

The

Chronicle

of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues



The reissued 90¢ 1869 stamp, imprint and plate number block of ten (plus two additional damaged stamps), now in the William H. Gross collection. The 1869 section in this issue presents an interview with Gross and some observations about his fabulous collection.

May 2008

Volume 60, No. 2

Whole No. 218

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THE EDITOR'S PAGE

MICHAEL LAURENCE

MEMBERS RESPOND FAVORABLY TO COLOR *CHRONICLE*

We've received a mini-avalanche of favorable responses to the *Chronicle's* new color format. Society members clearly welcome the change. We're still struggling with fine-tuning (some of the colors last issue were a bit bold), but we're certainly moving in the right direction. It's reasonable to expect slow but continuous improvement from here.

As your editor grapples with software subtleties and color settings, the actual content of our *Chronicle* gets ever meatier. At 96 pages, this issue is an especially fat one, with much to offer. Featured on our cover is the legendary plate block of the reissued 90¢ 1869 stamp, a show-stopper for sure, one of the storied items in United States philately. With a pedigree going back beyond George Worthington, this block is now part of the William H. Gross collection, which won the Grand Prix National prize at the Washington 2006 World Philatelic Exhibition. Starting on page 135, 1869 editor Scott Trepel offers some observations about the travails of the Gross collection in U.S. national stamp competition, followed by an interview with Gross himself, in which he talks candidly about his philatelic background and preferences. Coincidentally, a coffee-table book showcasing the Gross U.S. collection has just been published; this is reviewed on page 171.

A special feature starting on page 147 combines two articles on a subject that should interest anyone who collects or appreciates classic United States covers: The life and works of John A. Fox, the auctioneer, dealer and cover-faker who turned in his tongs just 20 years ago. The package begins with a biography of Fox, written by the late Varro Tyler. This is followed by a lengthier discussion, by yours truly, of Fox fake markings and Fox fake covers. The twin research bases for this article are a cache of Fox fake marking devices at the Philatelic Foundation and the SCRAP holding, the fake-cover archive maintained by the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society.

Beginning on page 109 we present a major contribution from prolific postal historian Steven Walske. Using carefully assembled cover-census data, Walske analyzes mail sent via San Francisco from Williams Creek, British Columbia, in the late 1860s. The typical artifacts from this route in this era are striking mixed-franking covers, fascinating to read about and lovely to behold—especially in glorious color.

Our Officials section this issue, page 143, contains a brief but very interesting article by George Sayers on the plate varieties that can be found in marginal markings on the 1873 Official stamps.

Rounding out this issue we have Stephen Pacetti on the curious Bowlsby patent essays (page 130), Harvey Mirsky on postal charge accounts during the 1847 era (page 102), Steven Rosen on Supplementary Mail Type A markings (page 121), James Doolin on an early 3¢ 1851 cover from Texas (page 107), a continuation of James Milgram's series on the route agent markings from the Louisville and Cincinnati Mail Line (page 88) and some updates, from Theron Weirenga, to his book on steamship markings (page 164).

If all goes as planned, you should receive this *Chronicle* in advance of the annual Classics Society meeting, scheduled for May 23-25 at the NOJEX show, in Secaucus, New Jersey, a quick train ride from New York City. In addition to the Society officers, your editor and many of the *Chronicle* section editors will attend, and we hope to see you there. ■

PRESTAMP & STAMPLESS PERIOD

JAMES W. MILGRAM, EDITOR

LOUISVILLE AND CINCINNATI MAIL LINE POSTAL MARKINGS, PART 2

JAMES W. MILGRAM, M.D.

This is the second part of an article, begun in *Chronicle* 217, discussing the route and the route agents' markings of the Louisville and Cincinnati Mail Line. This line held an important steamboat contract between 1837 and 1878 and carried a large volume of mail over a well-traveled section of the Ohio River. The previous installment discussed five of the seven different route-agent postal markings used on the Louisville and Cincinnati Mail Line through the 1850s and the remaining markings are discussed here. A complete listing of the markings is presented in tabular form at the conclusion of this installment.

One marking that was inadvertently omitted from the prior installment is the Type 3 marking with the non-integral addition of a rating marking within the circle. An example in black is shown as Figure 18. Part 1 mentioned that the position of the "5" is known to vary; the cover in Figure 18 demonstrates that the "5" was struck separately. (Compare this with Figure 11 in Part 1.) However, the reader should note that unpaid letters show no date logo.



Figure 18. The Type 3 marking in black can be found with no date and a "5" handstamp within the circle of the postmark. However, the position of the handstamp varies, so the "5" is not integral to the Type 3 postmark. This example contains an 1854 letter.

Apparently the "10" numeral handstamp (shown in Figure 1 in Part 1) was also used in a non-integral fashion, just like the "5," for double weight letters. The author speculates that this was also true for the uses in red ink too. The "10" markings in red ink might exist.

A use of the Type 5 marking from 1855 is shown in Figure 19. Here the marking was used on an envelope bearing the printed cornercard of the *Southerner*, owned by the company whose steamboats provided transportation over this mail route. This item is number 1287 in my book on vessel-named markings. The letter within was written on the steam-



Figure 19. The Type 5 route agent marking in blue on 3¢ 1851 cover with printed vessel-named steamboat cornercard. The enclosed letter, written on board the steamboat, is datelined 26 July 1855.

boat; it is datelined “S.B. Southerner, 26 July 1855.” The use of a route agent postmark with a vessel-named cornercard or handstamp is very rare.

Civil War Usage of the Type 5 Marking

The Type 5 marking had a very long period of use, about 10 years, beginning near the end of 1852. An excellent strike of the Type 5 marking in a Prussian blue color is shown in Figure 20 on a colorful patriotic cover to Connecticut dated August 4, [1861]. This cover



Figure 20. A dark blue strike of the Type 5 marking, “L’VILLE & CINTI. MAIL LINE AUG 4” (1861), tying a 3¢ 1857 stamp to a Civil War patriotic envelope.



Figure 21. The Type 5 marking in true blue, “L’VILLE & CINTI. MAIL LINE AUG 2” (1861), on an overall patriotic envelope showing a soldier with a flag at a fortification and a view of the Capitol, addressed “in Car of Capt David G. Rabb.”

is addressed to Eli Whitney, son of the famous inventor. However, the great cover shows this marking in a lighter shade of blue on a beautiful overall patriotic envelope showing a soldier with flag at a fortification, artillery in the foreground and the Capitol faintly in the background. Shown as Figure 21, this cover was postmarked two days earlier than the cover in Figure 20. From the address we can guess that this cover was sent to a newly inducted soldier who was just leaving for the war.



Figure 22. Green ink was used on some examples of the Type 5 marking. This “L’VILLE & CINTI. MAIL LINE APR 4” cancels a 3¢ 1861 stamp on an envelope with an 1862 Civil War soldier’s letter.

Route agents continued in the employment of the Post Office Department, stationed on certain mail boats during the Civil War, so it is not surprising that steamboat route agent markings are found on a few Civil War soldier letters. Such covers are known from other route agents as well. Letters sent from soldiers of the western armies were occasionally transported by steamboat. The Figure 22 cover, franked with a 3¢ 1861 stamp, contains a soldier's letter written on board the steamboat *Major Anderson*. The heading of the accompanying letter reads "On board the Major Anderson, April 3, 1862." The sender's unit was heading for Nashville and would disembark at Louisville to take the railroad south. This letter was handed to the route agent who marked it with a crisp green strike of the Type 5 marking: "L'VILLE & CINTI. MAIL LINE APR 4".

Figure 23 shows a clear strike of a Type 5 marking on a rough-paper envelope, dated "APR 1," probably sent by a Union soldier in 1862. The envelope is marked "Secesh Enve-



Figure 23. This blue-green example of the Type 5 marking, "L'VILLE & CINTI. MAIL LINE APR 1", was struck on a rough envelope marked "Secesh Envelope from Tenn" and probably sent by a soldier. There is no postal rate indicated on the cover. (Illustration from Siegel sale, March 16, 2006.)

lope from Tenn" and the route agent marking is either green or blue. The writer may have been on furlough when he gave the cover directly to the route agent. There is no postal rating and the cover was not certified by an officer.

A distinctive killer, a six-bar grid within a circle, was sometimes used with the Type 5 marking, as shown by examples not illustrated here.

Type 6 and Type 7 Markings

The Type 6 marking, smaller than the Type 5 and with sans-serif letters, is shown on the cover in Figure 24. This is the typical government-issue metal postmark distributed by the Post Office Department to many post offices during the early 1860s. This marking reads "LOUISVILLE & CIN S.B." The Figure 24 cover, a 3¢ entire envelope addressed to Louisville, is docketed from Cincinnati on "Jan. 14, 62." The blue route agent marking is dated "JAN 14". The Meyer listing in *Chronicle* 65 records this marking in blue and black;



Figure 24. The Type 6 marking, a smaller postmark than Type 5, is known mainly on 1862-dated covers. This example, worded “LOUISVILLE & CIN S.B. JAN 14,” docketed Cincinnati and addressed to Louisville, is struck in blue on a 3¢ entire envelope. The postmark date is “JAN 14” (1862).



Figure 25. The 26-millimeter Type 7 marking (“LOU. & CIN. MAIL BOAT”) dates from 1874 and is the latest type of route agent postmark with Louisville and Cincinnati wording. On this 3¢ entire envelope with grocer’s corner card, the date is the 15th but the month appears missing. (Illustration courtesy Guy Dillaway.)

I have seen it only in blue. Meyer listed the date as 1861. While one cover I have seen was dated December 16, 1861, the other three examples were dated 1862. An example with three 1¢ stamps and a 3¢ stamp paying a double rate was in both the Rohloff and Eggen



Figure 26. Type 1, the earlier of the two marking types showing the order of the cities reversed. On this 1854 cover to Philadelphia, franked with a 3¢ 1851 stamp, the marking, struck in black, reads “CINCINNATI & LOUISVILLE MAIL ROUTE JUL 13.”



Figure 27. A late use during the 1860s of the reversed-cities Type 1 marking.

collections. There is a definite overlap of the dates of usage of the Type 5 and Type 6 route agent postmarks.

After the latest recorded use of the Type 6 marking in 1862, there are no known route agent postmarks from this route for 12 years, until the final marking of this sequence, which has been dated 1874. This marking, Type 7, is a 26 mm single-circle with changeable date, that reads “LOU. & CIN. MAIL BOAT”. An example in black on a 3¢ entire envelope with illustrated advertisement is shown in Figure 25. This marking is quite scarce.

Cincinnati and Louisville Mail Route Markings

While this information might appear to be a complete listing of the Louisville and Cincinnati Mail Line route agent markings, there is a different group of markings from this route with the wording of the line name reversed. These say “Cincinnati and Louisville” rather than “Louisville and Cincinnati.” The recorded dates of use of the “Cincinnati and Louisville” markings overlap much of the period of the “Louisville and Cincinnati” markings, but there are only two types of “Cincinnati and Louisville” markings (see Table 2).

The earliest of the Cincinnati and Louisville Mail Route handstamps is the Type 1 from 1854 which is shown on the cover in Figure 26. This is a 32 mm single-circle marking with “CINCINNATI & LOUISVILLE” in large sans-serif letters above, and “MAIL ROUTE” in serified letters below. The black strike on this cover to Philadelphia is dated July 13, 1854 (per the folder letter enclosed) and ties a 3¢ 1851 stamp. This marking is known on steamboat covers with the printed corner card of “Steamer Telegraph No. 3” (1353 in my book). Examples in black can be found well into the period of the Civil War. An example from 1863, on a 3¢ entire envelope to Minnesota, is shown in Figure 27.

Use of this marking definitely overlaps the usage of the Type 5 and Type 6 markings with Louisville and Cincinnati wording. A tempting explanation is that the different wordings were used to indicate the direction of the steamboat, one up the Ohio River and one down. But it appears that such a simple answer is not the explanation. More covers, with contents, need to be examined before definitive conclusions can be formed about specific uses.



Figure 28. The blue Type 1 postmark, here reading “CINCINNATI & LOUISVILLE MAIL ROUTE JUL 13”, found from the middle of the 1850s into the era of the 1857 stamps.

The Type 1 “CINCINNATI & LOUISVILLE MAIL ROUTE” handstamps are also known in blue ink and in green ink. An example in blue on a cover to Pittsburgh franked with a perforated 3¢ 1857 stamp (year date uncertain) is shown in Figure 28.

Figure 29 shows a 3¢ 1861 cover to Connecticut with a very clear strike in green ink, year date unknown but probably 1862 or 1863. That is when green ink was used with the Type 5 handstamp. Meyer dated the blue markings from 1855 to 1857, but later markings



Figure 29. The Type 1 marking struck in a green ink on a 3¢ 1861 cover addressed to Connecticut. The marking reads “CINCINNATI & LOUISVILLE MAIL ROUTE APR 8,” probably 1862 or 1863.



Figure 30. Type 2, the later of the reversed-cities route agent markings, was used in the 1870s and reads “CIN. & LOU. ST. BT.” This example is dated May 13 and struck in blue on a 3¢ Bank Note cover to Covington, Kentucky.

exist, including uses on the 3¢ 1861 stamp. However, no example has been seen on a patriotic cover.

A different type of Cincinnati and Louisville marking was used during the 1870s. This marking, Type 2, a 25-mm single circle with sans-serif lettering, reads “CIN & LOU. ST. BT.” with dating. An example in blue on a 3¢ Bank Note cover addressed to Covington, Kentucky, is shown in Figure 30. This marking is more common than its counterpart, the black Type 7 “LOU. & CIN. MAIL BOAT” marking discussed above.

| LC# | TYPE | DESCRIPTION | COLOR | DATES | COMMENTS |
|-----|------|------------------------|-------|---------|--|
| 1 | 1 | Rectangle, 46x18mm | Red | 1851 | Seen with large "10"; 5¢ and 10¢ 1847 |
| 2 | 1 | Rectangle, 46x18 | Blue | 1851-52 | Seen with ms. 5; 10¢ 1847 |
| 3 | 2 | Circle, 38 | Blue | 1851-2 | "Large circle, small letters type" |
| 4 | 2 | Circle, 38 with 5 | Blue | 1851(?) | "5" appears to be integral in marking |
| 5 | 2 | Circle, 38 | Red | 1851-52 | Not known with integral 5 |
| 6 | 3 | Circle, 39 | Black | 1852-53 | "Large circle, large letters type" |
| 7 | 3 | Circle, 39 | Red | 8-51 | Earliest use of large-letter type |
| 8 | 3 | Circle, 39, wi 5 or 10 | Black | 1852 | Unpaid; "5" and "10" seem non-integral |
| 9 | 3 | Circle, 39 | Red | ? | Unpaid; the "5" seems non-integral |
| 10 | 4 | Circle, 34 | Red | 1852-53 | Seen with vessel-named handstamps |
| 11 | 4 | Circle, 34 | Blue | ? | |
| 12 | 5 | Circle, 33 | Red | 1852 | |
| 13 | 5 | Circle, 33 | Black | 1853 | Also seen with separate "5" |
| 14 | 5 | Circle, 33 | Blue | 1855-61 | Known on patriotic covers |
| 15 | 5 | Circle, 33 | Green | 1862-64 | |
| 16 | 6 | Circle, 26 | Blue | 1861-62 | |
| 17 | 7 | Circle, 26 | Black | 1874 | "LOU. & CIN. MAIL BOAT" |

Table 1. Louisville and Cincinnati Mail Line Markings.

| LC# | TYPE | DESCRIPTION | COLOR | DATES | COMMENTS |
|-----|------|---------------|-------|---------|-----------------------|
| 18 | 1 | Circle, 32 mm | Black | 1854-63 | |
| 19 | 1 | Circle, 32 | Blue | 1855-57 | |
| 20 | 1 | Circle, 32 | Green | 1862? | |
| 21 | 2 | Circle, 25 | Blue | 1874 | "CIN. & LOU. ST. BT." |

Table 2. Cincinnati and Louisville Mail Line Markings.

Descriptive information about the nine different route agent markings from this line, along with their subtypes in different colors, the non-integral rated covers and the dates of use, is presented in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 shows information about the Louisville and Cincinnati markings, and Table 2 shows comparable information about the Cincinnati and Louisville markings. There are actually 21 different varieties of these markings, which have been given a separate Louisville and Cincinnati marking number by the author (the column headed "LC#" in the tables). As a group, these markings comprise the largest number of individual postal markings related to a single steamboat company. ■

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UNIQUE HUSSEY HANDSTAMP BECOMES RARE

GORDON STIMMELL AND JOHN D. BOWMAN

George Hussey, who operated his local Bank and Insurance Post beginning in 1854, was a businessman with his fingers in many pies. Born in 1812, he worked for the old Bank of New York from 1836 to the mid 1860s. At the bank he noticed the desperate need for direct mailing to and from banks and insurance companies without resorting to the services of the government post office. His Special Message Post at 82 Broadway, Room 12 operated as a messenger service. Because he had no postal boxes spread across the city like other local posts, he evaded the wrath of postal authorities for decades.

Hussey moved to 50 William Street in 1858 and the post's name changed to Hussey's Instant Special Message Post. Later, in 1872, he moved to 54 Pine Street. During the heyday of the service, his staff varied between 25 and 40 messengers. He retired in 1875, selling his post to Robert Easson.

In the very early days, it seems Hussey's mission was delivering letters to individuals. But he rapidly moved into the safer niche of handling mass mailings for such businesses as insurance firms and real estate companies. A scan of the *New York Herald* reveals he kept his banking business active, as ads show he continued to be a major mortgage lender into the 1860s.

By the 1860s the usage of Hussey stamps shifted into the philatelic realm. Hussey quickly learned that he could make money beyond his legitimate carriage of business matter by catering to the surging needs of stamp collectors. He commissioned Thomas Wood to print scads of local post forgeries to fill the primitive stamp albums of the day. And somehow his own real stamp plates got into the hands of J.W. Scott, who reprinted a number of



Figure 1. Hussey handstamp, applied to a pink label and attached to a cover. This item is pictured in *Byways of Philately* and there described as unique. The label bears George Hussey's signature in pencil.



Figure 2. Three of the five recently surfaced examples of the handstamp illustrated in Figure 1. All five are receipts issued to the Insurance Company of North America.

Hussey stamps. The presumption is that this was a financially advantageous arrangement for both men.

Despite more than 140 years of students studying Hussey stamps and trying to sort out legitimate usages from philatelic ones, we are still making discoveries today. Major new finds have come to light this year, including two handstamps, one of which was enigmatic until now; the other seems to be a new find entirely.

The first handstamp, shown in Figure 1, was described as unique by H. W. K. Hale and Elliott Perry in *Byways of Philately*. But now it is no longer alone. A group of five items was recently sold at a major eastern auction house. All five bear a handstamp identical to the handstamp on the cover in Figure 1.

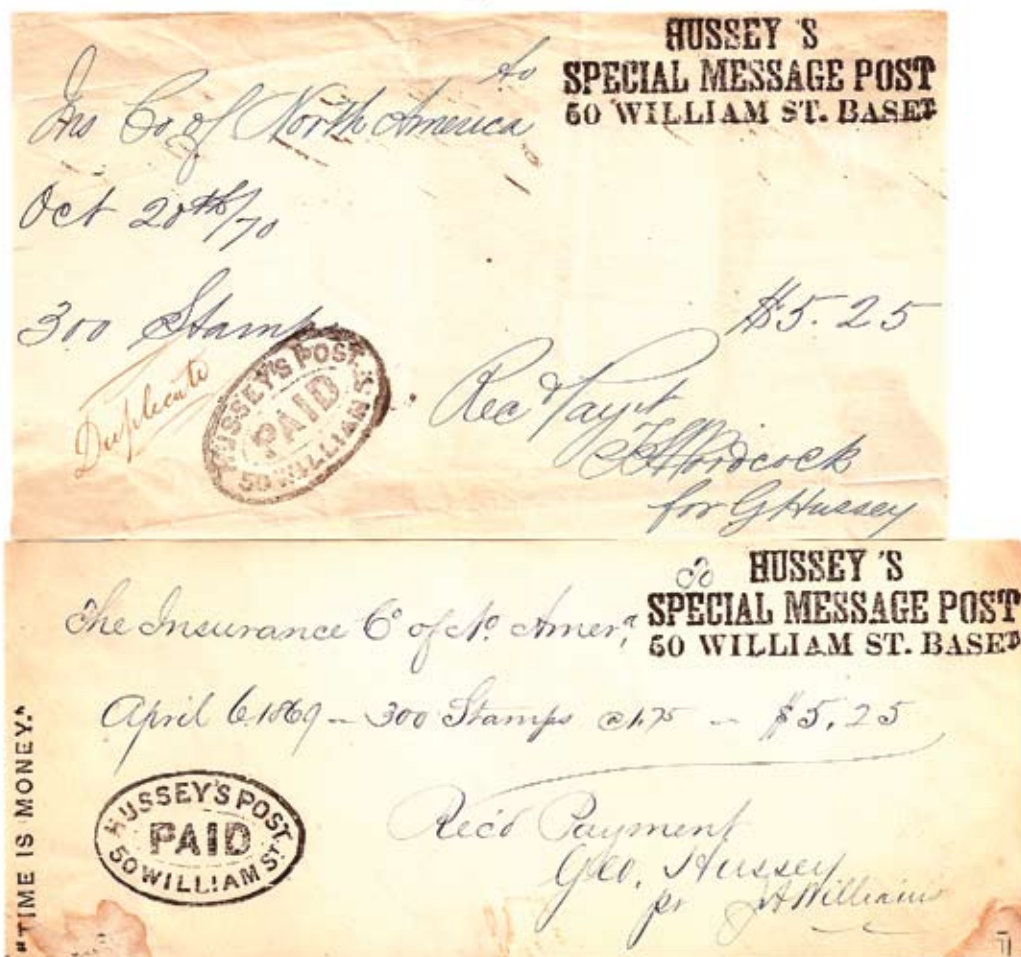


Figure 3. The other two recently-surfaced examples of the Figure 1 handstamp. These two also show a Hussey oval handstamp.

