

The First United States Issue: The Stamps & How They Were Used

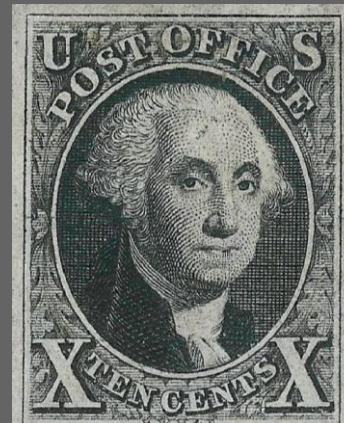
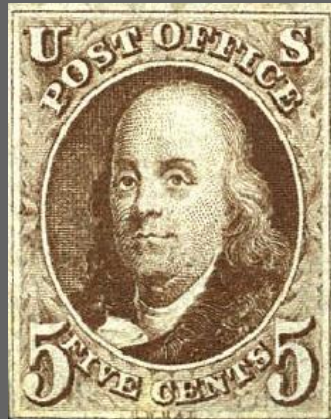
Gordon Eubanks FRPSL



Stampless letters, paid for by the receiver, and private postal systems, were gradually phased out in the United States after the introduction of adhesive postage stamps, first issued by the U.S. government post office on 1st July 1847, in the denominations of 5¢ and 10¢, with the use of stamps made mandatory in 1855.

The first U.S. postage stamps were authorized by an act of Congress and approved on 3rd March 1847. The earliest known use of the Franklin 5¢ is 7th July 1847, and the earliest known use of the Washington 10¢ is 2nd July 1847. Remaining in postal circulation for only a few years, these issues were declared invalid for postage on 1st July 1851.

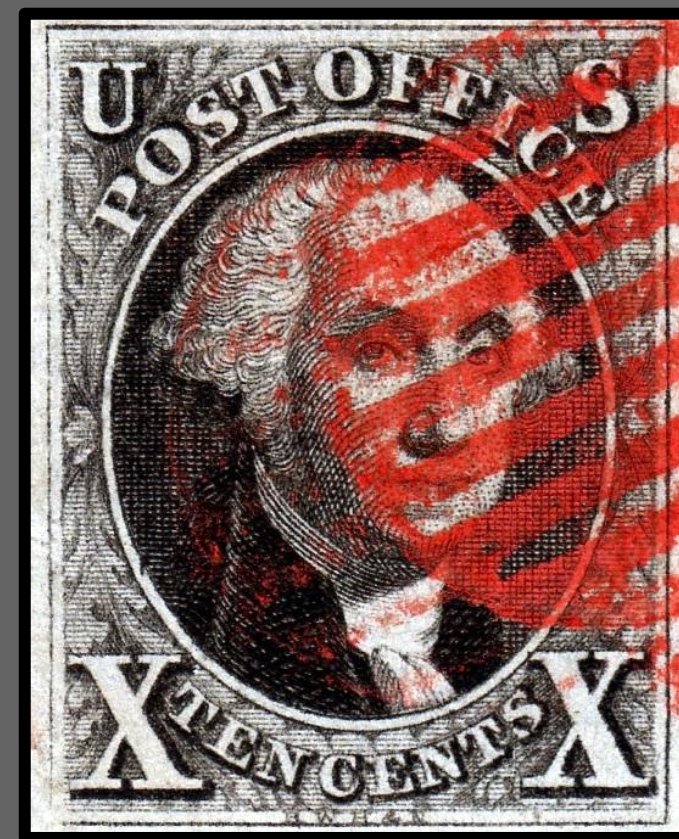
This presentation focuses on how these first two stamps issued by the United States were used, both in the United States and for International mail.





The First Issue of the US: The Stamps and How They Were Used

Gordon Eubanks
Royal Philatelic Society London
20 May 2021 via ZOOM



United States Postal Policy in the 1840's and 1850's

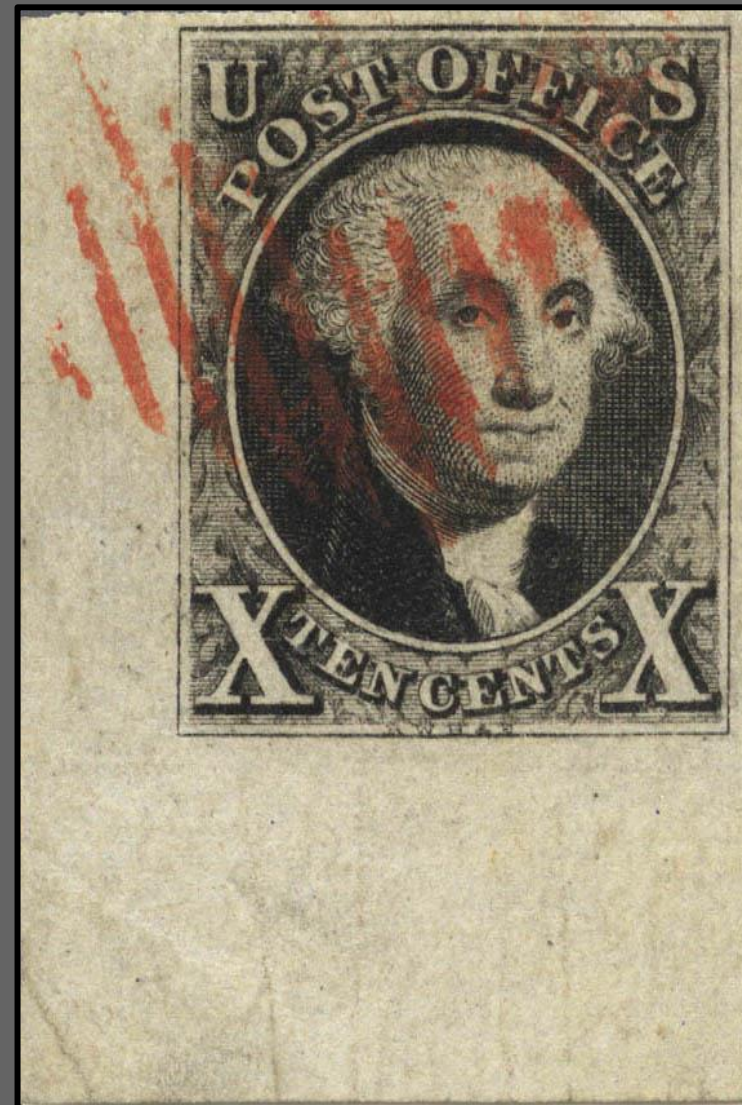
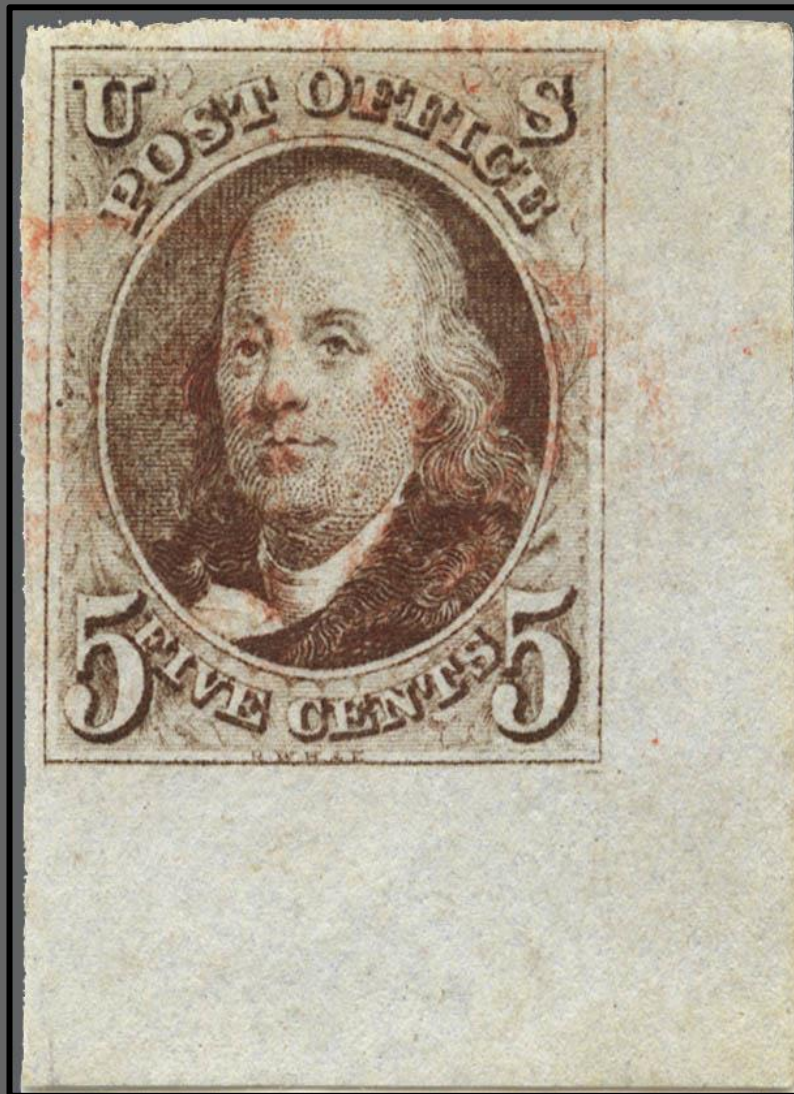
International trend was to significantly lower rates and mandatory prepayment with Stamps

