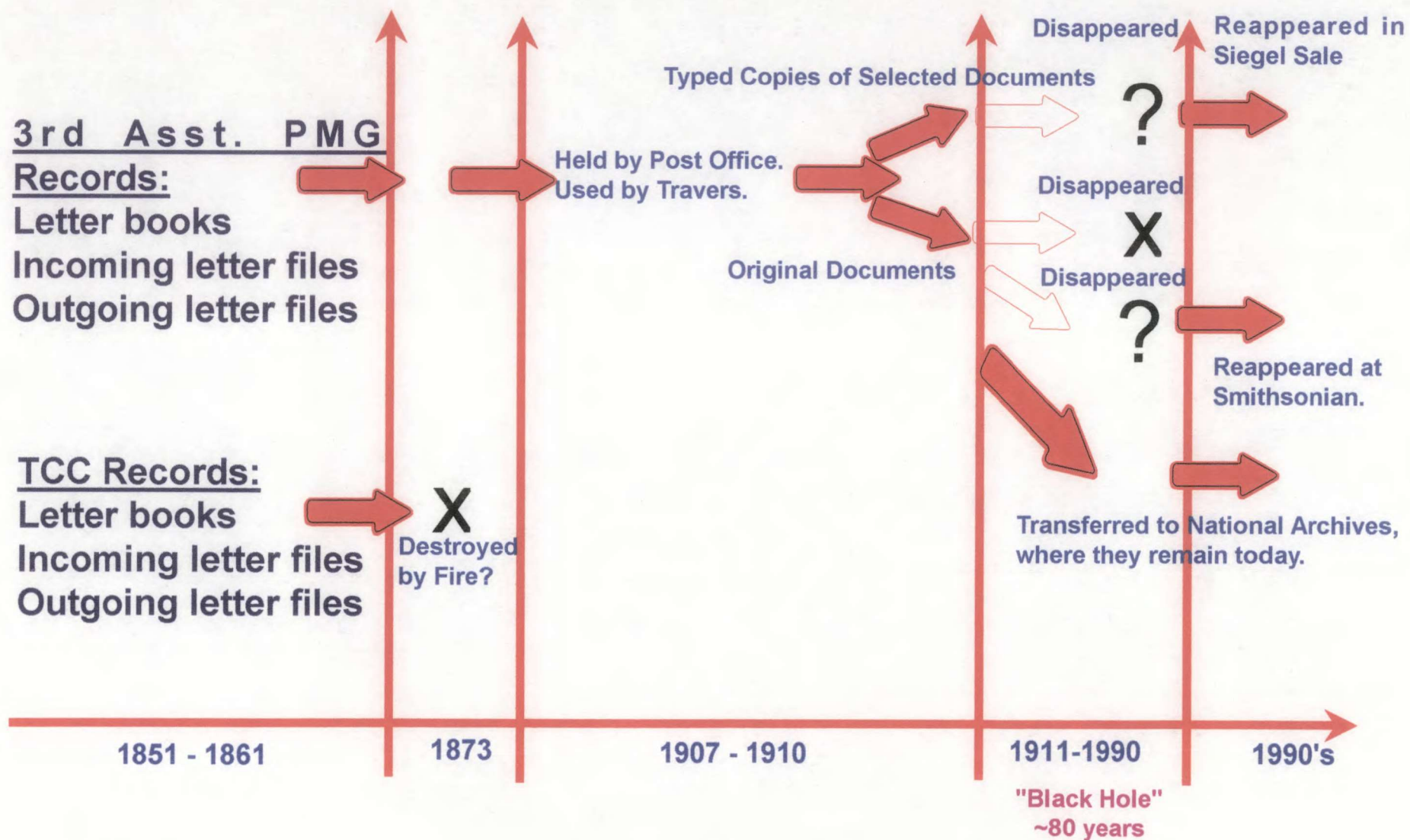


# **The Toppan, Carpenter Era**

**1851-1861**

After being separated for <sup>nearly</sup> 80 years, many of the key  
Toppan, Carpenter records have now been reunited.



**There is surprisingly little overlap of documents between the different sources.**

Number of Documents by Source

Era	Travers (Typed)	Smithsonian (Originals)	National Archives* (Originals)	Duplicated Letters	Total Unduplicated Letters
Rawdon Wright	44	43	5	33	59
Toppan Carpenter	146	229	150	46	479
National Bank Note	90	48	TBD	0	138
Continental Bank Note	82	214	TBD	8	288
American Bank Note	29	187	TBD	0	216
Bureau of Engraving	75	243	TBD	0	318
Total	466	964	155	87	1498

