

## **Paying the Postage in the United States: 1776-1921**

This display illustrates the relationship between postal rates and the various methods employed to pay those rates and fees in the United States between 1776 and 1921.

Prior to July 1851, many of the government postal rates were expressed in amounts that did not correspond to the United States decimal coinage, which at the time was circulating in very limited supply. Rather, the rates were based on the most widely circulating foreign coins. These coins of Spanish America included the famous “pillar” dollars, their “portrait coin” descendants, and the smaller denominations based on the division of the dollar into eighths.

A March 3, 1851 Act of Congress reduced the postal rate for a single letter sent up to 3,000 miles to three cents and also authorized the first issuance of a three cent coin. This is the first instance of a coin being minted directly to aid in the payment of a postal rate in the United States. In February 1853 an act was passed that reduced the silver content of all silver coins other than the dollar. As the new coins had an actual silver value less than their nominal face value, all prior silver coinage disappeared from circulation. This included foreign coins that had circulated, with official sanction, until 1857. Further hoarding of silver during the Civil War resulted in the virtual disappearance of silver coins in circulation.

During the Civil War substitutes for small change were needed. Temporary measures included the use of postage stamps, scrip, and tokens as money. The government began issuing fractional paper currency in 1862 which continued in widespread use until the Specie Resumption Act of 1875 resulting in a more stable monetary system. A renaissance of coin design began in 1908.

The exhibit is arranged primarily by the date of the postal artifact. Each page attempts to match a postal artifact with a corresponding item that could have been used as payment. The postal items have been chosen to reflect a wide range of rates and usages while the payment items reflect the changing nature of money, and money substitutes, which were utilized in the United States.



1762 Spanish Pillar Dollar



1908 Gold \$20 coin designed by St. Gaudens



13 February 1776 Newburyport, Massachusetts (NP postmark) to Philadelphia, 4 pennyweight 16 grains due rate currency of account converted to local currency equivalent of 2/- (2 shillings) when delivered as noted at left

*In 1774 the Continental Congress established postal rates expressed in pennyweights and grains of silver as a currency of account. The rate for distances between 400 and 500 miles was 4 dwt. 16 gr. This money of account had to be converted to an equivalent amount in local currency when it was actually paid.*

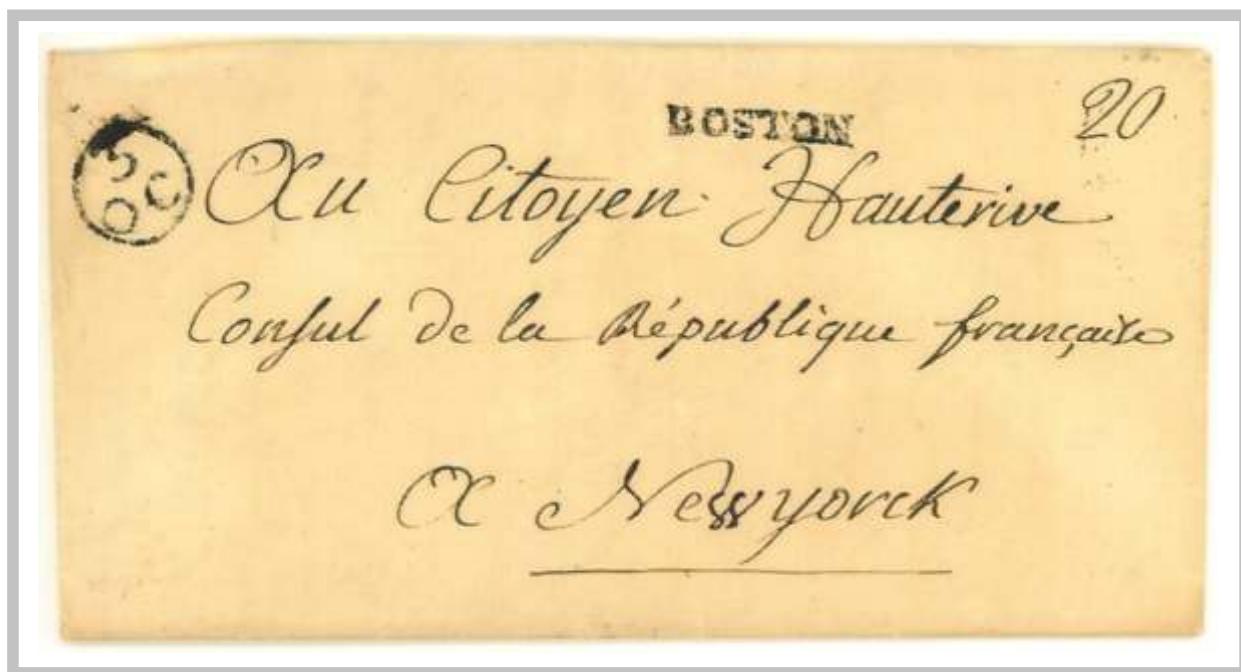


Two Shillings Pennsylvania "resolve money" dated October 25, 1775

Pennsylvania issued £22,000 in bills of credit as "resolve money" pursuant to a resolve of September 30, 1775. This note was printed by Hall and Sellers of Philadelphia. Anti-counterfeiting measures, including Benjamin Franklin's leaf nature print on the reverse, were employed in printing. Paper containing mica specks and silk threads was used.

1792 - 20¢ Domestic Rate

France One Fifth Ecu



3 October 1793 Boston, Massachusetts to New York City  
20¢ due rate in manuscript, addressed to the Consul of the French Republic

An Act of 1792 was the first to express postal rates in cents. A nine step rate structure, by distance, was instituted and the 20¢ rate applied to a single letter sent over 250 but not over 300 miles. This was simplified in 1799 to six steps.

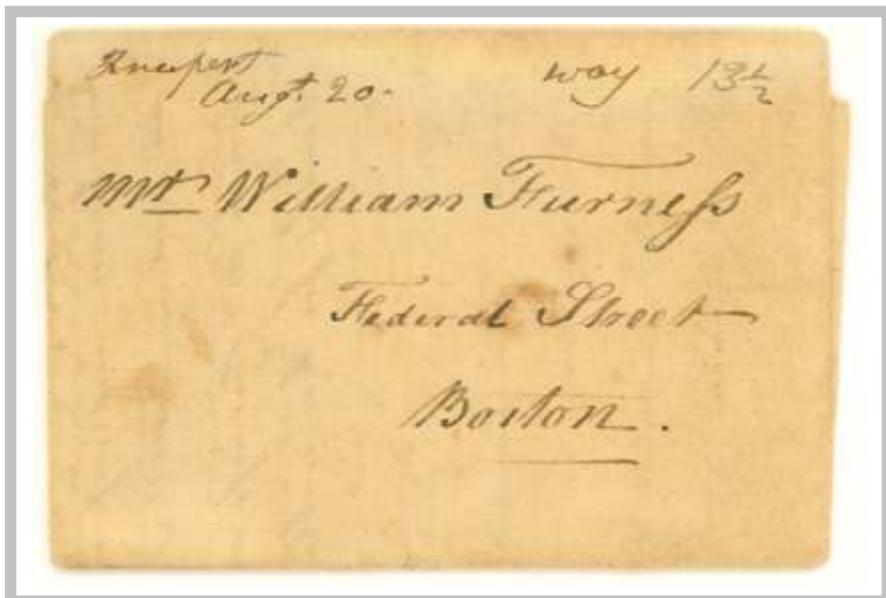


1785 1/5 ecu minted in Paris, France

The Act of 1793 allowed for the circulation of French silver as legal tender. Although the one ecu was valued at \$1.10 and the one-fifth ecu coin was valued at 22 cents, the fractional coins circulated at somewhat less than their nominal value.

1799 - 1¢ Way Fee + 12½¢ Domestic Rate

British Halfpenny + Spanish Colonial One Real



19 August 1799 Woolwich, District of Maine to Boston, Massachusetts

20 August 1799 entered mails as a way letter at Freeport, District of Maine with 13½¢ due

A way fee of one cent was added to the postal rate of 12½ cents and paid to the post rider for carriage to the post office.



1751 one real coin minted in Mexico City

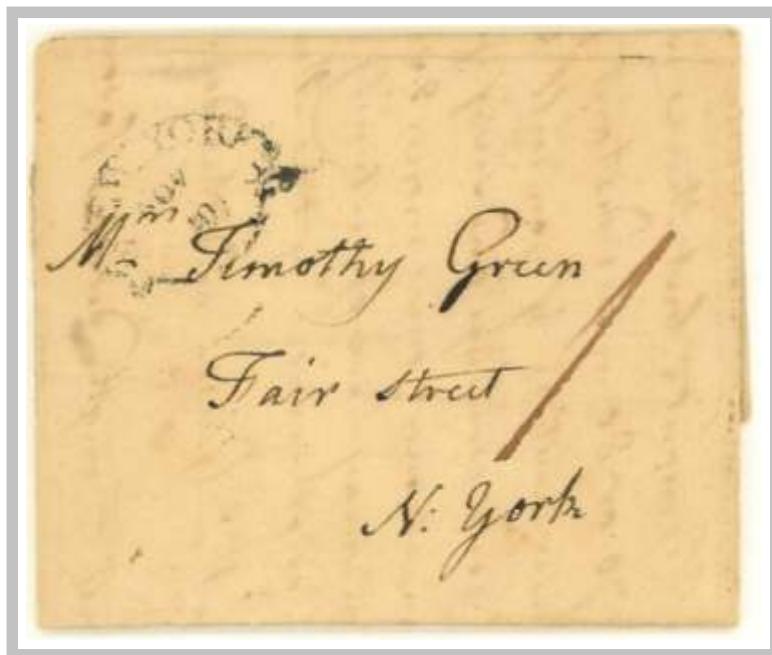


1749 halfpenny coin minted in England

The pillar design one real coin was equivalent to 12½ cents while the British halfpenny circulated at a value of one cent. Some 800,000 of these 1749 halfpennies were shipped to Massachusetts for assistance in the Louisburg Expedition.

1800 - 1¢ Drop Rate

United States "Fugio" Cent



10 November 1800 New York City local usage  
1¢ due in manuscript

*The Act of May 8, 1794 delineated a drop rate of one cent for a letter for delivery at the office where mailed.*



1787 Fugio cent minted in New Haven, Connecticut and Newburgh, New York

*The first coins issued under the authority of the United States were the "Fugio" cents. So-named because "Fugio" (time flies) inscription appears on front. This, as well as the further "Mind Your Business" inscription, have been attributed to Benjamin Franklin.*



24 February 1815 Hartford to New Haven, Connecticut

12¢ due rate in manuscript

*The 12 cents war surcharge rate applied for distances under 40 miles. This rate was only in effect between February 1, 1815 and March 31, 1816 and reflects a fifty percent increase over previous rate as a tax to pay for the War of 1812.*



1787 six pence coin minted in England

*The 1787 six pence coin, the last to circulate widely in the United States, was equivalent to twelve cents. This example shows missing hearts error on Hanoverian shield that was corrected later in the same year.*

1815 - 25½¢ War Surcharge Rate

United States Half Cent + Spanish Two Reales



31 May 1815 Wiscasset, Mass.  
(District of Maine) to  
Providence, Rhode Island  
25½¢ due rate in manuscript

The 25½¢ war surcharge rate applied for distances between 150 and 300 miles. This rate was only in effect between February 1, 1815 and March 31,

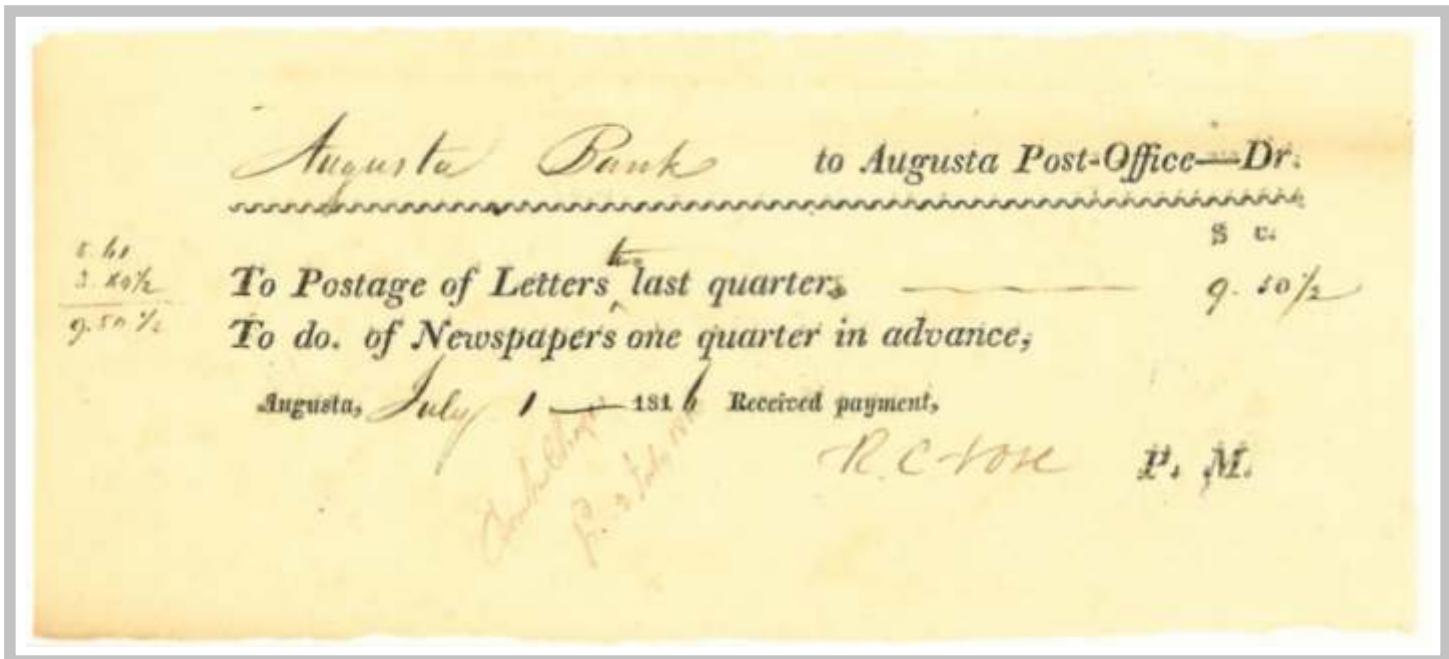


1800 one half cent  
coin minted in  
Philadelphia



1762 2 reales  
minted in Mexico  
City

The United States one half cent coins were minted between 1793 and 1836. The Robert Scot "draped bust" design was introduced in 1800. The two reales pillar coins circulated in the United States at a value of 25 cents. In 1815, the Spanish 2 reales coin had legal tender status, while the United States half cent did not.



