

# The Chronicle

## of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues

### The 3¢ U.S. Imperforate Stamp of 1851 - 1857

U.S. Philatelic Classics Society

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#### Position 1 L 1E:



Dr. Chase image courtesy of Smithsonian National Postal Museum

Click an image to enlarge it. Then click  to see it full-screen. Click the image again for full size 1200 dpi. At this largest size, use your mouse to "move it around" to focus on areas of interest. If you want to download the image to your computer, right-click on the image. Clicking outside the stamp border (or on the "X") returns you back to the starting point.

#### Characteristics Of Position 1 L 1E:

Scott Number: 10A  
 Relief: B  
 Chase Recuts: 3  
 Shifts:  
 Guide & Other Dots: UL and UR dots  
 Comments:

No. of Impressions: 11339  
 Misplaced Relief:  
 McDaniel Recuts: 3  
 Cracks:

Philately in the 21st century: Screenshot from a remarkable new on-line plating tool, now accessible on the website of our Society ([USPCS.org](http://USPCS.org)), providing images, data and much else to assist in the plating of the imperforate 3¢ stamps of 1851-57. The site's creator, Bryan O'Doherty, introduces and explains [StampPlating.com](http://StampPlating.com) in our 1851 section.

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Alfred H. Caspary



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*The word "Condition" as we philatelists use it is an anomaly. It does not mean when used by itself just bad or good or varying condition, it means only finest condition, something in exceptionally choice and superb state; hence a man is (or rather used to be) called a condition crank. It was said of him "he has the condition craze," meaning just simply he was a collector who rejected poor, or average, or even fairly fine copies, and took only the most immaculate, perfect, and superb copies obtainable.*

*For many years such a collector was in the minds of most other collectors really*

*considered mad. It was inexplicable why he should be willing to pay 20 percent more just because the stamp had extra-large margins and a very light postmark. Goodness gracious! What difference did a tiny tear make, or a slight thinning, which, being under the mount, could not be seen at all.*

*The striving for perfection is a most natural and commendable human attribute. The ardent collector of pictures, books, china, silver, each and all turn their most ardent endeavor to the acquisition of the finest and most immaculate specimens. It always has been so; even before and ever since the*

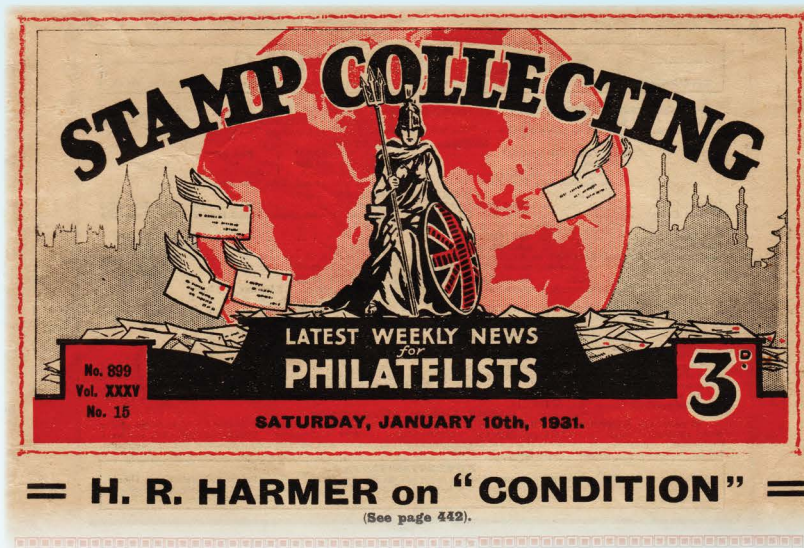
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Renaissance, the perfect and unsullied work of art, in its perfection and beauty, much scarcer than the ordinary example, would plainly from its very rarity bring the enhanced price. It took nearly fifty years of philately for us to find it applied equally to stamps.

Therefore I am, as I have always been, a strenuous advocate of taking whenever possible the finest obtainable specimens for one's collection. I recognize that a hobby that gives its devotees not only an absorbing and entrancing study, but at the same time gives them a reasonable chance of obtaining whenever they wish the return of their outlay, is a hobby founded on a rock. Of course, some careless people will buy rubbish in a dear market and some clever ones will buy fine stuff in a reasonably cheap market. That applies

in every branch of life and commerce, but the average collector who buys the finest stamps at the fairest prices, to use a slogan I have coined myself, should have no subsequent cause for regret whenever he sells.

The collector who buys a second-quality stamp buys a steadily depreciating security, and the man who buys the finest quality buys a certainly appreciating security. I am assuming, of course, what I feel sure is accepted by the huge majority of my readers, that the average collector buys from two points of view only. His interest in his hobby, and secondly the hope that should he at any time decide to sell, he will get some reasonable proportion of his outlay back. I do not think I find one collector in one hundred that ignores the second consideration.

**If you are interested in consigning to our next auction  
(April 2019) please contact us today to speak to a  
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# Auction Announcement November 2018

## The Highlands Collection of British North America Part One



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## **IN THIS ISSUE: NEW PLATING TOOL**

Since the 1980s, platers of the imperforate 3¢ 1851 stamp have been waiting for the computer era to help automate their arcane and detail-oriented pursuit. Finally this dream is becoming reality. This issue announces a remarkable new on-line tool that houses and displays most of the vast trove of 3¢ 1851 plating information that specialist collectors have developed during a century of research. This new website, called *StampPlating.com*, is accessible through the Classics Society website at *USPCS.org*. It was created by J. Bryan O'Doherty, RA 4569, a relative newcomer both to plating and to website development, who has journeyed a long distance in a short time. In our 1851 section this issue (page 325), O'Doherty introduces this new tool and explains some of its features.

Every collector of classic stamps, even those who have little interest in plating, should read O'Doherty's article, navigate to the website it describes, and experiment with this astonishing tool, a bold leap into the future.

In "By the Pilot" in our Stampless section (page 309), John Barwis provides an overview of covers that began their journeys on pilot boats, which guided larger vessels in dangerous waters. Some pilot-carried covers are clearly marked; others are discernable only from their letter content. Barwis includes a preliminary cover census; more must exist.

In our Essays and Proofs section (page 344), South African member Jan Hofmeyr uses documents from the Brazer-Finkelberg archive to flesh out details of the development of grilled stamps in the 1860s. As Hofmeyr reveals, all the Brazer-Finkelberg documents will soon be accessible on our ever-expanding website.

Alan C. Campbell always writes an interesting essay. In this issue (Officials section, page 356) he updates a previous census of covers bearing Official stamps to foreign destinations (there aren't many) and along the way provides wry insights into Officials collecting and Officials collectors, past, present and future. In a short feature in our Carriers and Locals section, page 322, Labron Harris examines three interesting covers, each franked with a Baltimore carrier stamp and a 3¢ 1857 stamp. On one cover is from Cincinnati.

Dr. James W. Milgram remains busy in retirement. In a brief but persuasive article in our 1847 section (page 318), Milgram discusses an unusual category of covers to which 1847 stamps were affixed by the local postmaster, with the postage charged to the sender's post office box account. In a special feature beginning on page 334, Milgram continues his history of classic U.S. covers bearing markings applied by stencil, this time with a reprise of stenciled steamboat markings. And most importantly, in our Foreign Mails section he launches a multi-part exploration of registered correspondence between the United States and the rest of the world. This is a long-neglected area toward which we are delighted Milgram has turned his attention. This first installment (page 366) provides general background and discusses registered covers to and from Canada. Much more will follow.

And we're pleased to announce an addition to the *Chronicle* editorial staff. With this issue David D'Alessandris joins us as assistant editor for the Foreign Mails section. He will be working with Section Editor Dwayne Littauer to assure that our coverage in this key category remains world class. D'Alessandris is currently vice president of this Society and has contributed importantly to the *Chronicle*, serving for more than a decade as our advertising manager and writing prize-winning and meticulously researched articles for our pages. ■

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## **BY THE PILOT**

**JOHN H. BARWIS**

**“Give me a plenty of sea room, and good canvass, where there is no occasion for pilots at all, sir.” –James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pilot, a Tale of the Sea*, 1823**

### **Introduction**

For almost three millennia, ship captains have ceded temporary control of their helms to local pilots when arriving or departing from ports. Both captain and pilot would then stand by the helmsman, because each bore legal responsibility for the safety of the vessel and its cargo, crew, and passengers. Occasionally, pilots also carried letters written by passengers or crew. This article documents the transport of letters by 19th century pilots.

Pilots are sailors responsible for maneuvering a ship through dangerous or congested waters, such as harbors or river mouths. They are highly skilled mariners with extensive local knowledge of tides and currents, as well as shoals, snags and other navigation hazards. Whether inbound or outbound, a pilot takes the helm of the ship he is assisting. His boat might either follow or lead him on his short trip, but the pilot steers his client’s vessel.

In the era of sailing ships, inbound vessels would pick up a pilot waiting offshore from a harbor or estuary entrance. In those days more than a dozen pilot boats might station themselves there, and would race to the vessel of a potential client. Some harbor authorities realized this was becoming chaotic and even dangerous, so they established a system that allowed each pilot company to get what was considered a fair share of the work. The pilot boats flew identifying pennants so incoming ship captains could distinguish them from fisherman, oystermen and day sailors.

From their beginnings, settlements on the eastern coast of North America featured pilots, initially using local natives as guides. Professional pilots are known to have been active on the Delaware River at least as early as 1650 and on Chesapeake Bay by 1661.<sup>1</sup> In 1694 the Colony of New York appointed the first local mariners as “Sandy Hook Pilots,” and by 1720 was licensing them. The Boston Marine Society commissioned pilots by 1742; by 1783 their appointments were controlled by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.<sup>2</sup> Although their starting dates are uncertain, Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, and New Orleans have all had pilot service since the early 18th Century. Sam Houston approved the first laws regarding Texas pilots in 1838.<sup>3</sup>

Ports on the American Pacific coast also recognized the need for competent and knowledgeable pilots early in their development. In 1850 the California Legislature passed “An act in relation to the appointment of pilots for different ports of California.”<sup>4</sup> Ships entering the Columbia River in the early 19th century were often met inside the bar by local Native Americans who then acted as guides. The Columbia River Bar Pilots were established in 1846, although non-native pilots had already been providing service there.<sup>5</sup> On Puget Sound, pilot services began in 1840; Washington Territory passed its first law regulating pilotage in January, 1868.<sup>6</sup>

Outbound ships could conveniently take on a pilot in the harbor before getting underway. Inbound ships, by flying a pennant or firing a gun, could request help from an offshore pilot, whose boat would be waiting at the entrance to an estuary—“outside the bar.” To help captains identify themselves as guides, a pilot boat flew a special pennant from the mast, and usually had a large identification number on the mainsail. American pilots began the transition from sail to steam in the 1870s, but many worked under sail until well into the 20th Century, as exemplified by the Charleston pilot schooner shown in Figure 1, from a photograph taken in 1920.



**Figure 1. Charleston pilot schooner working the bar, 1920. Photo courtesy Charleston Harbor Pilots Association.**

### **Carriage of mail by pilots**

A letter written on board an outbound ship could be given to a pilot before he disembarked for his return to the harbor. Such covers might be endorsed “by the pilot” or simply “pilot.” Others bear no endorsement but in their contents mention carriage by the pilot. Surviving covers show that pilots carried letters to the post office, as well as directly to an addressee. The 1792 U.S. postal laws allowed both practices:<sup>7</sup>

**And be it further enacted, That if any person, other than the Postmaster General, or his deputies, or persons by them employed, shall take up, receive, order, dispatch, convey, carry or deliver any letter or letters, packet or packets, other than newspapers, for hire or reward, or shall be concerned in setting up any foot or horse post, wagon or other carriage, by or in which any letter or packet shall be carried for hire, on any established post-road, or any packet, or other vessel or boat, or any conveyance whatever, whereby the revenue of the general post-office may be injured, every person, so offending, shall forfeit, for every such offence, the sum of two hundred dollars. Provided, That it shall and may be lawful for every person to send letters or packets by special messenger.**

This “special messenger” provision continued in force at least throughout the 19th century, albeit phrased differently in subsequent versions of the Postal Laws and Regulations. The principal criteria were that a letter had to be handled without compensation, and had to be carried on a non-scheduled basis.

### **Carried by Delaware River pilots**

Philadelphia is about 90 nautical miles from the Atlantic Ocean via Delaware Bay, the mouth of which is bordered by Cape Henlopen and Cape May. Depending on winds and tides, in sailing-ship days the outbound trip would consume most of a day and the inbound trip sometimes two or more days. Shoals and snags make the Delaware River hazardous to navigation. Henry Hudson wisely sailed only a short distance into the bay in August, 1609. Later, William Penn himself said that very little about the river was “suited for trade and navigation. It is long... tortuous... full of shallows: and its fresh water freezes quickly.” There was no Boston Tea Party in Philadelphia because the Delaware pilots refused to guide British tea ships up the river.<sup>8</sup>

Figure 2 shows a letter endorsed “Pilot,” and datelined “Bay of Delaware Mar 21st 1811.” News reports indicate the vessel was the schooner *Hero*, which was cleared for departure from Philadelphia on 18 March.<sup>9</sup> Three days is longer than usual for the trip downriver, but the sender mentions having waited at Newcastle—probably for a favorable wind—and that they were about to leave the Capes. The letter was not postmarked at Philadelphia until 24 March, so the pilot boat may have waited at the Delaware Bay Bar to



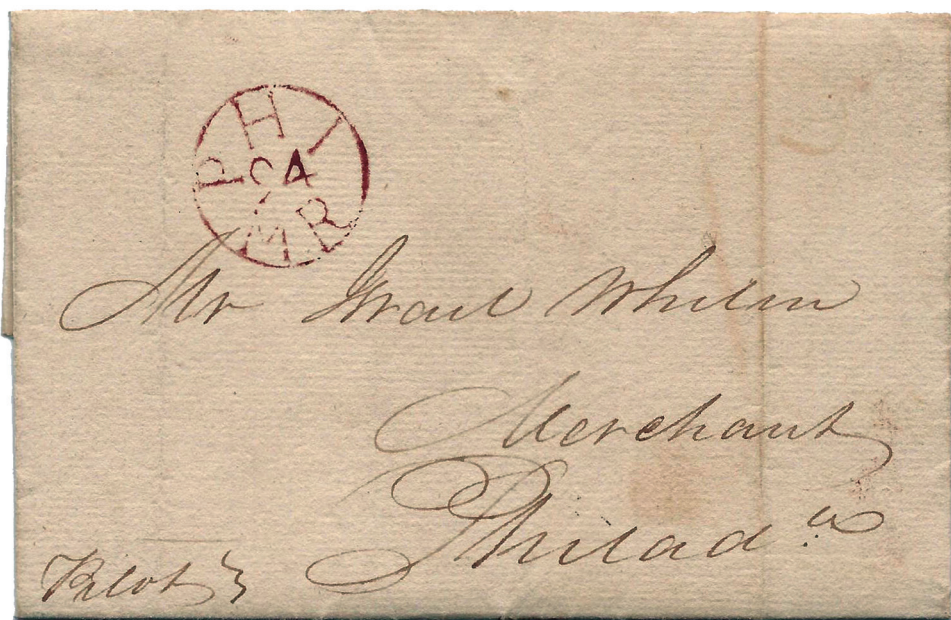


Figure 2. Carried by a pilot from Delaware Bay in 1811. Philadelphia rated the letter 1¢ cent due as a drop letter (weak crayon stroke just left of right crease).



Figure 3. Cover carried by a pilot from Cape Henlopen, Delaware to Philadelphia in 1811. Philadelphia rated the cover for 8¢ due, the postage to Downingtown, Penn.

pilot an incoming vessel back to Philadelphia. The Philadelphia Post Office rated the cover 1¢ due as a drop letter (weak red manuscript marking at right) per the Act of 1810.

A second letter to the same addressee, this one dated “Cape Henlopen 23rd July 1811,” is shown in Figure 3. The vessel is not identifiable, as several schooners cleared Philadelphia between 20 and 23 July of that year. The letter was written while underway by the schooner’s captain, Samuel King, who reaffirmed to Isaac Whelen—the vessel’s owner—that that he would make a speedy trip, and would deliver Whelen’s cargo in good

order. Capt. King reported that “I this day leave the capes with the wind South West—a fresh Breeze. The schooner in my Opinion Don’t Sail near as fast as She did before She was Sheathed.” A captain has no time to write letters while his ship is navigating dangerous shoals, so a pilot had to have been at the helm. One must therefore assume that, on clearing the bar, the pilot left the schooner and carried the letter back upriver to the Philadelphia post office. There it was readdressed and rated 8¢ due for the 37 miles to Downingtown. Sometimes the only way to determine if a cover was carried by a pilot is by reading the enclosed letter and making inferences from its content.

The cover shown in Figure 4 is datelined “Ship Medora 4 Oct 1812” and is not endorsed for carriage by a pilot. The sender, a young man writing to his father that the ship

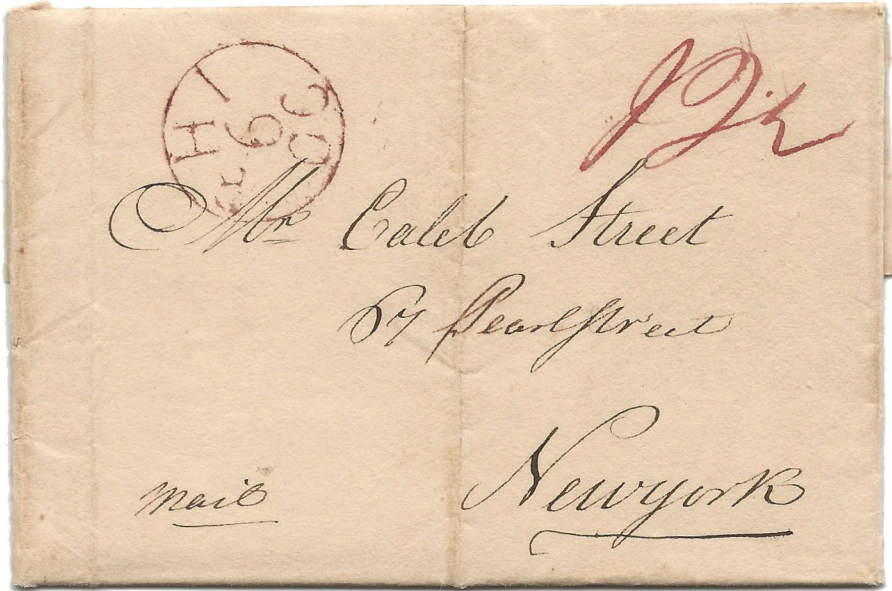


Figure 4. Cover from 1812, carried by a pilot from Delaware Bay to Philadelphia. There it was mailed and rated 12½¢ due, the postage to New York.

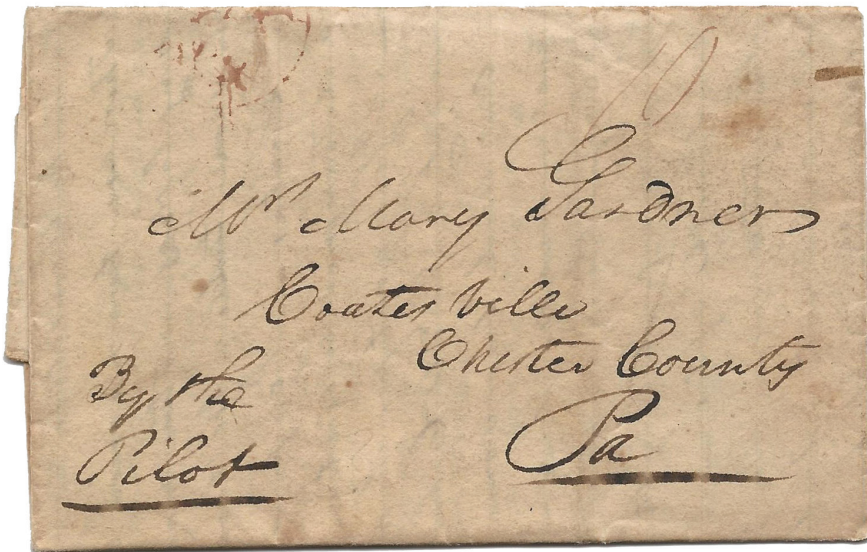


Figure 5. This 1828 cover was carried from a Cope Line vessel in Delaware Bay. Philadelphia rated 10¢ due, the postage to Coatesville, Pa.

was underway and “in sight of the Capes,” mentions they had spent the previous two days riding out a gale at Reedy Island, about 17 miles downriver from Newcastle, near the head of Delaware Bay. Although a pilot is not mentioned in the letter, he would have been the only person to have left the ship before she crossed the bar. Two days later the Philadelphia post office stamped the letter (“PHI 6 OC”) and marked it 12½¢ due, the rate to New York.

The cover shown in Figure 5 is boldly endorsed “By the Pilot.” The letter within is datelined “Monday morning—On board the Algonquin.” *Algonquin* was a Cope Line ship bound for Liverpool. Although the letter is undated, the sender mentions that they had left Philadelphia the previous evening. The combination of the datestamp style, a weak “APR” and a Sunday departure determine the year as 1828. The pilot was thus able to post the letter on either April 29 or April 30.<sup>10</sup> Philadelphia rated the letter 10¢ due, under the Act of 1816, representing the postage to Coatesville, Pennsylvania, for a distance of 30-80 miles. As with the letter in Figure 4, no ship fee was charged because the letter did not arrive at the post office in a ship’s mail bag, but was simply posted by an individual. The postal clerk might or might not have known the origin of the letter.

A full day on the Delaware was more than enough time for a passenger to pen a few letters and hand them to the pilot before he debarked for his return to Philadelphia. Such covers might be endorsed per pilot, but as noted, some are identifiable only by comments within the letter.

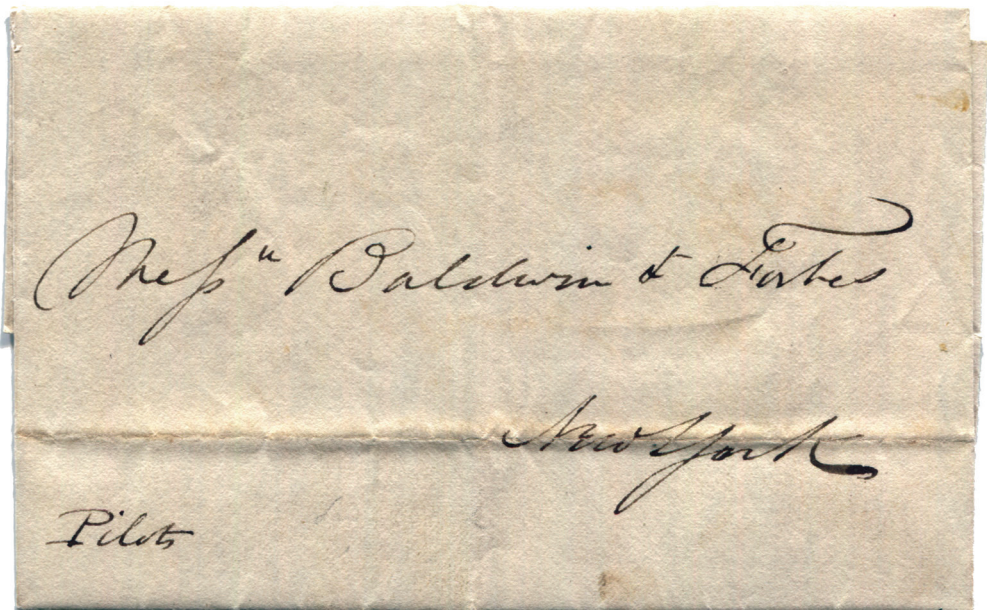
#### Carried by Sandy Hook pilots

Sandy Hook is only 20 nautical miles from Manhattan, so it is conceivable, perhaps even likely, that letters written aboard outbound ships could be carried back to the harbor and dropped at the New York post office on the day of the ship’s departure. Compared to departures from Philadelphia, passengers had less time for letter writing before a pilot would leave a ship, so covers carried by Sandy Hook Pilots may well be scarcer than those carried on the Delaware.

An 1824 letter carried to New York by a Sandy Hook pilot is illustrated in Figure 6. The letter is headed “off Sandy Hook Monday noon” and begins “I take the opportunity offered by the pilot who is leaving us to thank you...” The letter was delivered to the New York post office the next day, Tuesday, March 2. It was properly rated 1¢ due for a drop letter. The name of the ship is not known.



Figure 6. Carried by a pilot into New York City in 1824 from off Sandy Hook, New Jersey. New York rated the cover 1¢ due as a drop letter. Courtesy of Steven Roth.



**Figure 7. Cover from 1828, carried into New York City by a pilot from off Sandy Hook, New Jersey; delivered to addressee out of the mails. Courtesy of Steven Roth.**

The cover shown in Figure 7 is endorsed *pilot*, and its contents prove it was given to a pilot while underway. The writer was aboard the ship *Queen Mab*, Capt. Bailey, which sailed on 27 May for Savannah.<sup>11</sup> Dated "Sandy Hook, 27 May 1828," the letter within, to the father of the writer, begins: "Capt Baily has just settled with the Pilotage as he is about to leave us." The pilot left the ship as it was passing the Sandy Hook lighthouse and apparently carried the letter out of the mails to the addressee in New York.

In *Chronicle* 254, John Bowman documented an 1849 letter taken by a New York harbor pilot to Boyd's City Express. Boyd's delivered the letter to the New York Post Office, whence it traveled to Philadelphia via the New York and Philadelphia Railroad. Readers should consult Bowman's article for other useful information as well, including a map of New York's difficult navigation channel.<sup>12</sup>

### Carried by British Pilots

British coastal pilots were restricted to serve only those areas to which their license applied. They were authorized to carry letters ashore, including those from passing ships. Indeed, they were encouraged to do so by being paid by the postal service an amount equivalent to the master's "gratuity." Such service was so reliable that senders on transient ships passing close to a U.K. shore line endorsed their letters with instructions to pilots such as "To be forward by channel pilot."<sup>13</sup>

The Richard Winter collection of transatlantic mails contained two covers to the United States that were carried to the mails by pilots. The following analyses are from Winter's research notes.

