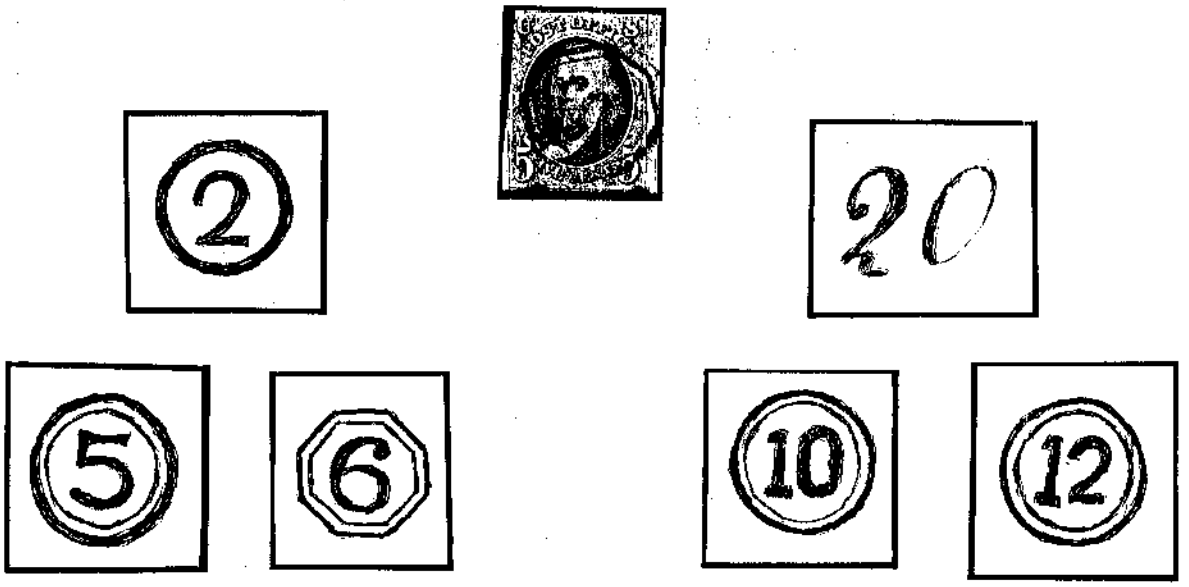
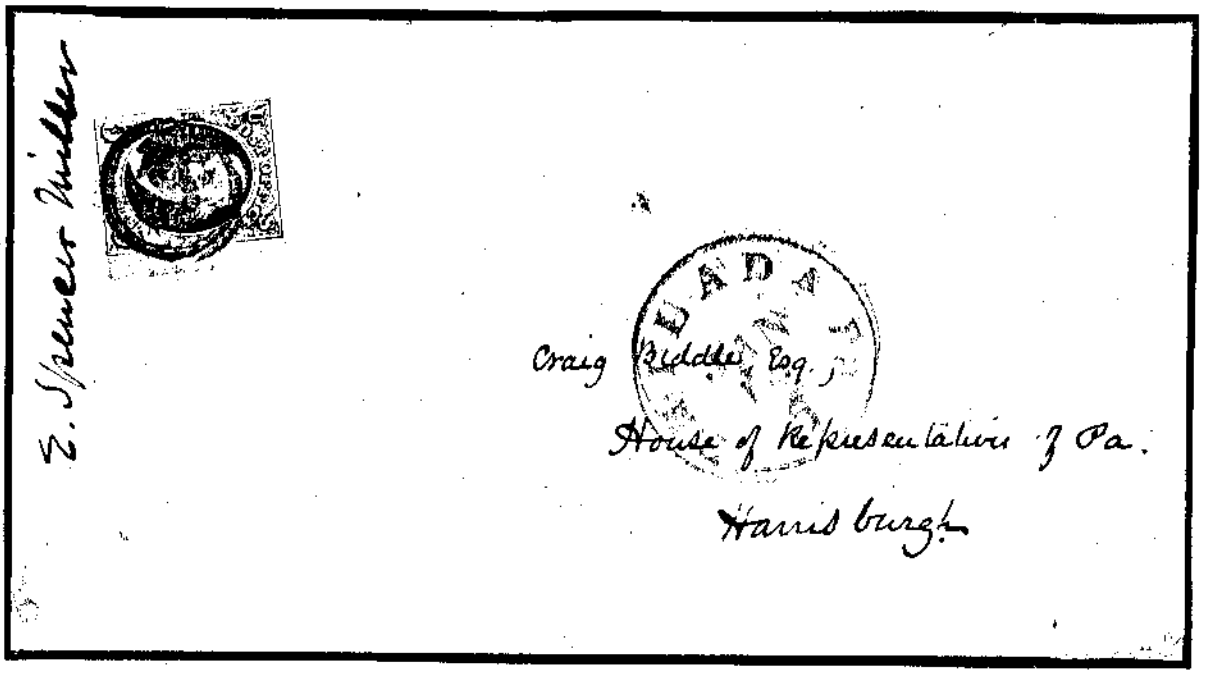
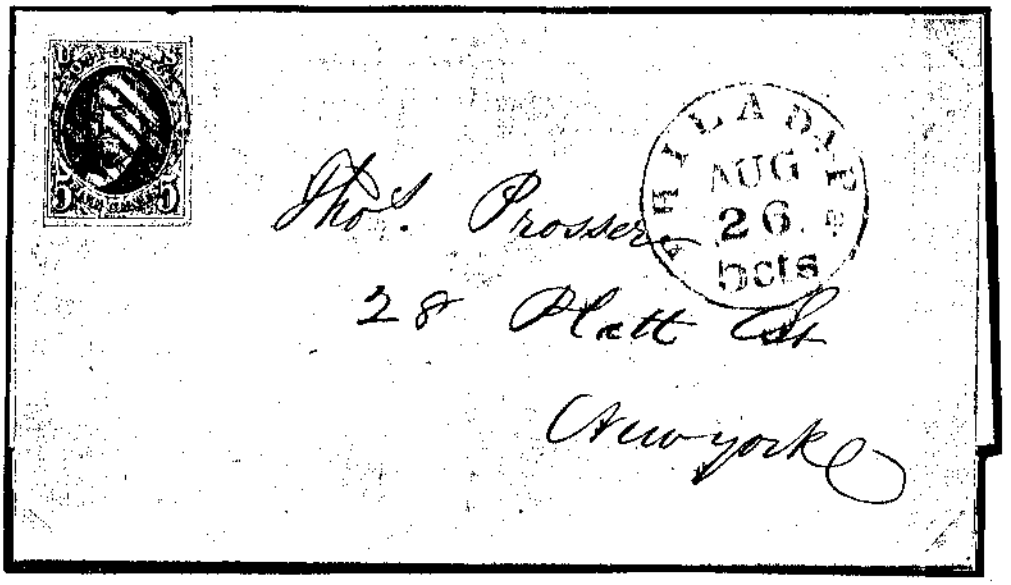




Rating handstamps used on stampless letters were occasionally pressed into service as devices to cancel stamps, as shown here.

