

Postal History Place: **United States Postal History-2**

By Seymour Dunbar

*(From The Stamp Specialist #4, 1940, with some new images**)*

Seymour Dunbar is well known for his study and writings on United States Postal History as exemplified by means of letters mailed by people. One of his exhibits is entitled "An Historical Portrayal of the People's Use of the United States Postal System for a Century, Linked with some of the Working Methods of the Postal System." The letters and postal stationery collected by Mr. Dunbar play an important part in the telling of his story for he believes that a Philatelic Exhibition should be in truth a Museum of History whereby the visitor may gain a view of the progress involved. Mr. Dunbar has displayed his exhibits in various parts of the United States with considerable success and encouragement.

IN this article remarkable features and incidents in our Postal History are revealed and illustrated that were due solely either to Governmental methods or to the spectacular acts of individual postmasters.

Part I of this illustrated discussion of United States Postal History published in The STAMP SPECIALIST Number 3, dealt with very unusual or rare letters or other mail matter whose features of extreme present-day interest and importance to us were due exclusively to qualities unwittingly bestowed upon them by the people who prepared and sent those letters. So far as that first group was concerned the official methods and acts of the Government, or of Postmasters, contributed nothing of the least consequence to our delight in the study of those relics.

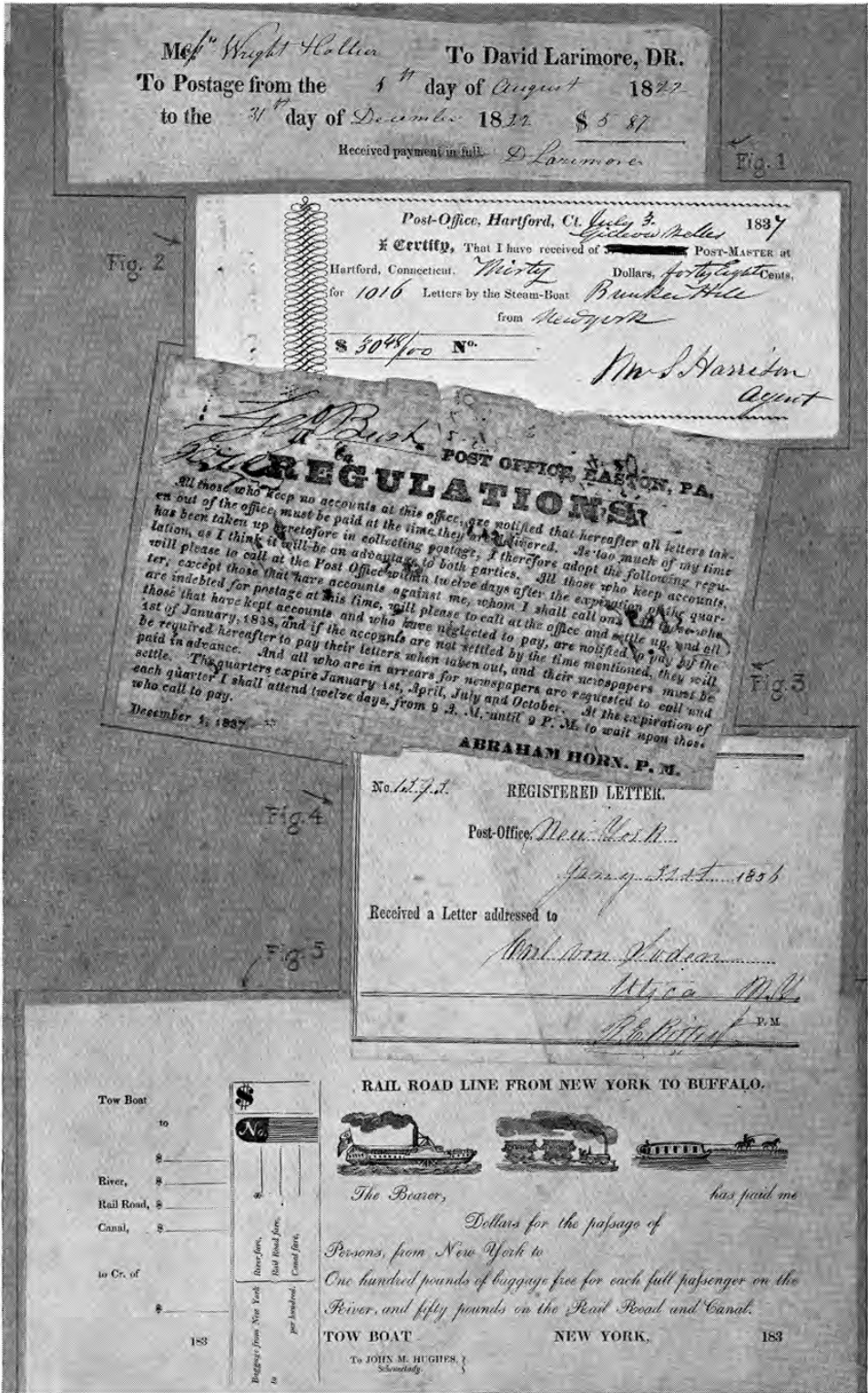
This article, Part II of the discussion, on the contrary—deals with various remarkable features and incidents of our pioneer mail which were solely due either to Governmental acts of one sort or another, or to the strange, curious, and often spectacular methods sometimes necessarily adopted by Postmasters on their own initiative during emergencies, or just because these Postmasters "chose to act that way" for no reason whatever except their own freakish impulses.

