

# United States 30¢ Stationery

Plimpton Issues 1874-1903 / Source Material and Usages

## History

High value stationery was progressively introduced by the US Post Office starting in 1861 and culminating with issuance of the first 30 and 90-cent values in 1870. Modern collectors, thinking of letters, find 30-cent envelopes to be illogical. There were very few items of such weight to justify a high postal rate in a small envelope, particularly after lowering of foreign postal rates coinciding with the General Postal Union (GPU) on July 1, 1875. Given the practical culture of the US Post Office in the 1800s, suspicions of a legitimate purpose only come from a lack of knowledge of postal services of that period.

High value envelopes were not intended for simple letters as they would never reach that tariff level based on the limited size of the envelopes. Rather, the 30-cent envelope was used for letters with added special services and as “parcel” envelopes which traveled with parcels. Like parcel cards and forms commonly used in Europe, envelopes allowed for an easier process of sorting parcels in the distribution systems of the day. The envelope was preferred in the US postal system of that period as it could also carry documents accompanying a parcel.

## Study

Before the creation of a parcel post service with lower tariffs, parcels were sent at letter rates, both domestically and overseas. In such cases, it was easy for a parcel to reach the 30-cent tariff: 3 ounces for foreign mail between 1875-1907 (at 5¢ per half-ounce); 5 ounces for domestic mail from 1861-1883 (at 3¢ per half-ounce) and 15 ounces for domestic mail from October 1, 1883 into the early 20th century (at 2¢ per ounce).

As private parcel services opened for business (the Post Office monopoly only applied to letter mail), Post Office sorting systems changed and postage rates fell, eliminating the need for higher value envelopes. This resulted in the last printings of high value envelopes in 1894 with the latest known usage in approximately 1908.

These envelopes, when used for parcels, typically contain two or more sets of numbers on their face: a registration number and a parcel number. The parcel number was an easy identifier for a “bin room” function as the parcels were moved in transit and ultimately called-for by the addressee at the post office of destination.

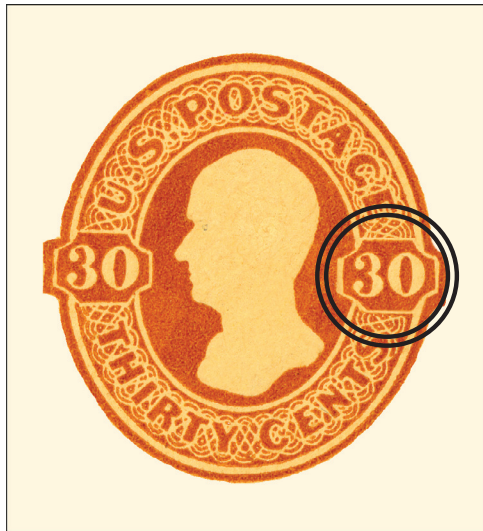
The surviving 30-cent covers, were sent primarily to Europe: Germany, France and Sweden; none are known to Africa or South America. Virtually all used examples are legal and extra-large sizes. ‘Printed to private order’ envelopes were produced in 1888 for a so-called stamp dealer ‘consortium’. None were postally used and they are omitted from this exhibit.



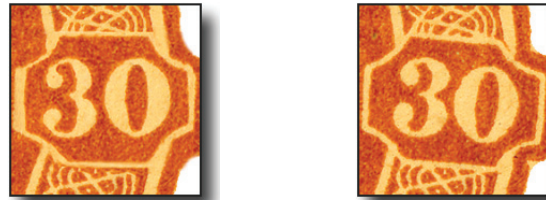
New York, N.Y. Branch Post Office 'Station F' to Aix la Chapelle, (Rheinish) Prussia  
Posted on 5 November, 1890, Processed through N.Y. Registry Division 5 and 6 November, 1980  
Received 15 November, 1890 in Aachen 'Station 1 - Ankunft', Prussia

