

The

# Chronicle

of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues

|                           | Dark Brown<br>Scott 1a                                                              | Red Brown<br>Scott 1                                                                | Orange Brown<br>Scott 1b                                                            | Red Orange<br>Scott 1c                                                              | Brown Orange<br>Scott 1d                                                             |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Early Impressions         |    |    |    | Red Orange<br>not known in<br>Early Impression                                      | Brown Orange<br>not known in<br>Early Impression                                     |
| Intermediate Impressions  |    |    | Orange Brown<br>not known in<br>Intermediate<br>Impression                          | Red Orange<br>not known in<br>Intermediate<br>Impression                            | Brown Orange<br>not known in<br>Intermediate<br>Impression                           |
| Worn-plate Impressions    |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cleaned-plate Impressions | Dark Brown<br>not known in<br>Cleaned-Plate<br>Impression                           |  |  |  |  |

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# H.R. HARMER

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Franklin D. Roosevelt

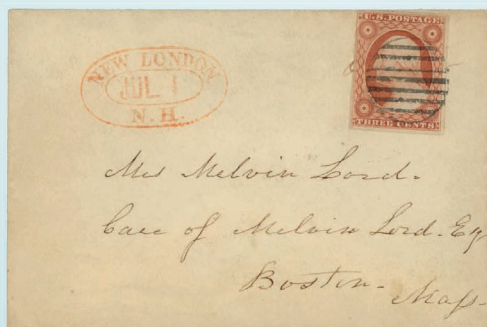


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*1851 3c Orange Brown, July 1 First Day Cover*



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# The Chronicle

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FINE STAMP AUCTIONS



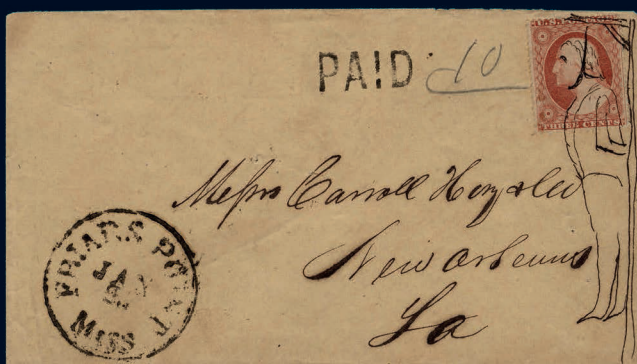
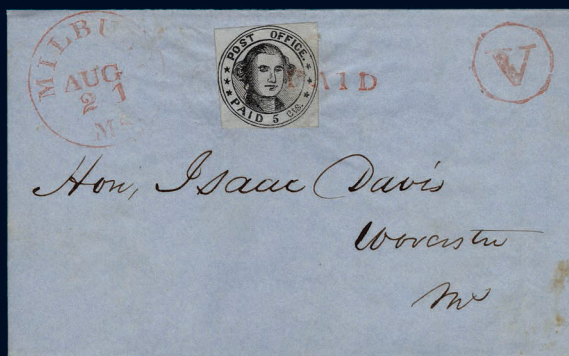
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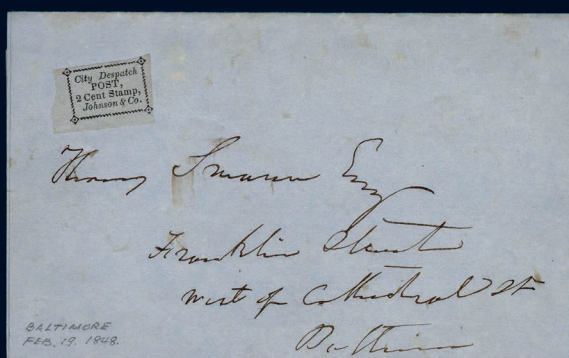


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2p rose, rouletted  
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1sh dull violet, unused  
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2c laid paper, used CDS,  
the finest of three known.  
October 2014; Lot 1193  
Realized \$247,250



2p scarlet vermilion, used  
February 2019; Lot 108  
Realized \$17,775



1/4c Leaf progressive die  
October 2020; Lot 666  
Realized \$27,255

12p black, a superlative mint  
example, widely regarded as  
the finest in existence



*ex. Duveen, Dale-Lichtenstein*  
February 2013; Lot 353  
Realized \$224,250



3p laid paper red cancel  
November 2017; Lot 429  
Realized \$4,025



Hawker Flight, mint NH  
February 2019; Lot 208  
Realized \$44,435



1875 registered cover to Norway with three examples of the 10c pale milky rose lilac shade  
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50c lathework single  
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## THE EDITOR'S PAGE

MICHAEL LAURENCE

### FREE THE CHATTER!

The bright white envelope that brought you this *Chronicle* did not contain a copy of *The Chairman's Chatter*, our sister publication. That's by design. At our virtual annual meeting in mid-February, our board of directors voted unanimously that the *Chronicle* and *Chatter* should henceforth be dispatched in separate mailings, six or seven weeks apart.

This represents a return to historical practice. The two were conceived as separate publications, created on different schedules and serving different purposes. But during a period of austerity a decade or more ago, mailing was consolidated. Despite Covid shut-downs, times are now fatter, at least for our Society. We're delighted the board has decided to separate the two publications again, doubling the tangible contacts our Society makes with its members. The *Chatter* has taken new life under the editorship of Charles DiComo. It deserves to stand on its own.

The *Chronicle* you hold in your hands contains several important articles, none more so than the essay featured on our cover. In our 1847 section this issue (page 135) Scott Trepel proposes a new way of classifying the 5¢ 1847 stamps, using printing impression as the primary feature, with color a secondary characteristic.

For collectors like me who are color-challenged (I struggle to discern distinctions in the red end of the spectrum) this is a welcome suggestion. Printing impression has long been a taxonomical key for many important classic stamp issues. Early Mauritius and New South Wales come to mind as examples; there are many others. But for some reason, the U.S. 5¢ 1847 stamp has always been classified by color alone. As Trepel makes clear, this has caused increasing problems. Among other suggestions, Trepel makes specific proposals for changing the 5¢ 1847 listings in the Scott specialized catalog. Whether the catalog editors will accept them, who knows? At least they have something to think about.

Trepel is well known as a professional philatelist (he's president of the Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries) but to Classics Society members he is equally well known as a senior member of the *Chronicle* editorial family. Trepel succeeded yours truly as editor of our 1869 section in the early 1980s. I reluctantly had to abandon *Chronicle* involvement when I became editor of *Linn's Stamp News*. Trepel has been our 1869 editor since 1984, making him our senior section editor by a large margin. So he speaks in our pages both as a professional and as a family member.

"Good Samaritan" labels are found on classic U.S. covers from the 1857 stamps up through the Bank Notes. There's even one on a 10¢ 1869 cover; I wish it were in my collection. Covers bearing these labels have been explored piecemeal over the years in several *Chronicle* articles. Now, in our 1861 section (page 165), Daniel M. Knowles discusses the full range of Good Samaritan labels, from their beginnings until the Post Office put them out of business. Knowles provides details about their launch and their termination, shows examples of known label types, and includes a detailed census of the 91 covers recorded so far. A noteworthy contribution to postal history scholarship.

(EDITOR'S PAGE concluded on page 146)

## **HANDSTAMPED SHIP ILLUSTRATIONS ON STAMPLESS COVERS**

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

A small number of handstamped markings on stampless covers bear illustrations of ships or steamboats. This article provides a survey of these markings, something that has never been done before. Many such markings were privately applied by the ships or ship lines involved, but some are actual postal markings. These will be discussed first.

### **Postal markings showing sailing ships**

During the 1830s most incoming ship covers destined to towns other than the port were postmarked with the word SHIP—to indicate that the letter was received from a ship and that the captain had been paid the traditional 2¢ fee, which was added to the postage due. Such markings were applied at the post office where the letter entered the mails.

As an alternative to the word SHIP, Philadelphia introduced in 1834 a striking pictorial handstamp showing a three-masted sailing vessel, with a long pennant furling from its mainmast. A newly rediscovered example of this beautiful postmark is struck on the cover shown in Figure 1, which is addressed to Providence, Rhode Island. The letter within was datelined at Valparaiso, Chile, on October 20, 1834. In addition to the Full-Rigged Ship marking (as it is generally called), which measures 29x33 millimeters, this cover bears an octagon “PHILA 28 FEB” datestamp and is rated “39½,” representing double the domestic postage rate of 18¾¢ (for a distance of 150-400 miles) plus the 2¢ ship fee. The correspondence of the Providence business firm of Brown & Ives is well-known to stampless collectors.

A smaller illustrated ship handstamp, 21x27 mm, was introduced by Philadelphia at the end of 1835. Only a few strikes of this marking are known, and none of them is perfectly clear. The only example recorded in red is the double partial strike shown inset in Figure 1. The letter that carries this marking originated in Cuba on December 11, 1835.

At least one strike of this small ship marking exists in blue ink, faint but fully struck on a cover dated in September, 1837. This was last seen in a Siegel auction on March 31, 1965. This smaller marking is more rectangular than the larger one. It shows less white space surrounding the vessel, and the streaming pennant is more subdued. The *American Stampless Cover Catalog* (ASCC) states that “some authorities question the authenticity” of this marking and the catalog does not price it.<sup>1</sup> But I know the marking is authentic, because the cover that bears the double-struck marking inset in Figure 1 comes from the Moses Taylor correspondence, which I discovered. I described the circumstances of this find in *Chronicle* 235.<sup>2</sup>

At nearly the same time, New Haven introduced a handstamp with the word SHIP incorporated into an outlined illustration of a ship’s mastless hull. Frequently called the New Haven Yawl, this marking was used for two decades. Figure 2 shows an early example on an incoming cover from Cuba, also from the Moses Taylor papers, internally dated February 3, 1836. At New Haven it was rated 12¢ due, 10¢ for postage to New York and 2¢ for





Figure 1. The best known of all U.S. ship-illustrated postmarks is the Full-Rigged Ship marking used on incoming ship letters at Philadelphia in 1834-35. The example shown here is struck on a cover that originated in Chile and entered the mails at Philadelphia for postal carriage to Providence, R.I. Inset at lower right are partial overlapping strikes from another Philadelphia ship marking, smaller, less detailed and much scarcer.



Figure 2. The New Haven Yawl marking, with the word SHIP within the outline of a ship's hull, on a cover from Cuba that entered the mails at New Haven on February 27, 1836. New Haven rated it for 12¢ due, 10¢ for postage and 2¢ for the ship fee.

the ship fee. The New Haven FEB 27 circular datestamp shows fleurons above the date and ornamentation at the bottom. ASCC lists the yawl marking as having been used between 1815 and 1857, but that first year must be a typographical error. The earliest examples I have seen are from 1835.



**Figure 3. Cover from St. Croix, addressed to San Francisco. The New Haven circular datestamp shows December 9 and the “42” rating (40¢ coast-to-coast postage plus 2¢ ship fee) establishes a year-date of 1848 or 1849. Shown inset at lower left is an enlarged strike of the same marking, here in black, electronically cropped from a cover from the 1850s. This marking was used for two decades.**

Figure 3 shows an envelope that arrived at New Haven from St. Croix in the Danish West Indies, addressed to an army officer in “Upper California.” The New Haven circular datestamp shows December 9. The “42” rating (40¢ coast-to-coast postage plus 2¢ ship fee) establishes a year date of 1848 or 1849. Comparison with the cover in Figure 2 suggests the New Haven Yawl marking changed very little over a 15-year period. An enlarged example in black, also from a cover from the 1850s, in shown inset in Figure 3. The marking also exists from 1839 in blue and is listed in ASCC in green ink. This I have not seen.

Volume II of the *American Stampless Cover Catalog* lists (with no illustration) a red, 22-millimeter marking from Stamford, Connecticut, described as “SHIP in outline of boat 1828-36.” I had never seen an example of such a marking until Charles DiComo recently showed me the cover in Figure 4. The content is a detailed invoice (dated 8 March 1836) to the famous merchant firm of Abraham Bell in New York City. Along with 24 casks of beer, it was sent from Dublin, Ireland, on board the brig *Lancaster*.

Unfortunately, *Lancaster* was wrecked on Sable Island off Halifax on May 21, 1836. Passengers, crew and mail were salvaged, and this letter was sent on to Halifax. An endorsement on reverse (not shown here) reads: “Forwarded by your very ob. Servt. Stephen Binney, Halifax, June 11/36.”

An unknown vessel then carried the letter from Halifax to Stamford, Connecticut, where it entered the mails on June 22, 1836. As evident in Figure 4, the cover bears two handstamps, a red double-oval “STAMFORD CT JUN 22” and a magenta “SHIP” within the outline of a ship’s hull. Stamford then rated the cover for 42¢ collection: four times 10¢ inland postage to New York City (30-80 mile distance) plus the 2¢ ship fee. This Stamford ship marking is strikingly similar to the New Haven Yawl marking, while at the same time significantly different. It measures a millimeter less in height. The stern of the ship is just a smudge with no detail, and the prow has a different angle of curve. The enlargements shown in Figure 4 provide a good basis for comparison.

Both handstamps on the cover in Figure 4 must have been applied at Stamford. But





Figure 4. Carried on a long and arduous journey from Ireland to New York, this cover was shipwrecked on the brig *Lancaster* off Halifax on May 21, 1836. Passengers, crew and mail were salvaged, and the cover found its way by private vessel from Halifax to Stamford, Connecticut, where it entered the mails as a ship letter, rated for a 42¢ collection in New York City. Stamford applied its double-oval datestamp in red and the SHIP marking in magenta. Enlarged at left are the New Haven SHIP from Figure 3 scanned alongside the Stamford SHIP. Similarities (and differences) are evident.

they are struck in different colors, and that's a source of concern. I would like to see another example of this ship marking. If a reader can provide one, I will be grateful.

Only one postal marking from the 1850s is known using an illustration of a sailing vessel instead of the word SHIP. This was used at Nantucket, Massachusetts. An example appears on the cover shown in Figure 5. Fortunately the strike is very clear. ASCC calls this marking a "ship under sail." The contents are missing so the origin of this envelope is not known. The cover is addressed to Manton, Rhode Island (now part of Providence) and rated 7¢ due: 2¢ ship fee and 5¢ unpaid postage. Since this is an envelope, it is unlikely to date from the 1840s.

### Postal markings showing steamboats

On the covers just discussed, images of ocean-going sailing ships substituted as postal markings for the word SHIP. In a few domestic instances, images of a steamboat were used as a substitute for the word STEAMBOAT or STEAM.

Probably the best known of these is the red steamboat used at Cahaba, Alabama, in the 1840s. Located at a strategic point on the Alabama river, Cahaba was the first capital of Alabama but was abandoned in the late 19th century due to frequent flooding. A nice strike of the Cahaba steamboat, with a "5" rating marking struck in the same red ink, can be seen on the cover shown in Figure 6, which was endorsed to be carried on the steamboat "Lourdes Jr." This well-executed pictorial postmark—with sidewheel, smokestack and bow pennant quite evident—served to indicate the letter was received at the post office from a steamboat. The "5" rating marking is appropriate for the mid-1840s. A second pictorial





**Figure 5. "Ship under sail" marking from Nantucket, Massachusetts, early 1850s, on a cover to Manton, Rhode Island, rated 7¢ due: 2¢ ship fee and 5¢ unpaid postage.**

steamboat marking, attributed to Cahaba and quite different from this one, is illustrated and listed by ASCC. This crude marking is a fabrication made 80 years ago by J. Hubert Scruggs Jr., who faked many Alabama steamboat handstamps.<sup>3</sup>



**Figure 6. Probably the best known of the small number of illustrated steamboat postmarks: Cahaba, Alabama, sidewheel steamboat marking, here with a matching 5 handstamp, on a cover from the mid-1840s.**

Figure 7 shows the only known example of an illustrated steamboat marking used at Wilmington, Delaware in 1834. This marking is erroneously listed in ASCC as a Philadelphia marking.<sup>4</sup> The letter within is headed "Tusculum Oct 2nd 1834." The cover is rated for





**Figure 7. Steamboat with two stacks, used at Wilmington in 1834, the only known example. Compare with the Philadelphia Full-Rigged Ship on the cover in Figure 1.**

6¢ collection (faint manuscript in upper right quadrant) for a distance of up to 30 miles. It is my opinion that this marking was created by the same person who made the Philadelphia illustrated ship in the same year. Compare this marking with the Full-Rigged Ship in Figure 1. The two cities are close and the design similarities are striking.

A third illustrated steamboat handstamp, a blue oval with the word STEAM in an arc behind the steamboat's smoke, was used at Memphis, Tennessee. This is not listed in ASCC, but I have seen three examples. A full, bold strike appears on the cover in Figure 8, a folded illustrated printed steamboat bill from New Orleans dated November 11, 1846. At Memphis the cover was rated for 12¢ collection, which I interpret as postage of 10¢ and 2¢ for the captain of a steamboat without a mail contract.



**Figure 8. Memphis, Tennessee: blue oval sidewheel steamboat illustration with the word STEAM partly obscured by the smoke at top, on a bill from New Orleans, 1846.**



### Forwarding agent handstamps with ship illustrations

In addition to postal markings, forwarding agent handstamps sometimes show ship illustrations. Such handstamps were widely employed in Europe, and I have noted two on stampless covers sent to the United States. There must be many more. The cover in Figure 9 bears the handstamped marking of the English office of the Boston-based Harnden Express Company, showing what appears to be an ocean-going steamship under sail. The legend on the marking reads “FORWARDED BY HARNDEN & Co. No 20 WATER ST. LIVERPOOL.” Routed “Per *Montezuma*,” this cover was rated “6” at New York for the port-of-entry charge for a private ship letter. The letter within is headed “Liverpool 31 Aug 1844.”

**Figure 9.** Harnden & Co., Liverpool office, handstamped forwarder marking showing an ocean-going steamship under sail. New York rated this 1844 cover for 6¢ as a private ship letter addressed to the port of entry.



**Figure 10.** Double-oval forwarding marking from the firm of Edwards & Sanford, Liverpool, showing a nicely detailed three-masted sidewheel steamship. The letter within is dated May 29, 1852.

Figure 10 shows an illustrated forwarding marking from the firm of Edwards & Sanford, Liverpool. The image in this marking is a three-masted sidewheel steamship. The letter within has a printed heading “Transatlantic Express and Shipping Agency” and is dated May 29, 1852. It is of interest that this letter enclosed a short letter written on very light paper that did not upgrade the letter’s weight. This cover crossed the Atlantic on the Cunard steamer *America* with 19¢ debited to the U.S. and 24¢ due from the recipient in New York.

### Naval Lyceum markings

A subset of forwarding agent markings are those applied by navy facilities to letters forwarded to sailors abroad. The U.S. Naval Lyceum, a library at the Navy Yard on the East River in Brooklyn, employed at least two forwarding markings showing images of ships. The Naval Lyceum was a library; I wrote about this subject more than 40 years ago in *The American Philatelist*.<sup>5</sup> Beginning in the 1830s, letters to sailors on board U.S. naval ships could be mailed to the Naval Lyceum, whence they would be forwarded, usually by another naval vessel, to the ship of the addressee. This was a useful service connecting sailors billeted overseas with friends and family at home.



**Figure 11. Exquisitely executed three-masted sailing vessel handstamped by the Naval Lyceum at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, which acted as a forwarder dispatching mail to sailors abroad. This marking is more often seen on the reverse of covers.**

Figure 11 shows a stampless cover that originated at Detroit on August 6, 1844. The PAID and 25 on this cover show that the 25¢ single rate for a distance over 400 miles was prepaid at Detroit. The cover was carried to Brooklyn where it received the lovely oval handstamp of the U.S. Naval Lyceum. The three-masted sailing ship in this marking is thoughtfully designed and exquisitely executed, right down to the stars-and-stripes pennant waving at the stern. The strike on the cover in Figure 11 is an extraordinary example of this marking, which is most often found on the reverse of covers in strikes that vary in clarity.

In the forwarding process the address lines “Care of Naval Lyceum, Brooklyn, N.Y.” were crossed out and the cover was subsequently consigned to an unknown vessel that carried it to Midshipman George M. Dibble, on board the “U.S. Brig *Porpoise*, West Coast of Africa.” The 225-ton *Porpoise* was at this time engaged in anti-slave-trade patrol duty.

The correspondence of Commodore Hiram Paulding contained two covers bearing a less-ornate Naval Lyceum handstamp showing a small illustration of a ship with “FORWARDED BY THE US NAVAL LYCEUM” in a large double oval. One of these markings is shown in Figure 12, struck on the reverse of a folded lettersheet that bears two sets of fumigation slits. The origin is uncertain, but the cover is addressed to “Lieut. Paulding, Commanding U.S. Schooner *Shark*, Mediterranean” in 1835. At the time Paulding was cruising between Malta and Naples.

A similar handstamp, illustrating a three-masted sailing vessel, was used at Boston





Figure 12. A less-ornate Naval Lyceum handstamp showing a small illustration of a sailing ship, struck on the reverse of a cover (origin not certain) sent to a sailor on duty in the Mediterranean. The puncture arrays are fumigation slits.



Figure 13. Scarce circular handstamp of the Naval Lyceum at Boston showing a three-masted sailing ship, here struck on a cover addressed to a vessel doing blockade duty for the Gulf Squadron during the Civil War. The text of the marking reads: NAVAL LIBRARY & INSTITUTE, U.S. NAVY YARD, BOSTON. There are no postal markings on this cover because it never entered the U.S. mails.

at a later date for the same purpose, to indicate forwarding to a naval vessel. An example is struck on the cover in Figure 13, which was sent during the Civil War to a ship in the Gulf blockading squadron. The text in this large circular handstamp reads: NAVAL LIBRARY & INSTITUTE, U.S. NAVY YARD, BOSTON. This is quite a scarce marking. A second example with a light strike appears on a cover addressed to a sailor on "U.S.S. Preble, Blockading Squadron, Care of Naval Lyceum, N. York." The letter must have been transported from New York to Boston where it received the handstamp. As with the cover in Figure 12, there are no postal markings since both covers were confined to the military dispatch system.



**Figure 14.** This cover to Pikesville, Maryland, from the U.S.S. *Hartford*, entered the mails at New York City, where it was rated for 5¢ postage due a ship letter. The handsome blue circular handstamp, showing a three-masted sailing ship, is typical of a group of markings used on board U.S. naval vessels during the 1870s.

During the 1870s certain U.S. naval vessels used similar blue circular handstamps illustrating a three-masted sailing ship. Most of the surviving examples are on covers franked with 3¢ stamps paying domestic postage (and showing that stamps were available onboard these ships). A few are found on incoming stampless covers. Figure 14 shows an example, from the “U.S. Ship Hartford” with New York ship postmark indicating 5¢ postage due.

These handstamps are illustrated and catalogued in my book on vessel-named markings.<sup>6</sup> The list includes: *Canandaigua* (M172), *Colorado* (M265), *Hartford* (M589), *Nipsic* (M1011), *Richmond* (M1195A), *Shawmut* (M1271B) and *Swatara* (M1339A). These and subsequent M numbers are the catalog numbers from my book; all except the cover from the *Richmond* date from the 1870s. The *Richmond* cover bears a Japanese stamp and was sent from Yokohama to Boston in 1884. The ship handstamp is a wide-spaced double circle with a different ship illustration.

### **Vessel-named steamboat handstamps**

There are a great variety of steamboat markings containing the names of individual vessels. These markings were applied by steamboat personnel (usually the clerk) to letters carried on board. While not strictly postal, the markings are a show of pride and a form of advertisement. The vast majority of such markings are illustrated in my book just noted. Only a small number of these handstamps contain any type of illustration. This article concludes by describing those markings that contain an illustration of a steamboat. In a few instances, I have chosen stamp-bearing covers because they best illustrate the pictorial ship images that are the subject of this article.

Two markings from the steamboat *Champion* (M193, M194) show the same illustration of a twin-stack sidewheel steamboat. This ship image is quite detailed for its small size. The 3¢ Nesbitt envelope in Figure 15, from the massive Carroll, Hoy correspondence, bears a handstamped STEAM and a New Orleans circular datestamp showing MAR 22 1859. The cover was placed on board the steamboat at some unknown origin for carriage down the Mississippi to New Orleans. The octagon marking containing the steamboat image (which





Figure 15. The octagonal handstamp of the Mississippi River steamboat *Champion* includes a small, twin-stack sidewheel steamboat. This cover from the Carroll Hoy correspondence was placed on board the steamboat at an up-river location for carriage to New Orleans, where it was postmarked on March 22, 1859.



Figure 16. A clearer strike of the steamboat image used by the sidewheeler *Champion*, here on a 3¢ 1857 cover that traveled in the U.S. mails up the Ohio River from Cairo, Illinois to Cincinnati. The tiny steamboat illustration in this marking is quite detailed.

is not very clear) names the steamer and its key personnel, and gives the specific date (“MAR 25”) of the steamer’s next departure back up the Mississippi to St. Louis and Cairo. It is rare for a steamboat marking to be dated like this.

The oval marking on the 3¢ 1857 cover in Figure 16, postmarked at Cairo (date unclear) and then sent up the Ohio to Cincinnati, is a different marking promoting *Champion*, but it names the same captain and clerk, and features the same small steamboat illustration, here in a nice crisp strike that shows details including tiny windows on the main deck.





Figure 17. The Mississippi River steamboat *Convoy* used a sidewheeler image along with its name. The STEAM 10 marking, in a different color, was applied at St. Louis. Internally datelined New Orleans, July 3, 1846.

An illustrated steamboat handstamp not listed in my book is the “CONVOY” (M288A) marking shown in Figure 17. Andrew Levitt discovered this cover after the book was published. Note that the ship name and image are struck in a red shade that is quite different from the color of the adjacent “STEAM 10,” which is a St. Louis postmark. The billhead within is datelined New Orleans July 3, 1846. Rushville, Illinois, is on the Illinois River, so this is likely a Mississippi River marking.

The cover in Figure 18 shows the purple oval handstamp of the “STEAMER C.T. DUMONT” (M319) with a blurred steamship image at center. The cover shows no date and no postal markings. A printed corner envelope exists for this same vessel, indicating that it traveled on the Ohio River between Cincinnati and the adjacent river towns of Florence, Indiana and Warsaw, Kentucky. A 3¢ 1869 stamp on the cornercard cover suggests the Figure 18 handstamp was used in the same period, 1869-70.



Figure 18. Purple oval handstamp “STEAMER C.T. DUMONT” with a blurred steamship image at center. The cover shows no date and no postal markings, but other covers affirm that this vessel did short runs on the Ohio River.



Figure 19. The handstamp of the steamboat *Cuba* shows a sidewheeler with flag and smokestack. This letter entered the mails at New Orleans in the 1850s, during the time such mail was being marked WAY.



While only known on the 3¢ 1853 Nesbitt envelope shown in Figure 19, the circular marking for the steamboat *Cuba* (M321) could well exist on a stampless bill of lading. The full text of the marking reads “U.S.M. [Mail] STEAMBOAT CUBA.” This strike is blurry but there is definitely a flag, smoke, a smokestack and even the hint of a sidewheel. This is an incoming letter posted at New Orleans during the period in the 1850s when New Orleans was marking steamboat letters with a “WAY” handstamp.

The 3¢ Reay envelope in Figure 20 shows the very interesting purple rectangular handstamp of the *D.L. Tully* (M351), a steamboat that plied the Alabama River in the 1870s. The marking indicates that Tully “leaves Mobile every Saturday for Demopolis, Gainesville, Warsaw, Vienna and Pickensville.” Addressed to Vienna, Alabama, this cover probably was put on board the steamer at Mobile. The illustration in the handstamp shows two tiny steamboats with a locomotive and train between them.

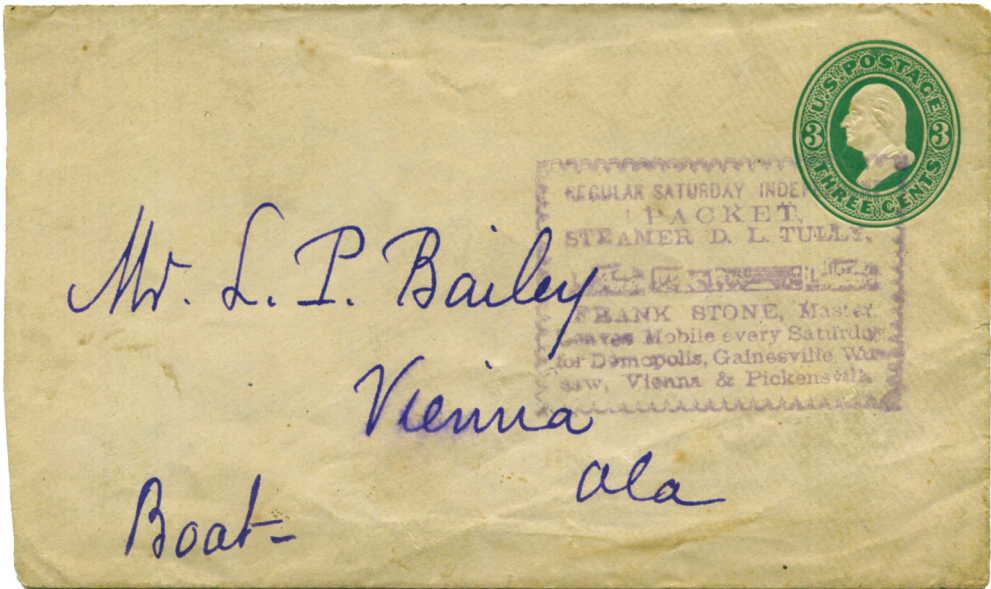


Figure 20. This 3¢ Reay envelope bears the purple handstamp of the *D.L. Tully*, a steamboat that plied the Alabama River in the 1870s. The illustration in the handstamp shows two tiny steamboats with a locomotive and train between them.