The two radically different groups of postal relics illustrated here and in Part I, however, have one outstanding attribute in common; namely, they both show in a most striking way the amazing degree to which the unique spirit of American individuality and invention displayed itself from the first during the evolution and popular use of our postal system.

As was said in Part I of this discussion, and is now emphasized, the postal history of no other people or nation even remotely approaches, in its interest, the degree to which national or popular trails and history reveal themselves during a study of our own United States postal relics.

** Due to the unique nature of many of these pieces and their relative lack of value, it was not possible to locate them or to find similar pieces; nevertheless this article offers much information, supplemented by the original images from this 1940 article. JFD.

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Figures 1-5. See descriptions on page 20

Until very recent years, until six or eight years ago in fact, these significant matters to which attention is directed by this discussion did not receive from students of philately even an insignificant fraction of the consideration they richly deserve. "Stamp Collecting," to most people both young and old, and unfortunately to philatelic exhibitions as well, was previously nothing but a "hobby." The one outstanding or dominating aim of the collector was "quantity." The absorbingly interesting "history" that has always been so intimately tied to men's efforts to keep in touch by means of postal methods and letters, and the high educational value of that history were sadly neglected, not even broadly recognized.

Today it is very different. Today it is recognized that the pioneer letters of the American people are not surpassed by any other species of relics, for the light they throw on the intimate and day-by-day characteristics and purposes and acts of these earlier generations. Pioneer "covers," as those letters are called, have become acknowledged and are precious Museum material. Our great Universities and Colleges in increasing numbers are studying and presenting postal history and its associated facts as a part of the useful methods by which they advance the education of their students.

I have been repeatedly told during the past five years, both in print and by correspondence, that I have actually contributed toward that result. My three extended articles on "Philatelic Exhibitions" and their undeniable museum character and educational value appearing in STAMPS of August 4, 11 and 18, in 1934, and also my later series of illustrated articles entitled "Covers that Scream History," in that magazine, created nation-wide comment. In the recently published volume entitled *Minimum-Essentials in Stamp Collecting* by Gerald Burgess, in his chapter on "Philately in Education," he has named and discussed in detail my own collection and its elaborate organization and purposes.

Proceeding now to a consideration of the unusual relics here illustrated we can get a better understanding from them of the manner in which the Government's own methods, and the individual postmasters' methods have often vastly enhanced the historic and educational value of our pioneer postal treasures.

The first group to claim our attention consists of documents revealing Governmental methods that were in effect from about 1820 to 1850 or after. (And it should be here stated that in each individual case of all the items herein illustrated, the separate explanation beneath the photograph should be studied in association with this text as a whole.)

Fig. 1—A receipt given by a Postmaster to one of his delinquent customers acknowledging the payment of \$5.87 postage covering the five months from August 1 to December 31, 1822. Fig. 2—A receipt showing that the Long Island Sound steamboat, "Bunker Hill," was paid \$30.48 for carrying 1016 letters from New York City to Hartford, Connecticut (at the rate of 3 cents per letter.) Gideon Welles, who was afterward in Lincoln's Cabinet, was the Postmaster at Hartford. Date: July 3, 1837. Fig. 3—A printed Hand-bill sent by Postmaster Horn, of Easton, Pennsylvania, to each of his delinquent customers, ordering them to pay up within 12 days or he wouldn't let them have or send any more mail except on "Cash Down" transactions. Date: December 1, 1837. Fig. 4—An example of the receipt given by the New York City Post Office to a person who mailed a registered letter in 1856 (Date: January 31.) The letter was addressed to Utica, New York. Signed by the Postmaster. Registration Number 1593. At the left is the tear showing where the printed duplicate was torn off for retention in the New York office. Fig. 5—A Ticket on the first "Through Mail and Passenger Line" of America. Date: 1831. The elapsed time for letters and travelers was, on steamboat from New York City to Albany, 10 hours; on the railroad, 17 miles from Albany to Schenectady, 1 hour; thence on the fast canal boat from Schenectady to Buffalo, 70 hours. Elapsed time, New York to Buffalo, 3 days and 9 hours. Six other copies of the ticket are recorded, three of them being in the library of the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry.

See page 4 for more on Figure 24.

