

THE  
MIKE FARRELL  
COLLECTION  
OF INDEPENDENT MAILS

INCLUDING THE HISTORY, FORGERIES, & FANTASIES OF  
UNITED STATES, LOCAL POSTS, CARRIERS,  
INDEPENDENT MAIL ROUTES, & EXPRESS CO.S

AMERICAN LETTER MAIL

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# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

Established in January of 1844 by Lysander Spooner, this independent mail route operated between New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Boston. The post was also sometimes known as the "American Mail Company" or "American Letter Company."

Upset at the price of stamps and inefficacy of the United States Postal System, Spooner created the company to purposely be direct competition with the government. Spooner wrote a pamphlet containing a twenty-seven point argument against laws created to suppress private post offices, and offered it for sale in his offices.

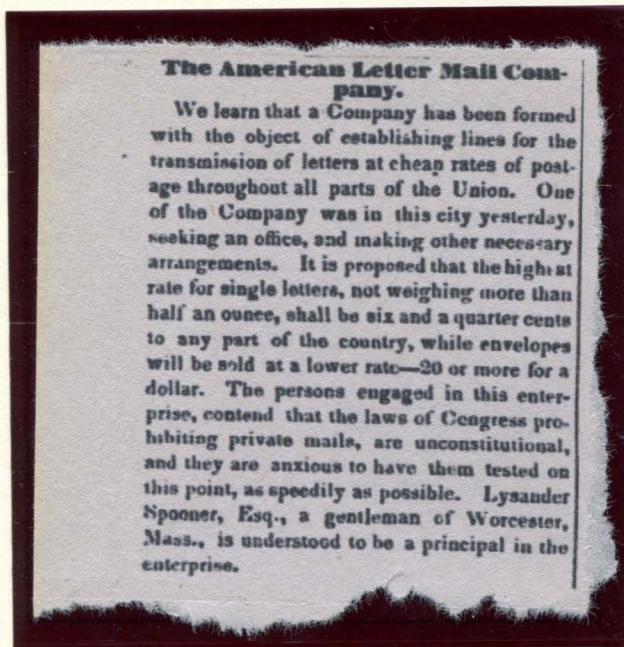
Spooner and his agents were involved in multiple court cases about the legality of the post office. It seems that Spooner, a who had previously fought the government over his license to practice law, had intended to antagonize the government into a legal battle from the beginning.

Railroads and most streets were considered "Post Roads", on which it was illegal for any company other than the United States Post Office to deliver letters. On several occasions, letter carriers for the company, such as George P. Fisher in Philadelphia or John C. Gilmore in Baltimore, were put on trial for transporting letters outside of the mail. Newspaper articles detail incidents where carriers were removed from trains or had their bags taken.

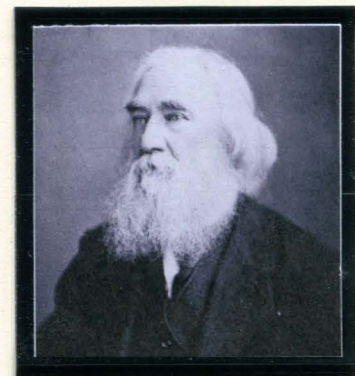
Spooner was able to succeed in court by taking advantages of loopholes to prove his legality. His company was able to stay in business for seven years, one of the longer running locals. However, after the creation of new laws in 1851, and threats of jail, the company was forced to close.

The American Letter Mail Co. offered stamps for 5¢ compared to the US Post Office price of 18<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>¢.

During the post's operation, the government post office reduced its rates to 3¢. For this reason, Lysander Spooner is sometimes called the "Father of the three-cent stamp."



NEWSPAPER CLIP FROM  
THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA  
ON JANUARY 18, 1844



PORTRAIT OF  
LYSANDER SPOONER  
FOUNDER OF  
AMERICAN LETTER MAIL COMPANY

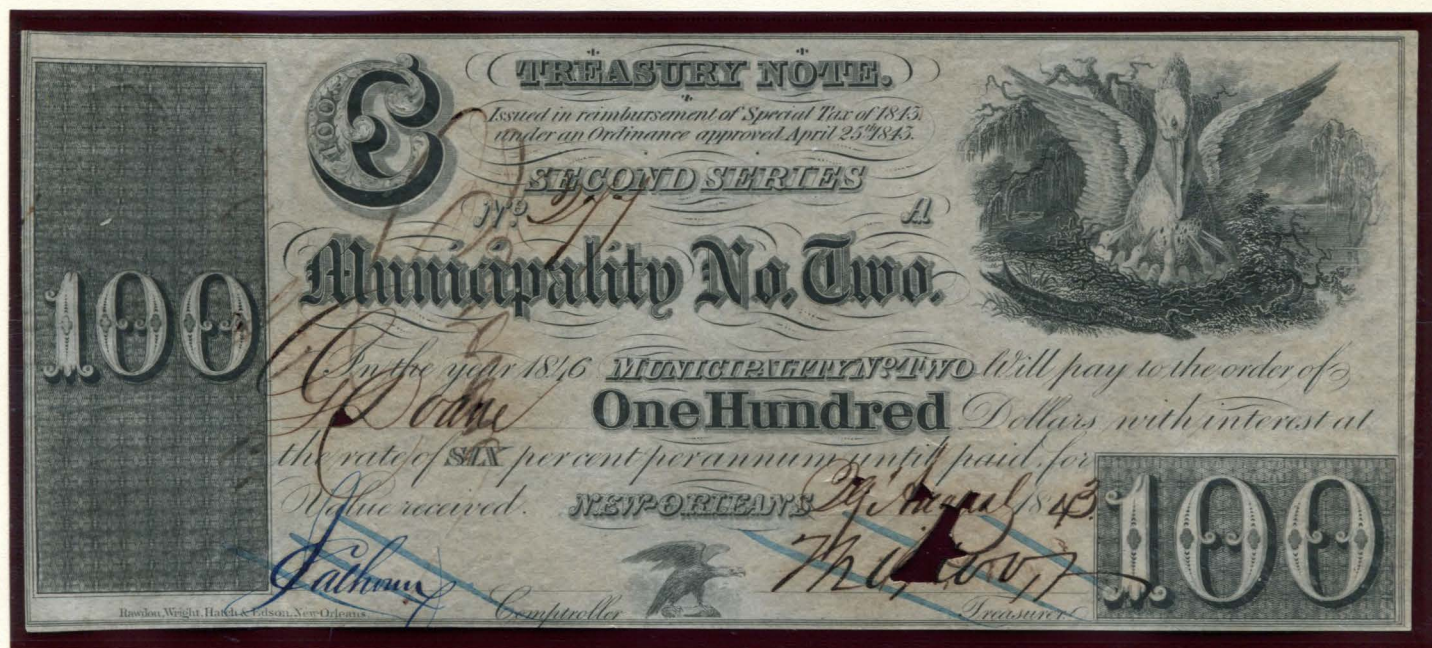


# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.



5L1 : SMALL EAGLE  
5¢ BLACK : GENUINE  
ON THIN PAPER  
POSITION 19

The first postage stamp printed for the American Letter Mail Company featured the image of a small eagle with a decorative border including the text "American Letter Mail Co." and "20 for a Dollar". These stamps were most likely engraved by Rawdon, Wright, Hatch & Edson using a stock die acquired from Durand, Perkins & Co. as the vignette. (Durand, Perkins & Co. sold its assets to Rawdon, Wright, Hatch & Edson after they went out of business in 1832.)