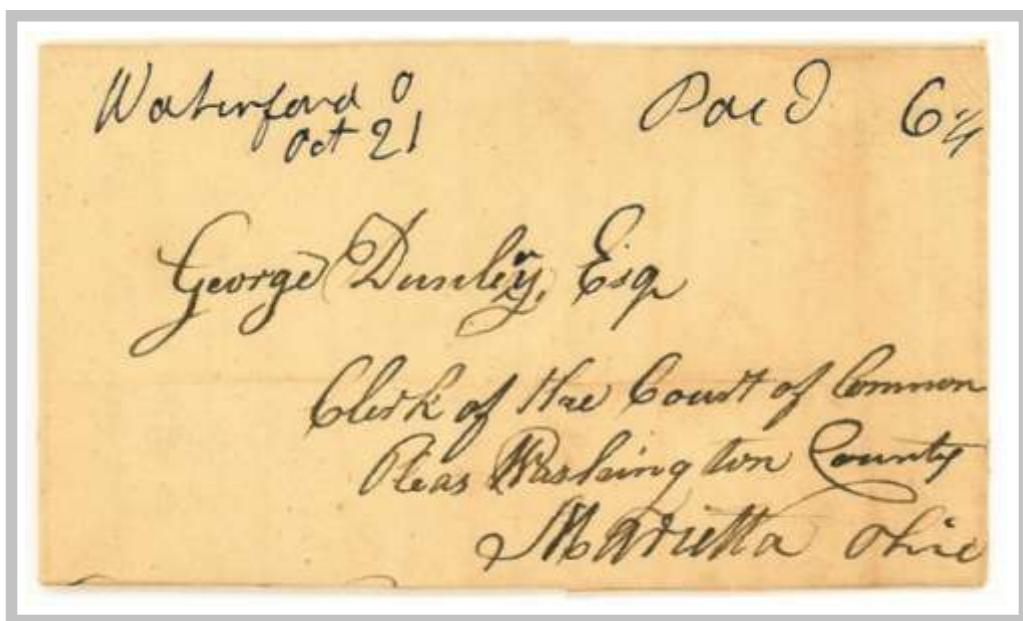
1 July 1816 Augusta, District of Maine receipt for postage paid for two quarters  
the (Hallowell) & Augusta Bank paid Augusta postmaster Robert Vose \$9.50½

*This receipt is for two quarters. Postmasters had to render accounts to the Post Office Department quarterly but "draft offices" such as Augusta didn't have to actually pay out the monies until called for by the Post Office.*



\$5 Hallowell & Augusta Bank note signed on 5 November 1815

*A Massachusetts law required that all paper money be printed using Jacob Perkins' stereotype steel plates. Perkins' methods were an important contribution to currency production and were later adapted for postage stamp production.*



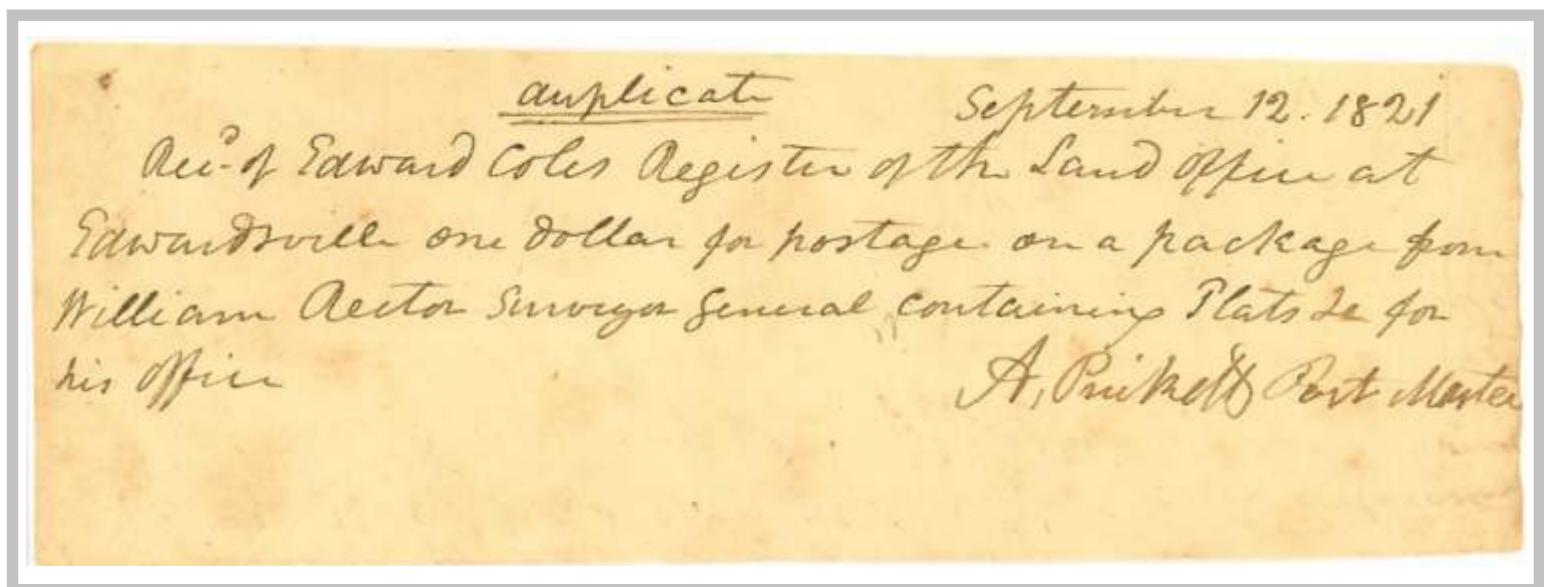
21 October 1827 Waterford, Ohio to Marietta, Ohio  
prepaid 6¢ rate but with manuscript "Paid 6¼"

*Although the 1816 postal rate for distances to 30 miles was 6 cents, the coin most frequently used to pay the rate was the Spanish Colonial one half real coin. The cover above is evidence of prepayment using such a coin.*

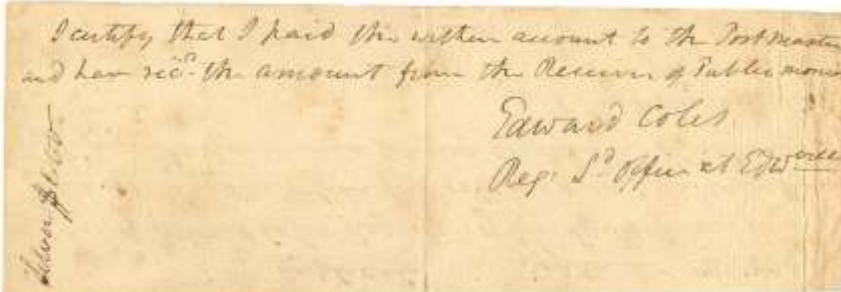


1798 one half real coin minted in Mexico City

*The one half real coin, also known as a picayune, was equivalent to 6¼ cents. This example bears the portrait of King Charles IV of Spain. These coins circulated widely in the United States until 1857.*



verso  
"silver \$1.00" →



12 September 1821 Edwardsville, Illinois receipt signed by postmaster Abraham Prickett that he has received "silver \$1.00" for postage on a package from Surveyor General containing plats.



1821 Loyalist 8 reales minted in Zacatecas, Mexico

*During the Mexico War for Independence the city of Zacatecas remained loyal to the Spanish crown and continued to mint silver coins portraying Ferdinand VII until 1822. The 8 reales coin circulated in the U.S. as a silver dollar.*

1825 - 18¾¢ Domestic Rate

Spanish Colonial Half + One Real



4 April 1837 West Cambridge, Massachusetts to New York City  
18¾¢ due rate handstamp

*In 1825 the domestic postal rate of 18½ cents was changed to 18¾ cents rate for distances between 150 and 400 miles to better correspond with the Spanish Colonial coins being used to pay for postal charges.*



1813 one half real coin



reverse of one real



1813 one real coin

*The one half real coin was equivalent to 6¼ cents and the one real coin was equivalent to 12½ cents. Together they were commonly used to pay the 18¾ cents postal rate which was in effect until 1845.*

1836 - 18¾¢ Domestic Steamboat Rate

Spanish Pistareen



1 July 1836 New York to Boston by contract steamboat  
entered mails in Boston with "Steamboat 18 ¾" handstamp incorporating domestic rate

*In 1836, contract mail service between New York City and Boston utilized steamboats across Long Island Sound. The postal rate was the same as if carried by land, but a special handstamp was used at Boston.*

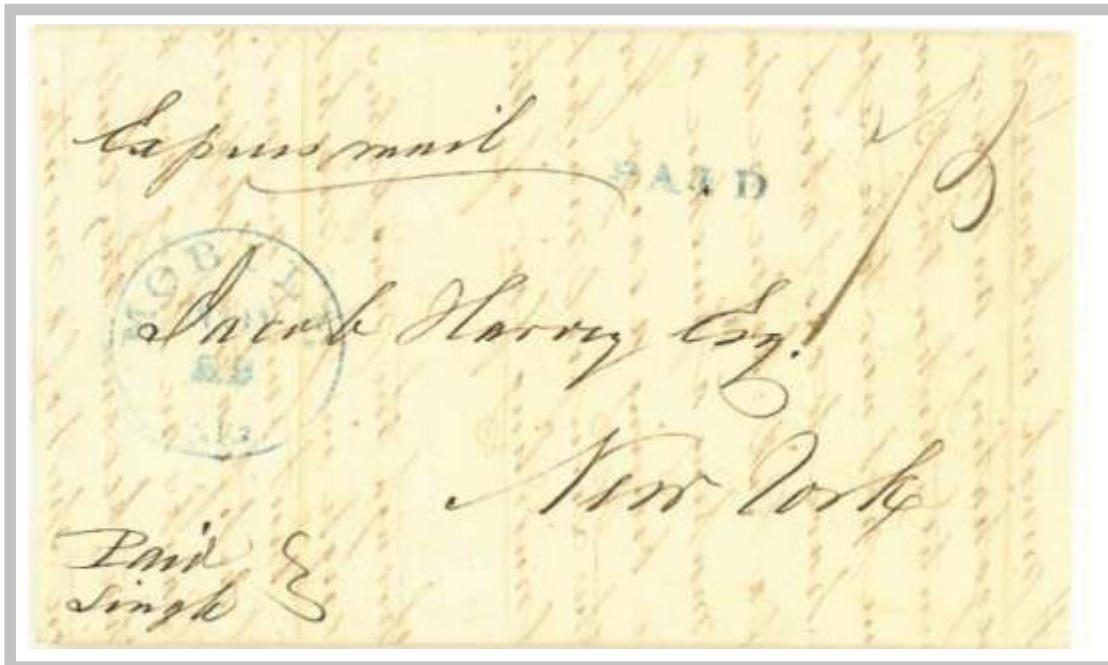


1766 Spain 2 reales (cross pistareen) minted in Madrid

*Silver coins minted in Spain contained approximately 20% less silver than coins of the same denomination minted in the Spanish Dominions. The 2 reales coins, called "pistareens," were valued in commerce between 16¢ and 20¢ and continued in wide circulation well into the late 1850's. Examples such as the one above were easily distinguished by the cross design.*

1836 - 75¢ Government Express Mail Rate

United States Half Dollar + Spanish Colonial 2 Reales



21 November 1837 Mobile, Alabama to New York City

75¢ (25¢ normal distance rate times three) prepaid

An Act of July 2, 1836 authorized an express mail service. For triple the ordinary rate of postage a letter could be carried by expedited service over certain Eastern postal routes. From November 1, 1837 until the service was discontinued in 1839, such mail had to be endorsed "Express Mail" and fully prepaid.

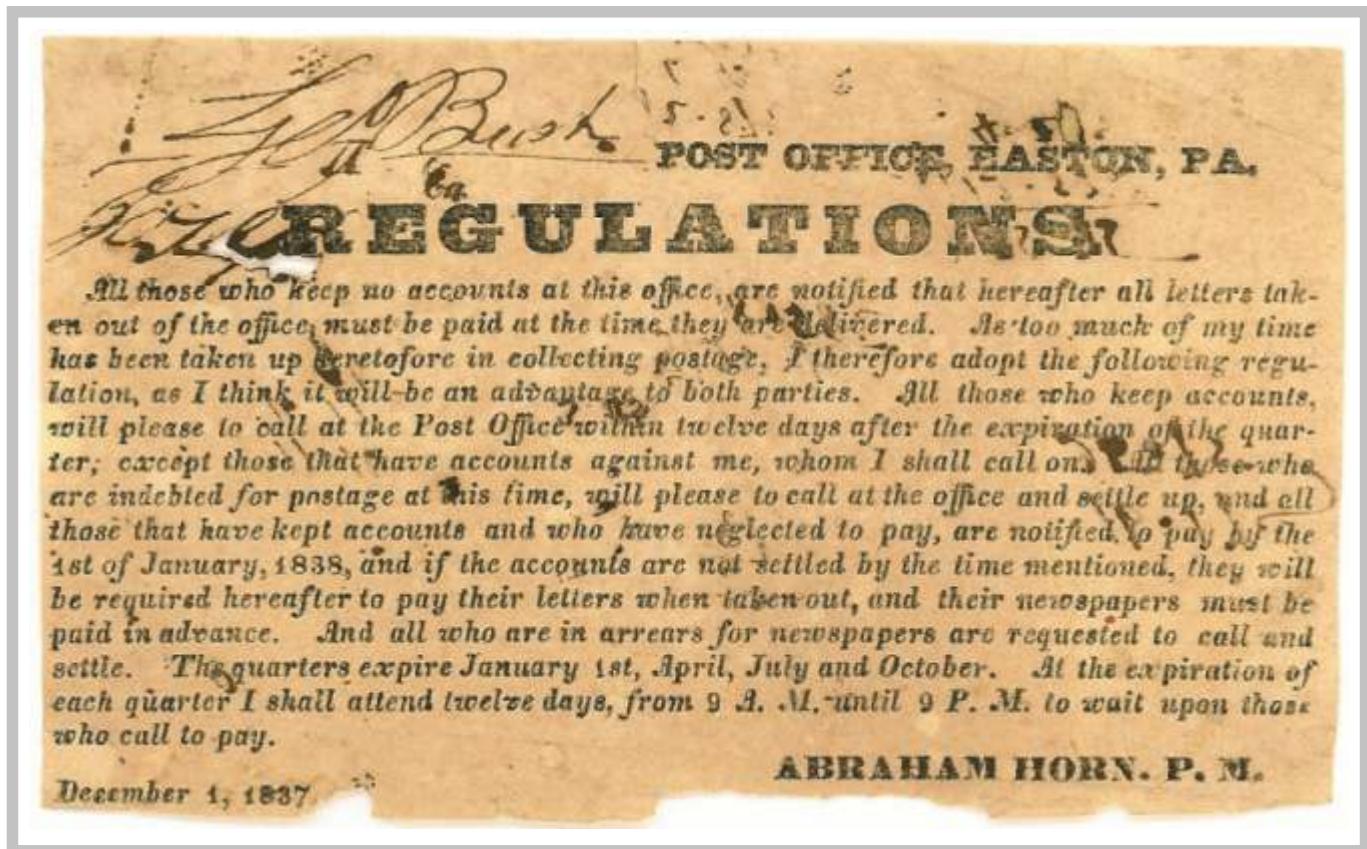


1837 half dollar  
minted in  
Philadelphia



1774 2 reales  
minted in Mexico  
City

Steam presses were first used for minting United States coins in late 1836. The reeded edge 50¢ coins were the first produced. The reverse legend was altered to "half dollar" in 1838. The two reales portrait coins circulated widely in the United States and had a value of 25¢.



1 December 1837 Easton, Pennsylvania notice to pay account quarterly  
if the box holder owed postage on 20 letters, at 25¢ each, the amount due would be \$5

Postmasters had to pay their accounts to the Post Office Department quarterly. Above notice shows that it was easier for them to run accounts of postage due from box holding patrons than to collect on individual letters.



1834 five dollar gold coin minted in Philadelphia

The weight of gold coins was reduced by four percent in 1834. The small quantities of United States gold coinage that had been circulating had become worth more than face value and quickly disappeared from circulation.

