



Hartford Letter Mail

By Richard Frajola



Introduction

There has long been a dearth of accurate information regarding the 1844 Independent Mail Company that operated briefly between August 1844 and June 30, 1845 carrying letter mail away from Hartford, Connecticut and vicinity. The stamps of the company were listed in Coster's seminal work on local posts published in 1882 where they were described under the heading of "Hartford Mail." The company will be styled by the present author as "Hartford Letter Mail" as a descriptive name in the absence of any corporate name having been discovered. They issued two adhesive stamps printed from a single plate of twelve subjects. Their black on yellow stamps are recorded genuinely used from Hartford to New York City and points further south. Their black on pink stamps are recorded genuinely used on cover only from Hartford to Boston. Atypically for an Independent Mail Company, these stamps were only available in Hartford and are not known used on inbound mail addressed to Hartford.

The author of the present study has been privileged to be able to examine the largest group of stamps and covers of the Hartford Letter Mail ever formed. As viewed and inventoried, the group represents over 90% of the reported examples of both stamp and covers. I refer to the holding of stamps and covers that was begun by Francis Stern in the period before 1950, and that was continued and expanded by Henry Conland. When received for study, the ex Stern portion of the collection remained intact as mounted by Stern who had carefully annotated the names of previous owners. Most of the material used in this study has not been seen by the current generation of collector or dealers, certainly not seen in its entirety.

As will be shown, the Hartford Letter Mail was operated by Francis Fuller. A possible partner, Edward Parsons, has also been identified. From August 1844 until June 30, 1845 southbound letter mail carriage from Hartford was arranged by Fuller using Phillips Express for actual carriage via New Haven to New York City. From late in 1844 until June 30, 1845 Fuller used Thompson's Express for carriage of letter mail northbound to Springfield and onward eastbound to Boston or westbound to Albany.

This treatise is organized by sections as follows:

1. The Express Companies serving Hartford before July 1844
2. The History of the Hartford Letter Mail
3. The Stamps of the Hartford Letter Mail
4. The Covers of the Hartford Letter Mail
5. Biographies of the Originators
6. Plating Guide and Enlargements
7. References

1. The Express Companies Serving Hartford before July 1844

The express business in Hartford, Connecticut was thriving prior to commencement of the first

independent letter mail companies after December 1843 and it was these express companies that actually carried the letter mail for the Independent Letter Mail companies. The map in Figure 1 shows the transportation routes serving Hartford. The New Haven, Hartford & Springfield Railroad was chartered in May 1833. The section of the line connecting New Haven and Hartford was completed in December 1839 but the railroad north to Springfield, originally chartered as the Hartford & Springfield Railroad in Massachusetts, was not completed until December 9, 1844. Prior to completion of the rail link between Hartford and Springfield, steamboats operating on the Connecticut River were used seasonally.



Figure 1. This map shows the principal transportation routes used by the express companies in January 1844. Railroads are shown in red and steamboat / steamship routes are shown in blue.

To set the stage for what follows, the express arrangements will be summarized. In January 1842, Harnden & Company Package Express and Foreign Letter Office and Adams & Company Express were the two major express concerns operating in Connecticut. Adams dominated the express traffic along the Connecticut coast and used (Benjamin) Beecher's Express in New Haven to handle express matter between that city and New York City by steamers. The more important express operator for Hartford businesses in 1842 was Harnden. In an advertisement, keyed to run from July 29, 1842 as published in the *New York Evening Post* on August 31, 1842 includes:

From New York To New Haven, Hartford and Springfield - Daily

Messrs. Harnden & Co., having purchased of Messrs. Hurlbut & Co., the former proprietor of the New Haven and Hartford Express Line, their right and interest in said line, and having arranged with the Steamboat and Railroad Companies on the said route for the exclusive privilege of running Express Cars thereon, would respectfully inform the public that they are now prepared to receive and forward daily (Sundays excepted) parcels, packages, bank notes, specie &c, to collect notes, drafts, bills and to transact all business in each of said places, of a like nature to that which is now done by their establishment. A special messenger will accompany the cars which contain iron safes.

Offices

J.M. Thompson, General Agent, 10 State street, Springfield
G.A. Hamilton, State street, Hartford

W. Webb, 55 State street, New Haven

Harnden & Co, 3 Wall street, New York

According to the new Harnden advertisements that began appearing on May 13, 1843, their agent in New Haven, W. Webb, was replaced by James Bailey. The following month a notice appeared in the June 3, 1843 Hartford, Connecticut Courant that J.M. Thompson & Co's. Express (Thompson) had purchased from Harnden the right of running an Express line from Hartford to Boston and Albany and the intermediate places. Thompson was later to play an important role in the Hartford Letter Mail.

In a similar development, Daniel Phillips (see biography in section 5), an ex Harnden employee and previously a partner in the Clark & Phillips New York Express, that operated from Hartford, via New Haven to New York City, introduced a new advertisement in November 1843. The advertisement that appeared in the New Haven Columbian Register states:

Phillips & Cos Express (late Harnden & Co's). The agency having transferred from Mr James S. Bailey to W. Webb, hereafter all packages for Hartford & East, should be marked "Care of Phillips & Co" and left at 56 State street before 11 o'clock A.M., W. Webb, Agent

A final express company that was active on the New Haven to New York steamer route in this precursor era was Beecher's Express. Between 1842 and the end of 1843, Beecher's Express advertised their express service between New Haven and New York City in direct competition to Harnden and later in competition to Phillip's Express. Beecher's ads disappear after December 30, 1843. It appears that Webb and Plant purchased a secondary route between New Haven, via Naugatuck, to Waterbury from Beecher and that Beecher sold his primary line between New Haven and New York to Phillips.

In summary, the active expresses serving Hartford in early 1844 included Thompson operating between Hartford and Springfield by steamboat and Phillips' operating between Hartford and New Haven by rail and from New Haven to New York City by steamer. These were also the expresses that were soon to carry the Hartford Letter Mail Mails.

2. The History of the Hartford Letter Mail

The earliest evidence of an Independent Mail operation in Hartford is found in a newspaper notice that appeared in the July 5, 1844 *Hartford Daily Courant*:

Independent Mails

Hale & Co., as may be seen by reference to an advertisement, have made arrangements to take Letters, independent of the Government mails, on all main routes, North, South, East and West. It is a convenience to the business public, as they deliver Letters, immediately on their arrival at their localities, and carry them much cheaper than the Government Post Office Rates, and although it has been in operation only a few days, we understand they have been very generally patronized.

The Hale & Co. advertisement mentioned in the article is shown in Figure 2 and corresponds nicely with the earliest reported Hale folded letter from Hartford (Gutman, Figure 39) which bears an "H" precancel adhesive and was used on a folded letter to New York on July 25, 1844. The advertisement gives the

Hale & Co. address in Hartford as 7 Central Row which location was next door to the Post Office at 9 Central Row and across the street from the statehouse.

