

1869 Times

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IN MEMORIAM

Elliott H. Coulter
(1924-1987)



ELLIOTT H. COULTER

Elliott H. Coulter died on October 9, 1987 at the age of 63 from pneumonia. Indeed, when I received a phone call that day saying he had died, I felt a tremendous sadness and loss. I had spoken to Elliott only a few days earlier about an upcoming exhibition. As always, Elliott was upbeat, in a great mood and anxious to share with me his personal thoughts on the world of philately and in general.

So it was when I learned of Elliott's death, that I began to reflect that philately, and all of us had lost a good friend, advisor, confidant and a generous and compassionate man. I cannot begin to do justice to describing Elliott's generosity, not only with his monetary contributions to philatelic groups and projects, but with his time and efforts in promoting philately, particularly on behalf of the 1869 Pictorial Research Associates. His efforts extended also to the Collectors Club of New York, The Philatelic Foundation, the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society and even the local stamp groups in his home town of Harrison, New York.

Elliott and I often competed for items to add to our collections. More often than not, it was a cover to an unusual destination or one having some unusual rate or marking, which neither of us had in our collections. This competition only made me respect Elliott more, and led to a closer friendship for this soft-spoken man. In many respects he was my mentor in collecting the 1869 Issue.

I will relate a story about Elliott, which occurred in 1981 when I was in the East to attend an auction and staying with Elliott and his wife, Judy. After several days of golf at Elliott's Club (Everyone there called him "Boomer"), Elliott and I discussed the upcoming auction. Up for sale was one cover which both of us desired. It bore several 1869 stamps and Bank Note issues, which paid the appropriate rate to the Cape of Good Hope. Neither of us was willing to give up the right to bid on it, so it was decided to flip a coin to see who would bid on the cover. I lost the toss and the next day Elliott was the winning bidder on the cover. Later, whenever we viewed his exhibit together, he could never let that cover go by without bringing up that story, and we both always laughed.

My final thought regarding Elliott is that I have always felt that he was a true friend. His personality, sense of humor, and sensitivity, together with his judgment and common sense, led me to have the utmost respect for him. Indeed, in the ten years that I knew Elliott, he demonstrated over and over again that one of the great benefits of stamp collecting is the friends you make and keep. Certainly, Elliott Coulter was one of those true friends. I shall always remember him with the greatest admiration.

J.M.F.

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THE MIRO 90¢ RATE 1869 COVER

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Editor's Note: This is the continuation and conclusion of an article begun in *Times* 40-41 by philatelic researcher Calvet Hahn. Some of the stamps and handstamps on this magnificent cover have been questioned. Hahn explains what he thinks is right and what isn't about this cover, which he believes to be a 5¢ overpay of the double 10¢ trans-Pacific rate and triple 15¢ per quarter ounce rate from the United States to France.

THE C. & J. S.S. OVAL

To progress we should examine both the killers and the oval. I propose to deal with the latter first. In his *Opinions II* article, Graham reports only four covers known to have been carried on the steamer *Japan*, arriving at San Francisco on July 20, 1869 (p.69). One is illustrated by him in *Chronicle* 75, p.138. It is from Hong Kong and bears the 8c stamp of Hong Hong (Sc.#13). The C. & J. S. S. (China and Japan Steam Service) oval strike is sufficiently poor that it cannot be compared with the Miro cover strike. I suspect the oval colors match.

