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Author(s): Robson Lowe

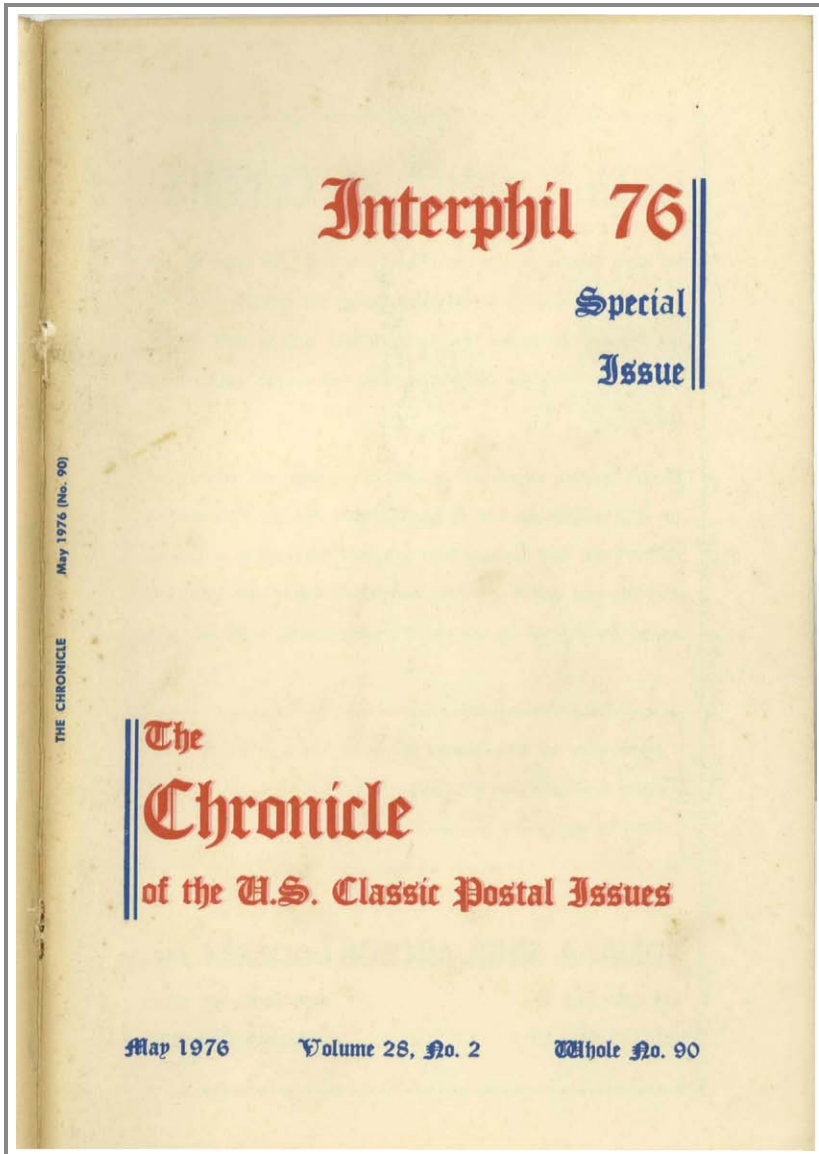


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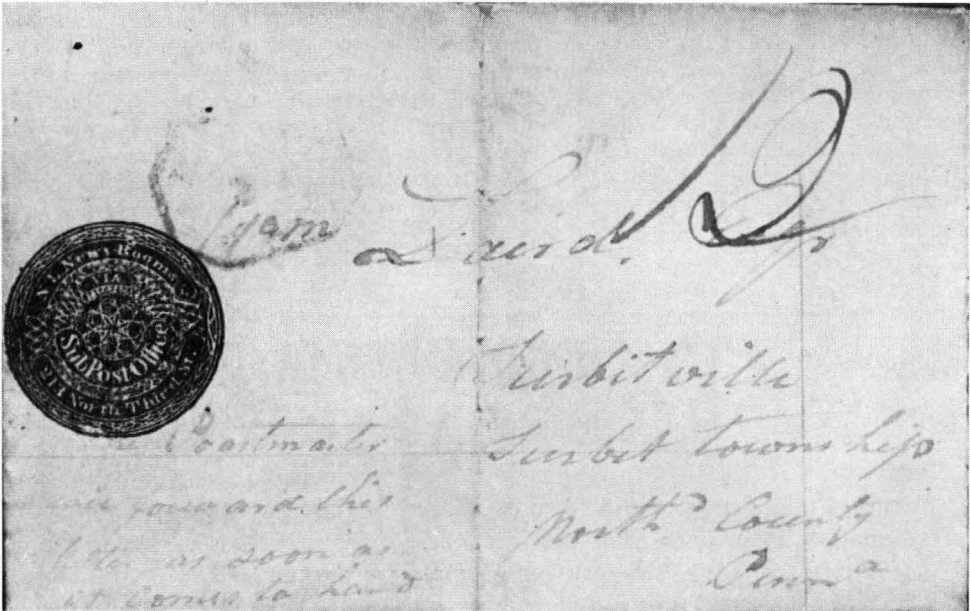
PHILADELPHIA LOCAL POSTS

ROBSON LOWE

The local private posts of Philadelphia have always fascinated me. In 1914 I had one of the small Blood's Penny Post in my school-boy collection and it was not until I met the late Humphrey Golding in 1919 that I learned the background story behind their issue. In passing I should mention that Golding was my one and only employer. At 9. am on the 6th May 1920 I started to work for him. At 9.20 am I was fired. Since then I have been self-employed.