The original example in Figure 1 is an undated folded letter to a Reverend Dennison concerning church business. The handstamp is applied to a piece of pink paper affixed to the letter. Hussey's signature is written across the handstamp.

The new items, shown in Figures 2 and 3, are all receipts on white paper for orders of 300 stamps—one presumes they were Hussey stamps—at \$1.75 per hundred or \$5.25 total. The receipts show evidence of having been glued to a package, or perhaps something else, with thick paper remnants adhering to the corners of the reverse.

The new group has similarities and differences. Two of the receipts bear George Hussey's original signature, while three are signed for him. Two of the signors are J. A. Williams and T. S. Hardcock. Four of the items are handstamped with Hussey's slogan "Time is Money." Two show "Duplicate" written across them in pen. The dates range from 3 May 1866 to 20 Oct 1870. Three have a manuscript "To" in front of "Hussey's." Only two of the receipts seem to be in the same handwriting (6 Apr 1869 and 17 Nov 1869). Two of them (shown in Figure 3) also bear a Hussey oval handstamp (6 Apr 1869 and 20 Oct 1870). All five are receipts issued to the Insurance Company of North America.

Such receipts have a predecessor. Shown in *Byways* on page 115 is a similar receipt, dated April 13, 1865 (one year earlier than the discovery copies above) signed by George

Hussey as receiving payment with a black printed depiction of the Circus Rider stamp (Scott 87LE1-7) with no denomination in the oval. This shares the “Time is Money” notation and is a receipt for payment of \$9.57 for “Wedding Cards deliver’d @ 3 cents” each. However, the “Hussey’s Special Message Post” with address is printed on the receipt rather than handstamped.

This black circus rider illustration is occasionally encountered cut out, sometimes with fake values written in pen on it imitating the rare high 30¢ and 50¢ values of the stamps. In fact, the one 40¢ circus rider stamp (not listed in Scott) seems to derive from such a receipt.

Encore

And a totally new handstamp has surfaced. This item, shown front and back in Figure 4, was sold on eBay recently. The stamp reads “Hussey’s Special Message Post, 50 William St.” None of the top Hussey scholars we consulted had ever seen it before. It is on a cut-out, pasted on the reverse of what appears to be an unused express receipt form.



Figure 4. Front and back of a newly discovered Hussey handstamp, cut out and pasted onto the reverse of what appears to be an unused express receipt form.

Was this cut from the wrapping of a package one of Hussey’s messengers delivered? Do any *Chronicle* readers have an opinion or knowledge to illuminate this hitherto unknown handstamp?■

BRUCE MOSHER’S NEW JERSEY PRIVATE EXPRESS COMPANIES

The arrival of Bruce H. Mosher’s interactive CD entitled *New Jersey Private Express Companies* is a watershed moment for students of locals and of express companies.

Express historian Mosher published, between 2003 and 2007, 15 reports in the bulletin of the New Jersey Postal History Society on New Jersey expresses in operation between 1844 and 1918. The CD consists of 235 interactive pages with exhaustive indexes and a bibliography. In my memory, no single state has ever benefited from so much scholarship. The work covers over 120 expresses operating in that time frame.

More than 100 express labels are illustrated in full color on the CD, and 55 covers are depicted showing express labels of New Jersey, as well as corner cards used by such enigmatic express companies as New Jersey Express Company (whose horsehead designs were much forged by the most notorious of locals counterfeiters).

When I first examined the CD I had just purchased a folded letter to New York City (Figure 5) with a blurry running horse red handstamp of Hanford’s Pony Express, a local

post that operated in New York City between February 1845 and early 1851. In faint pencil handwriting at the lower left of the cover is a notation: “Baldwin’s Express / Chg pr. J.H. Lavigne”. The Lavigne is garbled, but matches the scrawl signature of the sender of the letter, involving an overdue bank loan. Inside is the dateline: “Newark May 12, 1848.”

So what a perfect way to see how useful the Mosher CD is to scholars. I quickly found, by merely clicking on the interactive index and contents links, Part 6A, “N.J. Private Expresses; Offices in Newark, Baldwin’s Newark Express (1844-57).” I also discovered that Charles W. Baldwin operated to and from Newark out of Harnden’s Express office at 6 Wall Street. The Harnden link is denoted on several actual express adhesives issued by Baldwin in the 1847-1850 period.



Figure 5. Folded letter to New York City with blurred running horse handstamp of Hanford’s Pony Express, a local post that operated in New York City between February 1845 and early 1851. In faint pencil handwriting at the lower left of the cover is a notation: “Baldwin’s Express / Chg pr. J.H. Lavigne.”

More exciting, in Larry Lyons’ census of Hanford covers in the January 2008 *Penny Post*, I noted at least three deliveries by Hanford of Harnden’s circulars in the 1847-48 period. Hence, one would presume there was a definite link, never before established, between Hanford’s and Baldwin’s Express and Harnden’s, in the conjunctive delivery of mail in New York City.

And in the ad that Mosher reproduces in his CD, we note that Baldwin carried “Checks, Notes, Drafts, Bills for collection”—which exactly echoes the banking and loan contents of my folded letter sheet in Figure 5. Imagine my excitement at realizing I had a letter linking Hanford’s local post to Baldwin’s Express Post in Newark. Such a link is not mentioned in the CD, but the data provided help prove its validity.

The Mosher CD is formatted in Adobe Reader and is \$10 to NJPHS members and \$15 to the rest of us starving scholars. Checks or money orders to NJPHS may be sent to Jean R. Walton, Secretary, NJPHS, 125 Turtleback Road, Califon, NJ 07830 or by PayPal to NJPostalHistory@aol.com. Believe me, this is money well spent.—G.S. ■

CHARGING POSTAGE IN THE 1847 ERA

HARVEY MIRSKY

Although local Postmasters were not authorized to extend credit to their postal patrons, the evidence shows that many of them did provide that accommodation during the stampless era. Postmasters were permitted to rent mailboxes in their offices and to keep the proceeds as part of their compensation. Frequently they allowed their box customers to “charge” their postage and then to periodically settle their accounts. Some patrons might have had what we would call today a “debit account,” whereby a sum of money was paid in advance to the Postmaster who then deducted postage charges as they were incurred.¹

The use of charge accounts (or debit accounts) was an important benefit to a letter’s sender. He could simply drop the letter at the mail window, or through the mail slot, and save the waiting time required for postage to be assessed and then paid in cash for each letter mailed. This advantage was particularly useful for after-hours drop-off.

On covers bearing the U.S. 1847 stamps, charged postage is most often seen on letters that originated in Canada. Canadians could frank a letter with an 1847 adhesive to prepay U.S. postage from the border to the U.S. destination. Since Canada did not have adhesive postage stamps of its own until April 1851, the internal Canadian postage to the border—the first leg of the journey—had to be prepaid in cash. In several Canadian cities postage could be charged, with the sender’s box number added to the cover front (almost always at upper left). Note, again, that the 1847 adhesive on these letters prepaid only the U.S. postage; the charged postage represented Canadian postage only.

Charge notations on domestic U.S. 1847 letters are rarely seen. By definition, if the postage was prepaid with an 1847 adhesive stamp, there was nothing to be charged to the sender’s account. Figures 1 and 2 show examples of such covers bearing “charge” notations. The postage on the Figure 1 cover probably was charged to the sender’s box, while postage on the Figure 2 cover probably was not charged to the sender’s box number.

The Figure 1 cover is datelined at Brunswick, Maine, on September 3, 1847. The circular datestamp reads “SEP 6.” This is one of two covers recorded with this earliest-use date from Brunswick. The cover was sent by Rev. Leonard Wood, president of Bowdoin College, to Mr. Alexander Valtmare in New York City. Valtmare had acted as an intermediary with the Ministers of Agriculture and Commerce in France, arranging for the school’s library to be given several important volumes. Rev. Wood was writing a letter of appreciation to him.

Under the circumstances, it’s clear that Wood thought it was inappropriate that Valtmare should pay postage on the letter. What must have happened was that, not knowing that adhesive stamps were available at the Brunswick post office, Wood dropped off his stampless letter with the notation “Paid/ch. 89.” The intention was to prepay the postage us-

¹ Special thanks to Matthew Liebson, whose article “Charge Box Markings of Ohio” (*Ohio Postal History Journal*, September 2006, Issue 117, pp. 12-14), provided much of the background for this article.



Figure 1. 10¢ 1847 stamp on cover from Brunswick, Maine, to New York City, 6 September 1847. This cover was brought to the Brunswick office stampless. The Postmaster affixed one of the new 10¢ stamps and charged that amount to “Box 89.”

ing the sender’s charge account, so that the recipient would not have to pay any postage.

However, while this post office never received a direct shipment of 1847 stamps, the Brunswick postmaster did apparently obtain a supply of the new adhesives.² Twenty 1847-issue covers are recorded from Brunswick. With stamps at hand, the Brunswick postmaster simply affixed a 10¢ stamp to the letter and charged box 89 for that amount of postage. Although originally expected to be sent pre-paid but stampless, the letter actually arrived in New York City in a very up-to-date manner—franked with one of the new 10¢ stamps.

The Figure 2 cover, datelined September 20, 1847, is also a relatively early use of the new stamps. It was originally marked “Paid/624.” However, note that the “624” (the box number) was crossed out in the same ink as the address and the original notation. Writer E.C. Litchfield, of the “F & M Bank” (likely the Farmers and Merchants Bank) in Detroit, must have brought the letter to the post office intending to send it stampless using the bank’s charge account to pay the postage.

Apparently, the postmaster informed Litchfield that the new adhesive stamps had arrived from Washington, whereupon Litchfield purchased a 10¢ stamp (for the over-300 mile distance to Buffalo), affixed it to the envelope and crossed off the box number. Then he (or a runner) carried the letter to the Lake Erie docks and turned it over to the Captain of a non-contract lakes vessel (or perhaps the Captain happened to be at the Post Office at that time). In any case, the letter was carried by steamer to Buffalo, where it entered the mails and received the Buffalo “steamship in scroll” marking (the earliest recorded use of that marking on an 1847-issue cover).

Post Script: Letters Addressed to a Post Office Box

Given the fact that the use of post office boxes was not uncommon during the era of the 1847 issue, one would expect to see stamp-bearing letters addressed to box numbers. But in fact, such letters are extremely rare.

²His source of supply was most likely the postmaster in Portland, which is less than 30 miles from Brunswick.



Figure 2. 10¢ 1847 stamp on cover from Detroit to Buffalo, datelined September 20, 1847. Here the sender added a stamp to what he originally intended to be a stampless letter. He left the “Paid” notation, but crossed off the box number, so that he would not be charged again for the postage.



Figure 3. Two 5¢ 1847 stamps on a cover from Washington, Georgia, addressed to a post office box at Buffalo, New York.

The cover shown in Figure 3 was mailed from Washington, Georgia, and is one of only three 1847 issue covers recorded from that town (at least two of which—this and another—were written in the same hand). The Figure 3 cover was franked with two 5¢ Franklin stamps for the over-300 miles postage to Buffalo. It is addressed to “E.H.L.” at Box 248 in Buffalo, New York.

Obviously, "E.H.L." held a box at the Buffalo post office and the box number alone was all that was needed for delivery. This is the only example known to this author of mail bearing 1847 stamps that is addressed to a box number.

The Canadian Crowned Circle Marking

Speaking of frankings from Canada found on U.S. 1847 covers, the crowned circle marking of Canada is particularly interesting.



Figure 4. Dated at Quebec, April 20, 1850, and marked "pd to the lines," this cover was franked with two 5¢ 1847 stamps for U.S. internal postage and prepaid 11 1/2 pence for internal Canadian postage to the U.S. border. The crowned circle marking attests that Canadian postage was paid.

The letter shown in Figure 4 was written on the stationery of the Quebec and Lake Superior Mining Association. The sender in Canada affixed two 5¢ Franklin stamps in order to prepay the over 300-miles U.S. postage from the Canadian border to the addressee in New York City. Such prepayment of U.S. postage was permitted.



Figure 5. Quebec crowned circle.

When this letter was brought to the post office in Quebec, 11 1/2 pence internal Canadian postage was assessed (as noted in red crayon at right), for the 201-300 mile distance to the U.S. border. Canada did not yet have its own adhesive stamps, so the 11-1/2 pence was paid in cash. As evidence of payment, the crowned circle marking was applied. A well-struck example of the Quebec crowned circle marking is presented in Figure 5.

It is important to understand that the Canadian Post Office was under the control of the Imperial Post Office in Great Britain at this time. The crowned circle marking was used when postage was paid in cash for letters mailed at a colonial post office under Imperial Post Office control. In Canada, the only city that used the crowned circle was Quebec, where the main post office was located.

Because the crowned circle marking is "evidence" of postage having been paid, it is considered a franking in its own right. Therefore, it can be said that there are frankings from

two different countries on this cover (the Canadian crowned circle and the U.S. 5¢ Franklin stamps), with each paying only the internal postage of its respective country. Accordingly, under the most-commonly accepted definition, this can be considered a “mixed franking” cover.

To be sure, there are covers showing U.S. 1847 stamps along with Canadian stamps, but on these the stamps jointly pay a single “through rate” under postal treaty. And there are examples of demonetized 1847 stamps used with later-issue U.S. stamps to jointly pay domestic postage (illegal use of the 1847 stamps, but accepted nonetheless). However, if one accepts a strict definition of “mixed franking,” covers bearing 1847 stamps and the crowned circle marking may be the only true examples of mixed franking on an 1847-issue cover, showing frankings of two different countries, each franking paying the internal postage of its respective country.

The Canadian Post Office became independent of the Imperial Post Office on April 6, 1851, less than three months prior to demonetization of the U.S. 1847 stamps. Thus, the only adhesive-stamped U.S. covers that can show the crowned circle marking are 1847 covers. Six such covers are recorded. ■

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EARLY USE OF THE 3¢ 1851 STAMP IN TEXAS

JAMES DOOLIN

The 1851 issue of regular postage stamps was authorized to begin on 1 July 1851. Most first-month uses (July 1-31, 1851) are from eastern cities such as Boston, New York and Philadelphia. Few examples of early July uses of the 3¢ value on mails from other towns and cities are known. Thus, the cover illustrated in Figure 1, originating in Texas and dated 30 August [1851], is a remarkable item. The dateline of the letter reads “Columbus



Figure 1. 3¢ 1851 stamp (Scott 10) with manuscript postmark “Columbus Texas Aug 30” on a folded lettersheet to Petersburg, Texas. The cover has been unfolded and then folded over to show the address portion and the internal dateline: “Columbus, Aug 30/51.”

[Texas] August 30 [18]51 and the folded letter is postmarked in manuscript "COLUMBUS, TEXAS AUG 30." The 3¢ stamp, Scott 10, is cancelled with a manuscript marking. It was carefully cut by scissors from the sheet, most likely by the postmaster or clerk in Columbus. The postmaster in Columbus at this time was Harman Foshay.

The writer of the letter was George Washington Smith, who in 1851 was a young attorney. Later he became a judge in Columbus. The letter is from Smith to his wife, Mary, who was visiting her mother in Petersburg, Jackson County, Texas, not far from Columbus where they resided. Columbus is the county seat of Colorado County, located about 70 miles west of Houston, on a direct route between Houston and San Antonio.

The recent acquisition of this cover inspired me to search for earliest known uses of the 1851 issue from Texas. I examined the microfilm records for the 1847-1851 issues, dates of return of the earlier issue and delivery dates of the 1851 stamps and the quantities delivered to Texas cities and towns. Galveston was the first Texas city reported to receive the new stamps, with 5,000 3¢ stamps received on 31 July 1851.

I began to search further for early uses of the 1851 stamps in Texas, focussing on usage in August, September, and October 1851. I searched the catalog records of major auction firms such as Robert A. Siegel and others. I checked Alex L. ter Braake's book, *Texas, the Drama of Its Postal Past* (APS Philatelic Handbook, 1970) and found no early examples. Then I conducted a survey of the collections of Texas Postal History Society members and other prominent collectors of Texas postal history. The result: no early covers reported. Perhaps one or more of our readers can report an early example to me at the postal address given below.

I hope that publication of this brief note in *The Chronicle* will inspire USPCS members to search their collections and records of 1851 Texas covers and discover other early uses from Texas. The most likely cities are Galveston, Houston and San Antonio. Please send information to James Doolin, 11258 Goodnight Lane #105, Dallas, Texas 75229. ■

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**STAMP SHORTAGES IN THE CARIBOO GOLD COUNTRY:
MAIL FROM WILLIAMS CREEK VIA SAN FRANCISCO, 1864-1868**

STEVEN WALSKE

Williams Creek, British Columbia

The Cariboo gold mining region lies 200 miles northeast of New Westminster, the former capital of British Columbia (BC) and today a suburb of Vancouver. The region itself stretches another 350 miles in a northeasterly direction from Lillooet to Williams Creek (near what is now Barkerville). This remote region of BC was opened by gold miners in 1859. By 1862, major gold strikes had been made along Williams Creek in the northernmost part of the Cariboo region.

Because of limited access to the region, however, the Williams Creek post office was not established until June 1864. It received a supply of British Columbia and Vancouver Island (BC&VI) 1860 dull rose 2½d stamps (Scott 2), a straight-line “PAID” marking, and a numeral “10” canceling device. Since there were no datestamps with the name of the post office prepared, mail can only be identified by the numeral “10” cancels, or from known correspondences. The Williams Creek “PAID” marking is distinctive, but very hard to distinguish from those distributed to other BC post offices.

By mid-1864, gold yields began to decline in the Cariboo, and by June 1865 the Cariboo gold rush was effectively over. A census of surviving covers from Williams Creek to foreign destinations via San Francisco did not uncover any examples after March 1868.

Summarized as Table 2 near the conclusion of this article, this census of 39 covers from the 1864-1868 period is a comprehensive listing drawn from literature, auction lot descriptions and examination of collections. The census includes letters handled by the BC post office, but not those carried by private express companies. While the census is large enough to draw definitive conclusions, it does underscore the rarity of surviving covers. The combination of the important 1928 reference book by Alfred Deaville¹ and this census allows the postal historian to reconstruct how the Williams Creek post office handled mails to foreign destinations during this period.

A postal patron would pay for BC domestic postage and US postage in cash at the Williams Creek post office. The US postage was necessary because virtually all mail from BC to foreign destinations during this period passed through San Francisco and the US postal system. No other routes across the North American continent were available at this time.

The Williams Creek post office would mark the letters with its straight-line “PAID” marking, and then add the BC domestic postage to the letter in stamps, except when postage stamp supplies were depleted. Williams Creek typically marked the amount of US postage paid in red manuscript on the front of the envelope. It would then bag the letters in a prepaid mail sack, probably with a way bill indicating the amount of US postage paid, and forward the bag to New Westminster. After a 12-15 day trip, the bag would be opened at

¹ Alfred Stanley Deaville, *The Colonial Postal Systems and Postage Stamps of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1849-1871*, Quarterman Publications reprint of Charles F. Banfield: Victoria, B.C. (1928).

New Westminster, which would apply the necessary US postage in US postage stamps. The mail would then be re-bagged and consigned via Victoria, Vancouver Island (VI) to the care of the British consul at San Francisco. The consul then placed the letters in the US postal system for onward delivery.

| Timeframe | Franking type |
|----------------------------|--|
| Early June 1864 | Red manuscript "Paid" |
| Mid-June 1864 | Pair of BC&VI 2½d stamps |
| July 1864 to March 1865 | Strip of 3 BC&VI 2½d stamps |
| April 1865 | Numeral "10" cancel as a provisional frank |
| July 1865 to October 1865 | Strip of 3 BC&VI 2½d stamps |
| October 1865 to Sept. 1866 | Strip of 3 BC 3d stamps (1st printing) |
| October 1866 to March 1867 | Strip of 3 BC&VI 2½d stamps (1st re-issue) |
| April 1867 | Straight-line "PAID" as a provisional frank |
| May 1867 to February 1868 | VI 5¢ stamp and pair of VI 10¢ stamps, or |
| May 1867 to August 1867 | Strip of 4 BC&VI 2½d stamps (2nd re-issue), or |
| August 1867 to March 1868 | Strip of 4 BC 3d stamps (2nd printing), or |
| March 1868 | VI 5¢ stamp and strip of 3 VI 10¢ stamps |

Table 1. Williams Creek, 1864-1868: Timeline and franking types.

As explained more fully below, Williams Creek's 1864-68 postal history shows a complicated sequence of franking types created by changing rates and periodic stamp shortages. Table 1 summarizes the various franking periods.

1864 BC Postal Ordinance

The May 2, 1864, BC postal ordinance set the domestic rate on mail between the Cariboo region and New Westminster at 6d per half-ounce, effective June 20.² An additional 3d per half-ounce (for a total of 9d) was charged on mail leaving New Westminster for foreign destinations. To fulfill the new rates, the BC&VI 2½d stamps were sold provisionally for 3d each in BC, starting in June 1864.³ BC converted to decimal currency on January 1, 1866, at which time the 9d Cariboo foreign mail rate became 18¾¢ per half-ounce, and the BC&VI 2½d stamps were sold provisionally for 6¼¢ each.⁴

The First Mails from Williams Creek

Just as the Williams Creek post office opened, it received word of the May 2, 1864, BC Postal Ordinance. The first mails from Williams Creek were processed in early June 1864, evidently before any postal materials and devices had been received. Figure 1 illustrates an example from this period.

The cover in Figure 1 was marked "Williams Creek Office" and "Paid" (covered by the 3¢ stamp) in red manuscript. Only two letters with these markings are known. Since there were no BC postage stamps available at that time, the amount of BC domestic postage paid is not shown on the envelope. Three cents in cash was also paid at Williams Creek for the US domestic postage, so a red manuscript "3c" was marked on the letter. In late June, the letter passed through New Westminster, where a US 1861 3¢ rose stamp (Scott 65) was added. It arrived in San Francisco on July 12, 1864.

