

JULY 2020

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THE PENNY POST

Official Journal Of The Carriers And Locals Society



An Eagle carrier stamp tied on a cover from New York to Philadelphia and carried on the New York & Philadelphia Railroad. Siegel sale 817 (Golden), lot 32. Why are there so few Eagle carrier stamps on mail from New York? The answer is inside this issue.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

THE PHILADELPHIA EAGLE CARRIER CANCELLATION DISCOVERIES
WITH A NEW LRD AND A NEW THEORY

USE OF THE EAGLE CARRIER IN NEW YORK CITY

MEARIS' CITY DESPATCH POST, BALTIMORE

A NEW DISCOVERY AND A SUGGESTED RECONSTRUCTED PLATE

AND MORE

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Editor's Message

By
Larry Lyons

There are positive effects of the coronavirus pandemic! Carriers and Locals Society membership is up! Auction #32 broke all previous records! It's a well-kept secret that people who collect stamps are mentally doing the best in covid-19 confinement! Stamp collecting is surging! Dealer sales are skyrocketing! Auction sales are stronger than ever! The world has gone bust but stamp collectors are thriving and are mentally coping better than the general public! As your editor, I have a message for everyone—wear a mask and you will remain physically healthy; collect stamps and you will be mentally healthy! This should be the main message in *The New York Times* and you heard it here first!

More Shows Cancelled

The Great American Stamp Show in Hartford has been cancelled. NOJEX is also cancelled. When will we see each other again? There are probably so many new exhibits that have been prepared and are itching to be seen. Some may come to light virtually. We will need to adapt to the new normal.

In This Issue

We have two articles for you on Eagle carriers. Vern Morris looks at the subject primarily from the Philadelphia perspective and shows two new Philadelphia Eagle carrier cancellation discoveries along with a new latest recorded date of use and of course, he also presents a new theory. Cliff Alexander's article focuses on the use of the Eagle carrier in New York City. Both authors are extremely good researchers and are acclaimed writers. I am pleased to present their articles and I thank them for all their hard work. Cliff also has an article on Auction #32, sharing the successful results with all of us. I thank him not only for his article but for all the hard work he did in putting the auction together. I have convinced him to do it again in January. We need to strike while the iron is hot and covid-19 rages. Also thanks to John Bowman and Byron Sandfield for their heavy participation in getting Auction #32 ready for you.

Not to be left out of presenting new discoveries I have written an article presenting a new Mearis City Despatch Post stamp and my theory on the reconstruction of the Mearis plate incorporating the new discovery. Yes, we still find new things every day.

Welcome

A big welcome to our newest members. We are a philatelic fraternity of collectors with similar collecting interests and a thirst for new research discoveries. We had several new discoveries in 2019 and 2020. We will continue to have new discoveries, new research and more great articles.

Special Appreciation

I wish to give thanks to David Snow for his role reviewing Penny Post articles. David is invaluable to us for his “peer review” and proofreading of the articles you eventually get to read and enjoy. Also, thanks to our other two proofreaders, Alan Cohen and John Bowman. It takes a lot of people, all working for free, including me, to bring the award-winning *Penny Post* to you.

Thank You Advertisers

I would be remiss if I didn’t thank our advertisers for their continued support of our journal. I hope you study the ads and use the services of these fine dealers and auction houses.

Mission Statement

The purpose of *The Penny Post* is to present original research articles in the fields of United States Carriers, Local Posts and Eastern Expresses. Forgeries in these areas are also researched. Any article in these fields can be submitted to me for publication (email:editor@pennypost.org). These articles are reviewed, and assistance is provided by the Editor’s section heads who comprise the editorial board. *The Penny Post* continues to be at the top of society publications.

Final Message

The coronavirus has brought great difficulty, stress and grief to most of us. I wish you all good health and remember what keeps you well—wear a mask and collect stamps! Stay strong and mentally and physically healthy. We will get through these difficult times. The social distancing is killing me. I miss seeing you in person.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~

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32nd Society Auction is Great Success

By

Clifford J. Alexander & John D. Bowman

The 32nd Auction of the Carriers & Locals Society was held from May 31 to June 21, 2020. The two authors were responsible for this auction for the first time. We received exceptional assistance from Alan Cohen, who managed the first 27 Society auctions, Dr. Vernon Morris, Steve M. Roth, Byron Sandfield, and David W. Snow.

The auction generated \$10,685 in sales (not including buyer and seller fees). The net fee revenue for the Society totaled \$10,041, more than any other auction. This represents buyer and seller commissions plus sales of many lots generously donated to the Society by members.

The auctions are a major source of the Society's revenue. We encourage members to consider the Society when they plan to donate or sell items. Consignments and donations for the next Society auction, which is planned for January 2021, are now being accepted.

Auction 32 had 191 lots, of which 140, or 73%, were sold. The auction included 103 local post stamps and covers, 28 carrier lots, 22 independent mail companies, 16 lots of forgeries and fakes, 6 express company lots, and 8 literature lots.

Two-thirds of the items sold at prices above their minimum bids. There was something for just about everyone. Many diverse, interesting, and unusual lots were offered. The following are a few highlights:

- Very fine tete-beche pair of black on pink Brooklyn City Express stamps (Scott 28L4a) with a 2019 Philatelic Foundation certificate sold for \$90. **Figure 1**
- Scarce repaired block of 16 of the Wells Fargo "25 cts" stamp (Scott 143L9) sold for \$125. **Figure 2**
- Attractive exhibit page with an Eagle Carrier stamp study consisting of the four major plate flaws and four types of plate position dots sold for \$210. **Figure 3**
- Cover to Boston with instructions for local delivery by carrier: "The Post Master is respectfully and particularly directed to forward this letter to D Stevens should he not call for on the day of its receipt" sold for \$29. **Figure 4**
- Rare pair and single on piece of the first American Letter Mail Company stamp (Scott 5L1) sold for \$120. Only 3-4 covers with three stamps have been recorded. **Figure 5**
- A newly discovered EKU of the Hale & Co. Pottsville, Pennsylvania, oval handstamp on a cover to Philadelphia sold for

\$315. The Gutman Independent Mail Company Book recorded only five. **Figure 6**

- An unusual Adams & Co. Express cover to Port Phillip Australia sold for \$67. **Figure 7**
- A large collection of carrier and local post genuine stamps plus fakes and fantasies sold for \$1000. **Figure 8.**

We welcome suggestions on how to improve the auction. Anyone with comments or items for the next sale can contact Cliff Alexander at chairman@pennypost.org.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

United States Carriers

General Issue Carriers

Eagle Carrier Plate Flaws and Position Dots

Some of the Eagle carrier plate positions are easily determined by plate flaws or by the siderographer's position dots. The upper and lower panes contained 100 stamps each.

Plate Flaws



Spot under wing
Position 83 upper pane.



Only double transfer
Position 7 upper pane.



Separation lines on plate
show corner flaw
Position 1 lower pane.



Dash above "S" of
"DESPATCH"
Position 79 upper pane.

Position Dots

Position dots used in locating transfer roll entries on the plate can be used to help determine the plate positions.



Position dots are found opposite the center of the stamps at the sides on the corner stamps. These are positions 1, 10, 90 and 100 on both the upper and lower panes.



Position dots are found in the upper left corner of stamps in the first vertical row and in the upper right corners in the fourth and seventh vertical rows.

Figure 3.

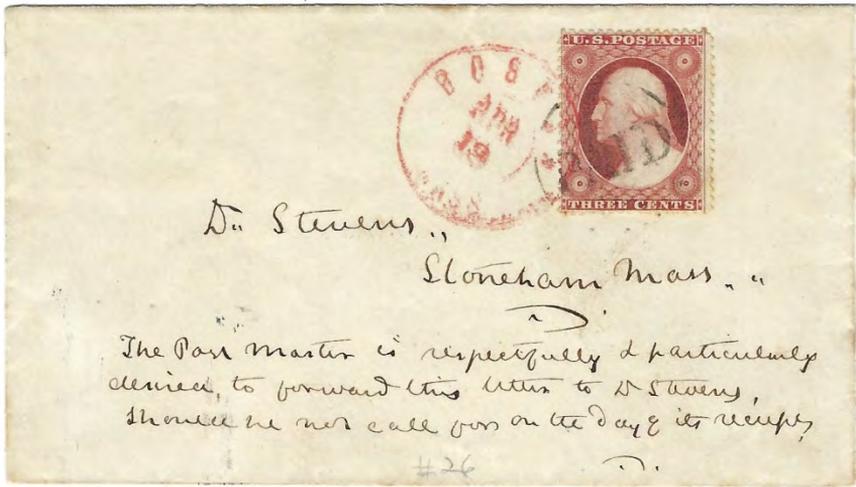


Figure 4.



Figure 5.



Figure 6.



Figure 7.

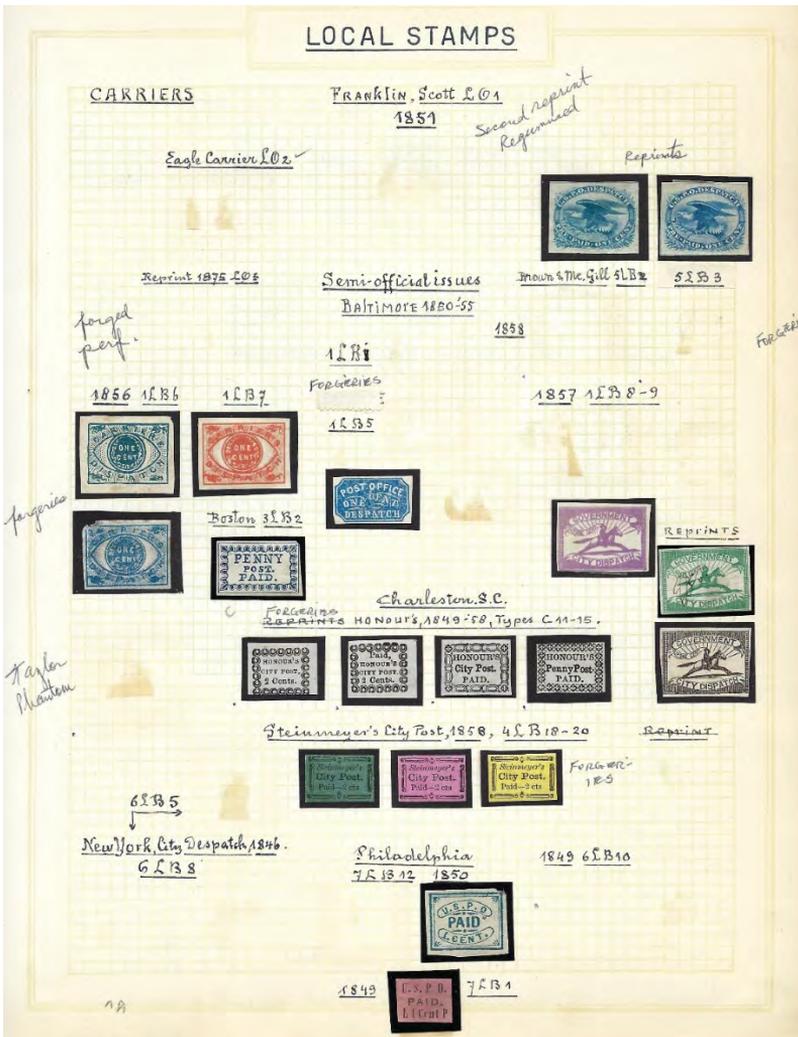


Figure 8.