**Figure 21. Out-of-the-mails use of a 3¢ Nesbitt envelope with a handstamp of the Red River steamboat *Grand Era* containing a tiny illustration of a steamboat: Faintly struck, but this is the only known example of this illustrated marking.**

One of several markings from the Red River steamboat *Grand Era* (M541) contains a tiny illustration of a steamboat. The Nesbitt envelope in Figure 21, another cover from the Carroll, Hoy correspondence, shows the only known example of this marking. This faintly struck rectangular handstamp lists the captain's name as Kouns and declares that *Grand Era* leaves New Orleans every Monday at 5 p.m. and leaves Shreveport every Friday at 10 a.m. The Kouns family ran many different steamboats on the lower Mississippi. The 3¢ envelope complies with the law, but this cover bears no postal markings and traveled from Shreveport to its recipient in New Orleans without ever entering the government mails.

The covers in Figures 22 and 23 bear ship-illustrated markings for two different vessels that traveled on two different rivers. Despite these differences, I think the two markings were created by the same person. The cover in Figure 22 bears a sharp, crisp strike of a circular marking used on the steamboat *James Hewitt* (M670), which plied the Tombigbee River in Alabama. The cover bears a red-orange circular datestamp of Demopolis, Alabama and a matching "5" rating mark. It was presumably put onto the steamboat at Mobile (or some point farther upriver) before entering the mails at Demopolis for carriage to Greensborough, about 30 miles north. The circular PACKET JAMES HEWITT marking features bold sans-serif lettering within a border of concentric circles and ornamental stars left and right, enclosing a nicely-executed steamboat illustration with the vessel name ("J. HEWITT") on the paddle-wheel housing.

The oval marking on the cover in Figure 23 is less crisply struck but shows the same essential features: bold sans serif lettering, concentric borders, surrounding stars and the steamboat name ("JEFFERSON") in clear tiny letters on the paddle-wheel housing. This cover was postmarked at New Orleans on December 22 and rated "STEAM 5." The letter within is headed Alexandria, Louisiana, December 16, 1851. Of these two illustrated steamboat markings the "JEFFERSON" (M685) is the rarer, with only this cover known bearing a full strike.

The Long Island steamer *Perry* used at least four handstamps and two printed corner-cards. Printed freight bills also exist with the same illustrations, so it can be presumed that





Figure 22. A cover carried on Tombigbee River in Alabama, with a crisp strike of a circular marking used on the steamboat *James Hewitt*. The detailed steamboat illustration includes the name of the vessel (“J. HEWITT”) on the paddle-wheel housing.



Figure 23. The oval marking of the Red River steamboat *Jefferson*, struck here on a cover from Alexandria to New Orleans, bears many of the features found on the *James Hewitt* marking in Figure 22—including the vessel name on the wheel housing.

the handstamps and colored cornercard pictures were copied from the printed bill illustrations. The cover in Figure 24, origin unknown and addressed to Newport, Rhode Island, shows the most interesting of the handstamps, a paddle-wheel steamboat with two flags and two smokestacks (M1085), with the word “STEAM-BOAT” as a separate handstamp and a “5” rating postmark. On this cover, all three handstamps are in the same color ink. This sug-





Figure 24. Small paddle-wheel steamboat with two flags and two smokestacks struck on a cover (origin unknown) with “STEAM-BOAT” and a “5” rating postmark. The handstamps are in the same ink, so this steamboat may be a Newport postal marking.

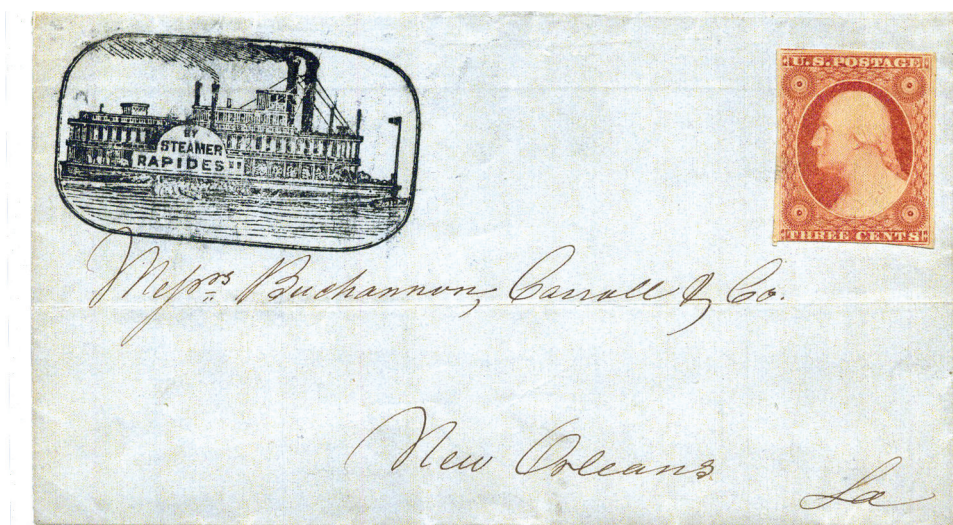


Figure 25. 3¢ 1851 stamp tied to a cover bearing a tiny red handstamped steamboat image thought to illustrate the Long Island steamboat *Perry*. Found mainly on covers bearing the 3¢ 1851 stamp, this too might be a Newport postal marking.

gests the illustrated steamboat might have been applied at the Newport post office, which would make it a postal marking. The ASCC illustrates and lists it as a Newport marking.<sup>7</sup>

The tiny red steamboat handstamp (M1086) on the cover shown in Figure 25 is thought to illustrate the *Perry*. This marking is found used on covers bearing 3¢ 1851 stamps and this too may be a postal marking. The blue color listed for this marking in my book is an error; it should be red.





**Figure 26.** The highly detailed handstamp of the Mississippi River steamboat *Rapides* is by far the most striking of all ship-illustrated handstamps. The 1855 cover (above) traveled from Evergreen, Louisiana to New Orleans without ever entering the U.S. mails, but the 3¢ 1851 stamp was still a requirement.



The finest vessel-named handstamp and certainly the most striking ship-illustrated marking is the black handstamp of the steamer *Rapides* (M158), shown in an incredibly clear, crisp strike on the cover in Figure 26. This is a three-dimensional image worthy of a ship modeller. The presentation in Figure 26 includes an enlargement to better show the details. Some collectors feel this is the finest U.S. handstamped marking.

As with the *James Hewitt* and the *Jefferson* covers (Figures 22 and 23), the name of the vessel is incorporated into the illustration on the housing of the paddle-wheel. The cover in Figure 26 is a small folded letter from Evergreen, Louisiana, internally dated December 6, 1855, addressed to New Orleans. As noted above, the government required 3¢ postage, even if (as in this instance) the cover never entered the U.S. mails. Thus the uncanceled 3¢ stamp. Often the steamboat clerk canceled such stamps with a pen mark but that did not happen in this case. The majority of these out-of-the-mails 1850s covers are stamped envelopes.

I record four other handstamps showing steamboats for which scans are unfortunately not available: *Lady Elgin* (M763), *Lotus No 2* (M808), *Nipsic* (M1011) and *Philadelphia* (M1103).

Finally, there is one forwarding handstamp that illustrates a steamboat. This is the marking at upper left on the cover shown in Figure 27. The ship image is hardly more than a caricature: there are no smokestacks but it does show a diagonal prow and a circular side-wheel. The cover bears a manuscript directive via the "Peytonia" and a red oval hand-



**Figure 27. The Cairo forwarding handstamp at upper left on this cover contains a simplified ship image: no smokestacks but a diagonal prow and the outline of a circular side-wheel. The directive via the “Peytonia” designates an Ohio River steamboat. The cover was apparently forwarded from Cairo to Kentucky Bend.**

stamped “STEAMER PEYTONIA” (M1099). It was forwarded from Cairo to Kentucky Bend with the illustrated handstamp (“FORWARDED BY T.J. SMITH & Co. CAIRO”) in fancy frame with the addition of two strikes of the small oval “MARSHAL NEY” (M849). This folded outer lettersheet contains no contents so the origin is not known, but *Peytonia* was an Ohio River steamboat.

### Conclusion and acknowledgements

This article has described (and illustrated where possible) the small number of hand-stamped markings, postal and otherwise, bearing illustrations of sailing ships or steamboats, that are known to have been struck on stampless covers. Thanks to Douglas Clark, Charles DiComo, David Jarrett and Richard Frajola for illustrations.

### Endnotes

1. *American Stampless Cover Catalog*, Fourth Edition, 1987, Vol. 2, pg. 85.
2. James W. Milgram, “Rare Philadelphia Small Full-Rigged Ship Postmark,” *Chronicle* 235 (2012), pp. 204-207.
3. Ashbrook *Special Service*, pp. 437-438.
4. *American Stampless Cover Catalog*, Fourth Edition, 1987, Vol. 2, pg. 134.
5. James W. Milgram, “U.S. Naval Lyceum Usages,” *American Philatelist*, Vol. 91 (1977), pp. 626-29.
6. James W. Milgram, *Vessel-Named Markings on Inland and Ocean Waterways, 1810-1890*. Collectors Club of Chicago, 1984.
7. *American Stampless Cover Catalog*, Fourth Edition, 1987, Vol. 2, pg. 134. ■

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**THE U.S. 5¢ STAMP OF 1847:  
A NEW APPROACH TO IMPRESSIONS AND COLORS**

**SCOTT R. TREPEL**

**Introduction—the need for change**

This article proposes a new way to classify 5¢ 1847 stamps. The current method of identifying 5¢ 1847s in Scott's *Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers* is fraught with inconsistency and contradiction. The emphasis on color and the proliferation of named shade varieties make it practically impossible for collectors, dealers or expertizing services to identify stamps with consistency. One philatelist's Dark Brown is another's Brown. Two stamps certified as the same color look nothing alike. A stamp certified as one Scott number is recertified as a different number by the same service. One stamp assigned a Scott number looks sharp and richly colored, while another with the same number is poorly printed and of dull color.

The proposal in this article is intended to remedy this problem. The new method uses the *printing impression* as the primary feature, followed by color family, to determine the basic Scott number. Sub-shades named by specialists but not listed in Scott would become a matter of opinion outside the purview of expertizing services, freeing them from the daunting task of consistently identifying shades on certificates.

A 5¢ 1847 printing impression is judged by the presence or absence of fine detail, and the sharpness and strength of the horizontal background lines. In printed impressions, the appearance of these fine details is mainly attributable to the effects of plate wear over time. For this reason, the impression is described in terms of the state of the plate. There are four basic categories of printing impression in this new method:

Early Impression  
Intermediate Impression  
Worn-Plate Impression  
Cleaned-Plate Impression

These four terms, used throughout this article, will be explained and illustrated. A visual guide is presented to illustrate the differences in impressions, so that anyone with good vision (and a magnifying glass) can assign the impression category to a 5¢ 1847 stamp with reasonable accuracy and consistency. This new system is not perfect, but it is a step in a different and better direction.

**Five printings from the same plate**

All 4.4 million 5¢ 1847 stamps, including the unissued and redeemed/returned stamps that were later destroyed, were printed by Rawdon, Wright, Hatch & Edson (RWH&E) in New York City, from a single engraved steel plate of 200 subjects. Work on that plate started in late May 1847. Printing began after the first order from the U.S. Post Office Department (USPOD) was received on June 3, 1847.



Over the four-year life of the 1847 issue there were five printings from the 5¢ plate and five separate deliveries of stamps from RWH&E to the official USPOD agent. Table 1 presents dates for the five printings gleaned from production correspondence.<sup>1</sup> The terms *delivery* and *printing* are used interchangeably by philatelists describing the date the 1847 stamps were ready at the printers. For clarity, in this article “Printing” will be used with an initial capital letter when describing a specific, numbered print run.

**TABLE 1: 1847 STAMP PRODUCTION**

| Printing   | Quantity  | Date of order to RWH&E | Receipt of order by RWH&E | Stamps ready at RWH&E |
|------------|-----------|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>1st</b> | 600,000   | Jun. 1, 1847           | Jun. 3, 1847              | Jun. 26, 1847         |
| <b>2nd</b> | 800,000   | Mar. 13, 1848          | Mar. 15, 1848             | Apr. 10, 1848*        |
| <b>3rd</b> | 1,000,000 | Mar. 19, 1849          | Mar. 20, 1849             | Apr. 19, 1849         |
| <b>4th</b> | 1,000,000 | Feb. 4, 1850           | Feb. 5, 1850              | Mar. 18, 1850*        |
| <b>5th</b> | 1,000,000 | Dec. 7, 1850           | Dec. 9, 1850              | Jan. 24, 1851         |

The five 5¢ 1847 printings, their quantities and their official ordering dates: the date of the post office order, the date the order was received at Rawdon, Wright, Hatch and Edson (RWH&E, the printer) and the date the stamps were ready to deliver to the USPO stamp agent. \* = Estimated date based on official correspondence.

The 1st Printing stamps were ready for delivery on June 26, in time to have them available July 1, the first day of issue at the New York City post office. The USPOD’s fifth and last order for 5¢ stamps was received by RWH&E on December 9, 1850, and the 5th Printing stamps were ready for delivery on January 24, 1851. About five months later, on July 1, 1851, the 1847 issue was superseded by the new stamps produced by Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Company of Philadelphia, and the 1847 stamps were demonetized.

The 1847 stamps in the public’s hands could be redeemed, and postmasters were ordered to return all unsold and redeemed stamps to the USPOD. According to official records, 682,580 unissued remainders and 148,174 5¢ stamps redeemed and returned from post offices were destroyed. The total printing of 4,400,000 5¢ stamps less 830,754 destroyed leaves an issued quantity of 3,569,246 5¢ stamps.<sup>2</sup>

The production timeline works out to 22,000 impressions from the 5¢ 1847 plate over a period spanning 42 months. Each time the printing was completed, the plate was wrapped and officially sealed in the presence of postal officials. When the next order was placed, the plate was opened by RWH&E in the presence of postal officials.<sup>3</sup>

The plate printers at RWH&E squeezed as much juice as they could from the 5¢ plate by reconditioning it on two separate occasions, as documented in official correspondence from the Travers papers.<sup>4</sup> In preparation for the 4th Printing (February-March 1850), the plate was cleaned with a chemical process that removed imbedded ink and dirt from the recessed lines and strengthened the engraved impressions.

The plate was reworked about one-third into the 5th Printing, which started soon after December 9, 1850. On December 19, 1850, RWH&E wrote to USPOD officials and requested the die “to retouch the plate.” In their letter they state that “having worked off about one third of the last order for postage stamps” they found it “necessary to retouch the plate.” One-third of the 5,000 impressions needed for the 1,000,000 stamp order would be about 1,700 plate impressions. RWH&E used the term “die” in their letter, but obviously plate re-entries had to be made from the transfer roll with a relief made from the die. The transfer roll was used to strengthen an unknown number of subjects on the 5¢ plate.

CHART 1: AVAILABILITY OF 5¢ 1847 PRINTINGS

|              | DATES WHEN 1847 STAMPS WERE READY AT RWH&E |                  |                                         |                       |                           |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
|              | 1847                                       | 1848             | 1849                                    | 1850                  | 1851                      |
| 1st Printing | 7/1/1847                                   | Early Impression |                                         |                       |                           |
| 2nd Printing |                                            | 4/10/1848        | Intermediate and Worn-Plate Impressions |                       |                           |
| 3rd Printing |                                            |                  | 4/19/1849                               | Worn-Plate Impression |                           |
| 4th Printing |                                            |                  |                                         | 3/18/1850             | Cleaned-Plate Impression  |
| 5th Printing |                                            |                  |                                         |                       | 1/24/1851<br>Cleaned/Worn |

This chart shows the availability of stamps from the five 5¢ 1847 printings, starting with the July 1, 1847 issue date and followed by “ready” dates at the printer. If a dated example predates the ready date, then it must represent a prior printing. The chronological lifespan of the various impressions is represented by the green bars.

Chart 1 presents a graphic timeline showing when the five printings became available, and what impressions come from each printing. This chart will be very helpful in deciding which printings (and possibly impressions) can be *ruled out* for a stamp on a dated cover. If the cover predates the “ready” date for the printing, then only the printings prior to that date can be considered.

The stamps issued from July 1, 1847, through mid-April 1848 all came from the 1st Printing supply that was ready on June 26, 1847. The 2nd Printing order was received by RWH&E on March 15, 1848, and stamps from this printing were ready on April 10, 1848. Any stamp dated prior to mid-April 1848 must be a 1st Printing and, therefore, an Early Impression. Dated examples help define what an Early Impression should look like.

The 3rd Printing was ready on April 19, 1849. Stamps from the 2nd and 3rd Printings show extreme variability in impressions, ranging from Intermediate to Worn-Plate Impressions. The 4th Printing, ready on March 18, 1850, was made from the reconditioned, or *cleaned*, plate. The 5th Printing, ready on January 24, 1851, included approximately 1,700 sheets printed before the plate was reworked by re-entering a number of subjects. The balance of 3,300 5th Printing sheets were printed after the plate was reworked. There is no way to know how many stamps from this reworked plate were actually sold to the public.

**Ink mixture and color variation—the quixotic quest for shade classification**

Over the course of five separate print runs, the plate printers used different ink mixtures to achieve the target color. Based on scientific testing supervised by Thomas Lera at the National Postal Museum and reported by Wade Saadi (*Chronicle* 239, August 2013) and Gordon Eubanks (*Chronicle* 252, November 2016), the inks found among a broad spectrum of 5¢ 1847 shades contain two primary elements: lead and sulfur.

Prior to these tests, some specialists claimed that varying levels of iron and chromium in the 5¢ inks were responsible for the different shades. However, neither iron nor chromium (nor any other extraordinary component) are present in the test samples to any significant level. Therefore, all of the 5¢ shades were the result of variation in mixing the same basic components (primarily lead and sulfur), not the presence or absence of anything else. This means that it is very unlikely there will ever be a test to prove a Red Orange (Scott 1c) is really a Red Orange, based on a detectable, distinguishing component in the ink. It is up to the human eye to judge.

The myriad 5¢ 1847 colors have challenged philatelists as far back as the earliest



pioneers in the study of classic United States stamps. Carroll Chase made an attempt to bring order to chaos in his series of articles published in 1916-17 in *The Philatelic Gazette*. Others followed, led by Stanley B. Ashbrook, Elliott Perry, Creighton C. Hart and other collectors who held large quantities of stamps for study. Every so often, someone would publish an article to present their ideas about the 5¢ colors, then be forgotten.

For a brief time in the 1970s and 80s, it seemed that fresh analysis might achieve a system that would bring consistency and logic to the 5¢ 1847 colors, and higher fidelity color printing promised accurate representations of the colors for comparison purposes. Roy White published his color book. Calvet Hahn published an article in the *Collectors Club Philatelist*, using color transparencies he had made in Christie's photography studio with stamps he gathered from Henry Stollnitz and Steve Karbo. Wilbur Amonette began writing notes and letters to collectors, identifying stamp shades according to his legendary reference collection. Wade Saadi built an exhibition collection with his stamps sorted by printing/delivery and color, and also published articles in the *Chronicle*, documenting what he believed to be the correct classification system.

Despite the dedicated efforts of these expert philatelists, the current color-based system of identification has proved to be unreliable. Contributing to the unreliability is the effect of environmental factors on inks. At the moment of production, the impression and color of a 5¢ 1847 stamp are determined primarily by plate wear and ink mixture (other variables include paper dampness, plate temperature, ink viscosity, and the plate printer's skill). After printing, a stamp's color can be affected by environmental factors.

The colors of many 5¢ 1847s seen today have changed from what they were even just a few years ago. Exposure to light and contact with contaminants (gas, liquid or solid) have the greatest effect on ink. In particular, 5¢ 1847 stamps frequently show darkening of the printed lines caused by lead and sulfur in the ink interacting with other chemicals or elements in the atmosphere or in contact material, a condition philatelists refer to as *oxidized* (technically incorrect, but commonly used).

There are five basic colors listed for the 5¢ 1847 in the Scott specialized catalog, plus four sub-shades (in italics):

Red Brown—Scott 1  
*Pale Brown, Brown*  
Dark Brown—Scott 1a  
*Grayish Brown, Blackish Brown*  
Orange Brown—Scott 1b  
Red Orange—Scott 1c  
Brown Orange—Scott 1d

In addition to these Scott-listed colors and sub-shades, specialists have devised an even longer list of shade variations. In an article on 5¢ 1847 shades, Wade Saadi stated: "I have recorded a total of 27 major shade classifications, and almost 100 more minor varieties. Even the pedestrian red brown shade has over a dozen and half variants." ("Putting the Ink to the Paper," *Chronicle* 239).

Some of these shade varieties go by unusual names, such as Fuscous Brown or Van Dyke Brown. Others have subtle modifiers: there is Bright Orange Brown versus Very Bright Orange Brown, and Deep Orange Brown versus Very Deep Orange Brown.

With all due respect to the specialists who created a color system with 127 variations, in my opinion, it was doomed from the start. The potential for inconsistency increases exponentially with each "Very," "Deep," "Bright," and "Dark" modifier. Add to that terms such as "Walnut," "Fuscous," "Seal," and "Chestnut," and you get a giant brown mess.

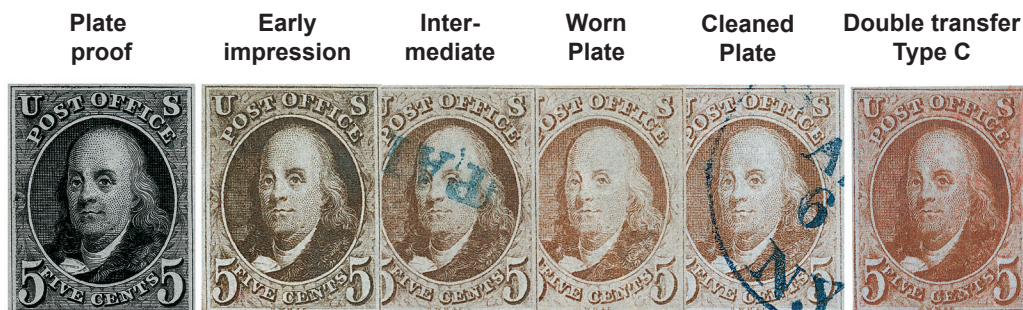
To simplify matters, the proposed new classification system uses the Scott catalog's major listings to name color families, and reduces the shade varieties to a manageable

number. It does not change any of the Scott numbers (1, 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d), which avoids the nightmare of renumbering albums, lists, databases and certificates. The proposed system also uses the printing impression to distinguish between two versions of the same color. For example, Orange Brown from an Early Impression is not the same Orange Brown from a Worn-Plate Impression.

### Visual guide to 5¢ 1847 impressions

The starting point for classifying a 5¢ 1847 stamp under the new system is impression. The visual guides that follow will help philatelists narrow down the range of possibilities and then pinpoint the impression category that best fits the stamp in hand.

The objective is to assign the stamp to the category that fits best among the choices, recognizing that there is variability within each impression category. The sharpest Early Impression will be more clearly defined than an Early Impression that is less clearly defined, but even the less clearly defined Early Impression will have details missing from the other impression categories.



**Figure 1. Side-by-side comparison of 5¢ 1847 impressions. From left: plate proof in black; Early (1st Printing); Intermediate (2nd/3rd Printings); Worn-Plate (3rd and later printings); and Cleaned-Plate (4th and 5th Printings). At the far right is a Type C double transfer, which is considered to be a 5th Printing stamp from the plate after it was reconditioned for the second time.**

Before focusing on different sections of the 5¢ stamp design to describe the finer details of each impression category, an overview of all four categories will be instructive. Figure 1 presents six impressions, arranged side-by-side for easy comparison. The first is a black plate proof that shows the sharpest and greatest amount of detail. To the right are examples of the four impression categories: Early (1st Printing); Intermediate (2nd/3rd Printings); Worn-Plate (3rd and later printings); and Cleaned-Plate (4th and 5th Printings). At the far right is a Type C Double Transfer, which is considered to be a 5th Printing stamp from the reworked plate.

### The POST OFFICE label and horizontal background lines

The appearance of these impressions changes most noticeably in the top part of the design. Figure 2 shows massive enlargements of the POST OFFICE label at top, from the black plate proof and from representative examples of the four different impression types. Note that the POST OFFICE label is positioned against a background of fine horizontal lines. As the plate wore, these fine engraved lines produced increasingly fainter lines. In the Worn-Plate Impression, the lines have become so faint that the POST OFFICE label appears to be set against an almost white background. When the plate was reconditioned before the 4th Printing (creating Cleaned-Plate Impressions), the lines were revived, but the process made them broader and less sharply defined. They continued to wear, and late



Plate proof



Early  
Impression



Intermediate  
Impression



Worn-Plate  
Impression



Cleaned-Plate  
Impression



Figure 2. Enlargements of the POST OFFICE label at top, showing the progressive effect of plate wear and reconditioning on the background lines. The lines grow fainter as the plate wears down. In the Cleaned-Plate Impressions (bottom image) the lines are restored, but they are broader and less well defined than in the Early impressions.





Figure 3. Detail showing the differences in the fine lines surrounding “S” at upper right and above the vignette oval.



impressions from the cleaned plate show very faint or virtually non-existent lines.

### **Leaves, straw and tiny projections at top of oval**

Additional details at the top of the design are also affected by plate wear and reconditioning. Figure 3 presents enlargements of these details in the four impression categories (plus the plate proof). The leaves are engraved in outline form in the horizontal background lines to the left of the “S.” Note that the horizontal lines pass through the largest of the leaves. To the left and below the “S” are lines that resemble stalks of straw, so labeled in Figure 3. At the top of the oval frameline surrounding the vignette of Franklin are tiny projections, some of which are labeled “oval projections” in Figure 3. All of these fine lines are prominent in the Early Impression, but become fainter as the plate was used. They show some degree of strengthening after the plate was cleaned, but they never return to their sharply defined state in the Early Impressions.

### **Lower right detail**

The top portion of the design usually provides sufficient detail for determining the impression category, but sometimes the salient details are obscured by a cancellation, or there is uncertainty for other reasons. In these cases, the lower right side of the design shows additional details that are useful in determining the impression category. Figure 4 presents enlargements of the right side of a plate proof and of the comparable portion of stamps representing the four impression categories.

The lower right side is especially useful in differentiating between Intermediate and Cleaned-Plate Impressions, which sometimes appear quite similar. In Cleaned-Plate Impressions, some of the fine details are faint or missing, as in Worn-Plate Impressions (for example, the leaves in the background) but the horizontal lines, thickened and softened by the plate-cleaning process, appear stronger than they do in Worn-Plate or even Intermediate Impressions. In the Cleaned-Plate example shown in Figure 4, the leaves to the left of the numeral “5” are barely visible, but the horizontal lines are much clearer than in the Worn-Plate Impression.

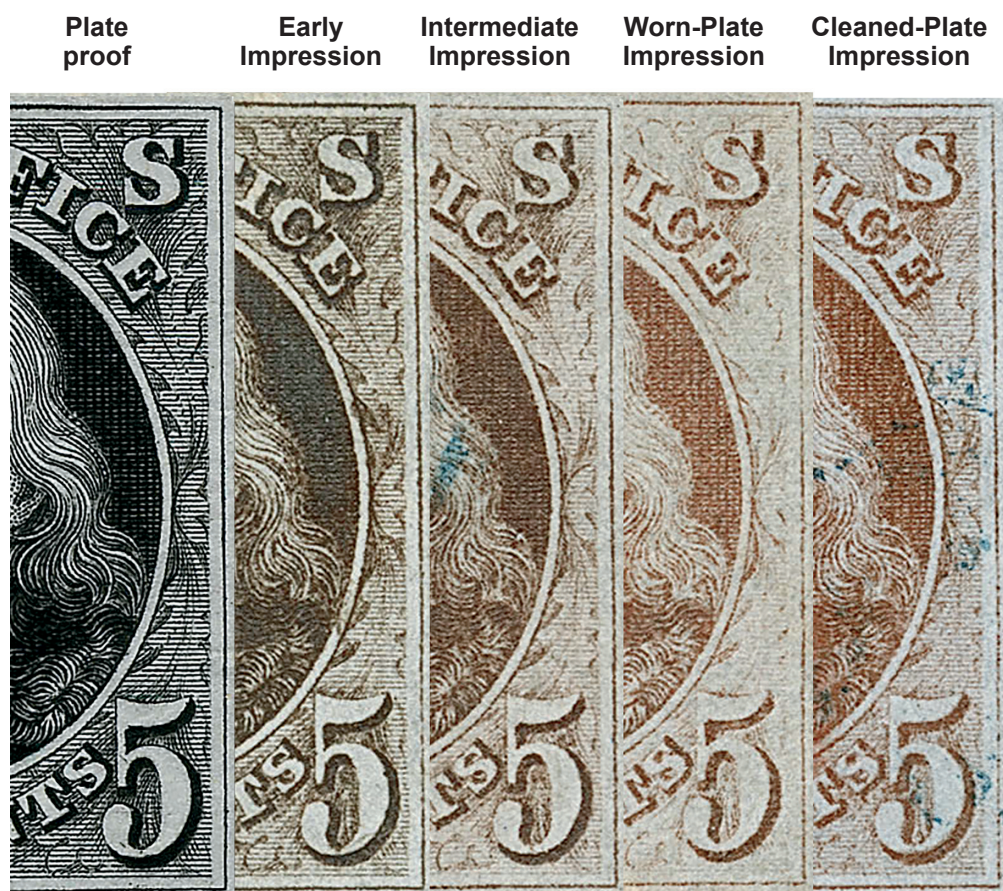
### **Significance of the Type C and D double transfers**

The elusive 5¢ Type C and Type D double transfers are significant because they reveal the appearance of impressions after the plate was reworked during the 5th Printing.

