

# BLOODS Part 2; 15L1

By

Vernon R. Morris, Jr., MD

Philadelphia was the second city in the United States to be honored with a private company dedicated solely to delivering local mail. The Philadelphia Despatch Post, was described in the local newspapers as a City Despatch Post, owned by Robertson & Co., and fashioned after the former City Despatch Post in New York founded by Greig.<sup>1</sup> This is the second in a series of postal history articles reviewing chronologically the stamp issues of the dominant private post in Philadelphia.

## Philadelphia Despatch Post

The Philadelphia Despatch Post was the third entity in the world to produce stamps for prepayment of postage, after Great Britain in 1840, and New York in February 1842. To put this into its proper historical perspective, Switzerland was fourth in March 1843, and Brazil fifth in August 1843.<sup>2</sup> Postmaster provisional stamps in the United States began July 1845, United States federal stamps in July 1847.

Moreover, for eighteen months the Philadelphia Despatch Post was the only private post in the United States, and the entire world, dedicated solely to city delivery of letters.<sup>3</sup>

## Circular Handstamp Marking

Two handstamp markings, 28 millimeter in diameter with inscription "PHILA. DESPATCH POST." have been documented. One is dated December 19, 1842 in black ink with "10 A. M." center,<sup>4</sup> and another circular handstamp with "3P M" is dated December 31, 1842 in red ink. Each specified delivery time from the company office. The author has recorded 61 examples of this circular handstamp marking, but only the first was in black ink.<sup>5</sup> **Figure 1** is a representative "3P M" example.

## Prepayment Stamp

The early stamps produced by the Philadelphia Despatch Post were simply handstamp markings on paper without gum fashioned into an octagonal form. The "3P M" circular handstamp had been selected for prepayment stamps.<sup>6</sup> An imperfect stamp creation with designated afternoon delivery as part of the design. For morning deliveries the stamp design was incorrect, misleading, and a potential source of

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<sup>1</sup> Vernon R. Morris Jr, MD, "BLOODS Part 1: 15L2," *The Penny Post*, Vol. 21, No. 1, (Whole Number 82) January 2013, page 18.

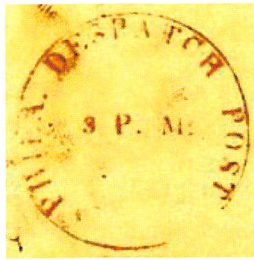
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, page 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, page 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, page 27.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, page 19.

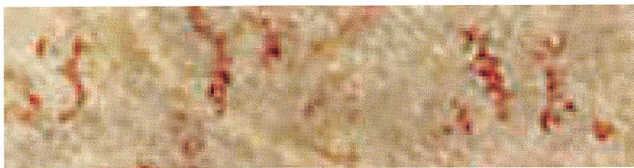
<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, page 34.



**Figure 1. The Philadelphia Despatch Post circular handstamp was fashioned in two types, one each for the two delivery times: 10 AM in Figure 1a from census number 1; and 3 PM in Figure 1b, from census number 14.**



**Figure 2. Red on bluish paper, Scott Catalog 15L1, from 1843.**



**Figure 3. 15L1 stamp design center was inappropriately marked for an afternoon delivery time, “3P M”. Best shown in census number 1 and 14.**

confusion. Since modern “white out” was not available the octagonal stamps could be salvaged by obliterating the delivery time with the crude “PAID” handstamp.

The author believes the first Philadelphia Despatch Post “cut out handstamps” were “black,” Scott 15L2.<sup>7</sup> All six surviving 15L2 examples are on cover, likely prepared prior to December 31, 1842, and known from a short period of time, the latest example on June 13, 1843.

It is probable that in short order the company’s prompt success forecast they would soon sell out of their stock of black stamps. A second and perhaps larger group with same design, was printed in red ink, **Figure 2**. The same “3P M” center handstamp was selected again, best shown in **Figure 3**. The 2012 *Scott Catalog*, seems to erroneously assign Scott 15L1 to this second red handstamp cutout used on covers.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, page 23.

### 15L1 Characteristics

The 15L1 stamp design was “primitive,” without the bust of a famous person or pictorial design. Simply a paper cutout of the company’s name prepared from the handstamp. “Primitive” as not a printed sheet of stamps with gum. “Primitive” octagonal shape, not continued by any government or private companies, with the exception of Hale & Co. beginning March 14, 1844 for fifteen months.<sup>8</sup> The 15L1 stamp design was identical to 15L2, each with “3P M” at center. They differed by color only. 15L1 was “red on bluish,” 15L2 was “black.”

### Dates and Time of Service

Fourteen examples of “red on bluish” 15L1 octagonal stamps have survived. The earliest recorded is February 15, 1843. The latest recorded is November 8, 1843.

The Philadelphia Despatch Post delivered letters twice a day from its “principal office” at 83 South Second Street. This strategic location was a few hundred feet away from the main post office and across from the confluence of Dock and Second Street.<sup>9</sup>

### Description Census

- (1) February 15, 1843; folded letter; local delivery; manuscript “*R&Co*”, bold red “3P M”; faint red “PAID” handstamp cancel, bold red “circle of dots” cancel; red “10A M” circular “PHILA. DESPATCH POST.” auxiliary handstamp. To: “Mr. Thos. G. Hollingsworth. / 136 South 2. St.”; Harmer sale 1071, March 20, 1957, lot 558, Caspary; Siegel sale 817, November 15, 1991, lot 491, Golden. Ex Lowe. Kramer collection.
- (2) April 19, 1843; folded letter; to the Mails, New York; manuscript “*R&Co*”, (red) PAID handstamp cancel, (red) bold 12mm single line numeral “3” cancel; (red) Philadelphia circular datestamp, Clarke 59 (f), manuscript 12 ½ rate. To: Robert M Ludlow Esq / Office of the Camden & Amboy Rail Road Co- / New - York”. Ex Boker.
- (3) June 13, 1843; (folded letter); local delivery; cut square, manuscript “*R&Co*”, (red) bold PAID handstamp cancel, (red) 6mm outline numeral “3” cancel; auxiliary (red) 12mm single line numeral “3” handstamp, (red) Philadelphia circular datestamp, Clarke 59(f), manuscript “*Refused*”. To: Mr. Fred Fritz / (Phila)”. Harmer sale 1071, March 20, 1957, lot 560, Caspary. Ex Boker.
- (4) June 20, 1843; folded letter; local delivery; manuscript “*R&Co*”, red “3 PM”; bold red PAID handstamp cancel, two red 6mm outline numeral “3” cancel; two red “PM” circular “PHILA. DESPATCH POST.” auxiliary handstamp. To: “Mr Maurice McNamee/ Shippen betw 3 & 4<sup>th</sup> St / Blacksmith”. Siegel sale 817, November 15, 1999, lot 492, Golden. Signed Lowe.