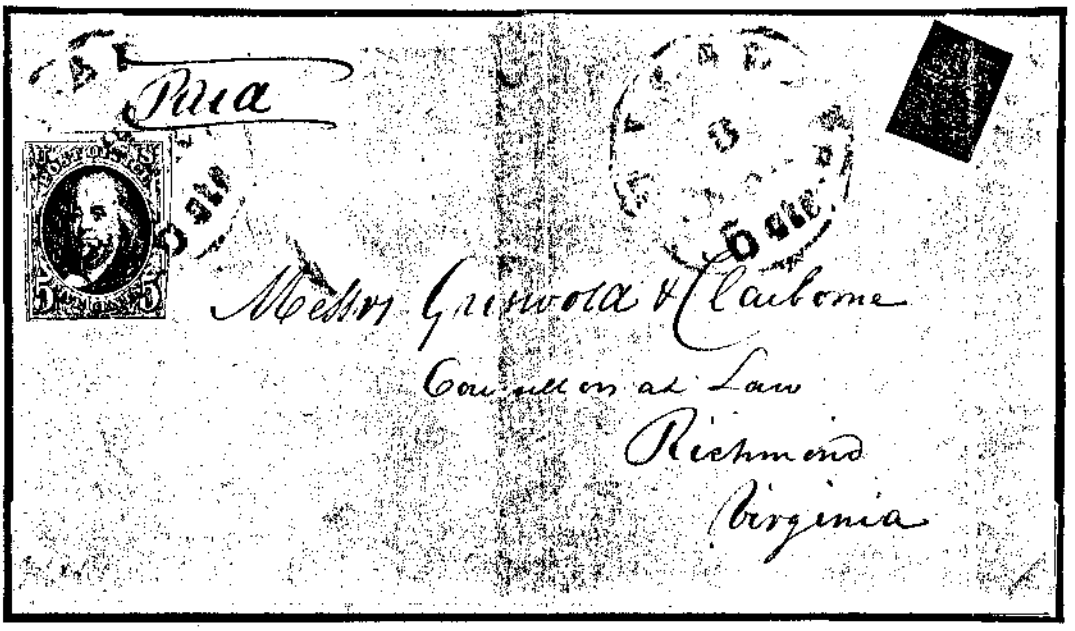
PHILADELPHIA



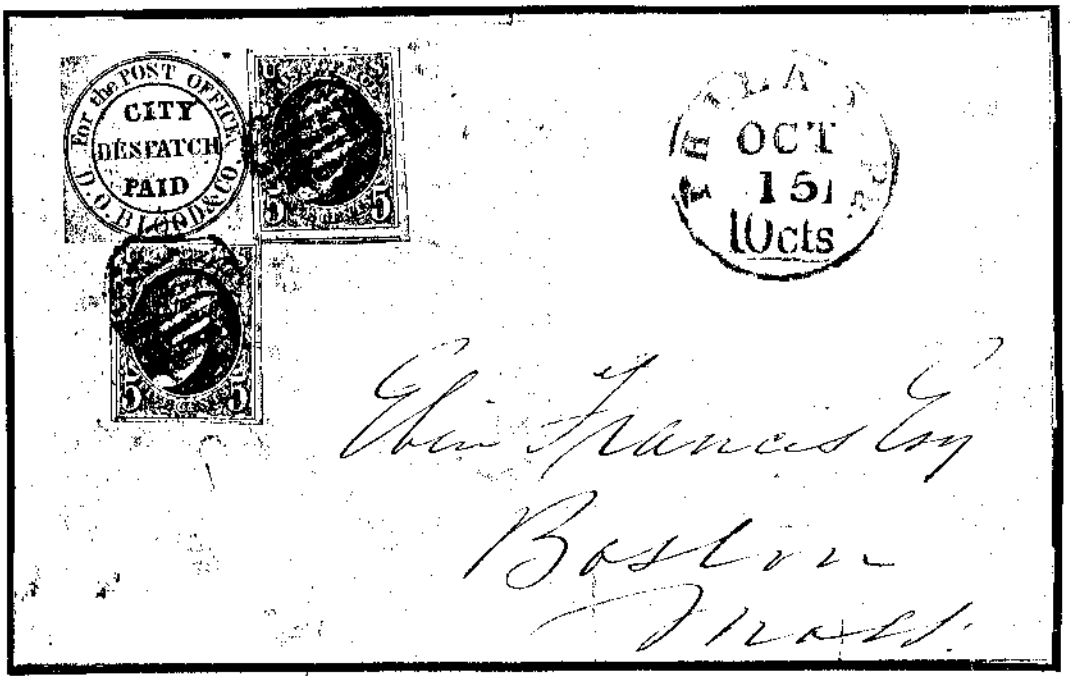
This letter was mailed on August 26, 1847. The stamp is orange brown.

Philadelphia was the second largest commercial center and used about three-fourths as many stamps as New York City.

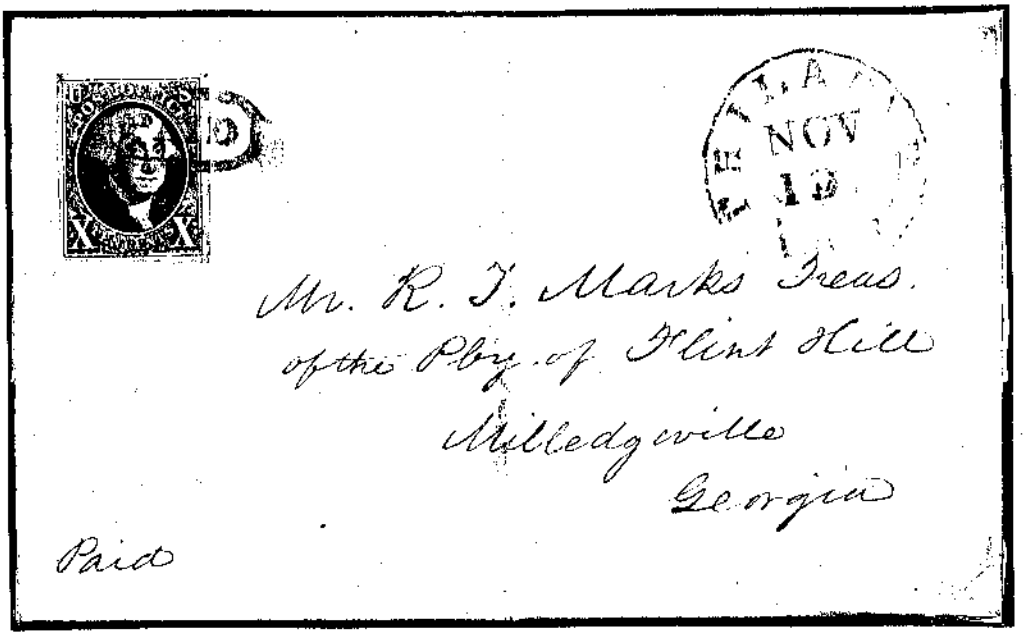
"An instrument" furnished to certain post offices, for canceling the new stamps, was the seven bar enclosed circular grid. Philadelphia received its first supply of stamps on July 9, 1847, and the earliest known use of this official grid is from Philadelphia on July 12th.

