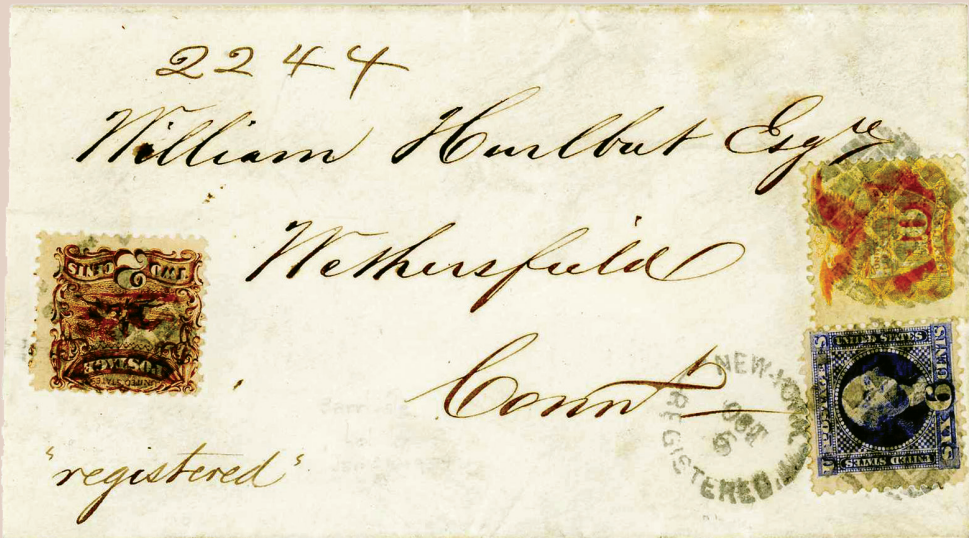


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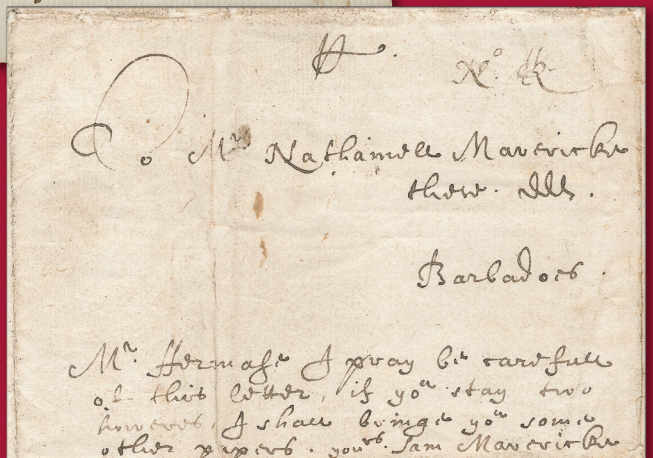
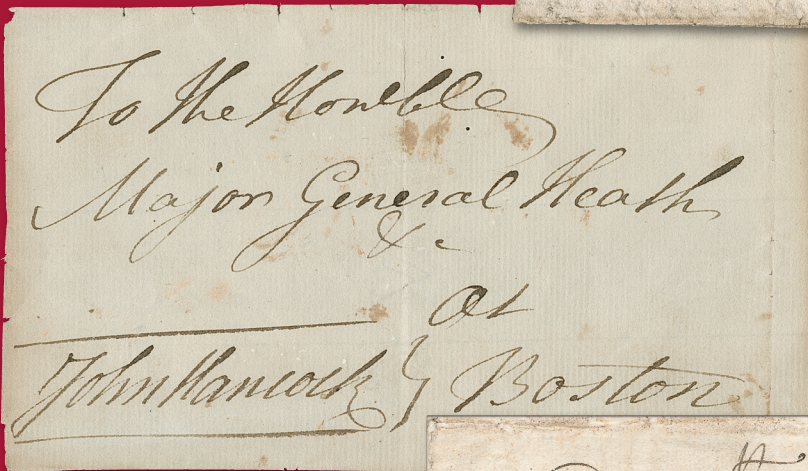
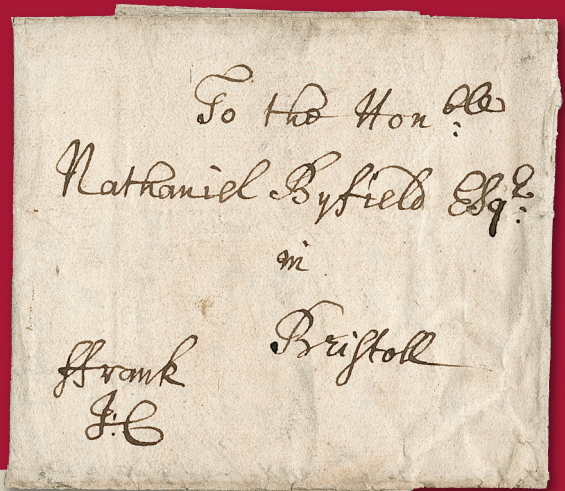
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The Chronicle

of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues

November 2019
Whole No. 264

Published quarterly in
February, May, August and November

Volume 71
Number 4

\$8.75 Members
\$10 Non-Members

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

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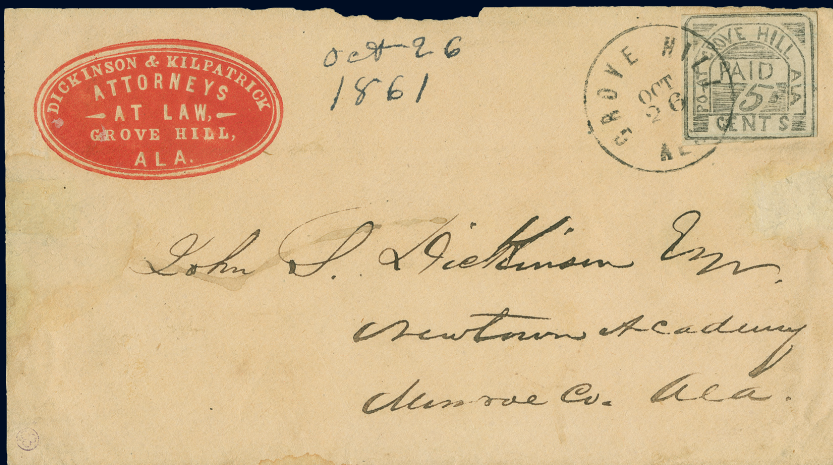
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IN THIS ISSUE

Over the last few years, James W. Milgram has explored in these pages various aspects of registered mail, both domestic and foreign. A major feature in this issue is Milgram's "Domestic Registered Mail, 1861-70," presented in our 1861 section beginning on page 350. As Milgram makes clear, the decade of the 1860s saw dramatic changes in the way registered mail was rated, franked and handled. The fee changed three times (first 5¢, then 20¢ then 15¢). Prepayment was always required, first only by cash and then only by stamps. Bookkeeping and paperwork were daunting. Milgram's article includes four plates of markings and a descriptive table. Our cover illustration, drawn from Milgram's article, is a colorful registered envelope that for many decades was part of the specialized 1869 collection of Millard H. Mack, RA 322—one of the most senior members of our Society and still active after all these years.

The *Chronicle* continues to push the envelope respecting the digital reproduction of line-engraved postage stamps. Our 1847 section publishes a survey article from section editor Gordon Eubanks that employs massive full-color enlargements to show the major plate varieties recorded on the 10¢ 1847 stamp. Many of these varieties, which contributed importantly to the plating of this iconic stamp, have been named and even sketchily illustrated in the Scott specialized catalog. But never before have they been presented in the photographic detail provided in Eubanks' article, "Plate Varieties on 10¢ 1847 Stamps," which begins on page 332.

Our Stampless section this issue (page 309) contains the second installment (1776-1815) in an ongoing series by Mark Schwartz on the broad subject of Boston postal history. The first installment (1639-1775) ran in February. In the current article, Schwartz provides useful information about early American postal practices—including four tables displaying domestic postage rates, first under the Articles of Confederation and then from the first decades of the Federal Constitution. Concluding our Stampless section (page 327), James W. Milgram summarizes the substantial reader response generated by his recently concluded series of articles on stencil markings on classic U.S. covers.

In our 1851 section (page 342), Michael Heller presents a portfolio of illustrated school advertising covers from 1850s. His accompanying article explains the various factors, postal and otherwise, that led to the proliferation of illustrated advertising envelopes in the decade of the 1850s. Heller is president-for-life of the Classics Society's New York City chapter, a small but lively group that meets monthly (usually on the second Tuesday) at the Collectors Club. When visiting New York, you should plan to attend one of these informal meetings; the member presentations are worth the trip.

In our Foreign Mails section (page 372), James Baird examines covers from the two brief episodes in the 1840s when the West Indies mail vessels of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company called at a few ports in the United States. These covers, many of them quite exotic, date from the early days of steam mail, before postal treaties. Baird includes two tables listing known covers; there aren't many.

Last but by no means least, research journalist Ken Lawrence reviews Yamil Kouri's huge new book on the postal history of the Spanish American War. A big book deserves a big review. Don't miss this one, page 386. ■

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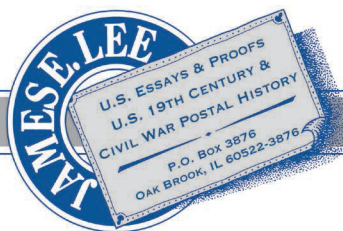


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THE BOSTON POST OFFICE FROM 1776 THROUGH THE WAR OF 1812

MARK SCHWARTZ

This is the second in a series of articles about the Boston post office and the letters that passed through it. This article discusses the period from the beginning of the Revolutionary War up until the 50 percent increase in postal rates enacted in December 1814. The first article, published in *Chronicle* 261 (February 2019), covered the period from 1639 to 1775, ending with the earliest known letter sent from the Boston post office after the rebels reopened it following the end of the Siege of Boston on March 17, 1775. That letter was rated according to the Sept. 30, 1775 Resolution of the Continental Congress, which re-instituted rates that were first introduced in 1765.

The Revolutionary War brings a period of inflation

When Congress started making preparations for war, they decided to pay for wartime expenses with Continental paper money, e.g., bills of credit. It is likely that depreciation of these bills began quickly, but it was considered unpatriotic to admit that the value of the Continental was sinking.¹ However, by late 1777, it became necessary to reflect this devaluation in the postal rates. The October 17 Resolution of the Continental Congress raised rates by 50 percent.

The letter shown in Figure 1 was datelined May 7, 1778 and sent by the firm of Otis & Andrews, purveyors of clothing and arms to the American army, to Joshua Wentworth, “Pres. of Board of War” in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Before the war, Wentworth ran a counting house on the corner of Hanover and Vaughan Streets in Portsmouth. In 1776, he received his commission as a Colonel in the revolutionary army.

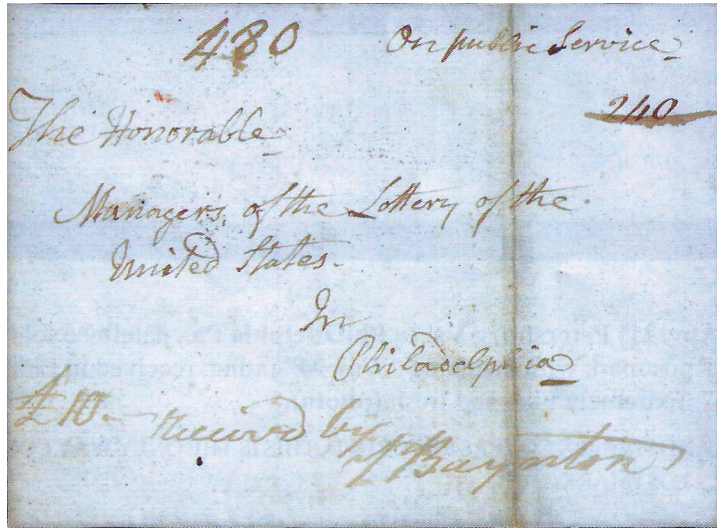


Figure 1. Single-rate letter datelined May 7, 1778 sent from Boston to Portsmouth, New Hampshire and rated for a collection of 3 pennyweights. This represents a 50 percent increase over the previous rate, reflecting a resolution of the Continental Congress dated 17 October 1777, responding to the impact of inflation on the Continental paper money.

The Figure 1 cover was rated “postage of” 3 pennyweights (dwt) compared to the official rate of 2dwt in effect a year earlier. In 1754, after Benjamin Franklin was appointed deputy postmaster general, he directed that to eliminate the confusion resulting from letters being rated in the local currencies of the various American colonies, all letters were to be rated instead in pennyweights (dwt) and grains (gr) of coined silver (usually the Spanish milled dollar). Coined silver was valued in pennyweights and grains, with 1 shilling sterling equal to 3dwt, and 1dwt equal to 24gr.

By 1779, much more drastic measures had to be taken. On December 28, 1779 the rates were increased twentyfold over the 1775 rates, and further doubled on May 5, 1780. Letters bearing these rates are rare. In the remarkable 2005 sale of Ed Siskin’s colonial material, Siskin noted that he knew of only four covers rated at the 20-times rate and only five at the 40-times rate.² I now have records of at least nine of each, although only one from

Figure 2. Letter dated 8 April 1780, rated 480 pence in local currency (160dwt) as a double letter sent 300-400 miles from Boston to Philadelphia. Continuing to respond to inflation, the congressional resolution of December 28, 1779 had raised rates twentyfold over 1775. Cover courtesy of Matthew Bennett Auctions.



each period involves Boston.

Shown in Figure 2 is one such Boston cover from the Siskin sale. Dated “State of Massachusetts, Bay Council Chamber” on April 8, 1780, this was sent by Jeremiah Powell to the “The honorable Managers of the Lottery of the United States, in Philadelphia.” It was marked “on public service” and initially rated 240 pence in local currency (80dwt) as a single letter sent 300-400 miles. The “240” was subsequently crossed out and the cover rerated as a double letter at 480 pence (160dwt). At the bottom is written “£10” and “Received by P Baynton.” Jeremiah Powell held the rank of Colonel in the revolutionary army and periodically served as one of the council presidents of Massachusetts.

The only recorded 40-times rate cover from Boston, courtesy of Timothy O’Connor, is shown in Figure 3. Marked “On Public Service” and sent on June 20, 1780 to Samuel Gray, “Dept. of Comy Genl of Issue,” at Windham, Connecticut, it was rated 106dwt, 16 grains (gr)—40 times the official 1765 rate of 2dwt, 16gr. Gray (1721-1787) was the “Issuing Commissary” at Windham, a purchasing agent responsible for the provision of troops.

Postal rates begin their return to normal

Around this time, Congress called on the states to retire the Continentals by levying taxes payable in either paper or specie. If one preferred the latter, one silver dollar would pay \$40 in taxes. Over the next year, the states would retire \$120 million in continental paper dollars. They also levied taxes to collect their own worthless currencies. This experiment in fiat paper money was over.



Figure 3. Inflation at its peak: One of nine known letters (and the only one from Boston) rated per the Continental Congress resolution of 5 May 1780, which doubled rates yet again. Sent June 20, 1780 from Boston to Windham, Connecticut, and rated 106dwt, 16gr for a single letter sent 60-100 miles. Courtesy Timothy O'Connor.



Figure 4. Dated in Boston on 4 October 1781, this letter was sent during the rate period of the Continental Congress resolution of 24 February 1781, under which rates were to be double the pre-war rates. Sent 100-200 miles to New Haven, it should have been rated 5dwt, 8gn rather than 8dwt.

Concurrent with the retirement of most paper currency (it continued to be used to pay the troops and supply the Army and Navy), Congress reduced postal rates dramatically. The Act of December 12, 1780 set rates at 50 percent of those in effect before the war. These rates lasted only 10 weeks; with only four examples reported, they are the most elusive domestic rates in U.S. postal history. None of the four are from Boston.

On February 24, 1781, in one of the last acts of the Second Continental Congress, rates were set at “double the sums paid before commencement of the present war.” The cover in Figure 4, datelined October 4, 1781, was sent from Josiah Blakeley in Boston to Henry Daggett in New Haven, Connecticut. It was incorrectly rated 8dwt (“8” at upper right) as a single letter sent 100-200 miles; twice the 1775 rate would have been 5dwt, 8gn. It appears that the postmaster instead doubled the 1777 rate of 4dwt. The recipient paid 5 shillings, 6d in local Connecticut currency. The “B” to the right of the local currency rate had previously been assumed to stand for Boston. Some students of Boston postal history

TABLE 1
POSTAL RATES UNDER ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION
EFFECTIVE: 1 JANUARY 1782—4 APRIL 1788

Distance	Single sheet	Double sheet	Triple sheet
up to 60 miles	1dwt, 8gn	2dwt, 16gn	4dwt
60-100 miles	2dwt	4dwt	6dwt
100-200 miles	2dwt, 16gn	5dwt, 8gn	8dwt
200-300 miles	3dwt, 8gn	6dwt, 16gn	10dwt
300-400 miles	4dwt	8dwt	12dwt

Note: for ship letters, an additional 16gn is added to the domestic rate.

now believe it may represent “Boat”.

The first Congressional resolution under the Articles of Confederation—which were ratified March 1, 1781—was passed on October 19, effective the following January 1. It was determined “that the price to be paid for the postage of letters be reduced to what it was at the commencement of the present war.”

At this point, the Boston post office had not yet returned to using town markings, as can be seen in the letter in Figure 5. It was datelined in Boston on July 3, 1782 and sent from Charles Miller to Chauncey Whittelsey in Middletown, Connecticut. At that time Mr. Whittelsey had just been appointed quartermaster-general of the militia. The sender marked “Post” at bottom left, but the only postal marking was the 2dwt, 16g manuscript rating at top right, which represented the postage due for a single letter sent 100-200 miles. A rate chart for this period is shown in Table 1. Note that in this table, for a ship letter an additional 16gn is added to the domestic rate.

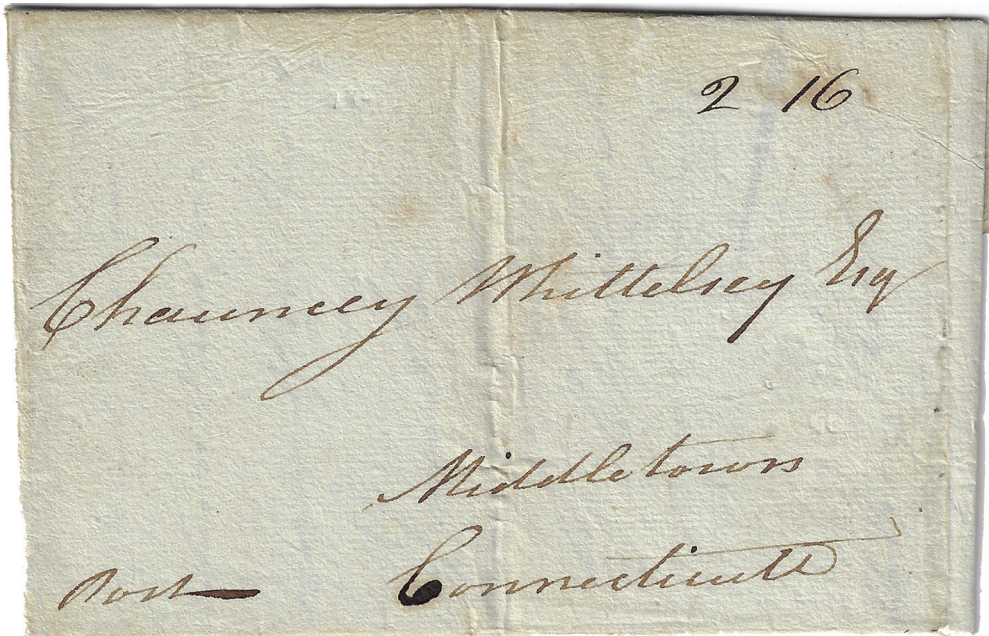


Figure 5. A cover rated under the first postal act under the Articles of Confederation: Datelined Boston 3 July 1782 and rated 2dwt, 16gn as a single letter sent 100-200 miles to Middletown, Connecticut, per the resolution of 19 October 1781.

The postal ordinance of the Confederation Congress of October 18, 1782 continued these same rates for the next 5½ years. During this period we see a proliferation of new Boston handstamps. The earliest of these is struck on the letter in Figure 6, sent on December 26, 1782 from Jonas Minot to William Whipple, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. It was rated 2dwt as a single letter sent 60-100 miles.

The bright red 28x5 millimeter “BOSTON” handstamp was similar to the ones used in 1775-77. Blake-Davis records this marking used from February 1783 to March 13, 1783.³ The town marking on the letter in Figure 6 is earlier by one or two months, though there appears to be at least one still-earlier example known. The 26/DE Franklin mark indicates the 26 December date. As was established in the first article in this series, Benjamin Franklin introduced this marking to show when letters were posted. Franklin marks are similar to the “Bishop marks” introduced by Henry Bishop, Postmaster General of England, in 1661.



Figure 6. Rated under the October 18, 1782 postal ordinance of the Confederation Congress, this letter was posted 26 December 1782 and rated 2dwt as a single letter sent 60-100 miles. The addressee, William Whipple of Portsmouth, N.H., was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. This cover shows the first BOSTON handstamp used since 1777

Other handstamps of relatively similar size (28-32x5-5½ mm) were used during the years covered by the 1772 ordinance, at first in red or olive ink, later in black and brown-black ink. Three smaller handstamps (25-27x3-3½ mm) were also used in the period, in red, olive and brown-black ink. One of the latter is in italics.

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An example of one of the smaller handstamps, in brown-black ink, is struck upside down at top left on the cover shown in Figure 7. Measuring 25x3½ mm, this marking was used for less than five months (March 10 to August 6, 1787). Datelined from Champion & Dickason in London on February 24, the Figure 7 cover was sent via the sailing ship *Neptune* and arrived at the Boston post office on April 30 (per the 30/AP Franklin mark). It was rated “sh 2” as a single ship letter sent up to 60 miles (1dwt, 8gn plus the 16gn ship fee). The letter was then sent to Brown & Benson in Providence. This was a prominent mercantile company that was formed by Nicholas Brown in 1762. The firm had been eager to resume trading with London after the war, and in 1783 chose Champion & Dickason as its London agent from among six large British companies.

Figure 7. This letter shows another of the many different Boston handstamps introduced during this rate period. It originated in London and was carried by ship to Boston, where it was posted on 30 April 1787 as a single ship letter sent up to 60 miles and rated 2dwt (including a 16gn ship fee).



One final example demonstrates the breadth of Boston cancels used during this period. In Figure 8, we see a 27x3 mm marking with italic lettering in an unusual olive ink. Applied at the upper left along with the “27/NO” Franklin mark, is certainly not as well-struck as one would like, but it can be discerned. The olive ink was used for less than one month, from October 30 to November 27, 1783. The letter was datelined on November 27 and rated 4dwt as a single letter traveling the 300-400 miles from Boston to Philadelphia. It was sent by Nicholas Roussele, an auctioneer and merchant who became a naturalized citizen two years later, to Etienne (Stephen) Dutilh, a member of a prominent European trading company who had immigrated to the United States earlier in 1783 to establish a branch of his family business here.

The last postal resolution enacted by the Confederation Congress was on October 20, 1787 (effective April 5, 1788). Postal rates were reduced by “nearly twenty five percentum as will consist with the present mode of calculating pennyweights and grains of silver in order to reduce them to the currencies of the various states.” The new rates are shown in Table 2. The ship letter fee remained at 16gn.

Figure 9 shows a letter sent free of postage on March 7, 1787, from David Greene, a Boston merchant, to Dudley Woodbridge, a merchant who was the first postmaster of Norwich, Connecticut. It is of particular interest because, while the Confederation Congress granted the franking privilege to a small list of government officials in March 1782, it was not until the Third U.S. Congress, in the act of May 8, 1794, that deputy postmasters were

added to that list. The postal history interest of this letter is heightened by the 13x3½ mm brown-black “FREE” marking, the earliest example of the first “free” handstamp used by the Boston Post Office.



Figure 8. A third Boston straightline handstamp of this era, this marking, in italics and olive ink, was used for less than a month. Posted on 27 November 1783, this cover was rated 4dwt as a single letter sent 300-400 miles.

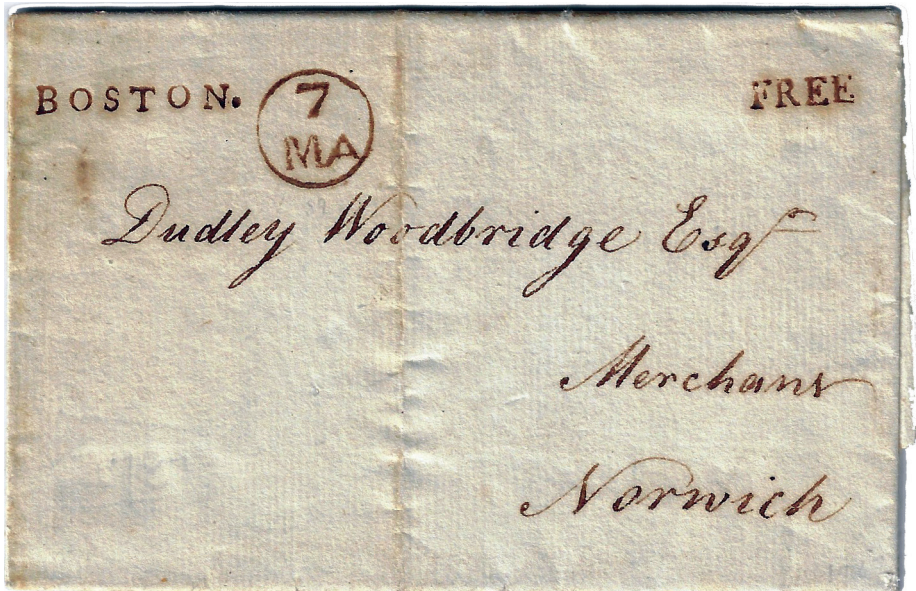


Figure 9. Rated under the last postal Act of the Confederation Congress, this letter was marked with the earliest example of the first “FREE” handstamp used in Boston. It was posted March 7, 1787 and sent to Dudley Woodbridge, the first postmaster at Norwich, Connecticut. At this time the Congress had not given the franking privilege to deputy postmasters.

America trades again

Before the war, the colonies could not trade directly with nations other than Great Britain. Britain required that all the raw materials the colonies produced be sold only to Great Britain, and that the Colonies purchase finished goods only from Great Britain. Thus, in the later 1780s, the U.S. saw a great expansion in trade. After a significant period of relatively few ship letters arriving at Boston, we see the results of Boston ships plying all over the Atlantic in pursuit of the trade previously denied them by their British overlords.

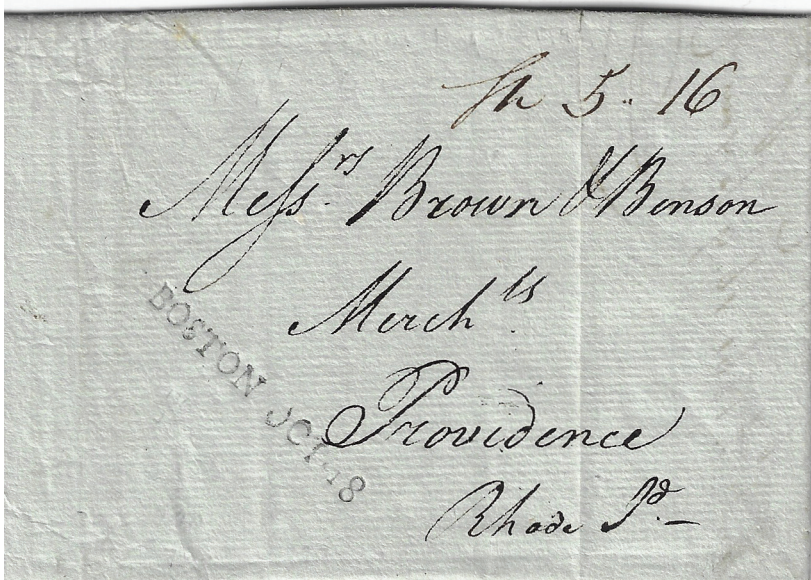
Distance	Single sheet	Double sheet	Triple sheet
up to 60 miles	1dwt	2dwt	3dwt
60-100 miles	1dwt, 8gn	2dwt, 16gn	4dwt
100-200 miles	2dwt	4dwt	6dwt
200-300 miles	2dwt, 16gn	5dwt, 8gn	8dwt
300-400 miles	3dwt	6dwt	9dwt

Note: for ship letters, an additional 16gn is added to the domestic rate.

The rate period depicted in Table 2 lasted for just over four years and coincided with an era in which the three major European powers—Britain, France and Spain—were at relative peace. Since France and Spain were U.S. allies during the Revolution, it is not surprising that once the war ended, we would begin trading with them, at least until the disruptions of the French Revolutionary Wars of 1792-1802.