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<sup>8</sup> Vernon R. Morris Jr, MD, “The Earliest Fancy Cancel in America,” *The Collectors Club Philatelist*, Vol. 89, No. 3, May-June 2010, page 183.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, pages 26-27.



- (5) June 27, 1843; (folded letter); to the Mails, New York; manuscript "*R&Co*", (red) "3PM"; (red) bold PAID handstamp cancel, "circle of V's" cancel; (red) Philadelphia circular datestamp, Clarke 57 (ba), blue manuscript "12 ½" rate. To: "Mssrs E.Fabrequettes fits & Morris / Merchants / New York". Harmer sale 573, October 17, 1950, lot 451, Schenck; Harmer sale 1071, March 20, 1957, lot 559, Caspary. Ex Ferrari, Boker.
- (6) July 28, 1843; folded letter; to the Mails, New Jersey; manuscript "*R&Co*", red "3P M"; bold red PAID handstamp cancel, three red 6mm outline numeral "3" cancels; red Philadelphia circular datestamp, Clarke 59f, manuscript "6" rate. To: "Miss Mary G. Patterson / St Mary's Hall / Burlington". Siegel sale 645, May 20, 1985, lot 354. Robert Kaufmann sale 58, May 13, 1989, lot 837. August 20, 1997 PFC 317269. Morris collection.
- (7) July 28, 1843; folded letter; local delivery; manuscript "*R&Co*", red "3P M"; two red bold "PAID" handstamp cancels, three red double line 6mm outline numeral "3" cancels; auxiliary manuscript "*paid*". To: "Mssrs Lattin & Hamlin / Commerce St / bet. 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Sts". Siegel sale 925, November 15, 2006, lot 1293. Sloane records.
- (8) August 29, 1843; folded letter; to the Mails, Virginia; manuscript "*R&Co*", red "3P M"; bold red PAID handstamp cancel, two red 6mm outline numeral "3" cancels; red Philadelphia circular datestamp, Clarke 59f, manuscript "Chg-", and blue manuscript "18 ¾" rate. To: "M R. H. Garnett esq / Lloyd's / Essex County / Virginia". Siegel sale 896, June 4, 2005, lot 519. Stimmell collection.
- (9) September 19, 1843; folded letter; local delivery; manuscript "*R&Co*", red "3P M"; bold red PAID handstamp cancel, red 6mm outline numeral "3" cancel; red "PM" circular "PHILA. DESPATCH POST." auxiliary handstamp. To: "Dr-William Blanding / Corner- 5<sup>th</sup>.. Willow St- / Phila". Siegel sale 825, June 27, 2005, lot 1589.
- (10) October 10, 1843; unknown; to the Mails and Mt. Pleasant, Ohio; torn stamp tied by red Philadelphia circular datestamp; Park Bernet Galleries sale 282, May 6, 1941, lot 1022, Knapp.
- (11) November 1, 1843; folded cover; local delivery; manuscript "*R&Co*", red "3P M"; bold red PAID handstamp cancel, red 6mm outline numeral "3"; red "PM" circular "PHILA. DESPATCH POST." auxiliary handstamp. To: "Mssrs Carter & Scattergood / 11 & 14 Minor Sts / Phila". Siegel sale 868, November 14, 2003, lot 2047. Ex Schwartz, Coles. October 17, 1983 PFC 123255; February 9, 2009 PFC 473478.



- (12) November 8, 1843; folded printed notice; local delivery; manuscript “*R&Co*”, excellent red “3P M”; faint red PAID handstamp cancel; red 6mm double outline numeral “3” cancel; “PM” circular “PHILA. DESPATCH POST.” auxiliary handstamp. To: “Henry D. Gilpin Esq / 99 Walnut St”. Siegel sale 817, November 15, 1999, lot 493, Golden. Ex Gibson, Lowe. Lyons collection.
- (13) Undated; folded letter; local delivery; manuscript “*R&Co*”, red “3P M”; red PAID handstamp cancel, 12mm single line numeral “3” cancel; red “PM” circular “PHILA. DESPATCH POST.” auxiliary handstamp. To: “A.D.Bache, L.L.D. / Chesnut St. 5<sup>th</sup> door East of Schl. 6<sup>th</sup> / Philadelphia”. Siegel sale 862, May 31, 2003, lot 61; Siegel sale 1000, December 8, 2010, lot 1316. Ex Schwartz. July 15, 2003 PFC 399,826. Morris collection.
- (14) Undated; folded letter; local delivery; manuscript “*R&Co*”, excellent red “3P M”; red PAID handstamp cancel, red 12mm single line numeral “3” cancel; excellent red “3P M” circular “PHILA. DESPATCH POST.” auxiliary handstamp; To: “George H. Richards Esq. / 34 Sec ----- / Phila.” Christie’s Robson Lowe sale 5926, June 18, 1985, lot 54. December 6, 1985 PFC 151759. Gronowski collection.

### Photographic Census

- Figures 4a, b, c: Hollingsworth; cover, stamp, cancel.  
 5a, b: Ludlow; cover, stamp.  
 6: Fritz; cover.  
 7a, b: McNanee; cover, stamp.  
 8a, b: Fabrequettes; cover, stamp.  
 9a, b, c: Patterson; cover, stamp, obliterator.  
 10a, b: Hamlin; cover, stamp.  
 11a, b: Garnet; cover, stamp.  
 12a, b: Blanding; cover, stamp.  
 13a, b, c: Scatttergood; cover, stamp, cancel.  
 14a, b: Gilpin; cover, stamp.  
 15a, b: Bache; cover, stamp.  
 16a, b: Richards; cover, stamp.

### 15L1 Cover Data Analysis

**Table I** is the data base for 14 surviving covers with a 15L1 stamp. All 14 surviving stamps are on the covers of folded letters. Census number 12 was a printed notice. Envelopes were not readily available during 1843.