The earlier of these two covers is shown in Figure 8. The letter was started at sea on 7 August 1842 about 350 miles out of Boston, enroute to Dover, and was endorsed "pr Deal Pilot." On 4 September in the Straits of Dover the letter was given to the pilot, who posted it at Walmer, a pilot station about two miles south of Deal. Walmer backstamped the letter and charged the pilot 8 pence for the outgoing ship fee. On 9 September the letter arrived at London and was sent onward to Southampton and put aboard the *British Queen* for New



Figure 8. Cover from Boston, 1842, carried by a pilot into Walmer, England, put into the mails and sent as a ship letter to New York and there rated 20¾¢—2¢ ship fee plus, 18¾¢ to Roxbury, Massachusetts. Courtesy of Richard Winter.



Figure 9. Cover from 1855, carried by a pilot to the mails at Bristol, England, then sent to Bath, Maine via New York. Courtesy of Richard Winter.

York. *British Queen*, from Antwerp, called at Southampton on 11 September and arrived at New York on 28 September. New York rated the letter 20¾¢ due: 2¢ ship fee plus 18¾¢ postage to Roxbury, Massachusetts. This was *British Queen*'s last of three voyages under the Belgian flag as a government packet.

Figure 9 shows the address panel of a letter written in the Bristol Channel on 31 October 1855 by the captain of the bark *Tonquin*, after she had cleared Bristol harbor for New York. The endorsement "Octr 31 pilot left the Tonquin" is written in the Captain's hand, possibly to let the addressee know he had not procrastinated in writing. He gave the letter to the pilot, who debarked *Tonquin* later that day and delivered the letter to the Bristol

forwarding agent J.F.&A. Alexander. On 5 November the agent posted the letter unpaid to Liverpool for the next packet, but it arrived too late so was forwarded to London. London debited 3¢ to the U.S. for British inland postage under the 1848 treaty, and sent the letter to Southampton for the next American packet. The Ocean Line's steamship *Washington* departed Southampton on 7 November, and arrived at New York on November 27. New York rated the cover for 24¢ postage due, the treaty rate for an unpaid single weight letter, to be collected from the addressee in Bath, Maine.

### Carried by Sydney Harbor pilot

Figure 10 shows a cover to Glastonbury, Connecticut, with a red New York circular datestamp with integral SHIP and a 14½¢ manuscript due rating. The letter within is headed "Bark Brothers, Sydney Harbor, 15 Feby 1837." The message begins: "My Beloved Abby, We have a very light wind, the pilot on board going past the Heads of Sydney Harbor. I can't refrain from writing still a few lines, the last moment an opportunity occurs."



**Figure 10. Cover cover carried in 1837 by a pilot from Sydney Heads to a forwarder in Sydney, Australia, then to a Liverpool forwarder who sent it onward via a private ship to New York, where it was rated 14½¢ due: 2¢ ship fee plus 12½¢ postage to Glastonbury, Connecticut. Courtesy of Dale Forster.**

The Sydney Harbor Heads are only about 6 miles from the harbor itself, so the writer only had a few hours to write to his wife. The pilot carried the letter back to the harbor, and delivered it directly to the ship *Jessie*, thus bypassing the Sydney post office. *Jessie* departed Sydney on 26 February for Liverpool and arrived there on 13 June.<sup>14</sup> There the letter was taken—probably by the ship's purser—to a forwarding agent, who endorsed it on the back "L'pool 14 June, rec'd and forwarded by R.F. Breed Eccleston." Although this forwarder is not listed in Rowe's book, three other letters of this correspondence used the same service.<sup>15</sup>

The forwarding agent avoided the British mails by carrying the letter directly to the ship *North America*, which departed Liverpool on 19 June and arrived at New York on 31 July.<sup>16</sup> The New York post office postmarked the letter on 1 August, and rated it 14½¢ due: 2¢ ship fee plus 12½¢ for the 120 mile trip to Glastonbury. This letter thus traveled aboard four vessels, a total of more than 18,000 nautical miles, before it entered a postal system.

### Summary and acknowledgements

Letters carried by pilots are seldom seen. All the pilot-carried covers to U.S. addresses that have come to my attention are listed in Table 1. The table presents the date of the enclosed letter, the addressee, the basis for inclusion in the listing, and a reference that should lead the interested reader to an image of the cover in question. Note that for half the covers in the listing, indication of pilot carriage was deduced from the content of the letter, not from an endorsement on the cover front. This suggests that many more such covers may yet be discovered by alert route agents who read the contents of appropriate

Date	Addressee	Basis for inclusion	Reference
21 Mar 1811	Israel Whelan, Philadelphia, Pa.	Ms. "Pilot" on front	Figure 2
23 Jul 1811	Israel Whelan, Philadelphia, Pa.; fwd	Letter content	Figure 3
4 Aug 1812	Caleb Street, New York, N.Y.	Letter content	Figure 4
2 Oct 1812	Caleb Street, New York, N.Y.	Letter content	Author's collection
3 Jan 1818	Stephen Hall, Savannah, Ga.	Ms. note on front	Philamercury, 6/7/18
2 Mar 1824	Amos Binney, New York, N.Y.	Letter content	Figure 6
11 Oct 1825	Henry S. Levench, New York, N.Y.	Dateline note	1071 RAS 4087
20 Apr 1828	Mrs. Mary Gardner, Coatesville, Pa.	"By the Pilot" on front	Figure 5
27 May 1828	Baldwin & Forbes, New York, N.Y.	Ms. "Pilot" on front	Figure 7
15 Feb 1837	Horace Hale, Glastonbury, Conn.	Letter content	Figure 10
xx Jun 1842	George Drew, New York, N.Y.	Ms. "Pilot" on front	Frajola list 7-15-10
7 Aug 1842	Geo. Read, Roxbury, Mass.	Ms. "per Deal Pilot"	Figure 8
24 Apr 1849	Sarah E. Coulter, Philadelphia, Pa.	Letter content	<i>Chronicle</i> 254, pg. 129
No date	George Drew, Charleston, S.C.	Ms. "Pilot" on front	52 Rumsey 1052
31 Oct 1855	Magoun & Clapp, Bath, Me.	Ms. "pilot"	Figure 9

**Table 1. Preliminary census of covers (to U.S. addresses) carried by pilot boat.**

letters. My thanks to Dale Forster, Steven Roth and Richard Winter for providing cover images and for reviews of earlier versions of this article. And I am grateful to the Charleston Pilots Association for permission to publish (as Figure 1) their photograph of a 1920 pilot schooner at work.

### Endnotes

1. Dana Kester-McCabe, 2018, "Delmarva River and Bay Pilots," in *Delmarva Almanac*: [http://delmarva-almanac.com/index.php/content/article/delmarva\\_river\\_bay\\_pilots](http://delmarva-almanac.com/index.php/content/article/delmarva_river_bay_pilots) (last viewed 6 August 2018).
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4. "Bar Pilots, The Pilot Law," *Daily Alta California*, January 15, 1850.
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7. Second Congress, Session I, 1792, An Act to Establish the Post Office and Post Roads within the United States, Chapter VII, Sec. 14.
8. Simon Finger, 2010, "A Flag of Defyance at the Masthead," *The Delaware River Pilots and the Sinews of Philadelphia's Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century*; University of Pennsylvania, McNeil Center for Early American Studies, pp. 387-389.
9. "Port of Philadelphia," *Philadelphia Gazette*, 18 March 1811, pg. 3.
10. John Barwis, "Postal History of the Cope Line of Philadelphia-Liverpool Packets," *Chronicle* 259, pp. 271-289. For the full text of this letter, see Barwis (2018), "A Letter Carried 'By the Pilot' of a Cope Line Packet Ship," *Pennsylvania Postal Historian*, Vol. 46, No. 3., pp. 11-13.
11. "Marine List, Port of New-York," *Commercial Advertiser*, 28 May 1828, pg. 2.
12. John Bowman, "Crossing the Bar: A Letter Carried by Pilot Boat Captain to Boyd's City Express," *Chronicle* 254 (2017), pp. 129-134.
13. A.W. Robertson, *A History of the Ship Letters of the British Isles* (1955-63), reprinted by James Bendon, Ltd. in 1984. Vol. 1, pp. A.32/C, D; A.61-63.
14. *Lloyd's List*, London, 16 June 1837, pg. 2.
15. Dale Forster, personal communication.
16. "Marine List, Port of New York," *New York Evening Post*, 1 August 1837, pg. 3. ■

## 1847 STAMPS CHARGED TO POST OFFICE ACCOUNTS

JAMES W. MILGRAM, M.D.

The practice of charging postage against a post office account is a very old one. I discussed “charge” and “charged” markings on stampless and stamped covers in *Chronicles* 138, 146 and 239. In the most recent article I showed a number of examples of bills for accrued postage sent from post offices to individual holders of post office box accounts. Recently I discovered an image of the earliest postage bill I have seen so far, from 1797.

This is shown in Figure 1: a receipt from the Boston postmaster acknowledging payment of postage charges incurred during the second quarter of 1797. Postal customer John

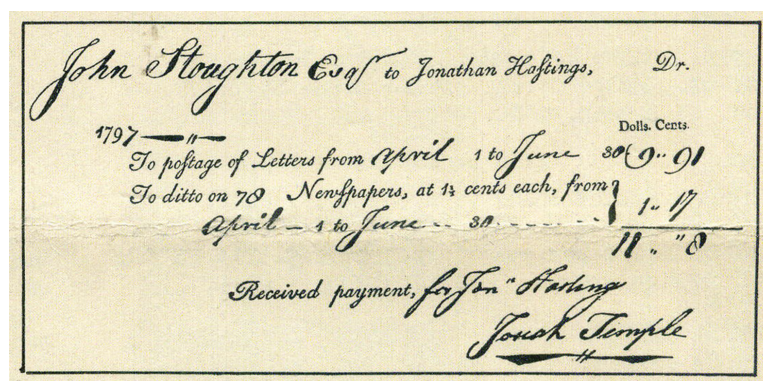


Figure 1. Receipt from postmaster Jonathan Hastings of Boston for post office charges billed to postal customer John Stoughton, showing charges for both postage and newspapers from the second quarter of 1797.

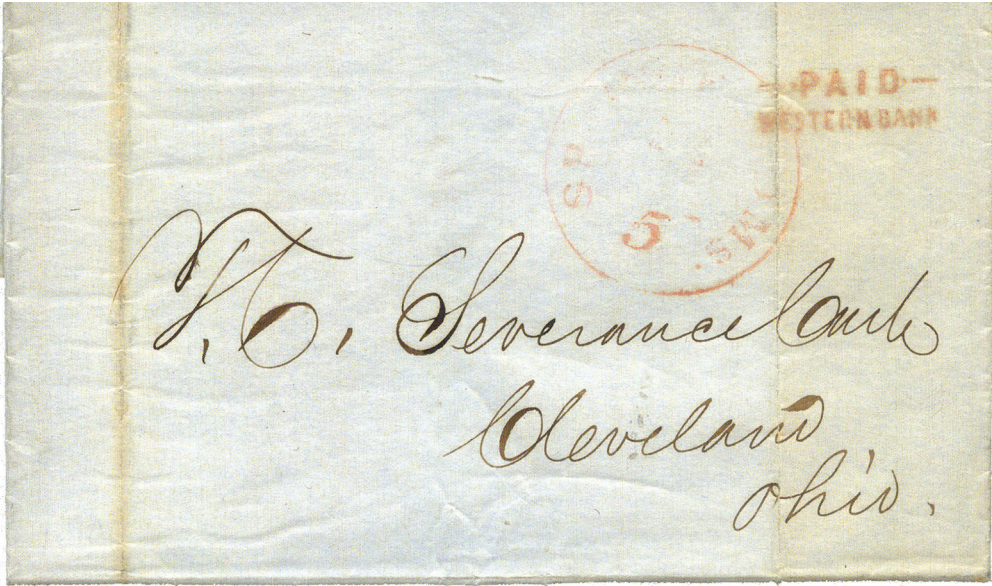
Stoughton was charged \$9.91 in letter postage and \$1.17 for postage on newspapers. Signed by an assistant, Joseph Temple, this receipt acknowledges payment of the charges on behalf of the postmaster, Jonathan Hastings. If the Figure 1 reproduction looks odd, that’s because it is a third-generation reproduction of a zinc-cut image that was originally published in *Postal Markings* magazine for January 28, 1938.

This document proves that the practice of charging postage existed as far back as the 18th century. Since there is no mention of a box number, I cannot say that this was a box account, but it was surely a post office account. Previously, the earliest instances of this practice, cited in my article in *Chronicle* 239, were from the early years of the 19th century.

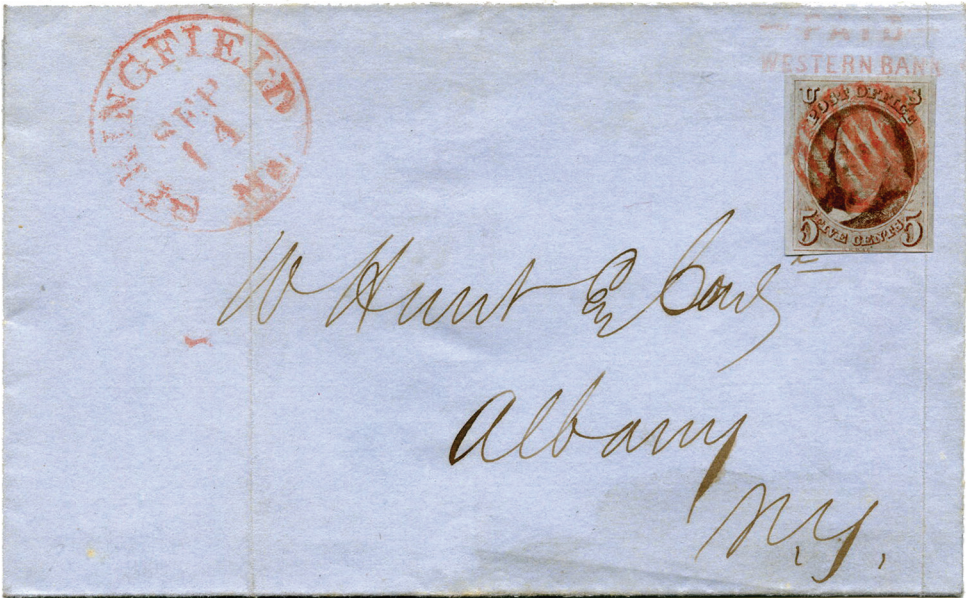
For collectors, the most interesting instances of charging postage occur when stamps are used to show the payment. This practice began with the our first postage stamps, the 1847 series. Figure 2 shows a stampless cover from Springfield, Massachusetts. The circular datestamp is not clearly struck, but the internal date is March 13, 1850, and the integral “5” indicates 5¢ postage, prepaid in this instance by a charge to the Western Bank of Springfield. (The proper rating should have been 10¢, since the distance this cover traveled is much more than 300 miles.) The red handstamp “PAID WESTERN BANK” is a typical charge-to-box-account handstamp. It was created and applied by the mailer, to indicate that the postmaster was to charge postage to the mailer’s account.

The cover in Figure 3, from Springfield to Albany, shows the same handstamp used in conjunction with 5¢ 1847 stamp with grid cancel and townmark “SPRINGFIELD MS SEP 14.” In this instance, instead of using a handstamped stampless marking, the Springfield





**Figure 2.** “PAID WESTERN BANK” red handstamp, applied by the sender, instructing the mailing post office (at Springfield, Massachusetts) to prepay the postage and charge the bank’s account. The red town postmark with integral 5 indicates this instruction was followed. The letter within is dated March 13, 1850.



**Figure 3.** “PAID WESTERN BANK” on a cover franked with a 5¢ 1847 stamp, post-marked September 14, 1850. In this instance, the Springfield postmaster elected to prepay the postage by applying the stamp. As with the cover in Figure 2, the charge was then billed to the sender’s post office box account.

postmaster applied a stamp to pay the postage. But as with Figure 2, the “PAID WESTERN BANK” indicates the postage was charged to the bank’s box account. This cover has a “Sep 13/50” docketing notation and a Philatelic Foundation certificate affirming that the stamp belongs on the cover.



Figure 4. Blue “CYRUS W. FIELD & CO. NEW YORK” handstamp and manuscript “Paid” indicating the New York postmaster was to frank the cover and charge the sender. The 5¢ 1847 stamp, applied by the postmaster, is tied by a square red New York grid killer. The “NEW-YORK” circular postmark is dated “APR 5” (1848).



Figure 5. Red “CYRUS W. FIELD & CO. NEW YORK” double oval handstamp, matching red “Paid.” and manuscript “Paid”—all applied by the sender, instructing the postmaster to pay postage and bill the cost to the account of the Field firm. As with the previous cover, the 5¢ 1847 stamp is canceled with a New York grid. This cover dates from May 22, 1851, late in the lifetime of the 1847 stamps.

Figure 4 shows a folded letter internally dated April 4, 1848, with a blue double-oval company handstamp designating “Cyrus W. Field & Co.” Field was an entrepreneur who helped found the Atlantic Telegraph Company and laid the first transatlantic telegraph line in 1858. Note that the sender marked “Paid” in the lower left corner of the address panel, indicating his desire to have the postage charged to Field’s account. The stamp is tied by



**Figure 6. Same company, same treatment, on an 1851 cover. The red markings were applied by the Field firm, by way of instructing the postmaster to prepay the cover and charge the firm's account. The 3¢ 1851 stamp on this cover is Scott 10A. The black "NEW-YORK JAN 19" postmark presumably dates from 1852.**

New York square red grid which matches the color of the "NEW-YORK APR 5" postmark.

Figure 5 shows a second cover from the Field firm that offers even stronger evidence of this practice. Here the double oval marking is in red and the "New-York" circular marking is dated May 22, 1851, a very late use of the 5¢ 1847 stamp. In addition to the manuscript "Paid" notation at upper left, this cover also bears a handstamped "Paid" marking (instructing to the post office to pay the postage) in the same color ink as the double oval. So on this cover the firm applied the paid marking and the post office applied the stamp.

The newly discovered cover in Figure 6 shows that this treatment continued into the era of the 1851 stamps. The 3¢ 1851 stamp on this cover is Scott 10A. The black "NEW-YORK JAN 19" presumably dates from 1852. Note that here too the sender has written "Paid." in the lower corner. Both the oval handstamp and the "Paid." marking are lightly struck in the same red ink. There would be no reason to write "Paid." if the sender applied the stamp himself. So this again represents postage charged to a box account. ■

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## AN UNUSUAL TRIO OF BALTIMORE CARRIER COVERS

LABRON HARRIS

I recently acquired three Baltimore carrier covers that have a story to tell. The item that first caught my attention, shown as Figure 1, is a cover addressed to Frederick, Maryland, bearing a 1¢ red Baltimore “Carrier’s Dispatch” stamp of 1856 (Scott 1LB7) along with a U.S. 3¢ stamp of 1857 (26). Both stamps are tied to the cover by a Cincinnati, Ohio circular datestamp dated December 6. The cover was docketed by the recipient as having been written on “Dec 5th 1858.” My curiosity was piqued. How could a Baltimore carrier stamp pay a carrier fee in Cincinnati?



**Figure 1. Baltimore carrier stamp (Scott 1LB7) and 3¢ 1857 stamp, both tied by Cincinnati circular datestamp, docketed 5 December 1858.**

The explanation becomes apparent with the examination of the other two covers. The cover shown in Figure 2, docketed as having been written 25 April 1859, is a typical use of the Baltimore carrier stamp, paying the carrier fee to take the cover to the Baltimore post office. The 3¢ 1857 stamp, canceled (along with the carrier stamp) by the Baltimore circular datestamp, paid the government postage to the recipient in Frederick.

The cover in Figure 3, perhaps the most interesting of the trio, sheds more light but poses additional questions. This too shows the Baltimore carrier stamp and a 3¢ 1857 stamp, but here the stamps are pencil canceled and there is no indication of postal use.

Evidently the sender was a traveling man, based in Baltimore, who made up envelopes bearing the Baltimore carrier stamp and the 3¢ 1857 to facilitate correspondence to his lady acquaintance. When he was in Baltimore these well served that need. When he was on the road and he posted one of these prestamped covers, he wasted a carrier stamp.

**Figure 2.** Same correspondence as Figure 1: Baltimore carrier stamp and 3¢ 1857 used from Baltimore and docketed 25 April 1859.



On the cover in Figure 1, on which both stamps are tied by a Cincinnati circular date-stamp, the Baltimore carrier stamp was just an add-on that provided no service in Cincinnati. The cover in Figure 2, with both stamps tied by a Baltimore CDS, represents the normal and appropriate situation in which both stamps did their duty.

But the pencil-canceled cover in Figure 3 was also received by Miss Susie Hanna, who docketed it, in the same manner as the other two, as having been written on 30 November 1858. This cover was either posted and handled in a strange way by the United States Post Office, or it was hand carried and delivered outside the mails. Perhaps it was taken to a post office and denied service because of the spurious carrier stamp.



**Figure 3.** Same correspondence: Baltimore carrier and 3¢ 1857 stamps, docketed 30 November 1858. Both stamps show pencil cancels, but there is no evidence of postal handling. Probably carried outside the mails.

All we know for certain is that the cover did indeed reach its recipient. How it got there remains a mystery. With this entire correspondence, the sender might have hoped that the Baltimore carrier stamp would help expedite delivery to Frederick, which is less than 40 miles from Baltimore. Those efforts were unsuccessful, but he did create an interesting and unusual trio of covers. The question of how and why these covers were created and handled is the essence of postal history and is what makes our hobby so challenging. ■

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**J. BRYAN O'DOHERTY, RA 4569**

Imagine a 2,600-piece jigsaw puzzle where all the pieces seem to look alike. However, after careful inspection, you see that each piece is slightly different and clearly has its own unique position in the puzzle. Then imagine those pieces are not packaged in a pretty little box. Instead, you must search throughout the world to find them. Collecting those pieces and completing the puzzle is the challenge of plating the United States 3¢ imperforate stamp of 1851-57.

So, you ask, “Where is the picture on the box to show me how the finished puzzle should look? What are the tips, tricks and tools that will help me complete the puzzle faster and easier?” Platers of the 3¢ 1851 stamp have long discussed the need for a computerized, database-driven environment to help them assess the pieces and assemble the puzzle.

A newly developed plating tool, now accessible through the website of the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, addresses that need. StampPlating.com is an internet-based study of the complete plating of the 3¢ 1851 stamp. It houses tens of thousands of images, data cells and individual web pages. This provides the “picture on the box”—the tools to help plate this fascinating and much-studied stamp.

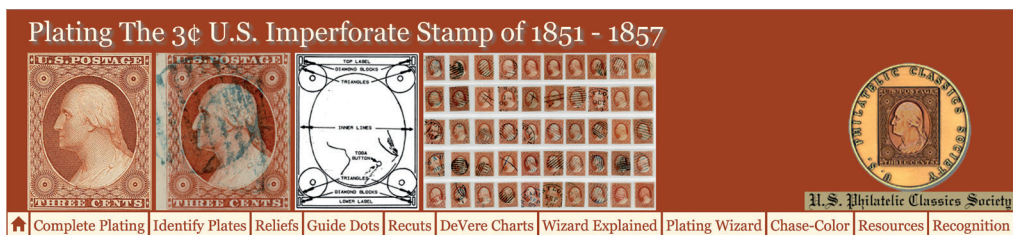
Given the vast amount of data, images and content contained in the website, it is impossible to provide a complete picture in one brief report. The purpose of this article is to provide a sense of what this website aspires to achieve and how it attempts to get there.

The tools on the site include: (1) a complete plating of the 2,600 positions of the stamp, with individual high-resolution images for each position; (2) plate and stamp identification tools depicting traditional plating characteristics, including reliefs, guide dots, recuts, colors, impressions and more; (3) an interactive “Plating Wizard” to help platers narrow down specific positions through search; (4) Excel data tables with hundreds of thousands of cells of information about the various positions of the stamp; and (5) De Vere A. Card’s plating system, developed many years ago, which provides advanced plating characteristics for all 2,600 positions of the stamp.

The foundation of this study is one of four currently-intact complete platings of the 3¢ 1851 stamp, achieved by Robin Lund after more than 30 years of effort. The other complete platings known to exist are those of Richard C. Celler, De Vere Card (he died in 1980 but his plating survives), and a third by a plater not known to me.

I acquired Lund’s plating in late 2016 and over the following 18 months used it to build the StampPlating.com website. This article announces its launch to the philatelic community and its co-residence on the Classics Society site.

StampPlating.com can be accessed by clicking on a link that appears prominently on the Classics Society homepage (USPCS.org). This link will take you to a landing page describing the plating website in more detail. You can go directly from this page to StampPlating.com, which will open up in a new tab. At the top of each page on that website, you will see the USPCS logo. Clicking the logo will take you back to the USPCS.org website.



**Figure 1. Heading section of StampPlating.com, a newly created on-line tool designed to provide assistance and information to aid in plating the 3¢ 1851 stamp. Clicking on the cream-colored tabs leads to information in the 12 designated categories.**

Figure 1 shows the top portion of the Stamp Plating home page, which is repeated on most of the internal pages. The website is organized into 12 sections, accessed by clicking on the cream-colored tabs shown at the bottom of Figure 1. With each tab name in **bold-face**, details of the content of the 12 sections are summarized in the paragraphs that follow.

**Home** introduces the broad subject of stamp plating and provides a wide range of information about the 3¢ 1851 stamp. Here the viewer will find an overview of the main features of the website, information about the design of the stamp, specific information about the plates and their construction, a timeline of the usage of the plates and their ink colors, recut information and sketches, definitions and much more.