The cover census indicates that Williams Creek received its postal supplies about a week later. Figure 2 shows an example of the earliest mail with the new postal markings

² Steven C. Walske, "Postal Rates on Mail from British Columbia and Vancouver Island via San Francisco, 1858-70," *Chronicle* 212 (November 2006), pg. 291.

³ Deaville, pg. 115.

⁴ The conversion rate was set at 25¢ per shilling.



Figure 1. Early June 1864 letter from Williams Creek, British Columbia, to San Francisco. Note the manuscript “Williams Creek office.” BC postage stamps and marking devices weren’t yet available at the Williams Creek office. Three cents US postage was paid in cash at Williams Creek; the U.S. stamp was applied at New Westminster. (Courtesy of the Fraser Thompson collection.)



Figure 2. June 1864 letter from Williams Creek to Aylmer, Canada. A pair BC&VI 2½d rose stamps is tied by the Williams Creek “10” marking. Williams Creek also marked the cover “PAID.”

and stamps. The census lists three letters from this mail, which carried the earliest known mixed frankings from Williams Creek.

The Figure 2 cover is from the Simmons correspondence to Aylmer, Canada West (Ontario), the largest group of surviving letters from Williams Creek. The cover was franked by a pair of BC&VI 2½d stamps, which were canceled with the Williams Creek numeral “10” cancel. Evidently, Williams Creek misinterpreted the 1864 ordinance: It added only

6d postage to New Westminster. Fifteen cents in cash was also paid at Williams Creek for the US transcontinental postage to Canada, so a red manuscript “15c” and black straight-line “PAID” were marked on the letter. The cover arrived at New Westminster in early July, where a US 1861 10¢ green stamp (Scott 68) was added.

The US rate to Canada had been reduced from 15¢ to 10¢ in July, but Williams Creek had not received notice of the new rate when this letter was posted. Aware of the change, New Westminster added only the necessary amount of US postage. Ironically, the 5¢ excess US postage paid at Williams Creek was almost equal to the deficient BC domestic postage (3d or 6¢). Perhaps that is why New Westminster sent the mail onward with no additional assessment. The letter passed through San Francisco on July 19, 1864, and was forwarded overland via Chicago to Aylmer.

Starting in July 1864, the census shows that foreign letters from Williams Creek were properly franked with 9d domestic postage plus the appropriate US postage. Figure 3 shows an example sent from Williams Creek to San Francisco in late July 1864.



Figure 3. July 1864 letter from Williams Creek to San Francisco. By this time, Williams Creek was applying the proper internal postage, here paid by the strip of three 2½d stamps.

The cover in Figure 3 was franked by a vertical strip of three BC&VI 2½d stamps, which were canceled with the numeral “10” cancels. Three cents in cash was also paid at Williams Creek for the US domestic postage, so a red manuscript “3c” and black straight-line “PAID” were marked on the letter. On August 13, the letter arrived at New Westminster, where a US 1861 3¢ stamp was added. The cover then arrived in San Francisco on August 23, 1864, where it was rated for an additional 7¢ in postage due. In August, the San Francisco post office decided to apply the July 1, 1864 10¢ non-contract steamship rate to mail from BC&VI, and added the “FOREIGN” handstamp to indicate the reason for the additional postage due.⁵

⁵ For more information, see Dale Forster and Fred Gregory, “The San Francisco FOREIGN Handstamp of 1864,” *The Collectors Club Philatelist*, Volume 85, Number 3 (May-June 2006), pp. 141-154.

1865 Shortage of Stamps at Williams Creek

Williams Creek, like the rest of BC, periodically ran short of BC&VI postage stamps. In April 1865, during such a shortage, Williams Creek used the numeral “10” cancel as a provisional frank, as shown in Figure 4. This cover comes from the other major surviving Williams Creek correspondence, the Murphy correspondence to Stamford, Canada West.



Figure 4. April 1865 letter from Williams Creek to Stamford, Canada. During this period of no stamps, Williams Creek used its numeral “10” as a provisional frank.

Posted in April 1865, this letter was paid 9d at Williams Creek, which used its numeral “10” frank to indicate that the BC domestic postage had been paid. Five pence (equivalent to 10¢) US postage was also prepaid, as indicated by the red manuscript “5d”. On April 29, the letter arrived in New Westminster, where the US 1861 10¢ stamp was added. The cover then traveled to San Francisco, where it was postmarked May 9, and finally arrived in Stamford, Canada West, on June 2, 1865.

By July 1865, Williams Creek had received a new supply of BC&VI 2½d stamps from New Westminster. Figure 5 illustrates this use. This cover was franked by a strip of three BC&VI 2½d stamps, which were being provisionally sold for 3d each, and which were canceled by numeral “10” cancels. One shilling (equivalent to 24¢) in cash was also paid for the US postage from San Francisco to England, so Williams Creek marked the letter with the red manuscript “1/-” at upper left. At Williams Creek, the cover was also marked “PAID.” A US 1861 24¢ red lilac stamp (Scott 70) was added in New Westminster, and the letter was forwarded to San Francisco, where it was postmarked July 31, 1865. It then traveled overland to New York, where it caught the Cunard steamer *Persia* departing on September 6. The letter finally arrived in Liverpool September 16.

BC 1865 Issue 3d Stamps

To alleviate the stamp shortage, BC ordered 111,360 newly-designed 3d blue stamps (Scott 7), which arrived in New Westminster on September 27, 1865.⁶ Accordingly, the

⁶Deville, pg. 127.



Figure 5. July 1865 letter from Williams Creek to Liverpool, England. By this time, Williams Creek had received a new supply of 2½d stamps.



Figure 6. September 1866 letter from Williams Creek to Maple, Canada. New stamps had arrived, the BC 3d blues, used here in a strip of three.

BC&VI 2½d stamps were withdrawn from circulation on November 1, 1865.⁷ The census indicates that the new BC 3d stamps were first used at Williams Creek in October 1865, and that use of the BC&VI 2½d stamps was discontinued as of that date. Figure 6 shows a September 1866 example of the new 3d stamps used on a letter to Canada West.

The letter in Figure 6 was franked by a strip of three BC 1865 3d stamps, which were being provisionally sold for 6¼¢ each. Ten cents in cash was also paid at Williams Creek for the US postage to Canada, per the “PAID” marking. Williams Creek canceled the stamps with the numeral “10” cancel, but did not add its customary manuscript “10”

⁷ Robson Lowe, *Encyclopedia of British Empire Stamps, Volume V, North America*, London, England (1973), pg. 577.

marking indicating the amount of US postage paid. Nonetheless, a US 1861 10¢ stamp was added when the letter arrived at New Westminster on September 14, most likely because the prepaid US postage was recorded on the way bill. The letter was postmarked at San Francisco on September 19.

1866 Shortage of Stamps at Williams Creek

The first printing of BC 1865 3d stamps began to run out in September, 1866.⁸ The census indicates that Figure 6 represents the last use of BC 3d stamps in Williams Creek until after the second printing was issued in New Westminster on July 19, 1867.⁹

To deal with this shortage, the BC&VI 1860 2½d stamps were re-issued in BC, and a supply was apparently sent to Williams Creek. Figure 7 shows the only known example of this second issuance of BC&VI stamps, which lasted for only six or seven months.



Figure 7. February 1867 letter from Williams Creek to Aylmer, Canada West. The reissued 2½d rose stamp was briefly used during a shortage of 3d stamps.

The sender paid 28¾¢ in cash (18¾¢ BC postage plus 10¢ United States postage) at the Williams Creek post office, which added the strip of three BC&VI 2½d stamps (then being sold provisionally for 6¼¢ each), and canceled the stamps with its numeral “10”. It also marked the letter “PAID”, and added a manuscript “10” at top center, indicating that 10 cents US postage had been paid for the trip from San Francisco to Canada West. On February 25, 1867, the cover passed through New Westminster, which added the US 1861 10¢ stamp, and sent it on to San Francisco, where the 10¢ stamp was cancelled and the cover was postmarked on March 4. Thence overland via Chicago to Aylmer, arriving April 5.

1867 United Postal Ordinance

On April 2, 1867, the United Postal Ordinance came into effect in the united colonies of BC and VI, establishing a 25¢ per ½ ounce rate for foreign mail from Williams Creek.¹⁰

⁸ Deaville, pg. 128.

⁹ Lowe, pg. 579.

¹⁰ Walske, pg. 291.



Figure 8. April 1867 letter from Williams Creek to Prince Edward Island. The “PAID” marking is used provisionally to indicate prepayment of the new rate of 25¢ BC&VI postage on foreign mail from the Cariboo region. (Courtesy of Michael Perlman.)



Figure 9. June 1867 letter from Williams Creek to Aylmer, Canada. The 25¢ rate is here prepaid by 5¢ and 10¢ VI stamps of 1865.

At the start of this period, it appears that Williams Creek was did not know how to reflect the new BC postal rates on its mail. Accordingly, as shown in Figure 8, the straight-line “PAID” marking was used as a provisional frank for the month of April 1867.

The letter in Figure 8 is from a known Williams Creek correspondence, and the “PAID” marking corresponds to late examples from Williams Creek. The sender paid 25¢ BC postage plus 15¢ US postage (the transcontinental rate to Prince Edward Island) in cash. It passed through New Westminster on April 27, where the US 3¢ and 10¢ 1861 and the US

1863 2¢ Black Jack (Scott 73) stamps were added. The cover transited San Francisco May 4 and arrived in Charlottetown on June 5.

On April 8, 1867, Vancouver Island (VI) transferred its remaining stocks of 74,000 VI 1865 5¢ rose stamps (Scott 5) and 110,000 VI 1865 10¢ blue stamps (6) to New Westminster.¹¹ The census shows that the VI stamps came into use at Williams Creek in May 1867. Figure 9 illustrates an example of VI 1865 stamps used on a June 1867 letter from the Simmons correspondence to Aylmer.

The cover in Figure 9 was franked by a VI 1865 5¢ stamp and a pair of VI 1865 10¢ stamps to make up the 25¢ rate from the Cariboo. Ten cents in cash was also paid at Williams Creek for the US postage to Canada. Williams Creek cancelled the VI stamps with its distinctive numeral “10” cancel, but by now had discontinued the practice of adding a manuscript notation indicating the prepaid US postage. The letter arrived at New Westminster on July 10, where a US 10¢ 1861 stamp was added, and was then forwarded to San Francisco, where it was postmarked July 19. It arrived in Aylmer August 14.

The BC&VI 2½d stamps were also re-issued on April 11, 1867 to pay the new 25¢ rate in strips of four (four times 6¼¢). These workhorse stamps were finally withdrawn from circulation for the last time on July 16, 1867.¹² Figure 10 illustrates the only known exam-



Figure 10. July 1867 letter from Williams Creek to Maine. On this cover four re-issued 2½d stamps (sold provisionally for 6¼¢ each) pay the 25¢ rate.

ple of this second re-issuance from Williams Creek. The letter in Figure 10 was franked by a strip of four BC&VI 2½d stamps, which were being provisionally sold for 6¼¢ each, and were cancelled by the numeral “10” cancel. The July 16 withdrawal notice for these stamps had not yet reached Williams Creek, so they were still valid for postage. Ten cents in cash was also paid at Williams Creek for the US postage to Canada. A US 1861 10¢ stamp was added when the letter arrived at New Westminster on August 17. The letter passed through San Francisco on August 26, and was forwarded overland to Lisbon Falls, Maine.

¹¹ Deaville, pg. 129.

¹² Deaville, pg. 129.

| ORIGIN DATE | FRANK/FRANKING | U.S. FRANKING | S. F. PMK | DESTINATION | REFERENCE |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Jun-64 | red ms "Paid" | 1861 5c, 10c | JUN 30 | Stamford, CW | ex-Haas |
| Jun-64 | red ms "Paid" | 1861 3c | JUL 12 | San Francisco | Figure 1 |
| Jun-64 | '60 2 1/2d BC&VI pair, PAID | 1861 10c | JUL 19 | Aylmer, CW | Figure 2 |
| Jun-64 | PAID (stamps missing?) | 1861 10c | JUL 19 | Stamford, CW | RAS 12/95 #1756 |
| Jun-64 | '60 2 1/2d BC&VI x 2, PAID | 1861 10c | JUL 19 | ? | Fox 2/53 #20 |
| Aug-64 | '60 2 1/2d BC&VI strip of 3, PAID | 1861 3c | AUG 23 | San Francisco | Figure 3 |
| Aug-64 | '60 2 1/2d BC&VI strip of 3, PAID | 10c missing | SEP 3 | Aylmer, CW | RL 2/63 #44 |
| Aug-64 | '60 2 1/2d BC&VI strip of 3, PAID | 10c missing | SEP 3 | Stamford, CW | <i>Gold Fever</i> , pg 117 |
| Dec-64 | '60 2 1/2d BC&VI strip of 3, PAID | 1861 10c | none | Aylmer, CW | Private collection |
| Mar-65 | '60 2 1/2d BC&VI strip of 3, PAID | 1861 10c | APR 3 | Ellesmere, CW | HRH 5/04 #183 |
| Apr-65 | numeral 10, PAID | 1861 24c | MAY 9 | Liverpool, GB | Wellburn #1063 |
| Apr-65 | numeral 10, PAID | 1861 10c | MAY 9 | Stamford, CW | Figure 4 |
| Jul-65 | '60 2 1/2d BC&VI strip of 3, PAID | 1861 24c | JUL 31 | Liverpool, GB | Figure 5 |
| Aug-65 | '60 2 1/2d BC&VI strip of 3, PAID | 1861 10c | AUG 23 | Stamford, CW | Bennett 4/04 #278 |
| Aug-65 | '60 2 1/2d BC&VI strip of 3, PAID | 1861 10c | AUG 29 | New York, NY | HRH 5/04 #186 |
| Oct-65 | '60 2 1/2d BC&VI strip of 3 | 24c missing | NOV 1 | London, GB | Firby 10/03 #680 |
| Oct-65 | '65 BC 3d strip of 3, PAID | 1861 24c | NOV ? | London, GB | Knapp 5/41 #1844 |
| Dec-65 | '65 BC 3d strip of 3, PAID | 1861 10c | JAN 1 | Aylmer, CW | HRH SF 6/80 #2160 |
| Dec-65 | '65 BC 3d strip of 3, PAID | 1861 10c | JAN 19 | San Francisco | Rumsey 12/02 #1308 |
| Dec-65 | '65 BC 3d strip of 3, PAID | '61 2c, 3c, 10c | JAN 24 | Pictou, NS | Wellburn #1246 |
| 8-Jan-66 | '65 BC 3d strip of 3, PAID | 1861 10c | FEB 17 | Aylmer, CW | HRH 5/04 #213 |
| May-66 | '65 BC 3d strip of 3, PAID | 10c missing | MAY 21 | Aylmer, CW | HRH 5/04 #207 |
| May-66 | '65 BC 3d strip of 3, PAID | 1861 10c | MAY 21 | Toronto, CW | Private collection |
| 13-Jun-66 | '65 BC 3d strip of 3, PAID | 1861 12c pair | JUL 2 | Liverpool, GB | Private collection |
| 12-Aug-66 | '65 BC 3d strip of 3, PAID | 1861 10c | SEP 1 | Aylmer, CW | HRH 5/04 #214 |
| Sep-66 | '65 BC 3d strip of 3 | 1861 10c | SEP 19 | Aylmer, CW | RAS 5/02 #2110 |
| Sep-66 | '65 BC 3d strip of 3, PAID | 1861 10c | SEP 19 | Maple, CW | Figure 6 |
| Feb-67 | '60 2 1/2d BC&VI strip of 3, PAID | 1861 10c | MAR 4 | Aylmer, CW | Figure 7 |
| Apr-67 | PAID | '61 2c, 3c, 10c | MAY 4 | Char'twn, PEI | Figure 8 |
| May-67 | '65 5c VI, 10c VI pair | 1861 10c | JUN 13 | Campo Seco, CA | Shreve 6/97 #608 |
| 6-Jun-67 | '65 5c VI, 10c VI pair | 1861 10c | JUL 1 | Aylmer, CW | Wellburn #1200 |
| Jul-67 | '65 5c VI, 10c VI pair | 1861 10c | JUL 19 | Aylmer, CW | Figure 9 |
| Aug-67 | '65 5c VI, 10c VI pair | 24c missing | AUG 26 | Dingwall, SctInld | HRH 4/62 #39 |
| Aug-67 | '60 2 1/2d BC&VI strip of 4 | 1861 10c | AUG 26 | Lisbon Falls, ME | Figure 10 |
| Aug-67 | '65 5c VI, 10c VI pair | 1861 5c, 10c | SEP 1 | Eversley, CW | HRH 5/04 #203 |
| Sep-67 | '65 5c VI, 10c VI pair | 1861 5c, 10c | SEP 30 | Char'twn, PEI | Sotheby 10/79 #175 |
| Feb-68 | '65 BC 3d strip of 4 | (closed mail) | none | Wimbledon, GB | Figure 11 |
| Mar-68 | '65 5c VI, 10c VI strip of 3 | 1861 10c | MAR 30 | Campo Seco, CA | Figure 12 |
| Mar-68 | '65 5c VI, 10c VI strip of 3 | 10c missing | MAR 30 | Lisbon Falls, ME | Firby 1/00 #210 |

Table 2. Census of covers from Williams Creek, BC, via San Francisco, 1864-1868.

The second printing of BC 3d stamps was issued in New Westminster on July 19, 1867, and reached Williams Creek in August. Just over a million of these deep blue stamps were printed, although only 210,000 were actually issued.¹³

The January 1, 1868 United States-Great Britain postal treaty included a closed-mail, fully-paid rate of 25¢ per half-ounce from BC to Great Britain. This rate was implemented in New Westminster on January 17, 1868,¹⁴ but not until February in Williams Creek. Figure 11 shows a February 1868 example of the closed mail rate paid by a strip of four of the second printing of BC 3d stamps, sold provisionally at 6¼¢ each and canceled by the



Figure 11. February 1868 letter from Williams Creek, BC to Wimbledon. Four BC 3d blue stamps prepay the new 25¢ treaty rate to England. Under terms of the US-Great Britain postal treaty, effective 1 January 1868, no US postage stamps were required on mail from British Columbia to England.

numeral “10” of Williams Creek. No US postage or postal markings appear on the cover, since this was a fully-paid rate, and mail was carried in closed sacks through the US. After transiting New Westminster, the letter arrived in London on April 13.

BC interpreted the January 1868 treaty as allowing the full prepayment of postage on letters to the US and British North America. This misconception was corrected by a US notice to New Westminster on February 21, 1868,¹⁵ but that correction did not reach Williams Creek until March 1868. Figure 12 shows an example of attempted full prepayment from Williams Creek in March 1868. This cover was franked by a VI 1865 5¢ stamp and three VI 1865 10¢ stamps in an effort to make up the 25¢ rate from the Cariboo to New Westminster plus 10¢ for the US postage to California. Williams Creek cancelled the VI stamps with its numeral “10”, and sent the letter on to New Westminster, where a US 1861 10¢ stamp was added in accordance with the corrected instructions from the US. It was then forwarded to San Francisco on March 30, and arrived the next day in Campo Seco, California. Per the census, this is the latest use from Williams Creek to a foreign destination via San Francisco.

¹³ Lowe, pg. 579.

¹⁴ Deaville, pg. 130.

¹⁵ Deaville, pg. 130.



Figure 12. March 1868 letter from Williams Creek to California. The 35¢ in VI stamps is an unsuccessful attempt to use VI stamps to fully prepay the cover to its destination in California. (Courtesy of the Fraser Thompson collection.)

Conclusion

Postal history is the study of postal rates, routes, frankings and markings from a particular historical period. The best postal history sources are official postal regulations and documentation, such as instructions to postmasters or post office communications. However, the official record is often incomplete, so a census of covers relevant to the period can fill in the gaps by showing patterns of postal usage. As shown in this article, the postal history of Williams Creek, BC, can be reconstructed using a combination of official records and a comprehensive census of surviving covers.

Acknowledgements

Dale Forster and Richard Frajola were very helpful in their critical editorial review of this article. Thanks are also due to “Fraser Thompson” and Michael Perlman for illustrations from their fine collections. ■

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**SUPPLEMENTARY MAIL TYPE A HANDSTAMPS:
POPULATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GENUINE MARKING**
STEVEN ROSEN

Supplementary Mail Type A markings have been of interest to philatelists since 1923, when Dr. Warren L. Babcock convinced the editors of the Scott catalog to list them. In the early 1940s he and Stanley Ashbrook conducted a very public dispute in the philatelic press over the Supplementary uses. Henry Stollnitz brought things up to date in an article in the 1976 *Philatelic Congress Book*, and very little has been written about the subject since.

The Stollnitz article caught my interest when it was published, and I set about collecting examples of the cancel. That collection has long been sold, but I kept most of my records and photographs. From that archive this article has been written, in hopes that readers will find here some useful information about the Supplementary Mail Type A marking not previously noted elsewhere.

Population

Ultimately I was able to accumulate about 100 genuine Type A items. These included about 20 covers and 80 off-cover stamps. I was also able to examine an additional 20-30 examples. From this base I speculate that 125-175 off-cover stamps with genuine handstamps could easily exist. The cover population was reasonably well known in 1976. The Stollnitz article included a detailed list of the 54 genuine covers known to him at the time, a vast improvement over the 20 or so Ashbrook and Babcock detailed. A major discovery of additional Type A covers, the Rathbone find, occurred sometime after the *Congress Book* article, so those covers are missing from the list. If the Stollnitz list were revised today, I would expect to see over 70 covers.

The Scott U.S. specialized catalog lists the Type A marking on many stamps from the 1851s through the Large Bank Notes. Off-cover stamps, with genuine Type A markings I have been able to confirm, include the following Scott numbers: 11, 17, 24, 26, 30, 30A, 32, 35, 36, 36b, 37, 38, 62B, 63, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 76, 77, 78, 91, 100, 116, 120 and 121. Some of the color varieties of Scott 70 and 78 also show the marking.