Only 13 covers have been photographed. All “red on bluish” stamp designs show the company name with “3P M” at center, **Figure 17**. All of the timed centers were obliterated by red “PAID.” All stamps bear a manuscript “*R&Co*” control marking in black ink, **Figure 18**.



Figure 4a.



Figure 4b.

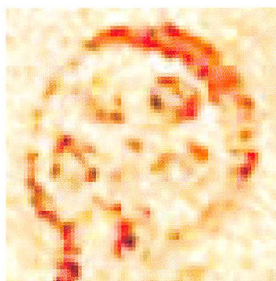


Figure 4c.

Figure 4. Census number 1 was locally addressed to Hollingsworth on February 15, 1843; shown as full cover in Figure 4a, 15L1 stamp only in Figure 4b, and the unusual “Circle of Dots” cancel in Figure 4c.



Figure 5a.



Figure 5b.

**Figure 5.** Census number 2 was addressed to Ludlow in New York City on April 19, 1843; the full cover is shown in Figure 5a, and 15L1 stamp in Figure 5b. Not photographed in any auction catalogs, and not seen in 40 years. Ex Boker.





**Figure 6. Census number 3 is sent to Fritz in Philadelphia on June 13, 1843. An auxiliary 12mm numeral 3 is present. Although a specific street address may not be written, The 1840 McElroy city directory listed Frederick Fritz at 366 North 6<sup>th</sup> Street, just at the east edge of the Spring Garden District. Since the government post office was involved this cover may been held at the post office as a drop letter until picked up by Mr. Fritz. This photograph is from the Boker exhibit page, but otherwise has not been seen or in any auction catalog since the Caspary sale 56 years ago.**



Figure 7a.



Figure 7b.

Figure 7. Census number 4 was locally addressed to McNamee on June 20, 1843; as full cover in Figure 7a, and 15L1 stamp only in Figure 7b. Cancelled by two red 6mm outline numeral 3 in the center, which are barely distinguishable. The city directory listed Morris McNamee as a “black and white smith.”

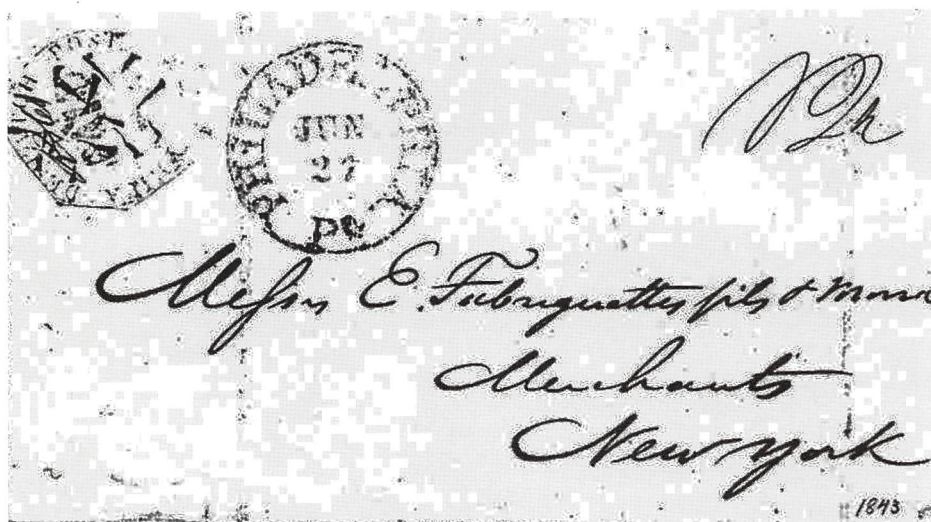


Figure 8a.



Figure 8b.

**Figure 8.** Census number 5 was addressed to Fabrequettes in New York on June 27, 1843; shown as full cover in Figure 8a, and 15L1 stamp only in Figure 8b. The “Circle of Wedges” cancel may be unique. The covers last auction appearance was 56 years ago in the Caspary sale. Ex Ferrari and Boker. (Eugene Fabrequettes, who was an importer at 61 Maiden Lane. His house was listed at 36 Walker. Doggett p113).





Figure 9a.



Figure 9b.



Figure 9c.

**Figure 9.** Census number 6 was addressed to Patterson, New Jersey on June 28, 1843. Shown in full cover in Figure 9a, and 15L1 stamp only in Figure 9b. Figure 9c reveals the irregular nature of the “PAID” obliterator.



Figure 10a.



Figure 10b.

Figure 10. Census number 7 was locally addressed to Hamlin on July 28, 1843. Figure 10a as full cover, and Figure 10b as 15L1 stamp. Twice struck was the 6mm numeral “3” cancel, and the “PAID” obliterator.



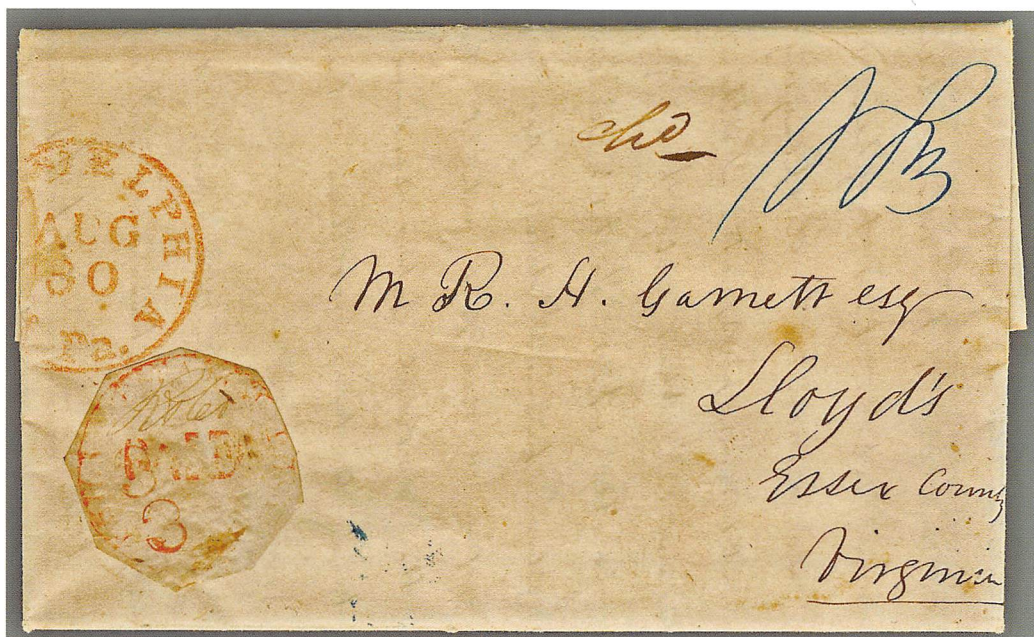


Figure 11a.



