

The

# Chronicle

of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues



Advertising collar on a drop letter posted at Detroit in the mid 1850s. The 1¢ 1851 Type IV stamp is perfectly placed within the dark blue cameo-style advertisement of Bush, Barnes & Co., a Detroit printing supply firm. From "Framing The 1851 Issue: Early Advertising and Propaganda Collars," by Chip Gliedman in this issue.

February 2020

Volume 72, No. 1

Whole No. 265

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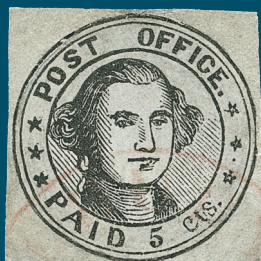
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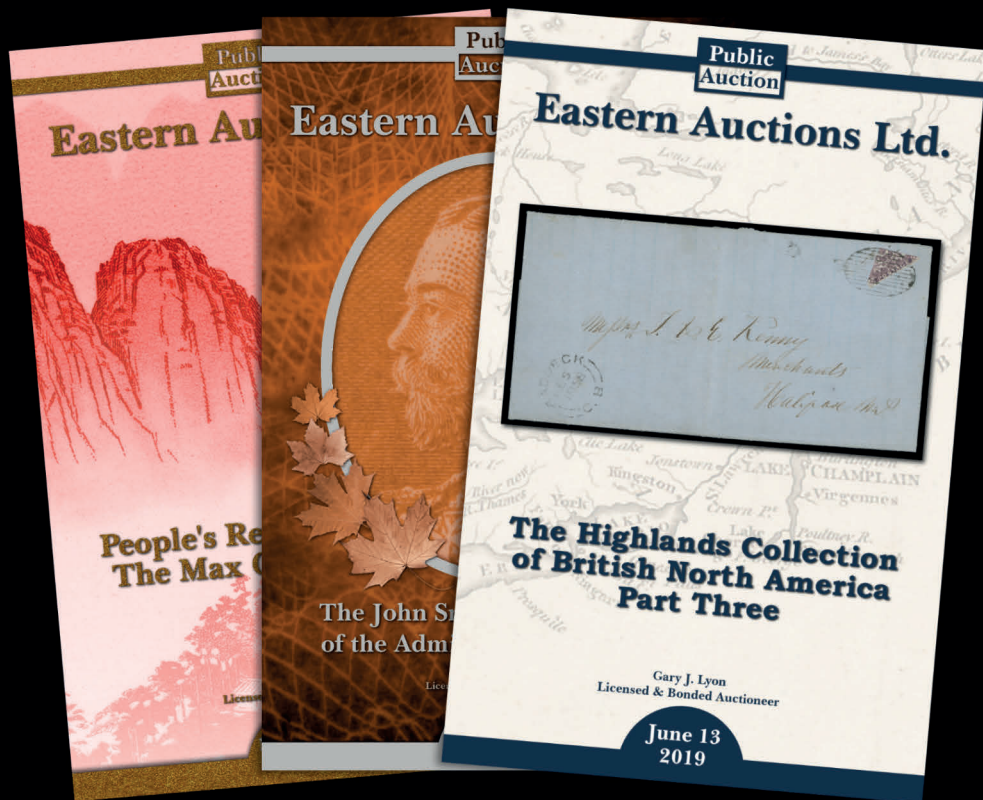
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# The Chronicle

## of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues

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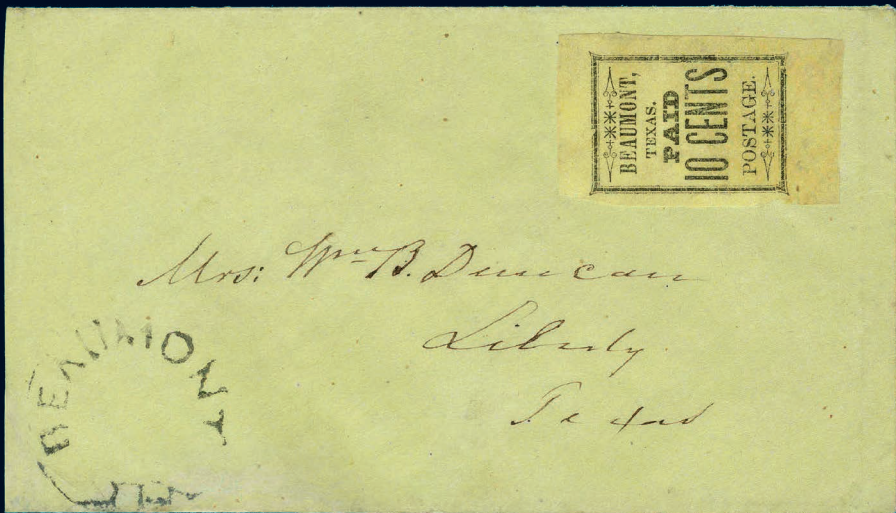
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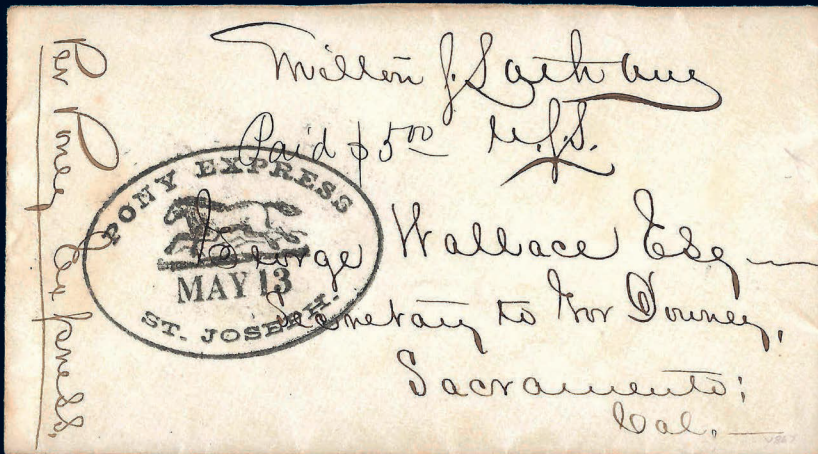


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Provenance:

Louis Grunin, Gordon Eubanks

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## CONTENTS

THE EDITOR'S PAGE	
In This Issue: Classics Society Expands its Scope <i>by Michael Laurence</i> .....	11
THE PRE-STAMP AND STAMPLESS PERIOD	
The Free Franks of Benjamin Franklin <i>by Timothy P. O'Connor, M.D.</i> .....	13
Earliest Known Postally Rated Cover from New Jersey <i>by Vernon R. Morris Jr., M.D.</i> .....	28
THE 1847 PERIOD	
Plate Varieties on 5¢ 1847 Stamps <i>by Gordon Eubanks</i> .....	33
THE 1851 PERIOD	
Framing the 1851 Issue: Early Advertising and Propaganda Covers <i>by Chip Gliedman</i> .....	43
THE 1861 PERIOD	
Patriotic Advertising Envelopes of Publishers and Sellers of Civil War Patriotic Covers <i>by James W. Milgram, M.D.</i> .....	48
SPECIAL FEATURE	
Tales of the Civil War Blockade: the Government-Owned <i>Robert E. Lee</i> <i>by Steven Walske</i> .....	64
THE FOREIGN MAILS	
Foreign Registered Mail 1855-75, Part Three: German <i>by James W. Milgram, M.D.</i> .....	72
Via Navassa: Mail from Haiti to and through the United States <i>by Ken Lawrence</i> .....	93
THE COVER CORNER.....	102
ADVERTISER INDEX.....	81

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## THE EDITOR'S PAGE

MICHAEL LAURENCE

### CLASSICS SOCIETY EXPANDS ITS SCOPE

When the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society launched the *Chronicle* as a quarterly magazine in 1963, coverage extended only through the 1861 stamps. The publication had four sections: the 1847 section (edited by Hugh and David Baker); the 1851-60 section (Tracy Simpson); the 1861 section (Henry Meyer); and the transatlantic mails section (George Hargest). I remember how excited I was when that first *Chronicle* showed up in my mailbox—though I was disappointed that its scope did not extend to include my collecting specialty, the U.S. 1869 stamps. Upon inquiry, I learned that the 1869 stamps were *too recent*. To be considered classics, stamps had to be at least 100 years old.

That arbitrary definition was apparently rooted in the tax and customs codes of the United States, where to receive favorable treatment as “antique” an item had to be over 100 years old. How this tax-related definition got conflated with philately is a mystery, but the passage of time soon set things straight. The coverage of the *Chronicle* expanded in both directions. An 1869 section was added in 1974; I was our first 1869 editor.

As a specialty collector group, the USPCS was several decades junior to the Bureau Issues Association, established in the 1920s and devoted to the stamps printed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The monthly BIA publication, *The Bureau Specialist*, lived up to its name by focusing exclusively on Bureau-printed stamps. These began in 1894 with the First Bureau definitives (starting with the 1¢ Franklin stamp, Scott 249) and the Trans-Mississippi commemorative series that followed.

Thus was established a boundary that long demarked our two groups. The USPCS and its publications embraced everything up to the Bureau, and the Bureau Issues Association took on everything thereafter. But as time passed the landscape changed. The United States Postal Service still churns out stamps, which collectors still purchase and study. But the Bureau no longer prints them. Recognizing this evolution, the Bureau Issues Association 20 years ago renamed itself the United States Stamp Society. Its publication became *The United States Specialist*.

Now it's our turn to make a change. At our last annual meeting, the USPCS directors voted unanimously to expand the focus of our Society to include the stamps and postal history of the entire 19th century. This move was announced by President Fred Gregory in the November *Chatter*. As a practical matter, this means the *Chronicle* is now open to articles discussing the First Bureau stamps, the Trans-Mississippi commemoratives and all aspects of the postal history of the United States and its territories during the last decade of the 19th century. Ken Lawrence's article on mail from Haiti to the U.S. sent via Navassa Island (page 93) is just a foretaste of what is to come. From a rates-and-routes standpoint, foreign mail from this era might be less challenging than pre-UPU mail, but there's an abundance of combinations, markings and other usages, both domestic and foreign. And of course the stamps themselves are eminently worthy of study.

So if you collect or just appreciate the First Bureau stamps and/or the Trans-Mississippi, your interest should soon be piqued by our expanded content. And if you have specific articles or article ideas that might fit, by all means speak up. We defer for a while the question of adding a new section editor to manage this new category.

While the classic era now officially ends on December 31, 1900, its beginnings keep creeping backward. Our stampless section this issue contains two articles on Colonial postal history. A short piece from Vernon R. Morris Jr. (page 28) presents a newly discovered

1721 letter that now becomes the earliest recorded postally-rated cover from New Jersey. And the section leads off with an important article from Timothy P. O'Connor on the free franks of Benjamin Franklin. O'Connor went through the *Franklin Papers* at Yale, almost 50 volumes, to record all known Franklin letters. Then he went to the various east-coast archives where the originals repose, to inspect items of special interest. The resultant article includes a tabular listing of all known archival Franklin free franks. Arranging the data chronologically enables observations about the timing (and thus the significance) of the famous "BFreeFranklin" markings. O'Connor's article is an archival *tour de force*—as well as an enjoyable read.

In our 1847 section, Gordon Eubanks continues his visual exploration of the plate varieties of the 1847 stamps. Launched in November with a much-acclaimed presentation of the 10¢ stamps, Eubanks' work concludes in this issue (page 33) with the 5¢ stamps. Most of the named plate varieties on the 1847 stamps have been listed in the specialized catalog since the 1920s, always without sufficient information (or clear enough illustrations) to enable collectors to see what these varieties actually look like. Having the material at hand, and taking full advantage of the digital publishing toolkit (including eight-times-lifesize photographic enlargements), Eubanks once and for all time has illustrated the actual features that distinguish these elusive and highly collectible varieties.

The ever-prolific James Milgram contributes two articles to this issue. Our Foreign Mails section leads off (page 72) with the third installment of Milgram's ongoing exploration of registered mail to foreign countries. Milgram's subject this time is Germany and the German states; a concluding installment is planned for later this year. And in our 1861 section (page 48), Milgram contributes an interesting article on patriotic advertising envelopes created by makers and vendors of patriotic covers. The article concludes with some well-documented insights into how patriotic envelopes were actually sold to the public.

In our 1851 section, Chip Gliedman provides a survey article (page 43) about advertising collars on covers franked with 1851 stamps. The eye-catching illustration on our cover this issue is taken from Gliedman's article. And Steven Walske continues his series on blockade-run covers and the vessels that carried them during the American Civil War. Walske's subject this time is a Scottish side-wheeler that began life as *Giraffe* but did most of its successful blockade-running as the *Robert E. Lee*. Full sailing data is included. ■

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THE FREE FRANKS OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN  
AS DOCUMENTED IN *THE PAPERS OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN*

TIMOTHY P. O'CONNOR, M.D.

Introduction

Benjamin Franklin is arguably the most famous postmaster in American history. All aspects of his administrations are worthy of study. This report focuses on one small facet of his postal historical legacy, his free franks. A question to be probed is the significance of his famous *double entendre* “BFreeFranklin” manuscript postmark (an example of which is shown in Figure 1), which this study places in its historical context.

Background

In the November 2011 *Chronicle*, Mark Schwartz and I reviewed free mail or free franked mail from the colonial era.<sup>1</sup> Some of this discussion is worth reiterating. Early



Figure 1. “BFreeFranklin” on an address panel detached from a letter sent by Franklin in London to his wife, Deborah, in Philadelphia. Because the content is not present, the specific date cannot be known, but a likely year date is 1766. The red handstamped “FREE” is a London marking. Detached address panels such as this one are not recorded in the Franklin Papers.

British colonists transplanted their English traditions to North America, including free mail for royals, government dignitaries and other worthies, a practice that was codified in Commonwealth England in 1652 and continued with the Restoration in 1660. Some form of the “On His Majesty’s Service” endorsement would suffice. In America, we’ve seen such letters from the era of King Philip’s War (1675-76), when fresh information was literally life-saving. Previously a governmental prerogative, the franking privilege was first legislated in America in the Neale Patent of 1693:

**Section 9: That all letters of Publick Concernment for their majesties’ service, from time to time, and at all times, shall be received and dispatched away, and delivered with all possible speed, according to the respective directions thereon, free of all charge, and without demanding or receiving any money or pay for the same....**

It is worth noting that the ten letters reviewed in the O’Connor-Schwartz article were letters sent *to* persons who had the free mail privilege. Six were sent by Boston Postmaster Jonathan Campbell, but none of these represented the postmaster exercising a franking right for personal use—a privilege which did not then exist. These letters went free because their addressee had the franking privilege.

In America, the first statutory basis for a postmaster franking privilege appeared as Item 17 of the *Instructions to Postmasters* issued in 1753 by Franklin and William Hunter. The two were then Deputy Postmasters General for North America:<sup>2</sup>

**17. Item. You are not hereafter to suffer any letter or Pacquet, to pass in His Majesty’s mail post free, unless you receive a special order from us for that Purpose. And hereupon, we now direct, that all Deputy Postmasters, bearing Commission immediately from us shall have all the letters to and from themselves Postfree; always meaning that they shall not, under the colour of this privilege otherwise, convey letters for other people, who would be chargeable for the postage thereof.**

This declaration extended the franking privilege to all postmasters deputized by Franklin and Hunter; and it included postmasters’ personal mail.

### **Research method: the Franklin Papers**

Since 1959, the *Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (hereafter referred to as “the Papers”), sponsored by the American Philosophical Society and Yale University, have comprised an extraordinary and comprehensive compilation. Edited at Yale, the Papers gather and publish in multiple volumes material held at various universities, historical societies, public libraries, hospitals, museums, churches, state archives and private collections. While the compilation aspires to completeness, this worthy goal is probably unachievable. New Frankliniana was being recognized even as I was writing this article.

The Papers faithfully record every known Franklin letter, including address panels, docketing and postal markings when those accompany. The majority of Franklin’s letters were not carried in a public post, and many of the letters documented in the Papers are second-hand survivors, known only through letter books or retained copies. From the thousands of Franklin letters documented in the the Papers, including eight new ones from a recent addendum,<sup>3</sup> I identified 935 autographed letter sheets, 406 of which included address panels.

Hoping to divine some insights into what Franklin intended by the various forms of free frank that he used, I created a spreadsheet for the letters, containing information in such important categories as date, nature of the franking, origin, destination, recipient, content, location of the letter and a correlation with contemporary events. I thought that arranging this information in chronological order might provoke new insights. At the outset, I harbored the illusion that “official” letters might bear a different franking than personal letters.

Over his long life, Franklin held three separate postmaster positions, all with the potential for free franking. First, he was the Postmaster of Philadelphia, appointed in early October 1737 (age 32) by Colonel Alexander Spotswood, who was Crown Postmaster Gen-



eral. Franklin succeeded Andrew Bradford, whose fiscal skills were lacking. The account books of the Philadelphia Post Office were much in disarray. Franklin's self-taught auditing skills soon enabled him to create order.

Second, he advanced to the position of Deputy Postmaster General (DPMG) for North America on August 10, 1753, sharing this role with William Hunter of Williamsburg, Virginia. Again, Franklin's accounting skills were useful, helping the Crown Post Office turn an eventual profit. He would last in the DPMG position until early 1774, when he was dismissed in the lead-up to the American Revolution.

Finally, he became Postmaster General of the Continental Congress on May 26, 1775, a position he occupied until October 26, 1776, when he resigned to begin his ambassadorial career in France. These three separate postmaster positions carried a free franking privilege and are analyzed in this article.

### **Explanation of the tabular data**

Table 1 presents the spreadsheet data in a format that has been abbreviated to fit the narrow *Chronicle* page size. As noted, from the 935 sent letters documented in the Papers, 406 still included the address panels. Of these, 133 (just about one-third) bore free franks of one sort or another. These are the covers described in Table 1.

Note that for the majority of surviving Franklin letters transcribed in the Papers, the address panels have been torn away. If a third of these detached address panels contained free franks, more than 200 additional franks, not listed in Table 1, are likely to survive within the collector universe. The proportion may well be much more than a third, because it's likely that many of these address panels were removed to capture an autograph. Some of these tear-aways, like the cover in Figure 1, probably repose in the collections of USPCS members. Because they are no longer attached to their original letter content, such covers usually cannot be assigned a specific date of origin. Such covers are not included in the Table 1 listing, which makes no pretense of recording all surviving Franklin franks. Table 1 is simply a listing of those covers that are documented in the Franklin Papers. But for scholarly analysis, this is a good beginning.

Table 1 records 24 covers from the period (October 1737–August 1753) when Franklin was Postmaster of Philadelphia. From August 10, 1753 through January 31, 1774, the period in which Franklin was DPMG for North America, the record shows 93 covers. Eleven covers are listed from the 15 months (5-26-1775–10-26-1776) when he was PMG of the Continental Congress Post.

I found in the Papers no free franks from the 11 weeks (5-5-75–7-25-75) when Franklin was entitled to the privilege as a “sitting member of the Continental Congress.” Only five free franks are noted from his ambassadorial years in France; these are listed and discussed as well, even though they had no legal basis as free franks. There are no franks from the years before Franklin assumed his first postmaster position. For reasons that will be made clear, the Table I listings includes three franks from Franklin's colleague John Foxcroft.

The remaining Franklin letters with address panels but no franks, 278 in all, reached their destinations in a variety of ways—including “per favor” of a traveler, via a ship's captain, and most frequently without any designation as to how they traveled. I found just two letters showing postal rates and only one (discussed extensively below) on which the thrifty Franklin actually used his own money to post a letter.

### **Covers**

The first of the 24 covers from Franklin's years as postmaster of Philadelphia is the earliest known frank, a “Free BF” marking, on a letter dated September 13, 1744. The

*(text continued on page 20)*

**TABLE 1**  
**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN FREE FRANKS**  
**AS RECORDED IN *THE PAPERS OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN***

<b>10/1737: FRANKLIN APPOINTED POSTMASTER OF PHILADELPHIA</b>					
<b>Date</b>	<b>BF franking</b>	<b>Origin/Destination</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Vol</b>	<b>Location</b>
9/13/1744	Free BF	Phila/New York	Cadwallader Colden	2	Yale
6/18/1745	Free BFranklin		Samuel Johnson	A	
2/1746	Free BFranklin	Phila/Coldenham, NY	Cadwallader Colden	3	NYHS
5/29/1746	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	William Vassall	3	Harvard
6/19/1746	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	William Vassall	3	Harvard
7/10/1746	Free BFranklin	Phila/New York	Cadwallader Colden	3	NYHS
2/10/1747	Free BFranklin	Phila/New Haven	Thomas Darling	3	private
3/27/1747	Free BFranklin	Phila/New Haven	Thomas Darling	3	private
8/13/1747	Free BFranklin	Phila/New York	Cadwallader Colden	3	NYHS
11/27/1747	Free BFranklin	Phila/New York	Cadwallader Colden	3	NYHS
1/27/1748	Free BFranklin	Phila/Coldenham, NY	Cadwallader Colden	3	NYHS
9/13/1750	Free BFranklin	Phila/Stratford Ct	Samuel Johnson	4	Columbia
10/11/1750	Free BFranklin	Phila/New York	Cadwallader Colden	4	NYHS
11/22/1750	Free BFranklin	Phila/Stratford Ct	Samuel Johnson	4	NYPL
10/31/1751	Free BFranklin	Phila/New York	Cadwallader Colden	4	HSP
12/24/1751	Free BFranklin	Phila/Stratford Ct	Samuel Johnson	4	Columbia
2/11/1752	Free BFranklin	Phila/Killingworth Ct	Rev Jared Eliot	4	Yale
5/14/1752	Free BFranklin	Phila/New York	Cadwallader Colden	4	NYHS
7/2/1752	Free BFranklin	Phila/Ct	Samuel Johnson	4	Columbia
12/8/1752	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	John Franklin	4	NYAM
2/28/1753	Free BFranklin	Phila/Coldenham, NY	Cadwallader Colden	4	NYHS
4/12/1753	Free BF	Phila/Coldenham, NY	Cadwallader Colden	4	NYHS
5/3/1753	Free BF	Phila/Long Island	William Smith	4	HSP
7/16/1753	Free BFranklin	Boston/Phila	Hugh Roberts	5	private
<b>8-10-1753: FRANKLIN APPOINTED DEPUTY PMG FOR NORTH AMERICA</b>					
8/20/1753	Free BFranklin	NY/New Haven	Rev. Clap	5	private
10/25/1753	Free BFranklin	Phila/New York	Cadwallader Colden	5	private
11/30/1753	Free BFranklin		Darling & Whiting	A	
12/13/1753	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	James Bowdoin	5	private
1/1/1754	Free	Phila/Coldenham, NY	Cadwallader Colden	5	NYHS
5/29/1755	Free BFranklin	Phila/Lancaster Pa	Edward Shippen	6	Princeton
7/3/1755	Free BFranklin	Phila/Hempfield Pa	James Wright	6	Yale
9/11/1755	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	Thomas Hancock	6	Harvard
10/16/1755	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	Jonathan Williams	6	APS

<b>Date</b>	<b>BF franking</b>	<b>Origin/Destination</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Vol</b>	<b>Location</b>
12/3/1755	Free BFranklin		Capt. John Hunter	A	
3/5/1756	Free	Phila/Boston	Eliz Hubbart	6	APS
6/10/1756	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	Jane Mecom	6	APS
6/10/1756	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	Jonathan Williams	6	CHS
1754-58	Free BFranklin		Catharine Ray	A	
8/26/1756	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	Catharine Ray	6	APS
3/24/1757	Free BFranklin	Phila/Westerly RI	Sam Ward	7	NA
4/19/1757	Free BFranklin	NY/Boston	Jane Mecom	7	APS
5/23/1757	Free BFranklin	NY/Newport RI	Rev Ezra Stiles	7	Penn
6/10/1758	Free BFranklin	London/Phila	Joseph Galloway	8	Yale
4/9/1761	Free BFranklin	London/Boston	David Hall	9	BPL
10/9/1761	Free BFranklin	London/Hampton Va.	Col. John Hunter	9	LC
12/10/1761	Free BFranklin	London/Westerly RI	Dr. Joshua Babcock	9	Yale
12/10/1761	Free BFranklin	London/Phila	David Hall	9	RU
12/10/1761	Free BFranklin	London/Braintree Ma	Edmund Quincy	9	MHS
1/9/1762	Free BFranklin	London/Phila	Ed Pennington	10	MHS
11/11/1762	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	Jane Mecom	10	APS
11/25/1762	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	Jane Mecom	10	APS
11/25/1762	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	Jonathan Williams	10	private
12/30/1762	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	Jane Mecom	A	
5/20/1763	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	Jane Mecom	10	APS
7/25/1763	Free BFranklin		Jared Ingersoll	A	
6/19/1763	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	Jane Mecom	10	APS
9/5/1763	Free BFranklin	Boston/Westerly RI	Dr. Joshua Babcock	10	Yale
10/18/1763	Free BFranklin	Boston/Westerly RI	Dr. Joshua Babcock	10	WCU
10/31/1763	Free	NY/Phila	Deborah Franklin	10	APS
11/10/1763	Free BFranklin	Phila/Westerly RI	Dr. Joshua Babcock	10	Yale
11/28/1763	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	Jonathan Williams	10	HSP
1/16/1764	Free to N York BFranklin	Phila/London	Richard Jackson	11	APS
2/15/1764	Free BFranklin	Phila/Warwick RI	Caty Greene	11	APS
4/7/1764	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	Jonathan Williams	A	
4/21/1764	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	Jonathan Williams	11	private
7/10/1764	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	Jane Mecom	11	Harvard
7/24/1764	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	Jane Mecom	11	APS
11/3/1764	Free BFranklin	Phila/Boston	Jonathan Williams	11	Yale
2/9/1765	Free BFranklin	London/Boston	Deborah Franklin	12	APS
7/5/1765	Free BFranklin	London/Newport RI	Rev Ezra Stiles	12	Yale
7/8/1765	Free BFranklin	London/Phila	Samuel Rhoads	12	HSP
7/11/1765	Free BFranklin	London/Phila	Charles Thomson	12	LC

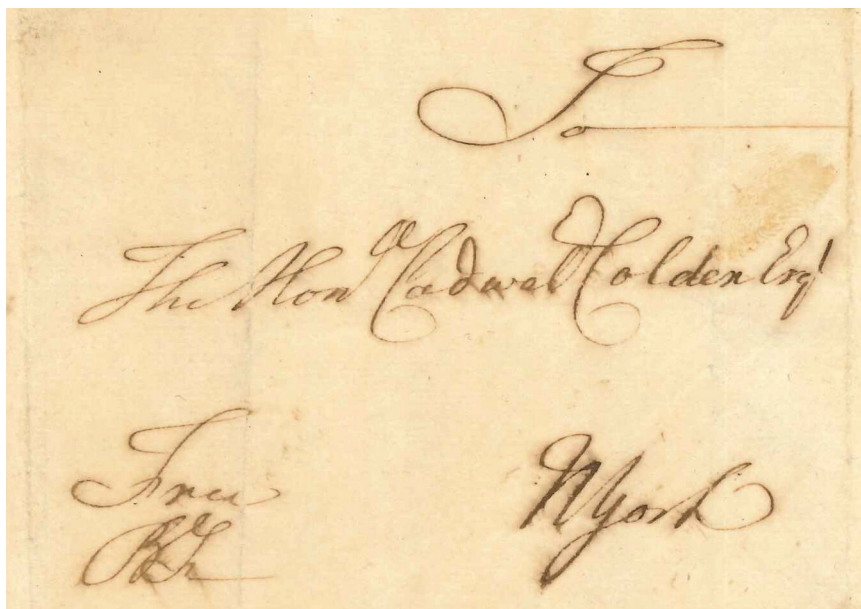
<b>Date</b>	<b>BF franking</b>	<b>Origin/Destination</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Vol</b>	<b>Location</b>
7/13/1765	Free BFranklin	London/Phila	Deborah Franklin	12	APS
8/9/1765	Free BFranklin	London/Phila	David Hall	12	HSP
9/14/1765	Free BFranklin	London/Phila	David Hall	12	Princeton
11/9/1765	Free BFranklin	London/Phila	Deborah Franklin	12	APS
11/9/1765	Free BFranklin	London/Phila	David Hall	12	APS
3/1/1766	Free BFranklin	London/Phila	Joseph Fox	13	private
5/9/1766	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Francis Hopkinson	13	HSP
5/9/1766	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Mary Hopkinson	13	HSP
6/13/1766	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Deborah Franklin	13	APS
12/15/1766	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Deborah Franklin	13	APS
2/25/1767	BFreeFranklin	London/Edinburgh	Lord Kaims	14	SRO
4/11/1767	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	John Ross	14	HSP
4/14/1767	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	David Hall	14	SCHS
11/17/1767	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Deborah Franklin	14	APS
2/28/1768	BFreeFranklin	London/Edinburgh	Lord Kaims	15	SRO
3/22/1768	BFreeFranklin	London/Edinburgh	Dr. Benjamin Rush	15	Dartmouth
5/14/1768	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	John Ross	15	HSP
6/11/1768	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Deborah Franklin	15	APS
3/1/1769	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Deborah Franklin	16	APS
7/9/1769	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Humphrey Marshall	16	private
9/29/1769	Free BF	London/Boston	Jane Mecom	16	APS
9/30/1769	Free BF	London/Boston	Samuel Cooper	16	BM
10/4/1769	Free BF	London/Boston	Jonathan Williams	16	APS
6/6/1770	BFreeFranklin	London/Boston	Jonathan Williams	17	APS
6/11/1770	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	David Hall	17	APS
6/26/1770	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Samuel Rhoads	17	HSP
10/3/1770	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Deborah Franklin	17	APS
5/1/1771	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Deborah Franklin	18	APS
6/5/1771	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Deborah Franklin	18	APS
10/27/1771	BFreeFranklin	Edinburg/London	William Strahan	18	Princeton
11/17/1771	BFreeFranklin	Edinburg/London	William Strahan	18	APS
11/5/1771	JFreeFoxcroft	Phila/London	to B Franklin	18	APS
2/2/1772	JFreeFoxcroft	Phila/London	to B Franklin	19	HSP
3/19/1772	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Deborah Franklin	19	APS
3/20/1772	BFreeFranklin	London/Chester Pa	Humphrey Marshall	19	Yale
3/20/1772	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	David Hall	19	Yale
7/14/1772	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Deborah Franklin	19	APS
10/7/1772	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	John Bartram	19	Haverford
10/7/1772	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Deborah Franklin	19	APS
12/2/1772	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Cadwallader Evans	19	APS

Date	BF franking	Origin/Destination	Recipient	Vol	Location
3/5/1773	BFreeFranklin	London/NY	David Colden	20	NYHS
4/6/1773	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Deborah Franklin	20	APS
7/6/1773	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Deborah Franklin	20	HSP
8/21/1773	BFreeFranklin	London/Liverpool	Peter Burdett	20	Yale
9/1/1773	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Deborah Franklin	20	APS
10/6/1773	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Deborah Franklin	20	APS
1/5/1774	BFreeFranklin	London/Phila	Samuel Rhoads	21	HSP
<b>5/30/1775: FRANKLIN APPOINTED PMG FOR THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS</b>					
8/27/1775	Free	Phila/Providence	PM Providence	22	APS
9/15/1775	JFreeFoxcroft		to BF	22	
10/16/1775	BFreeFranklin	HQ Cambridge	Jane Mecom	22	APS
11/24/1775	BFreeFranklin	Phila/Warwick RI		22	APS
3/24/1776	BFreeFranklin	Phila/Middleboro Ma	Jam. Bowdoin	22	MHS
5/12/1776	On the Service of the United Colonies		Phil Schuyler	22	NYPL
7/23/1776	BFreeFranklin	Phila/Burlington	John Lawrence	A	private
8/24/1776	BFreeFranklin	Phila/East Jersey	Col McKean	22	HSP
8/26/1776	BFreeFranklin	Phila/Perth Amboy	Col Bull	22	Author
9/19/1776	BFreeFranklin	Phila/Perth Amboy	William Temple	22	APS
9/22/1776	BFreeFranklin	Phila/Perth Amboy	William Temple	22	APS
9/28/1776	BFreeFranklin	Phila/Perth Amboy	William Temple	22	APS
<b>10/26/76: FRANKLIN RESIGNS PMG TO BECOME AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE</b>					
5/27/1777	BFreeFranklin	Paris/Boston	Thomas Cushing	24	MHS
5/27/1777	BFreeFranklin	Paris/Boston	Jonathan Williams	24	AJHS
2/27/1778	BFreeFranklin	Passy/Boston	Thomas Cushing	25	Yale
2/28/1778	BFreeFranklin	Passy/Boston	Caty Greene	25	APS
2/28/1778	BFreeFranklin		Benj Austin	A	
<p>"Date" column gives the date on which the franked letter was written, usually taken from the dateline. "BF franking" column gives the precise text of the frank used. "Vol" column provides the volume number in the Franklin Papers where the transcribed text of the designated letter can be found; "A" designates recent discoveries that have not yet been published in the Franklin Papers. "Location" column gives the name of the archival institution where the original reposes. AJHS=American Jewish Historical Society; APS=American Philosophical Society; Columbia=Columbia University; BM=British Museum; CHS=Connecticut Historical Society; Dartmouth=Dartmouth College; Haverford=Haverford College; Harvard=Harvard University; HSP=Historical Society of Pennsylvania; LC=Library of Congress; MHS=Massachusetts Historical Society; NA=Nantucket Atheneum; NYAM=New York Academy of Medicine; NYPL=New York Public Library; NYHS=New-York Historical Society; Penn=University of Pennsylvania; Princeton=Princeton University; RU=Rowan University (formerly Glassboro State College); SCHS=Salem County Historical Society of New Jersey ; SRO= Scottish Record Office; WCU=West Chester University; Yale=Yale University.</p>					

*(text continued from page 15)*

address panel from this letter is shown as Figure 2. The “Free BF” marking appears at lower left. The cover is addressed in Franklin’s distinctive handwriting to “The Hon Cadwal Colden Esq, New York.”