\*Preliminary, not all records yet compiled



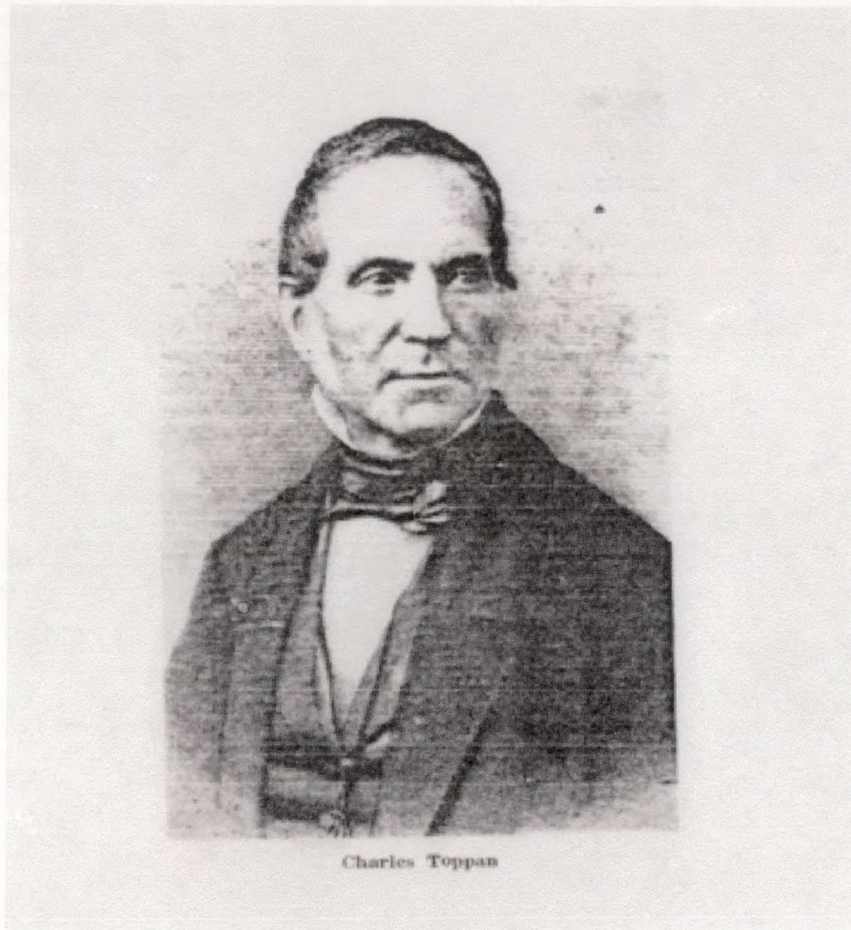
# **Examples of Original Source Material**

Toppan, Carpenter Era

- **Contractual Matters**
  - **Engraving and Printing of Each New Design**
  - **Production Problems**
    - **Gum**
    - **Availability**
    - **Color**
    - **Perforation**
- 
- **Relationships and Key People**
  - **How the Operation Really Worked**



**The Toppan, Carpenter stamp business was run by Samuel Carpenter, with almost no involvement by Charles Toppan.**



**Charles Toppan**



**Samuel Carpenter**

**Samuel Carpenter turned TC's initial 4 year contract into a 10 year business with little competitive bidding.**

**Toppan, Carpenter Era Contracts**

- 1851 Contract for Postage Stamps
  - 1855 Modification (Presorting into Envelopes)
  - 1857 Modification (Perforation of Stamps)
- 1851 Contract for Stamped Envelopes
- 1857 Contract for Postage Stamps
- 1861 Contract for Postage Stamps

**Extension from 4 to 6 years  
not competitively bid.**

```
graph TD; A[Extension from 4 to 6 years not competitively bid.] --> B[1851 Contract for Postage Stamps]; B --> C[1855 Modification (Presorting into Envelopes)]; B --> D[1857 Modification (Perforation of Stamps)]; E[1851 Contract for Stamped Envelopes] --- F[1857 Contract for Postage Stamps]; F --- G[1861 Contract for Postage Stamps]; H[Not competitively bid.] --- F;
```

**Not competitively bid.**



## A Representative Sample of the Archival Documents



**Topic: Perforation of U.S. Postage Stamps**



# Examples of New Information on Perforation of Stamps

- **Official Perforations**
  - **Background information.**
  - **The entire Post Office correspondence.**
  - **The order for the machine from Toppan, Carpenter to Bemrose.**
  - **Details on cost and capacities, number of machines.**
  - **Why the start up took so long.**
  - **Perforation of stamps, under the "First Contract."**
- **Private Perforations, Separations**
  - **Chicago Perforations**
    - **Five new letters**
    - **The missing samples "B" and "C"**
  - **Other private perforations, examples**

# Perforation of U.S. Postage Stamps

## Timeline

### Catalysts

March 1855 and  
Before

### The Investigative Phase

March 16 -  
September 20,  
1855

### Machine Ordered

September 21, 1855

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October 1855 -  
September 1856

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October 1856

### Modification to 1851 Stamp Contract

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November 1856 to February  
1857  
Signed: February 6-9, 1857

### The Rollout

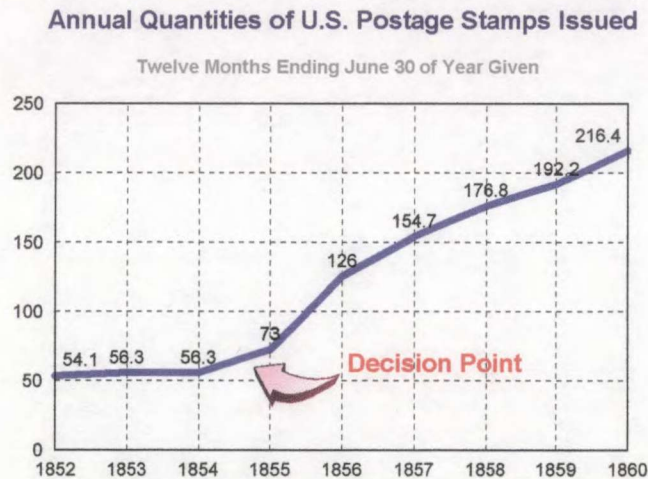
February - June 1857

### The Second Postage Stamp Contract

Signed: April 6 -8, 1857  
Effective: June 10, 1857

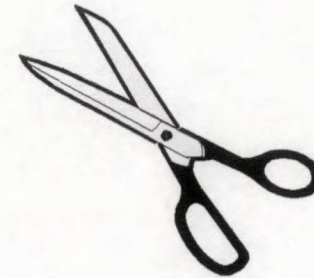
# There were several catalysts that prompted the U.S. Post Office to look at perforation of postage stamps:

- Usage of stamps was going to increase! (Act of 3/3/55)



Source: Origin & Use of Postage Stamps, Stamped Envelopes & c. Report of A.D. Hazen, Third Assistant Postmaster General, for fiscal year ending June 30, 1878.

