

The Chronicle

of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues



Figure 1. The *Unicorn* cover, carried on the first Cunard mail steamship to cross the Atlantic and bearing the first postage stamps to be seen in the New World. The British 1d and 2d stamps became valid for postage May 6, 1840. This spectacularly franked Mulready envelope was posted at London May 15 and reached Boston June 3. From Mark Schwartz' article on the Boston Post Office in the early Cunard era, in our 1847 section.

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The Chronicle

of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues

November 2020
Whole No. 268

Published quarterly in
February, May, August and November

Volume 72
Number 4

\$8.75 Members
\$10 Non-Members

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

Annual Dues
\$35

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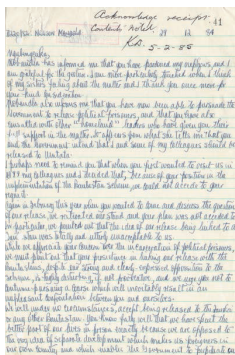
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THE EDITOR'S PAGE

MICHAEL LAURENCE

IN THIS ISSUE

Vice President Mark Schwartz has for several years been contributing *Chronicle* articles on aspects of Boston postal history. Taken together, they constitute a very useful primer on postal rates and practices from the colonial beginnings up through the advent of postage stamps. The fourth installment of Schwartz' series, discussing transatlantic covers from the early Cunard era, is presented in our 1847 section, page 324. A highlight is the fabulous *Unicorn* envelope, featured on our cover. While franked with British stamps, the *Unicorn* cover occupies a special place in the U.S. philatelic pantheon: It bore the first postage stamps ever seen in the New World.

Our new and prospering 1890s section (page 363) provides a colorful article from specialist collector Stephen Rose exploring unusual domestic uses of the 10¢ orange Special Delivery stamp, along with an article from Section Editor Labron Harris on five-point star cancels found on 2¢ small Bank Note covers (including a collecting suggestion). The indefatigable Harris also provides two short articles for our 1851 section (page 341). One discusses a stampless cover from 1854 promoting a cattle exposition and featuring a railroad map of Ohio. The other uses 3¢ Nesbitt covers to show that a scarce rimless circular postmark from New Smyrna, Florida, exists in two varieties.

Quite by coincidence, New Smyrna also figures in the current installment of Steven Walske's ongoing series on Civil War blockade runners and the mail they carried. This special feature (page 345) focuses on the wooden side-wheeler *Kate*, which for most of her career ran the federal blockade into Charleston or Wilmington, but twice in early 1862 broke through at New Smyrna. The Civil War is also featured in our 1861 section, in an article from Jim Cate (page 352) discussing a newly-discovered postal artifact from the siege of Chattanooga, a cover whose authenticity is solidly affirmed by its content. Another discovery, also announced in our 1861 section, is a first-day use (from Buffalo) of the 1¢ 1861 stamp. As detailed by Daniel Knowles, this brings to five the number of covers known showing this stamp used on August 21, 1861.

Our Bank Note section (page 359) features an interesting article from Stephen Tedesco, whose launching point is a striking block of four 15¢ Continental Bank Note stamps nicely canceled by two strikes of a fancy geometric New York Foreign Mail marking; and a review (from Section Editor Jeffrey Brahin) of a new book on Wheel of Fortune cancels that is available free as a PDF download. A longer review, from journalist-researcher Ken Lawrence (page 403) looks at a new book by Robert Toal, published by the United Postal Stationery Society, on the forerunner Lipman postal cards. And in our Officials section (page 375), editor Alan Campbell examines the "superfluous" 7¢ Official stamps of 1873.

In fostering the appreciation of transatlantic mail, no one alive today has done more than Richard F. Winter. Winter is best known to classic cover collectors as co-author (with Walter Hubbard) of the indispensable reference on transatlantic mail sailings. But his two-volume work on understanding transatlantic mails is an equally important contribution. And he has contributed substantially to the *Chronicle* over the decades, including definitive explorations of correspondence between the United States and Sweden (*Chronicles* 189-190), Spain (231-233) and Russia (241-242). Adding to these comprehensive studies, we are pleased to present, in our Foreign Mails section this issue (page 385), the first installment of Winter's two-part exploration of U.S.-Portugal correspondence, both ways, from the stampless beginnings up to UPU. Like its predecessors, this one is a keeper. ■

THE BOSTON POST OFFICE IN THE EARLY CUNARD ERA:
FROM THE *UNICORN* UP TO THE 1847 STAMPS

MARK SCHWARTZ

Introduction

This is the fourth in a series of articles about Boston postal history. The first article, in *Chronicle* 261, covered the period from the colonial beginnings up to 1776. The second article, in *Chronicle* 264, discussed the period from the American Revolution through the War of 1812. The third article, in *Chronicle* 267, dealt with the 1816-1845 era, but deliberately did not include the inauguration of the Cunard line and the transatlantic mail revolution that Cunard introduced. That is the subject of this installment. The article at hand focuses on the Cunard service during the first 12 years of its operation, exploring in detail the changes it precipitated in how the mails were handled between the United States and the United Kingdom (and beyond).

In 1839, Samuel Cunard received the first British transatlantic steamship mail contract, and the next year, with Robert Napier, a Scottish marine engineer, formed the British and North American Royal Mail Steam-Packet Company. They contracted with the British Admiralty to begin regular twice-monthly transatlantic service between the United States and the U.K., with a stop at Halifax, Nova Scotia, starting on July 1, 1840. Before service began, the scheduled frequency for the winter months was reduced to monthly.

As of July 1, letters arriving at Boston from the U.K. were to be rated 1 shilling per ½ ounce (prepaid by the sender) for transatlantic carriage, with the United States inland rate and ship letter fee to be paid by the addressee. Letters sent to the U.K. from the U.S. required prepayment of only the inland rate to the port of departure; the transatlantic and any inland rates within the U.K. or beyond were paid either by the forwarder in the U.K. or by the recipient.

As a prelude to this service, and to test its ability to provide feeder service between Pictou, Nova Scotia and Quebec on the St. Lawrence River, the Cunard Line sent the steamer *Unicorn* from Liverpool on May 16, 1840. *Unicorn* reached Boston on June 3.

Only about 10 covers are known from this initial westbound voyage. Figure 1 shows the most famous of them, a 1d Mulready lettersheet bearing three copies of the Penny Black and two of the Two Penny Blue, the world's first and second postage stamps. The stamps had been issued May 6 and this cover was posted at London on May 15 (per the red oval marking at top center). The total franking of eight pence paid the rate for an outgoing U.K.



Figure 1. The spectacular *Unicorn* cover, carried on the first Cunard mail steamship to cross the Atlantic and bearing the first adhesive postage stamps to be seen in the New World. The British 1d and 2d stamps were issued May 6, 1840. This artistically franked Mulready envelope was posted at London on May 15 and reached Boston June 3. A Boston SHIP 6 marking is faintly struck at upper right. Image shown through the courtesy of the Bolaffi Historical Archive of Philography and Communication.

ship letter. Bearing the directive (at lower left) “per packet steamer Unicorn via Liverpool” the cover was addressed to Dr. Isaac Boyle in Boston, where it was rated for a collection of 6¢ as a private ship letter addressed to the port of entry. An extremely faint strike of the fancy red Boston “SHIP 6” in a ribbon may be visible at upper right; a tracing of this distinctive marking was shown as Figure 18 in my article in *Chronicle* 267. It seems likely that the stamps on the Figure 1 cover were the first adhesive postage stamps to be seen in the New World.

At the same time, the Cunard Line was building four larger ships with which to officially inaugurate the service on July 1: *Britannia*, *Acadia*, *Caledonia* and *Columbia*. The first three began service in 1840 and *Columbia* followed in early 1841. From the first sailing of *Britannia* on July 4, 1840, all letters sent by Cunard steamer from the U.K. were charged the new 1 shilling transatlantic rate just described. Upon arrival at Boston, they were treated as incoming ship letters: marked “SHIP” in some manner and rated according to the distance they traveled domestically, plus the 2¢ ship fee. Detailed rate and distance information was presented in Table 3 in the article in *Chronicle* 267, page 224.

A typical incoming letter from this era is shown in Figure 2. Dated May 18, 1843, this cover was sent from Liverpool to Abraham Richards, a New York merchant, with the directive “per Acadia Steamer” at upper left and “Single” at lower left. The 1 shilling transatlantic charge was prepaid at Liverpool (manuscript “1/-” at upper right), where the cover was struck with the octagonal handstamp “PAID AT LIVERPOOL MY 19 1843” and placed on board the Cunard steamer *Acadia*, which sailed from Liverpool that day and arrived at Boston June 1. There the letter was struck with the red Boston JUN 1 integral SHIP circular datestamp. Simultaneously the cover was rated for a collection of 20¾¢ (2¢ ship fee plus 18¾¢ postage for the 150-400 mile distance from Boston to New York) by use of

Figure 2. A May 1843 letter carried from Liverpool to New York on the new generation of Cunard steamers at the 1 shilling transatlantic rate. It bears a "20¾" handstamp, part of the new set of Boston rate handstamps appearing at the start of 1843.



the 20¾ handstamp, part of a new set of Boston rate markers that made their appearance at the beginning of 1843.

Boston rate handstamps

Regular, frequent and affordable, the Cunard service greatly stimulated correspondence between the United Kingdom and the United States. Cunard vessels carried many thousands of letters to Boston on each voyage. Perhaps to make the job of rating this mail easier, the Boston Post Office created two different sets of rate handstamps, including markings for 20¾¢, 27¢ and 39½¢ in both small and large formats. The "20¾" on the cover in Figure 2 shows the small format.

The larger format markings differ from the smaller in that the numeral is surrounded by a circle. The Blake-Davis book lists 20¾¢ and 39½¢ rates (both sizes) as being used from the beginning of 1843 to June 1845, when they were obsoleted by the changes in U.S. postal rates.¹ Blake-Davis does not list a "27" rate handstamp in either format, but my research shows both were used during this period.

An example of the scarce handstamp "27" in a 23-millimeter circle is struck on the cover in Figure 3. Datelined at Liverpool on 1 February 1845, this letter was sent from R.L. Bolton to Messrs. C. & W.D. Crooker in Bath, Maine, discussing the sale and shipment of 350 bales of cotton. The sender wrote "p steamer to Boston" at top and "paid 1/-" at lower left. The letter received the red octagonal handstamp "PAID AT LIVERPOOL 1845 FEB 4" and a red manuscript "1/-." It was put aboard the Cunard steamer *Hibernia* which departed February 4 and arrived Boston February 19. There it received a very faint Boston FEB 19 integral SHIP circular datestamp and the large red "27", designating a double-rate ship letter sent 80-150 miles (2¢+ 2x12½¢).

The recipients of this letter, brothers Charles and William Donnell Crooker, were among the most prominent shipbuilders in Bath, Maine, during the middle of the 19th century, an era when Bath was one of the most important shipbuilding cities in the world.

The cover in Figure 4 shows the only recorded example of the small red Boston "27"

Correction: In the August installment of this series (*Chronicle* 267 page 221), the sentence immediately above Figure 1, stating that local delivery service would not be available in Boston until 1840, is incorrect. Local delivery was authorized in Boston as early as 1639 and again in 1689. There were penny postmen in the Boston Post Office from 1829. A note in the Nov. 29, 1823 *Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot* suggested that there had been a local delivery service 15 years earlier. The *Chronicle* apologizes for this error.



Figure 3. Scarce Boston 27 in a circle rate marking, on a February 1845 letter sent from Liverpool via Boston to Bath, Maine. One shilling was prepaid at Liverpool. The 27 indicates U.S. postage to be collected: 2¢ ship fee plus two times the 12 1/2¢ postage rate for 80-150 miles distance. Transatlantic carriage by the Cunard steamer *Hibernia*.

handstamp rate marking. This outer sheet (no contents) was posted at the main post office in Paris—per the 21 mm red-orange double circle (BUREAU CENTRAL 11 AVRIL 43) and prepaid 22 decimes, as noted on the reverse, for the postal rate from Paris to the U.S. port (Boston). The prepayment consisted of 10 decimes for the basic French letter rate plus 12 decimes for the transatlantic packet service. At London the cover received the orange 27 mm circular datestamp (PAID 13AP13 1843); the black octagonal transit datestamp (L APR 15 43) was applied at Liverpool. There the cover was placed on the Cunard steamer *Hibernia*, which left April 19 and arrived at Boston May 4. At Boston it received the MAY



Figure 4. Prepaid 22 decimes in France (per backstamp). Sent from Paris to Boston and then collect from there to New Orleans, this cover was struck at Boston on May 4, 1843 with the only known example of the small red 27 rate marking. Transatlantic carriage via Cunard steamer *Hibernia*, departing Liverpool April 19.

4 integral SHIP circular datestamp and the red 12x8 mm “27” handstamp, designating 25¢ domestic postage (for a single letter sent over 400 miles) plus the 2¢ ship fee.

Special arrangement

Another consequence of the very large number of letters received at Boston from the Cunard steamers was the difficulty in getting letters processed and on the train to New York and points south in a timely manner. Because of the economic disadvantage of receiving business information late, this delay led to an organized effort on the part of New York merchants to have the United States Postmaster General (PMG) make some sort of special arrangement with his counterpart in the U.K. to speed up mail addressed to destinations beyond Boston. While no official agreement between these two individuals seems to have occurred, it seems certain that some sort of agreement was reached with the Liverpool postmaster. Letters carried on the Cunard steamers to Boston and addressed to New York (and points south) were put into separate closed bags at Liverpool. When they arrived at Boston, these letters did not receive Boston markings, but were put directly on the southbound train. They were rated when they reached their destinations, but received no CDS. Richard Winter detailed this arrangement in the *Chronicle* in 1994,² and I have done additional research, some of which is reflected in the material shown below.

The merchant letter in Figure 5 is a relatively recent discovery that appears to push back the date of the first “closed bag” mail from Liverpool to November 3, 1843. The cover is datelined November 3 at London and sent from Maclean Maris & Co. to Seth Low & Co. It was prepaid 1 shilling, per the red manuscript marking at top (partly obscured by the blue manuscript markings) and the red tombstone handstamp “M PAID 5 NO 5 1843”. The letter was endorsed “steamer via Halifax” and traveled on the Cunard *Caledonia*, which left Liverpool November 4 and arrived at Boston November 17. Notable is the absence of a Boston CDS—an indication that the letter passed through Boston in a closed bag, the hallmark of the mail sent under this arrangement. Also note that the letter was initially rated “20¾” in a distinctive New York manuscript style. Upon further review, it was re-rated “39½” as a double-weight letter sent 150-400 miles (2x18¾¢ + 2¢ ship fee).



Figure 5. November 1843 letter from London to New York, via Boston but with no Boston markings. This is the earliest known letter sorted at Liverpool and sent by closed bag to New York (and points south) under an unofficial agreement between the U.S. and Liverpool, designed to expedite transatlantic mail addressed to cities south of Boston.

Such “closed bag” letters have been found addressed to many major cities beyond New York, as far south as New Orleans, beginning in early 1844. Further discussion is outside the scope of this article, save to bring the practice to your attention. More details can be found in Winter’s *Chronicle* articles noted above.

Rate reductions of 1845

The act of Congress of March 3, 1845 (effective July 1) reduced and greatly simplified domestic postal rates. A letter sent up to 300 miles was rated at 5¢ per ½ ounce. For letters sent over 300 miles, the rate was 10¢. Figure 6 shows a transatlantic letter sent after these new rates were established. It originated in Hong Kong on February 27, 1846 (per backstamp) and is addressed to Washington, D.C. British postage on the letter was prepaid 2 shillings (red 2/- at upper right), partly obscured by the red London circular marking (PAID



Figure 6. A transatlantic cover sent via Cunard steamer to Boston after the rate reductions and simplifications effective July 1, 1845. This cover originated in Hong Kong on 27 February 1846 with a prepayment of 2 shillings. At Boston it was rated for a collection of 12¢: 2¢ ship fee plus 10¢ postage (over 300 miles) from Boston to Washington.

XJ 25AP25 1846). From London the letter was sent to Liverpool where it was marked with the black “L AP 25 C” oval. The Cunard *Britannia* sailed on May 5 and arrived at Boston on May 21. The letter was struck with a Boston MAY 21 integral SHIP circular datestamp and rated for a collection of 12¢ (2¢ ship fee and 10¢ postage for a distance over 300 miles) and then sent on to Washington. In the absence of a postal treaty between the U.S. and Great Britain, the letter could not be fully prepaid.

Introduction of United States postage stamps

Section 11 of the the act of Congress of March 3, 1847 (effective July 1) authorized the PMG to prepare postage stamps. He contracted with the engravers Rawdon, Hatch, Wright and Edson to prepare 5¢ and 10¢ denominations. Beginning on July 2 and over the next four years, Boston would receive 401,000 5¢ and 41,000 10¢ stamps, a number exceeded only by New York and Philadelphia. It is not surprising, then, to find 1847 stamps on Boston covers carried overseas by the Cunard Line of steamers.

Two such covers, shown nearby, were sent to the U.K. prior to the establishment of the U.S.-U.K. postal treaty. This was during the time that Cunard extended their sailings to New York. In January 1848, as required by a new contract, the Cunard line began service from New York, in addition to the Boston service, both via Halifax. Fortnightly service began in the winter, with weekly service in April, alternating between Boston and New York.

The cover in Figure 7 was posted at Boston on February 25, 1848 (per the faint Boston FEB 25 integral 5 CDS), endorsed “pr Hibernia via New York” and addressed to London. It was franked with a 5¢ 1847 stamp, which paid the domestic postage to New York, where it was put on board the Cunard *Hibernia*, which left on February 26 and arrived at Liverpool March 11. There the letter was rated “1/-” (1 shilling) due in London.

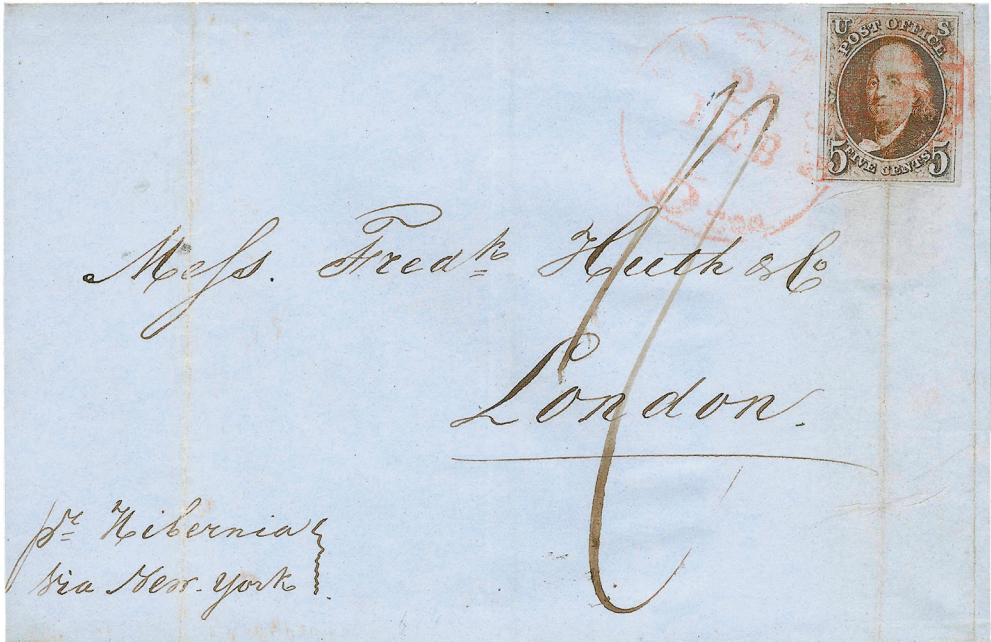


Figure 7. Pre-treaty use of a 5¢ 1847 stamp on a cover posted at Boston on February 25, 1848. The stamp paid the domestic postage to New York. Transatlantic carriage via Cunard’s *Hibernia*; 1 shilling was collected from the addressee in London.

The second cover, shown in Figure 8, was datelined in Montreal on June 9, 1848, endorsed “per Royal Mail Steamer from New York” and carried privately to Boston. There it was stamped with the faint red “5” at upper right, franked with the 5¢ 1847 stamp paying the rate to New York, and placed directly on the railroad, as indicated by the “U. S. Express Mail JUN 19 Boston Mass.” circular datestamp. In New York it was put on the Cunard steamer *Acadia* which sailed June 21 and arrived at Liverpool July 5, as confirmed by a Liverpool datestamp on reverse. At Liverpool it was struck with a black “1/-” (one shilling) handstamp designating the postage due from the addressee.

Discriminatory rate

From its beginning in July 1840, Cunard had a monopoly on contract mail sent on steamers between the United States and the U.K. That ended in mid-1845. The act of Congress of March 3 of that year authorized the PMG to contract with American steamers to carry U.S. mail between the United States and Europe. The Ocean Steam Navigation Company was formed and a five-year contract with the PMG was signed on February 2, 1847. The first of two steamers dedicated to this service (four were required by contract), the



Figure 8. Another pre-treaty use of a 5¢ 1847 stamp, here on a letter carried privately from Montreal to Boston. It was franked there on June 19, 1848, sent by rail to New York and then across the Atlantic by the Cunard steamer *Acadia* to Liverpool, departing New York June 21. Rated for 1 shilling collection at Liverpool.

Washington, made three voyages in the last half of 1847, and *Hermann* was put into service in early 1848. They began carrying prepaid United States letters, at 24¢ per half ounce, from New York to Southampton then on to Bremerhaven in Bremen. The U.K. refused to accept such mail as ordinary ship letters. The British Post Office order of June 9, 1847 made them subject to the usual British packet one shilling collection. Simply stated, the British government did not want to lose money to the U.S. carrier. This so-called “discriminatory” rating resulted in both sender and addressee paying for the same service.

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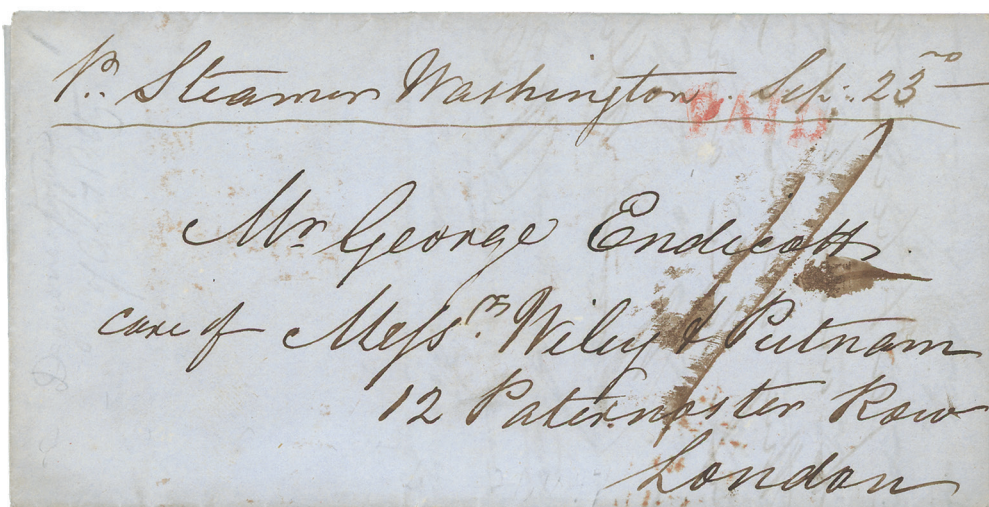


Figure 9. A “discriminatory” rate cover sent on 23 September 1847 from New York via Southampton to London, carried on the steamer *Washington* of the Ocean Steam Navigation Company. In addition to the 24¢ prepaid in cash for this letter, it was charged an additional 1 shilling (equivalent to 24¢) upon arrival in the United Kingdom.

Figure 9 shows a discriminatory rate cover from New York. This was carried on the second voyage of the Ocean Line steamer *Washington*, which left New York on September 23, 1847 and arrived at Southampton October 9. In New York, it was struck with a red curved PAID handstamp, indicating that the 24¢ rate had been prepaid there. Upon arrival in the U.K., it was marked “1/-” in black, reflecting the additional 1 shilling discriminatory rate due from the addressee.

The retaliatory rate (July–December 1848)

For nearly a year, the United States tried to convince the U.K. to abandon this practice, without success. Finally, on June 27, 1848 Congress authorized a “retaliatory” rate on letters carried to or from the United States on any British vessel, steamship or sailing ship. That rate was 24¢ (equivalent to 1 shilling) for steamers and 16¢ for sailing ships. This additional rate continued until the United States and Britain agreed on a new postal convention.

Figure 10 shows a stampless retaliatory rate letter addressed to Boston. It was dated in London and carried on the Cunard *Britannia* which left Liverpool on November 18, 1848 and arrived at Boston on December 6. In the U.K., the 1 shilling transatlantic rate was prepaid, per the magenta manuscript “P 1/-” and the PAID I H 17NO17 1848 London circular datestamp. When the cover arrived at Boston, it was marked with the small red 24 as a letter weighing under half an ounce addressed to the port. Since it was not going beyond Boston, no Boston CDS was applied.

A heavier stampless retaliatory rate letter, sent beyond Boston, is shown in Figure 11. Sent from Liverpool on November 4, 1848 (per the red PAID AT LIVERPOOL NOV. 4 1848), it was endorsed “per Acadia”, rated “2/-” (2 shillings) in red ink, and placed on that Cunard steamer. She left that same day and arrived Boston on November 19. There the cover was struck with Boston’s NOV 19 CDS and rated “68” in red crayon as a ½-1 ounce letter sent the over-300 mile distance to Petersburg, Virginia (24+24+10+10=68¢).

Although visually unremarkable, the retaliatory rate cover shown in Figure 12 is really quite extraordinary. I noted previously that the retaliatory rate was to be applied to mail carried not only on British steamers, but on British sailing ships as well. The Figure 12

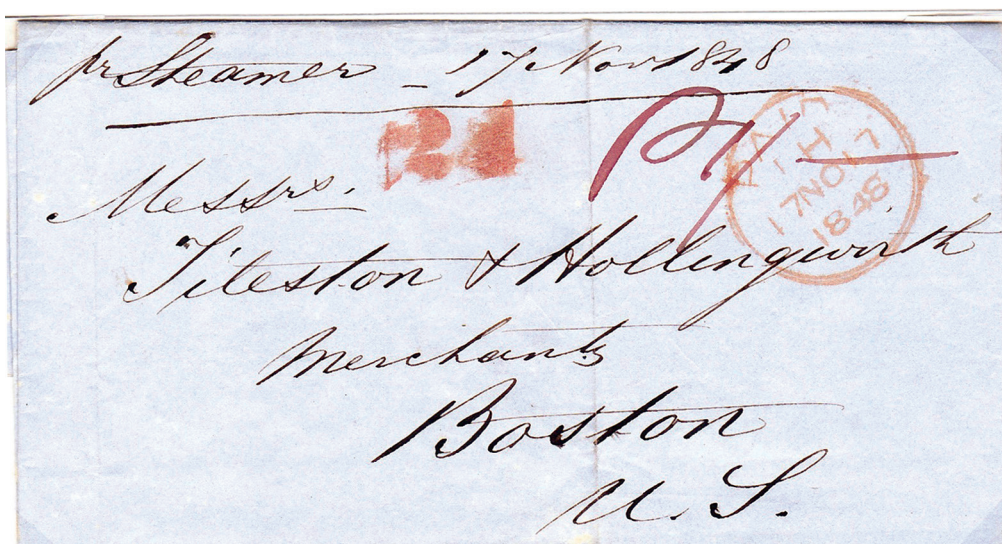


Figure 10. A retaliatory rate cover sent from London on a Cunard steamer and pre-paid 1 shilling (magenta manuscript "P1/-" at upper right) in London. Upon arrival at Boston on December 6, 1848, it was rated for an additional collection of 24¢, doubling the postage for the same letter. Transatlantic carriage via Cunard steamer *Britannica*.



Figure 11. A double-rated retaliatory rate letter, sent from Liverpool on November 18, 1848. A 2 shilling prepayment (for a ½-1 oz. letter) was acknowledged in the U.K., but an additional 68¢ collection (24+24+10+10) was assessed on arrival at Boston for the retaliatory charge and the postage for the over-300-mile distance to Petersburg, Virginia.

cover is the only Boston cover I know of showing the retaliatory rate of 16¢ that applied exclusively to British sailing ships. This letter was datelined at Halifax, Nova Scotia and carried to Boston on the British schooner *Boston* (note endorsement at lower left). There it was struck with the 1 JAN (1849) circular datestamp and the straightline SHIP, rated for a collection of 21¢ and sent on to New York. The 21¢ was comprised of the equivalent to the



Figure 12. The only example known to the author of the 16¢ retaliatory rate charged on a letter carried on a British sailing ship. January 1, 1849 letter from Halifax to New York via Boston, charged 21¢ (16¢ sea post plus 5¢ domestic postage).

8d British private ship rate (16¢) plus 5¢ for the domestic postage a half ounce letter sent up to 300 miles.

A final and very remarkable stamp-bearing retaliatory rate cover is shown in Figure 13. This was sent from Boston to New York on August 15, 1848, and then on to Pictou, Nova Scotia. The background here is that on the previous November 16, prior to the enactment of the retaliatory rate, the United States had suspended closed mails between Canada and the United Kingdom through the U.S. When this letter was mailed at Boston the following August, the only route it could take was on a Cunard steamer via Halifax. The three 10¢ 1847 stamps overpaid by 1¢ the 5¢ domestic rate from Boston to New York plus the 24¢ retaliatory rate from New York to Halifax. The cover bears a Boston AUG 15 Express Mail CDS, indicating that it was not mailed at the Boston post office but put directly onto the train to New York. There it boarded the Cunard *America*, which departed New York August 16 and stopped at Halifax on its way to Liverpool. The manuscript “1/8” rating in the middle of the cover represents 1 shilling 8 pence postage due from recipient: the 1 shilling (24¢) charge for British packet postage, plus 8d internal postage rate for carriage from Halifax across Nova Scotia to Pictou, a distance of 100-200 miles.

After six months of negotiations, with both the discriminatory and retaliatory rates in effect, pressure from businesses finally forced a postal agreement between the United States and Great Britain. The treaty was ratified in mid-December in England and in early January in the United States. It was went into effect on February 15, 1849. In the interim, postage rates were to return to those in effect in early 1847. These are termed the “restored rates” and they applied for just six transatlantic voyages, of which only three were in or out of Boston.

Restored rates (January–February 1849)

Given the small number of voyages, it is no surprise that no stamp-bearing covers from Boston from this period are listed in the comprehensive 1847 cover census maintained



Figure 13. August 15, 1848: The only retaliatory rate cover from Boston on which 1847 stamps were used to pay the 29¢ rate (24¢ sea post plus 5¢ domestic postage) for a letter carried on a Cunard steamer. Courtesy Siegel Auction Galleries.

on the website of the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society.