The weighty cover in Figure 10 was sent on the brig *Lively* from from Lanehorn & Co. in L'Orient, France via Boston to the Brown & Benson firm (see also Figure 7) in Providence. When it reached Boston it was struck on October 18, 1790 with a new variety of Boston postmark and was rated 5dwt, 16gn as a 1-1¼ oz. ship letter sent up to 60 miles inland. In rating letters of this period, the calculation is one rate per sheet, up to one

Figure 10. This letter shows the rates beginning 5 April 1788 (Table 2) and bears a new style of Boston straightline. Dated in L'Orient, France and posted at Boston on Oct. 18, 1790, it was rated 5dwt, 16gn (including a 16gn ship fee) as a 1¼oz. letter traveling up to 60 miles.



ounce (or four sheets). At that point, it becomes one rate per ¼ oz. For a letter sent up to 60 miles inland, a single rate would be 1dwt (see Table 2), and a 1¼ oz. letter would be five rates, thus 5dwt. Adding the 16gn ship fee totals yields the manuscript “Sh 5-16” seen on the Figure 10 cover. This new type of Boston postmark on this cover, with the town, month and day in one straight line, was used in various sizes from mid-1789 to mid-1791.

The Figure 10 letter discusses trade problems involving whale oil and bone. “The French Whaling Ships are coming in, two arrived here & more are daily expected, so that tho’ the price of 100- is low we have no reason to regret the sale, but we should have been obliged to do worse. Pot and Pearl ashes still continue in the same demand as p. our last tho’ we have had 200 Barrels arrived p the Lively (who takes this)....”



Figure 11. Another ship letter sent during the rate period depicted in Table 2, datelined at Bilbao, Spain on 10 December 1790 and sent via Boston to Philadelphia. Posted at Boston at a double rate of 6dwt for the 300-400 mile inland trip (plus the 16gn ship letter fee). The manuscript rating mark at upper right reads "Sh 6.16."

A second cover (Figure 11) originated in Bilbao, a port city in northern Spain. It was sent from the firm of Douat, Labate & Plante via Boston to Andrew Clow & Co. in Philadelphia. Clow & Co., the recipient, traded in textiles and also in sugar and grain, the last of which was the subject of this letter, which was datelined at Bilbao on December 10, 1790 and sent “p favor of Capt. T. Trask, W.G.P.” (Whom God Protect) on the Schooner *Eagle* to Boston. It arrived there and was posted on March 9, 1791 at a rate of “Sh 6.16” for a double letter sent 300-400 miles (2x3dwt) plus the 16gn ship fee. Also note at the top the “3/4”—rating the cover upon arrival for a collection of 3 shillings in local Pennsylvania currency.

The Constitutional Post—finally making cents

The United States Constitution was ratified on March 4, 1789. On February 20, 1792, Congress passed “An act to establish the Post Office and Post Roads within the United States.” Effective June 1, rates were for the first time stated in dollars and cents, breaking another connection with Britain. These rates are shown in Table 3. Nine postal zones were established, and ship letters were charged 4¢, either for delivery at the port or in addition to the zoned rate for those delivered inland. These rates were re-enacted on May 8, 1794.

TABLE 3
POSTAL RATES UNDER THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION
EFFECTIVE: 1 JUNE 1792—2 MARCH 1799

Distance	Single sheet	Double sheet	Triple sheet
up to 30 miles	6¢	12¢	18¢
30-60 miles	8¢	16¢	24¢
60-100 miles	10¢	20¢	30¢
100-150 miles	12½¢	25¢	37½¢
150-200 miles	15¢	30¢	45¢
200-250 miles	17¢	34¢	51¢
250-350 miles	20¢	40¢	60¢
350-450 miles	22¢	44¢	66¢
Over 450 miles	25¢	50¢	75¢

Note: ship letters charged 4¢ for delivery at the port of entry or 4¢ plus the zone rate for delivery beyond the port of entry.

By this time, the U.S. Government had moved from New York to Philadelphia, as evidenced by the free-franked letter in Figure 12. Section 19 of the Act of 1792 said “That the following letters and packets, and no others, shall be received and conveyed by post, free of postage, under such restrictions as are hereinafter provided, that is to say... all letters and packets not exceeding two ounces in weight, to or from any member of the Senate or House of Representatives... during their actual attendance in any session of Congress, and twenty days after such session.”

This letter was sent on December 16, 1793 from James Sullivan, Attorney General of Massachusetts to John Langdon, New Hampshire’s first U.S. Senator, in Philadelphia. It was struck with a 24x3½ mm straightline Boston postmark (known used from December



Figure 12. Letter from Boston sent free of postage on Dec. 16, 1793 under the first postal act under the United States Constitution. The addressee in Philadelphia, John Langdon, was the first U.S. Senator from New Hampshire.

26, 1792 to November 7, 1796), the 16/DE Franklin Mark, and the earliest known use of a new “Free” marking, which Blake-Davis had reported used from May 23, 1796 to July 2, 1801.

Expansion into the Northwest Territory

In addition to expanding international trade, independence also brought with it an expansion westward, extending the new nation’s borders. The Northwest Territory (NWT) was the initial post-colonial expansion of the U.S. and encompassed most of the pre-war British colonial territory west of the Appalachian mountains and north of the Ohio River: all or large parts of six eventual U.S. States—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and the northeastern part of Minnesota. The region was created as a United States Territory by the Northwest Ordinance of July 13, 1787. It ceased to exist March 1, 1803, when the southeastern portion of the NWT was admitted into the Union as the state of Ohio, and the remainder attached to Indiana Territory.

Figure 13 is a very early letter from the NWT datelined at Marietta (now Ohio) on September 16, 1792—prior to Marietta having a post office and prior to any mail route between the NWT and the East. It is addressed to Thomas P. Ives at Providence. It notes General Arthur St. Clair’s defeat in November 1791—the greatest defeat of the American army by native Americans in history; the constant threat of Indian attack; and the concern that the government plan to give land to settlers will hurt private land transactions.

This remarkable cover was privately carried on most of its journey. It bears three postal markings, all indicating that the letter first entered the postal system at Boston: a black 21/OC Franklin mark, a black 28x5 mm “BOSTON” town postmark, and an “8” rate marking (8¢) for the 30-60 mile trip from Boston to Providence. There is no explicit indication whether the letter reached Boston in 1792 or in 1793, but the discussion of land transactions suggests a need for quick response. The overland route, by the Ohio River east from Marietta to Pittsburgh, then over the post roads to Philadelphia and on to Boston, is difficult but could have been made in the 35-day period from the September 16 dateline to October 21 Franklin mark. The alternative route, via the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans, then by sailing vessels to Boston, would result in a 1793 date, but this would



Figure 13. A very early letter from Marietta, Northwest Territory. Datelined 16 September 1792, this cover was carried privately (route uncertain) into Boston, where it entered the mails and was rated for an 8¢ collection (30-60 mile rate, see Table 3) for the trip from Boston to Providence.

indicate a very unlikely transit time of 13 months. As further evidence supporting 1792 dating, I was unable to find a report in contemporary newspapers of any ship from New Orleans arriving at Boston in 1793.

The Quasi War

While the U.S. was expanding into the NWT, travel on the high seas was about to get difficult again. The Quasi War was an undeclared naval war with France from 1798 to 1800. The United States had been repaying a large debt to France amassed during the American Revolution. But that debt was owed to the French royal regime, which had been overthrown. The U.S. refused to pay the debt to the new government. In addition, the end of our Revolutionary War meant that we began trading again with Britain, with whom the French were at war. In response, France authorized privateers to conduct attacks on American shipping, seizing numerous merchant ships, and ultimately leading the U.S. to retaliate.

Figure 14 shows a most interesting letter from the American ship *Ariadne*, which was seized by the French during the Quasi War. Quoting from the Newburyport (Mass.) *Shipping News* of November 27, 1798:

Nov. 25. Arrived *Ariadne*, Prior, 56 days from St. Ubes Setubal, Portugal....[On] Oct. 8, lat. 35, N. Long., 18, W., was spoke to by two French frigates, the *Volunteer* and *Invincible*, boarded by the latter, the second officer in command, who was ordered on board, plundered the cabin of its stores and furniture, & took away all the poultry; after this transaction, Capt. Prior was ordered on board the *Invincible*, when the commander disapproved of the conduct of his officer and said that the articles should be returned; but the weather being bad and night coming on, Capt. P. was obliged to put up with the loss.

The Figure 14 letter was also taken by the French and opened to determine whether secret messages were being conveyed to the British. The letter was datelined at St. Ubes (Setubal, Portugal) on September 28, 1798 and sent by Capt. B. Balch to the prominent merchants Samuel and William Hale in Portsmouth, N.H. At left are a 26/NO Franklin mark, the 23½x3½ mm Boston handstamp (reported used Nov. 23, 1796 to Jan. 7, 1801) and manuscript "Pr. Ship *Ariadna*, Capt. Prior, Via Boston." At top right is the manuscript rating "Sh 14" reflecting a 4¢ ship fee and 10¢ for the 60-100 mile trip inland.

Of greater interest is the 13½x3½ mm "Paid" handstamp. In this early era, the great majority of letters were sent collect, ship letters even more so, because the writer was never sure his letter would reach its addressee. Prepaid ship letters from this era are exceedingly

Figure 14. A rare early prepaid ship letter. This 1798 letter was taken by two French frigates from an American ship during the Quasi War with France. The cover was returned to the American captain, taken to Boston, and there posted at a 14¢ rate (with a 4¢ ship fee) for the 60-100 miles to Portsmouth, N.H.



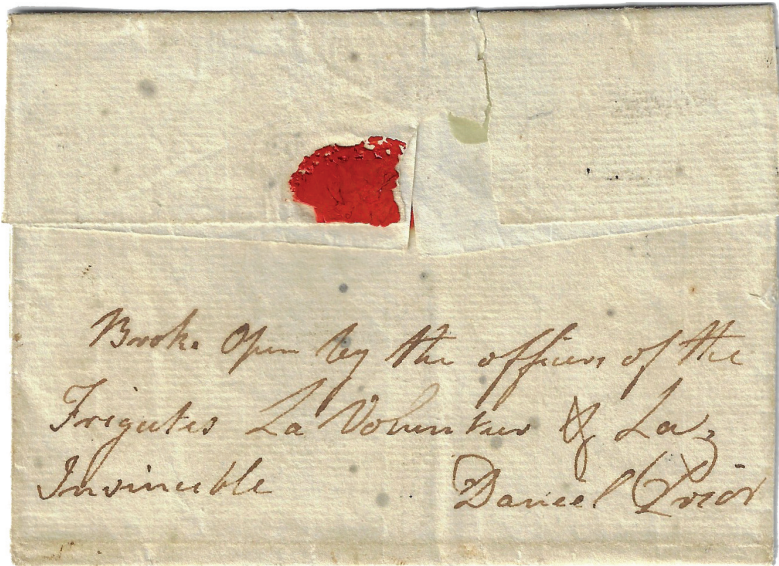


Figure 15. Reverse of the 1798 cover shown in Figure 14, captured at sea by French frigates. It bears an explanation inscribed by the American captain: "Broke open by the officers of the Frigates La Volunteer & La Invincible. Daniel Prior."

rare, this being close to the earliest of which I am aware.

Perhaps the reason the letter was paid at the Boston post office before it got to the addressee is seen on the reverse of the letter, shown in Figure 15. The ship's captain wrote: "Broke open by the officers of the Frigates La Volunteer & La Invincible, Daniel Prior." Prior may have been trying to atone for allowing his ship to be captured and substantially delaying the letter's arrival.

A new century begins

On March 2, 1799, Congress passed a new postal act, heralding the dawn of a new century, complete with trade with new foreign markets, a new conflict with Britain, and a shift to modern postal markings. Rates were simplified, from nine zones to six, as shown in Table 4. Ship letters were now charged 6¢ if delivered to the port, or 2¢ plus the zone rate for mail sent beyond the port of entry. And the franking privilege grew as the government expanded.

The first Boston circular datestamp

In 1799, the Postmaster General in Philadelphia attempted to standardize postal markings in the form of a 26 mm circular datestamp (CDS), with both town and state around the

Distance	Single sheet	Double sheet	Triple sheet
up to 40 miles	8¢	16¢	24¢
40-90 miles	10¢	20¢	30¢
90-150 miles	12½¢	25¢	37½¢
150-300 miles	17¢	34¢	51¢
300-500 miles	20¢	40¢	60¢
over 500 miles	25¢	50¢	75¢

Note: ship letters charged 6¢ if delivered to the port of entry, or 2¢ plus the zone rate for delivery to destinations beyond the port of entry.

inside top rim. Neither Boston nor other large cities (New York and Philadelphia) received these markings, but Boston adopted a similar marking in January 1801. The covers in Figures 16 and 17 show the last day of use of the last Boston straightline—January 19, 1801—and the first day of use of the first Boston CDS on January 18, one day earlier.

The Figure 16 cover with the straightline and the “19/IA” Franklin mark was rated 12½¢ as a single unpaid letter sent 90-150 miles to Hartford, Connecticut. The Figure 17 cover with the black CDS and the small “Paid” at right center was rated 10¢ as a single pre-



Figure 16. The last day of use of a straightline townmark by the Boston post office—19 January 1801 cover rated 12½¢ due for the 90-150 mile trip to Hartford.

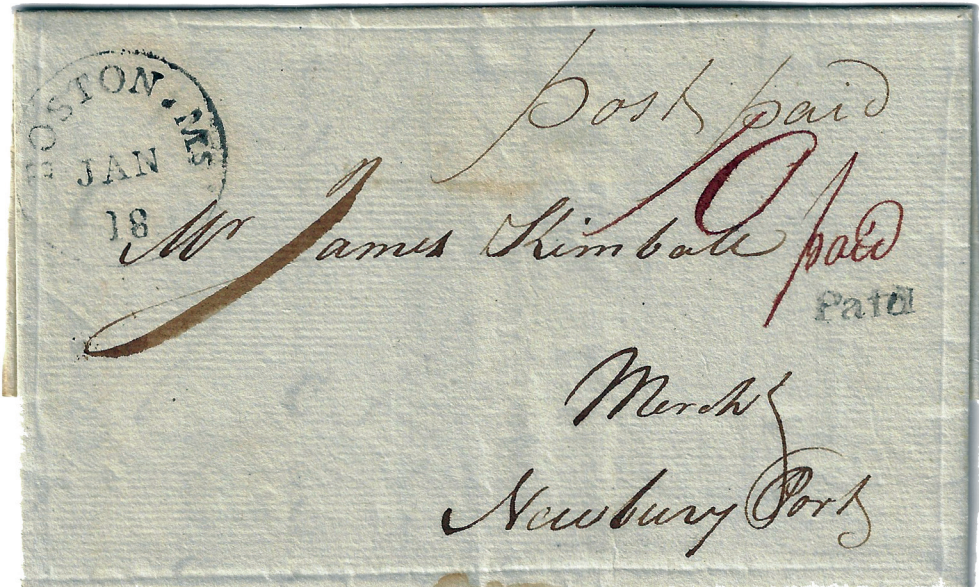


Figure 17. First day of use of a circular date stamp by the Boston post office—18 January 1801. Prepaid at 10¢ rate for the 40-90 miles to Newburyport. See Table 4. The straightline postmark in Figure 16 and this CDS overlapped for two days.

paid letter sent 40-90 miles to Newburyport, Mass. This new CDS is known used in black from Jan. 18, 1801 to June 11, 1804, and in red from Feb. 8, 1803 to sometime in 1805.

The franking privilege

In one form or another, the franking privilege had existed for many years, as evidenced by the covers in Figures 9 and 12, but the postal act of 1799 extended the privilege to scores of new office holders.

Section 17 of the act included postmasters, U. S. senators and representatives, administrative officers of the Senate and House, the president and vice president, secretaries of government departments and many of their subordinates. The full list is too long to enumerate here, and most free-franked letters originated in Washington, D.C. Two letters from a few of those covered and sent from Boston are presented herewith.

Figure 18 shows a letter bearing the free frank of Boston's first U.S. postmaster, Jon Hastings, who served from the reopening of the Boston post office after the British were expelled in 1776 until 1808. Marked "Free, Jon Hastings, Postmaster Boston" and bearing the first Boston CDS and small "Free" handstamp in red, this cover was sent on February 12, 1804 to Newcomb Kinney, "contractor for the mail," in Norwich, Connecticut.



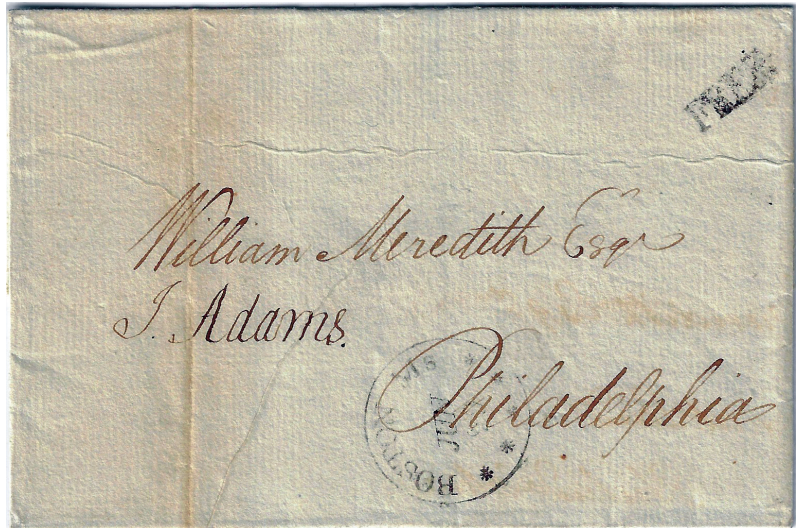
Figure 18. The Act of 2 March 1799 expanded the franking privilege to a broad group of office holders. This letter, posted February 12, 1804, shows the free frank of Boston's first U.S. postmaster, Jon Hastings, who served 1776-1808. The letter is addressed to a mail contractor in Norwich, Connecticut.

Beginning with the 1799 act, ex-presidents were granted the franking privilege. At this time, John Adams was the only living ex-president and a cover with his free frank is shown in Figure 19. Sent from Adams to William Meredith in Philadelphia, this letter was struck on June 27, 1806 with the second Boston CDS (reported used in black from March 14, 1805 to Nov. 15, 1808) and an unreported 15x5mm "FREE" handstamp.

The 6¢ "to the port" rate

As noted above, with the act of 1799, letters arriving by ship and addressed to the port of entry were charged 6¢. Blake-Davis stated that the earliest known Boston letter to show

Figure 19. The 1799 act gave the franking privilege for the first time to ex-presidents. This cover was sent on June 27, 1806 to Philadelphia, and bears the free frank of John Adams. This "FREE" handstamp has not previously been reported.



this rating dated from 1817. Since that book was written, the date has been moved back to 1801, as evidenced by the cover shown in Figure 20. The letter within is datelined Sept. 21, 1801. The cover was sent from Richard Reed in St. John's, Newfoundland to Turner Phillips Esq. in Boston. It was carried on the Schooner *Swift* which arrived at Boston on October 6. Since it was only going as far as the Boston post office, there was no need to rate it, but only to apply the 15x4½ mm "SHIP" handstamp (used in black from April 28, 1800 to July 9, 1802).

Trading far and wide

During this period we see U.S. ships trading farther than just western Europe. Letters below reflect early Boston trade with Uruguay, Norway and India. Figure 21 shows what is believed to be the second earliest letter sent to the U.S. from Uruguay.⁴ It was datelined on

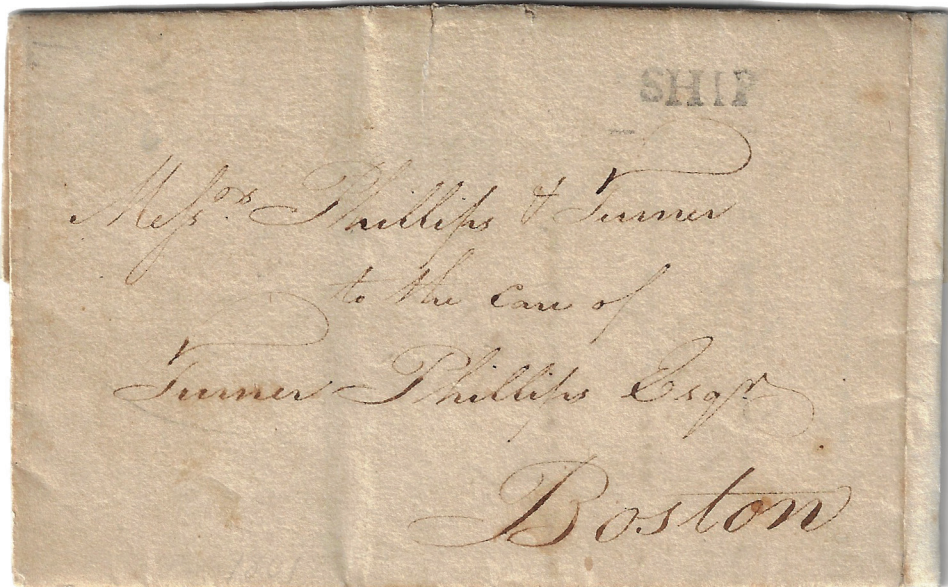


Figure 20. This letter shows only a "SHIP" handstamp, applied on or about Oct. 6, 1801 as a letter addressed to the port of entry. Per the Act of 1799, 6¢ was due from the addressee and it is the earliest of its type known at Boston.



Figure 21. One of the earliest covers to the U.S. from Uruguay, this letter was posted at Boston on 2 August 1807 and rated 53¢ (including a 2¢ ship fee) as a triple letter sent to New York City.

April 27 and May 28, 1807 at Montevideo and sent from Thomas B. Wallace via Boston to the firm of Low and Wallace in New York. It was carried on the ship *Superb*, which arrived in Boston Harbor on July 25, but was placed in quarantine for several days. The letter was marked with the second Boston CDS and “SHIP” handstamp on August 2, and rated 53¢ as a triple letter sent 150-300 miles (3x17¢) to New York and including the 2¢ ship fee.

The letter in Figure 22 shows the second earliest letter to the U.S. from Norway.⁵ It was sent from Hernian D. Landon and Sons in Bergen via Boston to Joseph S. Martin at Sam. G. Arnold and Co. in Providence. The ship *Antelope* that carried this letter also carried iron to the U.S. on this voyage. Endorsed “Duplicate” and struck with the third Boston CDS in red (used from April 18, 1809 to some time in 1813) and the red “SHIP” handstamp, this cover was posted on February 19, 1810 and rated 22¢ as a double letter sent 40-90 miles (2x10¢) plus the 2¢ ship fee.



Figure 22. Posted at Boston on Feb. 19, 1810, this letter is believed to be the second earliest cover sent to the U.S. from Norway. It was rated 22¢ due (with a 2¢ ship fee) as a double-rate letter from Boston to Providence.

Figure 23. Sent from Madras via Boston to Philadelphia in 1806, this is reportedly the second earliest letter from India to enter the U.S. mails. Rated 42¢ as a double letter traveling 300-500 miles (2x20¢ plus 2¢ ship fee).



The cover in Figure 23 was sent from Madras, India in 1806 and is reported to be the second earliest cover from India to enter the U.S. mails. It was datelined on August 14, 1805 and sent from Leopold Nottcnagel via the Ship *Aurora* to Boston, then sent by mail to Stephen Dutilh in Philadelphia (see Figure 8). It had arrived at Boston after a long 211-day trip, during which time the *Aurora* was delayed at Barbados. Markings include the second Boston CDS, 16x5½ mm “SHIP” (used April 21, 1806—July 11, 1808), the manuscript directive “by the Ship *Aurora* Cap Cook for Boston” and the rate of 42¢ for a double letter sent 300-500 miles (2x20¢) plus the 2¢ ship fee. The sender, a Philadelphia merchant, had arrived in India as the supercargo of the Ship *Voltaire*, owned by another more prominent Philadelphia merchant, Stephen Girard.

The War of 1812

This second war with Great Britain had many causes. During its war with Napoleonic France, Britain impressed U.S. sailors to man ships involved in the naval blockade on neutral trade with France. Britain also urged Indian attacks on American settlers on the frontier of the Northwest Territory, hindering American expansion and provoking resentment. And Americans certainly had eyes on the territory Britain controlled in Canada.

War was declared by President James Madison on June 18, 1812. The letter in Figure 24 was carried on the American ship *Henry*, which sailed from Liverpool around March 18, 1813. On April 28, it was captured by the *La Hogue*, a 74-gun Royal Navy ship of the line, commanded by Captain Thomas Bladen Capel, and sent to the vice-admiralty court at Halifax as a prize of war. After being cleared on June 15, the *Henry* returned to Boston on June 26. The manuscript notation “opened by the commander of the *La Hogue*” was presumably added by Capt. Gardiner of the *Henry*, a handling very similar to the letter in Figures 14 and 15, taken by the French during the Quasi War.

In addition to the manuscript notation, the letter bears the rectangular postal marking of Glasgow, where James Thomson posted it to Liverpool on December 13, 1812. It also bears a very light strike in red (at upper left) of the red fourth Boston CDS (27½ mm, known used Feb. 22, 1813 to Sept. 24, 1815) and a 17¢ rating, as a single letter sent 150-300 miles to New York. It was not marked as a ship letter nor charged the 2¢ ship fee. The

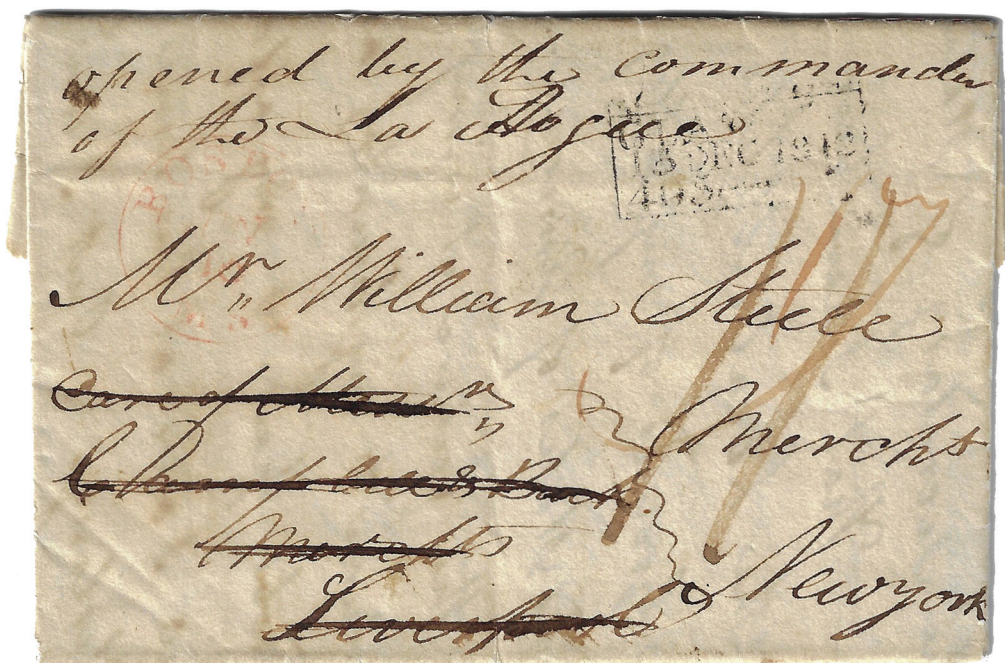


Figure 24. Carried on an American ship taken as a prize in the War of 1812. Upon the ship's release, it sailed to Boston where this cover was posted on June 26, 1813. It was rated 17¢ as a single letter sent to New York City. No ship fee was charged.

War of 1812 ended with the Treaty of Ghent on December 24, 1814. The third article in this series will begin with the act of Congress establishing the 1816 "War Rate," a 50 percent increase in postal rates intended to help pay for the War of 1812.

Endnotes

1. [Http://mises.org/library/inflation-and-american-revolution](http://mises.org/library/inflation-and-american-revolution), Mises Institute (last viewed August 7, 2019).
2. Matthew Bennett International Sale 290, October 7, 2005.
3. Blake, Maurice, and Davis, Wilbur, *Boston Postmarks to 1890*, Quarterman Publications, Lawrence, Mass. (1974).
4. Per conversations with Walter Britz, a well known expert in Uruguay philately. The earliest known cover from Uruguay to the U.S. is datelined March 9, 1807 and was sent via Charleston to New York City.
5. Per Harry Snarvold, a Swedish collector and expert in early Norway. The earliest cover known from Norway to the U.S. was sent from Kristiansand in 1809 and sent via Boston to Exeter, N.H. Two others in 1810 were sent to Philadelphia (one via Baltimore); these were delayed by the blockade during the Napoleonic Wars. A total of seven letters are known from Norway to the U.S. from 1809-1817. ■

STENCIL MARKINGS ON 19TH CENTURY COVERS: FOLLOW-UP

JAMES W. MILGRAM, M.D.