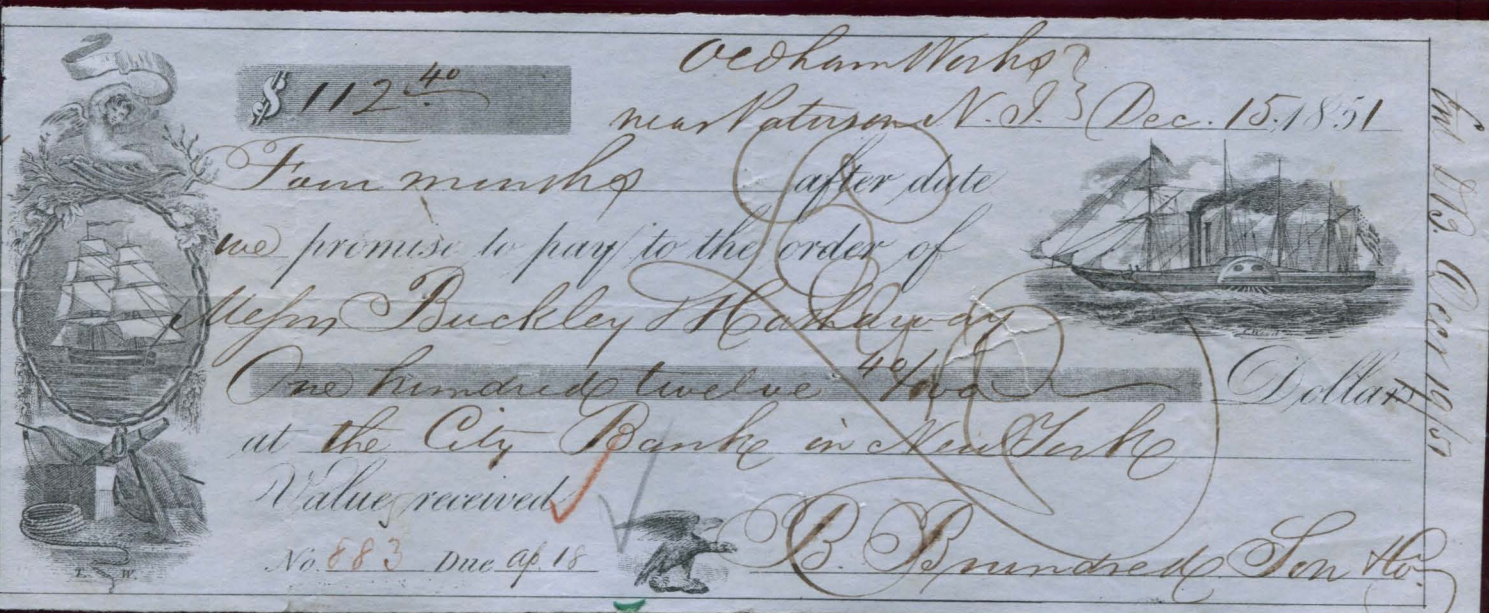


1843 BANK NOTE : \$100 BLACK  
NEW ORLEANS - MUNICIPALITY NO. TWO  
SECOND SERIES TREASURY NOTE - RAWDON, WRIGHT, HATCH & CO.

As a stock die, the small eagle image was used on several other items, including banknotes like the one above. This treasury note from the Municipality No. Two Bank in New Orleans, Louisiana, was engraved by Rawdon, Wright, Hatch & Co. It is dated 1843, a year before American Letter Mail started.



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.



1851 PROMISSORY NOTE (\$112.40)  
NEW YORK - THE CITY BANK

The small eagle die also continued use after the stamps were produced. The promissory note above is dated 1851, the same year that the American Letter Mail closed.

Note that the printing of the eagle on the bottom of this note is somewhat cruder than the printing on the stamps. There is no engraver name on this note, so this small eagle may have been printed from a copy of the design or a worn die that exchanged hands between printers.



5L1 : SMALL EAGLE STAMPS  
5c BLACK : GENUINE  
ON THIN PAPER  
HORIZONTAL STRIP OF THREE  
POSITION 3 - POSITION 4 - POSITION 5



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

American Letter Mail printed the stamps using a plate of twenty subjects. The stamps were printed on thin or thick paper. Using guidemarks in the margins, or slight variations produced when the transfer die was rolled onto the plate, these stamps can be identified by their position.



5L1 : SMALL EAGLE STAMPS  
5¢ BLACK : GENUINE  
ON THIN PAPER  
COMPLETE SHEET OF TWENTY

These stamps are known on both thin and thick paper. It is suggested that these paper types represent different printings. Sources are unable to agree as to which came first, however. It is also possible that the stamps were printed with whatever paper was on hand at the time.



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

American Letter Mail Co. cancelled their stamps in a variety of methods. The most common cancellations are manuscript pen strokes or crosses. Stamps were also cancelled with black or red brush marks. Several handstamps were also used, including a red "PAID" stamp. One of the more notable handstamps used by American Letter Mail was an oval of small red stars. (Scott's lists this in two types.)



5L1 : SMALL EAGLE  
5¢ BLACK : GENUINE  
ON THICK PAPER  
USED  
MS CROSSHATCH  
BLACK



5L1 : SMALL EAGLE  
5¢ BLACK : GENUINE  
ON THICK PAPER  
USED  
OVAL OF STARS  
RED



5L1 : SMALL EAGLE  
5¢ BLACK : GENUINE  
ON THICK PAPER  
USED  
OVAL OF STARS  
RED



5L1 : SMALL EAGLE  
5¢ BLACK : GENUINE  
ON THICK PAPER  
USED  
GRIDDED CIRCLE  
BLACK



5L1 : SMALL EAGLE  
5¢ BLACK : GENUINE  
ON THICK PAPER  
USED  
BRUSHED X CANCEL  
BLUE



5L1 : SMALL EAGLE  
5¢ BLACK : GENUINE  
ON THIN PAPER  
USED  
MS PENSTROKE  
BLACK



5L1 : SMALL EAGLE  
5¢ BLACK : GENUINE  
ON THIN PAPER  
USED  
BRUSH CANCEL  
BLACK



5L1 : SMALL EAGLE  
5¢ BLACK : GENUINE  
ON THIN PAPER  
USED  
OVAL OF STARS  
RED



5L1 : SMALL EAGLE  
5¢ BLACK : GENUINE  
ON THIN PAPER  
USED  
DOUBLE MS CROSS  
BLACK



5L1 : SMALL EAGLE  
5¢ BLACK : GENUINE  
ON THIN PAPER  
USED  
ALM-NYC-PO3  
RED

After the post closed, Spooner kept the printing plate in his possession, as well as a large supply of unsold remainders of the post's small eagle stamps. Spooner slowly released these remainders to the stamp collecting public, and by 1880, the market had been flooded by unused remainders. For this reason, cancelled American Letter Mail Co. stamps carry a significant premium over unused stamps.

Remainder stamps released by Spooner were primarily of the thin paper type.



