

# UNOFFICIAL REGISTRATION OF MAIL IN THE UNITED STATES 1845-1855

Registration of mail as a service of the Post Office Department began on July 1, 1855 with a five cent cash fee. However, for the ten year period prior to official registration, a widespread unofficial system of registering valuable letters was increasingly practiced throughout the United States. Early registration did not provide indemnification of lost valuable contents. But it did provide a promise by the Post Office Department to provide extra security for valuable letters when such letters were brought to the attention of a postmaster.

It was made clear to those sending money through the mails that money and other valuables were sent in the mails at the sender's risk, but the P.O.D. would make serious effort to investigate any loss. A directive dating from 1845 in *Postal Laws and Regulations* is felt to be the reason for the development of Unofficial Registration:

**Sec. 218.** Money, or other valuable things sent in the mail, is at the risk of the owner. But if it be lost the Department will make every effort in its power to discover the cause, and if there has been a theft, to punish the offender.

**Sec. 219.** In every case of loss by mail...the Department should be informed without delay, of all the circumstances connected with it. Particular care should be taken to state the name of the office in which the letter was placed, the day on which, if at all, it was actually mailed, the names of the writer and the person addressed, the amount, and if practicable, a particular description of valuable enclosures, the amount of postage marked on the letter, and whether unpaid or paid, the office to which addressed, and whether mailed direct thereto, or to another office for distribution, and the route by which it was sent, with any further particulars that may aid the Department in its investigation respecting the cause of loss.

**Sec. 220.** No reported loss will be investigated by an agent, unless satisfactory evidence is produced, either by the certificate of the postmaster, or some other disinterested individual that the money or other thing was deposited in the post office.

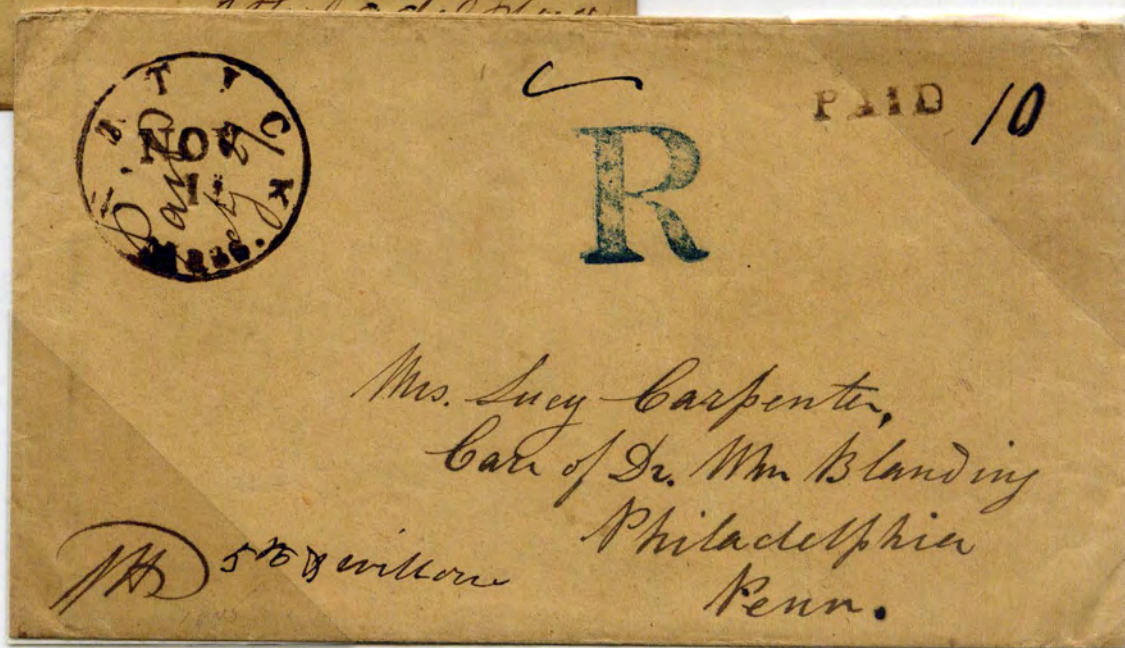
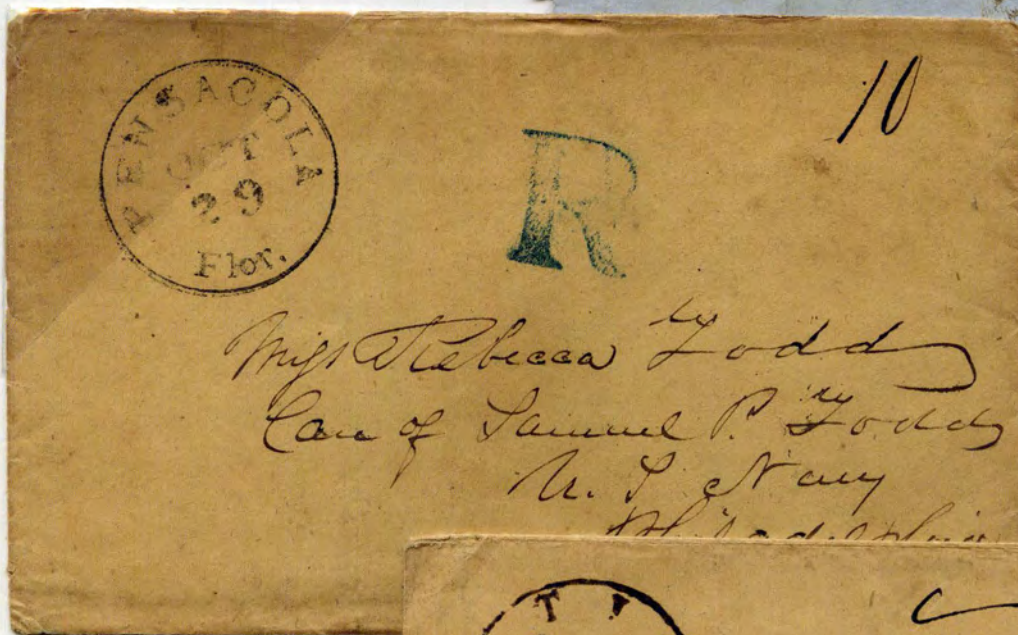
Therefore, beginning in 1845 at Philadelphia and spreading from there to other offices near there throughout the East and then to other parts of the country, one could send *for no cost* letters which would be registered by postmasters and tracked by those postmasters handling the letter, marking the bill that accompanied the letter.

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# Philadelphia large blue "R" markings



The earliest postal marking associated with registration is the large blue "R" which was applied to incoming letters at that city beginning November 1, 1845. This page contains the earliest known registered letter from the U.S. with New York October 31, 1845, the earliest postmark date with registration usage, Pensacola, Florida October 29, 1845 and a third early usage from Natick, Mass. November 1 or 11, 1845 with street address added at lower left.



**Philadelphia large blue "R" markings**



Three covers showing unusual usages. "R" marking on transatlantic "NEW-YORK SHIP NOV 12 12cts." (1845) from France. Railroad postmark "U.S. EXPRESS MAIL BOSTON NOV 20" (1845), "PAID" and ms. "20", blue "R" applied at Philadelphia. These early registered letters do not make comments about valuable contents so it is uncertain as to why they were so marked. Railroad postmark "WASHINGTON RAIL RD." in red, ms. "5" paying single rate for less than 300 miles. The cover was postmarked with blue "R" at Philadelphia.



# Philadelphia large blue "R" markings



Three covers from the Trotter Correspondence which show fancy stampless postmarks with a large blue "R". The earliest is "NAUGATUCK Ct. OCT 15" (1846) with negative "5". The 1847 cover with "HOLLIDAYSBURG Pa. NOV 6" shows a negative blue "5". This is known in red too with "R". The 1849 cover shows "St. CLAIRSVILLE O. APR 13" with negative red "10" with stars travel distance greater than 300 miles. This marking is also known in green with large blue "R"



## Philadelphia large blue "R" markings Usage with New York Provisional Stamp



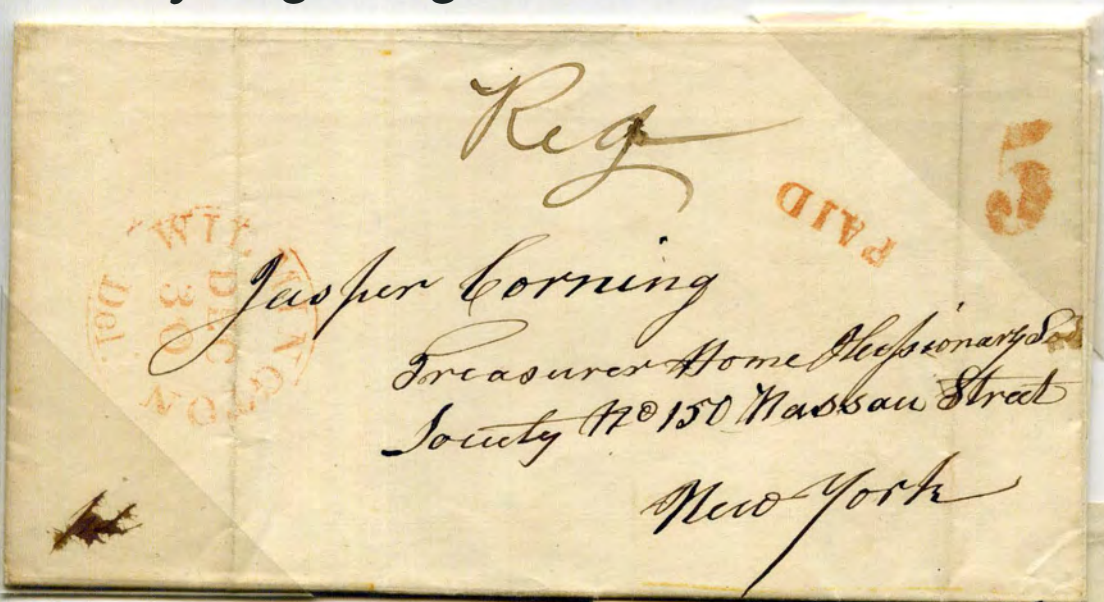
New York postmaster provisional 5 cents with blue manuscript cancel, "PAID" and "NEW-YORK 5 cts 22 JAN" (probably 1846), blue Philadelphia large "R", rebacked. The large blue "R" was used from October 29, 1845 to October 10, 1849.



New York postmaster provisional 5 cents with magenta manuscript cancel, tied "NEW-YORK 5 cts FEB 12" (1847) and "PAID" in red. There is a strike of the large blue "R". Contents included check for \$2100.00. This is the latest recorded usage of the "R" on a cover with this stamp.



