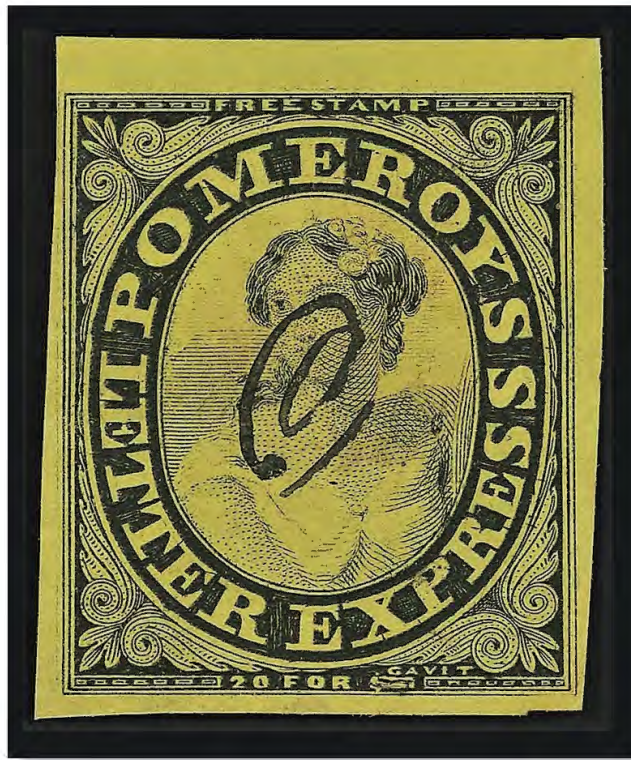
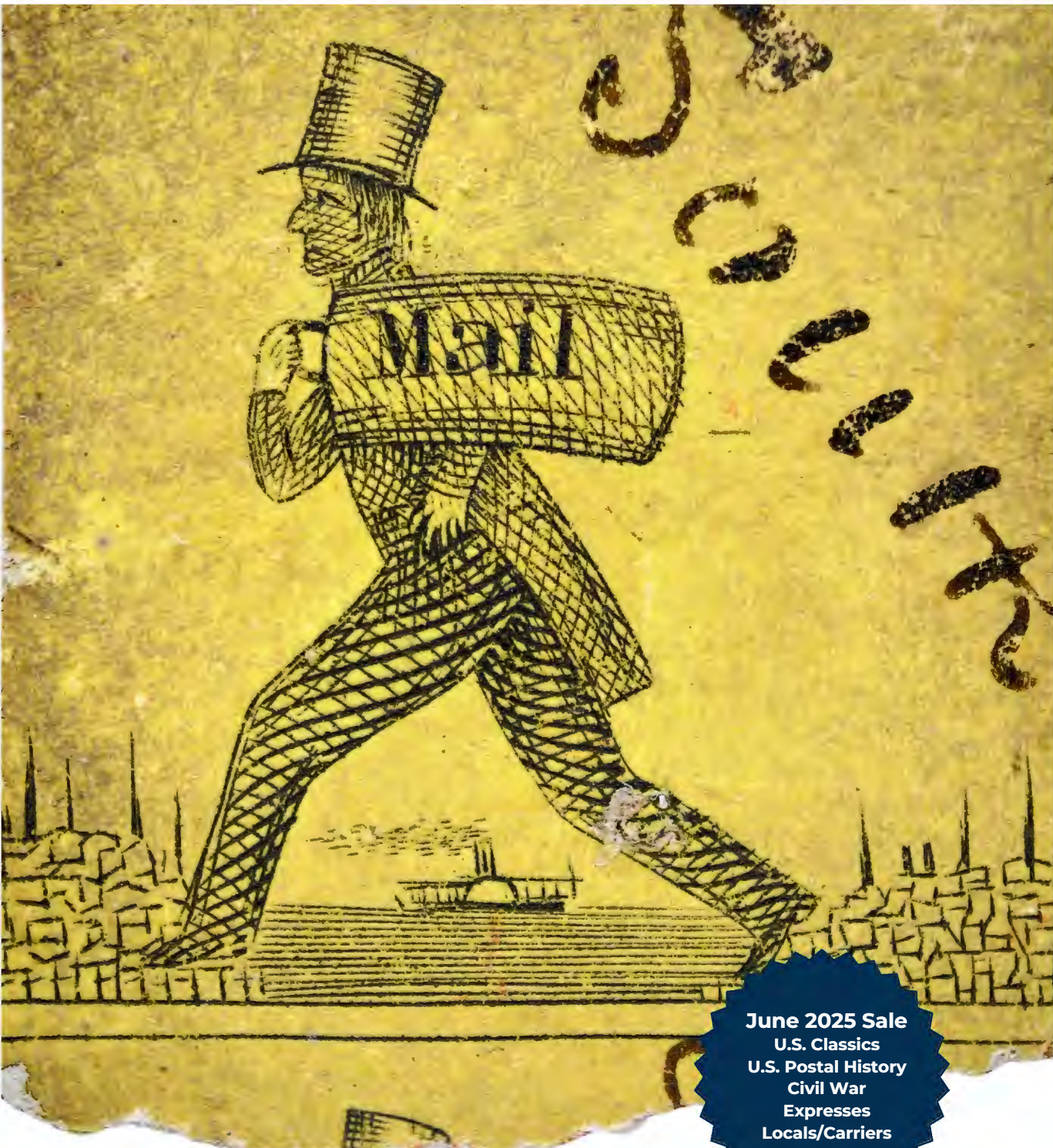


Collectors Club Philatelist



Pomeroy's Letter Express: Frame Breaks and the Origin of the Blank; Studies on the "Missing Value" Stamps



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THE COLLECTORS CLUB

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The Collectors Club Philatelist is an international specialty journal serving the needs of hundreds of collectors worldwide. It serves as the journal of record for the Collectors Club as well as publishing stimulating and helpful articles for collectors of many levels and specialties. *The Collectors Club Philatelist* strives to publish accurate philatelic information and serves as a forum for communication among members of the Collectors Club.

President's Message

Lawrence Haber

Five years ago, I wrote the following for this space:

I am writing this message for the May/June issue of the Collectors Club Philatelist during the third week of March. For more than two weeks, we have had our daily routines disrupted as we practice the latest neologism, social distancing. As you read this, you have a much better idea of how all this plays out than I currently do. I envy you. I hope my envy is well placed.

To paraphrase Dr. McCoy (from the Star Trek TV show), "I'm a stamp collector, not an epidemiologist," so there is really nothing that I can add regarding these circumstances other than what I've heard. No point in parroting back my misinformation, so I am not going in that direction.



For many of us, the COVID-19 virus and the disruptions it gave rise to are a memory. Many of us strain to make it a more distant memory. Many lost friends and loved ones to that calamity. Many suffered from the disease and long Covid. Some have forgotten, and that is a blessing.

But on the positive side, it was from that horror that our virtual program series rose. Since that time, we have hosted more than 130 individual programs. These programs cover a huge span of philately, and we heard from an extraordinary group of presenters. Our presenters came from across the United States and from across the globe. Our viewers have been representative of a worldwide source.

In the beginning, we did not restrict viewership to only our members. How could we do otherwise in the face of the pandemic and everything shutting down? With the pandemic behind us, we have kept to this policy. What was true then is true today. One of our roles is to support the spread of this hobby we love and to support those who wish to know and understand more. Many of these non-members have elected to become members, and we are proud of them, as well as our outreach.

However, the more we consider those who participate in our virtual programs and continue to avoid membership but nevertheless are repeat viewers, the term “non-member” may not be the correct term to describe them. In a sense, they are members, but they neither pay us nor provide any formal paperwork. However, their ongoing alignment is clear. Our challenge is how to bring them closer and deepen the relationship.

For many of us, joining an organization is a natural step. This is true not only for philatelic organizations, but also for voluntary organizations of all kinds. The membership model is facing increasing pressure and is being overtaken by the fee-for-service model. Managing these transitions, which most voluntary organizations confront – whether they realize it or not – is challenging. The answers are not obvious, yet the challenge is present, and it is one that we have no choice but to face.

Guidelines for Article Submissions

TEXT

All text for articles should be sent as a simple Word document using the “Normal” style – please don’t attempt to format for the magazine! Bold text, italics and tabs are ok. Text files may be sent as an email attachment or submitted via CD.

Please, do not embed illustrations in your text document! Show the preferred location if you wish (or send a separate PDF showing your preference), but leave actual illustrations out. Send them separately. **Simple, plain text always works best.**

ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrations are always preferred electronically as scans. Scans must be sized at a minimum of 100% and scanned at a minimum of 300 dpi as TIF or JPG files for optimal quality. Internet transmittals, such as WeTransfer (preferred) may be used. A typical cover should be at least 1,500 pixels wide.

If you do not have access to a scanner, originals may be sent. We will make scans and return originals immediately by the same method as they are sent to us. Again, please do not embed images in the text.

Your attention to – and compliance with – these standards will assure the highest-quality journal we can produce.

Thank you for your contribution!

What is Substack, and why do we care?

Lawrence Haber



We asked our friend, ChatGPT, to explain Substack to an audience without prior exposure to this medium. The response was:

Substack is a platform that allows writers to publish and share their work online, typically through newsletters. It's akin to a blog merged with email, enabling you to subscribe to your favorite writers and receive their content directly in your inbox.

Here's how it works:

Writers create content – articles, essays, updates, even podcasts or videos.

Readers subscribe – some newsletters are free, while others require a paid subscription.

Substack handles the tech side – sending emails, managing payments and offering a clean website for each writer.

It's popular with journalists, experts and creatives who want more independence and a direct connection with their audience – without needing a traditional publisher or social media algorithms to reach people.

We're not sure if that truly explains matters to the uninitiated, so we would appreciate it if you would go to collectorsclub.substack.com, spend a few minutes looking and reading, and then please return.

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Substack is a mechanism to deliver content to readers through regular emails or, alternatively, via the Substack app. When you leave this brief article to navigate to our Substack, we hope you subscribe; it's free. This will ensure that all future articles are sent to your email inbox. But why? Why this new toy?

If we back up a bit and survey the landscape, you would posit that there are long-form works; these are books. The recent example of Nick Kirke's book, *New York City Foreign Mail, 1845-1878*, is a perfect example. It examines a topic with depth and at length.

Next, we come to medium-length works, such as the recent monograph by John Barwis on New Sweden that we published last year. It deals with a narrow topic in depth and is shorter than a book, but longer than a journal article.

As a reader of this journal, we presume you are familiar with – and used to – journal articles, which can be 3,000-5,000 words long.

But, as you may have noted, our attention spans are growing shorter. For better or worse, that is the reality of today's world. We read material online and via email, meaning the length has to be briefer and more to the point. Substack addresses this need. It's a world of 350-750 words, roughly comparable to a single page of this journal.

Our goal is for you to have a look at our Substack and for you to subscribe. As the articles come out, please read them, react to them, and give it a try.

We believe this new mechanism will be important in the future, and it is a future we want to be part of. We also want you to join in.

**All Collectors Club presentations are currently held online,
via ZOOM, beginning at 5:30 p.m. (Eastern).
Although there is no cost, pre-registration is necessary.**



Editor's Notepad

Wayne L. Youngblood

Just a couple of quick notes this time. First and foremost, my plea for articles in the last issue was answered by several generous members, so our perennial copy crisis is – for now – forestalled. You'll begin to see the fruits of these efforts in the July-August issue. To those who have responded, thank you! The Collectors Club – and I – deeply appreciate it. If you have an idea or are currently working on an article, please let me know. I may also be able to provide help or support.

The second note relates to content in the *CCP*. You'll note, for example, that the content of this issue is largely filled by two pieces by David Wilcox, who has built on the works of others, as well as providing significant original research on Pomeroy's Letter Express. In most cases the journal is filled with shorter articles. Others, such as this, require larger editorial commitments.

Either way, when an article is published in *CCP* (or any other journal, for that matter), it is not intended to be the last word on a subject. New discoveries are constantly being made, and even the best authors make mistakes. Many research pieces contain more than a little speculation, usually based on fairly solid evidence. If you read something that is either incorrect or deals with unrealistic speculation, please take the time to respond in print. This is how we continually improve the knowledge base of our hobby.

Collectors Club Programs 2025

* All Programs will be available via Zoom; programs that will only be available online are noted as: (Zoom only)

- | | |
|----------|---|
| June 4 | <i>Dahomey: Man Climbing Oil Palm - The Workhorse of Dahomey</i>
<i>Definitives, Jere Dutt</i> |
| June 18 | <i>Scandinavian Collectors Club – Danish West Indies Postal History</i>
<i>Matthew Kewriga</i> |
| Sept. 3 | <i>Postal History of the United Colonies, Vernon Morris</i> (Zoom only) |
| Sept. 17 | <i>Postal Reform, James Grimwood-Taylor</i> |
| Oct. 9 | <i>Korean War POW Mail, John Hotchner</i> |
| Oct. 22 | <i>The Lithographed Washington-Franklin Heads, Andrew Kelley</i> |
| Nov. 5 | <i>Single-Frame Competition</i> |
| Nov. 12 | <i>We were British Once, Tim O'Connor</i> |
| Nov. 19 | <i>The U.S. 10¢ 1869 Issue – A 50-Year Study of Postal Uses (tentative),</i>
<i>Michael Laurence</i> |
| Dec. 3 | <i>Hong Kong, China overprints, Ian Gibson-Smith</i> |
| Dec. 10 | <i>Governors Open House,</i> |
| Dec. 17 | <i>Trinidad Britannia issues, Nigel Mohammed</i> (Zoom only) |

OUR AUCTION EVENT PLACE IN ZURICH 2-7



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE JUNE 2025 SALE

United States Special Delivery Stamps and Covers

– The Colin Beech Collection

Great Britain 1840–1841

– The Simon Beresford-Wylie Collection (part III)

Brazil Classic Stamps 1843–1861

– The Pablo Reim Collection (part I)

Postal History of Czech Lands – From the Beginning until 1867

– The Vít Vaníček Collection

Great Britain – The 'KOOYONG' Collection (part II)

Transportation of Australian Colonial Mail 1857–1900

– The Gary Diffen Collection

Persia, 1902 Provisional Typeset Issues of Tehran

Nigeria, Cameroon, Sudan

– The Peter Hørlyck Collection (part II)

A Captain's Books

– The Captain D. James Podger Philatelic Library

The 'CHELSEA' Sale of Worldwide Postal History

The Italian South Atlantic Airline LATI

– The Martyn Cusworth Collection

Gambia, Pakistan and Sarawak

– The Mike Roberts Collection

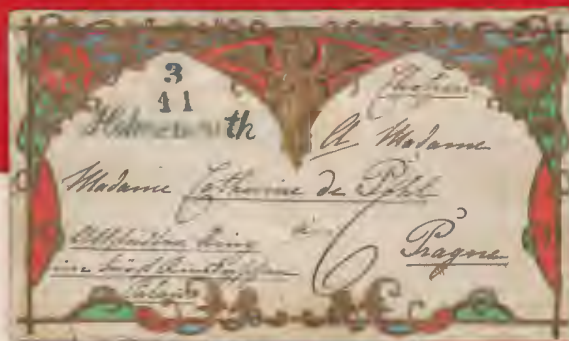
Zeppelin – Pioneer Mail

– The Eckhard Förster Collection (part II)

WEEK TAKES JUNE 2025



Founded in 1919



Provenance:
Dorotheum sale (2015)



Plate 11
Provenance:
incorporated in a larger multiple:
Earl of Kingston (1894)
Earl of Crawford (1910)
Frank Wadham (1925)
G. Watkin (1944)
Rose-Hutchinson (1949)
As a block of four:
Silkin Collection (1971)
Alan Holyoake (2006)



Provenance:
Collection Markovits Schuyler
Rumsey Philatelic Auctions (2016)

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Essential Elements

Shelved and Forgotten

Richard Coffey

Treasure abounds in a long-lost stockbook, shelved and forgotten. Such a wonder appeared between two seldom-used books on a floor-level shelf where, I suppose, I had consigned it 10 years before. The contents were probably superfluous to my immediate needs at that time, so lacking curatorial foresight I shoved the book into shelved oblivion.

