

## HISTORICAL ASPECTS

Perhaps the nation's greatest philatelic story was the **emergence of prepaid postage stamps** during the struggle for dominance of private versus governmental postal services. The recent transportation revolution from horseman and stagecoach to steamboat and railroad had not passed any monetary savings on to the public.

During the 1830's private Parcel Express companies began transporting packages of jewelry, money, and bundles of letters between cities. By 1844 a network of Independent Mails was organized. Each company offered prepayment stamps, were very popular, and became known as the Peoples Mail. By mid 1845 the **inter-city** Independent Mails were legislatively terminated, although government rates were lowered appropriately.

In 1842 two private posts offered prepayment stamps for **intra-city** service. In 1845 the very few existing private posts continued, multiplied greatly in number, and exerted competitive pressure upon their respective local city carrier departments. Private posts offered convenient drop boxes, volume discounts, and special messengers. However, in 1861 private posts too were effectively **terminated by legislation**, with correspondingly interesting city carrier sequelae.

## SIGNIFICANCE

During the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century Philadelphia was the second most populous city in the United States, forth in the Western World. This postal history exhibit reveals the **competitive struggle between private and government mail delivery**. **Postal rates were reduced by approximately two thirds and service greatly improved**. Philadelphia is unmatched by any city in the world for it's diverse, colorful, and rich legacy during the formative years of philately.

**PARCEL EXPRESS COMPANIES** by June 1843 provided colorful advertising labels, but did not sell pre-paid stamps however, only parcel express companies were permitted by law, but no remuneration for single letters.

### HATCH & CO.'S EXPRESS

OPERATED : 1840 TO 1844  
OPERATOR : GEORGE HATCH  
LOCATION : 42 S. 3RD ST, PHILA  
RATE : VARIABLE

JULY 18, 1843

PINK HATCH & CO EXPRESS  
LABEL

MANUSCRIPT "P HATCH COS  
EXPRESS"

FROM PHILADELPHIA

In 1836 Harden began in Boston, and by 1840 reached Philadelphia. During 1843 when advertising labels first appeared, he entrusted Hatch with his New York to Philadelphia route. In early 1844 Harden returned from his transatlantic and foreign exchanges to resume his domestic routes. On August 7, 1844 Harden sold this route to Livingston. Harden has often been called the "original expressman."

ONE RECORDED - July 18, 1843





### EXHIBIT PLAN

Express and Independent Mails - Frame 1  
Philadelphia Local Posts - Frames 2 - 5  
Philadelphia Carrier Department - Frames 6 - 8

### IMPORTANT MATERIAL

**Six unique advertising labels** - Frame 1, a **triple conjunctive** parcel express, one of 3 recorded.

**Ten unique handstamps** - Frames 2, 3, and 4.

**Seven unique adhesive stamps** - Frames 4 and 5.

**Nation's first fancy cancel handstamp** - Frame 1, the better 2 of 3 documented.

**Nation's first embossed envelope** - Frame 3, the better of 2 documented.

**World's third stamp producing entity** - Frame 2, page 1

**World's first pictorial stamp** - Frame 2, the **earliest** documented.

**World's first precancelled stamp** - Frame 1, the **earliest** documented.

*Original research, information, hypotheses, and conclusions are italicized. The significance of individual covers is headlined in bold blue.* Highly important examples are **framed in blue**. Over 90% have been PF authenticated.

Parcel Express companies gave birth to many Independent Mails, which did sell pre-paid stamps. After July 1, 1845,

