

# The Influence of Stait's Despatch Post on the U.S. Postal System: 1849--1870

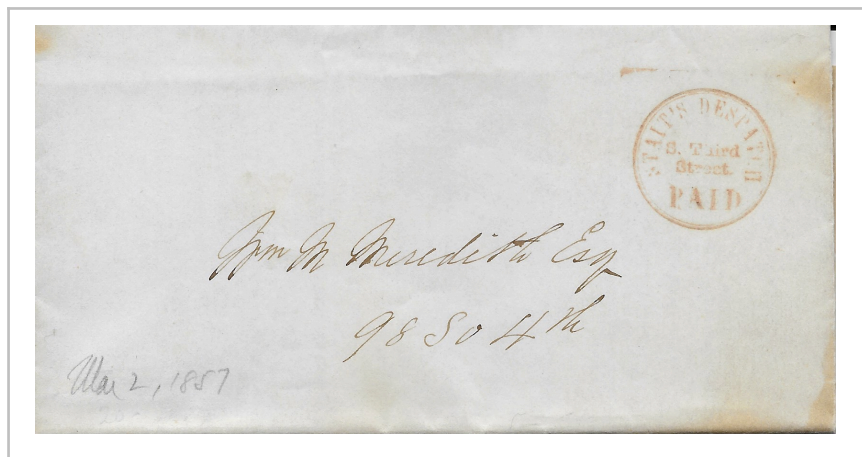
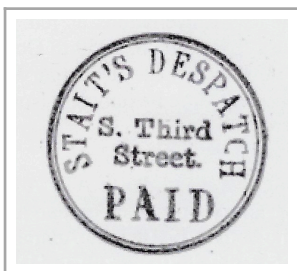
- **Purpose:** The exhibit's purpose is to examine the influence of Stait's Despatch Post on the U.S. Postal System and to illustrate handstamps throughout their postal history, including describing rates, routes, markings & contents.
- **Background:** In the 1830's & 1840's, many private carriers began across the United States. Each tried to compete w/ the U.S. Postal System for local mail in some fashion (e.g., cheaper, faster, more convenient). Local posts forced U.S. to reduce their short distance rates for ½ ounce from 10¢ in 1845 to 3¢ in 1855. Stait's was only 2¢ in 1850. William B. Stait was a former employee of American Letter Mail Company (1844-1845). He began Eagle City Despatch Post in summer of 1845, which ran as an intra-city post until about 1849. He also had an association w/ Adams' Express Company for intercity mail, noted on early Stait's handstamps. In late 1849 Eagle City became Stait's Despatch Post (likely due to U.S. using an eagle carrier stamp) & existed until 1859. According to Robson Lowe, Stait's Despatch was the only serious competitor to Blood's Despatch.
- **Plan:** To highlight types of Stait's Despatch Post handstamps (J, K, L, N & New). The exhibit is organized by type, as shown on the main headings. Types have used the lettering system since the early articles, such as Stimmell (1991), & are used in all known censuses. Types are presented in the following alphabetical order:

|             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| Pages 2-3:  | Type J |
| Pages 4-7:  | Type K |
| Pages 8-14: | Type L |

|          |                        |
|----------|------------------------|
| Page 15: | Type N                 |
| Page 16: | New Type &<br>Epilogue |

- **Difficulty of Acquisition:** Every type ever catalogued is included in this exhibit, as well as one type recorded by Bowman in 2014 (1 of 1) & one type discovered and recorded by this exhibitor in 2022 (1 of 1). This exhibit includes first & last known Stait's Despatch Post covers as well as circulars. **Red** mattes are for difficult to acquire material; importance is noted nearby.

## New Type Discovered by Exhibitor (page 16)



**Note:** All material in this exhibit is original & owned by exhibitor; all cover contents & handstamps are high-resolution reproductions of exhibitor-owned material.

## 1) Stait's Despatch Post: Type J

**Details of Type J:** Stait's Despatch Post / 2 / Adams' Exp's / & / 48 S. 3d st. Feature unique to this type is bolded 2 for **postage rate to be collected (2¢) (US rate was 10¢)**. Stimmell lists cancellations as **red**. Lyons describes this type being used from June 8 1850 to Oct. 13 1851 (although this exhibit includes a Feb. 2 1850 cover) w/ **13 recorded examples**.



CDS 36mm



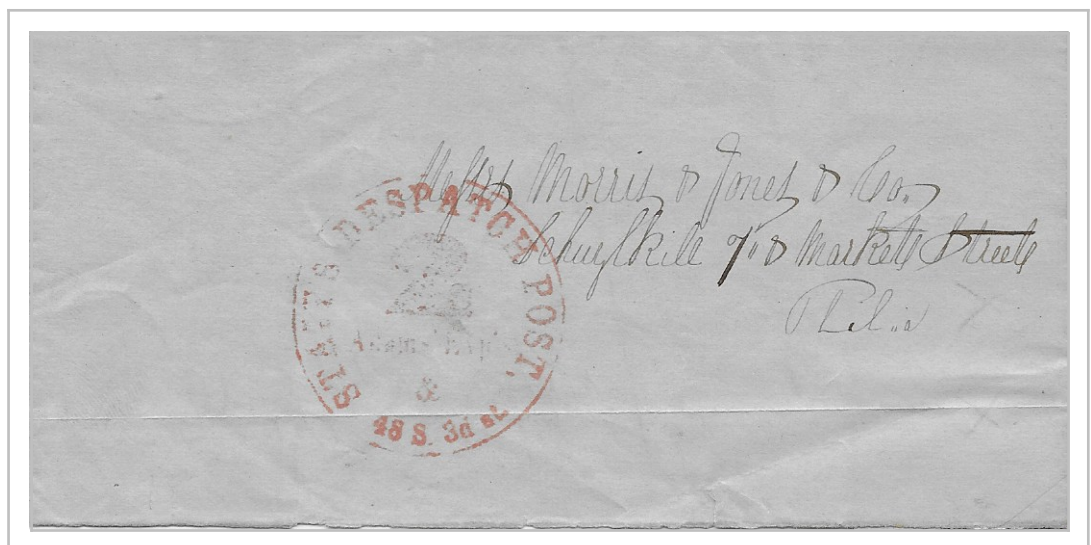
**February 2 1850, to Mssrs. Tatham & Bros., First Loft(?) below South St, Phila, from M. Newman.**

**Difficulty of Acquisition is High**

**Contents:** Order for 7-foot sheets (ex-Lyons).

**Earliest known Stait's Despatch Post Handstamp**

**June 5 1850, to Mssrs. Morris & Jones & Co., Schuylkill % 8 Market Street Phila.**



**Contents:** Handwritten note about order cut 3/16. On right are trademark blue-lined label notes of Calvet Hahn, noted postal historian (ex-Bowman).