The stampless cover to France in Figure 14 sailed on the only restored-rate voyage from Boston, the Cunard steamer *America*, which departed Boston January 24, 1849 and arrived at Liverpool on February 4. This cover is not rated for U.S. postage because it was put directly on board the steamer. This practice had been employed often during the retaliatory rate period to avoid the extra 24¢ charge, and it carried over into the restored-rate period. At London the cover received the red boxed COLONIES &c. ART handstamp. The cover entered France at Boulogne (ANGL. 6 FEVR. 49 BOULOGNE). It was rated for a collection of 19 decimes for the postage from the U.S. port (Boston in this case) to Cognac.



Figure 14. January 24, 1849: Cover from Boston to France, carried on the only restored rate sailing from Boston. This cover was placed directly on board the Cunard steamer *America*, avoiding the 5¢ U.S. domestic postage.

Figure 15. January 25, 1849:
Letter from Belfast, Ireland on one of the two restored-rate sailings to Boston. Rated 7¢ as a private ship letter: 2¢ ship fee and 5¢ domestic postage for carriage from Boston to New York.



The cover in Figure 15 was carried on one of the two transatlantic voyages to Boston during the restored-rate period. With British and transatlantic postage prepaid in cash, this cover was mailed at Belfast, Ireland, on January 25, 1849 (red half circle BELFAST JA25 1849 F) where it was rated 1 shilling (red manuscript "1/-" in the middle of the cover) and sent to London (red B PAID JA26 1849 A). It crossed the Atlantic on the Cunard *Niagara*, which left Liverpool on January 27 and arrived on February 11. Upon arrival in Boston, it was rated 7¢ (red 7) as a private ship letter sent up to 300 miles (to New York).

U.S.–U.K. Postal Convention of 1848 (from February 1849)

The new convention established the postage rate between the United States and the United Kingdom at 24¢ (or 1 shilling), consisting of 5¢ for U.S. domestic postage (regardless of distance), 16¢ for sea postage, and 3¢ for U.K. domestic postage. Partial payment was not an option: letters had to be sent fully prepaid or fully unpaid.

Prepaid in cash, the cover in Figure 16 traveled to the United States on the first west-bound voyage under the provisions of the new convention. It was posted in London (faint red circle PAID AU 19FE19 1849) and marked 1 shilling (manuscript 1/- at upper right), with 5¢ credited to the U.S. for the inland postage (red manuscript 5 to the left of the shilling rate) all the way to Michigan. The letter went to Liverpool (black octagon at bottom left L FE20 A), arriving there in advance of the departure of the Cunard *America* on February 24. *America* arrived at Boston on March 9, where the cover was rated 24¢ paid (red 24 handstamp partly obscured by the shilling mark). The Boston MAR 10 Integral SHIP CDS was used as an expedient before proper handstamps were available. It served only to identify the port of entry, because the treaty rate included postage to the destination.

Several interesting covers bearing 5¢ 1847 stamps date from the early years of the new postal convention. The cover in Figure 17 well illustrates the requirement that letters had to be sent fully paid or fully unpaid. This was sent from Boston to Liverpool on the Cunard steamer *Asia* on September 25, 1850. The 5¢ 1847 stamp was canceled by Boston's black 7-bar grid. The manuscript "paid" at upper right and the nearby red 19 handstamp indicate that 19¢ was paid in cash. Otherwise the 5¢ would not have been accepted, and 24¢ (1 shilling) would have been due in Liverpool. Upon arrival at Liverpool on October 5, the letter was struck with the tombstone-shaped PAID IN AMERICA LIVERPOOL 50C50. This is one of two known covers sent under this convention on which the rate was paid by a combination of an 1847 stamp and cash; the other is discussed as Figure 19.

A very beneficial provision of the 1848 convention allowed the United States to take



Figure 16. Prepaid at 1 shilling from London on Feb. 19, 1849 on the first transatlantic voyage under the provisions of the new convention, with a 5¢ credit to the United States for the domestic portion of the postage.

advantage of the extensive network of postal arrangements that England had already established with other countries. This allowed mailers in the United States to send letters to destinations beyond England by paying just the postage for U.S. services.

Two very unusual covers were sent from Boston to France under this provision. Figure 18 is the only transatlantic 5¢ 1847 cover franked with the first Boston Penny Post stamp (there were two types). This carrier stamp paid for transit to the Boston post office, and the 5¢ 1847 stamp paid domestic postage to the port of debarkation. The Cunard



Figure 17. The U.S.-British convention stipulated that transatlantic letters must be fully prepaid or fully unpaid. This September 25, 1850 letter, one of two such, complied, being prepaid by a 5¢ 1847 stamp and 19¢ in cash.

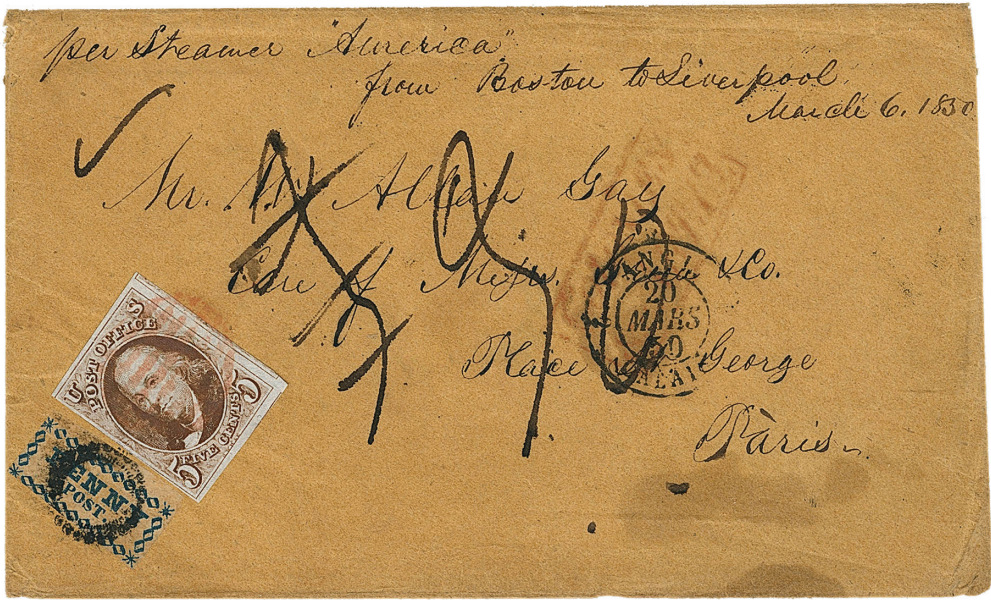


Figure 18. March 6, 1850: The only recorded transatlantic letter with a combination of the 5¢ 1847 stamp and a Boston carrier stamp. Sent by British open mail to Paris.

steamer *America* left Boston on March 6, 1850 and arrived at Liverpool on March 19. The red boxed COLONIES &c ART.13 mark was struck at London indicating an unpaid letter brought to the U.K. at British expense and that Britain was to receive 3s4d per 30 grams bulk weight (20 decimes for this ¼-½ ounce letter). The letter entered France at Calais on March 20, and was rated for a collection of 30 decimes—20 for England, 10 for France.

The other dual-payment cover sent under this convention (see Figure 17) is the cover in Figure 19. This was franked with a 5¢ 1847 stamp to pay the domestic rate from Boston to the port in New York; it may have initially been expected to travel on a Cunard steamer, in which case no further payment would be necessary. However, an additional 16¢ U.S.



Figure 19. The second dual-payment letter, sent from Boston to France by American steamer on February 3, 1851. In addition to the 5¢ 1847 postage stamp, 16¢ was prepaid in cash to cover all U.S. rates (domestic and sea postage).

packet postage was prepaid in cash (red manuscript “16” and Boston straightline PAID marking) enabling transatlantic carriage by the American Collins steamer *Arctic*. The red “20” indicative of the total rate was overmarked by the correct black “21.”

The *Arctic* sailed from New York on February 5, 1851 and arrived Liverpool on February 16. England debited France 10 decimes (per the COLONIES &c ART.13 marking) on February 17, and the letter entered France via Calais on February 18 and reached La Rochelle on February 20. France collected 15 decimes under the terms of its treaty with Great Britain. In addition to being one of the two known dual-payment covers sent under the U.S.-British postal treaty, this is the only known 1847 cover carried to France by an American packet.

Our final cover, shown in Figure 20, was also sent from Boston by British mail to a destination beyond England, in this case, to Germany. This is one of only two recorded 1847 covers from Boston to Germany. It is internally dated February 21, 1851 and the sender directed it “per steamer Africa via NYork.” It bears no Boston circular datestamp, but the contents show a Boston dateline and the 5¢ 1847 stamp, which paid the domestic rate to New York, is tied by a Boston grid killer. The Cunarder *Africa* left New York on February

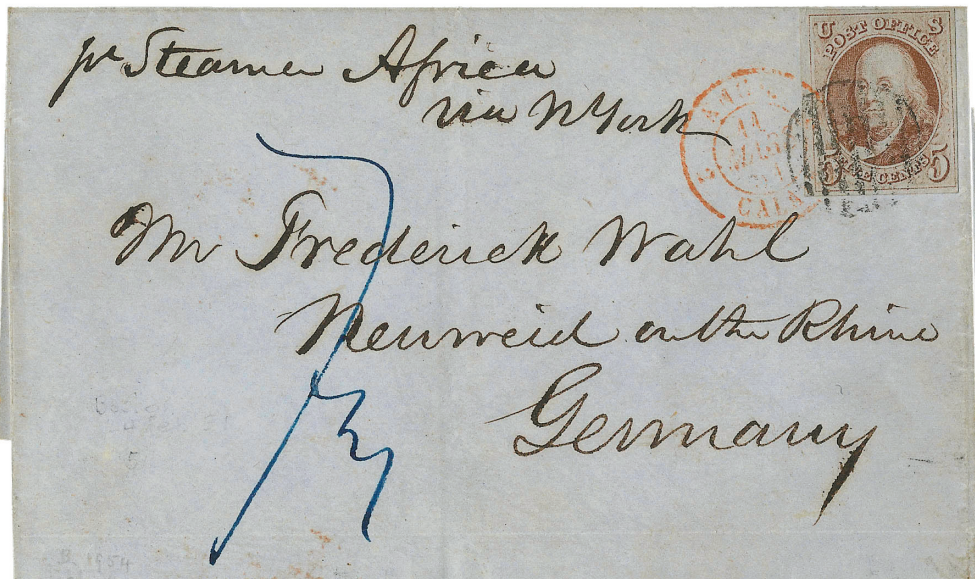


Figure 20. One of two covers from Boston to Germany bearing 1847 stamps, sent via British open mail on February 21, 1851. The 5¢ stamp paid U.S. domestic postage; an additional 7½ silbergroschen was collected from the addressee in Germany.

26 and arrived at Liverpool on March 9. The Figure 20 cover was sent on to France and arrived at Paris via Calais on March 14, per the orange double-circle entry marking tying the stamp. When the cover reached Neuweid on the Rhine, in Germany, it was rated 7½ silbergroschen due from the addressee.

The next installment in this series, discussing the iconic Boston PAID markings, is tentatively planned for the 1851 section of the *Chronicle* sometime in 2021.

Endnotes

1. Maurice C. Blake and Wilbur W. Davis, *Boston Postmarks to 1890*, (Lawrence, Mass., Quarterman Publications reprint, 1974), pg. 55.
2. Richard F. Winter, “Indications of a U.S.-British Mail Arrangement Prior to the 1848 Convention,” *Chronicle* 161 (February 1994), pp. 60-67; and *Chronicle* 162 (May 1994), pp. 120-130. ■

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NEW VARIETY OF RIMLESS NEW SMYRNA (FLORIDA) CANCEL LABRON HARRIS

Many stamp collectors look for varieties in printing, perforation or watermarking, or in platemaking, such as double transfers, cracked plates and reentries. Those of us who collect postal history are more interested in usage: rates, routes, origin, destination and postmarks. But there are occasions when a postal historian notices a variety on a scarce cancel. That is what I am going to write about in this article.

I have many accumulations that I call collections. For years I have looked for interesting uses of the early 3¢ Nesbitt envelopes. Some time ago I acquired two envelopes canceled at New Smyrna, Florida. These are illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.



Figure 1. 3¢ Nesbitt envelope from New Smyrna, Florida to North Fairhaven, Mass., June 14, 1859. The first "N" in the rimless circular datestamp has serifs.



Figure 2. Similar cover from the same correspondence, posted one month later. The first "N" in the rimless circular datestamp lacks serifs.

As developed below, this is a scarce postmark. It seems to have been crudely fabricated from letters of type individually arranged in a rimless circular array. The unusual thing about the examples shown here is that the "N" in "New" shows two different varieties.

I asked a few people about them and nobody showed much interest. Recently, I talked to the right person, Deane R. Briggs, M.D., a serious student of Florida postal history who

maintains a census of classic Florida postmarks.

Before I sent him scans of the two covers, Briggs speculated that there must have been a stutter or slippage within the elements of the marking to create the variation. But upon seeing the scans he changed his mind and agreed with me that the “N”s in the two cancels are distinctly different. And he was kind enough to provide the information that I needed to write this article.

New Smyrna, Florida, was a port town in Volusia County on the Atlantic Ocean. Its post office opened in 1831. In 1937 the town name was changed to Smyrna Beach. The postmaster during 1859, when these postmarks were applied, was Jane Seymour. She remained postmaster throughout the Civil War.

These cancels are distinctive because the city and state are typeset in a 32 millimeter circle with no outer rim. In Figure 1 the “N” in New Smyrna shows serifs and in Figure 2 it clearly lacks serifs. There may be differences between the “E”s as well.

Figure 3 shows highly enlarged portions of both cancels and one can clearly see the differences. The serified “N” must have become damaged or fallen out necessitating a replacement. The earliest known use of the rimless New Smyrna marking is recorded to be May 24, 1859, weeks earlier than the dates on the illustrated envelopes (both of which are clearly docketed 1859). The present owner of the May 24 cover could not be found, but both Briggs and I suppose the marking on that cover shows a serified “N” also.

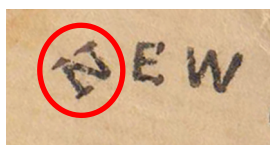
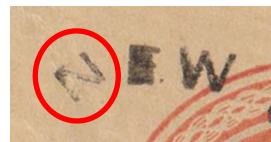


Figure 3. Enlargements of portions of the New Smyrna markings in Figures 1 and 2 clearly show that one “N” has serifs and the other does not.



Briggs estimates that eight or fewer of these rimless cancels are known before the Civil War: one (May 24, 1859) with probable serifs, the June 14 cover (Figure 1) with serifs, and all the later ones without serifs, like the July 12 cover shown here. After the war began, two additional envelopes with the non-serified marking are known used in Confederate Florida, one on a New Smyrna provisional cover dated FEB 10 (1862) and one on a stampless cover with a PAID 10 dated OCT 15, probably used in 1861.

With the use of this marking spread over several years, from May 1859 into the era of the Civil War, one would think there would be more than ten surviving examples of this marking. But only ten have been reported, including the Confederate uses. This is probably due to the fact that New Smyrna was a very small post office, usually doing less than \$20 in annual business during this timeframe. I’m glad they did enough business to create these interesting covers. ■

THE NATIONAL CATTLE CONVENTION OF 1854

LABRON HARRIS

With the success of the New York City Crystal Palace Exposition in 1853, groups around the country organized expositions and conventions to take advantage of a public appetite for such events.

Among these organizing groups was the United States Agricultural Society, which was founded in 1852. This group decided to host a convention to enable people to show off different breeds of cattle and compete for cash prizes for the best of the breed. The event was to be held in Springfield, Ohio, a location apparently considered central to the cattle industry at that time. The western cattle industry was then in its infancy; it would flourish

after the Civil War, in the late 1860s and especially the 1870s.

Figure 1 shows the front of an envelope that carried a printed circular advertising the Springfield event. The envelope shows a crude map of the state of Ohio designating towns deemed important and the railroad connections that would get individuals and their cattle to Springfield. The solid lines represent railroads. For no apparent reason, many of the town names are abbreviated. The “Sid.” below the “OH” of “OHIO” designates Sidney, a town well known to today’s philatelists.

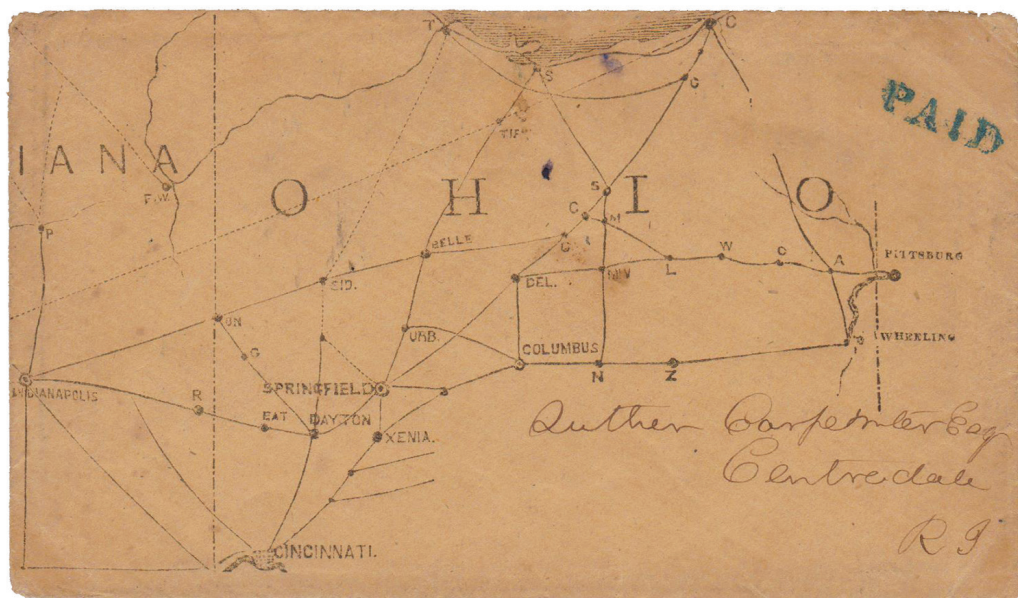


Figure 1. Preprinted envelope from Springfield, Ohio, which carried a circular to Centredale, Rhode Island, in the spring of 1854. Printed on the front of the envelope is a crude railroad map of central Ohio, showing that all roads lead to Springfield, site of a forthcoming cattle convention, sponsored by the United States Agricultural Society.

Because the envelope carried a circular, it was canceled only with Springfield’s blue PAID to indicate prepayment. The cover was sent to Luther Carpenter Esq. in Centredale, Rhode Island, likely a potential attendee.

Figure 2 shows a portion of the unsealed back of the envelope, which provides pertinent information about the event: name, sponsor, location and dates (October 25, 26, and 27, 1854) along with the local Executive Committee members.

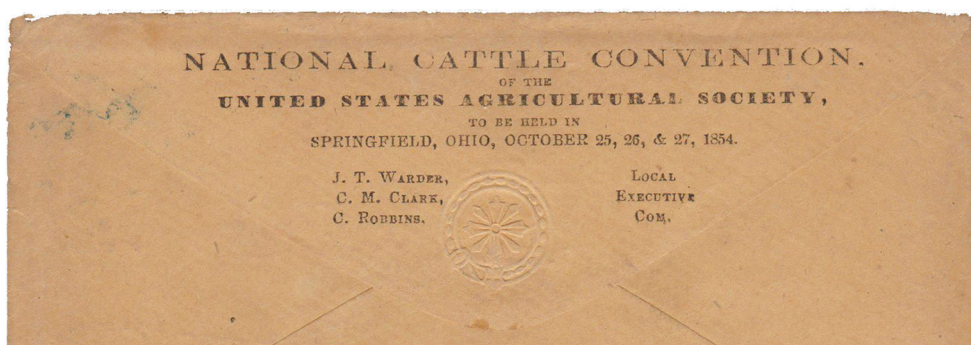


Figure 2. Portion of the reverse of the Figure 1 cover, dating the forthcoming cattle convention and listing the names of the members of the local organizing committee.

Figure 3 is the circular itself, dated May 1, 1854. It outlines the goals of the convention, designates the money to be awarded (\$6,000 in prizes) and specifies transportation and accommodation arrangements. The convention would be held on 20 acres with more than 300 stalls to accommodate the cattle. It was certainly set up to be a first-class event and I hope it was successful.

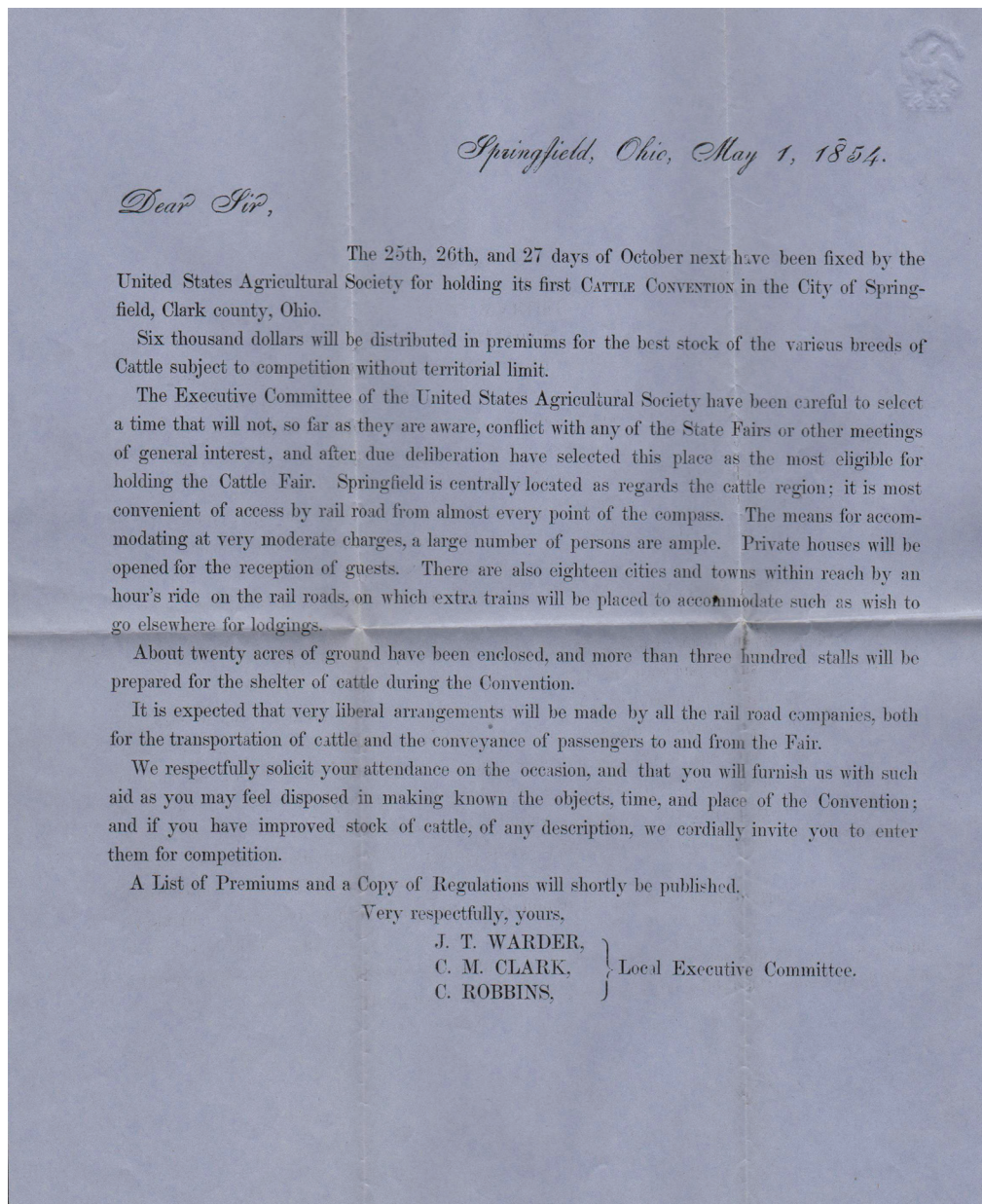


Figure 3. The circular carried in the Figure 1 envelope, providing travel details and other information for prospective exhibitors. \$6,000 in prizes is promised.

Expositions and fairs proliferated in the wake of the Crystal Palace. Some were failures and others succeeded, but one thing most of them did was to create collectible items of interest to postal historians. This is one of them. ■

TALES OF THE CIVIL WAR BLOCKADE: THE “REGULAR PACKET” *KATE*

STEVEN WALSKE

This continues a series of articles on Civil War blockade runners. The first article, on the steamship *Antonica*, was published in *Chronicle* 262 (May 2019). A second article, in *Chronicle* 263, described the career of the steamship *Fannie*. These were followed by articles on the *Robert E. Lee* (*Chronicle* 265); *Advance* (266); and an article on blockade disruptions caused by the yellow fever epidemic of 1864 (267).

This article describes the successful blockade-running career of the steamship *Kate*, originally launched in 1852 in New York under the name *Carolina*. She ran the federal blockade successfully 20 times, and her story is told by the letters that she carried through the blockade.

Carolina was a wooden side-wheeled packet boat that had carried mail and cargo along the Southern coast for the Florida Steam Packet Company before the war. She was shorter (165') and wider (30') than the typical blockade runner, but had an attractive 10'4" draft. Her cargo capacity was only 477 tons, and her top speed was a sluggish 9 knots.¹ These characteristics were not optimal for such a successful blockade runner, which speaks to the value of her excellent captain, Thomas J. Lockwood.

Immobilized within Charleston harbor by the blockade, she was sold in December 1861 by her owners to Charleston-based John Fraser & Company and re-named *Kate* in honor of William Trenholm's wife. William's father, George Alfred Trenholm, led John Fraser & Company, which had branches in New York (Trenholm Brothers, under James Welsman) and Liverpool (Fraser, Trenholm & Company, under Charles K. Prioleau). Early in the war, the Confederate States of America (CSA) had contracted with John Fraser & Co. to manage its overseas financial affairs. For a commission of 1.5 percent, the CSA could deposit specie or bonds with J. Fraser & Co. in Charleston, which would then issue letters of credit to Fraser, Trenholm & Co. in Liverpool. CSA agents in Europe could thus access funds in Liverpool to purchase munitions and supplies.

The European CSA agents also needed a way to ship their purchases home, so they turned to Fraser, Trenholm for help. Prioleau located the large steamer *Bermuda* for this purpose, and offered cargo space to the CSA, while reserving the greater portion for goods shipped by his firm. *Bermuda* sailed from Liverpool on August 22, 1861 and made directly for Savannah, Georgia, where she arrived on September 18. The extraordinary profits earned by Fraser, Trenholm on this round trip galvanized the blockade-running business. Other blockade-running firms were formed and suitable ships were in great demand. The

CSA also began to make its own shipping arrangements to avoid the high freight fees charged by Fraser, Trenholm and other private firms.

Among the first ships dispatched by the CSA was the *Gladiator*, a slow steamship with a large cargo capacity. She reached Nassau, Bahamas on December 9, but her deep draft and slow speed meant that she would be unable to outrun the federal cruisers on blockade. Once again, the CSA turned to Trenholm for help. He offered to carry the *Gladiator*'s cargo into New Smyrna, Florida on his recently purchased blockade runners, *Cecile* and *Kate*. To support this effort, *Kate* left Charleston on her first trip through the blockade with 250 bales of cotton, arriving in Nassau on January 18. On January 29, *Kate* was the first to leave Nassau with a portion of *Gladiator*'s cargo, consisting of 300 cases of Enfield rifles, 32 bales of blankets, 500 barrels of gunpowder, and other military supplies.² *Kate*'s successful trip validated the practice of transshipping cargos to smaller, fast steamers that

**TABLE 1:
KATE CIVIL WAR SAILING DATA, JANUARY-NOVEMBER 1862**

Trip #	Departure Port	Departure Date (1862)	Arrival Port	Arrival Date	Notes
Originated in Charleston, SC					
E-1	Charleston	14 Jan	Nassau	18 Jan	
W-2	Nassau	29 Jan	New Smyrna, FL	31 Jan	
E-3	Smyrna, FL	15 Feb	Nassau	17 Feb	
W-4	Nassau	26 Feb	New Smyrna, FL	28 Feb	
E-5	Smyrna, FL	10 Mar	Nassau	12 Mar	
W-6	Nassau	20 Mar	Charleston	24 Mar	
E-7	Charleston	26 Mar	Nassau	30 Mar	
W-8	Nassau	1 Apr	Charleston	5 Apr	
E-9	Charleston	17 Apr	Nassau	21 Apr	
W-10	Nassau	16 May	Charleston	20 May	
E-11	Charleston	2 Jun	Nassau	7 Jun	
W-12	Nassau	21 Jun	Savannah, GA	25 Jun	Figure 1
E-13	Savannah, GA	22 Jul	Nassau	26 Jul	Figure 2
W-14	Nassau	2 Aug	Wilmington, NC	6 Aug	Brought yellow fever
E-15	Wilmington, NC	12 Aug	Nassau	16 Aug	
W-16	Nassau	24 Aug	Wilmington, NC	28 Aug	
E-17	Wilmington, NC	15 Sep	Nassau	19 Sep	
W-18	Nassau	25 Sep	Charleston	29 Sep	Figure 3
E-19	Charleston	29 Oct	Nassau	2 Nov	
W-20	Nassau	14 Nov	Wilmington, NC	18 Nov	Figure 4
Ran aground and sank in the Cape Fear River on November 18					

SOURCES: These sailing dates, supplemented substantially by the author's personal research, were drawn from Stephen Wise's *Lifeline of the Confederacy*. Trips are numbered consecutively; "E" indicates eastbound, "W" westbound.

could better run the blockade, and the use of intermediate ports for transshipment of supplies. This was the system used for the balance of the war.

Table 1 provides details *Kate*'s 20 successful trips through the federal blockade.

On February 15, *Kate* was still at New Smyrna, waiting for Captain Lockwood, who had gone to Charleston to get his family. A federal ship discovered her, so *Kate* was forced to leave without Lockwood.³ In March, the blockade was strengthened off New Smyrna, so *Kate* thereafter used Nassau as the West Indies terminus for all subsequent trips.

Charleston, South Carolina and Wilmington, North Carolina were her principal CSA ports, with the exception of one trip to Savannah. The capture of Fort Pulaski on April 11, 1862, had closed Savannah to most blockade running. However, in June 1862, federal blockaders were diverted to Charleston, so blockade running became feasible at Savannah until their return in August.

Figure 1 shows a letter carried by *Kate* on her single trip into Savannah. Dated May 7, 1862 at London, this letter was sent under cover to the care of Henry Adderley & Company in Nassau, Bahamas. It left Liverpool aboard the Cunard steamer *Scotia*, which arrived in New York on May 21. It was transferred there in a closed mail bag to the Cunard branch steamer *British Queen*, which departed on May 24 and reached Nassau four days later.

