

Yesterday in Mekeel's, National Issue: The U.S. Postage Stamp, 1870-1900, Part 9-10

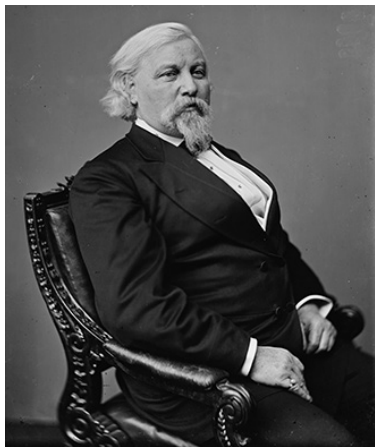
by Lowell S. Newman & Peter T. Rohrbach (From *Mekeel's Weekly*, March 15, 1990 with images added)

Another of Postmaster General John Creswell's ideas for the Post Office was prompted by the economic terrors of the Panic of 1873. Immediately after the collapse of a number of eastern banks and a ten-day holiday for the New York Stock Exchange he wrote to Congress: "The events of the past few weeks have awakened a lively interest in a plan heretofore submitted for securing the savings of the great body of the people by a pledge of the credit and faith of the United States."

What Creswell was proposing was a postal savings system for ordinary people, since the post office was the most widely spread and visible arm of the federal government in the late 19th Century. In every community, Creswell said, there was this branch of the federal government, and if people could deposit their savings there, it would be supported by the full faith of the federal government. Again, Creswell was ahead of his time; he did not receive much congressional support, and his successor was firmly opposed to the idea. It was not until 1911 that a postal savings system was inaugurated, and during that later great financial panic—the Crash of 1929—when banks were failing across the country, there were many millions of people whose savings were protected because they had been deposited in the U.S. Postal Savings System. This was precisely what Creswell had proposed during the Panic of '73.

By the middle of 1874, Creswell had served five years as Postmaster General, one of the longer incumbencies in Grant's cabinet, and he felt that it was now time for him to retire from government service. Accordingly, in July of 1874, he resigned, and returned to Elkton, Maryland, where he practiced law for the rest of his life. His biographer, Mary Wilhelmine Williams, wrote of him "the country has had few, if any, abler Postmasters-General."

Ulysses Grant appointed an interim Postmaster General for this important 19th century cabinet post, James Marshall, from Virginia who served only five months in the office. Then, in December of that year, he appointed Marshall Jewell as the nation's 25th Postmaster General.



Marshall Jewell, Postmaster General, 1874-1876. A businessman-turned-politician who brought a firm business approach to delivering

American inventions more secure against Russian pirating. It was this 49 year old, hard-headed businessman whom Grant appointed Postmaster General in December 1874.

Jewell took immediate opposition to some of his predecessors' more progressive proposals. Creswell had wanted to integrate the growing telegraph service into the Post Office and make it a national monopoly as

was being done in other nations; and of course he wanted a postal savings system to protect individuals against bank failure. Jewell discarded both of these proposals, saying curtly "the time has come when a resolute effort should be made to determine how far the Post Office Department can properly go in its efforts to accommodate the public without trespassing unwarrantably upon the sphere of private enterprise."

At the time of Jewell's appointment, business firms were still failing, mills were closing, and unemployment was growing. He stated that he wanted the Department run on a policy of strict economy during this national financial crisis. Bids were closely reviewed, contracts were re-studied, and new post offices were only created in the interests of efficiency. One disgusted politician remarked: "Why, he ran the post-office as if it was a factory."

Jewell was to remain in office for only a year and a half, and during his relatively brief tenure he had some notable successes: his business-like approach to government did result in cost improvement and efficient delivery of the mail; he issued

the 5¢ stamp for international postage; and he oversaw the beginning of the fast mail trains.

During Jewell's term in 1875 the Post Office also produced its second issue of newspaper and periodical stamps. These stamps of 1875 were not, strictly speaking, postage stamps as they are understood in the history of philately, since they were not used on pieces of mail in transit through the system; rather, they were used as documented receipts for the payment of postal fees by publishers at the point of mailing. The reason for these newspaper stamps in 1875 was the re-definition of rates for second class mail in 1874 by which regular issue newspapers and periodicals were sent through the system at the cost of 2¢ per pound. (This rate was lowered even further in 1885 to 1¢ per pound).

