

The Early Development of Carrier Service in America

With Particular Emphasis On
Service in New York Before
1850

A Website Presentation

By Calvet M. Hahn

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Scanned and Arranged

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LETTER CARRIER SERVICE IN NEW YORK

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Delivery of letters arriving in the post office is one of the oldest postal services in America. In the early days, the carriers were called Penny Posts; however, a distinction needs to be made between those reporting to the Post Office and those who were independent businessmen. The concern here is solely with the official carrier service.

Home delivery was authorized by the very first postal law¹: This law authorized Richard Fairbanks of Boston to act as a “voluntary post” to deliver letters. To date, I have found no specification of delivery service other than this law prior to 1675. However, the 1689 Massachusetts Provincial Acts, VI, pg. 37 did authorize the Boston postmaster, Richard Wilkens at the time, to ‘receive all letters and deliver them at 1d each.’ The **Neale Patent Laws** of 1692 also, however, do contain a specific delivery clause. The New York version of them clearly grants a monopoly over the right to,

“carry, re-carry or deliver Letters for hire, other than as before excepted”

It included a stiff one hundred pound penalty for each violation. The Massachusetts enactment is even more specific:

“If any letters or packets shall lie or remain uncalled for, by the space of 48 hours, the Postmaster then sending them forth to the respective houses of the persons to whom they are directed shall receive one penny more for each letter or packet.”

Following the take-over of the post office by the British crown in 1711, under the Act of 9 Anne, we find the Penny Post delivery is continued. The *New York Post Boy* of July 30, 1753, quotes the post office regulations as follows:

“All Letters for Persons living in the Town that remain uncall’d for on Post Nights will, on Monday Morning, be sent out by a Penny Post provided for that Purpose.”

This is not a voluntary delivery but a requirement as the notice clearly reads. The non-voluntary Penny Post in Quebec in 1764, where addressees had three hours to pick up mail (eight hours in 1767), has been cited in my *Colonial Great North Post*². Alex ter Braake in his major work on the colonial posts³ was able to find no earlier example than a stage letter from Burlington, N.J. of November 30, 1771 that had a documented penny post fee. **(See Appendix I for the specific regulations in 1754-1765.)**

¹ ‘First American Post Law’ by Calvet M. Hahn *Collectors Club Philatelist* January 1973

² ‘Colonial Great North Post’ by Calvet M. Hahn; two parts *American Philatelist* Oct/Nov 1973

³ ter Braake, Alex L. **The Posted Letter in Colonial and Revolutionary America 1628-1790**. Published 1975 by the American Philatelic Society

Sir

Burlington Nov: 30 1771

I inclos'd you two letters by Mr.
Jam: Duane which I hope you have deliver
ed - I ordered a Bells to be sent to your care
Some time ago if not sold I desire you will
not sell it, and I shall be in Town in about
two or three weeks & will then let you know
what is to be done with it - I am,

Your friend & friend
Jno. J. Stevens.

Letter from Jno Stevens dated
Nov 30 Dec 11 1771 penny
post ←

EARLIEST COLONIAL LETTER WITH DOCUMENTED CARRIER HANDLING. This letter from Jonathan Stevens was sent via the Burlington Stage November 30, 1771 to New York and docketed as received by the 'penny post' on December 11th.

The tradition of letter delivery for a fee from the post office carried over into the Goddard provisional services. As I reported in the *Provisional Posts of the U. S.*⁴, John Holt acting as the Goddard provisional office in New York City gave the following notice in 1775:

“Notice is hereby given to the owners of those papers that they may be had on sending for, or on a reasonable allowance to the Penny Post, they will be carried and delivered by him.”

This relates to newspapers, of course, but the existence of a Penny Post is established and it is most likely that the connection with the post office is official. From about mid-summer of 1776 until December 1783, it is very unlikely that a letter delivery service for New York existed. The post office was peripatetic, and British occupation did not cease until late in 1783. I have thus far not found a record of service, however, during the Confederation period or in the post-Goddard period; however, the existence of such a service is likely, as it is referred to in the *Postmaster General's Annual Report* of November 28, 1789 (reprinted in full in my *Postal History Notes* 10 in *Western*⁵).

Postal historians have published much misinformation on the New York post office. In one case, at least, I have helped perpetuate the misstatement that Elias Nixon was New York postmaster in 1776, having relied on other specialists. This error in my *Postal History Notes* should be corrected. Mr. Nixon was port master, not postmaster and the original source probably misread his notes. Similarly it has been stated that William Bedlow became New York postmaster at 23 Smith St. immediately following the Revolution. New York City Directories do not support this.

To explain it is necessary to look first at the national Postmaster Generalship. Ebenezer Hazard was named Postmaster General as well as New York postmaster in 1776. I have not been able to trace a successor in New York City until 1789. The first *Frank's City Directory*, published in mid-1786, lists Mr. Hazard as postmaster at 55 Broadway. He is reported at 29 Broadway in the *1787 Frank's City Directory* and continues at that address even following his dismissal as Postmaster General on September 26, 1789, as the 1790 directory attests, with its listing of E. N. Hazard, 29 Broadway.

Konwiser⁶, Scheele⁷, and others have long reported that the first New York postmaster following the British evacuation of the city was William Bedlow, followed in 1786 by Sebastian Baumann. The *Frank City Directory* does not bear this out. My copies do not show Mr. Bedlow listed at all, in either the 1786 or 1787 issues and there was none in 1788. He is reported, however, in the 1789 directory, published July 4, 1789, as postmaster at 8 Wall Street, (between Water and Front near the East River). The *1790 Hodge Allen City Directory* lists him at 170 Queen (Queen is the present Pearl Street north of Hanover Square). Thus he apparently became city postmaster sometime after mid-1787, taking over from Hazard, and it would be at Bedlow's 8 Wall Street address that Postmaster General Osgood had his connecting room.

⁴ Hahn, Calvet M. 'Provisional Posts of the United States'; 7 parts *Collectors Club Philatelist* May 1974-May 1975.

⁵ Hahn, Calvet M., 'Postal History Found in Newspapers'; *Stamp Collector* 1971-January 1973.

⁶ Konwiser, Harry M. "New York City Colonial and Revolutionary Posts", pages 117-122 *Collectors Club Philatelist*. The Konwiser articles were reprinted in his 1931 Richmond publication **Colonial and Revolutionary Posts**.

⁷ Scheele, Carl H. **A Short History of the Mail Service**, 250 pages. Published 1970 by the Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C.

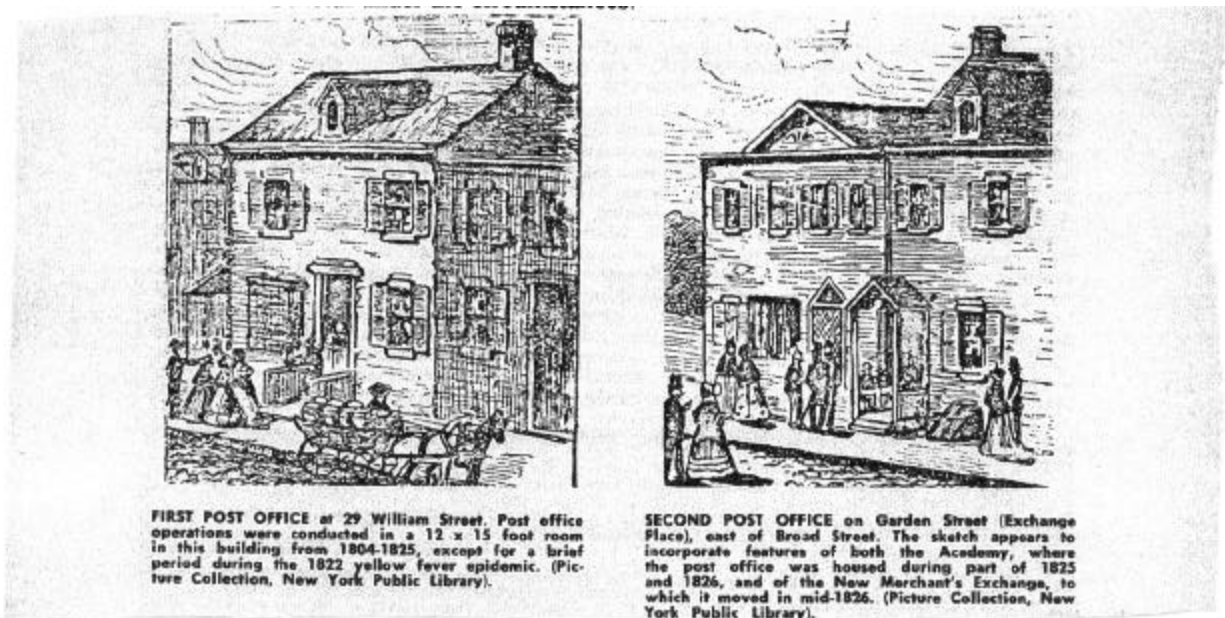
Certainly Osgood did not operate the post office from his Cherry street address as Cherry Street was in the suburbs of the period, being north of Fulton. William Bedlow is listed in subsequent directories as living: in 1791 at 15 Cherry, in 1792 at 41 Cherry, in 1794 at the shipyards, and in 1795 at the corner of Cherry and Charlotte at the shipyards. Shortly thereafter he disappears from the listings.

Operations Under The Constitution

New York as National Postal Headquarters--One of Hazard's superiors at the Treasury Department, which was where the postal services were assigned, was Samuel Osgood. He lived at 6 Cherry Street in 1789. The 1790 directory lists him as Post Master General at 4 Cherry St., and he then is listed in the 1791 directory as Samuel Osgood at 3 Cherry St. When Alexander Hamilton had been named Treasury Secretary on September 10, 1789, Osgood's position on the Treasury Board was abolished. As Mr. Hazard was in disagreement with the Administration on several points, his post was turned over to Osgood two days before Congress adjourned and Osgood became Postmaster General on September 27, 1789. He continued as long as the post office was in New York—at least through the adjournment of Congress on August 12, 1791. With the new Congress in Philadelphia on December 6, 1791, Osgood was replaced as Postmaster General, remaining in New York. The usually reliable Alvin Harlow in *Old Post Bag*⁸ notes that

“During Osgood’s administration he had for office a room connected with that of the city post office in New York.”

This would certainly not be at Hazard’s address at 29 Broadway, for it is unlikely that Mr. Hazard would give house room to the man who replaced him as Postmaster General under the circumstances.



⁸ Harlow, Alvin- *Old Post Bags*, chapters 14-16, 1928 Putnam Press New York

New York City Postmasters and Location of Their Office

The early city directories record Sebastian D. Baumann as a grocer at 62 Broadway (corner of Crown, later renamed Liberty). He is first listed as postmaster in the 1790 *Hodge Allen Directory* at 62 Broadway—his home and grocery store—having taken office October 5, 1789. The 1791 directory lists him at 51 Wall, while the 1792 and 1793 directories note the address at the corner of Wall and Smith. He is listed as Col. Sebastian Baumann, postmaster, 30 Wall Street in 1794 and onward until 1799. In 1799 he is listed, as is the postoffice, at 29 William (William and Exchange). Mr. Baumann's residence continues to be listed at 29 William through the directory of 1803; he is not listed in the 1804 directory and presumably died in 1803 while in office. Beginning in 1801 the *Longworth City Directory* lists the postoffice at Garden (now Exchange) and William.

| EXPLANATION. | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|---|------|
| Ma. for | Maine | But if carried to any post-office in the State in which it is printed, whatever be the distance the rate is | Cts. |
| N. H. | New-Hampshire | | 1 |
| Vt. | Vermont | | |
| Ms. | Massachusetts | | |
| R. I. | Rhode-Island | | |
| C. | Connecticut | | |
| N. Y. | New-York | | |
| N. J. | New-Jersey | | |
| P. | Pennsylvania | | |
| N. T. | North Western Territory | | |
| D. | Delaware | | |
| Md. | Maryland | | |
| Va. | Virginia | | |
| K. | Kentucky | | |
| N. C. | North-Carolina | | |
| T. | Tennessee | | |
| S. C. | South-Carolina | | |
| G. | Georgia | | |
| Pk. | Potowmack | | |
| C. R. | Cross Roads | | |
| c. h. | Court-House | | |

| RATES of POSTAGE for Single Letters. | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|------|
| | Miles. | Cts. |
| Any distance not exceeding | 30 | 6 |
| Over 30 and not exceeding | 60 | 8 |
| Over 60 do. | 100 | 10 |
| Over 100 do. | 150 | 12 |
| Over 150 do. | 200 | 15 |
| Over 200 do. | 250 | 17 |
| Over 250 do. | 350 | 20 |
| Over 350 do. | 450 | 22 |
| Over 450 | | 25 |

SHIP LETTERS received by private ships, are rated at 4 cents each, and if they are forwarded by post, with the addition of the ordinary rates of land postage.

Ship Letters passing in packet-boats or vessels provided by the United States, are rated as follow:

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| Single Letters at | Cts. |
| Double at | 8 |
| Triple, or Packets, at | 16 |
| | 24 |

But at present there are no such public packets-boats.

| RATES of POSTAGE of Newspapers. | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| Each paper carried not over | 100 miles | Cts. 1 |
| Over 100 miles | | 1 1/2 |

MAGAZINES and PAMPHLETS are rated by the sheet.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| Carried not over 50 miles, per sheet | Cts. 1 |
| Over 50 and not over 100 do. | 1 1/2 |
| Any greater distance | 2 |

OBSERVATIONS.

When postages are charged too high, such as a single letter charged as double, an abatement of the postage will be made, if the letter or packet is opened in the presence of the Post-Master or his letter-carrier, but not otherwise.

Letters must be delivered at the offices of Boston, New-York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, one hour before the time fixed for the departure of the mail, and at other offices half an hour, or they will lie until the next post.

Letter-carriers are employed at large post-towns, who deliver letters at the residence of individuals; they are entitled to two cents for each letter or packet which they deliver, in addition to the postage. Any person may, however, receive his letters at the post-office, on giving the post-master a written direction to that purpose.

Postages of letters or packets may be paid in advance at the office where the letter is entered to be conveyed by post, or they may be sent unpaid at the writer's choice. Postages must always be paid before delivering of the letter.

Post masters are required to be very cautious in delivering letters, there being in some towns several persons of the same name; the directions should be particular in such cases.

The direction should always mention the State, and generally the county in which the place is situated; for there are places of the same name in several of the States, and in some States places of the same name in different counties. As in Pennsylvania there are three places called Hanover; one in York county where a post-office is kept, one in Dauphin, and the other in Luzerne county.

When a letter is destined to a place where no post-office is kept, the nearest post-office should be mentioned. If the place

place is not on a post-road, and it is wished that the post master should forward the letter by private conveyance, that wish should be expressed on the letter, and the postage should be paid at the office where the letter is entered.

When letters are destined for Canada or Nova-Scotia, between which and the United States there is a regular communication by post, the postage must be paid in advance at the office where the letter is entered, so far as Burlington, Vermont, in one instance, and Brewers, Maine, in the other instance.

When letters are sent by post to be conveyed beyond sea, the postage must be paid as far as the post-office where the letters are intended to be shipped. The post-master there will forward such letters by the first conveyance.

The post-office does not insure money or other things sent by post; it is always conveyed at the risk of the person who sends or requires it to be sent.

No stage owner, or driver, or common carrier may carry letters on a post-road, excepting only such letters as may be for the owner of such conveyance and relating to the same, or to the person to whom any package or bundle in such conveyance is addressed.

When letters are delivered by a post-rider, he is entitled to two cents for each letter, in addition to the postage.

FREE LETTERS.

The following persons have a right to frank their own letters, and receive those directed to them free of postage: The President and Vice-President of the

United States, Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary at War, Post-Master General, Comptroller, Register and Auditor of the Treasury of the United States, Commissioner of the Revenue, Purveyor, Accountant of the War Office, and Assistant Post Master General; the Members of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, and the Secretary of the Senate and Clerk of the House of Representatives, during their actual attendance on Congress, and twenty days after the close of the session, when their letters do not exceed two ounces in weight, and the Deputy Post-Masters, when their letters do not exceed half an ounce in weight. No person may frank other letters than his own. If letters are included to either of the description of officers above named for a person who has not the privilege of franking, he must return the letter to the post-office, marking upon the letter the place from whence it came, that the postmaster may charge postage thereon.

The distances in the Table are taken chiefly from the information of Congress, and of Post-Masters living on the routes; and it is presumed that they are pretty generally accurate.

ABRAHAM BRADLEY, JUN.
Clerk in the General Post-Office, Philadelphia.

November 1, 1796.

Note. The distances are calculated by the post route on which the mails are usually carried.

The 1797 "postage guide" with a list of 504 postoffices and two pages of rates and instructions signed by A. Bradley, Clerk in the GPO, Philadelphia, November 1, 1796 was published in Jedidiah Morse's "American Gazetteer" at Boston. These instructions specifically covered home delivery by letter carriers in major cities. The instructions, illustrated here, are reproduced with the kind permission of the Collector's Club of New York whose rarity collection contains them.

Harlow's *Old Post Bags* reports that Josiah Ten eych followed Baumann as postmaster in 1803-4. No such man is listed in the 1803 directory, however in 1804 a Josiah Ten eych is listed as an accountant at 36 Broad in the *Longworth Directory*; the *Langdon Directory* says 36 Broadway. Ten eych may well have filled out Baumann's term until the election resulted in the March installment of General Theodorus Bailey in 1804 as postmaster.

The office in 1804 was one 12 x 15-foot room with the postmaster residing in the remainder of the house. Bailey reinstated the 144 patron's locked boxes that had been removed by his predecessor. The postoffice remained at 29 William until 1825 except for a short period in 1822 when, during the yellow fever epidemic, it was temporarily removed to Bank and 4th Street in Greenwich Village, which was immune from the disease. In 1825 the postoffice was moved to the two-story Academy on Garden St. There General Bailey presided over six clerks in addition to the carrier service. He moved his home to 12 Park Place at the time. There were some 900 call boxes, and carriers delivered letters as far north as Canal and Catherine Streets.

The general died in 1828 leaving his widow, Martha, and young John R. Bailey who was named assistant postmaster in the 1829 directory; John Bailey lived at 107 Greenwich.

Samuel L. Gouvernor, an attorney at 40 Wall whose home was at 63 Prince, at the corner of Orange, took over as Postmaster. He continued, without the assistance of John Bailey, until 1836. Gouvernor moved from 63 Prince to 155 Bleeker sometime prior to the directory of 1832, while the next directory (1833) saw him at 704 Broadway where he stayed until returning to 88 Prince in 1835, and stayed there into 1836 although he was no longer listed as postmaster in that directory. He was at 216 9th Street in Greenwich Village in 1837.

The Garden street office proved inadequate, and following the destruction of the old Exchange at Wall and Garden on April 28, 1826, the post office moved to the New Merchant's Exchange fronting on Garden according to the *Longworth Directory* published on June 12, 1826. The 1832 directory notes that it was in the basement and could be entered either from Exchange Place or from Wall Street, which was behind. Some 3,000 boxes were used and in 1834 a separate window for females and one for general delivery were included in the arrangements. Harry Konwiser in his New York city post office article in the *Collectors Club Philatelist*⁹ cites *William's New York Register* of 1834 for information about the four major divisions of the post office: **City Delivery**, with a superintendent and six clerks to handle general delivery, the boxes, and Packet mail; **Forwarding**, with six clerks and a chief who stamped and distributed all mail for other post offices; **Newspaper**, with five clerks and a superintendent to distribute the papers; and **Letter Carriers**, with a superintendent and 15 carriers who delivered letters and papers to all persons whose residences were known (except for box delivery) with twice daily deliveries in summer. The *Register* adds:

“boxes are placed by the Carriers in the upper part of the city, where they receive letters and deliver them every day (except Sunday) at One o'clock to the Post Office, in time for the afternoon mails, for which they charge two cents each.”