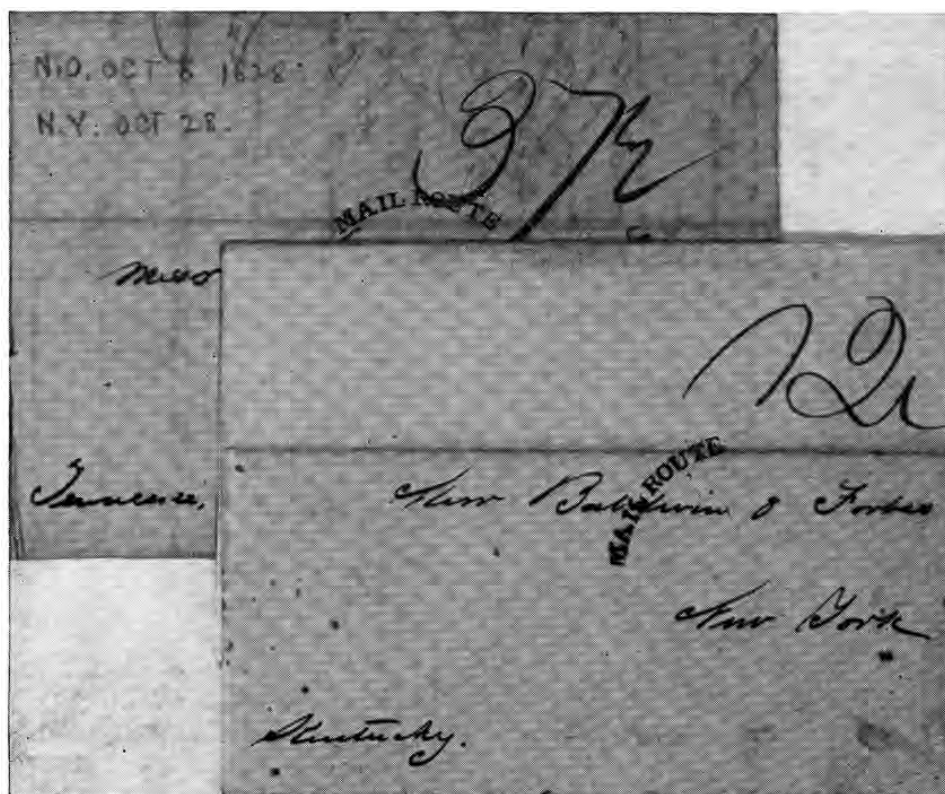
During our early postal history there was, as is well known, a long period in which the people could “run accounts” at the post-offices, just as they ran accounts at the groceries or general notion stores when they bought potatoes or seven yards of calico. That period endured until Congress put an end to it by law, and letters mailed on credit are not at all rare. Such missives are usually endorsed “charge box 17” (whatever the number of the debtor’s mail box), or “charge,” with the initials of the debtor. Then the creditor postmaster would mark the letter as “paid,” and enter the amount due in his books with the fervent hope that at some later date he would collect it. Here is shown a receipt (Figure 1) in which a postmaster admits that one of his customers has paid him \$5.87, covering letters sent and received during a period of no less than five months, at the end of the year 1822.

Sometimes, especially in towns of good size, a postmaster would eventually find to his dismay that hundreds of dollars were due to him by delinquents, and in cases of that sort the postmasters so involved had to resort to drastic measures in order to collect. (Otherwise the amount due would come out of the postmaster’s own pocket, for he had to submit a regular quarterly statement to the Department at Washington on a printed form supplied to him for that purpose.)

One instance of that sort, in which a postmaster became desperate, is here illustrated (Figure 3). Postmaster Abraham Horn of Eastern, Pennsylvania, got “fed up” with chasing after unpaid postage and on December 1, 1837 he took the action here revealed. He sent copies of the printed hand-bill to his delinquent customers ordering them to “toe the scratch” by January 1 or else any further business with him, of a postal character, would be conducted strictly on a “cash-and-carry” basis. In other words, postage-on-the-line or no more letters or newspapers. The text of Horn’s ultimatum should be read.

The carrying of the mails between distant points by mechanical means such as railroads and steamboats in those early days involved other phases of our postal history richly deserving of investigation and study. Herein is portrayed (Figure 5) in the shape of a ticket over the route, the method by which a swift transfer of letters between New York City and Buffalo was accomplished in 1831. The journey to Albany on the Hudson River, by steamboat, required ten hours. Then another hour was demanded for getting to Schenectady by means of the newly opened railroad on which the train of cars resembling stage-coaches was pulled over the 17 miles of track by a wood-burning steam engine. Arriving at Schenectady the mail and passengers were transferred to one of the swift canal-boats (speed, 3 miles an hour), and in 70 hours thereafter they arrived safely in Buffalo. Elapsed time, 3 days and 9 hours. This was the first “through” mail and passenger line of the country.

The use of steamboats as mail-carriers began at an early date and in a few years was common on the rivers and lakes, and particularly between the cities of the Atlantic Coast. Letters from New York to New England were carried by Long Island Sound boats to Hartford, and the Post Office paid three-cents for each letter so transported. The receipt here shown was for \$30.48, (Figure 2), being a payment for the carrying of 1016 letters. The Hartford postmaster involved was no other than Gideon Welles, who afterward became a member



LETTERS CARRIED THROUGH INDIAN TERRITORY

Top: One of the Letters that traveled overland from New Orleans to New York City by formal treaty permission granted in 1805 by the Independent Cherokees, Creek and Choctaw Nations of Indians, through whose sovereignties the mail route lay. Date of the letter, October 8, 1828. It was 20 days on the way. Received on October 28. Carried by U. S. postmen on horseback. The Indians owned and operated the ferries across the rivers, and the taverns where the letter-carriers stopped at night. Postage, 37½ cents. This letter went north to Tennessee before turning Eastward. The mail-route was specified in the treaties.

Bottom: Another letter that started from New Orleans on the way to New York City by treaty permission of the Indians. This letter went northward to Kentucky before turning Eastward. Date, January 21, 1830. Received in New York on February 10. The postage had been reduced to 12½ cents (?). As in the preceding case, the letter is stamped in red: "Mail Route."

of President Lincoln's cabinet. Steamboat carriage of mail on the Ohio River began in 1817. Previous to that date, such mail as went down the Ohio was carried on barges or sail-boats.

The strangest and, from the standpoint of historical interest, the most interesting overland route pursued by our pioneer letters was that taken by the mail that shuttled between the Eastern states in the North, and New Orleans in the South. As soon as the United States acquired the Louisiana Territory from Napoleon there naturally arose in the North, a desire to get in touch with New Orleans by some method not dependent upon ocean transport. But at that period the United States did not own the intervening territory and had no control over it. There existed a virtually solid block of territory extending almost from the Atlantic to the Mississippi River, made up of independent nations. Those nations were the nations of the Cherokee, Creek and Choctaw Indians who were, in the international sense, as foreign to this Government as the nations of Europe.