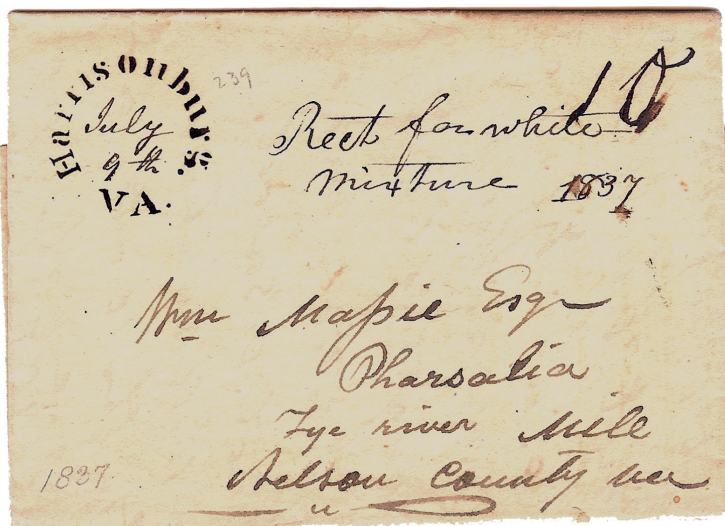
A few years ago I began writing what was originally intended to be two articles on stencil postmarks. The first article, published in *Chronicle* 255 (August, 2017), discussed stencil postmarks on stampless covers. A second article, in *Chronicle* 257, dealt with stencil postmarks on stamp-bearing covers. Both articles listed all the markings known to me in the categories under discussion.

Stencils are an uncommon means of applying markings to covers. It was evident there was a lot of collector interest, and I wound up adding four more articles. In *Chronicle* 258 I discussed various types of stencil markings that appear on Civil War covers. This was followed by an article on stencil-maker advertising covers (*Chronicle* 259); vessel-named stencil markings on steamboat mail (*Chronicle* 260); and stenciled hotel corner-cards (*Chronicle* 261).

As the series unfolded, readers responded with new listings, insights and information. It seemed best to let these responses accumulate in order to publish them all at once. This brief article summarizes the responses.

Russell Crow, RA 4208, sent the cover shown in Figure 1, postmarked in 1837 by a crisp and striking rimless 25-millimeter circular black stencil marking of “Harrisonburg. VA.” The islands and bridges that characterize the typography of stencil postmarks are clearly evident. This marking was unknown to me until Crow provided it, so of course it was not included in my listing in *Chronicle* 255.

Figure 1. A new stencil postmark on a stampless cover: Striking rimless 25-millimeter stencil marking of “Harrisonburg. VA.” on an 1837 cover to Pharsalia, Virginia. Cover submitted by Russell Crow.



Crow also confirmed that the 1847 “CHATOWN VA” circular marking I showed (*Chronicle* 255, page 246, Figure 31) is a stencil marking from Charleston, in what was then Virginia and is now West Virginia. In addition, Wayne Farley, RA 3649, sent three scans of other examples of this marking. Currently unlisted, this marking should be included in the new stampless catalog as a stencil postmark.

The cover in Figure 2, from a reader who prefers to remain anonymous, shows the distinctive double-circle stencil marking used at “URBANA MD” during 1845-48. In the stampless article in *Chronicle* 255 I showed examples in red. The strike on the Figure 2 cover is black. Note that the “5” rating marking on this cover is also a stencil marking.

An “EDDYVILLE/K” 23-mm circular stencil postmark in black, from 1831, is listed in the *American Stampless Cover Catalog*. I now have a poor image from an old auction catalog that confirms this listing, but it's too grainy to reproduce in the *Chronicle*.

The *Chronicle* 257 article illustrated a circular stencil marking from Findley’s Lake, New York, in which the state abbreviation was contained at the center of the stencil. John Valenti, RA 2572, sent a scan of a different type of Findley’s Lake circular stencil, struck on a 3¢ 1861 stamp and illustrated here as Figure 3. In Valenti’s marking the state abbreviation is arrayed along with the town name in the rim.

The *Chronicle* 257 article on stenciled postmarks on stamped covers included a black and white image of the straightline marking of “Prospect Ferry, Me.” At the time I did not

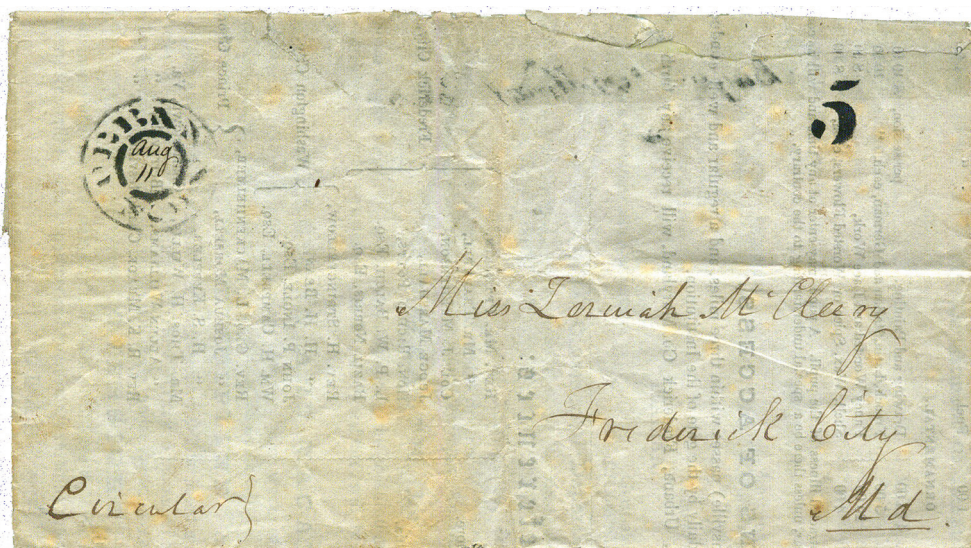


Figure 2. Double-circle stencil marking used at “URBANA MD” during 1845-48, here struck in black. The stampless article in *Chronicle* 255 showed examples in red. Note that the “5” rating marking on this cover is also a stencil marking.



Figure 3. A different type of Findley's Lake N.Y. circular stencil townmark, struck on a 3¢ 1861 stamp. Scan provided by John Valenti, RA 2572.

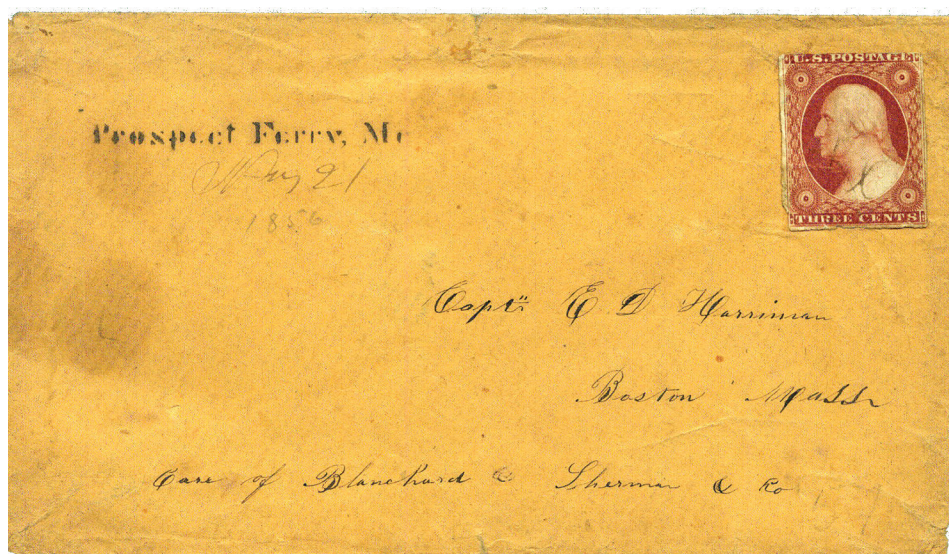


Figure 4. “Prospect Ferry, Me.” small stencil straightline, on a cover franked with a 3¢ 1851 stamp and addressed to a captain in the “Boston Squadron.” Now in the author's collection, this is the sole recorded example of this stencil townmark.



Figure 5. Elegant oval stencil corner advertisement of Brittain House, Greensboro, N.C., on a cover franked with a 3¢ 1857 stamp and submitted by Richard Winter.

know the whereabouts of the actual cover. I'm pleased to report that I subsequently acquired the cover, which is franked with a manuscript-canceled 3¢ 1851 stamp. The cover, bearing the sole recorded example of this marking, is illustrated in Figure 4.

The cover in Figure 5, submitted by Richard Winter, is franked with a 3¢ 1857 stamp and bears the very attractive stenciled corner advertisement of the Brittain House Hotel of Greensboro, North Carolina. The handsome blue-green Greensboro circular datestamp adds to the overall appeal of this cover. When sending the scan, Winter asked if I know of other North Carolina stencils. I did not. But then Tony Crumbley, RA 3515, submitted the cover shown in Figure 6, sent during the Confederacy (24 June 1861) with a Martindale, N.C. straightline stencil marking. This is a Confederate Paid 5 usage.

Corncards with stencil lettering are the most common type of stencil markings found on 19th century envelopes. A few of these markings take the shape of some type of

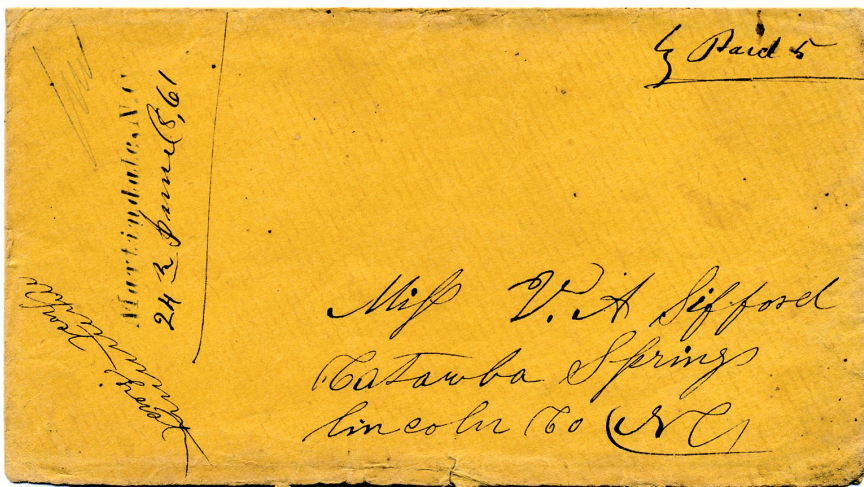


Figure 6. Stencil townmark of Martindale, N.C., to Catawba Springs, N.C. posted during the Confederacy. Submitted by Tony Crumbley, RA 3515.



Figure 7. On this 3¢ entire envelope sent to London, Tennessee, a cleverly designed stencil corner advertisement, in the shape of an anvil, promotes the business of a Knoxville iron and hardware dealer. Submitted by Chip Gliedman.



Figure 8. Elaborate, leaf-shaped stencil advertisement of a Newark, Ohio dentist firm, from the reverse of a 3¢ 1851 cover.

object. On the 3¢ Nesbitt envelope in Figure 7, submitted by Chip Gliedman, the stenciled corner advertisement of T.G. Rawlins, a Knoxville dealer in iron and hardware, is cleverly presented within a three-dimensional depiction of an anvil. Equally attractive, if less imaginative, is the stencil imprint of Sedgwick & Nicol, a firm of dentists in Newark, Ohio. Their stenciled imprint, electronically clipped from the back of a 3¢ 1851 cover, is shown in Figure 8. It takes the shape of a leaf.

Additionally, Scott Pendleton, RA 4592, sent helpful information providing background insight into the stencil postmarks of Deersville, Ohio. From this tiny village in eastern Ohio (current population: 79) came a number of handsome stencil postmarks (made from three different stencils) on stampless covers from the 1846-52 era.

Pendleton has done extensive research into the Pittis family of Deersville. Three Pittis brothers, cousins of Deerfield postmaster Robert Pittis, became stencil cutters in the 1830s and set up stencil-cutting businesses in Pittsburgh and in New York City. Pendleton writes that Henry and Thomas Pittis “did business as the firm of Pittis Brothers at 293 Pearl Street, New York City, 1845-1849. Henry then returned to Deersville to farm. It seems likely Henry was the artisan who made the Deersville stencils.” So now we know.

Thanks to all these contributors and to others who shared information. ■

PLATE VARIETIES ON 10¢ 1847 STAMPS

GORDON EUBANKS

The plates for the engraved stamps the United States issued in 1847 were produced in a series of steps. First a master craftsman would create a die that reflected the image of the stamp. Once the die was considered ready, one or more reverse images from the die were made on a transfer roll. From this roll images for each stamp were pressed into a plate.

For the 1847 stamps, it was a plate of 200 images consisting of two panes of 100 subjects each. In theory, all the stamp images would be identical. However, since the impression of each stamp was entered individually into the plate, there actually were small differences. In some cases, impressions were re-entered to complete or improve an image. In other cases, especially if the image was unaligned with its mates, the image would be rubbed out of the plate and re-entered. This sometimes left small remnants of the original impression. Stamps that show these characteristics are called double transfer varieties. In other cases, lines would be strengthened. This could also lead to two lines appearing where only one was intended.

These small differences provide the basis for plating a stamp: discovering unique features that identify each position on the plate. Early work on the possibility of plating the 10¢ 1847 stamp was done by Dr. Carroll Chase more than a century ago. The baton was picked up by Elliot Perry in 1922. He began work while sailing across the Atlantic from New York to England. He completed the plating on his return to New York in 1923, when he was able to get additional copies of the stamp. An important key to the puzzle was the discovery of a straddle-pane stamp, proving that the 10¢ 1847 stamps had been printed from two panes, not one as had originally been thought.

This article will discuss and illustrate the major types of plate varieties of the 10¢ 1847 stamp, employing color images and digital enhancements to show the salient features as clearly as modern technology allows.

The various categories of plate varieties on the 10¢ 1847 stamp include double transfers, double frame lines, misaligned plate entries and a few stamps with random markings to which collectors have attached descriptive names: the Stick Pin, the Harelip, the dot over “O” and the line in “F”. There are also plate scratches and short transfers. This article addresses all these varieties, beginning with the major double transfers.

The four major 10¢ double transfers are known as types A, B, C, and D. There are other minor double transfers on the plate but these are the four major examples. They were originally identified and given their letter designations by Chase.

Figure 1 shows twice-lifesize images of the Type A and Type B double transfer stamps, along with massive enlargements of their upper portions. The Type A is the left stamp in Figure 1 and its upper quarter is shown at the top. The doubling is most easily seen as the

TYPE A AND TYPE B DOUBLE TRANSFERS



Figure 1. Double transfers Type A and Type B. The Type A double transfer (left stamp and top enlargement) is most easily seen in the U and S, where marks of a previous entry show clearly. There's also a doubling of the upper right bar of the X at lower right, partly obscured on the Figure 1 stamp by the bold red cancellation. This Type A variety occurs in the first position (upper left corner) on the right pane, which is designated Position 1R. The Type B double transfer (right stamp, bottom enlargement) is one of the most dramatic of all transfer varieties on United States postage stamps: a striking doubling in POST OFFICE and in the U and S. This variety occurs at Position 31R.

odd markings within the in the “U” and the “S” in the top corners of the stamp. Note also that some background lines and other elements from the vignette clearly extend into the left side of the white oval surrounding the portrait of Washington. In a perfectly entered stamp this oval frame is empty and paper white. There’s also a diagonal line in the top right bar of the “X” at lower right. This is largely obscured by the bold red Mobile cancel on the stamp in Figure 1. The Type A double transfer comes from the first position on the right pane—the upper left corner of the pane, which collectors conventionally designate as Position 1R.

The right stamp in Figure 1 shows the Type B double transfer. Sometimes called the “POST OFFICE shift,” this is one of the most dramatic and easily recognized of all double transfer varieties on United States stamps. As the enlargement at the bottom of Figure 1 should show very clearly, doubling is evident across the entire curved “POST OFFICE” legend, most notably in the “O” at the top of the arc, which leaps out into the white frame area above the stamp design. Pronounced doubling is also seen in the “U” and “S” in the corners. In addition, the white oval around the portrait shows background lines from the vignette shifted in at the top—confirming the original erased impression was slightly higher than the new impression. The Type B double transfer position is 31R.

Figure 2 shows oversized photographs of the Type C and Type D double transfers, along with enlargements of the bottom portions of the stamps. The Type C is the left stamp in Figure 2 and its lower quarter is shown at the top. The Type C double transfer is less dramatic than the type B and shares some similarities with the Type A. There is a clear extra line on the right edge of the thicker leg of the right “X” and to a lesser extent in the “X” at left. There is also a doubling in some letters of “POST OFFICE,” especially clear in the top “O.” Doubling marks also show in the “U” and the “S.” On the left stamp in Figure 2, this is clearer in the “U” because the doubling mark in the “S” is partly obscured by the blue Troy datestamp. The white oval surrounding the portrait, which would ordinarily be paper white, shows doubling elements on the left side. Some of this can be seen in the enlargement of the “TEN CENTS” section at top in Figure 2. The stamp’s position is 2R, which means it is the adjacent stamp to the right of the Type A stamp shown in Figure 1.

The Type D double transfer is represented by the right stamp in Figure 2; its lower quarter is shown at the bottom of Figure 2. Distinguishing marks of the type D double transfer are a doubling of the outer frame lines at bottom (the shift is down and to the left) and also in the upper right corner. Hints of the doubling are also seen in the left “X.” The entire bottom frame line and the very bottom of the right frame line clearly show that the new impression is slightly to the right and above the erased image. Very little doubling is apparent in the upper three quarters of the stamp. The Type D double transfer comes from the 41R position; it is the stamp just below the 31R position, source of the Type B double transfer (right stamp in Figure 1).

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TYPE C AND TYPE D DOUBLE TRANSFERS



Figure 2. Double transfers Type C and Type D. The Type C double transfer (left stamp and top enlargement) shows most clearly at bottom, most notably in the X at right and to a lesser extent in the X at left. Doubling also shows as stray markings in ENTS and in OST OFF at top and in the U and S in the upper corners. This is Position 2R. In the Type D double transfer (right stamp, bottom enlargement) the outer frameline is doubled and shifted down and left, with hints of doubling also evident in the left X. Little or no doubling occurs on the upper three quarters of this position. The Type D double transfer comes from Position 41R.

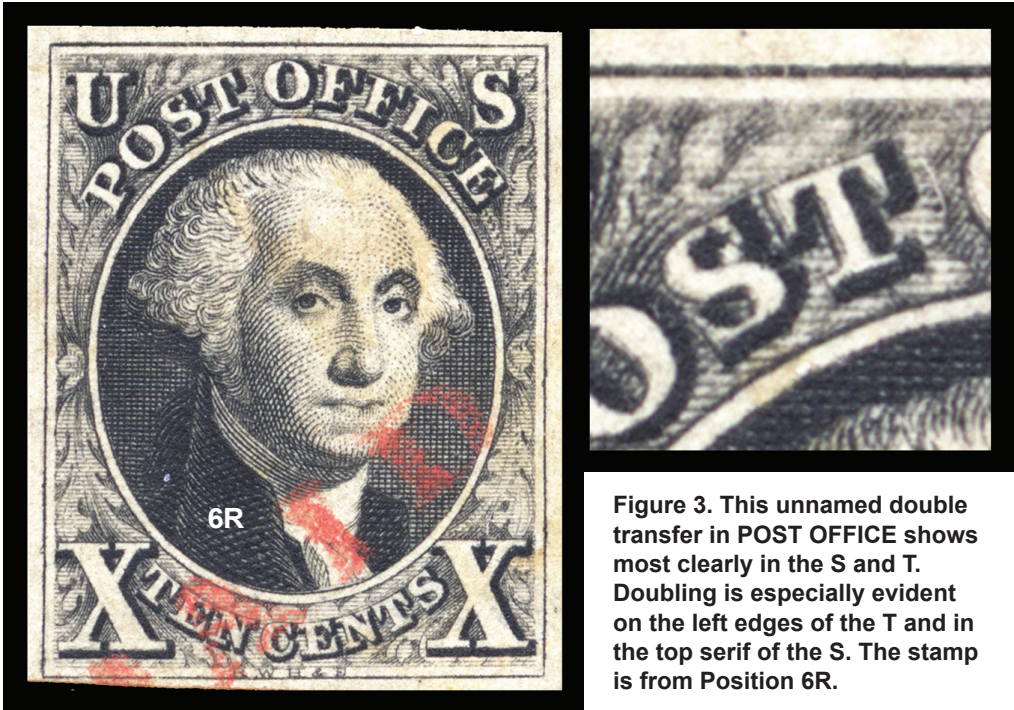
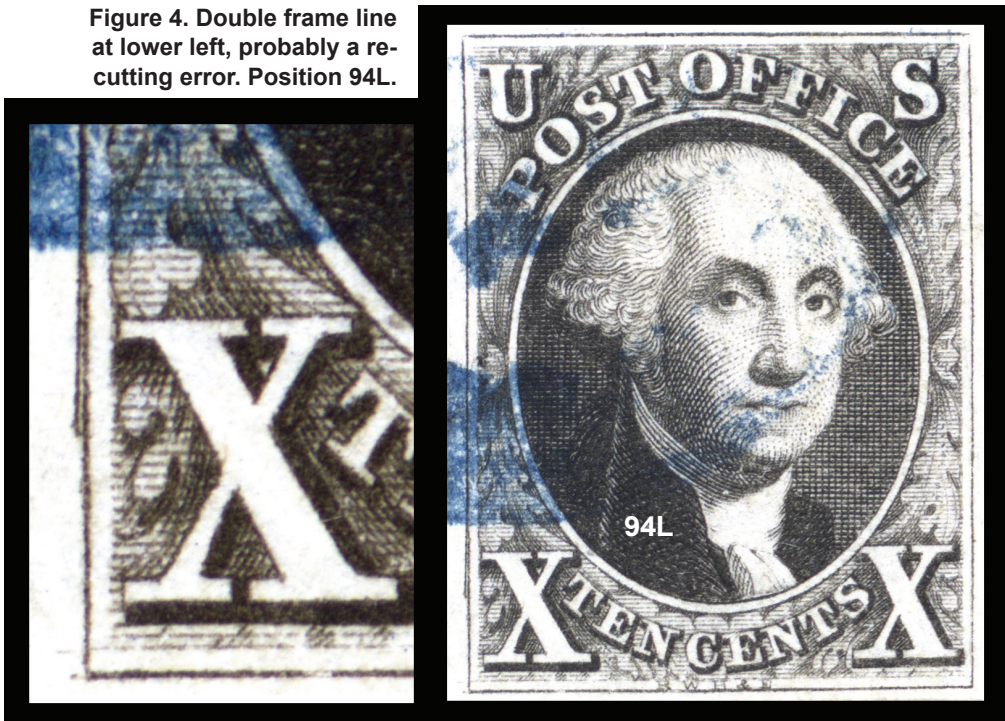


Figure 3. This unnamed double transfer in POST OFFICE shows most clearly in the “ST.” Doubling is especially evident on the left edges of the T and in the top serif of the S. The stamp is from Position 6R.

There are also unnamed double transfers. Figure 3 shows a Position 6R stamp digitally cropped from a pair on cover. It shows a minor double transfer in “POST OFFICE,” evident most clearly in the “ST” which is shown in the enlargement in Figure 3.

Figure 4 shows the stamp from Position 94L, which shows an odd doubling of the frame line at lower left, clearly visible in the enlargement in Figure 4. This doubling was

Figure 4. Double frame line at lower left, probably a re-cutting error. Position 94L.



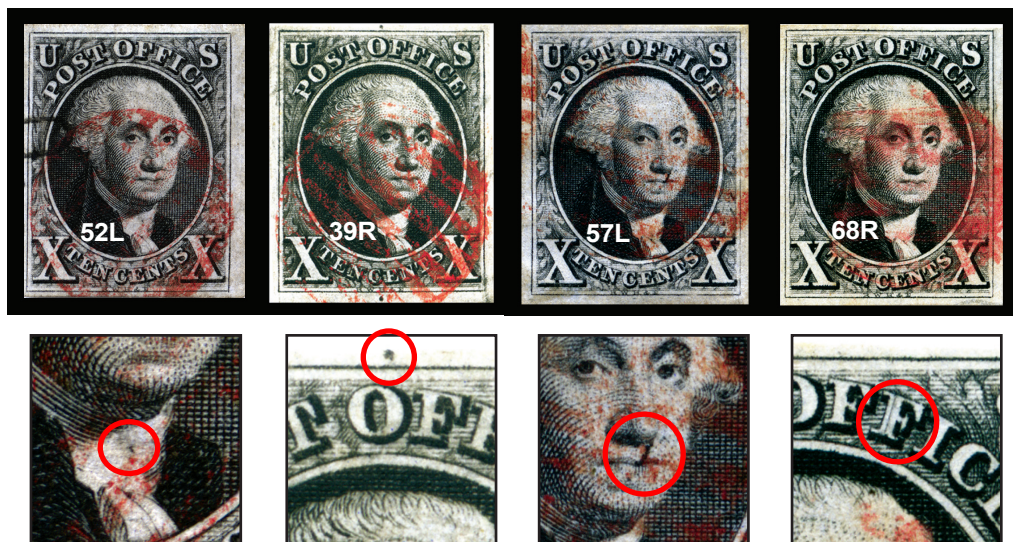


Figure 5. Some named markings reflect a single stray flaw on the plate. These random markings (encircled in red in the enlargements) are a great aid in identifying their plate positions. Shown here from left to right are the Stick Pin (Position 52L), the dot over the O (39R), the Harelip (57L) and the line in F (68R).

probably caused by a recutting error, but of that we cannot be certain.

Other 10¢ 1847 positions show single stray plate markings that have been sufficiently recognizable down through the years to induce collectors to give them names. Four of these are illustrated in Figure 5, with accompanying enlargements in which the named feature has been encircled for clarity. From left to right these are the Stick Pin; the dot over the “O” in “OFFICE”; the Harelip; and the line in “F.” Persistent random plate markings like these are a great help in plating because they easily identify individual positions. The plate positions for the four stamps in Figure 5 are (left to right) 52L, 39R, 35L and 68R.

An unusual variety of stray markings are plate scratches. How these scratches were created is not known, but they occur in consistent positions. Figure 6 shows a cover from



Figure 6. Cover from the famous Ludlow Beebe correspondence (Boston to Philadelphia) franked with a horizontal pair of 10¢ 1847 stamps that shows a very odd display of plate scratches in the gutter between the stamps. This unusual feature is shown enlarged at left. Positions 44-45R.

the Ludlow Beebe correspondence, source of a great many express mail covers. The cover is franked with a pair of 10¢ 1847 stamps (Position 44-45R). In the gutter between the stamps, shown greatly enlarged in Figure 6, is a series of random vertical plate scratches that resemble a child's doodling. All these stray markings hold ink, just like the stamp impression. Thus they show up on the printed stamps. But care must be taken to understand that scratches can occur at any time during the lifetime of the plate. They may not be present on early printings.

To help with image alignment, light lines were cut into the plate before the designs were entered. The left image in Figure 7 shows a stamp with a faint horizontal guide line running right across George Washington's face. This is from Position 99L.

Some stamps show a void of design at the top center. An example from Position 21L is shown at right in Figure 7, with the salient component enlarged below. This is often called a short transfer but was more likely caused by improper or overzealous cleanup of the plate in the process of removing rough burrs caused by metal displacement when the design was entered. Because of the way the designs were entered, a weak transfer should extend horizontally across the entire stamp.

Despite the assistance of guidelines and guide dots, laying down 200 stamp designs evenly on a steel plate was quite a challenge. It was not easy to keep the images aligned both vertically and horizontally. The pairs in Figure 8 show misaligned plate entries, with



Figure 7. Left images: A faint horizontal guideline, artifact of the plate-making process, cuts across George Washington's face (Position 99L). Right images: Incomplete design at top, often called a short transfer but more likely the result of overzealous plate clean-up after design entry (Position 21L).