Figure 11b.

Figure 11. Census number 8 was addressed to Garnett in Virginia on August 29, 1843. The entire cover in Figure 11a, and 15L1 stamp in Figure 11b. The stamp was cancelled twice by a 6mm outline numeral 3, in addition to the “PAID” obliterator.





Figure 12a.



Figure 12b.

Figure 12. Census number 9 was locally delivered to Blanding on September 19, 1843. Figure 12a is the full cover, and Figure 12b the 15L1 stamp. A 6mm outline numeral 3 is struck just above the “ID” of the “PAID” obliterator.



Figure 13a.



Figure 13b.



Figure 13c.

Figure 13. Census number 11 was locally addressed to Scattergood on November 1, 1843. Figure 13a is the full cover, and Figure 13b the 15L1 stamp, cancelled by excellent strike of 6mm outline numeral 3, shown in Figure 13c.



Figure 14a.



Figure 14b.

Figure 14. Census number 12 was locally addressed to Gilpin on November 8, 1843. Figure 14a is the full cover, and Figure 14b is the 15L1 stamp. The “3P M” stamp design is visible in the center.





Figure 15a.

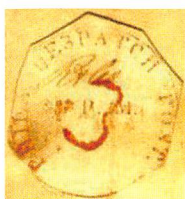


Figure 15b.

Figure 15. Census number 13 was locally addressed to Bache on undated cover. Figure 15a is the full cover, and Figure 15b is the 15L1 stamp, cancelled by a 12mm single line numeral 3.



**Figure 16a.**



**Figure 16b.**

**Figure 16.** Census number 14 was locally addressed to Richards on undated cover. Figure 16a is the full cover, and Figure 16b the 15L1 stamp only. “PAID” was too faint to obliterate the underlying “3P M” stamp design in the center, but was also cancelled by a 12mm single line numeral “3.”



**Figure 17.** From census number 12 is “3P M” stamp center partially obliterated by PAID. The inappropriate stamp design delivery time is also seen well in Figure 16.

All stamps were handstamp cancelled. Color photographs of 10 confirm red ink for each one. Black and white photographs of 3 are presumably red. No cancels are believed to be in black ink. Numeral “3” cancelled 11 of the 13 photographed stamps.

Additional postal markings appeared on all 14 covers. Of the 8 covers delivered directly to local individuals and businesses, 7 were marked with the company named circular handstamp, and therefore appears on half the 15L1 covers. Of the 6 covers delivered to the government post office, all were struck by the Philadelphia circular datestamp; 5 were outbound to the mails; one was retained in Philadelphia as a “drop letter.”



**Figure 18. Manuscript “R&Co” was a control mark applied on each and every 15L1 stamp that has survived. Shown is the example from census number 13, addressed to Bache.**



**Figure 19. From census number 11, reveals the crude “obliterator” handstamp “PAID.”**

### Cancellation Types

**Table II** summarizes the cancellation types. A cancel is a mark applied to the stamp to prevent reuse and potential subsequent unpaid postal service. Cancels may be in handstamp or manuscript form.

All 14 surviving examples were struck by a crude “PAID.” The letters “PA” are invariably not as tall as the letters “ID,” **Figure 19**. All 14 appear to be in red ink: confirmed red in census numbers 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, and 14; *presumed* red in census numbers 2, 3, 5, and 10. Two strikes of PAID were applied on census number 7. No strikes confirmed in black ink have been recorded. The author believes that the crude “PAID” was an *obliterator* of the flawed stamp design with inappropriate “3P M” at center,<sup>10</sup> rather than intended to “cancel” possible reuse for postal service. The crude PAID was probably applied on the *day of sale* to avoid confusion over actual future delivery times.

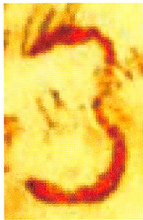
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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, page 24.



Other handstamp markings are present on 15L1 stamps, which are *true cancellations* to prevent reuse. They were probably applied on the *date of service*, rather than the day of sale.<sup>11</sup> All appear to have been in red ink. More than half of the census was cancelled by a 6 mm numeral “3” in outline form; census numbers 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12 confirmed in red, with census number 3 presumed red. Three other examples were cancelled by a 12 mm tall numeral “3” in single line form; census numbers 2, 13, and 14, but only the latter two confirmed in red. Black has never been identified as a numeral “3” of any size or type.

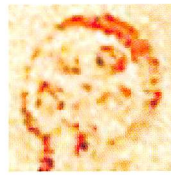
A “Circle of Dots” canceled one 15L1 cover, census number 1. Likewise, one “Circle of Wedges” cancel, census number 5. The latter may be unique, and not found on any of the three issues by the Philadelphia Despatch Post. “Circle of Wedges” has similar to the Maltese Cross cancel used in England about that time and presumed red, **Figure 20.**



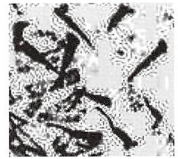
**Figure 20a.**



**Figure 20b.**



**Figure 20c.**



**Figure 20d.**

**Figure 20. Various 15L1 cancellations. Figure 20a is a 6mm outline numeral 3; Figure 20b is a 12mm single line numeral 3; Figure 20c is the “circle of dots”; Figure 20d is the “circle of wedges.”**

Government applied Philadelphia circular datestamps were certainly not intended to cancel or assist private posts. From the little information known about census number 10, the government circular handstamp marking by coincidence or accident, tied that 15L1 stamp to it's cover. Only one black and white photograph from 1941 of this cover exists, and is not available.

