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# THE PENNY POST

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Official Journal Of The Carriers and Locals Society

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Boston Train Station circa 1890's

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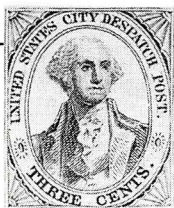
**Parcel Delivery Companies in Boston**

**Mearis' City Despatch Post**

**Davis's Penny Post**

**Periods of Use of Boyd's Stamps and Cancellations**

# THE PENNY POST



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# Parcel Delivery Companies in Boston

## Did They Operate as

There were at least ten different “Parcel Delivery” companies that conducted business within the city of Boston and nearby areas from 1872 to 1920. Ongoing search is being conducted by the author for information that will reveal whether these delivery companies operated similar to the many (i.e., literally hundreds of) Boston local express companies of the era. Or whether these companies were somehow unique in their business character.

This article summarizes the progress to date concerning this quest, plus it provides some correlated timing and stamp/label data to indicate when and how some of these eighty-year-old plus delivery companies conducted business in the Boston area. The pertinent company discussions are presented in alphabetical order, vice chronologically.

### American Delivery Company

The initial mention of the American Delivery Company (ADC) is found in the 1908 *Boston Directory* that reported it operated from an 105 Arch Street office. This Boston address is common to many parcel delivery and express companies of the era; this location was recognized as a “General Express” office in 1907<sup>1</sup>. The ADC apparently stayed in business into 1915, after which this name disappears from Express Company listings in the Boston city directories. The ADC also had offices at 97, then 127 Providence Street, and 78 Northampton Street during its existence.

The only currently known American Delivery Company label is illustrated in Figure 1. Since there is no business address printed on this label, it is not possible to confirm that it was actually issued by the Boston version of the ADC business. Previously published speculation on the origin of the illustrated

ADC label attempted to link it to use on parcels transported over the pneumatic mail tubes that were once located inside the Brooklyn Bridge<sup>2</sup>. Interestingly, this same reference alluded to similar use of an American Pneumatic Service Company label, shown in Figure 2, by the same, or a similar



*Figure 1. Red on white paper. Rectangular design area is 53 x 25 mm. Horizontally rouletted 8.0 at top and bottom, vertically imperforate. Horizontal top and bottom red dashes approximate the roulette gauge.*

### American Pneumatic Service Company

This was a parcel delivery company in Boston as evidenced by the “Parcel Delivery” inscription on its label (see Figure 2). The American Pneumatic Service Company (APSC) was in business in Boston from 1902 through 1907, the latter being the year before the ADC listings begin. This company is also listed under “Expresses” in the contemporary Boston directories. The APSC had offices at 115 Chauncy, 161 Devonshire, 9 Harrison Ave., and 272 West Newton during its six years of business in Boston. The 1905 Boston Directory indicates the APSC provided delivery service to Forest Hills and South Boston. The similarity in design features between the Figure 1 and 2 labels suggests that they may have evolved from the same designer and might have been used by related delivery businesses. Perhaps the American Delivery Company was the successor to the American Pneumatic Service Company, both of Boston.



Figure 2. Green on white paper, red control number (8757), red position number (20). Rectangular design area is 53 x 25 mm. Horizontally rouletted 6.9 at top and bottom, vertically imperforate. Horizontal top and bottom green dashes approximate the roulette

Two APSC labels are shown in Figure 3, affixed to a package wrapper. These labels appear to be tied to the wrapper by a crayon (or brushed ink) single-stroke cancellation. The handwritten inscription: “Roberts Iron Works Co./180 Main St/Cambridgeport.” is believed to be the destination written by the package’s sender. Cambridgeport was one of Cambridge, Massachusetts’ communities that existed within the city limits. The sender of this package is not identified, but perhaps it was taken to one of APSC’s stations for pneumatic tube transportation to their station closest to the Cambridgeport address. Unfortunately, no further information is known about the APSC business, nor their

The 1902 Cambridge [Massachusetts] Directory contains a listing for the Roberts Iron Works Co. at 180 to 198 Main Street<sup>3</sup>. This address was about a block west of the Charles River and a few blocks north of the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge. G. B. Roberts is cited as the company treasurer in the listing. The quarter-page business advertisement shown in Figure 4 is also found in this 1902 Directory<sup>4</sup>. A similar business listing and ad for the Roberts Iron Works Co. are found in the 1910 Cambridge Directory<sup>5</sup>.

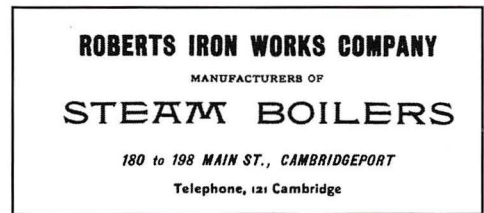


Figure 4. Advertisement from the 1902 Cambridge Directory.

The information presented here makes a reasonable case that the Figure 1 and 2 emissions (and perhaps the Figure 5 label, too) came out of Boston and were issued during 1902–15 by the label-inscribed, parcel delivery companies.

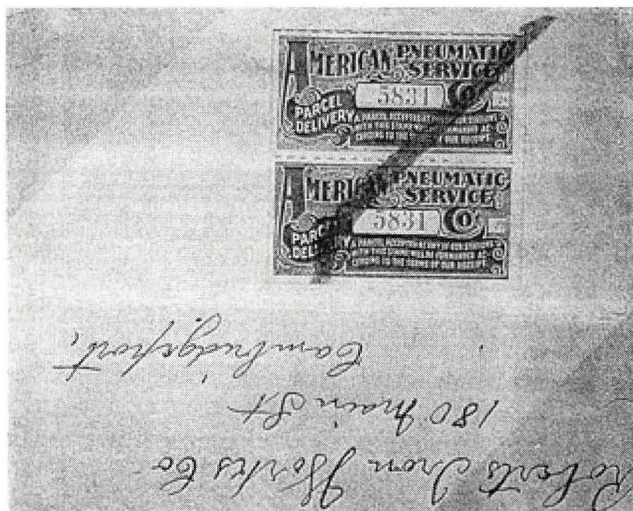


Figure 3. Two American Pneumatic Service Co. labels affixed to a small package that was sent to Cambridgeport, MA. [Richard Frajola’s collection]

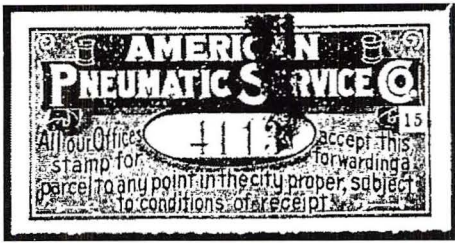


Figure 5. Black and gray on white paper, red control number (4113), red position number (15). Rectangular design area is 53 x 25 mm. Horizontally rouletted 10.75 at top and bottom, vertically imperforate. [Scott McClung's collection]

The small red number printed at right-center on the Figure 2 and 5 labels is believed to be a printing-plate position number. Since these labels all seem to exist with imperforate vertical sides, they may have been printed and issued in booklet panes or coil strips. The presence of the position number is most probably associated with a booklet pane format. The highest position number seen to date is "37" on the Figure 2 label, and "15" on the Figure 5 label. The lowest position number is assumed to be "1" for both issues (as low as "4" has been seen). No multiple connected labels have surfaced (except those shown in Figure 3) to determine more about the issued format of either of these labels. Several of the Boston Parcel Delivery Company labels discussed next in this article contain similar small numbers at approximately the same right-edge location which are also speculated to represent booklet pane, or coil, printing-plate positions.

The business inscription on the Figure 1 label reads as follows:

A PARCEL WITH THESE STAMPS  
ACCEPTED FOR DELIVERY  
ACCORDING TO THE CONDITIONS OF  
RECEIPT.

In Figure 2, that label's inscription reads:

A PARCEL ACCEPTED AT ANY OF  
OUR STATIONS WITH THIS STAMP  
WILL BE FORWARDED ACCORDING  
TO THE TERMS OF OUR RECEIPT.

The inscription on the Figure 5 label is somewhat harder to discern; it reads:

All our Offices accept this stamp for forwarding a parcel to any point in the city proper, subject to conditions of receipt.

The definition of "city proper" might possibly be explained by the Boston shaded area shown on the coverage map for the Clearing House Parcel Delivery Company (see Figure 11). All three of these self-proclaimed 'stamps' (Figures 1, 2, 3 and 5) are considered to be labels by the author, since no denomination is printed on any of them, nor presently known for them.

The last APSC label inscription (Figure 5) may be of significance if it excludes parcel delivery to Cambridge/Cambridgeport by stating it forwards to any point in the city proper (assumed to mean within the Boston city limits). Note that the Figure 2, APSC label cites delivery to any APSC 'station.' These differences in parcel delivery wording may eventually help to ascertain the relative issuing time-frames of the two labels if more details and chronology of the APSC's business operations are uncovered.

#### Boston Parcel Delivery Company

The first reference to the Boston Parcel Delivery Company (BPDC) is found in the 1887 *Boston Almanac and Business Directory* when its office was located at the familiar 105 Arch Street address, and another office at 211 Washington Street. The BPDC appears to be the oldest parcel delivery company to operate in Boston, and perhaps the oldest such organized package delivery business (that was not doing business as an 'express' company) to be operated in any American city.