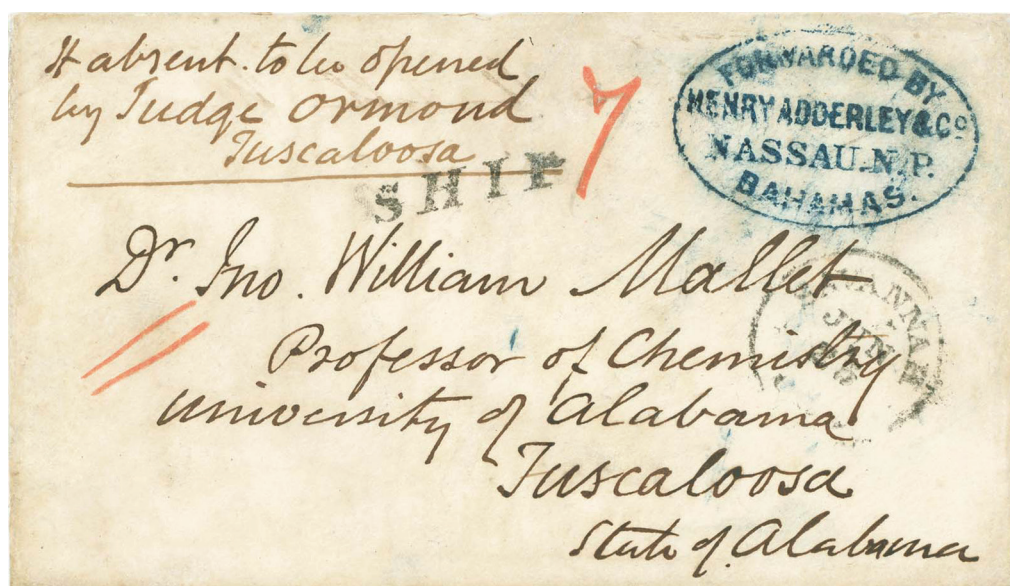


Figure 1. London to Tuscaloosa, letter dated May 7, 1862, sent under cover to Nassau and carried through the federal blockade into Savannah June 25 on *Kate*'s trip W-12.

Adderley held the letter until June 21 for Fraser & Company's *Kate*, which arrived in Savannah four days later. The Savannah post office postmarked the letter on June 25, added the distinctive Savannah "SHIP" marking and rated it for 7¢ due, per the red "7." This consisted of the pre-July 1862 5¢ postage rate for less than 300 miles plus a 2¢ ship fee. This is the only recorded Savannah entry postmark on blockade-run mail, and the only known blockade-run letter with a 7¢ due marking.

The letter in Figure 1 is addressed to Captain John W. Mallet, who was married to the daughter of Judge Ormond of the Alabama Supreme Court. Mallet enlisted as a private in the Confederate army in the fall of 1861, but was quickly recruited by officers who recognized his value to the CSA as a scientist. He was eventually appointed Superintendent of the Ordnance Laboratories at Macon, Georgia, and made major contributions to the development of munitions and explosives for the rest of the war.⁴

Reference to Table 1 will show that *Kate* stayed nearly a month at Savannah. Figure 2 shows an outbound letter carried on her return trip to Nassau. Originating in Savannah, this letter left there aboard *Kate* on July 22 and arrived in Nassau July 26. The letter was sent



Figure 2. July 1862 letter from Savannah, sent under cover through the federal blockade to Nassau on *Kate*’s trip E-13. The Nassau agent added the San Francisco address and the Bahamas 4 pence stamp, and sent the cover to New York via a Cunard branch steamer. The cover then traveled to San Francisco via train and stage.

under cover to Saunders & Son in Nassau, who added the San Francisco address and the 4 pence Bahamas postage stamp (Scott 3) paying the rate to the United States. It was postmarked at Nassau that day and left two days later aboard the Cunard branch steamer *British Queen*, which arrived in New York on August 2. New York treated it as a ship letter, per the “New York Ship Letter 5” integral rate postmark, indicating 5¢ postage due (3¢ overland

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Chronicle 268 / November 2020 / Vol. 72, No. 4

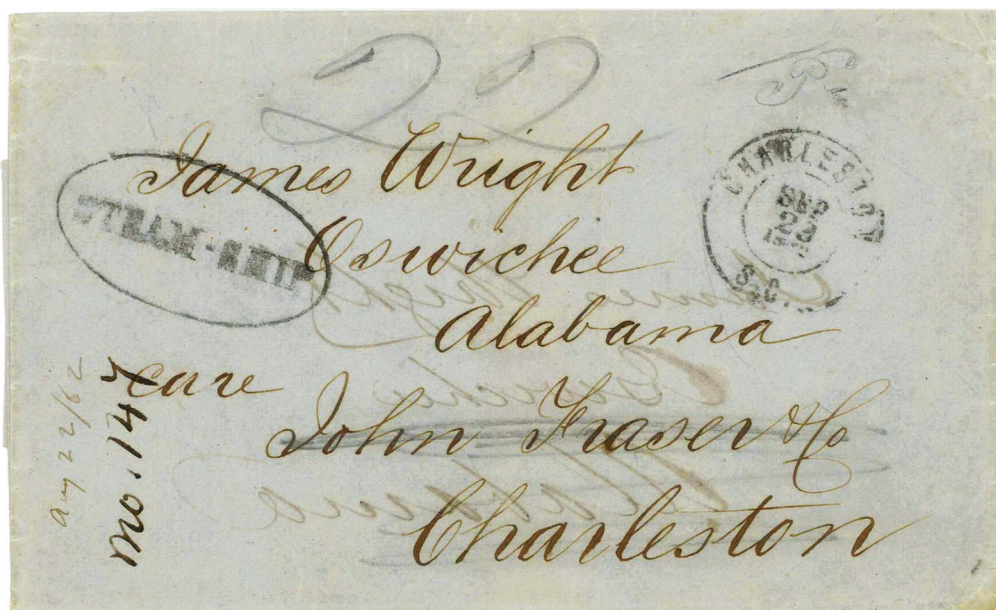


Figure 3. Folder letter datelined Liverpool, August 22, 1862, and addressed to Oswichee, Alabama. Sent to New York via Cunard *Australasian* and then to Nassau via Cunard branch steamer *British Queen*. Carried from Nassau through the federal blockade into Charleston on *Kate*'s trip W-18. Rated at Charleston for 22¢ collection from the recipient. Image from Robert A. Siegel sale 988 (May 27, 2010), lot 312.

postage plus a 2¢ ship fee). The cover was carried to California on the daily overland stage-coach from St Joseph, Missouri.

On August 6, 1862, *Kate* arrived at Wilmington with yellow fever on board. The epidemic spread rapidly and lasted over ten weeks.⁵ She stayed no longer than necessary to load a return cargo, and left on August 12, 1862 with Captain John Wilkinson and Major Ben Ficklin on board.⁶ More ominously, two fatal cases of yellow fever were also on board.

The September 30, 1862 Richmond *Dispatch* included an editorial about *Kate*:

The steamer *Kate* from Nassau successfully ran the blockade into Wilmington on Thursday [August 28]...In other words, the *Kate* is a regular packet, performing her trips with regularity and dispatch. Her successful voyages do not, indeed, tend to exalt our estimate of the officers of the blockading squadron.

The “regular packet” *Kate* carried the letter shown in Figure 3. Originating in Liverpool on August 22, 1862, this letter was addressed to the care of John Fraser & Co. at Charleston. It left Liverpool eight days later aboard the Cunard steamer *Australasian*, which arrived in New York on September 10. It was transferred there in a closed mail bag to the Cunard branch steamer *British Queen*, which departed on September 13 and reached Nassau four days later. Fraser’s agent in Nassau placed the letter on the company-owned *Kate*, which departed on September 25. The Charleston post office postmarked the letter on the day of *Kate*’s arrival, September 29, and rated it for a double-weight 22¢ due. This consisted of 20¢ double-weight postage to Oswichee, Alabama (twice the July 1862 10¢ rate) plus a 2¢ ship fee. The oval Charleston “STEAM-SHIP” marking was added to indicate the reason for the additional 2¢. The post office crossed out the John Fraser & Co. address and forwarded the letter directly to Alabama.

On November 18, 1862, *Kate* ran into Wilmington. A soldier at Fort Caswell wrote:⁷

This morning about 4 o’clock, the *Kate* ran in at this place. She ran against the obstructions in the river here, which caused her to leak very badly. She however succeeded in reaching

Smithville, where they ran her as high up on the shore as they could. She soon went to the bottom. Her bow and upper deck in front are above the water also her wheelhouse. The remainder is covered with water.

The cover in Figure 4 was recovered from the shipwreck. This letter was carried on *Kate*'s final successful trip through the blockade, departing Nassau on November 14 and arriving in Wilmington on November 18. Perhaps because of the shipwreck in the Cape

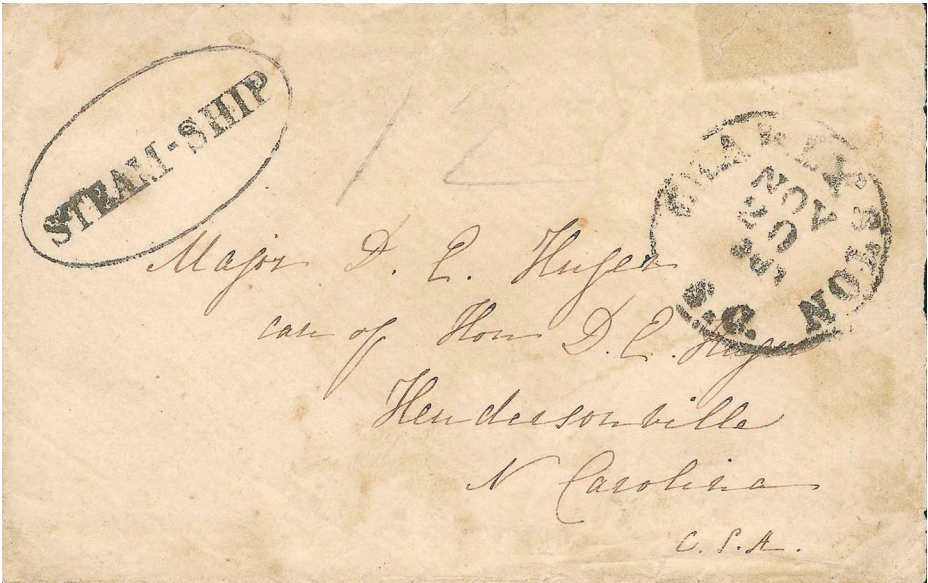


Figure 4. Cover carried on *Kate*'s final trip (W-20), when she was shipwrecked in the Cape Fear River while running into Wilmington from Nassau. Perhaps because this cover was recovered from the wreck, it was forwarded directly to Charleston, where it entered the Confederate mails for carriage on to Hendersonville, with 12¢ due from the addressee. Siegel sale 860 (May 14, 2003), lot 613.



Figure 5. Contemporary photograph of a wrecked blockade runner near Charleston, S.C. Two paddle wheels, a mast and a portion of the bow are all that are evident.

Fear River, this letter was forwarded directly to Charleston, where it was postmarked on November 20 and rated for 12¢ postage due.

Kate's crew, the mail and cargo were all rescued, but the ship was a total loss. The photograph in Figure 5 of a wrecked blockade runner near Charleston shows how she must have appeared after the wreck.⁸

Acknowledgements

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

Endnotes

1. Stephen Wise, *Lifeline of the Confederacy* (University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, 1988), pp. 8, 231.
2. Wise, pg. 59.
3. James Sprunt, *Chronicles of the Cape Fear River 1660-1916* (Edwards & Broughton Printing Co., Raleigh, 1916), pg. 465
4. Frank Vandiver, *Ploughshares into Swords: Josiah Gorgas and Confederate Ordnance* (University of Texas Press, Austin, 1952), pg. 113.
5. Hamilton Cochrane, *Blockade Runners of the Confederacy* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1958), pg. 177.
6. John Wilkinson, *The Narrative of a Blockade Runner* (Sheldon & Co., New York, 1877), pp. 84, 103.
7. Letter dated November 18, 1862 in the East Carolina University Manuscript Collection.
8. Library of Congress—DIG-cwpb-02974. ■

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CHATTANOOGA, 1863:
IDENTIFYING UNION ARMY SIEGE MAIL

JIM CATE

The Battle of Chickamauga on September 19-20, 1863 resulted in the Union military forces of the Army of the Cumberland under Major General William Rosecrans being defeated by the Confederate Army of Tennessee under General Braxton Bragg and forced to retreat back into Chattanooga.

The Federal military establishment lost no time in arranging help for the entrapped military force. Within 48 hours of the defeat at Chickamauga, some 23,000 troops of the Army of the Potomac under General Joseph Hooker entrained for a railroad trip of 1,157 miles to Bridgeport, Alabama. In Mississippi, General William T. Sherman was ordered to bring four veteran divisions east and to repair the railroad between Memphis and Chattanooga to reinforce Union positions.

Union forces were under siege by the Confederate Army in Chattanooga from September 23, 1863 to November 23, 1863. The battles of Chattanooga, Lookout Mountain, and Missionary Ridge at the end of November broke the siege and established Union control of the area. Federal mail processing at Chattanooga resumed in mid-December, 1863.

During the siege of Chattanooga, only a limited amount of supplies got through by a mountainous 60-mile route from Bridgeport, Alabama known as the Cracker Line, shown on the map in Figure 1. Very little mail got into or out of Chattanooga. From Bridgeport, the limited amount of mail sent over this supply line went 125 miles north to Nashville for processing. Identifying such siege mail is a challenge.

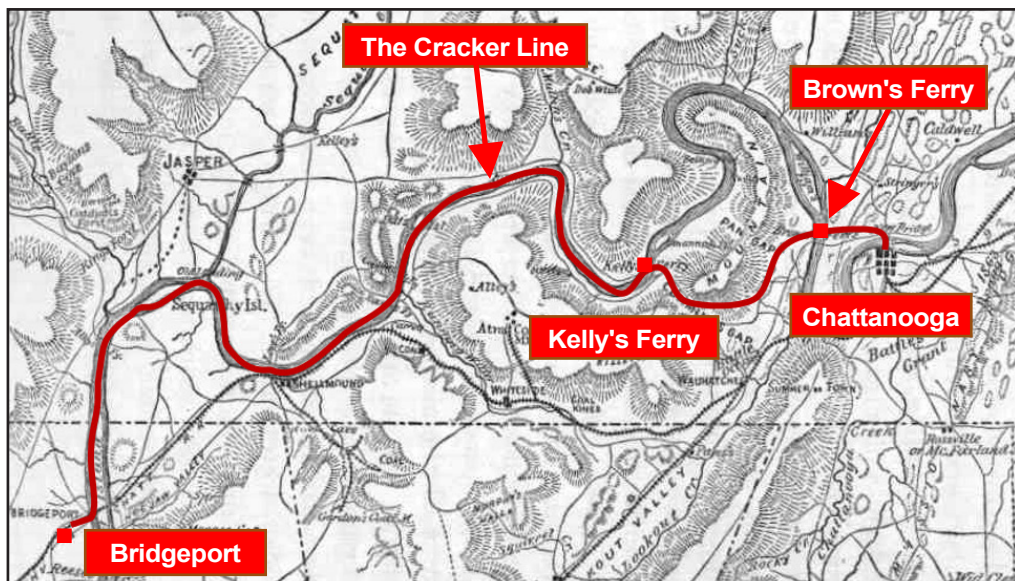


Figure 1. Map of the Chattanooga area (adapted from Grant's *Memoirs*) showing the 60-mile supply line from Bridgeport, Alabama that supported the Union forces under siege at Chattanooga. This mountainous supply route was called the "Cracker Line."



Figure 2. Cover postmarked in Union-occupied Nashville on October 25. The contents of the letter, shown in part in Figure 3, confirm that the year is 1863 and that the cover originated in Chattanooga during the Confederate siege. This cover must have traveled out of Chattanooga over the Cracker Line.

Figure 2 shows a cover postmarked from Union-controlled Nashville. Enclosed in this relatively nondescript cover are presumed to be the original contents. Figure 3 shows part of the enclosed letter on a printed letter sheet of "Company K-10th Regiment Kentucky Volunteer Infantry." It is headed "Chattanooga, Tenn., Oct. 18, 1863," right in the middle of the siege period. The envelope is postmarked seven days later, October 25.

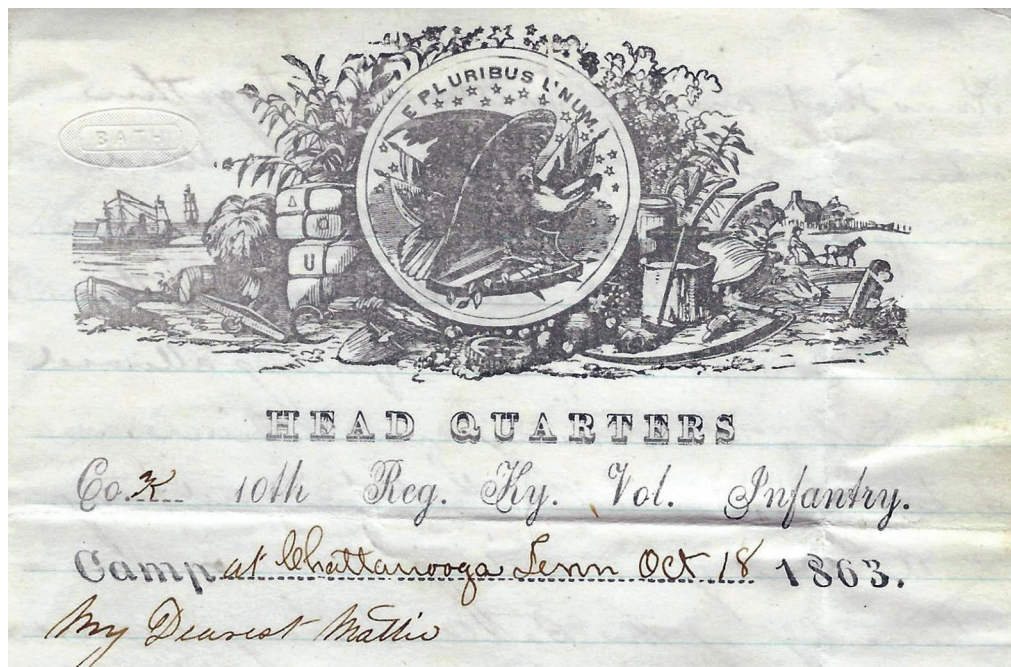


Figure 3. Portion of the illustrated lettersheet from the envelope shown in Figure 2. This is a preprinted letterhead for the 10th Regiment, Kentucky Volunteer Infantry. It is datelined "Chattanooga, Tenn, Oct. 18, 1863"—during the siege of Chattanooga.

Dyer's *Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* confirms that the 10th Regiment of Kentucky Infantry was located at the Siege of Chattanooga between September 26 and November 23, 1863.¹

Siege mail out of Chattanooga is rare. Including this example, three covers have been recorded.² Undoubtedly there are envelopes in existence today with Nashville postmarks that carried Chattanooga siege mail, but without an enclosed letter, they cannot be confirmed as such.

The seven-day difference between the written date on the letterhead (October 18) and the Nashville postmark (October 25) is completely understandable given the conditions at the time. The 180-mile route from Chattanooga via Bridgeport to Nashville was a mountainous journey involving multiple crossings of the Tennessee River.

The Civil War archive of the National Park Service identifies the sender of the Figure 2 letter, John M. Denton, as Captain in Company K of the 10th Regiment of Kentucky Infantry, just as described on the Figure 3 letterhead. The recipient of the letter was Miss Martha A. Cole, affectionately addressed in Figure 3 as "My Dearest Mattie." John Denton and Martha Cole were married on February 17, 1865 in Dearborn County, Indiana.³ This envelope to his future wife was written by Denton during the siege of Chattanooga.

Endnotes

1. Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, The Dyer Publishing Company (Des Moines, Iowa, 1908), pg. 1202.

2. Richard Graham referred to covers from the siege of Chattanooga processed in Memphis in "Some Questions About Federal Occupation Postmarks, 1861-1865" in *Chronicle* 105, pg. 42. I believe he was aware of two such examples.

3. The author would like to thank Chattanooga genealogist Bill Caldwell, who identified both sender and recipient. ■

DISCOVERY: NEW EXAMPLE OF THE EARLIEST RECORDED 1¢ 1861 STAMP ON COVER

DANIEL M. KNOWLES

This article announces a newly discovered example of the 1¢ 1861 stamp on the earliest recorded date of use on cover. The new discovery, shown as Figure 1, brings to five the number of examples of this stamp known used on August 21, 1861.

Over the years the *Chronicle* has published many articles concerning the demonetization of the 1851-60 stamps and stamped envelopes and the transition to the 1861 stamps. Briefly, following the creation of the Confederate States of America (C.S.A.) on February 4, 1861, United States Postmaster General Montgomery Blair decided to continue postal service in the seceded states. The hope was that this demonstration of goodwill would encourage the seceded states to rejoin the Union. This would also serve to protect the financial position of Northern businesses owed money by Southern customers.

However, growing hostilities led the Union to terminate its postal services in the seceded states effective May 31, 1861. The C.S.A. initiated its own independent postal system on June 1, 1861. At that time, in excess of \$200,000 of U.S. stamps and stamped envelopes still resided in southern post offices. So the Federal government decided to demonetize all previously issued stamps (and all but two stamped envelopes) and to replace the demonetized postage with new stamps and envelopes as soon as possible. The objective was to assure that the C.S.A. could not benefit financially from the retained U.S. postage.¹

But new U.S. stamps did not become available for distribution until August 16, 1861,



Figure 1. Newly discovered 1¢ 1861 cover, clearly postmarked Buffalo, N.Y., August 21, 1861. This brings to five the number of 1¢ covers known used that day.

and initially there were not enough new stamps to simultaneously replace all the old stamps throughout the loyal states. The Post Office first shipped new stamps to the large Eastern cities, followed by shipments to more distant locations and smaller post offices as more stamps became available.

The disorderly distribution of the new stamps resulted in variable dates of release and different periods of exchange for old stamps among post offices. As a result, adjacent towns sometimes had release dates differing by a month or more. In some cases, the Post Office was forced to send additional supplies of old stamps to post offices whose supplies had run out but who had not yet received the new stamps. This resulted in a nearly five-month period in which mailers and postmasters had to deal with the same stamps being legal to use from some places and illegal to use from others. All this led to confusion among some postmasters as how to deal with attempted uses of demonetized postage and the exchange of old stamps for new ones. Subsequently, philatelists could not easily discern when and how demonetization and the transition to new stamps transpired in many locales.

In an effort to decipher the events underlying demonetization and transition, dealer-researcher Elliott Perry in the middle of the 20th century undertook a 10-year, country-wide search for newspaper advertisements that stated the dates of release and the exchange periods for the new stamps among post offices. Perry identified literally hundreds of advertisements, publishing the findings in his house organ, *Pat Paragraphs*, and stimulating readers to assist him in the search.² This led to documentation of release dates and exchange periods of the new stamps for many post offices as well as compilations of demonetized uses and combined uses of the old and new stamps. This information greatly helped philatelists understand the process of demonetization and created an extraordinarily interesting postal history subject in the process.

Perry's studies also established the earliest recorded dates of release and use for the 1861 stamps. Those dates have remained unchanged for many years. That is why the recent discovery of a previously unreported example of the earliest recorded 1861 1¢ stamp on cover, August 21, 1861, and from a previously unreported city, Buffalo, New York, is so astonishing. The cover was identified by a well-known postal history dealer while examining an old-time collection that had been sequestered for more than 50 years. The Philatelic Foundation has certified the cover as genuine.

Approximately 5,000,000 1861 stamps of all denominations were delivered to government stamp agent Daniel M. Boyd on August 16, 1861. Baltimore, Maryland, received the first shipment on Saturday, August 17, 1861 and placed them on sale that day. A single off-cover 1861 1¢ stamp postmarked August 17 in Baltimore³ and two covers bearing the 1861 3¢ stamp, in pink and rose pink shades, also postmarked August 17 in Baltimore, are known.⁴ These are the only recorded examples of 1861 stamps postmarked on their first day of release.

The Philadelphia postmaster announced receipt and availability of all the new stamps at the Philadelphia post office on Monday, August 19, 1861. A single cover bearing the 1861 3¢ stamp postmarked in Philadelphia on August 19, 1861 exists.⁵

As noted, the earliest recorded 1¢ 1861 covers date from August 21, 1861. Evans described the four covers known when he wrote his book. All the covers were postmarked August 21, 1861, in Philadelphia or Pittsburgh.⁶ Pittsburgh had received a shipment of 1861 stamps on August 19, 1861 as well.⁷

EARLIEST DOCUMENTED USES: 1¢ 1861 STAMP			
Date	From/to	Stamp(s)	Reference
Off cover			
Aug. 17, 1861	Baltimore	1¢ 1861	Evans, pg. 153
On Cover			
Aug. 21, 1861	Philadelphia/Academia PA	1¢ 1861, 3¢ 1861	Bennett 316, Lot 39
Aug. 21, 1861	Philadelphia/Academia PA	1¢ 1861, 3¢ 1861	Bennett 316, Lot 40
Aug. 21, 1861	Philadelphia/Bethlehem PA	1¢ 1861, 3¢ 1861	Evans, pg. 153
Aug. 21, 1861	Pittsburgh/Huntingdon PA	3x1¢ 1861	<i>First Days</i> , Vol 12, #8
Aug. 21, 1861	Buffalo/Buffalo NY	1¢ 1861	Figure 1

Figure 2. Updated listing of the earliest documented uses of the 1¢ 1861 stamp.

The cover shown in Figure 1 is clearly postmarked Buffalo, N.Y. on August 21, 1861, making it the fifth on-cover example of the earliest recorded date of use of the 1¢ 1861 stamp, and the only example posted on that day in Buffalo. It is also the only example paying the 1¢ circular rate. An updated listing of the earliest documented uses of the 1¢ 1861 stamp is presented in the table shown in Figure 2.

When did Buffalo receive a shipment of 1861 stamps? Figure 3 shows an announcement from the Buffalo Morning Express for August 21, 1861, in which Buffalo postmaster A.M. Clapp acknowledges his receipt of the 1861 stamps and announces their availability on Monday, August 19. He states that a six-day exchange period would commence on that date.⁸ So Buffalo and Philadelphia received the 1861 stamps on the same day.

An interesting follow-up announcement from Clapp was published on August 27:

An excellent plan has been adopted at this office to prevent the deposit of letters bearing the old stamps by those ignorant of the alteration. The letter boxes have all been temporarily nailed up, thus compelling people to hand the missives through the delivery window into the clerks' hands and subject to inspection."

This notice makes one wonder if this was a Buffalo-specific scheme to prevent the use of old postage stamps or if other postmasters similarly closed the letter boxes in their city to ease postal compliance.

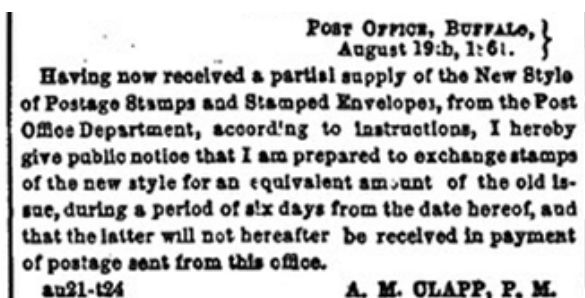


Figure 3. announcement from the August 21, 1861 edition of the *Buffalo Morning Express*, in which Buffalo postmaster A.M. Clapp acknowledges his receipt of the 1861 stamps and announces their availability on Monday, August 19.

In conclusion, this report documents the fifth example of the earliest recorded 1861 1¢ stamp on cover, August 21, 1861, the only known surviving example posted on that day in Buffalo, documents August 19, 1861 as the day 1861 stamps were received in Buffalo and affirms a six-day exchange period.

Endnotes

1. Don Evans, in his comprehensive book on the 1¢ 1861 stamp, also covers the general history of postal operations at the time, including demonetization. See Don L. Evans, *The United States 1¢ Franklin 1861-1867* (Sidney, Ohio: Linn's Stamp News, 1997), pp. 149-151; as well as the numerous *Chronicle* articles on the topic.
2. Elliot Perry, *Pat Paragraphs*. Compiled by G.T. Turner, and T.E. Stanton. (Takoma Park, Maryland: Bureau Issues Association, 1981), pp. 93-147.
3. Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-153.
4. The two 3¢ covers, one Scott 64 and the other 64b, are listed in the Siskin/Berkun Census of EDUs which is currently maintained by Richard Frajola. It can be viewed online at www.rfrajola.com/mercury/SiskinBerkun.pdf (last accessed 9/6/2020). Both covers were illustrated in Matthew Bennett sale 316 (May 22, 2007), lots 41 and 43.
5. Schuyler Rumsey sale 88 (October 4-6, 2019), lot 794.
6. Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-153.
7. Perry, *op. cit.*, pg. 139.
8. *Buffalo Morning Express*, August 21, 1861, pg. 3. ■

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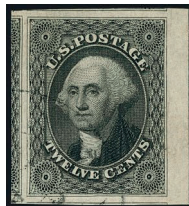
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THE BANK NOTE PERIOD

H. JEFFREY BRAHIN, EDITOR

AN EXCEPTIONAL NEW YORK FOREIGN MAIL BLOCK OF FOUR

STEPHEN M. TEDESCO

Collectors of New York Foreign Mail (NYFM) cancellations are well aware of the rarity of canceled pairs, strips, and blocks of stamps showing these fancy cancels. The largest recorded multiples are a block of 16 of the ungrilled 24¢ 1870 stamp (Scott 152) and a block of 12 of the 90¢ 1873 Continental Bank Note (165). Pairs can be found more readily than strips of three, with larger strips being the most elusive. John R. Boker, Jr. sold his NYFM collection through Nutmeg Stamp Sales on July 8, 1999. While there are strips larger than three found on cover, none was in the Boker holding. However, there was one piece with a block of four that certainly made up for the lack of larger strips.

Shown in Figure 1, this is the only recorded NYFM block that survives on piece. No intact cover has been recorded with a block for any stamp. On the item in Figure 1, full NYFM strikes tie the 15¢ orange block to a large cover piece bearing an image of the medal of the American Institute of New York. As discussed below, I believe this served as the institution's logo, here used as advertising on large business envelope. The original cover most likely paid a multiple of the first-class letter rate to a foreign destination. This artifact, with the NYFM strike and the institute seal, tells a remarkable story of an era long past.

Block of four

The eight-point star fancy cancel can be identified as either Waud-Van Vlissingen type A5 or Weiss type ST-8P3. The Weiss cataloguing is advantageous because of the author's copious recording of on-cover dates of NYFM strikes.¹ From this listing of dated



Figure 1. Block of 15¢ Continental Bank Note stamps, tied by two strikes of a fancy geometric New York Foreign Mail marking, on a piece of cover that shows the medal of the American Institute of New York.

covers, one learns that this cancel had a relatively short lifespan—July through October 1874. This places the block within the period of the Continental Bank Note Company, suggesting the stamps are Scott 163.