The plate was cleaned before the 4th Printing, but what did the impressions look like at the beginning and end of the 1,000,000-stamp 4th Printing run (5,000 impressions)? The same question can be asked about the 5th Printing: what did the impressions look like at the beginning and end of the 1,000,000-stamp print run? If the Type C and D double transfers are actually unique to the 5th Printing, after the plate was reworked, then they show what the impressions look like from this specific state of the plate.

Specialists generally agree that the Type C and D double transfers were produced during the 5th Printing, after a number of subjects were re-entered with the transfer roll. This assumption is based on the much greater rarity of the Type C and D double transfers compared to the Type A and B double transfers, and the absence of examples on covers dated prior to January 24, 1851, the 5th Printing “ready” date.

All of the 13 recorded Type C double transfer stamps (plus a half-stamp in a strip) are printed in the Brown Orange or Orange Brown shades associated with the 5th Printing, and they are strong Cleaned-Plate Impressions. The position of the Type C double transfer on the plate was unknown until recently, when a stamp on a folded letter (dated May 1, 1851) in the William H. Gross collection was identified as Position 94L (Siegel Sale 1228, lot 490). The stamp has part of the bottom sheet margin and a large top margin with the bottom of the adjoining stamp, which clearly shows the double frameline of the Type C double



**Figure 4.** Details in the design at lower right show the effects of plate wear and reconditioning. Note that the Cleaned-Plate Impression at right is missing some of the fine detail, but has the horizontal background lines broadened and softened, which makes them more prominent than in the Worn-Plate or even Intermediate impressions.

transfer. It was known that the Type C double transfer must be from the fourth column in the left pane, but the exact position was unknown. The stamp on the cover in the Gross collection clinched the location of the Type C double transfer – Position 84L.

The final piece of the puzzle that has yet to be found is an example of Position 84L printed *before* the plate was re-entered. Although a complete pane of plate proofs from the right pane is known, the left pane has not been completely reconstructed. The search for plateable examples of 5¢ 1847 proofs and stamps from the left pane continues, and a progress report is planned for a forthcoming *Chronicle*. A reconstruction would enable philatelists to show the Type C and D double transfer positions before and after the re-entry process. It might also be possible to show before-and-after states of other positions.

### Determining the color family

Once the impression of a stamp has been determined, the next step is to assign one of the five Scott numbers, which represent the basic color families. Chart 2 (next page) shows an arrangement of 5¢ impressions and colors, as well as examples of the Type C and Type D double transfers. Impressions progress from top to bottom and colors vary from left to right. As the chart suggests, certain impressions are not found in a particular color. For example,



## CHART 2: 5¢ 1847 IMPRESSIONS AND COLORS

|                                                                                                                                                      | Dark Brown<br>Scott 1a                                                             | Red Brown<br>Scott 1                                                               | Orange Brown<br>Scott 1b                                                          | Red Orange<br>Scott 1c                                                            | Brown Orange<br>Scott 1d                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Early Impressions                                                                                                                                    |   |   |  | Red Orange not known in Early Impression                                          | Brown Orange not known in Early Impression                                          |
| Intermediate Impressions                                                                                                                             |   |   | Orange Brown not known in Intermediate Impression                                 | Red Orange not known in Intermediate Impression                                   | Brown Orange not known in Intermediate Impression                                   |
| Worn-Plate Impressions                                                                                                                               |   |   |  |  |   |
| Cleaned-Plate Impressions                                                                                                                            | Dark Brown not known in Cleaned-Plate Impression                                   |   |  |  |   |
| <p>Columns show the five major Scott-listed colors; rows show the evolution of the plate and how plate wear effects color. See text for details.</p> |                                                                                    |                                                                                    |                                                                                   |                                                                                   |                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                      |  |  | Type C/D Double Transfers not known in Red Orange color                           |                                                                                   |  |
|                                                                                                                                                      | Ty. D DT<br>Red Brown                                                              | Ty. C DT<br>Orange Brown                                                           |                                                                                   |                                                                                   | Ty. C DT<br>Brown Orange                                                            |

the Red Orange (Scott 1c) is not found with Early or Intermediate Impressions; it is either a Worn-Plate Impression or a Cleaned-Plate Impression.

For most stamps, the default color is Red Brown (Scott 1) and in fact this color can be found in all of the impression categories. The most striking contrast is between Orange Brown stamps with an Early Impression and those with a Worn-Plate Impression. In my opinion, an Early Impression Orange Brown is rarer and far more beautiful than any Worn-Plate Orange Brown stamp, yet the two have the same Scott catalog value. Infrequently, an Early Impression Orange Brown is offered as an ordinary Red Brown, presenting the knowledgeable collector with a ripe cherry for picking.

One of the most misunderstood colors is Brown Orange, Scott 1d. For many years, Brown Orange was a sub-listed shade under Orange Brown, with the same Scott number (1b). At a certain point it became a separate listing, Scott 1d. The Philatelic Foundation has certified many stamps as Brown Orange when, in my opinion, they are a light yellowish shade of Orange Brown in a poor Worn-Plate Impression. Those examples stand in contrast with the true and more intense Brown Orange, which is found on 1851 year-dated covers after the 5th Printing stamps were available. The relative difference should be visible in the color reproduction in Chart 2.

Another frequently misclassified color is Dark Brown. The most beautiful Dark Brown and Dark Red Brown stamps are Early Impressions from the 1st Printing. They have strongly engraved lines and show much of the detail seen on black plate proofs. For some reason, these Early Impression Dark Brown stamps are sometimes described as Brown or Red Brown in auction catalogues and on certificates. One possible explanation for the confusion is that stamps with Intermediate and Worn-Plate Impressions exist in very dark blackish shades. While some of these unusual dark shades might be due to the ink mixture, in my opinion a fair number of so-called Dark Brown and Blackish Brown stamps with Intermediate or Worn-Plate Impressions are oxidized.

### Suggested changes to the Scott catalog listings

In order for the proposed new system of classifying 5¢ 1847 stamps to be widely adopted, it must be reflected in the Scott specialized catalog, and the characteristics that define each impression category must be explained in a way that produces consistent and

|   |     |                                                                                                                                                                               |         |        |
|---|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| 1 | A1  | 5c red brown (intermediate/worn impression)                                                                                                                                   | 6,500.  | 375.   |
|   |     | deep red brown (early impression)                                                                                                                                             | 10,000. | 1,000. |
|   |     | pale red brown (intermediate/worn impression)                                                                                                                                 | 6,500.  | 375.   |
|   |     | brown (intermediate/worn impression)                                                                                                                                          | 6,500.  | 375.   |
|   |     | bright red brown (cleaned-plate impression)                                                                                                                                   | 6,500.  | 375.   |
|   | a.  | 5c dark brown (intermediate/worn impression)                                                                                                                                  | 7,000.  | 400.   |
|   |     | dark brown (early impression)                                                                                                                                                 | 10,000. | 1,000. |
|   |     | blackish brown (intermediate/worn impression)                                                                                                                                 | 10,000. | 750.   |
|   |     | grayish brown (intermediate/worn impression)                                                                                                                                  | 7,000.  | 400.   |
|   | b.  | 5c orange brown (worn impression)                                                                                                                                             | 10,000. | 400.   |
|   |     | deep orange brown (early impression)                                                                                                                                          | 15,000. | 1,500. |
|   |     | orange brown (cleaned-plate impression)                                                                                                                                       | 10,000. | 750.   |
|   | c.  | 5c red orange (worn impression)                                                                                                                                               | 15,000. | 3,500. |
|   |     | red orange (cleaned-plate impression)                                                                                                                                         | 25,000. | 7,500. |
|   | d.  | 5c brown orange (worn impression)                                                                                                                                             | 10,000. | 1,000. |
|   |     | brown orange (cleaned-plate impression)                                                                                                                                       | 15,000. | 1,500. |
|   | (A) | Double transfer of top line (80R1)                                                                                                                                            |         | +200.  |
|   | (B) | Double transfer of top and bottom frame lines (90R1)                                                                                                                          | 50,000  | +200.  |
|   | (C) | Double transfer shows best on bottom frame line and lower part of left frame line, also shows on top and right frame lines and in "5's" and "Five Cents" (84L1, 5th printing) |         |        |
|   |     | orange brown, brown orange                                                                                                                                                    | –       | 7,500. |
|   | (D) | Double transfer on all frame lines (most noticeable at top right and lower left corners), also numerals (5th printing)                                                        |         |        |
|   |     | red brown, orange brown, brown orange                                                                                                                                         | –       | 5,000. |
|   | (E) | Double transfer of "U.", "POST OFFICE" and left numeral                                                                                                                       | –       | 1,750. |
|   |     | On cover                                                                                                                                                                      | –       | 3,500. |
|   |     | orange brown (on cover)                                                                                                                                                       | –       | 5,000. |
|   | (F) | Double transfer of top frame line, upper part of side frame lines, "U." and "POST OFFICE"                                                                                     | –       | 7,500. |

The 1st printing stamps were issued between July 1847 and March 1848 and show strong impressions with complete and sharp horizontal background lines. They are found in several shades, including the ones listed above. The type A and B double transfers were present when the plate was first used, and examples are found in a variety of shades (the premium should be added to the used value). The type C and D double transfers are believed by students to have been made to the plate when it was reconditioned before the 5th printing (January 1851). Type C comes from Position 84L. Type D position is unknown. The type B double transfer with original gum is in a pair and is valued thus. A second example with original gum is known, a single with faults. The type D double transfer is known in an unused block of four and in a used pair (the value shown is for the pair). The type E double transfer is believed by some students to show plate scratches, not a true double transfer. The type F double transfer is no longer believed to be a triple transfer.

**Figure 5. The author's suggested modifications to the listings for the 5¢ 1847 stamp in the Scott specialized catalog, incorporating a new system of classification based on impression state, as developed in this article. Significant changes and additions are highlighted in yellow. The values are the author's suggestions, based on current Scott values.**



accurate identification. My proposed revised Scott listing, presented in Figure 5, retains the basic numbers, but adds impression categories and increases the value of Early Impression stamps.

The proposed catalog revision in Figure 5 does not show listings for stamps with no gum, multiples or covers. The significant changes and additions are highlighted in yellow. The values are my suggestions, based on current Scott values.

### Conclusion—moving forward

The proposed new system will require collectors, auction describers, dealers and certification services to change the way they classify 5¢ 1847 stamps. I have no illusions about the general public's usual reaction to changing old habits.

But in this situation, the old saying "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" does not apply. As someone who sees hundreds of 5¢ 1847s and accompanying certificates every year, I can attest to the existence of problems that cry out for fixing. The solution will not come from attempting to match stamps with color charts comprising 127-plus named shades.

The only way to clean up the mess is to switch to a system that prioritizes printing impression and presents simple criteria for judging the best match between a stamp and the impression category. Beyond that, most philatelists would be happy with a color-matching system that corresponds to the basic colors in the Scott catalog.

The unusual shades of the 5¢ 1847 stamp certainly deserve attention, but it is far more important to make sure the fundamentals are in place and functioning well. If the specialists and certification services have the reference material, skills and desire to consistently certify sub-shades such as Walnut Brown, Seal Brown, Fuscous Brown, and so on, then they can create a sub-classification system.

### Endnotes

1. Information regarding 1847 production from original correspondence is contained in "Updating the U.S. 1847s on Their 150th Anniversary: Beginning, Production, Ending," George W. Brett, *1977 Congress Book*, 63rd American Philatelic Congress.

2. *The Travers Papers: Official Records United States Postal History and Postage Stamps*, George W. Brett, W. Wilson Hulme II, Thomas J. Alexander (Authors), Barbara R. Mueller (Editor), pg. 393.

3. *Ibid.*, pg. 439.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 392-93. ■

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### (EDITOR'S PAGE continued from page 115)

In our Stampless section this issue, page 116, James Milgram takes an equally comprehensive look at handstamped markings with ship illustrations that appear on stampless covers. Many of these are visually striking; some are breathtaking in their detail. Milgram's article provides on-cover illustrations of all but a handful of the known markings.

Labron Harris contributes to two sections this issue: In our Foreign Mails section (page 200) he discusses covers handled by Charles Brewer, an early Hawaii forwarder. And in our 1851 section (page 149) Harris presents a wide array of upgraded first-issue 3¢ Nesbitt envelopes, including some eye-catching covers.

Rounding out this issue, Steven Walske continues his series on the Civil War blockade-runners and the covers they carried (page 159); Alan Campbell investigates the 10¢ "Public Document" rate (page 191), a scarce rate found mostly on covers franked with Official stamps; and Robert Toal, in our Bank Note section (page 185) explores early postcards created by the Philadelphia Fire Association. Enjoy! ■

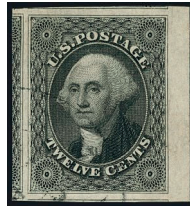
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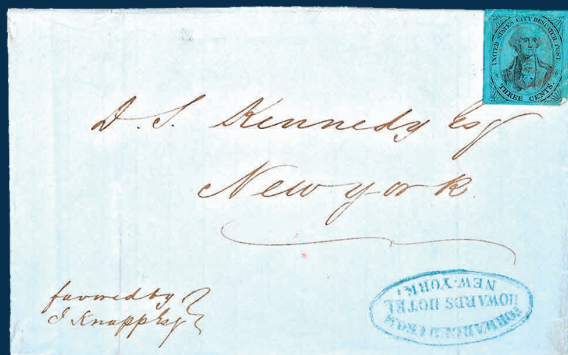
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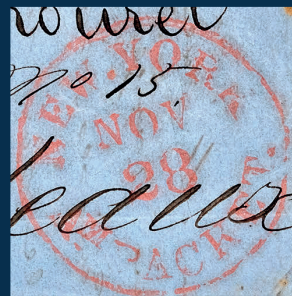
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### 3¢ FIRST ISSUE NESBITT ENVELOPES WITH STAMPS ADDED

LABRON HARRIS

In July 1853 the United States Post Office Department began issuing stamped envelopes printed by George Nesbitt. The envelopes came in three denominations: 3¢, 6¢ and 10¢. In this article I will be looking at 3¢ Nesbitt envelopes to which postage stamps were added.

There are two reasons this happened: To add enough postage to pay a higher rate, either within the United States or to a foreign country; or to pay postage, either in the United States or in the Confederacy, after the envelopes had been demonetized at the start of the Civil War.

#### Domestic covers

Many Nesbitt envelopes were uprated domestically to pay the 6¢ and 10¢ rates to California and even more were uprated to pay additional postage on multiple-rate mail. (Nesbitts also had carrier and local stamps added to them, but they will not be included in this article.) Here I will show two unusual domestic covers.

Figure 1 shows a 3¢ Nesbitt envelope sent from Marysville, California to Grantsville, Maryland. A 3¢ 1851 stamp was added to pay the 6¢ coast-to-coast rate (for a distance over 3,000 miles). The unusual feature is the “MARYSVILLE CAL PAID BY STAMPS” postmark. The date of January 30 indicates this cover was posted in 1854 or 1855. This marking is more frequently seen on Marysville covers posted after July 1, 1855, when the rate was



Figure 1. 3¢ Nesbitt envelope uprated with a 3¢ 1851 stamp to pay the 6¢ coast-to-coast rate on a cover sent from Marysville, California to Maryland in 1854 or 1855.



**Figure 2.** 3¢ Nesbitt envelope uprated with a 1¢ 1851 stamp to pay the way fee on a cover that entered the mails at New Orleans. From the massive Buchanan-Carroll correspondence.



increased to 10¢. It is scarce from the era before that, when the rate was still 6¢.

The cover in Figure 2, canceled at New Orleans and part of the massive Buchanan, Carroll correspondence, had a 1¢ 1851 stamp added to pay the way fee. The stamp and the 3¢ envelope imprint are both canceled WAY, indicating that the cover was picked up outside of New Orleans and put into the mail there. The person who picked up the letter and carried it to New Orleans was paid 1¢ by the post office for his trouble. Prepaid way covers are unusual. James Baird discussed the many oddities of New Orleans way mail in *Chronicle* 256.

#### **Covers to foreign destinations**

Figure 3 shows a 3¢ Nesbitt envelope to Canada with two 3¢ 1851 stamps and one 1¢ uprating the envelope to pay the 10¢ rate from the U.S. to Canada. The cover originated in Buffalo, New York, and was sent to St. Catherines, C.W. (Canada West, now Ontario). A faint light-blue Buffalo circular datestamp, dated August 3, ties the 1¢ stamp and all the stamps are canceled with black grids. The Buffalo post office added the red “UD STATES



**Figure 3.** 3¢ Nesbitt envelope uprated with one 1¢ and two 3¢ 1851 stamps, sent from Buffalo to St. Catherines, Ontario, franked to pay the 10¢ U.S.-Canada rate.



**Figure 4. 3¢ Nesbitt envelope uprated with two 1¢ 1851 stamps to pay the 5¢ British open mail rate (by British packet), sent in 1855 from Savannah to France.**

PAID 6d” exchange-office marking in the lower right quadrant.

Figure 4 shows a 3¢ Nesbitt envelope sent to France in 1855. A pair of 1¢ 1851 stamps was added to pay the 5¢ British open mail rate by British packet. The cover was sent from Savannah, Georgia July 14, via New York. Even though it was prepaid for a British packet and very specifically endorsed “per first English steamer via New York, Southampton, etc.” it was sent on an American packet for which the prepayment should have been 21¢. In 1855 during the Crimean War, the Cunard line sailed only fortnightly and only from Boston. The New York office did not send the letter to Boston to wait for the August 1 Cunard sailing, but put it on the July 25 sailing of the Collins Line *Pacific* and struck “NEW YORK AM PKT” in red. The letter then went via England to Paris, where it was marked 8 decimes due and the addressee had to pay that fee (equivalent to about 16¢) to receive his letter.

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**Figure 5.** 3¢ Nesbitt uprated with two 3¢ 1851 stamps and one 12¢, paying the 21¢ British open mail rate to France (via American-contract packet) in January, 1856.

Figure 5 is another 3¢ Nesbitt envelope to France, this one from 1856. Here the 21¢ British open mail rate (for carriage via American-contract packet) is prepaid by the addition of a 12¢ and two 3¢ 1851 stamps. This cover was posted at New Orleans on January 17, 1856, addressed to Bordeaux. At New York it received the “NEW YORK AM PKT” exchange-office marking dated “JAN 26.” It traveled via England to France where it was rated for 16 decimes collection, indicating it was treated as a double-rate letter in France.

Figure 6 shows a cover to England from 1859. The Nesbitt envelope was uprated with seven 3¢ 1857 perforated stamps, but they were affixed to the back (Figure 7) which seems to have confused the exchange-office postal clerks. The envelope imprint was canceled at



**Figure 6.** 3¢ Nesbitt envelope rated for 1 shilling collection in England because a postal clerk failed to note the stamps affixed to the reverse (shown in Figure 7).



**Figure 7. Reverse of the Figure 6 cover, showing seven 3¢ 1857 perforated stamps that had been added to fully prepay the 24¢ rate from the U.S. to the U.K.**

Hillsborough, North Carolina with a blue “OCT 1” circular datestamp, which also canceled the block of seven stamps on the reverse. At New York, the envelope indicium was also struck with a black “5 N. YORK AM PKT” marking characteristic of unpaid covers. In England the cover was rated for 1 shilling due (the squiggle on the front of the cover).

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Figure 8. 3¢ Nesbitt envelope uprated with three 10¢ and two 1¢ 1851 stamps, posted to Switzerland in 1856 and apparently intended to pay the 35¢ Prussian Closed Mail rate. The cover actually traveled via France at the 21¢ British open mail rate.

The colorful cover in Figure 8 is an uprated 3¢ Nesbitt sent to Switzerland. It was probably intended to be sent via Prussian Closed Mail but instead went in the British open mails via France. It was posted in 1856 from Stillwater, Minnesota Territory to Erlenbach, Switzerland. Three 10¢ 1851 stamps and two 1¢ 1851s were added to make up the 35¢ Prussian Closed Mail rate (an overpayment of the 21¢ rate via American packet). The cover went from Minnesota to New York (where it was struck with a red exchange office marking) to England through France to Switzerland. The “2” in the upper left indicates a double



Figure 9. 3¢ Nesbitt envelope uprated with a 12¢ 1851 stamp, posted at Lexington, Missouri in 1860 and franked to pay the 15¢ rate to Baden via Hamburg mail.

rate (over 7½ grams). The 130 rappen postage due was written in red over the address.

Figure 9 is a cover from Lexington, Missouri, postmarked September 15 and addressed to Rottweil, Baden, Germany. The Nesbitt envelope was uprated with a 12¢ 1851 stamp to pay the 15¢ treaty rate via Hamburg. According to *Chronicle* 186, page 139, this became effective in March 1860, so this cover most likely dates from 1860. New York credited Hamburg with 10¢ (per half ounce) per the terms of the treaty.



**Figure 10. 3¢ Nesbitt envelope uprated with ten 3¢ 1857 stamps paying the 33¢ rate from the United States to Shanghai via British mail via Southampton. The magenta manuscript "28" is the credit to England, in this case applied at Boston.**

Figure 10 is a cover from Lebanon, Tennessee to Shanghai, China, posted on December 18, 1860. It was sent in the British Mail via Southampton to China. En route it received a London transit marking and a 1d credit marking for the British post office in Shanghai. The Nesbitt envelope was uprated with ten 3¢ 1857 stamps to pay the 33¢ rate. The Boston exchange office credited Britain 28¢. Nesbitts with additional frankings to anywhere but Europe are unusual.

### **Demonetized Nesbitt envelopes**

Demonetization provided an additional set of circumstances making it necessary to add stamps to Nesbitt envelopes. When the Civil War began in 1861, there were many U.S. postage stamps in the South. In order to prevent southerners from using this value to promote the war effort, the United States Post Office demonetized existing stamps and stamped envelopes (except the 1¢ Star Die envelopes).

In the North, in an effort that rolled out in the summer and fall of 1861, most of the old stamps and envelopes were redeemed at local post office for new ones. But in the South, this alternative was not available and large numbers of postal paper remained. The stamps were useless (though some of them wound up in today's collections) but the stamped envelopes could be used as plain envelopes with no postal value. Southerners could place a Confederate stamp on such an envelope and use them up that way, and many did.



I have chosen two Confederate provisional stamps to illustrate this practice. Figure 11 is a cover from Memphis, Tennessee to Fredericksburg, Virginia. The addressee is Confederate General Daniel Ruggles, who distinguished himself at the Battle of Shiloh and lived many years in Fredericksburg. The imprint on this Nesbitt envelope counts for nothing, but the envelope served to carry a letter. The cover is franked with a pair of 5¢ Memphis provisionals (the date is unclear) paying the 10¢ rate to Virginia.



Figure 11. Demonetized 3¢ Nesbitt envelope franked with two 5¢ Memphis provisional stamps paying the 10¢ Confederate rate from Memphis to Fredericksburg, Va.

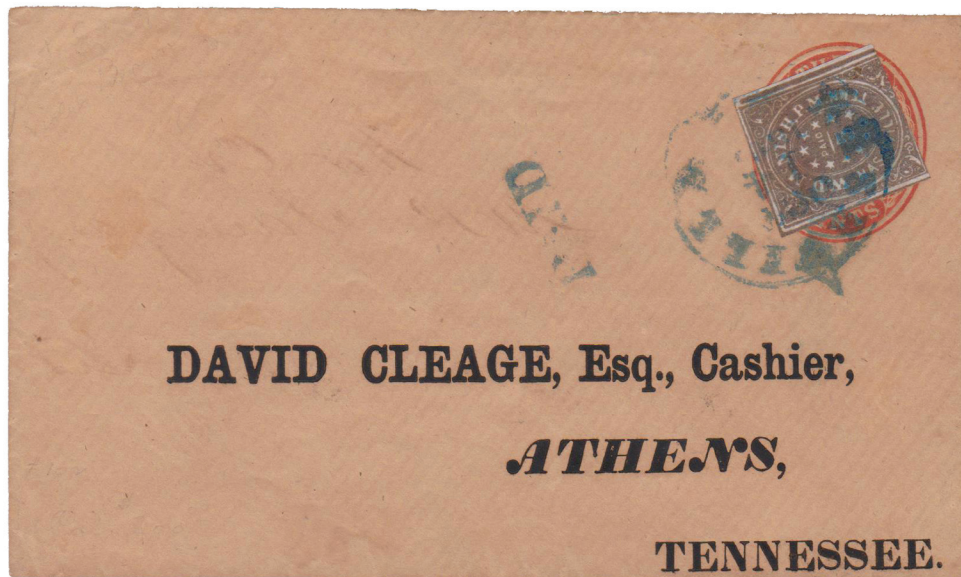


Figure 12. Demonetized 3¢ Nesbitt envelope franked with a 5¢ Nashville provisional stamp paying the Confederate rate from Nashville to Athens, Tennessee.

Figure 12 is from the Cleage correspondence. The Planters Bank in Nashville pre-printed a large number of Nesbitt envelopes addressed to David Cleage, its cashier at Athens, Tennessee. Evidently they did a lot of business with him. When Tennessee seceded

from the Union the envelopes were no longer valid for postage and the Planters Bank had to add a Confederate stamp to pay the postage, in this case a Nashville provisional. A fair number of these Cleage covers exist with Nashville provisionals or Confederate regular issues added to pay the necessary postage. But besides the Nashville provisional covers, the only other provisional I have seen used on a Nesbitt envelope is the one in Figure 11.



**Figure 13. Demon-  
etized 3¢ Nesbitt  
envelope franked  
with two 5¢ Con-  
federate stamps  
paying domestic  
postage from  
Richmond to Har-  
risburg, Virginia.**

Figure 13 is an unusual use: a pair of 5¢ regular issue Confederate stamps posted at Richmond on a Nesbitt overprinted by the Confederate Post Office. Because of the great number of Nesbitt envelopes remaining in the Richmond Post Office, the decision was made to overprint them for Confederate post office use. On this example the two stamps paid the postage to a Quartermaster in the Confederate War Department at Harrisonburg, Virginia.



**Figure 14. Demon-  
etized 3¢ Nesbitt  
envelope given  
new life by the ad-  
dition of a 3¢ 1861  
stamp, posted  
from Washington  
D.C. to Coopers-  
town, N.Y., proba-  
bly in 1862.**

Our last cover, Figure 14, is very mundane looking but actually quite scarce. In the North one could turn in unused Nesbitt envelopes and receive valid new envelopes. But some people didn't do this in a timely manner and were left with an envelope invalid for postage. So they did what the Southerners did: They made use of the envelope by adding valid postage, in this case a 3¢ 1861 stamp. It was canceled in Washington, D.C. and sent to Cooperstown, New York. The date is June 30, year not known, but most likely 1862.

Most of the covers shown here are not rare. Exceptions would be Nesbitts with stamps added to foreign destinations other than Europe, any to foreign destinations with high value stamps (over 12¢), Nesbitts with Confederate provisionals other than Nashville, and some later regular issue Confederate stamps or unusual combinations on these envelopes. If readers let me know about such covers, I could do a follow-up article on them. ■



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TALES OF THE CIVIL WAR BLOCKADE: THE INNOVATIVE *BANSHEE*

STEVEN WALSKE

This is the eighth in a series of *Chronicle* articles on Civil War blockade.<sup>1</sup> This article describes the very successful blockade-running career of the steamship *Banshee*, owned and operated by the Anglo-Confederate Trading Company. Her story is illustrated by the letters that she carried through the blockade.

The Anglo-Confederate Trading Company was formed as a blockade-running enterprise in June 1862 by Liverpool-based Edward Lawrence & Company. In July 1862, it purchased the steamship *Despatch* and sent it to Nassau under the direction of Thomas Taylor as supercargo. Unable to run the blockade, *Despatch* and Taylor returned to England, where *Banshee* was being built, specifically for the firm, on the Mersey River near Liverpool.