A single-sheet folded letter mailed March 4, 1812, from New York City to the law office of Edward Shippen Burd, a wealthy attorney in Philadelphia, Pa., was rated 12½¢ postage, based on the May 1, 1799, Act, setting the single-letter rate (one sheet of paper) for a distance more than 90 miles, but not exceeding 150 miles. The Coinage Act of 1792 authorized the U.S. Mint to produce decimal-based coins including ½¢, though it was more likely (before 1850) that a postal customer would have paid the postage using the popular Spanish real (8 reals to a dollar) or one eighth of a dollar, 12½¢.



The thrill of rediscovery nearly offset my guilt of failed stewardship – the stock-book actually contained a few pieces of interesting material.

Most of the stamps and covers were children of the 19th century. Some were tattered, to be sure, and fading, a few with shocked perforations and tears – though not surprisingly most of the rag-paper products of the 19th century were in much better shape and presented with richer color than I do at half their age.

I believe I created this stockbook many years ago when I fancied postal origins and evolutions, but discovered that acquiring the early years of stampless letter mail and primitive postage stamps was a bit too steep for my lifestyle, which, unfortunately, included an airplane with a psychotic affection for new cylinders. Fortunately, I married a sensible and completely sane woman who managed the chaos beautifully so that the two of us – and the stock book – arrived in the 21st century in pretty good shape.

Among the rediscovered items was an 1812 stampless piece of lawyerly letter mail drafted in New York City three months before President Madison declared war on Great Britain.

When we do enough reading and musing about a cover, a picture eventually emerges in our minds – a snapshot of a period in which most of us did not exist in a corporeal form – though here we are holding a bit of it in our hands – and this 213-year-old piece of 1812, which, if we play this hole to its conclusion, begins to take on an objective reality that leads and encourages us to explore further resources and emboldens us to study and question the veracity of the entire bow wave of data that our voyage has disturbed ... an exploration, by the way, which we students claim is the exciting part of our hobby.

I am struck, as Americans were during the summer of 1812, by what a near thing history is as it loops around and catches us behind and changes the landscape ahead forever.

**Explore our website and see just how much more
the Collectors Club can offer!**

www.collectorsclub.org



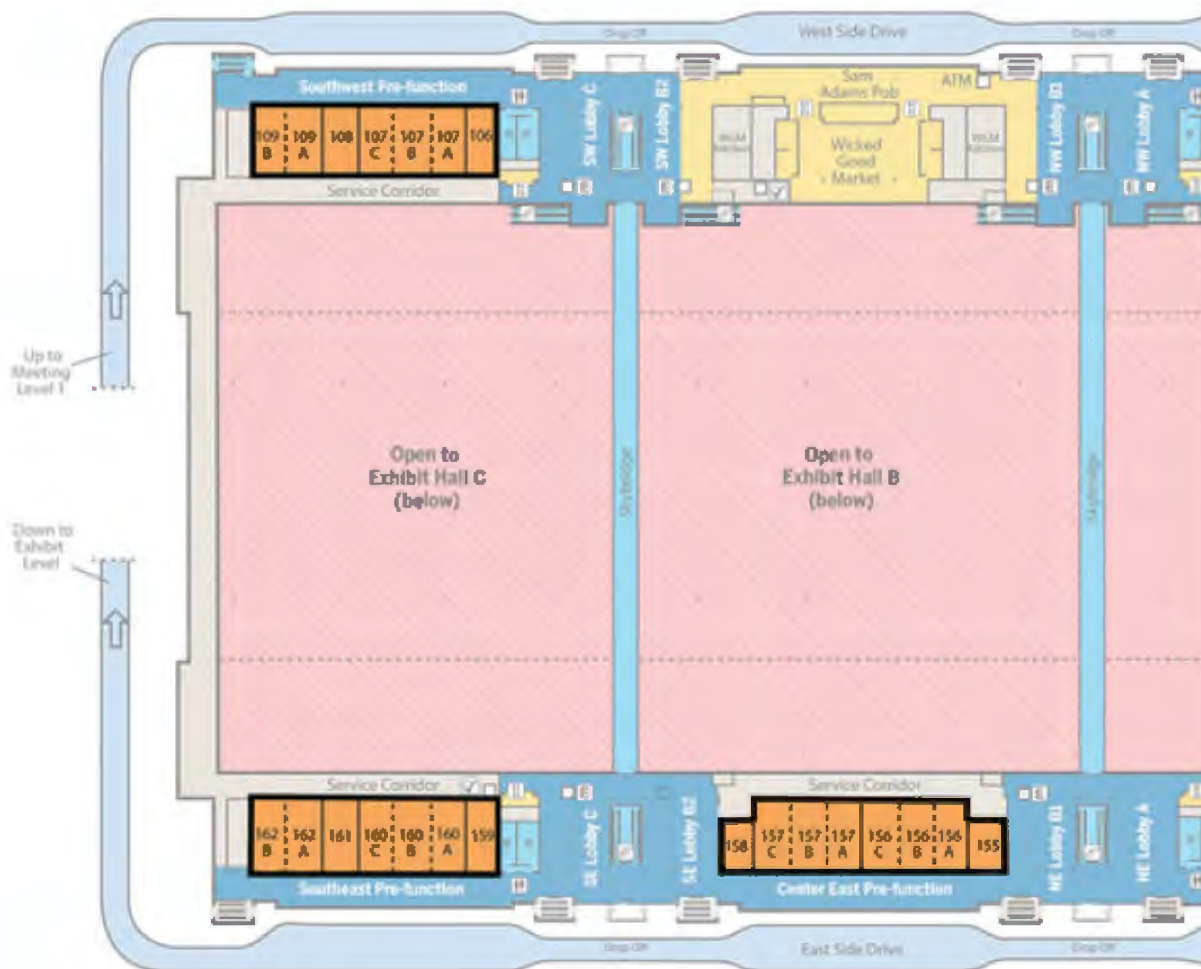
THE COLLECTORS CLUB

Societies, Meetings and Seminars at Boston 2026 World Expo



With only a year to go before the start of the next decennial U.S. world philatelic exhibition, Boston 2026 World Expo (May 23-30, 2026), the excitement is building among philatelic societies that are planning to have a strong presence at this highly anticipated exhibition. Boston 2026 has received unprecedented financial and publicity support from numerous philatelic societies of all sizes. Larger societies have reserved oversized booths near the left-side

entrance, within the main dealer area, or at “society row,” close to the right-side entrance, next to the large U.S. Postal Service area. Smaller societies will be mainly located inside the five regional hard-walled exhibition pavilions.



Donations are welcome, but Boston 2026 will not refuse any reasonable booth request from societies lacking financial resources. These booths will be subsidized by the show. The only requirement is that booths are always staffed. We encourage smaller organizations to share a booth with other smaller groups to meet this requirement. There is no limit on the number of societies that can share a booth.

The show venue, the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center (BCEC) has 38 meeting rooms of variable sizes on the upper level, where the lobby and registration area are located. They provide more than 61,500 square feet of meeting space with direct access to the food court. Pedestrian skybridges connect both sides of the BCEC for rapid access. The diagram nearby shows the meeting rooms in orange and the show floor in pink. The entrance to the show floor is on the right.

Most international philatelic exhibitions offer meeting rooms for a fee. Boston 2026 is able to provide meeting rooms to convening societies and organizations free of charge. There might be small fees for the rental of audiovisual equipment.

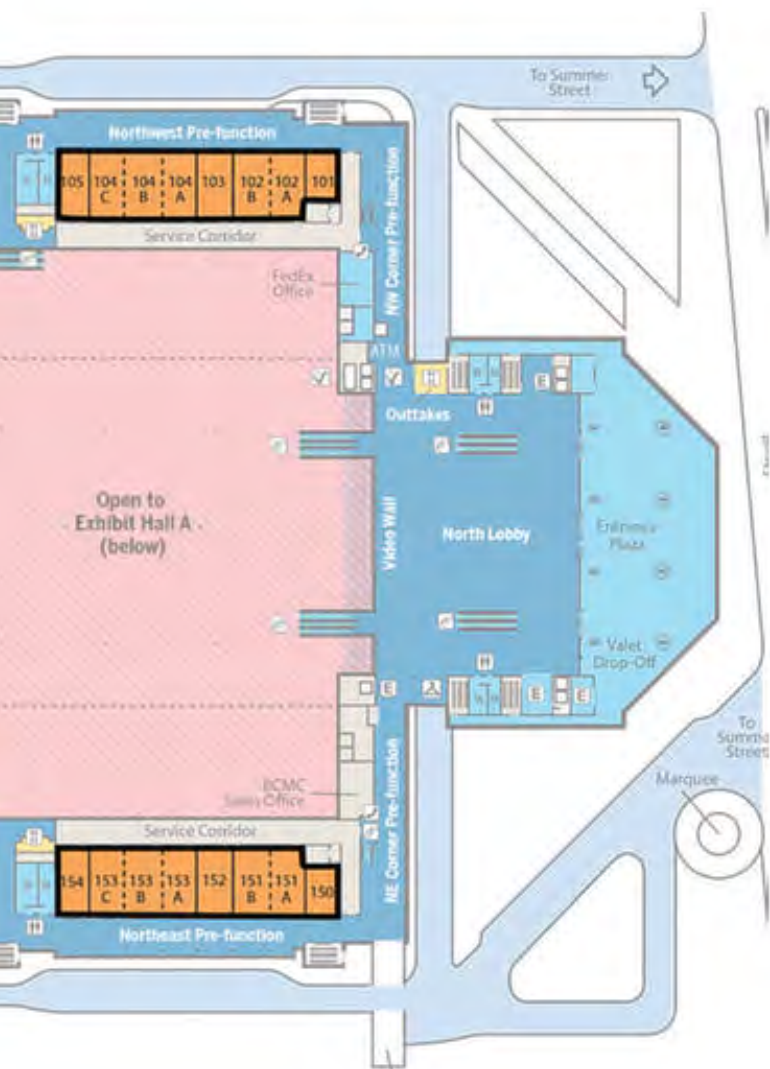
Meeting and society booth requests should be made to Mark Schwartz at

Mark.Schwartz@Boston2026.org.

Please include an estimate of the number of attendees, the need for audiovisual equipment and your preferred days and times. We have already received dozens of meeting requests. Most of the meetings and seminars will be open to the public, including the American Philatelic Society's annual meeting, and many special events planned by large national and international organizations, such as the Smithsonian National Postal Museum.

You can also visit our website, ***www.boston2026.org***, for the latest news and information, and to register to receive our email updates.

— *Yamil H. Kouri, Jr., president*
Yamil.Kouri@Boston2026.org



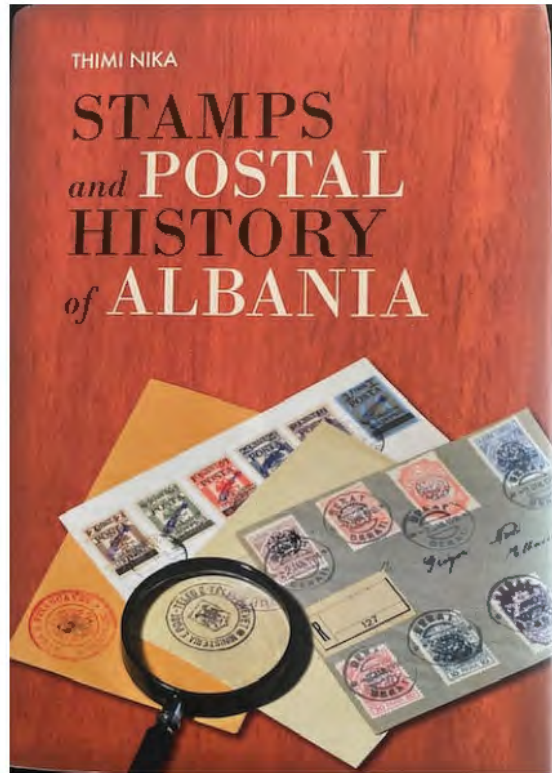
Something New / Something Old

Collectors Club Library Update

Robert Gray, Library Chair

We've been unpacking, restacking the shelves and things are looking very good at the Collectors Club library. We still have a lot to go, especially with the auction catalogs. One of the library staff, Eric Castro, was assigned to put country-based dividers on the shelves. He noticed that we did not have anything on Albanian philately. Since Albania has an interesting social and philatelic history, the library selected two books to cover this gap. The first is *Stamps and Postal History of Albania*, by Thimi Nika, a renowned Albanian philatelist. The second volume is *The Stamps and Posts of Albania and Epirus*, by John S. Phipps, published by the Stuart Rossiter Trust.

The library has a very good collection of New Zealand postal history and stamps, largely acquired when Bob Odenweller was library chair. This year, Bob Watson, from New Zealand, has graciously donated additions to our New Zealand area collection that significantly improved our collection of Kiwi philately.



