

# Local Posts of Philadelphia, 1843 to 1861

1843-1845

PHILADELPHIA DESPATCH POST

OPERATED : 1842 - JUNE 1845  
 OPERATOR : WILLIAM ROBERTSON  
 LOCATION : 83 SOUTH SECOND ST  
 93 CHESTNUT STREET  
 RATE : 3 CENTS

**Purpose** Tell the story of Philadelphia's local post company achievements that were instrumental to the development of the United States mail system.

**Historical Significance** A local post is private mail service operating separate from the government within a limited geographical area, or single mail route. From the outset of 1843 and for **18 months the Philadelphia Despatch Post had been the only local post in the United States**, able to charge three cents. By mid 1845 neighborhood companies in 30 cities appeared, became locally well known, provided confidence, timeliness, and in Philadelphia one developed volume discounts, 500 collection boxes and 5 deliveries per day. Of 20 companies located near the old city of Philadelphia 17 have been confirmed by postal history documentation. In 1848 a 1 cent denominated stamp appeared in Philadelphia. By 1849 competition had driven the market costs including carrierfees down to one cent, half of all other cities which largely held at 2 cents, double Philadelphia for 12 years. Legislation in December 1861 terminated private posts.

**Philatelic Importance** The **third entity in the world with prepaid postage stamps** was the Philadelphia Despatch Post, before Switzerland and Brazil. Philadelphia was the genesis of stunning private local post stamps such as 1843 **world's first pictorial stamp**, the iconic "striding messenger," and Spence & Browns Express messenger on galloping horse (page 4). By early 1846 Blood & Co. sold the **world's first special purpose stamp** (page 2), and by 1848 the **U.S.A. first pre-paid postal envelope** (page 4). In 1848 Telegraph Despatch (page 5) sold Philadelphia's first one cent denominated stamp. Also on display is the only U.S.A. local post strip of 5 stamps (page 6), earliest U.S.A. local post transatlantic cover (page 3), only U.S.A. local post Presidential Free Frank (page 3), only U.S.A. local post tete-beche pair (page 7), and earliest Philadelphia "Old Stamps Not Recognized" for 3 cent postal issue (page 8).

**Rarity** Philadelphia is best suited city for a local post single frame exhibit. The following 40 covers without duplication in 8 double pages reveal 16 companies: **11 examples are unique on cover; 6 are unique locals with 1847 postal issues.** Difficulty of acquisition is exceedingly high; 21 examples hail from great specialized collections of Golden, Hall, Gibson, and Gross. All material has been certified by the Philatelic Foundation noted by icon bottom right corner. ©

**Significance of each cover in bold blue headline.** Six very special examples are **framed in red.** □

**Organization** Progressive cost reduction from 3 cents early 1843, 2 cents mid 1846, and by March 1849 and subsequent 12 years Philadelphia's unique 1 cent market for all local post services .

BLACK OCTAGON - 3 CENTS

SIX KNOWN BLACK  
 March 20, 1843



manuscript "R & Co" red dots in circle cancel black "PAID" obliterator  
 red Phila Despatch Post / 3 PM handstamp red PAID handstamp local address ©

## THIRD ENTITY IN THE WORLD WITH POSTAGE STAMPS

RED OCTAGON - 3 CENTS

EARLIEST KNOWN RED  
 February 15, 1843

Feb. 15. 1843



manuscript "R & Co" red dots in circle cancel red PAID obliterator  
 red Phila Despatch Post / 10 AM handstamp local address ©

America's only local post from the early 1843 until June 17, 1844.

## WORLD'S FIRST PICTORIAL STAMP

BLACK - 3 CENTS

EARLIEST KNOWN  
 October 10, 1843

Oct. 10. 1843

3 Cents



Enlarged 50 %  
 Numeral 3 cancel



manuscript "R & Co" numeral 3 cancel tied  
 red Phila Despatch Post handstamp local address Spring Garden District ©

Handstamp "PHILA DESPATCH POST" delivery time "10 AM" or "3 PM" confirmed service. **Octagonal stamps were cut outs** from 3 PM handstamp only, affixed by wax.

Prepaid postage stamps were manuscript control marked "R&Co" by owner Robertson. Delivery time was overstruck by bold "PAID" obliterator marking.

Earliest cancels were red "circle of dots," and soon **numeral 3** cents, shown at right.

Six black octagons are known on cover, only **5 available to collectors.**

All bear a prepaid stamp and handstamp with delivery time.