* * * * *

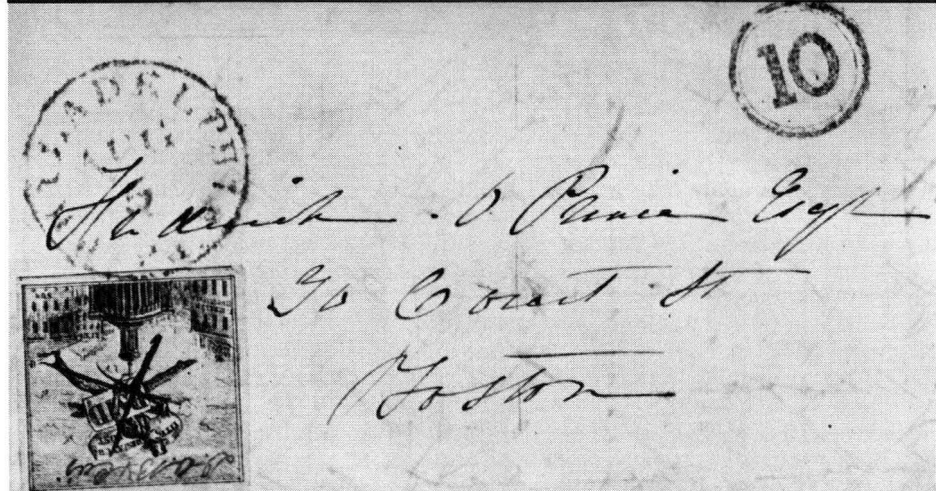
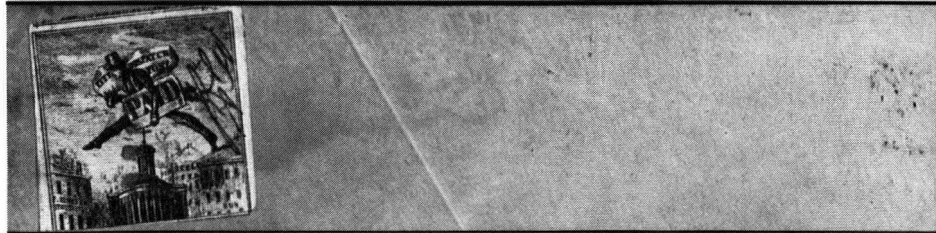
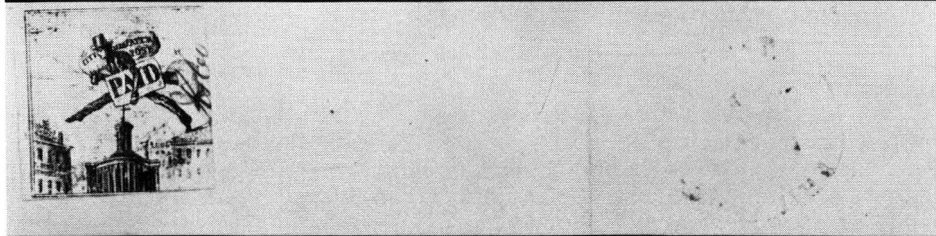
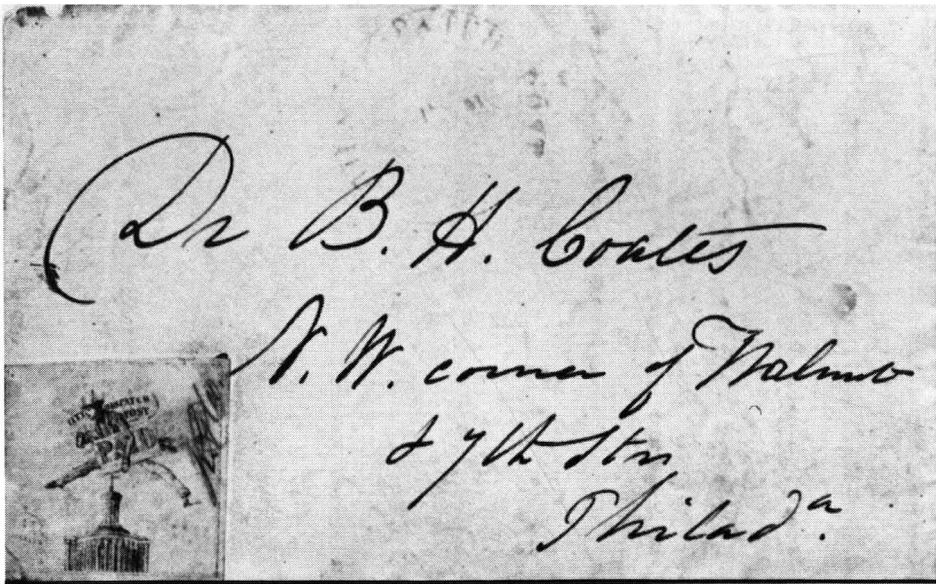
The first of these local posts was operated by Andrew McMachin, the owner of the *Northern Liberties News Rooms*, which in 1836 was the terminus for the New York-Philadelphia coaches. On arrival, the weary traveller could get refreshment and a bed and the printed letter sheet was available for him to write a letter to his friends in the city or the letter could be delivered to the Post Office for immediate forwarding out of town. The News Rooms were situated at 213 North Third Street. In addition to the 5 cents charged for the letter sheet, the federal postage had to be paid on out-of-town letters. The development of the railroad to Philadelphia resulted in the News Rooms' being closed in 1837.



Northern Liberties News-Rooms postal stationery, 1837.

The *Philadelphia Despatch Post* was the first local post within the city limits and was started by Robertson & Co. on 8th December 1842 when their advertisement announced that adhesive stamps would shortly be available at 37½ cents a dozen. These stamps were made from the handstamp, had the word PAID in place of the hour and were initialed "R & Co."; they appeared early in 1843.

Robertson was a retiring individual as nothing is known about his personal life. Letters written by a William H. Robertson are known carried by the service but it is by no means certain that this was the proprietor. The late Elliott Perry showed me a Philadelphian news cutting announcing the betrothal of a Robertson to a Perot in 1842. Was it the same man? I think so, for William B. Perot, the postmaster of Bermuda, was to make his postage stamp by the same method a few years later. We do know that Robertson's manager was James W. Halsey whose other profession was that of a dealer in leather trimmings. While William Harnden had his imposing building in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Despatch Post had their office on the premises.



From top: a) Robertson's Striding Messenger, first printing, initialed "R & Co."; note Philadelphia Despatch Post handstamp; b) second printing, endorsed "R & Co."; c) third printing, still initialed "R & Co."; d) third printing on pelure paper, overprinted by Blood "D.O.B. & Co."



Blood's 1846 "For the POST OFFICE," type 1 on cover. Inset: type 2 at left, type 3 at right.