There were 24 stamps issued in 1875 for this bulk rate mailing of newspapers, ranging from 2¢ to \$60, and they were presented by publishers to postmasters at the point of mailing and then immediately canceled—they were not affixed to the bulk



1875 5¢ Blue (Sc. 179) tied by cork "Middleborough Mass. Jul. 26" (1875) circular date stamp, paying the rate to Zurich, Switzerland, the cover also with a red New York transit and receiving backstamp. The 5¢ rate to UPU countries took effect July 1, 1875, so this is an early use.

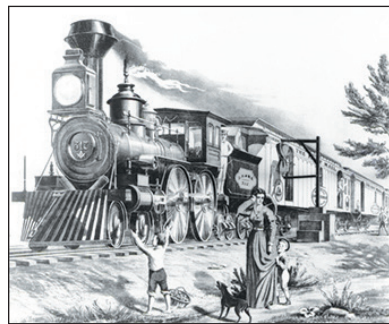


Illustration of an early Fast Mail Train



High and low values, Sc. PR9 and PR32

packages of newspapers and they remained as a receipt of fees paid. (Left, a typical postal receipt page with stamps affixed, this from 1898 with the 1895 1¢ and 5¢ stamps, Sc. PR114 and PR116.)

The intriguing thing about these newspaper stamps, which were used for the next 20 years was their design. During this time and for the next 20 years regular U.S. stamps would continue to use portraits of famous Americans on the stamps, but these special newspaper stamps used such artistic designs as the Goddess of Victory, the Muse of History and a vignette of an Indian maiden.

(We will carry a discussion of these 1875-1895 newspaper stamps in a future edition of Mekeel's.)

In 1876, Marshall Jewell became inextricably involved in another of the political controversies that had been hounding the Grant administration. That year the Whiskey Ring fraud had come to light, a series of bribes and payoffs involving the licensing and sale of whiskey, and scandal even threatened to touch Grant himself this time. The investigation into the matter had been launched by Benjamin Bristow, the upright Secretary of the Treasury, who wanted the entire matter exposed and all the culprits brought to justice. These revelations offended Jewell's philosophy of ethical business, and he openly supported Bristow, calling for more investigations.

Suddenly the Postmaster General had become a political liability in the Cabinet. It was 1876 with just a few months remaining in Grant's second term, and there was another national election coming up the next year for the Republican party. Grant was advised to get this fellow out of the Cabinet.

In July of 1876 Grant asked for Marshall Jewell's resignation, and appointed in his place James N. Tyner, a former congressman from Indiana who would serve as Postmaster General during those last few months of the disappointing administration of Ulysses S. Grant. However, Grant had not seen the last of Marshall Jewell, as we will see later.



Yesterday in Mekeel's, National Issue:

The U.S. Postage Stamp, 1870-1900, Part 11

by Lowell S. Newman & Peter T. Rohrbach (From Mekeel's Weekly, April 12, 1991 with images added)



N4, Statue of Freedom:
1875, Scott PR9-15



N5, Justice:
1875, Scott PR 16-23



N6, Ceres, \$1.92:
PR24; P48



N7, Victory, \$3: PR25;



N8, Clio \$8: PR26



N9, Minerva, \$9: PR27



N10, Vesta, \$12: PR28



N11, Peace, \$24: PR29



N12, Commerce, \$36: PR30



N13, Hebe, \$48: PR31

The complete set of 1875 issues. The "N" numbers are Scott's design type numbers. Note that some of the same designs were used for subsequent printings and Scott#.s. We will cover those in our next installment, along with a summary of the printers, design type numbers and Scott numbers.

Appendix II: Newspaper Stamps, 1875-1895

The 24 newspaper stamps of 1875 were:

2¢, 3¢, 4¢, 6¢, 8¢, 9¢, and 10¢ (Scott PR9-15-PR23). These eight stamps all featured the emblematic figure of Freedom modeled after Crawford's statue on the dome of the U.S. Capital. The left hand rests on a shield and holds a wreath, and the right grasps a sword.

The vignette stands in an arched frame, and above are slabs containing the words NEWSPAPERS and PERIODICALS. On the top are the words U.S. POSTAGE. The proper denomination is indicated in the four corners. All of these eight stamps were printed in black.