**D.O. BLOOD & CO.**  
OPERATOR: DANIEL BLOOD  
LOCATION: 48 SOUTH THIRD ST  
RATE: VARIABLE  
DATE: 1845 TO 1848

**WORLD'S FIRST SPECIAL PURPOSE STAMP**  
"FOR THE POST OFFICE" TYPE 1 - 3 CENTS

**SECOND EARLIEST KNOWN**  
March 11, 1846

*Mar. 11, 1846*

STRIDING MESSENGER TYPE 4 - 2 CENTS

**ONE KNOWN WITH 1847 POSTAL ISSUE**

August 6, 1847

STRIDING MESSENGER TYPE 2 - 3 CENTS

**LATEST KNOWN OF 17**  
December 15, 1845

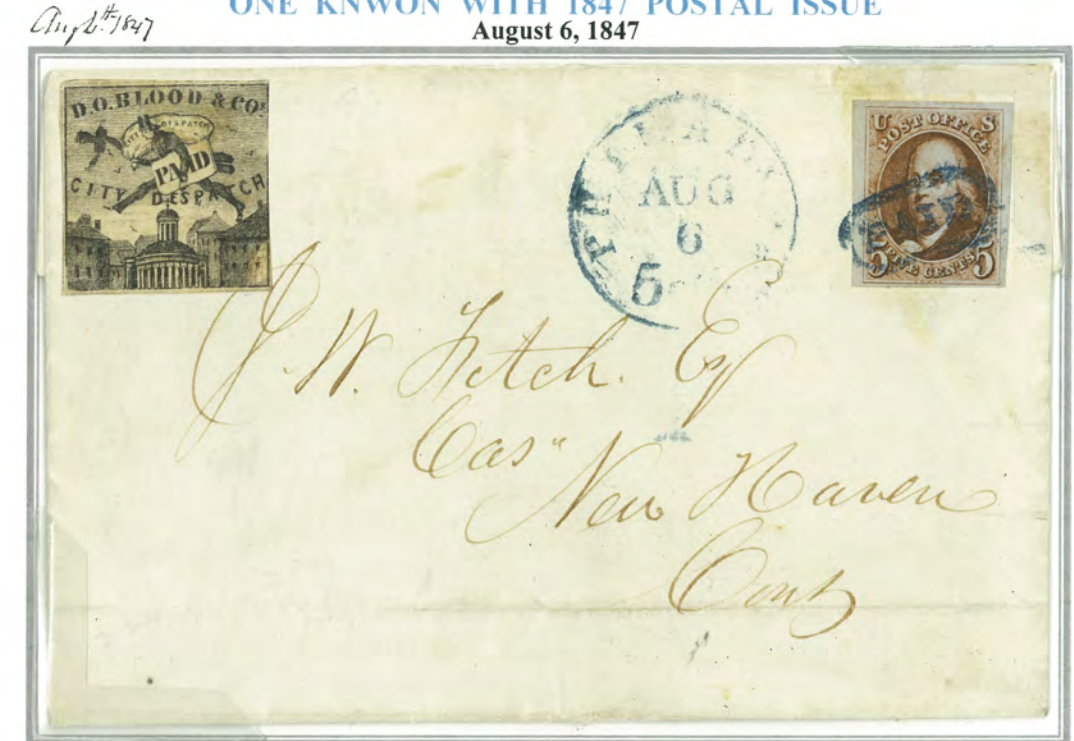
*Dec 15, 1845*



manuscript DOB&Cos blue Philadelphia cds tied matching numeral 2 in double circle addressed to local hotel



red PAID handstamp cancel tied blue Philadelphia cds matching numeral 5 in double circle Philadelphia to Baltimore 98 miles



manuscript "X" cancel 5 cent 1847 general issue blue "PAID" in lozenge cancel tied blue Philadelphia circular datestamp Philadelphia to New Haven, CT 171 miles

**No collect service for outbound letters.** All were easily delivered across the street from Blood's office to post office. Two systems need designated "For the Post Office" stamps with greater volume discounts.  
**By July 1846 Blood's reduced single stamp charge from 3 to 2 cents.**



Enlarged 50%

BLACK ON PINK - 2 CENTS

**SIX KNOWN**  
April 28, 1846

*Apr 27/46*



red crayon cancel blue Philadelphia cds matching number 5 in double circle matching PAID in lozenge handstamp Philadelphia to New York 94 miles

**CITY EXPRESS POST**  
OPERATOR: CALVIN TYSON  
LOCATION: UNKNOWN  
RATE: 2 CENTS  
DATE: 1844 TO 1846

City Express Post sold the first denominated stamp in Philadelphia for 2 cents, at right. The company was purchased on November 24, 1846 by DO Blood & Co.

