

Postal History Place:

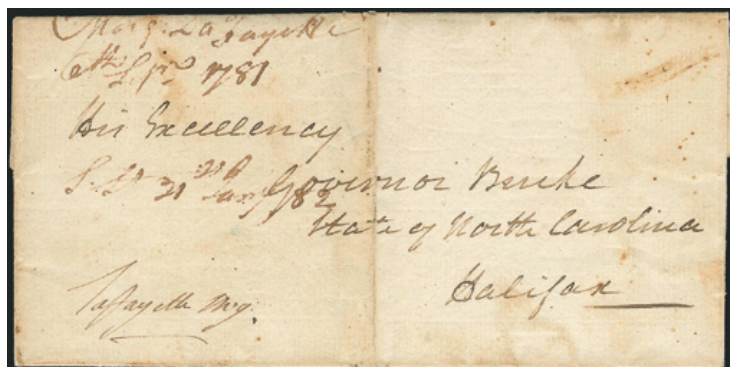
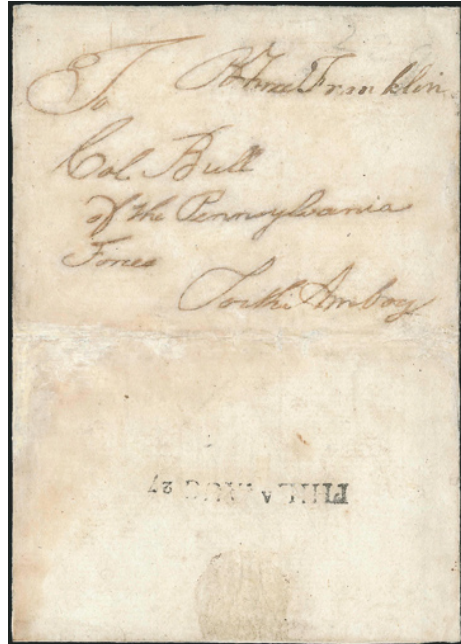
The George J. Kramer Collection of U.S. Domestic Mails, 1776-1869

On December 15, 2014 the Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries sold the George J. Kramer Collection of U.S. Domestic Mails, 1776-1869.

In a collection that mixed United States and postal history, one of the early lots was this Free frank “B Free Franklin” as Continental Postmaster General on folded cover addressed to Col. Bull of the Pennsylvania Forces at Perth Amboy N.J., with a “PHILA AUG 27” (1776) straightline datestamp.

An extremely rare Franklin Free frank as Postmaster General of the Continental Post with the “B. Free Franklin,” syntax, this usage was just one month after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Estimated at \$20,000-30,000, this Free Frank realized \$29,000. (All prices in this report do not include the 15% Buyer’s Premiums that are added on to these hammer prices.

Next we see a free frank “La-fayette M.g.” (Major-General) of the Marquis de Lafayette on a folded cov-