STAIT'S DESPATCH POST 2 ADAMS EXP'S  
& 48 S. 3d st, red 35mm circle. NLK  
52 or Scott 62. with the 2 rate.  
1x 17/50 2 15/50



## 1) Stait's Despatch Post: Type J

**August 27 1850, to David Brown & Co., 38 S. Front Philad<sup>a</sup>, from Hugh Downing.**

**Contents:** 1-page printed circular letter to stockholders of New Jersey Magnetic Telegraph Company related to supposed illegal nature of a prior circular.



(ex-H.C. Gibson acquired in 1949; note on right).



**Circa 1850, to W.F. Atlee, No. 263 Chestnut St, Philadelphia Penn.**

**Contents:** Edge-embossed envelope w/o contents.

Reverse shown below resized w/ black seal (ex-H.C. Gibson, Alexander).



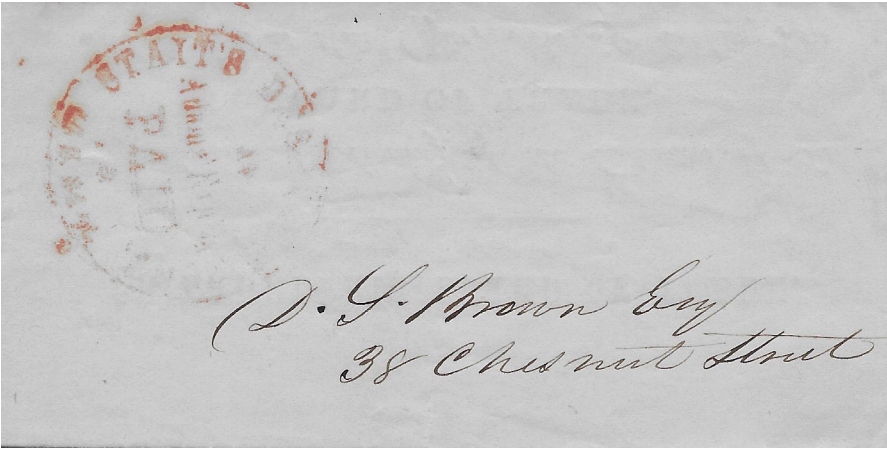


## 2) Stait's Despatch Post: Type K

**Details of Type K:** Stait's Despatch Post / AT / Adams' Exp'ss / PAID / & / 48 S. 3d st. Unique feature of this type is bolded **PAID** w/ Adams' Express noted (**rate of 2¢ & the US rate was 10¢**). According to Lyons, this type was in use from late 1849 to April 10 1851, w/ **over 25 recorded examples**. Census lists this cancellation as **red** or **black**.

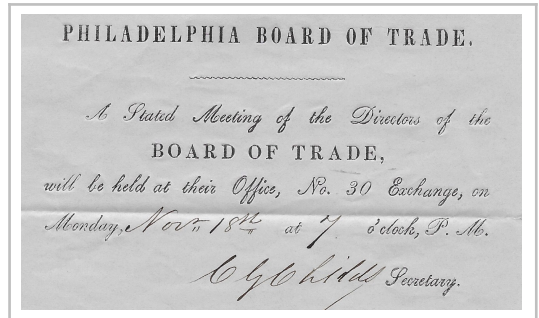


CDS 37mm



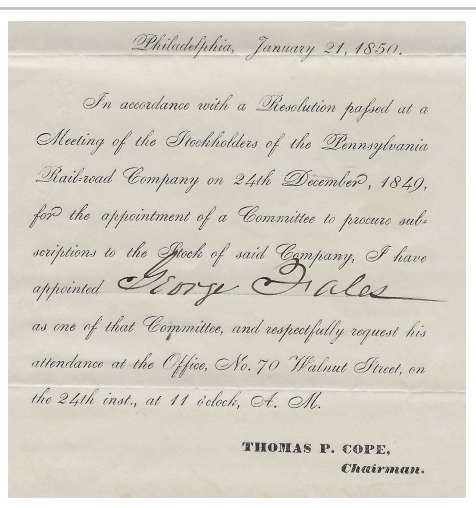
**Undated (ca. 1849 or 1850), to David S. Brown, Esq., 38 Chestnut Street, from Philadelphia Board of Trade Secretary C.G. Childs.**