Cadwallader Colden is a frequent Franklin correspondent, 17 years older. Born in Scotland of Irish parents, he was educated at the University of Edinburgh and in medicine in London. He moved to Philadelphia but then relocated to New York, becoming a member of the Governor’s Council in 1721. He is connected to Franklin via their shared interest in



**Figure 2. The earliest known American postmaster free frank: “Free BF” on a letter datelined September 13, 1744 and addressed to Cadwallader Colden in New York, a frequent correspondent of Franklin. Additionally, this is the earliest recorded Benjamin Franklin free frank. Franklin Papers Volume 2. The original reposes in the Yale University Library.**

explaining the natural world. Colden proposed a theory of “fluxions” and introduced Franklin to the great European philosophers of the day. He was burned in effigy in 1765 for his decision, as Lieutenant Governor of New York, to enforce the Stamp Act. In the Figure 2 letter, which reposes in the Yale University Library, Franklin introduces Dr. John Mitchell of Virginia to Colden.

This is the earliest recorded American Postmaster free frank, and clearly precedes any statutory announcement of the privilege. Apparently, that privilege was felt to be customary, a vestige of English tradition. From this period, there are three “Free BF” markings and 21 “Free BFranklin” markings. The content of all these Franklin letters is personal, or at least not related to the functioning of the Crown Post Office or the Colony of Pennsylvania. Some of the franks, like Figure 2, grace letters to fellow natural philosophers on subjects of science, weather, agronomy or manufacture. But the majority were sent to family. It seems likely that Franklin viewed the franking privilege as part of his postmaster compensation.

As noted, I found 93 franks from Franklin’s years as Deputy Postmaster General under the British crown. The first 53 are franked “Free BFranklin” (50) or some minor variation of this (3). Figure 3, from the Nantucket Atheneum, is an example, internally datelined Philadelphia, March 24, 1757 (shortly before Franklin set sail for London) and

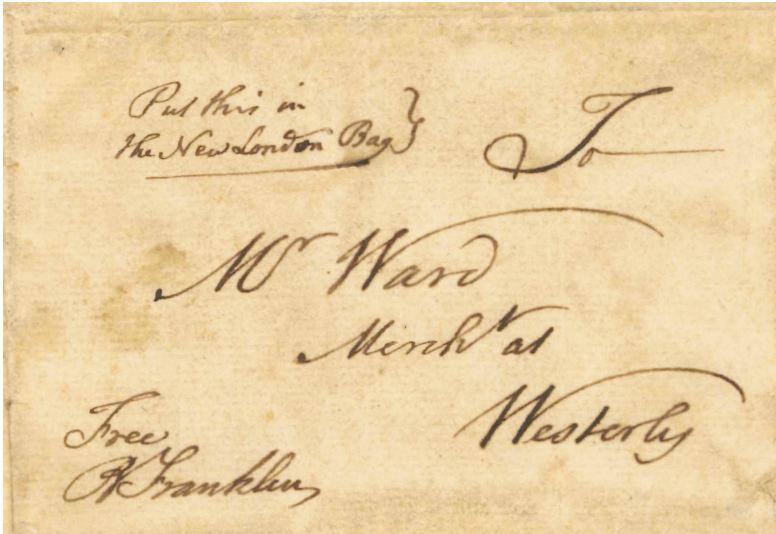


Figure 3. “Free BFranklin” on a letter datelined Philadelphia, March 24, 1757, addressed to Samuel Ward, merchant in Westerly, Rhode Island. Franklin’s blunt endorsement at top—“Put this in the New London Bag”—shows his familiarity with the mail service he supervised. Papers Volume 7, original in the Nantucket Atheneum.

sent to Samuel Ward in Westerly, Rhode Island.

In addition to the “Free BFranklin” franking at lower left, this letter is remarkable for Franklin’s blunt instruction at top: “Put this in the New London Bag.” Westerly is 16 miles from New London and the next colonial post office, at Newport, was 40 miles (and two ferry crossings) farther away. Ward would surely pick up his mail at New London, and Franklin was well aware of this.

In this letter Franklin scientifically describes two types of “Indian corn,” analyzing their usefulness and growth patterns. The recipient of this information, merchant Samuel Ward, was brother-in-law of Catherine Ray Greene. “Caty” Greene was a romantic liaison of Franklin’s, much younger and a lifelong correspondent. At this time, the Postmaster of Philadelphia was William Dunlap, Franklin’s nephew by marriage. Franklin secured the position for him as a way of helping his niece’s household. But Dunlap was less than diligent and ultimately a disappointment.

A minor variant of the “Free BFranklin” marking appears on the cover in Figure 4, from the archive of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. The enclosed letter is datelined Philadelphia, January 16, 1764. It was sent via New York to London, addressed to Richard Jackson, a member of Parliament for Weymouth, in Dorset, England. Known as

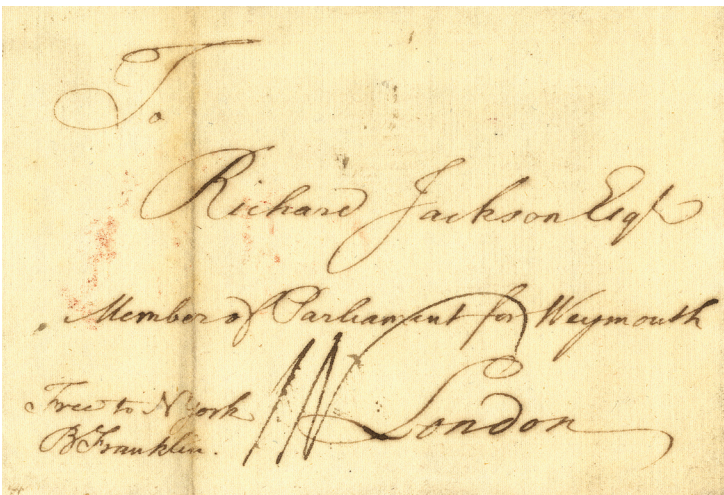


Figure 4. “Free to New York, BFranklin,” on a letter datelined Philadelphia January 16, 1764 and sent to Richard Jackson, a colonial agent for Pennsylvania, who was entitled to free mail as a Member of Parliament. The one shilling Falmouth Packet fee (manuscript “1N”) had to be collected. Franklin Papers Volume 11, original in the archive of the American Philosophical Society.

“the Omniscient Jackson,” the recipient was a brilliant London barrister who advocated for a more permissive colonial policy and served as a colonial agent for Pennsylvania. In his letter, Franklin discusses the size of Pennsylvania’s portion of the Parliamentary grant of 1760, disbursed in 1762, and felt by the Crown to be an overpayment.

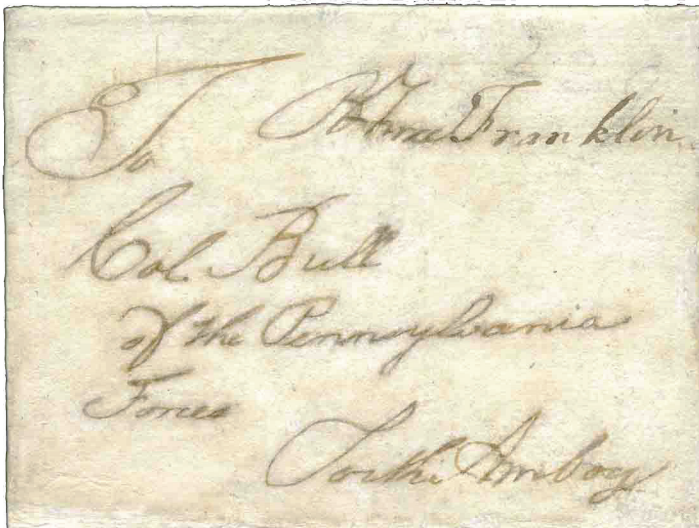
Franklin’s free frank beneath the address (“Free to New York, BFranklin”) absolved Jackson of the American postage and he was entitled to free mail as a member of parliament. The 1 shilling Falmouth packet fee (which appears as a manuscript “IN” on the address panel) was Jackson’s to deal with. A “20 FE” Bishop mark, on reverse and not shown in Figure 4, was applied in London. This is one of only two letters from Franklin that actually shows a postal rate.

### Important change in syntax

Of great interest to collectors is the syntactical change in Franklin’s free franking that took place in the spring of 1766. The last recorded “Free BFranklin” endorsement appears on a letter datelined March 1, 1766. The next franking—the first “BFreeFranklin”—is recorded from May 9, 1766. With the interesting exception of just three letters, all the subsequent franks from Franklin’s remaining tenure as DPMG for the Crown—36 letters in all—show the “BFreeFranklin” marking. The timing and historical context of this abrupt change in syntax is analyzed below.

To conclude explication of the tabular data, 11 free franks are known from Franklin’s tenure as PMG under the Continental Congress. Nine of these are the “BFreeFranklin” style. A tenth cover, posted when Franklin was on an information-gathering expedition to Canada after the conquest of Montreal, is endorsed “On the Service of the United Colonies.” The eleventh is a simple “Free,” but the cover is addressed to the Postmaster of Providence, who himself held a free mail privilege.

Figure 5 is an example of the “BFreeFranklin” endorsement applied by Franklin while he was Postmaster General for the Continental Congress. The letter within is datelined Philadelphia, August 26, 1776. The reverse, not shown in Figure 5, bears a PHILA AUG 27 “high A” handstamped straightline postmark. The letter is addressed to a Colonel



**Figure 5. “BFreeFranklin” on a letter datelined August 26, 1776. This is one of two recorded non-archival free franks from Franklin’s tenure as Postmaster General under the Continental Congress. Author’s collection.**



Bull “of the Pennsylvania forces” at South Amboy, New Jersey. Franklin served on many Committees for the Continental Congress and here responds to Bull’s request for leave from service; apparently, the Colonel’s officers refused to serve under him. Reference to Table 1 will reveal that the Figure 5 cover is one of just two free franks of Franklin as PMG for the Continental Congress that do not repose in an archive.

### Conclusions

The Papers offer no clues that would expand our understanding of why Franklin chose to exercise a franking privilege in 1744, several years before there was any statutory basis for the practice. Surviving letters show no earlier free franks. But this practice was ongoing in the 1740s, as is suggested by another postmaster free franking, noted from 1746, from Eleazar Russell in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The address panel of this cover is shown in Figure 6. Docketed Quaker-style “From John Sherburne Rec’d 2nd of 5th mon, 1746,” this cover traveled free to merchant John Reynell in Philadelphia, franked (at lower left) “Free E. Russell Jun., Post Master, Portsmouth.” Neither Sherburne nor Reynell had the franking privilege, so this is likely a misuse of the postmaster privilege—a postmaster franking to favor a friend—that Franklin would correct in 1753 under Item 17 of his Instructions to Postmasters, quoted earlier. The Sherburnes were prominent residents of the Portsmouth area, arriving New Hampshire from England in 1631.

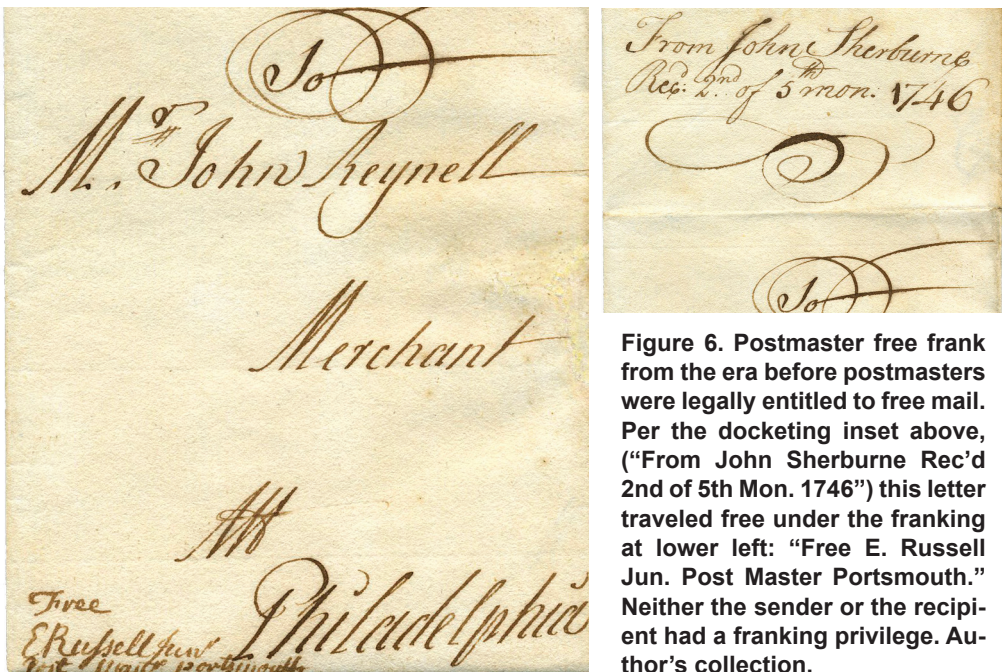


Figure 6. Postmaster free frank from the era before postmasters were legally entitled to free mail. Per the docketing inset above, (“From John Sherburne Rec’d 2nd of 5th Mon. 1746”) this letter traveled free under the franking at lower left: “Free E. Russell Jun. Post Master Portsmouth.” Neither the sender or the recipient had a franking privilege. Author’s collection.

Additionally, the Papers include Franklin’s Philadelphia post office record books. One of these, the “Post Office Book for May 25, 1748,” records that “the Northern Post rider arrived bearing 25 letters from Boston, 4 from Rhode Island, 30 from New York” and one Way letter. Four letters were marked “free.” It’s possible, even likely, that these included other postmaster free franks. Based on this and other evidence, I believe postmaster free franking was ubiquitous in the mid-1740s.

While acting as Deputy Postmaster General under the British crown, Benjamin Franklin made two extended trips to England. On both these trips, he was performing duties of a colonial agent, representing a number of colonies in addition to Pennsylvania. His first

visit, of five years (1757-62), was intended to pressure the Penn family to pay taxes on their extensive land and property holdings on America. Franklin was unsuccessful in achieving this objective.

He subsequently returned to England for 10 years (December 1764 to March 1775) to attend to colonial business and to campaign for an adjustment to postal rates in North America (successful, resulted in the “Act of King George III Altering Certain Postal Rates,” October 1765), and also to contest and appeal the various Crown acts negatively impacting the colonies. Chief among these was the odious Stamp Act, first proposed by George Lord Grenville in a committee speech in March of 1764. Franklin and other colonial agents, aware of the impending Stamp Tax, met with Grenville in February 1765, proposing alternative ways for the Crown to raise revenue to pay wartime expenses. Again Franklin failed. King George III signed the act into force March 22, 1765. Convulsions shook the American colonies, uniting disparate factions in opposition to the hated Stamp Act.

### **Advent of “BFreeFranklin” franks**

While America protested, Franklin, increasingly frustrated by the Crown’s resistance to compromise, worked with representatives of the British merchant class and other colonial agents, to ameliorate the status quo. Between 1765 and 1766, Franklin published 55 letters and articles in the London press, hoping to stir public pressure on the Crown’s ministers. He was examined by “The Committee of the Whole” on February 13, 1766. Records indicate he provided satisfactory answers to all questions.<sup>4</sup> On February 22, “The Committee” voted for repeal, and sent the recommendation to the King. Franklin’s last recorded “Free BFranklin” is March 1, 1766. King George III signed the repeal into law on March 18, 1766. Franklin’s next recorded frank, on May 9, 1766, is the first of the famous “BFreeFranklin” varieties.

I believe this variation was used by Franklin as a “huzzah” to celebrate his efforts (and those of many others) that resulted in this victory for the colonies. The data in Table 1 affirms that 38 more Franklin free franks are documented in the Papers, and (except for three “Free BF” endorsements from a period of just one week) all are the joyous “BFreeFranklin” style.

In the early 1770s, Franklin was scathingly criticized by Parliament for his involvement in the leaking (to revolutionaries in Boston) of letters from Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson on the subject of the Townshend Acts and the protests against them. As a consequence, Franklin was dismissed from his DPMG position on January 31, 1774 by Anthony Todd of the General Post Office in London. He remained in London for more than a year, returning to America on May 5, 1775, three weeks after the battles of Lexington and Concord.

### **Curiosities**

The cover census data in Table 1 reveals four significant curiosities.

First, the data identifies three anomalous covers in the otherwise continuous “BFreeFranklin era” (1766-78). These three letters, from a one-week period during late 1769, are franked with the earlier style “Free BF.” All three are addressed to Boston, which had been occupied by the British in 1768 and was then the only colonial city under an occupational shroud. Boston was certainly not free and perhaps Franklin felt that Bostonians couldn’t share in his manuscript celebration of success. But ten months later, he would frank a letter to occupied Boston using the “BFreeFranklin” format.

Second, the data includes three letters to Franklin from Co-DPMG John Foxcroft (who succeeded Hunter), each sent free with a “JFreeFoxcroft” superscription. Foxcroft too had the franking. He can be assumed to share in celebrating the success of his “Father-in-Law.” While Foxcroft covers don’t really belong in a listing of Franklin’s free franks, I have included them in Table 1 because of their striking historical relevance.



**Figure 7. “JFreeFoxcroft”** on a letter datelined February 2, 1772: a birth announcement sent to Franklin in London by his colleague John Foxcroft, who was obviously inspired by Franklin’s clever franking. This letter bears six different handstamped Colonial postmarks. It was initially struck with a faint two-line red-orange PHILADELPHIA and a matching datestamp (“3FE”). At New York it received a black NEW YORK double straightline and matching “6FE”. It arrived at Falmouth March 5, was marked at London (magenta “9MR”) and sent FREE to Franklin “at Mrs. Stevenson’s in Craven Street, Strand.” Franklin Papers Volume 19, original in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

One of the Foxcroft covers is shown in Figure 7. In the enclosed letter, sent from Philadelphia and datelined “Feby 2, 1772,” Foxcroft writes to Franklin: “I have the happiness to acquaint you that your Daughter<sup>s</sup> was safely brought to bed the 20th Ulto. And presented me with a sweet little girl, they are both in good spirits and likely to do very well.” Foxcroft continues “I was seized with a Giddiness in my head the Day before yesterday which alarms me a good deal as I had 20 oz. of Blood taken from me and took a Physick which does not seem in the least to have relieved me. I am hardly able to write this.” (Author’s diagnosis: Sounds like hypotension.)

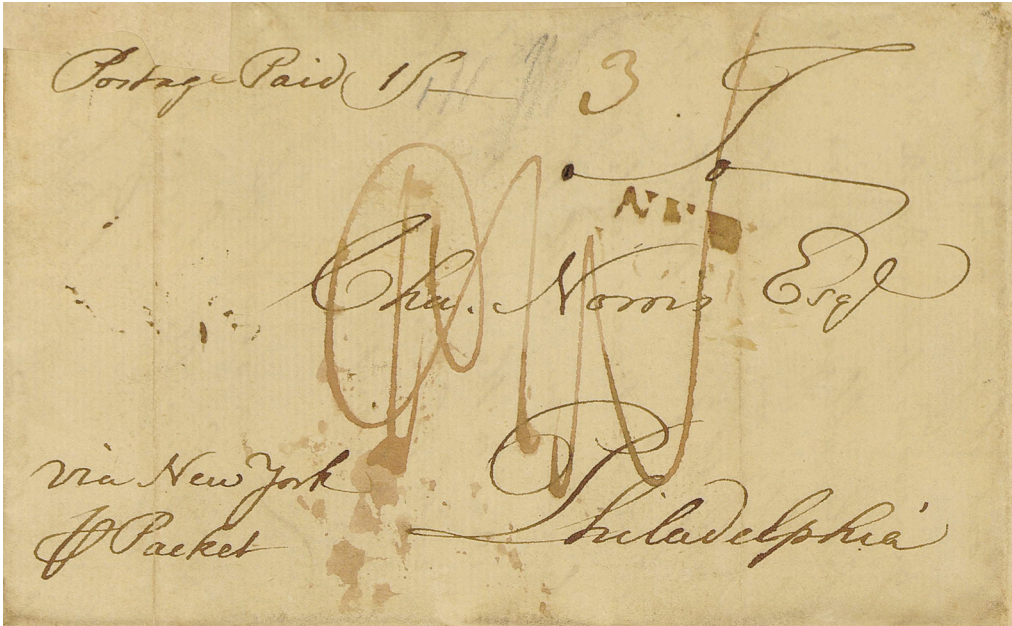
The Figure 7 letter, which reposes in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia, bears six different colonial-era handstamps in three different colors. It is backstamped with a faint two-line red-orange PHILA/DELPHIA and a matching Franklin datestamp (“3FE”). At New York it received a black NEW/YORK double straightline and matching “6FE”. It crossed the Atlantic on the Falmouth Packet *Earl of Halifax*, departing New York February 9 and arriving Falmouth March 5. The letter bag was opened in London (magenta “9MR”) and the letter sent FREE to Franklin “at Mrs. Stevenson’s in Craven Street, Strand.” On the address panel, Foxcroft penned his “JFreeFoxcroft” franking to the left of “London.”

Third, the Papers show five “BFreeFranklin” frankings sent from France during Franklin’s ambassadorial years. Evidently, Franklin felt his position allowed him the franking privilege. At this point, in the late 1770s, Franklin was one of the most celebrated figures in the western world, so it’s likely he was universally thought deserving of the privilege, whether he actually had it or not. As it happens, only a few Franklin letters from his prolific output in France qualify for this analysis because their content survives mainly from retained copies or letter books. Letters with actual address panels are scarce. Most of

Franklin’s ambassadorial letters were carried by American naval vessels or by couriers billeted on fast, safe ships, including French men-of-war. The only conclusion available from the few posted ambassadorial letters that survive (Table 1, letters posted in 1777 and 1778) is that Franklin persisted in using the “BFreeFranklin” form of franking

#### Sole letter on which Franklin paid postage.

Fourth, not exactly a curiosity but certainly an insight, is the observation that of all the posted letters in the Franklin canon, there’s only one on which Franklin actually paid the postage. This is the cover shown in Figure 8, sent from London to Philadelphia. Internally datelined January 16, 1762, this cover was sent by Franklin (while he was staying at Craven Street in London) to Charles Norris at Philadelphia. The notation at top left (“Postage Paid 1S”) accounts for the Falmouth Packet rate to New York. By statute, that fee had to be prepaid. The London receiving office acknowledged the prepayment via the red manuscript marking across the address (“PIN” = paid one shilling) and applied (on reverse, not shown) its circular Bishop mark (“16/IA”). The letter traveled in a sealed bag to the port of Falmouth, whence sailed the packet *Pitt* under Captain Goddard on January 23. After a long winter voyage (10 weeks !), *Pitt* arrived in New York April 8. The Crown Post at New York applied its red brown NEW/YORK double straightline marking (partly visible above



**Figure 8. Manuscript “Postage Paid 1S” on a letter datelined January 16, 1762, sent by Franklin in London to Charles Norris in Philadelphia. The shilling prepaid the Falmouth Packet rate to New York. There the Crown Post struck its red-brown double straightline and the letter was rated 3 (pennyweights specie) for transit to Philadelphia. Remarkably, this is the only letter the author found, within the massive 43 volumes of the Franklin Papers, on which Franklin actually prepaid postage.**

“Norris”) and the letter was rated 3 (pennyweights specie) for the onward trip to Philadelphia. Thanks to John Olenkiewicz for his wonderful compendium of British packet sailings.

The circumstances and content of this apparently unique “postage paid” letter provide a possible explanation. As noted, Franklin was billeted in London between 1757 and 1762, acting as an agent for the Colony of Pennsylvania. This was at the height of the French and

Indian War, and Crown funds were being diverted to frontier forces and colonial defense. Franklin's salary was kept on account in Philadelphia, even as he incurred substantial expenses in London: household, dining out, entertaining and lobbying. The yearly Crown Parliamentary allowances were delayed due to unanticipated wartime expense, and Franklin in 1762 was still waiting for his 1759 expense reimbursement.

### Contents of the postpaid letter

George Aufrere and Jonathan Sargent for the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, and David and Jonathan Barclay for the Royal Crown Governor of Pennsylvania were appointed to "receive" the monetary allotment records and negotiate disbursement via the Pennsylvania Loan Office. Charles Norris, to whom the Figure 8 letter is addressed, was one of the trustees of the Loan Office, holding Franklin's debts. Aufrere and Sargent agreed to back Franklin from their private funds (more than 22,000 pounds sterling—close to a million in today's dollars) in advance of reimbursement from the Parliamentary Grant. Franklin had recently been successful in convincing the Crown that the Penn proprietors should pay taxes on their extensive Pennsylvania land holdings, and the proprietors had directed the Barclays to oppose reimbursing Franklin. I speculate that Franklin prepaid the postage on the Figure 8 letter as a sign of gratitude for Norris' role in the matter, worrying that Norris might otherwise be charged for Franklin's letter, an undesirable and potentially harmful affront. The text of the letter underscores Franklin's financial straits:

London, Jan'y 16, 1762

Gentlemen, In mine of the 14th Instant, which I sent away by the same Night's Post, in hopes it would reach the Pacquet at Falmouth, I inform'd you, that I had been disappointed in my Expectation of the remaining Bills being paid by Messrs. Sargent, Aufrere and the Barclays. But this day, in answer to my last to them, of which I sent you a copy, I receiv'd the following Letter, whereby the two first nam'd Gentlemen do alone undertake to pay them for your Honour. I have had the occasion, of late, to see so much of the Scarcity of Money, and the Demand for it here, that they will as soon as possible be reimburs'd, the Interest being now by no means a compensation for the Advance they make. I have before acquainted you what Bills I have accepted, and what numbers, between No. 1 and No. 138 inclusive, had not yet appeared. Those, when they do appear, I shall refer to Messrs. Sargent & Aufrere for Payment. And when the Stocks are all sold, which will probably be next week, I shall make up the Account, and what Province money remains in my hands, if any, I shall apply to take up bills as far as it will go: but I doubt there will be very little. The Amount of what I have accepted is Ld 22,150. From this you can judge pretty nearly what Sum will be necessary to remit Messrs. Sargent & Aufrere in order to their Reimbursement. I am, with great Regard, Gentlemen, Your Most Obedient Servant, B Franklin

### Summary and conclusion

Stimulated by a desire to probe the meaning of the "BFreeFranklin" notation, I undertook a census of his frankings as documented in the Papers and then correlated these references with current events. A chronological spreadsheet clearly identified the point in time when Franklin changed the syntax of his franking signature. To date I have reviewed the first 42 volumes of the *Benjamin Franklin Papers*. Volumes 2-22 include his postmaster years, and provided a significant number of franked letters. I found no franks from letters predating his first postmaster appointment. The editorial team at Yale, responsible for the Papers, alerted me to eight new entries into their compendium. The Papers will record these discoveries in an "Addendum Volume 48." These are included in the Table 1 listing (designated A in the Volume column), albeit with incomplete data.

