

PRIOR to July 1, 1863 there was no free "Carrier Service" in the United States, but a number of the larger cities had a carrier system which was operated on a fee basis which service was at the expense of the public.

In other words, in those cities where a fee carrier system was in operation, if a person wanted to mail a letter and did not desire to go to the trouble of conveying it to the Post Office, the letter could be deposited at a given place where a mail carrier would pick it up and convey it to the main post office. The fee for the "pick-up" was one cent which sum was for the "pick-up" service. (July 1, 1860 to June 30, 1863.)

And likewise if a person wished their mail delivered at their place of business, or at their home, there was likewise a fee of one cent, during the same three-year period.

John Smith who resided in New York could drop a letter in a nearby mail-box, or branch post office, and by paying one cent in addition to the regular 3c postage could thus prepay the "carrier collection fee" and the regular 3c rate, say to Washington. If, in addition, he wished to prepay the "carrier delivery fee" at Washington, all he had to do was to add an extra one cent stamp, making the total rate five cents. See Figure #1 for a typical example.

Covers for transmission thru the mail, showing the prepayment of the collection fee, that is, 3c plus 1c, are much more common than the same class of mail with the delivery fee prepaid.

By "transmission thru the mail" is meant for first-class mail, not for delivery at the office of mailing (local delivery-Drop) but for transmission thru the mail from one post office to another.

The reason why prepaid "delivery" fee covers are much scarcer than prepaid "collection" fee letters is because on mail placed in boxes, prepayment of the carrier collection fee was required, whereas the prepayment of the de-

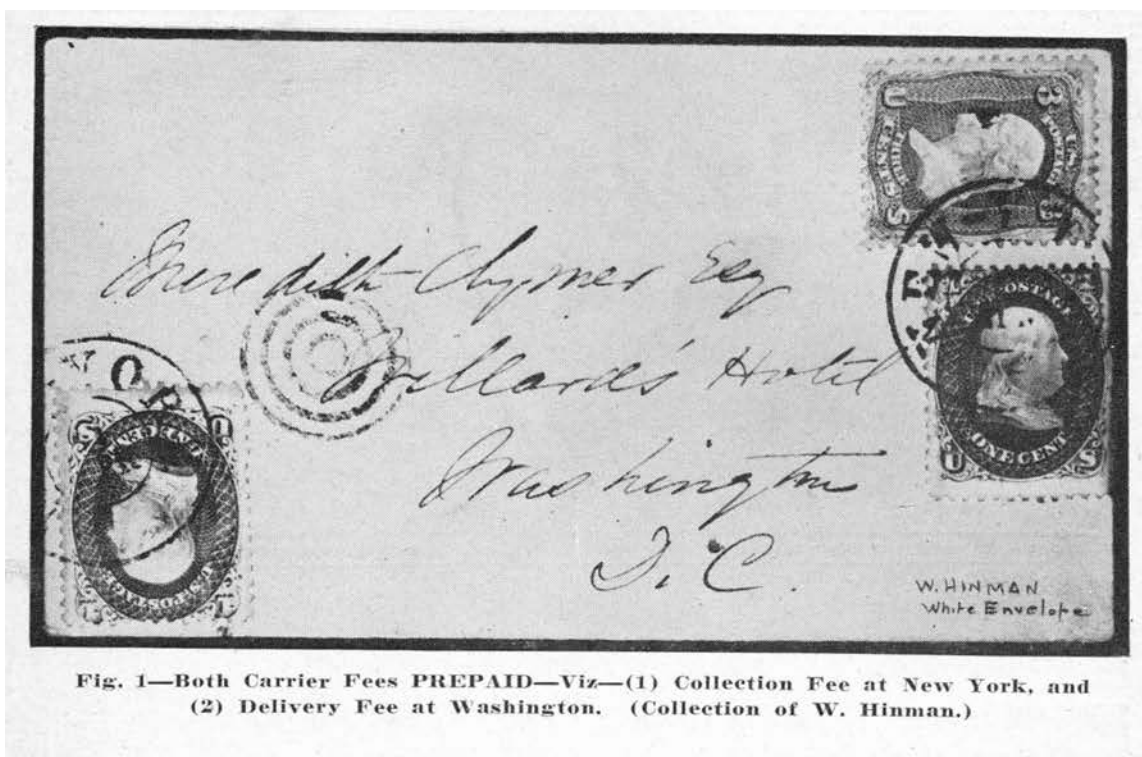


Fig. 1—Both Carrier Fees PREPAID—Viz—(1) Collection Fee at New York, and (2) Delivery Fee at Washington. (Collection of W. Hinman.)