**Complete Plating** presents Lund’s plating in a manner that allows the user to drill down into each of the 2,600 component stamps, quickly bringing up high resolution color images of Lund’s plated stamp, Chase’s plated stamp (from the black-and-white photo archive at the Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum) and detailed plating characteristics of the illustrated position. Figure 2 shows one of the 13 “position-clickable” plate summaries—in this case, for Plate 1 early (1E, the first plate). From the plate summary page the user can click on any position to bring up a large individual stamp page containing information and stamp images for that position.

One of the 2,600 individual stamp pages is shown as Figure 3. This happens to be the page for Position 1L1E, the first position on the first plate. Providing both the Chase and the Lund images for each position offers two different examples of the same subject (always a helpful tool) and diminishes the possibility of a plating feature being obscured by a cancellation. From the individual stamp pages it is possible to browse forward and backward to view adjacent stamps. Clicking on a stamp image brings up an even larger image, highly detailed (1200 dots per inch) and capable of being downloaded.

**Identify Plates** guides the user in applying the three-step process that Chase initially recommended for identifying the plate from which a 3¢ 1851 stamp was printed. The steps Chase suggested are (1) determine if the stamp has two, one or no inner lines; (2) determine if the stamp is orange brown; and (3) determine the heaviness, clarity and extent of recutting. This section presents many pages of information and hundreds of images to assist in the task of plate identification.

**Reliefs** provides information describing the three relief types—traditionally designated A, B and C—as originally presented in articles by Richard Celler and Elliot Omiya (both based on earlier *Chronicle* articles) published in *The 1851 Issue of United States Stamps: A Sesquicentennial Retrospective*, a superb book published by the Classics Society in 2006 and now out of print. These two articles well summarize what is currently known about the three relief types.

**Guide Dots** explains the significance of the guide dots particular to this issue and shows their positioning on the plate. While the guide dots were intended to be placed in the same position on every plate, there is in fact considerable variation in their placement, which for many positions provides useful plating information.



# Plating The 3¢ U.S. Imperforate Stamp of 1851 - 1857

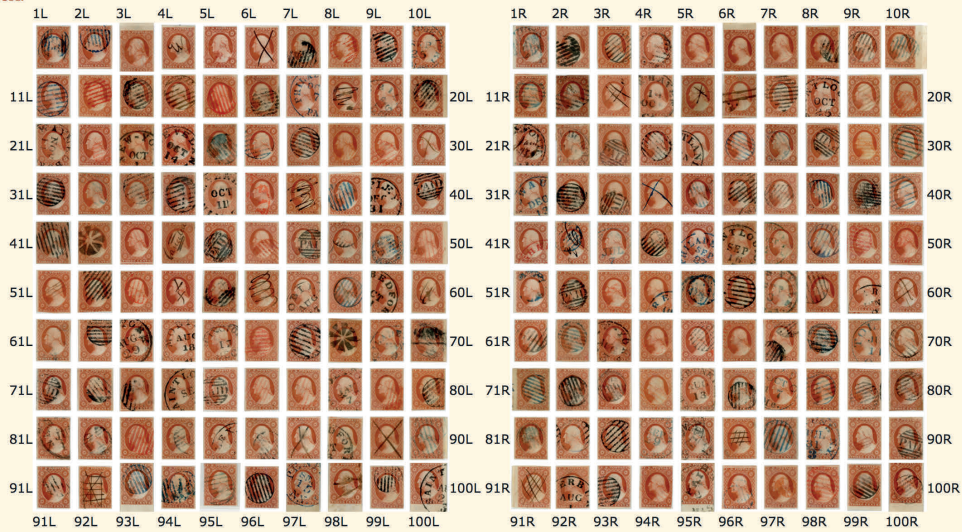


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## Plate 1E:

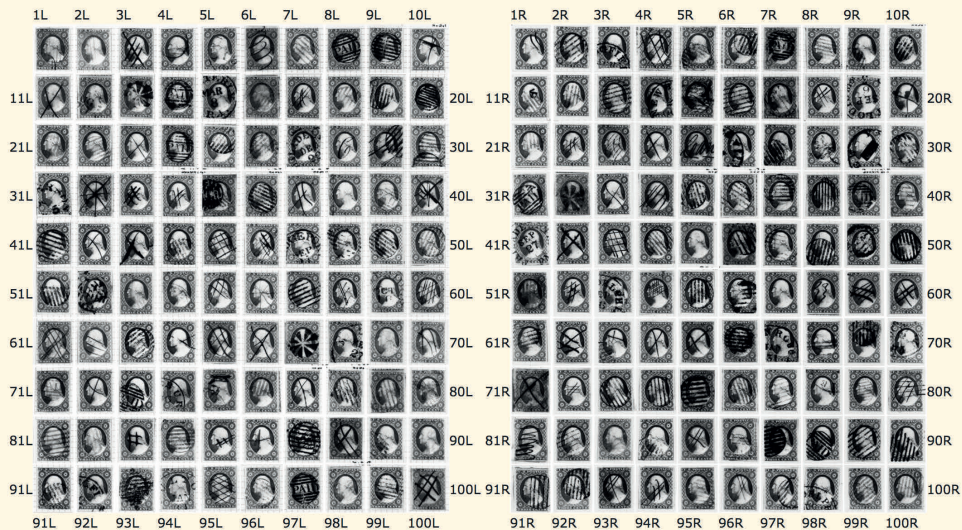
Plate 1E was printing stamps several weeks before the first stamps were issued to the public on July 1, 1851. Dr. Chase says that the first 300,000 stamps from this plate were delivered by printing contractors to the government on June 21, 1851, and that all other deliveries prior to about the middle of July, 1851, came from Plate 1E. Dr. Chase estimates that Plate 1E was used until about the end of the first week of July, 1851, when it was softened, and reentered, thus resulting in the intermediate state, Plate 1i. Approximately 2,267,800 stamps (11,339 impressions) were printed from Plate 1E. All of the stamps on Plate 1E are Orange Brown. The plate showed no wear, so impressions are clear; however, they are faint. Refer to Dr. Chase's book **The 3¢ Stamp of the United States 1851-1857 Issue** for the full story of Plate 1E.

**Plate 1E - Earliest Use July 1, 1851; Used For 1 1/2 Months; 11,339 Impressions/2,267,800 Stamps/0.63% Of Issued; 64 Scott 10, 136 Scott 10A:**



## Chase - Plate 1E:

Images are provided courtesy of Smithsonian's National Postal Museum



**Figure 2. One of 13 summary pages showing plated stamps. Clicking on any stamp image brings up an individual page of facts and photos for that stamp (see Figure 3).**

Position 1 L 1E:



Dr. Chase Image courtesy of Smithsonian National Postal Museum

Click an image to enlarge it. Then click to see it full-screen. Click the image again for full size 1200 dpi. At this largest size, use your mouse to "move it around" to focus on areas of interest. If you want to download the image to your computer, right-click on the image. Clicking outside the stamp border (or on the "X") returns you back to the starting point.

**Characteristics Of Position 1 L 1E:**

Scott Number:	10A	No. of Impressions:	11339
Relief:	B	Misplaced Relief:	
Chase Recuts:	3	McDaniel Recuts:	3
Shifts:		Cracks:	
Guide & Other Dots:	UL and UR dots		
Comments:			

**Figure 3. Individual stamp page from StampPlating.com for just one of the 2,600 positions of the 3¢ 1851 stamp, in this case Position 1L1E. Each stamp page provides plating information about that particular position. Clicking on the stamp image brings up an even larger image, showing individual features of the stamp in great detail (1,200 dpi).**

**Recuts** presents a vast amount of data, with multiple tables supported by illustrations, detailing the recut types and the combinations of those types that have been identified and tied to specific plates and positions. Recuts and recut combinations are key plating tools. This subject has been summarized very recently in articles by Don Getzin and Wade Saadi in *Chronicles* 258 and 259. The “Recuts” section of StampPlating.com examines this complex subject in much greater detail, including downloadable Excel spreadsheets providing data on plating characteristics for each plate position. As explained in more detail below, additional spreadsheets track updates and corrections to Chase’s original recut analysis.

**DeVere Charts** presents a recently rediscovered treasure, the plating system and plating charts created three generations ago by DeVere Card, who was a preeminent plater of this stamp from the 1930s until his death in 1980. Over many years he developed a plating system that transcended the conventional tools of his era, introducing “Additional Plating Characteristics” that go far beyond the traditional recuts charted in the Chase book. During the mid-1970s Card worked to develop a series of articles for the *Chronicle* to illustrate and explain his system, but ill health and lack of color copying technology thwarted his efforts.

Card’s plating system consisted of 52 charts, each containing two-color diagrammatic notations of particular plating characteristics for one 50-stamp half-pane (quarter plate) of the 13 3¢ 1851 plates. On StampPlating.com, Card’s charting of all 2,600 positions of

this stamp is now available to platers for the first time. An example of one of his half-pane plating charts, for Positions 1-50 of the left pane of Plate 3, is shown in Figure 4. Card's system, complex and in some ways idiosyncratic, is explored and fully described on StampPlating.com.

**Wizard Explained** introduces the approach, shorthand and underpinnings of the Plating Wizard, a special feature unique to StampPlating.com.

**Plating Wizard** provides interactive query tools to narrow down plating choices for the 3¢ 1851 stamp. The Plating Wizard provides an input form on which users can select the plating characteristics they wish to search. They simply click on all desired characteristics and then hit the "Find the Stamps with these Characteristics" button to see all stamp positions that match the search criteria. There is a hierarchy to the search process (Plate, Relief, Guide Dot, Inner Lines, and Other Plating Characteristics) but the user can override this to see more stamps showing any desired plating characteristics. The process of integrating Devere Card's wonderful work into the Plating Wizard is well under way and should be completed before the end of 2019.

*3 left pane* *DT. - 1*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
1	$\frac{875}{12}$	$\frac{568}{12}$	$\frac{65}{65}$	$\frac{78}{321}$	$\frac{78}{-}$	$\frac{78}{-}$	$\frac{-}{21}$	$\frac{783}{14}$	$\frac{23}{14}$	$\frac{4}{12}$	10
11	$\frac{743}{1}$	$\frac{1476}{325}$	$\frac{13}{6}$	$\frac{5}{5}$	$\frac{652}{37}$	$\frac{487}{12}$	$\frac{32}{5}$	$\frac{3}{127}$	$\frac{3}{12}$	$\frac{56}{1}$	20
21	$\frac{234}{-}$	$\frac{234}{58}$ B	$\frac{457}{12}$ DB	$\frac{765}{312}$	$\frac{1}{-}$ B	$\frac{27}{69}$ B	$\frac{-}{68}$	$\frac{21}{5}$ D	$\frac{-}{-}$ B	$\frac{-}{-}$	30
31	$\frac{4}{-}$	$\frac{392}{8}$	$\frac{32}{8756}$	$\frac{786}{3}$	$\frac{783}{12}$	$\frac{32}{-}$	$\frac{7}{21}$	$\frac{8}{-}$	$\frac{-}{-}$	$\frac{42}{1}$	40
41	$\frac{-}{-}$ B	$\frac{7}{-}$ BD	$\frac{-}{876}$ DB	$\frac{78}{3}$	$\frac{-}{56}$ D	$\frac{123}{65}$ D	$\frac{4}{8}$ B	$\frac{64}{872}$ DB	$\frac{-}{-}$ B	$\frac{5}{63}$	50
	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	

Figure 4. One of 52 half-pane plating charts, in this case for the top half of the left pane of Plate 3 (Positions 1-50), created by preeminent plater De Vere A. Card in the middle of the 20th century. Card's charts provide helpful visual cues showing important relative spacing and plating characteristics, much more information than was provided by Carroll Chase. All 52 half-pane charts are presented (and explained) at StampPlating.com, where they can be easily examined by prospective users.

As the input page shown in Figure 5 will suggest, the nomenclature on the Plating Wizard form is complex, though it should be recognizable to experienced platers because it employs terms and concepts developed in the Chase book and followed by platers of the 3¢ 1851 stamp ever since. Newcomers will benefit from the introduction provided on the “Wizard Explained” page.

Plating Wizard
U.S. Philatelic Classics Society

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**Select Plates:**  
 Scott #10 Or #10A:  1E  i    Scott #10A:  2E  5E  o    Scott #11:  4  6  7  8    Scott #11A:  1L  2L  3  5L

**Select Reliefs:**

A

B

C

**Select Guide Dots:**

None  Upper Left  Upper Right  Lower Left  Lower Right

**Select Primary Inner Lines:**

#1 Two Inner Lines

#2 No Inner Lines

#3 Right Inner Line Only

#4 Left Inner Line Only

#5 R-FLreplacesR-IL

#6 2Xtra|@L;R-FLreplacesR-IL

#7 L-FLreplacesL-IL

#9 1Xtra|@L;R-FLreplacesR-IL

**Select Other Plating Characteristics:**  
**Secondary Inner Lines Or Frame Line Recuts:**

#8 1Xtra|@R

#10 Xtra|@R;No-IL

#39 |~StampsAbv&Below

**Inner Lines Running Up/Down:**

#23 L-ILrunsUPtooFar

#24 L-ILrunsDOWNtooFar

#25 R-ILrunsDOWNtooFar

**Triangle Recuts:**

#11 |~UL-Tr

#12 ||~UL-Tr

#13 |||~UL-Tr

#14 ||||~UL-Tr

#15 |~UR-Tr

#16 |~LL-Tr

#17 |~LR-Tr

#18 ||~LR-Tr

**Diamond Block Recuts:**

#26 |~UL-DBtoL-FL

#37 h|~UL-DB

#38 |~UL-DB

#21 2h|@T-UR-DB

#32 h|~UR-DBtoR-FL

#33 h|~UR-DB~AdjUL-DB

#22 h|@B-LL-DB

#40 |LR-DB~LR-Tr

**Label Recuts:**

#28 TLbl~UL-DB

#27 TLbl~UR-DB

#30 h|~TLbtoUR-DB~FL

#31 TLbl&UR-DB~@T&B

#34 TLbl\UR-DB\R-FL

#29 BLbl~LR-DB

#35 BLbl~LR-DB

#36 BLbl&LR-DB~@T&B

**Other Characteristics:**

#19 LowerBust

#20 Button

Dbl-Transfer

Trpl-Transfer

Dbl-Guide Dots

Trpl-Guide Dots

**Figure 5. Plating Wizard input form. On this page the user enters the plating characteristics he wishes to search for. Once the appropriate boxes are checked, clicking the bottom rectangle ("Find the Stamps with these Characteristics") does just that, locating all positions from all plates that meet the specified criteria. Figure 6 shows an example.**

Figure 6 shows the results of a search conducted via the Plating Wizard. In this case, the Wizard was asked to search for relief C stamps from Plate 1E. Five positions met the criteria, and the answer is displayed in two ways. The first presentation is a sequential

U.S. Philatelic Classics Society

Complete Plating | Identify Plates | Reliefs | Guide Dots | Recuts | DeVere Charts | Wizard Explained | **Plating Wizard** | Chase-Color | Resources | Recognition

**5 Stamps Meet Your Plating Wizard Criteria - Plate 1E - Relief "C" :**

- 21 L 1E    - 43 L 1E    - 8 R 1E    - 9 R 1E    - 46 R 1E 

Click an image to enlarge it. Next, in the enlarged image screen, click on the , located in the upper right corner, to see it full-screen. Click the image again for full size 1200 dpi. At this largest size, use your mouse to "move it around" to focus on areas of interest. If you want to download the image to your computer, right-click on the image. Clicking outside the stamp border (or on the "X") returns you back to the starting point. Clicking "Yes", "No", or "Maybe" helps you keep track of your plating work.

**Plating Characteristics For Stamps Meeting Your Plating Wizard Criteria:**

<p>21 L 1E  </p> <p><input type="button" value="No"/> <input type="button" value="Maybe"/> <input <="" p="" type="button" value="Yes!"/> <p>Scott #10A "C" Relief Primary Inner Line Recut #1 Guide Dots: LL and LR dots Chase Recut(s) #1 McDaniel Recut(s) #1 Misplaced Relief</p> </p>	<p>43 L 1E  </p> <p><input type="button" value="No"/> <input type="button" value="Maybe"/> <input <="" p="" type="button" value="Yes!"/> <p>Scott #10A "C" Relief Primary Inner Line Recut #1 Guide Dots: LR dot Chase Recut(s) #1+11 McDaniel Recut(s) #1+11 Misplaced Relief</p> </p>	<p>8 R 1E  </p> <p><input type="button" value="No"/> <input type="button" value="Maybe"/> <input <="" p="" type="button" value="Yes!"/> <p>Scott #10 "C" Relief Primary Inner Line Recut #2 Guide Dots: UR dot Chase Recut(s) #2 McDaniel Recut(s) #2 Misplaced Relief</p> </p>
<p>9 R 1E  </p> <p><input type="button" value="No"/> <input checked="" type="button" value="Maybe"/> <input <="" p="" type="button" value="Yes!"/> <p>Scott #10 "C" Relief Primary Inner Line Recut #2 Guide Dots: UR dot Chase Recut(s) #2 McDaniel Recut(s) #2 Misplaced Relief</p> </p>	<p>46 R 1E  </p> <p><input type="button" value="No"/> <input type="button" value="Maybe"/> <input <="" p="" type="button" value="Yes!"/> <p>Scott #10A "C" Relief Primary Inner Line Recut #3 Guide Dots: LR dot Chase Recut(s) #3+11 McDaniel Recut(s) #3+11 Misplaced Relief</p> </p>	

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**Figure 6. Plating Wizard results page. The Wizard was asked to search for Relief C stamps from Plate 1E. The search produced five examples, displayed in list form (numbered 1-5 at top) and in greater detail via the five individual stamp pages at bottom.**

list of possible positions (numbered 1 through 5 at the top of Figure 6) where the user may click on any stamp and browse forward and backward among large-format individual stamp pages. The other array (bottom section of Figure 6) presents individual cards for each stamp, with larger images and designated plating characteristics for the specific position. Check boxes help the user keep track of his plating progress.

**Chase-Color** presents Chase's color reference charts—41 color cards in all—for the imperforate 3¢ 1851 stamps and the perforated 1857-61 stamps that followed. Chase acknowledged that describing colors was the most difficult chapter in his book. To show visually what was so difficult to describe, he prepared these color studies. With his handwritten notes and examples, this is a fascinating look into Chase's philatelic world.

The stamp illustrations in this section of StampPlating.com are full of precautions, because the Chase color images are second-generation electronic copies that have been digitally reproduced from color slides. The hues, tones, shades and tints in this on-line reproduction are no substitute for confirmed color samples of actual stamps, certified by a

competent color authority. The on-line color images are modestly useful in showing relative color values, but their main purpose is to provide insights into how Chase viewed color.

**Resources** presents a variety of downloadable PDF files, Excel worksheets, links to related websites, and other information relevant to the study of the 3¢ 1851 stamp. The Excel data tables, a key resource developed for this study, contain more than 550,000 cells of information pertaining to this stamp, including complete detailed plating characteristics as originally presented by Chase and as modified and corrected by William K. McDaniel in a series of *Chronicle* articles starting in the 1970s and extending out to 2006. In addition, analysis is presented for recut combinations, differences between Chase and McDaniel, and many other items of interest.

Tracing the corrections and modifications to Chase's original recut designations is no easy task. There is a net total of 175 identified changes. However, the actual number of recut changes since the Chase book was published is 221. These have been categorized as follows: 114 additions and 7 subsequent reversals originally presented in *Chronicles* 77, 80 and 95 in the 1970s; plus 84 new additions and 16 new subtractions from the original Chase recuts, which were identified in *Chronicles* 155-157, 185, 188, and 211. The 221 "absolute changes" (114+7+84+16) result in 175 "net additions" to the recut tables (114-7+84-16) that Chase originally presented.

There is no consensus among the platers of this stamp that the numerous changes proposed to Chase's book are all correct. For this reason, the "Resources" section of StampPlating.com presents all versions of the data (each in a separate spreadsheet), with details for all 2,600 positions at each stage of the published modifications. Users can make up their own minds regarding the changes.

A final Excel table contains a very concise representation of the salient features of each of the 2,600 positions. While it contains just a tiny fraction of the information included in the surrounding workbook, it serves effectively as a quick and simple source of data to help in plating the 3¢ 1851 stamp.

**Recognition** contains my thanks to the many people who helped me create this website. Throughout this study, I do not believe I have added any new knowledge, but I have certainly encountered an amazing amount of existing information. The "References" section at the conclusion of this article lists the major works that StampPlating.com draws upon.

### Conclusion

StampPlating.com was built to serve platers of the 3¢ 1851 stamp and to provide a repository for material related to plating in general. As a dynamic website, it will continue to grow in concert with the interests and efforts of the plating community. I hope that the tools and resources presented on the website will spark new energy and insight into the study of the 3¢ U.S. imperforate stamp of 1851-57, an important and endlessly fascinating collecting area that was the foundation of our Society 70 years ago.

### References used in creating StampPlating.com

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—, “The Three Cent 1857-57 Recut Varieties: A Newly Listed Variety,” *Chronicle* 211 (August 2006): pp. 184-185.

Richard C. Celler and Elliot Omiya. “The Toppan Carpenter Plates and the Guide Relieving Method” and “A Detailed Study of the 3¢ 1851 Relief Characteristics,” both in *The 1851 Issue of United States Stamps: A Sesquicentennial Retrospective*: U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, 2006. ■

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## STENCILED STEAMBOAT MARKINGS

JAMES W. MILGRAM, M.D.

### Introduction

This continues a series of articles on the subject of stencil markings found on classic United States covers. The exploration began in *Chronicle* 255 (August, 2017) with an article listing and describing stencil postmarks on stampless covers. It continued in *Chronicle* 257 (February 2018) with a similar article describing stencil postmarks on stamp-bearing covers. In *Chronicle* 258 I wrote about the various types of stencil markings that can be found on Civil War covers, and in *Chronicle* 259 about stencil-maker advertising on 19th century U.S. covers.

Our subject this time is the very small group of vessel-named markings applied to steamboat covers by use of a stencil. While not official postal markings, vessel-named markings are eye-catching and highly collectible. They were usually applied by steamboat clerks to letter correspondence or bills of lading carried onboard. The markings served to identify the carrying vessel; they were basically advertising notations. The great majority of vessel-named markings are handstamps, but a few were applied by stencil.

The 13 stencil markings illustrated and discussed below are all listed in my book, *Vessel-named Markings on United States Inland and Ocean Waterways, 1810-1890*, published by the Collectors Club of Chicago in 1984. No further examples were recorded in the two supplements to the book that were published serially over the next two decades in various issues of the *Postal History Journal*.<sup>1</sup>

It is a testimony to the scarcity of these markings that not one new stencil steamboat marking has come to light in the last 35 years. In fact, the majority of these markings are known from the existence of a sole surviving example. Their scarcity explains why some of the images presented herewith are black and white photos. These are the best images available.

As I noted in previous articles in this series, the small brass stencil plates from which these markings were made would have been carried by the user—in this case the clerk of the steamboat—who would apply the marking by brushing ink through the stencil plate directly onto the cover. Examples of two surviving stencil plates were illustrated in *Chronicle* 258.

The 13 known vessel-named stencil markings are illustrated and discussed alphabetically in the listing that follows. The markings were stenciled in black ink almost exclusively. Just one cover, from the steamboat *Monterey* and discussed at Figure 9 below, shows blue ink. The boldfaced **Shipname M-xxxx** designations refer to the listings in the catalog section of my book on vessel-named markings.

### Covers bearing vessel-named stencil markings

Figure 1 shows a black and white image of a 3¢ entire envelope (1864), from the massive Carroll–Hoy correspondence, probably the largest philatelic find ever made. The cover bears a large bold “S.B. CAROLINE” (**Caroline M-177**) stenciled upside down across the



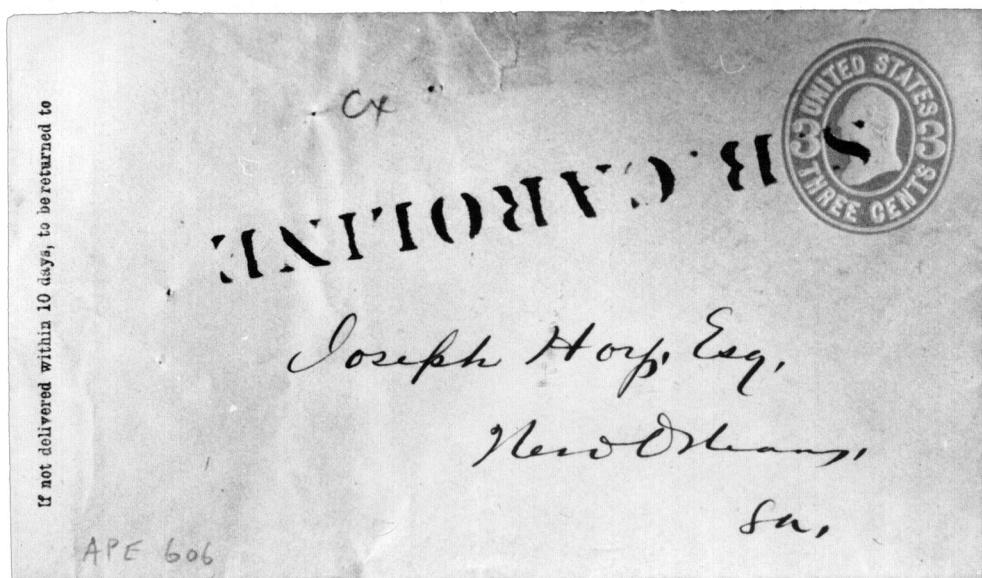


Figure 1 (above). “S. B. CAROLINE” bold stencil applied upside down on a 3¢ 1864 entire to New Orleans, from the vast Carroll-Hoy correspondence, probably the largest cover find ever made.



