

"How the Post Facilitated Distribution of the Printed Word 1775 - 1870"

The origin of the postal systems in Europe and what was to be the United States were quite different. In Europe, the postal systems were originally established for the benefit of the Crown. Each Crown needed a vehicle to assure an efficient mechanism to communicate the "rules and regulations" to their subjects. The Crown also needed this postal system to provide a vehicle to allow commerce to flourish generating taxes for income to the Crown. Finally, though free for the Crown, the Crown established a tax for others to use and benefit from the postal system therefore generating another source of income for the Crown.

In what became the United States, the postal system was established for the benefit of the citizens, not the government. The two foundations of America's postal system were to provide effective communications for business (business of government or commerce) and quick, inexpensive dissemination of news to the widest possible audience. In the 18TH Century and the first half of the 19TH Century newspapers and pamphlets (printed matter) were the only inexpensive and practical way to inform a broad group of people of current events and important commercial news.

What is most interesting is that between 1792 and 1870 printed matter made up the vast majority (count, weight and physical volume), 80%+, of the mails and yet printed matter accounts for less than 5% of surviving postal history artifacts. Why is the study of printed matter so difficult? For the answer, one must look outside of philately. *Outside the philatelic world "Printed Matter" has a different name - "Ephemera."* Ephemera is defined as *"paper items with little time value that were originally meant to be discarded right after use."* Discarded; thrown away; of no value after its specific use. The very nature of letters is viewed as historic and therefore they tended to be saved - that is why so many survive. Printing presses proliferated as the country expanded which resulted in an increase in both quantity and type of printed matter, in addition to newspapers, that could be cheaply produced. But ephemera, what philatelists call printed matter, was not kept and therefore explains its paucity. *Surviving postally transmitted ephemera, and that by express and private companies, by its very nature, is quite scarce and in many cases, provide the sole surviving examples to philately.*

This exhibit will comprehensively trace the growth and evolution of this class of mail matter and the special, lower postal rates they enjoyed between the years of 1775 and 1870. It will show the amazing continuity of the rates and, with only minor adjustments, rates that remained consistent for 100 years. After a few precursor examples of newspapers, this exhibit will then show examples of the full range of printed matter and how they were handled by the different post offices, express companies and private posts. The exhibit brings to philately over ten new items of major importance in showing the evolution of the early postal system of the United States.

The exhibit is organized into three frame groups separated by when major revisions occurred in the postal regulations relating to how printed matter was handled by the post office. Each group will first show the domestic rates and usages of newspapers, printed sheets, pamphlets, booklets and circulars. Following in the group will be examples of overseas usages which will show both rates and destinations. California and Hawaii, (frame 7) as well as the Confederate States of America, (frame 8) are presented individually.

Frames 1 -2: July 26, 1775 to June 30, 1851

- Section One - Precursors, Stampless and 1847 Issue (1)

Frames 3 - 8 July 1, 1851 to June 30, 1863

- Section Two - Domestic Usages (3 - 5)
- Section Three - Foreign Usages (5 - 6)
- Section Four - California And Hawaii Mails (7)
- Section Five - Confederate States Of America (8)

Frames 9 - 10: July 1, 1863 thru 1870

- Section Six - New Domestic Second & Third Mail Classes (9)
- Section Seven - Foreign Usages 1863 - 1870 (10)

Designator Keys

- 1. Cover Box Bordered in RED Means a Significant Cover.**
- 2. BLUE Signifies a New Item To Philately.**
- 3. PFC, PSE, APS Signifies a Certificate is Present.**

Introduction And Precursors
Newspapers Handled By The Colonial Postal System

18 August 1755
7 May 1759

Introduction - Section One

Section one of the exhibit, frames 1 and 2, first examines three precursor newspapers which illustrate how the Colonial post office operated under the British. The third newspaper, May 10, 1774 gives insight to the rates before July 26, 1775.

The section then shows examples of the newspaper rates both transient and by subscription. Of special note is that the rate to send a single newspaper remained virtually constant at 1¢ for the 58 years between 1755 and 1851. This is representative of the importance the postal system placed in the dissemination of the printed word.

The last two pages of frame one show an a very early and important printed sheet from Hawaii that was carried by whaling ship around Cape Horn, the southern tip of South America. The trip to Vermont took nearly one and a half years. Also shown is the only example of an 1847 issued stamp correctly paying any printed matter rate. All known 1847 stamps, on cover, pay a letter rate.

Precursors To The Study Period Of This Exhibit

In colonial America the newspaper was looked upon as a source of tax revenue for the individual colonies and ultimately for Great Britain. The "taxation without representation" rose out of Great Britain's attempt, in the 1760's, to tax the paper on which a newspaper was printed. Upon formation of the U. S. Postal Service on July 26, 1775, taxation would never again be imposed on the communications of the printed word. The post office, in fact, effected communications by establishing and maintaining very low rates for printed matter.