1837 - 1¢ Fee For Outbound Ship Letter Rate

Feuchtwanger Cent



18 March 1837 New York City to Dundee, Scotland by ship *President*  
1¢ fee paid to New York postmaster to send by private ship

The 1817 Law specified that postmasters at sea ports were to receive mail to be conveyed by private ship to destinations outside the United States. For each letter they were entitled to receive and keep one cent.



1837 Feuchtwanger cent

This one cent coin was produced from German silver by Dr. Lewis Feuchtwanger in 1837 to circulate as a token during the "hard times" coin shortage. His suggestion to Congress of composition coin was rejected.



7 February 1838 Charleston, South Carolina local usage  
1¢ drop rate, “one cent” rate handstamp

*The 1825 Act specified a rate of one cent for letters for local delivery, termed drop letters. This rate remained in effect until 1863.*



1837 Hard Times token

*This hard times token bears the inscription “Specie Payments Suspended, May Tenth, 1837” on one side referring to the date that banks quit redeeming their notes in silver or gold. This resulted in the financial panic of 1837. The other side bears an inscription ”Substitute For Shin Plasters, Novr 1837” with a phoenix rising from flames. The date is that of a convention held in New York City on the 27th when bank leaders from 19 states got together to fix a date for resumption of specie payment.*

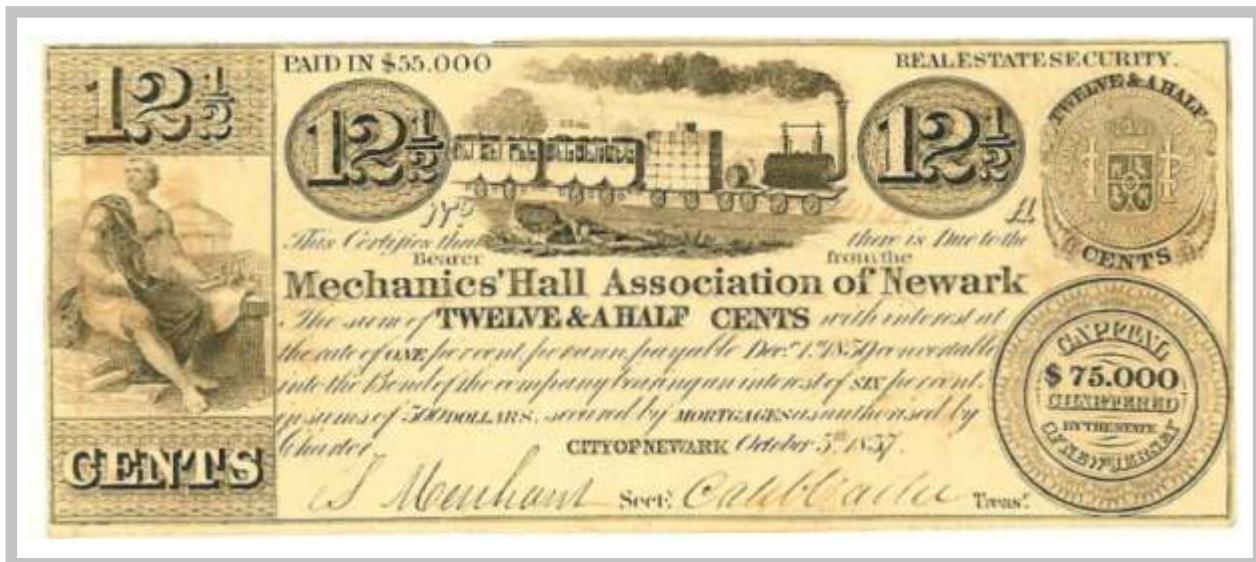
1839 - Domestic Rates

Fractional Scrip with Spanish Coin



Elizabeth City, North Carolina usages, 12½¢ and 25¢ rate handstamps (1839, 1835)

*Neither the 12½¢ or 25¢ postal rates in effect from 1816 until 1845 were based on decimal divisions of the dollar.*



1837 12½¢ interest bearing scrip with illustration of Spanish Colonial 1 real coin at right

*Fractional scrip that circulated, especially during Panic of 1837, was often related to the Spanish Colonial coins in circulation. Denominations as well as illustrations are a reflection of those coins.*

1839 - Domestic Packet Rate

Brazil "Dollar"



24 March 1839 Elizabeth City, North Carolina to Kingston, Massachusetts

\$1 due rate for a packet weighing 1 ounce, blue "100" rate handstamp

*An Act of March 3, 1825 established postal rates for "packets" weighing one ounce or more. A one ounce packet was subject to quadruple postage. In this case the single sheet letter was twenty-five cents for distance over 400 miles. The "100" rate handstamp appearing on this cover is exceptional and is the only reported example from this town.*



1820 960 reis minted in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

*These 960 reis coins of Brazil were legal tender in the United States and circulated at the value of one dollar. This example was struck over a Spanish Colonial eight reales coin under the Reign of John VI.*



16 May 1839 Boston to New York City, packet of letters weighing 43 ounces, prepaid \$32.25  
a one ounce packet was quadruple 18¾¢ rate (75¢), and for 43 ounces (75¢ x 43=\$32.25)

*This packet enclosed letters from a Boston agent to a mail forwarder in New York timed to catch the departure of the Transatlantic Steam Ship Company steamer Liverpool. The enclosed letters were given to the steamer purser by Abraham Bell as freight money letters and a fee paid for carriage to England. An exceptionally high postal rate.*

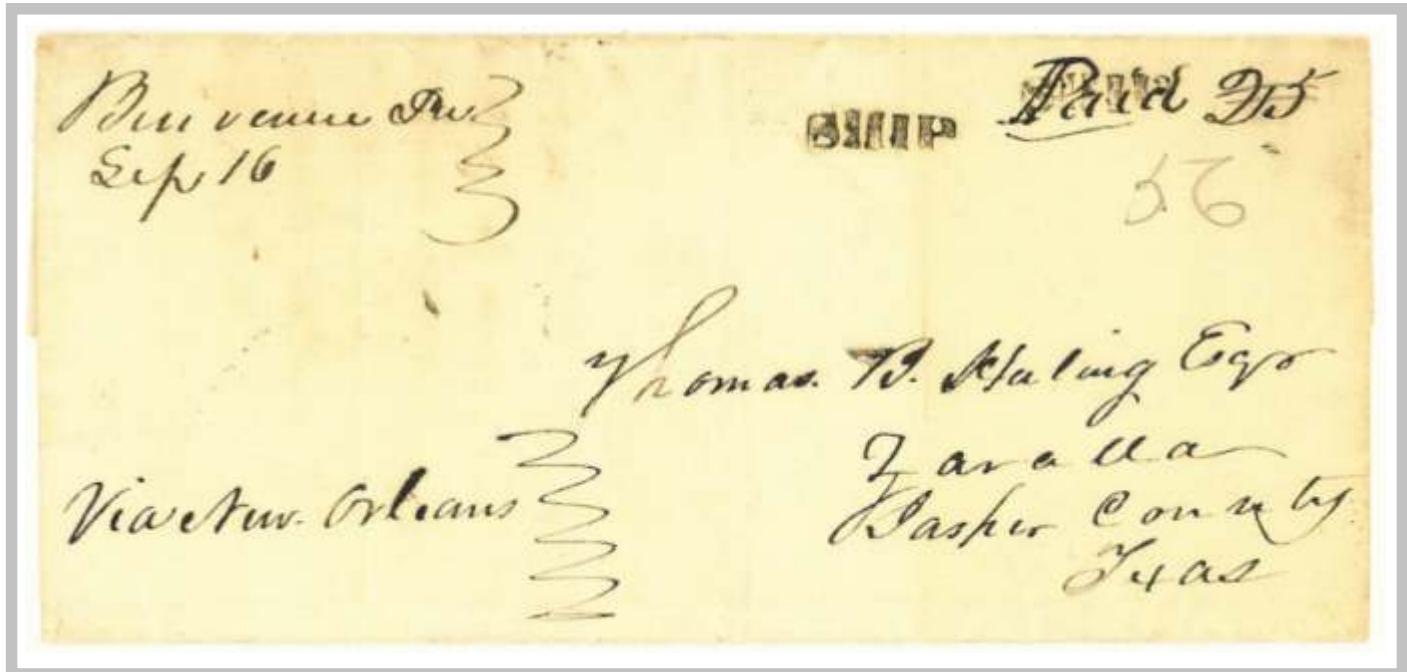


1790 - 8 escudos minted in  
Popayan, Colombia



1793 - 8 escudos minted in  
Popayan, Colombia

*Gold doubloons of Colombia, a Spanish Dominion, were legal tender in the United States and circulated at the value of \$16.25 each after the gold standard change of 1834. The 1790 example bears a portrait of Charles III, who had died in 1788, but here identified as Carol IV, while the 1793 example bears a portrait of Carlos IV identified as Carol III.*



16 September 1841 Benvenue, Pennsylvania to Zavalla, Texas Republic, paid 25¢ to New Orleans and forwarded by ship to Galveston with Texas ship rate of 6¼¢ plus 50¢ rate to Zavalla, 56¼¢ total due

*The postal service of the Republic of Texas, in operation from December 7, 1835 until December 29, 1845, employed postal rates based on the Spanish coin fractions. A forwarding agent resident at New Orleans forwarded mails to and from the United States. The cover above bears a Wm. Bryan, Agent of the Texian P.O., New Orleans oval backstamp.*



\$1.00 Republic of Texas note

*The Republic of Texas \$1.00 notes were authorized by an Act of December 14, 1838 and were redeemable only for promissory notes. They circulated at less than face value except when used for Republic debts, such as postal charges.*

1844 - 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ c Independent Mail Company Rate

Empire of Iturbide Half Real



15 May 1844 New York City To Boston by Hale & Co.'s Independent Mail  
6 $\frac{1}{4}$ c due rate handstamp applied at New York office

*Handstamp reflects the 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ c published rate for mail between New York and Boston. Hale's New York City office used this handstamp as a collect marking. It is known used March 5, 1844 to June 14, 1844.*



1823 one half real coin minted in Mexico City

*The Empire of Agustín Iturbide lasted a mere nine months immediately proceeding the establishment of the Republic of Mexico on March 19, 1823. This one half real coin, from the Empire of Iturbide, was equivalent to 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ c.*

1844 - 3¢ New York City Carrier

Central America Cuartilla



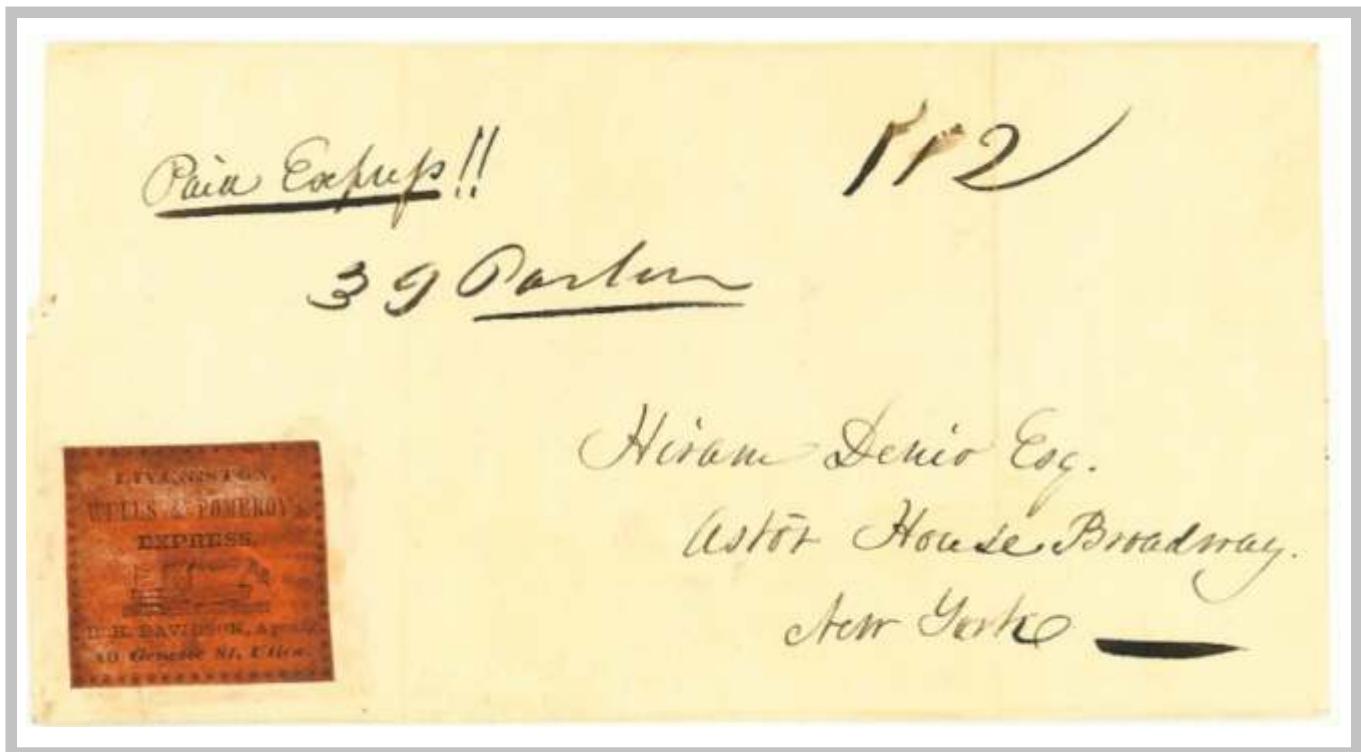
13 July 1844 New York City local usage with street delivery  
prepaid with 3¢ United States City Despatch Post carrier stamp of New York City

*In August 1842 Greig's City Despatch Post, a private local post in New York City, was sold to the Post Office Department and Greig was appointed as an official carrier. The three cent stamp covered carrier fee and local postage.*



1837 quarter real coin (cuartilla) minted in Guatemala

*The Central American Republic, which was confederacy of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, declared independence from Spain in 1821 and existed for fifteen years. Cuartillas, only 11.6mm in diameter, were the smallest silver coins that circulated in the United States. Value was 3¢.*



15 May 1845 Utica, New York to New York by Livingston, Wells & Pomeroy's Express  
\$1.12 express fee prepaid, with steamer illustrated label, addressed to Hiram Denio

*Livingston, Wells & Pomeroy was a private Express company that carried letters that related to shipments, such as this. Their service utilized the railway from Utica to Albany and then to New York City by steamboat.*



1749 gold trade ducat minted in Holland

*Gold trade ducats circulated widely in the Dutch settlements of New York, such as the Mohawk Valley where Utica is located, until the 1850's. The value in 1845 was \$2.20 and change would have been received on above letter. The addressee, a Circuit Judge, was instrumental in preserving the manorial land rights of the Van Rensselaer family.*

1845 - Postmaster Provisional

United States Half Dime



10 August 1845 New York City to Hartford, Connecticut  
5¢ postal rate paid with New York City provisional adhesive issue

*The domestic postal rate was reduced to five cents for distances to 300 miles effective July 1, 1845. Adhesives stamps were issued provisionally by the postmasters of a few larger offices to aid prepayment of postage.*



1834 five cent coin minted in Philadelphia

*The "capped bust" series of half dime coins were introduced in 1829 and continued to be minted until 1837. The circulating supply was never adequate to meet the demand but they augmented the circulating foreign coins.*



20 August 1847 Syracuse, New York City to Albany, New York  
5¢ dark brown 1847 issue adhesive used to prepay the postage

*The March 3, 1845 Act of Congress, effective July 1, 1845, reduced the postal rate for a single letter sent up to 300 miles to five cents. The first 5¢ stamp was issued in July 1847 for prepayment of this postal rate.*



1847 half dime minted in Philadelphia

*The Christian Gobrecht design, Liberty seated, half dime coin was introduced in 1837 and remained in use with only minor modifications until February 21, 1853 when silver content value was reduced.*



26 June 1851 Saint Louis, Missouri to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
10¢ black 1847 issue adhesive used to prepay the postage

*The March 3, 1845 Act of Congress, effective July 1, 1845, set the postal rate for a single letter sent over 300 miles at ten cents. The first 10¢ stamp was issued in July 1847 for prepayment of 10¢ postal rates.*



1847 dime minted in Philadelphia

*The Liberty seated dime, designed by Christian Gobrecht, was introduced in 1837 and remained in use with only minor modifications until February 21, 1853 when silver content value was reduced.*

*1847 - 12½¢ Steamship Rate*

*Mexico One Real*



6 February 1851 Matanzas, Cuba, via Charleston, South Carolina to Portland, Maine

11 February entered mails at Charleston from steamer *Isabel*, 12½¢ due

*A contract steamship route between Charleston and Havana was instituted in 1847. The 12½ cent rate was in effect from July 1, 1847 until July 1, 1851.*



1828 one real coin minted in Zacatecas, Mexico

*The Mexico one real coins circulated extensively in the United States at a value of 12.5 cents.*

1849 - 12½¢ Intra-California Rate

Mexican Revolutionary Coin



27 June 1851 San Francisco, California to Benicia, California  
12½¢ due rate handstamp

Handstamp reflects the 12½ cent rate for mail between places in California that was in effect from 1848 until June 30, 1851. However, the San Francisco post office did not start operating until March 15, 1849.



ca. 1816 one real Spanish Colonial coin counter stamped by insurgents

This one real coin was counter marked by insurgent General Guerrero in the south of Mexico between 1816 and 1821 during the Mexican Revolution. The base coin was a Colonial one real portrait coin.