Figure 2 (left). “SHIP Connecticut, A.B. LANGWORTHY” in two wavy lines, with crude ornamentation at bottom, possibly the work of a single stencil, applied on the reverse of a patriotic cover.

face. *Caroline* was a stern-wheel steamboat built at Madison, Indiana, in 1863. With three decks, she weighed 375 tons. *Caroline* was registered at Cincinnati and then New Orleans in 1866. The master was William D. Bateman. She ran mostly between New Orleans and the Arkansas River and was lost on the Red River on May 15, 1870.

Figure 2 shows a portion of the reverse of an 1862 patriotic cover (not shown) once owned by Frank Levi, Jr., an early student of the 10¢ 1851 stamps. Other details are not known, but we can guess the face of the cover bears a 10¢ green stamp. The stencil marking “Ship Connecticut, A.B. LANGWORTHY” (**Connecticut M-282**) in wavy lines may have been applied from a single stencil, in which case this marking would represent a private return address.

The Figure 2 marking could have been included in my article on stencil markings on Civil War covers (*Chronicle* 258) because it appears to be a private marking made for a crewman onboard the U.S.S. *Connecticut*, a side-wheel steamer that was the third naval vessel to bear this name. This *Connecticut* was purchased by the Navy at the outset of the Civil War to deliver supplies and men to blockading vessels as far south as Galveston. It made five supply voyages in 1862 and more in 1864 when it captured many southern vessels—including an English ship carrying Belle Boyd, the famous Confederate spy. *Connecticut* was decommissioned and sold in 1865.



Figure 3. "S.B. EXPRESS" one-line stencil on an 1851 cover to Bellevue, Iowa. This may be an Upper Mississippi steamboat use.



Figure 4. "RED RIVER PACKET, Steamer Grenada, B MCKENNEY MASTER" in rimless oval-format stencil. Address to Buchanan Carroll & Co., New Orleans, the cover bears a mute "NEW ORLEANS LA." circular datestamp in red, together with red "6" and black "WAY 6". At this time the postmaster at New Orleans was collecting a way fee on steamboat letters. The red "6" is a very unusual marking.

Figure 3 shows a folded commercial document internally dated 1851 and addressed to Bellevue, Iowa, a Mississippi River town between Davenport and Dubuque. The straight-line stencil marking at upper left reads "S.B. EXPRESS" (**Express M-431**). This sidewheel steamboat was built in 1850 at West Elizabeth, Pennsylvania. It weighed 192 tons. The Adams Express Company acquired the ship in 1852 to connect with the Madison & Indianapolis Railroad. *Express* later ran on the Missouri River and was lost on a snag near Leavenworth on July 15, 1855. Figure 3 is the only cover to show this marking, which dates from the period before Adams Express Co. took her over.

The cover in Figure 4, addressed to New Orleans and from the Buchanan Carroll correspondence, bears a number of striking markings, not least of them the rimless ornamented oval stencil reading "RED RIVER PACKET Steamer Grenada B. MCKENNEY, MAS-

TER” (**Grenada M-558**). The red New Orleans circular datestamp is not clearly struck, but the cover must date from the period when the New Orleans postmaster was collecting a way fee on arriving steamboat letters. The black “Way 6” is frequently seen but the red numeral “6” is most unusual.

Owned by Capt. Michael Gwartney and a consortium from Grenada, Mississippi, *Grenada* was a 217 ton sidewheel steamboat with 22 staterooms, built at New Albany, Indiana in 1851. The vessel was used on the Yazoo River trade in 1851-52 and was registered at New Orleans on February 23, 1853. In 1854 she was sold to Capt. Richard P. Crump of New Orleans, who ran her between New Orleans and the Ouachita River. *Grenada* was destroyed when she burned at Algiers, Louisiana on May 6 1861, with no loss of life.

The cover shown in Figure 5 bears what is in my opinion the most spectacular vessel-named steamboat marking of them all—and certainly the most spectacular in the much smaller grouping of vessel-named markings applied by stencil. Again, this is the only example known. As can be seen, this ornamented three-line stencil marking reads “STEAMER JENNIE GRAY. CAPT. M. A. KNOX” (**Jennie Gray M-686**) and fills almost the entire reverse of the cover. The front, less striking and shown reduced in Figure 5, is addressed to Duxbury, Massachusetts and bears a 3¢ 1857 stamp tied by a “ST. LOUIS MO. DEC 1857” circular datestamp on which the day of the month is not legible. This 161-ton vessel, also called *Jeannie Gray*, was built at Monongahela, Pennsylvania in 1857. Capt. Hannah J. Beares was part owner. She was destroyed in a fire at Pittsburgh on May 7, 1859.



Figure 5. The most spectacular vessel-named marking of them all: “STEAMER JENNIE GRAY, CAPT. M. A. KNOX” in bold black ink. This huge stencil marking fills the entire reverse of a cover to Duxbury, Massachusetts (shown at left) franked with a 3¢ 1857 stamp tied by a “ST. LOUIS MO. DEC 1857” circular datestamp.

A splendid example of the advertising nature of steamboat markings is illustrated in Figure 6. This is the reverse of a 3¢ green Reay entire envelope addressed to Hermitage, Louisiana. The front of the cover (not shown) bears a blue factor's handstamp and a New Orleans circular datestamp, both dated June 28 (probably 1870). With its odd punctuation modestly edited, this ten-line stencil marking reads "PLANTERS & MERCHANTS, FALSE RIVER PACKET LINE, J.M. TURNER & ROSE, J. LANDREAU, Agt., M. LEERUN, Capt. ALL ORDERS ADDRESSED TO DEPLAIGNE & LIEUX OR J. LANOS, HERMITAGE P.O. WILL BE PROMPTLY ATTENDED TO. J. LANDREAU." In addition to all this information, we find at the bottom of Figure 6, beyond the border where the stencil plate was applied, several impressions of the clerk's fingerprints, confirming that applying stencil markings could be a messy business.

False River is a Mississippi River town near New Roads, above Baton Rouge in Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana. It may not be immediately evident from the extended text of the stencil marking, but "J.M. Turner" and "Rose" are the two steamboats involved. In my book I designate this marking as **J.M. Turner & Rose M-703**.

The steamboat *J.M. Turner* was a 72-ton screw propeller vessel that was built in 1864 at Middleton, Ohio. Its first home port was Cincinnati. According to Lytle-Holdcamper it was registered at New Orleans July 20, 1867 and abandoned in 1875.<sup>2</sup> *Rose* was a smaller vessel of 19 tons built in 1866 at New Orleans. It went off list in 1870.



**Figure 6. Reverse of a 3¢ green Reay envelope, probably posted in 1870, mailed from New Orleans and sent to Hermitage, Louisiana. The back of the envelope is covered by a ten-line stencil advertisement naming two river steamboats, (*J.M. Turner* and *Rose*), the captain, agents and their address.**

The grainy photo fragment in Figure 7 shows a portion of a cover bearing a pen-canceled 3¢ 1851 stamp and a straightline stencil marking reading "Str. Laurel Hill" (**Laurel Hill M-775**). During this era there were two steamboats of similar tonnage both named *Laurel Hill*. One was built in New Albany, Indiana in 1853 and the other at Jeffersonville, Indiana in 1859. Both had New Orleans as their first home port. Since the illustrated stencil cover bears an imperforate 1851 stamp, we can assume that it was the earlier vessel that used the stencil marking. Enrolled at New Orleans 1853-58, this *Laurel Hill* was a large sidewheel steamboat, 497 tons, owned by Joseph G. Landry and John M. Hall. The first master was Capt. John A. Cotton. Landry also teamed with *Emperor* in 1854. Cotton was an earlier master of *Emperor* and also owned *Grosse Tete*. Both these steamboats also used handstamped markings, but not stencils.

Another striking and enigmatic New Orleans cover is shown in Figure 8. This bears a bold two-line oval stencil with a large fleuron, promoting "STEAMER MARY BESS" (**Mary Bess M-852**). The cover is franked with a 3¢ 1851 orange brown stamp canceled with a black handstamped "5". It also bears a New Orleans "WAY 5" handstamp and a red "NEW ORLEANS LA. SEP 17 5" integral-rate circular datestamp. Since there are three postmarks indicating a 5¢ collection, this cover must have been a double-rated folded letter

on which only the first rate was prepaid. Unfortunately, the contents are not present. This cover has been certified genuine by the Philatelic Foundation.

*Mary Bess* was built at Louisville in 1852, 206 tons, with owners including the captain, Sam Montgomery. It originally ran on the Alabama River from Mobile but went to New Orleans when it was sold to William Kimball and D.G. Hill. *Mary Bess* was enrolled between 1853 and 1856 at New Orleans. In 1854 she was sold to Henry J. Muggah and others, including Captain D.J. Muggah. Under master John Lyon she made trips up the Red River in 1856 and several years thereafter. Blue or red oval handstamped markings from this steamboat (M-853 and M-854) are not as rare as the stencil marking shown in Figure 8.

The folded bill of lading shown in Figure 9 never entered the mails; it was carried privately to its addressee in New Orleans. The letter within is written in French and docketed Natchitoches, January 28, 1848. In the same hand as the address the cover is marked “B/L” (bill of lading). The large oval stencil marking, applied in blue, reads “RED RIVER PACKET. MONTEREY” (Monterey M-931) within a border of crescents, a typical stencil orna-

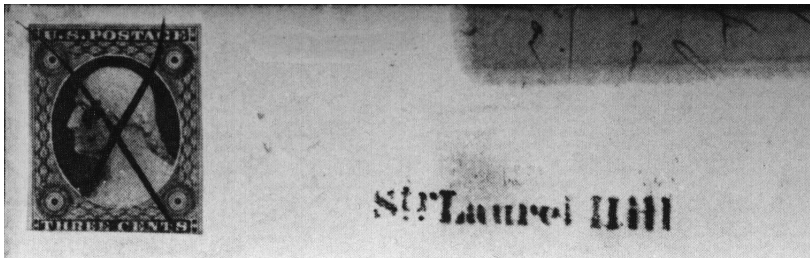


Figure 7. A portion of cover not seen in many years bearing a pen canceled 3¢ 1851 stamp and a straightline stencil “Str. Laurel Hill”.

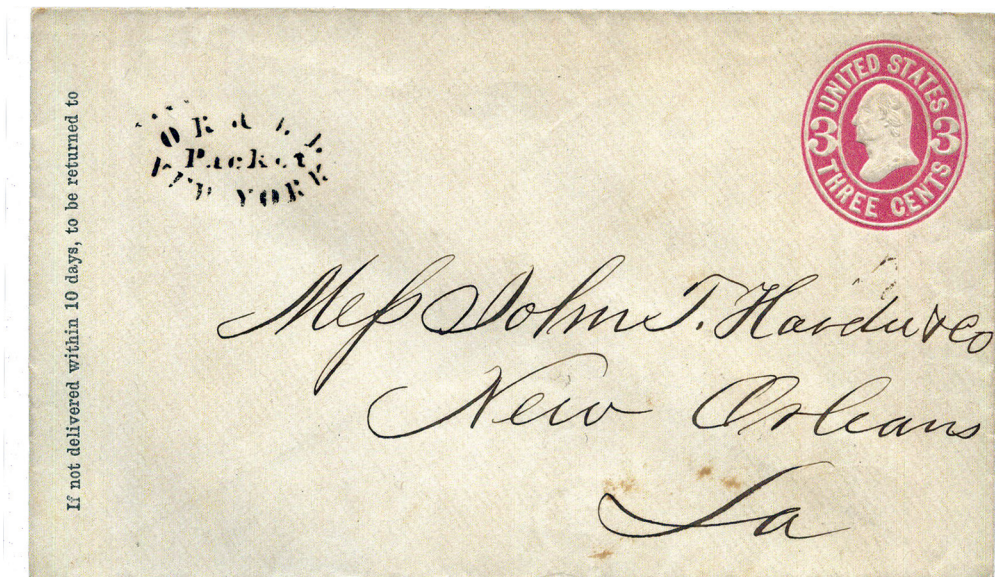


Figure 8. Bold two-line oval stencil marking “STEAMER MARY BESS,” with large fleuron, on a cover with a 3¢ 1851 orange brown stamp canceled “5”; also “WAY 5” and a red “NEW ORLEANS LA. SEP 17 5” integral-rate postmark. Three postmarks indicating 5¢ suggest this was a double-rate cover with only the first rate prepaid.



**Figure 9. “RED RIVER PACKET, MONTEREY” in large blue oval stencil on folded letter marked “B/L” (bill of lading) to New Orleans. This cover never entered the mails.**

mentation. As noted at the outset, this is the only vessel-named stencil marking recorded in a color other than black. There were two steamboats named *Monterey* built a year apart, but one of these ran only on the Ohio River. The vessel that carried the Figure 9 cover, 143 tons, was constructed at Cincinnati in 1846 and registered at New Orleans on November 28, 1848. The owners were both New Orleans men and the master was Capt. W.W. Withenbury, a famous riverboat captain who in retirement published his reminiscences. He bought the vessel with S.M. McConico the next year and ran her between New Orleans and the Red River until she snagged and was lost April 24, 1850.



**Figure 10. Uncanceled 3¢ 1864 entire with oval stencil “OR&BB Packet NEW YORK”. This is the only recorded strike; the significance of the initials is not known.**

Not much can be said about the stencil marking on the uncanceled 3¢ 1864 entire envelope shown in Figure 10. It appears to say “OR&BB Packet NEW YORK.” This is the only known example of this stencil marking (**New York M-1004**). The steamboat is clearly the *New York*, but the significance of “OR&BB” is not known to me. If a reader can provide insights, that would be most welcome.

*New York* had a very interesting career. She was built at Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania (on the Monongahela River above Pittsburgh) in 1862 and weighed 192 tons. During the Civil War she served as a military supply vessel for federal forces. Although captured at Vicksburg she was returned to U.S. service and ran on the Mobile River in 1865. She was lost in a fire at New Orleans on March 21, 1870.

The ornamented rimless oval stencil marking shown in the black and white photo in Figure 11 is struck on the reverse of a cover about which almost nothing else is known. Emblazoned with stars, the marking reads “STEAMER SILVER STAR, J.T. RUSSELL CAPT., S.F. SIMPSON CLK” (**Silver Star M-1280**). A 150-ton vessel of this name was built at Wheeling, Virginia, in 1856, and ran on the upper Ohio River between Parkersburg (West Virginia) and Gallipolis (Ohio) in 1858. The captain was J.T. Russell with S.F. Simpson as clerk, which matches the information in the marking. Later, under a different master, *Silver Star* proved too small for the Paducah-Evansville trade. She burned at Evansville May 12, 1860 with the loss of five lives.

The marking on the cover in Figure 12 is quite striking. This is a two-line stencil marking, in arch format, from the steamboat *Star Spangled Banner* (**Star Spangled Banner M-1299**). I know of three examples. The letter within accompanied a deposition and was written onboard “Steamer *Modern* near Vicksburg 28 Feb. 1847” with additional comment “on my way to Jackson and Vicksburg.” The sender presumably caused the letter to be



Figure 11. “STEAMER SILVER STAR, J.T. RUSSELL CAPT, S.F. SIMPSON CLK.” rimless stencil with stars on the reverse of a cover from 1858-59.



Figure 12. “NEW ORLEANS LA. MAR 4” and “STEAM” with stencil vessel-named marking “STAR SPANGLED BANNER” in arch format. This 1847 cover was rated “30” as a triple rate because of enclosures.

placed on a southbound vessel bound for New Orleans. There the letter entered the mails (the circular datestamp reads "NEW ORLEANS LA. MAR 4"), rated 30¢ due under the 1845 rates reflecting the enclosures. The 275-ton *Star Spangled Banner* was built at Cincinnati in 1845. She had four boilers and 36 staterooms, a magnificent steamboat for this era. She ran between Cincinnati and New Orleans under Capt. Dick Phillips. On 29 June 1847 she snagged and sank below Baton Rouge with 20 lives lost.



**Figure 13. Cover to St. Louis from the Barnes correspondence: "UNCLE SAM" in black stencil and a black "STEAM" handstamp tie a 3¢ 1851 orange brown stamp.**

The cover in Figure 13 is probably the finest cover franked with a 3¢ 1851 stamp and bearing a stencil cancellation. "UNCLE SAM" (**Uncle Sam M-1396**) in black stencil and a black "STEAM" handstamp solidly tie a four-margin orange brown stamp on this cover to St. Louis, from the substantial correspondence of Robert A. Barnes, a St. Louis wholesale grocer, banker and philanthropist.

This vessel is the second steamboat with this name. Built at Louisville in 1848, she weighed 741 tons (a real monster!) and was used mainly for freight, running between Louisville and New Orleans. In December, 1855 she rammed and sank the steamboat *Switzerland* near Natchez. The ornamented mortised marking "Uncle Sam" (**M-1395** in my book) was used on the first vessel with this name, which was built in 1845.

### Conclusion

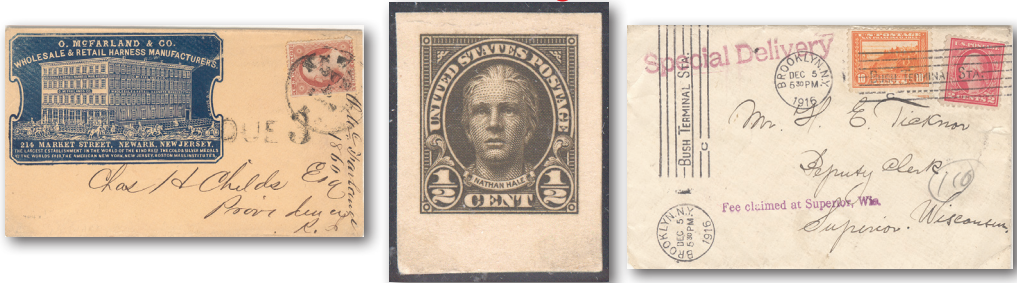
This article has described and illustrated all the vessel-named markings that I know of that were applied to steamboat covers by the use of a stencil. The appearance of additional stencil markings in this category would be cause for celebration.

### Endnotes

1. James W. Milgram, "Supplement to Vessel-Named Markings on United States Inland and Ocean Waterways, 1784-1899, Part I," *Postal History Journal* 90 (February 1992) pp. 33-48; 92 (June 1992) pp. 32-48; 93 (October 1992) pp. 32-48; 94 (February 1993) pp. 32-48; 95 (June 1993) pp. 24-40; 96 (October 1993) pp. 24-40; 97 (February 1994) pp. 24-40; 98 (June 1994) pp. 24-40. "Second Supplement to Vessel-Named Markings on United States Inland and Ocean Waterways, 1784-1899," *Postal History Journal* 136, (February 2007) pp. 29-36; 137 (June 2007) pp. 29-36; 138 (October 2007) pp. 29-36.
2. William M. Lytle and Forest R. Holdcamper, *Merchant Steam Vessels of the United States, 1790-1868* (Staten Island, N.Y.: Steamship Historical Society of America (1975). This valuable reference is the source of much of the steamboat information presented in this article. ■



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AN ARCHIVAL HISTORY  
OF THE EMBOSSED STAMPS OF 1867-68

JAN HOFMEYR

Introduction

August 13 1867 is the earliest documented use of what came to be called the grilled stamps of the United States. Figure 1 shows a cover from that date, franked with an A-grill stamp (Scott 79) and posted at Richmond, Virginia. The grills capped a fascinating period in postage stamp history. The Post Office Department (POD) was under pressure both to cut costs and to create stamps that could not be cleaned and reused. In 1867 the POD settled on grilling as the solution to the problem of reuse.

The grills have been widely studied, but most of what we know focuses on describing, classifying, and dating the issued stamps.<sup>1</sup> Surprisingly little is known about the back story of their development. My purpose in this article is to use the documents in the Brazer-Finkelberg archive to fill this gap in our knowledge. The acknowledgment section at the end of this article provides information about this remarkable holding of archival documents.

Charles Steel invented the grilling process while he was an employee of the National Bank Note Company. The accompanying box lists key documents that provide a timeline tracing the emergence of the grills. Patents are included because they are part of the competitive backdrop.<sup>2</sup>

The first mention of Steel's invention appears in a letter dated December 13, 1865,

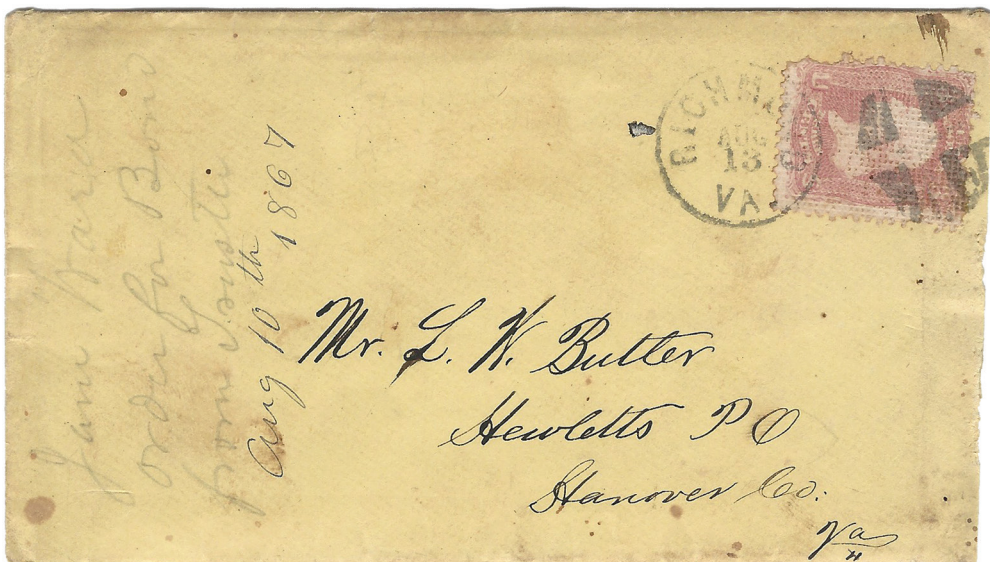


Figure 1: Earliest documented use of a grill—August 13, 1867. This is the A-grill (Scott 79) embossed on a 3¢ stamp. Four covers have been recorded from this date.

## DOCUMENTARY TIMELINE FOR THE EVOLUTION OF THE GRILLS

**Dec. 13, 1865:** Zevely responds to a letter from Steel about “an invention” to prevent the reuse of stamps. Steel had written to Zevely on December 11.

**Dec. 20, 1865:** Zevely responds to a follow-up letter from Steel acknowledging the receipt of samples of stamps with which Zevely says, he is “favorably impressed”.

**Dec. 26, 1865:** Bowlsby registers patent 51,782 for an “Improvement in postage stamps &c.” It is for canceling a stamp by tearing off a tab (Scott 63-E13).

**Feb. 27, 1866:** MacDonough of the NBNC registers patent 52,869 for an “Improvement in the manufacture of ink...” (incorrectly catalogued as Scott 79-E25c).

**Apr. 3, 1866:** Wyckoff registers patent 53,722 for an “Improvement in postage and revenue stamps,” for printing on a paper coated by “China white” (uncatalogued).

**Aug. 13, 1867:** Earliest documented use of the all-over A grill (Scott 79). All known used examples occur on the 3¢ Washington stamp of 1861. Two copies of the 1¢ Franklin are known mint.

**Oct. 8, 1867:** Zevely writes Steel that he has written to the NBNC to request “samples according to your plan.” He intends to test a “million or more” stamps.

**Oct. 22, 1867:** Steel registers patent 70,147 for an “Improvement in the manufacture of postage-stamps,” for “a stamp with an embossed center”—*i.e.* the “grill”.

**Oct. 23, 1867:** Zevely writes Steel to tell him that he has instructed NBNC to test the grill idea; and suggests combining it with a test of MacDonough’s fugitive ink.

**Oct. 29, 1867:** NBNC president Shepard writes to Steel about potential profit sharing from Steel’s invention should the NBNC “obtain a contract.”

**Nov. 6, 1867:** MacDonough notifies Steel that NBNC wants an agreement with Steel. He asks Steel to bring “your ideas for the stamp you desire to have made.”

**Nov. 25, 1867:** Earliest documented use of the C grill (Scott 83). This is the earliest known date for a stamp that can be described as “a stamp with an embossed center.”

**Dec. 9, 1867:** Shepard writes to Steel to say that NBNC has agreed to Steel’s terms for the use of his patent. Steel will be paid 3¢ per 1,000 stamps.

**Dec. 9, 1867:** Shepard writes a lengthy letter to Zevely to say that NBNC has agreed to terms with Steel, but that NBNC urgently needs a new contract.

**Dec. 14, 1867:** Boyd writes to Zevely about stocks of paper and stamps; and the need to use a thinner paper and better gum for the embossed stamps.

**Dec. 31, 1867:** Zevely writes to Maun about a disagreement as to whether to emboss the stamps before or after gumming. Steel’s patent specifies gumming first.

**Dec. 31, 1867:** Zevely writes to Steel enclosing the copy of the letter he has written to Maun, reassuring Steel that he has instructed Maun to follow Steel’s instructions.

**Feb. 1, 1868:** Earliest documented use of the D grill (Scott 85). The D grill is considered to be the first non-experimental grill stamp.

written to Steel by Third Assistant Postmaster General Anthony Zevely. Zevely responds to a letter (which apparently no longer survives) written by Steel two days earlier. Zevely’s letter is so important that it is worth quoting at length:<sup>3</sup>

**This Department wants a postage stamp from which it will be impossible to remove canceling marks without destroying it. If you establish your claim to such an invention, it might be introduced thro’ the National Bank Note Co. As to compensation the Postmaster General would consult Congress... It will be necessary to continue to manufacture in present hands, & your better plan might be to arrange with the contractors. If then your stamps & price suited the Postmaster General he might ask the necessary legislation.**

Steel must have written to Zevely on December 11 about an idea that for a stamp that could not be cleaned and reused. He must have asked Zevely how an inventor would be

compensated. Zevely's response tells us a lot. First, Zevely confirmed that the POD was still looking for a stamp that could not be cleaned and reused. By implication, the POD must not have been satisfied with the experiments conducted up to that time, most notably Loewenberg's patent involving "decals" (Scott 79-E65P); and Gibson's for "safety network overprints" (Scott 79-E26). Second, Zevely noted that compensation would require decisions at the highest level ("the Postmaster General would consult Congress"); but in any case the existing contract with the NBNC could not be sidestepped, so that Steel's best bet would be to work through NBNC.