**Contents:** Notice of Philadelphia Board of Trade Directors meeting (below resized) for November 18<sup>th</sup>.



**January 21 1850, to George Fales, Esq., 6 S. Front St., from Chairman Thomas P. Cope.**

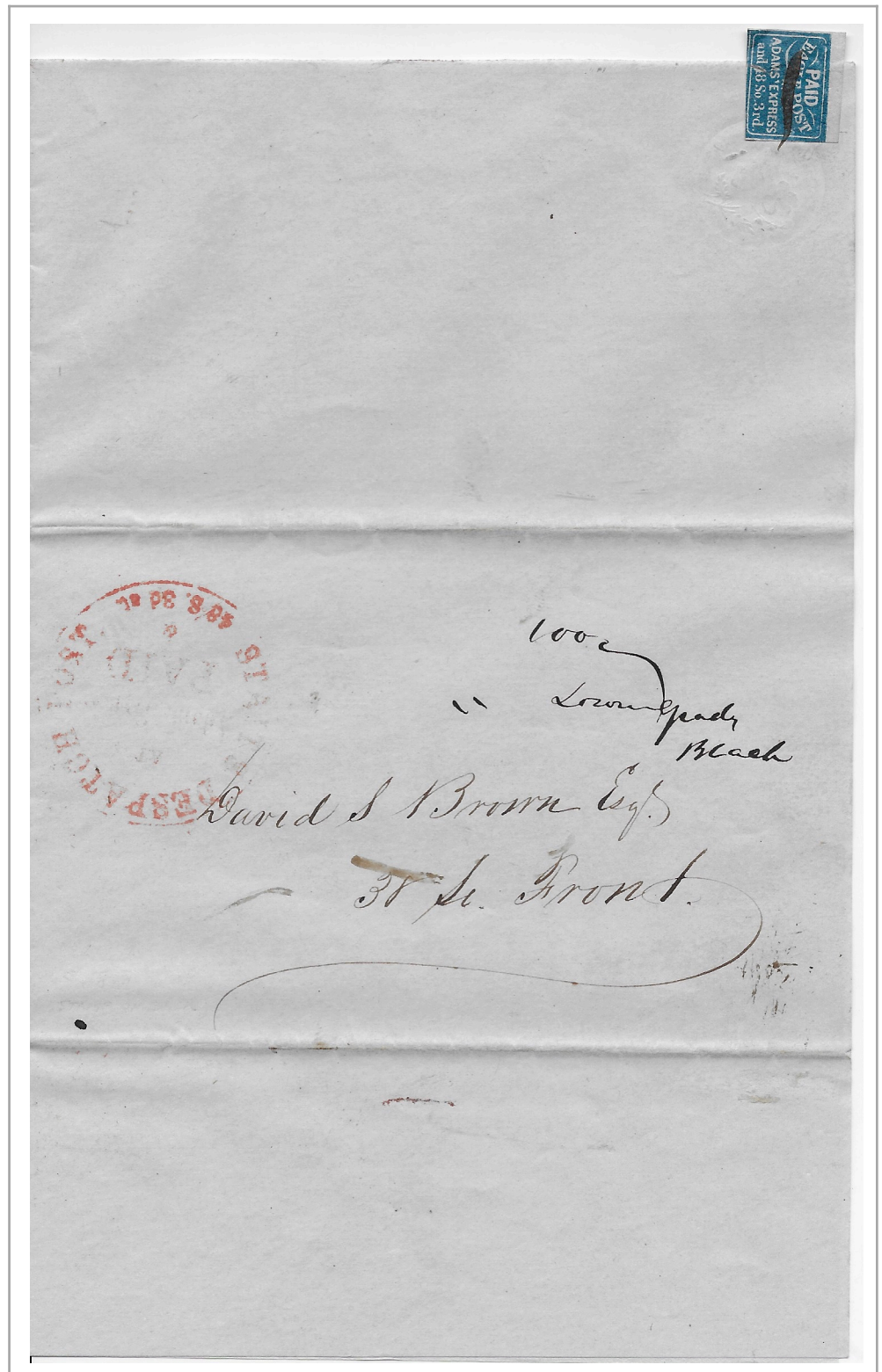
**Contents:** Bottom cover (below left resized contents) mentions appointment of George Fales to a committee to procure stock of PA Railroad Company (ex-Lyons).