The BPDC was established in 1872 according to their ad in the 1914 Boston Directory (see Figure 6), but the BPDC wasn't incorporated under the laws of Massachusetts until 1887. Maybe the latter action evoked enough notoriety to cause the BPDC's initial listing in the Boston Directories that year. G. A. Pratt was the BPDC Superintendent in 1914

according to the Figure 6 advertisement. No further information is available to define when Pratt became Superintendent, or whether other expressmen served in that position during the BPDC's apparent 47 years of delivery service.

Several Boston Parcel Delivery Company labels are known, but little information (maybe none?) has been published about their issue or usage dates. It is suspected that Figure 7 shows the earliest BPDC label, and it may have been issued in 1887 or soon thereafter, coinciding with the company's incorporation during that year. No denomination is printed on this label, so it is not now considered to be a 'stamp' as is self-proclaimed upon it. Under the company name, the label inscription reads:

THIS STAMP ENTITLES THE HOLDER TO FORWARD A PARCEL FROM ANY OFFICE OF THE COMPANY, TO ANY POINT IN CITY PROPER.

This same inscription is also present on all the subsequently described BPDC labels. There are no horizontal dashes printed near the separable edges of the Figure 7 label.



Figure 7. Blue on white paper, red control number (A 48). Rectangular design area is 54 x 25.5 mm. Horizontally rouletted 10.75 at top and bottom, vertically imperforate.

A horse-drawn covered express-wagon is illustrated at the left on this label. Figure 8 shows a significant enlargement of this delivery conveyance. This vehicle was probably the BPDC's principal means of collecting and delivering parcels for many of its operating years. Three control-number styles have been found near the bottom center of the early BPDC labels. In addition to the 4 mm high, red, 'A 48' (see Figure 7), we find a plain "808" in smaller red numerals (3 mm high) on another label, and serified red "3193" (4 mm high) on yet another label. This difference in control number styles may indicate different issues, or printings, of these labels.

Established 1872	Under Laws of Massachusetts	Incorporated 1887
<b>BOSTON PARCEL DELIVERY CO.</b>		
<b>Terminal, 47, 49, 51 Stanhope Street</b>		
<b>Packages may be left at 130 Bedford Street</b>		
C. A. PRATT, Supt.	Telephones Tremont 610 and 254	
<i>Special rates for delivery of large lots of calendars, printed matter druggists' samples, brewers' extracts and small packages of all kinds</i>		

Figure 6. Excerpt from the Expresses advertising section of the 1914 Boston Directory.

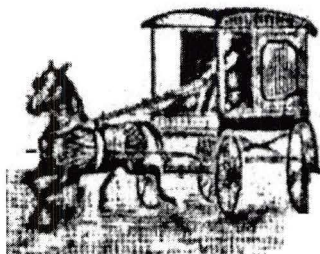


Figure 8. Covered express wagon depicted on the Figure 7, 9 and 10 delivery labels.

A small change in BPDC label style was subsequently probably made—the addition of a small 4x4 mm white pad near the middle of the right side. Shown in Figure 9, this small pad contains a red number which is assumed to represent the plate printing position of each label as explained earlier. Position numbers from “5” to “16” have been seen so far on these labels, but the maximum position number has not been ascertained at this time. The red control numbers at the bottom of this series of labels (Figure 9) are 4 mm high and are not preceded by a control letter. The Figure 9 label is known with, and without small horizontal blue-dashes that approximate the roulette separation gauge. Most Figure 9 type labels are rouletted horizontally across the top and bottom. Others have been seen with a straight bottom edge (on position 5 and 13 labels) and top edge roulettes.

Another small change probably followed soon thereafter—the addition of a control prefix letter as shown on the Figure 10 labels. This label variety also includes horizontal blue dashes between labels. These dashes correspond to the roulette gauge present for label separation. The maximum position number value on the Figure 10 label types has not been determined at this time, but numbers to “19” have been seen. The position 17 label exhibits a horizontal bottom straight-edge.

To date, no published information has been found that would facilitate learning the issuing dates, or usage dates, of the BPDC’s labels. Dated cancellations appearing on used copies of these labels might provide some clues to their usage time frame, but no dated cancels have been seen. Copies of cancel-dated BPDC labels are being sought by the author. Reader



Figure 9. Blue on white paper, red control number (2817), red position number (13). Rectangular design area is 54 x 25.5 mm. Horizontally rouletted 10.75 at top and bottom (not shown), vertically imperforate. Horizontal top and bottom (not shown) blue dashes approximate the roulette gauge.



Figure 10. Light blue on white paper, red control number (Q 462), red position numbers (10, 11, 12). Rectangular design area of each label is 53 x 25 mm. Horizontally rouletted 10.8 at top and bottom of each label, vertically imperforate. Horizontal top and bottom blue dashes on each label approximate the roulette gauge.

reports via photocopies are also earnestly desired.

Clearing House Parcel Delivery Company

We first find this company listed in 1914; its offices were at 49-67 Lansdowne Street. Figure 11 reproduces a full page Clearing House Parcel Delivery Company (CHPDC) ad which appeared in the 1914 *Boston Directory*. The map in this ad shows the company primarily made parcel deliveries (and presumably pick-ups) within about a twelve-mile radius from downtown Boston, but also to/from as far away as approximately 15 miles (i.e., the western end of Wellesley County). The 114 suburban communities that the CHPDC serviced are listed in the bottom third of the ad. According to this advertisement, D. B. Strickland was the President and Manager; Frank M. Andrew was the Treasurer. The CHPDC's six Directors are listed to the left of the map.

The statement at the bottom of the ad: "ONE FLAT RATE ANYWHERE WITHIN ABOVE RADIUS" is somewhat confusing. There are three radii drawn on this map. Here's one possible interpretation. Perhaps the CHPDC charged its minimum flat rate within the four-mile radius, then a higher (perhaps double, but 'flat' throughout the area) rate from four to eight miles, and an even higher (i.e., triple, but 'flat') rate out to the 12

mile radius. If this is a correct interpretation, it is possible that one label (or 'stamp') paid for delivery within four miles, two labels within 8 miles, and three labels within 12 miles. The only problem with this speculated rate scenario is that no CHPDC stamps or labels are known at this time. However, since this rate vs. radius speculation works out rather logically and easily, maybe it also pertains to some of the other Boston parcel delivery companies with known stamps/labels. These other companies may have used delivery rate sectors based on a Massachusetts map similar to that shown in Figure 11.

The CHPDC persisted in business until 1920, but the operating office address became restricted to just 55 Lansdowne Street in its final two years. The author hasn't been able to locate Lansdowne Street on any of the contemporary maps of Boston. If it was located near the center of the radii shown in Figure 11 (the big black dot), that would put it just about east of Boston Commons near the intersections of Washington and Summer or Bedford Streets. Perhaps Lansdowne Street was a small lane or 'alley' in that vicinity that doesn't show on every Boston map. Can any reader provide an early 1900's Boston map that shows the location of Lansdowne Street?

**Expresses**  
2822 ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT  
G. A. PRATT, Pres. Tel. 3002 Dor. ALLAN C. MAHON, Treas. & Mgr.  
**Dorchester Parcel Delivery Company**  
Incorporated under the Laws of Massachusetts  
Special Rates for delivery of large lots of Calendars,  
Printed Matter, Druggists Samples, Brewers' Extracts  
and Small Packages of all kinds.  
FURNITURE MOVING BY AUTO  
TRUCKS  
Terminal 105 HOMES AVENUE .. DORCHESTER, MASS.

Figure 12. Excerpt from the Expresses advertising section of the 1914 Boston Directory.



D. B. Strickland, Pres. and Mgr.

Frank M. Andrew, Treas.

**CLEARING HOUSE PARCEL DELIVERY CO.**

49 TO 67 LANSDOWNE STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

Phone Private Exchange Back Bay 6311

**DIRECTORS**  
 FRANK M. ANDREW  
 HON. J. J. MAHONEY  
 FRED H. EATON  
 JOHN N. MCCARTHY  
 HON. F. H. CHANDLER  
 D. B. STRICKLAND