**Philadelphia large blue "R" markings  
Early Origin Registration Postmarks**



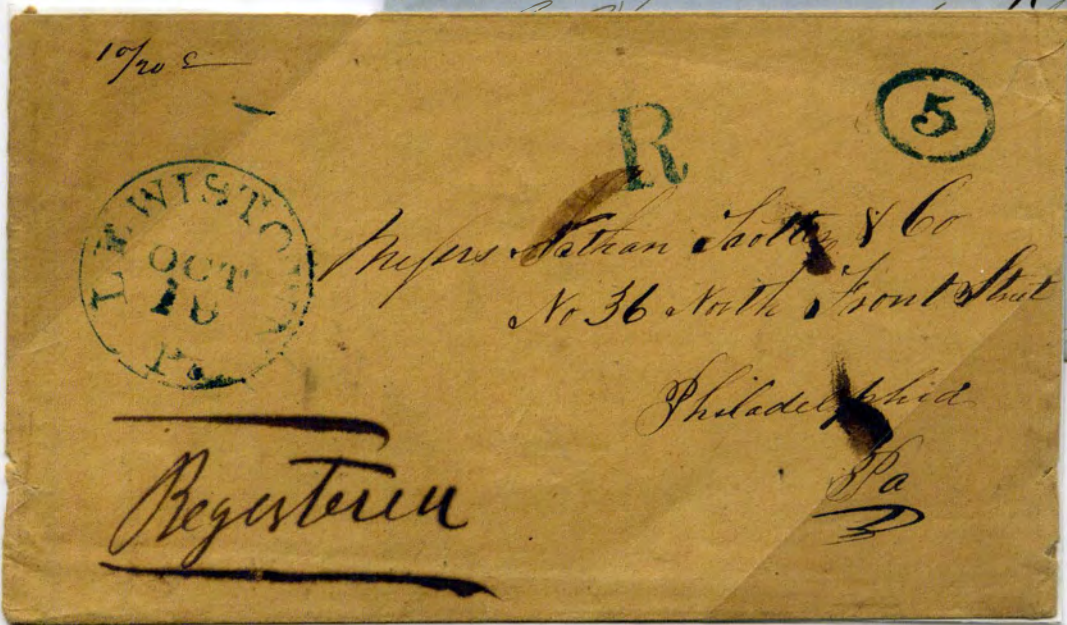
The cover with "WILMINGTON Del DEC 10", "PAID", "5" is dated 1846. It bears "Reg" in manuscript and is the earliest known origin postmark for registration now known. The second cover was registered by the postmaster at "ALLENTOWN Pa. MAY 7" (1847) with ms. red "Reg" and "5". It was again registered at Philadelphia with large blue "R". It contained \$40.00. According to Norona this was in 1934 the earliest known usage of registration at an originating post office in the U.S. The one with "CARLISLE PEN AUG 31" (1849) has a manuscript "Reg" and large blue Philadelphia "R".. It enclosed \$15 in cash.



**Philadelphia small blue "R" markings  
Early origin Registration postmarks**



Lewistown Oct 19th 49  
Messrs Nathan Lottin & Co  
Enclosed is \$22.00  
in twenty two dollars for which you  
please send me one bundle of Russia  
something heavier than the last  
you sent me  
You will please  
Thymyer, the same  
be sent out of the  
side them on the



The second handstamped registration postmark was the small blue "R" which was in use October 13, 1849 to September 1, 1851. The upper cover with "WASHINGTON D.C. 13 OCT" (1849) is the earliest known usage. The second cover bears an origin marking "Registered" at Lewiston, Pa. Oct. 19, 1849, and the letter enclosed \$22.00. At Philadelphia it received a strike of the small blue "R". Note the absence of any registration numbers on the cover.



**Philadelphia small blue "R" markings  
Early origin Registration postmarks**

Brandy Wine Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup>/49

Messrs Nathan Trotter & Co

I hereby forward  
to the Credit of my account Three hundred  
Dollars I have not been able to collect  
the Balance but I will send it to you  
in about one week

Yours Resp<sup>tly</sup>

James Wilson

Received Oct 25<sup>th</sup> 1849  
Enclosing amount of 300.

22  
Del  
**Reg** 5

Messrs Nathan Trotter & Co  
No 36 North Front St  
Philad<sup>a</sup>

From the *Official Advertiser*, to Editor: "I would like to see discussed or have the views of the P.O.D. on the propriety of registering letters of value, and noting them on the post bills. I believe it is generally practiced by postmasters in this section..." postmaster at undisclosed Pa. town September 10, 1850. This cover is an example with "Reg" applied with "WILMINGTON Del. OCT 22" (1849) and third earliest example of blue "R" at Philadelphia again without registration number. The letter enclosed \$300.



## Philadelphia small blue "R" markings



Cover with "BOSTON Mass. NOV 21" (undated but certainly 1849 because of clarity of "R"), "PAID", "20" double rate. This cover shows a number "33" below the address, a very early usage of the numbering of covers that began at Philadelphia with small R markings.



Cover shown by Norona in 1934 as Figure 7, "BETHLEHEM Pa. NOV 26" (1849) with "10" double weight postage with "Reg" in manuscript. At Philadelphia this cover received the blue "R" and was also numbered "48". The position of the number is typical for Philadelphia and not for other cities. This is an early origin postmark for registration.



**Philadelphia small blue "R" markings  
Usages with 1847 stamps**



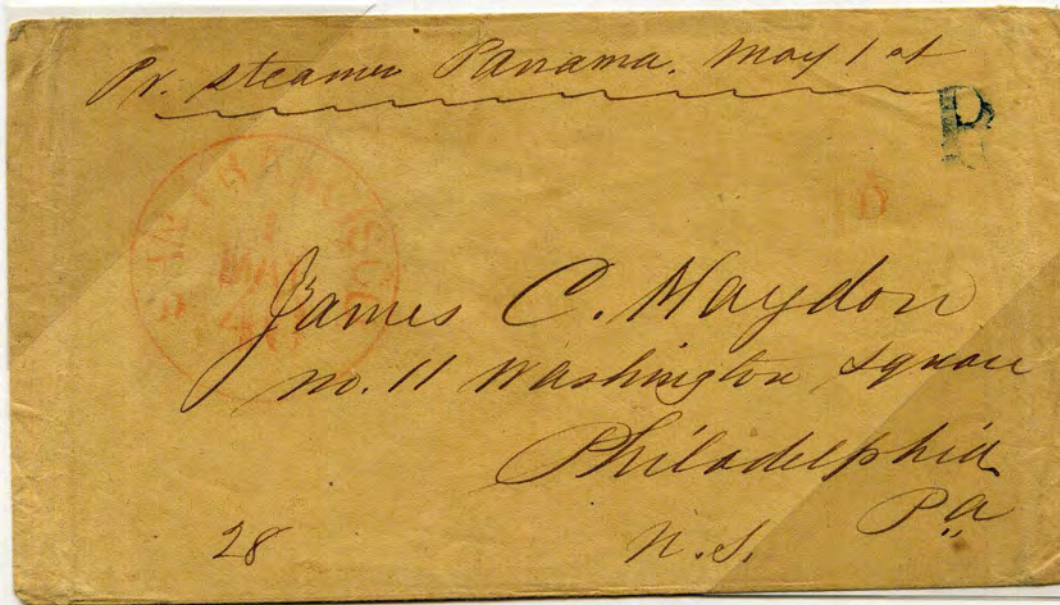
"BALTIMORE Md. OCT 4" (1850) in blue with red grids tying 5 cent 1847 stamp to Philadelphia. Note addressee was cashier at a bank. It received small blue "R" and a smudged number "34"



"NASHVILLE Te. NOV 9" (1850) and two blue grids tying 10 cent 1847 on registered letter to Philadelphia. The letter enclosed a draft. It received a Philadelphia "R" and was numbered "20".



# Philadelphia small blue "R" markings Unusual Usages from California and Europe



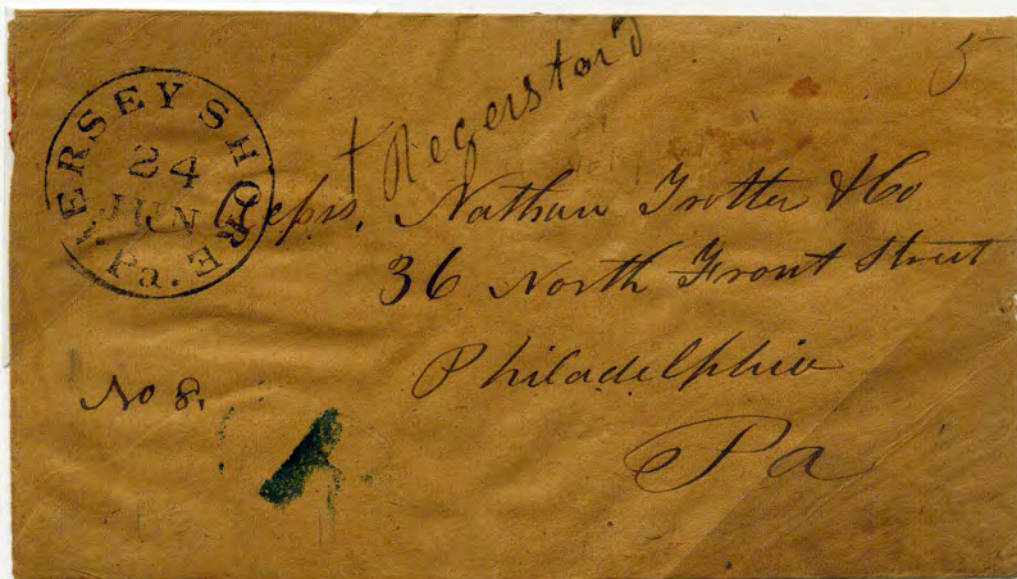
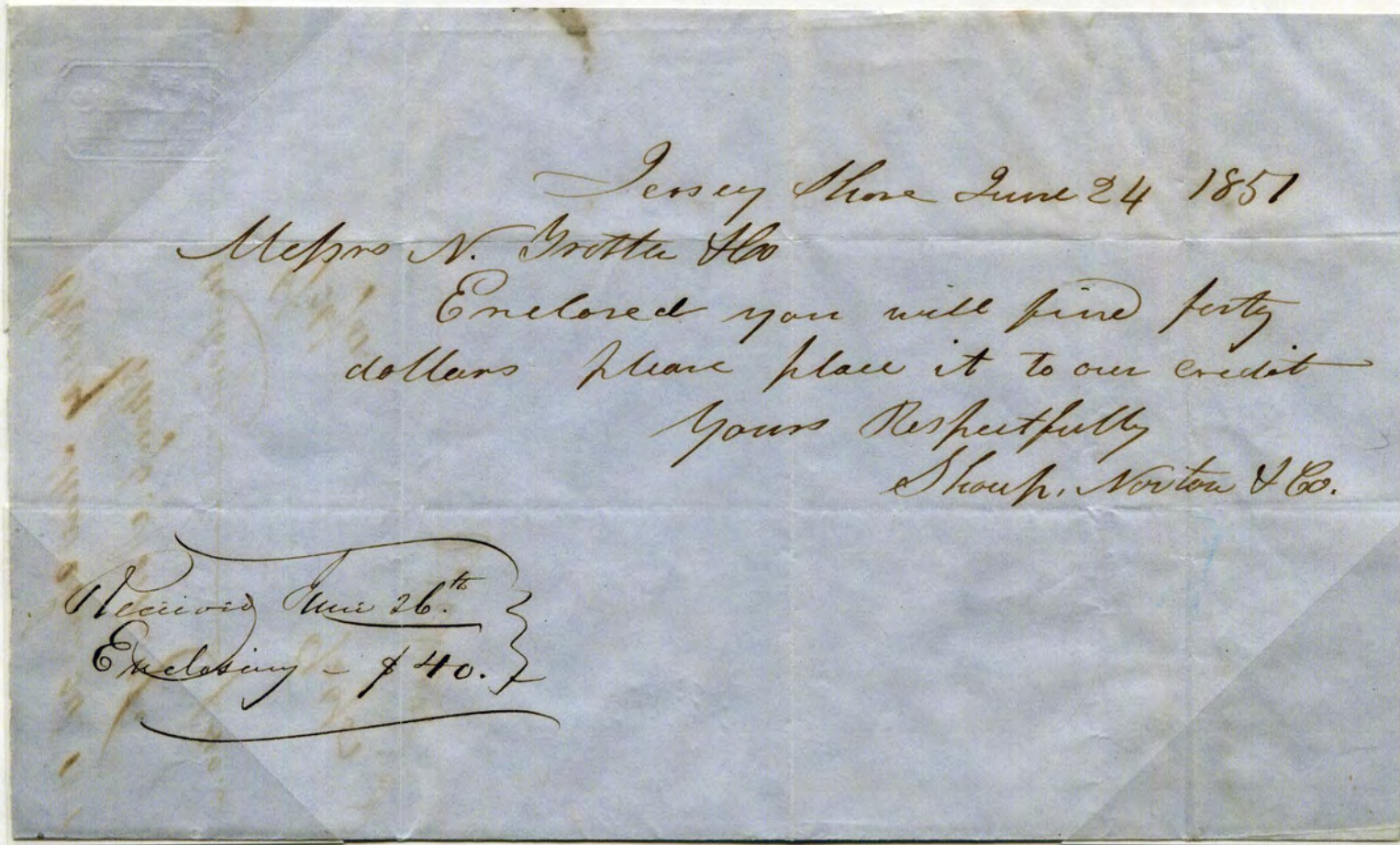
This remarkable letter bears the red "SAN FRANCISCO 1 MAY 40" (1850) and "PAID" to Philadelphia with small blue "R" and "28". The only way the Philadelphia postmaster would have known this letter had value was if the postbill had been so marked. This is the earliest known western registered cover.



