

1847-1848: A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD FOR MICHIGAN'S CAPITAL CITY

Introduction: In 1847, Michigan's capital was moved from Detroit to the newly established village of Michigan, Mich. Less than a year later, on April 3, 1848, after a lengthy debate, the village of Michigan was renamed Lansing. The Michigan, Mich. post office was opened on April 27, 1847. Michigan, Mich. cancelling devices were used as late as April 21, 1848. There were three methods used to cancel mail from Michigan, Mich.: 1) manuscript cancels, 2) straight-line newspaper type cancels, and 3) circular date stamps. George W. Peck was the first postmaster of Michigan and Lansing, Michigan.

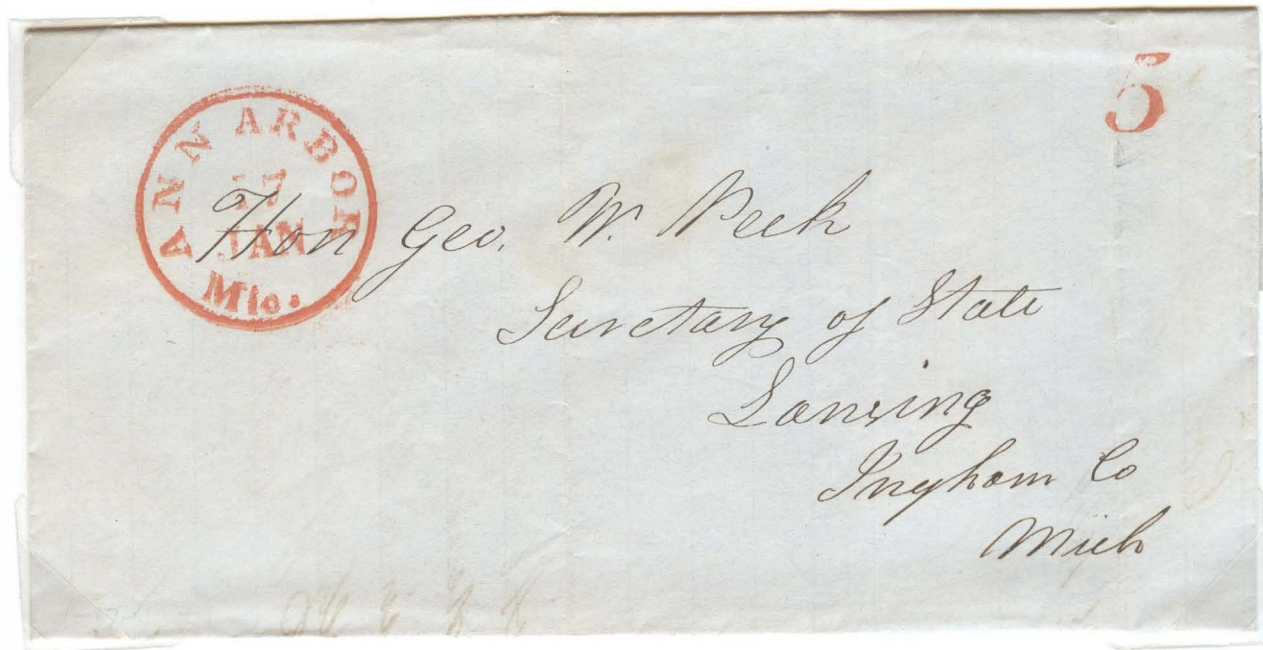
Exhibit Scope: This exhibit shows 1847 mail sent to state offices in Detroit prior to the relocation of those offices, 1847-1848 mail from and to Michigan, Mich. and Lansing, Mich., as well as referencing the move of the capital to Michigan, Mich.

Exhibit Organization: The exhibit is organized with 1) letters referencing the move of the capital, 2) 1847 mail to Detroit, Mich. after the Governor, Senate, and House had relocated, but before other state offices had relocated, 3) mail from Michigan, Mich., and 4) mail to Michigan, Mich., 5) mail from Lansing, Mich., and 6) mail to Lansing, Mich.

Rarity: A total of four (4) envelopes are known with a manuscript postmark; the latest documented manuscript postmark is shown. There are 35 documented envelopes with Michigan, Mich. circular date stamps (CDS). This exhibit shows six (6) of the documented envelopes. Research has identified 24 envelopes addressed to Michigan, Mich. with nine (9) shown. There are eight (8) documented envelopes mailed to Detroit and forwarded to Michigan, Mich., with five (5) shown. The number of 1848 envelopes mailed from and to Lansing, Mich. is unknown, but they are scarce. The earliest documented Type I Lansing CDS (four (4) documented) and probable earliest documented Type II Lansing CDS (unknown quantity) are shown. Rare or important items are highlighted with a [REDACTED] border.

Rates: Letters carried less than 300 miles were rated 5 cents and letters carried more than 300 miles were rated 10 cents. Letters arriving at Detroit and forwarded to Michigan/Lansing, Mich. were normally rerated to 5 cents.

References: Whitford, Craig A. and Mackey, David L., *Postmarked: Michigan, Mich., 1847-1848*, 1987.



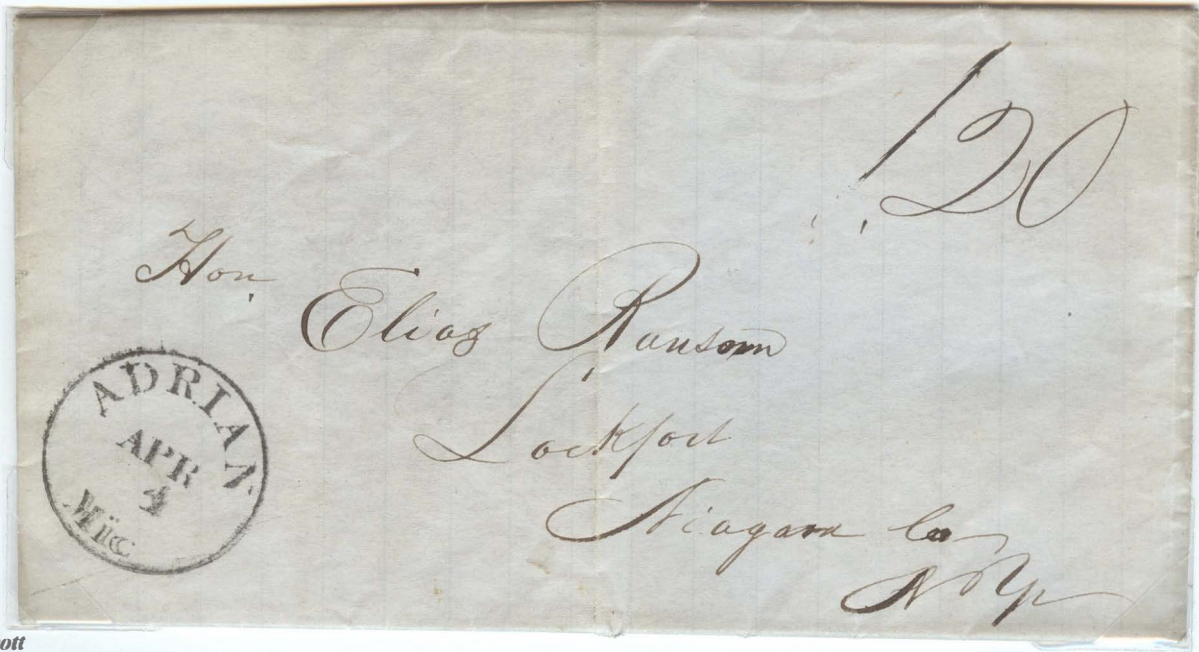
Ann Arbor, Mich. to Lansing, Mich.