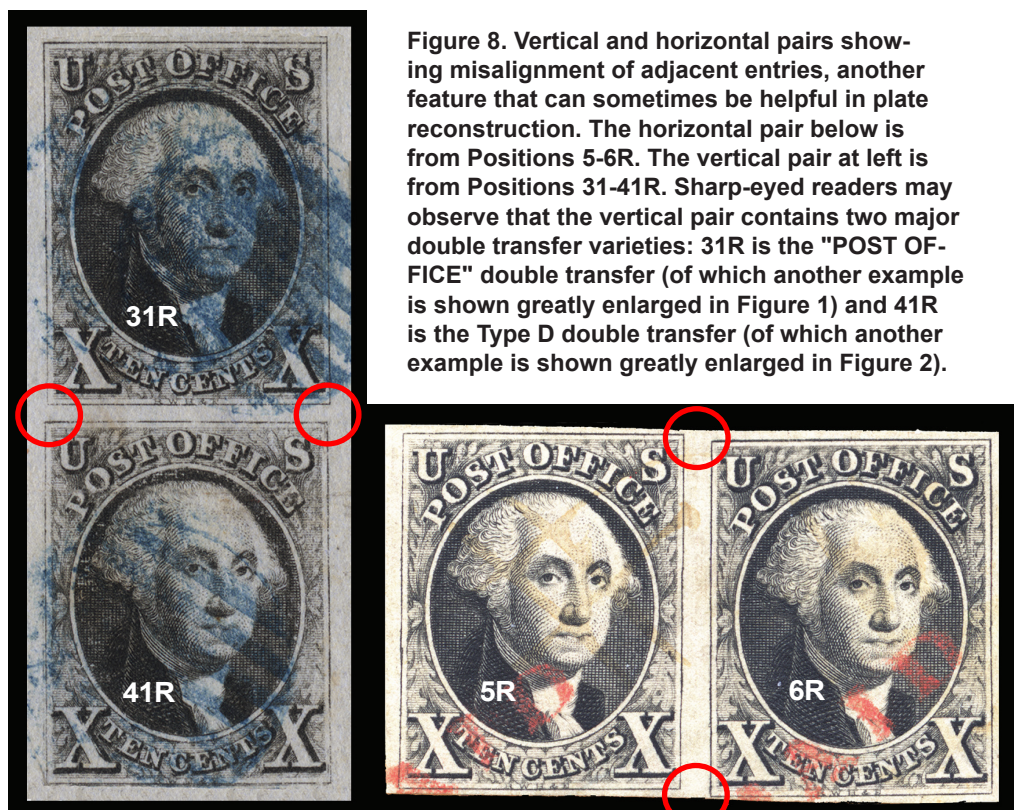


Figure 8. Vertical and horizontal pairs showing misalignment of adjacent entries, another feature that can sometimes be helpful in plate reconstruction. The horizontal pair below is from Positions 5-6R. The vertical pair at left is from Positions 31-41R. Sharp-eyed readers may observe that the vertical pair contains two major double transfer varieties: 31R is the "POST OFFICE" double transfer (of which another example is shown greatly enlarged in Figure 1) and 41R is the Type D double transfer (of which another example is shown greatly enlarged in Figure 2).

the misalignment highlighted by red circles. These features also provide assistance in plating—but of course this requires multiples, which for this stamp are not common. The horizontal pair in Figure 8 comes from Positions 5-6R. The vertical pair is 31-41R, which just happens to show two major double transfer varieties: the Type B at top and the Type D at bottom.

This article has illustrated some of the most prominent plate varieties that contributed to the the reconstruction of the 10¢ 1847 plate. Beginning with its April 1924 issue, the *Collectors Club Philatelist* serialized Perry's plating, including a full set of mats showing plating marks for each of the 200 positions.

In a future *Chronicle* I hope to provide illustrations of prominent plate varieties on the 5¢ 1847 stamp, which even after 170-plus years has not yet been fully plated. ■

DEPARTMENT OF AMPLIFICATION

Back in *Chronicle* 259 (August, 2018) I wrote an article about the short-lived triple domestic rate that prevailed for just 20 months between July 1, 1847 (when the 1847 stamps first went on sale) and 15 March 1849 (when the rate was eliminated, for reasons explained in the article).

Covers showing this rate are not common. I showed the 1848 cover presented here-with (Figure 1 overleaf), from New York to Alexandria, Virginia, with the triple rate prepaid by a vertical strip of three 5¢ 1847 stamps.



Figure 1. Unusual triple-rate cover from 1848. The notation at upper left is clearly in the handwriting of the person who addressed the cover. Originally interpreted as "1 1/2 oz." (the correct rate for this odd rate), the notation is better read as "For."

In the article I speculated that the odd manuscript notation at upper left, in the same ink and handwriting that created the address, might indicate "1½ oz."—which was the proper weight for this very unusual franking.

After the article was published, I received an amiable note from Harold Gill, RA 4989, who offered what he called "a small correction" that he thought was worth pointing out. He wrote: "I have spent most of my adult life studying 17th, 18th, and 19th century manuscripts and I think the notation in Figure 2 is not '1 1/2 oz.' Instead, I'm reasonably sure it says 'For.'"

Upon re-examining the cover, I think Gill is correct, and appreciate the information.—G.E. ■

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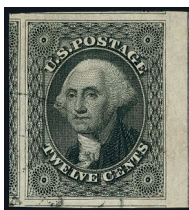
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EARLY ILLUSTRATED SCHOOL ADVERTISING COVERS

MICHAEL HELLER

Collecting illustrated advertising covers has been a popular pursuit for many decades. One sub-specialty involves covers associated with colleges, universities and other schools. This article discusses some of the factors that led to the advent of illustrated advertising covers and illustrates representative school-related covers from the decade of the 1850s.

The growth of illustrated advertising on envelopes can be tied to two factors: reduced postal rates and improved printing methods. Prior to 1845, postal rates were relatively high, varying by distance and based on the number of sheets of paper involved. If you sent a letter inside an envelope, the postage rate would essentially be doubled. Prior to 1845, envelopes were hand made and rarely used.

A major change in postal laws took place as of July 1, 1845. Rates were simplified and reduced, with only 5¢ charged for distances up to 300 miles and 10¢ for greater distances. More important, postal rates were now based on weight alone: a single-rate letter could weigh up to half an ounce, regardless of the number of sheets of paper. Spurred by this more attractive rate structure (and by advancements in envelope manufacturing), the use of envelopes began to take hold. But most people still preferred the old method of writing a letter, folding it and then closing it with a wax seal or a paper wafer.

It should also be noted that a preferential rate for prepaid unsealed advertising circulars was instituted at this time. This rate initially was 2¢ (regardless of distance) but advanced to 3¢ in 1847.

The next major change in postal rates had a significant impact on the use of envelopes. Effective July 1, 1851, it cost just 3¢ to send a prepaid letter within the United States up to a distance of 3,000 miles (5¢ if the letter was sent unpaid). For distances over 3,000 miles, these rates were doubled. With the majority of letters now costing only 3¢ up to half an ounce, the public began to use envelopes more frequently.

At the same time, postal rates for prepaid unsealed circulars were reduced to just 1¢ for distances under 500 miles. As of September 30, 1852, this rate became 1¢ for all distances within the U.S. on circulars weighing up to three ounces.

Recognizing the value of advertising, businesses began to produce illustrated envelopes that showcased their wares, pictured their factories or premises or otherwise tried to attract public attention. Such advertising previously existed in the form of illustrated letterheads or a few early illustrated envelopes, but the use of envelope advertising accelerated after the 1851 rate reductions.

Changes in printing methodology also added to this growth. Prior to 1850, most illustrations were printed by either intaglio or wood engraving. Intaglio engraving, a recess printing process, involved the incising of fine lines into a metal plate and using extreme pressure to force paper into the engraved recesses to pick up the printing ink. This method was both labor-intensive and costly. Wood engraving, on the other hand, involved the carving of a design in wood and applying the image to paper via relief printing. This was less labor and equipment intensive and thus less costly, so it was the more popular method for printing advertisements.

Starting around the mid-19th century, lithography began to be more widely used.

Here, a design was drawn on a stone base with a greasy crayon and, based on the principle that oil and water do not mix, images could be quickly and economically printed on paper. As the least costly of printing methods, lithography became very popular and helped fuel the growth of advertising on postal material.



Figure 1. The University of the City of New York (today's NYU), illustrated on a prepaid stampless cover sent from New York to New Haven in the early 1850s.

Figure 1 shows an illustrated stampless envelope for the University of the City of New York, now known as New York University (NYU). Postmarked with a New York, April 27, “Paid 3 Cts” integral-rate handstamp, this cover was sent from New York City to New Haven, Connecticut in the early 1850s. Docketing on the back of the envelope notes the sender as “Isaac Ferris, Chancellor of Univ, New York.”

The University of the City of New York was founded by a group of prominent city residents in 1831. The founders believed that the city needed a university whose students would be admitted based on merit, not social class. Reverend Isaac Ferris (1798–1873) served as the third president of the University from 1853 to 1870. He brought financial stability to the institution, which was renamed New York University in 1896.

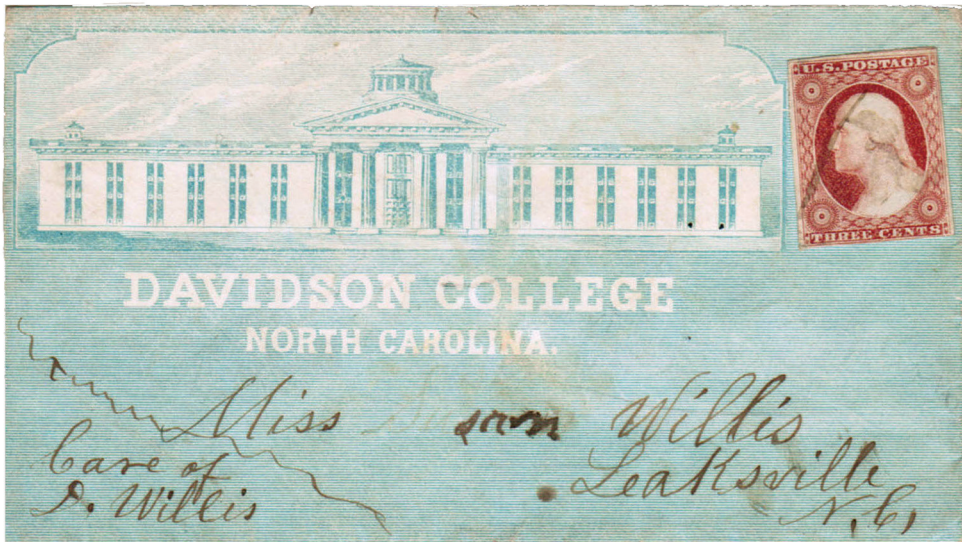


Figure 2. Overall advertising cover from Davidson College, Davidson, North Carolina, franked with a pen-cancelled 3¢ 1851 stamp and sent to Leaksville, N.C.

Figure 2 shows a light blue overall illustrated cover from Davidson College in North Carolina. There are no handstamped markings; the imperforate 3¢ Washington stamp was pen-cancelled. Founded in 1837 by Presbyterian ministers, Davidson College remains to

this day an esteemed private liberal arts college in Davidson, North Carolina, ranked as one of the top colleges in the nation.

The cover in Figure 3 depicts an illustration of the Phillips Academy. On this cover to Southold, Long Island, the perforated 3¢ 1857 stamp is tied by a blue “Andover, MS, Jan 2, 1860” circular datestamp. Founded in 1778 in Andover, Massachusetts, the Phillips Academy is the oldest continuously running private boarding school in the United States. Once a boy’s school, it’s now a prestigious co-ed prep school.



Figure 3. Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, depicted on a 3¢ 1857 cover sent to Southold, Long Island. The blue circular datestamp reads "JAN 2, 1860."

The nicely detailed overall illustration on the cover in Figure 4 depicts the Dansville Seminary. A single perforated 1¢ 1857 Franklin stamp is tied by a black Dansville, N.Y. circular datestamp. The reverse of this cover shows the imprint of N. Orr and Co. of New York, “Manufacturers of Illuminated Envelopes.” Addressed to Dundaff, Pennsylvania, this cover is presumed to have carried a printed circular.

The Dansville Seminary was established in 1858 with the sponsorship of the East Genesee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The seminary experienced financial difficulties for many years and was out of business by 1883. At that point, the seminary building was subsumed into the Dansville public school system.

Although education was almost exclusively reserved for men during the early history of our country, the clear need for female education was evident and a number of female seminaries and colleges began to spring up in the early decades of the 19th century. While some of these institutions focused on higher education, others were essentially finishing schools that prepared young women from wealthy families for their entry into polite society.

The cover in Figure 5 bears an illustration of Bordentown Female College. The cover is franked by a perforated 3¢ stamp which was tied by a Bordentown, New Jersey, postmark and mailed to Belle Haven, Virginia. The blue-green circular datestamp is dated October 15; a year date is not present, but the stamp suggests the late 1850s. Founded as a boarding school by Methodist minister John Brakely in 1850, the school was well-regarded among its peers and attracted a student body that drew largely from New York society. Unfortunately, the school fell victim to the financial panic of 1893 and finally closed in 1900.



Figure 4. Detailed overall advertising envelope depicting the Dansville Seminary of Dansville, New York. Franked with a 1¢ 1857 stamp, this probably carried a circular.



Figure 5. Bordentown Female College, rendered in what appears to be a wood engraving, on cover with a 3¢ 1857 stamp, canceled in green and sent to Virginia.

Addressed to Brimfield, Massachusetts, the cover in Figure 6 depicts the Normal School of Bridgewater, Mass. The perforated 3¢ stamp is tied by a blue grid cancel and a red “BRIDGEWATER, MS. OCT 6 1860” postmark is struck below the illustration.

A little bit of education history is in order here. The vision and leadership of Horace Mann fundamentally changed the educational system in the United States. Mann was one of America’s strongest advocates of public education. His belief in standardizing—or normalizing—the training of teachers, led to the establishment of “normal schools.” Founded by Mann in 1840, Bridgewater was one of the nation’s first such schools. Over time, the



Figure 6. Bridgewater Normal School, founded by Horace Mann, illustrated on a 3¢ 1857 cover to Brimfield, Mass. The school is now Bridgewater State University.

Bridgewater Normal School evolved into Bridgewater State University, a comprehensive liberal arts university located in Plymouth County, southeast of Boston.

Homer (New York) Central High School traces its history back to 1819, when it was known as the Cortland Academy. The cover in Figure 7 depicts the academy in the 1850s. This appears to be a lithograph, based on a wood engraving. The cover is franked with a 3¢ 1851 stamp tied by a black Homer, May 25 circular datestamp, mailed to Mansfield, Pennsylvania. Note the name under the engraving: “C. ANSON, ALB.” Engraver’s signatures are sometimes part of an advertising illustration, and they add another element of interest. I have not been able to locate any information about this Albany artist.

The covers in Figures 8 and 9 depict two different views of the Falley Seminary of



Figure 7. Cortland Academy in Homer, N.Y., illustrated on a cover franked with a 3¢ 1851 stamp and sent to Mansfield, Pa. Note the engraver’s signature at lower left.

Fulton, New York. Incorporated in 1836 as the Fulton Female Seminary. Its name was changed to Fulton Academy in 1842 (admitting both sexes) and finally to the Falley Seminary in 1849. The seminary was a preparatory school that offered traditional classical instruction as well as some more practical coursework. It closed in 1883.

Figure 8 is a handsome overall illustrated cover with a perforated 3¢ 1857 stamp tied by a black Fulton, New York circular datestamp, mailed to Prattsburgh, New York. Both towns are in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York. Figure 9 is a different style envelope, showing the seminary in the upper left corner. On this cover, addressed to New Worcester, Massachusetts, the 3¢ 1857 stamp is tied by a Fulton double circle marking. This cover contains a matching illustrated letter sheet dated October 27, 1860, on which the writer (perhaps an early suffragette) notes that she “will be turning 21 and could have all



Figure 8. The Falley Seminary of Fulton, New York, on an overall advertising envelope franked with a 3¢ 1857 stamp and sent to Prattsburgh, N.Y.



Figure 9. The same building vignette, with printing below and without the overall design, on a 3¢ 1857 cover sent from Fulton, New York to New Worcester, Mass,



Figure 10. Embossed cameo illustration of Pennsylvania's Mount Joy Academy, on a cover franked with a 3¢ 1857 stamp and sent to Newville, Pennsylvania.



Figure 11. Elaborately framed engraving showcasing the Amenia Seminary, Dutchess County, N.Y., on a 3¢ 1857 cover sent to North East, Pennsylvania. At the bottom of the frame, below the scroll, the engraver's tiny initials may be visible.

the rights of voting, but will not.”

Among the scarcest and most appealing types of illustrated advertising are the “cameo” covers. Often created as die-sunk embossments, these illustrations essentially depict their subject in the non-inked (white) area, surrounded by the inked background. Cameo advertising covers are generally found from the 1850s and 1860s, with some cameos continuing into the 1870s.

Figure 10 shows a striking blue cameo illustration for the Mount Joy Academy, in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The imperforate 3¢ 1851 stamp is canceled by a mute grid



Figure 12. Williston Seminary, East Hampton, Massachusetts, overall illustration of the institution's buildings, on a 3¢1857 cover sent to Old Saybrook, Connecticut.

and the cover is addressed to Newville, Pennsylvania. It also bears a "MOUNT JOY, PA. DEC 12" circular datestamp. Mount Joy Academy was chartered in 1851. The academy closed during the Civil War and its building became the Mount Joy Soldiers' Orphans' School.

Given the high cost of intaglio engraving, very few envelopes were illustrated using this technique. Figure 11 shows an engraved illustration for the Amenia Seminary in Dutchess County, New York. The view of the school buildings, with horse and riders, is surrounded by stylized script and an ornate frame. Beneath the scroll at the bottom of the frame are three tiny letters ("D.L.O." or "D.L.G.") which I assume are the engraver's initials. The cover is franked with a perforated 3¢ 1857 stamp, tied by a black Amenia circular datestamp and sent to North East, Pennsylvania. Operated by the Methodist Church, the seminary opened in 1835 and closed in 1888.

Our final cover, shown in Figure 12, depicts the Williston Seminary of East Hampton, Massachusetts. The perforated 3¢ stamp is tied by an East Hampton circular datestamp and the cover is addressed to Old Saybrook, Connecticut. Williston Seminary was founded as a private school for girls 1841 by Samuel Williston (1795-1874), a wealthy button manufacturer. It was renamed Williston Academy in 1924 and merged with the Northampton School for Girls in 1971, becoming the Williston Northampton School, a private coed prep school that flourishes today.

Collecting illustrated covers can be enjoyed not only for the intrinsic beauty of the objects themselves, but also because it invites research into the history of the illustrated institution or business. Much of the information presented here came from various Wikipedia articles. Other sources included: the Dansville Area Historical Society; Hidden New Jersey; and Bridgewater State University. ■

CORRECTION: In the 1851 section in *Chronicle* 263, our August issue, on page 232, the last sentence of the bottom caption misstated the Scott catalog number of the stamp being described. The sentence read: "Perforated examples, typically in rose (Plates 2L, 3 and 5L) are Scott 25." The correct Scott designation is Scott 25A. We regret this error, which has been corrected in the version of the *Chronicle* posted on our website (USPCS.org).

DOMESTIC REGISTERED MAIL 1861-70

JAMES W. MILGRAM, M.D.

Introduction

In articles published in *Chronicles* 252 and 253, I discussed domestic registered mail from the 1850s, an era when a cash prepayment of 5¢ was required for official registration by the Post Office Department.¹ This article discusses registration during the following decade, an interesting time for registered letters. The decade of 1861-70 was a period when the rate for registered letters was first increased from 5¢ to 20¢ and then reduced to 15¢. It was a period when stamps were first used to pay registered letter fees. It was the period when registered letters were separated from the regular mail and carried between post offices in special large envelopes. And it was an era of many different post office forms relating to registration of mail.²

The handstamps used on registered letters varied widely during these years, since many of the early markings were created locally. A table accompanying this article lists and describes 112 different handstamps containing the word “registered” in various forms that I have recorded on covers from the 1860s. The markings themselves are illustrated in five pages of photo plates that also accompany. Registered mail to and from foreign countries from the years prior to the Universal Postal Union has been the subject of a separate ongoing series of articles in the Foreign Mails section of the *Chronicle*.

The 1861 issue of postage stamps (with new entire envelopes) came into existence because of the Civil War. When war broke out on April 12, 1861, stocks of unused stamps and stationery were in the possession of postmasters in states that left the Union to join the Confederacy. Nationwide, the stamps on hand were soon demonetized and a new series of stamps was created to take their place.

July 1, 1855–June 30, 1863: 5¢ registry fee prepaid in cash

Through all this disruption, the charge for registration of a letter in the federal mails remained unchanged at 5¢ (in addition to the letter postage), to be paid in cash at the time the cover was mailed. This 5¢ fee applied from July 1, 1855 until June 30, 1863, when it was increased to 20¢. As will be explained in more detail below, prepayment in cash was a requirement through May 31, 1867. Prior to that date, registered covers typically show 3¢ stamps (or 3¢ entire envelopes). Registration is evident from the accompanying markings, but the absence of a year date (a common feature of domestic covers from the early 1860s) makes it difficult to discern whether the prepaid cash registration fee was 5¢ or 20¢.

In my articles in *Chronicles* 252 and 253, I illustrated a number of covers on which the letter postage was prepaid by imperforate 3¢ 1851 stamps or perforated 3¢ 1857 stamps, and the 5¢ registry fee was prepaid in cash. In preparing this article about registered covers franked with 1861 stamps, I was surprised to discover that covers with 3¢ 1861 stamps posted in the era of 5¢ registry prepayment are scarce. Many are ambiguous, and only a few



Figure 1. The 3¢ 1861 stamp on this registered cover endorsed "To follow the Regiment" is clearly tied by an Adrian, Michigan, postmark dated March 22, 1862. This date indicates that the registration fee, which had to be prepaid in cash, was 5¢.

show clear evidence placing them in era of the 5¢ fee, which requires a mailing date prior to June 30, 1863.

One such cover is shown in Figure 1, on which a 3¢ 1861 stamp is well tied by an "ADRIAN Mich MAR 22 1862" circular datestamp. The cover also bears a manuscript "Reg No 109" and is addressed to a soldier at "Fortress Monroe via Washington, D.C." with instruction "To follow the Regiment." Because of the date, we know that the prepaid cash registration fee must have been 5¢. The Washington postmark indicates the cover arrived there March 25. From Washington it would have been carried by military messenger to wherever the 1st Michigan Infantry was encamped.

Civil War uses

Only a couple of registered letters are known sent from southern states during the brief time after they seceded when they still used the Union postal system. My article in *Chronicle* 252 illustrated one of these, a cover from Wetumpka, Alabama, from the period when Alabama was an independent state. There was no registration of letters within the Confederate postal system.

The Union army used a military post office network that connected individual camps to nearby town post offices. Soldiers were paid in currency, so it is reasonable to expect to find registered covers that carried individual soldiers' pay. A printed circular dated 1 March 1862 from the postmaster at federally-occupied Port Royal, South Carolina, spells out in detail how soldiers and officers could post letters. The handling of registered mail was described as follows:

We are prepared to register letters and give the official receipts therefor, the extra fee for which is ½ dime per letter. "Registering" is not a government insurance on letters. It makes it more certain that they will be delivered only to the persons to whom they are addressed.

However, registration was only possible if one showed up in person at a post office, filled out the paperwork and paid the cash fee (5¢ before July 1863 and 20¢ after that). Soldiers could not leave their camps to do this. So a registered letter *from* a soldier is a very unusual item.

June 30, 1863–May 31, 1867: 20¢ registry fee prepaid in cash

Figure 2 shows a cover from a wounded soldier at Lovell Hospital in Rhode Island who was able to post a registered letter containing \$25 to his sister. The letter enclosed is datelined “Portsmouth Grove, R.I., July 22, 1863” and says in part: “...I think I shall get this letter registered for we have just been payd off and I hardley dir [dare] to send it with-

Figure 2. Registered letter from a hospitalized soldier sending his pay to his sister. The heading of the letter (“Lovell Hospital, Portsmouth Grove, R.I. July 22, 1863”) indicates it was sent three weeks after the prepaid registry fee increased to 20¢.



out mayking it shour and I shal feel easy about it then....” Addressed to Turner, Maine and franked with a 3¢ 1861 stamp nicely tied by a “PORTSMOUTH GROVE R.I. JUL 24” circular datestamp, the cover bears manuscript markings “Reg” and “No 10. The registration fee of 20¢, which had gone into effect just a few weeks earlier, was prepaid in cash. Note there is no evidence of a year date on the cover itself. We know the year (and thus that the prepayment was 20¢) thanks only to the dateline on the surviving letter.

Covers could be registered by family members and sent to soldiers, but such letters were not registered after they left a post office and were carried on to the camps by messengers (usually ordinary soldiers). So a registered letter *to* a soldier is also very unusual. Figure 3 is a registered cover sent in 1864 to a wounded Union soldier convalescing at a hospital in recaptured Atlanta. The cover contained \$10, possibly in the form of a gold piece. It bears a blue “REGISTERED” straightline postmark canceling the 3¢ 1861 stamp and a matching Cincinnati postmark dated November 4. Scores of different straightline markings similar (but not necessarily identical) to this one are known on covers from the 1860s. See Plates 2 and 36. Again the 20¢ registration fee was prepaid in cash. For some reason, this cover was undeliverable. It was ultimately sent to the Dead Letter Office in Washington (per the double circle marking at lower right). For those interested in learning

Figure 3. Straightline “REGISTERED” in blue tying a 3¢ 1861 stamp to a cover posted at Cincinnati on 4 November 1864 (20¢ fee era) addressed to wounded soldier at hospital outside Atlanta. The cover was not delivered and ultimately found its way to the Dead Letter Office.



more, registration of soldiers' mail was a part of a chapter in my book *Federal Civil War Postal History*.³

There are also registered letters that were sent to soldiers in prisoner-of-war camps. Earl Antrim listed a few in an article that pictured the cover shown in Figure 4.⁴ The 3¢ 1861 stamp on this cover correctly pays the 3¢ domestic postage rate and the 20¢ registry



Figure 4. 3¢ 1861 cover postmarked “SAN FRANCISCO CAL 29 MAR 1864” (20¢ fee era), sent registered to a prisoner of war at Johnsons Island. Docketing indicates the cover carried a draft for \$150. The “Due 10¢” notation cannot be explained.

fee was prepaid in cash. The cover bears a handstamped San Francisco “REGISTERED” marking and (per docketing at left) contained a draft for \$150 payable to a Confederate prisoner at Johnsons Island Prison (in Lake Erie near Sandusky, Ohio). Per the San Francisco circular datestamp, this cover was posted in March 1864.

The cover in Figure 5 bears a 3¢ 1861 stamp postmarked at Bodega, California (“MAR 30,” year uncertain) addressed to a Confederate prisoner at Rock Island Prison in Illinois. It bears a manuscript “Registered No 7” marking, applied at Bodega. Of considerable interest is the New York transit registration number (“3027”) at lower right, evidence that the cover was carried by steamship connection via Panama into New York and then by railroad to its destination in Illinois. The blue crayon “Exchanged” notation suggests the cover never reached its prisoner addressee. No Dead Letter Office markings are present.



Figure 5. “Registered No 7” on a 3¢ 1861 cover from “BODEGA CAL MAR 30” to a Confederate prisoner at Rock Island, Illinois. The New York registration number “3027” indicates this cover traveled by steamships via Panama. Year uncertain.

There are probably a couple dozen Civil War patriotic covers showing registration. The finest known to me is the 3¢ 1861 cover shown in Figure 6, with a rare engraved Kimmel patriotic design, addressed to Whitesboro, New York. This cover bears the special double-circle postmark with fleurons that New York used only on domestic registered letters during 1863-64. (The accompanying tabular listing of markings consists solely of markings that contain the word REGISTERED, so this one is not included.) A New York manuscript registry origin number (“740”) can be seen above the patriotic cachet.



Figure 6. A 3¢ 1861 stamp on a handsome engraved Kimmel patriotic cover sent registered from New York City to Whitesboro, New York. The New York double-circle marking with fleurons is found only on registered mail from 1863 and 1864.

The majority of registered patriotic covers originated in Philadelphia and bear a black or blue straightline REGISTERED marking applied there. Some of these are overweight covers franked with multiple 3¢ 1861 stamps. The largest such franking known to me appears on the cover shown in Figure 7. The circular datestamp reads “PHILADELPHIA PA. JUN 16 1864” and the underlying patriotic envelope is the famous E. Rogers caricature of Jefferson Davis, which when inverted shows Davis “returning from war” as an ass. The circular datestamp on this cover establishes the year-date as 1864, so we know that the cash registration fee prepaid was 20¢. But as noted, on many covers from the 1860s, the year date is not evident so the amount of the prepaid fee cannot be known for certain. The amount of the prepaid fee is rarely evident on registered covers from the 1860s—until June 1, 1867, when prepayment by stamps was required.

Even in these early years, bookkeeping for registered mail was complex. The *Report of the Postmaster General* of December 1, 1862 recommended duplicate receipts for the sender of a registered letter. One was to be given to the sender at the time of mailing and the other was to be sent out with the post bill and returned by mail signed by the recipient of the letter. This return receipt was to be mailed from the post office delivering the letter to the post office sending the letter. The postmaster of the sending office would then return the receipt to the sender. In addition to the two receipts, two bills passed between post offices, the one accompanying the letter and the other returned to the sending office by the post office of delivery. There were three forms sent in the next mail or with the letter, the registered letter bill, the return registered letter bill, and the return registered letter receipt. These forms have been discussed in classic articles by Delf Norona.^{5,6} Given all these cum-



Figure 7. Five 3¢ 1861 stamps on a five-times-rate cover sent from “PHILADELPHIA PA. JUN 16 1864” (20¢ cash registry fee prepaid) to St. Louis. The cover is a patriotic caricature which when inverted shows Jefferson Davis as an ass.

bersome and labor-intensive requirements, it’s no wonder the report recommended raising the registry charge from 5¢ to 20¢. The 1863 *Postal Laws and Regulations* state that July 1, 1863 was the date for the initiation of the new 20¢ fee. Section 32 states very clearly: “to entitle a letter to registration the regular postage must be prepaid in stamps, and in addition to this, the registration fee must be paid in money.”

