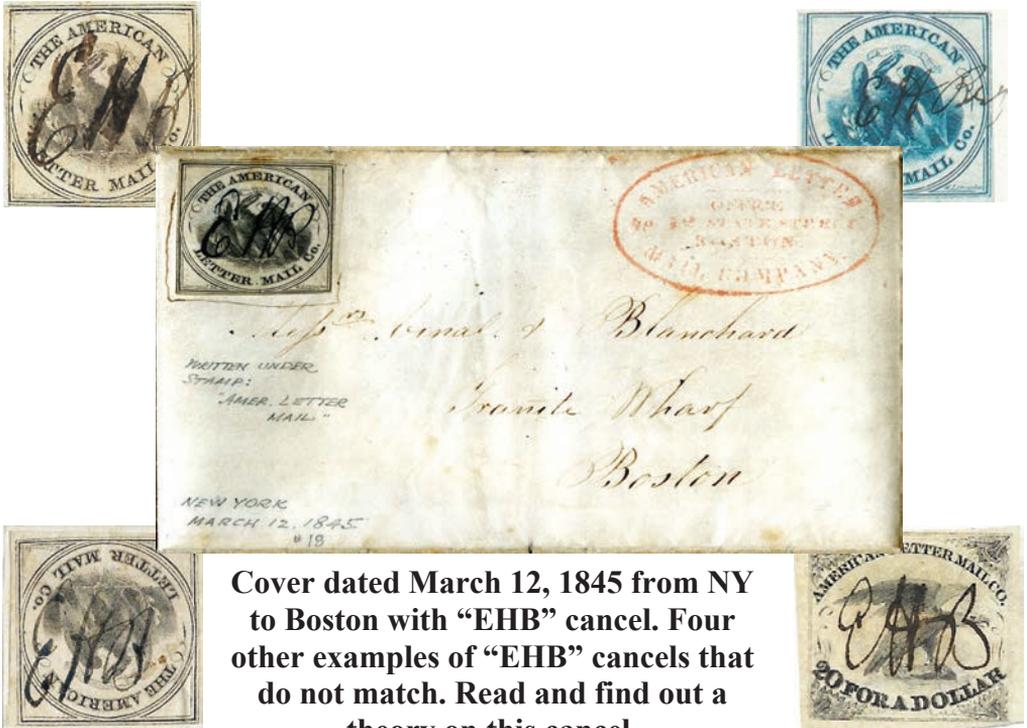


THE PENNY POST

Official Journal Of The Carriers And Locals Society



Cover dated March 12, 1845 from NY to Boston with “EHB” cancel. Four other examples of “EHB” cancels that do not match. Read and find out a theory on this cancel.

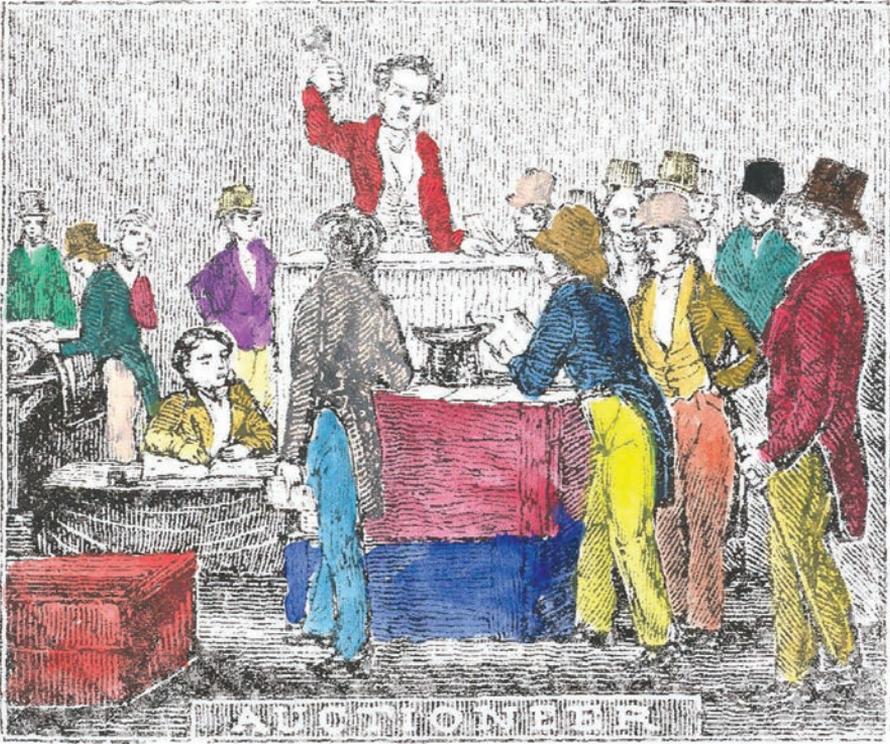
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IDENTIFYING PRINTINGS OF THE 20-CENT HUSSEY CIRCUS RIDER STAMPS

THE “EHB” CANCELS OF THE AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

THE “CC” CANCELS OF THE AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO. AND THE COURT TRIALS OF THE INDEPENDENT MAILS

AND MORE



Public Stamp Auction

Carriers and Locals Society

Auction #28

Date: Early 2018

Consignments Being Accepted

Contact: Martin Richardson

THE PENNY POST

VOL. 26 NO. 1

JANUARY 2018



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THE PENNY POST / Vol. 25 No. 4 / October 2017

Editor's Message

By
Larry Lyons

Happy New Year

I want to wish a very Healthy and Happy New Year to everyone. Perhaps in 2018 you will start a new collecting interest in a section of carriers and locals. Is it time to choose a new specialty or expand on one you have already started? Is it time to put together an exhibit for others to see? It is certainly time to commit to attending a philatelic show. I guarantee it will be an enjoyable experience. Is it time to help a fellow collector with information or make a trade? It is time to make new friends and thank old friends for their friendship. It is time to forgive anyone you have thought ill of and whom you have lost contact. What new discoveries in carriers, locals and expresses will be revealed in 2018? Maybe even starting with this issue of *The Penny Post*! It is time to enjoy another year of collecting.

Society Awards

For all our newbies and forgetful oldies I summarize our journal accomplishments as follows:

Since 2000 *The Penny Post* has won 25 Gold Medals and 7 Reserve Grand Awards in literature competitions. The editors of *The Penny Post* have won three Diane D. Boehret Awards for excellence in Philatelic Literature (1994, 2009, 2011).

What's New?

The *Carriers and Locals Society* website has been totally redone. Much thanks to Mike Farrell as website manager for accomplishing this task. Check it out! The date for the next Society Auction will appear on the website.

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: llyons@philatelicfoundation.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.

In This Issue

I have asked in paragraph one, "What new discoveries will be revealed in 2018?" Since our journal is devoted almost solely to original research we have new theories and discoveries in every issue. This issue leads it off for 2018.

For nearly 175 years we have been adding to our knowledge on the Independent Mail Companies. In this issue we have two very well-researched and well-presented articles on the American Letter Mail Co., written by David Wilcox. These articles are parts 3 and 4 in his series and explore the possible origins and falsely believed original theories on the "EHB" and "CC" cancels of the American

Letter Mail Company. David does an extensive exploration into personal histories and uses extensive examination of known covers to strongly prove that the “EHB” and “CC” cancels were not agent initials. David employs handwriting analysis and places of origin of these covers to prove his theories. David also takes a good look at the contents of these letters, when available, to put himself into the mind of our Independent Mail champions to attempt to derive what these cancels might have meant. David also will reveal a possible, previously unknown, name of the hidden owner of the American Letter Mail Company who carried the torch after Lysander Spooner succumbed to legal and financial pressures. It is an amazing piece of research and I commend and thank David Wilcox for having done the work to prove his theories.

Lastly, we have an article I have written on identifying the printing of the 20-cent Hussey circus rider stamps. This article is the fourth in the series. Again it is identification which has not been presented in the over 150-year existence of these stamps.

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.

Future Meetings and Gatherings

2018 StampShow, Columbus, Ohio, August 9-12, 2018
2019 NAPEX, June 7-9, 2019

Auction Procedures

Be sure to read page 4 of the previous issue of *The Penny Post* which provides the auction rules and procedures for consigning and bidding at the *Carriers and Locals Society* auctions.

Final Message

Happy Collecting in 2018. If you want to enhance the enjoyment of our hobby experience see the suggestions in the first paragraph of this *Editor's Message*. Plan on participating more. It is good for your health! Studies show that stamp collecting can lead to a longer, happier life. Getting up and down to find and lift philatelic books is good exercise. Long hours of deep concentration while doing philatelic research leads to less snacking and good weight control. Also, the wine is good with philatelic friends. Guarantee your good health with more active stamp participation!

Hope you enjoy this issue of *The Penny Post*. A very Happy and Healthy New Year to you all and may our hobby bring you peace and tranquility in 2018.

From Where I Sit

Here is the image of Lot 1700 from the Schuyler Rumsey December 14, 2017 Confederate States of America sale. The lot is described as 68 Taylor facsimilies. Line 2 stamp 6 is shown at top right enlarged.



J.W. Scott



The five cent Confederate States forgery in line 2 is a J.W. Scott forgery! The Taylor forgery of this stamp is shown at the bottom right. How did this happen? Are there any other stamps that do not belong in this group?

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Auction 28 Procedures

Auction 28 will be held in April. The starting and closing dates will be announced on our website, www.pennypost.org. Bidding is open to any person, however only members can consign material to future auctions. We have made changes to the auction software to permit non-member bidding. Members and non-members must complete the required information on the bid sheet page. There are detailed instructions on the site concerning the auction terms of sale and bidding procedures. This is an online active auction. Bidders will receive online status of their bids. Should you bid be exceed you will be notified online.

Bidding increases are as follows:

- Under \$30, \$1.00 increment
- Under \$70, \$2.00 increment
- Under \$100, \$5.00 increment
- Under 500, \$10.00 increment
- \$500 or more, \$20.00 increment

When bidding on lots which have reserves, you will receive an online notice if your bid is too low.

Claims for errors in lot description must be made, by email or telephone, within 15 days of sending of lots. For buyers outside the US & Canada 22 days will be allowed. Lots described as defective or having faults cannot be returned because of such defects.

Shown below are but a few of the lots to be offered:



Identifying Printings of the 20-Cent Hussey Circus Rider Stamps

By
Larry Lyons

Previous Articles

The three previous articles in this series covered the 5-cent, 10-cent and 15-cent Hussey circus rider stamps.^{1,2,3} Those articles explained the settings from which the first three denominations of circus rider stamps were printed. There were also discussions on colors and gum in those articles. In the first article the main printing block was shown and the articles contained details on the plating of the first three denominations of circus rider stamps. Now it is time to have a look at the 20-cent Hussey circus rider stamps.

The 20-cent Circus Rider Stamps

As was explained in the previous articles the key to understanding the circus rider stamps is found in an examination of the settings used to print the various denominations of the circus rider stamps. As shown in the third article the settings were all different for each of the printings of the first three denominations of circus rider stamps. Much of the material presented came from the research done by David Nussman. I have advanced the study and have included additional information such as a second setting of the 15-cent condensed numerals which had been missed. I have also included the plate numbers from the Hale book to allow for ease of identification.⁴

Basic Plate Identification of the 20-cent Circus Rider Stamps

H. Warren Hale identified two basic plates used to print the 20-cent circus rider stamps. He did not distinguish the different printings of each plate type. He simply called Plate I setting “e” and Plate VI setting “p.” You may need to know that the captions on pages 120 and 121 are reversed and printed incorrectly.⁵

Stamps printed from Plate I, setting c, are very easily differentiated from those printed from plate VI setting “p.” Plate I was printed using the master plate with ten uneven ovals into which the “20” was inserted. The numerals are separate slugs that made strong impressions indenting the paper to the reverse. The gum on Plate I is thin, sparse to non-existent. Plate I (and II) positions have no short flags on the “5” of “50” in any position. By comparison the Plate VI stamp numerals were not printed with separate slugs. All of the numerals are identical and are in even ovals in every position. The numerals in Plate VI do not show an imprint on

¹ *Identifying Printings of the 5¢ Hussey Circus Rider Stamps*, Larry Lyons, *The Penny Post*, October 2016, Vol. 24, No. 4, pages 41-56.

² *Identifying Printings of the 10-Cent Circus Rider Stamps*, Larry Lyons, *The Penny Post*, April 2017, Vol. 25, No. 2, pages 66-72.

³ *Identifying Printings of the 15-Cent Circus Rider Stamps*, Larry Lyons, *The Penny Post*, October 2017, Vol. 25, No. 4, pages 56-64.

⁴ *Byways of Philately*, H. Warren Hale, 1966, The J.W. Stowell Printing Co.

⁵ *Ibid*, pages 120, 121.

the reverse of the stamp. See **Figure 1**. In Plate VI all of the flags on the “5” of “50” are short except occasionally on position 2.

How Many Settings of Each Plate and How Do You Tell Them Apart?

Now the advanced study will explain the settings printed with each plate and how to tell them apart. The reader is reminded of the difference between Plate I and Plate II. In Plate I, position 2, the top left serif on the “N” in “CENTS” is missing. In Plate II, position 2, the top left serif on the “N” in “CENTS” is not missing. See **Figure 2**.

There were at least three printings using plate I/II. First Plates I and II were printed *tete-beche* and the gum used was thin and sparse. Then Plate I was printed using a heavy brown crackly gum and lastly Plate I was printed three times with one cliché *tete-beche* and no gum. See **Figures 3, 4, and 5**. H. Warren Hale did not distinguish the three printings using Plates I and II. I will call them settings c, c1 and c2 respectively. In fact, H. Warren Hale never reported a Plate II setting of the 20-cent circus rider stamp.⁶ David Nussman did not identify the setting I have called c1 with the heavy brown crackly gum. The c3 setting with three clichés and one cliché *tete-beche*, with no gum is in my collection and is the only recorded example. This was in the Hugh Tim Richardson collection which was sold to Carl Kane who sold the collection to me. This collection is especially rich in clichés and cliché multiples.

Now a summary of the settings made using Plate VI. H. Warren Hale recorded only one setting of the 20-cent Hussey circus rider stamps made with Plate VI and he called it setting “p”. David Nussman recorded two settings of the 20-cent circus rider stamps made from Plate VI and he called them Plate VI-A and Plate VI-B both from setting “p.” The first printing, VI-A, has smooth light-colored gum applied either uniformly or with a vertical brush stroke. The second printing of the 20-cent circus rider stamp using Plate VI-B has dark gum with horizontal gum ridges. Nussman concluded the two printings from Plate VI were different based on two very different gums on the stamps. The type VI-B stamps were printed from a transfer plate from type VI-A. Many of the positions in type VI-B have an extra dot beneath the period after the “S” in “S.M. POST.” See **Figure 6**. Also Type VI-B has a white mark in the right margin at position 4. See **Figure 7**. A third printing was made from setting VI-B and is distinguished by the tan paper on which it was printed. See **Figure 8**. The stamps on tan paper can be found without gum or with clear horizontal gum ridges. Based on position faults the stamps on tan paper were printed before the VI-B printing with darker gum and horizontal gum ridges.

Conclusions

The 20-cent circus rider stamps fall into six distinguishable printings. H. Warren Hale only recorded the 20-cent stamps in two groups. The six settings of the 20-cent Hussey circus rider stamps are as follows:

⁶ *Byways of Philately*, H. Warren Hale, 1966, The J.W. Stowell Printing Co., page 117.



Figure 1. At left, Plate I example of the 20-cent Hussey circus rider stamp with the numerals indenting the paper. At right is a 20-cent stamp from Plate VI that does not have the numerals indenting the paper. The bottom stamp on the right is the back of a Plate I stamp.

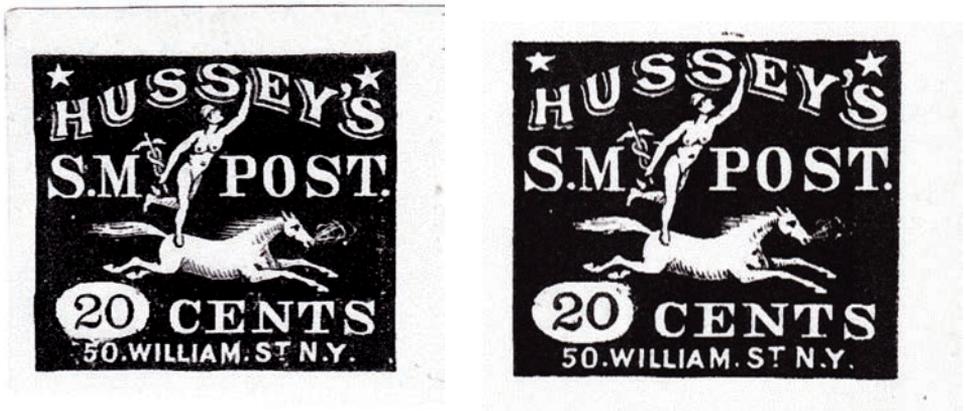


Figure 2. Position 2 of Plate I has the top left serif on the “N” in “CENTS” missing. In Plate II, shown at right, the top left serif on the “N” in “CENTS” is not missing.



Figure 3. Setting C, Plate I/II printed tete-beche, thin sparse gum.

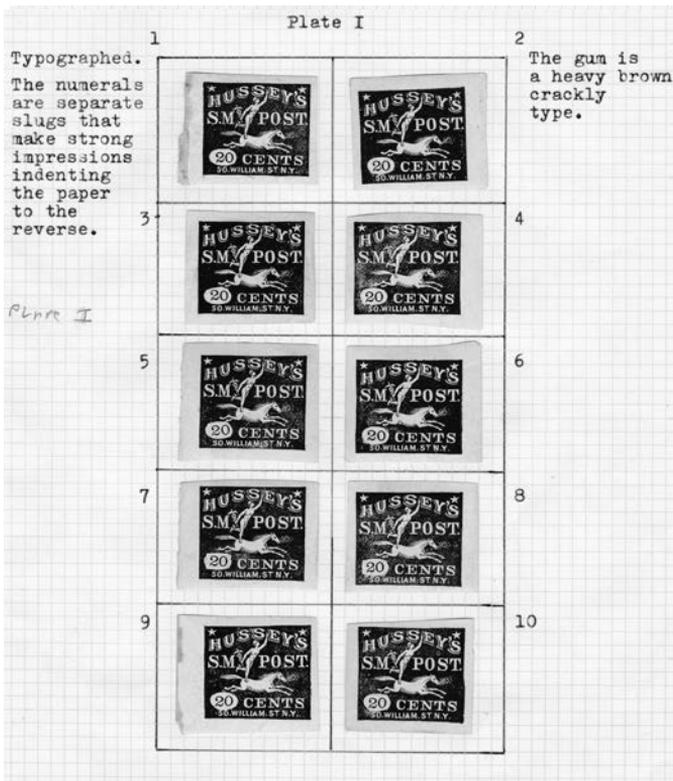


Figure 4. Setting C1, Plate I with heavy brown crackly gum.



Figure 5. Setting C2, Plate I, three clichés, one tete-beche, no gum.

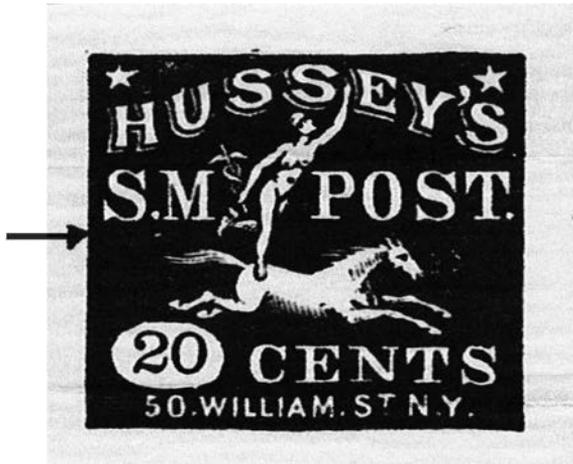


Figure 6. Positions in Type VI-B have an extra dot beneath the period after the “S” in “S.M. POST.”

