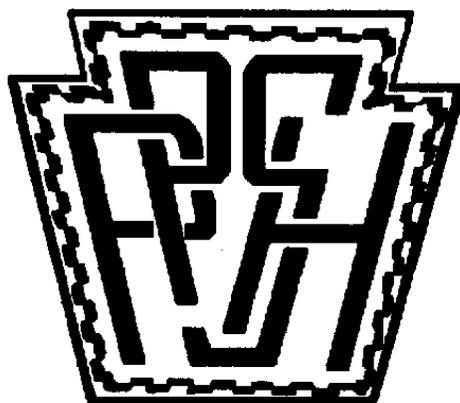


May 2014

Whole No. 199 Vol. 42, No. 2

PENNSYLVANIA POSTAL HISTORIAN

THE BULLETIN OF THE
PENNSYLVANIA POSTAL HISTORY
SOCIETY



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Earliest Reported Use of the 3-cent 1861 Issue in Pittsburgh and Alleghany*, Pa.?

By Bob McKain (# 345)

It is amazing what a little research can do on some covers bought years ago in a dealer's dollar box and thrown into a shoebox. Based upon several assumptions and available literature, the author believes he has on hand the earliest recorded use from Alleghany of the three-cent 1861 issue.

The contract of Toppan, Carpenter and Company to produce US Postage stamps expired on June 10, 1861. The incoming Republican administration probably would have changed printers in any case, but the possession of large stocks of the 1857 stamps in the hands of postmasters in the seceded States, for which no value could probably be recovered, required some action to void the old issues and replace them with new stamps embodying a changed design. Due to production problems with the new printer (National Bank Note Co.), new stamps were not available until mid-August 1861 at which time they were sent to the loyal northern post offices. Local postmasters advertised a six-day grace period during which the 1857 stamps and current postal stationary issues could be redeemed for the new 1861 issues.

When the United States Stamp Agent received the first order of stamps in the new design from the printer in New York on August 16, 1861, he took the entire supply to Baltimore. From there he also sent stamps to Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and a few other larger cities. The Pittsburgh postmaster received his supply in time to advertise the new stamps and the exchange period on August 19.¹ The earliest reported cover from Philadelphia is dated August 18, 1861 so those collecting Philadelphia may want to check their covers. If you have an 1861 issue dated August 18, you have a first day of usage!

When the new stamps arrived at larger post offices, they were accompanied by instructions about advertising the exchange procedures and about supplying the smaller nearby post offices. Alleghany probably received their initial supply of 1861 stamps from Pittsburgh on the 21st or 22nd of August and thus the August 22 cover shown later in this article may be the first day of usage of the new stamp from Alleghany until proven otherwise.

The following demonetizations notice appeared several days in the Pittsburgh newspaper - below is the notice as it appeared on August 19, 1861:

POST OFFICE NOTICE - STAMPS -

POST OFFICE, Pittsburg, Pa., August 19, 1861. - I am prepared to exchange Postage Stamps of the new series for an equivalent amount of the old issue, during a period of six days from the date hereof, after the expiration of which time the "Old Stamps" will not be received in payment of postage on letters or papers from this office.

Neighboring Postmasters can exchange here.

au 19

S.F. VON BONNHORST, Postmaster

This would make the transitional period to the 1861 issues in Pittsburg/Allegheny ending on August 24, 1861 at which time the 1857 issues or earlier postal issues would no longer be valid for postage.

Examples of the use of *Scott* #26 from Allegheny dated August 12, 1861 and from Pittsburgh dated August 14, 1861 are shown below in Figure 1.



Figure 1

Evans² book on the one-cent 1861 issue states that Baltimore, Maryland received the first issue of the new stamps on Saturday, August 17, 1861. The assumption is made by this author that the three-cent issue was also sent out along with the one-cent issue, as he is not aware of any definitive philatelic works on the three-cent delivery dates. He further states that the earliest reported cover from Pittsburgh is dated Wednesday, August 21 tying three one-cent issues (*Scott* #63) to an overall printed pink background envelope with a Commission Merchants corner card. The cover is docketed 1860 in error. It was last offered in the May 30, 1996 Christies Auction and no illustration of that cover has been seen by this author. Scott³ utilizes the same date of earliest known use (EKU) of *Scott* #63 as August 17 (on stamp - Baltimore). Scott notes the EKU of *Scott* #64b as August 18, 1861 and the more common *Scott* #65 as August 19, 1861.

The cover shown in Figure 2 is dated August 20, 1861 and is the latest use of *Scott* #26 from Pittsburgh known to the author. It was posted only one day after Postmaster

Von Bonnhorst received his initial allotment of the 1861 issues.