### SECOND EARLIEST HARNDEN LABEL - June 15, 1844

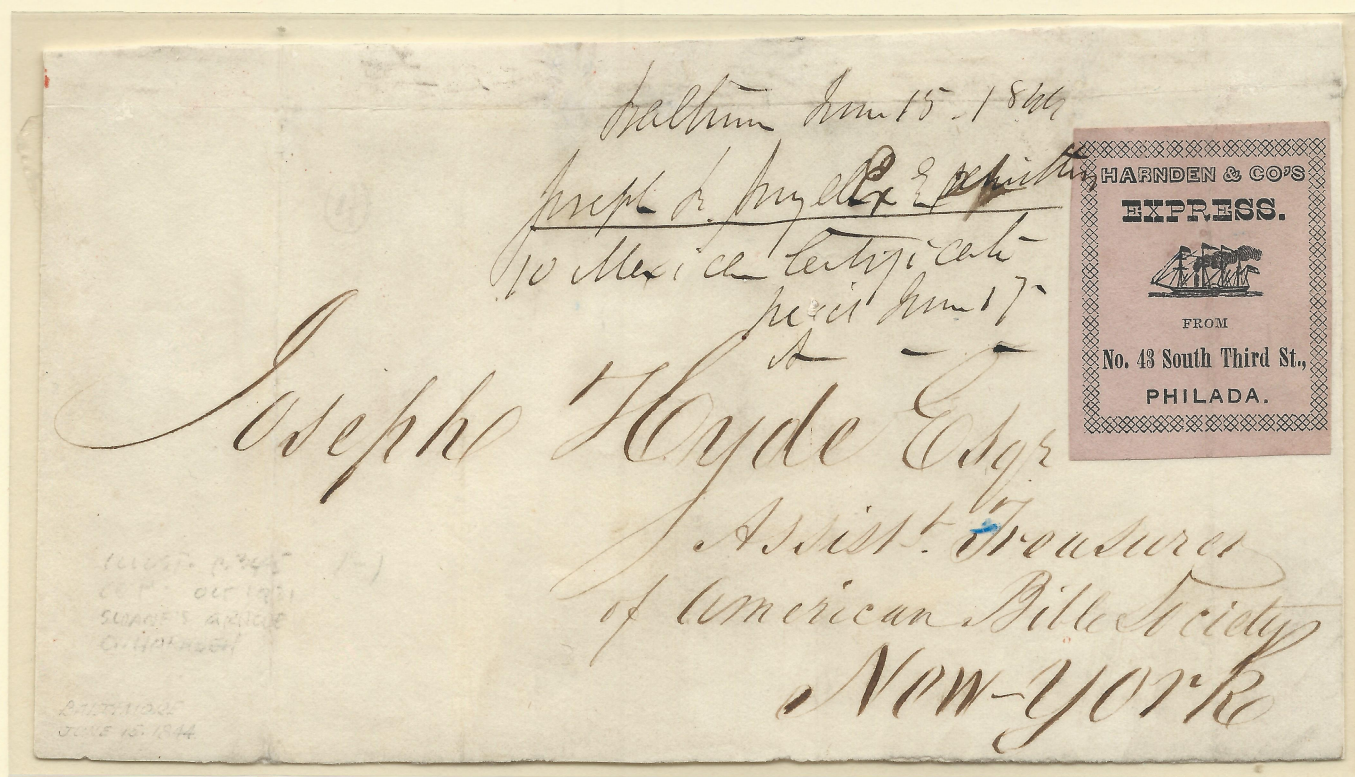
#### HARNDEN & CO'S EXPRESS

OPERATED : 1839 TO 1854

OPERATOR : WILLIAM HARNDEN

LOCATION : 43 S. 3RD ST.

RATE : VARIABLE





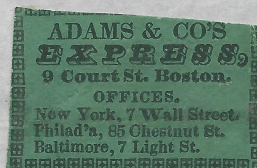
PARCEL EXPRESS

ONE RECORDED

GREAT NORTHEAST

ADAMS & CO'S EXPRESS

OPERATED : 1841 - 1854  
OPERATOR : ALVIN ADAMS  
LOCATION : 9 COURT ST, BOSTON  
7 WALL ST, N. Y.  
85 CHESTNUT ST, PHILA  
RATE : VARIABLE



*Mess. Charley Whelan*  
*Philadelphia*

MARCH 17, 1845

GREEN ADAMS & CO'S LABEL, REPAIRED

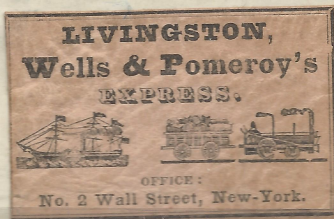
RED "3" (BITS)

INSIDE BOSTON DOCKET  
ADDRESSED TO PHILADELPHIA

ONE RECORDED

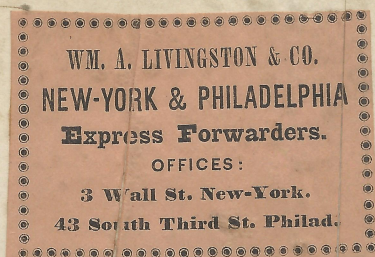
LIVINGSTON, WELLS & POMEROY'S EXPRESS

OPERATED : 1844 - 1847  
OPERATOR : CRAWFORD LIVINGSTON  
HENRY WELLS  
GEORGE POMEROY  
LOCATION : 2 WALL ST, N.Y.  
43 S. 3RD ST, PHILA  
RATE : VARIABLE



NOVEMBER 26, 1844

FROM ALBANY



*Lindsay & Blakiston*  
*Philadelphia*  
*Pa*

JANUARY 10, 1845

PINK WM. A. LIVINGSTON  
& CO. LABEL

MANUSCRIPT "ORDER"

MANUSCRIPT "\$15. ENCLOSED"

FROM NEW YORK

ADDRESSED TO PHILADELPHIA

Adams & Co's Express was founded in 1841, and reached Philadelphia by January 22, 1842. By August 28, 1844 Adams reduced the parcel rate from 25 to 12 1/2 cents.\* The top example shows red crayon 3 "bits" or 37 1/2 cents, triple rate for a bundle of three letters, or possibly money contents over \$200 (one bit per one hundred dollars content). In 1854 several express companies merged to form the well known Adams Express Company.

Livingston, Wells, and Pomeroy's Express was formed on April 27, 1844, shown in the middle example. Livingston purchased the New York to Philadelphia line from Harnden four months later, shown at bottom. Both were no charge for an "order."

\* "ADAM'S EXPRESS AND INDEPENDENT MAIL," CALVET M. HAHN, THE COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST, VOL. 69, NO. 3, MAY-JUNE 1990, P. 186, 194



