870, both rates were reduced, the direct rate being lowered to 7¢, and the rate via England to 10¢. This article surveys all known Bank Note covers sent to or through Germany from the earliest known uses (EKU) of the Bank Note stamps up to the July 1 1870 rate reduction. There aren't many.

The National Bank Note Company issued both grilled and ungrilled stamps at approximately the same time. The 3¢ grilled and 6¢ ungrilled stamps have the earliest EKUs, in late March 1870. Thirteen of the remaining 20 stamps have EKUs before July 1, 1870. Given this window of slightly more than three months, Bank Note frankings prior to the rate reductions on covers to Germany, or via German mails to Scandinavia or other countries, are scarce.

Figure 1 shows a cover sent to Germany at the 10¢ direct rate. A 10¢ ungrilled National Bank Note Stamp (Scott 150) is tied by a black cork cancel which does not appear to be one of those listed as having been used by the New York foreign mail office. If this mark-



**Figure 1.** Ungrilled 10¢ National Bank Note stamp on cover to Germany, posted at the 10¢ direct rate a few weeks prior to the rate reductions that went into effect on July 1, 1870. Covers showing Bank Note stamps sent to Germany (or via German mails to destinations beyond Germany) prior to the rate reductions are scarce.

ing was not applied at the New York foreign mail office, then the cover originated outside of New York City. The New York exchange office placed a weakly struck circular datestamp “New York Paid All Direct” (Laurence NY-15, Hubbard/Winter 237) below the stamp, a marking required by the 1867 Convention for letters sent by the direct route to Germany.<sup>2</sup> The month is clearly “JUN”. The date is incomplete, but begins with a “1.” The cover was endorsed “via Hamburg or Bremen,” and transited the Bremen exchange office where it was struck with the red transit “Bremen Franco,” also required by the 1867 Convention to indicate that the letter was fully prepaid to the NGU.<sup>3</sup> The year is clearly “70” and the month was June (“6”). The day is difficult to read, but is probably “23.” That date suggests passage on the NGL’s *Weser II*, which departed New York on June 11, arrived Southampton on June 22 and reached Bremen the next day. So this cover correctly paid the 10¢ per half ounce direct rate to Germany, prior to the July 1 rate reduction.



**Figure 2. May 27, 1870: 10¢ 1869 stamp plus two 2¢ Jackson Bank Note stamps on a cover from Cincinnati to Sweden, sent via German mails at the 14¢ direct rate that was in effect prior to the 1 July rate reductions. The New York credit “4”, restated at Hamburg as “1½Wf.” represents a credit to Germany for onward carriage to Sweden.**

A beautiful direct rate cover to Sweden pictured in Michael Laurence’s *Ten-Cent 1869 Covers* book is shown in Figure 2.<sup>4</sup> This is franked with a 10¢ 1869 pictorial (Scott 116), together with two ungrilled 2¢ Jackson Bank Note stamps (146) for the correct prepayment of the 14¢ rate to Sweden. The rate comprised 10¢ for direct carriage to Germany, with 4¢ credit to the NGU for transit beyond Germany to Sweden. The cover, sent less than three weeks after the EKV of the 2¢ Bank Note stamp, was struck twice with a blue May 27 Cincinnati circular datestamp duplexed with a target killer.

The New York exchange office struck the numeral “4” (Laurence NY-42) on the front of the cover, a marking required by the 1867 Convention, showing the 4¢ credit to the NGU for carriage beyond Germany. A “New York Paid All Direct” marking dated May 31 is struck on the reverse. The cover was carried on the Hapag steamer *Holsatia* and reached Hamburg on 12 June 1870, where it was stamped with a boxed “Hamburg Franco” exchange-office entry marking. The Hamburg exchange office also applied the “1½Wf.” marking at lower left. “Wf” is an abbreviation for “Weiterfranco,” which means “paid beyond.” The “1½” restates the 4 New York credit in silbergroschen. This cover is from the Warner correspondence, source of a number of covers from the U.S. to Denmark and Swe-





Figure 4. Via England at the higher closed-mail rate via German mails to Rome. The 19¢ rate, which was reduced effective 1 July 1870, is here paid by a 15¢ Type II 1869 stamp and a pair of ungrilled 2¢ Bank Note stamps. Posted at New York City on 7 May 1870, this cover represents the earliest known use of the 2¢ Bank Note stamp.

“4,” once again showing the 4¢ credit to the NGU. The reverse bears a red circular May 7 “New York Paid All Br[itish] Transit” marking (Laurence NY-18). The cover traveled on the NGL steamer *Deutschland*, arriving Southampton on May 18. On the Verviers-Cologne railway post office on May 19, the closed mailbag was opened and the cover was struck with the four-line “Verviers.A/19 5 3/Coeln/ Franco” handstamp (Laurence F-39). The German postal authorities also marked the cover in blue crayon with “f 1½” on the front,



Figure 5. New York City to Rome, same rate and transit as Figure 4, with the 19¢ rate overpaid by two ungrilled 10¢ Bank Note stamps. This cover was sent from New York on 1 June 1870, one month before the rate reductions took effect.

restating the 4¢ credit in silbergroschen. The black “PD” marking, showing that the cover was fully prepaid, was probably applied at that time.

The other cover to Rome, from the Chatard correspondence, is shown in Figure 5. This was sent by “Geo. Opdyke & Co.,” a New York banking firm, neatly represented by a grey oval cameo with the outer band in the form of a belt. Opdyke was a successful merchant and banker who was mayor of New York during the 1863 Draft Riots. The cover bears two ungrilled 10¢ Bank Note stamps, overpaying the 19¢ rate to Rome via England.

The cover was sent from New York on 1 June 1870. Either the *Russia* or the *Aleppo*, both Cunard line steamers which departed New York on June 1 and arrived in Queenstown on June 10 and June 12 respectively, could have transported the cover. After the cover crossed the English Channel, it was stamped on June 13 by the German traveling post office on the train between Verviers and Cologne.<sup>6</sup> The United States and German markings on this cover are identical to those on the cover in Figure 4, except that the German credit was not restated in silbergroschen. It should be noted that the stamps on this cover are cancelled by two strikes of another distinctive NYFM cancel, Kirke 70-06 -01-WG, Weiss TR-G8. These are the only reported strikes of this marking type, and the cover is pictured in the Weiss book.<sup>7</sup>

The six covers described in this article comprise all of the covers I have recorded, franked with Bank Note stamps sent to Germany (or via NGU mails beyond Germany) prior to the rate decrease of 1 July 1870. I am not aware of any covers with 1¢, 3¢, 6¢, 12¢ or 15¢ Bank Note stamps. Certainly other covers should exist, and I would appreciate the assistance of Society members in bringing them to my attention.

### Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Nicholas Kirke, Michael Laurence, Dwayne Littauer and Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries for images of some of the covers in this article. I am particularly grateful to Robert Boyd, whose comments and edits have made this a much improved article, but errors or omissions are my responsibility.

### Endnotes

1. The terms “Germany” and “NGU” will be used interchangeably for ease of reference although the modern nation of Germany was not formed until 1871.
2. Michael Laurence, *Ten-Cent 1869 Covers, A Postal Historical Survey* (Chicago: The Collectors Club of Chicago, 2010), pg. 187.
3. Richard F. Winter, *Understanding Transatlantic Mail, Volume 2* (Bellefonte, Pa.: American Philatelic Society, 2009), pg. 744.
4. Laurence, *op. cit.*, pg. 221.
5. Laurence, *op. cit.*, pg. 220 and 345.
6. Winter, *op. cit.*, pg. 765.
7. Weiss, Jr., William R., *The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City, 1870-78*, (Bethlehem, Pa., 1990), pg. 314. ■

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## U. S. OFFICIAL STAMPS: PLATE VARIETIES IN MULTIPLES

ALAN C. CAMPBELL

## Introduction

When I first began specializing in Official stamps in the early 1980's, I did not have a proper philatelic mentor. Then I met Lester C. Lanphear III, who also lived in San Diego and was already far advanced, having been taken under the wing of Charles J. Starnes. Lanphear directed me to some basic references, and also to the leading specialist dealer of the time, Albert Chang. Initially, I made a few cautious purchases from Chang. Later, I showed him what I'd assembled from various sources, and he advised me, with reasonable grace, that some of what I was buying was in his opinion the wrong stuff. In particular, he could not understand why I was buying any unused blocks, nor why I showed no interest in collecting special printings or plate and printing varieties. Of course, I was mildly offended and skeptical upon hearing this—was there, in fact, one correct, established model for building a traditional specialized collection? And if so, wouldn't my own collection come to resemble an ugly step-sister of Lanphear's, since they already had a close bond and Lanphear essentially had first refusal on all the best material that came into Chang's inventory?

At this time, there languished in Chang's stock an unused block of the 24¢ Treasury, a rare block, ex-Lilly, reasonably well-centered. He had bought it in the sale of the Rae Ehrenberg collection, having noticed during auction viewing that it contained an example of the prominent double transfer through "EAS" at position 16, not identified by the describer.<sup>1</sup> Chang had extremely acute close-up vision, whipping off his glasses and lowering himself to within inches of the stamp to be examined. At the time, this block did nothing for me, since I couldn't see the double transfer and frankly didn't even know what a double transfer was. Other specialists of that era—Rollin C. Huggins, Jr., Alfred E. Staubus and Lanphear—had already gotten on board the flyspecking program, but I was a stubborn holdout. Eventually, it got so that I could see with the naked eye short transfers and plate scratches extending into the stamp margins, but for extraneous marks within the framelines, forget it. I had to be told what to look for, and even then, I sometimes nodded assent vigorously, in fake acknowledgment that I'd seen what in reality I hadn't.

Today, utilizing George Sayer's magnificent large-scale scans with helpful arrows, it is much easier to know where to look to identify a copy of any of the confirmed and documented Official plate varieties.<sup>2</sup> There are even a few eagle-eyed specialists such as John Valenti and Charles Buck, who are actively engaged in closely examining all the high-resolution scans now available on eBay, hoping to make new discoveries. Sadly, as my vision deteriorates, I am not among them.