The catalog lists the Type A marking on more stamps than these, but I have not seen them. Good examples are the large Bank Note stamps. Covers are known with Type A cancels near the stamp, but not often touching it. Off-cover, however, I have yet to see a Type A handstamp canceling a large Bank Note stamp. I do not imply that the catalog is incorrect. It would not surprise me to find catalog numbers I have not seen, off-cover, canceled with genuine Type A markings. Stollnitz says he saw a 90¢ National Bank Note stamp without grill (Scott 155) with a Type A handstamp. I have yet to see that stamp, but imagine it's still out there somewhere.

Most off-cover uses are from the 1861 series followed by the 1857 series. Most of the recorded covers are addressed to England or France. The supplementary mail rate was double the normal rate for outgoing foreign mail posted at the docks after the regular mail had closed. It follows then that most off-cover strikes of the Type A marking would be found on stamps used to pay the rates to these two countries.

In both the 1851 and 1857 series the 5¢, 12¢ and 24¢ denominations are the most commonly found. For instance, 20 or more examples of the 24¢ 1860 exist off-cover with the Type A cancel. At one time or another I've bought and sold 15 different copies. The 24¢ 1861 stamps are almost as common. The 10¢ denominations are not rare and some of the 10¢ 1861s exist as pairs. The 30¢ denominations are scarce, but not rare; five examples of the 30¢ 1860 exist off cover, including the well-known Newbury copy. At least six of the 30¢ 1861 issue exist off cover. Hardest to find off-cover are the low denominations. Part of the problem is they have (or had) a low catalog value to begin with. As such they are less likely to be presented as individual auction lots and more likely to be grouped with other items.

The 1¢ and 3¢ denominations were quite hard to find with the 3¢ being the toughest. The 1¢ 1857 and 1¢ 1861 stamps have about five each known off-cover. The 3¢ 1857s are about the same according to my records, but nearly impossible to find in the real world. A strip of three of the 3¢ 1857 is known, as are singles, but I found only one single during the years when I was looking. The 3¢ 1861 was tougher still. I never had one, but at least two are known to exist. The 3¢ and 12¢ 1851s are the hardest to find. The 12¢ may have a population of two. I do not have a photo of the 3¢ 1851, but I believe the Philatelic Foundation records one. With or without inner frame lines, this 3¢ 1851 is possibly unique.

Perhaps equally rare is the Blackjack. A cover is known on which the Type A ties the stamp. Off-cover it is so rare that I doubt a Blackjack canceled by a genuine Supplementary Type A exists. I don't mean to pick on Blackjacks, but their popularity has made them targets for fakers. On the few off-cover Blackjacks I examined, the Type A cancels were fake. This includes the stamp shown in the 1976 Stollnitz article, the Blackjack sold on piece in the late 70's in a San Francisco auction, and others sold earlier this decade by some New York firms. I will touch on this below when I describe the characteristics of the genuine handstamp.

Covers are an almost certain source of genuine markings. Most of the Supplementary Type A covers I saw were unchanged by fakers. A very few had individual stamps removed or replaced. In my opinion, covers are the best way to observe the real Type A marking.



Figure 1. Cover to France, dated July 28, 1860, showing 3¢ and 12¢ perforated stamps and bearing multiple strikes of the Supplementary Type A handstamp.



Figure 2. 24¢ 1860 stamp showing two strikes of the Supplementary Type A handstamp.

Figure 1 is a scan of the auction catalog illustration of lot 11051 from the David Feldman sale of April 22-24, 1985. I am sorry I do not have an original photo. This shows 12¢ and 3¢ 1857 stamps (Scott 36 and 26) on a cover to France dated 28 July 1860. Since only the single 15¢ treaty-rate postage is paid, the supplementary fee on this cover must have been paid in cash. Stollnitz lists similar examples, but the Figure 1 cover is not in the list. The Type A marking on this cover is struck three times, once solely on the cover, once tying both stamps and once tying only the 3¢ stamp. The 3¢ stamp actually shows two strikes of the Type A marking.

Figure 2 is an off-cover 24¢ 1860 stamp, Scott 37, also showing multiple strikes of the genuine Type A marking.

Genuine Characteristics

To differentiate the genuine handstamps from the fakes you need to know the characteristics of both. The handstamp is an octagon stretched along its horizontal axis. The top and bottom frame lines are equidistant and generally equal in length. The left and right frame lines are the same. Finishing the octagon are four short angled corner frame lines each roughly the same size. The text in the handstamp reads in two lines "SUPPLEMENTARY/MAIL." "SUPPLEMENTARY" is tightly spaced. "MAIL" is more loosely spaced. The letters are uniformly about 2.5 millimeters tall. Letters will appear taller on heavily inked impressions. The "S" of "SUPPLEMENTARY" is quite close to the frame line on the left. Both lines of text are curved, giving the outline of the text somewhat the shape of a football or a cigar. Overall dimensions of the frame lines are about 22-22.5 millimeters wide and around 12.5 mm tall. Dimensions of handstamps will vary slightly according to the amount of ink used and the pressure applied by the clerk while striking the mark.

Unbroken border lines appear now and then on some examples, but rarely on all eight sides at the same time. Most frequently, the lines in the handstamp are broken in several places. When the handstamp was applied with even pressure and moderate ink the breaks are consistent. This is true throughout the life of the handstamp, from the earliest impressions to the latest. Frame breaks most often occur above the "M" of "SUPPLEMENTARY," in the lower right about midway along the short angled line, and on the far left near the "S." Other breaks occur in the border lines with some frequency, notably along the top line. The lower right angled line warrants particular attention. Some genuine on and off-cover examples show a notch instead of a break. The missing ink or notch is on the outside of the line. These are on earlier impressions of the hand stamp. However, there are genuine ex-



Figure 3. 24¢ 1861 showing the notch in the lower-right angled line of the cancel. This distinctive flaw is more clearly evident in the marking shown in Figure 6. Illustration courtesy of Stanley Piller.

amples showing no breaks here or in other places because of heavily inked and/or heavily struck impressions. Figure 3 is a 24¢ 1861 stamp showing the notch in the lower right angled line. Again, this appears on some but not all genuine strikes. (This distinctive flaw shows clearly in the marking shown below as Figure 6.)

Another thing to look for on genuine Type A handstamps is the period after “MAIL.” This period is directly below the point where the horizontal bar of the “A” meets its left leg. Some of the fake handstamps fail this test.

The mark itself should be familiar to most collectors of classic United States stamps. Tracings were reproduced in *The Stamp Specialist*, in *American Philatelic Miscellany*, in Van Vlissingen & Waud’s *New York Foreign Mail Cancellations* and in *The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City 1870-1878* by William Weiss, Jr. The marking has also appeared in other books and articles. Most importantly, for decades it has been shown in the introduction to the Scott’s *Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Cov-*

ers. Most, but not all of the fake Type A markings are based on the Scott illustration. Scott’s tracing is representative of the real handstamp, but it has minor differences, such as unbroken frame lines.



Figure 4. Strip of four 12¢ 1857 stamps showing at least two highly oxidized strikes of the Supplementary Type A handstamp, one on the cover, one canceling two stamps. The stamps are also canceled by crayon.

The color of the ink used for the handstamp is carmine or rose red. This color tended to be consistent over the 14-plus years the marking was in use. For years black was listed in the specialized catalog as a second Type A color. But black examples probably don't exist and this listing has been dropped. The only genuine black handstamp I ever saw is on a cover from the Rathbone find. On this cover shown here (in black and white) as Figure 4, the carmine or rose red ink has oxidized to black. So this isn't really a black marking, just an oxidized red one. In addition to the handstamp on the Figure 4 cover, the left pair of 12¢ is also cancelled by an oxidized strike, which doesn't show well in the photo. I bought and sold this cover twice in the late 1970s and early 1980's. The Figure 4 photo dates from that time. I should point out that while the photo doesn't show this very well, at least two if not all four of the stamps are hit by the Type A marking.

Fake Cancels

Three or four fake Type A cancel types exist. Fortunately, fake examples are harder to find than the real ones. There are easily 10-20 stamps with fake cancels on the market, perhaps more. The fake handstamps I am aware of can be characterized individually.

One was much larger than the correct size. I have seen it only in black and only on 1¢ 1857 stamps (Scott 24). This fake has solid frame lines.

A second fake was larger, top to bottom, and struck in roughly the correct color. The example I saw did not show the entire cancel on the stamp. This could be an impression from the fake handstamp noted above or it could be a different cancel. It has unbroken lines of approximately correct thickness.

A third fake exists in a distinctive maroon color. The outer lines tend to be thin and solid. The sides are tilted or skewed so the cancel looks pushed over. One of the bad Blackjacks mentioned earlier showed this cancel. Also, on this fake the period and the text do not line up correctly.

A fourth, the most common fake, is found in a red-orange color and was most likely copied from the tracing in the Scott catalog or *The Stamp Specialist*. The border lines are thin to medium in thickness, well formed and never broken. This fake appears on the 10¢ 1857 stamp shown in Figure 5. It might be evident that the second "E" in "SUPPLEMENTARY" is larger than the first. Most of the Blackjacks with bad Type A markings show this fake. The 15¢ 1869 shown in the Stollnitz article, with a fraudulent cancel in black, probably bears this cancel too.

All of the fakes mentioned above show the cancel well struck or perfectly struck on the stamp. This is not the case with the real strikes. As a general rule, off-cover stamps with a genuine Type A cancel tend to be canceled with no other devices. I do not recall seeing a genuine off-cover Type A on which the stamp is canceled by a grid, a rosette, a CDS, a smudge, or anything else, but such items could certainly exist. Genuine covers show stamps with part of a Type A hand stamp along with another cancel or killer. But a rule of thumb is that an off-cover stamp with a Type A cancel and another cancel should be treated as suspect. Some of the Blackjacks fail this test, as do other stamps, including the 10¢ 1857 shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5. 10¢ 1857 stamp showing the most common fake of the Supplementary Type A handstamp.



Figure 6. July, 1859.



Figure 7. December, 1862.



Figure 8. July, 1867.

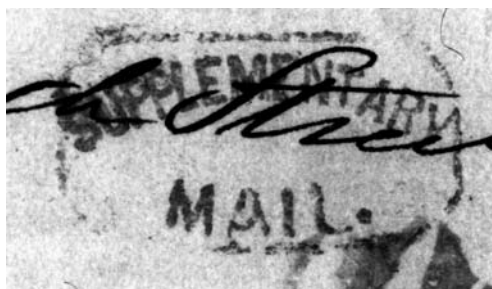


Figure 9. August, 1871.

Genuine strikes of the Supplementary Mail Type A handstamp, photographed from well-dated covers, illustrating how the marking changed as the years passed.

Figures 6 through 9 are photos of the genuine handstamp, all from well-dated covers, selected to show the marking as it aged. Besides these, other photos of the handstamp are readily available. Ashbrook's *Stamp Specialist* article illustrates a number of covers, not shown here, that clearly show the breaks in the lines. Two of those covers are uses earlier than the one shown here in Figure 6.

Figure 6 is a strike from late July, 1859. It was taken from the Rathbone cover in Figure 4. The break above the "M" and the break in the short angled line at lower right show quite well, as do other line breaks. Figure 7 is from cover 9 on the Stollnitz list, dated December 17, 1862. At this point, the handstamp had been in use at least three years. The marking in Figure 8 is from a stampless cover illustrated in Stollnitz' article in the *Congress Book*. This is cover 23 on the Stollnitz list, dated July 13, 1867. At this point the handstamp had been in use for at least eight years and was starting to become distorted. Figure 9 is from cover 48 on the Stollnitz list, dated August 12, 1871. After 12 years of use, the sides of the marking are worn to a point where the handstamp is losing its original octagonal shape and appears as much oval as octagonal.

There have been arguments about original gum in the past, particularly the discussion between Babcock and Ashbrook. I have never seen a genuine off-cover stamp canceled with a Type A marking that still had gum, original or otherwise. Could such an item exist? Yes. Would I love to see one? Yes.

I have often speculated about the existence of a second Type A handstamp. The real impressions I have seen all show the same characteristics, and the number of genuine uses I have seen is about 125. If there were a second handstamp, 50-75 impressions should exist. They do not, so I doubt the existence of a second device.

A prominent philatelist once asked me why the fakes exist. There is a collecting

reason and an economic reason. The cancel gained fame from the heated disagreement between Babcock and Ashbrook. With this sudden notoriety, collectors began to demand examples for their collections. Then, compound this by demand from specialist collectors. Remember, the use of the Type A handstamp spans five different classic issues!

Meeting collector demand were legitimate dealers and those who were less scrupulous. In the 1940s and 50s a price improvement on a stamp of as little as a dollar might buy a steak. It is my opinion most of the fakes originate from this time.

Conclusion

Despite its fame or notoriety, the Type A handstamp has an interesting history and a well-established place in the evolution of mail transmission. Its use spanned a long period in classic U.S. philately. Genuine covers are known from 1859 to 1873 and the actual use of the handstamp must have spanned a period greater than this. The handstamp shows identical characteristics throughout its long life. With careful examination and an understanding of the characteristics of the genuine marking, collectors can avoid fake cancels. ■

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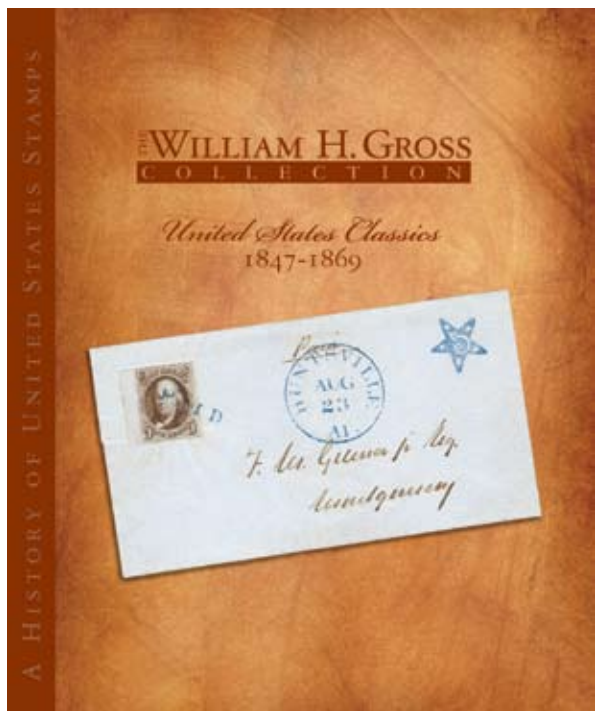


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A COLLECTION B

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The Collectors Club

THE BOWLSBY PATENT COUPON STAMP

STEPHEN B. PACETTI

It wasn't long after the issuance of our first adhesive postage stamps that the Post Office Department began fretting about lost revenue due to dishonest (or it might have been said at the time, innovative) people soaking used stamps from envelopes, washing off the cancellation ink and reusing the stamps. Some, it was thought, were even selling recycled stamps to others. Stamp washing was easy, since the common writing inks used by most postmasters were not very permanent. And let's remember that in the mid 1800s 5¢—or even 1¢—was real money. Five cents in 1860 was equivalent to about \$1.15 in today's money.

What hard evidence the POD had about the magnitude of lost revenue is not known. Nonetheless, Congress passed "An Act to punish the fraudulent Sale or Use of Postage Stamps," which was approved July 16, 1862.¹ It stated, in part:

...any person who shall wilfully remove or cause to be removed from any postage stamp or stamped envelope the cancelling or defacing marks thereon, with the intent to use the same or cause the use of the same a second time, or...[sell or buy]...such washed or restored stamps... shall, upon conviction thereof, be adjudged guilty of felony, and shall be punished by imprisonment not exceeding three years or by fine not exceeding one thousand dollars, or [both]...; and one half of such fine, when collected, shall be paid to the informer.

Montgomery Blair's Pronouncements

In his annual report dated December 1, 1862, Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, in a section titled, "Fraudulent Use of Cancelled Stamps—Amendment," that pursuant to the above act, the POD "...has endeavored to punish, and to prevent thereby, as well as by the attainment of a more effectual mode of cancellations..." the reuse of postage stamps. He goes on to say that the POD is working on obtaining improved canceling inks that cannot be washed off, and is testing "...new instruments and devices for canceling postage stamps..." He also recommends that the act be amended to "absolutely prohibit the removal of cancelled stamps from the paper to which they are attached, for whatever purpose."² Imagine how that suggestion would have affected stamp collectors, had it been enacted!

In his next report, October 31, 1863, Blair says that indelible canceling ink is in use in the larger post offices, and printing ink in smaller offices. Then, he offers this somewhat startling observation:

It is not believed that the department has ever suffered any considerable loss from [reused stamps], yet there has been a constant endeavor, either by the introduction of some effectual method of cancellation, or by a peculiar process in the manufacture of the stamps, to render impossible a second use thereof....³

Blair mentions that, "Instruments for cancellation, with cutting or abrading edges..." have been submitted by third parties for testing, but have been found wanting. He concludes that:

¹ *Statutes at Large*, 37th Congress, 2nd Session, Vol. 12, pg. 588.

² *Report of the Postmaster General, 1861-1862*, Theron Wierenga (1977), pg. 133.

³ *Report of the Postmaster General, 1863-1864*, Theron Wierenga (1977), pg. 15.

...the only certain means of effective cancellation is in the preparation of stamps in such a manner that, when once affixed to the letter, they cannot be removed therefrom without involving their destruction; or by their being printed in colors sufficiently permanent to resist the action air and light, but which would be effaced by any agent intended to remove the canceling marks. Three varieties of postage stamps, alleged to possess one or the other of these qualities, have been submitted to the department, and their respective merits are under consideration.⁴

George W. Bowsby and his Patent Coupon Stamp

There is not a lot of information available about George W. Bowsby's personal life. What can be found is that he was born in the state of New York in 1826, and moved, at some point, to Monroe, Michigan. He held a variety of jobs as a tin smith, news carrier, patent agent and city scavenger. He enlisted in Company K, 15th Regiment, Michigan Infantry on December 1, 1861 as a captain and was commissioned January 1, 1862. On March 22, 1862 the 15th was called to action and proceeded to Pittsburg Landing, where it participated in a fierce battle on April 6 and 7, along with other Union troops under the command of General Grant. Many men of the 15th were killed or wounded, but only one officer was wounded. I believe that was Bowsby. He resigned April 22, 1862 and applied for an "invalid pension" in September 1863. He died October 25, 1892 at age 67 and is buried at the Leavenworth (Kansas) National Cemetery. Sadly, he died in a hospital "insane ward" of "apoplexy" (nowadays stroke).⁵ Somehow, Bowsby found out about the POD's interest in stamp fraud. On December 26, 1865, he was granted Patent 51,782 for "Improvement in Postage-Stamps, etc." The illustration portion of the patent is shown in Figure 1.⁶ He describes his invention in the text portion of the patent as a standard sized postage stamp with perforations horizontally across the middle of the stamp, "C". "A" is the gummed upper part of the stamp and the lower half, "B", is not gummed. He envisions the postmaster tearing off the bottom portion, canceling and at the same time destroying the stamp for further use.

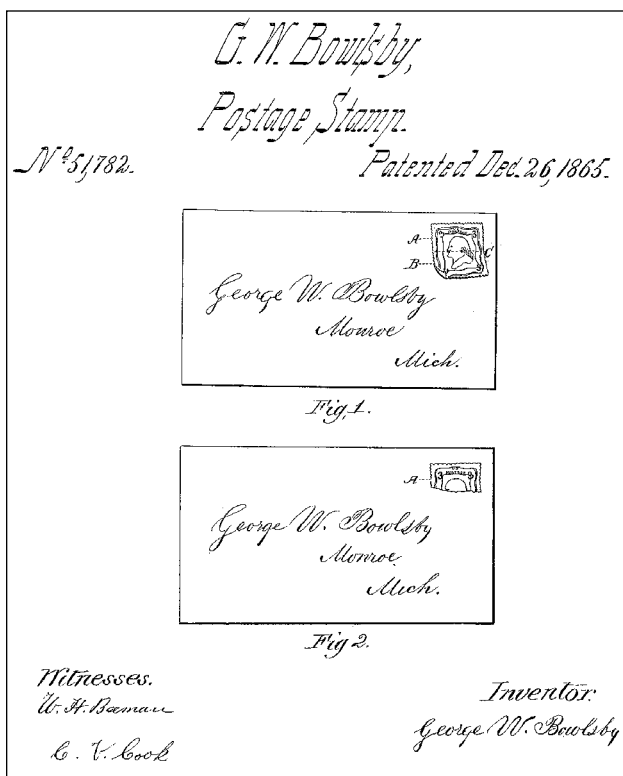


Figure 1. Illustration from Bowsby patent application.

⁴ *Ibid*, pg. 16.

⁵ A special thanks to my wife, Julianne H. Pacetti, who did the biographical research. A photograph of Bowsby could not be found.

⁶ Patents are public records and are available for inspection and downloading at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's web site: <http://www.uspto.gov>. Here, the size has been modified to save space on the page.

Plate Essays

It is interesting to note that Bowsby's original design is very different from the essays printed by the National Bank Note Company. An example is shown in Figure 2. How and by whom the decision was made to change the design and double its size by adding an upper coupon is not known. I suspect the change occurred at the NBNC. With either design,

however, it is easy to see the labor-intensive impracticality of the idea in any post office handling more than a few letters a day. Nonetheless, the coupon proposal left collectors of U.S. classic essays with one of the most beautiful of the several reuse-prevention inventions considered and rejected by the POD in the mid 1860s.

In Figure 3, you can see how the coupon stamp was envisioned to be placed on an envelope, here an unused strip of three on a U.S.



Figure 2. A Bowsby coupon stamp essay, printed by the National Bank Note Company. This is a plate essay, in blue, perforated all around, imperforate between the coupon and the stamp.