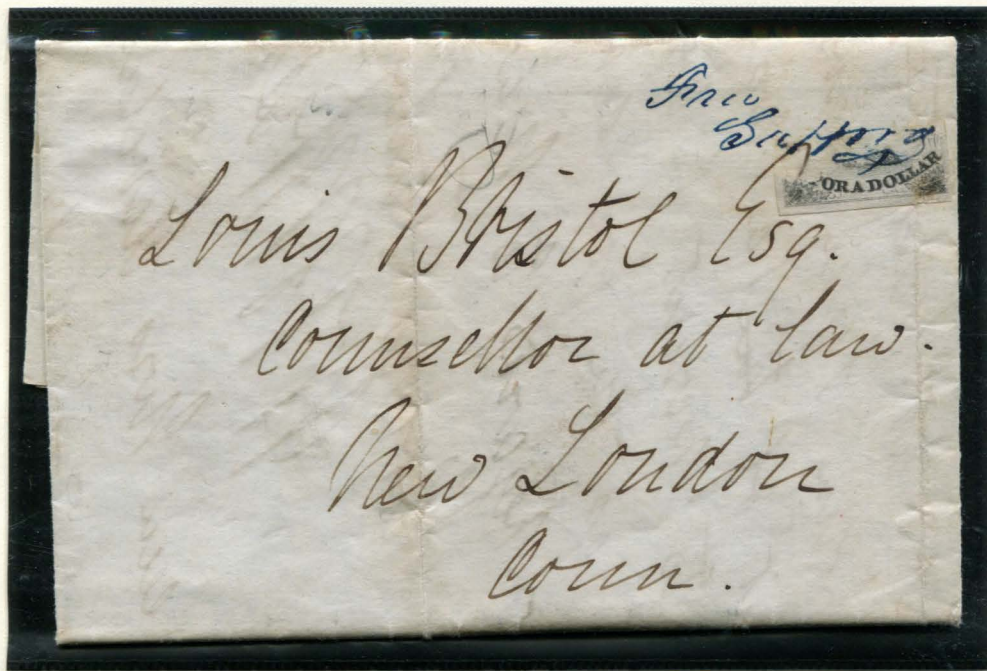
# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

The cover featured here was mailed from W.B. Bristol to his brother, Louis Bristol, a lawyer. A stamp was affixed to the letter, but was then partially peeled away, and franked "Free" by the American Letter Mail agent in New Haven.

While the letter begins with a discussion about a mortgage and finances, it later includes a note about the private mails:

*I understand that these Private  
Expresses have an agency in your place.  
if so, you had better buy stamps  
& I will do so too for the encour-  
agement of private enterprise -  
This Government Post Office  
system, is an imposition upon  
the public, and the sooner it is  
put down, the better.*

"I UNDERSTAND THAT THESE  
PRIVATE EXPRESSES HAVE AN  
AGENCY IN YOUR PLACE. IF  
SO, YOU HAD BETTER BUY  
STAMPS & I WILL DO SO TOO  
FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT  
OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE—  
THIS GOVERNMENT POST  
OFFICE SYSTEM IS AN IMPOSI-  
TION UPON THE PUBLIC AND  
THE SOONER IT IS PUT DOWN,  
THE BETTER."



511 : SMALL EAGLE  
5c BLACK : GENUINE - PARTIALLY TORN AWAY  
"FREE" & SIGNATURE IN MANUSCRIPT - BLUE INK  
JULY 19, 1844

Although there is no direct indication as to why the letter was carried for free, perhaps the agent appreciated the support. Bristol's note also describes his discussion with the agent:

"The agent here says he had last night three times as many letters to New York as the General Post Office here."



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

The following two covers are written to Tileston & Hollingsworth, paper makers. This company bought used and damaged sails from New England vessels to make into paper. During a recession in the 1840s, they could no longer afford sails, and instead began making paper out of rope. Brothers John Mark and Lyman Hollingsworth patented this process, which produced manila paper.

Each letter is address to either "care of P.C. Jones" or "116 State Street" in Boston, Massachusetts. Peter C. Jones operated a paper store at 116 State Street. The contents of each letter include orders for paper.

5¢ BLACK : GENUINE - MAGENTA BRUSH CANCEL  
5L1 : SMALL EAGLE  
NEW YORK TO MASSACHUSETTS  
MARCH 20, 1844



5L1 : SMALL EAGLE  
5¢ BLACK : GENUINE - MANUSCRIPT CANCEL  
PENNSYLVANIA TO MASSACHUSETTS  
PHILADELPHIA "FORWARDED BY AMERICAN  
MAIL CO."  
RED 3-LINE HANDSTAMP  
JUNE 18, 1844



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

The following covers represent what could be conjunctive usages between American Letter Mail and other independent mail companies. American Letter Mail was known to exchange mail with both Pomeroy's Letter Express and Letter Express (Wells).

5¢ BLACK : GENUINE - BLACK PEN CANCEL  
 511 : SMALL EAGLE  
 BOSTON TO NEW YORK  
 DOCKETED - SEPTEMBER 1844  
 MAILED WITH 11715 - POMEROY'S



5¢ BLACK : GENUINE - RED DOT CANCEL  
 511 : SMALL EAGLE  
 DOCKETED - JULY 31/AUGUST 3 1844  
 MAILED WITH 9612 - LETTER EXPRESS



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.


The partial cover below was mailed to New York via the Philadelphia branch of American Letter Mail. The Philadelphia branch used a circular handstamp that dropped "letter" from the company name, reading only "American Mail Co."



5L1 : SMALL EAGLE  
5c BLACK : GENUINE - CROSS PEN CANCEL  
PHILADELPHIA TO NEW YORK  
"AMERICAN MAIL CO." CIRCULAR DATESTAMP  
SEPTEMBER, 1844



# AMERICAN Post Office.

 **The AMERICAN LETTER MAIL COMPANY**, have established Post Offices in New-York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Boston, and will transmit letters daily from each city to the others: twice a day between New-York and Philadelphia.

Postage 6 1-4 cents for each half oz. letter, payable always in advance.

Stamps, twenty for a dollar.

The Company design to make their Establishment a permanent one.

They will carry only Letters.

Their purpose is to carry Letters by the most rapid conveyances, and at the cheapest rates, and to extend their operations, as fast as patronage may justify, over the principal routes of the country, so as to give the most extensive facilities for correspondence that can be afforded at an uniform rate of postage.

The Company design also, (if sustained by the public,) thoroughly to agitate the question, and test the constitutional right, of free competition in the business of carrying letters. The grounds on which they assert this right, are published, and for sale, [at the offices,] in pamphlet form.

**Letters containing money will not be received.**

Until further notice, letters, on arriving at their destination, unless promptly called for, will be delivered by carriers, or deposited for delivery in the Government Post Office.

**The Mails for Philadelphia, will be closed at 1-2 past 8 A. M., and 1-4 past 1 P. M. Those for Boston at 1-2 past 3 P. M.**

**Mails will commence running from New-York, to Boston and Philadelphia, on Tuesday, the 23d. inst. P. M.; from Boston on Wednesday, from Baltimore on Thursday.**

**Office in New-York, 56 Wall-st.; Philadelphia, 109 Chesnut-st.; Boston, 12 State-st.; Baltimore, under the Museum Buildings, Culvert-st.**

**Refer, in New-York, to Josiah Howe, Esq., 58 Merchant's Exchange, Silas Jones, Esq., 60 Wall-st., P. M. Irving, Esq., 15 1-2 Wall-st.**  
If the Public approve the enterprize, they are requested to give it their support from the outset.

**LYSANDER SPOONER.**

NEW-YORK, JANUARY 20, 1844.

TRIBUNE JOB PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT 160 NASSAU, AND 7 SPRUCE-ST. — J. A. FRAETAS, PRINTER.



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

While the plate of 20 remained in Lysander Spooner's possession after the close of the post, the original die used to make the plate remained with the engraver, Rawdon, Wright, Hatch & Edison. In 1858, this company merged with seven others to form the American Bank Note Company, which inherited all of their dies.