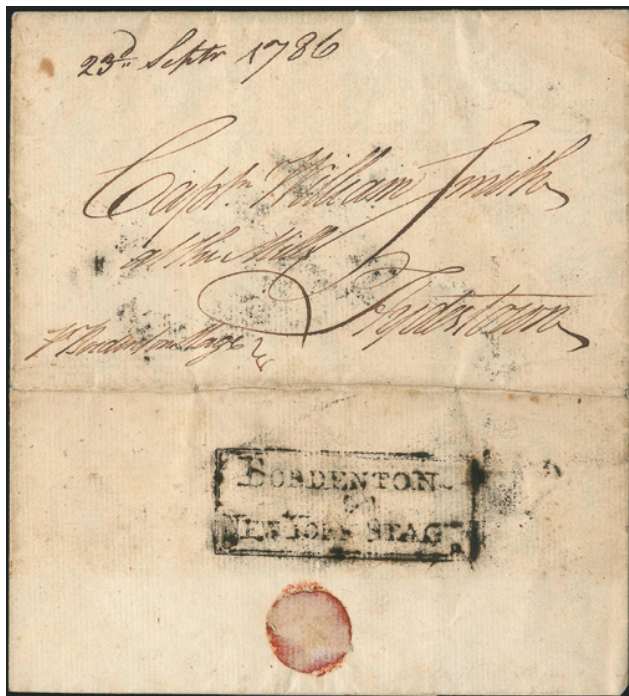


er addressed in another hand to “His Excellency, Governor Burke, State of North Carolina, Halifax”. The cover originated at Yorktown, Va., and shows a receipt docketing “Letter from Marquis LaFayette, 6th Sept. 1781, (?) 31st Jany 1782”.

Per the Siegel lot description, “Thomas Burke was the third governor of North Carolina. In September 1781, he was captured by Tories under the command of Col. David Fanning, and after a failed rescue attempt by patriot militia under the command of John Butler at the Battle of Lindley’s Mill, Burke was imprisoned by the British Army on James Island near Charleston, S.C. Burke was allowed to live freely on the island under parole, but he was subjected to mistreatment and deplorable conditions. On January 16, 1782, Burke escaped and made his way back to North Carolina. This mail from Lafayette was waiting for him upon his return.”

Estimated at \$4,000-5,000, it sold for \$6,250.

What you see next is described as “one of the iconic postal markings of 18th Century America.” It is the “Bordenton & New York Stage” large rectangular framed handstamp, found here on the back of a Sep. 23, 1786 folded letter from John Shields in Philadelphia to Capt. William Smith in Hydestown, Pa., with the sender’s directive “P. Bordenton Stage”.



Quoting from the February 2005 New Jersey Postal

History Society journal, we are told, “This private mail marking is regarded as the first of the independent mail handstamps used by a private carrier. Only six examples of this handstamp have been recorded over its brief period of use from August 23, 1786, through November 21, 1786.” Estimated at \$5,000-7,500, it fetched \$7,500.

Another cover of postal significance is this folded letter datelined “Kinderhook 14th June 1792” to Pliney Moore in Champlain N.Y., with a “Vermont.” small straightline handstamp in Old English font, also with an “Albany Way” manuscript postmark and “15” rate (15¢ for distance



of 150-200 miles, 1¢ way fee collected in cash), the top flap with a notation “Received of W. Rouse the postage on that of this letter, Z. Peaslee”, also with “Messrs. Caldwell & Pearson’s, particular attention to this is requested by this Obt. Sert. AMM” (AAM being the initials of the sender, Alexander M. Mecham).

This is the earliest recorded cover carried through the state of Vermont and the only recorded cover bearing the “Vermont.” Per the lot description, “This fascinating letter was carried privately by Zachary Peaslee, a Burlington merchant who operated a private post. It was carried across Lake Champlain to Caldwell & Pearson, an Albany merchant, where it entered the mails. The recipient, Pliney Moore, had moved from Kinderhook to Champlain in 1788. As no north-south mail service existed on the New York side of Lake Champlain, this primitive routing was used.

Vermont was admitted as the 14th state on March 4,

1791. Although carriage of mail from Albany to Bennington was authorized that same month, the arrangements took time to implement and the route did not become effective until June 1, 1792, concurrent with the new postal act.

Estimated at \$4,000-5,000, it sold for \$4,250.

Although of less value, this folded letter to the Comptroller in Albany bears an Albany Dec. 2? (1815) red circular datestamp and a manuscript "1-1/2" for 1¢ drop rate plus 50% War of 1812 surcharge—a rare drop rate showing the additional surcharge, one of only four such uses. Estimated at \$300-400, it brought \$600.



Next we have the Windsor Locks "Boat-in-Canal" pictorial postmark, which was described by the late postal history expert, Richard B. Graham, "possibly the most distinctive early handstamp of them all."

It is the Windsor Locks Ct. Type I with scrolls under "CT" and "KS", in red with manuscript "Nov. 21" date and "12-1/2" rate on an 1837 folded letter to New York, also with a matching "Paid" in scroll.



