

STUDY of the EXAMINER MARKINGS at the GENERAL POST OFFICE in NYC, 1878 – 1883.

Purpose: This single frame exhibit addresses the equipment markings, Type EM-2 and Type EM-3 used on domestic and foreign registered letters by the sworn clerks (aka examiners) at the General Post Office in New York City.

Scope: A new system of identification has been developed for the different types of all the examiner markings. The first examiner markings addressed in this exhibit are identified as Type EM-2 and were used from 1878 to 1882. The design of the marker is a rectangular box that measures 27 mm tall by 54 mm wide. The internal design has curved scroll lines through out with a small rectangular box in the center for the date of usage.

The second examiner markings addressed are the Type EM-3 and saw a small usage span of 20 months from April 1882 through November 29, 1883. The EM-2 marker was replaced by the Type EM-3 marker with four different letters, “B”, “C”, “D”, and “U” with the date stamp in the center of the letters.

This exhibit will update the research work that began with Dr. William Evans in 1935-36 and continued with J.H. Barr in 1952 regarding the sworn clerk markings used at the GPO in NYC. J. H. Barr's work addressed many registry marks but this exhibit only discusses the four larger letter markings used in 1882-1883,

History / Background: June 1, 1867, Postmaster General, A. W. Randall issued a more detailed plan of instructions for improving the registry system as was published in the “Regulations Respecting the Registration of Letters.” From this letter, section 8 of this letter addresses the “Receiving Registered Letters for Delivery.” Quoted from this section: “On the arrival of mail at any office the pouch shall be opened only by the postmaster, his deputy, or a sworn clerk;.” In the larger post offices, this work fell to the sworn clerks and in the case of the GPO in NYC these workers became known as the examiners.

Roll and Responsibility of the Examiners: Early research was performed by Dr. Evans and J.H. Barr and the two following quotes will explain these issues. The first is a quote from the “Stamps Magazine” of July 11, 1936 written by Dr. Evans.

“A letter from the postmaster written in 1935 says “From information which could be gathered from employees of the Postal Service at the mentioned markings to all mentioned were used for back stamping registered articles. The letter used in the stamp identified the clerk who used same and was known as an examiner, being exclusively by him, as he was held responsible for the condition of all articles being the stamp which he signed for. It is believed that the stamps were in use at the Registry Section of the old General Post Office on Park Row during the dated mentioned.” Until the receipt of this letter, the employment of the examiner was unknown.

Second opinion from a letter that J.H. Barr wrote to Mr. A. Goldman, former Postmaster in NYC, asking information about the Registry marks. As Mr. Barr states that Mr. Goldman went to considerable trouble to secure information about them and the following is quoted from his March 11, 1952 letter.

“It is regretted that there is no record of the cancellation impressions of that time still on file at this office: however, a registered wrapper bearing such an impression, letter C, dated June 6, 1894, was found in the official correspondence of 1894. One of the employees of the New York Post Office who entered the Postal Service in 1888 and who is now enjoying retirement at the age of 84, was shown this impression, and he advised that as far as his memory of 60 years ago permits, the initial was that of the clerk at the receiving window with the date of registration.”

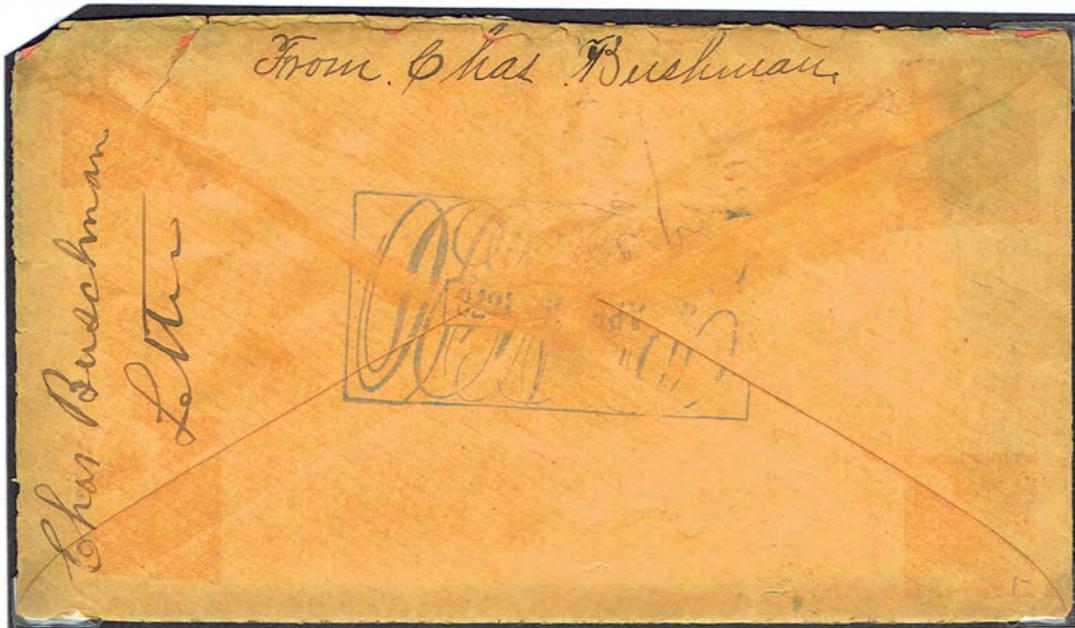
Exhibit Plan: Type EM-2 Examiner Markings, 1878 – 1882.
Type EM-3 Examiner Markings, 1882 – 1883.
Epilogue, The Next Generation of Examiner markings.

