

## INTRODUCTION

For most of the history of the United States Post Office, if you wanted to receive mail or mail a letter, you had to go to your local post office. What we know as letter carriers didn't exist, except in a few of the largest cities, and even then such operated sporadically. Since fees were paid in cash and no postal markings were used, there is little extant evidence of these early carrier operations.

By the early 1840's, entrepreneurs in large eastern cities established local delivery posts completely independent of the U. S. P. O. These private local delivery posts established sub-offices and placed mail boxes for collection of letters throughout their cities. Some of them also established offices in other cities or had cooperative arrangements with local posts in other cities. And many of these local posts issued postage stamps for prepayment of fees. The competition with the U. S. P. O. cut into postal revenues.

On July 1, 1845, all city streets, roads, railroads and waterways were defined "post roads" by Act of Congress. Delivery of mail via "post roads" was declared a monopoly of the U. S. Post Office, and most of the local posts were suppressed, though the process took two decades. Some of the local posts were purchased by their city post office, which continued their services as carrier operations. Pickup or delivery fees were at the discretion of the postmaster, who by law could charge either one or two cents.

U. S. P. O. carriers, while providing the same intra-city pickup and delivery services as local firms, were bonded employees of the post office. Some were salaried employees, while others were paid based on the number of letters they carried.

In 1851, the U. S. P. O. issued general stamps for the use of carriers. In September, the Franklin carrier stamp, which featured a portrait of Benjamin Franklin facing left, was inscribed "CARRIERS STAMP" and was undenominated to accommodate cities where the postmaster had set the fee at two cents. It was printed in blue on rose colored paper. In November 1851, the Eagle carrier stamp appeared. Printed in blue on white stamp paper, this bore the denomination of one cent and saw much wider use than the Franklin carrier stamp. Many carrier operations, though, opted to issue their own city carrier department stamps.

This exhibit provides an overview of the carrier operations to July 1, 1863, when all carrier fees were abolished and carrier services were extended to progressively more cities. The emphasis is on the postal history and usages.



Eagle carrier  
1851 issued block of six



Franklin carrier  
blue on rose paper  
1876 reissue



Franklin carrier  
card proof of 1876  
reissue



Eagle carrier  
card proof of 1876  
reissue

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND



To-the-mails carrier fee prepaid with 1 cent blue typographed "eye" semi-official Baltimore carrier, May 6, 1859.



1 cent black postrider with blue Baltimore town mark

To-the-mails carrier fee prepaid with 1 cent black typographed postrider semi-official. Postrider's banner shows "ONE SENT" instead of "ONE CENT," position 7.

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND



To-the-mails carrier fee prepaid with 1 cent 1861 regular stamp, November 11, 1861.  
Three cents stamp is pink color.



To-the-mails carrier fee prepaid with 1 cent 1861 regular stamp, November 24, 1861.  
Ex-Hollowbush.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



To-the-mails carrier fee prepaid with 1 cent "PENNY POST" unofficial carrier, October 3, 1850



To-the-mails carrier fee prepaid with 1 cent "PENNY POST PAID" unofficial carrier, January 2, 1853.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