- The US took this in steps, first addressing lower rates in 1845
- In July 1847 it was the 3rd country to general use postage stamps*
This depends on how you count! To understand all this, I highly recommend the book:
International Postal Reforms by James L. Grimwood-Taylor
- Required mandatory prepayment in 1855
- And finally in 1856 mandatory use of stamps for letter mail

*New South Wales (local), **GB**, US (local), Zurich (local) , **Brazil** , Geneva (local), Brunswick (Local), Batavia (to Egypt), Basel (general), US (provisional), St Petersburg (local), Moscow (local) and finally **US**

The Stamps Issued 1 July 1847

One Unhardened Steel Plate for Each Stamp – 2 Panes of 100 stamps Per Plate



Newbury Corner Copies

Multiples of the 5 and 10 Cent Unused Stamps



Bible Block – discovered in a bible
Largest recorded block - Full OG



Block of 8 full OG NH



Strip of 4 with OG

Large Recorded Multiples On Cover



Stamps pay 50 of the 60 cents due for a letter weighing between 3 and 4 ounces. 10 due.

3 x 30 cent rate from Peru to Mexico through Panama.
'PANAMA' handstamp applied under stamps.
Top right stamp replaced over torn stamp.



Positions 85-87R , 95-97RL, 71R, 81R, 91R

Straddle-Pane Examples Proving 2 Panes Per Plate



5c Stamps Plate Wear and Ink Colour

Four states of the plate



There were 5 printings and the plate was reworked before the 4th printing.

Detailed Images of Wear of 5 Cent Stamps

Plate
Proof

Early
Print

Inter.
Print

Worn
Plate

Cleaned
Plate



Examples of 5c Shades From Early and Late Printings



Orange brown first printing



Dark brown first printing



Red Brown early printing



Brown orange worn plate



Red Orange worn plate



Orange brown
cleaned plate

Brown Orange Pair Cleaned Plate From Last Delivery of Stamps
Right Stamp Double Transfer C



Intermediate Printing Red Brown Pair

From Canada Paying the 10c Through Rate



Early Uses of the Issue of 1847

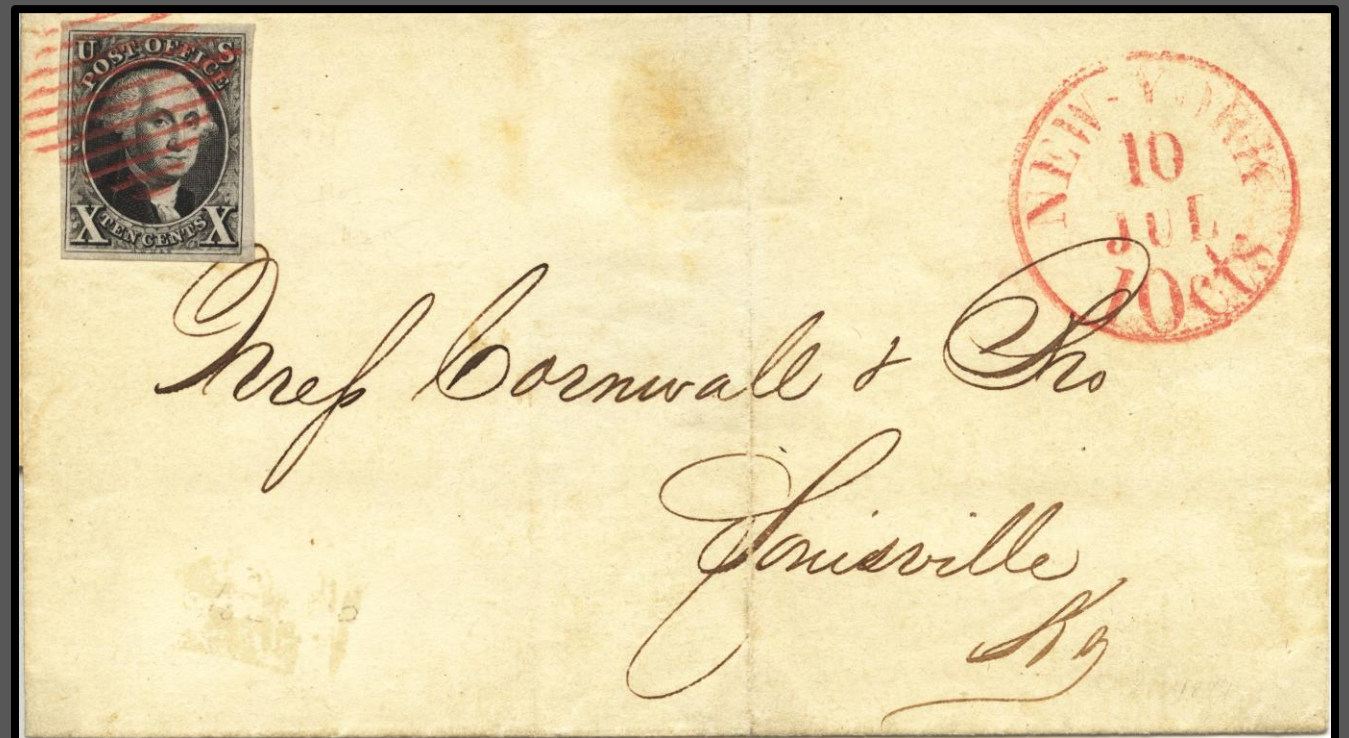
7 July 1847

Earliest recorded use of 5 cent stamp



The stamps were delivered to NYC on 1 July 1847.
Earliest recorded use 10 cent stamp 2 July from New York
Delivered to Boston on 2 July
Philadelphia 7 July & Washington DC 9 July
About 65 covers with either stamp recorded in July 1847

10 July 1847



Domestic Rate Structure Effective March 1845

- Letter under 300 miles 5 cents
- Letter over 300 miles 10 cents
- Letter over 3,000 miles 40 cents effective 3 March 1847
- Drop letter 2 cents
- Unsealed circular 3 cents
- Way 1 cent paid to person delivering and charged recipient
- Incoming ship letter - Captain receives 2 cents
- From East coast of Panama to New York 20 cents
- From West coast of Panama to New York 30 cents

Letter rates in $\frac{1}{2}$ oz increments.
After 3 March 1849 from 1 oz in 1 oz increments

