

# WESTERN EXPRESS

Research Journal of Early Western Mails

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Quarterly Publication of the  
Western Cover Society

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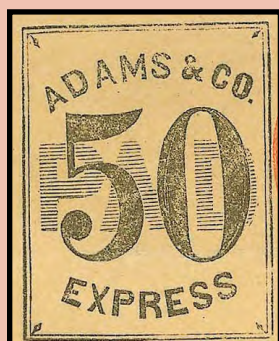
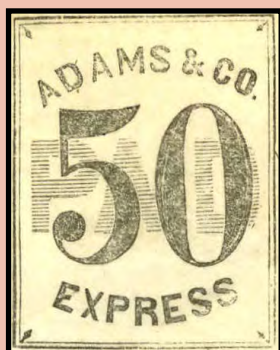
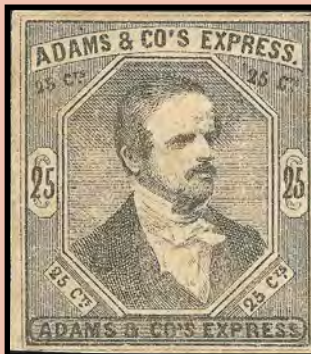
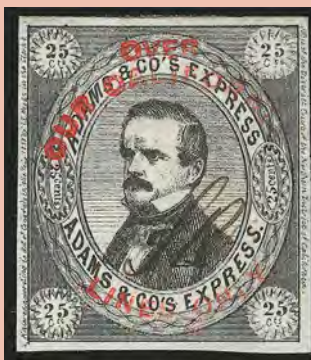
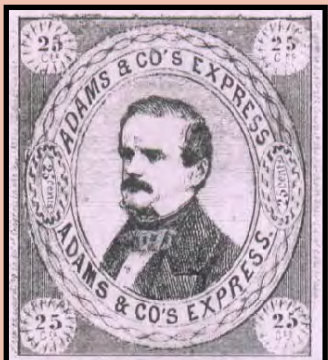
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## Recent Awards

**APS StampShow 2009 (Pittsburgh, PA) - GOLD**  
**Chicagopex 2009, 2018 (Arlington Heights, IL) - GOLD**

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*Western Express* (ISSN 0510-2332) is published quarterly (March-June-September-December) by the Western Cover Society, which is a not-for-profit 501 (C-3) tax exempt organization. Western Cover Society seeks to fulfill its charitable and educational mission through the publication of books and journals. All contributions above the basic subscription rate are tax deductible and will go to support publication of material.

The annual membership in the society includes a subscription to *Western Express*. All who share an interest are invited to join. Annual membership is \$35.00 per year. Membership application and back issues can be obtained by contacting Scott Prior at our web site, [www.westerncoversociety.com](http://www.westerncoversociety.com). Claims for missing issues made within six months will be serviced free of charge.

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**President's Message**

Submitted by Rick Mingee

Summer is in full swing but by the time you read this, Fall will be around the corner, which in the past has been a time to focus back on collecting. That said, at the peak of Summer, the Erivan Collection of Western Postal History auction took place on July 6 at H.R. Harmer in New York City. As I wrote in that auction announcement via our email distribution, "do not miss this" and I have no doubt many of our members secured important western postal history covers from this great sale. If you were a lucky winner, you are likely in replenish mode on your bank account! I have to say, it felt like there were MANY auctions during peak Summer this year compared to the past (including Siegel and H.R. Harmer, both annual advertisers in Western Express) all with great material, but perhaps that is just my observation.

I hope your Summer has been great thus far (and I have to admit, this year in Colorado it has been exceptionally wet, but that is far better than the perpetual fire danger seen over the last years). A polite reminder, our editor can always use articles "pertaining to the mails of the old west," so please consider a contribution to our journal in this area. I hope all of you continue to remain healthy and safe.

**Secretary's Report**

Submitted by Scott Prior

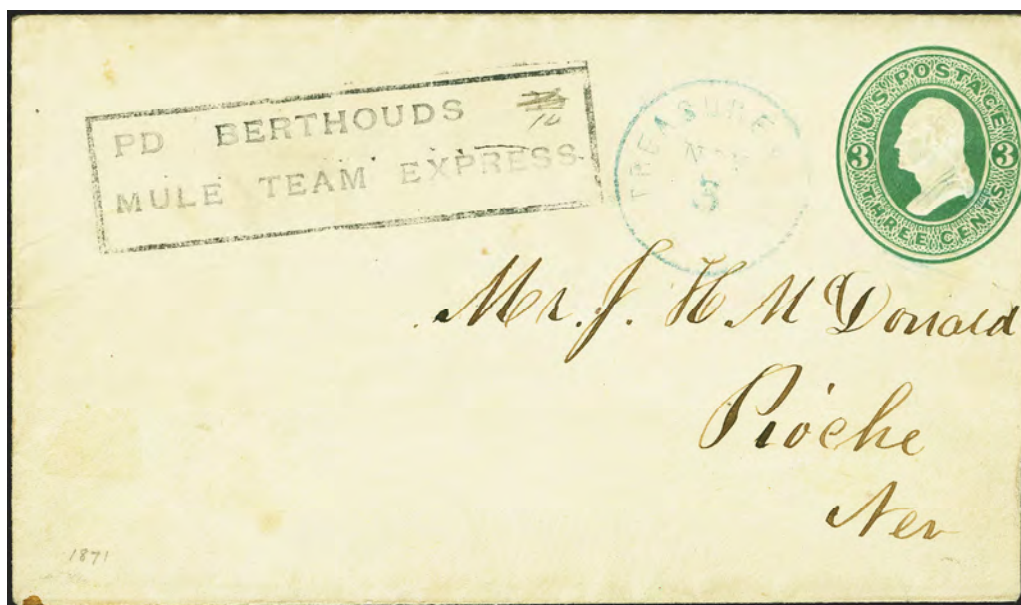
I hope you all found something of interest at the H.R. Harmer Erivan Sale #10, which consisted of Mr. Haub's western covers. I understand that a few express covers were inadvertently omitted from this sale and will appear at some point down the road. So, we still have something to look forward to. I picked up the "Berthoud's Mule Team Express" cover, which may or not be a fake. I am currently researching this enigmatic company for an article. I'd welcome any thoughts or comments from members about this company.