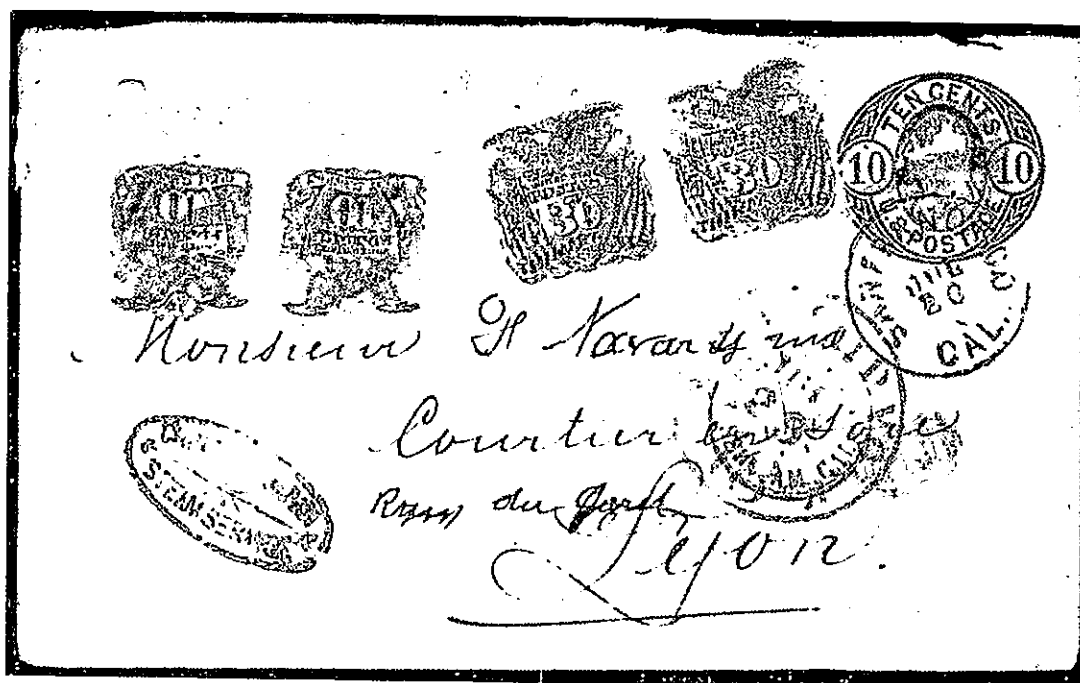


Figure 1. This is the highly disputed 90¢ rate 1869 cover offered for sale in 1953 by French dealer, L. Miro. Stanley B. Ashbrook and other experts have attacked it. Hahn believes this cover originated in Japan. Its destinations: Lyon, France. If genuine, this would be the eighth double 30¢ 1869 cover known.

Two of the other examples are Walsh Hall & Co. letters to Elmira, NY, one with a Scott's #68 (10c) on a #U40 and the other with a #U40 alone (See Chronicle 73:pp. 28-29). I have been unable to locate photos of either for comparison to see if the killers match or if the C. & J.S.S. ovals match. Graham says that the covers have pinkish ovals, the same, I believe, as the Miro oval.

For my own analysis of genuineness I took transparencies of the three enlargement photos in Ashbrook's Special Services, and laid the Miro example both over and under the other two versions which Ashbrook calls genuine. One photo is of his Hiogo cover (lot 35, Ryo Ishikawa Japan sale, Sotheby Parke Bernet auction, New York City, July 7, 1981). The other is of the Shanghai to Canada cover, sold as lot 70 in the same Ishikawa sale. The former was sent three months earlier and the latter five months earlier than the Miro example purports to have been.

The time differences are sufficient to cause changes in the C. & J. S.S. oval, even if the handstamp were made of steel. Richard Graham has suggested several C. & J.S.S. ovals were used, possibly as many as five (Chronicle 111). Sailing schedules make it clear at least two ovals had to be used at any time during the period when route agents handled the mail en route, for one had to be on each returning ship.

There is nothing in philatelic literature showing extent of use of this oval that I can find. However, the Reports of the Postmaster General suggest that when the service began in early 1867, about 400-600 letters were carried each trip.

It is probable that in 1869 the total was much higher, perhaps 3,000 to 5,000 per month. Inbound postage on the run as reported in the Report of Postmaster General dated 4-21-1870 was \$7,985.62 for the year 1869. Most covers, we know, were single 10c trans-Pacific rates to the United States. If we assume an average of 12c per letter, we find 66,500 covers carried inbound or 5,500 per month. If we assume average postage of 20c per letter, there would be 40,000 covers or 3,000 plus per month.