*Type Identification*

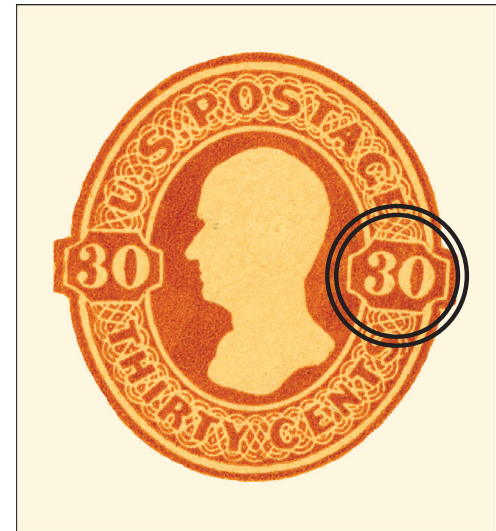
*Design and Watermark Differences*



Reay printing



Value tablet angle differences



Plimpton printing



Watermark 2



Watermark 6



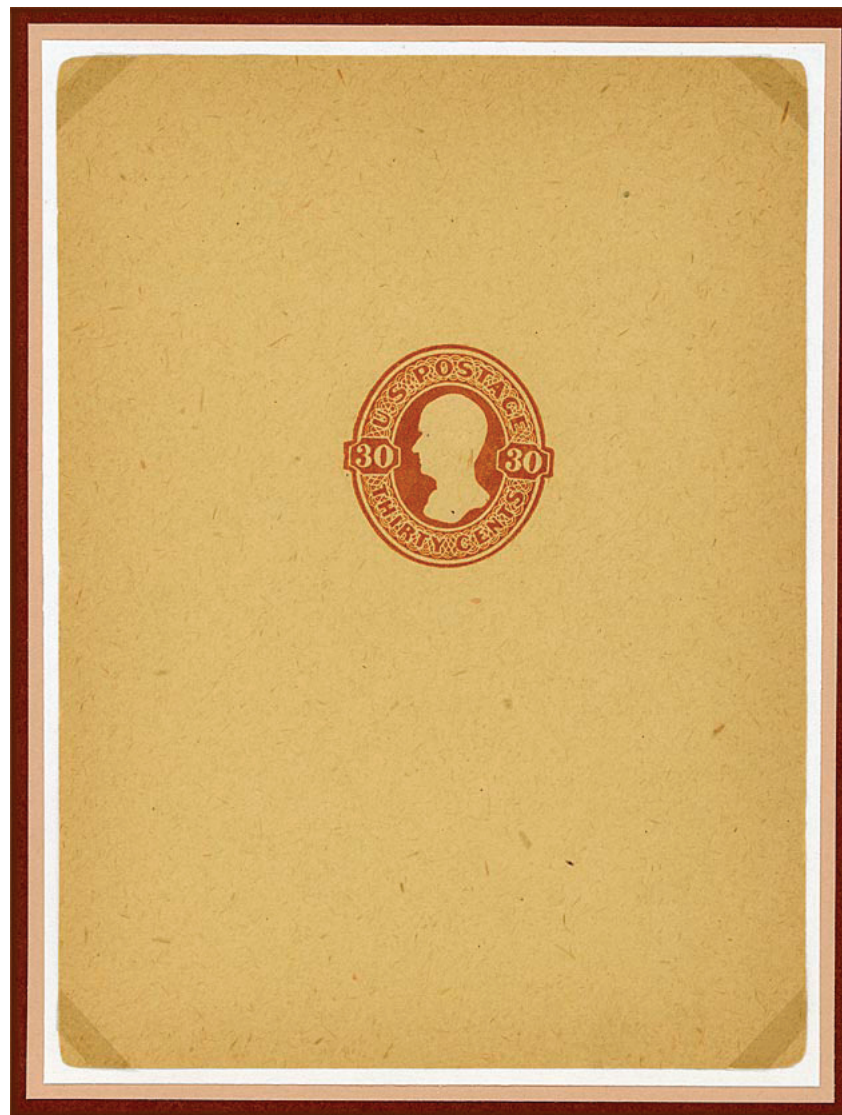
Watermark 7

**1874-1903**

***Plimpton Manufacturing Company***

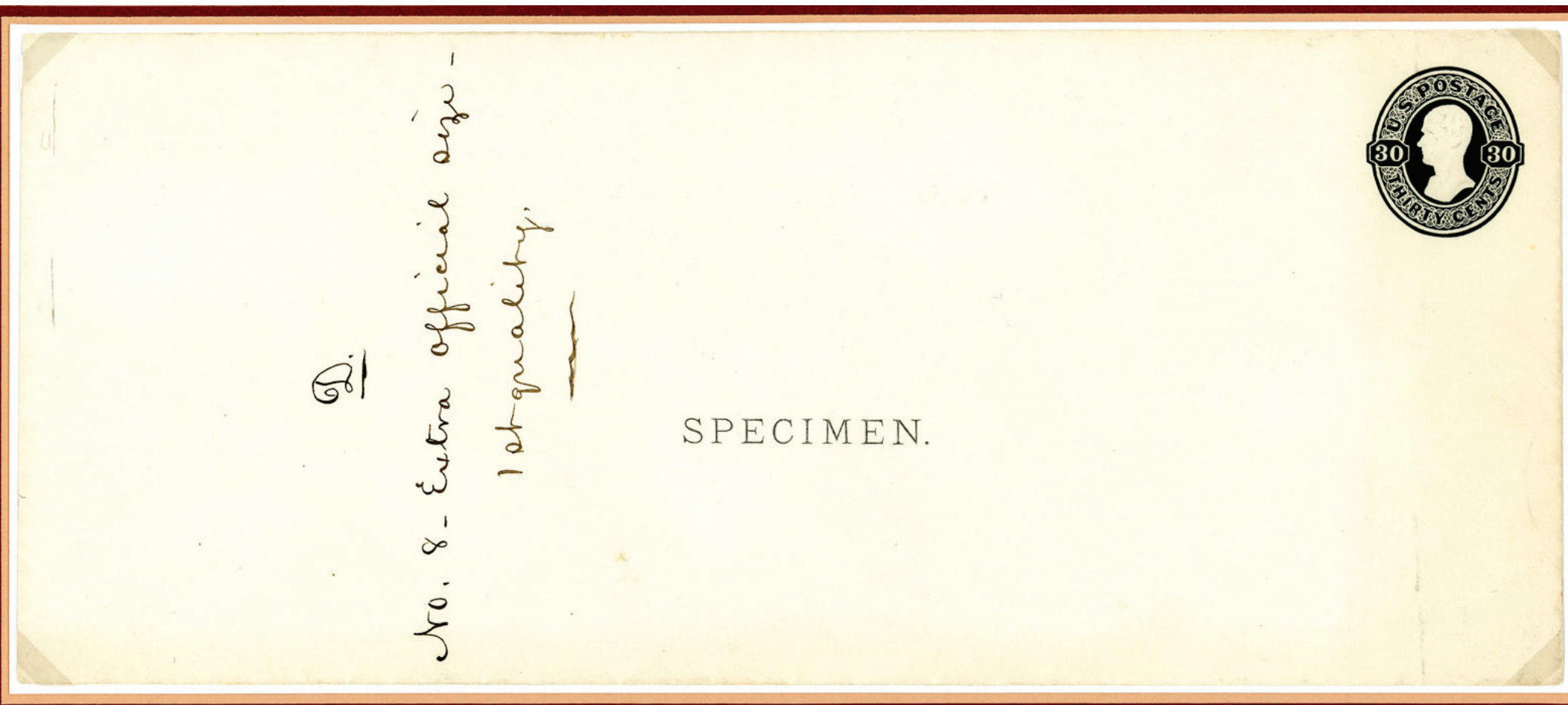
***Watermark 7***

***Bidder's Paper Sample***





Watermark 2



White paper specimen.

*Hand written note with details of size (8) and paper quality (first).*

1874-1903

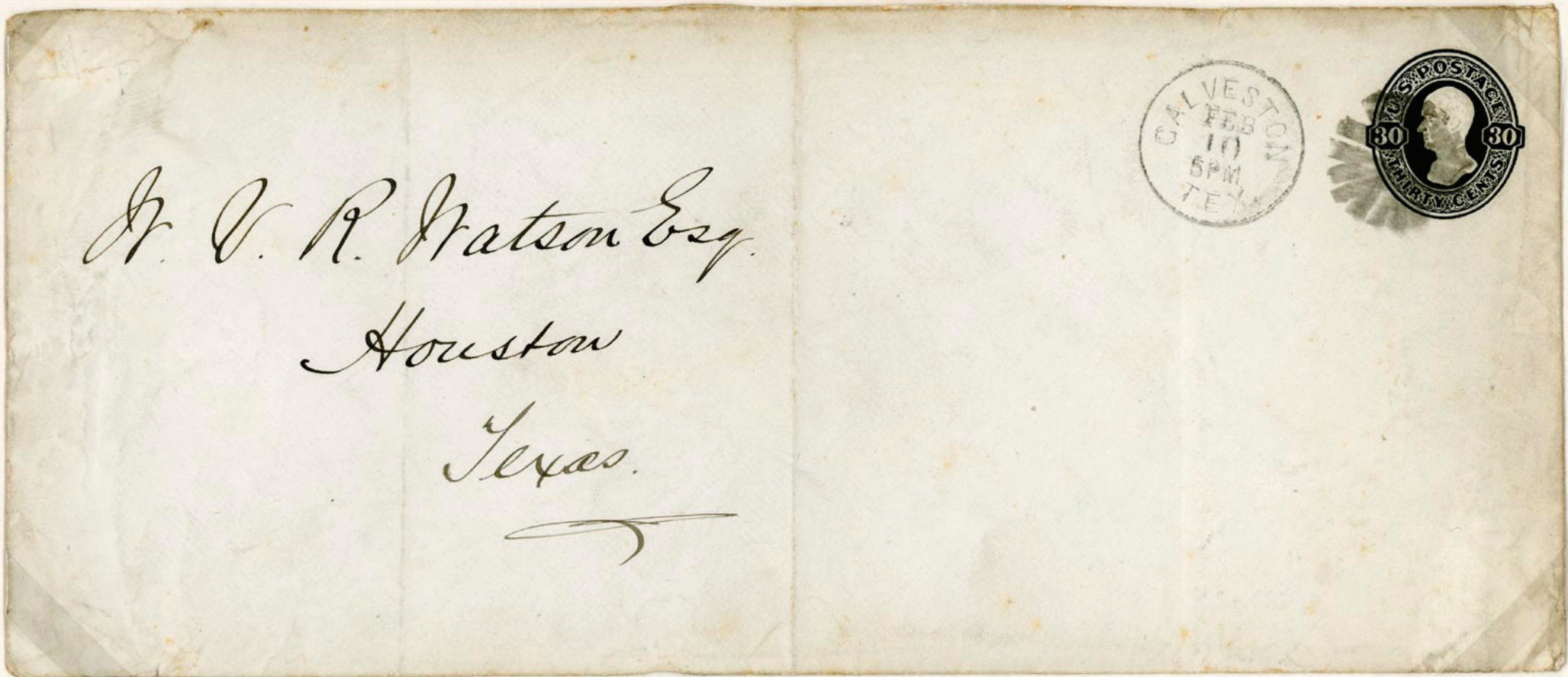
Plimpton Manufacturing Company

Watermark 2

Usage



Watermark 2



Galveston, Tx. to Houston, Tx., 10 February, 1879.  
Backstamped Houston, Tx. 10 February, 1879.