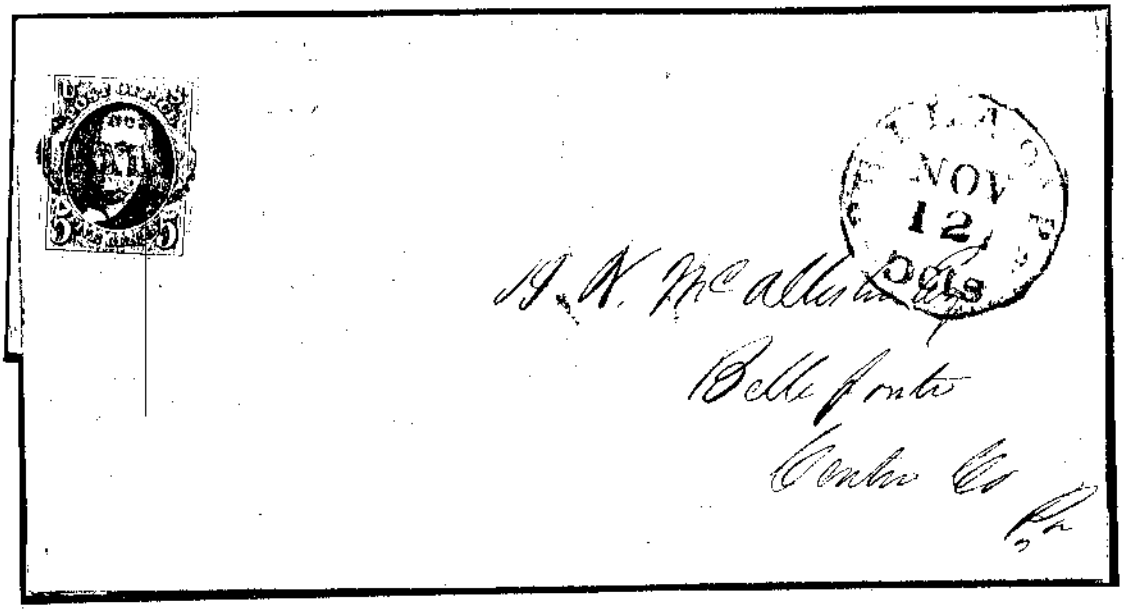


The U.S.P.O.D. provided official carrier service to the one central post office for an additional fee of 1¢, evidenced by the small red stamp.

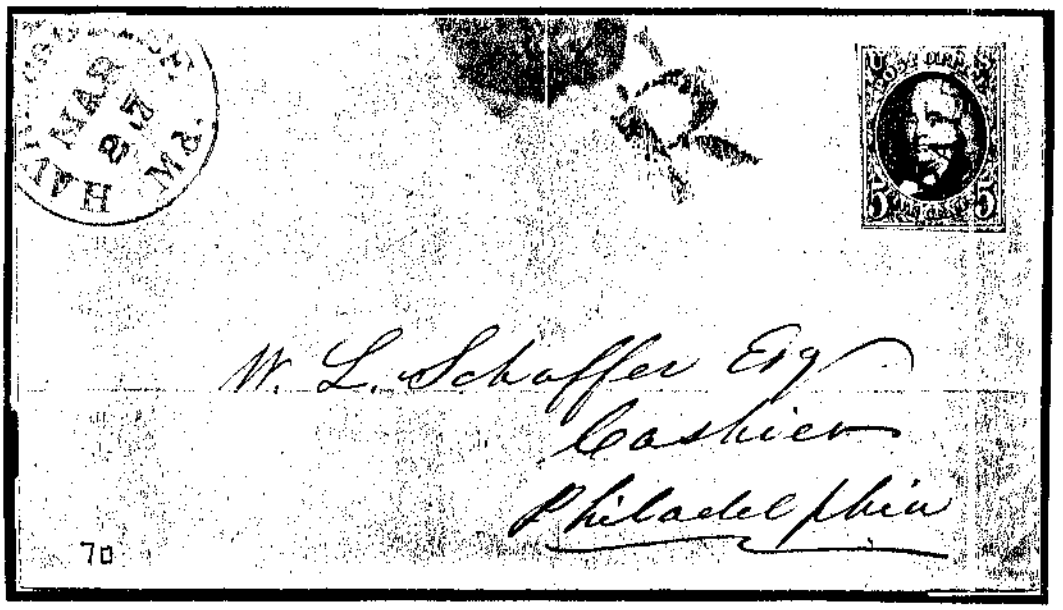


The local companies also provided competitive service. Blood's City Dispatch was the largest independent offering the same service.

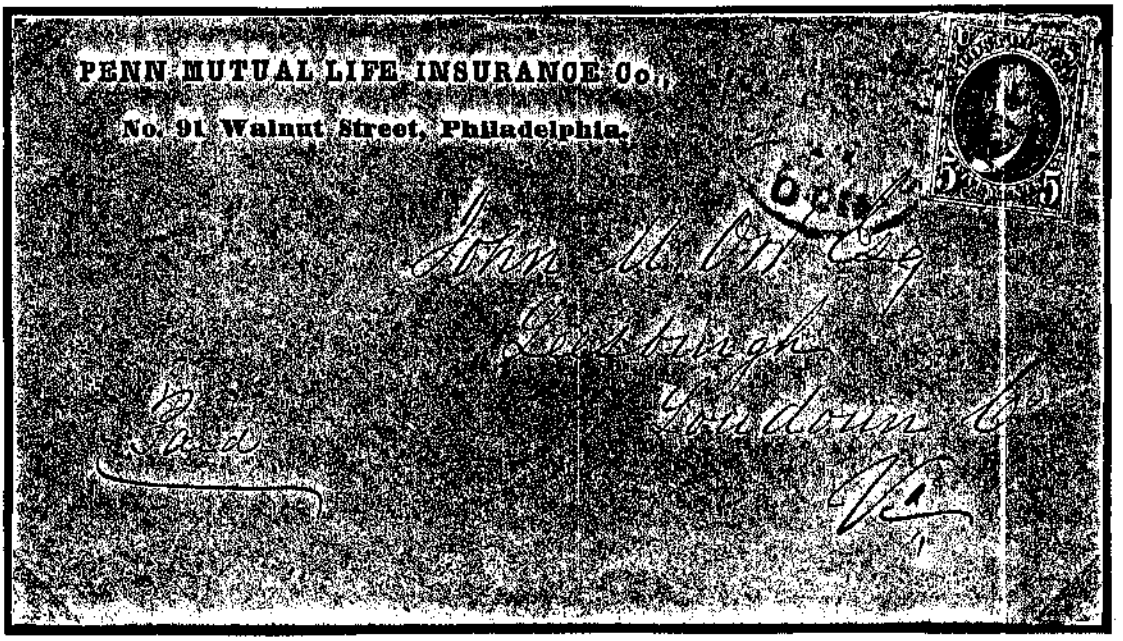




This distinctive handstamp PAID had been used on stampless mail prior to the time stamps came into use. The Philadelphia postal clerks used the new 7 bar grid provided by the Post Office Department to cancel stamps only during their first month of use. Thereafter, they used the old PAID handstamp as an obliterator, as shown here.