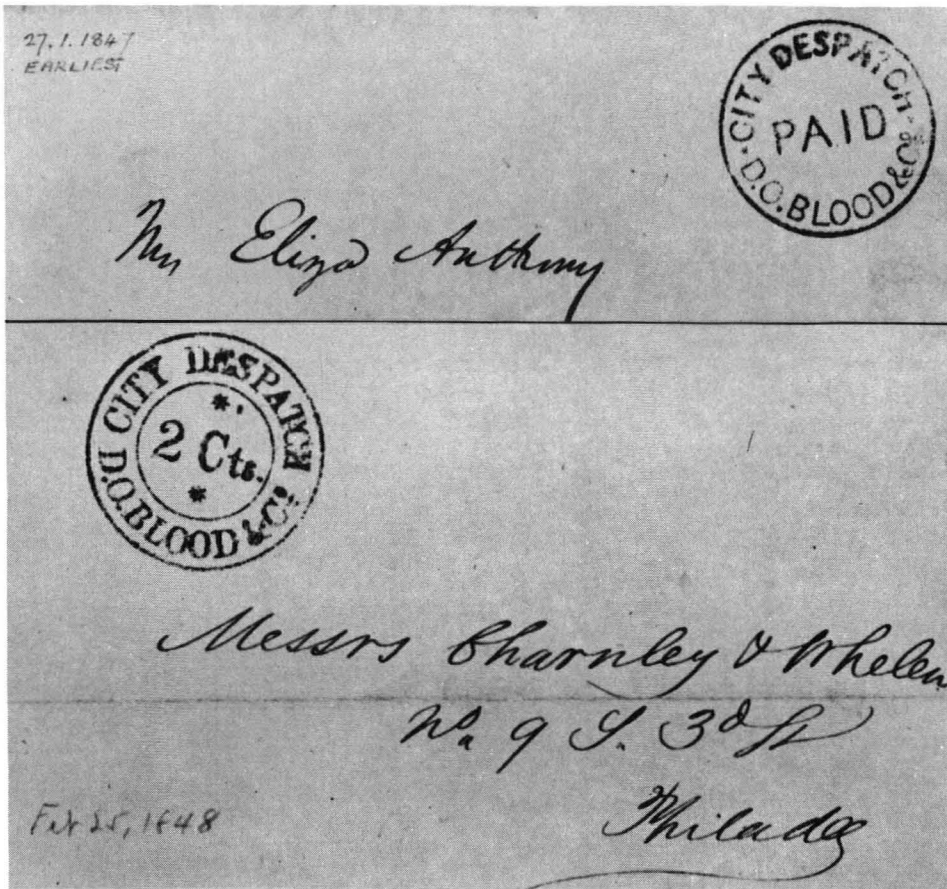
The *City Despatch Post* has always been a bit of a mystery. Who owned it is not known but one cover is known with the adhesive stamp made from a handstamp used on 24th October 1843. The handstamp alone is known used up to 5th May 1845. Of course the famous stamp issued by this post was the famous Striding Messenger design which is known used from September 1843 but these are only found initialed "R & Co." in the same way as the Philadelphia Despatch Post stamps. If Robertson did not start the *City Despatch Post*, he certainly was operating it from September 1843 although his early stamps were also in use up to the end of that year.

The Striding Messenger stamps are extraordinary in themselves as the printer first used a paper which was quite unsuitable for lithography and in consequence only the messenger and the central building appear in the first printing. The second paper used was a little better and details of the surrounding buildings show although the overall appearance is worn. The third and last printing was on a fine pelure paper that is so thin that it is nearly impossible to find a perfect stamp unless it is used on a cover.

On 7th July 1845, Daniel Otis Blood, who was chief cashier of the Daily Public Ledger, and his brother, Walter H. Blood, purchased the *City Despatch Post* from Robertson's manager, John W. Halsey. With the post, the remaining stock of the third printing was acquired and Daniel Blood overprinted each stamp in his own hand "D. O. B. & Co's" pending the arrival of his own striding messenger stamps lettered D.O. BLOOD & Co's *City Despatch Post Paid* which are known used from 27th August 1845 until April 1848.

At first these stamps cost three cents, as had the earlier issues, but on 1st June 1846 the rate was reduced to two cents with discounts varying from six for 10 cents to 96 for \$1. They were probably printed in sheets of 96 made up of eight transfers of twelve 3 x 4. At the same time a circular stamp was issued which bore the legend "For the POST OFFICE/CITY DESPATCH POST/ D.O. BLOOD & Co." and these are found only used on letters addressed out of town and carried to the post office. In 1847 and 1848 two further printings of the circular "For the Post Office" stamp appeared and these were sold at the rate of three for 5 cents and at varying discounts up to 100 for 75 cents.

Blood produced a second Striding Messenger stamp in 1847 and it remained in use for less than a year, the earliest date known to me being the 17th



Blood 1847 PAID handstamp (top). Blood 1848 2 Cts. due handstamp (below); note similarity to Hampton handstamp shown later.

October 1847 and the latest in December. No multiple is known to me. Meanwhile two different handstamps appeared, one including the word PAID and the other "2 cts.," presumably indicating postage due.

Blood was a firm believer in public relations. From the time when he brought out his first stamps he publicised his operations in many ways. His 1845 "Circular" describes his service as "the prompt, cheap and convenient method of conveying Letters, Papers, and Small Parcels to the Post Office, and from one part of the City and Districts to another (except Kensington and Spring Garden) . . . Boxes are placed in careful hands in various parts of the city, from which three deliveries are made each day, at the low rate of 2 cents each letter. City Letters may be prepaid, or paid by the person to whom addressed. All Letters for the Post Office must be pre-paid . . . Funeral Notices, Circulars, Notices of Meeting, &c., (in quantities) delivered with promptness, at low rates. N.B.—All our boxes have the name of D.O. Blood & Co. on them in large letters."

In 1847 Blood had sheets of small labels printed, one of which was frequently stuck on the letters he handled; these labels publicised various aspects of the service. At first, the headquarters were at 48 South Third Street, above the Gerard Bank.

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At this time there were other local posts operating which must be mentioned.