BLACK - 2 CENTS

**ONE RECORDED COVER**  
July 1, 1846

*July 1, 1846*



blue "PAID" in lozenge handstamp tied blue Philadelphia circular datestamp manuscript "paid" Philadelphia to Baltimore, MD 98 miles

STRIDING MESSENGER TYPE 3 - 2 CENTS

ONE KNOWN WITH 1847 POSTAL ISSUE

August 24, 1848



X cancel 5 cent 1847 issue cancel tied by blue Phila cds manuscript "In Haste" Phila to Pikesville, MD 103 miles

D.O. BLOOD & CO.

OPERATOR: DANIEL BLOOD  
LOCATION: 48 SOUTH THIRD ST  
RATE: VARIABLE  
DATE: 1845 TO 1848

"FOR THE POST OFFICE" TYPE 3 - 2 CENTS

ONE KNOWN PRESIDENTIAL FREE FRANK  
ALL U.S.A. LOCAL POSTS

January 27, 1848



blue Phila cds matching FREE in lozenge tied addressed to James K Polk President of the United States

"FOR THE POST OFFICE" TYPE 2

EARLIEST KNOWN  
TRANSATLANTIC  
ALL U.S.A. LOCAL POSTS  
July 27, 1847



At left, GS Harris was first company to mimic Blood & Co. At top "For the Post Office" stamps; At bottom local PAID delivery, like Blood's striding messenger holding "PAID" city letter; this a drop letter held by post office for additional 2 cents.

blue Phila cds tied blue PAID in lozenge Liverpool 1847 backstamp addressed to Manchester, England

Blood's volume discounts improved by mid 1847 to 2 dozen for 20 cents.

G.S. HARRIS  
OPERATOR : GEORGE S. HARRIS  
LOCATION : 119 N. 4TH STREET  
RATE : 2 CENTS  
DATE : 1847

HARRIS TYPE 1 - 2 CENTS

ONE KNOWN  
July 14, 1847



uncancelled blue Philadelphia cds Philadelphia to Mercersburg, PA 80 miles

HARRIS TYPE 2 - 2 CENTS

ONE KNOWN  
July 5, 1847



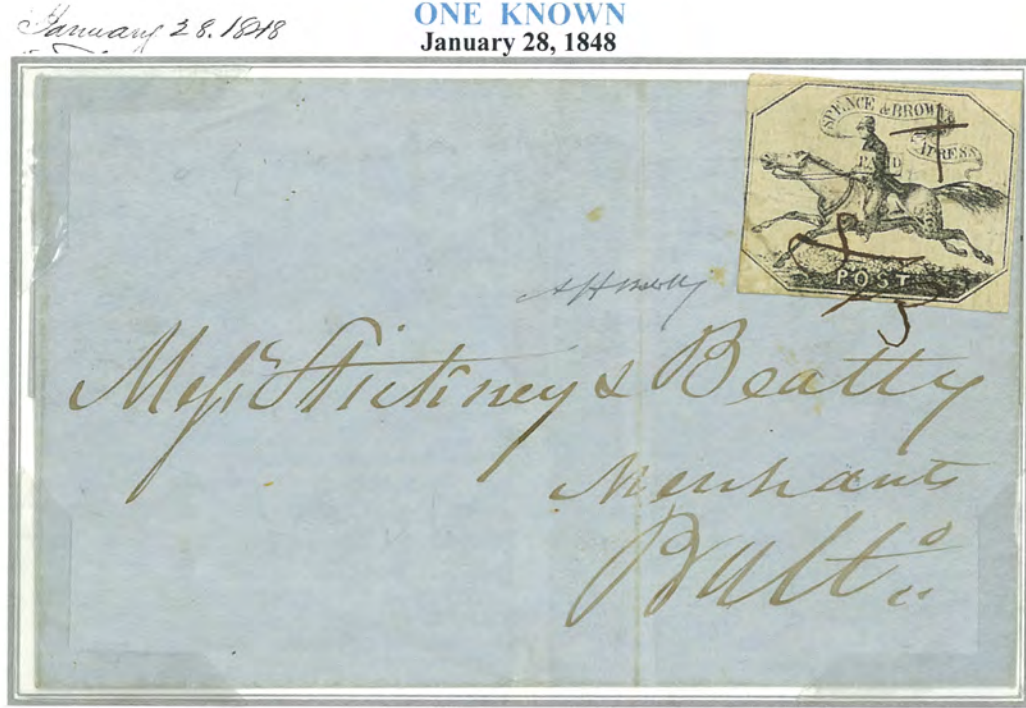
uncancelled blue Philadelphia cds with attached "2" twice local address

**SPENCE & BROWN EXPRESS POST**

OPERATOR : JAMES SPENCE AND  
EMMANUEL D. BROWN  
LOCATION : 48 SOUTH 6TH STREET  
RATE : 2 CENTS  
DATE : 1847-48

BLACK - 2 CENTS

ONE KNOWN  
January 28, 1848



manuscript "X" cancel manuscript "S/B" tied Philadelphia to Baltimore 98 miles ©

**1848-1849**

**U.S.A. FIRST POSTAL ENVELOPE**

TYPE 1 - ALBINO on BUFF  
TWO KNOWN  
1848



Indicia 23.5 mm diameter  
2 Stars

1848: new Blood's name, new address, smaller stamps, postal envelopes, and hundreds of street boxes.