**Membership:****New:**

- Gerald Ruby, WCS #1624. South Jordan, UT 84095. Gerald collects Western Express covers, including Mexican usages. He is also interested in postal stationery.

**Deceased:**

- Charles Boubelik, WCS #727. The June issue of *Western Express* was returned to us marked with the handwritten note "deceased". No other information is available.



"Berthoud's Mule Team Express" cover that sold by H.R. Harmer, Inc. in the recent "Erivan" sale of western postal history. Secretary Scott Prior purchased the item and is researching the company in an effort to determine whether the express is legitimate and to write an article on the subject. If you have any information, please contact him at 7figmo@gmail.com.

## Secretary's Report (continued)

### **Non-renewing members:**

The following members will no longer be receiving *Western Express* as they have not paid their dues.

<u>Member #</u>	<u>Name</u>
1068	Heisey, Toni
1337	Ness, Howard
1527	Kappelmann, Fred
1545	Martin, Larry
1590	Hillhouse, Thomas
1612	Kadohire, Howard
1613	Robertson, Paul
1614	Hayden, Mike

### Book Sale:

Additional western and express-related books have been donated. Look for a listing in the December issue of *Western Express*. A listing will also be emailed to all members with a known email address.

## Treasurer's Report

Submitted by Ryan Baum

As we approach the end of summer, this was the quiet time of year for your Treasurer as we wrapped up our dues renewals in Spring. The one activity was the renewal of our Society's Certificate of Deposit for a higher interest rate. This year's interest income will be much greater than any time over the past eight years. Dues renewal solicitations will begin in October. As with prior years, I will begin with two waves of notices via email followed in November and December with waves of regular mail solicitations. Amazingly, we only have email addresses for about half our members. If you have not provided your email to us in the past, feel free to pass to me so that correspondence can be instantaneous and at reduced cost. For those who prefer U.S. mail renewal notices, I would ask for the courtesy of a timely response. Our mailing of renewals costs the Society nearly a dollar each given postage, envelopes, and copying costs. Two or three renewal notices is equivalent to 10% of a person's annual membership dues! If you have any questions about your status, our information on file, or if want to share your collecting interest, please drop me at note at ccdollar@hotmail.

## Editor's Message

Submitted by Ken Stach

On rare occasion there's sufficient space leftover on the two pages I allot for the officers' reports for me to write a few lines. This issue is one of those occasions, for better or for worse.

This issue has but two articles in it: "The Adams & Co.'s Express Local Stamps" by yours truly, and "Charging Postage to a Post Office Box Account in San Francisco" by James W. Milgram, M.D. Dr. Milgram has been one of our journal's most prolific authors in recent years. He again explains a little known facet of western postal history with his article in this issue.

My article on the Adams & Co.'s Express local stamps is the product of many months of research, writing, and re-writing. As I explain at the beginning of the article, I knew virtually nothing about the Adams' stamps prior to beginning this project. I thought a few days work would suffice to cover the subject. Little did I know that every stone I turned over in researching the stamps would simply result in more stones!

Many of the Adams stamps are being called out in my article as fantasies, some as genuine stamps with fantasy overprints, and many with bogus Adams handstamps. What will this do to the perceived value of them? Only time will tell. I can state, though, that I purchased a Scott #1L4 (genuine #1L2 with fantasy overprint) at the dealer's ask price after writing the article.



Other stamps may not fare as well. The supposed Adams newspaper stamp (#1LP1) pictured above had last sold for \$2200 in Nov, 2000 by Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc. as part of the Hall collection. RASAG again sold it in July, 2023 "as is" where it realized \$275. Again, I purchased it as a reference item for my fakes collection.

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# The Adams & Co.'s Express Local Stamps

By Ken Stach

## Preface

I am a collector of western express postal history, among other postal history topics. However, I will be the first to state that I am not currently a stamp collector and certainly not (and never was) a collector of anything in the “Carriers and Locals” arena (although, after writing this article, I have picked up a few of these stamps). Thus, readers may think it odd that I am writing an article on the subject of the Adams & Co. Express “local stamps.” The stamp artifacts of Adams & Co.’s Express have always intrigued me, as I viewed them as something of an adjunct to Adams’ postal history items. They’re something I’ve always wanted to learn more about. What better way to do so than to research and write an article about them?

My education and background are in chemical engineering. For 35 years, I worked in the petrochemical industry, beginning as a process engineer and working my way through various levels of management. Engineering taught me to use a data-based approach in my analysis of any situation, to carefully document the sources for my data, and to draw succinct conclusions therefrom. That is the approach I have attempted to use in the course of working on this article. While some may question my conclusions, I believe them to be based soundly on data, providing an “outside set of eyes” on these sometimes controversial philatelic artifacts.