The great fire of December 16, 1835, destroyed the post office at Merchant's Exchange and the post was temporarily put at Pine and Nassau before being transferred north to Chambers and Cross Streets where it was listed in the 1836 and 1837 *Longworth Directories*. In 1838 it was in the Rotunda, an art gallery and studio in City Hall Park, with a branch at the Northwest corner of William and Exchange, which was established in 1837. On November 17, 1841, the Branch Post Office was moved to the just opened, rebuilt Merchant's Exchange.

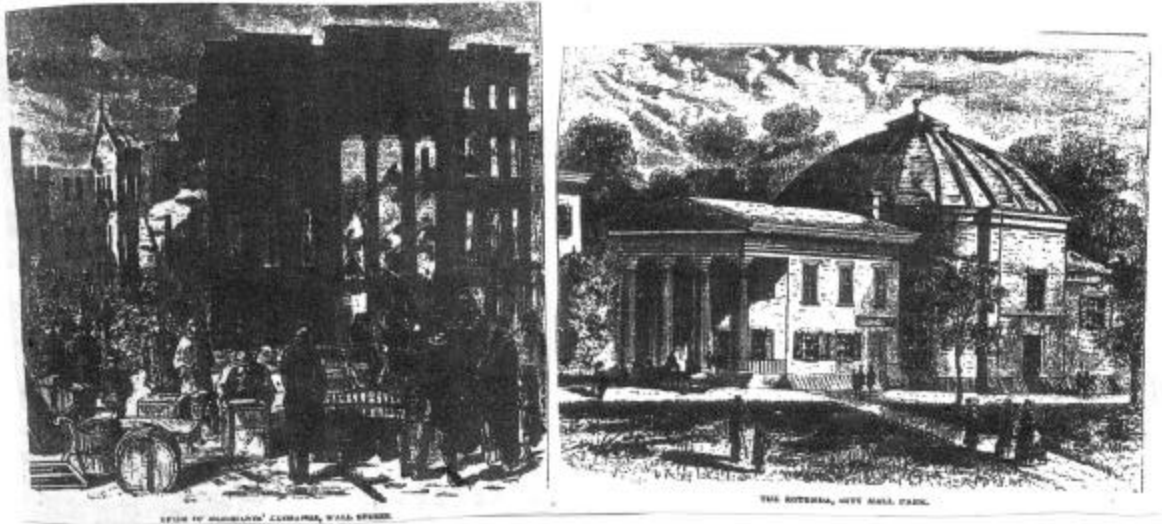
Succeeding Mr. Gouvernor in 1836 was James R. Page who was listed at 308 Houston, corner of Elridge Street in 1835, 1836, and 1837. Jonathan J. Coddington, in turn, succeeded him, in 1837. Coddington was listed as a merchant at 109 Beckman with his home at 56 White in 1837, and as postmaster living at 12 Bond in 1838 through 1840.¹⁰

The next postmaster, John L. Graham, took office in 1841. He was a lawyer at 49 Wall and had his home at St. Marks Place and Second Avenue or 191 8th, corner of 2nd in 1840, and at 21 Washington Square in 1841. It was during his term that private post competition to the New York carrier system developed. He was succeeded in turn by Robert H. Morris who worked in the City Recorder's Office at 128 Nassau and 4 City Hall in 1838 with his home at Kips Bay, prior to becoming Mayor in 1841-1844.

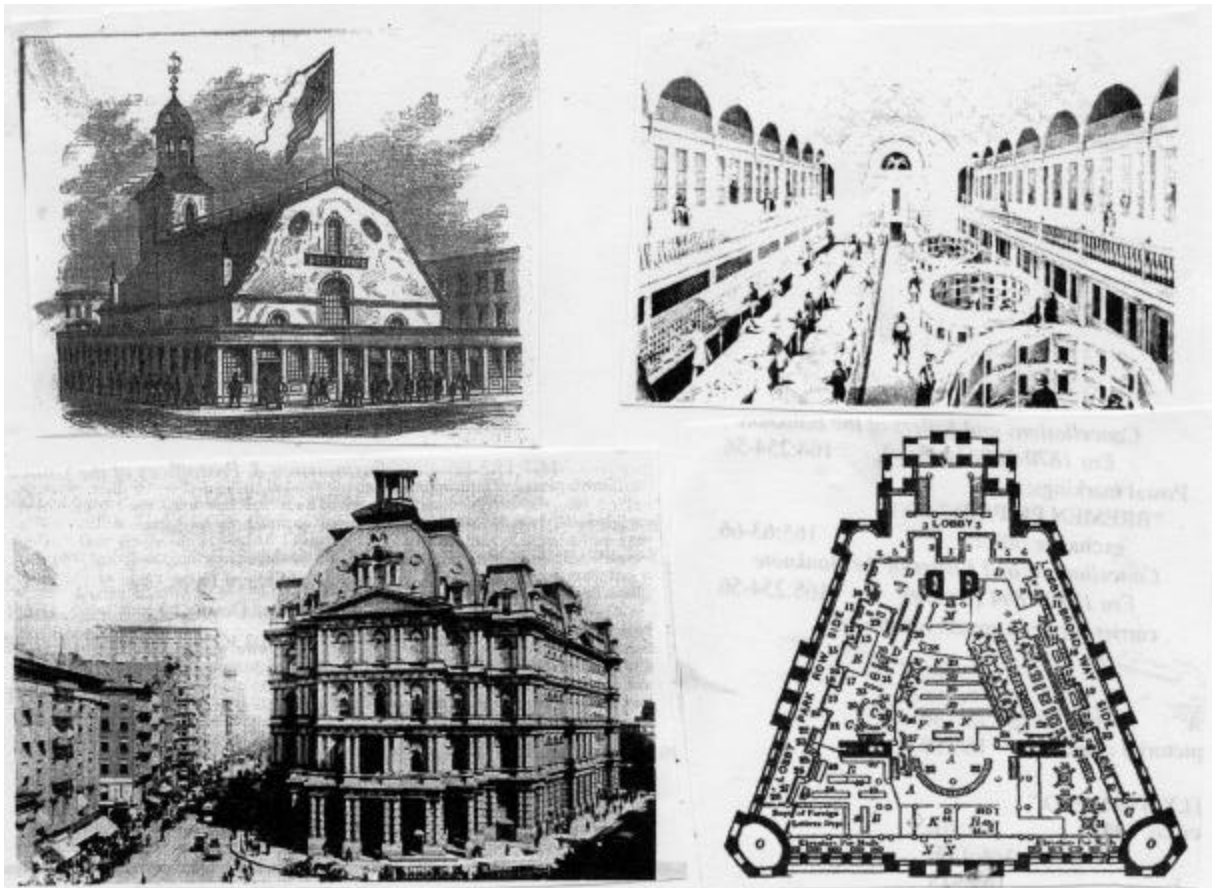
⁹ Konwiser, Harry M. “New York City Post Offices in 1832-1834’ *Collectors Club Philatelist* pg. 230

¹⁰ For additional information on the 1837-1862 quarter century see ‘The Critical Quarter Century in New York—1837-1862’ seminar of October 10, 2000 at the New York Chapter of the U. S. Classics Society website: www.nystamp.org

The New Merchant's Exchange office lasted from 1826 until the great fire of December 16, 1835 (pictured below) destroyed it. The postoffice was in temporary quarters until 1838 it was moved into the Rotunda in City Hall Park, with a downtown branch office at the corner of William and Exchange Streets.



Even with a two-storey addition, the Rotunda proved inadequate by 1844 and in May 1845 the office was moved to the remodeled Old Dutch Church, where it remained until 1875. The interior can be seen at right.



The new 5-storey postoffice between Broadway and Park Row can be seen above, with the interior layout at right. The carrier superintendent is located one-third up from the bottom near the stairs at 36 and the carrier cases at 37. The postmarking and canceling table is 38 and the carrier cases and tables are 39.

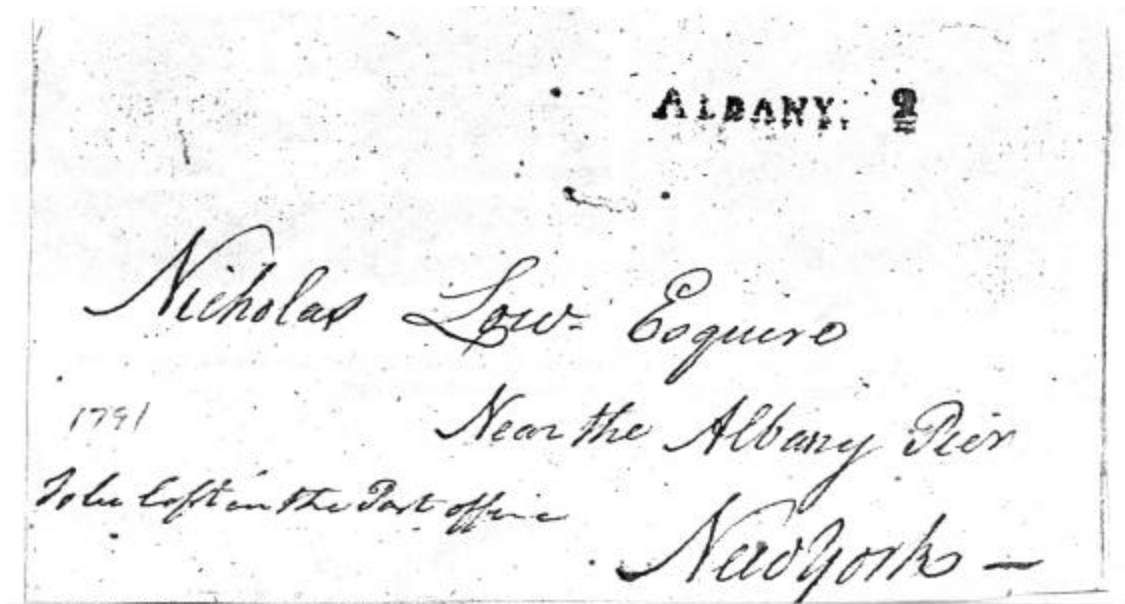
Coddington had expanded the Rotunda office by a two-story addition, but this became inadequate by 1844. Thus when the Middle Dutch Church in Nassau Street was offered for lease in 1844, the post office took it at an annual rent of \$5,000. There some 3,228 boxes were offered and there were 15 windows for general delivery. Both newspapers and women had their own windows. This office, purchased finally for \$200,000, lasted through the stampless period

Carriers Under the Constitution

The first New York City directory is *Frank's New York Directory* of 1786. It reports no letter carriers, nor does the 1787 edition. There was no directory issued in 1788; however, the one issued July 4, 1789, does list a New York City letter carrier,

“Hugh Duncan, letter carrier, 5 Little Queen”

Hugh Duncan lived just down the street from Aaron Burr, who was at 10 Little Queen. Checking back through the earlier directories does not reveal any listing for Mr. Duncan in any capacity.



NOT TO BE TURNED OVER TO THE CARRIER SERVICE. This letter from Ballston, N.Y. of August `2, 1791, was carried to Albany by the contract mail rider Nathaniel Sherman where it received a black 25 x 3mm handstamp ALBANY:2 for the two pennyweight rate to New York. (Note the double underlined rate.) It is specifically noted by the writer “to be left at the postoffice” so that if Mr. Low does not pick it up, it will NOT BE turned over to Hugh Duncan, the letter -carrier for delivery.

Subsequent directories show Mr. Duncan is the sole carrier until the *1794 Duncan Directory* published at mid-year, as were all the directories. This directory notes the renaming Queen to Cedar Street. It also lists a second carrier.

“Hugh Duncan, letter carrier, 26 Cedar
James West, letter carrier. 32 Broadway”

This is apparently the same **James West** who was a shopkeeper on Broadway in the 1790 and 1791 directory and was reported as a shopkeeper at 111 Broadway in 1792 and 1793.

In the Postmaster General’s letterbook under the date of December 3, 1789, we find a complaint from John Kean, a member of the Board of Commissioners for Settling the Accounts

Between the States and the U. S. Mr. Kean states:

“The Penny Post has demanded of him Postage for his Letters.”

Postmaster General Osgood’s response tells the New York postmaster that the act of October 10, 1778, makes mail to and from the Commissioners free. He adds— This method I have heretofore mentioned to you verbally, as being proper to pursue.

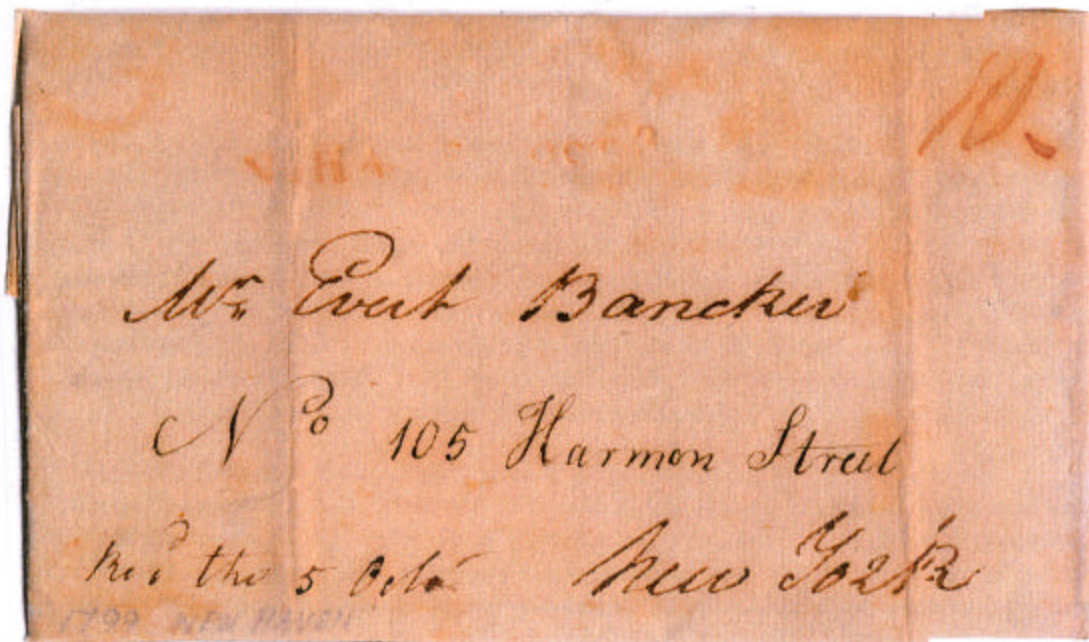
“with respect to Members of Congress now in this City.”

Thus, the effect was that carrier service was to be free to such men and the Penny Post did not have the right to collect postage. It was up to the city postmaster to make the necessary arrangements for compensation, but the addressee who had the franking privilege could not be charged.

It was in 1794 that the first United States regulation of the carrier service was promulgated. The Act of May 8, 1794, Section 28, effective June 1, reads:

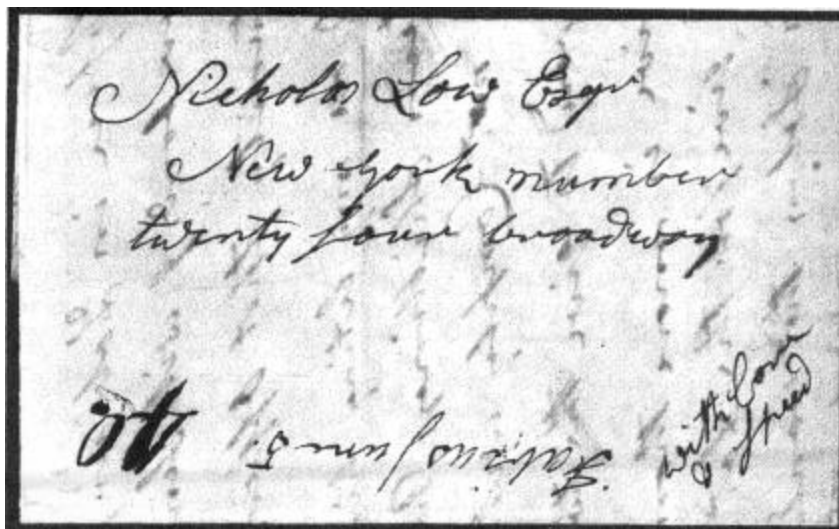
“And be it further enacted that letter carriers shall be employed at such Post Offices, as the Postmaster General shall direct, for the delivery of letters in the places respectively where such Post Offices are established; and for the delivery of each such letter, the letter carrier may receive of the person to whom the delivery is made two cents; PROVIDED, that no letter shall be delivered to such letter carrier for distribution, addressed to any person who shall have lodged at the Post Office a written request that their letters shall be retained in the office.”

This section is continued in the *Act of March 3, 1797*; however the rate becomes one cent under section 27 of the *Act of March 2, 1799*.



EARLY EXAMPLE OF THE NEW 1¢ RATE. This 1799 letter from C. V. Banker to his father was written at Hartford September 30th on his way to Brattleboro, VT, but carried out of the mail and posted with a red N.HAVEN* Oct 3 and a 10¢ rate and received October 5th at his 105 Harmon St. location showing this STREET ADDRESSED letter was distributed immediately upon receipt in N.Y., rather than held in the postoffice. Only Mr. West or Mr. Duncan could have delivered it, and as Mr. West lived out on Church, St., it is probably he that carried this cover out past Chatham Square to 105 Harmon St.

Mr. Duncan continued as a letter carrier with his address now at 26 Cedar until the directory of 1805. The *Jones City Directory* of that year reported his address at 46 Warren. He was not reported in the detailed listings of 1808; however, the 1809 directory shows him at 48 Warren where he continues through the *Longworth Directory* published July 7, 1810. This directory, for the first time, does not list him as a letter carrier and there is no subsequent letter carrier listing for him. The 1811 directory reports him at the Ferry, near Slip. Apparently he retired sometime prior to mid-1810. The 1811 listing is the last for Mr. Duncan.



EARLY CARRIER DELIVERY. This June 5, 1801 letter from Fabius, N.Y. (first p. o. erected 12/1/1800) carries a 40¢ double rate because a bond was enclosed. It is unusual in the well-known Low correspondence to find street addresses, which called for carrier delivery as here, particularly as much of his mail was 'favor carried.' The notation 'with care and speed' may explain why carrier service was sought. At this time the most logical carrier was James West, who lived just a few doors away on Church Street.

James West, the second carrier in 1794, continues at the 32 Broadway address until the directory of 1799 when he is at 5 Church. By the time the 1806 directory was issued he had moved to 4 Church, but was back at 5 Church in 1809 and in 1810 was reported as a letter earner at 36 Church. This may have been a misprint, for in the 1811, 1812, 1813, and 1814 directories the address is given as 26 Church. In the 1813 *Longworth Directory*, West is individually listed as a letter carrier, but in the post office listing he is not so included. That he retired, or quit early in 1813 is the logical assumption. The issue of July 6, 1815 carries him as a cart man at 131 Hester while he does not appear in the 1816 or subsequent directories, until a listing of 1818, which may refer to his son. Then a James West is reported as a laborer at 476 Greenwich, a listing that continues until 1820 and then shifts in the 1821 directory to a grocer at 476 Greenwich.