### **Cover Auxiliary Handstamps**

Auxiliary markings are defined as additional markings on a cover which did not cancel stamps, but provided additional pertinent postal information regarding its handling and delivery, and of use to philatelist by recording postal actions. The great majority of markings are straight-line or circular handstamps, although some exist as manuscript. The local post handstamp confirmed it's service, in the form of rate charged, paid service, and whether a morning or afternoon delivery occurred. As an extention of his concept, the post office applied its circular datestamp to indicate which city and on which cde the government performed a service. For the philatelic student, the government cds functions as additional information for date and type of service, ie “To the Mails.”

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, page 26.

**Table III** summarizes auxiliary handstamps which appear on the surviving 15L1 covers. All are confirmed or presumed in red ink. These markings were probably applied at the *time of service*. Prior to the day of service, of course the cover sheet was in the possession of the sender and *not available* to the Philadelphia Despatch Post.

*Half of the surviving examples are found with an associated "PHILA. DESPATCH POST." timed circular handstamp marking. This marking distinguished between a morning or afternoon delivery. It never functioned as a stamp cancellation. Only one "10 A M" style survived, census number 1. Much more common is "3P M," found on census numbers 4, 9, 11, 12, 13, and 14. All are confirmed in red ink. "PHILA. DESPATCH POST." was apparently reserved for only locally delivered letters, and none going to the post office. Of the eight examples delivered to a local address, seven had displayed the "PHILA. DESPATCH POST." marking (census number 7 did not).*

*Almost half of the surviving examples bear a government marking. Census numbers 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, and 10 demonstrate a Philadelphia circular datestamp. All six were applied at the main Philadelphia Post Office, after being delivered there by the Philadelphia Despatch Post. Five of six were outbound mail. Census number 3, however, was intended for a Philadelphia resident, although no address was given. Confirmed in red ink are numbers 6 and 8, the others unknown, but very likely red.*

Government circular datestamp corroboration by "Clarke type" can be helpful<sup>12</sup> for the advanced student with special interest in Philadelphia postal history. Census numbers 2, 3, 6, and 8 are Clarke 59, which is known used from mid 1841 until mid 1846, while subtype 59f is red and recorded in a more narrow time period, earlier 1843 until later summer 1844, and shown in census number 6 in **Figure 9!** Census number 5 bears a Clarke type 57. Census number 10 is unknown. The important message is the *Philadelphia cds was 30 mm in diameter, and very close in size to the 28 mm Philadelphia Despatch Post marking. Government circular datestamps on rare occasions accidentally contacted the private post stamp, as apparently the case in census number 10, philatelically tying the stamp to cover.*

Only census number 7 does not bear a circular private post or government handstamp marking. However, an auxiliary manuscript marking "paid" exists. Only one other manuscript auxiliary marking occurs in this group. Census number 3 was marked "refused." No auxiliary markings were handstamp "PAID."

In summary, all 14 surviving 15L1 examples bear some type of auxiliary marking. Seven were Philadelphia Despatch Post, and six were Philadelphia circular datestamps. However, these two bold handstamp markings were *mutually exclusive*, and none appeared together. Only census number 7 has a manuscript rather than handstamp auxiliary marking.

### Service Location

**Table IV** identifies addressee location. Almost two thirds of the surviving examples were delivered locally, nine of 14. Eight were delivered directly by the

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<sup>12</sup> Tom Clarke, *A Catalog of PHILADELPHIA POSTMARKS, 18<sup>th</sup> Century to Present, Part 1*, pages 14-15, 1991.

Philadelphia Despatch Post to a street address, six within the city limits were, and two to adjacent districts, Northern Liberties, and Southwark. However, one of the 9 cannot be fully determined. Census number 3 must have been delivered by the private post to the main post office where it was marked with the Philadelphia circular datestamp. More likely it was intended as a “drop letter” to be picked up by the addressee, and remained in the old city.<sup>13</sup> However, if not picked up after two days, it may have been forwarded by carrier, or more unlikely the intercity post to the Spring Garden District where the addressee is believed to have resided. To complicate matters further, the cover bears a manuscript “refused,” which may have been at the post office or the Spring Garden location.<sup>14</sup> **Figure 21** is a map distribution of local delivery addresses. Since census number 3 final delivery location is uncertain, the residence has been selected, but designated by a *much smaller number*.

Five examples were outbound letters delivered by the Philadelphia Despatch Post to the main post office for entrance into the government inter-city mail system. All destinations were out of Pennsylvania to nearby states. The distribution was equally divided, one each to New Jersey, Virginia, and Ohio, with the exception of New York receiving two.

### **Government Combinations**

Because 1843 was prior to federal government prepayment stamps, no prepayment stamp combinations were possible. Census number 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, and 10 were service combinations, bearing a Philadelphia Despatch Post prepayment stamp for delivery service to the post office, and Philadelphia circular datestamp for government service.

### **Incorrect Scott Catalog Numbering**

The Philadelphia Despatch Post issued three different prepayment stamps. The first two were “primitive” octagonal shaped stamps, all placed into service and exhausted prior to the end of 1843. The topic of this article, 15L1 “red on bluish” octagonal stamps, has been listed for decades in Scott Catalog as 15L1. The previous article in this series reviewed the “black” octagonal stamp, Scott Catalog 15L2. Collectively only twenty octagonal stamps have survived, and all are on covers, most of which are dated (eighteen of twenty).

From this small data base, reasonable evidence exists to suggest the catalog sequence should be reversed.<sup>15</sup> The earliest 15L2 was in December of 1842.<sup>16</sup> The earliest 15L1 example was not until February 15, 1843, *at least six weeks later*.

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<sup>13</sup> Vernon R. Morris Jr, MD, “What is a ‘Drop Letter’ and a ‘Drop Dead Letter’?,” *The Chronicle of the U.S. Classics Postal Issues*, Vol. 55, No. 4, (Whole Number 200), November 2003, pages 248-250.

<sup>14</sup> Vernon R. Morris Jr, MD, “Cressman & Co’s”, *The Collectors Club Philatelist*, Vol. 81, No. 5, September- October 2002, pages 240- 241.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, page 24.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, page 33.