Domestic Letter Rates

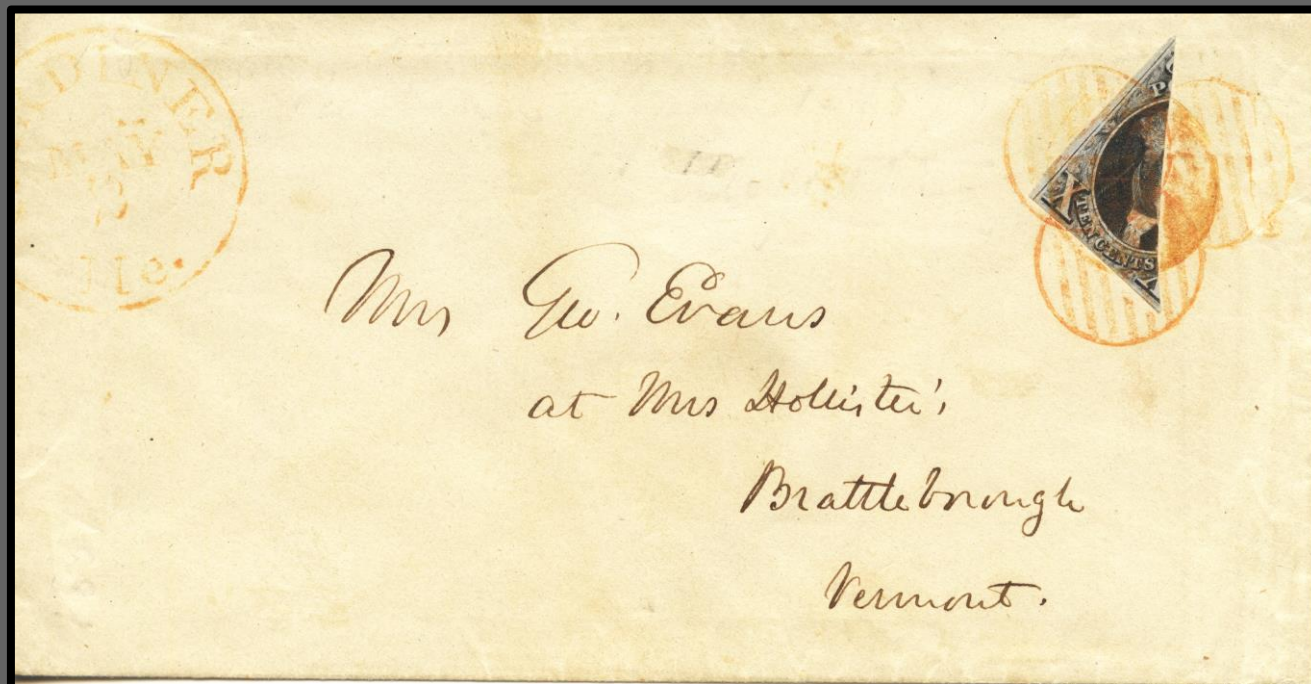
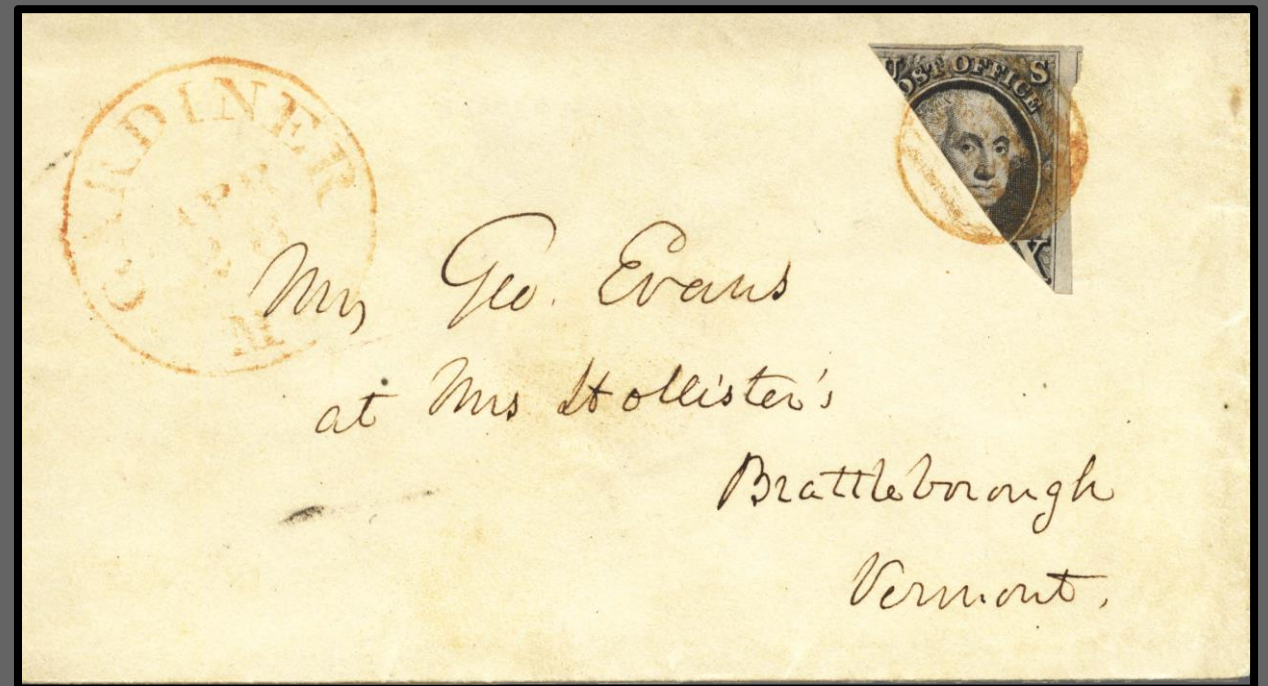
Each Basic Rate Paid By Each of the 1847 Stamps



February 1850 folded letter from Buffalo. 10 cent stamp pays the over 300 mile postage to Albany NY. From Albany the letter was forwarded under 300 miles to Albion NY.

Letter Rate Under 300 Miles Paid With Bisected 10 Stamps

Matched pair of
vertical bisects



Unique horizontal bisect

Double Rate Under 300 Mile Rate



Letter Rate Over 300 Miles Single and Double Rate



Turner Correspondence

| | | |
|---------------|-----|----|
| Single Stamp | 10c | 33 |
| Vertical Pair | 5c | 7 |
| Overlapping | 5c | 16 |
| Overlapping | 10c | 2 |