Enlarged 50%

Local Posts of Philadelphia, 1843 to 1861

**BLOOD'S DESPATCH**

OPERATOR : DANIEL O. BLOOD  
LOCATION : 28 SOUTH 6TH STREET  
RATE : 2 CENTS  
DATE : 1848-1852



Enlarged 50%

BRONZE ON BLACK - 2 CENTS  
EARLIEST KNOWN SMALL RECTANGLE  
ALL BLOODS STAMPS  
August 24, 1848



local and 5 cent issue both tied by red PHILAD<sup>A</sup> RAILROAD handstamp  
Philadelphia to New York 94 miles ©

**T.A. HAMPTON**

OPERATOR : THOMAS HAMPTON  
LOCATION : 9 PROSPECT ALLEY  
RATE : VARIABLE  
DATE : 1847-1849

HAMPTON TYPE 2 - 2 CENTS

TWO KNOWN  
May 23, 1849



blue Philadelphia datestamp Philadelphia to New Orleans, LA 1223 miles ©

TA Hampton was second company to mimic Blood's double circle stamps. Most companies were short lived and **unable to compete with Blood's.**

BLACK & BLUE - 2 CENTS  
ONE KNOWN WITH 10 CENT 1847 POSTAL ISSUE  
October 24, 1848



uncancelled local 10 cent indistinct cancel Philadelphia to Mount Holly, NJ 22 miles ©

**BRIGG'S DESPATCH**  
OPERATOR : GEORGE W. BRIGGS  
LOCATION : 61 SOUTH 8TH ST.  
RATE : 2 CENTS  
DATE : 1848 - 1850



GOLD ON PINK - 2 CENTS

ONE KNOWN  
September 28, 1848

Enlarged 50%



Triple handstamp

Prepaid stamp had not been recognized by Brigg's clerk, who incorrectly applied "2" due handstamp. Once realized, clerk used 2 "PAID" markings to obliterate.



Enlarged 50%



Enlarged 50%

GOLD ON YELLOW - 2 CENTS

TWO KNOWN  
September 1, 1849



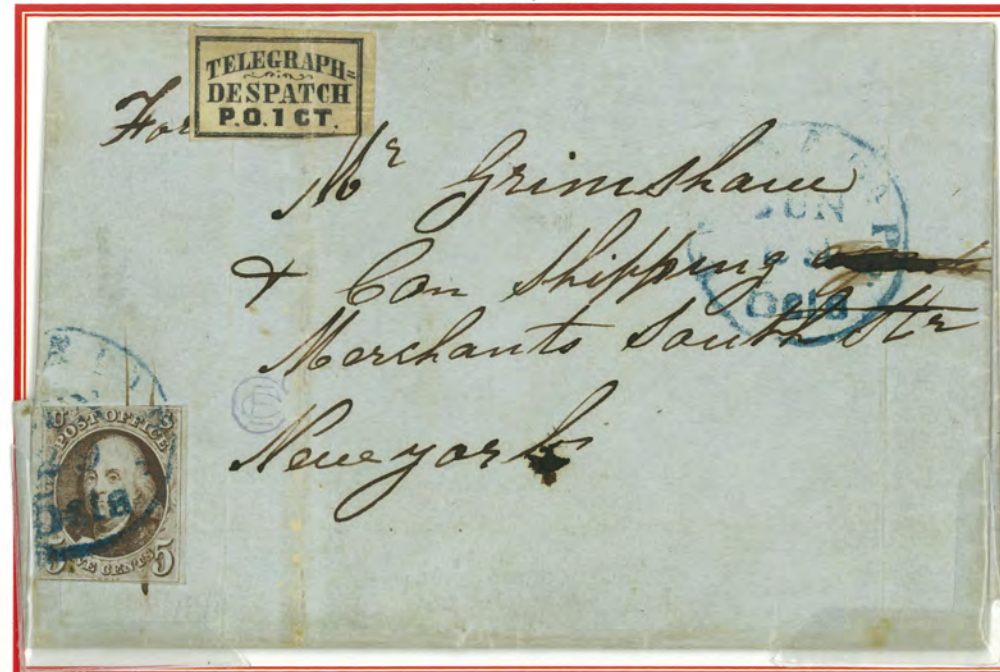
pen cancel Briggs Despatch "PAID" in circle handstamp twice obliterator Philadelphia to Frederica, GA 798 miles