Mearis' City Despatch Post, Baltimore

A New Suggested Reconstruction of The Mearis Plate based on a New Discovery

By
Larry Lyons

In the David Golden sale¹ on page 301 Scott Trepel offered a suggested reconstruction of the Mearis plate based on eleven known stamps and two known fragments. See **Figure 1**. I always found it strange that the stamps shown in positions 1 and 2 were not similar in design whereas the other four pairs are two cent and one cent stamps of the same design. The design is determined by four identifying characteristics. These are as follows:

1. A flower or a diamond in the corners.
2. Three different styles of lettering on the top line.
3. Three different styles of lettering in the bottom line.
4. The word "POST" is either narrow or wide.

My Thoughts

I believe that the stamps shown in positions 1 and 3 are the same stamps. In **Figure 2** I show these two stamps superimposed on each other with one in green and one in red which allows for the viewing of the differences. The described difference is that the left frame line appears bent in position 1 and straight in position 3. It is my belief that this slight difference is a result of either wear or inking. I believe that at least 50 sheets of the Mearis stamps were printed and there could be some differences in the same position on some sheets.

Removing the stamp from position 1 requires that something take its place. I have drawn what I believe is the missing design of a two-cent stamp for position 1 which follows the design characteristics of position 2. See **Figure 3**.

Position 9, type k consists of two fragments of stamps. The top left fragment was part of positions 7-8 when it appeared in the Caspary sale in March of 1957, Lot 867. See **Figure 4**. The fragment was trimmed away sometime before it appeared as Lot A1335 in the Golden sale. It was still attached in the Lilly sale in 1967. The larger part stamp fragment shown in position 9 was lot A1337 in the Golden sale and again was sold in lot 1614 in a Siegel sale (Kuphal) held on November 15-16, 2006. See **Figure 5**. This is a locally addressed cover and required a two-cent local post stamp. Hence the stamp is a two-cent Mearis stamp. The shape and location of the lettering on the bottom line make it a match for position 10. Positions 9 and 10 have unique matching lettering on the top line. Both stamps also have a wide "POST" on line 2. **Figure 6** is my reconstruction of the full design of position 9. It does not exist, only the two fragments of this unique stamp are known.

¹ Siegel Auction Galleries, November 15-17, 1999.

A New Discovery

Figure 7 shows a previously unknown Mearis stamp with a new design. This stamp received PF certificate 536,351 stating it is genuine. The stamp is on a piece and has the same manuscript cancel initials “MWM” of Malcolm W. Mearis. The PF certificate also says the type style of the top three lines is the same as 103L6 and the bottom line is somewhat similar to the bottom line in 103L5. This newly discovered stamp has a narrow “POST” like the same in position 2.

Figure 8 is a sketch of my recreation of what the one-cent match for the newly discovered stamp would look like.

Furthermore

I have another conjecture. Perhaps there were two sets of six stamps or the pane size was 4x3. Positions 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 made up one side and my new position 1, old position 2, old position 9 and 10 and the new discovery and its match are the other six stamps. See **Figure 9**. This is only my own personal supposition. Perhaps we will never know for sure, but I firmly believe there were 12 positions designs.

Table1. Census of Mearis’ City Despatch Post stamps

Kelly Types	Stamp	
G	103L3	Local cover to Miss Elizabeth Garrett
E	103L6	On piece dated FEB 6
C/D	103L1	On cover to Maryland FEB 17
H-B	103L5,4	Se tenant pair
F-A	103L3, 2	Se tenant pair
I	103L5	Fragment on a local cover
A	103L2	On cover to Sandy Spring, FEBRUARY 18
B	103L4	Single stamp
C/D	103L1	On cover to Philadelphia MARCH 22 (May not originate)
I/J	103L5,4	Se tenant pair
Lyons Types	Stamp	
K	103L7 (suggested)	PF 536,351 a New Discovery
L		One-cent unknown design to match type K.
M		Two-cent unknown design to match Type E.

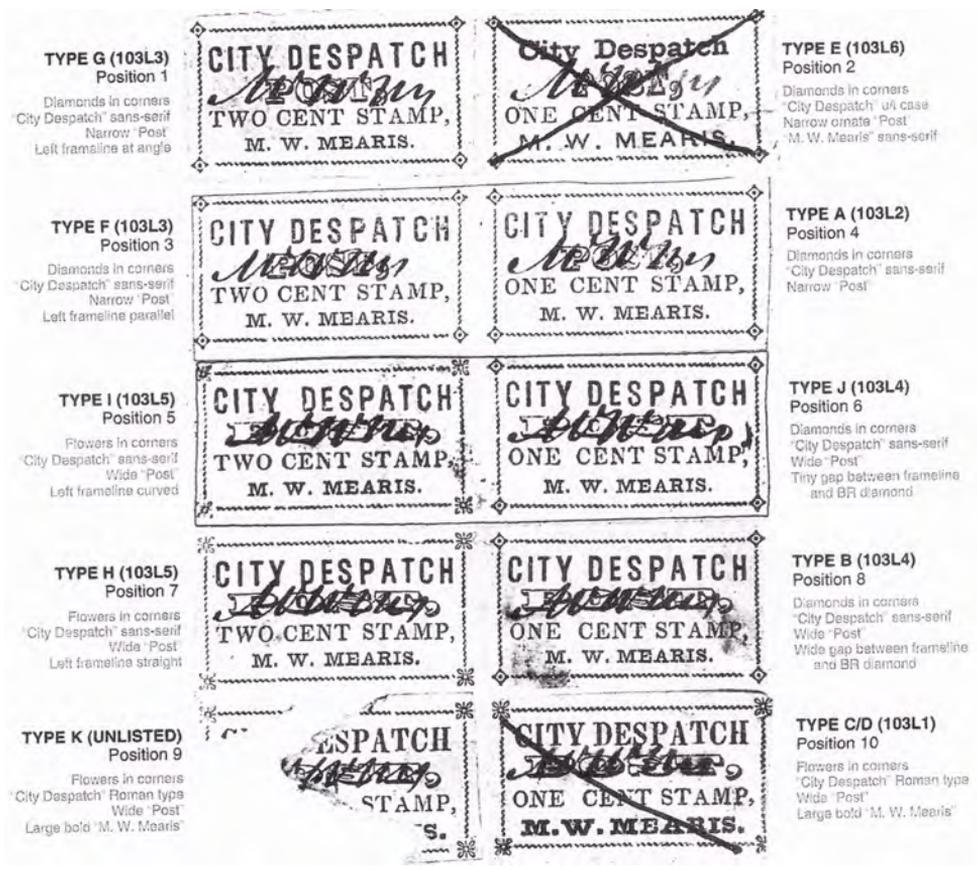


Figure 1. The suggested reconstruction of the Mearis plate found in the Golden sale, page 301.



Figure 2. Positions 1 and 3 superimposed at 200% to show they are possibly the same stamp.

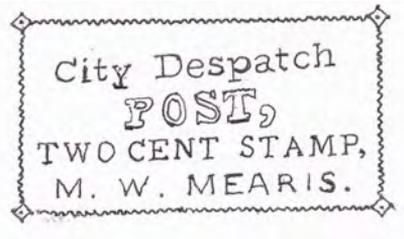


Figure 3. A sketch of the possible new two-cent position 1 stamp to match the position 2 one-cent stamp.



Figure 4. Positions 7-8 in the Caspary and Lily sales with a fragment of Position 9.



Figure 5. A fragment of position 9 on a cover from the Kuphal sale, lot 1614.



Figure 6. This author's reconstruction of the full design of the position 9 stamp.



Figure 7. The newly discovered certified Mearis stamp representing a position not previously known. PF 536,351.

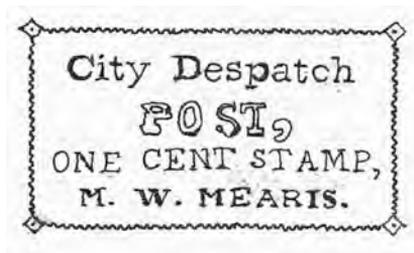


Figure 8. This author's recreation of what the one-cent match for the newly discovered stamp would look like.



Figure 9. This author's suggested reconstruction of the Mearis plate of 12 positions.

Two Philadelphia Eagle Carrier Cancellation Discoveries, New LRD, and a New Theory

By
Vernon Morris, MD

Two new discoveries of Philadelphia cancellations of the Eagle carrier stamp have prompted a general review of the Federal carrier stamps. **Several opinions, in bold type**, are offered for the philatelic community to consider, including a new and plausible explanation for the somewhat different carrier postal history of Philadelphia in the early 1850's.

Background

1851 General Issue

The Act of 1851, effective July 1, introduced several postal changes, including the demonetization of the 1847 general issue adhesive stamps, the introduction of new rates with respective denominational stamps for intercity mail, and for the first time adhesives issued specifically for intercity carrier transmittal of letters. In early October 1851 the blue "Franklin Carrier" adhesive inscribed "CARRIERS" at top and "STAMP" at bottom was printed in Philadelphia by Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co. See **Figure 1**. On October 11, 1851 a large number, 250,000, was shipped to New York, but somehow not received until April 15, 1852,¹ of which only 3 have survived on cover. On the same day 50,000 were sent to New Orleans, of which only 1 has survived on cover. Ten days later, on October 21, 1851, the nearby Philadelphia Post Office received a small amount, 10,000,² 14 of which have survived on cover. Even before this nondenominational issue was released, however, the great similarity and confusion with the recently issued blue 1851 one cent stamp, which also depicted the likeness of Ben Franklin facing the opposite direction, precluded it's viability as astutely observed by John C. Montgomery of Philadelphia.³

More than sixty years later in a pamphlet by Joseph Steinmetz of Philadelphia for his exhibit at the 1913 International Stamp Exhibition in New York, entitled *Steinmetz Miscellany*, was available a considerable amount of 1851 correspondence between the Postmaster General and the contract printer including: "21st October, 1851. Hon. N.K. Hall, Postmaster General, orders by telegram from Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co., ten thousand of General Montgomery's eagle design."⁴ This order, however, was filled with Franklin carrier stamps since the Eagle carrier stamps were not yet available.

