

Hale & Co. Independent Mail

This exhibit explores the operations of the Independent Mail Company founded by James W. Hale in December 1843, originally delivering letter mail on the lucrative route between Boston and New York, and gradually covering other states. Hale handled more letter mail than any other Eastern Independent Mail Company, until an Act of Congress put it out of business effective July 1, 1845. The scope of this exhibit is to show examples to or from each state that Hale advertised service and had agents. These eight states are Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine, Connecticut and Maryland.

Predecessor operation: Hale initially provided a foreign letter mail forwarding service starting in 1838. Only 21 such letters have been recorded from 1838 to 1842. The scope is to show examples to the two foreign countries recorded: Great Britain and France.



Havana, Cuba to London via New York
Jul 13 1841. Reverse shown at 70%
Backstamped red oval "Forwarded By Goodhue & Co. New York", "Liverpool Ship Letter" SL and red London 16 Aug. 1841 cds



Boston to London Nov. 20 1838 by steamship
Great Western of the Great Western Steamship
Company. Reverse shown at 70%. Handstamped
"Bristol Ship Letter" and rated at 2 shillings due.



New York to Paris, France Feb. 1 1842. 6 decimes due. The
only known Hale Foreign Forwarding Service letter to a
country outside of Great Britain. Paris 22 Feb. 42 receiving
backstamp.

Hale & Co. Independent Mail Adhesive Stamps

The stamps issued by Hale & Co. in 1844 had a number of firsts: the first stereotyped stamps, the first die-cut and mechanically separated stamps, and the first precancelled stamps, as shown in these examples. Initial printing on thin pelure paper, later printings on thicker wove paper. The blue stamp color shades range from light milky blue to deep indigo blue. Stamps were printed in a sheet of 20 (5 x 4 subjects) and sold for 6 cents each or 20 for \$1.00.