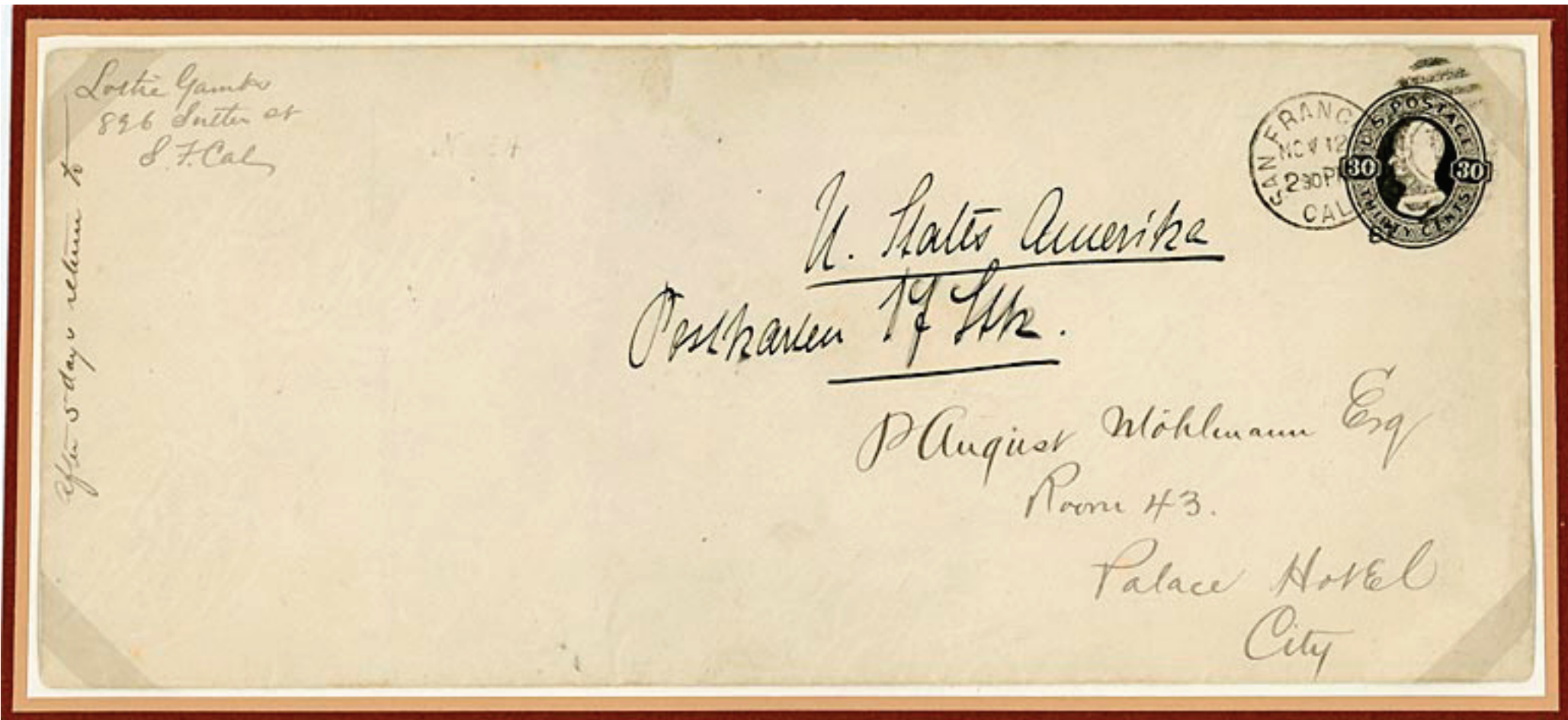
**Examples of used 30¢ envelopes with watermark 2 are extremely difficult to find.**

1874-1903

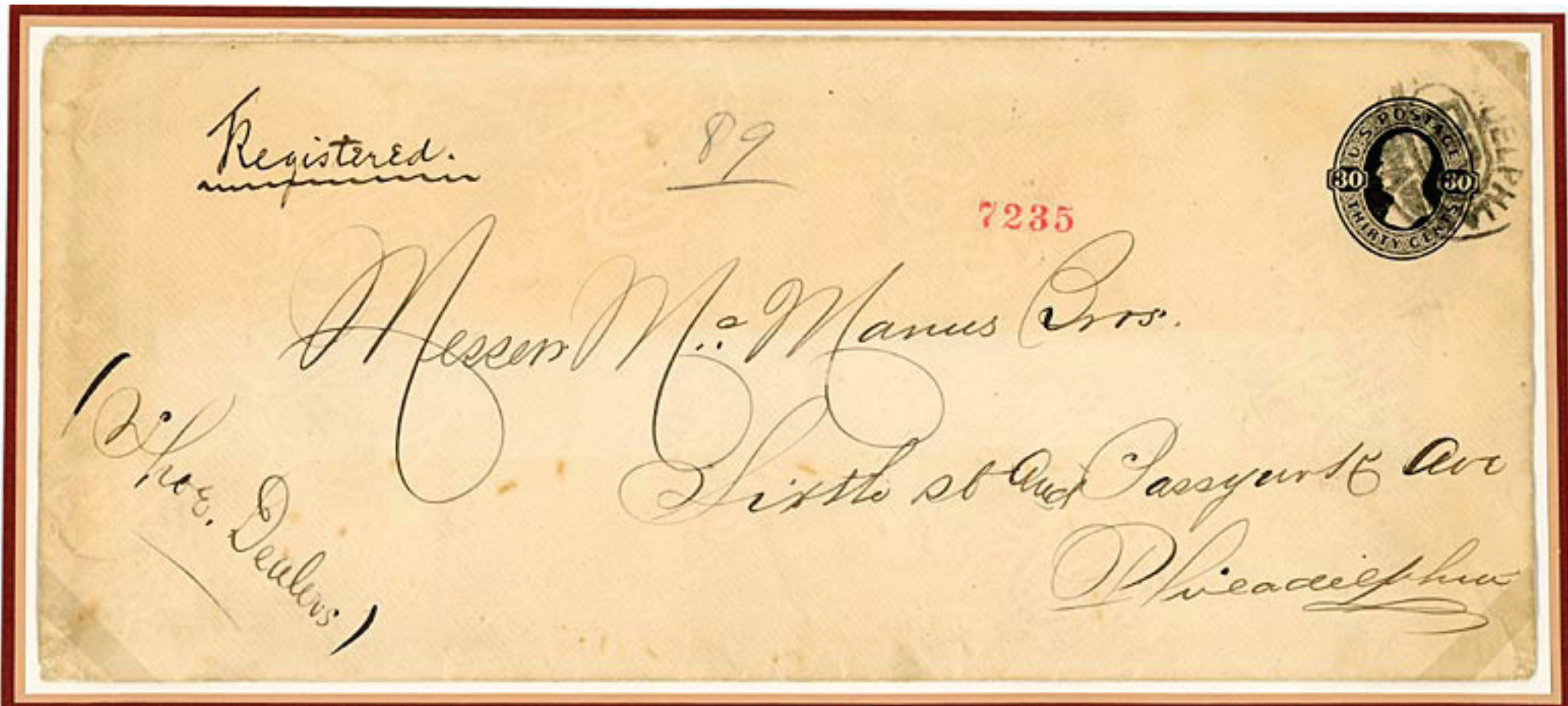
Plimpton Manufacturing Company

Watermark 6

Usage



Local use within San Francisco, Ca., 12 November, 1887.



Local use within Philadelphia, Pa., 7 October, 1890, registered (10¢), Passyunk Station.

1874-1903

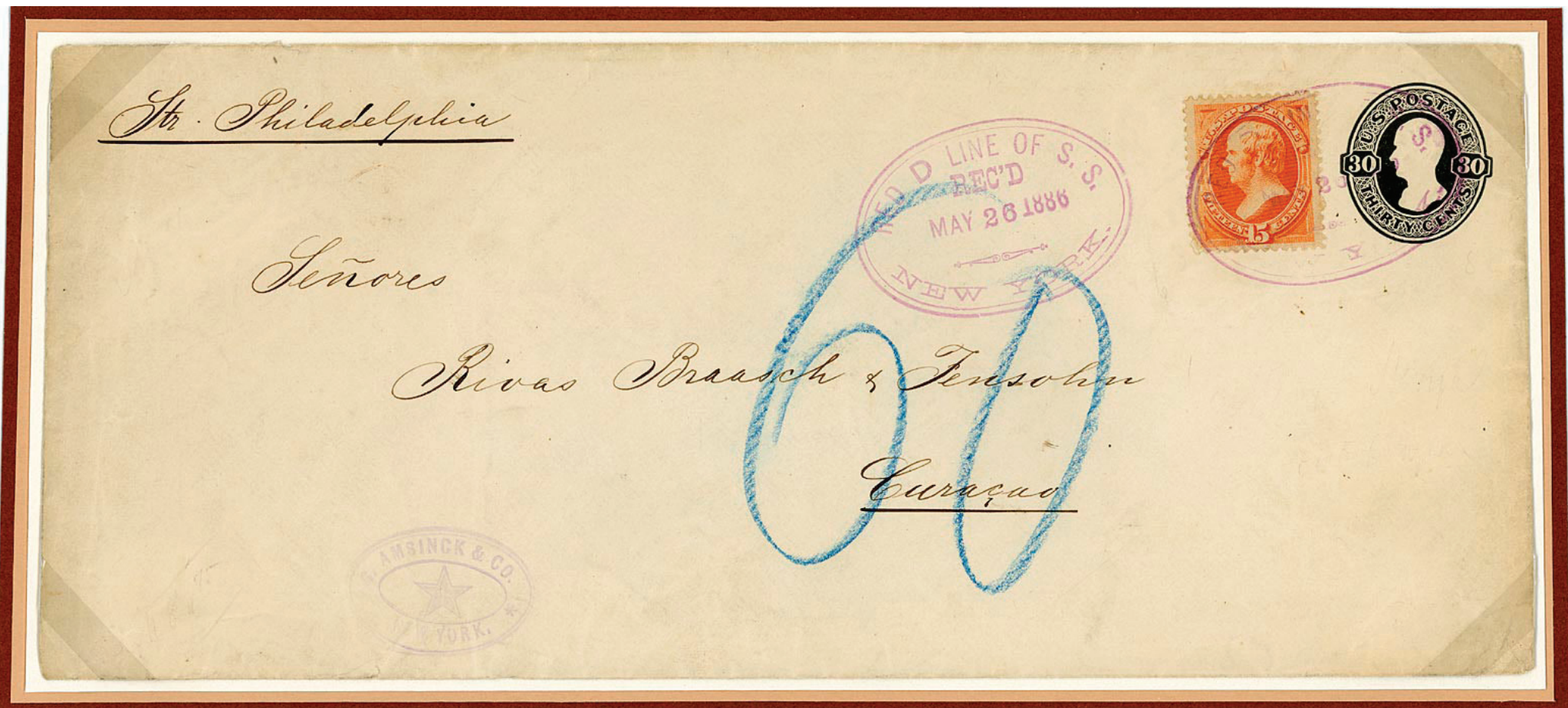
Plimpton Manufacturing Company

Watermark 6

Usage



New York, N.Y. to Boaz Island, Bermuda, 1 October, 1887, registered (10c).  
Received Hamilton, Bermuda 2 October, 1887.