## 2) Stait's Despatch Post: Type K

**Less than 5 Type K  
covers exist w/ Eagle  
City Post stamp  
(17x12mm)**

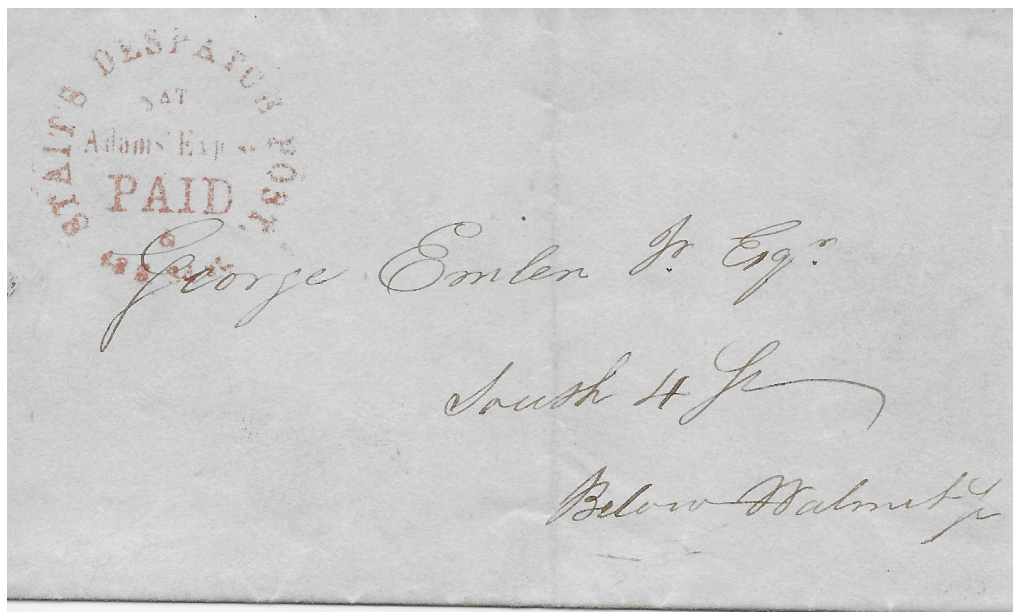


**ca. early 1850, to David S. Brown, Esq., 38 S. Front,  
from Thomas T. Firth, Secretary, Pennsylvania Rail Road Co.**

**Difficulty of Acquisition is High:** At top right is a pencil-cancelled adhesive stamp from Eagle City Post.

**Contents:** 1-page printed letter related to meeting of Board of Directors on May 29 1850.

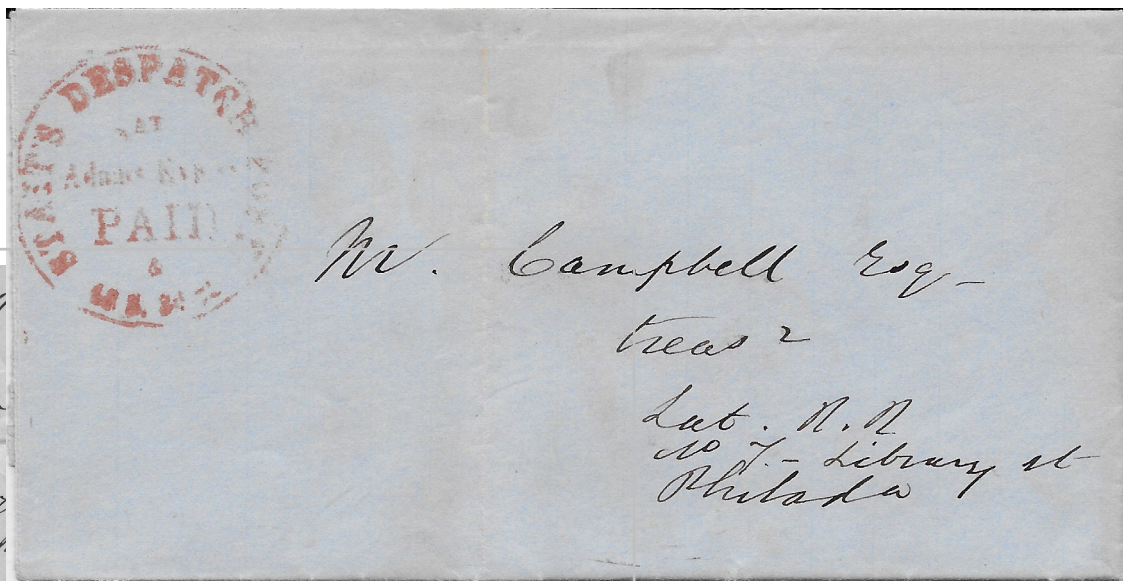
## 2) Stait's Despatch Post: Type K



Dear Sir,  
 Yours of the 26 is at hand &  
 I can only repeat, what I informed  
 you personally, 2 weeks since, that  
 I have called in the attorney of  
 Ed. J. Edwards respect to receive  
 the amt. sometime between this  
 & 11 Oct. next, should you apply to  
 the Tr. Court as your "intimate",  
 please state "referring to them"  
 which will oblige -  
 Yours respectfully,  
 W.D. Richards  
 Sept. 2. 1850

**September 2 1850, to George Emilen Jr., Esq., S. 4<sup>th</sup> St. Below Walnut St. from W. Richards.**

**Contents:** Deals w/ calling a mortgage (resized above right) (ex-Lyons).



M Campbell  
 Dear Sir  
 draft 63. 1 day  
 mt 6 mts 6.

Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>  
 1850

Yours respectfully  
 F. Heuson

**October 30 1850, to M. Campbell Esq., Treasurer, Lat. Rail Road, No. 7 Library St., Philad<sup>a</sup>, from F. Heuson Esq.**

**Contents:** Related to drawing payment of \$70.92 for completed work (above left resized) (ex-H.C. Gibson).



## 2) Stait's Despatch Post: Type K

**Undated (ca. 1850-51),  
to George Fales, Esq., 6  
So. Front St.**

**Contents:** Envelope w/o  
contents.



**Undated (ca. 1850-51), to George Fales, Esq., 6 So. Front St.**

**Contents:** Envelope w/o contents (ex-Bowman, Alexander).

### 3) Stait's Despatch Post: Type L

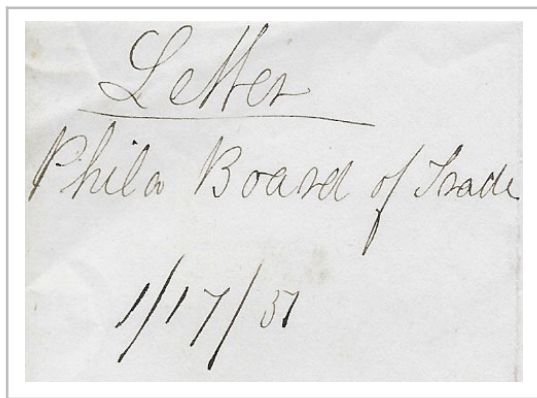
**Details of Type L:** Stait's Despatch / 48 / S<sup>o</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> St / PAID. Unique features of this type are enlarged **48** (referring to address) & no mention of Adams Express (**rate of 2¢ & US rate was 10¢**). Lyons lists this type being used from March 1850 to May 1855, w/ **over 35 recorded examples**. Census lists as a **red** handstamp, but **black** occurs (as shown in this exhibit). May also be seen w/ **Type G**, the Eagle City Post Special Messenger depicted as / S<sup>PECL</sup> Mess<sup>GR</sup> / FROM / Eagle Post / 80 Chestnut St. Lyons describes this type being used from Feb. 13 1849 to Dec. 15 1851 (although this exhibit includes a cover from June 4 1852) w/ **21 recorded examples**. Census lists this handstamp as **red**.



CDS 26mm



January 17 1851, to Messrs.  
Morris & Jones & Co., Market &  
School N Streets,  
from Philadelphia Board of  
Trade (High & School Streets).