Zevely's letter also suggests that Steel had not told NBNC about his decision to contact Zevely.

A second letter from Zevely to Steel followed a week later. By that time, Steel had produced and sent samples of his invention to Zevely. This letter too is worth quoting at length:<sup>4</sup>

**Acknowledging the receipt of samples of stamps submitted by you, with which I am favorably impressed.... no definite judgment can be formed... until [they have been tested]. The best of the tests would be...that you make arrangements with the National Bank Note Co. to manufacture a certain number of these stamps, to be sent out, sold and used, as the present stamps....The Department would be prepared, after such a successful trial, to enter into arrangements for their adoption.**

There are a number of reasons for thinking that the "samples of stamps" Zevely mentions must refer to actual grilled stamps. The first reason is that there is no evidence that Steel had any other ideas for stamps at that time. The second is that Zevely's proposal for testing implies that the invention could quite easily be applied to the current issue of engraved stamps using the 1861 plates (as grills could). Finally, there is Zevely's quite extraordinary suggestion to test the idea by "going live." No further permission would be needed. Produce the stamps, put them into distribution, then monitor the results. Zevely could only have made this suggestion if he thought that the altered stamps would be recognized, accepted and used.

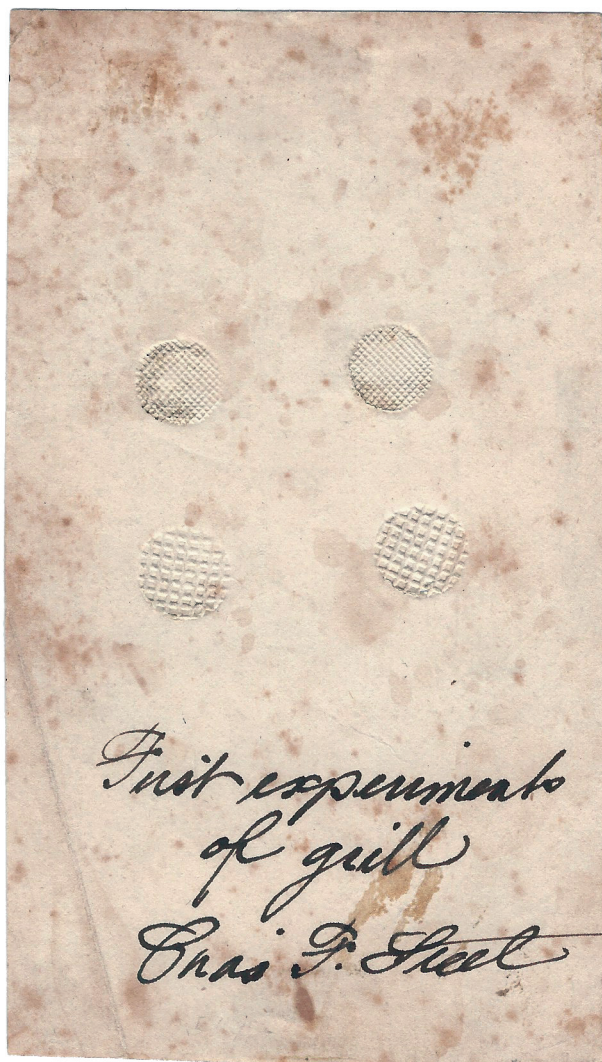
The letter provides a date of December 1865 as the latest date for the first grill experiments. Zevely's use of the word "stamps" suggests a configuration more elaborate than the well-known "first experiments" grill essays, signed by Steel, one of which is illustrated at left in Figure 2. Two other essays similar to this are known. While they are not dated, Zevely's letters to Steel strongly suggest these were produced in 1865.

The perforated essay shown at upper right in Figure 2 is a sample stamp of the sort that probably accompanied Steel's letter. This essay is listed in the Scott specialized catalog as 79E-13h. At this time, Steel's experiments involved mostly points-down grills. The enlargement at lower right in Figure 2 shows a portion of the grill from the perforated essay. As should be evident, the bosses of the grill are best described as "flat-topped squares." In the enlarged illustration, one of the squares has been outlined.

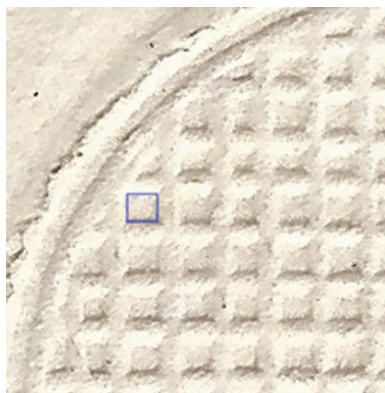
Although under contract to the NBNC, Steel clearly had the freedom to invent and test stamp ideas on the job. But the fact that he seems to have bypassed his employers with his proposal to Zevely suggests he was worried about potential conflicts of interest.

### **1867: The first grilled stamp passes through the post**

The Brazer archive contains no correspondence about grills from the year 1866. Yet we know that NBNC devoted a lot of effort, between 1864 and 1867, in the search for a stamp that could not be reused. Among the patented essays for which we have examples are Loewenberg's decals and coated paper, Gibson's safety network overprints, Bowlsby's stamps with tabs, MacDonough's glycerol-based fugitive ink, and Wyckoff's coated paper.<sup>5</sup> The NBNC also developed two dies for what it called "surface printing"—lithographic and typographic printing, as represented by the essays catalogued as Scott 79-E8, 79-E9, 79-



**Figure 2.** At left: "First experiment of grill" signed by Charles Steel (Scott 79-E13a). The embossing consists of square, flat-topped bosses. Zevely's letters to Steel suggest production during 1865. Three signed "First experiment" essays are recorded. Above: what may be the first grill sample in stamp format, sent to Zevely by Steel in 1865 (Scott 79-E13b). The enlargement below shows the flat-topped, square grill bosses.

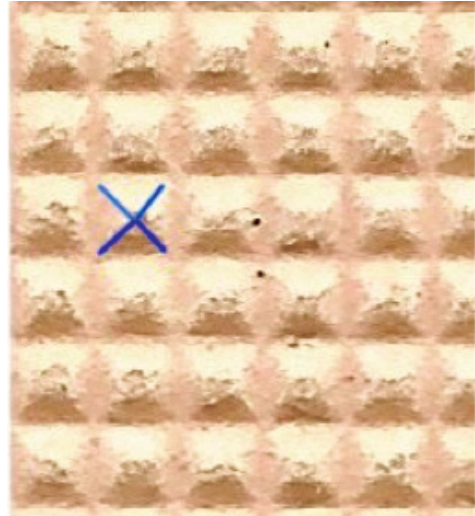


E23 and 79-E25. But none of these efforts led to stamps that were used on mail.

Then, on August 13, 1867, the first grill stamps (Scott 79) passed through the post. In addition to the cover shown in Figure 1, three other covers are known from this date, posted from different locations.

There is no warning in the Brazer archive that distribution of griled stamps was about to happen. The only indication that it could happen was the fact that Zevely had suggested it back in 1865. By this time the grill itself had evolved into a pyramid shape. It was no longer a flat square. The plate proof in Figure 3 is an unperforated top imprint block of four showing the all-over A-grill that was used in these first postal tests in August, 1867. Also shown in Figure 3 is a small portion of the A-grill embossment, greatly enlarged. The pyramidal structure of the bosses should be evident. For clarity I have marked the four edges of one pyramid with blue pen.

Two months passed. Then, on October 8, 1867, Zevely wrote to Steel saying he had instructed NBNC to send him a million samples of stamps produced "according to your [i.e. Steel's] plan." Zevely continued: "You know I have long been in favor of the invention. The P.M.G. is pleased with it. Your patent is ordered and will issue in a week or so."<sup>6</sup>



**Figure 3: Plate proof (Scott 79-E15) and magnified scan of the 'all-over' A-grill used in the first postal tests in August, 1867. The differences with the earlier square-shaped bosses should be clear.**

Steel's letters patent 70,147 for an "Improvement in the manufacture of postage-stamps" followed 14 days later.<sup>7</sup> The day after the registration of the patent, Zevly again wrote to Steel. Zevly had written to Albon Maun, NBNC's treasurer, and wanted to bring Steel up to date: "I have your letter and specimens and you may be assured of my confidence in your invention. I told Mr. Maun that I thought the P.M.G. favorably disposed....he should try the combination of McDonough's idea with yours. I also told him that surface printing is wanted....I think your Co. will finally do you justice; tho' seeming very slow about it."<sup>8</sup>

What are we to make of this? It is difficult to know whether there had been any communication about grills between December 1865 and the distribution of the A-grill experimental stamps in 1867. But the long delay, the significant investment by the NBNC in other patents, the sudden appearance of the used grill in August, and the phrase "I think your Co. will finally do you justice"—all point to there being a bit of a stand-off between Steel and his employer, NBNC.

The A-grill test must have broken the impasse, mainly because the POD responded favorably. Zevly writes confidently about the support of the PMG and moves assertively to further tests. Perhaps out of consideration for NBNC, he suggests that they test Steel's and MacDonough's patents in combination. But he orders "a million or more" grilled stamps. In 1978, C.W. Christian reported that about 50,000 of the A-grill 3¢ stamps were likely to have been printed.<sup>9</sup> Zevly's order involved a significant escalation of official interest in the grills.

### **What was "Steel's plan"?**

Zevly mentions Steel's "plan" in his October 8 letter. Thereafter "Steel's plan" is often mentioned in the archive. It is therefore important to understand exactly what that plan entailed. To do this, we need to summarize the key elements of the patent. At the heart of Steel's patent was the simple idea that embossing a stamp with a grill pattern would create breaks in the fibers of the paper. Canceling ink would then seep into the paper through the

breaks. This would make it difficult to wash the canceling ink off the stamp.

Although simple, the idea led to a number of technical challenges. To solve them, Steel proposed significant changes in the printing process. First, Steel was worried that embossing an already printed stamp would do unacceptable damage to the design. So embossing had to come *before* printing. But that would lead to the challenge of printing on an uneven, embossed surface.

Figure 4 shows an example depicting the problems involved.. This is a die essay on white wove paper of a circular grill pattern with an embossed numeral “3” at center, listed in the Scott specialized catalog as 79-E13d. The red ink was clearly applied after the grilling took place. This essay must date from the 1865-66 period, because it shows flat, square



**Figure 4. Shown life-sized at left and enlarged three times at right, this important essay (Scott 79-E13d) represents a test of the effect of printing on grilled paper. It must**

**date from the 1865-66 period because it shows the flat square bosses that characterize Steel's early efforts. It also gives us an insight into Steel's thinking as he formulated his patent. Achieving quality printing on paper after it had been grilled was to pose a challenge both to Steel and to the National Bank Note Company. In an attempt to resolve the challenge, Steel suggested a number of procedural changes in the printing process, some of which the NBNC apparently found unworkable.**



bosses of the sort that appear on the the early, experimental grill depicted in Figure 2.

To solve the problem of printing on a rough, grilled paper surface, Steel suggested “smoothing”—applying pressure to the grilled paper so that it would be flattened for printing. Steel argued that the paper would still contain the fiber breaks created by the embossing; thus canceling ink would still seep into the stamp after flattening and printing.

That left gumming. Steel was worried that gumming an embossed stamp, even after flattening, would allow the gum to seep into the broken fibers from the back. This could “impair” the stamp’s appearance. Steel therefore proposed that gumming the paper should come before anything else. This was a complete reversal of the standard process. According to Steel’s plan, the order of production should be: gum the paper, emboss it, flatten the embossing, print the design, then perforate.

### **1867: Contractual negotiations and additional experiments**

On October 29, 1867, seven days after Steel’s letters patent, we see the first indication that NBNC was finally accepting the need to deal not just with Steel the employee, but Steel the inventor. In a letter to Steel, Elliott F. Shepard, president of NBNC, wrote about a misunderstanding about profit sharing and asked Steel to submit a proposal for a contract.<sup>10</sup> On November 6, a note from Macdonough to Steel states that the board of NBNC “entertains favorably” the proposition from Steel and invites “friend” Steel to “come over and see me....”<sup>11</sup> The earliest documented use of the C-grill stamp, produced in response to

Zevely's order for a million samples, followed soon afterward, on November 25.

On December 9, NBNC finally reached an agreement with Steel. The agreement is contained in a formal letter from Shepard to Steel. Shepard writes: "I am authorized by our Executive Committee to accede to your terms... that this company pay you for the exclusive right to use your patent for embossed Post Office stamps at the rate of three (3) cents per thousand..."<sup>12</sup> He goes on to sign himself "your obedient servant"—quite a change from earlier correspondence.

The grill essay shown in Figure 5 probably dates from this time. This is an unlisted variety of an all-over A-grill essay that Scott catalogues as 79-E14b. The grill is imprinted on wove paper in various colors, captioned in manuscript as "Section of Grills used by National Bank Note Co." The proof sheet is boldly signed at lower left by "Chas. F. Steel, Inventor and patentee of the grill." Other signators are Macdonough (general manager of NBNC) and Alexander Duke, a machinist at NBNC, possibly the maker of the grill plate.

On the same day that NBNC finally came to terms with Steel, Shepard wrote a long letter to Zevely about the intolerable financial situation that had been created for NBNC by the incessant experimentation and lack of a new contract with the POD.<sup>13</sup> In his letter Shepard made four key points: (1) NBNC has delivered the million-stamp sample and agreed on a royalty with Steel "should the Post Office Department decide to have the stamps made on that plan;" (2) while NBNC "thinks well of" Steel's idea, it has also made considerable investment in other ideas at its own expense for the benefit of the POD; (3) the expense of continuing to produce the current stamps while producing the embossed stamps for experiments at 20¢ per 1,000, was proving to be ruinous; and (4) break-even for the embossed stamps would be about 25¢ per 1,000, but the current contract paid NBNC only 12¢ per 1,000. Shepard concluded: "Allow us to trust that you will send an order that will save us from this protracted misery."

Five days later (December 14) we see a letter from the POD stamp agent D.M. Boyd to Zevely. It suggests that the POD was finally deciding what specific actions it was going to take.<sup>14</sup> Zevely must have asked Boyd what improvements Boyd would desire in the "stamps with embossed center." Boyd writes that he would like a thinner paper and improved gum. He goes into detail about the existing stocks of printed stamps and paper, and notes that 150 million stamps would last for about five months. He writes: "From this data you can judge whether you will authorize the issue of the present plate with embossed centre immediately or not."

In other words, Boyd is setting out the stock and timing implications of grilling the 1861 stamps. But his letter also contains a lengthy discourse on the need to keep up the pressure for a surface-printed stamp. He argues that "the Bank Note Co. if allowed to keep on sending out the present style will presume on your good nature and defer the time indefinitely" and never produce a surface-printed alternative to grilled 1861 stamps.

The final two letters in the archive were written on December 31. They concern a disagreement about the order of gumming.<sup>15</sup> The NBNC was still printing stamps in the normal way, embossing them, flattening them and gumming them last.

The next day inaugurated the year of the grills using the stamps of 1861. Experts agree that the D-grill (earliest documented use: 1 February 1868), was the first non-experimental grill. But there is a possibility that the NBNC went through a series of grill redesigns as they gained experience with the remaining paper stocks. Only with the F-grills in August 1868 did grill production with the 1861 plates reach industrial scale.

### **What have we learned?**

The Brazer archive consists largely of manuscript copies of original documents. Hand-copying was a laborious process, and it seems that Brazer copied only what he felt needed to be copied. For example, the archive only provides copies of half of most cor-



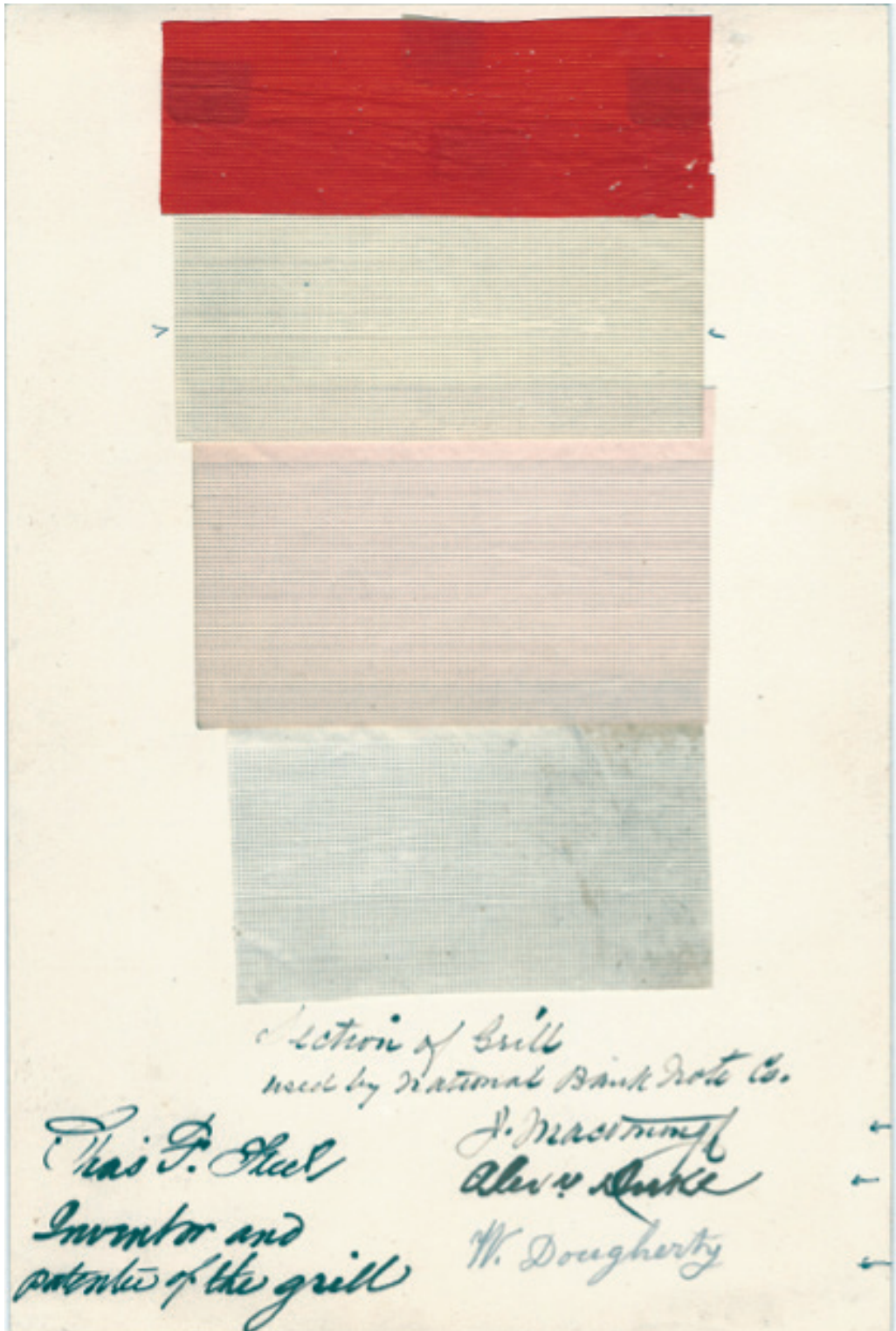


Figure 5. This A-grill essay acknowledges Steel's claim to the grill patent. It is co-signed by MacDonough (General Manager of NBNC) and Alexander Duke (machinist at NBNC).

respondence, as long as one can tell from one letter what was in the other. But in spite of the gaps, there is enough in the archive to significantly improve what we know about the production of the grills.

The first grill essays (including stamp-like essays), must have been produced in 1865 at the latest. From Steel's signed "First experiment" essays (Figure 2), we know that the grill bosses had a flat, square shape. Based on these experiments, Zevely gave Steel and NBNC permission to proceed with live tests of the idea.

The reasons for the long hiatus before testing in 1867 are not clear. Although NBNC was heavily invested in finding a stamp that could not be reused, the company failed to do anything with Steel's ideas. Part of the explanation may be that Steel was not very forthcoming about what he was doing. But NBNC also seems to have been reluctant to try his ideas. In any case, it took 18 months for the A-grill experiment to follow Zevely's initial suggestion. The test must have been deemed a success. Within months we see a significant increase in the POD's interest in Steel's entire plan; and Zevely ordered a "million or more" stamps for testing.

Zevely's million-stamp order led quite quickly to the production of the C-grills. By October 23, stamp-agent Boyd was reporting "the preparation of stamps under a recent order." The EDU of the C-grill stamps followed on November 25; and Shepard's letter to Zevely on December 9 indicates that the million stamps had already been produced. The stock of one million would not have lasted very long. Boyd's letter of December 14 suggests the POD was selling about a million stamps a day at that time.

In the meantime, Zevely had requested additional experiments involving plate and surface printing, with fugitive ink and with embossing. The NBNC's original contract had expired on 31 May 1867, but the POD could not make up its mind. Shepard's letter of 9 December makes it very clear that this was putting NBNC under significant financial strain. Perhaps the most important reason for the POD's indecision is that it wanted a surface-printed stamp. We see this both from Zevely's October 23 letter in which he wrote "I told [Maun] that surface printing is wanted," and in Boyd's lengthy reference (on December 14) to the need to keep up pressure for a surface-printed solution. But Shepard's pleas seem to have moved Zevely to action. His December request for information from Boyd was clearly aimed at helping him to reach a decision. Boyd's letter tells him how long existing stocks would last if Zevely decided to go ahead and grill them.

This gives us the following summary of the sequence of events in the evolution of the grills:

**December 20, 1865: the POD sees the first grill essays using a flat-topped grill**  
**August 13, 1867: EDU of the first A-grill stamps using an all-over pyramid grill**  
**October 8, 1867: the POD orders what were to become the C-grill stamps**  
**October 23, 1867: production of the million-stamp run reported to be underway**  
**November 25, 1867: EDU of the planed-down A-grill (i.e., the C-grill, Scott 83)**  
**December 9, 1867: Steel agrees on royalty terms with the NBNC**  
**December 9, 1867: Shepard's letter to Zevely about the pressing need for a new contract**  
**December 14, 1867: Boyd's letter to Zevely about existing stamp stocks**

Sometime late in December or early in January, Zevely must finally have decided to give up on surface printing for the new contract, and to authorize full production of grilled stamps using the 1861 plates until a new contract could be reached. On July 22 1868, with its request for proposals for new postage stamps, the POD flagged its intention to move to a new stamp issue entirely. The new stamps of course would be the 1869 pictorial issue, for which NBNC ultimately was awarded the contract.

### **Acknowledgement and late news**

I would like to thank Jim Lee for giving me access to what he calls the Brazer-Finkelberg archive. I spent a wonderful three days in his office last year—sifting through the

archive, identifying documents of interest and chatting about matters philatelic with Jim. The story of how this archive ended up in his library is, in itself, a tale worth telling. Document references in the text and endnotes of this article are to documents in the archive.

And a very welcome recent development: Meeting at the APS annual convention at Columbus, Ohio, in August, the board of directors of the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society voted unanimously to scan the entire Brazer-Finkelberg archive and to make the materials available on the ever-expanding Classics Society website (USPCS.org). This may not yet have taken place at the time you read these words, but it will happen. On behalf of all who share my interest in the archival background of the classic U.S. stamps printed by the National Bank Note Company, I thank Jim Lee for acquiring and then offering the material for scanning, and I thank the Classics Society for committing to make it publically available.

### Endnotes

1. William L. Stevenson, *United States Grills* (Severn-Wylie-Jewett Co., Beverly, Mass., 1916); Lester G. Brookman, *The 19th Century Postage Stamps of the United States* (H. L. Lindquist reprint, 1947); William K. Herzog, 1861-68 Part II: The 1867-68 Grilled Stamps, exhibit viewable on the website of the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society (USPCS.org).
2. Here is the internet link to the Patent Office: <http://patft.uspto.gov/netahtml/PTO/patimg.htm>. To view a copy of the original patent, simply insert its number into the space provided.
3. Zevely letter, 13 December 1865.
4. Zevely letter, 20 December 1865.
5. Jan Hofmeyr and James E. Lee, "Linking 3¢ Washington Essays to their Patents," *Chronicle* 251, pp. 267-273 (2016).
6. Zevely letter, 8 October 1867.
7. Steel letters patent 70,147.
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9. C.W. 'Bert' Christian (1978): "1867 Grills—Experimentals, Sizes and Fakes," *Chronicle* 97, pp. 38-42; *Chronicle* 98, pp. 188-192 (1978).
10. Shepard letter, 29 October 1867.
11. MacDonough letter, 6 November 1867.
12. Shepard letter to Steel, 9 December 1867.
13. Shepard letter to Zevely, 9 December 1867.
14. Boyd letter, 14 December 1867.
15. Zevely letters to Maun and Steel, 31 December 1867. ■

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*When you think of United States postal history provenance,  
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## UPDATE TO CENSUS OF CONTROL NUMBER OVERPRINT STAMPS

MICHAEL PLETT AND KENNETH GILBART

In an article in the August 2012 *Chronicle* we described the origins of the control number overprints on the 1861 stamps. As we did the research behind that article we began to realize how scarce these items are. Once we understood their origins, we set about creating a census of the stamps using input from fellow collectors and auction catalog photographs. Since that article six years ago, we have continued to update the census. We present the update here.

The control number stamps, examples of which are shown in Figure 1, are listed in the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers* in the “Specimens” section under “Various Overprints.” They have the catalog numbers of 63SJ to 78SJ. They were an experiment by the National Bank Note Co. (NBNC) to anticipate the need of the Post Office Department (POD) to keep track of stamps distributed to post offices. If the POD could track stamp shipments, they might deter large-scale theft.