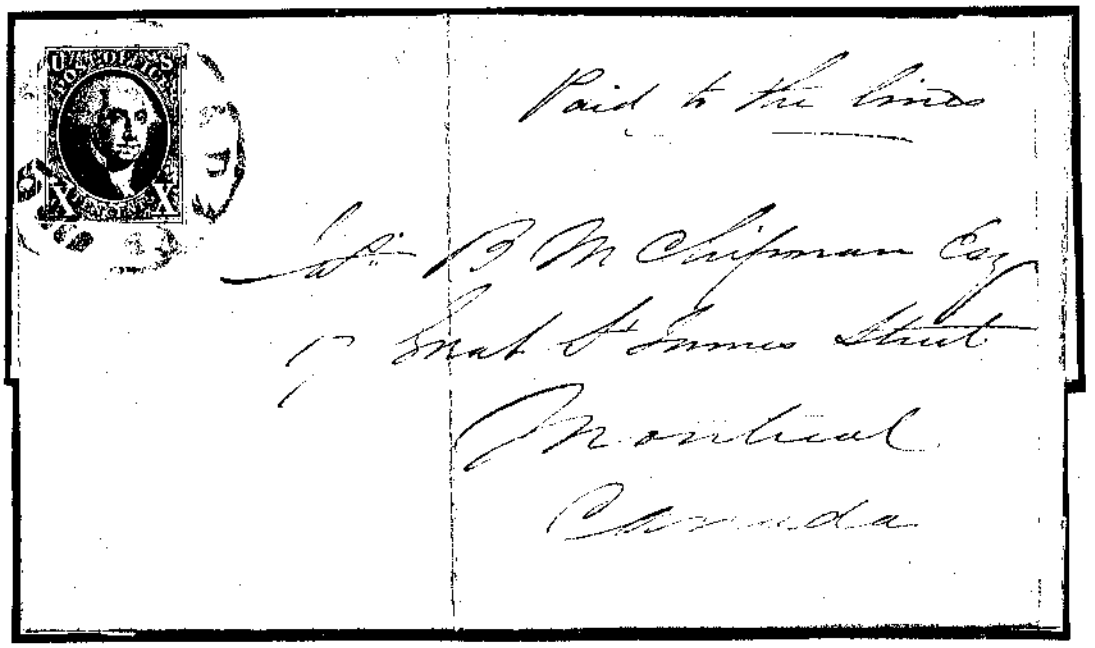
The large blue "R" was applied at Philadelphia upon arrival at that office. This indicated a letter containing money or a financial transaction; such letters were given special care. It is a forerunner of the registry system that was adopted in the 1850's.



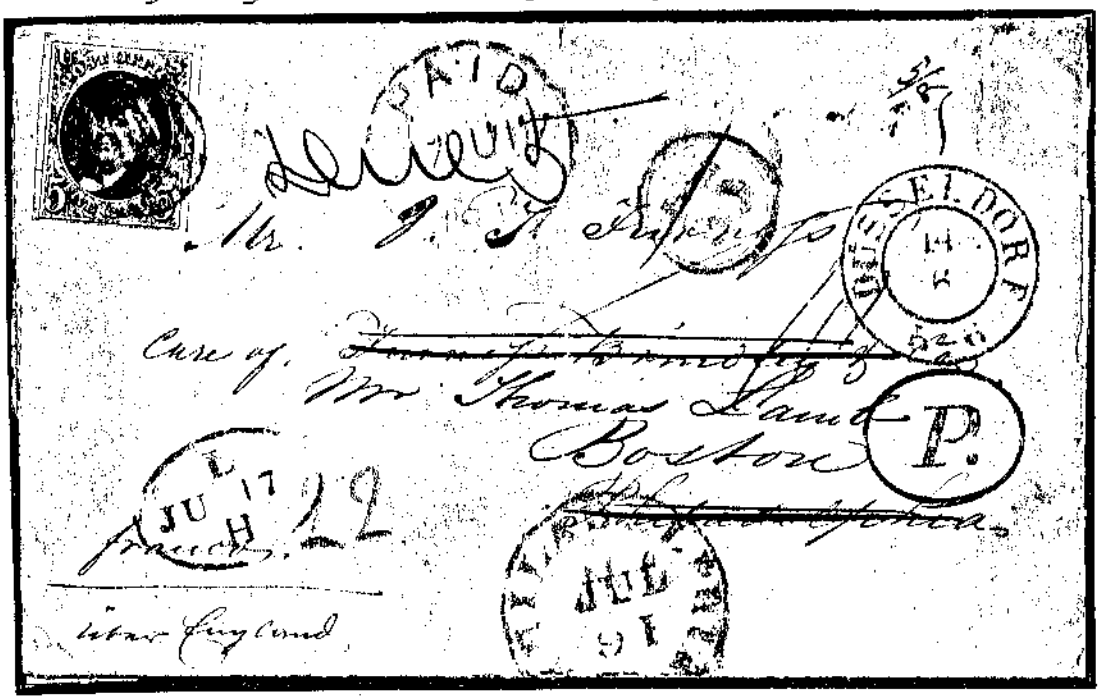
Corner cards and illustrated envelopes were just beginning to be used in the late 1840's. This Penn Mutual envelope is an early usage.