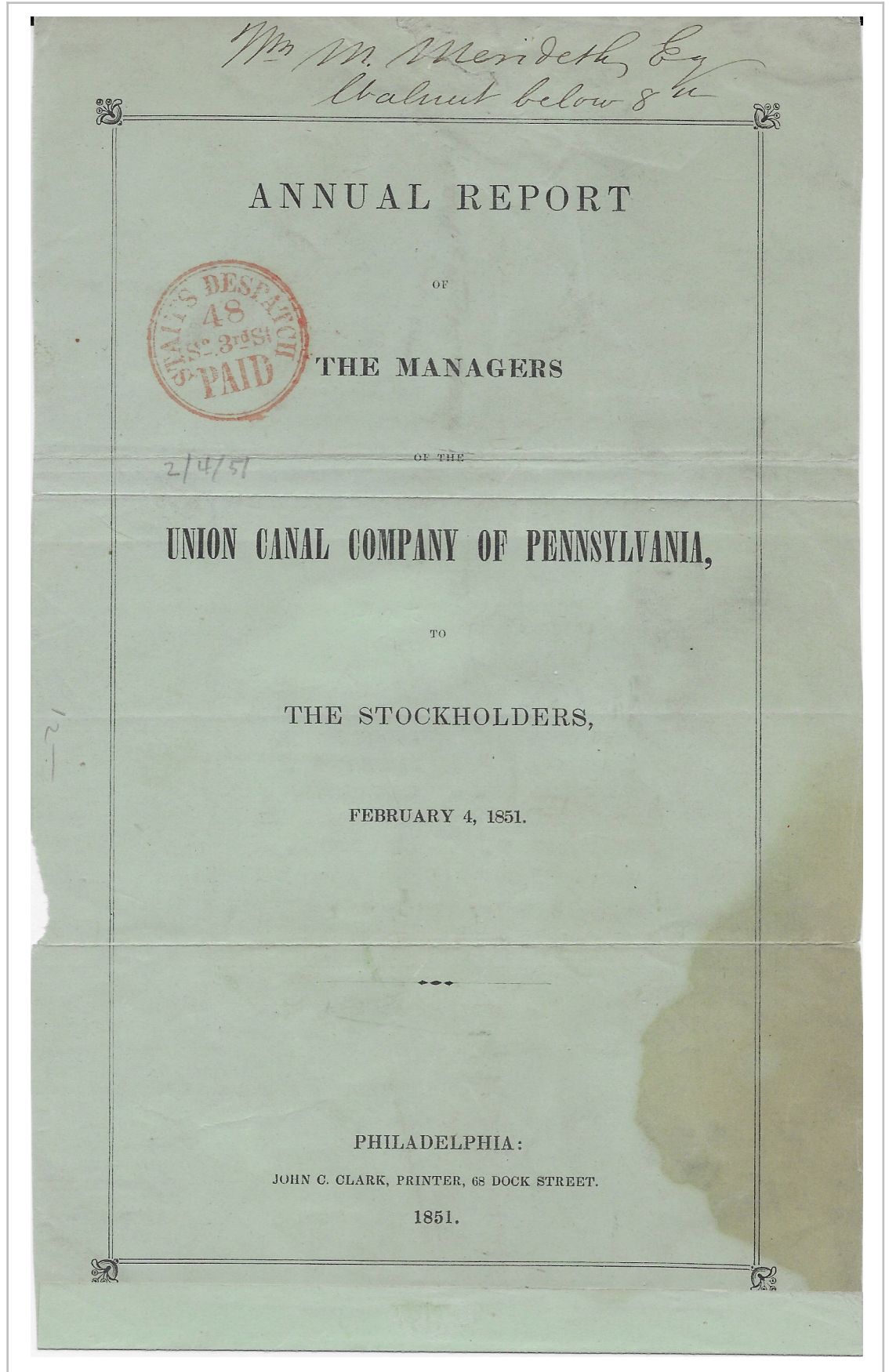


**Contents:** Hand-written note inside cover (shown left) regarding a letter to Philadelphia Board of Trade; letter has been removed.



### 3) Stait's Despatch Post: Type L

**Less than 10  
circulars exist w/  
Stait's handstamp,  
as few survived**

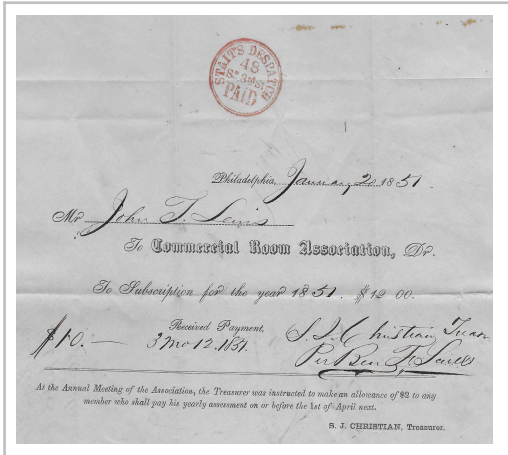


**February 4 1851, to William M. Merideth, Esq., Chestnut Below 8<sup>th</sup>, Philadelphia, from Union Canal Company of Pennsylvania.**

**Contents:** Cover of circular from Union Canal Company of PA annual report (ex-Bowman, Alexander).



### 3) Stait's Despatch Post: Type L



**March 12 1851, to John T. Lewis Esq., 134 S. Front, from S. J. Christian, Commercial Room Assn.**

**Contents:** Subscription for \$10.00 to Commercial Room Association (resized above left) (ex-Lyons).



**Less than 5 Type L  
covers exist w/ Eagle  
City Post stamp  
(17x12mm)**

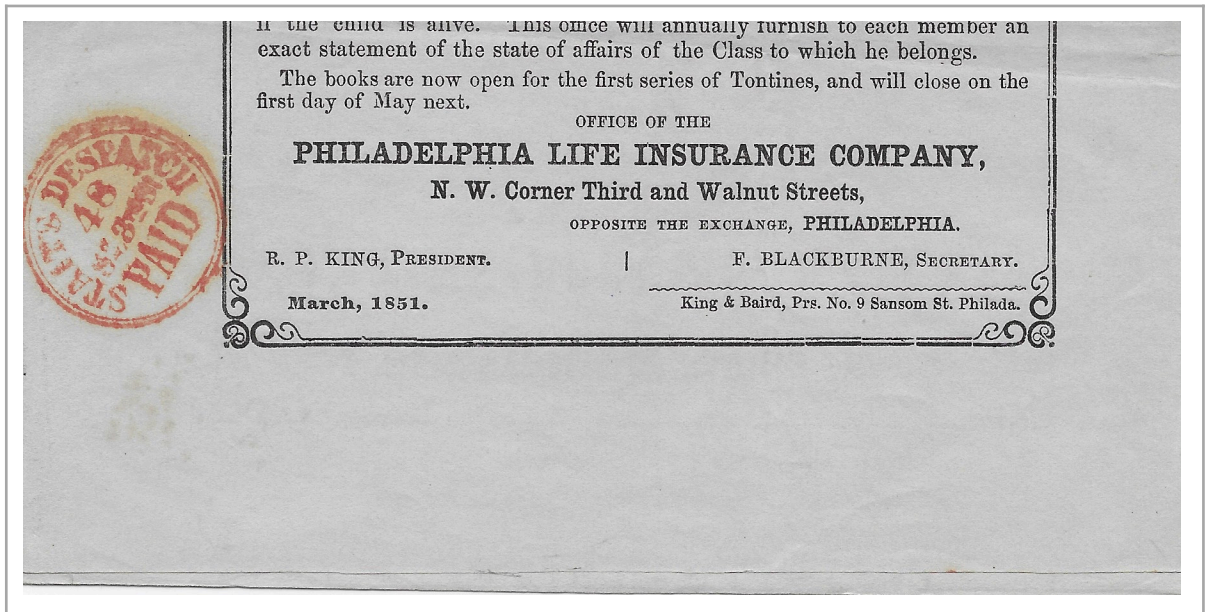
**June 19 1852, to Mess N. Trotter & Co, 36 N. Front St.**

**Difficulty of Acquisition is High:** At top right is a pencil-cancelled adhesive stamp from Eagle City Post.

**Contents:** Back embossed envelope (Philadelphia & Liverpool) with no contents (ex-Schwartz, Morris).



### 3) Stait's Despatch Post: Type L



Less than 10  
circulars exist w/  
handstamp

# A NEW SYSTEM OF SAVING FUNDS,

OR,

# TONTINE ACCUMULATIONS,

FOR DEFINITE PERIODS.

The PHILADELPHIA LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY, propose to take insurances on the plan of the well known *Tontine Associations*, with this difference, viz : That the payments are in the shape of an Annual Premium, and the risk for a definite period.