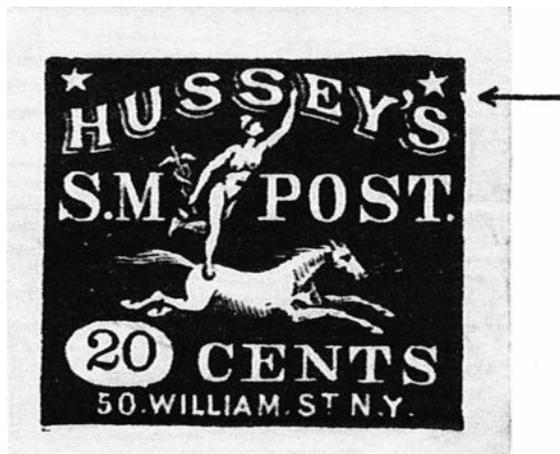


Figure 7. Position 6 in Type VI-B has a white mark in the right margin.

Settings of the 20-cent Circus Rider Stamps

c	Plate I/II tete-beche, thin sparse gum
c1	Plate I, heavy brown crackly gum
c2	Plate I, three clichés, one tete-beche, no gum
p	Plate VI-A, smooth light-colored gum
p1	Plate VI-B, tan paper, with or without gum
p2	Plate VI-B, dark gum with horizontal gum ridges

There are no condensed numerals of the 20-cent circus rider stamps.

Plating Positions

Positions 1, 2 and 9 and 10 usually can easily be plated by the border selvage. The other positions will take considerable time and concentration to plate.

Cancellations

Cancelled to order 20-cent circus rider stamps can be found from Plates I/II and Plate VI. Most are from Plates I/II.

Fake Cancel

Figure 9 shows a genuine Hussey cancel. The cancel is 54x25mm and has a period after "POST." **Figure 10** is a John Fox fake of this cancel. The fake is 56x24mm, does not have a period after "POST" and has a different "G" in "MESSAGE." The cover shown in **Figure 11** is a John Fox fake with a fake Fox handstamp. The opinion is based on the handwriting which has easily and clearly been matched to many other covers created by John Fox. This cover matches the one shown on page 111 in *Byways*, albeit with a different cancel. Hale called the cover shown in *Byways* as questionable which would implicate the cancel as a John Fox creation since the handwriting is that of John Fox. This brings me to the cancelled clichés shown in Figure 280 on page 123 of *Byways*. I believe the cancels on these clichés are Fox fakes. Similarly the cancel shown on the block of six in **Figure 12** is believed to be John Fox fake. How did this happen? John Fox provided the stamps to H. Warren Hale. In return he was thanked on page vi of the "*Byways*" book for "his considerable time and valuable assistance." What an evil man. **Figure 13** is from *Byways* page 170. This is a genuine Hussey handstamp. The 20-cent stamp pictured on page 171 in *Byways* has a fake cancel. The top stampless cover shown on page 161 in *Byways* has a fake cancel. See **Figure 14**. The stampless cover shown on the top of page 160 in *Byways* is genuine.

Covers

There are no genuine certified 20-cent circus rider stamps on cover. The cover shown in **Figure 15** is from *Byways* page 169. The cover is addressed to 21 Dey street. Dey Street is 1 block south of Fulton Street. According to Hussey's advertisements, shown in **Figure 16** the cost would have been 10 cents. So this cover is "philatelically inspired." Another 20-cent circus rider stamp on cover is

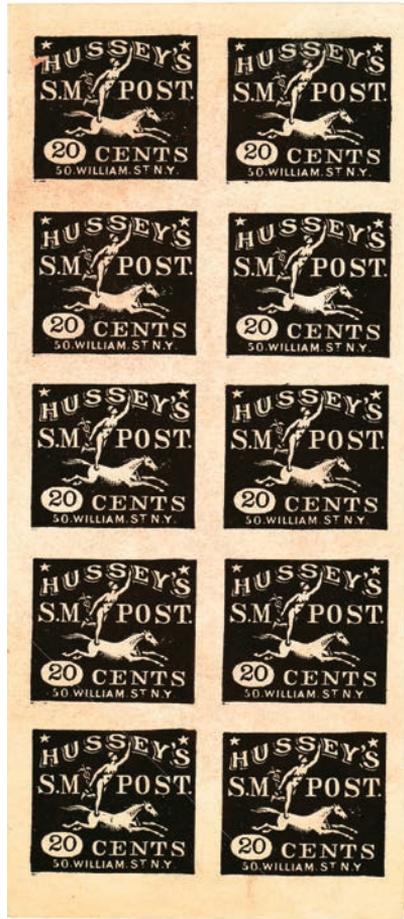


Figure 8. A third printing made from Setting VI-B is printed on tan paper.

shown in **Figure 17**. The addressee is at 747 Broadway. This is just below 8th Street and 8 blocks above Spring Street. This would have required 40 cents according to the Hussey advertisements. Hence another “philatelically inspired” use. Another cover with a 20-cent Hussey circus rider stamp is shown in **Figure 18**. This cover is addressed to 648 Broadway which is one block north of West Houston Street at Bond Street; also one block above Bleecker Street. This is well above Spring Street and would have required 40 cents according to the Hussey advertisement. This would also be a “philatelically inspired” use. I have yet to see a 20-cent Hussey circus rider stamp used on cover paying the rate for a proper distance of delivery.

Closing

The reader should now be able to separate and identify the six different printings of the 20-cent Hussey circus rider stamps. Next up will be the 25-cent Hussey circus rider stamps.

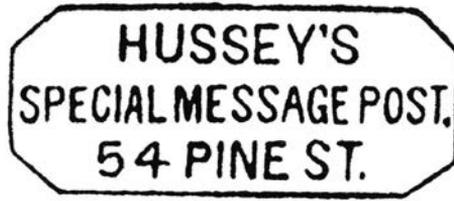


Figure 9. A genuine Hussey cancel, 54x25mm with a period after "POST."

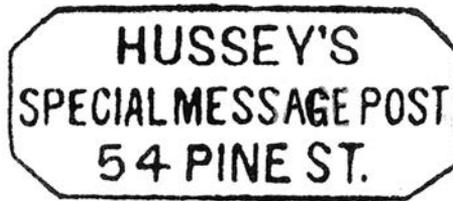


Figure 10. A John Fox fake cancel, 56x24mm with no period after "POST" and a different "G" in "MESSAGE."

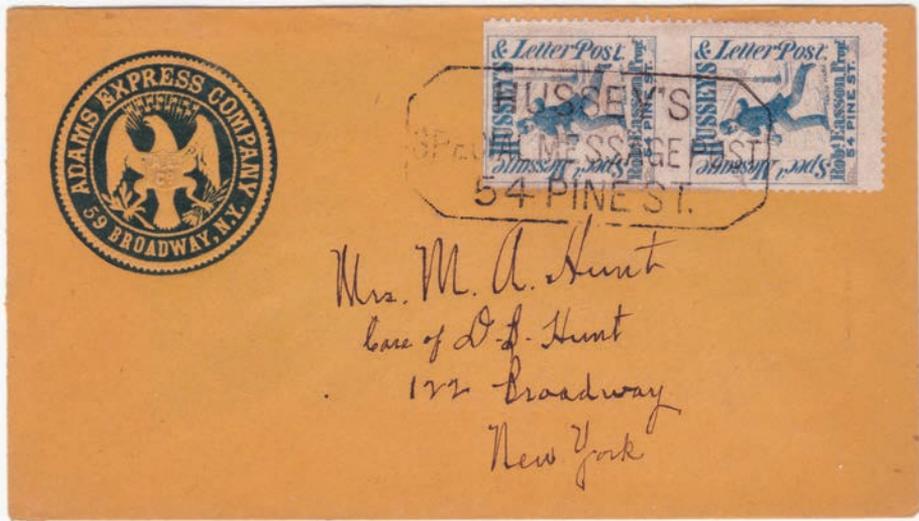


Figure 11. A John Fox fake cover. This is based on the handwriting being that of John Fox.



Figure 12. A most probably fake cancel made by John Fox.



Figure 13. A genuine Hussey handstamp on a stampless cover.

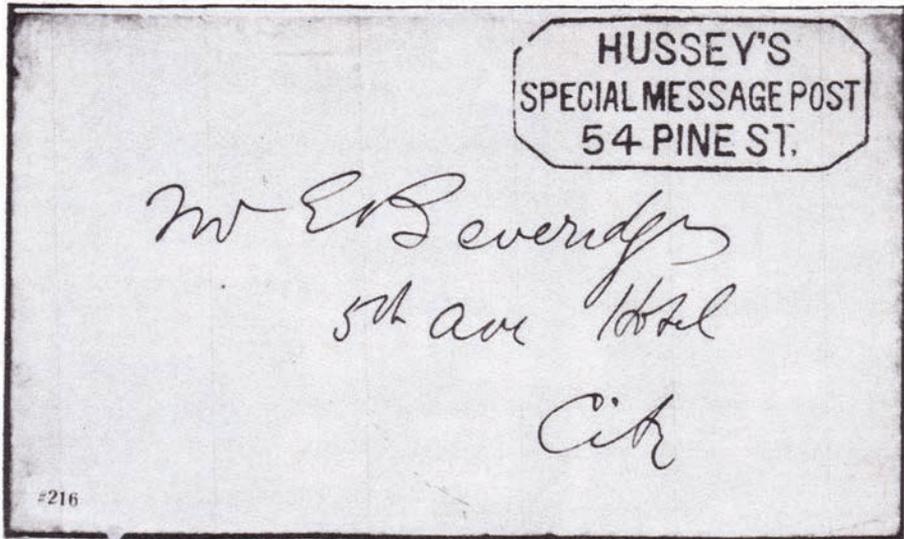


Figure 14. A stampless cover with a fake handstamp.

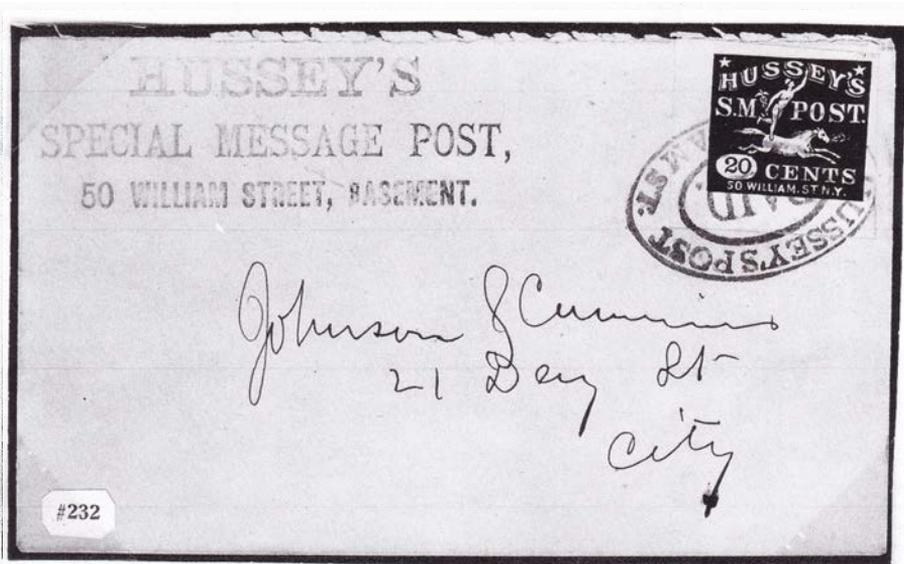


Figure 15. A “philatelically inspired” cover with a 20-cent circus rider stamp.

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Special Message Post,

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"	Chambers Street, " " "	20 "
"	Canal Street, " " "	25 "
"	Spring Street, " " "	30 "
"	Fourteenth Street, East or West,	40 "
"	Thirty-fourth Street, " " "	50 "
"	Forty-second Street, " " "	60 "
"	Fifty-second Street, " " "	70 "
	Beyond,	Additional.

Replies, Ten Cents and upwards.

Special Messengers always on hand at the Office to make deliveries.

A DISCOUNT from above prices when an increased time may be allowed for delivery, **AND YET SPECIAL.**

Hand Parcels, Bags, Valises, &c. delivered to and brought from any part of this and adjacent Cities.

Directed Circulars, (sealed) delivered at 90 Cents per 100.

Do. Do. Do. Do. \$8 per 1000.

ANYTHING NOT FOUND RETURNED.

Directories Fifty Years Back at the Office.

Reference to Banks, Insurance Companies, Firms and Individuals.

#132

ROBERT EASSON, Proprietor.

W. T. Sullivan, Printer, 23 Liberty Street, New York.

Figure 16. Hussey's advertisement of the rates for special message delivery.

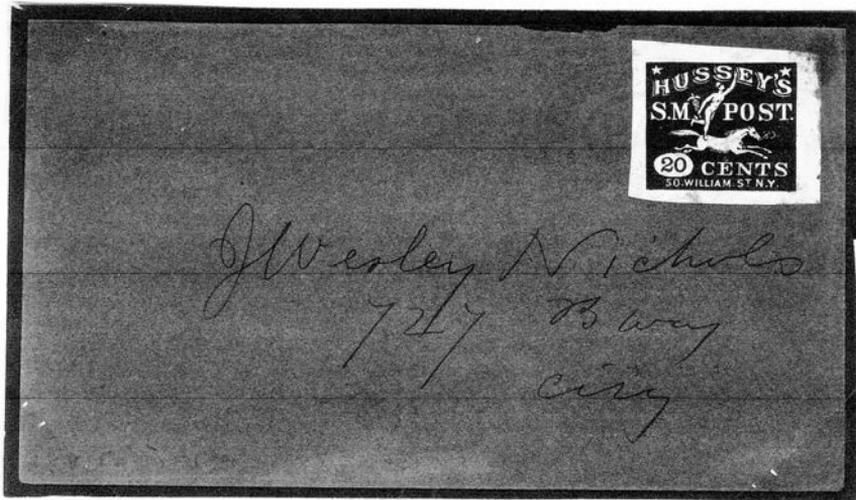


Figure 17. Another “philatelically inspired” 20-cent circus rider stamp on a cover. Based on the distance 40 cents would have been required.

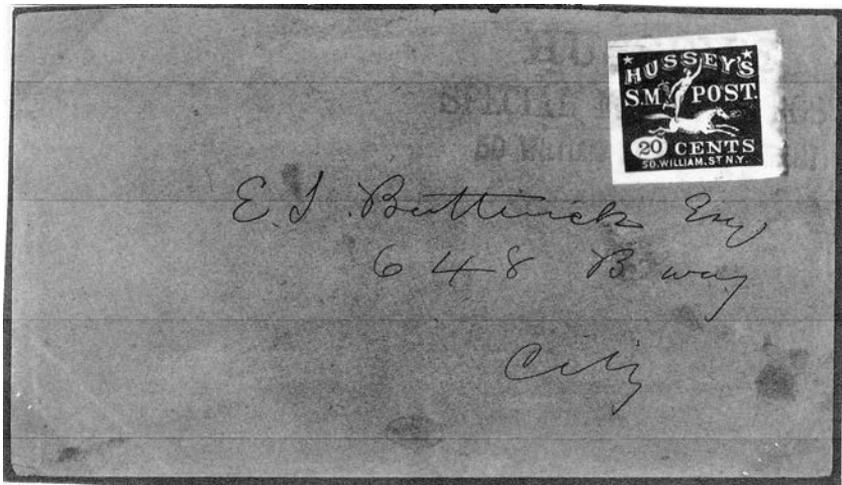
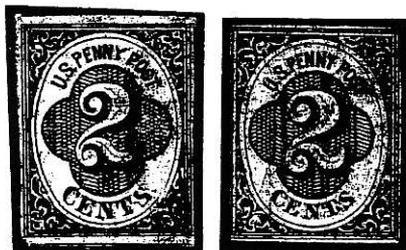
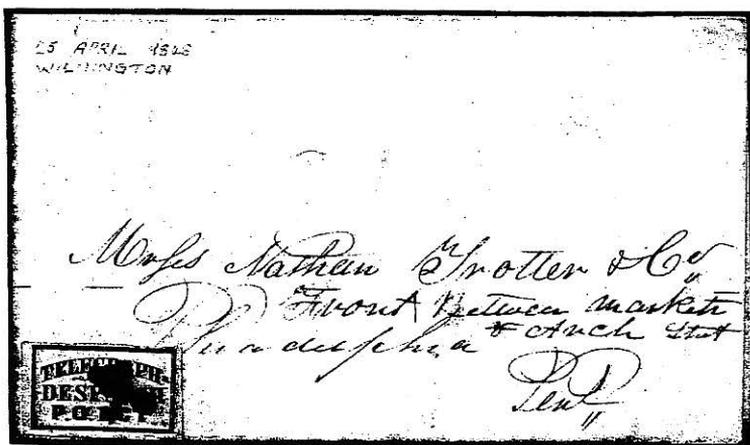


Figure 18. Another “philatelically inspired” 20-cent circus rider stamp on a cover. To this destination 40-cents would have been required.

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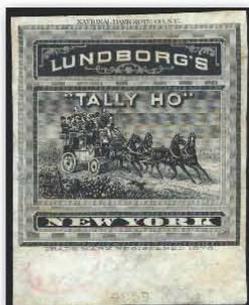
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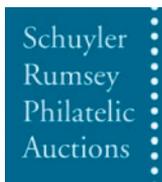


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Part 3: The “EHB” Cancels of The American Letter Mail Company

By
David R. Wilcox, Ph.D.

Introduction

The next four parts of this series on the American Letter Mail Company (ALM) will focus on the distinctive and intriguing manuscript cancels of this company. ALM was one of the earliest Independent Mail Companies active in the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic States in the mid-1840s. Over several years, John Bowman surveyed nearly 600 of these covers that survived to present day.¹ It has been suggested that we see only four percent of the original covers from these early mail companies.² Using that estimate, Bowman’s survey suggests there were many thousands of these covers carried by this letter handling business. Other than Hale and Company, ALM was the largest to carry mail during this exciting time of American entrepreneurial spirit. It was the first Independent Mail to issue stamps, and some of the cancellations are unlike cancels found on any other independent post including Hale and Co.

Early researchers simply equated most of these manuscript cancels as ALM agent initials. They offered no clear explanation why these cancels were applied. Some manuscript cancels were names of places such as NY and Boston, but others were manuscript cancels like “DB”, “JG”, “kerhoff”, and “TBS.” This second group of cancels fits the earlier assumption that many ALM manuscript cancels were mostly agent names and initials. But this early assumption does not seem to be true for most of the cancels. The majority of the cancels are “EHB” and “CC,” and both of these do not seem to be agent cancels. The “EHB” cancels will be discussed here and the “CC” cancels in Part 4. The rare cancels, some of which were indeed agent cancels, will be discussed in Parts 5 and 6.

In surveying ALM stamps with these curious manuscript cancels, it became obvious that nearly half of the cancels used a manuscript “EHB” as an obliterator. But unlike with the much rarer and sometimes unique agent cancels, there are no names with the initials “EHB” listed as agents of ALM in any of the Philadelphia, Boston or New York city directories for either of the two directory years ALM was in service. So, when variation in the lettering was noticed during the survey, it began to appear that “EHB” might represent something broader than just one agent’s initials.

Part 3 will compare the eighteen “EHB” cancels found so far (**Table 3-1**). The variation in handwriting suggests that there were either several agents with these initials (but there is no support for that) or the initials represent some other aspect of the company’s business. We do not know exactly how many stamps ALM produced.

¹ John D. Bowman, “The American Letter Mail Company” *Eastern Independent Mail and Express Mail Companies 1840-1845*, (edited and published by Michael S. Gutman), 2016, Chapter 1, pages 24-69.

² Calvet M. Hahn, “The Beginning of Adhesive Postage in the U.S.” *Penny Post*, Oct. 1995, Vol. 5, No. 4, page 22.

But on a much larger scale, Stanley Piller estimated that 5500 New York Postmaster Provisional stamps have survived until today, and records show that this stamp had a printing of 142,249 stamps. Therefore, this Provisional has had a survival rate of 3.87%.³ The NY Provisional was produced about a year after the ALM stamps were produced, so using this estimate, there may have been upwards of 465 ALM stamps receiving “EHB” cancels in its short existence under the new owner. The earliest surviving cover is dated August 26, 1844 and the latest May 29, 1845. That is 277 days or about 40 weeks. This averages nearly twelve “EHB” covers a week. Though today’s collectors see these cancels only infrequently, the ALM clerks saw a dozen “EHB” covers every week. Therefore, these striking cancels were a common part of the ALM’s working system and warrant closer examination.