livery fee was optional. For example, according to official instructions, if a person dropped a letter in a box with only a 3c stamp, and tried to avoid the payment of the extra 1c collection fee, the letter was held up, and if there was no return address, then the addressee was notified that the letter would be delivered, provided the deficient 1c fee was forwarded. Thus there was not only a delay in the transmission of the letter but the person addressed was put to the expense of paying the one cent collection fee which should have been paid by the writer, and also the expense of forwarding the one cent stamp or coin to the post office of origin.

Referring to letters which had been dropped in boxes without the prepayment of the collection fee, the Postmaster General stated in his annual report of 1860, (quote): "The letters are now retained for the payment of the carrier's fee, and the parties addressed are notified in order that, if they choose to do so, they may make the payment, which should have been made by the writers." (end).

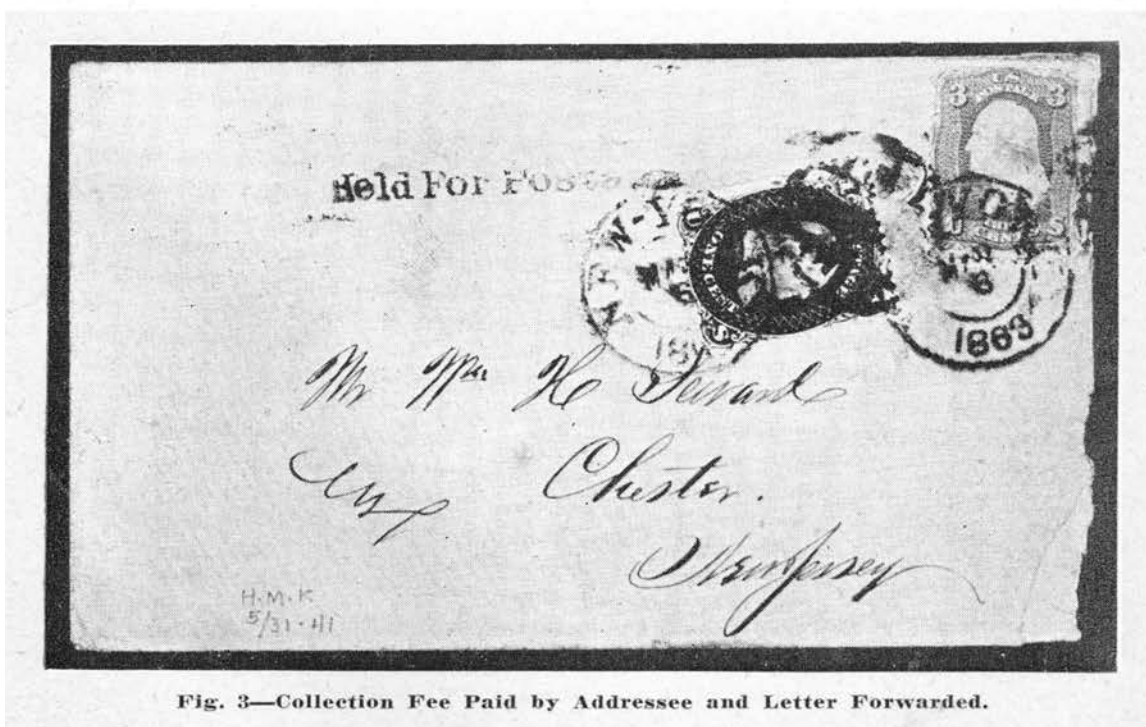
One of the most interesting covers of this class that it has been my pleasure to examine was one loaned to me by H. M. Konwiser in 1941, and illustrated by Figure #2. This cover shows a letter which was dropped in a box at New York in March 1863 without prepayment of the 1c collection fee. The letter was "*Held for Postage*," marked "*DUE 1*" and the addressee notified of the non-payment. Figure #3 shows this same cover after the receipt of the one cent stamp and the manner in which the letter was forwarded.