Yet I do regret not buying the 24¢ Treasury block from Chang all those years ago, because I've gained a new appreciation for the difficulty of finding plate varieties in used or unused multiples of Official stamps. At the most basic level, showing the variety in a multiple allows a plate variety to be seen adjacent to a normal impression (comparable to showing a pair of the 10¢ Large Bank Note stamps, Scott numbers 187-188 regular issue American printing, with and without the secret mark. Another example would be showing the 5¢ rose Washington foreign-relief error (Scott 505) in blocks of 9 or 12.

At least with Officials, the collecting of unused blocks has fallen out of favor, the last valiant attempt at completion having been made by Robert L. Markovits, building on the great Morrison Waud holding. But blocks can still be pertinent, when they reveal that certain varieties such as double transfers and foreign entries occurred in vertical rows, as transfer relief errors were made sequentially.

The collecting of Official plate number and imprint strips and blocks still has a few devotees, and such items—when they incorporate plate varieties—enable the exact position of the variety to be shown unarguably.

Finally, it should be noted that the collecting of Official plate varieties is an attractive proposition for two reasons: For most values, only one plate was used, and there exists a set of photographs of the Earl of Crawford card proof sheets before they were cut up. Therefore, most Official plate varieties can be plated to their exact position. This is not true for the regular large Bank Note stamps, where for most values, multiple plates were created and put into use. Respecting plate varieties on the regular large Bank Note stamps, I have a sense that the inability to plate these varieties definitively has discouraged specialist collectors from avidly seeking them out.

In this article, I will review how certain of the plate varieties identified by George Sayers can still be found in Official multiples. Because the varieties themselves have all been illustrated in great detail by Sayers (or in other published articles), I will not focus on those details, instead showing the entire multiple and identifying which stamp(s) represent a constant plate variety. In instances where the varieties are likely to be visible in the accompanying illustrations, I have added arrows to point them out.

Constant plate varieties in multiples will be discussed in sequence according to their basic types: plate scratches, foreign entries, double transfers, short transfers, plate damage, and a miscellaneous category, which consists of roll-to-transfer defects, recut lines and re-entries. I will be treating here only examples encompassed in multiples of the issued stamps, not in multiples of the special printings or plate proofs. Aside from remnants of the ex-Lilly proof sheets, multiples of the plate proofs are generally scarce.

### Plate scratches or cracks

Figure 1 shows an unused top plate block of 18 of the 10¢ Navy stamp, which incorporates the prominent vertical plate scratch at position 3. At the time Huggins wrote up this variety, it was still described as a plate crack, but the specialized catalog has since been calling it a scratch.<sup>3</sup> Based on the existence of an imprint India proof block that does not show the scratch at Position 3, Huggins argued that it is a rather scarce plate variety, in a sense “inconstant” because it occurred at some point during the printing of the stamps. Sayers, revisiting this issue, remarked: “This plate damage is one of the few with before-and-after examples recognized.”<sup>4</sup> After careful examination, Sayers concluded that it was a plate crack after all.



Figure 1. 10¢ Navy, top plate number and imprint block of 18, plate crack at Position 3.

Another plate scratch surprisingly hard to find is that extending into the upper margin on the 2¢ Treasury at Position 3R. This scratch may also have been an inconstant variety. I have an example on a small local-rate cover within New York City, and the style of the duplexed postmark indicates the plate scratch was present prior to 1877. Also, the plate scratch at position 100 of the 12¢ Post Office is surprisingly hard to find—again, possibly an inconstant variety.

For a multiple incorporating a plate scratch, the holy grail would be either a block of the 6¢ State showing the diagonal scratch across the margin between positions 26 and 27, or a block of the 15¢ State showing the horizontal scratch between positions 95 and 96. It is unclear whether these various scratches occurred while the plates were being worked on before they were hardened and tempered, or at some later point through mishandling. Plate cracks typically appear later, during the working life of the plate.



Figure 2. 6¢ State, block of 20, with foreign entries at Positions 61, 71, 81 and 91. These minute features, too small to highlight in this reproduction, were fully described and illustrated in an article in *Chronicle* 178. Illustration courtesy of Lester C. Lanphear III.



## Foreign entries

Figure 2 shows the important block of 20 from the lower left corner of the 6¢ State sheet, with evidence of foreign entries (from the 6¢ Executive stamp) at positions 61, 71, 81 and 91. Cropped portions of this block have been illustrated previously in the *Chronicle* (where these varieties, formerly listed as double transfers, were conclusively proven by Ralph Ebner’s research to be foreign entries), but it deserves to be shown here in its entirety and in color.<sup>5</sup> The salient features of the foreign entry, while well described in Ebner’s article, are difficult to see and are not singled out in Figure 2. The most prominent features occur just below the bottom of the stamp in Position 91.

At one time, an even larger block of 25—the full lower left quadrant—also existed. Purchased by Albert Chang at auction, it was later stolen from his inventory and reduced to a block of 16 to disguise it before it was offered at auction again.<sup>6</sup>

For many years, the 6¢ Agriculture foreign entry on the 2¢ Executive stamp (Position 40) was the only catalog listing for a foreign entry on Official stamps, and this item has always commanded a great premium. All the Executive stamps are rare in block form, so I strongly doubt this plate variety will ever be found amongst the few surviving multiples.

A foreign entry of the 15¢ Post Office on the 12¢ Agriculture stamp was discovered by George Sayers on Atlanta proofs, and he was able to plate it to Position 8 based on the Perry negative of the Earl of Crawford proof sheet.<sup>7</sup> Sayers searched unsuccessfully for years for an example of this foreign entry on the issued stamp, but was unsuccessful because, as he wrote, “extraneous yellow lines are especially difficult to recognize.” So I had always assumed even a superhero with phenomenal vision couldn’t find this foreign entry on an issued stamp, until I learned that Buck had found and purchased two copies, and located two others. A relative newcomer to the study of Official plate varieties, Buck has succeeded grand master George Sayers in the hunt for new constant varieties.

## Double transfers

Figure 3 shows a bottom plate number and imprint strip of nine of the 6¢ Post Office stamp from Plate 47, the left pane of a 200-subject plate. Positions 96 and 99 show doubling of the top frame line and the oval frame line. These features are visible to the naked eye, but they will not show in the Figure 3 image, which is necessarily reduced to fit the *Chronicle* page.

I bought this item from a dealer, a notorious ripper, who freely admitted that he had extracted position 100 for his own personal collection. Now it is well established that the best place to find a jumbo-margined single is from the four corner positions, since the perforation settings were wider around the perimeter of the sheet. But in this case, I can’t fathom the man’s motive, since the perforations at the top would have been close to touching and there would be a natural straight edge on the right, forfeiting any possibility that this could have been graded as a premium stamp.

I also have a top plate number and imprint block of 14 of the 3¢ Navy stamp, Plate



Figure 3. 6¢ Post Office, bottom plate number and imprint strip of nine, with double transfers at Positions 96 and 99, features that will not be visible in this reduced image.

34, which incorporates a double transfer at Position 6 (the stamp under the “4” in the plate number). In this variety, many horizontal elements at the bottom (frame line, ribbon frame line, tops of letters) are doubled. Lanphear has a bottom plate number and imprint strip of seven of the 1¢ Treasury, showing the double transfer at Position 97L; a bottom plate number and imprint strip of six of the 2¢ Agriculture, showing the double transfer at Position 92; and a mint block of the 3¢ Justice, showing the double transfer at Position 56. A number of top plate strips and plate blocks of the 24¢ War stamp survive showing a double transfer in the Continental Bank Note Co. imprint.

At this point, I should mention that while plate number and imprint strips or blocks from some departments are scarce or non-existent (Agriculture, Executive, Justice, State), they do exist for most values of the other departments (Interior, Navy, Post Office, Treasury, War). For those five departments, there is a far better chance that constant plate varieties in the top two rows (positions 1-20) and the bottom two rows (positions 81-100) will survive in unused multiples. Of course, very well-centered multiples have been ravaged in recent years as the quest for gem never-hinged single copies intensifies. Constant plate varieties in positions from the middle of the sheet (Positions 21-80) will accordingly be harder to find in multiples.

Figure 4 illustrates a mint block of the 15¢ Interior, with the two left stamps showing the famous double transfers that extend all along the left margins. Based on recent research by Lanphear, these two stamps have finally been plated as Positions 57 and 67. They were previously identified in the Huggins taxonomy as Types IA and IB.<sup>8</sup> The Figure 4 block of the issued stamps, from the Huggins collection, is to the best of my knowledge the only block incorporating these two positions.<sup>9</sup> Sayers has a block of the stamp on soft paper incorporating types IIA and IIB, which Lanphear identified as almost certainly being Positions 37 and 38.

The original impressions on the softened plate were entered by a hardened transfer roll, vertical positions in sequence, and the realization that they were misplaced might not



Figures 4 and 5. At left, 15¢ Interior block of four with double transfers at Positions 57 and 67 all along the left side of the design. Figure 5, at right: 3¢ War, used block of four from the left pane of Plate 32, showing plate damage at Positions 2 and 12.

occur until multiple positions had already been entered incorrectly. They would all need to be hammered out and reentered at multiple positions stacked vertically.<sup>10</sup> There are famous, easily detectable double transfers well into the left margin on the 12¢ Navy stamp at consecutive vertical Positions 50, 60, and 70. It would be a great coup to find a multiple of this stamp from the right side of the plate incorporating any of these positions. In the introduction, I mentioned an unused block of the 24¢ Treasury, which incorporates the prominent double transfer through the letters “EAS” at Position 16. The other truly famous, long-recognized major double transfer on Official stamps occurs on the 2¢ State at Position 98, with dramatically shifted doubling in the value tablet at the bottom. However, only a few used pairs and strips of this stamp are known, and no unused multiples.