The *City Express Post* was owned by Calvin Tyson and two different handstamps are known used in November 1845 and February 1846. In the

City Dispatch, for its utility, convenience and economy of this establishment compared to the other means and patronage of the City. These will, again, be shown in its advantages and other recommendations. Respectfully,
A FRIEND.

It's a good city paper to take you inform,
And never can manage the carrier in haste,
Get the name of the publisher—his line,
And read it thro' Blood & Co's City Dispatch!

Use of Blood's City Dispatch Post-office is not only the most convenient but the only one for the country; takes a Letter in the Post-office, sale or show.

Persons living in Spring Garden can send Letters to the other Districts (except Kensington) thro' Blood's City Dispatch. Boxes will be found in Vine street and in Sixth street.

A list of the Box Stations will be found very convenient for all who make use of Blood's City Dispatch. You can get one at the Office, 43 South Third st.

Call at the Office, 43 So. Third st., and get a list of the Box Stations of Blood's City Dispatch; you will find it very convenient.

Bills for collection are sent thro' Blood & Co's City Dispatch.

Receipts for the prepayment of Letters can be had at the Box Stations of Blood's City Dispatch.

Persons wishing Stamps, can get them at any of the Box Stations of Blood's City Dispatch.

Young Garden and Kensington are excluded by Government from receiving Letters through Blood's City Dispatch.

Notes.—There is a Post-office in Spring Garden; therefore Blood's City Dispatch is not allowed to take Letters from the City into that District.

Boxes of Blood's City Dispatch will be found in Sixth street and Vine street, into which persons living in Spring Garden can deposit their Letters.

The cheapest medium for sending throughout the City Letters, small parcels, and messages of any kind, is D. O. Blood & Co's City Dispatch.

Blood & Co's City Dispatch is for the purpose of carrying letters, small parcels, Funeral and Meeting Notices and Circulars of all kinds, throughout the City and Districts.

Funeral Notices are served in no way so cheaply and expeditiously as through Blood's City Dispatch.

Who would carry a Letter to the Post-office when Blood does it so cheaply?

The main point on Letters for the Post-office, sent through Blood's City Dispatch, can be prepaid at any of the Box Stations.

Hear ye! hear ye! Thro' Blood's City Dispatch Letters are taken from all parts of the City to the Post-office, three times a day.

Remember, that Blood's City Dispatch takes Letters, Papers and Small Parcels from one extremity of the City to the other, at the low rate of two cents each.

Letters are taken three times a day at the low rate of two cents each, throughout the city, and to the Post-office, by Blood's City Dispatch.

The Sun of Temperance thro' Blood's City Dispatch is a very convenient medium through which to send to members Notices of Meetings, Elections, Fairs, Arrangements, &c.

Blood's City Dispatch is just the medium for Societies to send Notices of Meetings to members.

Through Blood's City Dispatch all have a chance of cheap City communication.

Postage can be paid on Letters for the Post-office at any of the Box Stations of Blood's City Dispatch.

Persons who have the privilege of use of the Box Stations of Blood's City Dispatch, can Letters for the Post-office.

Call at Blood's City Dispatch Office, and get a list of the Box Stations.

All Retailers of whatever kind or business, find it very convenient to send their orders for fresh supplies through Blood's City Dispatch.

The small postage on Letters can be paid at the Box Stations of Blood's City Dispatch.

The name D. O. Blood & Co. will be found in three places on all the boxes of Blood's City Dispatch.

Societies send Notices of Meetings to members thro' Blood's City Dispatch.

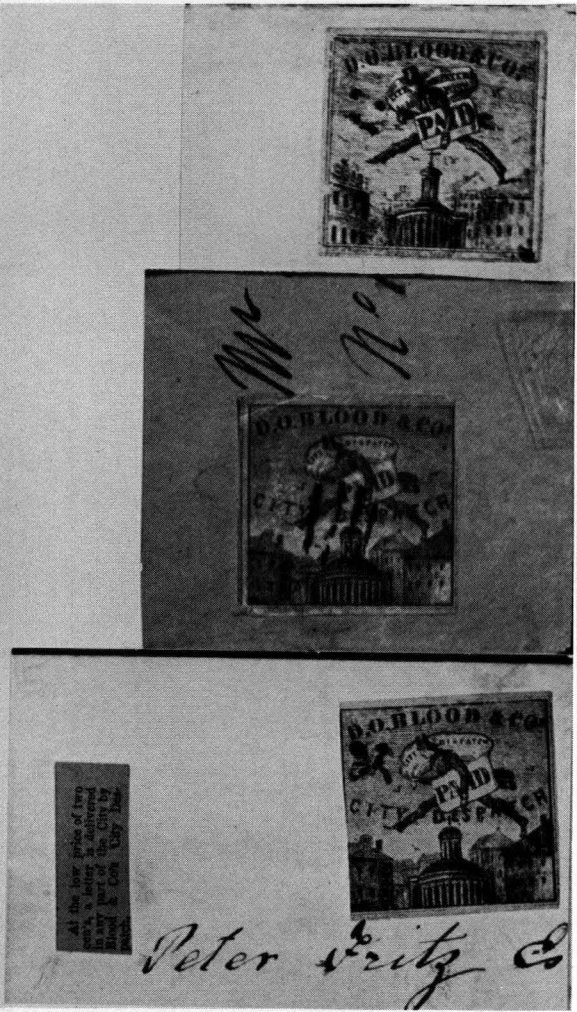
Notices of Meetings are sent to members through Blood's City Dispatch by different Societies.

As money is in the market, so is Blood's City Dispatch to the cripple.

Throughout the City and Districts, Funeral Notices, Meeting Notices, and Circulars of all kinds, are taken three times a day by Blood & Co's City Dispatch.

All Credit Dealers will find Blood's City Dispatch very convenient, through which to send their bills.

A desideratum for cripples—Blood's City Dispatch.



Left: sheet (or part sheet) of Blood's publicity labels. Above, from top: Blood's first definitive, cancelled four dots; Blood's second Striding Messenger type, cancelled four dots; same cancelled cross and with publicity label.