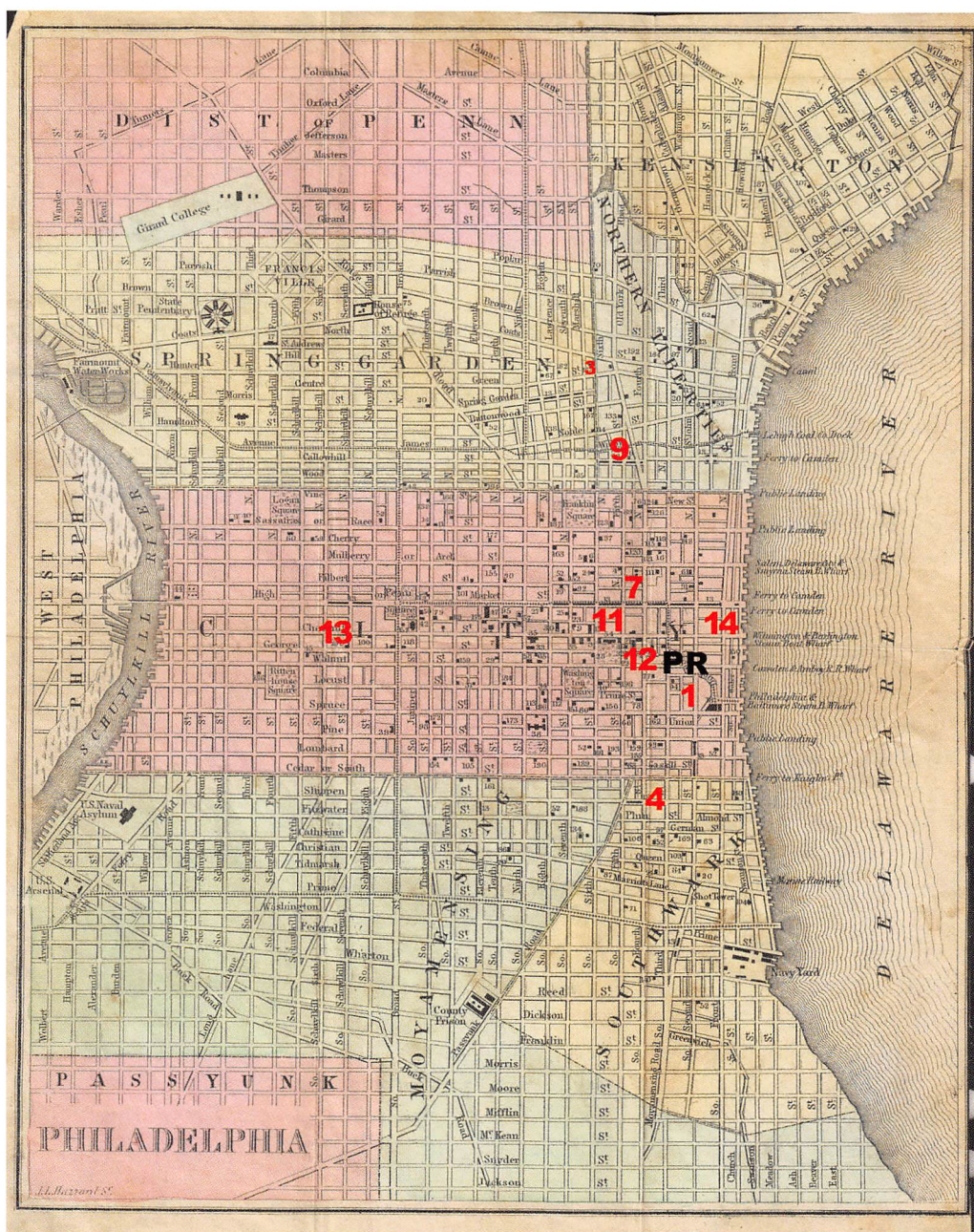


Figure 21. Contemporary map of Philadelphia. “R” indicates the principal office of Robertson’s “Philadelphia Despatch Post.” “P” locates the main post office in the old city of Philadelphia. Eight local census numbers have been identified by the Pennsylvania Historical Society. Census number 3 was probably a drop letter.



DATE	COVER	15L1 RED on BLUISH	15L1 CANCEL	AUXILIARY MARKING	ADDRESSEE
1. February 15, 1843	Folded letter	1. "R&Co" 2. Bold red "3P M"	1. Red "circle of dots" 2. Red PAID	1. Red "10 AM" circular "PHILA. DESPATCH POST"	Mr Teos. G. Hollingsworth. / 136 South 2d. St. OLD CITY
2. April 19, 1843	Folded letter	1. "R&Co"	1. (Red) PAID 2. (Red) 12 mm single line numeral "3"	1. Philadelphia circular datestamp	Robert M Ludlow Esq / Office of the Camden & Amboy Rail Road Co - / <u>New - York</u> NEW YORK
3. June 13, 1843	-	1. "R&Co" 2. Cut square	1. (Red) PAID 2. (Red) 6mm outline numeral "3"	1. (Red) 12 mm single line numeral "3" 2. Philadelphia circular datestamp 3. Manuscript "Refused"	Mr. Fred Fritz / (Phila)  DROP LETTER or SPRING GARDEN
4. June 20, 1843	Folded letter	1. "R&Co" 2. Red "3P M"	1. Red PAID 2. Two red 6mm outline numeral "3"	1. Two red "PM" circular "PHILA DESPATCH POST"	Mr Maurice McNamee / Shippen betw 3 & 4 St / Blacksmith SOUTHWARK
5. June 27, 1843	(Folded letter)	1. "R&Co" 2. (Red) "3P M"	1. (Red) PAID 2. (Red) "circle wedges"	1. Philadelphia circular datestamp	Mssrs E. Fabrequettes fits & Morris / Merchants / New York NEW YORK
6. July 28, 1843	Folded letter	1. "R&Co" 2. Red "3P M"	1. Red PAID 2. Three red 6mm outline numeral "3"	1. Red Philadelphia circular datestamp	Miss Mary G. Patterson / St Mary's Hall / Burlington NEW JERSEY

Table 1. Data base table for 15L1.