Typical transAtlantic steamer cover from England with Liverpool postmark October 18, 1850 and "19 cents" debit, "BR. PACKET BOSTON 30 OCT 24" due marking. The cover also bears small blue "R" but no registration number. This is the only foreign usage of small blue "R".



**Philadelphia large blue "R" markings  
Second Period**



The second period of usage of the large blue "R" was for a period of less than 3 weeks in 1851. The cover shown here, "JERSEY SHORE Pa. 24 JUN" (1851) bears a cross and "Regeisterd", markings of origin. This is also the earliest known usage of the blue "R", second period, with ms. "No. 8". The letter shows there was an enclosure of \$40.



**Philadelphia large blue "R" markings  
Second Period**



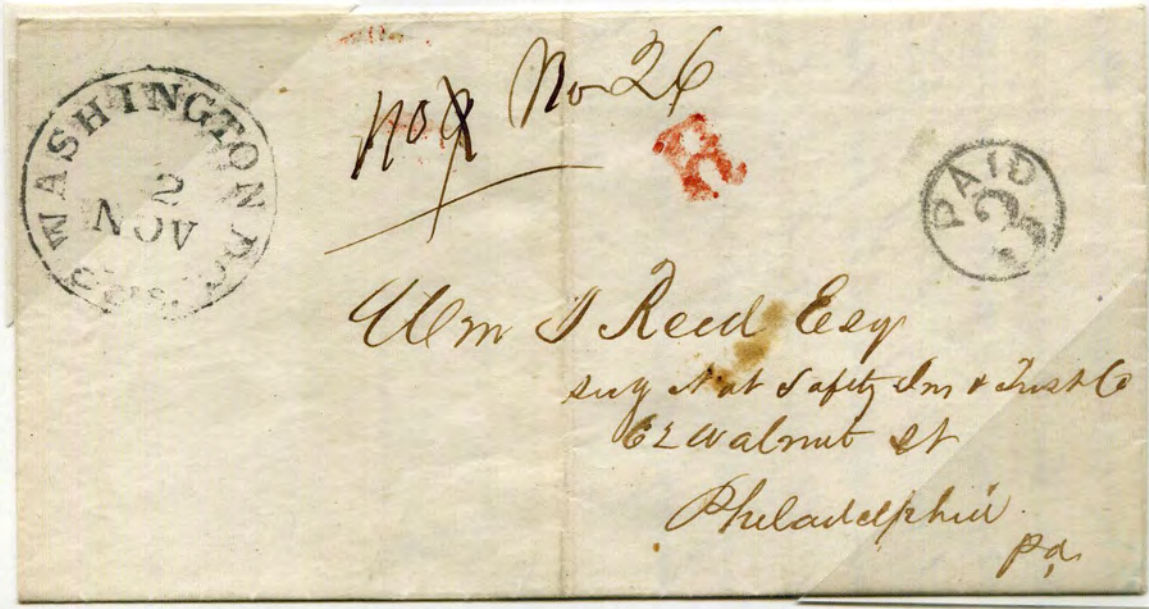
Second period large blue "R" with postmark "MCVEYTOWN Pa. JUN 24" (1851) and "5", also the earliest known date of usage. There is a ms. "Registered" of origin. The "No. 2" resembles the number on the cover above and may be from Philadelphia. Note how the R seems to be an old marking.



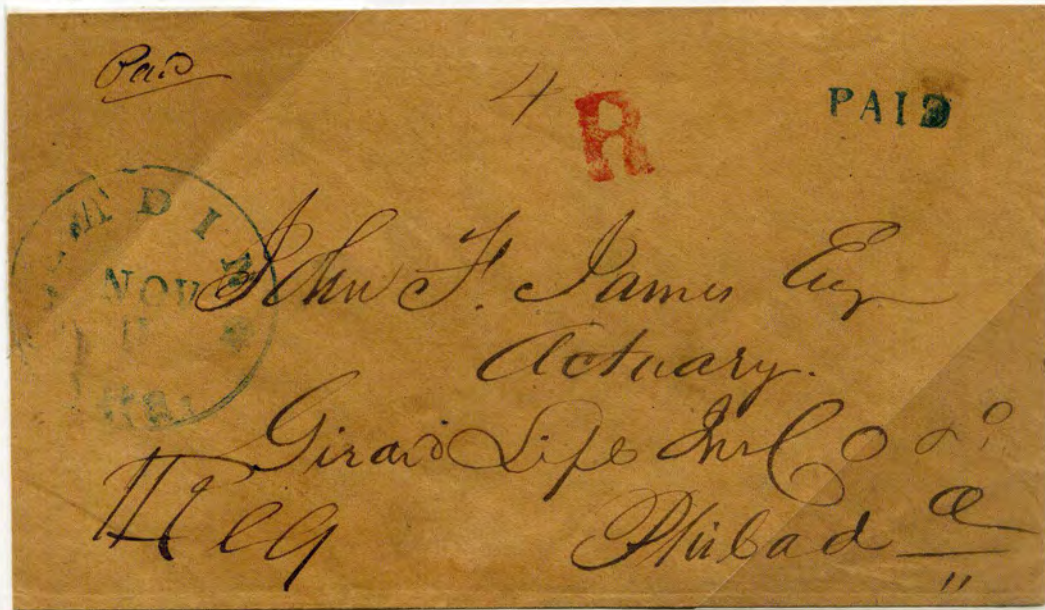
This cover with "BOSTON 6 Ms. 1 JUL" is dated 1851 and therefore this "PAID" usage is a double weight usage on the first day of the new 1851 postal rates. But it is also a registered usage with the large blue "R". It enclosed \$77 in banknotes and \$100 in a draft. The number "14" is below the "R".



# Philadelphia small red "R" markings



This cover used to be the earliest known usage of the small red "R" with "WASHINGTON D.C. 5cts.2 NOV"(1851) and "PAID 3" in circle but a more recent cover has been found dated October 22, 1851. The "No. 9" appears to be the Washington number and the "No 26" is probably from Philadelphia with small "R". Thus this cover was registered at origin and again on receipt.



The red "R" was used until February 27, 1852. This undated cover bears the small "R" on a cover which also bears a "Reg" with "READING Pa. NOV 1". So there are two registration postmarks, one origin, other destination. The postage was "PAID" but the rate is not indicated. Registration No. 4.



## Philadelphia large red "R" markings



The large red R is quite scarce. The dates of usage are 5/6/1852 to 9/14/1852. This cover with "WILLIAMSPORT Pa MAY 10" is a very early use. The number "81" and the large "R" were applied at Philadelphia.



This cover is interesting because of the origin cross marking. Later in the same year "SHIRLEYSBURG, Va. MAY 6" used a handstamped cross. So this cover has registration markings of origin and receipt, the large red "R". This is the earliest known usage of the large red "R". There is a number "9" probably from Philadelphia.



**Philadelphia small red "R" markings**  
**Second period of usage**



The small red "R" was used at Philadelphia from September 14, 1852 to January 8, 1855. The two covers on this page show the difficulty when the year of usage is not certain. Neither of these covers have contents. The earlier has "HAMBURG Pa. NOV 15" and also manuscript "Regis 6", a number of origin. There is also the small red "R" of Philadelphia.



This cover demonstrates a manuscript "R" of origin at "LANCASTER Pa. NOV 18" with a "19". Many small towns copied the Philadelphia R's. The meaning is obviously REGISTERED. The small red "R" was added at Philadelphia. This also means REGISTERED. It does not mean "recorded". R means registered and was always the registered usage at every post office.



# Manuscript "R" markings



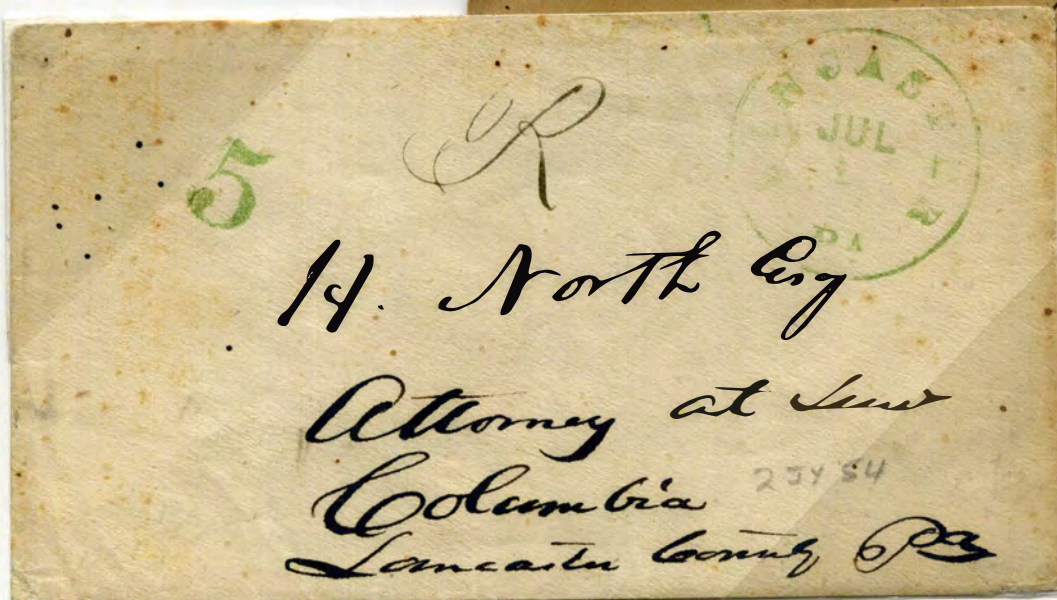
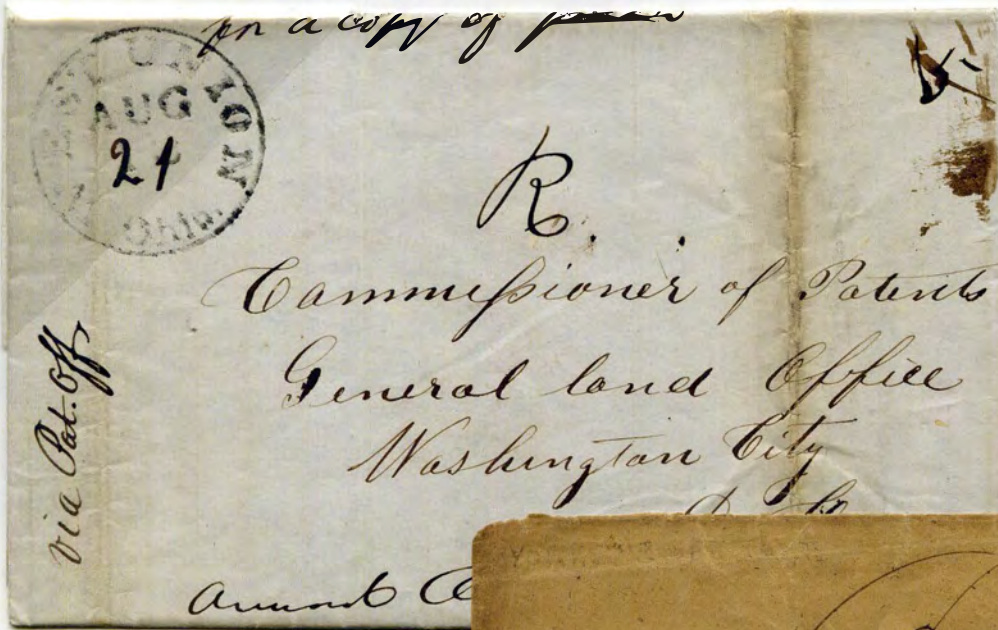
One of the towns known to have used "R" on valuable letters was Reading, Pa. This cover shows such a usage with red "READING Pa. MAY 7" (1849) and ms. cancel on 5 cent 1847 stamp. The sender enclosed \$5.00. This is the earliest known use of an 1847 stamp on a registered cover.



