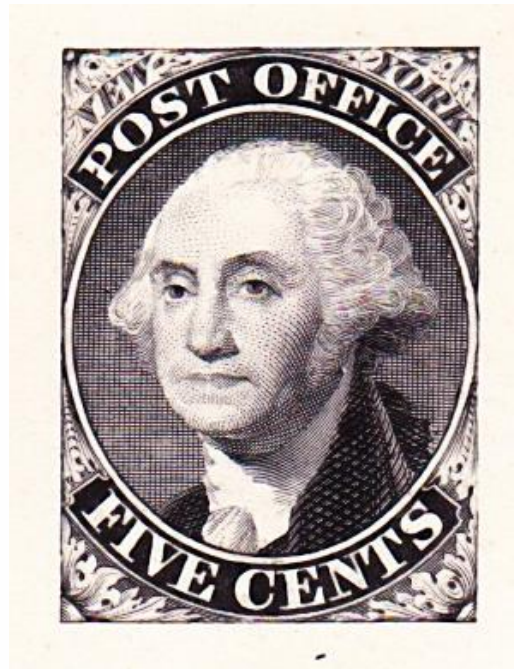


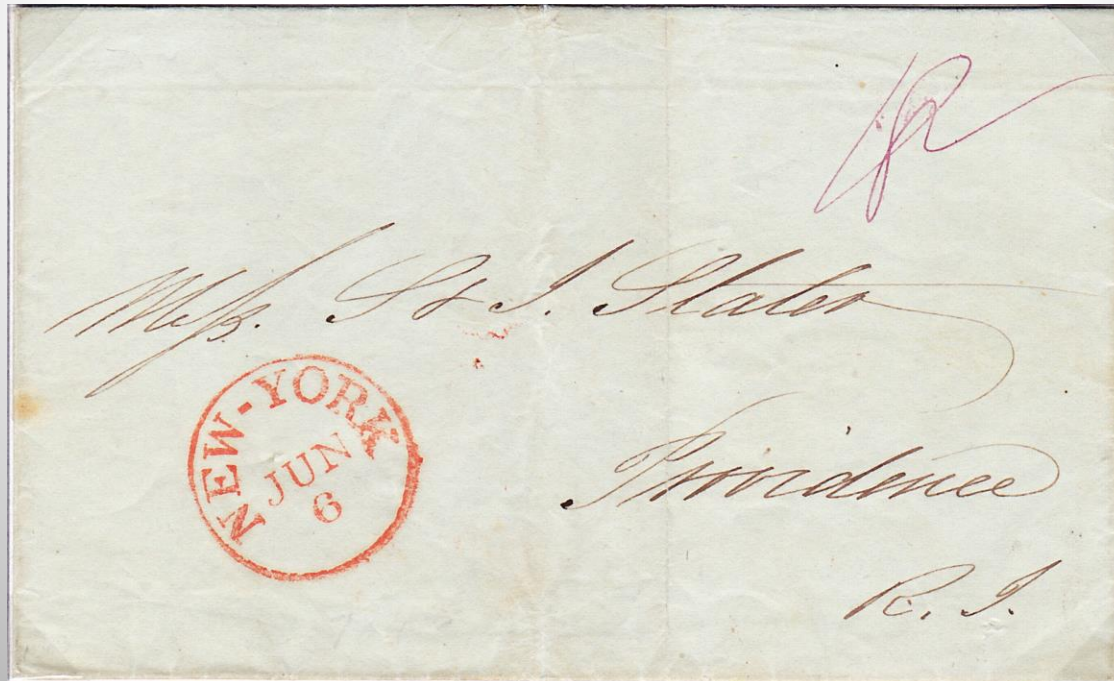
# The New York Postmaster Provisional Stamp of 1845



Mark Schwartz  
CCHS  
July 2023

# The Back-Story

- Before 1845, sending a letter could be very expensive.
- Rates began at 6¢ per sheet for a letter sent up to 40 miles to 25¢ for a letter sent over 400 miles.
- A letter sent from New York to Providence, like the one below sent on June 6, 1843, cost 18¾¢.



# Independent Mail Cos. Cut Rates

- Beginning in 1839, independent companies began carrying the mail much more cheaply, putting great pressure on the Post Office..
- The letter below, sent from Boston to New York on May 6, 1844, would have cost 18¾¢ if the post office carried it, but cost only 6¼¢ when carried by the American Letter Mail Company.