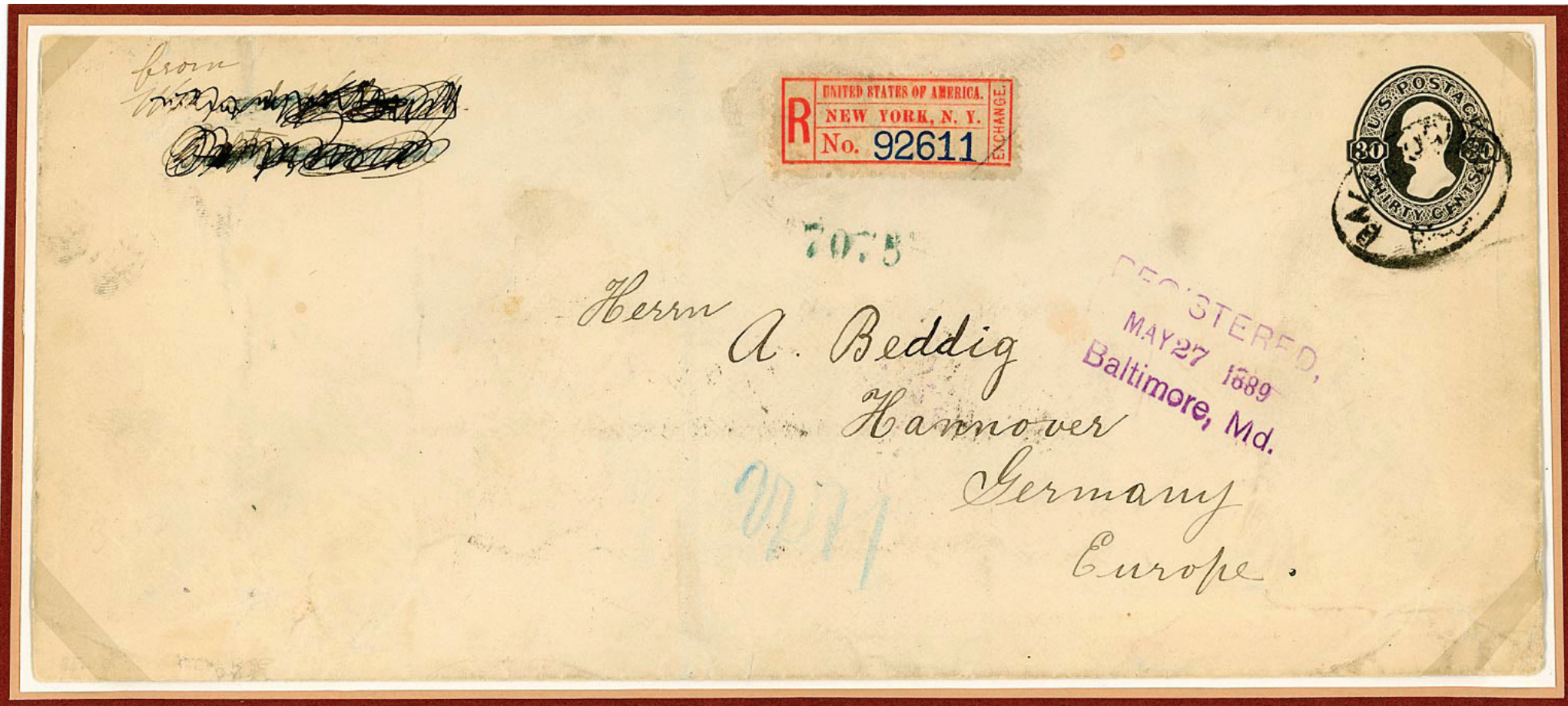
New York, N.Y. to Curacao, 26 May, 1886, via the Red 'D' Line, S.S. New York.

1874-1903

Plimpton Manufacturing Company

Watermark 6

Usage



Baltimore, Md. to Hannover, Germany, 27 May, 1889, registered (10c).  
Backstamped Hannover, 8 November, 1889.



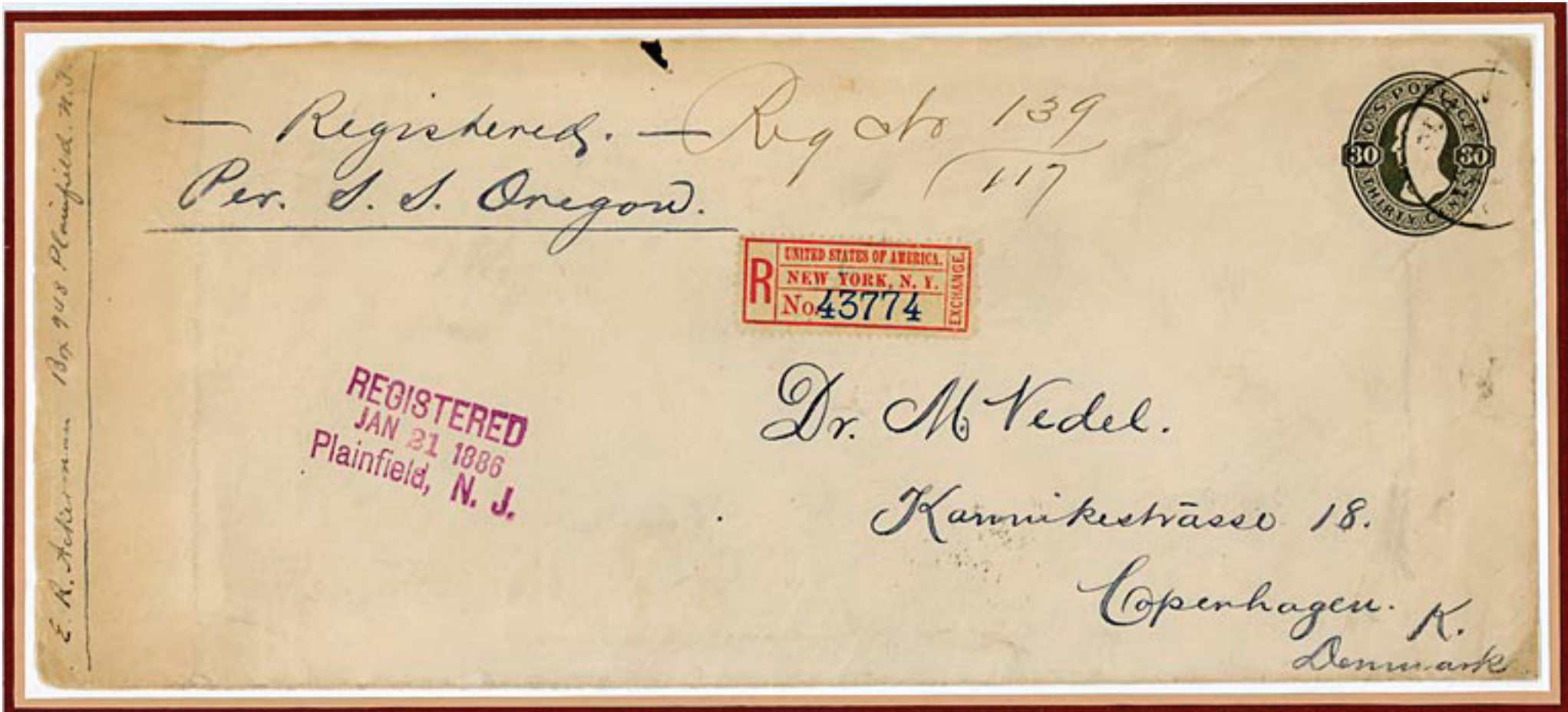
Boston, Ma. to Amsterdam, Holland, 11 February, 1904, registered (10c).  
Backstamped Amsterdam, 28 February, 1904.