**SAVE YOUR POSTAGE---HALE & CO'S. IN
INDEPENDENT MAIL.**—HALE & CO. are prepared
to forward Letters to and from Hartford, New Haven, New
York and Philadelphia; Springfield, Northampton, Green-
field, Albany, Utica, Rome, Canandaigua, Rochester, Buffa-
lo, Worcester, Boston, Salem, Portsmouth, Portland, Ban-
gor, Eastport, Calais, &c., Providence and New Bedford.
Postage, 6 1/2 cents—20 Stamps for \$1. Office, 7 Central Row,
Hartford.
Hale & Co. take pleasure in informing the citizens of Hart-
ford and vicinity, that their arrangements are such as to en-
sure the rapid and safe transmission of all letters entrusted
to them, and refer to the merchants and others of Boston and
New York, whose correspondence they have carried for the
past six months.
The public will please bear in mind that Hale & Co. have
tested the legality of their Independent Mail, before the Su-
preme Court of the U. S., Hon. Judge Story presiding, who
decided in their favor.
N. B. Southern Mail closes 1/2 before 6 P. M.; Northern,
Eastern and Western at 9 P. M. daily. Letters received
after those hours will not be forwarded until next day.
HALE & CO., 7 Central Row,
July 12 dit

Figure 2. Hale & Company advertisement in *Hartford Daily Courant*. Advertisement is internally dated to run from July 12 (1844) and ran until September 25, 1844.

The May 1844 *Geer's Hartford City Directory* published two months prior to the Hale notice lists two businesses operating from this 7 Central Row address. They are Phillips & Co. New York Express and Thompson's Springfield, Boston and Albany Express. These are the two firms that provided the actual letter mail service to and from Hartford under the protection of the Hale's covering banner. From Hartford Phillips carried the letter mail along with his express matter to and from New Haven and New York City where it could connect with other Hale service providers for onward distribution. Thompson provided the courier service for the Hale letter mail to the north to Springfield and from there west to Albany or east to Boston as required.

There are few facts known about the arrangements made by Hale & Co. with the various express companies that actually carried the letter mail for them. Most of the express companies did not wish to expose themselves to potential post office fines and seem to have found ways to profit by the increase in business while shielding their primary express income, in essence becoming sub-contractors to Hale for carrying their letter mail. The system generally utilized by the express companies allowed income distribution based on a web of agents and expresses working in conjunction with each other. Often, an express company would gain exclusive rights for carriage over a specific route or over the rails of a single railroad. Both Phillips and Thompson had been granted such exclusive rights from railroads and steamboat companies serving Hartford when Hale started operations. In the case of Hale's Hartford office they almost certainly used Phillips for mail to and from New York City and Thompson for mails to or from Hartford transiting through Springfield.

If this was the scenario employed by Hale & Co. in Hartford, the logical person for them to work with was Francis A. Fuller (see biography in section 5). The 1844 Geer's directory lists Francis Fuller as being employed by Phillips Express while also serving as the Hartford agent for Thompson's Express. Fuller was therefore in the unique position of being able to organize express service to, from, and through Hartford to points both north and south. This fact, coupled with subsequent events including

Fuller's name being mentioned in an 1895 philatelic article as one of two progenitors of the Hartford Letter Mail, lead this author to conclude that Fuller was indeed the prime mover.

A revised Hale & Co. advertisement that first appeared on September 27, 1844, shown in Figure 3, supports this scenario. The advertisement is identical except that it lists an additional new address at end of the second paragraph. This 139 Main Street address appears in the (May) 1845 *Geer's Hartford City Directory* as being the address of both Phillips Express and Thompson's Express.

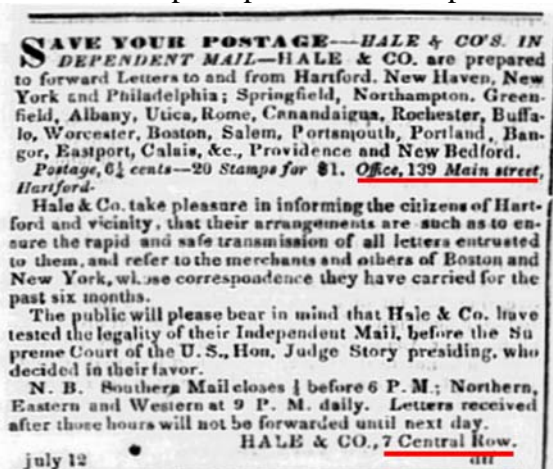


Figure 3. The Hale & Co. advertisement that ran in *Hartford Curant* from September 27 until October 24, 1844.

This alteration of the Hale advertisement comes less than one month after the earliest reported genuine use of the Hartford Letter Mail stamps (Figure 8) and this address is certainly the address of the new Hartford Letter Mail.

The Hartford Letter Mail issued two adhesive stamps, one on yellow paper for use to the south and to New York City as well as a second, printed on pink paper, for use on letters to the north via Springfield to Boston or Albany. The mode of transport employed on the route between Hartford and Springfield changed from steamboats operating on the Connecticut River to trains after the completion of the railroad on December 9, 1844. The Hartford Letter Mail operation continued until the end of the Independent Mail Company period on June 30, 1845.

3. The Stamps of the Hartford Letter Mail

Although the Hartford Letter Mail operated closely with Hale & Company, they issued their own adhesives. A plate of twelve individual engravings, arranged in two rows of six subjects, was prepared, presumably by one of several of the skilled local engravers, and printed at the Brown and Parsons print shop. The origin of the design, which features two cities separated by water, a steamboat and a striding man carrying a bag inscribed "MAIL," is unknown.

The stamps were printed from this single plate of 12 in black on yellow glazed paper. The author has examined two stamps that had in the past been characterized as being on buff colored paper, one being the ex Boker listing example, but both stamps have been chemically treated and were actually printed on yellow glazed paper. The stamps were also printed in black on pink glazed paper and enlarged images of each are shown in Figure 4. Although an 1895 account suggests the pink stamps may have been sold for ten cents each this author's research concludes that both were more likely sold for five cents each.



Figure 4. Enlarged images of the two Hartford Letter Mails stamp issues; black on yellow glazed paper and black on pink glazed paper. Both examples are from the plate position 6, the top right corner position of the plate of 12 subjects arranged in two rows of six. The left stamp has “Hartford” precancel and right stamp has a “West” precancel. The right stamp shows evidence of the “t” in “West” that was written on the adjoining position 5 stamp.

The two different paper colors were evidently used to keep the accounting separate. A study of known genuine examples on cover confirms that the stamps on yellow paper were all used on the Phillips Express route to New York City while the very few genuine covers bearing stamps on pink paper were used on the Thompson's Express route via Springfield to Boston. Although the sample of confirmed genuine uses on cover is very small, it is possible that the pink stamp was first issued after the December 9, 1844 completion of the railroad between Hartford and Springfield. If so, it might account for the extreme rarity of the pink stamps and would indicate that their service did not originally include steamboat service to Springfield.

The February 12, 1845 folded letter, Figure 12, sent from Newington to Philadelphia confirms the five cent value of the yellow stamps as it mentions:

We have received no letter free. I bought a card of tickets at 5 cents each one of which I stick on every letter to you which answers your postage. On your letters to us (which would have come via Hale's) I pay for each one 6 cents & I do not recollect one exception. I wish you to see we are not deceived.

The stamps were first plated to their correct positions by F.W. Hunter as shown in Figure 5. This plating was later confirmed by George Sloane and Elliot Perry independently. A second complete plating that incorporates six positions from the Preston “card of tickets” is shown in Figure 6. An annotated plating guide is provided in section 6.

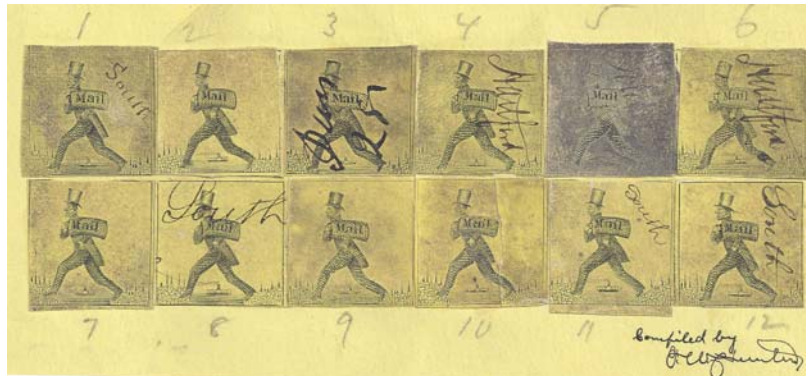


Figure 5. The original plate reconstruction “compiled by F.W. Hunter” that correctly placed in sheet layout the twelve types previously identified by Tapling.