- Existing methods for separation were inadequate



- Perforated British stamps were showing up in the US.



However, a note from one of the PMG's trusted friends pushed it over the top:

Hon. James Campbell  
Postmaster General U.S.

Philada.  
61 South 6th  
March 15, 1855

My dear Sir,

During **my visit to England** last year, I was struck while sending [letters] in London with the convenience of the English P.O. Stamps, which are pierced with small holes so as to enable the public to dispense with scissors, knife, or any other implement other than the fingers in separating them from the Sheet. I enclose a set of four upon which the experiment may be tried. It is said, moreover, that the fringe which is formed by the small semi-circles secures a firmer adhesion to the paper. I do not know by what machine the holes are perforated but it must be a simple one such as American ingenuity would easily continue if the English invention is unacceptable.

**I can hardly doubt that the introduction of the improvement would be generally acceptable and popular, and I should be very glad to see your name associated with it.**

Very Truly  
Your friend and Sevt.  
Horace Binney, Jr.

March 16, 1855  
Answd by P.M. Gnrl.  
Informally

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## The Post Office immediately forwarded Binney's letter to Toppan, Carpenter:

Messrs. Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co.,  
Philadelphia, Pa.

Post Office Department  
Finance Office March 16, 1855

Gentlemen:

We have frequently been urged of late to adopt the English plan of perforating their stamps so as to render them separable without cutting, and I send you four penny stamps, just received from Horace Binney Jr. Esq. It is claimed for this plan that they can be separated with the fingers, and that the jagged edges render them more adhesive. As prepayment of all inland letters after the 1st proximo, will bring our stamps such more into use, and as the Postmaster General desires as much practicable to promote the public convenience, he wishes you to look into the matter with the view of adopting the plan of perforating at an early day. Do you know the English process and what it costs? **Can we get the requisite machinery here, and what will the process cost us per thousand?** You will see that it is done after the stamps are gummed.

I am very respectfully,  
J. Marron,  
Third Asst. P.M. Gen'l.

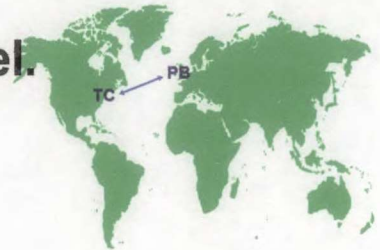


**Few options were available to Toppan, Carpenter when they began their search for the necessary equipment:**

Event	Date	Prototype Available	Full Scale Machine Available
Archer (London, England) machine available.			January 1854
TC begins investigative process.	March 16, 1855		
Hadley (Chicago, IL) prototype available.		June 1855	
Bemrose (Derby, England) prototype available.		July 1855	
Sparre (Sweden) machine available.			July 1855
TC places order for machine.	September 21, 1855		
Hadley (Chicago, IL) machine available.			April 3, 1856
Bemrose (Derby, England) machine arrives in U.S.			April 4, 1856
Bemrose machine modified and in use in U.S. A.			February 1857

## **Toppan Carpenter took a number of steps but quickly identified the Bemrose machine:**

- Requested help from U.S. Commissioner of Patents.
- Wrote Perkins Bacon in England for Advice and Counsel.
- Entertained offers and ideas from U.S. entrepreneurs.
  - J. Crowell
  - R.K. Swift and E.W. Hadley
- Samuel Carpenter's son-in-law sent to England to investigate English process - April 1855.
- W.C. Smillie, one of Toppan, Carpenter's partners, went to Derby, England - Aug





## C. & D.S. - In matter of Perforating P.O. Stamps

Chicago, June 19th/55

Dr. Sir

I addressed you some months since in relation to the above matter.

I now enclose herein **Samples** of perforated Stamps & paper. Those marked **A & B** were Done by **E.W. Hadley of this city** with very simple machines which he constructed himself. They are now fitted to be worked by hand but can be arranged to be worked either by hand or steam & at a cost if about \$500. The machines which cut the Samples marked **B** is the second machine made by Mr. Hadley & he says it works with much less power than the one which perforated the round holes in the samples marked "**A**". The cost of making **either machine will be about the same to wit \$500.**

Please return me the Samples or in lieu thereof a like number of other P.O. Stamps.

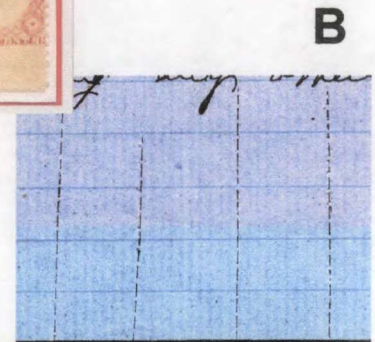
Mr. Archer of London the Patentee of the English P.O. Stamps perforated has written me that his charge for his machine delivered in London will be £1250. It is worked by steam & requires a good Deal of power to work it.

I also enclose **Sample "C"** which I received by Mr. Archer.

Yrs tr  
R.K. Swift



A



B



C





# Perforation of U.S. Postage Stamps

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The machine ordered was a "slitter" (rouletting machine). However, Smillie ask for a set of perforating wheels (of the character used on English stamps) if available.