It's a challenge to interpret the motivation of any individual 250 years after his actions, but I hope my conclusions will be seen as reasonable. This review has expanded our knowledge of Franklin's free franks and added Foxcroft's to the pantheon of postal history. While my database (abbreviated in Table 1) was necessarily limited to franks recorded in the Papers, I would be happy to expand it to include other Franklin franks, which probably

survive in some abundance, perhaps in the albums of readers of this article. Collectors can send me scans at timoconnor1@comcast.net.

### Endnotes

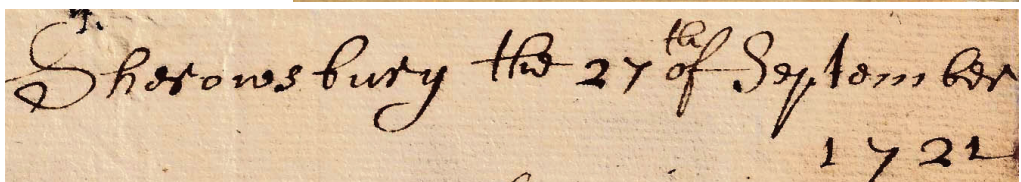
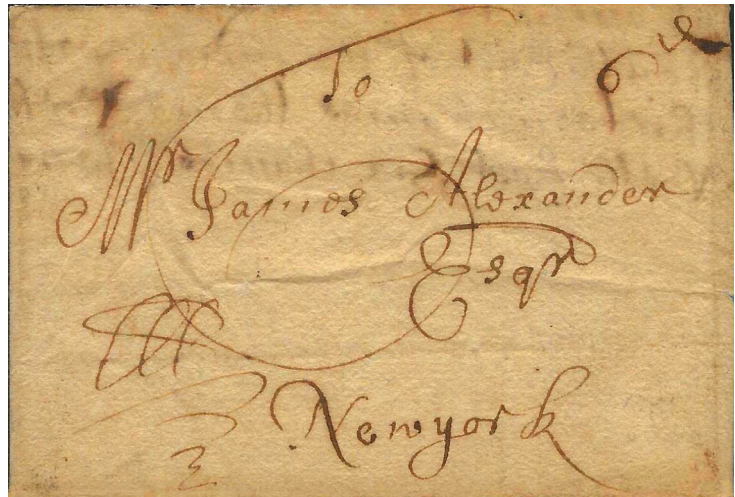
1. Timothy O'Connor and Mark Schwartz, "Use of the Franking Privilege in New England in 1699-1707: The Earliest Proof of a Durable Post," *Chronicle* 232, pp. 305-311.
2. "Instructions Given By Benjamin Franklin, and William Hunter," as quoted by Alex L. Ter Braake in *The Posted Letter in Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1628-1790* (APS, 1975), pages B-42 to B-47. This recitation is the best complete publication of the Franklin-Hunter instructions.
3. Amy Jacaruso, Editorial Assistant, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, Yale University. This private correspondence annotates eight "new" franked letters and gives some details. However, the contents are unknown or not provided.
4. The "Committee of the Whole" refers to an interrogation by a standing committee of the House of Commons. Its rules allowed free flowing questioning by any and all MPs. Franklin was called on the third day of the examination, and acquitted himself so effectively that the committee recommended repeal of the Stamp Act. Details of the session were leaked to the British and American press. The Marquis of Rockingham was quoted "To this very examination, more than anything else, you are indebted to the speedy and total repeal of this Odious Law."
5. In the summer of 1770, before he returned from England, John Foxcroft married Judith Osgood. In the absence of her father, Franklin "gave her away" and thereafter she was referred to (both by Franklin and by Foxcroft) as his "daughter." This gave rise to a rumor that she actually was Franklin's offspring (not true). ■

## SHREWSBURY, N.J., SEPTEMBER 27, 1721: EARLIEST KNOWN POSTALLY RATED COVER FROM NEW JERSEY

VERNON R. MORRIS, JR.

New to philately is the 1721 cover to New York shown in Figure 1, with a manuscript "6d" postal rate at the upper right. The internal dateline, included in Figure 1, shows "Shrewsbury [Shrewsbury] the 27th of September 1721" without naming a specific colony.

**Figure 1. Address panel from a cover sent from Shrewsbury, N.J. to James Alexander in New York City. Note the "6d" rating notation at upper right. The internal dateline, shown below, is "Shrewsbury the 27th of September 1721." This predates by 16 years the previous earliest known cover from New Jersey bearing a postal marking.**



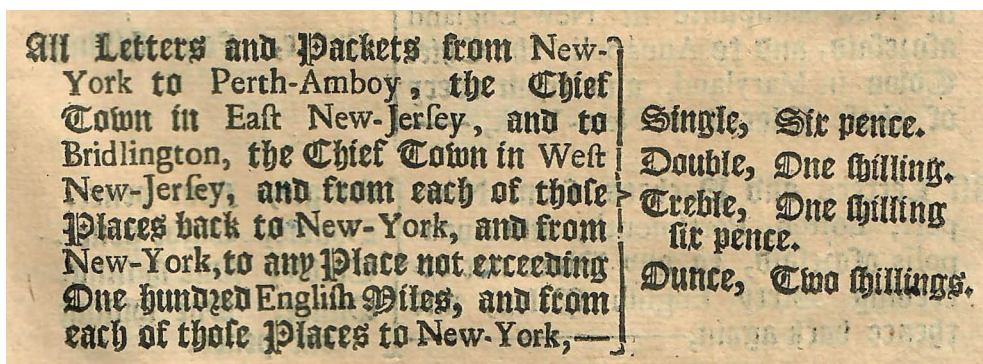


Figure 2. Electronically clipped from the British Post Office Act of 1710, this paragraph gives the letter rate between Perth Amboy and Bridlington (Burlington) New Jersey and New York: sixpence per single letter sheet, the rating on the Figure 1 cover.

Shrewsbury, Massachusetts is disqualified on the basis of distance, rate and the letter content. The only other early 18th century candidate was in Monmouth County, New Jersey, near the Atlantic shore.

The British Post Office Act of 1710, a salient portion of which is shown in Figure 2, declared that letters to New York entering the mails at either Burlington (in West Jersey near the Delaware River) or Perth Amboy (in East Jersey at the mouth of Raritan River) were to be rated at sixpence per single sheet. It's not clear in which town the Figure 1 cover entered the mails. In either scenario, it must have been transported by the crown's post from Perth Amboy to New York.

The New York portion of the the 1729 Hermann Moll map, the first postal map of North America, is shown in Figure 3. It shows only a single route (indicated by a double-lined roadway on the map) from Perth Amboy across the Arthur Kill river, through Staten Island and the Upper New York Bay to the southern tip of Manhattan—and then



Figure 3. A portion of the famous Hermann Moll post road map from 1729. The post route from Philadelphia to Portsmouth was indicated by a double-lined roadway, here shown from Burlington to New York City.

north toward Rye, New York and beyond. Conspicuous by its absence was the eventual New Jersey land “beltway” from Perth Amboy north to Newark, then east to Bergen and the Hudson River.

The earliest recorded New Jersey cover has long been considered to be a cover posted at Trenton in June 23, 1737.<sup>1</sup> The present whereabouts of this cover is unknown, but its manuscript “Tr: 2dwt” remains the earliest New Jersey town postmark. (“Tr” for Trenton and “2dwt” for two pennyweights, the pure silver accountancy equivalent of 6 pence sterling coin). But the cover in Figure 1, dated at Shrewsbury on September 27, 1721, is now the earliest recorded postally rated cover from New Jersey. Coincidentally, although the Shrewsbury and Trenton covers were separated by 16 years, both were addressed to James Alexander Esq, and both shared the same postal rate.

James Alexander was born in 1691 at Perthshire, Scotland, a relative of the Earl of Stirling. By 1715 he moved to America and Perth Amboy, and was soon appointed surveyor general of New Jersey. Alexander served from 1721 to 1723 as New York’s attorney general, and from 1723 to 1728 as New Jersey’s Attorney General. He was eventually succeeded by his son William Alexander, Lord Stirling, who in 1776 became a famous brigadier general in the Continental Army.

The assistance of Ed and Jean Siskin, Jean Walton, and the New Jersey Historical Society is greatly appreciated. A larger analysis with much additional historical information will be published in a forthcoming issue of the New Jersey Postal History Journal.

#### Endnote

1. Alex L. ter Braake, *The Posted Letter in Colonial and Revolutionary America*, American Philatelic Research Library (1975), pg. II-66. ■

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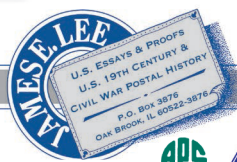
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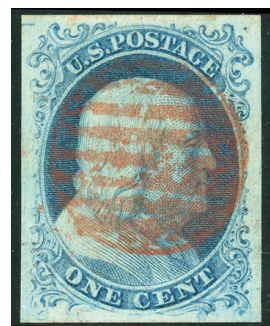
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**PLATE VARIETIES ON 5¢ 1847 STAMPS**  
**GORDON EUBANKS**

In our November issue, *Chronicle* 264, I discussed the plate varieties of the 10¢ 1847 stamp. I began with the 10¢ stamps for a good reason: they are much easier to deal with. The black ink shows plate varieties very clearly and the 10¢ stamp has been completely plated—meaning that every stamp can be assigned to a specific plate position. And there was only one state of the 10¢ plate.

This article will illustrate and explain the major plate varieties of the 5¢ 1847 stamp, quite a different assignment. The 5¢ 1847 stamp has not been fully plated. While much work has been done, little has been published about actual progress. It seems that much of the left pane has been plated and some of the right pane. One of the reasons the 10¢ stamp was more easily plated is that the frame lines were widely recut; this was not the case with the 5¢ stamp.<sup>1</sup> Many recurring varieties, including a number of the plate varieties illustrated and discussed in this article, have not yet been assigned a plate position.

The challenge of plating the 5¢ 1847 stamp is made more complex by the fact that there were two states of the plate. At some point in late 1850, the 200-subject 5¢ plate, worn down after more than three years of use, was cleaned and at least a few positions were reentered. The 10¢ plate was never cleaned or reworked.

There are six named double transfers among the 5¢ 1847 stamps, alphabetically designated A through F in the order of their discovery. These varieties (and others) are considered in the pages that follow. The supporting photos use digital tools to enlarge and enhance portions of the stamps with the goal of showing what these varieties actually look like.

To illustrate each of the six double transfer varieties, we have used the same basic approach. We devote a page to each variety. For the first five varieties, each page shows enlarged color illustrations of two examples of the same position. This confirms that the features under discussion are indeed consistent varieties, but more importantly it suggests the variation that can exist among different examples from the same plate position. They don't all look alike; some examples show the salient features much more clearly than others. In addition to showing examples of the variety, each page also presents massive enlargements—eight times lifesize—of the key features that define the variety.

Only the type A and B double transfers have been plated—to positions 80R and 90R. The plate locations of the other four double transfer types have not been determined. Only types A, B and E are known from the earliest printing of the stamp. The type C, D and F double transfers are known only from printings from late 1850 and the first half of 1851, following the cleaning and reworking of the plate. Thus these three varieties are scarcer.

Carroll Chase first named the types A and B double transfers in an important 1916 article in *The Philatelic Gazette*.<sup>2</sup> This obscure publication has been digitized by Google and is now instantly available via internet search. Worth a look, it's a fascinating publication.

Figure 1 shows enlargements of two stamps from Position 80R1, the Type A double transfer position. The type A variety shows a strong doubling of the top and bottom frame lines as well as some less significant marks elsewhere on the stamp. The shift is up and to the left. The stamp at left is from an early printing; all the design elements show crisply and clearly. The stamp at right is from a late printing, after the plate had been cleaned and reworked. Both stamps show the double transfer, but it's much more clearly evident in the early state. At top in Figure 1, the eight-times enlargement of the upper portion of the left stamp shows the doubled frame line very well.

The Type B double transfer, from Position 90R1 and shown in Figure 2, is more difficult to discern. The most prominent features are a doubling of both the top and the bottom frame lines. The shift is slightly down and to the left. Stanley Ashbrook also noted doubling in the numerals 5 and in FIVE CENTS, though these features are often difficult to discern and barely show in the examples presented in Figure 2.

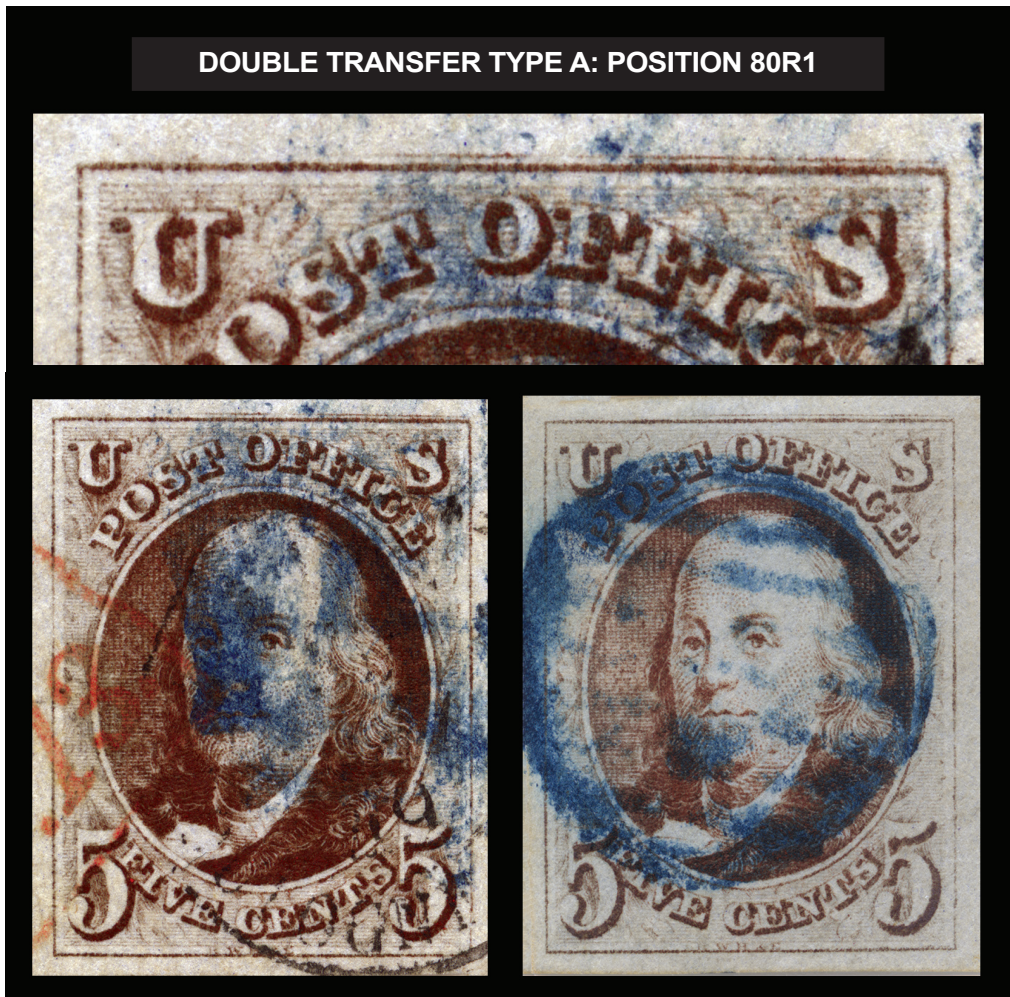


Figure 1. The Type A double transfer, Position 80R1, is most clearly indicated by the doubling of the top frame line, which is quite strong in the right half. Stanley Ashbrook additionally noted faint doubling in the some of the letters in POST OFFICE and FIVE CENTS, but these features often don't show clearly. The stamps above are both from Position 80R1. The example at left is from an early stage of the plate and shows clear lines. The example at right, from a late state, shows much less definition.

**DOUBLE TRANSFER TYPE B: POSITION 90R1**



Figure 2. The Type B double transfer, Position 90R1, is more difficult to discern. The most prominent features are a doubling of the top and bottom frame lines; the shift is slightly down and to the left. Ashbrook also noted doubling in the numerals 5 and in FIVE CENTS, though these features are often difficult to discern and barely show in these two examples. As with Figure 1, these stamp images show early and late states of the same position. A stamp from the early state is shown at left. In the late-state stamp at right, note the vertical gouge in the margin left of the left numeral 5. This is not present on the early-state examples and is presumably an artifact of the reworking of the plate. The super-enlargement at top is from the early state stamp at left, which shows the doubling more clearly. The enlargement at bottom is from the later state (stamp at right).

As with Figure 1, the stamp images in Figure 2 show early and late states of the same position. The stamp from the early state is shown in the enlargement at left. In the late-state stamp at right, note the gouge in the margin area to the left of the left numeral 5. This is not present on the early-state examples and is presumably an artifact of the reworking of the plate, though it's not clear how it was caused. The eight-times enlargements showing top and bottom portions are from the early state stamp, which as expected shows the doubling more clearly. Doubling of the frame line is most evident at left in the bottom strip. While double transfer Type A and Type B are found on both early and late printings, this is not the case for double transfers C and D. Figure 3 shows two stamps with the Type C double transfer. The plate position is not known. Because this variety is found only on late printings, it is scarcer than the A and B types.



**Figure 3.** The Type C double transfer, position unknown, is found only on late printings and is thus scarcer than the A and B types. Doubling of the bottom frame line is especially clear at the right. But in fact, the whole bottom portion of the stamp is doubled, evident in FIVE CENTS, in the numeral 5 at right, and even in the RWH&E printer initials, which appear blurred. Two examples are shown here, both with contrast enhanced. The bottom portion of the left stamp is also shown greatly enlarged.

According to Ashbrook, the Type C double transfer was discovered around 1920 by a collector named Dan Hammatt. A key characteristic is the doubling of the bottom frame line, which is especially clear at the right. But in fact, the whole bottom portion of the stamp is doubled, evident in FIVE CENTS, in the numeral 5 at right, and even in the RWH&E printer initials. Doubling makes the initials appear blurred. This profound overall doubling must have been caused by a botched attempt to reenter the design. Two different examples are shown in the Figure 3 montage, both with contrast enhanced to emphasize design detail. The bottom portion of the left stamp is shown eight times lifesize.

The Type D double transfer, shown in Figure 4, was discovered by Ashbrook. Doubling shows in opposite corners of the stamp, in the horizontal frame lines at bottom left and upper right. The doubled bottom frame line extends through the printer initials. Doubling is also evident in the bottom curve of the left numeral 5. To a lesser extent there is doubling in all the frame lines. The shift is up and very slightly right. Generally, the Type D doubling features are less obvious than Types A, B, and C, but they are certainly there. As with Type C, Type D is found only on later printings. Approximately a dozen copies are recorded.

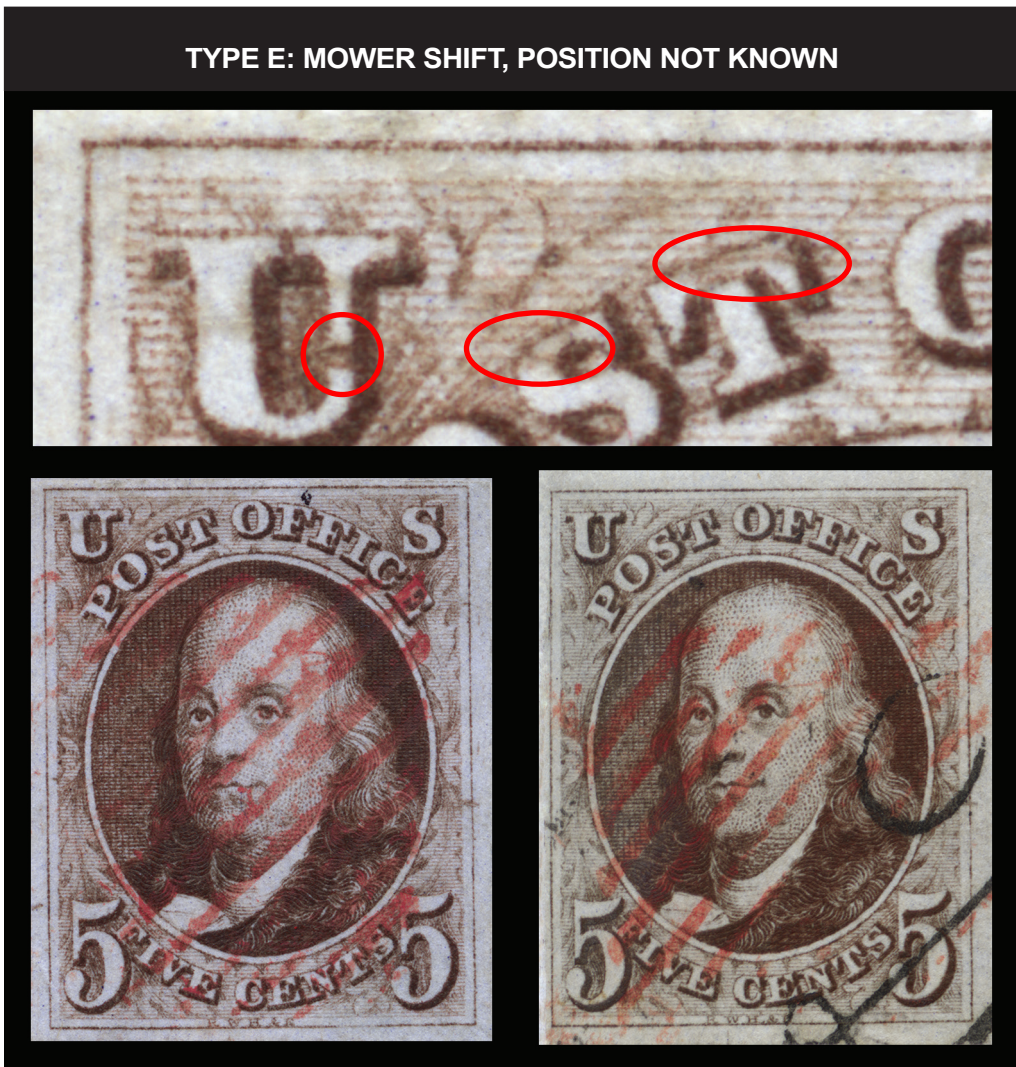


**Figure 4.** The type D shows clear doubling in the framelines in the upper right and lower left corners. Doubling at bottom extends through the printer initials. Doubling is seen in the bottom left frame line and the upper right frame line. Later printings only.

Figure 5 illustrates the Type E double transfer, also known as the Mower shift, a controversial stamp. The most accessible scholarship about this variety is an article by 1847 student Duane Garrett that was published in *Chronicle* 92.<sup>3</sup> This provides many useful details, but the small and grainy black and white illustrations are not helpful.

This variety was discovered in the 1920s by San Francisco stamp dealer R.H. Mower. There has always been some question whether it actually is a double transfer. Garrett called it that. Ashbrook in correspondence called it a “double transfer” in quotation marks, suggesting he had doubts. And in his *Special Service* (page 436) he wrote: “I do not know whether this is a plate variety or a very minor double transfer, but whatever it is, it is rather outstanding as a variety of the 5¢ 1847.”

Scott’s U.S. specialized catalog lists the item as a double transfer, citing a doubling in the left numeral that I have never been able to see. Inspection of the images in Figure 5 will show that actual evidence of doubling is minimal. The identifying characteristics of the Type E variety, which require a squint and heavy magnification, are highlighted in red



**Figure 5. The type E "Mower shift," position unknown, may not be a double transfer at all. But Scott lists it as such. Salient features are the background lines that appear to extend through the S and T in POST and through the U at upper left.**



circles in the enlargement in Figure 5: faint background lines that appear to extend through the S and T in POST and less clearly through the U at upper left.

An example of the variety survives on a cover from New York dated July 23, 1847, proving that the plate markings were on the plate during the first printing. The left stamp in Figure 5 was digitally removed from that cover. Garrett's article cites a letter from Ashbrook speculating that, since the marks are shallow, they probably wore down quickly and so are not visible in the later printings. The variety is certainly scarce; there are about 10 recorded copies.

The Type E stamp is without question a plate variety. But in my opinion, there is not adequate evidence to determine that the misplaced lines were caused by reentry, which is a requirement for a plate variety to be called a double transfer. But collectors defer to Scott in matters like this, and Scott says it's a double transfer.

The type F double transfer, shown in Figure 6, was discovered in the 1980s by Jerome Wagshal, who of course called it the Wagshal shift. East-west doubling can be seen clearly in the upper-left frame line and less clearly in the upper-right frame line. There is also



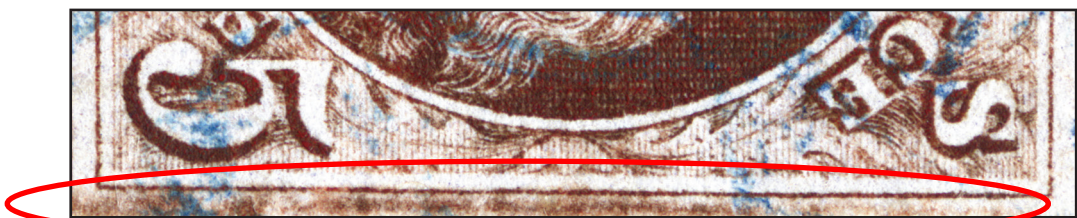
strong doubling in OFF and U. Wagshal felt this variety was not just a double transfer but a triple transfer.<sup>4</sup> This would occur if the original entry was erased, a new entry entered and then erased and a third entry made. Today, the variety is recognized as a double transfer, and a scarce one. Approximately six copies are recorded.

Misaligned entries occur because the transfer process, while accurate, was not perfect. The frame lines surrounding the 1847 stamps make even slight variations in alignment stand out. Wade Saadi covered this in detail in a *Chronicle* article in 2010.<sup>5</sup> Figure 7 shows vertical and horizontal pairs in which the misalignment (outlined by red ellipses) is very evident.

Also shown in Figure 7 is an example of plate bruising, caused by indentations in the plate that collect ink that prints along with the intended design. Bruising often occurs in the margins between stamps. The single stamp in Figure 7 shows extensive bruising in its right margin. This feature can be seen clearly in the massive enlargement at the bottom of the Figure 7 montage. In my experience, plate bruising is less common in the 1847 issue than in the 1851 and subsequent line engraved issues. I believe this was caused by reworking a plate, with small depressions occurring around the rework.



Figure 7. The horizontal and vertical pairs show misalignment of plate entries (encircled), helpful clues in plate reconstruction. The single stamp at right shows severe plate bruising in the right margin, greatly enlarged in the strip below. Plate bruising is found only on the reworked plates.





**Figure 8. Other plate varieties:** At left, a stamp showing the Dot in S variety (with the salient feature enlarged below it). This variety is found on all stamps from the ninth column of the left pane of the 5¢ plate. The center stamp shows the T crack, a plate crack discovered by Wade Saadi in the 1990s. The stamp at right shows what appears to be a plate crack, but such a declaration is premature because so far this is the only example that has been recorded. A bona fide plate variety requires more than one example. Can anyone produce a confirming copy?

Other plate varieties of the 5¢ 1847 stamp include the dot in S and the T crack. Shown at left in Figure 8, the dot in the S in the upper right corner is a long-recognized variety that occurs on all 10 stamps in the ninth column of the left pane of the 5¢ plate. Chase claimed the dot was more intense at the top and less so moving down the column. Brookman attributed the dot to a bit of foreign material on the transfer roll that caused a small indentation in the plate impressions.<sup>6</sup> The early literature makes reference to a dot in the U plate variety. This has an appealing symmetry to match the dot in the S. But as it turns out, the dot-in-U variety was seen on a plate proof and has never been recorded on an issued stamp. The conclusion is that this is not a plate variety.

The T crack, discovered by Saadi in the 1990s, is the most recent 5¢ plate variety that has been identified.<sup>7</sup> An example is illustrated as the center stamp in Figure 8. The crack extends from the top frame line above the T into the left arm of the T and possibly below.

The stamp at right in Figure 8 shows what appears to be a crack in the upper left region above the U. I have yet to find a second example, so this may be just a plate scratch, but its curving shape is more suggestive of a crack. Inspired by Saadi's earlier work, I have been searching the images at the Philatelic Foundation for a confirming copy. If any reader has a 5¢ 1847 stamp that duplicates this feature, I would be very interested in receiving a scan.

## Acknowledgement and endnotes

I would like to thank Wade Saadi for providing images of the “T” crack and for extensive discussions about plate varieties.

1. For helpful though not invariably reliable background information, see Jerome S. Wagshal’s 1847 essays at *Chronicle* 159 (August 1993) pg. 168 and *Chronicle* 163 (August 1994) pg. 161.
2. Carroll Chase, “The United States 1847 Issue,” *The Philatelic Gazette* 83 (July 1916). This was part of a series of articles on the stamps issued in 1847. Copies of this obscure publication are now available online from Google.
3. Duane B. Garrett, “A 5¢ 1847 Plate Variety—the ‘E’ Double Transfer or Mower Shift,” *Chronicle* 92 (1976).
4. Jerome S. Wagshal, “The Identification of a Triple Transfer on the 5¢ Stamp of 1847,” *Chronicle* 165, February 1993).
5. Wade Saadi, “Framelines on the 1847 Issue,” *Chronicle* 227 (August 2010).
6. Lester G. Brookman, *The United States Postage Stamps of the 19th Century*, Vol. 1, H.L. Lindquist Publications, Inc., New York, 1966.
7. Wade Saadi, “The Discovery of a Plate Crack on the 5¢ Stamp of 1847,” *Chronicle* 162 (May 1994). ■

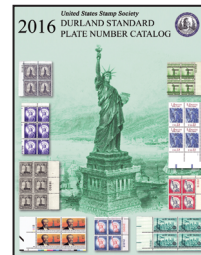
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FRAMING THE 1851 ISSUE:  
EARLY ADVERTISING AND PROPAGANDA COLLARS

CHIP GLIEDMAN

The 1845 change from sheet-based to weight-based rating for postage was a key driver for sending mail within envelopes. Prior to this date, the envelope itself would be charged an additional postage rate, because it was a separate sheet of paper from that which it enclosed. Given this new, blank canvas, advertisers, political candidates, and anyone with a message could embellish this medium for their benefit.

Once postage stamps also became available for use, they provided an additional basis for embellishment on envelopes. One specific form of advertising (or propaganda) involved placing a design or message in the upper right corner of the envelope where it would surround the stamp like a frame. Today, this form of design is referred to as an advertising collar. Compared to other types of illustrated envelopes, advertising collars with 1851 stamps are rare, with a very limited number of different designs.

While cameo-type corner advertisements are fairly common on 1851-franked covers, there are only a few examples of cameos fashioned into stamp collars. The example in Figure 1 is a drop letter with a 1¢ Type IV stamp (Scott 9) from Position 27L1L, surrounded by a dark blue collar advertisement for Bush, Barns & Co., a printing material and paper warehouse firm, in Detroit.