12¢, 24¢, 36¢, 48¢, 60¢, 72¢, 84¢, and 96¢ (Sc. PR16-PR23). These eight stamps featured the figure of Astraea, or Justice, holding in her right hand the balance, and resting her left hand on a shield bearing the U.S. coat of arms. The general design was the same as the first group of stamps in this issue, but these stamps were all printed in rose.

\$1.92 (PR24). This odd denomination stamp features the figure of Ceres, the Goddess of Agriculture, holding in her left hand an ear of corn and in her right a wreath. Printed in a deep brown.

\$3 (PR25). "Victory," her left arm raised, her right shield looking very much like a sword. Printed in vermillion.

\$6 (PR26). Clio, the Muse of History, toga thrown over the

left shoulder, holding a stylus and tablet. Printed in a light blue.

\$9 (PR27). Minerva, the Goddess of Wisdom, holding a spear. Printed in orange.

\$12 (PR28). Vesta, the Goddess of the Fireside, holding a burning lamp. Printed in a rich green.

\$24 (PR29). "Peace", holding an olive branch in one hand and three arrows in the other. Printed in a purplish slate.

\$36 (PR30). A figure representing Commerce, holding in her left hand the caduceus, the winged rod of Mercury, and in her right hand a miniature ship. Printed in a dull red.

\$48 (PR31). Hebe, the Goddess of Youth, holding a cup in her right hand which she is offering to the eagle, around whose neck her left hand is thrown. Printed in a light brown.

\$60 (PR32). A vignette of an Indian maiden, robed from her waist down. Her right arm is extended, while her left hangs by her side. In the background is a landscape of trees, vines, and wigwams. Printed in a rich purple.

The high denomination stamps of this newspaper issue of 1875 were of course the highest denominations which had ever



N14, Indian Maiden,
\$60: PR32

been printed for the Post Office, and they indicate the great bulk packs of newspapers that were being carried through the mail.

It is also interesting to note that during this same period the Post Office was strongly resisting the establishment of a parcel post in this country by which larger packages could be inserted in the mail. Parcel post, as we noted previously, was already becoming a fact in many European countries in the last part of the century, but the United States would not establish its own parcel post until early in the next century. In the light of that, the fact that the Post Office was nevertheless willing to carry these large packs of newspapers without complaint indicates once again the special and honored place that newspapers occupied in the postal system in the 19th century.

The newspaper stamps were first released in December of 1874, and during the first fiscal year some 2.2 million were delivered to local postmasters, with a cash value of some \$815,000. For the rest of the decade the amount of newspaper stamps delivered averaged about 1.5 million a year.

Initially, these stamps were sold over the counter to publishers and users of second class mail, but within a few years postal officials in Washington were instructing local postmasters not to sell the stamps directly. Instead, they were to be retained at the post office and only used when the bundles of newspapers were delivered for mailing. At that time, the postal clerk would make out two receipts, one of which he would give to the publisher, and on the other he would affix the proper newspaper stamp and immediately cancel it. The cancelled newspaper stamps were retained at the local post office and then sent quarterly to postal headquarters in Washington. Therefore the American public at large had practically no contact with these newspaper stamps.



The 12¢ Rose 1875 Issue (PR16) in a horizontal pair and single, used with 4¢ and 6¢ Black 1875 Issues (PR11-PR12), all with manuscript "X" cancels, on Jan. 1, 1875 and Jan. 23, 1875 dated Post Office Department receipts for nine and fourteen pounds of the Weekly Register newspaper. Each receipt represents half a page from a ledger book.

To Be Continued

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Yesterday in Mekeel's, National Issue:

The U.S. Postage Stamp, 1870-1900, Part 12

by Lowell S. Newman & Peter T. Rohrbach (From Mekeel's Weekly, April 26, 1991 with images added)

Another issue of newspaper stamps was released in 1879 when the American Bank Note Company acquired the printing contract for U.S. postage stamps, but American basically used the same plates it had acquired from Continental with some exceptions.

There were great variations in the colors used in the printings over the next number of years. For instance, the 12¢ stamp which had originally been printed in pink in 1875 was now being printed in various shades of brownish red. Also, the 9¢ stamp was discontinued in this issue. Finally, in 1885 when the second class rate was reduced to 1¢ per pound a new plate was created for a new 1¢ stamp. The design was the same as the 2¢ stamp of 1875—the emblematic figure of Freedom—and it was printed in both deep black and gray-black. Thus there were again 24 newspaper stamps through the 1880s.