Per the auctioneers, "The post office used two different pictorial handstamps showing the steamer in locks. The example offered here is one of the finest known examples of the first type. Estimated at \$2,000-3,000, it soared to a hammer price of \$16,000.

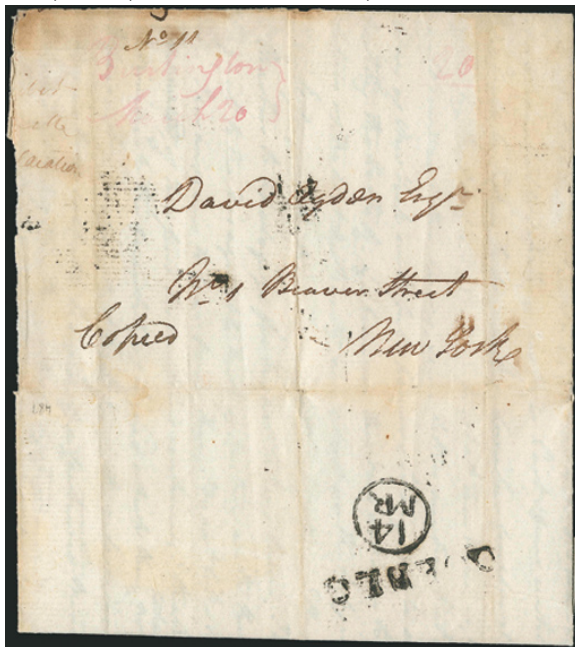
On this folded letter, you can't miss the "Star Spangled Banner" handstamp. It's a rare ship marking. Per the information-filled lot descriptions for which the Siegel



Galleries are known, "The Star Spangled Banner ran between New Orleans and Cincinnati. It sank on June 29, 1847, approximately 15 miles below Baton Rouge, with a loss of life of 125 passengers (source: Lloyd's Steamboat Directory and Disasters, p. 285). Fewer than five examples of this stencil marking are known." The 1847 folded letter from New Orleans to Lancaster O., entered the U.S. mails with a red "Cincinnati O. Feb. 3" circular datestamp and matching "Steam" straightline, manuscript "10" rate.

Estimated at \$3,000-4,000, it sold for \$9,000.

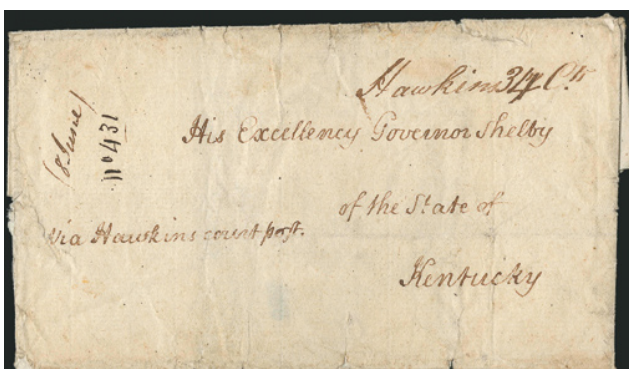
This next folded letter is the earliest recorded 1792 Treaty cover from Canada to the U.S. Per the lot description, "The 1792 treaty between Canada and the U.S. stipulated that Canadian postage had to be prepaid on southbound letters, while the U.S. postage could be paid or unpaid—in this case it was unpaid."



The 1793 folded letter from Quebec, Canada, to New York bears a "QUEBEC" straightline handstamp and "14 MR" Bishop's mark. It was carried via Montreal and then cross-border to Burlington

Vt., where it entered the U.S. mails with a magenta “Burlington March 20” postmark and “20” rate (for 251-350 miles). Estimated at \$2,000-3,000, it realized \$2,700.