# PARCEL EXPRESS

PENNSYLVANIA

# SHATTUCK & SMYLIE'S EXPRESS

ONE RECORDED

OPERATED : 1851  
 OPERATOR : SMYLIE  
 LOCATION : 3 1/2 SO. THIRD ST.  
 AND EASTON  
 RATE : VARIABLE

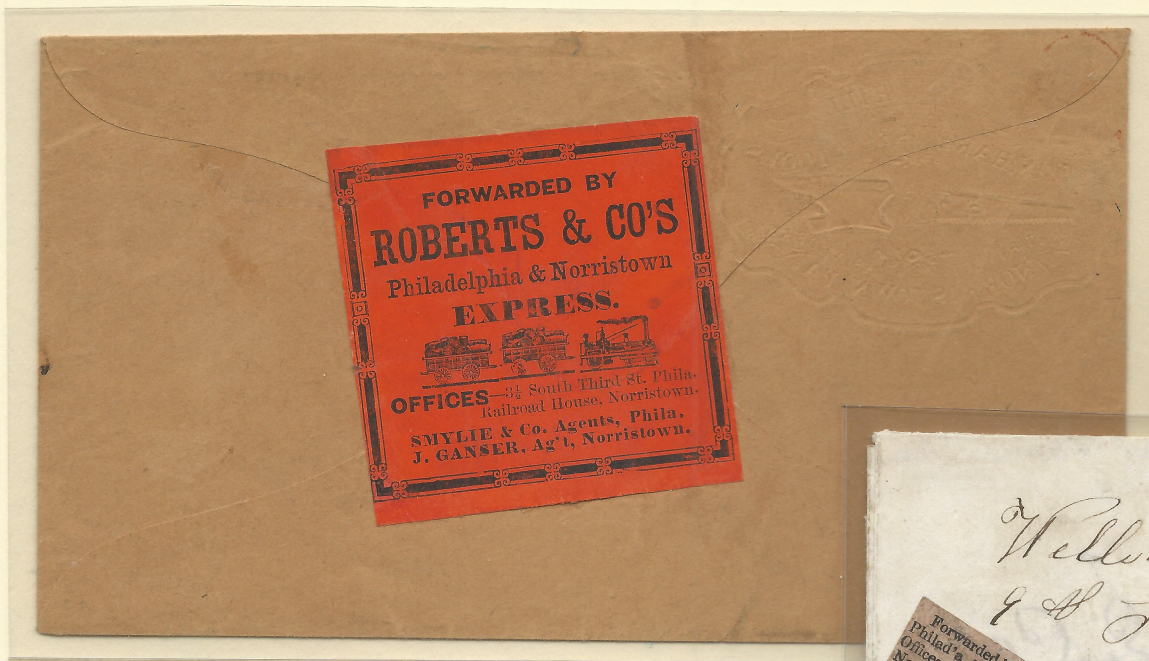


RED MANUSCRIPT "1851"  
 GREEN SHATTUCK & SMYLIE'S  
 PHILADELPHIA & EASTON EXPRESS  
 MANUSCRIPT "AN ORDER"  
 FROM EASTON  
 ADDRESSED TO PHILADELPHIA  
 PFC 2010

ONE RECORDED

# ROBERTS & CO'S EXPRESS

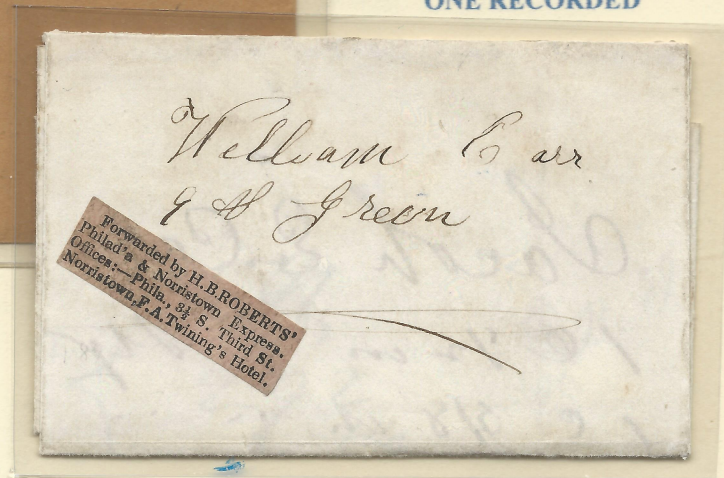
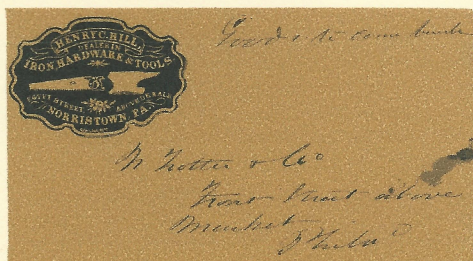
OPERATED : 1849  
 OPERATOR : HB ROBERTS, SMYLIE  
 LOCATION : 3 1/2 SO. THIRD ST,  
 AND NORRISTOWN  
 RATE : VARIABLE



SMALLEST OF ANY  
 PARCEL EXPRESS -  
 ONE RECORDED

UNDATED, CIRCA 1852 ORANGE ROBERTS LABEL, REPAIRED TO PHILADELPHIA PFC 2010

COPY OF FRONT



MARCH 22, 1849 PINK ROBERTS LABEL FROM NORRISTOWN TO PHILADELPHIA  
 PFC 2010

Some companies carved out an **intrastate express niche centered upon Philadelphia**. Smylie was the agent for the top example, "Shattuck & Smylie's Philadelphia & Easton Package Express," and the bottom for Roberts & Co's "Philadelphia & Norristown Express." Each advertising label reveals the same address, circa 1850, of 3 1/2 South 3rd Street, Philadelphia.



PARCEL EXPRESS

PENNSYLVANIA

HOWARD EXPRESS COMPANY

ONE RECORDED

OPERATED : 1846 - 1857  
OPERATOR : MR. HOWARD  
LOCATION : 248 CHESTNUT  
RATE : VARIABLE



*Miss Eva Trotter*

*Merch*

*Mr 36 no*

*Phil*

*\$202 93/100*

CIRCA 1846-50 BLACK ON VERMILLION ALLENTOWN, PA  
MANUSCRIPT "\$202.93" MANUSCRIPT "PAID 3/-"  
ADDRESSED TO PHILADELPHIA

At top left was a \$202.93 of money letter "Paid 3/-" 3 bits, or 37 1/2 cents for Allentown to Philadelphia. One bit was charged for each \$100. value increment.

The top right money envelope is one of only three recorded triple conjunctive parcel express examples. Originating in 1860 at the Howard Express Co. in Philadelphia, it was forwarded in Dunkirk, NY by the United States Express Co., and delivered in Erie, Pa by the American Express Co., both confirmed by company labels. Total triple charge was 8 bits.