¹ Perry, Elliot, *The Philatelist*, October 1973, page 5.

² Perry, Elliot, "*The Franklin Carrier*," *Collectors Club Philatelist*, Vol. IX, No. 1, January 1930, Pages 1-2.

³ Perry, Elliot, "*The Carrier Stamps of the United States; Philadelphia*," *Chronicle* 117, Vol. 35, No. 117, February 1983, pages 28-29.

⁴ Perry, Elliot, *The Philatelist*, November 1973, page 37.

A new stamp with the image of an Eagle was being designed from a stock die used by Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co. for banknotes before and after October 1851. Surrounding the image was an oval inscribed "U.S.P.O. DESPATCH - PRE-PAID ONE CENT," a face different stamp retaining the blue color selected for the one cent denomination. The designer of the Franklin carrier and probably the Eagle carrier stamp was E. Pitcher.⁵ The plate of Eagle carrier stamps was comprised of two panes of 100 each arranged 10 by 10 as shown in **Figure 2**. The transfer roll contained four reliefs with entries from left to right in a horizontal row.⁶

One million of the Eagle Carrier stamps were ordered on October 10, 1851,⁷ but may not have been printed until mid November 1851. No record exists whether the entire order was indeed printed. Since no varieties of ink or paper have been identified, it is unlikely that additional printings occurred. Since the Franklin and Eagle carrier stamps were part of the Federal 1851 general issue, they could be ordered by a postmaster from the 3rd Assistant Postmaster General, who endorsed and forwarded the order to the printer. Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co., however, charged the postmaster, who paid with funds derived from the carrier fees. Since the Carrier Department paid for the stamps rather than the Post Office, no numerical records were required. November 17, 1851 is the only recorded delivery date of 20,000 Eagle carrier stamps to the nearby Philadelphia Post Office. Washington DC may have received a shipment in July 1853, as its earliest recorded example was August 16, 1853 and latest in May of 1863.⁸ Cincinnati made occasional requests for a small number of stamps which were recorded from 1854 to 1861.⁹ One Eagle carrier adhesive is tied by a Cleveland cds on a locally addressed cover. Kensington, Pa. was located in Philadelphia County and may have used as many Eagle carriers as any other city outside of Philadelphia.

The Philadelphia Carrier Department

In 1753 Benjamin Franklin established a penny post in Philadelphia¹⁰ to deliver inbound mail to a street address (one penny equaled two cents). The Act of July 2, 1836 empowered the Postmaster General to establish a system of bonded letter carriers who could charge a fee up to two cents for the delivery of inbound letters. The Act of 1845 greatly reduced intercity postal rates but prohibited the Independent Mails from charging for intercity transportation of letters. Private enterprise subsequently redirected its efforts to intracity delivery of letters.¹¹

⁵ Sol, Atmann, "U.S. Stamp Designers and Engravers," *Essay Proof Journal*, 29:17, 1947.

⁶ Perry, Elliot, *The Philatelist*, December 1973, page 68.

⁷ Perry, Elliot, *The Philatelist*, November 1973, page 38.

⁸ Johnstone, Donald B., "Franklin and Eagle Carrier Stamps," *Chronicle* 125, Vol. 37, No.1, February 1985, page 24.

⁹ Perry, Elliot, *The Philatelist*, November 1973, page 37.

¹⁰ Roth, Steven M., "Detecting Carrier Serviced Covers in the Fee Paid Period: A Primer," *The Chronicle*, Vol. 47, No. 4, November 1995, page 230.

¹¹ Morris, Vernon R., Jr., MD., "What is a 'Drop Letter and a 'Drop Dead Letter'?", *Chronicle* 200, Vol. 55, No. 3, November 2003, page 268.



Figure 1. The blue Franklin carrier adhesive, L01, tied by a red star on a folded letter dated January 26, 1852 locally delivered in Philadelphia.



Figure 2. A full pane of 100 of the Eagle carrier stamps, L02, with the imprint of Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co. at the bottom.

Within four years the carrier departments of the largest cities were struggling due to energetic private posts. The greatest disparity was in Philadelphia due to the ambitious D.O. Blood & Co., not to mention numerous other fledging companies.

The Post Office department, however, did not respond until early 1849. Postmaster General Cave Johnson had the audacity to reduce the carrier fees by 50% to one cent for either collection or delivery because “many of the letter carriers in the cities received large sums.”¹² The Carrier Departments in Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, Boston, St. Louis, Cincinnati and Charleston responded by issuing their own Carrier Department adhesive stamps. By 1851 the private posts reduced their charges down toward one cent. Postmaster General Hall used his discretionary power to manipulate carrier fees further. To undercut the private posts for the collection of outbound mail, the carrier service was astonishingly declared free. Since delivery of inbound mail to a street address was a Post Office monopoly, the fee was increased back to its historical two cents. City mail remained at one cent. **The Eagle carrier stamp was therefore convenient and competitive for intercity mail, but was not necessary for letters outbound “To the Mails”.**¹³ **“From the Mails” was not practical for several reasons.** Two cents was clearly objectionable, especially with intercity rates to 3000 miles for just three cents. Except for Cincinnati no inbound letters exist bearing two Federal carrier stamps for door delivery.¹⁴ ¹⁵ **Federal carrier prepayment with stamps for door delivery was a concept ahead of its time.** In the early 1850’s ninety percent of intercity mail was still sent collect. At the destination address, the carrier collected the postage in addition to his fee. No additional documentation on the cover was necessary. If the intercity letter was sent prepaid, the carrier collected his own fee. The sender would have been from a different town and generally did not have access to the specific Carrier Department stamps of the destination city. In concept, a Federal issue might have solved this problem. Unfortunately, the Carrier Department’s accounting was separate from the Post Office. Federal carrier stamps were available at only a few post offices, and were purchased by the Carrier Departments for service restricted to that city. Not until the fee system was abolished on June 30, 1863 was “From the Mails” service free.

The Federal carrier stamps were not eligible for intercity mail, unlike the United States Despatch stamps used on some New York City outbound letters between 1843 to 1845,¹⁶ or the one cent 1851 general issue stamp (*Scott Catalogue* #5 through #9), see **Figure 3**. The New York carriers respected free collection service “To the Mails,” as reported in the New York Herald on August 23, 1851.¹⁷ They understandably may not have been very happy, and apparently did not elect to

¹² Roth, Steven M., “Why Were Letter Carrier Fees Reduced in 1849?”, *The Penny Post*, Vol. 4, No. 4, October 1994, page 32.

¹³ Roth, Steven M. “Tabulation of Carrier Fees in Philadelphia During the Fee Paid Period,” *The Penny Post*, Vol. 4, No. 4, October 1994, page 35.

¹⁴ Siegel Auction Galleries, Sale 791, June 25, 1997, Lot 22, Meyersburg.

¹⁵ Siegel Auction Galleries, Sale 853, December 19, 2002, Lot 2480, Johnstone.

¹⁶ Siegel Auction Galleries, Sale 868, November 14, 2003, Lot 2015, Gordon N. John.

¹⁷ Perry, Elliot, *The Philatelist*, November 1973, page 35.

purchase Federal carrier stamps for city mail either, perhaps as a protest. **A much different and opposite behavior than in Philadelphia.**

Numerous Eagle carrier Philadelphia city mail examples exist. Moreover, many Philadelphia Eagle carrier outbound “To the Mails” examples have survived, begging the question that under a fee system “Did the Philadelphia carriers refuse to transport outbound letters to the Post Office for free? Most certainly, as documented by 1 cent prepayment Eagle carrier stamps on numerous outbound covers. After all, Blood’s Despatch was getting one cent. Did the bonded government carriers disobey a Postmaster General who was not on location? The Philadelphia Carrier Department had not competed well for many years and may not have yet shared the competitive spirit of the distant leader. Perhaps the carriers in Philadelphia negotiated with the Postmaster General to reverse his position for them. Alternatively, the Postmaster General may have looked the other way, or may not have been aware of a small mutiny of sorts. **The author submits that in 1851 the Philadelphia Carrier Department ignored the Postmaster General’s arbitrary and inconsistent fee schedule and continued to operate under a “uniform 1 cent carrier fee for all services”** which had been in place for several years. Not until the Act of July 1, 1860 was Postmaster General Holt denied discretionary power over carrier fees, officially returning “To the Mails” and “From the Mails” to 1 cent each,¹⁸ identical to city mail for all of the large cities.

Although the 1851 Carrier stamps were a **Federal Government general issue, the author suggests that in many ways it was largely all about Philadelphia.** Philadelphia accounts for approximately 80% of the covers graced with a Franklin carrier stamp. By volume of surviving Eagle carrier covers, Philadelphia easily used more than all other cities combined. In addition, Kensington was in Philadelphia County, and apparently used as many Eagle carrier stamps as any of the other cities. John Montgomery almost single handedly engineered the prompt replacement of Franklin carrier adhesives with Eagle carrier adhesives. The printer, Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co. was located in Philadelphia. Montgomery may have personally selected the Eagle design from their stock dies. In October of 1851 John C. Montgomery Esq. was “Chief Letter Carrier and Superintendent of Letter Carriers of the City of Philadelphia.” The Philadelphia directories list him as postmaster from 1842-1844 and assistant postmaster in 1852 and 1853.¹⁹

Philadelphia Cancellations

Numeral 1 in Double Octagon - New Discovery

Numerous Philadelphia cancellations have been recorded on the Eagle carrier from 1852 through 1857 as will be reviewed including a new discovery cancellation, the impetus for this article. The cover in **Figure 4** was available in Nutmeg sale 177 on November 14, 2008 as lot 4337. It received 2009 PFC 473120 which states “LO2 1851 one cent blue single, double strike of numeral “1” in double

¹⁸ Roth, Steven M., “Tabulation of Carrier Fees In Philadelphia During The Fee Paid Period,” *The Penny Post*, Vol. 4, October 1994, page 36.

¹⁹ Perry, Elliot, *The Philatelist*, November 1973, page 36.



Figure 3. The Eagle carrier stamps could not pay the postage for intercity mail hence the 5 cts due for the postage in the Philadelphia handstamp. This cover to Washington D.C. is dated December 23 (1852).



Figure 4. The numeral “1” in a double lined octagon cancelled the Eagle carrier on this local cover dated June 1854. This cancel is a new discovery and was the impetus for this research article.