Figure 6. An enlarged plate reconstruction that includes six examples from the “Preston Pane” each of which has the “Southern” precancel vertically at right. These stamps are positions 5, 6, 8 to 10 and 12. The stamps remain on their six original folded letters from same correspondence.

The Precancels

This author defines a precancel as a cancel applied to a stamp before use on a folded letter or cover. The manuscript cancels on the majority of Hartford Letter mail stamps clearly fall into this classification. The manuscript precancels were applied while the stamps were in sheet form as evidenced by overlap cancels such as that found on the position 11 stamp in Figure 6. This stamp shows a portion of the precancel that was applied to the adjacent stamp in position 10.

The handwriting on all the precancels can be accurately ascribed to one of four different people (agents) as shown in Figure 7. These are identified arbitrarily as agents A to D. The yellow stamps, for use on the route to New York are reported with four different precancels: bearing the word "South" in two different styles, the word "Southern" in a third style, and the word "Hartford" in the same third handwriting style. The pink stamps, for use on routes via Springfield, exist with three different precancels, with the word "West," with the word "East" or with the initials "We" (West). Only a few examples were sold without these precancels and those either remained uncanceled or were pen canceled upon use.



"South" precancel, agent "A"



"South" precancel, agent "B"



"Southern" precancel, agent "C"



"Hartford" precancel, agent "C"



"East" precancel, agent "A"



"West" precancel, agent "A"



"W^e(st)" precancel, agent "D"

Figure 7. The seven different precancels that appear on Hartford Letter Mail stamps.

It should be noted the pink stamps with "West" precancels were probably intended for use on letters from Hartford, via Springfield, to Albany while those with "East" were intended for use to Boston.

This author believes there to be approximately 100 of the yellow Hartford Letter Mail stamps known off

cover and only about 10 of the pink stamp off cover. These numbers do not include the several examples of each that now appear on folded letters to which they did not originate. Surprisingly, the only multiples that are known of either Hartford Letter Mail stamps are two vertical pairs of the yellow stamp. These are used on separate folded letters which will be discussed in the postal history section.

4. The Covers of the Hartford Letter Mail

Actually, the use of the word “covers” in the above title is a bit of a misnomer as actually the stamps were used on folded letters in this era before the introduction of envelopes. The author records approximately 40 genuine uses of the yellow stamp on cover. In addition, there are several examples used on cover that the author believes are not genuine uses. These include two March 1844 uses on folded covers, without contents or evidence of origin location, addressed to Morgan & Co. in New York which are mentioned specifically to clarify that the author did not miss them when noting the earliest reported use shown in Figure 8.

An unusual circumstance with the Hartford Letter Mail is that there are no handstamped markings associated with the post. Although a very few of the covers do have handstamps, including two with the Forwarded By Hale’s Hartford oval, otherwise none have evidence of having been applied at Hartford. These covers will be discussed. Of the genuine uses, about 85 percent bear precancel stamps. The covers that do not bear precancels are franked with stamps that remained uncanceled or have other manuscript cancels such as manuscript dates.

The earliest reported genuine use is shown in Figure 8 and is a combination franking with Hale’s adhesive on an August 22, 1844 folded letter from T. Preston & Co. in Hartford addressed to Clark and Coleman in New York, a well documented correspondence. The reason for the combination franking is unknown but quite possibly came about in confusion as to which stamp was required.

Prior to this date, a (Hartford) *Republican Farmer* newspaper notice of August 6, 1844 reported:

We are told that arrangements are making to establish an Express for conveying letters etc. between this city (Hartford) and New York. The prices are to be half the present post office rates.



Figure 8. The earliest genuine use of the Hartford Letter Mail adhesive. Position 12 stamp with "Southern" precancel used on August 22, 1844 folded letter from T. Preston & Co. in Hartford addressed to Clark & Coleman in New York City. Used in combination with Hale & Co. "H"(artford) precancel adhesive.

A very interesting folded letter dated from Meriden, Connecticut on September 27, 1844 is shown in Figure 9. This letter is addressed to a Mrs. Parker in New York City and was franked with a "Southern" precancel stamp (position 6). Just below the stamp is a red "PAID" handstamp. It should be noted that Meriden was a stop on the railroad line (the Hartford & New Haven RR at this date) between Hartford and New Haven used by Phillip's Express to carry the letters of Hartford Letter Mail. A sender note on reverse, "I will not hold this (and await a friend to take) for the sake of five cents" confirms that the stamps were sold for five cents. This is the only reported use from Meriden.



Figure 9. September 27, 1844 folded letter of G.W. Perkins at Meriden addressed to Mrs. Parker in New York. The stamp is from position 6 and bears a manuscript "Southern" precancel.

A folded letter dated from Newington, Connecticut is shown in Figure 10. Like Meriden, Newington

was also a stop on the railroad line from Hartford to New Haven and located closer to Hartford. This example is the earliest of three reported examples from the Brace correspondence and is dated November 14, 1844 from Newington. Mr. Brace senior writes to his son in Philadelphia and endorsed the cover at lower left with “Newington, Nov 15 1844” mailed date. This letter, as well as the two additional examples from Brace correspondence are the only examples of Hartford Letter Mail adhesives used southward beyond New York City. Upon arrival at New York it was turned over to Hale & Company for onward carriage to destination without further charge. It was marked with familiar “Forwarded By Hale & Co., New York” handstamp and bears their “PAID” handstamp as well. It is significant that Hale treated this as completely prepaid to destination and did not impose a further amount collect as would be expected if received from a non-allied company.

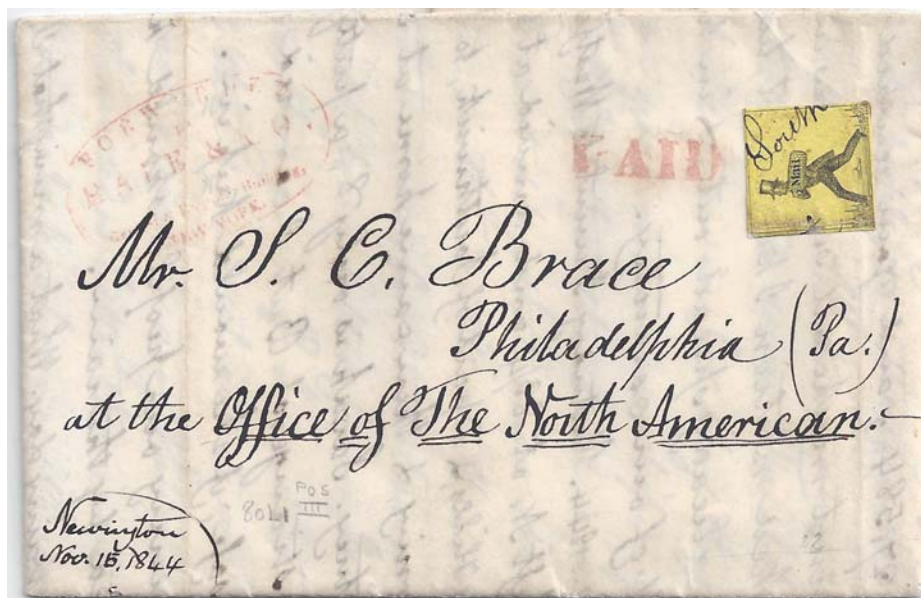


Figure 10. November 14, 1844 folded Brace correspondence letter from Newington, Connecticut to Philadelphia. A conjunctive use with Hale & Company for carriage beyond New York. Forwarded By Hale & Co. oval handstamp and matching “PAID” handstamp. It bears a position 3 adhesive with “South” precancel.