Figure 2

In Figure 3 is shown an Alleghany cover dated August 22, 1861 with the postage paid with a three-cent 1861 issue. **To my knowledge, this is the earliest use of the three-cent 1861 stamp from the Alleghany Post Office.** This lends credence to Evans' report of the use of the one-cent 1861 issue on August 21 at Pittsburgh.



Figure 3

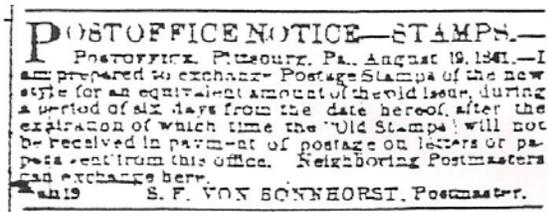
An early docketed use of the three-cent 1861 issue posted at Pittsburgh on September 4, 1861 is shown in Figure 4. The earliest likely use from Pittsburgh is August 21.

The actual newspaper notices regarding the availability of the new stamps and the new envelopes are shown in Figure 5. As previously indicated, the stamp announcement was taken from a Pittsburg newspaper dated August 19; the envelope announcement appeared in

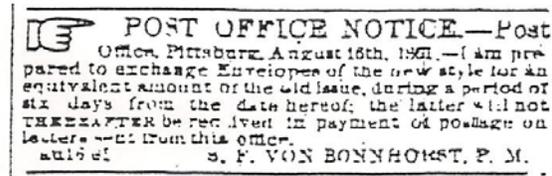
a Pittsburgh newspaper dated August 16.



Figure 4



Stamps (Aug. 19)



Envelopes (Aug. 16)

Figure 5

* The correct spelling of the town was Allegheny not Alleghany as noted in the postmarks in use between 1853 and 1870. It appears that sometime between March and May 1870, new postmark devices reverted back to the correct Allegheny spelling.

References:

- 1) Personal correspondence between the author and 1861 Section Editor of *The Chronicle of the U. S. Classic Postal Issues*.
- 2) Don L. Evans, *The United States One Cent Franklin 1861-1867*, Linn's Stamp News, 1997, p #153.
- 3) *Scotts Specialized Catalog of United States Stamps and Covers*.



Cuba to England via Three American Cities

By John H Barwis (# 498)

The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company began carrying contract mail between Cuba and Great Britain in February 1842. Correspondents in Havana could avail themselves of biweekly sailings to Southampton via Nassau, Bermuda and Fayal (Azores).¹ By June 1843 departures from Havana on this route were less frequent, sailing on or about the 10th of each month and taking just under a month to reach Southampton.² This “homeward” routing and schedule continued through the end of RMSP’s first contract in late 1847.

Private ship departures were more frequent and therefore more convenient if timeliness was a concern. It was unnecessary for a sender to await a private ship bound for the destination of his letter: mail was commonly sent to a foreign port for inward transmission within that country as an unpaid ship letter. Ship letters to a foreign country for transmission to a third country were also easily accommodated when a postal treaty existed between the foreign countries involved. When no such treaty existed, the services of mail forwarders were required.

Figure 1 is the outer sheet of a folded letter to London, care of Goodhue & Co. in New York. It bears no Havana postmark, but is docketed by the recipient as having been written in Havana on 9 November 1847. The Sender, Morrison de Comminck & Co., could have put the letter on the RMSP *Forth*, which departed Havana on 11 November and arrived at Southampton on 6 December.³ Instead, the letter was put aboard the private brig *Elizabeth*, bound for Philadelphia.

