



## The Rush 1847 Cover

Sale 912

Saturday, May 13, 2006

*Robert A. Siegel*

AUCTION GALLERIES, INC.

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View of Cunard's docks at Jersey City  
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# The Rush 1847 Cover

Offered at public auction by order of the owner



Sale 912 (Lot 501)

Saturday, May 13, 2006, at 1:00 p.m.

*The Rush 1847 Cover will be available for viewing  
on the morning of the sale or by appointment.*

*A 15% buyer's premium will be added to the hammer price.*

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Lot 501  
 Front and back

## The Rush 1847 Cover: A Confluence of Circumstances

by Scott R. Trepel

*"We consider this the most important cover known to American Philately."* — Philip H. Ward Jr., May 1944

### An October Day in Paris

THE SMALL ENVELOPE STUFFED WITH LETTERS took two weeks to reach Richard Rush at *soixante-trois* Rue de Lille in Paris. The envelope had been mailed by Rush's son, Benjamin, from Philadelphia on Tuesday, September 26, 1848, reaching the New York post office just in time to be placed on board the British steamer *Europa*, set to sail from Cunard's docks at Jersey City on Wednesday at "12 o'clock precisely."

After a transatlantic journey of twelve days and another two days from Liverpool to London and across the channel to France, the envelope was carefully slit open around the wax seal. Rush had just celebrated his 68th birthday in late August, away from his home in Philadelphia yet again. The arrival of a letter from his son nearly four thousand miles away must have cheered the old man. An experienced diplomat and, of necessity, a careful correspondent, Rush neatly annotated the envelope with a description of its contents: "*B.R. [Benjamin Rush] Sep. 26 and copies inside of same date.*"

Since 1847 Rush had been living in Paris, serving as the American minister to France. This was a time of great social unrest in the wake of several bad harvests and the Irish Potato Famine. In 1848 Karl Marx published his *Communist Manifesto*, and in Europe there was widespread revolt against aristocratic governments. The turbulent events of 1848 culminated in another French revolution and the year-end election of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte as president of the Second Republic.

Richard Rush's political mind must have been acutely aware of the circumstances in which his son's letter was transported over thousands of miles. As an advocate of protectionist tariffs during his tenure as Secretary of Treasury in the John Quincy Adams administration, Rush must have looked upon the envelope with a certain degree of irony. Here was a piece of mail clearly marked for the next British steamer from New York,



Richard Rush (1780-1859)  
*This engraving of Richard Rush is based on a portrait painted circa 1825, after his service as minister to England.*



stamped with six of the new 10¢ Washington stamps for no other reason than to retaliate against Great Britain over its discriminatory and protectionist treatment of transatlantic mail carried by American mail packets (“packet” is the term for a vessel that carries mail under government contract on regularly-scheduled trans-oceanic sailings).

The stamps applied in Philadelphia overpaid the 58¢ U.S. postage by two cents. The 33 decimes collected from Rush on delivery was roughly equivalent to 66¢ U.S., which was divided by Great Britain and France. Therefore, the total postage charged on this letter was approximately \$1.24, a significant sum in 1848. The dispute between the United States and Great Britain over mail subsidies had just arrived on Rush’s doorstep.

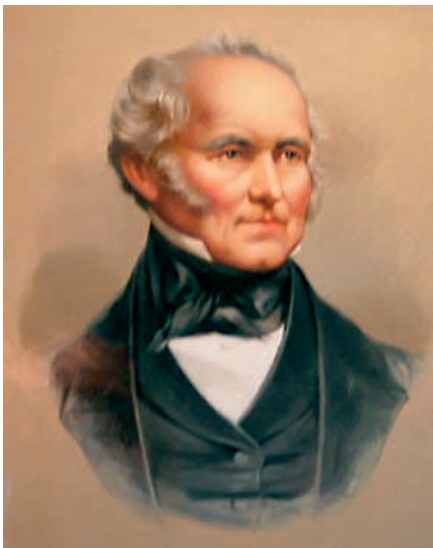
### **Great Britain Starts a Postal War**

**T**O UNDERSTAND THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE United States and Great Britain over transatlantic postage charges, known to postal historians as the 1848 Retaliatory Rate Period, it is helpful to start with the Cunard Line.

