

# 'NEW YORK SUPPLEMENTARY MAIL 1853-1877'

## The aim of this exhibit

To show all types of supplementary mail postal markings used on outbound foreign mail from New York City 1853-1877.

## What was 'supplementary mail'?

A service whereby for a fee equivalent to the regular postage, late mail was expedited onto a departing ship.

## What differentiated 'supplementary' from 'regular' mail?

a) consistently, the word 'SUPPLEMENTARY' (sometimes abbreviated to 'SUP') is shown in a red octagon or is integral to a red or black cancel or is integral to a red or black datestamp. This applied to stampless and stamped mail.

b) depending on the type, stamps were cancelled by red or black cancels; stamps on regular mail were normally cancelled in black.

(note; red grid cancels 1853-1862 did not indicate supplementary usage)

## How was the service accessed?

Until July, 1873 at the dockside. It then became available at the post office.

## Why does the exhibit conclude in 1877?

In 1877 the post office standardised supplementary mail markings with the introduction of a steel duplex device which held a 'SUPPLEMENTARY' datestamp in a fixed position with an ellipse which cancelled the stamp. Red was discontinued.

## How is this exhibit organized?

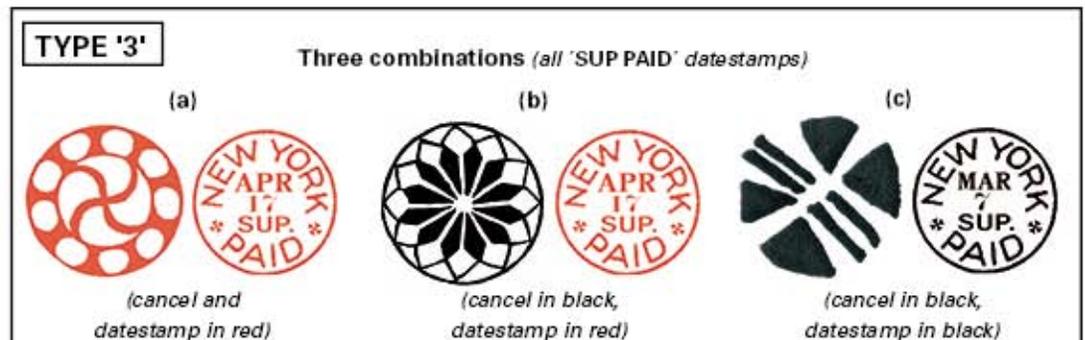
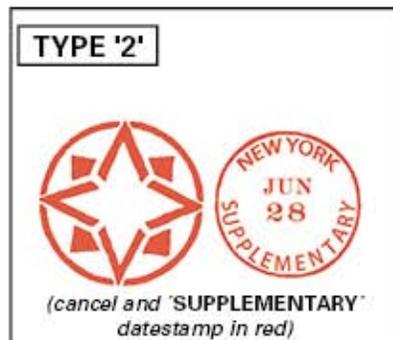
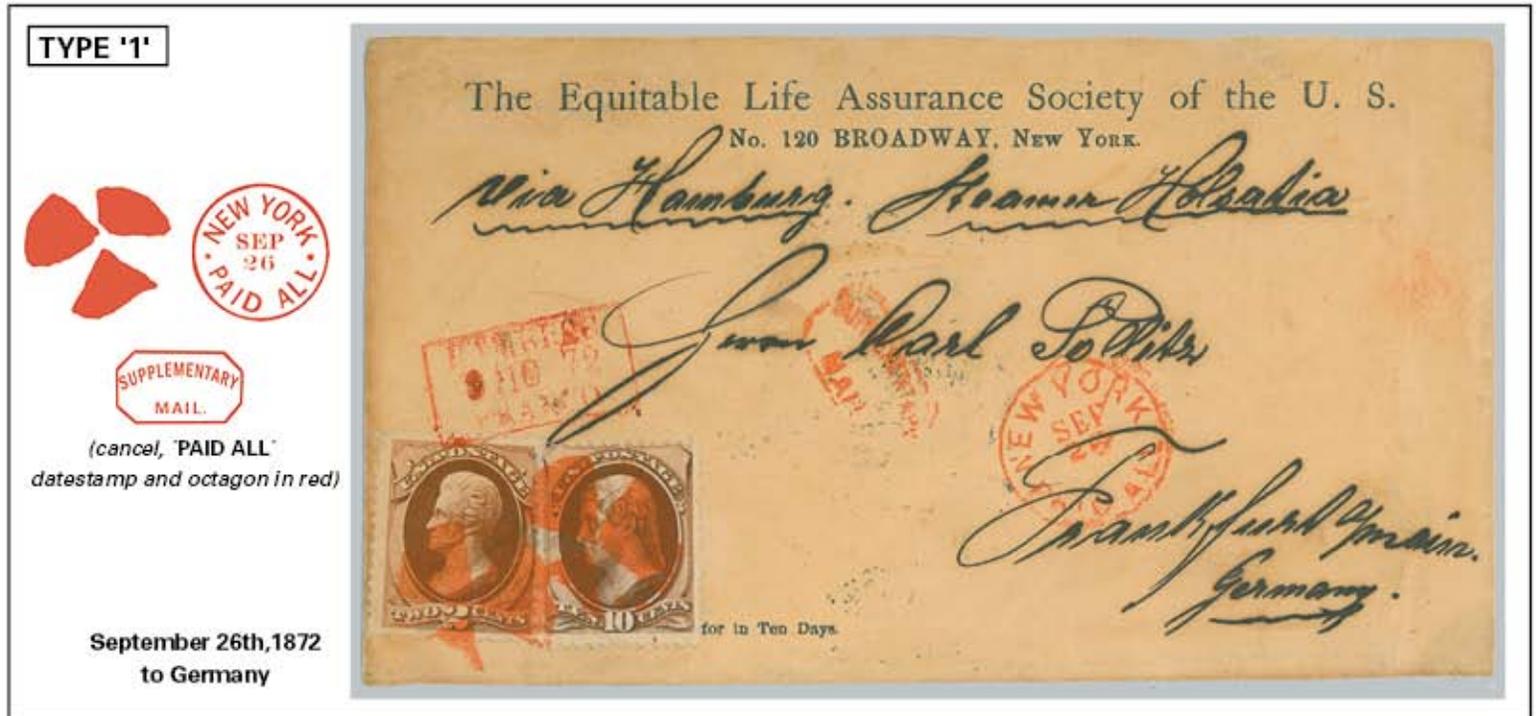
Types are shown chronologically;