## Peer Review

This article has been reviewed by the following fellow philatelists, all of whom have agreed with the conclusions drawn herein:

- Richard Frajola – Well-known postal history expert
- Scott Prior – Western Cover Society, Secretary; however, his views do not represent those of the Western Cover Society
- Jim Blaine – Western Cover Society, Director; however, his views do not represent those of the Western Cover Society
- John Bowman – Carriers & Locals Society, First Vice President; however, his views do not represent those of the Carriers & Locals Society
- Clifford Alexander – Carriers & Locals Society, Chairman; however, his views do not represent those of the Carriers & Locals Society. Mr. Alexander agrees with the conclusions, except that he believes that some of the stamps may have been intended for use affixed to covers to pay the express fee and that it is possible that some were used in this capacity but the covers have not survived.
- David Snow – Western Cover Society, Director and member of the Carriers & Locals Society; however, his views do not represent those of either the Western Cover Society or the Carriers & Locals Society

## Background and Outline

This article began as an unfinished and unpublished draft <sup>(27)</sup> first penned in 2005 by Larry Lyons, former editor of *The Penny Post* (organ of the Carriers and Locals Society) and current Executive Director of the Philatelic Foundation. I became aware of the draft in early 2019 when Mr. Lyons donated his western express “catalog clipping” archive (of which the draft was a part) to the Western Cover Society. I recently resurrected that work in an effort to further flesh it out for potential publication. In the course of doing so, I parsed out the portion of the original draft that dealt with the Adams & Co. printed franks, expanded its scope considerably, and authored it myself as an article entitled, “The Printed Franks of Adams & Co.’s Express.” That article appeared in the June, 2023 issue of *Western Express*. <sup>(28)</sup>

This article will focus solely on Adams & Co.’s Express “local stamps” (*Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps* numbers #1L1 through #1L6, #1LP1, and #1LU1 through #1LU4), the company handstamps on some of those stamps, and their associated covers. As with the article on the “Printed Franks of Adams & Co.’s Express,” I have included much more data than Mr. Lyons’ original draft contained, re-writing the article in its entirety, ultimately transforming it into something completely different. As a result, I felt it best that I be the author, as the article no longer resembles Mr. Lyons’ unfinished 2005 draft. I do want to give Larry Lyons tremendous credit, however, for



catalyzing this effort and providing the backbone for me to build upon.

Discussion of each stamp will be presented in its order of inclusion in the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps*, along with the known covers with stamps, followed by an assessment of the Adams handstamps which appear on some of the stamps and covers.

The references contained throughout the article are not necessarily in numerical order of appearance, as a result of my addition of key pieces of data late in the research/writing process. I apologize to the readers in advance for any difficulties this may cause.

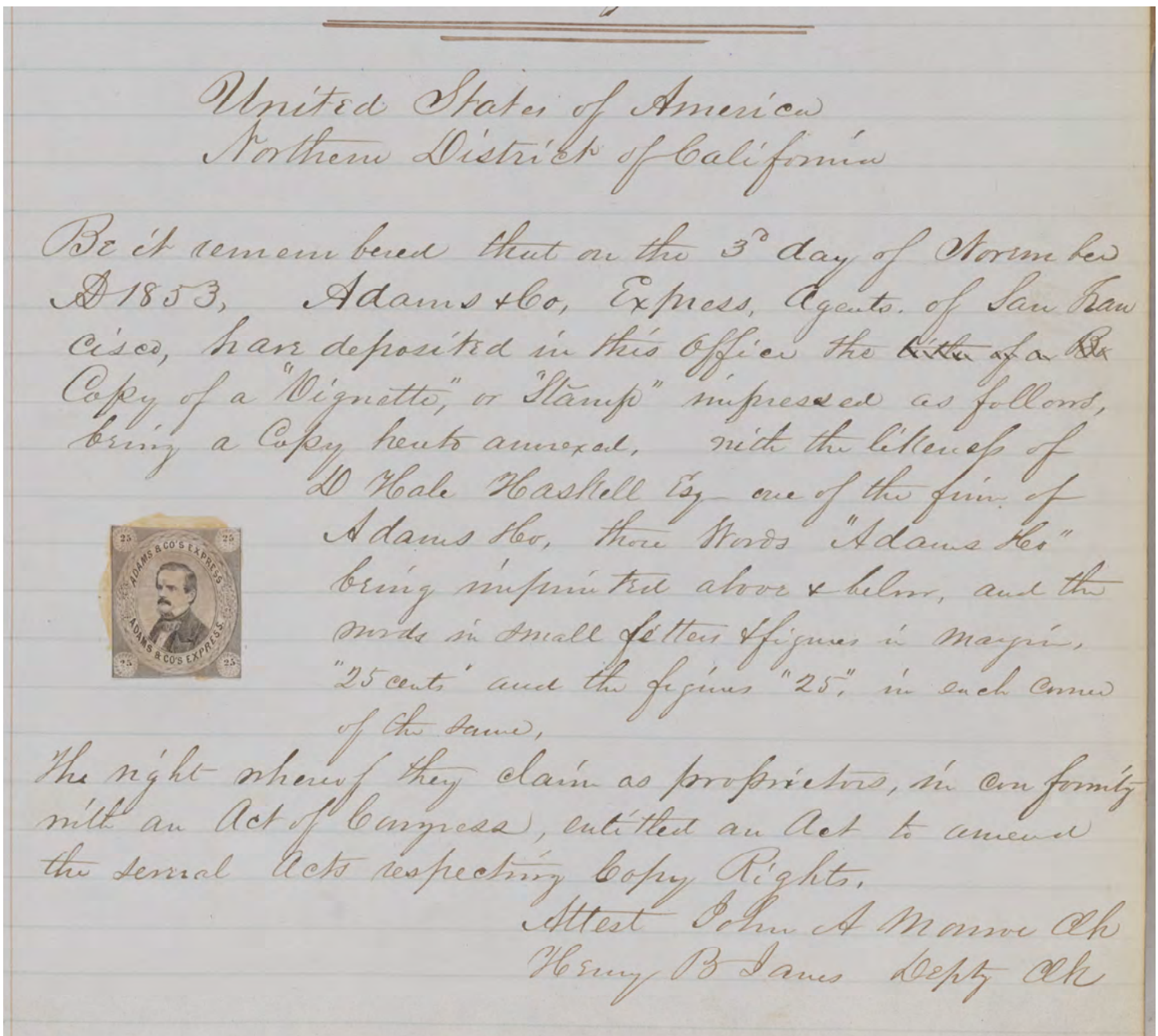


Figure 1. Copyright registration with the "United States of America, Northern District of California" dated November 3, 1853 for the Adams & Co. Express "Vignette," or "Stamp" with an example of such affixed (most likely a proof of what would become Scott #1L2).<sup>(2)(3)</sup>