**PHILADELPHIA'S FIRST ONE CENT STAMP**

TYPE 1 - 1 CENT

SIX KNOWN, ONE WITH 1847 POSTAL ISSUE

June 29, 1848



uncancelled blue Phila integral rate cds 5 cent 1847 cancel tied by blue Phila cds Philadelphia to New York, NY 94 miles

**TELEGRAPH DESPATCH P.O.**

OPERATOR : UNKNOWN  
LOCATION : 61 SOUTH 8TH STREET  
RATE : VARIABLE  
DATE : 1848-1850\*

**EAGLE CITY POST**

OPERATOR : WILLIAM STAIT  
LOCATION : 80 CHESTNUT STREET  
48 SOUTH 3RD STREET  
RATE : VARIABLE  
DATE : 1848 - 1850

COGWHEEL STAMP - 2 CENTS

ONE KNOWN WITH 5 CENT 1847 POSTAL ISSUE

March 8, 1849



manuscript X cancel tied 5 cent 1847 cancel tied by blue numeral 12 in double circle Philadelphia to Carlisle, PA 124 miles



Enlarged 50%

BLACK - 2 CENTS

5 COMBINED WITH 1847 POSTAL ISSUE

January 1850



manuscript X cancel tied blue Phila 5 integral rate cds 5 cent 1847 postal issue tied by cds Philadelphia to Rahway, NJ 71 miles

**G. CARTER'S DESPATCH**

OPERATOR : GEORGE CARTER  
LOCATION : 90 N 5TH ST  
RATE : 2 CENTS  
DATE : 1848-1852

RED - 2 CENTS

ONE KNOWN TIED

October 29, 1849



numeral 2 circular handstamp local address

Numeral 2



Enlarged 50%

**PRIEST'S DESPATCH**

OPERATOR : SOLOMON PRIEST  
LOCATION : 141 CHESNUT ST.  
RATE : UNKNOWN  
DATE : 1851 - 1855

**BRONZE ON BLUISH**

**ONE KNOWN**  
November 16, 1851

Priest's and Brigg's and Auner's had mimicked size and shape of Bloods new 1 cent stamp. They all were short lived and unable to compete.