Some of the “EHB” canceled covers still had their content, and a pattern seems to arise. Many expressed urgency, and some specifically requested an answer from the recipient before the sender could move forward with what they were doing. Based on the lack of consistency in the handwriting of the “EHB” initials and the urgency of several of the letters, it is proposed here that the “EHB” cancel may have been part of a system for registering the letter in the ALM ledger books. Unfortunately, there is no record of these books (in fact, ALM left no records at all behind when it closed). The aim of this article, therefore, is a humbler effort to initiate discussion while documenting the “EHB” variation and the urgency in the letters. Then, future discoveries may help us understand if ALM could have had a registration system in place.

Was the New Owner like Lysander Spooner?

Lysander Spooner sold his company in the summer of 1844 to an unknown buyer. Fresh off the company’s legal problems with the government and bad press, the new owner had to tread very lightly with his new company. Spooner must have given the new owner an earful about the perils of owning an Independent Mail Company. Spooner liked America and even placed an eagle on his stamp (5L1), but he believed in free enterprise over government control. He was ready to go to the Supreme Court to defend his principles. The US Government was not going there with him. Spooner’s ALM was on its way to smaller courts but in a very publicly visible way. Newspapers were sometimes very harsh on Spooner and his crusade, especially in Philadelphia. Details of this will be presented in Part 4.

In the summer of 1844, it would have been impossible for the new owner not to be acutely aware of Spooner’s struggles with the Government. In addition, Spooner had become deeply in debt. The owner’s business plan had to include avoiding the pitfalls that befell Spooner, and his first major business decision seems to have been to protect his name. To this day, the new owner has remained completely anonymous. His name never appeared in newspaper reports, on letters carried by ALM, on ALM office windows, or any of the many ALM advertisements. His unusual silence strongly suggests that the new owner had other interests to protect outside of his mail business.

³ Stanley M. Piller, *The New York Postmaster Provisional* (edited by J. Farrington and P. Wall, published by Robert G. Kaufman Publishing Company), 1991, page 65.

In his other business endeavors, he did not need the government as an opponent. Even after ALM closed in June 1845, the new owner remained silent on his ownership of ALM. New evidence will be presented in Part 8 of this series that points to one man in Philadelphia that may have been the second owner of ALM. The new owner probably had a growing successful business that he wanted to keep from bad publicity. He was very secretive, but he was far from uninvolved.

Before the postage stamp, most stampless covers had many markings to show their journey through the mails. Other than the address, the cover needed room for a forwarding or receiving stamp, a written or stamped “paid” marking, often a “single” marking for the number of sheets, and other markings such as “collect” and instructions about delivery. With the invention of postage stamps, the new owner probably reasoned that the stamp needed to be canceled anyway, so the stamp was an innovative and eye-catching place to put a message for the recipient office to complete a service requested by an ALM customer. If there was an ink smear or simple pen cancel like a small “x” or a crosshatch mark, the recipient office’s final job was just to record the arrival of the cover without any specifics and see that the letter was picked up or delivered. A striking cancel on the stamp, however, might have signaled the receiving clerks that they had more service work to do for their customer.

The new owner introduced new stamps and some innovative thinking. He seems to have had good business savvy. Therefore, it can be proposed that one of his innovations may have been to use cancelations on stamps to send a message to the receiving office. He may have reasoned that when an originating office placed a few simple but specific manuscript letters on the face of the stamp, the receiving office knew the cover was important enough to respond differently than just passing the cover on to its customer. One could hypothesize that the cover’s specific addressee and the time of arrival were recorded in a special book that was maintained in the office. Unfortunately, no such books have ever surfaced, so we are left to hypothesize from what we know about the letters themselves.

This proposed “EHB” cancel system would have been the new owner’s biggest experiment. The covers that have survived seem to have three characteristics that support this hypothesis. First, the “EHB” are so varied that it seems improbable that one agent made their mark on all of these stamps as was proposed years ago. The “EHB” covers seem more likely to have been created by different clerks in different offices and sometimes by different clerks in the same office. Second, the “EHB” obliteration was only very rarely re-canceled, so it was considered a cancel in and of itself. Covering up the initials may even have been undesirable if the letters had meaning. It seems logical that they did have meaning, since they required extra effort to apply than a simple “x” cancel. Also, the “EHB” cancel was repeated several times throughout ALM’s existence, and it always used the same three initials. Third, where we still have the luxury of seeing the “EHB” letter contents, they mostly expressed a sense of urgency. Some specifically asked the recipient to reply quickly, because the sender needed a reply to move forward.

This all suggests a general ALM company customer service that involved retaining a record of the cover’s travels through the ALM system. ALM carried thousands of letters, so this special treatment would not have been a normal treatment for all covers. It probably cost an extra fee, but there are no records of the service except for the distinctive cancels and the letter contents. Therefore, this remains only

a working hypothesis. The remainder of this article will document the variation in the signings and the urgency in some of the letters.

What was so great about the idea of using stamps?

A stamp is a mail handling business's asset. When canceled, it signals profit for a service rendered. This was a whole new concept for mail handlers in America. Previously, if a letter arrived at the addressee's door, the recipient was obliged to pay the mail carrier for the cover, if they wanted the news it contained. In the very early years of our Union, this arrangement worked well since a letter was a rare item and treasured by those who received one. But as the nation grew, this changed. If the letter was from someone the addressee did not care to read about (such as a business circular), or if the addressee was unable to afford the letter, the addressee simply refused the letter. There wasn't much the mail carrier could do but return the letter to the sender. Then, even the sender might have no reason to pay. When that happened, the mail company lost its asset.

The rejected cover that the company spent time and man-hours trying to deliver became a debit. In contrast, if a sender had the funds needed to pay for a postage stamp, and they had an urgency for the addressee to read their news (such as an advertiser or merchant sending a special invoice, or especially, if they needed a reply), they could now pre-pay for the cover themselves with a stamp. When they applied the postage stamp before the letter was sent to the recipient, it meant the recipient was more likely to read the letter's content. The pre-paid cover could also serve as a courtesy to the recipient and appear as a good business gesture, since the recipient did not have to lose their own money just to read the message. This concept was new in America as well as most of the world. It began in the UK with the "Penny Black" (May 1840). This experiment continued in America very shortly thereafter during February 1842 by the City Despatch Post in NYC. In four major Northeastern cities, ALM began this "previously paid, stamped-cover experiment" when it issued its crouching eagle 5L1 stamp in January 1844. This was one of the first postage stamps issued in the world.

This new idea was particularly a boon for companies. Now, the companies could send a letter pre-paid and reduce the chances the cover would be rejected. This helped insure that the company's assets increased. The mail companies may have benefited more than any other company. A customer now could give the mail company its asset money even before the service was rendered. When the mail company sold a stamp, it became "money in the bank" for them. And to encourage the matter, the mail companies even sold the stamps in quantities at a reduced cost (20 per \$1.00). This is something the US Government could not offer, since at that point, they had not issued stamps. The government was slow to respond to this idea. Even if they wanted to try this in 1844, the US Government Mail had to wait for Congress to authorize government stamps, which they finally released in 1847. The Postmaster Provisionals were the Post Office's best effort while they waited for the new government stamps. The American Letter Mail Company was not waiting. By January 1844, they were already selling their first stamps.

The mail carriers quickly realized they had to cancel the stamps to prevent the stamp's reuse. This guaranteed that the Independent Mail Company's assets increased.

Although this makes common sense to us today, this was a relatively new concept in the mid-1840s. Although a single stamp could cost only five cents, that was a much greater percent of the hourly wage than today's stamps. Reusing a stamp must have been a great temptation. ALM continued to carry unstamped letters where the sender apparently had no stamps, and the cover was then stamped "collect." In fact, in some collections stampless covers can outnumber the stamped covers. It very well may be that the customer was going through a transition to stamp usage at the same time the mail carriers were learning the new concept. Hale and Co. also offered the "collect" option, so ALM would have probably offered the "collect" service to remain competitive (David Snow personal communication).

Even though selling stamps was to ALM's advantage and would become the norm in the years to follow, buying stamps to have on hand was probably first seen when the communications were very frequent. In an extensive correspondence between a broker in Philadelphia to fellow brokers in NYC (discussed in Part 7), not once, did the sender use the "collect" service. But he may have been an exception, since he was sending letters every first of the month and buying a stamp sheet ahead of time saved him money. When a stamp was used, an occasional stamp made it through uncanceled, but as a rule, ALM clerks were very diligent in obliterating the face of the stamps. If the sending office missed the cancel, the receiving office probably finished the job. This became an essential aspect of dealing with postage stamps for all successful mail companies, and it continues today.

When is a cancel more than an obliterator?

The new owner of ALM needed to apply new ideas to his company, or he would have struggled in the same ways that Spooner struggled. First, the new owner changed the appearance of the stamp. The new stamp still had an eagle design and was still colored black, but the new owner's stamp was larger and stood out boldly on the cover. While Spooner's stamp showed "20 FOR A DOLLAR" prominently across the bottom, the new stamp had no denomination. Even under Spooner, the value of the stamp could vary. It was worth 6 ¼ cents if purchased alone, but only 5 cents when purchased in a lot of 20. We do not know why the denomination was not added to the new stamp, but it is possible Spooner's customers had found a fixed denomination confusing.

The new ALM owner added one more twist. From the very first month, he had ALM clerks occasionally cancel the larger stamp with writing on the face of the stamp. This article proposes that the intent of these manuscript cancels was to send an instruction from the originating office to the recipient office about how the customer wanted them to service the cover. Only very rarely was the manuscript cancel re-canceled with the common "x" cancel. These distinctive manuscript cancels were apparently considered a sufficient obliterator of the stamp, but it took time to apply the new initial cancels, so why was it used? Although uncommon, the "EHB" cancel was by far the most frequently used manuscript cancel on the ALM stamps. What was its message to the receiving office?

Two examples that illustrate what the “EHB” cancels might have meant

Finding a meaning for the “EHB” cancels will require a look at several examples throughout this article. The “EHB” cancels were so varied and from so many different cities, that we must rule out that they represented a single agent’s initials as earlier researchers had suggested. **Figure 3-1** will introduce the basic concept of the proposed “EHB” service, but the reader should first note the cancels on the two covers in **Figure 3-1**. These two “EHB” cancels are by two distinctively different hands. The manuscript letters of “EHB” in the first example (**frames a and b**) are separated, while the letters of the second example (**frames c and d**) are run together. The two cancels appear to have been made by two different people. This is the first suggestion that the “EHB” cancels are not initials applied by one agent. “JG”, “TBS” and “DB” may have been agent initials, but they were rare. The “EHB” cancels, in contrast were the most frequent of the ALM manuscript cancels, and they seem to represent something other than a single agent’s initials.

The Thompson cover

Figure 3-1 frames a and b illustrate a significant ALM cover. It is known as the Thompson cover (A3-IEHB-1), and it is the earliest appearance of the “EHB” cancel on an ALM cover (datelined August 26, 1844). It originated in Philadelphia, and it is proposed here that the stamp was canceled with “EHB” by the clerk in the Philadelphia ALM office under instructions from the new owner. This cover might therefore represent the owner’s new experiment. The fact that the cancel first appears on a blue eagle (5L3) stamp suggests that the new blue-colored stamp may have been produced for use on “EHB” related covers. If the “EHB” system was the intended use of the blue stamp, it may have turned out to be inconvenient in practice. Using the blue stamp meant the clerk had to keep a constant supply of two different stamp colors on hand and remember to use the blue ones as intended. An “EHB” cancel, on the other hand, only required the clerk to have the same pen he would be using for the simple “x” cancels. If the receiving clerk had no difficulty noting the “EHB” canceled covers, the blue stamp was not needed. Both the “EHB” cancel and the blue stamp may have been part of the new owner’s experiment. The blue-stamp part of his experiment appears to have fizzled, although the “EHB” part caught on.

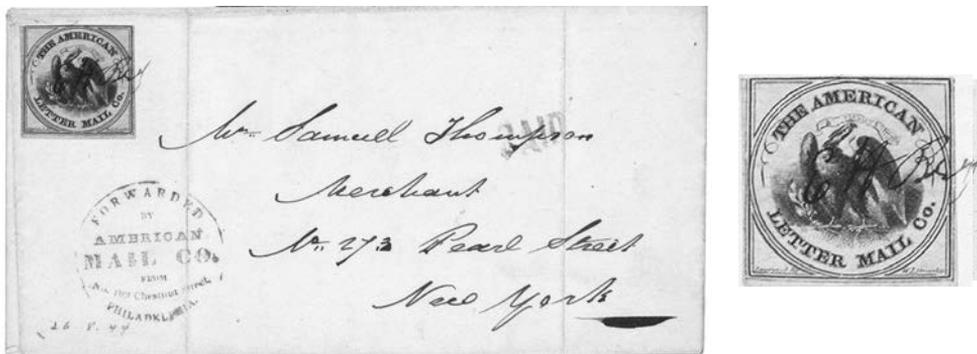


Figure 3-1 a and b. The Thompson cover (before cleaning), and the stamp cropped from the cover.



Figure 3-1 c and d. The Harris and Brown cover, and the stamp cropped from the cover.

The Thompson cover is both the earliest use of “EHB,” and also, a very early use of the new owners new Philadelphia handstamp (ALM-PHL-F10). The cover illustrates that the blue eagle stamps were not only available early under the new owner, but they were also used on letters very early. “EHB” cancels also occurred on the small black eagle stamp (5L1) and the larger black 5L2 stamps. However, the earliest surviving use of “EHB” on these other issues was not until November 4, 1844, two and a half months later. If the “EHB” cancel was to become a form of “registration” system under the new owner (as proposed here), the Thompson cover illustrates this well. The reader, however, must remember that this is a just a working hypothesis.

The cover is addressed to “Samuel Thompson, Merchant, No. 273 Pearl Street, New York.” Thompson is listed at the Pearl Street address in Doggett’s 1845 *New York City Directory* as Samuel Thompson and Nephew living in Brooklyn, and also, dealing in coal at 43 Gold Street. The Pearl Street address is not far from today’s Brooklyn Bridge and the FDR Drive, and it is close to the wharfs on the East River where Thompson sometimes sold his goods. The building seems to be gone now and may have been replaced with the Pearl Street Playground.

In the Thompson 1844 letter (**Figure 3-2 a**), an agent named John W. Downing was writing on behalf of a buyer named David S. Brown in Philadelphia. The letter is illustrated here in its entirety, since it involved David Sands Brown who may have been the new ALM owner. “EHB” was used extensively in the Brown company auditing system at that time, and therefore, may be the origin of the “EHB” cancels on the ALM stamps. An argument for this close association will be made in Part 8 of this series. **Figure 3-2 b** illustrates an example of the “EHB” auditing notation that David S. Brown’s Company used in their internal auditing system. In the example shown, the initials appear in the docketing, but on another cover sent to Brown (not illustrated), “EHB” initials also appeared on an inside invoice. The Brown Company initials were like the “EHB” manuscript cancels applied by ALM to their stamps. Of course, the initials were not identical in handwriting, since the ALM cancels were applied by ALM clerks, and the David Brown Company auditing initials were applied by his company employees.

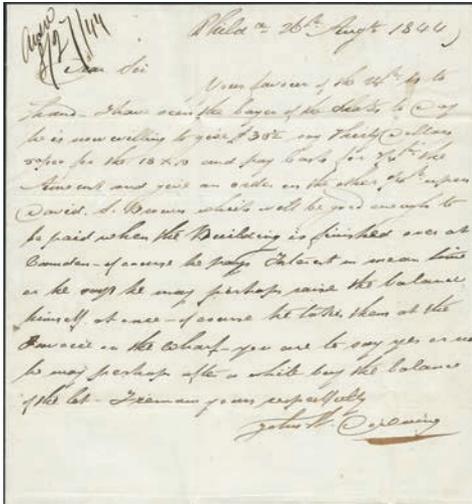


Figure 3-2a and b: The Thompson letter, and an example of the David S. Brown Company internal audit marks that were like the cancels on ALM stamps.

According to McElroy’s 1845 *Philadelphia City Directory*, David S. Brown and Co. was located at 38 Front Street, and ALM’s Philadelphia office was at 109 Chestnut (about a month later it moved to 101 Chestnut). Downing lived on South Street with an office at 9 Walnut while an agent, and also, 21 Chestnut while dealing coal from the South Wharf. Both Downing’s offices were just a few doors away from Front Street. Therefore, Brown, Downing, and the ALM office were all within a short walking distance of each other.

Both Downing and Thompson were coal dealers and may have known each other previously. But this letter was about the purchase of some slate for David S. Brown’s new building in Camden, across the Delaware River from Brown’s main company building. Downing wrote to Thompson that he had shown Thompson’s proposal (that he had before him) to Brown the buyer. Thompson sent his proposal on August 24, Downing spoke with Brown, then wrote to Thompson on the 26th and Thompson immediately responded on the 27th. Therefore, this was about a business agreement that had urgency.

Downing wrote Thompson that Brown wanted to pay upfront three-quarters of the cost of the slate and pay the other quarter later. Brown was hoping he could raise money to pay the entire order off quickly but wanted the slate he could afford sent immediately to the wharf near his Front Street building. Downing, speaking for Brown, wrote “you are to say yes or no” and send the slate to Brown. Downing indicated to Thompson where to send the slate from NYC to a wharf in Philadelphia, but he needed a response that the payment agreement was acceptable, and that the shipment was being sent. The remaining cost of the slate Brown would pay later. Therefore, there was not only some urgency here, but Thompson had to respond to Downing that he accepted the payment arrangements Brown was proposing. Then, the

slate was to be sent based on their promise. But first, Brown needed to know if he should anticipate the delivery.

More detail on the origin of the “EHB” acronym will be discussed in the final part of this series, while the remainder of this article will argue that the “EHB” cancels could not be agent initials. This article will also illustrate that “EHB” letters were expressing a degree of urgency and importance. Often, the sender was encouraging a response. In the Thompson letter, the sender appears to have been looking for a rapid reply. The additional “EHB” examples that follow in this article show letters possibly soliciting timely journal subscriptions, canceling of magazine subscriptions, initiating essential insurance coverage, or requesting information needed before a sale could be completed. ALM probably charged for the proposed “EHB” service, although there is no record of what the charge might have been. An extra charge would explain why the service was used sparingly and the cancels are uncommon. There are no company records of a charge or other notations on the face of the covers, but the “EHB” cancel suggests special treatment, and that, of course, usually costs more money.

The Harris and Brown cover

The second cover illustrated in **Figure 3-1 (frames c and d)** is known as the Harris and Brown cover (A2-IEHB-28) and is dated May 29, 1845. This cover is also very significant. It is the last known use of the “EHB” cancel. For this second example, the stamp is not the blue eagle stamp, but rather, the more common black eagle stamp. The handstamp and address indicate the letter was sent to New London, Connecticut from NYC (ALM-NYS-F09). The recorded date is only a week before ALM began to close its doors throughout June 1845. Not much is known about the Harris and Brown company except they worked out of New London Connecticut where the cover is addressed. They were agents for Perry Davis’ Vegetable Pain Killer for lung problems. They advertised in the *Hartford Courant*, March 1848, but in the ad, they noted that they had been sponsoring the product since 1845. The cover might have contained contents pertaining to the pain killer.

While the Thompson cover may illustrate how the “EHB” service was meant to work, the Harris and Brown cover may show that the cancel was an alert system for the receiving agent to act. If the service was not to be performed, the cancel had to be obliterated. Normally, nearly all ALM stamps under the new owner were simply canceled with a small “x” in the middle of the stamp. This Harris and Brown cover was canceled with a large “X” that went from the corner of the design to the other corners touching all four corners. No other “EHB” stamps are re-canceled with an “X” except one canceled with a small “x” that will be noted later. This distinctive large “X” re-cancel is found on no other “EHB” stamp and is very rare on any ALM stamp. Apparently, “EHB” cancels were a cancel in themselves and almost always required no additional cancel. This particular Harris and Brown cancel is an exception, since it received a second obliterating cancel. One possibility is that the clerk was canceling the promised “EHB” service by carefully crossing off the “EHB” message. We do not know the specifics of the “EHB” service, but in this unique surviving example, the “EHB” message apparently had to be obliterated.