Ex - Ernie Scott

JAN 17, (1849)

This 1849 folded letter, is addressed to "Geo. W. Peck" (George Washington Peck). Peck was the first postmaster of Michigan, Mich. and Lansing, Mich. He served as both postmaster, April 1847 to January 1849 and as Secretary of State, from 1848 to 1850, at the same time. Large red "5" rate marking.

1. Letters Referencing Moving the State Capitol



Ex - Ernie Scott

Adrian, Mich. to Lockport, N.Y.

APR 14, (1847)

This envelope has a black 30 mm CDS, with a manuscript "20" indicating a double weight rate of 10 cents for mail carried more than 300 miles was paid.

The letter reads in part, "The Recent removal of the Capitol of this State to the interior & North & West from Detroit has added greatly to the advantages of the North and South as we contemplate important thoroughfare North and South to the seat of government this place of location is in Ingham Co. at Lansing (Township). One of the newest of the settled counties of the state. This particular point of location containing I am told a house (Log of course) and barn & I believe this is all the building & it may be the commissions may locate when there is no improvement at all."

Ex - Ernie Scott

Dexter, Mich. to Greenfield, Mass.

APR 26, (1847)



This envelope has a red 30 mm CDS, with a circled red "10" indicating the 10 cent rate for mail carried more than 300 miles was paid.

This letter contains, in part, the following, "The capital of Mich. is changed from Detroit to Lansing (Township) in Ingham Co in the woods"

2. 1847 Mail To State Offices Not Yet Relocated From Detroit, Mich.

The state capital, including the governor's office and the legislature, were relocated from Detroit, Mich. to Michigan, Mich. in autumn of 1847. At the time, most of the state offices remained in Detroit. Finally, on December 13, 1847 the remaining state offices were moved to Michigan, Mich.

Removal of the State Offices.

NOTICE is hereby given that the offices of the undersigned will be closed on and after Monday next the 13th instant, for the purpose of their removal to the new seat of government, at which place they will be re-opened for the transaction of business, on or about the 23d inst.

All communications intended for them, must be addressed respectively, to "Michigan, Ingham county, Mich."
Detroit, Dec. 8, 1847.

D. V. BELL,
Auditor General;
GEO. B. COOPER,
State Treasurer;
G. O. WHITTEMORE,
Secretary of State.

Advertisement noting relocation of the state offices.
Democratic Free Press, December 8, 1847, page 3

Written to Digby V. Bell, the Auditor General of Michigan from 1846 to 1848.

Pontiac, Mich. to Detroit, Mich.

OCT 27, (1847)

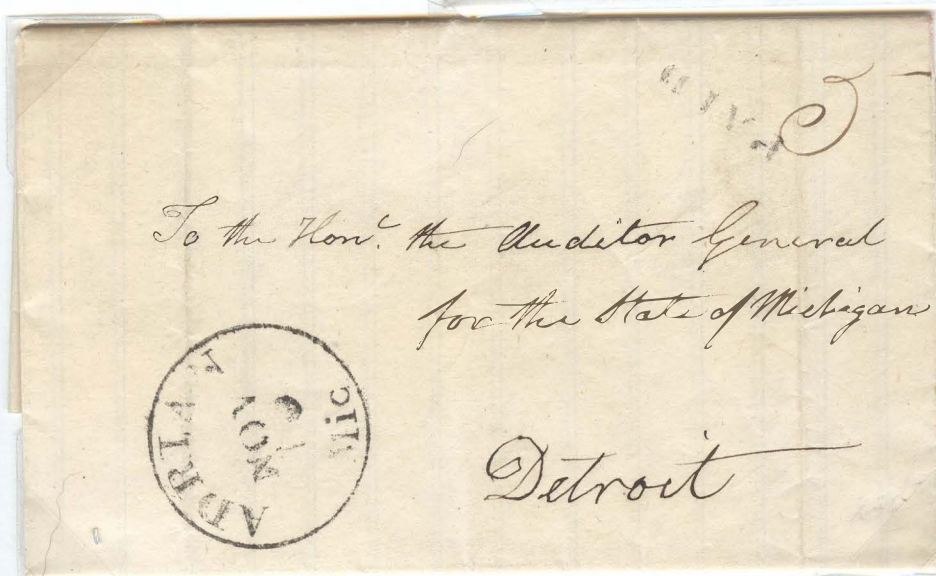
Red, 30 mm Pontiac CDS, with boxed red 5 rate marking.



Adrian, Mich. to Detroit, Mich.

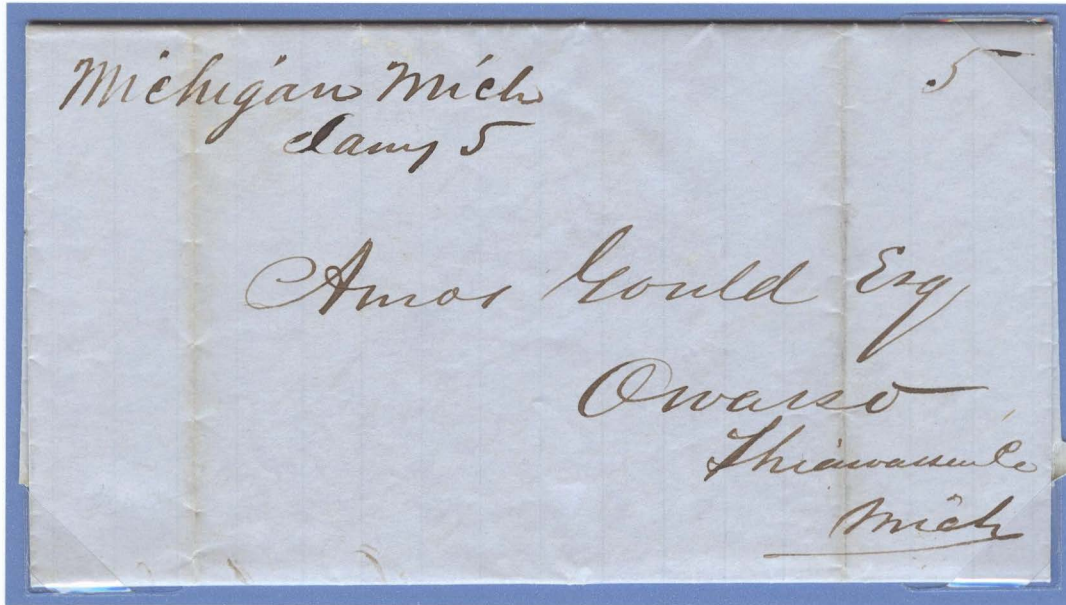
NOV 19, (1847)

Black, 30 mm Adrian CDS, with black manuscript 5 rating and black 4 mm x 19 mm "PAID" handstamp.



