

APRIL 2018

WHOLE NUMBER 102

VOL. 26 NO. 2

THE PENNY POST

Official Journal Of The Carriers And Locals Society



**“TBS” cancel of
carrier Trueman B. Shew**



**Daguerreotype produced
by William Shew**

**A juxtaposition of the 1840's worlds of photography and mail handling.
Read how one individual was at the beginning of both fields of
collectibles.**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

IDENTIFYING PRINTINGS OF THE 25-CENT HUSSEY
CIRCUS RIDER STAMPS

THE PLACE CANCELS OF THE AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

THE AGENT CANCELS OF THE AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

AND MORE



Public Stamp Auction

Carriers and Locals Society Auction #29

Date: Fall 2018

Consignments Being Accepted

Contact: Martin Richardson

THE PENNY POST

VOL. 26 NO. 2

APRIL 2018



The Carriers and Locals Society, Inc.
APS Affiliate 211

Official Journal Of The Carriers and Locals Society

Published quarterly in January, April, July and October.
Price per issue: \$10.00 for members, \$12.00 for non-members.

Website: www.pennypost.org

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Editor's Message

By
Larry Lyons

See Us

The *Carriers and Locals Society* will be at StampShow in Columbus, Ohio, August 9-12, 2018. The *Society* will have a booth. Our yearly *Society* Meeting will be held on Friday, August 10th, 3-5pm. We will have reports by our Officers and by the Editor. The meeting is open to all so come in and say "Hello." There will also be exhibits by *Society* members that you will not want to miss. At our previous gathering at NOJEX there were 80 frames by *Society* members. A sight to behold! This is the major APS event of the year and it will be well worth attending.

Website

The *Carriers and Locals Society* announced and launched its new website in October 2017. The website was designed by Brad Bansner of BB Design in Wernersville, Pennsylvania. Funding for the new website was generously contributed by Mike Farrell. Much thanks to Mike and his crew for all they have done for the *C&LS*.

Auction

The *Carriers and Local Society* Auction 28 is currently on-line on the *Society* website. It runs thru midnight, Sunday the 3rd of June. There are 100 exciting lots for you to bid on. Much of the Auction is material which has been donated to the *C&LS* so support the *Society* and make some purchases. Consignments can be submitted for the next auction.

In This Issue

In the past we have had an enormous amount of articles on the Independent Mail Companies but none quite like what we have in store for you in this issue of *The Penny Post*. David Wilcox continues his series on the American Letter Mail Company with Parts 5 and 6. Part 5 discusses "Place Cancels" and Part 6 deals with "Agent Cancels" and what they can teach us about the agents. I found the insight into the lives of the agents to be fascinating and something that has never been investigated before this article. Turns out one agent and his siblings were deeply involved in daguerreotypes which was in its infancy in the 1840's during the time the Independent Mail companies were showing the government how to handle the mail. Both fields led to their being collectibles. Imagine one pioneer in both fields! A fascinating story you should not miss. Much thanks to David Wilcox for his research and writing.

Lastly, we have an article I have written on identifying the printing of the 25-cent Hussey Circus Rider stamps. This article is the fifth in the series. Again it is identification which has not been presented in the over 150-year existence of these stamps.

Next Issue

In the January 2018 issue of *The Penny Post* I presented a picture of 68 forgeries all reported to be by S. Allan Taylor. One stamp struck me as odd because it was the image known to have been identified as a Scott forgery. We received some replies and an article is ready for the next issue of *The Penny Post*.

Campaign

We are on a campaign to add a significant number of members to our Society. If you have a friend who you would like to share our journal with please buy them a subscription. A hearty welcome to our 20 new members.

Thank You Advertisers

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

Mission Statement

The purpose of *The Penny Post* is to present original research articles in the fields of United States Carriers, Local Posts and Eastern Expresses. Forgeries in these areas are also researched. Any article in these fields can be submitted to me for publication (email: 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.

Final Message

Happy Collecting! Plan on seeing us at StampShow in August. Hope you enjoy this issue of *The Penny Post*. May the hobby experience bring you peace, tranquility and lasting friendships with fellow collectors.

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

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Part 5: Place Cancels of The American Letter Mail Company

By
David R. Wilcox, Ph.D.

Introduction

The next two parts of this series will complete the survey of the manuscript cancels of the American Letter Mail Company (ALM). In Part 1 of this series, the blue eagle American Letter Mail Company issue, Scott # 5L3, was surveyed. Twenty-three surviving examples were identified, and scans collected. This stamp issue is scarce and almost non-existent unused, and therefore, it was possible to create a classification system based entirely on cancellations. Each stamp was given a code to identify it, but each example was found to be visually unique, and therefore, a scan of the stamp was also sufficient for identification. In contrast, identifying the function of the blue eagle issue is a much more complicated task than just surveying the surviving examples. Therefore, a list of apparently genuine covers was prepared (Table 1-2, Part 1). Although some researchers may not agree completely with the authenticity of all of these covers, fourteen covers were described and illustrated to be used as a point of departure in discussions.

Unfortunately, even if the covers on this list are completely genuine usages, there are too few examples of the blue eagle stamp on cover to allow a thorough study of the intent and final use of this rare blue issue. Fortunately, many of the cancels found on the blue eagles are found also on the more common black eagle issue (Scott # 5L2). For example, the small “x” and the crosshatch pen cancels are found on thirty percent of the blue eagles, but also found commonly on the black eagles. In fact, it was concluded that whatever the original intent in producing the blue eagle stamp, the blue-colored stamp was finally used in many of the ways that the black issue was used.

However, one fascinating and not well understood aspect of cancels on all issues of ALM are the different types of cancels using initials or words across the face of the stamp. Earlier researchers (Perry and Hall unpublished manuscript) felt almost all of these cancels were agent initials. Parts 1 and 2 of this series surveyed and plated the blue eagle stamps.^{1,2} Parts 3 and 4 discussed the “EHB” and “CC” cancels on ALM

¹ David R. Wilcox, “Survey of the Scarce Blue American Letter Mail Company Stamp. Part 1” *The Penny Post*, Vol. 25 No. 4 October 2017, pages 5-21.

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

stamps,^{3,4} and it was concluded in each case that these are not agent initials as Perry and Hall suggested, but something else. This part of the series will survey other ALM stamps and consider further the validity of the Perry-Hall assumption when applied to the remaining cancels. This Part 5 of the series will consider ALM manuscript cancels used under the new owner that appear to be “Place Cancels.” Part 6 will consider the final remaining manuscript cancels that can truly be considered “Agent Cancels.”

It was not practical to survey every stamp canceled by ALM that survived. John Bowman’s survey of 580 covers gives an excellent overview of the variety and numbers of ALM covers.⁵ Bowman surveyed covers only, not singles. In addition, Bowman’s survey was of covers where the origin is known. If all other surviving covers and single stamps were to be added to that list, the number of ALM stamps that can be studied is many times Bowman’s survey.

In just a quick perusal of the Siegel Auction listings, where the majority of ALM stamps have been auctioned, one finds at least sixty different lots of ALM stamps and covers using the large blue or black eagle stamps. These were just the stamps and covers that seem to deserve a single-lot listing. Some single-cover lots were unique in destination, and some lots were desirable multiples on and off cover. When this cursory count was completed, however, it became obvious that none of the ALM stamps canceled during the Spooner era were canceled by the complex manuscript types that appeared under the new owner. Spooner-era stamps occasionally had a single-letter script cancel like “C” or “S.” These appeared to mean “canceled” or “single” sheet or rate. However, the multi-letter cancels were exclusive creations made under the new owner after he purchased the company from Spooner in the summer of 1845.

Breaking Down The Surveys

A survey of all known complex manuscript cancels on ALM stamps under the new owner has now been completed. Part 1 presented the survey results for all known cancels on the blue eagle issue and the two uncanceled blue eagles (23 stamps of Scott 5L3). Of the 21 canceled stamps, fourteen were manuscript cancel and seven were simple “x” or crosshatch cancels. Parts 3 through 6 expand on this by discussing all three of the ALM stamp issues that showed a similar type of complex manuscript cancel. These are mostly the large blue and black eagle stamps (5L2 and 5L3), since only two small eagle stamps (5L1) were identified within these more complex cancels, and they were both “EHB” cancels.

³ David R. Wilcox, “Part 3: The “EHB” Cancels of The American Letter Mail Company” *The Penny Post*, Vol. 26 No. 1 January 2018, pages 22-47.

⁴ David R. Wilcox, “Part 4: The “CC” Cancels of The American Letter Mail Company and the Court Trials of the Independent Mails” *The Penny Post*, Vol. 26 No. 1 January 2018, pages 48-71.

⁵ John D. Bowman, “The American Letter Mail Company” in *Eastern Independent Mail and Express Mail Companies 1840-1845* Chapter 1, pages 24-39, (edited and published by Michael S. Gutman), 2016.

A word of caution is due here. Many of the more common black eagle stamps (small and large) have not been listed as single auction lots (as was the usual case for the blue eagle stamps). Therefore, the black eagle survey of these fancy manuscript cancels, although for now complete, is limited (see Table 3-1 in Part 3 and Table 5-1 here). Unlike the blue eagle survey, the numbers in the black eagle survey should grow as more attention is given to these distinctive cancels.

Part 3 of this series discussed the “EHB” cancels on all three ALM stamp issues. “EHB” cancels do not seem to be agent initials but may have had a service function for ALM. Forty-five examples of manuscript cancels on the three ALM issues have been found so far. There were eighteen “EHB” in all. Therefore, forty percent of surviving complex ALM manuscript cancels are “EHB.”

The “CC” cancels were discussed in detail in Part 4 of this series. Two large black eagle stamps (A2-ICC-1 and A2-ICC-2) were found with a “CC” cancel. There were also two, blue eagle “CC” cancels reported in the first survey (Part 1, Table 1-1). Three of these four “CC” cancels seem to have different handwriting. Decades ago before this survey, the “CC” cancels were presumed to be the initials of the ALM agent Calvin Case. Perry and Hall suggested this in an unpublished manuscript using the limited data that was known then. However, the data from several auctions since that time (and now more easily accessible online), does not support their early assumption. In addition, using online newspaper services not available to Perry and Hall (they searched everything by hand), the “CC” cancels appear to have been applied after Calvin Case left the company. Like the “EHB” cancels, the “CC” cancels may have had a service function for ALM, but more discoveries are needed here. Both “EHB” and “CC” cancels do not seem, therefore, to be the initials of ALM agents, and combined, they are nearly half of these complex cancels (48.9%).

Table 5-1 shows the survey results of sixteen large black eagle manuscript cancels (including the two, black eagle “CC” but excluding all “EHB”). All “EHB” cancels surveyed so far were already summarized in Part 3 (Table 3-1), but three “EHB” cancels in Table 3-1 were repeats from Table 1-1. So, between Table 1-1 (all 5L3), Table 3-1 (all “EHB”) and Table 5-1, all forty-five manuscript cancels on ALM stamps used under the new owner have now been described. The first four columns of Table 5-1 give the code for each stamp using the system described in Part 1 for blue eagle stamps. The code begins with “A” for the company (ALM), and then, the issue number. The second part of the code refers to the cancel type. All the stamps reported in Table 5-1 begin with “I” in their code, since they are all “initials.” The fourth column (third part of the code) shows the number assigned to the stamp. The date of the cover, if known, is given next in the table and is followed by the address, city, and handstamps. Auction listings are identified in the fourteenth column with the auction house first, then the auction number, and finally, the auction lot. Abbreviations for the auction houses are given at the bottom of the table. The last two columns show certification and provenance of the stamp where known.

When both blue and black ALM issues are considered, there are twelve known types of the complex manuscript cancels used under the new owner. Five

different types are found on blue eagle stamps, and ten types on the black eagle issue. There are three types found on both colors: “EHB”, “CC” and the John Gray cancels. “DB”, and “...kerhoff” (Brinckerhoff) have been found only on the blue eagle stamps. and so far, the remaining seven types are found only on the black eagle stamps.

These forty-five distinctive cancels appeared between the last week of August of 1844 until into the second week of June 1845. That is about 47 weeks. The “EHB” and perhaps the “CC” cancels appear relatively widespread over this time frame. Using a 4% survival rate for stamps from this era (which arose from a study of the New York Postmaster Provisionals),⁶ The “EHB” and “CC” types considered together may have appeared in front of an ALM clerk as often as twelve a week. That is only a fraction of the letters ALM handled each week, but enough to cause the clerks to be ever watchful. The other ten types seem to be from more sporadic events.

“EHB” and “CC” cancels have been discussed, so Parts 5 and 6 of this series will discuss the examples that are rarer and appeared before a clerk less regularly. This includes the fourteen stamps from Table 5-1 that are not “CC” (all black eagle), and the nine non-CC and non-EHB from Table 1-1 (all blue eagle). This totals twenty-three stamps and ten different types of ALM manuscript canceled stamps. While these rarer types are only 51 percent of the manuscript cancels found so far, they are 83 percent of the variety. So, while these types are uncommon to rare, these twenty-three remaining stamps make up a large part of the variation. The twenty-three rarer cancels can be divided into two groups: “Place Cancels” (Part 5) and “Agent Cancels” (Part 6). The ten that can be considered “Place Cancels” are discussed below, and so far, they have only been found on the large black eagle issue.

The Place Cancels

City and Place Cancels on Independent Mail Stamps

Some examples of Independent Mail stamps canceled by city names are shown in **Figure 5-1**. Most are from single lot photos in the Siegel auctions. This is not an extensive survey, but in general, they are uncommon to rare. The Hartford Connecticut Mail Route stamps occurred with a precancel such as “South”, “Southern”, “East” and “West.” The yellow issue with “South” was supposedly headed to NYC, and the pink issues with “East” or “West” were headed to Boston or Albany. This is assumed to have assisted in keeping accounts separated.⁷ The actual “Hartford” city cancel (**frame c**), is quite rare. At least one example was re-canceled, but others were not. The cancel from Rome NY (near Utica) on a Pomeroy 5c black on greenish yellow stamp (**frame f**) is unique.

⁶ Calvet M. Hahn, “The Beginning of Adhesive Postage in the U.S.” *The Penny Post*, Oct. 1995, Vol. 5: No. 4, page 22.

⁷ Richard Frajola, “Hartford Letter Mail” *Eastern Independent Mail and Express Mail Companies 1840-1845* Chapter 8, page 342, (edited and published by Michael S. Gutman), 2016.

Table 5-1. Manuscript Cancels on Large Black Eagle Stamps of the American Letter Mail Co. (Non-EHB).

TABLE 5-1 Manuscript Cancels on Large Black Eagle Stamps of the American Letter Mail Co (Non-EHB) (16)

Co	Iss	Canc	N	M	D	Yr	Identifier	Address	City	Pd	Script	Pd	HdSt	City	HdSt	Auction	Certification	Provenance
A	2	IALL	1	no	no	no	Engler (stamped "Allegania")	Pres. Board Pub.	PHL				PHL-F12			S/1124/31		Schwartz, Puliafito
A	2	IALL	2	no	no	no	"Allegania" hand written	T. Smith & Co. **	Hrtfd	"Single"						L/(10-26-73) /lot 2001		
A	2	IAM	1	3	22	45	Tileston & Hollingsworth	care P.C. Jones	BOS				PHL-F12 BOS-F03			S/925/1015		Kuphal
A	2	IBO	1	12	19	44	Buck & Peters	29 South St	NYC				NYS-F09			S/1124/29	PF349311 (Pos 10)	Frajola, Puliafito
A	2	ICC	1	no	no	no	V. & J.F. Gilpin	67 Dock	PHL				PHL-F12				PF360580	
A	2	ICC	2	no	no	no	Steinmetz & Justice	**	PHL				NYS-F09			MB/304/1700		
A	2	ICSP	1				"CSP" single						PHL-F12					Bowman
A	2	IUG	1				5L2 "J Gray agent"									S/1124/21		Schwartz, Puliafito
A	2	INYa	1	12	11	44	Hopkins & Weston	**	NYC	"Single P'd"			NYS-F09			S/1101/568		
A	2	INYa	2				5L2 "NY" single										PF463686	
A	2	INYb	1				"23 C NY" single 1											Bowman
A	2	INYb	2				"23 C NY" single 2											Bowman
A	2	INYb	3				"58 Wall NY" single											Farrell
A	2	INYb	4	3	5	45	Vinal & Blanchard	Granite Wharf	BOS				BOS-F03				PF547650	Wilcox
A	2	ITBS	1				5L2 "TBS" single									S/1124/21		Schwartz, Puliafito Snow
A	2	ITBS	2				pen line re-cancel 5L2 "TBS" single no re-cancel											

** Steinmetz & Justice cover has no street address. N W 5th & Commerce is the address in McElroy's PHL City Directory
Hopkins & Weston cover has no street address. 54 Mercantile Exchange is the address in Doggett's NY City Directory .
Allegania hand-written (A2-IALL-2) is from Hartford based on the auction description and a partial photo,
but the Perry-Hall manuscript had a full cover photo showing in addition the addressee as T. Smith & Co. (but stamp may not belong).
Auc : L=Lowe, MB=Mathew Bennett, S=Siegel

Several of these uncommon city cancels are found on Hale & Co.'s stamp issues. The Hale & Co. network was very broad and made many different city connections, so this may have presented more instances where the clerk or agent felt a need to indicate a city of origin or destination on the stamp itself. Also, Hale interacted with several smaller mail companies in building its large network. Their rapid expansion was due in part to cooperative agreements with other parties.



Figure 5-1 a through f: Examples of Independent Mail stamps canceled with a city name: Brooklyn NY, Salem MA, Hartford CT, Haverhill MA, Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard, and Rome NY.

Usually, the "Place" of origin or destination was already designated in the address or on a handstamp. This may be the simple explanation of why "Place Cancels" on Independent Mail stamps are so rare. They were generally redundant and served a purpose primarily in the mind of the clerk or agent. They do not appear to represent general company policies.

There is an exception, however. Sometimes the cancel was applied before the stamp was used. They were precanceled. There are examples of both "Place Cancels" and "Agent Cancels" being applied before use. These precancels were presumably applied as a way of accounting for stamps in a location where they were used. The final count at the end of the month recorded the amount of stamp "merchandise" that had been consumed that month from a certain source. This is much like today's precancels which are usually applied by machine.