Copy  
New York, Sept. 21<sup>st</sup> 1855  
Recd. & P.O. for Mr. B.  
Chas. W. Smith

My dear Sir,  
I afford it pleasure in addressing you now, & that to  
know that intercourse so pleasantly begun with you by the Wakes in August  
last, to serve as a trial, one of your perforating or slitting machines.  
The order would have been forwarded some time ago, if the firm had  
not thought it desirable to see one previously, although I supposed I had  
sufficiently well talked up the claims of your machine to make that unnecessary.  
We do have orders for it at this time, but the tenders of the firm were  
having enjoyed the opportunity I did, of seeing the thing itself, deem it  
on the whole unwise to order but one.  
Will you therefore give immediate attention to it, & I will begin  
the propriety of giving it all the additional strength you can, a few  
hundred for the reason that we may want more a heavier punch  
than that you were using when I saw you. If you know  
that the machine will perforate, as I understood you to say, on  
one side edge so that we can use on the English stamps, then you  
will please make a duplicate of wheels or punches - one of the  
characters you use when I was present, and the other of the charac-  
ters of the English P.O. stamps, and in number corresponding the  
impression of stamps left with you.  
There is a great inconvenience in having the machine here at

the earliest day in your power, and I shall at thank  
you to do everything possible to expedite it, thus the time  
already lost may be redeemed. One reason that suggests  
itself of importance to yourselves is that, as there is a firm  
here who have written us on the subject, you will undoubtedly  
derive advantage by being in advance.  
Will you please do us the favor of acknowledging  
the post of this future mail, that we may know you are  
proceeding, & if you desire to know anything further of  
the responsibility of the firm, please address Mr. Bacon  
in London.  
When you write you had better say the exact  
cost of the machine, and we will arrange to remit.  
Say also when we can look for it.  
Yours most respectfully  
Toppin & Carpenter Co.  
Kinley D. Smith

Sept. 21, 1855  
Toppin & Carpenter Co.  
+  
Letter to Mr. D. Smith  
order of P. O. stamps  
Machine

## Toppin Carpenter's Order for the Rouletting Machine

September 21, 1855



**Toppan, Carpenter broke the news about a month later, probably about the time they would have received an acknowledgement from Bemrose and Sons.**

- **On 10/25/55 TC told the Post Office they had ordered the machine from England.**
- **W.C. Smillie had seen the working model, and it ..."accomplished all that is desired."**
- **"We have done all this on our own responsibility and risk."**

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## There were numerous delays in obtaining the machinery, not all due to Bemrose and Sons.

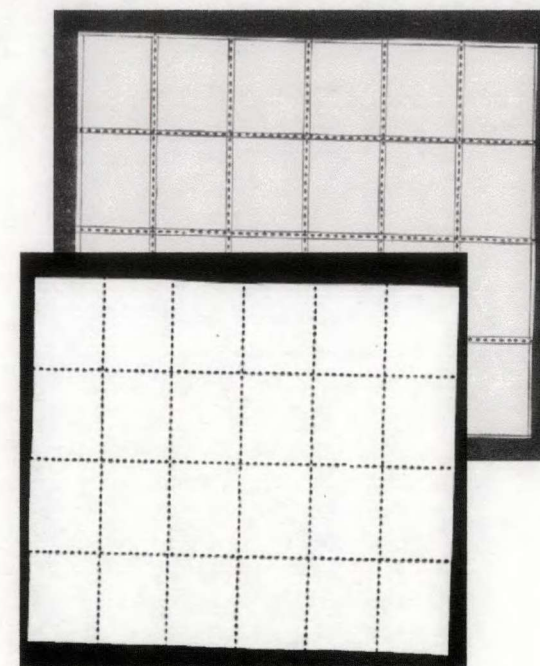
- Machine ordered: 9/21/55 (date of letter). Letter sailed 9/26/55, if sent by Steamer Africa.
  - Order received by Bemrose, if by Steamer Africa: 10/6/55 (est.)
  - Anticipated arrival date in U.S.: 12/6/55 (est., based on 11/15/55 completion plus allowance for shipping.)
  - Many delays due to complexity of making the machine work. Most of the related correspondence regarding the problems experienced by Bemrose is in the Perkins Bacon correspondence, not U.S. Post Office archives.
  - Shipped to New York: 3/22/56, per Steamer Asia.
  - Arrived in New York: 4/4/56.
  - Issue over customs duties 4/12/56 to 7/7/56
  - Machine finally released to TC: 7/8/56 (est.)
  - Repairs, trials on machine: mid-July through October 1856.
- 
- [4 month delay]
- [6 month delay]

Total Time from Order to Machine Ready: 13 months  
Total Time from Order to Stamps in Use: 17 months

**In the interim, other inventors offered solutions.**



**E.W. Hadley, Chicago  
[April 56, \$200]**



**William Brown, NYC  
[May 56]**



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## **Extensive trials were conducted to determine the ongoing cost of operation.**

- **Can punch or slit 180 sheets of 100 stamps per hour, per letter dated 10/22/56.**
- **"The slitting wheels will last a long time. The punch wheels must be renewed every two months."**
- **Cost estimates were provided. These estimates were used to provide this service 'at cost' to Post Office.**
- **At this point the decision to perforate or roulette had apparently not been made.**

**A Bemrose style Perforating Machine**





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**Following the Presidential Election on 11/4/56, in which James Buchanan was elected to replace Franklin Pierce (effective 3/4/57), Samuel Carpenter realized the whole investment is at risk:**

- **TC submits three proposals, dated 11/4/56, to perforate postage stamps. Each essentially provided perforation of stamps to the Post Office at cost.**
  - **3 cents per 1000, with indemnity of \$9,500 if contract not renewed for at least four years.**
  - **Lesser amounts, for four and six year contracts, with no idemnity.**
- **Samuel Carpenter provides frequent follow-up on his proposals to Post Office. [Panic begins to set in.]**
- **On 1/3/57 PMG Campbell decides that the succeeding administration should decide the matter. [Major panic.]**
- **Samuel Carpenter convinces the PMG to change his mind. [End of panic.]**



The long missing modification to the "First Contract" providing for perforation of stamps has now been found. It confirms the 1863 letter often quoted from Luff:

Post Office Department,  
Finance Office, 8 February 1857

Mr. Tappan, Carpenter & Co.  
Philadelphia, Pa.  
Dear Sir,

Since after the passage of the Act of March 3<sup>d</sup>, 1855, requiring the prepayment of the postage on all printed letters to be effected, you and after the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1856, by means of postage stamps or stamped envelopes, the Postmaster General directed me to communicate with you in relation to the perforation of the sheets, so as to make <sup>the sheets</sup> easily separable without cutting and thereby render them more convenient to the public. Accordingly on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> March, 1855, I addressed you letters on the subject which it seems, induced you soon after to import 2 machines from England, and subsequently to put it in working order. The Act of January 2<sup>d</sup>, 1857, requiring all transient printed matter to be prepaid by stamps, having greatly increased the demand for stamps and made more pressing the necessity for action. And the

of at least four years in case, indemnifying you and for his incurred expenses which we to the perforation, left to us in case of tract. The entire apportion to the printing, to be made the property of the Government of the approved giving perforation is understood, that the manner without waste machines of the best quality they can be obtained, and new and suitable and used in perforating is provided, they are to be changed, and the contract if the same is not renewed or extended for a period of not less than four years. Very respectfully, Wm. Luff

**Provisions of the modification:**

--TC shall perforate all stamps at 3 cent per thousand.

--If contract not renewed for at least 4 years, government will indemnify TC for \$9,500 for equipment and plates.

--Commence without delay, using three machines and suitable plates.

February 6-9, 1857

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**Once the contract was modified, there were still issues to be addressed before the rollout.**

- **Capacity was insufficient for U.S. wide rollout, but contract modification signed February 6-9, 1857 called for deliveries by end of month. One machine available, three needed.**
- **Samuel Carpenter was worried about reaction to non-continuity of supply "...once we give the public a taste of these things..."**
- **Campbell was due to leave public office on March 5, 1857.**

**Actions taken: Proceeded with the rollout, apparently positioned with the public as a "test." Only three-cent stamps were perforated during this period. Two more machines were ordered.**

**It is not likely that a perforated stamp used before 2/28/57 will be found:**

- **On 2/20/57 TC promised to have 500,000 perforated 3 cent stamps ready for delivery on 2/24/57 (slight variance from Luff).**
- **Docketing indicates that on 2/26/57 the Stamp Agent was telegraphed to send parcels to certain offices.**
- **An newspaper editorial dated 2/27/57 quoted in Chase indicates: "...90,000 ordered for New York and Philadelphia and 30,000 for New Orleans and cities South, West."**
- **The Earliest Known Usage of an officially perforated U.S. stamp is 2/28/57.**