Here’s another postal history EKU, in this case the earliest known U.S. Territorial postmark and the only reported cover from the Southwest Territory—which existed from 1790-

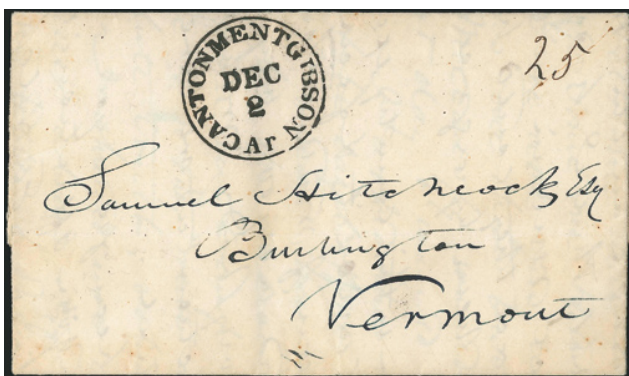


96, before it became the State of Tennessee. The folded cover originated in Knoxville, Southwest Territory. Addressed to Isaac Shelby, the first Kentucky Governor, it was carried by Roulstone’s semi-official post and entered the mails in Hawkins (now Rogersville Tenn.). It shows a “Hawkins 34 Cts.” manuscript postmark and rate for a double letter sent between 201 and 250 miles. , and contained a letter that was datelined Knoxville, June 6, 1793.

Further from the lot description: “Southwest Territory was created by the Southwest Ordinance from lands that had been ceded to the United States by North Carolina. It existed as an incorporated territory only from May 26, 1790, to June 1, 1796, when it was admitted to the Union as the State of Tennessee. Its capital was Knoxville.

Estimated at \$4,000-5,000, it brought \$5,750.

Next up is a Cherokee Nation usage, an 1841 folded letter from Ethan Allen Hitchcock to Burlington Vt., with a bold circular date-stamp and manuscript “25” rate. The con-



tents relate to receiving at council the Seminole Governor “the celebrated Chief Coacoochee (also known as Wild Car) and the no less celebrated interpreter Avrom”, and continues with the statement that General Clinch (who served as a U.S. Army commander during the First and Second Seminole Wars) fired upon the Indians at the conclusion of the council.

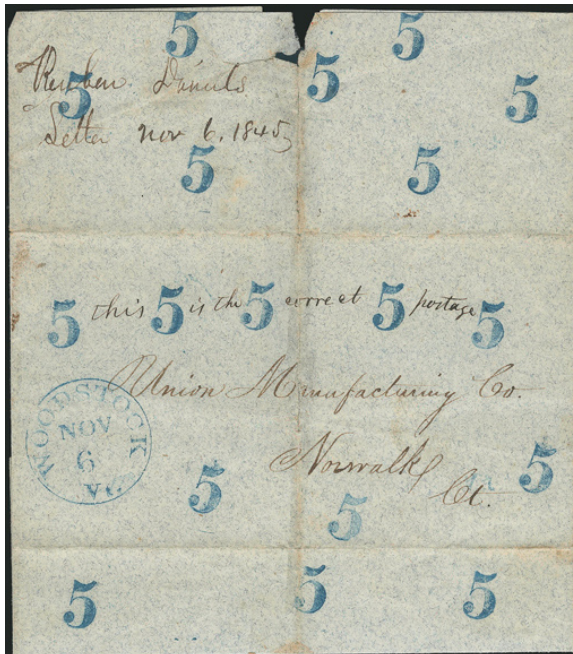
Estimated at \$750-1,000, it went for \$1,100.

This next folded letter is the latest of only three recorded examples of the Cherokee Nation Indian Territory datestamp, showing an Apr. 8, 1844 manuscript within the rimless circular datestamp as well as a manuscript “25” rate.



The post office at Cherokee was active from 1842 to 1844. The letter datelined “Cherokee Baptist Mission, March 30th 1844” from Sarah Hibbard to Rev. E. G. Babcock in Thetford Vt., discusses her experiences as a school teacher and provides a description of the life of the missionaries in Indian Territory. Estimated at \$7,500-10,000, it fetched an \$8,000 hammer price.