**CIRCLES REPRESENT 4, 8 & 12 MILE RADIUS**



**MAP OF TERRITORY COVERED**

**OUR PATRONS BOSTON'S BEST MERCHANTS**

- |                        |                     |                       |                 |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Allston                | East Lynn           | Mt. Auburn            | South Boston    |
| Arlington              | East Milton         | Mt. Hope West Roxbury | South Natick    |
| Arlington Hgts         | East Norwell        | Nahant                | Stony Brook     |
| Ashmont                | Edgewater           | Natick                | Swampscott      |
| Atlantic               | Everett             | Neponset              | Waban           |
| Auburndale             | Faneuil             | Newton                | Wainut Hill     |
| Beaver Brook           | Faulkner            | Newton Centre         | Waltham         |
| Belmont                | Fells               | Newton Highlands      | Watertown       |
| Bel Rock               | Forest Hills        | Newton Lower Falls    | Waverley        |
| Boswin                 | Glenwood            | Newton Upper Falls    | Wellenley       |
| Boschmont              | Harrison Sq         | Newtonville           | Wellenley Hills |
| Boston                 | Hazelwood Hyde Park | Newington Newton      | Wellesley Farms |
| Brighton               | Houghs Neck         | Norfolk Downs         | Wellington      |
| Brookline              | Hyde Park           | No. Cambridge         | W. Cambridge    |
| Cambridge              | Jamaica Plain       | No. Woburn            | W. Everett      |
| Cambridgeport          | Kendal Green        | Oak Grove             | West Lynn       |
| Charlestown            | Linden              | Oak Square            | West Medford    |
| Charlendon Hills       | Longwood            | Point Shirley         | West Newton     |
| Cliffendale            | Lynn                | Quincy                | West Quincy     |
| Chelsea                | Malden              | Quincy Adams          | West Roxbury    |
| Chestnut Hill          | Maplewood           | Readville             | West Somerville |
| Cottage Farm           | Mattapan            | Revere                | Weston          |
| Crescent Beach         | Medford             | Riverdale             | Winchester      |
| Dorham                 | Medford Hillside    | Roberts               | Winthrop        |
| Dorchester             | Melrose             | Rosindale             | Winthrop Hlds   |
| Dorchester Lower Mills | Melrose Highlands   | Roxbury               | Woburn          |
| East Boston            | Milton              | Saugus                | Wollaston       |
| East Cambridge         | Montvale            | Salem Hill            | Wrentham        |
|                        |                     | Somerville            | Wyoming         |

**ONE FLAT RATE ANYWHERE WITHIN ABOVE RADIUS  
 GASOLINE MOTOR TRUCKS ENTIRELY**

### Eastern Despatch and Delivery Company

The Eastern Despatch and Delivery Company is listed as being in business from 1891 to 1893 with offices at 77 Kingston Street, 33 Court Square, 96 Arch Street, and 91 Kilby Street. This apparently was a relatively short-lived parcel delivery business. No stamp or label emissions are known from this company.

### Dorchester Parcel Delivery Company

This company is first found in an 1908 business directory that states it operated from its 72 Kemble Street, Dorchester, Mass. office. The Dorchester Parcel Delivery Company (DPDC) subsequently operated from five additional office locations (see Table 1). A DPDC ad in the 1914 Boston Directory (see Figure 12) indicates it operated from a terminal at 105 Homes Avenue in Dorchester. G. A. Pratt was the DPDC's president. He is the same expressman who is shown as the Boston Parcel Delivery Company's Superintendent that year (Figure 6). Allan C. Mahon was the Treasurer and Manager.

In 1918 this company apparently expanded its delivery routes to include Quincy, Mass., because it appears as the 'Dorchester and Quincy Parcel Delivery' in the 1918 and 1919 directories. It still operated from the same (or nearby) office address. In this company's final listed year (1920), the business reverted to its original DPDC name. In addition to Dorchester, the DPDC provided parcel delivery service to and from Milton, Mattapan, and Neponset in Massachusetts. No DPDC stamp or label emissions are known at this time.

### Five Cent Parcel Delivery Company (and Successors)

This company apparently began operations late in 1890 with offices at 67 Franklin Street based on information printed on its stamps. The 1890 Boston city directories do not record its existence, but the directories were not published until the first of July (each year) and would not have recorded a late-in-the-year business startup. The 1891 *Boston Directory* does record the Five Cent Parcel Delivery

Company. This company operated into 1892 when its name was modified slightly to the Five Cent Parcel Despatch (or Dispatch) Company.

The company changed their name again in 1894, becoming the Merchants Five Cent Parcel Delivery Company that existed until sometime in late 1898 or early 1899. This company continued in business, but the 'Five Cent' portion of their name was dropped (maybe because it had become an obsolete, or restrictive, parcel delivery rate?). In 1899 the company was known as the Merchants Parcel Delivery Company; it operated into late 1902. The 1900 Boston Directory lists Back Bay, Boston Highlands, South End, and West End as the communities serviced by the Merchants Parcel Delivery Company. In 1903 this delivery company became the Merchants Parcel and Express Company that remained in business into 1907 according to Directory records.

The early stamps issued by this succession of delivery companies are shown in Figures 13 and 14. Although "Five Cent" is part of the company's name as inscribed on their emissions, this amount also apparently defines the value of each emission (also see the "5" in the circle of stars at the stamp's left), so they are categorized as 'stamps' vice 'labels.' Since no record of this company was found in the 1892 Boston directories, it is not known which company name or stamp it may have used during that year.

The author suspects that the illustrated stamps may have been issued in vertical coil (strips?) or booklet pane format as all seen to date are vertically imperforate. Vertical multiples, and bottom imperforate stamps, have been found for some issues. The Figure 13L stamp is only known with a 'SERIES A' imprint. Perhaps this company changed its business identity before an additional stamp series could be issued.



Figure 13. Left: 1890–91 Five Cent Parcel Delivery Co. Dull red on cream paper. Rectangular design area is 51 x 25.5 mm. Horizontally rouletted 10.75 at top and bottom, vertically imperforate. Horizontal top and bottom red dashes approximate the roulette gauge. Right: 1893 Five Cent Parcel Despatch Co. Dull red on cream paper. Rectangular design area is 51 x 25 mm. Horizontally rouletted 10.75 at top and bottom, vertically imperforate. Horizontal top and bottom red dashes approximate the roulette gauge.



Figure 14. 1894–97 Merchant's 5¢ Parcel Delivery Co. Left: Red on cream paper. Label is 57.5 x 27 mm. Horizontally rouletted 10.75 at top and bottom, vertically imperforate. Horizontal top and bottom red dashes approximate the roulette gauge. [Scott McClung's collection.] Right: Red on dull yellow paper. Rectangular design area is 53.5 x 25.5 mm. Horizontally rouletted 7 at top and bottom, vertically imperforate. Horizontal top and bottom red dashes approximate the roulette gauge.

There is a possibility that the stamp shown in Figure 14L was not associated with this series of Boston parcel delivery companies because its design is so different than the others. But the inscribed name and delivery coverage statement are the same as the other company stamps, and its non-white printing paper color is very similar to the other stamps, so it is included here until further identification information is discovered. Another version of the Figure 14R stamp has been seen that contains red dashes on all four sides (11 x 11 gauge). The latter stamp appears to be imperforate all around, like it had been cut from a sheet of these stamps. No multiples have been seen to corroborate the sheeted format speculation.

The later stamp and label issues from this series of companies are illustrated in Figures

15 and 16. The company names in the Boston city directories were used for estimating and bounding the issue dates of all the stamps and labels from this entire group of companies. One anomaly was found, however, when correlating the business names and addresses. The 1899-1902 *Boston Directories* give an 105 Arch [Street] address for the Merchants Parcel Delivery Company (MPDC, see Figure 16), but the illustrated labels bearing this same business name are imprinted with “67 Franklin St. cor. Arch” [Street] as their operating address. The MPDC’s use of the 105 Arch Street General Express office is not printed on their labels, although they undoubtedly rented accommodations at that location. The 67 Franklin Street address is suspected of being the MPDC’s warehouse or other facility that was unique to their business.



Figure 15. 1898 Merchant's 5¢ Parcel Delivery Co. Left: Red on dull yellow paper. Rectangular design area is 54 x 25 mm. Horizontally rouletted 7 at top and bottom, vertically imperforate. Horizontal top and bottom red dashes approximate the roulette gauge. Right: Similar stamp with “¢” missing. Not known whether this is a plate variety or a separate issue. [Scott McClung's collection].



Figure 16. 1899–1902 Merchant's Parcel Delivery Co. Left: Pink on white paper, blue control number (9) at right. Rectangular design area is 53 x 26 mm. Separation details unknown. Right: Red on yellow paper. Rectangular design area is 52 x 25 mm. Horizontally rouletted 10.75 at top and bottom, vertically imperforate. Horizontal top and bottom red dashes approximate the roulette gauge.

The Figure 16R label is only known inscribed with “SERIES A” at the right. Similar examples with other series letters on them are being sought, however, no record of such has been found. Perhaps the company name was changed before Series B could be issued. The Figure 16R label is also known with a company cancel (not a permanent company overprint) that shows: “5 cts./ PARCEL DELIVERY/FRANKLIN STREET/COR. ARCH.” So apparently this company still delivered some parcels for a five-cent fee during 1899–1902.

The facsimile signature of ‘O. D. Pillsbury’ over the title of ‘Manager’ appears on the later issues of these labels from about 1894 (Figures 14R–16). This signature is further indication that the cited delivery companies probably succeeded each other during the evolution of

business names. The chronology of all the aforementioned delivery companies in this group, and their various operating offices, is summarized in Table 2.

#### Five Cent Parcel Despatch Company

Discussion is included above under the “Five Cent Parcel Delivery Company” heading. Interestingly, the 1893 Boston Directory lists this company’s name using the word ‘Dispatch,’ vice ‘Despatch’ that is seen on its stamp. The name inscribed on their stamp (Figure 13R: “Despatch”) is assumed to be the correct company name.

#### Lyman & Harvey

This is the first parcel delivery company found in Boston’s, nineteenth-century, city directories. It appears under the “Parcel

Delivery” category in the Business section of the 1883 *Boston Almanac*. Lyman & Harvey’s office was recorded as 41 West [Street], which was just east of the Boston Commons. Delivery service was provided to Charlestown, South Boston and the City. No subsequent listing or mention of Lyman & Harvey was found in other annual city directories and no stamps or labels from this company are known.