*Mr. Henry B. Dawson*  
*Morristown*  
*New York*

UNDATED BLACK ON VERMILLION PHILADELPHIA  
ADDRESSED TO NEW YORK

ONE RECORDED  
TRIPLE CONJUNCTIVE

THE  
**HOWARD EXPRESS**  
COMPANY.

General Office, No. 248 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

*Box + Cash. \$ 49 55* for Collection.

On *Mr a Morgan*  
*Erie Pa*

On account of *Cornelius W. Baska*  
*Phila da*  
*1/6.*

Return proceeds under cover of this Envelope, without delay.

INSTRUCTIONS.

If the enclosed be a Bill of Lading, it must be presented on Delivery, the Agent sending it must enclose this Envelope and on the Package, the letter must be written on this Envelope, positively directed not to be opened, and the Agent receiving it is to receive payment for the part thereof, before the Goods so marked, and not accompany the OFFICE FOR THE BILL TO THE PROPER

If the enclosed be a Bill of Lading, it must be presented on Delivery, the Agent sending it must enclose this Envelope and on the Package, the letter must be written on this Envelope, positively directed not to be opened, and the Agent receiving it is to receive payment for the part thereof, before the Goods so marked, and not accompany the OFFICE FOR THE BILL TO THE PROPER

If simply Bill to collect, it will present the same promptly, and if not paid, after a reasonable time will return it, giving under Remarks reasons why not paid.

Agents will be held personally responsible for neglect of Instructions.

*Mon 28 1860*

REMARKS.

*COO - Rg*



*sf*

McGlin Brothers, Printers.



## INDEPENDENT MAILS

By the early 1840's some companies transported *single letters* in addition to bundles for inter-city mail in direct competition with the Federal Government. They were known as the "Peoples Mail" and the "Opposition Mail." By 1844 nine companies sold adhesive stamps for prepayment, and sometimes worked in conjunction with another. The government postage rate from Philadelphia to Boston of 18 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cents was severely undercut by the Independent Mail companies, which charged only 6 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cents collect, or 5 cents prepaid. Government was suddenly under enormous pressure from private enterprise.

SINGLE RATE  
"LIGHT BLUE"

WORLD'S FIRST PRECANCEL, EARLIEST RECORDED - June 2, 1844  
3 RECORDED IN MAGENTA

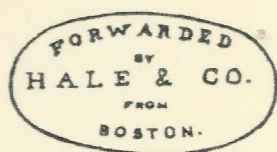
HALE & CO.

OPERATED : DECEMBER 1843  
UNTIL JUNE 30, 1845  
OPERATOR : JAMES W. HALE  
LOCATION : 37 S. THIRD ST.  
RATE : 6 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> CENTS OR 20 FOR  
\$1, PER HALF OUNCE



"RED ON BLUISH"

2 RECORDED IN PHILADELPHIA



MAY 27, 1845

RED ON BLUISH ADHESIVE,  
MANUSCRIPT "R"

RED "PAID" TIED CANCEL

RED PHILADELPHIA OVAL  
HANDSTAMP

ADDRESSED TO PHILADELPHIA

PFC 2011

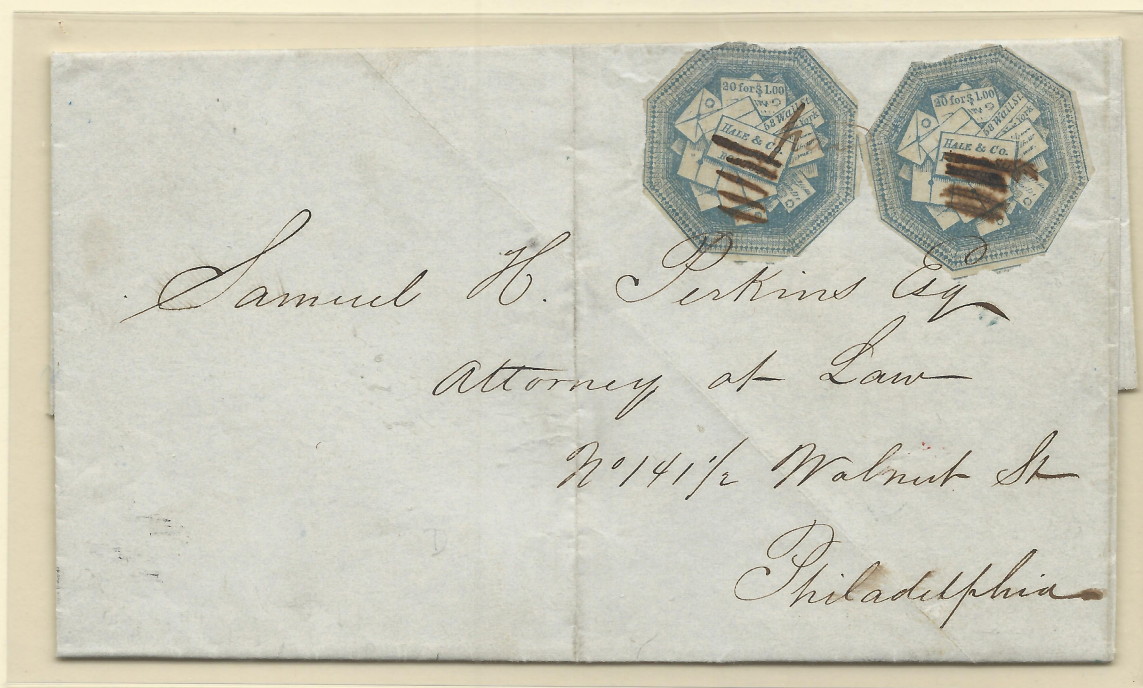


Hale invented the precancel by June 1844, perhaps for labor efficiency and to prevent reuse. The first three were in magenta, perhaps the precursors of the typical black penstroke precancellation. At top is the **earliest dated precancelled stamp**.