The conclusion is that there is a difference of between 10,000 and 25,000 strikes between the examples used by Ashbrook as controls and the Miro strike. Students of plating realize that even steel plates will show differences with that degree of usage. This quantitative analysis suggests, too, that Graham may be low in his estimate of five ovals.

Thus Ashbrook did not have comparable examples. Graham's analysis? Unless he used the other covers from the same trip, it is questionable whether his analytic conclusions are based on comparable data.

My own investigation using the transparencies does not support Graham's conclusion of fakery. The positioning of the letters on all three strikes is quite close. The so-called slant Graham reported is such that it might readily be explained by degree of inking or roughness of strike. Graham's methodology as outlined in Chronicle 111 (See pp. 182-193) suggests he did not use the overlay-underlay method.

Graham observes that there is a particularly thick bottom ring on the C. & J. S.S. oval on the Miro cover. But I would note that lots 28 and 30 (America trip leaving Yokohama 9-30-69) in the Ishikawa Japan sale show similar thickening.

I am not alone in doubting the assertion of fakery made by Graham. Other students, who have used layovers and worked with covers bearing the oval, find Graham's methods inadequate to substantiate his conclusion the oval is fake.

❧ THE KILLERS ❧

Graham said that the Miro killer cancels are not typical of those used in Japan. I am not convinced this is correct. The killers resemble other Japanese killers I have seen. We find the killer used on the trip preceding the Miro cover offered as lot 23 in the Ishikawa Japan sale (received San Francisco 6-21-69). The killer used on the succeeding trip is found as lot 27 (received San Francisco 8-19-69). Only if killers used on other covers from the same trip (arriving San Francisco 7-20-69) differ from those on the Miro cover, would it be fair to question the Miro cover killers. The Walsh Hall covers may or may not bear on this.

It is not widely known that both cancellation inks used in Japan and China during this period, as well as the killer devices, are different from those found in the United States. It would be difficult to find a US cancelled stamp with the appropriate type of black or gray ink and killer style to substitute. Western forgers didn't use killers made from bamboo, and U.S. inks differ in composition.

❧ THE STAMPS ❧

No one has claimed the 1869 stamps on this Miro cover are cleaned or damaged stamps, typical of those used by forgers for altering covers. If the killers now on the stamps are fake, it would follow the killer on the #U40 is also bogus, for it closely matches. It would be likely that the stamps are cleaned or damaged unused stamps. Does blacklight show evidence of cleaning or removal of either pair from the cover? Does it show the stamps are thinned?

When this cover surfaced, it was relatively expensive to use unused 1869 stamps as source material for faking. The catalog value for unused singles (two 10c, two 30c 1869s) at that time (1953) was about \$225. The stamps are fresh, bright copies in pairs, and are well enough centered to be called very fine to superb. Forgers normally do not use stamps of this caliber.

Physical examination should show if the stamps have been switched. One should look for: (a) cleaned or thinned stamps, (b) soaking stains, (c) blacklight shadows of a different size stamp having been there (1861 Issue instead of 1869 Issue), (d) disturbed fibers in the envelope paper, and (e) indirect ties, such as ties through indentation, under stamp stains, etc. If none of these tests reveal negative factors, I would not hesitate to pronounce the cover genuine.

Emphasis should be placed upon examination of the 10c pair, for it was unnecessary to pay the rate; and the killers on the pair stop short, although at least one should tie the stamps to the cover.

Some experts have questioned whether these 1869 Issue stamps were available in Japan in time for use on this cover. One student's remark that the #U40 "watermelon" embossed envelopes were not available in Japan is refuted by lot 31 in the Ishikawa Japan sale, which shows a use from Yokohama on Feb. 1, 1869.

In my "Overseas Distribution of the 1869 Issue" article (See 1869 Times #38-39), I have shown that the 1869 Issue was available on the West Coast ~~in time to reach~~ Japan on the Japan departure of May 4, 1869. Also, evidence suggests that stamps

were sent on allocation to Shanghai and Japan, probably being sent from New York City on March 24 or April 1, 1869. The evidence also suggests that all values were in the allocation.