# Earliest Known Use of Perforated U.S. Stamp

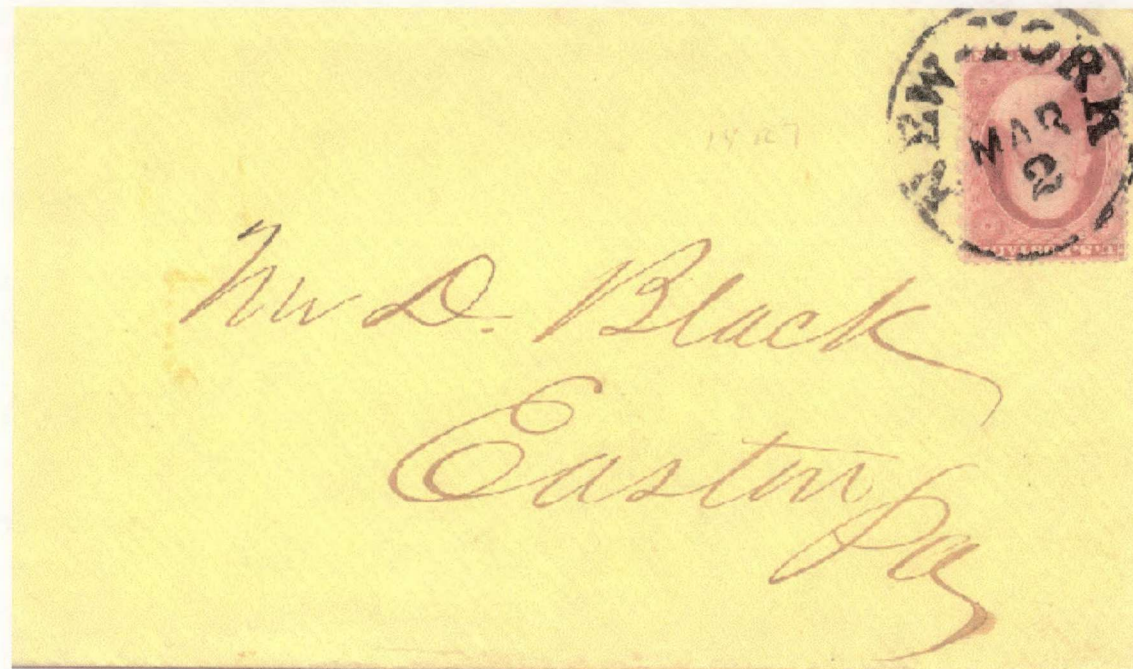
Two of Three Known Copies



February 28, 1857

## First Contract Perforation Cover

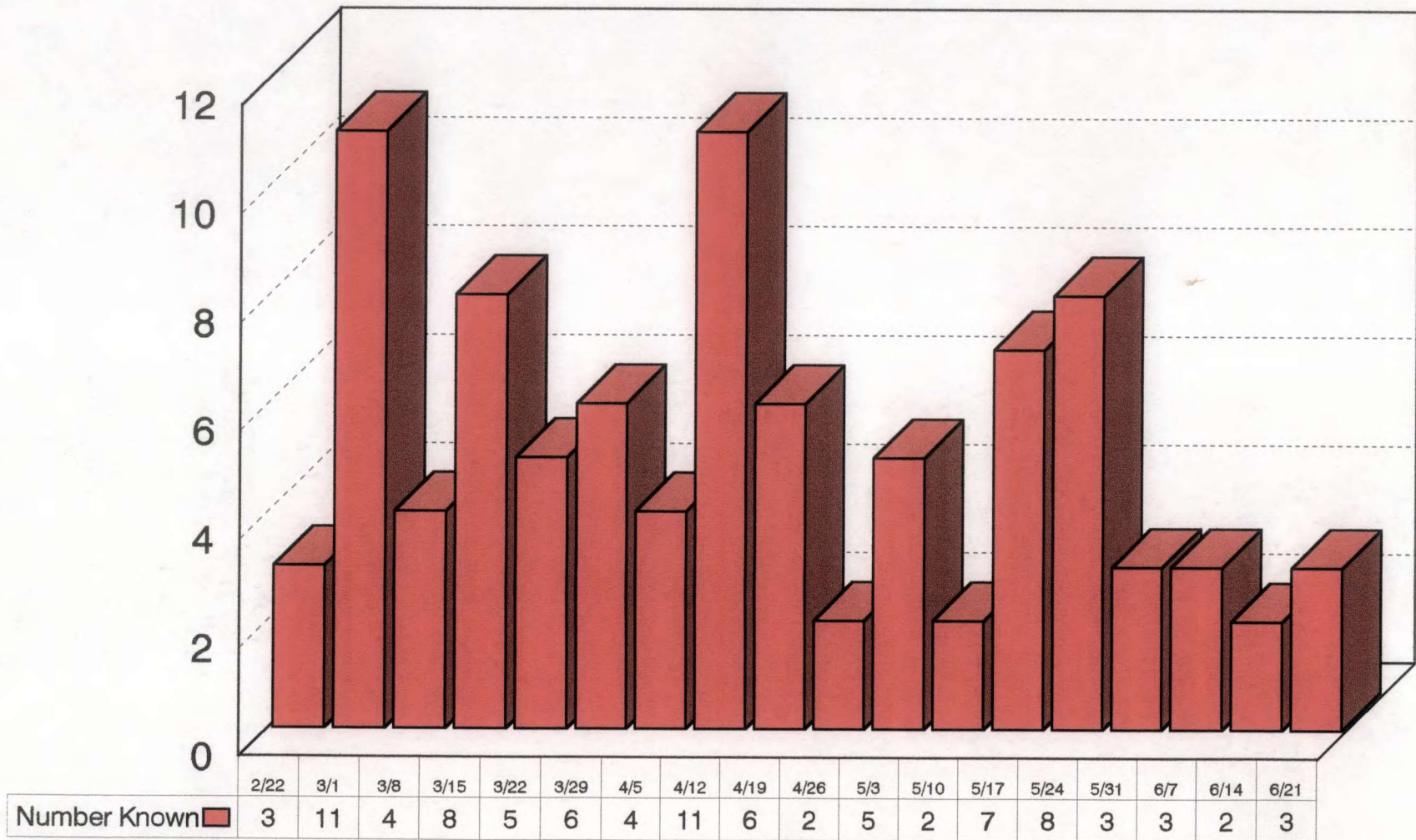
March 2, 1857, with enclosure dated February 28, 1857





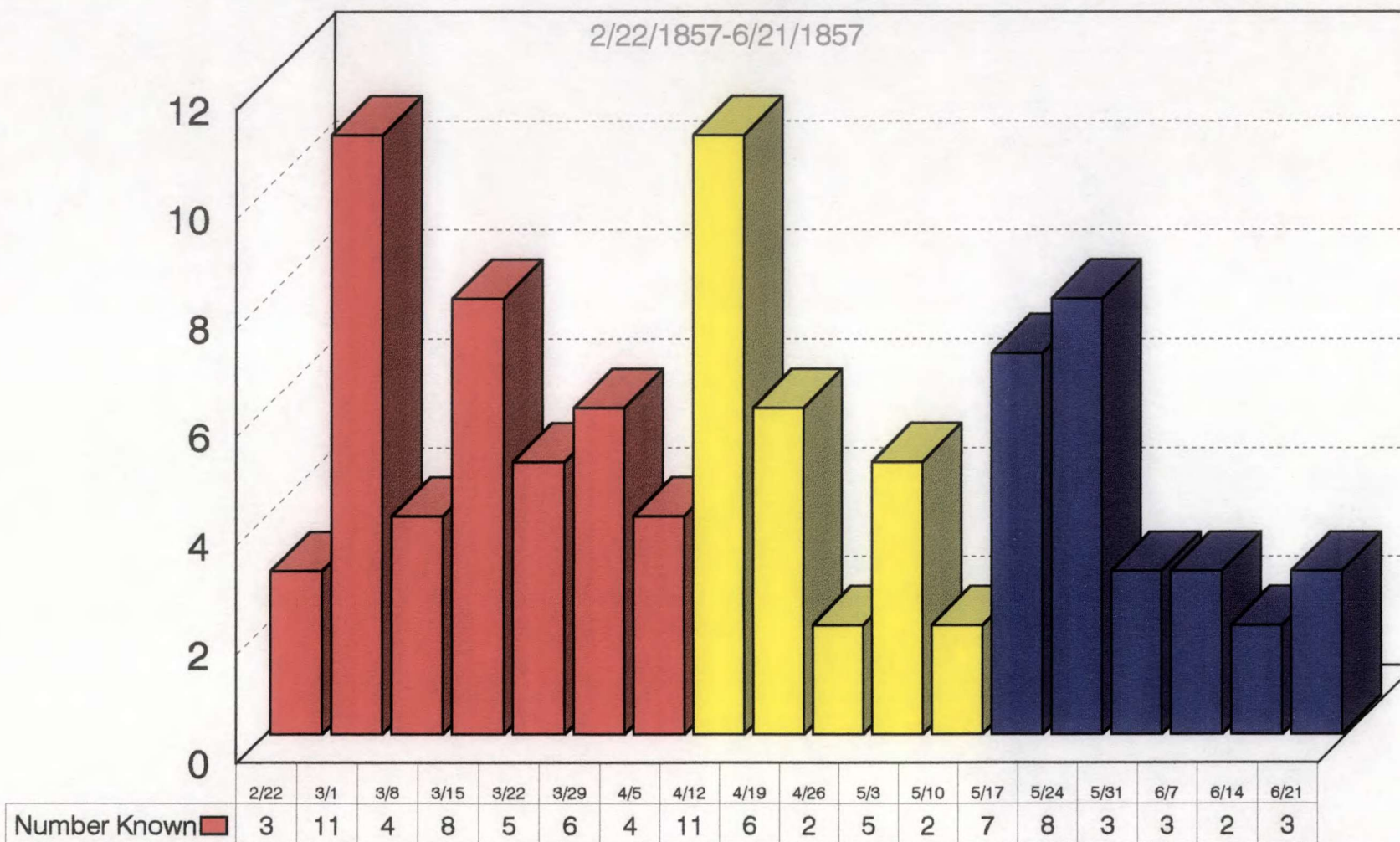
# Number of Recorded Usages of Scott #25 by Week