The two additional Brace correspondence letters provide an interesting contrast. The second example, sent from Newington on December 13, 1844 is shown in Figure 11. This example does not bear a Hale & Co. oval but does have their “PAID” handstamp of a style used at New York.



Figure 11. December 13, 1844 folded Brace correspondence letter from Newington, Connecticut to Philadelphia. It is a conjunctive use with Hale & Company for carriage beyond New York, with a small format “PAID” handstamp. It bears a position 5 adhesive with “South” precancel as well as additional manuscript “X” cancels.

The last of the three letters from Mr. Brace to his son in Philadelphia is shown in Figure 12. It was mailed from Newington on February 12, 1845 and, like the previous use, it bears a sender’s endorsement of origin and a red “PAID” handstamp applied by Hale & Co. in New York City. This example bears the interesting comment about having purchased a “card of tickets at 5 cents each” previously mentioned in the stamps section.



Figure 12. February 12, 1844 folded Brace correspondence letter from Newington, Connecticut to Philadelphia. It is a conjunctive use with Hale & Company for carriage beyond New York with their “PAID” handstamp. It bears a position 3 adhesive with “South” precancel.

A series of more typical uses is found with the letters addressed to the Clark & Coleman firm in New York. A subset of this rather extensive correspondence is the group of six letters written by Mr. Preston in Hartford to the firm. These letters, dated between August 22, 1844 (see Figure 8) and November 1, 1844 all bear stamps from the one sheet of stamps as purchased when the Hartford Letter Mail began service in August 1844. The stamp images are included in plating shown in Figure B and from the irregular margins can be proved to the sheet. These stamps are positions 5, 6, 8 to 10 and 12 and all bear “Southern” precancels.

A September 30, 1844 letter from the Preston to Clark & Coleman group is shown in Figure 13. This example illustrates the most commonly found type of use of a yellow Hartford Letter Mail stamp; a single precancel stamp, not tied, used on a folded letter from Hartford to New York without any other markings.



Figure 13. September 30, 1844 folded letter from T. Preston in Hartford to Clark & Coleman in New York. It bears a position 10 adhesive with “Southern” precancel.

One of the most famous of the Hartford Letter Mail covers is one of the two known vertical pairs on original letter. This ex Ferrari example, shown in Figure 14, is from the same Clark & Coleman correspondence but the letter is from Clark, Gill & Co. in Hartford rather than from Preston. The cover is clearly endorsed “Paid, Double Only” at top left by sender accounting for the use of a pair of stamps. The letter content also mentions an enclosure.

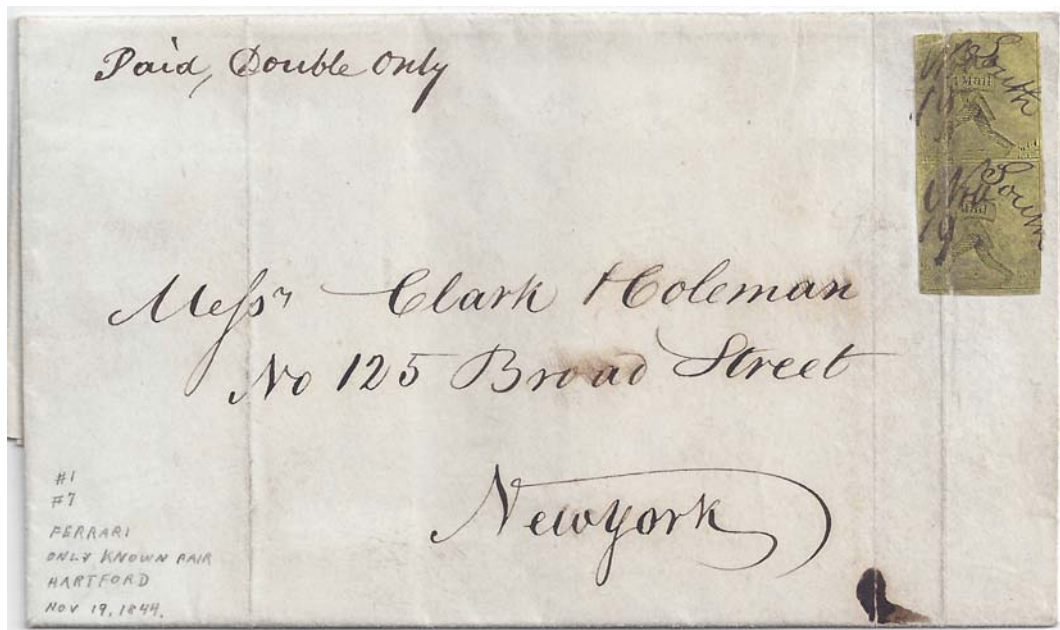


Figure 14. November 19, 1844 folded letter from Clark, Gill & Co. in Hartford to Clark & Coleman in New York. It bears a vertical pair, positions 1 and 7, with “South” precancel and additional manuscript Nov 19 date.

Another noteworthy use of a yellow adhesive on cover is the very attractive example shown in Figure 15. It is a January 30, 1845 use on a letter from A.H. Bull in Hartford to Breithaupt & Chun in New York City. The stamp is neatly tied to the address leaf by a clear “Paid Jan 30” cancel. This is one of only two known uses with a stamp that is tied.



Figure 15. January 30, 1845 folded letter from A.H. Bull in Hartford to Breithaupt & Chun in New York City. Stamp, without precancel, is plate position 9 and is tied by “Paid, Jan 30” manuscript cancel.

The final yellow adhesive use on cover that will be discussed is the latest known genuine use shown in

Figure 16. It is a single used on the final day of service on a folded cover docketed as being from A. Porter, Hartford and used to Messrs. C & S Roosevelt in New York. The addressee firm is that owned by President Theodore Roosevelt's grandfather, Cornelius, and his uncle, Silas Roosevelt. It bears a stamp without cancel. On the day after this cover was transmitted, July 1, 1845, the United States post office introduced their reduced postage rate of five cents to 300 miles. The 1844 Independent Mail companies were now obsolete.