First design with street address



First design die-cut, dark blue color



First design, vermilion color, die-cut



Second design, street address omitted



Second design, with part of adjoining stamp at top



Second design with precancel from Boston office



Second design with precancel and "R" cancel from Philadelphia office

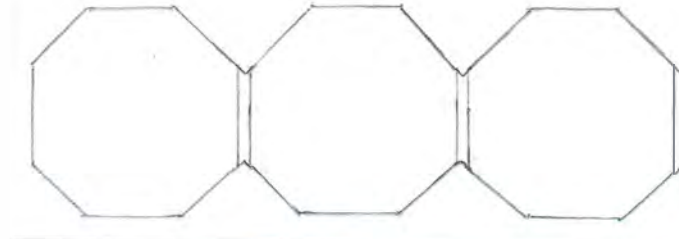


Diagram of die-cut strip configuration



← Note separation at sides

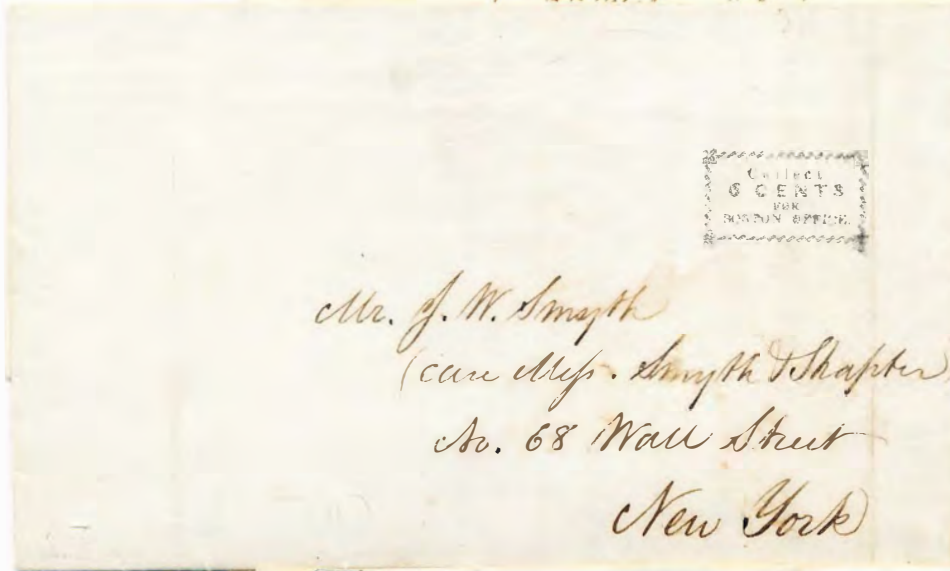
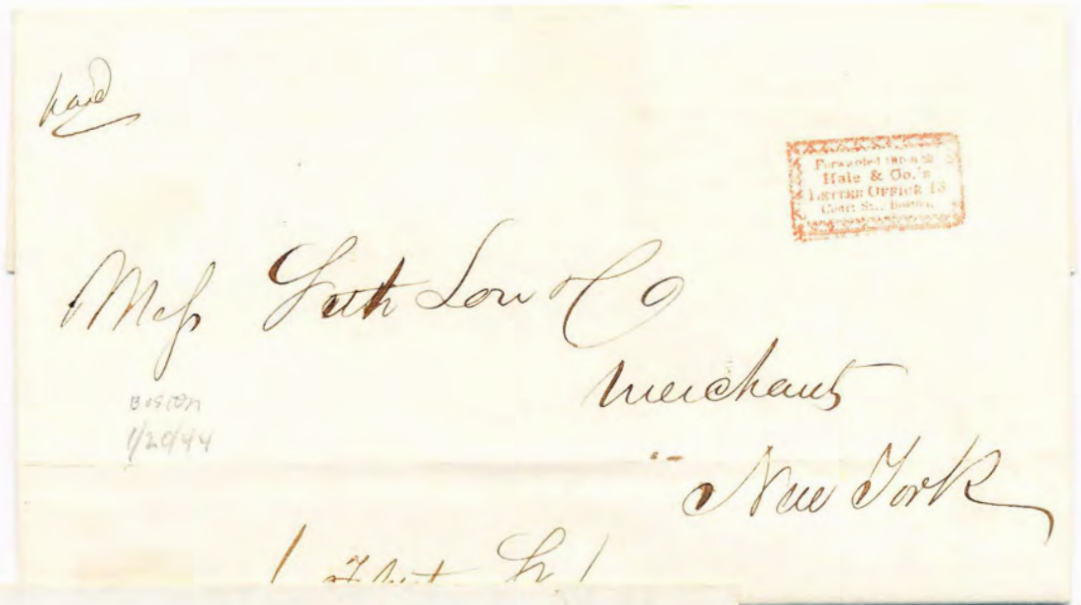
Boston to Northampton, Mass. Oct. 26, 1844

Primitive coil stamps: stamps were available die-cut in a strip such as in the diagram, cookie-cutter style, and individual stamps were torn off at the edges. The letter shown above is one of two recorded examples of this configuration. Note the torn edges at the two adjacent vertical sides.

Hale & Co. Independent Mail, Uses from Boston

Hale & Co. started their Independent Mail Service in Boston in December 1843. The first office was located at 13 Court Street and then moved to 23 State Street. Boston was the most active of Hale's offices.

Boston to New York Jan. 20 1844
 "Forwarded Through Hale & Co.'s
 Letter Office 13 Court St., Boston"
 handstamp. This is the earliest
 handstamp of any type that Hale
 used



Boston to New York Jan. 31 1844
 "Collect 6 Cents For Boston Office"
 handstamp. This is the earliest
 boxed collect handstamp that
 Hale used

Boston to New York Oct. 17
 1844, precancelled stamp
 "Hale & Co.'s Mail, Boston,
 Office 23 State Street."
 handstamp

