

The Stamp Specialist:

From The Stamp Specialist India Shade Book, Pt. 2, Vol. 17

1860-63 Three Cents Plus One Cent Plus One Cent

by Stanley B. Ashbrook

For the sake of continuity, we start with the last few paragraphs from part 1. JFD.

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).

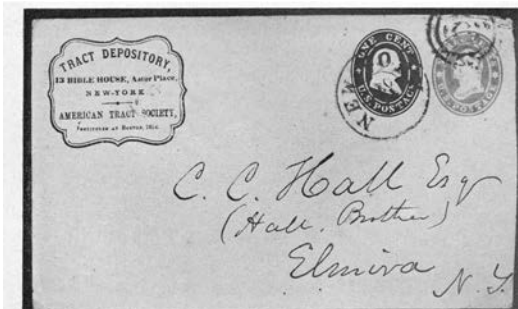


Fig. 9—The 3c plus 1c Envelope of 1860, which the Postmaster General stated could be used to prepay a Carrier Delivery Fee.

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.

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.

A hundred years ago, it was not generally the custom to prepay the postage on personal letters or on circular mail. Doubtless a personal letter was considered more or less as a favor and the person addressed was as a rule pleased to get mail and pleased to pay the postage on same.

Large numbers of printed circulars were sent thru the mail with postage unpaid, and same due on delivery. Imagine such a practice in the present day. But prior to the 1850's such methods were the general custom, and also it was not the general custom in the early 1860's to prepay the *carrier delivery fee*, but to let the addressee pay the one cent. After all, it was a service of benefit to the receiver of a letter rather than a service of benefit to the writer, so why shouldn't the addressee pay the once cent?

Thus the prepayment of the delivery fee was *optional*. In other words, if a person wanted mail delivered at his "domicil," by carrier he was expected to pay for such special service, and hence Washington did not impose prepayment on the addressor.

As stated above, the payment of the delivery fee was optional, but being optional, does not mean that the postal officials frowned on the delivery prepayment or issued any rules, regulations, orders, etc. etc. etc., which prohibited the public from prepaying a *carrier delivery fee* in cities which enjoyed the fee carrier service, and where the privilege of prepaying such carrier fees with the then current one cent stamps or stamped envelopes was permitted by the Post Office Department at Washington.

I suppose that the exceptions to the general custom of a writer not prepaying a delivery fee, were letters which the writer desired would reach the addressee with as little delay or expense as possible, and on which the delivery fee was prepaid by the writer.

Again may I refer to the Hinman cover, as illustrated in Figure No. 1. Here we have an envelope mailed from New York in April 1862, addressed to a "Mr. Meredith Clymer, care Willard's Hotel, Washington, D. C." It has a 3c 1861 and two copies of the 1c 1861. In my opinion, one of the one cent stamps paid the collection fee at New York and the other one cent stamp prepaid the delivery fee in Washington. It will be noted that the letter is not addressed simply to "Washington, D. C." but it has a delivery address, viz—"Willard's Hotel."

In this case I doubt if the writer especially desired to relieve Mr. Meredith Clymer from the payment of the carrier's fee for delivering the letter at his temporary domicil, but rather to have the letter reach him with as little delay as possible.

I am also illustrating by Figure No. 10 a 3c plus 1c cover from the collection of E. Tudor Gross. The 1861 stamps are tied by the postmark, "*MORRIS & ESSEX R. R.*" It will be noted that a New York street address was given which is quite characteristic of *Prepaid carrier delivery fee letters*.