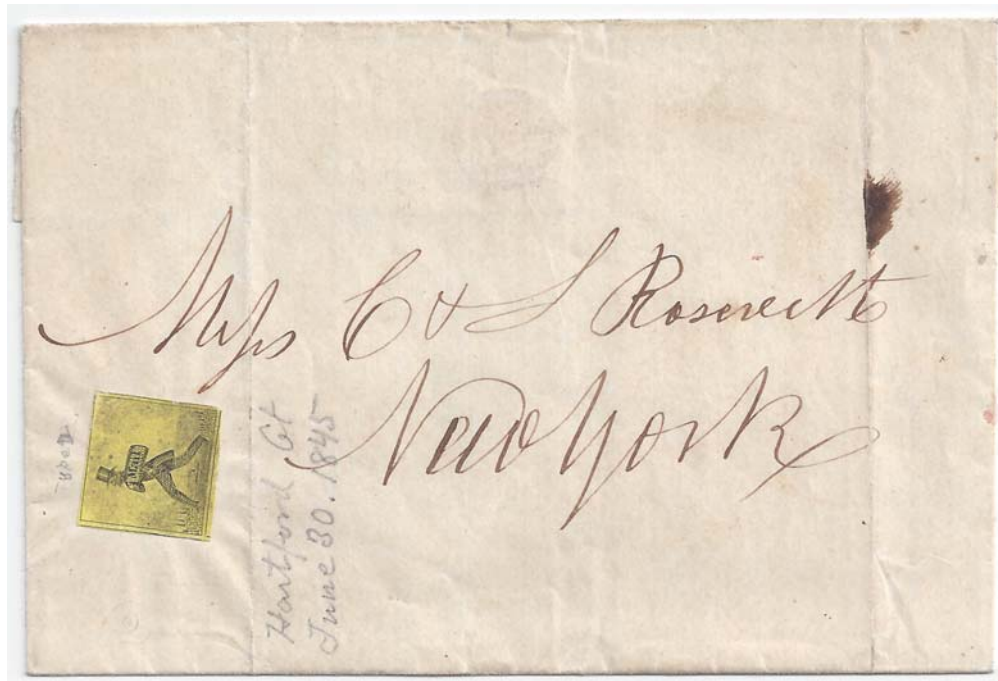


Figure 16. The latest possible use of a Hartford Letter Mail adhesive, uncanceled on June 30, 1845 folded cover from Allen Porter to C & S Roosevelt in New York City. Stamp is from plate position 2.

The use of the black on pink adhesives will be brief as the author records only four examples that he deems to be genuine uses on original covers. The author has not examined one of these four which, although it has a clean Philatelic Foundation certificate, is more accurately described as an incorrectly restored fragment. The item, dated November 1, 1844, has the addressee name and location replaced with a New York City address. Because it is a pink stamp, it would have been addressed to a location east or west of Hartford, and not to New York City.

Two of the remaining three genuine uses will be shown. The first is the undated folded letter of E.W. Bull in Hartford addressed to J.L.L Warren in Boston shown in Figure 17. This letter bears a black on pink adhesive, position 8, with manuscript "West" precancel. It also bears a red oval "Forwarded By Hale & Co From Hartford" handstamp.



Figure 17. Black on pink Hartford Letter Mail adhesive used on undated folded cover from E.W. Bull, Hartford to J.S.S. Warren in Boston with “Forwarded By Hale & Co., Hartford” oval handstamp. Stamp is from plate position 8.

The second genuine use, Figure 18, bears a pink adhesive with “East” precancel. It is a June 23, 1845 folded letter of Thomas Welles dated from Hartford and addressed to Elihu Geer in Boston. The addressee is the publisher of Geer’s Hartford directories of the era who was visiting Boston. The letter bears a pencil “postage 2¢” endorsement at top center presumably for a delivery charge in Boston.



Figure 18. Black on pink Hartford Letter Mail adhesive used on June 23, 1845 folded letter from Hartford to Boston with pencil “postage 2¢” endorsement. Stamp is from plate position 5.

The fourth example of a genuine pink adhesive use on a folded letter is from the same correspondence as the folded cover shown in Figure 13. It is also undated and bears a “Forwarded by Hale & Co.”

handstamp. The adhesive is from plate position 2 and bears a "West" precancel stamp.

There are a further six uses of the pink stamp on covers or folded letters that the author believes to have been added to covers to which they did not originate.

5. Biographies of the Originators

Francis A. Fuller

Francis Fuller was probably the person most directly involved with both the inception and operation of the Hartford Letter Mail. Unfortunately, little is known of Fuller beyond the few period newspaper references to him and the December 1895 W.H. Bruce fictionalized article in the *Eastern Philatelist* that mentions, "Mr Parsons, at the time of their emission, was engaged in the book business in Hartford and among his acquaintances was a Mr. Fuller, who was the terminal agent for the Thompson & Co. express line, of Springfield. These gentlemen conceived an idea that it was possible to operate a letter route by express ... On the suppression of the stamps the plate remained in the possession of Mr. Fuller for several years, when, it is claimed, it was destroyed,"

The earliest mention of Fuller that I have found in the Hartford papers is a notice of an advertised letter addressed to him that was published in the *Hartford Courant* in March 1842. He first appears in the city directories as an employee of Phillips New York Express that operated between Hartford and New York City and simultaneously as an agent for Thompson's Express that operated between Hartford and Springfield, Massachusetts. According to the Geer's (May) 1844 *Hartford City Directory*, both expresses operated from the same office at the "7 Central Row" address. Fuller boarded at the U.S. Hotel. In Geer's (May) 1845 *Hartford City Directory* the address for both Phillips & Co. N.Y. Express and Thompson's Express is listed as 139 Main Street, Hartford. This 1845 directory shows Fuller living at Bull's cottage on Church Street.

Significantly, this 139 Main Street address begins to appear in Hale and Company advertisements dated July 12, 1844 as a secondary Hartford address to their mail primary address at 7 Central Row (Hartford). The advertisement (Figure 19) is shown as it appeared in the October 11, 1844 *Hartford Daily Courant*. This same address is also listed in the directory as the primary address of Thompson's Express. These addresses correspond to the series of Hale & Company advertisements that appeared in the *Hartford Daily Courant*. From July 12 until September 25, 1844 the address for Hale & Co. Hartford Office appears in the advertisements as 7 Central Row. From September 27 until October 24, 1844 the advertisements include both the new 139 Main St address in second paragraph and the 7 Central Row address at foot. From November 6, 1844 until the ads were discontinued in early 1845 the address in second paragraph appears as 139 Main Street and a new address of 117 Main Street appears at the foot.

After the end of the Hartford Letter Mail on June 30, 1845, a single notice appears in the *Hartford Daily Courant* in September, 1845, "We are indebted to Mr. Fuller of the express office, for a copy of European Times" and then he disappears following two unusual notices that were published in 1846. A large Phillips Express display advertisement appeared in the Feb 21, 1846 Hartford Times included (in bold), "FA Fuller, former Agent of Thompson & Co has not now, neither has he had, any connection in business with Phillips & Co since Aug 30, 1845." Finally an April 8 1846 notice in *Hartford Daily Courant*, "Thompson Express. Francis A. Fuller ceased to be our Agent on the 20th day of October last.

**SAVE YOUR POSTAGE---HALE & CO'S. IN
DEPENDENT MAIL**—HALE & CO. are prepared
to forward Letters to and from Hartford, New Haven, New
York and Philadelphia; Springfield, Northampton, Green-
field, Albany, Utica, Rome, Canandaigua, Rochester, Buffa-
lo, Worcester, Boston, Salem, Portsmouth, Portland, Ban-
gor, Eastport, Calais, &c., Providence and New Bedford.
Postage, 6½ cents—20 Stamps for \$1. Office, 7 Central Row,
Hartford.

Hale & Co. take pleasure in informing the citizens of Hart-
ford and vicinity, that their arrangements are such as to en-
sure the rapid and safe transmission of all letters entrusted
to them, and refer to the merchants and others of Boston and
New York, whose correspondence they have carried for the
past six months.

The public will please bear in mind that Hale & Co. have
tested the legality of their Independent Mail, before the Su-
preme Court of the U. S., Hon. Judge Story presiding, who
decided in their favor.

N. B. Southern Mail closes ½ before 6 P. M.; Northern,
Eastern and Western at 9 P. M. daily. Letters received
after those hours will not be forwarded until next day.