Two years into the war, it had become apparent that English coastal packets built along the Clyde River near Glasgow, such as the *Antonica* and the *Robert E. Lee*, made the most effective blockade runners. However, the supply of existing Clyde-built steamships had dwindled, so ship builders along the Clyde and the Mersey began to build new vessels designed specifically for blockade running. In addition to adopting the general design of prewar Clyde-built steamships, they also experimented with engine and hull design to improve the speed and cargo capacity of the new vessels. The use of new materials for the hulls meant that the ships would be lighter, more buoyant and faster, since there was less need for a heavy supporting framework.

*Banshee* was launched by Jones, Quiggin & Company of Liverpool on November 20, 1862. She was a steel-hulled sidewheel paddle steamer of 214 feet, with a beam of 20 feet and a draft of eight feet. Her projected sea speed was an adequate 11 knots. To improve her seagoing qualities, *Banshee*'s bow was designed to knife through the waves rather than ride over them. To keep seawater off of the deck, she had a forecastle cover known as a "turtleback" that repelled water away to the sides. This ability to cut through the waves also kept her low in the water, and reduced the chances of her being seen at sea.

Figure 1 shows the newly-built *Banshee*, sleek and low-slung, in a painting done in 1864 by British maritime artist Samuel Walters (1811-82). The painting is currently in the Merseyside Maritime Museum in Liverpool.



Figure 1. "*Banshee*" by Samuel Walters (1864).



*Banshee* incorporated many of the latest technologies, such as the use of a steel hull. She was constructed around an iron supporting framework to which the steel deck and hull plates were attached; that made her significantly lighter and faster. *Banshee*'s hull plates were only 1/8" thick, less than half the thickness of contemporary iron-plated vessels. She was the first steel-hulled steamship to cross the Atlantic, although the thin steel plates did not hold up well in heavy seas; she limped into Nassau on April 20, 1863 with a crushed forecastle, buckled hull sides and a very nervous crew.<sup>2</sup> Supercargo Taylor, who was on board, described her arrival:<sup>3</sup>

*Banshee* at any rate was able to run into Nassau without being overhauled, and her arrival there caused a great sensation, as being the first boat specially built for the service...I at once set about getting her ready for a trip as soon as the nights set in dark enough. For so vigilant had the blockading force become by this time, that a successful run was considered practically impossible except on moonless nights. Invisibility, care, and determination were the secrets of success, and to this end the *Banshee* was carefully prepared...The whole ship was then painted a sort of dull white, the precise shade of which was so nicely ascertained by experience before the end of the war that a properly dressed runner on a dark night was absolutely indiscernible at a cable's length.

Table 1 details *Banshee*'s 14 successful trips through the blockade.

On May 9, 1863, *Banshee* and Taylor left Nassau for their first trip through the blockade. Taylor later described this exciting voyage:<sup>4</sup>

Thus well equipped and laden with arms, gunpowder, boots, and all kinds of contraband of war, as soon as the moon was right, the *Banshee* stole out of Nassau for the first time to make the best of her way to Wilmington...we crept noiselessly along the shores of the Bahamas,

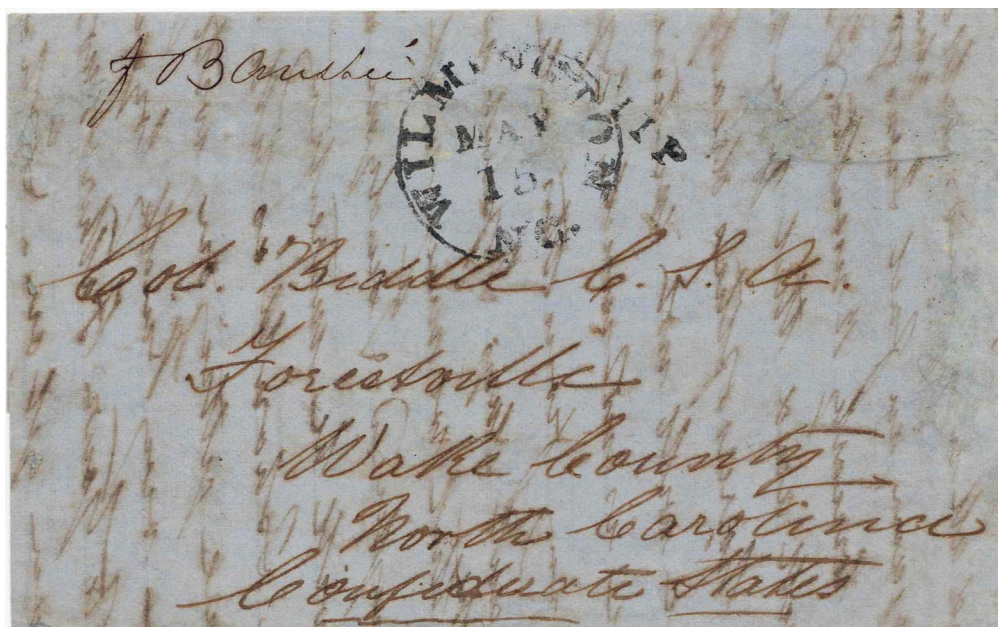
**TABLE 1: BANSHEE CIVIL WAR SAILING DATA, MAY-NOVEMBER, 1863**

| Trip #                                             | Departure Port  | Departure Date | Arrival Port   | Arrival Date | Notes    |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|----------|
| Arrived at Nassau on April 20, 1863 from Liverpool |                 |                |                |              |          |
| W-1                                                | Nassau, Bahamas | 9 May          | Wilmington, NC | 13 May       | Figure 2 |
| E-2                                                | Wilmington      | 18 May         | Nassau         | 22 May       |          |
| W-3                                                | Nassau          | 24 May         | Wilmington     | 28 May       | Figure 3 |
| E-4                                                | Wilmington      | 4 Jun          | Nassau         | 8 Jun        | Figure 4 |
| W-5                                                | Nassau          | 10 Jun         | Wilmington     | 14 Jun       |          |
| E-6                                                | Wilmington      | 22 Jun         | Nassau         | 26 Jun       | Figure 5 |
| W-7                                                | Nassau          | 3 Jul          | Wilmington     | 7 Jul        |          |
| E-8                                                | Wilmington      | 22 Jul         | St George's    | 26 Jul       |          |
| W-9                                                | St George's     | 8 Aug          | Wilmington     | 12 Aug       | Figure 6 |
| E-10                                               | Wilmington      | 20 Aug         | Nassau         | 24 Aug       |          |
| W-11                                               | Nassau          | 2 Sep          | Wilmington     | 6 Sep        |          |
| E-12                                               | Wilmington      | 26 Sep         | Nassau         | 30 Sep       |          |
| W-13                                               | Nassau          | 5 Oct          | Wilmington     | 9 Oct        |          |
| E-14                                               | Wilmington      | 28 Oct         | Nassau         | 1 Nov        |          |
| Captured entering Wilmington on November 21, 1863  |                 |                |                |              |          |

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

invisible in the darkness, and ran on unmolested for the first two days out...So “ahead slow” we went again, until the low-lying coast and the surf line became dimly visible...Still we could not tell where we were, and, as time was getting alarmingly near dawn, the only thing to do was to creep down along the surf as close in and as fast as we dared...Daylight was already breaking, and before we were opposite the fort we could make out six or seven gunboats, which steamed rapidly towards us and angrily opened fire. Their shots were soon dropping close around us: an unpleasant sensation when you know you have several tons of gunpowder under your feet...It began to look ugly for us, when all at once there was a flash from shore followed by a sound that came like music to our ears – that of a shell whirring over our heads. It was Fort Fisher, wide awake and warning the gunboats to keep their distance. With a parting broadside, they steamed sulkily out of range, and in half an hour we were safely over the bar.

Figure 2 shows a letter carried on *Banshee*'s first trip through the blockade. Dated in England on March 25, 1863, this letter left Liverpool on April 11 aboard the Cunard steamer *Persia*, which arrived in New York on April 22. It was transferred there to the Cunard branch steamer *Corsica*, which departed on April 25 and reached Nassau four days later. A Nassau forwarder, G. Chambers & Company, received the letter and endorsed it



**Figure 2. March 25, 1863 letter from England, carried from Nassau to Wilmington, North Carolina, on *Banshee*'s first trip through the blockade (W-1 in Table 1). Marked as a ship letter at Wilmington and sent onward in the Confederate post.**

with their name on the reverse and “pr Banshee” on the front. *Banshee* departed Nassau on May 9 and arrived at Wilmington four days later. The Wilmington post office postmarked the letter on May 15, and rated it for 12¢ due, consisting of 10¢ domestic postage plus a 2¢ ship fee. Wilmington added the straightline “SHIP” marking to indicate the reason for the additional fee.

On May 18, *Banshee* safely reached Nassau with a return cargo of tobacco and cotton. Taylor jubilantly reported on the results of his initial round trip:<sup>5</sup>

So ended my first attempt, a triumphant success! Besides the inward freight of £50 a ton on war material, I had earned by the tobacco ballast alone £7000, the freight for which had been paid at the rate of £70 a ton. But this was a trifle compared to the profit on the 500 odd bales of cotton we had on board, which was at least £50 per bale.

After a quick turnaround in Nassau, Taylor and Captain Steele left on May 24 in *Banshee* for Wilmington:<sup>6</sup>







Figure 4. Dated May 22, 1863 from Charleston to France via Nassau (trip E-4) and London. Siegel sale 1154, lot 2462.

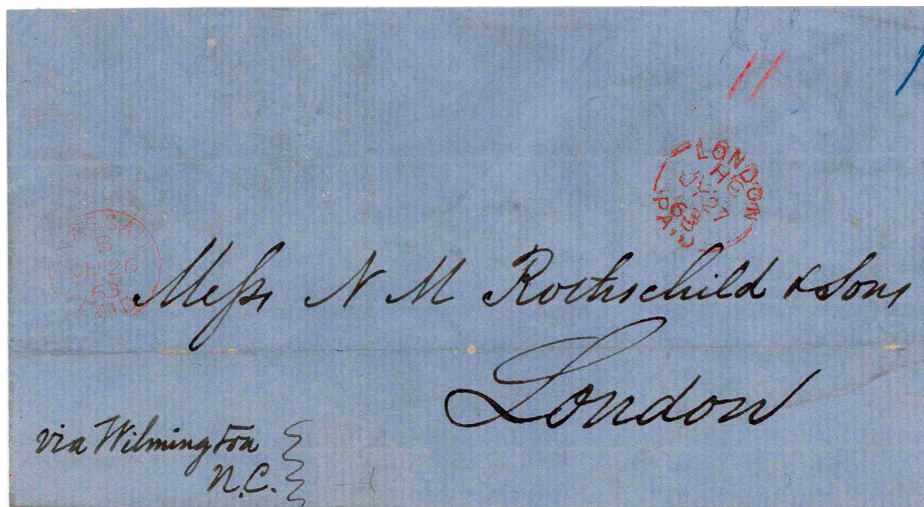


Figure 5. June 15, 1863 letter from Petersburg, Virginia, to London via Wilmington and Nassau (trip E-6). Siegel sale 1154 (May 10, 2017), lot 2461.

On August 8, 1863, *Banshee* left on her ninth trip through the blockade with Thomas Taylor aboard. He described her near capture during the run into Wilmington August 12:<sup>7</sup>

We made the land about twelve miles above Fort Fisher, and were creeping quietly down as usual, when all at once we made a cruiser out, lying on our port-bow, and slowly moving about two hundred yards from shore...It was an exciting moment; we got almost abreast of her, as we thought, unobserved, and success seemed within our grasp, till we saw her move towards us and heard her hail us as we came on, "Stop that steamer or I will sink you!" Old Steele growled out that we hadn't time to stop, and shouted down the engine-room tube to Erskine to pile on the coals...the *Nippon* opened fire as fast as she could and sheered close into us, so close that her boarders were called away twice, and a slanging match went on between us...She closed the dispute by shooting away our foremast, exploding a shell in our bunkers, and, when we began to leave her astern, by treating us to grape and canister...A little farther we came across a large side-wheel boat, which tried to run us down, missing us only by a few yards; after that we were unmolested and arrived in safe...Not more than one man out of a hundred would have brought a boat through as Steele did that night—the other ninety-nine would have run her ashore.



The cover illustrated in Figure 6 was carried on that exciting trip to Wilmington. Dated July 4, 1863 at Liverpool, this letter left that day aboard the Cunard steamer *Persia*, which arrived in New York on July 14. It connected there with the Cunard steamer *Corsica*, which departed on July 18 and reached Nassau four days later. A Nassau agent placed the letter on *Banshee*, which left August 8 and arrived in Wilmington on August 12. The Wilmington post office postmarked the letter on the following day, and rated it for 22¢ due, consisting of double-weight 20¢ postage to Virginia plus a 2¢ ship fee.

**Figure 6. July 4, 1863 letter from Liverpool to Petersburg via Nassau. Carried into Wilmington on *Banshee*'s trip W-9. Siegel sale 954 (April 10, 2008), lot 3382.**



After five more successful trips through the blockade, *Banshee*'s luck finally ran out on November 21. She was sighted enroute to Wilmington by the fast army transport USS *Fulton*, which gave chase, supported by the gunboat USS *Grand Gulf*. *Fulton*'s shelling forced *Banshee* to surrender, after which *Fulton* towed her to New York for adjudication at the prize court there. *Banshee* was valued by the court at \$105,000, after expenses.<sup>8</sup> After the Navy took half of the proceeds and the squadron commanders took their shares, there was about \$46,000 to divide between the crews of the *Fulton* and *Grand Gulf*.

On March 12, 1864, *Banshee* was purchased by the U.S. Navy at the New York Prize Court and converted into a gunboat. Three months later, she was commissioned as USS *Banshee* and assigned to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. In that capacity, she participated in the unsuccessful December 24-26, 1864 Federal attack on Fort Fisher. Shortly after that, she was re-assigned to Potomac Flotilla for the balance of the war. On November 30, 1865, she was sold and re-named *T.L. Smallwood*. Two years later, she was sold to British owners and re-named *Irene*. She stayed in service at least until the 1890s.

### Acknowledgements

John Barwis and Michael Perlman reviewed this and provided valuable insights.

### Endnotes

1. The first of these articles, on the steamship *Antonica*, appeared in *Chronicle* 262. This was followed by articles on *Fannie* (263), *Robert E. Lee* (265), *Advance* (266), virus-related disruptions (267), *Kate* (268) and *Cornubia* (269).
2. Angus Konstam, *Confederate Blockade Runner 1861-65* (Osprey Publishing: Oxford, 2004), pg. 23.
3. Thomas E. Taylor, *Running the Blockade, Third Edition* (John Murray: London, 1897), pp. 40-41.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-54.
5. *Ibid.*, pg. 69.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-73.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-76.
8. Rebecca Livingston, "Civil War Cat-and-Mouse Game, Researching Blockade Runners at the National Archives," *Prologue Magazine*, Volume 31, No. 3 (Fall 1999). ■

## GOOD SAMARITAN (CHARITY) LABELS: THEIR HISTORY, USE AND A COMPREHENSIVE CENSUS

DANIEL M. KNOWLES, M.D.

### Introduction

It is well known that during the 1860s some individuals and charitable organizations developed the practice of supplying postage for inappropriately franked letters that had been deposited in United States post offices. This practice allowed such letters to be mailed to their intended recipients, rather than be diverted to the Dead Letter Office (DLO).

Postmasters allowed those individuals and organizations to affix to the covers a privately produced label which encouraged the recipient to send remuneration or a contribution in acknowledgement of the charitable act. For this reason, these labels are most commonly referred to as Good Samaritan or Charity labels (and occasionally as etiquette labels).

Elliott Perry first brought attention to these labels in a 1955 *American Philatelist* article in which he described and illustrated ten covers bearing what he termed “postage-supplied labels.”<sup>1</sup> Ken Lawrence mentioned them in *AP* articles in the mid-1990s.<sup>2</sup> Irvin Heimburger provided the first census of Good Samaritan labels, specifically on covers franked with 1869 stamps, in a *Chronicle* article in 2012.<sup>3</sup>

However, these articles left many important questions unanswered. Who initiated this practice and when? Who was responsible for the most frequently encountered label (“Box 582, Newark, N.J.”)? Who else created Good Samaritan labels? What motivated these individuals to provide free postage for the benefit of others? Why, when and to what extent did the YMCA and other charitable organizations get involved? Why and when did the practice stop?

In researching the origin and use of Good Samaritan labels I was able to identify the individual responsible for initially creating them, Marcus L. Ward. In the process, I gained preliminary insight into their use and compiled the first published census of Good Samaritan labels used in the 1860s.<sup>4</sup> Now, a thorough search of the Siegel, Rumsey and Bennett auction catalogs on line, manual review of my nearly 40 years old auction catalog collection, cover contributions from my collection and those of fellow philatelists, review of commentary by philatelists on Richard Frajola’s PhilaMercury website and a search of literally hundreds of period newspapers has contributed to the assembly of a comprehensive census of Good Samaritan labels during the entire period of their use: from the late 1850s through the 1870s. This research provides significant additional insights into the history and evolution of Good Samaritan labels.

The census of 91 covers presented in the table that accompanies this article is organized into three parts, according to the stamps added to the covers: 1850s-60s, 1869s and Bank Notes. Within each table, the covers are listed alphabetically by post office. The tabular data includes the postmark date, the original franking, the stamp(s) added, the label source and references that in most instances will lead the reader to an image of the cover. For easier discussion, I have numbered the covers consecutively.



## Background

The Postal Act of 3 March 1855, effective 1 January 1856, mandated prepayment of postage by stamps on all domestic letters.<sup>5</sup> Unpaid letters were to be directed to the Dead Letter Office. It was hoped that mandatory prepayment would diminish the number of undeliverable letters, but this proved not to be the case. The problem of undeliverable mail was widely reported in the press. As an example, the 12 January 1861 issue of the (New Haven) *Columbian Register* reported “there has been no diminution in the number of dead letters. In fact...they can see no difference between the quantity of dead matter now and in the days when the optional prepayment system was in force.”<sup>6</sup> The 16 January 1862 *Farmer’s Cabinet* reported that “Of the dead letters last year...nearly one-third had no postage stamps.”<sup>7</sup> The 23 June 1865 *National American* reported that “the number of letters which are now being received by the Dead Letter Office, sent there under the new law which makes pre-payment of postage compulsory, amounts to more than 15,000 per week.”<sup>8</sup> The 4 April 1866 *Albany Evening Journal* reminded readers that “The chief causes of missing letters are first, misdirection, and secondly, neglect to stamp them properly. Of the latter...it should be known that a revenue stamp is not recognized on a letter; and a great many letters are deposited with such stamps upon them. These are all sent to the Dead Letter Office.”<sup>9</sup>

The letters directed to the DLO represented an enormous burden for the Post Office Department in addition to the personal and economic losses for senders and recipients. The 26 November 1868 *Farmer’s Cabinet* noted that “During the past year 35,000 letters, enclosing \$142,234, were received at the Dead Letter Office, and nearly 20,000 of them, containing \$130,620, were restored to their owners. But besides these money letters, there were 21,000 dead letters, containing bills of exchange, and other valuable matter appraised at over \$5,000,000; over 49,000 containing photographs, jewelry, etc.; and 97,000 containing stamps and articles of small value; nearly all of them were returned to the original writers.”<sup>10</sup> This situation beckoned a Good Samaritan to come forward.

### GOOD SAMARITAN COVERS WITH 1850-60s STAMPS

| # | Origin PO        | Postmark (M-D-Y) | Original franking | Stamps added | Label source  | Reference            |
|---|------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Chicago, IL      | 9-17-6?          | Unfranked         | 3¢ (65)      | YMCA          | <i>Chronicle</i> 238 |
| 2 | Chicago, IL      | 7-?-6?           | 1¢ (63)           | 2¢ (73)      | YMCA          | 1105 RAS 2589        |
| 3 | Cleveland, OH    | 5-12-68          | Unfranked         | 3¢ grill     | YMCA          | <i>Chronicle</i> 238 |
| 4 | Detroit, MI      | 12-27-67         | Unfranked         | 3¢ (65)      | YMCA          | <i>Chronicle</i> 238 |
| 5 | Indianapolis, IN | ?                | 1857 3¢ (26)      | 3¢ (65)      | YMCA          | 604 RAS 360          |
| 6 | Little Rock, AR  | 7-6-66           | 1857 3¢ (26)      | 3¢ (65)      | "GOOD WILL"   | 1087 RAS 53          |
| 7 | Louisville, KY   | 4-10-6?          | Unfranked         | 3¢ (65)      | "GOLDEN RULE" | Figure 10            |
| 8 | Manchester, NH   | 6-1-6?           | Unfranked         | 3¢ grill     | A.K. Morill   | Figure 7             |
| 9 | Mobile, AL       | 9-19-6?          | 1857 3¢ (26)      | 3¢ (94)      | YMCA          | 374 RAS 1024         |

**TABLE HEADINGS AND DATA:** **Origin PO** shows the post office where the label was applied. **Postmark** column shows the date (month-day-year) the cover entered the mails. **Original franking** shows the stamps (or lack thereof) on the cover as initially posted, with stamps indicated by denomination and Scott number. **Label source** names the organization taking credit for adding the stamps. **Reference** designates the source of the cover image or information. MB = Matthew Bennett; PM = PhilaMercury; RAS = Robert A. Siegel Galleries; RFK = Robert F. Kauffman Auctions. For other initials, see “Acknowledgements” at the conclusion of the accompanying article.

| #                                             | Origin PO         | Postmark<br>(M-D-Y) | Original<br>franking | Stamps<br>added | Label source               | Reference              |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 10                                            | Mobile, AL        | 12-30-68            | Unfranked            | 3¢ grill        | Children's Missionary Soc. | <i>Chronicle</i> 238   |
| 11                                            | Newark, NJ        | 12-20-56            | Unfranked            | 3¢ (26)         | Box 582                    | <i>AP</i> 1955, p. 405 |
| 12                                            | Newark/Cuba       | 8-9-59              | Unfranked            | 1-24+3-26       | Box 582                    | Figure 4               |
| 13                                            | Newark/Panama     | 12-8-?              | Unfranked            | 1-24+3-25       | Box 582                    | 33 Kukstis 451         |
| 14                                            | Newark, NJ        | 4-28-6?             | Unfranked            | 3¢ (65)         | Box 582                    | Author                 |
| 15                                            | Newark, NJ        | 9-29-65             | 5¢ (R23c)            | 3¢ (65)         | Box 582                    | 825 RAS 1139           |
| 16                                            | Newark, NJ        | 1-14-6?             | 2¢ (R15c)            | 3¢ (65)         | Box 582                    | <i>Chronicle</i> 238   |
| 17                                            | Newark, NJ        | 11-?-68             | Unfranked            | 3¢ grill        | Box 582                    | Figure 1               |
| 18                                            | Newark/Canada     | 9-7-6?              | 10¢ (R34c)           | 2-3¢ (94)       | Box 582                    | 825 RAS 1141           |
| 19                                            | New Orleans, LA   | 4-6-63              | Unfranked            | 3¢ (65)         | “POSTAGE STAMP”            | 78 Rumsey 1970         |
| 20                                            | Omaha, NB         | ?-?-6?              | Unfranked            | Stamp fell off  | YMCA                       | PM 33127               |
| 21                                            | Owego, NY         | 10-?-67             | Used 3¢ (65)         | 3¢ (65)         | YMCA                       | Figure 6               |
| 22                                            | Quincy, IL        | 7-7-66              | Unfranked            | 3¢ (65)         | PO Quincy, IL              | <i>Chronicle</i> 238   |
| 23                                            | Richmond, IN      | 7-8-6?              | Unfranked            | 3¢ (65)         | YMCA                       | CG                     |
| 24                                            | Sacramento, CA    | 5-19-6?             | Unfranked            | 3¢ (94)         | YMCA                       | 20 Rumsey 83           |
| 25                                            | S.F., CA          | 3-31-?              | Unfranked            | 1¢ (63)         | YMCA                       | CG                     |
| 26                                            | S.F., CA          | 2-24-69             | Unfranked            | 3¢ (94)         | YMCA                       | 820 RAS 94             |
| 27                                            | St. Louis, MO     | 11-20-6?            | Unfranked            | 3¢ grill        | “GOOD WILL”                | CG                     |
| 28                                            | St. Louis, MO     | 3-20-69             | 5¢ (R24c)            | 3¢ grill        | “GOOD WILL”                | <i>Chronicle</i> 238   |
| 29                                            | Stockton, CA      | 9-22-67             | Unfranked            | 3¢ (94)         | YMCA                       | CG                     |
| 30                                            | Toledo, OH        | 7-29-6?             | Unfranked            | 3¢ (65)         | Young Men's Christian U.   | <i>Chronicle</i> 238   |
| <b>GOOD SAMARITAN COVERS WITH 1869 STAMPS</b> |                   |                     |                      |                 |                            |                        |
| 31                                            | Baltimore, MD     | 3-1-?               | Unfranked            | 3¢ (114)        | “CHARITY” Box 700          | <i>Chronicle</i> 234   |
| 32                                            | Detroit, MI       | ?-?-?               | Unfranked            | 3¢ (114)        | YMCA                       | 906 RAS 2003           |
| 33                                            | Detroit, MI       | 3-30-?              | Unfranked            | 3¢ (114)        | YMCA                       | 261 MB 1132            |
| 34                                            | Dubuque, IO       | 4-6-?               | Unfranked            | 3¢ (114)        | YMCA                       | <i>Chronicle</i> 234   |
| 35                                            | Keokuk, IO        | 2-23-?              | 113+R1c              | 3¢ (114)        | Y.M. Benevolent Assoc.     | JWM                    |
| 36                                            | Newark, NJ        | 3-12-?              | Unfranked            | 2¢ (113)        | Box 582                    | 825 RAS 1177           |
| 37                                            | Newark, NJ        | 5-18-?              | Unfranked            | 2¢ (113)        | Box 582                    | <i>Chronicle</i> 234   |
| 38                                            | Newark, NJ        | ?-?-?               | Unfranked            | 2¢ (113)        | Box 582                    | <i>Chronicle</i> 234   |
| 39                                            | Newark/Peru       | 5-28-69             | 2-10¢ (96)           | 96+2-113        | Box 582                    | <i>Chronicle</i> 234   |
| 40                                            | Newark/HK         | 11-25-69            | Unfranked            | 10¢ (116)       | Box 582                    | <i>Chronicle</i> 234   |
| 41                                            | New Orleans, LA   | ?-12-?              | R15c                 | 2¢ (113)        | “THOUGHTFUL”               | Figure 11              |
| 42                                            | Providence, RI    | 10-20-69            | 2¢ (113)             | 1¢ (112)        | Union for Christian Work   | CG                     |
| 43                                            | Rock Island, IL   | ?-?-?               | Unfranked            | 3¢ (114)        | YMCA                       | 6 Kukstis 415          |
| 44                                            | S.F., CA          | ?-?-?               | Unfranked            | 112+113         | YMCA                       | <i>Chronicle</i> 234   |
| 45                                            | S.F., CA          | 5-31-?              | Unfranked            | 112+113         | YMCA                       | <i>Chronicle</i> 234   |
| 46                                            | S.F., CA          | ?-?-?               | 3¢ (26)              | 3¢ (114)        | YMCA                       | <i>Chronicle</i> 234   |
| 47                                            | St. Louis, MO     | 5-18-?              | 2¢ (113)             | 1¢ (112)        | “GOOD WILL”                | <i>Chronicle</i> 234   |
| 48                                            | Washington, DC    | 10-2-?              | Unfranked            | 3¢ (114)        | YMCA                       | <i>Chronicle</i> 234   |
| 49                                            | Waterloo, IA      | 6-1-69              | Unfranked            | 3¢ (114)        | YMCA                       | CG                     |
| 50                                            | Williamsburgh, NY | 6-1-?               | 2-1¢ (112)           | 1¢ (112)        | YMCA                       | <i>Chronicle</i> 234   |