3. Mail From Michigan, Mich.

Manuscript postmarks are believed to have been used from the establishment of the Michigan, Mich. post office on April 27, 1847 until January 5, 1848.



*1 of 4 Documented Manuscript Postmarks From Michigan, Mich.
Only 1848 Manuscript Postmark and Last Day/Latest Use of
Michigan, Mich. Manuscript Postmark*

Ex - Milton L. Greenebaum, Ex - Craig A. Whitford

Michigan, Mich. to Owosso, Mich.

JAN 5, (1848)

“Michigan Mich” straight-line manuscript postmark with manuscript “Jany 5” date. Manuscript “5” indicating that the rate for letters carried less than 300 miles had been paid. Addressed to Amos Gould, a local politician.

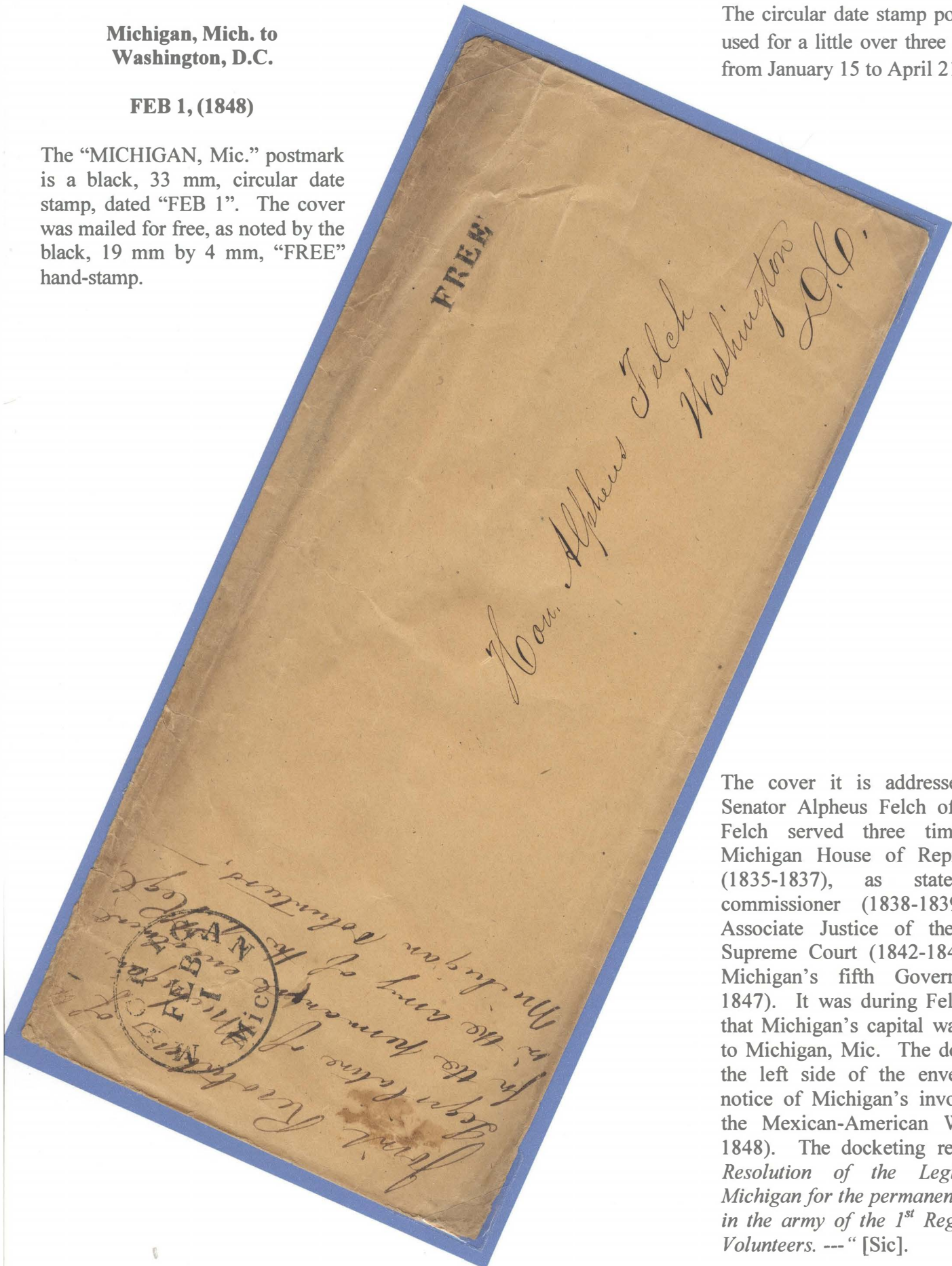
Mail From Michigan, Mich.

Michigan, Mich. to
Washington, D.C.

FEB 1, (1848)