The experiment was to determine if the NBNC could use a device designed for imprinting serial numbers on bond coupons to overprint stamps, and to assess what the effort would be. The process used a mechanical numbering head, similar to the device shown in Figure 2. This consisted of a number of discs with the numbers 0-9 and a space around the edge of each disc. Four discs were arranged so that a four-digit number could be printed and then simply advanced to the next number in line. To produce the numbering sequence evident in Figure 1, all four discs were advanced one digit before overprinting the next stamp value. Since the POD did not embrace the idea, the experiment failed. A similar plan was employed much later with the Kansas-Nebraska overprints.

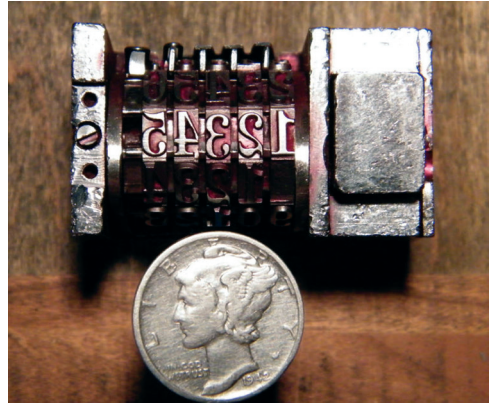


Figure 1. Full set of 1861-68 stamps with control numbers in red. The numbers are in sequence from 9012 to 1234, with the exception of the 15¢, which shows control number of 235. The double perforations on the 5¢ are characteristic of this value.

A survey of NBNC-printed bonds from the 1860s showed that the printed coupons were arrayed four, five, or rarely six across a sheet, indicating the press had four, five, or six mechanical numbering heads. This suggested that, for its stamp experiment, NBNC could only print 40, 50, or 60 stamps with one pass through the coupon-numbering press.

With that in mind, a census seemed to be a reasonable undertaking since it was unlikely that NBNC overprinted thousands or even hundreds of stamps for its experiment.

The latest version of the census data is presented in tabular form in Figure 3. There we record blocks of six, four, and single stamps. Since we have recorded 45 examples of the 2¢, we deduce that the press had at least five numbering heads across. The next most common is the 3¢, of which 39 copies are recorded. In time, we would expect that number also to exceed 40. Only if the recorded number of examples for any stamp value exceeds 50 will we know that NBNC used a device with six numbering heads.



**Figure 2.** The type of mechanical numbering head used to imprint sequential numbers in the 1860s. This particular device shows the same typeface (with traces of red ink) that was used in creating the control numbers on the Figure 1 stamps.

Current data for control number overprint stamps						Change from 2012 data			
Value	Control #	B6	B4	Singles	Total	B6	B4	Singles	Total
90¢	1234	1	3	14	32	0	0	2	2
30¢	2345		5	12	32	-1	1	4	2
24¢	3456		2	11	19	0	0	4	4
15¢	235	1	3	12	30	0	0	2	2
12¢	4567		3	12	24	0	0	2	2
10¢	5678	1	3	16	34	0	0	2	2
5¢	6789		3	13	25	0	0	3	3
3¢	7890	1	4	17	39	0	0	5	5
2¢	8901	1	5	19	45	0	0	4	4
1¢	9012	1	2	14	28	0	0	3	3
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>29</b>

**Figure 3.** Summary of findings from the updated census, which now records a total of 308 stamps. The data block at right depicts the changes from the previously published census in 2012. "B6" designates blocks of six, "B4" blocks of four.

At this point 308 examples are recorded across all values of the 1861 series. The least common is the 24¢ value with 19 copies recorded. These are not common stamps. Since the original census, two complete sets of all ten values have come onto the market. A 24¢ pair also surfaced. The rest appeared as single stamps. Unfortunately, the 30¢ block of six from the Hollowbush collection has been broken up. A block of four from the right portion of the block appeared in the Harmer-Schau sale of January 11-14, 2018. The data group at right in Figure 3 shows how the updated census data has increased over the original.

We are grateful to those who assisted us in continuing the census. Jim Lee was especially helpful. We plan to continue updating the census, so if you have control number stamps we don't know about, we would appreciate receiving a scan (at least 300 dpi on a black background). In another six years, we might be able to publish an additional update. ■

## OFFICIALS

ALAN C. CAMPBELL, EDITOR

### OFFICIAL COVERS TO FOREIGN DESTINATIONS, 1873-1884: AN UPDATE

ALAN C. CAMPBELL

#### Introduction

In these pages in August, 2013, Lester C. Lanphear III published an important census article entitled “U.S. Covers to Foreign Destinations: 1873-1884.”<sup>1</sup> Having kept careful records over many years, Lanphear was able to document 126 such covers, a distressingly small number considering how ubiquitous are foreign mail covers franked with regular Bank Note stamps. Furthermore, for the two-year-period when Official stamps were valid before the introduction of the standard 5¢ U.P.U. rates (July 1, 1873-July 1, 1875), Lanphear was able to list only five covers, three of which went to Canada: hardly worth counting, since the U.S.-Canada treaty then in effect normalized cross-border rates to match domestic postage.

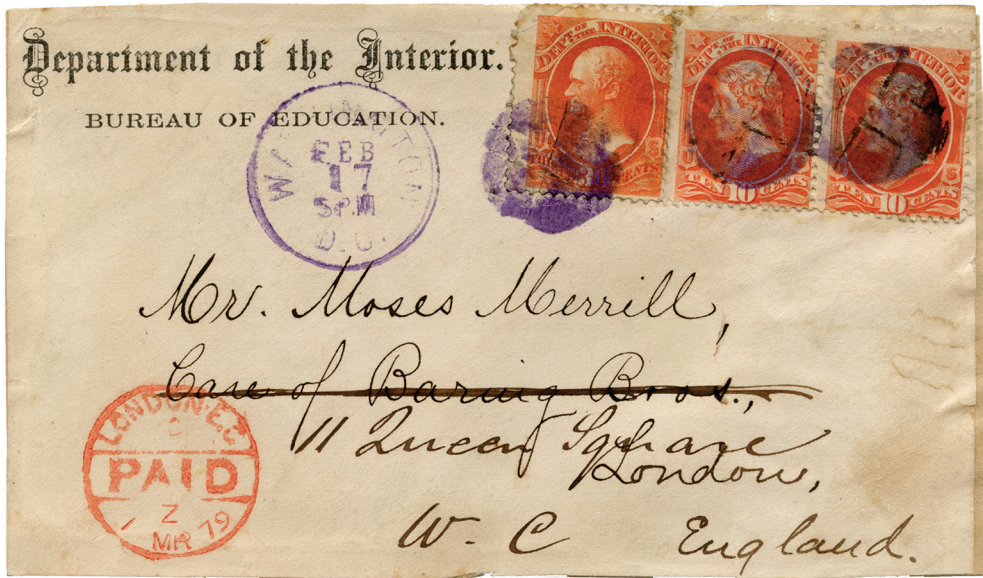
So for the most part, collectors of Official covers are precluded from displaying the glorious and complex pre-U.P.U. high-value combination frankings typical of the Bissell correspondence to India or the Davis correspondence to Peru.

In collecting Bank Note postal history, the search for covers to exotic destinations can be a thrilling hunt, whereas for Official postal historians—with the exception of one Interior cover to Batavia, Dutch East Indies (now Jakarta, Indonesia)—it is an exercise in futility. In truth, for any postal historian who wants the challenge of researching rates and routes, deciding to specialize in Official covers will prove a frustrating dead end. It is my sense that most specialists in Official stamps were initially attracted by the beauty and mystery of the stamps themselves, and then had to be content with tracking down examples on domestic covers: often shopworn legal-size envelopes with boring and obvious frankings. Those of us currently collecting in this field accept this as our lot in life.

In this update to Lanphear’s article, I have chosen to illustrate and discuss six Official foreign mail covers which have recently fallen into my lap. Most of these were sourced by a single sharp-eyed dealer from obscure European auctions. Since most collectors diligently track major American auction sales (where such covers normally appear), these six merit discussion because of their obscure provenance. Also, new discoveries like these give hope to all of us, just when we were about to despair that the our collecting universe has been thoroughly mapped. It is a comforting storyline, to realize how these covers slumbered neglected for 140 years in foreign albums and then were finally repatriated to heroes' welcomes upon their return home. Also, I will report on the Stone estate, handled by Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions, where a number of important and long-unaccounted-for Official covers recently resurfaced. Within this holding were four Official foreign destination covers, three of which were not included in the original Lanphear census.

#### Official covers to foreign destinations from Washington, D.C.

Figure 1 is a mailing label from the Bureau of Education, Department of the Interior, which shows on the right side that it is still attached to its wrapping substrate. It is franked with a pair of 10¢ Interior stamps and single 30¢ Interior stamp, all canceled by violet obliterators. The circular duplex postmark is dated February 17. The device was angled in



**Figure 1.** One 30¢ and two 10¢ Interior stamps on an 1879 mailing label from Washington to London, paying 10 times the 5¢ UPU rate. The violet cancels were struck during a two-week trial of a device known as the Cooper patent cancel.

canceling the 10¢ stamps on the right so as not to strike the circular datestamp again, typical scrupulous compliance by D.C. postal clerks with the official prohibition against canceling stamps with the dated postmark. The red London “PAID” transit marking confirms that this mailing was posted in 1879.

The D.C. postmark doesn’t contain a year date, but the violet canceling ink is telltale. Throughout 1878, the main D.C. post office had been experimenting with a duplex rubber device which incorporated the year date in the postmark and had a quartered circle killer, always struck in violet ink. In December of that year, the device continued in use, but was now being struck using a distinctive indigo or blue-black canceling ink. In early February, 1879, there was a two-week trial of the Cooper patent cancel in D.C., which was struck in violet and intended to scarify the stamps. Three Official covers are recorded with this cancellation, one of which—a Treasury cover to London—was expertly written up years ago in these pages by Alfred E. Staubus in the inaugural edition of this section.<sup>2</sup> On the parcel label in Figure 2, the killers—while struck in the violet ink characteristic of the Cooper patent trial—do not actually tear into the stamps. After all this experimentation, the main D.C. post office reverted to a few months of using a duplex device with a non-year-dated postmark with cut cork obliterated struck in black (encompassing the enchanting variations on a snowflake of April, 1879) before steel ellipse cancelers struck with indigo ink were introduced in May, 1879.

Fully 37 of the 126 foreign covers Lanphear documented (29 percent) were addressed to London or other places in England, which would intuitively seem the most common of all destinations, although the data is skewed by the great preponderance of Treasury covers surviving from the Conant correspondence.<sup>3</sup> It is thus refreshing to learn that the label illustrated in Figure 1 is only the second recorded Interior cover to England. What is not surprising is that this is only the second recorded use of the 30¢ Interior stamp on cover, the other being a solo use on a domestic book rate parcel label.<sup>4</sup> Any on-cover use of an Official stamp above a 15¢ value is excessively rare, so rare that within this field, cut-out mailing labels and cover fronts are valued almost on a par with fully intact covers. After the two

State parcel fronts to Mexico and the famous \$2 State parcel front to Germany, this is the highest foreign mail franking from any of the other Official departments.

The main D.C. post office did not have a foreign mail office per se, since eastbound or southbound covers were routed via New York City, while covers to the Far East were routed via San Francisco. With a dated first-class postmark and the absence of a “no written matter enclosed” attestation, the 50¢ in postage on the label in Figure 1 probably pays ten times the standard U.P.U. first-class rate of 5¢ per half ounce. Lanphear, in his original census article, illustrated a printed matter label to Austria without a datestamp franked with a pair of 2¢ Interior stamps, proudly describing it as “the only recorded example of a foreign-rate Official cover franked at the printed-matter rate” (which sticks in my craw because I had foolishly traded this item to him years before). He analyzed the postage as paying quadruple the 1¢ U.P.U. rate to Austria. Starting in 1879, double-oval third-class cancelers at the main New York post office incorporated a date in compliance with new U.P.U. regulations. So what did a typical official-mail printed-matter foreign mailing from D.C. look like during this period? We may never know, since domestic penalty franks would have been utilized to carry the mail to New York, where the necessary postage stamps would have been added by the dispatch agent. No such covers survive.

Figure 2 shows a small clean cover from the Smithsonian Institution to Padua, Italy, with two 3¢ Interior stamps overpaying the 5¢ U.P.U. rate. This sort of convenience overpayment is very common on Official foreign destination covers, suggesting that the absence of a 5¢ stamp to pay the U.P.U. rate must have been a considerable annoyance to departmental mailroom clerks. This style of postmark, incorporating the hour of the day but not the year date, was utilized at the main D.C. post office from August, 1874 through the



**Figure 2.** Two 3¢ Interior stamps on a Smithsonian cover from Washington to Padua, dating from 1875 or 1876. This is one of three recorded Interior covers to Italy.



end of 1877. Its use can be quite frustrating to collectors trying to pin down the year date of a mailing. Fortunately, in this case the year can be narrowed down to either 1875 or 1876, based on the style of the red New York transit marking (Winter 248) which is recorded used from May 23, 1870 to November 29, 1876.<sup>5</sup> There is an indistinct Padua backstamp on the reverse. The addressee (Mr. G. Bellavitis) is the same as on a similar odd-sized Smithsonian cover (dated April 4, 1876) in the original Lanphear census (IF20). That cover, when it first appeared in the market years ago, was regarded as suspect by the highly respected dealer Albert Chang, because the oily ink on the messy blob cancellation had run underneath the adhesive. It eventually was authenticated by the Philatelic Foundation in 2005, and was last sold in 2009.<sup>6</sup> The appearance of the highly similar and unimpeachable cover in Figure 2 should remove any lingering doubts.



**Figure 3. Cover from July 1875 or 1876, franked with a 6¢ Treasury stamp and sent from Washington to Brunswick, Germany. The franking represents a 1¢ convenience overpayment of the 5¢ U.P.U. rate. One of three recorded Treasury covers to Germany.**

Figure 3 shows a legal-size cover from the First Comptroller's Office of the Treasury Department to the U.S. Consul in the city of Brunswick, Germany, franked with a 6¢ Treasury stamp. This is another convenience overpayment of the U.P.U. single first-class rate. Once again, we encounter a D.C. postmark without a year date, and as before, we can establish this cover as being posted on either July 30, 1875 or 1876, based on the style of the red New York transit marking. Winter reported the span of use of this marking (his 243) as August 15, 1874 to September 6, 1876.<sup>7</sup> Given the great rarity of pre-U.P.U. official mail covers, had this been an 1874 use with the 6¢ Treasury paying an exact proper treaty rate, it would command a much higher price.

### **Official covers to foreign destinations from New York City**

Figure 4 shows another small cover from the Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., here addressed to Dr. Antonio Cipriano Costa in Barcelona, Spain. This envelope has the same odd dimensions of the cover to Padua shown in Figure 2, and may have contained a similar announcement or invitation. The pair of 3¢ Interior stamps is canceled by two overlapping strikes of the familiar sans-serif numeral in vertical barred ellipse typically seen on New York City foreign mail starting in November, 1876. This is a steel device, similar to the numeral cancelers first introduced on domestic mail there earlier in 1876, which gradually replaced the famous and well-studied geometric killers. I consulted the expert on these cancellations, John Donnes, who advised me that because a two-digit year date designation floating to the lower right of the postmark rim was added to these cancelers in August 1878, this cover must have been posted in 1876 or 1877—more likely 1876, because

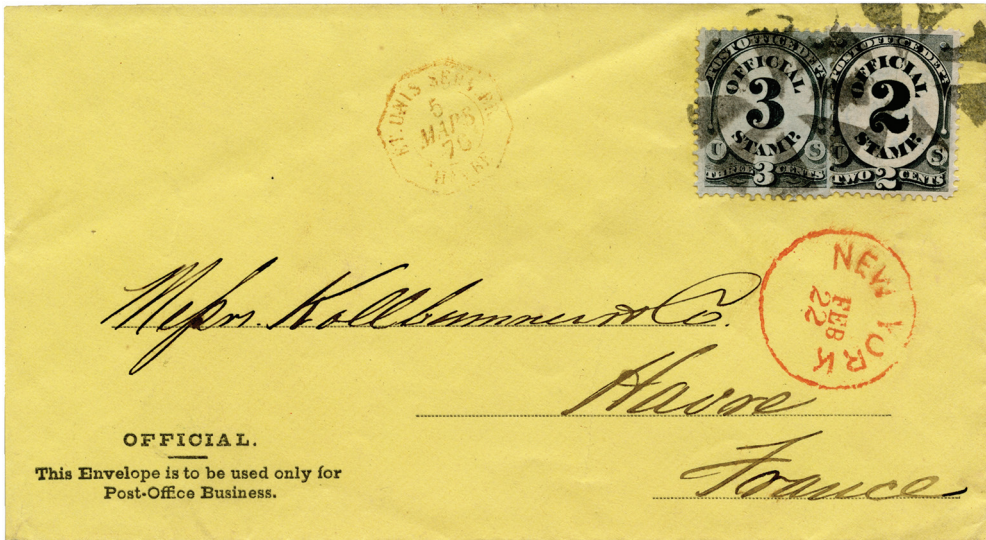


**Figure 4. Two 3¢ Interior stamps on an 1876 Smithsonian cover from New York City to Barcelona, Spain, a 1¢ convenience overpayment of the U.P.U. rate. One of two Official covers recorded to Spain, and the only Smithsonian cover posted at New York.**

the rim of the postmark does not show wear on the righthand strike. There is no additional red transit marking on this cover, nor would we expect to see one on a cover entering the mails at the main New York post office. The 6¢ postage again represents a convenience overpayment of the single 5¢ U.P.U. rate. There were six numbers in this set of barred elliptical killers: numerals 1 and 2 were used in the morning, 3 and 4 in the afternoon, and 5 and 6 in the evening. So the “4” in these killers accords nicely with the P.M. indication in the circular datestamp.

This is the only recorded Smithsonian Institution cover with Official stamps to have been posted originally in New York City, and we will probably never know how this came to happen. Presumably it was hand-carried up from Washington, D.C. Official covers to foreign destinations posted anywhere outside of Washington are scarce and highly sought. Most of the covers posted in New York City originated elsewhere (typically penalty-clause envelopes from Washington) and had supplemental postage stamps added by the dispatch agent at the main New York post office. Lanphear’s avidity for such covers has made my own quest for a single example on cover of the New York foreign mail steel duplex canceler much harder.<sup>8</sup> In the original Lanphear census, there was only one Official cover previously known going to Spain.

Figure 5 shows a lovely small yellow Post Office envelope, franked with 2¢ and 3¢ Post Office Official stamps, correctly paying the 5¢ U.P.U. rate to Havre, France. The red Havre received marking shows that this cover, postmarked in red at New York on February 22, arrived in Havre on March 5, 1876. The stamps are cancelled with two strikes of a large-diameter eight-wedge killer, TR-W17 in the Weiss taxonomy. Weiss listed 27 uses of

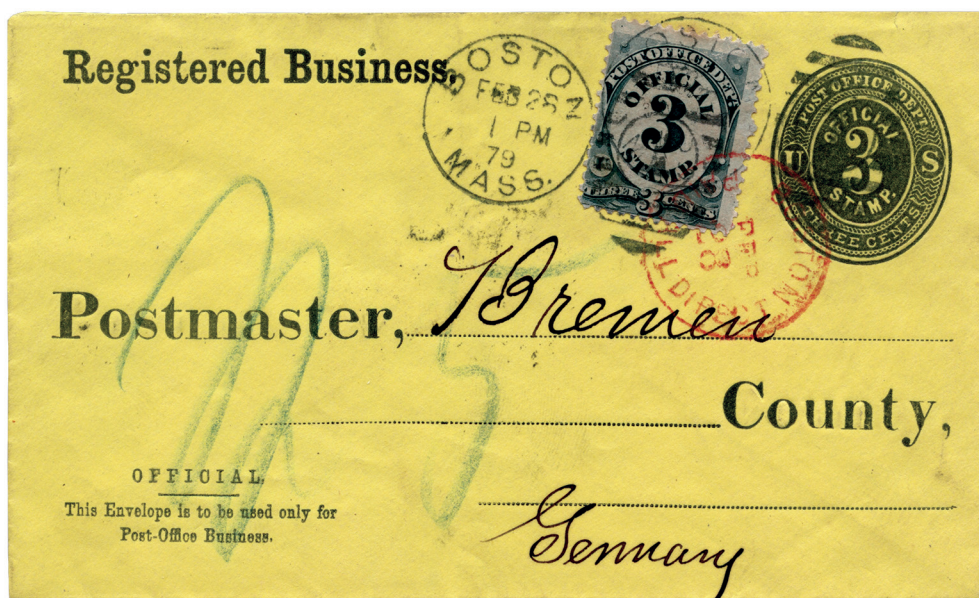


**Figure 5. Post Office stamps (2¢ and 3¢ values) on an 1876 cover from New York City to Havre, France, with two strikes of a New York Foreign Mail cancel (Weiss type TR-W17). This is one of three recorded Official covers showing classic NYFM cancels.**

TR-W17 on cover throughout 1876, so this is a very well-known traditional NYFM killer.<sup>9</sup> This cover is addressed to a business in Havre, not to the postmaster there. Prior to this discovery, there had only been two Official covers recorded with classic NYFM killers, both legal-size: a quadruple treaty-rate Treasury cover to Liverpool in 1875 (GE-EP1) and a double U.P.U.-rate War penalty handstamped envelope to Dresden in 1878 (TR-W13), with Post Office stamps goofily added by the dispatch agent in New York City.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 6 shows a small common lemon Official stamped envelope (UO7) with an adjacent 3¢ Post Office stamp apparently overpaying by 1¢ the 5¢ U.P.U. rate to Bremen, Germany. The adhesive and the embossed imprint are canceled by two strikes of a Boston steel duplex marking dated February 28, 1879. The killer is a barred ellipse with numeral 1. The cover was also struck in red by a Boston “PAID ALL DIRECT” marking applied by the Boston foreign mail office. A quite similar cover was in the Robert L. Markovits collection addressed to Paris, France, with the same red exchange marking and canceled by a single strike of a duplex device dated June 3, with the more expected negative “B” in circle killer.<sup>11</sup> The year date is confirmed as also being 1879 by a faintly struck blue Brest transit marking. Remarkably, up until Figure 6, the Markovits cover was the only Official foreign mail cover recorded from Boston.

The basic stamped envelope here was printed up for domestic correspondence between postmasters within the United States. This is a late use of such an uprated envelope, since the Post Office Department had quickly converted to using penalty envelopes in 1877. The clerk who added the 3¢ Official stamp probably believed that he needed additional postage for the German destination, unaware that per the U.P.U. Convention of June 1, 1878, “Official correspondence relative to the postal service and exchanged between the Postal Administrations, is alone exempt from this obligation [prepayment of postage] and admitted free” (page 740, Article 8, with author’s interpolation bracketed). Dennis Schmidt reports that he has a similar 3¢ stamped envelope, posted in Philadelphia and addressed to the same Bremen postmaster from October, 1878, where correctly no additional postage was affixed. Lester C. Lanphear III reports possessing a yellow Post Office Business envelope with no penalty clause or additional stamps, going from Nelson, Wisconsin to the postmaster in Hanover, Germany in 1883. To prevent such legitimate unstamped mail being



**Figure 6. 1879 3¢ Post Office stamped envelope with 3¢ Post Office stamp sent from Boston to Bremen, Germany. The significance of the crayon markings is not known.**

overly scrutinized, around 1890 the clause “Free Under Convention” was printed on Post Office envelopes to be used for such purposes.

Even in major U.S. cities, postal clerks often demonstrated an insecure grasp of the shifting U.P.U. regulations. Effective April 1, 1879, Official stamps and stamped envelopes were no longer valid for the payment of postage on foreign mail. The Treasury Department immediately began stocking regular postage stamps for its foreign mails, but for other departmental foreign penalty mail routed through New York City, the dispatch agent there continued applying supplemental Official postage with impunity through July 1, 1884.

In the summer of 2017, the philatelic auction firm of Schuyler Rumsey in San Francisco received a large consignment from an heir to the estate of Richard C. Stone, a collector who had died in the 1960s. He had several areas of specialization, and one of these was Official covers, used blocks, and cancellations. Most of his material had been purchased in the 1930s through the 1950s. He was apparently no relation to Marshall Stone, whose important collection of Officials was sold at public auction in 1990.<sup>12</sup> The bulk of the Richard Stone Officials was sold at a public auction held in conjunction with the SESCAL show in October in Ontario, California, with a few of the best covers held out for a Gems of Philately Sale in December in San Francisco.<sup>13</sup> Lanphear, myself, and Dr. Dennis Schmidt of Paris, Texas attended the first auction and were able to view the balance lots in person.

No material was offered from three departments: Executive, Justice, and Agriculture. I am told that the heirs did not withhold anything from the consignment, nor was the collection subdivided amongst them in some way, so this was apparently an eccentric personal choice on Mr. Stone’s part. His collection contained four Official covers to foreign destinations. Of little importance was a badly damaged 6¢ Interior tissue-paper cover to France, which was consigned to a balance lot of Interior covers (lot 1333), and rightfully so. Many of these covers were in shockingly rough condition, mended with a profusion of hinges on the front, stained or cut down, but we need to be open-minded, since this was not an exhibition collection, and very many Official covers have been badly cared for over the years. There was also a legal-size blue linen Department of State 1883 cover to Alexandria, Egypt, franked with a 10¢ State stamp with a D.C. fishtail numeral cancellation. This cover

is horribly stained in the middle: an expert restorer evaluated the condition and declared it unrestorable, chiefly because linen covers are so hard to work on. I am told that it will be offered in an upcoming sale, and who knows, it might still find a buyer.

In contrast, two magnificent covers were sold in Rumsey's 2017 "Gems" auction. One was an 1878 small 3¢ regular large Banknote cover posted in Baltimore, addressed to Midshipman W.S. Benson on the U.S. Flagship *Hartford* in Washington, D.C. With the addition of a 7¢ Navy stamp applied by the Navy Department there, it was forwarded to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, receiving a red London transit marking en route. This cover, lot 259 in the auction, was very similar to the ex-Waud cover sold in the Markovits sale as lot 3255 (NF4 in the Lanphear census). So there are now three such 7¢ Navy combination frankings.