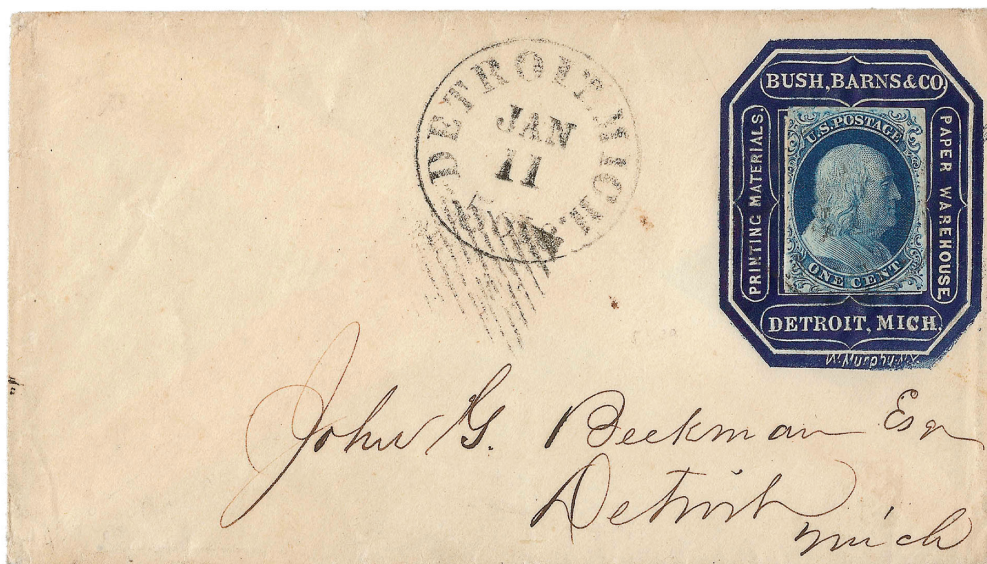


Figure 1. Ornate advertising collar for the printing and paper firm of Bush, Barns & Co., surrounding a 1¢ blue Type IV stamp on a drop cover mailed locally at Detroit, Michigan. Image courtesy of Siegel Auction Galleries.

The stamp is tied to the cover by a faint Detroit circular datestamp. A matching example of the datestamp is applied at the left with the “5 cts” integral rate indicator obliterated by a square grid marking. The rate for such a local or drop letter was just 1¢, here properly paid by the stamp. At the bottom of the cameo is the name of the cameo maker, “W. Murphy, N.Y.” More traditional advertising cameos with the “Murphy” imprint can be found promoting firms in New York, Tennessee and Ohio, among other locations.

Figure 2 shows another cameo-type collar, advertising the firm of “Miller & Lyon, 95 Market St., Phi.” A Philadelphia circular datestamp ties the stamp to this cover to Lamar, Pennsylvania. Docketing on the reverse indicates 1852 use. McElroy’s Philadelphia Directory for 1855 lists the company as a dry goods firm. No manufacturer’s imprint is evident in the cameo. This collar surrounds a 3¢ brownish carmine Type II stamp (Scott 11A).



**Figure 2. Cameo advertising collar for Miller and Lyon, dry goods merchants in Philadelphia, on a cover with a 3¢ Type II stamp sent to Lamar, Pennsylvania. The cover shows 1852 docketing on the reverse. Image courtesy of Siegel Galleries.**

Three additional collars share some common elements. The first example, shown in Figure 3, was used from New York and has an ornate typeset collar with the message “Free Trade! No Monopoly!” above and below a 3¢ type II stamp. The surviving contents show

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Figure 3. Typeset collar exhorting “Free Trade! No Monopoly!” with a 3¢ Type II stamp sent from NYC to Cooperstown in 1853. Image courtesy Siegel Galleries.



Figure 4. A different typeset collar with “FREE TRADE, NO MONOPOLY!” propaganda message, imprinted on a cover franked with a 3¢ Type II stamp used from New York to New London, Conn.

a dateline of October 22, 1853, within a few days of the “OCT 25” in the “NEW-YORK” circular datestamp and establishing 1853 as the year of use.

Figure 4 illustrates another New York use of a propaganda collar. This example bears a similar typeset border, a similar message, similar stamp, and a similar “NEW-YORK” datestamp, in this case with a September 22 date. David L. Jarrett, when describing an example of this collar design in his *Chronicle* article on propaganda covers hypothesized:<sup>1</sup>

The collar legend reads “FREE TRADE, NO MONOPOLY!” In the 1850s, many northern states sought heavy tariffs on imported foreign goods, so that the agrarian southern states would be compelled to buy goods from the more industrialized north. Southern states (and northern supporters such as the sender of this cover) favored free trade, which enabled southern planters to sell their produce to England in exchange for less expensive British manufactured goods. Along with slavery, disagreement over free trade was one of the irreconcilable issues that culminated in the Civil War.

The stampless cover in Figure 5 also shows a typeset border, but with the message “No Post-Office Monopoly!” Michael Laurence wrote about this cover in one of his weekly *Linn’s* columns back in the 1990s. In contrast to Jarrett’s analysis, Laurence noted about this cover that there was growing resentment of the post office monopoly, with higher rates and less frequent local pick-up and delivery of mail than the private local posts. Laurence added that the Post Office Department worked to legislate these enterprises out of business.<sup>2</sup> Conceivably, the “No monopoly” sentiment on these covers is related.

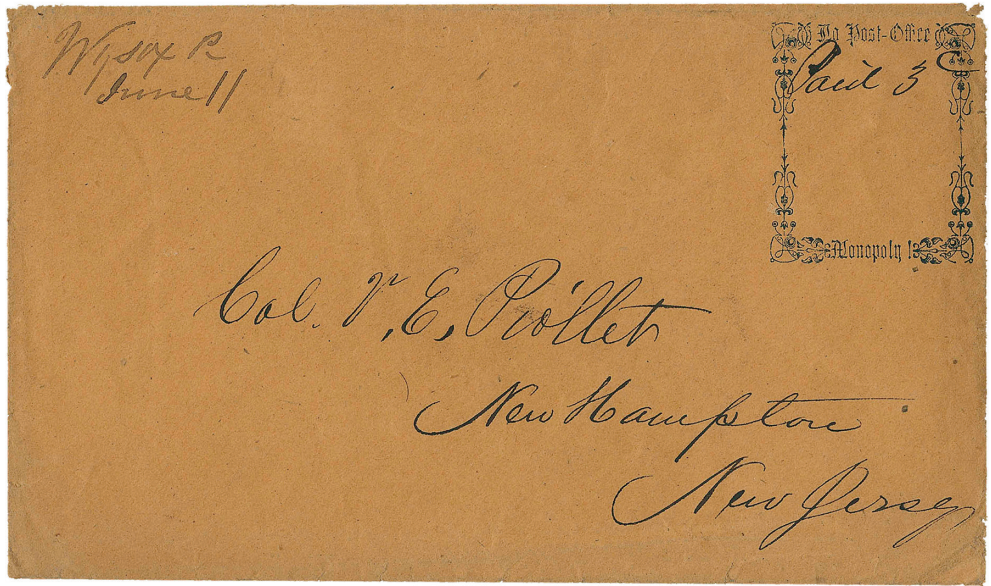


Figure 5. Stampless cover with “No Post-Office Monopoly!” propaganda message used from Wysox, Pennsylvania to New Hampton, New Jersey during the 1852-55 period. Image courtesy of Siegel Auction Galleries.



Figure 6. Typeset collar matching the collar frame of the cover shown in Figure 4. The 3¢ 1851 stamp pays the domestic postage rate from New York to Brooklyn.





**Figure 7. Comparison of typeset collars digitally cropped from the covers in Figures 4 (at right) and 6, indicating both were printed from the same typographical elements. The different sizes of the envelopes suggest there were multiple printings of this basic design.**

Figure 6 shows a similar cover also with a 3¢ Type II stamp and a “NEW-YORK NOV 8” datestamp. It appears to use the same typeset frame as the cover in Figure 4, although this example omits the propaganda message.

Figure 7 shows enlargements of the typeset border of the collars from Figures 4 (at right) and 6. Both collars show similar gaps and type elements, though the lack of message and the fact that they were printed on different sized envelopes indicates multiple printings from this basic collar design.

While this article is not a definitive census, the covers shown are far from common and were unearthed only after careful searching. Their apparent scarcity suggests that this form of advertising was employed far less frequently than other forms during the 1850s. The format would grow in popularity, with advertising collars (or collars included in overall advertising designs) used well into the 20th century.

### Endnotes

1. David L. Jarrett, “U.S. Propaganda Covers,” *Chronicle* 220 (November 2008), pp. 308-322.
2. Michael Laurence, “Unusual Message Collar on 1850s Cover,” *Linn’s Stamp News*, October 26, 1992, pg. 3. ■

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## PATRIOTIC ADVERTISING ENVELOPES OF PUBLISHERS AND SELLERS OF CIVIL WAR PATRIOTIC COVERS

JAMES W. MILGRAM, M.D.

### Introduction

The vast majority of Union patriotic covers were produced by a relatively small number of publishers, probably no more than 20 firms.<sup>1</sup> These companies sometimes used their patriotic designs on cornercard envelopes advertising their businesses. Such envelopes are rare. This article describes all the types that have been recorded to date, and uses them to launch a larger discussion of how Civil War patriotic stationery (both envelopes and letter paper) was packaged, promoted and sold to the public.

### Covers

One of the earliest publishers of patriotic covers was Frederick Kimmel of New York. I wrote a long article about Kimmel and his works for *The American Philatelist* back in 2001.<sup>2</sup> The Kimmel firm produced fine lithographs that were often hand-colored. Oddly, the



Figure 1. 3¢ 1857 stamp tied by “MONTGOMERY Ala. MAY 21 1861” circular date-stamp on a cover to Virginia, with a seven-star Confederate patriotic label affixed. The hand-painted red is characteristic of the work of Frederick Kimmel of New York.

earliest patriotic design attributable to Kimmel is not a Union design but a Confederate one: A shield-shaped label with bars and seven stars. An example is affixed to the cover shown in Figure 1. The seven stars with three stripes on the shield repeat the design elements of the first flag of the Confederate states, which was used briefly in 1861. The shield outline and field are printed in blue, but the red coloring is hand-painted in watercolor, a Kimmel characteristic. Addressed to Washington, the Figure 1 cover is franked with a 3¢ 1857 stamp tied by a Montgomery, Alabama circular postmark dated May 21, 1861.

Kimmel subsequently repurposed this Confederate shield with added text to create a printed Union patriotic envelope, a type of caricature. Figure 2 shows an example used on a 3¢ 1857 cover to Boston postmarked at New York on August 24. From the presence of the 1857 stamp, we can assume the year was 1861. The type enclosing the shield reads “OLD SECESSION...NOT ACCORDING TO HOYLE.” The blue text and design are printed on the envelope, but (as with the label in Figure 1) the red is hand-painted in watercolor.

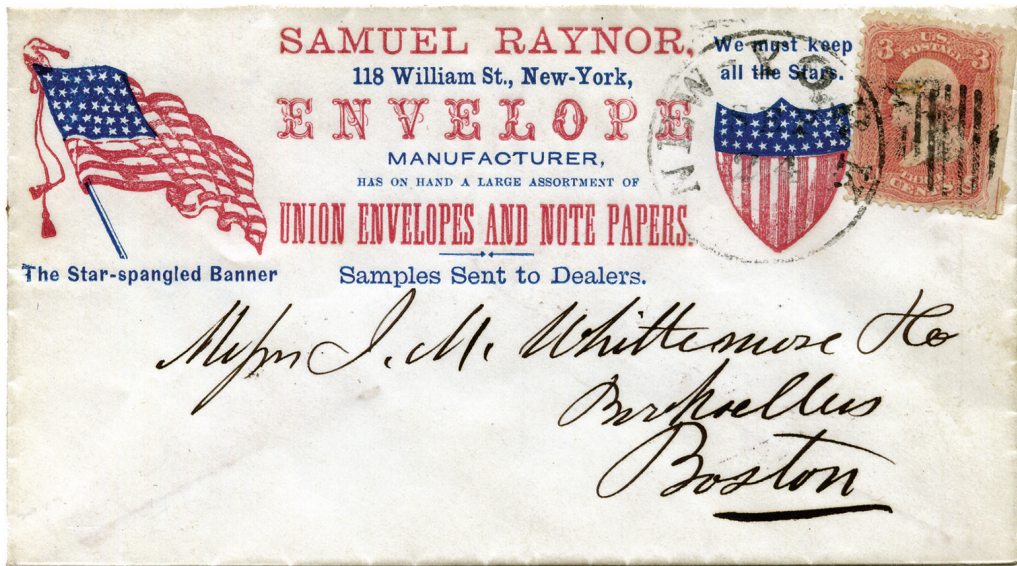


Figure 2. On this 3¢ 1857 cover the shield design used for the label in Figure 1 has been transformed into an anti-South printed cachet by added text. In addition, this cover bears the embossed corner imprint (shown enlarged at right) of F.K. Kimmel, who likely produced the label on the cover in Figure 1.



Notable for the purposes of this article is Kimmel’s embossed oval imprint stuck inverted at upper right: “FROM F.K. KIMMEL, ENGRAVER & PUBLISHER, 69 NASSAU ST., NEW YORK.” Also shown in Figure 2 is a contrast-enhanced enlargement. This embossed corner imprint has also been seen on one of the more conventional patriotic envelopes Kimmel produced, the ass with Confederate flag.

As an aside, we know that early Confederate patriotic covers were printed in the north for sale and use in the southern and border states. Unused patriotic envelopes showing seven-star Confederate flags survive in today’s collections, but examples actually used within the Confederacy are not known. It has been surmised that these envelopes were intended for sale in Confederate states, but additional state secessions rendered the seven-star designs obsolete.<sup>3</sup> These obsolete envelopes were subsequently sold to northern collectors of patriotic stationery during and after the war.



**Figure 3.** This bold two-color advertising envelope, with separate flag and shield designs, promotes the business of Samuel Raynor, a New York stationery printer who created a number of patriotic covers. The 3¢ 1861 stamp on this cover to Boston is tied by a “NEW-YORK SEP 24” circular datestamp. The year date is probably 1861.

Among the publishers of Union patriotic envelopes, Samuel Raynor of New York created one of the handsomest advertising envelopes. The example shown in Figure 3 is a cover franked with a 3¢ 1861 stamp and postmarked “NEW-YORK SEP 24” (probably 1861). The two-color design shows both the federal flag and a shield, and notes that Raynor “has on hand a large assortment of Union envelopes and note papers.” Earlier, Raynor produced a series of campaign envelopes for the election of 1860, including designs of all the various candidates. His Lincoln rail-splitter is one of the finest.

### John H. Whittemore

The addressee of the Figure 3 cover is John H. Whittemore, an entrepreneurial printer who was one of the leading publishers of patriotic stationery in Boston. During the Civil War, Whittemore promoted an ingenious portable writing desk for soldiers. Civil War historian Ron Field and I told the story of this unusual device (and showed an example) in *Chronicle* 263.

The patriotic cover in Figure 4 bears a cornercard of Whittemore’s firm. In a striking assembly of patriotic symbols, the illustration shows the snake of secession mortally pierced by an arrow and the Union shield, supported by the constitution and the bible, surmounted by a liberty cap and a banner reading “liberty or death.” This symbolism must have resonated with the northern public. Whittemore sold many envelopes with this design (lacking his business address) and they were widely used. A repurposing of this design is discussed and shown at Figure 11 below.

The Whittemore cover in Figure 4 was franked with a 3¢ 1861 stamp, which was canceled with a framed “PAID” at Boston on July 27 (year not certain, but probably 1862). The cover is addressed to the Magee firm in Philadelphia, yet another publisher of patriotic stationery, but a firm for which no patriotic advertising envelopes are known. Magee’s work also figures elsewhere in this article; see the discussion at Figure 10 below.

Figure 5 shows another cover addressed to Whittemore, this one a cannon and flag design from the J.G. Wells firm in New York. The “NEW-YORK” circular datestamp reads



Figure 4. Boston stationer John Whittemore created this assemblage of patriotic symbols—including the snake of secession pierced by the arrow of liberty—on envelopes sold widely to the public. This example also bears Whittemore’s business cachet, on a cover addressed to J. Magee of Philadelphia, another publisher of patriotic stationery. The 3¢ 1861 stamp is canceled with a framed “PAID”; the CDS reads “BOSTON MASS JUL 27.”

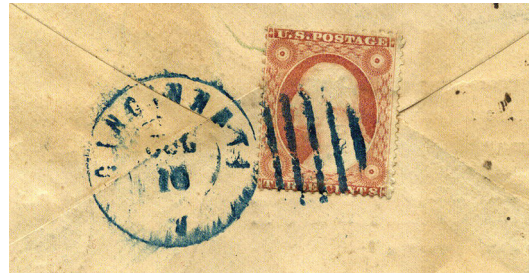


Figure 5. Patriotic cannon and flag design on a cover franked with a 3¢ 1857 stamp tied “NEW-YORK JUL 12.” The stamp indicates the year was 1861. This design was created by New York stationer J.G. Wells, whose wares are modestly described under the address. Like Figure 3, this cover is addressed to Whittemore in Boston.

JUL 12, and the year is assumed to be 1861. The self-description on the envelope indicates Wells sold a variety of Union goods, including “Union Cockades, Badges, Envelopes, Note and Letter Paper.” In addition to the design on this envelope, Wells created a number of other patriotic cover designs, evidenced by his imprint on surviving envelopes.



**Figure 6. Patriotic cover depicting Col. Robert Anderson, commander at Fort Sumter, used with printed cornercard for Mumford & Co., publishers of patriotic stationery in Cincinnati. Shown at right is a portion of the reverse, with a 3¢ 1857 stamp tied by a blue double-circle “CINCINNATI O. JUL 10” postmark.**

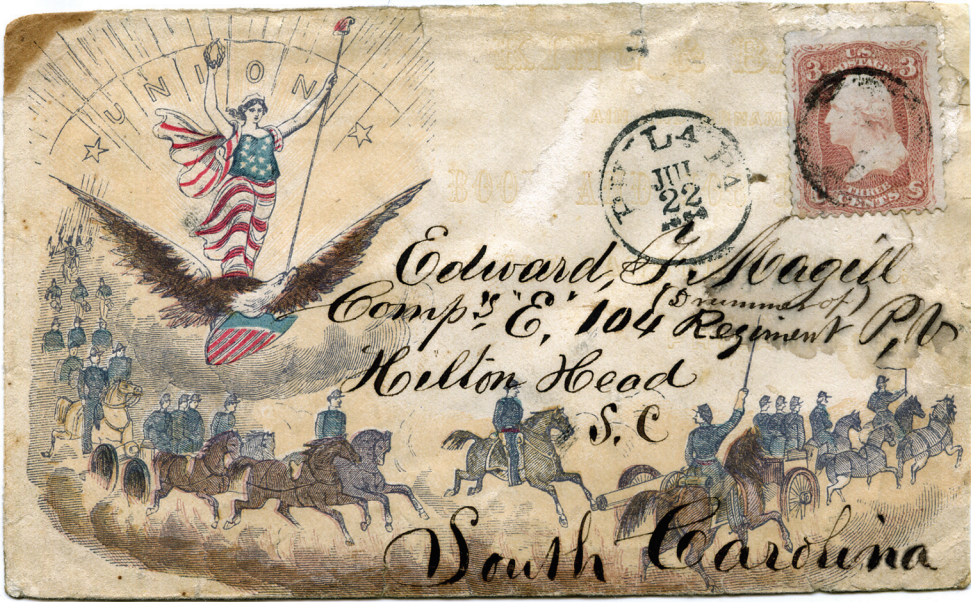


One of the more important publishers of patriotic envelopes was the Cincinnati firm of Mumford & Co. Their advertising envelope in Figure 6 depicts Colonel Robert Anderson, who commanded Fort Sumter until it was captured at the beginning of the war. Wells sold many Anderson envelopes (without the advertising information) in 1861, but envelopes like this one with his cornercard are rare. Note that with the Anderson cachet and the commercial information (“Patriotic Union goods, Bosom Pins, Badges, Rosetts, Biographies, Cards, Photographs, ... NEAR FIFTY STYLES OF UNION ENVELOPES”) there was no room on the cover front for the stamp, which had to be applied on the reverse (shown inset). The double-circle Cincinnati circular datestamp, struck in that city’s characteristic blue ink, is dated July 10. Because of the 3¢ 1857 stamp, the year date must be 1861. Mumford will also figure subsequently in this article.

One of the most elaborate patriotic cornercard envelopes is the example shown in Figure 7, from the printing firm of King & Baird in Philadelphia, which created many unusual patriotic designs. This one shows an entire Union cavalry troop, protected by an allegorical figure of Liberty who holds aloft a cap and garland and rides the back of an eagle carrying the Union shield. The King & Baird advertising information, clearly an afterthought, is printed in very light yellow at upper right, difficult to see and partly obscured by the 3¢ 1861 stamp and postmark, which is dated July 22, 1864.

### Unused envelopes

At least three patriotic envelope designs with publisher cornercards are not recorded in used condition. Figure 8 shows a cover bearing the corner imprint of John H. Johnson of Philadelphia, a lesser-known printer of patriotic envelopes. This eagle and shield motif was widely used. Unusual are the ruled address lines and the shield to frame the stamp.



**Figure 7.** This very interesting patriotic design of Liberty above a federal cavalry march also bears faint yellow text from Philadelphia printers King and Baird. This cover was sent by one soldier to another. The 3¢ 1861 stamp is tied “PHILA PA JUL 22 1864.”

The rhyming inscription under the eagle and shield design—“She called her Eagle bearer down, and gave into his mighty hand, The Symbol of her chosen land”—would have been familiar during the Civil War. These lines are from a poem called “The American Flag,” written in the early 19th century by a youthful poet, now largely forgotten, named Joseph Rodman Drake. In the patriotic frenzy of 1861, Drake’s poem was given new life as a popular song (scored by opera composer Vincenzo Bellini) and widely sold as sheet music. Its bold national symbolism probably inspired many patriotic envelope designs; the image on the King & Baird cover in Figure 7 is a highly plausible candidate.



**Figure 8.** Unused eagle and shield patriotic design with cornercard of John H. Johnson, “Printer, Stationer & Song Publisher.” The quotation below the shield, from a song popular during the Civil War era, may have been the source of the patriotic imagery depicted on the cover in Figure 7.

**Figure 9. Eagle, flags and shield “STAND BY THE FLAG” patriotic cover with printed red and blue cornercard for Cornwell, Van Cleve & Barnes, a Detroit paper wholesaler. The eagle with flags design on this envelope is most unusual.**



Figure 9 is an unused envelope with eagle, flags and shield design that bears a cornercard for a Detroit firm, Cornwell, Van Cleve & Barnes. The envelope has blue and red piping on the reverse side. This firm was certainly a seller of patriotic envelopes, but it is not known to have produced designs. The eagle with flags on this envelope is a very rare image.

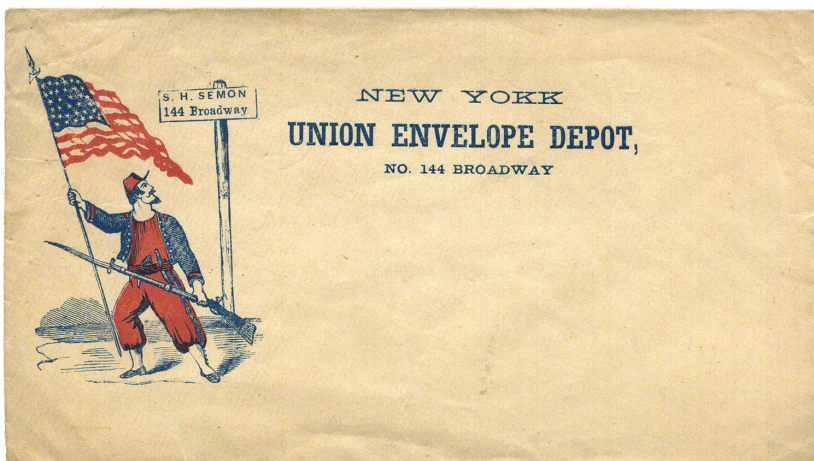
Figure 10 is an unused envelope showing the address imprint of the Union Envelope Depot of New York. The image of a Zouave soldier with flag and signpost (here containing the name S.H. Semon, likely the Depot’s owner) was used by many publishers with different text inserted in the sign. Zouaves were especially popular in New York, where Elmer Ellsworth raised a regiment of them—the 11th New York Infantry, known as the “Fire Zouaves.”

Most of these Zouave key-plate envelopes were probably produced by James Magee of Philadelphia, to whom the cover in Figure 4 was addressed. Magee was an important Philadelphia printer of patriotic envelopes, so it is surprising that no cornercard envelopes are known from his firm. Magee also produced portfolio envelopes, discussed at length at the conclusion of this article.

### Related items

Whittemore of Boston, whom we met previously at Figures 3-5, widely promoted the collecting of unused Civil War patriotic envelopes. Among other promotional devices, his firm created and sold a cover album. I showed an example in my book on Federal Civil War postal history.<sup>4</sup> The album consisted of accordion-bound pages with slits to hold the corners of the envelopes. It was promoted as an “illustrated envelope holder.”

**Figure 10. Unused Zouave design with the imprint of the Union Envelope Depot, New York City. Zouaves were especially popular in New York, where Elmer Ellsworth raised an entire regiment of them, called the “Fire Zouaves.”**





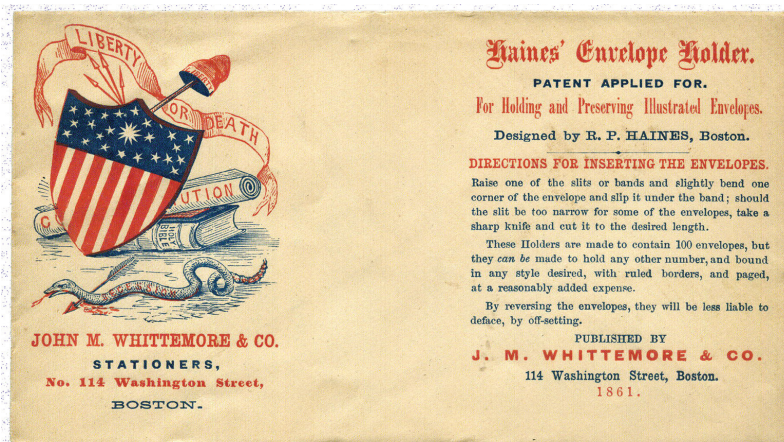


Figure 11. Patriotic envelope from John M. Whittemore with corner-card (see Figure 4) and including an advertisement for “Haines’ Envelope Holder,” an album expressly designed for housing and displaying patriotic envelopes.

Whittemore also produced envelopes to promote the sale of his albums. An example is shown in Figure 11, describing “Haines’ Envelope Holder.” This probably refers to the album I showed in my book. The Figure 11 envelope was obviously not intended for use in the mails: there is no space for addressing. It must have contained other promotional materials for inclusion with other merchandise. The secession snake design is the same as on the cornercard envelope shown in Figure 4. The descriptive legend at right in Figure 11 affirms that the album was as much for containment as display. And the red 1861 date at the bottom proves unarguably that unused Civil War patriotic covers were collected during the war years, not just afterwards.

The cornercard envelope shown in Figure 12 advertises R.R. Landon, a Chicago agent selling books, maps and stationery including “Union Stationery Packages” and “Union envelopes and paper.” A blue “CHICAGO III. OCT 4 1862” duplex marking ties the 3¢ 1861 stamp.

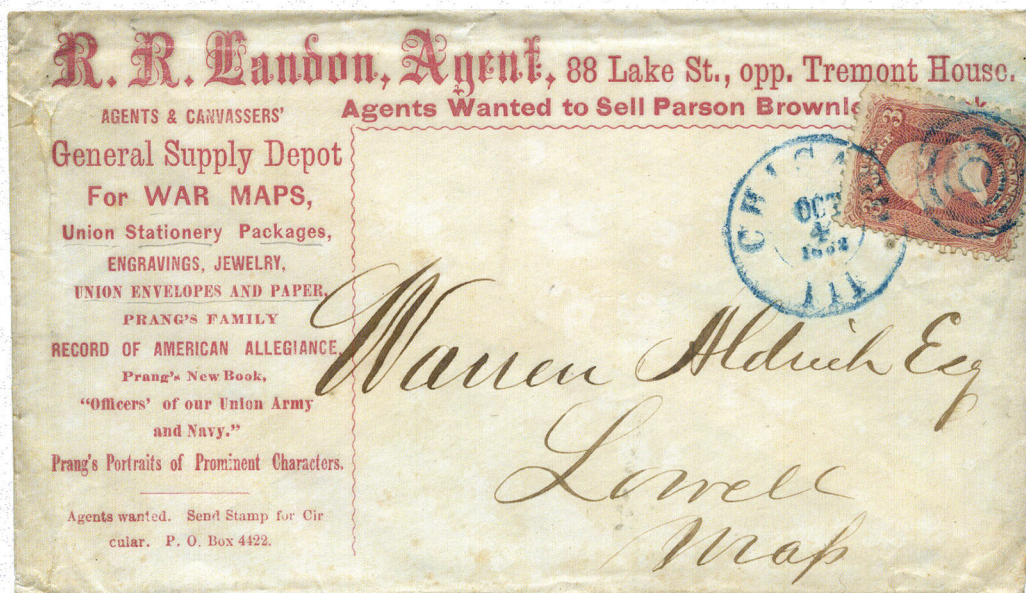


Figure 12. Chicago book and stationery wholesaler R.R. Landon offered a great variety of union patriotic products including maps and portrait albums as well as package envelopes and patriotic stationery. The 3¢ 1861 stamp on this advertising cover is tied by a blue double-circle “CHICAGO III. OCT 4 1862” duplex marking.

There are a few examples of patriotic covers with printing that appears to show that the envelopes were samples of what could be bought in bulk. Figure 13 is one such envelope with bold “HEAD QUARTERS FOR UNION ENVELOPES JAMES GATES, Corner, 4<sup>th</sup> and Hammond Sts.” (Cincinnati).

R.B. Nichol was a Washington, D.C. publisher of both envelopes and song sheets who appears to have started his business in 1864. Many of his designs have a cornercard type of advertisement where the postage stamp was to be placed. Figure 14 shows one of his caricature designs with a soldier boy riding on a pig; the stamp has been moved to reveal the printing. I have a purple envelope mourning Lincoln with this same type of cornercard.