Caspary collection there was an impression of a circular handstamp which was either a cut-out or an adhesive but no other example is known to me. Tyson first issued a type-set stamp and then a small lithographed adhesive stamp, in black on pink and in red on yellow, showing a pigeon carrying a letter which is known used between April and July 1846. On 24th November, Tyson sold his business to Blood.

Blood's one serious competitor was W. B. Stait who had been an employee of the independent mail carriers,¹ the American Letter Mail Co. until their

1. The independent mail carriers operated their posts between cities in competition with the U.S. Post Office.



Upper: Eagle City Despatch Post 1848 sawtooth stamp used in 1849 with handstamp "Eagle City Post & Mas. Telegraph Messenger Co." Lower: Eagle City Despatch Post 1850 showing alliance with Adams Express.

service was closed by Act of Congress at the end of June 1845. Stait then worked for Adams' Express at 80 Walnut Street who supplemented their express business by running the *Eagle City Despatch Post*. During the first year the service used only handstamps but in 1846 the name of the service was shortened to Eagle City Post. In 1847 a circular adhesive was made from the handstamp. The second adhesives appeared which were of a curious circular saw blade pattern. In 1849 the name changed to Eagle City Post & Mag. Telegraph Messenger Dept. and in addition to the revised handstamps, a new stamp appeared in 1850 matching the new small Blood stamps in size, the short title being used over "at ADAMS' EXPRESS and 48 South 3rd." Stait was certainly controlling if not owning the business, for in 1850 his name appeared in the handstamps as Stait's Despatch (both with and without Post). Stait apparently operated both in 1850 and 1851 after which both posts were heard of no more.

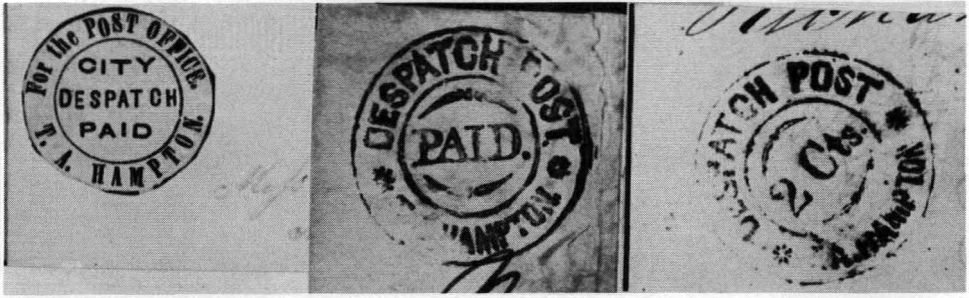
Two 1846 covers were carried by *Morton's Post*, one of which bore a type-set 2 cents stamp and the other a handstamp. Nothing has been discovered about this service which possibly only operated for a few weeks in March and April.

Spence & Brown Express Post operated during 1847 and 1848, issuing two stamps, the first type-set, the second lithographed and showing a rider on a racing horse. They are both so rare that little business can have been done.

T. A. Hampton ran a local post from 1847 to 1849 producing three different handstamps bearing his name and "DESPATCH POST" having either PAID 2 Cts. or 3 Cts. in the centre. The first of these designs was neatly lithographed as an adhesive stamp and Hampton produced another type-set adhesive "For the POST OFFICE" copying Blood's circular stamp first issued in 1846.

G. S. Harris brought out in 1847 two stamps which were identical to both Hampton stamps, which suggests that they were partners.

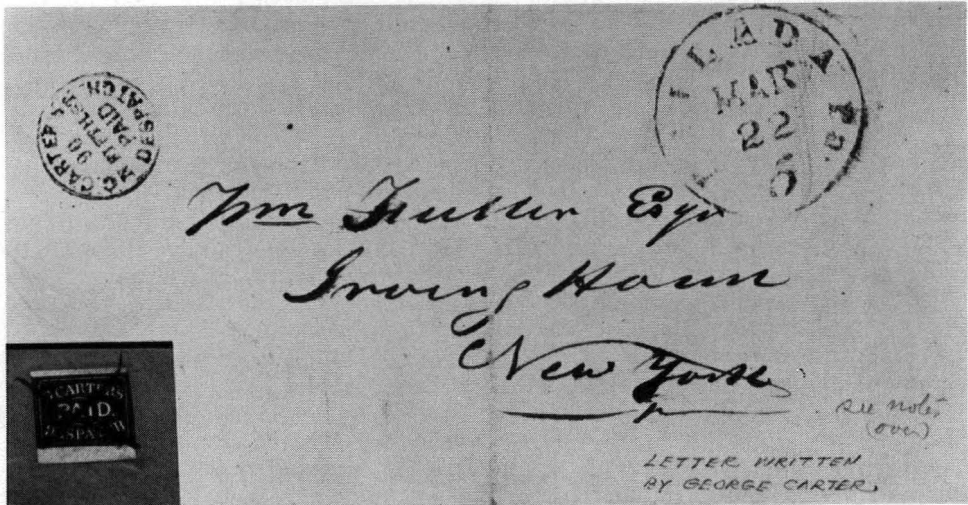
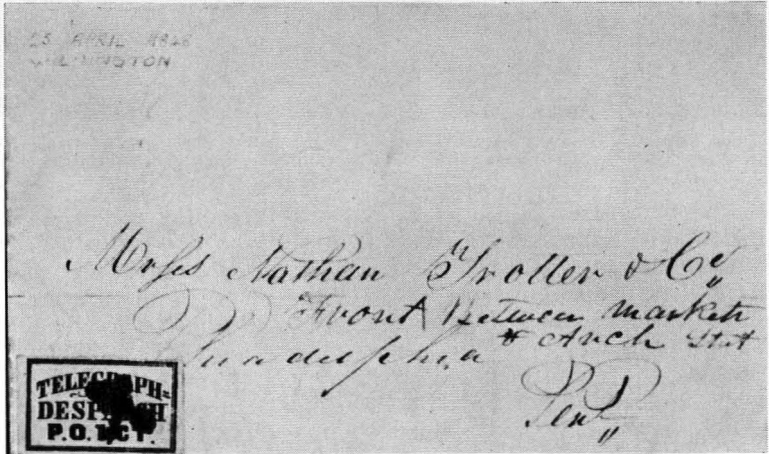
There were four local posts which started in 1848. *Brigg's Dispatch* of 61 South 8th Street produced an attractive oval 2c. black on yellow and two handstamps (PAID, and 2) with the lettering in reversed type. Any details of this and the *Telegraph Despatch Co.* are not known to me although the last named produced both 1 cent and 2 cent stamps but judging by those covers



Left to right: Hampton's 1848 adhesive copying Blood's 1846 design; Hampton's 1846 design; Hampton's 1848 PAID handstamp; Hampton's 1848 handstamp "2 Cts." due, after Blood.