Letter Rate Over 300 Miles Double Rate

Plate Scratches Between Stamps



Positions 44-45R

Entered the Mail on Train Boston to NYC with U.S. Express Mail Route Agent

Double Rate Letter Over 300 Miles
Paid With Strip of Four 5c Stamps

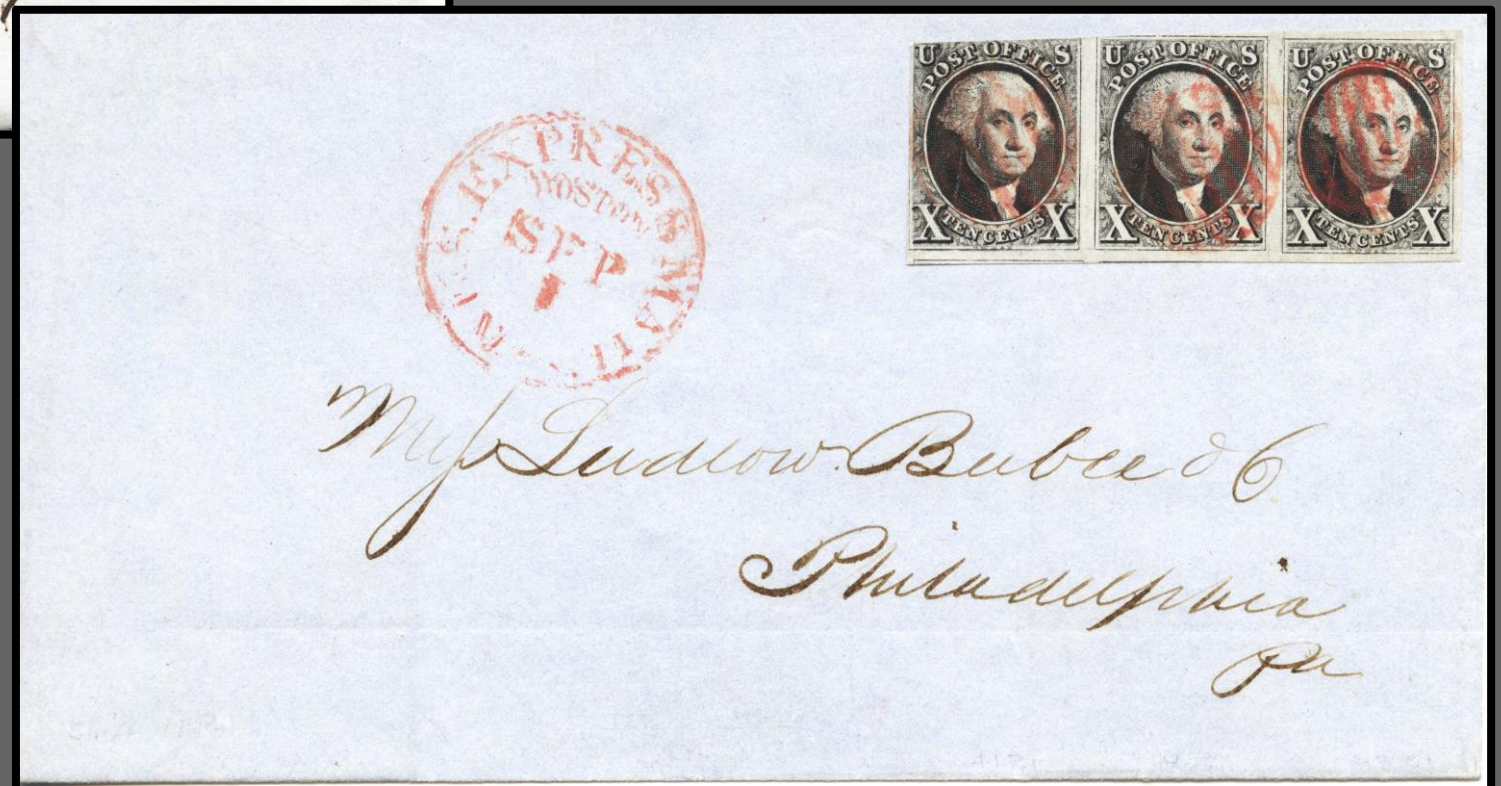


Over 300 Miles Double Weight Underpaid

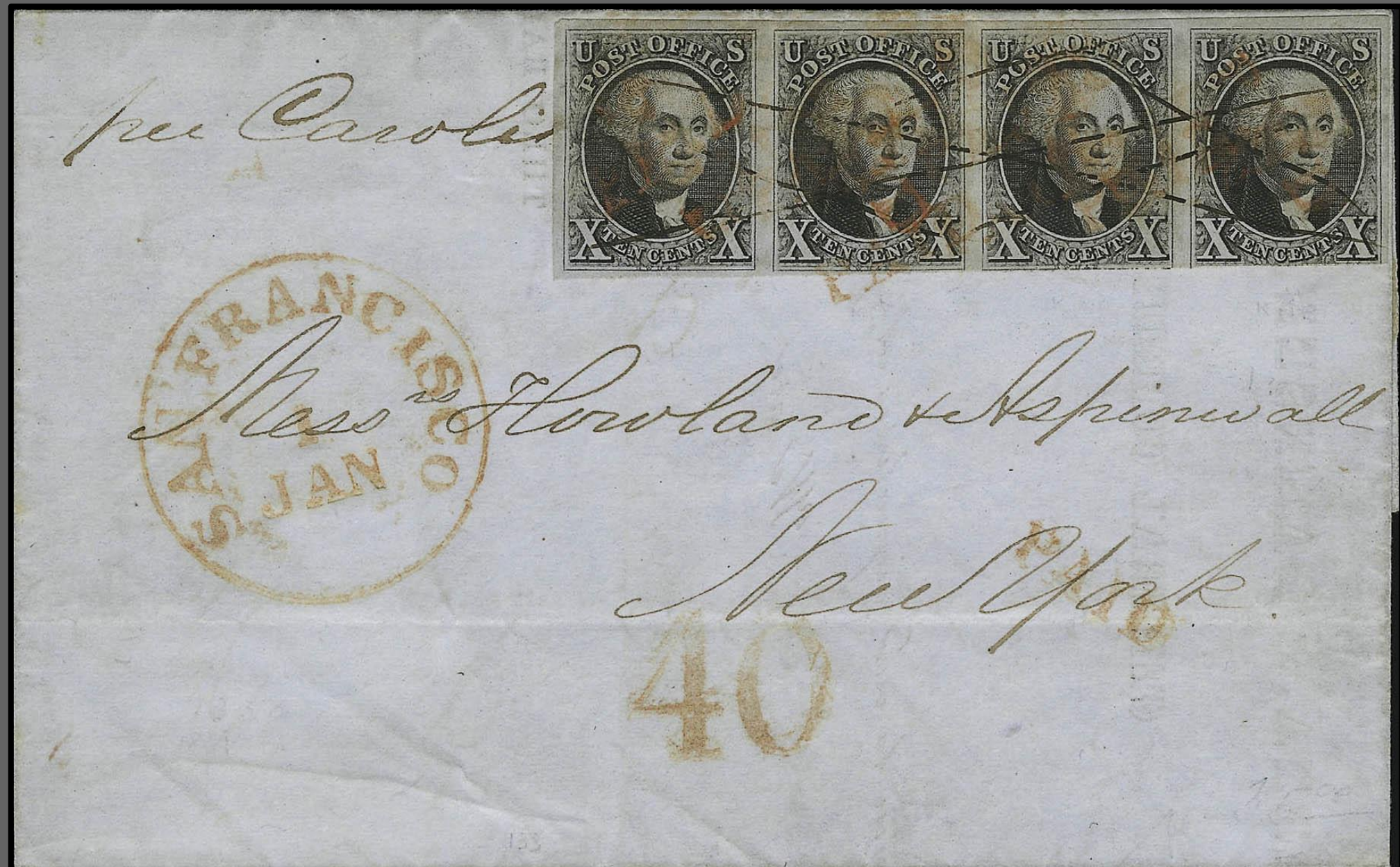


Domestic Triple Rate

Effective 1 July 1847 until 3 March 1849



Over 3,000 Miles SF to NY Via Panama
from SF paying 40 cent rate



Circular and Drop Letter Paid with 5c Stamp



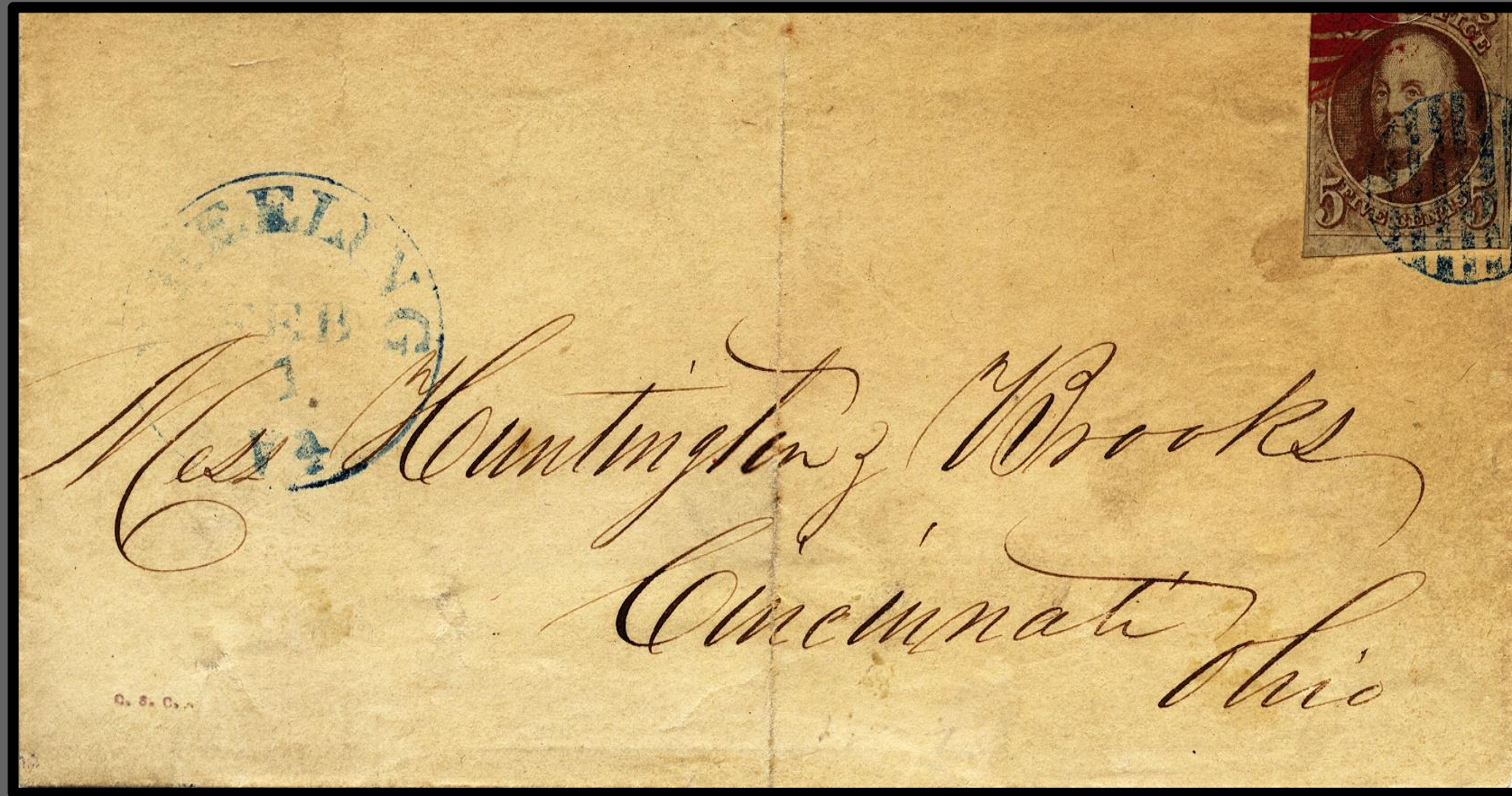
Letter Pick Up On 'Way' to the Post Office
And then Forward



