

New Postal History Census



Jasmine Smith, Postal
Restorer & Librarian



Bill Schultz, Accredited
Judge & Author

Census creators, Bill Schultz and Jasmine Smith shared the link (<https://sixandaquartercensus.omeka.net/>) to the recently released census of the 6 ¼ cent rate marking. This census includes both covers and banknotes. The census is shared on the open web, free of charge. If you own or have documentation of a 6 ¼ cent cover not included in the census, please email the item information to bill@patriciaschultz.com.

The About page of the website discussed the history of the rate:

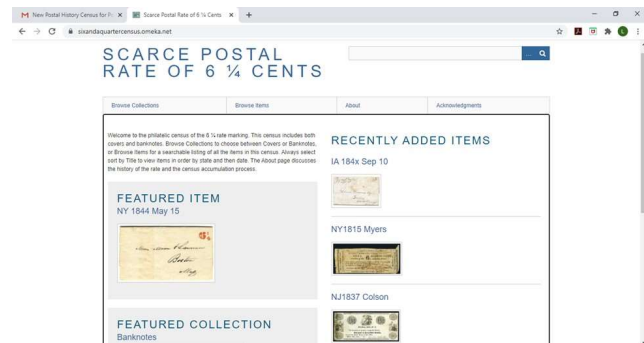
“Per the Act of Congress passed April 9, 1816, a single-sheet letter traveling less than 30 miles would be rated at 6 cents (United States Statutes at Large).

However, a small number of covers posted 1816 - 1845 show the rate of 6 ¼ cents. This unusual rate comes from the Spanish real, used in some parts of the US and the Republic of Texas

through the mid-19th century. One real was 1/8th of a Spanish silver dollar, or 12 ½ cents US. Half of this denomination, the ‘medio real’ or ‘picayune’, was valued at 6 ¼ cents US. The division of the silver dollar into ‘pieces of eight’ could also be called ‘bits’. Hence, 2 bits would make a 25 cent quarter, and a half bit would represent 6 ¼ cents. (American Stampless Cover Catalog, “The 6-¼¢ Rate”)

In regions where medio real or half bit coinage was in common use, the 6 ¼ rate was considered a ‘rate of convenience,’ as it conveniently matched a denomination that customers would have readily available. The postmaster would write the rate of payment on the cover at the amount paid to simplify the exchange.

Shortages of circulating coinage, particularly during recessions like the Panic of 1837, resulted in banknotes bearing the 6 ¼ rate.”



Virtual Exhibiting Committee

The future of virtual exhibiting is here. Currently static exhibits are being posted online, but there is so much more that can be done with graphics and technology available. But how far should we go? How would the exhibits be judged, and feedback provided? Should the exhibits then be archived after the show? The possibilities are endless.

Liz Hisey is assembling a committee to explore the topic further. If interested contact Liz directly, or send an email to womenexhibitors@gmail.com