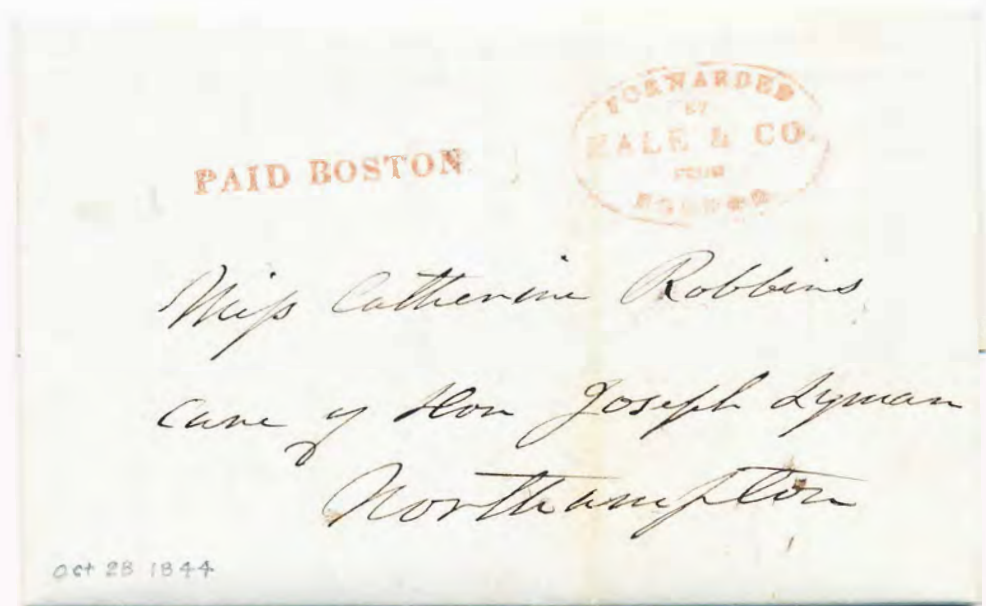


Hale & Co. Independent Mail, Uses from Boston



Lynn, Mass. To New York Dec 14 1844
 "Hale & Co.'s Mail, Boston, Office 23 State Street." handstamp. Double rate—writer mentions enclosing another letter for forwarding. Right stamp Position No. 1 with plate damage at top. Second printing of stamp.

Boston to Northampton, Mass.
 Oct. 28 1844. "PAID BOSTON" handstamp is scarce—only 7 examples recorded—this is the earliest known. "Forwarded By Hale & Co. From Boston" handstamp



Boston to Philadelphia Mar. 20 1845.
 Elongated oval handstamp "Forwarded By Hale & Co. From Boston". "PAID" handstamped cancel on stamp

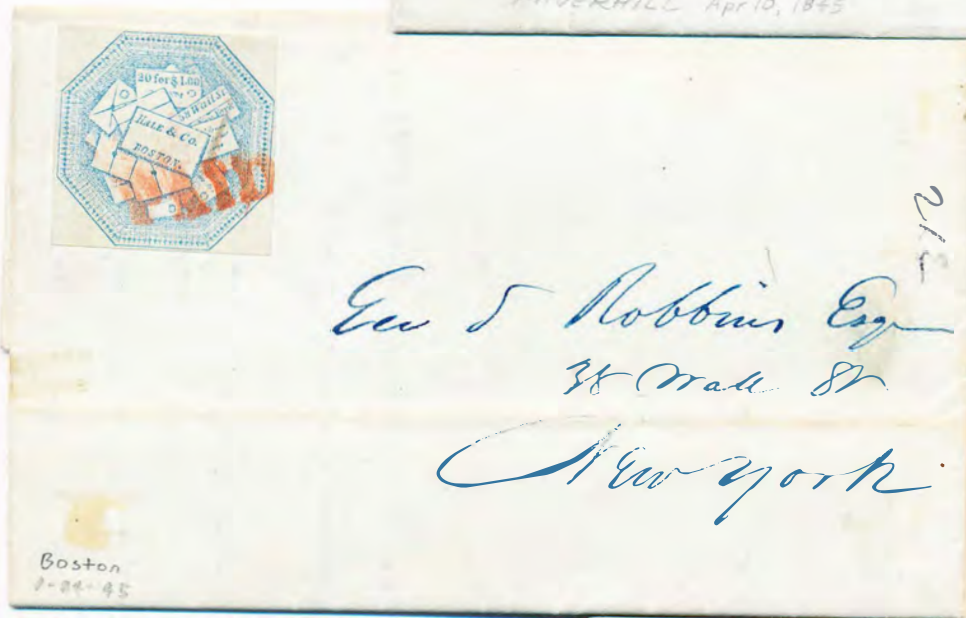
Hale & Co. Independent Mail, Uses from Boston