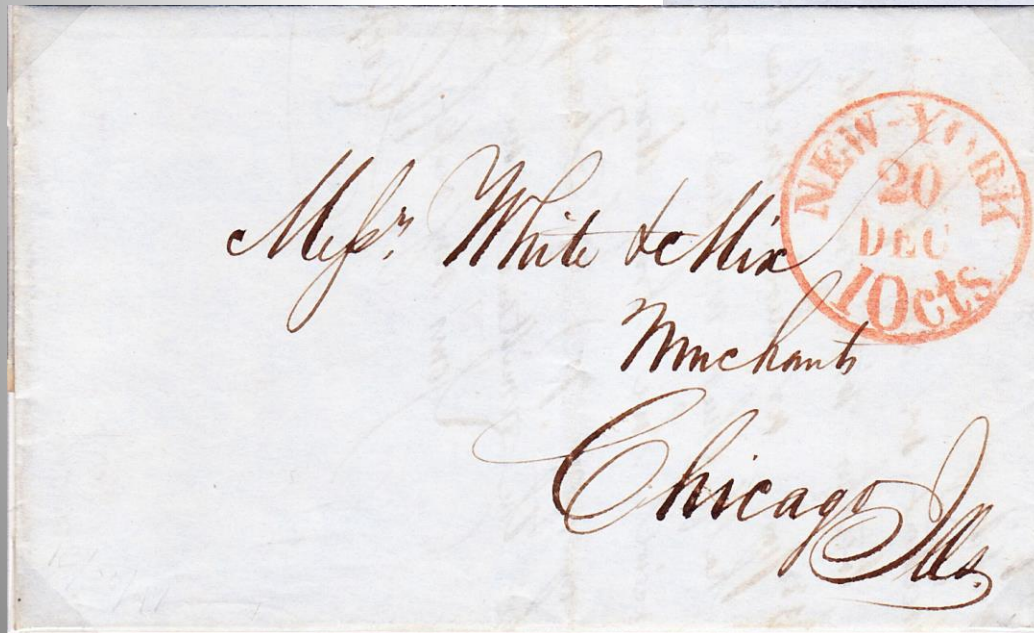




# The Post Office Concedes

- In March 1845, Congress reduced and simplified postal rates to 5¢ per ½ oz. for a letter sent up to 300 miles, and 10¢ for a letter sent over 300 miles.

December 20, 1847



July 20, 1848

# Where are the stamps?

- But in March 1845, Congress did not authorize the printing of postage stamps.
- They began being used in the U.K. in 1840, and Brazil in 1843
- U.S. Independent Mail companies had begun using them in early 1844.



Carried by Hale & Co.  
from Boston to NY  
on April 9, 1844

Stamps were sold at  
20 for \$1.00

This ½ - 1 oz. letter  
cost 10¢.

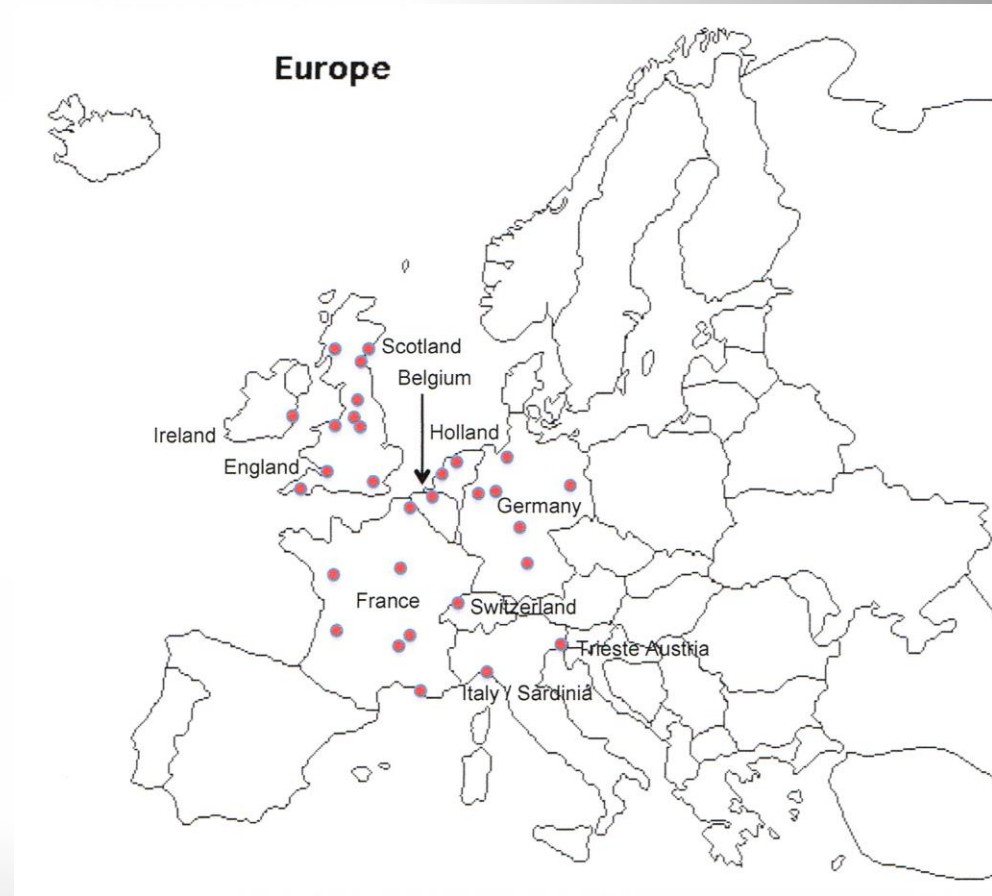
# Postmaster Creativity

Since stamps were not prohibited, postmasters of several cities and towns decided to have them printed privately, as a benefit to them and a convenience for their customers.

- ❖ Alexandria, Va.
  - ❖ Annapolis, Md.
  - ❖ Baltimore, Md.
  - ❖ Boscawen, N.H.
  - ❖ Brattleboro, Vt.
  - ❖ Lockport, N.Y.
  - ❖ Millbury, Mass.
  - ❖ New Haven, Conn.
  - ❖ New York, N.Y.
  - ❖ Providence, R.I.
  - ❖ St. Louis, Mo.
- Most of these stamps are quite scarce or even rare
  - The New York stamp, however, was broadly used, not only within the U.S. but also to the rest of North America and most of Western Europe.