Figure 8 depicts a cover from Kingston, Rhode Island. The 3¢ 1861 stamp is canceled by a seven-bar grid and the circular datestamp shows “NOV 14, 1865.” The manuscript notation at top left directs “Register and ch 80”—instructing the Kingston postmaster to register the cover and charge the 20¢ fee to the account of post office box 80. There would be no point in a charge notation unless something was being charged, in this case the 20¢ cash registration fee. The majority of registered covers franked with 3¢ 1861 stamps are 1863-67 uses like this one, during the 20¢ fee period.



Figure 8. 3¢ 1861 stamp and “KINGSTON R.I. NOV 14 1865” on a registered cover sent to Davisville, Rhode Island. The sender’s notation requests the postmaster to charge the prepaid 20¢ registry fee to his post office box 80.

Franked with four 3¢ 1861 stamps, the cover in Figure 9 bears a double-circle New York registered postmark (see Plate 1) and a manuscript registration number. The “US” killer tying the stamps was used at New York on registered letters only. The stamps paid quadruple-rate letter postage; the 20¢ fee would have been paid in cash. The double-circle NEW-YORK REGISTERED datestamp is notable because it is similar to registered mail markings that are still in use today, more than 150 years later.



Figure 9. Strip of four 3¢ 1861 stamps with double circle “NEW-YORK REGISTERED MAR 31” on a registered cover to Philadelphia. The 20¢ registry fee would have been prepaid in cash. The bold “U.S.” killer was used by New York only on registered mail.

Originating in Philadelphia, the spectacular cover shown opened out in Figure 10 bears 30 1¢ 1861 stamps, paying 10 times the 3¢ domestic postal rate (again, the 20¢ registration fee would have been prepaid in cash), on a battered envelope that once carried a large wad of documents to a court clerk in Delhi, Iowa. The circular datestamp reads “PHILADELPHIA PA MAR 28 1865.” All the stamps are canceled by a black straightline “REGISTERED” postmark used at Philadelphia during this era (Plate 3).

Explanation of tabular data and marking plates

The covers shown here as Figures 9 and 10 demonstrate examples of handstamped postmarks specifically made for registered letters. Table 1 (pages 362-364) lists all such markings I have recorded from the decade of the 1860s. The listing is confined to markings that contain the word “registered” or some form or abbreviation of that word. I make no pretense that this listing is complete or even close to complete, but it is a beginning, and the markings it describes are certainly representative.

The markings are listed alphabetically by city. The first column in Table 1 presents the town name; the second column shows the year for which I have seen the marking; the third column shows the text of the marking and the fourth shows its dimensions in millimeters. The last column (in most instances) is keyed to a photographic image of the designated marking, in most cases taken directly from a cover that provided the listing data. These images, shown in color as close to lifesize as possible, are presented in Plates 1 through 4.

Plate 1 shows registered markings that include a city name. In the decade of the 1860s, such markings were used only in the largest cities: Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Washington D.C. are represented.



Figure 10. Thirty 1¢ 1861 stamps paying the 10-ounce letter rate on a cover that carried a wad of depositions to a courthouse in Delhi, Iowa. All of the stamps are canceled by Philadelphia's black straightline "REGISTERED" marking. The March 28, 1865 date indicates that the cash prepayment for registration must have been 20¢.

Plate 2 shows registered markings that are recognizable by their unusual shapes. Plates 2 and 3 present borderless straightline markings. While many of these are superficially similar and may in fact have been manufactured by a single supplier, others show discernable differences in size, typography, serifs or spacing, suggesting they were created individually from local sources. From careful examination it might be possible to use these images to determine the origin town for similar strikes that survive only on loose single stamps. That would certainly be true for the straightline from Shamokin, Pennsylvania (Plate 3)—on which REGISTERED is misspelled REGSTERED.

Plate 4 shows circular markings, and straightline markings within parallel frame-lines rounded at the ends, which collectors conventionally designate as ovals. The circular markings are all 22 millimeters in diameter and may well have originated from a single manufacturer, though here too there are subtle differences. Likewise the ovals, which seem to come in two different sizes.

(text continued on page 364)

**1860s REGISTRY MARKINGS: PLATE 1
MARKINGS WITH CITY NAME**

BOSTON



Dots



Rimless



Small shield



Shield

CHICAGO



27 mm



Rimless



26 mm

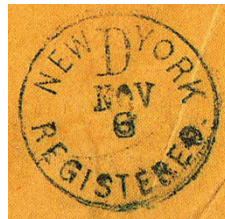
NEW YORK



Rimless red



Double circle



Station D



Station E



Rimless black

PHILADELPHIA

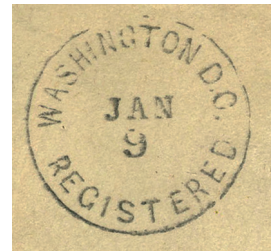


blue

SAN FRANCISCO

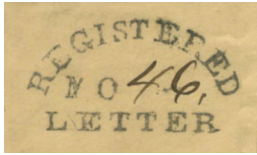


WASHINGTON



1860s REGISTRY MARKINGS: PLATE 2

UNUSUAL SHAPES



Albany NY



Beaver UT



Buffalo NY

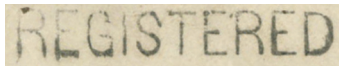


Portland ME

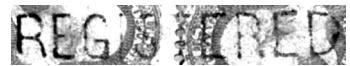
STRAIGHTLINES



Albany GA



Alexandria VA



Baltimore MD black



Baltimore MD blue



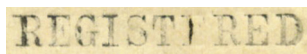
Bangor ME



Beaufort SC



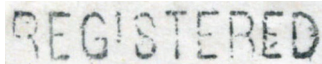
Belleville IL



Boston MA



Brandon MS



Brooklyn NY



Buffalo NY



Chicago IL blue



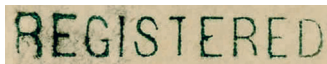
Chillicothe MO



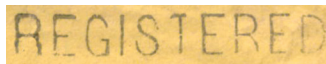
Cincinnati OH '64



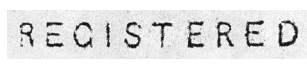
Cincinnati OH '70



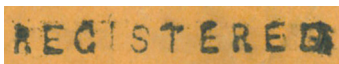
Cleveland OH blue



Cleveland OH



Corpus Christi TX



Culpepper VA



Emporium PA



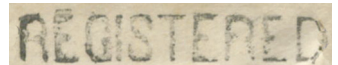
Flint MI



Fort Gaines GA



Galveston TX



Georgetown DC

1860s REGISTRY MARKINGS: PLATE 3

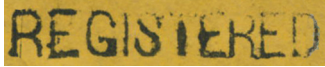
STRAIGHTLINES



Grenada MS



Lynn MA



Lyons MI



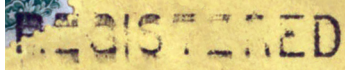
Medina NY



Memphis TN



Natchtoches LA



Nevada City CA



New Bern SC



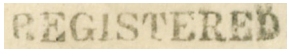
New Orleans LA



Portland ME



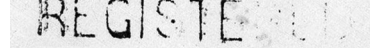
Newport RI



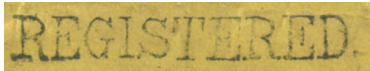
New York NY 35x4



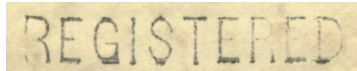
New York NY 35x4 red



Ogdensburg NY



Paterson NJ



Pawtucket RI



Philadelphia PA blue



Philadelphia PA black



Placerville CA red



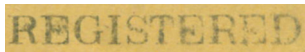
Placerville CA blue



Plattsburgh NY



Portsmouth VA



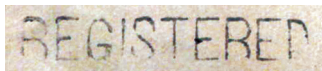
Providence RI



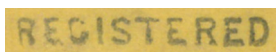
Sacramento CA



Saint Paris OH



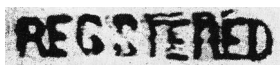
San Antonio TX



San Francisco CA



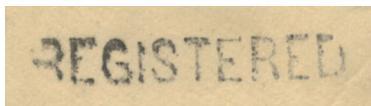
Sarasota Springs NY



Shamokin PA



Union Mills PA



Washington DC



Williamsport PA

1860s REGISTRY MARKINGS: PLATE 4

22mm CIRCLES



Grass Valley CA



Greenville MI



Hamburg PA



Kingston TN



Las Cruces NM



Oroville CA



Walton KY

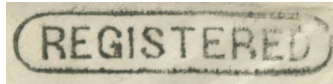


Watertown WI

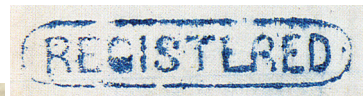
LARGE OVAL
STRAIGHTLINES
42-44 x 8-9 mm



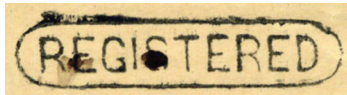
Leavenworth KS 43x9



New Orleans LA 42x8



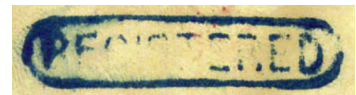
Savannah GA



Lynchburg VA 44x9.5



Richmond VA

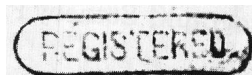


Winchester VA 42x9.5

SMALL OVAL STRAIGHTLINES
30-32 x 7-8mm



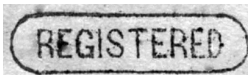
Atlanta GA blue 32x8



Brenham TX 32x8



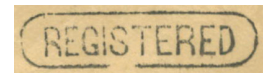
Virginia City NV 31x7.5



Atlanta GA 32x8



Columbia SC 31.5x7.5



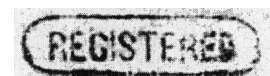
Washington DC 32x7



Baltimore MD 32x8



Louisville KY "30x6.5"



West Liberty OH 32x7

TABLE 1: REGISTERED MARKINGS FROM THE 1860s

Town Name	Year	Text of marking	Specifications	Ref.
Albany, GA	69-70	REGISTERED	SL 38x5	Pl 2
Albany, NY	66-70	REGISTERED/NO/ LETTER	Arch 27½x14½	Pl 2
Alexandria, VA	64	REGISTERED	SL 41x6	Pl 2
Atlanta, GA	66	REGISTERED	Oval 32x8 blue	Pl 4
Atlanta, GA	70	REGISTERED	Oval 32x8	Pl 4
Austin, NV	60s	REGISTERED	Oval 32x6	
Baltimore, MD	60s	REGISTERED	SL 43x6 blue	Pl 2
Baltimore, MD	64-70	REGISTERED	SL 43x6	Pl 2
Baltimore, MD	67-8	REGISTERED	Oval 32x6	Pl 4
Bangor, ME	67-8	REGISTERED	SL 40½x5½	Pl 2
Beaufort, SC	67-8	REGISTERED	SL 42x6	Pl 2
Beaver, UT	68	REG.	SL 21x7	Pl 2
Belleville, IL	64	REGISTERED	SL 41x5	Pl 2
Boston, MA	62-67	REGISTERED	SL 43x4½	Pl 2
Boston, MA	68-69	BOSTON/date/REGISTERED	Shield 25x26	Fig 15
Boston, MA	69	BOSTON/date/REGISTERED	C dotted 29	Pl 1
Boston, MA	70	BOSTON MASS REG/date	C no rim 27	Pl 1
Boston, MA	69	BOSTONdateREGISTERED	Shield 28x29	Pl 1
Brandon, MS	70	REGISTERED	SL 47x4	Pl 2
Brenham, TX	69	REGISTERED	Oval 32x8	Pl 4
Brooklyn, NY	69	REGISTERED	SL 39x6	Pl 2
Buffalo, NY	69	REGISTERED NO	C no rim 20	Pl 2
Buffalo, NY	63	REGISTERED	SL 40x5½	Pl 2
Chicago, IL	64	REGISTERED	SL 48x5 blue	Pl 2
Chicago, IL	69	CHICAGO III REGISTERED/date	C no rim 23	Pl 1
Chicago, IL	70	CHICAGO III REGISTERED/date	C 27	Pl 1
Chicago, IL	68	CHICAGO III REGISTERED/date	C 26	Pl 1
Chicago, IL	69	CHICAGO III REGISTERED/date	C no rim 23 blue	
Chillicothe, MO	68	REGISTERED	SL 44x5	Pl 2
Cincinnati, OH	64-68	REGISTERED	SL 37x4½ blue	Fig 2
Cincinnati, OH	70	REGISTERED	SL 40x6 blue	Pl 2
Cleveland, OH	66-69	REGISTERED	SL 40½x5½	Pl 2
Cleveland, OH	66-69	REGISTERED	SL 40½x5½ blue	Pl 2
Columbia, SC	68	REGISTERED	Oval 31½x7½	Pl 4
Corpus Christi, TX	69	REGISTERED	SL 41x4 green	Pl 2
Culpepper C.H., VA	70	REGISTERED	SL 42x3½	Pl 2
Emporium, PA	70	REGISTERED	SL 46x4	Pl 2
Flint, MI	69	REGISTERED	SL 41x6	Pl 2
Fort Gaines, GA	70	REGISTERED	SL 40x3½	Pl 2
Galveston, TX	69-70	REGISTERED NO	SL 42x5	Pl 2

Markings designating registered mail, as recorded on covers posted during the 1860s. Markings are arranged alphabetically by town name. "Year" column indicates year or years of usage. "Specifications" column shows type, size and color of marking, with dimensions in millimeters. Abbreviations: C=circle, DC=double circle, SL=straight-line, Pl=Plate, Fig=Figure. Markings are black unless another color is indicated.

Town Name	Year	Text of marking	Specifications	Ref.
Georgetown, DC	69	REGISTERED	SL 39x6	Pl 2
Gonzales, TX	69	REGISTERED	Oval 33½x8	
Grass Valley, CA	70	REGISTERED	C 21½ blue	Pl 4
Greenville, MI	70	REGISTERED	C 22	Pl 4
Grenada, MS	60s	REGISTERED	SL 42x4½	Pl 3
Hamburg, PA	68	REGISTERED	C 22	Pl 4
Huntington, NY	69	REGISTERED	C 22	
Kingston, TN	69	REGISTERED	C 22	Pl 4
Las Cruces, NM	70	REGISTERED	C 22	Pl 4
Leavenworth, KS	60s	REGISTERED	Oval 43x9	Pl 4
Louisville, KY	68	REGISTERED	Oval 30x6½	Pl 4
Lynchburg, VA	69	REGISTERED	Oval 40x9½	Pl 4
Lynn, MA	68	REGISTERED	SL 46½x4½	Pl 3
Lyons, MI	68	REGISTERED	SL 40x6	Pl 3
Medina, NY	70	REGISTERED	SL 42x4	Pl 3
Memphis, TN	66	REGISTERED	SL 41½x5 blue	Pl 3
Natchitoches, LA	69	REGISTERED	SL 49½x5½	Pl 3
Nevada City, CA	63	REGISTERED	SL 43x5½	Pl 3
New Bern, NC	70	REGISTERED	SL 41x6	Pl 3
New Orleans, LA	64	REGISTERED	Oval 42x8	Pl 4
New Orleans, LA	65	REGISTERED	SL 40x4	Pl 3
Newport, RI	66	REGISTERED	SL 37x4½ blue	Pl 3
New York, NY	64	REGISTERED	SL 35x4	Pl 3
New York, NY	63-65	REGISTERED	SL 35x4 red	Pl 3
New York, NY	63-64	NEW YORK REGISTERED, date	DC 27	Pl 1
New York, NY	63-65	NEW YORK REGISTERED, date	DC 27 red	
New York, NY	63-69	NEW-YORK REGISTERED, date	DC 27	Fig 9
New York, NY	63-67	NEW-YORK REGISTERED, date	DC 27 red	
New York, NY	67-69	NEW YORK REGISTERED, date	C no rim 21	Fig 13
New York, NY	67-69	NEW YORK REGISTERED, date	C no rim 21 red	Fig 14
New York, NY	69-70	NEW YORK E REGISTERED, date	C 26	Pl 1
New York, NY	70	NEW YORK D REGISTERED, date	C 25	Pl 1
New York, NY	70	NEW YORK H REGISTERED, date	C 24½	
Ogdensburg, NY	60s	REGISTERED	C 42x5	Pl 3
Oroville, CA	69	REGISTERED	C 21½	
Paterson, NJ	67	REGISTERED	SL46x6	Pl 3
Pawtucket, RI	69	REGISTERED	SL 42x6	Pl 3
Philadelphia, PA	63	REGISTERED	SL 43x5 blue	Pl 3
Philadelphia, PA	63	REGISTERED	SL 43x5	Fig 10
Philadelphia, PA	68-69	REGISTERED PHILA PA.,date	C 27	
Philadelphia, PA	68-69	REGISTERED PHILA PA.,date	C 27 blue	Fig 12
Placerville, CA	68	REGISTERED	SL 43x4 red	Pl 3
Placerville, CA	69	REGISTERED	SL 43x4 blue	Pl 3
Plattsburgh, NY	69	REGISTERED	SL 40x5	Pl 3
Portland, ME	64	REGISTERED	Arc 31x16	Pl 2
Portland, ME	67-69	REGISTERED	SL 47x4	Pl 3
Portsmouth, VA	69	REGISTERED	SL 47x7	Pl 3
Providence, RI	64-65	REGISTERED	SL 38x4	Pl 3

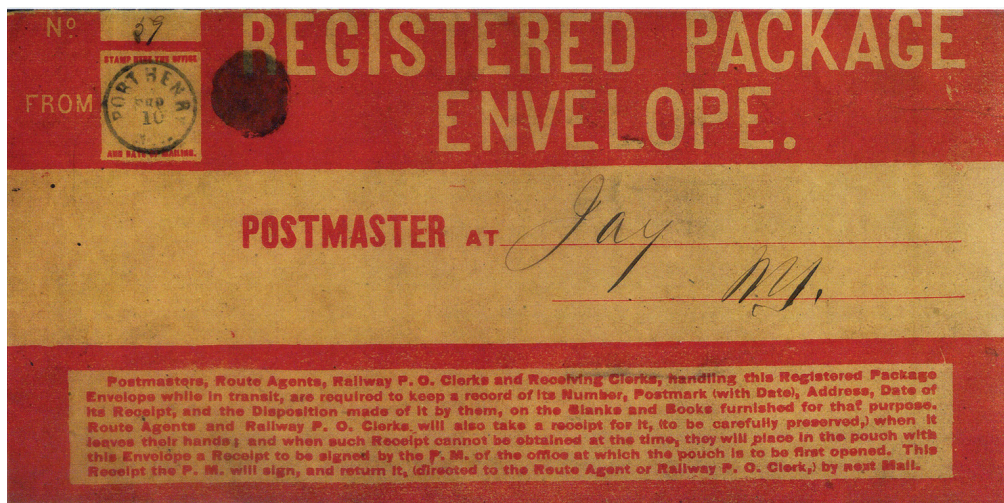
Town Name	Year	Text of marking	Specifications	Ref.
Richmond, VA	66-67	REGISTERED	Oval 42x9	Pl 4
Richmond, VA	66	REGISTERED	Oval 42x9 green	
Sacramento, CA	60s	REGISTERED	SL 44x5	Pl 3
Saint Paris, OH	69	REGISTERED	SL 41x3 blue	Pl 3
San Antonio, TX	69	REGISTERED	SL 43x5	Pl 3
San Francisco, CA	63-67	REGISTERED	SL 32x2½	Fig 4
San Francisco, CA	68-70	SAN FRANCISCO CAL REGISTERED	C 27	Pl 1
Sarasota Sprgs, NY	67-68	REGISTERED	SL 42x6	Pl 3
Savannah, GA	67	REGISTERED	Oval 43x8½ blue	Pl 4
Shamokin PA	60s	REGISTERED	SL 37x6	Pl 3
Smyrna, DE	70	REGISTERED	SL 40x3½	
Syracuse, NY	60s	REGISTERED	SL 42x6	
Union Mills,PA	69	REGISTERED	SL 40x4	Pl 3
Virginia City, NV	65-67	REGISTERED	Oval 31x7½ red	Pl 4
Walton, KY	70	REGISTERED	C 22 blue	Pl 4
Washington, DC	65-66	REGISTERED	SL 42x6	Pl 3
Washington, DC	66-67	REGISTERED	Oval 32x7	Pl 4
Washington, DC	69	WASHINGTON D.C. REGISTERED	C 26	Pl 1
Washington, DC	69	WASH. D.C.REGISTERED	C 33	
Watertown, WI	69	REGISTERED	C 22½	Pl 4
West Liberty, OH	68-69	REGISTERED	Oval 32x7	Pl 4
WilliamSPORT, PA	63	REGISTERED	SL 42x5	Pl 3
Winchester, VA	70	REGISTERED	Oval 42x9½ blue	Pl 4
Wytheville,VA	67-68	REGISTERED	C 25	

June 1, 1867–December 31, 1868: 20¢ registry fee to be paid in stamps

An eight-page post office pamphlet (“*Regulations respecting the Registration of Letters*”) dated January 1867 detailed forthcoming new regulations and procedures regarding the packaging and transport of registered letters. The best and most available reference sources for this information are the monthly issues of *The United States Mail and Post Office Assistant* from 1867. Articles in these issues outlined and discussed the regulations in considerable detail and gave June 1, 1867 as the date on which they would go into effect.

Registered letters were to be listed on two bills to be enclosed with the registered letter in a large boldly printed outer envelope that would be easily discernable in a mail bag, further assuring that valuable mail would receive special care in handling. Figure 11 shows the front of one of these large envelopes along with two letter bills it once carried between post offices in Port Henry and Jay, New York.

At upper left the large envelope shows a manuscript “59” and a postmark “PORT HENRY N.Y. SEP 10.” The reverse shows similar coloration but no postal markings. The bold red type across the bottom of the envelope spells out the complex details of how registered letters are to be receipted and accounted for. Originally inside this large envelope were the registered cover itself and the two letter bills shown in Figure 11 along with several receipts, including a return receipt and a receipt that was kept by the delivering post office (these two were printed together). Note that both letter bills contain the number of the registered package envelope (59) and the registry number of the actual letter (66). The “Registered Letter Bill” (at left in Figure 11) describes the letter (apparently addressed to Mrs. Eli Beaudry at Jay) and the “Return Registered Letter Bill” (at right in Figure 11) contains similar information, including a record of the letter’s arrival at Jay. Both forms pro-



REGISTERED LETTER BILL.

This Bill, and the annexed Return Bill, are to be filled up alike at the office of mailing, by entering in the proper columns the registered number, names of persons to whom addressed, and destination of the registered letters to be sent; also the number of the Registered Package Envelope in which they are to be forwarded. This Bill and the Return Bill are then to be enclosed (without separating them) in an ordinary envelope directed to the Postmaster at the office to which the Registered Package Envelope is directed, and must be sent in the same mail among the ordinary letters.

The first letter registered in is to be entered No. 1, the second No. 2, and so on to the end of the quarter. The next quarter will commence again with No. 1. The full postage and the registry fee must in all cases be paid by stamps.

Registered Letters from *Port Henry N.Y.*
Sept 10, 1867

To *Jay N.Y.*

Registered Number of Letter.	TO WHOM ADDRESSED.	OFFICE OF FINAL DESTINATION.	Forwarded in Reg. Package Envelope No.
66	<i>Mrs El Beaudry</i>	<i>Jay</i>	<i>59</i>

P. Marnix

RETURN REGISTERED LETTER BILL.

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

Post Office *Port Henry N.Y.*
Sept 11, 1867

Registered Letters received from *Port Henry N.Y.*

Registered Number of Letter.	TO WHOM ADDRESSED.	OFFICE OF FINAL DESTINATION.	Forwarded in Reg. Package Envelope No.
66	<i>Mrs El Beaudry</i>	<i>Jay</i>	<i>59</i>
		<i>Arrived Sept 11 1867</i>	

G. G. Wiley

Figure 11. Registered package envelopes like the one at top, oversized with bright red-orange stripes, carried registered mail between post offices starting in 1867. The back of this envelope is blank. Addressed to the Postmaster at Jay, N.Y., the front shows the postmark of the sending office—"PORT HENRY N.Y. SEP 10 [1867]"—and is numbered "59" above the postmark. Above left is the registered letter bill that accompanied, describing the letter (number 66 sent in registered package envelope 59). Above right is the return registered letter bill that also accompanied. This was to be sent from Jay back to Port Henry, showing the date the cover reached its destination.

vide extensive instructions as to their use and both are signed by the respective postmasters.

As noted, both letter bills contain the number of the registered package envelope (59) and the registry number of the actual letter (66). The return receipt, one of at least three receipt forms, would have been sent from Jay back to Port Henry, ultimately to be returned to the sender. A third receipt form ("Receipt for a Registered Letter") would have been kept by the Port Henry postmaster. It seems likely that the receiving postmaster at Jay had the person who picked up the letter sign yet another separate receipt for his records.

It was altogether a highly complex system. The large registered package envelopes

were modified in appearance over the rest of the 19th century, but this was basically how registered letters were transported up into the 20th century. Within a few years the bills for registered letters were renamed “Receipt for Registered Packages.” Return bills have been seen from as late as 1876, and there are crossover uses of the various forms.

A second major change—much more important to cover collectors—was the requirement that commencing June 1, 1867 the 20¢ registration fee was to be prepaid by stamps. The earliest known U.S. cover with registration paid by stamps was posted in New York City on June 4, 1867 and sent to London. It bears one of the rimless circular New York REGISTERED markings shown in Plate 1. This cover, franked with pairs of 10¢ and 24¢ 1861 stamps, was illustrated and fully explained in the second installment of my continuing series on foreign registered mail (*Chronicle* 262, February 2019).

So for the last seven months of 1867 and the twelve months of 1868, the 20¢ registration fee was paid by stamps. Figure 12 shows a registered cover addressed to New York that was posted at Philadelphia on March 1, 1868. Letter postage was paid by a 3¢ 1861



Figure 12. Cover from the 21-month period when the 20¢ registration fee had to be paid by stamps, here franked with a 3¢ and two 10¢ 1861 stamps, showing Philadelphia’s circular registered postmark dated March 1, 1868 and the “1845” registration number. The inset shows remnants of a return receipt that had been glued to the reverse.

stamp and the 20¢ registry fee was paid by a vertical pair of 10¢ E-grill stamps, an early use. The Philadelphia registered circular datestamp on this cover is one of a small handful of registered markings from this decade that include a city name (see Plate 1). The “1845” at upper left is Philadelphia’s registration number. The magenta manuscript “31-25858” at lower left is New York’s receiving number. Inset in Figure 12 is a portion of the reverse of the cover, showing a remnant of a return receipt that had originally been glued to the back of the envelope. Though not mentioned in the regulations, this was a fairly common practice in this era. There were no backstamps on registered mail in the 1860s.

Figure 13 is a New York registered cover of special personal interest to me. The cover bears eight copies of the 3¢ D-grill stamp (Scott 85), the largest known multiple use of this stamp on a cover. The registration handstamp is a rimless black “NEW-YORK REGISTERED FEB 4” (1868). This is just days after the earliest documented use of this stamp. The 24¢ postage is a 1¢ overpayment of the 3¢ letter rate plus the 20¢ registration fee.



Figure 13. Eight copies of the scarce 3¢ D grill stamp, overpaying by 1¢ the 20¢ registration fee and 3¢ letter postage, on a registered cover sent from New York City to Newburgh, N.Y. The rimless circular marking is dated Feb. 4 (1868).

The story behind this cover goes back to my teenage years. My father was an antique collector and one of his regular dealers had a shop in Newburgh, New York. Sometime in 1955, this dealer offered my father several boxes of paper—including thousands of old covers. It turned out that the dealer had split the purchase with another antique dealer. So my father bought that group too, many more thousands. Each dealer had sorted through the material and retained some of the envelopes. Two more purchases. Then the Newburgh dealer said there was yet more material left in the garage from which all these had come. I went with my father to one of those great old houses on a hillside overlooking the Hudson River. A large garage held a massive maple weaving loom and there were boxes all over the place. I remember pulling out of a crack in the wall a yellow envelope with three copies of the 1¢ cent 1861 F grill, a cover that I still own.

We ended up with 250 crates of material, all of a lawyer’s correspondence and papers from the Civil War up into the 1920s. My father and I spent two years sorting through those boxes, sitting beside a barrel on our farm, burning papers of no interest but keeping many items including stamp-bearing envelopes and legal documents such as property deeds. While I retained the very best covers, my mother forced us to sell the rest: stacked-up boxes that had filled the lower hallway of our home. There was much of interest but nothing of great value. In fact, the Figure 13 cover was probably the most valuable item in the find. This I learned in retrospect: Having initially missed the significance of the grilled stamps, I had to buy the cover back. A learning experience, no question.

In applying registration markings, New York City typically used black ink for domestic covers and red ink for foreign covers. The marking on the cover in Figure 13 is typical. The cover in Figure 14 (overleaf) is unusual since it is a domestic cover on which the postmarks were all applied in red ink. Addressed to Ware Village, Mass., this cover bears one 3¢ and two 10¢ 1861 stamps, paying the letter postage plus the 20¢ registry fee. Note that the red rimless circular New York registered marking shows “NOV 30 1867.” These rimless New York markings show a year date only in 1867, not 1868 or 1869. See Table 1.