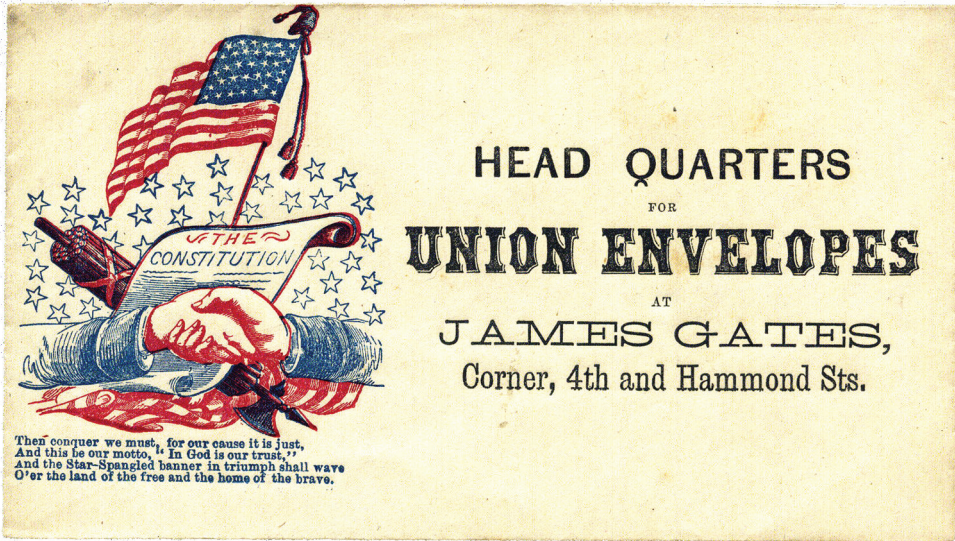
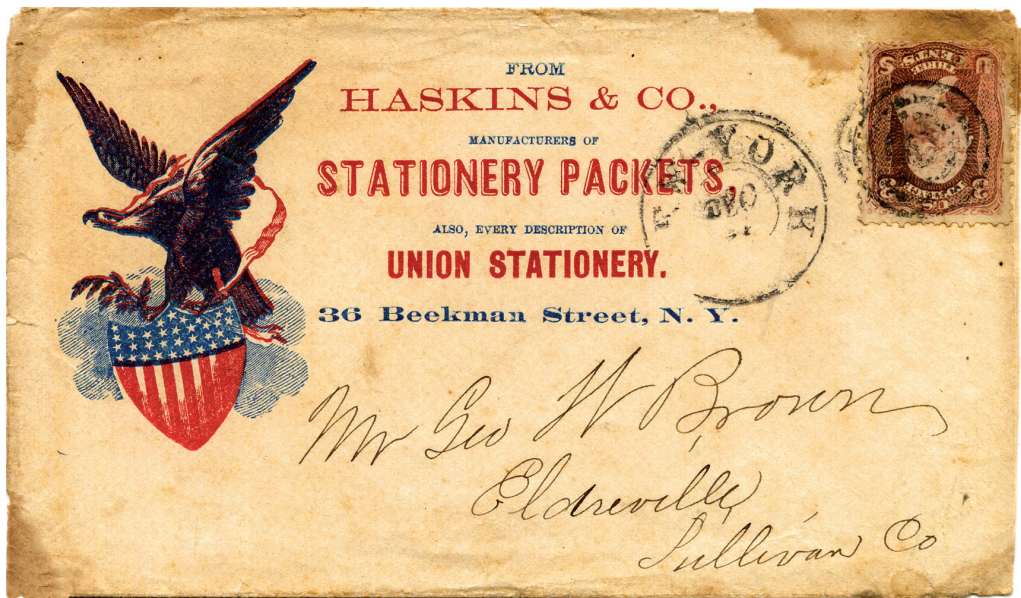


Figure 13. This unused patriotic envelope, likely a sample, shows clasped hands, flag and verse. It promotes Union envelopes from Cincinnati printer James Gates.



Figure 14. Soldier boy riding a pig bearing the sign “Clear the track, a letter from the Army.” In the stamp area at upper right is a printed corner imprint advertising the firm of R.B. Nichols of Washington, D.C., creator of patriotic songsheets and envelopes. The 3¢ 1861 stamp was canceled at Washington on June 10, likely 1864.



**Figure 15. Cornercard patriotic envelope for Haskins & Co., manufacturers of "every description of Union stationery." The 3¢ 1861 stamp is tied by a New York target killer.**

Figure 15 shows a patriotic envelope with an eagle and shield patriotic motif and the name of Haskins & Co. of New York, which declares itself to be a manufacturer of “stationery packets” and “every description of Union stationery.” I am not familiar with Haskins as a producer of patriotic covers, but perhaps the firm created envelopes under other names. The New York double-circle duplex marking tying the 3¢ 1861 stamp is dated “DEC” with day not clear and year not known.

### “Stationery packets”: Portfolio or package envelopes

Today’s collectors are generally not familiar with the envelopes used by dealers of patriotic stationery to package and market their wares. I explored this subject extensively in an article in the *American Stamp Dealer & Collector* in 2014 and more recently in *La Posta*.<sup>5</sup> These envelopes are large (6” by 9” or even larger) so they don’t fit easily on album pages. They are non-philatelic, so you don’t often see them in stamp exhibits. But they are unarguably artifacts of the social history of postal correspondence. They tie directly to the patriotic covers they contained, and they shed light on how these covers came into the hands of the letter writers who used them. It is probable that army sutlers stocked these envelopes and sold them to soldiers in the field. Some publishers called them “portfolio envelopes,” others called them “package envelopes.” Collectors today use both terms interchangeably.

Figure 16 (next page) shows a nice example from Cincinnati stationer James Gates, reduced to fit the *Chronicle* page format. In real life, this envelope measures 9” by 5½”. Envelopes like this were not intended to pass through the mails. They contained various pieces of patriotic stationery and were sold individually for 25¢ or 50¢.

The size of the package envelope seems to have been determined by whether it was meant to hold large sheets of writing paper (both plain and with patriotic illustrations) or small-format paper, which was the type most commonly used by soldiers and civilians in the 1860s. Packages usually included matching envelopes for the lettersheets and other trinkets including pen tips and cheap jewelry. I suspect these packages were stored with the paper contents only. The hard objects could be added at the point of sale. It would be difficult to store envelopes containing metal objects without damaging the fragile paper contents.



Figure 16. SOLDIER'S UNION STATIONERY ENVELOPE containing 12 patriotic envelopes with matching letter paper and five other items, including a songsheet, a pencil a pen and jewelry. This portfolio envelope was made by James Gates of Cincinnati.



Figure 17. Another portfolio envelope—OUR DEFENDERS PRIZE PACKET— made by Mumford of Cincinnati. This envelope, containing 12 sheets of paper and 12 envelopes, cost 25¢. The camp and home designs are not known on patriotic covers.

The Gates envelope in Figure 16, priced at 25¢, contained 12 patriotic envelopes in various designs, 12 sheets of patriotic stationery (also assorted designs), a patriotic song sheet, a pencil, a pen, and a piece of union jewelry.

Figure 17 shows a portfolio envelope, similar in size to the Gates envelope, from the other important publisher of Civil War stationery in Cincinnati, Mumford & Co., whose Anderson patriotic advertising envelope was discussed at Figure 6. In the Figure 17 pack-

# MUMFORD & CO.'S

## CATALOGUE OF NEW, ORIGINAL AND UNRIVALLED

# STATIONERY PRIZE PACKAGES.

ARMY SUTLERS ARE SELLING THOUSANDS OF THESE TO THE UNION SOLDIERS.

### YOUNG OR OLD MEN OUT OF EMPLOYMENT

Will find in the sale of these popular articles an honorable and certain way of clearing from \$25 to \$100 per month. Active men sell from 25 to 100 per day, and they give universal satisfaction.

### THE UNITED STATES ARMY PACKAGE

NO. 11.—Contains 6 Sheets Plain Note Paper, 6 Sheets Union Note Paper, 6 Union & Plain Buff, and 3 Assorted Envelopes, 1 Pen-Holder, 1 Black Lead Pencil—also, a Union Brass Pin, or other piece of Jewelry. Retail price, 30 cents. Wholesale, \$1.25 per dozen, or \$9.00 per 100.

### UNION VARIETY ENVELOPE.

NO. 2.—Contains 12 Sheets Note Paper, 12 good Envelopes, (one-half of each Union style), and a piece of Jewelry, consisting of Union Pins, Sewing Buttons, Studs, &c., 40 varieties. Retail price 25 cents. Wholesale, \$1.00 per dozen, \$7.50 per 100.

### MILITARY PORTRAIT PACKET

NO. 3.—Contains 6 Sheets Letter Paper, 6 Sheets Union Note, 6 Sheets Ladies' Note, 6 Union Envelopes, 6 White P. O. Envelopes, 6 Canary Envelopes, 3 Pen and Holder, 1 Fine Lead Pencil, and one piece of beautiful Jewelry. The whole is put in a large Letter-size Envelope, which has Lithographed, on the outside, 12 of our most prominent Generals. The splendid "Packet" has stationery in it worth 20 cents in any retail store—besides the Jewelry and outside picture on the envelope. Separately, these goods would retail for at least 25 cents in any country or city store. Retail Price, ONLY 25 CENTS. Wholesale, \$2.00 per dozen, \$15.00 per 100.

### UNION VOLUNTEERS' ENVELOPE.

NO. 4.—Contains 12 Assorted Sheets Union Note Paper, 12 Assorted Union Envelopes, Pen and Holder, good Lead Pencil, Union Song, and a piece of Jewelry. Retail price, 25 cents. Wholesale, \$1.50 per dozen, or \$11.00 per 100.

### Union Variety Envelope.

NO. 5.—Contains 6 Sheets Ladies' Note, 6 Sheets Commercial Note, a Buff or Canary Envelopes, 6 White Note Envelopes, (all new, printed in beautiful Union styles), also, one Pen and one piece of first class Jewelry. The whole put up in a Lithograph Portfolio Envelope. Retail price, 25 cents. Wholesale, \$1.25 per dozen, or \$9.50 per 100.

### UNION STATIONERY PACKET.

NO. 6.—Contains about the same as No. 7. Retail and Wholesale price the same.

### WESTERN ARMY PACKAGE, OR SOLDIERS' ARK.

NO. 7.—WESTERN ARMY PACKAGE, or VOLUNTEER'S ARK, contains 6 Sheets Fine Note Paper, 6 Envelopes to Match, 6 Sheets Union Note Paper, 6 Envelopes to Match, 1 Sheet Blotting Paper, 2 Fine Steel Pens, 1 Fine Pen Holder, 1 Black Lead Pencil, 1 Row Pins, 1 Song Book, (40 Songs), 1 Union Union Thread, 1 Pocket Comb, 1 Needle, 1 Button, 1 Calendar for 1862.

N. B.—This Package contains nearly double the value and amount of any other ever offered for the same money. The articles are of the best quality, put up by regular Stationers to meet the real necessities of soldiers and officers. Retail Price 25 cents. Wholesale Price 1.25 per dozen, \$12.00 per 100.

NO. 8.—Speak for itself. It is just ready, and is WITHOUT A RIVAL, OR PARALLEL in this country, for AMOUNT, KIND, and QUALITY of Goods—FOR 25 CENTS. Wholesale price, \$2.00 per dozen, \$15.00 per 100, \$7.50 per 100.

**THE "ECLIPSE" PORTFOLIO.**

CONTAINING

12 Sheets Embossed Note Paper,	12 Fine Designs for Embroidery, viz
6 " Ladies	2 Designs for Collars,
12 Embossed Envelopes, white.	4 " Under-socks,
6 Buff	2 " Under-shirt,
1 Accomodation Pen-Holder,	1 " Corner Handker'chf,
1 Commercial Pen,	2 " Cuffs,
1 Fine Pocket Pencil,	1 " Silk Purse,
1 Blotting Pad,	1 " Child's Jacket,
100 New and Valuable Receipts,	1 " Orn. Pillow Case,
5 Engravings, illustrating War Im-	1 Traveler's Maza, or Puzzle Garden
plements.	11 " Portraits of Generals and Dis-
1 Patriotic Songster—40 Songs.	tinguished Patriots.

**ONE BEAUTIFUL PIECE OF JEWELRY,**  
Valued at from 25 Cts. to Three Dollars.

**MUMFORD & CO.**  
Manufacturers,  
Nos. 38 & 40 West Fourth Street,  
Price, CINCINNATI, 25 Cents.

N. B.—All orders for less than \$10.00 must be accompanied by the cash—\$25.00, or less, may be sent by mail in a Registered Letter, AT OUR RISK. Postage on a single package, 27 cts. In remitting money, if amount is over \$25.00, and no Express Office convenient, send Draft on New York, Philadelphia, Boston, or this City, charging exchange to us. Where Goods are ordered C.O.D., 20 per cent. of amount must always accompany order, to satisfy us that the goods will be promptly taken and paid for.

WE WILL ASSORT UP THE WHOLE EIGHT NUMBERS AT \$12.00 PER HUNDRED. Otherwise, will fill orders by numbers from Catalogue. Any amount less than \$20.00, sent C.O.D., we will charge cost of collection. Over \$20.00, we will pay cost ourselves.

10 New War Maps, Sheet and Pocket Form—Now Ready.

**MUMFORD & CO.**  
Manufacturers and Wholesale Stationers,  
Nos. 38 & 40 West Fourth Street, Cincinnati.

Figure 18. Mumford recruiting poster advertising the portfolio envelopes shown in Figure 17, and offering a variety of similar patriotic assemblies.

age, Mumford offers 12 sheets of note paper (apparently plain), 12 Union envelopes and “1 good lead pencil.” Competitor Gates offered a better deal.

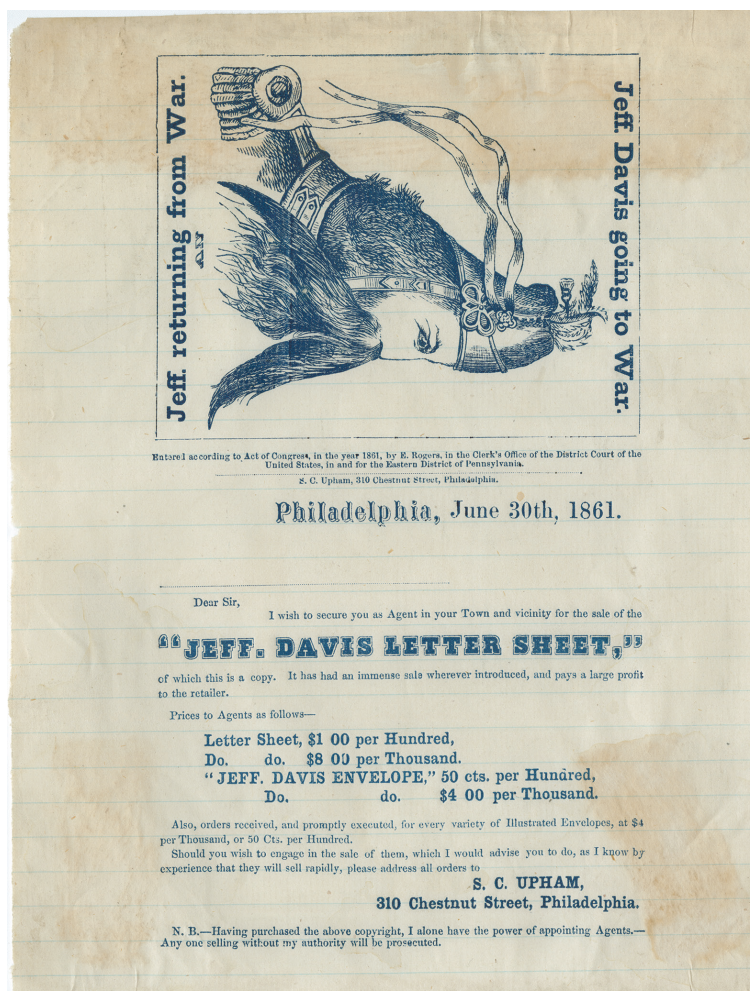
Mumford used the design elements from the Figure 17 envelope (soldier in camp, wife and child at home) on a striking 11”x16” poster promoting the sale of his wares to any individual desiring to make some money. This poster is reproduced as Figure 18 (previous page). Some of the tiny print may not be legible in the reduction presented here, but this is a fascinating document that sheds much light on how these portfolio envelopes were made up and sold. There can be no doubt, such packages were an important distribution channel for marketing and distributing patriotic envelopes.

Table 1 lists the different package envelopes that I have seen. The listing is alphabetical by publisher, with the title presented in the typography in which it appears on the package.

<b>TABLE 1: PATRIOTIC PORTFOLIO ENVELOPE DESIGNS</b>
Baker & Co., Chicago: <b>BAMFORD &amp; BALDWIN’S CHAMPION PRIZE PACKAGE.</b>
Bohn & Co., Washington: <b>SOLDIER’S CAMP STATIONERY.</b> (Hand-colored and blue)
S. Bott, Philadelphia: <b>VICTORY PACKAGE.</b>
John P. Charlton, Philadelphia: <b>No. 2 UNION GIFT PACKAGE.</b>
James Gates, Cincinnati: <b>SOLDIER’S UNION STATIONERY ENVELOPE.</b> (Fig. 16)
James Gay, New York: <b>MILITARY WRITING CASE FOR VOLUNTEER’S USE.</b>
J. Magee, Philadelphia: <b>THE UNION Stationery Package FOR THE MILLION!</b>
J. Magee, Philadelphia: <b>THE GOVERNMENT &amp; FLAG MUST &amp; SHALL BE SUSTAINED— STATIONERY AND PORTRAIT PACKAGE.</b>
Charles Magnus, New York: <b>U.S. MILITARY STATIONERY PACKET.</b>
Charles Magnus, New York: <b>MAGNUS’ HALFDOLLAR PORTFOLIO.</b>
Mumford, Cincinnati: <b>OUR DEFENDERS’ PRIZE PACKET.</b> (Fig. 17)
[Nichol, Washington]: <b>SOLDIERS’ STATIONERY AND SONG PACKAGE.</b>
Shaver, New Haven: <b>EXCELSIOR ACCOMMODATION MILITARY PORTFOLIO.</b>
Sweeter, New Haven: <b>Stationery and Portrait Package for the Million!</b>
Winslow, Syracuse: <b>WINSLOW’S Army and Variety Stationery Package.</b>
Unknown publisher: <b>EXCELSIOR GOLDEN PRIZE PACKAGE.</b>
Unknown publisher: <b>THE CELEBRATED American Standard, First Class STATIONERY PACKAGE.</b>
Unknown publisher: <b>VALENTINE PACKET.</b>
Unknown publisher: <b>THE ARMY VALENTINE PACKAGE.</b> (Also Romeo and Juliet design and army envelopes in orange. These two valentine envelopes are the same size as package envelopes.)

**Table 1. Surviving patriotic portfolio envelopes, listed alphabetically by publisher.**

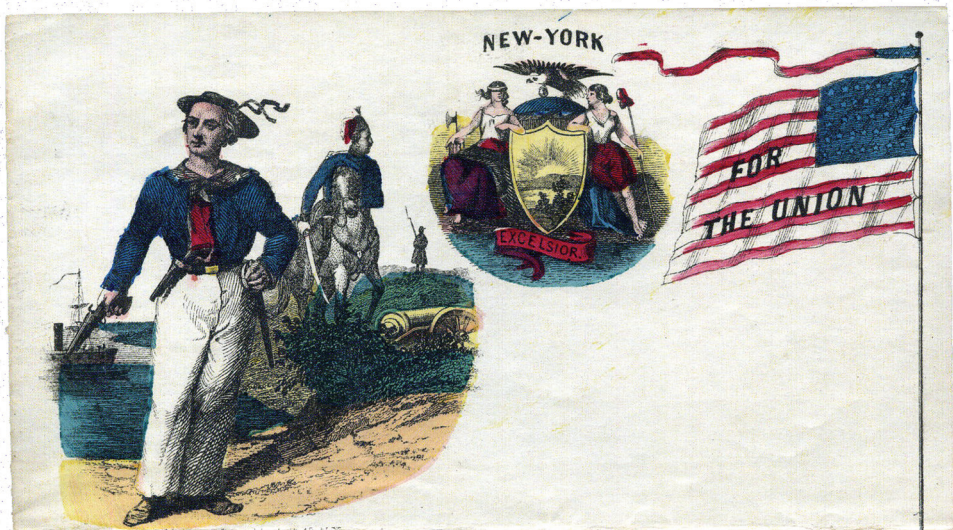
Patriotic envelopes were also marketed individually by local agents. These could be anyone, retailers or freelancers, willing to purchase envelopes in bulk and then sell them at retail. The Library Company of Philadelphia has a vast holding of unused Civil War paper of all types based on a collection put together at the time of the Civil War. Many of the portfolio envelopes discussed above are known only from this source. In that collection is the advertising circular shown in Figure 19, promoting the famous donkey/Jeff Davis envelope and lettersheet created by S.C. Upham of Philadelphia, a firm responsible for many cartoon-type patriotic caricature designs. The flyer solicits agents to purchase the Davis



**Figure 19. Printed circular from S.C. Upham of Philadelphia, advertising the famous Illustrated envelope (and lettersheet) showing a cartoon caricature of Jefferson Davis going to war in helmet and moustache and returning from war (image inverted) as an ass. The envelopes wholesaled at \$4/1000, less than 1/2¢ each. Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.**

envelopes (or other patriotic designs) at a wholesale rate of \$4 per thousand. A middleman could make a fair profit reselling these at a penny apiece. Lettersheets with the Davis imprint were more expensive: \$8 per thousand.

The works of New York printing entrepreneur Charles Magnus are well known to collectors. Given his prolific output of patriotic covers, it's surprising that no cornercard covers are recorded for the Magnus firm. In lieu of a cover, Figure 20 is a Magnus advertising circular with a hand-colored New York "For the Union" design that was certainly used on envelopes. The flyer is dated November 1, 1861, and Magnus advertises 210 designs available in hand-colored, blue, purple or green inks. The wholesale price per 1000 is not stated (and was probably negotiable), but the suggested retail price (for hand-colored envelopes) was \$2.00 per hundred (2¢ each). The flyer also contains a detailed description of the contents of Magnus' 25¢ "Excelsior U.S. Military Stationery Packet," one of the items



SIR!

*I take pleasure in announcing to the trade, that the assortment of my Union Envelopes has reached up to date, Nov. 1st, the Number of 210, and many more new styles are in preparation to complete at least a set of 250.*

*250 colored by hand, price per 1000 \$  
retail " " hundred 2.—*

*250 printed in purple, green or blue, 1000  
retail price per hundred 1.75.*

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE.**

1000 different UNION ENVELOPES, each and all specimens of engraving, representing views of cities, public buildings, state arms, maps, portraits &c. are offered by the publisher in the whole assortment, consisting of 250 finely colored, 250 purple print, 250 blue print, and 250 green print. Orders filled at the above prices by stationers and agents, or direct through any Express Co. without freight charge if the money is remitted with the order.

MAGNUS' EXCELSIOR U. S. MILITARY STATIONARY PACKETS are made up in 50 various styles, viz: 18 sets, showing views in and around Washington, views of public buildings, camp scenes &c. 32 sets showing state arms, views of cities &c., adapted for everybody, in every place. Conclusively you receive in each packet, made up to please the Million at the ordinary retail price of articles ~~75~~ 75 Cents real value for 25 Cents.

Contents of a packet — elegant envelope:

6 sheets note paper with colored engravings of Union emblems, state arms, views of cities, &c.	18 Cents.
6 envelopes do. do. do. do. to match,	12 "
20 portraits of generals in command, on card board	20 "
16 do of the presidents of our great Republic	8 "
1 good lead pencil, pen, holder, and blotter	7 "
Almanac for 1862, and memoranda pamphlet, arranged for 90 days	10 "
<del>75</del> 75 Cents real value for 25 Cents.	75 Cents.

**Just Published:**

Finely engraved maps of the Combat Territory from the district of Columbia to New Orleans, and also for the Coast Blockade, in a pleasing and useful style, ON A LETTER SHEET. There are now 4 different sheets carefully colored. Price 6 Cents each sheet.

**CHARLES MAGNUS,**

Printer and Publisher, 12 Frankfort St., New York.

**N. B.—Rich Goods for Money—Credit abolished.**

Figure 20. New York "FOR THE UNION" sailor design, created by Charles Magnus and widely used on envelopes, here used as a letterhead on a circular promoting unused stationery and stationery packets sold by the Magnus firm.



listed in Table 1. Most of the lettersheets and songsheets sold by Magnus during the war contain an advertisement of one sort or another at the bottom. The claim of 500 different designs was frequent.

### Conclusion

Civil War patriotic covers have been avidly collected from their beginning, in the first months of the war. Patriotic covers add visual enhancement to any postal history collection in which they fit. The symbolism of their various designs sheds colorful light on social aspects of the most traumatic event in American history. This article has discussed one small facet of patriotic covers—those that bear the corner advertisements of cover manufacturers—but this investigation has enabled exploration of some of the ways in which patriotic covers were marketed.


### Endnotes

1. In my book on Federal Civil War postal history, an appendix written by Gene Freeman lists almost 400 different maker's imprints that can be found on patriotic covers. Nonetheless, only about 20 companies produced any substantial volume of envelopes. (James W. Milgram, *Federal Civil War Postal History*, Northbrook Publishing Co., Lake Forest, Ill., 2009, pp. 391-406.)
2. James W. Milgram, "Civil War Patriotic Covers of Frederick K. Kimmel," *American Philatelist*, Vol. 115, pp. 718-725 (2001).
3. — and John L. Kimbrough, *Confederate Patriotic Stationery*, Northbrook Publishing Co., Lake Forest, Ill. (2018).
4. —, *Federal Civil War Postal History*, Figure 4-102.
5. —, "Portfolio or Package Envelopes of the American Civil War," *American Stamp Dealer & Collector*, Nov.-Dec. 2014, pp. 22-29; "Portfolio and Package Envelopes of the American Civil War," *La Posta*, Vol. 49, pp. 6-21 (2018). ■

— *The Gold Standard in Revenues* —

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## TALES OF THE CIVIL WAR BLOCKADE: THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED *ROBERT E. LEE*

STEVEN WALSKE

This continues a series of articles on blockade runners during the American Civil War. The first article, on the steamship *Antonica*, was published in *Chronicle* 262. A second article, in *Chronicle* 263, described the blockade-running career of the steamship *Fannie*.

This article describes the successful blockade-running career of the Confederate steamship *Robert E. Lee*, originally launched under the name *Giraffe*. She ran the Federal blockade successfully 16 times, mostly plying between St. George's, Bermuda, and Wilmington, North Carolina. Her story is told by the letters she carried through the blockade.

The main purpose of blockade running was to bring crucial war supplies and equipment into the Confederate States of America (CSA). As an adjunct to that objective, blockade runners carried cotton out of the CSA to help pay for those supplies and equipment. It is certain that the Confederate war effort would have collapsed early on without the military supplies brought in through the blockade.

At the start of the war, the CSA relied on private enterprise to conduct blockade running. This proved to be both overly expensive and unreliable, since many blockade-running companies preferred to carry higher-margin luxury goods into the CSA. Consequently, Colonel Josiah Gorgas, head of the CSA Ordnance Department, decided to acquire a fleet of five blockade runners to operate under naval command with cargoes fully dedicated to the war effort. Toward this end, Gorgas dispatched CSA agents to England, Nassau, Bermuda and Havana to facilitate the purchase and transshipment of military supplies.

Meanwhile, the CSA Secretary of the Treasury, Christopher Memminger, was facing the challenge of producing banknotes and certificates. His agent in England, Major Benjamin Ficklin, identified the necessary engraving machinery, presses and personnel in Scotland, and learned of a Clyde-built iron sidewheel steamer, *Giraffe*, that could be purchased to bring the equipment and personnel to the CSA. Figure 1 shows a photo of the vessel at anchor, date not known, from a photo history book published early in the 20th century.<sup>1</sup>

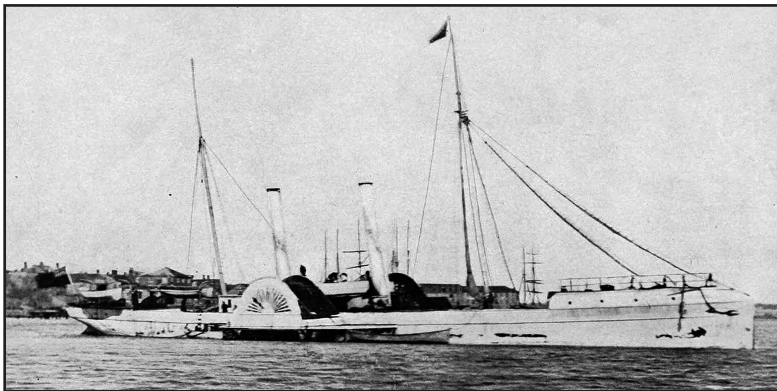


Figure 1. The *Robert E. Lee* at anchor, undated photograph.

Steamships built along the Clyde River near Glasgow had many of the characteristics that were needed to get past the Federal blockade: speed, shallow draft and low profile. *Giraffe* was one of the fastest Clyde-built steamers, having been launched on May 16, 1860 by James and George Thomson for the Glasgow-Belfast mail and passenger run. At 260 feet long and 26 feet wide, she was described as “the ultimate compromise between ‘sea boat’ and ‘racer.’ She was able to withstand the wild cross currents and seas of the North Channel between Scotland and Ireland....[F]or speed, she had a hull of great length and knife-edge bow, driven through the seas by twin oscillating engines (each 90 horsepower) served by six boilers.”<sup>22</sup> Notwithstanding these qualities, she was operating at a loss, so her owners decided to sell her in October 1862.

Ficklin and a CSA naval officer, Lieutenant John Wilkinson, rushed to Scotland to buy *Giraffe*, but they were too late. An important operator of private blockade runners, Alexander Collie & Company, had gotten there first and purchased her for \$160,000. Not to be denied, Wilkinson convinced Collie that his relationship with the CSA government would be greatly improved if he were to sell her to the CSA, so a partnership of the Treasury and Ordnance Departments acquired her at Collie’s cost. On November 15, 1862, *Giraffe* left Glasgow under Wilkinson’s command. She carried a cargo of war munitions, printing and engraving equipment and 26 Scottish lithographers.

Upon her December 19 arrival in Nassau, Bahamas, a new crew was waiting to take her into Wilmington. She departed on December 26 and ran aground just outside of Wilmington’s harbor bar on December 28. The lithographers and the mail were rowed ashore, and *Giraffe* steamed into Wilmington a day later. Figure 2 shows a letter carried on this trip.