Special Notes: Important pieces are high lighted with a red border.
Special and Historical notes identified in Italic print.

Type EM-2 Examiner Markings, 1878 – 1882.

The General Post Office in New York City was handling registered mail under the published guidelines in the “Regulations Respecting the Registration of Letters” that was effective beginning June 1, 1867. The examiner, at this time, would be working under the regulations set forth in section eight, “Receiving Registered Letters for Delivery.”

This first class registered letter from Char Bushman was mailed on, Thursday, April 18, 1878 from Groton, Connecticut to New York City. The Groton post office was established very early in the New London county in 1812 and is still an operating post office today. The first class rate in this time frame was three cents / ½ oz.



The registered mail pouch received at the GPO registry department, opened and inspected by the examiner and hand stamped the back of the envelope with a Type EM-2 marker in black ink on April 19, 1878.

Special Notes:

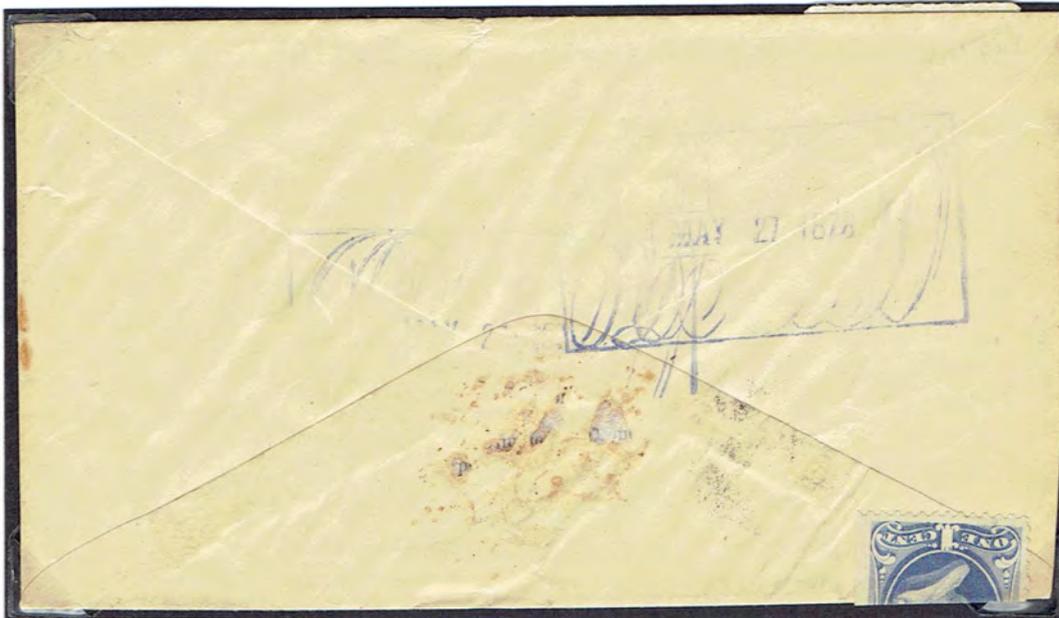
This cover shows a very early usage of the Type EM-2 marking.

At this time, the examiner was using blue ink to apply the marker mark to the covers.



Type EM-2 Examiner Markings, 1878 – 1882.