It can be proposed that the clerk noted the “EHB” command, knew it could not be honored anymore, so he canceled the request. If that is what happened, this

suggests that the “EHB” cancel had meaning that a clerk understood, and the “EHB” cancel had a function the clerk decided to cancel. The receiving clerk may have canceled the stamp with the large “X,” or maybe the originating office clerk made a mistake and crossed out his own “EHB” marking.

Some hesitation is due here. This is just a proposal, but it is consistent with what we see on the cover. The clerk may have had to cancel the service for this client, because in another week, ALM was closing its office and its records. Offering a paper trail by entering a customer’s urgent letter into the company books was not practical, if the books were soon to be closed and unavailable in the future. The Harris and Brown cover was written on Thursday of the last week of May. It could not have arrived and been recorded in New London any earlier than Friday. If the recipient responded immediately as might have been encouraged in the letter, the recipient’s response letter had to be carried to another city. If the sender needed a record that his letter was sent and received, the company books might not be available for him to prove his letter was received. Everything in the office (including the ledgers, if there were any) was to be gone by the end of the month. Even the clerk that canceled this stamp knew he personally would be out of work by the end of the next month. This would not be like a year-end adjustment in today’s companies or the closing of a single store in a chain. This was an entire company going out of business forever by an Act of Congress. There would be no reprieve or means to carry out business at the end of June.

As will be discussed later, ALM would have been closing its records the very week the Harris and Brown cover arrived. ALM probably decided to end the “EHB” service earlier that month. The company had known the end was coming as early as the March 3rd Congressional Act of 1845. The next earliest surviving “EHB” cover was April 18, 1845 (A2-IEHB-27), but of course, the service could have continued after that date. Late May, however, appears to have been too late. If the proposal here is correct, the Harris and Brown letter would never be recorded as it would normally have been using this service. The large “X” re-cancel also informed the recipient that details about the cover were not entered in the books of the origin office as the sender requested, and the details would not be entered in the company books upon the covers arrival. There would be no tracking record available for this cover.

“EHB” Variation

Table 3-1 summarizes the eighteen “EHB” canceled stamps found so far. All three ALM issues are represented. There are likely many more “EHB” stamps to be discovered. Many of these discoveries will probably be on the large black eagle stamps, because very few small eagle stamps have been found canceled with “EHB” so far, and there are probably very few blue eagle stamps left to be discovered. Only two small black eagle stamps (A1-IEHB-1 and 2) were found canceled by “EHB”. This is eleven percent of the “EHB” survey population, but the low percent of usage is not a complete surprise, since these small eagle stamps were probably carryovers from when Spooner owned the company. Thirteen large black eagle stamps are listed in the table (72 percent). This stamp was the workhorse for ALM under the new owner. Only three blue eagle stamps with “EHB” were found (17 percent), and this might not seem a surprise at first, because the blue eagle was rarely used in general

anyway. There is no record of why the blue eagle stamps were produced, but the new owner may have specifically printed the blue stamps for the “EHB” cancel system. If that is true, the blue eagle stamps were not strictly used as he intended.

Table 3-1 is similar in format to the earlier survey tables (Part 1, Tables 1-1, 1-2). The stamp code is given in the first four columns with the first part being the company (A for ALM) and its issues (1,2,3), followed by the IEHB (initial cancel “EHB”) and ending with its number. The cover date, where known, is after the code on the table, and this is followed by information on the addressee, their address, handstamps, auction appearances, certification and provenance of the stamp, if appropriate. Abbreviations are at the bottom of the table.

The exact function of the “EHB” cancels is unknown, but the variation is undeniable. **Figure 3-3** illustrates the wide range of “EHB” cancel styles, and this continues to support that the “EHB” cancels are not a single agent’s initials. **Figure 3-3 a** and **b** show two manuscript cancels with the letters separated from each other. The example in **Figure 3-3 frame a** (A2-IEHB-1) is on a cover to John Townsend in Albany with a Philadelphia handstamp (ALM-PHL-F11), and **Figure 3-3 frame b** (A2-IEHB-2) is a single. The two “EHB” cancels are similar but may or may not have been applied by the same clerk. The Townsend stamp is the only “EHB” example surveyed, other than the Harris and Brown stamp, that was re-canceled with an “X.” The Townsend stamp, however, is canceled with the smaller “x” characteristic of other stamps canceled without the “EHB” cancel. It is not known why the clerk decided to apply the second cancel.



Figure 3-3a through d. Variation and similarities between “EHB” cancels.

In **Figure 3-3**, the first two cancels discussed above are clearly different from the second pair (**frames c and d**). It is hard to argue that the same agent signed all four of these stamps. **Frame c** shows the stamp cropped from a George Stuart and Brothers cover (A3-IEHB-3) sent to Philadelphia probably from New York or Boston. It is one of the first suggestions that the blue eagle stamps were used from cities other than Philadelphia. The cover’s photo has low resolution, since it appeared in an auction fifty years ago. The “EHB” letters on this G. Stuart stamp are connected.

The second connected “EHB” example (**Figure 3-3 d**) is from a cover to Henry W. Miller (A2-IEHB-6) in Worcester, Massachusetts about 20 to 30 miles west of Boston. It is dated April 1, 1845. Miller is listed in the 1850 Federal Census as a machinist owning a hardware store on Main Street in Worcester. Based on the

Table 3.1. "EHB" Cancels of the American Letter Mail Company

TABLE 3-1 "EHB" Cancels of the American Letter Mail Company (18)

Co	Iss	Canc	N	M	D	Yr	Addressee	Address	City	Pd	Script	Pd HdSt	City HdSt	Auction*	Certification	Provenance
A	1	IEHB	2	11	4	44	(5L1 "EHB" single) Rev. A. D. Gillette	**	PHL	"Single ~"	no	PHL-F11	PHL-F11	S/1125/859		
A	2	IEHB	1	12	9	44	John Townsend	(shows bleed from cleaning)	Alb	no	PHL-P01	PHL-F11	F/Sale4/357			Middendorf
A	2	IEHB	2	12	27	44	Ripley & Co		Htfd	pencil "2"	no	no	S/1016/1236	PF371033 (cleaned)		
A	2	IEHB	3	12	30	44	Noah Taylor	Market St.	PHL	no	no	PHL-F11	S/834/705	PF223675		
A	2	IEHB	4	3	3	45	Hon. H. Lincoln	Bapt. Miss. Rm.	BOS	"Single ~"	no	BOS-F03	S/925/1014			Kuphal
A	2	IEHB	5	3	12	45	Vinal & Blanchard	Granite Wharf	BOS	no	no	BOS-F03		PF547651		
A	2	IEHB	6	4	1	45	Henry W. Miller	(printed on an ad circular)	Wst	no	NYC-P03	NYS-F09	S/908/4536	PF439036		
A	2	IEHB	7	4	18	45	Buck & Peters	29 South St	NYC	"Paid"	no	BOS-F04	S/830/228			Hall
A	2	IEHB	8	5	29	45	Harris & Brown		NLon	no	NYC-P03	NYS-F09	S/1124/35			Schwartz, Puliafito
A	2	IEHB	9				(5L2 "EHB" single)		NHav	no	NYC-P03	no		PF547649		Stimmell
A	2	IEHB	10	no	no	no	Rev. Edw. Tyler	"Editor of the Newenglander								
A	2	IEHB	11	no	no	no	Wm. C. Murdock	**	BOS	no	no	BOS-F04		PSE1325137		
A	2	IEHB	12	2	5	45	Ripley & Co		Htfd	pencil "2"	NYC-P03	no				
A	2	IEHB	13				(5L2 "EH" Single)***							APS201720		
A	3	IEHB	1	8	26	44	Samuel Thompson	273 Pearl St.	NYC	no	PHL-P01	PHL-F10	S/788/271,	PF319639		Caspary,
A	3	IEHB	2				(5L3 "EHB" Single)						Hr/1071/546	(cleaned)		Perry
A	3	IEHB	3	? ?	? ?	? ?	G. Stuart & Bros.	**	PHL	no	no	PHL-F10	He/(2-24-65)/			Schwartz, Puliafito

* F=Frajola, He=Heiman (2-24-65), Hr=Harmer, S=Siegel, SR=Schuyler Rumsey

** G. Stuart, Stuart & Brothers cover has no street address. Church Alley address is on another cover & in McElroy's Philadelphia City Directory. Rev. A. D. Gillette cover has no street address. McElroy's PHL Directory lists address as 69 N 12th (11th Baptist Church) & is misspelled Gillette. Complete addressee is "Sarah Grace Van Dusen care of Rev. A. D. Gillette"

*** Wm. C. Murdock cover has no street address and is a front only. Stimpson's Boston City Directory lists the address as 32 Fulton. A2-IEHB-13 single has only "EH" and has a preprinting fold.

handstamp (ALM-NYC-F09), the Miller cover was mailed from NYC. All four signings in **Figure 3-3** look dissimilar, but the final two seem completely different than the first two.

Figure 3-4 a and b illustrate a cover sent to Wm. C. Murdock in Boston (handstamp ALM-BOS-F04). The cover was certified very recently by PSE (#01325137). This is uncommon, since most American Letter Mail Company stamps and covers have a Philatelic Foundation certificate. If PSE has certified many other ALM stamps it is not known, since PSE does not have a search engine based on specific issues. The certificate number is needed to enter their search engine. The Murdock cover is only a partial cover front with an extremely brief comment remaining on the back. Its content was for 1730 ¼ pounds of something and gave a price per item. William C. Murdock is listed in Stimpson's 1842 through 1845 *Boston City Directory* as a shoe and leather merchant at 9 Fulton Street in Boston and living in Bedford. The cover was probably a price quote on items for sale that Murdock was considering. The cover is interesting, because someone placed the black eagle stamp on the cover completely upside down, but the clerk signed "EHB" correctly to be read without turning the letter over. This supports that "EHB" was not a precancel and was meant to be seen while mailing. Notice here again that the stamp was never canceled.



Figure 3-4 a and b. The Murdock stamp cropped and rotated, and on its cover front.



Figure 3-4 c and d. A large black eagle stamp canceled with only "EH" on the stamp, and a small black eagle "EHB" cancel.

Figure 3-4 frame c illustrates a large black eagle stamp with a pre-printing paper fold. It is certified by APS (#201720). Both the paper fold and the APS certification are the only examples of their kind represented in the survey. The stamp (A2-IEHB-3) is a single with a faint but unusual “EHB” cancel. In this example, the “EH” letters are on the stamp. The cancel looks like the Murdock “EHB” cancel, but on this single, the “B” seems to have been signed onto the cover and away from the stamp. Applied this way, the cancel is unique. The other example in **Figure 3-4 (frame d)** is an “EHB” cancel on a small black eagle. The stamp is a single, and the cancel looks similar to the “EHB” cancel on the Harris and Brown cover discussed earlier.



Figure 3-5 a and b: The Tyler cover, and its stamp cropped from the cover.



Figure 3-5 c and d: A black eagle and a blue eagle apparently both sent from Boston.

Figure 3-5 frames a and b illustrate a cover sent to Reverend William Tyler, the editor of *The New Englander* in New Haven, Connecticut. It recently received a Philatelic Foundation certificate (PF547649). The sender had read a review written by Tyler and published in a Boston newspaper called the *New England Puritan*. In the *Library of Congress* article titled “Chronicling America,” this newspaper was

reportedly published in Boston for just a few years from 1841 to 1849. The newspaper was about the “Life and Character of Rev. Dr. Nettleton” published in the *New Englander and Yale Review* (Vol 3: 79, January 1845). The writer of this letter to Tyler covered every inch of the cover sheet, front and back, except for parts of the stamp. He wrote a second sheet also, but it has been lost, so we do not know the sender’s name. We do know he was a very religious man and very unhappy with Tyler’s review. The “EHB” cancel and the content of the cover suggest this cover was sent from Boston in early 1845.

The writer was incensed by Tyler’s review and was expressing himself strongly. He even wrote that he wished to end his subscription to the *New Englander*. If “EHB” was a service, it is possible this subscription cancelation was part of the reason the sender requested the proposed ALM service. This may have been what prompted using the “EHB” cancel (and probably an extra fee), so that there would be a record of the sender’s request to cancel his subscription. Its intent may also have been meant to alert the *New Englander* editor that this letter was more than just an unhappy reader’s complaint. He also wanted his subscription canceled, which required an action by the editor.

Figure 3-5 frames c and d show stamps with similar “EHB” handwriting to the Tyler stamp. **Figure 3-5 c** shows a black-eagle stamp that is part of the Edward D. Peters family correspondence from Boston to New York discussed in Part 2 (**Figure 2-7**). It will be discussed again in Part 7. So, both the Tyler and Peters covers are from Boston. The stamp illustrated in **Figure 3-5 frame d** is a blue eagle single. The matching “EHB” handwriting between the stamps in **Figure 3-5** suggests that the blue eagle single in **frame d** is also from Boston, like the two black eagle stamps shown in the figure. Based on the “EHB” handwriting, therefore, this single (A3-IEHB-2) appears to be another example of the blue eagle used from a city other than Philadelphia. While **Figure 3-3** illustrates that “EHB” signings had considerable variation, **Figure 3-5** shows that some of the signings could also be quite similar.



Figure 3-6 a and b: The Gillette cover, and its stamp cropped from the cover.



Figure 3-6 c and d: The Lincoln cover, and its stamp cropped from the cover.

Figure 3-6 shows two covers apparently written entirely in the same hand. The writing is so similar that even the “Single” in the lower left corner is written with the same spiral after it. The two covers were mailed to Philadelphia and to Boston, so New York would be a good guess as to the origin of both covers. David Snow (personal notations, care of John Bowman) noted the sender as Reverend Dr. (Spencer H.) Cone pastor of the First Baptist Church in New York and President of the American and Foreign Bible Society.⁴ The Philadelphia cover (**Figure 3-6 frames a and b**) is addresses to Sarah Van Dusen care of Reverend A(braham) D(unn) Gillette (A1-IEHB-2). Gillette is listed in McElroy’s 1844 and 1845 *Philadelphia City Directory* (spelled both times Gillett) as active in the 11th Baptist Church on North 12th Avenue. A Mrs. Vandusen donated \$100 to the *Baptist Mission Magazine* in 1851 (Vol. 31, page 159), so perhaps this letter was soliciting a church donation. The cover is franked with a small black eagle stamp, and stamped with an early Philadelphia handstamp (ALM-PHL-F10) showing the date November 4, 1844. The Gillette cover is one of just a few ALM covers where the cancel ties the stamp to the cover. It is the earliest “EHB” cover reported so far (other than the Thompson cover), but there may be earlier covers yet to be discovered.

The second cover (**Figure 3-6 frames c and d**) was sent to Hon(orable) H(eman) Lincoln (A2-IEHB-4). He is listed in Stimpson’s 1844 and 1845 *Boston City Directory* as the treasurer of the Boys Baptist Mission Room in the Joy Building, Boston (a historic 1808 building on the west side of Washington Street). Lincoln is listed in an April 23, 1834 treasurer’s report of *The American Baptist Magazine* (Vol. 14 page 251). Since Lincoln was a treasurer at one point, there may have been some financial content in the letter requiring attention and perhaps urgency. The Lincoln letter is dated March 3, 1845, which is four months after the similar Gillette cover.

⁴ *First Annual Report of the American and Foreign Bible Society*, 1938, New York, Printed by John Gray, Walter Street NY.

Despite the long four-month break, the “EHB” manuscript writing suggests the same clerk in New York City applied the “EHB” cancels on the two letters.

Why did some ALM stamps receive the “EHB” cancel and others did not?

Two more covers are compared in **Figure 3-7**. The cover pictured in **frame a**, does not have an “EHB” cancel but is instead canceled with a unique “place cancel.” It has a black eagle stamp canceled with what appears to be a street number followed by “Wall” on one line and “NY” below that line (A2-IWall-1). The cover recently received a Philatelic Foundation certificate (PF547650). It was mailed from New York and is addressed to (Robert) Vinal and (William) Blanchard on Granite Wharf in Boston (Figure 5-3 frame a). Granite Wharf is not found on the Boston city maps or listed anywhere in the Stimpson *Boston City Directory*. It may be a local name for the Commercial Wharf, since Vinal and Blanchard are listed as flour and grain merchants at 17 Commercial Wharf. This was on Boston Harbor’s main channel and across from Provincetown, Cape Cod.

The “Wall” letter asks Vinal and Blanchard to insure bales of material already “on deck” and sent on the schooner “A. M. Hale” the day before from NYC (March 21, 1845). In 1843, the Equitable Marine Insurance Company was incorporated and then located in Provincetown (*Boston Post*, February 3, 1843). From docketing on this cover, Vinal and Blanchard apparently arranged an insurance policy for the sender with Equitable Marine Insurance to cover the material being sent. Since Vinal and Blanchard were merchants on the wharf, it was just a short ferry ride across to Provincetown to set this up. Vinal and Blanchard dealt in flour and grain and the senders were brewers, so the cargo might have been sent directly to Vinal and Blanchard, and that is why they were asked to set up the insurance.

On a nearly identical cover (A2-IEHB-5) by the same correspondents (Jacob Harvey to Vinal and Blanchard) insurance was again discussed just a week after the “Wall” letter. But on this second cover, the black eagle stamp was canceled with “EHB.” There is writing under the “EHB” stamp that reads “Amer” on the top line and “Letter Mail” and “Co” on the two lines below that. This was completely covered by the “EHB” canceled stamp placed inside a square apparently written by the sender to indicate where the stamp should be placed (**Figure 3-7, frame c**).

While the first cover (**Figure 3-7 frames a and b**) is not an “EHB” cover, it is otherwise a nearly identical twin to the “EHB” cover pictured in **frames c and d**. Both covers are addressed to (Robert) Vinal and (William) Blanchard in Boston. The sender sent both letters from NYC. He was Jacob Harvey the Assistant President of the Alliance Mutual Insurance Company, 58 Wall Street. Harvey was representing William B. and Abail. Miles of W.B.A. Miles Brewery located on 50 Christie Street in NYC. The earlier letter (A2-IWall-21, **frame a and b**) was franked with the unique “Wall NY” cancel and will be discussed in greater detail in Part 5.

In the second cover franked with an “EHB” canceled stamp (A2-IEHB-25, **frames c and d**), Harvey is again representing Miles, and he writes that he had contacted (Abel) Foster and (Joshua) Nickerson commission merchants (listed in Doggett’s 1845 *New York City Directory* as located at 25 South Street). This second Vinal and Blanchard cover is dated March 12, 1845. In the letter, Harvey indicated he had sought a contract with Foster and Nickerson as suggested by Vinal and Blanchard

in an earlier letter (not the “Wall” letter; the earlier letter where Vinal and Blanchard made this suggestion did not survive). So, Harvey had just followed through with Vinal and Blanchard’s suggestion and was getting back to them. Foster and Nickerson said the freight cost suggested was too low, so they could not make the contract, but as agents for the “New Line,” they could, if Harvey would specify that the “New Line” would be used. Foster and Nickerson had told Harvey, “The terms specified you will oblige us by so doing providing” (underlined by Harvey) “that his “New Line” will run as regular as the other lines.”



a.



b.



c.



d.

Figure 3-7 a through d: Two covers to Vinal and Blanchard, and their stamp cropped from the cover (the “Wall” stamp rotated).

Clearly, Vinal and Blanchard were being asked to answer where they stood on all of this. Harvey needed to be provided (he underlined this in the letter) with the fact they would use the “New Line.” Harvey needed their answer to move forward

with the arrangements with Foster and Nickerson. If the earlier letter from Harvey is any indication, the Mile's product was probably already on the ship ready to sail to Boston. There was clear urgency here, and the "EHB" cancel may have helped alert the recipient to that urgency.