Figure No. 4, illustrates a cover in the collection of E. R. Moody of Portland, Maine, which is in this same class but received at the Philadelphia P. O. with the non-payment of the collection fee. It was marked "*Held for Postage*," and "*REC'D—JAN 28*," the year being 1861. Evidently the addressee in



Maine was notified of the non-payment, he forwarded a one cent stamp (1c 1857—Type V), and the letter was sent on its way on Feb. 7, 1861, as per the Philadelphia postmark.

It must have been quite a bit of trouble and required extra clerical work to notify addressees to forward a one cent postage stamp on non-paid box letters, and in order to avoid this extra work, non-paid carrier collection fee letters were frequently sent with the 1c fee “DUE” on delivery.



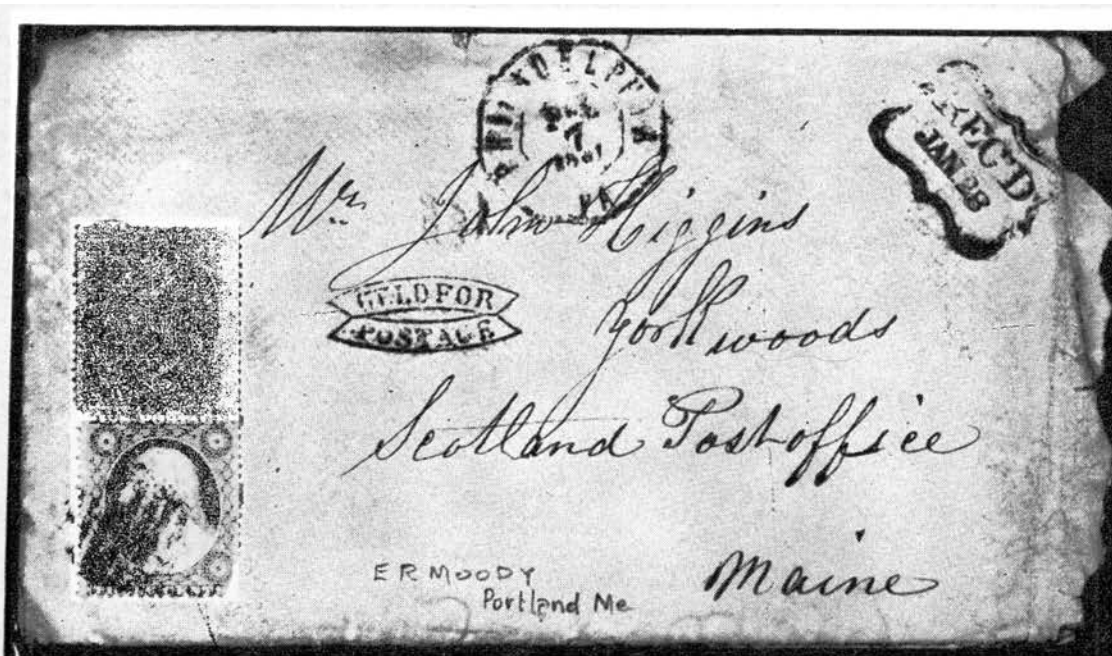


Fig. 4—One Cent Collection Fee omitted by writer. Letter dropped in a collection box, "Held For Postage By The Philadelphia Office. Addressee Notified, And on Receipt Of The One Cent Stamp The Letter Was Forwarded." (Courtesy of E. R. Moody).

Figure #5 illustrates a cover in the M. C. Blake collection which is in the "DUE" class. Here we have a letter with a 3c 1857, (Type II) which was dropped in a mail-box in Boston in August 1860, with a non-payment of the carrier's collection fee of one cent. It is addressed to "Cavendish, Vermont." Instead of holding up this letter and notifying the addressee to forward a one cent stamp, the Boston post office, forwarded the letter with "DUE 1 CENT," though I have an idea that this practice was contrary to the instructions issued by the Department at Washington regarding such non-paid fee letters.