Triple rate, Boston to New York Apr. 10 1845 with "PAID" cancels

"Forwarded By Hale & Co. From Boston" oval handstamp recorded used from March to June 1845



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Boston to New York
Jan 24 1845



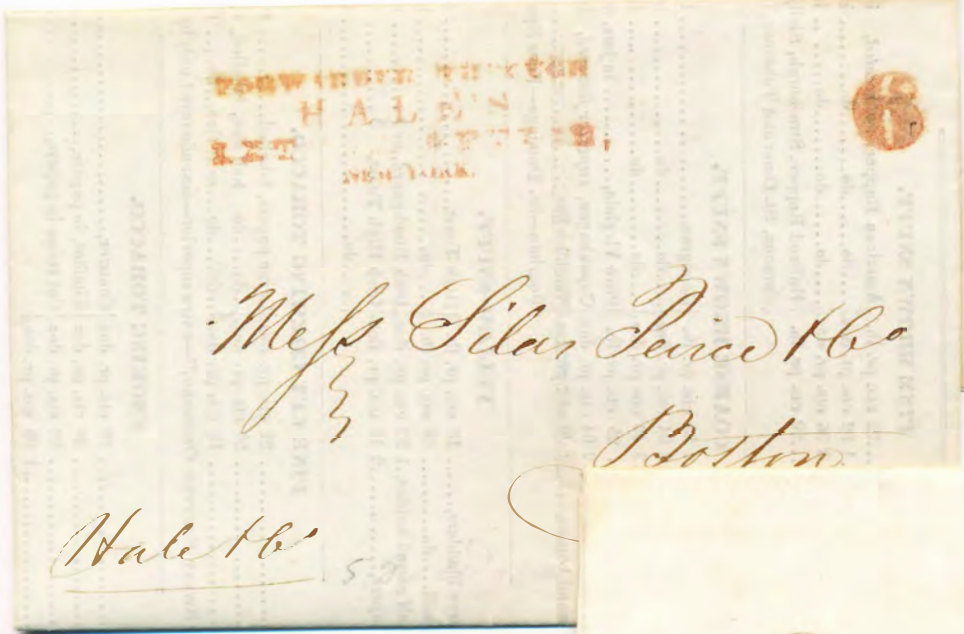
Boston to Philadelphia
Nov. 22 1844 "Hale & Co's Mail. Paid At Boston" handstamp



Boston to Providence Dec. 4 1844, same handstamp as above used as cancel

Hale & Co. Independent Mail, Uses from New York

New York City was the headquarters for Hale & Co., located at 58 Wall Street in the Courier & Enquirer Building. This is the office that James W. Hale worked out of for the 18 months his mail service was in operation.



New York to Boston Feb. 2, 1844
"Forwarded Through Hales's Letter
Office, New York." 6 cents collect

New York to Boston Mar. 30 1844 6-1/4 cents →



New York to Boston
Apr 17 1844 12-1/2
cents double rate



Note impression of slotted
screw head from handstamp

New York to Providence Sept. 23 1844 "Collect Six Cents For Hale & Co." handstamp replaced in late June 1844 the earlier numeral markings shown above. For higher rate letters the amount was added in manuscript, such as in this double rate letter rated "12-1/2" cents.

Hale & Co. Independent Mail, Uses from and to New York

Two types of oval forwarding handstamps saw extensive use at Hale's New York office. The example shown at top has "Cour. & Enq. Building" in a curved line of print. Good impressions are very difficult to find. This marking was replaced by the two examples shown below it, with "Courier & Enquirer Building" spelled out in a straight line of print.