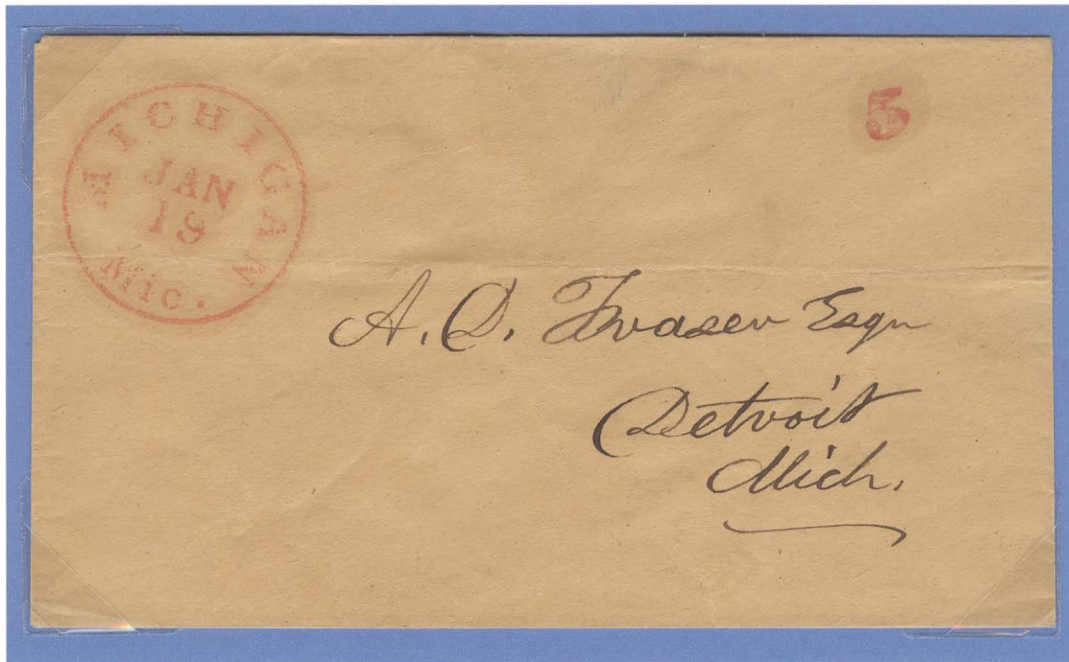
The "MICHIGAN, Mic." postmark is a black, 33 mm, circular date stamp, dated "FEB 1". The cover was mailed for free, as noted by the black, 19 mm by 4 mm, "FREE" hand-stamp.

The circular date stamp postmark was used for a little over three (3) months, from January 15 to April 21, 1848.



The cover it is addressed to U.S. Senator Alpheus Felch of Michigan. Felch served three times in the Michigan House of Representatives (1835-1837), as state banking commissioner (1838-1839), as an Associate Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court (1842-1845), and as Michigan's fifth Governor (1845-1847). It was during Felch's tenure that Michigan's capital was relocated to Michigan, Mic. The docketing on the left side of the envelope gives notice of Michigan's involvement in the Mexican-American War (1846-1848). The docketing reads, "Joint Resolution of the Legislature of Michigan for the permanent enrolment in the army of the 1st Regt Michigan Volunteers. ---" [Sic].

2nd Earliest Known Michigan, Mic. Circular Date Stamp



Michigan, Mich. to Detroit, Mich.

JAN 19, (1848)

This envelope has a red 33 mm "MICHIGAN, Mic., JAN 19" postmark, and a 7 mm x 5 mm red hand-stamped "5" rate marking. The red CDS and rate markings are only recorded from January 15, 1848 to January 27, 1848. **One of four recorded Michigan, Mic. covers with red CDS and rate marking.**



Michigan, Mich. to Hillsdale, Mich.

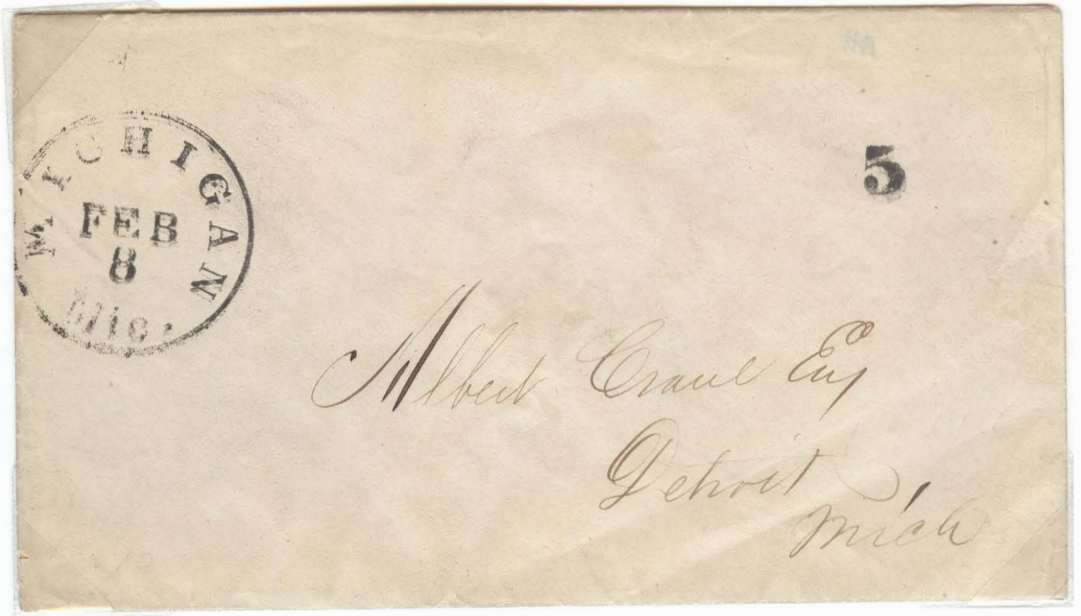
MAR 8, (1848)

This folded letter, datelined 7 March 1848, bears a black 33 mm "MICHIGAN, Mic., MAR 8" postmark, and a 7 mm x 5 mm black hand-stamped "5" rate marking.

**Michigan, Mich. to
Detroit, Mich.**

FEB 8, (1848)

This cover bears a black 33 mm "MICHIGAN, Mic., FEB 8" postmark, and a 7 mm x 6 mm black hand-stamped "5" rate marking.



Michigan, Mich. to Owosso, Mich.

MAR 6, (1848)

This folded letter bears a black 33 mm "MICHIGAN, Mic., MAR 6" postmark, and a 7 mm x 5 mm black hand-stamped "5" rate marking. Addressed to Amos Gould, a prominent local politician.



**Michigan, Mich. to
Grand Rapids, Mich.**

MAR 8, (1848)

This folded letter bears a black 33 mm "MICHIGAN, Mic., MAR 8" postmark, and a 7 mm x 5 mm black hand-stamped "5" rate marking. Manuscript notation showing reception by "Geo. V. N. Lathrop" on "Mar. 15/48." George Van Ness Lathrop was Attorney General of the State of Michigan 1848 to 1851.