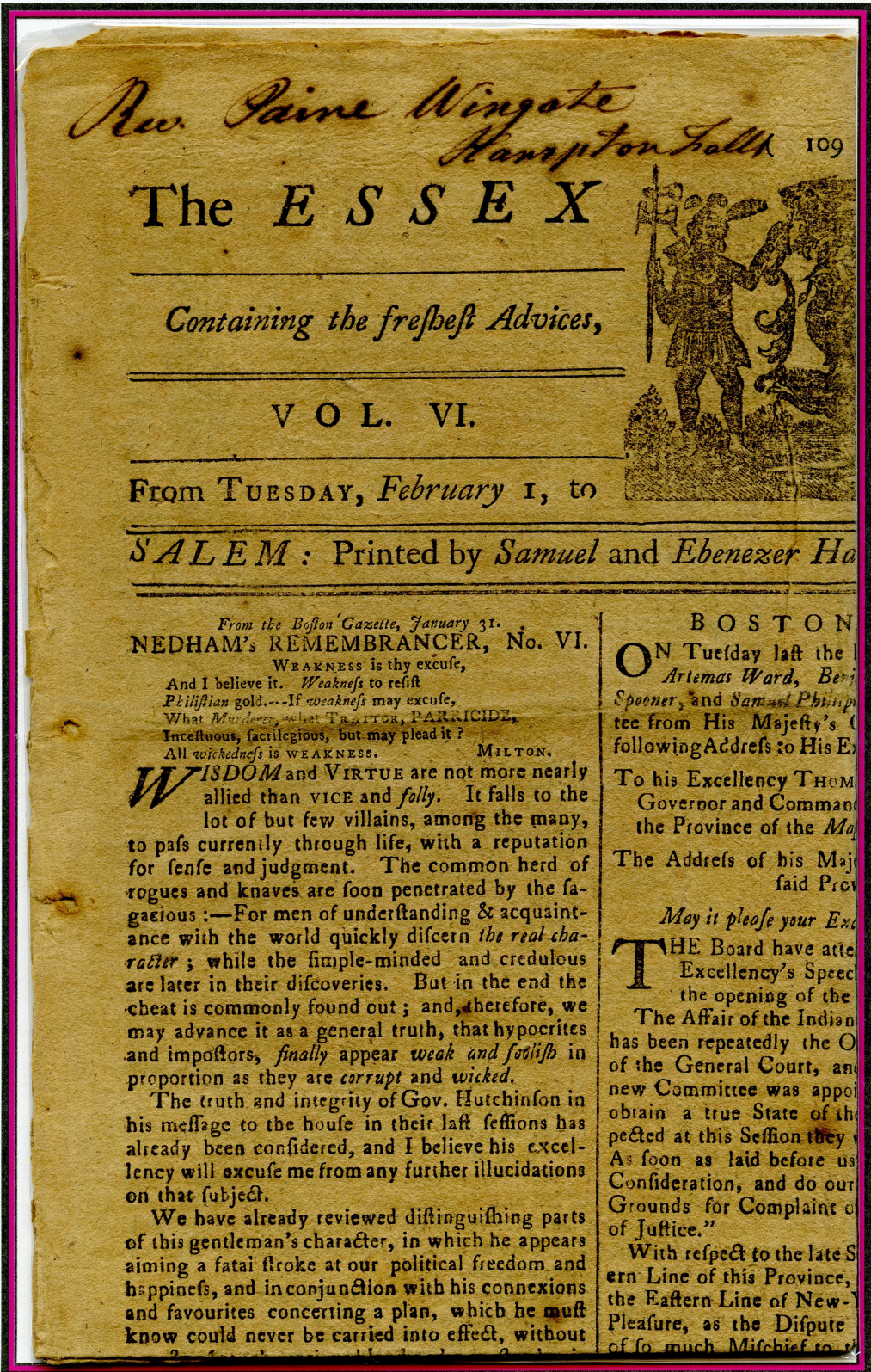
Boston, Massachusetts

Act Of January 8, 1775, Colony Of Massachusetts, One Penny Tax Stamp

18 August 1755

Earliest Recorded American Newspaper Carried By The Mails In Private Hands

THIS GAZETTE may be had for Six Shillings and Eight Pence per Annum, (exclusive of Postage) 3s. 4d. (or 4s. 6d. if sent by the Post) to be paid at Entrance. ADVERTISEMENTS not exceeding eight or ten Lines are inserted for Three Shillings.



The ESSEX GAZETTE

Salem, Massachusetts

February 1-8, 1774

This newspaper was sent by post from Salem, MA to Hampton Falls, NH, which is on the post road between Salem, MA and Portsmouth, NH, a distance of 31 miles. It predates the formation of the U. S. Postal service by a year and allows us insight into how newspapers were handled in British times.

Not only is this paper historically important, but it also includes information which has allowed postal historians to calculate the actual postage, charged at this time, for the transport of newspapers.