## GOOD SAMARITAN COVERS WITH BANK NOTE STAMPS

| #  | Origin PO        | Postmark<br>(M-D-Y) | Original<br>franking | Stamps<br>added | Label source             | Reference        |
|----|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| 51 | Baltimore, MD    | ?-?-??              | Unfranked            | 145+146         | CHARITY Box 700          | 548 Kelleher 850 |
| 52 | Baltimore, MD    | 10-25-71            | Unfranked            | 145+146         | CHARITY Box 700          | Feldman 11-28-12 |
| 53 | Baltimore, MD    | 12-27-??            | 2¢ (146)             | 1¢ (145)        | CHARITY Box 700          | CG               |
| 54 | Baltimore, MD    | 4-22-??             | Unfranked            | 3¢ (158)        | CHARITY Box 700          | AP 1995, p. 311  |
| 55 | Baltimore, MD    | 5-5-74              | Unfranked            | 3¢ (158)        | CHARITY Box 700          | CG               |
| 56 | Baltimore, MD    | 8-30-73             | Fwd unpaid           | 3¢ (158)        | CHARITY Box 700          | PM 21949         |
| 57 | Baltimore, MD    | 9-29-73             | Unfranked            | 3¢ (158)        | CHARITY Box 700          | AP 1995, p. 404  |
| 58 | Baltimore, MD    | 12-14-??            | Unfranked            | 3¢ (158)        | CHARITY Box 700          | 21 Philips 823   |
| 59 | Baltimore, MD    | 1-17-??             | Unfranked            | 3¢ (158)        | CHARITY Box 700          | MK               |
| 60 | Baltimore, MD    | 8-18-??             | Unfranked            | 3¢ (158)        | CHARITY Box 700          | Figure 8         |
| 61 | Cincinnati, OH   | 12-30-70            | Unfranked            | 145+146         | "HAMMOND" Box 534        | AP 1995, p. 405  |
| 62 | Columbia, MO     | ?-?-??              | Unfranked            | 3¢ (158)        | "SAMARITAN"              | Linn's, 8-20-12  |
| 63 | Hartford, CT     | 1-9-??              | 57 3¢ (26)           | 3¢ (158)        | S.J. Bestor/RE Broker    | 747 RAS 513      |
| 64 | Newark, NJ       | 5-28-??             | Unfranked            | 2-145           | Box 582                  | Kukstis 4-28-95  |
| 65 | Newark, NJ       | 5-5-??              | Unfranked            | 145+146         | Box 582                  | Feldman 11-28-12 |
| 66 | Newark, NJ       | 9-2-??              | Unfranked            | 2-145           | Box 582                  | 5 Rumsey 1006    |
| 67 | Newark, NJ       | 10-25-??            | Unfranked            | 2¢ (146)        | Box 582                  | CG               |
| 68 | Newark, NJ       | 6-16-??             | R135                 | 2¢ (146)        | Box 582                  | Figure 2         |
| 69 | Newark, NJ       | ?-?-??              | Unfranked            | 145+146         | Box 582                  | 67 RFK 1871      |
| 70 | Newark, NJ       | 7-8-??              | Unfranked            | 145+146         | Box 582                  | JWM              |
| 71 | Newark, NJ       | 6-30-??             | Unfranked            | 2¢ (157)        | Box 582                  | Newman 1-22-97   |
| 72 | Newark, NJ       | 10-12-??            | Unfranked            | 3¢ (158)        | Box 582                  | 91 Rumsey 1684   |
| 73 | Newark, NJ       | 6-30-70             | Unfranked            | 3¢ (158)        | Box 582                  | PM 45044         |
| 74 | Newark, NJ       | 3-30-??             | Unfranked            | 2¢ (146)        | Box 582                  | JWM              |
| 75 | Newark/NZ        | 3-26-73             | 10¢ (150)            | 6¢ (148)        | Box 582                  | 335 MB 285       |
| 76 | Newark, NJ       | 7-21-74             | 2¢ (157)             | 1¢ (156)        | Box 582                  | MK               |
| 77 | Newark, NJ       | 3-27-76             | Unfranked            | 3¢ (158)        | Box 582                  | CG               |
| 78 | New Haven, CT    | 3-5-76              | Unfranked            | 2¢ (157)        | John C. Chapman (ad)     | Figure 13        |
| 79 | New Haven, CT    | 11-10-74            | Unfranked            | Stamp fell off  | John C. Chapman (ad)     | PM 44573         |
| 80 | Philadelphia, PA | 12-6-70             | Unfranked            | 145+146         | I.L. Cragin Co. (ad)     | Figure 14        |
| 81 | Philadelphia, PA | ?-?-??              | Unfranked            | 1¢ (145)        | I.L. Cragin Co. (ad)     | KL               |
| 82 | Providence, RI   | 12-29-??            | Unfranked            | 3¢ (158)        | Union for Christian Work | AP 1994, p. 695  |
| 83 | S.F., CA         | 12-12-??            | Unfranked            | 2¢ (157)        | PO BOX 297               | AP 1994, p. 695  |
| 84 | S.F., Fran., CA  | 1-8-??              | Unfranked            | 3¢ (158)        | YMCA                     | MK               |
| 85 | St. Louis, MO    | 11-23-??            | U113                 | 2¢ (146)        | "GOOD WILL"              | JWM              |
| 86 | St. Louis, MO    | 6-27-??             | Unfranked            | 3¢ (158)        | "GOOD WILL"              | AP 1955, p 403   |
| 87 | St. Louis, MO    | 5-20-??             | 2 ct. (R2c)          | 3¢ (158)        | "CONFUSION"              | AP 1955, p 403   |
| 88 | St. Louis, MO    | 5-?-??              | 1 ct. (145)          | 1¢ (145)        | "CONFUSION"              | Figure 12        |
| 89 | Washington, DC   | ?-?-??              | Unfranked            | 3¢ (158)        | YMCA                     | MK               |
| 90 | Watertown, NY    | ?-?-??              | Stamp fell off       | 3¢ (158)        | Watertown, NY publisher  | AP 1955, p 404   |
| 91 | Worcester, MS    | 1-10-74             | Unfranked            | 3¢ (158)        | YMCA                     | AP 1955, p 404   |

## The original Good Samaritan

Responding to the call was Marcus Lawrence Ward, a successful New Jersey politician. Ward held Newark, N.J. Post Office Box 582 and was the originator of the earliest recorded Good Samaritan label, dated 20 December 1856 and discussed further below. Ward's role in the Box 582 operation was identified in an article entitled "Marcus L. Ward, the Soldier's Friend" published in an October 1865 issue of the *Trenton State Gazette*.<sup>11</sup>

One instance which is now well-known to many of his fellow-citizens, will illustrate at once his benevolence and modesty. It is known that the Post Office Department sends all letters not pre-paid with a stamp to the Dead Letter Office. Mr. Ward, learning that many letters thus failed to reach their destination, many years ago directed the postmaster at Newark to affix stamps at his expense to all unpaid letters. A little stamp was affixed in later years, reading as follows:

"This letter was detained in the Post Office at Newark, N.J., on account of the non-payment of postage. One who realizes how important it may be to have letters forwarded immediately, has placed the necessary stamps upon this letter. To repay him, send postage stamps of equal value, addressed to Box 582, Newark, N.J."

Mr. Ward continues this to this day, and of course is every year much out of pocket by his benevolent plan. It was a long time before the name of this generous friend was known who was thus saving hundreds of families yearly from sorrow, anxiety and loss, and it was only finally divulged at the peremptory request of the Postmaster General, who had noticed many of the little tickets, which, notwithstanding the pre-payment on the letters they were affixed to, had found their way to Washington. So pleased was he with the incident, that he made the fact, with Mr. Ward's name, public.

Covers bearing Marcus Ward's label are shown in Figures 1 and 2. Both covers were posted at Newark. The cover in Figure 1 (#17 in the census table) was deposited unfranked and the cover in Figure 2 (#68) was deposited inappropriately franked with a 2¢ Revenue stamp. Both covers were handstamped "Held for Postage" and detained. Subsequently, Ward, his agent or a postal clerk applied the proper postage and the Box 582 label, whereupon the covers were put back into the mail. The Figure 1 cover received a 3¢ grilled stamp to pay the letter-rate postage for carriage to New Durham, N.J. The Figure 2 cover, mailed in the early 1870s, received a 2¢ ungrilled National Bank Note stamp to pay the carrier rate within Newark. The Box 582 labels on these two covers are virtually identical despite



**Figure 1.** This cover was originally posted unfranked at Newark, in November 1868. Marcus Ward added the stamp and the explanatory label seeking reimbursement.





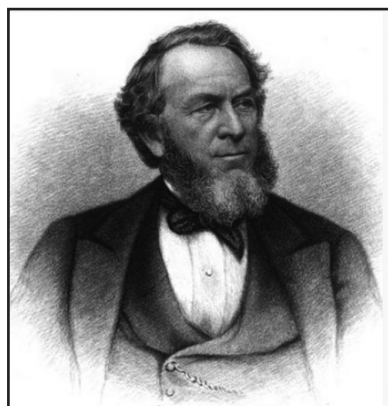
**Figure 2. Cover posted at Newark franked with a 2¢ Revenue stamp. The Newark post office marked it HELD FOR POSTAGE and turned it over to Ward (or his agent), who added the charity label and the 2¢ Bank Note stamp. Ward used this same "Box 582" label at Newark for almost 20 years. Image courtesy Robert Siegel Auction Galleries.**

being used several years apart. In fact, Ward used almost identical labels with the same text message over a span of very close to 20 years.

According to his Wikipedia biography, Ward was a successful Republican politician who served as governor of New Jersey from 1866-69, during which time he also served as Chairman of the Republican National Committee. Subsequently, he served in the House of Representatives from 1873-75. The Trenton newspaper article designating him "The Soldier's Friend" preceded his election to the governorship by just a few days.

Ward devoted much of his public life to laboring on behalf of Union veterans and their families, operating the "Marcus L. Ward's Office for Soldiers" in Room 2 of Newark's post office building. This placed him in direct contact with Newark's post office operations. While governor of New Jersey he helped establish the New Jersey State Soldier's Home. An image of Ward, copied from Wikipedia, is shown as Figure 3.

Why did Ward initiate the Good Samaritan practice? An earlier article in the *Trenton State Gazette* quoted another article extolling "numerous instances of his goodness of heart and generous care for others... at a time when Mr. Ward was not a candidate for any position." The article describes Ward's many financial activities on behalf of Union soldiers and their families.<sup>12</sup> That he supplied postage anonymously for so long suggests that his motives were largely philanthropic. However, the 29 February 1872 *Alexandria Gazette* quoted an Elizabeth, New Jersey resident as saying Ward "became Governor of the State through that course."<sup>13</sup> So, at least some of the public viewed Ward's generosity as a way to garner voter favor.

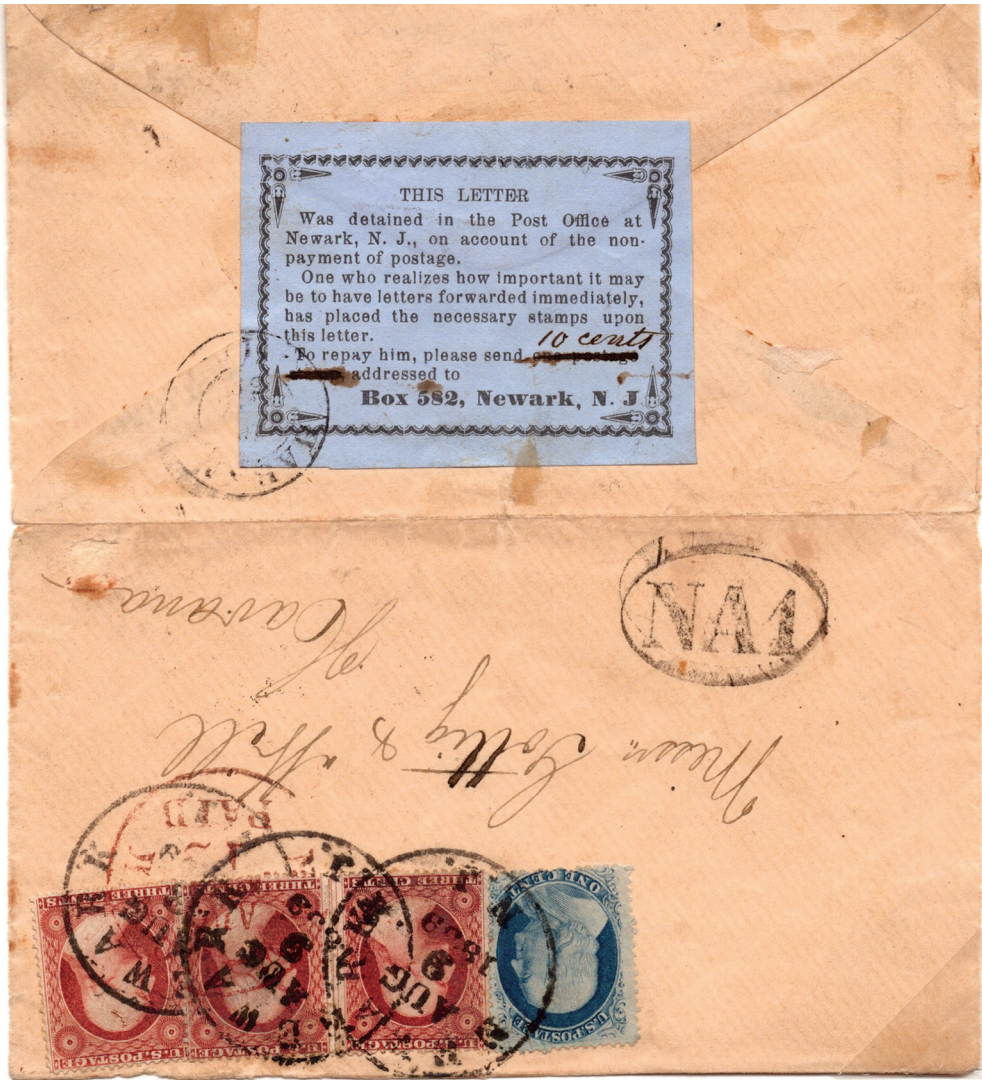


**Figure 3. Marcus L. Ward, the original Good Samaritan.**

### Covers from Box 582, Newark, N.J.

All three 1850s covers recorded in this Good Samaritan label census bear the Box 582 Newark label. The earliest (#11 in the census table), illustrated by Perry in his 1955 *American Philatelist* article, is a Box 582 label on an unfranked cover handstamped “Held for Postage” and postmarked (on the reverse) at Newark on 19 December 1856. The next day, a Saturday, Ward or his agent supplied an imperforate 3¢ 1851 stamp which was placed on the front. The label was affixed on the back and the stamp canceled with a Newark December 20 postmark.

The second earliest Good Samaritan label in the census is also from Box 582, on a cover dated 9 August 1859 (#12) that is shown opened up as Figure 4. Addressed to Havana, this was apparently put into a letter slot unfranked. At this time, covers to many foreign destinations (governed by postal treaties) could be sent collect, but Cuba was not one of them. On this cover the label is actually tied by a Havana receiving marking.



**Figure 4.** Early Box 582 labels had ornamental borders. Cover to Cuba posted unfranked on August 9, 1859. Ward added the requisite 10¢ postage and modified the label to indicate the desired remuneration was 10¢. Image courtesy Chip Gliedman.



The labels affixed to these two early covers are printed on blue paper and show novel, ornamental frames. They differ markedly from the smaller and plainer black-on-white Box 582 labels that followed. But every recorded Box 582 label, from the earliest to the latest, shows the same text message.

The third 1850s cover bearing a Box 582 label is postmarked December 8 (#13). This cover is not year dated, but it must have been posted in 1859 or 1860, since the stamps added were 1857 imperforates. On this cover the label is dissimilar from the earlier labels and almost identical to the plain black and white labels that followed. The next recorded Box 582 label appears on a cover postmarked September 29, 1865 (#15).

### Earliest non-Box 582 charity label

The earliest label in the census from a source other than Box 582 is “signed” “POST-AGE STAMP.” This label appears on a cover postmarked 6 April 1863 (#19) which was deposited unfranked in the New Orleans post office, whereupon a 3¢ 1861 stamp and the charity label were affixed. This was several years after the earliest recorded Box 582 labels. Beyond doubt, Marcus Ward, holder of Newark P.O. Box 582, initiated this practice and appears to have been its sole practitioner for several years.

The absence of any Box 582 labels between 1860 and 1865 suggests that Ward halted his operation during the Civil War. In fact, the only example of a Good Samaritan label definitely being used during the Civil War period is the New Orleans “POSTAGE STAMP” label just mentioned.

The absence of wartime Good Samaritan uses can be attributed to several factors. First, during the war soldiers and sailors had the privilege of sending letters without prepayment, the postage to be paid by the recipient. Second, from 1 July 1863 through 30 April

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Lawyer letter Ogdensburg NY to Prescott UC, 1855

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1865 (the “penalty period”), unpaid and underpaid letters were forwarded to recipients with double the deficit due, rather than being directed to the DLO. Third, benevolent individuals and charitable organizations likely turned their attention to activities that supported the war effort more directly.

Box 582 was responsible for 27 of the 91 covers in this census. Eight of the 30 1850s and 1860s covers (#11-18), five of the 20 1869 covers (#36-40) and 14 of the 41 Bank Note covers (#64-77) bear Box 582 labels. Additionally, all six of the covers sent outside the United States bear Box 582 labels. Marcus Ward appears to have been the only Good Samaritan willing to supply postage for international mail.

The latest recorded cover bearing a Box 582 label is postmarked March 27, 1876 (#77). Most of the label-bearing covers are not year dated, so a precise timeline cannot be created. But we now know that Ward’s labels were affixed to covers from at least 1856 to 1876. Ward died in 1884.

### Young Men’s Christian Association

The Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) is the charitable organization most frequently associated with Good Samaritan labels. The earliest cover in this census bearing a YMCA Good Samaritan label is postmarked September 22, 1867 (#29), more than a decade after Ward began his operation in Newark. Articles describing the YMCA practice of supplying postage for unpaid letters began to appear in the nation’s newspapers in 1867 and 1868, suggesting that YMCA Good Samaritan activity began around that time.<sup>14</sup>

Very likely, the YMCA got the idea from Marcus Ward’s activities. This is supported by a *Trenton Gazette* article from late 1869 that reported: “The Young Men’s Christian Association of Elizabeth has imitated the generous example of a well-known Newark citizen, in prepaying letters which are dropped into the post-office without a stamp. A number of letters every week accumulate in our post-office, sent generally by poor persons who are not accustomed to correspondence, and who are therefore ignorant of the law requiring the prepayment of postage. In prepaying these letters the Young Men’s Christian Association of this city would be doing a work of practical charity.”<sup>15</sup>

In mid-1867 the *Springfield Republican* reported:<sup>16</sup>

A shrewd Yankee is managing the Chicago Young Men’s Christian Association. He takes all letters put in the post-office there without stamps, supplies what are wanted, and sends them on their way, with this little printed label: “This letter was deposited in the Chicago post-office unpaid. Under the rules it would have been sent to the dead letter office. The Young Men’s Christian Association have paid the postage. In return for the favor please remit, to aid us in our work, such sum as you can afford. Address—Young Men’s Christian Association, No. 146 Madison Street, Chicago.” Lots of money comes back, sometimes five and ten dollar bills.

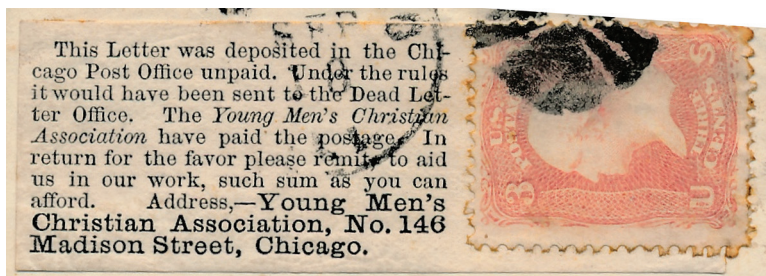
At about this same time the *Salt Lake City Telegraph* said of this practice by the Chicago YMCA that “sometimes the sum is quite generous.”<sup>17</sup> These newspaper accounts strongly suggest that the YMCA found this to be a profitable enterprise. That would explain the rapid and widespread adoption of the practice by numerous YMCA chapters throughout the United States.

Indeed, I have recorded Good Samaritan labels from YMCA chapters in 17 different cities. YMCA labels account for 13 of the 30 covers from the 1850s and 1860s and ten of the 20 1869 covers—but only three of the 41 Bank Note covers. So it appears that most YMCA chapters had curtailed the practice by around 1870. By then the public must have been keenly aware of the YMCA’s practice of supplying postage for unstamped letters in anticipation of receiving a contribution. A Cleveland newspaper reported in late 1868 that “there is a man in Chicago who is wealthy, and a lawyer of no mean pretensions, who is so penurious that he drops all letters to his friends in the post office without stamps, in order that the agent of the Young Men’s Christian Association will save him the postage.”<sup>18</sup>

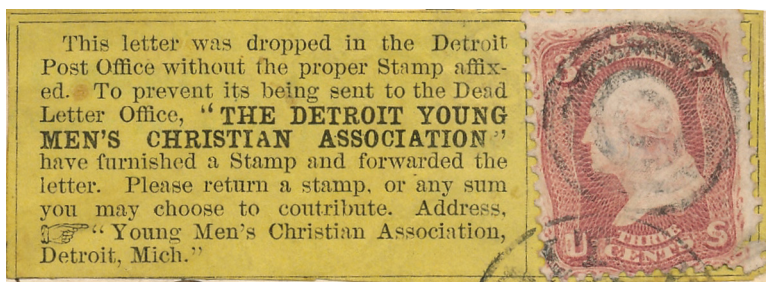


Figure 5 shows Good Samaritan labels. electronically clipped from their covers, prepared by five different YMCA chapters. From top to bottom, the labels are from Chicago, Detroit, Dubuque, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. The labels differ in design, printing

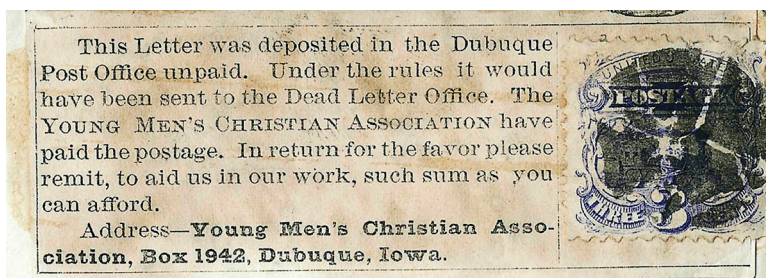
Chicago



Detroit



Dubuque, Iowa



San Francisco



Washington, D.C.

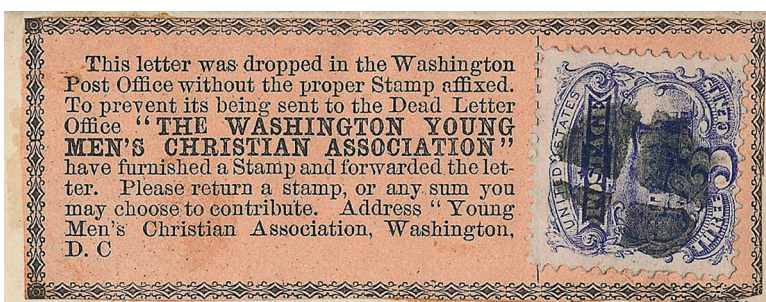
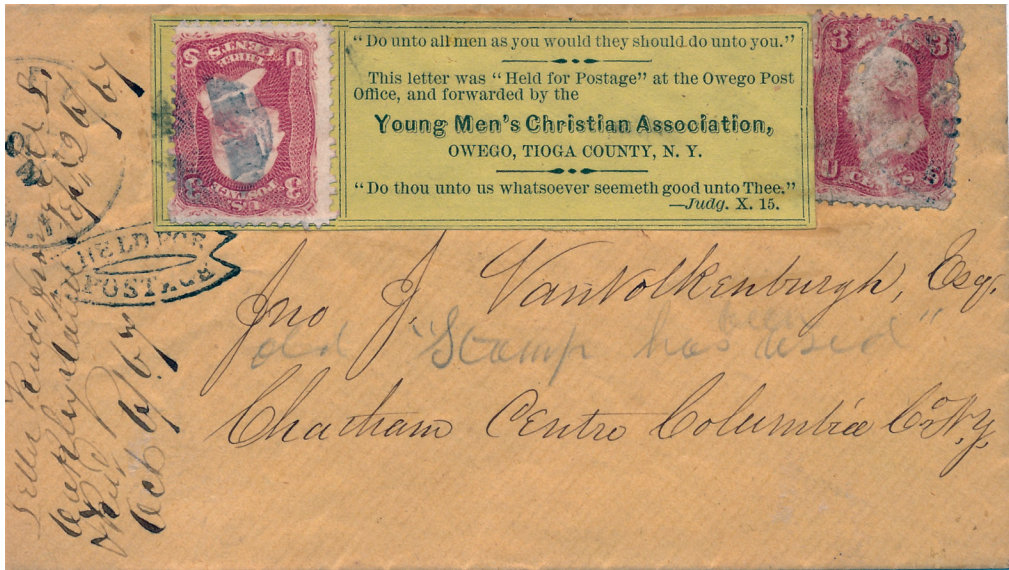


Figure 5. The Young Men's Christian Association picked up Ward's idea and rolled it out to branches across the nation. This is just a small sample of their output.

quality, paper color and language, evidence that individual YMCA chapters prepared their own labels. All bear similar, but not identical texts, requesting remuneration or a contribution. While the language was sometimes similar to that of Ward's Box 582 labels, none of the 26 recorded YMCA labels precisely copied Ward's text.



**Figure 6. The Good Samaritan label used by the YMCA at Owego, New York, is unusual in that it avoids any direct request for remuneration, relying instead on two quotes from the bible. This cover is additionally interesting because on it the sender attempted to reuse a previously canceled stamp. The Owego postmaster was not deceived.**

The cover in Figure 6 (#21) bears a YMCA Good Samaritan label distinctive in that it quotes the bible and does not directly request remuneration or a contribution. The label includes a collar expressly designed to frame the stamp added by the YMCA. The label reads: “Do unto all men as you would they should do unto you.” This letter was ‘Held for Postage’ at the Owego Post Office, and forwarded by the Young Men’s Christian Association, OWEGO, TIOGA COUNTY, N.Y. ‘Do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto Thee.’—Judg. X. 15.”

This cover is also interesting in that it was initially franked with a previously used (and very poorly cleaned) 3¢ 1861 stamp. As the postmaster noted in pencil across the address: “Old stamp has been used.”

### Other charitable organizations

In addition to the YMCA, I have identified Good Samaritan labels from four presumably charitable organizations that supplied postage for unpaid letters. These are the Union for Christian Work in Providence, the Children’s Missionary Society in Mobile, the Y.M. Benevolent Association in Keokuk, Iowa, and the Young Men’s Christian Union in Toledo, Ohio. Were these organizations truly charitable—or were they scams?

The Union for Christian Work was a true charitable organization whose establishment was announced in the *Providence Evening Press* on March 9, 1868. It engaged in numerous benevolent activities, including providing postage for unpaid letters dropped into the post office. The latter activity was documented in a correction published in this same Providence newspaper:<sup>19</sup>

**CORRECTION.**—The Union for Christian Work began two years ago to pay the postage on all letters dropped into the Postoffice in this city which were not stamped. The Postmaster has kindly placed the stamps on the letters and a small label of which the following is a copy:



**"The Union for Christian Work of Providence, R.I., paid the postage of this letter which was mailed without a stamp. Please return stamp or stamps to the society". Your issue of last evening attributed the work to the Young Men's Christian Association instead of the Union for Christian Work.**

Two covers posted at Providence bear labels created by the Union for Christian Work, one on an October 10, 1869 cover (#42) and another on a Bank Note cover (#82).

The crude label prepared by the Young Men's Christian Union (#30) reads: "This letter was detained on account of non-payment of Postage. The Young Men's Christian Union of Toledo, Ohio, forward it to you, having caused the necessary stamp to be affixed."

The label prepared by the Children's Missionary Society (#10) reads: "This Letter was dropped into the Postoffice without any stamp, and according to the Regulations, would have been sent to the 'Dead Letter Office,' but realizing the importance of such letters, we have paid the postage thereon, relying on your generosity to return a liberal compensation. Address CHILDREN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY, P.O. Box 250, Mobile, Ala."

The latter two covers are illustrated in my article in *Chronicle* 238.

The Young Men's Christian Union, the Children's Missionary Society and the Y.M. Benevolent Association may have been small charitable organizations with limited visibility in their communities. Alternatively, these may have been sanctimonious-sounding names used by charlatans to scam an unsuspecting public. I could not find any references to these three organizations in the period newspapers over a multi-year time span, strongly suggesting that the organizations were bogus.

### **The post office as Good Samaritan**

Two Good Samaritan labels offer evidence that postmasters sometimes engaged in this activity. An unfranked letter deposited in the Quincy, Illinois, post office (#22) was detained until an anonymous Good Samaritan supplied the postage. The label reads: "THIS LETTER was detained in the Post Office in Quincy, Illinois on account of the non-payment of postage. One who realizes how important it is to have letters forwarded immediately has placed the necessary postage stamps upon it. To repay him send postage of equal value addressed to: P. O., QUINCY, Ill."



**Figure 7. This Good Samaritan label was created by a A.K. Morrill, a clerk at the post office at Manchester, New Hampshire. Morrill's label very clearly states that the postage affixed "has been paid out of PRIVATE FUNDS."**

The label suggests that either the Quincy postmaster was the Good Samaritan or he collected payment on behalf of an anonymous Samaritan.

A Good Samaritan label headed Post Office, Manchester, N.H. and “signed” A.K. Morrill is also recorded (#8). The cover bearing this label is shown as Figure 7. When I wrote the article in *Chronicle* 238, I had been unable to identify this individual. However, examination of the Post Office records of the *Official Register of the United States* revealed that an A.K. Morrill served as a post office clerk in the Manchester post office during at least the last half of 1866 and the first half of 1867.<sup>20</sup> So, this most certainly was the man responsible for that Good Samaritan label, which reads:

Post Office, Manchester, N. H.