## Advent of the Express Postage Stamps

Daniel Hale Haskell was the manager of Adams & Co.'s California operations, having arrived into San Francisco from New York on October 13, 1849. The first advertisement for Adams & Co. in a California newspaper appeared shortly after Haskell's arrival, being printed in the November 8, 1849 issue of the San Francisco *Alta California*.<sup>(1)</sup> Adams quickly established themselves as the dominant express company on the west coast. It was not until July 13, 1852 that Wells, Fargo & Co. first exerted their influence upon the western scene, opening offices in San Francisco and Sacramento. As such, Adams & Co. were the western express innovators as well, laying the groundwork for introduction of the "Express Postage Stamps" with their registration for copyright of such being entered into Clerk's Office of the District Court for Northern California on November 3, 1853 (Figure 1, prior page).<sup>(2)(3)</sup>

The full registration of the copyright reads as follows:

*United States of America  
Northern District of California*

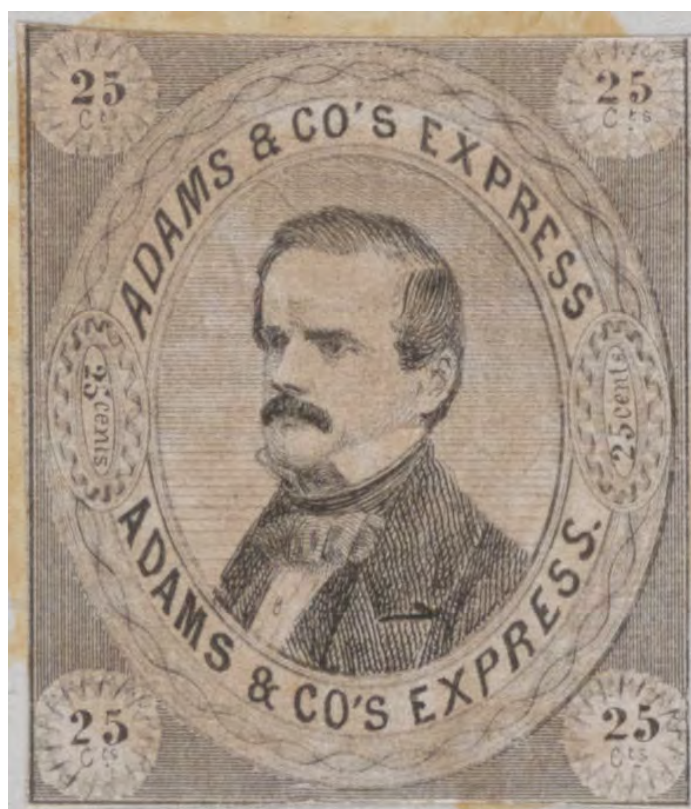
*Be it remembered that on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of November AD 1853, Adams & Co. Express, Agents of San Francisco, have deposited in this office the Copy of a "Vignette," or "Stamp" impressed as follows, being a Copy hereto annexed, with the likeness of D. Hale Haskell Esq one of the firm of Adams & Co., these words "Adams & Co." being imprinted above & below, and the words in small letters & figures in margins "25 cents" and the figures "25" in each corner of the same.*

*The right whereof they claim as proprietors in conformity with an Act of Congress, entitled an Act to amend the several Acts respecting Copy Rights.*

*Attest John A.  
Monroe Clk  
Henry B. James  
Depty Clk*

Of special note is the fact that an example of the Scott #1L2 stamp is affixed to the registration page.

The stamp is most likely a proof, as the production examples have the very fine (almost microscopic) lettering up and down the right and left sides that reads, "Registered according to Act of Congress in the year 1853 by I.C. Woods in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Northern District of California." An enlargement of the stamp affixed to the document shown in Figure 1a (using a 600 dpi scan) does not show this fine lettering. It is unlikely this inscription would have been printed on the example affixed to the registration page, as the stamp/proof had not yet been registered until that day.



**Figure 1a.** Enlargement of the stamp affixed to the document shown in Figure 1. The very fine lettering indicating copyright registration was not printed on this example (perhaps a proof).

Oddly, it appears as though no Adams "Express Postage Stamps" were distributed until nearly a year later, when on October 26, 1854, the interoffice letter shown as Figure 2 (following page) was sent from San Francisco to Stockton. Perhaps it took that long to get approval from Adams head office "back East," order the stamps, have them manufactured, shipped to California, and then prepared for distribution.