A third carrier joined Duncan and West in 1801. This was Charles Betts. On July 1, 1801, he was listed as a letter carrier at 3 Cortlandt. He first shows up in the 1799 directory as a 'currier above industry furnace' and in the 1800 directory he was a porter at Rickett's Circus.

Charles Betts continued as a letter carrier through mid.1806. He was, however, a foot-loose man, for his address constantly changed. In 1802 it was at 106 Beckman; in 1803, he was listed only at the post office; in 1804 the *Longworth Directory* lists him as a letter carrier at the post office with his home at 32 Cedar; however, the *Langdon Directory* reports 31 Cedar—both just down the block from Hugh Duncan. The *Jones Directory* of 1805 lists Betts as a house porter and letter carrier at Park, Broadway, while in 1806 he is recorded only at the post office. Following his postal career Mr. Betts tried to become a grocer according to the 1807 directory,

which so lists him at 42 First Street. He apparently failed as the 1808 directory lists him at the same address without profession. Beginning in 1809 he is no longer recorded.

The 1805 City Directory was the last to list just three carriers. It reported, as follows according to Abe Schoenfeld's article of 11/8/1941 in *Stamps*:

"Letters arriving at the Post Office in the mails or by water are immediately forwarded to their address by the carriers, for which service they receive two cents on each letter in addition to the regular postage. Theodorus Bailey, Deputy Postmaster General. Letter carriers, Charles Betts, Hugh Duncan. James West."



EARLY NEW YORK CARRIER DELIVERY. This 1805 letter was written at Mount Pleasant, N.Y. 'six miles from town' on July 29th (sic) by a girl friend who 'will get Josh, or Sam to put it under cover to Dr. Turk as it may perhaps reach your hands much sooner.' Dr. Turk took it to the postoffice where a red 27mm NEW-YORK/JUL/14 circle (NY3C Type 1A) was applied and a 1¢ fee noted in red. It was then turned over to the carrier for delivery, presumably because it had not been picked up in 24 hours. The carrier added the address 'Greenwich St. 132' as an aide memoire for his route. At this date only Mr. Duncan, Mr. West or Mr. Betts could have delivered it. Mr. Betts seems to have the closest residence at this time.



CARRIER SERVICE INDICATED BY STREET ADDRESS. Written by a business firm located at 145 Broadway, this 1811 letter received a red 27mm circle NEW-YORK/19/OCT (NYC Type 2) and a 1¢ drop letter rate, because it was put in the post office. Addressed to '3 Beach Street,' a location by the Hudson River some 2 miles from the post office, it urged a quick decision on a business deal. The detailed street address and the distance from the post office of the location combine with the time urgency of the letter to assure us that this was carrier delivered. Five carriers: Messrs. Orr, Forrester, Davie, Lynch and West operated at this time. The most likely man to have delivered this was Mr. Orr who lived not too far away.

Two new carriers Archibald Davie and William Orr were added in 1806 bringing the total to five carriers.



CARRIED PRIVATELY FROM POUGHKEEPSIE, probably by a steamboat passenger, this September 8, 1823 letter was written 'in haste' at 2 p. m. It was put in the William St. postoffice the following day (9th) and rated 1¢ and delivered to 11 Pine St. on the 10th and answered the same day.

The Carrier Service Begins To Grow

The *Jones Directory* of 1805 informs us that **William Orr** was a grocer at 38 Barclay Street. He is listed as a letter carrier in the directories of 1806 through the one of 1817. In that he is not listed under the post office section but, under his own name, he is noted as a letter carrier—this is a sign that he was leaving the service about mid-year. In 1806 he lived at 226 Greenwich, but moved to 41 Barclay in 1807, staying there until 1810 when he was reported as a postman at 15 Thames. In 1811 he moved to 405 Greenwich where he was listed through 1817. The *1818 Longworth Directory* reports William Orr as a merchant at 329 Broome, near Carman, and as a carpenter. The listing continues listing him as a carpenter at Carman near Broome in 1820 and in 1821 at Broome near Sheriff.

Archibald Davie was reported as a merchant at 22 Liberty Street in the 1805 *Longworth Directory*—the last near before he became a letter carrier. This listing, rather than that of letter carrier, continued until the 1810 directory. In that year, while being listed as a letter carrier under the post office listings, he is reported as a merchant at 22 Liberty with his home at Spring St. From 1811 through 1819 he is listed as a merchant at Spring St. (near Clark according to the 1817 directory). The *Merckln Directory* of 1820 reports him as a merchant at 206 Spring St. The only year in that span when he was not reported was in 1812 and then it may have been an error. In 1821, the individual listing shows Davie as a letter carrier at 206 Spring--the first time the occupation is mentioned--and as a merchant tailor at 99 Maiden with his home at 206 Spring. He is listed as a tailor at Maiden Lane in 1822 and as a letter carrier at 206 Spring. This is his last year with the post office. The 1823 listing shows him as a Maiden Lane tailor living at 206 Spring, while in 1824 he is at 41 Maiden Lane. His business occupation is at 195 Fulton in 1825, while from 1826 through 1829 he is listed only at his home at 204 Spring St. as a tailor. As can be seen by his listings, Mr. Davie was apparently a very cautious man who was not about to let the post office become his sole source of income. Even

so, he put in 17 years as a carrier.

Another carrier, **Elias Lynch**, joined the service in 1808. Unlisted in the 1807 directory, Lynch was reported in 1808 as a letter carrier at 96 Warren. He lasted in the carrier department until 1837/8, being last listed as a carrier in the 1837 directory. Mr. Lynch is not always reported under the individual name listings but his span of 30 years in the service is covered in the post office listings. In 1809 his home is at Chambers Street; individual listings then disappear until 1813 when he is reported at 93 Broad; in 1814 the listing is 93 Warren which listing continues in 1815. In 1816 Elias Lynch moves to 299 Orange (Mulberry street today) and there he opens a grocery store in 1820 while continuing as a letter carrier. He stays at this address until 1829 when he is found as a letter carrier at 47 Spring St., a listing that continues until his retirement. The 1838 directory lists him as a clerk at that address.

When Hugh Duncan retired in 1810, his replacement was **Archibald Forrester** who was not reported in the 1809 directory. He was a lamplighter living on Clinton at the corner of Harman. The 1812 directory also notes that he is a shipwright at the same address. Forrester is not listed in 1813, apparently because he has not yet located in his new home at 199 Harriman where he is listed in 1814. He moved down the block to 195 Harriman the next year and stayed there until 1820 when he was listed as a letter carrier at Columbia near Broome—the listing is 27 Columbia—an address he kept until he ceased to be listed in 1835. Thus this carrier spent 25 years in the service.

In 1812 the number of city carriers rises from five to six more when **Michael Noe** joins the force. Mr. Noe is the first of his extensive clan to become a letter carrier. In 1811 he was a shipbuilder living at 1 Charlotte. He was listed as a letter carrier in 1812 and as a postman at that address in 1813. In 1814 he moves to 59 Hester (the *Long Directory* says I Pike) and in 1815 he is at 57 Hester, which is at the corner of Bowery. In 1817 **Peter Noe**, presumably his brother, who also joined the carrier service on that date, joins him at that address. In 1815 Peter was listed as a ship carpenter at 1 Pike, probably accounting for the confusion of the *Long Directory*. They both continue to live at the same address until 1821 when Michael moves to 39 Pump (in the Chinatown area today), which is between Orange and Division. He continues at the 39 Pump address until 1829 when he moved to 253 Walker. He is at 253 Walker and 160 Orchard in 1830 and at Bloomingdale Road in 1831. No address is given for him from 1832 on to 1834, the last of his 22 years as a letter carrier.

The post office list last records Peter Noe as a carrier in 1822 when he was still living at 37 Hester. However, the individual listings show him as a postman as late as 1825. He moves to 27 Hester in 1823 and to 209 Grand in 1824 and then to 43 Forsyth in 1825. He is a carpenter at that address in 1826 but the following year moves to 24 Eldridge where he continues until 1830 when he changes profession to that of shipwright. Other members of the Noe family join the service in the 1820's and will be discussed later.

PLAN of the CITY of NEW YORK, 1808.



MAP OF NEW YORK CITY IN 1808. Locations of carriers of the 1808-12 period are indicated by circled letters according to the following key: (Insert two page map)

- A) General Post Office, 29 William St.
- B) Hugh Duncan (early), 26 Cedar St.

- G) William Orr, 15 Thames St.
- H) Elias Lynch, Chambers St.

- C) Hugh Duncan (late), 46-8 Warren St. I) Archibald Davie, 22 Liberty St.
 D) James West (early), 32 Broadway J) Archibald Forrester, Clinton & Harman
 E) James West (late) 36 Church St. K) Michael Noe, 1 Charlotte St.
 F) Charles Betts (early), 3 Courtlandt St.

One interesting reference to the carrier service occurs in 1815. Lot number 62 of the Donald Malcolm sale (1972) contains a letter of December 12, 1815, which asks the Post office to search for a lost letter. It refers to the carrier service in New York and to the fact that the postmaster is to,

“keep at the office a list of all letters delivered on first days.”

This list would be related to those who authorized the postmaster to immediately deliver letters rather than wait for a postoffice pickup by the recipient, or 48 hours.

Another new man, along with Peter Noe, joined the force in 1817—basically to replace William Orr who is last listed in that year in the individual listings but not in the postmaster lists. Thus the force still remained at six. This man is **Joseph Shardlow** who is listed in 1816, the year before he joined, as a mason at Reade Street. He maintains that listing when he joins the carriers, but the 1820 Directory notes that the address is 21 Reade. He moves in 1821 to 151 Reade and first lists himself as a letter carrier, at that address, in 1823 and again in 1824 while he drops out of the listings in 1825. I suspect he died, for a **John C. Shardlow** (misspelled Shardlace in the 1832 directory) joins the service in 1832. He would probably be Joseph Shardlow’s son who is trying to augment the family income of Ann Shardlow, widow of Joseph, who is reported at 151 Reade. The carrier service seems to have tried to take care of the families of those who died in its service.

At the time of the 1822 yellow fever move to Greenwich Village, there were only six carriers—Elias Lynch, Archibald Forrester, Joseph Shardlow, Archibald Davie, and Michael and Peter Noe. In 1823 two changes were made. J. S. Reynolds of 26 Bayard was added to replace Mr. Davie and Ford Noe was officially listed in place of Peter Noe.

J. S. Reynolds is apparently related to David C. Reynolds who ran a stagecoach at the corner of Bayard and the Bowery in 1822. He continues to be listed as a letter carrier through the directory of 1833 without a profession in the individual listings. He is at 26 Bayard until 1826 when the address shifts to 30 Bayard, a residence that lasts until the 1829 directory reports him at 26 Bowery. This address is the one used during his last listing as a letter carrier in the post office listing. He moves in 1834 to 22 Bayard where, without a professional listing, he is still found in 1838.

Lewis Ford Noe is listed under the post office section through the directory of 1833—a ten-year period. However, the first time he is individually recorded is in the directory of 1826. Peter Noe is listed instead, individually, in the earlier years. In 1826 Lewis Ford Noe is at 39 Pump—the address of Michael Noe; he moves to 13 Watts in 1827 and to 176 Thompson in 1828 where he remains for the rest of his carrier career. He is not listed in the 1834 *Longworth Directory*.

Young **Charles L. Noe** joined the force in 1827 and stayed through 1833. At no point in that period is he individually listed in the directories; however, beginning in 1834 he is recorded as a cordial distiller at 119 Stanton Street with his home at 133 Allen. The Noe family moved their cordial business to 83 Bowery in 1836 and Charles moves to 21 Second Avenue. Another Noe, **Richard Noe**, shows up in the post office lists for 1830 and 1831, but never appears in the individual listings. The family practically disappears from the city listings

following 1837. While some five members of the family served in the carrier branch only Michael Noe made a full career. The family reverted to its talents in shipbuilding or else moved into shoemaking or cordial distilling. The absence of some of the letter carrier Noes from the directory strongly suggests that they were minors living at home—a class not counted.

In 1825 when Joseph Shardlow died, he was replaced by **Henry Tyson**, a former carpenter of 3 Birmingham. He served nine to ten years being last listed in 1833 as a letter carrier. Henry Tyson moved to 9 Suffolk in 1828; he was briefly at 62 Forsyth in 1829 as a late listing indicates, but was back at 9 Suffolk until he was dropped from listing in 1834. Henry Tyson was the first of another letter carrier family.

He was joined by **William Tyson** in 1827 when the letter carrier force was expanded to eight (Charles Noe was also added in this year). William had been a shoemaker at 63 Mott Street and kept that address until the directory of 1830 when he dropped from the listings. He reappears in 1831 as a grocer at 262 Division where he was listed as a letter carrier in 1832. In 1833 he moved to 19 Eldridge—the last of his six years as a carrier. Another William Tyson is listed in 1831 and onward as a shipmaster at Hester Street and is probably an older member of the family. He was never a letter carrier.

Following the withdrawal of Henry and William Tyson from carrier service prior to the 1834 directory, another Tyson joined the service. This was **Isaac M. Tyson** who was individually listed as a victualer at 12 Washington Mews with his home at 218 Washington. He is listed as a letter carrier at 191 Washington in the 1835 directory, but in the 1836 and 1837 versions he returns to his profession as a victualer, with his home at 197 Washington, first at Washington Mews then at the Fulton Market in 1837 and at 203 Spring Street in 1838 where he also moved. As post office listings were discontinued in the 1836 directory when James Page became New York postmaster it is difficult to trace the carriers further. It would appear that Isaac Tyson was a letter carrier for only two years, however.

During this period, the letter carrier service fell under another postal act than that of 1794. A new Act of March 3, 1825, effective May 1st, covered letter carriers in several provisions. One of these, section 36 reads:

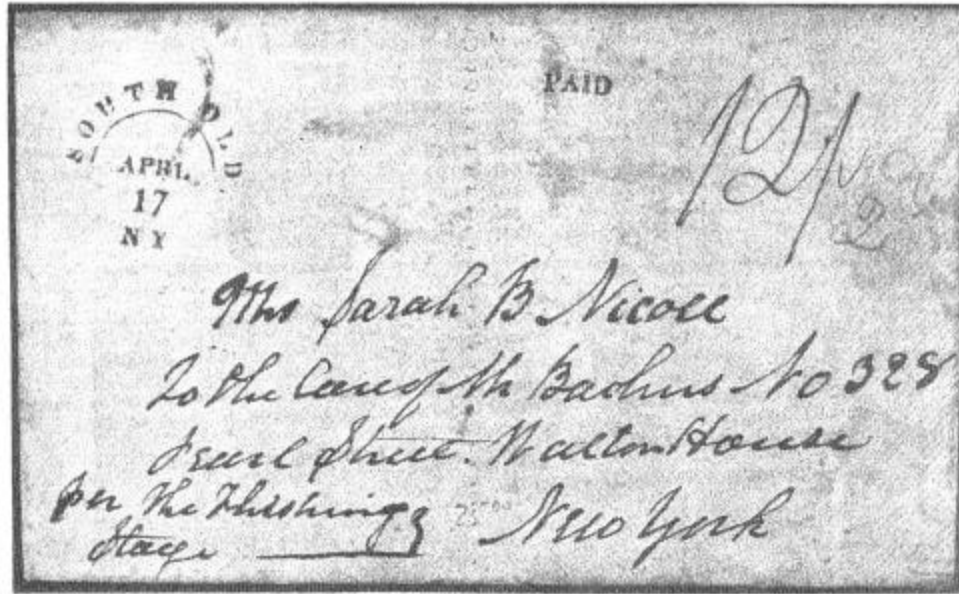
“That letter carriers shall be employed at such post offices as the Postmaster General shall direct, for the delivery of letters in the places, respectively, where such post offices are established; and for the delivery of each such letter, the letter carrier may receive, of the person to whom the delivery is made, two cents.”

This Act is subsequently cited in the *Postal Laws and Regulations* in 1843 where we find,

“247. When duly appointed and qualified, the postmaster may, at his risk and responsibility, place in their hands for delivery all letters received, except such as are for persons who may have lodged with him a written request to retain their letters in the office. Act of 1836, Sect. 36

248. Such carriers may charge and receive two cents for every letter, and a half-cent for every newspaper, delivered by them—Act of 1836, Sect. 36.”

This half-cent fee, was first authorized specifically for letter carriers in Section 2 of the March 2, 1827 Act, and not in the Act of 1825. The text of the Act of 1825 does not seem to add to the basic letter carrier situations authorized by the Act of 1794.



EARLY USE OF THE NEW 1825 carrier fee noted on face. Red 25x24mm arc SOUTH OLD/APRIL/17/NY and tiny red PAID on a Shelter Island latter carried into South Old by boat and rate in manuscript 12½¢ to go via the 'Flushing Stage' in 1825. This is addressed to 328 Pearl St., Walton House, New York to be sure it received carrier delivery. A pencil notation of 2¢ next to the 12½ rate shows that carrier service was provided. This is the earliest letter so far recorded under this carrier fee act; it is also the listing item for the South Old arc, although others have been found later and it is a rare example of the stage handling a carrier item.

The Big Expansion Of 1830

Letter carrier service had grown slowly through the years from one to eight men by 1829. In 1830 a major expansion was undertaken. This brought the carrier department to a temporary peak of 16 men, which dropped again to 13 in 1831-1833 and then climbed to 16 in 1834 and 1835, the last year that the post office listings gave carrier names.

The growth in the letter carrier service can be better understood if it is compared with the city population and the per capita population per carrier:

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Population</i> | <i>Carriers</i> | <i>Population per Carrier</i> |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1790 | 33,120 | 1 | 33,000 |
| 1800 | 60,483 | 2 | 30,000 |
| 1805 | 75,770 | 3 | 25,000 |
| 1810 | 96,373 | 5 | 19,000 |
| 1820 | 123,706 | 6 | 20,000 |
| 1825 | 165,186 | 6 | 21,000 |
| 1830 | 202,057 | 16 | 13,000 |
| 1835 | 265,000 | 16 | 16,500 |
| 1840 | 312,710 | 25 | 12,500 |
| 1845 | 415,000 | 17 | 25,000 |
| 1850 | 500,000 | | |
| 1860 | 813,669 | | |
| 1862 | 825,000 | | |

Beginning in the mid-1820s, as a result of the Erie Canal's opening new markets, the economy of New York boomed and the population burgeoned. At the same time, the growth of the city in geography and in complexity meant a carrier could deliver to fewer people under the

prevailing conditions. If I read Elliott Perry's *One Hundred Years Ago* correctly there were only 17 carriers in the 1840-45 period, although R. A. Barry in his "U. S. Specialists Column" in the *American Philatelist* reported there were 25 carriers in 1840. The figure of 25 carriers seems hard to accept. If we assume that delivery required about one carrier per 12,500 people, then in 1845 the official service had about half the needed manpower.

Among the new additions in the 1830's who have not yet been discussed was **George Lynch**, a shipmaster who lived at 17 Vandam. He initially lasted only through the 1831 directory when he was at 188 Houston, where his individual listing reported him as a shipmaster. He apparently reverted to that profession in 1832 and 1833 and rejoined the carrier service in 1834 when he was listed by the post office as he was again in 1835, the last year of the listings by the post office. He was not individually listed in 1834 and was listed at 46 Bedford as a boatman in 1835. The 1836 listing reports him as a shipmaster at 46 Bedford and there is no way to tell if he was also a carrier. He was not listed in 1837-8; however, in that period another member of the family joined the service. This was young **Andrew C. Lynch** who was listed as a letter carrier at 102 Suffolk in both 1837 and 1838.