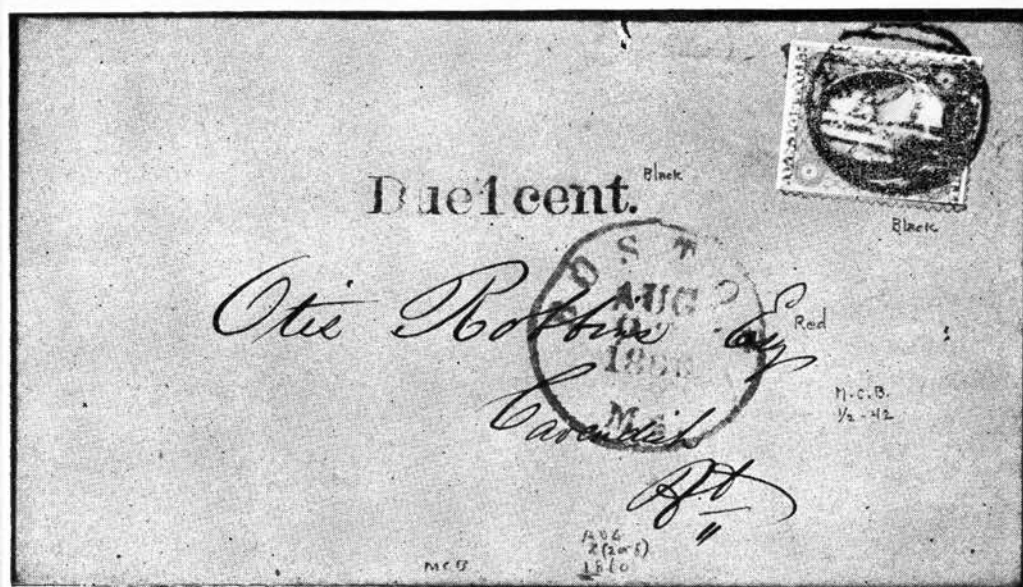


Fig. 5—Non-payment of Collection Fee at Boston. Letter forwarded with the One Cent fee due on delivery. (M. C. Blake).

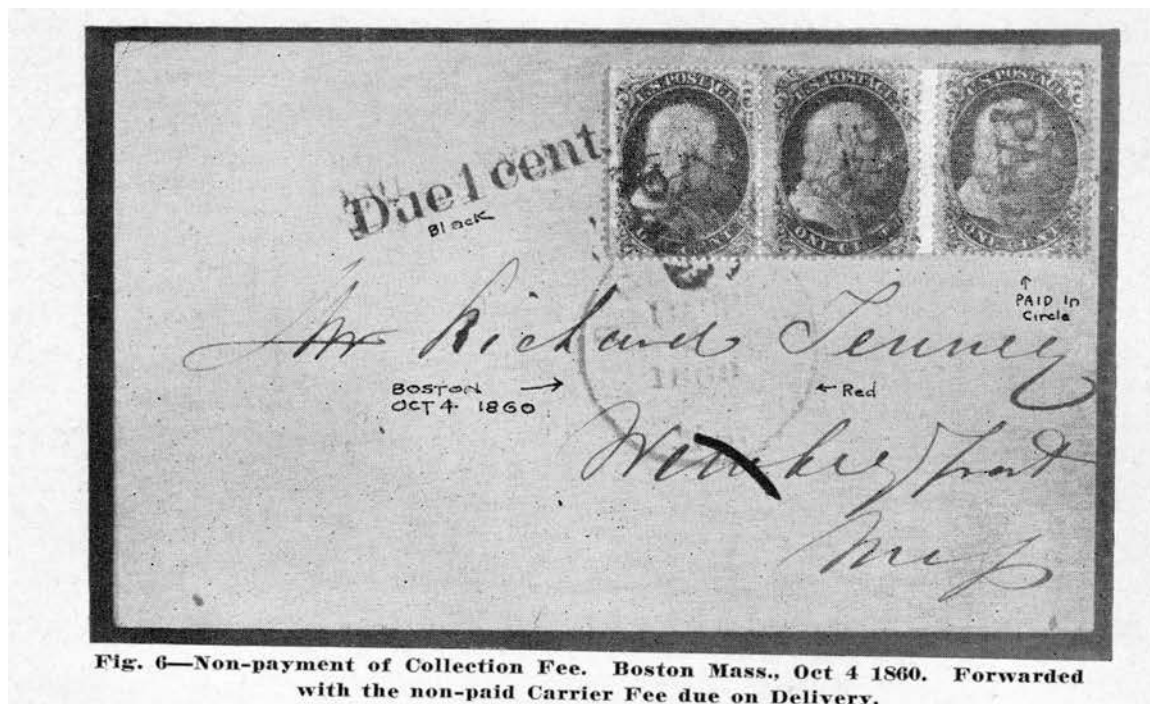


Fig. 6—Non-payment of Collection Fee. Boston Mass., Oct 4 1860. Forwarded with the non-paid Carrier Fee due on Delivery.