Another Interesting Forwarded Letter

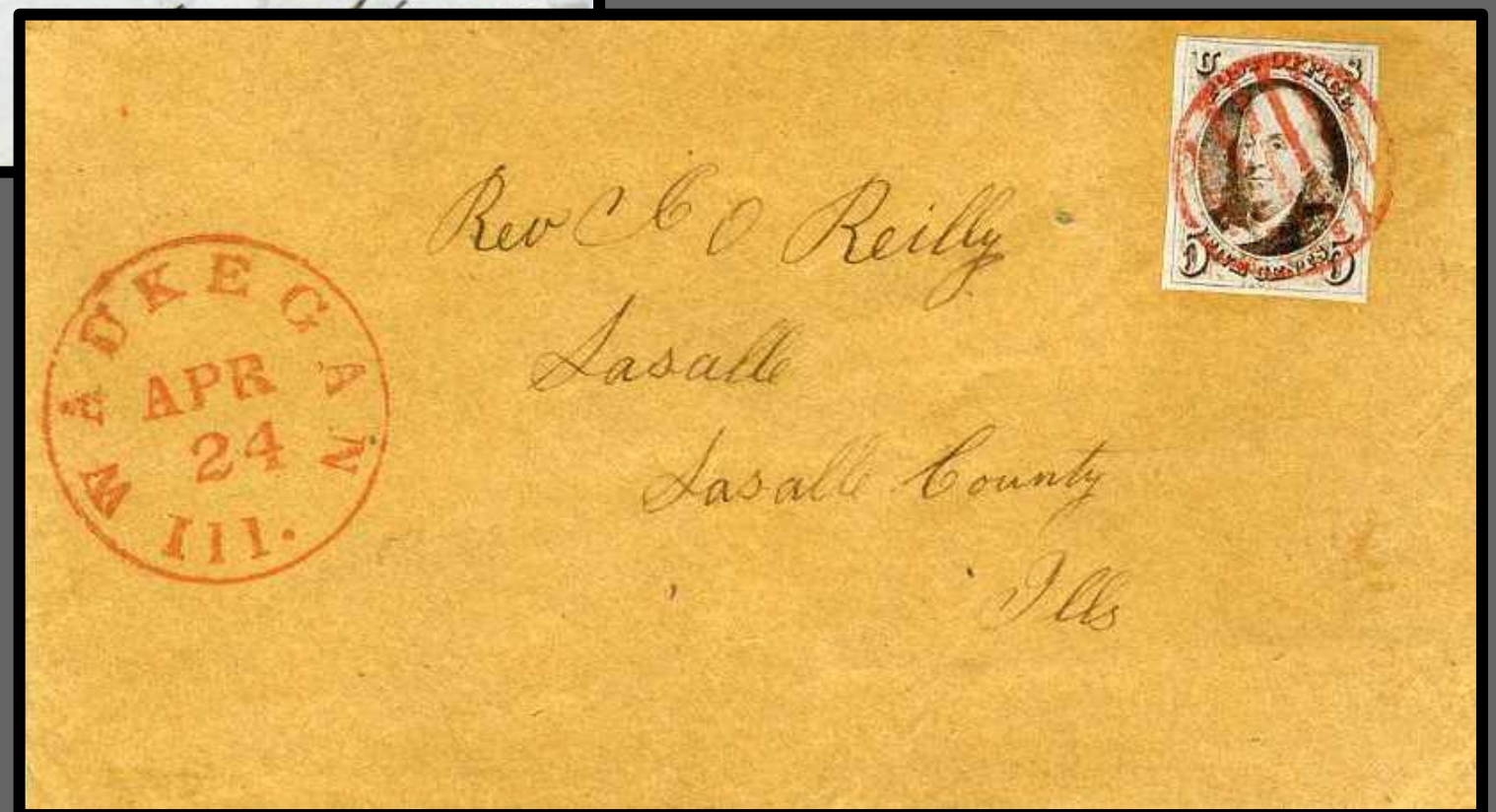


Control Marking? But Why Did they Do This?



3 with 5 cent stamps
4 with 10 cent stamps

Nice Cancels!!