January 1, 1869—December 31, 1873: 15¢ registry fee payable in stamps

A 10-page post office pamphlet (“*New Regulations Respecting the Registration of Letters*”) issued October 1, 1868 included an announcement that the registry fee would



Figure 14. New York ordinarily used red ink only on registered covers sent internationally. This use on a domestic cover is unusual. The red rimless marking is dated "NOV 31 1867." A 3¢ 1861 and two 10¢ 1861 stamps pay the registration and postage on this small envelope to Ware Village, Massachusetts.

be reduced from 20¢ to 15¢ effective January 1, 1869. A typical cover at the outset of this era shows a 15¢ 1861 stamp paying registration and a 3¢ 1861 stamp paying the postage. The stamps are often grills. Figure 15 shows such a cover (the stamps are "F" grills), with manuscript "Fredericksburg, Texas" (also a handstamp) and "Reg letter No. 15," addressed to Boston where it received a second registration marking—"BOSTON FEB 15 1869 REGISTERED" in a distinctive double-lined shield. In this era Boston actually used two shield-outlined registration markings, of which this is the smaller (see Plate 1). The docketing on this cover shows it was answered the same day it was received.



Figure 15. Typical example of the 15¢ registration fee paid by a Lincoln stamp with postage paid by a 3¢ Washington; both stamps are F grills. This cover from Fredericksburg, Texas, shows Boston's small shield registry marking dated "FEB 15, 1869."



Figure 16. 15¢ Lincoln paying registration on a 3¢ 1864-series government entire envelope sent from Derby, Connecticut, to New York City. New York applied its characteristic receiving number in magenta manuscript at lower left.

As the 1861 stamps were phased out, the 3¢ 1869 was commonly used for postage and the 15¢ Lincolns continued for registration—although a number of covers show registration paid by a 15¢ 1869 stamp. Quite a few uses are on 3¢ 1864 entire envelopes.

Figure 16 is a 3¢ 1864-series entire envelope with a 15¢ Lincoln stamp paying the registration fee. The cover originated at Derby, Connecticut and was sent to New York. Derby's purple registration number (apparently "1399") is pennaed in at the upper left. At the New York post office, the cover was also marked (lower left) with an incoming number ("19-11328"), characteristically in magenta ink. Since the recipient had a post office box, the New York clerk also underlined the box designation in magenta—and probably put a notice in the box as well. All of these numbers are associated with registered mail; many covers from this era, like this one, do not bear the word "registered."

During the brief lifetime of the 1869 stamps, the typical registered cover is franked with 15¢ and 3¢ 1869 stamps. Figure 17 shows the only cover I know of on which the registration fee is paid by a 15¢ 1869 stamp and the postage is paid by three 1¢ 1869s. On



Figure 17. Only the manuscript "No 193" indicates registration on this July 12 cover from Atlanta to Milledgeville, Georgia, on which three 1¢ 1869 stamps pay the letter postage and the 15¢ 1869 stamp pays the registration fee, an unusual combination.

this cover from Atlanta to Milledgeville, Georgia, just one number (“No. 193”) indicates registration, though the franking provides additional evidence.

The cover in Figure 18 shows the registration and postage paid with a very unusual franking: 2¢, 6¢ and 10¢ 1869 stamps. According to Michael Laurence’s book on 10¢ 1869 covers, this is the only cover known bearing this three-stamp combination. It was sent from New York City to Wethersfield, Connecticut on 6 October 1869. The rimless New York REGISTERED marking is black, as is typical on domestic covers from New York.

Another interesting 18¢ payment is the block of six 3¢ 1869 stamps on the cover in Figure 19, sent from Davidsonville, Maryland to Wilmington, Delaware in 1870. Here the

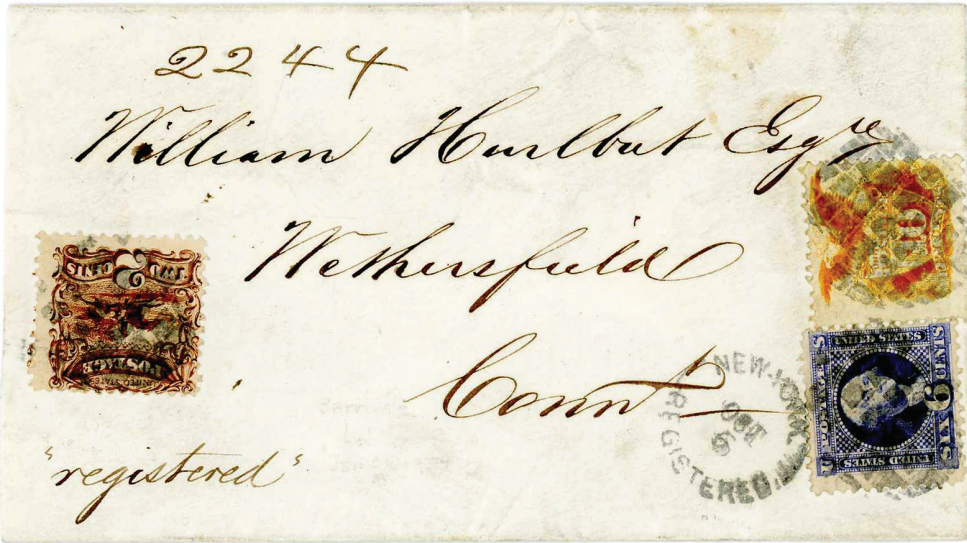


Figure 18. Unique combination of 2¢, 6¢ and 10¢ 1869 stamps paying 15¢ cents for registration and 3¢ for postage, on a cover from New York City to Wethersfield, Connecticut. The rimless New York registry marking reads OCT 6 (1869).



Figure 19. Another way to make 18¢: Block of six 3¢ 1869 stamps with “DAVIDSONVILLE MD JAN 26” cds and “Registered No 7” on a cover to Wilmington, Delaware.



Figure 20. A partially paid registered cover with “DUE 6” expressing the missing portion of the 15¢ registration fee. Manuscript “Swift Island N.C., Jun 22, 1869, No. 2” with a 6¢ and two 3¢ 1869 stamps on a cover addressed to Fayetteville, N.C.

manuscript marking “Registered No. 7” along the right edge is echoed by the manuscript “7” above the address.

One of the most unusual 1869 registry uses is the cover in Figure 20. This bears a 6¢ (tied by a target killer) and pen-canceled 3¢ 1869 stamps, on a registered (“No. 2”) cover from Swift Island to Fayetteville, North Carolina. On this cover the 15¢ registration fee was only partially paid, so the cover was marked “DUE 6.”

Registered covers bearing 1869 stamps are also seen with Banknote stamps from 1870 and later years. Registered covers from the Bank Note era will be the subject of a planned future article. Back in 2005, in a jointly bylined article, Lester Lanphear III and I discussed free franking and registration.⁷ Registration was never a free service on official mail.

Acknowledgements

Thanks for cover images and other information to Irvin Heimburger, the late Eliot Landeau, Michael Laurence, Tad Mackie, Jerry Miller and Peter Stafford.

Endnotes

1. James W. Milgram, “Domestic Registration of 1851-57 Stamps and Entires,” *Chronicles* 252 and 253 (Nov. 2016, Feb. 2017).
2. For a general overview of U.S. registered mail during the classic stamp era, see my book, *United States Registered Mail 1845-70*, David G. Phillips, N. Miami, Florida, 1998.
3. James W. Milgram, *Federal Civil War Postal History*, Northbrook Publishing Co., Lake Forest, Illinois, 2007.
4. Earl Antrim, “Registered Letters to Prisoners,” *Confederate Philatelist*, March 1964.
5. Delf Norona, “Registry System Forms, 1869-71,” *Twenty-Eighth American Philatelic Congress Book*, 1962.
6. Delf Norona, “U.S. Post Office Department Printed Forms,” *Thirty-Sixth American Philatelic Congress Book*, 1970.
7. James W. Milgram and Lester C. Lanphear III, “Registration of Official Mail to 1900,” *Chronicle* 207 (2005). ■

THE ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET COMPANY IN U.S. PORTS

JAMES BAIRD

The postal history of steamships carrying mail along United States coastlines includes, ironically, mail carried by vessels of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company (RMSP). First in 1842 and later in 1847-50, U.S. ports were included in the company's West Indies mail service, performed under contract with Britain. Although this service constituted little more than an interlude in U.S. and British maritime postal history, it created some fascinating covers that can only be understood with knowledge of the complex RMSP network and what the service entailed.

The discussion that follows is broadly divided into three sections. The first section is a background primer on the origins of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company and its early operations in the Caribbean. The second section illustrates and discusses representative covers carried on the route through the ports of New Orleans and Mobile. The concluding section is a census of all covers known to have been carried by RMSP through those two ports. The intention of this article is to make readers aware of a neglected chapter in the history of coastal mail carriage along our shores.

Background: the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company

RMSP was the brainchild of an Englishman, James MacQueen, a restless and daring man who in the 1830s saw opportunity in developing a fleet of steamships to serve the British government by carrying ocean mails between far-flung outposts of the British Empire. In 1838 he published an ambitious pamphlet entitled "General Plan for a Mail Communication between Great Britain and the Eastern and Western Parts of the World; also to Canton and Sydney westward by the Pacific." In that publication MacQueen summarized his vision as follows: "The mails can never be carried with regularity or certainty in vessels the chief object and dependence of which is to carry merchandise. Steamboats carrying mails should be the mail coaches of the ocean, limited as mail coaches on land are. The object being a national one, it ought to be carried into effect by the Nation."

Receiving encouragement from the British Admiralty, MacQueen formally founded RMSP in 1839, and on March 20, 1840 signed a contract with the Lords of the Admiralty to run a steam packet service twice a month from Southampton and Falmouth to islands and port cities in the West Indies. Terms of the contract called for the construction of seven steam packets and three sailing vessels which would operate on a complex network of routes, touching numerous Caribbean and South American countries with which England had for years maintained close relations and in some cases, overseen their governance.

If it seems odd that any mention of the United States has been left out of this, the reason is that I have to carefully thread my needle. Over the 35 or so years that the RMSP West Indies route was operated, the list of ports of call was altered as political and economic considerations came to bear. Each time there was a major change, the Company and the Admiralty executed a new contract for service. There were altogether six contracts, and

specialist collectors classify covers according to “contract periods” as well as “revisions” made under the contracts. They wouldn’t be British if they weren’t complicated.

Four United States ports (New Orleans, Savannah, Charleston and New York) were included for a short time in the first contract period (first revision), which ran from December 15, 1841 to October 1, 1842. When this contract was altered at the end of September, 1842, all four were dropped from the route.

In the Second Contract Period, which ran from November 2, 1847 to August 2, 1850, New Orleans was included in the route until December, 1848, whereupon it was replaced by Mobile. Mobile remained a port of call until August, 1850, when it also was dropped—and no United States ports would ever again be included in the RMSP network.

This complex background is necessary to create a clear understanding of the route modifications and their time frames, which reflect the economic and geopolitical realities within which RMSP found itself operating. Ports would be added and removed for a number of reasons.

From the outset, the absence of a postal convention between the United States and England (governing how the mails of each would be handled and accounted for when landed on the shores of the other) presented a seemingly insurmountable problem. This was probably the principal reason for the brief period in which U.S. ports were included in the first contract. The second contract period, interestingly, commenced on the cusp of the signing of the U.S.-U.K. postal convention which was agreed to by the parties on December 15, 1848 but not signed by the U.S. President until February 15, 1849.

First contract (1841-42)

What the company and its advisers had in mind when they initiated service to the U.S. ports was in effect a postal arrangement in which British consuls or other agents in the U.S. cities would receive and deliver mail to and from RMSP ships upon their arrival and departure. The agents would collect whatever postages were due and provide an interface with the U.S. postal system. This would involve letters requiring delivery to U.S. recipients and letters requiring carriage to the West Indies and beyond. Although mail carriage between U.S. cities would not be allowed, RMSP management foresaw the establishment of a postal operation on U.S. shores running more or less in parallel with the one already in place under the management of the U.S. Post Office. Understandably, the American reaction was not positive—or wouldn’t have been had they been aware of it. I will address that issue in a moment.

Postal historians know that the United States long had laws in place, designed to protect Post Office Department revenues and U.S.-flag coastal shipping from competition. The RMSP plan to arrive in and depart from a number of coastal cities presented potential conflicts. Revenues normally reserved to American flag ships might be compromised. Moreover, U.S. postal revenues might also be siphoned off by the carriage of letters between U.S. cities or overseas.

Under the Postal Laws and Regulations of 1825 (1825 PL&R), arriving foreign ship captains were required to deliver to the nearest U.S. post office all letters they were carrying addressed to U.S. recipients. The post office where the letters were landed was to rate them using (in this case) U.S. 1816 ship rates; thereafter, such letters would be under the control of the U.S. Post Office Department.

Since RMSP had no contract with the USPO, it was prohibited from picking up letters for delivery overseas or to other U.S. cities; USPO had its own routes for the delivery of such mail. The RMSP plan would be dashed on the rocks of the U.S. shore. It was simply unworkable. What was intended could not be implemented.

Remarkably, RMSP officials—consuls in both New York and New Orleans—an-

nounced the RMSP route to the public through ads placed in local newspapers, advising that its ships would be coming to their port, without having revealed the West Indies route to U.S. postal officials. As an additional insult, the RMSP contract with the Admiralty called for its first ship to depart from Southampton no later than January 1, 1842—and the American Postmaster General had no notice of the plan before receiving a letter dated February 14, six weeks later. Indeed, the RMSP steamer *Solway* reached the port of New Orleans on February 10, four days before the advisory letter was sent to the PMG.

Over the course of the next eight months, RMSP ships would visit New Orleans 18 times. Savannah and Charleston were each visited six times and New York five times. At all of the ports except New York the ships anchored out, carrying passengers and mail to dry land in ships' boats or other rented vessels. New Orleans presented a particularly thorny problem because the "nearest" post office to where captains of the RMSP ships elected to anchor was Balize, a former French fort at the mouth of the Mississippi, about 90 miles south of New Orleans. Passengers and mail were carried up to the city on a rented steam tug and mail received at New Orleans was presumably rated to include the distance to Balize.

It is not altogether clear what problems were experienced in Savannah and Charleston, but inasmuch as the RMSP ships had discharged their mail in New Orleans (and couldn't carry inter-city U.S. mail), stops there were probably unwarranted. No covers have been reported carried by RMSP from, to or through Savannah or Charleston.

New York offered its own variation on this theme. The initial intent was for the RMSP ship to carry mail for overseas destinations to Halifax, whence it could transit to Europe on a Cunard steamship while the RMSP steamer returned to New York carrying European mail brought in to Halifax. In order to comply with U.S. regulations, mail from the Caribbean (not New Orleans) was to be delivered to the New York post office, to be carried from there in a locked bag north to Boston and put on a Cunard vessel to be carried overseas. It appears that only three covers carried this way through New York survive.

Covers from the first contract period

The conventional wisdom has been that there are three New Orleans covers known to have been carried on the route during the first contract period. In fact, there are at least eight covers from this era, including one from Mobile. I have photocopies of three and scans of two others. The three remaining covers were well described by Robson Lowe in an article entitled "British Postal Agencies in the U.S.A." in *The London Philatelist* of July, 1945. Table 1 lists these eight covers chronologically with useful identifying information.

Date	From/to	RMSP ship(s)	Br rate	N.O. marking	Other markings
42/2/2	Mobile/Stroud, U.K.	<i>Forth/Medina</i>	1/	None	London Apr 24
42/2/6	NO/London	<i>Solway/Forth</i>	1/	Feb 6 (sl)	London Apr 22
42/3/8	NO/Havre	<i>Solway/Forth</i>	1/	Mar 8 (sl)	London Apr 22; Fig. 1
42/3/8	NO/London	<i>Solway/Forth</i>	1/	Mar 8 (sl)	London Apr 22
42/7/26	NO/London	<i>Solway/Forth</i>	1/	Jul 26 (cds)	London Sep 9 1842
42/8/24	NO/Liege, Belgium	<i>Solway/Dee</i>	2/4	Aug 24 (cds)	Liege Oct 15
42/9/22	NO/Liege, Belgium	<i>Medway</i>	3/6	Sep 22 (cds)	London Jan 23 1843
42/?/?	NO/Bordeaux	<i>Forth</i>	1/	NA	NA



Figure 1. Cover from New Orleans to Havre, carried by steamships of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company. The backflap has been folded out to show the NEW ORLEANS MAR 8 straightline marking, presumably applied by the British consul at New Orleans. This cover was carried on the RMSP steamer *Solway* to Havana and then crossed the Atlantic on the RMSP steamer *Forth*, arriving Falmouth on 20 April 1842.

Figure 1 shows the most presentable of the cover images available to me. From New Orleans to Le Havre, this cover was in the Steven Walske collection of classic U.S.-France covers, auctioned by the Siegel firm in March, 2016. The cover is shown here unfolded to include the markings struck on the reverse. Notable is a two-line handstamp “NEW ORLEANS MAR 8” which was applied by the RMSP agent (presumably the British consul) at New Orleans. Three of the eight covers listed in Table 1 show this marking. No marking like this is known to have been held or used by the New Orleans post office.

From New Orleans, the Figure 1 cover was carried to Havana on the RMSP steamer *Solway*, where it was transferred to the RMSP steamer *Forth* for transit to Falmouth, arriving April 20. The red London backstamp is dated 22 April 1842 and the cover was marked in manuscript (upper right on the address panel) with a one shilling British debit to France. It entered the French mails at Calais, where it received a red double-circle entry marking dated April 23. The French rated the cover for 21 decimes due from the recipient at Havre, representing 12 decimes for Great Britain and 9 decimes French inland postage.

A problem for U.S. collectors is that a number of these covers last reposed in the United States when they were written in New Orleans. The West Indies route appeals to collectors in many countries overseas; the current whereabouts of most of the covers listed in Table 1 seems known only to their owners.

Second contract (1847-50)

For exactly one year, commencing December 20, 1847, New Orleans was RMSP's only U.S. port of call. At the end of 1848, its ships ceased calling at New Orleans. Service to Mobile was substituted beginning January 31, 1849. The line's final stop in Mobile—and the United States—was made by *Great Western* on August 22, 1850. Altogether, RMSP ships visited New Orleans 12 times and Mobile 19 times. The suggestion has been made that the reason for the change from New Orleans to Mobile is that it was easier and less expensive for the ships to re-stock their coal supplies there. I have already mentioned the 90-mile run from Balize to New Orleans. That distance certainly would have been a lengthy one for the coal-loaded lighters to be moved by tug to the waiting ship.

Reflecting on the rather uninspiring statistics I have given, 29 total visits into four U.S. ports in 1842 and 31 total visits to New Orleans and Mobile before the U.S. was completely dropped in 1850, one wonders why RMSP bothered with us at all. The answer is that much had changed—and therein lies a sort of magical moment, for collectors such as ourselves, in the postal history of RMSP service into the U.S.

In the first contract period, the idea of steamships carrying mail across oceans was still in its infancy. An announcement that RMSP placed in the *New York Commercial Advertiser* in January, 1842 read: "The following is the list of places included in the scheme of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company." It then listed 49 ports, saying that its ships would travel 4,050 miles, completing the circuit in 30 days. This announced schedule was really quite extraordinary. The United States had nothing comparable. The only regularly scheduled steamship operation sporting the American stars and stripes had been the New York and Charleston Steam Packet Company, about which I wrote in *Chronicle* 249. It operated from the early 1830s and folded shortly after the loss of the steamship *Home* in 1837. While the U.S. did have steamships operating on its rivers and a few running along the coasts, it was essentially 10 years behind British maritime achievement and remained so throughout the century. (See also my piece on the failure of U.S. transatlantic lines in *Chronicle* 254.)

As was noted earlier, the postal laws and regulations of the United States had been written in the day of sail to protect national interests, not to accommodate an international exchange of mail. Neither the United States nor for that matter Great Britain had yet addressed the regulatory changes that steamships operating on schedule would force. Until 1848, there was no agreement, no "convention," whereby mails between the two countries were to be handled.

Five years later, the two found themselves seriously at odds over what steamships had wrought. Accustomed to the idea that their steamships had put them at the center of international postal service, Great Britain was repulsed when Ocean Line's *Washington* arrived in Southampton on June 15, 1847. Now it was Great Britain's turn to protect its interests. Fearful that competition from American steamships might harm the Cunard Line (which was heavily subsidized), the British refused to recognize U.S. ship letters, imposing a one shilling "discriminatory rate" on mail carried onto their shores by American vessels. Responding to the complaints of businessmen, Congress then responded, rather belatedly in June of 1848, by ordering retaliatory rates: 24¢ postage was to be assessed on letters carried onto our shores by foreign steamships and 16¢ on those carried in by sailing ships.

A great deal has been written on this subject—and never better than Richard Winter's article in the May 1992 *Chronicle* entitled "The Start of the US-British Postal Convention." It can be heavy reading in places, but nothing to compare to the 53-page agreement signed by the two nations in February, 1849.

The convention and the rates that led up to its signing are important here because some letters carried by RMSP ships in the second contract period reflect discriminatory and retaliatory rates. I have lifted key dates from Winter's article. These are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: IMPORTANT DATES IN THE HISTORY OF THE US-BRITISH POSTAL CONVENTION OF 1848-49

Date	Event
9 Jun 1847	British PO establishes discriminatory rates
29 Jun 1848	USPO orders retaliatory rates
3 Jul 1848	Retaliatory order published in New York
12 Jul 1848	Retaliatory order published in New Orleans
29 Dec 1848	Effective date of restored pre-discriminatory rates in G.B.
3 Jan 1849	USPO orders retaliatory rates rescinded
5 Jan 1849	Rescinding order published in New Orleans
12 Jan 1849	Rescinding order published in New York
24 Feb 1849	Treaty proclamation published in Washington
1 Jul 1849	Effective date of all provisions of U.S.-G.B. postal convention

Initially, including the three eastern ports (Savannah, Charleston and New York) in the route plan may have been to serve British rather than U.S. interests. The next stop on the route after New York was Halifax. At the time the RMSP contract was signed, Cunard had commenced its transatlantic operation. Envisioning a sort of “grand plan,” the Admiralty no doubt saw an opportunity to connect the two routes, enveloping the United States. Further, there was probably a need for the British ships to stop along the U.S. east coast for coal.

Covers from the second contract period

The background having been established, it’s time for a showing of covers. I have already indicated that the RMSP West Indies network offers rich offerings for cover collectors. It served numerous countries and ports over the years, with frequent changes in routes and rates, presenting the general collector with all sorts of wonderful covers. Collectors of U.S. material are more restricted by the short lifetime of the service and the relatively few covers that have survived. But the survivors offer lovely variety. Let’s look at some cover examples from the second contract period.

The dateline of the cover shown in Figure 2 reads “Callao, February 12, 1848” and the cover was inscribed “Postage paid to Panama.” Callao was the port town for Lima, Peru.



Figure 2. 1848 cover from Callao, Peru, via Pacific Steamship Navigation Co. to Panama and then via a series of RMSP steamers—Medway, Severn and Avon—from Panama to New Orleans. New Orleans rated it as a ship letter; 12¢ was collected in Providence.

The west coast of South America had long been served by the Pacific Steam Navigation Company (PSNC). In the upper right corner of the cover, the red “2/” manuscript notation indicates two shillings prepaid at Callao, one shilling for PSNC transport to Panama and the other for RMSP carriage to New Orleans. Prepayment is confirmed by the red crowned circle: “PAID AT CALLAO.”

The PSNC steamer *Ecuador* departed Callao on February 13, arriving at Panama on February 23. The cover then crossed the isthmus to Chagres. Note that the “Postage paid to Panama” directive was scratched out using the blue ink in which “via New Orleans” was written. Logic suggests this was done at the British post office at Chagres. From there, the cover boarded RMSP’s *Medway*, stopping at Carthagena, Colombia on the way to Kingston, Jamaica, where it arrived March 5. The next stop on the route was Havana, to which it was carried by *Severn*, arriving March 27. The sailing table then puts it on *Avon*, departing Havana March 28 and arriving in New Orleans April 5. The New Orleans cancel shows an earlier arrival at April 3; there are several possible explanations for the discrepancy. Whatever the actual dating, the New Orleans post office sent the letter on to Providence, Rhode Island, rated for 12¢ collection: 10¢ due for carriage over 300 miles plus a 2¢ ship fee. Quite a nice cover: six countries, counting Panama, on five ships, from the west coast of South America via New Orleans to Providence, in a bit less than two months.



Figure 3. Crowned circle “PAID AT VERA CRUZ” applied by the British consul, 15 August 1848, to a cover carried to New Orleans on the RMSP steamer *Severn*. The one shilling packet rate was paid by the mailer at Vera Cruz. At New Orleans the cover was rated 34¢ due: 10¢ for carriage to New York and 24¢ retaliatory surcharge.

The cover in Figure 3 is datelined “August 15, [1848] Vera Cruz.” The RMSP steamer *Severn* departed the same day, arriving at Cat Island below New Orleans on August 19. The red manuscript “1/-” marking indicates the one shilling packet rate was paid at Vera Cruz. New Orleans marked the cover “34¢” due from the recipient in New York, made up of the 10¢ U.S. inland fee for carriage to New York plus a 24¢ retaliatory surcharge. A simple route, but a rare cover.

The cover shown in Figure 4 was quite a traveler. The internal dateline reads “9 Lincoln’s Inn, 13 March 1849.” I have been unable to find Lincoln’s Inn in New Orleans directories, but it was almost certainly there. The March date was after RMSP had dropped New

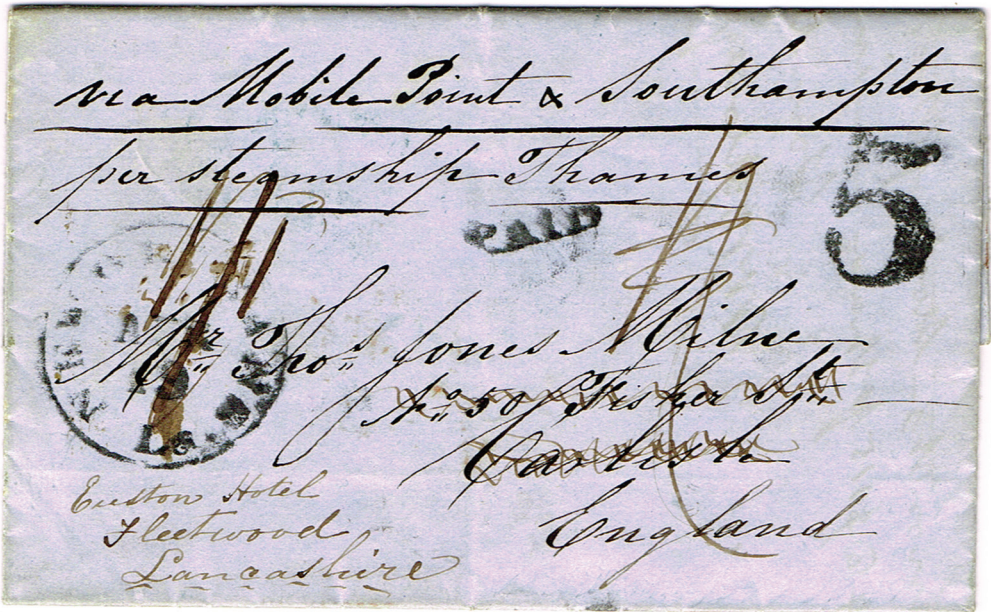


Figure 4. This cover originated at New Orleans and was sent in the U.S. mails to Mobile, where it was put on board the RMSP steamer *Great Western* for carriage to England via Havana, Nassau and Bermuda. It reached London on April 24, 1849. The "5" indicates 5¢ British open mail postage prepaid in cash at New Orleans.

Orleans from its route and substituted Mobile, and the sender was keenly aware of this. He endorsed the cover "via Mobile Point & Southampton per steamship Thames." The letter entered the U.S. mail in New Orleans on March 19 where 5¢ postage was paid in cash and the cover marked "PAID." The 5¢ prepayment represents the British Open Mail postage for carriage on a RMSP steamer.

At New Orleans the cover was placed in a locked bag and sent to Mobile, almost certainly on the daily mail steamer *Oregon*. At Mobile, it was put on the first visiting RMSP ship, *Great Western*—not *Thames*, as the sender indicated—on March 23. There is no Mobile marking, front or back. *Great Western* departed Mobile the next day, making stops at Havana (March 27), Nassau (April 1) and Bermuda (April 5) before ultimately arriving at London. Markings on the back of the cover reveal its journey in the British postal system. At the London post office, an arrival handstamp was applied on April 24. The cover was then carried to Preston, and then to Carlisle. Both stations applied markings on April 25. At the Carlisle post office, the letter was readdressed and forwarded to Fleetwood, where it was delivered.

In London, the cover was marked 1 shilling due. I suspect that the very light marking more or less in the center of the New Orleans postmark was put on in Carlisle to indicate 1d forwarding fee plus the aforesaid shilling. There is also the strong 1/1 applied over it. This cover is a very early transatlantic cover carried over the RMSP Caribbean route to England, one of two known. It is also an early cover reflecting handling under the U.S.-British Convention.