On the bottom of the back page are printed two lines, which are reproduced above, just below the page heading. It notes the subscription rates both with (4s 6p) and without (3s 4p) postage. The difference in the two, the postage charge, is 1s 2d.

A shilling was equivalent to 24 cents and 2 pence was equivalent to 4¢ or a total of 28¢. The paper was published once a week or a little over 52 times per year. The postage of 28 cents equates to 1/2¢ postage per newspaper.

Complete newspaper is herewith

Earliest Recorded Postally Sent Newspaper During The Confederation Period



*The Continental Journal
and Weekly Advertiser*
Boston
January 2, 1783

This is the earliest American newspaper, in private hands, recorded to have the specific notation of *Post*. As confirmation, paper has the street address written in the masthead, *Falmouth Way*.

Of particular note to the postal historian is an article which encompasses the entire second page entitled:

Extract from an Ordinance passed by the United States of America, in Congress assembled, October 18, 1782 entitled An ORDINANCE for regulating the Post Office of the United States of America.

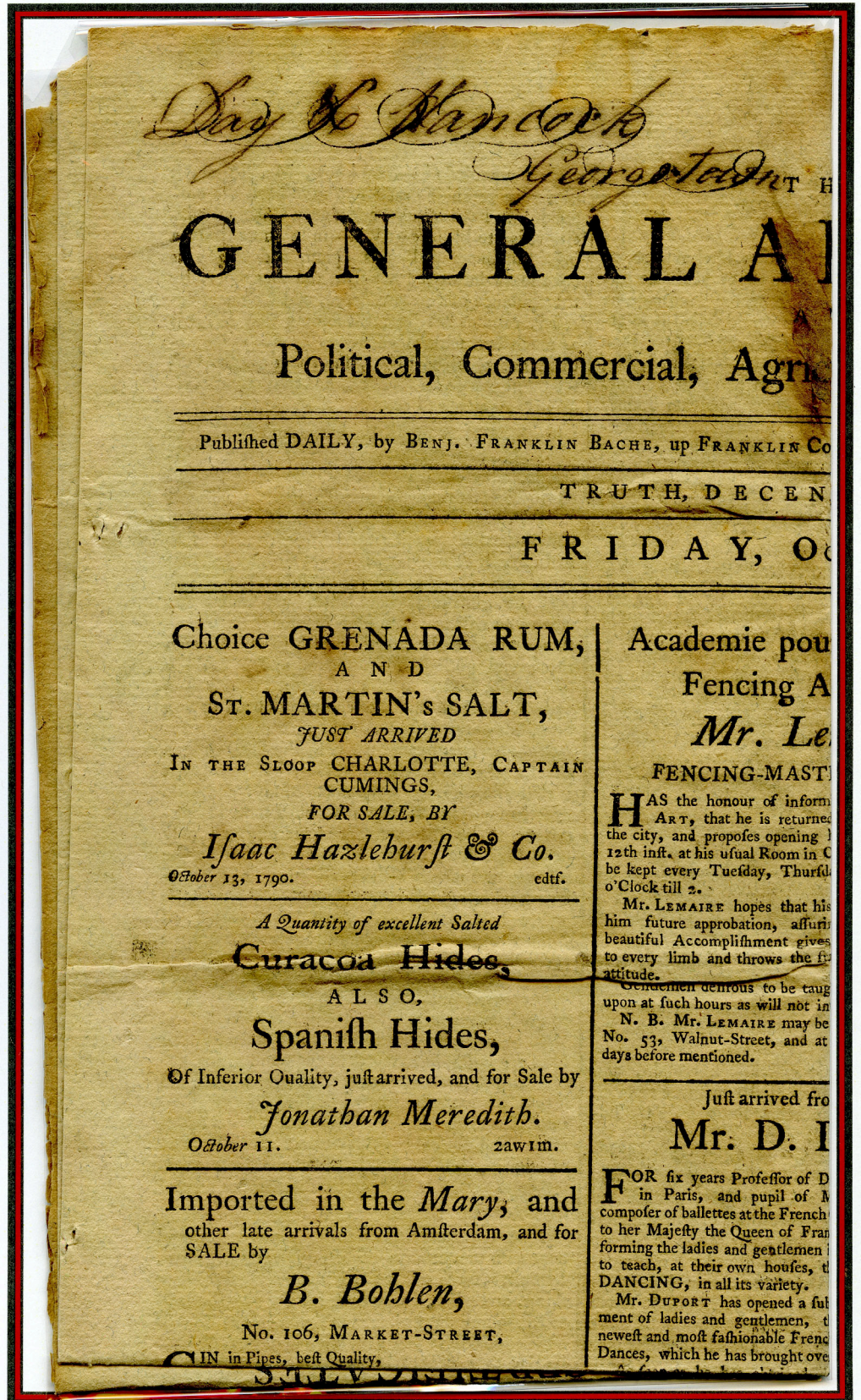
Contemporary accounts of the formation of the Post Office are exceedingly scarce and fascinating that it is included in this postally used newspaper.