The American Bank Note Company produced posthumous proofs of their stock of dies for their record books. These die proofs, impression of a single stamp, can usually be easily identified from the later plate reprints by their large margins. They also show evidence of vertical plate scratches, most visible on the left side of the stamp, and at the top through the "E" of "Letter".

Trail color proofs on India paper in six colors are known. These proofs have been attributed to an 1888 printing.



TRAIL COLOR PROOF  
5L1  
OLIVE BROWN  
ON INDIA PAPER  
AMERICAN BANK NOTE CO.



TRAIL COLOR PROOF  
5L1  
DULL RED  
ON INDIA PAPER  
AMERICAN BANK NOTE CO.



TRAIL COLOR PROOF  
5L1  
BLACK  
ON INDIA PAPER  
AMERICAN BANK NOTE CO.



TRAIL COLOR PROOF  
5L1  
BLUE-BLACK  
ON INDIA PAPER  
AMERICAN BANK NOTE CO.



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

Die proofs are also known on bond paper in four colors. These proofs were produced from a different printing than the India paper proof printing, although there is little information as to when and why they were printed.



TRAIL COLOR PROOF  
5L1  
GREEN  
ON BOND PAPER  
AMERICAN BANK NOTE CO.



TRAIL COLOR PROOF  
5L1  
RED  
ON BOND PAPER  
AMERICAN BANK NOTE CO.



TRAIL COLOR PROOF  
5L1  
ORANGE  
ON BOND PAPER  
AMERICAN BANK NOTE CO.

The proof below is printed directly on card. Like the bond paper proofs, there is little information about its printing.



DIE PROOF  
5L1  
BLACK  
ON CARD  
AMERICAN BANK NOTE CO.



## THE AMERICAN LETTER MAIL COMPANY

Was established by Lysander Spooner in 1844, and began its operations on the 23d day of January of that year. Mr. Spooner's object in this enterprise he averred to be to "test the constitutional rights of free competition in the business of carrying letters."

In this effort Mr. Spooner had the support of the principal newspapers, such as the *New York Express*, *Journal of Commerce*, and *Evening Post*. But the Government poured upon him vials of wrath, and Mr. Merrick, the Chairman of the P. O. Committee of the Senate, on the 22d February, 1844, stigmatised him as "destitute of all patriotic or moral principles."

Nevertheless Mr. Spooner persevered, inviting prosecution, and becoming subject to fines, and judgments, and exhausting his resources, until, to use his own language (letter to Mr. D. Phillips, Boston, 1851), "after having sustained the conflict for some six or seven months, and placed the principle, on which I acted, so fully before the public as that it finally compelled the concession of Congress to it, I was obliged, by want of means, to abandon the business, after having incurred debts which to this day I have been unable to discharge."

Stripped of resources Mr. Spooner was obliged to retire from a contest whose grand result was the reduction of postage, as the only means available to Government for suppressing private mails, the validity of which, under the Constitution of the U. S. was never disproved, while the then U. S. Attorney General, and Judges Story and Woodbury, were among many eminent lawyers who denied the "exclusive right of Government to establish post offices and mails."

During the few months' existence of the American Letter Mail Company its business was considerable. For the transmission of

letters by it a charge of five cents was made, and stamps of that value were sold for the prepayment of letters.

When collecting stamps became a "craze," diligent, but unsuccessful, effort was made to find and secure such remainders of the "American Letter Mail Co." stamps as might exist. Recently, however, a sheet of these stamps was seen at the *Historical Society of Boston*, and tracing their origin there were discovered in the possession of the executor of Mr. Spooner's estate the veritable remainders of the long sought stamps — a small pile of sheets, mainly damaged by time, a few in very fair condition, and the plate from which they were engraved, but so badly corroded that no good print could be made from it. The undersigned purchased these stamps, which are engraved on sheets of twenty stamps each, the sheets being 3 1-2 x 4 1-2 inches in dimension.

In addition to the sheet held by the *Boston Historical Society*, there is one sheet in the *Historical Society of Worcester, Mass.*, and two sheets are in the collections of private citizens of Boston.

William H. Seward wrote in 1849 that Mr. Spooner's course "contributed to the reformation of our post system, and the establishment of cheap postage."

Inasmuch as these stamps have historic interest as being the precursors of, and potential agents in compelling cheap postage, the few perfect sheets have been set aside with the view of furnishing them at \$5.00 each to Historical Societies, Libraries, etc. The other stamps will, until the small supply is exhausted, be sold to applicants at 50 cents per stamp.

All orders must be accompanied by a remittance to cover cost and postage, and 10 cents additional for registration, if desired.

E. A. HOLTON,

8 SUMMER STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

July, 1, 1887.

## AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

The small eagle stamps of American Letter Mail Co. have been reprinted several times by various printers using the original plate. The first reprints were produced by E.A. Holton, a Boston stamp dealer who acquired the plate from Spooner's estate in 1887.

Holton purchased the plate along with a supply of original sheets. Those sheets still in decent quality, he sold to his customers.

AT LEFT:  
E. A. HOLTON ADVERTISEMENT  
FOR THE SALE OF  
AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.  
REMAINDER SHEETS  
1887

Around this time, Holton took one reprint plate "proof" on thick white paper to test the plate, which had significant corrosion damage. At first, he believed it was too corroded to make decent reprints; but the plate was eventually cleaned to a extent that he felt confident producing a supply of reprints for sale.



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

The first Holton reprints were printed on bond paper with a watermark reading "Old Hampshire Bond, USA". Although the corrosion damage is present on these reprints, some positions can be difficult to differentiate from the originals. Other positions have easily identifiable markings, such as the two scratches under the eagle's wing in position 6, or the bruise across the rock in position 7.



5L1 : SMALL EAGLE : 5¢ BLACK  
HOLTON REPRINT (CIRCA 1895)  
ON WATERMARKED BOND PAPER  
SHEET OF TWENTY

Holton cleaned the die further before printing his next series of reprint sheets. These second reprints were printed die sunk on bright white glazed card. A full size (8½ by 11 inch) reprint card is featured on the following page.

-SEE FOLLOWING PAGE-  
5L1 : SMALL EAGLE : 5¢ BLACK  
HOLTON REPRINT (SECOND SERIES)  
ON WHITE GLAZED CARD  
SHEET OF TWENTY







# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

It is not confirmed who owned the plate after Holton, although according to our sources, it was for some time in the possession of Boston stamp dealer W.C. Henry. It was then acquired by Bill Aldrich. Aldrich, along with Otto Pollitz and Norman F. Sparhawk of the Frank P. Brown Company, produced the next series of reprints in 1934.

The Frank P. Brown reprints were produced in six bright colors and advertised as "trial color proofs". The first of these reprints include a small "proof" handstamp on the back of each. These handstamps are not present on later printings. Although the plate was significantly cleaned for this printing in comparison to the Holton reprints, scratches and bruises still remain.

**American Letter Mail  
Plate and Proofs**

The entire remaining stock of about 27,000 sets and the original plate of the American Letter Mail Company were withdrawn from the Receiver's sale of the Frank P. Brown Co. The undersigned will receive offers for these two items until December 20, 1934. A sample sheet of the proofs will be furnished interested parties against references. The above constitutes a splendid opportunity for a dealer with either a wholesale or retail outlet.