Collectors Club Philatelist

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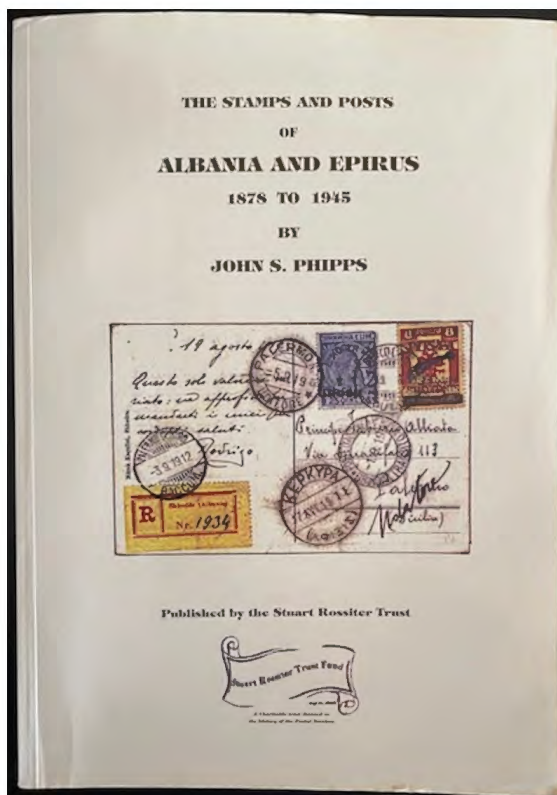
WE APPRECIATE THEIR SUPPORT!

Steve Reinhard, former Collectors Club president, worked diligently assembling the library's aerophilately books and then donated additional ones filling up most of the space allocated to it.

Unpacking the boxes we found some very special items including a photo album of the first Lichtenstein Awards Dinner held in 1937. It is amazing how much things have changed.

Another treasure includes several boxes of 100-year-old+ stamp albums. A few of the ones in better condition are on display in the social area. We also have set aside many duplicate books and catalogs. These are available on a cash and carry basis at the library at real bargain prices.

If you are in the neighborhood, please stop by and have a look for yourself. If you would like to volunteer at the library, please contact me or Andrea Matura.



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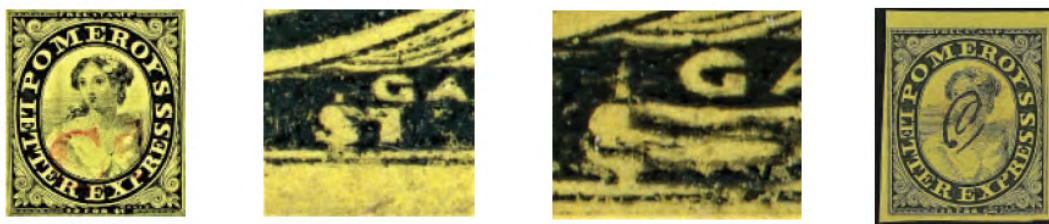


Pomeroy's 117L2 (No Denomination)

Distribution studies indicate the issue had no postal significance and was a printing artifact

David R. Wilcox, Ph.D., and Lee Pomeroy

Pomeroy's Letter Express created two nearly identical issues that researchers have found puzzling. 117L2 looks identical to the Pomeroy workhorse issue 117L1 except the "1" is missing in the bottom banner, as seen in Figure 1. Notice in Figure 1c that the "1" value is not present and has been replaced by a broad blank area that often has a strong black line running horizontally through it.



Figures 1a-1d. The value area in the lower banner of Pomeroy's Scott 117L1 (value present, left) and Scott 117L2 (value missing right).

In a recent comprehensive survey of all 23 issues of the nine independent mail companies,¹ No. 22 117L2 covers of this enigmatic issue were identified (one on a piece). All were found with images and presented in an earlier article (*CCP*, Vol. 103, No. 3, May-June 2024, page 148). Eighteen of the 22 covers could be fully dated and were plotted on distribution graphs (histograms). The goal was to compare the distribution of surviving covers and look for patterns that might suggest a different function for the two issues. This Part 2 of the article will present detailed analysis.

Lyons previously surveyed both the 117L1 and 117L2 covers² and found a similar number of 117L2 (20), but only 27 of the 117L1 on cover. This was not enough data to compare the two populations of the covers to look for differences in distribution.

The recent, more comprehensive, cover survey took advantage of the search engines of several auction houses and the Philatelic Foundation. In addition, 127 117L1 covers were identified and 90% had images. The large survey of 117L1 will be published later in "guide" books that describe the much larger 1,300-cover survey of all the independent mail company covers.

All but six 117L1 were determined to be genuine. Of these 121 genuine 117L1 covers, 98 could be fully dated for graphing. The destination, the origin and even the differences in the blank space of 117L2 were examined here for patterns using these 143 covers (117L1 plus 117L2). No significant patterns were found, and it is concluded that 117L2 had no postal function separate from 117L1.

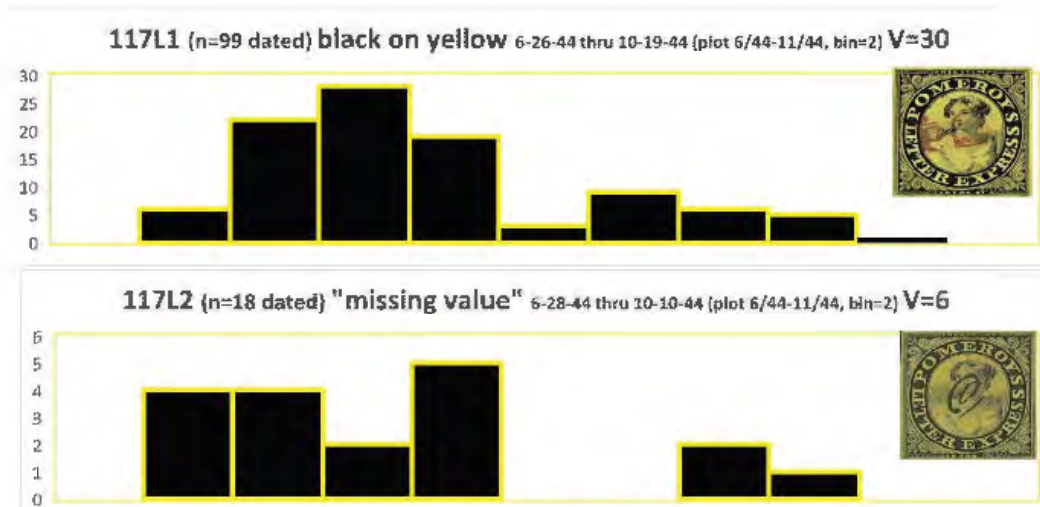


Figure 2. The distribution of 117L1 (top) and 117L2 (bottom).

The Distribution of 117L1 and 117L2

In Part 1, the distribution of 117L1 and 117L2 covers was plotted over time directly as single values (bin of 1). The two distributions looked similar. In Figure 2, the same data is plotted using a bin of two to smooth out the pattern and identify (if any) hidden but noteworthy differences. Both curves look the same, and they start and end approximately at the same time.

In fact, the two Wetmore covers that were mailed near the end of Pomeroy's reign (a few weeks after he officially announced his closing) are both franked with one each of the two issues. The EKU ("earliest known use") for each of the two issues alone on a cover are only one day apart (June 27 and June 28). Therefore, for the EKU, both issues were used the same week that Pomeroy officially opened on June 26, 1844. Therefore, both the EKU and LKU for 117L1 and 117L2 are essentially the same.

Figure 3 illustrates the breakdown of the distribution data in Figure 2 by cities. Also given is the percentage of the 117L2 population that each city sent (in blue). The percentage for 117L1 is given to compare the two issues (red in parentheses). The intent of the analysis in Figure 3 was to see if the "value missing" covers were distributed to, and then mailed from, distinctly separate locations from the 117L1.

The number of 117L2 survivors was smaller than 117L1, so the results must be interpreted carefully (117L1 dated covers were 5.5 times more abundant than the 117L2 dated covers). With that consideration in mind, Figures 2 and 3 give no clear identifiable patterns distinguishing 117L2 from 117L1. New York City sent more of the "value missing" covers than any city, but that was also true for the normal stamp. "Value missing" came from Utica and Penn Yan, where no normal 117L1 covers were mailed, but that is only three covers and one cover, respectively, of the 22 "value missing" covers surveyed.



Percent for 117L1 will not equal 100% because 117L1 was also sent from other cities where 117L2 was not sent, and sometimes the origin city is not known. 117L2 % for NYC is high, but 117L1 % is also high.

Figure 3. Breakdown of the distribution data by cities for letters sent from the city. The percentage of the surveyed covers for each city is given in blue for 117L2 and red for 117L1 (in parentheses).

The rest came from diverse cities. The percentages sent from Albany for the two issues are almost the same. There are differences elsewhere in Figure 3, but nothing that is not expected when we consider that there were few surviving 117L2 covers (estimate under 5%), and these few survivors were discovered in separate locations over the years.

Although the surveys are believed to be highly complete for survivors, the source covers are from a small surviving pool, and they were discovered randomly in diverse ways. The sampling is not a systematic sampling. Survival and especially discovery of the covers relied mostly on chance.

While Figure 3 looked at the *origins* of the covers, Table 1 looks at the percentage of “value missing” covers *arriving* at a city. Nos. 117L1 and 117L2 are compared for the five major cities in Pomeroy’s network, including (Wells’) Letter Express. For New York City, Albany and Buffalo, the percentage of the mail population arriving for each of the issues looks similar. New York City percentages received are comparable with 59% for the “value missing” 117L2 issue and 45% for the normal stamp.

Issue	n	ALBANY	BUFFALO	DETROIT	NYC	ROCHESTER
117L2	22	13.6	9.1	9.1	59.1	4.5
117L1	121	11.6	9.1	0.8	45.5	1.7

Table 1. Percentage of covers arriving at cities.

For Albany, the difference is only two percentage points different and, for Buffalo, they are exactly the same. Detroit had a higher percentage of the “valu-ing missing,” but the sample size was small. The percentage difference is mostly because of the two Wetmore covers which were only about 10% of all the “value missing” covers found. Therefore, both Figure 3 and Table 1 show no significant patterns, whether the covers are compared by origin or by destination.



Figure 4. Comparison of the strong and weak lines in the blank area of 117L2 where the value is missing..

The distribution of the two types of blank area on 117L2

All “value missing” 117L2 have a black line through the small area where the “1” should be found. Sometimes the line is weak and at other times strong. The two types are illustrated in Figure 4 at the top. The magnification required for these scans is high, so some of the scans are poor. This is because the images are taken from publications that scanned the entire cover, and these scans are just a small bottom part of a stamp which is in a corner of the larger cover. Only one 117L2 (in my collection) could be scanned directly.

In fact, some of the weak examples may appear weaker, due more poor image quality than in actuality. It may be that the 117L2 issue with these two blank-area types were all printed and distributed early and ready by opening day. If that is true, there may be no pattern to be found when they were used later. However, since no other patterns have been found elsewhere in the distribution curves for the full 117L2 covers, these two types of blank areas were examined looking for a pattern.

The analysis is imperfect and needs high-resolution scans of all the stamps if that is even possible. However, the tentative conclusion is that some of the weak lines appear later than the strong lines, but they appear earlier also. So again, there is no obvious pattern apparent.

What do the distribution graphs show?

The conclusion from the distribution plots is that the two Pomeroy issues 117L1 and 117L2 on cover were not treated differently. They apparently shared the same function of prepaying 6¼¢ to carry the cover to its destination. This was just as Sir Rowland Hill had envisioned it.

Researchers have long examined these Pomeroy covers looking for a difference in the rate that they represented. No previous study found any indication of a different rate that would explain why the “value missing” stamps appear alone or sometimes uncommonly with a normal stamp.⁵

Curiously, the “value missing” has never been found as a double franking without the normal stamp, and no pairs of 117L2 have been found. However, the much more common 117L1 normal stamp occurred in its survey as a double franking on only 15 of the 121 No. 117L1 covers known (dated and undated). So, 117L1 double frankings are also uncommon.

Only 12.4% of the 117L1 population that survived had a double franking. Only 13.6% of the 117L2 occur in double frankings with 117L1 (one on a piece). The percentages are almost the same for 117L1 and 117L2. Until, or unless, more 117L2 are found, there is no reason to hypothesize that the “value missing” stamps were *never* used together in a double-franked Pomeroy cover. There just is not enough data.

Double franking was a generally less-common event than single franking. Since the percentage of double frankings in the two populations is similar, there is no reason to suggest an explanation for the 117L1 paired with a 117L2 on some covers, but a different explanation when paired with itself on other covers.

Possibly, it is significant that 117L2 never pairs with itself or has never been found as a pair. This may be a clue to what 117L2's different function might have been if there was one. Unfortunately, it seems likely we may never find enough double-franked covers involving 117L2 to resolve this hypothesis. To find an example with two 117L2 together, if that exists, may never happen, since so few 117L2 covers have survived, and all double frankings, even on 117L1, are not common.

This is one of the frustrations of analyzing a population of covers that is too small to begin the study and will probably never grow much larger in the future. The data we do have, however, supports that 117L2 was handled the same as 117L1 and had apparently *no* identifiable unique postal function based on distribution or rates.

Was the small 117L2 flaw significant to Pomeroy's business?

When one holds in hand a cover that is franked by both the 117L1 and 117L2 issues, as a Pomeroy postal clerk would see the cover for processing, it is easy to imagine that Pomeroy's clerks might often miss the absent value on one of the stamps. The Wetmore cover, shown in Figure 5, has both issues nicely placed next to each other. Visually comparing the two would be easiest when presented to a Pomeroy clerk this way. Unfortunately, only three of the 22 No. 117L2 covers pictured in Part 1 were found paired with a 117L1 (only 13.6%). A single frank-



Figure 5. One of two covers that were sent to Mr. F. Wetmore in Detroit, Mich. Both were franked with an example of 117L1 and one of 117L2.

ing with only 117L2 would have offered an even greater challenge to Pomeroy's clerks when mixed with thousands of covers franked with 117L1.

According to the surveys, slightly more than 15% of the black-on-yellow stamp covers that clerks needed to process would have the value omitted (117L2). That means 154 covers for every thousand covers that the clerks saw had to be processed correctly if the missing value indicated a difference in handling. This would seem a challenging task and many 117L2 covers might be handled incorrectly.

Hale wrote that his company handled 50,000 to 60,000 letters a day across his network.³ Whether or not that was an exaggeration, there is no question that the flow into these independent mail offices was significant, and processing so many letters was a challenge. However, the processing had to be done efficiently for the company to stay in business and retain customers.

During the summer of 1844, Pomeroy was competitive with Hale, based on the surviving covers surveyed and compared between Hale and Pomeroy during that specific summertime period. Although Hale was by far the larger company, Pomeroy may have even exceeded Hale's productivity during some weeks of July 1844.⁴

Pomeroy's clerks, therefore, may have been handling and processing thousands of covers a day during that peak time. Based on the distribution curves, both 117L1 and 117L2 covers were being handled together then.

Distribution by origin of Pomeroy's single-color issues.

Pomeroy issued four single-colored issues (blue, black, red and lake, all on white), so his clerks could easily identify different stamps that had contrasting functions. Researchers have been unable to assign a specific function to Pomeroy's single-color issues,⁵ but they continue to study these stamps, because the distinctive colors suggest a different function likely existed.