There is a significant question one can ask about this pair of Vinal and Blanchard covers. The "Wall" cover may be a philatelic oddity, but the "EHB" covers are the commonest of the ALM manuscript cancels. Why did the first cover not receive an "EHB" cancel, and the second did? The two covers were sent to the same recipient by the same sender and both letters involved a matter of insurance coverage. Why were they canceled differently? Was the second part of an ALM service, and the first was not? The proposal put forth in this part of the series argues that ALM kept more detailed records on the second letter than the first. Both letters had a degree of urgency, but perhaps the second situation prompted the sender to avail himself of the ALM "EHB" service, because the sender (Harvey) felt a greater urgency and a need to have a record kept of the communications. Both letters discussed timely matters. But the second seems to be waiting a reply that gives it even greater urgency. Only the second letter was franked with "EHB."

How many clerks initialed "EHB" stamps?

While there is certainly variation in the "EHB" initials, one can wonder whether just one clerk in each office was assigned to initial the stamps this way. The Gillette and Lincoln covers discussed earlier (**Figure 3-6**) might suggest that only one clerk signed "EHB" on ALM stamps in New York City. However, **Figures 3-7** and **3-8** suggest otherwise.

The second Vinal and Blanchard cover illustrated in **Figure 3-7 (frames c and d)**, is an "EHB" cover sent from NYC. **Figure 3-8 frames a through d** illustrate two more New York covers with their stamps cropped for detail. As with the two Vinal and Blanchard covers in **Figure 3-7**, both covers in **Figure 3-8** are each from the same correspondence. They are addressed to Ripley and Company in Hartford. Both required further local delivery as noted by the "2" notation. The first letter was dated December 27, 1844 (A2-IEHB-22). The second letter (A2-IEHB-32) was dated February 5, 1845 and is stamped with an additional NY "PAID" (ALM-NYC-P03). We know from the matching handwriting of the addresses and the content of the second cover that both correspondences were from A. Taylor and Company. They were listed in Doggett's 1845 *New York City Directory* as commission merchants at 126 Pearl Street in NYC. In the second letter, Taylor was requesting Ripley to send by railroad some cast steel that they already sold to someone in NY. However, Taylor needed Ripley to know that "should the corners be cut square like sheet steel, please do not send it." Taylor already had a buyer but only if the material was properly prepared. Here, there is not only urgency, but the sender had already acted, and his deal would not go through unless he had a reply. Again, the "EHB" cancel may have in some way alerted the recipient to the urgent reply the sender needed.



a.



b.



c.



d.

Figure 3-8 a through d: The December 1844 Ripley cover (A2-IEHB-2), and its stamp cropped from the cover, and the February 1845 Ripley cover (A2-IEHB-12), and its stamp cropped from the cover.

Therefore, all three “EHB” letters in **Figures 3-7 and 3-8** were sent from NYC, and therefore, presumably canceled by a NYC clerk. The three letters were sent over a two-and-a-half-month period and two of the three covers were to the same recipient and from the same sender. But all three “EHB” cancels seem to have been written by a different person. Clearly, these three signings are not by one agent. This can be explained if the cancels were applied by three different clerks who indicated the covers should receive the “EHB” service. NYC was an active center for ALM mail delivery and no doubt had several mail clerks.⁵ These three covers in Figure 3-7 and 3-8 suggest that the “EHB” initials were understood by more than one clerk in the NY office, and more than one clerk was involved in canceling the stamps.

The “EHB” examples illustrated in this article show that the cancel was applied by different clerks in different cities and even by different clerks in the same

⁵ Bowman, *op. cit.*, 2016, Table 2, page 39.

office. Under the new owner, the “EHB” service had already established itself by August 1844 with the Thompson cover. This was very shortly after Spooner sold the company. “EHB” cancels continued to appear until shortly before the company prepared to close in June 1845 as indicated by the Harris and Brown cover. So, the “EHB” cancels were frequently seen, recognized and presumably serviced by ALM clerks in all of the major cities in the ALM network and throughout most of the company’s existence.

Comparing “EHB” cancels to the NY Postmaster Provisional initials

The initials on the well-known New York Postmaster Provisional stamps, have at least three variations on their “ACM” initials, and they can be shown to have been applied by at least three different people associated with the NY post office. The records preserved for this office even allow assigning a set of initials to a specific employee. The initials are so distinctive that *Scott’s Specialized Catalogue*⁶ lists three different “ACM” initial, and specialists collect even more than are listed. Differences in pricing is sometimes very significant.

The Postmaster was Robert H. Morris, and he signed with his initials “RHM,” although rarely.⁷ Apparently, also rare are stamps initialed by Marcena Monson as “MM Jr.” But the most common initials were by Morris’s brother-in law, Alonzo Castle Monson. He signed with his initials “ACM” in one flowing cancel that left the three initials all connected. One can imagine that the initialing was a major task, because just about all the NY Provisionals were presumably part of the planned signings, and as noted earlier, the printing was for over 140,000 stamps. Certainly, the number that were ultimately signed numbered in the thousands. Apparently to help Alonzo out, many stamps were initialed by a clerk W.C.R. Engrist and uncommonly by Alonzo’s brother Marcena, who signed earlier as “MM Jr”. But in both cases, the helpers (the clerk and the brother) signed with Alonzo’s initials (ACM). Marcena signed “A.C.M.” with periods, and W.C.R. signed “AC M” with the “CM” disconnected from the “A.” Marcena’s signings are somewhat less common than Alonzo’s, but W.C.R.’s disconnected initials are fairly common and priced in the *Scott Catalogue* at about the same as Alonzo’s. But these were not the helpers’ initials, they were Alonzo’s “ACM.”

So, one can see that the “ACM” had evolved from Alonzo’s initials into a stylized cancel meant apparently to prevent re-use of the stamps or perhaps a means of auditing supplies. In the same way, the ALM “EHB” cancels were applied by different clerks at different times, and they presumably always stood for the same thing also. Unlike the “ACM” initials, however, “EHB” was used uncommonly and probably designated a service. We know it was not as a control like the NY Provisionals, since so very few ALM stamps received the “EHB” markings. Also, the Provisional stamps were routinely re-canceled with a pair of ink lines or less commonly with a circular date stamp when found used on a cover. The “EHB” cancels were almost never re-canceled.

⁶ *Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers*, (published by Amos Media Co., Sidney, Ohio), 2017.

⁷ Piller, *op. cit.*, “Initials Used to Validate the New York Provisional” page 41.

The ALM “EHB” initials have at least as much variation and probably more than the NY Provisionals. This is in spite of the fact that there are a few thousand examples of the NY Provisional stamps to compare, yet we have found only eighteen examples of the “EHB” cancels to compare. **Figure 3-9** show photos from Siegel auctions of the three primary NY “ACM” variations. **Frames 3-10** shows ALM “EHB” counterpoints to the “ACM” initials. Both series show examples of letters attached, partially separated, and completely separated.



Figure 3-9 a, b and c. Examples of New York Postmaster Provisional “ACM” cancels with letters connected, partially connected, and fully disconnected.



Figure 3-10 a, b and c. “EHB” cancels that are counterpoints to the “ACM” initials in Figure 3-9 frames a through c.

There is no reason to believe the “EHB” cancels were a form of overprint or to prevent re-use as is argued for the NY Provisional “ACM” initials.⁸ First, these distinctive ALM cancels are only very rarely re-canceled, and therefore, they apparently served as a cancel when applied. Second, the cancel ties the stamp to the cover in at least one case (A1-IEHB-2). One off cover example has only the “EH” part of the cancel on the stamp face, and the “B” presumably applied off the stamp onto the cover (A2-IEHB-13). Another “EHB” cancel, in this case on cover, was even applied upside down on the stamp but appeared right side up when compared with the

⁸ Ibid.

address on the cover (A2-IRHB-11). Third, the “ACM” cancels appear on almost all of the NY Provisional stamps, but the “EHB” cancel were applied only uncommonly. So, this author believes these ALM initials were applied by the sending clerk as a cancel, and then, were meant to be read by the receiving clerk as a signal. But what did “EHB” signal the receiving clerk to do?

What was the purpose of the “EHB” cancel?

There is no record of the purpose of the “EHB” cancels, although they were frequent enough to have been part of some ALM company general policy. The examples presented in his part of the series support that “EHB” cancels were not the initials of an ALM agent as in the case of “JG” or “TBS.” It is proposed here that “EHB” represented a service that was flagged by clerks in the receiving office. “EHB” was also warning the recipient that there was a sense of urgency in the message. The use of stamp cancels to call attention to how a cover should be handled or received was an innovation of ALM’s new owner. “EHB” served both as a signal and a cancel. It seems that “EHB” did not need a further cancel unless the second cancel was to negate the service.

The following is speculation, but it is consistent with the examples given. It might be proposed that ALM kept a record for the sender, much like we do today for “Registered” letters. Both the sending office and receiving office would have to enter the senders name and the address of the recipient including the dates when ALM was involved. The meaning of “EHB,” therefore, could have meant “Enter in the Handling Book.” Further proof of this interpretation of the “EHB” acronym will be presented in Part 8 of this series. This interpretation is suggested by David Brown Company’s internal auditing marks (an example was shown in **Figure 3-2 frame b**).

We do not have any examples of ALM ledgers, but the company must have had a system for recording arrival and departures of covers. Without this, ALM would have had no accountability for its own internal auditing of the performance of its agents and its clerks, and there were many clerks. Unlike the frequent “Mom and Pop” operations of most Independent Mail carriers, ALM was the second largest Independent Mail Company, and it carried significant volumes of the country’s mail while operating out of three major cities under the new owner. At the very least, the ALM offices must have kept a tally of the mail they handled, if only to be sure their employees were properly compensated. The owner or manager of the post would also have needed this information to allocate resources to the different offices.

There were not as many “EHB” canceled covers as the common covers handled each week, but they must have required greater attention. Otherwise, why were they canceled distinctly different with special initials that were considered as sufficient as an obliterator of the stamp, but at the same time, took extra effort to apply than a simple “x”?

What might be proposed as “EHB’s” function?

As a working hypothesis, one proposal will be made here, but it contains speculation. The “EHB” system could have functioned like a “Registered” letter functions today. In this proposal, the specific addressee and address on the cover was recorded by clerks at both the sending and receiving office with the exact dates and

perhaps time. This was then maintained for a while for future reference in case the sender required that information. It was used by clients who were sending a letter that had some degree of urgency or priority, and/or the sender wanted a record of the letter's passage. When the recipients noted the cancel, they knew there was urgency, and the letter demanded attention. "Registered" letters today have a similar effect on the recipient.

"EHB" covers were not common, so it is reasonable to assume there may have been an additional fee beyond the cost of the stamp. Unlike "collect" markings, there was no fee to collect, so the only indication of the "EHB" service is the "EHB" cancel on the stamp itself. We mostly know a cover today was registered when we see it stamped "Registered," but not necessarily by reading its content or other markings. For us, the "EHB" has no obvious meaning, but to an ALM clerk or the recipient, the "EHB" may have meant "this letter's journey was recorded, it has urgency, a record has been kept at the office of origin, and a record was kept at the receiving office also."

Only the sending clerk would have applied "EHB," since the "Registered" letter was initiated there by a sender, although a record was likely needed at both ends of its journey. One would not expect any reference to the service in the letter content. The "registration" would have been paid by the sender, and it was meant as a signal for the receiving clerk and recipient. So, it will be difficult to find examples that specifically refer to this system, except that the covers are easily identified by the "EHB" cancel. Covers with "EHB" canceled stamps, however, would be expected to have content showing urgency or a need for a specific reply from the recipient before the sender could go forward. This is a difficult discovery task, since many surviving covers have lost their contents. The "EHB" examples above, however, seem to support this urgency, and in some cases, suggest or specifically ask for a quick reply.

The Thompson cover is an excellent example of "EHB" use and perhaps the very first usage. Downing, the agent, needed a reply from the recipient (Thompson) about splitting payment on a deliver to his client (David S. Brown) before the client could prepare for the delivery at his wharf site. In Part 8 of this series, David Brown will be argued as the new ALM owner after Spooner. So, Brown being the client in this Thompson transaction seems particularly significant in this earliest use of the "EHB" cancel. In this example, David Brown's agent indicated to Thompson in the letter that he was waiting for his reply. He wrote, "you are to say yes or no." In other "EHB" covers presented earlier, important financial matters may have been discussed in the letter (Lincoln), timely offers made through an ad circular (Miller), church business noted and a donation solicited (Gillette, Van Dusen), anger expressed and a request that a subscription be urgently canceled (Tyler), insurance coverage needed immediately (Vinal and Blanchard), and a sale that was already in the making would have to be voided, if the supplier could not supply the needed material (Ripley). These examples illustrate the proposed "EHB" use, but there is no surviving ledger to give definitive proof. More covers are needed. If readers have new examples of "EHB" covers, and especially if they have content, please contact the author.

Facts to reconcile in an “EHB” cancel proposal

It will be difficult to identify the function of the “EHB” cancels on ALM stamps, because no company records seem to have survived. In this article, a system of “Registration” of covers is suggested as a working hypothesis. The Thompson cover is a good measure to use if a proposed use of “EHB” is to hold up to scrutiny. Brown and his agent can be specifically located in Philadelphia, and Thompson can be located in NYC. The instructions clearly are requesting a reply, and Thompson clearly had already made contact with the agent and had the materials ready to go. So, the Thompson letter does not fit well with any proposal that “EHB” was applied to covers either arriving from other places before being sent to the recipient, and with proposals where the cover required the recipient to pass the cover or the information along to a third party. The Thompson cover also does not fit well with a proposal where the “EHB” was applied in transit for whatever reason.

“EHB” could even have meant the return was pre-paid by the sender. To prove that, one would have to find a return letter that commented on the return service. Such a letter has not surfaced, but it probably has not been searched for yet either. Such a cover would not have an “EHB” canceled stamp, but would probably be canceled normally.

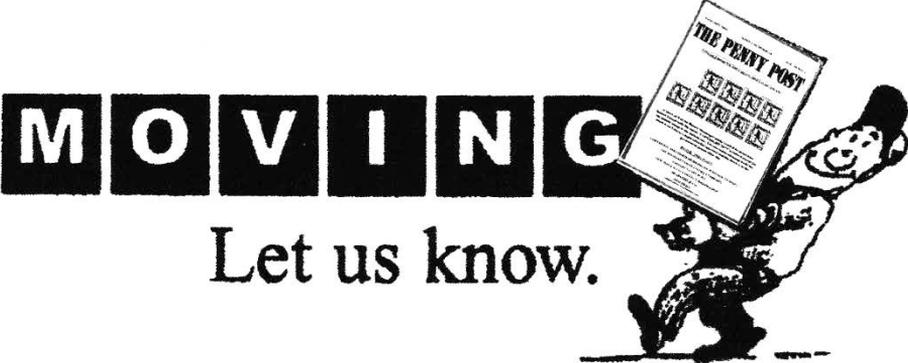
Although other scenarios than a “Registered Letter” proposal might seem plausible, the following observations must hold consistently. First, “EHB” signatures differ significantly from city to city and even within the same city, so it seems nearly impossible that they were made by the same person. Second, the cancels were only rarely re-canceled, so they were a form of cancel, not just a form of marking made before the cancel as is the case with the NY Provisional “ACM” cancels. Third, “EHB” cancels were uncommon, but they may have occurred as often as a dozen a week. That would be four on average at each of the three main ALM offices each week. This is approaching one each business day. Fourth, the cancels appeared as early as August 1844 and as late as May 1845, so they represent a system used by ALM throughout its history under the new owner. Fifth, several examples suggest urgency, and some are seeking a reply from the recipient. Finally, the “EHB” initials on the ALM stamps are like an “EHB” auditing acronym used at that same time in Philadelphia by the David S. Brown Company. At Brown’s company, “EHB” seems to mean to enter information in a company book.

Conclusion

In a survey of “EHB” canceled ALM stamps, eighteen examples were found to have survived. This suggests as many as a dozen covers were serviced each week. The handwriting of the initials suggests the cancels were not made by a single ALM agent, but probably by different clerks in different cities, and by different clerks in the same ALM office. The cancels were apparently considered sufficient obliterations of the stamp, since only two were re-canceled. In examples of the “EHB” covers still having the original contents, the letters often gave a sense of urgency, and some letters seemed to be seeking a reply. The David S. Brown Company in Philadelphia used a similar “EHB” acronym in its accounting system in the same city where ALM had a major office, and at the same time that the ALM company was in business.

The author is deeply indebted to John D. Bowman whose assistance, insights and guidance throughout this project allowed it to finally happen. Access to his extensive database of ALM covers and stamps was invaluable. Many thanks to Clifford Alexander, Vernon Morris and David Snow for their email communications, and shared lists and resources. Special thanks go to The Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries and The Philatelic Foundation for allowing generous use of their excellent search engines that made researching the many ALM varieties possible. The author welcomes comments and additional information at dwilcox1@comcast.net.

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Part 4: The “CC” Cancels of The American Letter Mail Company and the Court Trials of The Independent Mails

By
David R. Wilcox, Ph.D.

Introduction

One of the earliest Independent Mail Companies of the mid-1840s was the American Letter Mail Company (ALM). The company’s second owner began control of the company in the summer of 1844. One of the distinctive aspects of this company’s operation under the new owner included manuscript cancels across the face of their stamps.

Today’s philatelists are aware that several Independent Mail stamps are initialed with letters across their face. **Figure 4-1** illustrates some examples. In **frame a**, an ALM agent named John Gray signed a black eagle ALM stamp while writing the word “agent” below his name (discussed in detail in Part 6 of this series). Amos Bates initialed Hale & Co. stamps (**frames b**)¹, L. Shed printed his name (**frame c**) and agent “WCS” signed Pomeroy stamps (**frame d**).² J.C. Burbank may have initialed Pomeroy stamps with a “B” while acting as an owner/agent for Burbank & Co.’s Express in upstate NY (**frame e**). Although, in the case of the “B,” it may have been a generalized initial for the name of the Burbank company. Similarly, Pomeroy sometimes had stamps initialed with a “P”, and Brainard with a “B.” But these were probably not agent initials.



Figure 4-1 a through e. Examples of agent initials on independent mail company stamps, one from ALM, two from Hale and two from Pomeroy are illustrated (SEE text).

¹ Michael S. Gutman *Eastern Independent Mail and Express Mail Companies 1840-1845* Chapter 7 Hale & Company, illustrated on page 125, edited and published by Michael S. Gutman, 2016.

² David W. Snow *Eastern Independent Mail and Express Mail Companies 1840-1845* Chapter 13 Pomeroy’s Letter Express, page 438, edited and published by Michael S. Gutman, 2016.

In an unpublished manuscript, Perry and Hall suggested many of these initials may have been the work of mail carrying agents of the companies. One cancel was specifically felt to be the initials of agent Calvin Case (“CC”). Part 4 of this series will argue that the “CC” cancels do not represent Calvin Case, and some alternative meanings will be suggested.

A brief survey of “CC” canceled stamps

Only four “CC” canceled stamps have been identified, although there may be many more. The author expected to find more in searching auction lots and articles on the Independent Mails. However, a quick but careful survey of manuscript cancels from all Independent Mail companies revealed fewer examples than most collectors probably believe exist. In the case of “CC” cancels specifically, it was a bit of a surprise finding so few, since many years ago Perry and Hall in their unpublished manuscript had suggested these initials were made by Calvin Case. Perhaps since “C” alone was sometimes used to mean “canceled” or “checked,” the “CC” cancels have not received single lot listings in auction houses as most other manuscript cancels have received. Although it is likely almost all blue eagle “CC” stamps (Scott 5L3) have been found, the “CC” cancels on black eagle stamps (Scott 5L2) may be much more plentiful than the two stamps the author found by searching auction listings. And yet, there are still discoveries to be made even with the blue eagle stamps.

The second “CC” cancel on a blue eagle stamp appeared on eBay only recently. The dealer offered the stamp alone having soaked it from the cover it was on. After the stamp was sold, the dealer retrieved the cover shown in **Figure 4-2 frame c**, but there are reasons to believe the stamp did not originate there. There is a ghost to the left of the site where the blue eagle was found that suggests another stamp franked the cover. Although it is possible the stamp and cover do not belong together, the letter is described below for the record. Unfortunately, we may never know if they belonged together, since the stamp was chemically separated from the cover before it could be expertized. In Part 1 of this series, this stamp was designated A3-ICC-2. The two known blue eagle stamps are pictured along with the two black eagle stamps in **Figure 4-2** and **Figure 4-3**. The newly discovered blue eagle stamp and the cover it was on are pictured in **Figure 4-2 frame b** and **c**.