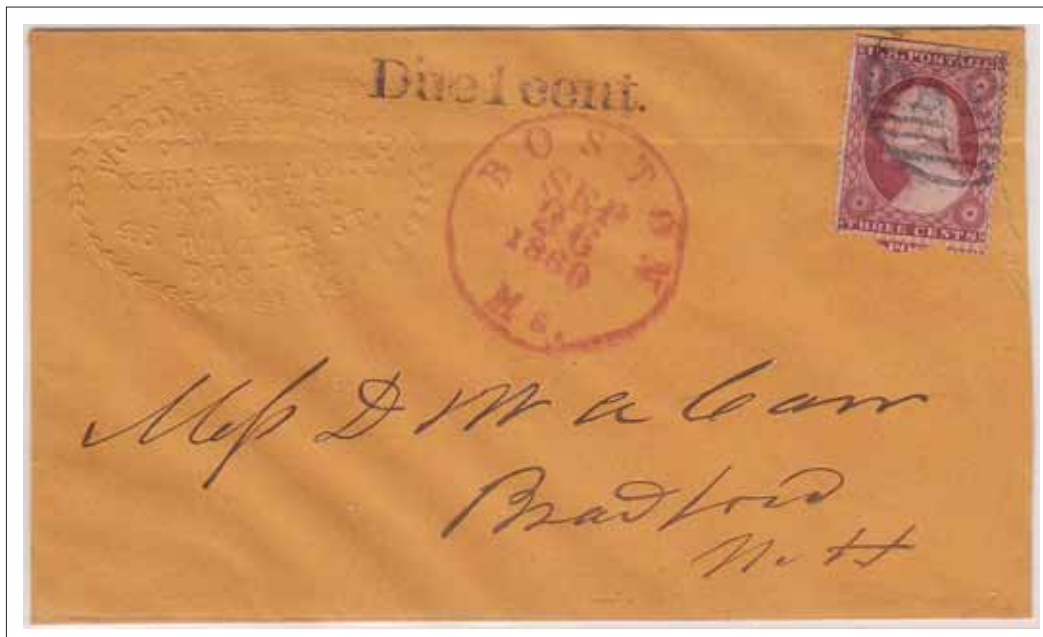


To-the-mails carrier fee prepaid with 1 cent 1857 regular stamp, August 7, 1861.  
 One cent stamp is type II, position 15L12.  
 Ex-Chase, illustrated in Ashbrook Volume II.



Drop letter fee paid by 1 cent 1861 regular stamp. From-the-mails carrier fee paid by cash  
 or on personal account, March 11, 1862.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



One cent to-the-mails carrier fee paid by recipient.  
 Boston, Massachusetts, to Bradford, New Hampshire, September 26, 1860.

For a short period from August through October of 1860, the Postmasters of Boston, Philadelphia and New York permitted the collection of to-the-mails carrier fee to be passed on to the addressee in another city. Beginning in November 1860, such partially unpaid carrier service letters were held for payment of the fee by the sender.

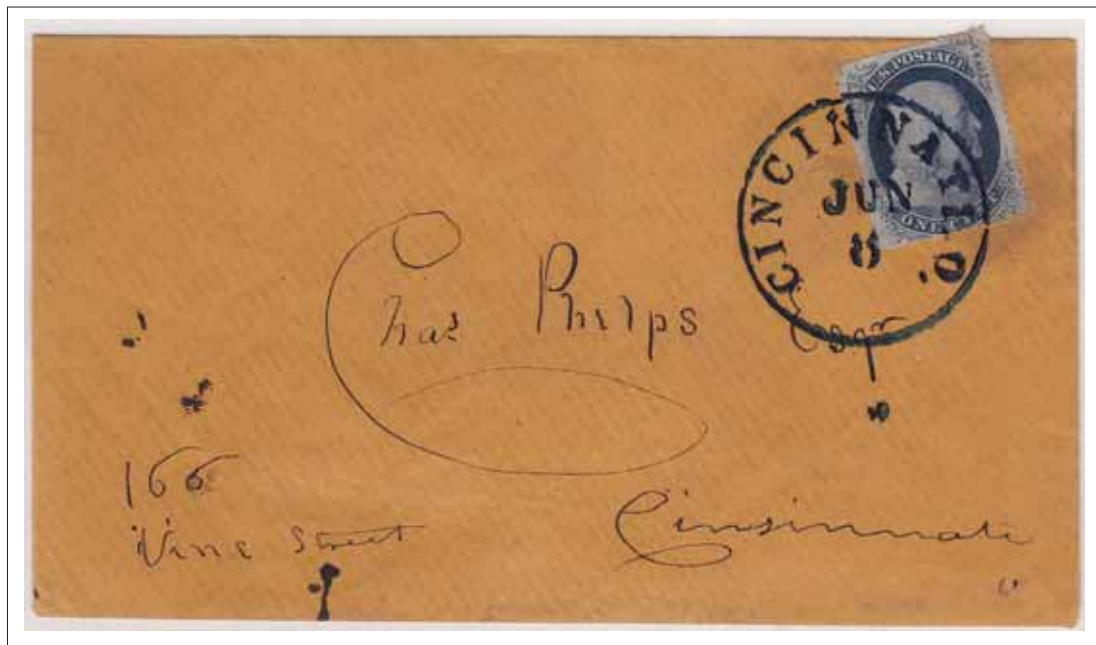
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA



Honour's City Post  
 2 cents black on bluish

From 1849 through 1860, the Charleston Post Office had four bonded carriers, but never more than two working at any one time. All of them, John H. Honour, E. J. Kingman, Joseph G. Martin and John F. Steinmeyer, Jr., issued semi-official carrier stamps.

CINCINNATI, OHIO



One cent "Eagle" official carrier used in Cincinnati.

Drop letter fee paid by 1 cent 1857 regular stamp.  
From-the-mails carrier fee paid by cash or on personal account.

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA



To-the-mails carrier fee prepaid with cash or on account,  
blue "N.O.U.S. CITY POST" "snow shovel" postmark, June 21, 1853.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK



**UNITED STATES CITY DESPATCH POST**

The New York Post Office purchased Grieg's City Despatch Post in 1842. Alexander M. Grieg remained as manager under Post Office ownership. The three cents Grieg stamp is also known used as a local issue. U.S. City Despatch Post was folded into the New York Mail Carrier organization in 1846.