HALE & CO., 7 Central Row,
Hartford.

july 12

**SAVE YOUR POSTAGE---HALE & CO'S. IN
DEPENDENT MAIL**—HALE & CO. are prepared
to forward Letters to and from Hartford, New Haven, New
York and Philadelphia; Springfield, Northampton, Green-
field, Albany, Utica, Rome, Canandaigua, Rochester, Buffa-
lo, Worcester, Boston, Salem, Portsmouth, Portland, Ban-
gor, Eastport, Calais, &c., Providence and New Bedford.
Postage, 6½ cents—20 Stamps for \$1. Office, 139 Main street,
Hartford.

Hale & Co. take pleasure in informing the citizens of Hart-
ford and vicinity, that their arrangements are such as to en-
sure the rapid and safe transmission of all letters entrusted
to them, and refer to the merchants and others of Boston and
New York, whose correspondence they have carried for the
past six months.

The public will please bear in mind that Hale & Co. have
tested the legality of their Independent Mail, before the Su-
preme Court of the U. S., Hon. Judge Story presiding, who
decided in their favor.

N. B. Southern Mail closes ½ before 6 P. M.; Northern,
Eastern and Western at 9 P. M. daily. Letters received
after those hours will not be forwarded until next day.

HALE & CO., 7 Central Row,
Hartford.

july 12

**SAVE YOUR POSTAGE---HALE & CO'S. IN
DEPENDENT MAIL**—HALE & CO. are prepared
to forward Letters to and from Hartford, New Haven, New
York and Philadelphia; Springfield, Northampton, Green-
field, Albany, Utica, Rome, Canandaigua, Rochester, Buffa-
lo, Worcester, Boston, Salem, Portsmouth, Portland, Ban-
gor, Eastport, Calais, &c., Providence and New Bedford.
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Eastern and Western at 9 P. M. daily. Letters received
after those hours will not be forwarded until next day.

HALE & CO., 117 Main street,
Hartford.

july 12

Figure 19. Hale & Company advertisements in Hartford Daily Courant. Advertisement at left, internally dated July 12 (1844), ran until September 25, 1844. Advertisement at center, identical except listing the Phillips Express address of 139 Main Street in addition to the Hale address at 7 Central Row (Hartford) ran from September 27, 1844 until October 24, 1844. Advertisement at right, with main Hale address listed as "117 Main St" ran from November 6, 1844 until 1845.

Edward Williams Parsons

Although no period mention of E.W. Parsons's involvement with the Hartford Letter Mail has been found, in the 1890's Parsons claimed to have been the "instigator of the enterprise" and his claims require careful consideration even if they can not be verified.

The earliest mention this author has found of his purported involvement with Hartford Letter Mail appeared in a report of "Rare Postage Stamps" that was distributed to several newspapers in 1890. The piece was published by the *New York Times* on March 7, 1890 and *Dickerman's United States Treasury Counterfeit Detector* of the same year. This report, apparently sent out by Parsons and another stamp collector from Hartford, Hammond Trumbull, will be examined after a review of Edward Parsons' career.

According to his obituary published in the *Hartford Courant* on September 26, 1898, Edward W. Parsons was born in Amherst, Massachusetts on December 28, 1817 and died in Hartford, Connecticut on September 25, 1898. He came to Hartford in 1836 to work in a flour mill and afterward he became a partner of Flavius A. Brown in the book business, the firm name being Brown & Parsons.

The advertisements of Brown & Parsons continue unchanged through the 1844-45 period of operation of the Hartford Letter Mail. The first mention of Parsons being associated with the express business appears in a news item in the January 22, 1852 Hartford Courant that states: "Mr E.W. Parsons (of the late firm of Brown & Parsons) has become associated with Messrs. Phillips & Co. of this city in the Express business." After Daniel Phillips merged his express into the new Adams Express Company in 1854, Parsons continued on with the new company. On December 13, 1855 the *Springfield Republican* mentions that Parsons had just been appointed as Superintendent of the New England section of Adams Express Company. Two uses of E.W. Parsons' Adams Express datestamp are shown in Figure 20. Following a successful career with Adams Express, Parsons retired to become the first President of the Connecticut General Life Insurance Company.



Figure 20. E.W. Parson's oval datestamp on Adam's Express Company business letter of September 2, 1857 dated from Hartford and the same marking on a local use 1858 cover.

Interestingly, Parsons became a member of the American Numismatic & Archeological Society on February 25, 1869. He apparently had philatelic interest in the Hartford stamp as well. The 1890 "Rare Postage Stamp" notice (Figure 21) previously mentioned includes:

RARE POSTAGE STAMPS - A Hartford, Conn. dispatch says: In 1845, the same year in which the first stamps were issued by the New York Post Office, two years earlier in fact, than the first Government stamps, the old Adams Express Company put out an issue of its own, the company stipulating the transportation of mail matter as express for just one-half of the Government rates. E.W. Parsons of this city who was formerly Superintendent of the company, was the instigator of the enterprise. He has two of these stamps in his possession. They are buff-colored and somewhat smaller than the new two-cent stamp. The figure of a man is represented astride of two continents, with a mail pouch over his shoulder, and the word 'Hartford' written across it. President Daniel Phillips of the Mechanics' Savings Bank, who is now nearing the eighty-year limit in life, was an associate of Mr. Parson's in the express company. It was one of his duties to sell the stamps. He has in his possession a gold dollar which was given him by mistake for stamps forty-five years ago. The trade was discontinued on account of Government interference after it had been carried on for a short time. The stamps were scattered, and it is not probable that a dozen of them can be found in the entire state.

This un-sourced article, seemingly distributed by Hammond Trumbull and Edward Parsons, is loaded with inaccuracies. Adams Express had no connection with Hartford Letter Mail. The Hartford stamp was issued in 1844, not 1845. Further, there is no mention of the pink stamp and curiously, no mention is made of Francis Fuller. Also, Daniel Phillips' role was certainly more significant than implied.

In December 1895, W.H. Bruce authored an article (Figure 22) on "The Hartford Local" that was published in *The Eastern Philatelist*. The author apparently interviewed Edward W. Parsons and the article states:

In this later class (locals of which few copies are extant) must be enumerated the labels issued in 1845 by Messrs. Parsons & Fuller of Hartford. .. Mr Parsons, at the time of their emission, was engaged in the book business in Hartford and among his acquaintances was a Mr. Fuller, who was the terminal agent for the Thompson & Co. express line, of Springfield. These gentlemen conceived an idea that it was possible to operate a letter route by express ...

This short introduction repeats the date of issue error and fails to make any mention of Daniel Phillips who at least got mention in the 1890 version. Also, the stamp is described as having the word "Hartford" written across it, and this is repeated in the 1895 "Eastern Philatelist" report and may refer to the manuscript precancel that exists but the mail bag has the word "MAIL" inscribed on it. However, even with all the errors of fact contained in the article, there does remain a hint at a possible connection. A following sentence, "On the suppression of the stamps the plate remained in the possession of Mr. Fuller for several years, when, it is claimed, it was destroyed" suggests that Parsons had knowledge of the stamp plate. The most likely connection would be that he was involved with the printing of the stamps while working at Brown & Parsons booksellers. The firm is known from their advertisements to have sold prints locally produced.

In summary, the author has not been able to find any real evidence that E.W. Parsons was involved with the Hartford Letter Mail. The few published accounts from Parsons, relating to both coins and the Hartford stamps, do not inspire confidence in the veracity of his claims. However, it does seem possible that the plate of twelve individual engravings was prepared by a local engraver and printed under the direction of Parsons.

RARE POSTAGE STAMPS.

OLD CONFEDERATE SPECIMENS—HARTFORD EXPRESS STAMP.