Fancy Cancels Are Uncommon on 1847 Stamps



Blue hollow star fancy cancel of Trenton NJ

Illustrated Covers

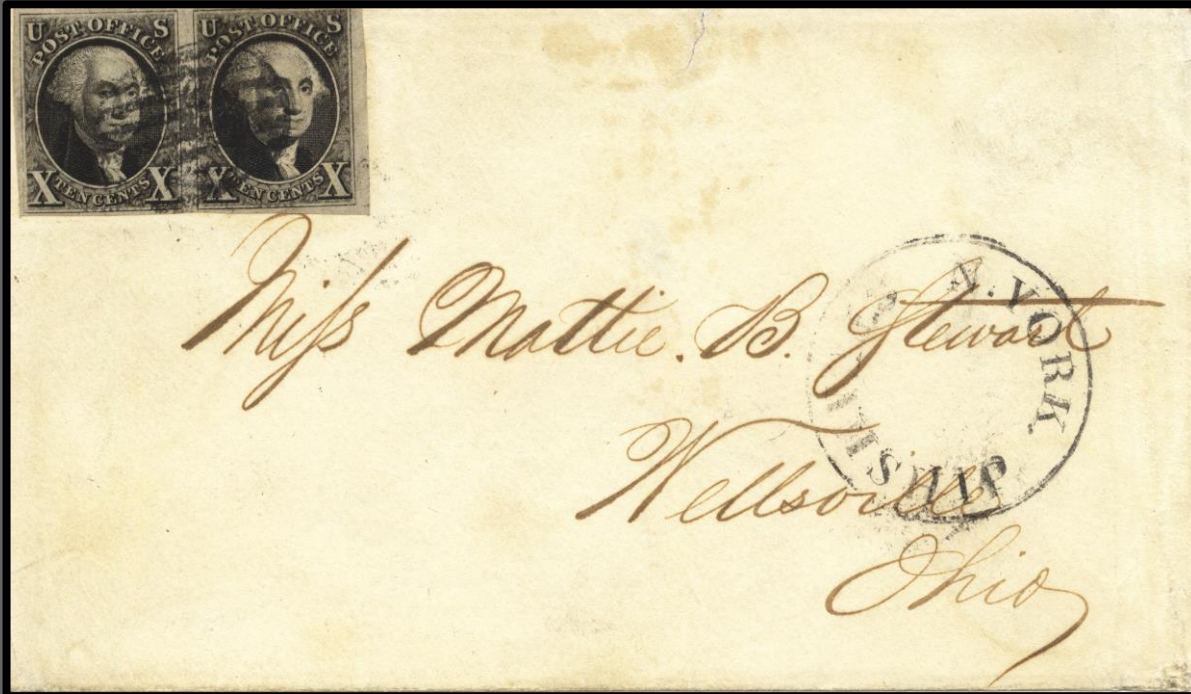


Illustrated Political Envelope

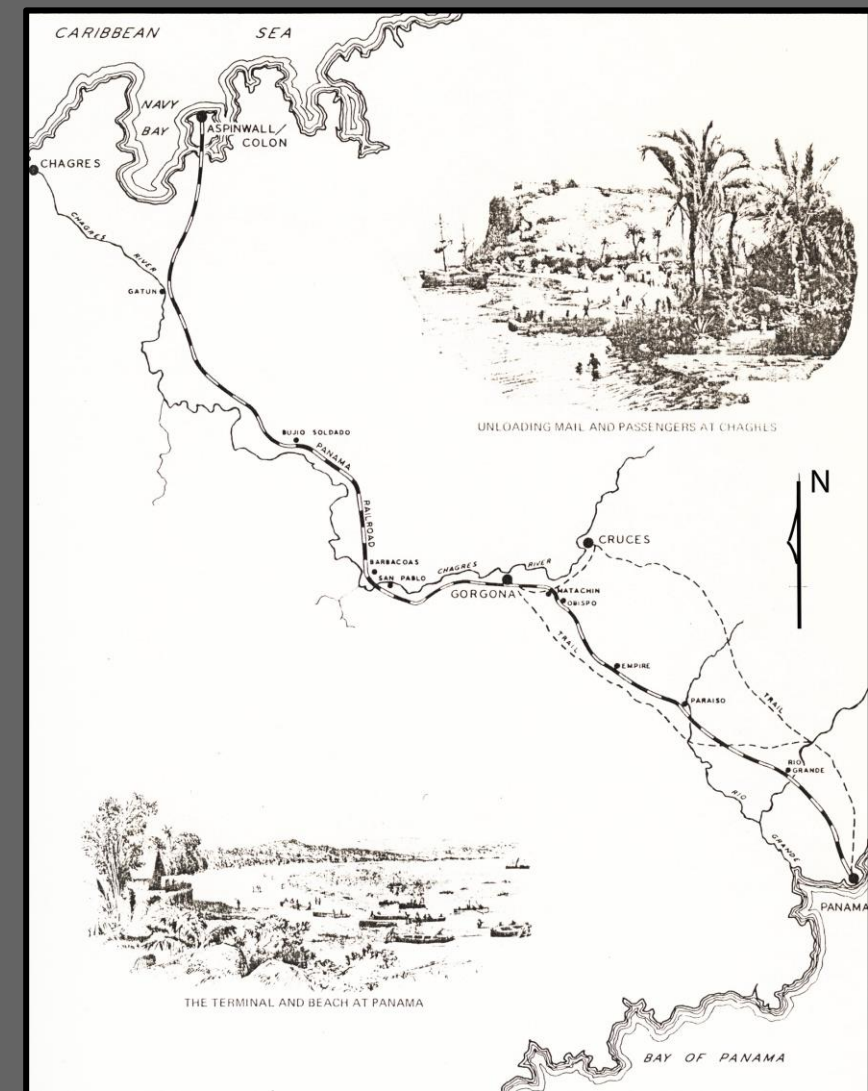
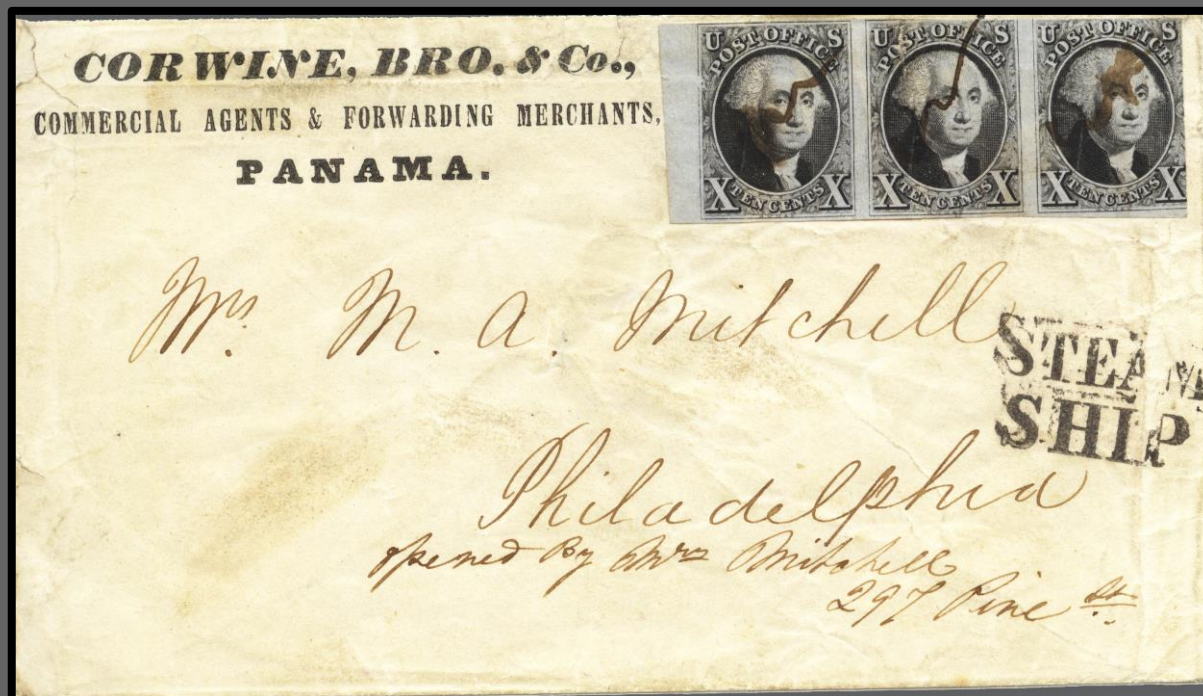


From Panama East and West Coast to New York

20 cent rate from Aspinwall



30 cent rate from Panama



From Via Panama - DeVoss

Incoming Ship Letter



Letter originating in New Brunswick carried by ship to Eastport ME entering the mail as a ship letter. 2 cents due to the Captain. The 10 cent stamp paid the over 300 rate to the exchange office at Queenston. 4 ½ pence due on delivery in Hamilton Canada.

International Arrangements and Rates

- Canada from Revolutionary War times paid to or from the border
- Canada 6 April 1851 Agreement
- Bremen Convention 1847
- To Britain before formal agreement
- British Convention of 1848
- British Open Mail – using the British mail system to reach the world
- Retaliatory rate period
- 12 ½ rate to Cuba

Triple Rate Montreal to New York Prior to 6 April 1851

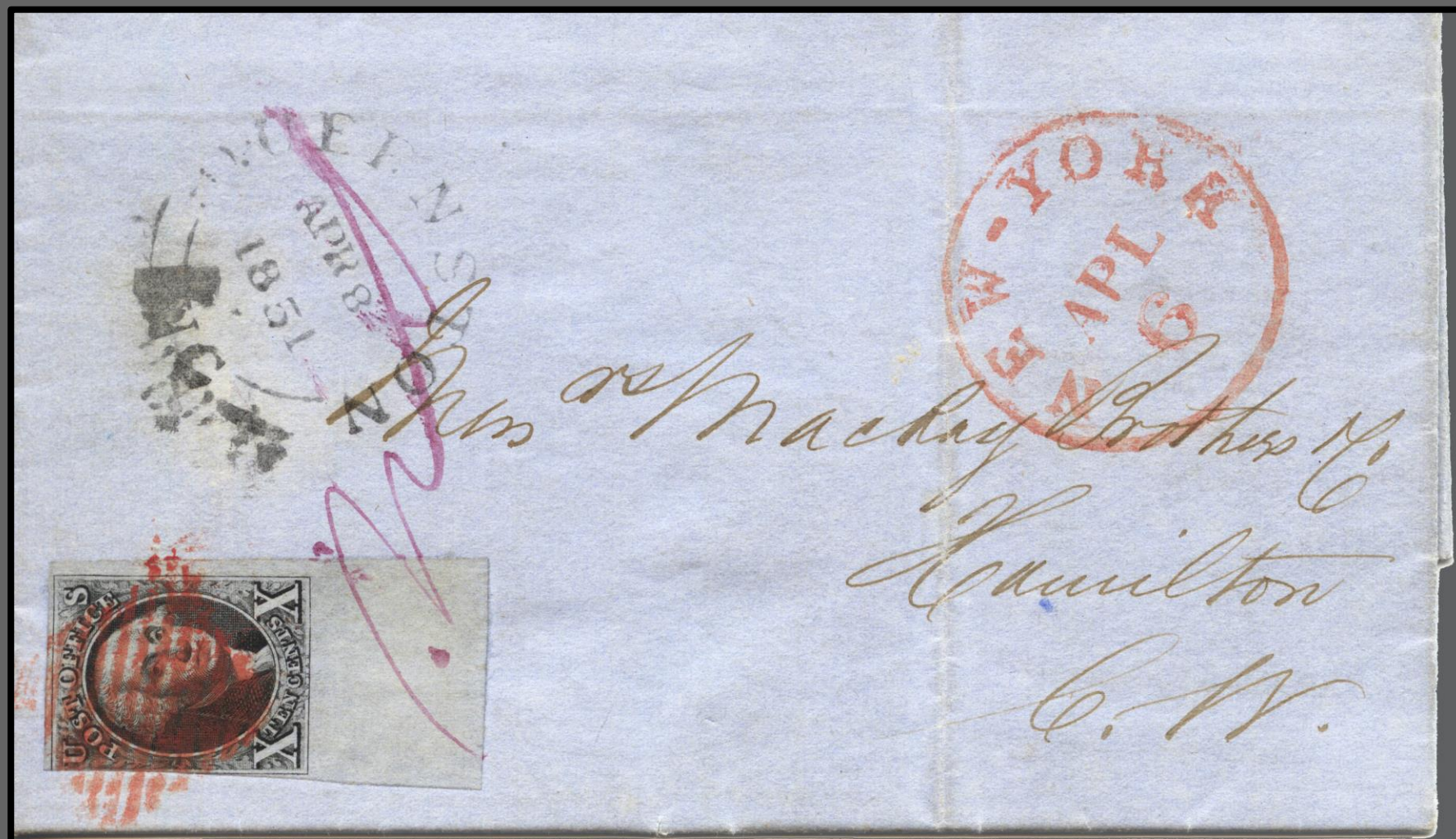
US Postage Paid Triple Rate from the Border