PHILADELPHIA

TO CANADA - FROM GERMANY

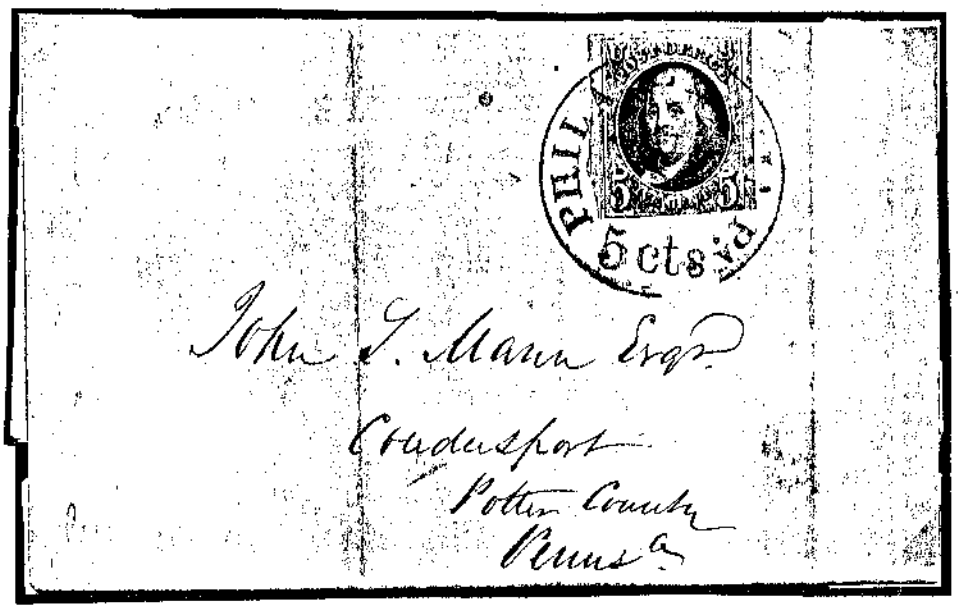


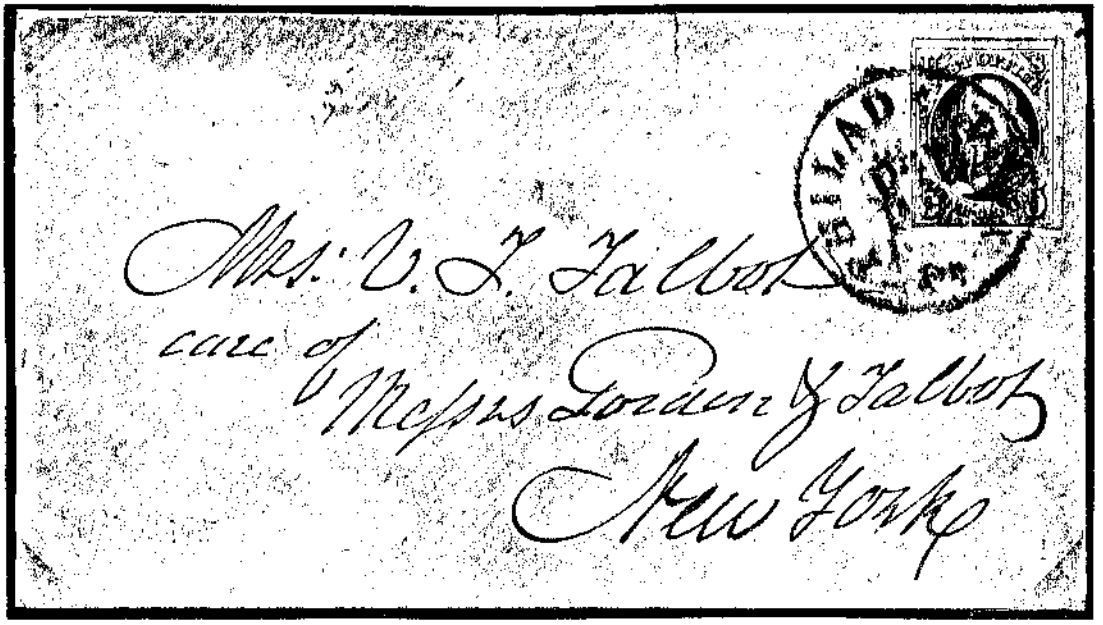
The 10¢ paid through rate to Canada went into effect April 6, 1851. This cover, posted April 8 so soon afterwards lacks the "U. STATES" origin mark, and the "4½" pence found on covers posted prior to April 6th.



This cover arrived stampless from Dusseldorf with 12¢ due, which was paid in cash. It was then forwarded to Boston with a 5¢ stamp. The rate to Boston was 10¢; hence the manuscript "Due 5."

PHILADELPHIA



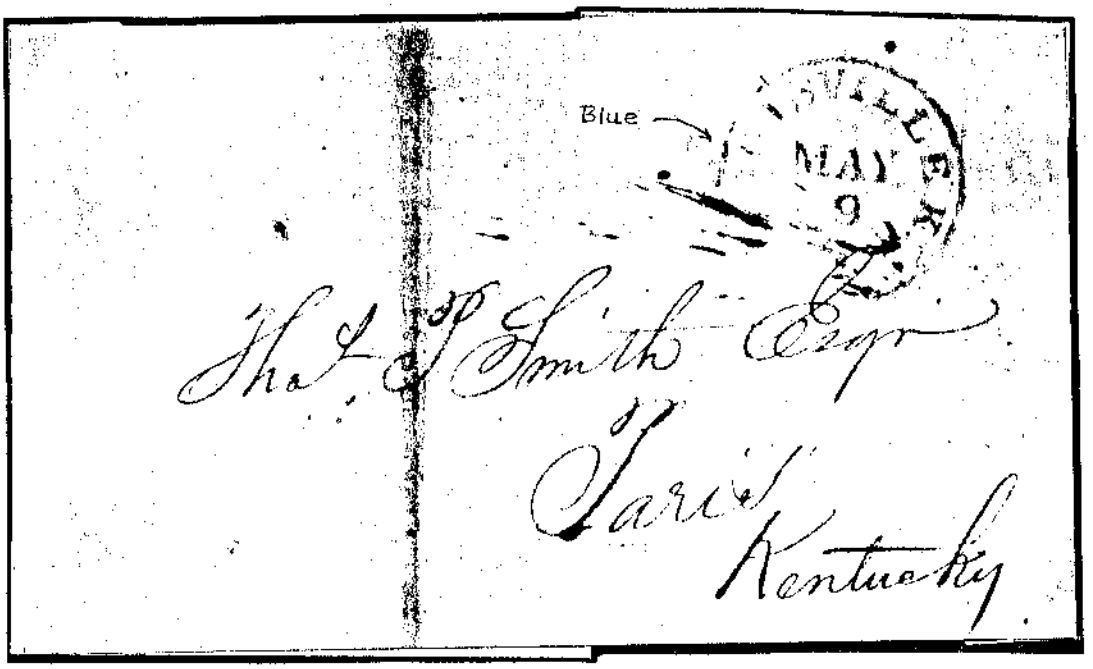


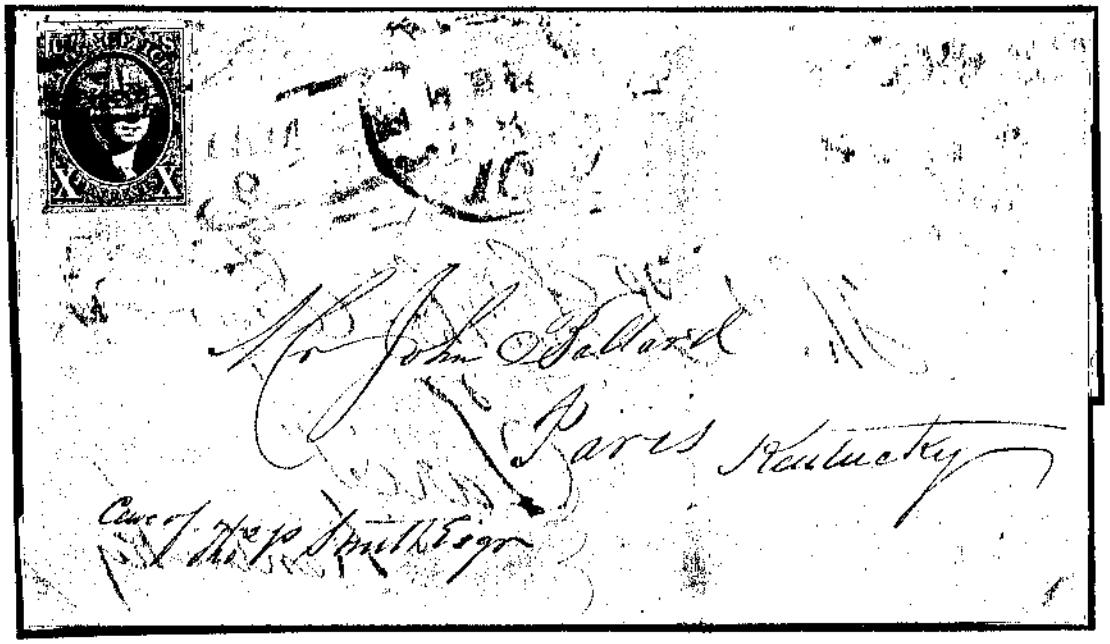
The 1847 issue was no longer valid for postage after June 30, 1851, but illegal uses accepted as valid are well known. The top cover is a folded letter year dated 1852, but even if the year were not evident, this type town-mark is of a date used after demonetization.

The bottom cover with the black townmark is known to be a late usage, since only blue was used during the four years in which the stamps were current.