Complete newspaper is herewith

General Advertiser
Philadelphia, PA
October 15, 1790

This is the earliest recorded postally used newspaper, in private hands, after the passing of the Constitution of the United States.

The paper was printed in Philadelphia, PA and mailed to Georgetown, DC, which was on the post road between Philadelphia and Washington, DC, a distance of 141 miles.



Complete newspaper is herewith

Printed Sheet

Not Over 50 Miles - One Cent Each Printed Sheet

8 May 1794 - 2 March 1825

Printed Sheets Are First Defined In The U. S. Postal Laws of 1794



New Bedford, MA to Taunton, MA

(1809)

The 3¢ rate is composed of 1¢ for each of three printed sheets; the mileage is 23 miles.



New Bedford, MA to Taunton, MA

2 February 1809

The mailing contains a brief letter requesting General Thomas Lincoln sign the five enclosed military resignation forms and return them to Colonel Benjamin Lincoln, his son. The rate of 13¢ is composed of 8¢ for the letter and 1¢ each for the five printed sheets.

Newspaper

Subscription And Transient

1 May 1825 - 30 June 1851

Newspaper By Subscription, Published Biweekly - Six Cents Per Quarter



Concord, NH to Bradford, NH

12 December 1843

This newspaper, *The Practical Christian* was published biweekly of Saturday. The recipient did not have a subscription to the paper so the transient newspaper rate of 1¢ within the state applied.

Complete newspaper is herewith

Transient Newspaper - One Cent Within The State



Manchester NH to South Weare, NH

25 May 1844

This newspaper, *The Gleaner*, the National Enquirer of its day, was published weekly on Saturday. The recipient had a subscription to the paper as evidenced by the Concord, NH postmark and lack of a rate. Subscription newspapers were only required to be postmarked or marked in script by the postmaster in the town of origin.

Complete newspaper is herewith

Newspaper

Over 100 Miles, Out of State - One And A Half Cents

1 June 1792 - 30 June 1845

JOURNAL OF HUMANITY

And Herald of the American Temperance Society

1 1/2

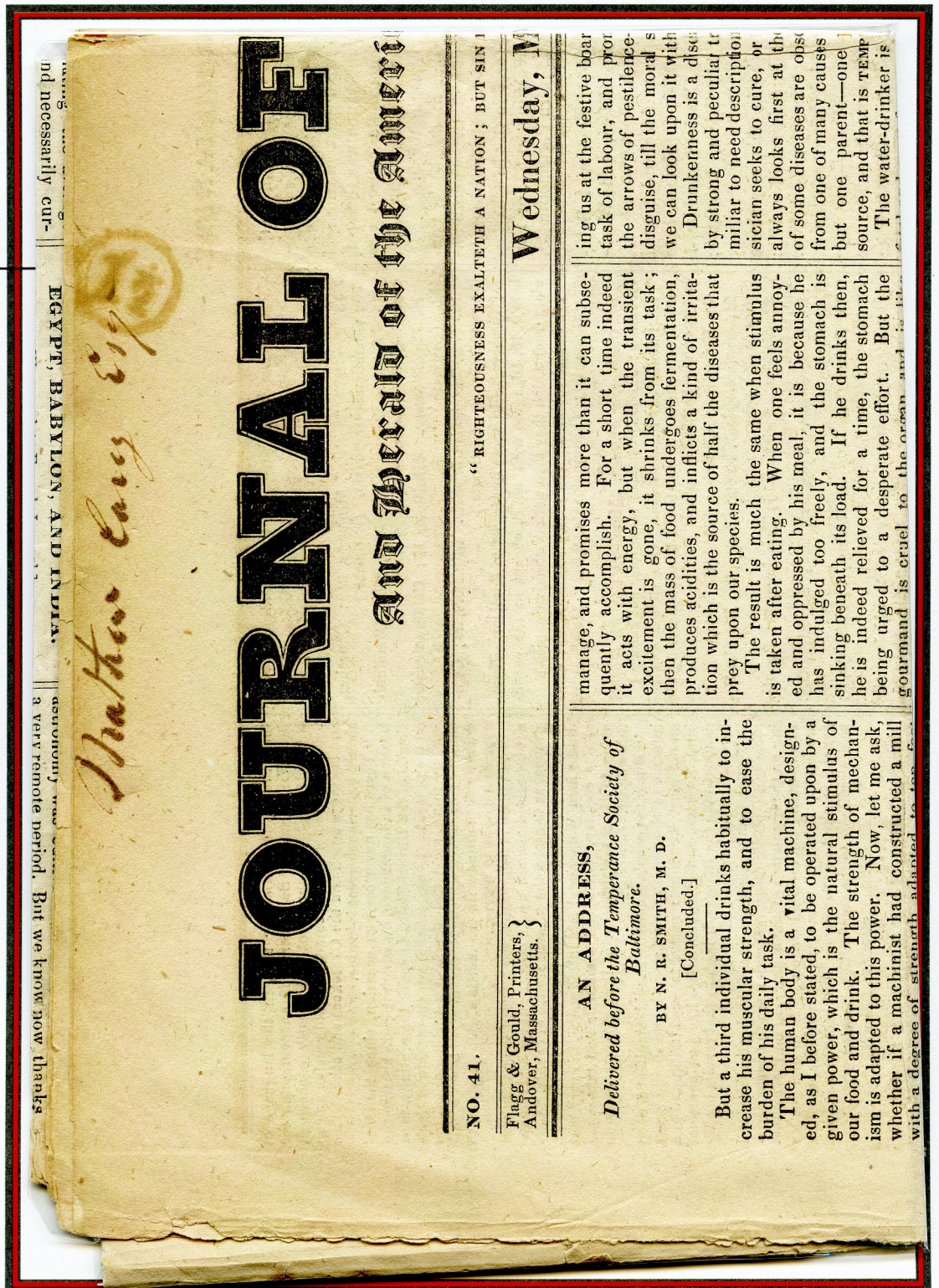
Single Newspaper Over 150 Miles - 1 1/2¢