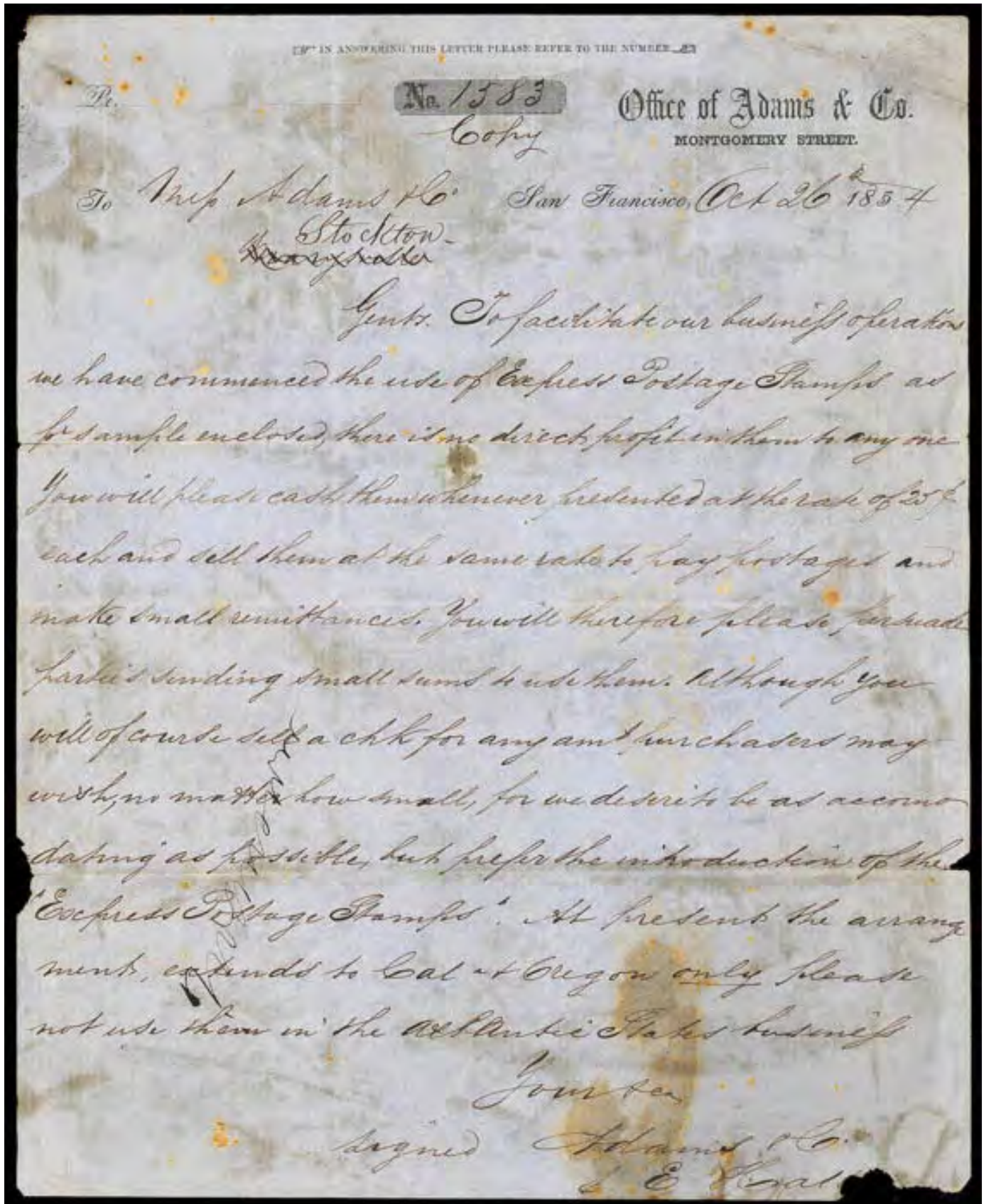


Figure 2. Adams & Co. interoffice letter on printed letterhead from San Francisco to Stockton, dated "October 26, 1854", and announcing the introduction of Adams stamps. The letter reads in part: "To facilitate our business operations we have commenced the use of Express Postage Stamps... there is no direct profit in them to anyone. You will please cash them whenever presented at the rate of 25c each and sell them at the same rate to pay postages and make small remittances. You will therefore please persuade parties sending small sums to use them... At present the arrangement extends to Cal. & Oregon only please [do] not use them in the Atlantic States business." Courtesy Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions, Inc. Sale #41 (March 30, 2011) Lot 467.

A full transcription of the contents of the interoffice letter of Figure 2 follows:

No. 1583 Copy  
Office of Adams & Co.  
Montgomery Street  
San Francisco Oct 26<sup>th</sup> 1854

To Messrs Adams & Co. ~~Marysville~~ Stockton

*Gents. To facilitate our business operations we have commenced the use of Express Postage Stamps as per sample enclosed, there is no direct profit in them to any one. You will please cash them whenever presented at the rate of 25¢ each and sell them at the same rate to pay postage and make small remittances. You will therefore please persuade parties sending small sums to use them. Although you will of course sell a chk [check] for any amt [amount] purchases may wish, no matter how small, for we desire to be as accommodating as possible, but prefer the introduction of the "Express Postage Stamps." At present the arrangement extends to Cal & Oregon only please do not use them in the Atlantic States business.*

*Yours & c,  
Signed Adams & C.  
S. E. Hall*

H.B. Phillips wrote of the discovery of this historic and important Adams' document in Volume III of his "Filatelic Facts and Fallacies" (October, 1894 to September, 1895): <sup>(4)</sup>

"In one of the rooms of the Old City Hall, on Kearny street, opposite Portsmouth Square, were stored many years a quantity of the records and papers of the old Adams Express Company, that failed in February, 1855."

"The old hall has recently been torn down and these papers brought to light and to the attention of another and later generation."