This next “oddball” is a folded cover from Woodstock Vt. to Norwalk, Conn., with a Nov. 6 (1845) blue circular datestamp. Those 18 strikes of a “5” handstamp on



front and back are supported by a notation (across the center of the image) “this is the correct postage”. Per the lot description, “apparently the letters from Woodstock were being overcharged elsewhere and this was the postmaster’s way of driving home the point. Estimated at \$400-500, it realized \$850.

Moving into the adhesives sections, we find this blue 1846 folded letter from St. Louis to Philadelphia, part of the Charnley & Whelen correspondence. It bears the



St. Louis, Missouri, 20¢ black on gray lilac paper (Sc. 11X6) Type II and the 10¢ black on greenish (Sc. 11X2), Type I, both stamps with pen line cancels and tied by a red “St. Louis Mo. Apr. 22” circular datestamp, also with a red “PAID” handstamp and a second strike of the St. Louis cds. The rate also is indicated by a manuscript “30”.

A rare combination of these two stamps, it soared past its \$30,000-40,000 estimate, settling at \$110,000.

Even more striking—but not as valuable—was this locally-addressed cover with a blue “Bush, Barnes & Co., Paper Warehouse, Printing Materials, Detroit Mich.” stamp collar

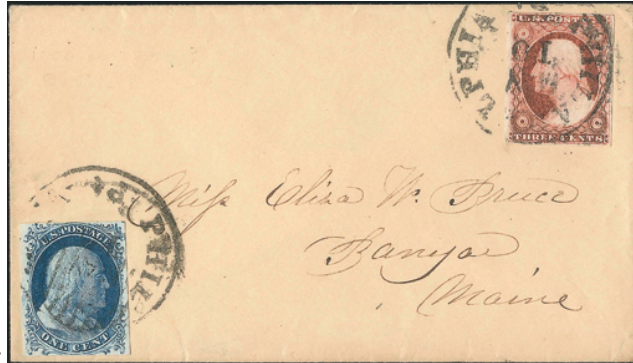


around a 1¢ blue, Type IV (Sc. 9) recut once at both the top and the bottom, also with a double transfer.

The stamp is tied by a light strike of a Detroit circular datestamp, with a second strike of the “Detroit Mich. 5cts. Jan. 11” integral-rate circular datestamp. As the drop rate was 1¢, the “5cts.” in the cds was obliterated by a

square grid cancel. Aptly described by the auctioneers as “one of the most beautiful drop-rate covers we have ever encountered, it was estimated at \$5,000-7,500 and sold for \$11,500.

On this cover, the 3¢ dull red Type I (Sc. 11) paid the postage from Philadelphia to Bangor, Maine, and the real story is the 1¢ blue Type IV because it is a rare example of



a carrier fee paid by a regular stamp—used circa 1855, when the supply of Eagle Carrier stamps began to run out. Both stamps are tied by “Philadelphia Pa. May 10” circular datestamps. Estimated at \$400-500, it went for \$325.

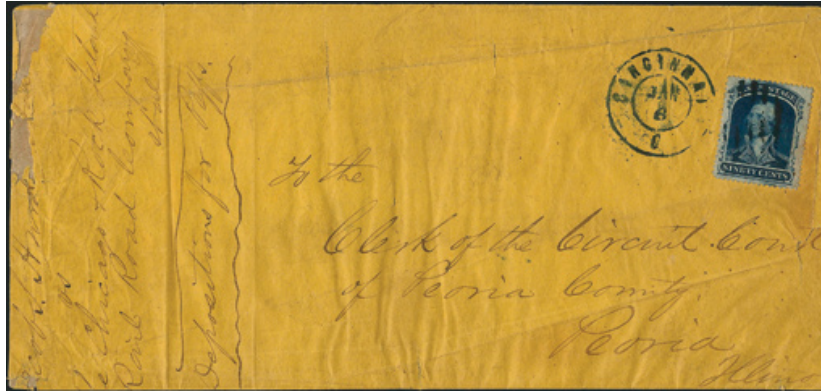
The unusual looking franking on this 1852 blue folded letter consists of a 3¢ brownish carmine Type II (Sc. 11A) and, the key to value, a 12¢ black, diagonal half used as a 6¢ (Sc. 17a). The stamps pay the triple rate and are tied by



two strikes of a “U.S. Express Mail N.Y./N. York/May 15” route agent’s circular datestamp on this cover to Providence R.I.—one of the few known 12-cent bisect usages on intra-east coast mail. Estimated at \$5,000-7,500, it realized \$14,500.