1874-1903

Plimpton Manufacturing Company

Watermark 6

Usage



Plainfield, N.J. to Copenhagen, Denmark, 21 January, 1886, registered (10¢) via Steamship 'Oregon'.  
Backstamped transit New York, N.Y., 23 January, 1886; Copenhagen, 2 February, 1886.



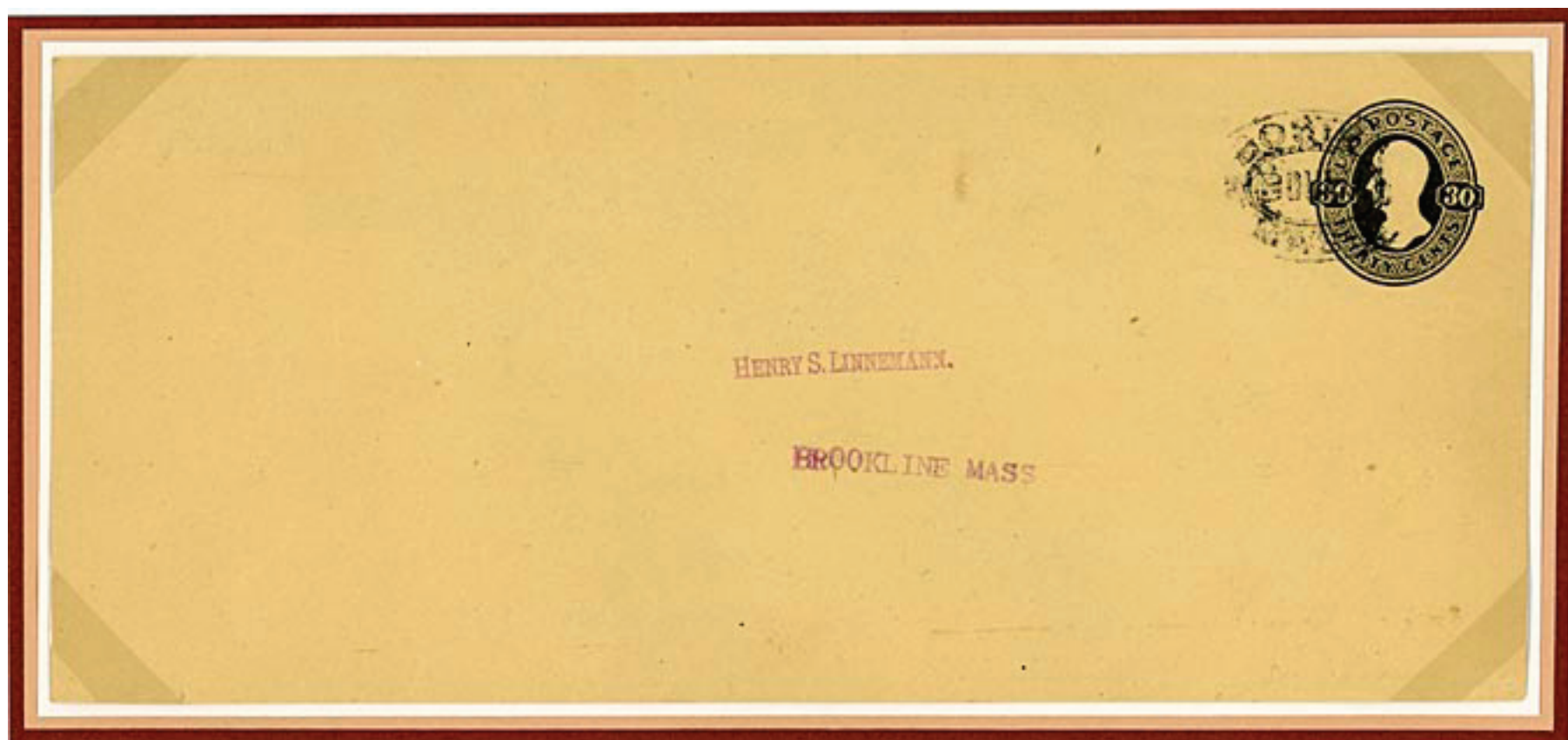
New York, N.Y. to Christchurch, New Zealand, 28 February, 1890, registered (10¢).  
Backstamped transit San Francisco, Ca. 5 March, 1890; Christchurch, 2 April, 1890.



1874-1903

Plimpton Manufacturing Company  
Watermark 7

Usage



Boston, Ma., BOULV (Boulevard) Barnch to Brookline, Ma.

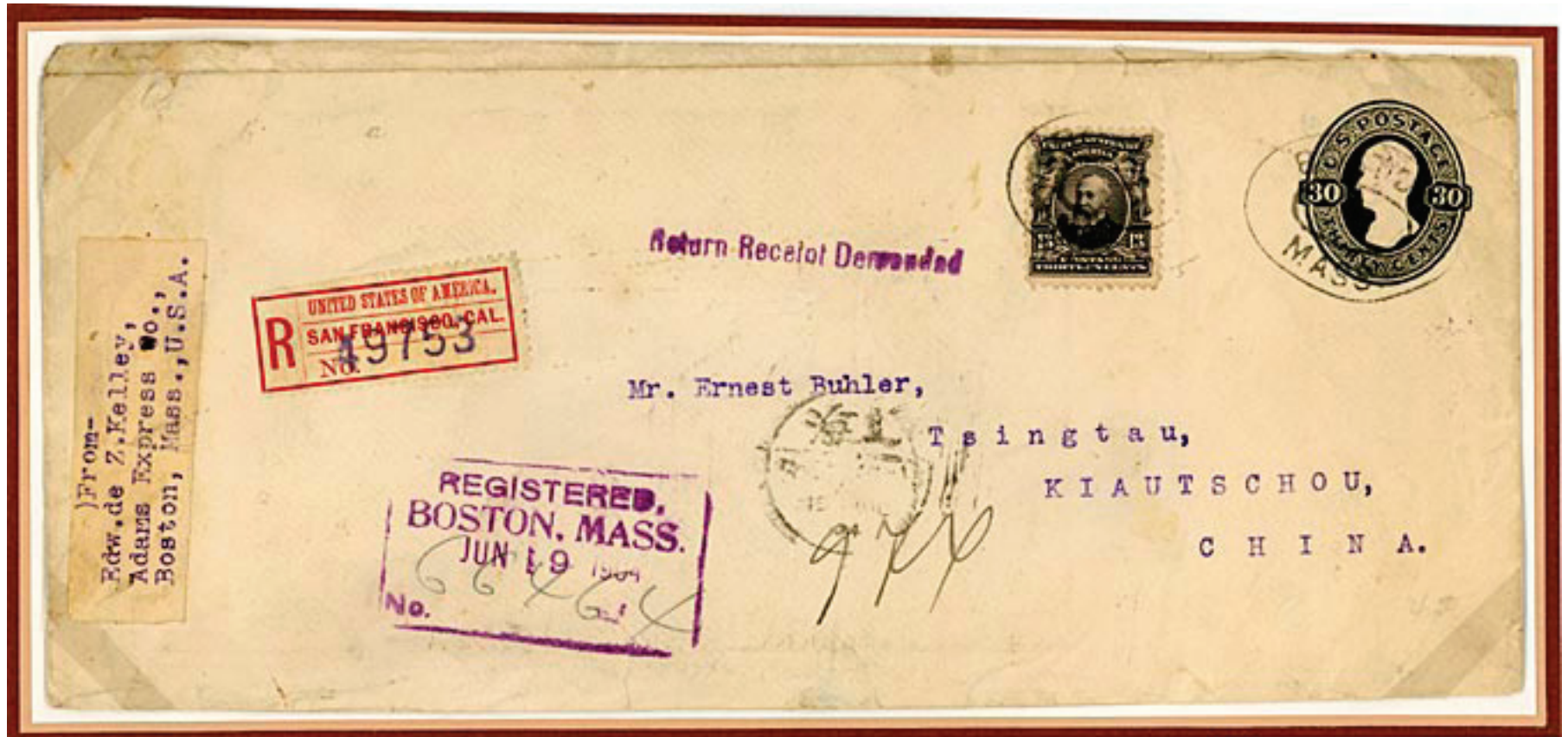
*Examples of used 30¢ envelopes (black indicia) with watermark 7 are extremely difficult to find.*

1874-1903

Plimpton Manufacturing Company

Watermark 7

Usage



Boston, Ma. to Kiautschou, China, 9 June, 1904.  
Registered (10¢) with return receipt demanded (5¢).  
(Domestic registration fee 8¢ likely mis-charged in this case)  
Foreign registry through Ferry Station, San Francisco, Ca., 14 June, 1904.  
Backstamped Tsingtau, Kiautschou, China, 22 July, 1904.