In addition, the distribution of origin cities for these uncommon issues is not random. Besides their distinctive colors, each color seems to have been sent more often from a specific region of the Pomeroy network. Figure 6 shows the clusters of origin cities for the four Pomeroy single-color issues that form clusters (the few covers outside the cluster are not marked to simplify the figure).

Thirteen of 15 known 117L6 lake covers originated from New York City. That is to say, 87% of all known covers with that lake color stamp originated from just one city. No. 117L5, light red, originated more from Albany and the lower Mohawk Valley (seven of nine known, or 78%).

Many 117L3 blues originated from the Rochester, N.Y., region. Seventeen of 23 known 117L3 originated within the Rochester/Lockport region and are marked on the map with a blue circle (74% of all known).

In some examples, some of these percentages would rise if we allowed that some covers were not franked at all with a Pomeroy stamp until they arrived at



Figure 6. Clusters of origin cities for Pomeroy's single-color stamp issues.

a Pomeroy office. Then they received a 117L3 stamp upon arrival although they had originated away from Rochester.

For example, a cover from Mt Vernon, Ohio, and another from Cleveland, Ohio, were both franked with Pomeroy's 117L3 blue. They were both on their way to New York City, but might easily have been left in the Rochester Office to receive the Pomeroy stamps.

Another 117L3 was sent from Albany to Geneva (a city within the 117L3 blue cluster). This cover may have left Albany unfranked and received the 117L3 blue in Geneva, since it had no stamp (another cover that originated in Geneva was franked with a 117L3 blue). If we include these three covers, the percentage of 117L3 sent from – or franked passing through – the Rochester area increases from 74% to 90%.

Two covers with the black 117L4 originated in western states, but the other 20 No. 117L4 black where the origin is known are all marked with a black circle in Figure 6. In this example, the 117L4 pattern is less clear and the origin cities are more broadly spread. However, 78% of these originated from the large cities. All 117L4 passed through Albany on their way to their destination.

The distribution is far from absolute for any city or region. The 117L4 black is more widespread than the others, but 117L3 blue, 117L5 light red and 117L6 lake were all sent with a significantly high frequency out of certain regions of New

York State. In each case, other than 117L4, the cluster origin represented more than three quarters of the surviving covers for a specific issue from its distinct region.

The patterns so far do not bring us any closer to understanding the function of these issues. However, the pattern is far from random, as would be expected if the distinctive colors had *no* function. That function unfortunately remains a mystery.

Notice in Figure 7 that distinguishing the four single-color Pomeroy issues from the black-on-yellow workhorse issues is a much simpler task than distinguishing 117L1 and 117L2 from each other on covers. For these four single-color issues, Pomeroy was careful to print them all in distinctive colors. In contrast, the 117L1 and 117L2 issues are identical in color.



Figure 7. Pomeroy's five basic issues: the black-on-yellow and the four single-color issues.

If the 117L2 “value missing” had an important postal function different from 117L1, the tiny design difference on identical colored stamps is inconsistent with all other stamp issues Pomeroy used on his mail. This means the difference between Pomeroy's 117L1 and 117L2 could have been easily missed, and Pomeroy was very much aware of the need for a distinctive color. This raises the possibility that the two black-on-yellow issues had *no* different function. Perhaps they were just an artifact of the printing process, and no separate postal function was intended.

The City Despatch Post green issues are similar to Pomeroy's black-on-yellow issues

For the City Despatch Post (CDP), the black-on-green issues of Mead and Cole look the same, except Cole stamped “C” on each side of Wahington's portrait. If a customer noticed the two “Cs,” Cole probably told them that the “C” stampings were only to identify the stamps they bought were now issued under his management and not Mead's. Like Pomeroy's 117L1 and 117L2, Cole's “C” stampings represented the same postal rate and were used in the same way on covers as the previously unstamped Mead examples.

Figure 8 shows that the area with a “value missing” on Pomeroy's black-on-yellow 117L2 is even smaller than Cole's stamped “C.” The two CDP issues (40L2 and 40L4) were both green (with shades), had the same design and had the same rate. Cole's customers were likely told not to be concerned about the “C” stamped letters, because the covers they were mailing would be handled just as before under the previous management, and at the same cost, but now by a new owner. Customer concerns, if any, were easily satisfied.



Figure 8. Examples of City Despatch Post 40L2 and 40L4 to compare the size of the “C” with the “value-missing area of 177L2.

The main difference between the CDP example and Pomeroy “value missing” variation is there is only one owner issuing the Pomeroy black-on-yellow stamps. But it would have been just as easy for Pomeroy to tell his customers the rate was the same, and handling of their letter would be the same. If Cole could satisfy customer concerns, Pomeroy could have done the same.

The distribution curves and cover usage support that there was nothing different in the handling of these Pomeroy covers or in the cost to the customers. It is likely both the customers and the clerks were told why the two Pomeroy issues looked slightly different, and from that point onward, the missing value was completely ignored. If 117L2 had a different function than 117L1, that would have been a different story, but the distribution data does not support the two Pomeroy issues were handled any differently.

Postal historians study covers to find out what function or use a particular stamp design or color was meant to convey. Here, however, the distribution graphs suggest the clerks treated 117L1 and 117L2 the same way. The best conclusion is there was no different postal function between 117L1 and 117L2, and they were used interchangeably.

Perhaps “ignore the difference” was Pomeroy’s instructions to clerks, and it is likely these low-paid clerks hardly noticed the difference most of the time anyway. It is very possible the “value missing” variants are much more interesting to stamp collectors today than to Pomeroy’s customers and staff in 1844.

Did Pomeroy consider franked covers an improvement over stampless for the future of his company?

Stamps were a valuable asset, and we know the mail companies knew this, because they used many methods to try to stop theft of their stamps. For example, precanceling, initialing stamps and canceling the stamp once on the cover so it could never be used again.

At the very beginning, many companies did not always cancel their stamps, but as time went on, canceling became the norm. Reuse of stamps by customers had obviously become a fundamental problem, since it took time for the clerks to carefully cancel them.

With so many covers passing through a Pomeroy or Hale office per day, canceling was an extra chore the companies might have skipped if it were not so important. Even in some larger independent mail companies, where the number of covers reached thousands per day, a cancel was used commonly to mark part of the stamp to prevent later use. (Hale used many precanceled stamps.) This was time consuming, but was done to protect profits. This, of course, gradually became the norm in later government-franked letters as well. By the 1870s, the cancel was sometimes an obliterator, and you could hardly see what the stamp looked like.

A postage stamp is a promise that the company will complete a service for its customer. Interestingly, as soon as a stamp is sold, it is the mail company's profit from then onward. The customer's money is already in the company's "bank." In fact, if a stamp is lost or never used, the mail company makes a profit without performing the service.

Of course, the mail company must stay in business and follow through on that promised service. Sometimes the stampless covers were prepaid, but this was a choice of the sender. On the other hand, when a postage adhesive was affixed, the sender had to purchase the stamp and, therefore, franked covers are always prepaid.

Stampless covers do not have to be prepaid. The sender made that decision, and it was out of the hands of the mail carrier company. Imagine how much more tentative a mail delivery business was before this time. Mail companies carried a client's letter to its destination, but the recipient too often could simply say they would not pay for the cover. If it were an invoice asking for the recipient's money, or even a letter from someone they did not know, the recipient could just refuse to pay the delivery boy any money. What could the delivery agent do?

The agent took the undelivered cover back to the office, and not only was the business sending the invoice stymied, the private post potentially lost money. The private post promised the sender to perform a service and, if the sender elected to not prepay postage, success depended entirely on the mail company's ability to deliver the cover and collect its fee. The recipient had to pay the delivery boy, or there was no profit, even though the service had already been performed.

In contrast, the prepaid postage stamp gave the senders, the recipients and the mail-carrier companies stability and – especially for the mail companies – financial predictability. During the independent mail era, both stampless and franked covers were carried together (often stampless still being more numerous). But

eventually the stampless letters were eliminated and, years later, not allowed by the Act of Congress Jan. 1, 1856.

That tiny little piece of paper we call a postage stamp, that some then called a "label," changed the face of commerce for the better. The City Despatch Post introduced the concept to America, but it was the independent mails that spread the idea across the upper states.

More than any other independent mail company, Pomeroy clearly felt prepaid postage was a way to his company's success. Uniquely, Pomeroy issued not just one adhesive, as others often did, nor just two or three, as the largest companies, ALM and Hale, had done, Pomeroy issued five distinctly different items.

Although Pomeroy may have enjoyed profits from stampless cover service, his prepaid adhesives were central to some not-yet not well-understood plan. He not only prepared an array of issues but there is some indication to be discussed in a future article he was planning a new postal issue only a few weeks after his opening day.

Pomeroy may have serviced many stampless covers (although no survey has been published). However, his plan for multiple differently colored adhesives, which was never tried before by even the largest independent mail companies, argues Pomeroy completely understood the potential of the postage stamp.

Why did Pomeroy *not* throw the varieties away to avoid confusion

Customer concerns (if any) over the missing value were easy to handle as previously discussed. But Pomeroy could have avoided the occasional customer questions by never using the 117L2 stamps. Why did he not throw them away or at least use them only when the supply became low?

The distribution shows that he mixed the "value missing" issue in the same pile as the 117L1. He apparently began using them on opening day (or close) interchangeably with the normal stamps. The two issues appear used from cities across Pomeroy's network and span the same time period together. Both issues were apparently used equally right up until Pomeroy went out of business.

The answer may be that there is a second reason the "value missing" 117L2 stamps were kept and used interchangeably with 117L1. Based on the cover survey, the "value missing" 117L2 were 15.4% of the stamps that Pomeroy printed in black-on-yellow (22 No. 117L2 covers were found, versus one 121 No. 117L1). The 117L2 is less common than 117L1, however 15% of thousands of printed stamps was still a major investment for Pomeroy's company.

To run a mail carrier service in 1844, you needed a few small offices with a counter, maybe some drop boxes and people working at a minimal wage to process and to carry the letters. The initial investment was small. It just took desire, focus and an opportunity to capitalize on the poorly run government postal system that had been created.

If you decided to not only handle stampless covers and, instead, also offer stamps as a prepayment, as Rowland Hill proposed, you would make more money. The idea drew in customers, especially larger companies, that liked the concept. From his many stamp releases, we can surmise Pomeroy liked the idea.

The business strategy is simple. You need to spend part of your profits on printing the stamps. You get a return on your investment in printing the stamps because you get more paying customers. Your investment had a wonderful return. All you needed were adhesives to put on customer letters and probably a ledger to keep track of how the stamps were used and how much money was spent to resupply stamps.

When Pomeroy's clerks and his clientele were told both designs with and without the value were worth the same 6¼¢, and the cover they were sending would be handled identically, Pomeroy could use the two issues interchangeably. The distribution data supports this is what happened. It did not even require a special accounting; the two issues were probably just mixed in a pile together.

Pomeroy had already spent 15% of his budget on printing the black-on-yellow 117L2. A single sheet of stamps might not cost very much, but printing thousands of stamps was a big part of the Pomeroy budget in a rapidly growing mail business that did not have too many other expenses to pull down the profits.

As an astute businessperson, Pomeroy knew 15% of a costly part of his budget was a significant amount of money worth saving if possible. If the "value missing" stamps were just a printing artifact, he could easily work with his staff and his customers to use them interchangeably with the normal variety. Why would he throw them away?

Conclusion

Distribution histograms and tables show patterns that support that the Pomeroy workhorse 117L1 and the "value-missing" 117L2 were used interchangeably. Both issues appear to have had the same postal function.

Endnotes

1. Wilcox, David R., "Correspondences of the U.S. Independent Mails 1844-45," *Collectors Club Philatelist* 2023, 102:6 pp. 340-368. (in publication: Wilcox, David R., "The Independent Mails Cover Survey: Part 1 Survey Analysis" and "Part 2 History of the Independent Mails," *Collectors Club Philatelist* 2025).
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3. Gutman, Michael S., "Hale & Company" in *Eastern Independent Mail and Express Mail Companies 1840-1845* (Editor Michael S. Gutman), Chapter 7, page 94, 2016.
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Pomeroy's Letter Express: Frame Breaks and the Origin of the Blank

David R. Wilcox, Ph.D.

Studies on the "Missing Value" Stamps

Despite having no apparent specific postal function¹, the "missing value" variety on Scott 117L2 reveals a wealth of valuable information on the production of the Pomeroy stamps. This new data helped in formulating the proposal presented near the end of this article.



Figure 1a and b. (a) Comparison of No. 117L2 (with C-Curly cancel) to two other later Pomeroy issues (117L2B on thick wove and 117L3 on fibrous paper), and Figure 1b, pairs of 117L4 showing the outer frame intersections with the middle line top (left) and middle line bottom (right).

Figure 1a shows the alignment of the "C-curly" 117L2, plated to be position pL1. This is the stamp in the plate of 40 with two side-by-side panes of 20, where this stamp came from the top-left position in row one of the left pane of 20 stamps. Thus, "p" is for plate position, "L" is for the left pane, and "1" for the first stamp in the first row.

The 117L1 pL1 with the value present has more than the normal number of readily visible plate markings, including a dot in the second "O" of Pomeroy, a dot in the "P" of Pomeroy, a dash in the left side of the oval between "L and P" of

“LETTER POMEROY” and a guide dot in the bottom-left corner, just to the left of the left frame, but always at the same position across from the top of the bottom panel in the design.

Also, a layout line runs up the left frame from the dot. The stamp’s outer frame is unbroken. The “1” of \$1 is in an exact spot below the “G” of “GAVIT” that is characteristic for the position. Often, the top and the side margins may be present and, on later printings, the outer frame of the entire two-pane setting may be visible at the top or the side or both. As must be obvious, position pL1 on the normal Pomeroy plate is exceptionally rich in characteristic markings for plating.

When two other Pomeroy pL1 stamps from any of the later issues are aligned with the newly plated 117L2 pL1, we see in Figure 1a that stamps printed after 117L2 have the outer top frame line, but the 117L2 does not. No. 117L2 is in the center, 117L2B on thick wove to the left and 117L3 on fibrous to the right. The three stamps were cropped along the bottom frame so the tops could be compared. This proves this outer frame was added to the plate design after the 117L2 was printed.

Many Pomeroy issues after 117L2 are known in full sheets. When Pomeroy stamps in general are inspected, we can also see the center line does not quite reach the top or bottom outer line (see Figure 1b). Also note the guide dots used for drawing the center line. This supports the argument that the outer frame was added later, because when the center line was drawn earlier, there was no outer frame line there to connect.



Figure 2. Portion of the center line appears on the 117L2 stamp franking the Hart cover (No. 13 in the survey, cover dated Aug. 12, 1844, sent from Penn Yan to New York City and delivered there by Boyd’s).