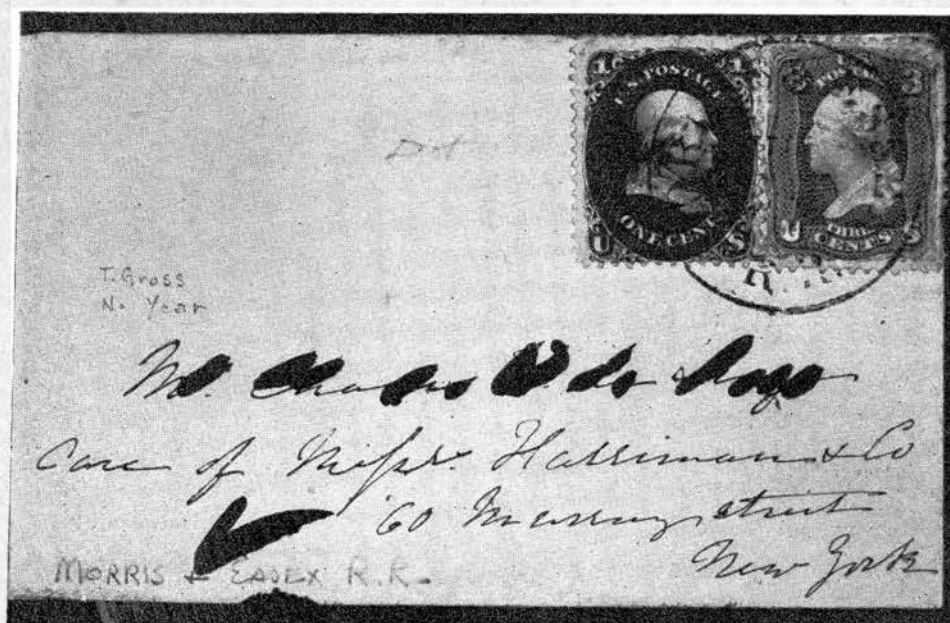


Fig. 10—The 1861 stamps tied by MORRIS & ESSEX R. R. believed to be a pre-payment of the Delivery Fee at New York City.

Surely this is not a *prepaid* “Way” fee letter, nor a prepaid box collection fee, but rather a *prepayment of the carrier delivery fee in New York City*. It seems probable that the use was in July 1862.

The Postmaster General’s Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1862, disclosed that eleven cities had a fee carrier system, as follows:

- (1) New York
- (2) Philadelphia
- (3) Boston
- (4) Baltimore
- (5) Washington
- St. Louis
- Kingston, Pa. (misprint for Kensington, Pa.)
- Harrisburg, Pa.
- Lowell, Mass.
- Manchester, N. H.
- Providence, R. I.

Covers of the 1861-1862 period from the first five cities listed above are known showing the carrier fee paid by a one cent stamp of 1861, but I have never seen a 3c plus 1c cover from any of the other offices.

The above 1862 report shows that the total number of letters, newspapers and circulars handled by carriers at the New York Post Office for the year ended June 30, 1862, was 10,152,054 and that the sum of \$99,137.90 was received and paid out to the carriers for this service. Philadelphia was second with a total of 2,850,955 pieces and Boston was third with 1,825,468. The St. Louis office reported a total of 154,388 pieces of which 146,787 were letters. The sum of \$1,050.87 was received and paid to carriers for handling the 154,388

pieces. I have yet to hear of a 3c plus 1c cover used from the St. Louis Post Office and the question arises as to how the carrier fees were paid by the public? Did St. Louis have letter-boxes at that time for the collection of mail? If so, how did the public prepay the 1c collection fee?

The 1862 and 1863 reports did not list Chicago but a 3c plus 1c "Compound" stamped envelope is known used from Chicago, and, further it has the embossed corner card of a Chicago manufacturer. The use was Nov. 29, 1862 and it is addressed to Lowell, Mass., which office, in the 1863 P. M. G. report, is listed as having handled 159,039 letters. Did the 1c on this "Compound" prepay a "collection fee" in Chicago or a "delivery fee" in Lowell? It would indeed be interesting to have the answer.

The Congress by act of *April 16, 1862*, (12 Stat. 380) authorized the Postmaster General to establish branch post offices in cities of his selection and to charge one cent in addition to the regular postage for letters deposited or delivered from such offices. Presumably this law went into effect on July 1, 1862 and was in force for one year or until July 1, 1863.

The act read as follows, quote:

"The Postmaster General is authorized and directed, when in his judgment the public interest or convenience may require it, to establish one or more branch post offices, to facilitate the operation of the post office in any city or place which, in the opinion of the Postmaster General, may require such additional accommodations for the convenience of the inhabitants; and it shall be the duty of the Postmaster General to prescribe the rules and regulations for the branch post office which may be established by virtue of this act; and the Postmaster General is hereby authorized to charge one cent, in addition to the regular postage, for every letter deposited in any branch post office to be forwarded by mail from the principal office, and which shall be prepaid by stamp, and one cent for every letter delivered at such branch office, to be paid on delivery: Provided, That no letter shall be sent from the principal office to such branch office for delivery contrary to the request of the party to whom the same may be addressed: And provided, The expense of such branch service shall not exceed the receipts on account thereof." (end of quote).

