

The 1876 Centennial Exposition Issue of Postal Entires: A Study of Uses

Issued in commemoration of the World's Fair at Philadelphia in 1876, this issue of postal stationery was manufactured by the Plimpton Manufacturing Company of Hartford, Connecticut. Domestic and foreign-bound uses will be shown, as well as the earliest documented uses of both green and vermilion designs, as well as the earliest documented example with the address typed at the Exposition.

Shortly before the 1876 Exposition, The Plimpton Manufacturing Company had perfected a machine which would gum the envelopes as well as performing all of the other operations. With the permission of the Post Office, one of these machines was setup in the space devoted to the Post Office Department in the Government Building in the Centennial Grounds in Philadelphia, and keep it in operation during the Exposition. This improved machine, with the exception of cutting the blanks or patterns, would perform folding, stamping, gumming, and if desired, print a return request. Attached to the machine is an automatic counter, separating the envelopes into packages of 25. These groups of 25 were banded together with blue bands bearing the gold monogram "CSE", probably standing for Centennial stamped envelopes. The machine was handsomely ornamented, and was in almost constant operation, during exhibition hours, from the opening on May 10 to November 10 1876, and was capable of producing about 20,000 envelopes per day. At first it was intended to only issue these commemorative envelopes to the Philadelphia Post Office, but there was such an immediate demand for them that the privilege of obtaining them was extended to every post office in the country. A total of 4,775,000 of the full letter size and 4,227,000 of the larger commercial size were reported issued.

A special design for the stamp and dies was prepared by Henry Mitchell to commemorate the Centennial celebration in 1876. The design included a mail carrier on horseback, representing 1776, and an express train, with telegraph wires overhead, representing 1876. The stamp was printed in green for the full letter size 7, knife 30, and in vermilion for the larger commercial size 8, knife 36. The paper was especially manufactured for this issue with a watermark consisting of "U S C 1876" in monogram (known as watermark 3).



"Centennial Phila'da. Pa. 5 AM Sept 4" cds, to Colebrook, N.H., forwarded to Boston, Mass. Postmarked at Centennial Exposition station



Die 71 – single line under "POSTAGE"



Wmk. 3 (1876)



Die 72– double line under "POSTAGE"

1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition Station Uses



3c green Die 71 May 19 1876, Earliest Documented Use, Centennial Exposition station, to Wiesbaden, Germany

APEX cert

3c green Die 71 May 25 1876
EDU with typed address from
Centennial Exposition station,
to Utica, NY



APEX cert



3c vermilion Die 71 June 12 1876
EDU at Centennial Exposition
station, to New York, NY

APEX cert

1876 Centennial Exposition Issue: Domestic Uses

Return to NEAVE, WARD & CO.,
37 and 39 Main Street, CINCINNATI, Ohio,
If not delivered within 10 days.

Cincinnati, Ohio to Bloomington,
Indiana



Mr. Moore Bollender & Co.



Bloomington Ind

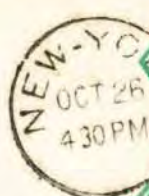
Robert R. Loy, Esq
Att'y at Law

Galesville, Wisc. to Norristown, Pa.
double rate



S. B. Brahm
Millersville

Return to W. L. HEERMANCE,
67 Broad Street, NEW YORK,
If not delivered within 10 days.



Lancaster, Pa. to Millersville, Pa.

H. Farrington &
Shelby Ohio

New York, NY to Shelby, Ohio

1876 Centennial Exposition Issue: Western Express Use

CHEYENNE AND BLACK HILLS
STAGE CO'S EXPRESS,
Gilmer, Salisbury & Patrick.



Wm. Cooper Esq
Belvidere
Boon Co
Illinois

LUKE VOORHEES, SUPT.

"Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage Co.'s Express, Gilmer, Salisbury & Patrick, Luke Voorhees, Supt." printed frank, "Cheyenne Wyo. Dec. 4" (1876) cds to Belvidere, Illinois. At Cheyenne the stage connected with the Union Pacific Railroad.

The Cheyenne & Black Hills Express was organized by F.D. Yates in 1876. The first run was on 2 February, 1876 from Cheyenne, W.T. to Custer City, D.T. via Red Cloud Agency. Ten days later Yates sold out to Gilmer, Salisbury and Patrick, who extended the route to Deadwood, D.T. via Fort Laramie, W.T. On 1 October, 1878 Patrick withdrew from the partnership and on 15 May, 1883 Gilmer and Salisbury sold out to Russell Thorpe Sr., who continued to operate the line until 19 February, 1887.

On 3 August, 1874 army scout "Lonesome" Charley Reynolds (killed at the Battle of Little Big Horn 25, June, 1876) rode into Fort Laramie with startling news that gold had been found in the Black Hills by the Custer exploring expedition. The news swept like wildfire and started the stampede to the Black Hills - the hills held sacred to the Indians. The land that had been set aside by two treaties for the red man's hunting grounds forever.

Information courtesy of Richard Frajola.



Gold miners in the Black Hills. The gold rushes antagonized the Sioux and provoked war with Custer.