#### Merchants City Parcel Delivery Company

This company listing was only found once—in the 1887 *Boston Almanac* under the “Parcel Delivery” Business section heading. Since this listing appeared three years before the Five Cent Parcel Delivery Company purportedly started in 1890, it is not considered to be a business predecessor of that company. No stamps or labels are known from the Merchants City Parcel Delivery Company of Boston.

#### Merchants Five Cent Parcel Delivery Company

Discussion is included above under the “Five Cent Parcel Delivery Company” heading.

#### Somerville Parcel Delivery Company

This company was only found listed for one year—1895. In addition to Somerville, they also provided delivery service to East Cambridge. No stamp or label emissions from the Somerville Parcel Delivery Company are known.

#### Suburban Parcel Delivery Company

The initial mention of the Suburban Parcel Delivery Company (SPDC) was found in the 1889 *Boston Almanac*; its offices were located at 105 Arch Street, 42 Summer Street and at “all railroad stations.” The SPDC is then found in Boston business directories through 1901, with delivery operations conducted from seven different street locations within the city (see Table 2).

One label is known from this company and it is illustrated in Figure 17. The operating statement on this label reads:

THIS STAMP ENTITLES THE HOLDER TO FORWARD A PARCEL FROM ANY OFFICE OF THE COMPANY TO BOSTON HIGHLANDS, SOUTH BOSTON, CHARLESTOWN.

These three delivery destinations probably define the ‘suburban’ area that the SPDC expressmen worked. Like the BPDC, the SPDC apparently did not operate nearly as far away from the city as did many of the Boston local express companies. The proprietors considered this label to be a ‘stamp,’ so perhaps it had some monetary value that was collected to pay for a single parcel delivery. Such value is unknown at this time, but five to ten cents might be a reasonable guess. Lacking the exact valuation amount, the author categorizes this emission as a ‘label,’ consistent with previous similar assessments.

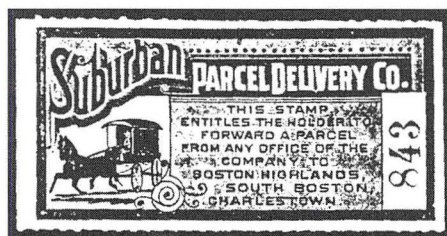


Figure 17. Black and gray on white paper, red control number (843). Rectangular design area is 53 x 25.5 mm. Horizontally rouletted 10.75 at top and bottom, vertically imperforate. [Scott McClung’s collection]

A lone report of a Suburban Parcel Delivery business was found in the 1917 Boston Directory. It is not known whether this is the reincarnation of the earlier company, or more likely, it was a short-lived business endeavor of the same name. In any event, this later version of the Suburban Parcel Delivery Company only lasted one year in the directories, maybe even less time if pertinent business records were to be found.

Table 1. 1887 - 1920 Boston Parcel Delivery Businesses (A to D)

YEAR	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	*	O2	O3	O4	O5	O6	O7	O8	O9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20			
<b>COMPANY NAME</b>																																			
<b>• American Delivery Co.</b>																																			
§105 Arch																				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X								
78 Northampton																									X	X									
97 Providence																										X	X	X	X						
127 Providence																												X	X						
<b>• Boston Parcel Del' ‡ ‡</b>																																			
95 Arch												X																							
97 Arch												X	X	X	X	X	X	X																	
§105 Arch	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X																						X	X	X
§108 Arch																				X	X	X	X	X	X										
§130 Bedford																									X	X	X	X							
135 Bedford																																			X
176 Boylston			X	X																															
462 Boylston					X		X				X						X																		
103 Providence							X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X																
127 Providence																																X	X	X	
51 Stanhope																				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
42 Summer	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X																									
211 Washington	X																																		
<b>• Clearing House Parcel Delivery Co.</b>																																			
49-67 Lansdowne																											X	X	X	X	X				
55 Lansdowne																																		X	X
<b>• Dorchester Parcel Delivery Co.</b>																																			
§105 Arch																																X	X		X
§ 32 Court Square																																			X
105 Homes Av (Dorchester)																											X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
72 Kemble (Dorchester)																					X														
?? Providence																																			X
51 Stanhope																												X	X	X					
<b>• Dorchester &amp; Quincy Parcel Delivery</b>																																			
104 Arch																																			X
§ 105 Arch																																			X
<b>YEAR 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 * O2 O3 O4 O5 O6 O7 O8 O9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20</b>																																			
§ General Express office per 1907 report (Ref. 1)													* 1899, 1900 and 1901																						
‡ Listed in the Boston Almanac's Business Directory under "Parcel Delivery" category, but not listed in the "Express Offices in Boston" section of the Boston Almanac until 1889 and thereafter.																																			
																																15 Feb 99			

**Table 2. 1887 - 1903 Boston Parcel Delivery Businesses (E to S)**

YEAR	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	1900	O1	O2	O3	
<b>COMPANY NAME</b>																		
• Eastern Despatch & Delivery Co.																		
96 Arch					X	X												
33 Court Square					X	X												
91 Kilby					X													
§ 77 Kingston					X	X	X											
• Five Cent Parcel Delivery Co.																		
67 Franklin					X													
• Five Cent Parcel Dispatch Co.																		
42 Franklin							X											
• Merchants City Parcel Delivery Co. ‡																		
301 Devonshire		X																
• Merchants Five Cent Parcel Delivery Co.																		
96 Arch								X	X	X	X							
§105 Arch												X						
• Merchants Parcel Delivery ‡																		
§105 Arch													X	X	X	X	*	
• Somerville Parcel Delivery Co.																		
88 Essex									X									
• Suburban Parcel Delivery																		
95 Arch											X	X	X	X				
§105 Arch			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X								
176 Boylston				X														
462 Boylston						X	X											
42 Franklin						X												
103 Providence									X	X	X	X						
42 Summer			X	X					X	X	X							
All railroad stations			X	X														
	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>1900</b>	<b>O1</b>	<b>O2</b>	<b>O3</b>
	‡Not listed in the "Express Offices in Boston" section of the Boston Almanac																	
	* Became Merchants Parcel & Express Co. at the same address until 1907																	
§ General Express office per																		
1907 report (Ref. 1)																		15 Feb 99

Company Locations

Scrutiny of Tables 1 and 2 reveals that six of the eight, Boston Parcel Delivery Company, office locations were shared by the Suburban Parcel Delivery Company during many of their 1889–1901 mutual operating years. Table 3 explicitly shows the simultaneity of this 13-year business synergy. The 105 Arch Street office location has already been recognized as a General Express office and probably accounts for their mutual business residence there. We might guess that the local delivery service areas attributable to these two delivery companies had very little overlap in order for them to successfully share the same business facilities for so long. Its also conceivable that these companies shared additional office locations for many of the uncorrelated years. Business Directory editor omissions may have been responsible for the failure to record additional simultaneous office addresses in the 1891–94 and 1898–1901 periods.

The majority of the parcel delivery companies discussed in this article operated from offices and terminals in the vicinity of a relatively few city blocks in downtown Boston. In fact, some of the delivery and local

express company offices appeared to be next door to each other, or across the street from one another, or within the same block of a downtown street. Of course, as mentioned previously, many delivery and local express businesses of this era shared the same street address, perhaps operating from separate desks, rooms, or cubicles within a building bearing a single numbered address.

Unfortunately, the Boston directory listings do not distinguish between a delivery company’s business offices, terminals or warehouses for a given address. So the addresses in Tables 1 and 2 merely indicate that the cited delivery company had a business presence there. The few contemporary advertisements reproduced in this article provide much better visibility into a company’s business operation at their cited addresses. It is suspected that many of the shared street addresses (between the delivery and local express companies) signifies the primary utilization of these facilities as offices. They probably also served as package consignment locations, like that promoted in the Figure 6 BPDC ad. Parcel receipt, storage and dissemination were most likely effected from a warehouse or terminal at another city location, possibly unique for each company.