Figure 3. How the Bowsby coupon stamp might have looked on cover. This strip of three plate essays, in red, on a Sanitary Fair patriotic envelope, is perforated all around and between the coupon and the stamp.

Sanitary Commission patriotic cover.⁷ Such a scheme would require a conscious effort by the sender to place the stamps just so. Then the coupon(s) would flap around like little flags until a postmaster or clerk, with equal attention to detail, tore them off. Try to picture this arrangement with, say, five different stamps on a foreign-rate cover. Bad idea!

The National Bank Note Company printed the Bowsby coupon stamp on white stamp paper in blue and red from flat plates. Only the 1¢ 1861 design was used. Examples are seen perforated all around and in between, perforated all around and imperforate in between, perforated all around and rouletted in between, and imperforate all around and in between. One, imperforate all around and in between, bears a C grill on both the coupon and stamp. This occurs in red only. A split grill is known. A red imperforate all around and in between was also printed on pelure paper. The perforated essays are gummed only on the bottom stamp portion. The imperforates are gummed all over. All are listed in the essays section of the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers* as numbers 63-E13c through 63-E13h. Figure 4 shows a pair, perforated all around and in between, in a dark red shade variety. The example shown in Figure 2, in blue, is perforated all around and imperforate in between.

Large Die Essays

Where the Bowsby items really shine color-wise is in the large die essays. Scott lists 14 colors for the die essays on India paper sunk on card stock (63-E13a), and four colors for the die essays on white glazed paper (63-E13b). Clarence W. Brazer, the noted essay and proof specialist, listed in his catalog⁸ two additional colors for die essays on India paper (yellow



Figure 4. Pair of Bowsby coupon stamp essays, in the dark red variety, perforated all around and in between.



Figure 5. Blue-green Bowsby die essay on India paper, sunk in card. Note the pencil "C" in the lower right corner, possibly indicating the color, green.

⁷ Image courtesy of James E. Lee. Another similar cover, but with blue coupon stamps and canceled with nondescript grid killers, is pictured on page 32 of *Baker's U.S. Classics*, Baker, Hugh J. & J. David, (U. S. Philatelic Classics Society, 1985).

⁸ *The United States 1¢ Franklin 1861-1867*, Don L. Evans, (Linn's Stamp News, 1997), pg. 61.



Figure 6. Scarlet die Bowsby essay on white glazed paper.

green and green) not shown in Scott. He also listed a plate essay on India and on card, both in black, which are not recognized in Scott. (I have an example of the black India essay in my collection, so it does exist.) Figure 5 is a blue-green Bowsby die essay on India, sunk in card, and Figure 6 is a scarlet die essay on white glazed paper. Note in Figure 5 that in the lower right corner there is script letter "C". Evans reasons that these letters, which appear only on the die essay on India paper, denote the color, here green.⁹

Bowsby coupon-stamp plate essays (in blue and red) are not scarce (except for the C grill) and appear regularly in auctions and in dealer stocks. These items currently catalog in the \$175-\$300 range. On the other hand, die essays are much harder to come by, particularly in all the colors, and catalog at \$1,600 each. Today's prices, however, reflect a renewed interest in a collecting specialty that languished for many years, and one that enhances any collection of U.S. classic stamps from the 1860s. ■

⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 60. Evans recorded: A scarlet, C green, E brown, J blue, L carmine, and M apple green.

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SECTION EDITOR'S COMMENTARY ON
THE CHALLENGE OF EXHIBITING GREAT STAMPS—
AND AN INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM H. GROSS

Section Editor's Commentary

For this writer, the defining moment of Bill Gross's relationship with the entrenched forces of philatelic judging occurred during the judges' critique at an APS-sponsored national-level exhibition. One of the judges, a seasoned collector and well-respected exhibitor/judge, responded to a question from Charles Shreve, the auctioneer who, along with his wife and partner, Tracy, has served as advisor and agent throughout most of Gross's collecting career. Shreve asked what could be done to improve the exhibit, hoping to learn why the judges felt it had not realized its full potential greatness. The responding judge enumerated a few voids in the exhibit, and then suggested that the exhibit could be improved with the addition of something like a 24¢ 1861 Scratch Under "A" of "Postage" variety (see Scott U.S. Specialized sublistings for numbers 70 and 78).

At that moment, I realized all of us were just characters in the philatelic version of *Best in Show*, the hilarious Christopher Guest documentary movie about a fictional American Kennel Club dog championship. Instead of poking around canine snouts and rumps,



Figure 1. 10¢ 1869 paying the direct rate to France after expiration of the 1857 U.S.-French postal treaty on 1 January 1870, with internal French postage prepaid with 20- and 40-centime French stamps, applied in New York City. Stamps of both nations required to fully prepay the cover to its destination. Ex Schatzkes and Kuphal.



Figure 2. One of two recorded 30¢ 1869 covers to Japan, this was carried across the Atlantic on the Inman Line’s *City of Brussels* on its record-breaking voyage, then by British packet via Marseilles and Hong Kong. Although marked “Insufficiently Prepaid via Marseilles,” it was correctly prepaid 42¢. The confusion was probably caused by the “26” cents credit marking, which was applied instead of the correct 32¢ credit. Ex Gibson, Ishikawa and Rose.

philatelic judges were obsessively analyzing the merits (or lack thereof) of bits of paper arranged in exhibit frames. And, hearing a judge recommend that the addition of a minor plate variety might elevate the stature of Gross’s exhibit, in which dozens of the greatest and most valuable United States stamps and covers were displayed, suggested to me that something else was underfoot. Yes, I concluded, Gross was now being asked to pay the price for owning all those treasures, a price measured not in dollars (of which he has many) but in another currency: Homage to Philately.

From that show to the ultimate victory at Washington 2006, where Gross was awarded the Grand Prix National, he and his advisors—Charles and Tracy Shreve, Charles Verge, and a cadre of consultants well-versed in the arcane world of FIP judging—fought to gain acceptance, not only of the exhibit, but of the exhibitor as well.

For years Gross had remained the anonymous exhibitor of the “Monte Carlo” collection, in non-competitive environments where he could display his treasures without being judged. Upon entering the competitive exhibition arena, this cloak was removed, and there stood Bill Gross, highly respected in the world’s financial circles, but untested and unrecognized by the philatelic cognoscenti. I could hear the minds of the judging community: “If this guy thinks he can just come into our show and win the top award, we’ll show him.”

Gross started assembling the foundation of what would become his Grand Prix exhibit in 1993 at the Christie’s auction of the Ryohei Ishiwaka collection. In that sale he was represented by the Shreves, who were then employed by Greg Manning, Inc. under the company name Ivy, Shreve & Mader (the Shreves left that company shortly after and started their own firm).

Gross bought more than \$2 million worth of the Ishikawa sale and firmly established himself as a major collector. He participated in almost every important auction and private



Figure 3. 15¢ 1869 Type I, block of six with original gum, considered to be the finest unused multiple of this stamp. Ex Hind, Caspary, Bechtel and Zoellner.

sale offering between then and 2006, and he was frequently the winning bidder on items ranging from classic U.S. stamps and covers to worldwide rarities. As his name circulated through the stamp profession, details of his life emerged. He ran PIMCO, a major bond-investment firm on the West Coast. He was young (50s at the time). He made huge amounts of money and was spending millions on stamps. He used a mathematical formula to calculate the value of stamps based on past pricing history.

This last biographical note is relevant to the formation of his exhibit. Gross did, in fact, use a value model to make judgments about how much a philatelic item was worth. The following is taken directly from a *Wall Street Journal* report dated May 4, 2007:

“...[U]nlike stamp collectors of yesteryear, who bought and sold largely on instinct, Mr. Gross relies on some of the same sophisticated financial strategies he uses to make billions in the bond market. Studying patterns in the stamp market over the past 75 years, Mr. Gross found that certain sales tracked closely the growth in U.S. nominal gross domestic product. By projecting future GDP growth, he could also plot the future prices for certain stamps. ‘I looked at the history of the stamps and correlated the prices to the growth rate of the U.S. economy to make sure I wasn’t getting my hat handed to me,’ he says. ‘I don’t think most of the people in the stamp-collecting world understood what I was doing.’”

Up to the point Gross decided to go for the gold, he could be outbid, presumably when the price of an item went beyond the value limit predicted by his formula. For example, in the 1998 Zoellner sale held by the Siegel firm, Shreve dropped out of the bidding on the 1¢ Z Grill at \$800,000, leaving Donald Sundman of Mystic Stamp Company as the winning bidder at \$850,000 plus 10% premium. (Actually, it was Mr. Sundman’s 11-year-old son, Zachary, who did the bidding and won the lot, which inspired Jerry Wagshal to yell across the room, “C’mon Charles, you can beat him. He’s just a kid!”)

However, once Gross entered the world of competitive exhibiting, any holes in the collection were nakedly exposed, and he knew those empty spaces could not be filled with explanations as to why the missing items were not worth the prices asked. From then on, when something essential to the exhibit became available, he revised (or disregarded) his own valuation model. Perhaps the most obvious example of this evolution in thinking was



Figures 4-6. Unused examples of the three 1869 Inverts (number known shown in parentheses): 15¢ (3 known) ex H. B. Phillips; 24¢ (4 known, one in Tapling collection), ex Worthington; and 30¢ (7 known), ex Ishikawa. See *Chronicle 135* (August 1987) for an article on the unused 1869 Inverts.

the 2005 “swap” of the \$3 million Inverted “Jenny” plate block he bought at a Siegel auction for the 1¢ Z Grill, which he needed to complete his rare grills.

Gross also made some significant private acquisitions. In terms of the sheer number of items which are displayed in the exhibit, perhaps the greatest private acquisition was his purchase of the John C. Chapin collection of United States stamps and plate number multiples, brokered for the seller by Andrew Levitt and purchased by Shreves Philatelic Galleries for more than \$3 million (the price was not made public). As Shreve tells the story, the Chapin collection was purchased by his firm for resale, but when Mr. Gross saw all of the fantastic plate number multiples, he fell in love and bought the collection. Good thing, because those plate multiples form a significant part of the support columns throughout the entire display. In my opinion, what distinguishes the Gross exhibit from Ishikawa’s 1847-1869 exhibit is the presence of the ex-Chapin plate multiples, the rare Z Grills and some of the covers that were never available to Ishikawa.

As 2006 approached, Gross assembled most of the pieces necessary to form his exhibit, and then he entered the first competitions required to qualify for an FIP show. In these early forays, Gross encountered neither the applause of admiring fans nor the plaudits of impressed judges. Rather, he was met with derision from the “serious” exhibit crowd who felt he was simply a rich guy with a lot of expensive material slapped together. During this period I witnessed numerous harsh critiques, all spoken with the *Best in Show* earnestness of true philatelists who are only concerned with the good of the hobby: “No continuity,” “Poor write-up,” “Too many flashy items,” and “The exhibit pages are the wrong color.” I was reminded of the criticism leveled at Ishikawa when he exhibited his 1847-1869 Issues (lacking only the jingoistic lament about the Japanese buying up all things American).

What was Gross doing wrong? His advisors asked that question, and they received lots of answers. The judge who recommended throwing in a 24¢ Scratch Under “A” of “Postage” variety honestly believed that an exhibit of classic stamps and their varieties should include lots of varieties, even the little ones. Perhaps. Yet, at this point in the critique, I was compelled to rise in defense of the exhibit and of the right of all exhibitors to display great philatelic rarities without fear of reprisal from the proletariat or the insular community of judges.

No applause followed my speech, but Shreve later thanked me for “falling on the sword,” which I accepted as gratitude, even though the expression “falling on one’s sword” means to commit suicide, which might better describe the speech’s effect on my chances of getting future auction consignments from members of that judging panel.

Personally, had I been in Gross’s shoes at that point, I would have picked up my

marbles (stamps), given the judging community the universal hand signal for “I’ve had enough,” and gone home. But Gross and his advisors did no such thing. They persevered by having the exhibit remounted with the judges’ criticisms in mind. Gross published an article on 1847 plating and used original research in the exhibit. He made other important acquisitions, such as the 1847 Rush cover to France (with a strip of six 10¢ 1847s), to add even more power to the display. His team also made sure the judges knew their comments had been heard.

Gross and his advisors played the game, paid homage to philately (and to the judges), and in the process earned acceptance from the exhibiting community.

At the Washington 2006 show, the competing contender for the Grand Prix National was Steven C. Walske’s exhibit of Civil War special routes. George Kramer’s Panorama of U.S. Postal History exhibit did not make the final cut, which surprised many seasoned observers who know that Kramer is a master of competitive exhibiting.

Walske’s exhibit was (and is) an astounding assembly of rare covers, seamlessly woven into a fascinating storyline that had the postal history judges gushing with praise. The contrast between the two top contenders was striking. I made a colorful analogy at the time. Gross’s 1847-1869 exhibit was a tall, busty blonde in a silver-sequin evening gown, and Walske’s Civil War exhibit was a sultry brunette in fashionable eyewear, wearing a skirt and jacket, but no less enticing. (This analogy might explain why I spend so much time alone with my dog.)

At the Washington Palmars, a painfully long event made even more excruciating by the total disappearance of wine after the main course, the audience waited (and waited and waited) for the Grand Prix winner to be announced. When Gross’s name was finally announced, I felt relieved that his achievement in assembling and intelligently presenting many of philately’s greatest treasures was not undermined by a natural inclination to resent the infiltration of a process by an outsider, especially a wealthy outsider (although the list of Grand Prix contenders with low- and middle-class incomes is rather short).

In the minutes, days and months that followed Gross’s hard-won victory, I thought about how anti-climactic the final event was, compared to the journey leading up to it. All along, the real winners were always the people who got to see such an extraordinary display of rarities. In Washington, while I was taking time to look at Gross’s exhibit, I watched a father show his son the “Stolen Pony” cover and the 1¢ Z Grill. The kid was truly in awe. For me, that was the second defining moment in the saga of “Mr. Gross Goes to Washington.” What the judges think or say about anyone’s exhibit is secondary to the benefits derived by the public when collectors show their collections.

Interview with William H. Gross

When the *Chronicle* changed to its new full-color format, I thought about the opportunities to show items which had previously been published in black and white, but could now be pictured in glorious color. Many of the items I thought about are in Gross’s Grand Prix National exhibit of 1847-1869 Issues.

It also occurred to me that this journal of U.S. classics should record for future generations Gross’s own words about his collection and collecting career. He kindly agreed to answer questions sent by e-mail, and Charles and Tracy Shreve generously offered to supply color images from the newly-published book on Gross’s U.S. exhibit. An ad for that work and a review appear elsewhere in this issue. Since this is the 1869 section, we’ve limited the accompanying images to 1869 items, interspersed throughout this text as Figures 1-8. The Gross material in other classic stamp categories is equally impressive. The reader can imagine what’s there, or buy the book.

I would like to preface the interview by saying that Gross is always candid and en-

gaging in his published and broadcast statements. He publishes a web-based newsletter for PIMCO and is frequently interviewed on financial news programs. He speaks what he believes to be the truth, even when it might ruffle feathers.

CHRONICLE: What research resources (including gut instinct) did you utilize to make judgments about the relative importance of items as they came up for sale?

GROSS: Old issues of the *Chronicle*, sale catalogues going back to Ferrary, especially Caspary, Lilly, Ishikawa, and Zoellner

CHRONICLE: Every collector looks back at buying opportunities and thinks “If only I knew what I know today. I should have bought it.” You started seriously in 1992. Which items are on your “Regret List”? These would be items that you did not acquire.

GROSS: The unique cover with the Hawaiian Missionary 2¢. And the 1¢ Z Grill at Zoellner—I had to pay up for it later on!

CHRONICLE: You are widely respected for your financial acumen. In one of your postings on the PIMCO website, you talked about a formula for judging the appreciated value of stamps (and other assets) over years. Please tell our readers about that formula.

GROSS: The financial ability to purchase stamps is correlated to the growth of wealth in the global and local economies. The best measure of wealth creation is the growth rate of a country’s GDP, historically averaging 5-6% a year in the U.S. Over time stamps should appreciate at a similar rate although short-term cyclical/inflationary influences as well as the cost of financing (interest rates) may dominate.

CHRONICLE: The defining moments in a collector’s career are often major sales. Which sales over the past 15 years do you consider your greatest moments?

GROSS: Ishikawa for sure, although it came very early in my career as a philatelist. Zoellner as well.

CHRONICLE: Acquiring the 1¢ Z Grill in a trade for the Inverted Jenny plate block owned by Don Sundman generated a lot of publicity and allowed you to show all of the US 19th century rarities. Please tell our readers how that came about from your perspective.

GROSS: I knew I had to have it to complete my U.S. collection and thought Don Sundman might be receptive since he was using it mainly as an advertising item. Any advertising campaign eventually becomes a little tired so I suggested the Inverted Jenny block would revitalize his approach. It worked for both of us—a win/win trade!

CHRONICLE: Here’s a question to inspire those of us who don’t have the money to make all of our philatelic dreams come true. If you only had a few thousand dollars to spend on a philatelic collection, what would you collect?

GROSS: Start with a worldwide approach and fill in spaces. Get on an “approval” list, buy grab-bags. The benefit to filling up a global album comes from learning about the history of countries. German stamps for instance from the 1930s point out the tremendous inflation of that era. They printed a 5 billion mark stamp!

CHRONICLE: They say the thrill is in the chase. Which do you enjoy more? The



Figure 7. The unique block of the 24¢ 1869 Invert. Ex Ridpath, Thorne, Crocker, Souren, Martin, White, B. D. Phillips and Ishikawa. For a history of the block and account of its sale in the 1993 Ishikawa auction, see *Chronicle* 162 (May 1994).



Figure 8. The unique 90¢ Re-Issue imprint and plate number block of ten (plus two additional damaged stamps at right from the adjoining pane). The pencil notation on the back of the selvage reads “12/21/04 New Eng[land Stamp Company] LFSSS.” This was Worthington’s source and cost code (BULFINCHES=1234567890). The coded purchase price was probably \$340. \$3,400 would have been too much for this item in 1904.

acquisition or admiring what you’ve acquired?

GROSS: Actually I enjoy the admiring. Sitting at my desk on a weekend afternoon, I love to take out my albums and breathe in the sense of beauty and history from the items in my collection. If I didn’t enjoy looking at my stamps, I wouldn’t be able to justify holding them. They’re too important just to sit in a vault!

CHRONICLE: The late Leonard Sheriff, a well-regarded Wall Street arbitrageur, once said he liked philatelic rarities, “not because they are expensive, but because they are rare.” How would you describe your passion for rarities?

GROSS: Rarities are just that—one-of-a-kind fingerprints that are unique in the philatelic world. To have one, several, or many is a privilege that should be appreciated.

CHRONICLE: Ishikawa captured the Grand Prix, as did you, with his U.S. 1847-69 collection. How do you view your collection compared to Ishikawa’s?

GROSS: Important collections are easier to compare than Superbowl champions from different eras. The stamps and covers in many cases are the same. Because I have purchased many or most of the critical Ishikawa pieces, as well as added many, many more, I think it’s undeniable that my collection surpasses his. Caspary? There’s a harder comparison. He had more duplicative items in his collection but my major rarities exceed his. In general, the inflation adjusted value of the Caspary collection as measured by auction sales is probably a little in excess of mine, but as I say, he had five or 10 examples in some cases of the same stamp.

CHRONICLE: You also collect foreign classics. How does your classic U.S. compare with other countries’ classics?

GROSS: My UK collection, auctioned in 2007, was one of the best ever compiled. I have outstanding Swiss and Hawaiian collections as well.

CHRONICLE: Last question: Which is your favorite stamp, and which item in your collection is the one piece that gives you the most satisfaction?

GROSS: In both cases, the Inverted Jennys! The history behind this stamp is incredible and it’s great to look at. Even observing the gum is an experience in history. You can almost see the sweat from Colonel Green’s vest pocket on many of them. Despite trading a block to Donald Sundman, I still own 19 of them – but don’t call me Colonel!■

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Office: 800 S. Broadway, Suite 201 • Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 559 • Alamo, CA 94507

Phone: 925-938-8290 • Fax: 925-938-8812

Email: stmpdlr@aol.com • Web: www.smpiller.com



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**CONSTANT PLATE VARIETIES FOUND IN THE MARGINAL MARKINGS
OF THE 1873 OFFICIAL STAMPS**

GEORGE G. SAYERS

The Continental Bank Note Company produced about 100 stamp printing plates in the spring of 1873, each with the company imprint and an individual plate number. Eighty-one of these were plates of 100 subjects for the Official stamps, with one plate number and



Figure 1. At top, 24¢ War stamp, position 2, with partial capture of the top imprint showing a double transfer. **Figure 2,** above, the corresponding portion of a normal imprint, taken from a 15¢ Post Office card proof.

imprint at the top and at the bottom of the plate.¹ Double transfers and recuts occur in these marginal plate markings and are entertaining and informative to study. Some rarely occur as an accidental part of a large stamp from a particular position. These are highly collectible. Four examples are presented for the interested student.

In Shift Hunter Letter No. 31,² the editor reported: “The top imprint on Plate No. 86 of the 24¢ War Department, shows a TRIPLE TRANSFER.” While a double transfer is readily

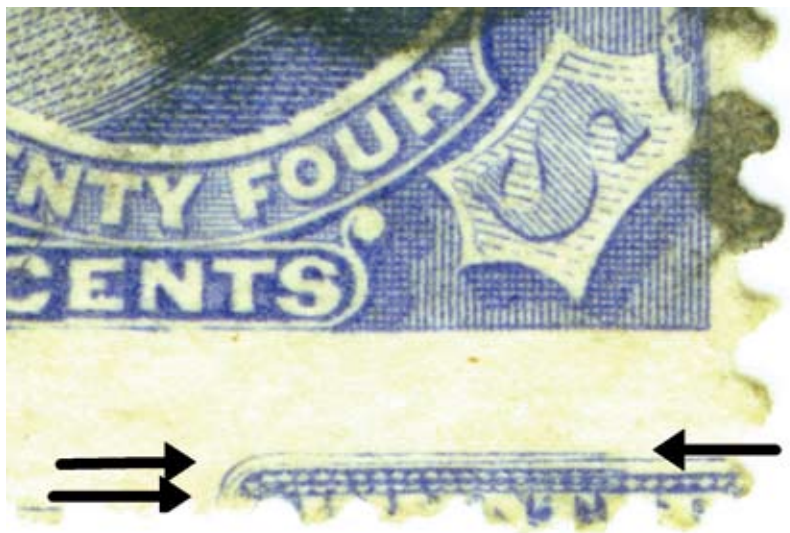


Figure 3. 24¢ Navy stamp, Position 92, with partial capture of the bottom imprint showing a double transfer.

recognizable in the left and bottom of the imprint, this author has not identified the triple transfer. Figure 1 shows an example of this variety, partially captured in the top of the 24¢ War stamp from Position 2. Figure 2 shows an enlargement of the corresponding portion of a normal imprint.