PHILADELPHIA

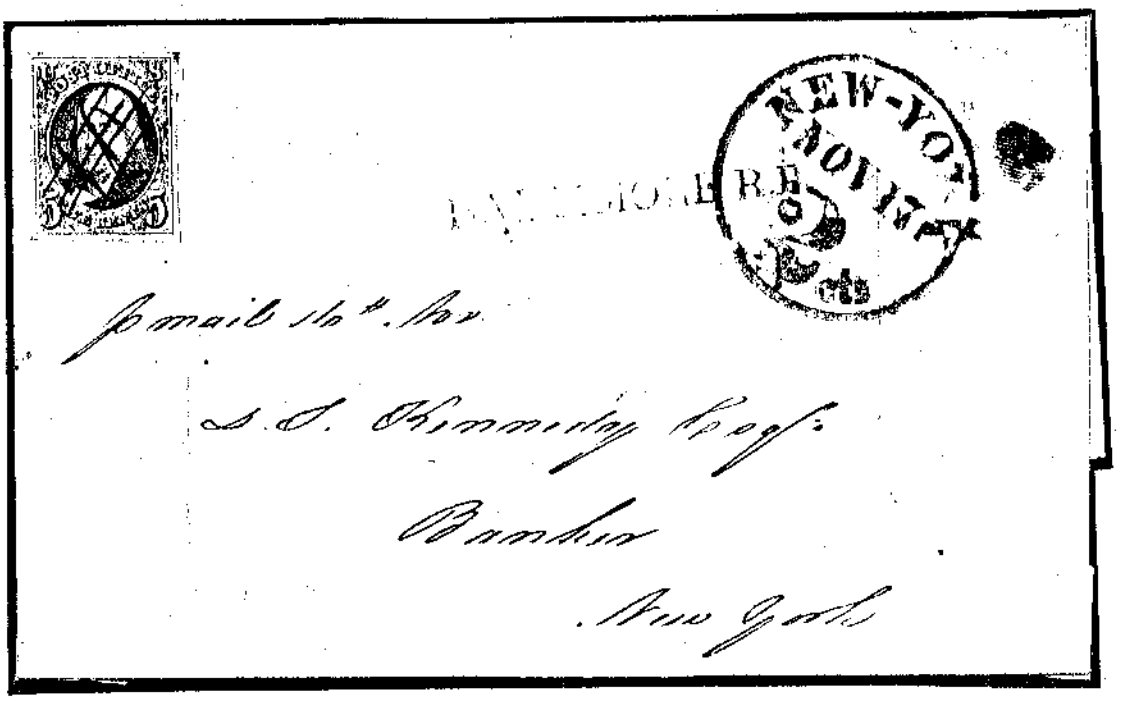
TURNED COVER





This cover was sent from Louisville to Paris, Kentucky, as a stampless, unpaid 5¢ letter. It found its way to Philadelphia, where it was turned and re-addressed to Paris, this time being prepaid with a 10¢ 1847 stamp. The photograph at top shows the stampless cover on the other side of the stamped cover.

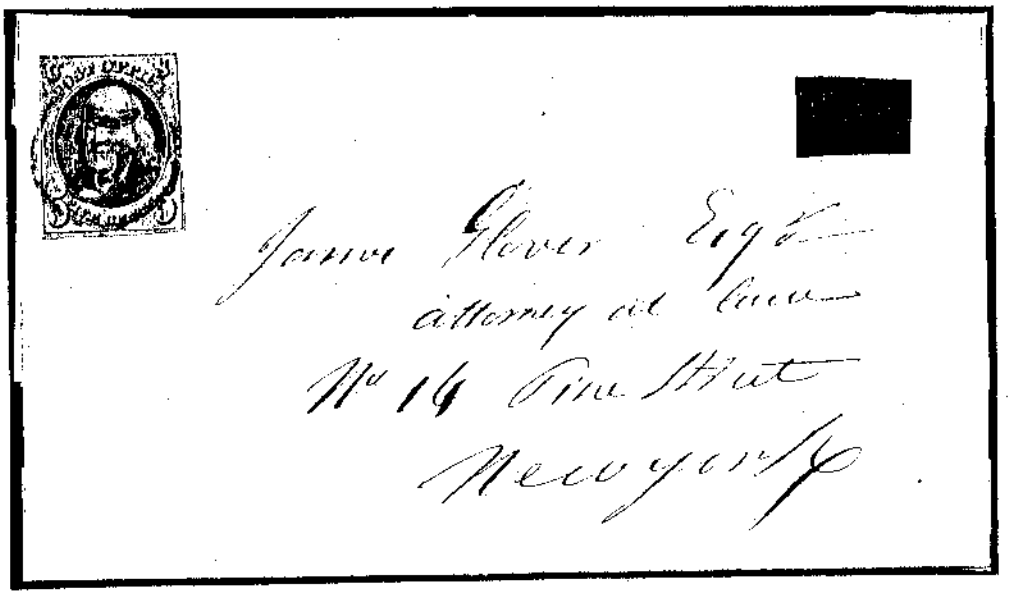
NEW YORK CITY



November 17, 1849

The letter originated at Baltimore and was handed to the route agent there. Evidently the sender asked him to expedite delivery so that it would reach the addressee by Saturday, the 17th. The route agent therefore kept the letter separate and gave it directly to the clerk handling drop letters on arrival at the New York City Post Office. This clerk cancelled the stamp with the blue ink typical of New York City and struck the drop-letter postmark.

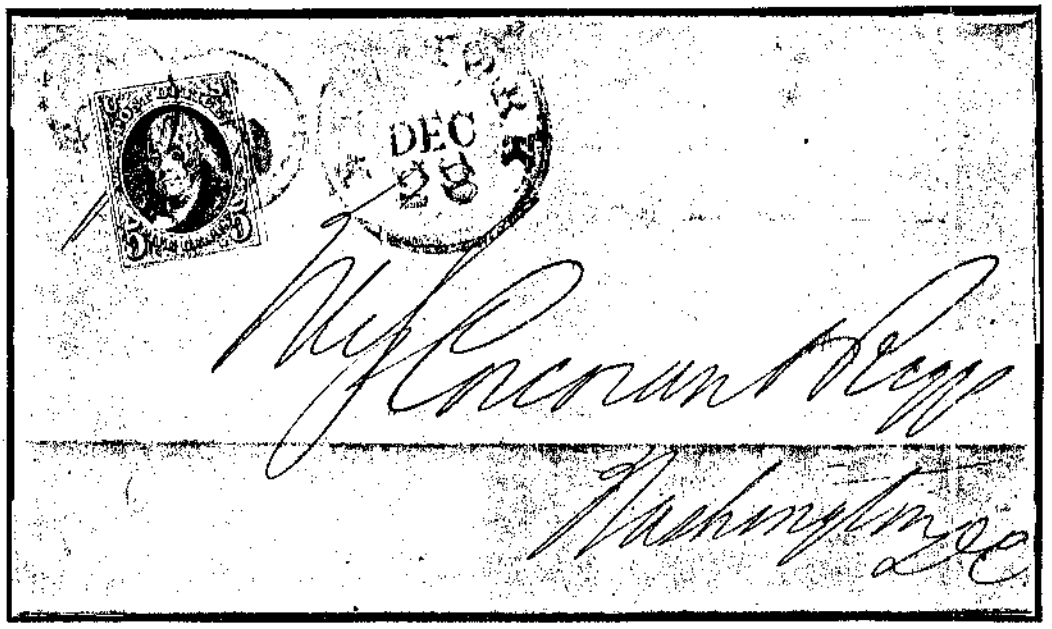
NEW YORK CITY



October 21, 1850

This rating handstamp was designed for use on stampless letters at the single rate of 5¢ for less than 300 miles. Its use as a canceller is accidental and unusual.