2/22/1857-6/21/1857



There appears to be three different distribution dates of perforated stamps, probably produced on different days.

Number of Recorded Usages of Scott #25 by Week



Shaded patterns represent the different batches of distribution.



## Six cities account for 85% of all recorded usages.

	Date:	2/22/57	3/1/57	3/8/57	3/15/57	3/22/57	3/29/57	4/5/57	4/12/57	4/19/57	4/26/57	5/3/57	5/10/57	5/17/57	5/24/57	5/31/57	6/7/57	6/14/57	6/21/57	Total
City, State:																				
Philadelphia, Pa.		1	1		2	1	4	1												10
Baltimore, Md.			2	1					1	1				2	2					9
Washington City, D.C.									5	3	2	3		1	5	2	2	1	2	26
Moore's Ordinary, Va.									1											1
Richmond, Va.																	1			1
Subtotal Mid-Atlantic:		1	3	1	2	1	4	1	7	4	2	3	0	3	7	2	3	1	2	47
New York, N.Y.		2	7			1			1					1				1	1	14
Boston, Ma.				3	1					1				1						6
Albany, N.Y.					1															1
Farmington Falls, Me.												1								1
Middletown, Ct.													1							1
Springwater, N.Y.															1	1				2
Subtotal North East:		2	7	3	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	1	1	25
Chicago, Il.					1	1	1	2	1											6
St. Louis, Mo.												1		1						2
Indianapolis, In.									1											1
Ft. Des Moines, Ia.														1						1
Subtotal West:		0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	10
New Orleans, La.					2	2	1	1	1				1							8
(City Unknown)			1		1					1										3
Totals:		3	11	4	8	5	6	4	11	6	2	5	2	7	8	3	3	2	3	93

← [The initial 500,000?, or less?]
← [Apparently a second batch]
← [Apparently a third batch]



The year of use of some examples can only be identified by the contents, docketing, or period of use of the cancelling device.

	Date:	2/22/57	3/1/57	3/8/57	3/15/57	3/22/57	3/29/57	4/5/57	4/12/57	4/19/57	4/26/57	5/3/57	5/10/57	5/17/57	5/24/57	5/31/57	6/7/57	6/14/57	6/21/57
City, State:																			
Philadelphia, Pa.		P	D, P		D	D	P	P											
Baltimore, Md.			C, D	U					D	D,U				Y	D,U				
Washington City, D.C.									Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Moore's Ordinary, Va.									Y										
Richmond, Va.																	U		
New York, N.Y.		Y,P	Y,C, D,P			Y			Y					U	Y			Y	Y
Boston, Ma.				U	C					C				U					
Albany, N.Y.					C														
Farmington Falls, Me.												C							
Middletown, Ct.													Y						
Springwater, N.Y.															C	C			
Chicago, Il.					Y	U	Y	Y	Y										
Indianapolis, In.									Y										
St. Louis, Mo.												Y		Y					
Ft. Des Moines, Ia.														U					
New Orleans, La.					Y,U	Y	Y	Y	Y				U						
(City Unknown)			U		U					U									

(Y=Yeardated Cancel, D=Docketing, C=Contents, P=Period of Usage for Cancel Known, U=Unknown/Not Recorded)