**U.S. MAIL CARRIER**

Letter started in Bloomingdale, Michigan, November 23, 1849, then finished and mailed in New York City on December 15th. To-the-mails carrier fee prepaid with 1 cent black on buff New York carrier stamp. Regular postage was collect, to West Woodstock, Connecticut.



1 cent on rose



1 cent on yellow



1 cent on buff



NEW YORK, NEW YORK



**U.S. MAIL CARRIER**

Red [SHIP] "6" in circle and red straight line "2<sup>ND</sup> DELIVERY" carrier marking.  
 Bill of lading accompanying shipment of foundry ladles from Liverpool, 1844.  
 Recipients could instruct Post Office to automatically deliver via carrier.  
 Ship letter and carrier fee paid with cash or on account.



**U.S. MAIL CARRIER**

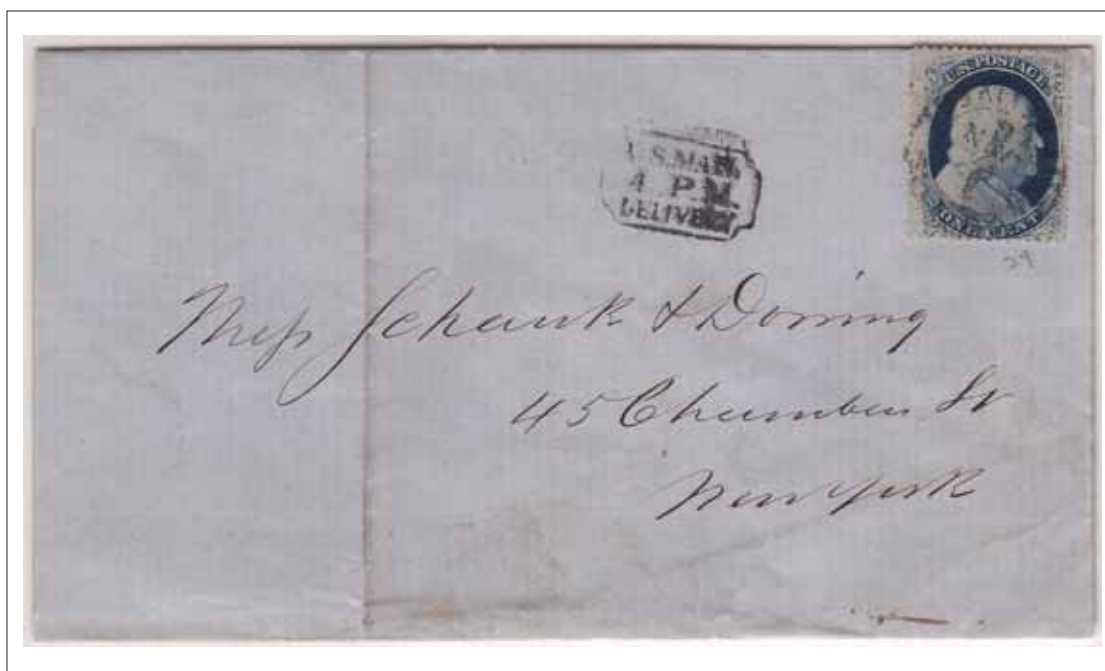
Unpaid from-the-mails carrier service. Hour marking in octagon from Station A.  
 No letter indicated main Post Office; stations were designated with letters A through G.  
 Circular carrier marking in use 1856-1858.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK



**U.S. MAIL CARRIER**

From-the-mails carrier fee paid by 1 cent 1861. "PAID / CITY DELIVERY" circular date stamp properly struck in red.



**U.S. MAIL CARRIER**

Pre-printed order for merchandise from Scranton, Pennsylvania, dated June 4, 1859. Carried bootleg to New York City and dropped off at the main carrier office for delivery. Carrier fee paid by 1cent 1857 type V. "CITY DELIVERY" circular date stamp indicating 1 cent due improperly struck in black.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK



**U.S. MAIL CARRIER**

From-the-mails carrier fee paid with 1 cent 1861.  
Unusual resurrection of 1840's-period curved "PAID" marking.



**U.S. MAIL CARRIER**

One cent to-the-mails carrier fee paid by sender.  
Envelope bearing 3 cents stamp only dropped in letter box in Brooklyn (per enclosed letter).  
Reverse bears "NEW-YORK / APR 27" receiving mark.  
Face bears "Held For Postage" straight line. Under the 1 cent stamp is a "Due 1" handstamp.  
New York Post Office requested 1 cent stamp for carrier fee from sender.  
Stamp was duly sent and affixed. Both stamps then cancelled by "NEW-YORK / MAY ?" duplex.