Three cent 1851 stamp tied blue "READING Pa. SEP 1", undated but probably 1854 with large "R" in manuscript at lower left. Note the addressee was a bank cashier in Pittsburgh.



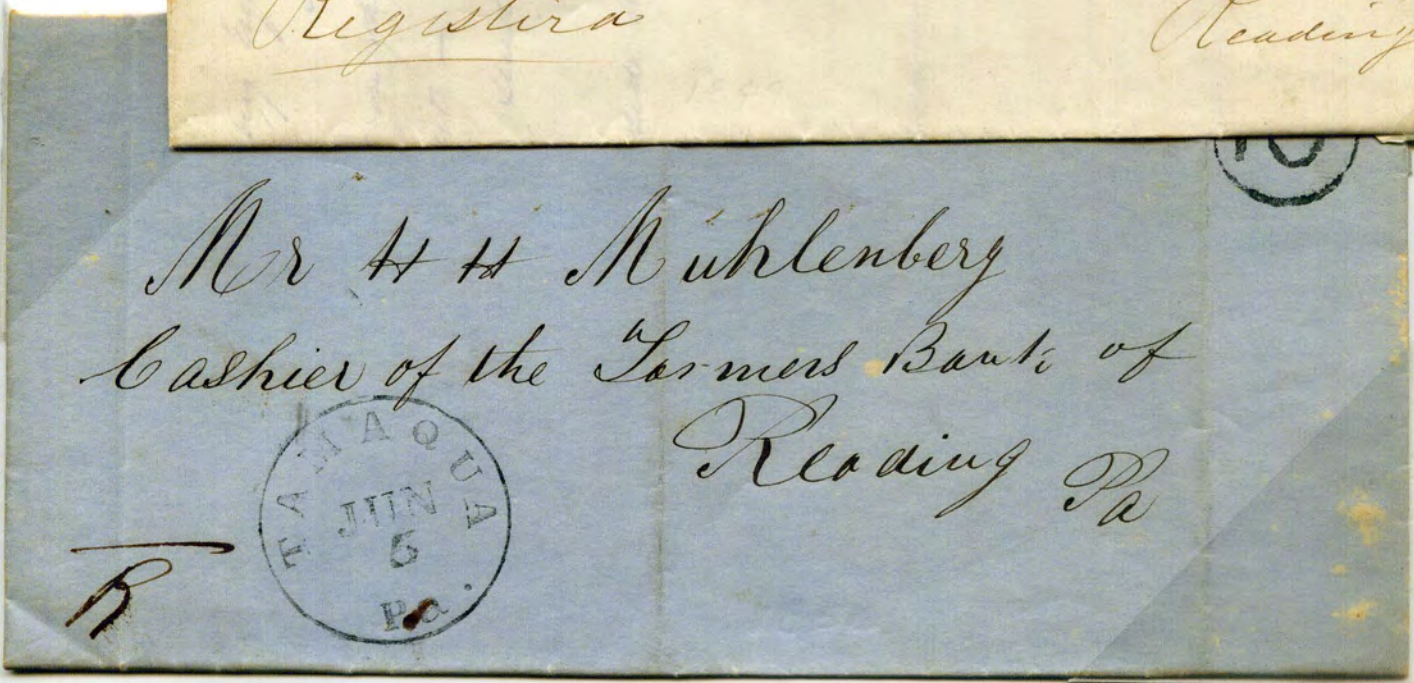
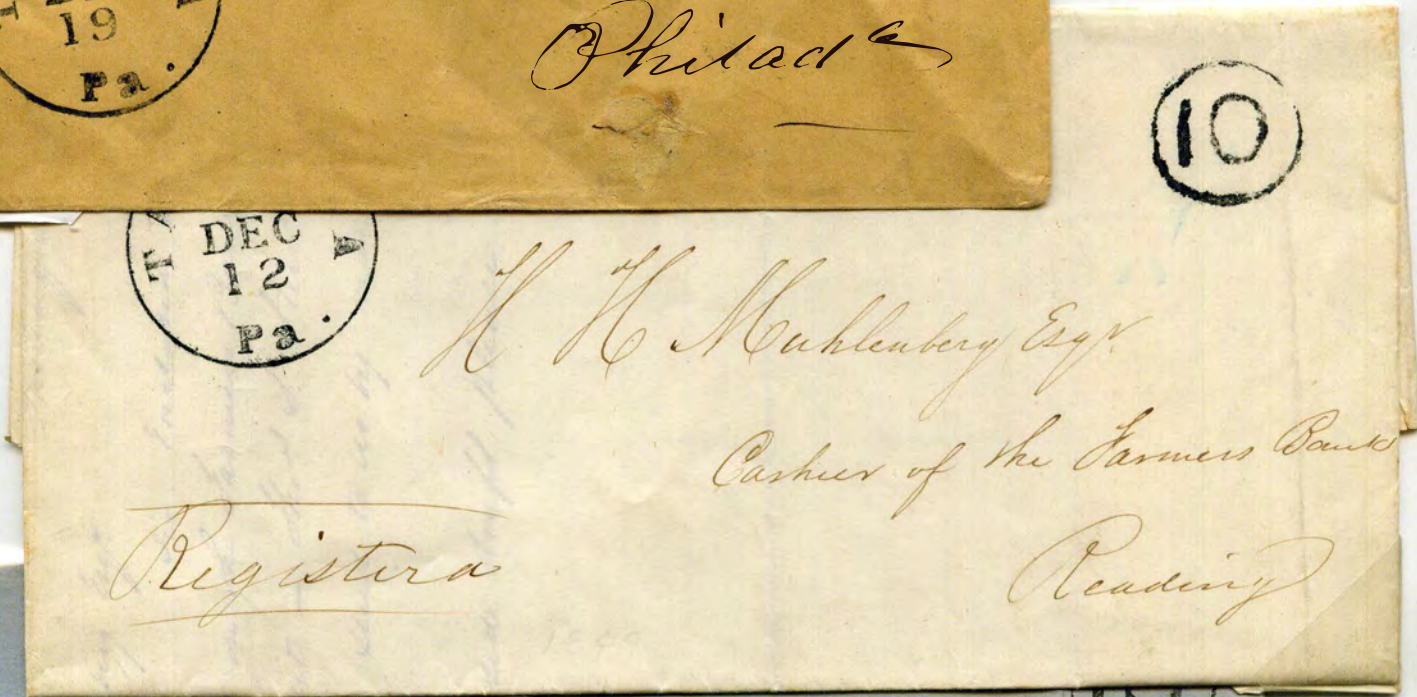
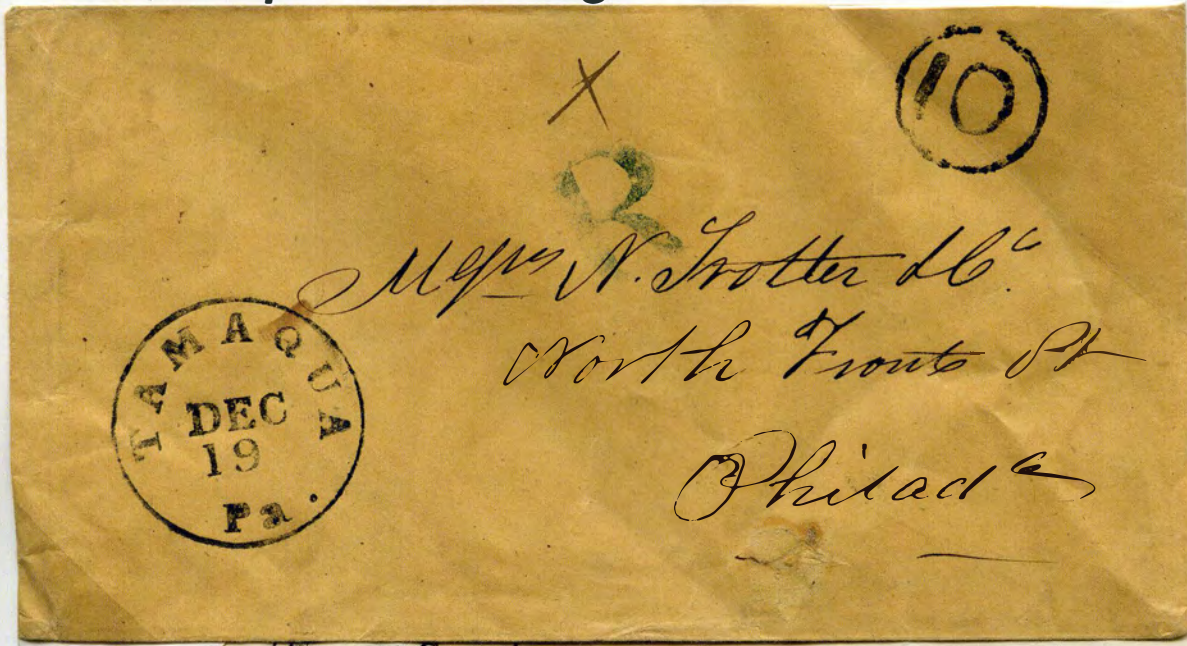
# Manuscript "R" markings



The upper cover is a very early usage of an origin registered postmark in 1847. It bears an "R" with postmarks "WEST UNION Ohio AUG 21" and "5". Note the address was to Washington, D.C. It requests information on a land patent, a letter that would be sent Certified Mail today. The second cover bears a faint "YORK SULPHUR SPRINGS, Pa. APR 27" with unknown year date. There is a "PAID" with "5". This rate indicates the usage was prior to July 1, 1851. A large manuscript "R" is present and the cover is addressed to Philadelphia and has a typical number at the lower left "19". The interesting feature is that there is no Philadelphia "R". The Philadelphia postmaster must have felt that one R is enough. Another Pennsylvania town using a "R" for registration was "LANCASTER, PA JUL 1" with "5" both in green. There is a received dating on the reverse of the cover "Recd. July 2, 1854, Sunday".