pen cancel  
blue Phila integral 5 cent cds  
Phila to Burlington, NJ 21 miles

**BLACK ON EMERALD**

**ONE KNOWN**  
November 21, 1851



**EAGLE POST  
BLUE ON BLUISH**

**ONE KNOWN WITH RED STAIRS**



**BLACK ON GRAY**

**ONE KNOWN**  
February 6, 1851

**A.W. AUNERS DESPATCH POST**

OPERATOR : ALFRED W. AUNERS  
LOCATION : 34 RACE STREET  
RATE : UNKNOWN  
DATE : 1851

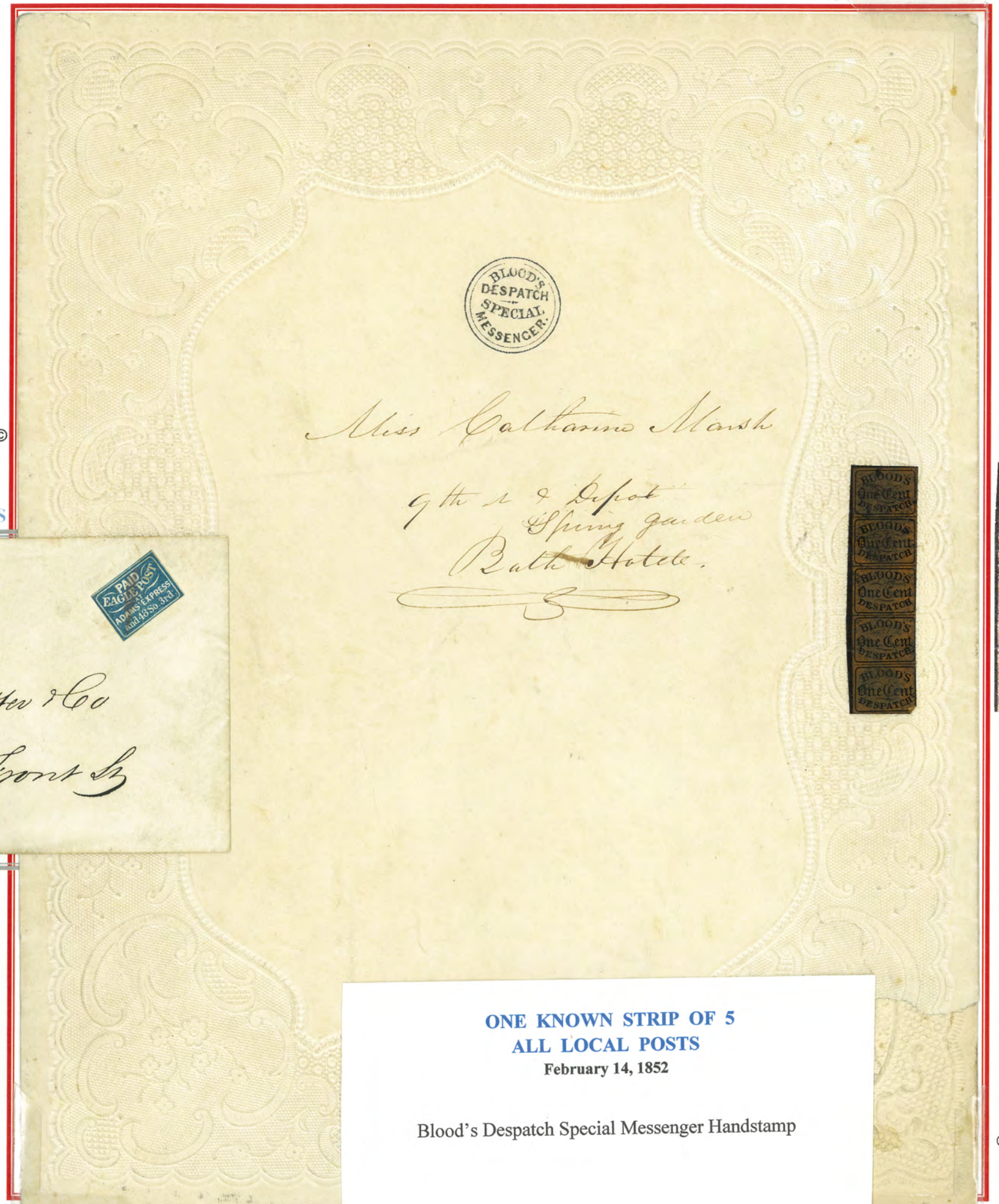


Not enlarged

Auner's was the last vestige of early double circle stamps.