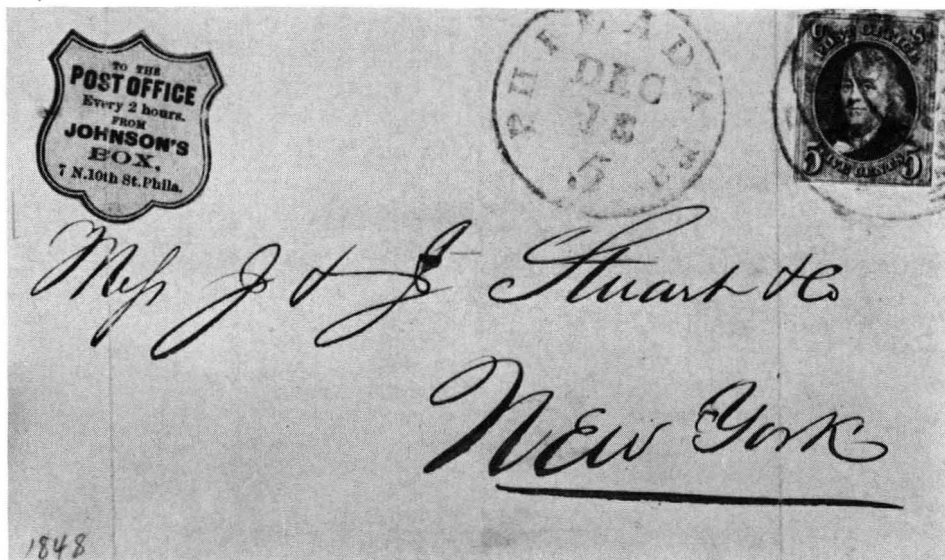
that I have seen, neither service could have lasted for more than a year and all are rare. Something is known about George Carter who ran *Carter's Despatch* from 1848 to 1851 as some of his personal correspondence is in collectors hands. He was a letter carrier for the Philadelphia post office about 1830 and ran a tobacconist's shop from 1843 to 1848. The address of his local post was 50 North 5th Street and during November and December he used four different handstamps, one containing PAID, another 2 Cts.; then

Telegraph Despatch Co. 1848 1¢ black on cover from Wilmington to Philadelphia.



Carter's Despatch, 1849, PAID handstamp on letter written by George Carter. Inset: Carter's Despatch stamp.

there were two types of PAID, one of which was curved and set in curious Gothic type. Carter's adhesive stamps were probably sold for one cent each and were printed in black on white wove or vertically ribbed paper. It is interesting philatelically because the impression shows no margins between vertically while they have enormous margins top and bottom; I cannot think of another stamp with this peculiarity. Maybe they were printed in horizontal rows.



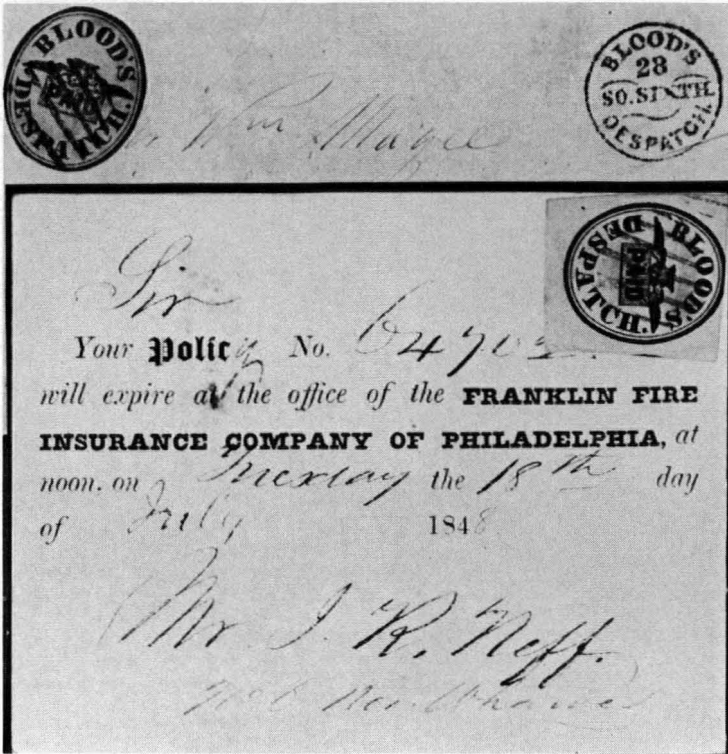
Johnson's Box, 1848 die-cut stamp, used with 5¢ 1847.

The fourth post of this vintage was *Johnson's Box* which is known on covers used in 1849 and 1852. The shield shaped stamp reads "For the post OFFICE every two hours from JOHNSON'S BOX 7 N. 10th St. Phila." This stamp was in Kline's catalogue in 1866 and some fifteen years later it was forged by J. W. Scott who naturally included it in his catalogue of U.S. Locals. It has now been removed but there is no doubt of its genuine existence. About 1900, the late E. H. Sanford wrote "Mr. J. W. Kline of Philadelphia informed W. P. Brown . . . that he perfectly remembers Johnson's Box and it was used by those in the neighbourhood for depositing letters to be taken to the Post Office and mailed by Johnson."