Some examples of No. 117I2 could be partially plated

Figure 2 illustrates another 117L2 that shows part of this center line at the left. Not only has it been proven there is no outer frame, but the large gap at the left identifies as the center line, because the outer framing lines later are significantly closer to the stamps. This, then, is the gutter between the two panes of 117L2.

The darkish line at the bottom is not straight, like the bottom outer frame expected from later issues. It is probably just water staining but deserves further study using the original. This scan was cropped from a cover image in an auction catalog, and it is too low in resolution for a detailed study at this time. However, the center line is clearly there at the left, and the slight left curve at the bottom suggests the stamp's position may be at the bottom of the center line. If it is, this is position pR17 from the right pane. However, this is only a tentative identification. Note position pR17 is the right stamp in the bottom pair of the black 117L4 in Figure 1b.



Figure 3. Portion of the center line at the right on a 117L2 franking the Phelps cover (No. 7 in the survey, dated July 15, 1844, sent from New York City to Albany).

Figure 3 shows another surviving on-cover example of 117L2. It also shows a portion of the center line. The outer frame lines are closer to the stamp, so this is a center line, as in Figure 2. Here, however, the stamp is from the left pane of 20, whereas the example shown in Figure 2 was from the right pane. The resolution of the stamp image is not high enough for plating from the auction catalog. This cover was sent from New York City to Albany and is canceled with the red "Cd" found often on Pomeroy Albany covers.

Notice even with the fortuitous wide-cut center line showing at the right, further plating is difficult. At this resolution, a guide dot of layout line is not visible. The "1" is not there, as with all 117L2. In addition, one of the stamps in this column of the left pane shows a prominent "breast scratch" plate flaw (pL16).

Unfortunately, since 117L2 was the first use of the plate, we cannot know if that flaw had yet appeared on the plate. In fact, from the printing order study

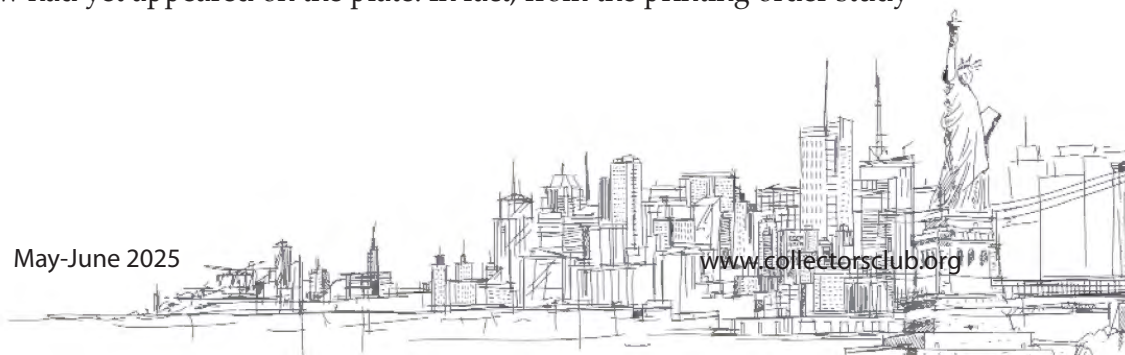




Figure 4. This 117L2 shows a dash in the outer frame characteristic of row-three stamps (No. 14 in the survey, dated Aug. 16, 1844, sent from Geneva N.Y., to New York City and delivered by Boyd's).

that used these flaws to find the sequence in which Pomeroy's stamps were printed, the "breast scratch" flaw is one of the flaws that shows up later. So, no 117L2 will likely ever show that flaw. We have lost another important plating mark that worked well for 117L1, but it is of no value for 117L2. We may be looking at pL16 here in Figure 3, but we have no plate mark to prove it.

A second 117L2 can be fully plated

Figure 4 shows another 117L2 on cover. This example traveled from Geneva N.Y., on the Finger Lakes (head of Seneca Lake). It was carried east to Albany, where it likely received the red "Cd" cancel and then south to New York City, where Boyd's City Express carried it to the final Wall Street address. This example shows a dash in the left outer oval that is characteristic of row-three stamps on the 117L1 plate (Figure 4c arrow).

In a separate article, it was suggested these are marks made by the printer in his study of paper shrinkage of the Pomeroy printings. The dash seen here suggests that the printer had made these row-three marks even on the earlier 117L2 plate. If the dashes were made to measure shrinkage, this 117L2 stamp suggests the concern over shrinkage began even with the very first "State of the Plate."

Since the dash reduced the position possibilities to the center row (three), this position can be identified by the guide dot seen at the bottom-left corner. Out of the eight positions on that row (across both panes), no other row-three position has this dot. There may also be a dot on the right foot of the "R" in "LETTER," as is found on later Pomeroy printings, but the resolution is not the best.

This is pR11, and a rare example where the 117L2 stamp can be plated despite lacking the "1" value, even though the frame break patterns for 117L2 cannot be assumed to match later Pomeroy printings. There may even be a hint of a frame break on this stamp in the lower-right corner. On the pR11 position on later



Figure 5. An example of 117L1 plating to pR11, the same position on 117L2 shown in Figure 4. The cover was sent from Rome, N.Y., on July 18, 1844, to A.C. Flagg in Albany. The typical center row plate mark between the “L-P” of “LETTER POMEROY” is seen in frame c, and the characteristic guide dot at the lower-left corner, which is characteristic of pR11, is seen in frame d.

Pomero sheets, there is not even a hint of a break. This stamp needs closer analysis with high resolution, but it may be a second example where the frame breaks of later printings cannot be trusted to be the same on 117L2. It is, however, pR11.

Figure 5 shows a 117L1 that also plates to pR11, as the 117L2 did on the Washington Post cover shown in Figure 4. This 117L1 cover was sent from Rome N.Y., on July 18, 1844, to A.C. Flagg in Albany (survey No. 19). Note the dots in the oval by “L-P,” as well as a bottom-left outer frame dot, are the same found on the stamp franking the Washington Post cover. So, these two pR11 are a second example that proves 117L2 and 117L1 were not printed on the same sheet. The earlier pL1 plating was the first example proving this point.

Position pL1 and pR11 were identified for 117L2, but additional 117L2 stamps will likely be more difficult to plate. There are not many 117L2 survivors to study, and all 117L2, by definition, have no “1” under the “G” to compare to other positions. Also, other plate positions do not have the many characteristic plating markers seen for pL1, and it took a fortuitous pairing of plate marks to plate the pR11 example.

In an attempt to plate a 117L2 stamp by an earlier researcher, a frame break was noted. The stamp was identified in part because of the frame break as pL14.¹ The stamp being plated in that other study was the same PF399778 stamp found to be pL1 in an earlier article. The frame break pattern is different for 117L2, and in this previous author’s study, it led to an incorrect plating and some false conclusions about the number of plates involved.

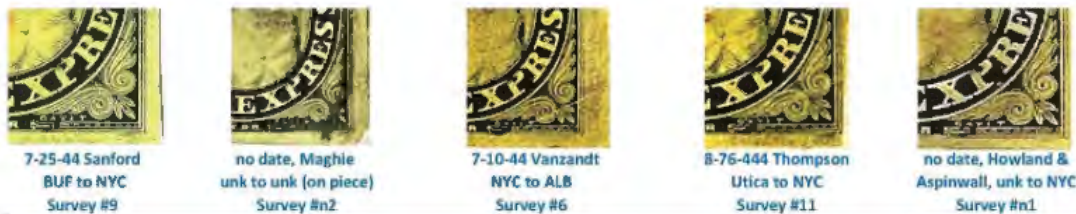


Figure 6. Possible marks on the bottom-right corner of some stamps may mean the printer was studying the frame break.

More observations on 117L2

Another important observation is shown in Figure 6. Five different 117L2 were found that seem to have a faint line below the lower-right corner. There were 28 117L2 examples to study (both on and off cover), and these five stood out. This bottom-right corner is where many frame breaks occur.

I feel the printer may have been lightly marking the plate and running various printing trials to see if he could find a way to stop the breaks, or at least, why they formed. The light lines seen on these 117L2 are not seen on any of the 40 positions in the later printings, so the printer probably placed them there lightly for his early experiments on frame breaks using the earlier 117L2 “state of the plate,” and then burnished them away later. In later Pomeroy printings, there is no sign of the marks under the right-bottom corners at any position. These marks are far enough away from the design to burnish, just as layout lines that extend between positions are often removed.



Figure 7. The horizontal line running across the blank area on 117L2 stamps. The pattern is identical.

There is a black line in the area of 117L2 where the “1” will be etched in later printings. Figure 7 looks at these marks under high magnifications, and it shows that the pattern of the black line is the same wherever the detail could be studied clearly. The reason for the gouge lines is suggested in the proposal, but here in Figure 7 we can see the pattern is constant whether strong or weak.

That means the line occurred from etching into the original transfer roll, and the pattern of the lines was transferred with the same pattern to every one of the positions when the first plate (that printed 117L2) was made. In other words, these lines were not made later, as the added “1” was added later. These blank area lines were created before the plate was even constructed by the transfer roll. The line was created on the transfer roll and is faithfully duplicated on the different plate positions that followed as the original plate was made.

One might argue that the lines resulted from modifying the master die. This is possible; however, that seems unlikely as that would have ruined the master die were it needed later. An engraver/printer can make a new transfer roll any-time from the master die, if needed, but once the master is damaged, repair is no longer possible.

Seven discoveries from studying 117L2

1. 117L2 was printed from the original plate.

The 117L2 pL1 single has five characteristic marks found together on all pL1 of later printings.

2. 117L2 was printed *before* 117L1.

The top outer frame and the plate “flaw” in the oval between the left “L” and “P” are missing on the 117L2.

3. 117L1 and 117L2 were not printed together on the same sheet.

an example of 117L1 and of 117L2 were identified for both positions pL1 and pR11.

4. Shrinkage may have been a concern from the beginning.

The row three 117L2 on the Washington Post cover has a mark between the “L-P.”

5. Frame breaks may have been a concern from the beginning.

Several 117L2 show marks below the right corner that are missing later (apparently burnished away after the experiment).

6. Frame breaks are not reliable traits for plating 117L2 using 117L1 data.

The 117L2 pL1 has a break in the lower right frame, but 117L1 pL1 does not.

7. The “no value blank” was created prior to making the plate.

The black line pattern in the Type 1 (and Type 2, but weaker) “blank” box of all 117L2 is identical.

Correlation between frame breaks and the position of the “1” below “G” of GAVIT

Figure 8 shows a striking and important, direct correlation between the frame breaks and the “1” that was etched into the original 117L2 plate. Notice that the positions where right corner bottom frame breaks occur in all later paintings are directly associated with the “1” etched below the “G” and positioned slightly to the left.



Figure 8. Direct correlation between lower-right corner frame breaks and the position of the “1” under “G” of “GAVIT.”

Four other positions have frame breaks, but in a different corner or combination (Figure 9). pR17 has a unique bottom-left side break. pR13 has the unique combination of a break at the bottom right and the top right. pR14 and pR15 have a break at the top right only. The “1” was etched in a different location on those positions than are seen in Figure 8, and they do not show the same correlation to the “1” position.

It appears that the problem with the undesirable frame breaks arose from the region on each stamp away from the break where the "1" is usually printed. The "1" etched under the "G" slightly to the left caused the most frame-break problems in later printings.

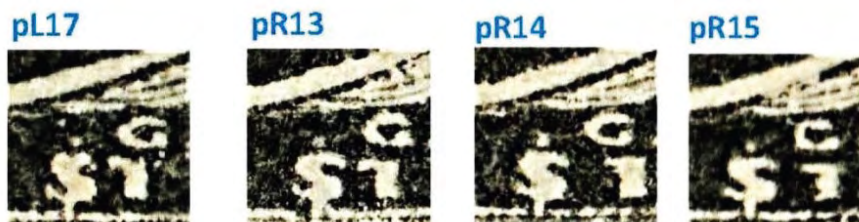


Figure 9. Other frame break positions do not correlate with the pattern in Figure 8. pR17 has a unique bottom left side break. pR13 has the unique combination of a break at the bottom right and the top.

Somehow, during the platemaking process (or as an adjustment on the printing plate) there was an incomplete printing of the frame for stamps with the "1" in a certain position. The position of the "1" at its extremes is shown in Figure 10. No frame breaks occur there or on the other 27 positions not shown in Figure 8 and 9.

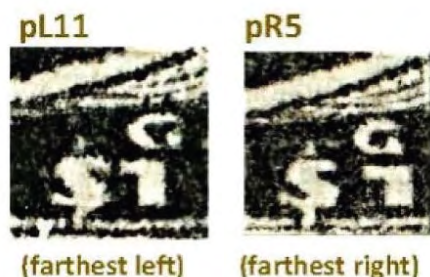


Figure 10. All other positions have the "1" at various other locations below the "G" of Gavit, but none show a frame break. pL11 and pR5 show the range of "1" locations relative to the "G" but these other 29 plate positions show no frame break.

Why the proposal?

If the following proposal is correct, Gavit, the original engraver, never suspected Pomeroy would remove both values. Gavit designed his die assuming the integer removed would depend on the final postal rates that Pomeroy and Wells agreed upon.

This is why the hypothetical proposal suggests the original master die had both a "1" and "2" as part of the design and the original plan was to remove only the "1" or the "2" when creating a plate, but not both. If Pomeroy wanted both a "1" and "2," Gavit designed the master so that two separate transfer rolls could be made, and a different numeral could be removed from each transfer roll to make two plates identical except for the value "1" or "2." If so, Gavit's design was brilliant. However, at no point did Gavit apparently expect Pomeroy would remove both numerals to give a "no value" stamp.

The master die (usually a single subject) can be used to print a few stamps directly. The transfer roll is needed when a plate with many of the same stamp

design has to be made. Some early private posts may have only used a master die and produced their stamps individually. Gavit, therefore, could carefully evaluate his design on the master die directly for frame breaks and probably saw none, since he passed it on to Pomeroy.

Unfortunately, Pomeroy apparently was forced to remove both values to prepare 117L2 “value missing” for opening day. This is speculation, of course, but the “mockup” in the lower-left image of Figure 11 clearly shows there is enough room for two values in the blank area and remnants can still be seen.

Later, when Pomeroy had the “1” etched into the blank space on the plate, it was etched in various positions under the “G.” All 40 positions were etched separately. This is why a plating scheme that focuses on the relative “1” position works so well for 117L1.

Gavit’s original “1” was under the “A” of “GAVIT.” Unfortunately, due to the damage that had been done earlier in creating the initial plate that printed 117L2 with no value, the new “1” had to be re-engraved to the left of its original location, under the “G” of GAVIT.

The frame breaks continued to appear on the sheet, but with a new pattern affecting new positions. For at least one position, pL1, the frame break seen in 117L2 disappeared on the 117L1 printing. For others, new breaks *potentially* occurred where they had not appeared before. We are not sure at what positions these new breaks occurred because we cannot reliably plate all 117L2.