NEW YORK CITY



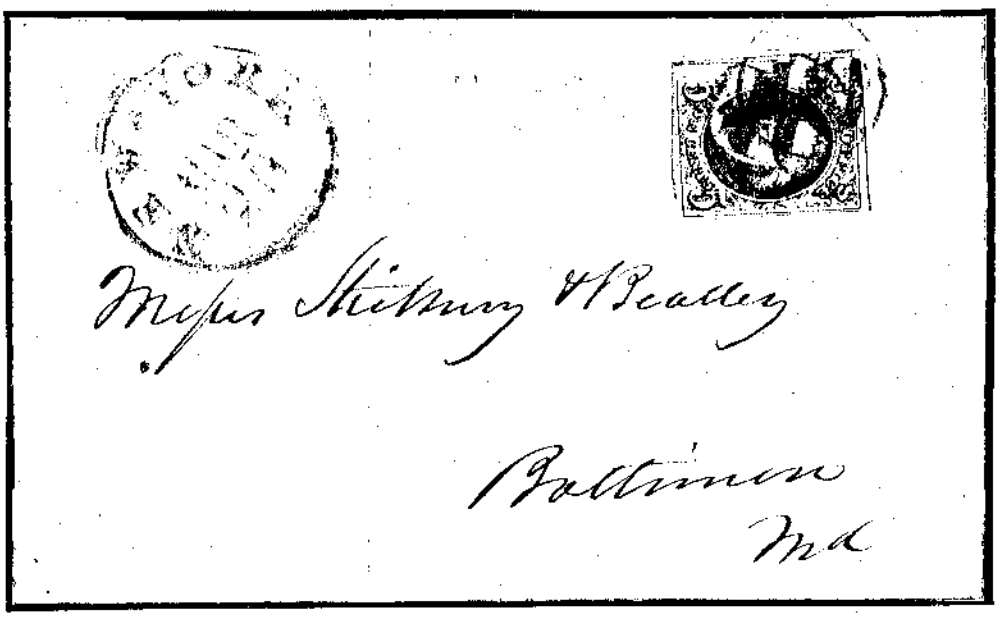
December 28, 1848

The encircled "6" handstamp was used on incoming ship letters as the rating mark. The ship letter fee for such letters delivered at the port at which they were landed was 6¢.

This rating stamp was pressed into service as a canceller in emergencies.

NEW YORK CITY

10



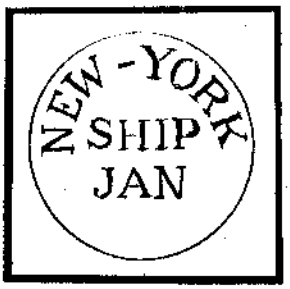
March 25, 1849

The encircled "10" handstamp used to cancel this stamp was one of a series of rating handstamps of similar design used at New York City.

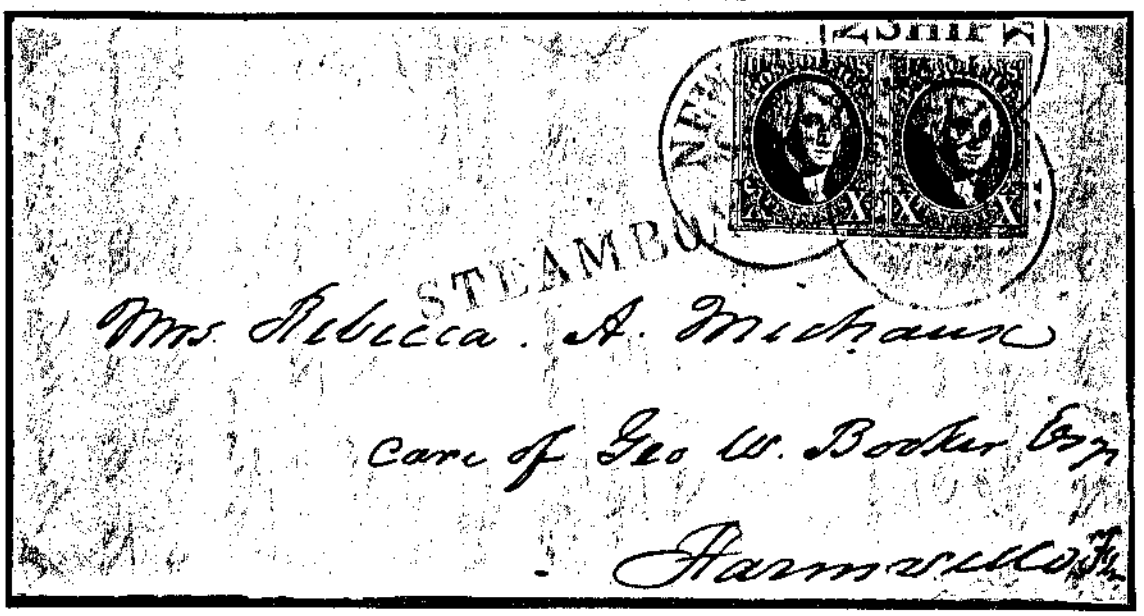
It occurs most often on stampless mails of Canadian origin reaching New York in the through bag from Montreal and was struck to indicate U.S. postage due – in red, until April 6, 1851. Thereafter it was used on letters both to and from Canada as a due marking – in black.

Its use simply as a canceller on ordinary mail is uncommon.

NEW YORK CITY



STEAMBOAT

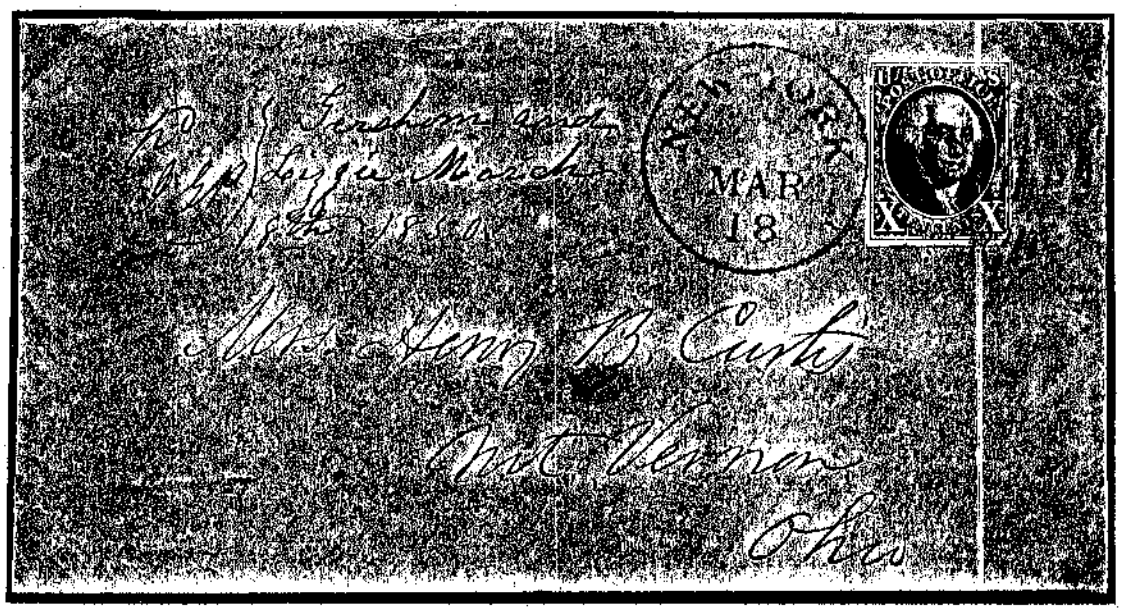


January x, 18 - x

This ship letter postmark was normally used on ship letter mail from overseas received at New York City from private vessels. Its use on a cover with 1847 stamps is most unusual.