New York to Philadelphia
Sept. 7 1844
curved line of print marking

New York to Troy, NY (scarce destination)
Mar 31 1845 straight line of print marking



New York to Boston Dec 10 1844
straight line of print marking PF cert



Troy, NY to New York May 18 1845 conjunctive use with Brainard & Co. "Collect Six Cents For Hale & Co." marking applied in New York

Hale & Co. Independent Mail, Uses from New York

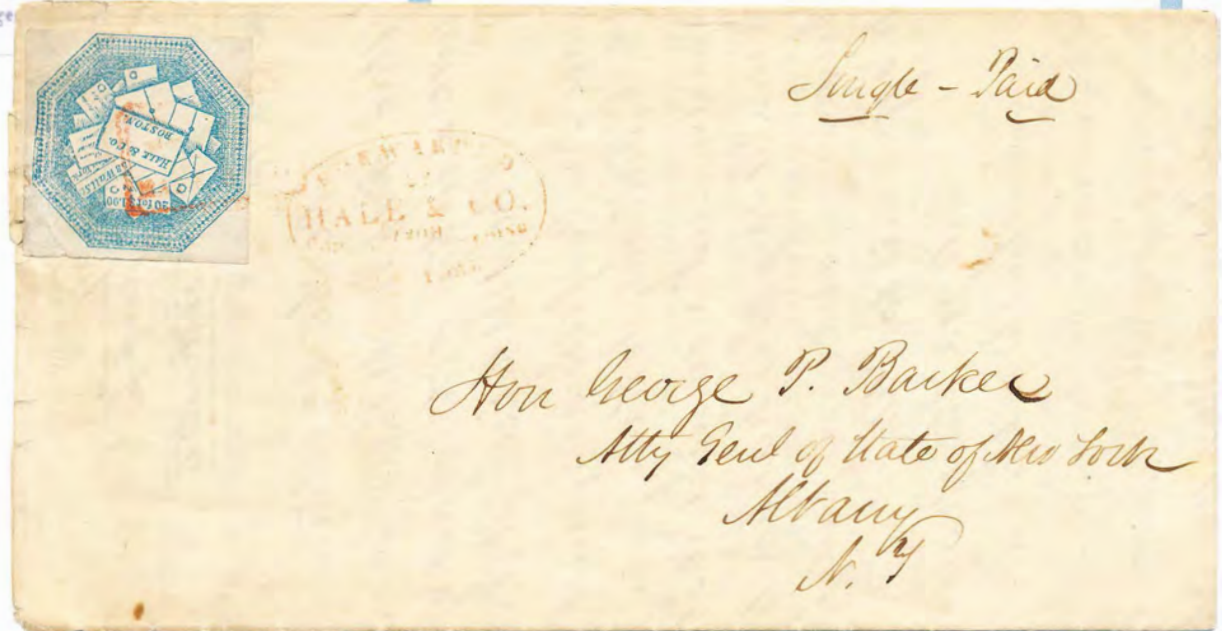
Letter originating in Great Britain. Dated "Per Hibernia, Birmingham July 3 1844" The Cunard Line steamship "Hibernia" departed Liverpool on July 4, 1844 and arrived at Boston on July 17, after a stop at Halifax. This letter was probably carried under a wrapper with others from Boston to New York and re-mailed by the Forwarder, John A. Newbould in New York City using Hale & Co. for delivery to Hartford, Conn. Hale's New York office applied the "6-1/4" collect marking. The manuscript "8" was the total collect charge, including 2 cent local delivery. This is the earliest known letter delivered by Hale into Hartford. Hale began advertising service to Hartford on July 12, 1844 in the *Hartford Daily Courant* with his office listed at 7 Central Row.



Reverse shown at 70% of letter from Birmingham to Hartford with Forwarder's oval handstamp of John A. Newbould of New York

ARRIVAL OF THE STEAMSHIP HIBERNIA.
 Twelve Days Later from Europe.
 Rise in the price of Cotton—Massacre of a Lieutenant and Seven Men—Loss of a Steamer with oil on board—The Agitation Unabated in Ireland—Immense Repeal Subscriptions, &c.
 The steamship Hibernia, Capt. Ryrie, arrived at her wharf at East Boston, Wednesday morning, a few minutes before six, making a short passage of twelve and one-half days.
 We are indebted to Messrs. Adams & Co. for a copy of Wilmer and Smith's Liverpool Times, in advance of the mail, from which we principally select the following news. We are also indebted to the Philadelphia Ledger for a copy containing the news.