**Examples of used 30¢ envelopes (black indicia) with watermark 7  
to a foreign destination are exceptionally difficult to find.**



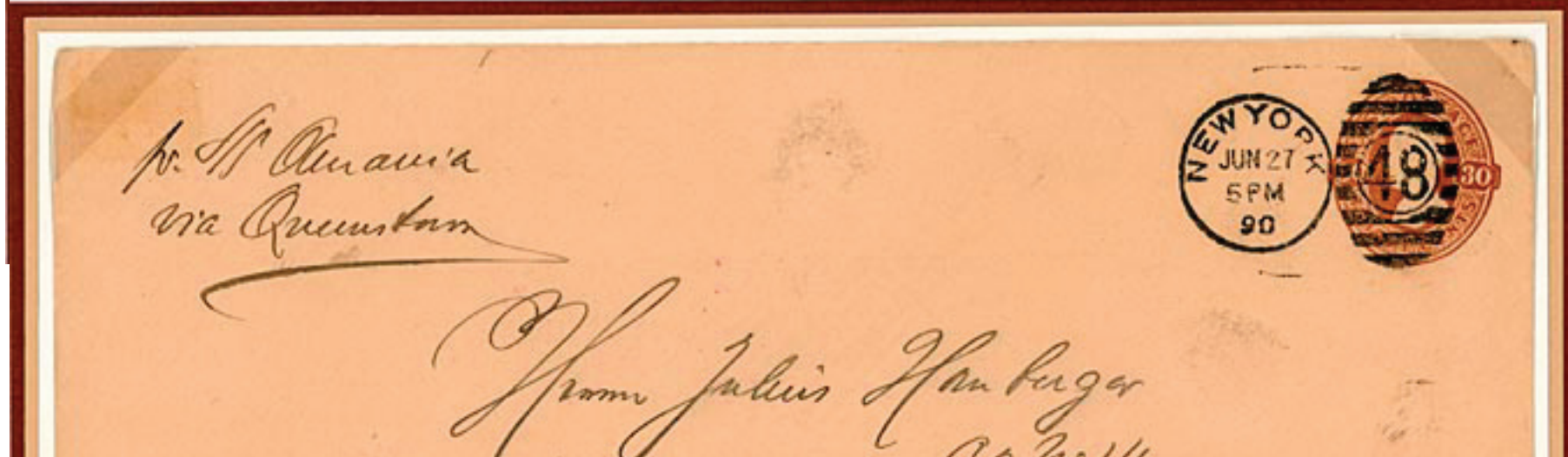
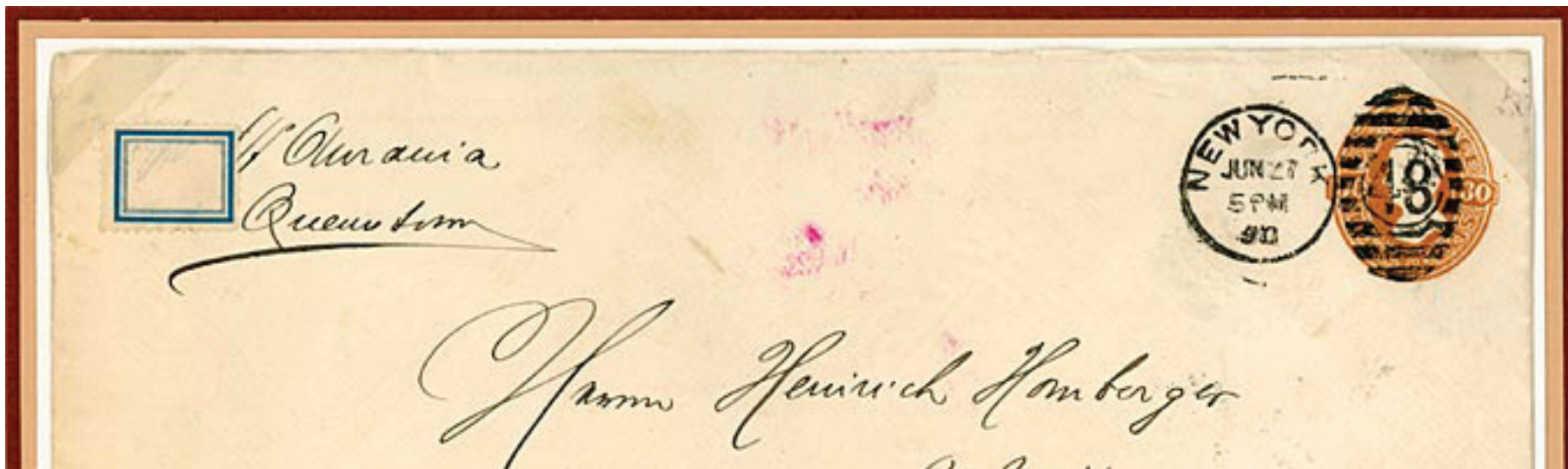
Scan of rear

1874-1903

Plimpton Manufacturing Company

Watermark 7

Usage



New York, N.Y. to Mannheim, Germany, 27 June, 1890.  
Backstamped Mannheim, Germany 8 July, 1890.  
Examples of paper color and quality.

1874-1903

Plimpton Manufacturing Company

Watermark 7

Usage



Saint Louis, Mo. to Hannover, Germany, 26 July, 1890, registered (10¢).  
Forwarded and backstamped Barsinghausen, 9 August, 1890.



Chicago, Ill., Station D to Neumunster, Germany, 30 March, 1908, registered (10¢).  
Forwarded and backstamped Wiesbaden, 10 April, 1908.

1874-1903

Plimpton Manufacturing Company

Watermark 7

Usage



New York, N.Y. to Ingolstadt, Germany, 22 May, 1889, registered (10¢) with return receipt requested (5¢).  
Backstamped Ingolstadt, 8 June, 1889.



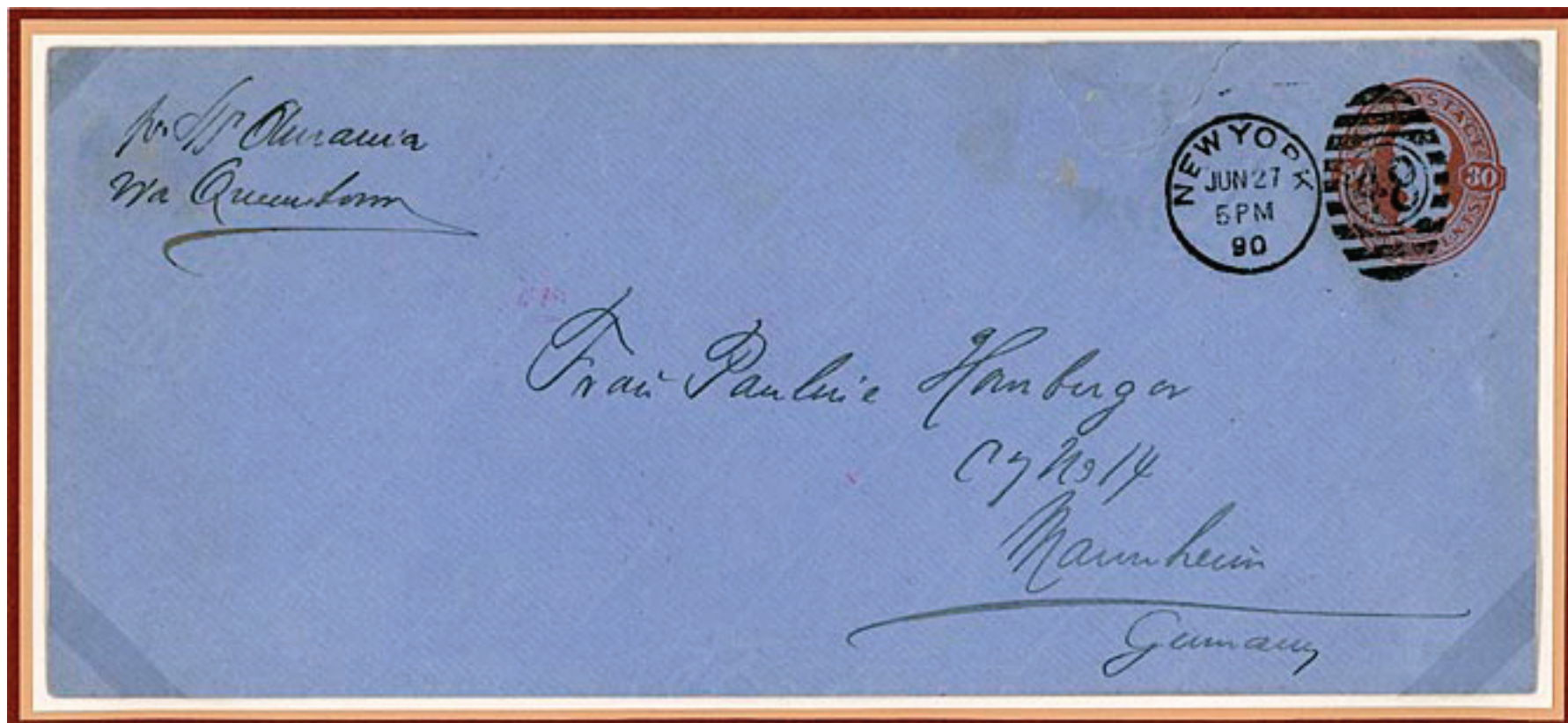
Chicago, Ill., Station C to Neumunster, Germany, 8 April, 1908, registered (10¢) with return receipt demanded (5¢).  
Forwarded and backstamped Wiesbaden, 21 April, 1908.