Continental produced only one new plate of the 15¢ stamp after taking over the contract from National Bank Note Company on 1 May 1873. This was plate number 31 with 200 positions. In the time period under discussion, the Bill Book Records show fewer than 5,000 impressions had been made from plate 31.² The block is probably from the first Continental printing, as it shows a bright, deep color with a bold impression that reflects a plate with little wear.

The straight edge indicates the block comes from the left pane of Plate 31, the 9th and 10th columns. The block can positively be identified as a Continental printing from the layout dots showing in the right margin of the 10th column. As to which rows, this cannot be determined.

The American Institute

The American Institute of the City of New York was founded in 1828 with the stated goal of “encouraging and promoting domestic industry in this state, and the United States, in agriculture, commerce, manufacturing and the arts; and any improvements made therein, by bestowing rewards and other benefits on those who shall make any such improvements or excel in any improvements or excel in any of the said branches.”³ The Institute set out to accomplish these goals by two means: lobbying and petitioning for government policies to protect and advance its causes; and sponsoring and promoting annual fairs where artisans and inventors could exhibit their wares and compete for awards.

An example of the American Institute medal is shown in Figure 2. Coveted by both individuals and companies, this was the organization’s highest award given for American achievement. While winning the medal was prestigious, its advertising value was perhaps the greatest benefit. The medal logo was often incorporated into the winner’s advertising for promotion of the recognized wares. (Until modern times, Guldens mustard showed a copy of their American Institute gold medal on its jar labels.) Engraved by George Lovett of New York City with allegorical themes of commerce, industry and agriculture, the medals were first awarded in the early 1830s and kept this distinctive design through the 1870s. When awarded, the medals were housed in handsome gutta percha cases that resembled daguerreotype frames.

The history behind the American Institute medals is well-known to numismatists,



Figures 2. Obverse and reverse of a prize medal awarded by the American Institute of New York. The allegorical design of commerce, agriculture and industry is the same image that is printed on the cover piece in Figure 1. The reverse shows that this particular medal was awarded in 1884 to Theo. C. Bates "for corsets."

who have assiduously recorded the Institute's medal output and the provenance of various survivors. Numerous examples of this medal were awarded, each unique because of the recipient award engraved on the reverse. Medals are known to exist made out of gold, silver, bronze, copper, brass, and a few other metals. Examples are noted to have been awarded for everything from hot water heaters to new printing techniques. The reverse in Figure 2 depicts the American Institute medal awarded to one Theo Bates in 1884 "for corsets."

Conclusion

From its first fair held in 1828 to the last held in Madison Square Garden in 1897, the American Institute resoundingly fulfilled its charter objectives. Recipients of its medal include some of the greatest names in American invention: Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell and George Eastman, to name a few. The renowned photographer Matthew Brady was the recipient of the highest "premium award" no fewer than three times.

In my view, the Figure 1 block ranks as an important piece in the NYFM collecting area. The evidence is clear that the block was used on a large American Institute envelope, perhaps containing other printed advertising as well. The Institute would have had a large amount of heavy mail, both foreign and domestic, in the daily routine of business.

Numismatists have their medals and philatelists their stamps and postmarks. This artifact combines the two in a time capsule that sheds light on the era of American progress.

Endnotes

1. Arthur Van Vlisningen and Morrison Waud, *New York Foreign Mail Cancellations, 1870-1876*, (Collectors Club of Chicago, 1968), pg. 20; William R. Weiss, *The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City 1870-1878* (Bethlehem, Pa., 1990), pp. 163-68.
2. Ronald Burns, *A Type Written Transcription of the U.S. Post Office Dept. Stamp Bill Book Numbers for the Issue of 1870 Ordinaries, 1870-1879, Part One: The National & Continental Issues*, Research Paper #19, United States Stamp Society, 2015.
3. Andrew Harkness, "The American Institute—Catalyst for the American Greatness," *TAMS Journal*, August 1989, pp. 123-35. ■

WHEEL OF FORTUNE CANCELLATION BY LARRY L. RAUSCH

REVIEWED BY H. JEFFREY BRAHIN

The Wheel of Fortune cancellation is one of the most intricate and interesting cancellations of the classic stamp era. It contains 24 segments and 10 concentric circles. A stylized round center is surrounded by a 12-petal flower design, further encompassed by a 24 point sunburst and seven concentric circles, some of which are less than a millimeter apart, all symmetrically packed within a cancel measuring a mere 16 mm in diameter.

The cancel is a popular collecting area, as in addition to its geometric detail and beauty, it was used in at least 824 U.S. towns, as well as in Mexico and Guatemala, with many interesting accompanying postmarks. The cancel was used on a variety of stamps from Large Bank Notes through the Second Bureau Issue. Wheel of Fortune cancellations are found on covers to domestic and international destinations and on postcards. The cancellation is found on covers with postage dues, on registered mail, on corner and advertising covers and on postal stationery. Many articles have been written about these cancels, primarily by Arthur Beane and Roger Curran in the *U.S. Cancellation Club News*.

Considered the foremost collector of these cancellations, Beane announced his inten-



and documents 1,057 datestamps, presented alphabetically by state and town. A total of 293 covers are shown in color. Perhaps the most remarkable attribute of the book is that the author has painstakingly redrawn 857 datestamps and their accompanying postmarks.



Figure 1. A "most perfect strike" of a Wheel of Fortune cancellation.

The work is a comprehensive examination of this iconic cancel. It is a "must have" for collectors of this cancel, and valuable for those who have even a single example in their collections. The pictures alone are worth the price of admission. And the entire work is available for free as a download from the website of the publisher, the Rochester (N.Y.) Philatelic Society. ■

**THE 1893 ORANGE SPECIAL DELIVERY STAMP:
UNUSUAL DOMESTIC USES**

STEPHEN ROSE

Introduction

In February 1893, a new Special Delivery (SD) stamp made its debut, a month after the Columbian commemoratives. The post office rationale for this orange SD stamp (Scott E3) was to avoid confusion between the 1¢ Columbian stamp and existing SD stamps, which were nearly identical in size and color. Post offices received stocks of the new orange stamp until May 1894, coinciding with the period of primary use for the Columbians. Although catalogued separately, the orange SD stamp has long been considered a functional part of the Columbian issue.

Exposition uses

Chicago stamp dealer J.A. Pierce prepared many postal souvenirs during the 1893 Columbian Exposition. These are on Columbian postal stationery of all denominations as well as the green and red Plimpton 1876 Centennial stationery. All Pierce creations feature a Columbian stamp from 1¢ to \$5, including a few with the orange Special Delivery stamp. Figure 1 shows a typical Pierce cover: a pre-printed 3¢ Centennial envelope with Columbus' bust from the half-dollar coin design, postmarked with a seven-line World's Fair machine cancel. Pierce's covers are colorful, but they are philatelic souvenirs. There is no evidence the Figure 1 cover received special delivery treatment.

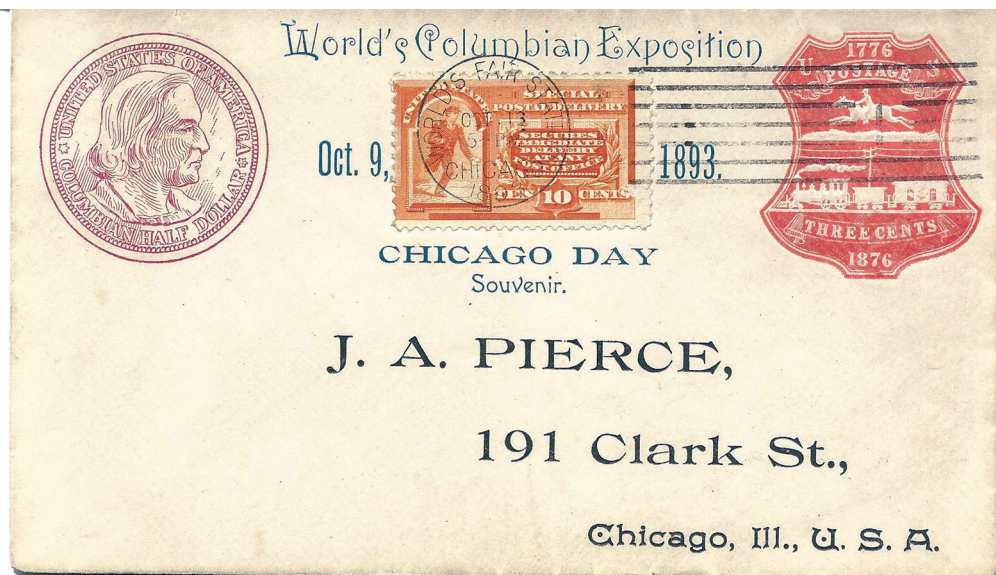


Figure 1. 10¢ orange Special Delivery stamp on red Plimpton 1876 Centennial envelope preprinted with an image of the Columbus half-dollar. Struck with a World's Fair machine cancel, this souvenir was created by J.A. Pierce, a Chicago stamp dealer.

The Columbian Exposition closed on October 31, 1893. Many of its exhibits and pavilions relocated to Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, which hosted the California Midwinter International Exposition, the first western world fair, in January 1894. Figure 2 shows a 2¢ Columbian entire envelope with an illustrated advertising imprint related to preparations for this Expo. Originally postmarked on November 17, 1893 and addressed to the university at Berkeley across the bay, this cover went back to San Francisco the following day with the SD stamp added to expedite forwarding.



Figure 2. "Converted" use of a 10¢ orange Special Delivery stamp forwarding a 2¢ Columbian envelope promoting the California Midwinter International Exposition.

In his landmark book on special delivery service, Henry Gobie labeled this treatment a "converted" use: an ordinary letter transformed into special delivery upon forwarding.¹ Postal regulations required free forwarding of first-class mail, but expedited or secured forwarding required extra franking to pay for SD or registration service. Gobie cites the earliest SD converted use known to him as April, 1894; the cover in Figure 2 pre-dates this by five months.

VIP and official use

Figure 3 is unusual due to the persons involved. The cover was personally addressed by ex-president Benjamin Harrison on Executive Mansion stationery more than a year after he left office. The recipient was Dr. Joseph H. Senner, first civilian Commissioner of Immigration at Ellis Island, New York. In 1891 President Harrison had designated Ellis Island as the first Federal immigration center in the United States. Upon leaving office, Harrison lost the power to use penalty envelopes for official mail. The franking privilege for ex-Presidents was abolished in 1873 and not restored by Congress until 1968. Harrison's 1894 letter to Dr. Senner required proper franking, just like any other citizen's mail.

Even when President Harrison had been eligible to use penalty envelopes for official mail, the privilege only covered first-class postage and not extra service such as special delivery. The cover in Figure 4 illustrates this limitation. In order to obtain special delivery for its own official mail, the Post Office had to add an SD stamp to a penalty envelope. I have two examples of this same use—from the Railway Mail Office in Cleveland addressed to W.A. Conant, a postal clerk in Newburgh, Ohio, one dated March 23 and the other May



Figure 3. 10¢ orange Special Delivery and 2¢ Columbian stamps on a White House envelope addressed by ex-president Benjamin Harrison (who did not have the franking privilege) more than a year after he left office.



Figure 4. 10¢ orange Special Delivery stamp on official post office envelope. Regular postage was not needed, but special delivery service required franking by stamp.

3, 1894, both annotated with docketing numbers in the left margin. Perhaps these covers were intended as a test of SD efficiency or some other time-sensitive aspect of the railway mail system in Ohio.

Multiple franking

A consistent theme of the SD service was that each SD stamp guaranteed only one attempt at special delivery. After an unsuccessful attempt, the postal item entered the normal mailstream. Figure 5 illustrates a letter from the New York State capital at Albany (June 14, 1894, 5 p.m.) franked for special delivery at Watertown, New York. Delivery on the morning of June 15 was unsuccessful due to absence of the addressee. The letter was then forwarded to the addressee (apparently in care of a friend) at Camden, New York, with a second E3 added on top of the first to pay for another immediate delivery attempt. This is the only recorded example of double franking with this stamp.



Figure 5. Two 10¢ orange Special Delivery stamps on one cover: Delivery to the first address failed because the addressee was not present. The cover was then re-addressed and forwarded to her at another location, with a second SD stamp added.

Postal cards and wrappers

To better appreciate the role of special delivery, it is helpful to understand the communication options available to Americans in 1893. The telephone was still a personal luxury, with an average density of four phones per 1,000 people.² Telegrams cost an average 4¢ per word, and the “postal telegram” known as special delivery had become a popular alternative for rapid communication over short and medium distances. Post offices typically operated between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, often later in cities, and two hours on Sundays and holidays. “Speedy boys” operating out of the post office were available to make rapid delivery, often on bicycle. Author Gobie had been one of them as a boy.

Figure 6 shows effective use of SD service to pass along a time-sensitive message using a postal card. The card (Scott UX9) was postmarked December 18, 1893 at 7 p.m. at Lynn, Mass., and dispatched 15 minutes later for messenger delivery within the city. The message on the reverse reads: “Miss Houghton, I am sick in the house with the gripe and will not be able to keep my appointment. Will send you another as soon as I can. Very truly yours, Dr. W.M. Lamkin.” Another card in my collection franked with E3, sent from Brewster, New York, to Danbury Connecticut, has a similar ring of urgency: “Dear Sir, did you order the fish for me? I did not receive any yet. If not, will you send them over this afternoon by Express?” The use of postal cards is a lost art today but was a popular form



Figure 6. 10¢ orange Special Delivery stamp on a postal card, a fairly common practice before telephone communication was widely available.

of communication starting in the 1870s. Based on 15 years of pursuing E3 uses, I estimate fewer than a dozen examples of this stamp exist on postal cards.

Another scarce use of E3 occurred on wrappers, a component of third-class mail that would not seem to warrant any special service. The 1891 Postal Law defined third-class mail as miscellaneous printed matter, including circulars, pamphlets, proof sheets, and books. The postage rate was 1¢ per two ounces.³ Neither Gobie nor the dean of special delivery collectors, Bob Markovits, recorded any use of E3 on a wrapper. To my knowledge, two exist, both illustrated below.

Figure 7 shows a 1¢ Plimpton wrapper (Scott W301) addressed to Edwin Seligman, who was a professor of political economy at Columbia College (now Columbia University) and a leading expert on taxation policy and public finance. The wrapper was posted April 23, 1893 from Ithaca, New York, perhaps from a professional colleague at Cornell.

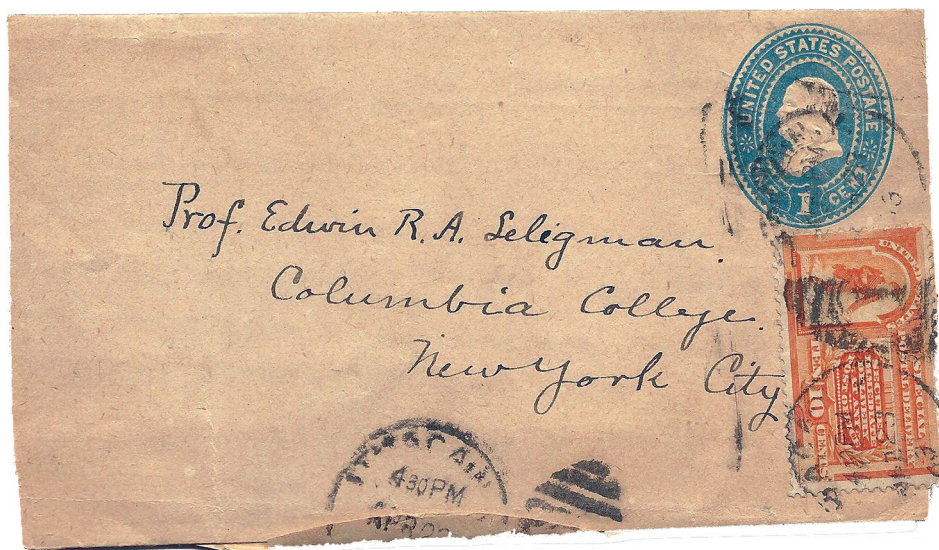


Figure 7. 10¢ orange Special Delivery stamp on a 1¢ Plimpton wrapper, sent from Ithaca, New York to a professor at Columbia College in New York City.

Figure 8 is a much larger (9" wide) wrapper sent (per backstamps not shown) from Santa Cruz to Stockton, California on December 31, 1893. Basic franking of 3¢ (paid by the two Small Bank Note stamps) indicates the wrapper enclosed printed matter weighing between four and six ounces. It likely arrived at Stockton January 1 or 2. The manuscript numbers at lower left are consistent with SD tracking requirements: a receipt time at the Stockton post office of 1:45 p.m. and a serial number for the fifth recorded SD item of the new year. In 1893, Stockton had a population of 15,000, and by 1900 was processing more than 2,500 SD letters and parcels per year, with a reported successful messenger delivery rate of 99 percent.⁴



Figure 8. 10¢ orange Special Delivery stamp on a hand-made wrapper. The 3¢ postage paid by Small Bank Note stamps suggests printed matter weighing 4-6 ounces.

Illegal use

The unusual use in Figure 9 may be one of a kind. The War Revenue Law of 1898, passed to help defray expenses of the Spanish-American War, levied taxes on a wide range of goods, transactions and documents. Included was a 10¢ tax on the general category of legally required certificates.⁵ No taxable document could be used in a court proceeding unless it was properly stamped. Figure 10 shows the proper way to pay a marriage certificate tax: using a Battleship documentary stamp issued in support of the 1898 Revenue Law. Both certificates apparently come down to us from the files of a county clerk in Dauphin County, in south central Pennsylvania.

The SD stamp in Figure 9 is improperly used in several respects. By law, Special Delivery stamps could only be used for SD service and not as regular postage, much less to pay a documentary tax. In this case, the 10¢ fee went to the Post Office, not to the Internal Revenue Service. One can only surmise that parties to the marriage were unable to provide a proper documentary stamp and resorted to E3 as an expedient. The presiding official made a stab at rectifying the situation by signing the E3 with his initials and designating it as "I.R." for Internal Revenue. An interesting question is whether a judge would have allowed this document to be entered as evidence in a court case since it had been inappropriately stamped.

Conclusion

The stated purpose of this article is to describe some unusual domestic uses of the 10¢ orange SD stamp. A related goal is to refine a census of certain uses. I ask readers to send me scans of E3 items in their collections for the following categories: Pierce Expo covers, multiple frankings, postal cards, wrappers, official mail, and illegal revenues. My email address is rosesa47@outlook.com).

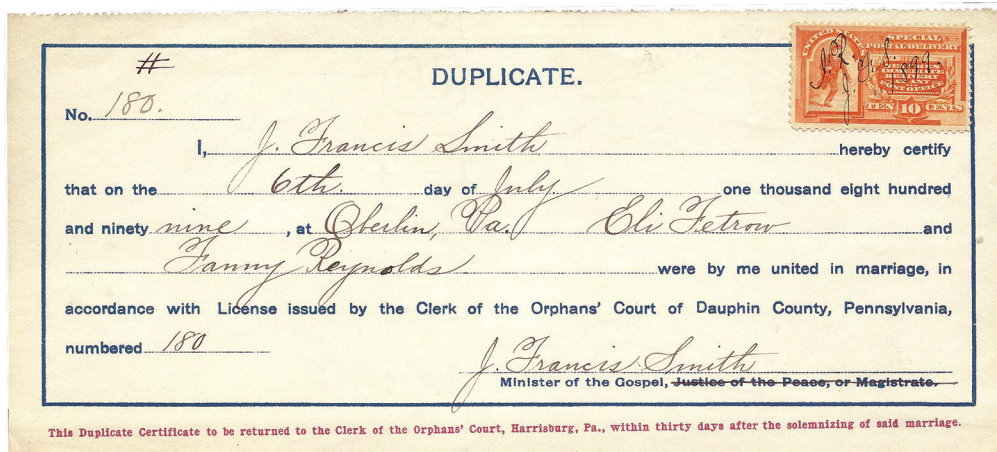


Figure 9. Illegal use of a 10¢ orange Special Delivery stamp to pay the war-related documentary tax on a marriage license issued in Pennsylvania in 1899.

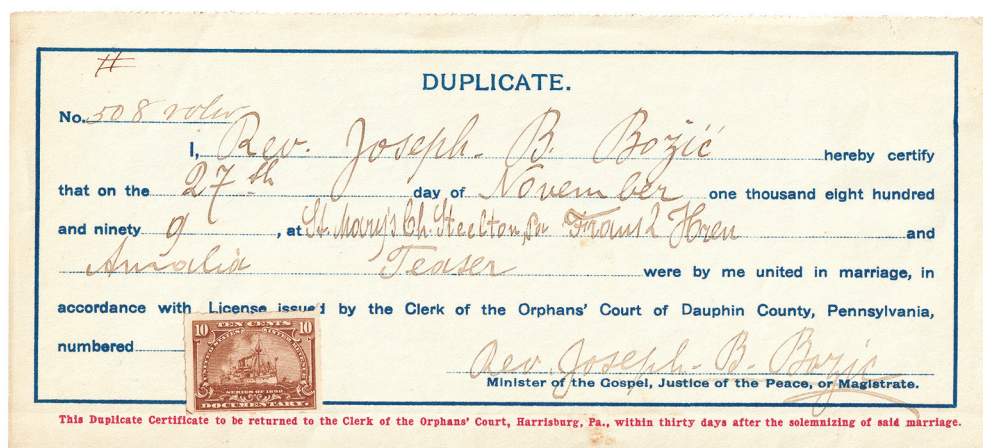


Figure 10. A marriage license similar to Figure 9, from the same county clerk's files, showing proper payment of the tax by a 10¢ Battleship documentary stamp.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Ron Leshar for his insights on the illegal revenue use of E3 in Figure 9 and for providing the image in Figure 10.

Endnotes

1. Henry Gobie, *The Speedy: A History of United States Special Delivery Service*, published by Wilhelmina Gobie, 1976, pg. 63.
2. In 1893, the United States was considerably behind Sweden, New Zealand, Switzerland, and Norway in teledensity. Telephone use expanded rapidly after the Bell patents expired in 1893 and 1894, and many independent telephone companies began to provide local service in large cities. The first "long lines" between major cities arose in the mid-1890s. A three-minute call between New York and Chicago from a special facility cost almost \$6. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970: Bicentennial Edition*, Washington, GPO, 1976.
3. Postal Law & Regulations, March 3, 1891, sec. 311. This PL&R also specified that mailable printed matter "...must be placed under band, upon a roller, between boards, in a case open at one side or both ends, or in an unclosed envelope, or simply folded in such a manner as not to conceal [its] nature...."
4. Report of Third Assistant Postmaster General, Fiscal Year 1900, cited in Gobie, *op. cit.*, pg. 294.
5. Public Law 56-133, commonly known as the War Revenue Law of 1898, Schedule A, pg. 18: "Certificate of any description required by law not otherwise specified in this Act, ten cents." ■

FIVE-POINT STAR CANCELS ON 2¢ SMALL BANK NOTE COVERS

LABRON HARRIS

Fancy cancels have always been a favorite of collectors. Pumpkins, Soldiers Heads, Leaves and many other pictorial cancels have all been struck on stamps, especially in the 1850s, 60s and 70s. Machine cancellers, which began to be used extensively in the middle 1890s, brought an end to the era of fancy cancels.

Stars are some of the less desirable of these cancels because they are not as fancy as many other cancels. But star cancels were used broadly across the United States. Many manufacturers of duplex cancellers created marking devices using stars as the killer. And some postmasters made their own star cancellers.

In this article I will examine both handmade and manufactured star killers used during the early 1890s. All the cancels shown here are five-point stars, struck on covers bearing 2¢ Small Bank Note stamps. The colors of these cancels are normally black or shades of purple. The covers all represent simple domestic uses of the stamp. Because of the similarity of the uses and our focus here on the markings, I have electronically cropped most of the covers to show just the stamp and its cancel. This saves a lot of precious *Chronicle* space.

This article makes no attempt to show all the five-star cancels on 2¢ Small Bank Note stamps, just representative examples of each cancel type. The purpose is to show the wide variety of material that is available to be collected.

Locally made stars

I will start by looking at the simplest cancellations, various star types fabricated by the postmaster himself or someone else locally. These are actually the most numerous type of fancy cancels to be found on covers from this era. I will only show two examples, just to suggest what they look like.

The first example, Figure 1, is from Jamaica, Vermont, and is a small star, here shown on its full cover. The substantial separation between the circular datestamp and the killer



Figures 1-2: Locally made stars, from Jamaica, Vermont and Mexico, New York. Neither of these killers is duplexed with the circular datestamp.

is evidence that this star is not part of a duplexed device (on which CDS and killer are attached to the same hammer and applied in one strike).

Figure 2, inset over Figure 1, is an example of a large star from Mexico, New York. The crudeness of the star suggests local manufacture, and it's likely that this too was not duplexed to the adjoining CDS.

Shaded stars

Next we will look at shaded stars. These are striking cancels and because of this I think a disproportionate number were saved, so stars like this are not uncommon. Figure 3, from Newton Centre, Massachusetts, is by far the most common example of this type of



Figure 3

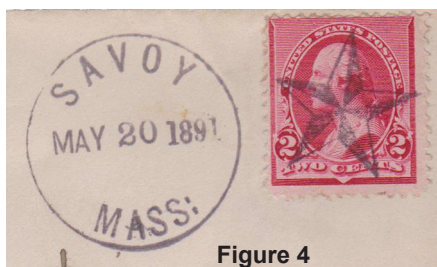


Figure 4

Figures 3-4: Shaded stars, on duplex markings from Newton Centre and Savoy, Mass. The stars are of different sizes, and the shading is on different faces.

star. It is usually found on the 2¢ green Large Bank Note stamps issued in 1887, but it also appears on Small Bank Note stamps.

A slightly larger star, shown in Figure 4 on a cover from Savoy, Massachusetts, is a star type is less common than the smaller one. Comparing the two stars in Figures 3 and 4, note that the shading occurs on different sides of the point faces. Both these cancels are duplexed, with the town circular datestamp joined together with the star in a single canceling device. This marking type was available via mail order from a cancel manufacturer, so a number of towns had the same killer type with different town names.

Encircled stars

Stars in circles were also used extensively and were available from one of the various cancel manufacturers. These were nearly all duplexed and there are a number of different types. The first type is a simple star enclosed in a circle. Figure 5 shows an example: a large encircled star from Conception, Missouri. This is a stand-alone killer cancel, not duplexed to the adjacent CDS. Figure 6 is a smaller encircled star from Chapel Hill, North Carolina; this one is duplexed.



Figure 5

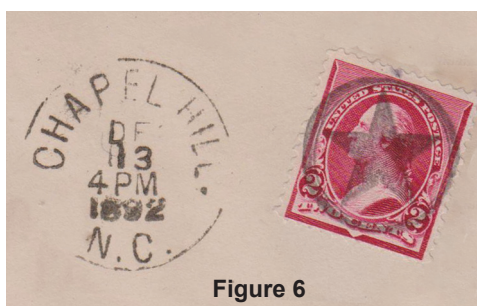


Figure 6

Figures 5-6: Encircled stars, from Conception, Missouri and Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The Conception star is not duplexed to the adjacent circular datestamp. The Chapel Hill star is duplexed.

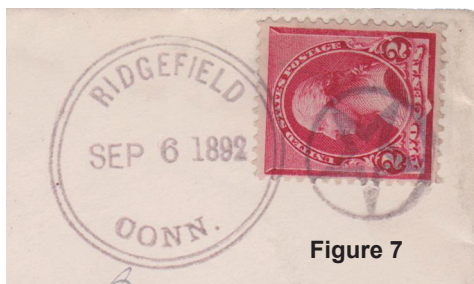


Figure 7



Figure 8

Figures 7-8: Figure 7 is a hollow star within a circle from Ridgefield, Connecticut. Figure 8, a negative star in a circle within another circle, is from Gilberts, Illinois. A tracing of this unusual killer is shown at right.



Figure 7 is an example of a hollow star within a circle, here from Ridgefield, Connecticut. A different star in a circle is shown in Figure 8: a circle with a negative star in a circle within it. The cancel is from Gilberts, Illinois. Because the purple killer might not show clearly on the carmine-colored stamp, a tracing is included. Both are duplexes.

Stars within stars

The next two cancels, also both duplexes, are stars within stars. Figure 9 is an example from Copperopolis, Calaveras County, California while Figure 10 is from Windsor, California with a smaller but similar star design. These are very attractive cancels and rarely seen. Both these covers are from California towns (even though they are 180 miles apart)—suggesting that the cancels were made in California.



Figure 9



Figure 10

Figures 9-10: Stars within stars. Figure 9 is from Copperopolis, California and Figure 10 is from Windsor, California. Both are duplexes.

Unusual stars

The next group are all duplexed but more unusual. Figure 11 is a railroad route agent's marking, struck on the Brattleboro and New London Railroad. The cancel reads "Bratt & New London R.P.O." and the adjoining killer shows a crude negative star. A barred RPO ellipse is the killer commonly seen with this route agent's circular datestamp, but at some point that killer got worn or lost and was replaced with this homemade star.

Figure 12 is from Roaring Branch, Pennsylvania and the killer cancel on the stamp is a diamond with a star within it. The last marking, Figure 13, is from Chepachet, New York. The border of the circular datestamp is actually three delicately inscribed concentric

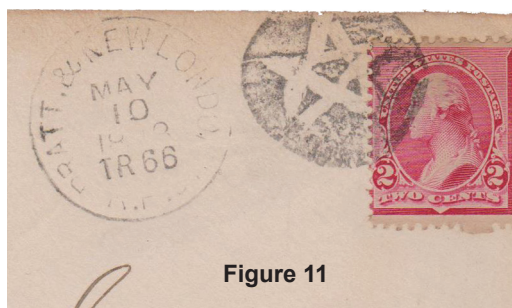


Figure 11

Figures 11-13: Unusual stars. Figure 11, attached to a route agent's marking for the Brattleboro and New London Railroad, is a crude replacement for a more conventional killer that apparently went missing. Figure 12, from Roaring Branch, Pennsylvania, is a star within a diamond. Figure 13, from Chepachet, a hamlet in central New York, is a star within a box.



Figure 12



Figure 13

circles, and the killer cancel is a box with a star in it. All three of these unusual cancels and are hard to find.

This is an area in which I have been accumulating covers for many years, but I'm sure there are many other interesting five-star cancels that I am not aware of. Specialized collections like this can be formed for many different killer types. The covers are abundant and not that expensive when you find them. This is an area that can still be collected, without a great deal of competition, by anyone with an interest in fancy cancels. ■

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

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OFFICIALS

ALAN C. CAMPBELL, EDITOR

THE 7¢ OFFICIAL STAMPS OF 1873: A SUPERFLUOUS DENOMINATION

ALAN C. CAMPBELL

Introduction

In 1870, when the Large Bank Note stamps replaced the 1869 pictorials, no new denominations were added. The 7¢ Bank Note value was issued subsequently, on July 1, 1871, to meet a 7¢ direct rate to Germany, Austria and Hungary that had been introduced a year earlier. Initially curtailed by war, this rate was reduced to 6¢ in 1871, and for a short interval there was no 7¢ rate going anywhere, until the closed mail rate to Germany via England was lowered from 10¢ to 7¢ late in 1871.