1849 - 40¢ California Rate + Express Fee

France 5 Franc + Spanish Colonial Gold



11 January 1851 New York City to San Francisco, California, unpaid 40¢ rate  
by Reynold's Express from the post office to the Southern Mines collect \$2 handstamp

*Mail service to San Francisco commenced in 1849 and the rate for letters from the East was 40¢. At San Francisco this letter was picked up by Reynold's Express and taken to the addressee at the mines. The \$2 charge included the 40¢ postage due that Reynold's had paid when they picked up the letter.*



1840 France five francs coin



1814 half escudo gold minted in Mexico City

*The actual value of each of these coins was 93¢. However, both circulated widely in California at the rate of \$1 each. The 1847 Donner Party to California carried large numbers of French 5 franc pieces as excavation at the site has shown.*

1849 - 40¢ California Rate + Forwarding

United States Half Dollar



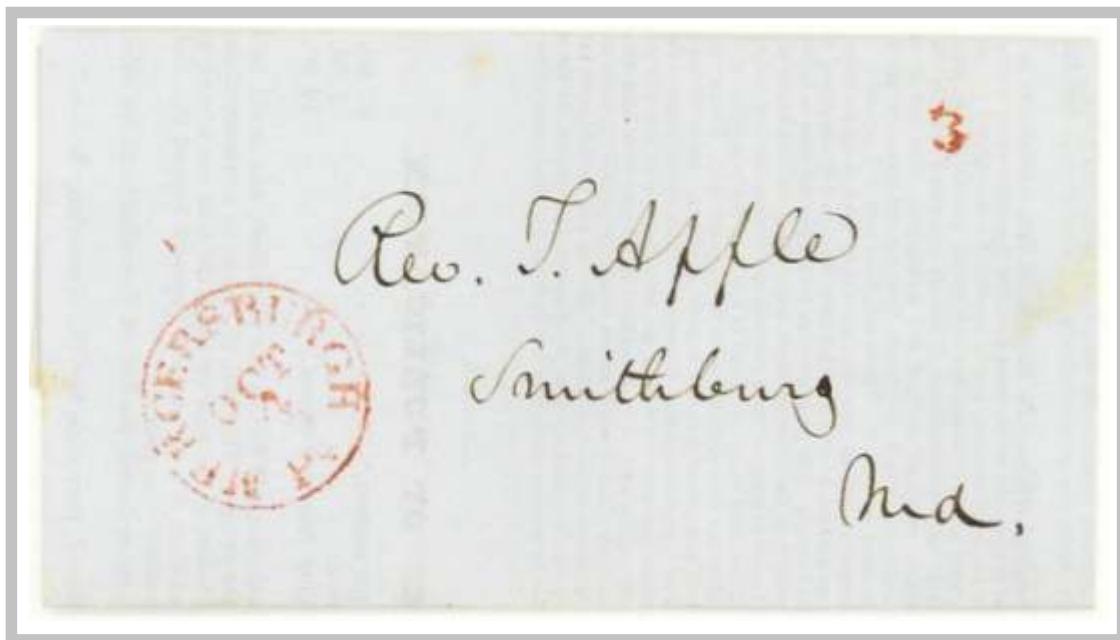
1 November 1849 San Francisco, California to Newport, Rhode Island and forwarded to Florida  
40 due handstamp for California rate plus 10¢ forwarding at Newport, total due 50¢

*The August 14, 1848 Act of Congress stipulated a 40¢ postal rate for letters from any place on the Pacific Coast to any place within the territory of the United States. California didn't become a state until 1850.*



1848 half dollar coin minted in New Orleans

*The Christian Gobrecht design, Liberty seated, one-half dollar coin was introduced in 1839 and remained in use with only minor modifications until February 21, 1853 when silver content value was reduced..*



4 October 1850 Mercersburgh, Pennsylvania printed circular to Smithburg, Maryland  
a printed prospectus sent collect for 3¢ due

*In 1847 the postal rate for a single sheet printed circular, such as the above, was three cents. This rate was reduced to one cent after July 1, 1851 for distances under 500 miles.*

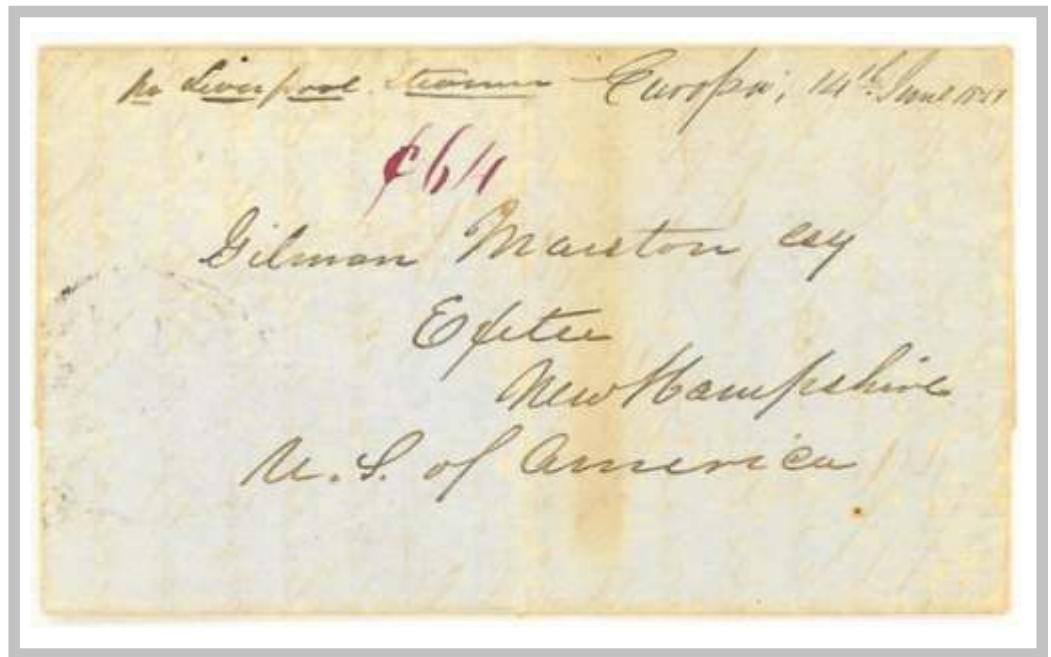


1843 cuartilla, minted in Mexico City

*Cuartillas, one fourth of a real coins, were the smallest silver coins that circulated in the United States. Value was 3¢.*

1851 - Harnden's 64¢ Rate from Italy

Hannover Thaler



31 May 1851 from *USS Mississippi* at Leghorn, Italy by Harnden & Company to Exeter, New Hampshire  
Harnden's Liverpool backstamp showing charges of 2sh 3d. (54¢), red "64¢" due including 10¢ US

*Harnden & Co. provided trans-Atlantic mail services, via their offices in Boston and Liverpool, in competition with the government subsidized packet services. Cunard Line packets were utilized.*



1835 Hannover one thaler, illustration from coin value guidebook

*Although German silver coins were considered to be promiscuous, and not legal tender, they did circulate in German speaking areas of the country before 1857. An 1846 guidebook illustrated this 1835 one thaler coin. The English word "dollar" is derived from the German word "thaler."*

1851 - 3¢ Domestic Rate

United States Trime



28 July 1851 Lowell to Roxbury, Massachusetts  
3¢ orange brown adhesive and 3 cts Paid rate datestamp, first month of usage

*The March 3, 1851 Act of Congress reduced the postal rate for a single letter sent up to 3,000 miles to three cents.  
The 3¢ stamp was issued on July 1, 1851 for prepayment of this postal rate.*



1851 three cent "trime" minted in Philadelphia

*This same act of March 3, 1851 also authorized the first issuance of a three cent coin. This is the first instance of a coin being issued directly to aid in the payment of a postal rate in the United States.*



proof impression in orange brown on glazed card  
design of 1851 three cent coin, type I

*The above proof impression is accompanied by an original signed letter, dated August 17, 1857, of George F. Nesbitt who held the contract to supply imprinted postal stationery to the Post Office Department from 1853 until 1870. A new stationery design was evidently contemplated. The letter to Third Assistant Postmaster General reads in part: "I called at the United States Mint yesterday ... Mr. Longfield (sic. - James Barton Longacre) informed me that there was no Head of Washington at the Mint that he thought suitable for the purpose .... Mr. Longfield recommended the enclosed as a suitable mark for the three cent envelopes."*



enlargement of design - the first coin denomination minted specifically to pay a postal rate

*There is one other example of this essay that is owned by the Library Company of Philadelphia. It is accompanied by a March 24, 1851 letter from Longacre to the Secretary of the Treasury which says, in part: "It is the first impression I have taken from the dies I have been preparing for the three cent piece ordered by congress."*

*1851 - 1¢ Drop Rate*

*United States Large Cent*



11 June 1852 Madison, Wisconsin local usage  
1¢ rate prepaid with 1¢ blue 1851 issue, type II

*The postal rate for letters for local delivery (drop letters) was reduced from the 1845 rate of two cents to one cent effective July 1, 1851. An adhesive stamp with Franklin's portrait was issued simultaneously for payment of this rate.*

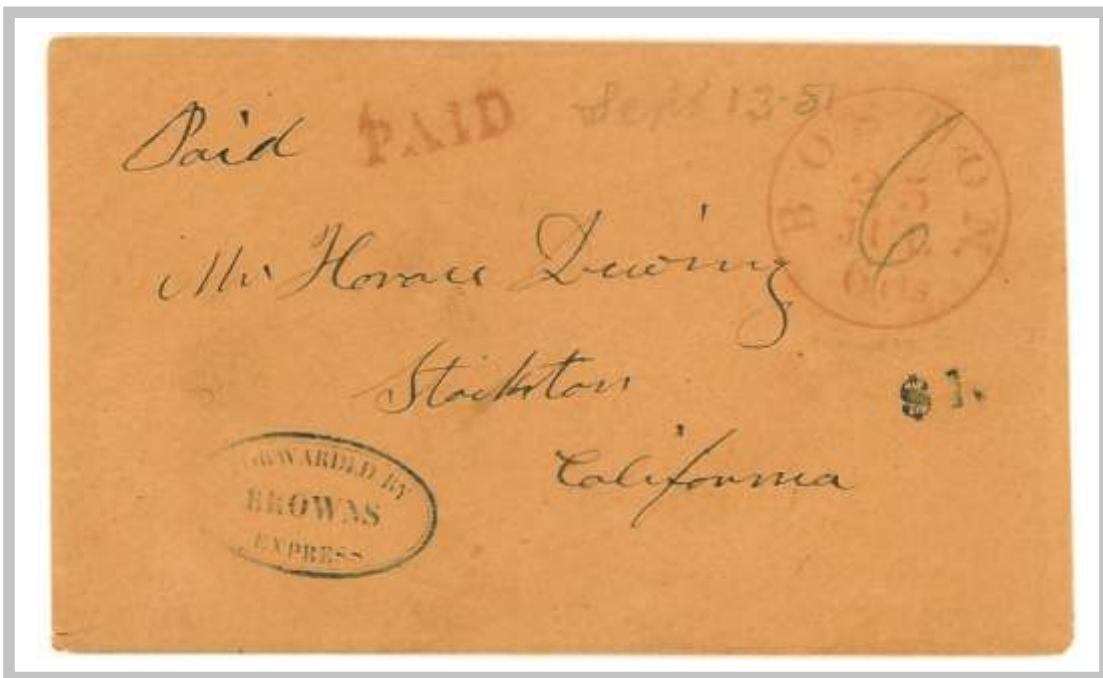


1851 one cent coin minted in Philadelphia

*The Gobrecht designed braided hair coronet large cents were introduced in 1839 and remained in production until large cents were discontinued in 1857. Large cents were not legal tender when coined.*

*1851 - 6¢ California Rate + \$1 Express Delivery*

*Mexico Half Real + Gold Dust*



25 July 1851 Boston to Stockton, California, 6¢ rate prepaid in Boston by Brown's Express from the Stockton post office to the "diggins," collect \$1 handstamp

*Effective July 1, 1851, the prepaid rate for distances over 3,000 miles was reduced from 40¢ to 6¢ . William Brown operated his private express from Stockton to the nearby mining regions until 1853 charging \$1 for his service.*



1841 Mexico half real



pinch of gold dust (1.67g)

*The Mexican ½r coin was equivalent to 6¼¢ . Due to extreme shortage of coins in California in 1851, gold dust was the standard of commerce. One pinch of gold dust (roughly 1.67 grams) was equivalent to \$1.*

1852 - 25¢ Inbound Rate From Germany

United States Quarter



25 February 1852 Hamburg, Germany to New York by Bremen mails

25 due rate handstamp applied at New York

*Handstamp reflects the 25 cents rate for Bremen mails from Hamburg that was in effect from August 1851 until August 1853. The rate included 5¢ postage for carriage from Hamburg to Bremen.*