In sum I conclude that evidence adduced against the Miro cover is insufficient to condemn it. Ashbrook's original condemnation falls apart completely in rate analysis and color of the oval handstamp. The strongest negative comments are those of Graham, which depend upon his conclusion that the C. & J.S.S. oval is fake and his opinion that the killers differ from Japanese ones. Experts who have overlaid transparencies, as I have, may not find his reasoning conclusive.

On the positive, the Miro cover meets the tests of a trans-Pacific cover, including those unknown at the time of its discovery. Furthermore, the stamps could have been in Japan on the appropriate date.

Ashbrook's arguments have been completely refuted, but the atmosphere of prejudice he created lingers still. Consequently, it would appear experts are seeking ways to condemn this cover, rather than examine it objectively.

∞ POSTSCRIPT ∞

Since completing the above analysis, I have received reports from several persons who have examined the actual cover and found the following: (a) the 1869 stamps are not thinned or repaired, (b) there is the correct pinkish tinge in the C. & J. S.S. oval, (c) there is a color offset of this oval on the back of the cover, as would appear if the cover had been handled with a group of covers, rather than as an individual item to be forged, (d) there is a "2" for double rate under the 30c pair, which is the same ink as the "OVERLAND MAIL," (e) the killers on the 10c pair, the 30c pair and the #U40 all match.

The above observations help confirm the conclusion that the Miro cover is genuine, a trans-Pacific usage, double rated to the United States, and then triple rated to France. They also support the probable usage of the 1869 stamps in Japan, particularly the 30c pair. Note that the "2" double rating contradicts a San Francisco prepaid origin and supports a trans-Pacific usage.

There are three negative observations, all dealing with the 10c pair. These are: (1) a killer strike on this pair that should tie the pair to the cover stops short, with two-thirds on the stamp and the rest missing, (2) there are gum points around this pair, not found around the 30c pair (This suggests tinkering may have occurred), and (3) the 10c pair is really "stuck down" with an impression in the paper as though the pair were ironed on. This is not true of the 30c pair.

These negative observations do raise serious questions about whether the 10c pair originated on the cover. It was not needed to pay the rate. On the other hand the killer match suggests that at least the pair was cancelled in Japan, and transported on the same trip back to the United States. It is possible the pair was on another cover, which accompanied the Miro cover. Maybe the original discoverer of the cover sold by Miro found the pair on a damaged cover and used it to enhance this cover.

While I believe the Miro cover to be genuine, I do have reservations about the 10c pair, but I would not remove it from the cover, even though the stamps represent overpayment and may have been added.



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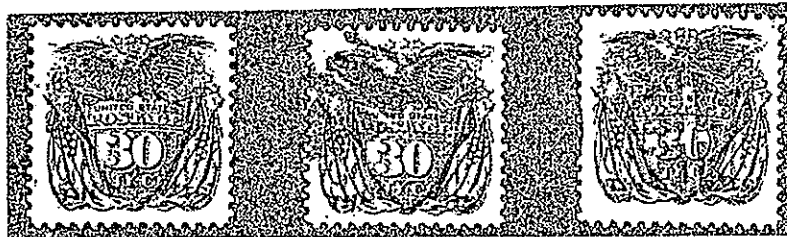
AUCTION REPORT

It has been many months since we have brought you a report on prices realized at auction for 1869 and 1875 re-issue material. The following article should bring matters up to date.

The trend continues for superb off-cover material, used or unused, to bring huge prices. Rare material also sells well, but it must be very rare and in reasonable condition. Thus a pair of 3c 1869s with the rare skull & bones and "KKK" cancel on piece sold for \$6,600, not only because this is an extremely rare and showy item, but also because it was sound and in fairly choice condition.

Rare 1869 covers are not often on the market. The 24c and 30c covers are pretty well spoken for. They can bring more than \$15,000 each, if sent to an uncommon destination, used with other stamps and in fine condition. But the shabby examples bring half catalog if that. The overall supply of 15c-90c 1869 covers is very small, numbering less than 1,000 in all of the four values, including both types of the 15c.