The precancel served an even more important purpose however. The precancel is a deterrent against theft. In the 1840s, a stamp was worth a larger part of a person's hourly pay than it is today. These tiny pieces of paper were cash in hand. During the Civil War some stamps were even encased so they could be used as coins, and in California, the cardboard-like stamps of the Adam's & Co's Express (Scott 1L3) were reportedly used as poker chips. Watch a bank or post office clerk today,

and you will notice every bill or stamp they handle is recorded in an accounting book. In that sense, stamps are like money.

The precanceled stamp minimized employee theft. A cover arriving at a post office already franked was usually just moved along into the mail mainstream after it was first canceled by the clerk. A clerk stealing the office supply of stamps, even if they went to another branch office (ALM had one in NYC), would be quickly found out when the letter with the precancel was used. The office manager could keep track of all of the office supply simply by signing with his or the office's distinctive initials.

So why did some post offices guard their supply of stamps so carefully? Carrier agents were paid per cover carried. They received a couple of cents for each cover they delivered to its destination. But how did the clerks get paid? Probably by a regular salary, but how was their work load monitored? Beside the fact that the stamp had value by itself, the number of stamps used may have partly determined the salary of the clerk, or at least, the office manager. It may have determined if he kept his job and the office stayed open. The number of stamps used reflected his work load. We know that the NYC Postmaster Robert Morris's salary was determined by the number of Postmaster Provisional stamps he could demonstrate were sold (discussed below). This is at least part of the reason he precanceled his stamps.

Hale stamps are commonly found precanceled by a straight line across, and then occasionally down, that did not continue onto the cover. Whole sheets of stamps could easily be inked with the lines at the same time. Occasionally a cover is noted where the lines extend onto the cover. These were not precancels, although they appear similar. **Figure 5-2 frame "a"** shows an example of a stamp precanceled and applied to the cover afterwards. The precanceled stamps were marked with lines extremely straight as if applied by a ruler. In contrast, note that the example in **frame "b"** seems hand drawn, and the lines extend onto the cover. It is not a precancel. The single defining characteristic of a Hale & Co. straight-line precancel is that the lines are drawn to the edges but do not continue onto the cover. Obviously, the stamp needs to be on cover for this test. (It is not known why the frame "b" cover's stamp was also canceled with the numbers "7" and "6.")

Sometimes instead of a simple line precancel, the stamp was precanceled with a script notation (the "NY" example will be discussed below). Many, but not all, of these Hale city cancels occurred on Hale's later blue issue that had the "12 Court St" line removed. The written cancel "Salem" Massachusetts (**Figure 5-1, frame b**) occurred on both colors of the Hale Co. blue and red issues (the blue more commonly). The "Brooklyn NY" cancel (**frame a**) on a cover to Maine, the "Haverhill" Massachusetts cancel on a cover to New Bedford MA (**frame d**) and the "Edgartown" Martha's Vineyard cancel on a single (**frame e**) are apparently unique cancels. Cancels reading "Marblehead" MA and "Nantucket" are also known.⁸ Because a city or place name across the face of a stamp stands out to a collector, they were collected more often. This alone may be why we have a chance to enjoy them to this day despite their uncommonness.

⁸ Michael S. Gutman, "Hale & Company" *Eastern Independent Mail and Express Mail Companies 1840-1845* Chapter 7, page 127, (edited and published by Michael S. Gutman), 2016.

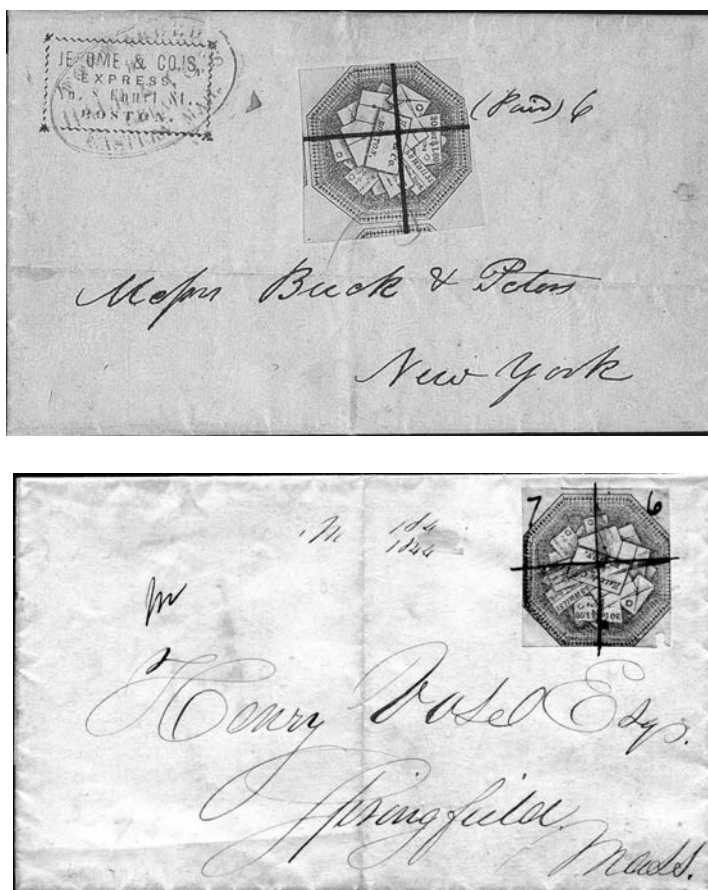


Figure 5-2 a and b: Two stamps on cover canceled with crossed lines. Frame “a” shows a cover with a stamp precanceled before it was applied to the cover. Cover “b’s” stamp was canceled on the cover, and the cancel lines tie the stamp to the cover.

City and Place Cancels on American Letter Mail Stamps

Figure 5-3 shows two ALM black eagles with a Boston connection. The first (**frame a**) is unique and reads “Am Mail Co” (A2-IAMc-1). This is not really a city, of course, but rather the company name. The company is a “Place,” but the ALM offices were in different cities. It is clearly not an “Agent Cancel,” so rather than create a whole new category for just one example, it was put in this “Place Cancel” group.

The stamp does have a city connection, however. The stamp is from a cover addressed to Tileston and Hollingsworth, care of P. C. Jones in Boston. In Bowman’s cover survey noted earlier, he was able to identify the ALM handstamps used in different cities. This Tileston cover has both a Philadelphia (ALM-PHL-F12) and Boston (ALM-BOS-F03) handstamp. Tileston and Hollingsworth were paper manufacturers located at the “Paper Store” on 116 State Street (Stimpson’s 1845

Boston City Directory). Tileston died in 1834 at age 60 (*Boston Post* October 24, 1834), and Peter C. Jones may have played a role as manager at the State Street store in later years. Hollingsworth may have continued as manager at a second “Paper Store” listed in the Boston directory at 14 Waters Street (J.M./& L. Hollingsworth).



Figure 5-3 a and b: Two “Place Cancels” with a Boston connection.

The unique “Am Mail Co” cancel was applied to an ALM stamp on a cover dated March 22, 1845. The Philadelphia correspondent of this “Am Mail Co” canceled cover had been using ALM to correspond to the “Paper Store” as early as February of 1844 when ALM was owned by Spooner (based on the addressee’s handwriting). The “Am Mail Co” cancel, however, is unique and appears on no other cover in this small correspondence. In fact, this cancel is found on no other ALM stamp. Therefore, there is no clear reason why this cancel was used on this stamp instead of ALM’s simple and common “x” cancel, other than the “Am Mail Co” cancel is the name of the company that carried this letter.

The second example in **Figure 5-3 (frame b)** is canceled with a manuscript “Boston” and is from the Peters’ correspondence out of Boston on a cover bound for NYC. Therefore, it is assumed the NYC clerk wanted to note the cover had arrived from Boston (although it is not impossible the cover was canceled in Boston by a Boston clerk who decided to cancel it with his city name, or it could even be a precancel). Unfortunately, the cancel is unique, so it is hard to draw any greater significance to the cancel than it indicated from where the cover was sent. The other three covers in this correspondence were canceled with a “field of stars” cancel, a “CC” cancel and an “EHB” cancel, but only the cover dated December 19, 1844 had the “Boston” cancel. So, both the “Am Mail Co” and “Boston” canceled stamps were part of slightly larger correspondences, but each was a unique application. Who might have applied the cancels?

The “Am Mail Co” cancel (**frame a**) could have been applied in any of ALM’s major cities. It was sent from Philadelphia, probably traveled through NYC and ended its journey in Boston. The cancel could have been applied in NYC if the cover arrived there without a stamp (or the stamp was uncanceled) while in transit to Boston. The NYC clerk could have written the company name across the stamp to cancel it. The Boston cancel could also have arrived in NYC without a stamp or a cancel, and then, canceled with the city from which it had been mailed. In both cases, this is, of course, speculation. But there is a good reason to consider whether NYC

clerks could have possibly canceled these two stamps, because the next five “Place Cancel” examples were all clearly canceled by the NYC clerks. It is conceivable, therefore, that all ALM “Place Cancels” were applied at ALM’s offices in NYC, and the practice was extremely rare to nonexistent in Boston or Philadelphia. More examples are obviously needed.

Figure 5-4 illustrates the two types of NYC “Place Cancels.” There are two examples known of “type a” (A2-INY a-1 and 2), and the handwriting on these two “type a” examples appears to be by the same person (**frames a and b**). These each have a continuous black ink pen squiggle that ends with the letters “N” and “Y.” In both “type a” examples, the beginning of the squiggle appears to be the letter “A.” The second example (**frame b**) is a single, but the first example (**frame a**) is on a cover dated December 11, 1844 and from a well-represented Hopkins and Weston correspondence mailed from Philadelphia to NYC (discussed in Part 7). We know therefore, that the “type a” stamp in the first frame of **Figure 5-4** arrived in NYC, and therefore, the “A” part of both “type a” examples probably meant “arrived” or “accepted.” In other words, the script “A” before the “NY” suggests it was the NYC clerk that applied the cancel, not the Philadelphia clerk.



Figure 5-4 a through f: “NY” “place-cancels; frame a and b are “type a” and frames c through f are “type b.”

The four examples of New York’s “type b” cancels are also shown in **Figure 5-4** (A2-INY b-1 through 4, **frame c through f**). The first two are singles, and the cancel reads “23 C” over “NY” in blue ink. This cancel refers to ALM’s second office at 23 Chambers in NYC where John P. Brinckerhoff and Erastus. J. Ackley are listed in the Doggett’s 1845 46 *New York City Directory*. This branch office opened July 3, 1844.⁹ The “56 Wall” cancel shown in **frame e** and **f** refers to the main office which was at that address. The first “56 Wall” example is a single stamp, but the second

⁹ Bowman, *op. cit.*, 2016, Table 1, page 35.

example of the “56 Wall” cancel (**frame f**) is on a cover and the numbers appear smeared.

This second smeared example of the “56 Wall” cancel is on a cover to Vinal and Blanchard in Boston dated March 5, 1845. It was discussed earlier in connection with a companion cover in Part 3. The cover is illustrated in **Figure 5-5 (frame e)**. We know from docketing and contents of the two letters discussed in Part 3 that they involved insurance matters, and that both covers were mailed from NYC to Boston. So here, the smeared manuscript “56 Wall” is placed on a stamp of a cover on its way to Boston. Wall Street is in NYC and the cover left NYC, so the stamp was probably canceled in NYC. So again, we have a NYC clerk applying the “Place Cancel.”



Figure 5-5 a though e: the four “type b” NY cancels cropped and rotated as needed to show the similarities. In frame e, the entire cover of the smeared example is shown to illustrate the orientation of the stamp on the cover.

Figure 5-5 (frames a through d) shows the four “type b” examples cropped and rotated as needed to show their similarities (the first three are the singles). The “NY” below the street address has a distinctive handwriting in all the cancels, and this suggests all four examples were made by the same clerk. This clerk presumably did not move from city to city, so all four “type b” NY cancels were probably applied in NYC based on the one on cover. Therefore, one might even conclude further that all six NY cancels (both NY types “a” and “b”) could have been applied in NYC, and the other two “Place Cancels” discussed above (“Am Mail Co” and “Boston”) could conceivably have been applied in that city also.

The Chambers Street branch opened in NYC July 1844. This suggests an increase in mail handling in NYC during that summer. Indeed, Bowman’s cover survey suggests that the volume of mail was at its highest in all offices from July through the end of December 1844.¹⁰ Bowman notes that the Boston and Philadelphia main offices each moved at one point, but there seems to be no indication these two other cities opened a branch office as occurred in NYC. So, it appears that the NYC 23 Chambers office was the company’s only branch office in a major city. This may have presented some accounting issues discussed below, that were unique to the NYC area.

Were the ALM’s “NY Type B” Cancels Control Marks or Precancels or Both?

There is a possible explanation for the two different street addresses on the “NY type b” cancels. The volume of ALM mail at that time in NYC was at a peak, and it may have become an accounting issue for stamps used from the main and the branch offices. In other words, the “NY type b” cancels may have been applied to stamps before use, and the street notation then added depending from which office they were meant to be used. It may be that many stamps were pen canceled with “NY,” but only the stamps intended for use from the main office received the “56 Wall” inscription, and the branch office stamps received the “23 C” inscription. Gutman¹¹ distinguishes between a precancel and a control mark by calling a “precancel,” a stamp with a mark that crosses a stamp and goes to the edge but not onto the cover (this is clearest with the straight-line cancels on Hale stamps). Precancels, therefore, cannot tie the stamp to the cover. Also, the stamp is generally not re-canceled.

A control mark, he explains, is a marking on the stamp to control its use (usually against theft or for accounting). Control marks are often manuscript initials and have an additional characteristic. For Hale & Co., control marks that used initials were generally (but not always) applied parallel to the stamp design regardless of the final orientation of the stamp on its cover. In other words, a stamp with a control mark parallel to the design can appear sideways or upside down on the cover. Manuscript cancels that were not precanceled and were applied after the stamp was affixed to the cover were usually applied parallel to the address on the cover. But there is a conundrum. Stamps placed upright on the cover with the cancel parallel to the address can be either a precancel or applied after the stamps was applied. So, several other

¹⁰ Bowman, *op. cit.*, 2016, Table 1-17, page 40.

¹¹ Gutman, *ibid.*, page 124.

covers may need to be examined. But in every case, the stamp must be on a cover to compare its cancel's orientation to the address, so singles are not helpful in this respect.

Gutman's definition has limitations when applied to ALM stamps. The Hale stamps are more abundant than the ALM stamps, and the plain straight-line cancels seen so often on Hale stamps never appear on ALM stamps. In addition, almost no ALM manuscript canceled stamp were ever re-canceled no matter what their purpose. So this characteristic is not useful in determining if an ALM stamp's cancel is a control or a cancel applied for other purposes (such as has been proposed for the ALM "EHB" cancels).

Of course, the corollary to this rule is that the control mark can be applied perpendicular to the stamp design, and then when the stamp is applied to the cover with the design upright, the precancel will read upwards or downwards relative to the stamp design. This is what appears to have happened here with the smeared ALM "54 Wall" stamp. Applying the precancel perpendicular to the design, as on this ALM stamp, seems less logical, but the decision is at the whim of the clerk applying the precancel. An example described below on a reportedly control-canceled Hale stamp apparently even received a control mark upside down relative to the stamp design.

The definitions of a control mark and a precancel blur sometimes. It even becomes more confusing when considering ALM stamps with manuscript cancels. Of the forty-five found so far only a couple are re-canceled, but as discussed below, only the "NY type b" seem to have been marked before the stamp was used. The words precancel and control cancel may mean different things to different people and under different circumstances. In general, however, "precancel" describes the cancel's treatment of the stamp; "control cancel" involves the cancel's function. The two terms can be self-inclusive but not always. The author feels the ALM "NY" cancels were applied as precancels, but the EHB" were not. At the very least, the "NY" cancels were also control cancels. These arguments are presented below.

The argument for the "CC" cancels is, however, inconclusive. The "CC" cancels have only four representatives so far, and all are in the center of the stamp, do not tie the stamp to the cover and orient parallel with the stamp design. In addition, the three "CC" on cover orient parallel to the address. None of the four tie the stamp to the cover, but tied stamps are rare on ALM covers (only three are known for the blue issue). This would fit both our definitions of stamps applied before or after the stamp was affixed. More examples are needed to be sure. Also, it would be most helpful if we knew the definitive function of the "CC" cancels.

The "NY Type B" Cancels are Precanceled Control Marks

Figure 5-4 (frame e) shows the original cover with the smeared "56 Wall" cancel running upwards contrary to the way one might expect the clerk or agent would apply the cancel. The stamp is shown cropped in **frame d**. On cover, it can be seen that the markings are perpendicular to the address. The three other examples in **Figure 5-4 (frames a, b and c)** are all singles with the cancel on the stamp running parallel to the stamp design. The three singles match each other in orientation to the stamp design and in the clerk's handwriting. The stamp on cover is canceled with a different orientation to the design but still appears to be in the same handwriting. This is

consistent with there being a bare minimum of three sheets precanceled. At least one sheet of “23 C” was sent to the branch office, and at least two others marked “56 Wall” (one perpendicular and one parallel with the design) were kept at the main ALM office.



Figure 5-6 a through f: The six covers with manuscript cancels (from 29 in the survey) where the stamp was not affixed with the stamp image upright. Three have the black eagle and three have the blue eagle. The Murdock cover in frame b is upside down. All six cancels, however, were applied parallel with the address.

Of course, there could have been, and probably were, several sheets precanceled in all. The 23 Chamber’s branch office opened in July 1844, but the smeared “56 Wall” cover is dated in March 1845. There is no reason to believe only three precanceled sheets were produced. The three singles could have been made anytime between July 1844 and March 1845, which is eight months apart. All four known “NY type b” canceled stamps suggest a pre-marking, since they are so similar and appear to be applied by the same hand. The example on cover also suggests the

stamp was marked before placement on the cover because of the perpendicular orientation of the cancel to the cover address.

To summarize, a precancel should not extend onto the cover, and sometimes, the cancel will not be parallel with the address, although it may be parallel in some cases. To be considered as a precancel, the stamp must therefore be on its original cover, and then, the cancel's orientation compared to the address. If the stamp's cancel is perpendicular to the address, no matter what the orientation of the stamp's design to the address, it is more likely a precancel, but if the cancel is parallel to the address, more examples must be examined. To test for precancels on ALM stamps, all forty-five manuscript cancels found so far were inspected for examples on apparently genuine covers, and then, the cancel compared to the orientation of the cancel to the stamp design, and also, to the address.