1852 one quarter coin minted in Philadelphia

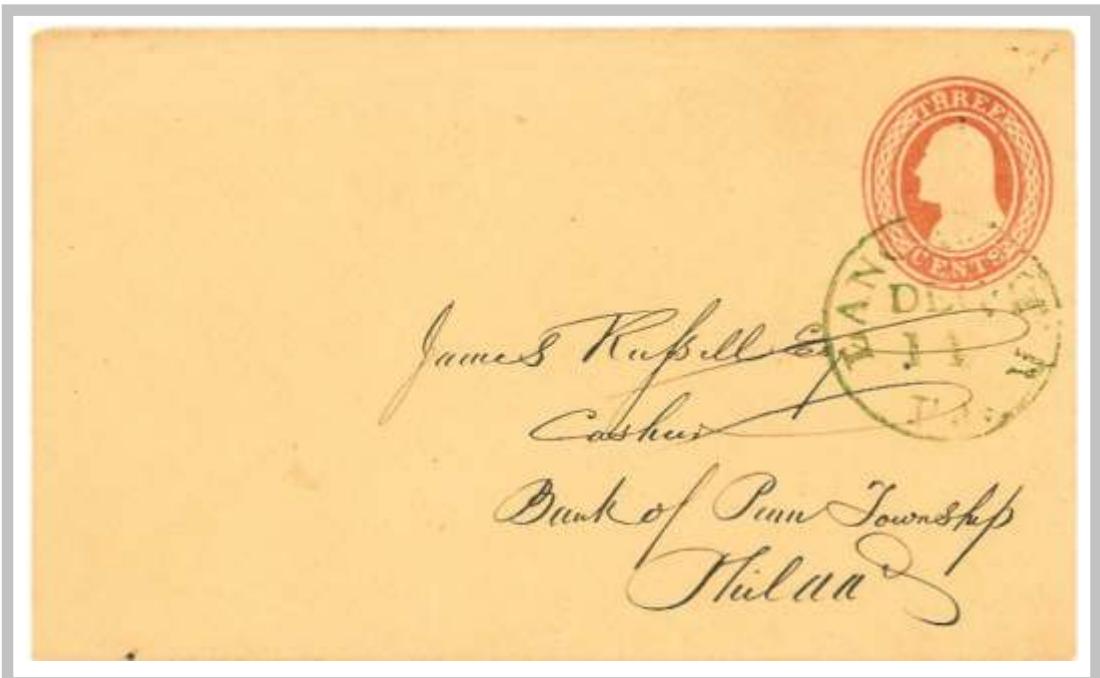
*The silver content of the quarter of 1852 was full face value and equal to one quarter of a dollar. From February 21, 1853 all silver pieces below one dollar contained silver value less than their face value.*

A LIST OF PRICES, STAMPED ENVELOPES.							
\$3.16.	\$3.18.	\$10.18.	\$10.24.				
No. 1,	No. 2,	No. 2,	No. 3,				
On Note Size	On Letter Size	On Letter Size	On Official Size				
35	29	85	89	25	23	25	1.34
33	28	88	90	26	24	26	1.34
70	57	21	22	75	74	75	4.00
490	38	190	190	18.15	18.00	18.15	9.45

price list of postal entires



Nesbitt seal on reverse



11 December 1853 Lancaster, Pennsylvania to Philadelphia, green postmark  
3¢ postal entire with seal of the manufacturer, George F. Nesbitt, on reverse

*The three cent envelopes issued in 1853 were the first postal stationery of the United States. These were manufactured by George Nesbitt & Co. and he placed his embossed seal on the reverse until ordered to discontinue the practice on July 7, 1853. These were intended to be purchased in bulk by business users at a slight advance over the imprint stamp value. A quantity of 75 of these would have cost purchaser \$2.39.*



1846 gold half sovereign (half pound) minted in the British Empire

*The British gold half sovereign coins circulated as legal tender in the United States until 1857. The value in commerce varied with the value of the gold content but was approximately \$2.40 in 1853.*



1 September 1854 New York City local post service by Swarts Dispatch  
Swarts 1¢ stamp prepaid for the delivery of this letter to a street address

*Aaron Swarts operated his privately owned local post from 1847 until 1856 serving the Chatham Square area of New York City. He provided collection boxes for mail, including mail to the post office, as well as a mail delivery service.*

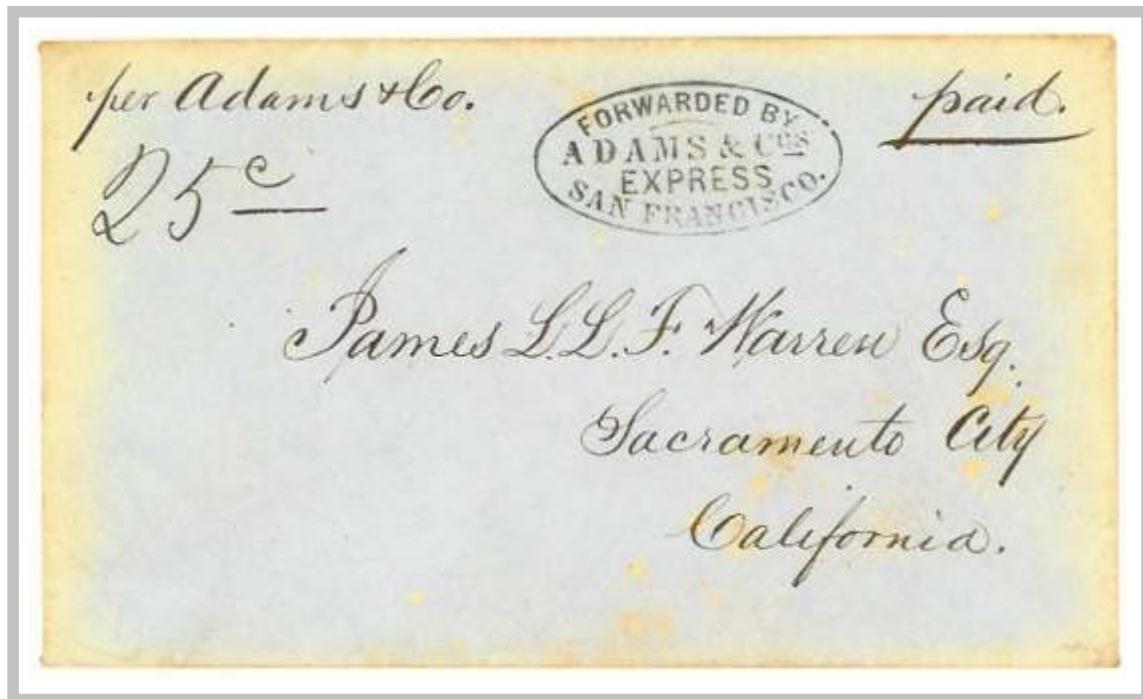


1853 West's Trained Dogs token, New York City

*Merchant tokens, such as this example produced by H.B. West, served as a circulating medium of exchange during periods when normal coinage was scarce. This example commemorates the New York Crystal Palace of 1853.*

1854 - 25¢ Adams Express Rate

Adams Poker Chip



circa 1854 San Francisco to Sacramento City, California by Adam's Express  
manuscript 25¢ rate prepaid

*Adams & Cos Express was one of the larger Express companies carrying mail and gold in California before being forced to close in February 1855 after a banking collapse.*



1854 twenty five cent “Poker Chip” currency on pink glazed card

*In October 1854 Adams Express issued 25¢ “stamps” that were primarily intended to be used as cash to send money by Express and as a substitute for money. They were redeemable at all Adams offices in the West.*

To Paid by a 3 cent-piece  
deposited herewith



9 October 1854 East Winstead, Connecticut to North Amherst, Massachusetts  
manuscript "Paid by a 3 cent piece deposited herewith" endorsement at left

*Post offices in smaller towns had mail collection boxes for deposit of mail when the office was closed. The above cover was deposited along with a trime coin in such a box. The "Paid 3" indicates the postmaster found the coin.*



1854 three cent coin, type II, minted in Philadelphia

*The trime design was modified in 1854 with three outlines to the star to improve minting characteristics. The star design was changed again to two outlines in 1859 (type III).*

1855 - 10¢ California Rate

United States Dime With Arrows



1 April 1856 Auburn, New York to the U. S. Mint at San Francisco, California  
10¢ green, type II 1855 issue adhesive used to prepay the postage

*The March 3, 1855 Act of Congress, effective April 1, 1855, set the postal rate for a single letter sent over 3,000 miles at ten cents. The 10¢ stamp was issued in May 1855 for prepayment of this postal rate.*



1853 dime minted in Philadelphia

*When the silver content value was reduced by an Act of February 21, 1853 it became necessary to distinguish the new lighter standard dimes from the old-tenor dimes. To this end, arrows were added at the sides of the date.*



10 May 1857 New Orleans to Paris, France, prepaid 15c treaty rate

10¢ 1855 issue, type III, and 5¢ 1856 issue adhesives

*The first mail treaty between the United States and France became effective on April 1, 1857. A fifteen cents per one-half ounce rate was established. The cover above was carried by a British packet and twelve cents of the postage was paid to Great Britain for the service provided.*

Sec. 252. Postmasters may receive for postage the small Spanish and Mexican silver coins at the following rates, viz: The fourth of a dollar, or piece of two reals, at twenty cents; the eighth of a dollar, or piece of one real, at ten cents; and the sixteenth of a dollar, or piece of half a real, at five cents. But they are not allowed to pay out such coin except to the United States depositaries.

Section 252. The 1857 Postmaster General Regulations



1838 over "7" dated one-half and one real coins minted in Guanajuato, Mexico

*An Act of February 21, 1857 demonetized foreign coins. However, as described in Section 252 of the Regulations, postmasters will be allowed to receive Spanish and Mexican coins at the discounted rate of ten cents for a one real coin, and five cents for a half real coin. These coins could also be redeemed for pennies at full value.*

1858 - 24¢ Rate to Scotland

Mexico Two Reales



23 June 1858 Red River Settlement, Manitoba, Canada carried privately by Hudson Bay Company to Saint Paul, Minnesota, 24¢ rate to United Kingdom prepaid in cash

*Although the postal regulations required prepayment by stamps at the time the above letter was mailed, stamps were frequently unavailable. Minnesota had become a state in May 1858 but territorial designation in postmark continued.*



1838 two reales coin minted in Guanajuato, Mexico

*Although the Mexican coins had lost their legal tender status in 1857, they continued to circulate in more remote areas such as the upper Midwest at only a fractional discount from their previous value of twenty five cents.*

1860 - 2¢ Foreign Circular Rate

Flying Eagle + Indian Head Cents



23 January 1860 New Orleans, Louisiana printed circular to Genoa, Italy  
pair 1¢ perforated 1857 issue adhesives paying circular rate

*The two cent printed matter rate went into effect in 1851 and covered only the United States and British carriage. France charged Sardinia 2 decimes transit and Sardinia collected 32 centes on arrival.*



1857 Flying Eagle and 1860 Indian Head pennies, Philadelphia mint

*An Act of February 21, 1857 provided for the coinage of the first small cent to be composed of 88% copper and 12% nickel. The design was soon changed and in 1860 a shield was added to the reverse.*



13 October 1860 New York City to Lyon, France

30¢ pair 1860 issue adhesives paying quadruple rate

*The fifteen cent rate to France went into effect in 1857. The thirty cent stamps were issued in August, 1860 and saw limited usage until demonetized starting in August, 1861 when they were replaced with 1861 design.*



1853 half dollar  
minted in Philadelphia



1860 dime  
minted in Philadelphia



*The half dollar of 1853 bears arrows at the sides of date to distinguish the new lighter standard coins from the old-tenor halves. The 1860 dime was the first year that the country legend appeared on the obverse.*

1860 - \$2.50 Pony Express Rate

United States Gold Quarter Eagle



New York City to Sacramento, California, pencil "\$2.50" indicating pony express fee prepaid  
1 November 1860 carried by Pony Express from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento

*The Pony Express began operations in April 1860 under the control of Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express Company whose oval datestamp, as well as their "California Pony Express Paid" handstamp appear on cover above. The famous pony express captured the imagination of the country before being obsoleted by the completion of the telegraph in 1861.*



1853 Quarter Eagle minted in Philadelphia

*The United States coronet type gold quarter eagle (\$2.50) coin was minted between 1834 and 1907 with only minor design changes.*

*1860 - 3¢ Stamps by the Sheet*

*United States Gold Three Dollar*



mint block of three cent stamps  
sheet was 100 stamps



5 April 1861 Confederate patriotic envelope used in U.S. mails  
Memphis, Tennessee to Helena, Arkansas, 3¢ 1857 issue stamp

*Three cent stamps paid the normal domestic postal rate and were often purchased in sheets of one hundred stamps. The cover was sent from Tennessee before it joined the Confederacy in June 1861 and is addressed to Arkansas before it joined in May. The Confederate postal system did not begin until June 1, 1861.*



1854 three dollar gold coin minted in Philadelphia

*The three dollar gold coin was authorized in 1853 and first minted in 1854. There was little need for the denomination other than for the purchase of sheets of the three cent stamp.*

1861 - \$1.00 Pony Express Rate

United States Gold Dollar



\$1 Pony Express adhesive used from San Francisco, California to New York City  
7 August 1861 carried by Pony Express to St. Joseph, Missouri and thence by rail to New York

*Effective July 1, 1861, the Pony Express rate was lowered to \$1 per halfounce. Service was mandated by the Post Office Department and continue until the October 1861 completion of the telegraph lines.*



1860 gold dollar minted in San Francisco

*The United States Indian "large head" type gold dollar was minted between 1856 and 1889.*



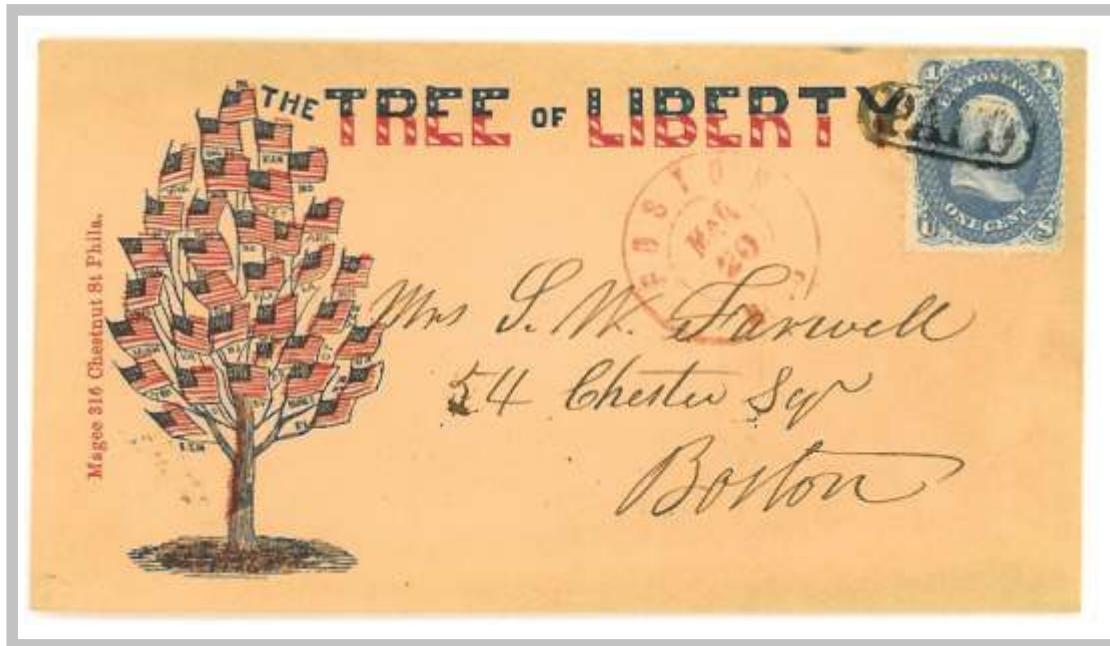
12 July 1861 Pontiac to Detroit, Michigan by American Express  
their "Money Package" illustrated label and pencil "Ex 2/-" (Express 2 bits) endorsement