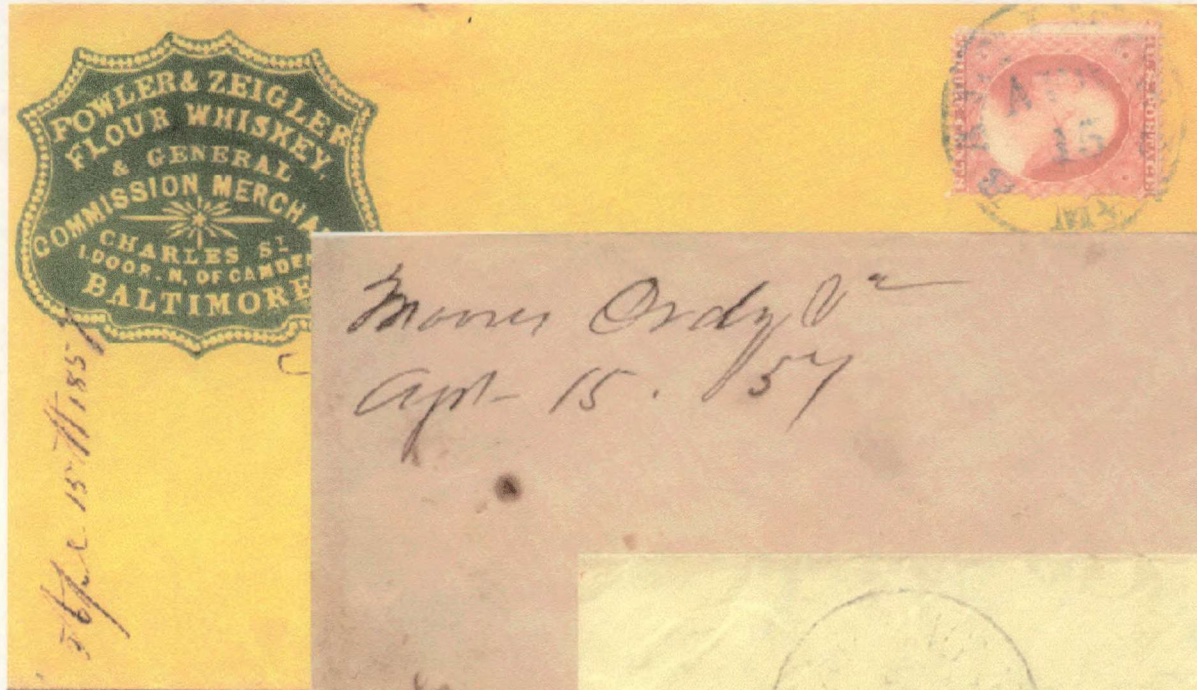
Most known examples are from Plate 7. After the Second Contract was signed (4/8/57) other plates were used, but rarely.

	Date:	2/22/57	3/1/57	3/8/57	3/15/57	3/22/57	3/29/57	4/5/57	4/12/57	4/19/57	4/26/57	5/3/57	5/10/57	5/17/57	5/24/57	5/31/57	6/7/57	6/14/57	6/21/57
City, State:																			
Philadelphia, Pa.		7	7,U		7	7	7	7											
Baltimore, Md.			U	U					5L	5L				7	7,U				
Washington City, D.C.									7, U	7	6, 7	7,U		U	7,U	7	7	7	7
Moore's Ordinary, Va.									8										
Richmond, Va.																	7		
New York, N.Y.		7,U	7		7				U					7	7			7	6
Boston, Ma.				7,U	7					7				U					
Albany, N.Y.					U														
Farmington Falls, Me.													4						
Middletown, Ct.													7						
Springwater, N.Y.															7	7			
Chicago, Il.					U	7	U	7	7										
St. Louis, Mo.												7		7					
Indianapolis, In.									7										
Ft. Des Moines, Ia.														U					
New Orleans, La.					7	7	7	7	7				U						
(City Unknown)			U		U					U									

(# in Block is Plate Number, U=Unknown)



After the Second Contract was signed (4/8/57) other plates were used, but rarely.



EKU Plate 5L Perforated  
4/15/57

EKU Plate 8 Perforated  
4/15/57

EKU Plate 4 Perforated  
5/9/57



# Perforation of U.S. Postage Stamps

## Timeline

### Catalysts

March 1855 and  
Before

### The Investigative Phase

March 16 -  
September 20,  
1855

### Machine Ordered

September 21, 1855

### Construction, Delays, Other Bidders

October 1855 -  
September 1856

### Machine Trials

October 1856

### Modification to 1851 Stamp Contract

Panic and Negotiations:  
November 1856 to February  
1857  
Signed: February 6-9, 1857

### The Rollout

February - June 1857

### The Second Postage Stamp Contract

Signed: April 6 -8, 1857  
Effective: June 10, 1857

**Perforated stamps of other denominations, as well as larger numbers of three cent stamps, did not start showing up until mid to late July 1857. This apparently corresponds to when two additional machines became fully operational.**

**The Earliest Known Use of a 1 Cent Stamp**

July 25, 1857

**EKU's of Perforated Stamps**

Values other than Three Cent

Value	EKU
One Cent	7/25/1857
Five Cent	8/23/1857
Ten Cent	7/27/1857
Twelve Cent	7/30/1857



**The Earliest Known Use of a 10 Cent Stamp**

July 27, 1857





## 1851 to 1861 Presidents and PostMasters General

<i>Year</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>PMG</i>	<i>Home State</i>	<i>Date of Office</i>	<i>Contracts of Interest</i>	<i>Events of Note</i>
1851	Millard Fillmore	Whig	Nathan Kelsey Hall	New York	Hall took office in 1850	1851 Contract for Postage Stamps	Act of 3/3/51
1852			Samuel Dickinson Hubbard	Connecticut	08/31/1852	1852 Contract for Stamped Envelopes	Act of 8/31/52
1853	Franklin Pierce	Democrat	James Campbell	Pennsylvania	03/07/1853. Campbell became PMG when Fillmore was voted out of office.		
1854			James Campbell				
1855			James Campbell			Modification to 1851 Contract - presorting	3/3/55 Amendment to Act of 3/3/51, mandatory prepayment of letters.
1856			James Campbell				Mandatory prepayment of postage with stamps.
1857	James Buchanan		Aaron Vail Brown	Tennessee	03/06/1857. Brown became PMG when Pierce was voted out of office.	Modification to 1851 Contract - perforation; 1857 Contract for Postage Stamps	Introduction of perforation on stamps.
1858			Aaron Vail Brown				
1859			Horatio King	Maine	03/09/1859. After PMG Brown died in office, Horatio King served as interim PMG to 3/14/59.		
			Joseph Holt	Kentucky	03/14/1859.		
1860			Joseph Holt				Lincoln elected, secession begins.
1861	Abraham Lincoln	Republican	Horatio King	Maine	02/12/1861. Holt resigned as PMG to become Secretary of War.	1861 Contract for Postage Stamps	Civil War