From the survey, twenty-nine examples were identified on apparently genuine covers which included cancels on all three ALM issues (5L1, 2 and 3). The cancels included "EHB", "CC", "Agent Cancels" and "Place Cancels." Just six were franked with stamps not placed upright (21%) on the cover. Many of the twenty-nine covers have been illustrated at some point in this series, and the six with the stamp placed other than upright are illustrated in **Figure 5-6**. All twenty-nine of the genuine covers with manuscript cancels are canceled with the writing parallel with the address, except the smeared "Wall 56" cover. Even the six examples in **Figure 5-6**, where the stamp was affixed other than upright, have their cancels parallel with the address. In the most extreme example, the Murdock cover in **frame b** had its stamp affixed completely upside down, but the cancel was still applied parallel to the address. So, the "56 Wall" cancel stands out as an ALM precancel from all twenty-nine of the known manuscript cancels on cover (**Figure 5-5, frame e**). At the very least, it is a control mark, but the case for it being a precancel can be made also.

It was a surprise that the "56 Wall" was precanceled perpendicular to the design, but that decision would have been left entirely to the whim of the clerk doing the precanceling. The stamp is still precanceled no matter how the clerk oriented the initials. For example, one of the Hale "NY" precancels has the precancel signed upside down relative to the design (see **Figure 5-7 frame d** and discussed below). Both examples illustrate that the precancels were not always applied parallel with the stamp design.

To conclude, the orientation of the "56 Wall" stamp to its stamp design and to the cover's address is, so far, unique among the ALM covers. Taken all together, it is surmised that the ALM "NY type b" manuscript cancels are precanceled control marks. First, the smeared "Wall 56" cover sent from NYC to Boston is consistent with a stamp that was pre-marked before use but not parallel with the stamp design (like Hale's upside down "NY" example). The "56 Wall" stamp was placed upright on the cover with the design parallel with the address, but this then caused the cancel to read perpendicular to the address.

Second, there is good reason to believe there might be a need for pre-marking the NYC stamps with a control mark, since there were two very active ALM offices in NYC at that time, which could have caused accounting conflicts that necessitated the precancels. The ALM "NY" cancels are the best example among ALM's manuscript cancels that fit the definition of a precanceled control mark, but this is not

a complete surprise, since only NYC had the two different offices which might have invoked the need for control marks. Philadelphia and Boston had only one office and would not have faced such a crisis.

Third, and most significant, all four of the “NY type b” cancels are in the same hand and look very similar to each other. In fact, one can imagine a single clerk canceling several sheets first with just the “NY” part of the cancel, and then, after deciding how many sheets to send to each of the two offices, adding the “23 C” or “56 Wall” above the “NY” after that.

This is the reason the author feels the stamps were precancels and not just control cancels. The “NY” portion of the cancel suggest all the stamps were first precanceled with “NY” by the same clerk but in at least two different orientations. Then, the office’s street address part of the cancel was added later as a control mark as the needs demanded. This would make the stamps precanceled control cancels.

A closer look at the “54 Wall” smear may suggest (although not at all conclusively) a second number was applied over the original “56” cancel. There may be an explanation for this. Sometime in early 1845, the Wall Street buildings were renumbered,¹² and ALM’s main office changed its number from 56 Wall to 68 Wall. The Chamber Street number was not changed. The new Main Street address was noted in the 1845 Doggett’s *NY City Directory* (**Figure 5-7 frame a**). Hale and Co at 58 Wall was also renumbered to 70 Wall Street.¹³ It is possible the ALM’s smeared 56 Wall (magnified in **frame b**) is a clerk’s correction of the precanceled 56 Wall to 68 Wall for use at the re-numbered 68 Wall address imposed by the city. The March 1845 date on the cover with the smeared Wall precancel coincides with the change in Wall Street address changes. The smear, however, seems nearly impossible to decipher, so we must leave that decision to the reader.

Did the Independent Mails Influence Precancels on the NY Postmaster Provisionals?

In 1845, the NY Postmaster released his 5c black NY Provisional stamps with a portrait of Washington. He had the vast majority of his stamps precanceled with the initials “ACM.” The initials on the NYC Postmaster Provisional stamps are considered control initials, especially since they were generally canceled “again” later when used.¹⁴ So the NY Provisionals received precancels and so did some ALM NY stamps. Hale & Company also precanceled some of their NY stamps. The data presented here suggests that the NY Postmaster was heavily influenced by the previous experiments in precanceling by the New York City Independent Mails.

The details of this obvious influence will be explained below, but first, there are two striking differences between the NY Provisional and the NY Independent Mail precancels that need to be explained. The Government NY Provisionals were almost

¹² *Document of Assembly of the State of New York*, Volume 35, page 110 (the author thanks Michael Gutman for helping locate this rather obscure reference).

¹³ Michael S. Gutman, *Hale & Co. Independent Mail Company 1843-1845*. (published by Michael S. Gutman), 2005, page 4.

¹⁴ Stanley M. Piller, *The New York Postmaster Provisional* (edited by J. Farrington and P. Wall, published by Robert G. Kaufman Publishing Company), 1991.

always precanceled and almost always re-canceled. This is not true of the Independent Mail stamps, and this can be partially explained.

GENERAL MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION.	
Academy of the Sacred Heart, 111 Bleeker	American Land Company, 29 Nassau
Agency New Jersey floor oilcloth factory, 182 Front	American Letter Mail Co. E. J. Ackley, agent, 68 Wall
Agentur der Deutschen Gesellschaft, 105 Fulton	& 23 Chambers
Albany and Troy steamboats, 95 Barclay	American Pottery Manufacturing Co. 6 Liberty
Allaire Works, 404 Cherry	Apalachicola Land Company, 35 Wall
Almshouse, Bellevue, foot Twenty-sixth, c. r. James H.	Apollo Association, (now American Art Union) 322
Cook, commissioner, office new City Hall, Fenelon	Broadway
Hasbrouck, resident physician, — Hyatt, clerk,	Apollo Saloon, 412 Broadway
George W. Anderson, supt. of out door poor	Apprentices' Library, 32 Crosby
American Fur Company, r. 39 Ann	Arsenal (N. Y. State) Franklin c. Elm
American Institute, west wing new City Hall	Artillery Drill Rooms, Centre market, Centre c. Grand

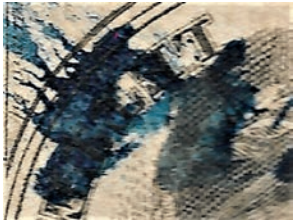


Figure 5-7 a and b: The ALM 1845 NYC directory listing showing their new number on Wall Street, and the smeared “56 Wall” cancel cropped from its cover and magnified.

First, although all four known ALM “NY type b” cancels were not re-canceled, ALM manuscript cancels in general were almost never re-canceled no matter what their function. So, for ALM anyway, it is not a surprise the precanceled ALM stamps were not re-canceled. Explaining why Hale precancels were sometimes uncanceled and sometimes re-canceled is beyond the scope of this article and will be left to a future author. However, the re-canceled Hale NY precancel stamp in **Figure 5-8 (frame b)** is canceled with a red “collect” handstamp. So, this was possibly a special case, where the cancel re-canceled the stamp, and also, indicated a fee must be collected.

Second, unlike the thousands of NY Postmaster Provisional stamps that received precancels, very few Independent Mail stamps overall received a precancel. Most were not precanceled and are just canceled with a simple ink mark. This will require a slightly more nuanced explanation. We have already looked carefully at the ALM “NY” precancels, so now we need to look carefully at the Hale “NY” precancels.

Figure 5-8 shows five “NY” cancels on Hale & Co. stamps. These are considered to be control marks,¹⁵ and the first three (**frames a, b and c**) seem to be by the same clerk, while the last two by another clerk. Also, note that while these Hale markings are considered control marks, the stamp in **frame d** has the “NY” written upside down relative to the stamp design. The stamp in **frame e** is right side up although these two Hale stamps appear to be signed by the same person. This suggest

¹⁵ Gutman, “Hale & Company” *Eastern Independent Mail and Express Mail Companies 1840-1845* *ibid.*, page 107.

at least two different sheets for the last two examples and at least one more for the three examples in the first three frames. But of course, as with ALM, there may have been many Hale sheets precanceled, and apparently, they were sometimes precanceled in different orientations to the stamp design.

Therefore, both Hale and ALM seem to have tried control marks in NYC. Without a large multiple such as the Amos Bates example in **Figure 5-10**, we cannot be sure the precancels were applied to whole sheets (although that seems likely). However, it does seem reasonable that they were canceled in groups before use on covers, especially since the handwriting is so similar between clusters of the stamps. At the very least, they are all control cancels.

It should be remembered that Hale's office in NYC was at 58 Wall Street (later renumbered to 70), just two numbers higher on the street than ALM's main office at 56 Wall Street (later renumbered to 68). Hale's office was in the Courier and Enquirer Building, and the ALM office was presumably nearly next door and to the west on Wall. Today this is one continuous building, but perhaps they were separated in the 1840s. They were certainly neighbors and likely even on the same side of the street (based on the renumbering, which was initiated to put even numbers on the same side of the street). So, Hale's solution to an accounting problem certainly would have been known to ALM when they looked for their solution to accounting for stamps from their two different NYC ALM offices. Which company actually began using such control marks in NYC is a tossup, but Hale & Co. probably experimented with precancels and control marks elsewhere in its network before ALM found the need to do so in NYC.



Figure 5-8 a through e: Five “NY” pre-cancels on Hale & Co. stamps, the first three appear to be by the same hand and the last two another hand.

Figure 5-9 shows three examples of the NY Postmaster Provisionals that have precanceled initials. In the NY Provisionals, the cancels are different because they were applied by different employees. The explanation of the greater variation in NY Postmaster Provisional cancels is very simple. Unlike the Independent Mail stamps, every Provisional stamp was to be precanceled. This became such a massive job involving potentially 1000s of stamps that several people had to be involved in the task.



Figure 5-9 a, b and c: Three different initial cancels on the New York Postmaster Provisional stamps.

So, why were so few of the Independent Mail stamps precanceled? The answer is simple. Morris wanted every NY Provisional precanceled, but the Independent Mails did not see the need for it. The ALM NYC manager was working with hindsight to a problem that was slowly developing in front of him and with the benefit of knowledge of his office's history of handling the NYC mail (even back several months to when Spooner first started ALM). Morris, on the other hand, was acting in foresight. He and his office were just beginning a grand experiment by the U.S. Government, and he had been informed that the number of stamps used by his office might even affect his salary directly. The ALM manager was solving an existing problem for his company while Morris was anticipating the same problem in the Government offices.

When compared to the NY Provisionals, the numbers that had to be precanceled by these two Independent Mail companies is even lower when we also consider the stampless covers. In Morris's mind, he had to consider that every cover carried by the NY Government Mail was to have a NY Provisional stamp. This is not what finally happened, since, like the Independent Mails, many of Morris's NYC covers were still handled without a stamp. But as Morris prepared his stock of stamps, he was preparing for the unknown future. In contrast, the Independent Mails applied precancels only after they had been in business several months. Their branch office caused all the conflicts, but it opened six months after ALM began business. So, ALM was in a much better position to estimate the numbers of precancels that would be needed.

The number of ALM letters without stamps may have been as high as sixty to seventy percent (David Snow and John Bowman personal communications). Gutman surveyed 1810 Hale & Co. covers and found 650 had adhesives. The other 64% were

stampless. So, while collectors naturally focus on the various stamped covers of the Independent Mails, the stampless covers are much more abundant. The Independent Mails were just beginning the process of introducing customers to the concept of a postage stamp to pre-pay for a letter's delivery. They had no choice but to continue the older idea of a stampless cover (either pre-paid or "collect"), if only to remain competitive with each other (suggested by David Snow, personal communication).

If there was a problem with accounting for stamps between ALM's two offices, the task was not as massive as Morris perceived with his NY Provisionals. ALM already knew that the number of covers that would require a precanceled stamp was low. The demand put on ALM clerks for precanceled control stamps in NYC was much less than the demands on the NY Government clerks. In fact, unlike the case with the NY Provisionals, it is possible every single one of the ALM precancels was prepared by a single clerk or manager. We know from the ads and the directory listing, that E. J. Ackley was the "general agent" for both NYC ALM offices (**Figure 5-7, frame a**), and he would be a likely candidate for pre-marking all the ALM NYC stamps. If a document is ever found with Ackley's handwriting, it would be worthwhile comparing his writing to the ALM "NY" precancels.

Ackley and the Government's NY Postmaster, Robert H. Morris, may have had slightly different motivations however. Ackley seems to have been supervising two different NY ALM offices with accounting problems that needed a solution. Morris may have also had accounting issues with his stamps, but in his case, his specific salary was determined by his stamp sales. In Piller's book on the Provisionals, Philip Wall wrote in the Introduction that Morris "was politically inclined and wanted to impress his superiors in Washington. In addition, his compensation was based upon the receipts of the New York City Post Office."¹⁶

So, when Morris looked at his supply of stamps, he saw his salary. Today, we know stamps have a face value, but that value is not tied directly to a postal employee's salary. For Morris, those little pieces of paper represented his paycheck. He needed to protect them. So, where did he come up with the idea of precanceling the stamps with initials to keep track of their proper use and to monitor his supplies? The answer seems to be the Independent Mails. Data here suggests ALM may have used pre-marked stamps, and Hale & Co. and the Hartford Mail Route certainly did. All three companies worked through NYC, and this was before Morris made his decision to precancel the NY Postmaster Provisionals.

According to Philip Wall, the first delivery of NY Provisional stamps from the printers was July 12, 1845. The earliest use was July 15, and the ten covers with this date were all without initials.¹⁷ So at first, Morris did not have the stamps initialed but quickly decided he needed a solution to a perceived problem. Today, we tend to forget that early postmasters, clerks and even the agents were learning as they encountered the problems that today we do not consider nearly as important. The postage stamp was a very recent invention, and its applications were just being worked out.

¹⁶ Stanley M. Piller, *ibid.* "Introduction" Philip T. Wall (June 1991), page vii.

¹⁷ Stanley M. Piller, *ibid.* page 55.

Morris took office May 21, 1845, and as a result of the Act of March 1845, he knew he was expected to show success, and that the Government was watching for his success. NYC at the time had a population of 415,000 people which was third in the world, and the city was second in commerce. The mails however were inadequate, so Morris was tasked with a monumental responsibility to bring reliable mail delivery to the city:

“The Times considered the numerous ‘illegal’ private posts to be highly unreliable, stating that ‘a letter once committed to their care is about as certain of reaching its destination as a balloon committed to the four winds of Heaven.’”¹⁸

The Government Mail Service in NYC was tasked with improving upon the reputations of the private posts, in particular, because the Congress had just put the Independent Mails out of business. New York postal customers were expecting improvements. And, of course, they were more than just customers. They were also voters. The pressure on Morris from his superiors must have been enormous. He had the entire United States Congress on his back looking for him to succeed.

Two of the Hale and Co. stamps in **Figure 5-8 (frames b and c)** were on letters dated October 4 and December 3, 1844. The only ALM stamp of the four in **Figure 5-5** with the “NY” cancel on a dated cover is the “Wall” cover with a smeared 56 street number to Vinal and Blanchard (**frames d and e**). It was dated March 5, 1845. But ALM may have been pre-marking their stamps before March 1845, since the branch office opened more than a half year earlier in July 1844. In both cases, the two companies clearly were pre-marking their stamps before Morris decided to use that idea on his NY Provisional stamps in July 1845. In fact, Independent Mail Companies were precanceling their stamps even before Morris was appointed.

As noted before, the ALM NY office and Hale’s NY office were next door to each other at 56 and 58 Wall Street respectively. The first NY Government branch office was at the corner of William and Exchange Place in 1837 (*Wikipedia.com*). The Government Post had no postage stamps then, and Hale and ALM were not yet in business, but by January 1844, ALM had begun using postage stamps (some of the first in the world) and Hale & Co. started shortly thereafter. The two companies were only two blocks away from the location of the early office. In addition the Government then opened a branch office at Chatham Square in 1845. It closed there by the end of 1846, but this was all within the time span that Morris would have been trying to solve his accounting issues with his new stamps. Both Independent Mail companies went out of business on July 1, 1845, but this was only two weeks before Morris began using his stamps. Morris’s precanceled Provisional stamps appeared only a few months after the last surviving Independent Mail control-marked stamps, and only just a few weeks after all the Independent Mails were put out of business.

The two Independent Mail companies’ main offices were only a mile south of Morris’s Chatham Square branch office, and ALM’s Chambers Street branch was half again closer. Today the old ALM branch building would have been located near the Manhattan side of the Brooklyn Bridge which was constructed later in 1883. In

¹⁸ <https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-history/post-offices-facilities.htm>

1845, the ALM branch office was just a few blocks south of the NY Post Office branch in Chatham Square. Clearly, Morris would have looked to the Independent Mail examples as a solution to his problem. He may even have had former Independent Mail agents among his new army of government mail carriers, since all Independent Mail carriers were out of work after June 1845. Therefore, it seems highly likely Hale & Co., ALM and perhaps the Hartford Mail route stamps gave Morris the solution he was looking for to solve his stamp monitoring problems. The Independent Mails had already tried pre-marking their stamps, and they were located practically in Morris's backyard. Morris gave it a try but on a much grander scale.

“EHB” Revisited: Could “EHB” Cancels Have Served As Control Cancels?

With the possibility that the ALM New York street cancels (“type b”) might be precancels to act as controls between the two different ALM NYC offices, a new question can be asked of the “EHB” cancels. Could they have been “control cancels?” Could they have been precancels? Part 3 argued for a system of “EHB” registration-like marks, suggesting the covers were recorded in a company book to be available if needed by a customer later. It is possible the cover was indeed entered in a company book (thus the reason for the “EHB” notation which meant “ENT d Handling Book” in the David S. Brown company), but not as a permanent record to be read later, but somehow used for control purposes. Perhaps, the stamp the clerk used on the cover was from a controlled stock of stamps held aside for a particular purpose. Perhaps, the “EHB” cancel meant the stamp did not need to be accounted for in the books again, since it had already been “entered in the book.” This may even have somehow involved customers with running “charge” accounts with ALM (if that was allowed). All of this is speculation but not beyond possibility.