Wm. May
Office Supt. Rm. S.
New York.

Berlin, Pa. to New York, NY

1876 Centennial Exposition Issue: Domestic Uses with Fancy Cancels

State of New Hampshire.
SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE.
OFFICIAL BUSINESS.

Concord, N.H. Aug 13 (1876)
with negative "76" in blue
shield, to Fitzwilliam, N.H.
with original dated enclosure

Amos J. Blake Esq
Fitzwilliam
N.H.



Return to TOPLIFF & ELY,
ELYRIA, Lorain County, Ohio,
If not delivered within 5 days.

Inv. Sept 20
\$695.72
Miss W.D. Wood & Co.
Pittsburg
Pa.



Elyria, Ohio Sept. 11 1876
with blue interlocking "US"
in oval, to Pittsburg, Pa.

Pittsburgh, Pa. with star in circle,
to Dickson City, Pa.

Miss Mary R. Richmond
Dickson City Pa.
Luzerne County
Penn'a



1876 Centennial Exposition Issue: Domestic Uses with Fancy Cancels

Boston, Mass. With negative
"H" in circle cancel to Con-
toocook, N.H.



Orland, Ind., Steuben County Apr. 30
1878 purple serrated oval postmark
with purple "4" cancel, to Chicago, Ill.



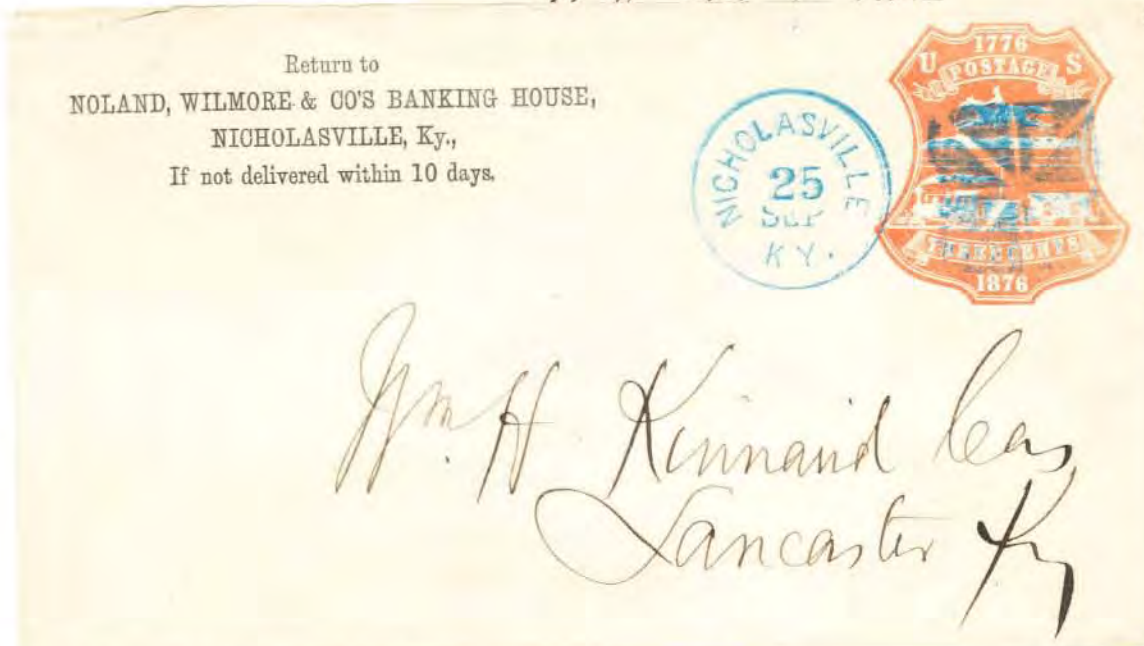
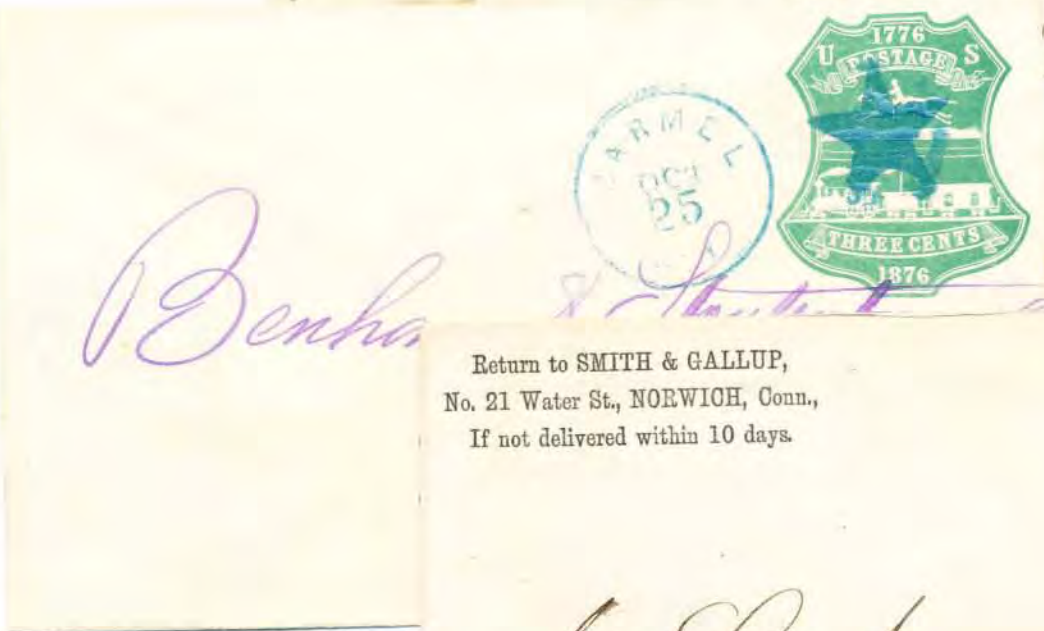
Blairstown, N.J. 9 Sept. 1876 pur-
ple cds with purple "V" in circle
cancel, to Warsaw, NY