Another carrier relative who joined in 1830 was **Charles Forrester**. He is first individually listed in 1837 when he is listed as a letter carrier at 27 Columbia, the address of Archibald Forrester who retired the year before. Charles is presumably Archibald's son. Neither got individual listing in 1836 and only Charles was listed in 1837-8. Also joining the force in the class of 1830 were the Reads. **John M. Read** was listed as a letter carrier at 30 Sheriff that year and moved to 36 Sheriff in 1831 and to 33 Sheriff in 1832. He was unlisted in 1833. **William Read** is listed in the post office section in 1830 and 1831. He was a clerk at 147 Centre Street. There are three William Reads in 1831 and two in 1882 but none are listed as letter carriers, although the 1831 post office list reported a William Read—the 1832 did not. One was a mariner at 60 Henry and one a typesetter at 30 Jay. Which was the letter carrier we don't know.

The Strachan family also joined in 1830. **William Strachan** is in the 1830 post office listing only and is never found with an individual directory listing. **David R. Strachan** is listed as a letter carrier at 57 Cedar when he joined in 1830. He moved to 38 Wooster in 1831 and to 6 or 7 Beach in 1832. While recorded as a carrier in 1883, he has no individual listing, which suggests he left the service early in the year. No Strachan appears in the next few directories.

The most illustrious of the men who joined in 1830 was **John H. Hallett**. He does not receive an individual directory listing until 1833 when he appears at 679 Washington Street as a postman. While he drops out of the directory in 1837, he is back, at 676 Washington, in 1838. He continues in the service for many years and on May 1, 1857, is named Superintendent of the Alphabet and Carrier Delivery Service at a salary of \$1,500 a year. This was increased to \$2,000 in 1859-61 and it was Mr. Hallett who was the head of the New York City carrier operation when home delivery was made universal in 1863.

The Reorganization of 1834—Collection Boxes and Branch Post Office

Resignations gradually whittled the department down to twelve members in 1832 and 1833; however, the population continued to grow and so did the work load. Action was taken in 1834, when, eleven new men were added to the service. The post office was reorganized and the *Williams New York Register* noted there were **boxes installed for collections** in the upper part of the city. Following the fire in the Merchants Exchange in December 1835 and the subsequent move to the uptown City Hall area in 1836, a **branch post office** was established at the corner of William and Exchange Place (as reported in the directories of 1837 and 1838) to

service the downtown business.



BRANCH POST OFFICE. Letter concerning sailor, Snug Harbour dated April 29, 1842, with a red 27mm NEW-YORK/APL/29 type 18 and a curved PAID and red pen '2' rate addressed to Mr. Swan of 48 Exchange Place. This is the 2¢ fee for the Branch Post Office, which had just been moved to the rebuilt Merchants' Exchange on November 17, 1841. Had this letter gone through the Rotunda post office the fee would have been 1¢.

Barnabas Bates, who was assistant postmaster of New York from 1833 to 1836, depicts these two shifts in his *Brief Statement of the Exertions of the Friends of Cheap Postage in the City of New York*, published in 1848:

“In 1833, the letter carriers of this city were required to establish boxes in their respective routes for the reception of letters, and to deliver them daily at the Post-office in season to be sent out by the mails, free of expense. This was continued for a few years, but was then discontinued, greatly to the annoyance and inconvenience of the citizens living at a distance of two or three miles from the Post-office. It is understood that the present Postmaster-General has ordered the re-establishment of such places of deposit, but it has hitherto been disregarded.

After much entreaty, the Post-office Department conferred upon them [the downtown merchants the great boon of establishing a Branch Post-office down town, provided they would pay one cent for each letter deposited in and two cents for every letter received from, that office! Rather than be compelled to send to the Park Post-office for the letters, the merchants submitted...the revenues at the Branch Post-office proved to be so large that even these gentlemen [Postmaster and Postmaster General], becoming ashamed to tax the merchants so enormously, consented to remit the cent on the letters deposited in the Post-office, but still pertinaciously adhered to the payment of two cents on letters delivered. The income from this source alone, exclusive of the rents for boxes in the Park Post-office, and the cent on free, and drop letters, amounted to the enormous sum of \$16,000 per annum!!”

The explanation by Mr. Bates tells us that collection boxes definitely were established throughout the city. It also explains the nature of the second occupation of many of the **carriers who used their places of business as deposit boxes**, particularly the carriers who joined the service in the 1834 period. It is one of the reasons why it is necessary to go through the tedious listings of carrier home addresses. These home addresses were in many cases collection

stations for the carrier service. We do not know the number of collection boxes in 1834.

A second point made by Mr. Bates is the fee structure of the Branch Post Office. It is possible to associate specific New York markings with this branch post office, which I believe is the first in the country. Thus those who desire examples of various postal services should have a handstamp from this operation, which set the precedent for branch offices. Too, the postal fee 'was different at this office than it was anywhere else in the U. S. The covers do not generally reflect this difference; however, it is possible to find one that does. Such a cover would be an exhibition piece in any postal history collection. It is not until the *Act of March 3, 1847*, Section 10, that we find a full authorization for the establishment of branch post offices and this section specifically notes:

“no additional postage shall be charged for the receipt or delivery of any letter or packet at such branch post office.”



UPPER POST OFFICE 1¢ rate. this letter from Albany dated April 9, 1842 was smuggled to New York and deposited in the Rotunda p. o. in the Park where it was given a red 31mm NEW-YORK/APR/10 c.d.s. and a 1¢ rate (as a letter not for transmission) although addressed to Mr. Richards at 44 White St. who had Box 356 at that postoffice. Because he also had a box, this was handled as a 'drop letter'.

However, the Act of May 18, 1842, which deals with the pay of postmasters and attempts to cut back the excessive incomes at several major postoffices, does mention branch offices:

“It shall be the duty of postmasters at New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore and New Orleans, and the other several cities of the Union, each and every year hereafter, to render a quarter-yearly account to the Postmaster General under oath, In such form as the latter shall prescribe, for the purpose of giving full effect to this proviso, of all emoluments or sums by them respectively received for boxes, or pigeon-holes, or other receptacles for letters or papers, and by them charged for to Individuals; or for the delivery of letters or papers at or from any place in either of said cities, other than the actual post office of such city; and of all emoluments, receipts and profits, that have come to their hands by reason of keeping branch post offices in either of said cities.”

The addition of Isaac M. Tyson to the carrier force in 1834 has already been discussed. Young John C. Shardlow also joined this year. He is first individually listed in the *Longworth*

Directory in 1836 when he is reported as a letter carrier at 65 Pitt where similar listings were noted for 1837 and 1838. **William Boyle** also joined in 1834 and was first individually listed in 1835, as a grocer at 99 Delancy, corner of Ludlow. This was probably a collection station as well. He is listed as a carrier in 1834 and 1835. The 1836 directory notes him at the Delancy address, but he is no longer listed in 1837.

Another new addition was **William B. Brown**. He is not listed individually in 1833, or 1834, but in 1835 he is reported as a grocer at 52 Bayard, corner of Elizabeth. He has no listing in 1836 or 1837. Presumably he was only a carrier for two years—1834-5.

The Hallett family had an additional carrier in 1834 when **Samuel P. Hallett** joined. He is first individually listed in 1835 as a carrier at 77 3rd Avenue, a listing he keeps through 1838, the last year checked.

A dry goods man, **Joseph P. Smith**, also joined the services in 1834. He had operated a dry goods store at 271 Grand with his home at 218 William the year before. He is listed individually as a letter carrier at 218 William in 1834 and at Willett near Grand in 1835. In 1836 he is listed as a grocer and fire-brick dealer at 7 Pecks Slip as he is in 1837.

Israel Hatch, who was not listed in 1833, is reported as a letter carrier beginning in 1834. He is so reported through the directory of 1837 but is not reported at all in 1838. Joining the service at the same time was **James E. Hyde**, a mason who lived at 6 Doyers. He is listed individually as a letter carrier at that address in 1834 and 1835 and then as a letter carrier at 230 Bowery in 1836 and at 82 Suffolk in 1837 and 83 Suffolk in 1838. Another new carrier was **John P. Hoff, Jr.** who is a letter carrier in 1834 and 1835 according to the post office listing. He is probably the son of Ann Hoff, widow of John Hoff at 29 Attorney in 1833. He is first individually listed in 1835 as residing at 106 Laurens where he is also found in 1836. He is not reported in 1837 at all and probably was not a carrier past 1835.

Another carrier who joined the service in 1834 was **John B. McPherson** who was a courthouse officer at 17 Rector in 1833. He is listed in 1834 as a letter carrier at 99 Hudson and then in 1835 at 107 Laurens (108 in 1836 and 106 in 1837) before moving to 40 Macdougall as a letter carrier in -1838. It should be noted that his address in 1835 and 1836 is in the same building or next door to John Hoff, Jr.

Last, but far from least, of the 1834 crew was **Robert Roberts**, who was listed as a letter carrier at 27 Oak street in 1834 through 1836 and then as a letter carrier at 123 Orchard in 1837 and 1838. He and his family had been listed for some years previous to his joining the force as saddlers. For example, Robert Roberts, Jr. was a saddler at 173 Chatham in 1827. Roberts rose in the ranks of the letter carrier service and in 1849 was chosen to head the department for its official restoration in January of that year following its dissolution on November 28, 1846. He published an official list of 26 branch offices—chiefly drug stores—on February 3, 1849.

The Changes of 1836

It is apparent from noting the listings of the carriers that a number of the new crop did not survive into 1836. The reason is plain. During the great fire of December 16, 1835, a number of business houses were wiped out along with all their records. The carriers had been extending credit of \$50 to \$150 to these businesses on quarterly accounts—the accounts were due at the end of the quarter, or about two weeks after the fire. These are known as **charge box covers**. As the businesses were ruined in many cases, the carriers could not collect. The

amounts represented a very substantial portion of their annual earnings and would discourage them from continuing in the service.

A shift in the financing of the post office in 1836 was another probable cause for a demoralization of the carrier force in 1836. Mr. Page, the new postmaster, was sufficiently less interested in carriers to discourage the citations about carrier service that had been carried in the New York City directories for years. Alvin Harlow, in *Old Post Bags*, offers an explanation. He notes that box rents in the post office were part of the “perquisites of office” of the postmaster and did not go into the general, and accountable, post office revenue. This income had become so huge by 1842 that Congress passed a law, approved 5/18/42, limiting a postmaster’s earnings to \$5,000 a year. New York got a new postmaster, John Lorimer Graham, in 1841. Congress had targeted in on three post offices, which had become open scandals because of the large postmaster incomes—New York, Boston, and Philadelphia.

Until 1836, the letter carrier system had operated on (a) historical tradition stemming from the earliest colonial days, (b) the Act of May 8, 1784, Section 28, (c) the Act of March 3, 1825, which restated the authorization to deliver letters to the domicile of the addressee. In 1836 a third change in the letter carrier laws was passed by Congress in section 41 of the *Act of July 2, 1836, for the Reorganization of the Post Office*. The text of this section is quoted in full in Elliott Perry’s chapter on ‘Carriers and Carrier Markings,’ p. 165, of Ashbrook’s *United States One Cent Stamp of 1851-57*, an essential reference for anyone collecting carrier markings. This act provided for the bonding all letter carriers, and for a maximum fee of 2¢ on letters to be deposited in the post office, to be paid at the time of receipt of the letter. It also provided for a maximum 2¢ fee for letters delivered by carriers. The receipts from the fees were to make a fund to compensate carriers.

The *Act of 1794* definitely made the letter carriers post office employees and thus the bonding instructions of the *Act of 1836* probably were not an innovation although I have not previously found specific instructions on the bonding of carriers. Both the *Act of 1794* and the *Act of 1825* provided for domicile delivery of the mails; however, such delivery had gone on since early colonial times. The major addition of the *Act of 1836* is the authorization for carrier pick-up of letters.

It was always true, of course, that you could catch a letter carrier on his rounds and hand him a letter for delivery. Legal authority goes back to colonial days and is specific in the *Act of 1794*. The **way fee** covered the situation. The fact is that letter carrier pick-up of letters was done prior to the *Act of 1836*. The New York City post office reorganization of 1834 specifically provided for “installing boxes for collection in the upper part of the city.”

The problem of pick-up involves payment for the service. Would it be done for fee or free? The *Act of 1836* made it clear that a fee for picking up the letters was involved. It is probable that a charge existed previously. To prepay—(and who among the carriers would be foolish enough to accept a letter without prepayment unless a charge account existed?)—a pick up location was needed. If the carrier addresses are plotted on a map for any given year, it will be seen that they cover a diversity of locations. Their homes would be logical pick-up points. While prior to 1834, Mr. Davie’s habit of listing himself with a business address suggests that he was an early pick-up station. With the 1834 addition of boxes for collection came a series of new carriers. Three or four of them had professions that sound suspiciously as though they would serve as box locations—two grocers, a dry goods store, and a mason.

Harlow in *Old Post Bags* makes two pertinent references to the problem of carrier pick-up of letters. First, he notes that in 1825 an arrangement was sanctioned that permitted

merchants to have their mail delivered at a certain store instead of having to go to the post office for it. Undoubtedly the *Act of 1825* was involved in the change. However, it had been legal and normal practice previously to deliver letters when the addressee was known and no instructions not to deliver were given. Thus the advantage seems to have been a substitution of first day delivery for delayed delivery or box service. More importantly, Harlow also reports that the post office department sanctioned the placing of a letterbox in a building at Chatham Square from which carriers collected mail and took it to the post office. This is the first reference to carrier pick-up of mail.

There is no reference in the city directories of the period to this service, nor is a branch office mentioned. However, several carriers live in the area. J. S. Reynolds is located on Bayard at various addresses just a block or so away. Michael Noe is at 39 Pump, which runs between Orange and Division and is in the Chatham Square vicinity. Because of the peculiar listings of the Noe family, where the younger members are listed but no address is shown, it is more likely that one of them ran the letterbox from the house.

To summarize: while the *Act of 1836* did provide for both pickup and delivery by letter carriers, it is probable that these functions had been performed in New York at least as early as 1825 and possibly as early as Mr. Davie's employment in 1805. Too, it is also logical that each carrier would accept letters at his home and take them to the post office so that in a limited sense pick-ups go back into the dim Colonial past. A reasonable hypothesis might be that each carrier home had also a letter pick up box. This is particularly likely after the 1834 revamp of the post office when storeowners were also listed as letter carriers.

Identification of Early Carrier Covers

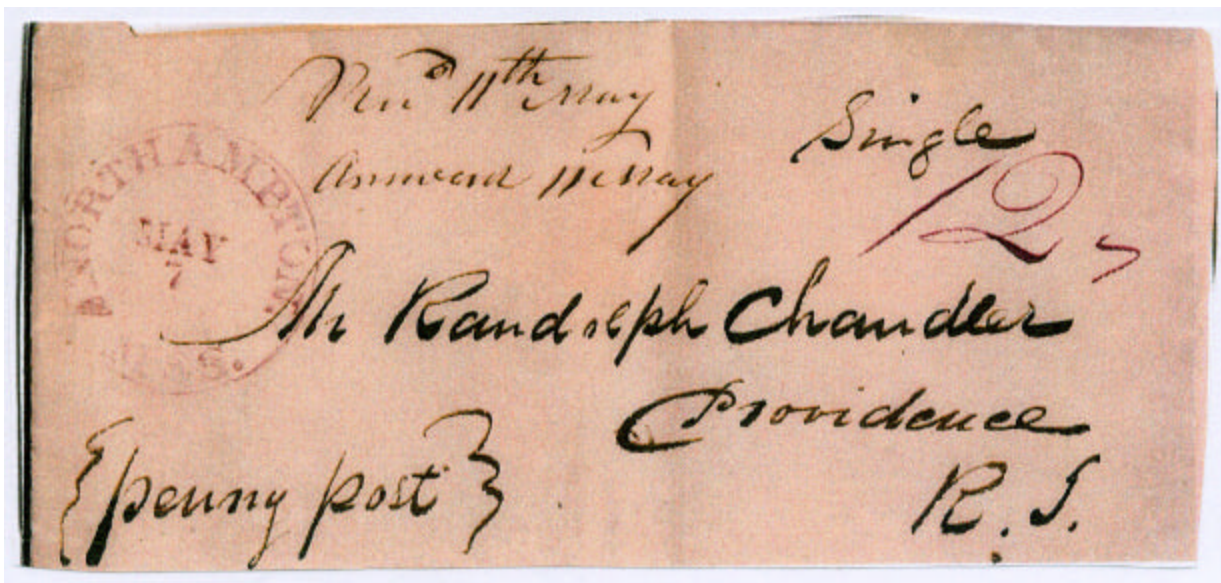
The real problem is in the identification of covers handled by letter carriers in the early days. Mr. Barry illustrated a cover written from Boston to New York and mailed on November 5, 1847, which contains on the face the following:

“Will THE PENNY POST deliver this as soon as he POSSIBLY CAN, as it is of the greatest IMPORTANCE.”



This cover is addressed to William W. Hooper, 'Engraver on Wood', 202 Broadway Room #8 and discusses a shipment of wood engravings that had not arrived. This is what is called a directional marking.

Such directions are not only found on New York City covers, there are found on covers addressed to many other cities and are the most obvious clues as to early carrier service. Typical are several covers addressed to Providence, RI seen below:



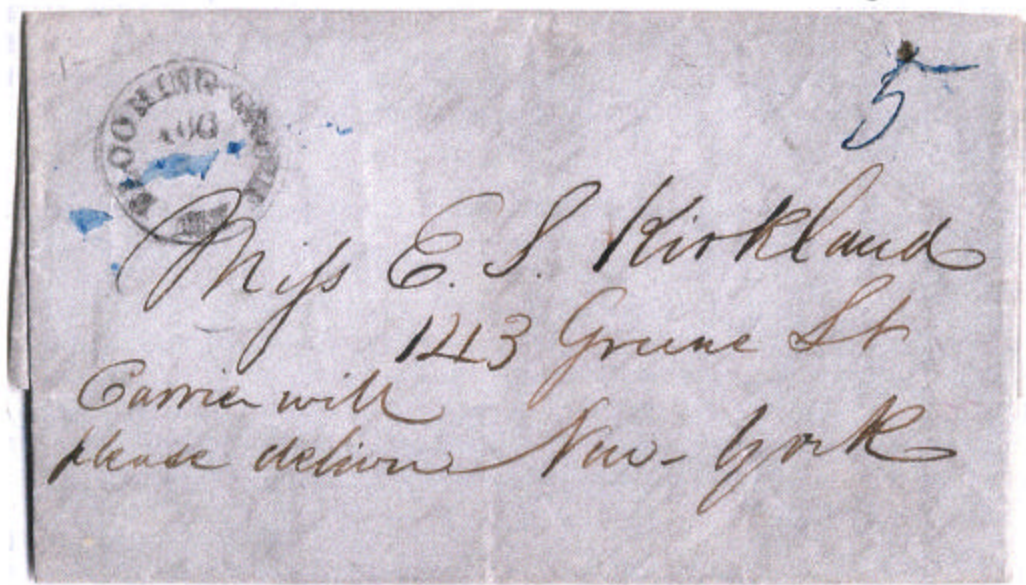
PROVIDENCE PENNY POST. Purple 35mm circle NORTHAMPTON/MAY/MSS. circle and manuscript 12½¢ rate to Providence, RI on a letter dated May 7, 1836—prior to the new Act of 1836—incribed ‘single’ and ‘penny post’ on the face. The letter took four days to reach the writer’s father. It is one of the two known documenting the existence of the Providence carrier system in 1836.