# The Broad Use of the NY Provisional



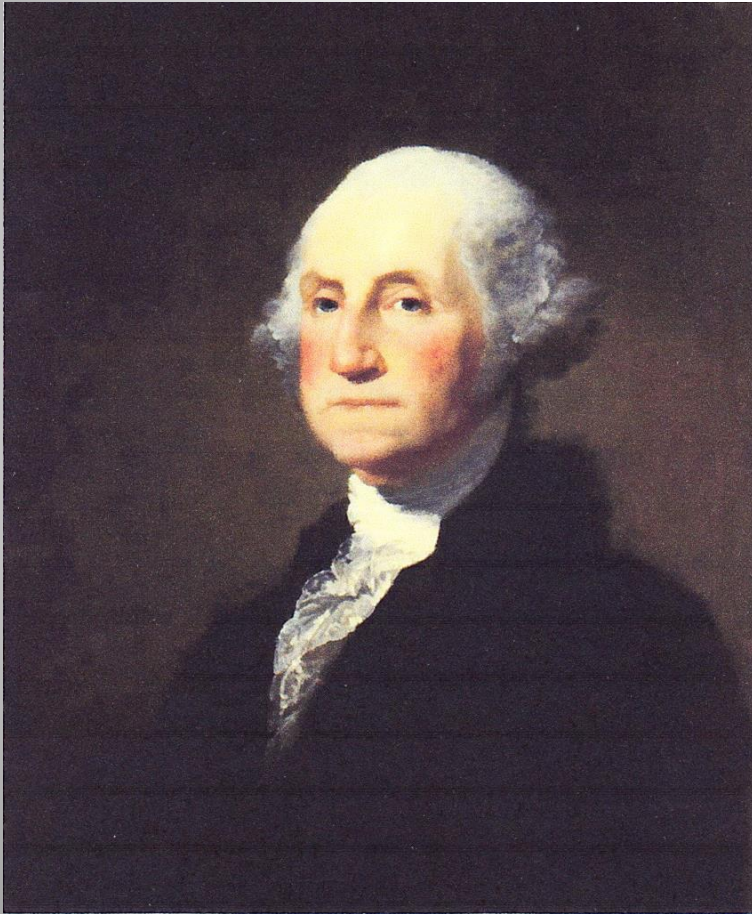
# The New York Postmaster

- Robert Hunter Morris was the postmaster from 1845-1849
- He had been Mayor in 1841-1844 and in 1852 became a NY Supreme Court Justice





# Design of the New York Provisional



- PM Morris contracted with Rawdon, Hatch & Wright to design and print the stamps, using an image of George Washington.
- They were already using (on currency) an image of the first president copied from the famous portrait painted by Gilbert Stuart in 1797.