Pages 2 to 4 Type '1'

Pages 5 to 9 Type '2'

Pages 10 to 16 Type '3' (with combinations)

(Page 16 also shows a Type '4' duplex for comparison)



Tracings 75% of actual size

**Type '1' (Stampless)**

Red 'SUPPLEMENTARY MAIL' octagon, red 'NEW YORK' datestamp

Recorded use; July 24th, 1858 to July 5th, 1873

**THE EARLIEST RECORDED TYPE '1' USAGE**



**July 24th, 1858 stampless letter to England**

The 'SUPPLEMENTARY MAIL' octagon shows 'fluted' corners, not straight as seen later

*Postage prepaid (in cash) the 24c 1848 British Treaty rate by American Packet plus the 24c Supplementary Mail fee (in cash)*



**Type '1' (with adhesives)**

Red octagon, red cancel, red 'NEW YORK PAID ALL' datestamp



June 20th, 1868 to England  
Postage of 24c paid the 12c British Mail Treaty rate plus the 12c Supplementary Mail fee



Straight corners



September 4th, 1871 to England

Postage of 12c paid the double weight 6c British Mail Treaty rate. The 12c supplementary mail fee was paid in cash at the dockside



June 20th, 1872 to Germany  
Postage of 12c paid the 6c Direct Mail rate via Hamburg plus the 6c supplementary mail fee

Type '1' (cont)



May 24th, 1873 to England

Postage of 36c paid the triple 6c British Mail Treaty rate plus the 18c supplementary mail fee

This cancel was one of a range of innovative fancy cancels produced by the New York Foreign Mail Department 1873 to 1875

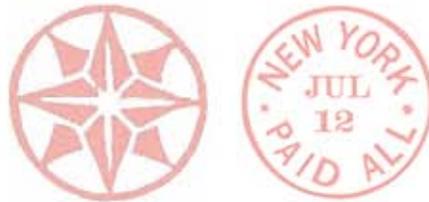


July 5th, 1873 to France

The latest recorded use of Type '1'

Postage of 8c paid the 4c British Open Mail rate plus the 4c supplementary mail fee

## Type '1' (interim Type '2')



### TRANSITIONAL COVER SENT IN THE PERIOD FOLLOWING THE CONCLUSION OF TYPE '1' AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THE TYPE '2' DATESTAMPS



July 12th, 1873 to England

Although this cover shows no **'SUPPLEMENTARY MAIL'** marking it can be assumed as supplementary because the cancel is red, the usual colour for supplementary mail, and postage indicates a fee was paid.