"In a hap-hazard search through piles of way-bills, check stubs, reports, letter files and country office outfits, the following letter was chanced upon, which is interesting as showing the uses made of the old Adams Express

postage stamps, and confirms the tradition that they passed current as coin, and were receivable at saloons and other places in payment for goods purchased or bills liquidated: and gives a *raison d'etre* for the known cardboard specimens that have been heretofore looked upon as proofs; but which were really printed on cardboard by the Company in order that they could be sold, redeemed and sold again without wearing out as would happen with stamps on thin paper."

"Those of us who handled small change in 1860-61 in the Northern and Eastern States, well remember the difficulties of postage stamps for current money [so-called "Encased Postage Stamps" used as small change during the American Civil War in the eastern U.S.]. It was apparently unknown in that section that Adams & Co, of the West had solved the vexatious question some six years before."

[A transcription of the letter shown in Figure 2 was included in Phillips' article at this point.]

"This was a circular letter, as is gathered from various indorsements found upon it, and seems to fix with sufficient accuracy the date of issue of these historical stamps."

"We can only mention some further late discoveries here, reserving a detailed account for a future occasion."

Interestingly, the interoffice letter only mentions 25¢ "Express Postage Stamps" and does not make any mention of envelope stamps (postal stationery stamps) or newspaper stamps. Furthermore, the letter makes no mention of affixing the "Express Postage Stamps" to envelopes (to pay Adams & Co.'s Express fee), only that they should be used "to pay postage and make small remittances." These nuances will be discussed later in this article as each of the stamps is addressed.

With the prior information as a backdrop to the introduction of the stamps, each of the issues will now be discussed based on their order of inclusion in the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps*.





Figure 3. The three different basic designs of the lithographed Adams & Co.'s Express regular "Express Postage Stamps," in this case (from left to right) are examples of #1L1 (portrait facing right), #1L2 (portrait facing left), and #1L6 (portrait facing right with new outer design). These three basic designs were used in all six of the Adams & Co. stamps, with *Scott Specialized Catalogue* numbers of #1L1 through #1L6. All images courtesy of Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc.: #1L1 (Sale 1230, December 15-18, 2020, Lot 886), #1L2 (Sale 830, November 13, 2000, Lot 393, right-hand example from strip of three), #1L6 (Sale 830, November 13, 2000 Lot 402). All images are greatly enlarged to show detail.

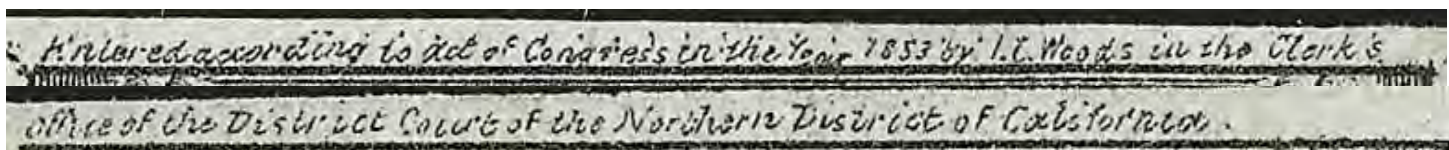


Figure 4. Greatly enlarged detail showing the inscription up the left side and down the right side of the Adams & Co.'s Express "Express Postage Stamps" which appears on #1L1 through #1L5. The inscription reads "Entered according to Act of Congress in the Year 1853 by I.C. Woods in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the Northern District of California." The "A" of "Act" is capitalized only on #1L1; whereas, it is lower case on #1L2 through #1L5.

### The Basic Designs

The Adams & Co. Express "regular stamps" (to delineate them from the newspaper stamp and the postal stationery envelope stamps) have Haskell's portrait as the vignette, with *Scott Specialized Catalogue* numbers of #1L1 through #1L6. There are three basic designs for these stamps (see Figure 3), all of which are lithographed from a finely executed stone.

### Scott #1L1 (Facing Right)

The #1L1 stamp (left-hand image of Figure 3) has Daniel H. Haskell facing to the right. It is described in the *Scott Specialized Catalogue* as black on blue; however, it can also be seen as black on bluish-gray paper. One of the significant differences in this design from the others is that the Adams & Co. Express inscriptions both above and below the vignette have periods after the word "Express." The

stamps with Daniel H. Haskell facing to the left (#1L2 through #1L5) all have a period after "Express" in only the bottom inscription. The "25 cents" inscriptions at the left and right of the vignette both read from the right side on #1L1, as opposed to the left facing Haskell stamps which have these inscriptions facing outward from the vignette. The "25 cents" at the four corners have the word "CENTS" spelled out in full on #1L1, whereas the Haskell facing left stamps have "CTS" under the "25" in the corners.

The design of the #1L1 stamp includes very fine lettering up the left side and down the right side of the stamp (Figure 4) which reads, "Entered according to Act of Congress in the Year 1853 by I.C. Woods in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the Northern District of California." This same inscription is found on the #1L2 through #1L5 stamps; however, the "A" of "Act" is lower case on these stamps. No such inscription is found on #1L6.



- 22) Hahn, Calvet M., "The Hoogs and Madison Conundrum – Part II," *The Penny Post*, Volume 11, Number 1, January, 2003, pp. 57-72.
- 23) Coster, Charles H., "Dangerous Locals," *The Collector's World*, Volume 1, Number 7, March, 1879; with Figure 22 taken as Figure 1 from an article authored by Robert B. Meyersburg, "Buffalo City Despatch Post, New Haven City Despatch, Requiescat in Pace," *The Penny Post*, Volume 2, Number 3, August, 1992, pp. 25-29.
- 24) Sloane, George, "Sloane Reference Notes – S. Allan Taylor," on the Western Cover Society website under the "Research Materials" section.
- 25) Stimmell, George, "Unrecorded Combination," *The Penny Post*, Volume 4, Number 2, April, 1994, page 23.
- 26) Phillips, David G., "American Stampless Cover Catalog," Volume II, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1987, David G. Phillips Publishing Company, North Miami, FL, page 37.
- 27) Lyons, Larry, "Adams & Co. Express, California," unpublished draft on the Western Cover Society website contained in the "Larry Lyons Research Materials" in the folder "Adams 4," on pages 65-85.
- 28) Stach, Ken, "The Printed Franks of Adams & Co.'s Express," *Western Express*, Volume 73, No. 2, Whole Number 288, June, 2023, pp 21-31.