HARTFORD, Conn., March 6.—The Hon. I. Hammond Trumbull of this city, who is the most noted antiquarian in the State, made a curious discovery not long ago while scanning an old tome that had come into his possession. In turning over the pages he came across two old Confederate letters which had been sent through the South during the first year of the war. The letters themselves were of no material consequence, but the canceled stamps on the envelopes turned out to be rare specimens. They belong to the first lot of postage stamps issued by the Confederacy and bear the likeness of Jefferson Davis. The canceled stamp of this period is of special value, being exceedingly rare in stamp collections. Mr. Trumbull, as the librarian of the Watkinson Library in this city, has received great numbers of interesting stamps, his collection containing some of the rarest specimens of official issues in the country. These official stamps, which have never been used, came to him from the departments at Washington in public documents and publications. Not being used by Prof. Trumbull in acknowledgment of the volumes received, the stamps accumulated, and he is now the owner of a most admirable assortment.

But the famous Hartford stamp, two or three specimens of which only can be found here, eclipses Dr. Trumbull's official issues in interest. In 1845, the same year in which the first stamps were issued by the New-York Post Office, two years earlier, in fact, than the first Government stamps, the old Adams Express Company put out an issue of its own, the company stipulating the transportation of mail matter as express for just one-half of the Government rates. E. W. Parsons of this city, who was formerly Superintendent of the company, was the instigator of the enterprise. He has two of these stamps in his possession. They are buff-colored and somewhat smaller than the new two-cent stamp. The figure of a man is represented astride of two continents, with a mail pouch over his shoulder, and the word "Hartford" written across it. President Daniel Phillips of the Mechanics' Savings Bank, who is now nearing the eighty-year limit in life, was an associate of Mr. Parsons in the express company. It was one of his duties to sell the stamps. He has in his possession a gold dollar which was given him by mistake for stamps forty-five years ago. The trade was discontinued on account of Government interference after it had been carried on for a short time. The stamps were scattered, and it is not probable that a dozen of them can be found in the entire State.

Figure 21. This "Rare Postage Stamps" newspaper article appeared in March 1890 and was printed in several newspapers and publications. It appears to have been distributed to those publications by Trumbull and Parsons.

THE EASTERN PHILATELIST.

Official Organ of the New England Philatelic Association.

Published by
F. H. PINKHAM.
NEWMARKET, N.H.

VOL. XVI., No. 4.

DECEMBER, 1895.

WHOLE No. 94.

The Hartford Local.

The collection of United States locals, while not as extensively pursued, even by specialists, as is the acquiring of certain other provisional labels identified with the earlier days of slow transportation and limited mail facilities, is yet a very interesting and rather fascinating feature of the stamp hobby. While in a collection of revenue stamps there is a general similarity of design governing each series, in a fairly complete acquirement of locals there is afforded an almost unlimited field of study, and as many delineations as there are emissions. Originals or reprints of a good many of these locals are to be found in the average collections, while of others but a few known copies are extant. In this latter class must be enumerated the labels issued in 1845 by Messrs. Parsons and Fuller of Hartford. They are not only rare, but extremely so, less than a score of originals being at the present time definitely located, and of those but about half a dozen are used. Mr. Parsons, at the time of their emission, was engaged in the book business in Hartford, and among his acquaintances was a Mr. Fuller, who was a terminal agent for the Thompson & Co. express line, of Springfield. These gentlemen conceived an idea that it was possible to operate a letter route by express, on their own responsibility, at a less rate per ounce than Uncle Sam charged, and make something on the venture. In pursuance of this scheme they had the design prepared, familiar to every collector who has looked through the pages of Scott's Catalogue, of a man with one foot on the Western Hemisphere and the other on the Eastern half of the world, an ocean steamship centering the device. The idea, as Mr. Parsons informs me, was suggested by a Shakespearean metaphor, which some of our readers may recall. Over the left shoulder of the figure is thrown a mail sack on which appears the inscription, "Mail." The word "Hartford" does not appear as a part of the design, but was written on the face of the stamp by way of cancellation and also to show its emanation and the point from which the letter it franked came. On all the specimens we have seen, the word is written either down the stamp or diagonally across it.



The plate from which the stamps were printed was a small one, of metal, electrotyped, and containing not over ten duplicates. The stamp was, of course, imperforate, the paper employed being of a thin wove texture, with a light brownish gum. There were two varieties of these stamps issued—one on a buff glazed paper, which were put up in packages of twenty and sold for \$1.00, and one on a pink glazed paper, of which ten were given for \$1.00.

The rate charged by the government at this time was $6\frac{1}{4}$ and $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents per half-ounce and per ounce respectively, and so, to win some of Uncle Sam's business, the inventors sold their stamps at the above prices.

It was the intention at first to carry letters only between the larger cities, as New York and Boston, and as patronage developed gradually to increase the facilities and distances. Before, however, the system had gotten well under way an agent of the government interviewed the projectors, with the result that the issuance of both kinds was at once discontinued. Of the buff value not over 100 in all were printed and of the pink a lesser number, so the comparative rarity and value of these labels can readily be surmised.

On the suppression of the stamps the plate remained in the possession of Mr. Fuller for several years, when, it is claimed, it was destroyed. Of the known copies of the 5c. value, three are in the possession of Mr. Parsons, and not purchasable at any price; two others are owned by grandchildren; two are in the books of old Hartford collectors, and another, on the original cover, which had been to New York and was subsequently secured, is the property of another Hartford party. Several of the originals are also owned in New York city.

Of the pink, or 10c. variety, but two copies are known to the writer, and a good specimen would find a quick market at \$50.00. It is stated that reprints exist, but we have never seen one. Such specimens as have been submitted to the writer from time to time for an opinion have in every instance been counterfeits, pure and simple—some excellent specimens, but nevertheless counterfeits. Mr. Fuller, through whom some some few reprints might possibly have reached the market, passed away over a decade ago, while his partner in the enterprise, Mr. E. W. Parsons, is yet a hale, well-preserved gentleman, on whom the hand of time has rested but lightly.

W. H. BRUCE.

Figure 22. Article on "The Hartford Local" by H.C. Bruce which appeared in December 1895 "The Eastern Philatelist."

Daniel Phillips

Daniel Phillips was the proprietor of the "New York Express Company" that operated a package express between Hartford and New York City. This is the express company that actually conveyed the Hartford Letter Mail letters from Hartford to New York City. It seems probable that the company also carried Hale & Company letters in both directions between Hartford and New York City.

According to Pearce's *Forbes & Forbush Genealogy*, Phillips was born July 2, 1809 in Charlestown, Massachusetts. He left Westboro, Massachusetts in 1842 to engage in the express business between Hartford and New York operating the line previously established by W.F. Harnden in 1837. The express operated as Clark & Phillips New York Express in early 1843. By November a *New Haven Columbian Register* notice no longer included Clark's name. The full notice reads:

Phillips & Cos Express (Late Harnden & Co's). The agency having been transferred from Mr James S. Bailey to W. Webb, hereafter all packages for Hartford & East, should be marked "Care Phillips & Co" and left at 56 State street before 11 o'clock AM. ,W. Webb, Agent

In 1845 *Geer's Hartford Directory* the address from Phillips & Co N.Y. Express is listed as 139 Main Street, Hartford. Significantly, this address begins to appear in Hale and Company advertisements dated July 12, 1844 as a secondary Hartford address to their mail primary address at 7 Central Row (Hartford). The advertisement (Figure 3) is shown as it appeared in the October 11, 1844 *Hartford Daily Courant*. This same address is also listed in the directory as the primary address of Thompson's Express.