### **Plate damage**

Figure 5, courtesy of Lanphear, shows a rare used block of the 3¢ War Department stamp on soft paper (Scott O116). This is from the left pane of Plate 32. It shows plate damage at Position 2 (a scratch through the base of the bust) and at Position 12 (where the “PT” in “DEPT” is defaced). Unused, these varieties should not be too hard to find in matrix, since the soft-paper stamps were remaindered and many plate number multiples (and some intact full sheets) have survived.

On the right pane, there occurs a very distinctive hexagonal tool mark in the upper left corner of Position 11, first written up by the great War Department specialist, David Lobdell.<sup>11</sup> Again, this can probably be found in a number of surviving plate blocks, but perhaps the most striking example I remember seeing is a used vertical pair in the possession of John Donnes.

There is plate damage at Positions 66 and 76 on the 24¢ State, but inasmuch as only two unused blocks of four are recorded for this stamp, there is no hope of finding either variety incorporated in a multiple. Lanphear has a top plate number and imprint block of 14 of the 1¢ Post Office, showing damage at Position 1R. This variety is of special interest, because comparison examples can be found from before and after the damage occurred.

### **Short transfers**

Short transfers are the most common constant plate variety to be found on Official stamps. The term is a bit of a misnomer, since in most instances, the flaw was not caused by an incomplete rocking in of the transfer roll. The only true short transfers on the Official stamps are the 3¢ Treasury (29R36, showing short transfer of entire bottom); the 24¢ Treasury (Position 61, very faint top); and the 30¢ Treasury (Position 41, entire top).

Figure 6 shows a used block of four of the 24¢ Treasury, with the lower left stamp being Position 61.<sup>12</sup> Figure 7 illustrates a used block of four of the 30¢ Treasury, with the upper left stamp being Position 41. I once overheard the dealer Ed Hines say, “The only thing scarcer than used Official blocks are the people who collect them.” I know of a few specialists in Official stamps who avidly seek or have sought them out—Lanphear, Dan Curtis, Mike Plett and myself. But I have in mind the late Carl Mainberger, who when it came to Official stamps, only collected used multiples.<sup>13</sup> Sometimes he had to bide his time for years to add something new, and I imagined him sitting in his apartment, bored out of his mind and twiddling his thumbs, like the Maytag repairman in the old TV commercials, waiting for the phone to ring. Anyway, take the challenge of collecting used Official blocks, overlay that with the requirement that they contain a plate variety, and the degree of difficulty increases exponentially. Basically, the quest requires patience and luck.

After all the entries were made, the plate needed to be cleaned up, removing all extraneous marks by burnishing. Most of the so-called “short transfers” on Official stamps resulted from overzealous erasures in the margins between the impressions, in which the



**Figures 6 and 7. Used blocks of four showing short transfers at the top of the stamp design. The 24¢ Treasury block at left, Figure 6, shows a short transfer in Position 61. Figure 7, the 30¢ Treasury block at right, shows a similar feature in Position 41.**

shallow background vertical lines at the corners got smoothed out. Figure 8 shows three unused blocks of the 30¢ Treasury, all ex-Huggins, each of which incorporates a confirmed “short transfer” at one of the upper corners.<sup>14</sup> In the left block, the upper right stamp is Position 26 (short transfer at left top); in the middle block, the bottom right stamp is Position 45 (short transfer at right top); in the right block, the bottom left stamp is Position 95 (short transfer at top left). Thus, in conjunction with the used block discussed below at Figure 9, all four plate variety positions of the 30¢ Treasury have been captured in multiples.

Not shown due to space limitations is a used block of 30 of the 30¢ Treasury, encompassing the entire lower left quadrant of the sheet and capturing the short transfer (upper left) at Position 95. This impressive piece, ex-Curtis, along with a used block of 30 of the 1¢ Post Office stamp in the Lanphear collection, are believed to be the largest recorded used multiples of any classic Official stamp.<sup>15</sup> Curtis, who entered the field of Officials in 2004




**Figure 8. 30¢ Treasury, three unused blocks of four, all originally in the Rollin Huggins collection, showing short transfers in the upper corners, Positions 26, 45, and 95.**



Figures 9 and 10. At left (Figure 9): 3¢ State, block of four, showing short transfer at Position 85. Figure 10: 2¢ Justice, block of four, showing short transfer at Position 3.

at the time of the auction of the Robert L. Markovits collection and bought heavily there, was especially enamored of large used multiples. He established an on-line census of the largest known blocks of revenue stamps ([www.thecurtiscollection.com](http://www.thecurtiscollection.com)) which is still being maintained by the Siegel firm.

I have a plate number and imprint strip of the 12¢ Interior stamp which incorporates (under the plate number) Position 6, with a short transfer down the lower right side. There is a well-known short transfer at Position 91 on the 1¢ Interior plate, and a number of bottom plate number and imprint multiples survive incorporating this variety. Figure 9 shows a mint block of the 3¢ State, in which the upper right stamp is Position 85, with a short transfer in the middle of the right side. Figure 10, shown here courtesy of Lanphear, illustrates a mint block of the 2¢ Justice, in which the upper left stamp is Position 3, also with a short transfer on the right side.





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Figures 11 and 12. Above (Figure 11): 10¢ State, block of four, with short transfer at Position 34. At right (Figure 12): 90¢ Post Office block of four with stray fiber defects in Positions 9 and 19.

Figure 11, also courtesy of Lanphear, illustrates a mint block of the 10¢ State stamp, with the lower right stamp being Position 34, showing a short transfer at top right. On the 24¢ Justice, there is a prominent short transfer at the bottom left corner of Position 98, but no multiples survive to show it.

### Miscellaneous

Sayers wrote an article about stray fiber roll-to-transfer defects on Official stamps, having identified them on multiple positions of the 90¢ Post Office, the 1¢ State and the 6¢ Executive.<sup>16</sup> These are extremely faint and not easy to see. He was able to plate the transfer defects on the 90¢ Post Office to Positions 9 and 19, showing a reconstructed pair. Plate blocks of the 90¢ Post Office are fairly scarce, but over the years I’ve seen at least two intact sheets of this stamp offered at public auction. Figure 12, courtesy of Lanphear, shows a block of four with top selvage, showing the stray fiber flaws in the right-hand stamps.

Figure 13, again courtesy of Lanphear, illustrates a plate number and imprint strip of five of the 6¢ Navy stamp, showing the “line through N” variety at Positions 2 and 6. He also has an unused block of four in which three positions show this variety. This flaw, listed forever in the catalog and not especially scarce, was long thought to be some sort of vestigial layout line. Alfred E. Staubus, a dogged researcher, was able over many years to plate 70 positions of the 6¢ Navy plate, and to identify all 18 positions showing the “line through N” variety. Putting his head together with George Sayers, they finally came up with an explanation for this phenomenon: grossly simplified, the transfer roll had a network of cracks on the leading edge and a loose chip of hardened steel got embedded there, so that it effectively scratched the softened plate in advance of the impressions being rocked in.<sup>17</sup>

There is a type of plate variety known as recut lines, where an attempt is made to go back and strengthen by hand a weak frame line. Sayers identified three occasions where



**Figure 13. 6¢ Navy, plate number strip, line through “N” varieties at Positions 2 and 6.**

this occurred on the Official plates: 15¢ Agriculture Position 100, and 24¢ Navy, Positions 33 and 92. Under magnification, these “improvements” are laughably crude, reminiscent of the botched attempt by Cecelia Gomez to restore the *Ecce Homo* fresco in Borja, Spain. Better to have left well enough alone. So far, I’ve been able to find single copies of these recut varieties, but nothing in a multiple.

Finally, there is an unusual phenomenon on one of the 3¢ Post Office plates, Plate 141, on which all the positions appear to have been re-entered. As of yet, this has not been thoroughly written up, but Ebner identified it on bottom right plate number and imprint strips in the Lanphear exhibit collection, showing the original state and the strengthened state.

### Conclusion

To my everlasting regret, I never did heed Chang’s advice that I should assemble a representative showing of the Official special printings. These stamps, sold un gummed to the general public, had been overprinted “SPECIMEN” to prevent them being used postally, and for many years were improperly located in the specialized catalog. The value of these special printings, most of them sold in tiny quantities, was vastly underappreciated, except by a few enlightened souls such as Staubus and William E. Mooz. When the collections of Markovits, Lockyear, Lobdell and Huggins were sold at public auction in recent years, their holdings of special printings, especially the rare “SEPCIMEN” errors, brought staggering prices. At the time they were all making what turned out to be wise investments, I was pushing peanuts with my nose, buying fancy cancellations on off-cover Official stamps, thousands of them. Down the line these will make for some nice balance lots.

In 1974, fresh out of design school and working at my first job at an architectural firm, I met Roman Beck, a diminutive older architect, born in the Sudetenland under German occupation, who maintained that his growth had been stunted by poor nutrition in his childhood. He was a stamp collector, and led me around to some local clubs and shows. As a philatelist, he had a legitimate claim to fame, because while examining a set of new issues for the Falkland Islands, he discovered the startling center-transposed error on the Falkland Island 6d of 1964 showing *HMS Glasgow* instead of *HMS Kent*. His copy of this major error became the basis for a new listing in the Stanley Gibbons catalog.

The odds have always been stacked against philatelists making a discovery of this magnitude, but we can always dream. I believe that in recent years, the collecting of Official plate varieties has attracted new interest, because this field, never having been sufficiently studied in the past, is fertile ground for new finds and new research. Not blessed with exceptional vision, I have mostly contented myself with ferreting through dealers’ stocks to find my own first copies of known varieties, not identified and hence underpriced. Paying a steep premium for what someone else has already discovered, that’s a vicarious

kick, like buying a gold doubloon or pieces of eight certified as coming from a salvaged shipwreck. I can scarcely imagine how thrilling it must have been for Ebner or Sayers to find the discovery copy, the confirming copy, puzzle out the bewildering extraneous lines to determine their source, and then plate a new foreign entry—which in the field of United States classic stamps in general, is a very rare variety. Perhaps sweat-drenched biologists and botanists, slogging through the jungle, feel something comparable when their years of fieldwork finally pay off, and they alight upon a heretofore unknown species.