From the collection of Theodore Lockyear, Figure 3 shows the discovery copy of a double transfer of the left top of the bottom imprint of the 24¢ Navy plate, partially captured in the bottom of the stamp from Position 92. Evidently, the imprints were placed on the plate using a transfer roll, not a punch as commonly believed.

Figure 4 illustrates the top plate number 117, above Position 6 of the 24¢ State plate, with an apparent double transfer of the base of the left numeral “1”. Above the plate number is an array of three dots, probably the position dots used to locate the plate number transfer rolls for roll-in. Examination of several examples of each of the plate number numerals shows the internal structure of engraved lines in each digit is constant, which is consistent with plate numbers being entered on the plate using a transfer roll, not individually engraved. Several numerals on different plates show recuts of unsatisfactory transfers.

¹ Plates of 100 images have the imprint either approximately centered above Position 3, in which case the imprint extends above Positions 2, 3 and 4; or approximately centered above the vertical margin between Positions 2 and 3, in which case the imprint extends above Positions 1, 2, 3, and 4. Slight differences in location may move the small parts of the imprint above Positions 1 or 4 away from these positions. The script “No.” is approximately above Position 5, and the plate number is approximately above Position 6. The bottom imprints and plate numbers are in approximately the same locations below Positions 91-96. The unique and noteworthy exception to this layout is the 24¢ Agriculture plate, where the bottom imprint is found below Positions 97-99. Plates of 200 subjects were divided into two panes of 100, each with imprint and plate number at both top and bottom. The right pane shows, from left to right: interpane arrow, plate number then imprint. The left pane shows, left to right: imprint, plate number then interpane arrow.

² *The Bureau Specialist*, Vol. 2 (1931), pg. 46a.

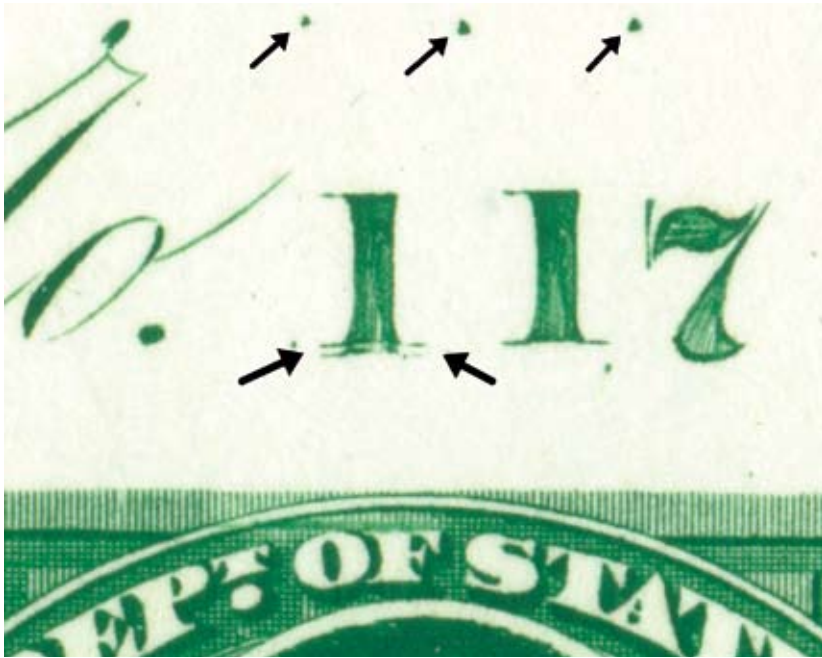


Figure 4. 24¢ State card proof, top plate number 117 above Position 6, showing double transfer of the base of the left “1” and three position dots above the plate number.



Figure 5. 1¢ Executive card proof showing two plate numbers under Positions 96 and 97. The wrong plate number was entered, then scratched out with the proper number added.

Figure 5 shows the most famous marginal-marking variety of the Official stamps: the plate number change on the 1¢ Executive plate. The incorrect plate number was entered on the top and bottom of the plate, then crossed out, with the correct number entered to the right. For the top plate numbers, the incorrect, scratched-out plate number is above Position 6 and the correct number is above Position 7. For the bottom, as shown in Figure 5, the positions are 96 and 97. This is the only reported example of such a correction for the Bank Note plates.

The author requests that additional discoveries of new marginal markings varieties be reported. ■

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JOHN FOX: HIS LIFE AND WORKS

This special feature combines two articles dealing with long-time stamp dealer (and cover faker) John Fox, who died in June 1988, just 20 years ago. The first part of this package is a brief biography of Fox, written by the late Varro Tyler. The second part is an exploration of the Fox fake markings that are now in the possession of the Philatelic Foundation, including illustrations of the markings and an exploration of some related Fox covers in the SCRAP archive of the United States Philatelic Classics Society.

The author of our Fox biography, Varro Tyler, is one of few individuals to have achieved world recognition in two separate fields. In Tyler's case, the fields were pharmacognosy and philatelic forgery. Pharmacognosy is the study of drugs that come from plants. Tyler was professor emeritus in this field at Purdue University; he wrote hundreds of books and papers on herbal medicine and nutritional supplements.

He was almost as prolific on the subject of fake stamps and the men who created them. His crowning achievement in this category was Philatelic Forgers: Their Lives and Works, first published by Robson Lowe in London in 1976. Well-documented and a model of scholarly concision, this book consists of brief biographies of most of the world's stamp fakers—at least, those whose names and works were known.

Tyler's biography of John Fox, presented below, was originally written for the Robson Lowe book. The fact-based, non-judgmental approach was necessary because Fox was still alive at the time. Despite Tyler's circumspection, the Fox biography was deemed too hot to handle. It did not appear in the London original, which was subsequently reprinted by Linn's Stamp News. Tyler updated the Fox material for publication in a series of sketches published in Linn's in 2000 and 2001. The biography below was awaiting publication when Tyler died, in 2001, at age 74. This is its first appearance in print.

BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN A. FOX

VARRO TYLER

Born on August 17, 1911, in New Jersey, John A. Fox became interested in stamp dealing at age 12 and went on to become one of New York's most colorful and most successful dealers during the 1950s and early 1960s. Although he denied, in a 1986 interview,¹ ever having personally manufactured or produced fraudulent covers, a considerable number of such items were certainly included in his stock.

This fact first came to public attention as a result of a sheriff's sale of Fox's stock held on behalf of his creditors on January 3, 1974. A legendary ladies' man, Fox had been named as a correspondent in a divorce proceeding, and another suit had been brought against him by the Internal Revenue Service. The divorce suit, which also involved the purchase of a stamp collection, resulted in a judgment against Fox of \$1,600,000. This forced him into receivership and necessitated the sale.

¹ Bierman, S.M., *Philatelic Literature Review* 37: pp. 181-192 (1988).

Creighton C. Hart, a specialist in stamps of the United States 1847 issue, attended that sale, and recorded specific details of nine of the very attractive 1847 covers offered in the sale.² The stamps on all of them had four margins, and the postmarks and cancellations were clearly struck. All of the covers were clean, and none showed evidence of the year of use. One of the covers bearing an unusual black herringbone cancellation was purchased by Hart (“as a souvenir”) and submitted to the Philatelic Foundation. It was returned with the opinion that “the stamp did not originate on this cover and all the postal markings are counterfeit.” This cover is shown here as Figure 1.



Figure 1. Binghamton herringbone grid tying a 5¢ 1847 stamp. The stamp is genuine, but the markings and the address are John Fox fakes.

At the beginning of the sale, the auctioneer warned that no warranty of genuineness was offered, and accompanying descriptions of the covers should be ignored. Each of the covers was originally valued in the \$1,500-\$2,000 range, but, in spite of good attendance by both collectors and dealers, the covers sold at prices ranging from \$45 to \$160.

Many other apparently choice U.S. covers were offered in the sale. They all carried desirable postmarks, cancellations, stamps, or a combination of these. In spite of their excellent appearance, Pony Express covers sold for \$10 to \$25 and scarce Civil War Magnus patriotic covers for \$5 to \$15. A truly scarce 30¢ 1869 cover to France sold for \$100. It was obvious that the dealers and collectors present did not value highly these works of art. Hart concluded his article with the warning that collectors purchasing any of the many lots of 19th century U.S. or Confederate covers with apparently desirable postal markings should submit them to a suitable authority for expertization.

Fox had already been censured in 1966 by the American Stamp Dealers Association. Now he was dropped from membership in that group, of which he had been president in 1952-53. He had also been expelled from membership in the American Philatelic Society on November 28, 1966. An appeal in his case was denied by the full board of the Society at a meeting in New Orleans on March 31, 1967. However, as is the custom, no details were specified. The stated grounds for the expulsion were simply “unethical conduct and conduct unbecoming a member.”³ In spite of this significant damage to his reputation, Fox continued to hold auctions of philatelic material until December, 1987. He died at his home in Floral Park, New York, on June 16, 1988. ■

² Hart, C.C., *Chronicle* 82, pp. 69-75 (1974).

³ DeVoss, J.T., *The American Philatelist*, Vol. 80, pg. 614 (1967).

JOHN FOX MARKING DEVICES AND FAKE COVERS

MICHAEL LAURENCE

Introduction: John Fox Postal Markers

The cover in Figure 2 was featured in the Cover Corner section of *Chronicle* 159. This was back in 1993. In his accompanying write-up, editor Scott Gallagher asked: “What is noteworthy about this cover?” He published his answer in *Chronicle* 160, expressing disappointment that of many responses, only two got it right. Most writers said the cover was a



Figure 2. Fox fake of a scarce and lovely Confederate cover. The stamps and the address are genuine, but the Alexandria, Louisiana, postmarks are fake.

splendid and rare example of a trans-Mississippi use from 1863. The two who got it right, Jack Molesworth and Charles Kilbourne, both legendary Confederate gurus, said the cover was a John Fox fake.

Gallagher continued with a tantalizing revelation: “Your Editor had the advantage of having the cover in hand, and being at the Philatelic Foundation in 1992 with John R. Hill, Jr., where we examined a box of ostensible postal markings which had been found in the basement of the Floral Park, New York office/home of John A. Fox shortly after his death. An Alexandria, La., marking device dated Sep. 8 was in that box, and it was clearly the origin of the markings on this cover.”

“The device was identical in zinc alloy, resembling pot metal, to dozens of other markers in the box. A wide variety of town marks, fancy cancels and ancillary markings was represented. The surmise is that all had been made from photographs of genuine markings. The resulting devices do not have sharp, regular lines. The edges of letters, numbers and lines are slightly lumpy, rather like a muddy path.”

About the cover in Figure 2, Gallagher and his expert group concluded that the envelope, address and stamps were all genuine. The cover had traveled out of the mails, with no stamps on it, to be preserved as part of a large family correspondence. A century later, genuine stamps were added to the cover and tied by the fake markings to create a stunning and most persuasive forgery.

The existence of the Fox devices had been talked about for years before Gallagher outed them in the *Chronicle*, but proof images were never published. I had a vague recollection of Gallagher’s remarks when I joined the Philatelic Foundation as Executive Direc-

tor in mid 2006. After not too much searching, with help from long-time PF expert staffer David Petruzelli, the Fox box was located. It sat in my office for months; I was too busy to examine its contents.

The provenance of the Fox marking devices is said to be as follows: Carl Mainberger, a New York collector who was a fan of the PF and upon his death proved to be a PF benefactor (the Foundation received half his estate) had a connection to the woman (not Fox's wife) who cleaned up Fox's office/residence after he died. She would feed material to Mainberger as she came across it. Thus these fake markers came to the PF through Mainberger. This may be as much folklore as fact, but it's a plausible explanation. There's no question the markings came from Fox: ample cover evidence proves that.

On January 15, 2008, a few weeks after my retirement, I returned to the PF offices and made proof impressions of all the markings, housed in a small cardboard box in the PF vault marked "Fox fakes." The markings are engravings on zinc slabs about 1/8" thick. The slabs are mounted on hardwood blocks cut to fit. Each block is a square or rectangle about 3/4" thick. From the similarity of the wood backing and the cuts themselves, it's clear these markings all emanated from the same source. Indeed, similarities in the grain of the wood backing suggest they might all have been created at the same time.

Using a black ink-pad purchased from a Staples store across Sixth Avenue, I made proof impressions of each marking on three pieces of white card. There were 67 markers in total. I'm not particularly gifted at imprinting postmarks, fake or real, and in many instances I had to create multiple impressions before obtaining an adequate strike. Had I been faking covers, I'd have ruined a lot of material. But I did improve as the job progressed.

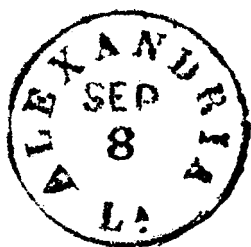


Figure 3. Proof impression of the Alexandria marking on the Figure 2 cover, taken from a holding of Fox fake markings in the archive of the Philatelic Foundation.

Figure 3 shows the imprint I made from the Alexandria marking in the PF holding. Just as Gallagher observed, this is obviously the source of the markings on the Figure 2 cover. Proof impressions of all 67 markings are presented in the three marking plates that accompany this article. The markings themselves are discussed further below.

The USPCS SCRAP Program

Gallagher was an important figure in the early days of the United States Philatelic Classics Society (USPCS). In addition to creating the Cover Corner, he was a director for many years, served as president for a while, and rendered many other important services to our Society. One of his enduring legacies is SCRAP, the archive of fake covers maintained by USPCS. SCRAP was Gallagher's brain-child. In the 1960s, when knowledge of Fox's handiwork was first coming to light, Gallagher conceived a plan to remove fake covers from the marketplace while at the same time preserving them for future study. In an early description of the genesis of the SCRAP program (*Chronicle* 105, page 71), Gallagher tells how a disappointed British collector burned 12 "foxy fakes" in his fireplace after learning what they were. SCRAP was set up to sequester such items without destroying them.

SCRAP stands for "Stamp and Cover Repository and Analysis Program." The original name, Cover Repository and Analysis Program, reflected the intensity of collector distaste for Fox's activities. The name was subsequently modified to yield an acronym more

appropriate to a family association such as ours. The legal structure Gallagher established enabled collectors to donate bad covers and deduct their cost as a tax write-off. For more information about the development of SCRAP, see Richard Winter's history of USPCS in *Chronicle* 177, page 29.

The SCRAP archive, which currently includes 273 covers reliably characterized as John Fox fakes, was an important research resource for this article. The great majority of the Fox fakes in the SCRAP archive are viewable on-line in the Members Domain section of the Society website. While protected by a password, the Members Domain is accessible to all USPCS members. Almost all the Fox fake covers in the SCRAP holding, bearing U.S. stamps, have been scanned and posted on the website. Confederate covers, which comprise about 25 percent of the Fox SCRAP archive, haven't yet been scanned for on-line viewing.

In February I spent several days browsing through the Fox fake cover images on the SCRAP website and comparing them against the proof impressions of the Fox fake markings at the PF. I probably missed some matches, but I did find 10 covers showing strikes of the Fox markings presented here. Of the 67 markings in the PF holding, only nine appear on the SCRAP Fox covers that I viewed.

This lack of overlap suggests two observations, neither of them very comforting. First, there must be many more Fox fake covers than have so far been quarantined in the SCRAP repository. Second, there are (or must have been) many more Fox fake marking devices than now repose in the PF vault. Viewed together in this manner, the PF devices and the SCRAP archive outline the tip of a very large iceberg. They also help define the range of Fox's output, and can serve as a useful precaution to help collectors protect themselves from fraud. There's much more work to be done involving the Fox fakes. This article makes no pretense at being definitive; it is just a beginning.

How the Fox Fake Markers Were Made

Comparing the Fox fake markings from the PF holding against the Fox fake covers on the SCRAP website leads to some interesting conclusions, and enables us to make some informed guesses about how Fox created his fakes. It's clear from cursory examination that the Fox marking devices were made by photo-engraving, a photo-mechanical process that goes back to the days of Louis Daguerre. The photoengraving process produces a printing surface in relief. It is well suited to the task of copying monochrome continuous-tone images (such as postal markings) onto metal.

Making a fake handstamp marking device via photo-engraving would first require a clear, unobstructed example of the original marking. Fox's position as a cover dealer and cover auctioneer brought him an abundance of candidates from which to select design originals. Once an appropriate subject was at hand, a negative image could be created from the marking, either via camera or (more likely) directly—using a copy stand, masks, and light-sensitive papers. The negative image is then transferred by photographic exposure onto a soft metal plate that has been coated with light-sensitive material. Exposure creates a hardened image from which the unprotected negative portion can be acid-etched below the printing surface. The result is a relief image in soft metal that duplicates the original postmark and, when properly inked, can be used directly as a handstamper. For efficiency's sake, multiple images were probably ganged in the manufacturing process, then etched simultaneously on a plate perhaps half the size of an ordinary letter sheet. This etched plate would then be glued to a wooden backing. After the bond was secure, the plate could be cut into individual units on a bandsaw.

Up into the 1960s, before phototypesetting transformed the printing business, every newspaper in the land, and most every printshop, had an engraving facility that could easily

do such work. As a youthful newspaper reporter in the 1950s, I witnessed the process many times, though I never saw postal markers being engraved. One veteran philatelist who knew Fox well says that the Fox markings were created by the print shop that produced his auction catalogs. Conveniently, this firm was just down the hall from Fox's office at 110 West 42nd Street in midtown Manhattan.

Stamp writers in Fox's day were reluctant to reveal anything about how Fox made his fake markings, for fear that other fakers would pick up the technique. This may have happened anyway. In reviewing an earlier version of this article, Richard Graham, dean of U.S. postal historians, said he thought there might have been more fakers than Fox using his method. This could account for the apparent ubiquity of "Fox fakes." A lifetime in journalism has taught me that covering up information, rather than revealing it, while almost always well intentioned, is invariably mistaken. Understanding how Fox fakes were made makes it easier for collectors to detect them. And nowadays, zinc-etching facilities are few and far between. The technique is used today only in a few highly specialized applications, most notably the manufacture of Braille nameplates for elevators and other public accommodations.

Fox Fake Covers Created by Markers Now in PF Archive

To explain in more detail how Fox actually created his fakes, we will now illustrate and discuss a few Fox fakes from the SCRAP archive covers that use the Fox postal markers now sequestered at the PF. Figure 4 shows a most appealing cover. This is item 9610711



Figure 4 (above): "PLACERVILLE, CAL 9 JAN" tying a 10¢ green 1857 stamp. This cover is item 9610711 in the USPCS SCRAP archive, where it is designated a John Fox fake. The envelope and the stamp are genuine, but the marking and the address are forgeries. Figure 5 (left): Proof impression of the "PLACERVILLE, CAL 9 JAN" marking on the Figure 4 cover, taken from the holding of Fox fake postmarking devices currently in the archive of the Philatelic Foundation.

in the SCRAP archive, where it is specifically designated a John Fox fake. An illustrated Noisy Carrier envelope from San Francisco, with a charming letter-mail theme no less, the cover bears a fat 10¢ 1857 green Washington stamp, apparently Type V. The perforation setting is so wide at left that it fully captures the adjacent Toppan, Carpenter imprint. Off the cover, this would be a very desirable stamp. It is well tied by a full strike of a 32-milimeter single-circle “PLACERVILLE, CAL” postmark dated “9 JAN”.

Figure 5 shows a proof impression from one of the Fox devices in the PF holding. Note that it is the same marking with the same date, “9 JAN”. Close inspection confirms beyond question that the marking on the Figure 4 cover was created from the device that made the proof impression in Figure 5. Both strikes show two dots, like a tiny umlaut, hovering over the stem-cap of the last “L” in “PLACERVILLE.” A black spot beneath the “PL” shows both in the Figure 5 proof and on the stamp on the Figure 4 cover (on the bridge of George Washington’s nose). Other shared flaws are also evident. The photographic process that created the fake marker picked up ink spots and other imperfections and duplicated them in ways that would never occur in real life. Note also the addressee and the handwriting. We’ll have more to say about both.

Figure 6 shows a 1¢ 1861 stamp and a 2¢ Blackjack on a cover from Philadelphia to Virginia. The Philadelphia circular datestamp reads APR 17, 1862 and the cover also bears an oval handstamped *MAILS SUSPENDED*. This cover is item 9610829 in the SCRAP archive, attributed to John Fox. The 1862 year-date would raise a caution flag today, because we know the Blackjack stamp was not issued until mid-1863. But this wasn’t common knowledge 50 years ago.



Figure 6 (above): 1¢ 1861 stamp and a 2¢ Blackjack on a cover from Philadelphia to Virginia. The Philadelphia datestamp reads APR 17, 1862 and the cover also bears an oval handstamped *MAILS SUSPENDED*. This cover is item 9610829 in the SCRAP archive, attributed to John Fox. The stamps are genuine, but both postmarks are forgeries. Figure 7 (right): Proof impression of the Philadelphia marking on the Figure 6 cover, from the PF archive of Fox fake markers. The *MAILS SUSPENDED* marker is not present in the PF holding.