A “triple” first class registered letter mailed, Saturday, May 25, 1878 from Irvington, N.Y. to Middlebury, Vermont. The first class rate at this time was three cents / ½ oz. The registered mail pouch was received at the NYC GPO registry department, opened and inspected by the working examiner and double hand stamped the back envelope back flap with a blue Type EM-2 marker on Monday, May 27, 1878.



Special Notes:

Another very early usage, only 38 days later than the cover shown on page three. Domestic registered “triple weight covers” are most difficult to fine in the early years.

Sometimes known as “Irvington-on-Hudson”, a village in the town of Greenburgh in Westchester County, NY where the post office was established in 1854 and still operating today. Of note, the main city of Greenburgh only had a post office that stayed open from 1873 to 1875.



Type EM-2 Examiner Markings, 1878 – 1882.

On March 3, 1879 the Congress of the United States approved a new set of “Postal Laws and Regulations that then took effect on July 1, 1879. The new regulations created a system for handling valuable mail that truly met the stated objectives for the registry service stated in section 807 of the law. This registry system objective is intended to secure to valuable mail matter in its transmission through the mails the utmost security within the province of the Post Office Department.

Mr. Rudolph Fisher mailed a first class registered letter on Wednesday, July 2, 1879 from Tell City, IN to a friend in Meisterschwanden, a city in the most densely populated German region of Switzerland, called Canton of Aargau. The first class UPU service rate was five cent / 15 grams. The letter arriving at the GPO in NYC, inspected and hand stamped by the examiner with a Type EM-2 marker in black ink on “Sunday”, July 6, 1879, and operating on the 6th day under the new regulations.



Special Notes:

Under the “Postal Laws and Regulations” effective July 1, 1879, Section 811, “No Registration on Sunday – Postmasters are not required to receive letters or other matter for registration on Sunday or legal holidays.” Recorded information shows that the examiners worked on Sundays into the 1920’s at the GPO in NYC.



Type EM-2 Examiner Markings, 1878 – 1882.

Mr. A. Ketileos mailed this first class registered "mourning cover" from Branch "B" in NYC on May 10, 1880 to Highgate Springs, Vermont. The first class rate was three cents per ½ ounce plus ten cent registration fee.



The letter traveled from the Branch Station to the General Post Office in NYC where the examiner inspected the back flap and hand stamped the cover with his Type EM-2 marking on May 10, 1880. The letter was re-registered with no.12915 and then forwarded to Vermont.

Special Note:

This cover is listed in the Ernest Mosher book of "Mourning Covers", Exhibit 26-10, 70-4.



Type EM-2 Examiner Markings, 1878 – 1882.

Donahue Sheffield mailed a first class registered letter on Thursday, December 30, 1880 from San Francisco, CA to Locarno, Switzerland. The letter was registered in San Francisco, hand stamped on the cover front with a "SAF no. 1910" registered marking and no.10130 for tracking and hand stamped the back flap with an examiner marking classified as a "SAF no. 1820" from the John H. Williams book. The registered mail pouch being opened at the GPO in NYC by the examiner, inspecting, and then hand stamped the back flap with a magenta Type EM-2 marking on Friday, January 7, 1881. The registry department re-registered the letter with no.9460 before forwarding to Europe. The first class UPU rate of five cents / 15 grams was over paid by one cent for convenience.



The letter traveled through four other post offices in Switzerland, Ambulant, Luzern, Pasel, and Schiff Luzern before arriving at the final destination in Locarno.

Special Notes:

The back of the cover shows a different rectangular box design that measures 36 mm x 54 mm and dated on December 30, 1880. This marking is listed on page 946 from the book of California Town Postmarks, 1849 - 1935 by John H. Williams, Volume II. The census only lists one known from March 20, 1879 but this exhibit has two other recorded usages. The above cover has a December 30, 1880 and a second usage of June 8, 1883 on the cover shown on "page eleven of this exhibit."

Clerks / examiners in Brooklyn, Chicago, Philadelphia and San Francisco used similar designs as their back flap marking equipment that assured the registered letter was properly checked and sealed.



Type EM-2 Examiner Markings, 1878 – 1882.

Professor A. Hentz mailed a first class “double UPU weight” registered letter from the front window at the General Post Office in New York City on Thursday, November 17, 1881 to Mrs. Mashild Kussenaul in Hamburg, Germany. From the front window, the letter moved to the registry department where the examiner double checked the letter and hand stamped with a magenta ink Type EM-2 marking. The first class UPU rate of five cents / 15 grams being the current rate and this letter had to have had a weight between 16 to 30 grams.