SECOND PROVIDENCE PENNY POST LETTER FROM ANOTHER CARRIER TOWN. This 1836 letter bears a green 30mm NEW HAVEN/FEB/7/Ct. circle and is double rated 25¢ and bears the inscription ‘Penny Post’. It is from a Yale student and took two days to be delivered, showing it was delivered by the carrier on the ‘first day’ of its receipt in Providence.

These two letters to Providence, RI carry specific “Penny Post” notations, showing that a carrier operation was in operation in that city prior to section 41 of the *Act of July 2, 1836* (the

act for the reorganization of the Postoffice). A.B. Slater in his Providence provisional study¹¹ reported that by 1847 the Providence city directory listed three Providence letter carriers: **Francis O. Ballou, Jesse Calder and John Hagan.**



NEW YORK CARRIER USE FROM THE MAILS. This letter was written at Washingtonville, Orange county New York and posted as nearby BLOOMING-GROVE/AUG21/N.Y. with a black 24mm cds. In it a father writes his daughter discussing the health of his son and his play. To insure this went into the ‘from-the-mails’ portion of the carrier department it is inscribed ‘Carrier will please deliver’. At this time the New York carrier department was composed of two separate operations—one from the mails and the other the United States City Despatch Post operation.

Another illustrated cover from Blooming-Grove N.Y. postmarked August 21, 1846 bears a notation, ‘Carrier will please deliver’ shows how widespread the knowledge of large city carrier operations was. It shows one method of identifying New York carrier service. This notation on this letter handled during the tail end of the government operation of the City Dispatch Post made it unnecessary to use that handstamp as well.

It is also possible to identify letters, on occasion, that did not go into the letter carrier service. One such letter, is the earlier illustrated 1791 item from Albany to New York City, bearing the notation, ‘To be left at the Post Office’. This quite specifically meant that Mr. Duncan was not to deliver it.

Other examples are noted “Box 185” or similar markings. These must be differentiated from the “Charge Box 185” type of covers discussed in the seventh essay of my book, *Essays on Postal History*. One is the box of the addressee and one of the addressor. The addressee box notation means the postal service is to put the letter into the box at the receiving post office. The addressor box means that a charge account is run against the box in the addressor’s name and the account is to be debited for the letter, by the postmaster.

Examples of letters that are *specifically* noted for carrier service prior to 1840 are scarce. Many more letters were involved in pre-1840 letter carrier service and have thus far not been identified. Not all can be identified, but a number can be definitely associated with letter carrier service, and many more can be presumed to be so associated though proof positive may be lacking. To understand the identification, it is necessary to explain how the postal system of

¹¹ Slater, Alpheus B. “The Stamps of the Providence, R.I. Postmaster 1846-1947” page 28. 1930 Haley & Sykes Providence, RI 104 pages.

the period worked.

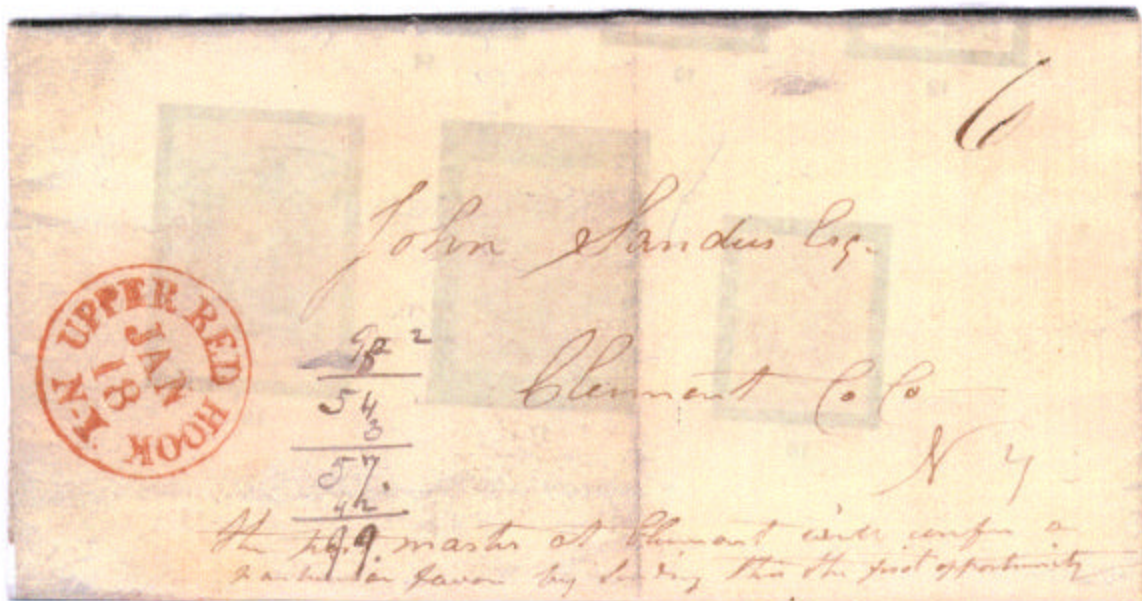
When a letter arrived in a city where letter carrier service operated in the pre-1840 period, five different classes of things could have happened according to how it was addressed:

1) It could be put into a *post office box*, the revenues on which went to the individual postmaster. No carrier service was involved as the patrons picked up the letters personally. These letters were of two types, those addressed specifically to a box and those where the postmaster knew a box existed but which were addressed only to the person at the city. About 6% of the New York City population in 1830 was serviced by post office boxes (3,000 of the 50,000 families), although a higher proportion of the mail went into boxes, as business firms held many.

2) The letter could go into *restricted general delivery*. Patrons picked up these letters, and there was no box, drop, or carrier fee involved. The patrons in question had given specific instructions to the post office that their letters, *were not* to be delivered. A master list of such names was held in the post office. An example where the addressor made this restricted decision is the previously cited Albany letter of 1791.

3) *Unrestricted general delivery letters* where *no street address was given* may or may not have been carrier delivered. The vast majority of stampless letters fall into this classification. These letters are general delivery items to be held at the post office until called for, or they may be advertised if not picked up. It will be noted that advertised letters are completely, or almost completely, unknown with street addresses in the pre-1840 period, and even for years thereafter. Although it is possible that these “no Street address” letters were carrier delivered in some cases, we can generally assume that they were not. Unless there is specific evidence to justify an exception, they should *not* be considered for potential carrier service.

The instruction was such that the postmaster, himself, might deliver the letter or have his son do so for the legal 2c fee of the period. The letter was probably domicile delivered.



SPECIAL CARRIER DELIVERY. This 1836 letter with a red 28mm UPPER RED HOOK/JAN/18/N-Y. cds is addressed to nearby Clermont, N.Y. and bears a notation to have it carrier delivered.. “The postmaster will confer a particular favor by sending this the first opportunity.”

4) *General delivery letters with addresses put on by the addressor* can be considered prime candidates for carrier delivery. These letters could be held at the general delivery for the legally specified period and then turned over to the carrier service for delivery. As we have not yet found any instructions stating such letters should automatically go out on first day carrier delivery, they are not certifiable as letter carrier delivery covers, but they probably did receive such domicile service.



ORIGINATING CARRIER DIRECTIONAL FOR DELIVERY. This May 9, 1851 letter with its orange 31mm WEST TROY N.Y./MAY/9/5 cds was give a carrier delivery direction by its writer, who knew Philadelphia had a carrier system and stated '134 South Second Street, Below Dock Street', to obtain carrier delivery.

The instruction "Below Dock Street" would not have been added if this letter were not to be carrier delivered. It is logical to anticipate carrier delivery when we consider that the city's streets had been declared post roads by the Act of March 3, 1851, to take effect July 1, 1851. This act would have spurred the addressor to use the government's system rather than Blood's.

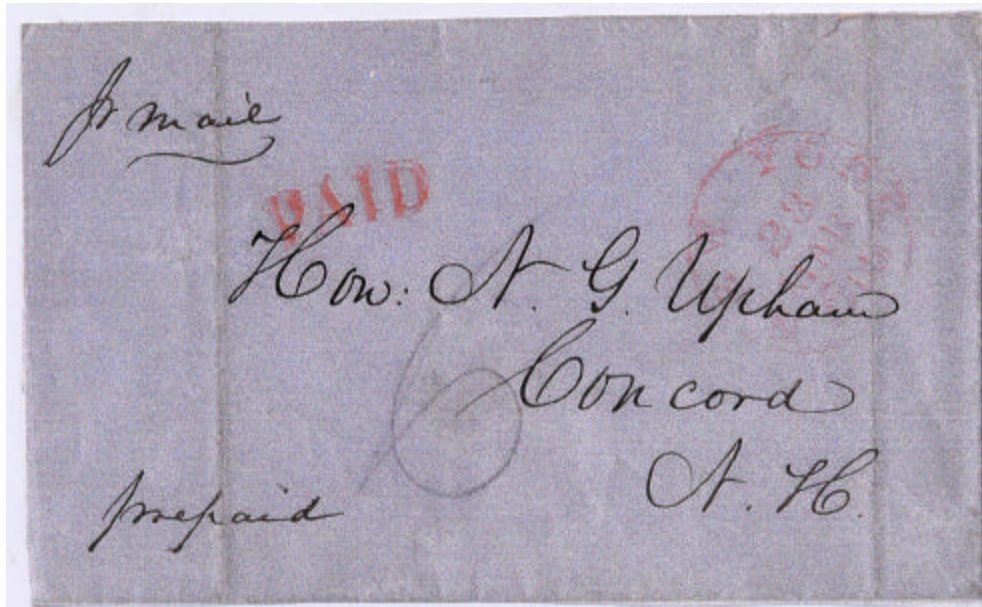
5) Street addresses added in a second handwriting are general delivery letters that received carrier handling. These are letters of class (3) above that were taken out of general delivery by the carrier service for delivery in New York, and presumably in the other cities where carrier service existed. The carrier as an aide memoire added the address because he knew that the letter in question, although not marked with Street address or box number, was to be delivered. Either a specific request had been received or the letter had waited in the post office for the required time to be automatically transferred to the carrier service. The latter is the more probable.

It is possible to even identify these second handwriting-addressed letters as to the carrier involved. This has been done for several of the early New York carrier items previously illustrated. Because each of the first New York carrier men started at a different time, it is possible to match the handwriting on covers that they alone could have handled against that on other covers. If it matched a handwriting associated with carrier service prior to mid-1793 it was Mr. Duncan's. If it matched a handwriting associated with carrier service prior to mid-1800 but not prior to mid-1793, it was Mr. West's. If it was neither, Mr. Betts wrote it.



CARRIER PICKUP CHARGE ON OVERSEAS MAIL. This October 23, 1847 letter was picked up and charged a carrier 2¢ fee as denoted by the red 34mm cds NEW-YORK/OCT 24/2 cts at lower left. As it was addressed to St. John, New Brunswick, it was given the red 31mm NEW YORK/OCT/25/10cts cds and a blue pen 10 rate. It crossed the border at St. ANDREWS where it got a green 29mm ST. ANDREWS/OC 29/1847/N.B. backstamp and went on to St. JOHNS the same day receiving a black cds. In New Brunswick it received a collect charge as denoted by the manuscript at upper right, 6d Canadian equivalent to the 10¢ U.S. and a 7d internal New Brunswick for a total of 1/1 Canadian.

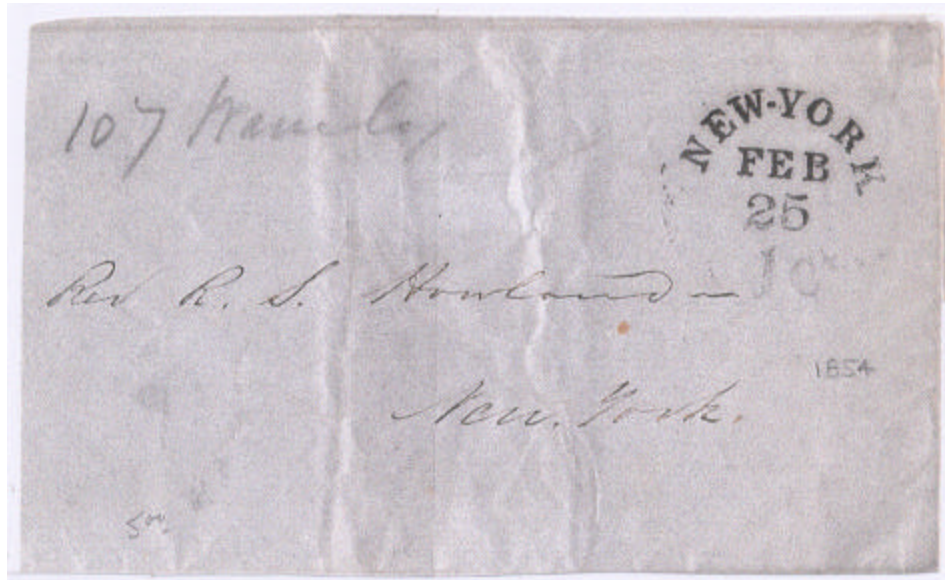
Building up a reference collection structure of the carrier dates and handwritings permits identification of many of the New York City carriers prior to the introduction of special carrier handstamps, which are beyond the scope of this article. (These include the United States City Despatch Post markings of 1842-1846, the U.S. City Mail markings of 1850 and the city delivery and station markings beginning in 1856.) It is just the possibility of such a reference structure that insures against future forging of extra addresses upon inexpensive covers to convert them into desirable early letter-carrier markings. Past forging of this type of marking is nonexistent.



1¢ COLLECTION FEE OF 1849 AS PER ROBERT MORRIS' NOTICE OF THAT DATE. This March 28, 1851 cover is a late use of the 1845 rate. The letter was written March 25th and given to the carrier already prepaid 6¢. The carrier put a manuscript 6 on the face before turning it in to the postoffice where it received a red curved New York PAID and the 30mm NEW YORK/28/MAR/5 cts (flat style) cds to Concord, N.H.



PREPAID 4¢ CARRIER PICKUP FOR DOMESTIC 3¢ RATE. The carrier picked up this 1853 letter addressed to Mrs. Currier at Grand Rapids Mich. which was writer-denoted 'Paid 4 cents' and marked a '4' and his initials in pencil before taking it to the postoffice where it received the standard red 31mm NEW-YORK/MAR/14/PAID 3 Cts. of the period. The late Arthur Bond confirmed my analysis.



1854 SMUGGLED LETTER CARRIER DELIVERED. This cover was written at Rome January 14, 1854 and smuggled to the U.S. where it was given to the carrier department for delivery as denoted by the black 30mm NEW-YORK/FEB/25/1 Ct. cds and the carrier's pencil address notation of '107 Waverly' St. A docketing notation of June 1, 1854 by Howland records he received \$8.66 from Ebenezer Thayer of 16 Wall St. who was to pay the bill of exchange according to the letter.

Carrier Operations In Boston and Philadelphia

The extent of the carrier service prior to the *Act of 1836* makes it clear that in New York, at least, a large number of the known stampless covers must have been domicile-delivered by carriers prior to the first handstamps recording carrier service. This fact has not hitherto been recognized. Similarly, it is not a matter of common philatelic knowledge that a number of cities had a history of early (pre-1840) carrier service and therefore that there are a number of hitherto unrecorded carrier service covers associated with them.

A cursory check of pre-1840 carrier service shows that in the three largest American cities—New York, Philadelphia, and Boston—the service goes back into the 18th century. Boston had carrier service as far back as 1639 (provided by a forwarder), even 40 years before an official post office was established, and this was confirmed under the *1692 Neale Patent*. There is no reason to assume carrier service was ever abandoned, although I was unable to find a penny post letter carrier listed in the 1789 Boston city directory.

Local collectors are aware of the scarcity of the private locals in Boston and the relative weakness of the private locals compared with the other two major cities, even in the 1850s. Too, many of the letters carried by the Independent Mail operations such as Hale, American Letter Mail, and Overton, carry notations for local delivery fees of 2¢, which almost certainly were those of the Boston carriers. There were at least four carriers in the penny post system in 1837 and this expanded to six in 1847 and eight in 1848, under the aegis of Edwin C. Bailey. Bailey headed City Delivery from 1846 to late 1848, before his replacement by James H. Patterson who had earlier headed the Boston Parcel Post at 23 Sudbury, a private local.

While Boston apparently had a penny post in its early days, it is doubtful if there was one in the last days of the colonial period—a situation that may have continued right to the end of the 1700's. One piece of evidence is the *Hugh Finlay Journal*¹². There, Finlay comments

¹² Finlay, Hugh *Journal Kept by Hugh Finlay 1773-1774*, pages 29-30. Compiled and published in 1867 by Frank H. Norton; 1975 reprint edition by the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, with introduction written by Calvet M. Hahn.

upon the Boston office as it was on October 14, 1773,

“There’s no runner employ’d at this office; one wou’d be useful. The riders have no Post horns.”

By this remark he surely meant there was no “penny post” carrier as of that date.

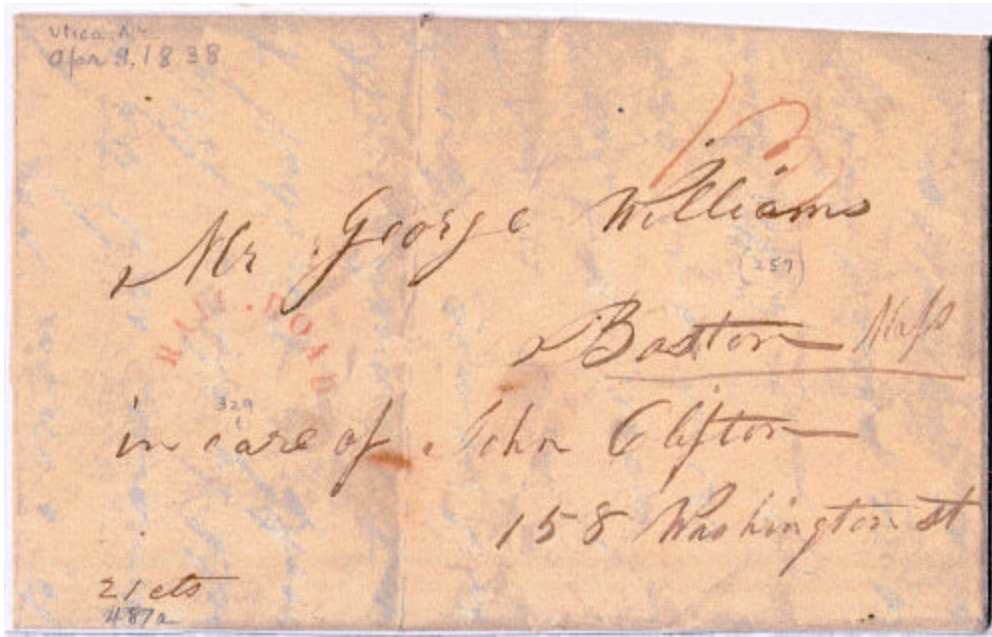
Boston has earlier been cited as having a very early operation in 1639, but Hugh Finlay did not find one in operation in 1771. Maurice Blake¹³ notes that post office notices and almanacs show that there were from one to eight penny postmen in the Boston carrier service between 1829 and 1849. There were four ‘penny posts’ in 1837 and by 1847 the number was six rising to eight by 1848. From 1830 to January 1, 1844, the main postoffice was located in the Old State House (City Hall) after which it was in the Merchant’s Exchange on State Street until the November 10, 1872 fire except for a brief period between March 5, 1859 and December 14, 1861 at which time it was at Summer and Chauncey Streets.