### Endnotes

1. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, sale 577, April 10, 1981, “The Crystal Collection” (lot 403).
2. Sayers self-published in 2004 a two-volume loose-leaf compendium of all the plate varieties he had identified up to that point. A copy is available at the American Philatelic Research Library (APRL MO721). His series of articles in the *Chronicle* treated the departments alphabetically, beginning in *Chronicle* 219 and concluding in *Chronicle* 228. For this staggeringly impressive body of work, Sayers was awarded the Carroll Chase Cup in 2009.
3. Rollin C. Huggins, Jr., “That Elusive ‘Crack,’” *Chronicle* 155 (August 1992) pp. 204-207.
4. George G. Sayers and Alfred E. Staubus, “Constant Plate Varieties of the 1873 Official Stamps: The Navy Department,” *Chronicle* 223 (August 2009) pg. 234.
5. Ralph Ebner, “The 6¢ State Foreign Entry Variety,” *Chronicle* 178 (May 1998) pp. 138-149.
6. Christie’s Sale of the Weill Brothers Stock, December 14, 1989, lot 788, later offered by Shreves.
7. George G. Sayers, “1873 Official Stamps: Foreign Entry of the 15¢ Post Office Design at Position 8 of the 12¢ Agriculture Plate,” *Chronicle* 234 (May 2012) pp. 168-170.
8. Lester C. Lanphear III, “Plating the Double Transfers of the 15¢ Interior Stamp,” *Chronicle* 253, pp. 87-90.
9. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, sale 1123, April 8, 2016, “The Rollin C. Huggins Jr. Collection of United States Official Issues” (lot 532).
10. Only 30 transfer rolls were utilized to produce 92 different Official plates. The only stamp to be printed in massive quantities, requiring multiple plates, was the 3¢ Post Office; therefore, this stamp alone might have had multiple reliefs on a dedicated transfer roll. The other transfer rolls would have contained reliefs of three different Official stamps. That double transfers and foreign entries occur vertically on Official plates was *not* caused by multiple entries from a transfer roll on a single pass, as one might have first postulated.
11. David H. Lobdell, “An Unusual Plate Mark on the 3¢ War Department Stamp,” *Chronicle* 174 (May 1997) pp. 131-135.
12. Spink USA, “The Robert Van Buren Emmons Collection,” January 24, 2017, lot 261. This is the second recorded used block of O80. Along with a few other used blocks in this collection, it has a dubious provenance, coming from the 459th Daniel F. Kelleher Sale (April 9, 1954), which contained a number of “used” Official blocks with obviously fake cancellations.
13. Mainberger’s collection, started when he bought the Philip Ward holding from the Weill Brothers, was sold by Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, December 12-16, 2005 (sale 905).
14. Siegel sale 1123, *op. cit.*, lot 609.
15. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, sale 1085, “The Curtis Collection,” November 6, 2014 (lot 4133).
16. George G. Sayers, “The 1873 Official Stamps: Roll-to-Plate Transfer Defects from Foreign Fibers,” *Chronicle* 212 (November 2006) pp. 278-287.
17. Sayers and Staubus, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-233. ■





AN EARLY WESTBOUND BREMEN-MAIL LETTER  
AND THE FIRST THREE ROUND TRIPS  
OF THE PIONEER STEAMER WASHINGTON

FRIEDRICH A. MEYER

The letter in Figure 1, which has not previously been documented in the philatelic literature,<sup>1</sup> was sent to New York on the maiden return voyage of the first American packet mail steamship, *Washington*. The letter was written in Leipzig, the German printing center in the Kingdom of Saxony, on June 22, 1847, by A.J. Ellis, a British scientist who was searching for translation and printing of his works in Germany. He exchanged correspondence with an American colleague in Cambridge, Massachusetts.<sup>2</sup> The writer took advantage of the “U.S. Consulate Leipsic” which dispatched the letter by diplomatic mail to the American Consulate in Bremen.<sup>3</sup> The U.S. consul in Bremen confirmed receipt of the letter on the reverse and added “from Southampton” to the original routing endorsement that was applied at Leipzig (“pr. Steam-ship *Washington* via Bremen”) and paid the British open-mail rate of 80 grothe for a double-weight letter. As usual for the Bremen city post office, the total postage was not marked on the letter. But the 3 shilling credit to England (two times the 1 shilling 6 pence single rate) was written in the typical red ink. The Leipzig endorsement was complemented by Bremen’s new red boxed handstamp PAID.



Figure 1. Folded letter from Leipzig, June 22, 1847, carried on *Washington*'s first return trip from Bremen. The letter was put on board the ship at Southampton. New York marked the cover for 34¢ due from the recipient in Cambridge, Mass. (24¢ sea postage plus 10¢ double under-300-mile rate).

The letter was carried by a British packet from Cuxhaven and then via London (July 5). It reached Southampton before *Washington* departed for New York on July 15. Although the letter would have been paid to the U.S. border had it been carried by a British-contract Cunard steamer, it was specifically endorsed to be carried by an American-contract steamship. Since there was no postal treaty between the two countries, no credit could be given to the U.S. for the sea postage that was paid in Bremen. New York rated the letter for only a single sea rate of 24¢ and the correct double-inland rate of two times 5¢ for under 300 miles, so the recipient in Cambridge was assessed 34¢.

There is no plausible explanation why the New York exchange office charged only a single sea rate. The letter obviously was recognized as a double-weight letter because of the correct double inland rate. But this was a new agreement, with which the New York clerks had little experience.

### **The Bremen mail and *Washington*'s maiden round-trip voyage**

The maiden voyage of *Washington*, the first American steamship of the Ocean Steam Navigation Company (Ocean Line), began a new period of transatlantic postal history. The Ocean Line received a subsidized mail contract from the United States Post Office, which led to a postal agreement with the Hanseatic City of Bremen. The Ocean Line had to assure a direct service between the U.S. and Bremen, an exchange of mail under American control, independent of the British-packet mail ships that dominated the north Atlantic. The so-called "Bremen Mail" was born. The new paddlewheel steamer's first trip was from New York on June 1, 1847; after a stop in Southampton, England, she arrived on June 19 at her target port Bremerhaven.<sup>4</sup> A wood engraving of the *Washington*, from a German source, is shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. The side-wheeler *Washington*, the first transatlantic steamship under American contract, in a contemporary wood engraving from a German publication.**

The sea postage was 24¢ or 24 Bremen grote, which matched the British packet rate of 1 shilling. Bremen's currency was the gold thaler, which was divided into 72 grote. For accounting between the exchange offices, the agreement equated one U.S. cent to one Bremen grote, although there was actually a difference of approximately 5 percent. This forward-looking postal agreement has been documented and described in great detail.

Selah R. Hobbie, First Assistant Postmaster under Postmaster General Cave Johnson, arrived in Bremen on *Washington's* maiden voyage with instructions to conclude with the Hanseatic City a prepared "Postal Agreement for Germany." Realizing its opportunity, Bremen immediately accepted the proposal, but had to point out that "Germany" included the postal administrations of 17 sovereign German states, and the Senate of Bremen was legally unable to speak for them. Nevertheless, the agreement was signed, although the parties recognized that implementing regulations still had to be prepared. Bremen could add into them the city's requirements, which the U.S. side accepted. The internal transit fee of 2 grote for the 40-mile distance between Bremen and Bremerhaven was not mentioned in those regulations.

On his return trip Hobbie stopped in England where he tried to negotiate the exchange of mail with Great Britain. The British position was firm and he was less successful than in Bremen.

Only with the maiden voyage of the second steamer *Hermann* in April 1848 could the Ocean Line assure the monthly round trips required by the U.S. postal administration. Therefore, it was not until March 1848 that Postmaster General Johnson informed the American public and all his postmasters about the details of the agreement with Bremen. After the successful negotiation with Hobbie in June 1847, the Bremen city post office was designated as the *de facto* agent of the American postal administration, and Bremen intensively promoted this agreement on the German side.

Bremen Senator Arnold Duckwitz, who was responsible for postal matters in his country, worked diligently on this project with other German states. Prussia and Hanover embraced the new agreement immediately, accepting the maximum German inland rate imposed by the U.S. of 12¢, which was equated to 5 silbergroschen (sgr), 4 gutegroschen (ggr), or 18 Rhenish kreuzer (kr). This was easy for Hanover, which had a uniform inland rate of 2 ggr for letters to and from England. In December 1847, Prussia established for the Bremen mail a 5 sgr uniform internal rate, irrespective of the distance within Prussia. Thurn and Taxis resisted at first, but accepted the 18 kr rate beginning in August 1848.

For handling ship letters, the Bremen City Post Office always charged a ship-letter fee. Consequently, for all incoming and outgoing letters carried by *Washington*, they added 2 grote for the transport between the city and the pier in Bremerhaven, a distance of approximately 40 miles (although this fee never was debited to the U.S.). Acceding to protests by the Americans, beginning with *Hermann's* arrival in April 1848, the Bremen city post office stopped charging this internal transit fee. The regulations and tariff instructions of Prussia, Hanover, and Thurn and Taxis included this Bremen 2 grote transit fee until mid-1848 for letters paid as far as the Ocean Line steamer in Bremerhaven.

With the formal announcement of the agreement in the U.S. and *Hermann's* first trip in April 1848, the exchange office in New York introduced various handstamps: PAID PART in black for payment to Bremen and PAID ALL in red for fully prepaid letters. Previously, manuscript markings such as "franco Bremen" or "franco New York" had been used. For *Washington's* first three round trips, only part payments have been observed.

This new direct connection to Germany and central and northern Europe was heavily promoted in the United States to assure immigrants they could keep close contact with their home countries and to attract more immigrants as well. Bremen, however, had to convince all the other German postal administrations of the advantage of such an agreement with

the United States. Most of them did not regard lower postal charges as an advantage, seeking instead to maximize postal revenue. Therefore, there was much more eastbound mail during the first trips (and even during the first years) than Bremen sent to the United States. In the early years, Bremen's trade was both waiting and hesitant. Writing letters was not a common practice for the families emigrants left behind. Letters had to be paid in advance and postage was expensive. It took years for Germans to accept the postal convention's innovations that allowed a letter to be mailed from any village in Germany to the most remote settlement in the U.S. at the same rate, whether fully paid, part paid or unpaid.