Below are some prices realized for 1869s and 1875 re-issues at 9 auctions held during 1987. Prices in parentheses are catalog values from Scott. Prices realized included the 10% buyer's fee.



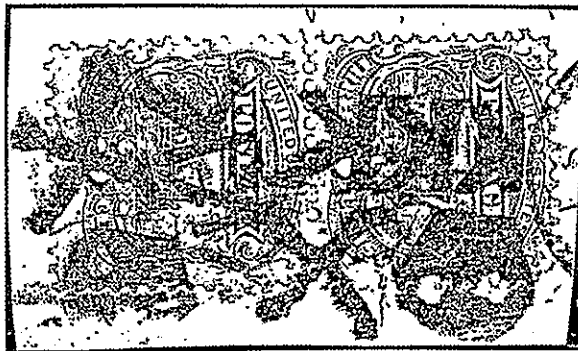
STEVE IVY PHILATELIC AUCTIONS, AUG. 21-23, 1987, BOSTON APS SHOW

Two beautiful used copies of the 30c 1869 sold for \$825 each (Photos above). The first, with light brownish red killer (photo, top center), is well centered; the second (photo, top right) has huge margins and is centered vf-s, ex-Grunin, Wunderlich. A full og, unused copy (photo, top left), slightly off-center, sold for \$2,860 (\$2,250). An outstanding full og, unused well-centered copy of the 90c 1869 Lincoln with 1987 PFC went for \$12,650 (\$7,000).

STEVE IVY PHILATELIC AUCTIONS, DALLAS, MAR. 13-15, 1987 in NEW YORK CITY (INTERPEX '87)

What the auctioneer called "the finest mint single we have ever offered" of the 1c 1869 (See photo below) sold for \$935 (\$225); while an almost equally nice mint 2c 1869 realized \$770 (\$160). A mint 3c 1869 (photo below), over-described as "a special example that possesses true post office freshness, flawlessly centered, bright color, pristine, never hinged, extremely fine, a gem," sold for an incredible \$1,155, almost nine times catalog. (I can recall buying a rare very fine plate block of 12 of the 3c stamp for about six times this price).





Other stamps included: 10c yellow 1869, used, extra fine (See photo previous page), \$440 (\$95); 10c tied on cover to Germany, vf, \$385 (\$325); extra fine mint 15c Type I, fresh, full og, PFC, \$7,150! (cat., \$1,750). A set of card proofs, inverted centers (Sc. 120aP4-122aP4, 129aP4), vf, 100 sets printed, sold for \$12,650 (\$24,000). Other stamps: 24c with blue cancel, ef, (See photo previous page), \$2,420! (\$450); and, just as remarkable, a full og, extra fine centered 90c 1869 with "proof-like" colors, went for \$16,500 (\$7,000). Two used copies, both very fine and well-centered Lincolns, were auctioned off for \$2,970 and \$2,585, respectively--both had 1986 PFCs.

DANIEL F. KELLEHER CO., INC., BOSTON, SALE 576, SEPT. 9-10, 1987

A very fine, nearly full og 10c with PFC sold at \$1,210 (\$850); a 24c 1869, no gum, but good color and centering, \$1,980 (\$2,500), and a 90c carmine and black Lincoln, part og, fine, \$2,530 (\$7,000). The 24c and 90c are pictured above. A 24c re-issue (#130), vf, PFC, unused, sold for \$1,485 (\$1,250).

DANIEL F. KELLEHER CO., INC., BOSTON, SALE 575, MARCH 17, 1987

This sale featured a pair of the 3c 1869 tied to a piece by the very rare and spectacular Union Mills, PA "skull & bones-KKK" cancel, ef, double strike, PFC, which sold for \$6,600 against the house estimate of \$7,500 (See photo, above, center).