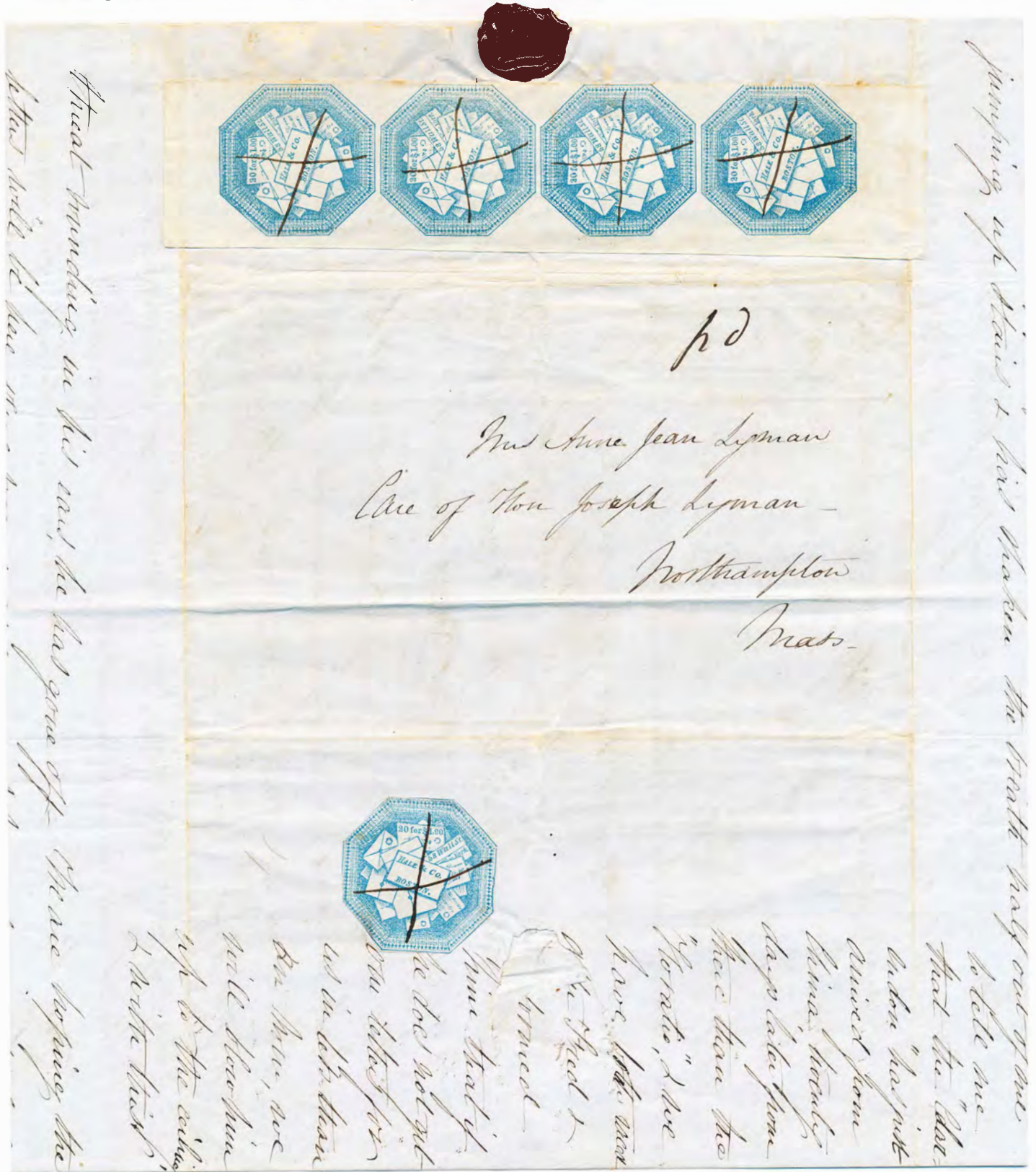
The Sun (New York)
 July 19 1844



Undated letter from Manhasset, Queens County (now in Nassau County), Long Island, NY, to Albany with Hale's New York oval forwarding marking with curved line of print. This handstamp is recorded used from 7/2/44 to 11/9/44. The only known letter from Manhasset.