**Table 3. Common Delivery Company Offices**

YEAR	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	1900	1901
<b>ADDRESS</b>													
• 95 Arch									B,S		S	S	S
• 105 Arch §	B,S	B,S	B,S	B,S	B,S	B,S	B,S	B,S					
• 176 Boylston	B	B,S											
• 462 Boylston				B,S	S	B				B			
• 103 Providence						B	S	B,S	B,S	B,S			
• 42 Summer	B,S	B,S	B	B	B	B	B,S	B,S	S				
	B = Boston Parcel Delivery Company office									§ General Express office per			
	S = Suburban Parcel Delivery Company office									1907 report (Ref. 1)			



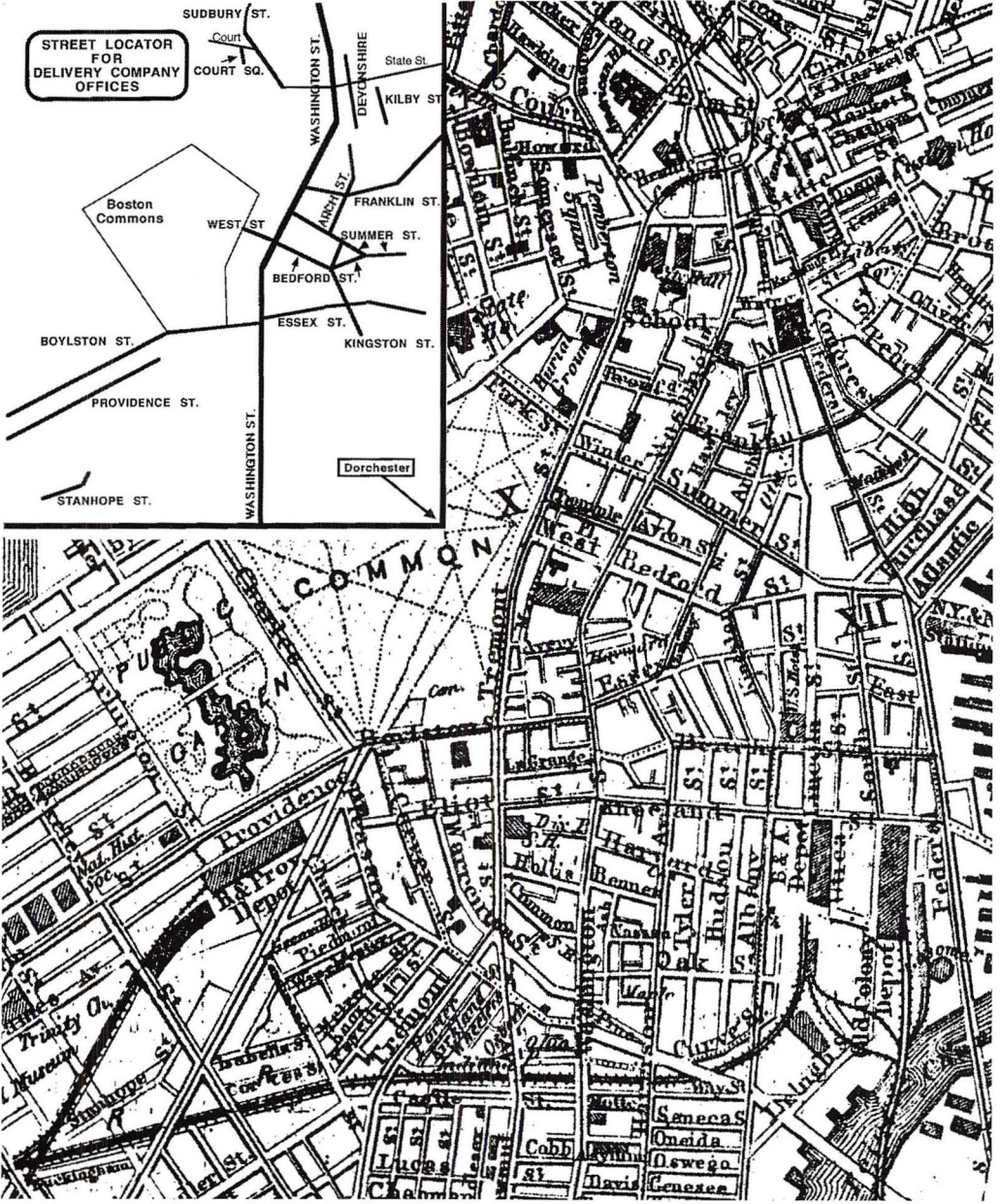


Figure 18. Lower downtown map from 1888 Boston Directory. Street locator

An enlarged view of part of late Nineteenth-Century downtown Boston is reproduced in Figure 18. This map is excerpted from a larger detailed Boston area map that was found attached in the *The Boston Almanac and Directory* of 1888. Many of the streets cited in the Table 1 and 2 lists of parcel delivery companies can be found on this hundred-year-old map. In fact, many of the 1888 Boston streets shown in Figure 18 still exist in some form in modern-day Boston. A street locator diagram appears in the upper left corner of the map to facilitate finding the majority of the streets where the delivery company offices resided in Boston. Northampton Street is not shown in Figure 18 because it is about 20 blocks below Lucas Street which is located near the bottom-center of Figure 18.

### Conclusions

One interesting characteristic pertains to all the Boston business directory listings of the parcel delivery companies discussed in this article. This pertinent feature is their inclusion (alphabetically) among the multitude of local express companies, year after year, with no special categorization or other identification because of their 'delivery' company name. From this citation attribute we can surmise that the parcel delivery companies of this era were similar enough to local express companies to be included among them with no particular distinctions or qualifiers, at least as far as was decided by the contemporary business-directory editors.

Several of the delivery companies discussed here conducted some of their business from the General Express offices in Boston. This would seem to afford them business and delivery status on a par with the local Boston expresses who they apparently worked among and with. The "Boston and the 'Local' Express Business" reprint following this article provides some contemporary insight into the local express business operations in the early part of this century.

An 1897 new-business pronouncement has been found that also indicates parcel delivery companies probably operated similar to express companies. This notice chronicled the

initiation of the Manhattan Delivery Company in New York City and appears in a popular express magazine of that time<sup>6</sup>. This announcement reads in part as follows:

The Manhattan Delivery Company has been organized by a number of well known expressmen of New York City. It will transact a general delivery and express business in all portions of Manhattan Island, ...

Perhaps magazine or newspaper business announcements for the Boston parcel deliveries, if found, would contain comments suggesting these companies operated similar to local express companies.

Any additional information concerning Boston delivery companies, and their stamps and labels (including corrections and differing opinions), would be most welcome and will subsequently be published in *The Penny Post*. Please contact the author at POB 033236, Indialantic, FL 32903 or by E-mail at <bhmexp@digital.net>.

### Cited References:

1. Briggs, J. S., "EXPRESS" A Handbook Containing Useful Information for Shippers, 1907, pg 120.
2. Wood, Ken (Editor), "Brooklyn Bridge carried more than traffic," *Stamp Collector*, Nov 13, 1976, pg 12.
3. Greenough, W. A. & Co, 1902 Cambridge Directory, No. LI, pg 425.
4. *Ibid.*, pg 935.
5. Greenough, W. A. & Co, 1910 Cambridge Directory, No. LVIII, pg 441 and pg 690.
6. "Manhattan Delivery Company," *The Express Gazette*, January 1897, pg 18.

### General References:

- *The Boston Almanac & Business Directory*: 1883, 1885-88, 1890
- *The Boston Directory*: 1884, 1889, 1891 to 1920

*The following is copied from pp 117-20 of Reference 1:*

## **BOSTON AND THE “LOCAL” EXPRESS BUSINESS**

The city of Boston being the birthplace of the Express, it is possible that this fact may have influenced the rapid growth of the industry in this city and the surrounding cities and towns. The local express business constitutes an enterprise of great magnitude, and the amount of capital invested in this branch of the business amounts to many thousands of dollars. Nearly five hundred expresses transact business between Boston

express calls over the “Express Department” telephone. The telephone company in Boston maintains a separate department, styled the “Express Dep’t.” For a small rental the business houses are able to secure the express telephone service. Calls for the various local expresses are given to the operator in this “Express Dep’t.” These orders are then sorted and sent by direct line to the different “General Express” offices for which they are intended. The sorting of these orders for the various “local” lines, same being deposited in their respective “boxes,” is an interesting feature in connection with the local business.

This method of handling the enormous



and the outlying cities and towns.

The necessary detail in connection with the local business is of great proportions, and the system evolved to handle this enterprise is unique and efficient. Throughout the business section of Boston are distributed what are termed “General offices.” These offices are practically “clearing houses” for the local expresses. There are twenty of these “General Express” offices in Boston, each one accommodating from twenty to one hundred local expresses. Each “local” has a box in which orders may be left for his particular line, also booths for the depositing of packages which may be left at the office for his route.

One of the most important details in connection with the “local” express business is the method employed in the handling of the

local express business in Boston is one of the greatest accommodations extended to the merchant. As may be readily seen, the immense saving in time and trouble is bound to be a great factor in the transaction of business. The merchant wishes to use, say, thirty different local expresses. He calls the “Express Dep’t.” on the ‘phone, and gives his orders for the different expresses. In this way he saves valuable time, as in order to reach the thirty expresses he would perhaps be obliged to call up eight or ten of the “General Express” offices to leave his calls. This system used in Boston in handling the local express calls is probably the only one of its kind in the country, and, in its operation is nearly automatic, being accomplished without any appreciable delay and in a satisfactory manner.

The "General Express" office is under the supervision of a manager, and the "local" express pays a monthly rental for the service of the office. No busier spot may be found, than one of these "General Express" offices in the afternoon, when the "local" men are getting ready for their outgoing trips. The illustration of one of the "Generals" at the beginning of this article will give the reader an idea of the situation.

The "locals," running as they do, in all directions, to the smaller towns and cities within a radius of from five to forty and more miles from the "Hub," are able to give the merchants and residents of the outlying districts practically a preferred express service. The "local" man will be called upon to take an order from a customer of his to a merchant in Boston, to purchase the goods, and see that the order is filled properly, to then transport and deliver the goods at his customer's door, in fact, acting as a special agent for each customer. It is this preferred service which has enabled the "local" expressman to obtain such a foothold, and which has made the service so popular.