**Manuscript "R" markings**



These three covers from Tamaqua, Pa. demonstrate the different origin postmarks which can be found on early registered covers. The earliest is from December 19, 1848 and shows a cross "X". At Philadelphia it received also the large "R". The December 12, 1849 cover bears "Registered" with destination Reading. \$25 was enclosed. The third cover enclosed \$100 cash. At "TAMAQUA ;Pa. JUN 5" (1850) it was mailed with "PAID" and "10", double rate from enclosure, to Reading, Pa. A manuscript "R" is seen lower left.



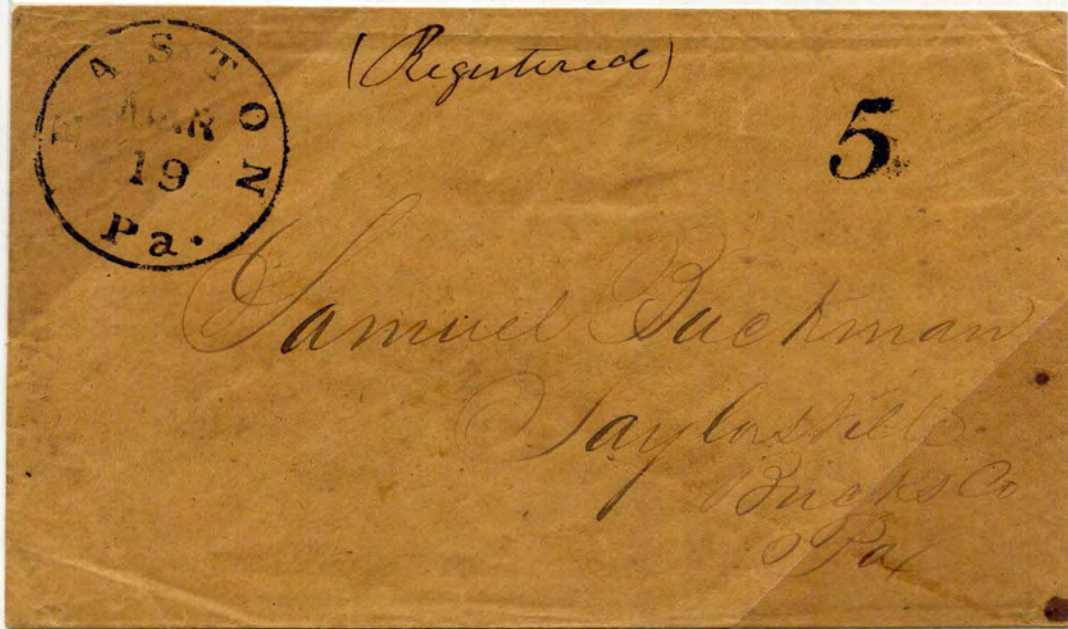
# Manuscript "Registered" markings



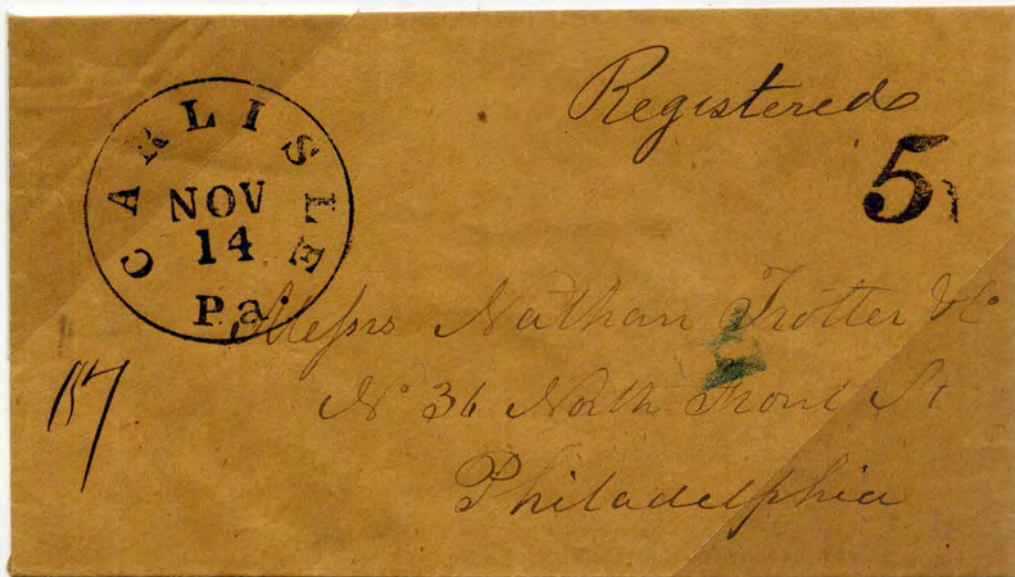
"Registered" was written on many unofficial registered covers. Note that two of these covers also show a cross. The "DANVILLE N.Y. 3 PAID OCT 18" is a nice integral rate postmark without year date. The "BLOOMSBURG Pa. DEC 8" (1851) is a rather early usage. The "PORTLAND ME PAID APR 16" on three cent stamp is dated 1854 and is thus a very late unofficial registration usage.



# Manuscript "Registered" markings Pennsylvania towns



This cover bears "(Registered)" with postmarks "EASTON Pa. MAR 19" and unpaid "5" on an envelope, probably after 1851. Such covers from many different towns prove that registration was being practiced at many, if not most, post offices of the period.



This is a similar cover with "Registered" and "CARLISLE Pa. NOV 14" with "5". But this cover was addressed to Philadelphia, so there is a small blue "R" and manuscript number "17" at lower left. Because of the November dating, the year date of this cover had to have been 1850.



**Manuscript "Registered" markings  
Undated 3 cent entires**



Here are three other 3 cent 1853 entires all of which lack letters and docket information. The manuscript "Registered" markings are typical for unofficial registration. The towns of origin are small ones which would only have infrequent registered letters, Alligator, Fla., Calhoun, Ga., and Hillsdale, Mich..







**Manuscript "Registered" markings  
Late Usage Unofficial Registration**

← coins

Young America Club Room  
Lancaster, April 23, 1855

Mr. James Shaw,

Brother:— Enclosed you will find  
the sum of \$8.50 due you by Washington Camp  
No. 13. of S. of A., for value received. We are sorry we  
could not pay it before, but circumstances  
would not permit.

We are at present in a prosperous condition although  
we do not number as many as we ought. There  
is a project on foot to procure officers regulias  
which I have no doubt will succeed after which

5 PAID 6

Mr. James Shaw  
128 Arch St above 6th  
Philadelphia  
Pa

This letter enclosed \$8.50 and the impression of coins can be seen at the top of the letter. It was dated April 23, 1855, just over two months before official registration. The cover is a manuscript "R" marking with origin number "5". The postmarks are "LANCASTER PA APR 26", "PAID", and ms. "6". double weight.



**Manuscript "Registered" markings  
Late Usages Unofficial Registration**



These three covers each show manuscript Registered notations and they are postmarked in June, 1855, the month before registration became a postal charge of five cents. The usages are from small towns and the cities of receipt are three of the largest American cities at that date, Washington, Richmond and New Orleans.



## Unofficial Registration Numbering Notations



Covers with unofficial registration demonstrate that such letters were numbered and recorded in registers under the number. That is the whole purpose of registration, to make a record of the letter in case it was lost. Some offices must have had fairly high volume of registered letters because the numbers are rather high. This cover with "LOUISVILLE KY APR 14" (1854) bears "Registered #221".



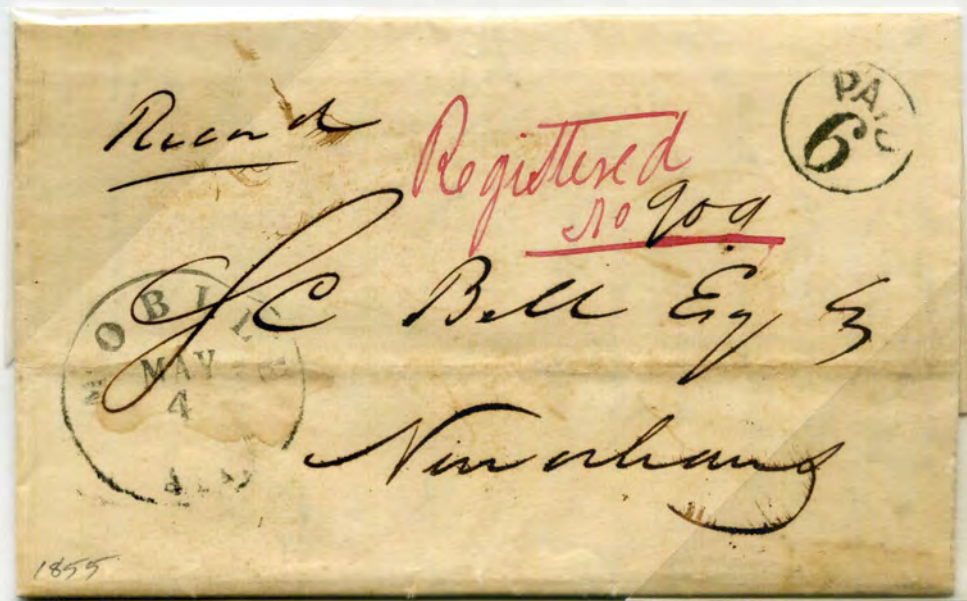
This cover is from a small town "DONALDSON La. MAR 13" with "5" unpaid postage in 1852. This is the same banking correspondence as will be shown on the next page. It is marked "Registered No. 282" in manuscript showing a high volume of registered mail. The contents were a bankbill for \$1000 and a draft for \$388.80.



**Unofficial Registration  
REGISTERED, not RECORDED**



One of the errors that one sees repeated time and again in written articles and philatelic exhibits is that the "R" markings refer to recorded letters. This is utterly false. The "R" stood for **registered**. This error seems to have originated with a correspondence of registered covers from a bank on which a cashier wrote "record" on the covers. This is a "MOBILE ALA. MAR 14" (1855) with "PAID 6" from this correspondence. The Mobile post office marked it "Register No. 501" in magenta ink.



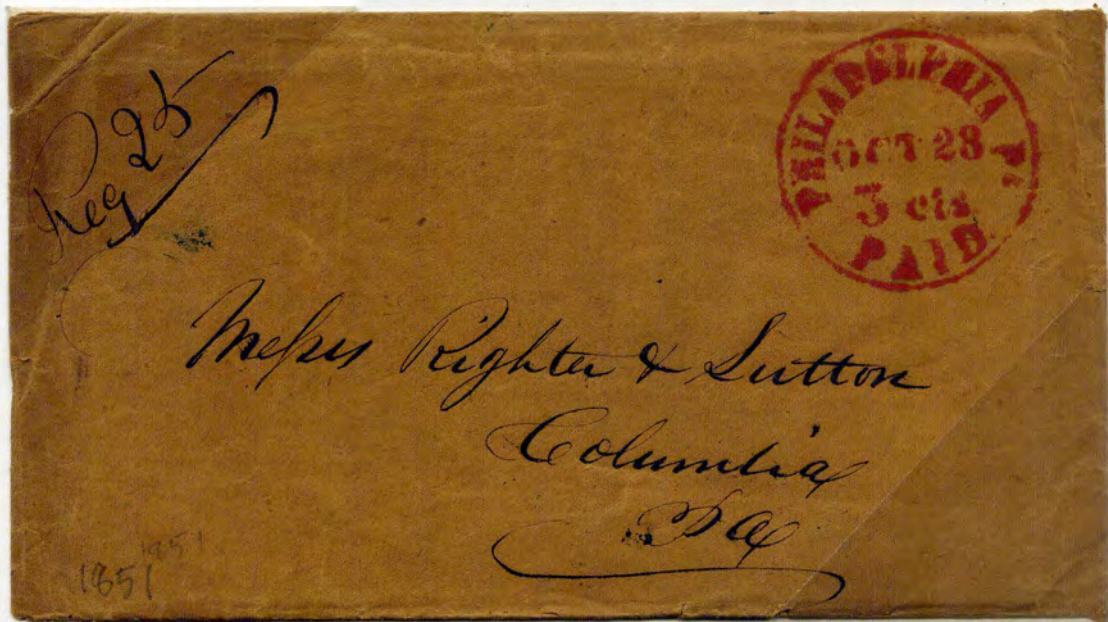
This is a second cover during unofficial registration from this post office. It was mailed just weeks after the above cover on May 4, 1855, less than two months before official registration. The postmark here is "Registered No. 909". Note that this number is 408 higher than the March 14 dated cover showing a huge volume of registered letters being handled.