# Master Design from Rawdon, Hatch & Wright



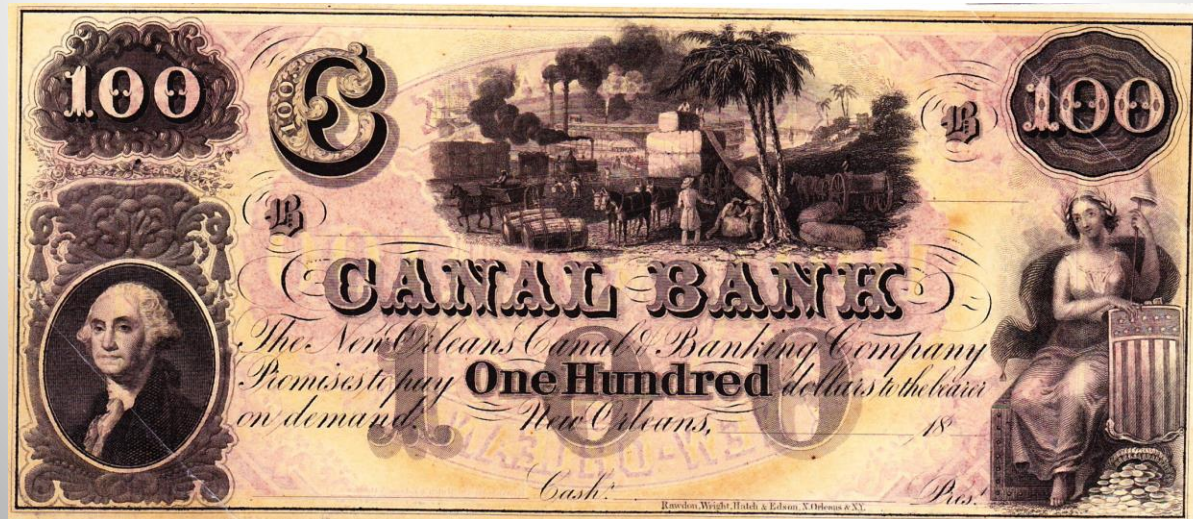
Full Proof



Vignette Proof



Vignette Proof



Vignette Proof Used on a Banknote

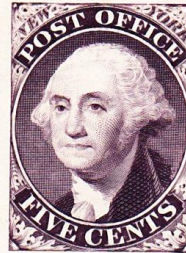


# Various Proofs of the NY Provisional

Large Combination Die Proof



Small Die Trial  
Color Proof



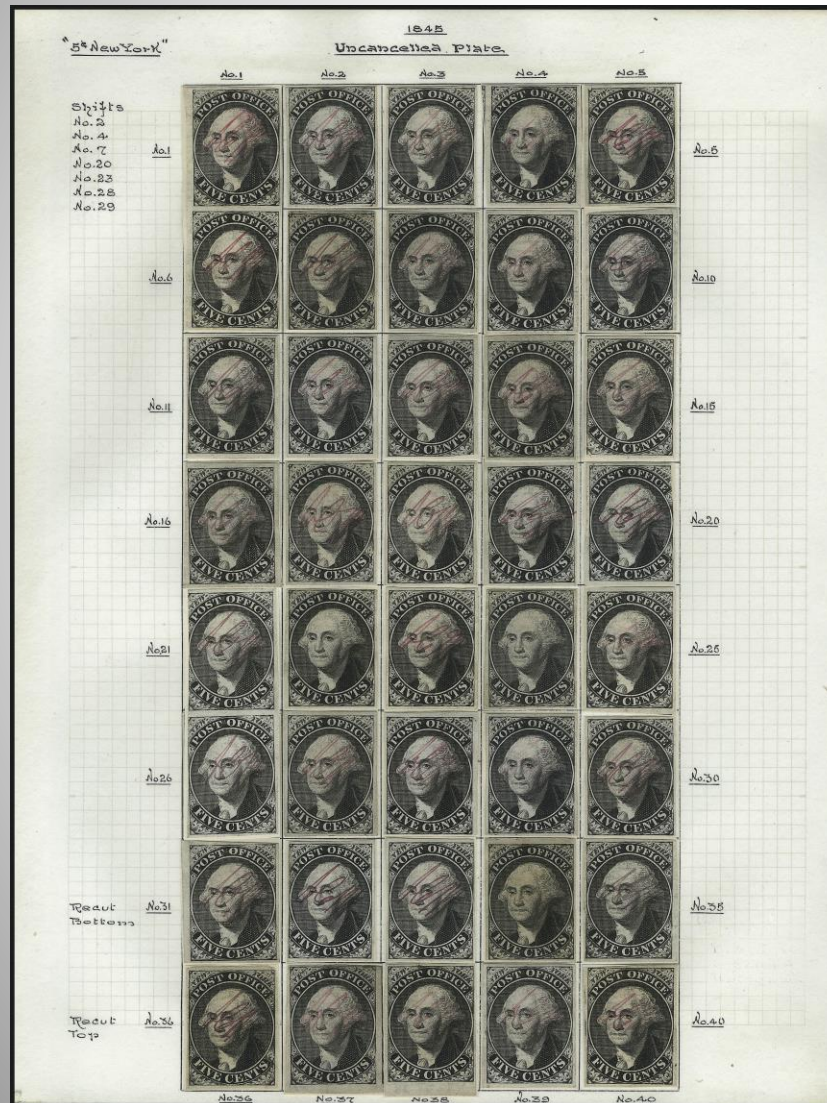
Large Die Trial Color Proof



Plate Proof



# The Full Pane

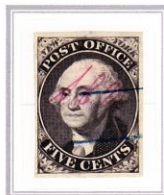


- Several attempts at plating the stamp were made as early as 1894, but the first published reconstruction in the 5x8 format was not made until 1921.
- There were 3590 panes of 40 stamps printed, for a total of 143,600 stamps.
- The first were delivered on July 12, 1845
- They were placed on sale on July 14, the same day Morris ran ads about their availability in the New York papers.
  - One of those ads highlighted the usefulness in using the new stamp on foreign mail.
- The earliest known covers are postmarked on July 15 – three domestic, 12 foreign.

Courtesy Robt. A. Siegel

# Paper Varieties of the NYPP

Pos. 32  
"A.C.M."

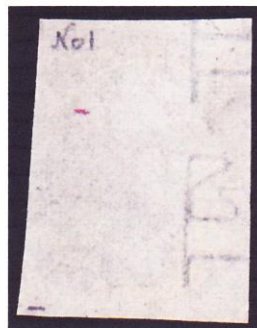


**Pelure** is a very thin paper that shows the design quite well from the reverse.

**Pelure Paper**



**Double Line Watermark**



Pos. 1  
"ACM"



The **double line** is clearly seen, with the first letter an "E" or "F".

Pos. 19  
"ACM"



The **stitch** watermark is difficult to see and runs vertically at the far left.

**Stitch Watermark** ↓



# Paper Varieties of the NYPP (2)

Pre-printing Paper Crease





# Paper Colors of the NYPP

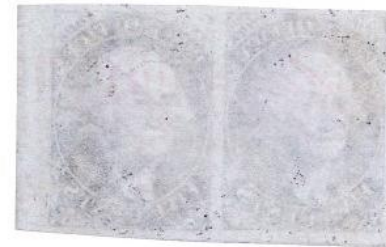
- The vast majority (95+%) of stamps were printed on a bluish-white paper.
- In the last shipment of stamps from Rawdon, Hatch & Wright (January 1847, some sheets were on a deeper blue or battleship gray paper.
- They are difficult to distinguish from the front, especially when cancelled, but may be seen more easily from the back.



Bluish-white



Gray



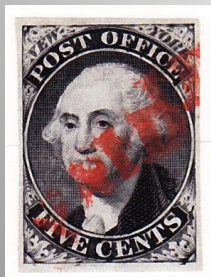
Blue

# The Blue Paper NYPP

- An estimated 50 examples of the NY Provisional on blue paper exist and there are 12 covers in the Scheuer Census on the USPCS website. The earliest is March 4, 1847.
- The blue paper is generally harder than the bluish-white and thicker.