**Type '1'** and **Type '2'** markings are absent because the cover is dated just two days after supplementary **Type '1'** dockside service discontinued. It seems **Type '1'** was withdrawn before the **Type '2'** datestamp was prepared.

Meantime, the post office applied a regular Exchange Office datestamp.

*Postage of 24c paid the double 6c British Mail rate plus the 12c supplementary mail fee*

## Type '2'

Red cancel, red 'NEW YORK SUPPLEMENTARY MAIL' datestamp

Recorded use; August 21st, 1873 to July 8th, 1874



August 21st, 1873 to Belgium

An earliest recorded use of Type '2'

Postage due was the 8c Belgium Closed Mail rate plus the 8c supplementary mail fee, a total of 16c, so postage of 28c was 12c overpaid



October 23rd, 1873 to France

Postage of 32c paid the 16c British Mail Treaty rate plus the 16c supplementary mail fee

Type '2' (cont)



December 27th, 1873 to France

E

Postage should have been 20c (French fully prepaid rate for 15 to 20 grams) plus the supplementary mail fee of 20c, a total of 40c, so postage of 44c was 4c overpaid



November 8th, 1873 four colour franking to Spain

E

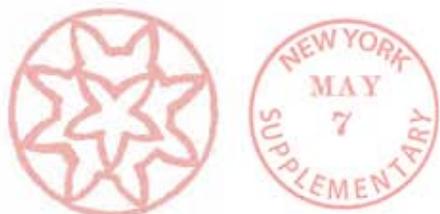
Postage of 32c paid the 16c British Mail Treaty rate via France plus the 16c supplementary mail fee

Type '2' (cont)



January 24th, 1874 to Ireland

Postage of 24c paid the double 6c British Mail Treaty rate plus the 12c supplementary mail fee



May 7th, 1874 to England

Postage of 12c paid the 6c British Mail Treaty rate plus the 6c supplementary mail fee



May 16th, 1874 to Germany

Postage of 12c paid the 6c North German Union (NGU) Direct rate plus the 6c supplementary mail fee

**Type '2' (cont)**



**June 23rd, 1874 to Germany**

*Postage of 14c paid the 7c NGU Direct rate plus the 7c supplementary mail fee*

**Type '2' (variety)**

**Black cancel, red 'NEW YORK SUPPLEMENTARY' datestamp**



**June 13th, 1874 to Switzerland**

**The sole recorded Type '2' where the cancel is black not red**

*Postage of 40c paid the double 10c Swiss Closed Mail rate plus the 20c supplementary mail fee*

**Type '3'; Combination 3a**

Red cancel, red 'NEW YORK SUP PAID' datestamp

Recorded use (all combinations); August 8th, 1874 to August 23rd, 1877



August 15th, 1874 to Germany

The second earliest known use of Type '3a'

Postage of 14c paid the 7c NGU Closed Mail rate plus the 7c supplementary mail fee



August 29th, 1874 to Holland

Postage of 20c paid the unannounced 10c British Mail rate plus the 10c supplementary mail fee

Type '3'; Combination 3a (cont)

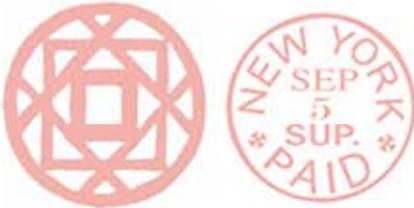
If not called for within Ten Days, return to  
**J. C. REIFF,**  
 80, Broadway,  
 NEW YORK.



September 29th, 1874 to England

Postage of 12c paid the 6c Direct rate plus the 6c supplementary mail fee

*J. V. Painter*  
*Care McCulloch & Co*  
*London*  
*England*



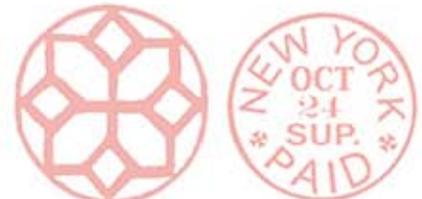
September 5th, 1874 to England

Postage of 12c paid the 6c British Mail Treaty rate plus the 6c supplementary mail fee

*Post. City of Kiel...*  
*To the*  
*London Banking Association Ltd*  
*London*



If not called for in Ten days, return to  
**SCHIFFER & NEPHEWS,**  
 Commission Merchants,  
 AND  
 HOLESAL E GROCERS,  
 38 VESEY STREET,  
 NEW YORK.