We can look at this possibility using the criteria noted at the end of Part 3. There, a list of facts was given that needed to be satisfied by any alternative theory for use of the “EHB” cancels that might be suggested. First, however, we need to ask if the “EHB” cancels could have been precanceled as well as control marks. For this question, the answer is no.

As discussed earlier, the criteria for a precancel is, in part, that the manuscript cancel should generally align with the stamp design (the one ALM “NY” precancel on cover is an exception), but then, not necessarily aligned with the address. Also, a precancel cannot run off the stamp to tie the stamp to the cover. **Figure 5-10** showing the Amos Bates sheet of precanceled Hale stamps which illustrates clearly why this is expected most of the time.

The “EHB” cancels, however, do not fit this criterion, since they are found at all angles oriented to the stamp. In one example, the “EHB” is even applied upside down to the design but parallel to the address (the Murdock cover). On another example (a single), only the “EH” is on the stamp but the “B” presumably ended up on the cover. Perhaps even more important, the Gillette cover (A1-IEHB-2) is canceled with an “EHB” where the lower back curve of the “E” leaves the stamp and ties the stamp to the cover. So, support for the “EHB” cancel being a precancel applied before the stamp was affixed is rather weak. But that does not rule out that ALM clerks initialed the stamps on the cover for some unknown accounting or “control mark” purpose.



Figure 5-10: A large multiple of Hale & Co. stamps with the Amos Bates “AB” precancel.

The “control mark” hypothesis fits fairly well along with the critical facts presented in Part 3 that argued for a “registered letter” system. It is also a simpler idea than a “registered letter” system. However, the sense of urgency in the “EHB” covers, and the examples where an immediate answer was needed, do not seem to fit the simpler “control mark” hypothesis. The clerk in the ALM office applying a “control mark” to a stamp would not know the contents of the letter, so they could not know about the urgency or the customer’s requests for a reply from the recipient. Until more information surfaces, however, both the “registered letter” and the “control mark” hypotheses should be kept in mind. The purpose for using the “EHB” cancel may even have been a combination of both ideas.

The “Allegania” Cancels: A Special Example Of A “Place Cancel”

The final “Place Cancels” on ALM stamps to consider are the mysterious “Allegania” cancels. The “Allegania” cancel has fascinated philatelists since it was discovered. The Siegel Auction house described this cover in their auction as having, “...no indication of origin except for the ‘Allegania’ marking (there was a river named Allegania but no town at this time), fine appearance, only two examples of this “Allegania” marking are recorded” (Siegel Auction 1124 lot 31). The two examples Siegel referred to (A2-IALL-1 and 2) are illustrated in **Figure 5-11** and **Figure 5-12**.

On the cover addressed to “Jos. P. Engles,” the “Allegania” cancel ties the black eagle stamp (**Figure 5-11 frame a**). A tied stamp on any ALM cover is uncommon. If inspected carefully the cancel is not a true pen-written cancel but

appears to be a blue handstamp with the “Allegania” engraved in script (cropped and realigned in **Figure 5-11 b and c**). As seen under magnification, a portion of the handstamp’s framing shows as a blue smudge to the left of the word “Allegania.” Also note that the letters run perfectly parallel with each other, as one might expect from a commercially made stamp but not usually seen in handwriting.

The other known example of an “Allegania” cancel was offered in a 1973 Lowe auction. The resolution is poor and only a small portion of the cover was illustrated. The auction catalog states the cover is to Hartford, Connecticut. An image of the entire cover was found in the Perry-Hall unpublished manuscript (**Figure 5-12 frame a**). It is addressed to T. Smith and Co., who were, at one time, mortgagees in Hartford (*Hartford Courant*, Jan 28, 1850). The Lowe “Allegania” cancel is not a handstamp but a manuscript pen-cancel with the first “A” letter of “Allegania” potentially flowing off the stamp to tie the stamp to the cover and perhaps its tail swooping back onto the stamp in the upper left corner of the stamp. However, the ink does not appear on the cover, so there is reason to believe the stamp did not originate on this cover (cropped and realigned in **Figure 5-12, frames b and c**). One other possibility is the Lowe stamp was a precancel. The “Allegania” handstamp on the Engles’ cover seems to have been based on the handwriting of the person signing the Lowe “Allegania” stamp. Perhaps the Smith cover was an early mailing, and the Engles cover part of a much larger mailing requiring the handstamp.

The Engles’ cover with the blue handstamped “Allegania” cancel was sent to Philadelphia and has a red ALM-PHL-F12 handstamp as expected for that time frame. It is not certified and is only a front, but it is clearly addressed to “Jos. P. Engles, Pres. Board of Education.” This Engles’ “Allegania” example appears to be on its original cover, especially since the “Allegania” cancel ties the stamp to the cover. Joseph P. Engles’ name is in McElroy’s 1845 *Philadelphia City Directory*, and he is listed as employed by an “academy” on George Street. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Grammar School in 1811, and from 1813 to 1817 he worked with Samuel B. Wylie, D.D. while Engles was co-master of that school. After Wylie left the school, Engles oversaw the school for the next 28 years. His appointment to the Board of Education as its publishing agent had only just begun in February of 1845.¹⁹

So, the Engles’ “Allegania” cover must have been mailed between Engles’ appointment in February and June when ALM closed its doors forever. The undated handstamp (ALM-PHL-12) is consistent with these dates, since the latest recorded use of the dated handstamp (ALM-PHL-11) that preceded the undated handstamp is January 18, 1845.²⁰ According to Bowman’s research, the ALM-PHL-12 handstamp was the only one being used after Engles’ February appointment to the Board of Education.

¹⁹ Alfred Nevin, referenced in *wileygenealogy.com*, 1884, *Encyclopedia of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: Including the Northern and Southern Assemblies* Presbyterian Encyclopedia Publishing Co. Philadelphia, PA.

²⁰ Bowman, *op. cit.*, 2016, Table 3, page 43.



Figure 5-11 a, b and c: The Engler “Allegania” cover, and the stamp cropped and realigned.

The Reverend William M. Engles is also listed working on George Street though not living at the same residence as Joseph. It appears from a genealogy search that Reverend William Engles may have been Joseph’s brother (*Ancestry.com*). William is listed in the Philadelphia directories as the editor of the *Presbyterian*, a weekly Philadelphia newspaper. Although the Reverend has not yet been found listed as a minister at any of the Presbyterian churches in Philadelphia, his name appears as a keynote speaker at several Presbyterian conferences in different parts of the country (for example, *Carolina Watchman*, Salisbury NC, May 31, 1845).

From the Siegel auction lot description, they appear to have searched “Allegania” as a “Place” name, but with little luck. But it turns out, their search was on the right track. “Allegania” is not a real place, but rather, it is a fantasy place. During the Spring of 1845, a debate raged in NYC which began on April 1 at the New York Historical Society. This was within the time frame of the Engles’ “Allegania” cover front. A formal paper was even prepared before the Historical Society meeting



Figure 5-12 a, b and c: The Lowe “Allegania” cover from the Perry-Hall unpublished transcript with the stamp cropped and realigned.

dated March 31, 1845 (see **Figure 5-13, frame a** for the cover page from the paper which is still available on line).²¹

On April 1, 1845, a three-person Committee appointed by the New-York Historical Society reported on “the subject of the irrelevant appellation, at present used for this country” and discussed a geographical name more likely to “promote national associations and prove efficient in History, Poetry and Art.”²² The Committee was dissatisfied with the name “United States of America.”

²¹ David Dudley Field, Henry R. Schoolcraft and Charles Fenno Hoffman, “Report of the Committee of the New York Historical Society on a National Name”, New York, March 31, 1845. (Digitized by INTERNET ARCHIVE from the Library of Congress).

²² Almost an Alleghanian: or how N-YHS tried to change the nation’s name to the United States of Alleghanis” *blog.nyhistory.org › almost-an-alleghanian*, From the Stacks, New York Historical Society, January 30, 2013.

In the debate, some felt the name “United States of America” was too awkward, and the name should be changed (*The Evening Post* April 2, 1845). This was only about seventy years after America declared independence, and the nation had grown significantly since its original thirteen independent colonies. The debate was real and “Allegania” was one of the proposed new names. Washington Irving (**Figure 5-13, frame b**) proposed the name change years earlier, but his idea went nowhere.

“In France, when I have announced myself as an American, I have been supposed to belong to one of the French colonies; in Spain, to be from Mexico or Peru, or some other Spanish American country.” (Irving points out that,) “if the country adopted the *United States of Alleghania* as its new name, its initials would still be USA.” (*blog.nyhistory.org* › “Almost-an-alleghanian”).

The NY Historical Society debate was reported in newspapers from NYC to South Carolina (*Carolina Watchman*, April 12, 1845):

“America is too broad - it belongs to the Whole hemisphere; and to call ourselves United Statesians is too awkward, besides there are other Confederacies on this Continent already, which have taken the name United States.”

It was proposed we could “call ourselves ‘Alleganians.’” Others liked “Columbia,” and others found too much pride in losing the name “American.”

“The Committee’s enthusiasm for the new name was not, however, shared by the rest of the country — or, for that matter, even the rest of the Society, who rejected the proposal at an apparently heated meeting held on May 13, 1845 (according to the *Evening Gazette*, Society President Albert Gallatin, formerly Thomas Jefferson’s Secretary of Treasury, had difficulty keeping the members in order). ...Sister historical societies were equally derisive. Called on for support, the New Jersey Historical Society instead issued a stinging rebuke: ‘The object of Historical Societies is not to change the name of States or Empires, but to aid in the writing, and in the preservation of all that pertains to, their true history.’ The Massachusetts Historical Society agreed in principle that the country needed a new name, but championed *Columbia* over *Allegania*, the latter evoking a ‘mere clod of earth.’”²³

Needless to say, we are still called Americans, so the debate obviously fizzled. But there were apparently advocates for “Allegania” (probably from NYC) that invested in a mail campaign for the name “Allegania” and sent news reports around the nation to stir up interest.

²³ *Ibid.*

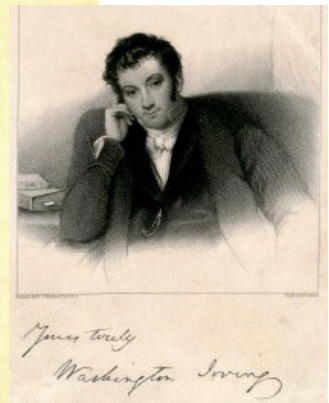
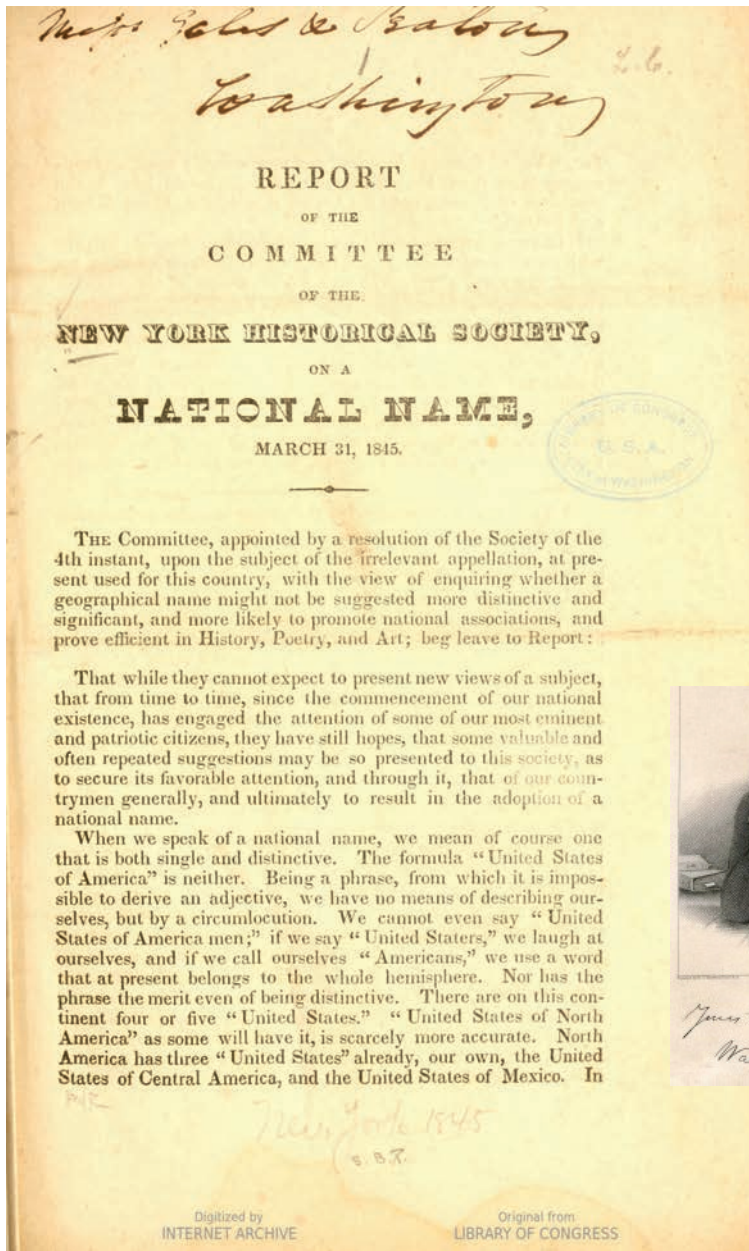


Figure 5-13 a and b: The cover page of the NY Historical Society 1845 proposed change to the name of the United States and a portrait of Washington Irving who had made the proposal much earlier.

The Engles' "Alleghania" cover is a cover front only without content, but it may have contained a news report on the debate and may have asked one of the Engles to publish it in the *Presbyterian*. It may also have been asking opinions or support for the name change, especially from Joseph in his high position at the University of

Pennsylvania Grammar School as President of the Board of Education (and its publishing agent).

The NY Historical Society specifically called for a mailing to societies and citizens to further the debate. There may have been such a letter in the Engles' cover. The NY Historical Society's original paper requested the letter:

"Third. That a letter be addressed by the Society to other historical societies and to eminent citizens in different parts of the country, asking their concurrence and co-operation in bringing the name before the People."

The "Allegania" cancel, therefore, was a type of slogan cancel or advertising cancel on the ALM stamp. It was promoting a name change for the United States of America and was probably made by members of the NY Historical Society in response to the request in the paper authored in March. Just five years earlier in 1840, postage stamps were introduced in the UK. In 1842, the postage stamp was introduced in America. Therefore, the ALM "Allegania" cover of 1845 was probably one of the first uses of a "slogan cancel" on a stamp in the United States, and perhaps, in the world.

The significance here for the history of the American Letter Mail Company is that it is hard to believe ALM would have made a special "Allegania" handstamp for this aggressive but small campaign. The customer most likely made the handstamp, not ALM. The NY Historical Society had given themselves a mandate to contact "historical societies" and "eminent citizens in different parts of the country." This was a tall order, and their society would have to foot the bill. At first, they may have hand precanceled the stamps as in the case of the Lowe cover. Finally, it appears they may have invested in a handstamp for canceling the many covers needed for the task. It's quite possible they bought sheets of the ALM black eagle stamps and prepared Society letters and stamped the postage stamps on the letter with their handstamp themselves.

One can imagine some late-night volunteers hand writing the hundreds of different addresses to the prepared folded letters before mailing. The covers were then franked with ALMs large black eagle stamps and hand stamped to tie the stamp to the cover. When all ready, the bundle of addressed and pre-stamped covers was delivered to ALM's NYC office ready for mailing. This was not a precanceled stamp as exemplified by the ALM or Hale "NY" examples, but it was more. It was a stamp on a prepared notice tying the stamp to the cover and prepared by the Society for ALM before delivery to the mails. If this is how the covers were prepared, it would be a precanceled cover using a postage stamp. It was perhaps one of the very first mass mailings using postage stamps in America. It's unfortunate that only two covers seem to have survived. The effort was political in nature, and ALM apparently allowed the letter with its slogan cancel to be carried through its mail system, and in both surviving examples, the cover was carried without re-canceling the stamp.

The "Allegania" cancel may be an example of ALM's flexible policy in handling customer-cancelled stamps. In the case of the Engles' "Allegania" example, this was perhaps on an even larger scale than an isolated request, because someone in the Historical Society seems to have made a special handstamp to cancel the presumably large volume of letters sent out. The "Allegania" cancels may illustrate a

willingness by ALM and its new owner to innovate and allow the customer to dictate some of the rules.

In Conclusion

Table 5-1 completes the survey of ALM manuscript cancels as appeared under the new owner. Forty-five manuscript cancels have now been described and discussed. In this Part 5 of the series, all ALM manuscript “Place Cancels” were analyzed as to their meaning and possible origins. “Place Cancels” such as “NY” and “Allegania” were discussed.

Several ALM city cancels appear to have been applied in NYC, and “NY type b” appears to be a precanceled control mark possibly used as an accounting mark between the two ALM NYC offices. It is proposed that the Independent Mail companies in NYC influenced Robert Morris’s decision to initial his NY Provisional stamps.

The “Allegania” cancels seem to have been promoting a change in the name of the United States of America. These now rare “Allegania” cancels may have been some of the world’s first “slogan cancels.” Although only two covers seem to have survived, they may have been part of a fairly large mailing originating from the Historical Society in NYC. They may have been one of America’s first mass mailings using a postage stamp.

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, David Snow, Mike Farrell, Michael Gutman and Casey White for their email communications, and shared lists and resources. Thank you to Adam Levine for his help in researching the “Allegania” cancel. 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.

Part 6: Agent Cancels of The American Letter Mail Company, and What They Can Teach Us About the Agents

By
David R. Wilcox, Ph.D.

Introduction

When “EHB” and “CC” are removed from the list of American Letter Mail Company (ALM) manuscript cancels, and then, the “Place Cancels” are also removed, there are only thirteen remaining examples that can be considered true “Agent Cancels.” Therefore, ALM “Agent Cancels” are surprisingly uncommon (only 28.9% of the survey). Details of these survivors were previously given in Tables 1-1 and Table 5-1. Of the thirteen survivors, only five can be dated on cover, and these were all from the first two weeks of June 1845 when ALM was closing out its business.