The larger express companies do not find it easy to give to each customer the individual attention which is received from the "local," consequently the smaller express benefits thereby. These larger express companies, realizing the great volume of business which passes through the "General Express" offices, have largely affiliated themselves with these offices, establishing branches therein. The "locals" handle many shipments, which of necessity must pass over the lines of the large companies, by the establishing of branches in the "General offices," the transfer of this business to the larger companies is thus accomplished. These larger express companies, by the above arrangement, are today receiving as much, and often more business, from their branches in the "General Express" offices, than from an office maintained exclusively for themselves.

All the "General Express" offices come under the supervision of the "Expressman's League," which fact is of great import to the merchants of Boston, as this supervision

practically guarantees to them honesty and faithfulness, two attributes of great value in the success of any enterprise.

Below is given a list of the "General Express" offices in Boston:

- 105 Arch Street.
- 108 Arch Street.
- 130 Bedford Street.
- 56 Broad Street.
- 89 Broad Street.
- 73 Central Street.
- 48 Chatham Street.
- 32 Court Square.
- 14 Devonshire Street.
- 15 Devonshire Street.
- 71 Kingston Street.
- 76 Kingston Street.
- 77 Kingston Street
- 139 Kingston Street.
- 15 Merchants Row
- 36 Merchants Row.
- 14 A Nashua Street.
- 65 Pearl Street.
- 47 Providence Street.
- 16 Union Street.

# Mearis' City Despatch Post Baltimore, Maryland

By Scott R. Trepel

*This article was originally presented in the Siegel Auction Galleries Sale 817, The David Golden Collection of United States Carriers and Locals, November 15-17, 1999. It is reproduced here with their permission.*

A comprehensive history of Baltimore's City Despatch Post is provided in Denwood N. Kelly's series, published in the *Collectors Club Philatelist* (Vol. 50, No. 3). A summary of Kelly's research follows.

The City Despatch Post was established by Malcolm W. Mearis, who announced its opening in an advertisement that appeared in *The Sun* from January 23 to 29, 1846. Mearis's office was located in the basement of the Jarvis Building at the corner of North (now Guilford Avenue) and Baltimore Streets. Mearis placed 100 letter boxes throughout the city and charged two basic rates: 2c for city-delivery letters and 1c for letters carried to the post office. A special 2c "fast horse" rate was available for eastbound mail that Mearis would bring to the Lower Depot railroad route agent just before the mails closed. Package-delivery and money-collection services were also offered.

On October 20, 1846, an advertisement appeared in *The Sun*, announcing new ownership of the City Despatch Post by William Taylor, with R. K. Ford named as the post's agent. Taylor owned a bookstore in the same building where Mearis had his City Despatch Post office. Subsequent ads announce letter-box locations, new delivery times, and reiterate the 2c and 1c rates charged by Mearis. The availability of "Paid stamps" is specifically mentioned, although no examples under the Taylor-Ford ownership have been recorded. A special 2c rate for last-minute delivery of eastbound and southbound mail, directly to the railroad route agent, was also advertised. The last reported ad for the

City Despatch Post, without any change in ownership noted, appears early January 1847. On March 22, 1847, an announcement in *The Sun* states that the City Despatch Post has been acquired by Wm. H. Hahn from R. Wilton. No mention of Taylor or Ford is made, and it is unclear whether this City Despatch is even the same one started by Mearis.

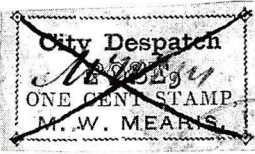
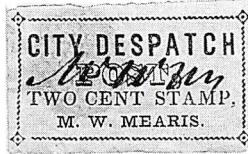
The 1c and 2c stamps issued by Mearis in 1846 were typeset and printed in black on grayish paper. Ten distinct types have been identified, and the plate arrangement was almost certainly in two columns of five; the 2c stamps at left and the 1c stamps at right. This arrangement is supported by the existence of three 2c-1c se-tenant pairs. There was significant variation among the ten subjects, involving two types of corner ornaments (flowers and diamonds) and font changes for three of the four lines of type in each stamp. Using digital scans and Adobe Photoshop, we have been able to overlay the eleven recorded stamps and two additional fragments, in order to classify each type and reconstruct the setting.

Three of the five rows can be positioned in their correct relative order, owing to the miraculous survival of three se-tenant pairs with original gum. Two of the pairs are offered here and have long been regarded as the only known se-tenant multiples. What has not been generally known is the existence of a *third* se-tenant pair, located in the British Library's Tapling collection. The Tapling pair is the piece of the puzzle that allows us to reconstruct the original block of six from which all three pairs were cut. Illustrated opposite is a digital reconstruction with the pairs joined together and the four additional types in positions that we believe may accurately reflect the original setting.

# Suggested Reconstruction of the Mearis Plate

## TYPE G (103L3)

Position 1  
 Diamonds in corners  
 "City Despatch" sans-serif  
 Narrow "Post"  
 Left frameline at angle

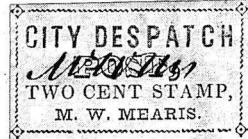


## TYPE E (103L6)

Position 2  
 Diamonds in corners  
 "City Despatch" u/l case  
 Narrow ornate "Post"  
 "M. W. Mearis" sans-serif

## TYPE F (103L3)

Position 3  
 Diamonds in corners  
 "City Despatch" sans-serif  
 Narrow "Post"  
 Left frameline parallel

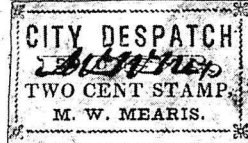


## TYPE A (103L2)

Position 4  
 Diamonds in corners  
 "City Despatch" sans-serif  
 Narrow "Post"

## TYPE I (103L5)

Position 5  
 Flowers in corners  
 "City Despatch" sans-serif  
 Wide "Post"  
 Left frameline curved



## TYPE J (103L4)

Position 6  
 Diamonds in corners  
 "City Despatch" sans-serif  
 Wide "Post"  
 Tiny gap between frameline and BR diamond

## TYPE H (103L5)

Position 7  
 Flowers in corners  
 "City Despatch" sans-serif  
 Wide "Post"  
 Left frameline straight



## TYPE B (103L4)

Position 8  
 Diamonds in corners  
 "City Despatch" sans-serif  
 Wide "Post"  
 Tiny gap between frameline and BR diamond

## TYPE K (UNLISTED)

Position 9  
 Flowers in corners  
 "City Despatch" Roman type  
 Wide "Post"  
 Large bold "M. W. Mearis"  
 Left frameline curved



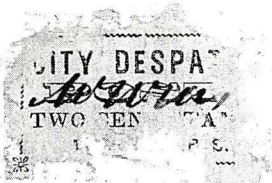
## TYPE C/D (103L1)

Position 10  
 Flowers in corners  
 "City Despatch" Roman type  
 Wide "Post"  
 Large bold "M. W. Mearis"

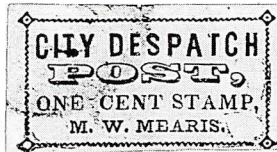
The suggested reconstruction is based on eleven stamps and two fragments (three duplicates shown below). Two of the three se-tenant pairs (Positions 3-4 and 7-8) are offered in this sale (lots 1334-1335). The third se-tenant pair (Positions 5-6) is in the British Library's Tapling collection. The three pairs were originally a block of six, which was divided prior to 1891.

We have used Denwood Kelly's types A-H, plus types I, J and K that we have identified. Kelly's type D is a duplicate of his type C. Scott numbers are shown in parentheses.

## Duplicate Examples



TYPE I (103L5)  
 Position 5



TYPE B (103L4)  
 Position 8



TYPE C/D (103L1)  
 Position 10

**CITY DISPATCH POST.**—The undersigned, desirous of being useful to his fellow-citizen, has established a **CITY DISPATCH POST** similar to those in the other large commercial cities of the Union, by which persons at the most distant points of the city may communicate with each other without delay or trouble, and at a very small expense. It has been found conveniently useful in New York, Philadelphia and Boston, and is now sustained and encouraged by all classes—and the undersigned in offering himself to the public pledges all that fidelity and industry can do to make it a convenient and useful establishment, and only asks in return the confidence and support of his friends and the public. 100 boxes will be posted at different points of the city, specially enumerated by bills. The charge will be upon a communication delivered to any point of the city 2 cents, and letters to go out of town will be regularly mailed for 1 cent, which must be paid at the box. I will receive at Golden Horse, Howard street, quarter before nine; at Mortimer & Mowbray's ten minutes before nine; Taylor, Wilde & Co., and Sun Office until five minutes of nine o'clock, letters to go East, which will be carried by me to mail agent at Lower Depot, by fast horse, for 2 cents each. Notices delivered for associations and clubs at a small charge. Also, small packages delivered to any part of the city. Good Collections attended to for a small percentage.

**MALCOM W. MEARIS.**

Persons will please direct their communications so that there may be no mistake in the delivery.

**REFERENCE**

Z. Collins Lee, Esq.	Hugh McDermery, Esq.
Lambert Gittings, Esq.	T. Yates Walsh, Esq.
Geo M. Robertson, Esq.	Jas. O. Law, Esq.
Wm H. Watson, Esq.	

And business men generally.

j23-1w\* **MALCOM W. MEARIS.**

**CITY DESPATCH POST.**—This establishment having passed into the hands of Mr. WM. TAYLOR, will now be conducted in such a manner as to insure its success, and make it a most convenient medium of communication to the public.