Unfortunately, the number of letters conveyed on the first trips is only partially documented, but accounts and reports in the Bremen State Archive provide an overview and allow some conclusions. Table 1 shows departure and arrival dates along with the number of letters carried in both directions (between New York City and Bremerhaven) on *Washington's* first three round trips. The numbers printed in boldface are sourced from the archival documents; non-bold figures are estimates derived from the archival data.

<i>Washington</i> voyages 1847: Eastbound (from the U.S.)					
	Depart	Arrive	Number of letters		
Trip	New York	Bremerhaven	Unpaid	Prepaid	Total
1	June 1	June 19	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>2,400</b>
2	Sept. 23	Oct. 12	<b>2,000</b>	1,400	3,400
3	Nov. 18	Dec. 6	<b>2,200</b>	1,400	<b>3,600</b>
		<b>Total</b>	<b>5,200</b>	4,200	9,400
<i>Washington</i> voyages 1847: Westbound (to the U.S.)					
	Depart	Arrive	Number of letters		
Trip	Bremerhaven	New York	Unpaid	Prepaid	Total
1	June 25	July 30	<b>350</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1,250</b>
2	Oct. 19	Nov. 9	<b>310</b>	800	1,100
3	Dec. 13	Jan. 16	<b>440</b>	1,200	1,650
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1,100</b>	2,900	4,000

**Table 1. Letters carried on the first three voyages of the Ocean Line steamer *Washington*, the first American packet mail steamship. Numbers in boldface are based on information located in the Bremen State Archive. Numbers in regular face are estimates based on the archival data.**

It is safe to say that during these first three journeys, more than twice as many letters came into Bremen from the United States than were dispatched by the Bremen City Post Office to the U.S. All the surviving covers were paid only to the respective ports of departure, New York or Bremen, although according to the accounts of the Bremen city post office, fully paid letters were also conveyed in both directions. It might be assumed that those letters paid to New York or beyond also bore Bremen's new red boxed handstamped PAID.

The information in Table 1 documents the rarity of westbound letters from Germany that were carried on *Washington's* first voyages. Only one letter from Germany that was carried on *Washington's* maiden return voyage had been documented. This was put on the ship at Southampton, rather than at Bremen. This letter was in Richard Winter's collection and he described it in his book, *Understanding Transatlantic Mail, Volume 1*.<sup>5</sup>



**Figure 3. Another cover from *Washington's* first return trip, sent from Bremen to catch the steamer at Southampton. This was paid to the U.S. frontier, although the sea postage was not credited to the United States; 29¢ due from the recipient.**

It is noteworthy that on the maiden voyage, Winter reported there were 10,000 American letters to Great Britain, but only 2,400 to Bremen or beyond.<sup>6</sup> Winter also reported that on the same day *Washington* sailed from New York (June 1, 1847) the British Cunard steamship *Britannia* left Boston for Liverpool with 40,000 letters.

The Figure 3 letter, which was also processed in Bremen on July 2, 1847, the same day as the Figure 1 letter and seven days after *Washington* had sailed from Bremerhaven, was handled under two different postal regimes: the 1841 Anglo-Bremen convention and the British “discriminatory” rates beginning in June 1847, which then led to the British-American postal war.<sup>7</sup>

Here is the explanation. *Washington* sailed from Bremerhaven on June 25 as planned. On June 27, she had to return to Southampton because of machine damage and was able to continue the journey only after successful repair on July 15. The news of this delayed journey had to be known before July 2 in Bremen and also in Leipzig, since the letter was endorsed “p. *Steamer Washington*” and was sent on the old classic route via Cuxhaven and London, then to Southampton to catch the American steamer. Handwritten markings like these were also recognized by England.

The sender in Bremen paid 40 grote, which would have fully paid the letter to the American shore if it had been carried by a British Cunard steamer. The new Bremen hand-stamp **PAID.** was applied in red and the credit to England of 1 shilling 6 pence is marked in magenta ink: 6d Cuxhaven-London plus 1 shilling packet fee paying the letter to the U.S. border by a Cunard steamer. The postage for the route from Bremen to Cuxhaven was 4 grote (or 2d), one grote for Bremen and 3 grote for Hanover.

The New York exchange office charged the 24¢ sea postage plus the 5¢ (under 300 miles) rate to Baltimore, for a total of 29¢ postage due from the recipient.

The transatlantic sea postage that had been paid in Bremen was not credited to the Americans, since the U.S. and Britain had no postal convention and Great Britain refused



**Figure 4. From Bremen but not via *Washington*: Prepaid ("FRANCO") by British packet to Boston. Sent to Baltimore via the Cuxhaven-London route from Bremen on 27 August 1847; 12¢ due from the addressee: 2¢ ship fee plus 10¢ over 300 miles.**

to recognize non-British ships for the transport of mail (or goods).<sup>8</sup> This continuing refusal was the trigger for the British-American postal war which finally ended on February 15, 1849, with the first postal treaty between the United States and Great Britain.

Figure 4 shows a letter that was sent during the interim between *Washington's* first and second voyages. It was posted in Bremen on August 27, 1847, sent via Liverpool and paid to the American shore by a British packet to Boston. It bears a black **FRANCO** handstamp in contrast to Bremen's new boxed red **PAID**. The letter was carried by the Cunard *Britannia*, which departed Liverpool on September 4 and arrived in Boston on September 19. The recipient paid 12¢ to receive this letter, which went to the same Baltimore addressee as the Figure 3 letter carried on *Washington's* first return journey.

#### **Back to the new letter with the same date of dispatch**

Bremen's use of the new red boxed **PAID** is striking. In later years this marking was used exclusively on letters under the U.S.-Bremen convention. However, the previous **FRANCO** marking continued to be used as before on prepaid letters, including those to be carried by Cunard steamers. It never appeared on Bremen convention letters.

It is also striking that the Figure 1 letter from Leipzig does not show any German postal markings before it was handed over to the Bremen post office by the American Consul. This new American postal agreement must have had a high political value and the consulate in Bremen apparently was well informed, even of *Washington's* unscheduled repair in Southampton.

The great attention of the American administration to the handling by Britain of this first non-British packet mail may indicate that difficulties had been expected. *Washington's* mechanical failure on the return journey may have come as a welcome opportunity

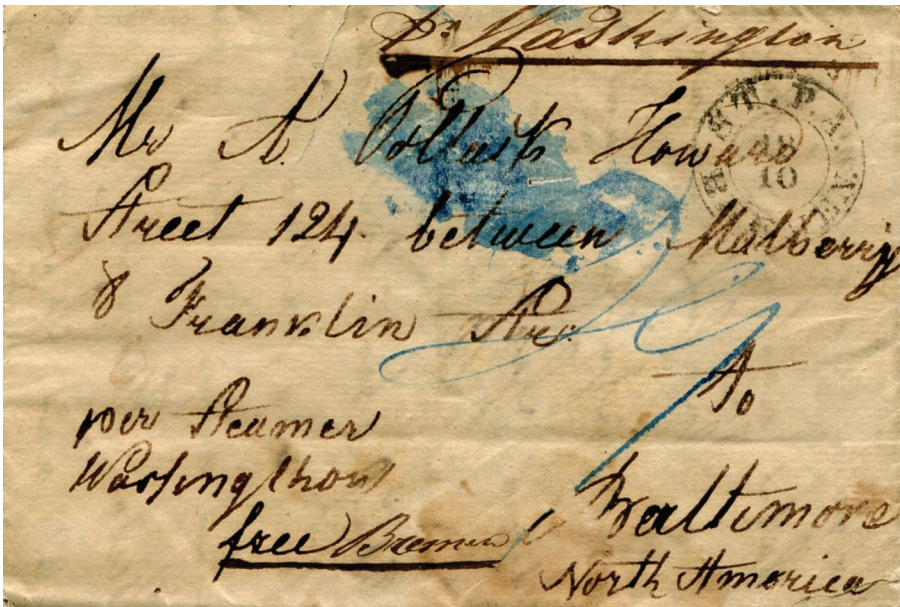
for Hobbie to press for a postal agreement between England and the United States. While England initially insisted on her “Navigation Act,” she ultimately had to give way. Finally, after 19½ months, on February 15, 1849, the first Anglo-American postal treaty became effective.

***Washington’s second westbound trip***

Since there are no letters recorded from Bremen on the first return voyage, the difficulties of this entirely new enterprise are made clear and recognizable only on letters of the second westward journey. Three westbound covers will be compared.

*Washington* started her second trip from New York on September 23, 1847, reached Bremerhaven October 12, and resumed the return journey by departing Bremerhaven on October 19. From this westbound trip the four covers recorded so far show that the processing on both sides had yet to be developed and refined.

The letter shown in Figure 5 originated in Buende, in Westphalia (which belonged to Prussia) and is marked “free Bremen” in addition to the steamer endorsement. It was paid to Bremen and was sent there on October 18 by an intermediary or forwarder. There is no Prussian handstamp on the cover and the postage to Bremen would have been 2 sgr plus 2 grote (¾ sgr) for a single letter (10-15 miles). The New York exchange office charged 29¢ in blue ink to the recipient in Baltimore, 24¢ sea postage plus 5¢ for the under-300-mile domestic rate. There is no New York arrival marking.