The enclosed came into this office without the necessary stamp, and would have been sent to the Dead Letter Office at Washington, with other un-mailable matter.

The postage has been paid out of PRIVATE FUNDS, and sent to you, trusting that you, on your part, will contribute something to prevent this fund from diminishing. Please return this with your reply.

Yours truly,  
A. K. Morrill

I presume Morrill discovered that this practice pleased the local public, was less laborious than diverting letters to the DLO, and perhaps even generated some money. In any case, this postal employee made certain that everyone knew that he used “PRIVATE FUNDS” to support the practice.

### Anonymous Good Samaritans

Many individuals, in addition to Marcus Ward, provided postage for improperly franked letters and applied specially prepared labels requesting payment in return for their kindness. However, all these other individual Good Samaritans used charitable-sounding pseudonyms in lieu of their real names. The most frequently encountered is signed “CHARITY” Box 700, from Baltimore, Maryland. One cover is known from the 1869 era (#31) and ten are recorded on Bank Note covers (#51-60). All 11 “CHARITY” labels are identical. Figure 8 shows a typical example.



Figure 8. In addition to Ward, many anonymous individuals provided postage for improperly franked letters. Among the most prolific was “CHARITY,” from Baltimore. Eleven examples are recorded in the census, all with the type of label affixed to this 3¢ Bank Note cover. Image shown through the courtesy of Matthew Kewriga.



Other labels are signed “GOOD WILL,” from Little Rock in 1866 (#6); “GOOD WILL” from St. Louis in 1869 and beyond (#27, 28, 47, 85 and 86), of which an example is shown in Figure 9; GOLDEN RULE from Louisville, ( #7, Figure 10); “THOUGHTFUL” from New Orleans (#41, Figure 11); CON FUSION from St. Louis, (#87-88, Figure 12); and “SAMARITAN” from Columbia, Missouri (#62). There is also “POSTAGE STAMP” from New Orleans in 1863 (#19) and “HAMMOND” from Cincinnati (#61).

The six “GOOD WILL” labels from Little Rock and St. Louis, recorded from the 1860s through the Banknotes, may differ in size and color, but all have the same text, which is identical to that of Ward’s Box 582 labels. The text in the two recorded “CON FUSION”

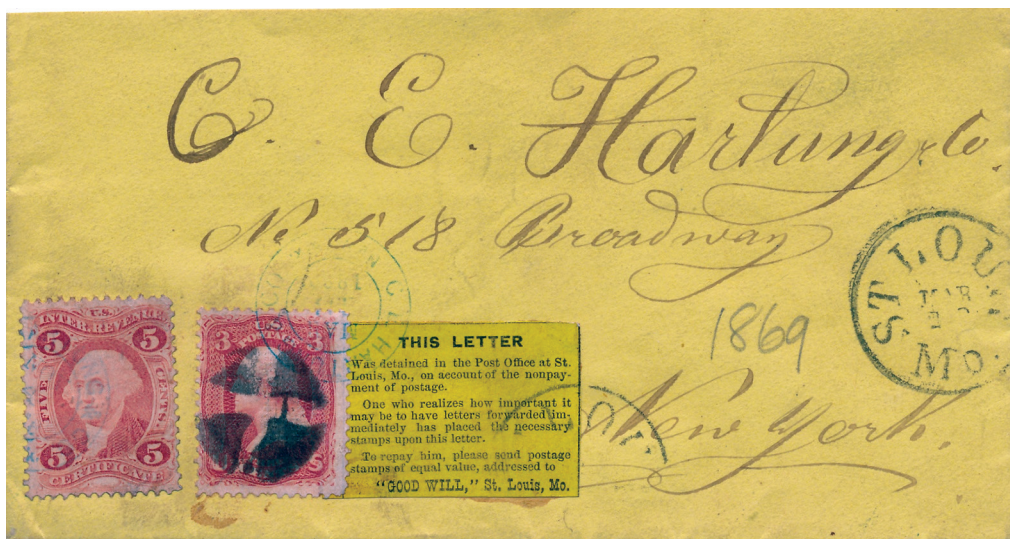


Figure 9. “GOOD WILL,” a Good Samaritan in St. Louis, applied the 3¢ grilled stamp, along with his label (the text of which echoes Ward’s), to this envelope that was posted in 1869 franked with a 5¢ Revenue stamp, which of course was invalid for postage.



Figure 10. 3¢ 1861 stamp plus label applied by “GOLDEN RULE” of Louisville to a cover that was originally posted unfranked. This Good Samaritan seeks “a liberal compensation.” Image shown through the courtesy of James W. Milgram, M.D.



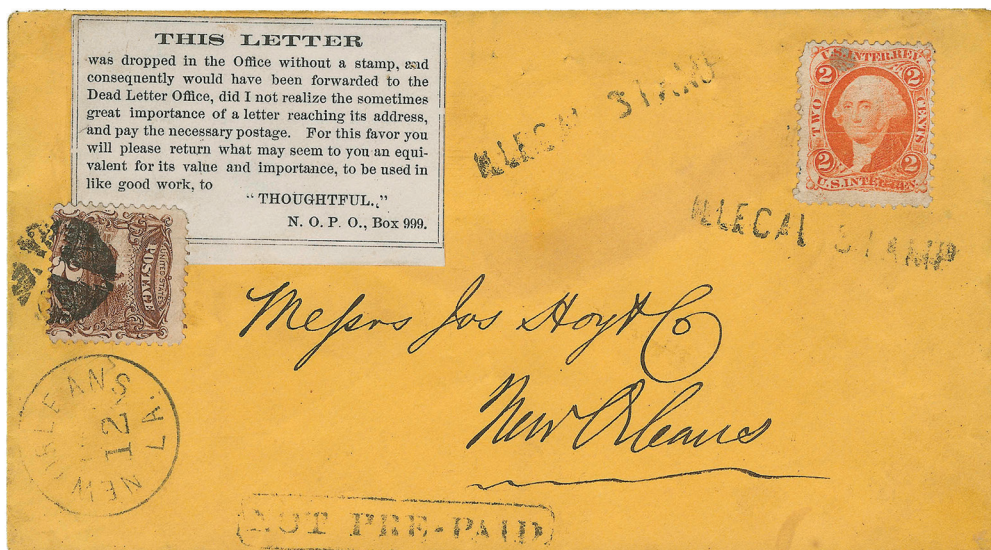


Figure 11. "THOUGHTFUL," the Good Samaritan at New Orleans, applied his label and the 2¢ 1869 stamp to this cover, which had been posted with a 2¢ Revenue stamp, a franking the New Orleans postmaster very firmly rejected. This unsealed envelope probably carried a printed circular.



Figure 12. One of two labels recorded from "CON FUSION" in St. Louis. The text, picking up Ward's original, is identical to that used by "GOOD WILL" and presented in Figure 9. Image shown through the courtesy of Matthew Kewriga.

labels is identical to that of "GOOD WILL" and to Ward's Box 582 labels as well. All these labels read:

#### THIS LETTER

Was detained in the post office at St. Louis, Mo., on account of the nonpayment of postage. One who realizes how important it may be to have letters forwarded immediately has placed the necessary stamps upon this letter. To repay him, please send postage stamps of equal value, addressed to

"GOOD WILL", St. Louis, Mo.



Clearly, “GOOD WILL” and “CON FUSION” copied the practice initiated by Ward several years earlier, including the language he composed for his labels. The other labels cited above contained a distinctive text message that was sometimes similar, but never identical, to that of Box 582.

So, who were “GOOD WILL” and these other anonymous Good Samaritans and what was their rationale for engaging in this activity? Searches of all available local newspapers of this period over a long time span failed to unearth a single reference to any of these labels or clues as to the names of the individuals who created them. So, their identity and motives remain unknown. I suspect that some, perhaps all these individuals, were scammers seeking personal profit. In that regard, it is noteworthy that while Box 582 (Ward) requested “postage stamps of equal value”, some of these individuals requested “liberal compensation.”

### **Good Samaritan businessmen**

Another participant in this practice was S.J. Bestor of Hartford, Connecticut. The 23 August 1871 *Providence Evening Press* reported: “S.J. Bestor, of Hartford, each Saturday, pays the postage on all letters held for nonpayment in the post office of that city. They are then forwarded, with the request that the receiver will remit the amount paid, a request usually heeded, and gratefully acknowledged. He also thus advertises his business.”

The 29 February 1872 *Alexandria Gazette* reported: “S.J. Bestor, an eccentric gentleman of Hartford, Conn., regularly stamps all letters held for postage in that city, attaching to the envelope a printed statement of the fact. The responses he has received would fill a large volume.”

Based on these newspaper reports, I had speculated in my *Chronicle* 238 article that an example of an S.J. Bestor Good Samaritan label might survive in someone’s collection. Following publication of the article, Ronald Burns provided me with a scan of a cover bearing an S.J. Bestor Good Samaritan label (#63). It is clear that Bestor got involved in this practice after seeing Ward’s Box 582 label. We know that is the case because the text of Bestor’s label is copied virtually verbatim from the Box 582 label.

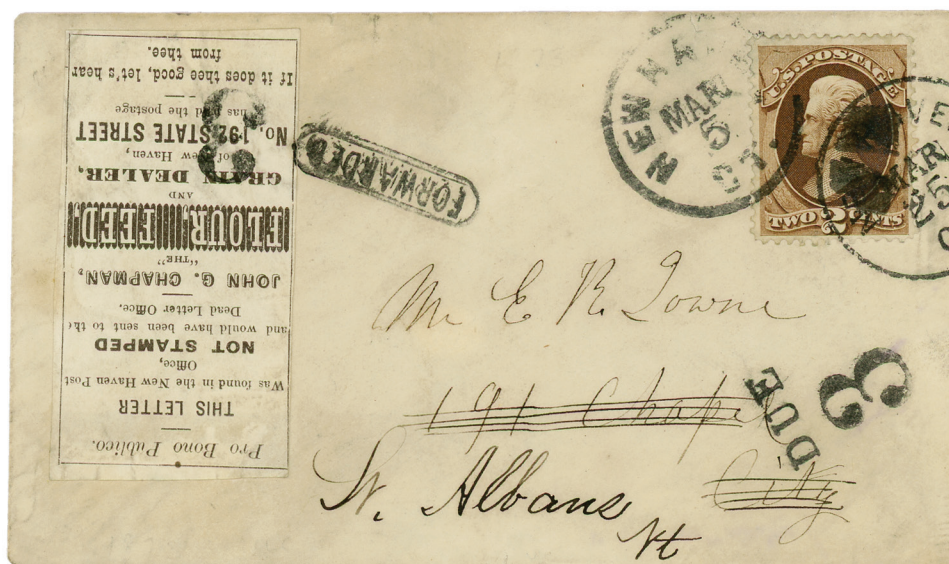
Bestor manufactured and sold gold pens and accessories from a salesroom at 245 Main Street in Hartford in 1871. He advertised himself as a real estate agent at that address in 1872 and at 240 Main Street in 1874.<sup>21</sup> Both of Bestor’s businesses must have benefited from the local attention he received for supplying postage for unpaid mail.

But unlike Ward, whose motivation was primarily philanthropic, and the YMCA, whose motivation was both charitable and financial, Bestor’s motivation was to promote himself as a well-intentioned Good Samaritan in his community and to advertise his businesses. Unlike Ward, who left his labels anonymous as Box 582, Bestor “signed” his labels “S.J. Bestor, Real Estate Broker, Hartford, Conn.”

Other Good Samaritan labels advertising businesses and products appeared during the 1870s. Matt Kewriga posted on PhilaMercury an 1874 cover bearing a Good Samaritan label advertising New Haven grain dealer John G. Chapman (#78). This cover is shown in Figure 13. It was initially sent unfranked at the 2¢ local rate within New Haven. Chapman provided the 2¢ stamp, but then the cover required forwarding and the recipient wound up paying 3¢ postage due despite Chapman’s good intentions.

A second Chapman label is also known (#79). An 1871 issue of *The Stamp Collector’s Magazine* commented on Chapman’s Good Samaritan practice as a means to successfully advertise his business. The article conflated uncalled-for letters with unfranked ones, but the essentials are there:

**Unpaid letters, as everybody knows, are not delivered by the post office authorities, but advertised. Now it occurred to Mr. John G. Chapman, a New Haven grain dealer, that some of these letters would be of value to the parties to whom they are addressed, and that a chance was afforded to the said Chapman, to advertise his business; so he went to the post office just**



**Figure 13.** This New Haven Good Samaritan was a grain dealer primarily concerned with promoting his business. He provided the missing postage on this local letter, but the recipient had relocated, so forwarding (and first class postage) was required. Image shown here through the courtesy of Matthew Kewriga.

before the letter lists were to be sent to the papers, and affixed to each letter its proper stamp, together with another neat little label bearing his name and business address, with the added suggestion that he had paid the postage, and would be happy to receive any return in the way of business patronage, in case the letter should be of value to the recipient. This practice he has continued ever since last April, and he has profited largely by it. In nine cases out of ten his stamps have been returned to him, and have frequently been accompanied by more substantial favours.

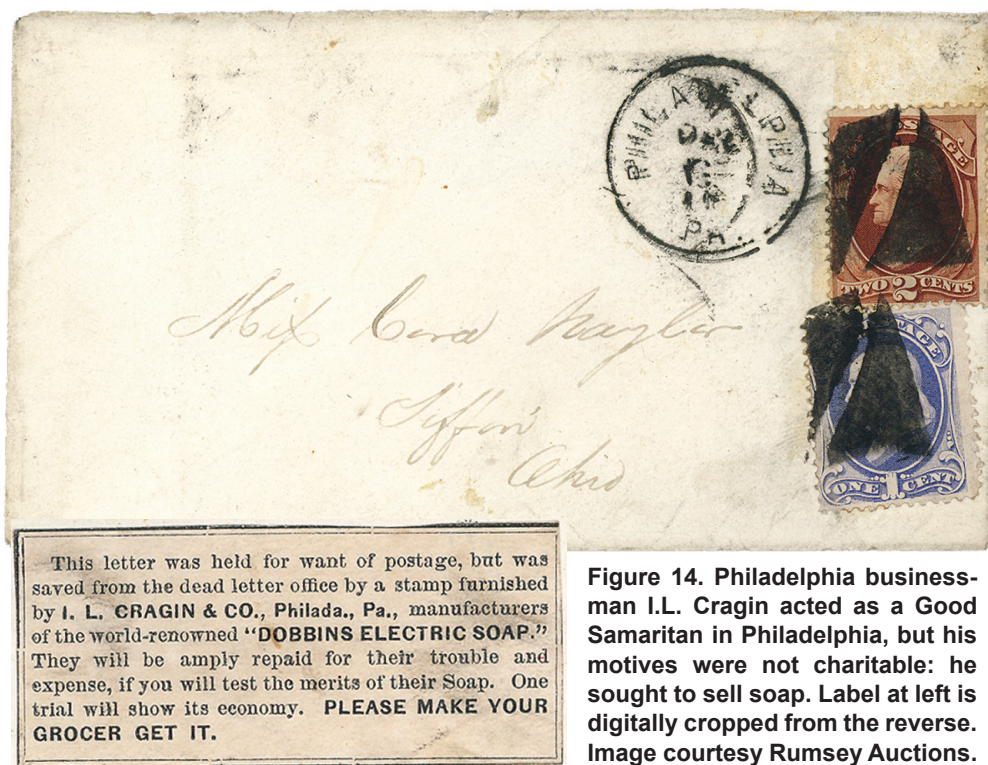
Ken Lawrence posted on PhilaMercury an unusual Good Samaritan label from a Philadelphia soap dealer (#81). As it happens, two covers bearing this label are known. The other (#80) is shown in Figure 14 (next page). This is the creation of Philadelphia businessman I.L. Cragin, manufacturer of a laundry product called Dobbin's Electric Soap. In return for paying postage on inappropriately franked letters and thereby avoiding their diversion to the Dead Letter Office, Cragin asked recipients to "Please make your grocer buy it." On the Figure 14 cover, the label is affixed to the back of the cover. We have clipped it electronically and inset it onto the front to save space. Inspection of the label will show that Dobbin did not seek any reimbursement for his out-of-pocket postage expense. His sole objective was selling soap.

### How the practice evolved

Developing this census—91 covers bearing Good Samaritan labels spanning 20 years—enabled some analysis of the evolution of this practice. Apparently, the motivation for the first and most prolific Good Samaritan, Marcus Ward, was primarily charitable. Indeed, this was only one of several philanthropic activities in which Ward participated. He continued this practice for 20 years, from at least 1856 up until at least 1876.

The motivation for the YMCA appears to be charitable as well, although newspaper accounts suggest that the YMCA also benefited financially. YMCA chapters in at least 17 cities, and likely far more, engaged in the activity during the late 1860s. All of them appear to have started and stopped at about the same time, suggesting this was an organization-driven activity. Only three YMCA labels are recorded from the Bank Note period.





**Figure 14.** Philadelphia businessman I.L. Cragin acted as a Good Samaritan in Philadelphia, but his motives were not charitable: he sought to sell soap. Label at left is digitally cropped from the reverse. Image courtesy Rumsey Auctions.

A few other organizations also engaged in this activity very briefly during the late 1860s and early 1870s. Some were truly charitable. Others may have been fictitious organizations directed by profit-seeking entrepreneurs. Many individual Good Samaritans, identifying themselves only by charitable-sounding pseudonyms such as “CHARITY”, “GOOD WILL”, “THOUGHTFUL”, “GOLDEN RULE” and “SAMARITAN” began to appear in multiple cities toward the end of the 1860s and continuing through the mid-1870s.

Several Good Samaritan labels used primarily to advertise businesses and products appeared in the early to mid 1870s. It seems clear that the motivation for providing free postage for the benefit of others evolved over time. It began with the charitable benevolence of one individual, Marcus Ward. His model was copied by the YMCA, which was motivated by both charitable intentions and financial gain. Subsequently, a variety of individuals and organizations engaged in the practice purely for financial gain. Some of these individuals simply copied verbatim Ward’s label. Finally, some businessmen were motivated by a desire to promote their status in the local community and advertise their services and products.

### How the practice ended

The United States Post Office sounded the death-knell for the Good Samaritans with the issuance of Postage Due stamps on 1 July 1879. Chip Gliedman posted on PhilaMercury a short article entitled “Demoralizing Benevolence” which appeared in *The Present Age and Educational Weekly* on 1 June 1882.<sup>22</sup> The article read:

Instances of the harm done by indiscriminate charity are not wanting. Years ago a benevolent individual in Newark, N.J. conceived the idea of authorizing the postmaster of his city to affix stamps to all letters that might be deposited in that office, at his expense. Upon such letters was placed a label notifying the recipient of the facts; and in many instances the stamps were returned to the donor, with thanks. The system becoming known, not a few persons availed themselves of securing free postage, and with the consent of the post office department,

the benevolent scheme was initiated in other cities, with results stated in the following official order:

“827. The Department cannot give permission to any association or individuals to pay postage upon unpaid letters dropped into the mail. The system was tried several years ago, by permission of the Department, at several of the larger post offices, and found to be entirely unsatisfactory. Persons neglected to pay postage upon letters, feeling assured that they would be forwarded without it. In other cases where the postage had been refunded to the party paying it, dunning letters were forwarded by them, bringing complaints from the parties addressed, who charged that the Post Office Department was taking unauthorized liberty with correspondence belonging to others in permitting the inscription asking the return of the unpaid postage to be placed on the envelope. These persons, among others, induced the Department to withdraw the permission which had been granted for the sake of experiment.

“827” refers to Ruling 827 in the May 1882 *United States Official Postal Guide*.

Finally, Ken Lawrence noted that still another order, in the January 1883 *Postal Guide*, urged strict adherence to the 1879 Postal Laws and Regulations barring individuals and organizations from supplying postage for unpaid letters.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the use of Good Samaritan labels came to an end, leaving us with many interesting artifacts illustrative of a novel chapter in United States postal history.

### Acknowledgments

Thanks to fellow philatelists Chip Gliedman, Matthew Kewriga, Ken Lawrence and James W. Milgram for supplying images of covers housed in their collections, instances acknowledged by their initials in the “Reference” column of the census data. Thanks as well to the Siegel, Rumsey and Bennett auction houses for placing their past sales on line, thereby facilitating research; and to Richard Frajola for creating the PhilaMercury website, which facilitates research by allowing philatelists to post and search covers.

### Endnotes

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23. Lawrence, *op. cit.*, June, 1996. ■



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## THE BANK NOTE PERIOD

H. JEFFREY BRAHIN, EDITOR

### FIRE ASSOCIATION OF PHILADELPHIA POSTCARDS

ROBERT TOAL

#### Introduction and historical background

Postal cards were first issued by the United States Post Office in 1873. However, privately issued postcards, or forerunners, were used for decades before the first government postal cards, with the earliest identified use in 1848.<sup>1</sup> This article surveys forerunner postcards from the Fire Association of Philadelphia, which were used between 1865 and 1872.

The Fire Association of Philadelphia was organized in 1817 by 11 volunteer engine and five fire hose companies. It was incorporated as an insurance company in 1820, with a percentage of the profits to be distributed to the volunteer companies. The corporation began with 29 paid policies but that number grew substantially as the decades passed.

Figure 1 shows an ad from the association that was published in *McElroy's Philadelphia City Directory* for 1865. The ad declares that the association insures merchandise,

INCORPORATED

MARCH 27,

1820.

OFFICE,

No. 34

N. FIFTH STREET.

**FIRE ASSOCIATION OF PHILA.**

The Trustees of the Fire Association of Phila.

Insure from LOSS BY FIRE in the City of Philadelphia only,

**MERCHANDISE of every description, BUILDINGS, and HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE.**

TRUSTEES.

GEORGE W. TRYON, President.

WM. H. HAMILTON,  
JOHN SOUDER,  
PETER FRITZ,  
JACOB MOYER,

PETER A. KEYSER,  
JOHN PHILBIN,  
JOHN CRAIG,  
JOHN CARROW,

GEORGE I. YOUNG,  
JOS. R. LYNDALL,  
LEVI P. COATS,  
SAMUEL SPARHAWK.

WILLIAM T. BUTLER, Secretary.

Figure 1. This 1865 ad for the Fire Association of Philadelphia describes its insurance specialties and shows the firm's logo, an early fireplug with encircling hose.



buildings and furniture “from loss by fire in the City of Philadelphia only.” A practice in Philadelphia and elsewhere was that policy holders were required to affix “fire marks” outside their buildings, to inform fire brigades that the building was insured and by which company. The fire marks of the Fire Association of Philadelphia show a fireplug with a hose attached and the letters “F A” flanking the plug. This became the logo of the association and was used on their printed matter, including the private business postcards that are the subject of this article. The cards were used to notify customers of the upcoming expiration date of their insurance policy. The concept of card mailings was not a novel idea by 1865. The Fire Association of Philadelphia cards were likely based on earlier use of card mail by another Philadelphia Insurance company, going back to 1848.

Nine Fire Association of Philadelphia cards have survived. The earliest, shown as Figure 2, is dated 29 December 1865. These devices seem to have been designed to be mailed as private postcards. There’s a space for the stamp at upper right, and there are printed address lines. The reverse of the card is blank. The cards were printed in black on buff or white card stock. The small illustration of the association logo at upper left establishes these cards as the earliest illustrated American postcards.

All the Fire Association of Philadelphia postcards that have been identified so far are used. The card is not known unused. The cards were printed with three address lines, the fireplug logo, and a preprinted dateline of “186\_” or “187\_.” The format changed slightly over the years. The reverse is always blank.

A census of known Fire Association postcards is presented in Table 1. The table shows the date the card was mailed, the Scott number of the stamp on the card, the policy expiration date penned onto the card, and the name of the recipient. In most instances, the cards bear local postmarks that don’t show a year date. But each card includes the specific date on which the policy expires, from which the year of mailing can easily be deduced.

| TABLE 1: FIRE ASSOCIATION OF PHILADELPHIA POSTCARDS |       |                   |                 |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Date mailed                                         | Stamp | Policy Expiration | Recipient       | Reference |
| 29 Dec 1865                                         | 63    | 5 Jan 1866        | Thomas Gay      | Figure 2  |
| 5 May [1868]                                        | 87[?] | 14 May 1868       | Anna ?          |           |
| 28 Sept [1868]                                      | 87    | 8 Oct 1868        | Peter Pierce    |           |
| 2x Dec [1868]                                       | 93    | 5 Jan 1869        | Thomas Gay      |           |
| 28 Jan [1869]                                       | 93    | 7 Feb 1869        | Mary Jane Watts | Figure 3  |
| 23 Jun [1869]                                       | 113   | 3 Jul 1869        | Saml Betts      | Figure 4  |
| 1x Apr [1871]                                       | 146   | 27 Apr 1871       | Sarah Furber    | Figure 5  |
| 14 Aug [1871]                                       | 146   | 24 Aug 1871       | John Seddinger  |           |
| 11 Oct [1872]                                       | 146   | 20 Oct 1872       | Mary Major      |           |

**Table 1. Chronological listing of the nine Fire Association postcards so far recorded, showing date of mailing and the Scott number of the stamps they bear.**

### 1¢ 1861 stamp

Figure 2 depicts the earliest known Fire Association of Philadelphia card. It also represents the scarcest rate: The 1¢ circular carrier contract rate in effect at Philadelphia during the mid-1860s, here paid by a 1¢ 1861 stamp. During this period, the postal law establishing free carrier delivery also provided that the local postmaster could contract with publishers of newspapers, periodicals and circulars for delivery by carrier within his district at agreed upon rates, subject to approval of the postmaster general. The normal fee for local

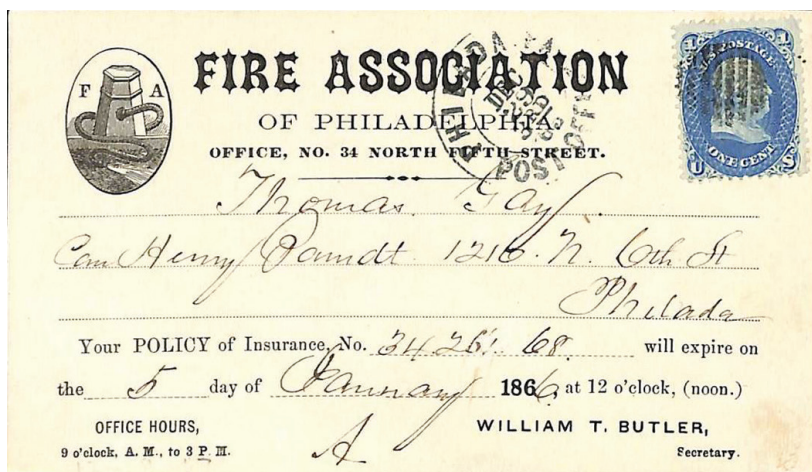


Figure 2. The earliest known Fire Association card, posted 29 December 1865 and franked with a 1¢ 1861 stamp to pay a specially negotiated Philadelphia carrier rate.

delivery was 2¢ for circulars and printed matter at all cities that provided carrier service. The special Philadelphia contract rate seems to have been 1¢, as shown by this card and other examples.<sup>2</sup>

The carrier-style cancel on the Figure 2 card is a 29 December 1865 “Philada.PA/Post Office” handstamp with a circular grid killer. The “3RD” slug indicates a delivery time period. This double-circle cancel can be found on contract mail as well as stamped local mail at the standard 2¢ rate. It was used from March 1863 thru February 1868.<sup>3</sup>

### Black Jack stamps

Four cards are known used with the 2¢ Black Jack stamp of 1863. Figure 3 shows a card with an F-grill Black Jack stamp (Scott 93). The card bears a Philadelphia “CARRIER” postmark dated January 28 with the year unclear. But the penned-in policy expiration date is 7 February 1869, and as the notices were all sent seven to ten days prior to the expiration date, we can be certain that the card was mailed in January of that year. The card has the letter B printed at bottom center. We know from surviving policy documents that this designates insurance for a building. Other cards are coded F (for furniture) and M (for merchandise). The manuscript A on the card in Figure 2 may indicate “All” but that’s just a speculation. The Figure 3 card appears to be rated as a 2¢ drop letter delivered by carrier.