**RATES.**—On all letters to be delivered in the city, 100 cents will be charged. Those immediately for the Post Office *one cent*, to be paid for at the BOX, otherwise they will not be mailed.

Notices for Societies, Circulars, Catalogues, Invitations to Parties, Balls, Funerals, &c., served at a low charge, by the hundred, by calling at the office, **BASEMENT** of Jarvis' Buildings, immediately under Wm. Taylor's Book Store.

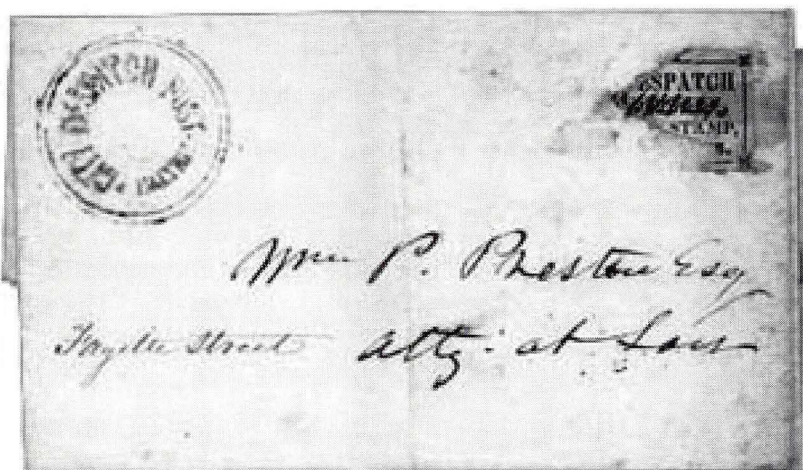
Persons will please be particular in their directions, and they may rest assured of a prompt and speedy delivery of their letters.

**WANTED.**—An industrious **BOY**, of good character. Apply to **R. K. FORD, Agent** for the Proprietor.

020-3t

*Announcement of the change of ownership made by Taylor - Ford.*

*Advertisement placed by Mearis announcing the establishment of the City Despatch Post.*



Mearis' City Despatch Post, Baltimore Md., 2c Black on Gray (this type unlisted in Scott). Unlisted Type K, Position 9 in our plating analysis ("City Despatch" in serified type, "M. W. Mearis" in large block letters), approximately one-third of stamp remaining, initialed "MWM", red "City Despatch Post Baltimo." double-line circular handstamp on undated folded letter to local street address, file fold, faint toning.

The ex-Caspary se-tenant pair originally had a fragment of the adjoining stamp below at lower left, which showed part of the "City Despatch" label (the margin was later trimmed to improve the appearance). The fragment showed a serified typeface used for "City Despatch" and floral corner ornaments, which rule out any of the other 2c types - we call it Type K. The cover offered here bears the only example of the type, which would probably be given its own Scott number (103LIA) if it were a complete stamp.

Ex Kelly and illustrated in his CCP series (Vol. 50, No. 3, p. 153) (Realized \$660.00)

# Davis's Penny Post Baltimore, Maryland

By Scott R. Trepel

*This article was originally presented in the Siegel Auction Galleries Sale 817, The David Golden Collection of United States Carriers and Locals, November 15-17, 1999. It is reproduced here with their permission.*

William D. Davis advertised for 25 "intelligent youths" in the February 1, 1856, edition of *The Sun* and followed this solicitation for employees with the February 5th announcement of his "One Cent Dispatch". Letters would be delivered within the city or to the post office for 1c each, and a "Special Messenger" service was offered for 5c. Additional advertisements appeared in *The Sun* until February 18, just two weeks later, and none appeared subsequently. Evidently, Davis's Penny Post lasted one Valentine season and was closed (source: Denwood N. Kelly, *Collectors Club Philatelist*, Vol. 50, No. 4).

The small typeset stamps issued by Davis's Penny Post are rare, with just 14 examples recorded, including four genuine covers (two of these are offered in this sale). We have attempted to reconstruct the setting, using the typographic differences to distinguish one subject from the other. In Denwood Kelly's comprehensive *CCP* series on Baltimore carriers and locals, he listed eight minor typographic varieties based on two basic types, acknowledging that some of the differences might be influenced by printing. Kelly also felt that the setting comprised ten subjects. In our analysis, the 14 recorded stamps show consistent typographic characteristics that can be classified as six subject types. Comparing this with the Kelly list, we are able to eliminate three of his eight types as duplicate subjects. There are no 57L1 multiples, so the only means to arrange the setting is to study stamps with sheet margins or showing bits of adjoining subjects. While the expectation is to find ten stamps in a setting, the surviving Davis stamps suggest a setting of six, each subject confirmed by one or more examples. A sheet of six stamps

is reasonable, if one considers that the standard U.S. postage stamp at the time was 3c, and that the 3c silver coin minted in 1852 was circulating in 1856. Davis could have arranged his sheets as two columns of three stamps to facilitate sales in 3-cent increments.

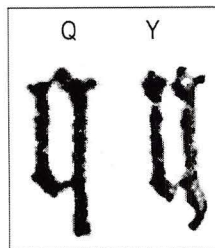
Speculation is a necessary part of plating the Davis stamps, owing to the absence of multiples or a larger number of examples from which to work. The plating shown here is our best guess based on the material at hand. Positions 1 (Ty. A), 2 (Ty. B), 4 (Ty. D) and 6 (Ty. F) are based on sheet-margin stamps. Stamps from these positions with margins showing bits of adjoining stamps have been used to establish the spacing between subjects. Type C is found with what appears to be a trace of the ornament from the upper right corner of the stamp below, which puts it in Position 4. Again, the 14 recorded stamps can be matched with these six subject types.

The most significant stamp to come from this setting is Type B, Position 2, which shows the spelling error "Pennq" for "Penny". A detail of the different characters is shown here. Remarkably, this error is not listed in Scott, nor mentioned in the Kelly series, nor in Sloane's notes, nor in any publication we have read. However, we are not the first to notice the "Pennq" variety. Elliott Perry, writing in April 1959 to Eugene Costales, the Scott Catalogue editor, noted a variety in which "the y of Penny is a q." For whatever reason, Costales did not change the Scott listing to reflect Perry's report.

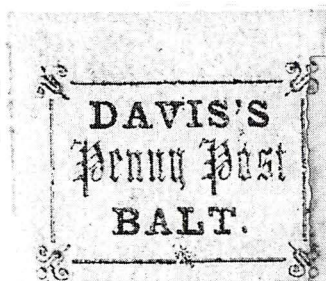
Currently, there are four recorded examples of the "Pennq" error, two of which are offered in lots 1022 and 1023. This is the first auction offering of these stamps that identifies them for what they are, and we anticipate that the current Scott editors will maintain consistency by listing them as 57L1a, along with other errors, such as the Honour's "Conours" and "Bents" (4LB8c), Glen Haven "Gien" (71L1a, see lot 1088), Moody's "Henny Dispatch" (110L1b) and Hoyts "Lettrc" (85L1).



# Suggested Plating of 57L1



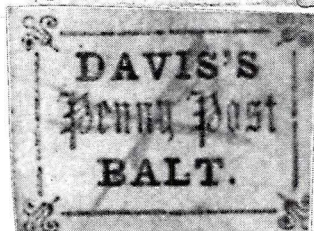
**TYPE C**  
Position 3  
Left frame break as shown



**TYPE B**  
Position 2  
"Pennq" error  
"BALT." in Roman type



**TYPE C**  
Position 3  
Left frame break as shown



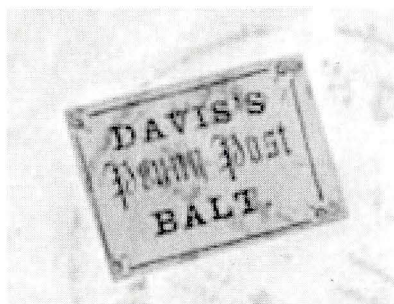
**TYPE D**  
Position 4  
"L" of "Balt." raised and tilted



**TYPE E**  
Position 5  
"DAVIS'S" in Roman type

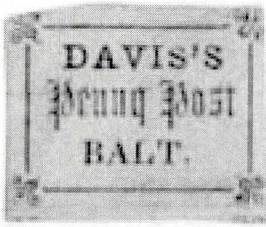


**TYPE F**  
Position 6  
Wide break in left frame



Lot 1021

Davis's Penny Post, Baltimore Md., (1c) Black on Lilac (57L1). Type A (Position 1), tied by red "Davis' One Cent Dispatch" circular handstamp on small piece. Only six of the fourteen recorded stamps, including those on covers, are cancelled by the red



Lot 1022

handstamp.

**Davis's Penny Post, Baltimore Md., (1c)  
Black on Lilac, "Pennq" for "Penny" (57L1  
var).** Type B (Position 2), original gum.

Typeset stamps are by nature more prone to variation. Typesetters composing a sheet of stamps were sometimes forced to sacrifice uniformity to complete the setting. Fonts or border pieces were interchanged. Even individual characters were used incorrectly, if misread by the typesetter or deliberately substituted for used-up type. Stamps such as the Honour's "Conours" and "Bents" (4LB8c), Glen Haven "Gien" (71L1a, see lot 1088), Moody's "Henny Dispatch" (110L1b) and Hoyts "Lettcr" (85L1) are a few prominent examples of typographical errors among the carrier and local issues.