Hale & Co. Independent Mail, Use from New York

Adhesive with street address omitted, single cut-to-shape and sheet margin vertical strip-of-four. Letter datelined "New York Sept. 9 1844" to Northampton, Mass. Each stamp cancelled by a manuscript "X". Manuscript "Pd" (Paid). This is the largest recorded multiple of this stamp on cover. This shows the entire left column of the sheet comprising Positions 1, 6, 11 and 16 on the Second State of the plate. Only one other strip of four is recorded—from the plate with the address. Writer mentions enclosing several other letters from other family members, hence the 5X rate.



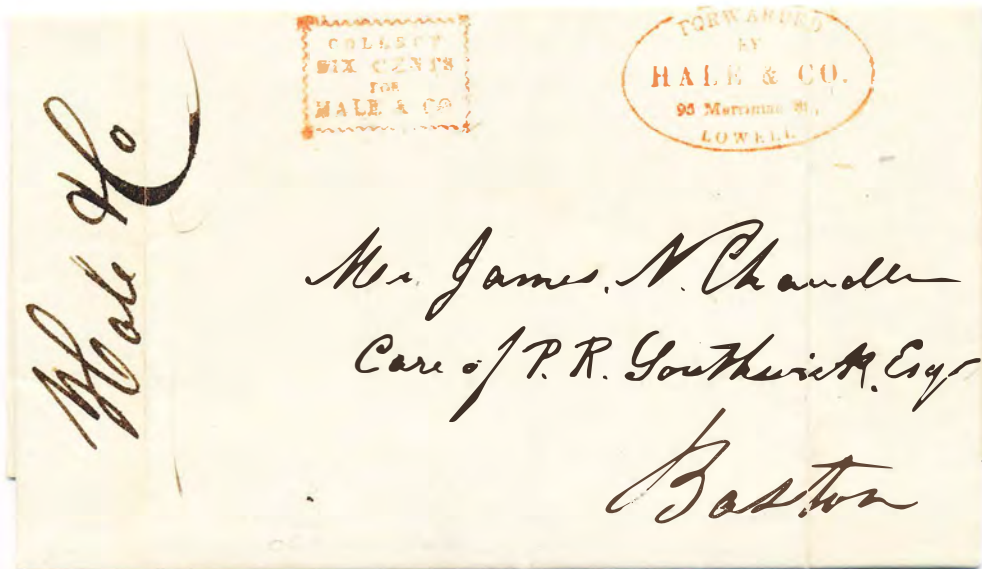
Hale & Co. Independent Mail, Uses from Massachusetts

Hale had more offices in Massachusetts than any other state. Hale did such a large business there as the state was highly industrialized and many of its town were served by both railroad and steamboat.



Salem to Springfield, Mass.
Oct. 17 1844. The town was a stop on the Eastern Railroad. Hale's agent was Sylvester Phelps located at 14 Washington Street. This letter is unusual as the office and collect markings are struck in different color inks.

Haverhill to Philadelphia Sept. 7 1844. Letters with this oval office marking are only known dated from Aug. 27 to Oct. 8 1844, and are always struck in a distinctive rusty orange brown color ink.



Lowell to Boston Oct. 14 1844. Only 8 letters are recorded with this oval office marking, which gives the address as 95 Merrimac St.

Hale & Co. Independent Mail, Uses from Massachusetts

New Bedford to Taunton, Mass. Feb 15 1845. Note the distinctive "Collect 6 Cents For N. Bedford Office" boxed handstamp. New Bedford was primarily a whaling port, served by both coastal steamer and railroad. Amos Bates was Hale's agent, located at 92 Union St.



New Bedford to Boston Jan. 17 1845. Stamp tied by PAID cancel, one of 11 examples recorded of this handstamp.