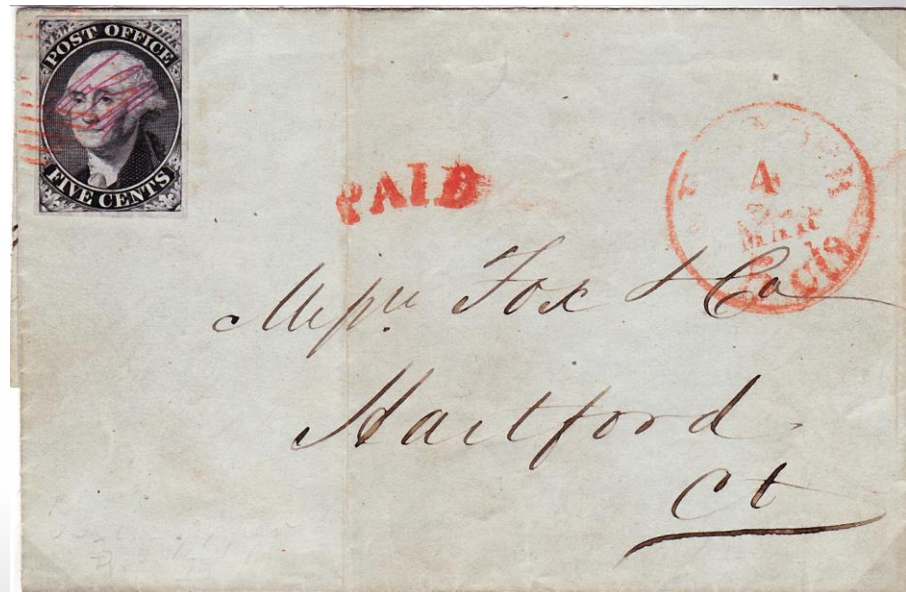


One of 4 known pairs



One of 2 unsigned  
and used

Ex-Morris



New York to Hartford, Conn

March 4, 1847

# The Gray Paper NYPP

- I have found records of 25 off-cover gray paper stamps, including two pairs, three with no control initial and 7 with “RHM” initials. Siegel claims there are 12 recorded covers (plus one in my collection not counted)
- The gray paper is also on a hard paper but with variable thickness.



New York to Lakeville, Conn

March 30, 1847



One of 7 with  
“RHM” initials



# Manuscript Cancells Used on the NYPP

A review of the Scheuer census (USPCS) indicates that 85% of manuscript cancells are in a bright blue ink. About 5% are in magenta, and 10% in black.

Magenta Manuscript

Pos. 1



PFC 132904

New York to Boston, Mass.

August 18, 1845

Black Manuscript - First Two Weeks of Use



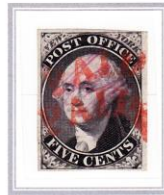
Pos. 4

New York to Plainfield, NJ

July 25, 1845

# Hand Cancels Used on the NYPP

Curved "PAID"



PAID

Boston Grid Cancel



"5" Rate Mark



5

Canadian Split  
Circle "U.C."



Blue Paper

"U.S." in Octagon



Fewer than 12 examples recorded

13-bar Grid



Used from Nov. 1846

# Hand Cancels Used on the NYPP

## On Foreign Mail

Pos. 25  
"ACM"



PFC 180472

New York via Boston and London to Lyons, France

July 15, 1846

Cunard steamer *Britannia* (July 16 - July 31)



The rate of 5c was for a letter of up to ½ oz. sent up to 300 miles.

An additional 25 decimes was paid by the addressee for Br. sea post and transit (10 dec.) and Fr. transit (15 dec.).



# The Control Initials

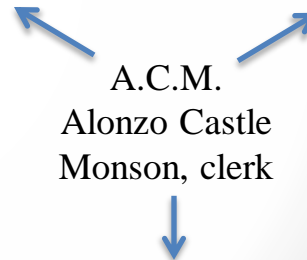
- After a few days where no control markings were put on the stamps, on July 17, 1845 we start seeing a variety of initials.
- These are believed to be control markings, possibly added to help prevent the use of stolen stamps.



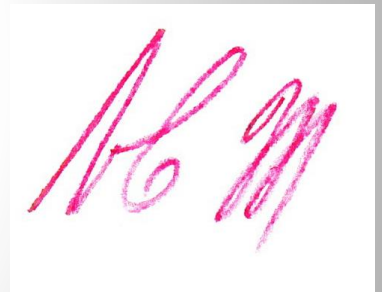
R.H.M.  
Robert Hunter  
Morris, PM.



All letters  
connected



A.C.M.  
Alonzo Castle  
Monson, clerk



“C” and “M” unconnected



M.M. Jr.  
Marcena Monson Jr.  
Asst. Deputy PM



With Periods

# “R.H.M.” Initials

- Other than the “MM Jr” initials, this is the scarcest type, with only 13 known covers and less than 25 off-cover stamps.



One of 6 known covers from New York City  
March 13, 1846

One of 7 known covers from New Hamburg, NY to NYC  
September 6, 1845



# “M.M. Jr” Initials

- Easily the rarest of the control markings, only three examples are known: one off cover stamp, on single on a full cover and a pair on a cover front.
- These are the initials of Marcena Monson Jr., Asst. Deputy PM.



Photo from USPCS census

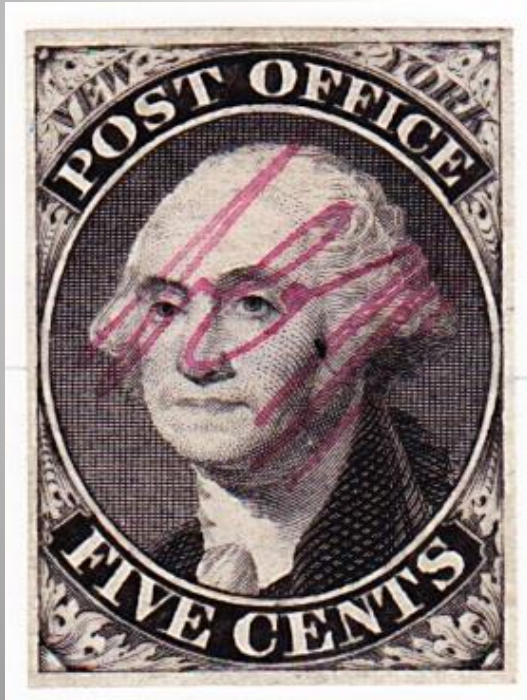
New York to Bethany, Va,

February 16, 1847



# “ACM” Initials (all connected)

- The “ACM” initials of Alonzo Castle Monson, postal clerk, brother-in-law of PM Morris and brother of Marcena, are seen on the vast majority of the NY Provisional stamps. The most common has all three letters connected.



New York to Ann Arbor, Mich.