*"Stamps" November 24, 1934.*

**BRAYTON MORTON**  
Receiver  
**FRANK P. BROWN CO.**  
20 Kilby Street, Boston, Mass.

ADVERTISEMENT FROM  
STAMPS MAGAZINE  
NOVEMBER 24, 1934



REPRINT  
BROWN  
FRANK P. BROWN  
(5L1)  
WITH "PROOF"  
HANDSTAMP  
FRONT VIEW



REPRINT  
BROWN  
FRANK P. BROWN  
(5L1)  
WITH "PROOF"  
HANDSTAMP  
BACK VIEW



REPRINT  
BROWN  
FRANK P. BROWN  
(5L1)  
WITHOUT  
"PROOF"  
FRONT VIEW



REPRINT  
BROWN  
FRANK P. BROWN  
(5L1)  
WITHOUT  
"PROOF"  
BACK VIEW

Although these stamps were advertised and sold as "proofs", they are reprints. The Frank P. Brown Company sold the sheets to dealers as stock, claiming they "will sell readily as singles on approval sheets, or as a set for Junior collectors."

The following page includes a letter from N.F. Sparhawk of the Frank P. Brown Co. to dealer George B. Sloane. This letter, dated January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1934, describes the reprints and their prices for wholesale.





# Frank P. Brown Co.

44 Bramfield Street  
TELEPHONE LIBERTY 8272  
Cable address "Brownstamp"

NORMAN F. SPARHAWK

Boston, Mass., January 30, 1934

George B. Sloane,  
116 Nassau St.,  
New York City, New York

Dear Sir:

We are enclosing a set of the American Letter Mail Trial Color Proofs, (Scotts #6219) made from the original plate. The entire supply is in our possession and though limited we can offer them at the following prices:

|         |      |          |      |
|---------|------|----------|------|
| 10 sets | \$1. | 50 sets  | \$3. |
| 25 sets | \$2. | 100 sets | \$5. |

## CASH WITH ORDER

A few larger quantities are available; prices on request. (We also purchased a few of the original complete sheets of 20. Price \$2. each.)

This set should be very popular with all collectors of U. S. and is within the means of all your customers. The stamps will sell readily as singles on approval sheets, or as a set for Junior collectors.

We suggest that you take advantage of this offer and be the first to offer them to your customers.

Sincerely yours,

Frank P. Brown Company

*N. F. Sparhawk*

*American Letter Mail.  
Small Stamp (Eagle)  
Reprints in color*

*As of Jan. 1933, no date as to  
present ownership or whereabouts  
of the plate.*

*W.C. Henry is  
believed to  
have owned  
the plate before  
or after the  
reprinting*



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.



REPRINT (5L1)  
MAGENTA  
FRANK P. BROWN  
BLOCK OF FOUR  
WITH PROOF BACKSTAMP



REPRINT (5L1)  
YELLOW-ORANGE  
FRANK P. BROWN  
BLOCK OF FOUR  
WITH PROOF BACKSTAMP



REPRINT (5L1)  
APPLE-GREEN  
FRANK P. BROWN  
BLOCK OF FOUR  
WITH PROOF BACKSTAMP

Full set of Frank P. Brown reprint blocks of four, in each of six colors. These blocks, from the top left corner of the plate, include positions 1, 2, 6, and 7. Note the plate damage on positions 6 and 7.



REPRINT (5L1)  
ULTRAMARINE  
FRANK P. BROWN  
BLOCK OF FOUR  
WITH PROOF BACKSTAMP



REPRINT (5L1)  
BROWN  
FRANK P. BROWN  
BLOCK OF FOUR  
WITH PROOF BACKSTAMP



REPRINT (5L1)  
LIGHT-VERMILION  
FRANK P. BROWN  
BLOCK OF FOUR  
WITHOUT PROOF BACKSTAMP



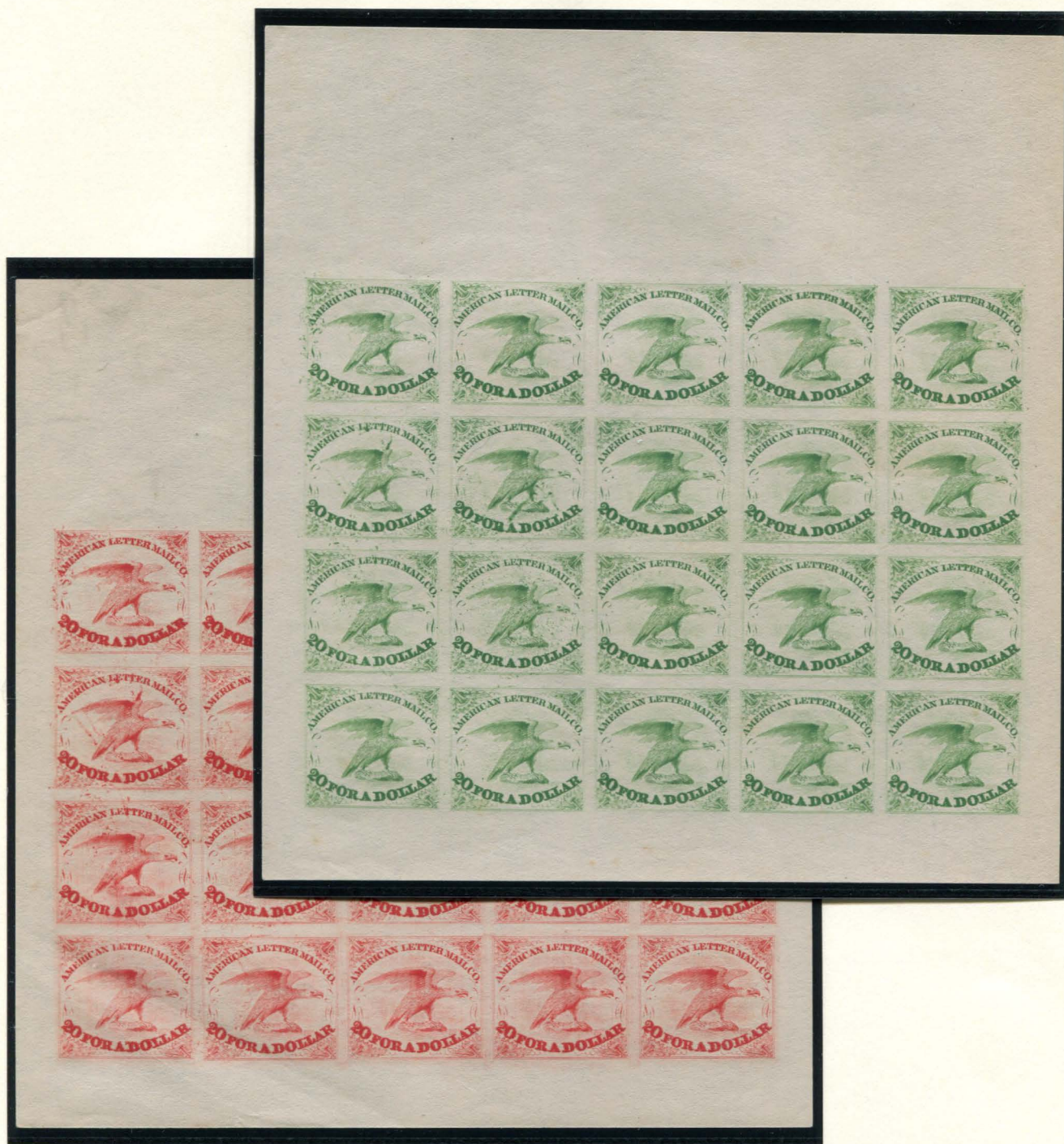
# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.