Dated February 28, 1862 at London and addressed to Richmond, this tobacco price report was sent under cover to an agent in Nassau. It was carried on the Cunard steamer *China*, which sailed from Liverpool on November 22 and arrived in New York on December 5. Since the Nassau mails were sent closed through New York, it was transferred in a mail bag to the Cunard branch steamer *British Queen*, which departed from New York on



**Figure 2.** Letter from London, carried into Wilmington from Nassau on *Robert E. Lee*’s first blockade-running trip in 1862. Postmarked at Wilmington on December 29 and rated for a collection of 52¢: five times the CSA domestic postage rate plus 2¢ ship fee. Robert A. Siegel sale 1154, lot 2448 (May 10, 2017).

December 9 and reached Nassau four days later. There the agent discarded the outer envelope and directed this letter to be placed on *Giraffe*. On the day of her arrival at Wilmington, the Figure 2 cover was processed by the post office, which rated it for a quintuple-weight 52¢ due, and added the handstamped “SHIP” marking to indicate the reason for the 2¢ ship fee.

Once safely in Wilmington, *Giraffe* was transferred to the Ordnance Department under the permanent command of John Wilkinson, and re-named *Robert E. Lee*. Captain Wilkinson had an unblemished record with the *Robert E. Lee*. By his own account, “she carried abroad between six thousand and seven thousand bales of cotton, worth at that time about two million dollars in gold, and had carried into the Confederacy equally valuable cargoes.”<sup>3</sup>

Even though *Giraffe* ran aground on her first trip into Wilmington, this port greatly favored blockade runners because of the multiple inlets on either side of Cape Fear. The map in Figure 3 shows that a departing blockade runner could sail down the river to Smithville and, based on where the blockade squadron had placed the bulk of its ships, choose the best inlet for departure.



**Figure 3. Wilmington, North Carolina, and its many approaches. Multiple inlets made the city very attractive for blockade running. Map courtesy of Richard Frajola.**

Speed and low profile were essential for successful entry or escape. A blockade runner approaching Wilmington would typically use its lesser draft and low profile to approach one of the inlets close to shore. Wilkinson devised methods which further improved his chances for success. For example, since the blockading fleet used a system of colored rockets to indicate which inlet a blockade runner was attempting to use, Wilkinson carried colored rockets on board, which he shot off to send the blockaders in the wrong direction.

Table 1 details *Robert E. Lee*'s 16 successful trips through the blockade. The CSA Ordnance Department preferred to use Bermuda as a blockade-running terminus, since safe connections with Europe via Halifax and St. Thomas facilitated the transshipment of military supplies. Table 1 shows that, after the Ordnance Department acquired the *Robert*

**TABLE 1:  
GIRAFFE/ROBERT E. LEE CIVIL WAR SAILING DATA: 1862-63**

Trip #	Departure Port	Departure Date	Arrival Port	Arrival Date	Notes
<b>1862</b>					
Left Glasgow on November 15 and arrived at Nassau on December 19					
W-1	Nassau	26 Dec	Wilmington	29 Dec	Figure 2
<b>1863</b>					
E-2	Wilmington	22 Jan	Nassau	26 Jan	Continued to Bermuda
W-3	St George's	5 Feb	Wilmington	11 Feb	
E-4	Wilmington	1 Mar	St George's	5 Mar	
W-5	St George's	14 Mar	Wilmington	19 Mar	
E-6	Wilmington	12 Apr	St George's	16 Apr	
W-7	St George's	24 Apr	Wilmington	30 Apr	
E-8	Wilmington	18 May	St George's	22 May	
W-9	St George's	5 Jun	Wilmington	10 Jun	
E-10	Wilmington	4 Jul	St George's	9 Jul	Figure 4
W-11	St George's	22 Jul	Wilmington	28 Jul	Figure 5
E-12	Wilmington	15 Aug	St George's	18 Aug	
W-13	St George's	24 Aug	Wilmington	28 Aug	
E-14	Wilmington	29 Aug	St George's	2 Sep	
W-15	St George's	4 Sep	Wilmington	10 Sep	Figure 6
E-16	Wilmington	10 Oct	Halifax	16 Oct	Left Halifax October 20
W-17	St George's	4 Nov			
Captured 9 November entering Wilmington					

SOURCES: These sailing dates, supplemented substantially by the author's personal research, were drawn from Stephen Wise's *Lifeline of the Confederacy* (University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, 1988); and Maurice Ludington's *Postal History of Blockade Running Through Bermuda 1861-1865* (British Caribbean Philatelic Study Group, Monograph No. 14, Edward F. Addiss Philatelic Research Collection, 1996). Trips are numbered consecutively; "E" indicates eastbound, "W" westbound.

*E. Lee*, she ran regularly between Wilmington and Bermuda (St. George's) for almost a year before she was finally captured.

Figure 4 shows an outbound letter carried from Richmond to Philadelphia via Bermuda and Halifax. Dated in Richmond on June 28, 1863, this letter was sent under cover to an agent in Halifax, Nova Scotia. It left Wilmington on July 4 aboard *Robert E. Lee* and arrived in St. George's five days later. On July 15, the U.S. Vice-Consul at Bermuda reported that, "*Robt. E. Lee* under the flag of the so-called Confederate States arrived at this port on the 9th inst. from Wilmington with Cotton and Turpentine and is now taking in cargo



**Figure 4. From Richmond to Philadelphia via Bermuda and Halifax. This June 28, 1863 letter was carried on *Robert E. Lee's* trip E-10 via Wilmington to St. George's, Bermuda, thence to Halifax and on to Boston by Cunard steamers. The "CTS 10" marking was applied at Boston. Robert A. Siegel sale 1154, lot 2479 (May 10, 2017).**

from Warehouse for a return voyage.”<sup>24</sup> Still under cover, the letter was transferred to the Cunard branch steamer *Alpha*, which departed on July 11 and arrived in Halifax three days later. The Halifax post office postmarked the letter on July 16, and the transatlantic Cunard steamer *Africa* carried it to Boston on July 22, where it was rated for double-weight 10¢ packet postage due from the recipient in Philadelphia.

Because of its ordnance facility, Bermuda became a major destination and transit point for Confederate naval ships and personnel. Thus, it was no surprise that the Confederate raider, CSS *Florida*, stopped there July 16-25, 1863 to refuel and refit after her six-month first cruise. Her captain, the famed blockade-runner John Newland Maffitt, moored her next to the *Robert E. Lee*, which was preparing for a return trip to the CSA. On July 21, the U.S. Vice Consul reported that, “I have the honor to inform you of the arrival at this port on this 16th inst. of the armed steamship *Florida* under the flag of the rebel States of America. . . . She is now alongside the *Robert E. Lee* transshipping silver bars, chronometers, etc. for Wilmington.”<sup>25</sup>

The CSA ordnance agent at St. George's, Major Smith Stansbury, also reported on July 20 that the “Steamer *Robt. E. Lee* has her Cargo and is only waiting for Coal, of which we are now out. Should she not leave within two days, she will probably be detained until about the 30th.”<sup>26</sup> Blockade runners did not attempt to challenge the blockade during a full moon, so the delay referenced by Stansbury was due to that.

Nonetheless, Captain Wilkinson scrounged up enough coal for the journey to Wilmington and left St. George's on July 22. The letter shown in Figure 5 was carried on that trip. This letter was endorsed “Ship's letter C.S.S. ‘Florida’ Bermuda,” and given directly to the nearby *Robert E. Lee*. She carried it to Wilmington on July 28. Perhaps due to a quarantine for yellow fever, the Wilmington post office postmarked the letter two days after her arrival, and rated it for 12¢ due (10¢ Confederate postage plus the 2¢ ship fee).

Bermuda's principal connection with Europe was via Halifax. A Cunard branch steamer ran between St. George's and Halifax, where it connected with the transatlantic Cunard steamship between Liverpool and Boston. Figure 6 shows an inbound letter routed



Figure 5. July 1863 letter carried in to Wilmington from Bermuda on *Robert E. Lee's* trip W-11. Postmarked at Wilmington July 30 and sent on to Richmond rated for 12¢ collection: 10¢ Confederate postage plus the 2¢ ship letter fee.



Figure 6. Originating in Europe, this letter was sent under cover to Bermuda via Liverpool and Halifax, then carried into Wilmington on *Robert E. Lee's* trip W-15. Sent from Wilmington to an agent at Charleston, who added the 10¢ stamp and readdressed the cover to North Carolina. Robert A. Siegel sale 1154, lot 2463 (May 10, 2017).

via Halifax. Originating in Europe, this letter was sent under cover to an agent in Bermuda. It left Liverpool on August 8 aboard the Cunard steamer *Asia*, which arrived in Halifax on August 18. It was transferred there to the Cunard branch steamer *Alpha*, which departed on August 20 and reached St. George's, Bermuda, six days later, where the agent placed it on *Robert E. Lee*. This was *Robert E. Lee's* final trip between Bermuda and Wilmington, departing on September 4 and arriving on September 10. When this letter reached Wilmington, the provost marshal signed it "B. Duncan" on the reverse, in conformity with the Au-

gust 11, 1863 Confederate Special Order No. 156, which required examination of all letters carried by blockade runners. The Wilmington post office then postmarked the letter the day after arrival, and assessed 12¢ postage due to Charleston per a manuscript “12” obscured by the stamp. The W.C. Bee Company (a private operator of blockade runners), to whose care the letter had been directed, paid the 12¢ on September 12 in Charleston and added a 10¢ Confederate stamp (Scott 11) to pay forwarding postage to the addressee in North Carolina.

Although the ordnance steamers were supposed to carry only war munitions, some non-military cargo did sneak aboard. The *Robert E. Lee*'s September 4 cargo manifest includes 300 barrels of gunpowder, five cases of cartridges, 400 pigs of lead, army clothing, medical stores and 300 cases of brandy.<sup>7</sup>

Just after his September 10, 1863 arrival in Wilmington, Wilkinson was given new orders for a special mission. He was to sail *Robert E. Lee* to Halifax with a cargo of cotton and 22 CSA officers, and attempt to rescue 2,500 Confederate officers held at the Johnson's Island prison near Lake Erie. An impossible constraint was to not violate British neutrality during the operation. Wilkinson nonetheless proceeded from Wilmington on October 10 and arrived in Halifax six days later. His cargo was sold there, and the proceeds were applied to the purchase of military supplies at Halifax and to the funding of his operation. Loaded with its new cargo, *Robert E. Lee* left Halifax on October 20 under the command of John Knox, and proceeded to Bermuda. Meanwhile, Wilkinson and his party travelled surreptitiously to Montreal, where they were met with the news that their expedition had been uncovered, and that the guard at Johnson's Island had been strengthened. Disappointed, they returned to Halifax and then to Bermuda.

On November 4, *Robert E. Lee* and her sister ship in the Ordnance fleet, *Cornubia*, left Bermuda for Wilmington. *Cornubia* reached Wilmington first, but was captured there by the USS *James Adger* during the evening of November 8. Meanwhile, Knox had inexplicably anchored the *Robert E. Lee* near Wilmington until first light on November 9, when she was also spotted by the *James Adger*. After a short chase, she surrendered. The simultaneous loss of two very successful Ordnance Department blockade runners was very damaging to the Confederate war supply effort.

*Robert E. Lee* was purchased by the U.S. Navy in the Boston prize court and commissioned the USS *Fort Donelson* on June 29, 1864. She was assigned to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron and de-commissioned on August 17, 1865. That marked the end of her illustrious Civil War career.

### Acknowledgement

John Barwis and Scott Trepel reviewed a draft of this article and provided valuable insights.

### Endnotes

1. Photograph of the *Robert E. Lee* at anchor, from *The Photographic History of the Civil War in Ten Volumes: Volume Six, The Navies* (Review of Reviews, New York, 1911), pg. 108.
2. Eric J. Graham, *Clyde Built* (Birlinn Ltd., Edinburgh, 2006), pp. 47-52.
3. John Wilkinson, *The Narrative of a Blockade Runner* (Sheldon, New York, 1877), pp. 104-107.
4. Glen Wiche, editor, *Dispatches from Bermuda, the Civil War Letters of Charles Maxwell Allen, United States Consul at Bermuda, 1861-1888* (Kent State University Press, 2008), pg. 96.
5. *Ibid.*, pg. 97.
6. Frank Vandiver, editor, *Confederate Blockade Running through Bermuda, 1861-65* (Kraus, New York, 1970), pg. 73.
7. *Ibid.*, pg. 117. ■

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**FOREIGN REGISTERED MAIL 1855-1875**  
**PART THREE: GERMAN**

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

**Introduction**

This is the third article in a planned four-part series devoted to registered mail between the United States and foreign countries during the classic stamp era. The first installment, discussing registered mail between the U.S. and Canada, was published in *Chronicle* 260 (November 2018). The second article, in *Chronicle* 262, discussed registered mail to and from Great Britain and via British mails to and from destinations beyond Great Britain. This current installment will discuss registered mail to and from Germany and nations beyond served by the German international mail system. A planned fourth installment will discuss registered mail to and from the rest of the world.

**Early Prussian covers**

Early registration of mail was based on treaties the U.S. had with specific German states. According to Richard Winter, the first mechanism for foreign registration of U.S. mail was through additional articles to the Prussian closed mail convention of 1852, signed in Washington, D.C., on August 29, 1855 and in Berlin on October 14, 1855.<sup>1</sup> These articles did not have a specific effective date, so the latter date was when both countries first had a formal agreement.



**Figure 1.** The earliest recorded foreign registered letter that was also registered in the United States. Posted at Dresden, Saxony, September 19, 1855 and sent to New York City. The 17 neugroschen prepayment (crayon at the lower left) was 13 ngr convention rate, 2 ngr German registration fee, plus an unnecessary 2 ngr for U.S. registration.

Under this arrangement, each country kept the entire registration fee and gave no credit to the other for any portion.<sup>2</sup> This was similar to the arrangement with Canada, but unlike the treaty with Great Britain. The U.S. fee was 5¢ per letter regardless of weight until January 1, 1868, when the new treaty changed it to 8¢.<sup>3</sup> This change was also discussed in my book, *United States Registered Mail 1845-1870*.<sup>4</sup>

Postmasters did not always follow formal conventions. Figure 1 illustrates the earliest recorded registered cover from Germany that also shows registration within the United States. It was sent from Dresden, Saxony, September 19, 1855 with black **Chargé** and **P.P.** The red boxed serrated-edge **Recomandirt** (registered) may also have been struck in Dresden. (The bar over the m indicates a double m. The full German spelling is “recommandirt,” but philatelic convention is to quote the spelling as it appears on the actual markings.)

The cover was endorsed “per steamer via England,” so it was sent by Prussian closed mail. Although not rendered clearly, the red crayon marks at bottom left likely indicate the total prepayment of 17 neugroschen (ngr). This represented the sum of the 13 ngr Prussian convention postal rate to the U.S., 2 ngr registration fee, plus an additional 2 ngr payment for the registration fee in the U.S., which would not have been necessary under the additional articles to the convention (which were technically not yet in effect).

The red crayon 10 below the red **AACHEN PAID** double circle marking is a 10¢ credit from Prussia for 5¢ U.S. internal postage plus an unnecessary 5¢ for the U.S. registration fee. Unlike the treaty with Britain, the additional articles to the Prussian convention did not require a credit to the U.S. for the registration fee. The black manuscript marking at upper left indicates the weight of ½ loth (equal to 8.33 grams). The significance of the red manuscript marking at the upper right is not clear.

At Aachen the letter was marked with a red crowned **REGISTERED** in reverse arc. Britain supplied this marking to Prussia for use under the Anglo-Prussian convention and Prussia also used it for mail under the U.S.-Prussian convention.<sup>5</sup> **NEW-YORK AM PKT PAID 30 OCT 3** indicates the total 30¢ rate was prepaid and that the cover was carried by an American packet, in this case the ill-starred Collins steamship *Pacific*, which departed Liverpool September 22 and arrived in New York October 2.<sup>6</sup>

Within the address is a magenta manuscript “NY No 456”, penned in the location where New York almost always wrote the registration number if the cover was to be delivered within New York City. This is the second earliest recorded New York registration postal marking. The New York office treated this letter as registered before the additional articles to the convention were signed in Germany on October 14, 1855. Since the articles had been signed at Washington on August 28, the New York postmaster probably considered the treaty amendment already to be in effect.

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Figure 2. Registered from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 16 May 1857 to Haiger, Dutchy of Nassau. The 1851 stamps and postal stationery paid the 30¢ Prussian closed mail rate. The 5¢ registration fee was prepaid at Milwaukee in cash. The manuscript New York transit number in the lower right corner confirms registration in the U.S. New York's crayon 7 credited Prussia for 2¢ Belgian transit plus 5¢ German internal postage.

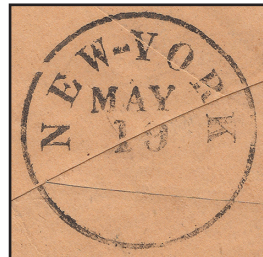


Figure 2 shows a cover posted at Milwaukee, Wisconsin on May 16, 1857, addressed to Haiger, Dutchy of Nassau, Germany. The 30¢ Prussian convention rate was paid by the 3¢ 1853 entire envelope uprated with a 3¢ and a pair 12¢ 1851 stamps. The 5¢ registration fee was paid in cash. The manuscript number at the upper left may be Milwaukee's registration number. New York's transit registration number is in manuscript at lower right. A black **NEW-YORK MAY 19** circular datestamp was struck on the reverse (shown inset). The magenta manuscript 7 in the center is the credit to Prussia for 2¢ Belgian transit and 5¢ German internal postage. The letter was sent from New York to Boston for the May 20 sailing of the Cunard *Europa*, which arrived at Liverpool May 31. At Aachen it received the red **AACHEN 3 6 FRANCO** and a boxed serrated-edge **Recomandirt. HAIGER 8 JUN 1857** is struck on the reverse (also shown inset).

An even earlier cover with three 10¢ 1851 type I stamps tied by **MILWAUKEE WIS MAY 6** (1857) to Württemberg via Aachen was registered with a number only.<sup>7</sup> There is also a New York transit number. The Aachen **Recomandirt** and **AACHEN 24 5 FRANCO** confirm fully paid registered carriage.

The black and white illustration in Figure 3 shows a cover from Chicago to Sachsenheim, Württemberg. A pair and a single 10¢ 1851 type III imperforate stamps paid the 30¢ convention rate. They are canceled by **CHICAGO III. AUG 11 1857** with registration number at the upper left. The New York transit registration number is written in at right center. The red **N. YORK 7 AM. PKT. AUG 15 PAID** indicates a 7¢ credit to Prussia for 2¢ Belgian transit and 5¢ German internal postage. The letter was carried on the Collins Line *Baltic*, which sailed on August 16, one day late because she was grounded on a mud bank upon leaving her New York berth. She arrived in Liverpool August 28.<sup>8</sup> Aachen applied its



Figure 3. Registered cover from Chicago to Württemberg, posted August 11, 1857. Three Type III 10¢ 1851 stamps paid the 30¢ Prussian closed mail rate; 5¢ registration fee was paid in cash. New York credited Prussia 7¢: 2¢ Belgian transit and 5¢ German internal postage. The 5/10 notation is the weight in German loth.

boxed transit marking and likely also applied the serrated boxed **Recomandirt**. The number at the top appears to be a German registration number. The manuscript 5/10 to the left of the Aachen boxed marking indicates a weight of 5/10 of a loth. The crisscross manuscript at the upper left was applied in Württemberg to indicate registration.<sup>9</sup>

An 1858 use from Jefferson City, Missouri, November 17 to Munster, Prussia, is shown in Figure 4. The 30¢ Prussian closed mail rate was paid by a strip of three 10¢ 1857 Type III stamps. A blue endorsement by the sender in German “recommand” (register) is at the lower left and the registration number “17” was marked in the upper left corner. The 5¢ U.S. registration fee was paid in cash and (as usual) is not noted on the cover. The New York office wrote its registration number “3525” at lower right and struck **N. YORK 7 BR. PKT. NOV 24 PAID** in red to indicate the 7¢ credit to Prussia: 2¢ Belgian transit and 5¢ German internal postage. The letter was carried on the Cunard *Asia*, which departed New York November 24 and arrived in Liverpool December 5. The blue manuscript 4/10 at the upper left probably is the weight in German loth.



Figure 4. Registered cover posted at Jefferson City, Missouri, November 17, 1858, addressed to Munster, Prussia. Three 10¢ 1857 Type III stamps paid the Prussian closed mail rate. The 5¢ registration fee was paid in cash. Registered number 17 at top left; New York registry transit number 3525 at bottom right.



**Figure 5. Philadelphia, December 18, 1860 to Vienna. The pair of 30¢ 1860 stamps paid double the Prussian closed mail postal rate; 5¢ registry fee was paid in cash. Magenta 14 double-rate credit to Prussia. Philadelphia's registration number is 2937; 6588 is the New York transit registration number. Blue 8/10 is the weight in loth.**

Figure 5 shows a very attractive double rate Prussian closed mail cover to Vienna, Austria. Postage was paid by a pair of 30¢ 1860 stamps tied by an octagonal **PHILADELPHIA PA. DEC 18 1860**. The 5¢ registration fee was paid in cash. The Philadelphia registration number “2937” is in the upper left and the New York registration number “6588” is at bottom, left of “Vienna.” This cover was carried on the Cunard *Asia*, which departed December 19, the date of the New York circular datestamp. It arrived at Queenstown on January 1, 1861. New York wrote the magenta 14 to the left of the stamps to indicate the double rate credit to Prussia: 4¢ Belgian transit and 10¢ German internal. The Aachen exchange office struck **AACHEN 4 1 FRANCO** and **Recomandirt**. It wrote the weight, 8/10 of a loth, in blue at the upper left.

On the cover in Figure 6 the Prussian closed mail rate to Waiblingen, Württemberg, was paid by a single copy of the 30¢ 1860 stamp tied by **ST LOUIS MO. JUL 1 1861**. The 5¢ registration fee was paid in cash. The cover bears St. Louis’ “R 10” and New York’s “No. 1380” registration numbers. The red **NEW-YORK JUL 6 1861** postmark was applied in transit. The large red 7 in the center is the 7¢ credit to Prussia for 2¢ Belgian transit and 5¢ German internal postage. The cover was carried by the Inman Line *Kangaroo*, which sailed New York July 6. Although it was endorsed “via Liverpool” *Kangaroo*’s mails were actually offloaded in Queenstown July 17. The Prussian exchange office applied in red **AACHEN 19 7 FRANCO** and **Recomandirt** boxed markings. The blue 7/10 at the left is the weight in German loth. The bold cross-hatching crisscross in blue ink was applied by Württemberg to indicate registration. The 77 at the top is a German registration number.

Figure 7 is a stampless cover with a Hotel Jegel cameo corner cachet sent registered from New York to Trieste, Austria, in 1862. The 30¢ Prussian closed mail payment is noted at the upper right but the mandatory payment for the 5¢ registration fee is not indicated. New York struck in red **NEW-YORK MAR 12 1862** and wrote its registration number 6429 at left (lower than usual because of the corner imprint). The magenta 7 at the lower right is a 7¢ credit to Prussia. The cover was carried by the Cunard *Arabia*, which sailed from New York March 12 and arrived in Queenstown March 24. Aachen struck its red



Figure 6. St. Louis, Missouri, July 1, 1861 to Waiblingen, Württemberg. The 30¢ 1860 stamp paid the single Prussian closed mail rate; 5¢ registry fee was paid in cash. "R 10" marked at the top, New York's 1380 at lower right. Crayon 7 credit to Prussia for 2¢ Belgian transit and 5¢ German internal postage. Blue 7/10 at left is the weight in loth.



Figure 7. Registered cover from New York City, March 12, 1862, to Trieste, Austria. New York's registration number was 6429 (below the hotel imprint). Prepaid 35¢ in cash: 30¢ closed mail postage (upper corner) plus 5¢ registration (not noted on the cover). The magenta 7 at lower right is a credit to Prussia; blue 6/10 is weight in loth.

AACHEN 25 3 FRANCO and **Recomandirt** boxed markings. The blue 6/10 is the German loth weight.

The cover from St. Petersburg to Washington, D.C. in Figure 8 bears a black Russian **RECOMMANDIRT.** in an octagonal box and a black Russian circular marking which is



Figure 8. St. Petersburg, Russia, to Washington D.C., early 1860s. The black **RECOMMANDIRT.** in an octagonal border is a Russian marking. Aachen applied the red crown **REGISTERED** marking. The magenta 13 at top left confirms the 13 sgr Prussian closed mail rate was prepaid. Red Aachen double circle credits U.S. 25¢.

unfortunately unreadable. At bottom left the cover is endorsed “Pr. Prussian closed mail.” The 13 sgr (equated to 30¢) prepayment for the Prussian closed mail rate was written in magenta ink at the upper left. A black manuscript 9 on the reverse may represent the sum in sgr of the registration fee and the transit from Russia to Germany. The crown **REGISTERED** is from Aachen and there is double-circle **AACHEN Paid 25 cts**, which is the credit to the U.S. for 2¢ Belgian transit, 18¢ sea and 5¢ U.S. internal postage. A year date is not present but the usage appears to be the early 1860s. On arrival, **NEW-YORK AM. PKT.** was applied in red. The 5066 is a New York registration number, and the 785 may have been applied at Washington.

Figure 9 shows a cover addressed to Schwarzburg-Sondershausen, a small principality in present-day Thuringia, sent from the gold-mining town of Placerville, California, an unusual origin for a registered letter sent overseas. The 30¢ 1861 stamp overpaid the 28¢ Prussian closed mail rate. A cash registry fee of 5¢ is not indicated on the cover nor are there any manuscript markings from Placerville. The red crayon 7 in the middle is a 7¢ credit to Prussia for 2¢ Belgian transit and 5¢ German internal postage. The New York registration number “4315” is at the lower right. The postmarks have no year date, but the red New York straight line **REGISTERED** (R-NY-4) was used 1863-65 and the red **NEW-YORK AUG 29** with fleurons (R-NY-8) is recorded from 1863-64.<sup>10</sup> Based on the New York postmark and red **AACHEN 12 9 FRANCO** dates, the letter likely was carried by the Inman Line *City of Washington*, which sailed August 29, 1863 and arrived at Queenstown September 8. Aachen’s boxed **Recomandirt** confirms registration in Germany.

The July 1, 1863 increase in the domestic United States registration fee from 5¢ to 20¢ did not affect the registration fee under the Prussian closed mail convention.<sup>11</sup> Figure 10 shows a cover with 30¢ 1861 stamp sent June 8, 1865 from San Francisco to Wismar, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, by Prussian closed mail. The stamp overpaid by 2¢ the 28¢ Prussian closed mail rate. San Francisco’s black straight line **REGISTERED** (R-SF-1) is in the upper right. New York struck its red double circle **NEW-YORK REGISTERED JUL 8** (R-NY-8) and wrote transit number 359 at lower right. The faint red crayon 7 in the middle





Figure 9. Unusual origin and destination: Placerville, California, August 6, 1863 to Schwarzburg-Sondershausen. The 30¢ 1861 stamp overpaid the 28¢ Prussian closed mail rate. The domestic registration fee at this time was 20¢, but only 5¢ (prepaid in cash) was required for registration under the U.S.-Prussian postal convention.

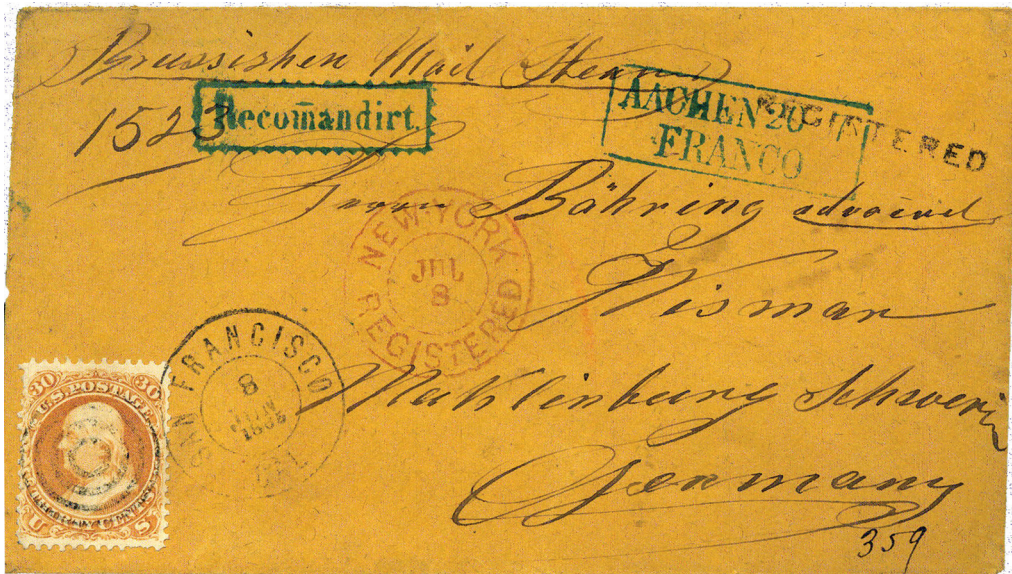


Figure 10. Registered cover posted at San Francisco June 8, 1865, addressed to Wismar, Mecklenburg-Schwerin. The 30¢ 1861 stamp overpaid the 28¢ Prussian closed mail rate and the 5¢ registration fee was prepaid in cash. The red New York double circle registered marking is strikingly similar to markings still in use today.

is a 7¢ credit to Prussia for 2¢ Belgian transit and 5¢ German internal. The 5¢ registration fee was paid in cash; no credit was given to Germany. The letter was carried by the Inman City of Boston, which left New York July 8 and arrived at Queenstown July 18. Aachen applied the blue AACHEN 20 7 FRANCO and **Recomandirt**. These markings are recorded in blue beginning February 1865. The only marking on the reverse is **AUSG 21 N 7 6**.

### Early registered covers via Bremen mails

Articles for the exchange of registered letters between Bremen and the United States became effective August 1, 1855. This agreement included towns in the German-Austrian Postal Union. As described by Winter, the German registration rates varied with the German state, but the U.S. rate was always 5¢.<sup>12</sup> Each country kept the prepaid registration fee. The fee in the United States remained 5¢ on German mail even with the changes in the domestic registration fee in 1863.