Figure 4-2 a, b and c. The first "CC" canceled stamp reported (shown photographically cropped from its Buck & Peters cover), and the recently discovery “CC” stamp and the cover from which it was chemically removed.

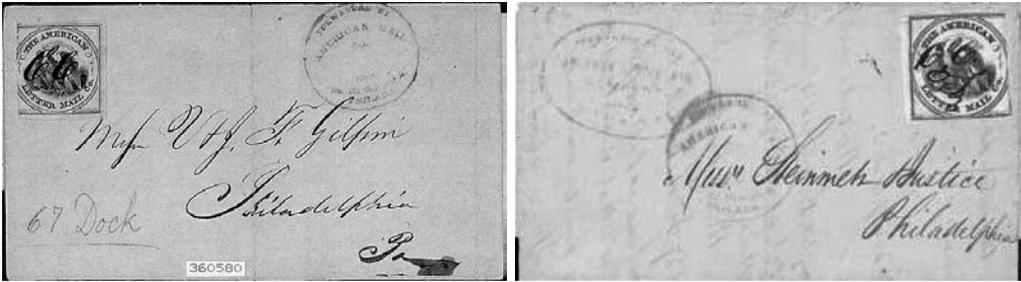


Figure 4-3 a and b. "CC" cancels on the Gilpin, and Steinmetz and Justice covers.

The first "CC" stamp on a blue eagle stamp that was discovered (A3-ICC-1 in the survey) appears on a cover found several years ago (the cover is pictured in **Figure 4-4 frame a**, and cropped in **Figure 4-2 frame a**). There was no content sheet, but there is docketing on the flap. The stamp is on a cover-sheet addressed to merchants named Buck and Peters at 29 South Street in NYC. The site is near the East River, but it is gone now. The building has been replaced by the New York Vietnam War Memorial and Vietnam Veterans Plaza. The letter is docketed as arriving from "Edwd D. Peters Co." (**Figure 4-4 frame b**).

Edward D. Peters Co. was located on the Boston Harbor at 12 Central Wharf. They were importers of everything from corn, to shovel handles, to oars and champagne (*Boston Post*, January 3, 1843 and March 6, 1843). In a *Boston Post* ad dated April 23, 1840, the company was named E. D. Peters and Son. David Snow in a personal communication to John Bowman reported that:

"Edward D. Peters & Co. was a commission and lumber house in Boston. The Davenport, Peters Co. was founded in 1811 by Edward D. Peters. Peters was sent by Maine lumber manufacturers, unhappy with the prices they were getting by using ship captains to sell their lumber, to serve as their agent in Boston. For fifty years, Edward D. Peters and E.D. Ellicott operated the firm as a wholesale lumber business."

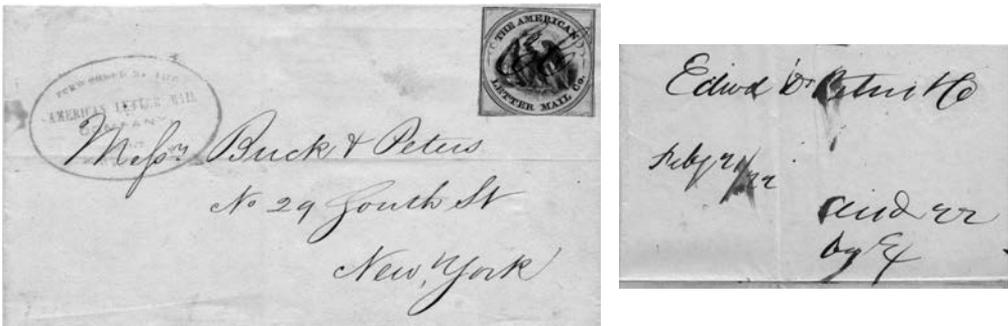


Figure 4-4 a and b. The Buck Peters "CC" cover and its docketing.

In a later notice in the *Boston Post* (June 1, 1843), it was announced the company had been dissolved. Edward D. Peters (the senior) would carry on, but Edward D. Peters Jr. had “associated himself with Richard P. Buck in New York, under the firm of Buck and Peters.” Edward Jr. was Edward (Sr.)’s. eldest son (*Ancestry.com*). So, there was a family connection between the sender and recipient of this blue eagle “CC” cover.

Edward D. Peters Jr. moved to New York and Edward D. Peters (Sr.) remained in Boston. They apparently remained close, and Edward Jr. is mentioned in his father’s last will to receive his estate estimated in 1899 at \$110,000. That was a significant sum at the time and may have included the Boston company.³ It is not known if Edward Peters (Sr.) wrote the “CC” letter personally, but it appears, from the docketing initials, that Edward Jr. responded to the letters directly. The stamp has some file-fold damage inconsistent with the cover it is on. It is also pencil docketed with an erroneous date. Even so, the cover has been certified by the Philatelic Foundation (PF511131) as belonging on the cover. Four covers from this correspondence were illustrated in Part 2 of this series,⁴ and this “CC” cover does seem to be a genuine part of the Boston correspondence to Buck & Peters in NYC.

As is common with these few “CC” letters, there is no content sheet with the Buck and Peters cover. Because of this, it is impossible to determine exactly why the “CC” canceled stamp was used on this cover. However, it was reported that Edward D. Peters of Boston was indirectly involved in a District Court case in Maine at this time. It involved an unpaid bill for \$1000 by John N. Gossler, a merchant in NYC. The District Court was “demanding” the goods be paid, and they thereby “summon said John N. Gossler” to appear before “our Justices of our District Court for the Eastern District.” The news report is so full of legalese, it might give the reader a headache (you have been warned).

“...the said John Black thereafterwards on the same day endorsed the said bill then and still unpaid, then and there delivered the same to one Edward D. Peters and the said Edward D. Peters thereafterwards viz on the same day endorsed the bill then and still unpaid and delivered the same to the Plaintiff by means whereof the said Gossler became liable.” (Bangor *Whig and Courier*, December 30, 1844).

Readers in Bangor Maine apparently had a great deal of patience. There is no content sheet with the cover, but one could speculate that the cover once contained a legal notice relating to this case.

The “CC” cancel may relate to the courts. The possibility that all “CC” covers are related in this way will be discussed at the end of this article. Although it will be strongly argued that “CC” cancels were not Calvin Case’s initials, there is very little information unfortunately that proves the true meaning of the “CC” cancels.

³ “Massachusetts’s Wills and Probate Records 1635-1991”, *Ancestry.com*.

⁴ David R. Wilcox “*Plating Studies of the Scarce Blue American Letter Mail Company Stamp, Part 2*” *Penny Post*, October 2017, Vol. 25 No. 4, pages 22-51.

The second blue eagle “CC” cancel (A3-ICC-2, **Figure 4-2 b and c**) is on a cover addressed to Tatham and Brothers in Philadelphia. The stamp recently received a Philatelic Foundation certificate (PF547645). The cover was not submitted, since the stamp was removed. We may never be sure whether it belonged. The Tathams (four brothers) were manufacturers of sheet lead and pipes in Philadelphia with an address at 15 Minor in the city and a factory on the first wharf below Cedar Street (McElroy’s, 1845 *Philadelphia City Directory*). This newly discovered letter was sent by the Lincoln Receiving Co. which may be the listing in Stimpson’s 1845 *Boston City Directory* for Lincoln R. and Co. at 56 Commerce and run by J.B. Lincoln. In the letter, Lincoln Receiving was requesting the Tathams to give a quote for some heavy sheet lead, and then continued by giving a description of their needs. They ended the note with a reference to C. C. Mackey. Mackey was an auctioneer in Philadelphia and ran many ads in the city newspapers for auctioneering of a great variety of items. Some of these auctions occurred at store closings but others were held at Mackey’s “City Auction House” at 31 North Third Street (*Public Ledger* September 14, 1844). Inside the Tatham cover, the bottom two thirds of the inner sheet have been torn away and may have had further instructions or even a form to return.

The new “CC” cover has a Philadelphia handstamp (ALM-PHL-F12) and appears to be docketed June 28, 1845. This would be an amazing late usage for any ALM cover, even if the cover combination is a fake. Scrutiny of the inside handwriting, however, suggests the date is actually January 28, 1845. The stamp was chemically lifted by the previous owner leaving a squared off transparent spot on the cover (**Figure 4-2 frame c**). The scan has been enhanced here to bring out the probable location to the left of the transparent area where there seems to have been another stamp originally. This new discovery is listed in the blue eagle general survey (Part 1, Table 1-1) but not in the covers’ survey (Part 1, Table 1-2).⁵

The early suggestion that “CC” are the initials of agent Calvin Case is challenged by the new discovery. The two sets of “CC” initials on the known blue eagle stamps do not appear to be in the same hand (**Figure 4-5 frames a and b**). Although the inking on the newer stamp is weak, the lower curve of both “C’s” of the newly discovered blue eagle are drawn wide and do not even come close to the down stroke. In the older example (A3-ICC-1), the Cs are each drawn tightly inward and touch the lower stroke.

On one of the black eagle stamps, the “CC” cancel appears on a letter to V. and J.F. Gilpin in Philadelphia (**Figure 4-5 c**) and looks similar to the cancel on the Buck and Peters cover to New York from Boston. This may suggest the Gilpin letter originated in Boston as seems to be the case for the Buck and Peters cover. An additional “CC” cancel was found on a black eagle (A2-ICC-2) to Steinmetz & Justice in Philadelphia (**Figure 4-5 d**). Unfortunately, this last cover appeared in an auction lot with other covers, and the resolution is very poor. However, it may read as “C.C.” with periods after the “Cs,” and an “of” below that could stand for office.

⁵ David R. Wilcox “*Survey of the Scarce Blue American Letter Mail Company Stamp, Part I*” *The Penny Post*, October 2017, Vol. 25 No. 4, pages 5-21.



Figure 4-5 a through d. Four examples of “CC” cancels enlarged on two blue eagle stamps and two black eagle stamps.

The two, blue eagle “CC” cancels in **Figure 4-5 (frame a and b)** seem distinctly different and raise some questions about the hypothesis that the “CC” initials are Calvin Case’s initials. To defend this idea, one must argue that Calvin Case varied his initialing significantly. It is possible the “CC” initials do not represent “Calvin Case” at all. The author favors this latter conclusion.

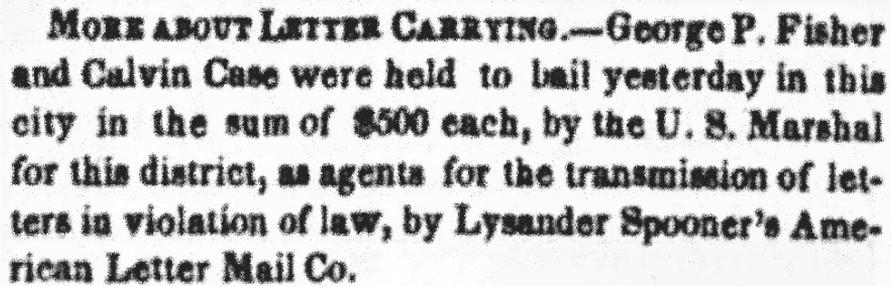
Extensive variation in “EHB” initialing has been reported in Part 3 of this series. It was suggested that the “EHB” initials were not from an agent but signified a functioning system in ALM, and they were a signal to the ALM clerks to perform a service. “CC” cancels could have served a related function for the courts, but there are too few examples and almost no letter content to study. The stamp in **Figure 4-5 frame d** is very intriguing, since it seems to have an “of” below it which might stand for “office.” Unfortunately, the resolution is poor, and the contents are unknown. As more “CC” covers are discovered, perhaps this working hypothesis involving the courts can be expanded.

The “CC” cancel’s possible association with court matters will be discussed briefly at the end of this article. But there is very little data. However, the assumption that Calvin Case initialed these “CC” stamps is undeniably wrong. And there is plenty of data for that. The remainder of this article will try to put to rest this long-standing misnomer.

Why study the trials?

Where did Calvin Case fit in with the government assault on Spooner’s agents? Did he play a significant enough role to allow him to be one of the few that initialed ALM stamps? During the Spring of 1844, several agents and owners of the Independent Mail Companies Hale & Co, Pomeroy Express, and the American Letter Mail Company were arrested. Some were tried, some were released, some were held on bond, some were convicted and some exonerated. Others probably never made it to court because of the Act of 1845 which ended the Independent Mail Companies’ right to exist, and this made the final court challenge moot. They probably just paid their fine. It was political theater. Although extensively documented in the press, the details of these confusing arrests and decisions has not been well told. We need to try to understand these events here to understand Calvin Case’s role in the history of the ALM.

The events can be confusing at times, so **Table 4-1** may help the reader follow the commentary that follows. The table is intended to list many of the references about the events, but it is probably incomplete. The goal of the table and the commentary is to focus on Calvin Case as an employee of the American Letter Mail Company, and whether he initialed ALM stamps as an agent. Some agents did cancel American Letter Mail stamps, but very few and not on a regular basis (discussed in Part 6 of this series). Was Calvin Case such a prominent figure that he was allowed to cancel ALM stamps with his initials? This was not a common practice and most agent signings seem to have occurred when it is doubtful Calvin Case was even still employed at ALM.



MORE ABOUT LETTER CARRYING.—George P. Fisher and Calvin Case were held to bail yesterday in this city in the sum of \$500 each, by the U. S. Marshal for this district, as agents for the transmission of letters in violation of law, by Lysander Spooner's American Letter Mail Co.

Figure 4-6: *Public Ledger* announcement of the arrest of Fisher and Case in Philadelphia.

When the “CC” initials were observed on ALM stamps, it was understandably associated with Calvin Case, the ALM agent arrested during 1844 for carrying letters on the railroads. It was documented in the newspapers of the time that Calvin Case and George P. Fisher were arrested by a U.S. Marshal for transporting the mail illegally. Initially just Calvin Case was arrested and put on \$100 bail (*Public Ledger*, March 23, 1844). He was “alleged to be in the office, or connected with” ALM. Since the government decided not to bring Calvin Case to court, the proof that supported Case being present with the other agent George P. Fisher committing the “crime” may have been weak. Also, the “illegal act” of carrying mail on a US post road (the railroad) was to be tried in Philadelphia. Fisher was a resident of Philadelphia, but Case appears to have been living in NYC. Fisher was clearly the better target for the US Government’s case, and in fact, witnesses would testify that Fisher admitted to carrying mail on the trains.

A few days after the Calvin Case announcement, it was reported that both Case and Fisher were held on bail in Philadelphia for \$500 each (**Figure 4-6**), and that they were both agents of the American Letter Mail Company (*Public Ledger*, March 30, 1844). Although true, these two facts are not the whole story, and they are misleading. Calvin Case was not a central character in this legal drama. Although Fisher went to trial, Case never did. Furthermore, it is even more likely that the “CC” initials found on ALM stamps did not even represent agent Calvin Case. It is very likely that Calvin Case was not even employed by ALM when the “CC” script cancels were applied to the stamps.

Table 4-1. Events Affecting the American Letter Mail Company.

Table 4-1 Events Affecting The American Letter Mail Company

Yr	Date	Participant	Trial Event	City	Result	Reference
89	Sept 22	Congress	na Act of 1789	All	Temporary established post-office	Act of Congress
92	Feb 20	Congress	na Act of 1792	All	First act to set postal rates	Act of Congress
99	March 2	Congress	na Act of 1799	All	General post office established	Act of Congress
25	March 3	Congress	All Act of 1825	All	Govt monopoly set & under PM Gen	Act of Congress
27	March 2	Congress	All Act of 1827	All	Sets \$50 fine for violations per letter	Act of Congress
44	Jan 23	ALM	na ALM Company starts service	Four	Announced/signed by L. Spooner 1/20	Boston Courier
44	Feb 6	Gilmour, John C.	1 Carries mail illegally	Balt	From Balt on P W & B RR to Phil	Balt Sun (3/12)
44	Feb 8	Spooner, Lysander	1 Editorial admits mail carried	Balt	Detailed all; wants to go to Supreme Ct	Baltimore Sun
44	Feb 14	Fisher, George P.	3 Asked to leave P W & B RR	Balt	Pratt Street depot, travels w/mail later	Balt Sun (2/27)
44	Feb 27	Fisher, George P.	3 Signed editorial	Balt	Admits & defends his actions	Balt Sun (2/27)
44	Mar 11	Gilmour, John C.	1 Heath (jury) rules against ALM	Balt	Gilmour must pay fine	Balt Sun (3/12)
44	Mar 19	Hatch, Winsor	2 Arrested in Boston	Bost	ALM found innocent later in June	Public Ledger
44	Mar 29	Fisher, George P.	3 Held to bail with Calvin Case	Phil	Arrested by U.S. Marshals	Pub Legd (3/30)
44	Apr 8	Spooner, Lysander	na Arrested, NYC ALM stopped	NYC	ALM resumed eight days later	Adams Sent., Pa
44	June 4	Spooner, Lysander	na Dismissed on common bail	NYC	Other charges quashed, some remain	Pub Legd (6/5)
44	June 25	Fisher, George P.	3 Randall Rules against ALM in Phil	Phil	Overrules Boston decision	Pittsburgh Weekly
44	~July	New ALM owner	na Exact purchase date unknown	na	New owner not named	Bowman, Ind. Mails*
44	July 10	Pomeroy, George	4 Trial upstate NY, acquitted	Utica	Wanted Supreme Ct also but rejected	Snow, Ind. Mails*
44	July 3	ALM NYC	na ALM NYC branch office opens	NYC	23 Chambers Street (main at 56 Wall St)	Bowman, Ind. Mails*
44	Aug 3	Pomeroy, George	4 Pomeroy announces serv. stop	Alb	Ads stop 8/1 but service cont. Into Aug	Snow, Ind. Mails*
44	Sept 2	Hale, James W.	5 In court, Randall ruled against 7-7	Phil	Trial continued into February '45, bailed	Gutman, Ind. Mails*
44	Sept 26	ALM Phil	na ALM Phil office move announced	Phil	109 to 101 Chestnut (8/24 early HdStp)	Public ledger
45	Mar 3	Congress	All Act of 1845 sets end of Ind. Mails	All	Rate reduction for July set (5c/10c/2c)	Act of Congress
45	Mar 12	Hale, James W.	5 Hale announces will retire	NYC	Services continues through June 30th	Gutman, Ind. Mails*
45	Mar 15	ALM Boston	na ALM Boston office moves	Bost	12 to 16 State St (based on HdStp)	Bowman, Ind. Mails*
45	June 30	All Ind. Mails	All Deadline, operations cease	All	Independent Mails illegal July 1 1845	Act of Congress

* Eastern Independent Mail and Express Mail Companies 1840-1845 (edited and published by Michael S. Gutman), 2016.

What events provoked the trials?

Two major areas of the early postal system in America converged in 1844. First, the world of commerce with its entrepreneurial spirit was moving forward into a conflict with the postal monopoly of the US Government. There was a central question that is still being asked today. How much should the central Government influence the individual States for the betterment of all? In 1844, it was a conflict between the commercially active Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states with the Southeastern coast's less-populated states. The Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states were subsidizing the Southern mails. The second force at work was the world of the American public. Beyond the conflict between whether the northern states should share the cost of mail delivery to southern states, graft and favoritism were driving the cost of mailing a simple letter to prohibitive heights.⁶ The government postal rates had become a significant burden on individuals and companies.

US Postmaster Charles A. Wickliffe was rightfully concerned that the blossoming Independent Mails would soon engulf the US Postal System's apparent monopoly on carrying the mails. The government was granted powerful control over the mails from the very inception of the country. The Independent Mails, however, could deliver the mail cheaper, offered a discount on quantity purchases and were faster than the government mail. For a review of the many reasons for the rise of the Independent Mails in just a short eighteen-month period, read Scott R. Trepel's excellent Introduction in *Eastern Independent Mail and Express Mail Companies 1840-1845*.⁷

One of the champions for the entrepreneurial faction of this conflict was Calvin Case's boss, Lysander Spooner. Therefore, it was not a complete surprise that there was a great deal of interest across the country when Wickliffe decided it was time to confront the very vocal and defiant Spooner and his company. The news reports for the trial were widely reported and fairly detailed. Understanding why Calvin Case was not at the center of this conflict, and therefore, that it is highly unlikely that the "CC" initials represent his name, requires a recounting of the events.