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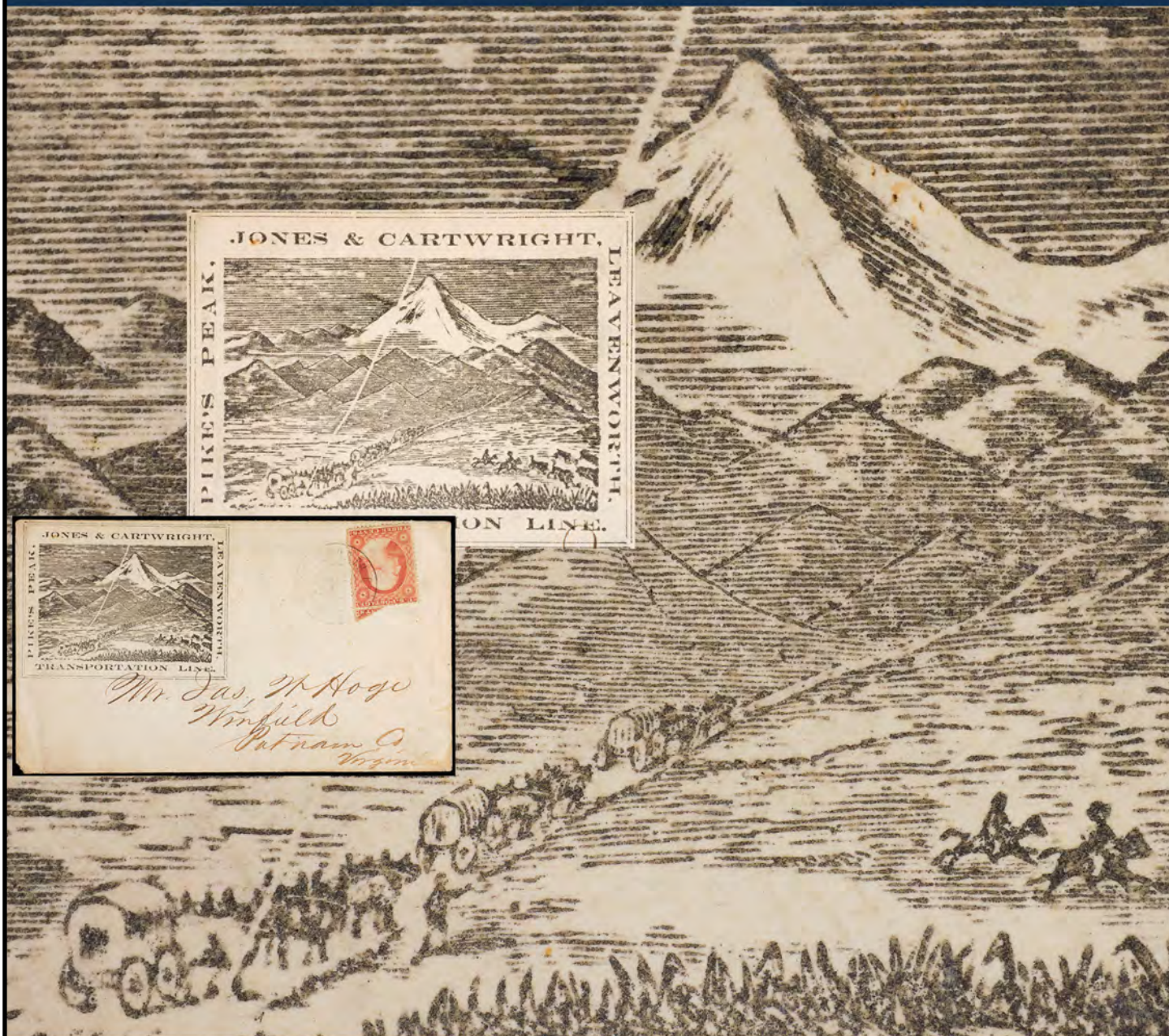
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## Charging Postage to a Post Office Box Account in San Francisco

By James W. Milgram, M.D.