Also sold were: a fine used 12c 1869, \$209 (\$90); very good og block of four of the 15c Type II, \$1,585 (\$4,000); vf og 24c 1869, \$2,090 (\$2,500); 24c used, ef, \$935 (\$450) and a 24c vf used, \$688. A very fine og copy of the 90c Lincoln without grill (Sc. #122a), PFC, sold for \$9,900 (\$13,500), and a very fine used 10c re-issue (#127) went for \$1,760 (\$1,200). A block of four, unused, of the 15c Type III re-issue (cat., \$20,000) did not sell.

RICHARD WOLFFERS, INC., SAN FRANCISCO, SALE 143, AUG. 26-27, 1987

A number of nice 1869 singles were sold. These included: 2c Pony Rider, vf, og, straddle pane copy, \$242 (\$160); extra fine, jumbo used 3c, \$66 (\$5); 3c with Freeport, ILL "moth" cancel, PFC, \$231; 6c used, ef, \$358 (\$90); 10c ef, used, \$264 (\$95); 12c used, ef, brown cancel, \$385 (\$105); 15c Type I, ef used, \$935 (\$250).

Also, 15c Type II used, double grill, \$798 (\$450); 24c used, jumbo superb,



\$1,320 (\$450); 10c re-issue (#127), ef, unused, \$1,595 (\$1,400); 30c re-issue (#131), ef used, \$1,485 (\$1,000); and 90c re-issue, ef, unused, PFC, \$6,325 (\$5,500).

HARMERS OF NEW YORK, INC. SEPT. 16-17, 1987, SALES 2792-2794

A very fine, probably never hinged block of four of the 3c 1869 sold for \$1,320 (cat., \$625), while a fine used copy of the 30c 1869 went for \$160 (\$225).

ROBERT G. KAUFMANN SALE 50, NEW YORK CITY, JUNE 26, 1987

The sale featured four 10c 1869 covers, including a single tied by the US Consul Shanghai cork killer to Iowa, fine, sold for \$633, and two singles on a very fine, fresh cover to Germany, \$605.

JOHN W. KAUFMANN, INC. AUCTION 129, MAR. 4, 1987, WASHINGTON, D.C.

An extra fine used copy of the 15c Type II (#119) sold for \$231. (\$120); an extra fine used 30c flags & shield sold at \$220 (\$225); and a nice used copy of the 12c re-issue with small thin spot realized \$1,045 (\$1,200).

CHRISTIE'S ROBSON LOWE NEW YORK SALE 28, MAR. 10, 1987

A set of corner margin singles of the inverted center plate proofs on card (Sc. #s 120 P4a-122P4a, 129P4a) sold for \$13,750 (\$24,000). A spectacular set of sheet margin blocks of four of the same set of invert proofs (100 issued) realized \$57,200 (cat., \$100,000). Photo above shows the 30c and 90c values in blocks.

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1869 COVER CENSUS UPDATE

By Jon Rose, Editor

Those fortunate persons who have already purchased the 1869 PRA, Inc. book, *The 1869 Issue on Cover: A Census and Analysis*, may want to note the following additions and corrections to the listings under the 15c stamp covers, both Types I and II.

The *1869 Times* will from time to time carry additions, deletions and corrections to the various lists in the cover census book. For those interested in 1869 postal history, who have not bought the book, details on ordering it may be found on page 7 of this issue of the *Times*.