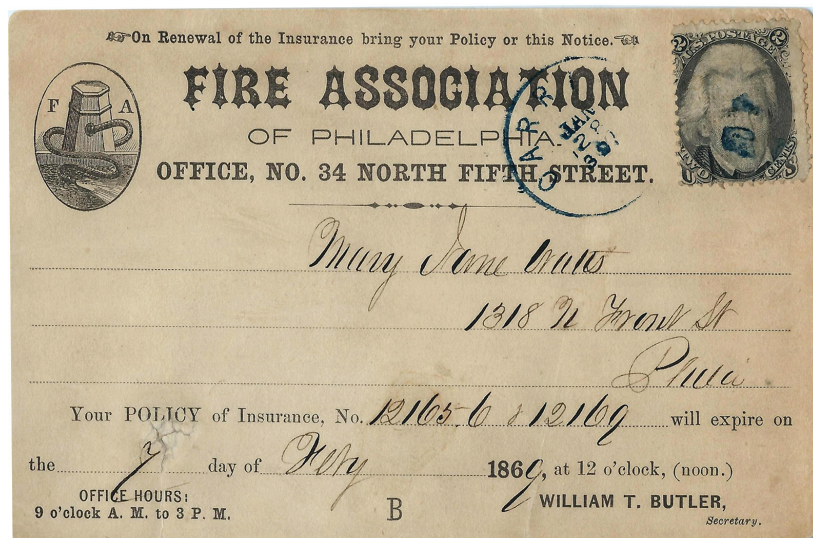


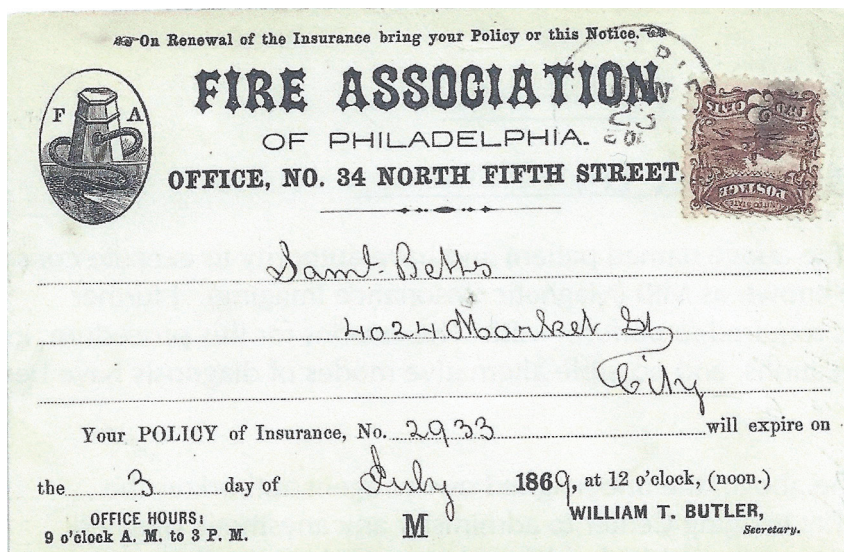
Figure 3. Posted 29 January 1869, this is one of four recorded Fire Association cards franked with Black Jack stamps. The letter “B” at bottom center indicates the insurance coverage was for a building.



## 2¢ 1869 stamp

The card shown in Figure 4 is the only known example of a 2¢ 1869 pictorial stamp on a private postcard. Mailed on 23 June 1869, it also pays the 2¢ drop rate for carrier delivery. The black carrier postmark has three slots for month, day, and a time slug showing the delivery period. The information in the cancel in Figure 4 is “2 D[EL],” with the last two letters not struck. This card is coded with the letter M for merchandise.

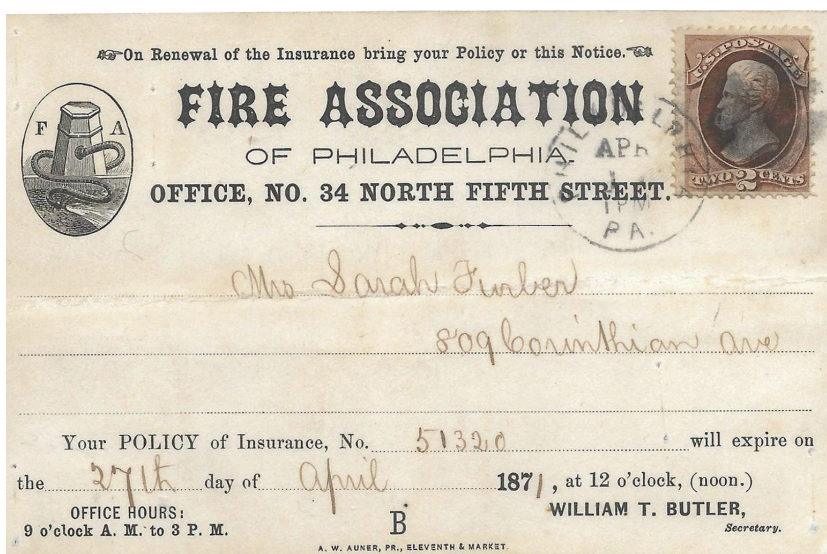
**Figure 4.** The only Fire Association card known franked with an 1869 stamp. The 2¢ Pictorial stamp on this card is canceled by a Philadelphia Carrier postmark dated June 23 (1869).



## 2¢ National Bank Note stamps

Three cards are known franked with 2¢ Jackson large Bank Note stamps (Scott 146). One of these cards, mailed on 1? April 1871, is pictured in Figure 5. All three cards with Bank Note stamps are from a new printing that shows “187\_” in the date line with the printer’s imprint (“A.W. Auner, Pr., Eleventh & Market”) beneath the code letter. A Philadelphia sheet-music printer, Auner was elected secretary of the Columbia Engine Company in January, 1870.

**Figure 5.** One of three Fire Association cards known franked with a 2¢ Bank Note stamp. This example was posted in April of 1871. The fire plug logo is a feature of all these cards and makes them the earliest illustrated American postcards.



All three of the postcards franked with 2¢ Bank Note stamps were canceled with a Philadelphia circular datestamp showing the time in hourly increments. No year dates are included. These duplexes were in use in Philadelphia through October 1879 and fully replaced the dedicated local/carrier handstamps which were discontinued in 1873.

### From postcards to envelopes

The city of Philadelphia created its own municipally controlled fire department which entered service 15 March 1871. At this juncture the Fire Association became a joint stock company. The Chicago fire later that year highlighted the inherent riskiness of locally-specialized fire insurance and caused many insurance companies to broaden their scope and thus spread their risk. The Fire Association transformed into a general insurer serving all parts of the United States. To support this expansion an agency sales system was launched.

After the Fire Association of Philadelphia entered the general national insurance field, local card communication was no longer appropriate. Commencing in 1872, the firm used envelopes for general communication and policy expiration notification. Figure 6 shows an example of a Fire Association envelope used by a branch-office agent. It was mailed



**Figure 6. National expansion ended the use of local mailing cards, which were superseded by envelopes. This cover was sent in the early 1870s from a Fire Association branch agency in Springville, New York. Here the fire plug logo has acquired ferns.**

30 April (probably 1872 or 1873) from Springville, New York with a cork smudge killer cancel on a 3¢ National ungrilled Bank Note stamp, sent to West Valley, New York. The envelope shows a line engraving of a local waterworks, along with the ubiquitous "FA" fireplug logo, which in this incarnation has acquired ornate surrounding decoration.

Figure 7 is a multi-colored Fire Association trade card promoting fire insurance for "in all parts of the United States." This was handed out at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. The fireplug logo is prominent at center.

### Spectacular flame-out

The Fire Association operated under its historic name until 1958 when it merged with subsidiaries and changed its name to Reliance Insurance Company of Philadelphia. Reli-



**Figure 7. Fire Association trade card distributed at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876. Note the persistence of the fire plug logo.**



ance retained the fireplug logo with some modern updates. In the 1960s, Reliance was taken over by a youthful financial swashbuckler named Saul Steinberg, who used it successfully as a piggy bank to finance corporate raiding. Reliance hit a financial peak in 1998 and then collapsed spectacularly. By 2001 the firm was in liquidation, where it remains to this day.

### Conclusion and acknowledgements

In addition to taking advantage of favored local rates, card mailings saved time and envelope expense for the Fire Association of Philadelphia. Hundreds (perhaps thousands) of card notices were likely sent to Philadelphians over the years. Although only nine cards are identified in this census, others likely exist. Beyond their philatelic and social historical significance, these cards are much appreciated by deltiologists because the small fireplug logo makes them the earliest illustrated American postcards. I would like to thank Richard Benjamin and Bruce Nelson for furnishing images and information used in this article.

### Endnotes

1. Robert L. Toal, *The Lipman Postal Card – Forerunner From Philadelphia*. Chester, Va.: United Postal Stationery Society, 2019, pp. 55-63.
2. Norman Shachat, “1¢ Circular Carrier Contract Rate at Philadelphia During the Mid 1860’s,” *Chronicle* 135, August 1987, pp. 184-186.
3. Tom Clarke, “Philadelphia’s Circular Postal Markings, 1765 to 1870,” *LaPosta: The Journal of American Postal History*, January 2000, pp. 49-57. ■

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## OFFICIALS

ALAN C. CAMPBELL, EDITOR

### THE SHORT-LIVED 10¢ PUBLIC DOCUMENT RATE OF 1874

ALAN C. CAMPBELL

#### Introduction

For the most part, those of us who specialize in collecting covers bearing United States Official stamps have not been expected to make any significant contributions to the broader field of the postal history of the era of the Bank Note stamps. Enough Official covers survive from the great departmental headquarters in Washington, D.C. that we have all gradually become conversant with the evolution of postmarking practices there.

Yet elsewhere, far too few Official covers survive, forcing us to piggyback onto research originally done on regular Bank Note issues. The late Robert L. Markovits, whose great collection of Official stamps was sold in 2004,<sup>1</sup> kept a kosher kitchen but was omnivorous in his philatelic collecting interests and should be considered a true postal historian. And certainly Charles Starnes, whose long-lost collection of Official covers resurfaced and came to market in 2007,<sup>2</sup> was also a great postal historian. In researching his seminal book on pre-U.P.U. letter rates,<sup>3</sup> he would have consulted all editions of *The United States Mail & Post Office Assistant* and would have seen there—although not germane to the subject of his book—a paragraph describing a new special rate for the mailing of public documents.

Since Starnes was a mentor to Lester C. Lanphear III, the rest of the next generation of Official collectors gradually became aware of this rate, and rare examples of it were properly described in auction catalogues. In a recent conversation with an avid collector of regular Bank Note postal history, though, I was startled to find that he was unaware that this rate also applied in some cases to parcels franked not with Officials, but with regular Bank Note stamps, for he had never seen an example in many years of collecting. So it is with some pride that we are finally able to make here a small (albeit obscure) contribution of knowledge to the overall field of United States postal history.

#### The statute itself

A government publication of 1930 summarized the statute of June 23, 1874 in a somewhat confusing way, implying that it was effective January 1, 1875.<sup>4</sup> That was actually the start date for the new rates for mailing newspapers, celebrated in the gorgeous series of tall statue stamps to be affixed into receipt books at the Post Office. Anthony S. Wawrukiewicz was able to clarify that “hereafter” meant July 1, 1874, as these were appropriations for the fiscal year beginning on that date.<sup>5</sup> The actual wording of the relevant statute reads as follows, taken from the *United States Official Postal Guide* for October, 1874:

**SEC. 14.** That hereafter the postage on public documents mailed by any member of Congress, the President, or head of any executive department, shall be ten cents for each bound volume, and on unbound documents the same rate as that on newspapers mailed from a known office of publication to regular subscribers, and the words “public document,” written or printed thereon, or on the wrapper thereof, and certified by the signature of any member of Congress, or by that of the President, or head of any executive department shall be deemed a sufficient certificate that the same is a public document; and the term “public document” is



hereby defined to be all publications printed by order of Congress, or either House thereof: *Provided, That the postage on each copy of the Daily Congressional Record mailed from the City of Washington as transient matter shall be one cent.*

The rates for *unbound* public documents were now to be 2¢ or 3¢ per pound, depending on the frequency of publications. This is a radical revision downwards from the book rate of 4¢ per four ounces, established by the Act of March 3, 1863 and effective at least through 1872, surviving examples of which are very scarce. Respecting government publications sent through the mail, it is safe to say that only a tiny fraction of the wrappings, whether they originally contained bound or unbound documents, would have been saved for posterity. As we will see, those that have survived wouldn't win any beauty contests.

What did the average bound public document typically weigh? The auction catalog for the Markovits sale weighs 21 ounces, and so would have cost 24¢ to send via the old book rate of 4¢ per four ounces, making for a fair savings. But the Scott specialized catalog, weighing in at a hefty four pounds 13 ounces, would have cost 80¢ to mail under the previous rating schedule.

Of course, for government documents, this high cost was not an issue, since until July 1, 1873 (when the franking privilege was abolished and the Official stamps came into use), public documents all passed through the mails free. After that, with congressmen themselves having to reach into their own budgets to send out books and reports to constituents, little wonder that less than a year later, they quickly passed the statute quoted above, granting relief to the departments and to themselves as well.

### **The Webster, Maine find of 1991**

An auction conducted by William R. Weiss in 1991 included “a recently discovered group of package fronts sent to Webster, Maine, including some very rare items, being offered in the market for the first time.”<sup>6</sup> There were eight lots in total, all addressed to one B. D. Bryant (Benjamin Doyle Bryant, Jr.), who had helpfully noted on each label who had sent it to him and the date received. There were seven individual lots with official frankings, five of which are clearly examples of the 10¢ public document rate. The most important of these was lot 3309, a parcel label imprinted “PUBLIC DOCUMENT,” endorsed by Commissioner Frederick Watts, franked with an untied 10¢ Agriculture stamp, and docketed on the partial package wrapping as having been received by mail on January 1, 1875. I was aware of this sale, and successfully bid on two items, lot 3311 (a label with a 10¢ Interior) and lot 3315 (a label with a 30¢ War and a strip of four 6¢ War). I agonized over lot 3309, but ultimately decided against bidding because the stamp wasn't tied. In general, one ought to be wary of untied high-denomination Official stamps on cover, but in this particular case, not yet being aware of the 10¢ public document rate, I shot myself in the foot. Because a 10¢ stamp, tied or untied, is exactly what you would expect to find on this label. Honestly, with four other parcel labels in this find, all imprinted “PUBLIC DOCUMENT” and bearing 10¢ Official stamps, you'd have thought I might have inferred the correct rate, but no such luck. Years later, having realized my mistake, I illustrated this package front in a *Chronicle* article.<sup>7</sup> It was subsequently reoffered at a Bennett auction, bought by Dan Curtis, and was then resold in the 2014 sale of the Curtis collection.<sup>8</sup>

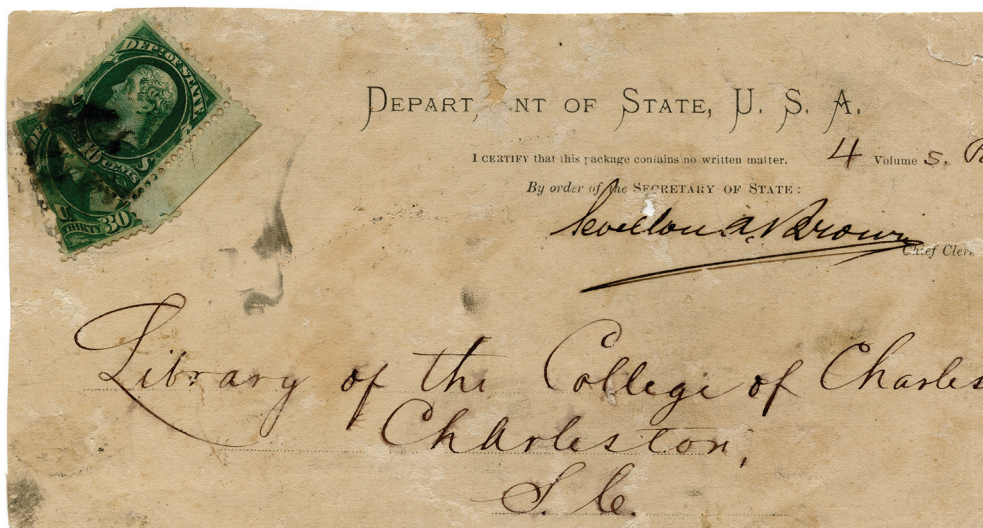
In the Weiss auction catalog, these package fronts were shingled on the illustration page, so not all the details are visible. From what I can make out, two of the Interior pieces were docketed as being from Senator Lot M. Morrill (Senator from Maine from 1861 to 1876, later Secretary of the Treasury under President Grant and founder of the land grant colleges) and the Treasury Coast Survey piece is from Senator James G. Blaine (Congressman from 1863-1876 and Speaker of the House 1868-1876, then Senator from Maine, 1876-1881). The War piece is directly from the Signal Service Corps. So Bryant, in his quest for public documents, in some instances solicited them directly from certain depart-

ments, but in other cases had his Senators intervene, directing that the requested documents be sent to their constituent.

Then we encounter from the same Weiss consignment lot 3316, a balance lot of fifteen package fronts all franked with regular large Bank Note stamps. Many were annotated as being sent by Senator Hannibal Hamlin, Senator from Maine 1869-1881. Five of these are franked with 10¢ Bank Note stamps, and presumably each contained a single bound public document. Today, I believe there are two collectors specializing in uses of the 10¢ large Bank Note stamp, and I wonder if either has been able to obtain an example of this extremely obscure rate. Apparently, certain public documents were provided directly to Congressmen and Senators, which were then sent out to constituents using regular postage. For example, the single cover illustrated for lot 3316 has a boxed corner card that states "Public Document, Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture," is docketed as having been received on February 19, 1874, and is franked with 2¢ and 30¢ large Bank Note stamps. What a shame! Had this report gone out directly from the Commissioner's Office instead of via the U.S. Senate, the franking would have been 2¢ and 30¢ Agriculture stamps. This would have been the only recorded example of the 30¢ Agriculture stamp on a cover.

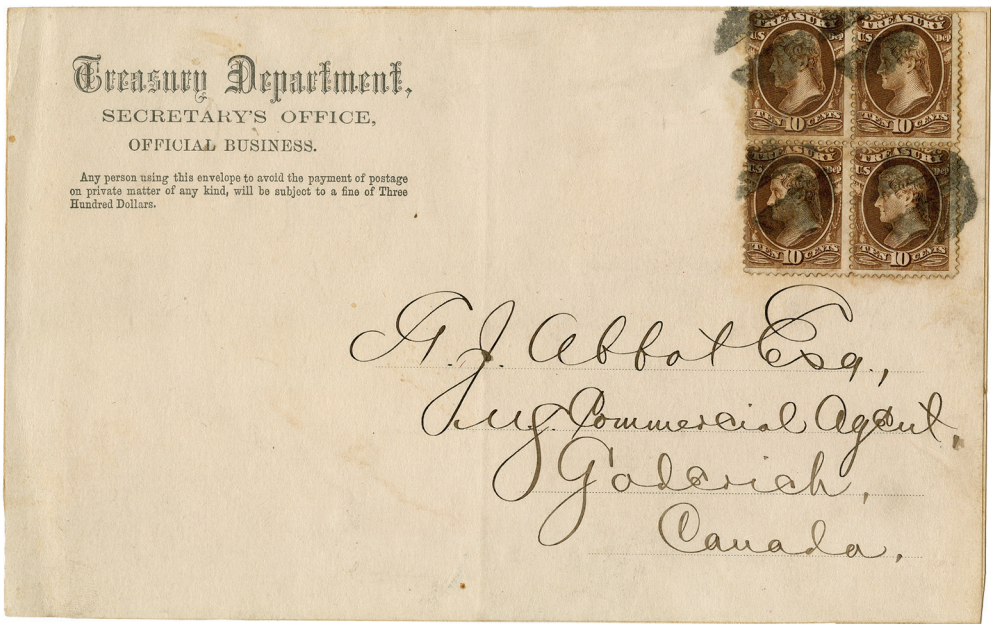
### Examples of the 10¢ public document rate

Figure 1, courtesy of Lester C. Lanphear III, shows the only recorded example of the 10¢ public document rate from the Department of State. A 30¢ State stamp has been crudely overlapped by a sheet margin copy of the 10¢ State to pay the 40¢ rate for four bound volumes (as noted in the certification at upper right) on a parcel label to the Library of the College of Charleston, in Charleston, South Carolina. This is the only form known on which the number of bound volumes is specified. The chief clerk's certification is that of Lewellon A. Brown, the same clerk who signed off on the famous 1882 \$2 State parcel front to the American Public Library in Stuttgart, Germany. That parcel was franked per the U.P.U. rate for international printed matter, and bears 17 copies of the 30¢ State stamp. But when Lanphear bought this parcel label in 1981, it was the first of the four known 30¢ State uses to come onto the market.



**Figure 1. Parcel label with 10¢ and 30¢ State stamps paying four times the 10¢ public document rate for four bound volumes (as attested by the signature at upper right of the chief clerk of the State Department, Lewellon A. Brown) and sent to a college library in Charleston, South Carolina. Courtesy of Lester C. Lanphear III.**





**Figure 2. Penalty parcel label from the Secretary's Office of the Treasury Department franked with a block of four of the 10¢ Treasury to Goderich, Canada. The penalty clause counted for nothing in Canada, but domestic postage applied for four bound volumes (per the treaty of 1875).**

Figure 2, from my collection, shows a penalty parcel label from the Treasury Department Secretary's office, franked with a block of four 10¢ Treasury stamps and sent to Goderich, Ontario. I believe this to be one of five Official used blocks still on cover. Without a dated postmark to enlighten us, we still know that this parcel must have been mailed sometime between July 1, 1877 (when penalty mail was first authorized) and April 1, 1879, when Official stamps were no longer valid on U.P.U. mail. The penalty frank was not accepted as valid in lieu of postage by Canada, and the correct postage was calculated at domestic rates per the treaty effective January 1, 1875.

In the Markovits and Curtis auction catalogs, this cover was analyzed as bearing 40¢ in postage for a 5-pound parcel of printed matter. I expect these descriptions repeat the information on the original Markovits exhibit page, which was written up by yours truly, and I now assert the right to rethink this. Effective July 1, 1874, standard printed matter rates no longer applied to either bound or unbound public documents going through the mail. Once penalty franks came into widespread use (and the Treasury Department was an early and enthusiastic adopter of penalty mail), there was no need domestically to have mailing labels stating "PUBLIC DOCUMENT" and certified as bearing no written matter, since now everything went through the mail free. Since postage to Canada was calculated at domestic rates, I would now say that the 40¢ in postage on this parcel label pays the 1874 rate of 10¢ per bound volume for four volumes. I am inclined to believe that whenever the postage on such a parcel front is a multiple of 10¢, then bound public documents must have been enclosed.

Figure 3 shows a package front to New York City franked with four 15¢ War stamps. The small label affixed at lower left bears the signature of Chief Clerk H.T. Crosby, attesting that the package contained no written matter. Both the Markovits and Lobdell auction catalogues described this piece as paying the 60¢ rate for six bound volumes of public documents. Only three 15¢ War covers survive.



Figure 3. Package front to New York City franked with four 15¢ War stamps, paying six times the 10¢ public document rate for six bound volumes, with a small printed label certifying that no written matter was enclosed.

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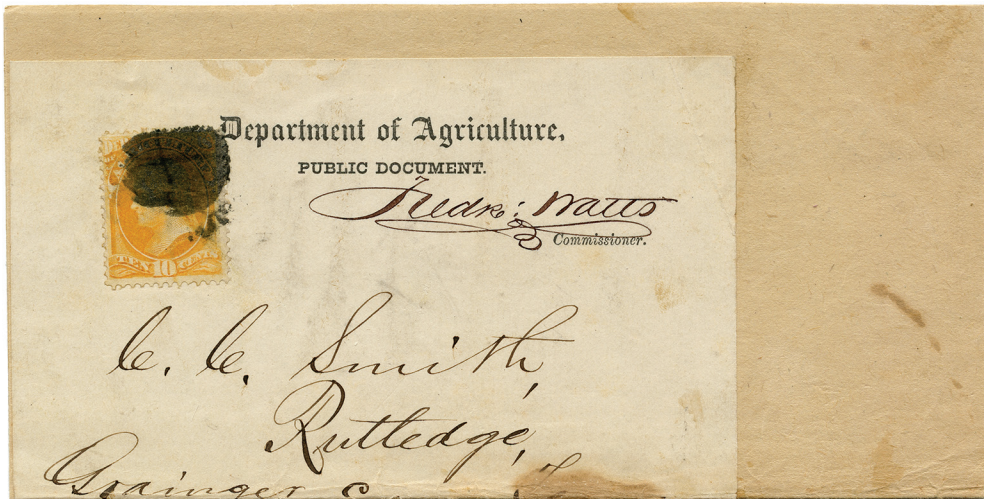
Figure 4, courtesy of Lanphear again, shows a Department of the Interior parcel label to Springfield, Illinois, certified by the Superintendent of Documents, C.C. Adams. A 30¢ Interior stamp pays triple the 10¢ rate for three bound volumes of public documents. A similar parcel label from the Bureau of Education was in the Markovits sale (lot 3406): although the stamp was not tied, it was authenticated by the Philatelic Foundation as a genuine use “but the stamp has been removed and improperly reaffixed on the label (PFC 460,173). Another 30¢ Interior “cover” (ex-Needham, Ackerman, Hughes and Duckworth) bit the dust in 1985, killed by the PF. Thus Lanphear’s piece, and an 1879 label to London, England (illustrated in *Chronicle* 260 in 2018) now represent the only two 30¢ Interior uses believed to be completely legitimate.<sup>9</sup>



**Figure 4. Department of the Interior parcel label to Springfield, Illinois, with 30¢ Interior paying postage for three bound volumes of public documents, with clerk’s certification that no written matter enclosed. Courtesy of Lester C. Lanphear III.**

Figure 5 shows a complete Department of Agriculture PUBLIC DOCUMENT parcel label on a folded package wrapper addressed to Rutledge, Grainger County, [Tennessee]. This is endorsed by Commissioner Frederick Watts and franked with a heavily canceled 10¢ Agriculture stamp. It came into my possession via a circuitous route. Originally Lot 3771 in the Starnes sale, it was hammered down at \$5,250 in the Starnes sale to a telephone bidder. On extension, it received a good certificate (PFC 459,183). But the transaction was apparently never completed, because the item was returned by the auctioneer to the Starnes heirs, who then some months later put it up for offer on eBay, where I was able to buy it at a much more favorable price. All three recorded uses of the 10¢ Agriculture stamp consist of the stamp paying the public document rate for a single bound volume.

No examples of the 10¢ public document rate are recorded from the Executive Office itself nor from the Navy Department, the Department of Justice or the Post Office Department. There exist two printed-matter parcel labels from the Navy Department but these were not franked at the 10¢ public document rate: a 12¢ Navy solo franking (ex-Curtis, lot 4077) from the Bureau of Ordnance, and a 24¢+6¢(3)+2¢ Navy franking from the Nautical Almanac Office (ex-Waud and Markovits, now with Lanphear). One might have expected that new editions of the Nautical Almanac itself would be sent out utilizing the 10¢ bound public document rate, but no examples of this have turned up. Also, it seems only logical that each of the departments would produce and have printed up an annual report that could



**Figure 5. Department of Agriculture “PUBLIC DOCUMENT” parcel label on a folded package wrapping to Rutledge (Tennessee), endorsed by Commissioner Frederick Watts and franked with a 10¢ Agriculture stamp paying the 10¢ public document rate.**

be mailed to interested parties. But no such thing has been seen.

The bold-faced listing below presents a census of the 13 currently known examples of Official parcel labels franked at the 10¢ per volume public document rate. Specific dating information is not available though in a few instances the year is known. The listing gives the franking, the destination, and reference information that should enable to the interested reader to locate an image. The initials for ownership are ACC for Alan C. Campbell, and LCL for Lester C. Lanphear III.

- 1. 10¢+30¢ State to Charleston, South Carolina, Figure 1.**
- 2. 10¢ Treasury, Coast Survey Office, to Webster, Maine, 1876, Weiss sale 109, lot 3314.**
- 3. 10¢ Treasury block of 4, Secretary’s Office penalty label to Goderich, Canada, Figure 2.**
- 4. 10¢ War, Surgeon General’s Office to Newark, New Jersey (LCL).**
- 5. 10¢ War pair, Surgeon General’s Office to Newport, Rhode Island (ACC).**
- 6. 15¢ War pair and two singles, to Auditor’s Office, U.S. Custom House, New York City, Figure 3.**
- 7. 10¢ Interior to Webster, Maine, 1875, Weiss sale 109, lot 3311 (ACC)**
- 8. 10¢ Interior to Webster, Maine, 1876, Weiss sale 109, lot 3312.**
- 9. 10¢ Interior, two singles, Smithsonian Institution to Webster, Maine, 1878, Weiss sale 109, lot 3313.**
- 10. 30¢ Interior to Springfield, Illinois, Figure 4.**
- 11. 10¢ Agriculture to Webster, Maine, 1875, Weiss sale 109, lot 3309; Curtis sale lot 4024.**
- 12. 10¢ Agriculture on piece, ex-Markovits (lot 3477) (LCL).**
- 13. 10¢ Agriculture to Rutledge, Tennessee, Figure 5.**

These public document rates should have been rendered obsolete as soon as penalty mail was first authorized for use on July 1, 1877. But it is well known that Official stamps were still being used by all departments from Washington, D.C. well into the 1880s. A good example of this is the Smithsonian parcel label listed above as item 9, which is docketed as



having been received on December 21, 1878. An independent agency, the Smithsonian was not granted the privilege of penalty mail until 1879. Other smaller agencies and bureaus still had stocks of Official stamps on hand and paid for, and were slow in getting penalty labels printed up. The War Department was especially notorious in this regard. The public document rates as they applied to Congressmen would have become obsolete when the franking privilege was restored to them in a very limited way, per the Act of March 3, 1877. A broad free-frank privilege was not restored to Congressmen until 1895.