The Davis's "Pennq Post" error was not noted by Denwood Kelly, nor has it been listed in Scott since Elliott Perry wrote to the U.S. Specialized editor, Eugene Costales, in April 1959, reporting the "Pennq" variety. Of the fourteen recorded 57L1 stamps, four come from Position 2, which we classify as Type B, in which the "q" character is used instead of "y". This is the only original-gum example among the four. A pencil-cancelled corner copy is offered in the following lot. A copy cancelled by the red handstamp is shown in Kelly's records, as is the fourth copy, which is cut to shape.

To maintain consistency, one would expect the Scott Catalogue to create a new listing, 57L1a, for the error. Therefore, this offering represents a rare opportunity to acquire a stamp before it receives Scott Catalogue recognition.

# PERIODS OF USE OF BOYD'S STAMPS AND CANCELLATIONS

By John D. Bowman  
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This article is a work in progress. The author has used published information and photocopies of covers kindly provided by Martin Richardson and Lawrence LeBel. In addition, the Levi auction record covers are included in this listing. The author also used major auction sales of Boyd's covers to develop the database. Other major auctions of US locals and a few other sources were used to develop the database. Some duplication exists in the database, since some covers have been auctioned more than once. The information in this article does not count such duplication of entries.

The number of covers in the database is provided as a relative measure of scarcity. A word of caution is in order when interpreting this information – the more commonly encountered covers are not usually sold as individual lots, and thus are not represented fairly in this listing with respect to their availability.

It is highly likely that other covers exist which are not included in this census and might be earlier or later than the listings below. If you have such covers, please contact the author.

The cancellations in the table are numbered according to the illustrations in a previously published article on Boyd's cancellations<sup>1</sup>.

It should be noted that during some time periods of Boyd's varied operations, year-dated cancels were not employed. Thus, it is difficult to establish the time periods of use of some of the cancellations.

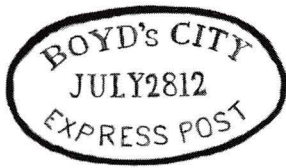
The latest use dates do not accurately reflect the end of the period of sales of a particular stamp, since Boyd's stamps were probably

## PERIODS OF USE OF BOYD'S CANCELLATIONS

honored for postage after replacement issues were sold. In some cases, the author has included a "probable latest use" date.

<b>Cancel Type</b>	<b>Earliest Use</b>	<b>Latest Use</b>	<b>Probable Latest Use / Notes</b>
1	June 27, 1844	Sept 24, 1845	Dec 4, 1844 / 64 covers
2	June 29, 1844	Dec 16, 1845	12 covers
3	Dec 7, 1848		No others listed
4			None listed
5	Sept 12, 1844	May 15, 1845	11 covers
6	Sept 27, 1844	Mar 9, 1849	Sept 24, 1867 / 76 covers
7	Feb 14, 1845	Aug 7, 1851	5 covers
8	Aug 21, 1847	Oct 5, 1849	4 covers
9	Mar 20, 1845	Apr 11, 1857	53 covers
10			None listed
11	Aug 29, 1845	July 19, 1860	51 covers
12			None listed
13	Jan 15, 1856	Sept 12, 1857	6 covers
14	Oct 12, 1852	Mar 8, 1855	10 covers
15	Aug 18, 1855	Jan 18, 1861	32 covers
18	Mar 25, 1861	May 26, 1864	27 covers
19	July 16, 1861	Mar 4, 1863	7 covers
20	Mar 25, 1856	Oct 4, 1867	July 2, 1861 - Nov 2, 1865 / 20 covers
21	Feb 8, 1866	June 2, 1868	25 covers
22			None listed
23	Apr 1, 1879		No others listed
24	Dec 29, 1868	May 2, 1870	7 covers
25	Dec 29, 1877		No others listed
26	July 11, 1877	Sept 20, 1877	3 covers
27	June 21, 1878	May 8, 1888	47 covers
28	Jan 17, 1882	Aug 20, 1884	2 covers
30	Nov 10, 1879	Jan 6, 1886	73 covers
33	Sept 9, 1880	June 17, 1886	Oct 24, 1885 / 4 covers
34	Dec 7, 1883		No others listed
38	Feb 20, 1889		No others listed
39	May 3, 1900		No others listed
44	Jan 4, 1883		No others listed

<sup>1</sup> Bowman, John D and LeBel, Lawrence. "Boyd's Postal Markings." *The Penny Post*, Vol 7, no. 3 (July 1997): 2-12



Type 8 cancel (corrected)



Type 41 cancel (corrected)

## PERIODS OF USE OF BOYD'S STAMPS

Stamp / Envelope (Scott #'s)	Earliest Use	Latest Use	Probable Latest Use / Notes
20L1	June 27, 1844	Sept 23, 1844	(?) June 28 use / 5 singles / 21 covers
20L2	Sept 12, 1844	Nov 20, 1845	Apr 25, 1845 / 30 covers
20L3	Feb 3, 1845	Oct 26, 1848	Jul 21, 1845 / (4/21/46 known) / 36 covers
20L4	Mar 20, 1845	Mar 3, 1851	Mar 9, 1849 (11/12/49 known) / 96 covers
20L5	May 10, 1848		2 covers
20L6	May 10, 1848		Only one cover
20L7	Apr 4, 1848	Oct 5, 1854	July 9, 1853 / 131 covers
20L8	July 23, 1852	Sept 28, 1854	32 covers
20L9	Feb 2, 1853	Sept 17, 1857	17 covers
20L10	July 3, 1854	Oct 6, 1855	37 covers
20L11	Dec 21, 1855	Mar 15, 1859	31 covers
20L12	Jan 16, 1856	Nov 21, 1858	May 10, 1857 / 32 covers
20L13	May 5, 1856	Feb 16, 1857	20 covers
20L14	Mar 27, 1857	May 29, 1860	44 covers
20L15	Nov 11, 1859	Aug 1, 1860	12 covers
20L16	Feb 7, 1861	Sept 21, 1865	26 covers
20L17	Jan 18, 1861	May 26, 1864	66 covers
20L18	May 23, 1861	Dec 31, 1863	41 covers
20L21	Oct 4, 1867	Jan 26, 1883	8 covers
20L23	June 9, 1866	Nov 26, 1878	29 covers
20L24	May 29, 1866	Sept 3, 1867	5 covers
20L25	Sept 4, 1866		3 covers
20L26			4 covers
20L32			5 covers
20L33	May 5, 1877		3 covers
20L34			4 covers
20L35	Aug 5, 1878	Jan 26, 1883	15 covers
20L36	Sept 20, 1877	July 29, 1878	6 covers
20L43	Aug 30, 1878	Oct 3, 1878	12 covers

## PERIODS OF USE OF BOYD'S STAMPS

Stamp / Envelope (Scott #'s)	Earliest Use	Latest Use	Probable Latest Use / Notes
20L43A	July 13, 1878	Sept 26, 1878	4 covers
20L44	Aug 9, 1877	July 8, 1881	Oct 7, 1879 / 18 covers
20L45	Sept 9, 1880	Oct 21, 1882	13 covers
20L46	Apr 19, 1879		5 covers
20L47			12 covers
20L48			
20L49			
20L50	July 8, 1881	June 17, 1886	Sept 14, 1882; 7 covers
20L51			
20L52	Apr 19, 1882		2 covers
20L53	Jan 17, 1882	Oct 18, 1884	14 covers
20L54	Nov 7, 1881	Feb 9, 1882	7 covers
20L55	Mar 1, 1883	May 8, 1888	May 18, 1883 / 9 covers
20L56	July 1, 1881	Oct 24, 1885	June 16, 1882 / 58 covers
20LU7	July 13, 1865		Only one cover
20LU11	Mar 25, 1856		Only one cover
20LU13	Dec 21, 1867		Only one cover
20LU14	Mar 21, 1867		5 covers
20LU20	Feb 16, 1867		2 covers
20LU21	Feb 8, 1866		Only one cover
20LU30	July 17, 1879	Aug 2, 1879	3 covers
20LU33	Jan 18, 1879	July 10, 1879	3 covers
20LU34	Mar 31, 1879	Jan 21, 1880	3 covers
20LU35	Jan 27, 1879	Apr 15, 1881	7 covers
20LU36	Jan 7, 1880	Mar 23, 1880	3 covers
20LU37	Aug 1, 1879	Nov 10, 1879	3 covers
20LU38	Mar 1, 1879	Mar 22, 1882	8 covers
20LU40	May 5, 1880	May 7, 1880	2 covers
20LU42	Nov 27, 1880		Only one cover
20LU43	Oct 5, 1882	May 3, 1883	6 covers
20LU44	Mar 27, 1882	June 6, 1883	8 covers
20LU45	Jan 23, 1874	Oct 12, 1874	8 covers
20LU46	Mar 7, 1876	May 24, 1876	5 covers
20LU47	July 18, 1876	Mar 7, 1877	4 covers
20LU48	Nov 25, 1878	Mar 20, 1879	5 covers
20LU49	June 17, 1879	Mar 11, 1880	11 covers
20LU50	May 20, 1880	June 13, 1880	5 covers
20LU51	Mar 5, 1881		2 covers
20LU52	Jan 16, 1882		Only one cover