## Letters originating at Philadelphia



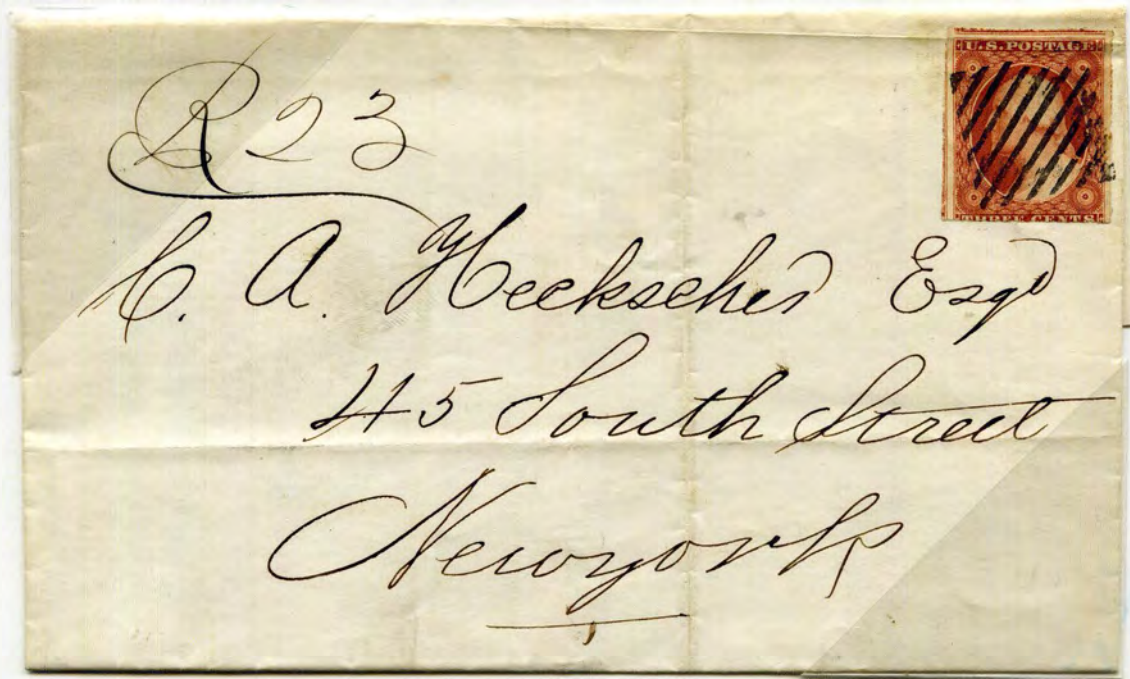
While Philadelphia used handstamped markings on incoming registered mail during the unofficial registration period, no handstamps have been seen on ongoing registered letters. This cover from 1849 shows a crayon "Register" with the number "6". Otherwise it is a typical letter from Philadelphia of this period with integral rated "PHILADA 5 cts NOV 2" and "PAID" in blue octagon. There was never a fee for registration 1845-1855.



This letter is a couple of years later and shows manuscript registered postmarks, "Reg 25" with red integral rated "PHILADELPHIA Pa PAID OCT 28 3 cts." (1851). The sender was paying for one load of corn. Note the usage of the word "registered" being used at Philadelphia.



# Letters originating at Philadelphia



This cover is from Philadelphia, September 22, 1851 and shows a manuscript "R23" on usage to N.Y. with grid on 3 cent orange brown. No handstamps were used on registered covers originating from Philadelphia.



A second cover with "PHILADELPHIA Pa PAID Apr 25 3 cts." in red bears a ms. "26 Registered." In 1852. These two covers demonstrate that Philadelphia used manuscript markings on outgoing registered mail.



## Dead Letter Office markings on registered covers



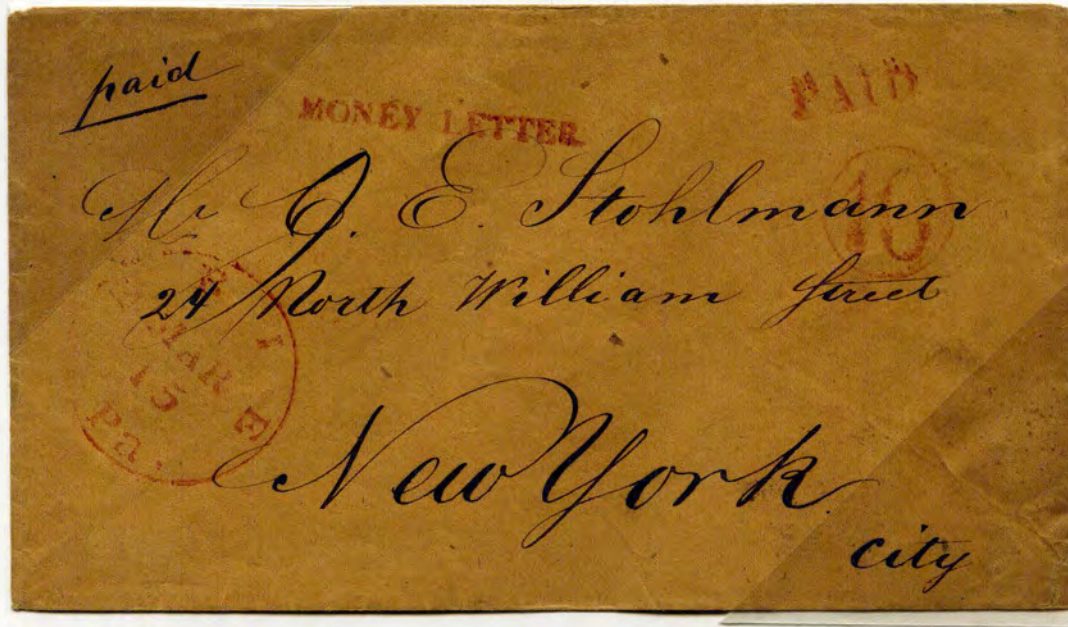
This cover with "COLUMBIA Pa MAR 26" (1847) contains a letter on bank stationery returning a draft for \$222. It was marked with blue "R" at Philadelphia. Apparently it was refused by the addressee because it remained in the Philadelphia post office for many years. Finally it was sent to the Dead Letter Office with a marking dated June 11, 1851.



The 3 cent entire with ms. "Shiemanstown Pa Aug 18" also bears the word "Registered" below the address. On the reverse of the cover is "ALTOONA Pa DEC 31" which indicates that the Altoona post office sent the cover to the Dead Letter Office. The cover was torn open (see patched tear with wax seals on front of envelope) and \$2 in cash was found. The "S" is a D.L.O. marking for the first initial of the addressee. There is a "DEAD LETTER OFFICE P.O. DEPARTMENT 21-10 [the D.L.O. number] JAN 10, 1854." This is how the Post Office Department handled a letter even with unofficial registration.



**Handstamped REGISTERED markings  
Usage of money letter terminology**



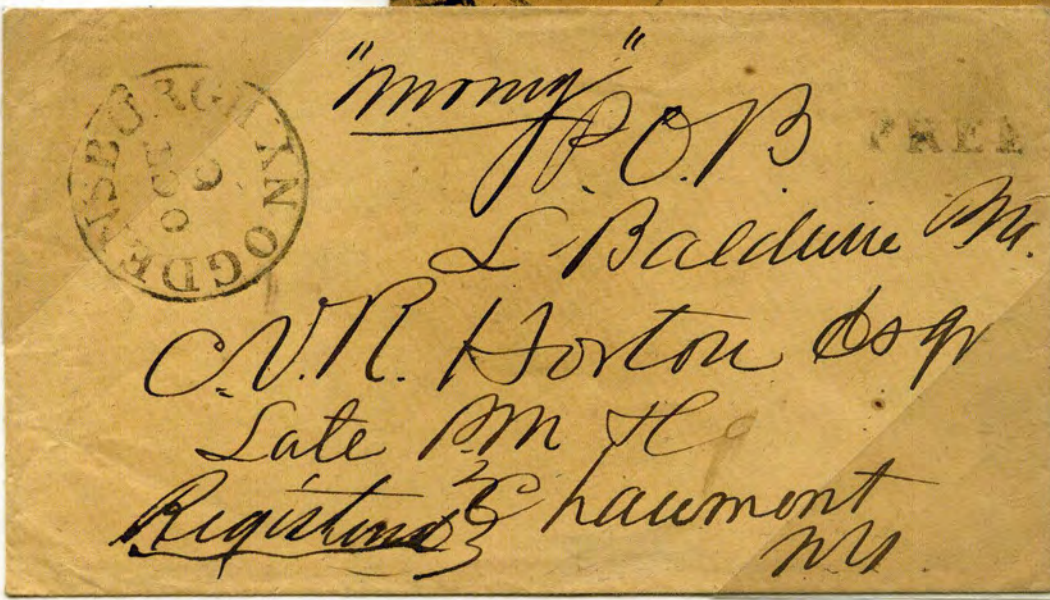
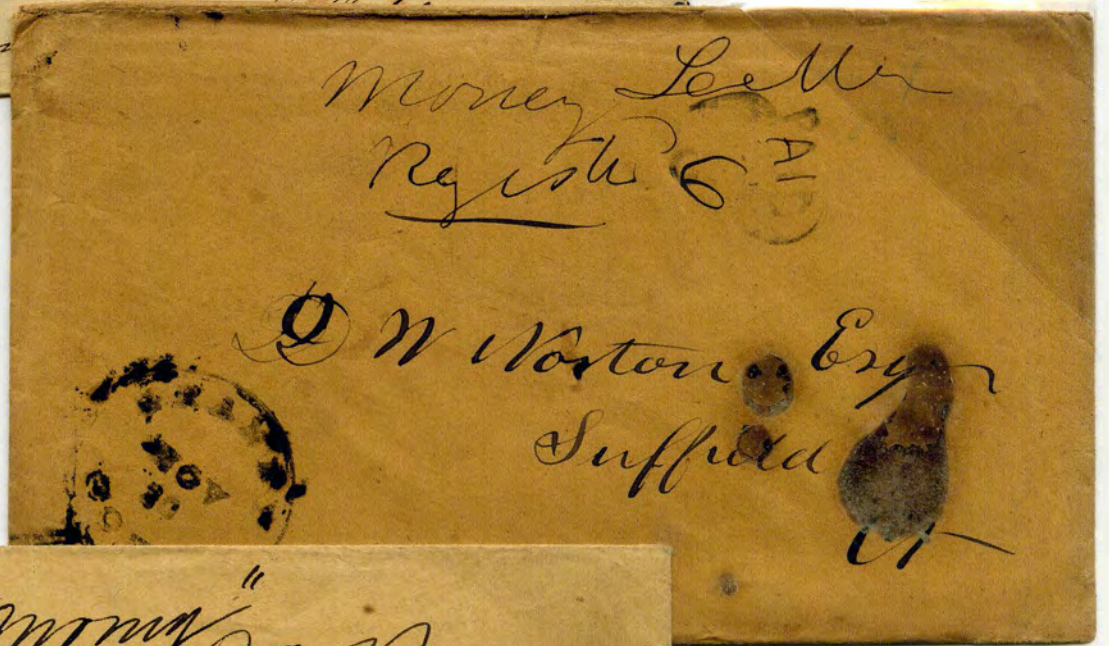
Canada used the terminology Money Letter on registered mail from the late 1820's until it adopted the word Registered in 1855. Several American cities which handled considerable Canadian mail copied these words for their registered mail. The earliest is "MONEY LETTER" in red straight line with "ERIE Pa. MAR 15", "PAID" and "10" in circle (1851). This city later used a different black MONEY LETTER on stamped covers.