The following is the Scale adopted for \$100.

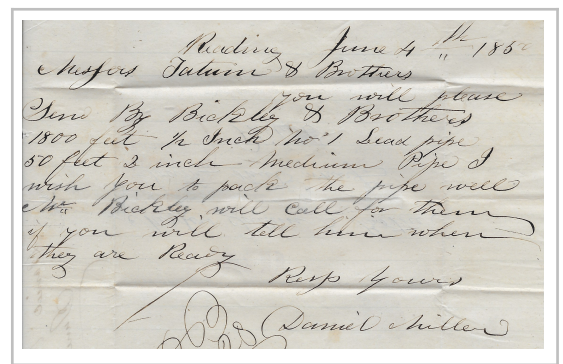
| Age.                  | Expire<br>in<br>10 years. | Expire<br>in<br>15 years. | Expire<br>in<br>20 years. |                        | Age. | Expire<br>in<br>10 years. | Expire<br>in<br>15 years. | Expire<br>in<br>20 years. |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 10 <sup>or less</sup> | 8 68                      | 5 11                      | 3 35                      | TONTINE ACCUMULATIONS. | 36   | 8 39                      | 4 83                      | 3 05                      |
| 11                    | 8 68                      | 5 11                      | 3 35                      |                        | 37   | 8 37                      | 4 80                      | 3 01                      |
| 12                    | 8 68                      | 5 11                      | 3 35                      |                        | 38   | 8 35                      | 4 77                      | 2 98                      |
| 13                    | 8 67                      | 5 10                      | 3 34                      |                        | 39   | 8 33                      | 4 74                      | 2 95                      |
| 14                    | 8 67                      | 5 10                      | 3 34                      |                        | 40   | 8 30                      | 4 70                      | 2 90                      |
| 15                    | 8 66                      | 5 10                      | 3 34                      |                        | 41   | 8 26                      | 4 66                      | 2 87                      |
| 16                    | 8 66                      | 5 09                      | 3 33                      |                        | 42   | 8 23                      | 4 61                      | 2 83                      |
| 17                    | 8 65                      | 5 09                      | 3 33                      |                        | 43   | 8 18                      | 4 57                      | 2 79                      |
| 18                    | 8 64                      | 5 08                      | 3 33                      |                        | 44   | 8 13                      | 4 53                      | 2 75                      |
| 19                    | 8 64                      | 5 07                      | 3 32                      |                        | 45   | 8 07                      | 4 48                      | 2 70                      |
| 20                    | 8 63                      | 5 07                      | 3 32                      |                        | 46   | 8 02                      | 4 43                      | 2 65                      |
| 21                    | 8 62                      | 5 06                      | 3 31                      |                        | 47   | 7 97                      | 4 39                      | 2 60                      |
| 22                    | 8 60                      | 5 05                      | 3 30                      |                        | 48   | 7 91                      | 4 34                      | 2 55                      |
| 23                    | 8 58                      | 5 03                      | 3 29                      |                        | 49   | 7 85                      | 4 29                      | 2 50                      |
| 24                    | 8 56                      | 5 01                      | 3 28                      |                        | 50   | 7 80                      | 4 23                      | 2 44                      |
| 25                    | 8 55                      | 5 00                      | 3 27                      |                        | 51   | 7 73                      | 4 17                      | 2 38                      |
| 26                    | 8 53                      | 4 99                      | 3 26                      |                        | 52   | 7 69                      | 4 11                      | 2 32                      |
| 27                    | 8 51                      | 4 98                      | 3 25                      |                        | 53   | 7 63                      | 4 05                      | 2 25                      |
| 28                    | 8 50                      | 4 96                      | 3 23                      |                        | 54   | 7 56                      | 3 97                      | 2 17                      |
| 29                    | 8 48                      | 4 95                      | 3 21                      |                        | 55   | 7 50                      | 3 90                      | 2 09                      |
| 30                    | 8 47                      | 4 94                      | 3 20                      |                        | 56   | 7 42                      | 3 81                      |                           |
| 31                    | 8 45                      | 4 93                      | 3 18                      |                        | 57   | 7 34                      | 3 72                      |                           |
| 32                    | 8 44                      | 4 91                      | 3 15                      |                        | 58   | 7 25                      | 3 63                      |                           |
| 33                    | 8 43                      | 4 90                      | 3 13                      |                        | 59   | 7 15                      | 3 53                      |                           |
| 34                    | 8 42                      | 4 88                      | 3 10                      |                        | 60   | 7 05                      | 3 42                      |                           |
| 35                    | 8 40                      | 4 86                      | 3 07                      |                        |      |                           |                           |                           |

March 1851, from Philadelphia Life Insurance Company, N.W. Corner Third & Walnut Streets, Philadelphia.

**Contents:** Folded circular & inside contents (resized above) concerning insurance policy paying interest (known as Tontine Accumulations) (ex-Bowman, Alexander).



### 3) Stait's Despatch Post: Type L

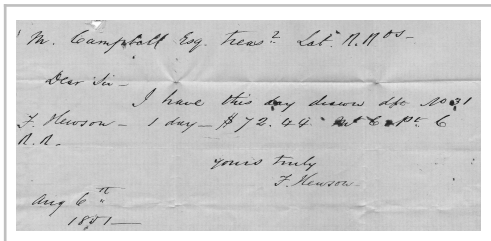


**Less than 5 covers exist with all 3 handstamps: Type L, PAID, & Special Messenger**

**June 4 1852, to Mssrs. Tatum & Brothers, South Street Wharf, Philad<sup>a</sup>. from Daniel Miller.**

**Difficulty of Acquisition is High**

**Contents:** 1-page handwritten letter (resized above right) for an order of lead pipes (ex-Lyons).



**Less than 10 covers exist with both Type L & Special Messenger handstamps**



**Aug. 6 1851, to M. Campbell Esq., Treasurer, Lat. Rail Road, No. 7 Library St., Philadel<sup>a</sup>, from F. Heuson Esq.**