Canadian Postage 1s 6d Paid Quadruple-rate to the Border in Cash



Positions 52, 53, 63L

Under the 6 April 10 Cent Through Rate To Canada
First Day of Through Rate to Canada



Positions 99R

Paying Through Rate from Canada



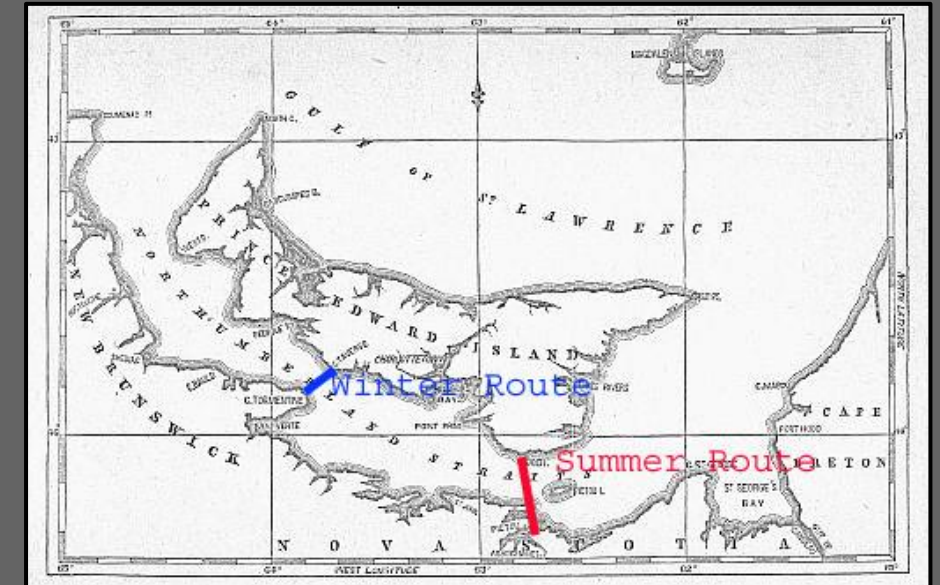
US to Pictou Nova Scotia



July 1849 to Pictou Nova Scotia. From Boston the letter traveled to Eastport most likely on the steamship Admiral where it was transferred to the private ship Maid of Erin and sailed to St. John and entered the Canadian mails and the two line 'ST JOHN NB/SHIP LETTER' hand stamp was applied. US stamps pay the rate to the border. 1s 4d comprised of 4½ d ship fee and 11½ d inland rate to Pictou.

Boston To Prince Edward Island

Carried across Northumberland Strait on an Ice Boat

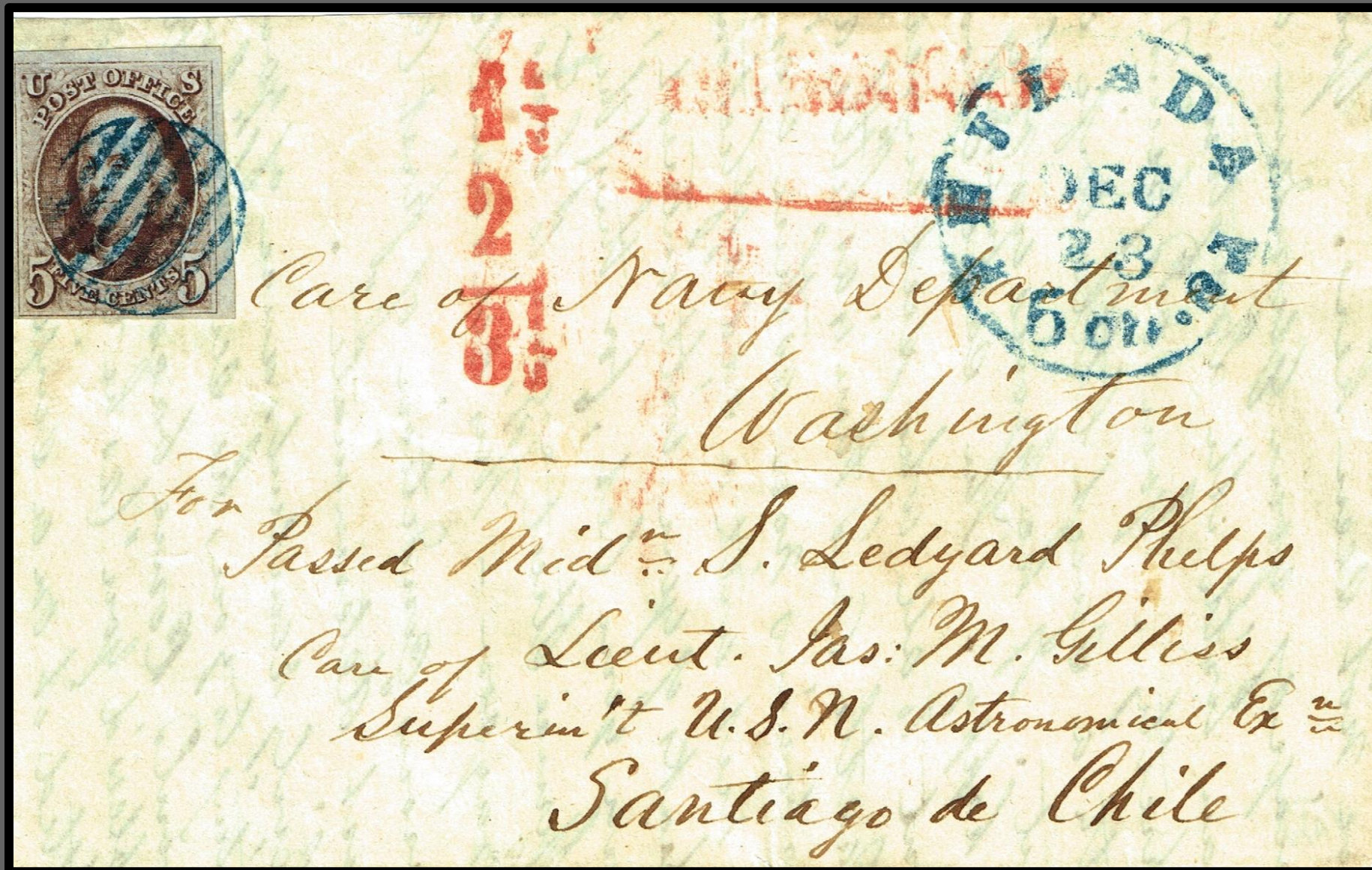


This letter traveled on the land route from Boston. At Robbinston ME the letter was exchanged with St. Andrews New Brunswick and rated 1 shilling 1½d due. From St. Andrews the letter was sent to Amherst Nova Scotia and then to Cape Tormentine where it crossed Northumberland Strait to Point Traverse.