That being the situation, our State Department approached those Indian Nations and asked them if they would grant us permission to carry letters back and forth between the North and New Orleans, along such mail routes and under such conditions as the Indians might be pleased to name. The Indian Nations kindly consented to help us out under the circumstances, and so three treaties were drawn up and duly signed. The first treaty with the Cherokee Nation was of October 27, 1805. Section II of that treaty read as follows:

"And whereas the mail of the United States is ordered to be carried from Knoxville to New Orleans through the Cherokee, Creek and Choctaw countries, the Cherokees agree that the citizens of the United States shall have, so far as it goes through their country, the free and unmolested use of a road leading . . ." etc., etc.

The Creek and Choctaw Nations gave similar permission in treaties negotiated in Washington on November 14, 1805.



REGISTERED LETTERS

Top: A type of Registration used in 1868. Sent to Philadelphia. Received on December 22. Postage, 9 cents. The registration number is apparently "4." Cancelled in blue, straight-line/ Bottom: One of the earliest types of registration. Date, perhaps earlier than 1850. Postage, 5 cents, with the "R" struck in blue, and the registration number, "70," in manuscript. Sent from Princeton, New Jersey, to Philadelphia.

So that was the way the North communicated overland with New Orleans until the year 1830 (and perhaps a bit longer). The letters were carried on horseback. The ferries over the rivers were owned and operated by the Indians, and the taverns where the white mail carriers stopped at night were also owned and operated by the Indians.

The north-bound letter of October 8, 1828, here shown, bears the cachet "Mail Route" in red ink, and as indicated it came north to "Tennessee" to Knoxville and then moved eastward, probably through the Cumberland Gap

See early Registered covers, pages 24 & 25.

HARTFORD & NEW YORK--DAILY.

The Steam Boat **BUNKER HILL**, Captain Huntington, will leave Hartford from the foot of State street, every **MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, and FRIDAY**, at 2 o'clock, P. M. **M. SANDFORD**, Agent.

An advertisement in the November 30, 1840 Hartford Times announcing that the Steamer Bunker Hill will make trips to New York three days a week. (See page 2 Figure 2 and caption 2 page 3.)

Early Registered Covers (see also page 25)

5¢ red brown (Sc. 1) tied by black grid cancel, "Wilkes Barre Pa. Mar. 29" (1851) circular datestamp on buff cover to Philadelphia, with matching "Registered" straightline handstamp applied at Wilkes Barre and



blue "R" handstamp applied on arrival in Philadelphia, also with manuscript "25" registration number at lower left. This is an example of a cover that went through the informal registration system that existed before registered mail was authorized under postal regulations in 1855.



5¢ brown, Double Transfer cancelled by red "5" handstamp, cover to Philadelphia also with blue "Baltimore Md. Apr. 5" and matching "R" recorded handstamp on folded letter to Philadelphia, also with manuscript "67" registry number.

3c Dull Red, Ty. II, Registered Covers (11A). Five covers, incl. one with red straightline "Registered" on folded letter from Newport R.I. which includes an analysis from Thomas Alexander concluding that it is a not certain but probable genuine



pre-1855 registered usage, also a blue straightline "Registered" handstamp on cover from Newbern N.C. (P.F. certificate), and three manuscript registered usages from Middletown Conn., Astoria N.Y., and Greencastle Pa., (two with P.F. certificates), Very Fine group (Image Magnifier)

E. 500-750 475

15c Black, F. Grill (98). Used with 3c Red, F. Grill (94) and tied by "Boston P.O. Registered Apr. 1?, 1869" shield-type datestamp on registered cover to Wendell Centre Mass., 1877 docketing at left, fresh and Very Fine example of the



15c registry fee (Image Magnifier)

E. 300-400 450



A letter of 1851 or a little later, on which the stamp, when accidentally folded over when the letter was filed away, had actually photographed itself by radium rays. The ink with which the stamp was printed—as is now known—was impregnated with a radio-active mineral. If this letter had been found after perhaps 10 or 15 years, and had then been examined and explained by scientists, radium would have been discovered in America some 30 years or more before it was finally found by Madame Curie in Paris. In that case this identical letter would have created a world-wide sensation. Two other such letters are known and recorded.

and by stage-coach. The postage was 37½ cents. It reached New York City in 20 days.

The other similar letter left New Orleans on January 21, 1830, and reached New York on February 10. It as usual bears the “Mail Route” cachet in red, but as indicated it came north as far as Kentucky before turning eastward. The postage had been reduced to 12½ cents; or, at any rate, that is the amount of postage stated.

Years of search in New Orleans for south-bound letters through the Indian Nations has thus far, so far as I am aware, been without result. If any such are known that knowledge should be made available.

Next among these relics to claim our attention are three items dealing with the registration of mail. The first is a letter of about 1850, sent from Princeton, New Jersey, to Philadelphia. It bears the “R,” struck in blue, and the number “70.” The postage was 5 cents. The other registered letter is one of December, 1868. The Cancellation, “Registered,” is boldly struck twice, in blue ink. The postage is 9 cents.

Following the two registered letters is a specimen of the receipts given by the New York City post office, (Figure 4) to those who mailed registered letters in 1856. Doubtless such printed forms were sent from Washington to all (or many) post-offices, and the necessary notes were filled in by hand, in Manuscript.

Next in this procession of Museum exhibits is a letter which could easily have become world-famous. It was sent to New Orleans, and was borne by a 3-cent stamp of the 1851 issue. There it was filed away, and remained untouched for about 80 years. But in filing it away, the clerk folded the envelope, with the result that is obvious. That 3-cent stamp photographed itself!