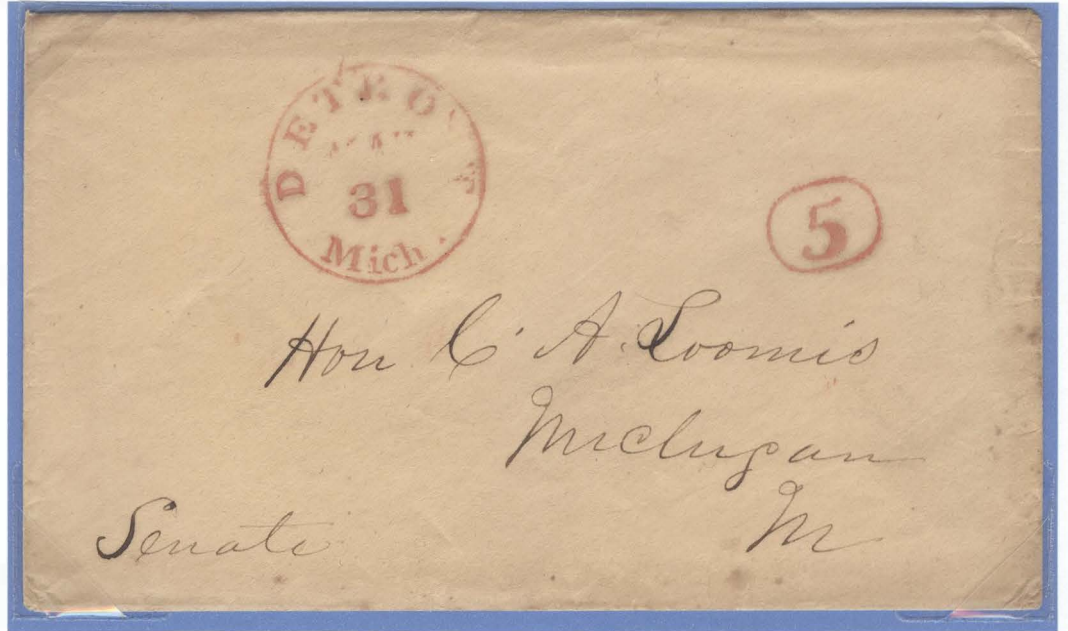


4. Mail To Michigan, Mich.

**Detroit, Mich. to
Michigan, Mich.**

MAY 31, (1847)

This envelope has a red "5" hand-stamp, indicating postage paid, and a red 30 mm Detroit CDS. The 5 cent rate is for mail carried less than 300 miles. Addressed to Michigan State Senator Charles A. Loomis.



Earliest Documented Letter to Michigan, Mich.



**Belle River, Mich. to
Michigan, Mich.**

(1848)

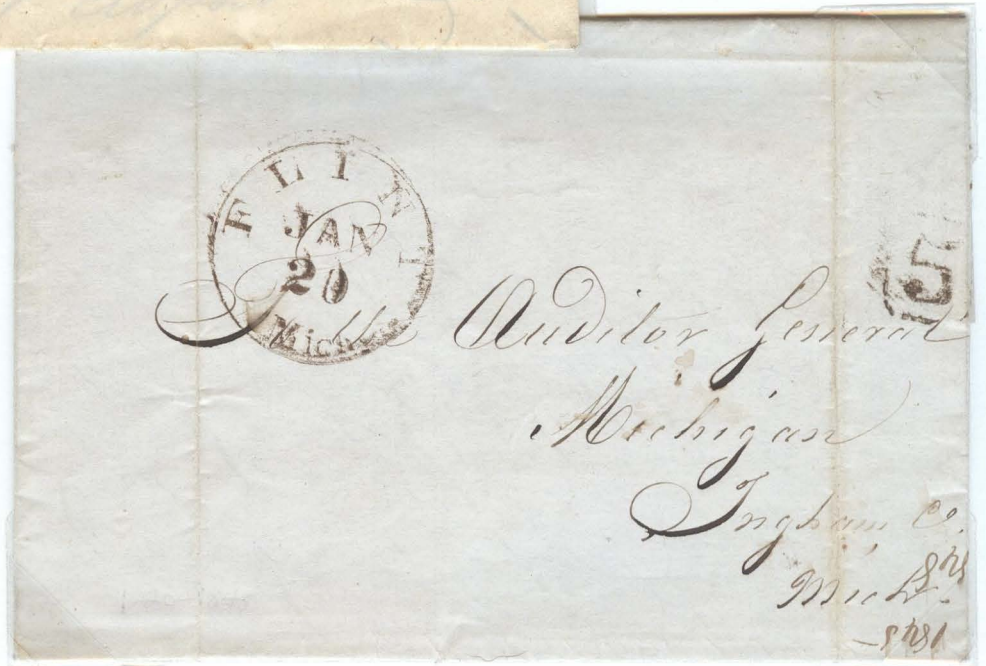
This envelope sent by the Belle River postmaster has a blue manuscript "Free" frank. Addressed to Michigan State Senator Charles A. Loomis.

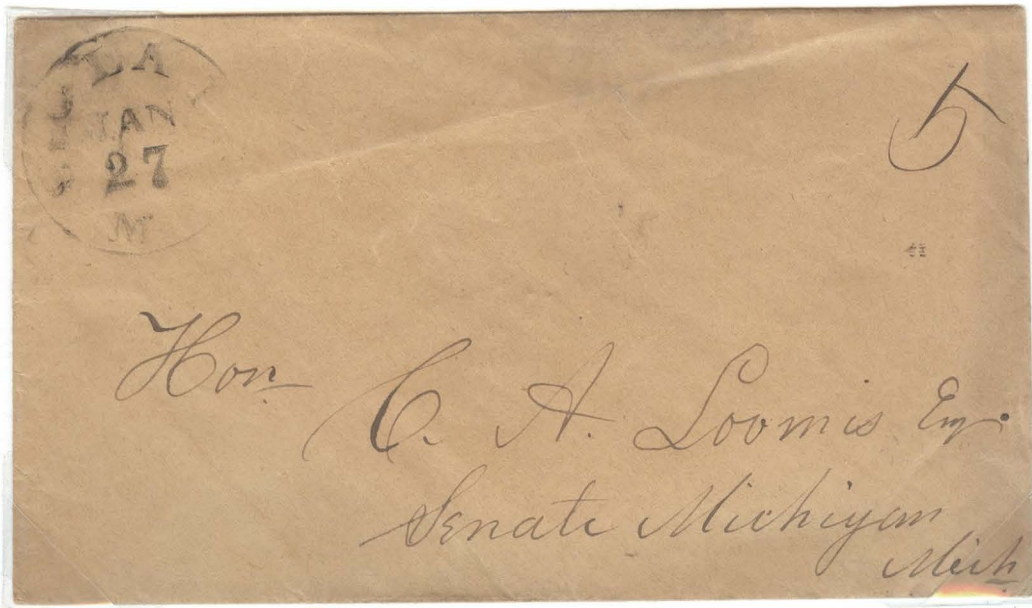
Ex - Ernie Scott

**Flint, Mich. to
Michigan, Mich.**

JAN 20, (1848)

Sent to Michigan, Mich. two months before name changed to Lansing. This cover has a brown 30 mm CDS, with a squared 5 paying the rate for mail sent less than 300 miles. Sent from the Genesee County Treasurer to the State Auditor General





St. Claire, Mich. to Michigan, Mich.

JAN 27, (1848)

This envelope has a black manuscript "5", indicating postage paid, and an unknown black 30 mm CDS. The 5 cent rate is for mail carried less than 300 miles. Addressed to Michigan State Senator Charles A. Loomis.