During the winter months the mail was carried across the Northumberland Strait on passenger ice boats which could be dragged across sections of solid ice. **Passengers were given a reduced rate if they assisted the crew pulling the boats.**

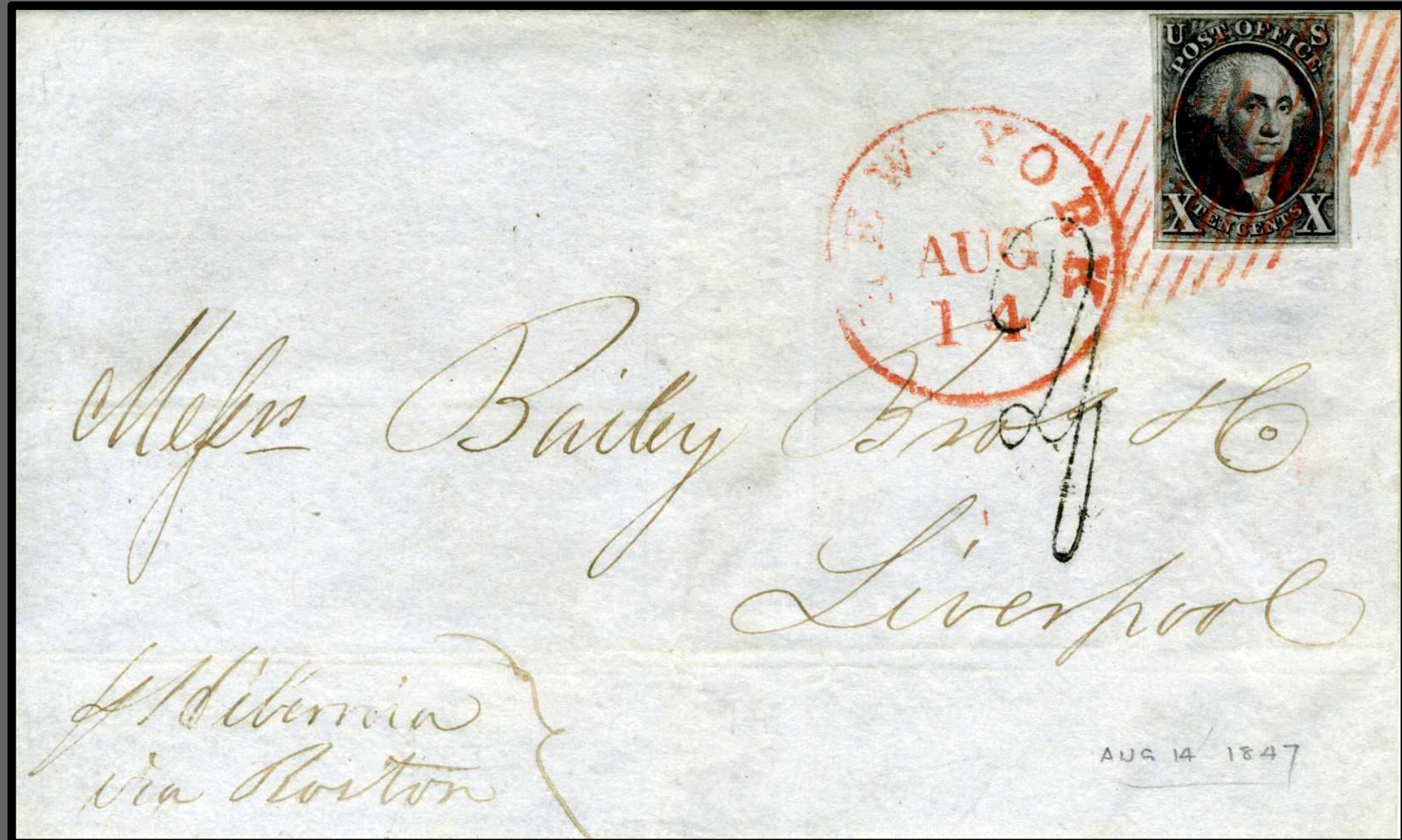


1844 Convention with New Grenada

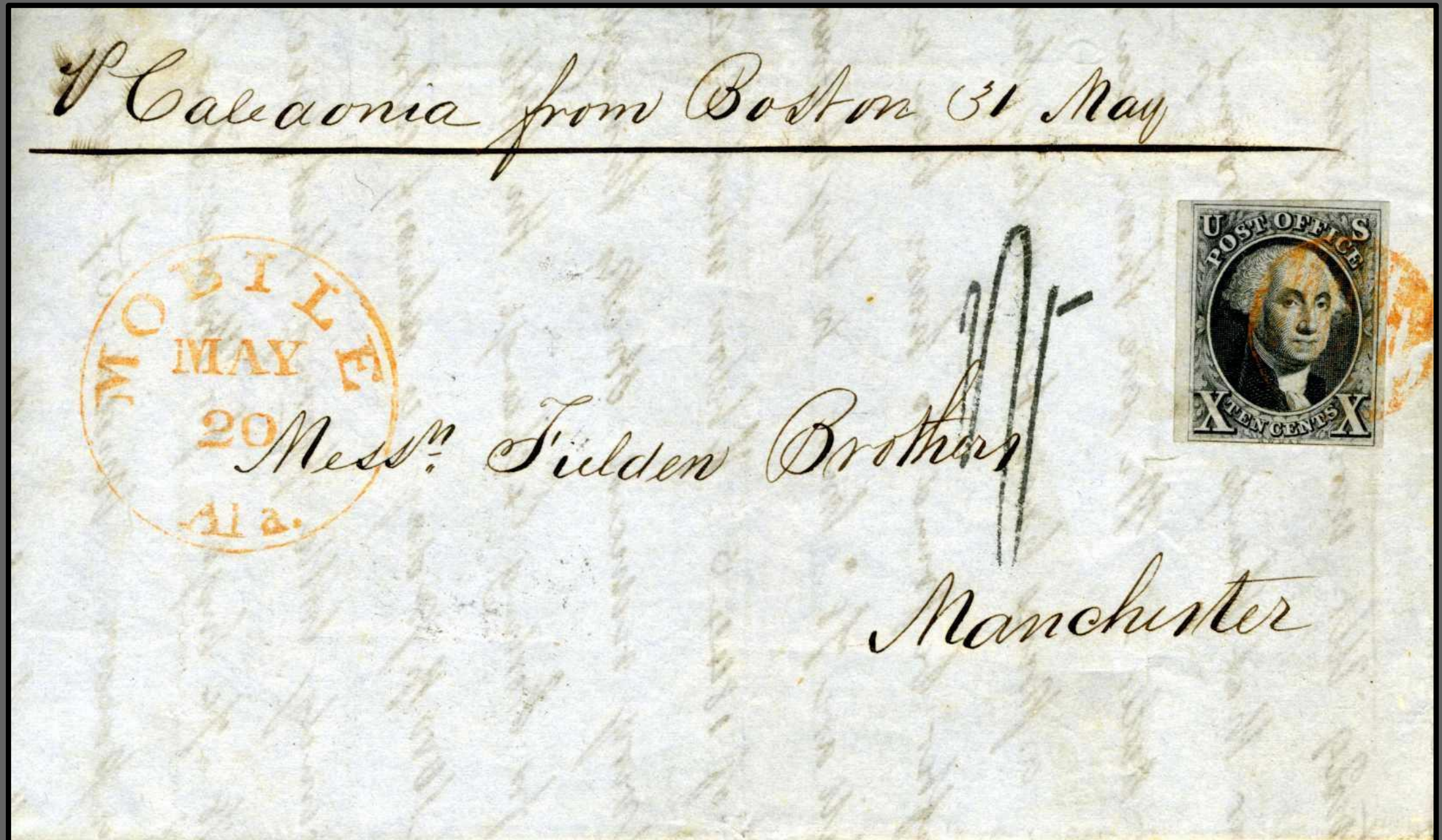


US Navy carried mail bags to Chagres. The bags transported across the isthmus and delivered to the US Consul at Panama City. British mail delivered to Chile.

Double Rate to England Prior to the Postal Convention of 1848
British packet Hibernia to Liverpool.



Single Rate to England Prior to the Postal Convention of 1848
Orange Cancel of Mobile AL



Circular to Scotland Overpaid With a 5 Cent Stamp



Retaliatory Rate Period 3 July 1848 – 3 January 1849

British Do Not Like US Contract Ships Carrying Transatlantic Mail



10c Positions 22-24R

The pre-payment was ignored and 1s 8d charged to Belgium

British Open Mail Under the British Postal Convention of 1848 Provided Access to the World

To Switzerland



To Italy



Used on the Last Day of Legal Use
All 1847 Issue Stamps Demonetized 1 July 1851



Used on the First Day of Demonetization
While Not a Legal Use Both Postmasters Accepted the Letter