As is now well known, the ink used in printing these 3-cent stamps of 1851 was strongly (though of course unknowingly) impregnated with a radio-active mineral element. That radium ceaselessly shooting forth, struck the envelope and reproduced the design of the stamp upon the paper. So, if this envelope had been found in ten years, say, and had then been brought to the attention of science and studied, radium would have been discovered in America a generation before it was discovered by Mme. Curie in the Paris laboratory. Then



Top: The Postmaster's Provisional envelope created and issued by Postmaster S. R. Griffin, of the little village of Harford, New York State, in the late summer or autumn of 1860. Perhaps the only example of this remarkable provisional that has yet been discovered. Found and certified by the eminent experts, Gustav and Arthur Burger. The most generally accepted explanation for its creation is set forth in the text of the article.

Bottom: A "Monday" letter from North Evans. This little village post-office, in Erie County of New York State, was the only known United States post-office whose postmaster put the "day-of-the-week" in his postmark. (The year was 1863.) One veteran collector has vainly sought for 30 years to complete the series of the six North Evans week-days. He still lacks one of them. There is no recorded proof that the Postmaster worked on Sunday.

indeed, this envelope would have been a world-wide sensation. Two other similar specimens, at least, are known and recorded.

Our attention now turns to a letter of very different sort; one in which the action of an individual Postmaster looms as the element which gives the letter its distinction. It is hitherto unknown Postmaster's "Provisional" envelope of very peculiar character, and was created and issued by Postmaster Griffin, of the tiny little settlement of Harford, up in North-Central New York State, in 1860. Harford contained only about a dozen houses, a country store,



The "Union" cancellations devised and used by the Postmaster at Chester, Connecticut, a few days after the Civil War was started by the bombardment of Fort Sumter. The postmark of this letter is "May 10." This Chester case is perhaps the only known instance in which "Union" was immediately employed by a Northern Postmaster as a patriotic badge for use on letters.

and some half-a-hundred people. To one of these people, or to some farmer of the neighborhood, he issued this envelope, first recording upon it the fact that 3 cents in "Money" had been paid for the postage. He also officially signed the envelope as Postmaster (apparently as an afterthought).

But the manuscript postmark, which reads: "Harford N. Y. Oct. 10th 1860," was obviously written by the same writer who addressed the letter! Now, since the person who mails a letter does not stand in the post-office and perform a part of the postmaster's job, the most commonly accepted explanation of Postmaster Griffin's action in thus preparing or selling the envelope is this:

The envelope, so goes the theory, was bought by someone who for some sufficient reason (such as distance of a mile or two from the post office) did not want to take it to the post office when the letter it was to enclose had been written and was ready for transmission. In fact it is apparent that the envelope, as prepared by Griffin did not necessarily have to go back to the post office at all. The sender of the letter, when the letter was ready, could himself write the postmark and then hand the letter to the contract mail-carrier as the mail-carrier drove past the sender's gate after leaving the post office. The postage had already been paid, every detail necessary for the transmission of the letter had already been attended to.

That is the most commonly advanced theory, and it appears to be a reasonable one. Such a method could easily have been the common practice of the one who paid the postage in the envelope. He might have provided himself with others at the same time, not knowing when the letters had to be sent. He himself could write the postmarks when the time came.



Examples of the "1870" and "1871" year-date cancellations used by the Postmaster at Watkins, New York, during a period in which Postmasters could, and did, employ any postal marking for the purpose that pleased their fancy. These are the most outstanding and striking year-date cancellations that have yet been found, and a constant search has long been in progress, by numerous students, in an effort to discover similar Watkins letters in which a part of the numeral—however small—has been impressed upon the envelope during the process of cancellation. Until or unless that search is successful, it is now the consensus of opinion that these should be classified as "pre-cancels." On the covers from which these illustrations are taken the dates are neatly "pre-cancelled" on the stamps.

LADIES HATS MADE IN U. S. A.

The "Ladies Hats Made in U. S. A." cancellation. Most extraordinary U. S. Postal cancellation thus far known. Five examples of it—each on a commercial package—were discovered in a department store in Sydney, Australia, during the World War, and all five specimens were secured by the eminent dealer, Mr. Bartels. Place and reason of origin not yet found. One suggested explanation is that since all packages destined for transmission by ocean steamship were then open to suspicion as possible incendiary or explosive bombs, the cancellation was devised as a guarantee that those particular packages were beyond suspicion.

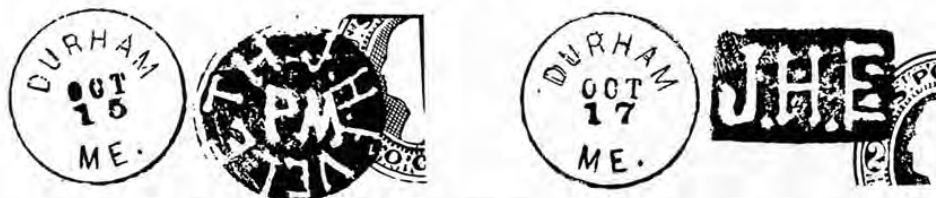
One of the most frequently used methods by which postmasters impressed their own personalities upon the letters they handled in earlier days, lay in the cancellations which they used. For some 20 or 25 years following 1860, a postmaster could devise and use almost any cancellation or postmark that his fancy dictated. A very unusual group of such specimens is here exhibited.

The first of them thus displayed is a cancellation invented by the postmaster of Chester, Connecticut, a few days after the bombardment of Fort Sumter had started the Civil War. With letters made of rubber, he impressed the word "Union" on the stamps. This envelope, so treated, is dated May 10 (1861). Perhaps that precise patriotic cancellation was only used at Chester, though of course there can be no certainty on such a point.