Special Note:

The registry department in the normal processing of foreign mail recorded all proper paper work on each cover. Note the blue pencil marking “No 17”. That number refers to the 17th cover counted in the stack of covers bound for Germany on that day, November 17, 1881.



Type EM-2 Examiner Markings, 1878 – 1882.

It would be believed that the GPO postmaster was in the process of evaluating his operation for the amount of foreign registered mail had doubled in size from 1878 through 1881. They were handling on average 888 letters per day and in reality increased another 30% in 1882.

The need to increase the examiner work force became apparent and a fourth employee was added to the examiner work force. With this extra employee, a seven day schedule was easier to fill to meet the incoming volume of mail arriving on the weekends.

Mr. Phoebe Brown mailed a first class registered letter on Wednesday, January 18, 1882, from the Harlan's "L" Branch Station in NYC to a family relative in Marietta, Ohio. The traveled from the Branch P.O. to the GPO where the examiner inspected all the registered mail and applied a Type EM-2 marking in magenta ink on January 18, 1882. The first class service rate was three cents / ½ oz.



Special Note:

This letter represents the last recorded usage of the Type EM-2 marking equipment. There is an open time frame from January 18, 1882 to April 9, 1882 that could yield an actual change over date to the Type EM-3 markers.



Type EM-3 Examiner Markings, 1882 – 1883.

The GPO postmaster made upgrades to the examiner equipment, which became the Type EM-3 markers for the following reasons: 1. Each examiner identified by his own alphabet letter and could be checked on his performance and accountability on the job. 2. The marking equipment would decrease in size and weight, which would help with performance. 3. This equipment change coincided with the addition of supplying four new geometric design equipment markers to be used at the front receiving window at the GPO by the window clerks.

This “double” weight first class registered letter mailed by B. Jenifer, agent, from Ingomar, Mississippi on Thursday, April 6, 1882, to Professor Allen in New York City. The letter arrived at the GPO in NYC on “Sunday”, April 9, 1882. The receiving examiner inspected and hand stamped a Type EM-3, “B”, marking on the reverse side flap. The condition of the letter was noted by the examiner with many hand stamps applied to the cover front. An Officially Sealed stamp was applied which has the initials (J.J.P.) of the examiner written on the official stamp and on the front of the cover. The first class rate was three cents / ½ oz.



Special Markings:

The following hand stamps were applied to the front of this cover: “Request Examination on Delivery, Obtain Envelope if Irregularity is Reported.” “ Received at New York P. O., in Bad Condition.”

Special Notes:

This Type EM-3, “B”, marking is the earliest recorded usage and only two days later than the earliest recorded usage of a Type EM-3, “C”, on Friday, April 7, 1882.

The Ingomar, MS post office operated from 1866 – 1883 and has an S/1 – 5 rarity rating by R.W. Helbock.



Type EM-3 Examiner Markings, 1882 – 1883.

This is the second cover in this exhibit that was mailed to Professor A.W. Allen. As a graduate from Columbia University in 1878, he started working his profession in July 1, 1880. The cover was mailed first class registered on Monday, December 11, 1882 from Whites Mill, Arkansas to New York, NY. The rate was three cents / ½ oz.

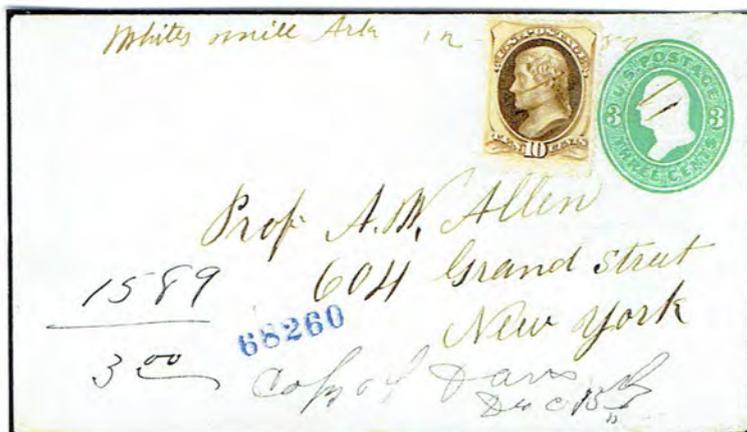


Letter received at the GPO in NYC and inspected and “double” hand-stamped on the back flap with a Type EM-3, “D”, marking on Wednesday, December 13, 1882.