* * * * *

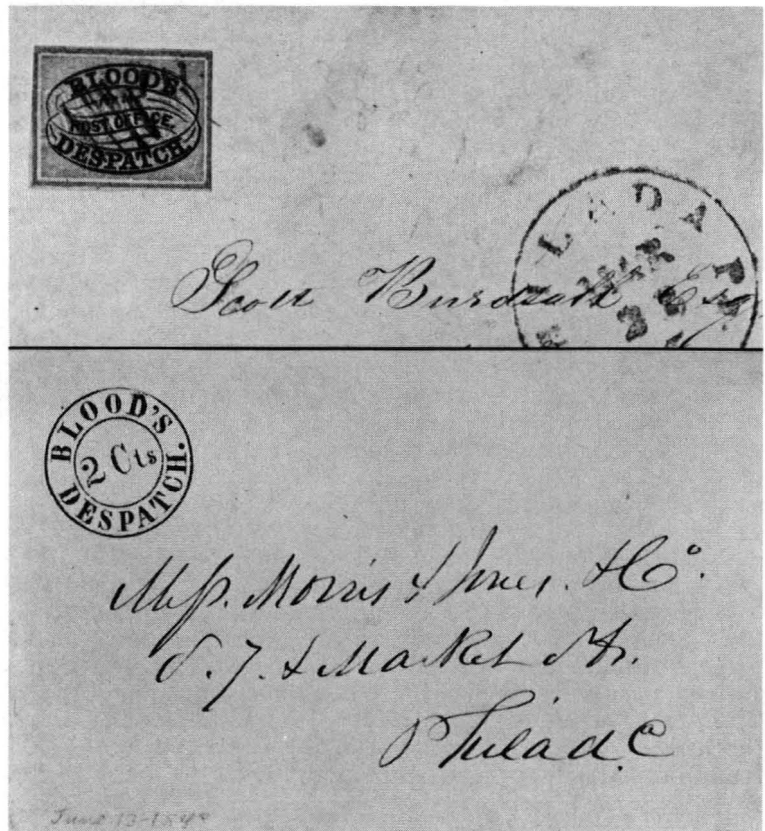
BLOOD'S DESPATCH was the title given to the famous firm in 1848 when Walter Blood left the business and Charles Kochersperger joined as an assistant. Immediate changes were made, the Striding Messenger and circular "For the Post Office" stamps were respectively replaced by the oval black on green² and the black on Wedgewood blue oblong—both with a face value of 2 cents. It is possible that this re-organisation was the reason why the four competitors made their challenge in the same year. Blood was obviously aging but his new assistant was a man of action. Kochersperger almost certainly was responsible for the introduction of the one cent rate. Three new small stamps were issued—the first printed in gold leaf on glazed black paper bearing the word *Paid* in the centre. The next two stamps appeared in 1849 printed in bronze on black, one with the words "Post Office", the other inscribed "One Cent." These are a fascinating trio for although no multiples of the first two stamps are known, they "plate" on the pane of One Cent. The latter was printed in sheets of 192—eight panes of 24—4x6.

2. The only Blood stamp known to have been mechanically separated.

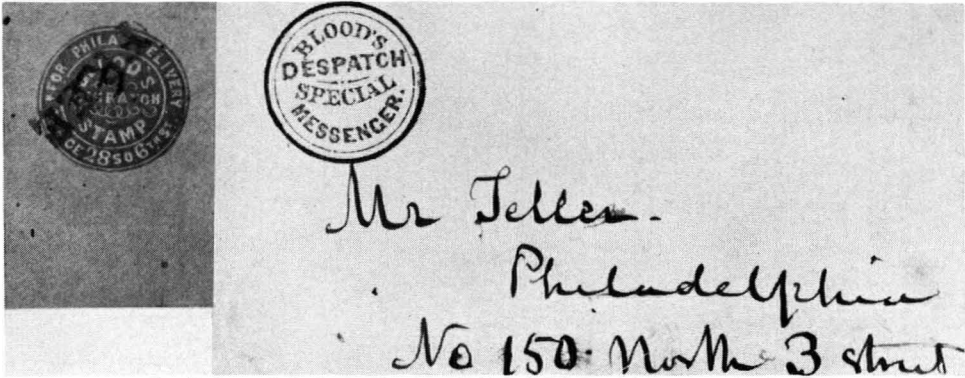


Upper: Blood's Despatch 1848 local 2¢ mechanically cut, cancelled five bars.

Lower: Blood's Despatch 1848 black on green used on post-card!



Top: Blood's Despatch 1848 "For the POST OFFICE" black on gray-blue; below: 1848 2 Cts. due handstamp.



Blood's Despatch stationery first type (left) and 1850 Special Messenger handstamp.

There are four different types in the horizontal row repeated six times in the pane. These stamps were frequently cancelled by a drop of acid.

By 1849 the headquarters of the post had been moved to larger premises at 28 South Sixth Street, new types of handstamps appeared and the first postal stationery envelopes were issued. In 1850 the premises were increased to embrace the adjoining building, number 26, which necessitated a new type of envelope. A new Special Messenger service was introduced and in the following year, Charles Kochersperger's brother, Elbert, joined the business.



Blood's Despatch third type postal stationery stamp. Used from Raleigh, N.C., with 1851 issue.



Upper: Blood's Despatch, third type stationery embossed on Post Office 3¢ envelope. Below: third type stationery with 10¢ 1847.

Early in 1852 Charles became the manager and *Blood's Penny Post* was started with the famous small stamp so inscribed and lithographed in bronze on black. These were printed in sheets of 200 arranged in eight panes of 25-5x5. These stamps can be "plated." In 1853 there was a colour change to blue and pink on bluish and a year later the colour was bronze on lilac. Date-stamps with the time of acceptance were introduced which suggest there must have been at least eight deliveries a day. In 1854 a new type of envelope appeared as the circular Blood's device appeared on the top left corner of the embossed 3 cents Nesbit envelope.

Blood died in 1855 and Charles Kochersperger bought the business, his brother Elbert becoming a partner. A lithographed essay bearing the portrait of Henry Clay was prepared but before it could be issued it was forged by George Hussey for sale to collectors. In consequence a beautifully engraved stamp of oval design, again with the portrait of Clay, lettered in the surround BLOOD'S PENNY POST, KOCKERSPERGER & CO. PHILAD^A was printed by Draper, Welsh & Co. An essay for this design has the city name spelt in full. The exact date of the closing of the post is not known but it must have been about 1862 when litigation by the Post Office was started on the grounds that the service was an infringement of Post Office monopoly.