In 1839 Samuel Cunard, a Nova Scotian by birth who rose to prominence in the ocean shipping business, won the British contract to run regular mail packets on steam-powered vessels between the United States and Great Britain. The British and North American Steam Packet Company was formed, but it was more widely known as the Cunard Line. Regular packet steamers started plying the waters between Boston, Halifax (Nova Scotia) and Liverpool in July 1840 (some mail was carried on the *Unicorn* in May 1840, but July 1 was the official inauguration date).

With a seven-year contract and lucrative mail subsidy, Cunard and, by extension, Great Britain, dominated transatlantic postal communications. America’s once-proud position during the wind-powered era was seriously undermined by Britain’s development of its well-organized and rapid steamship routes.

Cunard’s voyages were regular, highly-publicized events. Businesses relying on the fastest means of communication between continents viewed Cunard as the Fedex of its day. With no comparable alternative, correspondents paid one shilling postage per half-ounce (the equivalent to 24¢ U.S.) to have



Samuel Cunard (1785-1865)

*Cunard, a Nova Scotian and leader in the shipping industry, established the first British steamship packet service, which started regular sailings in July 1840.*



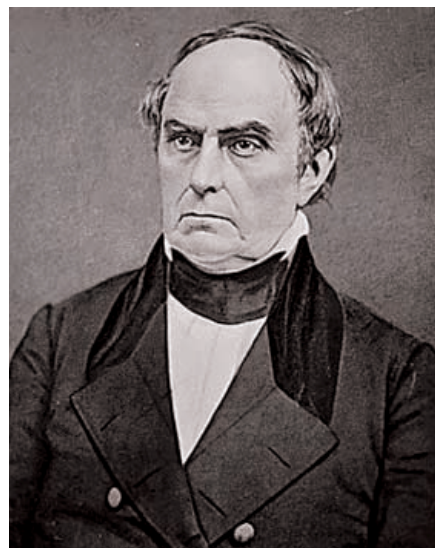
their letters carried by British steamships. Because there was no postal treaty between the United States and Great Britain prior to 1849, it was not possible for American correspondents to prepay ocean postage on letters. Therefore, a typical letter had enough prepaid U.S. postage to bring it to the port of departure, and the British postage (including the packet charge) was paid by the addressee.

The public outcry for cheaper ocean postage and other postal reforms in the United States was led in the 1840's by men such as Barnabas Bates, Joshua Leavitt and Elihu Burritt. In June 1840 a Senate resolution was introduced by Daniel Webster, which called for the reduction of postage and the use of stamps (the printed bill actually reproduces a Mulready lettersheet design). The pressure was on to do something about high rates and British dominance in transatlantic postal communications.

In response, Congress passed acts in 1844 and 1845 that created lower, more uniform postage rates and authorized a mail subsidy for U.S. steamer packets. Two significant consequences of these congressional acts were the issuance of postage stamps for general use and the establishment of the U.S.-operated Ocean Line. Both breakthroughs occurred in 1847.

The Ocean Line was the first transatlantic mail packet subsidized by the United States government. The route ran between New York and Bremen, but included a stop near Southampton where mail for Great Britain could be unloaded or picked up. The arrangements with German postal authorities were negotiated by Major Selah Reeve Hobbie, a Jacksonian Democrat and former congressman from New York who served as First Assistant Postmaster General almost continuously from 1829 until his death in 1854. Major Hobbie played an important role in the Retaliatory Rate controversy as the first point man for negotiations with British authorities.

Facing a challenge to their virtual monopoly over transatlantic mails, postal authorities in Great Britain issued an order to impose British postage charges (one shilling per half-ounce letter and two pence for each newspaper) on letters carried by American packets (non-contract ship mail would still be treated under the customary 8p ship-letter charge). This had the effect of doubling postage on every piece of mail carried by the new Ocean Line steamships.

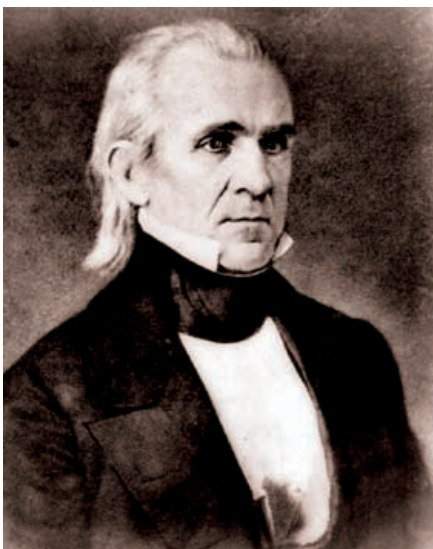


Daniel Webster (1782-1852)  
*Webster submitted his resolution to the Senate on June 10, 1840, calling for the reduction of postage rates and issuance of postage stamps.*