**Figure 5. Cover to Baltimore from Buende, Prussia, carried on *Washington's* second return trip. Sent privately to Bremen and posted there on October 18, 1847; 29¢ due from addressee: 24¢ sea postage plus 5¢ under-300-mile rate.**

The Figure 6 letter from the Prussian capital bears the handstamp Berlin 16 October [1847] and the handwritten notation from the American sender “*By the Steamer Washington from Bremen.*” The clerk of the Prussian post office in Berlin added “*fr bis Bremen*” and the postage of 6¾ sgr, the full rate on board *Washington* in Bremerhaven. The eight-zone tariff of 1844 for the Prussian domestic postage was still in effect (4 sgr Berlin-Bremen, 1½ multiple for ¾ Loth or 6 sgr) plus the Bremen transit fee of 2 grote or ¾ sgr. It was not until December 15, 1847, that the Prussian Regulation (*Verordnung*) No. 50 appeared, mandating a uniform domestic rate of 5 sgr for U.S. correspondence.



Figure 6. Second return trip: From Berlin, Prussia, October 16, 1847. Paid to Bremen and sent to Albany, N.Y. Note the handwritten directive at lower left: "By the Steamer Washington from Bremen." Postage of 29¢ due in the U.S.: 24¢ sea postage plus 5¢ under-300-mile rate.

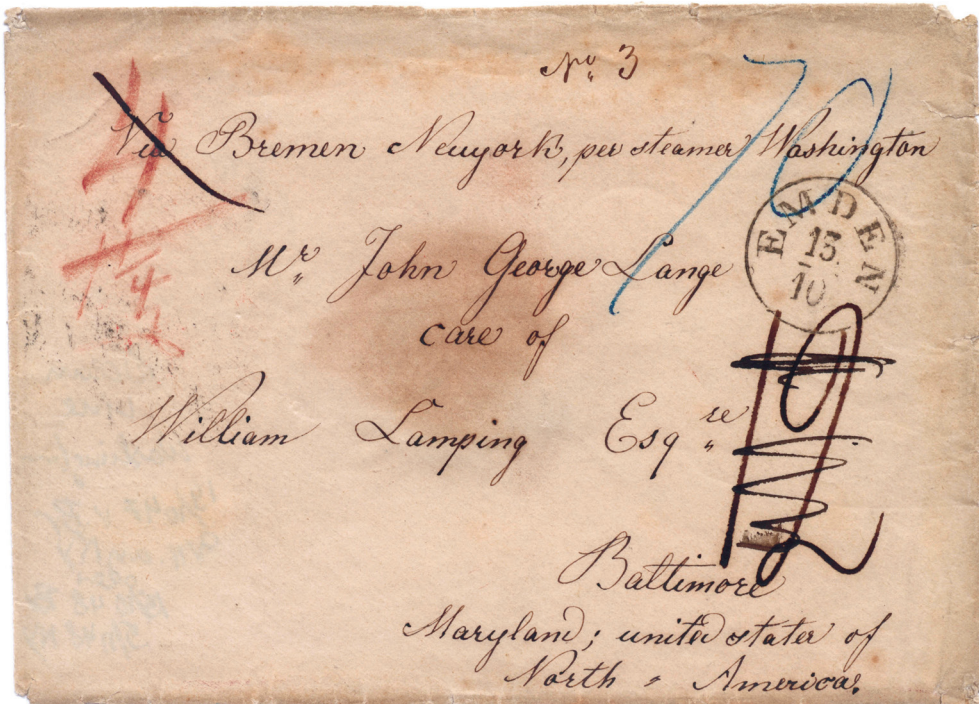


Figure 7. From Emden, Hanover, 15 October 1847, another cover via *Washington's* second return trip. In red at upper left: 1¼ loth weight and 4 grothe double Bremen-Bremerhaven fee (not debited to the U.S.); 70¢ due at Baltimore for 12¢ double rate from Hanover to Bremen, 48¢ double sea postage and 10¢ double domestic rate.



The letter bears no signs of processing by the Bremen city post office, and New York again marked in blue ink only the 29¢ due postage, without applying an entry handstamp. This cover is in the H. Conzelmann collection.

The unpaid letter shown in Figure 7 was posted in Emden in the Kingdom of Hanover on October 13, 1847. It bears the correct routing endorsement: “via Bremen Newyork, per steamer Washington.” The clerk did not find a notation “franco Bremen,” and wrote in red crayon at upper left a 4 grote double Bremen-Bremerhaven transit fee and the letter’s weight, 1¼ loth. Since the “franco” notation was missing, Bremen debited the U.S. 12¢ (2 times 6¢) for Hanover domestic postage. Bremen did not include the 4 grote transit fee in its debit to the U.S.

*Washington* left Bremerhaven on October 19 and reached New York without difficulty on November 9 after 21 days. The New York exchange office did not find a “franco Bremen” notation and added the 12¢ German domestic postage to the 48¢ double sea and 10¢ U.S. domestic postage for under 300 miles, for a total of 70¢ due from Mr. Lange in Baltimore. This is a well-known correspondence.

### Washington’s third westbound trip

The Ocean Line’s initial difficulties were enormous. It was a new line employing untested ships. Bremerhaven, the destination port, had been built only a few years previously. Not surprisingly, during 1847 the Ocean Line fell well short of its original plan of a monthly exchange of mail between Bremerhaven and New York. The first two round trips had lasted 60 and 47 days, respectively. A third voyage commenced on November 18, 1847. The necessary second steamer, *Hermann*, was now under construction and the volume of mail slowly developed on the American side, but relatively few letters traveled westward from Bremen in this first year.

The Figure 8 letter is not from Bremen, but was written in Damme, a small town in the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg. It arrived in Bremen without a Damme postal marking, and was handled in Bremen on December 13. It was most probably paid to Bremen, but there is no confirming marking. On the same day, *Washington* left for New York with an extra intermediate stop in Halifax, January 10, 1848. The New York exchange office applied its 24 handstamp in red (Hubbard-Winter 302)<sup>9</sup> for the first time on Bremen Convention mail, indicating the unpaid sea postage. New York also wrote “34” (cents) in the previously

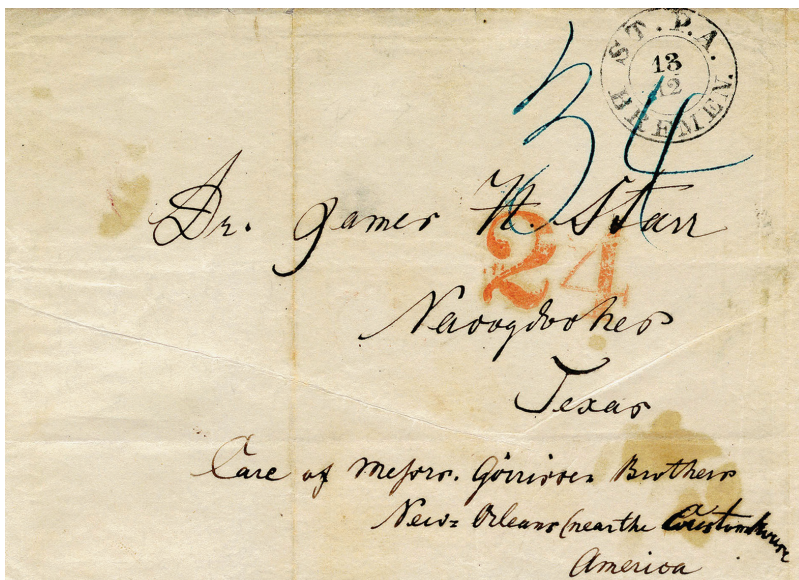


Figure 8. Cover from Damme, Oldenburg, December 13, 1847, carried on *Washington's* third return trip. Paid to Bremen and there posted to Nacogdoches, Texas, via a New Orleans forwarder. To the 24¢ sea rate, 10¢ over 300 mile rate to New Orleans was added for due postage of 34¢.

seen blue ink, indicating the postage due from Gonissen Brothers in "...New Orleans near the Custom House." Gonissen then forwarded the letter privately to Nacogdoches, Texas, where it arrived on February 4 after 53 days.

Unpaid letters to overseas destinations were little known at this time in rural Oldenburg, so it is not surprising that the Figure 8 letter was given directly to the Bremen city post office, which was the transit post office for Oldenburg mail to German states and foreign countries. Probably no one in Damme understood the tariff structure of the new Bremen convention, but they were aware of it. The postage on the letter would have been 6 grote to Bremen (10-13 miles) and 2 grote on board, for a total of 8 grote, according to the domestic rates prevailing in Oldenburg. There is no routing endorsement.

Also unusual is New York's use of red ink for the due handstamp on unpaid letters. This occurred only on covers carried on the second and third trips. Red was later used to indicate that a letter was paid.

### **Washington's first three eastbound trips**

To complete the picture, correspondences going to the U.S. (discussed above) should be compared to letters coming from the U.S. There are about twice as many of these, and they are covered with handstamps and rate markings because of the many rating points in the various German postal administrations. Often unclear and difficult to interpret, these markings require some rate knowledge from the pre-philatelic period. For a good reason, the American side insisted on a maximum of 12¢ German postage for prepaid letters, which (as previously noted) was equated to 4 ggr, 5 sgr and 18 kr. However, the overwhelming majority of letters from the United States were sent unpaid, so the German postage was not taken into account in the U.S., which had little information about German internal rates.