This cover was shown in the classic article by Norona in 1934 on registration. It bears a stamp on an entire paying a double rate with blue "MONEY LETTER" and "LEWISTON N.Y. 19 MAY" postmarks. Both Lewiston and Buffalo are exchange cities for Canadian mail. This is unofficial registered mail.



**Manuscript REGISTERED markings  
Usage of money letter terminology**



All three of these covers used the word "money" or "money letter" but they also are "registered" too. The one from "GRANBY CONN NOV 11" (1854) has a letter and contained coinage.



# Handstamped REGISTERED markings Usage of money letter terminology



A handstamp reading "MONEY LETTER" in oval in red was used with "CLEVELAND O MAY 27" (1851) and later in black was used with "CLEVELAND O. 3 PAID DEC 26" integral postmark in 1852. This cover also bears a manuscript "R".



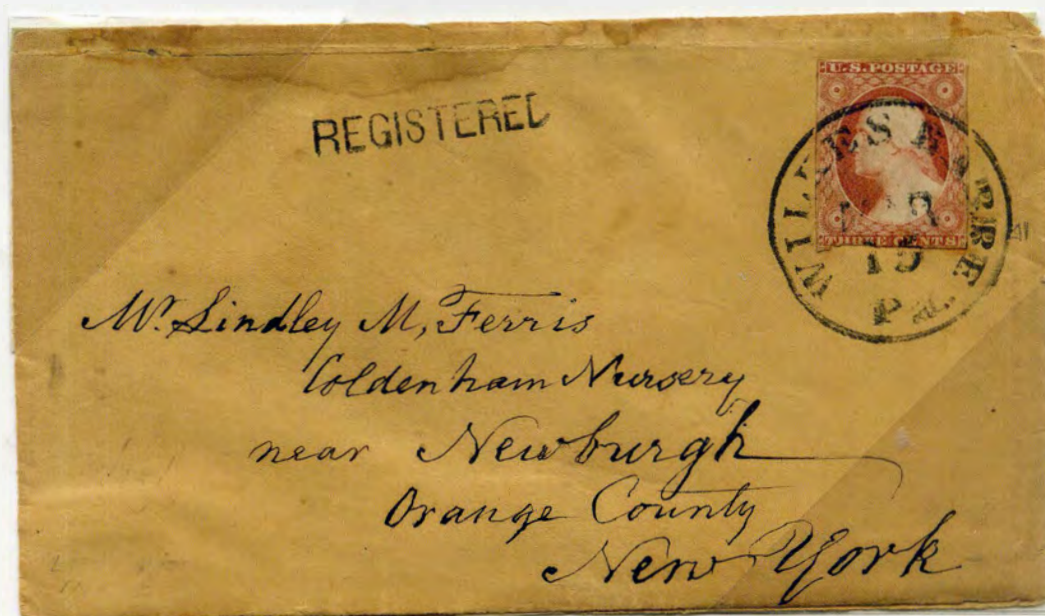
One of the most unusual registered mail handstamps is the "MONEY REGISTERED DETROIT" handstamp used here on stampless cover with red "DETROIT MICH. 3 PAID JUL 26" integral postmark with prepayment in 1854, about a year before official registration. Both words that refer to valuable mail were used in the marking.



## Handstamped REGISTERED markings



This red handstamp "REGUSTERED" was used with 3 cent 1851 tied "NEWPORT R.I. AUG 24". The 1854 letter to publishers Little & Brown of Boston is from George Bancroft discussing his work *The History of the American Revolution to the Treaty of Peace* to be added to five already published volumes.



This is the second handstamp "REGISTERED" used at Wilkes Barre, Pa. The enclosed letter is headed 14 March 1853 and the writer encloses seven dollars to purchase 10 trees per advertisement.



**Handstamped REGISTERED markings  
Pennsylvania Towns**



“REGISTERED” in straight line, “LEWISTOWN Pa. MAY 29” (1850), and “10” over “5” for double weight letter addressed to Philadelphia where it received a second registered postmark, “R” in blue and was numbered “28”.



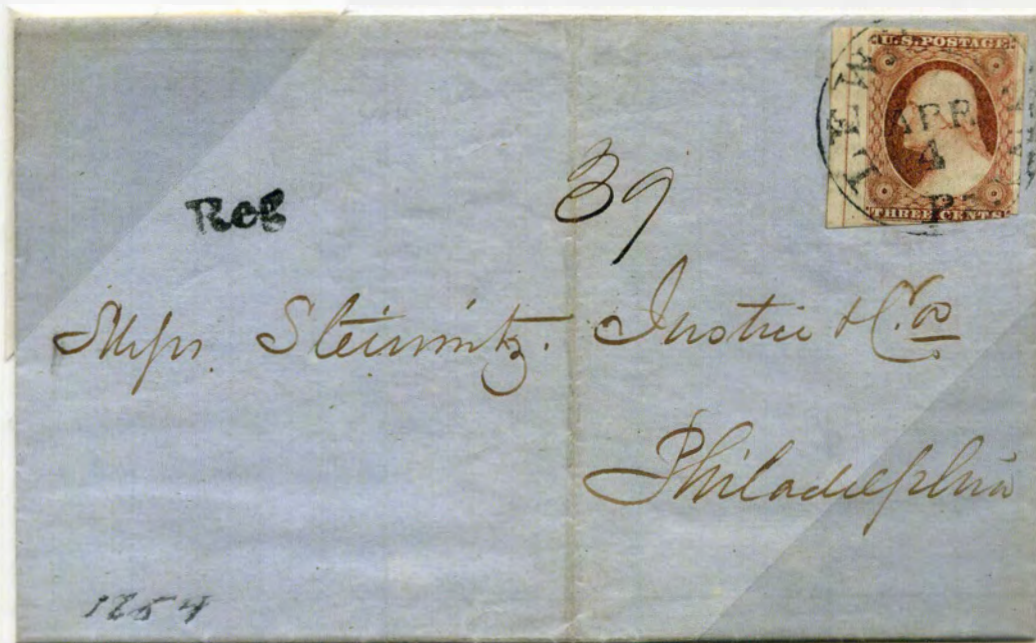
“REGISTERED” in blue straight line, “READING Pa. SEP 23” (no date), “PAID” and ms. “10” and “X” all applied on mailing. On receipt in Philadelphia a red “R” without number was added. The small red “R” was used in September only in 1852 or later.



# Handstamped REGISTERED markings Pennsylvania towns



This cover bears a handstamped "Reg" in black with simple "R" as the first letter. A 3 cent 1851 stamp was canceled with integral "LEWISTOWN FEB 5 3 PAID". The cover is addressed to Philadelphia where it received a red "R" and "23" registration number.



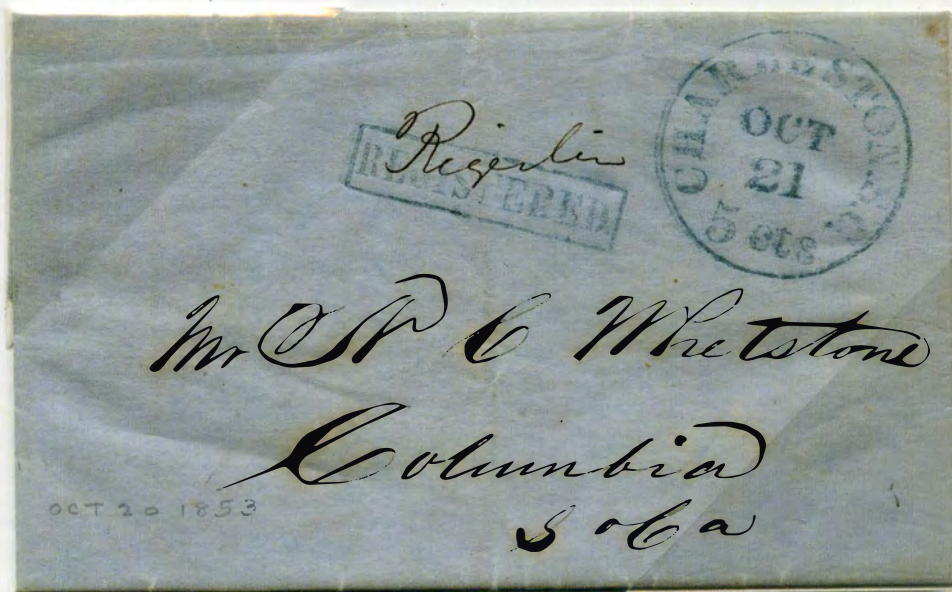
"Reg" with "LEWISTOWN Pa. APR 4" (1854) on cover to Philadelphia that lacks the red "R" but shows the two digit number like the cover above. The "R" of "Reg" is the more fancy variety of "R" (of the two types).



**Handstamped REGISTERED markings  
South Carolina usages**



This attractive cover bears a boxed blue "REGISTERED." known to be used as an origin postmark for unofficial registered covers. The postage was prepaid with a stamp tied "CHARLESTON S.C. PAID MAY 15"(1852).



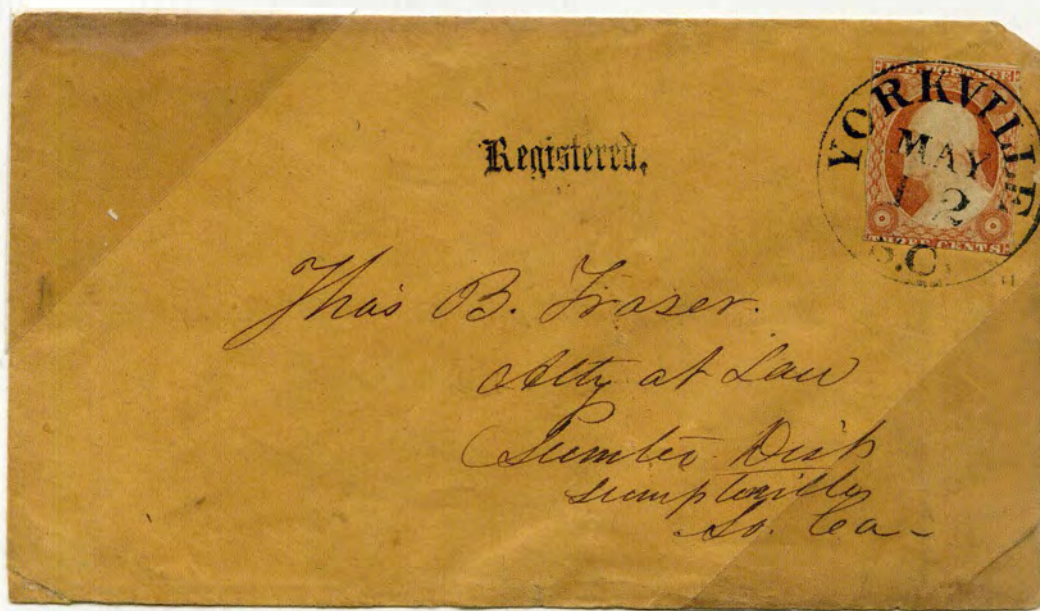
An unpaid stampless cover usage from the same city also bears "REGISTERED." with "CHARLESTON S.C. 5 CTS. OCT 21", an integral rate postmark. This 1853 letter enclosed \$50.00.