manuscript X cancel  
pencil "Post Office"  
blue Phila integral 5 cent cds

Philadelphia to Pottsville,  
PA 97 miles



**ONE KNOWN STRIP OF 5  
ALL LOCAL POSTS**

February 14, 1852

Blood's Despatch Special Messenger Handstamp

1853-1854

BLOOD'S DESPATCH

TYPE 2 - RED ON BUFF  
ONE KNOWN TRANSATLANTIC  
ALL U.S.A. LOCAL POST ENVELOPES  
January 8, 1853

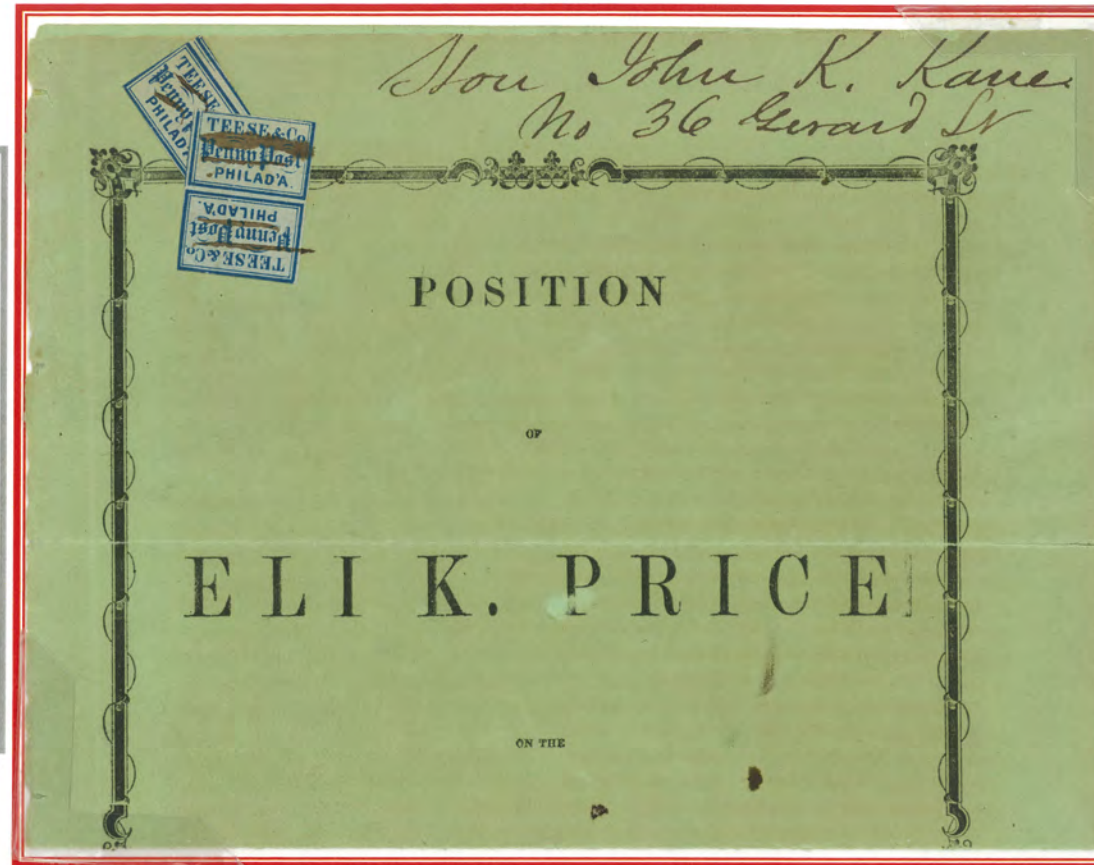


Enlarged 30%



blue Phila cds red Phila PAID in octagon Philadelphia to New York 94 miles ©

BLUE ON BLUISH - 1 CENT  
ONE RECORDED TETE-BECHE  
ALL U.S.A. LOCAL POSTS  
1854



Teese mimicked Bloods 1853 blue stamp. Intercity rate to Kensington was 3 cents and sender applied three 1 cent stamps.

TEESE & CO  
OPERATOR : MITCHELL TEESE  
LOCATION : WASHINGTON & 6TH  
RATE : 1 CENTS  
DATE : 1852 - 1854

CRESSMAN & CO'S PENNY POST  
OPERATOR : UNKNOWN  
LOCATION : 3 RD AND BUTTONWOOD  
RATE : UNKNOWN  
DATE : 1854 - 1857

GOLD ON LILAC - 1 CENT  
ONE KNOWN  
Undated



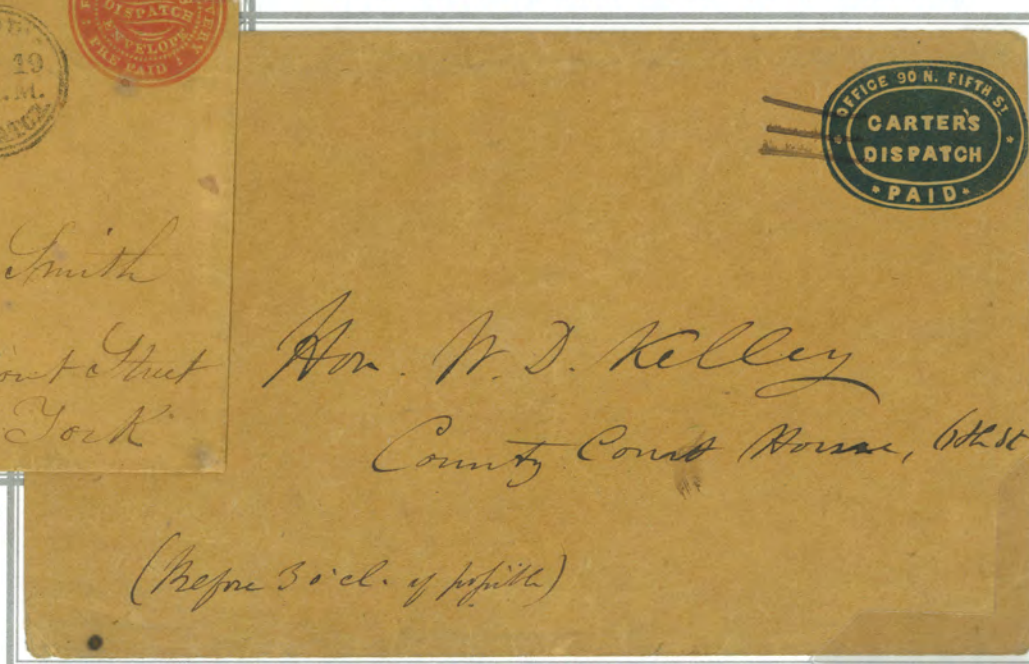
acid cancel addressed to Northern Liberties District ©

TYPE 3 - RED ON BUFF  
ONE KNOWN DEMONITIZED 1847 POSTAL ISSUE  
ALL U.S.A. LOCAL POST ENVELOPES  
August 19, 1853



Blood's handstamp 10 cent 1847 postal issue cancelled by blue Phila cds Philadelphia to New York 94 miles ©

BLUE ON BUFF  
ONE KNOWN SERVICED BY CARTER'S



cancel by 3 penstrokes local address ©

GOLD ON BLACK - 1 CENT  
NINE KNOWN  
December 18, 1854



uncancelled red Phila integral 3 cent rate cds Philadelphia to Baltimore 98 miles ©

Short lived Teese and Cressman mimicked 3 Blood's 1850's stamps: Blue, Lilac, and Black.