The 7¢ Bank Note stamp featured a profile bust of Lincoln's Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, who had the impressive flowing beard of an Old Testament prophet. Stanton died in late 1869. When the Continental Bank Note Company took over the stamp printing contract in 1873 and added secret marks to National's original dies, they were also required to prepare new dies for four 7¢ Official stamps—Navy, State, Treasury and War. It was felt that only these four departments would generate enough foreign mail to justify the expense of preparing special stamps.

Figure 1 shows a regressive die proof of the 7¢ regular-issue Continental stamp, with the frame portion cut away. Scott lists this as O39-E1a, an essay for the Navy stamp. Via a mother transfer roll from this modified die, four new dies were laid down, onto which the distinctive frames of the four departments were then transferred.

The 7¢ treaty rate to Germany which justified the creation of these four Official stamps was superseded by the uniform 5¢ GPU rate, effective 1 July 1875. Since all the Official stamps were issued on 1 July 1873, the designated valid purpose for these stamps lasted exactly two years. Remarkably, for all four stamps, not a single Official cover has ever been seen showing payment of the 7¢ rate for which the stamps were intended. There are two obvious reasons for this: the dismal survival rate for official covers in general, and the fact that the volume of official foreign mail was wildly overestimated from the beginning. Call me a cockeyed optimist, but I hold out hope that in the back of an old stamp album somewhere in Europe, there rests in peace an intact example of a 7¢ Official stamp paying the 7¢ closed mail rate

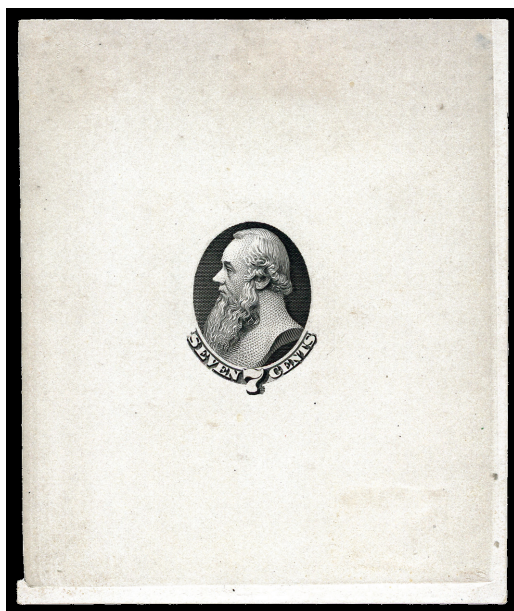


Figure 1. Regressive die proof from the 7¢ Continental regular issue stamp.

via England. This article, however, will summarize the various creative ways in which this odd denomination was actually used on official mail.

Department of State

Figure 2 shows an unused block of nine of the 7¢ State stamp. This block, ex-Lilly, Waud and Markovits, is the largest multiple known, and may well be the only block extant.¹ The Philip H. Ward holding of Official blocks, sold with the rest of the Weill Brothers stock by Christie's, did not include a 7¢ State block.² For the fiscal years 1874-75 during which the 7¢ closed mail rate applied, 17,800 7¢ State stamps were requisitioned, but then strangely in the fiscal years 1876-77, another 20,000 stamps were ordered, for what purpose it is hard to guess.

State Official stamps were utilized only at the mailroom at the department's headquarters in Washington, D.C. and by the office of the dispatch agent in the main New York post office. It seems logical that the Department of State—communicating with foreign governments and its legations, consulates, and embassies around the world—would have generated more foreign correspondence than any other department, but we must remember that much

of this, being essentially classified, was sent in locked diplomatic pouches, not through ordinary mail channels requiring postage stamps.

Approximately 15 covers bearing the 7¢ State stamp survive. None of these covers originated in or passed through the New York City dispatch agent; all were posted at Washington. Most are 1¢ convenience overpayments of the 6¢ double domestic rate, typically on legal-size envelopes. Figure 3 shows an inbound diplomatic cover from Athens, Greece that was sent in 1874 via London dispatch agent B.F. Stevens. The cover was apparently sent in diplomatic pouches from Greece through London to Washington, where the 7¢ State stamp was affixed. It is quite unusual for diplomatic pouch-mail covers (which usually contained personal letters) to retain their contents, but this one does. A red wax seal on the back identifies the consulate of origin.

Figure 4 shows a small mourning cover, ex-Huggins, addressed to St. Louis, Missouri.³ Official mourning covers are scarce, and the identity of the official being mourned (e.g. President Garfield, 1881, or Postmaster General Howes, 1883) can usually be guessed from the dated postmark. As in this case, when the datestamp doesn't ring any bells, then the black border probably memorializes the death of a private individual. And despite the lack of a printed or hand-written corner card identifying a consulate of origin, the red "DEPARTMENT OF STATE" straightline is typical for private inbound diplomatic pouch mail. As with all such courtesy postings, the 7¢ State stamp was applied in Washington.

Figure 5 shows an 1874 triple-weight diplomatic pouch cover to New Orleans, on which 2¢ and 7¢ State stamps combine to pay the 9¢ required postage. The identity of the



Figure 2. Unused block of nine of the 7¢ State.



Figure 3. Inbound 1874 diplomatic pouch cover from from the U.S. consul in Athens, Greece, with handstamp of London dispatch agent B.F. Stevens. The 7¢ State stamp was applied at Washington, D.C. and represents a 1¢ convenience overpayment of the 6¢ double domestic rate.



Figure 4. A small mourning cover from Washington, D.C. to St. Louis, Missouri, probably inbound diplomatic pouch mail. This is another convenience overpayment of 2x3¢ domestic postage.



Figure 5. 1874 inbound diplomatic pouch mail to New Orleans, Louisiana. 2¢ and 7¢ State applied in Washington, D.C., paying 9¢ triple domestic rate postage.

originating consulate at the upper left has unfortunately been rendered illegible by water stains. This homely cover is the only recorded example of the 7¢ State used in combination with another stamp. This cover was in the collection of Rae Ehrenberg, and then in the hands of our longtime editor-in-chief, Michael Laurence.⁴ In the early 1980s, Laurence briefly entertained the idea of forming a specialized collection of the 7¢ large Bank Note stamp, along with the associated 7¢ Official stamps. This is quite a logical extension. Two great Lincoln specialists, William G. Ainsworth and Eliot Landau, both collected the 6¢ Official stamps, and 2¢ Jackson specialists such as Barbara Fosdyke and Matthew Kewriga, both made forays into collecting the 2¢ Officials. Also, 12¢ Bank Note specialist John Donnes has extended his grasp to include the 12¢ Official stamps.

Treasury Department

Courtesy of Lester C. Lanphear III, Figure 6 shows a mint top imprint and plate number strip of six of the 7¢ Treasury stamp. This is believed to be the only example of such a multiple. A total of 195,000 7¢ Treasury stamps was requisitioned in the fiscal years 1874-75, when the 7¢ closed mail rate was in effect. Another 25,000 stamps were ordered in 1877. This is by a wide margin the most common of the four 7¢ Official stamps, and it was used in combination with other Official stamps to pay various rates in clever and unobvious ways. An estimated 15 7¢ Treasury covers have survived. Solo uses overpaying



Figure 6. Mint top imprint and plate number strip of six of the 7¢ Treasury stamp.

the 6¢ domestic rate are very rare. Most often, the stamp is found in combination with a 2¢ Treasury paying the triple domestic rate. It can also be found in combination with a 3¢ Treasury to pay the 10¢ double U.P.U. rate (two small covers to London from the Conant correspondence) or to pay the 10¢ registry fee on a penalty envelope. The stamp was distributed to field offices everywhere, but chiefly east of the Mississippi River.

Figure 7 shows a cover from the U.S. Mint at Philadelphia, with 2¢ and 7¢ Treasury stamps paying triple domestic postage to Newburyport, Massachusetts. This small envelope may well have contained proof coins.



Figure 7. 2¢ and 7¢ Treasury, paying 9¢ triple domestic rate postage from the U.S. Mint at Philadelphia to Newburyport, Massachusetts. Probably contained proof coins.

Figure 8 shows a complex franking on a large piece of a registered cover from Statesville to Ironton, North Carolina, paying 14¢ in total postage (6¢ double domestic rate, 8¢ registry fee). A mailing date of 1874 or 1875 can be surmised, because the short-lived 8¢ registry fee went up to 10¢ on July 1, 1875.



Figure 8. Partial cover from Statesville to Ironton, North Carolina, franked with 14¢ in Treasury stamps, paying 6¢ double domestic rate postage plus the 8¢ registry fee.

And courtesy of Lanphear again, Figure 9 shows a remarkable cover from Boston to a money-changer in Plymouth Union, Vermont. On this cover the 7¢ and 12¢ Treasury stamps combine to pay the 19¢ rate for a triple weight registered cover (9¢ postage, 10¢ registry fee). This is the only way to pay this rate with just two stamps, a combination not in

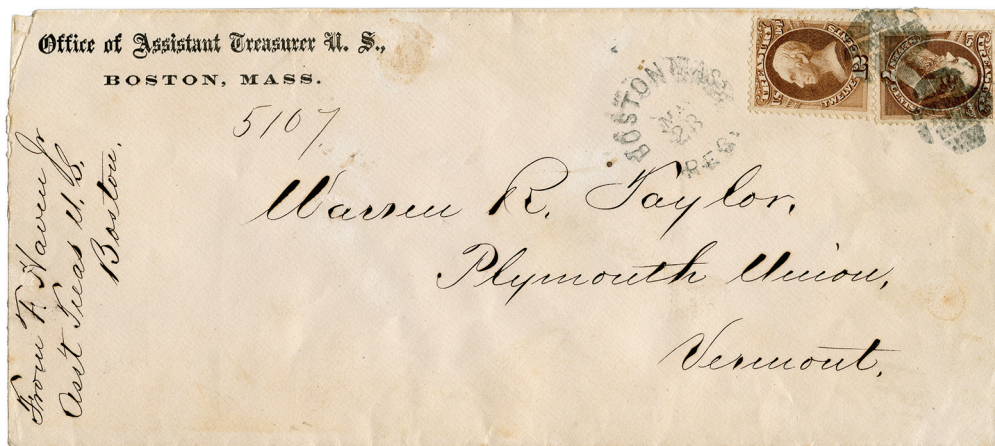


Figure 9. Cover from Boston to Plymouth Union, Vermont, with 7¢ and 12¢ Treasury stamps paying 9¢ triple rate postage plus the 10¢ registry fee.

the least bit obvious or intuitive, so hats off to a brilliant young mailroom clerk who surely went on to write algorithms for a hedge fund.

War Department

Figure 10 shows a top plate number and imprint strip of five of the 7¢ War stamp. Just 17,300 of these were requisitioned in the fiscal years 1874-75 when the 7¢ closed mail rate to Germany was in effect, but orders for this denomination continued every year through 1884, for a total of 55,728 stamps. The War Department, with its many far-flung outposts, particularly out west, did not embrace the concept of penalty mail with much enthusiasm. In a recent article in these pages, I illustrated two pieces from a package wrapper posted in Newport, Rhode Island, where a clerk was doing his level best to rid himself of an overstock of pointless 7¢ War stamps that were curling up in a desk drawer.⁵



Figure 10. 7¢ War: Top plate number and imprint strip of five.

Again courtesy of Lanphear, Figure 11 shows a clean, legal-size cover from the Adjutant General's Office to Haverhill, Massachusetts, with 2¢ and 7¢ War stamps paying triple-rate domestic postage. This cover is ex-Lobdell (Lot 5514).⁶ Dr. Lobdell had bought from a Weiss sale a similar cover to San Francisco, roughly opened through the 2¢ stamp, and had threatened to burn it to preserve the uniqueness of his other cover. However, he did not follow through, and I—long the owner of a crabby three-legged cat—bought this damaged waif of a cover and have given it a home. Then a third similar cover, from the Adjutant General's Office to Camp Douglas, Utah Territory, showed up in the sale of the long-lost



Figure 11. 2¢ and 7¢ War stamps, paying 9¢ triple domestic rate postage on a cover from the Adjutant General's Office in Washington, D.C. to Haverhill, Massachusetts,

Richard C. Stone Jr. collection.⁷ And there you have it, the three recorded on-cover uses of the 7¢ War stamp. That's all, folks.

Navy Department

A total of 13,000 7¢ Navy stamps was requisitioned in the fiscal years 1874-75, and then another 3,000 in 1877 and 1879 combined, for a grand total of 16,000, making this easily the rarest of the four 7¢ Official stamps. It was used principally from Washington and also from cities along the eastern seaboard that had Navy Yards, such as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and New Orleans.

The 7¢ Navy stamp on cover was for a long time considered a great rarity. Famous specialists such as Congressman Ernest R. Ackerman (1933), James E. Hughes (1953), Rae Ehrenberg (1981), and Charles M. Starnes (2007) were never able to obtain one. (Dates cited are for when their collections were sold at public auction). When the Morrison Waud collection of U.S. Officials, chiefly consisting of unused blocks and covers, was sold by Robert A. Siegel to Robert L. Markovits in 1982, it contained two examples, which became part of the outstanding Markovits exhibition collection. Figure 12 shows one of these: A triple-rate domestic use from Washington, D.C. to Mansfield, Ohio with 2¢ and 7¢ Navy



Figure 12. 2¢ and 7¢ Navy stamps paying 9¢ triple domestic rate.

stamps heavily cancelled, as if Jackson and Stanton had been shepherded into the witness protection program.⁸

The other 7¢ Navy cover that Markovits kept from the Waud holding was far sexier: an 1878 private letter from Pikesville, Maryland to young Midshipman W.S. Benson on the U.S. Flagship Hartford, originally franked with a 3¢ regular large Banknote stamp.⁹ In Washington, a Rio de Janeiro forwarding address for the ship was supplied (in red ink) and a 7¢ Navy stamp was added, to make up the rate to Brazil (double the regular 5¢ UPU rate). A similar mixed franking cover, posted in 1877 from Huntington, N.Y. to a Captain Robert L. Meade on the same ship, from the Marshall Stone collection, was sold in 1990 to Lester C. Lanphear III.¹⁰ Then a second cover from the Benson correspondence, an 1878 cover from Baltimore, Maryland, with an identical 10¢ mixed franking, came up in the sale of the Richard C. Stone, Jr. collection.¹¹ And finally, with the floodgates still open, a third cover from the Benson correspondence surfaced in a postal history sale in the spring of 2019.¹²

This cover, shown in Figure 13, was posted in October 1877 at Baltimore, Maryland and addressed to Norfolk, Virginia. It was held for a month and then remailed with the necessary 7¢ supplemental postage from Washington to Rio. Per the partially legible London transit marking, it was carried via the British mail service and ultimately received and answered in January, 1878 (per the pencil docketing). In all examples of private mail being forwarded with Navy Official stamps, it is believed that they were sent under cover from their original address to Washington, D.C. So now a total of five 7¢ Navy covers have turned up, four of them mixed frankings with regular issues, on which the 7¢ value was inadvertently perfect for making up the 10¢ treaty rate to Brazil.

A similar story has played out with the 10¢ Navy stamp, which was once considered not only excessively rare on cover, but possibly unique. On the advice of his mentor Charles Starnes, Lanphear in 1981 placed the winning bid for a Naval Observatory cover to Paris, France, with a 10¢ Navy paying double the U.P.U. rate.¹³ For 32 years, this remained the only recorded example of the 10¢ Navy stamp on cover. At what point can an exhibitor make the legitimate claim that such an item is “unique”? After all, when no corpse has turned up it only takes 20 years for a person to be declared dead *in absentia*.



Figure 13. 3¢ regular Bank Note stamp on 1877 private mail from Baltimore, Maryland to Washington, D.C., forwarded by the Navy Department to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Well, in 2013, descendants of Commodore C.H.B. Caldwell, doing genealogical research on the Internet, discovered on the Siegel website that two covers addressed to him as the commander of the Navy's South Atlantic Station had sold for the highest prices in the sale of the Starnes Official covers. (The covers were a 24¢ Navy cover to Uruguay, and a 12¢+30¢ Navy cover to Brazil.¹⁴) The descendants then consigned additional covers to the Siegel firm, all paying the 21¢ rate to Brazil via Great Britain (which immediately preceded the 10¢ rate paid on the 7¢ Navy covers). On four of these covers, the 21¢ rate was paid with two 10¢ Navy stamps and a 1¢ Navy stamp (on one of them, the 1¢ stamp had fallen off). These four covers were auctioned by the Siegel firm and brought a range of prices, based on their variable condition.¹⁵ And just like that, the ex-Ehrenberg 10¢ Navy cover was no longer "unique". To add insult to injury, the descendants produced another double rate 12¢+30¢ Navy cover to Brazil, quite similar to the Starnes cover, which had sold for \$37,500 hammer six years earlier, when it enjoyed the status of being "the undisputed highlight of the Starnes collection" and the only recorded use on cover of the 30¢ Navy, featured in color wrapping around the cover of the catalog. With the exception of one lot, all the covers in this new find were purchased by the great philatelist J. William Mittenfior, who was Secretary of the Navy from 1974-1977. They were resold by the Siegel firm in a dedicated name sale on February 25, 2020.¹⁶

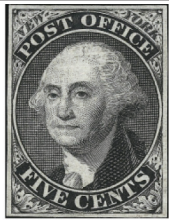
Conclusion

As a boyhood stamp collector, I recall my father telling me that in his opinion, the large Bank Note stamps were the most beautiful of all U.S. regular issues. I think it was the classical busts that appealed to him, since his education had included not only Latin but reading Homer in the original Greek. His 1924 junior edition of Scott's International Postage Stamp Album included unfilled spaces for the 7¢ and 90¢ Bank Note stamps. As a boy, he had not been able to afford them. It was some years before I ever saw these stamps in the flesh.

The 7¢ stamp in particular seemed quite mysterious to me: Why such an odd prime number denomination? Who in the world was Edwin Stanton? And why such a scalding seductive color? As a teenager, I was finally able to fill the spaces in my own album by ordering copies from the Babylon, N.Y. mail-order dealer David F. Chassy. His legendary price lists, with their seven different condition grades, were the work of a Talmudic scholar. Years later, in the early 1980s when I first got interested in Official stamps, I ordered Officials from him, and even received a few covers on approval.

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Bob Markovits had a wonderful exhibition collection of used Reay and Plimpton 7¢ stamped envelopes. A specialized collection of the 7¢ Bank Note stamp would be a most worthwhile undertaking. But no one in their right mind would specialize in the 7¢ Official stamps alone, because there is not enough material to hold one's interest or even fill a single frame in a competitive exhibition.

Back in the 1870s, schoolboys found assembling sets of Departmental stamps a wonderful challenge. They would rummage through wastebaskets on Saturday mornings at the great departmental headquarters in the nation's capital. But the four 7¢ values were hard to obtain even then, judging by the disproportionate number of 7¢ special printings of 1875 that were ordered from the Office of the Third Assistant Postmaster General. Setting aside the sheets of cheap 1¢ and 2¢ values ordered by European dealers for packet material and also the prepackaged scissor-cut complete sets, more copies of the 7¢ special printings were ordered than for any other values of the State, Treasury, Navy and War special printings. Even today, our expectation of the most specialized collections in this field is that some token showing of elusive 7¢ material is mandatory.

Endnotes

1. Matthew Bennett sale 273, February 7, 2004, lot 3084.
2. Christie's, December 14-15, 1989.
3. Siegel Auction Galleries, sale 1123, April 8, 2016, Lot 576.
4. —, sale 577 ("The Crystal Collection"), April 10, 1981, lot 349.
5. Alan C. Campbell, "Separated at Birth", *Chronicle* 258 (May 2018), pg. 181.
6. Siegel Auction Galleries, sale 1003, December 16, 2010.
7. Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions, October 14, 2017, lot 1322.
8. Matthew Bennett sale 273, February 7, 2004, lot 3356.
9. —, sale 273, February 7, 2004, lot 3355.
10. Siegel Auction Galleries sale 728, September 14, 1990, lot 96.
11. Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions, December 13, 2017, lot 259.
12. Siegel Auction Galleries, sale 1196, March 12, 2019, lot 952.
13. —, sale 577, April 10, 1981, lot 307.
14. —, sale 945, October 26, 2007, lots 3813-14.
15. —, sale 1048, June 25, 2013, lots 389-390; sale 1051, July 23, 2013, lots 1580-81.
16. —, sale 1216, lots 211-214. ■

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**MAIL BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND PORTUGAL
AND ITS ATLANTIC COLONIES
VIA THE BRITISH MAIL SYSTEM, 1840-75**

RICHARD F. WINTER

Introduction

On 1 July 1875, the terms of the Berne postal treaty went into effect (except for France, whose participation was delayed). The 21 countries that signed the treaty included both the United States and Portugal, including the island of Madeira and the Azores Islands. This treaty established a General Postal Union (GPU) which soon became the Universal Postal Union, regulating postal rates between all the signature nations.

The United States and Portugal never had a bilateral postal agreement governing the movement of mail between them. Before the GPU was established, if the United States didn't have a bilateral postal agreement with another country, postal rates for mail to that country were established using existing postal arrangements of other countries with which the United States had a postal agreement. In the case of Portugal and its colonies, mail to and from the United States could use the British mail system as an intermediary. Initially this arrangement did not include full prepayment to destination. Some postage was always due in either the United States or in Portugal and its colonies. Only after 1 January 1868 could mail between the United States and Portugal be fully prepaid to destination.

The British had a long postal connection with Portugal and its colonies. The first British postal treaty with Portugal was concluded in London on 20 February 1705. This established a weekly British packet service from Falmouth to Lisbon. On 19 February 1810 another treaty between the British and Portugal was concluded in Rio de Janeiro, establishing a monthly Falmouth packet service to Brazil, touching at Madeira. The next important postal convention between the United Kingdom and Portugal was signed in Lisbon on 6 April 1859. This convention provided details for a regular exchange of mail between the United Kingdom and Portugal and its colonies. It provided for letters, newspapers and other printed matter by British packet, in closed mail through France and Spain, and by private ships plying between the two countries.

Mails were to be exchanged in the United Kingdom at London, Southampton and Liverpool and on the Portuguese side in Lisbon, Oporto, Funchal (Madeira) and St. Vincent (Cape Verde Islands). Besides postal rates and weight progressions, this convention addressed unpaid, insufficiently paid and registered mail. Detailed regulations were issued on 6 June 1859. Some modifications were later made by an additional convention on June 6 and 28, 1866 (effective 1 August 1866) and again on 2 April 1872 (effective back to 1 September 1871). This last additional convention discussed Portuguese payment to the British post office for mails carried by British contract steamships directly between Portugal and ports in South America.

I have assembled records of 96 covers between the United States and Portugal or its colonies. All but four of these covers were sent by the British mail system. Of the four sent in non-British mails, three were sent by French mail and one by Hamburg mail. From this admittedly small sample, there is no question that Americans predominantly used the Brit-

ish mail system to send and receive correspondence from Portugal and its Atlantic colonies. The small number of covers overall reinforces the observation that mail between the two countries is quite uncommon, and in many cases scarce to rare. These observations (and this study) do not include the large number of stampless letters sent privately by ship (outside the mails) between the United States and Madeira, mostly related to the wine business.

United States rates

Charles J. Starnes published rate tables in his book *United States Letter Rates to Foreign Destinations 1847 to GPU–UPU*, a 1982 green cover, hard-bound work. A more comprehensive *Revised Edition* was published in 1989 (maroon cover). Adapted from this source, Starnes' data for letter rates from the United States to Portugal, the Azores Islands, the Cape Verde Islands, and the Madeira Islands are presented in Table 1.

Since the principal method of sending mail between Portugal (and its Atlantic colonies) and the United States was by British mail, only the British mail via Southampton and the British mail via France categories will be considered in this article. As can be inferred from Table 1, the route via Southampton was no longer among the postal routes published in the United States after 1857, even though British packets continued to operate to Portugal until mid-1862. Instead, the British mail route via France was encouraged, a reduced rate created by a new convention between the United Kingdom and France in 1856 which became effective on 1 January 1857. Additional rate reductions on this route occurred in July 1859 and August 1862.

Portuguese rates

I have seen a few different Portuguese rate tables and they don't agree with each other. Over the years students and collectors have tried to organize these rates, but to my mind, there was always something wrong with this information. In attempt to dispel the considerable confusion I found, I built my own rate table based on what I thought was the most accurate portions of the different previous efforts. The rates as I construe them are presented in Table 2. I hope that more serious future efforts will unravel the mysteries of these rates, to make clearer when and what rates were applied, backed by credible source data. I am convinced this information exists in Portuguese archives, but so far it has not been found.

Mail prior to the U.S.–U.K. postal convention of 1848

The United States–United Kingdom postal convention of 15 December 1848 was fully effective on 1 July 1849. Prior to that, mail could not be sent to Portugal from the United States via England without being stopped in the United Kingdom. This was because the British required that all transit fees be fully paid before they would allow mail to continue onward. An agent or representative in England was needed to pay the fees. Otherwise the mail would be held for postage in London until the sender responded to a British request for the required additional postage. Rates from the United States to destinations in Portugal and its colonies did not come into effect until 1 July 1849. Then they were very high, because the British packet rate from England to Portugal was 1 shilling 9 pence up to ½ ounce. This high rate lasted until 1 July 1859, when it was reduced to 4 pence per ¼ ounce or 8 pence per ½ ounce.

British mail service directly to Lisbon was possible from February 1705 via the weekly Falmouth sailing packets. In 1835 the Peninsular Steam Navigation Company started carrying mails to the Portuguese ports of Lisbon and Oporto, but not under British mail contract. By August 1837 a mail contract was approved. In December 1840 this steamship line, with extended mail-carrying interests into the Mediterranean and beyond, was incorporated as the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (usually called the P&O Line). P&O had a contract to carry mail every two weeks from Falmouth, England, to Vigo,

**TABLE 1. LETTER RATES FROM THE U.S. TO PORTUGAL
AND ITS ATLANTIC COLONIES, 1849-UPU**

PORTUGAL

	7/49	1/57	4/57	7/57	7/59	5/60	8/62	9/66	2/67	1/68	1/70	12/70	5/73	7/75
Br. v S	63	-	-	-	omit							16	-	omit
Br. v France		37/47	-	-	29/37	-	33/45	-	-	22/34	16/28	omit		
B-H				30/42	-	-	-	-						
Fr. v Behobia (Irun)		21/42	-	-	-	-	-	omit						
Fr. v Bordeaux						30/60	-	omit						
Fr.								*27/*54			omit			
NGU, d.													*11	omit
NGU, cm.													*12	omit
UPU														*5

AZORES ISLANDS

	7/49	7/59	9/66	1/68	1/70	11/70	5/73	7/75
Br. v S	63	omit		22	16	-	-	omit
Br. v Portugal		29/37	-	omit				
Br. v France				22/34	16/28	omit		
Fr.			*27/*54	-	omit			
NGU, d.							*11	omit
NGU, cm.							*12	omit
UPU								*5

CAPE VERDE ISLANDS

	7/49	7/59	5/60	1/68	1/70	7/75	7/77
Br. v England	65	29/37	-	22	16	*15	omit
Fr. v Bordeaux & Lisbon			30/60	-	omit		
UPU							*10

MADEIRA ISLANDS

	7/49	7/59	9/66	1/68	1/70	5/73	7/75
Br. v S	65	29/37	-	22	16	-	omit
Fr.			*27/*54	-	omit		
NGU, d.						*11	omit
NGU, cm.						*12	omit
UPU							*5

Postage rates from the United States to Portugal and its Atlantic Colonies, adapted from the work of Charles Starnes. In these tables Starnes shows a dash (–) where a rate continues from the previous column and an asterisk (*) when prepayment was optional. He uses “omit” to indicate that from that date on, there was no applicable rate for the mail system used. It must be emphasized that the rates shown in Starnes’ book are postal rates from the United States and may not be the same as rates from those countries or colonies to the United States. His abbreviated mail systems in these tables that apply to this article are: British mail via Southampton (Br. v S), British mail via France (Br. v France), British mail via Portugal (Br. v Portugal), and British mail via England (Br. v England).

TABLE 2. PORTUGUESE RATES

BEFORE 1859

Oitavas	A	B	C	D
Up to 1	240	140	160	120
1 - 1½	360	210	160	180
1½ - 2	480	280	160	240
2 - 2½	600	350	160	300
2½ - 3	720	420	160	360
3 - 3½	840	490	160	420
3½ - 4	960	560	160	480
4 - 4½	1080	630	240	540
4½ - 5	1200	700	240	600
5 - 5½	1320	770	240	660
5½ - 6	1440	840	240	720
6 - 6½	1560	910	320	780
6½ - 7	1680	980	320	840
7 - 7½	1800	1050	320	900
7½ - 8	1935	1125	320	960
8 - 8½	2055	1195	400	1020

Column A: Letters arriving by land from Paris through Spain (14 July 1813 to 1859).

Column B: Letters arriving from London by packet (14 July 1813 to 1840). From 1840 to 1 July 1859, use Row D.

Column C: Letters arriving by foreign ships (16 June 1815 to 1859).

Column D: Letters arriving by packet from Brazil; British packet from the Mediterranean via Alexandria and via India (29 January 1840 to 30 June 1859).

Column E: Letters arriving by packet from Brazil; British packet from the Mediterranean via Alexandria and via India. (After 1 July 1859).

Column F: Letters arriving from the U.K. for Portugal, Azores, Madeira, Cape Verde and West African colonies overland through France and Spain or by a British mail packet). (After 1 July 1859).

Column G: Letters arriving from the United Kingdom via France and Spain for Portugal, Azores, Madeira and West African colonies per 7½ grams. (After 1 August 1866).

The first four columns (A, B, C, and D) express rates before 1859. The last three columns (E, F, and G) show rates used after that. Columns A and B are incoming postage rates established in a Portuguese rate table issued 14 July 1813. These rates were based on letter weights starting at 1/8 ounce (1 Oitava) and increasing in 1/16-ounce increments. Thus a letter weighing 5/16 ounces would weigh 2½ Oitavas. For this weight the postage due in Portugal on a letter sent via France and Spain was 600 reis (column A). The same letter sent by packet directly from England was 350 reis (Column B). Column C provides incoming ship letter rates, and column D provides the rates for mail delivered by any packet service from Brazil, and by British packets from the Mediterranean and beyond. All rates are in Portuguese reis for the weight shown in the left-hand column. **NOTE:** for rates to the United States from Portugal or colonies in the Atlantic, the rates to the United Kingdom can usually be combined with the sea rate from the United Kingdom to the United States to arrive at the total rate. Until 1868, there will always be an amount still due in the United States, usually 5 cents, the United States portion under the postal convention with the United Kingdom. Since 20 reis = 1 British penny, 10 reis = 1 U.S. cent. Remember, the U.S. rates in Starnes are letters rates from the U.S. They don't always equal the same foreign rate into the U.S. However, often they are the same (or almost the same) when the rates are compared in the two currencies, in this case reis and cents. For example, the 1862 rate of 33¢ per ¼ ounce is very close to the Portuguese rate of 320 reis.