March 21, 1847

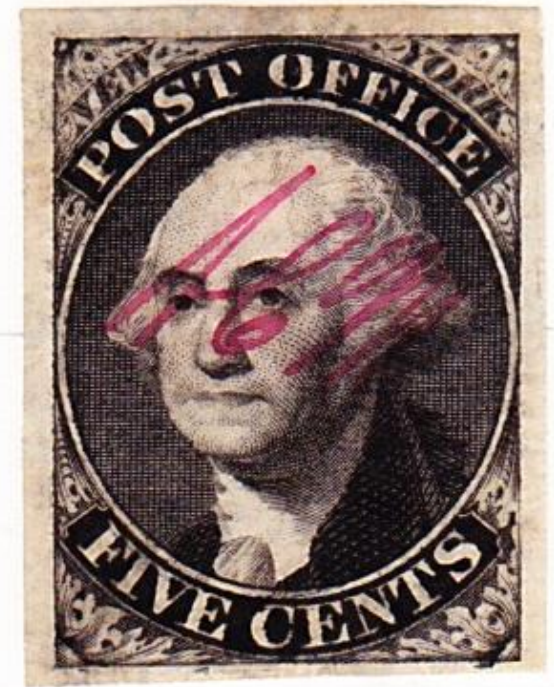
# “ACM” Initials (“AC” connected)

- This is only slightly less common than the all connected” variety. Besides Alonzo Castle Monson, other clerks likely applied these initials as well, accounting for the difference in handwriting.



New York to New Haven, Conn.

January 17, 1847





# “ACM” connected – unconnected se-tenant pair

- There are 7-8 examples of two different signatures appearing on consecutive stamps. Only one is on cover.





# “ACM” connected – unsigned

- The most striking example is an unused vertical pair where one of the copies is unsigned.



Courtesy Robt. A. Siegel

# “A.C.M.” Initials (with periods)

- This variety is the least common of all “ACM” initials. They were probably applied by Marcena Monson, brother of Alonzo. The ECU is on July 17, 1845



New York to Philadelphia, Pa.

September 15, 1845

# **A Few Interesting Covers**



# First Day of Use

- The earliest known covers were posted on July 15, 1845
- 11 are to foreign countries, including The U.K., Germany and France; only three are domestic uses.



One of three known sent to Germany on the first day of use



NYC to Philadelphia to NY, delivered to a lawyer on S/ 4<sup>th</sup> St.

# The Philadelphia “R”

- These are among the earliest Registered or “Recorded” covers.
- The earliest known are on November 1, 1845.
- There are 7 examples on NY Provisional covers.
- Note that the stamp is a bottom right corner margin example.



New York to Philadelphia, Pa.

March 11, 1846



# Railroad Covers

## NY-Philadelphia Railroad

- These covers were posted on the railroad, rather than at the NY PO, and marked by railroad agents. Only 4 such covers are currently known.



New York to Philadelphia, PA.

February 5, 1847

This 0-1/2 oz. letter was accepted  
as paid at the Philadelphia PO

This is a 1-1½ oz. letter with the 5¢ stamp  
accepted and 10¢ due from the addressee.



New York to Philadelphia Pa.

May 18, 1846



# Railroad Covers

## Long Island Railroad

- This unique cover was sent from NY City through the Atlantic Avenue tunnel (built in 1844, it is the world's oldest subway tunnel) then by an eastbound LIRR train to Greenport, LI and from there by LIRR steamboats connecting to RR lines to Boston.



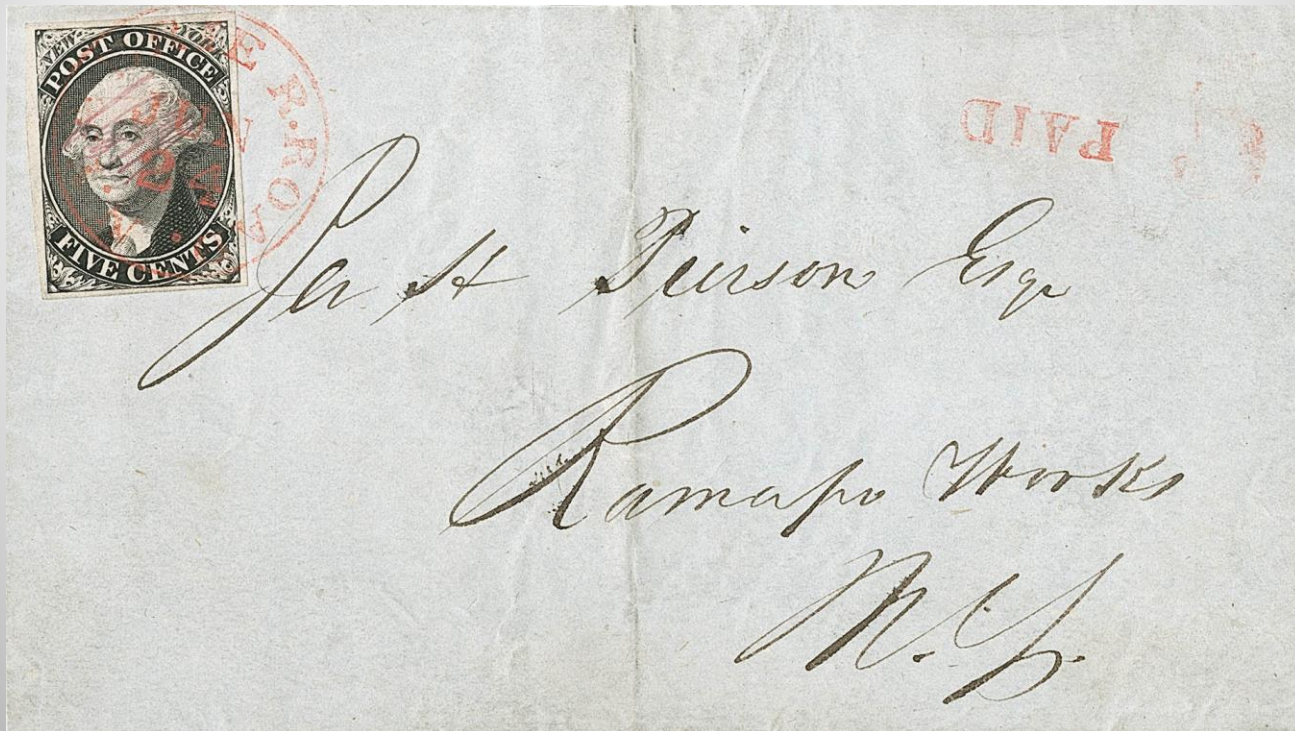
New York to Boston, Mass.