In Part 7, it will be argued that all the true agent cancels could have occurred in ALM’s final weeks. Agent cancels never occurred under Spooner and do not seem evenly distributed under the new owner. If they were evenly distributed, however, they would have appeared less than once a month during ALM’s short existence. So, they were clearly not part of the everyday operations of the company as the “EHB” cancels had become. We must now conclude that the earlier assumption that most ALM manuscript cancels were agent cancels is false. In fact, the agents were probably encouraged not to sign their stamps. The “EHB” cancels (and perhaps the “CC” cancels) were sending a message to the receiving clerk for him to carry out some action the company wanted him to perform. Agent cancels on ALM stamps would have only confused the receiving clerk unless they had a message of their own. This part of the series will survey what we know about these rare cancels, and Part 7 will try to unravel what the agent cancel’s message was to the clerk.

Part 6 will finalize the survey of American Letter Mail manuscript cancels under the new owner.^{1,2,3,4,5} Only five types of the manuscript cancels are true “Agent Cancels.” One type (“DB”) is represented by six examples, but all the others are represented by three or fewer survivors. The thirteen survivors are three John Gray cancels (found on both the blue and the large black ALM issue), the unique

¹ David R. Wilcox, “Survey of the Scarce Blue American Letter Mail Company Stamp. Part 1” *The Penny Post*, Vol. 25 No. 4 October 2017, pages 5-21.

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

³ David R. Wilcox, “Part 3: The “EHB” Cancels of The American Letter Mail Company” *The Penny Post*, Vol. 26 No. 1 January 2018, pages 22-47.

⁴ David R. Wilcox, “Part 4: The “CC” Cancels of The American Letter Mail Company and the Court Trials of the Independent Mails” *The Penny Post*, Vol. 26 No. 1 January 2018, pages 48-71.

⁵ David R. Wilcox, “Place Cancels of The American Letter Mail Company, Part 5” *The Penny Post*, Vol. 26 No. 2 April 2018, this issue.

“...kerhoff” cancel (on the blue issue), a newly discovered “CSP” cancel (on a large black eagle), the two Trueman Shew “TBS” cancels (both on the large black issue), and finally, the six “agent DB” cancels (all on the blue issue).

Despite their relative uncommonness, these true agent cancels each tell their own story. Part 6 will summarize what is known about these thirteen survivors, and Part 7 will consider their significance. This article will conclude with some thoughts on what the agents were like that chose to carry mail for the American Letter Mail Company.

Agent Cancels

John Gray

John Gray is listed in the 1845 McElroy *Philadelphia City Directory*. He is clearly listed as an “agent for the American Letter Mail Company” at 101 Chestnut Street. His home address is not given. John Gray is the only agent that initialed an ALM stamp that is specifically listed as an agent for ALM in his city directory. George P. Fisher who was tried by the Government in June 1844 is also listed in the directory specifically as an ALM agent. However, he never signed any ALM stamps that survived. It is not known why he did not initial any stamps, but Part 7 will argue that the agents only signed ALM stamps as it closed its doors in June 1845. Perhaps Fisher was not part of that event (or his signings have not survived or have not been discovered yet). John Brinckerhoff (...kerhoff) and “TBS” are each listed as “agents” in the directory, and it can be concluded that the listing is referring to ALM, but the directory listing is not that specific. Calvin Case was never listed, and it is likely the “CC” cancels are not his initials anyway (this argument was presented in Part 4). “DB” is not listed in any directory as an “agent.” There are good reasons to believe “DB” is an agent, but he has not yet been identified.

E. J. Ackley in NYC was listed specifically as an ALM agent, but he did not initial any ALM stamps. This may be because his signings have not survived, or more likely, because he never signed any stamps. He is listed as the NYC branch “General Agent.” This suggests he was an office manager or clerk and not a mail carrying agent. The argument made in Part 7 explaining the possible meaning for the “agent cancels” will show why clerks probably never initialed ALM stamps.

John Gray signed three surviving ALM stamps (A2-JG-1, A3-JG-1, and A3-JG-2, see **Figure 6-1**). A2-JG-1 is a black eagle single and reads “J. Gray” and “agent” on the line below (**frame a**). This stamp most likely contributed to the early belief that all ALM stamps were canceled by agent initials. The other two John Gray stamps (**frames b and c**) are blue eagles on genuine covers carried by ALM during the final weeks of ALM’s existence. These three examples are all that have survived. Although John Gray’s philatelic ties to ALM are one of the clearest, we know very little else about him.



Figure 6-1 a, b and c: Three ALM stamps canceled by John Gray.

The “...kerhoff” cancel...John P. Brinckerhoff

One item, in the blue eagle survey of Part 1, is from John Bowman’s collection (ex-Stimmell) and is canceled “...kerhoff.” (A3-Iker-1). It has never been described before, and the cancel is unique (**Figure 6-2, frame a**). This interesting but otherwise sad stamp was damaged probably due to a cover fold weakening the left edge of the stamp before it was removed from its cover. Only about 90% of the stamp remains. This would normally make plating the stamp difficult. However, there is a characteristic position dot just to the left of the right scroll. This suggests the stamp is from position 12 on the right side of the sheet at the end of row three.

A much more obvious consequence of the stamp damage is the loss of the left side of the cancel. The manuscript cancel suggests an agent’s name ending in “...kerhoff.” Since most of the verifiable blue eagle covers surveyed in Part 1 seem to have originated from Philadelphia, that city seemed to be a good place to start a search for the agent. A page-by-page search of the 1845 McElroy *Philadelphia City Directory* turned up no candidate. A word search suggested the last name “Brinkerhoff,” but there were no Brinkerhoffs in all the Philadelphia directories (1844, ‘45 or even ‘46).

Finally, a candidate was found in Doggett’s 1845-46 *New York City Directory*. The ALM agent that signed this stamp seems to have been John P. Brinckerhoff (note the “c”). His address was given as 23 Chambers street in New York City. Brinckerhoff is only listed as an “agent” in the directory, but another person, E(rastus) J. Ackley, is listed at the same address and specifically named as an “agent of the American Letter Mail Company”. In the *NY Journal of Commerce* dated August 12, 1844, Ackley is noted as the “General Agent” for the American Letter Mail Company, and in the July 27, 1844 issue of the *New York Express*, 23 Chambers is listed as a branch office of ALM. It is believed this NYC ALM branch opened earlier in that month.⁶

The Poudrette Co. was also at 23 Chambers in the 1845 NYC directory. This company had moved into the Chambers Street building before ALM set up its branch

⁶ John D. Bowman, “The American Letter Mail Company” in *Eastern Independent Mail and Express Mail Companies 1840-1845* Chapter 1, pages 24-39, (edited and published by Michael S. Gutman), 2016.

there (**Figure 6-2, frame b**). Poudrette is a fertilizer made from dried night soil mixed with other substances such as gypsum and charcoal. John Brinckerhoff was specifically listed as an agent for this company in the 1842-43 directory when the company was at 118 Nassau Street (*The Evening Post* April 3, 1843, Doggett's *New York City Directory for 1842 and 1843*). The company moved into the Chambers Street building later in 1843. In the 1845-46 directory, Brinckerhoff dropped the specific reference to the Poudrette company and was just listed as "agent," although his fertilizer company was still at the Chambers Street address. After ALM was closed, Poudrette Co. ads continued in the NYC newspapers, and Brinckerhoff continued his listing in the NYC directory. So, it appears likely Brinckerhoff just continued to work with Poudrette as their agent after ALM was forced out of business.

Brinckerhoff appears to have signed his unique blue eagle stamp as an ALM agent while working in the same building with E. J. Ackley at 23 Chambers in NYC, but he is also associated with the fertilizer company before and possibly after 1845. A good explanation for these facts is that Brinckerhoff worked part time for both companies during 1845. This was probably not unusual for agents working for the early Independent Mail companies. The Poudrette Co. had moved into the Chambers Street address in May 1843 (*The Evening Post* NYC May 20, 1843) about a year before ALM opened its branch in July 1844, so Brinckerhoff probably saw a chance to make some extra money while his fertilizer company was in the same building with ALM.

ALM had agents in all the major cities it served, including NYC, Boston and Philadelphia (and briefly Baltimore). Since most of the blue eagle stamps were used from Philadelphia, an agent's signature on a blue eagle stamp residing in NYC was not expected. One possibility is that ALM's NYC office, where Brinckerhoff worked, had some blue eagle stamps. This possibility was discussed in Part 2 of this series, but the author has recently had to rethink this idea. It may be that Brinckerhoff signed the blue eagle stamp in Philadelphia while carrying mail for ALM on one of his return trips from Philadelphia to his NYC residence. The possibility Brinckerhoff signed the stamp in Philadelphia will be considered further in Part 7 of this series, but the fact the stamp is a single without a cover means we may never fully understand where Brinckerhoff signed the stamp unless another is found.



REMOVAL—THE NEW YORK POUDRETTE COMPANY have removed to No. 23 Chambers, corner of Centre street, opposite the Post Office, where orders for Poudrette, Fertilizing, Powders, and Removal of the Deposits, may be left, and Garden Seeds, Flowers and Plants may be obtained. Call and see. my9 lm

Figure 6-2 a and b: The only recorded ALM stamp with the John P. Brinckerhoff's signature, and an ad for the earlier arrival of the Poudrette Company to the Chambers Street building.

The “CSP” cancel...Charles S. Peaslee

The “CSP” cancel (A2-ICSP-1) is a very recent discovery (from the John Bowman collection) and not even included in calculations in earlier parts of this series. **Figure 6-3** illustrates the single stamp (**frame a**) and shows the stamp color digitized to bring out the letters (**frame b**), and then, the letters are traced individually in the final frame (**frame c**).

The letters read CSP or possibly CLP. The **Figure 6-2** tracing shows the middle initial as an “S,” but continuing the lower loop might alternatively suggest an “L.” The author favors the “S” drawn here because of the similarity to the TBS initials discussed below in the Trueman Shew section (see **Figure 6-6 frame b**). The “S” continues into the “P” in “CSP” but in “TBS” the letters are all separated, so a direct comparison is difficult, and therefore, both possibilities were researched.

There is only one name in McElroy’s 1845 *Philadelphia City Directory* with the CLP initials...Charles L. Parker. He is a sheet iron worker living on Fourth below Franklin. This would seem an unlikely candidate for an ALM agent but cannot be ruled out. There is also only one name with the CSP initials...Charles S. Peaslee. He is listed as a merchant working at 38 Front Street (in both the 1844 and 1845 Philadelphia directories). This is the building where David S. Brown & Company was located, and no other company is listed at that address. Neither Parker or Peaslee is listed as an “agent” as some other ALM agents were listed (like “TBS,” for example, discussed below).



Figure 6-3 a, b and c: The “CSP” initials of Charles S. Peaslee on its original single, and then, digitally color altered and finally traced to show the letters more clearly.

Peaslee is a tempting choice here, since David S. Brown is a top candidate for the new owner of ALM in the summer of 1844 (mentioned earlier and in detail in Part 8 of this series), and Peaslee was one of Brown’s associates. It is tantalizing to think that one of David Brown’s employees (Charles S. Peaslee) might have worked for ALM as a part-time agent, if only briefly. This is the only tentative tie found between any Brown employee and ALM, but other than the initials on this stamp, it is not known whether Peaslee indeed worked briefly as an agent for ALM at the same time. Clearly, the “CSP” agent initials will require much more research. It will be very

helpful if a second example is found. It may be out there hidden in a collection, especially since it may be on the common, but less sought after, small black eagle issue.

The June “DB” cancels

Six blue eagle stamps are canceled “DB” and listed earlier in Part 1 of this series (Table 1-1). The six in Table 1-1 are all found on the blue eagle issue, and therefore, were used under the new owner (A3-ICC-1 through 6). The “DB” cancel has yet to be found on any of the large black eagle stamps. Three of the blue eagle “DB” cancels are on covers dated in the early weeks of June 1845 (A3-ICC-1 and 2). From plating studies and other considerations reported in Part 2, it could be argued that all six “DB” examples were used during the final month of ALM’s existence. “DB” may have some other meaning, but if it is an agent’s initials, perhaps the six stamps were carried by the same agent in a single run from Philadelphia to NYC in early June.



Figure 6-4 a through f: The six known “DB” canceled ALM stamps (A3-IDB-1 through 6).

So far, no agents with “DB” initials have been found listed as an “agent of the American Letter Mail Company” in any of the city directories for the years 1844 or 1845. The six “DB” stamps are shown as they appear cropped from their covers in **Figure 6-4**. Three of the “DB” stamps are signed vertically and three horizontally across the face of the stamp. This is due to the orientation of the stamp on the cover, and therefore, not a suggestion that they may be a form of precancel. One “DB” cancel is on a purported cover to which it did not originate, but the other five seem to be genuine, and these are all signed horizontally with the address. Also, one example

(A3-IDB-1 on a cover dated June 7, 1845, **frame a**) is tied to its cover by the tail of the “B” initial trailing off the stamp onto the cover. Tied blue eagles on cover are rare (there are only three known) and being tied is another indication “DB” is not a precancel. With only two script letters in the “DB” cancel (“D” and “B”) and only six examples to compare, it is difficult to be positive, but the six “DB” initials appear to be by the same hand.

At least four “DB” listings are on covers from Philadelphia to NYC. So, “DB” might be a Philadelphia resident. Probably the best candidate from the Philadelphia directory listings for 1845 is David Brown a runner for the Health Department and listed so in the directory (this person does not seem to be related in anyway with the owner of the David S. Brown Co. mentioned as a candidate for the new owner of ALM in the summer of 1844). Other candidates are Daniel Baker listed as a “currier,” Daniel Beckman a “carrier” and Daniel Berrigan a “clerk.” But there is no information tying any of them directly to ALM. Whoever agent DB was, he could have been a long-standing employee of ALM or just a brief player. We do not know. As with the “CSP” initials, this is an area that could use much more research.

The six “DB” canceled stamps reported (all on blue eagle stamps) is greater than all the “CC” stamps found so far on both the blue and black colored stamps. This may be because at least three of the “DB” canceled stamps are part of the saved Hopkins and Weston correspondences where twenty covers survived intact. In other words, the “DB” examples may be all that exist, but there may still be many more “CC” yet to be found. Also, the blue eagle covers attracted more collector attention than the black eagles, so they may have been saved more often. Not much more is known about the “DB” cancels, but a hypothesis strongly suggesting “DB” is indeed an ALM agent will be presented in Part 7.

The “TBS” cancel...Trueman B. Shew (also sometimes spelled Truman)

A very fanciful set of three initials (TBS) is found on a surviving black eagle stamp (Table 6-1, A2-ITBS-1). This seems to be another example of an ALM agent’s initials canceling a stamp. This stamp is also canceled with a single ink line, so it appears to have seen mail service (**Figure 6-5 a**). The extra ink cancel is common but unexpected on this initialed stamp, since all but a couple of the forty-five manuscript cancels discovered so far do not have a second cancel. The general rule seems to have been that a manuscript cancel under the new owner was sufficient to obliterate the stamp against further use. In fact, it may have been undesirable to re-cancel the manuscript cancels, if they were meant to be read by the receiving office as a message. In this first example, the TBS has a cancel line through it, but the initials are still fully visible.

A second example canceled with the “TBS” initials has recently surfaced (**Figure 6-5 b**, A2-ITBS-2, David Snow personal communication). It is shown here for the first time. This stamp was not re-canceled as in the first example, but it seems to be in the same hand, and like the first example, is in blue ink, and the cancel is also on a large black eagle stamp.

The “TBS” cancels are most noteworthy for their fancy, if not artistic, lettering. A search of McElroy’s 1945 *Philadelphia City Directory* turned up a probable candidate. T. B. Shew is listed as an “agent” and the address given is 136

Chestnut. This address was just a block up the street from the ALM office at 101 Chestnut. In the same 1845 directory, T. B. Shew is listed under the general heading “daguerreotypist.” This suggests that TBS was both a mail agent and maker of daguerreotypes (duh-gair-uh-tahyp, -ee-uh-tahyp) at the same time in 1845. Like Brinckerhoff, T. B. Shew may have worked only part-time with ALM. At some point between 1841 and 1848, he was reportedly employed at Plumbe's Gallery⁷ and residing at 116 Chestnut Street (*Public Ledger*, March 30, 1847). This location is just a few buildings away from the ALM office at 101 Chestnut.

Both “TBS” initialed stamps are single, so unlike John Gray we have no surviving covers with the “TBS” canceled stamps. Therefore, we know more philatelically about John Gray than TBS, since we have two of Gray's blue eagle covers surviving from early June 1845.

Unlike John Gray, however, we do know that TBS continued to work in Philadelphia when ALM closed. Being a mail agent was probably a temporary job as TBS set up shop with his real love of making and selling daguerreotypes. Since we know a fair amount about the Shew family, it will be interesting to consider their lives as an insight into the world of an Independent Mail agent. Although Shew probably only worked for ALM a short time, it will be interesting to explore why he decide to carry the ALM mail in 1845. In general, the lives of almost all Independent Mail agents have been poorly reported, mostly because there is little information of any kind about the men that worked these often-transitory jobs.

The Shew name is Irish/Scottish. Trueman was born in 1817 in NY State into a family of six brothers and six sisters. It is not clear exactly where Trueman was born, but the large Shew family grew up mainly near Watertown in upstate New York (*craigcamera.com*). Trueman's brothers and sisters were born over several years. In fact, Truman's youngest brother Abram was born in 1841 when Truman was already 24 years old.

Around 1840, William I. Shew (one of Trueman's younger brothers) read a paper on the daguerreotype technique by Samuel F. B. Morris. This is the same Morris that invented the telegraph. At age 20, William moved with his brothers to NYC, apparently to study with Morris. William was one of the first to commercialize the daguerreotype technique and ran many ads in the Boston papers after he moved there from NYC. The daguerreotypes were often mounted in leather-like cases that, today, are quite collectible in their own right. Later in the 1850's, the paper and shellac-based frames were treated with chemicals much the way phonograph records were made later. This was one of the first uses of plastics in America.⁸

The daguerreotype was invented by L. J. M. Daguerre in France. It required skill, great care with lighting and needed polishing just before use, but it did not demand a great deal of space and was relatively inexpensive. The process employed an iodine-sensitized silvered plate and mercury vapor to produce a clear image of the subject. Unlike today's photos from scans and negatives, each delicate daguerreotype was unique and irreplaceable. The experience of viewing a daguerreotype is:

⁷ *craigcamera.com*.