REPRINT SHEETS  
ULTRAMARINE  
FRANK P. BROWN (5L1)  
FULL SHEETS OF TWENTY  
WITH & WITHOUT "PROOF" HANDSTAMP ON BACK



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.



REPRINT SHEETS  
LIGHT VERMILION & APPLE-GREEN  
FRANK P. BROWN (5L1)  
FULL SHEETS OF TWENTY  
WITHOUT "PROOF" HANDSTAMP ON BACK



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.



REPRINT SHEETS  
MAGENTA & YELLOW-ORANGE  
FRANK P. BROWN (5L1)  
FULL SHEETS OF TWENTY  
WITH VIOLET UPPER MARGIN IMPRINT  
"AMERICAN LETTER MAIL COMPANY / COLOR PROOFS"



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

American Letter Mail Company  
COLOR PROOFS



American Letter Mail Company  
COLOR PROOFS



REPRINT SHEETS  
APPLE-GREEN & LIGHT VERMILION  
FRANK P. BROWN (5L1)  
FULL SHEETS OF TWENTY  
WITH VIOLET UPPER MARGIN IMPRINT  
"AMERICAN LETTER MAIL COMPANY / COLOR PROOFS"



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

American Letter Mail Company  
COLOR PROOFS



American Letter Mail Company  
COLOR PROOFS



REPRINT SHEETS  
BROWN & ULTRAMARINE  
FRANK P. BROWN (5L1)  
FULL SHEETS OF TWENTY  
WITH VIOLET UPPER MARGIN IMPRINT  
"AMERICAN LETTER MAIL COMPANY / COLOR PROOFS"



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

Several "printer's waste" pieces are known from the Frank P. Brown reprinting. These tests, scraps, misprintings, miscuttings, and various errors from the printing process.



REPRINT - BLOCK OF TWELVE  
ULTRAMARINE  
FRANK P. BROWN  
(5L1)

PRINTER'S WASTE  
SKEWED, DOUBLE PRINTING



REPRINT  
APPLE-GREEN  
FRANK P. BROWN  
(5L1)

PRINTER'S WASTE  
MULTIPLE PRINTINGS



REPRINT  
BROWN  
FRANK P. BROWN  
(5L1)

PRINTER'S WASTE  
SKEWED, MISCUT, &  
DOUBLE PRINTED



REPRINT  
ULTRAMARINE  
FRANK P. BROWN  
(5L1)

PRINTER'S WASTE  
HEAVILY PITTED



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.



REPRINT - FULL PLATE  
MAGENTA ON THICK MANILA PAPER  
FRANK P. BROWN  
(5L1)

WITH PARTIAL INVERTED PRINTING ON BACK



PHOTOCOPY—BACK OF SHEET  
(REDUCED TO ~21%)  
PREVIOUSLY OF THE SLOANE COLLECTION



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

One dealer, T.K. Barker & Company of San Francisco, purchased a supply of the reprint stamps and sold them as sets of singles, hinge mounted on card. These cards, designed with the text "American Letter Mail" above and "Trial Color Proofs" below, were sold to collectors for 25¢.



REPRINT SET (5L1)  
 LIGHT VERMILION, YELLOW-ORANGE, APPLE-GREEN, ULTRAMARINE, BROWN, MAGENTA  
 FRANK P. BROWN REPRINTS (1934)  
 WITH PROOF BACKSTAMP  
 ON T.K. BARKER DISPLAY CARD

T.K. Barker & Co. advertised primarily in the Boy Scouts' magazine, *Boys Life* during the 1930s-1940s. They were also known for mailing custom advertising post cards to potential customers.



T.K. BARKER CO. ADVERTISEMENT CLIPPING  
 FROM *BOYS LIFE* MAGAZINE MAY, 1936



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

Sets in a nearly identical style to T.K. Barker's cards are known printed on paper. These sets have text slightly larger and less sharp than the Barker cards, although the borders around the hinged stamps are the same size.



REPRINT SET (5L1)  
MAGENTA, ULTRAMARINE, LIGHT VERMILION, APPLE-GREEN, BROWN, YELLOW-ORANGE  
FRANK P. BROWN REPRINTS (1934)  
WITHOUT PROOF BACKSTAMP  
ON DISPLAY PAPER SHEET

According to an article in a 2007 *Penny Post* (Vol. 15, No. 4), these small sheets were offered by Frank P. Brown in Boston sometime shortly after their sale in San Francisco. It is possible that Frank P. Brown & Co. designed and printed the cards at T.K. Barker's request first, then used the same design for his own sale afterward.

All the reprint stamps mounted on the set featured above are without the "proof" handstamp. An additional duplicate set within the collection includes five of the six reprints without "proof". Since the reprints without the handstamp were of a later printing, this fits with the *Penny Post's* claim that the paper mounted sets were sold after the T.K. Barker card mounted sets.



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

During the 1934 American Philatelic Society Convention at Atlantic City, New Jersey, philatelic souvenir sheets of the Frank P. Brown reprints were offered. These souvenir sheets include a full plate reprint of the stamps and green description handstamp at the top.



REPRINT (5L1) 5¢ BROWN  
FRANK P. BROWN REPRINT ON SOUVENIR SHEET  
A.P.S. CONVENTION 1934  
WITH 750 : 3¢ PURPLE  
IMPERFORATE SINGLE FROM SOUVENIR SHEET  
CONVENTION DATESTAMP AND FIRST DAY CANCELLATION



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

During the 1934 American Philatelic Society Convention at Atlantic City, New Jersey, philatelic souvenir sheets of the Frank P. Brown reprints were offered. The sheet below is used with a 3¢ purple Mt. Rainer stamp from the imperforate National Parks issue sheet that was offered at the convention.



REPRINT (5L) 5¢ LIGHT VERMILION  
FRANK P. BROWN REPRINT ON SOUVENIR SHEET  
A.P.S. CONVENTION 1934  
IMPERFORATE SINGLE FROM SOUVENIR SHEET  
CONVENTION DATESTAMP AND FIRST DAY CANCELLATION



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

George Hussey sold forgeries of the small eagle American Letter Mail stamps. His printer, Thomas Wood, produced the forgeries from two different stones. The first stone of fifty subjects, "A-1", alternated between rows of Broadway's Post Office stamps and the American Letter Mail stamps. The other stone, "A-2" produced a sheet of 77 small eagle stamps.

Featured in this collection on the following pages are complete sheets from each stone.

AT RIGHT:  
FORGERY A - STONE A-1  
HUSSEY  
PHOTOCOPY—REDUCED BY 50%  
(SEE FOLLOWING PAGES)



AT LEFT:  
FORGERY A - STONE A-2  
HUSSEY  
PHOTOCOPY—REDUCED BY 50%  
(SEE FOLLOWING PAGES)



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.



FORGERY A - STONE A-1  
5¢ BLACK WITH BROADWAY FORGERY A  
FULL SHEET OF FIFTY  
HUSSEY  
(5L1)







# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

Hussey ordered four printings of the American Letter Mail small eagle stamps, which are detailed in the record book of his printer, Thomas Wood. Three of the small eagle stamp printings took place on the same day that Broadway forgeries were also printed, and it can be reasonably assumed that stone A-1 was used for these printings. The table below lists the details of each printing.

| Printing date     | ALM forgeries printed | Stone used | Cost of printing |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------|------------------|
| May 29, 1862      | 1,000                 | A-1        | \$4.50           |
| March 31, 1864    | 1,000                 | A-1        | \$3.00           |
| February 10, 1865 | 5,000                 | A-2        | \$8.75           |
| February 16, 1866 | 1,000                 | A-1        | \$2.25           |

Hussey forgeries are also known with counterfeit cancellations.