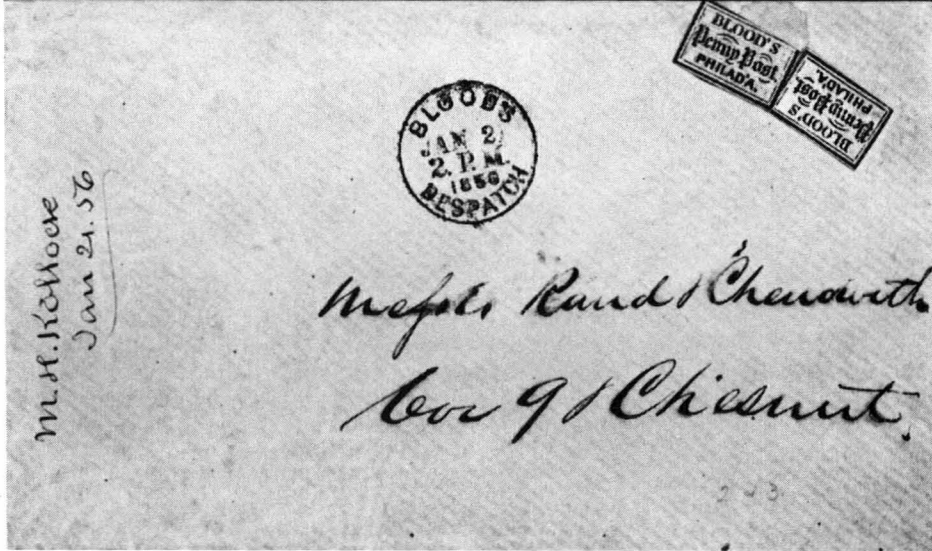
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During the fifties there were at least four other local posts.

A. W. Auner's Despatch Post was advertised in 1851 and but one example of their adhesive PAID stamp is known. *Priest's Despatch* functioned from 1851 to 1856, producing adhesive stamps but no cancellations. *Teese & Co's Penny Post* 1852-54 closely imitated Blood's stamp with the added pleasure of providing ten tete-beche stamps in a sheet of 100. *Cressman & Co's Penny Post* which started in 1856 was in service for less than a year and produced one stamp in two different colours.



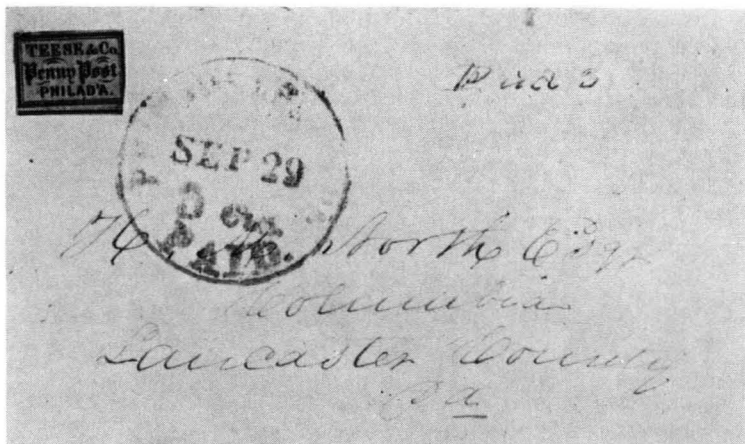
*A. S. L. Estey,
Clinton,
N. Jersey*



*M. H. Ketchum
Jan 21. 56*

*Messrs Rand & Chewath
Box 9 Chestnut*

Upper: Blood's Penny Post 1852. Note datestamp. Below: Blood's Despatch 1856—first datestamp with year. Penny Post stamps cancelled with acid.



Teese & Co's Penny Post, 1852-54, in imitation of Blood.

*Wm. North & Co
Lancaster County
Pa*

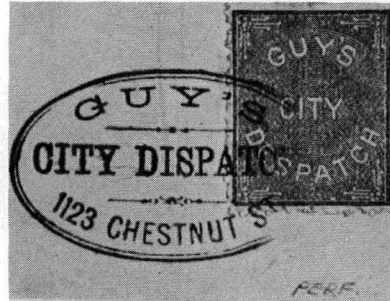
One of the most interesting stamps to study is that issued by the *City Dispatch* in 1860. This 1 cent stamp was lithographed in black and showed a female Justice holding the scales. Several years ago I wrote in *The Chronicle*

(November 1971) about the plating problems of this stamp but other than that it is common unused and scarce used there is little to tell. One of the three cancellations known is like one of the Blood's types, another is Blood's own cancellation. At this time there were no other competitors of Blood's service as all were frightened of the action pending by the U.S.P.O. against Blood. I favour the theory that the City Dispatch was also run by Charles Kochersperger, the "Justice" theme being propaganda in favour of a private service that had done so well for the public good over a period of fifteen years. The design could well have been based on the engraved "Henry Clay" stamp of Blood's Penny Post.

One final post was *Guy's City Dispatch* which opened in April 1879. The U.S.P.O. brought an action against the firm on 16th June and four days later it closed its doors. The remaining stock of unused stamps was sold to a dealer.



Priest's Despatch 1851-56 (left); and
Guy's City Despatch 1879 (right).



There are a few other locals known which should be mentioned in this record. *Clinton's Penny Post* provided stamps which I believe to be entirely bogus, although they are in the Scott catalogue. *Franklin's Penny Post* produced a black on green stamp bearing Benjamin's head; these are of such rarity that I suspect that they were prepared for use in 1860 or 1861 but owing to the U.S.P.O. Blood's Penny Post legal action were not issued. The *Chestnut Street Line* appears on a label bearing Franklin's head; I have been told that it was an advertising label for a street-car company but I know no facts.

* * * * *

In the last century, J. W. Kline recorded much of the history of these posts and catalogued their stamps; his work is almost free from errors as he lived at the period when these posts were in being. Henry C. Gibson made a remarkable collection from which a lot was learned. My own tutors were Frank Hollowbush, Elliott Perry and George B. Sloane, alas none of them alive to-day. Nevertheless their names should be recorded here as without their learning and research this contribution could not have been written.

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