# Handstamped REGISTERED markings South Carolina postmarks



Another cover with the blue boxed "REGISTERED." with integral rate postmark for prepaid mail "CHARLESTON S.C. 3 PAID MAY 26" shows also a registered postmark on receipt at Athens, Tenn. "REGISTERED." in blue straight line. This is the only cover showing this combination of two registered postmarks, both using the word REGISTERED. Undated but probably 1853 or 1854.



A cover with 3 cent stamp "YORKVILLE S.C. MAY 12" also bears a straight line "Registered." known to be an origin marking from this town, all examples known are undated.



**Handstamped REGISTERED markings  
Other southern cities**



"REGISTERED" in straight line on 3 cent entire documented by docket date as 1854. Postmarked "CAMDEN S.C. MAY 23".



New Orleans used a red "REGISTERED" with manuscript numbers. This cover bears "#592#" and the word "valuable" written by the sender. There is a three cent stamp tied black grid with red "NEW ORLEANS La. NOV 11"(1854). Note the destination was another southern city. It shows wide usage of registration at this time.



**Handstamped REGISTERED markings  
Midwestern town usage**



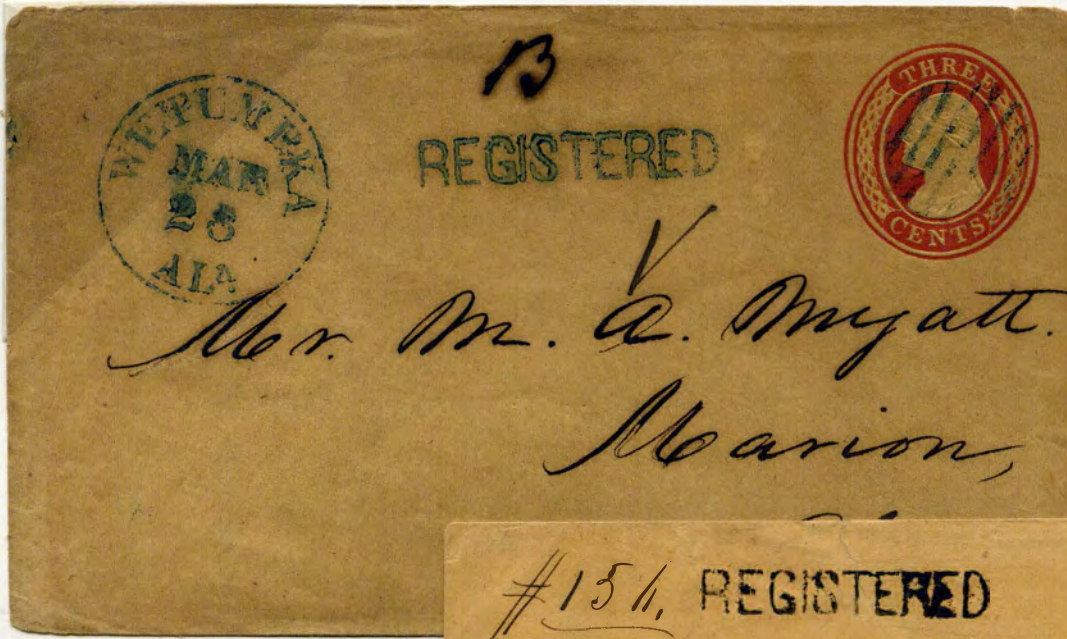
This is the only known example of this marking, a blue "R", which certainly was inspired by the Philadelphia markings. However, it is an origin postmark on this cover with 3 cent stamp tied "HAMILTON Ohio. APR 11". There is a manuscript number "12" and the destination is a town different from Philadelphia.



This cover was printed with a blue cameo comecard with a lovely train design. It also bears a postmark "REGISTERED" with matching "CHICAGO ILLs. MAY 25" This is the earliest known Chicago registered cover. It is docketed as containing 4 drafts totaling \$4053.14. Note the lack of number.



**Handstamped REGISTERED markings  
Undated 3 cent entires**



A number of covers which are probably unofficial rather than official registration are undated as to year date so the usage could vary between 1853 and the late 1850's. Shown here are three handstamped "REGISTERED" markings, all of which are the only recorded examples, from Wetumpka, Al., Eufaula, Al, and Harlansburg, Pa.



# Handstamped REGISTERED markings Philadelphia straight line handstamps



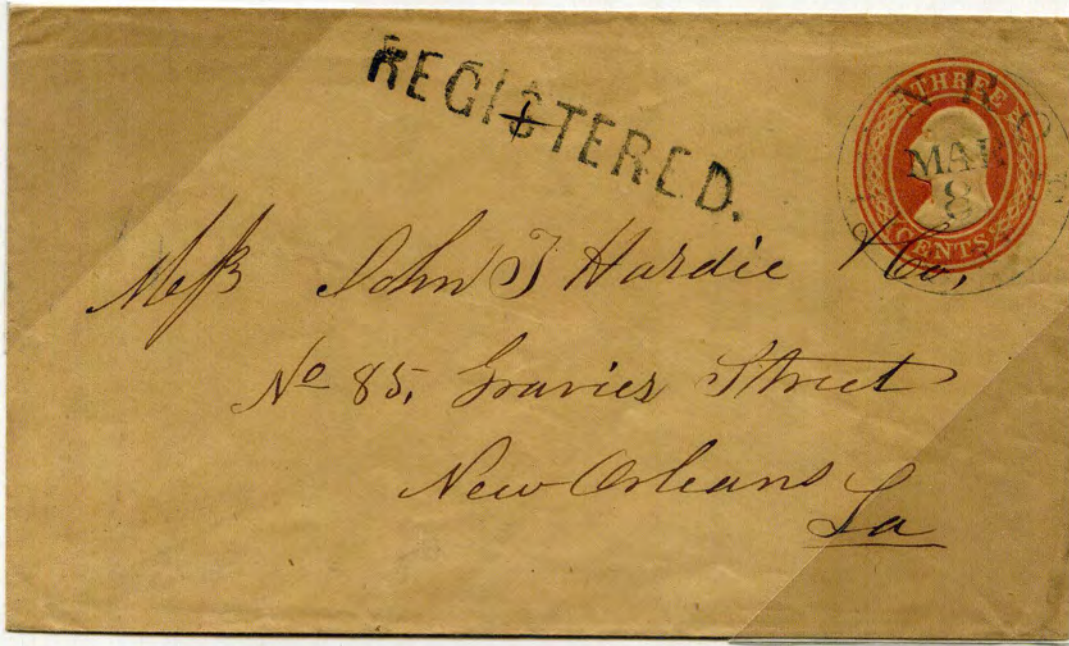
This cover and the cover below are the only known examples of blue straight line "REGISTERED" postmarks on registered covers going to Philadelphia. The cover here has a manuscript "X" with "ANNAPOLIS Md 29 NOV" (1852) enclosing \$2.50 for a subscription. The manuscript "X" has been documented as meaning that a letter was valuable. At Philadelphia it received a blue straight line "REGISTERED" and the number "13". This marking is similar to an "R" marking in usage.



This cover bears a 3 cent stamp with green "RINGGOLD Ga. JAN 18 (date upside down)" (1854) with manuscript "Registered No. 14" postmarks. It also bears a blue "REGISTERED" probably applied on receipt in Philadelphia. This marking is different from the one above. It is difficult to read and may have been discontinued for that reason.



**Handstamped REGISTERED markings  
Montgomery, Al. transit markings**



Among the early registered postmarks, the usages of the Montgomery, Al. "REGISTERED." straight line are very interesting. The cover is postmarked "MONROE Ga MAY 8". The only indication of a valuable letter is the tiny manuscript cross. But the letter bill must have been marked so the postmaster at Montgomery, Al. postmarked it on its transit to New Orleans.



This second cover shows a manuscript "Register No. 68" at "Columbus Miss. MAY 9". The entire is postmarked "REGISTERED.", a marking believed to have been applied in transit at Montgomery.



**Handstamped REGISTERED markings  
Montgomery, Al. transit markings**



This 3 cent entire bears a manuscript "Registered" with no number and red "CHUNENNUGGEE, Ala DEC 30". It has the Montgomery "REGISTERED." and is addressed to Greenville, Ga.



This cover bears the postmark "Autaugaville, Ala. June 21th/54" and "Registered Mail June 21" in handwritten box. There is a nice strike of the Montgomery "REGISTERED." and destination was New Orleans.



**Handstamped REGISTERED markings  
Montgomery, Al. origin markings**



This cover with integrally rated "MONTGOMERY ALA 3 PAID 3 FEB" contains an 1854 dated letter. Note that the sender wrote "Charge Register No."; the postal clerk filled in the number 1407 (which is in a different handwriting). Thus the postage of 3 cents was charged to a box account. The "REGISTERED." postmark here is an *Origin* rather than *Transit* postmark.



A three cent 1851 stamp is tied to a 3 cent entire by "MONTGOMERY, ALA OCT 14" (1857), docketed on reverse on envelope. The envelope bears "No. 59". There is a strike of a worn "REGISTERED." postmark. This cover is during the period of official registration and would have paid a cash fee of five cents. Note however that the postmarks of unofficial and official registration are identical.



**Handstamped REGISTERED markings  
Columbus, O. transit markings**



This cover bears a black "CHILLICOTHE O. 3 PAID MAR 29" integral rate postmark with additional "PAID" and manuscript "Registered". It also bears two strikes of bold "REGISTERED" believed to have been applied at Columbus, O. The address is to Erie, Pennsylvania.



The same manuscript "Registered" (same handwriting) is on this second cover postmarked "CHILLICOTHE O. 3 PAID JUN 30" (1855) which is a day before official registration. It is believed that the beginning of official registration caused the Columbus postmaster to stop marking transient registered letters.



**Handstamped REGISTERED markings  
Columbus, O. transit markings**



This 3 cent 1853 entire was canceled blue "SPRINGFIELD O. APR 23" (1855 from letter enclosed). There is also a manuscript "Registered". In addition, there is a bold "REGISTERED" on this cover addressed to Baltimore, Md. The person receiving this letter marked it "No. 3" and also wrote '55 in pencil.



This second cover bears "Registered" in the same handwriting on a stampless cover with "SPRINGFIELD O. JUL 13" and "PAID 3" and "PAID" This second "PAID" is significant because it indicates that the registration fee of 5 cents was paid. Although the letter is absent, the cover has two markings verifying that it is letter No. 10 and dated in 1855, thus requiring official registration which began 13 days earlier. Again the Columbus postmaster had ceased to mark transient letters by this date. The same addressee was in Williamstown. Ma.



**Official Registration  
Earliest known usages**



Registration with a five cent cash fee became law on July 1, 1855. This cover is dated on the first day of registration, "LOUISVILLE KY JUL 1"(1855) with notation "#21865 Registered" (a very high number thus continuing unofficial to official registration). It bears "PAID 24" for postage to Ireland. There is a 19 cents debit by Great Britain for 16 cents ocean postage and 3 cents inland postage. Other covers from this correspondence show the N.Y. transit registration postmarks and later a split fee for the 5 cents registration.



Well-known cover with "REGISTERED" between two pointing fingers. 3 cent 1851 canceled grid with "SACO MAINE JUL 4". In addition, the registration fee is indicated "PAID" in red and ms." 5 cts".