FORGERY A  
STONE A-1  
5¢ BLACK  
HUSSY  
(5L1)



FORGERY A  
STONE A-2  
5¢ BLACK  
HUSSY  
(5L1)



FORGERY A  
STONE A-1  
5¢ BLACK  
HUSSY  
(5L1)  
FAKE CANCELLATION  
SAN FRANCISCO CDS  
MAGENTA



FORGERY A  
STONE A-2  
5¢ BLACK  
HUSSY  
(5L1)  
FAKE CANCELLATION  
MANUSCRIPT CROSS  
BLACK



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

Scott published an image of the small eagle stamp in his International Album. He also produced two types of forgeries for stamp collectors. The first Scott forgery ( known as Forgery B) uses the same image as the album illustration.



**FORGERY B**  
5c BLACK  
SCOTT  
(5L1)  
CLIPPED FROM SCOTT'S  
INTERNATIONAL ALBUM, 1888



**FORGERY B**  
5c BLACK  
ON WHITE WOVE  
SCOTT  
(5L1)



**FORGERY B**  
5c BLACK  
ON CREAM  
SCOTT  
(5L1)

The second Scott forgery (Forgery C) is more finely detailed and known in a variety of colors.



**FORGERY C**  
5c BLACK  
ON WHITE WOVE  
SCOTT  
(5L1)



**FORGERY C**  
5c BLACK-MISCUT  
ON WHITE WOVE  
SCOTT  
(5L1)



**FORGERY C**  
5c GREY BLACK  
ON WHITE WOVE  
SCOTT  
(5L1)



**FORGERY C**  
5c ORANGE RED  
ON WHITE WOVE  
SCOTT  
(5L1)



**FORGERY C**  
5c RED  
ON V. LAID PAPER  
SCOTT  
(5L1)



**FORGERY C**  
5c BRIGHT GREEN  
ON WHITE WOVE  
SCOTT  
(5L1)



**FORGERY C**  
5c BRIGHT GREEN  
ON THIN BUFF WOVE  
SCOTT  
(5L1)



**FORGERY C**  
5c GREEN  
ON THICK WOVE  
SCOTT  
(5L1)



**FORGERY C**  
5c GREEN  
ON H. LAID  
SCOTT  
(5L1)



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

Below is a collection of Scott's "Forgery C" counterfeits with fake cancellations applied to make them appear more legitimate.



FORGERY C  
5c GREY BLACK  
ON WHITE WOVE  
SCOTT  
(5L1)  
FAKE CANCEL  
BLUE HANDSTAMP



FORGERY C  
5c GREY BLACK  
ON WHITE WOVE  
SCOTT  
(5L1)  
FAKE CANCEL  
GREEN 4-RING TARGET



FORGERY C  
5c GREY BLACK  
ON WHITE WOVE  
SCOTT  
(5L1)  
FAKE CANCEL  
BLACK GRID IN CIRCLE



FORGERY C  
5c BLACK  
ON THICK BUFF  
SCOTT  
(5L1)  
FAKE CANCEL  
BLACK 3-RING OVAL



FORGERY C  
5c GREEN  
ON THICK WOVE  
SCOTT  
(5L1)  
FAKE CANCEL  
BLUE HANDSTAMP



FORGERY C  
5c RED  
ON THICK WOVE  
SCOTT  
(5L1)  
FAKE CANCEL  
BLACK GRID IN CIRCLE



FORGERY C  
5c ORANGE  
ON THICK WOVE  
SCOTT  
(5L1)  
FAKE CANCEL  
MANUSCRIPT

There is little information about the forgery known as "Forgery D".

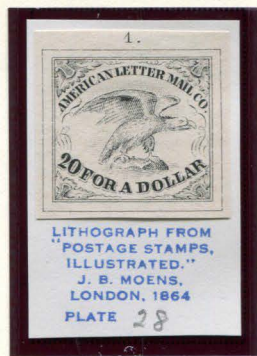


FORGERY D  
5c BLACK  
ON WHITE  
UNKNOWN FORGER  
(5L1)

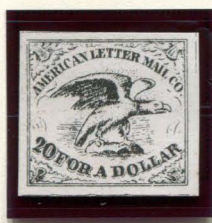


# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

J.B. Moens created an illustration of the small eagle stamp for his book. Moens' version of the stamp is listed by Lyon's as "Forgery H". Several forgeries were later created based on his drawing.



FORGERY H  
5¢ BLACK  
MOENS  
(5L1)  
FROM POSTAGE STAMPS  
ILLUSTRATED, 1864



FORGERY E  
5¢ BLACK  
ON THICK  
WHITE PAPER  
AFTER MOENS  
(5L1)



FORGERY E  
5¢ BLACK  
ON THICK  
CREAM PAPER  
AFTER MOENS  
(5L1)



FORGERY E  
5¢ REDDISH BROWN  
ON THICK  
WHITE PAPER  
AFTER MOENS  
(5L1)



FORGERY E  
5¢ LIGHT BLUE  
ON THICK  
WHITE PAPER  
AFTER MOENS  
(5L1)

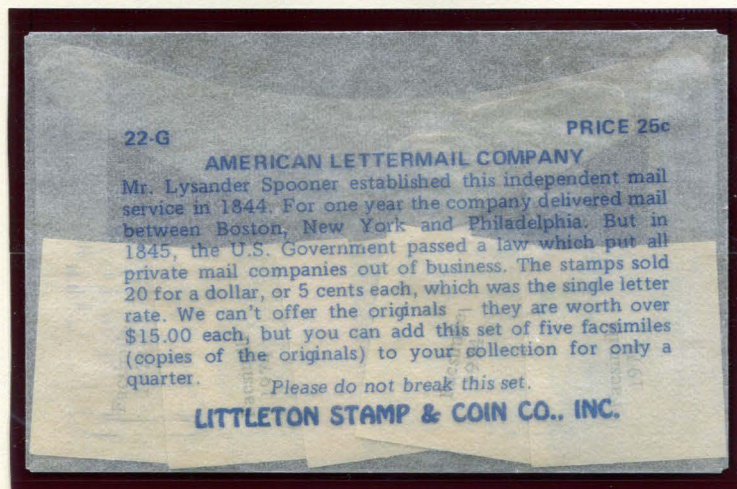


FORGERY E  
5¢ METALLIC GOLD  
ON THICK  
WHITE PAPER  
AFTER MOENS  
(5L1)



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

The small eagle design was reprinted in five colors as facsimile in 1974. There is deterioration in the details of these reprints.



LITTLETON STAMP & COIN CO., INC. ENVELOPE  
WITH FULL SET OF SMALL EAGLE FACSIMILES



FACSIMILE  
BLACK  
(5L1)



FACSIMILE  
GREEN  
(5L1)



FACSIMILE  
PURPLE  
(5L1)



FACSIMILE  
YELLOW  
(5L1)



FACSIMILE  
RED  
(5L1)



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

The second stamp design of American Letter Mail Co. is known as the "large eagle". It includes a vignette of a large eagle standing with wings partially spread, surrounded by the name of the company and a circular border in a square frame.

This stamp was engraved by Waterman Lily Ormsby, a renowned engraver from New York City. Ormsby was a highly influential engraver whose improvements on the transfer press and geometric lathe were used for years. He was also one of the founders of the Continental Bank Note Company. Although he was an activist against counterfeiting, even writing a book (*Description of the Present System of Engraving*, 1852) to expose several printers and techniques, Ormsby was known to take up work from somewhat shady organizations. Many of the banks Ormsby printed notes for were frauds or extremely short lived firms which were prone to bankruptcy.