George Bancroft (1800-1891)

*Bancroft was Polk's Secretary of the Navy and later minister to Great Britain. He was responsible for negotiating a postal treaty with the British in 1848.*



James K. Polk (1795-1849)

*Polk was President during the conflict between the United States and Great Britain over transatlantic packet service. He died of cholera in June 1849, only a few months after the end of his presidential term.*

The first American steamship to arrive at Liverpool was the *Washington* on June 15, 1847, which carried mail bags and Major Hobbie, who had been sent by Postmaster General Cave Johnson to negotiate a postal arrangement with British postal authorities. When he arrived he was unaware of the new discriminatory charge. Hobbie's mission was to convince the British to eliminate the 8p incoming ship-letter charge on American packet mail (in recognition of its government-subsidized status) and to secure cooperation in processing mail to, from and in transit through Great Britain. Imagine Major Hobbie's surprise when he disembarked and discovered that days earlier the British had decided to play hard ball by charging full ocean postage on letters carried by the new U.S. packets. For a man closely allied with Andrew Jackson's politics (and probably sharing Jackson's disdain for the British), Major Hobbie must have directed several choice expletives at British postal authorities.

The British discriminatory postage charges amounted to a protectionist tariff and set off strong protests from American diplomats and politicians. The claim was made that the charges, which in the words of the British order were specifically aimed at the Ocean Line, violated the Most Favored Nation status of the United States in its trade relations with Great Britain. The British responded to George Bancroft, the American minister in London, telling him that the British packet postage on American packet letters was necessary "to protect the Cunard line of steamers, and to derive for the British Treasury a revenue out of the Mail service of our packets as well as [yours]." To American ears, that was the Anglicized version of "what's mine is mine and what's yours is mine."

### **An Eye for An Eye**

MAJOR HOBBIE CONTINUED ON TO BREMEN TO conduct his business with German postal authorities. He returned on July 3, 1847, to negotiate with the British in order to reach a satisfactory arrangement that would end the discriminatory charges. By the end of October 1847, Hobbie sailed back to the United States without a deal.

President Polk asked Congress to decide on a course of action based on the Postmaster General's report. In response, the Act

of June 27, 1848, was passed. It authorized the Post Office Department to charge 24¢ packet postage on every letter, whether it was carried by an American or “foreign packet ship.” The act was carefully worded to avoid specific mention of Great Britain, because one of the American complaints was that the British had singled out U.S. packets, thereby violating existing trade agreements. However, since no other foreign country operated a transatlantic packet service, the target was obviously Great Britain and the Cunard Line.

The first mail affected by the U.S. Retaliatory Rate was outbound mail carried on the Cunard Line’s *Britannia*, which left New York on July 5, 1848, and arrived in Liverpool on July 19. Days later, on July 8, the Cunarder *Caledonia* arrived in New York with its mail. Every letter on these ships and all subsequent packets during the Retaliatory Period were charged both British and U.S. packet postage. This penalty created an uproar among businesses and the public, which forced the parties back to the bargaining table.

### The 1848 U.S.-British Postal Treaty

**N**EGOTIATIONS FOR A POSTAL TREATY ACTUALLY took place on two different levels. Postal representatives had the authority to make *arrangements* or *conventions* between countries, but postal *treaties* had a higher level of status and were negotiated by diplomatic representatives. Any postal treaty, essentially a form of international trade agreement, had to be ratified by the U.S. Congress and by British Parliament.

Representing the British were Lord Clanricarde, Postmaster General, and Sir Charles Wood, Chancellor of the Exchequer and a trusted member of Parliament. The British Foreign Secretary was the controversial Viscount Palmerston, who later became Prime Minister.

On the American side was Postmaster General Cave Johnson, a Tennessean who had earlier advocated putting Andrew Jackson’s portrait on the first U.S. stamp, which probably reveals something about his attitude towards the British. Although PMG Johnson remained in the U.S. during negotiations, he was deeply involved in the process.