A summary of the 1844 trials of the American Letter Mail Company

There were several court cases against the Independent Mails, but two stand out. The Independent Mails were found guilty in both cases, and the American Letter Mail Company was at the center of each case. The incident involving Calvin Case was the second ALM court case. However, the first incident that was taken to court occurred in Baltimore. Robert F. Black., Jacob G. Grape and others were fined, or their cases were discontinued (*Public Ledger* March 20, 1844). However, it was John C. Gilmour that the government decided to focus on in court.

The supposed illegal act occurred when at about 9PM on February 6, 1844 (*Baltimore Sun*, March 12, 1844), three men associated with ALM named Gilmour (also spelled other ways in newspaper accounts), Ellis and Brown prepared a bundle of letters in "Mr. Brown's Express office" which was "under the Museum" in

⁶ Scott R. Trepel, *Eastern Independent Mail and Express Mail Companies 1840-1845* Introduction, edited and published by Michael S. Gutman, 2016.

⁷ Scott R. Trepel, *Ibid*.

Baltimore. A witness testified he gave a letter to Ellis (the clerk), gave him 6 ¼ cents, and then, Ellis immediately stamped the letter and put it with others. Later that evening, Brown and Ellis prepared a bundle of letters and Gilmour headed for the train depot and left for Philadelphia on the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad.

This railroad line was the first to supply transportation to the South with the completion of the Schuylkill River bridge (although a steam railroad ferry ride was still needed to cross the Susquehanna River). In the same year Gilmour used the line, Samuel F. B. Morse's telegraph invention laid its lines along the railroad and continued all the way to Washington DC southwest of Baltimore.

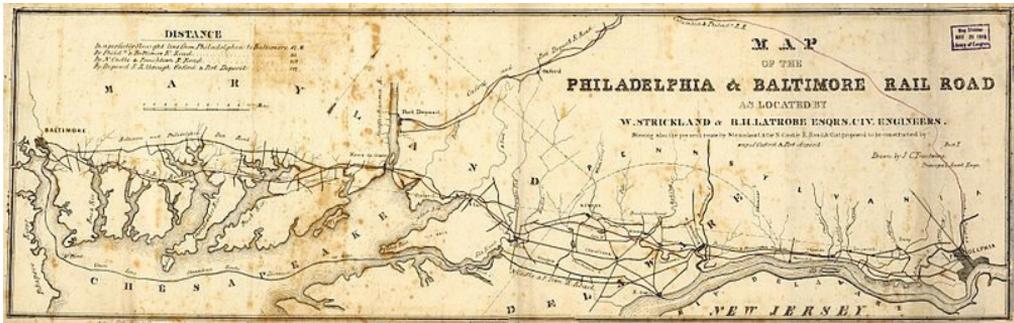


Figure 4-7: Route of the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad and its successors.

The map in **Figure 4-7** shows the PW & B Railroad and its successors' route in 1851. It extended from Baltimore on the left (southwest) to Philadelphia on the right (northeast). NYC is the same distance again further northeast of Philadelphia and Boston is twice that again northeast of NYC. This was the world of Spooner's American Letter Mail Company in 1844.

“In 1839, the railroad's ticket agents advertised daily mail-and-passenger trains that left Baltimore's old original Pratt Street station (at South Charles Street) of the B&O (before the 1857-65 construction of the now-famous Camden Street Station) at 9:30 a.m., stopped for lunch in Wilmington, and reached the Market Street depot in Philadelphia at 4 p.m.”⁸

It was along this route that both Gilmour from the first ALM trial and Fisher from the second ALM trial would travel. The incidents were actually fairly similar except Gilmour was tried in Baltimore and Fisher in Philadelphia.

In the Gilmour trial, a witness (a spy) employed by the postmaster said he was “to keep an eye on the three.” The witness accompanied Gilmour part way. The witness repeated in court Gilmour's comments to him, “we do every thing open and above board...we do not want to conceal anything from the Government...we want the matter tested and brought to the issue.” However, Gilmour did conceal the letters

⁸ Crawford, A., agent (Feb 9, 1839). "Railroad to Philadelphia," *American & Commercial Daily Advertiser*, page 4.

in his pockets. An agent for the railroad testified that Gilmour “passed over the road two or three times a week.”

At first, Spooner denied the agents were even confronted (*Times Picayune*, New Orleans LA, February 14, 1844). His sights were set on a direct Supreme Court trial based on his well-published beliefs on free trade and freedom of speech. Others in the country were aware of the issues at hand from Wickliffe’s open proclamations of the rights of the government to control the post roads. There was a mixed reaction to the arrests. One letter from a reader was published in the *New York Tribune* February 16th, and the reader took Wickliffe to task on the mail company encounters, and his double standard in contracts with a certain Buffalo to NY railroad. Others felt it was an important court challenge for the rising and threatening Independent Mails.

On Monday March 11, Judge Heath in Baltimore spoke to the jury, and then the jury “without leaving the box, returned a verdict for the plaintiff” (*Baltimore Sun*, March 12, 1844). Gilmour was found guilty, and the verdict was reported as far away as Mississippi (*Mississippi Free Trader*, Natchez, Miss. March 27, 1844).

Although this Baltimore case found the Independent Mails guilty, it remained to be seen what decisions would be made in other cities. Judge Heath in Baltimore ruled that if the government declares a road a post road, it has exclusive rights “to carry hire letters upon said road and prohibit others.” The government could fine the mail carrier \$50 for each letter carried (*Public Ledger*, March 13, 1844).

In an editorial found in the Perry-Hall unpublished manuscript, the *Morning Courier of NY* editorialized after the trial decision (March 13, 1844),

“This decision, if correct, establishes the principle, that the people of the United States have no constitutional right to transmit intelligence to each other on paper, except with the consent of the Government, and of course under such espionage as the Government may see fit to establish...The Mail Company design to bring this question before the Judges and Jurors of the free States, and see whether they will place our whole population in the same category with Southern slaves.”

The emotions obviously ran very deep.

There was a trial between the time of the Gilmour trial and Fisher’s trials that involved ALM, but this other trial went ALM’s way and found the Independent Mails innocent of any crime. On March 19, 1844, a Mr. Hatch was arrested in Boston and “held to bail for \$100 by order of the Postmaster General.” This was not the A.D. Hatch of Boston’s New Bedford Express (ads in *The Boston Post* July 30, 1840 and later), but rather, Winsor Hatch (spelled Windsor in the Stimpson Baltimore directories). He was a clerk in the ALM Boston office who was a Boston resident on South Hudson near Harvard. He was listed in both the 1844 and 1845 directories, but by 1849, he had apparently moved on. Since this Massachusetts decision was contrary to the Baltimore decision, the stage was set for more decisions against the Independent Mails. “We shall soon know whether the charge of Judge Heath is law in this region” (March 19, 1844 *Public Ledger* as reported in the *Boston Mail*). Although the US Government had hoped the Boston trial would solidify their legal right to be sole carriers of the US mail, a June trial in Boston found Hatch innocent.

At this point all the Independent Mails were under considerable pressure from the government and their status remained undecided. Pomeroy began to wither under the pressure, and the future new owner of ALM must have had some difficult decisions to make in his new venture into mail communications. However, the Boston decision left the strength of the government position unresolved. The law that gave the government its monopoly was written before the railroads became a prominent force in American transportation, and there was a question whether the rails the railroad used were post roads under the law. The pressure on the Independent Mail Companies seemed to lift.

After the Boston decision, a much-publicized case in Philadelphia was completed, and it involved ALM again. This time, it involved Calvin Case, although only indirectly. George Peter Fisher was the central character, and **Figure 4-8** shows a newspaper account of the encounter on February 14, 1844. Fisher was confronted and then abruptly sent from the train, and the train left without him. Later Fisher completed his “unlawful” trip. Notice that Calvin Case is not even mentioned.

PRIVATE MAIL AGENT STOPPED.—On Saturday evening last, at about seven o'clock, when the cars were about to start for Philadelphia, from the Pratt street depot, Mr. Fisher, an agent of the American Mail Company, appeared as a passenger, and being suspected by the railroad agent of being a private mail carrier, he was informed of the difficulty that lay in the way of his going on as such. He gave up the key of his trunk, that it might be ascertained whether or not it contained “mailable matter,” and took his seat in one of the cars, in which he was accosted by Hugh McElderry, Esq., one of the directors of the railroad company, to whom he made the admission that he was an agent of the American Mail Company. Mr. McElderry therefore informed him that he could not go on, and as he manifested an unwillingness to leave the cars, Mr. McElderry took hold of him, and ejected him from the car. The train then proceeded on its way to Philadelphia.

Figure 4-8: Fisher’s encounter with the railroad as reported in the *Baltimore Sun* (Feb 27, 1844).

The trial lasted three days and was decided against ALM on June 25, 1844 (*Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*). Judge Randall ruled that " a rail road car was embraced in the language of the statute which prohibited the conveyance of letters by 'stage or other vehicle regularly performing trips on the post road or a road parallel to it'" (*Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, June 27, 1844). The newspaper editorialized, "Most surely there is a most glorious uncertainty about the law."

This ALM trial involving Fisher set a new tone of aggression from Wickliffe in attacking the mail companies. This incident, later tried in Philadelphia, occurred Wednesday, February 14, 1844. It again involved boarding a train in Baltimore bound for Philadelphia, and it occurred only about a week after the Gilmour incident. Adding to the confusion in reading newspaper reports is that the trial was not tried in Philadelphia until June 17, 1844 (*Public Ledger*, June 18, 1844). It is not known the exact date when Spooner sold his ALM Company in the summer of 1844, but it must have been within weeks of the close of the Philadelphia case which ended in favor of the government.

The fine for carrying the mail illegally over the government's post roads was only \$50 per letter. So, the fines were rather small, and the trials were more symbolic than punitive (although court costs and lawyer fees were high). The government decided it needed to show evidence that one letter at a time was transported illegally to establish the fine as set forth in the Act of 1825 and 1827 (*Public Ledger* June 18, 1844). The government gradually focused solely on this "one-incident-one letter" legal approach, because the penalty remained low enough to keep the case out of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. The focus was on George P. Fisher and just two of the letters he carried for Spooner's ALM Company on February 14th. In fact, the prosecutor attempted in court to bring up more letters as examples of wrongdoing, and this was not allowed. This legal approach was definitely not what Spooner had hoped would happen.

"'Oppression'- Mr. Wickliffe has reported to the weapons usually employed by little minds, to carry his plans of Post Office monopoly into effect. Instead of accepting the proposal of Mr. Spooner...Mr. Wickliffe has resorted to the oppression of bringing a multitude of little suits" (Editorial in *Journal of Commerce* as reported in the *Public Ledger*, March 22, 1844).

The *Public Ledger* in Philadelphia published the previous quote but was fairly negative toward Spooner's company and referred to them as, "This organized band of law-breakers...exhibit the coolest impudence we have recently met."

So, Wickliffe's approach required the prosecution of witnesses to recount just a few covers through their exact handling over the post roads. The post roads in this case were the railroads. In order to follow a letter being carried illegally, the government even sent spies to gather the information needed in court. This was not an extremely difficult task, however, since Spooner and his agents openly boasted about their activities.

A report in the *Baltimore Sun* on February 8, 1844 appeared even before the arrests of Spooner's agents. This report addressed Spooner's position and set the tone for all that was to follow.

“The *Philadelphia Gazette* states that it is authorized to say that Mr. Spooner, the head of the new Letter Mail Company, has sent on to the government officers a written admission of his conveyance of letters, &c., with all the necessary facts in the case, to make it a purely legal question, so that the Postmaster General has nothing to do but to take the whole subject to the Supreme Court of the United States as soon as it can possibly be got there.”

This strong statement by Spooner, and Wickliffe’s determination to preserve the government’s monopoly lead to the conflict, the arrests, and the headlines. Also, these events probably affected events several months later, when the new owner, in the summer of 1844, took ALM in a new direction, while all the time, keeping his identity a secret.

Another agent was later reportedly arrested in Jersey City (*Baltimore Sun*, March 12, 1844). This was not technically in NYC, but it might as well have been, since it was just across the Hudson River from lower Manhattan. So, Postmaster Wickliffe was targeting every one of the four major cities where the Independent Mails operated (Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and Boston). More arrests would follow, including Pomeroy in upstate NY. But it is from the February 14th incident that arose a key case against the independent mails for illegally carrying mail on a post road. There was even a counter suit by Spooner’s lawyers against the train conductor (William L. Ashmead) for his “assault” on Fisher (*Public Ledger*, June 19, 1844).

In the same February 27 issue of the *Baltimore Sun* where the account of Fisher’s encounter was explained, there appeared an editorial that ended as follows:

“It is true, as stated in *The Patriot*, that on that evening I was compelled to leave the cars of the Railroad Company by two individuals professing to act under its orders, after I had taken my seat with the intention of travelling as a passenger to Philadelphia, and after I had applied at the ticket office and tendered a ticket for a passenger ticket. It is my intention to bring this matter at once before the proper tribunal, to ascertain whether or not a peaceful citizen can be arrested upon his journey and thrust from the cars of a railroad company, which is bound by its charter to carry passengers, upon the ground that it chooses to decide and settle legal and constitutional controversies existing between private citizens and the government of the United States. G.P. Fisher”

The editorial was signed by G(eorge) P(eter) Fisher, the ALM agent involved. Of course, Spooner may have helped Fisher write the editorial, but only Fisher signed the editorial. Spooner had found his spokesperson. And George Fisher was sincere. During the trial, a witness quoted Fisher as saying, “he could cheat the road in spite of the devil, and was determined to do it, till they were tired.” Another witness recounted Fisher saying, “He had a right to carry letters, and that he could see Colt’s pistol on the man who should stop him” (*Public Ledger*, March 8, 1844). A witness (a post office employee) quoted Fisher during the trial, “he thought he could make more money” than the government mails.

The encounters took a toll however. The witness continued,

“...they had abandoned the Baltimore route, as they could make no money by it... They carried on that route from about the 24th of January to the 14th of February last, without interruption. They said they quit the letter business (to Baltimore) ...this to prevent anymore suits being brought.”

The case was finally resolved in June 1844 against Fisher and the Independent Mails. Unfortunately for the railroad conductor, who was counter-sued, his case lasted into Jan 1845, before a jury decided he was only doing his job in ejecting Fisher (*Public Ledger*, January 4, 1845). The conductor was finally acquitted, and the jury felt he was only upholding what he understood was the law.

The first incident of February 6, 1844 went to court in Baltimore March 11, 1844 (*Baltimore Sun*, March 12). This was the John C. Gilmour case, and he would be found guilty. In Philadelphia, newspapers and public opinion on the Baltimore verdict was much harsher against Spooner than in other cities. In Philadelphia, the ALM agents were referred to as “smugglers.” and “counterfeiters” (*Public Ledger*, March 22, 1844). The *Public Ledger* wrote “this decision will put a stop to Mr. Spooner’s operations.” Some papers editorialized in favor of Spooner, but one Philadelphia account wrote:

“Persons wishing to avail themselves of regularity and certainty better not rely on the promises of Mr. Spooner...It will be remembered that some of the newspapers, both in this and other cities, highly applauded Mr. Spooner’s attempt to violate the laws, and urged upon the business community and others to send their letters and correspondence through the so-called ‘American Mail.’ The advice and support of these newspapers, besides being ignorant and injudicious, and getting the company into the hands of the law for its violation of the acts of Congress, did an injury to business men, also, who acted upon it, for the letters were almost invariably stopped on the way and sent back again, subjecting them to a delay which would not have occurred had they gone through the regular and legal conveyance. It is always best to uphold the law against any violation” (*Public Ledger*, Philadelphia, March 13, 1844).

This stern rhetoric from Philadelphia probably weighed heavily on the new owner purchasing ALM later that summer. It may also explain why the Fisher trial was pursued by the US Government in Philadelphia even though the incident, like the Gilmour case, started at the Baltimore station. The first trial in Baltimore worked very well for the Government, and the chances of a second favorable decision for the Government probably seemed strongest in Philadelphia. And indeed, they were right.

Not until many of these events had passed did Calvin Case’s name appear in the newspapers. The *Public Ledger* in Philadelphia reported March 22, 1844:

“Another Suit- Calvin Case, another of the persons alleged to be in the office, or connected with ‘Postmaster General Lysander Spooner’s American Letter Mail Co.’ was arrested and held to bail in the sum of \$100, the United States Marshal, in this city (Philadelphia), yesterday, on the ground of conveying letters contrary to the laws of Congress.”

So, Calvin Case entered the story late and was arrested in Philadelphia after the decisions in Baltimore and Boston. His arrest was reported first in a Baltimore paper (*Baltimore Sun*, Mar 25, 1844), and then, both Case and Fisher were arrested in Philadelphia a few days later (*Public Ledger*, March 30, 1844). The two agents went before the Judge to set bail on April 20th (*Green-Mountain Freeman*, Montpelier Vermont). However, Calvin Case never appeared in court except perhaps to pay his fine. George Fisher was the agent the government paraded before the courts. Only George Fisher was convicted in court. Calvin Case's actions are not mentioned in the news reports again. He was only a peripheral player in the Independent Mail court cases. Even if he was involved in a small way, there is no reason to assume he was allowed to sign his covers with his "CC" initials. As will be discussed later in Part 6, the only demonstrable agent cancels are rare and probably only occurred when the post was forced to cease its operations a year later and under the new owner.

The Philadelphia trial was deemed necessary by Wickliffe because of subsequent decisions considered unfavorable to the government by other courts after his Baltimore victory. Also, the Baltimore conviction was not a solution. The *Baltimore Sun* reported April 1, 1844:

"...the President says he wishes he could say that the American Letter Mail Company are the only persons engaged in the business of carrying letters over mail routes for hire, to great injury of the revenue of the (Post Office) Department...others are engaged...The extent of the business thus carried on can only be measured by the evident decline in the revenue in the Department, which I regret to say from present appearances will fall below the expenses of the current year...the revenue for the present year will fall below that of 1843, over \$200,000, mainly owing to the operations of the various persons engaged in carrying mail matter over the mail routes."

Many people realized that Congress needed to step in and mandate lower mail rates.

On April 8, the *Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg Pa) reported that Lysander Spooner himself had been arrested in NYC. His American Letter Mail Company, by court order, "received a sudden and violent stoppage in New York". Just eight days later, however, a judge lifted the order, and they were back in business again (*Baltimore Sun*, Apr 18, 1844). The report noted that Congress still had not passed a law reducing postage, "for fear it will diminish the (US) revenue. The post office is really losing its revenue, and it will soon be compelled to come upon the Treasury to make up the deficiency." On June 4, 1844, Spooner was discharged on common bail for four of the charges against him and other charges were quashed. There are no reports that he ever went to trial. So not only was Calvin Case not directly brought before the judge, even his employer Lysander Spooner escaped that public embarrassment. Only John Gilmour in Baltimore and George Fisher in Philadelphia became central figures in court decisions against ALM.

Finally, in June 1844 (*Baltimore American*, on the 25th and repeated in the *Mississippi Free Trader*, Natchez Miss, July 10), George Peter Fisher was convicted in Philadelphia. He was fined just \$50 per letter as was specified in the Congressional

Act of 1827. But Wickliffe felt he had made his point. The Philadelphia decision motivated Wickliffe to have some ten to twelve agents arrested in Philadelphia and held on bail there (*Daily Picayune*, Sept 8 reporting about Philadelphia August 27). In addition to the trials, the government had begun lawsuits on other Independent Mail Companies.

What happened to the Independent Mail owners?