1874-1903

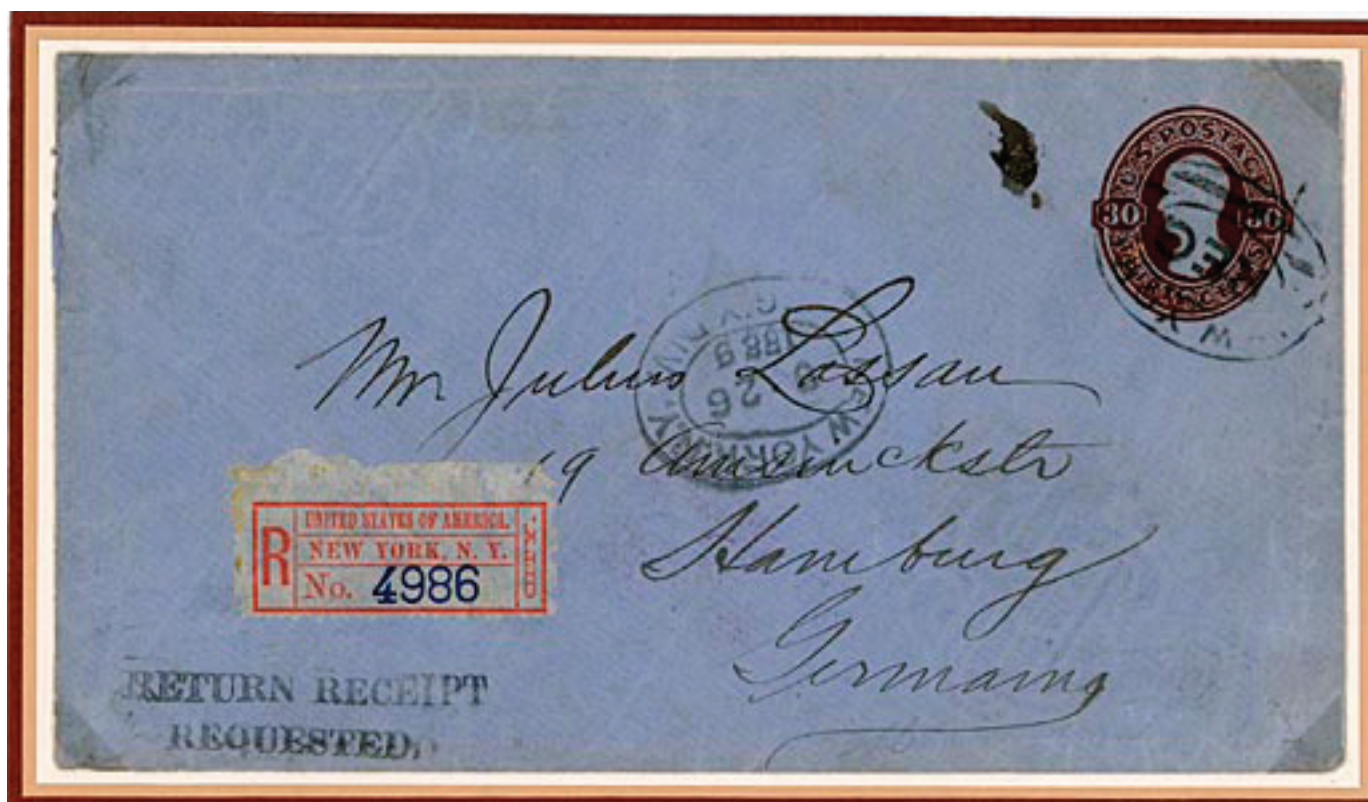
Plimpton Manufacturing Company

Watermark 7

Usage



New York, N.Y. to Mannheim, Germany, 27 June, 1890.  
Backstamped Mannheim, 8 July, 1890.



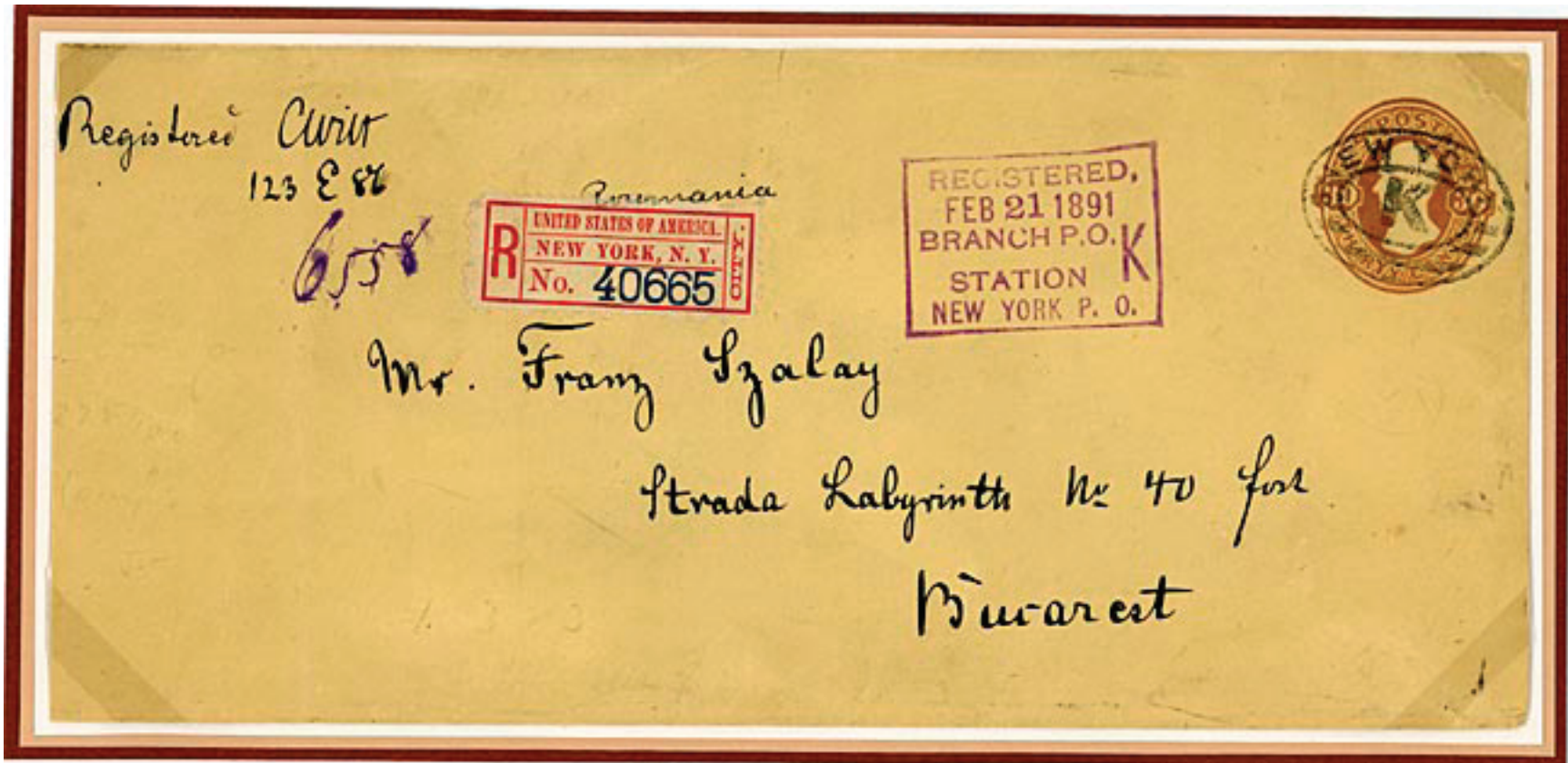
New York, N.Y. to Hamburg, Germany, 26 September, 1889, registered (10¢) with return receipt requested (5¢).