LARGE EAGLE  
VIGNETTE PROOF  
BLACK  
DIE ON CARD

The eagle featured in the center of this stamp was a reused image that Ormsby had previously engraved for a bank notes, such as the one below for the Hartford Exchange Bank in Indiana.



1859 BANK NOTE : HAXBY #220-G4A  
\$2 BLACK ON PELURE PAPER  
ORANGE "2" SECURITY PATTERN ON REVERSE  
HARTFORD, INDIANA - HARTFORD EXCHANGE BANK  
W.L. ORMSBY, NEW YORK, ENGRAVER



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

American Letter Mail issued two stamps with the large eagle design, one printed in black and the other printed in blue. The blue stamps are far less common.



5L2  
GENUINE  
BLACK ON WHITE  
POSITION 13  
MINT



5L3  
GENUINE  
BLUE ON WHITE  
POSITION 9  
MANUSCRIPT CANCEL  
"EHB"

Genuine large eagle stamps were printed in plates of twenty and can be identified by their position. Stamps are often cancelled with a variety of pen strokes or red handstamps.



5L2  
GENUINE  
BLACK ON WHITE  
POSITION 4  
MANUSCRIPT CANCEL  
"X"



5L2  
GENUINE  
BLACK ON WHITE  
POSITION 8  
RED "PAID" HANDSTAMP  
# ALM-NYC-PO3  
WITH "-" PENSTRIKE



5L2  
GENUINE  
BLACK ON WHITE  
POSITION 19  
MANUSCRIPT CANCEL  
"# "



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

Only six multiples of American Letter Mail Company large eagle stamps are known. The block of twelve featured below is the largest known multiple. It contains stamps in positions 5-8; 9-12; and 13-16. This is an important piece in this study of American independent mail stamps. It was previously of the Needham, Worthington, Hollowbush, Golden and Gordon N. John collections.



5L2 : LARGE EAGLE  
GENUINE - 5¢ BLACK ON WHITE  
BLOCK OF TWELVE  
POSITIONS 5, 6, 7, 8 / 9, 10, 11, 12 / 13, 14, 15, 16  
PF# 0406695  
UNUSED, ORIGINAL GUM

The large eagle stamps (5L2 and 5L3) can be identified by their position within a plate of twenty. These positions are identified primarily by small dots, dashes, or scratches on the plate. Horizontal and vertical center guidelines were used during the production of the stamps. Remains of these lines can sometimes be seen, usually very faintly, on stamps of any position; however, these lines do occur more strongly in some positions. In addition, guidelines were also appear faintly between stamps, outside of the frames.

On the following page is a plating study of these stamps, which labels the positions and lists their most prominent identifying factors. Other identifying factors, such as double transfer lines, which were detailed by the philatelist Art Hall, are not included in these descriptions.



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO. - LARGE EAGLE STAMP (5L2 & 5L3) SHEET LAYOUT

Plate positions with brief description of major defining marks.



**POSITION 1**  
Dot at inner right.



**POSITION 2**  
Dot at inner right & dot at left.



**POSITION 3**  
Vertical dash at top.



**POSITION 4**  
Dot at right & outer left.



**POSITION 5**  
Dot at outer left & guideline at outer right.



**POSITION 6**  
Faint center guideline ends & faint layout lines.



**POSITION 7**  
Dot at left. Marks at right corners.



**POSITION 8**  
Dot at outer left & NO outer left guideline above middle.



**POSITION 9**  
Dots at outer left & inner right.



**POSITION 10**  
Dots at left & inner right.



**POSITION 11**  
Faint center line & dot at left.



**POSITION 12**  
Faint full center line. Dots at outer left & inner right.



**POSITION 13**  
Layout line at left. Dots at outer left & inner right.



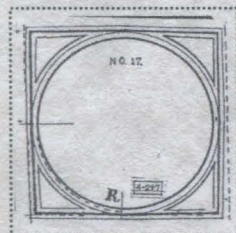
**POSITION 14**  
Dot at outer left & inner right.



**POSITION 15**  
Scratch from top left triangle to "M".



**POSITION 16**  
Dot at outer left & complete outer left guideline.



**POSITION 17**  
Dot at outer left & right. Vertical guide at bottom.



**POSITION 18**  
Dots at left & right. Vertical dashes at bottom.



**POSITION 19**  
Dashes at bottom. Dots in bottom left triangle.



**POSITION 20**  
Dash in left frame. Line from bottom to "M".



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

Below is are "large eagle" stamp covers mailed by the Philadelphia branch of the American Letter Mail Co., sometimes known as "American Mail Co.". On these covers, both sent in October of 1844, the red, circular datestamp of the Philadelphia branch features a "101 Chestnut Street" address.

The first cover was delivered locally. The second was forwarded to Boston, and marked with the "No. 12 State Street" addressed red oval handstamp.



51.2 : LARGE EAGLE TYPE (BLACK)  
GENUINE STAMP ON COVER - POSITION 4  
MANUSCRIPT "X" CANCEL  
PHILADELPHIA "AMERICAN MAIL CO." RED CDS  
"101 CHESTNUT STREET"  
OCTOBER 4, 1844



51.2 : LARGE EAGLE TYPE (BLACK)  
GENUINE STAMP ON COVER - POSITION 1  
MANUSCRIPT "X" CANCEL  
PHILADELPHIA "AMERICAN MAIL CO." RED CDS  
"101 CHESTNUT STREET"  
BOSTON "AMERICAN LETTER MAIL COMPANY" RED OVAL  
"NO. 12 STATE STREET"  
OCTOBER 8, 1844



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

The partial cover below was carried by the American Letter Mail Co. and paid with a large eagle stamp. The cover was carried locally in New York City, and is marked with a red, "56 Wall St." handstamp.

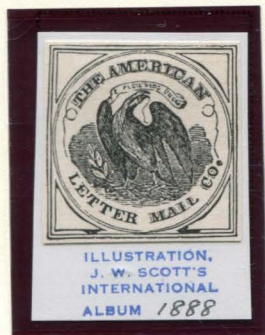


5L2 : LARGE EAGLE TYPE  
BLACK ON WHITE  
GENUINE STAMP ON COVER - POSITION 3  
MANUSCRIPT "X" CANCEL  
AMERICAN LETTER MAIL HANDSTAMP - RED OVAL  
EASTERN INDEPENDENT MAIL COMPANY STUDY GROUP # ALM-NYC-F09  
ASCC HANDSTAMP 6



# AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

Scott produced several forgeries of the "Large Eagle" type stamp for collectors. These forgeries were based on the illustration published in his *International Album*.



FORGERY A  
SCOTT  
BLACK ON WHITE  
ORIGINAL CLIPPING FROM  
SCOTT'S INTERNATIONAL ALBUM, 1888  
(5L2)



FORGERY A  
SCOTT  
BLACK  
ON THICK WHITE  
(5L2)



FORGERY A  
SCOTT  
BLACK  
ON WHITE  
(5L2)



FORGERY A  
SCOTT  
DARK BLUE (SHADE)  
ON WHITE  
(5L3)



FORGERY A  
SCOTT  
DARK BLUE (SHADE)  
ON WHITE  
(5L3)



FORGERY A  
SCOTT  
BLUE (SHADE)  
ON WHITE  
(5L3)



FORGERY A  
SCOTT  
BLUE (SHADE)  
ON WHITE  
(5L3)