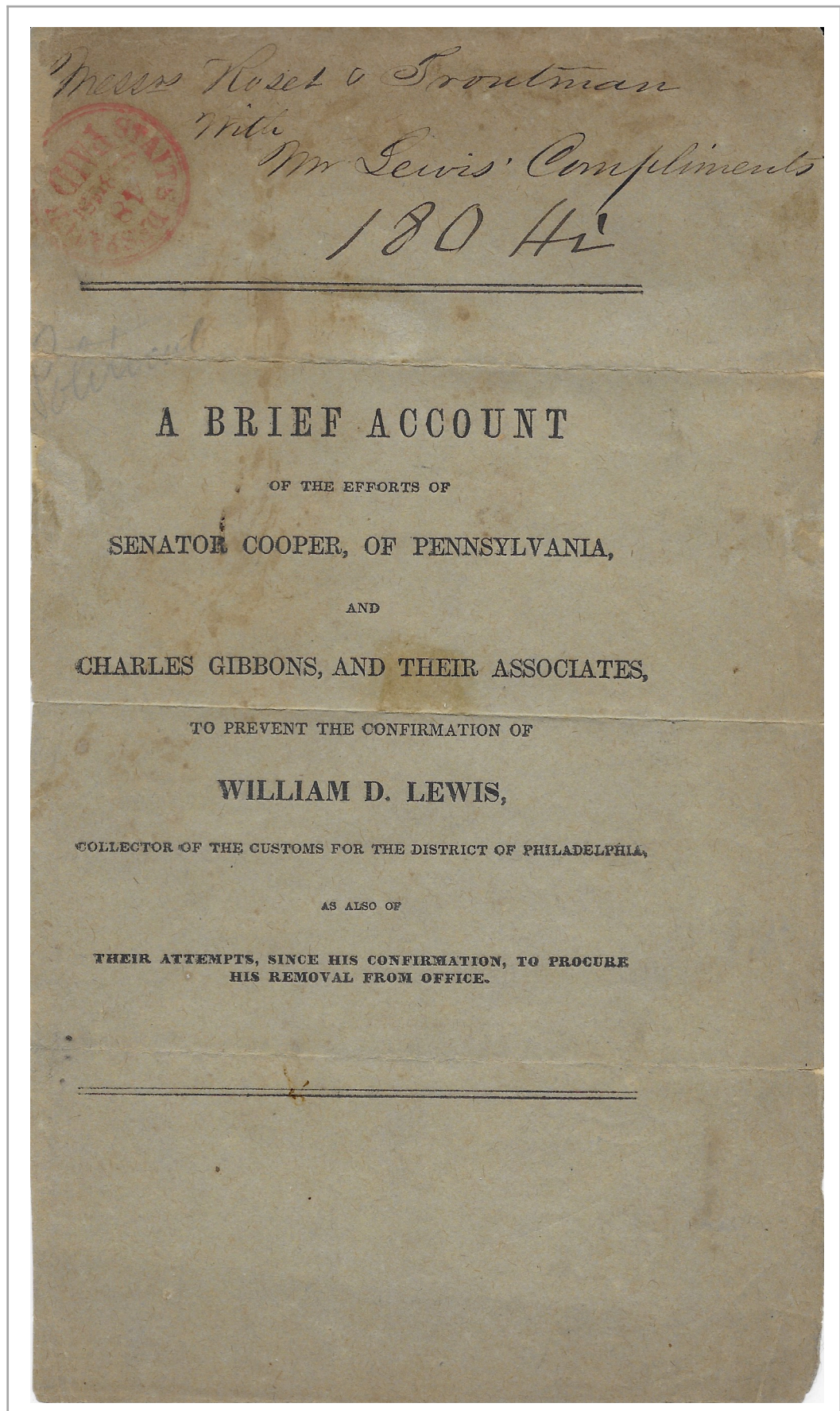
**Difficulty of Acquisition is High**

**Contents:** 1-page handwritten letter (resized above left) on drawing of \$72.44 payment to F. Newson for railroad work (ex-H.C. Gibson).



### 3) Stait's Despatch Post: Type L

Less than 10  
circulars exist w/  
handstamp



Undated (ca. 1851), to Messrs. Roset & Troutman, 180 High Street, Philadelphia from William Lewis.

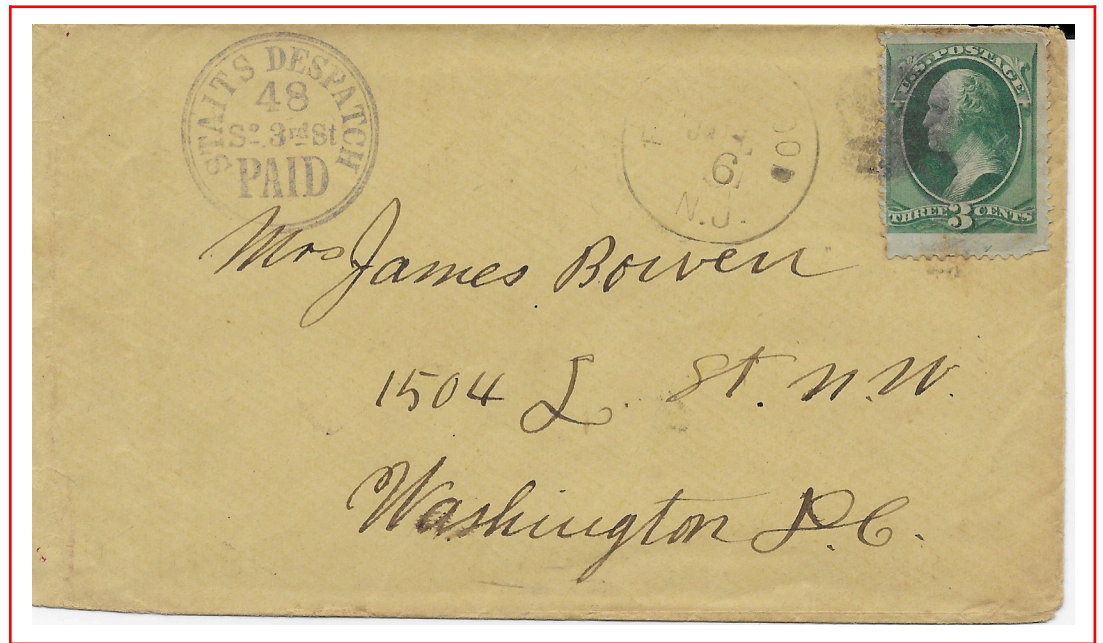
**Contents:** Cover of pamphlet about Senator Cooper (PA) & Gibbons legal firm (ex-Bowman, Alexander) (restoration: cleaning, tape removal, reinforce folds).