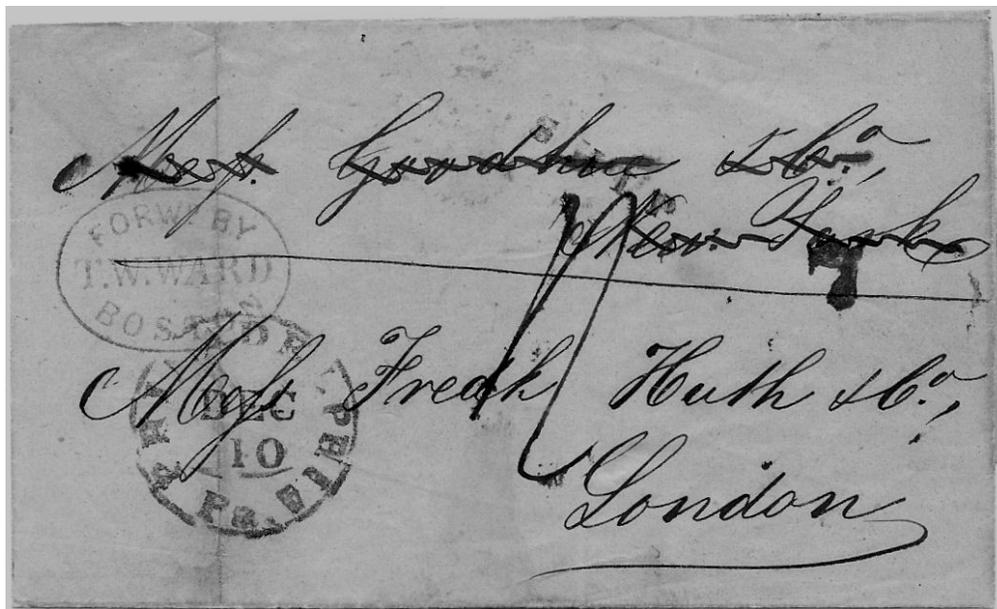


Figure 1

Elizabeth (Capt. Barclay) departed Havana on 30 November, made Cape Henlopen in seven days, and arrived at Philadelphia on 10 December.⁴ Philadelphia rated the letter 7 cents due for the ship fee and inland postage and sent it onward to Goodhue in New York. Philadelphia's small blue 7 postmark is scarce, having been used only from August to December 1847.^{5,6} The example shown here is the latest use known to the author.

Goodhue & Co. backstamped the letter with their forwarder's mark (Figure 2), then sent the letter to another forwarder, T.W. Ward in Boston because the Ocean Line did not sail from New York during the winter.⁷ Rather than carry the letter to the Boston post office, Ward delivered it directly to the next departing packet. Cunard's *Britannia* left Boston on 16 December, and arrived at Liverpool on 30 December.⁸ London backstamped the letter the next day, and rated it one shilling due for an unpaid packet letter.



Figure 2

Why did Morrison & De Comminck not use the British packet, which left Cuba only two days after their letter was written? Had they done so, their letter would have been received in London at least three weeks earlier. The reason was probably cost: a packet letter from Cuba to London would have been charged 2s3d per GPO Notice 49/41, issued on 1 January 1842 in conjunction with the opening of RMSP service.⁹

Exclusive of the forwarder's costs to De Comminck, the letter thus cost 1s3d less by sending it via Philadelphia. An 1847 shilling inflated to 2014 is roughly £5, so the 1s3d savings would amount to about £6.25 today – more than \$10. Why would de Comminck have cared, since the recipient paid the postage due? Frederick Huth & Co. was a merchant bank, who would have no doubt billed the postage back to de Comminck's account.

References:

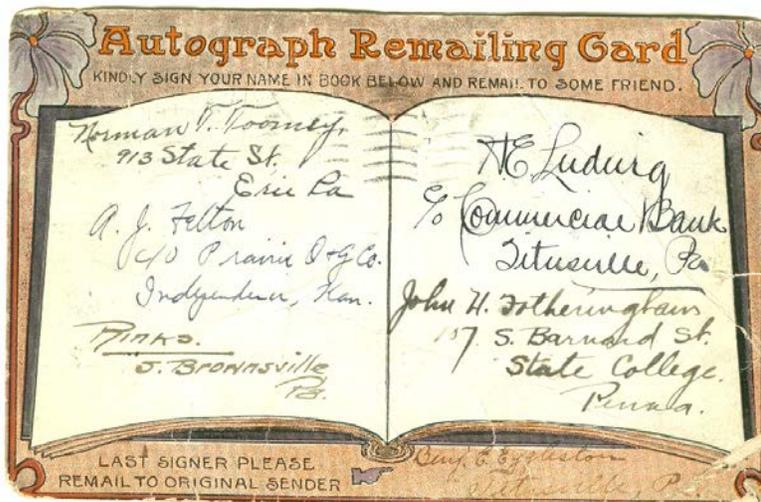
- 1) Kenton, P.J., and Parsons, H.G., *Early Routings of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company*, The Postal History Society, 1999, p. 12.
- 2) Ibid., p. 37.
- 3) Ibid., p. 74.
- 4) Ship News, *North American and United States Gazette*, Issue 16,188, Column C, 11 December 1847.
- 5) Clark, T., *A Catalog of Philadelphia Postmarks, 18th Century to the Present, Part II*, Privately published, 1990, Chapter 12, BOB Origins Postmarks, Boat/Ship, p.46.

- 6) Barwis, J.H., *Development of the Philadelphia Exchange Office: Pre-GPU Postmarks on Philadelphia Maritime Mail, 1793-1875*, International Postal History Fellowship, Washington DC, 2006, 11 p.
- 7) Winter, R.F., *North Atlantic Mail Sailings, 1840-75*, U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, 1988, p. 82.
- 8) *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 9) Tabcart, C., 2006. *United Kingdom Letter Rates, 1657-1900*, Fareham, Hants, privately published, 4th Edition, 2006, p. 53.



Amusement Early 20th Century Style

Completed *Autograph Remailing Card* sent in by **John Dowd (# 591)**



Editor's Note:

Does anyone know anything about these cards or collect them? The only year date that I can make out is 1919.