It is entirely possible that the "Compound" envelope described above, and used in the fall of 1862, may have been a letter deposited in a branch post office in Chicago.

Dr. Clarence W. Hennan of Chicago, is the authority for the statement that the first branch post office in Chicago was "opened at the northwest corner of Randolph and Halstead Streets in 1862 with A. C. Stewart in charge."

Dr. Hennan owns a cover with a 3c and 1c 1861 postmarked Chicago Jun 26 1863, and addressed to St. Joseph, Mich. See Figure 11. This cover may have been a branch P. O. cover and it may have been a prepaid "Way" cover, which was brought into the Chicago Post Office. There is just as much chance that it was one as the other as "Prepaid Way" covers were very seldom marked "WAY."



Fig. 11—3c plus 1c, Chicago JUN 26 1863. Prepaid Collection Fee, or "Prepaid Way" letter? It may have been either one. (Collection of Dr. C. W. Hennan).

Section 45 of the Act of March 3, 1863 stipulated: "And be it further enacted, that all acts and parts of acts inconsistent with the provisions of this act are hereby repealed." (end). When the laws of the United States were revised in 1873-74, the provisions of the Act of April 16, 1862 as quoted above, were not incorporated in the revised statutes.

In his 1862 report dated December 1, 1862, the Postmaster General stated that the number of letters held for non-payment of the carrier's fee totaled 6,778, nearly all of which were received at the post offices of New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore.

In the 1862 report, the Postmaster General also stated: "I also recommend the abolition of the one cent carrier's fee for the *delivery and collection* of letters in cities, and in lieu of that annoying and delatory tariff on *delivered and collected* letters, that the charge upon local (or drop) letters be made uniform at the prepaid rate, etc. etc." (end).

Congress followed the recommendation of the Postmaster General to abolish the one cent carrier's fee and passed the act of March 3, 1863, effective July 1, 1863, which provided among other legislation that letter carriers be employed at such post offices as selected by the Postmaster General and that they be paid an annual salary "not exceeding" \$800.00.

Section 23 stipulated in part: "but no *extra postage* or carriers' fee shall hereafter be charged or collected upon letters delivered by carriers, nor upon letters collected by them for mailing or delivery."

Figure 12 illustrates a very unusual cover in the collection of Harold Stark of Detroit. The use of this letter was from New York on September 21st, presumably 1861. It was a double rate letter (2 x 3c) addressed to Boston, with the postage prepaid by two 3c 1857, Type II stamps. The carrier collection fee was paid by a 1c 1861 stamp, thus on this cover we have 1857 and 1861 stamps, the former still being legal for postage at the New York Post Office on

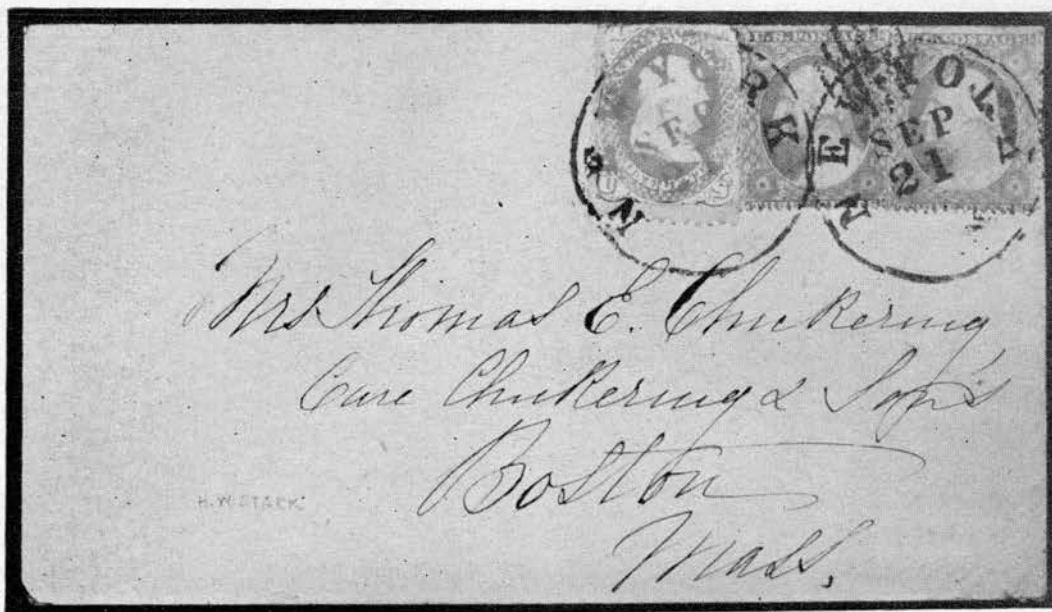


Fig. 12—A Double Rate plus 1c Carrier Cover, with use of 1857 and 1861 stamps, the former being still legal at New York on Sept. 21 1861. (H. W. Stark).