George Pomeroy of Pomeroy Express was also taken to trial (July 10, 1844), but he was later found innocent in a Utica, NY court (*Madison Express*, August 8, 1844). Pomeroy was harassed by the government by a devastating mandate directed at the railroads that they would face fines if the Independent Mail Companies tried to carry mail on their trains. Pomeroy's Letter Express was blocked from their Albany to Buffalo route by the Tonawanda and Syracuse & Auburn Railroad.⁹ They began to redeem their stamps, and while they did not go under immediately, they kept a very low profile from August onward.

James W. Hale from Hale & Co. and some of his agents were arrested. Hale's case came up on September 2, 1844 (*Public Ledger*, September 4, 1844). Although Judge Randall found him guilty of some charges tied to NY and Philadelphia on September 7, charges continued into February 22, 1845 (*Public Ledger*, Sept 9 and Feb 24, 1845), at which time, the defendant was discharged on bail. Again, the government attacks had taken their toll. Years later, Hale wrote about the spies, detectives, decoy letters, frequent arrests of his agents and being placed under a \$400,000 bond. The cost for lawyers and court fees was crippling. Hale announced in March 1845 he would retire after the government mandated closing of his post at the end of June.¹⁰

Spooner was spared his own personal trial, but the Government attacks took their toll here also. In a letter to Mr. D. Phillips in Boston 1851 (as quoted in an ad by stamp dealer E. A. Holton in 1887 while selling reprints of the ALM small eagle stamps...the reference kindly supplied by Mike Farrell), Spooner wrote, "after having sustained the conflict for 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 his resources he retired.

If the reader takes away anything from this flurry of court activity, there are two facts, for the purpose of this series of articles, that need to be remembered. First, Calvin Case was not a main player in all these interactions, and in fact, he never even went to trial. Second, the new owner of ALM purchased the company from Spooner sometime in the summer of 1844, and the confrontational environment, especially in Philadelphia, around the ALM cases would have been foremost on his mind. He became very secretive. He was a survivor, and his relative success in holding ALM above water until the fatal Act of 1845 is proof of that. He never used his name in any American Letter Mail Company advertisements or other communications. To this day,

⁹ David W. Snow *op cit.*, pages 443-5.

¹⁰ Michael S. Gutman *op cit.*, page 107.

we do not know for sure who bought the company. The ownership issue will be discussed further in Part 8 of this series.

Why wasn't Calvin Case prosecuted in court by the US Government?

Why wasn't Calvin Case a significant part of the US Government's attack on the Independent Mails? The simple answer is that he did not fit their plan. His boss Lysander Spooner certainly was a focus, but Calvin Case was a poor match for the US Government's legal argument. Spooner had been vocal to the point of public defiance, and as he planned, the government could not even begin to attack the mail carriers in general without addressing Spooner publicly. But he made a miscalculation. He openly admitted to his "crime" and wanted the "illegal act" challenged in the highest court in America, the Supreme Court. In many ways, he was naive. Postmaster Wickliffe was faced with a mindboggling mess in the US Government's postal system. It was dysfunctional with postal rates so high from graft and favoritism that it was unsustainable, and yet there was a Congress that was not acting fast enough to regulate the rates for many reasons they found significant until everything imploded with the Act of 1845.

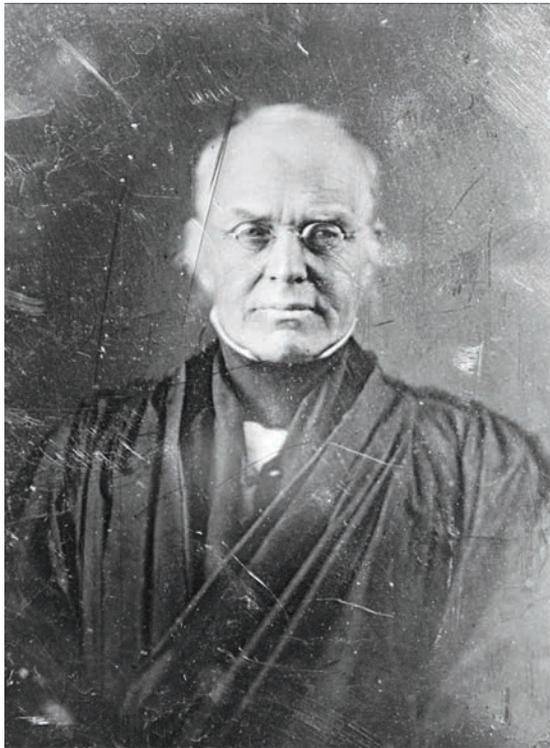


Figure 4-9: Supreme Court Judge Joseph Story supported Spooner's views. Photo from 1844.

Wickliffe was left with only one recourse. He had to attack the entrepreneurs that had found a hold in his dysfunctional system, but at the same time, could not allow Spooner to have his wish. There were already well-known lawyers and even a Supreme Court Judge (see Joseph Story as photographed in 1844, **Figure 4-9**) that agreed with Spooner.¹¹ Wickliffe decided on a strategy of harassment using the full power of the US Government to embarrass the Independent Mails in court while draining their more limited resources. The \$50 fine was trivial, but the court and lawyer fees were not. Pomeroy's Letter Express was dissolved or absorbed by Livingston, Wells and Pomeroy¹² and disappeared. Spooner's ALM would have gone under if it were not for the silent and mysterious new owner. Hale owned the strongest and broadest-based of the Independent Mails, so Wickliffe went after Hale and Co. last through lawsuits and court attacks that lasted throughout the Fall of 1844 after the other two large companies had essentially folded or gone into hiding while in plain sight.

Spooner was beaten first in Baltimore since this was his weakest link and a city that was supportive of the US Government. ALM's initial focus was on NYC and Philadelphia. Baltimore was its stretch (based on its history, the surviving covers and distance from the main offices). Based on the trial results, Boston, upstate NY and even NYC were less sympathetic to the government monopoly. Spooner confessed openly so he could be tried in the Supreme Court, but Wickliffe used the Act of 1827 to whittle away at Spooner's position by just going for the small \$50 per letter provision that the Act of 1827 had allowed. Spooner needed to make it to the Supreme Court to make his stand. He never made it.

After Baltimore, the Government then took on the Independent Mails elsewhere. The Boston case went against the Government, but Philadelphia, in the press, was the most supportive of the Government's position and most negative toward the entrepreneurs. Philadelphia was, after all, one of the seats of America's independence. They probably understood fully that the postal reform was overdue, but knew also that privatizing something as critical as communications would have its risks too. The government won in Philadelphia using George Peter Fisher as everyone's pawn. Fisher was alright with that, and he made public statements earlier that unfortunately allowed a jury to convict him in court with very little additional debate. In hindsight, Spooner and Fisher never had a chance with that venue.

Calvin Case could have become a government pawn, but since he made no public pronouncements like Fisher, and perhaps, because the Government found they did not have as strong a case against him, he probably just paid his fine and slipped into his future career in NYC politics. He probably wanted nothing to do with the trials, since unlike Fisher, he did not even stay with the company after the Philadelphia trial ended. Spooner probably sensed Case's disinterest. In addition, Calvin Cases did not have a city directory listing that could be found, so it is possible the Government did not even know he was not a Philadelphia resident (like Fisher) when they arrested him. Calvin Case just did not fit the Government's plan.

¹¹ Russell K. Osgood, "Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story" *Cornell Law Review*, Vol. 71 Article 8, 1986.

¹² David W. Snow, *op cit.*, pages 445-8.

What happened to the ALM agents?

Calvin Case before and after the trials

On the same day of Fisher's earlier editorial, February 27, 1844, the Democratic Whigs of the Second Ward in NYC used the *New York Tribune* to announce a meeting at Jones' Hotel on Nassau Street in the city. The purpose of the meeting was to select delegates to represent the Second Ward at a convention. Listed as one of the Second Ward secretaries of the party was Calvin Case. So even while employed by ALM, Case was actively involved in NYC politics. He even was recognized for donating time to his NYC church (*New York Tribune*, February 1, 1844). It is possible that Calvin Case was employed by ALM for only a relatively short period of time, and he may even have been working with ALM part time. By April 7, 1846, two years later, Case was no longer listed as the Second Ward secretary, but the *New York Tribune* reported Calvin Case had been elected as a delegate to the County Convention. He was then elected to the General Committee December 29, 1846.

Although involved in NYC Second Ward politics, and therefore presumably a resident of that city, Calvin Case never appeared in any of the four major city directories for '44, '45, or '46. City directories from this time were not all inclusive. Some "colored" were listed but only in a separate section and probably not extensively. No children appeared, of course, because the directory was focused on resident addresses. Women usually only appeared if they owned their home, owed a business or were a widow. Having a listing in a directory is a reasonable indication that a person lived in that city barring the simple carryover errors from the previous year. But a person might not be listed in the directory for many reasons besides not being a true resident at the time. These reasons could range from not being successfully contacted, to simply, the person did not want to be listed. In Philadelphia, for example, William B. Stait was employed by Adam's Express in 1845. For the next few years he managed the Eagle Post, but he was not listed in the Philadelphia directory until 1847 when he began his own post called "Stait's Express."

Calvin Case was finally listed in the NYC directory for 1847 and again in 1850-51. In 1848, he continued as deputy clerk of New York's Fulton Market living at 23 Fulton Street (*The Evening Post*, October 1848). He then apparently left NYC to his home town in Barkhamsted CT, northwest of Hartford, where he had inherited family land earlier. He represented his district of Canton at his party's state convention (*Hartford Courant*, February 14, 1853). A few years later in 1856 and 1857, his name appears as one of several directors at The Hartford Savings Bank and Building Association (*Hartford Courant*, March 11, 1857).

Despite the arrests in 1844, Case's political career seemed to blossom. Although he may have been forced to stay in contact with ALM during the trials (he may however have been allowed to leave after paying his fine), Calvin Case probably never carried mail for the company again. When the "CC" initials appeared on ALM stamps in early 1845 more than six months after the trials, it seems highly unlikely that Calvin Case was still an ALM employee. Since Calvin Case may not even have been an ALM employee at the time the "CC" initials were used, and also, the "CC" initials do not seem to be applied by the same hand, it seems safe to conclude that

“CC” cancels on ALM stamps are not Calvin Case’s initials. Like the “EHB” initials, the “CC” initials probably represented something else.

George Fisher before and after the trials

As with Calvin Case, George P. Fisher was active early in city politics. He was voted a Philadelphia City Tax Collector for the South Ward in May 11, 1843 (*Public Ledger*, Philadelphia). So, he was an active resident in Philadelphia before joining ALM in 1844. But unlike Case, Fisher continued as an agent for ALM and is listed specifically in the 1845 directory as their agent. A genealogy study reveals (*genealogy.com*) that Fisher continued with his wife in the Philadelphia area and had four more children. Fisher’s new profession after ALM was a carter (carried things using a cart). One of his children also became a carter and the other carried things using a team of horses. This is the origin of the occupation called a “teamster” (as in today’s truck drivers of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Union). George Fisher lived until age 69 and is buried in Pennsylvania.

So today, the myth has continued that Calvin Case signed ALM stamps with his initials, since he was clearly arrested as an agent of ALM, and he had those initials. This explanation of the “CC” cancels seems false. It is doubtful that Calvin Case was even employed by ALM for very long and certainly not long after his court case. Calvin Case’s thoughts and his time were taken up by politics in New York City. When the “CC” initials began appearing on ALM stamps under the new owner (probably early spring of 1845), Calvin Case was well into his career as a politician in NYC.

George Fisher is the real hero of the ALM company, if there is one. He defended Spooner’s philosophy of free enterprise and even continued with the company under its new owner, perhaps until its end. However, his initials apparently never appeared on an ALM stamp. As fate would have it, he never received the philatelic notoriety falsely awarded to Calvin Case.

What did the “CC” initials represent, if they were not Calvin Case’s initials?

Upfront, it should be stated that we do not know what the “CC” cancels represented. Only that they do not seem to be Calvin Case’s initials. This is an area for further research, but some suggestions follow.

The “CC” covers studied so far are missing much, if not all, of their content. Except for the partial inner sheet left behind and attached to the recently discovered “CC” cover, the other three “CC” covers seem to be only cover sheets. The inner sheets might have had information for the addressee to act upon immediately. C.C. Mackey is one of several possible leads on the “CC” cancel on the most recent discovery if the cover is real, but this would be restricted to Philadelphia. Unfortunately, the “CC” cover that mentions Mackey may not represent a genuine “CC” usage.

Another “CC” cover that survived was to Steinmetz and Justice (George and Philip S.). This was a prominent Philadelphia hardware at 14th N. W. 5th and Commerce. Letters to them were delivered by both ALM and Hale & Company, and there is even a surviving 1845 folded letter with a NY Postmaster Provisional addressed to them (9X1a, AC connected, Mathew Bennett auction 304 lot 1700). The Steinmetz “CC” cover appeared in an auction lot, so the image resolution is very poor.

However, it may read as “C.C.” with periods after the “Cs” and an “of” below that could stand for “office” (see **Figure 4-4 frame d**). This cover may suggest the “CC” initials were a reference to a public office such as the Circuit Court or County Commissioner’s Office. If a reader owns this cover, the author would appreciate a better scan, if you have one. The content of this letter would also be very interesting.

When just considering the Steinmetz and Justice “CC” cover, the possible content could have been anything from tax notices to legal forms. In Philadelphia, the County Commission handled all of this until 1854. A “CC” canceled stamp on a cover could have meant that its content required the recipient’s attention for matters from the County Commission (“CC”). Another possible meaning of “CC” might be the Circuit Court or even the Court of Common Pleas (also called then the Commerce Court). Until very recently, the court officer in Philadelphia was referred to as the Clerk of Courts.¹³ The “C.C. of” on the Gilpin cover could refer to the Clerk of Courts Office.

A fourth “CC” cover was addressed to V. & J. F. Gilpin (Vincent and John F.) at 67 Dock street near the Merchant’s Exchange. This was a place for exchange of brokered goods, and it housed the US Post Office at that time. Both Gilpins were brokers, and John F. Gilpin was an active member of the Philadelphia community being at some points one of 19 directors of the Philadelphia Schools, on the Board of the Office of the Guardians of the Poor and a Trustee of the Philadelphia Gas Works. Of interest here, John Gilpin was on the Philadelphia Common Council (“CC”) in 1845. During the spring of 1845, he was also called for Jury duty. A summons for this duty could have been mailed to him from the Circuit Court (“CC”).

Since it is believed ALM only delivered mail between cities and not intra-city, the “CC” cancel on an ALM stamp would have most likely carried a notice from one city to the next. Even with just three covers to look at so far, we can see that the “CC” cancel was used on covers to two different cities (NYC and Philadelphia). This suggests the function of this cancel may have had a broad application. The Gilpins had a legal issue at about the time they probably received their “CC” cover, and this might have involved two different cities.

In May 1845, the Gilpin firm was sued in the District Court by Clarissa J. Howell over their misrepresentation of a stock transaction of Howell’s that the Gilpins handled (*Public Ledger*, May 16, 1845). This was a full-blown jury trial, and the verdict went against the Gilpins. The court ordered them to pay Howell \$2109.77. The stock purchase occurred several years earlier. By the time of the trial in 1845, the plaintiff, Clarissa Howell, is not listed in the Philadelphia directory (for 1844 or 1845). Perhaps Clarissa Howell had moved, and the Gilpins received a (“CC”) court notification involving this case from outside of Philadelphia? The Gilpins “CC” cancel appears to be from Boston based on its strong similarity to the Buck and Peters “CC” cancel which is believed to be from Boston. There is a George Howell listed in Stimpson’s 1845 *Boston City Directory* living on 18 Tileston. But without the letter content of several of these “CC” canceled covers, it is very hard to determine if a court tracking system was in place for ALM resembling the proposed “EHB” system. At least for the “EHB” cancels, several covers and their contents have been discovered

¹³ <https://www.courts.phila.gov/departments/ojr-criminal.asp>.

(discussed in detail in Part 3 of this series). But, so far, information on the content of “CC” covers is practically nonexistent.

The role of the “CC” cancel on ALM stamps is a wide-open opportunity for further study. New discoveries of “CC” covers that still have their contents may clarify the exact role “CC” played in the ALM system. The author concludes that “CC” cancels were not agent initials, and it is particularly unlikely that they are Calvin Case’s initials. Since at least two examples of “CC” initials seem to be written in different handwriting, the “CC” cancels may have played a more functional role in ALM. The cancel’s intent may have been to alert the receiving office or the recipient of an action due, perhaps related to the courts. If ALM notified the courts (or simply kept records) that a court notification to an ALM recipient had been delivered (a reason for the special “CC” cancel), this might have been a system similar to the proposed ALM “EHB” system that appeared earlier. It may have been a “registered letter” mail services specific to the courts. But this is pure speculation and only given here to encourage further research on these interesting cancels. If a reader has a “CC” ALM cover, please send a scan to the author. Maybe you have the key to this mystery? If your cover still has its contents, you may have a treasure.

One final thought on the “EHB” and “CC” cancels

Could either the “EHB” or “CC” cancels have represented a system for expediting the delivery of a letter to the recipient, perhaps something similar to “special delivery” or even today’s “overnight letter?” This seems improbable if you place yourself in the ALM world of 1844. Unlike today, where a phone call, internet email, a quick chat on the internet between friends or even a conference call between business associates allows rapid communication, the people of 1844 had only the mail to communicate with each other. The telegraph would change some of that, but the first lines were not fully laid until late 1844, and even then, the telegraph was in its infancy. It eventually became very complete but not until into 1851.

By carefully coordinating deliveries using steamboats, canal passageways, the railroads and the stage lines, the mail carriers had already succeeded in bringing mail from the sender to recipient at about as fast a pace that transportation of that time allowed. As mentioned earlier, a routine letter sent by rail from Baltimore in the morning could dependably reach Philadelphia before the dinner hour. In Part 7 of this series, an example will be given of a letter sent by a broker in Philadelphia receiving a stock offer from NYC one day, responding the next day with a request to buy the stock and the transaction completed by the end of the third business day.

The only expediting a mail sender faced in 1844 was that his recipient did not have to respond immediately because the recipient choose to respond slowly, or he was just neglectful. ALM could not, of course, force the recipient to respond immediately. But a mailing option such as the proposed “EHB” system (or perhaps the “CC” court mailing) might have encouraged expediting the recipient’s response. In that way, the “EHB” system (or perhaps the “CC” system) could hurry the communication process. The company could not make the physical communication exchange any faster, but for a fee, it could encourage a faster response in addition to keeping a record of the mailing. This would have been the attractiveness of such a system to businessmen. Unfortunately, we still need more research to prove these systems existed.

Facts to reconcile in any “CC” cancel proposal

As with the “EHB” cancels, it will be difficult identifying the function of the “CC” cancels on ALM stamps, because no company records have survived. In addition, very few “CC” examples have been found so far. However, the following should be consistent with any proposal. Of the four “CC” cancels found, none were re-canceled. Like the “EHB” cancels, the “CC” cancels were apparently considered a cancel by themselves. At least two “CC” canceled stamps seem to have originated in two different cities. Although two previously known examples of the initials appear to be similar, the newly discovered “CC” blue eagle cancel appears to be by a different hand. In all the examples, it is unlikely that the initials are Calvin Case’s signings, since it is unlikely he was even employed by ALM when the “CC” cancels were applied. One canceled stamp seems to have the letters “of” below it on the stamp, which may mean “office.”

Conclusion

A new ALM blue eagle stamp has been discovered with a “CC” cancel. The cancel does not seem to be in the same hand as the only other previously known blue eagle “CC” stamp. A history is given of the Government pursuit of the Independent Mails in court over their rights to carry mail over the post roads. It is concluded that the “CC” cancel on ALM stamps were not the initials of agent Calvin Case who was arrested in the summer of 1844. Case may not even have worked at ALM when the “CC” letters were applied as a cancel. If the “CC” cancels do not represent an ALM agent’s initials, this opens a whole new area for further study.

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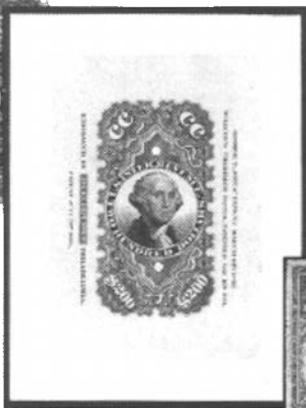


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