The American minister in London, George Bancroft, was directly engaged in negotiating the postal treaty with British



Sir Charles Wood, 1st Viscount Halifax (1800-1885)

*As Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Charles Wood was responsible for pressing British interests in negotiations with the U.S. minister, George Bancroft. This portrait is by Anthony de Brie after George Richmond (1873), courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG 1677).*



Lord Palmerston (1784-1865)

*During the Retaliatory Rate conflict, Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary, expressed the view that the British were always yielding to American demands.*





Cave Johnson (1793-1866)  
*Postmaster General Cave Johnson was opposed to the terms of the 1848 treaty, but he did not have the authority to stop it.*

authorities. Bancroft was a former Secretary of the Navy and held strong anti-British views. As minister to Great Britain, he reported to the Polk administration's Secretary of State, James Buchanan.

After extensive discussions and correspondence, negotiations finally reached a point at which a deal seemed imminent. Both sides agreed to a reciprocal 24¢ (or one shilling) rate and specified that packet postage would be retained by or credited to the packet's country of origin. However, PMG Johnson vehemently objected to one aspect of the proposed uniform rate, specifically the domestic postage component, and he refused to give his consent.

In a bit of diplomatic maneuvering, the decision was made by Bancroft and the British negotiators to create a postal *treaty*, which elevated the agreement's status to a level beyond the authority (or consent) of the Postmaster General. It was now in the hands of diplomats and elected officials.

On December 15, 1848, the treaty was signed. It was ratified in January and the treaty terms commenced on February 15, 1849. Prior to this date, the old rates were restored on any packets arriving in Great Britain (beginning December 29, 1848) and in the U.S. (beginning January 3, 1849).

### **Dividing the Spoils of \$1.24 Postage**

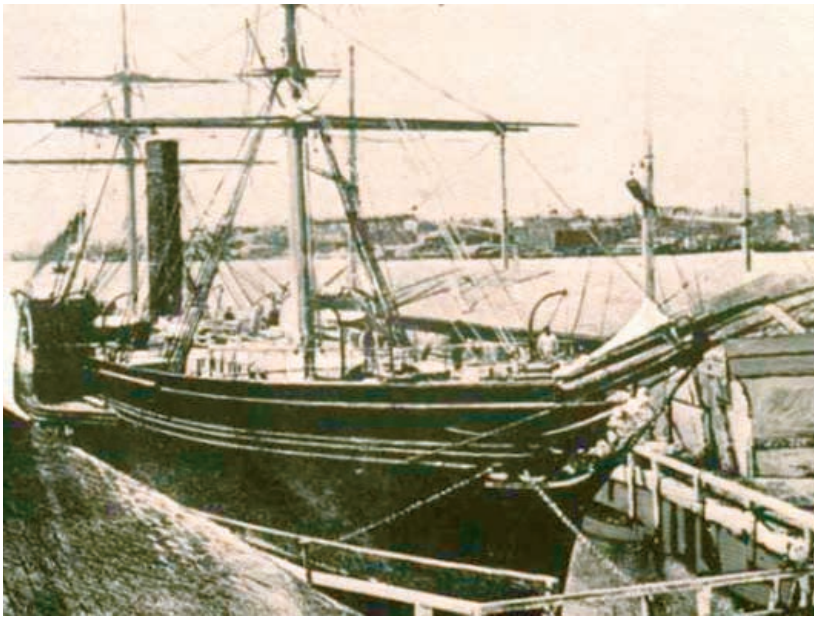
**T**RACING THE JOURNEY FROM PHILADELPHIA TO Paris will help explain how the \$1.24 postage (plus the two cents overpayment) was divided among the three countries involved in the Rush cover's transportation.

As noted by Richard Rush on the envelope itself, the letters enclosed were dated September 26 (1848). Presumably the notation "*copies inside of same date*" refers to copies of letters sent by other ships. It was a common practice during this period of uncertain ocean navigation to send more than one copy of a letter by different routes or ships. Benjamin Rush evidently enclosed duplicates of other letters in this envelope, which explains the heavy weight (one-half ounce, or 15 grams).

The impending departure of the 1,834-ton Cunarder *Europa* was known to Benjamin, who wrote explicit directions at the lower left to send the letter "*Via New York, British Mail Steamer of the 27th Septem. 'Europa'.*" Scheduled packet sailings were



## *The Rush 1847 Cover*



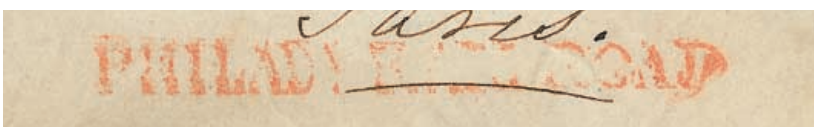
### *R.M.S. Europa*

*The 1,834-ton Europa was in Cunard service from 1848 to 1867. Shown here in dock, the Europa had the misfortune of colliding with other vessels on two occasions.*

advertised in newspapers, and Benjamin was certainly accustomed to sending letters for specific departures.