October 24th, 1874 to Germany

Postage of 12c paid the 6c NGU Direct Mail Rate plus the 6c supplementary mail fee

*From Adolph Guttman*  
*Adresse*  
*From S. Friedmann*  
*Ritter Strasse 86*  
*Berlin*  
*Prussia*

**Type '3'; Combination 3b**  
**Black cancel, red 'NEW YORK SUP PAID' datestamp**



**December 24th, 1874 to Italy**

*Postage of 20c paid the 10c NGU Direct Closed Mail rate via England plus the 10c supplementary mail fee*



**April 7th, 1875 to France**

*Postage of 18c paid the 9c French Mail Treaty Mail rate plus the 9c supplementary mail fee*

Type '3'; Combination 3b (cont)



June 12th, 1875 to Manila (via Great Britain)

The sole recorded supplementary mail cover to the Philippines

The sender prepaid 40c postage, but mistakenly endorsed the cover 'Via Marseilles'. However, it was correctly routed in New York via Brindisi with the correct credit to G.B. of 30c (the U.S. was entitled to 2c internal and 2c Sea Postage for carriage to England). The 6c additional postage prepaid the supplementary mail fee based on the 6c Treaty rate



June 26th, 1875 to France

Postage of 18c paid the 9c French Mail Treaty rate plus the 9c supplementary mail fee

Type '3'; Combination 3b (cont)



August 26th, 1876 to Sachsen (Germany)

Postage of 10c paid the 5c Universal Postal Union (UPU) rate plus the 5c supplementary mail fee

E



September 30th, 1876 1c Postal Card to Germany

The sole recorded Type '3b' on a Postal Card

Postage of 4c paid the 2c UPU Postal Card rate plus the 2c supplementary mail fee

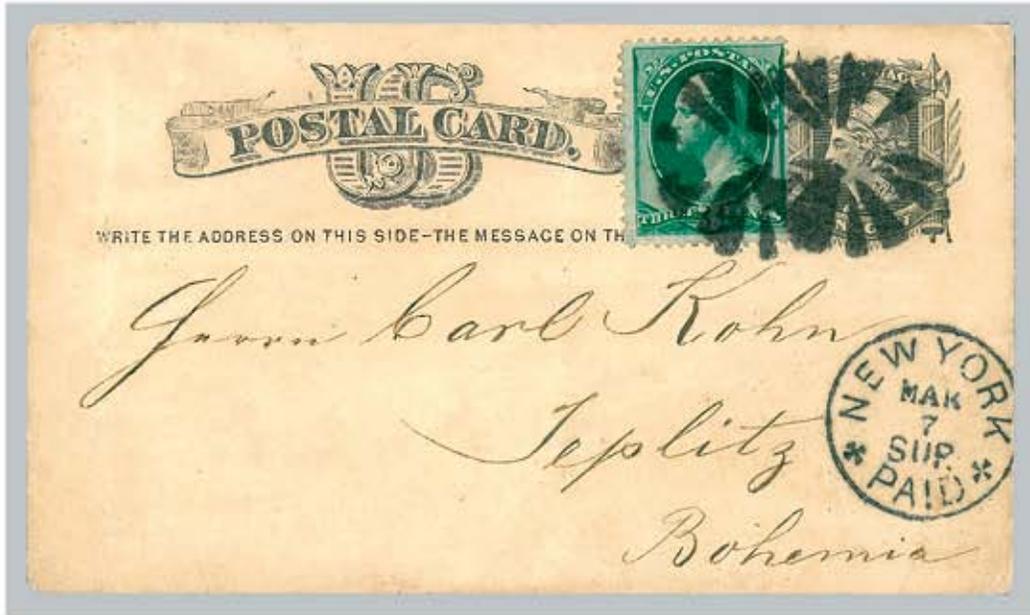


November 18th, 1876 3c Stamped Envelope to Germany

Postage due was the 5c UPU rate plus the 5c supplementary mail fee, a total of 10c, so the 17c paid was 7c overpaid