It is clear, however, that the frame break pattern on the uncommon 117L2 cannot be assumed to be the same as is seen on the abundant 117L1 printings. Unfortunately, there is no way to predict what happened at each position when printing from the 117L2 plate. The breaks depended upon the effects of the removed numeral values, and that effect may have been different at each plate position.

On the original plate that Pomeroy used to print 117L2, frame breaks apparently occurred because no value was in the blank area. On the newly modified plate used for all of Pomeroy’s future printings, frame breaks occurred because the “1” had been added (but now moved to a new place). The breaks in 117L1 now depended on where the “1” had been etched relative to the “G.” However, for 117L2, we have too few examples to know what pattern of frame breaks existed on that original plate. All we know is the pattern may have changed between 117L2 and 117L1.

Frame breaks are a wonderful tool when plating 117L1 today, but they may have bothered the printer. That is why the faint marks (shown in Figure 5) below the right corners of some 117L2 may suggest the printer was experimenting with the plate to solve the frame break problem. Since the pL1 117L2 successfully plated earlier showed a frame break, and the black line pattern in the blank

area is remarkably similar for all 117L2, it would not be a surprise if many of the 117L2 positions showed frame breaks in the lower-right corner.

Unfortunately, there are not enough 117L2 known to have survived to verify if that is true. There are only approximately 26 No. 117L2 examples on or off cover, and there are 40 positions on the plate. Even many of the 117L2 copies that are known are mostly reported in auction catalogs at too low a resolution. They would have to be re-scanned before plating, and it is doubtful that any one collector has more than a single copy or two of 117L2 since they are relatively uncommon.

In summary, through necessity Pomeroy changed his plans for Gavit's die. This possibly led to frame breaks and the peculiar printing of 117L2, where the bottom legend begins "20 for..." but ends without a value. When a value "1" was added later, Pomeroy could finally print the stamps he had wanted with the value he wanted, but unfortunately the frame breaks continued.

For Pomeroy, however, having frame breaks still occurring on the newly modified plate with \$1 value now present, was far less a concern than having stamps without *any* value at all. Pomeroy's printer seems to have found the frame breaks objectionable, but Pomeroy and his clientele probably scarcely noticed the breaks. The distribution data suggests 117L1 and 117L2 were used interchangeably from opening day onward.

A proposal for the origin of the "value missing" 117L2 Pomeroy stamps

The following proposal, based on printed evidence, illustrates why the "missing value" 117L2 came about. Although there is no written record, the suggestion Wells and Pomeroy were negotiating costs fits the following scenario well. The proposal is based on those events, and on high magnification of the "blank area" in the legend where the "1" is normally seen.

Pomeroy had a dilemma: he might need 5¢ stamps or a complete supply of both 5¢ and 10¢ stamps if he could not coordinate with Wells. It should be noted that Wells' location, past Buffalo but serving within the West, and also to New York City, meant he did not have the same dilemma that faced Pomeroy. From the very beginning, Wells had to print both 5¢ stamps (96L1) and 10¢ stamps (96L2) for his letter rates.

This proposal came out of necessity, because otherwise, as shown in an earlier article, there is no solid data that supports that the "missing value" had a postal function. In addition, there are some suggestive patterns in the black line found where the "\$1" should have been printed that support the proposal.

The hypothesis is that the "value missing" stamps were printed to obtain a supply of adhesives to prepare Pomeroy's new company to be up and running by his deadline for opening day. There was some urgency, since Pomeroy at that time had no stamps printed at all. No. 117L2 may have been printed in a panic

when Pomeroy did not know the future. No. 117L2 was perhaps Pomeroy's "go to" plan if everything else failed.

Although Pomeroy would finally make his opening day deadline by printing nearly all the stamps he finally needed (117L1 through 117L6), he did not know his other stamps would be ready when he printed the 117L2 sheets. There must have been a fair number of the 117L2 sheets printed, because they were to be his workhorse issue if 117L1 could not be readied. Both were the black-on-yellow color and he needed a healthy supply of that stamp for his many offices across hundreds of miles of Upstate New York.

Pomeroy's stamp issue 117L2 was not a "quickie" print run. Pomeroy had to get an ample supply to every one the offices in his network from New York City, Albany, Rochester, Watertown and Buffalo. Unlike the single-color issues in distinct colors, the black-on-yellow stamp would be used everywhere, and each office needed to have enough stamps to hopefully never run out, at least in the early days. If he also needed to serve west of Buffalo, the quantity of 117L2 needed would become even greater.

In addition, if his plan was to use the black-on-yellow as his workhorse, he had to supply every office with a good supply. If he only printed just a few 117L2 for each office, and they ran out quickly, it would potentially have been more confusing for his mail clientele than if he did not offer stamps. So, once Pomeroy committed to printing any of the black on yellow stamps, he was committing to print perhaps thousands of them.

Based on the survey results, Pomeroy probably printed at least 15% of the total number of black-on-yellow stamps he finally had on opening day. No. 117L2 is considered uncommon today, but 15% of all the black-on-yellow issue placed on sale opening day would be a lot of stamps. There may have been hundreds of 117L2 sheets printed in 1844 and finally distributed based on the surviving 117L2 covers found in the modern survey.

High-resolution scans of the "blank" area suggest the master die had two values

Guide dots, layout lines and major plate flaws are visible, but they have no postal function. They are printing artifacts. Early researchers searched for postal function for 117L2's blank space. Now that we have demonstrated there is no postal function for the "no value" issue, we must consider whether the blank area is much like a plate flaw. Although unlike plate flaws, the blank space was likely made purposefully (human-caused), it was probably created specifically to remove the numerals. Nos. 117L1 and 117L2 were handled identically.

The proposal is that, with Pomeroy waiting on an agreement with Wells over rates for areas west of Buffalo, Gavit made a composite die. Gavit was Pomeroy's brother-in-law, so it is likely they had many opportunities to have some long in-

depth conversations on how the master die was to look. Gavit likely was aware of Pomeroy's anxiety and, as an engraver, he offered a solution designed specifically for Pomeroy's dilemma. It seems to have been an ingenious design.

Figure 11 shows a mockup of what the proposed original die would have printed were it ever used without removal of any of the numerals. No printing such as Figure 11 exists and it is doubtful such a printing was ever carried out. The image shown in Figure 11 is hypothetical, based on reconstruction of what can be seen under high magnification of the blank area. This is what Gavit would have seen on the few stamps he may have printed from his finished master die to test for frame breaks and overall design integrity.



Figure 11. A mockup example of what the proposed Pomeroy's original master die may have printed as a proof, were it ever used, which was not in this form.

High-resolution scans suggest how Pomeroy prepared the "blank" area of 117L2. For the proposal presented here to be valid, we need to see *what proof there is that both a "1" and a "2" were on the original Gavit master die.*

Notice the "1" in this hypothetical image is below the "A" of "GAVIT." Later, Pomeroy's normal 117L1 stamps have the "\$" in the same place as in the mock-up, but the "1" is re-engraved instead to the left below the "G".

The mockup shown in Figure 11 pictures a "2" between the "\$" and the "1." It shows what the proposed Pomeroy's original master die might have printed were

it ever used, which it was not. A Gavit-engraved "2" was graphically lifted from the left side of the inscription "20 for \$1." This "2" was likely there on the original master die engraved by Gavit, but it *may or may not* have looked identical to the one under the "G" in the master die. All we know is this is how Gavit made a "2" in the inscription to the left. Gavit's original plan seems to have been for Pomeroy to remove one of the values (or a different value on each of two transfer rolls) once an agreement was made with Wells.

Gavit designed the master die this way, presumably presumably Pomeroy told him the conflict he was having with Wells. Unfortunately, Pomeroy needed stamps hurriedly for the first day, but they could not have a value at all. Gavit's masterful plan was thrown out the window for a brief time. Gavit's master die would not be damaged, so Pomeroy could still return to use it even after opening day. However, opening day was close, and Pomeroy had no stamps over hundreds of miles of his many offices.

In this scenario, Pomeroy was forced to set up his plate prematurely. However, a stamp printed with both a "20 stamps for \$2" and "20 stamps for \$1" would be confusing, so both the "1" and "2" had to be removed before the transfer roll was used to make the plate. *Both* numerals had to go. Stamps were then printed for the first day. These seem to be the examples of 117L2 we now see. They had no value or special function, so they were likely mixed later with 117L1 once all were distributed.

The "2" was inserted next to the "1" in the mockup due to the following: First, Pomeroy was negotiating with Wells for either a stamp with "20 for \$2" or "20 for \$1." That would be a 5¢ stamp after the discount or a 10¢ stamp. If negotiations with Wells went differently, Pomeroy would have needed a 10¢ stamp if he had to deliver mail all the way into the West to cities such as Cleveland and Chicago. Wells finally agreed to transfer Pomeroy's covers in Buffalo, so Pomeroy ultimately only needed the 5¢ stamps, *but when the master die was created, no one knew the future.*

The proposal is that the engraver, Gavit, built both values into the original master die, so when negotiations were over, all Pomeroy had to do was create a transfer roll and remove either the "1" or the "2." If Gavit's master die was indeed first engraved with two numerals, Gavit's original design would be very ingenious and solve several yet-unknown scenarios that Pomeroy might face.

Gavit made his ingenious master die so that Pomeroy could also, if needed, make two transfer rolls and remove a different numeral from each. Then Pomeroy could have made two plates with one plate able to print 5¢ stamps and the second plate able to print 10¢ stamps. In Gavit's plan, the master die would not be damaged, only the transfer rolls, so the master die would still be available unaltered if needed later.

Under this scenario, Gavit's master die allowed Pomeroy to make a plate for

the 5¢ only, or for the 10¢ only (as mentioned), depending on how the negotiations with Wells ended. Thus, Pomeroy had three options from one master die: a 5¢ plate, a 10¢ plate or both. Gavit set Pomeroy up well.

In the end, Pomeroy only needed one transfer roll, but while preparing the master die, no one knew what would happen. Remember, there was likely only a few months for an intelligent and savvy businessperson to prepare for every possibility, while being fully aware the competition wanted what he wanted — a postal gateway to the West.

Wisely, Gavit only made one master die for an anticipated two plates. Therefore, the designs of both plates — other than the value — would be the same design of a lovely lady with flowers in her hair. The “lady” design has been traced by Dr. Juian Blanchard to a John E. Gavit advertising sheet, which is shown in Figure 12 (with inset enlargement).⁴

Because an agreement with Wells was not getting resolved, Pomeroy needed to have his stamp plate made sooner than planned. He might have pan-



Figure 12. Shown above is the original source of the young lady in Gavit’s engraving for Pomeroy’s Letter Express stamps. It is a promotion for Gavit’s business. An enlargement of that area of the design is enlarged at right, as well as a vignette from one of Pomeroy’s stamps.

Image courtesy of Archives International Auctions, LLC.

icked. He had reason to do so, since he not only had to secure his territory and dominance in Upstate New York before the competition, but he also had the government attacking all the independent mails.

When the master die was being made, Pomeroy had not begun his independent mails post, but ALM (American Letter Mail) was under full attack by the government, and one of its employees was in a very public court trial for carrying letters on the post roads. Even before opening day, Pomeroy had to be preparing for similar attacks on his post by the government.

Business decisions are never made in hindsight; they are made to prepare for an unknown future. Pomeroy seems to have been a consummate businessperson, preparing for every eventuality. Unfortunately, individuals cannot easily hold off a government that has the power to later change the very laws that allow you to exist.

However, Pomeroy with Gavit's master die somehow made opening day a success. He was so successful in July 1844, that it took the U.S. government to force him out of business. Pomeroy succeeded in being fully competitive with Hale for those few brief weeks in July 1844⁵. Unfortunately, he would end up at the top of the government's hit list, and he was driven out of business before anyone else.

A proposal for the origin of the "missing value" 117L2 has been presented. We'll likely explore the probable alteration of the double-value transfer roll in more detail another time, based on my theory. This, of course, is speculation, based on printed evidence.

Conclusion

The 117L2 Pomeroy issue had no intended postal function as a no-value stamp. It was an artifact of the printing process and a rush to get stamps produced quickly in the absence of an agreement with Wells. I feel 117L2 was still used by Pomeroy simply due to financial considerations, and Pomeroy did not feel the small difference between 117L1 and 117L2 was significant enough to warrant discarding them. The original Gavit master die – if it had two values – may have forced Pomeroy's decision to do away with the value.

Endnotes

1. Wilcox, David R., "Pomeroy's Letter Express: 117L2 Distribution Survey," *Penny Post*.
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3. Wilcox, David R., "Correspondences of the U.S. Independent Mails 1844-45," *Collectors Club Philatelist*, Nov-Dec. 2023, 102:6 pp. 340-368. (also, in preparation, Wilcox, David R., "The Independent Mails Cover Survey: Part 1 Survey Analysis" and "Part 2 History of the Independent Mails," *Collectors Club Philatelist*, 2024).
4. Blanchard, Julian, *Essay-Proof Journal* No. 72.
5. Wilcox, Ibid.



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A Brief Survey of “Named” Post Office Markings, St. Louis, Mo. Part II

Wayne L. Youngblood

As I mentioned in Part I of this article (*CCP*, March-April 2025, pp. 112-118), I’ve always been fascinated by “named” markings from post offices – especially those from towns and cities I’ve called “home” over the years. In this case I provided a brief survey of types of named markings from St. Louis, Mo., including various “paid” and internal markings, some of which were never intended to appear on live mail.

This time we’ll focus on some of the auxiliary markings used in St. Louis, many of which explained mail delay or damage to specific items.