The red stamp, at bottom, reveals the full Hale address in Boston. After relocation the address was removed, initially obliterated by pen shown on the next page, and later by printing omission shown on the top examples.



## DOUBLE RATE



JUNE 27, 1844 TWO STATE 1 HALE ADHESIVES, MANUSCRIPT ADDRESS DELETED  
 ADDRESSED TO PHILADELPHIA MAILED FROM NEW YORK PFC 2000



OCTOBER 28, 1844 12 CENT DOUBLE RATE RED OVAL PROVIDENCE HANDSTAMP  
 ADDRESSED TO PHILADELPHIA PFC 2013

Both examples are double rate and addressed to Philadelphia. The top examples pre-paid by two adhesive stamps, which purchased in **volume was only 10 cents**. Bottom example was the full 12 cent cash pre-paid or collect.



## TRIPLE RATE

ONE RECORDED BLOCK OF ANY HALE ADHESIVE STATE



MAY 29, 1845      BLOCK OF THREE, HALE STATE 1 STAMP      LETTER "R" CANCEL  
 RED PHILADELPHIA OVAL HANDSTAMP      MAILED FROM PHILADELPHIA  
 ADDRESSED TO NEW YORK      PFC 2010

ONE RECORDED TRIPLE RATE COLLECT VIA HANDSTAMPS



JULY 23, 1844      RED 12 1/2 HANDSTAMP      RED 6 HANDSTAMP      FROM NEW YORK  
 ADDRESSED TO PHILADELPHIA      PFC 2011

Triple rate from Philadelphia to New York *prepaid* stamp, at top, was only 15 cents, whereas 18 1/2 *collect*, at bottom. Compared to the government rate of 37 1/2 cents a **60% reduction**. The exhibitor's research on Hale large multiples on cover has revealed *three stamps on eight covers, four stamps on four covers*, but only **one block**. The bottom example 18 1/2 cents was an unusual combination of monetary systems: 6 cents in American and 12 1/2 cents in Spanish currency denomination. Hale's Philadelphia office was their third largest by volume.

Hale & Co. grew to approximately 25 offices, and in conjunction with other private mail companies, a network of 110 offices and 1100 agents. **Hale may have enjoyed as much as 60% of the market share of all intercity mail.**



INDEPENDENT MAILS

HALE CONJUNCTIVE

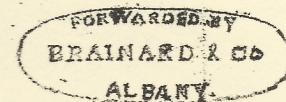
BRAINARD & CO.

11 CENTS:  
5 CENTS PREPAID BRAINARD  
6 CENTS COLLECT HALE

BRAINARD "BLACK" ADHESIVE STAMP

SEVEN RECORDED COVERS

OPERATED : JUNE 1844 TO JUNE 30, 1845  
OPERATOR : BRAINARD FAMILY  
LOCATION : 14 EXCHANGE ST., ALBANY  
58 WALL ST., NEW YORK  
RATE : 5 CENTS PREPAID OR 6 1/4



JULY 1844

BRAINARD TYPE 1 ADHESIVE  
PENCIL CANCEL

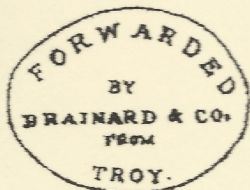
RED OBLONG BRAINARD  
ALBANY HANDSTAMP

RED HALE "6" DUE HANDSTAMP

6

Brainards New York to Albany/Troy route extended Hale's reach up the Hudson River, for additional charge. Likewise, Brainard utilized Hale to deliver their letters to Philadelphia.

EARLIEST RECORDED TROY OVAL  
HANDSTAMP - September 5, 1844



SEPTEMBER 6, 1844

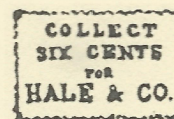
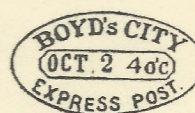
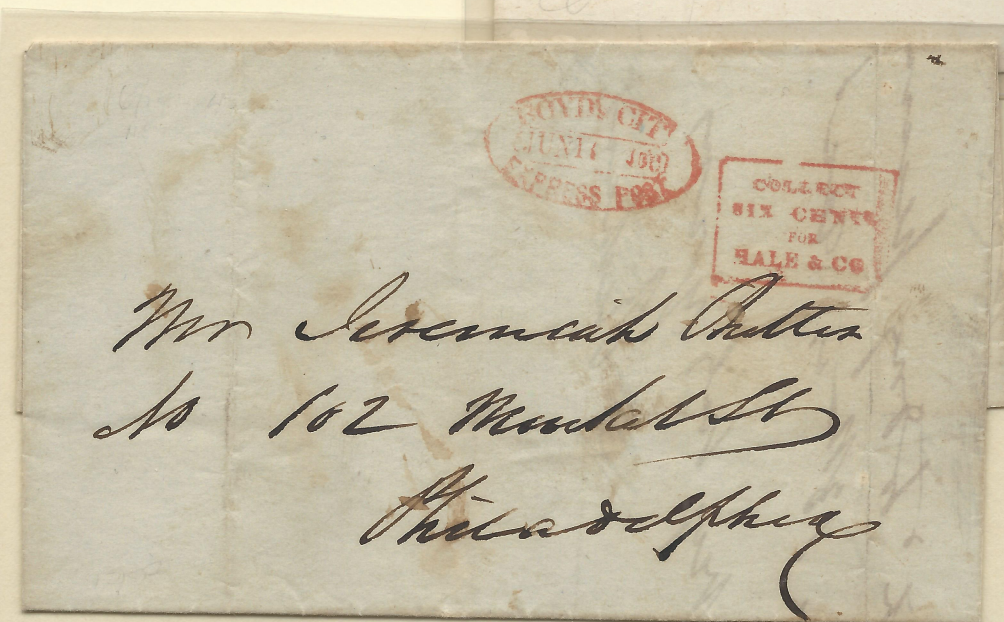
RED OVAL BRAINARD TROY HANDSTAMP

RED OVAL HALE NEW YORK HANDSTAMP

RED BOXED HALE COLLECT HANDSTAMP

RED HALE "6" DUE HANDSTAMP

DELIVERED TO PHILADELPHIA



BOYDS CITY EXPRESS POST

Only a few private posts had existed during the Independent Mail period. On very rare occasions they complemented companies such as Hales for local door delivery of single letters in New York City, bottom example.