1876 Centennial Exposition Issue: Domestic Uses

Carmel, NY with blue star, to New York, NY



New York, NY to South Brooklyn, Long Island, NY



Norwich, Ct., target cancel, to Scotland, Conn.

Nicholasville, Ky. Blue wedges in square cancel, to Lancaster, Ky.

1876 Centennial Exposition Issue: Domestic Uses with Fancy Cancels

Boston, Mass. with negative
"E" in circle cancel, to South
Hadley, Mass. Addressed using
early typewriter



Barre, Vt. Blue wedges cancel, to
Vershire, Vt.

Amherst, NY negative "76" in
shield cancel, to Chicago, Ill.



1876 Centennial Exposition Issue: Foreign-Bound Uses



Cincinnati, Ohio to Calw, Baden-Wurtemberg, Germany, circa 1877, blue numeral "2" in concentric circles cancel



Chicago, Ill. Oct. 4 1876 with blue grid cancel, to Liverpool, England



Oakland, Cal. to Modena, Italy, circa 1877

1876 Centennial Exposition Issue: Foreign-Bound Uses



New York, NY Registered Use Jan. 31, 1877 to Berlin, Germany, with Hamburg registry label at top, "From Abroad" (Vom Ausland) and "Registered" (Eingeschrieben) with 15c orange yellow Continental Banknote with grid cancel



Hartford, Conn. Aug. 11 1876 to Lewes, Sussex, England. Short paid—"T" (postage due) circular marking and "7-1/2" pence collect and "25" markings



Galveston, Texas Dec. 8 1876 to La Chaux-de-fonds, Switzerland, 1c convenience overpayment of 5c UPU rate

1876 Centennial Exposition Issue: Foreign-Bound Uses



Philadelphia Exposition station,
Aug 11 1876, to London, England,
typewritten



San Francisco Calif. Oct 20
1878, to Frankfort, Germany



Cleveland, Ohio to Berlin, Germany
Circa 1877

1876 Centennial Exposition Issue: Foreign-Bound Uses

Commission of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg,
Main Building, Centennial Exhibition,
PHILADELPHIA.

Europe
Monsieur Armand Frenais
77 Boulevard, Richard Lenoir 77
Paris.



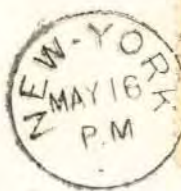
Philadelphia Pa. Dec 26 1876 to
Paris, France, from Luxembourg
Commission at the Exposition,
Main Building

New London, Conn. to Italy

Miss Penelope
Caro Signora Artimino
Bella Artimino
Bello Squardo
Firenze Italia
Hanno Italia



La Frisia
a 10



From Capt. H. H. H. H.
Hamburg
Danzig

New York, NY to Danzig, Germany
per steamer *Frisia* via Hamburg

1876 Centennial Exposition Issue: Foreign-Bound Uses



New York, NY Mar 29 1877 to Nice, France



Wyandotte, Kansas to Chemnitz, Saxony, Germany



Philadelphia, Pa. Jul. 4 1876 to Alberti-Irsa, Austria, via Vienna

1876 Centennial Exposition Issue: Foreign-Bound Uses



Michigan to Calw, Württemberg, Germany, via Bremen



Dubuque, Iowa Oct. 26 1876 to Dublin, Ireland



New York, NY Oct 13 1877 to Danzig, Germany per steamer Mosel via Bremen

1876 Centennial Exposition Issue: Foreign-Bound Uses



Philadelphia, Pa. Mar 11 1878 to
Rugby, England



Fourth Crossing, Cal. to Olney,
England



Pike Road, Alabama, Jan 18,
1877 to Manchester, England

1876 Centennial Exposition Issue: Foreign-Bound Uses



New Haven, Conn. to Paris, France,
forwarded to Bozen, Austria then
to Grilo Badl, Austria

Philadelphia, Pa. Oct. 5, 1876,
to Clarens, Switzerland



Hartford, Conn. Jan. 21, 1886,
to Paris, France. Late use