Detroit, Mich. to Michigan, Mich.

JAN 29, (1848)

This envelope has a red circled 5 and a red 30 mm CDS. The 5 cent rate is for mail carried less than 300 miles. Addressed to Michigan Auditor General (1846-1848) Digby V. Bell.



Newark, N.Y. to Michigan, Mich.

MAR 4, (1848)

This folded letter was mailed to Michigan, Michigan with a red "NEWARK, N.Y., MAR 4" circular date stamp, a red "PAID", and a red "10". Mailed to the Auditor General regarding the sale of land in Ottawa County in December 1847. The 10 cent rate paid for mail carried over 300 miles.



On April 3, 1848 the capitol city's name was changed from Michigan, Mich. to Lansing, Mich. by Public Act No. 237 of 1848. The covers shown below represent late examples addressed to Michigan, Mich.



Ex - James H. Hayes

Ann Arbor, Mich. to Michigan, Mich.

MAR 28, (1848)

This folded letter has a red 32 mm CDS, with a red "PAID" and a red 9mm by 10 mm "5". Mailed to Henry L. Whipple, the Auditor General of Michigan in 1842. The 5-cent rate is for mail carried less than 300 miles.



Ex - Ernie Scott

Coldwater, Mich. to Michigan, Mich.

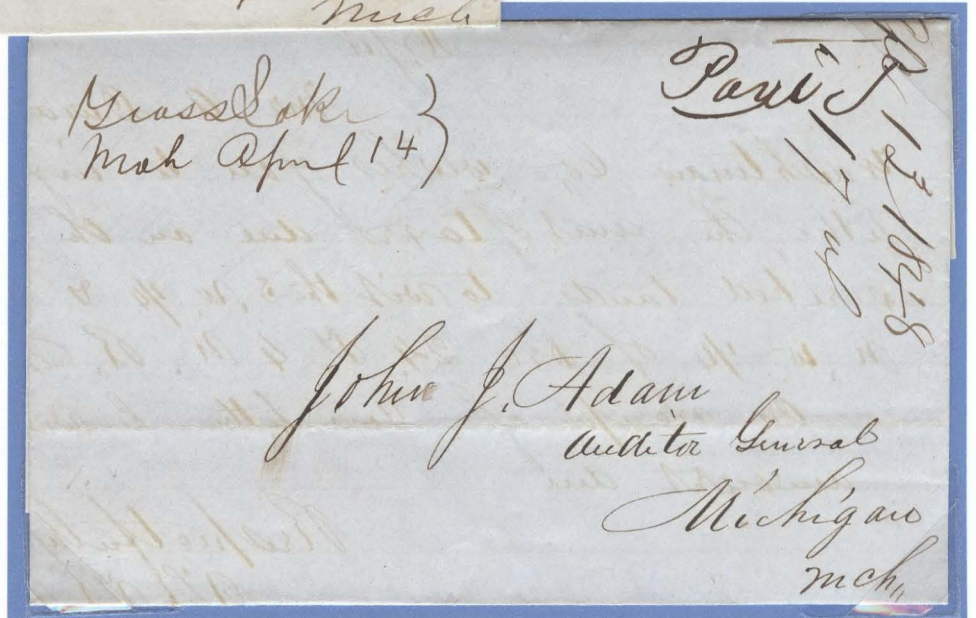
APR 1, (1848)

This folded letter has a red 31 mm CDS, with a red "PAID" and a manuscript "5". Mailed to John J. Adam, the Auditor General of Michigan. The 5-cent rate is for mail carried less than 300 miles.

Grass Lake, Mich. to Michigan, Mich.

APR 14, (1848)

This folded letter was mailed to Michigan, Michigan, with a black manuscript "Paid 5", and is to the Auditor General of Michigan. The 10 cent rate is for mail carried over 300 miles.



Mailed to Michigan, Mich. 11 days after the name was changed to Lansing, Mich.

**Mailed to the Auditor General of Michigan,
whose offices were moved from Detroit to Michigan, Mich. in December 1847.**

**From New York, N.Y. to Detroit, Mich.
and Forwarded to Michigan, Mich.**

**14 JAN, (1848) –
Forwarded JAN 24, (1848)**

This letter lacks a 10-cent rate marking for letters carried more than 300 miles. The letter was rated 5 cents in Detroit and forwarded to Michigan, Mich. The New York postmark (2) is a red 30 mm CDS. A 30 mm red Detroit CDS and circled 5 were applied prior to forwarding. There are no forwarding markings.



**From Danby, N.Y. to Detroit, Mich.
and Forwarded to Michigan, Mich.**

**JAN 21, (1848) –
Forwarded FEB 1, (1848)**

The letter was rerated in Detroit and forwarded to Michigan, Mich. The original 10-cent rate, paid in Danby is for mail carried over 300 miles; the manuscript 10, manuscript paid, and Detroit have been crossed out. A manuscript 5 and MI have been added. A red Detroit post mark and red circled 5 were applied prior to forwarding. The 5-cent rate is for mail carried less than 300 miles.



**From Rochester, N.Y. to Detroit, Mich.
and Forwarded to Michigan, Mich.**

**FEB 9, (1848) –
Forwarded FEB 16, (1848)**

This letter has a red 30 mm CDS applied at Rochester, with a red PAID and a red 10-cent rate marking for letters carried more than 300 miles. The letter was addressed to Detroit, where it was rerated 5-cents and forwarded to Michigan, Mich. The Detroit city, PAID, and 10-cent rate were all crossed out prior to forwarding.





**From Geneva, N.Y. to Detroit, Mich.
and Forwarded to Michigan, Mich.**

**MAR 9, (1848) –
Forwarded MAR 16, (1848)**

This 1848 folded letter was mailed to the Auditor General in Detroit, Mich. The letter was rerated and forwarded to Michigan, Mich. The original 10 cent rate, paid in Geneva, is for mail carried over 300 miles; the blue circled X and blue paid have been crossed out. A red Detroit post mark and red circled 5 were applied prior to forwarding. The 5 cent rate is for mail carried less than 300 miles. There are no forwarding marks; the letter was possibly forwarded in a state government mail bag.



From Clyde, Wayne Co., N.Y. to Detroit, Mich. and Forwarded to Michigan, Mich.

**Mailed 12 days after town renamed to Lansing and forwarded 1 day after the last known use of a
Michigan, Mich. cancelling device.**

**APR 15, (1848) –
Forwarded APR 22, (1848)**

This 1848 folded letter was mailed to the Auditor General in Detroit, Mich. The letter was rerated and forwarded to Michigan, Mich. The original 10 cent rate, paid in Clyde (dateline), is for mail carried over 300 miles, and denoted by a manuscript 10. There are no other origination markings. A red Detroit post mark, red circled 5 and a red PAID were applied prior to forwarding. The PAID marking was crossed out. The 5 cent rate is for mail carried less than 300 miles. There are no forwarding marks; the letter was possibly forwarded in a state government mail bag.