1859 AND AFTER

Ounces	E	F	G
Up to ¼		80	120
¼ to ½	150	160	240
½ to ¾	300	240	360
¾ to 1	450	320	500
1 to 1¼	600	400	620
1¼ to 1½	750	480	740
1½ to 1¾	1050	560	860
1¾ to 2	1200	740	980

Spain; Oporto and Lisbon, Portugal; Cadiz, Spain; and Gibraltar. Service gradually increased to weekly. On 27 September 1843, the British terminus for the packet service to the Iberian Peninsula was shifted from Falmouth to Southampton. From 7 April 1845 service was reduced to three times a month. By late January 1859 the calls at Cadiz and Gibraltar were ended as other P&O steamers called at Gibraltar en route to Alexandria. This left calls only at Vigo, Oporto, and Lisbon. The Iberian Peninsula service ended in July 1862. Thereafter, British mail for Portugal was sent through France.

Figure 1 illustrates a 17 January 1840 folded letter from New Orleans to Madeira with a second addressee, "Care Messrs Richd Symonds & Co, Ingram Court, London." The Madeira Islands are an archipelago of three islands 540 miles west of Casablanca, Morocco. The largest of the islands is Madeira, with Funchal the capital city of the archipelago. The absence of a New Orleans postmark on the Figure 1 cover indicates this letter was included in another letter or package sent from New Orleans to a New York forwarding agent. The



Figure 1. Folded letter from New Orleans to Madeira, 17 January 1840, addressed in care of agents in New York and London. Carried from New York by Black X Line sailing packet *Mediator* and put into the British mails at Weymouth as a ship letter. A British agent paid 8d incoming ship fee and 1s10d for the Falmouth packet rate to Lisbon. Marked at Madeira for 40 reis postage due.

letter was endorsed in the upper left corner, “British Queen,” a reference to the pioneer steamship operating between New York and Liverpool. A manuscript notation on the reverse, “recd & ford by/D.B.& Co/Jany 29/40,” indicates action by the New York forwarding agent, probably Davis & Brooks Company. The agent crossed through the endorsement for the *British Queen*, which wasn’t scheduled to sail until 1 April, and wrote in the lower left a new endorsement, “p Mediator.”

Mediator was an American sailing packet of the Black X Line scheduled to leave New York for London on 1 February 1840. She left New York on 2 February and put into Weymouth, England, on 10 March en route to London. A red boxed handstamp, SHIP LETTER WEYMOUTH, was struck on the reverse (shown unfolded at top in Figure 1), as well as a manuscript “8” on the front, the incoming ship letter rate in pence.

The letter was sent to London 127 miles away, arriving the next day. There it received a red circular datestamp on the reverse. The London agent indicated he received the letter on 11 March with a manuscript note on the reverse under the New York forwarder’s marking. He paid the 8 pence incoming ship letter fee and crossed through his address on the front. On 14 March he paid 1 shilling 10 pence, the half-ounce rate to Madeira Island via Lisbon (per a General Post Office notice of December 1839). On 16 March the Falmouth packet *Royal Tar* departed for Lisbon, arriving on 20 March 1840. I do not know how the letter got to Madeira, but the blue handstamp “40” indicates the postage that was due there, 40 reis (4¢ U.S.).

An extraordinary cover is shown in Figure 2. This 24 July 1844 folded letter originated at Funchal, Madeira Island, and was addressed to Baltimore, Maryland. The letter was paid 1 shilling for the mail to the West Indies (per the manuscript endorsement at lower left and the manuscript rate marking upper center). In the upper right corner, the letter received the red crowned circle PAID AT MADEIRA handstamp of the British packet agent in Madeira. This is a very rare marking of which just two or three strikes are known. The marking



Figure 2. Folded letter from Funchal, Madeira Island, to Baltimore, datelined 24 July 1844 and endorsed to travel via the West Indies. The 1 shilling West Indies rate was prepaid at the British packet office on Madeira, where the cover was marked with the scarce red crowned circle PAID AT MADEIRA handstamp. It traveled on the RMSP steamship *Teviot* to Grenada and *Thames* to St. Thomas, then via schooner *Caroline* to New York. The postage due in Baltimore was 20¼¢.

device was sent out from the General Post Office (London) on 28 February 1842.

On 27 July the Royal Mail Steamship Company (RMSPCo) steamer *Teviot* called at Madeira for mail and reached Granada in the West Indies on 9 August 1844. The Figure 2 letter was transferred to the RMSPCo steamer *Thames*, departing Grenada on 10 August and arriving at St. Thomas on 14 August 1844. About 18 August the schooner *Caroline* carried it from St. Thomas, arriving at New York on 1 September. At New York a postal clerk marked the red handstamp SHIP over the manuscript 1-shilling prepayment marking and wrote “20 $\frac{3}{4}$ ” alongside to the right, designating the postage due upon arrival in Baltimore. While the squiggle at the end of this number doesn’t appear to say “ $\frac{3}{4}$ ” that was how the hastily written fraction was expressed. This postage due consisted of 2¢ incoming ship fee plus 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ ¢ U.S. inland postage to Baltimore, a distance less than 400 miles, effective from 1 May 1825 until 1 July 1845.

Another pre-convention cover is shown in Figure 3. This folded letter originated in Boston on 25 February 1845, and was addressed to Oporto, Portugal. It was sent unpaid using the services of Harnden’s Packet Express & Foreign Letter Office at No. 8 Court St., Boston. Their red oval marking appears in the upper right corner. This forwarding agent placed the letter in the mail bag of the Cunard steamship *Hibernia*, which departed Boston on 1 March and arrived at Liverpool on 17 March 1845. The letter reached London the next day, 18 March, shown by a red circular datestamp on the reverse.

Since the letter had not been paid, the London office would not allow it to continue to Portugal. A red boxed handstamp was applied in the upper left corner reading “No. 21,418 (in manuscript) Detained for Postage.” The required postage amount was written alongside

Figure 3. This unpaid folded letter from Boston to Oporto, Portugal, datelined 25 February 1845, used the services of Harnden’s Packet Express & Foreign Letter Office. A Harnden agent at Boston routed the letter to the Cunard steamship *Hibernia* to Liverpool. When the letter arrived at London it was detained for postage of 2/7 and notice sent (probably to the addressee in Oporto) that this had to be paid before letter could proceed. When payment was received three weeks later, the letter was sent most likely by P&O Iberian Peninsula steamship *Queen* from Southampton to Oporto; 420 reis postage was due at Oporto.

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in black ink, 2 shillings 7 pence. A letter explaining why the letter was being held in London was sent, probably to the addressee in Oporto, requesting the unpaid amount. By 7 April 1845 the unpaid amount had been received at London. The original "2/7" was crossed out and the payment of the same amount was written in the lower left corner. This sum represented the unpaid 1-shilling packet rate from Boston plus 1 shilling 7 pence for the packet rate to Portugal. The normal 1 shilling 9 pence rate was reduced by 2 pence since a portion of the British internal rate was assumed in the packet rate from the United States and would otherwise be charged twice.

On 21 April 1845 the letter arrived at Oporto and was marked for 420 reis postage due for a letter weighing between 2½-3 oitavas (the fifth weight step, 5/16-3/8 ounce, in the London British Packet column, column B, of Table 2). I believe this letter was carried by the P&O steamship *Queen* from Southampton on 7 April and remained on board until she stopped at Oporto on her return from the Peninsula and Gibraltar, even though the Oporto arrival listed by Kirk (see References) is a day later.

The maiden voyage of America's first contract mail steamship line, the Ocean Steam Navigation Company, was performed by the steamship *Washington*, departing New York on 1 June 1847 and calling for the British mail on June 16 near Southampton in the Solent off the Isle of Wight. Letters from the United States had to be prepaid 24¢ per half ounce. To U.S. mailers, this rate seemed very high. Letters sent from the United States by the British-owned Cunard steamships were charged no fee for ocean service because the 1 shilling packet rate was collected in England. In either case, the U.S. inland fees to the departure port had to be prepaid in the United States. No wonder that on the day *Washington* sailed with 10,000 letters, the Cunard steamship departed from Boston with four times as many.

When *Washington's* mail arrived at London the letters were charged the full incoming packet rate of 1 shilling (24¢) per half ounce. This shocked the Americans since the sea postage on these letters had already been paid in the U.S. The British performed no service to get the letters to England yet they charged a full-service fee, just as if the letters had been brought there by a British contract steamship. With this postage due, double sea postage would be paid on such letters.

Americans considered the British charges discriminatory. Treatment of the U.S. mail in this way infuriated them, especially businessmen who wanted to send mail by American steamers, but found it very uneconomical to do so. They would endure this insult for a full year before forcing Congress to take retaliatory action.

On 27 June 1848, after repeated efforts by the U.S. government to get the British to eliminate the 1-shilling rate charged on letters carried to England by American-contract steamships, the U.S. Congress finally acted, passing legislation that empowered the Postmaster General to collect the same sea postage on letters carried on foreign packets that the governments which owned those vessels imposed on mails carried to their country by American packets. While the British were not named specifically in this legislation, it was very clear that this law was in retaliation for the British discriminatory order the previous year.

Since the bulk of all mail between the United States and England was carried on British government contract vessels (the Cunard Line steamers) this order had immediate and costly effect on all overseas mails sent to or through England. All letters now required much higher payments regardless of the vessel that carried them. The ultimate result of the order was that in the coming months, businessmen on both sides of the Atlantic would pressure their governments to conclude a postal convention. The U.S. retaliatory order was in effect for only six months (from 3 July 1848 until 3 January 1849) when the Post Office department rescinded it. In late December 1848, the British Post Office also rescinded their discriminatory rate order.

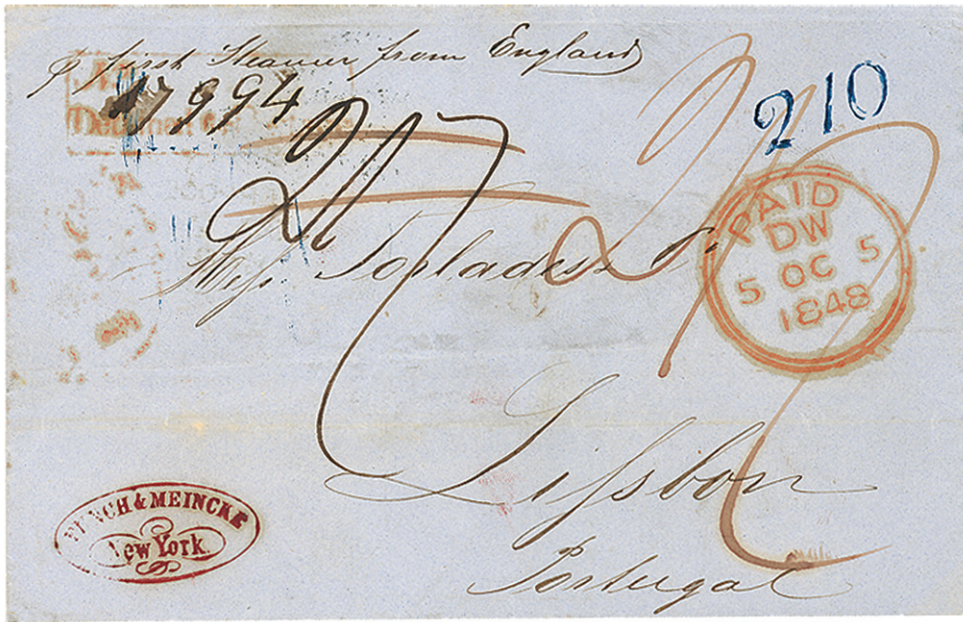


Figure 4. 13 September 1848, unpaid folded letter from New York to Lisbon. A New York forwarding agent, Funch & Meincke, was employed to get the letter to the Cunard steamship in Boston rather than use the American steamship about to depart from New York, saving the extra 24¢ retaliatory rate. Carried unpaid by Cunard steamship *Hibernia* to Liverpool, this letter was detained for postage at London. Two days later the 2/7 payment was received and the letter sent by P&O steamship *Montrose* from Southampton to Lisbon, where it was charged 210 reis postage due.

Figure 4 illustrates a cover similar to Figure 3, but here the motivation for sending it unpaid was quite different. Addressed to Lisbon, this folded letter originated in New York on 13 September 1848, during the retaliatory rate period. It was endorsed in the upper left corner, “p first Steamer from England.” Two steamships were scheduled to depart from the United States on 20 September 1848, the American steamship *Washington* from New York and the British Cunard steamship *Hibernia* from Boston. The sender of the letter entrusted it to the forwarding agent Funch & Meincke of New York, who struck their red oval handstamp in the lower left corner. Rather than pay the retaliatory rate of 24¢, they arranged for this unpaid letter to be placed in the mail bag of the Cunard steamship scheduled to depart from Boston. *Hibernia* departed on schedule and arrived at Liverpool on 2 October 1848. At Liverpool the cover received on the reverse a black circular datestamp, AMERICA LIVERPOOL OC 2 1848. It was then sent to London, arriving the next day, 3 October, shown by a red circular datestamp on the reverse.

Since the letter had not been paid, the London office would not allow it to continue to Portugal. A red boxed handstamp was applied in the upper left corner reading “No. 17994 (in manuscript) Detained for Postage.” The amount required was written alongside in black ink: 2 shillings 7 pence. Either an agent had been alerted about the unpaid letter or the Portuguese consulate in London responded quickly to the request for payment. By 5 October 1848 the unpaid amount was received at London. The original “2/7” was crossed out and the payment of the same amount was written in red ink on the right side. This amount represented the unpaid 1 shilling packet rate from Boston plus 1 shilling 7 pence for the packet rate to Portugal. As with Figure 3, the normal 1 shilling 9 pence rate was reduced by 2 pence since a portion of the British internal rate was subsumed in the packet rate from the United States and was not to be charged twice.

On 7 October the letter departed Southampton on the P&O packet *Montrose*, which arrived at Lisbon on 12 October. Here a square datestamp was struck on the reverse in blue ink, 12 LISBOA 10. On the letter front, the upper right corner was struck a blue ink handstamp “210” for the postage due of 210 reis, the amount required for a letter brought by British packet weighing between 1-1½ oitavas or the second weight step, 1/8-5/16 ounces (column B of Table 2).

United States–United Kingdom postal convention of 1848

A postal convention between the United States and the United Kingdom was signed in London on 15 December 1848. Ratifications were exchanged in London on 26 January 1849. Under Article XXI of the convention, the post office departments of the two countries were to work out the details of the convention as soon as possible after the ratifications were exchanged. These details, among other items, would contain the agreed-upon postal rates for mails going beyond the United Kingdom. Mindful of the difficult retaliatory rate period during the second half of 1848 and the burden imposed on letter senders in both countries, the U.S. President proclaimed the convention effective on 15 February 1849 without consulting the British and well before the detailed arrangements had been agreed to. Since the basic letter rate of 24¢ per ½ ounce on letter mail between the United States and the United Kingdom, was spelled out in the Convention, this rate could be put into effect at that time. This convention rate of 24¢ consisted of 5¢ for U.S. internal postage, 3¢ for United Kingdom internal postage and 16¢ sea postage for the country whose contract mail vessel carried the letter.

The detailed articles to the 1848 Convention were formally accepted on 14 May 1849 and became effective on 1 July 1849. Tables of rates for mail going beyond England were included. Letter rates from the United States to Portugal and its colonies are shown in Table 1 under the column date of “7/49” for British mail via Southampton or British mail via England. The postal rates established by this convention remained in effect until 1 January 1868, when a new postal convention between the United States and the United Kingdom went into effect.

Table 1 also shows changes in letter rates by British mail caused by additional events overseas such as the reduction in British transit fees through France, reductions in British packet fees, and changes in postal agreements between the United Kingdom and Portugal. These rate changes were accomplished through communications between U.S. and British post office departments. Note that, since the original convention was not between the United States and Portugal, mail could not be paid to destination. Until 1868, there would always be an additional charge upon arrival in Portugal or its colonies. However, under the treaty, mail was no longer delayed in London to await payment for the postage beyond England.

Figure 5 shows a letter from New York *circa* 15 October 1850, addressed to Oporto. While the printing within, which easily shows through the semitransparent paper, would suggest this was a circular sent at printed matter rates, the absence of rate markings associated with printed matter, as well as the British charge to send the item to Portugal, indicates it was treated as a letter. Perhaps an enclosure has been removed with the remaining portion being the printed circular. From the printing I can see it originated in New York. Like Figure 1, this item must have been included in another letter or package, in this case addressed to a Liverpool agent, which is why there are no New York postmarks.

The agent posted the letter at the Liverpool post office and paid the 1 shilling 9 pence single letter rate to Portugal by British packet. This amount was written on the left side, over the address. The red Liverpool datestamp at upper right confirms the payment. The posting date at Liverpool was consistent with the arrival of the Cunard steamship *Cambria*, departing Boston on 16 October and arriving at Liverpool on 27 October 1850. That is why

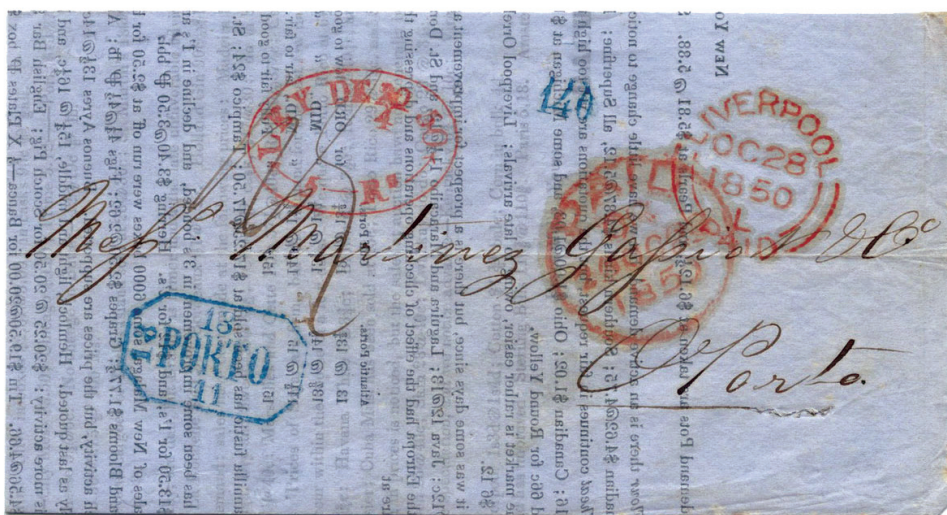


Figure 5. 15 October 1850: Sent under cover from New York to Liverpool, where an agent put the letter into the British postal system and paid 1/9 for carriage to Portugal. The cover was marked for 140 reis postage due in Oporto. The red oval handstamp indicates collection of an additional fee to support the new Banco de Portugal.

I can say that the letter probably originated about 15 October 1850 in New York. The letter was sent to London and arrived the next day, 29 October 1850.

Again, London indicated it was a paid letter with its red datestamp. The letter had missed the P&O steamship sailing from Southampton on 28 October and had to wait ten days for the next steamer, the P&O *Madrid*, departing Southampton on 7 November and arriving at Oporto on 12 November 1850. Next day it received the blue rectangular datestamp of Oporto. At the same time the letter was marked with a blue handstamp “140” for 140 reis postage due. This amount was for a letter weighing up to 1 oitava, 2/16 of an ounce, carried by a British packet (first increment in column B, Table 2).

One additional postal marking appears on the letter, the red oval handstamp, LEY DE 20/4 50 5 RS. This marking was used in both Lisbon and Oporto from 25 April 1850 until 30 June 1853 for the purpose of collecting 5 percent of the rate in excess of 100 reis on mail of any origin, to support the newly-formed Banco de Portugal. A Government decree of 20 April 1850 authorized this surcharge. The amount of the surcharge (“5 Rs”) was included within the oval at the bottom. In this case, the amount of the surcharge was rounded up to the nearest 5 reis. Thus the total collected on this letter was 145 reis.

A folded outer letter sheet without contents is illustrated in Figure 6. This was posted at New York on 29 January 1851 and marked with two addresses. The top one was “B Franklin & Co, Colonial Chambers, John St Crutched Friars, London.” This was the London agent who would see that the letter got posted to Portugal. The second address was the addressee in Oporto. The letter was endorsed at the lower left, “p St Asia,” a reference to the Cunard steamship of that name. The letter was a double-rate letter in the United States (½-1 ounce) sent to London unpaid under the 1848 U.S.-U.K. postal convention. The clerk of the New York exchange office (an office created by the detailed regulations of the convention) struck in the upper right-corner the black handstamp NEW 10 YORK JAN 29. This marking indicated that the United States was debiting the United Kingdom 10¢ (2x5¢), the U.S. inland portion under the convention, for this unpaid double-rate letter. The date in the marking was the date the steamship was to sail.

As noted, the convention established a single letter rate of 24¢, of which 5¢ belonged to the United States, 3¢ belonged to the United Kingdom, and the remaining 16¢ went to

Figure 6. 27 January 1851, folded letter sent unpaid from New York to Oporto via a London agent. The letter weighed between $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 ounce, requiring two rates. The New York exchange office datestamp showed 2x5¢=10¢ debit to the U.K. The Cunard steamship *Asia* carried the cover to Liverpool. London marked 2x1 shilling = 2 shillings postage due, paid by the agent. Sent to Oporto "out of the mails."



the country providing the sea transport. In this case, the letter was to be sent on a British contract mail steamship; therefore, the sea postage belonged to the United Kingdom. The Cunard steamship *Asia* departed New York on 29 January and arrived at Liverpool on 9 February 1851. The letter was sent to London, arriving the next day, shown by a weak red strike of a London Feb 10 postmark on the reverse. The agent in London paid 2 shillings for this letter (= 48¢), which was marked in pen in the center of the letter face. Of the 48¢, the British retained 38¢. Since there are no Portuguese markings, it must be assumed that the letter was sent to Oporto in another letter or package.

Figure 7 shows an envelope posted at Philadelphia on 23 July 1853, addressed to the "Purser of U.S. Frigate 'Constitution,' Porto Grande, Island of St. Vincent, Cape de Verde." St. Vincent is the second most northern island of a group that forms the Cape Verde Islands, off northwest Africa about 400 miles west of Dakar, Senegal. The envelope was endorsed in the lower left corner, "By the Cunard line," indicating British packet service from New York. The letter was prepaid 65¢ in cash (manuscript marking at upper right), the proper

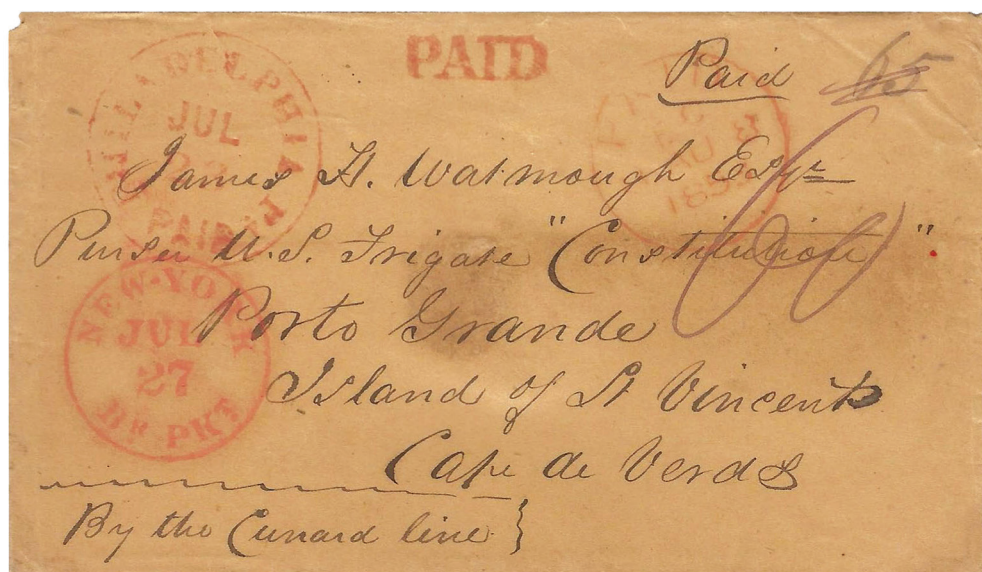


Figure 7. Envelope from Philadelphia to St. Vincent, Cape Verde Islands, posted 23 July 1853 with the 65¢ rate prepaid in cash. New York credited 60¢ to United Kingdom for Atlantic transit on board the Cunard *Arabia* to Liverpool. London sent the cover to St. Vincent on the Brazil packet *Tay* from Southampton. Delivered to U.S. Frigate *Constitution* by U.S. Brig Perry (according to docketing on reverse).

rate for a ½ ounce letter by British mail to the Cape Verde Islands.

The envelope was sent to New York, where it received the red circular datestamp on the left side, NEW-YORK/JUL/27/BR. PKT., indicating the letter would leave New York on 27 July 1853. The New York exchange office clerk wrote the red “60” on the right side to show that 60¢ of the prepayment was credited to the British, who would be providing all the services to get the letter to St. Vincent Island. On 27 July the Cunard steamship *Arabia* departed New York, arriving at Liverpool on 6 August 1853. The letter reached London on 8 August and was marked in the upper right corner with a red circular datestamp indicating it was paid. The Brazil packet *Tay* of the RMSPCo departed Southampton on 9 August with the letter on board and arrived at St. Vincent Island about 23 August 1853.

The U.S. Frigate *Constitution* was operating off the west coast of Africa as the flagship of the West African anti-slavery squadron. A notation on the back of the envelope (not shown) indicates final delivery to the *Constitution* was made at sea by the U.S. Brig *Perry* on 18 December 1853. The long delay in getting the letter to the *Constitution* was undoubtedly a result of her capturing the slave trader *H.N. Gambrill* on 3 November 1853, south of the Congo River, and taking the captured vessel to St. Paul de Loando, Portuguese Angola, more than 3,100 miles away. There were no slaves on board but there was sufficient evidence to prove the vessel’s business. This was the *Constitution*’s last prize.

The folded letter shown in Figure 8 was dated 16 July 1855, at Funchal, Madeira Island, written by a ship captain and addressed to Kingston, Massachusetts, probably to the



Figure 8. Above: Folded cover from Funchal to Kingston, Mass., dated 16 July 1855 and sent unpaid because the 3¢ 1851 stamp was ignored as partial payment. Carried to Devonport, England, by HMS *Pluto*, homebound from the west coast of Africa. Boston marked 65¢ postage due. *Pluto* was a British wood-en-paddle gunship doing anti-slavery duty. The woodcut shows *Pluto* (the steamship at right) capturing a large slave vessel in 1860.

owner of his vessel. The letter was given to a forwarding agent, John Blandy & Sons of Madeira, to get it onto a ship going back to the United States. An 1851 dull red 3¢ imperforate stamp was affixed in expectation it would pay the U.S. inland postage when the letter got to America. A clue to how the letter got to England is the faint strike of a two-line handstamp, PACKET LETTER/DEVONPORT, struck partially onto the postage stamp.

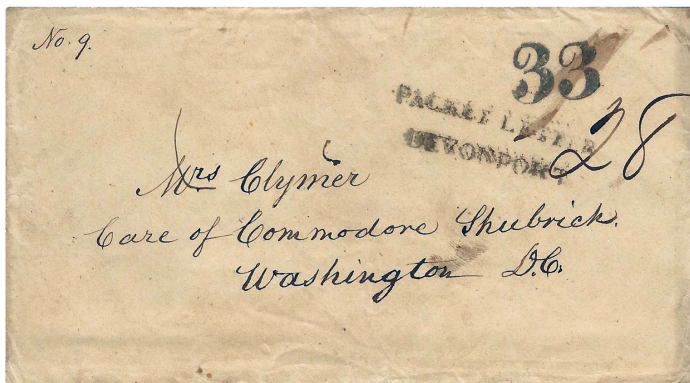
Before 1825 Devonport was named Plymouth Dock. It is adjacent to Plymouth, England, and still an important British naval base today. The London *Standard* of 3 August 1855 reported HMS *Pluto*, Lt. Cdr. Clavering, arrived that morning from Sierra Leone. *Pluto* was a British wooden-paddle gun vessel returning from anti-slavery duty along the coast of West Africa. Figure 8 includes a woodcut from *The Illustrated London News* picturing *Pluto* capturing a large slave ship in 1860. Homebound, she undoubtedly stopped for supplies at Madeira Island taking any mail from there. As a naval vessel any mail she carried was treated as packet mail and charged the still high rate of 1 shilling 10 pence (1/10) from Madeira. This amount, equivalent to 44¢, was written left of the postage stamp.

From Madeira the letter was sent to London, arriving the next day, shown by a red circular datestamp on reverse. A London exchange office clerk crossed through the “1/10,” added the 16 cents due to the British for the transatlantic sea postage to America and marked “60” (below the stamp) for the 60¢ British debit to the United States. The letter was included in the mail placed on the Cunard *America*, departing Liverpool 4 August and arriving at Boston on August 17, 1855. The Boston exchange office clerk struck the black circular handstamp on the reverse (“BOSTON AUG/17 BR. PKT.”) and the black “65” onto the postage stamp, designating the postage due at Kingston. This was the full 65¢ rate from Funchal to Kingston by British mail. The 3¢ stamp was not allowed as a partial payment.

Another envelope carried on the same voyage of HMS *Pluto* to Devonport is illustrated in Figure 9. This contained a letter written by Dr. George Clymer to his wife in Washington. Begun on 13 July, the letter states: “Friday Morning July 20th. The war steamer Pluto, just from the Coast of Africa, sails at noon today for England. The Captn who had just made us a visit offers to take our letters. I shall give him this, and one to Tom and Mary Clymer.” The voyage to Devonport took 13 days. While there is no London postmark on this envelope, it likely arrived in London on 3 August 1855, as did the Figure 8 cover.

At London a clerk processing this letter rated it very differently. As the *Pluto* had left from Sierra Leone he calculated the packet rate for a ½ ounce letter at 6 pence (12¢), a new rate effective 1 June 1855. To this he added the 16¢ due to the British for the transatlantic sea postage to America, and marked “28” for the 28¢ British debit to the United States. The letter was included in the mail placed on the Cunard steamship *America*, departing Liverpool on 4 August and arriving at Boston on 17 August 1855. The Boston exchange office clerk struck the black circular handstamp on the reverse (“BOSTON AUG/17 BR. PKT.”) and the black “33” in the upper right corner of the envelope front for the postage due at

Figure 9. From the Clymer correspondence, Madeira to Washington, also carried by *Pluto*, same voyage that carried the cover in Figure 8. At London this envelope was marked as if it had originated in Sierra Leone, making it eligible for a much lower rate. British debit of 28¢, marked at Boston for 33¢ due.