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

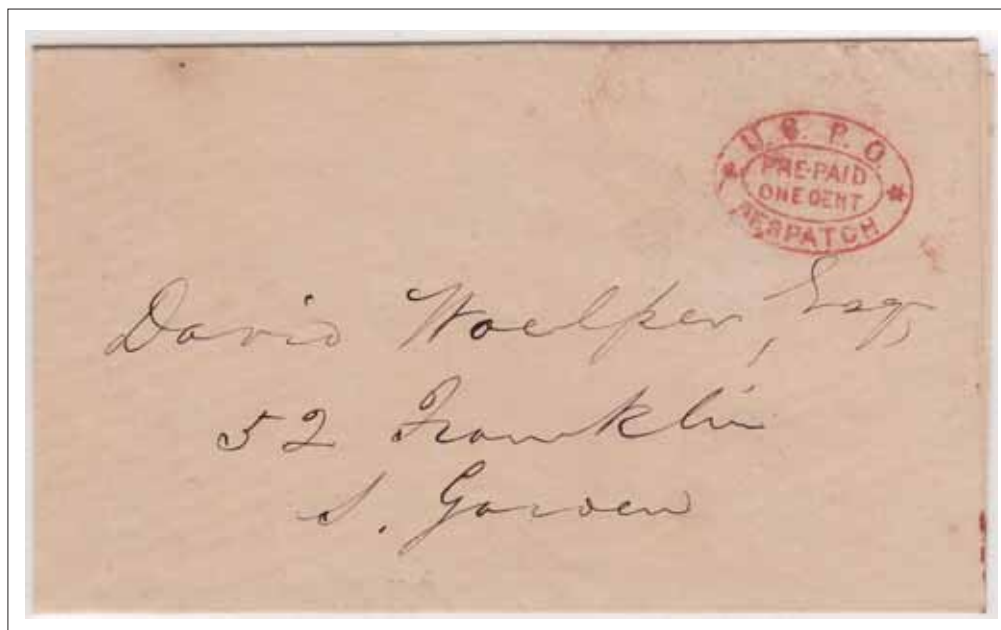


From-the-mails carrier fee paid via Eagle carrier stamp.



To-the-mails carrier fee prepaid with Eagle carrier.  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Delafield, Wisconsin, May 24, 1853.

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA



From-the-mails carrier fee prepaid via cash or on account, 1853.

Oval handstamp used as a postmark (as in this case).

It was also used for making prepaid envelopes (which always have an additional postmark) and for making adhesives by impressing on selvages of 1851 1 cent stamps.



To-the-mails carrier fee prepaid with 1 cent 1861.  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to New Haven, Connecticut, June 9, 1862.

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA



To-the-mails carrier fee prepaid with 1 cent 1861.  
Double-weight cover from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Sandy Spring, Maryland, June 17, 1861.  
Unlike the regular postage, the carrier fee was assessed per piece, not on the basis of weight.



To-the-mails carrier fee paid in cash or on account, "U.S. PENNY MAIL / DEC 27" carrier postmark.  
Main Philadelphia post office notified sender (Philadelphia & Reading R.R., per embossed flap)  
that recipient had moved and requested additional 3 cents stamp for forwarding.  
Sender complied. First 3 cents stamp postmarked DEC 30 and second 3 cents stamp postmarked JAN 1 / 1862.

WASHINGTON, D.C.



"H" in red manuscript precancel  
(Thomas F. Harkness)



"J" manuscript precancel  
(Vincent Jackson)



"B" manuscript precancel  
(Robert Ball)



"CJW" manuscript precancel  
(Charles J. Wright)



To-the-mails carrier fee paid by Eagle carrier bearing manuscript precancel "H" in red (Thomas F. Harkness).

NON-CARRIER USAGES



Supplemental fee for letter mailed at West Side Station, Chicago, Illinois, April 19, 1863. Chicago was not a city with carrier service. The 1 cent fee was to transport the letter to the main post office.

“Way” letter with one cent 1857 type V prepaying way fee. Charleston, South Carolina, carriers used their own semi-official adhesives exclusively. Three cents Nesbitt patent envelope paid the regular postage.



Letter from Freeport, Illinois, to Philadelphia, March 4, 1861. One cent regular stamp plus street address in Philadelphia indicate attempted prepayment of from-the-mails carrier fee. If letter was delivered by a Philadelphia carrier, the fee was paid by the recipient, and the 1 cent stamp was wasted.