Sep. 21, 1861. A double rate letter of 6c plus 1c carrier, is a most unusual item, but here is a combination which is doubtless unique. I have never seen a duplicate.

Figure 13 illustrates a cover which was mailed in May 1859, at which time no collection fee was charged at New York, in spite of the fact that the acts of 1836 and 1851 stipulated that fees be charged for letters collected by carriers.

The black carrier marking indicates that this letter was doubtless dropped in a letter-box without payment of any postage. It was "*Held for Postage*," the addressee notified, and upon receipt from him of the 3c 1857 stamp, the



Fig. 13—A Letter "For The Mails" dropped in a letter box without prepayment of any postage. It was held until the Addressee forwarded a 3c stamp. At this time, there was no "Pick Up Fee" at New York.



Fig. 14—Mailed in a box at New York on Feb. 21 1862 with postage and collection fee prepaid by INVALID stamps. Later forwarded to destination with payment of only the 3c postage.

letter was forwarded to its Hudson N. Y. address. The small “pick-up” carrier marking is dated “May 6,” and on the back of the envelope is a New York postmark of “May 7, 1859.” The 3c stamp is tied by “New York—May 12 1859.”

Figure 14 illustrates a most interesting cover which indicates that it was placed in a New York mail-box on Feb. 21, 1862 with copies of the then invalid 3c and 1c 1857 stamps. Both of these are canceled “21 Feb.” This letter was evidently held up and the addressee was notified that the letter was being held for 4c in postage. The marking on the back “Held for Postage” is dated “Feb. 22.”

It seems quite possible that the addressee not being familiar with New York carrier service could not figure out why he should pay 4c to get this letter as the rate of postage was surely only 3c, so he sent only a 3c stamp. Rather than argue any further it appears that the New York Office attached the 3c 1861 on the letter and it was forwarded on Feb. 28th, without the payment of the carrier collection fee.

If this theory is correct, one wonders why the letter was not forwarded with a “Due 1” for the carrier collection fee, the same as the New York cover illustrated by Figure #7. The answer to that query might be that by this time in 1862, the Postmaster General had prohibited the collection of the carrier fee by forwarding such mail as “Due 1.”

Figure 15 illustrates quite an unusual cover that was recently offered at auction by the firm of John A. Fox of New York. This item was in the finest possible condition and it brought the really remarkable price of \$137.50 which surely is a record high for a cover such as this. I might be mistaken but I think that the competition for this cover demonstrated to some extent, that collectors are becoming more and more interested each year in the stories that