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

Figure 5. is an enlargement of the number “1” handstamp on the cover shown in Figure 4. In Figure 6, the numeral is rotated 120° and in Figure 7 we see the “1” numeral used by the Philadelphia Post Office.



Figure 8. The numeral “1” in an octagon on a cover with an Adams Express corner, going through the Philadelphia Post Office. The cover is dated March 22 (1855-1856).



Figure 9. The numeral “1” in the octagon was primarily for drop letters but possibly also for circular charges. This cover dated September 16 (1853) was brought by carrier to the post office where it was dropped for a post office box.

octagon cancel, on locally addressed cover. It is a *genuine* usage, the stamp with a small piece out at right.” The **Figure 5** enlargement more readily reveals two strikes of the handstamp. The numeral one in double octagon shown in **Figure 6** is rotated 120 degrees clockwise to match the strike on the cover. To the author’s best knowledge and research no other such example exists canceling an Eagle carrier stamp, or for that matter in conjunction with and not canceling an Eagle carrier stamp.

The numeral “1” in a double octagon was occasionally used by the Philadelphia Post Office. This handstamp is shown in **Figure 7**, and was primarily for drop letters but possibly also for circular and carrier charges, between 1850 to 1854 according to Phillips,²⁰ and from July 10, 1850 until December 9, 1853²¹ with a curious listing as the latest date of September 5, 1856²² by Clarke. However, since the drop rate was not reduced to one cent until July 1, 1851, no real purpose existed prior to that date. Some postal historians report this marking was used until 1858.²³ **Figure 8** is a stampless cover showing the marking in black combined with Clarke type 63, together dating this cover between 1854 and 1856. The one cent charge is most likely the drop rate on a letter handed to the Post Office possibly by Adams Express. As a more unlikely alternative, it possibly may have been intended as a city letter, and given to a carrier on route along with one cent cash for delivery to the street address, if the handstamp device was in the possession of the Philadelphia Carrier Department. This marking also appears in connection with Philadelphia Carrier Department adhesives as in **Figure 9** reflecting the additional drop rate, payable to the Federal Government,²⁴ for a letter held in a post office box.

The new discovery example (see **Figure 4**) is an envelope without contents, although a manuscript “June ‘54” docket appears on the front. The addressee of this cover was located within the old city, suggesting this may be a city letter. One cent was the appropriate charge for city mail delivered to a street address, the marking thereby only a cancellation device with no significance should the letter have actually been delivered to the street address. The numeral 1 in octagon, however, more strongly suggests an additional charge of one cent. The recipient probably requested his mail be held at the post office for his retrieval and paid the drop rate of one cent, thereby giving meaning to the marking.

Philadelphia Red Star

Figure 10 shows an Eagle carrier tied by two strikes of a red star on a cover featuring an attractive metallic brass advertising corner card. The red star cancellation is vintage Philadelphia with a distinctive color because its major

²⁰ David G. Phillips, ed., *American Stampless Cover Catalog*, Vol.1 (North Miami, Fla: David G. Phillips Publishing Co., Inc., 1987), page 346.

²¹ Clarke, Tom, *A Catalog of Philadelphia Postmarks, 18th Century to the Present, Part 3, pages 18-19, 1991.*

²² Clark, Tom, *A Catalog of Philadelphia Postmarks, 18th Century to the Present, Part 1, page 17, 1991.*

²³ Shachat, Norm, Personal communications.

²⁴ Morris, Vernon R., Jr., MD., “What is a ‘Drop Letter’ and a ‘Drop Dead Letter’?” *The Chronicle* 200, Vol. 55, No. 3, November 2003, page 250.

component was *cinnabar, mercuric sulfite*.²⁵ The red star in Philadelphia was used exclusively by the Carrier Department. Introduced at about the same time as the Franklin and Eagle carrier stamps, the red star was also applied on covers indicating payment in cash to the carrier while on his route. The earliest recorded date of a red star handstamp marking is October 16, 1851. See **Figure 11**.

Red Smudge

Not uncommonly were Eagle carrier stamps cancelled in Philadelphia by a red smudge as in **Figure 12**, which may have evolved as a diminished and untidy version of the red star.

Precancel

Two precancels have been recorded. **Figure 13** shows the precancel as *two thin parallel penstrokes, ruled horizontally* on a cover with a non-contemporaneous 1857 pencil notation, more easily appreciated on the **Figure 14** enlargement. The **Figure 15** precancel is a *single heavy black inked vertical* line on an undated cover. Both examples are city letters to an address within the old city of Philadelphia.

Penstroke

Eagle carrier stamps were seldom cancelled by manuscript markings such as the example in **Figure 16**. This cover is very late for an Eagle carrier in Philadelphia with a date of March 17, 1857, previously believed by the author to be the latest documented use.

“U.S.P.O. DESPATCH”

The handstamped marking in **Figure 17** (*Scott Catalogue* type C-32) of the Philadelphia Carrier Department was used in the early 1850’s, much like the red star marking (a) to indicate carrier service paid in cash, and (b) to cancel carrier adhesives. In conjunction with Eagle carrier stamps, four have been recorded in red such as the tied example shown in **Figure 18** addressed to the Spring Garden district, which was located adjacent to the old city, serviced by the Philadelphia Carrier Department, and classified as city mail. In addition, three have been recorded in black, none of which is very legible. Black was not used in Philadelphia until early January 1854. The tied example in **Figure 19** is addressed to Maine and classified as “To the Mails,” which will be addressed later in this article.

Grid in Circle

Figure 20 shows one of the few Eagle carriers tied by a black seven bar grid in a circle on a locally addressed cover.²⁶ **Figure 21** shows an Eagle carrier stamp tied to a piece by a black eleven bar grid in a circle, the only known example. Most intriguing is the combination with a Blood’s Penny Post acid tied stamp, certainly a unique item. This issue (*Scott Catalogue* 15L14) is known after May of 1854. In all likelihood this was a city letter and for some reason handled by competitors.

²⁵ Johnstone, Donald B., “*Franklin and Eagle Carrier Stamps*,” *Chronicle* 125, Vol. 37, NO. 1, February 1985, page 23.

²⁶ Siegel Auction Galleries, November 13, 2000, Lot 26 and 30, Hall.

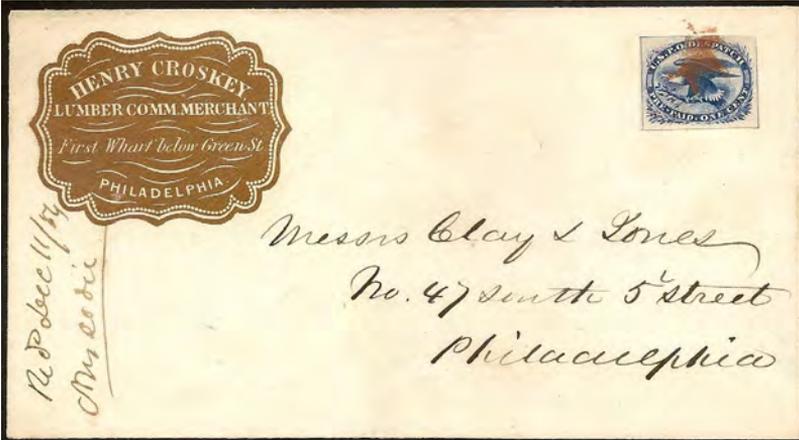


Figure 10. The Eagle carrier adhesive on this cover dated December 11, 1854 is cancelled by two strikes of the red star which has a distinctive color due to its major component of cinnabar, mercuric sulfate.



Figure 11. The earliest recorded date of a red star handstamp is October 16, 1851 on this cover. The red star indicated payment in cash to the carrier while on his route. The addressee Meredith is a known set of correspondence.



Figure 12. An example of the red smudge cancel which may have evolved as a diminished and untidy version of the red star.

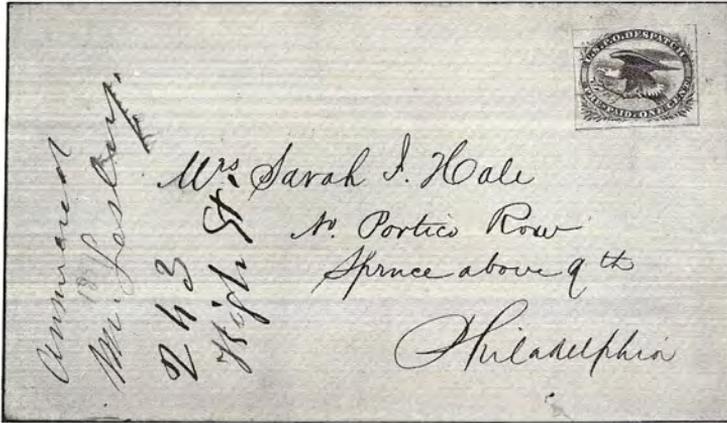


Figure 13. A two bar precancel on an Eagle carrier adhesive. An enlargement is shown in Figure 14.



Figure 14. A two horizontal bar precancel on the Eagle carrier adhesive from the cover shown in Figure 13.

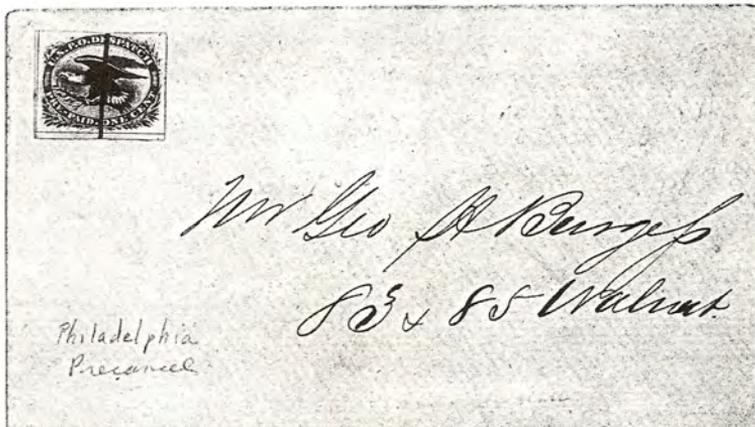


Figure 15. A heavy black inked vertical line precancelled the Eagle carrier adhesive on this local cover.



Figure 16. Unlike other carrier adhesives, Eagle carrier stamps were seldom cancelled by manuscript markings. This cover is dated March 17, 1857 and was previously believed by the author to be the latest documented use.



Figure 17. The U.S.P.O. DESPATCH handstamp was used by the Philadelphia carrier department in the early 1850's to indicate carrier service paid in cash.