On page 10 we see a buff cover with one of six known usages of the 90¢ Blue (Sc. 39) and the only domestic usage. The cover to the Clerk of the Circuit Court at Peoria Ill., shows the stamp cancelled by a dark blue 5-bar grid, and matching “Cincinnati O. Jan. 8” (1861) double-circle datestamp.

The cover originally contained depositions in a case against



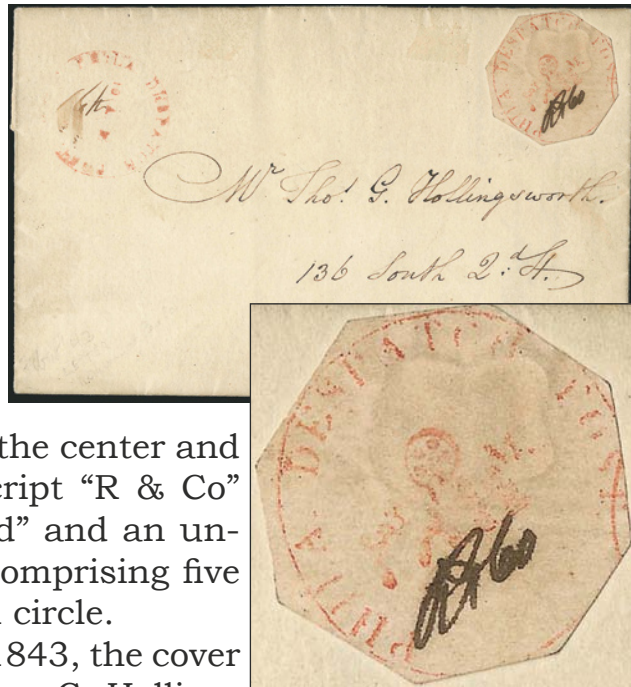
the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad Company, with a weight that required 30-times the 3¢ domestic rate (15 ounces). Estimated at \$40,000-50,000, it realized \$32,500.

Jumping to the back of the book, we come to a folded letter with the Philadelphia Despatch Post, 3¢ red (Sc. 15L1) with octagonal margins cut around the red circle frame, with

a “3 P.M.” time in the center and the usual manuscript “R & Co” initials, a red “Paid” and an unusual red cancel comprising five dots inside a small circle.

Dated Feb. 15, 1843, the cover is addressed to Thos. G. Hollingsworth, 136 South 2nd St., in the hand of and signed by Rembrandt Peale (the American portrait artist who resided in Philadelphia), red “Phila. Despatch Post 10 A.M.” circular datestamp with manuscript “16th” (February date).

In the extensive lot description, the auctioneers commented on the Scott listing and description for the stamp: “This stamp is obviously not on ‘Bluish’ paper, as described in the Scott Catalogue. The paper is noticeably pinker (or



more rose-colored). It is also somewhat thicker and more highly finished on the surface—the smooth surface has an almost glazed quality. While we do not believe subtle paper differences among these rarities qualifies them for separate Scott Catalogue classification, the precise texture and color of the paper are important to note for the record. Robson Lowe [the famed British auctioneer and expert] also noticed the paper color and described it as yellowish in his October 1974 catalogue that featured this item on the front cover.

“Another distinctive feature of this 15L1 cover is the tiny fancy cancellation struck in red, almost centered on the stamp. Consisting of five dots in a small circle, the cancel indentation is strong enough to pass thru the stamp, the glue used to affix the stamp, and the lettersheet.”

Estimated at \$7,500-10,000, the cover fetched \$11,000.