⁸ Dorothy J. Clark, *The Terre Haute Tribune*, Indiana, June 8, 1976.

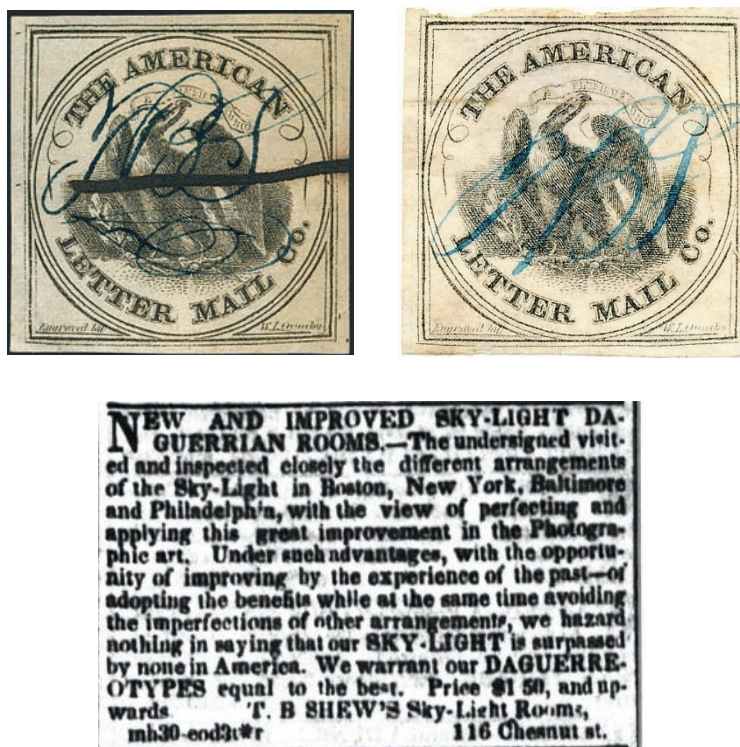


Figure 6-5-a, b and c: The two known copies of the “TBS” cancel and a T. B. Shew ad as a daguerreotypist.

“unlike that of viewing any other type of photograph. The image does not sit on the surface of the plate, after flipping from positive to negative as the viewing angle is adjusted, viewers experience an apparition in space, a mirage that arises once the eyes are properly focused (*daguerreobase.com*).”

A similar experience today can be seen with holograms on credit cards. The industry exploded after 1844, and shops appeared in many of the major cities along the East and West coast. By 1853, NYC had 85 studios.⁹ It was about the only photographic technique available to the common man until into the late 1850s.

Trueman Shew (sometimes spelled Truman) was one of the nation’s earliest photographers to use this technique commercially, and it is said to have brought the individual and the family portrait to the world of the common man. Daguerreian photographers’ studios were usually on the upper floor with skylights to give maximum natural light for the exposures. One of T. B. Shew’s ads from the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, March 30, 1847, is shown in **Figure 6-5 (frame c)**. Another ad in the *Philadelphia Saturday Courier* November 28, 1846 read, “T.B. Shew. Portraits, \$1.50 to \$10 perfect and colored, Plates, cases, apparatus, chemicals,

⁹ Gary W. Clark, *Cased Images & Tintypes*, 2013, published by Photo Tree.com, page 6.

&c. for sale at the lowest rates. Instructions given on reasonable terms.” When all was added up, however, a daguerreotype cost between \$12 to \$50 in today’ dollars.¹⁰ This means that Trueman’s clientele may have been considered the “common man,” but they were either very well to do, or the picture was a very special occasion. However, a daguerreotype was still affordable by the “common man” when contrasted to a formal portrait painting.



Figure 6-6 a, and b: The image of a young women produces by William Shew when in Boston, and his advertising card behind the picture.

So, here we have a surprising juxtaposition of the three entrepreneurial worlds of the 1840s and 1850s. Trueman worked briefly in Philadelphia as a mail carrier for the prominent Independent Mail carrier company ALM, which had challenged the government’s monopoly on the mails and produced some of America’s very first stamps. He then specialized in a new photographic technique that brought the gift of photographic memories to the common man. Finally, these “treasures” would eventually be mounted in a frame made using the future commercially important world of plastics.

Before Philadelphia, around 1841, four of the older brothers, Trueman, William, Jacob and Myron, worked at the firm of L.P. Hayden Daguerreian Photo Studio at 11 Park Row NYC (*craigcamera.com*). Later, William advertised and began production of his daguerreotypes in Boston, and he was acclaimed as a maker of "daguerreotype miniatures."¹¹ Myron was listed at Tremont Row in Boston in Stimpson’s 1847-48 *Boston City Directory* and later with William at 123 Washington Street. **Figure 6-6, frames a and b** show one of William’s Boston products of a young woman and with his advertising card label mounted behind the image in the case.

¹⁰ Ibid. page 6.

¹¹ *craigcamera, ibid.*

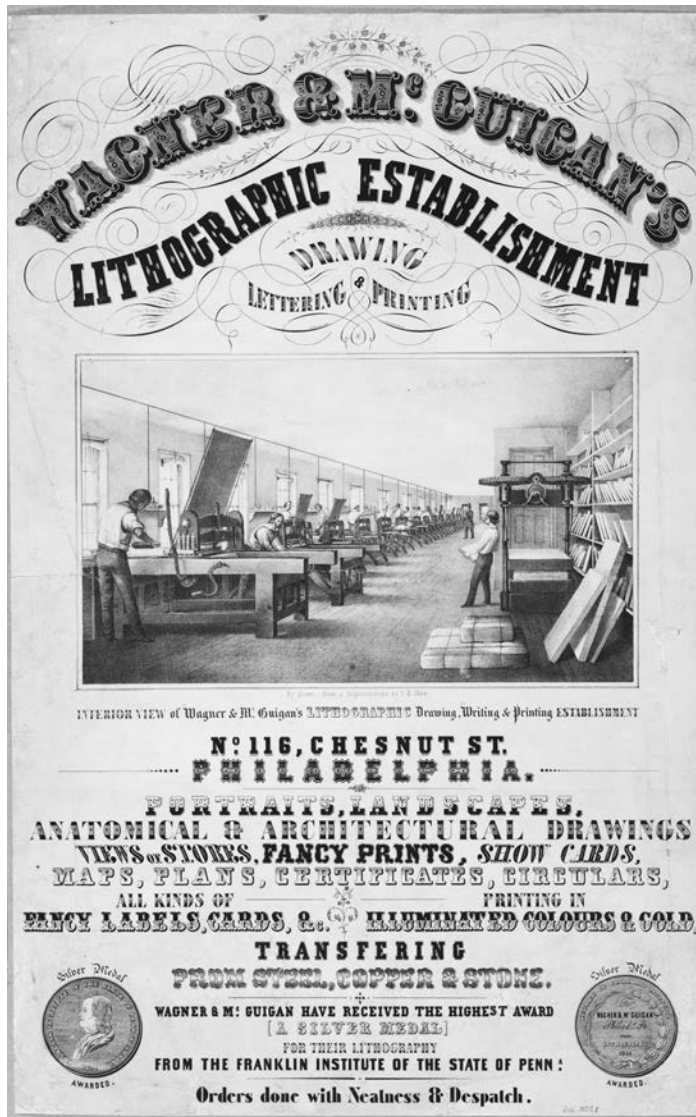


Figure 6-7: A poster advertising the Wagner & McGuigan lithographic establishment for drawing & printing at 116 Chestnut that used one of Trueman’s daguerreotypes in the etching.

Figure 6-7 shows a poster that incorporated some of Trueman Shew’s work. It is not a daguerreotype itself but an etching from one of his works. It pictures the Wagner & McGuigan lithographic establishment for drawing & printing at 116 Chestnut.¹² Trueman lived there at the time, and his daguerreotype was used for the poster to make the etching of the machines, workers and the foremen supervising the

¹² Library Company of Philadelphia (DIGITAL.LIBRARYCOMPANY.org).

work. An actual daguerreotype by Trueman is probably very rare, and dealers in daguerreotype that have been contacted said they have never seen one.

Trueman's listing as T.B. Shew continued in the city directory until 1849. Somewhere around that time, his younger brother Myron Shew moved from Trueman's other brother William's company in Boston to continue Truman's work in Philadelphia. Myron lived at 76 South Fourth Street. He later advertised as working at 118 Chestnut Street (*The Buffalo Daily Republic*, April 24, 1856). Soon thereafter, with his brother Jacob, Myron bought out the Van Loan Gallery (*craigcamera.com*). Myron was then living at 108 Walnut Street.

When Truman died in 1848, his brother Myron took over Trueman's Philadelphia business. **Figure 6-8, frames a and b**, shows Truman's gravestone and an 1849 daguerreotype of one of Myron's customers. **Frame c** shows Myron's advertising card that was mounted behind the daguerreotype. The leather-like case is also illustrated (**frame d**). Since Myron produced this photo image within a year of Trueman's death and in Trueman's old shop on Chestnut Street, this figure also illustrates what Truman's daguerreotypes would have looked like.

The daguerreotypes were covered with a glass cover to protect the delicate photos, but also framed with a mat to keep the glass from contacting the print. The print was vulnerable to deterioration around the edges, so they were made as airtight as possible. Note the damage around the edges on the daguerreotype in **Figure 6-8 (frame b)** made by Myron Shew. In later years, the glass, mat and print were clamped in a metal "protector" or "preserver." But these were not seen until 1847. The mat has a fancy pattern not oval or octagonal, and the surface is sandy. These characteristics place this example of Myron's work between 1845 and 1850.¹³ There is no metal preserver around the daguerreotype in **Figure 6-8**, and its sandy mat with an ornate mat and velvet liner place its production to an even narrower range between 1847 and 1849. Since Trueman died in August 1848, this specific Myron Shew daguerreotype must have been made in Truman's studio within months of his death. Truman was dying from mercury vapor poisoning from his work, and he would have been very ill. So, this example may suggest that Myron arrived in Philadelphia to take over his brother's business even before Trueman passed away lying on his death bed.

T.A. Shew was still listed in the 1846, 1847 and 1848 Philadelphia directories but as a "photographist," and he moved from 136 to 116 Chestnut. His ads began appearing in Philadelphia's *Public Ledger* as early as March 1846 (*Public Ledger*, March 30, 1847).

The daguerreotype profession appears to have exploded onto the Philadelphia scene in 1845 when the city directory lists five other "photographists." All of them gave addresses between 100 and 142 Chestnut Street. David C. Collins was one of TBS's major competitors in Philadelphia with many ads in the *Public Ledger* (January 12, 1847, page 2, then at 100 Chestnut Street). Collins was well known along with Truman's younger brother William as a leader in this field.

One can imagine that TBS's fancy initials on the ALM stamp reflect his artistic talent. All the "photographists" listed in Philadelphia at that time were within this small cluster of buildings on Chestnut Street. Trueman was at the center of the

¹³ Gary W. Clark, op cit. page 25.

Philadelphia daguerreotypist's universe. At one point, they even held a competition to see who had the best technique (*Public Ledger*, January 12, 1847, pg. 2).



Figure 6-8 a through d: Trueman Shew's grave with his first name spelled "Truman", and a daguerreotype of a young man produced by Myron Shew shortly after Trueman's death with Shew's label underneath the daguerreotype and mounted in a leather-like case.

Although Trueman's father and mother died at 73 and 78 respectively, Trueman died early at only 31 years of age in August 1848 apparently in Philadelphia. He never married. Peter Shew (one of Trueman's descendants) reported that both Trueman and his much younger brother Joel died from chemical poisoning from their photographic work (personal communication). Some of the chemicals used were very dangerous and required great care. Even explosions were possible. In the 1848 *American Hand Book of the Daguerreotype*, it was warned that the fumes of prussic acid were "quite as poisonous as the solution," dipping one's hands in cyanide of potassium caused "very troublesome eruptions over the skin" and hydrochloric acid "should be at once be copiously drenched with water" when contacted, because "one small drop on the tongue of a dog causes death." The hydrochloric acid warning seems a little overstated, but the reader certainly must get the point.

Although most accounts of Trueman spell his first name as Trueman, his name is spelled “Truman” on his gravestone (**Figure 6-8, frame a**). The “B” middle initial probably stood for Beecher, since WikiTree.com noted his mother’s brother was Truman Beecher. Trueman is buried in Presbyterian Cemetery near Fish House in Fulton County NY. Trueman’s younger but more famous brother William also spent hours working with the dangerous photo-chemicals, but he, on the other hand, lived a fruitful life. He married early at 27 to his first wife, had one child, then married again at 71 to his second wife age 42.

Around 1850 while Myron continued Truman’s work in Philadelphia, Trueman’s more famous brother William took his craft to San Francisco, California, where he became famous by producing daguerreotypes out of a traveling railroad car called “Shew’s Daguerreian Saloon” (craigcamera.com, **Figure 6-9, frame a**). Following his roots, he then advanced into producing Carte de Visite portraits. These were popular with the wealthier “common” man (especially at first in the UK) for their relative inexpensiveness, and in this case, the ease of carrying them. The prints were produced by a method that allowed for several prints of the same photograph and came in a handy size similar to visiting cards (hence the name). In the UK, the wealthy gave their visiting card to a servant at the door to announce their presence. The corner was bent if the visitor wanted the host to know it was left by the visitor and not by their servant.

In America, the photo cards resembled these visiting cards, and became very popular in the mid to late 1800s as collectibles. They sometimes changed hands many times. The fad was called “cardomania.”¹⁴ Victorian homes in America even displayed albums filled with the family images. These photo cards were probably also carried by loved ones just as some people still do today with wallet-size photos. Unlike daguerreotypes, these “card photos” later became light enough to be mailed to distant relatives. If Trueman had survived, this would have been the world he moved into after his short stay with the American Letter Mail Company in Philadelphia.

An example of William Shew’s later work in California with these more reproducible photos is shown in **Figure 6-9 (frames b and c)**. A portrait of a woman is on the front, and on the back of the card, is Wm. Shew’s name and his address on Montgomery Street in San Francisco. The photo card was owned by the purchaser, of course, but it was also a popular way for photographers to advertise their work. The note on the back offered duplicates of the card if desired, and usually had a penciled number as a reference. Copying an image was a claim the Shew brothers could not make just a decade or two earlier with a daguerreotype (which could not be duplicated at that time).

To help pay off the Civil War debt, this card was taxed 3c by the Government using a hole-punch canceled green “foreign exchange” revenue stamp (Scott number R16c). The large punched hole has been replaced at the bottom left. The stamp and the card’s squared or clipped corners suggest it was produced between August 1864 and August 1866. The 3c stamp was a tax on the photo costing less than 50 cents but more than 25 cents. Later cards had rounded corners. When franked with a 3c fee, a “proprietary” revenue stamp (Scott number R18c) was also used fairly often.

¹⁴ Dorothy J. Clark, *The Terre Haute Tribune*, Indiana, June 8, 1976.

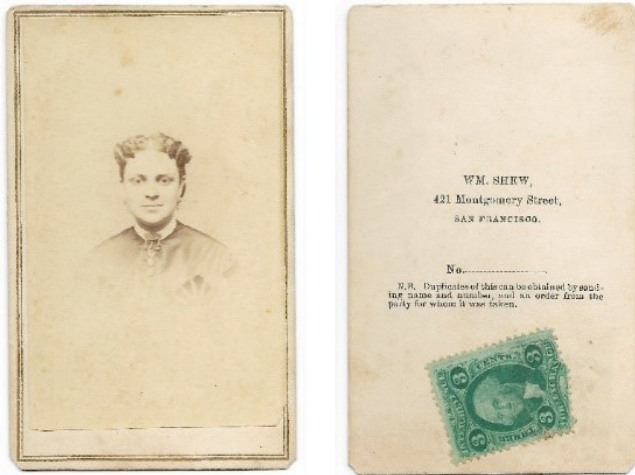


Figure 6-9 a, b and c: The William Shew traveling railroad car, and a Carte de Visite portrait card of a young woman produced by Wm Shew with his address on the back.

Figure 6-10, frames a and b, shows the backs of photo cards produced by Truman's brothers William and Jacob Shew in San Francisco sometime around 1870. Note the rounded corners and the much more ornate printing. **Frame c** illustrates William's attempts at colorizing his prints in 1870, and **frame d** shows one of William's cards that he enameled. The daguerreotypes Truman made in 1847 were not only nonreproducible and fragile, they could only be produced in black and white. William's card photos had come a long way since then. A late photo of William I. Shew is shown in **Figure 6-10, frame e.**



Figure 6-10 a-f: The backs of two Carte de Visite cards showing the calling cards produced by William and Jacob Shew late into the 1800s, and an example where William colorized one of his photos, and another that was enameled. Frame e shows a late photo of William Shew.

Figure 6-11 (frames a, b and c), shows Carte-de Visite of Abraham Lincoln and Montgomery Blair. Both cards were made as collectibles, and as with family photos, collecting celebrities became popular, and the photo cards were avidly traded. Since these photos saw more wear than a standard framed photo, being able to produce more than one copy had its advantages. New photographic techniques that allowed

multiple copies and a lighter, less-fragile format for carrying in pockets gradually replaced the daguerreotypes.¹⁵ Blair was the Postmaster General under Lincoln, and his card here is franked with a 2c “playing card” (Scott R11c) revenue stamp. Two-cent “bank check” revenue stamps (Scott R5c) were also often seen. The stamps show that these cards were produced just a short time after the Civil War and after Lincoln’s assassination. The two-cent “playing card” stamp was used only during the summer of 1866.¹⁶ Lincoln was assassinated on the evening of April 14, 1865. This was just five days after Lee’s surrender at Appomattox Court House in Virginia. This Blair “picture card” apparently appeared during the next summer.