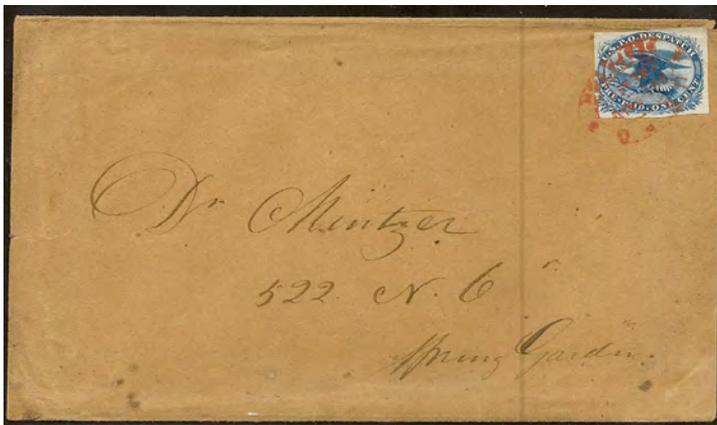


Figure 18. The author records four red examples of the U.S.P.O. Despatch handstamp cancelling the Eagle carrier adhesive. This cover is dated October 3, 1853.



Figure 19. The author records three black examples of the U.S.P.O. DESPATCH handstamp cancelling the Eagle carrier adhesive. The black U.S.P.O. handstamp was not used until early January 1854. This cover is dated December 1, (1854-7).



Figure 20. An Eagle carrier tied by a black seven bar grid in a circle on a locally addressed undated cover.



Figure 21. An Eagle carrier tied by a black eleven bar grid in a circle, the only recorded example. Blood's carried this either to or from the post office and the carrier took it the other way.

Two explanations are possible. Blood's could have delivered this example to the Philadelphia Carrier Department for city delivery, perhaps to an outlying district, similar to the example shown in **Figure 18**, where private posts were forbidden from intercity mail. Alternatively, the Carrier Department may have delivered this letter to Blood's for city delivery.²⁷

Boxed Grid - New Joint Discovery

The cover shown in **Figure 22** was privately carried from Riverton in Burlington County, New Jersey to Philadelphia. Probably placed into a street collection box with prepaid carrier service "To the Mails" and Cleveland, Ohio. The boxed grid "killer" handstamped marking was rarely used in Philadelphia during the late 1850's, this possibly its earliest usage. This example was discovered by Gordon Stimmel and the author during the research for this article. This cover is internally dated **June 29, 1857, the Latest Recorded Date in Philadelphia for an Eagle carrier**, and extends by three months the previously recognized date shown in **Figure 16**. The internal contents reveal the sender to be a Quaker and one of ten prominent Philadelphia families with a summer home in Riverton, and who frequented Philadelphia and undoubtedly had access to Eagle carrier stamps.

Kensington CDS

Kensington, Pa was located in Philadelphia County, adjacent to the old city, although not legally consolidated into the city of Philadelphia until 1862.²⁸ The Kensington Post Office could have received its supply of Eagle carrier stamps directly from the local printer Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co. Alternatively their source may have been the nearby Philadelphia Post Office, either directly or through mutual patrons. Examples of contemporaneous Philadelphia Carrier Department stamps have been recorded used in both directions between the two post offices as shown in Figures 23 and 24 revealing the close working relationship between the two. **Figure 25** depicts a cover which originated in Kensington, bears an Eagle carrier stamp tied by a red Kensington circular datestamp, and addressed to Delaware. For completeness, a very attractive Eagle carrier tied by red numeral "3" from Kensington exists but which did not receive a good Philatelic Foundation certificate.²⁹

Philadelphia CDS

Figure 26 demonstrates an Eagle carrier tied by a blue Philadelphia circular datestamp classified by Tom Clarke as number 62³⁰ on a locally addressed cover.

²⁷ Shachat, Norm, Personal communications.

²⁸ Flack, Wylie H., *An Introduction To The Postal History of Philadelphia and Philadelphia County*, The Associated Stamp Clubs of Southeastern Penna. & Delaware, Inc., 1978, page 15.

²⁹ Siegel Auction Galleries, November 13, 2000, Lot 23, Hall, April 24, 2001 PFC 365933 reads "Genuine usage of the 3 cent stamp, but carrier stamp did not originate and the tying cancellation is counterfeit."

³⁰ Clarke, Tom, *A Catalog of Philadelphia Postmarks, 18th Century to the Present, Part 1*, page 16-17, 1991.



Figure 22. Eagle carrier tied by a “killer” handstamp. The cover is dated June 29, 1857 and is the latest date the author records for an Eagle carrier in Philadelphia.



Figure 23. A folded letter from Kensington to Philadelphia with a Philadelphia carrier department adhesive. For a cover traveling in the opposite direction see Figure 24.

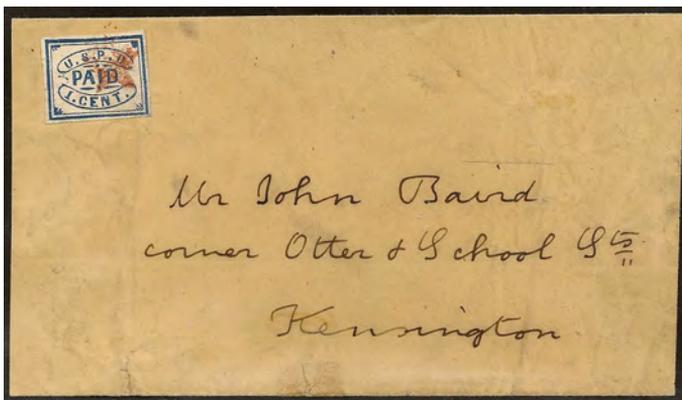


Figure 24. A cover from Philadelphia to Kensington with a Philadelphia carrier department adhesive. For the opposite direction see Figure 23.



Figure 25. Cover bearing an Eagle carrier to Delaware which originated from Kensington. Kensington used Eagle carrier adhesives.



Figure 26. Eagle carrier tied on a local cover dated February 28 (1852-3) by a blue Philadelphia circular datestamp. The author surmises the carrier must have had access to this standard circular datestamp because the letter did not go through the post office.



Figure 27. An example demonstrating that the Postmaster General's 1851 order of free carrier service "to the mails" was ignored. The Eagle carrier adhesive paid the carrier fee on this June 15 (1852-3) cover to Massachusetts.



Figure 28. Another example of the collection of a carrier fee violating the Postmaster General's order. This cover is dated November 25, 1853 and is fully prepaid by the Nesbitt envelope.



Figure 29. Another example of the collection of a carrier fee violating the Postmaster General's order. This cover is separately handstamped by a red Philadelphia handstamp which reflects the mail/3cts./PAID" rate as prepaid in cash at the post office probably by the carrier on behalf of the sender.



Figure 30. The carrier was paid to take this July 14 (1853) cover to the post office. The postage cost was left to the recipient who was charged the 5 cts undiscounted collect rate.

Apparently, the Philadelphia Carrier Department must have had access to the standard circular datestamps of the Philadelphia Post Office. The Eagle carrier stamp did not pay for a conceivable drop rate, as otherwise possibly suggested by this marking (same town postmark as the addressee). Eagle carrier stamps, although Federal issues, were purchased by the Carrier Department, and not for service at the main post office. Since no specific street address is listed, should the carrier have mistakenly transported this example to the Main Post Office as a “drop letter,” an additional one cent would be due and handstamped with numeral “1” in double octagon for a total cost of two cents. As a postal history exercise, should such a hypothetical letter not be picked up in two days, carrier delivery from the Post Office would cost an additional two cents for a total of four cents. The Carrier Department was designed just for this purpose, to bypass the main Post Office.³¹

Usage

“To the Mails”

Since the Postmaster General ordered free carrier service “To the Mails” in 1851, Eagle Carrier stamps were not necessary on outbound letters and shouldn’t exist from Philadelphia. The following are four Eagle carrier examples, each with a different postal history form of intercity mail. The Eagle carrier stamp in **Figure 27** is combined with a *three-cent adhesive* with each tied by a separate blue Philadelphia cds, Clarke type 62, fully prepaying the Carrier Department and the Post Office Department to Massachusetts. **Figure 28** is fully prepaid by a *Nesbit envelope* and Eagle carrier, together tied by Clarke type 63a, also to Massachusetts. **Figure 29** documents Eagle carrier prepayment with a typical red star cancel on an envelope to New Jersey which is separately handstamped by a red Clark type 67b handstamp reflecting the “*mail three cent prepaid rate as cash*” at the Post Office, in all probability by the carrier on behalf of the sender. **Figure 30** shows an Eagle carrier tied by red star separate from the blue Philadelphia cds, Clarke type 73, on envelope to New York; prepayment was made only to the Carrier Department, leaving the “postage” cost to the recipient who was charged the 5 cent *undiscounted collect* rate.

Trans-continental

Two covers are recorded with Eagle carrier stamps which crossed the North American continent. At that time (prior to April 1, 1855) the intercity rate for over 3000 miles was 6 cents prepaid or 10 cents collect. **Figure 31** demonstrates the fully prepaid “To the Mails” transcontinental charge with an Eagle carrier cancelled by red smudge. The sender in **Figure 32**, however, may not have been aware of the proper rate since he prepaid the carrier and only half of the postage, leaving a single rate collect and undiscounted at “Due 5 cents” from the recipient.

³¹ Perry, Elliot, “*The Carrier Stamps of the United States; Philadelphia*,” *The Chronicle* 115, Vol. 34, No. 3, August 1982, page 176.

Transatlantic

Ten covers with an Eagle carrier stamp are addressed to Europe, one of which was privately handled. Of the remaining nine, four originated in Philadelphia and all to the same correspondence in Liverpool. Furthermore, the example shown in **Figure 33** is the only Eagle carrier cover in combination with the 12 cent general issue stamp, which may be the quintessential Philadelphia Eagle carrier cover.

Earliest Recorded

The earliest recorded Eagle carrier cover has been reported to be January 3, 1852.³² Although the final six weeks of 1851 may conceivably have been possible, definitive evidence of an 1851 usage is very difficult and has not been proven as most Eagle carrier examples are on envelopes without originally dated contents. Several 1852 examples exist, many determined by deductive analysis, such as **Figure 31** and **Figure 32**. They are tied by a blue Philadelphia circular datestamp classified by Tom Clarke as number 62; with earliest know date of August 5, 1846 and latest know date of June 12, 1853. **Figure 31** is therefore 1852, the only year in which the July 2nd datestamp and period of issue overlap. Likewise, **Figure 32** also can only intersect in 1852 since a November 15, 1851 franking would have been two days prior to the arrival of Eagle carrier adhesives at the Philadelphia Carrier Department on November 17, 1851.