The other truly sensational official foreign mail cover to emerge blinking from the witness protection program was the long-missing blue linen 1874 Department of State cover front to the U.S. Consul in Matamoros, Mexico, franked with 90¢, 30¢, and two 10¢ State stamps. This was lot 262 in the sale, SF12 in the Lanphear census. It had last been seen at a John Fox auction on April 15, 1955 (lot 766). It was subsequently certified by the Philatelic Foundation and then received judicious professional restoration.<sup>14</sup> Its companion piece, the only other 90¢ State cover (SF11 in the Lanphear census) ex-Waud and ex-Markovits, had been sold for \$63,250 (including the buyer's commission) in 2004, and has since been a major highlight of a Department of State postal history exhibit collection.<sup>15</sup> Lanphear had been tracking the missing cover to Mexico for many years, and had never given up hope that it might one day reappear, keeping the faith just as he did after the great covers were stolen from the Charles Starnes collection.

It only seems fitting then, that Lanphear was able to finally buy it at the Rumsey auction and add it to his collection. He paid \$37,375 including the buyer's commission, a relative bargain attributable to the fact that his would-be major competitor for this item presumably felt no compulsion to own both pieces. Of the 117 issued Official stamps (both Continental and American printings), only 100 are known to exist on cover. With this purchase, Lanphear has now collected 96 of the 100 known, a far superior rate of completion than any of the famous Official collectors who preceded him: Congressman Ernest Ackerman, Morrison Waud, Robert L. Markovits and Charles J. Starnes. This is indeed a most impressive achievement.

I would be remiss if I didn't comment in passing on a few other items in the first Stone sale, which might well have escaped the attention of those who casually examined only the catalog. The registry fee changed from 8¢ to 10¢ on July 1, 1875. Prior to this sale, there was only a single recorded example of the 8¢ registry fee paid with Official stamps during their first two years of their postal validity. In this sale, three more examples surfaced. One was a small cover front (lot 1305) from the Office of the 3rd Assistant Postmaster General from early May, 1875, franked with a 3¢ Post Office stamp and 11¢ in regular postage. This was fulfillment of an early order of Special Printing stamps, and the collector was 3¢ short in his remittance, not having realized that the mailing would be double weight (6¢ postage + 8¢ registry fee = 14¢).

In the War Department cover balance (lot 1341), there was a damaged legal-size Washington, D.C. registered cover with blue cancellations on a 2¢ War and two 6¢ War stamps (again, 6¢ postage + 8¢ registry fee = 14¢). The buyer of this lot intends to have the cover restored. Finally, in the Treasury Department cover balance, there was a piece of a registered legal-size cover front from North Carolina franked with 1¢, 7¢, and a 3¢ pair, which again totals 14¢ for the postage and registry fee combined.

The War Department cover balance mentioned above also contained an astonishing sleeper. This was a Signal Service Corps wrapper to Jules Marcou, a famous geologist in Cambridge, Massachusetts, franked with additional 1¢ and 3¢ War stamps. It was described as a 1¢ War wrapper, but on close examination turned out to be a 2¢ War manila wrapper

(WO33), the first used example ever recorded. The buyer, Dr. Dennis Schmidt, believes that the 6¢ in total postage paid triple the 2¢ rate for up to two ounces of printed matter. In fairness to the describer, I too examined this wrapper, on which the indicium was so heavily canceled that it was virtually impossible to make out the denomination.

I myself was especially pleased to bid successfully on lot 1295, a used 30¢ War block with a large Fort Davis, Texas postmark. It will make a nice companion piece to the used 3¢ War used block from Fort Benton, Montana Territory, that came my way via a treasure trove balance lot in the David Lobdell sale.<sup>16</sup> These are the only two used Official blocks with fort cancellations I have ever seen. In the Rumsey “Gems” sale, Dr. Schmidt bought lot 257, the very pretty ex-Ackerman 2¢ War stamped reply envelope uprated with a 1¢ War adhesive, paying the 3¢ domestic rate from New York City to Washington, D.C. in 1876. This was described as the only recorded used 2¢ Reay entire envelope (UO19).

Also in this sale, Lanphear was victorious in winning lot 261, described as “The Most Important Post Office Department Cover in Existence.” Ex-Ackerman, this is a large manila cover posted in Washington, D.C., sent to the Postmaster of Winchester, New Hampshire, franked with a strip of five 30¢ Post Office stamps. The other long-missing ex-Ackerman 30¢ Post Office cover was also in this consignment, but the auction staff deemed it inauthentic. Given that no 24¢ or 90¢ Post Office covers have ever been reported, the breathless heading given to this lot in the auction catalog was indeed justified. Finally, lot 264 was a proof-like socked-on-the-nose strike of a Pittsburgh skull-and-crossbones in coffin cancellation (Cole SK-51) inverted on a 30¢ War stamp. With the buyer’s premium, this extraordinary stamp—a mini masterpiece of American folk art—sold for \$6,613, a realization that left crawling in the dust every other off-cover cancellation on an Official stamp sold publicly before.

### Conclusion

Lanphear recently confided to me his relief that so few important Official covers remain unaccounted for, aside from a handful of covers from the Starnes collection that are still missing. Considering how challenging it is to collect the postal history of this field, in a perfect world all the important covers would remain under the control of a small fraternity of dedicated specialists. Inevitably, though, some items get poached. The Smithsonian cover I mentioned in the introduction, franked with 10¢ in Interior stamps to Batavia, Dutch East Indies, was last sold in 1981, and seems to have gone underground. As has, from the same sale of Rae Ehrenberg’s collection, the legendary 3¢ State first day cover, a diplomatic pouch mailing from Malta, which Markovits bought and then unwisely returned because of an utterly trivial cover fault.<sup>17</sup> Best guess would be that it was then sold privately to a collector of earliest known uses who is still holding it. Also, the highlights of the Dr. David H. Lobdell exhibit collection of War Department Issues—a matched pair of covers to Yedo, Japan on the northern island of Hokkaido franked with 24¢ and 30¢ War stamps—are thought to have been bought by a collector with a special focus on transpacific covers.<sup>18</sup>

Initially under the mentorship of Charles J. Starnes, Lanphear has for many years been compiling important census data on various aspects of Official stamps: plate number and imprint blocks and strips, used multiples, Fort covers, diplomatic pouch mail covers, foreign destination covers, and values on cover where less than ten examples have been recorded. Much of that research has been published on an ongoing basis here in the *Chronicle*, and he is still maintaining and updating his meticulous records. Back when I took a stab at writing census articles myself, Lanphear, as assistant section editor, was always able to find and add a few obscure items that I would otherwise have missed. Over the years, I have seen my census data cited in various auction catalog descriptions to tout the rarity of certain covers. Whenever I see this, I feel a strange mixture of pride and misgiving, since the published data can quickly be rendered obsolete and inaccurate when constant updates

aren't being issued. Census data is best maintained on a website, where the information can be continuously edited, and the future for philatelic research of this sort is exemplified by the Robert A. Siegel firm's sophisticated Power Search function. The question then arises, who in succession will serve as keeper of the ledgers?

As the small fraternity of Official specialists suffers attrition through the passage of time, one wonders what bright eager understudy awaits in the wings, brimming with passion, enthusiasm, and maniacal obsession to carry on the work. As it stands at the moment, with all the best material closely held, there seems little opportunity for a propitious opening. Since we were first granted the privilege of a dedicated section in the *Chronicle* back in 1990, I feel that the lumpy rugby ball of our understanding has been advanced far down the field, given how rudimentary general knowledge was in the beginning.

Granted, this is not the National Genome Project, but those of us still collecting passionately have a solemn duty to consolidate and organize our research for the benefit of those who will follow. After all, we would have been starting at ground zero had it not been for the seminal research contained in the chapter on Official stamps in John N. Luff's majestic *Postage Stamps of the United States* (1902), and Luff had access to material back then that would be impossible to obtain today. From 1940 to 1980, this field was still avidly collected and researched (particularly by Starnes), but few important articles were published. I would respectfully encourage all the specialists of my generation to now focus their efforts on writing, so that in the future—when their collections and reference material are dispersed into the hands of a new generation of stewards—all that hard-won knowledge will not be lost.

### Acknowledgements

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### Endnotes

1. *Chronicle* 239, pp. 273-287.
2. Alfred E. Staubus, "Stamps for use on Official Correspondence to Foreign Destinations under GPU and UPU Treaties," *Chronicle* 147 (August, 1990), pg. 189, Figure 1.
3. In March 1877, at the start of the Hayes administration, Secretary of the Treasury John Sherman dispatched Charles F. Conant to oversee the sale of United State bonds in the European financial markets. Conant spent three years in London and the correspondence between him and Sherman survives. After April 1, 1879, Official stamps were no longer valid on U.P.U. mail, and the Treasury Department quickly began stocking regular stamps for foreign mailings. The majority of the Conant covers to London are legal-size penalty envelopes, franked with 5¢ and 10¢ Bank Note stamps.
4. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, sale 945, October 26, 2007, "The Charles J. Starnes Collection," lot 3788, now in the Lanphear exhibition collection. Another purported 30¢ Interior use, ex-Robert L. Markovits, untied on a package label (lot 3406 in the Matthew Bennett name sale of February 7, 2004), did not survive the certification process. Nor did an ex-Ackerman cover that resurfaced in 1985.
5. *Chronicle* 171, pg. 201.
6. Spink Shreve Galleries, April 17, 2009, "The William J. Ainsworth Collection," lot 417.
7. *Chronicle* 171, pg. 200.
8. See Lester C. Lanphear III, "Official Stamps Added During Transit in the Mail System," *Chronicle* 205 (February 2005), pp. 48-55.
9. William R. Weiss, Jr., *The Foreign Mail Cancellations of 1870-1878* (1990), pg. 437.
10. Alan C. Campbell, "New York Foreign Mail Cancellations on Official Stamps, 1873-1884," *Chronicle* 203 (August 2004), pg. 230, Figure 5.
11. Matthew Bennett Auction 280, October 2, 2004, lot 1916.
12. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, sale 728, September 14, 1990.
13. Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions, SESCAL sale, October 14, 2017, lots 1274-1342, and Gems of Philately, December 13, 2017, lots 257, 259, 262.
14. PFC #477,751, issued on June 1, 2009, submitted by Richard C. Stone Jr.
15. Matthew Bennett Auction 273, February 7, 2004, lot 3146.
16. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, sale 1003, December 16, 2010, lot 5539.
17. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, sale 577, "The Crystal Collection," lots 250 and 335.
18. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, sale 1003, December 16, 2010, lots 5523-24. ■

**FOREIGN REGISTERED MAIL: 1855-1875**  
**PART ONE—CANADA**  
**JAMES W. MILGRAM, M.D.**

This is the first of a planned series of articles that will explain and illustrate registered correspondence between the United States and the rest of the world, from the beginning of registered mail in the United States until 1875, when the Universal Postal Union established uniform registry rates for most countries. To enable full understanding, it is first necessary to provide a brief overview of domestic registered mail. Domestic registry rates are summarized in Table 1.<sup>1</sup>

Effective date	Registration Fee	Payable
1845-June 30, 1855	No charge	
July 1, 1855	5¢	In cash
July 1, 1863	20¢	In cash
June 1, 1867	20¢	By Stamps
January 1, 1869	15¢	By Stamps
January 1, 1874	8¢	By Stamps
July 1, 1875	10¢	By Stamps

**Table 1. Domestic registration fees, 1845-1875**

Official registered mail became law on July 1, 1855, but the decade after November 1, 1845 saw a gradual growth of unofficial registered mail throughout most of the country, even the far west.<sup>2</sup> There were no charges for this unofficial registration service, which was provided by individual postmasters to protect letters that were identified by their senders as having valuable content. As of this writing, only two incoming foreign letters have been reported with markings showing this unofficial service, one an 1845 letter from France showing the large blue **R** of Philadelphia applied within two weeks of the commencement of unofficial registration (Figure 1) and the other from Liverpool dated October 18, 1850 (Figure 2) showing Philadelphia's small blue **R**. **R** designates registered. It is believed the **R** markings were applied at Philadelphia when the accompanying way bill mentioned value in a letter. But neither of these two early incoming registered letters discusses value.

Addressed to Philadelphia, the cover in Figure 1 was sent from Paris on October 3, 1845. Manuscript markings on the reverse (shown opened up at top in Figure 1) indicate a weight of 25 grams and prepayment of 19 decimes. The handwritten "177" at the upper left on the cover front designates that this was the 177th prepaid letter sent from the Paris office on this particular day.<sup>3</sup> The prepayment was the sum of 18 decimes for a 25-gram letter going 180 km from Paris to Le Havre plus a 1 decime ship letter fee.

The cover was carried by the packet sailing ship *Silvie de Grasse*, which departed Le Havre on October 12, 1845 and arrived in New York on November 11, 1845. The letter weighed more than ½ ounce and the circular red New York ship marking indicated 12¢





Figure 1. Folded letter from Paris, October 3, 1845 to Philadelphia. Weight of 25 grams and prepayment of 19 decimes indicated on the reverse (unfolded at top). Carried by sailing packet from Le Havre to New York and there rated 12¢ due (2¢ ship fee and double 5¢ under 300-mile inland rate). Marked with large blue Philadelphia “R” within two weeks of the earliest known use of this marking.

was due: 2¢ ship fee plus 10¢ for double the 5¢ rate (for up to 300 miles) from New York to Philadelphia. The reverse shows No 29 and a crossed out No 27, the meaning of which is uncertain. The large blue R indicates the letter was treated as registered at Philadelphia.

Figure 2 is a folded letter sent to Philadelphia from Liverpool on October 18, 1850 under the 1849 United States-United Kingdom postal convention. The Liverpool exchange office struck **19 CENTS** debit to the United States, representing 16¢ sea postage plus 3¢ British internal postage. The letter was sent on the Cunard steamship *Canada*, which departed Liverpool October 19 and arrived in Boston October 29. The next day Boston struck **Br. PACKET 24 BOSTON** circular datestamp to indicate 24¢ was due. At Philadelphia the cover received a small blue R, again, a certain indication it was treated as registered there.



Figure 2. Unpaid from Liverpool, Oct. 18, 1850 to Philadelphia: 19¢ British debit to the U.S. Carried by Cunard steamer *Canada* to Boston. Rated 24¢ due, the U.S.-U.K. convention rate. This cover shows Philadelphia's small “R” marking without a registration number.

Informal registration markings also appear on outgoing foreign mail letters. An August 22, 1852 letter from St. Louis to Backnang, Württemberg, endorsed “Recomandirt” (registered) was illustrated in *Chronicle* 234.<sup>4</sup> Figure 3 shows an outgoing letter from New Orleans, datestamped June 24, 1852 and sent to Paris. Unofficial registration is indicated by the manuscript “No 3689” and the red New Orleans straightline **REGISTERED** (R-NO-1).<sup>5</sup> A red **PAID 20**, also applied at New Orleans, indicates 20¢ was prepaid for the combined U.S. internal and American packet rate (under ½ ounce) for direct service to France. The letter was carried by the Havre Line steamship *Franklin* from New York on July 3 and arrived at Le Havre on July 15. Due postage of 12 decimes is written in the center. This indicates French internal postage for a letter weighing 7½ to 15 grams addressed beyond the port of arrival. The pen check mark at the upper left indicates a weight over 7½ grams.



**Figure 3. New Orleans June 24, 1852 to Paris: 20¢ postage paid, the combined U.S. internal and sea rate by American packet to France. “No 3689” and straightline REGISTERED indicate unofficial registration. Carried by Havre Line *Franklin* from New York.**

A second example of unofficial registration in the United States to a foreign destination is shown as Figure 90 in my book.<sup>6</sup> This is an 1852 cover to Quebec, marked “money” and numbered “20” at Buffalo. The 10¢ treaty rate to Quebec was prepaid by three 3¢ 1851 stamps and a 1¢ 1851 Type II stamp. The cover bears Canadian markings and a hand-stamped “MONEY-LETTER” in red.

In the United States, official registration, requiring a 5¢ cash fee, was inaugurated July 1, 1855.<sup>7</sup> The regulations applied only to letters sent within the United States. As shown in Table 1, the registration fee was increased to 20¢ in 1863 with cash prepayment still required. Beginning June 1, 1867, the cash requirement was eliminated and prepayment by stamps was required. The registry fee was reduced to 15¢ on January 1, 1869. Then on January 1, 1874 it was further reduced to 8¢. Finally, on July 1, 1875, a 10¢ U.P.U. rate was instituted. This remained operative until 1893.

### Early Canadian uses

Valuable letters were identified much earlier in Canada than in the United States. From the 1820s such letters could be marked “Money Letter” or a similar notation.<sup>8</sup>

Printed money-letter receipts from recipients of such letters exist from 1833. Regulations required that after 1827 money letters should be noted on the post bills (the accounting slip sent with every shipment of letters from one postmaster to another). Quebec City introduced the first handstamped “MONEY LETTER” marking in 1831. In 1839 brass handstamps were provided to other cities in Upper and Lower Canada; these were in use by 1840. Many locally made handstamps appeared later. While money letters from the U.S. to Canada are rarely seen, quite a few examples are known in the reverse direction beginning in the 1840s. Since the postage had to be paid within each country, these covers bear both Canadian and American ratings.

Figure 4 shows the straightline MONEY-LETTER marking of Hamilton, Canada West, on a July 22, 1850 folded letter to New York that also bears a manuscript “Money” endorsement. The red PAID and red manuscript notation indicate the sender prepaid 4½ pence Canadian currency for the rate (up to 60 miles) from Hamilton to the exchange office at Lewiston, New York. There was no charge for money letters in Canada at this time. Lewiston struck its circular datestamp (July 23) and rated the letter due 10¢ for the over-300-mile rate to New York City. It probably also crossed out the PAID marking, because it no longer applied. Someone wrote “Rec” to the left of the orange date stamp to indicate the letter was received; this is not a registration marking. However, the checkmark at lower left may indicate valuable contents.



**Figure 4. Hamilton July 22, 1850 MONEY-LETTER to New York. PAID 4½d Canadian currency for postage (up to 60 miles) to the exchange office at Lewiston, New York, which marked 10¢ due for over-300-mile distance to New York City. This may have been treated as an unofficially registered cover at Lewiston. Note the check marking at lower left (indicating registration), applied in the same bold pen and ink that was used to cross out the Canadian PAID handstamp (which no longer applied).**

Figure 63 of the Harrison, Arfken, and Lussey book shows two 1847 5¢ stamps that were applied in Quebec to prepay U.S. postage on a money letter to New York City.<sup>9</sup> A manuscript 4½, which ties one of the 1847 stamps, indicates the Canadian postage was paid in cash. Canadian adhesives are also known on these covers.

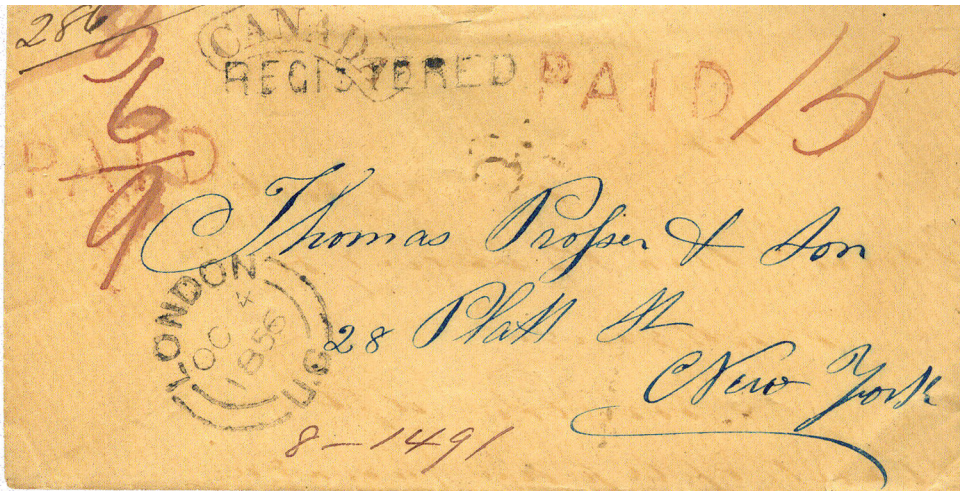
It should be made clear that these letters were not registered within the U.S., although it is not known if they were marked as money letters on the accompanying post bills. One very interesting cover was shown to me by David Handelman. This was an 1854 money

letter cover from Hamilton addressed to Easton, Pennsylvania. In addition to Canadian “MONEY LETTER” and postmarks, the cover bears manuscript “money” and “Reg 8” markings. At this time no Canadian post office used the “registered” terminology, so this must have been an unofficial U.S. registration notation. It will be discussed in a later installment of this series that in 1841 the registration of mail began in Great Britain with postage charges first of one shilling but reduced to 6 pence in 1848. Other countries had registration even earlier.

During the early period of money letters, Canada used the pence system. Registration of letters in Canada was introduced on May 1, 1855, just two months before the U.S. registry system officially began. A 1d Canadian currency (cy) charge paid the registry fee. This fee was changed to 2¢ on July 1, 1859, when Canada adopted decimal currency. REGISTERED handstamps were distributed to the post offices in 1855. The 3d postage and the 1d registration fee could be paid in cash or with stamps. Additionally, in Canada both the postage and registration fee could be charged to the recipient of a letter.

### Treaty covers

In order for a letter mailed in one country to be registered in the other, there has to be a bilateral treaty regulating the service and payments for the service. After negotiations, an amendment to the U.S.-Canadian treaty became effective October 1, 1856. Under the amended convention, each country retained the registration fee. The U.S. charge was 5¢ on a registered letter to Canada, the same as the domestic registration fee. The fee from Canada to the U.S. was 3 pence. The treaty required both postage and registration fee to be prepaid.<sup>10</sup> The Harrison, Arfken, and Lussey book contains this excerpt from the *Canadian Directory* for 1857-58: “If addressed to the United States, the ordinary postage rate on the letters to that country must be prepaid, and in addition a registration charge of 3d per letter. The registry thus effected in Canada will be carried on by the United States Post Office until the letter arrives at its destination.... The Postal Department is not liable for the loss of any registered letters.”<sup>11</sup>



**Figure 5. London, Upper Canada, October 4, 1855 to New York. Paid 9d Canadian currency (15¢) for 3d registry fee and 6d treaty rate to the United States. Canadian REGISTERED marking. New York applied framed arc CANADA exchange mark. This is the earliest known registered letter sent under the U.S.-Canada convention registration provisions. At New York it was treated as a registered letter with notation “8-1491” under the address, a typical location for a cover addressed to New York.**

The cover in Figure 5 was mailed from London, Upper Canada, to New York on October 4, 1856, only four days after the amendment to the treaty concerning registration took effect. The magenta manuscript markings at the upper left indicate 9d cy (15¢) was paid: 3d cy (5¢) registration fee plus postage of 6d cy (10¢) for less than one half ounce to pay the letter to its destination. The penned “286” in the upper left corner is the Canadian registration number. There is also a magenta manuscript New York registration number “8-1491” below the address, a placement which indicates the letter was incoming to New York City and was not a transit letter. The black **REGISTERED** is a Canadian marking. The **CANADA** in framed arc was supplied by Rawdon, Wright, Hatch & Edson and was used at New York City beginning April 1851.<sup>12</sup>

After the decimal currency change took place, the Canadian postage to the U.S. was 10¢ plus 5¢ for a registered letter. The December 16, 1859 cover from Toronto to New York in Figure 6 (with the striking Eaves cameo corner card of a Toronto boilermaker) shows a 15¢ prepayment in cash. There are registration numbers both from Toronto (“103”) and New York (“19 15587”). All three red handstamps were applied at Toronto. The 15¢ postage, here prepaid in cash, could also have been paid with stamps.



**Figure 6. December 16, 1859 from Toronto, Canada West, with cameo corner card, to New York. After the conversion to decimal currency, 15¢ paid for the 5¢ registration fee and 10¢ treaty postage. Toronto marked REGISTERED and "103"; New York applied the magenta manuscript registration number ("19 15587") below the address.**

A reverse use from the U.S. to Canada was shown as Figure 102 in my book *United States Registered Mail 1845-1870*.<sup>13</sup> This is an 1857 stampless cover with PORTLAND Me/MAR 10/10 integral rate postmark and manuscript “Registered 420” to Montreal. It also bears a framed arc “U. STATES” and manuscript “35” Canadian registry number.

The cover in Figure 7 bears a 10¢ 1857 Type V stamp paying the treaty rate from Buffalo, N.Y. (March 18, 1861) to Guelph, Canada West. In addition to the year-dated postmark, Buffalo wrote the registration number, “341”. The manuscript “6951” and the black straightline **REGISTERED** handstamp are both Canadian markings. This type of registration marking was a widely distributed in Canada; it is not of American origin. Not illustrated is a very similar use from Chicago with a 10¢ 1861 stamp used to Quebec. Chicago



Figure 7. Buffalo, New York, March 18, 1861 to Guelph, Canada West: 10¢ treaty rate paid by 1857 Type V stamp. The registration fee was paid in cash. Buffalo applied the manuscript "341". The straightline REGISTERED and "6951" are Canadian markings.

wrote "Registered" by hand. A black REGISTERED handstamp was applied in Canada.<sup>14</sup>

Figure 8 shows a more unusual cover, from 1862, addressed to London, Upper Canada, with the treaty rate paid by the 10¢ 1853 entire envelope. The cover is postmarked FORT BRIDGER/U.T./OCT 18 and bears a black Canadian REGISTERED along with a manuscript "Regd" and "No 1." There are two other numbers as well. On this cover, as on the cover in Figure 7, the 5¢ registration fee was paid in cash.