Springfield to Boston Sept. 16 1845
12-1/2 cents double rate collect



Springfield to New York Oct. 24 1844 Note fresh, bright color of vermilion adhesive. Springfield is a Connecticut River town and served as a hub for two railroads. Hale's agent was located at T.D. Beach's Book Store, State Street.

Hale & Co. Independent Mail, Uses from Massachusetts



Danvers to New York Oct. 2 1844. Tiny "J. Shed" manuscript marking in center of stamp. J. Shed was Hale's agent in Danvers. Endorsed "Penny Post Paid" for local delivery.

Only 4 covers are recorded with the oval Danvers office handstamp, two of which are shown here.

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Danvers to Buffalo, NY Aug. 13 1844. Buffalo had been on the Pomeroy route to Albany, but when Pomeroy's Letter Express closed down on Aug. 9 1844 Hale was forced to take over the route. Prior to that time the rate would have been 12-1/2 cents, split between Hale and Pomeroy.



PF cert



Northampton to New York Sept. 30 1844. Manuscript "C" cancel. Northampton is located on the Connecticut River—steamboats provided transport as the railroad had not reached the town by the Hale era. Hale's agent was A.W. Thayer.

Hale & Co. Independent Mail, Uses from Philadelphia

Hale's office in Philadelphia, the second largest city in the U.S. at that time, was located at 37 South Third Street.

June 9, probably 1845, Boston to Philadelphia by U.S. post office for 18-3/4 cents collect. Returned by Hale & Co. to Boston for 6 cents collect, one third of the cost by government mails. Hale usually delivered letters within his system by the next day, ahead of the government mails, another reason his service was so popular



Philadelphia to New York

June 14 1845



Philadelphia to the scarce destination of Troy, NY on the Hudson River, six miles north of Albany. Only 11 Hale letters are known going to Troy

Hale & Co. Independent Mail, Uses from Rhode Island and Connecticut

Providence to New York Oct. 12 1844.
 This oval office marking was usually
 poorly struck. "6" (cents) collect mark-
 ing. Hale's only office in Rhode Island
 was in Providence



Providence to New York Aug. 9 1844 with "N" cancel on adhesive



Providence to New York Oct. 4 1844. One of two known precancels (letter "N") recorded from Providence. Note deep indigo blue shade of Hale's first adhesive with street address



New Haven Conn. to Norwich Conn. Oct. 18 1844 with precancel. Carried by steamer. Hale's agent in Norwich was John H. Grace located at 130 Main St.

Hale & Co. Independent Mail, Uses from New Hampshire, Connecticut



Portsmouth to Boston Feb. 15 1845. One of three recorded examples of Portsmouth precancel with vertical line and "P/NH" control mark, Gutman type 2. Note the ms. "Paid 6-1/4" and "collect 6-1/4", "and the delivery Paid" notations. Indicative of a double rate letter partly paid.



Providence to Portsmouth
Nov. 27 1844. "N" cancel



Portsmouth to Boston Sept. 17 1844.
"Forwarded By Hale & Co.'s Great Eastern Mail" oval marking applied in Boston. This marking was used to indicate travel for the mail, usually used for mail north of Boston.



New Haven, CT to Philadelphia May 9 1845. Only four letters are recorded with this boxed Collect Six Cents marking applied in New Haven

Hale & Co. Independent Mail, Uses from Maine and Maryland

Epilogue: The Congressional Act of March 3, 1845, effective July 1, 1845, significantly lowered postal rates, reduced the postal zones to two, and banned private conveyance of letter mail between cities on post roads. This put Hale & Co. and all the other independent mail companies out of business. Due to competition from these private letter mail companies the post office was forced to reform.

New York to Frankfort, Maine Nov. 13 1845. Conjunction use with Jerome & Co.'s Express, whose marking appears on back. Jerome was Hale's agent in Frankfort, who delivered this letter from Boston to Frankfort



Boston to Bangor, Maine Mar. 25 1845



Baltimore to New York Apr. 28 1845. Hale opened his office in Baltimore in April 1845, which was odd because he knew he would have to close it down in less than 3 months.

Baltimore to New York May 20 1845