Covers carried from Mobile by RMSP are also very interesting and the cover shown in Figure 5 is exceptionally so. Its journey began in Guayaquil, Ecuador where it was rated showing a prepayment of 2 shillings (red manuscript "2" left above "Mobile") on June 17, 1850. Prepayment was confirmed by the double-circle "GUAYAQUIL PAID" at right. One shilling paid the transit from Guayaquil to Panama; the second for carriage from Chagres

Figure 5.
 Posted July
 17, 1850 at
 Guayaquil,
 Ecuador, to
 Washington,
 D.C. Carried
 from Panama
 on various
 RMSP steam-
 ers via Jama-
 ca, Havana
 and Mobile.
 At Mobile the
 cover was
 rated FREE
 because it was
 addressed to
 a Treasury
 department
 official in
 Washington.



to Mobile. The first leg of the route, from Guayaquil to Panama, is difficult to puzzle out. From the markings, we know with very high probability that the letter was carried by a Pacific Steam Navigation Company steamer, and that this carriage was accomplished in eight days—because the three-line Panama transit handstamp reads June 25.

Useful sailing tables for the Valparaiso/Callao/Panama route of PSNC were assembled by Percy Bargholtz and published in the *Postal History Journal*.¹ He included an accounting for the Guayaquil/Callao voyages 1841-53 but they are not helpful given our need. Callao is well south of Guayaquil, which is the wrong direction to reach Panama in eight days. Bargholtz wrote that the line did have ships running direct from Guayaquil to Panama but he did not research them. So we are defeated on that for now.

What we do know is that once the letter reached Chagres, it was picked up by *Dee* and taken to Jamaica, arriving Kingston on July 3. The next leg was Jamaica to Havana, picked up and carried by *Clyde* on July 23, arriving July 27. From there, *Great Western* carried the letter into Mobile, arriving July 30. The post office in Mobile did the easy part. Noting that the addressee was a high-level official in the Treasury Department, it applied the August 1 circular datestamp, marked the letter FREE and put it in the bag for Washington. This is the only “free” cover to be found in the census.

The cover shown in Figure 6 originated in Georgetown, British Guiana on June 4, 1849. Georgetown was the most distant of the ports served by RMSP ships on the route. British Guiana (now Guyana) was southeast of Venezuela on the coast of South America. The cover was picked up for the first leg of its journey on June 6 by the *Thames* and carried to Barbados, arriving on June 9. The next leg was from Barbados to Jamaica. It was carried out by the *Dee*, leaving that same day. Interestingly, since the letter was presumably in a locked bag, it was off-loaded at Kingston (per Kingston backstamp dated June 17). *Dee* went on to Santiago, only to return to Kingston. There, it picked the letter back up, leaving Jamaica on June 26 for Havana, where *Great Western* picked it up and carried it to Mobile,



Figure 6. Cover from Georgetown, British Guiana, sent on various RMSP steamers via Barbados and Jamaica to Mobile, where it entered the U.S. mails June 30, 1849.

arriving June 29. Mobile postmarked it on June 30, indicating its entry into the U.S. mail. It was rated as double weight, 20¢ plus the ship fee of 2¢. A pretty cover, and the only one in the census to show the striking Mobile SHIP 22 rating mark.

The letter shown in Figure 7 was written in Vera Cruz in April, 1850 and carried by RMSP steamship into Mobile in order to transit the U.S. to New York, where it would be put on a ship to the addressee in London. Other than the mess that was made in rating the cover in both the New York and Mobile post offices, the only other hand-stamp impression, on the back, is a London arrival marking that reads May 14, 1850. This arrival date is im-



Figure 7. From Vera Cruz to Mobile via RMSP in April 1850, thence in the U.S. and transatlantic mails via New York and Boston to London. Mobile applied the blue circled 24, suggesting intended carriage via Cunard line from Boston, but New York briefly overrode this with duelling debit markings. Finally carried by Cunard.

portant in establishing whether the cover was carried across the Atlantic by a British or an American vessel. Reference to Hubbard and Winter's *North Atlantic Mail Sailings, 1840-1875* reveals the cover was carried by the Cunard steamship *America*, arriving Liverpool May 13. A further bit of sleuthing offers explanation of the dueling ratings that were applied to the cover.

Note that the cover entered the mails in Mobile on April 20. It would have taken about a week to reach New York. The Mobile post office was in the habit of rating covers for transatlantic carriage, something they were not supposed to do. Transatlantic rating was to be done at the New York exchange office. Nonetheless, the blue encircled "24" was applied by the Mobile office. One can see a partial "2" in blue ink beneath; the Mobile clerk didn't get a good impression with his first try. The 24¢ rating suggests the clerk intended the cover to be carried to Boston for transatlantic carriage by Cunard.

The black "5" and "21" debit markings were both applied in the New York Exchange office. More sleuthing reveals that this cover might have been even more remarkable than it is. The Collins line *Atlantic* left New York on April 27 on its maiden voyage. This was also the Collins' first steamship to cross the Atlantic. The exchange office clerk thought he would get the letter on the *Atlantic* and rated it accordingly 21¢ (with a 5¢ debit for the U.S. inland postage). However, he apparently learned subsequently that the bag for the *Atlantic* had been closed, so he let stand the 24¢ rate and put it into the bag for Boston, whence it was carried by Cunard's *America*. The 24¢ packet rate is the sum of the 16¢ sea rate conveyance fee, a 5¢ U.S. inland fee and a 3¢ inland fee to Great Britain.

The cover shown in Figure 8, also from Vera Cruz to London, is a nicer representation of what Figure 7 might have looked like. The encircled "24" was unnecessary; the Mobile post office did it again. The London arrival stamp reads Dec 19 (1849), informing us that the letter was carried by Cunard's *Caledonia*. The black 5 is the debit for U.S. inland carriage.



Figure 8. 1849 cover from Vera Cruz to London via Mobile and New York. Mailed at Vera Cruz in 1849, carried by RMSP steamer to Mobile, which applied its 24 indicating 1 shilling postage due. New York applied the debit 5 for the U.S. inland charge.

Figure 9 shows another cover written in Vera Cruz with an endorsement “via Mobile” and the same London addressee as the cover in Figure 8. I find it most interesting that the United States served as a sort of mail pipeline, between the British RMSP Caribbean mail operation in the Gulf and the British Cunard line that dominated mail carriage across the Atlantic.



Figure 9. Quadruple-rate cover from Vera Cruz to London, carried on RMSP *Avon*, arriving Mobile March 23, 1850. Mobile's 96 indicates four times the 24¢ rate to England; New York's 20 represents four times the inland charge. Four shillings due in London

The Figure 9 cover was carried from Vera Cruz by *Avon*, departing Vera Cruz on March 19, 1850, and arriving in Mobile March 23. According to the sailing tables, Mobile forwarded it to New York the next day. The Mobile post office found it necessary to advise the New York exchange office, via its “96” penned at upper right, that the letter met a two-ounce requirement, thus requiring four times the 24¢ packet rate. The New York exchange office agreed, debiting the 20¢ inland fee (4x5¢). The pen scroll at bottom right designates the correct 4/ shilling British collection. A very rare cover for the rate.

Resources, acknowledgements, notes on Table 3

A good deal of interesting background information regarding the differing points of view of U.S. and RMSP officials and the negotiations that took place between them can be found in Colin Tabcart's “By West India Steam Packet,” a series that appeared in three consecutive numbers of the *Chronicle* in 1994 and 1995. Tabcart's postal history focus was largely on the very minor role played by the port of New York in 1842, and the even more minor role played by Savannah and Charleston. There are no known covers from either of the southern ports; and only three are reported that traveled into or through New York.

Tabcart thanked Richard Winter for his research help in writing his article. That goes for me too. Winter has shepherded me through tight spots in my understanding, and he provided some of the listings in the census that accompanies this article as Table 3. Winter is an ever-present authority and contributor to our hobby in all things maritime.

TABLE 3
RMS P COVERS VIA U.S. PORTS, SECOND CONTRACT PERIOD, 1847-50

N.O. date	From/to	Crown PAID	RMS P Ship	US Rate	UK Rate
none	New Orleans/Bordeaux		<i>Forth</i>		1/
none	Mobile/England		<i>Forth</i>		1/
48/03/23	Vera Cruz/Philadelphia	VERA CRUZ	<i>GW</i>	32 ms	2/
48/04/03	Peru/Providence (Figure 2)	CALLAO	<i>Avon</i>	12 ms	2/
48/04/16	Vera Cruz/Philadelphia	VERA CRUZ	?	f ms [free]	2/
48/04/22	Vera Cruz/Washington, DC	VERA CRUZ	?	f ms [free]	2/
48/04/23	Honolulu/Boston	VERA CRUZ	<i>Avon</i>	12	1/
none	Havana/New Orleans	HAVANA	<i>GW</i>	6	1/
48/07/28	Vera Cruz/Philadelphia	VERA CRUZ	<i>GW</i>	22 ms	2/
48/08/21	Vera Cruz/NYC (Figure 3)	VERA CRUZ	<i>Severn</i>	34	1/
48/09/13	Jalapa, Mexico/New York	?	<i>Trent?</i>	34	?
48/09/29	Tampico, Mexico/London		<i>Trent</i>	34	
48/09/29	Vera Cruz/Philadelphia	VERA CRUZ	<i>Trent</i>	34 ms	1/
48/10/04	Valparaiso/N. Reading, MA	VALPARAISO	<i>Forth</i>	34	2/
48/xx/xx	Vera Cruz/Philadelphia	VERA CRUZ	<i>Forth</i>	34	1/
48/11/03	Valparaiso/Barnstable, MA	VALPARAISO	?	34	2/
48/11/21	Vera Cruz/New York	VERA CRUZ	<i>GW</i>	34	1/
Mobile date					
49/02/19	New Orleans/London		<i>Dee</i>	NO black 5	1/
49/03/09	Vera Cruz/NYC		<i>GW</i>	red 12	
49/03/22	N.O./Carlisle, Eng. (Figure 4)		<i>GW</i>	NO black 5	1/
49/03/24	Vera Cruz/New Orleans	VERA CRUZ	<i>GW</i>	red 7	1/
49/04/05	Cartagena/Baltimore		<i>Thames</i>	red 12	ms 1/
49/04/05	Panama/NYC	PANAMA	<i>Thames</i>	red 12	1/ 1/2
49/04/19	New Orleans/Carlisle, Eng.		<i>Thames</i>	NO black 5	1/
49/04/22	Vera Cruz/NYC	VERA CRUZ	<i>Thames</i>	red 12	1/
49/05/05	Genoa, Sardinia/NYC		<i>Severn</i>	red 12	
49/05/05	Jamaica/NYC		<i>Severn</i>	red 12	1/
49/06/04	Paris/Vera Cruz		<i>Clyde</i>	ms 31	
49/06/20	Callao, Peru/Nantucket	CALLAO	<i>Clyde</i>	red SHIP/12	2/1
49/06/21	Santa Anna, Mex/New Orleans	TAMPICO	<i>Clyde</i>	red SHIP/7	2/
49/06/21	Mexico City/NYC	VERA CRUZ	<i>Clyde</i>	red SHIP/12	1/
49/06/21	Vera Cruz/NYC	VERA CRUZ	<i>Clyde</i>	red SHIP/12	1/
49/06/30	British Guiana/CT (Figure 6)		<i>GW</i>	red SHIP/22	2/
49/06/xx	Vera Cruz/NYC	TAMPICO	?	red SHIP/12	1/
49/08/01	Valparaiso Chile/Boston	CALLAO	<i>Trent</i>	red SHIP/12	2/
49/08/21	Chihuahua Mex/Brazoria, TX	VERA CRUZ	<i>Trent</i>	red 10	1/
49/08/21	Vera Cruz/NYC	VERA CRUZ	<i>Trent</i>	red SHIP/12	1/
49/08/21	US Consul Mexico/Trenton, NJ	VERA CRUZ	<i>Trent</i>	ms 42	1/
49/09/03	Havana/New Orleans	HAVANA	<i>Severn</i>	blue SHIP/7	1/
49/09/03	Jamaica/Canandaigua, NY		<i>Severn</i>	blue 10	ms 2/2

Mobile date	From/to	Crown PAID	RMSP Ship	US Rate	UK Rate
49/09/21	Vera Cruz/NYC	VERA CRUZ	<i>Severn</i>	ms 40	4/
49/09/21	Vera Cruz/NYC	VERA CRUZ	<i>Severn</i>	blue 10	1/
49/10/05	Cartagena/NYC		<i>Teviot</i>	blue 10	ms 1/
49/10/28	Vera Cruz/NYC	VERA CRUZ	<i>Teviot</i>	ms 20	2/
49/10/28	Vera Cruz/Philadelphia	VERA CRUZ	<i>Teviot</i>	blue 10	1/
49/11/05	Barbadoes/Philadelphia		<i>Dee</i>	blue 10	ms 1/
49/11/05	Havana/NYC	HAVANA	<i>Dee</i>	blue 10	1/
49/11/23	Vera Cruz/Philadelphia	VERA CRUZ	<i>Dee</i>	blue 10	1/2 (?)
49/11/23	Vera Cruz/London (Figure 8)		<i>Dee</i>	blue 24	1/
49/12/05	Jamaica/Mt. Vernon, Ohio		<i>Thames</i>	blue 10	1/
49/12/22	Vera Cruz/Philadelphia	VERA CRUZ	<i>Thames</i>	blue 10	1/
50/01/23	Vera Cruz/NYC	VERA CRUZ	<i>Clyde</i>	blue 10	1/
50/01/23	Vera Cruz/NYC	VERA CRUZ	<i>Clyde</i>	blue 20	2/
50/01/23	Vera Cruz/NYC	VERA CRUZ	<i>Clyde</i>	blue 10	1/
50/01/23	Tampico/NYC	TAMPICO	<i>Clyde</i>	blue 10	1/
50/01/23	Tampico/London		<i>Clyde</i>	blue 24	1/
50/02/13	Liverpool/New Orleans		<i>Thames</i>	blue 10	2/
50/02/13	Liverpool/New Orleans		<i>Thames</i>	blue 5	1/
50/02/13	Valparaiso Chile/Boston		<i>Thames</i>	blue 10	
50/02/27	Vera Cruz/Philadelphia	VERA CRUZ	<i>Thames</i>	10	1/
50/03/09	British Guiana/Fairhaven, CT		<i>Avon</i>	10	1/
50/03/24	Vera Cruz/London (Figure 9)		<i>Avon</i>	ms 96	4/
50/04/20	Vera Cruz/NYC	VERA CRUZ	<i>Medway</i>	10	1/
50/04/20	Vera Cruz/NYC	VERA CRUZ	<i>Medway</i>	blue 20	2/
50/04/20	Vera Cruz/London (Figure 7)		<i>Medway</i>	blue 24	1/
50/04/20	Mexico City/Philadelphia	VERA CRUZ	<i>Medway</i>	10	1/
50/05/10	Santa Martha, Colombia/NYC	STA MARTHA	<i>Severn</i>	blue 20	ms 1/
50/05/23	Vera Cruz/NYC	VERA CRUZ	<i>Severn</i>	10	1/
50/05/23	Vera Cruz/NYC	VERA CRUZ	<i>Severn</i>	10	1/
50/05/23	Talcahuano, Chile/Boston	VALPARAISO	<i>Severn</i>	10	2/
50/06/20	Vera Cruz/London		<i>Thames</i>	ms 24	1/
50/06/20	Mexico City/Philadelphia	VERA CRUZ	<i>Thames</i>	10	1/
50/06/20	Vera Cruz/London		<i>Thames</i>	ms 24	1/
50/06/20	Mexico City/London		<i>Thames</i>	ms 48	2/
50/07/21	Vera Cruz/NYC	VERA CRUZ	<i>Tay</i>	10	1/
50/08/01	Callao, Peru/Boston		<i>GW</i>	10	
50/08/01	Ecuador/D.C. (Figure 5)		<i>GW</i>	red FREE	2/
50/08/20	Vera Cruz/NYC	VERA CRUZ	<i>GW</i>	10	1/
50/08/20	Vera Cruz/Philadelphia	VERA CRUZ	<i>GW</i>	10	1/

Royal Mail Steam Packet covers via U.S. ports, arranged chronologically according to the U.S. postmark they bear, which is initially New Orleans and then Mobile. In the "Ship" column, GW=Great Western. In the UK Rate column, "ms 1/," "ms 2/" etc. indicates that the British rating was applied in manuscript.

Essential to most serious maritime research is sailing data relevant to one's interest. It would be simply impossible to study and understand the RMSP West Indies operations without a book of sailing tables. Fortunately, there is one, and a rather remarkable book it is: *Early Routings of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, 1842-1879* by Phil Kenton and Harry Parsons, published by the Postal History Society (U.K.) in 1999. I tremble at the thought of how many hundreds of hours were spent by these men, giants both, researching this information.

Finally, on the subject of giants, it seems that I never write an article without a very low bow to Van Koppersmith. In this case, I have him to thank for compiling, checking and re-checking the census of New Orleans and Mobile covers that accompanies this article as Table 3, which is a distillation of a vastly more complex database that Koppersmith has been accumulating for decades.

The cover listings in Table 3 are chronological, based on the Mobile circular datestamp, which seems the most enduring constant on these wildly variegated covers. The listings for 1848, when the port of call was New Orleans rather than Mobile, are based on the New Orleans date, which is sometimes absent or less reliable. Beginning in 1849, the Mobile circular datestamp is a useful chronological marker, though some of the covers from early 1849 (Figure 4, for instance) actually entered the U.S. mails at New Orleans and were datestamped there.

In addition to the date in the Mobile circular datestamp, the Table 3 listing includes origin and destination, the initial RMSP ship, and the original U.S. and U.K. rate markings. If a cover bears a crowned circle marking from one of the British overseas post offices, that information is also included. The information in Tables 1 and 3, while necessarily incomplete, should be sufficient to enable collectors to determine whether a cover in their collection is already part of the record. Reports of new covers would be most welcome.

Endnote

1. Percy Bargholtz, "Mail Steamer Dates, 1846-1854," *Postal History Journal* 126, pp. 24-36. See also James Baird, "The Pacific Steam Navigation Company, Redux," *PHJ* 162, pp. 11-17. ■

IN REVIEW

THE SHARED POSTAL HISTORY OF CUBA, SPAIN AND THE UNITED STATES, 1895-1898: A REVIEW OF *UNDER THREE FLAGS* BY YAMIL H. KOURI JR.

KEN LAWRENCE

This oft-cited excerpt from James Creelman's 1901 book, *On the Great Highway: The Wanderings and Adventures of a Special Correspondent*, introduced the 1898 Spanish-American War segment of my eighth-grade American History class in 1955:

Some time before the destruction of the battleship *Maine* in the harbor of Havana, the *New York Journal* sent Frederic Remington, the distinguished artist, to Cuba. He was instructed to remain there until the war began; for "yellow journalism" had an eye for the future.

Presently Mr. Remington sent this telegram from Havana:

"W.R. Hearst, *New York Journal*, N.Y.:

"Everything is quiet. There is no trouble here. There will be no war. I wish to return. Remington."

This was the reply:

"REMINGTON, HAVANA:

"Please remain. You furnish the pictures, and I'll furnish the war. W.R. HEARST."

The proprietor of the *Journal* was true to his word, and to-day the gilded arms of Spain, torn from the front of the palace in Santiago de Cuba, hang in his office in Printing House Square, a lump of melted silver, taken from the smoking deck of the shattered Spanish flagship, serves as his paper weight, and the bullet-pierced headquarters flag of the Eastern army of Cuba—gratefully presented to him in the field by General Garcia—adorns his wall.

After reading the new book *Under Three Flags: The Postal History of the Spanish-Cuban/American War (1895-1898)* by Yamil H. Kouri Jr., I am confident that Kouri's views of that conflict evolved from a significantly different historical perspective. One task of the reviewer, then, is to determine whether and to what extent such differences might influence studying and collecting the postal remains of that war, perhaps even what might be included in or excluded from the collection.

In other words, do the answers make a difference? Kouri's title says they do. By styling it the Spanish-Cuban/American War* he has implicitly asserted that Cubans were actors and agents in a liberation struggle which had been percolating for most of the half century before the belligerent powers declared war on each other. A second subtler inference is that the armed forces of the United States came late to the fight. In that view, William Randolph Hearst might have been a bellicose provocateur and war trophy collector, but he did not "furnish the war."


Maybe both were true, but I think a more fruitful view is that the Cuban war against Spain was not the same as the U.S. war against Spain. In that case, the stroke that connects "Cuban/American" might mislead more than it clarifies. My knowledge of Cuban history is barely enough to be conversant, but it has shaped my opinion on how these strands intersected. As will become clearer below, my view differs from Kouri's, and our differences have consequences for analyzing and classifying this important era of Cuban, Spanish, and American postal history. This is not a matter of being right or wrong, but of attitude and interpretation.

José María Sempere's preface (which would be called a foreword in most editorial conventions) asserts that Kouri's tome "has gone beyond the realm of philately to become an essential work to other scholars due to the rigor and professionalism in its focus and de-

Under Three Flags

The Postal History of the
Spanish-Cuban/American War
(1895-1898)

Yamil H. Kouri Jr.



Collectors Club of Chicago

Under Three Flags, The Postal History of the Spanish-Cuban/American War (1895-98) by Yamil H. Kouri Jr. Case bound in buckram with gold stamping, Smythe sewn, 8½x11" format, 752 pages, 1,600 illustrations, color throughout, dust jacket. \$97 postpaid to U.S. addresses from Robert L. Glass, Collectors Club of Chicago, P.O. Box 3996, Oak Park, IL 60303-3996.

*Kouri did not originate this term or the inference. Yale historian Samuel Flagg Bemis wrote, in his 1959 book *A Short History of American Foreign Policy and Diplomacy*: "On the fiftieth anniversary of Cuban independence occurred a symposium of Cuban historians met to commemorate the battle of Santiago, where American soldiers had assisted Cuban veterans to turn decisively the tide to victory over Spain in 1898. The war, declared the Cuban scholars, was a Cuban-Spanish-American War, not merely a Spanish-American War as historians in the United States and elsewhere had been calling it. The corrective is well called for. It was in truth a Cuban-Spanish-American War, and henceforth so it should be called." I too take offense at the chauvinistic connotation of "Spanish-American," but "Cuban-Spanish-American" and its "Spanish-Cuban/American" permutation might give uninitiated readers the impression that the war's outcome respected Cuban participation, which, I regret, is more than history granted. Nevertheless, I have no better alternative to propose. In this review I call it the 1898 war.

velopment. It is simultaneously a work of enrichment to those interested in Hispanic-Cuban themes due to its global vision, the meticulous analyses, and the ease in which conclusions are summarized.”

In my more measured words: Collectible postal objects related to the 1898 war derive their significance from their historical context; hence Kouri’s story should attract interest beyond the community of hobbyists.

The roots of Cuban nationalism

The emergence of Cuban aspirations for national independence is a tangled story that has little in common with North American or Saint-Domingue counterparts, the 18th century revolts that gave birth to the United States and Haiti. Yet there can be no doubt that the New World’s first two successful anti-colonial uprisings inspired insurgents throughout the hemisphere. In the Spanish empire, José de San Martín led the fight for independence in the Southern Cone, as Simón Bolívar did in the lands that became Venezuela, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, and Peru. By the 1890s, Spain retained only Puerto Rico and Cuba.

In his first chapter, titled “Setting the Stage,” Kouri acknowledges that “[t]here were several slave rebellions during the first half of the 19th century” in Cuba, but he does not elaborate. It is not an insignificant or unrelated subject. Without at least a summary sketch of political, social, economic, and cultural relations that shaped Cuban history, one cannot intelligently perceive the grievances that led Cubans to risk their lives by rising in arms against Spain.

My proposed summary begins a century earlier: As a consequence of the successful slave revolution and emancipation in neighboring Saint-Domingue from 1791 to 1804, and the establishment of Haiti, sugar production there, “indelibly associated with slavery, became unbearable,” C.L.R. James wrote in a 1962 appendix to the second edition of *The Black Jacobins*.

The outcome proved to be a windfall for Spanish planters and a catastrophe for Cuban toilers. As subsistence agriculture replaced sugar plantations in Hispaniola, Cuba’s sugar production became more lucrative than ever, overtaking tobacco as the island’s most profitable export. The African slave trade brought fresh captives to Cuba until 1873. Cuba’s slaves were not emancipated until 1886, but Cuban slavery was not congruent with slavery in the southern United States. Unlike human chattels in North America, Cuban slaves had legal rights, including the right to buy their freedom at a set price, which many did.

According to Frank Tannenbaum in his 1946 book *Slave and Citizen*, a pioneering work of comparative history, “[I]n Cuba the Negroes provided a majority of the army in the long struggle against Spain. . . . special Negro regiments were common, sometimes with their own Negro officers.” Cuba’s greatest independence warrior, Antonio Maceo (1845-96)—“*El Titan de Bronce*” (the Bronze Titan) to his comrades—was of Afro-Cuban birth.

From that perspective, Kouri’s starting point—necessary, but potentially misleading in the absence of this overview—is oddly incongruous, though accurate: “The first significant organized military expeditions attempting to free Cuba from Spanish rule [in 1850 and 1851] were carried out by Narciso López, with the support of wealthy families in Cuba and the southern United States.” López had led pro-slavery filibustering expeditions under the banner that became Cuba’s national flag.

The importance of Kouri’s book

In 15 lower-case roman-numbered and 734 arabic-numbered pages, from the title page through the index, Kouri has presented every scrap of postal and philatelic information he encountered that might touch on events related to Cuba during the period designated by the title, broadly construed. That means he begins with subjects from much earlier times and carries through to postal items issued and used several years later, on grounds that the

former created a patriotic Cuban legacy that his title's war years drew on, and that the latter represented the direct outcome of the war, if not its actual continuation by other means.

If you intentionally collect postal items related to Cuba from the mid-19th through early 20th centuries, you must have this book. Others for whom it will be indispensable are collectors of U.S. possessions, U.S. military postal history, and Spain and colonies philately. If you are not especially interested in Cuba but you collect United States or Spanish stamps or covers of that era, you might benefit from consulting it.

The book is encyclopedic. It is destined to be the permanent repository of postal and philatelic information on the subject, not to be superseded unless some future student discovers significant mistakes or omissions in Kouri's compilation. I found only one nit to pick and one serious misuse of established philatelic terminology to criticize, but Cuban postal history is not my area of expertise.

The contents are organized chronologically, then by subject, with clear chapter headings, appropriately subdivided and subtitled. The book has a comprehensive bibliography and an index. These will be a boon to the collector who has a cover he or she wants to identify and understand, the typical future user. It is a reference volume, thoughtfully crafted to meet those needs, not for poolside pleasure reading.

Furthermore, despite his subtitle, Kouri does not limit his survey to covers, rates, routes, postal and censorship markings, means of transport and postal usage. He includes archival material, essays, proofs, unused stamps and postal stationery, revenue issues, postage stamps used to pay taxes, revenue stamps used to pay postage, provisional issues, propaganda issues, letters for which no known covers exist and for which no postal markings are known, cinderella stamps, maps and collateral documents. At every turn of the page, the reader expects to encounter a full kitchen sink on the overleaf.

Postal history of the Ten Years' War

After brief mentions in Part I (Chapter 1) of early rebellions, the minimal presence in Cuba of the Spanish military before the mid-19th century and military expeditions launched from Cuba in the 1860s, each subject illustrated by contemporaneous mailpieces, Kouri devotes Part II (Chapters 2, 3, and 4), almost 40 pages of text and illustrations, to the Ten Years' War led by Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, which lasted from 1868 to 1878.

The insurgents established a postal system using couriers to carry messages. "There are only a handful of covers known from this period, in either private collections or institutions, and none of them have any postal markings. . . . This is the first study of the few surviving pieces of correspondence from this conflict," according to Kouri.

Maybe Kouri reserves the term "cover" for individual correspondence. In the usual meaning, one cover from that war, which he mentions—the outside panel of an 1869 insurgent newspaper illustrated here in Figure 1 (overleaf)—does have a postal marking. I copied it from *Historia Postal de Cuba* by José Luis Guerra Aguiar.

Carlos Echenagusía featured the same cover in his 2009 monograph titled "*El correo de la República de Cuba en Armas en la Guerra de los Diez Años y la Guerra de la Independencia*," published on-line at <https://echenastamps.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/el-correo-mambi.pdf>. He wrote that it was sent by Mambi mail (*enviado a través del correo Mambi*). *Mambises* were the mostly Afro-Cuban guerrillas of Tannenbaum's history.

Kouri's Part II also includes the Cuban postage stamps of 1874, printed in New York by the Continental Bank Note Company, "ostensibly to pay for postage carried by the Insurgents' mail system within the Island....Most of the Cuban stamps were sold for fund raising purposes....There is only one used example known, in the Cuban Postal Museum collection, attached to a very small cover fragment."