February 7, 1846

# Railroad Covers

## New York & Erie Railroad

- One of three known covers with this CDS.
- Sent from NYC via Hudson river steamboat to Piermont, NY and from there by the NY & Erie RR to Ramapo Works.



New York City to Ramapo Works, NY.

June 4, c. 1846



# Railroad Covers

## New York - Boston Express Mail

- A total of 7 covers are known bearing the U.S. Express Mail, New York marking. Three are to foreign destinations. This mail was not handled differently, although it did reflect mail that did not go through the NY Post Office, but was put directly on the train.



New York to Bolton, Mass.

September 1, 1845



# Local and Carrier Use

- Only a very few NY Provisional covers are known which bear a local or carrier stamp. Two covers are recorded with the 3c U.S. City Despatch post stamp. One other with the Boyd's City Express stamp is known.



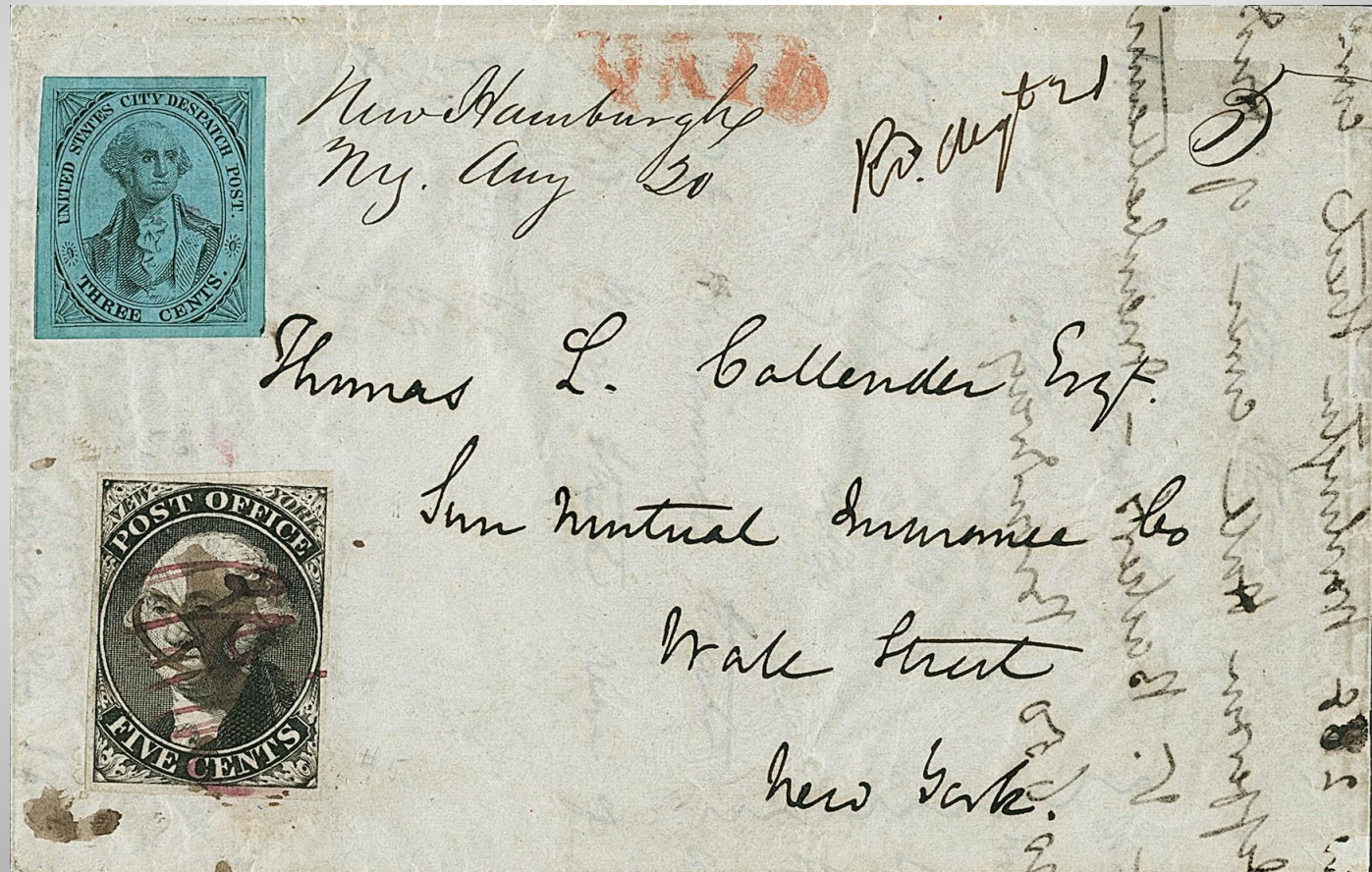
New York to Washington, D.C.