Special Notes:

The Type EM-3, “D”, marking has a very small census survivability rate on cover.

The Whites Mill, Arkansas post office operated from 1878-1886 and would have an S/I – 7 rarity rating if the stamps were properly canceled vs pen cancel.



Type EM-3 Examiner Markings, 1882 – 1883.

Mr. Vorrath mailed a “triple” weight first class registered letter on June 8, 1883 from San Francisco, Ca to Mr. Albert Kuntze in Dresden, Germany. The letter was hand stamped with an “unlisted registered marking” not found in the John H. Williams book of California Town Postmarks. The back flap was hand stamped with a “Type SAF no. 1820” marking by the San Francisco examiner. The first class UPU service rate was five cent / 15 grams plus ten cents registration fee.



The registered mail pouch took seven days to get to the GPO in NYC where examiner “C” performed his proper inspection of the incoming registered letters and hand stamped them with a Type EM-3 marking in magenta ink on Friday June 15, 1883. The registry department further processed the letter on Saturday, June 16, 1883. A New York City exchange label, Type I-A, from sequence run # 2, usage period from April 8, 1883 to July 26, 1883 was applied to the cover.

Special Notes:

Triple weight registered letters are very difficult to find in general and this one with the Type EM-3 marking is the only one listed in the 38 cover census.

This cover shows another example of the examiner marking, SAF no. 1820 used in the San Francisco, CA P.O. during the early 1880's.



Type EM-3 Examiner Markings, 1882 – 1883.

William Diestelhorst mailed a five times first class registered letter from Boston, Mass on Monday, August 27, 1883, to his father Otto Diestelhorst, Esq, in Dresden, Germany. The first class UPU rate was five cents / 15 grams.



The registered mail pouch arrived the next day at the GPO and examiner “C” properly inspected this letter and hand stamped the back flap with his Type EM-3 marking. The registry department further processed the letter on Tuesday, August 28, 1883. A New York City exchange label, Type I-A, from sequence run # 3, usage period from July 27, 1883 to November 16, 1883 was applied to the cover.

Special Notes:

This five times weight first class registered letter is only one of two recorded in the census of the 35 known recorded copies. Both covers were inspected by examiner “C”.

The Boston, Mass registered marking on the front of the cover can be found in the book of “Boston Postmarks to 1890” by Blake and Davis. This markings has a reference number 2347 and shown on page 309 of the book. The date of this marking is an earlier usage than shown in the book.



Type EM-3 Examiner Markings, 1882 – 1883.

First class registered letter mailed on Wednesday, September 5, 1883 from Chicago, Ill to Bamberg, Bavaria, the largest Federal State of Germany. First class UPU service rate was five cent / 15 grams.



Upon arrival at the GPO in NYC, examiner "U" inspected the cover on September 7, 1883 and hand-stamped the back flap with the Type EM-3 marking. The letter was further processed in the registry department on the next day and a New York City exchange registry label, Type I-A, from sequence run # 2, usage period from April 8, 1883 to July 26, 1883, was applied to the letter before leaving the GPO to travel via England to Bavaria.



Epilogue, The Next Generation of Examiner Markings.

Epilogue:

The Type EM-2 markers began service around April, 1878 and continued for 48 months. The postmaster at the GPO in New York City made a design and a procedural change to the way the examiners performed their duties based on the new "Postal Laws and Regulations effective July 1, 1879. That decision was to change to large letters that incorporated the date internal to that letter. The letters chosen started with were "B", "C", "D", and "U" and became known as the Type EM-3 markers. By providing each examiner with his own lettered marking equipment, the postmaster could track the performance of each examiner. This equipment saw nineteen months of service until November 29, 1883, which is the last recorded usage of a Type EM-3, "B" marking.

The use of the registry system was growing very fast. From 1878 thru 1883, domestic registered mailed grew 220% and the foreign registered mail grew even faster at 303%. The number of post offices grew from 39,258 to 47,863, a 22% increase in this same time frame.

The postmaster was again reviewing the design of the marking equipment and came up with a new smaller design marker compared to the Type EM-3 marker. The Type EM-4 marker being developed and began service on December 1, 1883 using the same four letters, "B", "C", "D", and "U". The earliest recorded example is a Type EM-4, "B", marking used on December 5, 1883. Known copies of the letters "C" and "D" also exist used in December, 1883.

The following cover show an example of the Type EM-4, "B", marking. The full story of these markings are shown in another exhibit developed by this exhibitor.