An early cover from Leitmeritz, Austria (now Litoměřice, Czech Republic), July 17, 1857, through the Bremen exchange office to Watertown, Wisconsin, is shown in Figure 11. There are three German registered postmarks, a black **RECOMANDIRT** from Leitmeritz, a red boxed octagon **Registered** from Bremen, and a red Prussian **Recomandirt** in scalloped box. The large black X across the center indicated the letter was fully paid. The



Figure 11. Registered cover from Leitmeritz, Austria (now Litoměřice, Czech Republic), posted July 17, 1857 and sent via Bremen to Watertown, Wisconsin. The large X and the black script *Franco* indicate the letter was fully prepaid. Blue 9/30 is probably the weight in loth. **RECOMANDIRT** applied at Leitmeritz. Bremen applied the red octagon **Registered**, **PAID.**, and **10** (cents) to indicate the international rate. At lower right is the New York registration transit number.

black Leitmeritz *Franco* shows prepayment of postage as well as registration fee (detailed on reverse of the cover). The registration fee was 6 kr but the rating on the reverse indicates the Leitmeritz post office might have collected a second 6 kr registration fee, which like the extra payment on the Figure 1 cover was unnecessary. The blue manuscript number 9/30 at top left might be the weight in German loth or a Prussian registration number marked on the Leipzig-Magdeburg railroad.<sup>13</sup> A black double circle **ST.P.A. 18 7 BREMEN** postmark was struck on the reverse. The red oval **PAID.** and **10** are Bremen postmarks indicating the 10¢ international rate to the U.S. was paid. The letter was carried from Bremen on the Vanderbilt Line *North Star*, which sailed from Bremerhaven August 8 and arrived in New York August 24. On arrival the cover was postmarked in red **NEW-YORK AUG 25 U.S. PKT.** and the New York transit number 3875 was written in the lower right corner, showing this was treated as a registered cover within the United States.



**Figure 12. Bamberg, Bavaria April 7, 1857, via Bremen to Maryland. The 16 kr in stamps paid the international postage. The 6 kr German internal rate and 6 kr registration fee were prepaid in cash. Black Chargé struck in Bamberg.**

The Figure 12 cover from Bamberg, Bavaria, April 7, 1857, via Bremen to Frederick, Maryland, shows part of the rate prepaid by stamps. It was paid 16 kreuzer (kr) by two 6 kr, a 3 kr and a 1 kr 1849-50 Bavaria stamps. This paid only the international rate of 10¢ or 4½ sgr, as indicated by Bremen's red oval **PAID. 10** and by the blue crayon 4½ at the bottom left. The 6 kr German internal postage and 6 kr registration fee were paid in cash. The black script **Chargé** handstamp was struck in Bamberg. The red **Recomandirt** is a Prussian mark and the octagonal red **Registered** was struck in Bremen. The blue manuscript 6/10 likely is the weight in German loth. The letter was carried by the Ocean Line *Hermann*, which sailed Bremerhaven April 18 and arrived in New York May 6. The New York exchange office struck in red **NEW-YORK MAY 6 AM. PKT.** and penned registration number 2841 at the lower right.

## ADVERTISER INDEX

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Columbian Stamp Company	1
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Eastern Auctions Ltd.	4
Christoph Gartner Auctions.	8
H.R. Harmer, Inc.	Inside Front Cover, 6-7
Harmers International Inc.	32
Leonard H. Hartmann	47
Eric Jackson	63
Kelleher Auctions.	10
James E. Lee	30
Mystic Stamp Company	32
Philatelic Foundation	71
Stanley M. Piller & Associates	44
Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions	Inside Back Cover
Stephen T. Taylor	12
Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc.	2-3, Back Cover
United States Stamp Society	42

Figure 13 illustrates a double rate cover from Merzig, Prussia, posted September 19, 1858 to West Bend, Wisconsin. The 1 1/10 loth weight is written at the upper right. There are several numbers at the lower left. The red crayon f 15 indicates a 15 sgr prepayment: double the 6½ sgr Bremen convention rate from Prussia plus 2 sgr registration fee. The blue manuscript fr 9 confirms payment of double the 4½ sgr international rate, which was equated to 20¢ as indicated by the magenta 20. The red boxed **Recomandirt** is Prussian and the more compact red octagonal **Registered** was struck in Bremen. This cover was carried by the Vanderbilt Line *North Star*, which sailed from Bremerhaven October 3 and arrived in New York October 22, where the red **NEW-YORK OCT 22 AM. PKT.** was applied. New York's 1268 registration number is in the lower right.

**Figure 13. Double rate cover from Merzig, Prussia September 19, 1858 to West Bend, Wisconsin. 1 1/10 loth weight written at the upper right. Red crayon f 15 indicates a 15 sgr prepayment: double the 6½ sgr Bremen convention rate from Prussia plus 2 sgr registration fee. Blue manuscript fr 9 is double the 4½ sgr international rate and was equated to 20¢ (magenta ink). Prussian **Recomandirt** in rectangle and octagonal red Bremen Registered. New York 1268 registration number at lower right.**



Figure 14 is a double-rate cover from Leipzig, Saxony November 23, 1867 to New York. Three 5 neugroschen (ngr) 1863 Saxony stamps paid double the 6½ ngr Bremen convention rate from Saxony plus a 2 ngr registration fee. The weight of 1 4/20 loth is shown in the upper left along with registration number 298. The purple **Recomandirt** was struck in Leipzig and the octagonal red **Registered** was struck in Bremen. The 15 ngr payment is indicated in blue at the lower left and the 20¢ double international rate is written in red crayon after the red oval PAID. This letter was carried by the North German Lloyd Line *Union*, which sailed from Bremerhaven December 1 and arrived at New York December 14. The red **NEW-YORK AM. PKT.** arrival marking is partially struck at the lower right and the New York registration number is written in magenta ink below the address.

An early registered use from the United States is shown in Figure 15. This cover was posted at Albany, New York September 7, 1858, addressed to Molbergen, Oldenburg. **ALBANY N.Y. SEP 7** postmarks canceled the 3¢ and 12¢ 1857 stamps, which overpaid the 13¢ Bremen convention rate to Oldenburg. The sender wrote “Franco Bremen Registered,” which the postmaster double underlined in red crayon. The 5¢ registration fee was paid in cash. The number 118 in the upper left was probably applied at Albany and suggests that 117 previous letters were registered at Albany from July 1; quarterly registration numbering was the common practice in the United States.

The New York exchange office struck in red **N. YORK BREM. PKT 12 PAID SEP 11** to indicate a 12¢ credit to Bremen. This was an error since the German internal rate



Figure 14. Double-rate registered cover to New York from Leipzig, Saxony, posted on November 23, 1867. Three 5 neugroschen (ngr) 1863 Saxony stamps paid double the 6½ ngr Bremen convention postal rate plus a 2 ngr registration fee (restated in blue at the lower left). "Recomandirt" struck in Leipzig; "Registered" struck in Bremen.



Figure 15. Registered cover to Molbergen, Oldenburg, posted at Albany on September 7, 1858. The 15¢ in stamps overpaid the 13¢ Bremen convention rate to Oldenburg; a 5¢ registration fee was prepaid in cash. The 12¢ credit in red New York marking was struck in error. On a cover to Oldenburg, the credit should have been 10¢.

was 3¢ instead of 5¢, so the proper credit should have been 10¢ (6¢ sea, 1¢ Bremen and 3¢ German internal). New York's registration number 5189 was written at the lower right. The letter was carried on the maiden return voyage of the North German Lloyd Line *New York*, which departed New York September 11 and arrived at Bremen September 24. The red boxed **Recomandirt** was applied in Germany.



Figure 16. Registered cover to Posen, Prussia, sent from New York August 4, 1860. The three 5¢ Jefferson stamps, paying the 15¢ Bremen convention rate, are canceled by a 5-ring target killer that New York used only on registered mail. New York origin registration 3022 at top left. The 5¢ registry fee was paid in cash. Magenta 12¢ credit to Bremen for 6¢ sea, 1¢ Bremen and 5¢ German internal. Hanover post office in Bremen struck AMERICA ÜBER BREMEN FRANCO. Weight of 3/10 loth in black at top left. The straightline FRANCO, applied somewhere in Germany, indicates the cover was prepaid.

The only early foreign use cover with a specific American registered mail cancellation is the cover in Figure 16. This cover bears a strip of three of 5¢ 1860 type II stamps with three strikes of a New York City target cancel that was used only on registered mail sent from that city. The 5¢ registration fee was paid in cash. At top left is the New York origin registered number 3022. The red NEW-YORK AUG 4 1860 indicates the date the cover was posted to Posen, Prussia. The magenta 12 at center is New York's credit to Bremen for 6¢ sea, 1¢ Bremen and 5¢ German internal postage. The cover was carried by the North German Lloyd Line *Bremen*, which left New York August 4 and arrived at Bremerhaven 19 August. The Hanover post office in Bremen struck its three-line AMERICA ÜBER BREMEN FRANCO marking in blue to show payment through to the destination. The letter's weight—3/10 of a loth—was written in black at the upper left. The red crayon 2 to the right of the stamps may represent the 2 sgr German internal portion of the postage. A red **Recomandirt** indicates Prussian registration and a German **FRANCO** indicates the letter was paid. On the reverse is a black three-line August 20 Minden-Berlin railroad marking.

### Early registered covers via Hamburg mails

Although not discussed in the 1857 postal convention between the United States and Hamburg, it appears from cover evidence that each country honored registered letters from the other. The Reports of the Postmaster General for 1858 and later years included registered letters in the summaries.<sup>14</sup> As with the Prussian and Bremen mails, each country kept the registration fees it charged, 5¢ in the case of the United States. The U.S. fee did not change until January 1, 1868 when it was raised to 8¢ to most countries.

Additional articles to the convention with Hamburg of November 11, 1863 expressly addressed registration. Even though the U.S. domestic registration fee increased to 20¢ on

July 1, 1863, the additional articles specified that the registration fee under the convention was 5¢, the amount that had been charged since 1857.<sup>15</sup> Only the convention with Great Britain was different, with each country charging its domestic rate and crediting half to the other country. This also changed on January 1, 1868. My book listed July 1, 1857 as the date that the U.S. began to exchange registered letters with Hamburg. That date appears to be correct, although no very early covers have been seen.<sup>16</sup>

Registered letters under the Hamburg convention are rare from any date. Figure 17 shows the earliest cover recorded, a D.B. Cooke & Co. patriotic envelope posted at Milwaukee, Wisconsin on July 10, 1861, addressed to Schwerin, Mecklenburg-Schwerin. The 15¢ Hamburg convention rate was paid by a 5¢ 1857 and a 10¢ 1859 type V stamp. The 5¢ registry fee was prepaid in cash. The cover has no Milwaukee registered mail notation, only a number 69 that was crossed out. At New York it received a transit number 850, penned in at bottom right. The New York exchange office struck **N. YORK PAID HAMB PKT 10 JUL 13** in red to credit Hamburg 10¢ (4¢ sea, 1¢ Hamburg and 5¢ German internal postage). The letter was carried by the HAPAG *Hammonia*, which sailed from New York July 13 and arrived at Hamburg July 27, 1861. Upon arrival, the Hamburg office struck the red *Chargé* (registered in French) and wrote in dark blue (above the flag) the weight 8/10 loth. The Mecklenburg post office struck the black **Recomandirt Sp.B.** and wrote the large blue 3 in the center to indicate that the German transit fee of 3 Mecklenburg shilling (equivalent to 2 sgr) had been paid in the U.S. and was retained by Hamburg.<sup>17</sup>



Figure 17. Flag design patriotic cover from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, July 10, 1861, to Schwerin, Mecklenburg-Schwerin. The stamps paid the 15¢ Hamburg convention rate; 5¢ registry fee was paid in cash. The 69 at top is likely Milwaukee's registration number. New York credited 10¢ to Hamburg. New York transit number 850 applied at right. Hamburg struck *Chargé* (registered) in red; 8/10 loth weight in dark blue at top left. Black boxed **Recomandirt Sp.B.** applied in transit to Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

Figure 18 is a westbound cover from Münstermayfeld, Prussia, posted May 26, 1867 and sent to Richfield, Wisconsin. The red crayon fr 8½ at the lower left shows the total amount prepaid, 8½ sgr, which is the sum of 6½ sgr Hamburg convention rate from Prussia to the U.S. plus 2 sgr registration fee. The red boxed **Recomandirt** indicates Prussian registration. The fr 8½ was crossed out in blue crayon and f 4½ was written below to indicate the



Figure 18. Registered cover to Richfield, Wisconsin, posted at Münstermayfeld, Prussia, May 26, 1867. The red crayon "fr 8½" at lower left shows the total amount prepaid: 6½ sgr Hamburg convention rate plus 2 sgr registration fee. The New York transit registration number 9294 at lower right confirms international registration.

4½ sgr international rate. The blue crayon 13 and 7 may be German registration numbers. Hamburg struck in red **Chargé** and **HAMBURG PACKET JUN 1 PAID 3**. The latter indicated 3¢ credit to the U.S. for internal postage. The letter was sent on the HAPAG *Cimbria*, which sailed from Hamburg June 2 and arrived in New York June 13, which is the date of the poorly struck brownish **NEW-YORK AM. PKT** arrival marking. New York marked registration number 9294 in black at the lower right.

Figure 19 shows a septuple-rate State Department envelope (Legation of the United States corner imprint) addressed to East Cambridge, Massachusetts and posted at Berlin's Potsdamer Bahnhof railroad station on June 7, 1865. The docketing indicates it contained a deposition taken that day at the post office in Berlin. Prepayment of 47½ sgr was marked in red crayon (intertwined with the New York marking). This was seven times the 6½ sgr Hamburg convention rate from Prussia plus 2 sgr registration fee. The blue manuscript f31½ written at bottom center is the international portion, seven times 4½ sgr. The red boxed **Recommandirt** is probably from Berlin where the postage was prepaid. Hamburg struck the red **Chargé** straightline and the red circular **HAMBURG PACKET PAID**. Within that marking, 21 was written in red crayon to indicate a credit to the U.S. of seven times the 3¢ U.S. internal postage. The blue crayon 31 and 337 at upper left are German registration numbers. The letter was sent on the HAPAG *Borussia*, which sailed from Hamburg June 11 and arrived in New York June 26. The red New York double circle with fleurons was a marking specifically used on foreign registered mail letters. The New York office wrote "Boston" and the 9460 transit number.

### Payment of registration fee by stamps

Figure 20 shows the earliest recorded cover to Germany on which the registration fee is prepaid in stamps. Posted on the eighth day prepayment of the registration fee by stamps was required, this is also the second earliest use of U.S. stamps to pay any registration, foreign or domestic. This cover from New York to Weinheim, Baden, bears 5¢ and 30¢ 1861 stamps, which pay double the 15¢ Hamburg convention rate to Baden plus the 5¢ registra-





**Figure 19.** Seven times rate registered cover posted June 7, 1865 from the U.S. minister in Berlin to a state supreme court justice in East Cambridge, Massachusetts. The 47½ sgr prepayment marked in red crayon at middle bottom represents seven times the 6½ sgr Hamburg convention rate plus the 2 sgr registration fee.

tion fee. The registration number 7792 at upper left indicates the letter originated at New York. The postmark **NEW-YORK REGISTERED JUN 8 1867** in reddish ink is recorded beginning May 11, 1867. Since the cover was addressed to Germany, the registration fee was only 5¢, instead of the 20¢ fee that would have been required for domestic registration. The red crayon 24 in the center is a double-rate credit to Hamburg of 12¢ sea, 2¢ Hamburg, and 10¢ German internal postage. The letter was carried on the HAPAG *Borussia*, which left New York June 8 and arrived in Hamburg June 24. The red **Chargé** was applied in Hamburg. The 6 at the bottom is a German registration number. The crisscrossed red crayon marking, indicating registration, was probably applied in Baden.



**Figure 20.** Earliest recorded registered cover to Germany on which the registration fee is prepaid in stamps. Posted at New York on June 8, 1867 and addressed to Baden, Germany. The 35¢ postage, paid by single 30¢ and a 5¢ 1861 stamps, represents double the 15¢ Hamburg convention rate to Baden plus the 5¢ registration fee. The rimless **NEW-YORK REGISTERED JUN 8 1867** origin postmark in reddish black shows a year date; this is characteristic of 1867 usage only. Red crayon 24 (center) is a double rate credit to Hamburg (12¢ sea, 2¢ Hamburg and 10¢ German internal postage).



**Figure 21. Savannah, Georgia November 12, 1867 to Rendsburg, Holstein. Savannah blue oval REGISTERED and 393. Two pairs of 30¢ and a 5¢ 1861 stamp overpay four times the 28¢ Prussian closed mail rate plus the 5¢ registration fee. NEW-YORK REGISTERED NOV 19 1867 in red and New York transit number 6571 at lower right.**

A very spectacular use is the cover shown in Figure 21. Two vertical pairs of 30¢ 1861 stamps plus a 5¢ stamp overpay quadruple the 28¢ Prussian closed mail rate to Rendsburg, Holstein, plus the 5¢ registration fee. One wonders why the sender used the 5¢ stamp when the cover was 3¢ overpaid without it. In any event, this is another early example of the registration fee prepaid by stamps. The originating postmark is SAVANNAH GA. NOV 12 in blue with an oval REGISTERED (R-SV-1) and the manuscript 393. New York struck the NEW YORK REGISTERED NOV 19 1867 (R-NY-9) and wrote in the manuscript transit number (6571) at right. Note that the New York postmark contains the year date; this only occurred in 1867. The red crayon 28 in the center is a quadruple credit to Prussia for 8¢ Belgian transit and 20¢ German internal. Aachen struck the blue boxed **Recomandirt.**, which also ties the 5¢ stamp. A black manuscript 19 on the reverse may be a registration number.

The cover in Figure 22 shows 5¢ and 15¢ stamps used from St. Francisville, Wisconsin, December 2, 1867 to Aulendorf, Württemberg, with manuscript "Registered No. 13." It bears a red NEW-YORK REGISTERED DEC 5 1867 (R-NY-10) and transit number 9489 in the lower right. It is endorsed via Bremen or Hamburg at the top, so the rate was 15¢ postage and 5¢ registration, both here prepaid by stamps. The red crayon 12 in the center is New York's 12¢ credit to Bremen for 6¢ sea, 1¢ Bremen, and 5¢ German internal postage. The cover traveled on the North German Lloyd *America*, which departed December 5 and arrived December 17. At Bremen it received a magenta **Recomandirt.** It is marked "franco" at the lower left. The red crayon 2 is a statement of the 2 sgr German internal postage.

The colorful cover in Figure 23 originated at Baltimore on October 29, 1866 and is addressed to Detmold, which was the capital of the small principality of Lippe, now in the western German state of North Rhine-Westphalia. The "29" in the Baltimore circular datestamp is inverted. Baltimore's straightline REGISTERED handstamp is struck twice, horizontally at top left and vertically at right tying a 30¢ 1861 stamp to a 3¢ entire envelope (Scott U58). Baltimore's registry number (260) was penned in the top left corner.

The stamp and the envelope imprint paid the 28¢ Prussian closed mail rate plus 5¢ registration. The letter arrived in New York October 31. New York's transit number 3263 is at the lower right. The red double circle NEW-YORK REGISTERED OCT 31 (R-NY-



Figure 22. Registered to Aulendorf, Württemberg, from St. Francisville, Wisconsin, December 2, 1867. The 15¢ and 5¢ 1861 stamps paid the 15¢ Bremen convention postal rate plus the 5¢ registration fee to Germany.



Figure 23. Baltimore October 29, 1866 to Detmold, Lippe-Detmold. The 3¢ 1863 entire envelope and the 30¢ 1861 stamp (canceled by Baltimore's REGISTERED) paid the 28¢ Prussian closed mail rate plus 5¢ registration fee. The red crayon 7 at center is New York's credit to Prussia for 2¢ Belgian transit and 5¢ German internal postage.

11) has been seen previously only on an 1869 letter bill. This marking is strikingly similar to registration markings still in use today, more than 150 years later. The red crayon 7 in the center of the cover is New York's credit to Prussia for 2¢ Belgian transit and 5¢ German internal postage. The letter likely was carried by the Cunard *Scotia*, which departed New York October 31, 1866 and arrived in Queenstown November 9. A Prussian clerk struck the blue boxed **AACHEN 11 11 FRANCO** and serrated boxed **Recomandirt.**

### North German Union convention

As the unification of Germany progressed, the postal treaties with Prussia, Bremen and Hamburg were replaced by a January 1, 1868, postal convention between the United States and the North German Union (NGU). The various Bremen, Hamburg and Prussian closed mail rates were replaced by direct and closed-mail rates over the same routes. The convention specified that the registration fee could not exceed 10¢ in the U.S. and 2 sgr in the NGU.<sup>18</sup> The United States registration fee to Germany was set at 8¢, the same fee charged on letters to other countries except Canada.<sup>19</sup>

An early cover sent under the Northern German Union Convention is shown in Figure 24. Addressed to New York, this stampless cover was posted at Hamburg on February 18, 1868. It was endorsed “Registered” by its sender, but it also bears Hamburg’s red boxed



**Figure 24. Early registered cover sent under the North German Union convention: direct rate from Hamburg (February 18, 1868) to New York. The black 2 at upper left indicates a double rate. The 10 groschen prepayment (red crayon below the blue FRANCO) was for double 4 sgr direct postage plus 2 sgr registration fee.**

**Recomandirt.** marking. The postmark is **HAMBURG F. 18-2 68 N 1 8-9V**. The penna black 2 in the upper left indicates a double rate. The prepayment of 10 groschen, written in red crayon below the blue **FRANCO**, represents double the 4 sgr direct rate plus 2 sgr registration fee. The blue crayon 52 and the black 187 are German registration numbers. The HAPAG *Hammonia II* left Hamburg February 19 but it had to return to Southampton on March 4 for repairs. Its mail was transferred to the HAPAG *Germania* which sailed from Southampton March 4 and arrived in New York March 20. There the cover was stamped with a marking generally applied to closed-mail letters, **NEW YORK PAID ALL BR. TRANSIT MAR 20**. This cover was addressed to New York and the destination number 20 22575 was placed in the center of the address, since there was no space below.

Figure 25 shows an unusual origin for a foreign registry use. This cover is from Hallettsville, Texas, postmarked November 25 (1868) with 30¢ 1861 and 15¢ 1866 adhesives, and addressed to a town near Freiburg, in Saxony. Although the old German script is difficult to read, the name underlined in blue at the lower right appears to be Meissen.<sup>20</sup> The postal rate from the U.S. to the NGU in November 1868 was 10¢ or 15¢ depending on the route (direct or closed mail via England, respectively). This was a double-rate cover sent



**Figure 25. Registered via closed mail under the NGU convention from Hallettsville, Texas (November 25, 1868) to a town in Saxony, probably Meissen. The 30¢ and 15¢ stamps overpaid double the 15¢ postal rate plus the 8¢ registration fee. Red PAID ALL and NEW-YORK REGISTERED DEC 7.**

via England. The Hallettsville postmaster wrote “No 29 Registered” but it appears that he incorrectly assessed the domestic registration fee of 15¢, rather than the 8¢ that this service required. He may not have been aware that foreign fees were different.

We can establish the year date from the **NEW-YORK REGISTERED DEC 5** (without year date, R-NY-10) as being 1868 or 1869. There is also a straightline **PAID ALL**, also applied at New York. The transit marking **VERVIERS. A 29 12 I COELN FRANCO** (applied December 29 on board the Verviers-Cologne railway sorting car) is consistent with British transit. There is also a German **Recomandirt**. On the reverse, a **FREIBERG 31 12 68** backstamp establishes a firm year date. The reverse also bears a torn remnant of a return registered letter receipt, which would have been sent from New York back to the sender.

The 24 days between leaving New York and reaching the Verviers exchange office is an unusually long transit. The letter probably was put on the Inman Line *City of Boston*, which departed New York December 5, but had to return to New York because of the loss of her rudder and sternpost. Her mails were transferred partly to the Cunard *China*, which departed New York December 9, and the rest to the HAPAG *Borussia*, which departed New York on December 8. Since *China* arrived December 18, this letter likely was transferred to *Borussia*, which encountered trouble as well. When about 700 miles west of Portland (Dorset) and due at Southampton on December 18, she broke her mainshaft. She set sail and was taken in tow by the screw steamer *Great Yarmouth*, bound for Havre. The tow snapped but, before leaving, *Great Yarmouth* took *Borussia's* mails and some of her passengers and landed them at Portland. *Borussia* later anchored in Portland Roads and was towed into Southampton on December 31.<sup>21</sup> Evidently, this letter was among the mail taken to Portland, since it was able to reach Verviers by December 29.

The 1869 cover in Figure 26, addressed to Cassel, Prussia, bears a 3¢ and a pair of 10¢ 1869 stamps tied by **SAN FRANCISCO CAL REGISTERED NOV 16** (R-SF-2). The stamps prepaid the higher of the two German rates: 15¢ closed mail rate plus 8¢ for registration. At the lower right is a poorly struck New York double-circle registered marking dated November 30. The blue 8777 may be a New York registration number. The HAPAG *Silesia* left New York November 30 and arrived at Plymouth December 10, 1869 before



Figure 26. Registered cover from San Francisco, November 15, 1869 to Cassel, Prussia. Pair of 10¢ and a 3¢ 1869 stamp pay the 15¢ closed-mail rate plus 8¢ registration fee. The 7757 at top is probably San Francisco's number and the blue 8777 might be a New York number. Weak red double circle NEW-YORK REGISTERED NOV 30.



Figure 27. Double direct rate (note the red crayon 2 at center) from Philadelphia March 5, 1870 to Berlin, Prussia. Philadelphia registered number 64. The 3¢, 15¢, and 10¢ 1869 stamps pay double the 10¢ direct rate to Prussia plus the 8¢ registration fee. The New York registry transit number 2501 is placed in an unusual location.

continuing to Cherbourg and Hamburg. This cover debarked at Plymouth for faster transit via British mail across England and the channel. The Verviers, A 11 12 III Coeln Franco and registered boxed markings were applied in Germany.

A subsequent cover from 1870, shown in Figure 27, presents the 10¢ direct rate to Berlin, Prussia, on a double-weight letter with 3¢, 10¢, and 15¢ (Type 2) 1869 stamps and magenta REGISTERED PHILA PA MAR 5 (R-PH-8). Of the 28¢ prepayment represent-

ed by the stamps, 8¢ paid the registration fee (effective January 1, 1868) and 20¢ paid twice the 10¢ direct-rate postage. There is manuscript 2501 from Philadelphia and no New York number. Such mail was bagged at Philadelphia and sent unopened through New York.

This cover crossed the Atlantic on the HAPAG *Holsatia*, which sailed from New York March 8 and arrived at Hamburg March 20. There the letter was marked **HAMBURG 20 3 70 FRANCO** and **Recomandirt** in red. There is also an odd manuscript “Registriert 64” which appears to be a mixed spelling for registered.

Thanks to the following collectors for cover images and other assistance: James Allen, Robert Boyd, Michael Laurence, Dwayne Littauer and Antonio Torres. Previous installments in this series covered registered mail to, from and through Canada and Great Britain. The final installment, planned for later this year, will discuss registered mail to the rest of the world.

### Endnotes

1. Richard F. Winter, *Understanding Transatlantic Mail, Volumes 1 and 2* (Bellefonte, Pennsylvania: American Philatelic Society, 2006, 2009), pp. 198-202; 16 *U.S. Statutes at Large*, pp. 976-77.
2. 16 *U.S. Statutes at Large*, pg. 977, Article VI.
3. *Ibid.*, Article I.
4. Milgram, *United States Registered Mail 1845-1870* (North Miami, Florida: David G. Phillips Publishing Co., Inc., 1998), pg. 80.
5. Winter, *op. cit.*, pg. 201.
6. All North Atlantic sailing dates are from Walter Hubbard and Richard F. Winter, *North Atlantic Mail Sailings 1840-75* (Canton, Ohio: The U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., 1988).
7. Shown in part in Robert Kaufmann sale 62, November 1989, lot 822.
8. *Ibid.*, pg. 108.
9. Winter, *op. cit.*, pg. 200.
10. All R-xx-xx series numbers refer to entries in the catalog section of Milgram, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-175, or new listings for that section.
11. Winter, *op. cit.* pg. 199.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-74; 16 *U.S. Statutes at Large*, pp. 955-56.
13. This cover is explained in detail at Winter, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.
14. *Ibid.*, pg. 539.
15. 16 *U.S. Statutes at Large*, pp. 961-62.
16. Milgram, *op. cit.*, pg. 88.
17. Winter, *op. cit.*, pp. 540-041.
18. 16 *U.S. Statutes at Large*, pg. 981, Article X.
19. Winter, *op. cit.*, pg. 842.
20. Thanks to Robert Boyd for this interpretation.
21. Hubbard and Winter, *op. cit.*, pp. 57, 182 (note 47), and 213 (note 51). ■

## VIA NAVASSA: MAIL FROM HAITI TO AND THROUGH THE UNITED STATES KEN LAWRENCE

Navassa Island, a possession of the United States since 1859, is located in the Caribbean Sea between Jamaica and Haiti, south of Cuba. From the mid-1870s until 1898, Navassa served as a transfer hub for international mail from Haiti to the United States.

To follow this unusual arrangement, ponder the Figure 1 cover from a Haitian import-export firm to a New York merchant, endorsed “SS Adirondack,” posted December 29, 1893, at Les Cayes, Haiti, and franked with two 5-centime Haitian stamps of 1891 (Scott 29). The cover was backstamped on the morning of January 8, 1894, at New York City.

But the “Shipping News” table in the January 10 *New York Tribune* newspaper reported the arrival of the Atlas line steamer *Adirondack* more than a day later than that, in its “Port of New-York arrivals” section for January 9:

Steamer *Adirondack* (Br), Sansom, Jacmel December 28, Aux Cayes December 30, Kingston January 3, with mdse and 12 passengers to Pim, Forwood & Co. Arrived at the Bar at 10:30 p.m.

It's clear that the *Adirondack* did collect the December 29 letter as the sender's endorsement requested. (Aux Cayes is another name for Les Cayes.) But how did the cover reach the New York post office a day and a half before *Adirondack* berthed at the port?

We find the answer to this riddle on page 72 of the 1892 *Hand Book of Haiti*, published as Bulletin No. 62 by the Bureau of the American Republics:

The Atlas Steamship Company, who have a fleet of commodious iron and steel steamers, all built by the best shipbuilders in Scotland especially for this service of plying between New York, the West Indies, and the Spanish Main . . . dispatch a steamer every week for Haitian ports, alternating between those of the north and those of the south of the Republic. . . . The outward steamers which touch at the northern ports take the mails there for New York, leaving them at Navassa and passing on to Savanilla, Cartagena, and Port Limon, and then the next steamer which comes, returning from these later ports, takes the mails up at Navassa, bringing them directly to New York. By this route it takes just ten days for letters from Port au Prince to reach New York. It has proved to be an entirely safe and reliable mail service. The homeward-bound steamers of this line do not touch at Port au Prince or any other place in Haiti.