As for the sending of books by the general public, the fourth-class rate of 1879 limited the weight of each mailing to under four pounds. A special fourth-class book rate was established in 1938 and continues to this day, now subsumed into the more general category of “media mail.” The changing rates for mailing books are laid out in Tables 32 and 33 in *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-1993*.<sup>10</sup>

### Epilogue

In the summer of 1971, after my first year of architecture school, I had a job as a substitute mail carrier in my hometown of Ann Arbor, Michigan. The first few weeks were rough, as I filled in on different routes for regular mailmen on their days off. Each day, I was handed keys to a different dilapidated vehicle from the pool out back. The oddest of all was a pushbutton 1964 Dodge. Most were stick shifts, which I had only the vaguest idea how to drive. It took me forever to pull away from the loading dock each morning, and one day I drove an entire route in first gear, grinding my way along.

The job got easier when I was assigned a regular route in a newish subdivision. Walking the blocks of single family homes was a breeze. The only challenging part was a big apartment complex, where a lot of graduate students were in the process of moving in and out. Each afternoon, I spent time back at the post office, writing forwarding addresses on all the “nixies.” One day, I was brought eight boxes of books to deliver: a graduate student had mailed his scholarly library from the west coast, but hadn’t himself yet made it across the country. The resident manager of the complex gave me the key to his empty apartment—on the third floor, of course—and I had to haul all these boxes up two flights of stairs and then lock up afterwards. The fourth-class book rate then would have been 7¢ per pound for boxes weighing up to 70 pounds (as these all seemed to).

Back at the post office, I complained to one of the veteran mail carriers, who told me that the prior year, a very persuasive door-to-door salesman for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* had come through and sold four sets in one block on his route! Back then, the 14th edition was continuously revised and consisted of 24 heavy volumes. All four sets were mailed out book rate on the same day, and the mailman had to schlep them from his truck up to the front doors. At our household, we had successively *The Book of Knowledge*, *The World Book*, and the *Encyclopedia Britannica* as the basis for writing our school reports. How we ended with the *Britannica* instead of the *Encyclopedia Americana*, I have no idea.

### Endnotes

1. Matthew Bennett International, *The Robert L. Markovits Collection of U.S. Official Stamps, 1873-1884*, February 7, 2004.
2. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc., *The Charles J. Starnes Collection*, October 25-26, 2007.
3. *U.S. Letter Rates to Foreign Destinations, 1847 to GPU-UPU*, 1982, updated 1989.
4. *Postage Rates 1789-1930*, United States Government Printing Office, 1930, pg. 13.
5. Henry W. Beecher and Anthony S. Wawrukiewicz, *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-1993*, Table 23, pg. 149.
6. Weiss Philatelics, Public Auction No. 109, September 21, 1991.
7. Alan C. Campbell, “Usage of Department of Agriculture Official Stamps”, *Chronicle 194*, May 2002, Figure 11.
8. Robert A Siegel Auction Galleries, Sale 1085, lot 4024 (Nov. 6, 2014).
9. Alan C. Campbell, “Official Covers to Foreign Destinations, 1873-1884: An Update,” *Chronicle 260*, November, 2018, pg. 357.
10. Beecher and Wawrukiewicz, *op. cit.*, pg. 179. ■

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## **CHARLES BREWER, HAWAIIAN PIONEER AND MAIL FORWARDER**

**LABRON HARRIS**

The four covers discussed in this article include a recent discovery and provide insights into how mail bound for the United States was handled in the Pacific area in the mid-1840s—and the key role forwarders in the Hawaiian Islands played in conveying it.

First, some background: Charles Brewer (shown in Figure 1) was born in Boston in 1804. He went to sea at the age of 17. He made his first voyage to Hawaii as an ordinary seaman on the China-trade ship *Paragon*, which left Boston on February 23, 1823 for Hawaii (then called the Sandwich Islands) and China. After two more voyages to Hawaii, Brewer decided in 1830 to stay there and pursue his fortune. He succeeded.

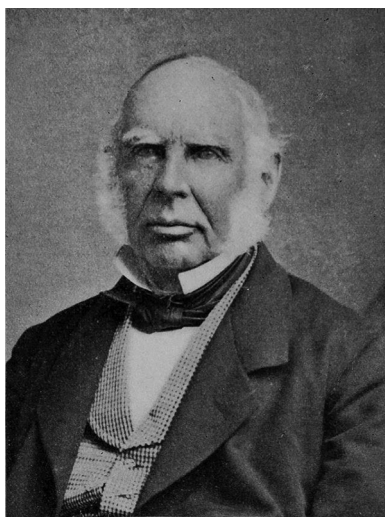
He soon became master of Henry Peirce's fleet of vessels, which were based in Honolulu and sailed between Boston and the Orient. In December 1835 he joined Peirce in the commission and trading business, forming in Honolulu the partnership of Peirce & Brewer. In 1843 Peirce retired to become a diplomat. Brewer took over the company, renaming it C. Brewer & Co. Brewer's business interests included supplying whaling ships that harbored in Hawaii between hunting seasons in the north Pacific. His nephew, Charles Brewer II, became his helper and continued the business after his uncle left Hawaii.

Among other services, C. Brewer & Co. collected letters from ship captains and crewmen, as well as from Hawaii residents, and held the letters until they could be sent forward toward their destinations. With few exceptions, such letters were addressed to locations on the eastern seaboard of the United States, which was "home" to most sea captains, crewmen and American residents of Hawaii.

The senior Brewer returned to Boston in 1849. He remained active in the Boston-Hawaii trade as partner in a group that employed a large fleet of ships. The Figure 1 photo shows Brewer long after he had returned to Boston. He died in 1885 on his estate in Jamaica Plain, just outside of Boston.

From 1844 to 1846, C. Brewer & Co. applied markings to many of the letters they forwarded. Until 1846, the company applied a forwarder mark on the outside in pen. In 1846, they used an oval handstamp struck in red. This article shows examples and uses of both types.

Figure 2 shows a cover from Henry Peirce, Brewer's former partner, who was then in Boston, addressed to Mr. William D.W. Howard, "On the Coast of California, viz. On Board Ship *California*." The letter within is dated August 19, 1843. It was carried around the Horn to Valparaiso, Chile, by Captain Phelps of the bark *Creole*, which sailed from Boston August 19<sup>1</sup> and arrived at Valparaiso via Talcahuano on January 18.



**Figure 1. Charles Brewer**

A forwarder at Valparaiso penned on the reverse (shown in Figure 3) the notation: "For'd by W.D. Phelps from Valpo Feb. 30, 1844" and sent the cover to Honolulu by the British brig *Laura Ann*, which sailed after March 17 via Callao (Peru) and the Marquesas Islands, leaving the latter May 19.<sup>2</sup> *Laura Ann* arrived at Honolulu June 12 where the letter was handed to C. Brewer & Co. for forwarding to Upper California, which in 1844 was still

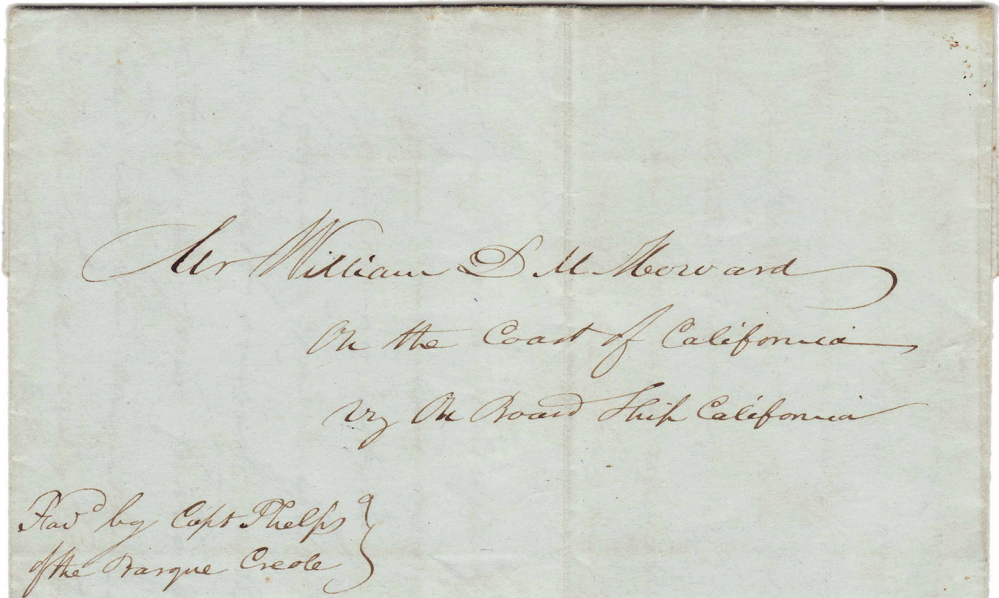


Figure 2. Letter datelined Boston, August 19, 1843, to an addressee on a ship "off the coast of California." Carried privately to Valparaiso, Chile, forwarded to Honolulu and then on to San Francisco, where it arrived July 30, 1844, after almost a year in transit.

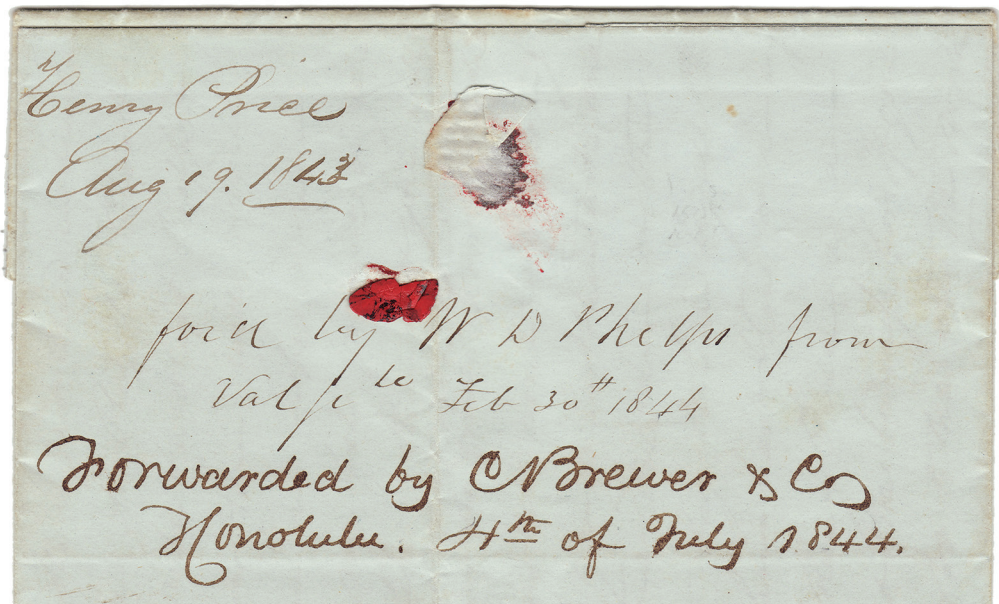


Figure 3. Reverse of the Figure 2 cover, showing forwarding notations: Forwarded from Valparaiso "Feb. 30th 1844" and "Forwarded by C. Brewer & Co., Honolulu, 4th of July 1844." Despite extensive travels, this cover never entered government mails.



a political department of Mexico. Someone at the Brewer firm boldly penned “Forwarded by C. Brewer & Co. Honolulu, 4th of July 1844” on the reverse and put the letter onboard USS *Levant*, departing for San Francisco July 5 and arriving there July 30.<sup>3</sup> The addressee, William Howard, was in the hide and tallow trade at San Francisco. Presumably he received this letter there, almost a year after it left Boston. Despite its extensive travels and multiple hand-offs, this cover was carried privately over the entirety of its long journey. It never entered a government mail system.

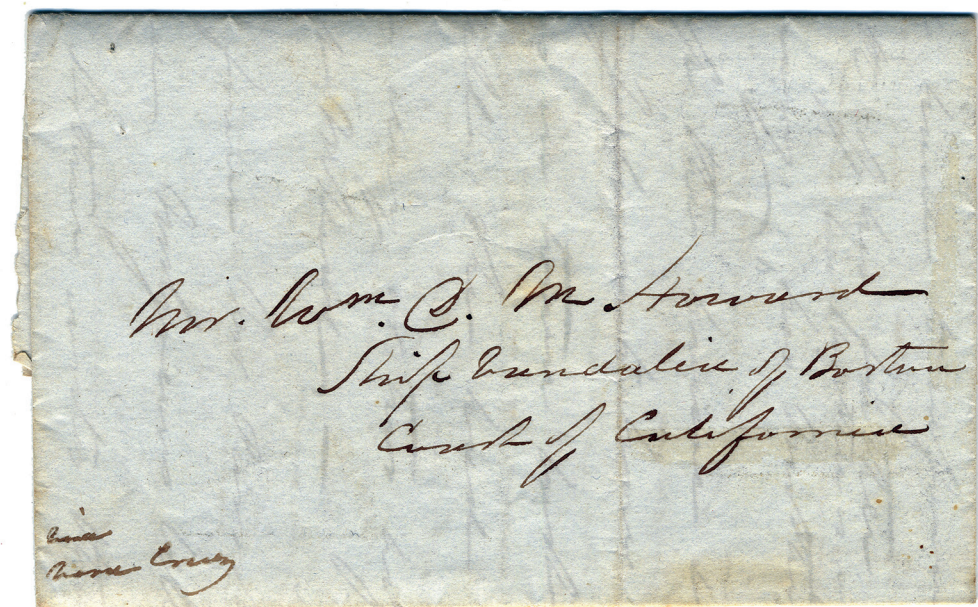


Figure 4. Another cover from the same correspondence, datelined Boston 24 February 1844. This traveled “Via Vera Cruz” (per the endorsement at lower left).



Figure 5. Reverse of the Figure 4 cover, showing New York, Tepic and Honolulu forwarding markings. Like the cover in Figure 2, this never entered government mails.

An interesting comparison is the cover in Figure 4, another letter from Peirce, also addressed to Howard in California and also sent outside the government mails. The letter within is dated February 24, 1844, more than half a year after the Figure 2 letter. With the “Via Vera Cruz” notation at lower left, Peirce directed this letter to travel by the New York packet to Veracruz and across Mexico to Tepic at the west coast port of San Blas. Figure 5, the reverse of the cover, shows it was forwarded from New York by Goodhue & Co. (reddish-orange forwarding oval at upper right). The British Vice-Consul at Tepic, Barron, Forbes & Co., penned “Rec’d at Tepic the 29th April & for’d the 10th of May, 1844.”

Barron, Forbes could have sent the cover to Honolulu by any one of several ships that sailed soon after that date. At Honolulu, it was handed to the Brewer firm, which penned “Honolulu, July 5/44, Rec’d & Forwarded by C. Brewer & Co.” and sent it off to California on the USS *Levant*—in the same mail bag that carried the Figure 2 letter, well demonstrating the superiority of the via-Mexico route over the long route around Cape Horn.

Figure 6, the new find that prompted this article, shows a partly-opened folded letter dated March 14, 1846, written by Charles W. Chase, a crewman on the whaling ship *Isabella*, addressed to Massachusetts. In the letter Chase writes of getting enough whales to enable him to return home, and of the death by drowning of one of his crew mates. The ship arrived at Lahaina March 19, and then Honolulu April 15, 1846.<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 6.** Dated March 14, 1846, this letter was forwarded by Brewer from Honolulu to New York via the whaling ship *Niantic*, which left Honolulu August 17, 1846 and arrived New York on February 1, 1847. There it entered the mails for carriage to North Auburn, Massachusetts.



To double Cape Horn in the summer months of January-March, ships left Hawaii for Cape Horn in the closing months of the year, the last leaving in December or early January. Chase's letter, datelined March, would be stuck in Hawaii until the fall, so he left it with C. Brewer & Co. at Honolulu to forward when home-bound whaling ships would next depart. *Isabella* then went on a whaling cruise and returned to Lahaina September 8.<sup>5</sup> While Chase was still whaling aboard *Isabella*, the Brewer firm marked the reverse of the cover with its red oval ("Forwarded by C. Brewer & Co.") and placed the letter onboard *Niantic*, which left Honolulu August 17, 1846, one of the earliest homebound whaling ships to leave Hawaii for Cape Horn that season.

*Niantic* arrived in New York City February 1, 1847.<sup>6</sup> There the cover entered the mails, struck with a red New York integral "12cts" circular datestamp, designating the sum that was to be collected from the addressee in North Auburn, Mass. (near Worcester)—2¢ ship fee and 2x5¢ double rate domestic postage.

Four covers are known with this C. Brewer & Co. oval marking.<sup>7</sup> The other three covers transited Mexico from Mazatlán to Vera Cruz before the Mexican-American War closed that route. One of these three is shown in Figure 7. This letter, dated March 25, 1846, was sent by 11-year-old Henry Lyman of Hilo, to his aunt, Melissa Joiner, at Royalton, Vermont. Henry's parents, David Lyman and Sarah Joiner Lyman, added their notes. Rather than wait for the homebound whale fleet to leave late in the year, the Lymans sent the letter to Brewer in Honolulu for forwarding via Mexico. The Brewer firm applied its red oval forwarding mark on the reverse (Figure 8) and sent it to Mazatlan, Mexico, on the brig *Jeune France*.



**Figure 7.** Sent by a boy in Hawaii to his aunt in Vermont, this 1846 cover was forwarded by Brewer via a French brig to Mazatlan, Mexico, carried by Mexican post to Vera Cruz, then taken to Pensacola and mailed there.

At Mazatlan, the letter was handed to the Mexican post office and carried across Mexico to Vera Cruz, where Mexican postage (4 reales) was paid, as evidenced by the faint black circular datestamp ("Franqueado en Veracruz" dated August 23) also shown in Figure 8.

By then, the Mexican-American War had begun, the United States was blockading Vera Cruz, the American consulate was closed and the consular officials had fled. The neutral British consul took possession of the letter, paid the postage and passed it through the blockade under neutral flag for delivery to a U.S. naval vessel. The cover was carried by



**Figure 8. Red oval forwarding marking of C. Brewer & Co., from the reverse of the cover shown in Figure 7. This marking also appears on the cover in Figure 6. Four strikes of this Honolulu marking are recorded.**

the USS *Princeton* to Pensacola, Florida, where it entered the U.S. mail on September 12, 1846. The mail clerk aboard *Princeton* must have mixed it with the ship's mail delivered to the Pensacola post office because it was rated for 10¢ collection, without a ship fee. From Pensacola, the letter was forwarded to Mobile, whence it was sent north overland by the Great Northern Mail. Young Lyman's letter was part of the last American mail to cross Mexico before war shut down the route.<sup>8</sup>

The four covers discussed here provide insights into how letters bound for the United States were handled in the Pacific area in the mid-1840s. They suggest the frequency of out-of-the-mails carriage and show the important role forwarders in the Hawaiian Islands played in their carriage.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Fred Gregory for helping me understand Hawaiian forwarders during this era and for allowing me to use his Peirce cover sent via Cape Horn (Figure 2) and his Lyman cover sent via Mexico (Figure 7); also thanks to Richard Malmgren for the use of his Peirce cover sent via Mexico (Figure 4).

### Endnotes

1. *Salem Register*, August 21, 1843, pg. 3, column 3; *Boston Courier*, May 4, 1844, pg. 2, column 4.
2. *Liverpool Mail*, July 13, 1844, pg. 7, column 3; August 10, 1844, pg. 7, column 1; *The Friend* [Honolulu], July 1, 1844, pg. 8, column 3.
3. *The Polynesian*, August 24, 1844, pg. 3, column 3.
4. *The Polynesian*, March 28, 1846, pg. 3, column 2.
5. *The Polynesian*, September 12, 1846, pg. 4, column 3.
6. *The Commercial Advertiser*, New York, February 1, 1847, pg. 3, column 1. All newspaper citations (except *Liverpool*) were obtained through GenealogyBank.com. *Liverpool* citations were obtained using The British Newspaper Archive.
7. Fred F. Gregory, *Hawaii Foreign Mail to 1870*, Vol. 3, pg. 66 (The Philatelic Foundation, 2012) states three strikes are recorded, but this cover came to light after the book was published.
8. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pg. 123. ■



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## EXPLANATION OF PROBLEM COVERS IN CHRONICLE 269

Our pair of problem covers from *Chronicle* 269, shown in Figures 1 and 2, was submitted by Daniel Knowles. The cover in Figure 1 is canceled with a double-circle New Orleans circular datestamp dated 14 October 1864. It is locally addressed to a specific street



Figure 1. 3¢ 1857 stamp on a cover with New Orleans "OCT 14 '64" CDS, "DUE 4" and "Drop Letter." There are no other markings or notations on the reverse.



Figure 2. Identically franked cover, also locally addressed, with a single-circle New Orleans SEP 23 CDS without year date, marked "Drop Letter" and "DUE 2."

location and bears the additional postal markings “DUE 4” and “Drop Letter.” The cover in Figure 2 is canceled with a smaller single-circle New Orleans CDS dated 23 September, but without a year date. There is a manuscript notation on the reverse of this cover that appears as “A.J. Hill Sept 22, 1863.” However, this may be a mistaken interpretation of the year date, because this style of New Orleans CDS did not come into use until 1865. This cover bears the additional postal markings of “DUE 2” and “Drop Letter.” The auxiliary markings on both covers appear to have been applied at New Orleans. The questions were: Why were these markings applied, and why do the ratings differ for seemingly identical postal uses?

Andy Burkman noted the very late use of the 1857 3¢ stamps on each cover. He speculates that by that late in the Civil War era, everyone would know that these pre-war stamps were no longer valid for postage. He goes on to say:

The covers were both rated “due” for that reason. The stamps were not valid for any part of the 2¢ drop letter rate. The 1864 cover (Figure 1) was due 4¢ since this was during the “double the deficit” period. The Figure 2 cover was later, after the penalty rate was discontinued, 1865 or 1866. The single-circle postmark confirms this. By then the requirement was for only the 2¢ due.

Jim Milgram agrees with Burkman and elaborates further:

The cover in Figure 1 is dated October 14, 1864 which is after the penalty rates of July 1, 1863 were instituted. This postal act also raised the drop letter rate from 1¢ to 2¢ and was the reason for the introduction of the 2¢ Black Jack stamp. Unpaid postage of 2¢ was doubled to 4¢ by this act—hence the “DUE 4” in circle handstamp. The other cover is more interesting because it bears a “DUE 2.” One can note that the “DROPLETTER” handstamp is much less crisp than on the other cover. Therefore, it is a much later use, after the penalty rates were dropped and only the unpaid postage of 2¢ was charged.

A check of the seminal guide to New Orleans postal history, *The Great Mail* by Huber and Wagner, confirms this timeline. The appendix “Chart of Postmarks” indicates that the New Orleans CDS in Figure 1 is Type 11, which was in use from 1864-71. The New Orleans CDS in Figure 2 is Type 12a, in use 1865-70. Huber and Wagner illustrate the “Drop

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Letter” and the “DUE 2” markings, but apparently were unaware of the existence of the “DUE 4” penalty marking which affirms its scarcity. These two covers when shown together illustrate the evolving rate structure of local mail delivery during the mid to late 1860s as the Post Office Department moved towards the goal of universal carrier delivery service.

### PROBLEM COVER FOR THIS ISSUE

Our problem cover for this issue, shown in Figure 3, is a folded letter from Memphis to Wurttemberg that has languished in this editor’s collection for several decades awaiting an explanation. It is a full folded letter datelined 16 April 1851 and written entirely in Ger-



**Figure 3.** Folded letter from Memphis, Tennessee, posted in 1851 to the German State of Wurttemberg. In addition to the various transit markings there are a number of rate notations in pencil, red crayon and red ink. The only marking on the reverse is illustrated in the inset at left. The challenge is to explain the rate, the route and the markings

man. The address panel bears multiple strikes of the Memphis CDS dated APR 18 in blue with a matching PAID. A manuscript rate mark that appears to be “42” has been crossed out and replaced with a “20” in matching ink. Likewise, what looks like “Havre” has been crossed out and replaced with “Liverpool” also in matching ink. There is a red boxed exchange marking “COLONIES & C ART.13” and a red double-circle Calais entry marking dated 20 MAI 51. In addition there are a number of manuscript numeral notations in pencil, red crayon and red ink. The only marking on the reverse (shown here as an inset) is a red circle “ZH 18 MY 18 1851.”

While the origin and destination are not that unusual, the rate structure seems overly complicated. The challenge is to explain the rate, the route and the markings. What is going on here? Extra credit for speculating what this cover might have looked like if only the Memphis post office had been supplied with first-issue U.S. postage stamps. ■

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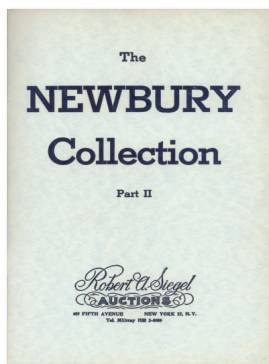


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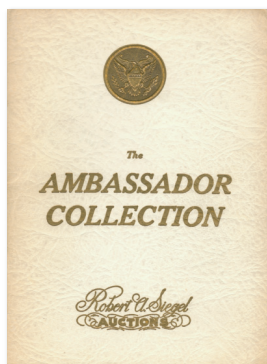
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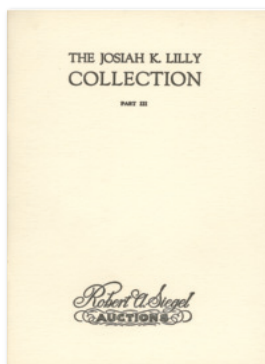




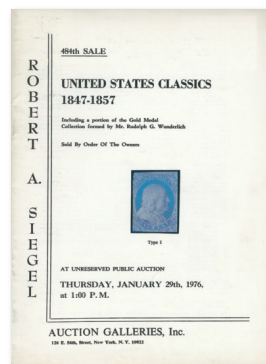
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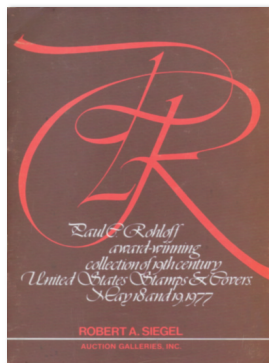
Ambassador 1966



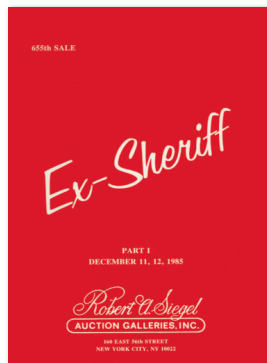
Lilly 1967



Wunderlich 1976



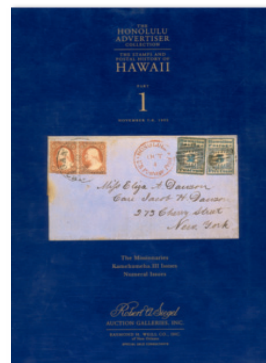
Rohloff 1977



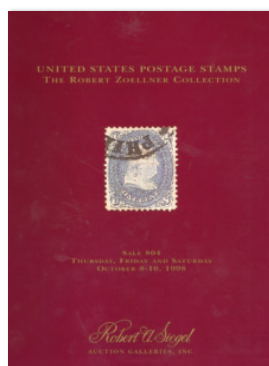
Sheriff 1985



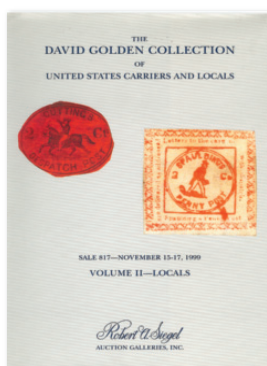
Kapiloff 1992



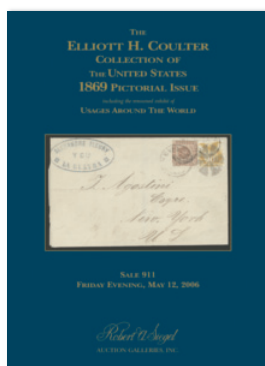
Honolulu Advertiser 1995



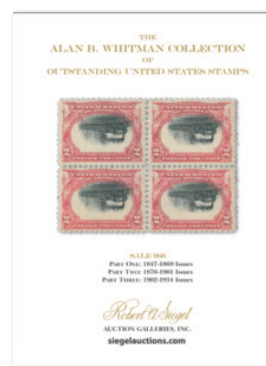
Zoellner 1998



Golden 1999



Coulter 2006



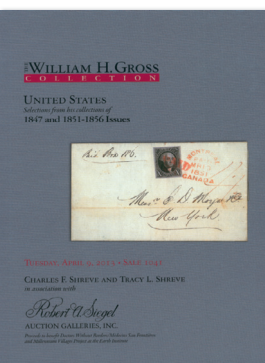
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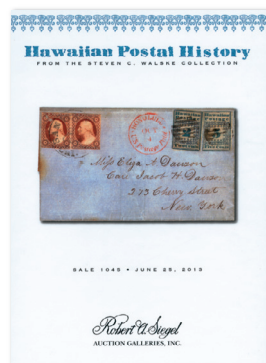
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