This advertisement is a variant of a nearly identical ad that did not include the 139 Main Street address that ran under the same July 12 internal date prior to October 1844. The address was the location of the Hartford Letter Mail office run by Francis Fuller in his dual role as employee of Phillips New York Express and as agent for Thompson's Express.

Figure 23 shows a folded letter from Waterbury endorsed to be carried by Phillips Express that entered Hale's office in New York as unpaid and collect. It was handled by Phillips Express via New Haven to New York City before receiving the Hale & Co. boxed collect handstamp. This letter tends to confirm the relationship between Hale and Phillips.

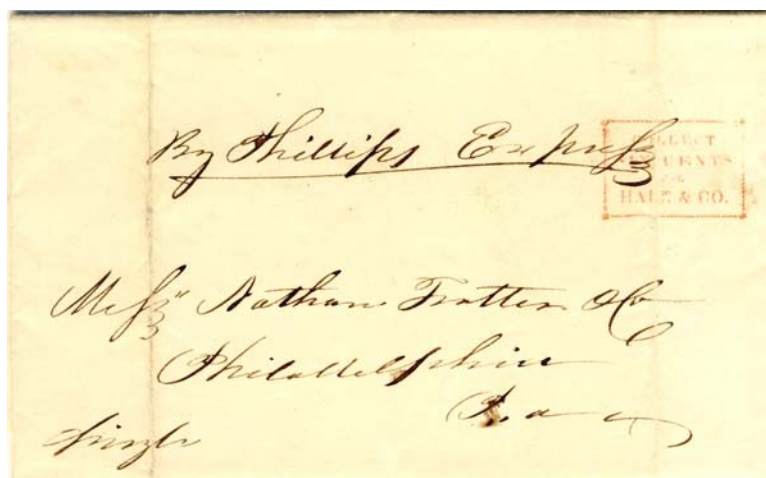


Figure 23. "By Phillips Express" endorsement on December 4, 1844 folded letter from Waterbury to Philadelphia.

Following the June 30, 1845 termination of the Hartford Letter Mail service, Phillips continued their package express. A July 26, 1845 *Hartford Times* advertisement reads,

Phillips & Cos Express have made arrangements to run their express daily between Hartford & NY. Messengers will leave Hartford at 6 ½ PM and Harnden & Cos Office, 6 Wall St, New York at 6 ½ AM for the transportation of bank notes

Phillips New York Express continued until 1854 when it and other companies were merged in the Adams Express Company. That same year Phillips was elected as member of the Connecticut General Assembly. Daniel Phillips also served on the Adams Express first board of managers and continued his association with the express until 1866 when he retired. He died May 2, 1903.

6. Plating Guide and Enlargements

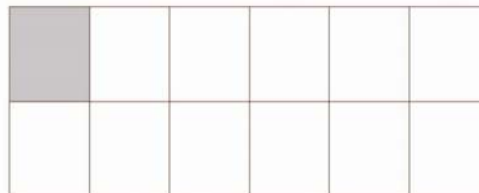
The following images show enlargements of the twelve plate positions with brief description of the salient characteristics.

Position 1

Strider has large nose.
Left heel rests on cubes.



Position on Plate Layout

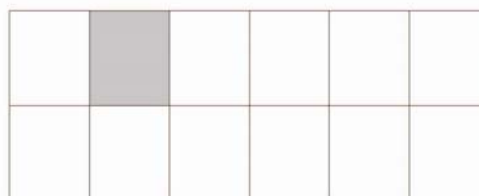


Position 2

Strider short hat,
vertical lines below left
heel.



Position on Plate Layout

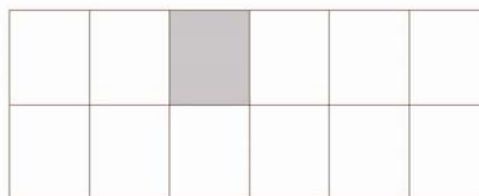


Position 3

Strider's left hand short
and barely visible.



Position on Plate Layout

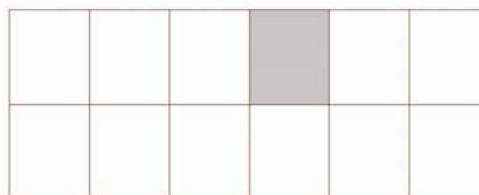


Position 4

Strider's left hand with
clearly defined fingers.



Position on Plate Layout

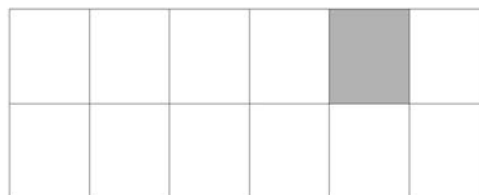


Position 5

Strider's left hand with clearly defined fingers.



Position on Plate Layout



Position 6

Large mail bag with squarish handle.



Position on Plate Layout

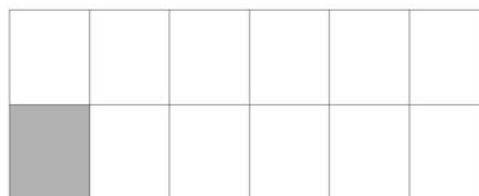


Position 7

Strider with idiotic face and long head.



Position on Plate Layout

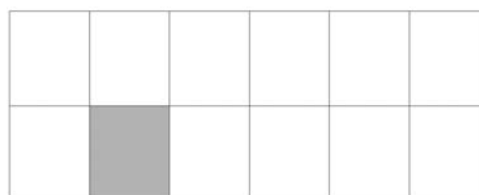


Position 8

Strider with long fingers. Steamer is taller than normal.



Position on Plate Layout

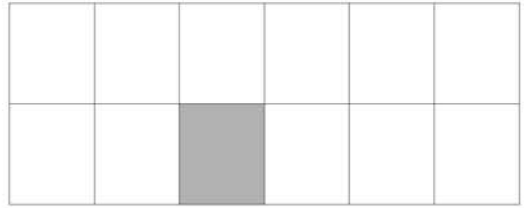


Position 9

Strider with out-thrust chin. Long steamer.



Position on Plate Layout

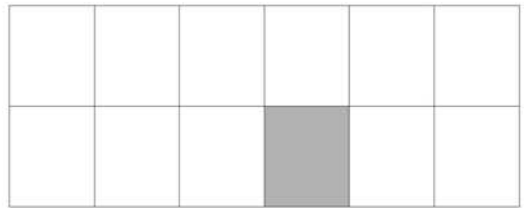


Position 10

Strider with pointed nose. Shallow boat.



Position on Plate Layout

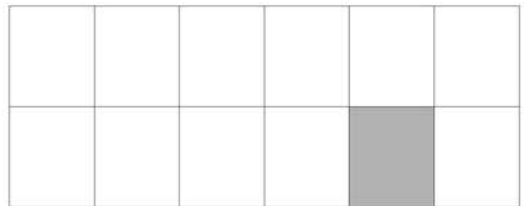


Position 11

Both cities slope to left. Steamer with solid hull.



Position on Plate Layout

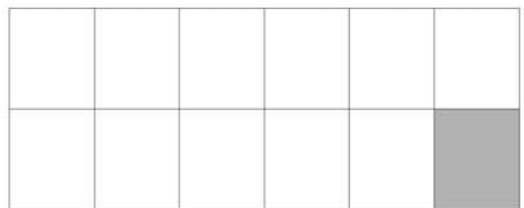


Position 12

Strider placed higher on towns. Mail bag larger handle.



Position on Plate Layout



7. References

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Gutman, Michael, *Hale & Co. Independent Mail Company, 1843-1845*
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