5. Mail From Lansing, Mich.

In 1847, the seat of government had moved from Detroit to Michigan, Mich., which was renamed Lansing on April 3, 1848. The two Lansing Circular Date Stamps (CDS) shown below represent the first and second CDS devices used in Lansing after the name change.

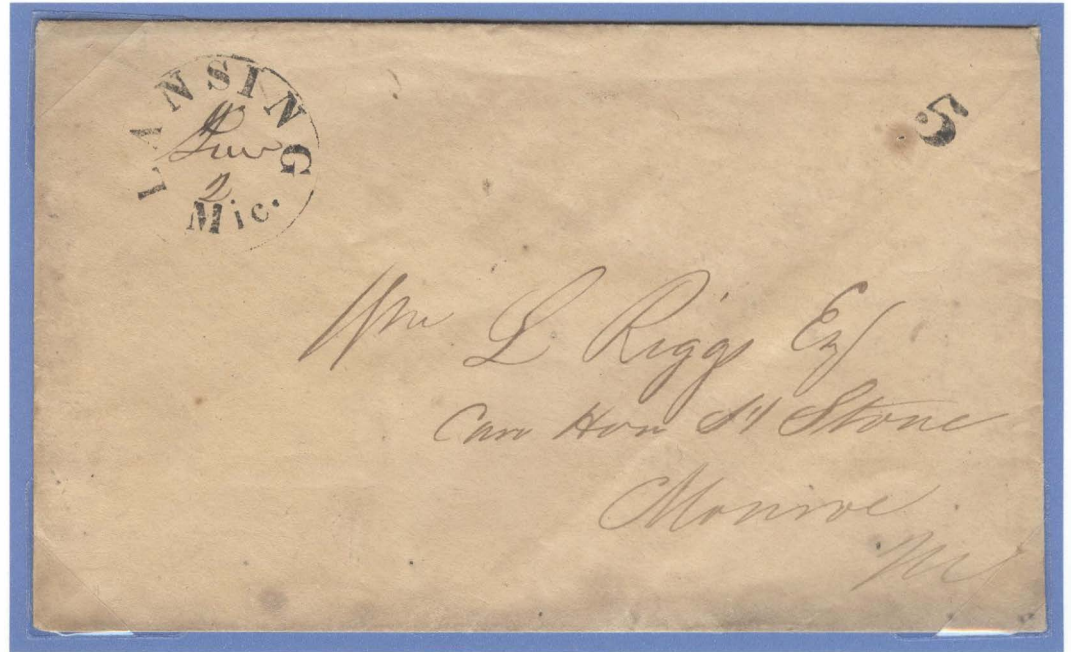
**Lansing, Mich. to
Monroe, Mich.**

JUN 2, (1848)

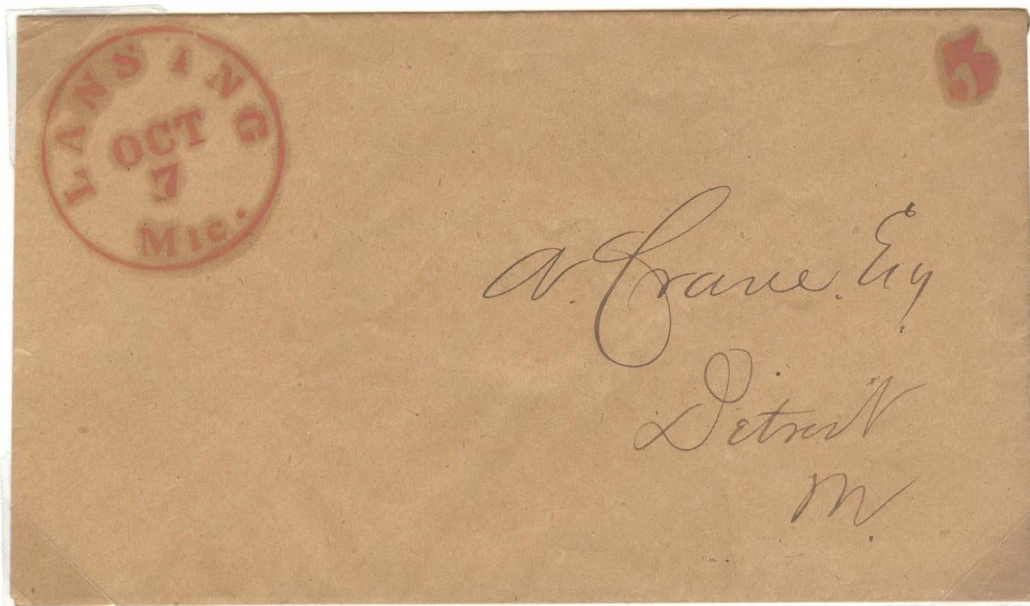
Type I CDS – Used from JUN 1848 to about OCT 1848.

The cancel is a black, 26 mm CDS, with manuscript month and date. A 5 mm by 6 mm “5” rate marking.

Postal authorities were unhappy with the appearance of the CDS, with the top of the LANSING lettering being too close to the CDS rim. A second Lansing CDS was ordered; this Type II CDS is illustrated below.



1 of 4 Documented, and Earliest Usage, of a Type I Lansing CDS



*Early Use of Canceling Device
(Possible Earliest Known Usage)*

Lansing, Mich. to Detroit, Mich.

OCT 7, (1848)

Type II CDS – Used beginning about OCT 1848.

This 1848 folded letter was mailed to Detroit. A red Lansing post mark and red 5 rate marking.

6. Mail To Lansing, Mich.

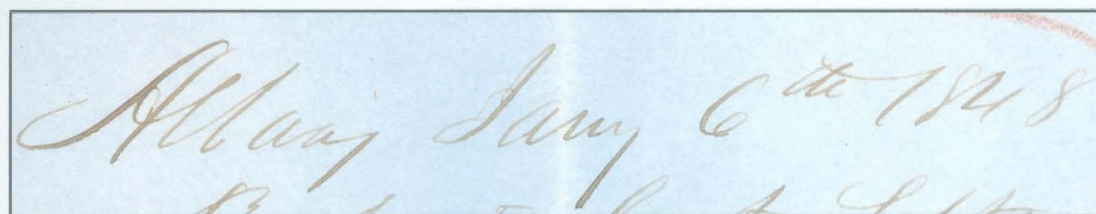


**Albany, N.Y. to
Lansing, Mich.**

JAN 6, (1848)

This folded letter was mailed to the Auditor General in Lansing, Mich. It has a red Albany CDS and red "5" hand-stamp that was corrected to the right postal rate by a manuscript "10". The 10-cent rate is for mail carried more than 300 miles.