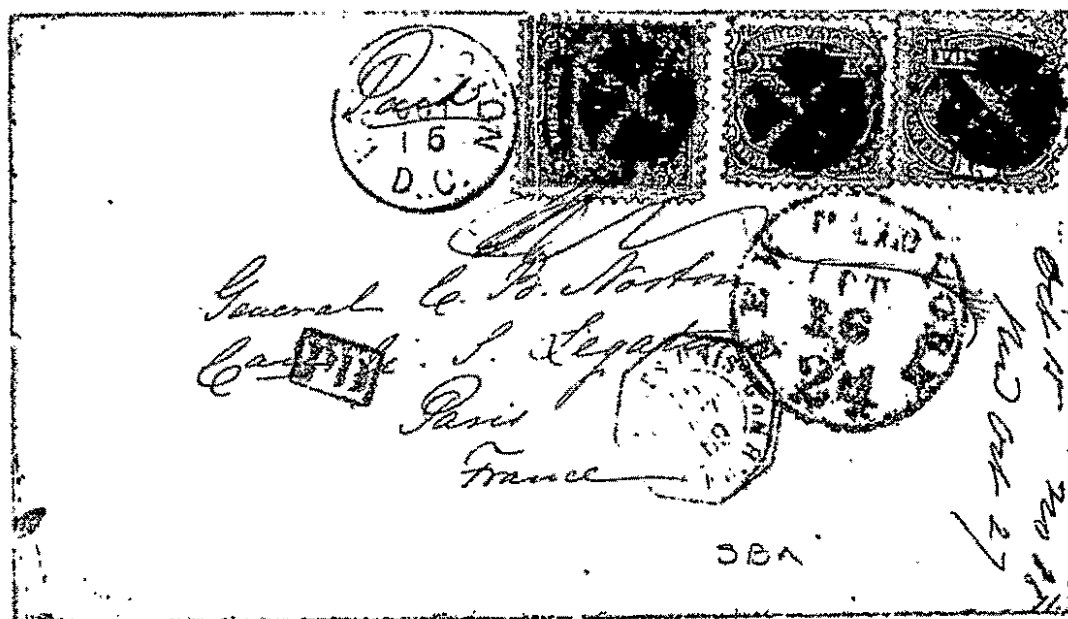


Figure 1. A 15c Type I 1869 plus 3c and 12c 1869s pay the double 15c rate from Washington, DC, to Paris on this Oct. 15, 1869 cover. Note "24" double rate credit in "NEW PAID YORK" cds. 15c was formerly listed as a Type II stamp.

15c TYPE I

Additions:

<u>Origin/Destination</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Stamps</u>	<u>Description/Remarks</u>	<u>Source</u>
NY/NY to Frankfurt, Ger.	5/4/70	118-1:	Red NY Br.trns.Verviers, Col.	D. B. Wood
Middleborough, MA/ Constantinople, Turkey	11/3/70	118-1:	5c crd. NGU-2 sgr. Washburn corresp.	D. B. Wood

15c TYPE I

Change:

<u>Origin/Destination</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Stamps</u>	<u>Description/Remarks</u>	<u>Source</u>
Wash., DC/Paris, France (See Fig. 1, page 12)	10/15/69	114, 117 118-1 (not 119)	NYPD '24", 2 x 15¢ rate, red "PD"	R. W. Cutts

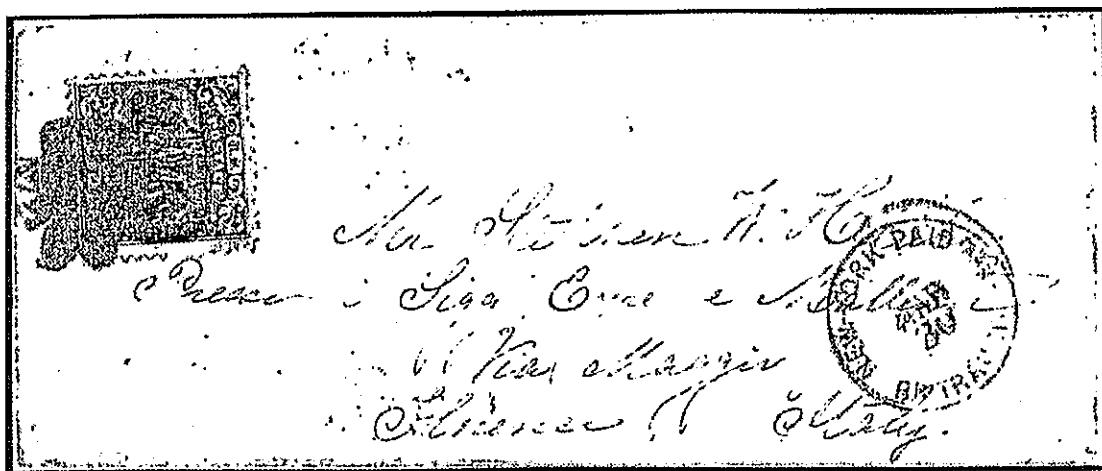


Figure 2. A 15c Type II pays the obsolete direct closed mail via England rate from NYC to Florence, Italy, Mar. 30, 1870.