*Private companies were allowed to carry money outside of the mails. During the Civil War, the express rates were usually expressed in shilling notation but referring to as bits, a carry-over from the previous decade when Spanish coins were still legal tender. One bit was equal to 25¢.*



1853 quarter, minted in Philadelphia

*The quarter design was modified in 1853 when it became necessary to distinguish the new lighter standard quarters from the old-tenor quaters. To this end, arrows were added at the sides of the date.*



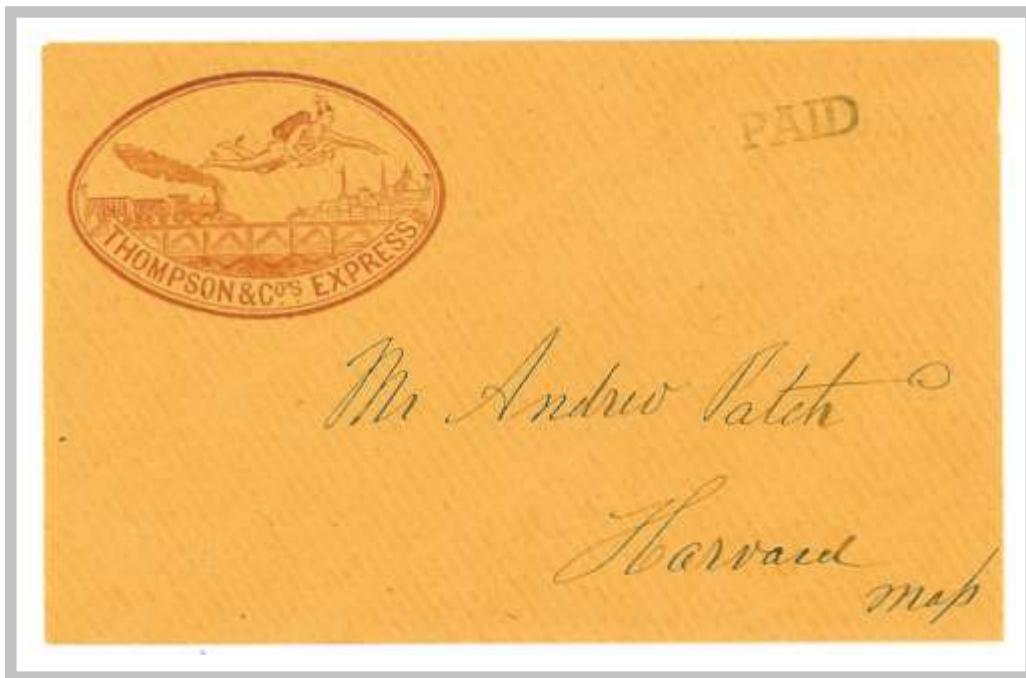
10 March 1862 local use at Boston prepaid with 1¢ 1861 issue stamp  
carrier delivery to street address, "Tree of Liberty" patriotic cover printed by Magee

*The one cent rate applied to covers deposited into a post office by sender for local delivery. This rate included carrier delivery to a street address where available. Rate was increased to two cents in July 1863.*



"The Federal Union - It Must And Shall Be Preserved" / "Army And Navy" manufacturer unknown

*The Civil War brought a shortage of copper as well as silver coinage. Tokens were produced by several manufacturers in response. This patriotic example is inscribed with an Andrew Jackson quote from 1830.*



circa 1862 Thompson's Express illustrated cover from Springfield to Harvard, Massachusetts  
handstamped "Paid" indicating charges were prepaid

*Thompson's Express operated primarily between the Boston area and Albany, New York via Springfield, Massachusetts which was one of their principal offices. They carried a small amount of letter mail, usually letters that accompanied goods being transported. Charges for bills sent between their offices were generally around 10¢.*



Thompson's Express 10¢ scrip dated October 1, 1862, signed by Thompson

*This 10¢ paper scrip, with imprinted design that matches the envelope, was used in 1862 during the severe shortage of small coins. This example is also signed by E.H. Hubbard, the express agent in Springfield.*

1862 - Inbound Postage Due Cover

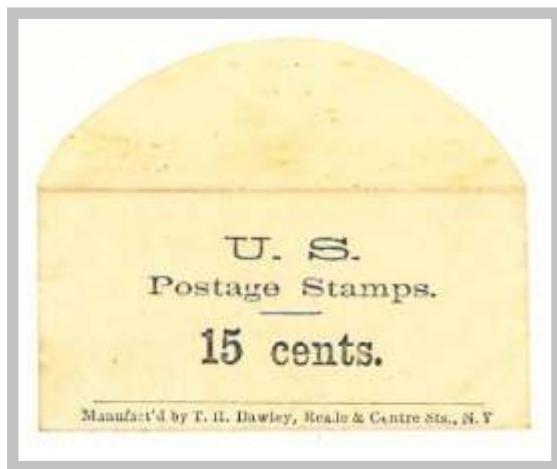
Postage Stamp Envelope



15 October 1862 Paris, France to New York City

15¢ due rate handstamp applied at New York

*New York exchange datestamp includes the 15¢ postage due for an unpaid single rate letter from France.*

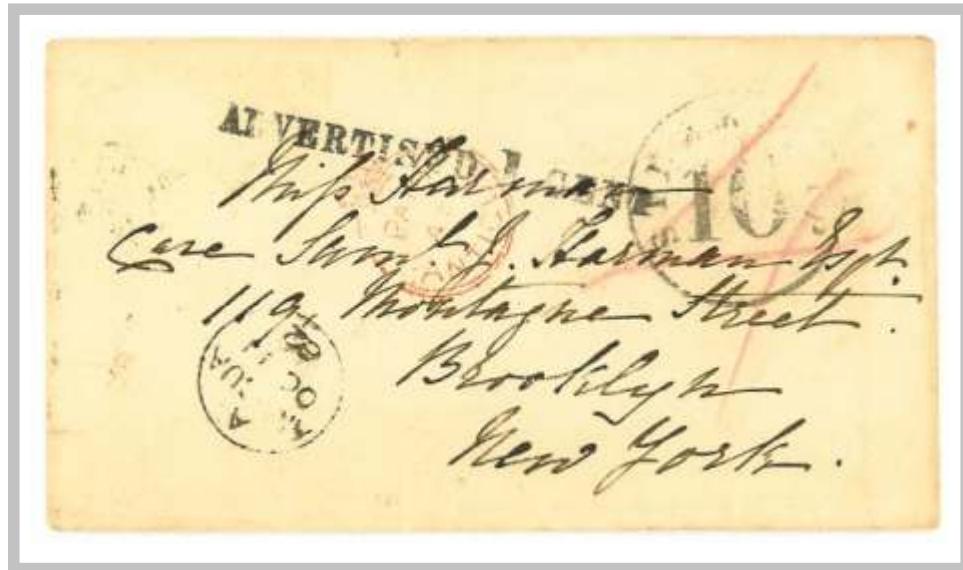


1862 Dawley's envelope for 15¢ in postage



1861 Issue 12¢ and 3¢ unused stamps

*In the summer of 1862 the shortage of coins resulted in postage stamps being declared legal tender. Manufacturers such as T. R. Dawley of New York City produced small envelopes to house the postage stamps. Redemption of postage stamps began in December, 1862 and by the time redemption was terminated on January 20, 1863 a total of over \$205,000 had been redeemed by the New York City Post Office.*



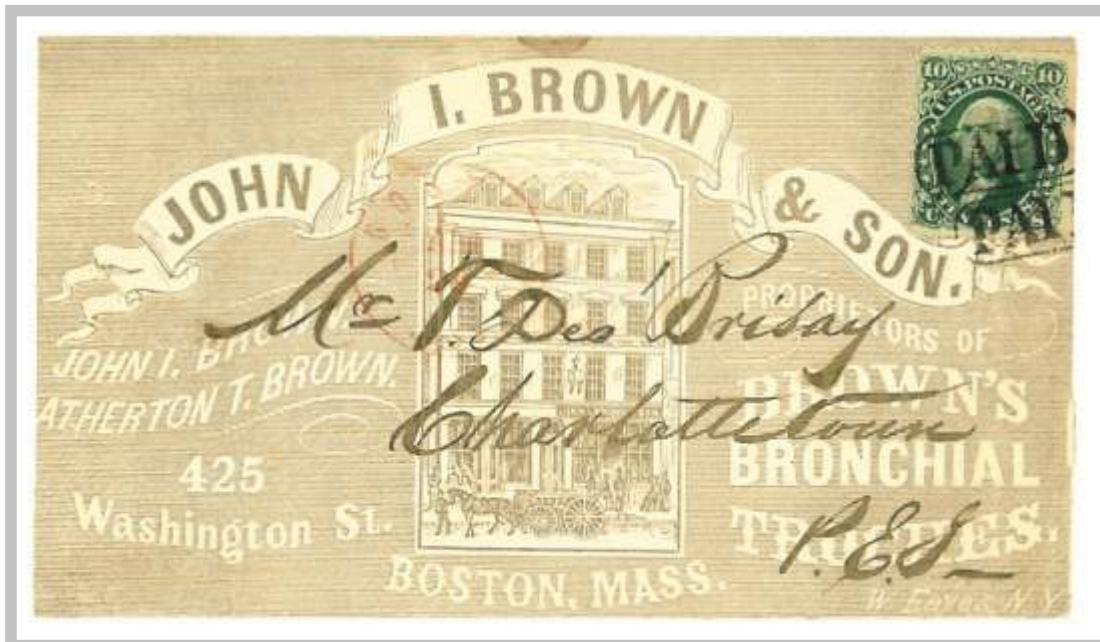
11 October 1862 Antigua to Brooklyn, New York  
10¢ steamship due rate handstamp applied at New York plus 1¢ advertising fee

*This cover was prepaid 4d. in Antigua and was routed via St. Thomas and thence by non contract steamer to New York City. The advertising fee of 1¢ was added because the letter was unclaimed initially at Brooklyn office.*



1862 Burnett's 1¢ and 10¢ encased postage

*In 1862 John Gault patented the idea of encasing postage stamps in metal frames to use as small change. Merchants purchased and advertised on the reverse. Both of these are for "Burnett's Cooking Extracts."*



19 April 1863 Boston to Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island  
10¢ 1861 issue stamp, cover advertising for Brown's Bronchial Troches

*The postal rate to Prince Edward Island, a British Colony that joined the Canadian Confederation in 1873, was ten cents. The sender of this cover later issued their own private die proprietary revenue stamps for their bronchial troches.*



1862 Ten Cents Fractional

*The First Issue of fractional currency was released on August 21, 1862 and continued in use until May 27, 1863. The designs incorporated current stamp designs which they intended to replace as currency.*

Some private merchants issued scrip that mimicked the fractional currency. The example at right was produced by Jameson & Richardson's Restaurant in Boston.





1 December 1863 New York City to West Arran, Canada  
10¢ rate prepaid with pairs of 2¢ 1863 issue and 3¢ 1861 issue

*This cover was prepaid using stamps that the sender had probably purchased in quantity before posting. The two different stamps were those in primary use at the time (3¢ for domestic rate and 2¢ for local rate).*



1863 Issue 10¢ fractional currency

*The Second Issue of fractional currency was released on October 10, 1863 and continued in use until 1867. Printing was by the Treasury Department. Text on front reads "Receivable for all United States Stamps."*

1863 - 2¢ Local Letter Rate

United States 2¢ Coin



10 October 1864 Sandusky, Ohio drop rate cover for local delivery prepaid with 2¢ Jackson stamp cover from a Confederate Prisoner of War being held at Johnson's Island, censored by Pvt. Frank W. Rittman

*The Act of March 3, 1863 established a uniform 2¢ rate for local letters. Additional carrier fees for letters delivered by carriers, or received by carriers, were eliminated. The 2¢ stamp featuring Andrew Jackson was issued in July 1863 to be used to prepay this new rate.*



1864 two cent coin minted in Philadelphia, large motto

*The April 22, 1864 Act included a provision for the first two cent coins to be minted. The timing suggests that the issuance was directly related to needs arising from the new two cent drop rate. The coin was minted in the same alloy of copper, tin and zinc as the cents. The "In God We Trust" motto was first introduced on this coin.*

1864 - \$1.00 Depreciated Currency

\$1.00 Legal Tender Note



December 1863 Egypt, via England and Boston, to Long Meadow, Massachusetts, double 33¢ rate

3 February, 1864 Boston arrival and rated 66¢ if paid in silver coin or \$1.00 in U.S. Notes

*Effective May 1, 1863 all postage due mail arriving from abroad could be paid either in coin at the regular rate or in depreciated paper currency at a rate that fluctuated with the actual value of currency against silver.*



\$1.00 Legal Tender, first series, August 1, 1862

*The first national currency was authorized by the Legal Tender Acts of 1862. The issuance of "green backs" was in response to the lack of circulating coins and the need to finance the Civil War. These notes were not redeemable in coin.*

1862 - North to South Flag of Truce Mail

United States Dime



February 1862 Hamilton, New York through the lines to Confederate Robertville, South Carolina, "10cts enclosed"  
20 February 1862 Norfolk, Virginia entered CSA postal system, 10¢ coin removed and marked "Paid 5c"

*Civilian mail between the United States and the Confederate States was handled via a flag of truce boat that operated between Old Point Comfort (US) and Norfolk (CSA) between September 1861 and April 1862. The above cover is from the Mott-Bostick correspondence. See following page for a cover sent in the opposite direction.*



1825 dime minted in Philadelphia

*With the dearth of silver coins in 1862, the sender may have had to dip into a old hoard to find a dime. The "capped bust" style was coined between 1809 and 1837 and contained more silver than later dimes.*

1864 - South to North Flag of Truce Mail

United States Trime



26 August 1864 Greenwood, South Carolina through the lines to Hamilton, New York, trime attached by wafer  
10 September 1864 Old Point Comfort, Virginia entered US postal system, trime replaced by stamp

*Civilian mail between the United States and the Confederate States was handled via a flag of truce boat that operated between Old Point Comfort (US) and Richmond (CSA) between March 1862 and end of the war. The above cover is from the Mott-Bostick correspondence. See the previous page for a cover sent in the opposite direction.*