From 1846 until 1849 Edwin C. Bailey headed the carrier department. A notice of February 28, 1849 from Nathaniel Greene, the Boston postmaster stated that James H. Patterson (former head of the Boston Parcel Post Company) and his carriers were the government delivery agents. Initially his carrier department was at 23 Sudbury St., location of the Boston Parcel Post, but by 1850 it was in the Merchant’s Exchange. The department was reorganized in 1851 into nine sub offices rising to 19 in 1857 and replaced by 16 ‘receiving stations’ in 1858. Postmaster Nahum Capen declared Boston streets were post roads on October 11, 1858 and iron letterboxes were placed around the city including in the leading hotels. . A selection of the Boston carrier postmarks follows:



BOSTON CARRIER DELIVERY OF SHIP LETTER IN 1835. This letter, which originated at Eastport, ME May 6, 1835 reports a 3-day passage from Portland and heavy gales. It regards finding a job from the addressee. It arrived in Boston on the sailing vessel *Boundary* and was given the red Boston SHIP/6 scroll and turned over to the carrier for delivery to Wildes’ Hotel on Elm Street for which an 8 cts rate was charged, 2¢ of which was for the carrier.

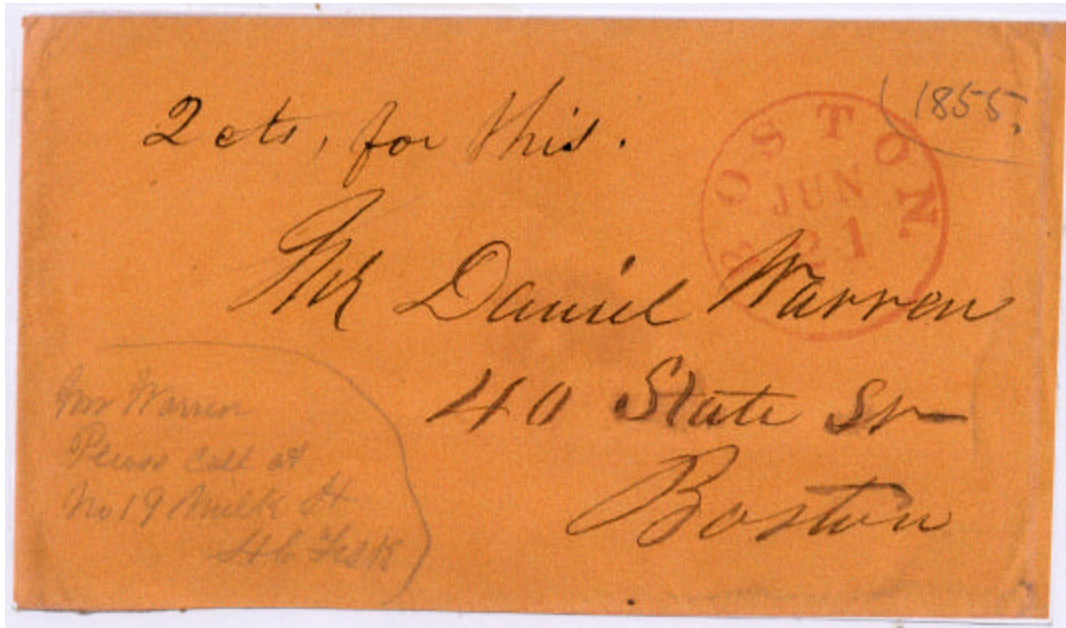
¹³ Blake, Maurice C. and Davis Wilbur B. **Boston Postmarks to 1890.** 1949 Published by Severn-Wylie Jewett, Portland, ME; reprinted 1974 Quarterman Publications, Lawrence, MS, pages 82-99.



UTICA RAILROAD AND BOSTON CARRIER DELIVERY COMBINATION. This April 2, 1838 cover, which is ex-Blake, bears the earliest recorded Utica red (Towle catalog 114B61) arc RAIL.ROAD. It is rated 12½ to get it to Boston and the addressee had to pay the '21 cts' noted at bottom left when it was delivered c/o John Clifton at 158 Washington St. in Boston. My best explanation is that there was a question of distance and the 12½ was not deemed correct and an 18¾ was charged plus 2¢ for carrier delivery rounded up to 21¢.



BOSTON PENNY POST DELIVERY. It was common to put a manuscript 'Penny Post Delivery' on covers in the 1847-59 period as seen here on a cover from New York August 31, 1847 that was delivered at 3 Dane St. Boston.



BOSTON TWO CENTS CARRIER CHARGE IN 1855. This June 21 1844 letter to Daniel Warren at 40 State St was charged 2¢. It would appear that the manuscript notation at bottom left asking Warren to call at 19 Milk St. was written by the carrier as the handwriting neither matches that of the address nor Mr. Warren's docketing of the carrier charge.



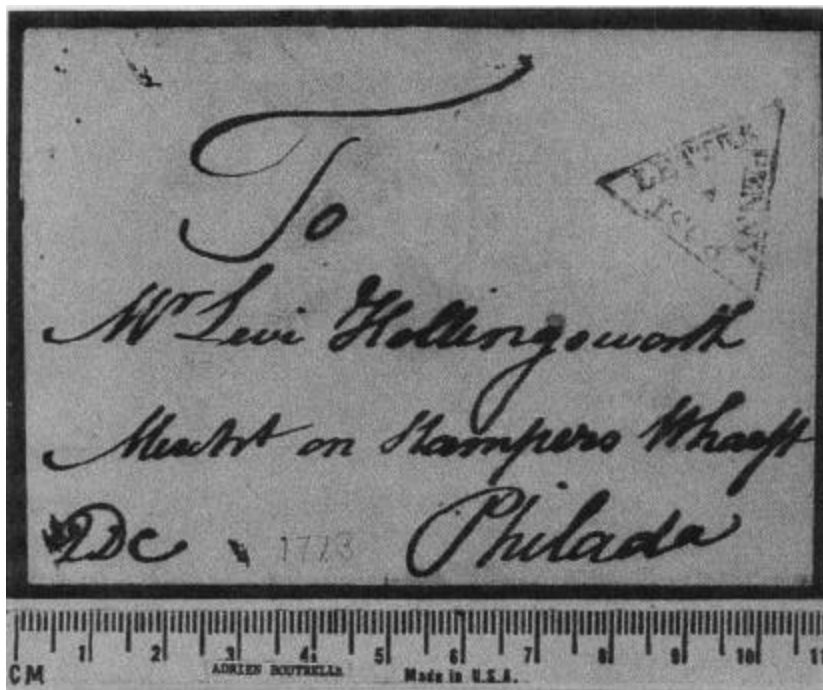
BOSTON PENNY POST PAID HANDSTAMP. In addition to using a series of hour/date/DELIVERY ovals or boxes, usually as backstamps from 1854-1857, Boston also used a 19mm double-circled grid PENNY POST/PAID in black, red and blue. The blue is particularly rare; I've only recorded two 1860 examples. This one is on a June 11, 1860 cover delivered to Munroe Place at Tyler St.

The situation was quite different in Philadelphia, America's largest colonial city. There, Franklin had introduced both the advertising of letters and the penny post in 1753. During the month of July 1762, William Bradford's *Pennsylvania Journal* carried the following notice from the postmaster who was Franklin's cousin:

"The lad who was lately employed at the Post Office as Penny Post having run away.

the gentlemen who expect letters are requested to call for them until a suitable person can be procured to carry them. WILLIAM DUNLAP.”

Knowledge of the colonial Philadelphia penny post’s existence has led to a nasty philatelic situation. Apparently genuine colonial correspondence has been tampered with to create new rarities, Philadelphia penny post covers. At least two such covers are reported in the holding of an important eastern collector who quite rightly called attention to the probability of them being forgeries.



PURPORTED PHILADELPHIA PENNY POST COVER FROM 1773. This outer leaf has a red handstamped PENNY/POST/LETTER added to make a great philatelic rarity, from an ordinary colonial outer leaf address sheet.

The added marking is a red 28mm triangle reading: PENNY/POST/LETTER with a tiny triangle in the center as illustrated on the letter sheet here. Both reported letters are addressed to Hollingsworth in Philadelphia and both are supposedly dated 1773. One is on a correspondence from “Elk 22 August 1773” and the other is just an outer wrapper. The town of Elk is the “Head of Elk” located on the post run from Philadelphia to Annapolis. Detailed analysis of why these should be considered forged additions is not offered here, as it is feared other items are now being circulated, with reported added markings even being inserted into archival copies to boost authenticity. An exposé of detection methods might lead the perpetrator to correct his failings, therefore, only the appropriate people have been supplied with such identification detail.

In Philadelphia, R. A. Barry in his ‘U. S. Specialists Column’ in the *American Philatelist* reported that there were three carriers in the 1790’s. I cannot verify this. I have carefully read the two 1785 city directories, the 1791, and the 1800 Philadelphia city directories and located only one carrier, **Abraham Cook**, who was at 15 Queen Street at Southwark as a cooper in 1791. He was a letter carrier at 3 Chauncey Street in Philadelphia from 1794 through 1798 and at 18 North 3rd street in 1799, moving to 198 North 2nd in 1800. Because Philadelphia was the largest American city in the period, it would not be illogical for there to have been three carriers in the period. A more thorough reading of the Philadelphia city

directories may reveal them.

Steven M. Roth in his 'Philadelphia Carriers' article¹⁴ took up this challenge and found **William Blake** as a letter carrier at 68 Spruce St. in the 1791-1793 editions, the last of which had him at 6 Carters Alley #4. Blake does not again appear. Roth did not locate Cook before the 1794 edition; at this point Cook was at 3 Chancery Lane while Blake was at 6 Carter's Alley as was another new carrier, **Josiah Johnson**. Cook continued at 3 Chancery Lane until the 1799 edition at which point he was at 18 North 3rd St. and in 1802 at 98 North 2nd St. Johnson may have dropped out of the picture in 1795 to become a printer at 188 Race St., but he is again listed in 1797 at the 6 Carter's Alley location, at which he continues through 1802 except for 1799 when he is at 36 South 5th St.



PHILADELPHIA 2 ON INCOMING COVER FOR CARRIER. This is an 1831 cover from Brownsville, PA with its straightline at upper left. It is addressed to L&A. Haines c/o Charles Champion at the Arch St. ferry and bears an additional manuscript '2' in addition to the 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ rate to cover the carrier deliver.

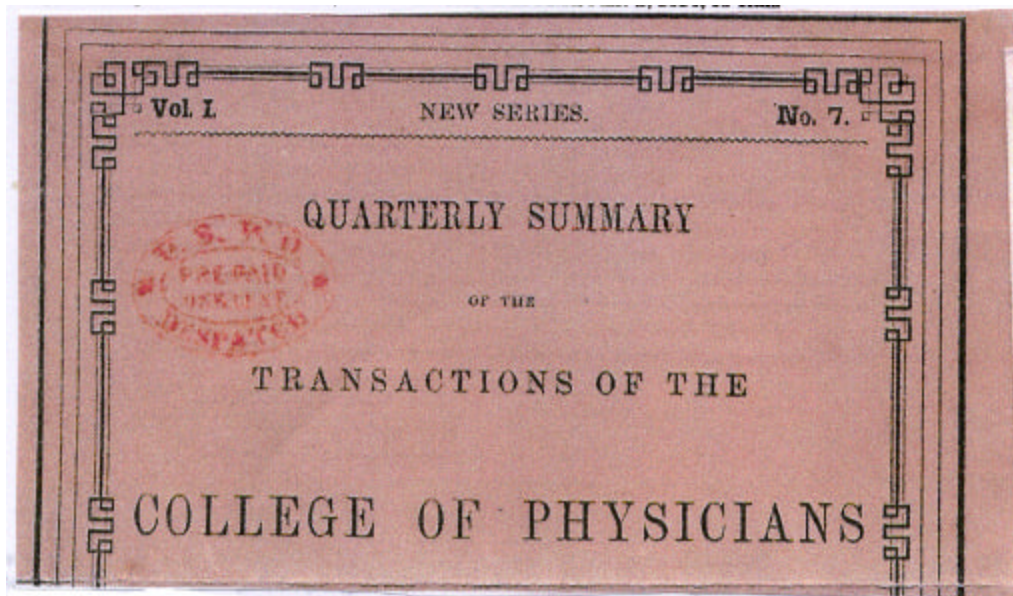
Another carrier, apparently a relative, **David Johnson**, is found at 6 Carter's Alley in 1798, moving with Josiah Johnson to 36 South 5th in 1799 and then in 1801 to 24 South 5th St, moving just a few doors away to 32 South 5th in 1802-1803. In 1798 a third carrier is found, **Samuel Parke**, at 6 Carter's Alley and who is located there into 1801. In 1803 another Philadelphia carrier is located. This is **John Lee** at 288 Sassafras St. Roth never continued this study. According to Robert Meyersburg's article in *Chronicle 130*, another member of the Johnson family, **John Johnson** was a carrier in 1847. Pre-1850s Philadelphia covers could be street addressed or bear specific notations so that the penny post would deliver them; others could just be rated with a carrier rate or what is known as the 'Philadelphia checkmark'.¹⁵ Beginning in the 1850s, they could bear the handstamps well known used at that city's carrier office.

¹⁴ Roth, Steven M. 'Philadelphia Carriers' published in *Penny Post* Vol. 1 #3 August 1991 pages 28-30

¹⁵ Newman, Lowell S. "The Carrier Check Marks" published in *Penny Post* Vol. 4 #4 October 1994 pages 12-15



EAGLE PREPAID ONE CENT HANDSTAMP COVER. This ex-Henry Gibson August 1, 1855 cover is from the Tacony Chemical Works at 58 South Front St. and addressed to the South St. Wharf. It received the Philadelphia red PAID and the 21x17mm handstamped red version of 7LB14. It has PFC 317242 attesting to its genuineness. A copy ex-Chapman is known June 4, 1852. Also known in black June 2, 1856, ex-Hall.



EARLY SERIFED U.S.P.O. PREPAID ONE-CENT HANDSTAMP. This red handstamp is used to deliver pamphlets etc. with this example being from the summer of 1852 delivering a quarterly report of the College of Physicians. It is recorded from this July 6, 1852 date to March 1853.



PHILADELPHIA CHECK MARK COVER. This cover from an 1845 correspondence originated with the black 27mm double circle MACON/AL^A. cds addressed to Mrs. James Campbell at 269 Pine St in Philadelphia. Rated 10 cents it was carrier delivery addressed and has the check mark in the middle that is believed to be a carrier notation.



SANS-SERIF VERSION U.S.P.O. PREPAID ONE CENT DESPATCH HANDSTAMP. Introduced February 27, 1853 this version is found in both red and black and is the most common of the three.

Carrier Operations in Other Cities Before the Act of 1836

In an important article ¹⁶ on carriers, the late Henry Meyer drew attention to the fact that

¹⁶ Meyers, Henry "Good-by Penny Post" published in *SPA Journal* September 1963.

Section 36 of the *Act of 1825* is a repeat from the earlier *Act of March 3, 1810*. This, of course, borrowed from the 1794 act cited here as the first federal act I was able to locate on the carrier service. The article also noted a number of cities with carriers prior to 1837. Among them were Newport, R.I. (I own an 1826 one originating at Kingston RI), New Brunswick, N.J., Detroit, Mich. and Hagerstown, MD. Others have since turned up including New Haven and Middletown, CT and Portsmouth, NH.

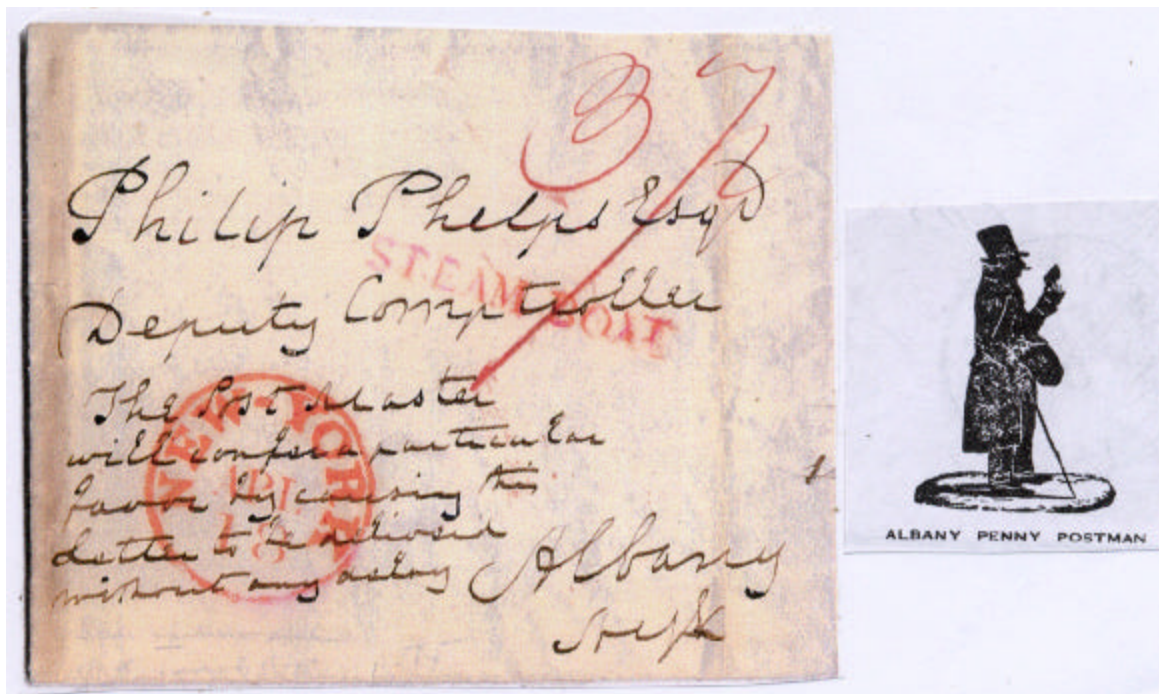


NEWPORT R.I. PENNY POST NOTED ON FACE. this Kingston, R.I. letter was posted June 1, 1826 and received on the third s docketed on the face. The rate was 6cto Newport while a 2¢ ‘penny post’ charge was added. The letter is to notify Mr. Gould, a goldsmith, that he has six months to make claims against an estate.

Other cities also had carrier services prior to 1840. Elliott Perry recorded carrier service in Cincinnati in 1839. Denwood Kelly reported Baltimore had a penny post as early as 1819 according to the Baltimore city directories. I noted an even earlier one, **John C. Ebecke**, found in a notice in the *New York Post* of October 11, 1809 and cited in my *Collectors Club Philatelist* reply to the critics of my review of ter Braake’s colonial post book. There were three carriers by 1840 and six by 1842 of whom **John Musselman** continued in service until 1851.

As noted in my already cited *Postal History Notes VI*, **Charles Bishop** of 49 First Street was appointed as Troy, NY’s first letter carrier in January 1836 and began delivery on January 29th of that year with a 2¢ fee. Letters are known as early as February 2, 1836 marked “Penny Post” for carrier delivery in Providence, RI. I have at least one cover that suggests Portsmouth, NH may have had letter carrier service in the early 1840’s. Albany had a penny post letter carrier, **William B. Winnie**, at least as early as 1800, when Ken deLisle found newspaper references. I owned a check-marked cover of December 5, 1816 which may be Winnie’s carrier marking. He was a letter carrier living at 57 Orange on June 1, 1814, the date of the earliest *Albany City Directory* I was able to check. He was still listed as a post office messenger in 1889 living at 63 Orange, where he moved in the early 1880’s. Prior to 1884, but after 1831, he was joined by **Robert Strong** as the postoffice letter carrier. Strong had been a grocer for many years previous at Pearl and Lydius. He lived at 23 and then 48 Lydius while carrying the mails

and was still listed at the post office in 1839. Robert Dalton Harris indicates Winnie was a “penny post” as early as 1795. Elliott Perry in his *Carrier Stamps of the U. S.*, Part IV, notes both Winnie and Strong were appointed letter carriers “in conformity with the nomination of S. van Rensalaer, PM” in an official order dated January 26, 1897.