Transient newspapers traveling over 100 miles, out of state, were charged a rate of 1 1/2¢ each. The rate remained stable for 52 years.

The 1 1/2 in circle marking is the only recorded example. Since the paper was published in Andover, MA, it is assumed to be from there.

At the time, Nathan Carey, the addressee, was a resident of the small religious community of Wyoming, PA

Complete newspaper is herewith



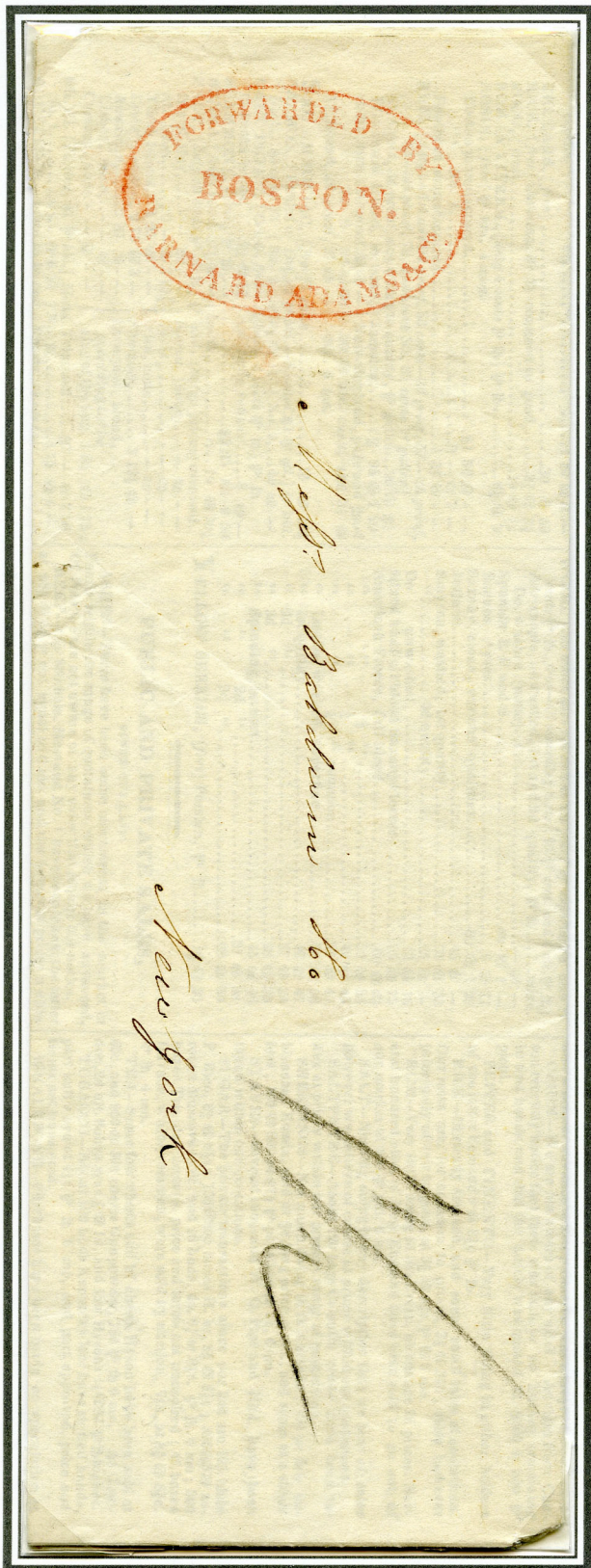
Andover, MA to (Wyoming, PA)