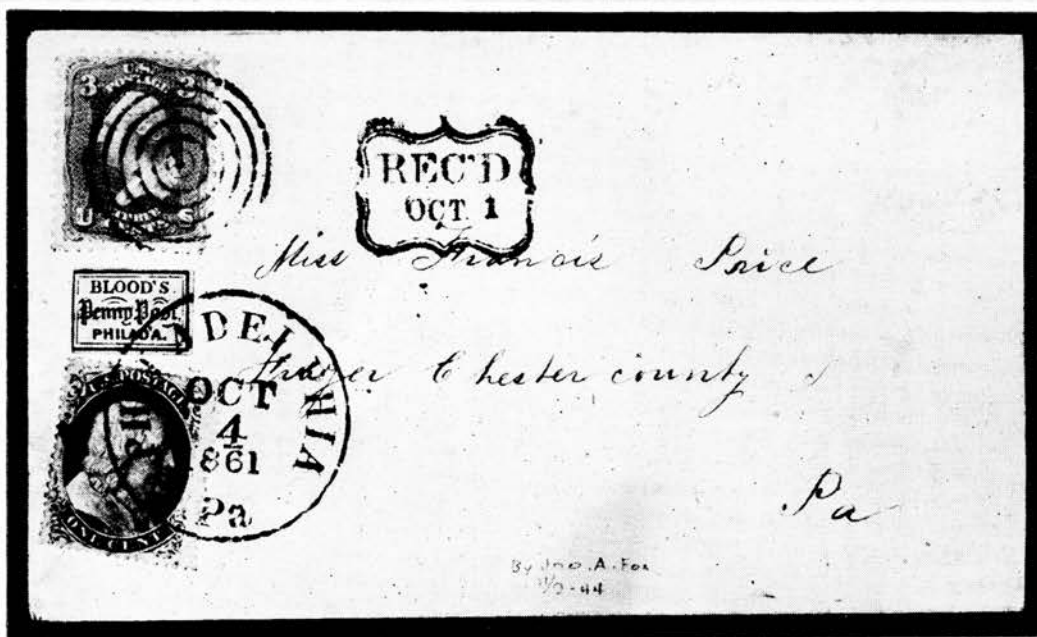


Fig. 15—This Cover brought \$137.50 at a Sale by John A. Fox, of New York on Sept. 29 1945.
Can You Read its Story?

our covers can tell us if we but learn to read their language. Can we read the story of this cover? Perhaps yes, and perhaps no, but at least we can try, so here goes.

The writer originally put the 3c 1861 and a Blood's Local on this cover, intending to drop it in a Blood's mail-box in Philadelphia, but instead, it was dropped in a U. S. mail-box. The Blood stamp was not acid canceled by the Blood's Post. It was carried to the Philadelphia Post Office by the U. S. carrier where the 3c stamp was canceled with the large "target" and the letter marked with the well-known Philadelphia marking "REC'D—OCT 1." Also note Figure No. 4. The letter was held up and the addressee at Frazer, Penna., was notified that the letter was being held for one cent postage. Instead of sending a stamp that was valid at the Philadelphia Post Office, "Miss Price," the addressee, sent a 1c 1857 stamp which was not valid for postage at the Philadelphia Post Office, though it is barely possible, that the 1857 stamp may still have been valid during the first three days of October 1861 at the post office at Frazer, Pa.

It seems possible that the Philadelphia clerks preferred to forward the letter without a 1c 1861, rather than to argue the matter any further. Therefore, this cover in all probability was forwarded to the addressee without a legal payment of the one cent collection fee to which the letter carrier was clearly entitled, and no doubt the same thing happened to the cover illustrated in Figure No. 14.

Perhaps it might be suggested that the Philadelphia post office could have forwarded the letter with "Duc 1ct," as per Figure No. 8, and in explanation of same could have used the well-known Philadelphia marking, "OLD STAMPS NOT RECOGNIZED," but again the question arises as in the case of Figure #14, viz: "Did the officials at Washington prior to October of 1861, issue in-

structions that letters placed in letter-boxes with non-payment of the carrier collection fee of one cent were not to be forwarded to the addressee with "DUE 1," but rather that the addressee was to be notified of the deficient payment and be requested to forward same?" Perhaps this is a true explanation.

In conclusion may I remind collectors who are especially interested in the study of 3c plus 1c covers, that Congress, by an act, approved June 15, 1860, effective July 1, 1860, fixed the carrier fee for the delivery of a letter at one cent and no more. Congress, by acts passed in 1836 and 1851, had fixed the collection fee at "not exceeding two cents" and the delivery fee at "not exceeding two cents." Postmaster General Holt in his annual report of 1860, (December 1st) stated that the acts of 1836 and 1851, (quote): "Contemplated that the same charge should be made for the delivery of letters *into the post office*, as for their delivery at the domicile of the citizen," but he stated that the former provision had not always been enforced.

For some time prior to July 1, 1860, *no collection fee had been charged at the New York Post Office*. The New York Postmaster, John A. Dix made the statement under date of November 14, 1860, that the *delivery fee at the New York Post Office* had recently been reduced from 2c to 1c as of July 1, 1860, but from that date a collection charge of one cent had been ordered by the Postmaster General. He explained that the collection fee of 1c had been "*ordered*" by the Postmaster General, but that the law authorized a fee of as much as 2c. The above facts are mentioned for the purpose of emphasizing the importance of the date of use of 3c plus 1c covers. If the use was between July 1, 1860 and June 30, 1863, the cover comes under the provisions of the act of June 15, 1860. If the use is prior to July 1, 1860, it falls into quite a different category.