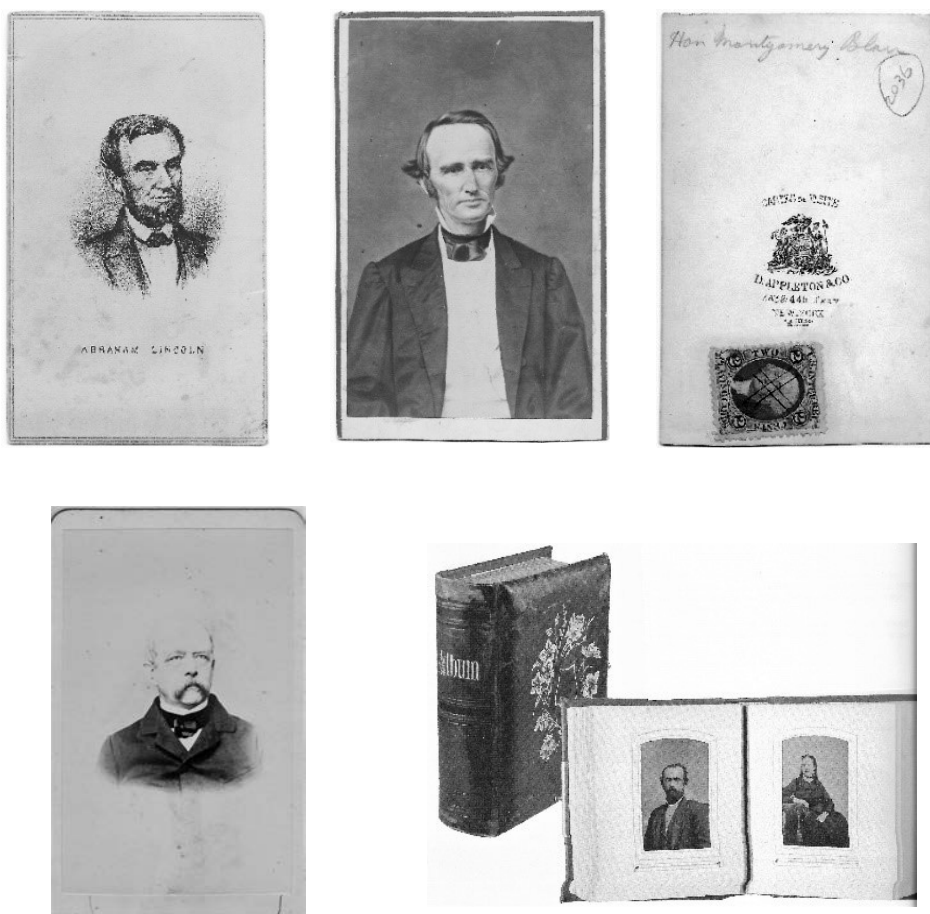


Figure 6-11 a through e: Collectible Carte de Visite cards of Lincoln and front and back of a Montgomery Blair card. Also, a card made by Wm. Shew of Bismarck. Frame e shows an example of the kind of album of the late 1880s where photos were kept.

¹⁵ Gary W. Clark, *Ibid.* page 6.

¹⁶ Gary W. Clark, *19th Century Card Photos*, 2013, published by Photo Tree.com.

Cards with images of famous people were a good source of revenue for photographers. They were collected and traded by the populous much like sports cards are collected today. William produced these celebrity cards as well. Frame d shows one of his works illustrating German Chancellor Otto Von Bismarck. He formed the German Empire in 1871 which unified Germany with himself as the Imperial Chancellor. He was probably still alive when this card was circulating in America. A typical collector's album is shown in **Figure 6-11 frame e**. The albums were works of art in themselves, and when families gathered, they would pass the albums around and tell family stories. Many such albums show considerable wear from the constant handling.

In the US Census, William and Myron appear later in California together. In addition, Jacob traveled to San Francisco and ultimately was in competition with William. Sadly, Jacob committed suicide in 1879, in his studio with a revolver to his head. He was age 52.¹⁷ He found that the photography business was poor and dull, and he was in debt. The cause of death was reported as "pecuniary embarrassment." Eleven years after Jacobs suicide, Myron died of natural causes in 1890, but William continued to work until 1900 at age 80 and died in 1903. Photography had come a long way since Trueman's brief stint with the American Letter Mail Company. If he had lived, it seems likely Trueman would have joined his brothers in California and continued his "photographist" career there.

What Kind of Men Carried the Mail for the Independent Posts?

One can wonder why an article on the Independent Mails is describing daguerreotypes and photography into the late 1800s. Because of the insights gained by studying agent cancels on ALM stamps, we can now venture to understand the kind of men that carried the mails for these companies. Many left no detailed records of their ALM employment, but their initials have opened new insights into their lives. This may not have been as feasible with other Independent Mail companies where the agent cancels do not exist, or the agents' backgrounds are less researched. It took a lot of digging, access to new online search engines and some fortuitous purchases to find their stories, but the stories have been waiting for 170 years for their unveiling.

In general, the Independent Mail companies only survived eighteen months at most, and many may have only been active for a season. Very few left detailed records. The smaller posts probably relied on family members, relatives, friends or sometimes even the owner to get the mail to its new destination. But ALM was one of the larger companies, and its mail carriers were potentially from all walks of life. What kind of men were attracted to this profession? Having explored the men behind the ALM initials, we can at least venture a partial answer to that question.

Some mail agents were deeply involved with the company such as George P. Fisher, who went to court for Spooner in 1844 and continued perhaps until the end under the new owner. Others, such as Trueman Shew and probably Calvin Case and John P. Brinckerhoff, were just trying to earn some money until their ultimate careers took off. If Trueman had not died suddenly from mercury poisoning, he probably

¹⁷ William Welling, *Photography in America*, 1978 & 1987 (Wikipedia.com).

would have followed Myron, Jacob and William to California with a successful career in photography.

George Fisher never initialed any ALM stamps, but his name appeared prominently in newspaper accounts. If the ALM company had survived past the summer of 1845, George Fisher in Philadelphia would have probably become a life-long employee of the company. Unlike so many of the mail agents, Fisher would be the prime candidate as a full-time agent. This was probably his main job, and he followed Spooner's philosophical reasons for doing the job, that he believed in doing, as part of his livelihood. He became Spooner's spokesperson, and he willingly and openly expressed his defiance to the Government. In some ways, he was a hero to the Nation. He expressed his beliefs in newspaper editorials but would never find the same fame Spooner gained from his challenges to free enterprise. Spooner was willing to go all the way to the Supreme Court for a decision against the Government. If Spooner had made it that far, there is little doubt that Fisher would have gone with him as a witness. That took bravery. After ALM closed, Fisher ended up carting merchandise around the city to different establishments. He appears to have loved Philadelphia because he never left the city, raised his family there and is buried there.

After his stint with ALM, on the other hand, John Brinckerhoff in NYC appears to have only carried mail for ALM a short time, and he seemed to be more completely committed as an agent to a fertilizer company before and after his experience with the Independent Mails. He worked in the same building where ALM had its branch office, and as an opportunist, he carried mail for them to supplement his income. He was at the right place at the right time. He worked out of the 23 Chambers building before ALM decided to set up their branch office there. He was one of the Poudrette Company's agents in the same building with ALM. The Poudrette Company did not produce the material there, so Brinckerhoff must have had the gifts of a salesman. To make ends meet, he apparently was able to carry two jobs at once. With some Independent Mails running letters on Fridays and into the weekend, he would have been able to hold down his regular work for the fertilizer company and pick up some extra cash by traveling between cities on the weekends. It is probable the companies paid the mail carrier upon arrival, so he may even have been able to pick and choose his travel times (if they let him). When the Government closed down the Independent Mails, he was secure in his main job to weather the storm. It is likely that Brinckerhoff had an easy transition when the Government pulled the rug out from under the Independent Mail companies. It's doubtful that it was as comfortable a transition for the ALM mail clerks and the office managers. These men were probably holding full-time jobs, and the Government ended their budding careers with their companies. But of course, they were not given a choice. Congress saw to that. They may have, of course, ended up working for the Government Post.

Calvin Case carried the mails during a critical time for ALM and ultimately faced legal issues because of his employment with the ALM mail company. Despite this, or more likely because of this, he was drawn away by the world of politics in NYC. Case was active in NYC local politics even while carrying mail for ALM. Like Brinckerhoff, it is doubtful Case saw his job as an Independent Mail agent as a lasting career move. In fact, Case is an example of an agent that probably regretted his choice to run the mails for ALM. Being charged with a crime was not the best career move

for a future politician. It is interesting that the “CC” initials on the ALM stamps would at one point be considered his lasting contribution to philately 170 years later. And they were not even his initials. Calvin probably could not wait to get away from his part-time job with ALM to continue his career in NYC politics.

Truman Shew probably carried ALM mail only briefly, perhaps only for a month or two, but from the very beginning of his career, his eyes were set on a career in photography. A photographer’s life was at best only moderately lucrative, and Trueman’s brother Jacob died from his debt. Myron, another of Trueman’s brothers, was a frame manufacturer in Philadelphia for a while after he closed Trueman’s business, but he finally ended up working for his brother William the rest of his life as a photographer’s assistant in California. Truman was set to stake his claim in Philadelphia as a maker of daguerreotypes, but temporarily, being an ALM mail carrier fit his plans for building a future. Like Calvin Case and John Brinckerhoff, Trueman probably worked only part-time at his new job as a mail carrier, but he must have realized he needed the part-time income to survive. However, for Trueman, compared to working as a mail agent at a per-letter compensation, photography was certainly a more stable job that he probably felt he could build on for the future. His story was a tragic tale unfortunately, since the poisoning chemicals from his work not only killed him, but they also killed one of his younger brothers.

Many Independent Mail agents were probably opportunists, like Trueman Shew, with their eyes always on the bigger prize down the road. America expanded with steamboat navigation of the rivers, new man-made waterways like the Erie Canal, and a whole new network of fiercely competitive railroad empires. The Independent Mails became so successful they forced the US Government to come to grips with their failures in keeping up with a growing nation. The telegraph was first introduced to become a communication force rivaling the letter in the decades to follow. But when the ALM agents were on the post roads doing their jobs, the letters they carried were the force that fueled America’s commerce. From the men that invested in the Independent Mails, including those that ran the operations, to the agents that carried the mail often as a part-time job, they represented the entrepreneurial spirit of their time. During their time, the Nation completely revolutionized its transportation and communication structure, and it began to conquer the West.

Conclusion

Part 6 of this series has completed the survey of ALM manuscript cancels as appeared under the new owner after the summer of 1844. Thirty-one new examples were found to add to the fourteen, blue eagle manuscript cancels from Part 1. In this Part 6 of the series, manuscript cancels, other than the “CC” and “EHB” cancels (discussed in Parts 3 and 4) or place cancels (discussed in Parts 5) were analyzed as to their meaning and possible origins. The remaining thirteen manuscript cancels discussed here are likely true “agent cancels.”

Details about five “Agent Cancels” were discussed (“JG”, “...kerhoff”, “CSP”, “DB” and “TBS”). These cancels are very rare. Nearly half of the examples are of just one type (“DB”), and two cancels are unique (“...kerhoff” and “CSP”). The true agent cancels are only 30% of the forty-five identified manuscript cancels. It is

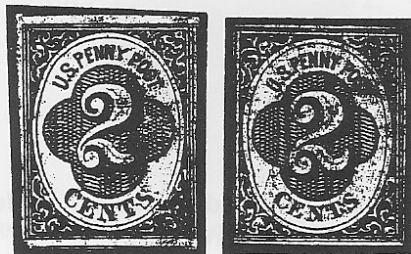
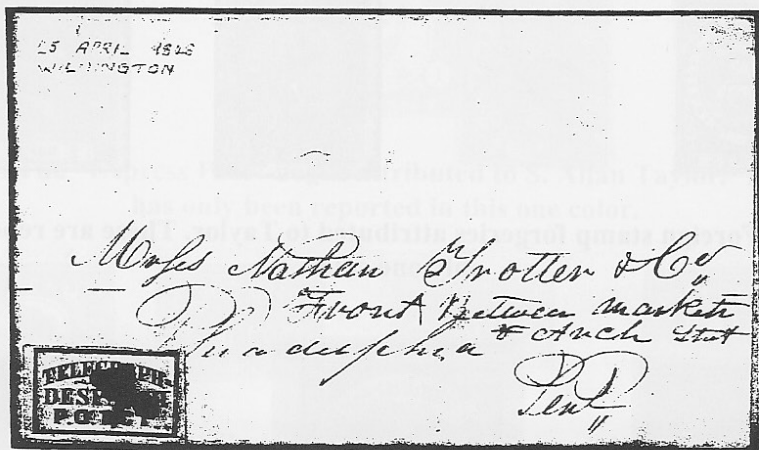
concluded the earlier assumption that most ALM manuscript cancels were agent cancels is false.

This article concludes with a look at what we know about the men that carried the mail for the American Letter Mail Company. A few may have been seeking a career as a mail agent, but most were probably opportunists each in their own way.

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, David Snow, Mike Farrell and Casey White for their email communications, and shared lists and resources, as well as to Peter Shew for his help with Trueman Shew's ancestry. 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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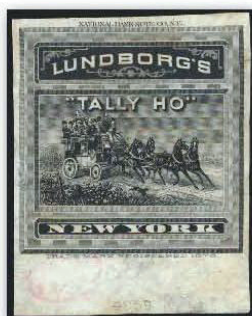
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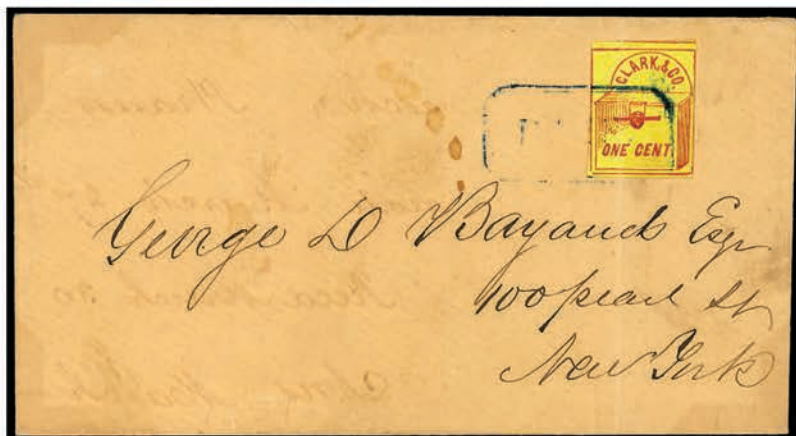
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Identifying Printings of the 25-Cent Hussey Circus Rider Stamps

By
Larry Lyons

Previous Articles

The four previous articles in this series covered the 5-cent, 10-cent, 15-cent and 20-cent Hussey circus rider stamps.^{1,2,3,4} Those articles explained the settings from which the first four 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 25-cent Hussey circus rider stamps.

The 25-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.⁵

Basic Plate Identification of the 25-cent Circus Rider Stamps

H. Warren Hale identified three basic plates used to print the 25-cent circus rider stamps. He did not distinguish the different printings of each of the three basic plate types, much the same as he did for the previous four denominations already researched and presented. Hale simply stated the pane of ten 25-cent circus rider stamps were from setting d. (Plate I). This is a condensed numeral setting with rectangular ovals at positions 7 and 8. All positions have a decimal before the 25. See **Figure 1**. The horse appears more skeletal than in the other plates. See **Figure 12**. He showed this Plate I on page 120 of *Byways of Philately* but the captions on pages 120 and 121 are reversed and printed under the wrong images. Hale also identified 25-cent circus rider stamps printed from Plates IV and V. He showed

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 *Identifying Printings of the 20-Cent Circus Rider Stamps*, Larry Lyons, *The Penny Post*, January 2018, Vol. 26, No. 1, pages 6-18.

⁵ *Byways of Philately*, H. Warren Hale, 1966, The J.W. Stowell Printing Co., pages 120, 121.



Figure 1. Plate I, setting d has condensed numerals, a decimal before the .25 at all positions, the horse appears skeletal and the gum is smooth and whitish.

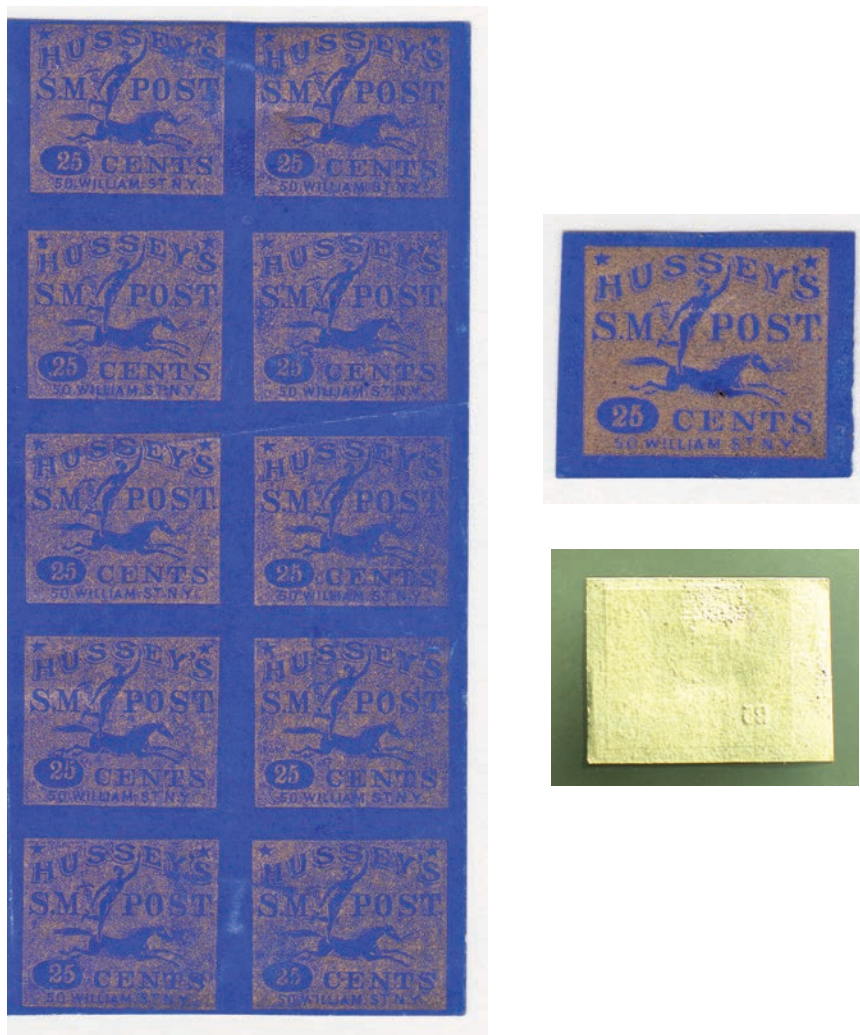


Figure 2. Plate IV setting L has condensed numerals, a decimal before the .25 only at position 3, the horse appears full and the numerals are all in ovals.