After the *Adirondack* had transported mail from Les Cayes to Navassa on December 31 or January 1 on her way to Jamaica, the steamer *Athos*, northbound from Cartagena, brought the mail from Navassa, which included the Figure 1 cover, to New York. According to the January 8 *New York Tribune*, *Athos* called at Navassa on January 2 and arrived at New York on January 7 at 6:20 p.m. New York backstamps show 1-8-94 morning arrival.

By the time of these reports, the system of relaying mail from Haiti to the United States at Navassa Island had been in effect for about two decades. It continued to serve until the U.S. Navy evacuated all Navassa residents during the 1898 war with Spain.



Figure 1. In an unusual mail relay scheme, two Atlas line ships carried this December 29, 1893, cover from Les Cayes, Haiti, to New York. The steamer *Adirondack* transported it from Haiti to Navassa Island on her way to Kingston, Jamaica. The steamer *Athos*, sailing north from Cartagena, Colombia, collected it at Navassa and delivered it to the New York City post office on the morning of January 8.







**Navassa Island and its environs. Now uninhabited, Navassa was mined for guano in the 19th century. Navassa is situated in the Jamaica Channel, south of Cuba between Haiti and Jamaica. On a clear day, the island is visible from the Haitian mainland.**

#### **Navassa Island: the original U.S. overseas possession**

On December 8, 1859, to forestall a Haitian attempt to take possession of Navassa, U.S. Secretary of State Lewis Cass formally recognized an American ship captain’s claim filed under the Guano Islands Act of 1856. No other overseas possession had received official recognition earlier, and none has been under U.S. administration for a longer time.

In his 1956 book *Advance Agents of American Destiny*, diplomatic historian Roy F. Nichols wrote, “In this humble fashion, the American nation took its first step into the path of imperialism; Navassa, a guano island, was the first noncontiguous territory to be announced formally as attached to the republic.”

Cass should not have certified the claim to Navassa. The island is located within the coastal waters of Haiti and is visible from the Haitian mainland. Its original inhabitants were Taino people from Hispaniola. For more than two centuries Haitian fishermen, who considered Navassa part of their country, had landed there to harvest shellfish. Each of Haiti’s constitutions since 1801 had declared its sovereignty over named and unnamed adjacent islands.

The 1856 law allowed American citizens to claim and possess islands “not within the lawful jurisdiction of any other government” for the purpose of mining guano. In such an instance, “said island, rock, or key may, at the discretion of the President of the United States, be considered as appertaining to the United States.” (A State Department legal advisor later wrote, “The use of the term ‘appertain’ is deft, since it carries no exact meaning and lends itself readily to circumstance and the wishes of those using it.”)

Before the Civil War, the United States did not recognize the government of Haiti, formerly the French colony of Saint-Domingue. American slave-owners, their supporters, and their representatives in Washington—including President James Buchanan—regarded the example of a victorious slave revolution and emancipation on a nearby Caribbean island as an existential threat to their way of life.

American claimants had begun mining guano on Navassa in September 1857. When a Haitian naval delegation attempted to take control of the island in May 1858, Buchanan ordered the U.S. Navy to send a warship to Haiti to protect the American guano operation.

Subsequent official notice of American ownership provided legal justification for U.S. occupation and exploitation of the island's resources, later upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

### Mail relayed via Navassa

The system of expedited transport in which mail was handed off by one ship and collected by another at a location with no post office, no official representative of a sovereign government, and no wharf where ocean liners could dock resembles whalers' use of mail drops on islands in the South Seas during the *Moby-Dick* era, but adapted to the age of ocean steam navigation.

The earliest published references I have found to the Navassa mail relay appeared as a consequence of a shipwreck. The American steamer *City of Galveston* had departed Cap-Haïtien on February 3, 1876, bound for New York. She had run aground February 6 at Mariguana Island in the Bahamas, but almost two weeks passed without word from her passengers and crew.

On February 18 the *New York Herald* reported:

Yesterday afternoon Mr. Williams, of the Atlas line of steamships, plying from here to the West Indies, stated to a HERALD reporter that in all probability their steamer, the *Alps*, from Aspinwall, will arrive here on Monday, and will bring a Haytian mail, which she will pick up at the island of Navassa, and will doubtless contain the names of the *City of Galveston's* passengers and a list of her cargo.

A sequel, published February 23, must have disappointed concerned underwriters, anxious importers, and worried kin, but it provided a cameo view of the postal procedure:

Upon arrival, in this port yesterday, of the steamship *Alps*, from Central America and the guano Island of Navassa, off the Haytian coast, a HERALD reporter went on board of her to ascertain whether she brought any list of the passengers of the wrecked steamship *City of Galveston*. Mr. H. Reyes, the purser, said, "the Haytian mail was brought on board from Navassa at half-past one o'clock on the morning of the 16th by a sailor. No Haytian newspapers were handed to me. As a rule Mr. Davidson, the superintendent of the Guano Works, comes on board and tells me all that is transpiring, but as it was night when we arrived, he did not care, I suppose, to come off and board us. The sailor who brought off the mail made no mention of having heard of the *City of Galveston*. The Port au Prince mail crosses the island of Hayti in about fifteen hours. The first news we had of the wreck of the *City of Galveston*, in the Bahamas, on the 6th inst., was from the pilot who brought us in here. The *Atlas* is due here from Hayti about Wednesday, March 1."

The *City of Galveston's* four passengers and crew had arrived safely at Nassau on February 19, but news of their rescue, by telegraph from Key West, did not reach New York until the 24th.

### When and why did the Navassa Island mail transfer begin?

Unless further documentation emerges, perhaps to be found in Jamaican or Haitian archives, the origin of the Navassa Island mail transit system is and will remain unknown. But those news snippets attest that it had become routine by February 1876.

Historical background might suggest a plausible context. The Abraham Lincoln administration had recognized Haiti in 1862. In 1869 President Ulysses S. Grant, on the recommendation of Frederick Douglass, had appointed Ebenezer D. Bassett to be resident minister to Haiti, the first African American U.S. diplomat. Bassett held that post until the end of Grant's second term.

In 1873 the State Department had rejected Haiti's proposal to submit the Navassa ownership dispute to international arbitration. Connecting dates and dots as I studied this history, I wondered if Bassett might have proposed or arranged for the system to expedite mail via Navassa to New York—a benefit for Haitian businesses—as a diplomatic initiative to mitigate Haitian resentment.

If so, the Atlas line, which had inaugurated service for the British Caribbean in the



**Figure 2. A passenger aboard the southbound Pacific Mail Steamship Company liner *Colon* “Near La Vasa” (Navassa) mailed this postal card to Southbury, Connecticut, in late July 1876. The northbound *Atlas* liner *Alps* carried it from Navassa Island to New York. Upon arrival August 4 at New York it was treated as an unpaid ship letter from a foreign country, rated 5¢ postage due. The Postal Laws and Regulations of the United States did not acknowledge Navassa as a U.S. possession until the 1879 edition.**

fall of 1872 at Kingston, Jamaica, subsidized by the colonial government, would have been an obvious choice as the carrier. Part of the firm’s declared mission was to secure mail contracts until then held by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. Extending service to Haitian ports would have been a logical way to grow.

Upon Bassett’s retirement the acting secretary of state, Frederick W. Seward, wrote to him:

I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without expressing to you the appreciation of the department for the very satisfactory manner in which you have discharged your duties of the mission at Port-au-Prince during your term of office. This commendation of your services is the more especially merited because at various times your duties have been of such a delicate nature as to have required the exercise of much tact and discretion.

Following his retirement from U.S. government service, Bassett became the consul general for Haiti at New York, a post he held for the next decade. In 1888, President Benjamin Harrison appointed Douglass as the U.S. resident minister to Haiti; Bassett returned to Port au Prince as his assistant.

### Covers that transited Navassa Island

Figure 2 shows a 1¢ postal card (Scott UX5), evidently self-addressed by the recipient, on which a passenger aboard the southbound Pacific Mail Steamship Company liner *Colon*, en route from New York to Aspinwall, Panama, wrote to friends in Southbury, Connecticut, about his voyage.

He dated the card July 21 (1876) “Near La Vasa.” “I am feeling as well as one could expect on a rough ocean sailing and the weather warmer than I ever remember,” he wrote. The *Atlas* liner *Alps* collected it July 29 at Navassa on its northbound trip to New York.

Upon arrival at New York it was struck with a NEW-YORK AUG 4 DUE 5 CTS. postmark. That was the rate for an unpaid ship letter posted on the high seas or from a foreign country. It is unclear whether the 1¢ postal card postage would have been credited, or whether the due amount was collected. This is the earliest postal item I have recorded from Navassa.

The Figure 3 cover, formerly a showpiece in Scott Gallagher’s collection of guano islands postal history, offers a splendid illustration of the Navassa relay. The three Haiti 1891 stamps (Scott 26, 27 and 30) paid the 10-centime international single-letter postage



**Figure 3. The Haitian import-export merchant J.B. Vital posted this cover, endorsed “S. Andes via Navassa–New York–San Francisco” on August 26, 1891, at Jacmel, Haiti. After the *Andes* left it at Navassa Island, the *Adirondack* transported it from Navassa to New York. Backstamps show that the cover transited New York City on September 6 and San Francisco on September 12 en route to Noumea, New Caledonia, in the South Pacific. Haitian stamps paid the 10-centime international single letter postage rate.**

rate. Posted August 26, 1891, at Jacmel, Haiti, the cover was endorsed for transport to Noumea, New Caledonia, departing on the Atlas liner *Andes*, “via Navassa–New York–San Francisco.”

Those instructions were obeyed exactly, as the postmarks (front and back) verify. *Andes* left the letter at Navassa en route to Kingston, Jamaica, eventually arriving at New York on September 8. The New York transit backstamp shows that the cover was collected at Navassa by the Atlas liner *Adirondack*, northbound from Cartagena, which arrived at New York on September 6, ten days in transit from Haiti to New York City.

The letter had been presented to the purser of the *Andes* in port at Jacmel, which therefore required Haitian postage. Not having yet passed through a post office, the stamps were not canceled until they were struck by New York foreign mail postmarks. From New York the letter crossed the United States by train, reaching San Francisco on September 12.

From San Francisco it probably was sent onward aboard the steamer *Mariposa*, which departed September 18, reached Auckland, New Zealand, October 9, and arrived at Sydney, Australia, October 14. The steamer *Birksgate* departed Sydney on October 15 and took about 10 or 11 days to reach Noumea.

The sender, J.B. Vital, had immigrated to Haiti from France in the 1860s. In the 1880s he opened what became one of the largest and most successful businesses in Jacmel, exporting Haitian coffee, cacao, and other agricultural staples, and importing manufactured goods.

#### **Earlier philatelic reference to the Navassa relay scheme**

In the September 1995 issue of *Haiti Philately*, L. Wallace Dean III pictured and described an 1878 stampless cover sent by bankers Tweedy, Peters & Compagnie at Port au Prince to the Lanman & Kemp pharmaceutical firm in New York, endorsed “p. Ailsa via

Navassa,” [Dean read the ship name as *Ailva*] postmarked NEW YORK OCT 8 78 DUE 5 CENTS.

He deduced the principal elements of the scheme—“some merchants in Haiti were clever enough to have worked out a method of getting letters onto ships traveling between Navassa and Baltimore or New York City, where they entered the United States as ship letters”—but not the actual operation or its details.

In this instance, the Atlas liner *Ailsa* had collected his cover at Port au Prince on September 26, on her outbound voyage to Cartagena and Aspinwall, and had deposited it at Navassa, there to be collected by the Atlas liner *Alps*, northbound from Cartagena, which delivered it upon arrival at New York on October 8. *Ailsa* returned to New York on October 21.

Dean mistakenly conflated the relay mail service from Haiti via Navassa to New York with the transport of mail that originated at Navassa to various American port cities on the Atlantic Coast. These were separate operations.

Postal history dealer Richard Micchelli was the discoverer of the Lanman & Kemp correspondence, one of the grandest cover troves ever to bless our hobby, which was the source of Dean’s cover. Micchelli also handled two rare 1880s covers that came to this country on direct sailings from Navassa Island.

#### Direct from Navassa to the United States

Most letters that were posted at Navassa for delivery in the United States arrived not on ocean steamships, but on sailing vessels that brought loads of guano to Atlantic Coast ports. The cover in Figure 4 is an example, struck (at Navassa) with a red two-line SHIP LETTER NAVASSA ISLAND, W.I. (West Indies) endorsement.

Thomas N. Foster, the Navassa Phosphate Company’s bookkeeper at the guano mine, had sent it to his mother, probably with a Christmas greeting enclosed. It was sent as an unpaid ship letter aboard the bark *Romance* to Baltimore, where it entered the mail December 22, 1888. (Peter Duncan, captain of *Romance*, had asserted the original claim as the American discoverer of Navassa in a sworn affidavit filed November 18, 1857; after the State Department had acknowledged his claim, he deeded his appurtenance privileges to a guano mining consortium.)



Figure 4. Along with a load of guano, the bark *Romance* brought this cover, bearing the rare two-line SHIP LETTER NAVASSA ISLAND, W.I. postmark, to Baltimore, on December 22, 1888. Backstamps confirm it reached its Wilmington destination that same day. It was an unpaid ship letter, with the correct amount of postage (double the 2¢/oz. domestic letter rate) collected from the recipient, denoted by a pair of 2¢ Postage Due stamps.

From Baltimore the cover went to Wilmington, Delaware, that same day. Upon arrival at its destination, 4¢ postage due was collected from the addressee. This is the correct amount of postage due for an unpaid ship letter (double the 2¢ per ounce domestic letter rate) here denoted by the pair of 2¢ red brown postage due stamps (certified by the Philatelic Foundation as Scott J2) canceled at Wilmington.

The earliest record I found for this cover was as lot 755 in Earl P.L. Apfelbaum's September 14-15, 1983, auction of United States stamps and covers. Micchelli was the successful bidder; he sold the cover to Gallagher.

Postal history dealer Richard C. Frajola found the Figure 5 cover from Navassa to Richmond, Kentucky, in an old collection. The cover is franked with a 4¢ green Andrew Jackson stamp of 1883 (Scott 211). Micchelli bought it from Frajola and sold it to Gallagher, uniting a prepaid ship letter with one that had been sent unpaid, both struck with the Navassa postmark.

The Figure 5 cover sailed to the United States from Navassa on Duncan's bark *Romance*, but by mistake or shortness of time it did not get mailed when *Romance* landed July 16, 1888, at Baltimore. Instead, it stayed on board to enter the mails August 12 at Milford, Connecticut, a port town on Long Island Sound, en route to *Romance's* August 19 arrival at New York City.

A backstamp shows that the cover finally reached its destination on August 14. French Tipton, the addressee, edited and published the Richmond *Climax* daily newspaper. His August 15 issue ran this item:

**Capt. Geo. W. Tipton, who has been sojourning on the Island of Navassa, West Indies, for a number of years, will reach home in September, and remain here permanently. He recently shipped a \$12,000 cargo of phosphates to England.**

Thus we learn the news the cover had carried. As events transpired, Tipton returned to Navassa and resumed his position shortly after a brief trip home to Kentucky. (His title "captain" reflected Tipton's service in John Hunt Morgan's Confederate cavalry regiment. He was captured in Ohio during Morgan's July 1863 raid and was held prisoner at Camp Douglas in Chicago until the end of the war.)

In an article titled "The Mystery of Navassa Island" in the Philatelic Foundation's 1988 book *Opinions V*, Gallagher recounted his ultimately satisfying adventure, assisted by postal history researcher Richard B. Graham, to have these two covers postmarked SHIP LETTER NAVASSA ISLAND, W.I. certified as genuine.

Four covers with that marking have been recorded; Gallagher owned three of them—besides these two, one that he had pictured in the May 1990 *Chronicle*, purchased from California postal history dealer Stanley Piller. All three are now in my collection. The fourth, owned by Vernon L. Ardoff and illustrated by Stanley Ashbrook in the January 1943 *American Philatelist*, has not surfaced since 1946.

The census of classic-era covers recorded as having originated at Navassa comprises those four covers plus a fifth inscribed with a manuscript "Ship Letter from Navassa Island West Ind" endorsement, illustrated in the November 2016 and February 2017 Cover Corner feature of the *Chronicle* and owned by Scott Trepel.

### **End of the Navassa Island mail transfer**

Covers from Haiti that were handed off at Navassa add a more plentiful supply for sharp-eyed postal historians to pursue. The relay system operated in just one direction—from Haiti to the United States—and only until 1898. The war with Spain brought an abrupt end to guano mining. Evacuation left the island once again uninhabited, with no one to hold the mail for the next northbound Atlas liner to collect.

The timing that coincided with the war barely registered an irony of Navassa history.



**Figure 5. This 1888 cover, also struck with the SHIP LETTER NAVASSA ISLAND, W.I. postmark, entered the mail at Milford, Ct.**

The island had served as a base for guerrilla warriors who fought to liberate Cuba. In 1896, American filibusters, conspiring illegally, transferred arms, ammunition, and supplies for Cuban insurgents from the steamer *Laurada* out of Philadelphia to the tug *Dauntless* at Navassa. But when the armed forces of the United States became engaged in a military alliance with Cuban patriots in 1898, Navassa played no part in the war.

Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries' November 21, 1993, sale included the D. Scott Gallagher Collection of Caribbean and Latin American Mails. The description of lot 1340, a cover to the U.S. franked with Haitian stamps, was probably based on Gallagher's exhibition text. It read:

**1896, 5c Slate Green (41). Horizontal pair on cover to New York with stamps canceled by port of entry, "Chester Pa. Aug. 1 98" duplex, red "SHIP LETTER" hs of the Atlas Line from Navassa Island, pair with some foxing, Fine and scarce.**

But that cover could not have come from or through Navassa Island. The British steamer *Navahoe* probably transported it on a direct voyage from Haiti, which arrived at Philadelphia from Cap-Haïtien on August 1, 1898. A few months earlier, on May 13, 1898, a U.S. Navy warship had evacuated everyone from Navassa, debarking them at Key West, never to return. No one remained to transfer letters from Haiti to the United States.

Jimmy M. Skaggs wrote in his 1994 book *The Great Guano Rush*:

**No [guano] shipment from American appurtenances officially passed through any U.S. port after 1898. . . . Navassa, still an American possession despite ongoing Haitian claims to the contrary, was mined longer and more extensively than any other island, rock, or key that ever appertained to the United States.**

The end of guano mining brought the classic era of Navassa Island postal history to a close. The next American initiative at Navassa was the construction of a lighthouse in 1916.

### **Final remarks and further reading**

My article "Navassa Island: the original United States overseas possession" in the April 15, 2019, issue of *Linn's Stamp News* is, I believe, the most comprehensive English-language account of Navassa Island history—not just postal history—yet published. This *Chronicle* article nevertheless includes new information and fresh analysis that supplements and corrects that report, based on readers' feedback, fresh research, and reflection. Even so, I again relied on extensive files compiled by Vernon Ardiffe, Scott and Shirley Gallagher, and Jon Krupnick, with assistance from Richard Frajola, John Barwis and Scott Trepel. Thanks to all, and to our editor; blame me for any disappointments or faults you find. ■

## EXPLANATION OF THE PROBLEM COVER IN CHRONICLE 264

Our problem cover from *Chronicle* 264, shown here as Figure 1, turned up in a dealer's stock at last year's NAPEX show. Addressed to New Orleans and endorsed "John Marshall," it bears an unusual "SHIP 14½" rate marking. The folded lettersheet is headed Providence and is dated 9 January 1828. There are no markings on the reverse.



**Figure 1. Folded letter addressed to New Orleans with black handstamped "SHIP 14½" rating. The letter is headed Providence and dated 9 January 1828.**

The questions were: 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?

Bill Schultz was the first person to see this cover. He was quick to point out that he had seen other similar covers with this rate from this era and his impression was that they were all carried by favor on board sailing vessels that did not have mail contracts.

Dan Ryterband weighed in with the observation that the 14½¢ rate implies a distance from a port of entry to the final destination of 80 to 150 miles—12½¢ inland postage plus a 2¢ ship fee. Ryterband was unsure what port of entry that might be, but speculated that it could be the Balize, a former French fort and settlement at the mouth of the Mississippi River, where many letters debarked. Figure 2 shows a portion of an 1814 map of Louisiana that illustrates this clearly. Both New Orleans and the Balize are indicated in red.

Regular contributor Andy Burkman consulted his river charts to confirm that the Balize was exactly 95 miles from the foot of Canal Street at the New Orleans riverfront. The 95 mile distance is firmly within the 80-150 mile domestic zone rate of 12½¢ in effect at that time.





Figure 2. Portion of an 1814 map of Louisiana by Mathew Carey. The Balize, a former French fort ("La Balize") can be seen at the at lower right where an eastern branch of the Mississippi River empties into the Gulf of Mexico. Both New Orleans and the Balize are encircled in red. Image courtesy of the Historic New Orleans Collection.

In 1823 the Post Office Department had declared that "all waters on which steamboats regularly pass from to port, shall be considered and established post roads." As a result, the Mississippi River was considered a post road, so as Ryterband speculated the letter was correctly charged 12½¢ for the distance traveled from the Balize to New Orleans plus 2¢ for the ship fee.

Steve Roth referred us to an article, "New Orleans Maritime Mails of 1825-1830: The MAILROUTE and SHIP 14½ Covers" co-authored by Arthur Bond and Hubert Skinner in the 1974 *American Philatelic Congress Book*. The authors examined a number of covers from the 1828-30 period addressed to New Orleans and which traveled by sea from a domestic origin. According to the authors, "All such letters were treated exactly like ordinary ship letters. They evidently were intercepted at the Balize by John Daly, agent of the New Orleans post office, marked 'SHIP' and rated 12½¢ single postage plus 2¢ ship fee for a total of 14½¢ postage to be collected from the addressee at New Orleans. The 12½¢ represented the standard zone charge for a distance of 80-150 miles for overland postage from the Balize to New Orleans." As noted, these letters did not travel overland. They traveled over a post road, which in this case was the Mississippi River.

John Barwis carried the challenge a bit further providing what might well be the back story of the events that took this letter on a very dramatic odyssey:

In early January 1828 the 198-ton fast brig *John Marshall* was advertised in Providence, Rhode Island, as only 5 years old, for sale or charter at Mauran's wharf. She departed Providence on an unknown date (no earlier than 9 January) skippered by Capt. Drummond. On January 21 *John Marshall* was wrecked on Elbow Key, a reef off Great Abaco Island, Bahamas. Ship and cargo were a total loss, but the sails and rigging were carried to Nassau and sold. In Nassau, Capt. Drummond chartered a small vessel to take him and his crew to the U.S. coast. At sea on 5 February they spoke the *Huntress*, which took Drummond and his crew on board, continued her voyage to Savannah, and arrived there on 6 February.

The next Savannah departure for the Gulf Coast was the Schooner *Only Son*, Capt. Pearce, which sailed for New Orleans on 12 February (*Georgian*, Feb. 12, Vol. X, Issue 65, pg. 2). Captain Drummond could have handed the letter (or likely an entire bag) to Capt. Pearce. Had the letter been carried all the way up the Mississippi to New Orleans, it would have been rated only 6 cents due for delivery at the port. *Only Son* probably dropped the letter at the Balize (Pilottown), near Head of Passes on the Mississippi river delta—about 95 miles from New Orleans. I assume the letter was stamped SHIP 14½ at New Orleans, having been taken upriver by one of the regular steam towboats that operated between the city and the delta.

Perhaps the water stain on the cover is an artifact of the shipwreck that Barwis describes.

My opinion is that the entire scheme of appointing an agent of the New Orleans post office at the Balize was designed to capture additional postal revenue that would otherwise

be lost. Prior to this arrangement many incoming letters carried by favor were hand-delivered to recipients or agents without ever entering the mail system. This regularly occurred despite the threat of a hefty \$50 fine for failing to turn in such letters at the post office.

By arranging for such letters to enter the mails at the Balize, additional postage was accrued from the 95-mile journey over the recently designated “waterway” post road. This arrangement was financially beneficial both to the Post Office Department and to the New Orleans postmaster, whose compensation was based upon postal revenue.

Special thanks for Geoffrey Lewis and Ravi Vora for contributing examples of similar covers from their collections which served to validate the theories of the other contributors.

### PROBLEM COVER FOR THIS ISSUE

Submitted by Labron Harris, our problem cover for this issue is shown in Figure 3. This 1¢ Plimpton entire envelope (Scott U35) originated from New York and was originally addressed to Furstengraben, Germany. From there it was forwarded to Dorpat, Estonia. The front bears a boxed “T” handstamp as well as a handstamped oval marking with a manuscript “2.” In addition there are some blue crayon markings which may or may not be



Figure 3. Our problem cover for this issue is a 1¢ Plimpton entire envelope apparently sent in 1890 from New York, originally addressed to Furstengraben, Germany and then forwarded to Dorpat, Estonia. Backstamps show a St. Petersburg transit marking (at left) and an indistinct arrival marking that appears to be Dorpat.



of postal significance. The reverse of the envelope bears a St. Petersburg transit marking and an indistinct arrival marking that appears to be that of Dorpat—both dated in March of 1890. These two backstamps are shown as clippings with Figure 3.

The questions are several: Is this a printed-matter rate? What is the significance of the handstamped markings on the front? Are the blue crayon markings postal in nature? Did the cover make it to Estonia? Please reply promptly so we can gather responses for publication in the *May Chronicle*. ■

SCHUYLER J. RUMSEY AUCTIONS IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT AUCTION TO BE HELD AT WESTPEX 2020

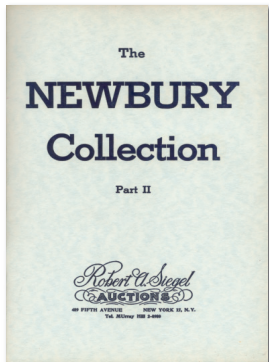
## The Dale Forster Collection of Australian Colonies - United States Mails



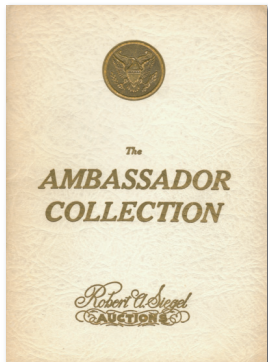
This auction features the Dale Forster FIP Large Gold award-winning collection of Australian Colonies - United States Postal History. The collection studies the various mail routes in both directions from the early 1840s to UPU entry in 1891. Both transatlantic and transpacific routes are presented in detail.

Schuyler  
Rumsey  
Philatelic  
Auctions

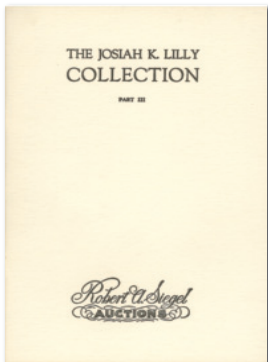
415 781 5127 | [srumsey@rumseyauctions.com](mailto:srumsey@rumseyauctions.com) | visit us at [rumseyauctions.com](http://rumseyauctions.com)



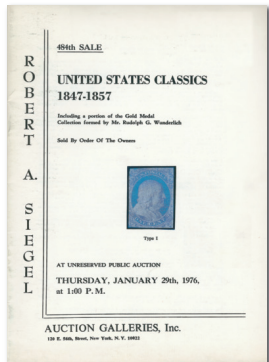
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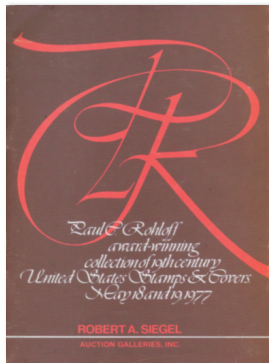
Ambassador 1966



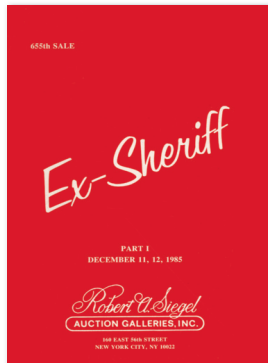
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Wunderlich 1976



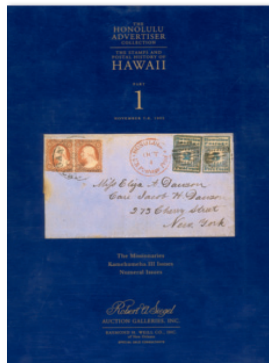
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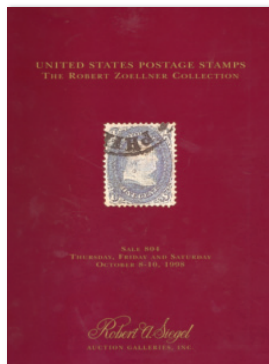
Sheriff 1985



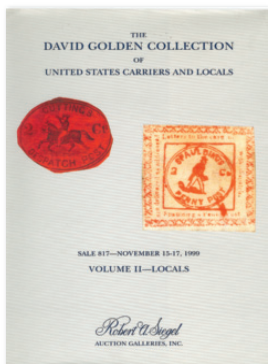
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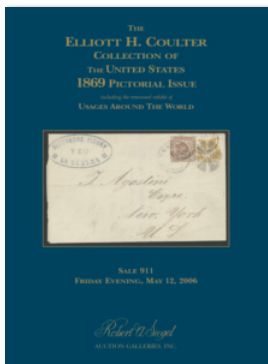
Honolulu Advertiser 1995



Zoellner 1998



Golden 1999



Coulter 2006



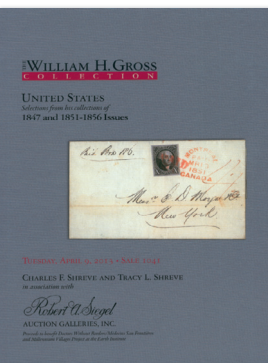
Whitman 2009



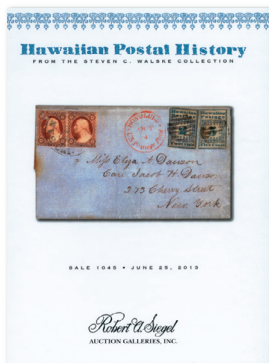
Twigg-Smith 2009



Frelinghuysen 2012



Gross 2013



Walske 2013

*Great collections have ONE NAME in common.*