The "STEAMBOAT" marking indicates that the letter was carried into New York by a non-contract steamboat and sent from there to Florida through normal mail channels.

NEW YORK CITY

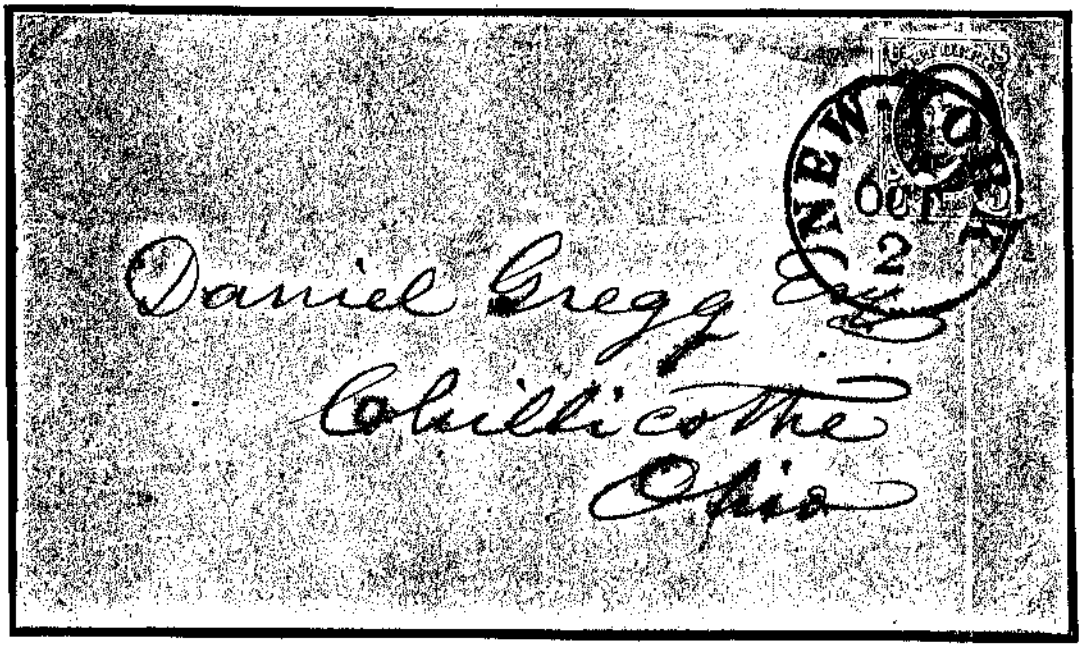


March 18, 1850

This townmark is known as the first type of "Ocean Mail" postmark. It was normally used on letters from New York to California by sea, although it occasionally was struck on ordinary mail, as here.

The instrument was the one formerly used on incoming ship letters, except that the word "SHIP", which had appeared above the date, was removed.

NEW YORK CITY

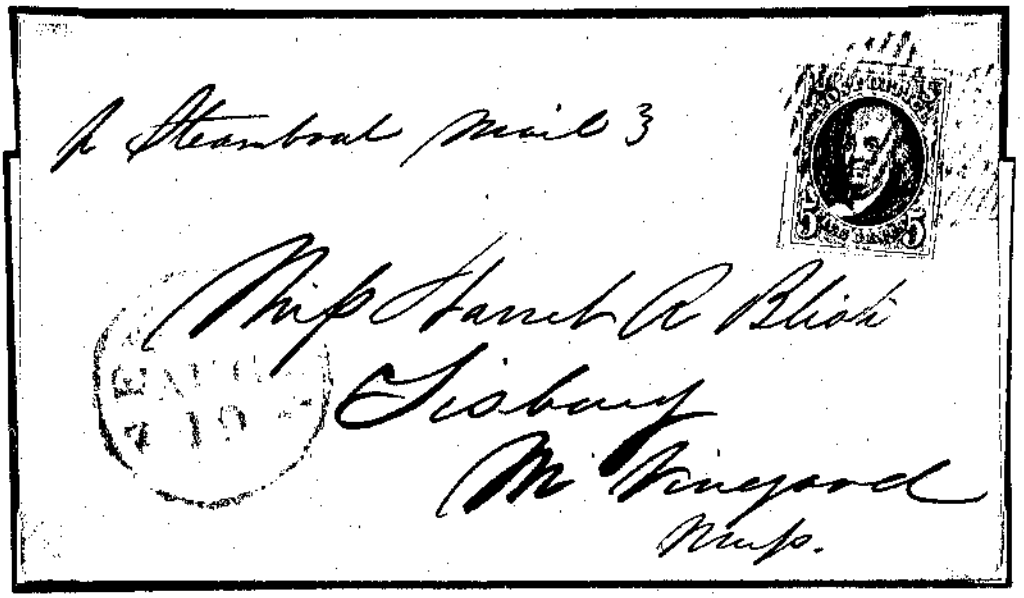


October 2, 1852

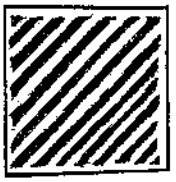
New York City gradually shifted from red to black for postmarks beginning in early July, 1851, and used black with increasing frequency.

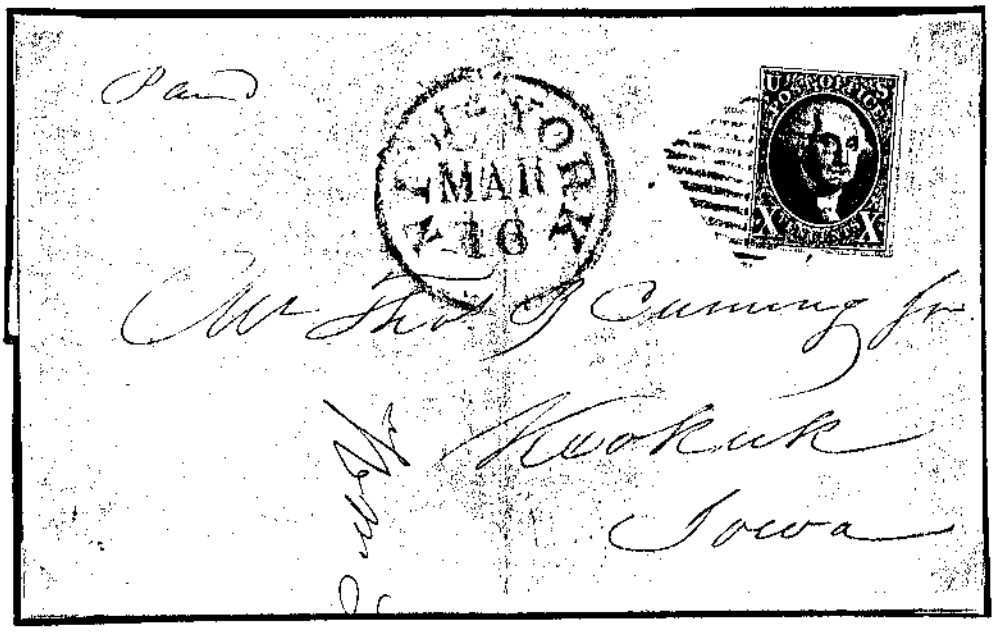
The 1847 stamps were demonetized as of July 1, 1851, but many examples of late use are known. However, 1847 stamps cancelled by the New York City postmark in black are very rare.

NEW YORK



August 19, 18x. New York City





March 16, 1850. New York City

112