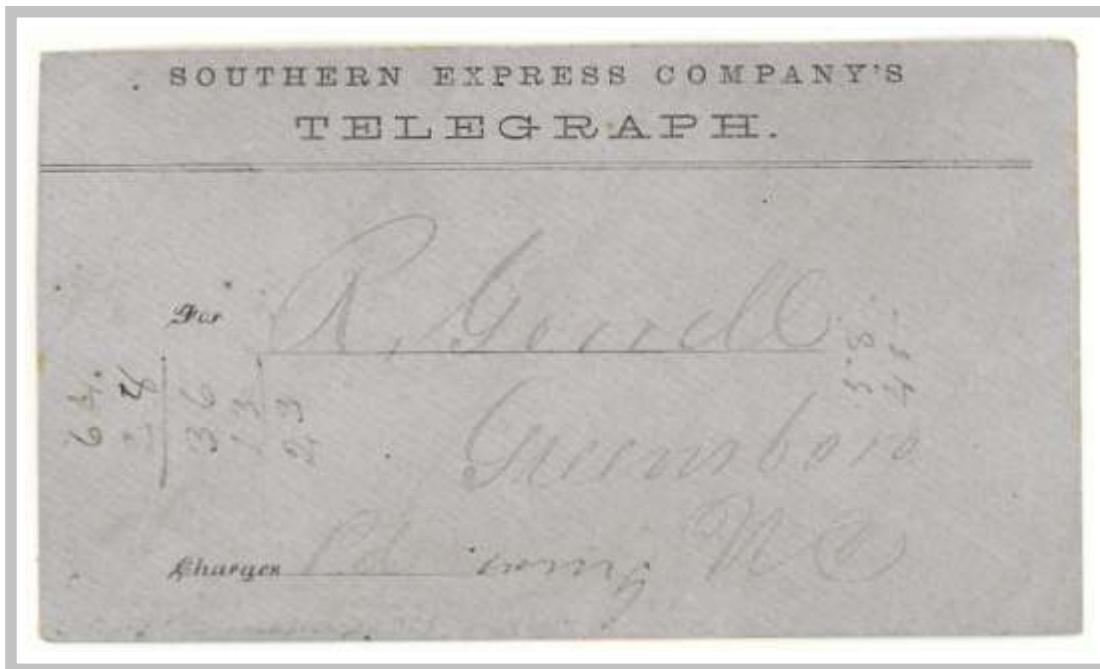


1861 three cent coin, type III, minted in Philadelphia

*The type I trime design of 1851 had been modified in 1854 with three outlines to the star and reverse ornaments. The type II design was changed again in 1859 when the star was changed to two outlines (type III).*

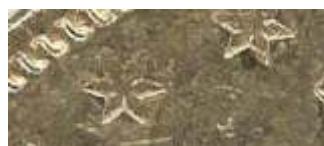
1861 - Southern Express Telegraph

Confederate Half Dollar



circa 1861 Southern Express Company's Telegraph cover to Greensboro, North Carolina  
telegraph message was delivered in envelope, this endorsed that telegraph charges had been prepaid

*The Adams Express was reorganized as the Southern Express Company at the onset of the war. The Southern Telegraph Company took over the American Telegraph Company's lines. The standard rate for messages conveyed by telegraph was probably 50¢ for the first ten words as it was in the North at the time.*



die crack



1861 half dollar minted in New Orleans, Louisiana

*The United States branch mint at New Orleans continued to manufacture half dollars after the secession of Louisiana. In April 1861 some 962,633 of these coins were delivered to the Confederacy. These coins can be distinguished from previous coins because of the presence of a die crack on the obverse. The mint was closed on April 30, 1861.*



31 August 1861 New Orleans, Louisiana to Acona, Mississippi  
New Orleans 2¢ Postmaster Riddell Provisional adhesive used to prepay circular rate

*The Confederate States postal rate for printed circulars to any distance was two cents. Prior to the release of the first Confederate stamps, postmaster Riddell issued provisional stamps including a two cents stamp.*



1¢ stamp money scrip

*Issued by postmaster Riddell in June, 1861. Hallmark stamped by Riddell and signed by Ed S. Rapier as clerk. Note "receivable in payment of postage" in inscription.*



merchant token of L.W. Lyons

*Lyons was a prominent New Orleans clothing merchant. Token was issued between 1858 and 1860.*



16 December 1861 Charleston to Bennettsville, South Carolina  
Confederate States 5¢ issue of 1861 used to prepay the postage

*The first stamp issued by the Confederate States was the five cent green adhesive portraying Jefferson Davis, issued in October 1861. It was issued to prepay the postal rate for a single letter sent under 500 miles.*



image of verso

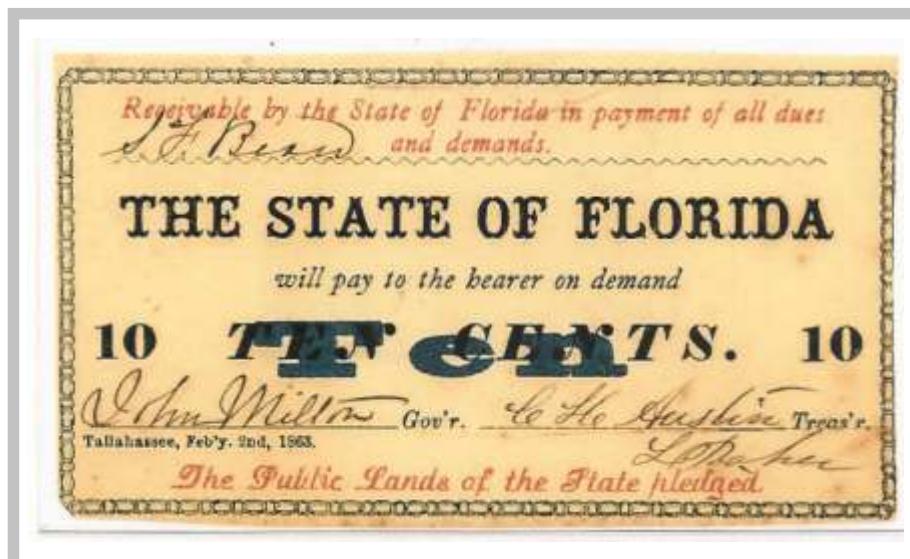
State Bank of South Carolina 5¢ demand note of July 1, 1861

*The shortage of small coins and paper in the Confederacy was acute from the start of the war. This note was printed on the reverse of an unissued \$1 bank note of The Commercial Bank at Macon, Georgia.*



10 September 1864 Tallahassee, Florida mourning cover to Raleigh, North Carolina  
Confederate States 10¢ issue of 1863 used to prepay the postage

*The Confederate States postal rate for single letters to any distance became ten cents effective on July 1, 1862 and continued until the end of the war. The stamp portrays President Jefferson Davis.*

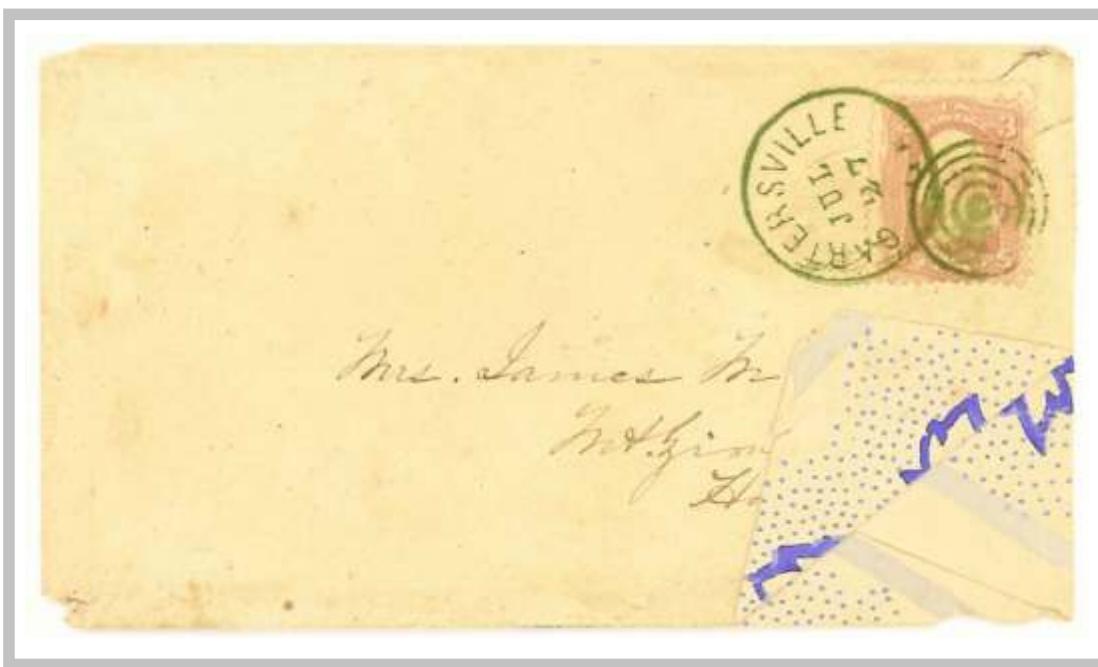


1863 State of Florida 10¢ demand note

*This note, dated at Tallahassee, Florida on February 2, 1863 is signed by Governor John Milton and Treasurers C.H. Austin and L. Baker. The public lands of the state are pledged to secure it.*

1865 - Re-opening of Southern Post Offices

United States Nickel Trime



27 July 1865 Cartersville, Georgia wallpaper cover to Mt. Zion, Georgia  
3¢ rate paid with 3c 1861 issue, bright green postmark

*The United States re-opened post offices in the occupied South as contractors to carry the mails could be found. Envelopes made of wallpaper were a hold-over from the severe paper shortages in Confederacy.*



1865 three cent coin minted in Philadelphia

*In 1865 three cent pieces were first minted using a nickel composition rather than silver as previously. The composition was 75% copper and 25% nickel. The designer was James B. Longacre.*

1866 - 6¢ Ship Rate from Japan

Third Issue Fractional Currency



20 April, 1865 Yokohama, Japan to US Mint Director Pollock's wife at Philadelphia

20 May 1865 San Francisco, California Due 6 ship rate

*This letter is from the sister of addressee who, along with her husband, James Curtis Hepburn, were doing Missionary work in Japan. Letter describes the first use of anesthesia in an operation in Japan. The Director of the Mint objected to the use of fractional currency "shinplasters" but was unable to secure the needed nickel to mint enough coins.*



1864 Issue 3¢ fractional currency

*The third issue of fractional currency was released on December 5, 1864. It was the only issue to include a three cent denomination. Two of these notes could be used to pay the six cents due.*

1869 - 15¢ Rate To France

Fourth Issue Fractional Currency



22 May 1869 New York City to Paris, France  
15¢ rate prepaid with 15¢ 1869 pictorial issue, type I

The first pictorial series of stamps was issued in 1869. The fifteen cents and two higher denominations were printed in two colors. The stamps were gridded in an attempt to thwart illegal re-use.



1869 Issue 15¢ fractional currency

The fourth series of fractional currency, issued in 1869, was the only one to include a 15c denomination. Some examples have blue fibers embedded between the layers of the paper in an attempt to prevent counterfeiting.

1875 - 10¢ Steamship Rate

Fifth Issue Fractional Currency



7 May 1875 Matanzas, Cuba to New York City  
Due 10 U.S. Currency rate datestamp applied at New York

*Currency due datestamp was used on unpaid steamship mail received at New York in 1874 and 1875.*



1874 Issue 10¢ fractional currency

*The Fifth Issue of fractional currency was released on February 26, 1874 and continued in use until all fractional currency was retired in 1876. Printing was done by the Bureau of Printing and Engraving.*

1875 - 20¢ Double Steamship Rate

Twenty Cent Piece



9 March 1875 letter from sailor onboard USS *Canandaigua* at Aspinwall, New Grenada double 10¢ steamship rate prepaid by sender, entered mails at New Orleans on March 26 for local delivery

*Mail carried by a steamship with a mail-carrying contract was subject to a ten cent per half ounce rate until July 1, 1875. This cover was carried by such a steamer on the regular mail route between Aspinwall and New Orleans. The U.S. stamps could have been purchased in New Grenada (Colombia) or in the U.S. by the sailor.*



1875 twenty cent piece minted in Carson City

*The twenty cent piece was a short-lived coin that was minted for circulation only in 1875 and 1876. They circulated primarily in the West where silver was preferred over paper currency. The Carson City, Nevada mint, where the above example was coined, operated from 1870 until 1893.*



17 December 1888 registered cover from Honolulu, Hawaii to Freetown, Sierra Leone postage and fees prepaid with 25¢ 1883 issue portraying a statue of King Kamehameha I

*Before Hawaii was annexed by the United States in 1898, it had been an independent kingdom and then a republic. After 1878, Hawaiian stamps were printed by the American Banknote Company in the United States.*

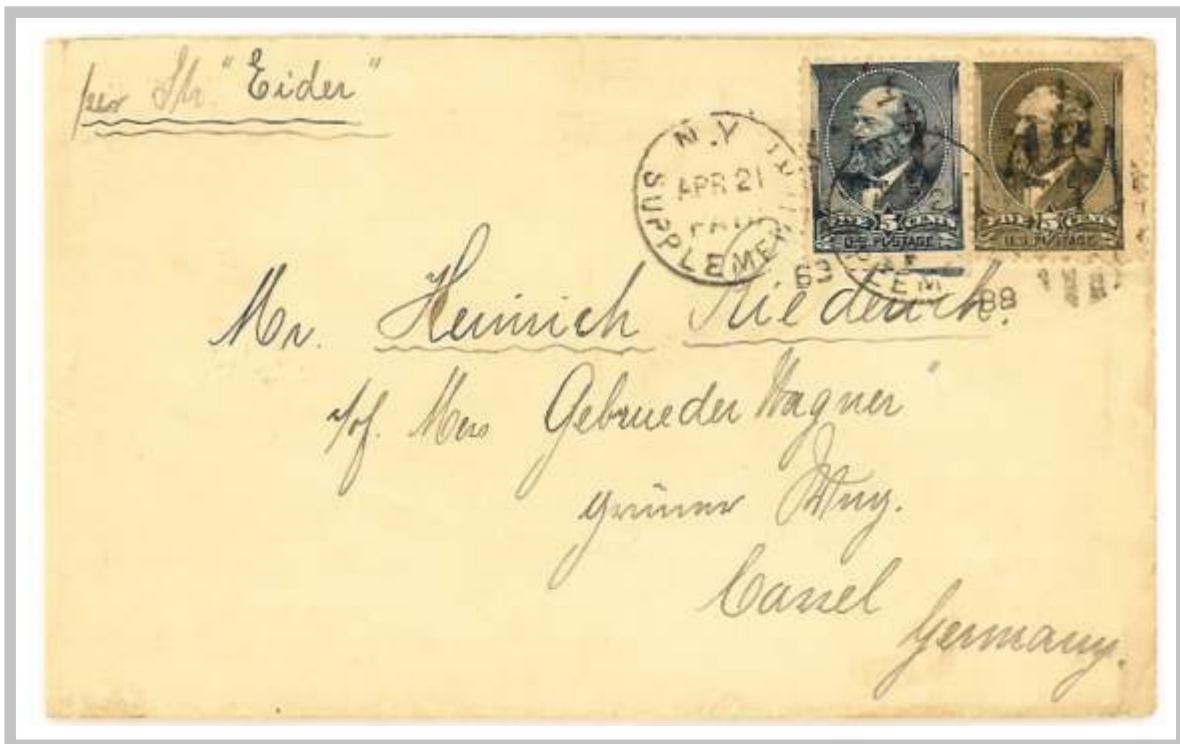


1883 Hawaii quarter minted in Philadelphia

*In 1883 Hawaii contracted with the United States mint for the production of silver coins based on the current United States series. Designed by Charles Barber, the coins, minted only for a single year, portray King Kalakaua I and the Hawaiian coat of arms. These were the only silver coins minted for Hawaii.*

1888 - 5¢ Garfield Issue Color Change

Nickel Design Change of 1883



21 April 1888 New York City to Cassel, Germany 5¢ postal rate paid with 5¢ brown Garfield supplementary mail 5¢ fee paid with newly issued 5¢ blue Garfield

*The color of the five cent brown Garfield stamp was changed to blue in 1888. The sender of this applied the brown stamp and the supplementary mail office, where late mail was processed, applied the new blue stamp.*



1883 Liberty nickel, with "V"  
no unit of currency designated



1883 Liberty nickel, with "V"  
"cents" added



*In 1883 a new design "Liberty" nickel was introduced. The initial design did not include the word "cents" and soon gold-plated examples surfaced passing as \$5.00 gold pieces. Later in 1883 the design was altered to include the denomination.*