(Other covers of this correspondence were similarly overpaid)

**Type '3'; Combination 3c**  
**Black cancel, black 'NEW YORK SUP PAID' datestamp**



**March 7th, 1877 1c Postal Card to Bohemia (then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire)**

*Postage of 4c paid the 2c UPU Postal Card rate plus the 2c supplementary mail fee*



**April 14th, 1877 to Brazil (via Great Britain)**

The red 'LONDON' transit datestamp is struck across the bottom of the centre stamp

**The sole recorded supplementary mail cover to Brazil**

*Postage of 26c paid the 21c rate to Brazil plus the 5c UPU supplementary mail fee to G.B. (the red crayon '80' represents an 80 French Centimes credit to G.B. equalling 16 U.S. cents. The remaining 10c prepaid was retained by the U.S.: 5c postage plus the 5c supplementary mail fee)*

**Type '3'; Combination 3c (cont)**

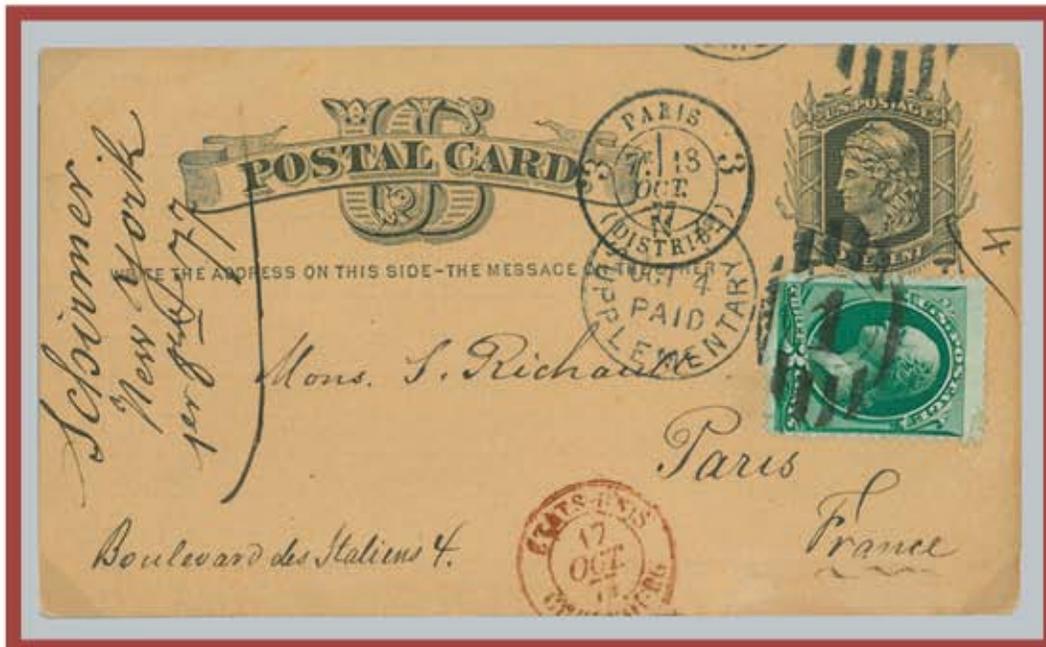


**June 16th, 1877 3c Stamped Envelope to Germany**

*Postage of 10c paid the 5c UPU rate plus the 5c supplementary mail fee*

**Type '4' (Duplex datestamp with ellipse cancel)**

Recorded use; September 15th, 1877 to January 8th, 1898



**October 4th, 1877 Type '4' to France**

**A second earliest use of a supplementary mail duplex cancel**

*Postage of 4c paid the 2c UPU rate plus the 2c supplementary mail fee*

## Nicholas M. Kirke

### SYNOPSIS; 'New York Supplementary Mail 1853-1877'

#### The aim of this exhibit

The aim is to illustrate, chronologically, all types of Supplementary Mail postal markings and cancellations used on outbound foreign mail processed the New York City post office 1853-1877.

#### What was supplementary mail?

Supplementary mail was a convenience service whereby for a fee equivalent to the regular postage, late mail was expedited onto a departing ship. The service only applied to first class mail.