15c TYPE II

Additions:

<u>Origin/Destination</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Stamps</u>	<u>Description/Remarks</u>	<u>Source</u>
NYC/Amsterdam, Holland	8/21/69	119-1:	CMvE;bkst. 9/4 Amsterdam	D. B. Wood
NYC/Florence, Italy (See Fig. 2 above)	3/30/70	119-1:	NYPD, Br.Trns.-bkst.Milano & Firenze (4/16)	E. Busch
Cooperstown, WI/Basel	4/1/70	119-1:	NYPD, Br.Trns.;Cooperstown CDS ties. Basel Arr.bkst.	Cherrystone: 2/18/87 L-2391

PRA Board of Directors Meeting Held April 25, 1987

William M. Wickert, Sr., of Virginia Beach, VA., was named secretary-treasurer, replacing Victor Krievins, who resigned, at the U.S. 1869 PRA, Inc. board of directors meeting held on April 25, 1987 at the WESTPEX show in San Francisco. The late and greatly missed Elliott Coulter resigned as vice president, being replaced by Richard Searing, Ph.D., of Placentia, CA. William Crowe, Danbury, CT, is now in charge of advertising for the 1869 Times.

New PRA board members include Wickert and Richard Cutts, a specialist in the 3¢ 1869 from Georgetown, Texas, who is in charge of publicity. PRA membership suffered due to delays in publishing the *1869 Times*, caused by financial problems (now mostly solved). As of January, 1988, membership stood at about 230. A motion to merge the 1869 PRA with the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society was rejected.

Jon Rose, *Times* editor, requested articles, shorts and photos (or photocopies) for the *Times*. "Help is needed; this is your publication," he stressed. A new classified ad section was to be initiated in *Times 42* (See p.14, this issue). The 1869 Cover Census book sales are going well. As of December, 1987, President Forster reported about 55 of the 100 deluxe copies had been spoken for and 220 of the 400 regular editions had been sold or distributed. Next meeting of the PRA board was set for 3 pm Friday, Jan. 22, at ARIPEX in Phoenix, AZ.

— N E W —

1869 TIMES CLASSIFIED AD SECTION

This section is open to any person or organization wishing to run a classified ad not to exceed 3 x 3 inches of space for \$15 per insertion. 1869 PRA members who submit an article, preferably with photo(s) or photocopy illustrations, which is accepted, will be entitled to run one free classified ad in a future issue of the *1869 Times*.

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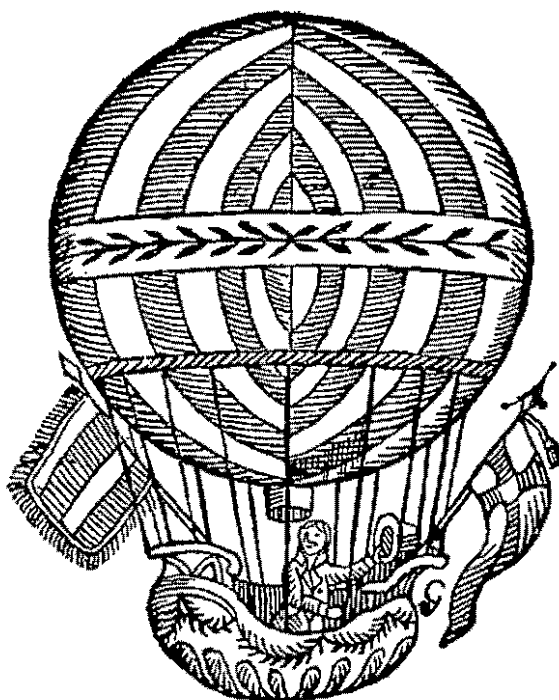
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