Figure 3. Plate V setting “n” has full size bold numerals, the ink is gold and the gum is crackled in setting “n” and smooth and horizontal in setting “n1”.

Plate IV, setting (L) on page 128 and Plate V setting (n) on page 129. See **Figures 2 and 3**. Plate IV is identified by all values being in true ovals and the “N” in “CENTS” is not missing a serif at the upper left. Only Position 3 has a decimal before .25. All of the positions in Plate IV setting (L) are condensed numerals. Plate V is identified by all values being in true ovals and all positions are missing the upper left serif on the “N” in “CENTS.” This is the identifying characteristics for setting “n”. Setting “n” was printed work and turn to make a sheet of twenty.

Hale made no mention of the gum on these circus rider stamps. I have been presenting the additional in-depth study of the circus rider stamps by David Nussman. Nussman identified two distinct printings of Plate V setting “n” which I will call settings “n” and “n1.” Plate V setting “n” has crackled gum and setting “n1” has smooth gum. The gum identifies the different printings of settings of “n” and “n1”. The gum on the 25-cent circus rider stamps from Plate I setting “d” is described as smooth whitish gum.

Additional New Information

As indicated in an earlier article in this series, I acquired a Hussey circus rider collection from Carl Kane who had amassed over 3000 single stamps for study and a very impressive collection of multiples. Carl sold me this material with the hopes that the research presented in this series of articles would be done and published. I am pleased that Carl’s “request for study” is finally being published.

The multiples in my Hussey collection shed some new light and additional information on the printings of the circus rider stamps. Plate I setting “d” is known with three clichés on one sheet with one cliché tete-beche. See **Figure 4**. There are two recorded examples.

Figure 5 shows two tete-beche clichés of the 25-cent circus rider stamps from Plate IV setting (L). This is the only recorded example of this multiple.

Figure 6 shows two tete-beche clichés of the 25-cent circus rider stamps from Plate V setting “n.” It is noted the ink is bright gold and the gum is clear, thin, and crackly with some vertical streaks. The Plate V printing has full size broad numerals. Two recorded examples are noted.

Figure 7 shows a reconstructed pane from Plate V setting “n1.” It is noted the ink is bronze and the gum is smooth and is horizontal.

Plating

Plate V is one of the so-called “reproduced” plates. In the 25-cent denomination the “reproduced” plate was made by copying position 2 ten times. This position has the top left serif on the “N” in “CENTS” missing so it is missing on Plate V at all positions.

Dave Nussman provided the following plating key for 25-cent Hussey circus rider stamps from Plate V.

1. "M" of "William is broken.	2. Spot in top of "P". Slight bulge in frame line above "Y".
3. Dot under rt hoof; dot between front legs.	4. Dot above horses ears. Sometimes a dash at L.R. outside frame.
5. Extra dash to rt of "M". of "S.M."	6. Top frame line bulges over 2 nd "S".
7. Dot in upper curve of "S" of "S.M."	8. Dash under "L" of "William"
9. Last "S" of "Hussey's" has a 4-cornered upper bar.	10. Dot above "T" of "Post". Spot on left arm in bulge of "muscle."

Cancels

As discussed in the 20-cent Hussey circus rider article,⁶ Hussey cancels type PMR-a with a period after "POST" are genuine and those without the period, and a different "G" in "MESSAGE" are John Fox fakes.

Figure 8 is a cliché of Plate IV with a genuine Hussey favor cancel.

Covers

Figure 9 shows a cover with a 25-cent Hussey circus rider stamp from Plate IV setting "L" cancelled and tied by postmark PMC-f in black. I have recorded this 54 Pine Street cancel used from June 17, 1873 to April 22, 1875. I have also noted in my records that the Hussey circus rider stamps were primarily used from 1872 to 1874. According to Robert Easson's ads, 25 cents was the rate for a special message to be carried to Canal Street on the line of Broadway. The early ads had this rate extending to 23rd Street. Robert Easson was the proprietor of the Hussey Post at this time. The cover shown in **Figure 9** is addressed to the "Fifth Avenue Hotel" which presumably fell into this rate charge. Some ads have rates all the way up to 80 cents to go to 52nd Street. No Hussey circus rider special message letters have been recorded at a rate higher than 25 cents.

⁶ *Identifying Printings of the 20-Cent Circus Rider Stamps*, Larry Lyons, *The Penny Post*, January 2018, Vol. 26, No. 1, page 14.

There are six examples of the 25-cent Hussey circus rider stamp on covers which are thought to be genuine uses. **Figure 10** is another genuine use example. Again the stamp is from Plate IV setting “L”. The handstamp is type PMO-g, with tall, narrow “PAID.” I record this handstamp in use from 1872-1874. The letter is addressed to 108 3rd Avenue. This is just above 15th Street. Again this is a rate above Canal Street at 25 cents. The Philatelic Foundation has certified five covers with the 25-cent Hussey circus rider stamp. In addition to the two already presented there is one to 9 East 17th Street which is near where the 108 3rd Avenue letter was sent. A fourth example went to Allen Street in the same neighborhood just above Canal Street and also on the east side of Manhattan.

The final example of a use of a 25-cent Hussey circus rider stamp is different. It is on a package envelope from Albany carried by the American Express Co. to New York and delivered by Hussey. See **Figure 11**. This 25-cent Hussey circus rider stamp has a strong serif on the “N” in “CENTS” and is identified as Plate IV setting “L”. The five line Hussey handstamp is type PMS-g which is found used in 1867-1869. One of the other certified covers has Hussey’s straightline “Answer By Bearer” message type PMS-f which was used in 1869. From all the related data one can surmise that the package delivery took place circa 1869 while George Hussey was proprietor. The package went to John Street which was about ½ mile uptown and less than half way to Canal Street, but it was a package delivery for which Hussey received 25 cents. This was an earlier use of a circus rider stamp from the period after the circus rider stamps were created by George Hussey.

Favor Covers

During the period 1858-1871 Hussey’s Post operated out of 50 William Street. It has been written that the circus rider stamps were conceived by George Hussey in 1863. Hussey’s ads say he offered special message post service in 1862 and 1863. Most of the genuine uses of Hussey circus rider stamps come from when the post was operated by Robert Easson, 1872-1875. **Figure 11** is the only recorded example of a circus rider stamp believed to be a genuine use under the George Hussey years. There are other examples. **Figure 13** shows three examples. These three examples all have the 25-cent circus rider stamps tied by the three line type PMS-o Hussey cancel. In *Byways of Philately* on page 169 this canceller is described as having been “struck on Special Delivery city covers which do not command great respect.” This is an odd statement without further explanation; however my extensive research into the known uses of this PMS-o cancel revealed no examples except for the use on the three covers shown in **Figure 13**. David Nussman described these three covers as “favor cancels.” It is noted that all three of these covers are written in the same hand. It is also possible that these covers were cancelled after the post ceased to exist. This would account for no actual genuine use of the PMS-o handstamp. At any rate these three covers are not considered genuine uses.

Closing

The reader should now be able to separate and identify the four different printings of the 25-cent Hussey circus rider stamps. There will be a concluding article on the Hussey circus rider stamps with additional information.

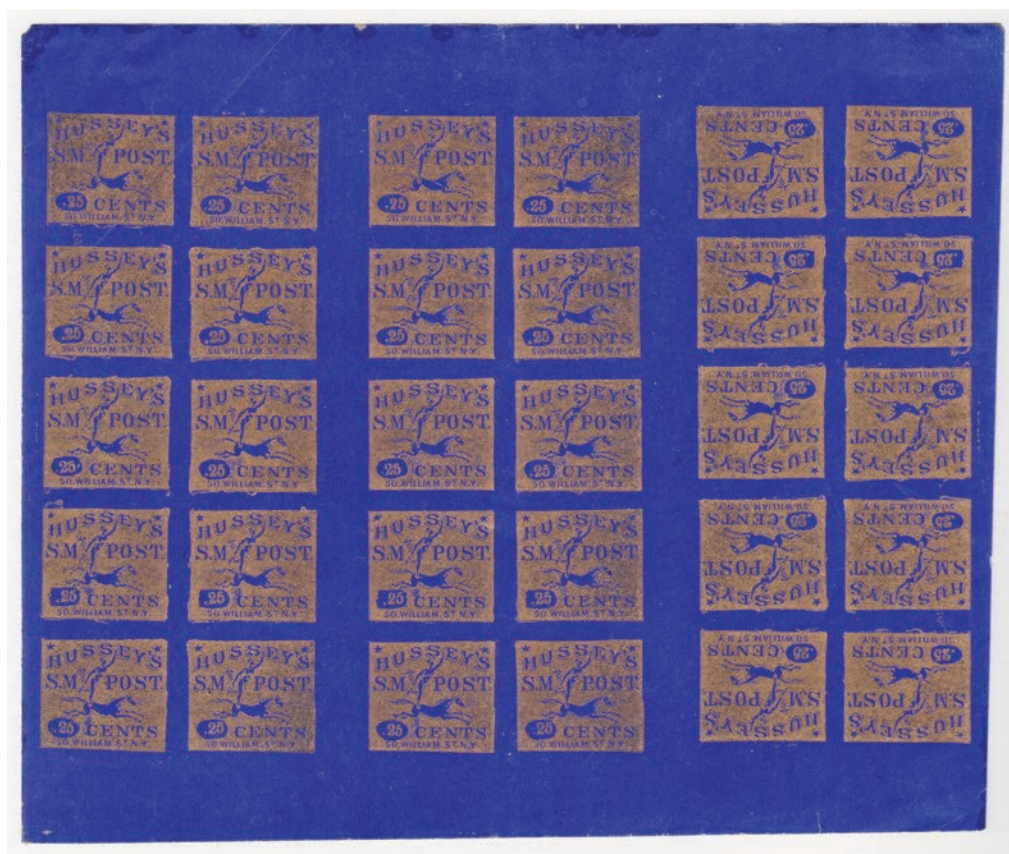


Figure 4. Plate I setting d is known with three clichés on one sheet with one cliché tete-beche.

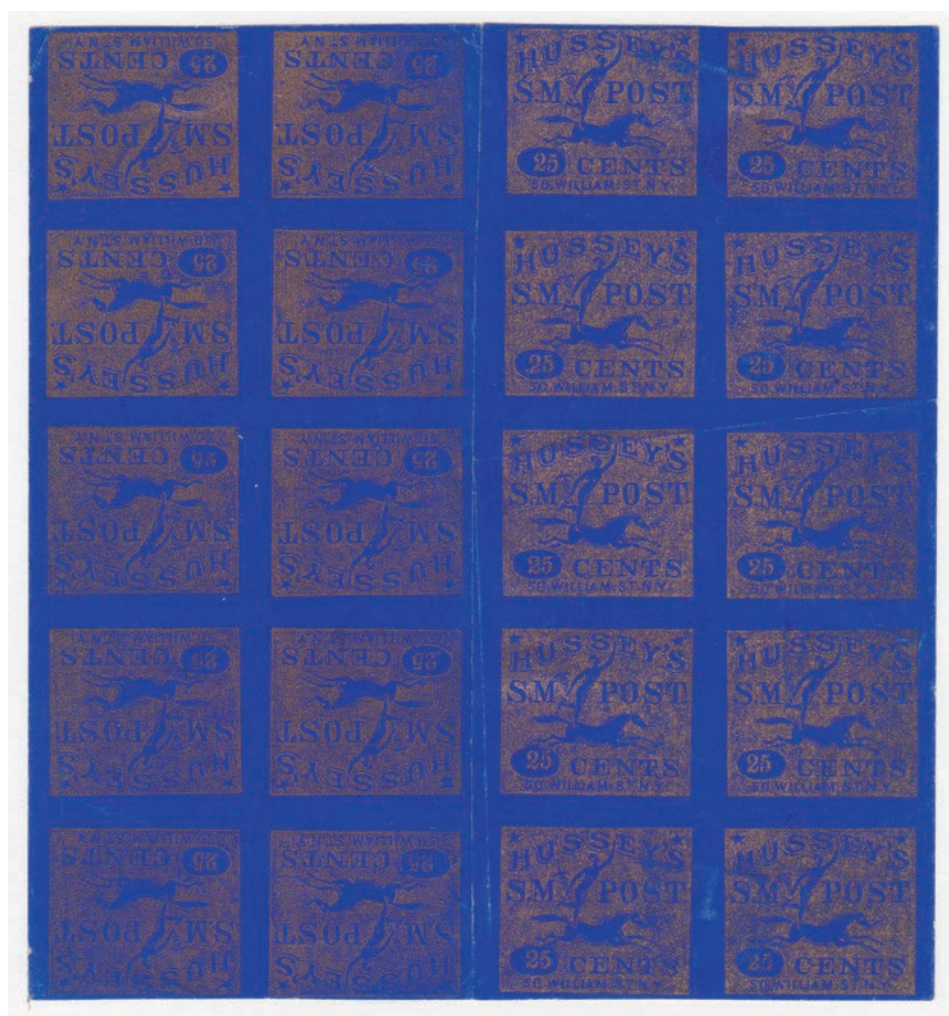


Figure 5. Plate IV setting L. Two tete-beche clichés.



Figure 6. Plate V setting n. Two tete-beche clichés. The top left serif on the “N” in “CENTS” is missing at all positions.

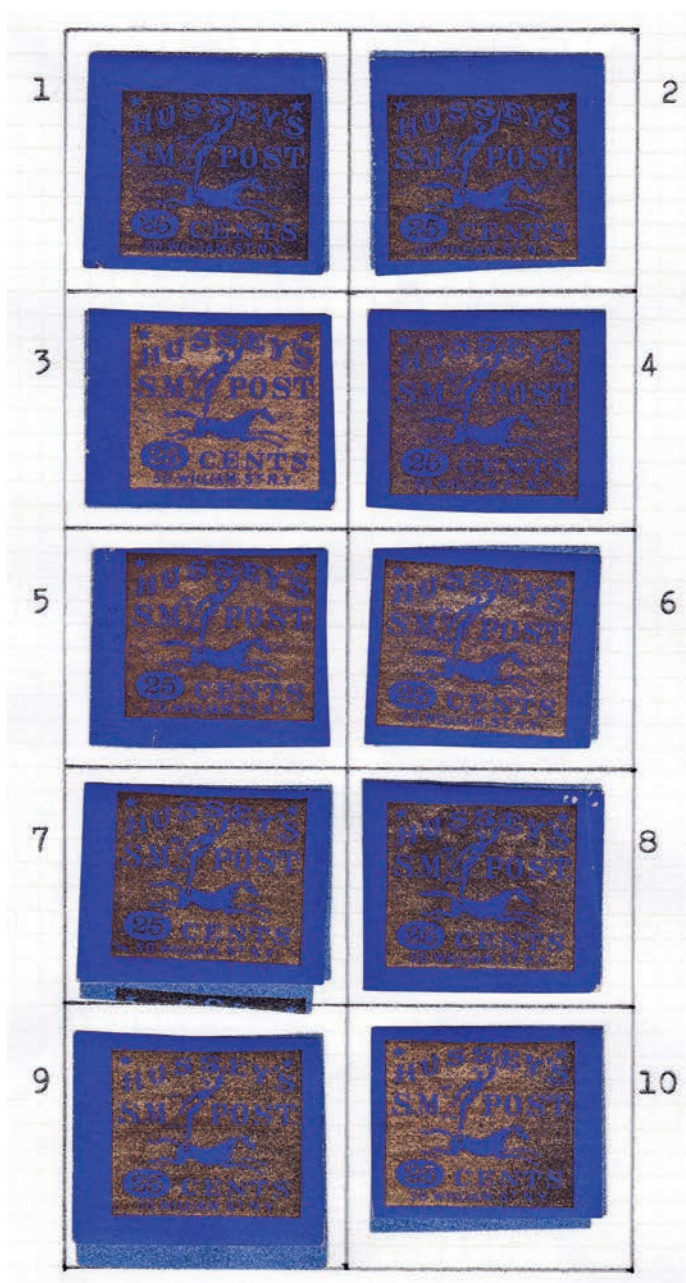


Figure 7. Plate V setting n1. A reconstructed pane. The ink is bronze and the gum is smooth with a horizontal grain.



Figure 8. A pane of Plate IV stamps with a favor cancel.



Figure 9. A cover with a genuinely used 25-cent circus rider stamp from Plate IV. The tying cancel is PMC-f.



Figure 10. A cover with a genuinely used 25-cent circus rider stamp from Plate IV. The typing cancel is PMO-g.



Figure 11. An early genuine use of a 25-cent circus rider stamp from Plate IV. The tying cancel is type PMS-g. This circus rider stamp was used while George Hussey owned the Post. The American Express label has been identified by David Snow as Mosher ANBX-L90c which reads “American Express Co./Albany/Wells, Butterfield & Co. The label dates from 1860s.

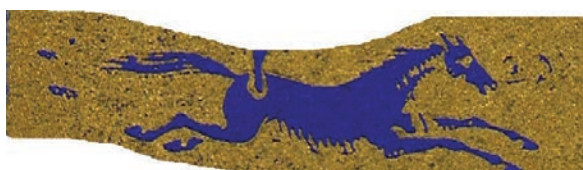


Figure 12. Circus Rider from Plate V.



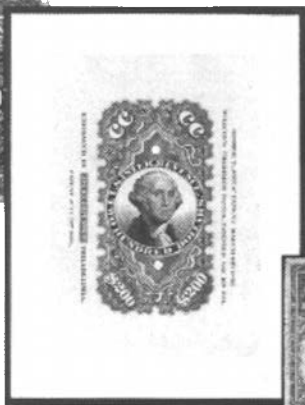
Figure 13. Three examples of 25-cent circus rider stamps on favor covers. The handstamp type PMS-o was never genuinely used.

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