In a few cases, the “named” markings of St. Louis don’t specifically state “St. Louis,” but local covers or various types of receiving marks (usually verified by more than one) remove all doubt about the marking’s origin. For example, the cover shown in Figure 1 was mailed from St. Louis to Clayton (a close suburb)

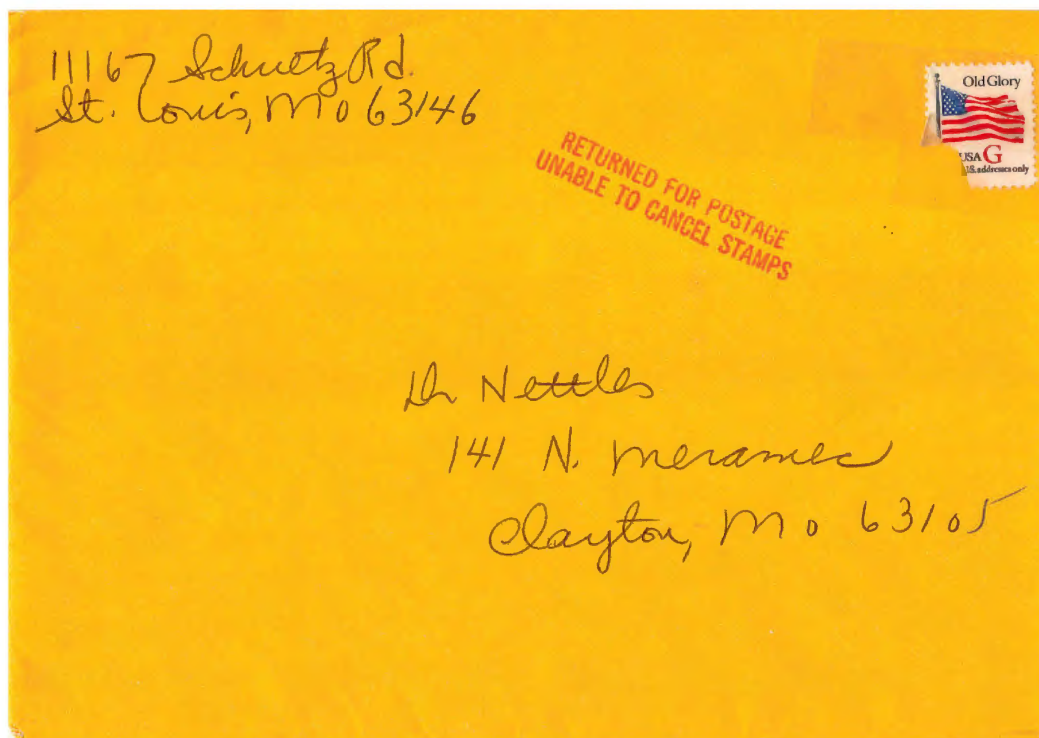


Figure 1. Although the name “St. Louis” does not appear in this locally mailed auxiliary marking, there is no doubt it originated there.

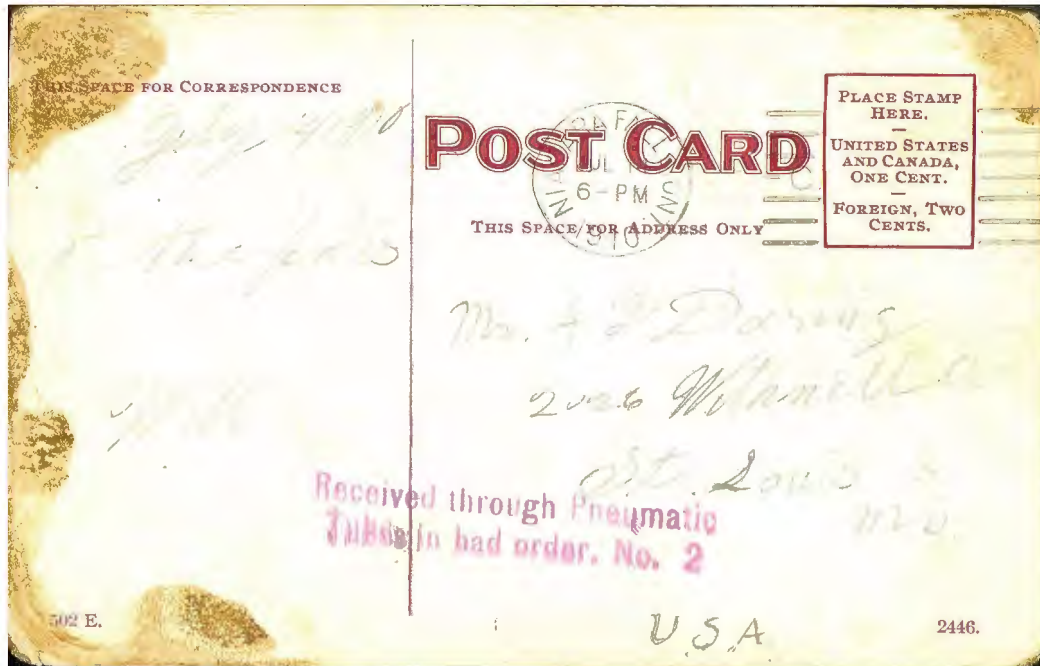


Figure 2. Discovered by researcher David Straight, this postcard was almost certainly damaged in the extensive St. Louis pneumatic tube system and was so marked. Although perhaps lost to philately, it is thought to be the only-known marked pneumatic mail item from St. Louis.

with a torn stamp taped on the envelope. The cover was caught and returned for postage (it was never mailed again). Although the returned marking doesn't include "St. Louis" in the text, there's no doubt about the origin.

One of the most fascinating of the non-named "named" markings is the item shown in Figure 2, which unfortunately is, perhaps, lost to philately. It was discovered some years ago by David Straight, who studied St. Louis postal history extensively. The postcard was mailed July 14, 1910, from Niagara Falls, N.Y., to St. Louis, Mo. As you can see, the stamp is missing and the card is badly stained around the edges. The auxiliary marking reads "Received through Pneumatic Tubes in bad order. No. 2."

As a brief bit of background, between 1893-1918, pneumatic tubes served six large American cities, including Philadelphia (1893), New York (1897), Brooklyn (1898), Boston (1897), Chicago (1905) and St. Louis (1905). At the height of their activity, pneumatic tubes were moving more than half of all mail traveling through these cities, but specifically named markings are known only from Chicago. A wartime economy measure, according to Straight, ended all pneumatic service in 1918. Severe congestion in New York City and Boston required reactivation of those tube systems during the 1920s, which continued until 1953 in New York City, when GM trucks replaced the tube. I do not know when Boston's second-period service ended.

Because the card was destined for St. Louis and almost certainly traveled through the tube system, Straight reasoned that the marking had to be from St.

Louis. While I do not doubt Straight's speculation, it is also theoretically possible that the card was damaged and marked while traversing the New York City system.

However, since the volume of mail that passed through New York City at that time was so much larger than that passing through St. Louis tubes, it seems highly unlikely that no other examples of this marking have ever turned up, had it been applied in New York. Thus, we'll assume Straight was correct that this is a so-far unique use from St. Louis. Unfortunately, after his death, this postcard did not turn up amongst his extensive pneumatic tube mail collection. This is unfortunate.



Figure 3, A 1908 postcard mailed Dec. 30, 1908, was completely torn in half, repaired with official seals and marked "Received in St. Louis, Mo. in bad order," all on the same day. The card, of course, was damaged in mail handling, possibly while in transit through the city's pneumatic tube system.

Although there is no pneumatic marking, it is entirely possible the postcard shown in Figure 3 was also a casualty of the St. Louis pneumatic tube system, given the fact that about half of all daily mail traveled through the system. Mailed somewhat earlier than Straight's card, this example originated in St. Louis Dec. 30, 1908, bound for Denver, Colo. The card was ripped in half and repaired with two Official Mail seals (Scott OX11b), postmarked in St. Louis the same day.

The telling feature of this item, however, is the city-named auxiliary marking, which reads "Received at St. Louis, Mo. In bad order." Just above that marking is another marking, a detached "No. 2," likely signifying the nixie clerk who repaired the card. The fixed marking on Straight's marked pneumatic card also bears a "No. 2."

But there were many other causes of delay or damage to mail traversing the St. Louis mail system.

The 1942 cover shown in Figure 4 captures a historic snapshot of a much larger weather event. The cover, mailed from Sappington (a southwestern suburb of St. Louis) was likely mailed July 8, 1942, destined for the downtown office of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* newspaper office. There is no stamp, but there is a July 9, 1942, St. Louis duplex cancel, along with two auxiliary markings. The first simply states “Damaged by Rain at St. Louis MO”; the second reads “Mail damaged by water/ postage paid.”

During a single, lingering storm, a total of 6.94 inches of rain fell in St. Louis over the course of July 8 and 9, 1942 – the third greatest 24-hour total accumulation in St. Louis’ history. This followed significant flooding throughout the state about 10 days earlier.

During this storm, streets were extensively flooded, all city underpasses were impassable and hundreds of vehicle were inundated and stalled.

Clearly, this cover was caught in the deluge (whether in a mail box or during transit), the stamp was floated free and there is visible water damage. What I find more interesting, perhaps, is that there was a ready-made device in the St. Louis post office describing mail damage by rain. This must not have been an uncommon occurrence.

Of course, finding people in a large city also accounts for delays, sometimes significant. In others, the situation can resolve itself fairly quickly. We can assume by the markings found on the postcard shown from tand back in Figure 5



Figure 4. The third-largest accumulation of rain falling in a 24-hour period in St. Louis, Mo., caused this cover to be damaged and marked with a specific explanation of damage.



that delivery was successfully made, as there are no dead letter markings. However, delivering the card wasn't necessarily an easy matter.

Mailed July 6, 1908, from Milwaukee, Wis., the real photo postcard bears a humorous message from five beer-drinking men in a boat. It was addressed to Albert Fischer, at 1138 Flat Ave., in St. Louis. You can see several different house numbers were tried unsuccessfully, and a double-ring red "Name Duplicated in Directory [Clerk] No. 51" marking was added July 7.

A search of the 1908 St. Louis city directory shows a total of eight Albert Fischers living in the city – none at the address indicated on the card. Two of these were listed as "Saloon," so, perhaps one of those was the proper addressee – or not.



Figure 5. An unusual "Name duplicated in directory" marking was added to this real-photo postcard in 1908, when the addressee could not be found at the address written on it.



Figure 6. This 2¢ stamped envelope, which probably contained a circular, lost its contents before leaving St. Louis.

The cover shown in Figure 6 is a lot more straightforward. The cover, bound for Germany is a 2¢ stamped envelope, likely sent as unsealed printed matter. Somehow the piece was caught in St. Louis, postmarked Sept. 10, 1904, and marked “Received at St. Louis, Mo. Open and Empty.” With no indication of a sender’s return address, the piece was sent on to its destination. We can only hope the recipient knew who sent it.

By contrast, the Christmas greetings postcard shown in Figure 7 provides a true challenge to decipher. It was mailed Dec. 21, 1906, from Napa, Calif., bound for St. Louis, where its first town marking was an upside-down boxed “Sent to General Delivery,” applied at lower left. Later in the day it received the double-ring magenta “Record No. 25” marking at lower right, along with at least one of the “Forwarded” markings. The card was then hit with a Dec. 28 duplex and sent on its way.

Next stop was Chicago, Ill., where a bright red, but indecipherable, Dec. 28 marking was applied. This was probably a directory service or “dead” marking for figuring where to send it next. A couple of clerk numbers were also applied somewhere along the way as well.

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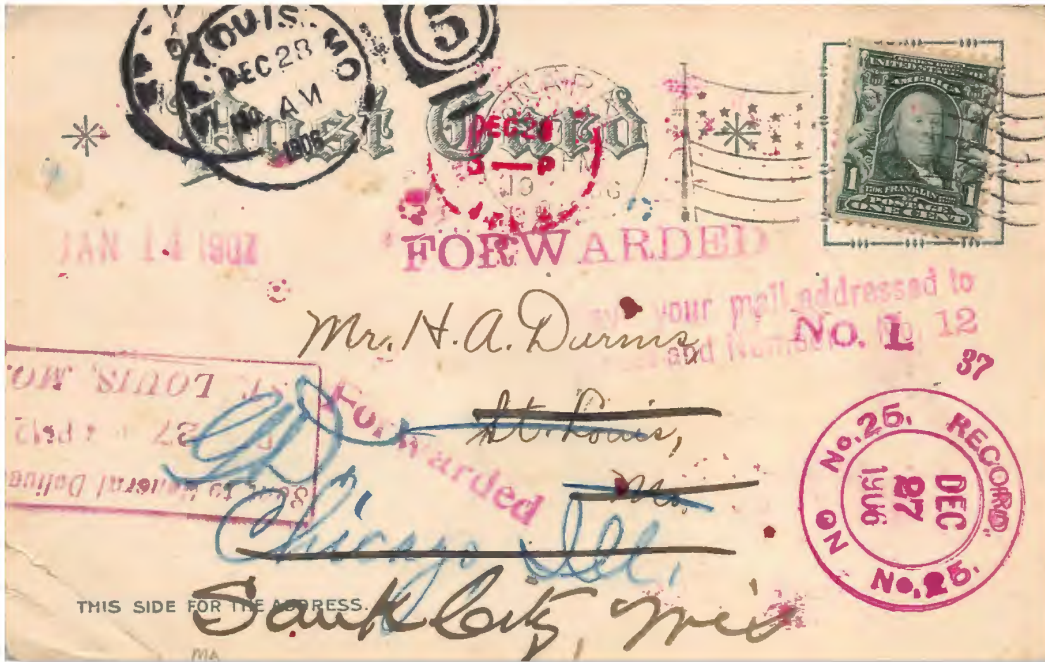


Figure 7. A simple Christmas greeting postcard (front not shown) took a multi-city tour during late 1906 and early 1907 in search of its addressee.

Although there is no town-named receiving mark on the card, we must assume that the Jan. 14, 1907, dated marking found near the upper-left corner was applied at the card's final destination, Sauk City, Wis., taking just a little more than two weeks for its multi-city odyssey, but all the richer (from a postal history standpoint) for its time spent in St. Louis.

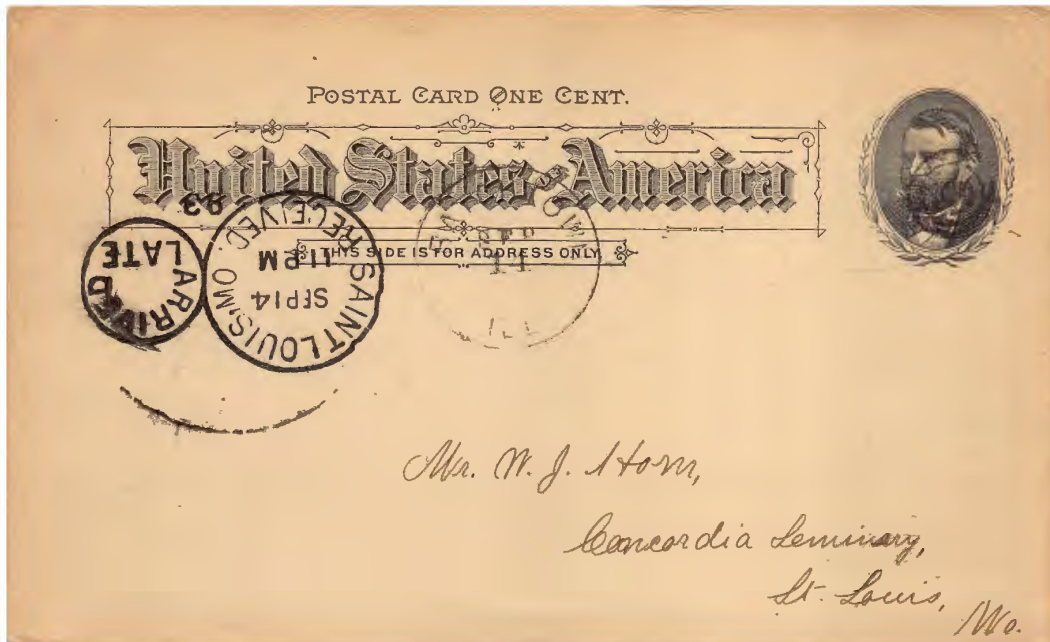


Figure 8. A crisp "Arrived Late" double-circle received marking on this card likely meant it arrived too late for same-day delivery.