Washington, D.C., a rate that included 5¢ for the U.S. inland postage under the convention. This was the rate Starnes lists for mail to Sierra Leone effective June 1855.

Note that neither Figure 8 nor Figure 9 went through the Madeira post office or the British packet agent. Both letters originated in the same place and were carried by the same steamships at the same time, but the British rated them very differently. The Figure 8 cover had a forwarding agent marking indicating it came from Madeira Island, while the Figure 9 cover did not. Presumably the London clerk considered that the Figure 9 letter originated in Sierra Leone, whence the naval vessel departed and which had lower rates.

The letter writer for the last and the next few covers was Dr. George Willing Clymer. He entered naval service in July 1829 as a trained doctor and served for 37 years. He was a naval surgeon assigned to different naval vessels during the 1830s and 1840s in the Mediterranean and the Pacific Squadrons. From 1855 to 1861 he served as fleet surgeon in the West Africa and West India Squadrons. During the Civil War he served as fleet surgeon of the South Blockading Squadron. As fleet surgeon he was attached to the squadron flagships.

An extensive collection of his letters along with his correspondence from his family now reposes in the Princeton University Library. Before Princeton acquired the collection, a number of Clymer letters were sold on the philatelic market and now reside in private collections. Clymer often wrote detailed notations on the envelopes that provide information on when and how mail reached him, usually with the names and dates of arrival of the vessels. As with Figure 9, many of the letters Clymer wrote indicate how and when they would be sent. This information has proved invaluable to collectors in understanding the postal history of the Clymer correspondence. A few more Clymer covers from Portuguese possessions in the Atlantic will be described.

Figure 10 shows the envelope of a letter Clymer wrote to his wife, care of Commodore Shubrick, his father-in-law, in Washington. At this time Clymer was the fleet surgeon on board the U.S. Ship *Jamestown*, flagship of the West Africa Squadron. His letter covered the period 26 May through 2 June 1856. Across the top of the envelope he wrote "Madeira. June 2nd, 1856—via England," routing instructions for the letter. In the upper left corner, he wrote "29," indicating this was the 29th letter in his current correspondence with his wife.

The envelope was posted on 2 June 1856, shown by a British packet agent datestamp

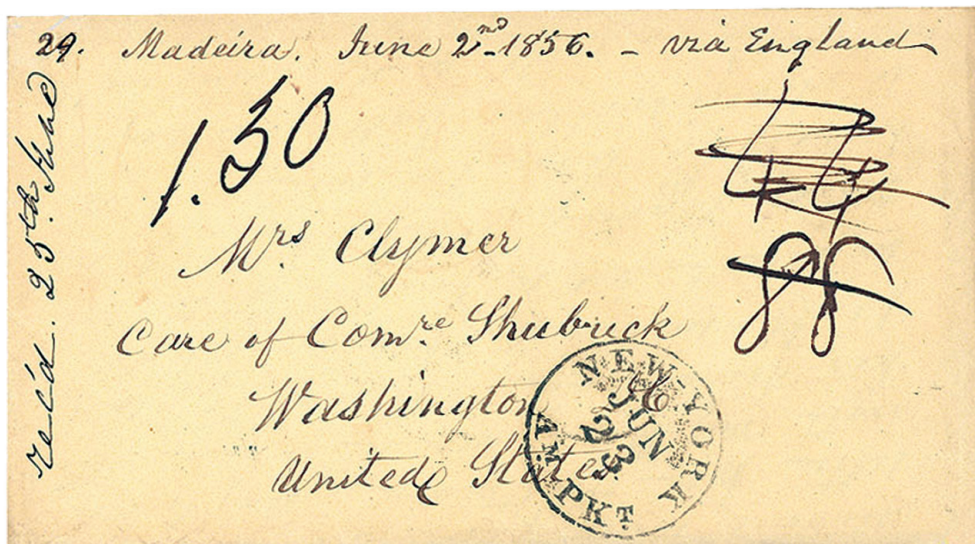


Figure 10. Madeira Island to Washington, another Clymer letter. Carried by Brazil packet *Tamar* from Madeira to London, and by Collins steamship *Atlantic* from Liverpool to New York, where \$1.30 (2x65¢) was marked as postage due at destination.

in black on the reverse (not shown). That date the RMSPCo steamship *Tamar*, returning from Brazil, called at Madeira Island for mail. She then reached Southampton on 8 June 1856. The letter was sent to London, arriving the next day as shown by a black circular datestamp on the reverse. A London clerk wrote “44” in black ink in the upper right corner to show the British debit to the United States of 44¢ for a ½-ounce letter to be carried on an American contract packet westward across the Atlantic. On reweighing the letter, it was found to exceed ½ ounce, so the “44” was crossed through and “88” written below it as the new debit.

An American packet was selected because a British-contract steamship had left two days earlier and the next would not depart until June 14. The letter was included in the mail placed on board the Collins Line steamship *Atlantic*, departing Liverpool on 11 June and arriving at New York on 22 June 1856. The next day the cover was processed at the New York exchange office, where it received the circular datestamp NEW-YORK JUN 23 AM. PKT. at bottom. The New York exchange office clerk crossed out the “88” and wrote “1.30” in the upper left corner, indicating 2x65¢ postage due from the recipient in Washington, who noted on the left edge, “rec’d. 25th June.”

A letter that traveled the opposite direction is illustrated in Figure 11. This envelope contained a six-page letter from “M.W.C.,” Mary Willing Clymer, Dr. Clymer’s sister. Since his wife also was named “Mary,” Dr. Clymer in envelope notations always referred to his sister as “M.W.C.” This letter was posted on 21 July 1856 at Morrisville, Pennsylvania, where MWC lived and where Dr. Clymer was born. The envelope was endorsed in the upper left corner with the routing instructions, “Pr Steamer/via England.” It was addressed to “Dr. George Clymer, Surgeon U.S. Ship Jamestown, Madeira.” Since the ship was often at sea, Madeira Island must have been the base of the operations from which letters would be forwarded.

The envelope received a black PAID handstamp and manuscript “65 cts,” which was written alongside in the upper right corner to show the payment of 65¢, the correct rate for a ½-ounce letter to Madeira Island by the British mail via Southampton. The letter was sent to New York for the next British contract steamship. At the New York exchange office, a clerk



Figure 11. 21 July 1856, Clymer letter (from his sister) from Morrisville, Pennsylvania, paid 65¢ to Madeira, of which 60¢ was credited to England. Cunard steamship *Africa* to Liverpool; London to Madeira via Brazil packet *Avon*. At Madeira it was marked in blue 160 reis due, then put back on board to be carried to Tenerife.

marked (on reverse) a red circular datestamp, NEW-YORK JUL 23 BR. PKT., to show the date the letter was to leave New York. He also marked in manuscript the 60¢ credit to the United Kingdom (upper center of the envelope). On 23 July the Cunard steamship *Africa* departed New York, arriving at Liverpool on 3 August 1856. The letter was sent to London, arriving the next day, shown by the red circular London datestamp that also indicated the letter was paid.

The letter was then sent to Southampton for the 9 August sailing to Brazil of the RM-SPCo steamship *Avon* which called at Madeira Island about 16 August 1856. During the short period the letter was at Madeira, it was marked for 160 reis postage due for a letter up to ½ ounce, shown by the blue handstamp “160” in the upper right quadrant. This is peculiar because a British packet brought the letter to Madeira and the foreign ship letter rate was applied instead of the packet letter rate. Nevertheless, this amount was paid by the agent who forwarded the letter by placing it back on board the *Avon*, whose next port call was in the Canary Islands.

According to Dr. Clymer’s detailed notation on the reverse of the envelope this is how the letter got to Santa Cruz on Tenerife Island, arriving the next day, 17 August 1856. Figure 11A shows the reverse of the envelope. At Santa Cruz the cover was marked with a red handstamp, 8.RS. for the Spanish postage due of 8 Reales. A partial strike of a red circular datestamp (on reverse) shows the arrival at Santa Cruz. The envelope shows four horizontal 11 millimeter slits in a line through the first line of the address. These appear to be disinfectant slits to allow fumigation of the letter; but I can find no information that disinfection took place at either of the Portuguese or Spanish islands at this time.

Figure 12 is the last of the Clymer covers that I will describe. This envelope contained letter number 40, written on 9 April 1857 by his sister, MWC, according to Clymer’s notation on the reverse. The cover was posted in Washington on 10 April 1857 and addressed to Dr. Clymer on board the U.S. Ship *Jamestown* at Porto Grande, St. Vincent Island in the Cape Verde Islands. The envelope was endorsed “via England,” and prepaid 65¢ for the ½ ounce letter rate. A curved red PAID handstamp and a red crayon “65” were marked at Washington to show the prepayment.

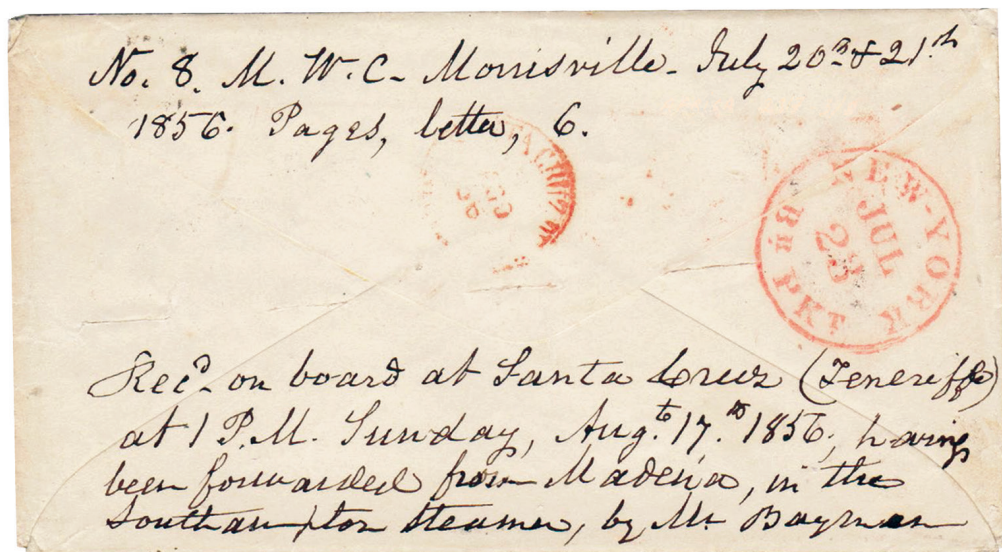


Figure 11A. Reverse of the Figure 11 cover, showing Clymer’s detailed docketing notations, a great boon to today’s postal historians: “Recd. on board at Santa Cruz (Teneriffe) at 1 P.M. Sunday, Aug., 17th. 1856, having been forwarded from Madeira, in the Southampton steamer, by Mr. Bayman.”



Figure 12. 9 April 1857, Washington to Porto Grande, St. Vincent Island, prepaid 65¢ to the Cape Verde Islands. Credit to England of 44¢ because the Cunard steamship *Alps* carried this cover to Liverpool on a single contract voyage as a Collins Line charter. The Brazil packet *Medway* took the cover to St. Vincent Island, but Dr. Clymer had already returned to America. His note on the reverse indicates the cover finally reached him 289 days after it was posted.

The envelope was then sent to New York for transit overseas. The clerk at the New York exchange office anticipated that the letter would travel on a British-contract steamship and wrote “40” in the upper right as the credit to the United Kingdom. But the next British steamship wasn’t scheduled to leave until 15 April. The American-contract steamship *Baltic*, originally scheduled for the Saturday, 11 April 1857 sailing, had returned to New York on 6 February needing extensive repairs. Apparently, the Collins Line realized that *Baltic* would not be ready and at the last minute chartered the Cunard steamship *Alps* to make this voyage. A *New York Tribune* article on 11 April told the public that the *Alps* would carry the mails that day at noon from the Cunard docks across the river at Jersey City. The mails from Washington, D.C. must have arrived in time for that sailing. The New York exchange office clerk struck a red circular datestamp on the reverse (NEW-YORK APR 11 AM. PKT.) and marked “44” in red ink to show the U.S. credit to the United Kingdom. Because an American packet was to carry the letter the United States was entitled to keep 21¢ (5¢ inland and 16¢ sea postage to England) of the 65¢ paid. The *Alps* arrived at Liverpool on 25 April 1857 and the cover reached London later that day. Here it received the red circular datestamp on the right side indicating the letter was paid.

The letter was included in the mails sent to Southampton for the next Brazil packet, which was the RMSPCo steamship *Medway*. She sailed on 9 May and reached St. Vincent Island about 23 May 1857. But by then Dr. Clymer had been detached from the U.S. Ship *Jamestown* and returned to Washington. His note on the reverse of the cover indicates the letter was brought from Cape Verde Island by the “St. Louis.” This would have been the U.S. Sloop of War *St. Louis*, attached to the African Squadron. She didn’t complete her assignment until early 1858, and arrived back in New York on 9 February 1858. But the Figure 12 letter did not get to Dr. Clymer until 23 May 1858, 289 days after it was sent!

(To be concluded in February)

KEN LAWRENCE

Among the founding myths shared by postal card and postcard collectors is this creation story: *United States government postal cards since 1873 and privately manufactured picture postcards since 1898 are progeny of Lipman's Postal Cards of 1861 or 1870 [depending on the narrator and his credulity quotient], invented and copyrighted by John P. Charlton, manufactured and marketed by Hymen L. Lipman, both of Philadelphia.*

Robert L. Toal has written an entire book devoted to that legend—*The Lipman Postal Card: Forerunner from Philadelphia*, published by the United Postal Stationery Society (UPSS)—destined to be the principal reference on the subject for many years to come.

These are his reasons for considering his subject important:

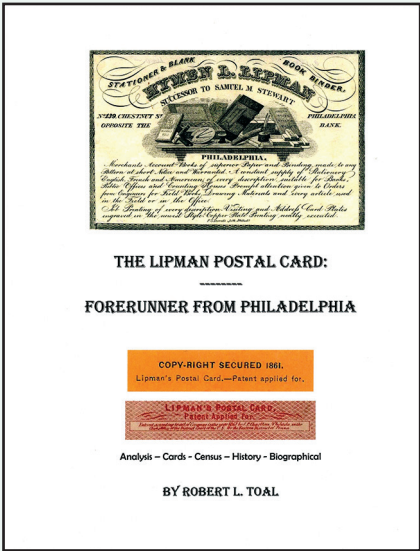
The Lipman Postal Card of 1872 has the distinction of being an essay for the first U.S. government postal card and at the same time, a forerunner of modern private mailing cards. Although other earlier mailed American cards exist, it was the first to be designated postal card, private or otherwise, and first successfully marketed to businesses for printed matter use. It also represents the earliest fully illustrated private post card in America.

By correctly dating the origin of Lipman's card as an 1872 event, Toal disclosed in his opening paragraph that he does not agree with previous accounts, which claimed Lipman's card was invented in 1861, or which reported that one was postally used in 1870, or both. Toal's rejection of those fables tends to weaken his other reasons for regarding Lipman's card as the original progenitor, but verification of the 1872 birthdate is his book's important achievement.

The myth of Lipman's postal card priority rested on three inferences, all of them wrong. Attributing the card's debut to 1861 or 1870 relied, first, on the date of a copyright issued to John P. Charlton, printed on the cards; second, on a misinterpretation of an unrelated 1861 statute; and third, on an implausible 1870 date written on one of Lipman's cards.

Toal carefully researched Charlton's December 17, 1861, copyright. He discovered that it was for an envelope, not a card. The 1861 statute had no connection at all. A paragraph in *An Act establishing certain Post Routes* of February 27, 1861, declared:

SEC. 13. And be it further enacted, That cards, blank or printed, blanks in packages



weighing at least eight ounces, and seeds or cuttings, in packages not exceeding eight ounces in weight, shall also be deemed mailable matter, and charged with postage at the rate of one cent an ounce, or fraction of an ounce, to any place in the United States under fifteen hundred miles, and at the rate of two cents an ounce or fraction of an ounce, over fifteen hundred miles, to be prepaid by postage stamps.

That provision of law obviously applied to quantities of printed or unprinted cards wrapped and shipped in bulk, not to single cards mailed as letters or circulars, both of which already had designated rates. If the Congressional scribe had not aberrantly inserted the word “blanks,” the meaning would have been less susceptible to scholarly mischief: “That cards, blank or printed, in packages weighing at least eight ounces....”

But in the October 1949 *Essay-Proof Journal*, after quoting the statute section, Clarence Brazer wrote, “Thus this United States law of February 25, 1861, authorized the Charlton-Lipman postal card copyrighted December 17, 1861.” Postal stationery and deltiology writers have repeated that preposterous claim ever since. At long last Toal, a man of their own persuasions, has soundly debunked it.

Charles Fricke contributed the third mistaken inference in excessively shrill capital letters in his 1973 book, *Centennial Handbook of the First Issue Postal Card 1873–1973*:

“THE GRANDDADDY OF UNITED STATES POSTAL CARDS”

THE EARLIEST KNOWN EXAMPLE OF A POSTAL CARD (PRIVATE) TO BE CARRIED BY THE U.S. MAILS — OCTOBER 25, 1870

The Lipman Postal Card (so-called second issue....) is postmarked RICHMOND IND OCT 25, and is dated on the message side of the card 10.24 1870. Thus it predates by almost 3 years the issue of the first United States Postal Card (May 12, 1873).

Fricke’s pictures show a card franked with a 1¢ Benjamin Franklin stamp of the Large Bank Note series. The back side is a business form of Nicholson & Brother stationers and booksellers that solicited catalogs and price lists from suppliers. The printed dateline reads, “Richmond, Ind., ____ 187_.” In manuscript it shows the date “10.24.” ahead of the year, and (apparently) “0” to complete it.

The franking alone should have cautioned Fricke to dial down his hyperbole, because no printed-matter mailpiece could have been sent for 1¢ until June 8, 1872. In 1870 the minimum rate was 2¢. But Fricke was not the first to take the 1870 date at face value. Since 1955 if not earlier, postal stationery and deltiology writers had published it without evident hesitation.

Toal adduced evidence that Lipman’s first card, which he calls “Type I,” illustrated here in Figure 1, was first offered for sale through a March 1872 advertisement in a Philadelphia newspaper; his second card, “Type II,” Figure 2 here, in a May 1872 ad; and his third card, “Type II-like,” Figure 3 here, made its appearance when Lipman submitted samples to the POD for consideration in June 1872.

Toal could find no credible evidence that any Lipman’s card existed before 1872, so the manuscript zero that appears to complete the 1870 year date on the Richmond card cannot be right. (It might have represented 1880.) Since few postal stationery specialists or deltiologists are postal history experts, they have clung to Brazer’s faulty interpretation and Fricke’s inflated claim as their scriptural authorities ever since they first appeared, until Toal’s apostasy.

If Toal had quit there he would have performed yeoman service for hobbyists. But his book provides even more information of value to post- and postal card collectors. He has provided an illustrated census, including provenance to the extent possible, of every recorded Lipman card. He has presented personal and career biographies of the three men whose names are associated with creating and marketing the cards—Hymen L. Lipman himself, John Pascal Charlton, and Alfred Morris Collins.

Toal’s Appendix A is titled “Sources of Lipman Card Misinformation.” Besides the

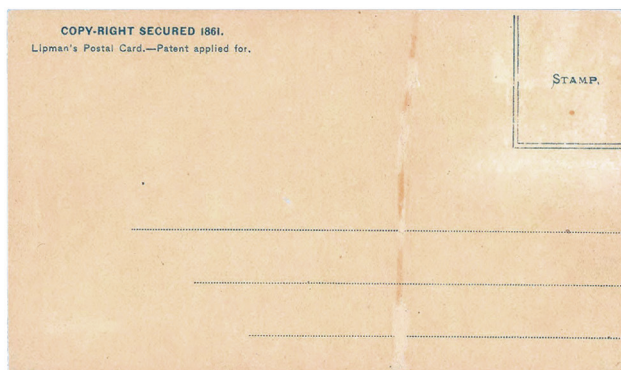


Figure 1. The corner inscription on the original version of Lipman's Postal Card, which Robert L. Toal has designated "Type I," claimed a copyright date of 1861 and a pending patent application. The text on the back side, which identified H.L. Lipman as "Patentee," matches March 1872 advertisements in Philadelphia newspapers. Courtesy of Schuyler J. Rumsey Auctions in association with Christoph Gärtner Auctionshaus.

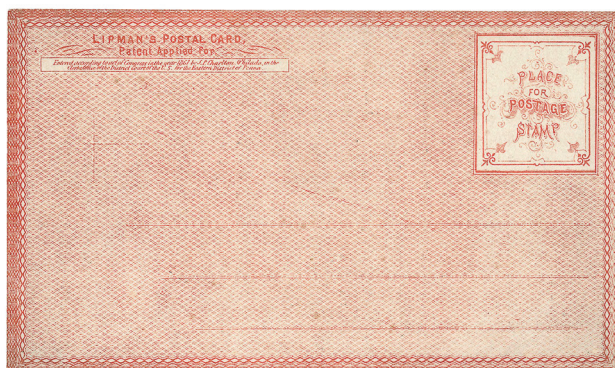
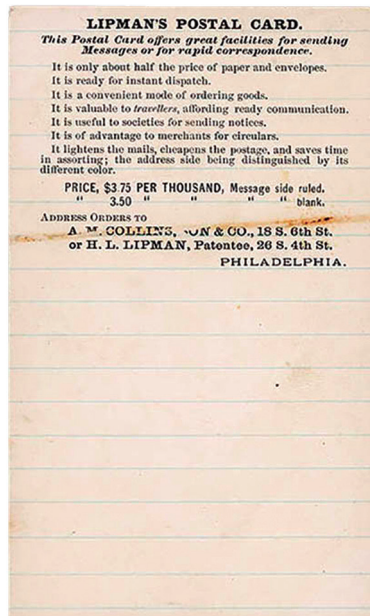
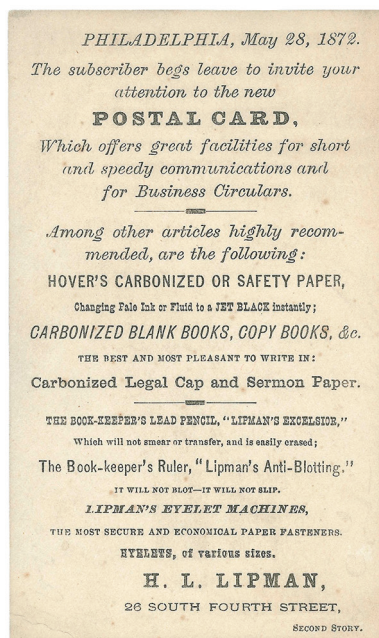


Figure 2. The upper left corner inscription on this second version of Lipman's Postal Card, "Type II" in Toal's classification system, reads, "LIPMAN'S POSTAL CARD, Patent Applied for. Entered according to act of Congress in the year 1861 by J.P. Charlton, Philada. in the Office of the District Court for the Eastern District of Penna." The May 28, 1872, date on the back side and promotion of the cards for "Business Circulars" corresponds to June 1872 ads in Philadelphia newspapers. Courtesy of Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries.



major points just described, he combed nits and cataloged them here. Toal found that nearly every scholar and seller of these items has misspelled Lipman's given name as Hyman. Some have published a picture of Crawford W. Long falsely captioned as Lipman. Others have mislabeled a picture of Edgar Allan Poe as Lipman. No photograph of the real Lipman is known.

At Toal's urging, Wikipedia took down Long's picture and added a correction. But if philatelists do not read his book, repetition of false narratives and continued use of incorrect images will not end. Despite Toal's efforts, the H.R. Harmer firm misspelled Lipman's

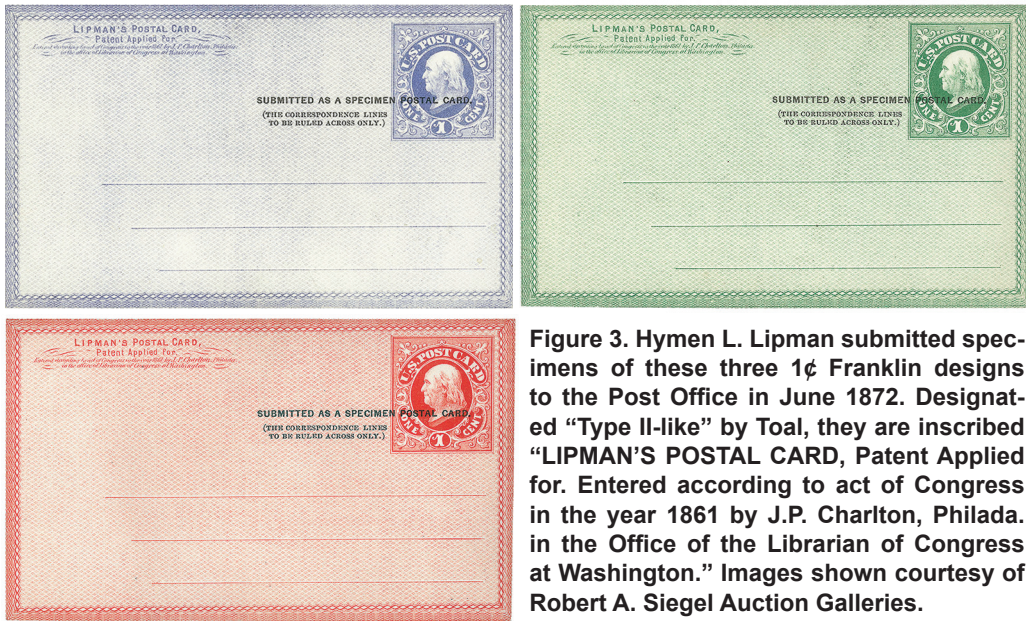


Figure 3. Hymen L. Lipman submitted specimens of these three 1¢ Franklin designs to the Post Office in June 1872. Designated “Type II-like” by Toal, they are inscribed “LIPMAN’S POSTAL CARD, Patent Applied for. Entered according to act of Congress in the year 1861 by J.P. Charlton, Philada. in the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.” Images shown courtesy of Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries.

forename and included a picture of Long as Lipman in a June 16-17, 2020, auction catalog that included three Lipman cards.

Toal studied documents in the Travers papers, archived at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum and available for digital viewing and copying on the Classics Society website. He quoted and reproduced John P. Charlton’s February 7, 1873, notice to the POD with attached envelope samples that I have included here as Figure 4. Charlton had claimed that

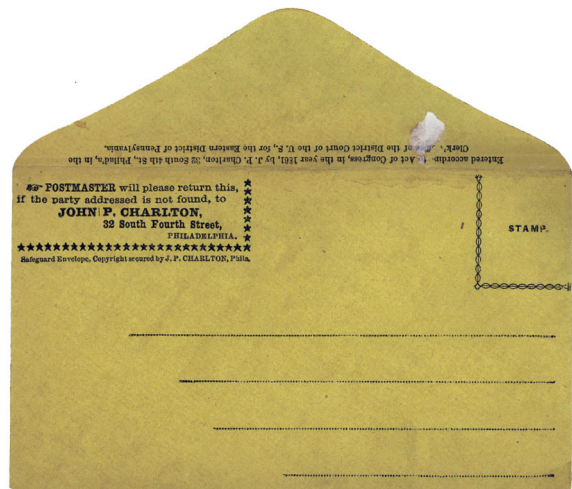
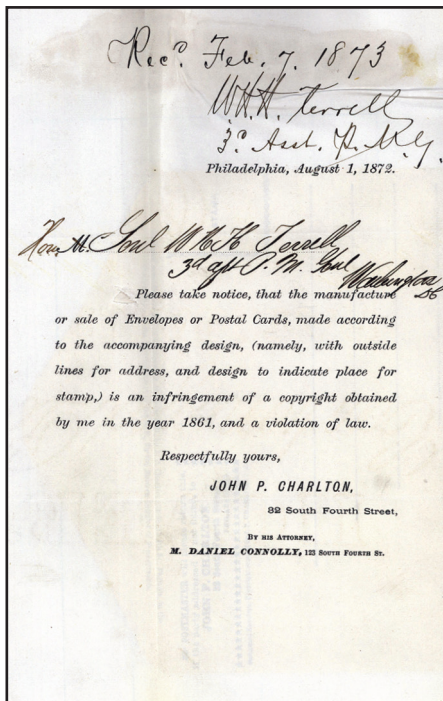


Figure 4. John P. Charlton sent the notice at left with samples of his “Safeguard Envelope” (above) to the Post Office Department in February 1873. He claimed that the first issue of United States postal cards, then in production, infringed on his 1861 copyright. From the Travers papers, courtesy of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum and the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society.

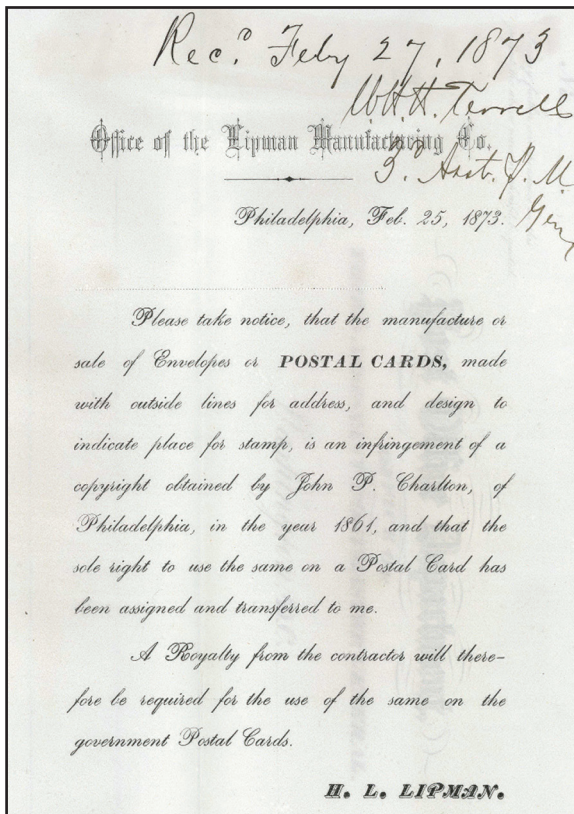


Figure 5. Lipman sent this demand for royalty payments two weeks after Charlton sent his. Lipman claimed that Charlton had assigned and transferred the 1861 copyright to him. Copied from the Travers papers courtesy of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum and the United States Philatelic Classics Society.

postal cards “with outside lines for address, and design to indicate place for stamp” would infringe on his copyright. The printed August 1, 1872, date on his notice suggests that he had originally used it to threaten publishers of competing private post or postal cards.