Next is one of my favorite stamps, the Philadelphia Despatch Post (3¢) black on grayish with “R & Co” initials (Sc. 15L3), on this cover tied by a small red outline “3”



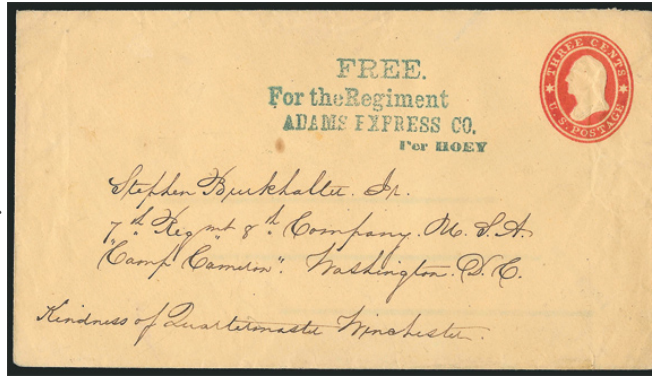
(struck a second time

on the stamp), The folded cover to a local address bears a matching “Phila. Despatch Post” in circle upper left.

For background, the lot description tells us “The Striding Messenger stamp, issued in 1843 by the Philadelphia Despatch Post, is the first pictorial stamp in the world. It depicts a gargantuan letter carrier, the ‘City Despatch Post’ bag slung over his shoulder—stepping over the Merchant’s Exchange Building, which housed Philadelphia’s post office. The image conveys the private posts’ superior speed and reliability.”

Described as “one of the choicest covers extant with the 1843 Striding Messenger—the world’s first pictorial stamp...especially rare tied by the red ‘3’ rate,” it was estimated at \$5,000-7,500 and brought \$17,000.

Next we find a cover that takes us back to the early days of the Civil War. The 3¢ red on buff Star Die entire (Sc. U27) bears a “FREE./For the Regiment/AD-



AMS EXPRESS CO./Per HOEY” four-line handstamp perfectly struck in greenish blue. It is addressed to Stephen Burkhalter Jr., 7th Regiment New York State Militia, 8th Co., Camp Cameron, Washington D.C. “Kindness of Quartermaster Winchester”

Per the lot description, “The Adams Express ‘Free for the Regiment’ markings were used briefly in April-May 1861 on mail carried free of charge between New York and regiments guarding the capital after Lincoln’s call for volunteers to suppress the Southern rebellion. Only seven examples of the ‘For the Regiment’ version are recorded, this being one of the choicest strikes. This example is unusual because it is one of the few showing the use of a 3¢ stamped envelope, a requirement according to the published notices and postal laws, but apparently ignored.”

Estimated at \$2,000-3,000, it soared to \$6,250.

Another mix of history and postal history is this red and blue Eagle and U.S. Flag Patriotic cover to Adamsville N.Y., with a 1¢ blue (Sc. 63) horizontal strip of three, each stamp cancelled by



a “Paid” straightline handstamp. The 1861 issue strip is affixed over an uncanceled strip of three 1¢ blue Type II (Sc. 20) with double vertical perfs on all three stamps.

The cover bears a “Manchester Ct. Oct. 14” (1861) circular datestamp. As explained, “The late 1861 Federal demonetization of all United States stamps issued before the new 1861 series resulted in the rejection of 1857 issue stamps as prepayment—most famously represented by the “Old Stamps Not Recognized” handstamps. Other markings used to reject prepayment were applied in manuscript, or letters were simply marked postage due or held for postage. In the case of the cover offered here, the 1857 Issue stamps were not accepted and the letter was held for postage until the new 1861 Issue strip was applied.

“This is further confirmed by the presence of [Sc. 20] 1¢ Plate 12 stamps underneath the 1861 Issue strip. Stamps from Plate 12 were not issued until January 1861, so this October use must be no earlier than 1861—well after the new stamps were available.”