I have been asked the following question, "If the Office at Cavendish, Vt., collected that one cent how did the Boston carrier obtain it?" Well, I believe that the answer is quite simple. Both the Boston and Cavendish offices were and are simply branch offices of the main Post Office Department at Washington, hence Boston, paid the carrier one cent and in their quarterly report to Washington, debited Washington with the one cent paid, and the Cavendish office credited to Washington the one cent collected from the addressee. Thus a debit at headquarters was offset by a credit and all accounts were square.

And likewise the question has been raised, that if a person at a small post office prepaid a New York delivery fee with a one cent postage stamp, how did the carrier in New York obtain that penny? The answer is again quite simple, viz., simply a matter of bookkeeping.

Figure No. 6, illustrates another very interesting cover mailed from Boston to Newburyport, Mass., with three One Cent 1857 stamps which was dropped in a mail-box without the prepayment of the collection fee and was forwarded with the fee "due" on delivery. The Boston postmark is *Oct. 4, 1860*.

Figure No. 7, illustrates a cover in the Ward Hinman collection, with a New York date of *Jan. 7, 1861*, showing that the New York office, at different periods followed two procedures, viz: (1) as per this cover and (2) as per cover, Figure No. 2, the fee, "*Held for Postage.*"

Figure No. 8, illustrates another interesting cover in Mr. Hinman's collection, which was doubtless dropped in a mail-box at Philadelphia with the collection fee unpaid, and in this case, we find that the letter was forwarded with the unpaid one cent fee "due" on delivery.

Regarding the non-payment of the carrier's collection fee, Postmaster General J. Holt commented as follows in his annual report dated December 1, 1860, quote:

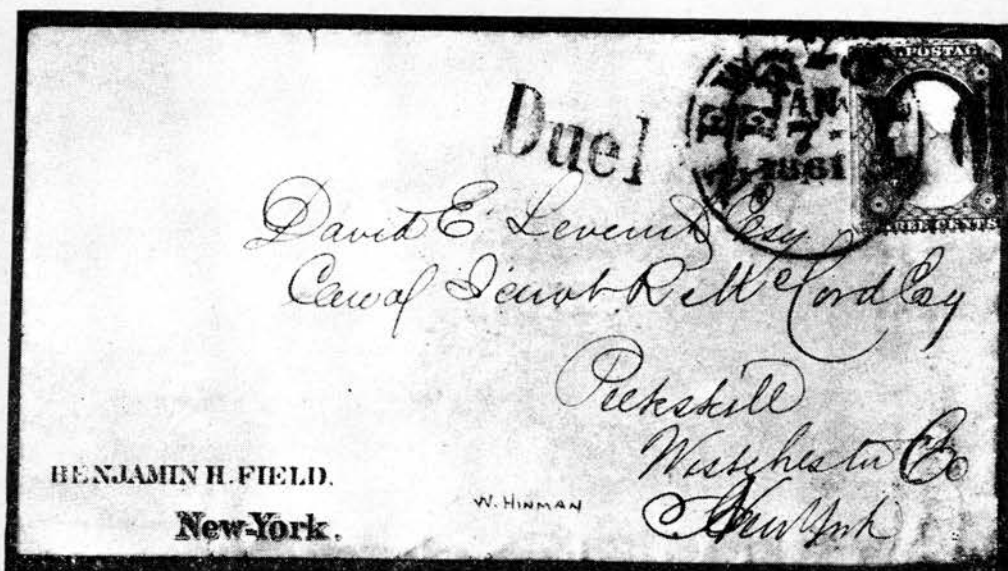


Fig. 7—Non-payment of the Collection Fee. New York, Jan 7 1861. Forwarded with the non-paid Carrier Fee due on delivery. (W. Hinman).