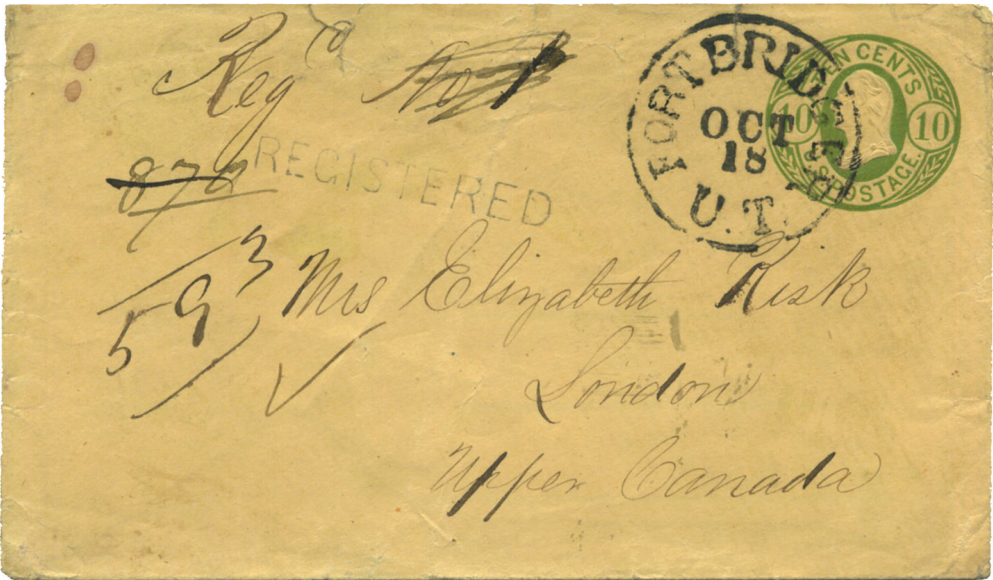


Figure 8. 10¢ 1861 entire paying the treaty rate from Fort Bridger, Utah Territory, October 18, 1862 to London, Upper Canada. Registration fee paid in cash. Manuscript "Regd No. 1" and two manuscript numbers. Black Canadian REGISTERED handstamp.

When the U.S. domestic registration fee changed to 20¢ on July 1, 1863, the registration fee to Canada remained 5¢ because it was established in the treaty. The monthly periodical *United States Mail and Post Office Assistant*, which exists as a reprint by the Collectors Club of Chicago and is now accessible and searchable online at the club's website, contains lists of postal rates, including domestic and foreign registration charges, in each monthly issue for the 12-year period between 1860 and 1872.

During the 1860s, registered covers from Canada to the U.S. show 5¢ payment, either via a stampless rate marking or with stamps. Covers from the U.S. to Canada do not show any registration payment, because the registration fee was paid in cash and was not indicated on the covers.

Figure 9 shows a cover with a single 10¢ 1861 stamp paying the treaty rate to Canada. The cover is addressed to "Nelson, Canada West" and the 5¢ registration fee was prepaid in cash. This cover shows a scarce Cleveland octagonal datestamp, here reading **CLEVELAND/O/MAR/6/1867**, that is recorded only on a few registered covers. The cover also bears strikes of two different **REGISTERED** straightline markings. Although the Cleveland marking at the top (R-CL-4) closely resembles the Canadian registration marking below it, the Cleveland marking can be distinguished by the bar in the G, the longer curves in the S and the shorter bar of the T. In fact, this may actually be a handstamp made in Canada. Nevertheless, the Cleveland straightline is a documented postmark and exists on domestic covers as well as on a cover to England.



**Figure 9. Cleveland, Ohio March 6, 1867 to Wellington, Canada West. The scarce Cleveland octagonal datestamp is recorded on only a few registered covers. The top REGISTERED handstamp was struck by Cleveland; the REGISTERED handstamp beneath it is a Canadian marking. The 10¢ 1861 stamp paid treaty rate postage; the registration fee was paid in cash. The cover was renumbered several times.**

A special category of Canadian-U.S. registered covers are those sent from Victoria, British Columbia, to eastern parts of Canada. These covers passed through the United States bearing American stamps that were usually postmarked at San Francisco. Prior to the transcontinental railroad, such letters were sent by steamer to Panama and then to New York, whence they were carried by train back into Canada. This subject was not covered in my registration book, but these covers are part of the U.S.-Canada registration story.



Figure 10. From Victoria, British Columbia, through the United States to England. The stamps prepaid the 29¢ rate from the U.S. west coast to England. Victoria applied its blue oval (faintly struck at lower left) and REGISTERED straightline. The numeral 5 and No 174 indicate 5¢ registration fee paid in cash and Victoria's registration number. The stamps were canceled in San Francisco March 2, 1863; "1176" may be San Francisco's registration number. Sent to New York by steamers via Panama. New York applied its circular registered postmark and "7699". The "5½" is New York's credit to Britain for half the 5¢ registration fee plus 3¢ British inland; via American packet.

Figure 10 shows a cover from the Wellburn Collection to Durham, England. The blue REGISTERED straightline and large blue Victoria PAID oval marking faintly struck at bottom left were applied at Victoria and are said to be the earliest recorded uses of both markings.<sup>15</sup> The manuscript "5" and "No. 174" are Victoria markings indicating 5¢ was paid in cash for registration. In March 1863, the U.S. registration rate was still 5¢, which therefore was the registration fee under the United States-United Kingdom postal treaty.<sup>16</sup> The letter was sent to San Francisco where the U.S. stamps were canceled, and a double-circle March 2, 1863 postmark was applied. The "1176" penned in at upper left may be the San Francisco registration number.

The stamps paid the 29¢ west-coast rate to the United Kingdom, which was not reduced to 24¢ until July 1, 1863. The letter was sent registered on the steamer *Golden Age*, which sailed from San Francisco March 2, 1863 and at Panama connected with the steamship *Ariel*, which sailed from Aspinwall on March 16 and arrived in New York on March 26. The red NEW-YORK MAR 28 with fleuron is a registration-only postmark for foreign usage (R-NY-6). The magenta manuscript "7699" was written to the right of the address, the typical location for registered transit covers passing through New York. The red 5½ at the top of the address is a New York accounting handstamp indicating a credit to Britain for 3¢ British domestic postage and half of the 5¢ U.S. registration fee.<sup>17</sup> This subject will be discussed in more detail in a later installment of this series. The letter was sent from New York on the Inman Line steamship *Edinburg*, which sailed on March 28 and arrived at Liverpool on April 9. This is confirmed by the "AP 63" date in the PAID/LIVERPOOL/U.S. PACKET marking.

A second Victoria cover is shown in Figure 11. This was sent to Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia. It bears Victoria's blue oval PAID handstamp, manuscript "No. 426," and blue





**Figure 11.** From Victoria, British Columbia through the U.S. to Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia. Victoria applied blue REGISTERED and oval handstamps and wrote "Nr. 426." This cover entered U.S. mails at San Francisco in November 1863, where the 3¢ 1861 stamps were canceled. The 24¢ stamp has been added to replace a missing stamp and suggest a prepayment of double the 15¢ over-3,000-mile rate to Nova Scotia. San Francisco wrote in the "1229" registration number. The 20¢ U.S. registry fee had to be paid in cash. Since the U.S. at this time had no registered mail treaty with Nova Scotia, all the registration markings were crossed out.

straightline REGISTERED. The letter was sent to San Francisco where it was postmarked November 1863 and the pair of 3¢ stamps was obliterated with cogwheel cancels. A stamp is missing from the cover and a 24¢ stamp has been added to suggest double the 15¢ over-3,000-mile rate to Nova Scotia. But the missing stamp might have been a 10¢ adhesive, which would have made a 1¢ overpayment of the single 15¢ rate. In any case, the 20¢ U.S. domestic registry fee was paid in cash. At this time the United States had no registration treaty with the maritime provinces. So, the two numbers and the Victoria straightline postmark were crossed out. The cover was registered within the United States, however.

In the late 1860s, while the U.S. had different registration fees with other countries, the treaty charge for registration to Canada remained 5¢. Registered covers from Canada to the U.S. from 1870 to 1873 also show a 5¢ fee. Another cover from the Wellburn collection, sent from British Columbia to New York in August 1871 bears a 3d stamp paying postage and 5¢ overprinted stamp paying the registration fee. It shows the same blue REGISTERED marking and both Canadian and U.S. registration numbers.

### Registration paid with stamps

Commencing June 1, 1867, U.S. regulations required the registration fee to be prepaid in stamps. Figure 12 illustrates an 1868 cover with FLINT/MICH/AUG/20 bearing a 5¢ brown Jefferson stamp and two 3¢ E grill stamps, sent to Markham, Ontario. The 11¢ postage pays the 6¢ treaty rate to Canada that became effective in April 1868 and the 5¢ registration fee. The black straightline REGISTERED (R-FL-1) and two manuscript "43"s were applied at Flint. These U.S. registration numbers were subsequently crossed out and "149" with a much fainter REGISTERED straightline were applied at Toronto. The significance of the pencil 26 corrected to 28 is uncertain; these are probably not postal markings.



Figure 12. Flint, Michigan, August 20, 1868 to Markham, Ontario, Canada, with two 3¢ grilled stamps and a 5¢ 1861 stamp paying the 6¢ treaty postage and the 5¢ registration fee. Flint applied the bold black straightline REGISTERED (same ink as Flint postmark). A second faint black REGISTERED was applied in Canada. Both U.S. “43” markings were crossed out and “149” was written below the Canadian registered marking.



Figure 13. Houlton, Maine, January 4, 1869 to St. Martins, New Brunswick. Stamps paid 6¢ treaty rate and 5¢ registry fee. The U.S. domestic registration fee was then 15¢.

Figure 13 shows an 1869 envelope to St. Martins, New Brunswick, with the same combination of stamps, here postmarked HOULTON/ME/JAN/4 with “Registered” and “No. 2.” written in black pen. A marking on the reverse of this cover reads REGISTERED SAINT JOHN N.B. JA 5 1869. Effective January 1, 1869, all other countries had at least an 8¢ registry fee. The U.S. fee was 5¢ only on covers to Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. At this point in time, registration was not yet available to Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland.

Some postmasters did not understand that foreign registration fees differed from the domestic charge. Figure 14 shows an 1869 cover that appears to have originated in Shepardsville, Michigan. Two 6¢ 1869 stamps pay the double treaty rate to Ontario and a 15¢ Lincoln F-grill stamp overpays the 5¢ U.S.-Canada registration fee. Between 1869 and 1873, the domestic registration fee was 15¢, and that probably explains the overpayment. Below the left 6¢ stamp is a faint strike of a boxed **REGISTERED/G.W.R.** (Great Western Railway) handstamp. A clearer strike of this same marking can be seen on the cover in Figure 16 below. On the reverse of the Figure 14 cover are a boxed **REGISTERED LETTER** and **DUNNVILLE ONT PM SP 16 69.**



Figure 14. Shepardsville, Michigan, September 13, 1869 to Dunnville, Ontario. Double the treaty postage rate was paid by two 6¢ 1869 stamps and the registration fee was paid by the 15¢ Lincoln stamp, a 10¢ overpayment, since the registration fee to Canada was only 5¢. A faint boxed **REGISTERED/G.W.R.** handstamp appears at left.

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Figure 15. Bangor, Maine, June 8, 1870 to St. John, New Brunswick. The pair of 6¢ 1869 stamps paid double-rate postage and 5¢ 1863 stamp paid the treaty-mandated registration fee on Canadian mail. It appears that the stamps were charged to a post office box.

The Figure 15 cover shows a proper prepayment: a pair of 6¢ 1869 stamps paying double the treaty rate and a 5¢ 1863 stamp paying the registry fee to St. John, New Brunswick. This cover bears a Bangor circular datestamp dated June 8 and a straightline **REGISTERED** (R-BN-1). This straightline REGISTERED is also known from Bangor on domestic covers although its form suggests it may have been produced in Canada. Note the manuscript at the lower left, which suggests that the stamps were applied by the postmaster and charged to post office box account number 586.



Figure 16. Lyons, Iowa, May 1, 1875 with 2¢, 6¢ and 3¢ stamps paying 6¢ postage and 5¢ registration fee to Elmira, Ontario, Canada. Boxed REGISTERED/G.W.R. transit marking with four different registry numbers. The year date is indicated by backstamps.

Figure 16 is an example of a use just prior to U.P.U., posted at Lyons, Iowa on May 1, 1875, addressed to Elmira, Ontario and franked with 2¢, 3¢ and 6¢ Bank Note stamps. The 6¢ stamp paid the treaty postage rate and the two other stamps paid the 5¢ registration

fee. The cover bears the same boxed **REGISTERED/G.W.R.** (Great Western Railway) straightline marking seen on the cover in Figure 14.

Future installments of this series will treat the exchange of registered mail with and through Britain, the German states, and other foreign counties.

### Endnotes

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14. *Ibid.*, pg. 79.
15. Gerald E. Wellburn, *The Postage Stamps & Postal History of Colonial Vancouver Island & British Columbia, 1849-1871: The Gerald Wellburn Collection* (Vancouver, British Columbia: Jack Wallace and Daniel L. Eaton, 1987), pg. 47.
16. Additional Articles dated March 20 and April 9, 1856 to the United States-United Kingdom Postal Treaty, 16 U.S. Statutes at Large, Article IV, pp. 815-16.
17. *Ibid.*, Article V, pg. 816. ■

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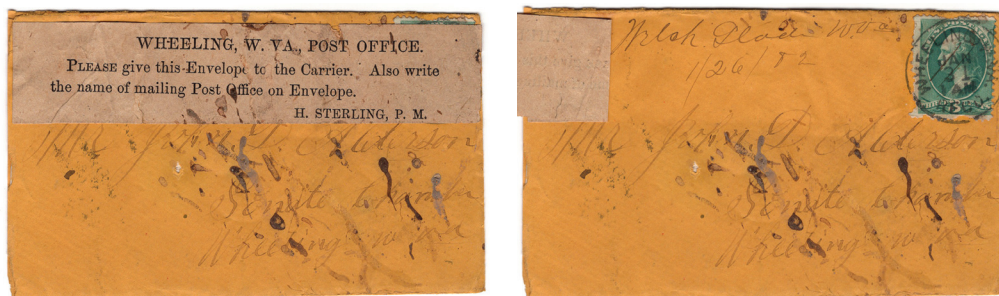
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**EXPLANATION OF PROBLEM COVER IN CHRONICLE 259**

Our problem cover from *Chronicle 259*, shown in two views in Figure 1, consisted of an envelope from Welch Glade, West Virginia addressed to Wheeling, West Virginia. The unusual aspect of this cover was an instructional label applied across the top of the envelope at Wheeling. The text of the label reads: “WHEELING, W. VA., POST OFFICE. Please give this Envelope to the Carrier. Also write the name of the mailing Post Office on the Envelope. H. STERLING P.M.” The question was: What is the purpose of the label and why was it affixed to the cover?



**Figure 1. Our problem cover from the last issue, shown here in two views, was mailed 26 January 1882 from Welch Glade, West Virginia and date stamped (on the Bank Note stamp) 31 January 1882 at Wheeling. A label from the Wheeling postmaster was then affixed over the stamp and postmarks. The question was: What’s going on here?**

Fellow section editor Chip Gliedman submitted this cover in hopes that readers would be able to offer an explanation for the label. Gliedman pointed out that the letter left Welch Glade (in the central part of the state) on January 26, 1882, a Thursday. The arrival date in Wheeling was not until January 31, a Tuesday. Even though direct rail service between Wheeling and much of the rest of the state was somewhat limited back then, five days in transit seemed excessive for a distance of just under 200 miles.

West Virginia specialist Wayne Farley, RA 3649, dug through the extensive files of newspapers hosted online at virginiachronicle.com, where he discovered a timely interview with Postmaster Sterling that appeared in the December 17, 1881 edition of the *Wheeling Register*. The story merited front-page status, but is too long to quote here in its entirety. A condensed version follows:

**POST OFFICE MATTERS: WHERE THE DIFFICULTY IS IN THE WEST VIRGINIA SERVICE.** Statistics of the Wheeling Office—What Free Delivery has done—Col. Sterling’s Views on What is Needed to Perfect the System... Special Correspondence of the Register. Washington, December 16.—I had considerable talk yesterday with Col. Hugh Sterling, who is here looking after the interests of the Wheeling Post office and postal routes adjacent to Wheeling, as well as the general appropriation for the Post Office department. He says it is a mistake to suppose that the attention paid by the Department to the matter of insuring frequent deliveries by carrier, in cities having the carrier-delivery system, takes away any of

its ability to serve the country routes acceptably. On the contrary, he claims that frequent delivery by carriers is a means of profit, not only by stimulating correspondence and securing the additional penny paid when a drop-letter is delivered, but also in the saving of clerk hire in the offices which have the carrier system. Taking Wheeling for instance, which, he says, is one of the most profitable offices to the Government of the class to which it belongs, the increase in the number of pieces handled last year was nearly treble that of the year preceding the introduction of its carrier system, the difference being something like that between nine hundred thousand and two million three hundred thousand pieces....As to the failure to provide proper facilities for interior routes throughout the State, of which too much complaint has been made, Sterling says the main trouble consists in the fact that no preference is given by the Department to contractors living along the line of the route proposed to be served. The route is let to the lowest bidder who will give security for the fulfillment of his contract. Bidders who live near the route know what it will cost to serve it, and bid accordingly. Those who have no practical knowledge of it, resulting from residence in its proximity, take it at unremunerative figures, serve it for a brief period and then throw up the contract... The Department can offer the contract to the next lowest of the original bidders until it finds one who will accept, and can collect the difference from the bondsmen of the defaulting contractor; or it can readvertise and relet the route. But all this takes time, and meanwhile the service on the route is suspended, and the people along the line make cursory remarks, as they have been doing in the back counties of West Virginia for some time past....

That closing reference to the “back counties” sums up part of the problem. The selection of Wheeling as the site of the state capitol in 1863 was a practical matter, because the outcome of the Civil War was then far from settled. Wheeling was in the northernmost corner of West Virginia and was actually closer to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania than it was to the central and southern counties of the new state. Of course, that was the reason for the selection of Wheeling: most of the rest of the state was not yet considered to be firmly in the control of Union military forces. As a result, from the very founding of West Virginia there was a degree of anti-Wheeling sentiment within the interior counties.

In fact, as soon as the war ended the legislature voted to move the capitol to Charleston. By 1875 the city of Wheeling was able to lure the seat of state government back temporarily with monetary incentives. But within two years, a statewide plebiscite settled the matter with the selection of Charleston as the permanent capitol commencing in 1885 (to coincide with the completion of a new capitol building).

One can easily imagine the further resentment of the interior folk when Sterling (who was postmaster from 1879-1885) ramped up the carrier service in Wheeling to two and three times a day while, according to the interview in the *Daily Register*, a number of interior postal routes were being routinely abandoned by contractors who found them to be unprofitable. The people most affected by these rural service disruptions apparently blamed their woes on the diversion of financial resources to the carrier service in the larger cities.

That may well be the underlying explanation for the Sterling labels. Sterling’s interview made two points clear. First, he was a steadfast proponent of the value of the carrier service in the cities, which he pointed out actually increased the revenue of the Post Office Department while decreasing the need for window clerks at the urban post offices. And, second, he championed the need for more reliable rural postal service. He pointed out that the two services were not mutually exclusive. To support his contention, he likely created these labels to collect data on the timeliness of mail transit from the interior counties to the state capitol. The collection of a large sample of envelopes with places and dates of origin along with Wheeling receiving marks would be a valuable tool to help promote improved interior service.

While this is only a theory, it is a plausible theory which hopefully will spur research that could lead to a more definitive answer.

## **PROBLEM COVER FOR THIS ISSUE**

Our problem cover for this issue, shown in Figure 2, was submitted by John Barwis, who once owned it. A partial strike of a Philadelphia circular datestamp dated 11 August

(1853) ties the 30¢ Franklin stamp (Scott 38) on this cover addressed to Wellington, India. To the left in red is a Calais, France, marking dated 23 August (1853) and a black Madras, India CDS dated 5 January 1854 is applied over these markings. In addition there is a red MISSENT TO QUEENSLAND circular marking stamped at the upper left. There is also a manuscript "27" in magenta as well as a manuscript notation "New Zealand" (also in magenta) on the face of the cover which may or may not be a postal notation. The three



**Figure 2. Cover to India, mailed from Philadelphia 11 August 1853. The Calais double circle marking reads 23 Aout 53. The cover bears just three backstamps, shown inset at right. The questions are many, including who applied the magenta manuscript markings and the red MISSENT TO QUEENSLAND handstamp?**



markings on the reverse of the envelope are shown overlapped in Figure 2: a Marseille transit CDS dated 24 August 1853; a Dunedin, Otago, New Zealand receiving mark dated 19 October 1853; and a Wellington receiving marking (presumed to be India) dated 7 January 185x. The questions are several: Who wrote "New Zealand" in magenta on the face of the envelope? What does the "27" mean? Why did this cover go to New Zealand on its way to India? Where was the MISSENT TO QUEENSLAND circular marking applied? ■

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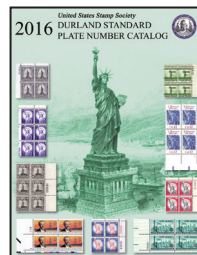
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# Gems of Philately

Auction #84 - December 2018

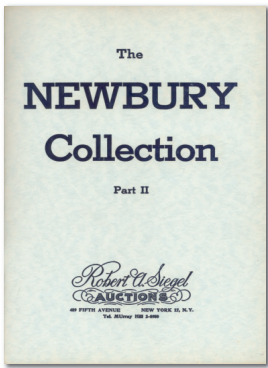
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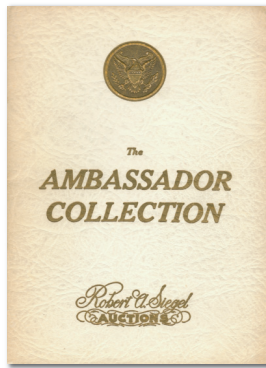
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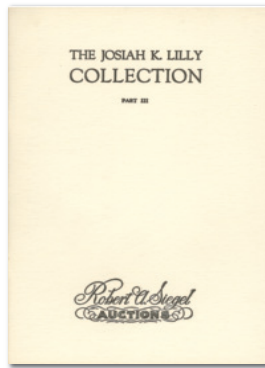
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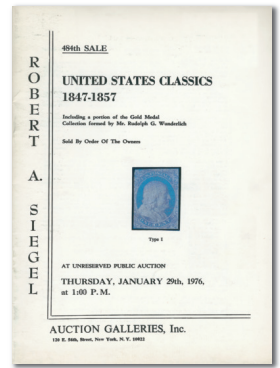
Newbury 1961



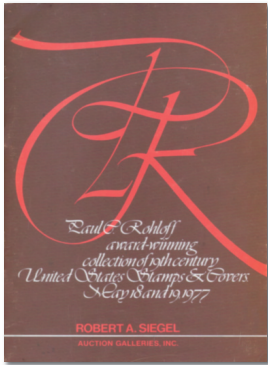
Ambassador 1966



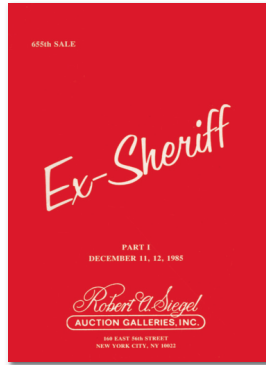
Lilly 1967



Wunderlich 1976



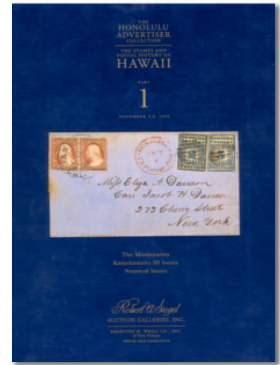
Rohloff 1977



Sheriff 1985



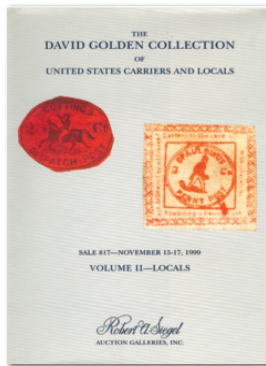
Kapiloff 1992



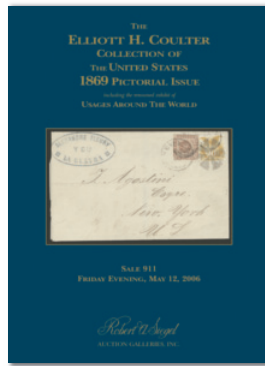
Honolulu Advertiser 1995



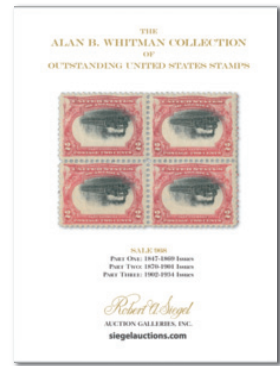
Zoellner 1998



Golden 1999



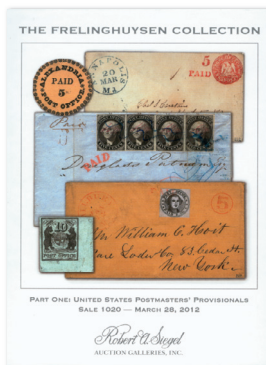
Coulter 2006



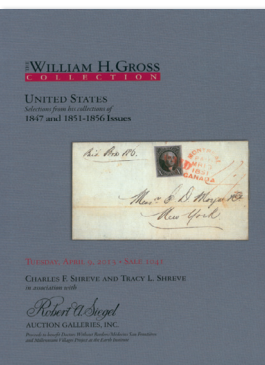
Whitman 2009



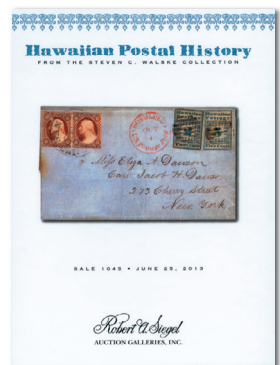
Twigg-Smith 2009



Frelinghuysen 2012



Gross 2013



Walske 2013

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