June 19, c.1846



# Local and Carrier Use (2)

- One of two NY Provisional covers known with the 3c U.S. City Despatch post stamp. The other is on a front sent to the Netherlands,



New Hamburg, NY to New York, NY

August 20, 1845



# Sent from Outside NYC

- PM Morris recognized that stamps would occasionally be used on mail sent from other cities. He sent other PMs a letter telling them to treat them as unpaid, and he would accept them as paid when they reached NY.



- Sent from **Boston** on November 8, 1845
- One of <10 recorded intact covers

- Sent from **Philadelphia** on May 25, 1846
- One of two known, the other a pair on cover sent *via* NYC to Canada.





# Sent from Outside NYC (2)

- Sent from **Boston** to New York on November 12, 1846.
- One of the two most outstanding covers with the provisional stamp used from another post office



# Sent from Outside NYC (3)

- Sent from **Charleston** to New York on December 7, 1846.
- No other Cover from Charleston is known.





# Multiples

- Four covers are known with a strip of 4.
  - Two are in the Erivan Haub collection (Court of Honor NY2016)



New York to Marietta, Ohio

June 2, 1846



# Multiples

- The cover below contains the second largest multiple, from NYC to Buffalo at a 30¢ rate (1-1½ oz. sent over 300 miles)



New York to Buffalo, NY

April 3, 1846

# Multiples

- The cover with the largest multiple, called the Hasbrouck cover, has a block of 9 and strip of 3. The 60c postage pays a 6-times rate for a cover sent over 300 miles, to Ogdensburgh, NY, on the Canadian border.



New York to Ogdensburgh, NY

April 1?, 184?

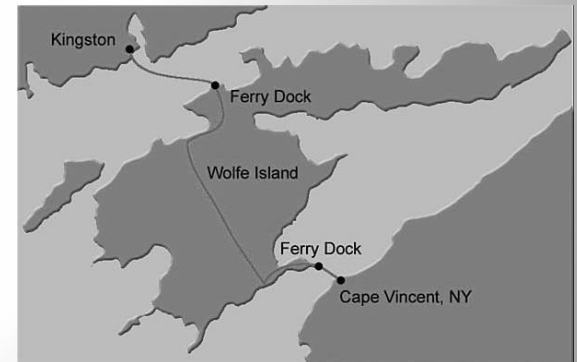
# Foreign Mail

- The New York Postmaster Provisional was sent to countries throughout North America and Western Europe.
  - Canada
  - The Maritimes
  - Mexico
  - Puerto Rico
  - England, Scotland  
and Ireland
  - France
  - Germany
  - Belgium
  - Switzerland
  - Holland
  - Austria
  - Italy



# To Canada

- There are about 8 covers known sent to Canada.
- Posted on Jan. 22, 1847, it was sent overland to Cape Vincent NY. It then took two ferries, one from the U.S. to Wolfe's Island, a second from Wolfe's Island to Kingston, Canada.
- Because of that the normal 2d ferriage charge was 3d.



# Puerto Rico

- The only example of as New York Postmaster Provisional sent to Puerto Rico.
- Sent on Sept. 9, 1846 from New York to Baltimore, and from there *via the Brig Frances Jane*, to PR.





# England / Austria



- Posted Nov. 28, 1845 and carried to Liverpool by the Cunard steamer *Britannia*. The addressee paid 1sh for sea post and British transit.

- Many covers to the U.K. were forwarded to Austria, either “under cover” (no further postal markings) or through the post.
- Posted Jan. 31, 1846 and carried to Liverpool by the Cunard steamer *Hibernia*. Delivered in London where the 1sh packet rate was paid, then forwarded by post to Trieste. The addressee paid 38 Kreuzer for French and Swiss transit and for the Austrian domestic post.





# France / Germany



- Posted July 15, 1846 and carried to Liverpool by the Cunard steamer *Britannia*. The addressee in Marseilles paid 21 decimes (10 dec. for British sea post and transit, and 11 dec. for French transit).

- **One of 11 FDU's sent to a foreign country.**
- Posted July 15, 1845 and carried to Liverpool by the Cunard steamer *Acadia*. At Augsburg, Germany, it was marked 50 kreuzer due (34 for France and 16 kreuzer for Germany)



# Switzerland / Belgium



- There are four full covers known to Belgium.
- Posted Oct. 15, 1845 and carried on the Cunard steamer *Cambria* to Liverpool. Marked 1sh, 8d in the U.K. for sea post and Br. Transit. Sent by packet to Ostende, Belgium and when it reached Anvers, marked 24 decimes due (20 dec. Br. Sea post and transit, plus 4 dec. for Belgium transit).

- There are four covers known to Switzerland.
- Posted Jan. 31, 1846 and carried on the Cunard steamer *Hibernia* to Liverpool. It traveled through France to Switzerland under a postal agreement between the U.K. and France in 1843. In Switzerland it was rated as a  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. letter, with 46 Kreuzer due for British sea post and for British, French and Swiss transit.





# Epilog - The Issue of 1847

- On March 3, Congress authorized the PMG to prepare postage stamps “to facilitate the transportation of letters in the mail” and as “evidence of the prepayment of the postage...” The 5c and 10c stamps were again printed by Rawdon, Wright & Hatch, now with Edson as a fourth partner. They were issued on July 1, 1847 and the New York Post Office ceased selling the Provisional issue.

A copy of the 5c 1847 stamp used as a direct replacement for the NY Provisional on a 0-½ oz. letter sent on Feb. 3, ~1850 under 300 miles to Boston.



A pair of the 10c 1847 stamp used for increased convenience on a ½-1oz. letter sent on June 14, 1850 over 300 miles to New Orleans.