ALBANY PENNY POST DELIVERY (1834-1843 period). This steamboat letter from New York with a 30mm NEW-YORK/APL/18 cds (Type 15) contains an instructional for the postmaster to delivery the letter without delay to the Deputy Comptroller of the State. Either Winnie or Strong would have delivered it. To the right is an old-time sketch of an Albany penny postman, probably a likeness of William B. Winnie, himself



ALBANY CARRIER 2¢ RATE MARK. This August 7, 1842 letter from Post office Special Agent Lewis Eaton at Buffalo, the man who first advertised the ‘express mail services’, is addressed to former Albany Mayor and railroad magnate Erastus Corning in Albany stating the PMG has authorized service on route 969 between Schenectady and Utica to take

effect July 1, 1842 once the contract is signed. The unpaid letter has a 2¢ black rate mark to show carrier delivery in Albany.

One romantic incident involving William Winnie is narrated by Alice Earle¹⁷. Ms. Earle describes how a highwayman in 1805 robbed the tavern of John Pye (on the West Troy, N. Y., road), but failed to get \$1,000 in cash and gold under Mr. Pye's bed as Mrs. Pye shot him and frightened him off. He fled back through Albany and leaped onto the ice with his horse to flee across the Hudson. The mounted Albany men fled when highwayman Johnson fired at them. That is, all fled but Captain Winne (sic) the penny post, who was heard to mutter excitedly in his semi-Dutch dialect:

“Mine Cott! Yat leeps das horse has mate! Yull dwenty feet! Dunder and bliksem! He's der tuyfel for rooning!” Winnie was an old Indian fighter, and soon he boldly grappled the highwayman, who drew a dagger on him. Winnie knocked it from his hand. The highwayman grappled with him, wrenched away his club, and hit the penny-post a blow on his mouth, which loosened all his front teeth (which, the chapbook says, ‘Winne afterwards took out at his leisure’). Winne then dallied no longer; he pulled down the handkerchief from the robber's forehead, twisted it around his neck, and choked him. In the morning twilight the great band of cautious Albanians gravely advanced, bound the highwayman securely, and carried him in triumph back to jail.”

The range of cities in which carrier markings are likely because of known service makes it most probable that a search of the records in many other areas would produce like results. Domicile delivery of letters was widespread in the US prior to 1840. Copies of such markings are sufficiently plentiful that no major local or carrier collection should lack an example, although few have them today.



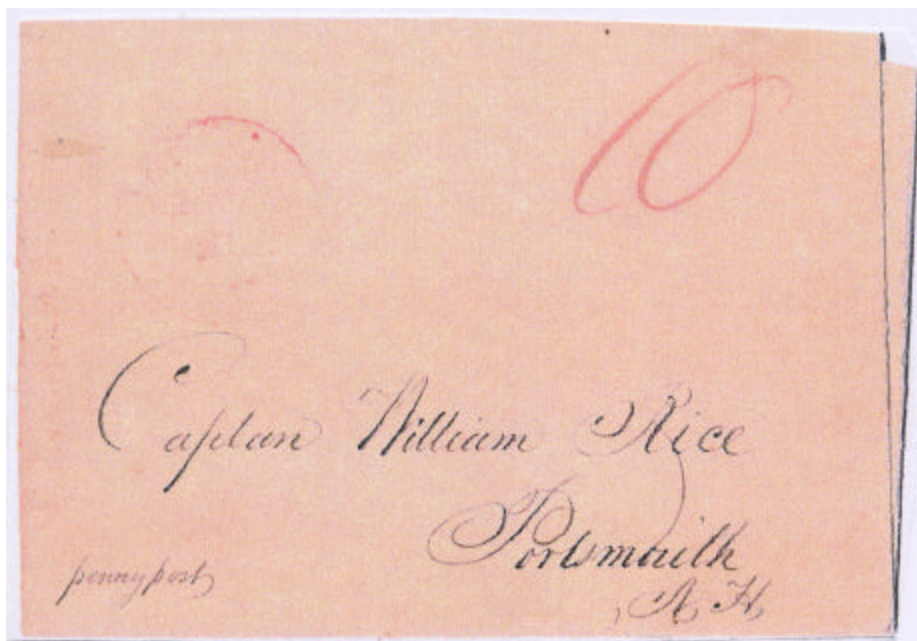
MIDDLETOWN, CT CARRIER OF 1832. a Middletown resident who is in Charleston, SC. writes on July 26, 1832 to Mr.

¹⁷ Earle, Alice M. **Stage-Coach and Tavern Days**, pgs 395-399. 449 pages published 1900 by Macmillan Company. Reprinted in 1969 by Dover Publications, New York.

Higgins at Middletown CT regarding a suit against him, which he apparently will lose; the writer was not even allowed to give testimony. The letter was sent unpaid at the 25¢ rate and docketing notes Higgins paid 56¢ including a 6¢ carrier fee. It is not at all clear why the basic rate was doubled and the carrier paid 6¢.



NEW HAVEN CT CARRIER DELIVERY IN 1847. New Haven had a well-organized carrier system as early as 1811, when a member of the New York Strong family sent money care of 'Tutor Day of Yale' to his student relative. A nephew writes this New York letter of November 24, 1847 to his uncle in New Haven regarding the uncle's property and problems in getting a smith and mason to take care of it. Posted November 25th, it is addressed to the Rev. William Niles at 80 Wooster St., New Haven and requests immediate delivery at New Haven by the 'penny post.'



PORTSMOUTH CARRIER. LETTER OF DECEMBER 20, 1827 TO COLLECT DEBT AT PORTSMOUTH. This letter originated at Boston and was rated 10¢ as well as being directed to the 'penny post' of Portsmouth. It directed that Capt. William Rice collect the debt to be paid to Willis Barnaby, a Portsmouth stage driver.

The Beginning Of Private Locals

The first private locals logically would begin in Boston, New York or Philadelphia where their need would be first felt. No early contenders have been reported for Boston. In Philadelphia there are two—the Northern Liberties News Room of 1835-1836—and Blood's. In New York, the earliest recorded is the New York Penny Post. In fact, this is the first private local yet recorded as the Northern Liberties seems not to be a carrier or a local, but rather a 'newsroom' similar to New York's Hudson's, Gilpin's or Boston's Topliff's only located in a hotel. It is in line with the Blue Anchor Inn forwarding operation run by Richard Fairbanks in 1639 that was the subject of the first American postal law. Newsrooms and coffee houses were listed in city guides under the caption of 'postoffice', as was the case to the 1817 Blunt's *'Strangers' Guide to the City of New York.'*

Handstamped forwarders go back until at least 1809 and in manuscript they go back to 1673 on known covers from the U. S. as I note in my *Postal Services of New Netherland*¹⁸. Hotel handstamps are known in early 1840 from Howard's Hotel in Troy, N.Y. and the Hayes and Treadwell hotel in New York in association with mail delivery to the post office, or even intercity. In manuscript they go even earlier. For example, the Wayne Hotel, in Steuben (now Wayne) county, New York, not only handled letters but the manager was also able to have his hotel designated as the U. S. postoffice. Thus, I believe, the Northern Liberties News-Room marking is nothing more than an early handstamped hotel or newsroom marking.

Eliminating the Northern Liberties, Bloods is traditionally classed as the first true local in Philadelphia. The Blood family, themselves, in the advertisement of June 28, 1851, do not claim to have been in the local delivery field before 1845, when Daniel Otis Blood, chief cashier of the *Daily Public Ledger*, and his brother Walter H. Blood purchased the Philadelphia Dispatch Post from James W. Halsey on July 7, 1845. The Blood family members were dealers in coal and manufacturers of shoe polish in the early days. The preceding local, the Philadelphia Dispatch Post, was announced December 8, 1842, by Robertson & Co. and apparently managed by Mr. Halsey. Its earliest recorded handstamp is a black strike on 12/19/42. Both have been extensively discussed elsewhere and the data need not be repeated here.

Excluding Philadelphia as we must, the earliest private local yet recorded is the New York Penny Post.¹⁹ This operation was first advertised in the *New York Journal of Commerce* on Friday, December 20, 1839 to begin operations on Monday December 23rd with 75 locations where letters and packages could be picked up. The service offered twice daily delivery and pickup service for a per letter charge of 3c. The post was sponsored by the New York Penny Post Association and had its address at 62 Canal Street (this is near the corner of Canal and Broadway). In searching the *Longworth Directories* for 1841 and 1842—the two that would logically carry a listing for this operation—I have been unable to find a listing under the Penny Post, City Despatch, New York Penny Post or Free Trade Penny Post.

The good will and assets of the New York Penny Post were sold to Henry Thomas Windsor, an Englishman, sometime in the fall of 1841 so that he might start the City Despatch Post, using Alexander M. Greig as his agent, early in 1842. In one sense the Penny Post was not a success or it would not have been sold. On the other hand, the known copies during its

¹⁸ Hahn, Calvet M. 'Postal Services of New Netherland'. (4 parts) *American Philatelist* February-May 1973.

¹⁹ Both Bloods and its predecessor and the New York Penny Post and its successors are discussed in my recently revised *Penny Post* series 'Beginnings of Adhesive Philately' where more detailed discussion and sources can be found.

first year of operation are far more numerous than the known copies of Swarts—a very successful New York local—during its first year of operation or of the first year of the Blood operation.

The Reason for the Rise of the Locals

Private operation of city posts in the 1840's was a logical consequence of the economic system of the period. A need for better mail handling was growing and the government did not meet it. First, population was booming. I have already noted that in 1830 there was one carrier for every 13,000 people in New York City. According to the "U. S. Specialists Column" of Mr. Barry, previously cited, there were 25 carriers in 1840. I have not been able to verify this and suspect the figure is high. At the opening of the U. S. City Despatch in 1842 there were but eight carriers involved, rising to 17 in 1845. In population, New York City stood at 313,000 in 1840 and the trend was sharply up with 92,000 immigrants arriving in that year alone—many staying in New York. Two years later annual immigration had risen to 110,000. Thus by 1845, the population had soared to 415,000. The 17 carriers reported by Elliott Perry in the *First 100 Years* for the 1844-5 period would have represented one per 25,000 population—about half the needed staff. The impact of the Panic of 1837—truly the great depression of 1837-45—has not yet been discussed in its effect upon the carrier service although the change in post office administration, the fire of 1835, and the problem of allocating the fees from the post office between the postmaster (for boxes) or carriers (for domicile delivery) have been.²⁰ The depression was a very serious one. Banks in New York suspended operations in May 1837 setting off a chain reaction. Specie payments were not resumed until late 1839. Rents in New York City dropped almost 50% between 1835 and 1840. The wholesale price index registered a very sharp drop in 1837 and did not turn back up until 1841-1842. The trough of the depression was in mid-1841. As the economy improved and population continued to boom new demands for service were logical. It is possible that the depression was the key factor in the relatively small impact of the New York Penny Post -

There almost certainly was some deterioration of service in the 1836-42 period. The report of Barnabas Bates made this clear. Alvin Harlow, in *Old Post Bags*, reports that there were 22 carriers on the streets going as far north as Houston and Fourth streets in the late 1830's, and adds,

“But even in the business district there was only one delivery per day and farther out, only three per week.”

The initial report of the take over of the City Despatch shows that only eight carriers in eight districts were used in early 1842. In addition to the number of carriers, the number of stations is an important competitive measure. Both must be related to the geography of the city. Postmaster John Lorimer Graham in 1842 gives the geography:

“the limits of this city mail extend from the Battery to Twenty second street, a distance of upwards of three miles, and from the East River to the Hudson. which at some points, are distant from each other two miles and a quarter—comprehending an area, intersected by streets, amounting to 113 miles in extent.”

There had been an addition of 16 blocks—from 4th street to 22nd— island wide since the mid-1830's. By 1844, John Boyd's local was advertising service up to 26th street as the city continued to sprawl North at a rapid pace.

²⁰ Hahn, Calvet M. 'Mail Quantities Carried by the Independent Mail Companies' *Chronicle* December 2001 presents an extensive discussion of this depression, population growth and economic activity.

The New York Penny Post had had to use 75 stations and twice a day delivery. The service was double that offered by the government's letter carrier operation in the late 1830's on just delivery alone. It was probably double to triple the number of stations operated in the 1833-6 period. At the time of the government purchase of the City Despatch there were 101 stations—not quite one per mile of Street to cover. This expanded in a few months to 112 stations and delivery was up to three times daily. John Boyd began his competition with the government with over 200 stations (chiefly in drug stores and hotels). To the extent that the government was not successful in expanding the stations rapidly enough to meet the growth in population or the deliveries to meet the competitive offers, the local private posts had a competitive weapon.

Service can be measured by carriers, collection-stations, and frequency of delivery. In all of these the official service had gaps that the private entrepreneurs were quick to exploit. Another supposed advantage was the creation of the adhesive stamp by Mr. Windsor for the City Despatch Post. This supposedly solved the prepayment problem and increased the importance of the collection stations. It is true that the adhesive was an advantage and was used more extensively in the early days by the private operators than by the government. However, philatelists have probably overrated its importance.

In the 1840's prepayment was the exception not the rule. Up until the 1850 period, we can probably find more local covers without stamps than those with. And, many of those that do bear locals are suspect. The psychological shift from payment upon receipt of a letter to the prepayment of a letter had not been made prior to 1850. The shift involved reflections of status, economic class. etc. Previous to 1840 only people asking favors prepaid. Prepayment implied an inability upon the part of the recipient to afford letters—which were expensive!

Until the change in rates made it economically advantageous to prepay letters in mid-1851, the psychological barrier was important. It is also true that many people probably never had to deal with a stamp in their lives prior to 1851. As can be seen from Appendix II and III, less than 1½% of U. S. postage came from stamped letters in the 1847 through 1851 period. In fact, stamp revenues were usually less than the British remittances on transatlantic mail. Even after the 2¢ penalty for unpaid letters was instituted on July 1, 1851, we find 34% of all letters were still unpaid in fiscal 1852, while stamps prepaid only 33.4%. The problems of purchasing stamps at this period are covered in *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine* in 1850, which reports:

“Stamps could be bought nowhere save at the post office, and were not for sale there at the windows. No clerk can be trusted with the precious charge. You must go around by a back way, through an obscure door, up a narrow, winding stairway into a lobby having several doors, and when you find the one leading to the cashier's room, you may enter there and be allowed to purchase stamps!”

The difficulties were formidable and explain the relative scarcity of the 1847 issue on cover in New York compared with the quantities of the period. It was probably just as difficult to get the U.S. City Despatch stamp in earlier years.

A fifth and final advantage that the private operators had was price. Elliott Perry discourses upon this point exhaustively in *One Hundred Years Ago* and his arguments need not be repeated here save to note that there was a price advantage accruing to the private operations and that it was important. Barnabas Bates in his letter of February 7, 1847 to the Postmaster General makes the point:

“A free delivery of letters would increase the revenue by causing the greater portion of the drop letters to be sent through the post-office, instead of the private offices now established in different parts of the city. The only reason why the City Despatch Post

failed was, that they charged more than the private penny post offices . . .”

The government had gotten out of the City Despatch business about three months earlier.

How the Carrier System Operated

The New York City carrier system operation can be divided into phases. In the first period a few carriers took letters from the post office, after waiting the requisite time, and delivered them to the homes or offices for a 2c fee. The carriers were post office employees, but whether they were paid solely from the carrier fee or were on salary is not yet known. A few of the carriers may have accepted letters at their homes.

The second phase began in New York in 1833 when the carrier force was greatly expanded and the carriers were required to establish collection boxes on their routes. The 2c delivery fee was given to the carriers and they apparently did not have a salary as well. Letters to the post office were free if they went out of town.

The third phase begins with the appointment of lawyer James R. Page and continues through the administration of merchant Jonathan J. Coddington. It was a depression period and these men used the post office as a means of enriching themselves through the box rents. By cutting back on carrier service, more citizens were required to take out boxes and thus improve the rent income of the postmaster. It was in this period that the first competition developed to the increasingly unsatisfactory service of the carrier system.

The fourth period occurred under Postmaster Graham when he arranged for the purchase of the City Despatch Post. The city was divided into eight districts for the local letters with a carrier for each. As Mr. Graham reported on November 24, 1842 to the Postmaster General,

“Boxes are placed in the most populous and eligible situations for the deposit of letters, among which all the principal hotels in the city are included, and where collectors of letters call at stated periods three times each day, receiving and transmitting to the post office all letters the said boxes contain, accompanied by a printed receipt for them, signed each time by the proprietors of the hotel or of the store constituting the stations. The letters, being brought to the post office are examined with the receipt, stamped with the hour and day, and conveyed throughout the same space to the parties to whom they are addressed, in the same number of deliveries, ...at three cents each. For the accommodation of those who wish to transmit these letters post-paid, free stamps are prepared...”

Initially service was limited to the area below 18th street (in terms of stations) and concentrated heavily in the financial district around Wall Street. A point not previously noted is that the city despatch operation was separate from the general carrier delivery. It has been reported, of course, but its implication has been passed over.

On July 21, 1842, Postmaster Graham wrote the Postmaster General that he had examined the report of Mr. Plitt who had been sent to Europe to examine the British and French systems. The English had separated out the penny post from the general delivery while the French had combined them. Graham had initially planned to combine the two, but when he talked to the old-time carriers such as Hallett, he opted for adoption of the London plan and to “keep the general and despatch delivery entirely separate.”

The separation of the carrier function into two parts partially explains Elliott Perry’s

problem in locating men who signed the Grieg testimonial among the men “connected with the Department since its formation.” It also makes it extremely difficult to determine the number of carriers on the streets and the function performed. Mr. Graham reports that the Greig operation had been handling 437 letters a day and the letter carrier system 250, however, this was only the portion of letters handled by the government that were despatch letters in line with the split of the carrier operation. We do not know the total number handled by the carriers.

The despatch post operation carried letters between two points within New York City, to the drop box in New York’s post offices, and to the general delivery for out of town mails. It was possible for a customer in New York to make arrangements to have letters from out of town brought by the despatch post, but I have yet to see a genuine example on stampless covers. The only example I have heard of on stamped covers is the one Perry illustrated from New Hamburg, N. Y., with an untied and unused City Despatch stamp. There is no reason to presume that this stamp actually prepaid the carrier delivery. Although the stamp seems to have been genuinely applied to the cover in the contemporary period by someone wishing to prepay and who had opportunity to buy the stamps when in New York, it may not have been. Further, even if so applied, the service was unlikely to have been performed, for out of town letters normally were turned over to the regular letter carriers for delivery and not the despatch carriers. Performed service would have required cancellation of the City Despatch stamp as Mr. Graham made clear when he wrote the Postmaster General,

“On letters bearing these stamps being received at the post office, the stamps are defaced in such a manner as to preclude the possibility of their being a second time used.”

The letter carrier service, in truncated form now that the local letters were removed, continued to take letters from out of town and deliver them for two cents or one cent each until free city delivery was instituted in 1863.

Carrier Operations in Other Cities After 1836

While this study is principally focused upon carrier operations as they developed in New York City, that city was not unique in having a ‘from the mails’ carrier system. Earlier a number of cities that had carriers prior to 1836 were discussed. These included colonial carrier services in Boston, Philadelphia and New York. Under the Constitution this list expanded to include Albany, Baltimore, New Haven, CT, Newport, R.I, Providence, RI among others.