Figure 7 shows a proof impression of one of two Philadelphia circular datestamps in the PF holding. The date reads APR 17, 1862. Close examination confirms that this marking is the source of the Philadelphia strike on the cover in Figure 6. The dot between the legs of the left “A” in PHILADELPHIA is just one of many distinguishing characteristics. The MAILS SUSPENDED oval on the cover in Figure 6 must also be a Fox fake, but this marking is not present in the PF holding.

Specifically dated postmarks such as Figures 3, 5 and 7 couldn’t be used by a faker too often without raising suspicions. The appearance of half a dozen 9 JAN covers from Placerville would surely prompt collector questions. I wondered about the economics of creating fake marking devices that could only be used a few times, until, while pulling proofs from these devices, I realized how easy it would be to make an impression that didn’t contain all the information. The faker could use a Q-Tip and some solvent to remove the ink from the date portion. Alternative masking procedures also suggest themselves. Whatever the technique, it would fairly easy to make a strike from a dated marking that contained all the elements except the date, which then could be added from another device.

I believe Fox employed this technique repeatedly. Certainly that’s what was done on the Fox fake cover in Figure 8. This is item 9610811 in the Scrap archive, an attractive Confederate patriotic envelope on which a 3¢ 1857 stamp is well tied by a 34-millimeter “MC MINNVILLE Ten. JUN 14” postmark. The McMinnville marking in the PF holding, from which a strike is shown in Figure 9, says “MAR 14,” but otherwise the two markings are identical. The oddly-shaped negative spacing within the legs of the first “M” in “MC MINNVILLE” is similar on both strikes and there are identical flaws in the “T” and the “n”



Figure 8 (above): Confederate patriotic envelope on which a 3¢ 1857 stamp is well tied by a 34-millimeter “MC MINNVILLE Ten. JUN 14” circular datestamp. This is item 9610811 in the SCRAP archive, attributed to John Fox. The stamp and the envelope are genuine, but the address and the postmark are forgeries. Figure 9 (left): The McMinnville marking from the PF Fox holding says “MAR 14,” but is otherwise identical to the marking on the cover above. The marking on the cover was struck from this device with the “MAR” indicator masked out. Then “JUN” was added using another device.

of “Ten.” Note also how the two numerals in “14” are out of alignment in both markings. The “1” sits half a millimeter higher than the “4.”

The McMinnville marking on the cover in Figure 8 was struck from the Figure 9 device with the “MAR” indicator masked out. Then “JUN” was added using another device, which is not present in the PF holding. Like the cover in Figure 6, the Figure 8 cover contains an anachronism known today that wasn’t known 50 years ago. This stars-and-bars patriotic envelope is a post-war knock-off, created in the late 1860s or later, to appeal to collectors of Civil War patriotic envelopes. The survival of large quantities of unused patriotic envelopes provided Fox with much of his raw material.

Fox’s handiwork reached something of an apotheosis in the cover in Figure 10, another eye-popping patriotic. This is item 9610608 in the SCRAP archive, specifically attributed to Fox. The combination of the current 1¢ 1861 stamp with the obsolete 3¢ 1857 stamp is a nice touch. This cover was created using four fake markings, all of which survive in the PF archive. Proofs from the four markings are grouped together in Figure 11.

No question, the “OLD STAMPS NOT RECOGNIZED” and the “Due 3” on the cover are identical matches to the PF fake devices, again proved by shared distinctive characteristics (dots between the letters in “RECO” and flaws in the ball of “3”). The Philadelphia marking is more problematic. Two Philadelphia circular datestamps survive in the PF holding, one dated “AUG 29 1861” and the other dated “APR 17 1862.” (See Plate 1.) On the cover in Figure 10, I believe Fox used the “APR 17 1862” device with the “17” masked out. Distinctive similarities between the PF marking in Figure 11 and the marking on the cover in Figure 10 are less dramatic than what we’ve seen previously, but still persuasive. On both there’s a definite flattening of the outer circle above “HIL” and there’s a highly



Figure 10 (above): A spectacular but fake OLD STAMPS NOT RECOGNIZED cover. Figure 11 (right): Proofs from fake markers, now in the PF archive, that Fox used to create the Figure 10 cover. He masked out the “17” in the Philadelphia date and imprinted the “2” in its place.

OLD STAMPS
NOT RECOGNIZED

Due 3 2



distinctive flaw within the negative area of the “P” in “Pa”.

In the space where the “17” was masked out of the marking, Fox handstamped the odd, almost italic-looking “2,” also shown among the proofs in Figure 11. This is poorly struck in the postmark on the Figure 10 cover, but the impression is clear enough to see that it’s not at all parallel with the month above it and the year below. That would be uncharacteristic of a date slug inserted into its slot in a fabricated marker, but quite predictable if the number were hand-struck by a faker using a separate device.

My suspicion is that Fox used this masking technique frequently. With his Johnson Ranch double-circle marking, for instance, the technique had to be used every time. The marking itself (see Plate 2) contains a manuscript “29” that, if imprinted in the ink of the handstamp, would be a dead giveaway of the fakery. So every time this marking was used, at least the manuscript portion had to be masked out and something else (perhaps another manuscript date applied in pen) substituted in its place. This insight about date-masking might help locate Fox fakes that have heretofore gone unrecognized.

Fox Markings in Philatelic Foundation Archive

Proofs of the Fox markings in the PF archive are presented in the Plates 1-3. I’ve tried to arrange the markings in logical groupings, dictated in part by the limitations of our *Chronicle* page size.

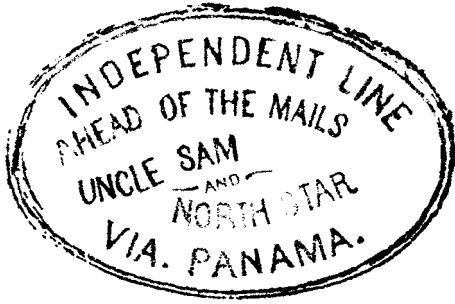
Plate 1 shows fancy townmarks, Civil War era circular datestamps both from north and the south, and steamboat handstamps. Steamboat handstamps are technically not postal markings, but they are colorful and highly collectible. They were very popular in the 1960s when Fox was creating his covers. The fancy townmarks include the well-known West Meriden devil and pitchfork and an eagle and shield from Corry, Pennsylvania. Two markings from Shabbona Grove, Illinois, are represented. There’s also a negative Little Rock shield from way back in the pre-stamp era, dated May 5, 1831.

Plate 2 shows California markings, along with rating markings and date slugs. A large mix of California towns is represented: Benicia, Dutch Flat, Johnsons Ranch, Mission San Jose, Petaluma (two different markers), Placerville, Sacramento and San Francisco (also two devices). At the bottom of Plate 2 we show stand-alone date slugs. As discussed and illustrated above, these date slugs could be imprinted separately onto examples of the various circular datestamps that had been struck without dates. Fox probably had a large number of these; they are small and easily overlooked. I’m surprised this many have survived. Date slugs in the PF holding are 8 FEB, 15 JUL, 15 AUG, SEP 6 1860, SEP 13, SEP 14 and DEC 27. There’s also the lonely italic “2” illustrated in Figure 11.

Plate 3 shows fancy killers followed by a grouping of miscellaneous markings that don’t fit into the previous categories. These include route agent markings from railroads and steamboats, sanitary fair markings and others, including a fake of a personal marker used by 1847 collector J. Waldo Sampson. Railroads include an undated Long Island Rail Road integral 6 CTS, Northern Railroad (SEP 19) and the Troy and Whitehall Railroad (AUG 16). The two Sanitary Fair markings are the small Great Central Fair (dated June 23, 1864) and the larger Springfield Soldiers Fair, dated Dec 20, 1864. There’s also a large circular Colonial Express Mail marking from St. John, New Brunswick, dated AUG 8; a large oval New Orleans marking (“Sam Ricker Jr., Agent of the Texian Post Office Dt.”); and the large Louisville and Cincinnati Mail Line marking, here dated JUN 30. Dr. James Milgram commenced in *Chronicle* 217 a series of articles on the route agent markings of the Louisville and Cincinnati Mail Line. Milgram told me the Fox Louisville and Cincinnati Mail Line marking is not a very persuasive fake, and said that he has never seen an example on a fake cover. So it may be that this marking device was never used. The same might be said of many of the other markings shown in Plates 1-3.



Plate 1. Fancy townmarks, circular datestamps and steamboat handstamps.

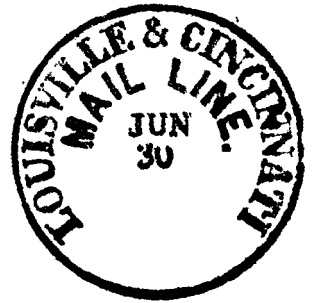
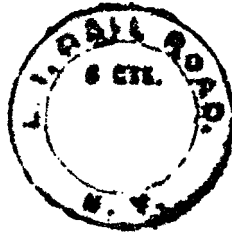
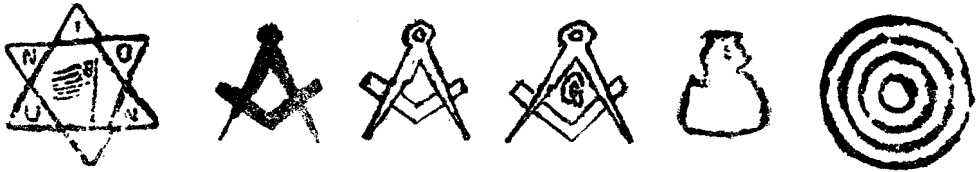
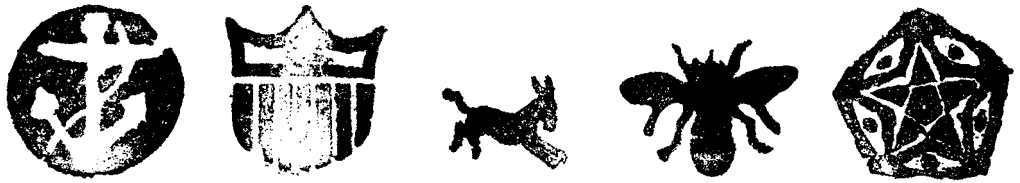


Due 3 **DUE 3** FREE

5 **5** 8 10

8 15 15 SEP 2
FEB JUL AUG 1880 SEP 13 14 DEC 27

Plate 2. California markings, rating markings and date slugs.



**OLD STAMPS
NOT RECOGNIZED**



Plate 3. Fancy killers, route agent markings, sanitary fair markings and others.



Figure 12. This stunning Huntsville cover was one of the stars of the sheriff's auction of Fox fake covers. The pair of 5¢ 1847 stamps is genuine (probably with pen cancels removed). The markings and the address are forgeries.

The Scope of Fox's Work

An examination of these markings and reference to the SCRAP covers provides a good insight into the scope of Fox's work. Like any successful faker, Fox made what collectors wanted.⁴ He created stunning 1847 covers, favoring the Huntsville and Binghamton fancy killers, and Princeton (N.J.) because of its desirable green. The boxed "5" in plate 2 is an imitation of a Princeton rater used by Fox on several 1847 covers. A Binghamton fake was illustrated in Figure 1. Shown as Figures 12 and 13 are a fantastic matched pair of Huntsville covers addressed to the ubiquitous Frederick Cornell. Note that he's also the addressee of the Figure 1 cover. The two Huntsville covers were among the stars of the sheriff's sale that Tyler wrote about in his biography of Fox. Except for the problematical handwriting, they represent the pinnacle of Fox's art. The blue ink is excellent.

The problem with faking 1847 covers is that the requisite stamps aren't cheap, especially in unused condition. Fox sometimes employed 1847 stamps from which pen cancels had been removed, and then placed his postmarks to conceal the evidence. That's the case with the 10¢ 1847 stamp in Figure 13 and possibly with the pair of 5¢ 1847s in Figure 12.

Fox made many more patriotic covers than 1847s, because here the raw materials (unused patriotic envelopes and unused 3¢ 1857 and 1861 stamps) were more readily available. Confederate patriotics were a special favorite. Envelopes and unused stamps were easily obtained, but genuine covers were scarce and sought-after. For a useful analysis of

⁴ Paul Rohloff, a knowledgeable collector a generation ago, told a story that reveals a key to Fox's success. Rohloff was recovering from a heart attack when Fox visited him in hospital to cheer him up with some stunning covers, \$80,000 worth, so the tale goes. Rohloff bought them eagerly. But in the cold light of day, they all proved to be bad. No fool, Rohloff was one of the most experienced and knowledgeable cover collectors of his generation. When a friend asked how he could have been duped by these Fox fakes, Rohloff replied: "He made beautiful covers that I needed in my collection. *He knew I would want them to be good.*" This insight suggests that the willing suspension of disbelief is as important in philatelic fakery as in other areas of artistic endeavor. Rohloff's story had a happy ending. Through the forceful intervention of a friend, he extracted a full refund from Fox.



Figure 13. A mate to the cover in Figure 12, also part of the sheriff's auction of Fox fake covers. A pen cancel was removed from the otherwise genuine 10¢ 1847 stamp. The postmarks and the address are forgeries.

a Fox fake Confederate stars-and-bars Flag cover (on a postwar envelope), see *Chronicle* 179, page 193. Fox is named as the creator of this cover. The anonymous authors of the write-up tell us that “John Fox was thought to have used, or caused to be used, a particular duplicative process, purposely unnamed here, to manufacture the handstamp devices used in his fakes.”

Western and Pony Express covers were another Fox specialty, for similar reasons. Mint Wells-Fargo and low-value government entire envelopes (and certain of the stamps) were widely available. As always, collector interest was keen. For an analysis of three Fox fake Pony covers, see *Chronicle* 173, page 38. Fox is not named here, but the covers are his creations. Fox must have possessed a number of fake Pony Express markings. Other than the California townmarks shown in Plate 2, none of these are present in the PF holding. As we have observed, the marking devices that survive at the PF are just the tip of the Fox iceberg.

It was not the postmarks but the handwriting on Fox's covers that first brought them under suspicion. Fox was never able to replicate persuasive 19th century handwriting. The covers in Figures 1, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 13 all seem to show hesitance, a lack of boldness that suggests the writer (or writers) were trying to imitate the penman's flourishes that modern viewers of 19th century covers find so striking. There's no clear agreement about whether Fox employed one or several penmen to create his addresses. Whatever their number, none did the job well. The most persuasive Fox fakes, such as Figure 2, were created on genuine addressed envelopes that were carried outside the mails and thus survived with no postal markings. For Fox, these were blank canvasses awaiting his artistry.

Also, in some cases the ink color in the address was wrong: bright 20th century blue rather than 19th century brown or black. Figure 1 is an example. Once collector attention focused on the addresses, other oddities came into focus. The addressee on the cover in Figures 1, 12 and 13, “Revd. Fredrk Cornell,” appeared to have had correspondents, all of them very weak penmen, in many of the U.S. cities that applied fancy cancels to 1847 stamps. And the recipient of the Noisy Carrier envelope in Figure 4, “Miss Sarah Lewis,



Figure 14. Enlargements of portions of a known Fox fake marking (at top, electronically clipped from the Figure 1 cover) and two known genuine postmarks from the same era. Note the relative crispness and boldness of the genuine strikes, compared with the lightness and sponginess of the Fox marking. This “mottling” in the Fox fake postmarks is their major defining characteristic.

1014 Green Street, Philadelphia,” along with a gaggle of sisters at the same address, received voluminous correspondence, mostly in patriotic or other illustrated envelopes, from cities on both coasts and from correspondents on both sides of the Civil War.

Letters in the files of the Philatelic Foundation, going back to the early 1960s, show that Ethel Harper, the formidable assistant to the Chairman during that era, was consulting with outside experts, handwriting analysts and others, to confirm that the addresses on certain Fox covers were not written in the 1860s, and that the address inks were wrong for that period.

The inked impressions of the Fox fake postmarks are themselves a major indicator of their fraudulence. Observers have frequently mentioned the “mottled” appearance of the markings, “rather like a muddy path,” as Gallagher put it. We show in Figure 14 enlargements of portions of a known Fox fake marking and two known genuine postmarks from the same general era. The Binghamton marking at top was electronically clipped from the cover in Figure 1. The two markings at bottom (applied by different markers in different cities) come from a known genuine cover that I happened to have at hand. Compare the relative crispness and boldness of the two genuine strikes against the lightness and sponginess of the Fox fake. This sponginess is the “mottling” so frequently cited. I believe it derives from imperfections in the porous surface of the soft zinc plates from which the Fox marking devices were fabricated. It may also reflect inadequacies of the marking inks Fox used. While Fox is said to have possessed cakes of certain 19th century inks, at least blue

and possibly black and red, he did not mix his inks with oil, as postal regulations specified. Perhaps as a consequence, the ink didn't spread uniformly over the raised surface of his devices.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this article has been to bring to broader attention the Fox fake markings at the PF and the USPCS SCRAP archive of Fox covers. Collectors now and in future should be aware of these resources, individually and collectively. It's clear from a comparison of the PF markings and the Fox SCRAP covers that there were many more Fox fake marking devices than currently survive at the PF. It's equally clear that there are (or were) many more Fox fake covers than now repose in the SCRAP archive. Exploring the full scope of Fox's work would be a huge undertaking, but these two resources provide an excellent starting point. A useful next step would be to compile a listing of all the fake markings in the Fox *oeuvre*. Any volunteers?

In viewing the fake markings presented in Plates 1-3, collectors should keep in mind that Fox's technique was to make a photographic negative from a genuine strike. Every marking in these three plates must have begun with a genuine example—probably a clear, unobstructed strike applied crisply to a cover. So if you find one of the illustrated markings on a cover in your collection, don't lose heart prematurely. Yours might be the genuine strike that started it all. Or it might be yet another genuine strike from the same original device. Nonetheless, you would be well advised to get the item expertized, just to be certain. I would strongly recommend the Philatelic Foundation.

If your cover turns out to be bad, consider donating it to SCRAP. The usefulness of the SCRAP archive has been shown. It can only improve as the population of SCRAP covers increases. Removing bad covers permanently from the marketplace while maintaining them accessibly for future study (rather than burning them in the fireplace) is without question the right way to dispose of fake covers.

As a final note, it's something of an urban myth within the trade that Fox never signed his fake covers. That's not entirely true. There's at least one Fox fake cover that bears his signature line: "In my opinion, this cover is genuine in every respect, John A. Fox." However, almost all the known Fox fake covers do *not* bear Fox's warranty, and there are many genuine covers that do. So if you have a cover that bears Fox's signature, it's almost certainly a genuine cover. But again, it wouldn't hurt to get it expertized.

Acknowledgements

I'm grateful to the Philatelic Foundation for permitting me to create and illustrate the proof impressions of the Fox fake markings and to PF postal history expert David Petruzelli for background on the Fox markings and much other assistance. The USPCS website and SCRAP archive were equally indispensable, and I send felicitations to Charles diComo, who in addition to his duties as Society secretary is the keeper of the Society website and administrator of the SCRAP program; and to Walt Demmerle, publication sales chairman and SCRAP custodian. Richard Frajola, Richard Graham, David Jarrett, Jerry Palazolo and Scott Trepel read versions of this write-up in manuscript form and provided valuable criticism and suggestions. ■

ADDITIONAL STEAMSHIP COVERS FOR
UNITED STATES INCOMING STEAMSHIP MAIL, 1847-1875,
SECOND EDITION

THERON J. WIERENGA

Section Editor's Note: The following group of covers, and others to follow in subsequent Chronicles, were discovered by Theron Wierenga after his book, United States Incoming Steamship Mail, 1847-1875, Second Edition, went to press in 2000. Had he seen them prior to its publication, they would have been included in the book because of their importance. At the start of each description is listed the chapter heading and subheading, along with the page location where the cover would have been inserted in the book.

Chapter III: Steamship Rates, The Steamship Rates of 1845 and 1847, 30¢ Steamship Rate to or from Panama (add after Figure 63 on page 48)

The stampless folded letter shown in Figure 1 is datelined "Panama March 10th 1849" and mentions that the writer arrived in Chagres after a passage of 19 days. He also reports they had only one day of bad weather when they lay to under storm staysails, indicating that he probably arrived by sailing ship and not by steamship.

This letter was carried overland from Panama to Chagres, where it departed on the



Figure 1. An early and scarce example of the 30¢ steamship rate from Panama on cover datelined Panama, 10 March 1849. This was carried overland from Panama to Chagres, thence on the steamship *Falcon* to New York, arriving April 14. New York marked the 30¢ rate in manuscript because a handstamp was not yet available.

steamship *Falcon* on April 1, arrived at Havana on April 6, departed Havana on April 8 and arrived at New York on April 14.¹ This was the third return voyage of the *Falcon* from Chagres and the letter is a very early example of the 30¢ steamship rate from Panama. Covers showing the 30¢ rate in early 1849 are decidedly scarce. The “NEW-YORK/SHIP” marking in red dated APR 14, was used since New York had not yet obtained distinctive steamship markings. The New York clerk marked the 30¢ rate in manuscript. A handstamp was not used until the latter part of 1849.

The writer of this letter was John A. Westervelt. His name appeared in the *New York Herald* of February 10, 1849, on a passenger list for the brig *Sampson* (Captain Wheeler) which sailed on February 9. This would place Westervelt’s arrival at Chagres about February 28.

In his letter Westervelt mentions that he was unprepared to send a letter when they first arrived at Chagres. Unfortunately, a brig left for New York within a half hour of his arrival. He left Chagres for Panama on March 2, and in three days had been poled 60 miles up the Chagres River by hired boatmen. He then camped at Gorgona for three days in the midst of about 100 tents. He left Gorgona on Thursday, March 8, and spent 15 hours getting to Panama, a distance of 22 miles. Westervelt reports he and some other passengers were keeping house in four large rooms outside the city walls. The city inside the walls was only 5-10 acres. This letter was written on March 10, two days after the steamship *Isthmus* had cleared Chagres for New York.² It was transported back to Chagres and then waited over two weeks for the next steamship, the *Falcon*, to depart. The letter arrived in New York over two months after Westervelt had departed on his journey. As is often the case with letters written at Panama during 1849 and 1850, the writer vividly describes his impressions of Chagres, the arduous Isthmus route, the inhabitants of the Isthmus of Panama, and the city of Panama itself, in not too flattering terms.