However, in this case he was cutting it close, because the Cunard advertisement in the September 26 *New York Commercial Advertiser* stated that the *Europa* would “sail from her dock, Jersey City, on Wednesday (27th) at 12 o’clock precisely.” Benjamin’s letter had to make the northbound train trip to New York City for processing at the post office, then the bags of mail had to be carried by a small harbor vessel across the Hudson River to Cunard’s docks at Jersey City.

One indication that time was short is the presence of the “PHILAD<sup>A</sup> RAILROAD” straightline and “5” in circle. These markings were applied to the envelope and stamps on arrival at the New York post office. The bright orange-red ink is typical of the New York City post office during this period, and specialists in railroad markings generally agree that the “PHILAD<sup>A</sup> RAILROAD” straightline was applied after the mail bags were removed from the train and opened by postal clerks. In this case, the Philadelphia post office did not waste time cancelling the stamps and postmarking the envelope. They hurriedly tossed it into the mail bags to be handed over to the route agent on the northbound train.

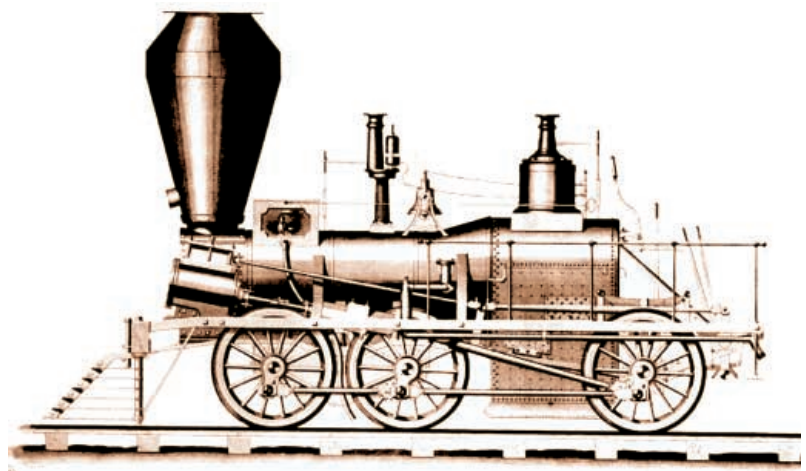


### *“PHILAD<sup>A</sup> RAILROAD”*

*This marking was applied at the New York post office to letters carried on the train from Philadelphia via New Brunswick, N.J.*

Baldwin Locomotive

*This Baldwin six-wheel steam locomotive is typical of the type used on railroads in the northeast corridor in 1848.*