3 March 1830

Pamphlets And Magazines

Published Periodically Not Over 100 Miles - One And A Half Cent 1 May 1825 - 30 June 1845

Pamphlets And Magazines Not Over 100 Miles - One And A Half Cents

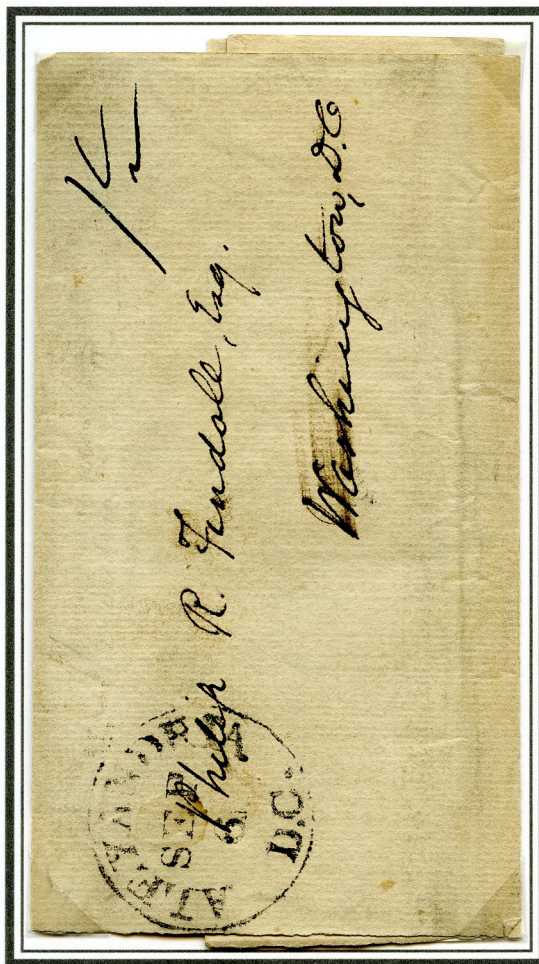


Boston, MA to New York, NY

9 August 1833

Printed Prices Current

The prices current, to the left, was considered by the post office to be a pamphlet published periodically. It was forwarded outside of the mails to New York by the forwarding company *Barnard Adams & Co.* where it entered the mails and was rated 1 1/2¢, prepaid, for under 100 miles.



Alexandria, D. C. to Washington D. C.
C. 1840 - 1844

Pamphlets

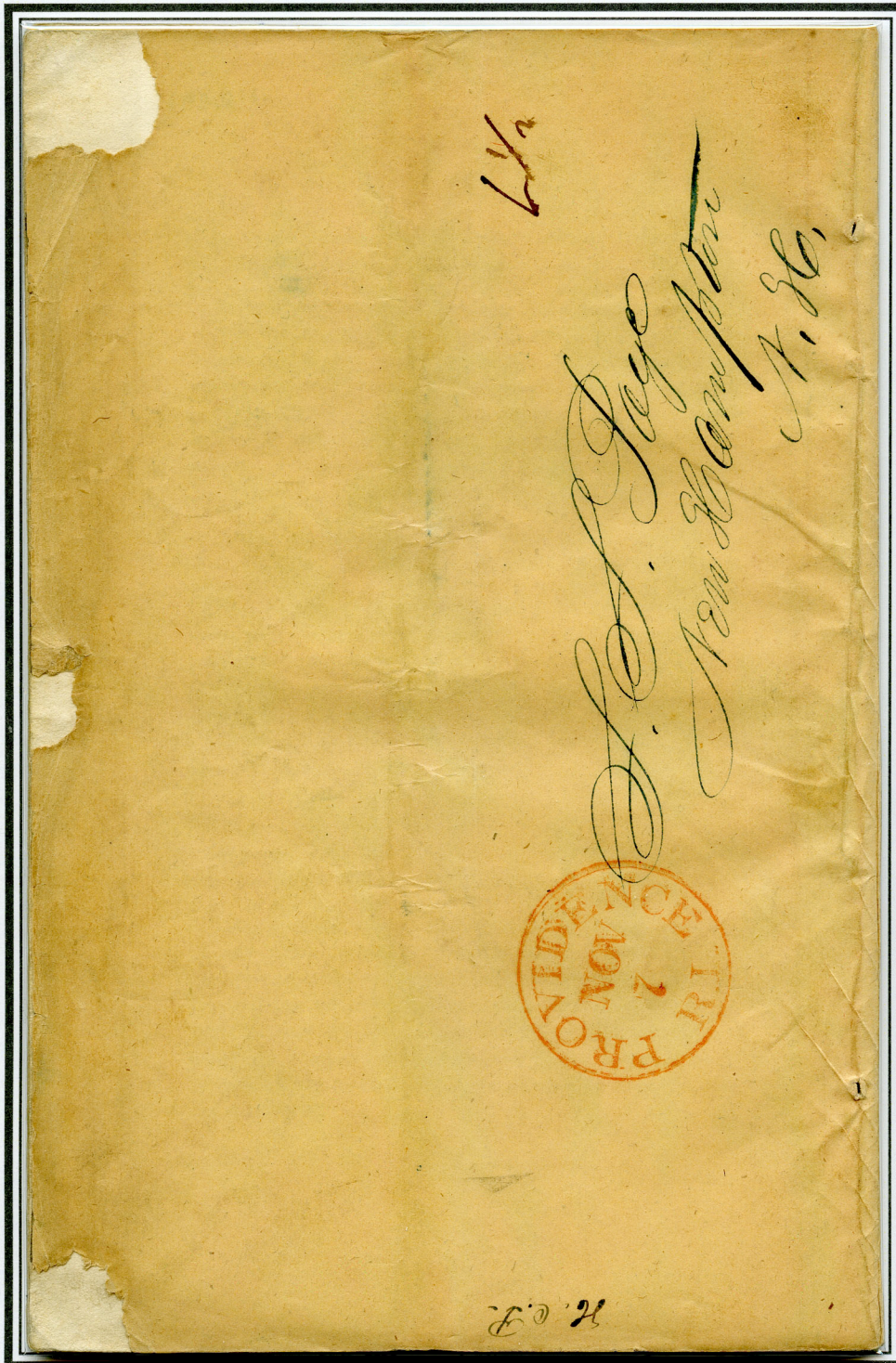
The wrapper, to the left, contained a periodical or a pamphlet which traveled less than 100 miles and was charged the prevailing rate of 1 1/2¢.