The cover in Figure 9 was posted at Massillon, Ohio, on May 24, 1847, prepaid 10¢ for the over-300-mile rate to New York. The manuscript 10 and handstamped PAID domestic postal markings were scratched out at New York and replaced by 24 (sea rate in U.S. cents) in blue ink as a debit to Bremen. The letter reached Bremerhaven on June 19 on *Washington's* maiden voyage. Based on the style of red crayon marking, I believe that the

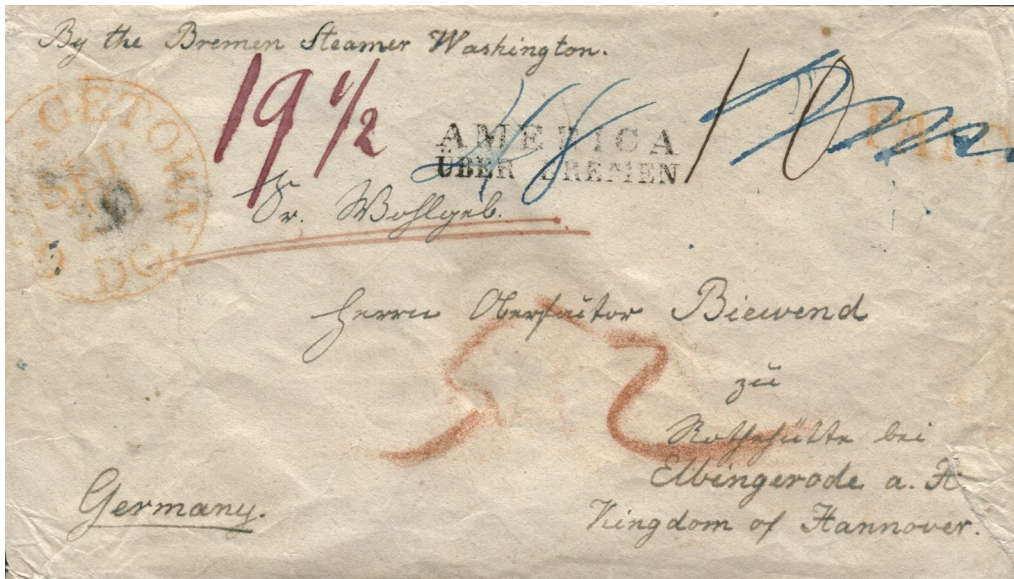


**Figure 9. *Washington's* first voyage: Cover from Massillon, Ohio, 24 May 1847, 10¢ rate (over 300 miles) prepaid to New York, sent via Bremen to Württemberg. The U.S. debited Bremen 24¢ (9 ggr) for sea postage. The 9¾ ggr Bremen debit to Hanover included a ¼ ggr Bremerhaven-Bremen fee; 1 gulden 19 kreuzer due from addressee.**

Bremen city post office marked  $9\frac{3}{4}$  (ggr) debit to Hanover (9 ggr sea plus  $\frac{3}{4}$  ggr Bremerhaven-Bremen fee) at upper left. On the same day the Hanover post office in Bremen applied the black transit handstamp **AMERICA/ÜBER BREMEN** on the front and its June 19 entry postmark on the reverse. Hanover added its transit fee of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ggr to the  $9\frac{3}{4}$  ggr debit, for a total of  $11\frac{1}{2}$  ggr or 49 kr as a charge to Thurn and Taxis, which in turn added 24 kr for its own transit. The cover shows Thurn and Taxis' debit to Württemberg of 73 kr or 1f 13 kr to which 6 kr Württemberg postage was added. The postage due from addressee Jacob Häusler in Nufringen amounted to 1f 19 kr.

Until this time, it was unimaginable that a letter could be sent all the way from the U.S. midwest to a remote Swabian village in the Kingdom of Württemberg, under a single postal agreement, with no prepayment, with the entire postage paid by the recipient.

Figure 10 shows a double-rate letter posted September 20, 1847, at Georgetown, near Washington, D.C. The cover was paid 10¢ to New York for double the 5¢ domestic rate for a distance under 300 miles. New York crossed out Georgetown's manuscript 10 and handstamped **PAID** and added the manuscript 48 marking representing the sea postage debit to Bremen. The Bremen city post office debit to Hanover was  $19\frac{1}{2}$  ggr (twice  $9\frac{3}{4}$  ggr) or 52 grote (48 grote international plus 4 grote German internal). The Hanover post office in Bremen applied **AMERICA/ÜBER BREMEN** to distinguish the cover from the letters routed via Prussia.



**Figure 10. Double-rate cover from *Washington's* second eastbound voyage, posted at Georgetown, D.C., 20 September 1847. Prepaid 10¢ double domestic postage to New York and sent via Bremen to the Kingdom of Hanover. The New York exchange office debited Bremen 48¢ (18 ggr) for double sea postage; the  $19\frac{1}{2}$  ggr or 52 grote Bremen debit to Hanover included  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ggr double Bremerhaven-Bremen fee.**

On the reverse, the postage due in Elbingerode, in the Kingdom of Hanover, is shown as  $21\frac{1}{2}$  ggr, which included only a 2 ggr single (rather than double) Hanover domestic rate. No weight is indicated on the cover, but the letter might have been over  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce and under one loth, thus a double rate in U.S. but a single rate in Hanover.

The letter in Figure 11 was sent from New York on *Washington's* third outbound voyage, November 18, 1847 and bears a red New York circular datestamp, even though it was not prepaid. The New York exchange office claimed 24¢ sea postage using the same



spective ports of departure (New York or Bremen)—with the exception of the cover from Emden to Baltimore shown in Figure 7.<sup>10</sup> But according to the accounts of the City Post, there were fully paid letters in both directions. Paid letters from Germany to New York or beyond might be expected to bear the boxed red “PAID” handstamp seen on the covers in Figures 1 and 3.

With *Hermann’s* maiden voyage in March 1848, the fifth journey under this postal convention, the regulations took full effect and finally brought the desired breakthrough on the German side. However, it took years to bring incoming and outgoing mail volume into balance. Thanks to Heinrich Conzelmann for his constructive and detailed contributions to article prior to publication.

### Endnotes

1. However, a photograph of this cover was part of Stanley Ashbrook’s reference collection and has been posted on the Classics Society website, [uspcs.org](http://uspcs.org).
2. The letter is from Alexander John Ellis of Cambridge, U.K., a British philologist who made contributions to mathematics and musical theory. The recipient is Professor J.E. Worcester in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a competitor of Noah Webster who wrote dictionaries and spelling works.
3. John G. Flügel, the American consul in Leipzig from 1838 to 1849, signed the letter and sent it to his colleagues in Bremen, Ralph King (Consul) and R. Boehme (Vice Consul).
4. Bremerhaven was an exclave of the City of Bremen on the lower river Weser, 40 miles north of the town. The territory was purchased from Hanover in 1827 to build a new, ice-free port that did not get choked up with sand. *Washington’s* arriving mail was transported to the Bremen city post office by smaller steamships in 3½ hours, in order to avoid Hanover and its transit fees, according to Christian Piefke, *Die Geschichte der Bremischen Landespost* (Bremer Schlüsselverlag H.Kasten, 1947), pg. 115.
5. Richard F. Winter, *Understanding Transatlantic Mail, Volume 1* (Bellefonte, Pennsylvania: American Philatelic Society, 2006), pg. 21.
6. *Ibid.*, pg. 93.
7. Letters that were prepaid 24¢ sea postage for carriage to the United Kingdom by the American-contract *Washington* were charged an additional 1 shilling sea postage in Britain, a charge the U.S. considered discriminatory. To retaliate, beginning in July 1848, the U.S. charged 24¢ sea postage on letters arriving on British-contract steamships. This “retaliatory period” lasted until January 1849, when the first British-American postal convention became effective.
8. This was based on the Navigation Act of 1651, valid since the days of Oliver Cromwell.
9. Walter Hubbard and Richard F. Winter, *North Atlantic Mail Sailings 1840-75* (Canton, Ohio: The U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., 1988), pg. 369.
10. H. Conzelmann’s collection includes a letter to Holland from *Washington’s* second trip that was paid to Bremen and marked “See Brief” in Bremen. ■

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USA at  
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## EXPLANATION OF PROBLEM COVERS IN CHRONICLE 254

The first of the two problem covers from *Chronicle* 254, shown at left in Figure 1, was franked with a 3¢ dull red stamp (Scott 11A) well tied by a “Taunton Ms. 3cts. Feb. 18” integral-rate circular datestamp. The cover also bears a red New Orleans circular datestamp dated March 5 and a red “DROP 1” handstamp. There are no additional markings on the back. The questions were why two circular datestamps? And what rates are represented here?

Several readers responded along similar lines of conjecture. Andy Burkman speculated that when it arrived in New Orleans the cover was further treated as a drop letter due to the “Box 6, No. 9” directions. Ron Getzin expanded upon that line of reasoning as follows:

This item was deposited in the Taunton post office where it received the black CDS cancel.... At some point it left the mails and was later deposited as a drop letter in the New Orleans post office. That is where it received the red New Orleans CDS and the DROP 1 marking....The 1c drop fee was to be collected from the recipient. Why and how it left the mails, only to re-enter the mails as a drop letter is the real puzzle. Note that there are about two weeks between when the letter first entered the mails in Taunton and then when it re-entered the mails in New Orleans. Perhaps this has something to do with why this letter left the mails.

Both Burkman and Getzin are onto something here. The key to the puzzle is the inscription at lower left. “Box 6” is in the same handwriting as the rest of the address panel, while “No. 9” is in a different handwriting. The person who sent the letter from Taunton



**Figure 1. Both our problem covers from last issue were addressed to New Orleans.**

mistakenly directed it to the wrong post office box. The owner of “Box 6” in due course returned the letter to the New Orleans post office, where a savvy clerk redirected the letter to the correct box—“No. 9.” From the clerk’s point of view, the post office performed as directed (delivery to Box 6 in New Orleans) for a prepaid fee of 3¢. In redirecting the letter to the correct box 9, it was treated as a drop letter reentering the mail system and requiring an additional drop fee of 1¢ to be collected from the addressee.

The second problem cover from last issue, shown at right in Figure 1, is another arriving New Orleans cover. This first-issue Nesbitt envelope bears a handstamp marking of the New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western Railroad in addition to the New Orleans circular datestamp and WAY marking. Although the cover lacks a year date, the Buchanan, Carroll address suggests usage prior to 1859.

We posed two questions: How did this cover get to New Orleans, and what is the significance of the WAY marking? Hugh Feldman provided information from his forthcoming

book *U.S. Contract Mail Routes by Railroad (1832-1876)* that provides background information on the railroad as well as a synopsis of its mail contract:

The Brashear, New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western Railroad was chartered in March 1852 with construction commencing in October 1852 at Algiers, with the City of New Orleans subscribing for \$1,500,000 of the \$3,000,000 capital stock. The company was reincorporated in April 1853 doubling the capital. Construction reached 17 miles to St. Charles when the first excursion was made on December 3, 1853.