By 1890, as the country was growing and newspaper circulation was increasing, some 3.7 million of these stamps were being issued each year, with a total cash value of about \$1.7 million.

In 1894 the Bureau of Engraving and Printing began to print U.S. postage stamps, and that meant it also had to produce these newspaper

As mentioned in our prior instalment, the Statue of Freedom and Justice designs were used for many denominations and printings. Here's the list.

N4, Statue of Freedom:

1875 Issue	1875 Cont. Sp. Pr.	1879 ABNC	1883 Amer. Sp. Pr.	1885 ABNC	1894 BEP
1¢				PR81	PR90
2¢, PR9	PR33	PR57	PR80		PR91
3¢, PR10	PR34	PR58			
4¢, PR11	PR35	PR59			PR92
6¢, PR12	PR36	PR60			PR93
8¢, PR13	PR37	PR61			
9¢, PR14	PR38				
10¢, PR15	PR39	PR62			PR94

N5, Justice:

1875 Issue	1875 Cont. Sp. Pr.	1879 ABNC	1885 ABNC	1894 BEP
12¢ PR16	PR40	PR63	PR82	PR95
24¢ PR17	PR41	PR64	PR83	PR96
36¢ PR18	PR42	PR65	PR84	PR97
48¢ PR19	PR43	PR66	PR85	
60¢ PR20	PR44	PR67	PR86	PR98
72¢ PR21	PR45	PR68	PR87	
84¢ PR22	PR46	PR69	PR88	
96¢ PR23	PR47	PR70	PR89	PR99

Finally, here's a summary of the Scott #s and printings.

Scott #s by set:

PR9-32	1875 Continental
PR33-56	1875 Continental Special Printing
PR57-79	1879 American Bank Note Issue
PR80	1883 ABNC Special Printing
PR81-89	1885 ABNC Issue
PR90-101	1894 BEP Issue
PR102-113	1895 New Designs, Unwatermarked
PR114-125	1895-97 USPS Double Line Watermark



N15, Statue of Freedom:
1¢ black: PR102, PR114
2¢ black: PR103, PR115
5¢ black: PR104, PR116
10¢ black: PR105, PR117
25¢ carmine: PR106, PR118
50¢ carmine: PR107, PR119



N17, "Victory":
\$2 scarlet: PR108, PR120



N18, Clio:
\$5 ultra: PR109, PR121



N19, Vesta:
\$10 green: PR110, PR122



N20, "Peace":
\$20 slate: PR111, PR123



N21, "Commerce":
\$50 dull rose: PR112, PR124



stamps. The Bureau, slightly overwhelmed with all its new tasks, produced an interim issue of newspaper stamps in 1894 which consisted of only 12 stamps which were made from the plates acquired from American—1¢, 2¢, 4¢, 6¢, 10¢, 12¢, 24¢, 36¢, 60¢, 96¢, \$3, and \$6. These were the same plates which had been used before, although they were produced in different colors.

N22, Indian Maiden:
\$100 purple: PR113, PR125

In 1895, the Bureau produced its own issue of newspaper stamps, which was to be the last such issue in U.S. history. There were 12 stamps in this issue, and one of the purposes was to increase the highest denomination from \$60 to \$100, an indication of the growing number of newspapers being carried through the mails. However, the Bureau basically used the old designs from American but created new dies for these newspaper stamps of 1895. The denominations of this issue were: 1¢, 2¢, 5¢, 10¢, 25¢, 50¢, \$2, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100. But they were actually only re-workings of the original stamps of 1875, plus the new 1¢ stamp of 1885. The same designs were used but they were shifted to different denominations with the proper changes in numerals. For instance, the designs of new \$2, \$5, \$10, \$50, and \$100 denominations were taken respectively from the former \$3, \$6, \$12, \$24, \$36, and \$60 stamps.

Finally, in 1897 the Post Office discontinued the use of these stamps, a step many postal officials had been urging for a number of years. These officials said that the newspaper stamps had long ago accomplished their fundamental purpose, mainly to make sure that newspapers were pre-paid

in the postal system and that there was an accurate accounting system of monies paid at the post office of origin, with one receipt for the mailer and another for the postal clerk. This system of dual receipts had in fact been used for a number of years now, and the affixing of a stamp on one of these receipts only created an extra step and an extra expense for the Post Office.