INDEPENDENT MAILS

AMERICAN LETTER MAIL CO.

OPERATED : JAN. 23, 1844 TO JAN. 30, 1845  
 OPERATOR : LYSANDER SPOONER  
 LOCATION : 109 CHESTNUT ST. AND LATER  
 101 CHESTNUT ST.  
 RATE : 5 CENTS PREPAID, 6 1/2 CENTS  
 COLLECT PER HALF OUNCE

SMALL BLACK EAGLE

FIVE BALTIMORE COVERS RECORDED; February 8, 1844

OVAL OF STARS;  
 March 8, 1844



American Letter Mail Company's first issue was late January 1844. The Baltimore office closed within six weeks on March 13, 1844 resulting from an unsuccessful court trial, top left example showing a crude smudge cancel. Top right example demonstrates the New York red "oval of stars" cancel. Bottom left red PAID in Philadelphia. Bottom right example was letter/initial "C."



## LARGE BLACK EAGLE

5 CENTS:  
PREPAID SINGLE RATE

ONE COVER RECORDED WITH "CC"

MAY 17, 1845

LARGE BLACK EAGLE

MANUSCRIPT "CC" CANCEL

PENCIL "67 DOCK"

RED PHILADELPHIA TYPE B  
HANDSTAMP

MAILED FROM NEW YORK

DELIVERED TO PHILADELPHIA

PFC 2000

ONE RECORDED "PAID"



ONE COVER RECORDED TO TROY



OCTOBER 15, 1844

LARGE EAGLE

MANUSCRIPT "X" CANCEL

RED TYPE B PHILADELPHIA  
HANDSTAMP

MANUSCRIPT "SINGLE"

MAILED FROM PHILADELPHIA

DELIVERED TO TROY, N.Y.

PFC 2001

Mid 1844 change of ownership was accompanied by a new adhesive stamp, the large black Eagle, which also did not declare a denomination, but was probably 5 cents by volume. The top example was cancelled by initials "CC." Calvin Case, a carrier for the Philadelphia office, who may have delivered this letter to 67 Dock Street for an additional two cents. The government rate for 80-150 miles was 12 1/2 cents, a **60% reduction** between Phila. and NY by the American Letter Mail Co.

In September 1844 the Philadelphia office moved several doors to 101 Chestnut Street, consistent with a new style Philadelphia Type B circle handstamp. The bottom example is the only recorded American Letter Mail Company delivery to Troy *without conjunctive assistance*. The government rate for 150-400 miles was 18 3/4 cents, reduced to 5 cents prepaid - a **73% reduction** by the "Opposition Mail."