Overlap with Philadelphia Carrier Department Adhesives

For two years the Philadelphia Carrier Department sold typeset adhesive stamps. By March of 1851 they issued a more attractive lithographed series, which was in use through 1853, the latest recorded on September 16, 1853 and shown previously in **Figure 8**. For several years beyond that date Carrier Department handstamps were used. Therefore, **October of 1851 through September of 1853 can be viewed as a transition period of overlap and concurrent use of the Philadelphia lithographed stamps and the Federal Eagle carrier stamps**, with decreasing use of the former and increasing use of the latter. Most Eagle carrier covers can usually be dated by Clarke type to a limited period of time usually a few years and rarely by itself a single year. Since the sample pool of Eagle Carrier stamps on cover is finite, correlation with the concurrent Philadelphia Carrier Department stamped covers for usage and postal history facilitates a more comprehensive retrospective analysis.

Mysteries

Forwarded Philadelphia to New Jersey

Figure 34 is a letter from Delafield, Wisconsin, with December 14 cds and matching "PAID 3" in arc, manuscript dated 1854, and addressed to a reverend in Philadelphia. The letter was subsequently forwarded to a second address in Burlington, New Jersey, with companion black Clark type 76a cds of December 19th combined with an Eagle carrier tied by red smudge. The Carrier Department probably discovered relocation of the reverend, perhaps by his representative at the

³² Lyons, Larry, Personal communications about a dated meeting announcement.



Figure 31. A fully prepaid “to the mails” transcontinental cover dated July 2 (1852) with an Eagle carrier cancelled by a red smudge. Only two transcontinental covers are recorded with Eagle carrier stamps.



Figure 32. A “to the mail” transcontinental cover dated November 15 (1851-2) with the rate only half paid leaving a single rate collect and undiscounted at “due 5 cents” from the recipient. Only two transcontinental covers are recorded with Eagle carrier stamps.



Figure 33. A transatlantic cover with an Eagle carrier. One of ten recorded but only this one has the postage to England paid with the 12-cent general issue stamps.

door who may have applied the Eagle carrier stamp for its return “To the Mails,” but Postage collect at the undiscounted 5 cents rate for the second leg of this journey. This explanation, however, does not satisfy the carrier service provided on the inbound Philadelphia “From the Mails” to the street location declared versus the one cent “uniform 1 cent carrier fee for all services” theory, and back to the post office for a total of two cents minimum; or divine providence reduced the total carrier consideration to one cent as if city mail was to and from the post office.

New York to Kensington

Figure 35 is an example originating in New York, addressed to “Kensington, Philadelphia” with a red New York PAID 3 circular datestamp.³³ The Eagle carrier stamp is just barely tied by a red smudge, a not uncommon Philadelphia cancel. Several conceivable explanations may be considered. City mail at first examination can be disqualified because the city of origin and delivery must be the same. Against the New York “To the Mails” theory is that the service was free. Also, the red smudge was not a New York carrier department cancel. Philadelphia “From the Mail” to the Kensington address is possible although underpaid. However, the Philadelphia and Kensington carriers were apparently operating under the 1849 and not 1851 discretionary fees of the Postmaster General, with all carrier fees set at one cent. More unlikely, the sender in New York may have possessed some Carrier stamps and was hopeful that the Philadelphia carriers would accept them as payment for “From the Mails”. Even if the New York Carrier Department sold some Eagle carrier stamps the remuneration for service was not transferable to the Philadelphia carriers who would have performed the service. The red smudge was indeed a common Philadelphia cancel. The address is somewhat ambiguous including both Kensington and Philadelphia (not Pennsylvania). Perhaps the letter arrived in Philadelphia to be sent as city mail to Kensington.

“From the Mails”

Carrier delivery of intercity mail was generally never prepaid, but collect at the door in cash. Exceptions are conceivably possible on correspondence by a thoughtful friend or family member, probably in a nearby community, who may have frequented Philadelphia himself and obtained the stamps directly from a friend or the Philadelphia Carrier Department. The Meyersburg collection contained two such examples. An Eagle carrier stamp with red star cancel not tied to an 1856 cover from Doylestown, Pa, approximately 23 miles north of Philadelphia,³⁴ to a Philadelphia street address, but which did not receive a good PFC.³⁵ Additionally, an Eagle carrier stamp with black penstroke again not tied on an advertising cover from Wilmington, Delaware, approximately 30 miles south of Philadelphia, to a Philadelphia address exists. Although described in the auction catalog as “To the

³³ United States Postal Service zip code calculations.

³⁴ Siegel Auction Galleries, November 13, 2000, Sale 830, Lot 23, Hall.

³⁵ Siegel Auction Galleries, June 25, 1997, Sale 791, Lot 57, Meyersburg; August 20, 1997 PFC 317217 reads “Genuine usage of the 3-cent stamp torn in half but the carrier stamp did not originate on this cover.”

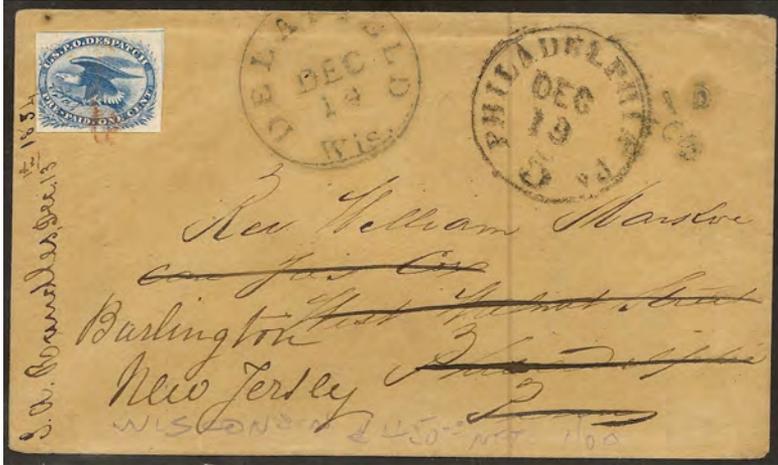


Figure 34. Cover dated December 14, 1854 from Delafield, Wisconsin to Philadelphia and redirected to Burlington, New Jersey. The postage was “collect” from Philadelphia for the second leg of the journey. The mystery is why did the carrier only get one cent for going back and forth to/from the post office?



Figure 35. Another mystery cover. The letter originated in New York on August 10, 1853 and is addressed to Kensington. The carrier stamp is tied by a red smudge cancel but how was the carrier involved in this service?

Mails” Wilmington use, both covers may have been “From the Mails” use in Philadelphia.³⁶ Unfortunately, these two Eagle carrier examples are not tied to the cover.

Two other contemporaneous examples, however, each bear a single Philadelphia Carrier Department stamp tied to an inbound letter and are certainly prepaid “From the Mails” New York, 80 miles northeast of Philadelphia, see **Figure 36**,³⁷ and “From the Mails” Downingtown, 32 miles west of Philadelphia.³⁸ In these two cases the Philadelphia Carrier Department could rest assured the prepayment was received by them, unlike Eagle carrier stamps which could have been purchased in New York for conceivable service in Philadelphia. These two, nonetheless, **confirm the author’s position that the Philadelphia Carrier Department autonomously continued the 1849 one cent carrier fee for all service, including “From the Mails.”** Perhaps the inbound Eagle carrier letters from Wilmington and Doylestown should be reconsidered as the sender could not have purchased Eagle carrier stamps in the town of origination. The author submits that **Philadelphia Carrier Department stamps and Eagle carrier stamps occasionally found their way by regional business, communication, and travel within a range of 30 to perhaps 80 miles from the old city of Philadelphia, and that prepaid “From the Mails” did exist including Eagle carrier stamps.**

Conclusion

An important corner of the Philadelphia postal history legacy houses the Eagle carrier covers, a relatively narrow slice of the broad spectrum that shines strong. The Franklin and Eagle carrier adhesive stamps were a novel, short lived, but not insignificant component of the 1851 General Issue of the Federal Government. The vast majority of surviving covers come from the Philadelphia area, without which precious few examples would exist. Philadelphia was a major force in the Eagle carrier stamp creation and deployment, although just a “flash in the pan.”

The fee system with separate accounting was quite provincial and too restrictive to be compatible with a large scale Federal carrier prepayment plan. The Eagle carrier stamps were most useful for city mail. The author submits that **in 1851 the Philadelphia Carrier Department ignored the Postmaster General’s discretionary privilege over the carriers and continued with the fee system already in place during the prior few years. This plausible explanation accounts for the many and varied “To the Mails” usages not found in any other city, and which have not been satisfactorily explained but rather avoided in the philatelic literature. “From the Mails” use was not practical for several reasons. This Philadelphia “uniform one cent carrier fee for all services” theory gives credence, however, to “From the Mails” Philadelphia Eagle carrier covers, the few of which may have been heretofore considered bogus. The 1851 to 1853 period was a transition for the Philadelphia Carrier Department away from their own stamps in favor of the new Eagle carrier issue, which ran their course in 1857.**

³⁶ Siegel Auction Galleries, June 25, 1997, Sale 791, Lot 72, Meyersburg.

³⁷ Siegel Auction Galleries, May 13, 2000, Sale 824, Lot 377, Rarities 2000.

³⁸ Siegel Auction Galleries, November 15, 2006, Sale 925, Lot 1248, Kuphal.



Figure 36. A “from the mails” carrier service dated February 15, 1852 paid by the blue 7LB12 adhesive. Unlike the Eagle carrier the Philadelphia carrier department could rest assured the prepayment by this adhesive was received by them.

This article presents **two new discovery Eagle carrier cancellations and a new Latest Recorded Date of use of the Eagle carrier stamps in Philadelphia.** The Federal Carrier stamps represent a rewarding collection and research area where new discoveries after 150 years are still possible. Many thanks for assistance from Norm Shachat, Gordon Stimmel, Larry Lyons, and Tom Mazza. Any candidates for “earliest recorded date” and/or additional cancellations should be gratefully sent to Vern Morris, 128 South Huckleberry Lake Drive, Sebring, FL 33875. A condensed and more readable version of this material is being concurrently published in the *Collectors Club Philatelist*.

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Use of the Eagle Carrier in New York City

By

Clifford J. Alexander

For years, collectors of U.S. carrier postal history have wondered whether New York City—the U.S. city with the largest population and largest carrier department when the Eagle Carrier stamp was issued—received a supply of Eagle Carrier stamps (Scott LO2). If it did receive the stamps, why are there so few used examples on and off cover with New York City markings?

This article summarizes the history of the Eagle Carrier stamp and discusses correspondence in the Travers Papers at the Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum and on the U.S. Philatelic Classic Society website that helps answer questions about the use of the Eagle carrier stamp in New York City.