From those primary sources, Toal deduced:

Charlton’s letter referred to “outside lines” for address. This is because hidden (inside) address lines printed on back or back inside wing of an envelope were previously patented November 20, 1855. These, viewed by the writer when pressing down, aided in laying out a neatly addressed the envelope. [sic] They were first available on private (1855) and later government (October 1861-1870) envelopes. [sic, actually inaugurated in October 1859 on government envelopes]

Whether this was a legally valid complaint dealing with postal cards, not an envelope, is uncertain. The copyright statement Lipman “borrowed” for his card was likely with Charlton’s consent. The copyright was probably not transferred to Lipman as the copyright letter is from Charlton not Lipman. If Lipman owned the copyright, he would be the one complaining.

Toal did not probe far enough into the Travers papers. Lipman *did* complain. I have reproduced as Figure 5 his notice, dated February 25, 1873, and received by the POD two days later, which reads:

Please take notice, that the manufacture or sale of Envelopes or **POSTAL CARDS**, made with outside lines for address, and design to indicate place for stamp, is an infringement of a copyright obtained by John P. Charlton, of Philadelphia, in the year 1861, and that the sole right to use same on a Postal Card has been assigned and transferred to me.

A Royalty from the contractor will therefore be required for the use of the same on the government Postal Cards.

H. L. LIPMAN.

On this aspect of Charlton and Lipman’s demand for royalties, Toal was as credulous as his predecessors:

The address lines along with printed stamp box and “return request box” were all ostensibly covered by Charlton’s 1861 Safeguard envelope copyright. So, if one or more of these features is used on Lipman’s new postal card then the card is covered too, right? At least that is what Charlton, Lipman and Collins believed....

We know that Charlton’s envelope copyright notice, placed on the Lipman card, pertained to the address lines and stamp box printed on the card not to the card itself.

No, we do not know those things. They were neither true nor credible in 1872 or 1873. Indications of “place for stamp” had been printed on envelopes since 1852 if not earlier. See “Framing the 1851 Issue: Early Advertising and Propaganda Collars” by Chip Gliedman in *Chronicle* 265. The U.S. Patent Office had rejected John W. Orr’s May 11 and September 11, 1858, applications to patent “Improvements on Envelopes”—“flat lines on articles of paper, such as envelopes, &c.” Denying Orr’s appeal, the patent commissioner held:

The alleged invention has nothing to do with an envelope as such. It relates only to the ornamentation of envelopes, or the use of their surfaces as a medium of advertising, and as such is met by English references that will show substantially the same use and mode of ornamenting paper elsewhere. If this mode and style of printing and ornamenting paper is old, the application of it to envelopes is only a double use and utterly fails to render envelopes a new article of manufacture in a patentable sense.

The novelty of Emanuel Harmon’s envelope design, patented November 20, 1855, was not that address lines were printed inside instead of outside. This was his claim:

My invention consists in manufacturing or preparing envelopes with lines ruled or otherwise made in such manner that the lines shall not appear externally and shall become visible when the face and back of the envelope are brought together so as to guide the hand in writing the address as hereafter described.

By December 1861 when Charlton secured his copyright, address lines on the front of envelopes were common, notably on many Civil War patriotic designs, some of which were printed and sold in Philadelphia. Charlton could not have thought the stamp box and address lines on his Safeguard envelope were novel. The feature he probably did intend to protect by copyright was the boxed corner-card instruction for the return of undeliverable letters.

Charlton’s 1862 advertisement for his envelope, which Toal reproduced, pitched that aspect, with no mention of lines for the address or a box for the stamp:

Just published, SAFEGUARD ENVELOPES, buff and white, admirably adapted to prevent miscarriage of letters and relieve the dead letter office; useful to the business man, the soldier, and every correspondent.

Charlton was attempting to profit from *An Act in Relation to Return of undelivered Letters in the Post Office*, adopted April 6, 1860:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That when any person shall indorse on any letter his or her name and place of residence, as writer thereof, the same after remaining uncalled for at the office to which it is directed thirty days, or the time the writer may direct, shall be returned by mail to said writer; and no such letters shall be advertised, nor shall the same be treated as dead letters, until so returned to the post-office of the writer and there remain uncalled for one quarter.

In my opinion Charlton and Lipman were not mere entrepreneurial stationers honestly and earnestly engaged in promoting and selling a timely invention in 1872 and 1873. After the POD passed over Lipman’s entry for the postal card design, Charlton and Lipman became antecedents of today’s so-called patent trolls. They attempted to gain a financial windfall by confecting a groundless claim of infringement on concepts that were obvious for products that already existed.

If Charlton and Lipman intended their notices to plant evidence of priority in the official record, which might later be cited to verify an allegation of transgression, they underestimated the POD’s administrative competence. First Assistant Postmaster General

James W. Marshall had already secured a report from the Patent Office regarding patents that pertained to postal cards.

Patent Commissioner Mortimer D. Leggett wrote to Marshall on June 4, 1872, that he had found only three related patents, copies of which he enclosed. He added, "About 100 applications have been rejected." The three that had been granted—in August 1871, December 1871, and February 1872—pertained to methods of manufacturing folded cards sealed on three edges that today are called letter cards.

The *Springfield Union* newspaper of April 4, 1873, reported on attempts to crash the postal-card party for cash, and the POD's method of thwarting them, in an article titled "The Postal Cards." The next day's *Albany Evening Journal* reprinted the *Union* article, from which I quote this excerpt:

No sooner had the system been arranged than private parties began getting up postal cards on their own hook and sending them through the mail, with the usual one cent stamp affixed. As each card bore an inscription similar to the following: "Lipman postal card, patent applied for," every one making its appearance at the post-office is confiscated and sent to the dead-letter office at Washington. Without the postal inscription the cards would have been allowed to pass like other mail matter.

Those confiscations probably contributed to the apparent scarcity of postally used examples of Lipman's Postal Card. In my opinion, the POD's suppression of Lipman's prints seized from the mails refutes any inference that his card could have obtained a positive result on a maternity test of the first U.S. government postal card. In effect, Lipman's cards represented attempts to cheat the post office of revenue by using an illicit endorsement for a 1¢ rate that did not admit private correspondence cards.

At best Lipman's cards were mailed as circulars, rated 1¢ each as printed matter (which had become possible on June 8, 1872, not earlier), and thus, in postal terms, they were neither postal cards nor private mailing cards (post cards).

Two items that both Toal in his book and UPSS in *Historical Catalog of U.S. Postal Card Essays and Proofs* as edited by Bill Falberg (8th revised edition, December 2018) list as essays appear to be mock-ups—essays of essays, maybe? They are unused Type I and Type II Lipman cards that have National Bank Note Company 3¢ Liberty Head adhesive stamp essays of 1867 (Scott 79E301) pasted onto the stamp boxes.

NBNC had probably presented them to Lipman as samples, and probably asked him to select which he preferred, before composing the Type II-like 1¢ Benjamin Franklin cards that Lipman submitted to the POD as his postal card designs. To Toal, NBNC's 1867 stamp essays suggested that Lipman might have been clairvoyant. "Was he first to come out with a Lady Liberty indicium idea?" That would have required remarkable foresight.

Let me now review skeptically Toal's list of reasons for celebrating Lipman's card.

First, he asserted that "it has the distinction of being an essay for the first U.S. government postal card." In the sense that Lipman sent three specimens to the POD in 1872, and that they had no influence on the design of the issued card, his statement is true as a tautology—"An essay is a proposed design that differs in some way from the issued stamp [or postal stationery item]," as the Scott catalog defines the term—but so were several others.

Second, he asserted that Lipman's card has the distinction of being "a forerunner of modern private mailing cards." True, but other private forerunners were in commercial use earlier, notably Fire Association of Philadelphia policy expiration notices on cards, mailed locally at the 2¢ drop letter rate from 1865 to 1872.

Third, he asserted that Lipman's card "was the first to be designated postal card, private or otherwise." On this he was almost certainly mistaken. The "Pioneer Postal Cards" section of the Robert A. Siegel sale of November 15-17, 2011, included two postally used copies of Herrick's Postal Card, both mailed at the 2¢ printed matter rate in 1872. The one illustrated herewith as Figure 6 has a March postmark, which makes it contemporaneous

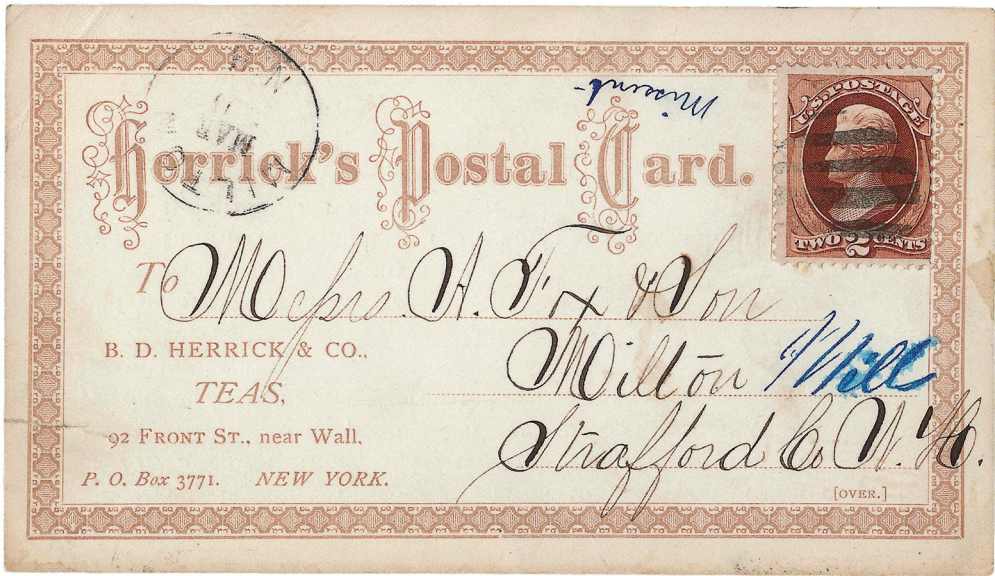


Figure 6. This example of Herrick's Postal Card franked with a 2¢ Andrew Jackson stamp of 1870 (Scott 146) was sent at the 2¢ rate for up to four ounces of printed matter, which was in effect until June 8, 1872. Because the sender had addressed it to Milton instead of Milton Mills, New Hampshire, a clerk at the Milton post office corrected the address, marked the card "Missent," and struck it with an indistinct March datestamp as it was redirected to Milton Mills. As a March 1872 use of a privately printed "postal card," this predates all recorded postally used examples of Lipman's Postal Card. Courtesy of Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries.

with or earlier than Lipman's first published announcement—and earlier than any postally used Lipman cards. Also observe that it has a box for the stamp and lines for the address.

Fourth, Toal asserted that Lipman's card was the "first successfully marketed to business for printed matter use." I doubt that is true. From January to March 1871 the *San Francisco News-Letter and California Advertiser* marketed a product called "Latest News and Post Card," at \$10 per thousand, "POSTAL CHARGES.—If not written upon [that is, as printed matter], Two Cents, to all parts of the world." I have no proof that the promotion succeeded, but I doubt that Toal has evidence it failed.

Fifth and finally, Toal asserted that Lipman's card "represents the earliest fully illustrated private post card in America." How might he prove that? Herrick's Postal Card, illustrated here in Figure 7, pictured its new five-story store in New York City. Although it is undated, it was an announcement of B.D. Herrick & Company's move to 15 Warren Street, which occurred in January 1873. Lipman's cards that predated it were not illustrated.

Does any of this matter? I cannot see how it does. There is no need to exaggerate the significance of Lipman's cards. Charles Fricke was wrong when he called Lipman's "the granddaddy of United States postal cards," but regardless of their placement on the postal card evolutionary timeline, they are scarce, attractive collectible cards that contribute to the narrative. Lipman's Postal Cards left us a legacy of glamorous collectible objects that most collectors, including me, enjoy opportunities to see.

By failing to engage a competent editor, the UPSS served Toal poorly. His book begins with a preliminary chapter titled "Forward," whatever that might suggest, written by the author himself. An experienced editor would have called it the book's introduction. Sometimes an author will insert a "Foreword"—a word by another writer about his book's significance—before his own text begins.

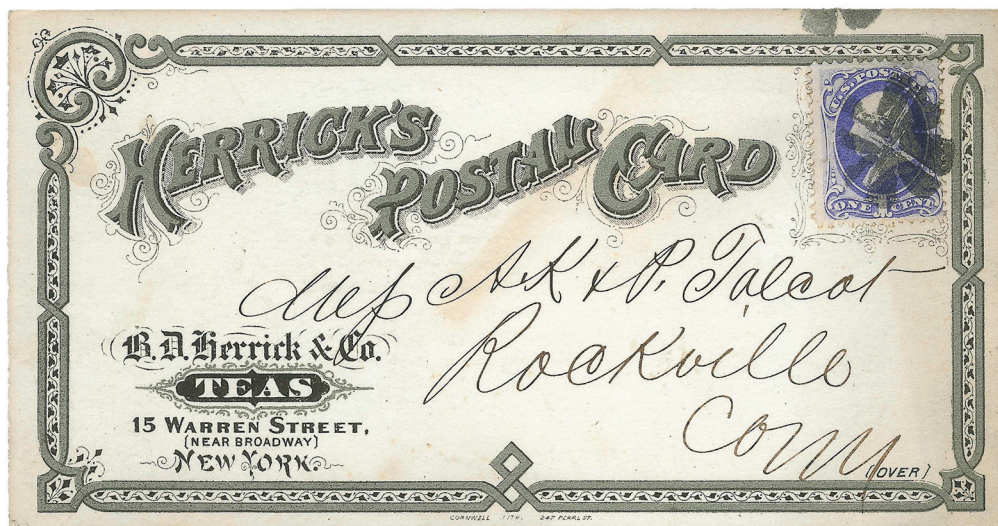


Figure 7. Above and below, both sides of a very early Herrick's Postal Card. The January 28, 1873, *New York Tribune* reported that "B. D. Herrick & Co., tea merchants, late of No. 92 Front St., have removed to No. 15 Warren St." This Herrick's Postal Card, franked with a 1¢ Benjamin Franklin stamp of 1870 (Scott 145) paying the 1¢ (per two ounces) circular rate, shows a picture of the firm's new store. Its circa January-February 1873 use predates all recorded Lipman's Postal Cards that bear illustrated pictorial advertisements. Courtesy of Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries.



The book has no index. It is poorly organized and annoyingly repetitive, which needlessly burdens the reader who wants to use it as an easily consulted collecting reference. By most editorial conventions, Toal's Appendix C near the end of his book, "How I became involved with the Lipman Postal Card topic," would have been its preface or first chapter. Those are samples of problems that could be fixed.

Blame for editorial lapses belongs to the publisher, not to the author. UPSS should help Toal compile a revised and corrected edition, and should hire an experienced professional editor to assemble a book worthy of the author's contribution to philatelic scholarship and to his subject's significance. ■

EXPLANATIONS OF PROBLEM COVER IN CHRONICLE 267

Our problem cover from *Chronicle* 267, shown in Figure 1, turned up at the Garfield-Perry show earlier this year. The Star Die envelope is clearly dated on the front: "CAIRO, ILL. MAR 2, 1862." However, the reverse bears several strikes of the same circular datestamp, but dated "FEB 24, 1862." In addition there are several pencil notations on the front: "Corinth Feb 62" and "Rec'd March 5th."

The questions were: What is the purpose of the 3¢ postage stamp affixed in addition to the 3¢ Star Die? Why are the dates of the Cairo cancels different on the front and the back? What is the significance of the pencil notations on the front?

Fellow *Chronicle* section editor Jim Milgram submitted this solution:

This cover is an "old stamps not recognized" usage. The 3¢ Star Die was demonetized in the fall of 1861 and replaced by the stamps of the 1861 series. Evidently this cover had some type of contents about Corinth in Feb 1862 but the origin of the letter is not certain. I think it orig-



Figure 1. Addressed to Springfield, Ill., 3¢ Star Die envelope with 3¢ pink stamp, each clearly tied by "CAIRO, ILL MAR 2, 1862" circular datestamp. Pencil notations include "Corinth Feb 62" at top center and "Rec'd March 5th 62" at bottom. Inset at right is a portion of the reverse showing three strikes of the same Cairo CDS, but dated a week earlier: "FEB 24 1862."

inated at Cairo and was posted Feb 24, 1862. The postmaster put three strikes on the reverse and must have notified the writer that it was being held for postage. Somehow a 3¢ 1861 stamp was sent to the post office to redeem the letter. This stamp was canceled on Mar 2, 1862 and the letter was carried by mail (probably by train) to an address in Springfield. The recipient noted "Recd March 5th 62" under the address on the front of the envelope. All this took place before either of the battles at Corinth, which was in the Confederacy at this time. Corinth was an important town for railroads in the C.S.A.

Overseas member and frequent contributor Anders Olason provides a different take along with some pertinent historical background:

This cover is what I see as "History illustrated by a postal item." It was postmarked at Cairo, Illinois, February 24 1862, and forwarded to Springfield, Illinois on March 2. It is a Star Die stamped envelope of 1860-61, at this time demonetized, but still useful as nothing more than a mailing envelope. Added postage is an adhesive 3¢ stamp of the issue of 1861. The notation "Corinth Feb 62" may be the solution.

First some background. Cairo is situated at the bottom tip of Illinois, where the Ohio River enters the Mississippi. It was a hub for transportation by river and rail, and therefore a militarily important place in the Civil War.

Early in 1862 an operational target for the Union was Columbus, Kentucky, the end of the railroad from Corinth, Mississippi, and a Confederate fortification protecting the lower Mississippi River from Union invasion. But Grant selected a different route of attack, a combined operation with the navy up the Tennessee River to attack Fort Henry. The fort surrendered February 6. The next day operations began against Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River, flowing in a close parallel valley. The gunboats and reinforcements were sent up this river via the Ohio River. Fort Donelson surrendered February 16. With more than 10,000 prisoners of war, wounded soldiers and a continued need of supplies for the Union forces, Cairo had a very busy time. The postal service must have been pressed. After the twin victories the battle participants were no doubt eager to inform relatives and friends of their success. And this explains the receiving postmarks. From wherever the mail came, the postal service at the moment could only stack it for later sorting and distribution.

The notation "Corinth Feb 62" may have been added long afterwards to place this correspondence in the campaign described above, which continued with Shiloh and ended in the siege of Corinth. If this is the case, then the envelope may have been carried during the early weeks of the campaign by the soldier sender and mailed after the surrender of Fort Donelson.

A full interpretation of this cover and its perplexing "Corinth Feb 62" endorsement is one of those questions to which there is no right or wrong answer. While both contributors offer plausible explanations, there may yet be more to the back story. The Union capture of Fort Henry opened up the Tennessee River Valley to a Federal naval invasion, and in February Union gunboats were dispatched to capture and destroy the important Memphis & Ohio Railroad Bridge spanning the Tennessee River a few miles to the south.

Flag Officer Andrew Hall Foote ordered Lt. Seth Phelps to take charge of three timberclads: *Tyler*, *Lexington* and *Conestoga*. They reached the draw bridge on February 6. Finding no opposition they continued upstream overtaking and disabling three Confederate transports before arriving at Cerro Gordo Landing, where they discovered the Confederate ironclad *Eastport* still under construction. Swift action prevented the Confederates from scuttling her. Phelps was not only able to capture the prize, but also a large trove of lumber and iron plating as well as spare parts for use on the unfinished gunboat.

Leaving two of his three ships behind to load the supplies and guard the prize, Phelps moved on passing the town of Eastport, Mississippi and eventually reaching Florence, Alabama on the evening of February 8, just as the Confederates were attempting to torch three more of their transports to prevent their capture. Unable to cross over the treacherous shoals of the river due to the deep draft of his boat, Phelps halted his advance, anchored and briefly occupied Florence. After a day he returned to rejoin the rest of his small flotilla at Cerro Gordo. With the unfinished ironclad in tow he arrived back at Fort Henry on February 10. Phelps' brief venture deep into Confederate territory (see the map in Figure 2) made headlines throughout the north and the south. The mere fact that Union forces had set foot in the Deep South states of Mississippi and Alabama created a sensation.

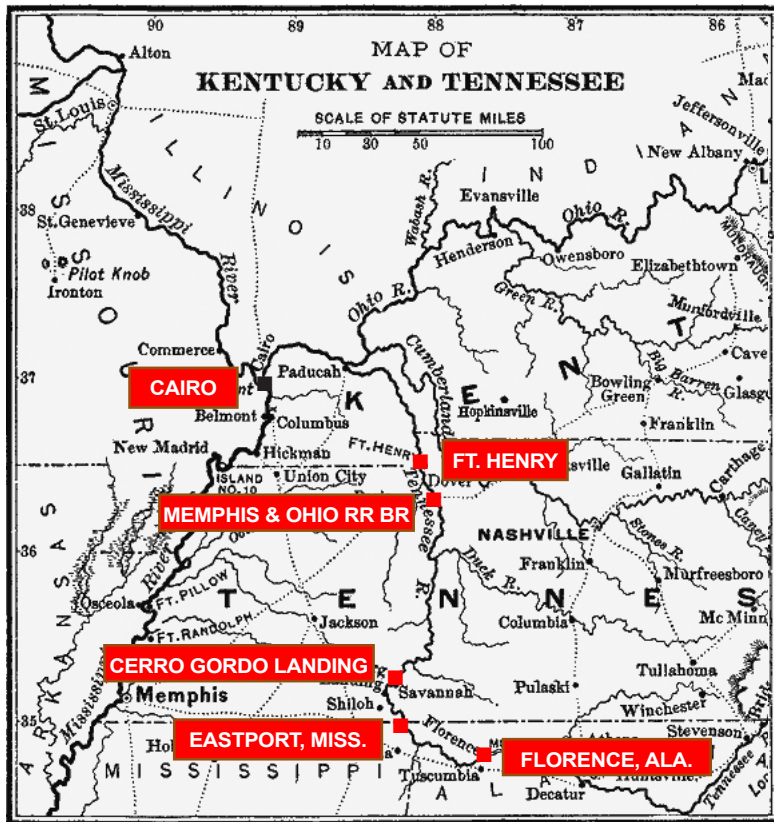


Figure 2. Civil War era map highlighting the notable points (red squares) of Lt. Seth Phelps' naval mission up the Tennessee River.

Without the original contents of our subject cover we can only speculate the meaning of the “Corinth Feb 62” pencil notation. It is possible that the writer was sending the jubilant news of Union forces advancing within just a few miles of the rail center of Corinth in the virtual heart of the Confederacy. One could even make the case that it is plausible that the writer was part of this daring mission.

Not quite as perplexing is the postal history mystery of the combination of the Star Die and the 3¢ adhesive along with the mismatched Cairo dates. On this I agree with Milgram, that the letter was held at Cairo for invalid postage—“Old Stamps Not Recognized.” The relatively close proximity of Springfield to Cairo could allow for a notice of a letter held for postage to be sent and the resulting response to be received within the six-day period between the Cairo postmarked dates on the back and the front of the cover. Such speculation is bolstered by the eventual arrival docketing of March 5, just three days after the Cairo March 2 postmark.

But Anders Olason’s opening observation remains valid: this cover truly represents history illustrated by a postal item.

PROBLEM COVER FOR THIS ISSUE

Our problem cover for this issue, shown in Figure 3 is an interesting transatlantic cover submitted by Labron Harris. It was posted at New Haven, Connecticut, initially addressed to Great Malvern in Great Britain. From there it was apparently forwarded within Great Britain and eventually returned to the United States. Markings on the front include a NEW HAVEN, CONN. circular datestamp with what appears to be a matching PAID



Figure 3. Abundantly marked cover from New Haven to Great Malvern, England in 1853 and subsequently returned to the U.S. The only two backstamps are shown at right. The basic question is: What do all these markings mean?



and handstamped “24”. There is also a “19” in reddish orange and a “tombstone” marking AMERICA 23 FEB. A GT (Great) MALVERN circular marking on front is dated February 28. A partial six sided L(iverpool) marking in green as well as a green 3 CENTS rate marking appear on the front as well. There is also a black NEW YORK PACKET 24 marking dated March 25. The reverse bears another Great Malvern marking dated February 24 and a B A crown double circle dispatch marking dated 5 MR 1853.

The questions are: What do all these rate markings mean and why was the letter fully prepaid from the United States, but apparently sent back collect from England? Hint: The questions may not be as complicated as they first appear if the markings are dissected and considered in chronological order. ■

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

United States Postal Service, Form 3526: Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation. 1. Publication Title: *The Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues*. 2. Publication Number: 0560-680. 3. Filing Date: 27 August 2020. 4. Issue Frequency: Quarterly. 5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 4. 6. Annual Subscription Price: \$35. 7. Complete Address of Known Office of Publication: 100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte, PA 16823. 8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office: % Michael Plett, 2855 Willowmere Woods Dr., Vienna, VA 22180. 9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor and Managing Editor. Publisher: None. Editor: Michael Laurence, 101 West 90th St., Apt. 8-H, New York, NY 10024. Managing Editor: None. 10. Owner: The U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., % Michael Plett, 2855 Willowmere Woods Dr., Vienna, VA 22180. 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees and Other Security Holders: None. 12. Tax Status: Has not changed during preceding 12 months. 13. Publication Title: *The Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues*. 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data: August, 2020. 15a. AVERAGE NUMBER OF COPIES EACH ISSUE DURING PRECEDING 12 MONTHS: (a) Total Number of Copies (Net Press Run): 1,256. (15b.) Paid Circulation: (15b.1) Mailed Outside County: 902. (15b.2) Mailed In County: 0. (15b.3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails: 0. (15b.4) Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail): 354 (15c) Total Paid Distribution: 1,256. (15f) Total Distribution: 1,256. (15g): Copies Not Distributed: 0. (15h) Total: 1,256. (15i) Percent paid: 100%. 15a. NUMBER OF COPIES OF SINGLE ISSUE PUBLISHED NEAREST TO FILING DATE: (a) Total Number of Copies (Net Press Run): 1,275. 15b. Paid Circulation: (15b.1) Mailed Outside County: 920. (15b.2) Mailed In County: 0. (15b.3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails: 0. (15b.4) Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail): 355 (15c) Total Paid Distribution: 1,275. (15f) Total Distribution: 1,275. (15g): Copies Not Distributed: 0. (15h) Total: 1,275. (15i) Percent Paid: 100%. (16) This information to be published in the November, 2020 issue of the publication. (17) Signed (x), Michael Plett, Treasurer.

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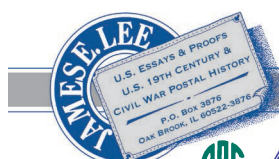
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Gems of Philately

December 2020

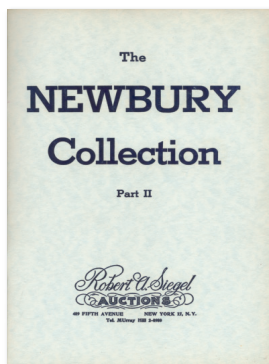
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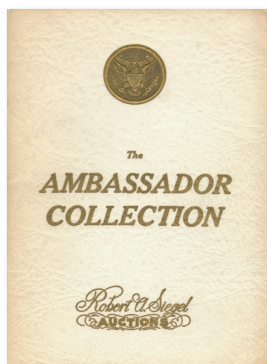
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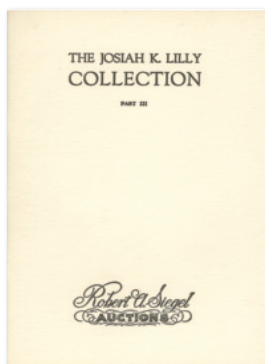
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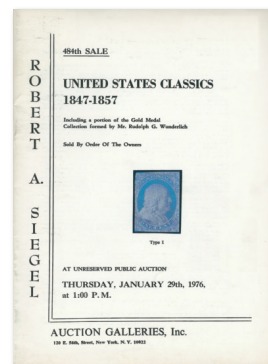
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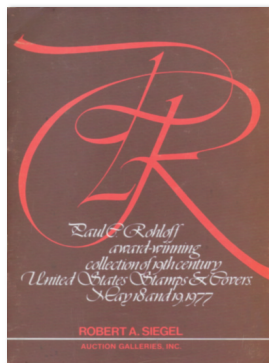
Ambassador 1966



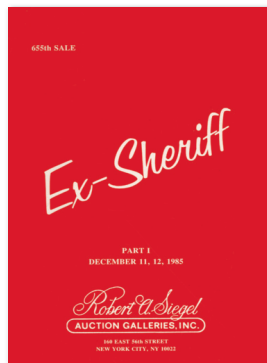
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Wunderlich 1976



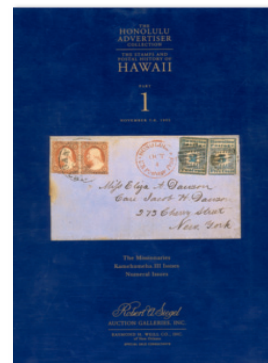
Rohloff 1977



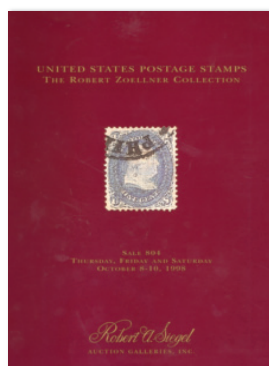
Sheriff 1985



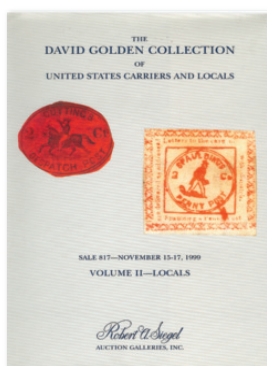
Kapiloff 1992



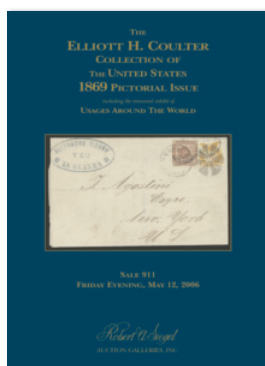
Honolulu Advertiser 1995



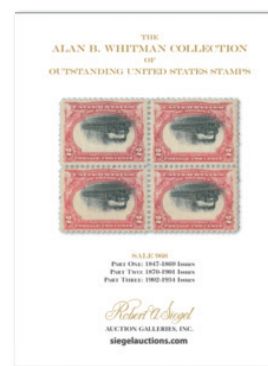
Zoellner 1998



Golden 1999



Coulter 2006



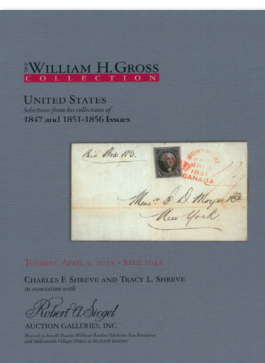
Whitman 2009



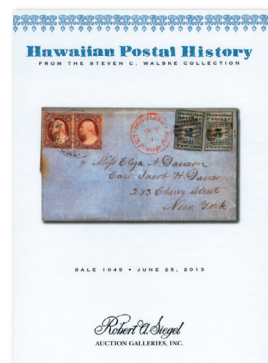
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