Chapter III: Steamship Rates, The Steamship Rates of 1845 and 1847, 30¢ Steamship Rate to or from Panama (add after Figure 70 on page 54)

Figure 2 illustrates a bootlegged cover. If it had been mailed at Panama, where it was written, the post office at New York would have rated it as a 30¢ steamship letter. Instead, it was carried privately to New York, where it was placed in the post office as a drop letter that was charged only 2¢ postage due. The dateline of the letter is “Panama July 23rd 1850,” and it was written by A. J. Bowie. It contains a description of his journey across the Isthmus of Panama en route to San Francisco and discusses his prospects for business in San Francisco.

The endorsement in the lower left corner, “favor of Capt McLean, U.S.A.,” identified the individual who carried the letter to New York. Captain McLean probably was the one who mailed it as a drop letter. New York applied a red circular datestamp, “NEW-YORK/2 cts”, dated AUG 8. John McLean was listed as a passenger who arrived on the steamship *Cherokee* on August 6, having departed from Chagres on July 27 and Kingston on July 31.³ Evidently, it took him a couple days before he got around to mailing the letter. This person most likely was John W. McLane, a United States Army Captain during the Mexican War. Subsequently, as a Colonel during the Civil War, he organized the 83rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Regiment and was killed in action at Gaines’ Mill, Virginia, in June 1862.

Considering the high cost of postage from Panama, it is not surprising that some let-

¹ Theron J. Wierenga, *United States Incoming Steamship Mail, 1847-1875, Second Edition* (Austin, Texas: U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, 2000), pg. 340.

² *Ibid.*

³ *New York Herald*, August 7, 1850.

Chapter X: The Steamship Markings, San Francisco Steamship Markings, 40¢ Steamship Rate to or from the Pacific Coast (add before Figure 318 on page 220)

When the *United States Incoming Steamship Mail, 1847-1875, Second Edition*, was published, no illustration was available of the San Francisco red boxed 40 used on a steamship-rate cover. Now, Figure 3 illustrates an example with the dateline “Mazatlan, May 9, 1850.” This letter was carried into San Francisco on May 20, 1850, by the steamship *Oregon*, which departed Panama on May 1.⁴ The 40¢ rate on this cover is unusual. San Francisco regularly marked steamship letters from Panama with a red boxed handstamp showing a 30¢ rate during this period. Mazatlan, Mexico, was a stop on the route from Panama to San Francisco and is much closer than Panama. Most likely, the San Francisco clerk erred in thinking this letter required a 40¢ rate because it originated from other ports (foreign countries) on the Pacific coast. He misinterpreted the wording of the Act of March 3, 1847. The 40¢ rate in that legislation was concerned primarily with mail to and from New York. It was not concerned with letters that originated along the route that would enter the mails at San Francisco.

Chapter XII: The Nicaragua Route, 7¢ Incoming Ship Rate (add before Figure 358 on page 262)



Figure 4. Cover addressed to Sandy Hill, New York, inscribed “Steamer Orus, Chagres N.G.” probably from 1850. This is only the second cover known to the author showing *Orus* designation.

The cover in Figure 4 caught my eye immediately because of the inscription “Steamer Orus, Chagres N.G.” Since the handwriting and ink are different from the address it is most likely a docketing notation applied by the addressee, indicating the origin of the letter. Unfortunately there are no contents, just the folded outer letter sheet. It is either an 1849 or 1850 cover addressed to Sandy Hill, New York. This is only the second cover that I have recorded inscribed as originating on the *Orus*.⁵

The *Orus* was a small river steamer built for J.P. Allaire to run on the Navesink River from Red Bank, New Jersey, to New York.⁶ She had two lever-beam engines, each with a

⁴ Wierenga, *op. cit.*, pg. 321.

⁵ The other cover is illustrated and described in Wierenga, *op. cit.*, pp. 148–149.

⁶ John H. Morrison, *History of American Steam Navigation* (New York: Argosy-Antiquarian Ltd., 1967), pg. 180.

25-inch diameter cylinder and an 8-foot stroke. Originally built in New York in 1842, she was enlarged in 1845 to 247 tons, and 158 feet 7 inches in length, 21 feet 6 inches in beam, and 7 feet 6 inches in draft.⁷

The *Orus* cleared New York on December 19, 1848, for Chagres with the intention of taking passengers up the Chagres River to reduce the overland journey across the Isthmus of Panama. She was still detained by weather in the harbor at New York as late as December 24. Arriving at Charleston on December 31, she cleared on January 2 after taking on a supply of fuel. She arrived at Nassau on January 5 for coal, cleared on January 6, and cleared Kingston on January 11, arriving at Chagres on January 14.⁸ Subsequently, it was found that her draft was too much for the Chagres River and that she could not go as far upriver as had been hoped, only 18-20 miles. She carried the passengers of the *Crescent City*, the brig *Winthrop*, and a portion of the passengers of the *Falcon* up the Chagres River on February 16.⁹ In addition, since Chagres had no natural harbor, she was used as a tender, transporting passengers and baggage from ships lying offshore.

Commodore Vanderbilt later purchased the *Orus* for use in Nicaragua on the San Juan River. The *Orus* arrived at San Juan del Norte from Chagres on January 21, 1850.¹⁰ It appears that she was found not very satisfactory for use on the San Juan River also. The *New York Herald* later reported: "The steamer *Orus* is again at her post in the harbor, having, I learn, failed to carry out the views of Capt. Vanderbilt and Mr. Morgan on the river San Juan. She has been chartered by these gentlemen, and will be used as heretofore, waiting upon the steamers."¹¹

In July 1850, the *New York Herald* reported the *Orus* was at Chagres and was to sail July 13, 1850 for San Juan de Nicaragua.¹² In November 1850, she again tried to navigate up the San Juan River, but grounded and broke up on the rocks of the Machuca Rapids.¹³

The identity of the ship that carried the Figure 4 letter into New York is uncertain. The red "NEW-YORK/SHIP/7 cts" postmark is dated JUL 9 (or possibly 8). Since the letter was rated as a ship letter (7¢ due for the 2¢ ship letter fee plus 5¢ inland postage for a distance up to 300 miles), it was not carried by one of the contract steamships running between New York and Chagres. The steamship *Philadelphia* arrived at New York on July 7, 1850, from Chagres (June 28) and Kingston (July 1). The *Philadelphia* could have carried the letter since she did not belong to a contract mail line at this time. However, covers are known carried by the *Philadelphia* before the contract line owned her and they were marked at steamship rates. It is also possible that this letter is dated in 1849, although there is no date close to July 9 that matches a steamship arrival in New York. It is more likely that a sailing ship from Chagres to New York carried this letter. ■

⁷ John H. Kemble, *The Panama Route*, (New York: DaCapo Press, 1972), pg. 241.

⁸ *New York Herald*, December 19, 22, 27, 1848, January 10, 18, 28, 1849, and February 15, 17, 1849.

⁹ *Ibid.*, March 5, 1849.

¹⁰ David I. Folkman, Jr., *The Nicaragua Route* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1976), pg. 23.

¹¹ *New York Herald*, March 11, 1849.

¹² *Ibid.*, July 23, 1850.

¹³ Folkman, *op. cit.*, pg. 26.



Pony Express Wells Fargo & Co. Cover

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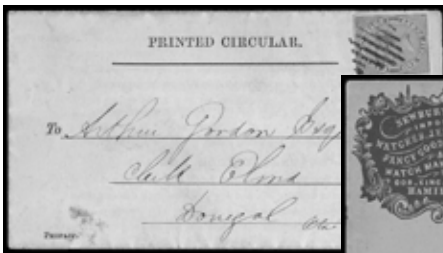
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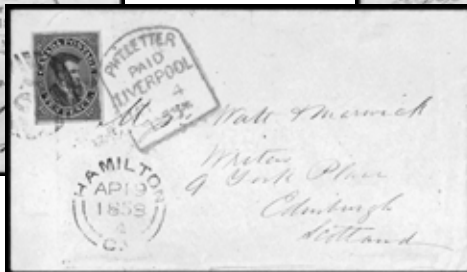


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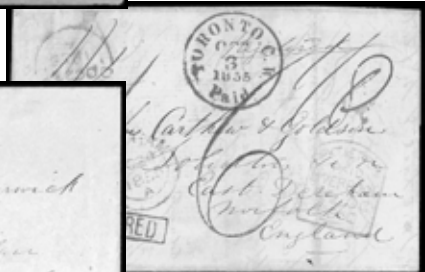


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ACROSS THE OCEANS, NEW BOOK ON INTERNATIONAL MAIL

Foreign mail students often note how long it took a letter to reach its overseas destination. In 1815, it was not unusual for a letter to be in transit two months or longer across the Atlantic. By 1875 letters could cross the Atlantic in as little as 10 days. Seija-Riitta Laakso's *Across the Oceans: Development of Overseas Business Information Transmission, 1815-1875*, is a thorough study of the speed and reliability of the transmission of

***Across the Oceans, Development of Overseas Business Information Transmission, 1815-1875*, by Seija-Riitta Laakso. Finnish Literature Society, Helsinki. Softbound 6¼ x 9¼ format, illustrated (some color), 459 pages, €32 plus shipping. Available at www.finlit.fi/books.**

business information (mail and newspapers) and the changes that caused improvements. From sail to steam, it discusses many of the contract mail sailing ship and steamship lines that operated on the different oceans.

Laakso's work recounts in detail the history of the development of the transoceanic mail service in the North Atlantic, the West Indies, South

America, Panama, East India, China, Australia and South Africa. It is an economic history of how efficiently the world's most important mail routes served business from the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 to the General Postal Union in 1875. It examines the speed of mail communications route by route. Its scope includes the telegraph, but the bulk of the book is devoted to transoceanic mail service.

The book contains a tremendous amount of statistical data, which likely will not be helpful to a collector who is trying to understand a cover; but this data is important in developing the author's analysis of business information transmission time. It includes 48 diagrams and 97 tables. For example, in the North Atlantic section, there is a bar chart showing the duration of each American sailing ship and steamship voyage from Liverpool to New York or Boston in 1845. A pie chart shows the relative total tonnage of mail-carrying steamship lines on the North Atlantic route in late 1850. Diagrams compare the speed of the Collins and the Cunard lines in 1850 and 1851. A table shows how many days it took to receive a reply in 1851, assuming the reply was sent on the next possible mail sailing.

The book is principally an economics Ph.D. dissertation. Laakso is Finnish, but the book is in English, and quite readable. The 1,045 footnotes provide very useful references. There are eight maps showing mail routes and a helpful index of the many ship names that are mentioned in the text. The bibliography separates philatelic literature listings from other sources. The book illustrates several covers. The captions for the covers focus primarily on the routes, the ships, and the speed of transmission.

While *Across the Oceans* is not intended to help a collector explain the features of a particular cover, it can still be a valuable tool to a foreign-mail student because it summarizes in a single volume a tremendous amount of the history of the development of the main transoceanic mail routes and mail-carrying lines. One would have to read many different books to obtain all the information compiled in this single volume. It can help the collector better understand the historical background of the sailing and steamship lines that carried the covers he studies.—Dwayne O. Littauer

COFFEE-TABLE BOOK ON GROSS CLASSIC U.S. EXHIBIT

Just received is a coffee-table book showcasing the William H. Gross collection of

classic United States stamps. This is the exhibition collection that won the national grand prize at the big international stamp show held in Washington, D.C., in 2006. The book is co-published by Gross and the Collectors Club of New York and was produced by Spink Shreves Galleries. The advertising notices (see the centerspread in this issue) indicate that all sales proceeds will benefit the Collectors Club.

The book is well produced: large format (10 1/2 by 12 1/2 inches), attractive dust cover, 136 interior pages, hardbound, Smythe sewn, thick glossy stock, full color throughout. The front matter includes dedications by Gross, a foreword by Wade Saadi (in which the title word is regrettably misspelled), and an introduction by Charles and Tracy Shreve, the dealer-auctioneers who helped Gross assemble this matchless collection. The bulk of the book consists of larger-than-life illustrations, in excellent color, of the 128 exhibition pages that won Gross the big prize in Washington.

A generation ago, Japanese industrialist Ryo Ishikawa created a similar book showcasing the exhibition pages that won him the grand prize at the 1986 Ameripex show in Chicago. The similarities between the two collections and the two books invite comparison. By any objective measure, Gross wins the competition. Coming after Ishikawa, Gross had the opportunity to purchase all the important Ishikawa items. He didn't miss many. To these he has added other significant items unavailable to Ishikawa, notably the classic plate number pieces from the Chapin collection, which Gross acquired intact.

It's interesting to note the conceptual similarities between the Ishikawa and Gross collections. Both focus exclusively on U.S. postage stamps between 1847 and 1869. Neither shows postmaster provisionals, proofs, essays, carriers or locals. Neither shows the August issues, now largely relegated to the back of the book. (This was a bolder omission for Ishikawa than it is today.) Ishikawa also shunned reprints and reissues. Gross shows four pages of these as the conclusion to his exhibit (including the show-stopping plate block of the reissued 90¢ 1869 stamp). Ishikawa showed the 1867 grills without playing them up, because he lacked key items. Gross shows the grills fully and effectively, since he has them all, including the 1¢ Z grill, for which, amidst much hoopla, he traded the unique inverted Jenny plate block. (He still has 19 other Jenny inverts, not part of this showing.)

The premise for the Gross collection is simplicity itself: for each classic U.S. stamp, show a perfection mint copy, the largest available multiple, a rare use or two on cover, and other scarce varieties as appropriate. The result is wonderful to behold. It's a survey of classic U.S. philately from the loftiest perspective, without any of the fly-specking trivia that competitive exhibiting tends to foster.

Collectors, both now and in future, are the beneficiaries of works like this. For previous great U.S. survey collections (think Worthington, Gibson, Caspary, Lilly) we have auction catalogs. These are fine references, but they're disjointed and often incomplete—not the same as having color reproductions of actual exhibition pages. Gross deserves our heartiest salute, both for assembling this collection and for making it available to all of us in this manner.—M.L.

The William H. Gross Collection, United States Classics, 1847-1869. Co-published by William H. Gross and the Collectors Club; produced by Spink Shreves Galleries. Hardbound, 10½ x 12½ format, 136 pages, color throughout. \$80 postpaid from the Collectors Club, 22 E. 35th St., New York, NY 10016.

COFFEE-TABLE BOOK ON 100 GREATEST AMERICAN STAMPS

Such abundance! Here's another coffee-table book of interest to collectors of classic U.S. stamps. The title is *100 Greatest American Stamps* and the authors are well-known in

the stamp community: Janet Klug, recent president of the American Philatelic Society, and Donald J. Sundman, president of Mystic Stamp Co. There's even a foreword by the ubiquitous William H. Gross.

The premise of this book is simple. The authors asked stamp collectors (30 or so are named in the preface, but the implication is that many more were polled) to vote on what they thought were the greatest U.S. stamps. One hundred winners were chosen and ranked. The authors devote a page of the book (sometimes two) to each stamp.

The result is lovely to look at and most interesting to read.

For each stamp, the presentation includes a blow-up of a nice example (in glorious color, at least five times bigger than life) along with appropriate collateral material (covers, coins, stock certificates, photos, etc.) and a well-informed write-up about the stamp itself and related philatelic and social history. Sundman's promotional talent and Klug's enthusiasm for the stamps is much evident. At the bottom of each page is a price history of "market values" (actually Scott catalog values) for that stamp, mint and used, by decade from 1920 to 2007. Some of this data is flawed. Page design is elegant, consistent and very professional; the color images are crisp; binding and cover are sturdy and attractive. The result is a package that speaks highly of our hobby and promotes it very effectively.

So what are the 100 greatest American stamps? Well, most of them are from the 19th century. Both 1847 stamps make the list, and their ranking matches their Scott numbers. (The item illustrating the 10¢ 1847 is actually one of the 1875 reproductions with margins unaccountably trimmed.) Three postmaster provisionals are included (St. Louis, New York

100 Greatest American Stamps, by Janet Klug and Donald J. Sundman. Whitman Publishing LLC, Atlanta, Georgia. Hardbound, 10½ x 12½ format, 144 pages, color throughout. \$29.95 plus shipping and handling from Mystic Stamp Co., 9700 Mill St., Camden, NY 13316.

and Alexandria), along with a local (the City Despatch Post stamp, Scott 40L1), a Pony Express stamp (143L1) and a 13¢ Hawaiian Missionary (4). Every value of the 1869 stamps made the list, but only three large Bank Notes (the 90¢ 1873, the 5¢ Taylor and the 3¢ Vermillion). For the Columbians,

all the dollar values made the cut, along with the 1¢. Both dollar-value Trans-Mississippi stamps are also represented.

Oddly, the only imperforate 1851 stamp in the top-100 list is the 1¢ Eagle carrier. The imperforate 1¢ Franklin postage stamp of 1851, source of more study and more scholarly literature than any other U.S. stamp, is not on the list, a most egregious omission. In this reviewer's opinion, that stamp can lodge a strong claim to being the greatest of all American stamps. Surely it belongs in the top 100. As a possible explanation, the perforated 1¢ Franklin (Type II, Scott 20) *is* included (also the perforated 90¢ Washington of 1860); given the face-different focus of the book, perhaps the authors felt that was representation enough.

Small-minded quibbles about individual stamps should not diminish the importance of this book. It's a wonderful outreach device, promoting the collecting of United States stamps in an engaging, compelling, adult manner. The price is right too. I got my copy for \$37.50 via telephone order to Mystic Stamp Company. *100 Greatest American Stamps* appears to be positioned for bookstore distribution at a retail price of \$29.95. Here's wishing the publishers every success in this endeavor. If they can sell a bundle of these books through traditional retail booksellers, every stamp collector, and certainly every member of this Society, stands to benefit.—M.L.■

ANSWER TO PROBLEM COVER IN *CHRONICLE* 217

We received four responses to the problem cover in *Chronicle* 217, which is illustrated (front and back) as Figure 1. The question posed: Do the puncture marks in this cover provide evidence of some sort of disinfection process?

None of the respondents supported the fumigation explanation, and one questioned why the cover was even considered for this column. Route Agents Michael J. Morrissey, and Tony L. Crumbley submitted almost identical explanations. Morrissey's was a little more detailed and is quoted herewith:

"The cover has creases that indicate it was folded at one time. The creases form eight panels, each of which has a hole near the middle. When the cover was completely folded, the paper wad, about the size of one of the panels, was nailed to something, producing a hole in each of the panels. The two dirtiest panels are the upper right and lower right on the



Figure 1. Both sides of our problem cover from *Chronicle* 217, a Confederate patriotic envelope sent from Richmond, Virginia to Camden, South Carolina, franked with a perforated 3¢ 1857 stamp datestamped May 1, 1861. The question was: Do the puncture marks on this cover evidence fumigation?

front of the cover, so they were on the outside; the lower right and lower left panels, on the back show matching stains. They were touching after the cover was folded.

"The cover was first folded along the middle vertical crease. Then it was folded again making the other vertical creases (one was through the left side of the stamp). The final fold made the horizontal crease, leaving the stamp on one side and the lower right corner of the cover on the other. The result was a rectangle roughly 1" x 1¼" plus or minus a little due to sloppy folding. The lower right panel, on the front, shows the imprint of the nail head around the hole (seen also on the back lower left), so this is where the nail entered. The exit wound is on the back of Washington's neck where part of the stamp is torn away."

After its postal duty was completed this envelope was folded up and punctured with a nail or tack for some utilitarian purpose, possibly acting as a shim or spacer. Perhaps it was nailed to the bottom of a short table or chair leg. Or, maybe it was used to protect some delicate surface from the nail head. Whatever the purpose, it's easy to see that there's a lot of utility left in a used envelope.

Route Agent Crumbley confirmed all this by revealing that he had purchased this cover from a now-deceased South Carolina collector some time ago, and that when he bought it the cover was neatly folded four times into a tight little square, with what appeared to be a nail hole in the middle. He also added his opinion that without the folds, the fumigation explanation might make sense. But with the folds, this was most likely an attractive Civil War leveler.

On a more humorous note, Morrissey also suggested: “It looks like the addressee, a member of the Camden Jockey Club, ran his spurs over the envelope, perhaps testing for sharpness and uniformity.”

PROBLEM COVER FOR THIS ISSUE

Our problem cover for this issue is shown in Figure 2. As can be seen, this is a 3¢ pink on buff Nesbitt entire envelope mailed from Bethany, West Virginia to St. Louis, Mis-



Figure 2. Problem cover for this issue: 3¢ Nesbitt entire envelope from Bethany, West Virginia to St. Louis, Missouri, postmarked June 9, 1867 and then apparently returned to the writer on July 20.

souri on June 9, 1867, and apparently returned to the writer on 20 July. There’s a black two line “NOT TO BE ADVERTISED” handstamp at right. The question is: Why wasn’t this advertised if the addressee didn’t pick up the cover? Was there any postal regulatory basis for the return of such a cover prior to 1868?■

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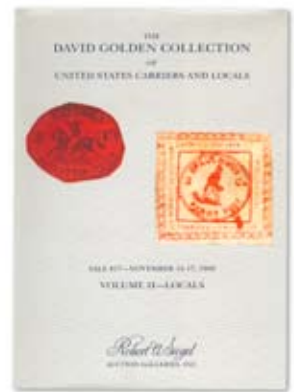
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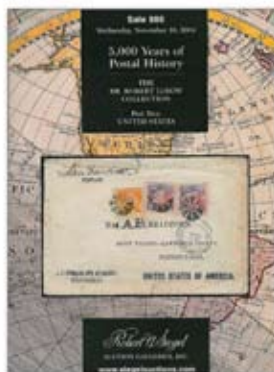
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