“After the act of March 3, 1855, making prepayment compulsory, had gone into operation, it was found that large numbers of unpaid letters continued to be posted. Supposing that this was the result of a lack of knowledge, on the part of the public, of the requirements of the new law, the department directed that in all such cases the parties addressed should be advised by the postmasters that such letters had been deposited for transmission, and would be forwarded on receipt of the postage. This practice has been continued for more than five years, but the evil which it was established to correct, still con-

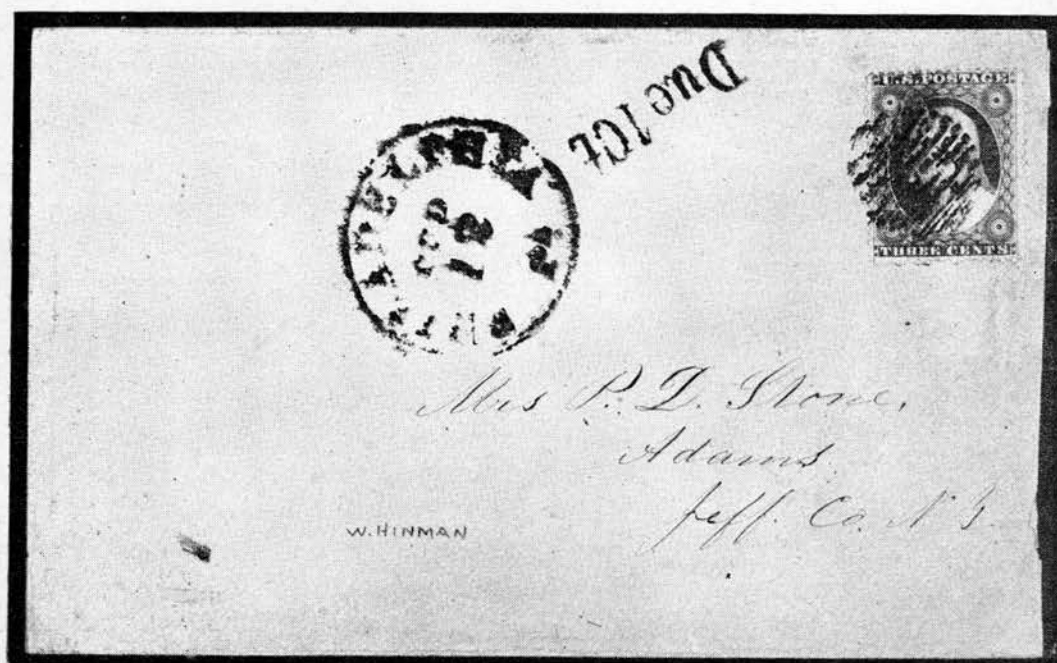


Fig. 8—Non-payment of the Collection Fee. Philadelphia, Sept 12 (1861?), forwarded with the non-paid Carrier Fee due on delivery. (W. Hinman).

tinues. The fact that the postal laws exact the prepayment of all domestic letters is certainly as notorious as any governmental regulation can possibly be made, and yet these letters not only continue to be lodged unpaid in the different post offices, but at several points they have of late been on the increase. In New York their average number is fifty-nine daily, and it is presumed that in like proportion they are received at the other post offices throughout the country. Regarding this as evidencing a determination on the part of a portion of the correspondents using the mails, to evade the postal laws, the practice of notifying the parties—which has been one involving much labor and expense—has within a few weeks been abandoned, and this class of letters are now sent at once to the dead-letter office. This appropriate disposition of them will, it is believed, be promptly followed by a general compliance with the law.

The same indisposition to obey the postal laws has been manifested by the non-payment of the carrier's fee on letters *collected from the boxes for the mails* in those cities in which this feature of the penny post has been introduced. The act of July 3, 1836, is imperative in *requiring the prepayment of this fee*, and concurring, as I do, fully in its policy, I have not felt justified in suspending or in any degree modifying its operation. As, however, the date of its enforcement is so recent, it has been deemed advisable to pursue for a limited period the course already mentioned as having been adopted in reference to another class of letters, after the passage of the act of March 3, 1855. *The letters are now retained for the payment of the carrier's fee, and the parties addressed are notified in order that, if they choose to do so, they may make the payment, which should have been made by the writers.* Through the press, and by placards on the letter boxes, every possible publicity has been given to this law, and yet from inadvertence, or fraud, or other cause, *numerous letters continue to be deposited in the boxes on which the carrier's fee is not paid.* The courtesy of the department in giving the notice alluded to—which has imposed upon it a heavy burden—instead of being appreciated, has been the means of provoking much bitter and senseless animadversion on the part of those who find themselves overtaken by the unpleasant consequences of their own neglect or fraud, or of that of their correspondents. To all this, it is sufficient to reply, that the postal authorities are but performing a plain and simple duty in enforcing this law, and if embarrassments ensue it is but proper that they should fall upon those by whose willful or heedless conduct they have been superinduced.” (end of quote).