It also provides a census of five New York City covers with Eagle Carrier stamps and three off-cover stamps with New York City markings. As will be discussed later, it is interesting that none of the five covers were delivered locally by carrier.

This is the fourth in a series of articles by the author on the Eagle Carrier stamp. Future articles will discuss use of the stamp in Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and Washington, as well as unusual uses on cover.¹

History of the Eagle Carrier Stamp

In February 1842, Alexander Greig began operating a private post in New York City named New York City Despatch Post. He issued the first stamp in North America for prepayment of postage. The New York City post office acquired the business in August 1842, renamed it U.S. City Despatch Post and revised the stamp design to reflect the new name. **Figure 1** shows a N.Y. City Despatch Post stamp (Scott 40L1) and a U.S. City Despatch Post stamp (Scott 6LB5). The New York City carrier department operated the City Despatch Post until November 28, 1846.²



Figure 1. The stamp on the left is a local post stamp and the one on the right is a carrier stamp.

¹ See “*Use of the Eagle Carrier with the 3¢ 1861 Issue After Demonetization*,” *The Penny Post* Vol. 23, No. 4 (Oct. 2015) pp 5-9; “*Use of the Eagle Carrier in Kensington*,” *The Penny Post*, Vol. 25 No. 1 (Jan. 2017) pp 5-15; “*Use of the Eagle Carrier on Stamped Envelopes*,” *The Penny Post*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Apr. 2017) pp 4-13.

² Abraham Mead operated the City Despatch Post from November 30, 1846, to late 1847 or early 1848; Charles Cole purchased the business from Mead and operated it until about 1851; Edward N. Barry acquired it from Cole and operated it until about 1856.

In October 1851, the U.S. Post Office Department (POD) issued a non-denominated official stamp that could be used in all cities with carriers. The need for the stamp was clear. From 1849 to 1850, ten carrier departments issued 32 different carrier stamp designs with various ink colors, shades and papers to facilitate prepayment of carrier fees. Because these stamps were locally authorized and designed, they are called “semi-official” carrier stamps. **Figure 2** is an example of a New York City semi-official carrier stamp on cover.

To be useful in all cities with carriers, the Franklin Carrier stamp did not state a rate. The Postal Act of 1836 authorized the Postmaster General (PMG) to set rates for carrier and drop letter fees from zero to a maximum of 2¢. In cities without competition from local posts, the PMG typically set the fee at 1¢ or 2¢ for all letters brought by carriers to residents of the city or to the post office.

The PMG set carrier fees at 1¢ or zero for letters collected in cities where private local posts presented stiff competition to post office carriers. From July 1851 to April 2, 1860, New York City did not charge a carrier fee for letters addressed to another city that were deposited in carrier collection boxes. During that period, the fee was 1¢ for local delivery letters collected by carriers and brought to addressees in the city or drop letters brought by carriers to the post office for pick-up by local addressees.³

The new stamp was to be used only by city carrier departments and was not authorized for general postage use. The first design had a vignette with a bust of Benjamin Franklin. Shortly after it was issued, the POD became concerned that the Franklin Carrier stamp might be confused with the blue 1¢ general issue stamp, which also had a bust of Franklin. To prevent carrier stamps from being used improperly to pay for regular postage, the POD withdrew the Franklin Carrier stamp and replaced it with the Eagle Carrier stamp.

Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Washington, and Kensington, Pennsylvania account for over 95% of the covers with Eagle Carrier stamps. Kensington was a borough adjacent to Philadelphia and likely received a supply of stamps from the Philadelphia post office. A *Penny Post* article by Stephen Gronowski reported only fourteen uses in twelve other cities, including one on cover and one off with New York City markings.⁴ I have recorded five on cover and two used off cover with genuine New York city markings, including the cover and stamp reported by Gronowski.

The Travers Papers

Until the Travers Papers were published, POD records were not easily available to persons researching the Eagle Carrier stamp. For example, Donald B. Johnstone, in his series of articles on carriers published in *The Chronicle* from 1984 to 1985, wrote that, “The first and only record known for delivery, and hence, the recognized date of issue, was November 17, 1851, for 20,000 stamps to the

³ For a detailed list of New York City carrier fees, see Steven M. Roth, “Summary of Drop Letter and Carrier Postal Rates New York City (1794-1885),” *The Chronicle*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Nov. 1974), at pp.210-212

⁴ Stephen Gronowski, “LO2 Uses Outside of Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Cincinnati and Kensington,” *Penny Post* Issue 44, Vol 11, No. 3 (July 2003), pp. 9-22. Gronowski wrote, “It is somewhat hard to fathom thought that more of these adhesives were not used in this large city.”

Philadelphia Post Office.”⁵ He was not aware of POD correspondence that recorded delivery of carrier stamps to other cities. The Travers Papers fill in certain information gaps, especially with respect to New York City.

The Travers Papers are a collection of POD correspondence and other documents assembled by Arthur M. Travers, a collector who worked in the office of the Third Assistant PMG from 1901 to 1911. They were donated to the National Postal Museum by Jack Rosenthal. Robert S. Boyd and Wilson Hulme II published a summary of the 1851-1861 Travers Papers in *The Chronicle*⁶. This ten-year period was one of the most interesting decades in the history of carrier service.

A searchable reprint of the 1851-1861 Travers Papers is available to members and non-members in the “Resources” section of the U.S. Philatelic Classic Society’s website at www.USPCS.org. The Classic Society website also describes the history of the Travers Papers.

The Travers Papers show that Eagle Carrier stamps were delivered to New York City and available for purchase for five months in 1852, after which unsold stamps were returned to the POD. We now know a substantial supply of Eagle Carrier stamps was shipped to the New York City carrier department and available to residents, but we can only speculate as to the reasons why the stamp was seldom used there.

In an October 13, 1851, letter, Marcellus Ells, The Superintendent of Letter Carriers in New York, wrote PMG N.E. Hall to report a significant increase in carrier business during 1851. He emphasized the extent of the increase by noting that in September, New York City carriers brought 35,225 letters to the post office from boxes for free compared with 8257 in July (Doc. #217).⁷

Hall also reported that another 30,106 “Letters [were] received from boxes and delivered in the City.” As noted above, New York City carriers charged 1¢ for each letter picked up by a carrier from a collection box and delivered in New York City.⁸ Carrier Department revenue for delivering letters during September 1851 would have been \$301.06.

The large increase in volume of letters delivered by carriers during 1851 must have convinced the New York post office that Eagle Carrier stamps would facilitate collection and delivery of intra-city mail by New York City carriers. In an April 17, 1852, letter, New York Postmaster William Brady advised John Marron, the Third Assistant PMG, that Mr. Ells proposed to purchase 250,000 Eagle Carrier stamps for use in New York City at the 10% discount that had already been authorized (Doc. #260). Marron’s approval for the delivery was noted in a May 21, 1852, letter (Doc. #265), and the 250,000 were delivered.

⁵ Donald B. Johnstone, “Franklin and Eagle Carrier Stamps,” *Chronicle* Issues 122 to 125, Vol. 36 Nos. 2, 3 and 4, and Vol. 37 No. 1 (May, August and November 1984, and February 1985).

⁶ Robert S. Boyd and Wilson Hulme II, “*The Travers Papers Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co. 1851-61: Part I*,” *Chronicle* 245, Vol. 67, No. 1 (Feb. 2015); and “Part II,” *Chronicle* 246, Vol. 67, No. 2 (May 2017). The first group of Travers Papers covering 1834 to 1851 was published in a two-volume set compiled by Thomas J. Alexander, George W. Brett and W. Wilson Hulme, II. *The Travers Papers: United States Postal History and Postage Stamps 1834-1851* (published by James Lee 2012).

⁷ “Doc.” refers to correspondence in the 1851-61 Travers Papers on the USPCS web site; and 217 is the number that Wilson Hulme assigned to the document.

⁸ Steven M. Roth Article at p. 211.

New York Postmaster Brady reported in an October 16, 1852, letter to PMG Marron that only 6,800 stamps had been sold in the five months between April and October (Doc #285). If the 30,000 letters in September 1851 was also the average for the five months from May to September 1852, the 6800 stamps that were sold represented only 2.3% of letters delivered by carriers from collection boxes to addresses in New York City.

Brady returned the remaining 243,200 stamps and received a credit. Revenue of \$68 from the sale of only 6800 Eagle Carrier stamps over five months did not justify a \$2000 investment in inventory or the time and effort involved in processing stamp purchases.

Eagle Carrier Census

The census in Table I lists five possibly genuine uses of the Eagle Carrier stamp on New York City covers. All five were carried in the mails to another city. Only one of the covers has a year date, August 3, 1853. In addition, described below are two genuine used copies off-cover Eagle carrier stamps with New York City markings and one that a Philatelic Foundation certificate states is “counterfeit.”

Stamps on Covers. The Philatelic Foundation recently issued Certificate 566764 that states the Eagle Carrier stamp “is a genuine usage” on cover with a dull red 1851 3¢ general issue stamp (Scott 11) tied to an April 11 New York circular date stamp. See **Figure 3**. The certificate does not express an opinion whether the Eagle Carrier stamp was applied in New York or Philadelphia.

The August 10, 1853, cover shown in **Figure 4** was carried from New York City to Kensington, Pennsylvania. It was offered by Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries in the November 2000, sale of the Hall Collection of Carriers, Locals and Western Express. The lot description states that the stamp represents payment for delivery in Kensington.

Figure 5 is a cover with a September 23 circular date stamp addressed to New Canaan, Connecticut, that was owned by Stephen Gronowski and illustrated in his article. Philatelic Foundation Certificate 43163 stated that it was a genuine use on cover.

The cover shown in **Figure 6** was carried from New York to Philadelphia. It was offered in both the Caspary and Golden sales. This interesting cover was brought to a POD railroad agent in New York City at the train station, who applied a “NEW YORK & PHIL. RR” circular date stamp tying both the Eagle Carrier and 3¢ 1851 stamps.

The fifth Eagle Carrier stamp on an embossed entire is shown in **Figure 7**. It is tied by an odd “8 am” manuscript notation on a 3¢ entire (Scott U10) carried in the mails from New York City to Lexington, Scott County, Indiana. This was offered in a June 1979 Kaufmann sale. Because the auction catalog photograph is poor, the date of the New York circular date stamp is indistinct. It does not appear to have been submitted to the Philatelic Foundation and it is not clear whether it is a genuine use.

None of the Eagle Carrier covers in the census were used for the intended purpose—to pay for local delivery by carriers. All five are addressed to other cities. As noted above, from July 1851 to June 30, 1863, New York City did not charge a carrier fee either for delivery of letters to the post office for pick-up by local addresses or for intra-city delivery.