### 3) Stait's Despatch Post: Type L

**Less than 5  
Stait's covers  
exist with U.S.  
postage**

**Last known  
Stait's Despatch  
Post handstamp**



**July 6 ca. 1870, to Mrs. James Bowen, 1504 L. St., N.W. Washington D.C. from Englewood NJ.**

**Postmarks:** **Black** double circle Stait's Handstamp (**black not listed in census**). Handstamped front & reverse (bottom reduced), cancelled at Englewood NJ with 3 cent US postage (Washington, first issued 1/3/1870).

**Difficulty of Acquisition is High:** **Because of inclusion of US postage, this letter was mailed outside of Philadelphia. This occurred well after demise of Stait's Despatch Post, circa 1859. Thus Stait's handstamp must have occurred much earlier than circa 1870 posting & cancellation in New Jersey.**

**Contents:** Standard envelope w/o contents.



#### 4) Stait's Despatch Post: Type N

**Details of Type N:** Stait's Despatch / Adams Express. / One Cent (in script typeface) / A pass. Unique feature of type is One Cent designation for rate (**rate of 1¢ & US rate was 10¢**). Handstamp first recorded in Bowman (2014). According to Lyons this type was used circa 1850. Cancellation is **red**.  
**Not listed in any known census.**



CDS 35mm

**Circa 1850, to John Pennington**  
**Esq., 10 So. 5<sup>th</sup> Street,**  
**Philadelphia, from Ely.**

**Only recorded example of  
this type**

**Contents:** Handwritten business note (resized below) on book order in German. Refers to a Lutheran handbook of church history written by Heinrich Guericke. Last edition likely refers to 1849 German version (ex-Bowman).



Gebauer, Guericke's Handbuch der  
Kirchengeschichte. 3 vol. 8vo.  
Recent Edition. 4  $\frac{2}{3}$  Thlr.  
Last

Ely

## 5) Stait's Despatch Post: New Type & Epilogue

**Details of New Type:** Stait's Despatch / S. Third Street. / PAID. Unique feature of type (1857) is Third spelled out on handstamp. Similar in appearance to bogus cut adhesives of S. Allan Taylor, produced in later years only as cuts, but not on covers. Possible Taylor copied from this type (although font, spacing & apostrophe differ). Coster (1877) notes, but w/o illustration, "a simple handstamp reading Stait's Despatch, S. Third Street, Paid ... It is generally found struck in **red**" (p. 59). Coster is referring to this type as it is the only one w/ those characteristics. **Not listed in any known census.** Cancellation is **red**.



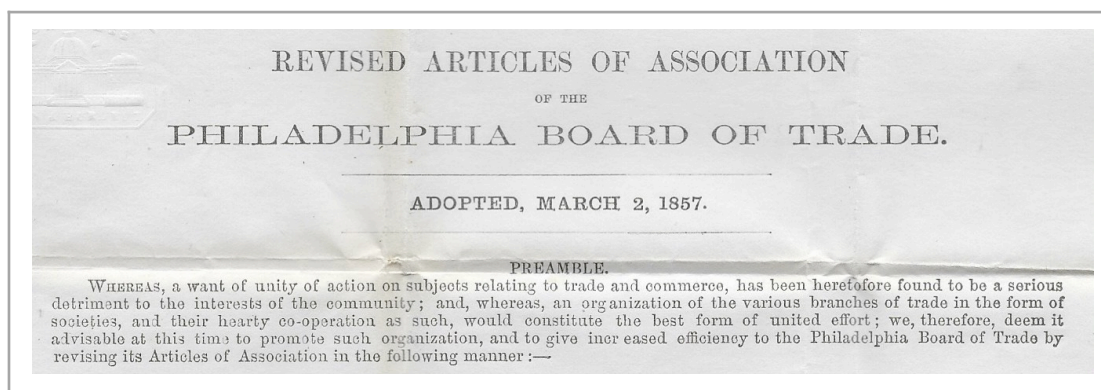
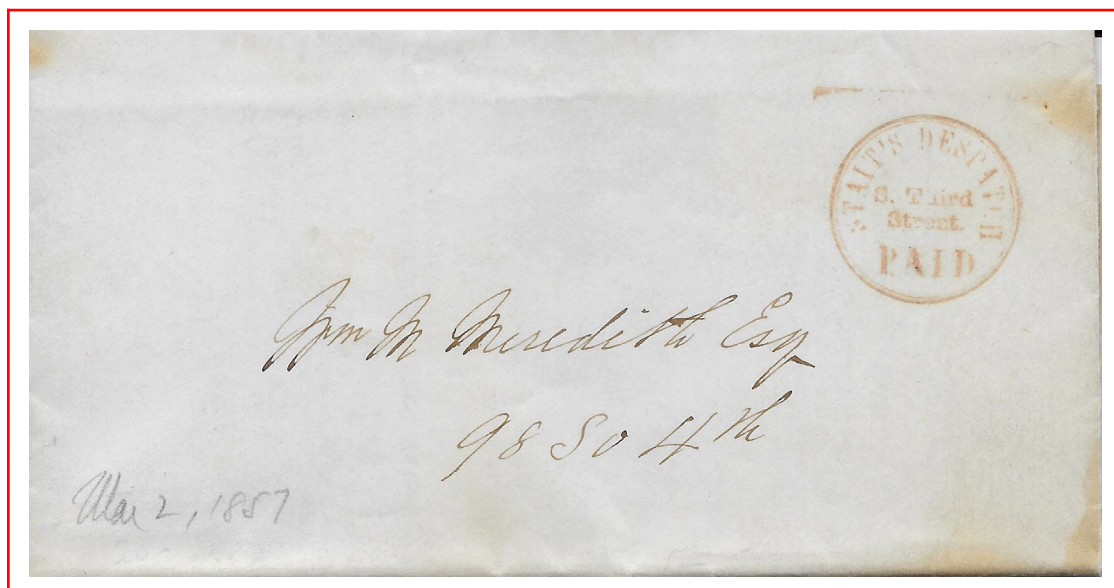
CDS 24mm

**Only recorded example of this type; discovered by Exhibitor & published in Penny Post (2022)**



Ca. March 2 1857, to  
Wm. Meredith Esq., 98  
So. 4<sup>th</sup>, Philadelphia,  
from Philadelphia  
Board of Trade.

**Contents:** One page printed letter (partial below) related to Revised Articles of Association, Phila. Board of Trade. Hand calculations on reverse (ex-H.C. Gibson acquired in 1949).



**Epilogue:** Following first US postage stamp of 1847, legislation began to increase US Postal System's monopoly over mail. By also making their rates competitive, by early 1860's most local posts were out of business.