The 1861 strip was lifted and moved slightly down and hinged to better reveal the 1857 Issue strip. Estimated at \$5,000-7,500, this cover sold for \$12,500.

From the rebel side, we see a cover with the Petersburg Va., 5¢ red Postmasters’ Provisional (Sc. 65X1), used with the CSA General Issue 5¢ green (Sc. 1) tied to-

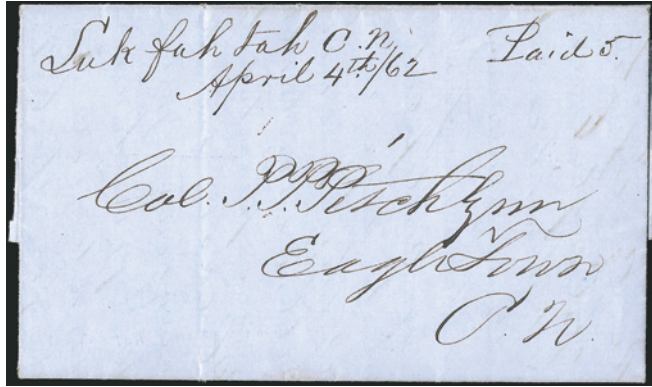


gether by a single bold strike of a blue “Petersburg Va. Feb. 7” (1862) circular datestamp. The buff cover to F. P. Leavenworth, Van Buren, Ark. is one of eight recorded covers showing conjunctive use of a CSA Postmasters’ Provisional and a General Issue.

One interesting aspect of the lot description is this auctioneer’s comment: “In our opinion, these combination frankings are significant and quite undervalued—imagine what price would be paid for a Baltimore provisional handstamped entire with a U.S. 5¢ 1847 stamp, or a St.

Louis “Bear” and 1847 combination. In this instance the auctioneers assigned a presale estimate of \$30,000-40,000 and the top bid was \$28,000—or \$32,200 with the 15% Buyers’ Premium.

Concluding this study of the U.S. Mails through one man’s collection, we come to a blue folded letter with a “Luk fah tah C.N. April 4th/62.” manuscript Choctaw



Nation postmark and “Paid 5” Confederate rate written in a different hand than that in which the address was written.

The cover was sent by an assistant to the colonel at Luk Fah Tah to Colonel Peter P. Pitchlynn at Eagletown, with the letter concerning a request for payment of expenses related to Confederate regiments under Col. Pitchlynn’s and Captain Washington Hudson’s commands.

One of two recorded covers mailed from a post office within the Confederate military department of Indian Territory, it also is the only recorded cover bearing a postmark with the town name, and is described as “one of the most significant postal artifacts surviving from the American Indians’ role in the Civil War.”

Per the informative lot description, “Luk Fah Tah (Luk-fata) lies in what is now eastern Oklahoma (McCurtain County). During the Civil War, it was part of Indian Territory and was located on the Confederate mail route 409, which included Para Clifta and Ultima Thule (in Arkansas), and Eagletown, Wheelock and Doaksville (in Indian Territory).

Colonel Peter P. Pitchlynn was the Principal Chief of the Choctaw Nation and a prominent representative of the Five Civilized Tribes located in Indian Territory. When the Civil War broke out, Col. Pitchlynn was in Washington D.C.

attending a meeting with President Lincoln. Although pro-Union, Col. Pitchlynn honored the wishes of his people to join the Confederate cause. He commanded the Choctaw forces with headquarters at Fort Towson in Doakesville. Col. Pitchlynn and his contemporary, Stand Watie—the only American Indian to attain the rank of General in the Confederate Army—are reported to have been the last Confederates to surrender to Federal forces, on June 19, 1865....

“A thorough search of auctions and other sources located only one other example of mail sent from within Confederate Indian Territory, but it is not postmarked with the town name. Only this Luk Fah Tah cover survives as an example of the Confederate post office’s presence in the slave-owning Indian Nations. As such, it is a truly remarkable artifact of postal history.”

Estimated at \$5,000-7,500, this cover sold for \$17,000.