The rest of the section includes Spanish military mail and Cuban civilian mail in

Figure 1. In *Historia Postal de Cuba* by José Luís Guerra Aguiar, this photo of an 1869 cover is captioned (in translation) “Mambi newspaper ‘El Tinima’ transported by insurgent mail in 1869 from Cubitas to Yaguajay, before the use of postage stamps.” Mambi were mostly Afro-Cuban guerrillas of the National Army of Liberation led by Antonio Maceo.



abundance, including the rare typographed text-only provisional adhesive stamp of Bayamo pictured on three covers. In the Three-Flags context Part II is merely prelude, but this section might be as important for future postal historians of Cuba as the later chapters.

Postal history of the Cuban War of Independence and the 1898 war

Part III comprises the rest of the book, more than 650 pages of dizzying detail. Of the four-page table of contents, the equivalent of three are devoted to the 23 chapters in this section, too much material to review comprehensively here. I shall make do with lowlights and highlights.

The 1895 to 1898 War of Independence, organized and led by Maceo, Cuban patriot and poet José Martí (1853-95), General Calixto García (1839-98), and General Máximo Gómez (1836-1905), is the subject of Chapter 5. Once again the insurgents issued postage stamps, this issue printed by the New York Bank Note Company, but for this war covers do exist, and Kouri has reproduced many of them.

Chapter 6 surveys postal items associated with Cuban nationalist exiles and their supporters in the United States; Chapter 7, patriotic labels that promoted the Spanish side; Chapters 8, 9, 10, and 11, Spanish military mail; and Chapter 12, interrupted mail between Cuba and other countries after the U.S. Navy blockaded Cuban ports.

Blockade mail is the Chapter 13 subject; Spanish prisoner of war mail, the Chapter 14 subject. These are all subjects that should fulfill Sempere’s expectation that scholars outside the stamp hobby will benefit from studying.

Chapter 15 records and illustrates every kind of U.S. patriotic envelope issued for the war, fewer by far than for the American Civil War, but to me a surprisingly large and diverse number considering how quickly the 1898 war was fought and won.

U.S. patriotic labels are Kouri’s Chapter 16 subject. In the kitchen-sink category, he has included Brewster Cox Kenyon’s “bogus” (Kouri’s adjective) Eagle and Shield ARMY FRANK labels. It’s true that Kenyon treated the 1898 war as an opportunity to sell his stamp-like stickers to collectors, but if they had a connection to Cuba it has evidently eluded the author.

Chapter 17 finally takes us to U.S. naval mail and the sinking of the USS *Maine*, illustrated with a January 1898 cover from a sailor aboard the *Maine* in Havana harbor that Bob Rawlins showed me many years ago. Are there no others? U.S. military and related mail continues in Chapter 18.

With Chapter 19, “The Road to Santiago—and Beyond,” Kouri shifts gears to provide

a sweeping summary of the war's main combat encounters and protagonists, intelligence gathering, troop transport and deployment, establishment of military post offices, through-the-lines mail, Spanish capitulation, and transfer of power to the United States.

Besides those, he tells of rampant corruption in the U.S. Military Department of Posts of Cuba, and the free-frank privilege granted to General Gómez. He closes the chapter with a cover franked by U.S. Senator Orville H. Platt, author of the eponymous amendment to the 1902 Cuban constitution that granted the United States the authority to intervene in Cuban affairs.

Chapters 20, 21, and 22 revert to form with markings of U.S. military stations, locations, and categories of mail. The subject of Chapter 23 is mail of U.S. military hospitals, and the Chapter 24 subject, U.S. military camps.

So-called "Gibara Provisionals"

Up to this point there have been few surprises that might spark arguments. Chapter 25, "Local Provisional Stamp Issues," rekindles an old one. In May of last year on Richard Frajola's PhilaMercury Internet chat board, Kouri and I debated the meaning of the term "provisional postage" as he applies it to postal markings struck on covers posted at Gibara in November and December 1898.

Figure 2 shows the first cover Kouri posted during the on-line exchange; he also reproduced it as Figure 25-5 in his book. At the upper left is a manuscript endorsement "Soldiers Mail" and in the lower left corner, "Photo." At the upper right and lower left are strikes of a three-line purple handstamped marking that reads "No stamps available / Postage paid Military / Govt." At the top center is a mostly illegible strike of a Spanish colonial Gibara circular datestamp.

At the lower left the cover is struck with two impressions of a blue double-circle marking that encloses the inscription "CORREOS DISTRITO GIBARA DE HOLGUIN 2 cts." From Kouri's point of view these are "provisional stamps." From mine they are markings on stampless covers that show the rates and amounts paid. This is not a trivial difference.

The integrity of philatelic scholarship depends in part on agreed definitions of terms. Essential elements of postage stamps and postal stationery are portability and retention of value until used. You can buy a stamp, stamped envelope, or postal card unused at the post office, take it home, and use it later. A paid postal marking, you cannot.



Figure 2. This cover, mailed from a U.S. military post office at Gibara, Cuba, bears two strikes of the 2¢ circular marking that Kouri calls provisional stamps. Other experts call them provisional postmarks or provisional handstamps.

This cover has another problem. In the absence of stamps, a soldier's letter should have been sent unpaid, rated postage due to be collected from the recipient. But other examples of this 2¢ marking and a 5¢ counterpart exist on civilian mail that was not subject to that regulation, so the nonstandard marking did serve a legitimate postal purpose.

If the Gibara markings were postage stamps, they ought to be listed in the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers* along with the listings of Puerto Principe provisional stamps. But the Gibara stamps are not listed and should not be. Figure 3 shows that Ignacio Prats titled his exhibit page of a cover with this marking, "Provisional Postmark of Gibara," which was and is consistent with established terminology. It can be viewed on-line at <http://www.philat.com/FIL/Pto-Principe/Prats-Collection/072.pdf>.

These were unknown until the 1990s. No one has yet found an earlier record of their existence. The first published reference of which I'm aware appeared in the 1997 edition of the Edifil *Catálogo Especializado de Sellos de Cuba* (Cuba specialized stamp catalog), which included a diagram of the circular mark and a translation of the three-line marking but did not picture either one. Echenagusía, the Edifil editor, called them *gomígrafos* (postmarks or cancelations) and *cuños* (markings or imprints), which appear to have been chosen so as not to call them postage stamps (*sellos*).

More information appeared in an article by Prats and Kouri in the July 1997 issue of *The Cuban Philatelist* titled "The Provisional 'Stamp' of Gibara" and "El 'Sello' Provisional de Gibara." That is, in both English and Spanish the authors enclosed the word *stamp* in quotation marks, and the article text called the Gibara marking "probably a provisional 'stamp'." The authors likened the Gibara markings to similar ones from Puerto Rico that the Scott catalog editors have recently delisted and reclassified. (See "Rethinking the Ponce Provisional Adhesive" by William di Paolo on pages 1114-1115 of the 2019 specialized catalog.) Although Scott has retained its listing of the Ponce 2¢ marking struck on envelopes, reclassifying it as a local issue, while deleting the listing for adhesive stamps struck with the same marker, retaining the former must rely on the plausible belief that unused examples could once have existed and might have been sold as such, comparable to the 5¢ Coamo stamps, which Scott also has reclassified as locals.

But the Gibara markings were not used by a local post. If genuine, they were used at a United States military post office. Prats had submitted his cover on the Figure 3 album page to the Philatelic Foundation, which declined to issue an opinion. The Edifil catalog had reported two other examples, one struck with a 2¢ marker, the other with a 5¢, neither of which Prats or Kouri had seen.

The Figure 2 cover made its public debut in an October 13, 2006, Soler y Llach auction sale, described as a provisional stamp of Gibara (*el sello PROVISIONAL DE GIBARA*)



Figure 3. This exhibit page from the Puerto Principe section of the Ignacio Prats collection called the marking "Provisional Postmark of Gibara," which is reasonable. Kouri calls it a provisional postage stamp, from which the reviewer dissents.

without quotation marks or other qualification, with the postmark date given as “1898 (26 Oct.)” Reserved at €3,500, it failed to attract a bid. Kouri, too, dispensed with quotation marks in his September-October 2012 *Collectors Club Philatelist* article, “The U.S. Military Government Provisional Stamps of Gibara, Cuba.”

Alerted by Prats and Kouri, Echenagusía had searched the archives of the Cuban Postal Museum, “where he found two additional fragments with these stamps, one with a two-cent and another with a five-cent denomination.” In the PhilaMercury exchange, Kouri wrote, in response to one of my objections, “Perhaps the fragments in the Cuban Postal Museum . . . represented mint examples of these provisional stamps.” If they were not postally used, I would call them proof strikes.

Oddly, Echenagusía’s 2012 edition of the Edifil catalog pictures the Prats 2¢ cover (subsequently owned by Jack E. Thompson) but has no 5¢ listing. In an article titled “The Provisional Issue of Gibara” in the April-June 2013 issue of *Journal of Cuban Philately*, which includes both denominations, Echenagusía used the term “provisional handstamps” in English and “*gomígrafos*” in Spanish.

Ernesto Cuesta’s article, “Follow-up on the Gibara Provisional Handstamp” (“*Más sobre los cuños provisionales de Gibara*” in the Spanish version), in the October-December 2013 issue, reported the sale of the Figure 2 cover, “previously in the Dr. Yamil H. Kouri, Jr., collection,” for \$3,000 plus 15 percent buyer’s premium at Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries’ June 25, 2013, Rarities of the World sale.

The rest of Kouri’s Chapter 25 is devoted to Puerto Principe provisional adhesive stamps, including the identifying features of five surcharge printings and a revised updated census of recorded genuine uses on covers. Chapter 26 presents official mail envelopes, and chapter 27, postage stamps and postal stationery issued from 1899 to 1902, overprinted and regular issues, bringing the book to its conclusion with the first Cuban stamp booklets, issued in 1902. Evidently Kouri felt no urge to end with a summation or epilogue.

The limitations of Kouri’s book

Besides the Gibara markings, what parts of Kouri’s book are subject to debate?

Let me offer this admittedly imperfect analogy: I collect, write about and exhibit World War II postal history. My purposes are to indulge my personal interest in history, stimulated initially by my father’s Army service in the Pacific while I was a toddler, and to share my appreciation with viewers of my collection.

There is no doubt that civilians and combatants on all sides of that war suffered terribly, that some members of every belligerent power’s armed forces fought gallantly while others committed atrocities. But acknowledging those facts does not relieve historians, myself included, of the obligation to make judgments, to assert that one cause was right and one was wrong, and that the right side prevailed. Can that be said of the 1898 war?

Our “postal history” idiom is fraught with ambiguity. For me the accent is on “history”; for Kouri, on “postal.” These distinctions are probably of less significance to him, and to readers comfortably familiar with Cuban history, than to me. Nevertheless, they imbue the collector and the scholar with different challenges, and guide both along different trails to fulfillment.

To the question “What is War?” Carl von Clausewitz famously answered, “War is a mere continuation of policy by other means. We see, therefore, that War is not merely a political act, but also a real instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means....the political view is the object, War is the means, and the means must always include the object....” That is where analysis must begin.

The Spanish political objective was to retain Cuba as its colony. The opposing Cuban political objective was national independence, which I interpret to mean self-government. Both of those aims are explicit in Kouri’s narrative. What about the political objectives of

the United States military intervention in Cuba?

In his “Raison D’être” introductory chapter, Kouri writes, regarding the consequence of the war for the United States, “Almost overnight, the country came out of its isolationist shell to have its first bittersweet taste of colonialism and to become an important world player.”

Generations of diplomatic and military history students have been taught that synopsis as the origin of American empire, exemplified by Rough Rider bravado, San Juan Hill swagger, and *Message to Garcia* humbug, so I cannot fault Kouri for asserting it. But it wasn’t so.

In 1803, at the time of the Louisiana Purchase, some American politicians and editors proposed building an empire beyond the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. Liberia became the original overseas United States colony in 1820. Although never annexed, Liberia has been tightly clutched by the eagle’s talons ever since; Firestone Tire and Rubber Company became the principal beneficiary. Christian missionaries settled other far-flung lands as first American colonizers, notably Hawaii and Samoa.

In pursuit of economic advantage, the Guano Islands Act of 1856 extended the U.S. empire in the Caribbean and the Pacific, providing legal grounds for formalizing possession of those islands, and empowering the president to take military action to secure them. William H. Seward, author of that legislation, next unfurled the Stars and Stripes over Alaska in 1867.

The first seven and a half decades of transoceanic U.S. empire-building met as scant domestic political opposition as had the doctrine of coast-to-coast Manifest Destiny. Try to name a leading isolationist policymaker or policy in the hundred years after George Washington delivered his Farewell Address. None spring to mind.

The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 declared the United States’ sphere of influence to comprise all the Americas. The Tyler Doctrine of 1842 extended Monroe’s principles to Hawaii. According to *New York Times* wordsmith William Safire, U.S. “gunboat diplomacy” originated with the 1844 Treaty of Wanghia, which opened Chinese ports to American commerce. Conquest of Spain was a predictable extension of those earlier U.S. policies, not a reversal.

Anti-interventionists in the United States

Paradoxically, the unfamiliar aspect of America’s clash with Spain in 1898 was the birth of organized anti-imperialism in the United States, a second part of my eighth-grade history lesson that’s missing from Kouri’s book. Mark Twain’s pamphlet *To the Person Sitting in Darkness*, published in 1901 by the Anti-Imperialist League, included this pertinent passage:

There, in Cuba, [President William McKinley] was following our great traditions in a way which made us very proud of him, and proud of the deep dissatisfaction which his play was provoking in Continental Europe. Moved by a high inspiration, he threw out those stirring words which proclaimed that forcible annexation would be “criminal aggression”; and in that utterance fired another “shot heard round the world.” The memory of that fine saying will be outlived by the remembrance of no act of his but one — that he forgot it within the twelve-month, and its honorable gospel along with it.

Besides Twain, the league’s roster listed such luminaries as former president Grover Cleveland, Civil War general Carl Schurz, industrialist Andrew Carnegie, and labor leader Samuel Gompers, but in domestic politics they could no more prevail against McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and Hearst than Cuban forces could overcome the U.S. Army that occupied their country. Shouldn’t the kitchen sink make space for an anti-imperialist cover or two?

Some historians contend that the anecdote about Hearst’s telegram to Remington is apocryphal—most recently and most insistently, W. Joseph Campbell in his 2017 book *Get-*

ting it Wrong: Debunking the Greatest Myths in American Journalism, second edition—but Hearst and his fellow swashbuckling jingoists are the larger-than-life characters whose legends personify the 1898 war in basic American history textbooks. (My rebuttal of Campbell can be viewed on-line at https://www.rfrajola.com/2k19/Hearst_telegram_2019.pdf.)

Ultimately the objectives of Cuban independence and U.S. imperialism could not be reconciled, even though Spanish colonialism had seemed to be their common adversary in 1898. History awarded victory to the imperialists, not only in Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippine Islands—the lands wrested from Spain—but also in other overseas possessions the United States annexed along with them—Hawaii, American Samoa, and Wake Island—that had not been part of the Spanish empire.

The less conclusive case of Cuba adds nuance to history's judgment and supports many chapters of Kouri's thorough postal history compilation, but unequal strength is not the only factor that complicates treating the war for Cuba as a two-sided contest fought across a hyphenated heading that places Cubans and Americans on the same side. Spain lost the war; the United States—not Cuba/America—won it. That was not the outcome to which Maceo and Martí devoted and eventually sacrificed their lives.

Acknowledgement

Thanks to the American Philatelic Society Translation Service for assistance. ■

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EXPLANATION OF THE PROBLEM COVER IN CHRONICLE 263

The problem cover in *Chronicle* 263, shown as Figure 1, was submitted by Daniel Ryterband at your editor's suggestion. Addressed to Memphis, Tennessee, the cover bears a circular duplex postmark of New York City dated June 5, 1861 tying a 3¢ 1857 stamp. In addition the envelope also bears the double oval marking "DEAD LETTER OFFICE / P.O. DPT." dated July 6, 1861 and "DUE 3 cts." straightline marking. What appears to be



Figure 1. Our problem cover from last issue, franked with a 3¢ 1857 stamp at New York City, addressed Memphis and diverted to the Dead Letter Office in Washington, D.C. What's going on here?

the sender's address is written in manuscript vertically along the left edge. It reads, "W.W. Morgan, No. 82 Broadway, New York, N.Y."

The questions were several: Why was this seemingly properly addressed letter diverted to the Dead Letter Office in Washington, D.C.? What is the significance of the "DUE 3 cts." marking? Was the letter eventually delivered to the addressee or returned to its sender?

Ryterband's explanation of his cover is pretty straightforward:

On 27 May 1861, the Union Post Office Department ordered the suspension of all mail service in the seceded states, effective May 31. Southbound letters to suspended southern post offices were to be forwarded to the U.S. Dead Letter Office (DLO) in Washington, D.C. At the DLO, the diverted mail was opened to ascertain the sender's address, which was written on the face. Diverted letters were then postmarked before being returned to the sender and marked for return postage due.

This is an apt and succinct statement of the facts. But this cover elicited an excellent response from readers, who provided a cascade of additional information, especially involving the Memphis address. First up was James Kulwicki (RA 4439), who submitted an extensive commentary on the events (both political and postal) surrounding the cover:

With the uncertainty of the future of the Union in the middle of 1861, this cover got caught up with the decisions made to deal with this uncertainty. As announced in the June 1861 issue of the *United States Mail and Post Office Assistant*, mail service would be discontinued to the “states which claim to have seceded from the Union” beginning on 1 June 1861. This included the states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas and Texas....The list of states which had seceded did not include Tennessee....In Tennessee a referendum to convene a convention to discuss secession was decisively voted down in February 1861. Subsequent events (Fort Sumter, Lincoln calling for volunteers to put down the rebellion) resulted in a large majority of voters in Tennessee changing their opinions about secession. [Editor’s note: Another major tipping point propelling Tennessee towards secession was the April 25th seizure of the steamboat C. E. Hillman by the Illinois Volunteer Light Artillery upon orders of Illinois Governor Yates. It was carrying a large cargo of lead from St. Louis, possibly with other munitions, and was bound for the state of Tennessee, which had purchased the goods. Governor Harris denounced the seizure as a violation of Tennessee’s sovereignty and subsequently called the legislature back into session whereupon a second act of secession was approved on the condition of a public referendum to be held on June 8, 1861.] Post Office officials were likely aware of the upcoming vote and may have had some contingency plans to add Tennessee to the states where mail service was discontinued in the event of a favorable vote for independence. The problem cover was posted in New York on 5 June, three days before the referendum. At the time of posting, there was no reason for the sender or any Post Office clerk to think there would be any difficulty for delivery to Memphis. It is uncertain what route the letter would have taken to get from New York to Memphis at this time, but somewhere along the way the letter was separated out for transmission to the Dead Letter Office by a Post Office clerk or agent...The Dead Letter Office clerks identified the sender of this problem cover, writing the name and address of the sender at the left end of the cover. The sender’s address was written with an orientation of ninety degrees in relation to the original address to likely facilitate processing by other post office clerks when the letter was returned to the sender in New York. In the 1859 edition of the *Postal Laws and Regulations*, there was no specific mention of charges for the return of undeliverable domestic mail to senders. However, in late February 1861 during the last days of the Buchanan administration Congress modified the rules relating to dead letters, requiring the sender to be “charged the usual rates of postage, to be collected on delivery” for the return of an undeliverable item. The April 1861 issue of the *United States Mail and Post Office Assistant* reported this change along with other changes as a part of this legislation. As the problem cover appears to be simple single rate letter, the “DUE 3 cts” marking would have been appropriate for charging the sender for its return.

Francis Crown Jr. (RA 1214) added an essential additional insight by citing an important but overlooked historical event that occurred the day after this letter was posted:

On 7 June 1861 William D. McNish resigned as postmaster at Nashville, Tennessee. He gave his reason in a lengthy notice published in the *Nashville Daily Patriot* on 8 June 1861. There he included copies of several letters and telegrams exchanged with the Post Office Department in Washington, between 1 June and 6 June. One telegram from Washington, dated June 6, read as follows:

To Post Masters: The Post Office at Memphis, Tenn., is discontinued. The Post Master General orders Postmasters to forward to the Dead Letter Office at Washington all mail matter which is directed to that office.

JNO. A. KADDON, 1st Assistant P. M. Gen’l.

This telegram certainly gives the reason why this letter was returned to the Dead Letter Office. What it does not tell us is from where the letter was redirected to the Dead Letter Office. The letter was surely dispatched from New York to Memphis on 5 June, the date of the postmark. That would mean that the letter was redirected to the Dead Letter Office while it was en route between New York and Memphis

Another reader, Ron Stauber (RA 4025), provided specific details of how postal regulations were used to justify the seizure and redirection of the problem cover. He says that it is assumed that the letter was redirected to the Dead Letter Office under a rule earlier promulgated by U.S. Postmaster General Blair:

...No mail-pouch, sack, or lock can be sent by any Postmaster to any point or place where such service has been discontinued. All pouches, sacks and locks coming to a Post office from such discontinued offices and routes will be retained and sent to the proper depositing offices.

The effect of all this is clear. As soon as the 6 June order was issued, discontinuing the Memphis post office, all southbound mail destined to Memphis was halted immedi-

ately. Stauber speculates that the night mail to Washington left New York City at 11 p.m. on 5 June and arrived in Washington by 9:30 the next morning. Presumably that mail was processed and on its way before the suspension of the Memphis post office became known, thus leaving the interception of the mail bag to another post office further down the line.

Anders Olason of Sweden (RA 3717) agrees with Kulwicki, Crown and Stauber and adds that by the time this letter was mailed the rail route via Washington through Virginia and Tennessee had already been closed. As a result the letter was likely routed to Cincinnati and on to Louisville, which still maintained rail connections with both Memphis and Nashville. Thus, it was probably at Louisville where the cover was intercepted and diverted to the Dead Letter Office in Washington.

So, while Ryterband's brief explanation was entirely accurate, serious detective work from four contributors on two continents added important historical details to flesh out the series of events surrounding this intercepted letter from the dawn of the Civil War. Thanks to all who participated!

PROBLEM COVER FOR THIS ISSUE

Our problem cover for this issue recently came to light after nearly 200 years. As shown in Figure 2, this folded letter addressed to New Orleans bears a most unusual "SHIP



Figure 2. Our problem cover for this issue is a folded letter addressed to New Orleans with handstamped rate marking indicating "SHIP 14½." The letter is headed Providence, R.I. and is dated 9 January 1828. There are no markings on the reverse.

14½" rate marking. The letter is headed Providence, Rhode Island and is dated 9 January 1828. There are no markings on the reverse.

The questions are several: What does this rate represent, where was the marking applied, and how did this letter travel from New England to New Orleans for such a small sum? Please reply early, to give us time to assemble responses for publication in the February *Chronicle*. ■

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STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

United States Postal Service, Form 3526: Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation. 1. Publication Title: *The Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues*. 2. Publication Number: 0560-680. 3. Filing Date: 6 September 2019. 4. Issue Frequency: Quarterly. 5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 4. 6. Annual Subscription Price: \$35. 7. Complete Address of Known Office of Publication: 100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte, PA 16823. 8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office: % Michael Plett, 2855 Willowmere Woods Dr., Vienna, VA 22180. 9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor and Managing Editor. Publisher: None. Editor: Michael Laurence, 101 West 90th St., Apt. 8-H, New York, NY 10024. Managing Editor: None. 10. Owner: The U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., % Michael Plett, 2855 Willowmere Woods Dr., Vienna, VA 22180. 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees and Other Security Holders: None. 12. Tax Status: Has not changed during preceding 12 months. 13. Publication Title: *The Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues*. 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data: August, 2019. 15a. AVERAGE NUMBER OF COPIES EACH ISSUE DURING PRECEDING 12 MONTHS: (a) Total Number of Copies (Net Press Run): 1,250. (15b.) Paid Circulation: (15b.1) Mailed Outside County: 935. (15b.2) Mailed In County: 0. (15b.3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails: 0. (15b.4) Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail): 315 (15c) Total Paid Distribution: 1,250. (15f) Total Distribution: 1,250. (15g): Copies Not Distributed: 0. (15h) Total: 1,250. (15i) Percent paid: 100 percent. 15a. NUMBER OF COPIES OF SINGLE ISSUE PUBLISHED NEAREST TO FILING DATE: (a) Total Number of Copies (Net Press Run): 1,250. 15b. Paid Circulation: (15b.1) Mailed Outside County: 948. (15b.2) Mailed In County: 0. (15b.3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails: 0. (15b.4) Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail): 302 (15c) Total Paid Distribution: 1,250. (15f) Total Distribution: 1,250. (15g): Copies Not Distributed: 0. (15h) Total: 1,250. (15i) Percent Paid: 100 percent. (16) This information to be published in the November, 2019 issue of the publication. (17) Signed (x), Michael Plett, Treasurer.

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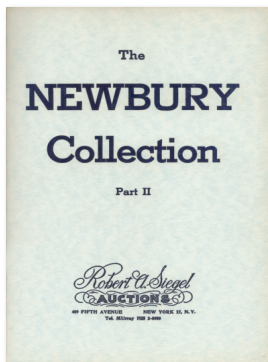
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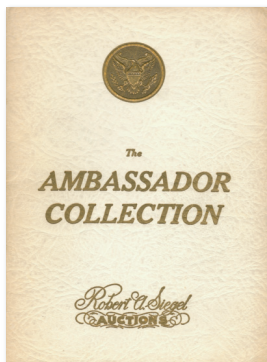
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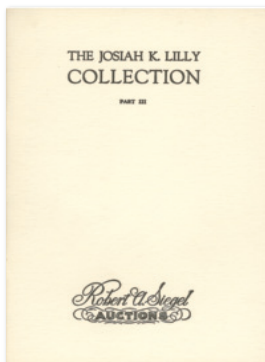
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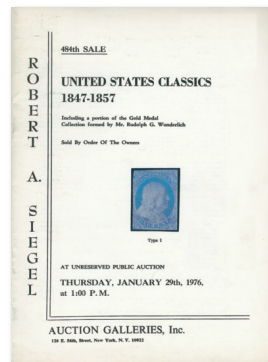
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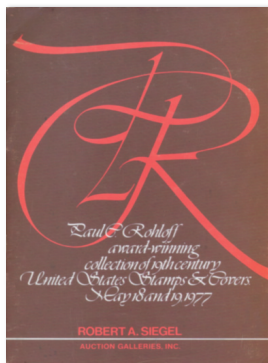
Ambassador 1966



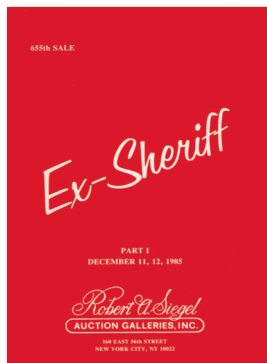
Lilly 1967



Wunderlich 1976



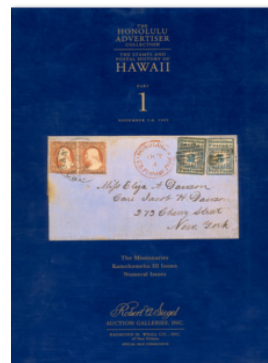
Rohloff 1977



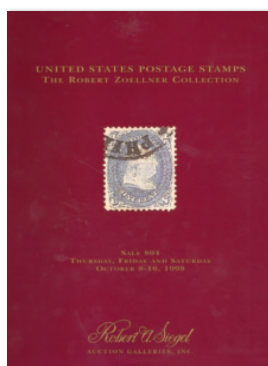
Sheriff 1985



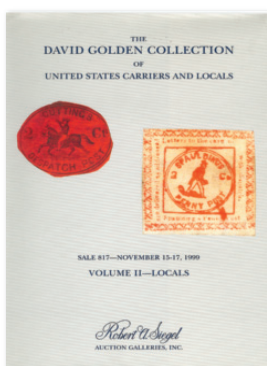
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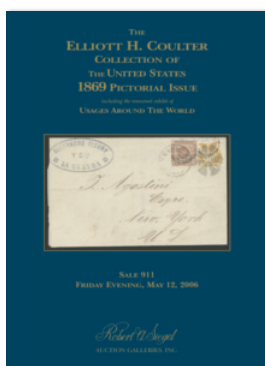
Honolulu Advertiser 1995



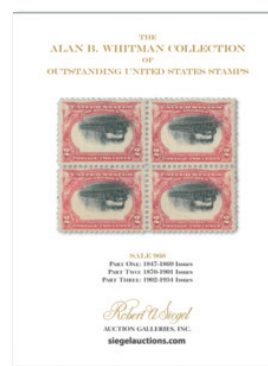
Zoellner 1998



Golden 1999



Coulter 2006



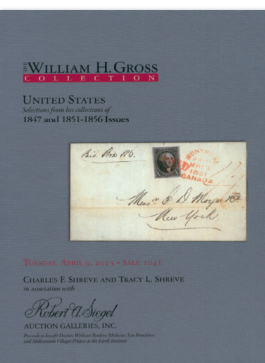
Whitman 2009



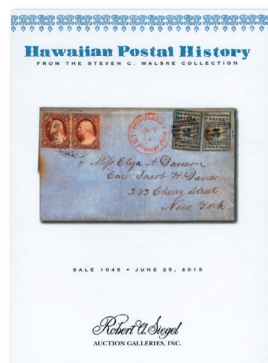
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