1874-1903

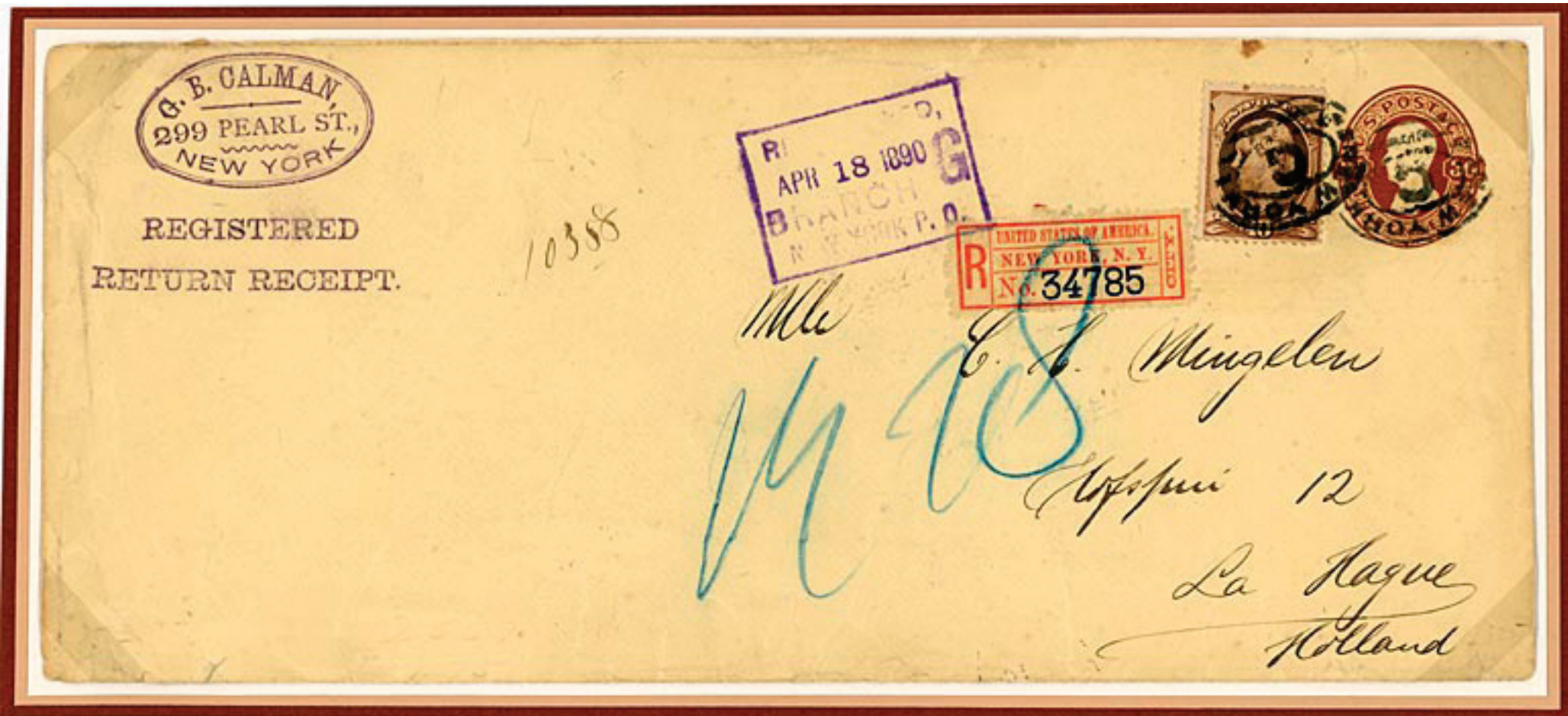
Plimpton Manufacturing Company

Watermark 7

Usage



New York, N.Y., Station K to Bucarest, Romania, 21 February, 1891, registered (10¢).  
Backstamped Bucarest 8 March, 1891.



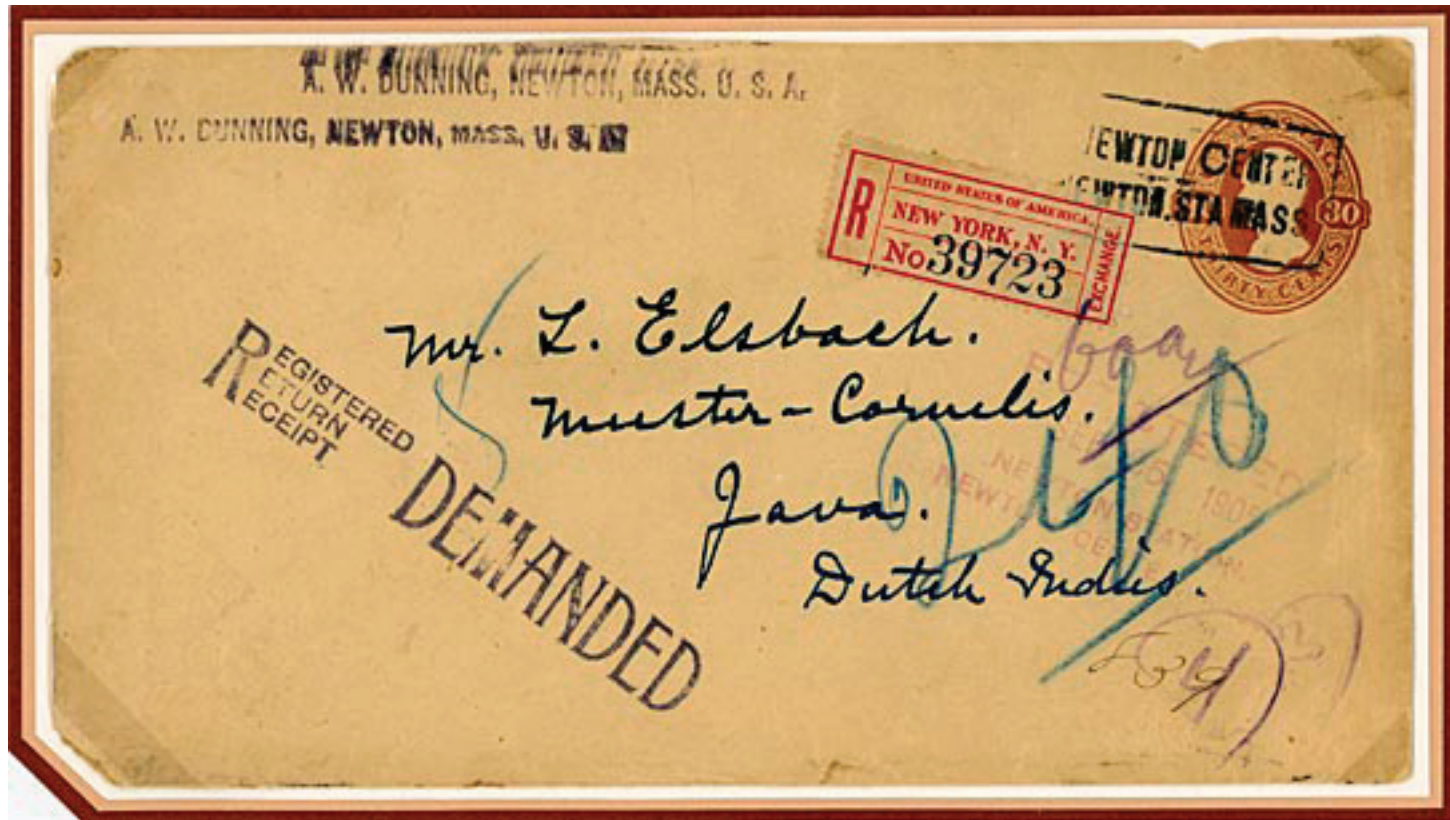
New York, N.Y., Station G to La Hague, Holland, 18 April, 1890, registered (10¢) with return receipt requested (5¢).  
Backstamped Mannheim, 8 July, 1890.

1874-1903

Plimpton Manufacturing Company

Watermark 7

Usage



Newton, Ma., Newton Station to Muster-Cornelis, Java, Dutch Indies, 25 September, 1905.

Registered (10¢) with return receipt demanded (5¢).

Foreign registry through New York, N.Y. 26 September, 1905.

Backstamped London, England, 2 October 1905 and

Muster-Cornelis, Java, 30 October, 1905.

**Examples of stationery used to the Dutch Indies are exceptionally difficult to find.**



Scan of rear