Datelined "Albany Jan 6th 1848". Mailed to Lansing, Mich. even though Michigan, Mich. wasn't renamed to Lansing, until April 3, 1848. Therefore, the letter was addressed and sent to Lansing two months and 14 days before the name change.



**Poplar Ridge, N.Y. to
Detroit, Mich. Forwarded to
Lansing, Mich.**

APR 17, (1848)

Datelined April 12, 1848, this letter was rated 10-cents, and a manuscript Paid and 10 applied in Poplar Ridge. In Detroit, the Paid, 10, and Detroit, Michigan were crossed out. A red, 30 mm CDS was applied, with a circled 5.

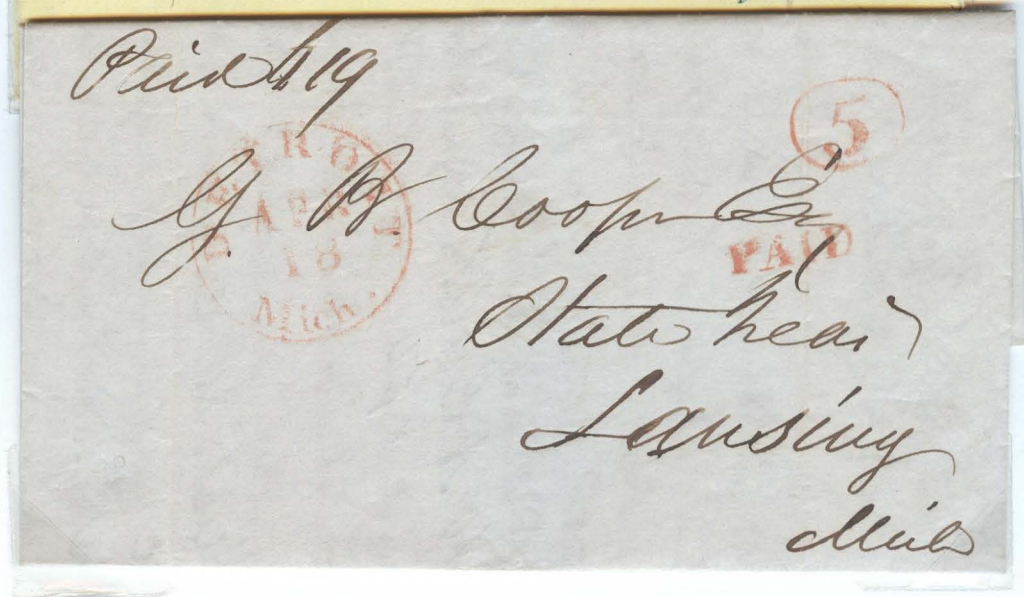


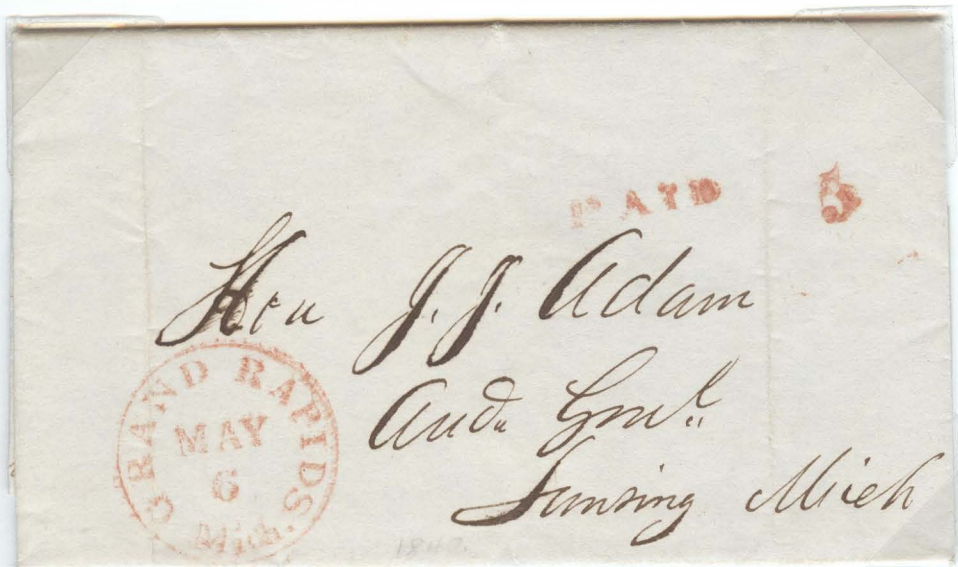
Detroit, Mich. to Lansing, Mich.

APR 18, (1848)

This folded letter was mailed to the Auditor General in Lansing, Mich. It has a manuscript "Paid Ap 19", a red Detroit CDS, red circled "5" and "PAID" hand-stamps.

Datelined "April 18, 1848". Addressed to Lansing, Mich., 15 days after Michigan, Mich. was renamed Lansing, Mich.





Ex - Ernie Scott

Grand Rapids, Mich. to Lansing, Mich.

MAY 6, (1848)

This 1848 folded letter was mailed to the Auditor General in Lansing, Mich. A red 30 mm CDS, red "PAID" mark, and red "5" were applied at Grand Rapids. The 5 cent rate is for mail carried less than 300 miles.

Mailed 1 month after the name change to Lansing, Mich.

Ex - Ernie Scott

Ann Arbor, Mich. to Lansing, Mich.

MAY 23, (1848)

This folded letter was mailed from Ann Arbor to the Auditor General of Michigan. The cover bears a red 33 mm CDS, with a red 11 mm italic "5". The 5 cent rate is for mail carried less than 300 miles.



Detroit, Mich. to Lansing, Mich.

AUG 31, (1848)

This 1848 folded letter was mailed to the Auditor General in Lansing, Mich. A red Detroit post mark, red "PAID" mark, and red circled 5 were applied at Detroit. The 5 cent rate is for mail carried less than 300 miles.





Detroit, Mich. to Lansing, Mich.

SEP 17, (1848)

This 1848 folded letter was mailed to the State Treasurer in Lansing, Mich. A red Detroit post mark and red circled 5 were applied at Detroit. The 5 cent rate is for mail carried less than 300 miles.

Clyde, Wayne County, N.Y. to
Detroit, Mich. and Forwarded to
Lansing, Mich.

SEP 18, (1848) -
Forwarded Sep 30, (1848)

This folded letter was hand-carried from Clyde, N. Y. to Detroit. It was mailed to the Auditor General of Michigan. There is no postmark or rate marks originating at Clyde, N. Y. The letter was rated in Detroit and forwarded to Lansing, Mich. A red Detroit post mark, red circled 5, and a red "FORWARDED" was applied prior to forwarding. The 5 cent rate is for mail carried less than 300 miles.