Pamphlets And Magazines

Published Periodically Over 100 Miles - Two And A Half Cents

1 May 1825 - 30 June 1845

Pamphlets And Magazines Over 100 Miles - Two And A Half Cents

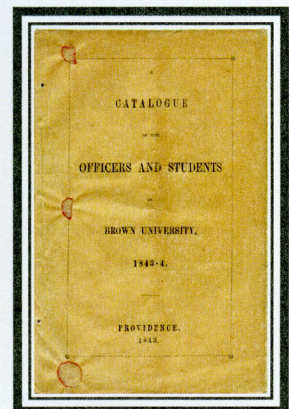


Pamphlets

This *Catalog of the Officers and Students in Brown University, 1843 - 4* is a pamphlet published periodically, in this case once a year. The distance from Providence, RI to New Hampton, NH is 148 miles.

Since the distance is over 100 miles, the required postage was 2 1/2¢ prepaid.

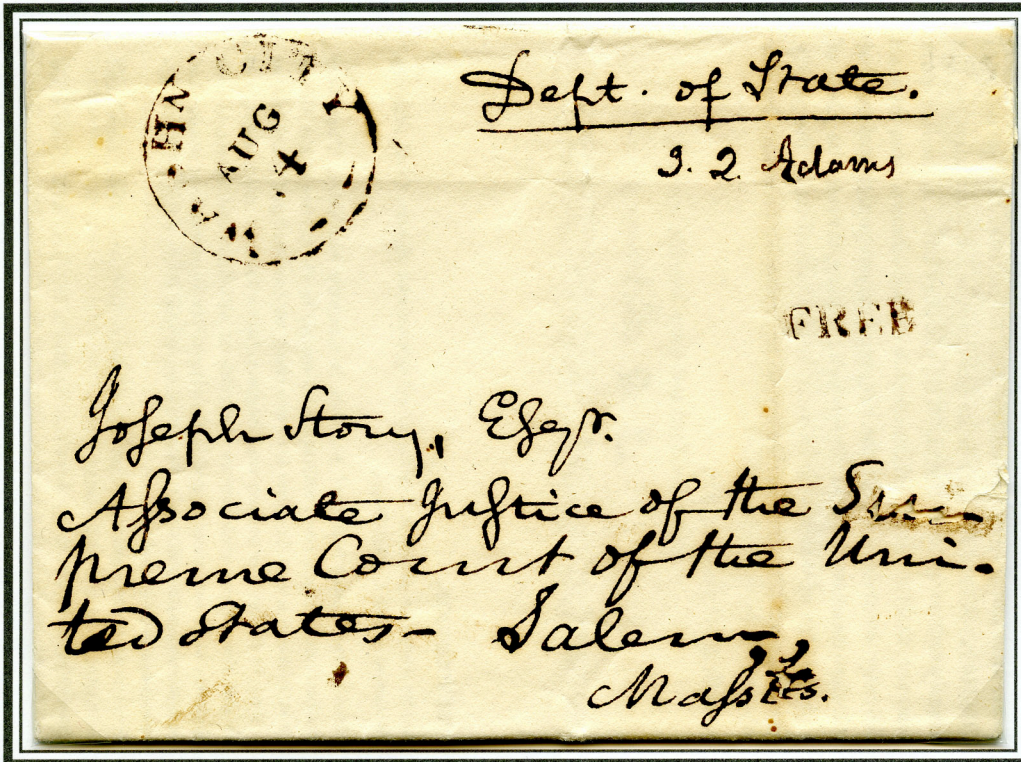
The three missing pieces on the address panel are from three spots of wax that were used to secure the pamphlet when it was rolled up to be mailed.