The postmaster of the village of Watkins, in New York State, probably stands first among those of his fellow officials who used what has come to be known as the "Year Date" cancellation. In 1870, and in 1871 (and possibly before and after those years) he employed those year-date figures as cancellations for the stamps that passed under his hands. Examples of both are here presented. One uncertainty concerning them may still persist. Until a Watkins letter of either of those dates appears in which a part of the date is impressed upon the fabric of the envelope itself, the burden of probability is to be found in the theory that the stamps were cancelled before being placed on the letter; in other words, that they are specimens of pre-cancellation.

Another New York State postmaster who did something unique in the way of postmarking, was the postmaster of the town of North Evans, in Erie county. He is the only known postmaster who included the day-of-the-week in his big date circle. A "Monday" letter of his is here shown.

Doubtless the most spectacular of all the cancellations created and used by individualists among the postmasters are those devised by Postmaster J. H.



Two of the possibly three varieties of the cancellations devised and used by Postmaster J. H. Eveleth, of the village of Durham, Maine, in 1883. Most spectacular creations of the sort by any of the known "self-advertising" postmasters of our national postal history. The circular one was employed on October 15.

Eveleth, of the village of Durham, Maine, in 1883. Two of them, one circular and the other a rectangle, are here presented. One has Eveleth's full name and the "P.M." title, and the other shows his initials. They speak, very loudly, for themselves.

But the most remarkable of all known United States cancellations is a comparatively recent one, since it was created and discovered in the year 1917,



Top: A letter which reached its destination through the intercession of a Young Men's Christian Association (the Y. M. C. A. of San Francisco), but the cooperation of the Postmaster and the Association did not reach the degree attained at Richmond. In this case the Y. M. C. A. notice and the stamp were attached separately by the Postmaster, although he "tied" them together by his postmark.

Bottom: A letter carried by the extraordinary provisional used (on certain rare occasions) by the Postmaster at Richmond, Indiana, in 1865. This is the only known case or practice of this sort in our postal history. The postage is a compound adhesive, and is one of the supreme prizes of a United States collector. A more extended discussion of this strange item, and of the manner in which it came into existence, will be found in the accompanying text.

during the World War. It reads: "Ladies Hats Made in U.S.A." An explanation of it, so far as yet known, accompanies the illustration.

Now turning back to a period 75 years ago, and to a phase of our postal history far removed from those just mentioned, it becomes necessary to discuss one of the supreme and possibly unique letters of our postal annals. It is the envelope bearing the extraordinary provisional postage employed (for nobody

See page 31 for Samaritan covers, including a recent photo of the top cover on on this page.

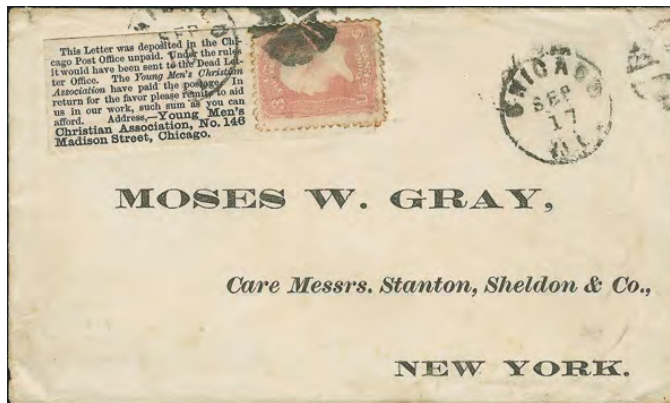
Good Samaritan Covers (see also page 30)

1869 3¢ ultramarine (Sc. 114) tied by a multi-point star cancel and "San Francisco Cal. Mar. 18" circular datestamp, used with demonetized 3¢ dull red, Type II (Sc. 26), uncanceled. The datestamp also ties the



Y.M.C.A. 'Good Samaritan' label on a cover to Swampscott, Mass., that originally was addressed by sender to "Swampscott Calif." Presumably the address correction and valid stamp were supplied by the Y.M.C.A. The cover also has a blue Lusk & Co. backstamp. (See the photo on page 30 for owner notations that were subsequently removed.)

3¢ rose (Sc. 65) affixed over a Y.M.C.A. 'Good Samaritan' label, tied by a quartered cork and "Chicago Ill. Sep. 17" circular datestamp on cover with printed address to New York.



knows how long or how often) by the postmaster in the town of Richmond, Indiana, in 1865.

At that particular time, just at the end of the Civil War, some thoughtful-minded and probably now undiscoverable member of some Young Men's Christian Association somewhere in the country had a new idea. He proposed that the Y. M. C. A.'s make arrangements with their local postmasters by which the Y. M. C. A.'s should undertake to pay the postage on letters, in addition to stamps paid for by the Y. M. C. A.'s, should also bear a printed slip advertising the Y. M. C. A. involved.

Of course that scheme or idea to be carried out had to receive the approval of the local postmaster to whom it was presented, and also had to receive his active cooperation. But at any rate it is known that such a plan was proposed to various postmasters in towns and cities scattered over the country, and that some of these postmasters fell in with the idea and took part in it. The Y. M. C. A.'s, of course, stood the expense of printing the little slips and no doubt deposited with a complaisant postmaster enough money to cover the cost of a dozen or two stamps. A few of the printed slips naturally were handed to such a postmaster, to be kept handy and stuck on letters if occasion arose. So much for the general plan.