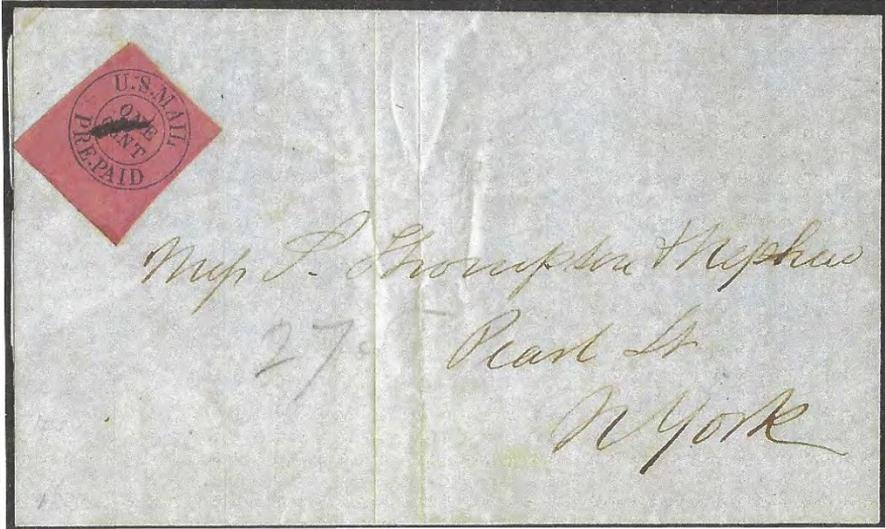


Figure 2. This is an example of a New York City semi-official carrier stamp on a locally delivered cover.



Figure 3. This is a genuine use of an Eagle carrier stamp on a cover. Was it applied in New York or Philadelphia?



Figure 4. On August 10, 1853 folded letter from New York to Philadelphia. The lot description stated the stamp represents payment for delivery in Kensington.



Figure 5. A New York City applied Eagle carrier stamp on a cover to New Canaan, Connecticut. Was the sender attempting to pay for carrier delivery in New Canaan?



Figure 6. An Eagle carrier stamp tied on a cover from New York to Philadelphia and carried on the New York & Philadelphia Railroad.

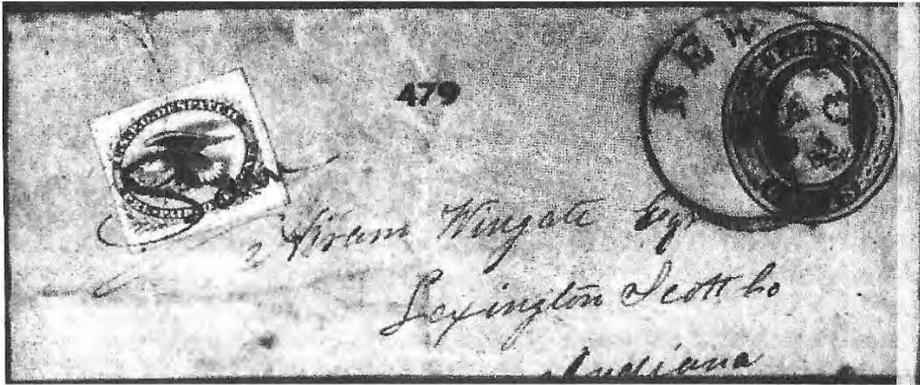


Figure 7. An Eagle carrier stamp tied by a manuscript “8 AM” on a Nesbitt envelope from New York City to Lexington, Scott County, Indiana.

Dr. Vernon Morris has written two articles theorizing that the letters to Philadelphia and Kensington were to pay for carrier delivery from the mails to the addresses in those cities.⁹ He believes travelers may have purchased the stamps in Philadelphia or Kensington and brought them to New York City where they affixed

⁹ See Vernon Morris, MD, “Two Philadelphia Eagle Carrier Cancellation Discoveries, New LRD, and a New Theory,” *The Penny Post*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (April 2009), p. 1, at p. 24; and, “The Philadelphia Eagle Carrier Cancellations: Two Discoveries,” *Collectors Club Philatelist*, Vol 88, No. 3 (May-June 2009), p. 149, at p. 156.

them to the covers. We do not know whether addressees were charged for delivery in Philadelphia or Kensington. However, none of the three has a due marking.

This explanation does not explain the cover addressed to New Canaan, which has an Eagle Carrier stamp tied by a New York City circular date stamp and a Philatelic Foundation Certificate stating the use is genuine. Nor does it explain the Lexington cover with an Eagle Carrier stamp tied by the “8 am” manuscript notation. Neither city has been reported to have had carrier service. It is possible that the senders of these two covers mistakenly believed payment of a carrier fee was required.

Stamps Off-Cover. I have recorded three Eagle Carrier stamps off-cover with New York City markings.

Figure 8 is a used stamp dated March 13 that was reported by Gronowski. It was offered in a February 1993, Siegel auction that simply stated some of the lots came from “An Old-Time Collection of Carriers and Locals.”

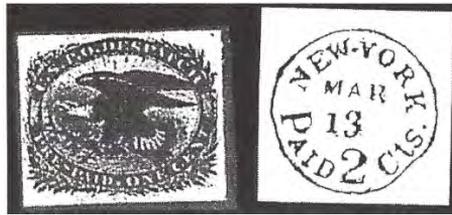


Figure 8. An Eagle carrier stamp with a New York datestamp.

The stamp in **Figure 9** has a clear “NEW YORK” double circle date stamp. Philatelic Foundation Certificate 496146 does not declare the cancel to be a non-genuine use. It states that the stamp “is a used Scott L02, with a non-contemporary cancel.” This statement is accurate insofar as the Eagle Carrier stamp was offered in New York City only during 1852, and the cancel is the double circle type first used in New York and other cities in the early 1860s.

However, it is possible that the stamp was legitimately used eight years after New York City returned its unsold supply of stamps to the POD. **Figure 10** is a Cincinnati cover with the double circle handstamp tying the Eagle Carrier stamp. I also have recorded two covers with Cincinnati double circle date stamps, and one off-cover used stamp with a Washington DC double circle date stamp.

The Eagle Carrier stamp in **Figure 11** has a fine strike of “YORK.” Unfortunately, Philatelic Foundation Certificate 423029 states “the cancellation is counterfeit.”



Figure 9. Eagle carrier stamp with a non-contemporary New York City datestamp.

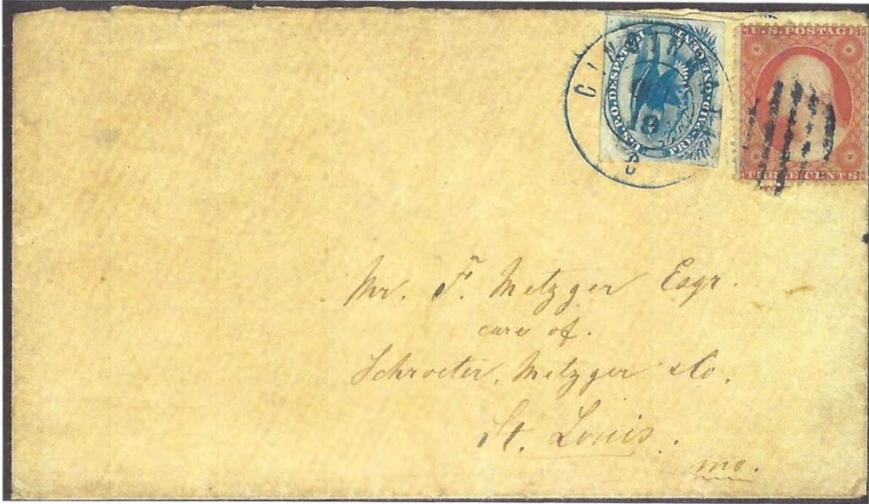


Figure 10. A rare cover with the Eagle carrier stamp used in Cincinnati.



Figure 11. A counterfeit New York City cancel on an Eagle stamp.

Figure 12 is a previously unreported Eagle Carrier stamp with a faint red circular date stamp showing nearly all the letters of "BROOKLYN." This was offered in a June 2006, Carriers & Locals Society Auction. It is not a New York City marking because, during the 1850's, Brooklyn had its own post office separate from the New York City post office. It is possible a patron acquired the stamp in New York City and used it in Brooklyn.



Figure 12. A Brooklyn cancel appearing on an Eagle carrier stamp.

Conclusions

The Travers Papers correspondence tell us what happened but does not explain the reasons. Why was the Eagle Carrier stamp used more often in four other large cities than New York? Was it due to resistance or apathy on the part of carriers, patrons, or both? One possible explanation is that New York City addressees were accustomed to paying the carrier 1¢ cash for letters delivered to them. Conversely, New Yorkers were not accustomed to prepaying the carrier delivery fee for intra-city letters they dropped in a collection box.

Another possibility is that New York City carriers did not want to be bothered with accounting for cash they received for stamps. Carriers in other cities, where the volume of mail was less and fees were charged for all letters they collected, might have viewed the stamps as more useful, rather than a nuisance.

I plan to continue updating the census. If anyone knows of additional Eagle Carrier covers or stamps with New York City markings, please contact me at chairman@pennypost.org. I would like to thank Steven M. Roth and Dr. Vernon Morris for their assistance with this article.

Table I.
Eagle Carrier on Covers From New York

<u>No.</u>	<u>NY Marking</u>	<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Sources/Comments</u>
1.	“NEW YORK/ APR 11”	“Messr. T. P. Remington & Co/Philadelphia/Penn”	PF Cert. 566764.
2.	“NEW YORK/ AUG 20/PAID 3 CENTS”	“Messr. Barry Moffit/Penn Works/Kensington/ Philadelphia/Pa”	Siegel (Hall) Sale No. 830, Lot 23.
3.	“NEW YORK/ SEP 23/PAID 3 CENTS”	“Mifs Julia C. Noyes/New Canaan/Fairfield Co./Conn”	Illustrated in Stephen Gronowski, L02 usages outside of Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Cincinnati and Kensington, PA, <i>The Penny Post</i> , Vol. 11, No. 3 (July 2003), at pp. 13 and 14. PF Cert. 43163.
4.	“NEW YORK & PHILA. RR/OCT 19”	“Mr. Geo. H. Cushman/ (for Mfs. Wathwin)/3 Girard Street/Philadelphia/Penn.”	Siegel (Golden Sale) No. 817, Lot 32; H.R. Harmer (Caspary) Sale, March 18-21, 1957, Lot 48.
5.	“NEW YORK/?”	“Hiram Wingate Esq/Lexington Scott Co/ Indiana”	June 1979 Kaufmann Sale, Lot 479.

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