The first contract was made for Route 7808 when the railhead had reached Tigerville, 66 miles west of Algiers, with the company paid \$50 per mile for a three times a week service including 2 mile ferriage across the Mississippi between New Orleans and Algiers [emphasis added]. Service commenced on November 6th 1855....

The fact that the contract included ferriage across the river from Algiers to New Orleans provides an important clue. Depending upon the actual year of use the railroad marking could have been applied by a route agent on board the train or by an employee of the railroad at the terminus of the rail line at Algiers, which is directly opposite New Orleans on the west bank of the Mississippi. From Algiers the locked mail bags plus accumulated loose letters were transported across the river by steamboat and deposited at the New Orleans post office. (NEW ORLEANS COVERS concluded on page 311)

### PROBLEM COVER FOR THIS ISSUE

Our problem cover for this issue, shown in Figure 2, is an incoming cover that originated in Melbourne, Victoria. A manuscript *Harbinger Steamer* at the top is crossed out. Written underneath is *per Europa*. In the lower left there is a double-oval forwarder's hand-



Figure 2. Our Problem Cover originated in Melbourne, Victoria, and found its way to New York City. The question is how? The two markings at lower left provide clues.

stamp struck over an Adams & Co. boxed express marking. The only marking on the back is a green LIVERPOOL circular datestamp dated AU 19 1853. There are several related questions here: How did this cover get from Melbourne to London? Who affixed the 1 shilling British stamp, and where? ■

**THE SPRINGFIELD FACSIMILES OF CONFEDERATE POSTAGE STAMPS  
BY STEVEN ROTH, FRANCIS CROWN JR. AND PATRICIA KAUFMANN**

REVIEWED BY JERRY PALAZOLO

Virtually every collector of a certain age has probably owned a set of the Springfield facsimiles of Confederate stamps and may even have been fortunate enough to have obtained them mounted in a little “Tasco Educational Booklet.” The Springfield Confederates have after all been around for over 80 years, yet little is really known of their origin or purpose. Virtually nothing has been written about them until now.

This new book presents detailed and exhaustive analysis of the facsimiles themselves along with details about their various printings and presentations over the years, providing breakthrough information including previously unavailable biographical information on the man who created them.

After a brief introduction the authors delve right into the subject matter with an extensive overview of the facsimiles themselves, including information on who produced them and how they were made. It may come as a complete surprise to some readers that there was not just one set of Springfields. In fact they appeared in myriad formats with assorted backstamps (or none at all) as well as some very rare “cancelled” varieties.

Probably the most surprising revelation is that the majority of the Springfield designs were not even reproductions of actual Confederate stamps. Most of the values were reproduced from hand-drawn images created by August Dietz in 1918. Dietz called these “fac-simile die proofs.”

Another chapter provides an extensive look at the controversy surrounding the marketing of the Springfield facsimiles and the resulting backlash in the philatelic press during the middle of the 20th century. In the face of a barrage of criticism, the creator of the Springfields never backed down. Instead he answered his critics at every turn by tweaking his product and his advertisements to blunt their objections, all the while steadfastly proclaiming that he never intended to defraud or deceive anyone.

The final chapter gives readers a history of the Tatham Stamp and Coin Company as well as its various predecessors and affiliates. Readers may be surprised to learn that its



***The Springfield Facsimiles of Confederate Postage Stamps*, by Steven M. Roth, Francis J. Crown Jr. and Patricia A. Kaufmann. Published by the Confederate Stamp Alliance. ISBN: 978-0-9818893-2-0. Hardbound, unsewn, card covers, 8.5 x 11 inches, 116 pages, color throughout. \$30 post-paid from Larry Baum, CSA secretary, 316 W. Calhoun St., Sumter, SC 29150.**



founder, Howard MacIntosh, and his company became one the premier mail-order houses for both stamps and coins during the 1940s and 50s. A brief but thorough biography of MacIntosh is included, presenting hitherto unpublished information on his life and career.

The volume culminates with lavishly illustrated appendices showing the characteristics of the Springfields and their various backstamps—as well as the assorted “Tasco Educational Booklets” that often accompany these sets of labels. A final 24-page appendix goes into painstaking detail comparing the Dietz facsimiles both to genuine stamps and to the Springfields. This reviewer was not quite sure what to make of this information and actually found it a bit confusing. The source of the images and their comparison to actual stamps has been amply covered elsewhere.

This leads to one other criticism. The book reads more like a collection of essays than one cohesive work. But the three authors stayed on course, presenting a wealth of information in a relatively short span of pages. Readers with a penchant for philatelic nostalgia will find this work both educational and entertaining. ■

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*(NEW ORLEANS COVERS from page 309)*

Steve Roth responded that such piggybacking was “was a common, symbiotic practice among railroads, steamboats and/or stage coaches at the time, many of which were under common ownership. Likely, however, the rail line would have connected with a steamboat having a mail contract, too. In that case, if the steamboat did not have a route agent aboard, loose letters (including the Problem Cover) would have been turned in by the steamboat captain to the New Orleans post office as required.”

Burkman and Getzin speculated on just such an arrangement in their responses as well. Your editor agrees and is of the opinion that in essence the short ferriage across the river to New Orleans was actually just an extension of the railroad—as is confirmed by the language of the contract provided by Feldman. This letter (and others) could have been picked up anywhere along the 66-mile rail line. All were transported by steamer along with the locked mail bags across the river to be deposited at the New Orleans post office. There the loose letters (including our Problem Cover) were treated as way mail and marked accordingly. The WAY marking served as an origin marking indicating at what point the letters entered the mail system—in this case New Orleans. There is no indication that any additional fee was charged to the addressee. ■

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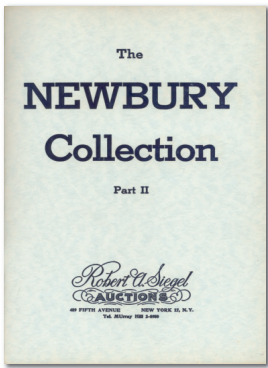


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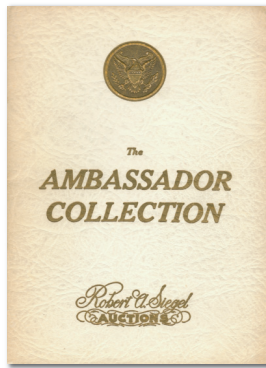
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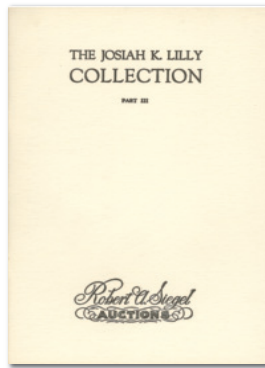
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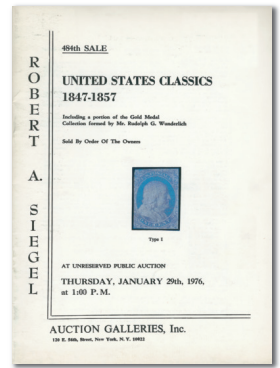
Newbury 1961



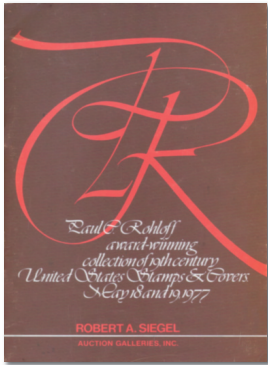
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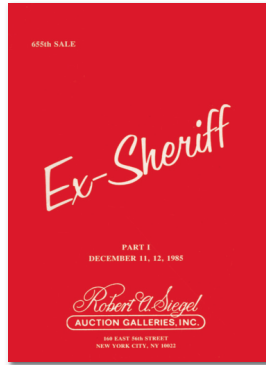
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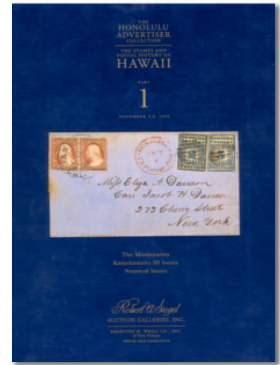
Rohloff 1977



Sheriff 1985



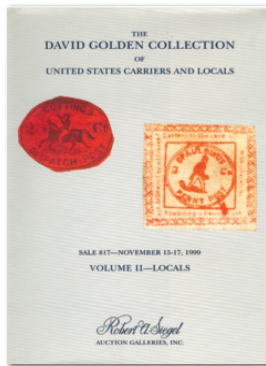
Kapiloff 1992



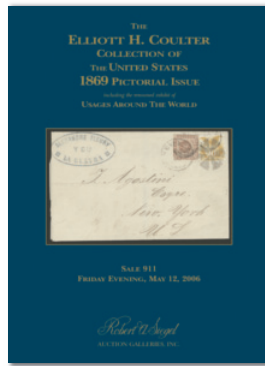
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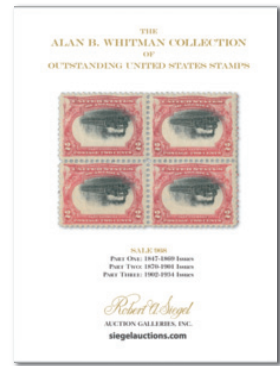
Zoellner 1998



Golden 1999



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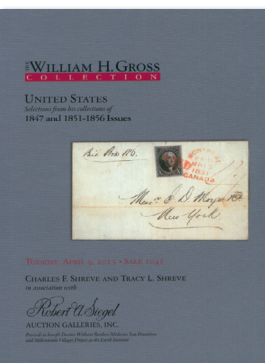
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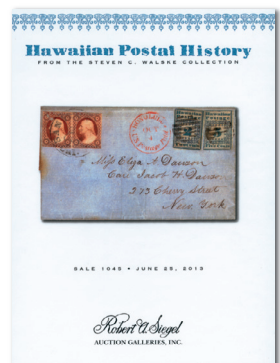
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