Now for what obviously happened at Richmond. The postmaster said "Yes," and the local Y. M. C. A. printed its slips. But instead of preparing the slips so that they would be separate from the stamps, and separately stuck on the envelopes they combined the two. With the consent and help of the postmaster they actually created the only known compound adhesive! The Richmond slip contained at one end a printed compartment for the stamp, and in that form with the stamp already in place and a constituent part of the device, it was delivered to the postmasters for use if the opportunity occurred.

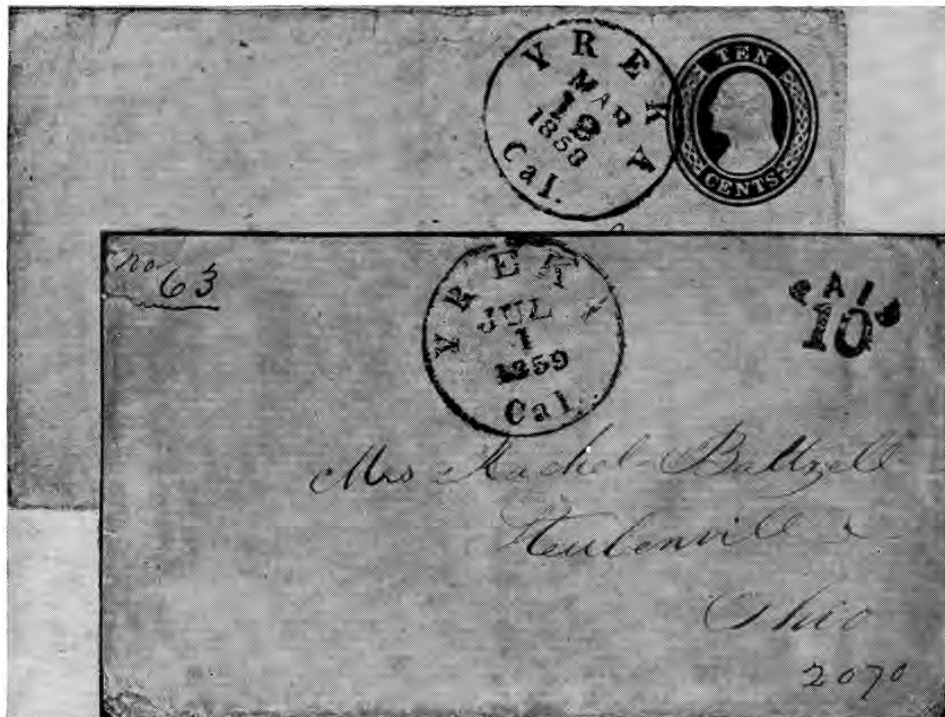
The opportunity did occur. The action that took place when this letter was found is plainly obvious. The postmaster slapped a lot of mucilage on the envelope; reached for one of the stamped slips; slapped the slip on the letter; and cancelled the Y. M. C. A. donation at once, while the mucilage was still wet. The job took perhaps 10 seconds. Within that space of time, a postal "provisional" consisting of a compound adhesive which was the joint creation of the United States Government and the Y. M. C. A., and which was attached to the letter by a Government postmaster, had come into existence. Hereafter, a listing of the 3-cent stamp of 1861, to be complete, should include this Richmond species! It surpasses, both in rarity and historical interest, the 3-cent stamp of 1861 used in connection with the "Lattice Window" envelope of 1859.

Accompanying the Richmond letter is a companion-piece showing how the San Francisco Postmaster and the local Y. M. C. A. cooperated in a similar case. The letter was mailed, with a stamp demonetized years before, on March 11, 1870. On March 18, the Y. M. C. A. slip and the donated stamp were affixed, but separately. The postmaster, however, tied the slip and the stamp together by means of the postmark.

A group of five outstanding letters that are intimately tied up with the postal history of the West as well, now claim our attention.

Two of the group deal with the pioneer history of California, and with one of the mining camps there in the years 1858 and 1859. The camp in question was Yreka. One of the letters is dated on March 12, 1858, and shows that the postmaster of the camp at the time was supplied with postal necessities from Washington. It was carried by a copy of the current 10-cent envelope.

The other letter, also from the Yreka Camp, is vastly different. It is dated July 1, 1859, and is a provisional envelope issued by compulsion by the Postmaster at the camp because he had no more stamps or envelopes. Contemporary records reveal that three camps at the time in question (of which Yreka was



Top: A letter handled on March 12, 1858, by the Postmaster of the mining camp of Yreka, California, during the year (1858) preceding Postmaster Grow's forced issuance of his Provisional envelope in 1859. Grow was Postmaster of the Yreka camp from September 30, 1858. At this time (1858) as is obvious, the Yreka office possessed postal supplies received from Washington.

A copy of the Provisional envelope issued by Postmaster William Grow of the mining camp of Yreka, California, in the summer of 1859. (Dated July 1.) Contemporary records reveal that at least three mining camp post-offices in the state (including that at Yreka) ran out of postal supplies from Washington at the same time, and had to resort to similar methods. Further discussion in the text.

one) were similarly situated and had to resort to similar expedients. Supplies from Washington had for some reason failed to arrive.

The postmaster at Yreka on July 1, 1859, who had to sell cheap commercial envelopes at 10 cents apiece, was William Grow who had taken charge of the post office on September 30 of the previous year (1858). This envelope probably was number 63 of those so prepared, postmarked, cancelled "Paid 10" and sold. If Grow had not kept a record of each transaction of the sort it is

See page 34

Yreka Cover (see also page 33)

A Chase's Express franked cover carried in 1858 by Chase's Express into Yreka when it entered the U.S. mails for delivery to Minnesota, with a "Yreka Cal." postmark and "PAID 10" handstamp at center.