7. July 28, 1843	Folded letter	1. "R&Co" 2. Red "3P M"	1. Two red PAID 2. Three red 6mm outline numeral "3"	1. Manuscript "paid"	Mssrs Lattin & Hamlin / Commerce St / bet. 4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> Sts OLD CITY
8. August 29, 1843	Folded letter	1. "R&Co" 2. Red "3P M"	1. Red PAID 2. Two red 6mm outline numeral "3"	1. Red Philadelphia circular datestamp	M R. H. Garnett esq / Lloyd's / Essex County / <u>Virginia</u> VIRGINIA
9. September 19, 1843	Folded letter	1. "R&Co" 2. Red "3P M"	1. Red PAID 2. Red 6mm outline numeral "3"	1. Red "PM" circular "PHILA DESPATCH POST"	Dr-William Blanding / Corner-5 <sup>th</sup> & Willow St- / Phila NORTHERN LIBERTIES
10. October 10, 1843	-	-	-	1. Red Philadelphia circular datestamp	Mount Pleasant, Ohio OHIO
11. November 1, 1843	Folded letter	1. "R&Co" 2. Red "3P M"	1. Red PAID 2. Red 6mm outline numeral "3"	1. Red "PM" circular "PHILA DESPATCH POST"	Mssrs Carter & Scattergood / 11 & 14 Minor St / Phila OLD CITY
12. November 8, 1843	Folded printed notice	1. "R&Co" 2. Red "3P M"	1. Red PAID 2. Red 6mm outline numeral "3"	1. Red "PM" circular "PHILA DESPATCH POST"	Henry D. Gilpin Esq / 99 Walnut St OLD CITY
13. Undated	Folded letter	1. "R&Co" 2. Red "3P M"	1. Red PAID 2. Red 12mm single line numeral "3"	1. Red "PM" circular "PHILA DESPATCH POST"	A.D Bache, L.L.D. / Chesnut St. 5 <sup>th</sup> door East of Sehl. 6 <sup>th</sup> / Philadelphia OLD CITY
14. Undated	Folded letter	1. "R&Co" 2. (Red) "3P M"	1. Very faint red PAID 2. Red 12mm single line numeral "3"	1. Red "3PM" circular "PHILA DSPATCH POST"	George H. Richards Esq. / 34 Sec Sixth ----- / Philada. OLD CITY ?

Table 1. (cont.). Data base table for 15L1.



<b>15L1 CANCEL</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>Cancel Type</b>	<b>Census Number</b>
13	Red <b>PAID</b>	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,11,12,13,14
8	6 mm outline numeral “3”	3,4,6,7,8,9,11,12
3	12 mm tall single numeral “3”	2,13,14
1	Red small “Circle of Dots”	1
1	“Circle of Wedges”	5
1	Unknown	10

**Table 2. 15L1 handstamp cancellation types.**

<b>AUXILIARY COVER HANDSTAMPS</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>Handstamp Type</b>	<b>Census Number</b>
6	Philadelphia circular datestamp	2,3,5,6,8,10
6	“PHILA. DESPATCH POST.” - 3PM	4,9,11,12,13,14
1	“PHILA. DESPATCH POST.” - 10AM	1
1	12 mm tall single numeral “3”	3

**Table 3. Auxiliary cover handstamps.**

<b>ADDRESS</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Census Number</b>
6	Old City	1,7,11,12,13,14
1	Northern Liberties District	9
1	Southwark	4
1	Philadelphia Post Office / Spring Garden District	3
2	New York	2,5
1	New Jersey	6
1	Ohio	10
1	Virginia	4

**Table 4. Addressee locations. Census number 3 was addressed to an individual without street location, and most likely a “drop letter” given to the postmaster to hold. The addressee resided in the Spring Garden District.**

November 8, 1843 was the latest recorded 15L1 (census number 12). The latest recorded 15L2 was June 13, 1843 (census number 6), *almost five months* before the latest 15L1.

### **15L1 & 15L2 Combined Data Analysis**

The combined total of 15L1 “red on bluish” and 15L2 “black” stamps is 20, *of which 19 have been photographed, 15 in color*. All 19 stamps have a manuscript “R&Co” control marking in black. All 19 stamp designs show the company name with “3P M” in center. The center time in all 19 had been obliterated by a like color “PAID.”

All 19 stamps were likely cancelled in red ink. Of the 19, 15 were confirmed in red, and 4 presumed red. Confirmed for 15L1 was census number 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14; for 15L2 was census number 1, 2, 3, 4, 6. Presumed red for 15L1 was census number 2, 3, 5; for 15L2 was census number 5. Of the combined census photographed in color, 15 of 15, or **100%, were in red**. None are confirmed canceled in black ink.

Of the 19 photographed stamps, 15 were cancelled by a numeral “3”; 11 on 15L1, 4 on 15L2. The 15L1 census numbers were 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14. The 15L2 census numbers 1, 4, 5, 6. Of the combined census almost **80% were cancelled by a numeral “3.”**

Of 20 covers 19 demonstrate auxiliary markings; 15L1, census number 7, is manuscript. An **auxiliary handstamped marking appears on 18 for 90% of the covers**. For all 6 letters delivered to the Philadelphia Post Office, a government circular datestamp was applied; 15L1 census number 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, and 15L2 none. Of the combines 12 delivered by the Philadelphia Despatch Post directly to an individual or business, all were handstamped by their named circular marking; 15L1 were census numbers 1, 4, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15L2 were census number 1, 2, 3, 5, 6. The two circular handstamp markings are *mutually exclusive*, and do not appear together. Therefore, for the combined census of 18 auxiliary markings, two thirds of all circular auxiliary handstamp markings were on private post letters.

The 12 Philadelphia Despatch Post auxiliary markings each revealed the delivery time of day. The morning delivery occurred on 4; 15L1 census number 1, and 15L2 census number 1, 2, 5. The afternoon delivery occurred on 8; 15L1 census number 4, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15L2 was census number 3, 6. Therefore, for the combined census of 12, **one third were morning and two thirds were afternoon deliveries**.

Of the 6 delivered to the main post office, 5 were on outbound mail. All 5 were 15L1, census number 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10. Compared to the concurrent 15L2 outbound service of zero, 35% of 15L1 outbound is high. The sample pool is very small, but the differential quite high. A qualified statistician has concluded “the number of red stamps sent out of state is *significantly greater* than the number of black stamps... $p=.019$ .”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Personal email communication from Elizabeth M. Hudak, Ph.D. on April 12, 2013.