#### Why the period 1853-1877?

Supplementary Mail service was **established in New York City in 1853**, '*... the dispatch of supplementary mails at double the rates of postage was authorised July 7 1853*' <sup>(1)</sup>. **The first recorded use of a 'SUPPLEMENTARY MAIL' usage dated 7/24/1858** is shown at 1-2 . As the exhibit demonstrates, a variety of types and colour combinations ensued. However, in 1878, supplementary mail marking were standardized with the inception of the steel duplex, a cancelling device using black ink which held the datestamp and the obliterating cancel in a fixed position.

#### How did the service operate?

Until 7/9/1873 the service was available at dockside from shipping line offices. An average of three sailing weekly, promulgated in the '**New York Times**', accepted supplementary mail. Letters arrived at dockside either with pre-affixed adhesives to include the supplementary fee, or just the regular postage affixed; the fee was then paid in cash. From 7/10/1873 the service was only available from the post office, '*An order was made that supplemental mails to European steamers will be dispatched to the steamer from the main office after the close of the regular mail. The supplemental bags at the wharves will be discontinued.*'<sup>(2)</sup> Supplementary mail service continued until 1939.

#### Classifications of supplementary mail

Traditional classification of New York **Types 'A', 'D', 'E' and 'F'**, introduced by Babcock <sup>(3)</sup>, have been listed in Scott Stamp Catalogue <sup>(4)</sup> from 1923. Each letter relates to particular supplementary mail markings on outbound mail from New York City. The exhibitor introduces what he feels is a more logical numerical system, **Types '1', '2', '3', and '4'** (the missing letters 'B' and 'C' in Babcock's classification refer to domestic use from Chicago).

## SYNOPSIS (cont)

## 'New York Supplementary Mail 1853-77'

### To which destinations was supplementary service available?

New York supplementary mail service was available on steamers bound for Europe. This would include mail with a final destination outside Europe but routed through, say, London, bound for Asia (see 1-13 to **The Phillipines**) or to South America (see 1-15 to **Brazil**). It was not available for ships or trains bound for New Orleans in transit for Mexico or South or Central America, nor for mail by train to San Francisco for onward transit to Far Eastern destinations.

### Was supplementary mail service available elsewhere in the United States?

Apart from Chicago, a service operated domestically, or occasionally internationally, in Philadelphia, Detroit and San Francisco. None differentiated regular mail from supplementary mail as did New York City. Some post offices used a '**LATE FEE**' mark to indicate supplementary. Supplementary use from cities other than New York City is only deduced by the postage paid. (5)

### What percentage of the regular mail was supplementary mail?

Using **Type '1'** it is possible to estimate the percentage for 1859. The benchmark is from a report in *The New York Herald* noting, '*The revenue from these supplementary mails is from \$20 to \$25*' (6). Based on 3 sailings weekly and an average postage per cover of 22c this extrapolates to 116 covers per sailing, a total of **16,704 covers for 1859**. The Postmaster General's Report for 1859 (7) notes the total amount of covers sent to European as **3,093,390** (G.B. 54%, Germany 30%, and France 16%) indicating **supplementary mail as 0.5% of the total mail** for that year. Although a 'ball-park' figure, it indicates supplementary mail was but a tiny fraction of the regular mail. Further, survival rates have been estimated as low as 0.036% of this 0.5% (just 6 supplementary mail covers for 1859) (8).

### References

- (1) Warren. L. Babcock, M.D., 'Supplementary Mail Markings', p.2, para 5, Dec 1939, 32 pages, Published by W. L. Babcock, Detroit, MI, USA
- (2) 'The New York Times', p.1. July 9th, 1873
- (3) See ref (1) p. 1-6
- (4) Scott Catalogue. 1st published 1868. Scott Publishing Co. Now a subsidiary of Amos Press.
- (5) Leonard Piskiewicz, p. 13, 'United States Supplementary Mail' published by the United States Stamp Society, 2009. 133 pages, ISBN No; 0-930-412-29-X
- (6) New York Herald September 1, 1859 p.5.
- (7) Postmaster General Holt's Report 1859. Published Dec 6th 1860
- (8) Arden Callender Lecture 10/10/2012 The Philatelic Rendezvous, 2012, Fredericksburg, Texas, '*New York City Type 'A' Supplemental Mail 1853-1873*'.

### The exhibitor has authored the following article on supplementary mail

'New York Supplementary Mail; 1870-1877', *The Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues*, May 2011, Vol.63, No.2, Whole No.230, The Bank Note Period, p.146