Virginia City Covers (see also page 35)

A cover similar to the cover on page 35 with Sc. 65 tied by a target cancel and "Virginia City / IDO, Jan 2 '65" c.d.s., when Virginia City was part of Idaho Territory.



A cover to Iowa with a "Virginia City / Montano Aug. 31" (1865) c.d.s. with Sc. 65 tied by a target cancel, after Virginia City became part of Montano (later Montana) Territory.



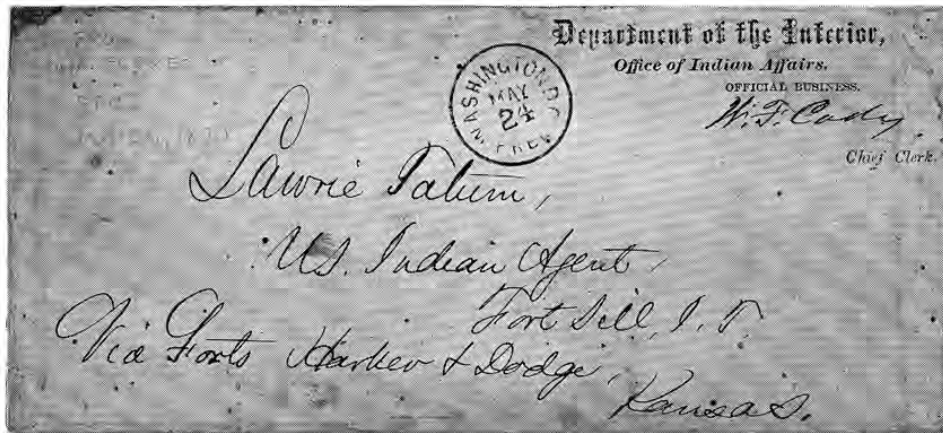
obvious that he would have had on hand more money than his inventory or accounts called for. Such a situation would never do in that particular region and at that particular time. Besides, Postmaster Grow had just been nominated for the office of Sheriff of Siskiyou County on June 8, a few days before the issue of this provisional. The convention had even been held at the Yreka camp. So he had every reason to be scrupulously careful and exact in the conduct of his duties as postmaster. The notation "2070" at the lower right corner of the envelope is believed to indicate the number of letters that had been handled by the post office, or dispatched during some specified time.



Top: This and the following are two letters from the only known pioneer United States post-office that moved from one territory to another while nevertheless remaining stationary. The unique post-office in question was that of Virginia City, Idaho Territory, which was established in 1863 to accommodate the adventurers who flocked to the neighboring newly discovered gold deposits. But in a few weeks after this letter the Post-office in question, though still standing unchanged on its original location, leaped from Idaho Territory into Montana Territory. This letter is postmarked from Virginia City, Idaho. Date: May 21, 1865.

Bottom: This is the letter (written by the same person, to the same person; and to the same address as the preceding) which was mailed at the Virginia City post-office on August 12, after the post-office had jumped from Idaho Territory to Montana Territory. As will be observed, the postmark reads "Montano," which was the first spelling of the name.

The two letters postmarked at and sent from "Virginia City" are believed to be unmatched. Virginia City is the only known pioneer United States post office that moved from one territory to another while still remaining stationary. The post office was in Idaho Territory and was established for the benefit of the gold-seekers who in 1863, rushed to the near-by newly found gold deposits. Idaho Territory at that time embraced what is now Montana. But soon after the letter postmarked "Virginia City, Ido." was mailed, the Territory of Mon-



Letter from office of Indian Affairs at Washington, to Lawrie Tatum, Indian Agent at Fort Sill, Indian Territory. Mailed May 24, 1870 and received June 6. See further description below.

tana was formed, and when the dividing line was run, the Virginia City mining camp and post office found themselves to be in Montana Territory.

So the second of the two letters, postmarked August 12, though sent from the same Virginia City post office, is cancelled as from Montana ("Montano" was the first spelling, and was then used). Both letters were written by the same person; to the same person; and to the same address. Both letters were handled by the same post office, which did not move. Yet those two letters originated in different territories.

The final letter of the five missives so closely entangled with our Western history can hardly be approached, and certainly cannot be excelled, with relation to the elements of interest embodied in it. It dealt with the Indian affairs of the West just after the completion of the first transcontinental railroad (which was in part built by the consent of the Indians), and at a period when the Indians, acutely conscious of the doom of their society and remaining sovereignty, were in a naturally hostile mood. It was sent and signed by Buffalo Bill, who was then the Chief Clerk of the Office of Indian Affairs and addressed to an Indian Agent. It was addressed to one fort, in care of two other forts. It is thus far the only recorded letter with that distinction. It could only be delivered at its destination through the escort of three military movements. Three cavalry expeditions conveyed it from the railroad to the first fort, and thence in turn to the other forts. It was sent to Lawrie Tatum.

Lawrie Tatum was the man who, on completion of his duties in the Indian Country, became the guardian of a little orphan Iowa boy, and that little boy, guided and cared for by Tatum, grew up to become a President of the United States of America, and one of the greatest and most useful personages of modern history. The boy's name was Herbert Hoover.

No one, I think, who reads and thoughtfully considers the two sections of this brief and fragmentary comment upon our postal history can do otherwise than agree with me that the subject is worthy of far more attention and study than it has yet received.

And Philatelic Exhibitions designed to attract public attention should hereafter be organized on a different and better basis. (Particularly does this opinion apply to the Eastern part of our country.) An all-too-obvious attitude of commercialism should give place to careful planning and organization that will sharply emphasize—to visitors both young and old—the history element, the Museum quality, and the educational value of such displays.

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