DOUBLE RATE

SMALL BLACK EAGLE

10 CENTS :  
5 CENTS, TWO PREPAID STAMPS

FIRST US FANCY CANCEL, TWO OF THREE RECORDED - February 15, 1844



ENLARGED FLORAL

FEBRUARY 15, 1844

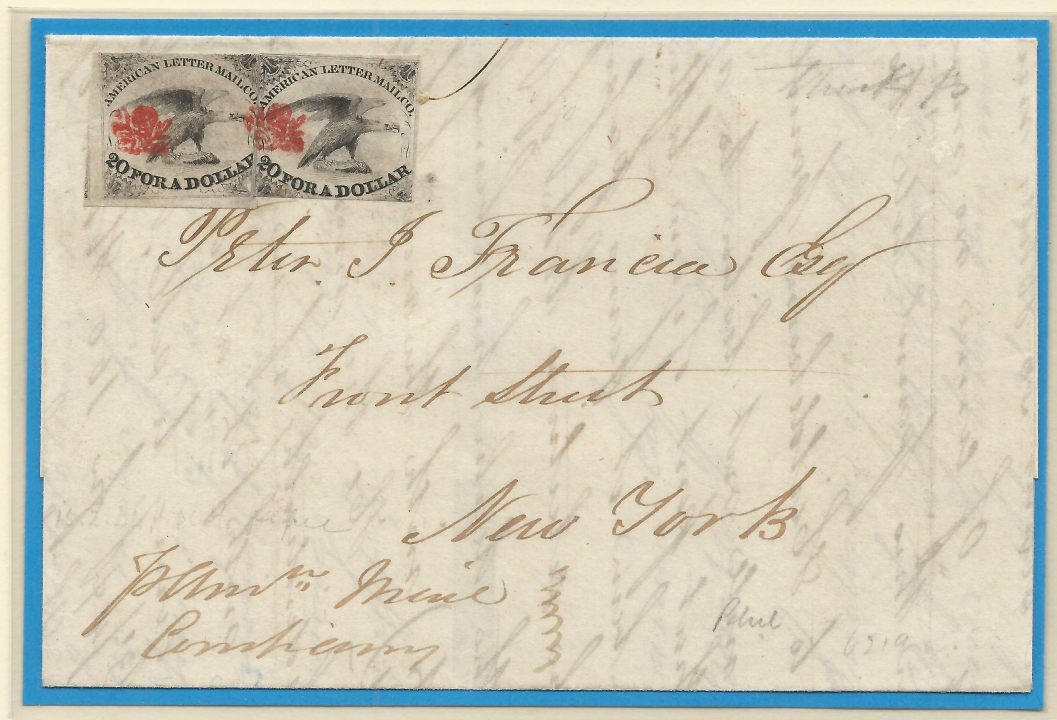
TWO SMALL BLACK EAGLES

RED FLORAL CANCEL

MAILED FROM PHILADELPHIA

ADDRESSED TO NEW YORK

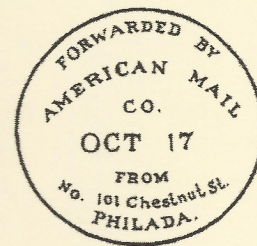
PFC 1997, 2010



LARGE BLACK EAGLE



ALM-PHL-F11



NOVEMBER 14, 1844

TWO LARGE BLACK EAGLES

PENSTROKE CANCEL

RED PHILADELPHIA TYPE "B"  
FORWARDING HANDSTAMP

ADDRESSED TO PHILADELPHIA

PFC 2007

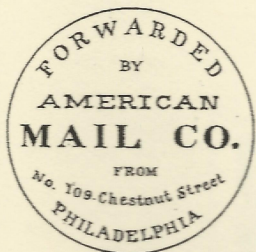
The February 1844 red floral design is the *earliest known "fancy" handstamp cancellation in the United States\**, and possibly the entire modern world. The double rate could be prepaid by two stamps of either black eagle style, large or small.

\* "THE EARLIEST FANCY CANCEL IN AMERICA," VERNON MORRIS JR MD, *THE COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST*, VOL. 89, NO. 3, MAY-JUNE 2010, P.183-185



## DOUBLE RATE - LARGE BLUE EAGLE

ALM-PHL-F10



10 CENTS : PREPAID DOUBLE RATE

EARLIEST OF TWELVE RECORDED COVERS - August 26, 1844



AUGUST 26, 1844    MANUSCRIPT E.H.B. CANCEL    RED PHILADELPHIA TYPE A FORWARDING HANDSTAMP  
 RED TYPE 1 PAID    ADDRESSED TO NEW YORK    PFC 1997

All surviving examples originated from Philadelphia, and the great majority during the late Spring of 1845, just prior to the termination of the Independent Mails. The identical design as the large Black, without denominated value. The **large Blue Eagle** may likely have represented double rate prepayment, perhaps modeled after the recently developed British system of Penny Black and the Twopence Blue. The above example is **the earliest recorded**, and *one of only two from 1844*. Large Blue Eagle stamps were not as versatile as large Black Eagle stamps, more easily used in multiple. Large Blue Eagle stamps had been speculatively placed into service near the end of it's viable period, some possibly in desperation on single letters.



## TRIPLE RATE

15 CENTS :  
5 CENTS PREPAID TRIPLE RATE

## SMALL BLACK EAGLE - TWO RECORDED



FEBRUARY 15, 1844 VERTICAL PAIR AND SINGLE ADHESIVE  
RED BRUSH STROKE CANCEL MAILED FROM NEW YORK  
ADDRESSED TO "JOSH. R. EVANS ESQ / PHILADELPHIA" PFC 2004 & 2010

## LARGE BLACK EAGLE - FIVE RECORDED



DECEMBER 1844  
THREE SINGLE ADHESIVES  
MAILED FROM PHILADELPHIA  
ADDRESSED TO NEW YORK  
RED OVAL NEW YORK  
MARKING  
MANUSCRIPT "STAMPED"  
PFC 1991 & 2010

The prepaid triple rate for three sheets of paper from Philadelphia to New York was only 15 cents compared to the government rate of 37 1/2 cents, a 60 % reduction.

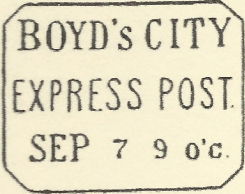
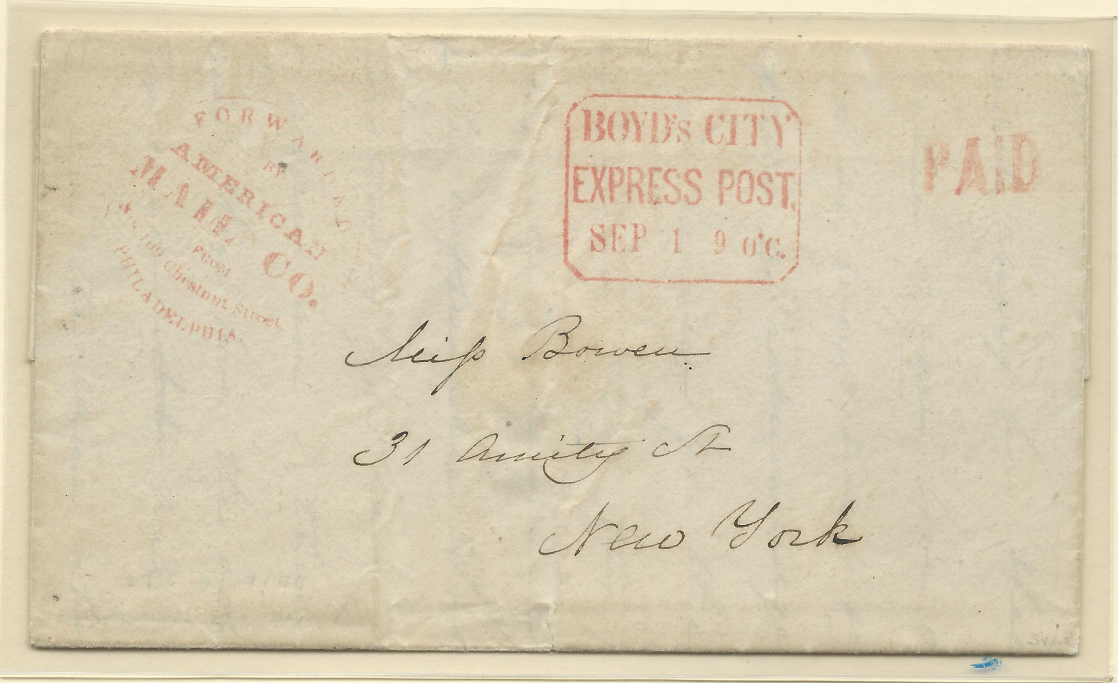