June 1893 Consular cover from Ningpo, China, via Shanghai, to Boston entered mails at U.S. Postal Agency in Shanghai with pair 5¢ 1892 issue adhesives

*The United States established a consular postal agency in Shanghai, China in 1867 and stamps sold. The above cover was carried by consular courier from Ningpo to Shanghai where it entered the mails to the United States.*

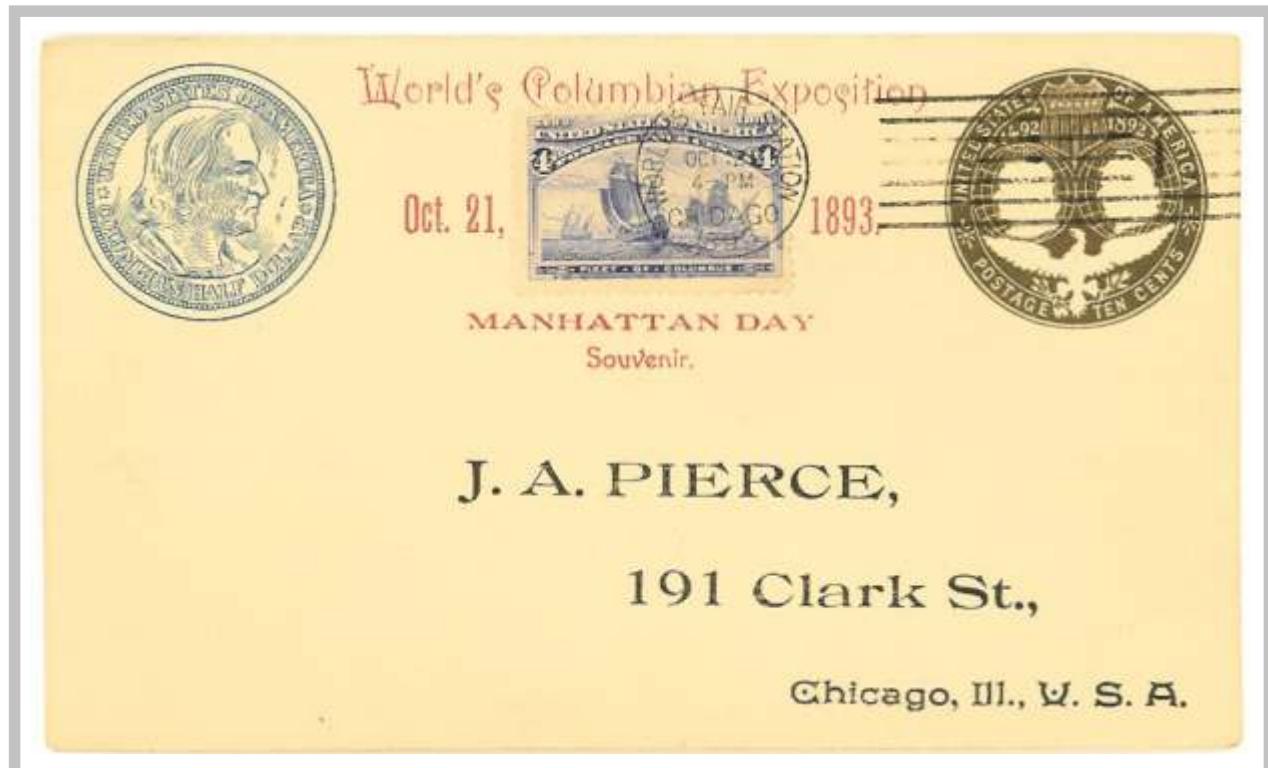


1875 trade dollar minted in San Francisco, Chinese chop marks

*In 1873 the minting of the trade dollars commenced with the expectation that they would replace Spanish coins then prevalent in the China trade. Their legal tender status in the United States was soon revoked after silver prices dropped in 1876. Most were shipped to China and Chinese merchants often added their "chop" marks after verifying purity.*

1893 - Columbian Series

Columbian Commemorative Half Dollar



21 October 1893 World's Fair Station Chicago postmark on souvenir cover with coin design  
4¢ Columbian series stamp on 10¢ Columbian series postal stationery

*The first commemorative series of United States stamps was issued in conjunction with the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. Sixteen denominations were included. Above is a souvenir cover prepared by J. A. Pierce at the fair.*



1893 World's Columbian Exposition Chicago Half Dollar

*The first commemorative silver coin of the United States was the Columbian half dollar released the same day as the stamp set on January 1, 1893. The half dollar was sold as a souvenir for \$1.00 each at the fair and remainders were later released at face value.*



17 July 1894 Philadelphia registered usage from Bogert & Durbin, stamp dealers  
1¢ to 6¢ Columbian issue stamps overpaying the postal rate to a famous collector

*The first commemorative series of United States stamps was issued in conjunction with the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. Sixteen denominations were included.*



1893 World's Columbian Exposition Chicago Quarter Dollar

*The commemorative silver Columbian quarter dollar was released on June 13, 1893 as a companion coin to the previously released half dollar. They were sold as a souvenirs for \$1.00 each at the fair.*

*1909 - 2¢ Lincoln Commemorative First Day of Issue*

*1909-S Lincoln Cents*



12 February 1909 San Francisco, California

2¢ Lincoln stamp, first day of issue

*A commemorative stamp for Abraham Lincoln was issued on the 100th anniversary of his birth. It was released nationwide as well as in Puerto Rico on the same date.*



1909-S cent, "VDB" initials  
minted in San Francisco



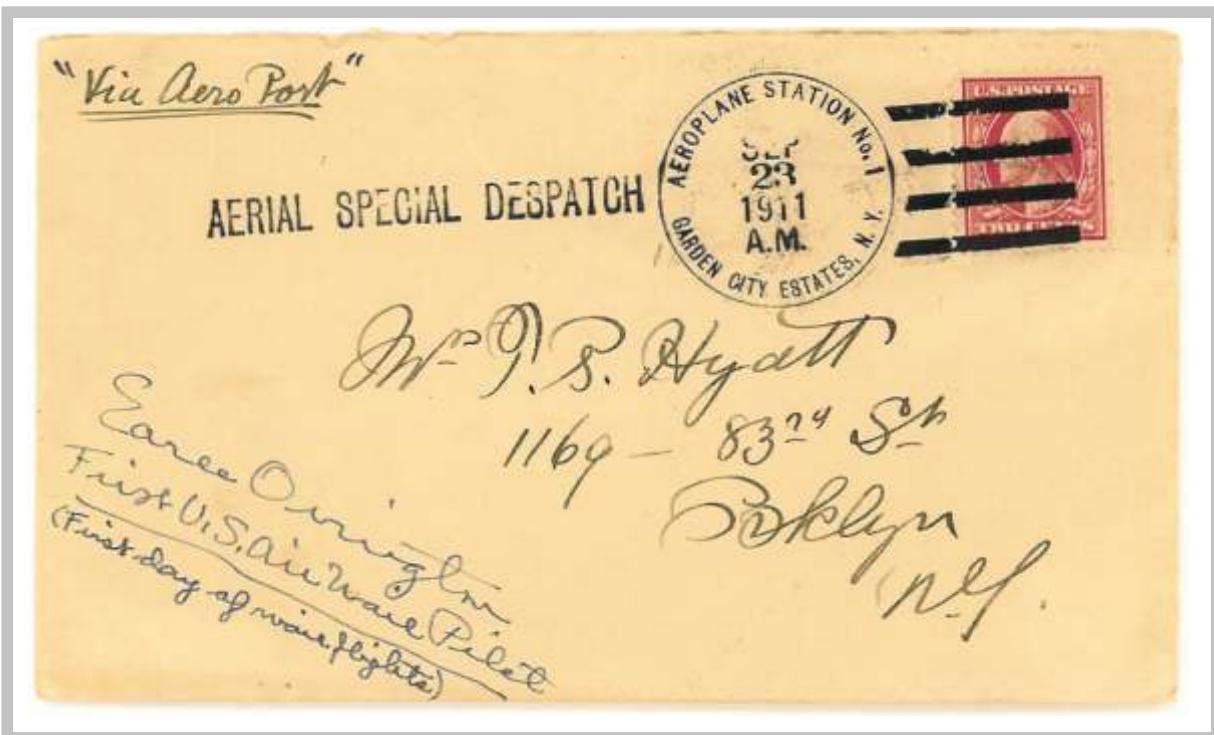
1909-S cent, no initials  
minted in San Francisco



*The Lincoln cent was designed by Victor D. Brenner to replace the Indian Head cent in 1909. They were originally minted with the designer's initials (V.D.B.) on the reverse but these initials were soon removed.*

1911 - First Official Airmail Flight

1909 Lincoln Cents



23 September 1911 Garden City Estates "Aerial Special Despatch" mail  
2¢ stamp covered regular mail service, signed by Earle Ovington the pilot

*The first official airmail in the United States was carried by Earle Ovington, an appointed mail carrier for this event, during an Aviation Tournament at Garden City on September 23, 1911. Above cover is a first day flight.*



1909 cent, "VDB" initials  
minted in Philadelphia



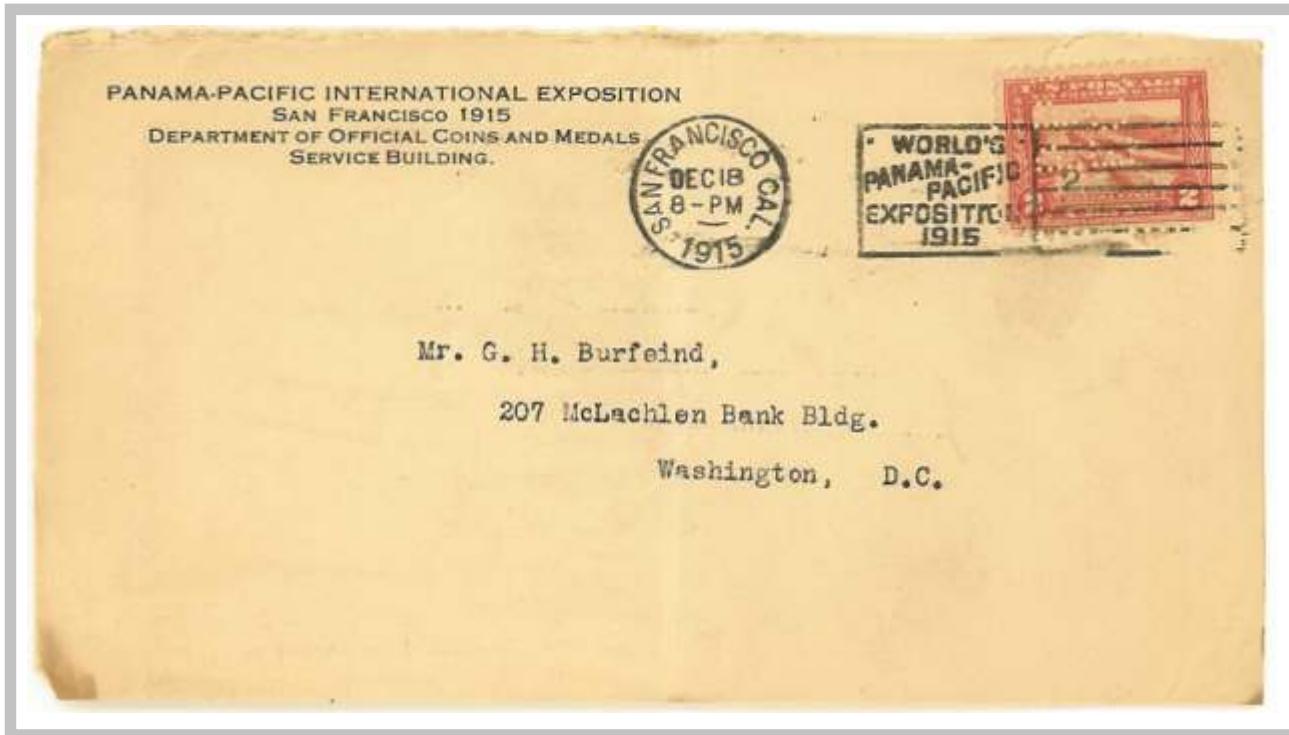
1909 cent, no initials  
minted in Philadelphia



*The Lincoln cent was designed by Victor D. Brenner to replace the Indian Head cent in 1909. They were originally minted with the designer's initials (V.D.B.) on the reverse but these initials were soon removed.*

1915 - Panama-Pacific Series Perfin

Panama Pacific Gold Dollar



18 December 1915 usage from the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, Department of Coins and Medals  
2¢ stamp with "PPIE Co" perforated initials (Panama Pacific International Exposition Company)

A set of commemorative stamps, 1¢ to 10¢, was issued for the Panama-Pacific Exposition that was held in San Francisco in 1915. The sponsoring Company perforated their initials on stamps as a control measure to prevent theft. The cover is addressed to a coin and medal dealer.



1915 Panama-Pacific Gold Dollar minted in San Francisco

A quantity of 15,000 commemorative Panama-Pacific gold dollars were minted in January, 1915 as part of a set of commemorative coins ranging from 50¢ to \$50. The obverse design represents a laborer on the Panama Canal and the reverse shows two dolphins representing the joining of the oceans.

1917 - Registered Usage from Puerto Rico

Buffalo Nickel + Mercury Dime



24 April 1917 Arecibo, Puerto Rico registered, return receipt requested, to Freetown, Sierra Leone  
15¢ total postage which included 10¢ registry and 5¢ for rate to Sierra Leone

*United States stamps and coins have been used in Puerto Rico since October 18, 1898 when control of the island passed formally to the United States.*



1913 Buffalo nickel, type 1  
minted in Philadelphia



1916 Mercury dime  
minted in Philadelphia



*The Buffalo nickel, designed by James Fraser, was first issued in 1913. The design was modified later that same year by recessing the date and altering the mound on reverse. The Winged Liberty Head, or Mercury dime, designed by Adolph Weinman, was first released in 1916.*

1918 - 24¢ Airmail Service

Standing Liberty Quarter



29 May 1918 Via "Aeroplane Mail" from New York City to Washington, D.C. and by train to Chicago  
24¢ airmail stamp covered airmail service and special delivery upon arrival in Chicago

The first airmail stamp issued by the United States was released on May 13, 1918. The 24c stamp was issued for the new airmail service inaugurated on May 15th. The rate was reduced on July 15, 1918.



1917 Standing Liberty Quarter, type 1, minted in Philadelphia

The standing Liberty quarter dollar was designed by Hermon MacNeil. Type 1, showing Liberty's exposed breast, was first released in January 1917. In response to public outrage, the design was altered in July 1917.

**1921 - Parcel Tag**

**Gold Half Eagle**



21 October 1921 Denver Federal Reserve Bank to Kansas City Federal Reserve Bank  
parcel tag, total prepaid \$4.74, 10c registry fee plus \$4.64 postage for 232 ounces at 2¢ an ounce

*This tag probably accompanied a parcel of gold coins being transferred from the United States Branch bank in Denver to their counterpart in Kansas City. If \$20 gold coins were sent, the total would have been 175 coins.*



1909 gold \$5 Indian Head half eagle minted in Denver

*The Indian Head half eagle coin was designed by Bela Lyon Pratt. The half eagle was minted between 1908 and 1914 in Denver. The use of incuse design and lettering on coins was limited to the quarter eagles and half eagles.*