Figure 8 illustrates yet another type of marking denoting a delay. The postal card, mailed Sept. 14, 1893, from Illinois (Calhoun County), received – the same day – the large, uneven opera-glass-style marking “Saint Louis, Mo Received” in one circle and “Arrived Late” in the second, which probably meant too late for same-day delivery.

The cover shown in Figure 9 may not have been delayed, but it communicates a form of slightly mistaken identity. It was mailed with registry service Feb. 24, 1969, to noted philatelist John Pope in St. Louis, from the Spokane, Wash., Terminal Annex post office.



Figure 9. This 1969 registered cover arrived in St. Louis without proper registry protocol having been followed. The St. Louis post office was prepared with a special marking for the event.

One of the protocols of registered mail is that every possible opening spot on an envelope is supposed to be struck with a dated marking from the town of origin. Rather than using the Terminal Annex marking used to cancel the stamps, a clerk used a straight-line “AMF Spokane, Wash.,” marking (Air Mail Facility).

Although the markings covered potential openings, it was not dated, so, upon arrival in St. Louis, two double-ring magenta strikes of a Feb. 25 marking were applied. The following day, Feb. 26, the Central Station



Figure 10. As this cover transited through St. Louis it received a marking from the Registry Exchange Office.

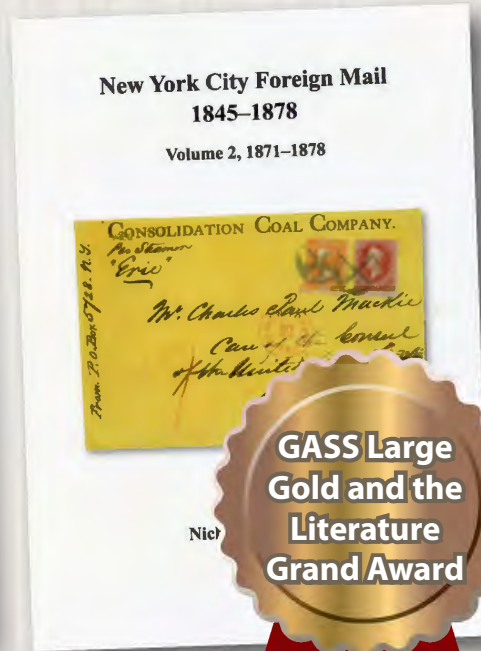
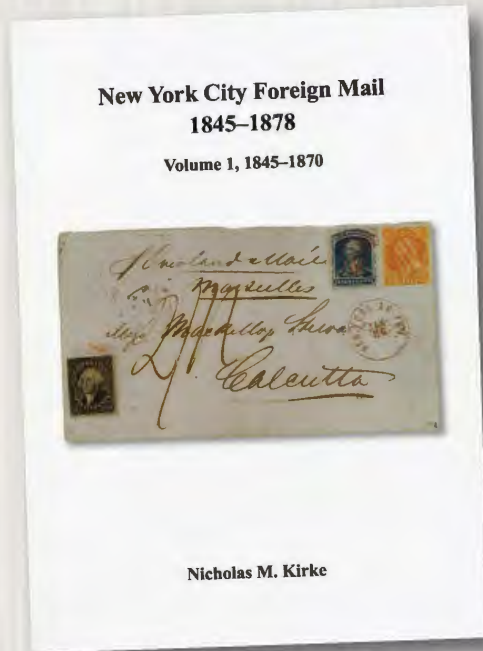
not only applied its own receiving mark (in darker magenta), but also a straight-line “Received Without Backstamp” marking to denote the “deficiency” of the Spokane office. It’s hard to imagine this much care being taken today.

Finally, the cover shown in Figure 10 illustrates the use of St. Louis as a registry exchange office. St. Louis served as the inbound exchange office for much of Mexico. The cover was mailed Feb. 15(?), 1906, from Mexico City to Washington, D.C. As the cover passed through the St. Louis registry office, the four-line “Transmitted Through Feb. 17, 1906 St. Louis, Mo., as Registered Mail” marking was added, with the final Washington, D.C. Feb. 19 receiver added two days later.

This is just a brief sampling of the many different types of Auxiliary markings known from St. Louis.

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Book Reviews

[*Editor's Note: The Scott Specialized Catalog of United States Stamps and Covers is traditionally released in October; the Classic Specialized Catalogue of Stamps & Covers 1840-1940 is typically released in November. Due to a variety of reasons, Scott was unable to physically deliver the catalogs until March and April, respectively. It is anticipated the company will resume its more traditional schedule later this year.*]

Scott 2025 Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers, perfect-bound, 990 pages, plus cover, 8½ by 11 inches, Amos Media, \$149.99, ISBN 978-0-89487-737-7, available either from Scott at a discount (as an Amos Advantage member) or from several different supply dealers.

The much-anticipated 2025 edition of the *Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers* is finally out.

By far the biggest news (and best, in my opinion) this year is that both the Identifier and stamp-values-by-grade sections have been restored to the main body of the catalog!

After the 2021 edition of the *Specialized* topped out at a hefty 1,370 pages (plus cover), the decision was made by Scott to reduce image sizes and spin off the United Nations, Essays & Proofs, stamp-values-by-grade and Identifier sections into separate stand-alone volumes, leaving the core catalog room to expand in the future. The Postal Counterfeits section had already been reduced in size, leaving only pre-Forever-stamp-era counterfeits in the *Specialized*, while a more comprehensive version was welcomed by collectors as a stand-alone volume.



I suspect not only were space-saving measures considered by Scott when cutting the additional sections and creating extra volumes, but also the potential for additional revenue for expanded sales from existing data. After all, the Counterfeit volume was warmly welcomed by the marketplace. Regardless, the decision was made and the 2022 *Specialized* left many collectors confused and some a bit angry when they found some of these sections absent.

Arguably, the smartest move was to eliminate the United Nations from the *Specialized*. First, many U.S. specialists do not share the same enthusiasm for stamps of the United Nations, and those who are specialists of U.N. stamps probably resented having to buy the entire *Specialized* to access that area. United Nations stamps continue to be a separate volume from the *Specialized* and, I would guess, continues to enjoy a regular following.

Removal of the Essays & Proofs was met with mixed reviews, with some appreciating having that wealth of information in a single, accessible volume. Others resented the removal of those items from the *Specialized*, arguing that many collectors already know little about essays and proofs and divorcing the section from the *Specialized* will simply have the effect of compartmentalizing and diminishing interest further.

But the real uproar came with the elimination of the pricing-by-grade and Identifier sections.

Now, before going further, one could argue either side of the pricing-by-grade section. True, it is useful and convenient in the *Specialized*, but is it truly necessary? For usability I actually preferred the smaller, stand-alone book, but has been an integral part of the catalog for several years, and collectors and dealers have come to expect its presence. I'd like to note that there have been a significant number of changes – mostly upward – in the higher grades of classic-era stamps in particular.

Even if you're not a fan of graded stamps, this section provides invaluable perspective. The standard Scott value is for a stamp in very fine condition, essentially meaning a grade (if graded) of 80. Thus a stamp, such as the Scott No. 35 shown nearby (Type V), would not likely sell for its full \$55 catalog value as very fine. Despite being a jumbo stamp with a light cancel, one could really only call it an F-VF (fine to very fine), which has a listed value of \$40. Obviously, other condition issues would also affect its value positively or negatively, but one can get a pretty good idea of a retail value of a stamp by studying this guide.



The Identifier section should never have been removed in the first place and I hope that move is never contemplated again. Part of the essential usability of a work such as the *Specialized* deals with being able to identify stamps to be able to determine the appropriate Scott number for them. This is especially true for the Washington-Franklins, the plethora of certain modern Flag issues and many other modern stamps where there are significantly different characteristics warranting major Scott numbers. While the separate volume was easy to handle, I argue that the Identifier is an integral and necessary part of the *Specialized*, and that its usefulness was diminished by its absence.

After consulting with collectors and leaders in the hobby in the years since, a reasonable solution has been achieved. While the Essays & Proofs remain in a separate volume, the Identifier and values-by-grade sections have been restored. With 990 pages (plus cover), it will be at least a few years before the catalog once again reaches critical mass in terms of size.

So what else is new with the *Specialized*?

As would be expected, the market for U.S. stamps is very mixed, with the catalog reflecting both increases and decreases throughout. As a general rule, high-quality and truly scarce stamps tend to increase in value, while the market for more common material – including some with significant catalog values – is rather soft.

For example, Scott 34, the Type IV counterpart to the Type V 10¢ 1857 shown earlier in this review, had a 2024 catalog value of \$50,000; the new value is \$75,000.

Of course, stamps like this are well beyond the reach of most of us, but most of us have plenty of stamps that show moderate gains or losses. For example, the 3¢ orange-red imperforate of 1851, Scott 10 (Type I) and 10A (Type II) both showed incremental gains. In the 2024 catalog, a used No. 10 listed for \$190, and a 10A for \$150; in the 2025 edition, those values are \$200 and \$160, respectively. Meanwhile, the ever-popular Black Jack (No. 73) lost ground. In 2024 the stamp cataloged \$75 used. The new value is \$70.

Similarly, comparisons of “touchstone” stamps throughout both regular listings and back-of-the-book show mixed returns, with not too many drastic changes. Modern (post-2010 or so) stamps continue to show strong results. Much of this is driven by popular Forever stamps that have uses in markets other than ours, such as the more well-produced Love stamps and others. There is much to discover.

On interesting note, pointed out by Editor-in-Chief Jay Bigalke, is that there are seven new earliest-known uses documented, ranging from Scott 93-581. It’s unusual to see so many new EKUs in a single year.

Another interesting development is the specific notation that the values for imperforate stamps between No. 314 and 611 (Washington-Franklins and Fourth Bureaus) are for *completely* imperforate stamps.

Many of us have known for years that imperforate stamps of that time period sold to private vending companies, such as Schermack and Mailometer, are worth significantly less with those private perforations, but it wasn’t entirely common knowledge until now. Notations direct users to the private perforation section. Stamps with trimmed-off private perforations don’t count as imperforate, either.

The bottom line is that – for decades – Scott has proven itself (thanks to the scores of specialist collectors and dealers who freely contribute their research and wisdom) the foremost authority on United States stamps. It is definitely worth updating this tome every year, if possible.

— Wayne L. Youngblood

Scott 2025 Classic Specialized Catalogue of Stamps and Covers 1840-1940, hardbound, 1,362 pages, plus cover, 8½ by 11 inches, Amos Media, \$179.99, ISBN 978-0-89487-738-0, available either from Scott at a discount (as an Amos Advantage member) or from several different supply dealers.

Like the *U.S. Specialized*, publication of this year’s *Classic Specialized Catalog of Stamps & Covers 1840-1940* was delayed for months, but has finally arrived in the philatelic marketplace. If this is a volume you update regularly and you do not already have a copy, you may wish to consider finding one while they are still in stock. From my limited observation, they seem to be selling quickly, and it is possible there was a much smaller press run than normal for this belated volume.

According to Scott, there are more than 6,250 value changes in this year’s edition of the *Classic Specialized*. While that number, which is fairly close to the annual average number of value changes in recent years, may not seem like a lot in

a catalog that contains tens of thousands of listings, it is significant, and it is not all that occurs within these now-1,362 pages.

A catalog such as this is much more than simply numbers and values. Detailed explanations of varieties, exceptions to the rule, cautionary notices and more are essential to a growing and evolving publication, and they must be reviewed and added as necessary over time.

In addition, the listings for each country must continually be expanded. When the first *Classic Specialized* was released, the listings were not terribly different from those found in the Standard catalogs, but it was the goal of Scott editors to keep expanding listings to include values for never-hinged stamps of this time period, as well as a general guide to on-cover values, which can be as good as gold in some cases.

This year's edition now includes, for the first time, values for stamps on cover for some of the stamps from Lebanon. The job is not yet complete, but it's a healthy start. Value listings for stamps on cover typically are given for the most common usage of any given issue. And many 1840-1940 stamps are scarce on cover. For example, Scott 22, the low value of a set of 11 surcharged French stamps from 1924-25, catalogs for only 50¢ used and \$1 mint. But on cover, this common stamp has a \$15 value. Many more dramatic listings may be found throughout the catalog.



Similarly, because the norm during this time period was to hinge stamps in albums, the values for never-hinged stamps frequently dwarf those for stamps that have been hinged. Countries for which listings have been added for never-hinged stamps include Alexandretta, Algeria, Brazil, Egypt, Guatemala, Honduras, Iraq, Jordan, Oman and Syria. Again, while these listings are not yet comprehensive, they are informative. For example, Brazil Scott 189, shown nearby, catalogs for \$24 hinged, but \$110 mint never-hinged.

Countries that saw the highest number of value changes this year include Canada and Provinces, Nicaragua, Uruguay and Hungary. In addition, the listings for parcel post issues of Greenland were reorganized and new varieties were added.

As is the case with the *U.S. Specialized*, this major – nay, indispensable – work could not possibly exist without the generations-deep voluntary (unpaid) contributions of collectors and dealers. While gratitude is extended in the introduction, it needs to always be remembered that while Scott may be the commercial driver of this work, it is something that truly belongs to the hobby.

— Wayne L. Youngblood



The Collectors Club

Membership Update: Feb. 13 through April 20, 2025

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Feb. 25, 2025

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Carlisle, Pa.

March 25, 2025

Non-Resident:

Pelc, Bogdan Janusz

Berlin, Germany

Zimmer, Scott

Woodbury, Minn.

Applications Pending

Non-Resident:

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Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Jones III, Vincent

Emerald Hills, Calif.

We regret to inform you of the recent death of the following longtime Collectors Club members:

Dewey, Anthony [Tony] F.

April 14, Hartford, Conn.

Winter, Richard [Dick] F

March 13, Colfax, N.C.

2003 Recipient of the Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award

If you would like to update your contact information, please contact our Executive Secretary Andrea Matura at: info@collectorsclub.org.

We appreciate the continuing outreach efforts in collaboration with the Philatelic Foundation and major auction houses in membership recruitment. Upcoming meetings at the Club continue throughout the year. Our ongoing 2025 remote 'Zoom' and combined 'Zoom + Live' meeting series is in progress. We eagerly anticipate the ramping up of 'in person' activities and related events at the Club throughout 2025!

Please plan on attending the annual Great American Stamp Show (GASS), sponsored by the American Philatelic Society, American Topical Association and the American First Day Cover Society this August in Schaumburg, Ill. See you there!

Respectfully submitted,
Mark E. Banchik, Membership Chair



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