Front Cover Reduced 80%

Printed Sheet

Franking Privilege - Free

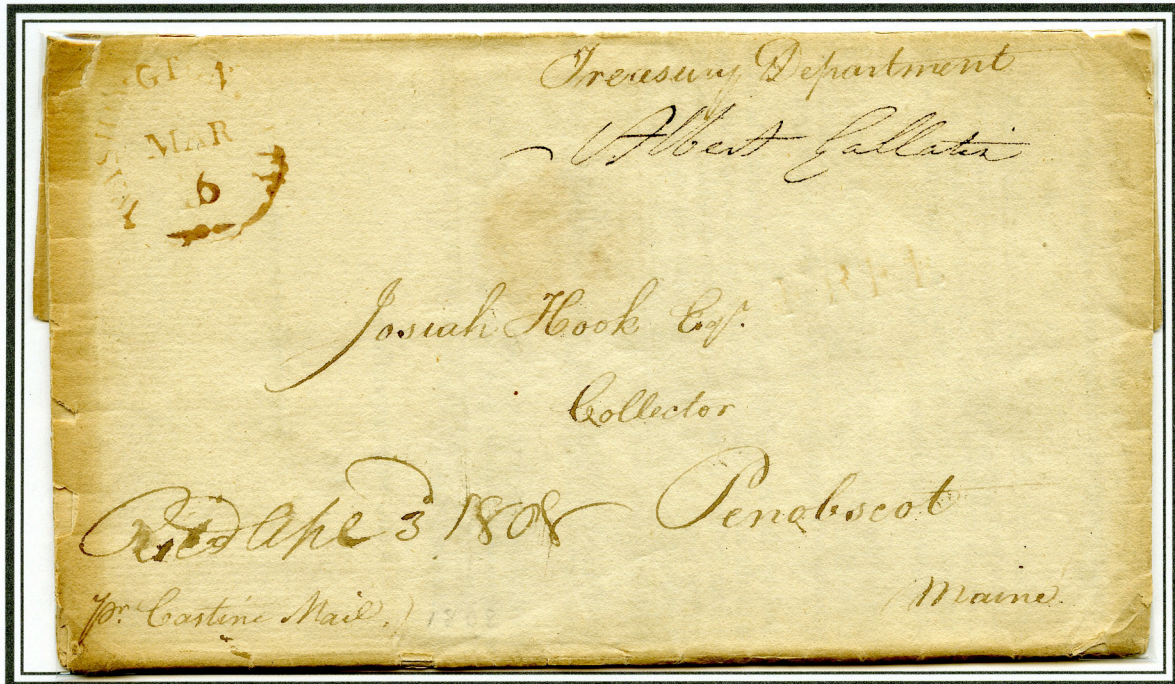


Free Franking Privilege

The circular, to the left, is franked by John Quincy Adams, then Secretary of State, to Justice Story of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Washington, DC to Salem, MA

8 August 1821



Washington, DC to Penobscot, ME

12 March 1808

This circular is franked by Albert Gallatin as Secretary of the Treasury. It discusses important aspects of President Thomas Jefferson's embargo on trade with England which, with others later, eventually precipitated the War of 1812.

Printed Matter

Inbound To The United States - Letter Rate

26 July 1775 - 1848

Printed Matter Coming From Foreign Countries Rated As Letters

Since there were no formal postal treaties with any foreign countries prior to 1847, there were no favorable rates for any printed matter. Therefore, all printed matter entering the United States was rated as letter mail with the addition of the ship captains fee.

Mr. Messrs Brown, Benson & Jves
Providence
BREMEN 1^o Octobre 1795

Sirs,

The honor my traveler Mr. Sc...
with your eminent house, giv's me leave
Place, and inform You by the inclosed Pr
I hope, will not be unwelcome to You.
formations about the Trade between your
Business, which, no doubt, would yield Yo
dutch Netherlands, the Trade of this City
the Navigation to this Place (in Proporti
interior Parts of Germany) is generally le

H 26
BALANCE 7
Messrs Brown, Benson & Jves
Merchants
Providence
Rhode Island District

Bremen Germany to Providence, RI

1 October 1795

Printed circular, without a handwritten letter, in English from Bremen Germany soliciting business and representation. The circular was rated as a letter with 22¢ postage and 4¢ ship fee.

Consulate U.S.A. Halifax
S. A. Barker Esq.
Collector of Customs
Philadelphia.
PHILA 20 DEC
6

Halifax, Nova Scotia to Philadelphia, PA

23 July 1834

The ship captains fee for items addressed to the port of arrival was 6¢.