Perhaps the largest city, not already discussed, is New Orleans. This ‘Queen City of the South’, New Orleans also had a flourishing carrier system that used stampless covers. However, it was late in developing a city carrier operation. The postoffice in 1846 employed carriers **Adolphe** and **Valery Wiltz**, together with **Gabriel Levasseur**. There is some indication that Valentines were delivered by carriers in 1849, but the first handstamp, the New Orleans ‘snow shovel’ seems to date from August 1851. Richard Schwartz noted there were six districts and nine carriers at the time. Valery Wiltz was head of the carrier service, being replaced by Levasseur in 1854.



EARLIEST NEW ORLEANS SNOW SHOVEL. This cover of August 8, 1851 was posted with a black 32mm circle LAGRANGE/AUG/10/TEX and a faint red circled 3. It discusses plans to sell assets to pay a claim and reports will arrive in New Orleans October 8th. Upon receipt in New Orleans it received a green 38x27mm 'snow shovel' of August 19 and oval CAR.2 for outof-town letter carrier delivered letters. It also received a green boxed NOT FOUND and a red boxed ADV. 1 to cover the cost of advertising.



BLUE SNOW SHOVEL. The blue snow shovel came into use by March 14, 1853 (in my holding) replacing the greens. This example originated in 1854 with a red 32mm BILOXI/JUL/23/MISS cds and 5 rate. It was received on the 27th (?) to reach Mrs. Pratt at St. Thomas and Benjamin Sts and has a blue CAR 2 handstamp as well. I record its use as late as December 14, 1854.



BLUE N.O.U.S. CITY POST—The snow shovel design was replaced in December 1854 by a new blue 36 mm circle reading N.O. U.S.CITY POST. This marking seems to have been used in black beginning June 2, 1855. This example originated with a black BELLEVILLE/FEB/9/ILL. cds and 5 rate in 1855 and was received in New Orleans on the 29th at which time the blue CITY POST was struck.

Among the other towns with a government carrier service that had its own adhesives are Baltimore and Charleston, S.C. Baltimore, had a ‘penny post’ operation since at least 1811. The late Denwood Kelly in his major work on Baltimore carriers²¹ and locals noted the *Matchett’s Baltimore City Directory* of 1842-1843 reported a notice of June 1, 1842 that seven depots for letters were established.

These seven district offices were: the Three Tuns Tavern in **J. Musselman’s** (appointed 1837-1850) district; at **Dominick Rayhice’s** home, on Saratoga St. 9 doors west of Chatsworth in his district; at the Golden Horse Tavern at the corner of Howard and Franklin in **John Gallagher’s** district (July 28, 1841 until he died in 1844); at William Moore’s located at Pratt St. and Smith’s wharf in **W. White’s** district (appointed November 2, 1841 until he resigned in 1842); at Messrs Ahern & Boyd’s at Baltimore and Liberty streets in **E. C. Wells’** district (June 1, 1836- 1842) he replaced **Peter Wells** (11/30/36-11/2/41) and **Richard C. Wells** (11/30/36-11/3/41); at the corner of Thames and market in **Ezekiel. C. Johnson’s** district (11/3/41-4/30/45; 7/14/49-51); and at #14 Exeter, north of Pitt in **H. Lusby’s** district (a former bank runner who was a carrier 4/14/41-4/16/45).

Kelly also noted other 1830s carriers were **John Busch** was appointed 11/30/36, **W. Keplinger** who resigned 4/14/41, **Abraham Littlefield** appointed 11/30/36, **James McNeal** (who resigned 7/28/41), **George Steener** (appointed 11/30/36), **J. J. Thompson** (appointed 11/30/1836), and **Walter N. Wills** (removed May 1841 and replaced by Edward C. Wells).

The carrier operation had an encircled blue 1 sometimes used by the carrier department when carrier deliveries were made, as well as a blue 21mm PAID+1+/- CENT/CARRIER of which a number have recently surfaced.

²¹ Kelly, Denwood N. ‘Private Posts in Baltimore 1844-1869’ *Collectors Club Philatelist* Vol. 50 #2-6 and ‘The Carrier Service In Baltimore Prior to 1863’ *Collectors Club Philatelist* Vol. 51 #3-Vol. 53 #1



BLUE BALTIMORE CARRIER HANDSTAMP. One of a half dozen or so examples of the Baltimore carrier circle is this to C. Nicholson. In addition to this one, Hall had the ex-Ackerman example; Schwartz had one and Golden had three. Hollowbush's example was dated December 17, 1855.

Charleston is also known to have used stampless manuscript markings such as the following manuscript directional in addition to having carrier adhesives. The adhesive service began under John H. Honour in 1849, who served until 1860 at which point John C. Beckman replaced him. Honour hired his brother-in-law, E. J. Kingman, to assist, but in 1851 they separated dividing the carrier business between them. Kingman became an official carrier at that time and served until March 1858 when he retired and was replaced by Joseph G. Martin. In mid-1858, John F. Steinmeyer, Jr. joined the service.



GOVERNMENT CARRIERS SUCH AS HONOUR PROVIDED CARRIER SERVICE IN CHARLESTON, S. C. BETWEEN May 1849 AND 1860. This example came from out of town posted with a red 29mm SUMPTERVILLE /OCT/6/S.C. is specifically directed to the care of the penny post, for delivery at 20 Montague St. in Charleston.

Carrier delivered covers addressed to Providence and Newport have already been

illustrated. Below are ones to Brooklyn, N.Y.; Harrisburg, PA; Lynn, MS.; Pittsburgh, PA; Salem, MS; and Utica, N.Y.

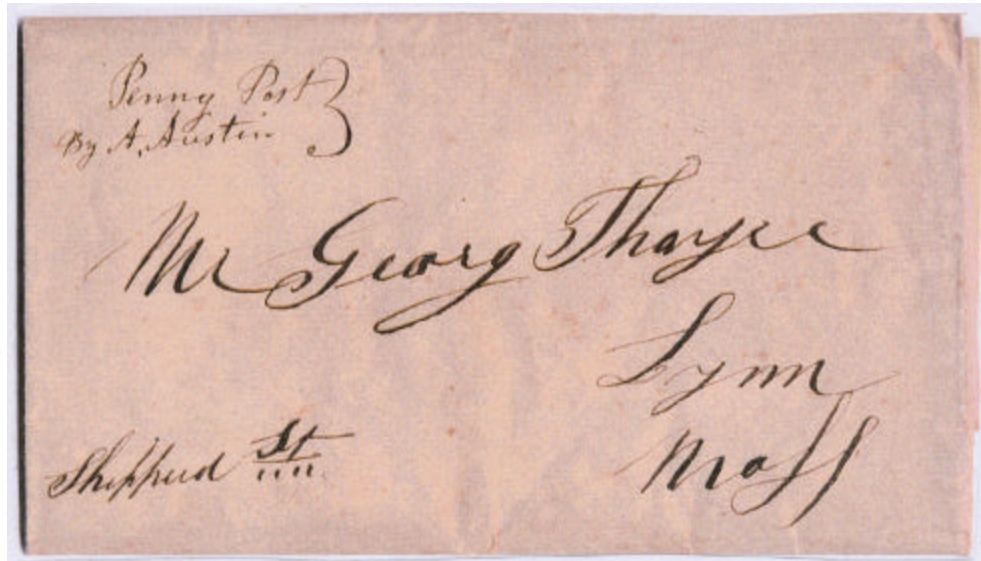


BROOKLYN CARRIER DELIVERY. This '1 CENT' handstamp is normally used for drop letters, but in this case it is on a carrier delivered letter to 217 Washington St. in Brooklyn. Note it is over-striking a FREE handstamp. Service apparently began in 1855 and in 1856 Robert H. Atwater was one of the Brooklyn letter carriers. Perry cited the first announcement from the 1855 newspapers when one delivery daily at 10 a.m. was noted. The following year the newspapers stated 'Carriers leave the office daily (Sundays excepted) at 8 A.M. and 3 P.M. for the delivery of letters, etc.'



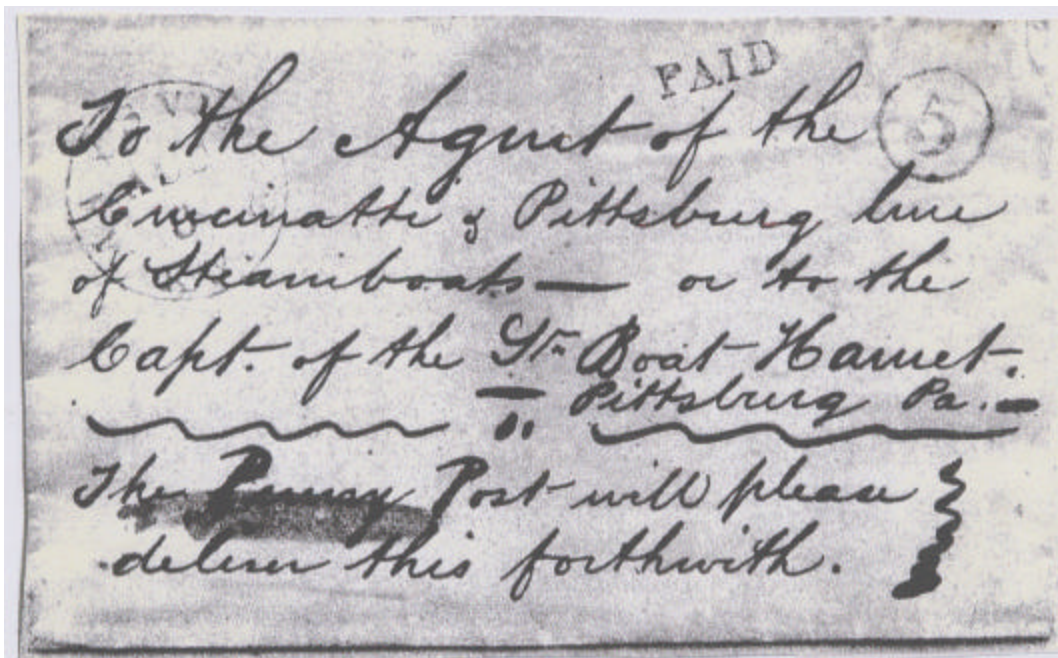
HARRISBURGH CARRIER. This example was mailed with a blue 32mm HOLLIDAYSBURG /MAR/19/Pa. cds and a PAID 5 rate which was paid by the writer's charge box number 75. The cover is addressed to James Bell at the Buchler's Hotel at Harrisburgh and was delivered there by a carrier as denoted by the manuscript pencil 'carrier 2'. The hotel apparently paid the carrier so its guest could get his mail.

A second Harrisburg cover confirms the existence of a regular penny post in this city. It was a completely unpaid cover sent from Philadelphia August 15th to the future 1853 Postmaster General James Campbell at Harrisburg, with a cancel that dates into 1847 and bearing a pencil 5¢ due for postage with an additional 2¢ added for 'post delivery' as denoted in pencil on the face.



LYNN, MS CARRIER DELIVERY. The letter below was written by Mr. Hutchinson of 229 Washington Street, Boston on July 16, 1844 to go to George Thayer at Shipperd St Lynn, MS. It went outside the mails to Lynn and asked the addressee to meet him on Thursday (the 18th) to go to Manchester. As a rail link from Boston to Lynn was known by 1838, this may have been handed to a conductor. It is inscribed 'Penny Post by A. Austin', presumably in Lynn; however, A. W. Austin had been the Charlestown postmaster a few years earlier and at this time he was Boston port master. .

Another variety of 'penny post' carrier service was not only delivery to a street address, but in ocean and river port cities such as Pittsburgh, which was at the headwaters of the Ohio River, it was to delivery to the docks or to the Captain of a specified vessel as in the following case. The vessel in this case was the 168-ton *Hornet*, built in 1853 and abandoned in 1859. The only other *Hornet* of the period was a 94-ton vessel out of Philadelphia burnt at Poughkeepsie, NY in 1860.



PITTSBURGH, PA PENNY POST. A letter with a blue 30mm MAYSVILLW/AUG/8/Ky cds PAID and circled 5 rate directs this letter "To the Agent of the Cincinnati & Pittsburgh line of steamboats or to the Captain of the *Steamboat Hornet*...The Penny Post will please deliver this forthwith." (See next page).



SALEM CT PENNY POST DELIVERY. This letter from Mr. Anderson was posted with a black 30mm HARDIN/MAR/21/III. cds and unpaid 5 in circle rate. It was addressed to Mr. Nathan in Salem and docked as received there 'March 31st, 1854' by Nathan who paid the Penny Post 7 cts, the unpaid postage plus the carrier fee.

An unusual use is the next to be noted. It is a pencil-written letter from the Oswego County town of Williamstown, N.Y. February 18, 1831 enclosing legal papers. Because it is addressed to nearby Sand Bank, N.Y., another Oswego town about eight miles away, it was given to the 'male carrier' who charged only two cents for delivery. It presents the problem of whether it should be considered a carrier delivery or a way letter given to the intercity carrier when he was more than a mile from the postoffice. The reason I hold it is a carrier under the Act of 1825 is that there is no indication that any other charge than the 2¢ was involved and the fact that there is no receiving town postmark, although both towns had postoffices at the period.

A similar anomaly cover is one from Laplain's Office March 21, 1849, which tells the West Farmington, NY postmaster that he has advanced the monies for several papers to be delivered and that Mr. Hathaway, mail carrier, should get Mr. Smith's copy and the postmaster should also take a copy of this 'Free Soil' paper when it arrives. This political party paper was organized out of the Liberty party in August 1848 and nominated Van Buren; the party elected Sumner as one of its two senators.



UTICA NY 2¢ CARRIER DELIVERY FEE. Black 30 mm circle WHITESTOWN/NOV/N.Y. circle and manuscript Paid 6 on a cover addressed to Mr. Lewis Bradley, Artist, Gen. St., Utica, N.Y. This November 13th letter asks the artist to make a copy of a girl's miniature, at his own price, as she is too haughty to grant this request for a locked. It is undated, but the style is known from 1839-1844. It bears two ink manuscript 'Paid' markings in different hands a red manuscript '2', which is a carrier charge. Because it has a street address, the '2' carrier fee is most likely that of Utica rather than a pickup fee at Whitestown.

APPENDIX I

Official Instructions for the Handling of Carrier Letters in the Colonial Period as Issued by Franklin and Hunter to All Postmasters in Late 1753 or Early 1754

“9. Item, You are to cause all Letters and Pacquets, received by you for persons living in Town, which remain uncalled for on those days they are brought to the Office, to be carefully delivered the next Morning. as directed, so that the Persons receiving them may have convenient Time to return their Answers to your Stage to go by the next return of the Post; and you are to allow the Person employed by you to deliver Letters aforesaid, to receive of the Persons to whom he delivers them, for his own use, One English Copper Halfpenny for each Letter, over and above the Postage charged thereon. And whenever any Letters remain in your Office undelivered One Month after you have received them, you are to take a List of the Names of the Parties to whom the same are directed, and their Places of Abode, and publish it in one or all the Newspapers printed in your Province, if the Printers thereof send any of their Papers in his Majesty’s Mail. And all those Letters which remain undelivered two Months after such Publication, you are to send to the General Post Office at Philadelphia, as Dead Letters, and your Account will be credited therewith accordingly; And, if there be any particular Reason why any Letter was not delivered according to its Direction, mention the same on the Back of such Letter; and on each Bundle mark the Amount of Pennyweights and Grains it contains. If you omit sending the Dead Letters with your quarterly Account, you are to take Notice that you will have no Allowance made you for them until they are sent.

10. Item, You are to use your best endeavors to prevent any private Collection of Letters, by any Person whatsoever, within any of the Towns or Places under your Care; and if you find any private Collectors of Letters or Pacquets, you are constantly to return the Names, and Places of Abode, of all such Persons making such Collections, to our Comptroller aforesaid.”

Excerpt about Carriers from Letter of Franklin and Foxcroft reporting on Sept. 21, 1764, to Anthony Todd, Secretary G.P.O.

“The Offices in America have sometimes employ’d Letter Carriers to deliver letters in the Towns and directed them to demand a penny for delivering each Letter; but the right to Demand such Penny above the Postage being frequently disputed and complain’d of as an Imposition and the Practice on that Account occasionally dropt, the Deputy Postmaster General some time since directed the Delivery of Letters in the several Towns gratis. This however is not generally comply’d with, being found very burthensome to the Office; but the Inconvenience may perhaps be remedied either in the Penny Post Clause, or by a Clause for the purpose.”

APPENDIX II

Breakdown of Letters in Fiscal 1852

| Class | Number | Percent |
|---------------------|------------|---------|
| Unpaid domestic | 32,672,765 | 34.0 |
| Paid in money | 18,448,510 | 19.3 |
| Paid in stamps | 31,897,750 | 33.3 |
| Free | 3,146,000 | 3.3 |
| Steamer-Europe | 4,421,547 | 4.6 |
| Havana | 99,372 | 0.1 |
| California | 1,495,537 | 1.6 |
| Drop | 973,134 | 1.0 |
| Unpaid dead letters | 2,635,909 | 2.8 |
| | 95,790,524 | 100.0 |

APPENDIX III

Relative Importance of Stamps in U. S. Postage 1840-1856

| 8/30 of Year | Total Postage | Newspaper Postage | Stampless Letter Post | Stamps | Stamps % of Total |
|--------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 1840 | \$4,539,005.68 | \$535,229.61 | \$4,003,776.07 | -- | |
| 1841 | 4,378,984.07 | 566,245.46 | 3,812,738.61 | -- | |
| 1842 | 4,525,540.45 | 572,225.25 | 3,953,315.20 | -- | |
| 1843 | 4,281,584.93 | 543,277.39 | 3,738,307.54 | -- | |
| 1844 | 4,225,905.36 | 549,743.83 | 3,676,161.53 | -- | |
| 1845 | 4,268,996.60 | 608,765.22 | 3,660,231.38 | -- | |
| 1846 | 3,533,840.23 | 652,142.49 | 2,881,697.34 | n.a. | |
| 1847 | 3,842,118.02 | 643,160.59 | 3,198,457.43 | ..n.a. | |
| 1848 | 4,107,638.97 | 767,334.85 | 3,340,104.10) | less than |) |
| 1849 | 4,701,778.82 | 819,016.20 | 3,882,762.62) | \$185,270# |)1.3% |
| 1850 | 5,495,149.80 | 919,485.94 | 4,575,663.86) | |) |
| 1851 | 6,404,373.65 | 1,035,130.49 | 5,369,802.76 | 89,440.36 | 1.4 |
| 1852 | 5,184,526.84 | 789,246.36 | 2,910,229.31 | 1,316,563.59 | 25.0 |
| 1853 | 5,084,560.96 | 611,333.40 | 2,843,965.42 | 1,629,262.12 | 32.0 |
| 1854 | 6,029,735.67 | 606,148.18 | 3,277,110.50 | 2,146,476.92 | 34.0 |
| 1855 | 6,294,791.44 | 639,112.32 | 3,143,037.49 | 2,512,641.63 | 40.0 |
| 1856 | 6,587,421.72* | 632,826.25 | 1,688,281.22 | 4,235,041.60 | 64.0 |

#stamps included in stampless for fiscal 1848-50; total issued during four fiscal years 1848-51 was \$274,710, less about \$8,850 in hands of postmasters on June 30, 1851.

* includes \$31,272.65 in registered postage.

Source: *Reports of the Postmaster General 1847-1856.*

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