Whereas government postal envelopes were not issued until June 1853, two Philadelphia private post companies were years earlier: **Bloods 1848 and Carter's 1851.**

1855-1861

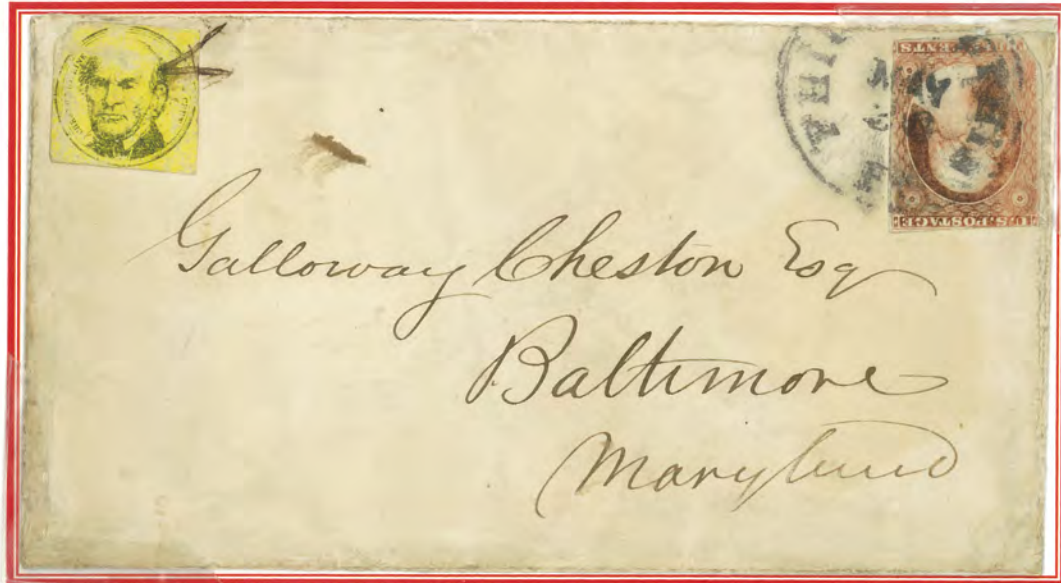
CHESNUT STREET LINE

OPERATOR : UNKNOWN  
LOCATION : UNKNOWN  
RATE : 1 CENT  
DATE : 1856

YELLOW - 1 CENT

ONE KNOWN

May 20, 1856



pen stroke cancel tied 3 cent 1851 postal issue cancel tied by black Phila cds Philadelphia to Baltimore 98 miles

BRONZE ON LILAC - 1 CENT

TWO KNOWN COMBINATIONS;  
EARLIEST KNOWN U.S.A. "OLD STAMPS NOT RECOGNIZED"

August 26, 1861



Due to Civil War new 1861 postage stamps became available in Philadelphia by August 19, 1861. After a 7 day exchange period, effective August 26, 1861 old stamps were no longer valid.

BLOOD'S PENNY POST

OPERATOR : CHARLES KOCHERSPERGER  
LOCATION : 61 SOUTH 8TH STREET  
RATE : ONE CENT  
DATE : 1854-1861



CITY DISPATCH; BLACK - 1 CENT

ONE KNOWN VALENTINE

February 14, 1861

1 CENT



Enlarged 400%

PINK - 1 CENT

ONE KNOWN

June 7, 1856



Penstroke cancel tied 3 cent 1851 postal issue canceled tied by Phila cds Philadelphia to West River, MD 134 miles

KOCHERSPERGER - 1 CENT

3 KNOWN ON INSURANCE WRAPPER

May 17, 1859



scarab cancel tied 3 cent 1857 postal issue, both tied by Phila octagonal handstamp Bloods Handstamp Type 21



EPILOGUE

On December 1, 1861 the Postmaster General reported a decision against private posts from the United States Circuit Court of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. **Last to close their doors was Blood's Penny Post on January 11, 1862. No one could stop Blood's except the federal government.**