## Theory

Five of fourteen 15L1 survivors were addressed outside Pennsylvania, per **Table 1**. More than one third were delivered to the federal government's Philadelphia main post office to enter intercity mail. Evidence demonstrates that all 15L2 covers were local delivery to a street address. To within a very statistically significant degree of confidence, only 15L1 serviced letters delivered to the government. The author speculates that the red 15L1 stamp was probably chosen for post office delivery, while simultaneously valid for a local service. *Evidence demonstrates that 15L1 was a dual purpose prepayment stamp.*

A high correlation exists for both 15L1 and 15L2 auxiliary cover handstamp markings and type of service. The Philadelphia Despatch Post handstamp was employed for local delivery by the private post, but not for *any* letter delivered to the main post office, even a "drop letter."<sup>18</sup> *Perhaps the private post desired to be below the radar*, especially since located directly across Dock Street. To the contrary any letter turned over to the government received a Philadelphia circular datestamp. The Philadelphia Despatch Post auxiliary handstamp mark *does not exist in conjunction with a Philadelphia circular datestamp.*

The author submits the *change of handstamp color and stamp color to red may have served to mimic the red color, commonly used during 1843 by the government*, Clarke type 59f. Perhaps the Philadelphia Despatch Post was sensitive to its competitive position with the federal government and specifically the Philadelphia carriers.<sup>19</sup> By blending in better with the contemporary postal markings perhaps the private company would be less conspicuous. The casual observer may have been sufficiently confused and believed the private post may have been an arm of the government. The similarities in red are best demonstrated on census number 6 in **Figure 9a**.

Delivery time must have been important, but only on local letters delivered to a street address. Understandable as outbound letter delivery became a matter for the post office. Moreover, prospective future private post patrons lived in Philadelphia and not other states.

## Significance

The Philadelphia Despatch Post was the third entity in the world to issue prepayment stamps. Most 15L1 survivors served concurrently with 15L2.<sup>20</sup> While these two octagonal stamps were active throughout most of 1843, they were the only private post prepayment stamps in the United States, and for that matter, the entire world. 15L1 participated in the advancement of written communication through specialization and innovation of postal service dedicated and restricted solely to local service in one city.

*Gone undetected for 170 years was 15L1 and 15L2 stamp design stating a delivery time.* An oblitative strike of "PAID" in the same color was sufficiently

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<sup>18</sup> Vernon R. Morris Jr, MD, "What is a 'Drop Letter' and a 'Drop Dead Letter'?", *The Chronicle of the U.S. Classics Postal Issues*, Vol. 55, No. 3, (Whole Number 199), August 2003, page 177.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, page 250.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, pages 16-37.



successful to disguise the flawed stamp design for almost two centuries. The timed auxiliary cover handstamp marking further ameliorated the predicament by accurately recording the delivery time of day.

### Summary

The “red on bluish” 15L1 and 15L2 “black” stamp are identical in all ways except color. Both appear to have been expediently “manufactured” by the Philadelphia Despatch Post during the first years that stamps were ever issued. Timed circular handstamp markings were fashioned into octagonal shapes, and sold without gum as prepayment for future postal service. Although the handstamp specified delivery time, conversion to a prepayment stamp for future service on an unknown delivery time was a flawed method which resulted in a flawed stamp design! The octagonal shape may also have been *hand labor intensive*. The octagonal shape was primitive, and in retrospect an experiment which did not survive the test of time.

All 14 surviving 15L1 stamps remained on their original cover. Only 13 have been photographed. All 13 demonstrate a manuscript “*R&Co*” control marking in black ink (as all 15L2). All 13 “red on bluish” 15L1 stamp centers are red “3P M,” and all obliterated by red “PAID” (similar to the black 15L2 “3P M” obliterated by black “PAID”). Obliteration most likely occurred on the *day of sale, to promptly remedy the flawed design*. The PAID obliteration of “3P M”, however, was surprisingly *successful and has gone undetected by all admiring philatelists for the past 170 years!*

All 13 photographed 15L1 stamps were cancelled to prevent free additional postal service. Cancellations were probably on the day of service. All 15L1 examples photographed in color were *cancelled in red ink, 100% of the combined census*. Numeral “3,” cancelled 11 of 14 Scott 15L1 stamps, and 79 % of the combined census.

All 14 of the 15L1 covers bear an auxiliary marking, 13 were circular handstamp markings, one manuscript. For 15L1 an almost equal split existed between the private post, and the government’s Philadelphia circular datestamp. These two namesake handstamps were *mutually exclusive*, and never appeared together on any 15L1 covers. The *Philadelphia Despatch Post handstamp was found on 66% of the combined census*,

The most common recorded delivery was “3P M.” Of the 7 examples of 15L1 with timed handstamps, 6 were afternoon deliveries. The combined census proved *afternoon delivery was 66%*.

For 15L1 examples 8 of 14 were delivered to local individual or business, and the remainder 6 to the post office. For the combined census, *70% were locally delivered to individuals and business’s*.

15L1 “red on bluish,” however, appears to have been *multipurpose*. This stamp of course, served to prepay letters delivered to any local address including individuals, businesses, and even to the post office in Philadelphia. Since the post office was located directly across the street (**Figure 21**), such short a delivery must have been the most lucrative! The Philadelphia Despatch Post circular hanstamp auxiliary marking on the cover was reserved, however, for delivery to individuals

and business's. This proud marking was *never* applied on any letters delivered to the post office, as if attempting to go unnoticed by the government.

Once delivered to the main post office, the government circular datestamp was applied as an auxiliary cover handstamp marking. Outbound letters entered the federal inter-city mail system. However, some addressees were Philadelphians in possession of a paid letter box at the post office for their own regular pick up. Typically an account was established to satisfy the postmaster's emolument for a "drop letter,"<sup>21</sup> as probably the case with census number 3.

"Red on bluish" 15L1 were probably printed once the company realized its supply of 15L2 stamps would soon be exhausted. The author speculates that the Philadelphia Despatch Post *conversion to red prepayment stamps and red auxiliary cover circular handstamp marking may have been intended to better disguise their postal marking to appear more like the commonly used red color and circular style Clarke 59f of the Philadelphia post office*. Conversion was by the very end of December 1842.<sup>22</sup>

The Philadelphia Despatch Post was on the cutting edge of evolutionary specialization in written communication. A new service had been provided in the third largest English speaking city in the world. Along with the 15L1 companion 15L2, these "primitive" octagonal stamps were extremely important in the development of postal service. The next article will discuss the third and final issue by the Philadelphia Despatch Post, and another paradigm introduced by the Philadelphia Despatch Post that was anything but primitive.

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, page 150.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, page 24.