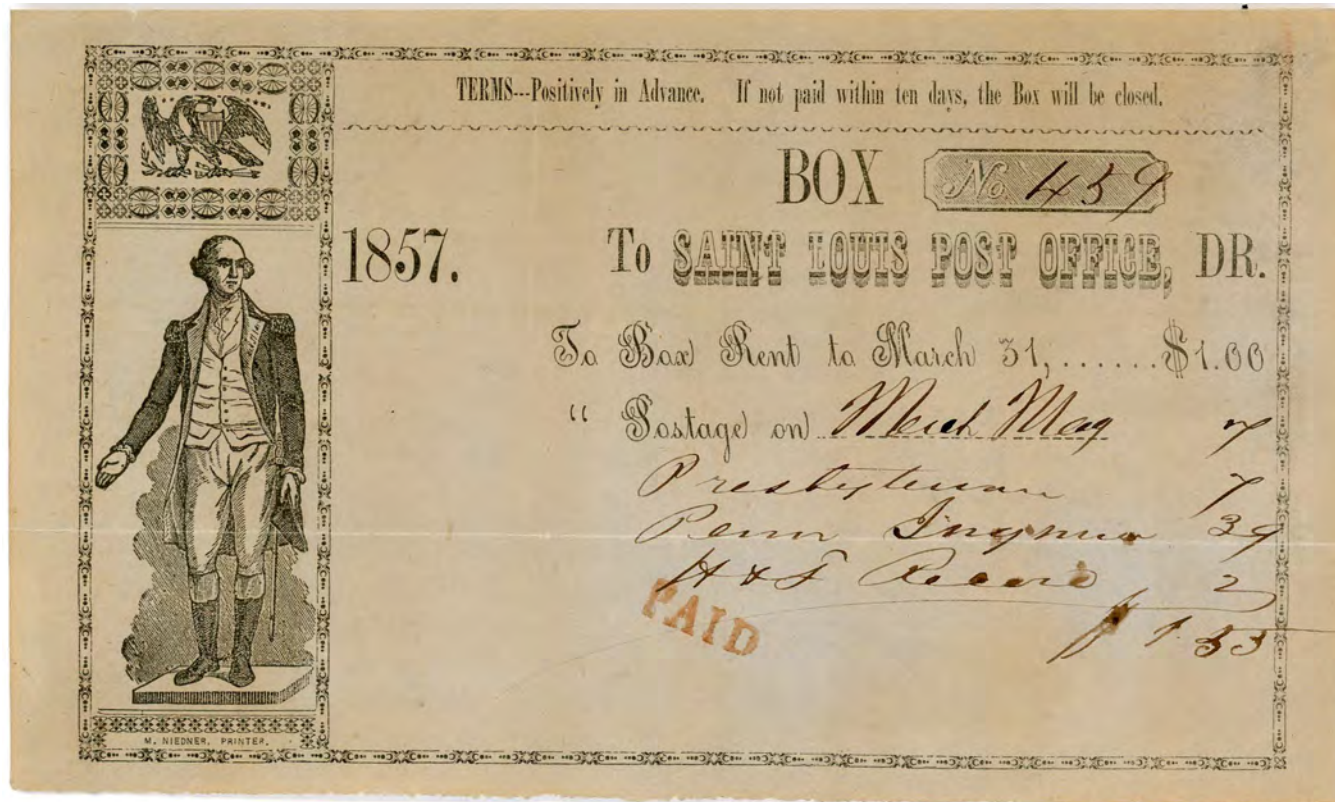


Figure 1. Printed bill from the St. Louis Post Office for first quarter 1857 rental of P.O. Box 459 showing charges for postage in addition to the box rental.

As I have discussed in other articles, postage on letters was often charged against the sender when that person rented a post office box at the post office. <sup>(1)(2)(3)(4)</sup> Most of the covers showing this service are stampless covers, but the practice continued into the stamp era although to an unknown extent since the records were kept by individual postmasters and not reported to the Post Office Department. Only a very few covers with stamps show markings about charging postage. The practice was revived and used fairly frequently during the Confederate Post Office Department period. <sup>(5)</sup>

However, there is one source of documentation about the charging of postage to a box account. These are the receipted bills that were sent to those persons renting the box. An example of one such bill during the period when stamps were required on all letters to pay postage is shown in Figure 1. This attractive illustrated bill from St. Louis shows the quarterly box rental fee as \$1.00. Then there are four entries in pen. Two of these appear to be

magazines or newspapers and two are for letters. This shows that only a few items were charged and we can infer that the holder of Box 459 bought stamps to pay most postage charges on letters. Note that the postmaster used a postal handstamp PAID to show payment on the bill which was kept then as a receipt by the holder of this box.

Recently, the author came across two bills from the San Francisco post office. The earlier bill is dated July 10, 1860 and is shown in Figure 2 (following page). The box rental for a quarter was \$2.00 but there was an additional 87 cents in postage charges. Note that the bill has a line for a deposit charge to cover postage, but there was no such charge to boxholder 1582, who did not charge much postage. The bill is signed by a clerk as being paid.

A second later bill is shown in Figure 3 (following page). A postmark was used instead of writing in the date, April 1, 1868, which would have been the second quarter of the year. There is a second handstamp "JUN 30" which is the last date in the



second quarter under the box rental entry and the price was still \$2.00. However, this very late bill from 1868 still has entries for "postage due to date" and "Deposit to cover postage to accrue." So, the practice of postal charges against a box account was still in existence. In fact, five cents was charged during the first quarter by the holder of Box 727.

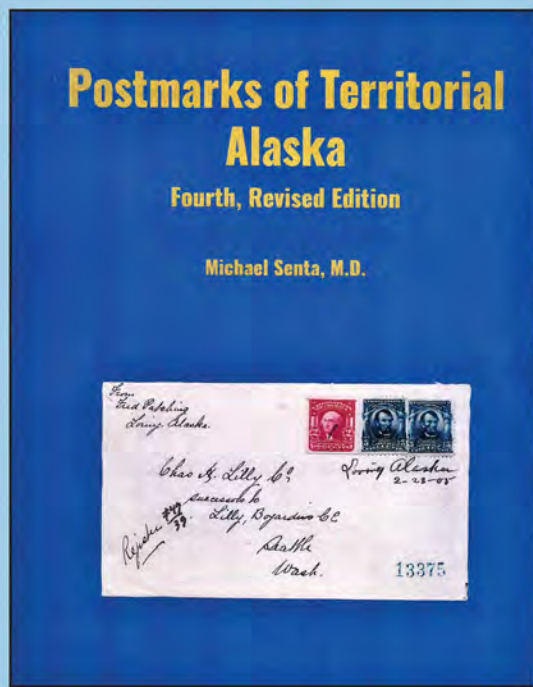
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