It must be quite obvious that the Washington Department greatly desired that the public obey the law regarding the prepayment of ordinary postage and that it was also a source of much annoyance that the carrier collection fee was frequently left unpaid in the large cities with fee carrier service.

The law required that the carrier collection fee be prepaid and the Post Office Department did everything possible to impress on the public that the fee had to be prepaid, as quote: “Through the press and by placards on letter boxes” etc.

The claim has been frequently made in the philatelic press that while the Department required prepayment on collection letters, that the officials at Washington *denied the public the privilege of prepaying the carrier delivery fee*, and hence all existing three cent plus one cent covers represent only prepaid collection letters. I deny that this claim is true.

I have been challenged to produce proof that it was perfectly permissible for the writer of a letter to prepay both the collection and delivery carrier fees. Here is documentary proof.

Late in 1860 the Department at Washington issued a stamped envelope with a 1c and a 3c stamp which is known to collectors as the "Compound" envelope of 1860. See Figure No. 9. Postmaster General Holt made the following statement about this 3c plus 1c stamped envelope in his annual report of 1860, quote:

"It is contemplated to introduce immediately two new denominations of envelopes; one embossed with a one-cent stamp, the other with both the one and the three-cent stamps.

The one-cent envelope is designed mainly for circulars, of which many millions are annually distributed through the mails. The same envelope, however, will also be largely used for city correspondence.

The envelope with the one-cent and three-cent stamps will be required in cities where there are lamp-post letter-boxes or other depositories for letters, to be conveyed by carriers to the post office, the one-cent paying the carrier's fee, and the other stamp paying the postage on letters to be sent out of the city by mail. *This envelope will also be used by those who, when addressing their city correspondents, desire to relieve them from the payment of the carrier's fee for delivering their letters at their domicil.*" (end of quote).

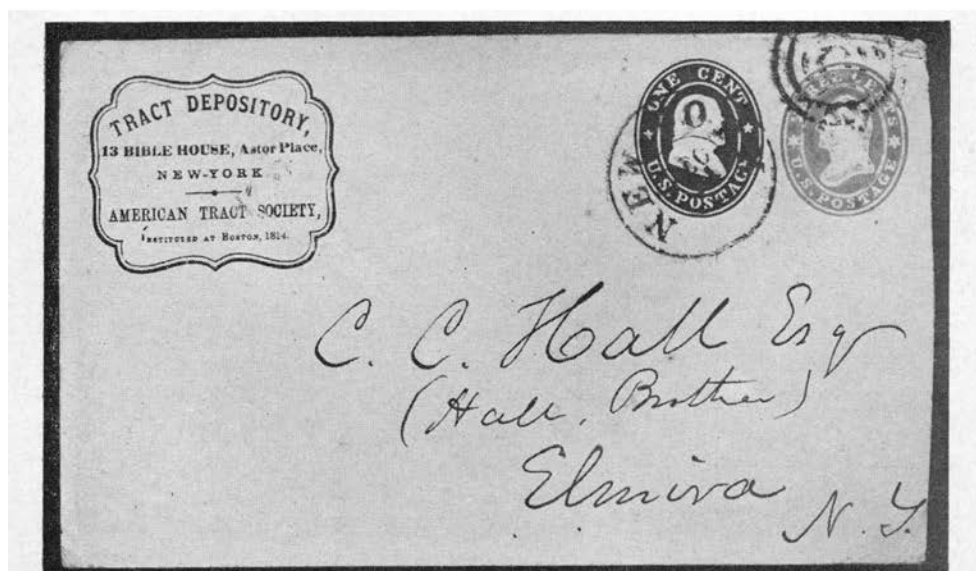


Fig. 9—The 3c plus 1c Envelope of 1860, which the Postmaster General stated could be used to prepay a Carrier Delivery Fee.

The last paragraph is not ambiguous in the slightest degree, and Mr. Holt meant exactly what he stated, which was to the effect that a person living in a small town, that had no carrier service, could use one of the 3c plus 1c "Compound" envelopes to prepay the delivery fee in one of the cities which had the fee carrier service.