TWO RECORDED SEXTUPLE RATE  
37 1/2 CENTS  
ALL INDEPENDENT MAIL COS



AUGUST 23, 1844      STAMPLESS      COLLECT 37 1/2 CENTS  
FROM NEW YORK      RED PHILADELPHIA TYPE A HANDSTAMP  
PFC 1997

CONJUNCTIVE WITH BOYDS



AUGUST 29, 1844      STAMPLESS      RED PHILADELPHIA TYPE A HANDSTAMP      RED TYPE 1 PAID  
BOYD'S CITY EXPRESS POST HANDSTAMP      ADDRESSED TO NEW YORK  
PFC 2011

The only recorded American Letter Mail Co. cover with sextuple rate. Only one example exists with greater rate. Boyd's City Express was the only local post in New York City during the last half of 1844. Boyd's provided local door delivery, and served Independent Mail Companies such as the American Letter Mail Co. above, and Hales shown six pages previously.

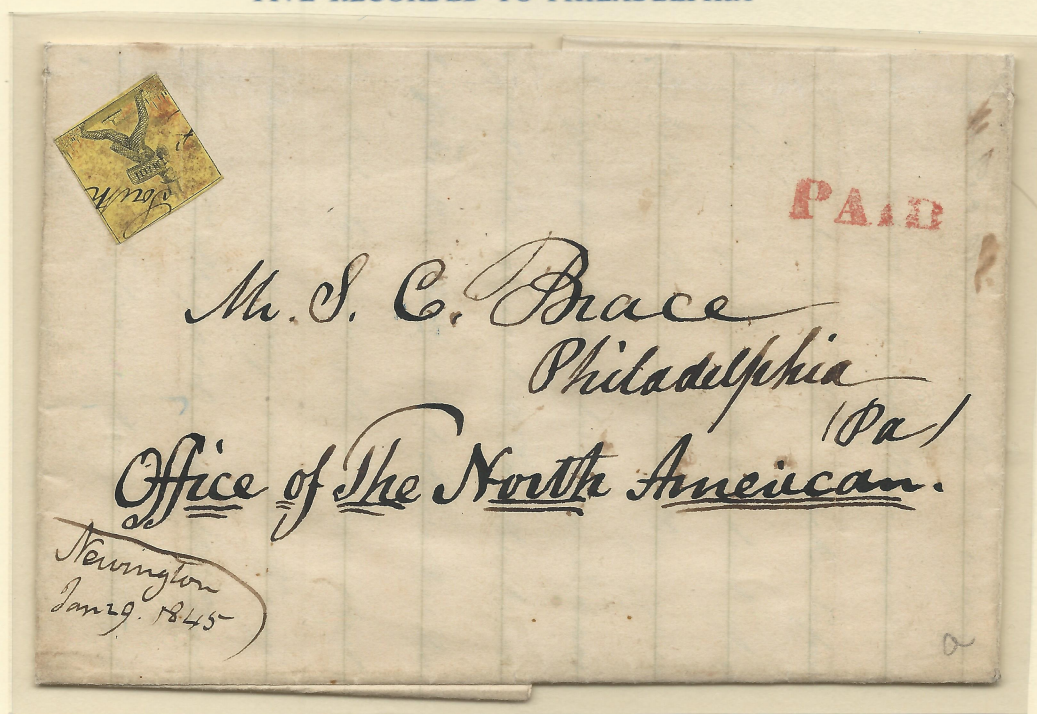


"BLACK ON YELLOW"



OPERATED : JUNE 1844 TO JUNE 30, 1845  
 OPERATOR : UNKNOWN  
 LOCATION : HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT,  
 NEW YORK, PHILADELPHIA  
 RATE : 5 CENTS PREPAID OR 6 1/4  
 CENTS COLLECT, 1/2 OUNCE

FIVE RECORDED TO PHILADELPHIA



JANUARY 29, 1845

HARTFORD "SOUTH" STAMP

RED "PAID" HANDSTAMP

DELIVERED TO PHILADELPHIA

PFC 2013

The Hartford Mail Company was a small company with intriguing **gigantic postman** stepping over a harbor. One year earlier by mid October 1843 the famous "striding messenger" appeared on postage stamps sold by the Philadelphia Despatch Post, and shown in the next frame. By mid November 1843, some Harden stationary showed a post man stepping over the Atlantic Ocean. The Hartford Mail Co. was one of three which reached as far south as Philadelphia, without any conjunctive assistance.

The Parcel Express companies transported bundles, and soon single letters, much cheaper than the government, and gave birth to a network of Independent Mail Companies. Hales and American Letter Mail were the largest. They all extended their reach by working in **conjunction**, including local door delivery by upstart Boyd's City Express Post in New York.

The **Federal Government could not compete with cheap rates**, and legislatively abolished the Independent Mails effective July 1, 1845, but capitulated to their established **low market rates**. Philadelphia to New York was lowered from 12 to 5 cents! Philadelphia to Boston was lowered from 18 to 5 cents, for an incredible **73% rate reduction**.

Parcel Express companies introduced free advertising label. Their derivative Independent Mails began sold pre-paid postage stamps in early January 1844, three years prior to the federal government.