Newspaper stamps were officially terminated on July 1, 1898, but the Post Office retained every other feature of the receipt system for second class mail, including a new system of placing advance deposits at the local post office against which the mailer could draw.

The extant newspaper stamps were then recalled to the Post Office in Washington for redemption, although in 1899 the Department placed on sale 55,000 sets of Newspaper stamps for collectors and the general public. But only 26,989 sets were sold at a return to the Post Office of \$134,945. After that, the remaining Newspaper stamps were destroyed, and thus came to an end the short and interesting history of the U.S. Newspaper stamps.

The U.S. Postage Stamp, 1870-1900, Part 13

by Lowell S. Newman & Peter T. Rohrbach (From *Mekeel's Weekly*, May 10, 1991 with images added)

One of the most striking postal accomplishments during Postmaster General Jewell's tenure was the introduction of the "FastMail" trains. Mail had been carried on the railroads as far back as the 1840s, and in 1864 a new dimension was achieved by the creation of the first Railway Post Office, a post office on rails where mail could be sorted in transit. Now, in 1875 the Post Office worked out an arrangement with some rail companies for specially constructed mail cars which would be moved through the system on an express service.

The first of these Fast Mail trains was the result of an agreement between the Department and the New York Central & Hudson River and the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern Railways. On September 16, 1875, the first Fast Mail train pulled out of Grand Central Station in New York City carrying 43 pouches of letters, 663 sacks of papers, and additional bundles of newspapers—a total of 33 tons of mail to be handled and sorted, and occasionally distributed in transit. This train threw off mail en route and picked up other pouches of mail by means of a catcher arm extended from the train.

This first 900-mail run from New York to St. Louis was completed in 26 hours, a new record for delivery of mail. A similar run was established by the Pennsylvania Railroad for a fast mail journey that was completed between New York, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and St. Louis in 33 hours.

These first runs were only experiments, but they proved that it was possible to move mail even more rapidly. Consequently, the New York Central constructed 20 special cars for this fast mail service. Then, in one of those incredibly short-sighted governmental actions, the Congress on July 12, 1876, ordered a 10% reduction in the fees paid to the railroads for carrying the mail. Infuriated, two weeks later the nation's railroads terminated all fast mail trains.

This all happened just a few weeks after Marshall Jewell's forced resignation, and his successor James Tyner protested the action by the railroads, saying it was "a source of mortification to all the officers of the department" and it would cause the Post Office "to go backward" in the speedy transmission of the mail. A similar protest was voiced in newspapers across the nation.

There was a standoff between the Congress and the railroads for the next four years, but by the beginning of the 1880s the Fast Mail trains started to come back into service and they grew greatly in importance throughout the rest of the century.

The Fast Mail train, first introduced in 1875, was just one of the major advances in the fast transportation of U.S. mail—others being the Pony Express of the 1860s, and the transport of mail by airplane following World War I—and it showed those Americans of the later 19th Century who were buying stamps and postcards in growing numbers that their mail could be carried not only safely and at a relatively modest price, but also with great speed.

A special trans-continental train trip was organized by Henry C. Jarrett in 1876. The plans called for leaving

New York at 1:00 a.m. on June 1 and arriving in San Francisco only 88 hours later. The \$500 excursion price included a week's food and lodging in California and return trip fare. A special cancel, produced by a Myers Machine, was used on a small amount of mail carried on the train during its journey, which was actually accomplished in 81 hours, setting a trans-continental speed record that was to stand for several decades. Only ten examples of this marking are known.

Shown here is an example of the Jarrett & Palmer's cover with a virtually complete c.d.s., Jun 1, 1876, duplexed with a bold barred ellipse "1" that ties a 3¢ green (158) on a cover with the corner card of Dry Goods Merchant, Leon H. Blum and the Jun 4 receiving handstamp of San Francisco Wool Dealer, E. Raas [lower right], also on the front.

The cover here, from a 2020 Kelleher auction, also included this newspaper clipping and the picture of the train, which included only two cars, a baggage/smoker car and a Pullman.