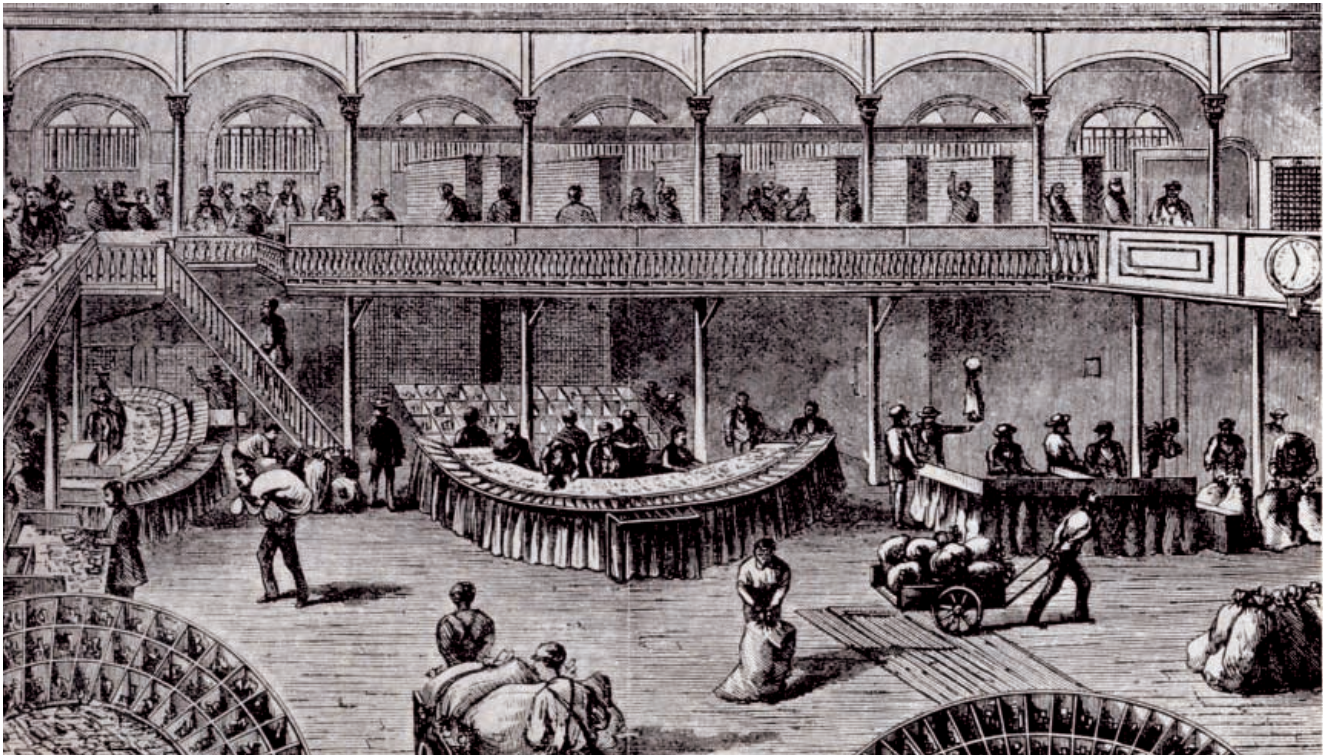


There was no “Philadelphia Railroad” or “New York and Philadelphia Railroad” by name. Mail was carried along routes of the New Jersey Railroad and Transportation Company, the Camden and Amboy Branch, and the Philadelphia and Trenton Railroad. Cunard’s advertisements specifically state that mail for their Liverpool sailings had to go through the New York post office first. Therefore, the train bringing mail from Philadelphia would have carried it past Jersey City to New York City.

For this first leg of the journey, Benjamin Rush had to pay the domestic postage of 5¢ per half-ounce for a distance up to 300

Interior of New York Post Office

*This 1871 engraving captures the activity inside the New York Post Office, which was moved to the Old Dutch Church building in January 1845.*





## *The Rush 1847 Cover*

miles. The letter was judged to weigh just over the half-ounce limit and thus required 10¢ domestic postage.

Under normal circumstances, before the 1848 Retaliatory Rate Period and before the treaty with Great Britain was signed, the one-shilling (24¢) per half-ounce British packet postage could never be prepaid. It was always collected from the addressee, or the letter travelled by a non-contract ship and was charged the basic ship-letter rate.

When the Ocean Line started carrying mail, the packet postage had to be prepaid. Immediately, however, the British discriminatory charge on letters arriving by American packets effectively doubled the rate. Once the 1848 treaty established a system for exchanging credits, the sender of a letter to Great Britain could prepay the total postage.

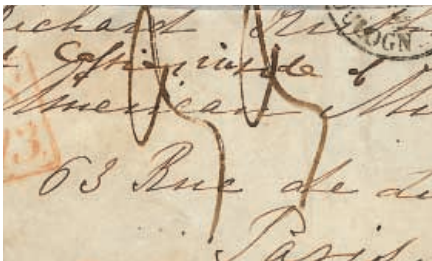
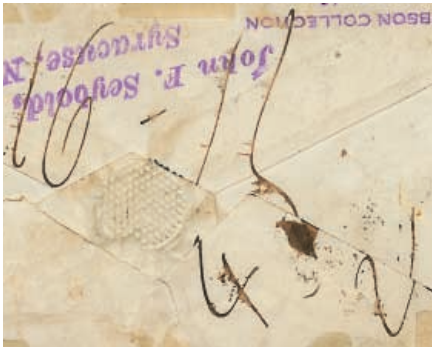
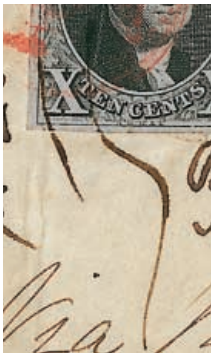
In the case of Benjamin Rush's letter to his father in Paris, the situation was different, because it was mailed during the Retaliatory Rate Period. Regardless of the shipping line used, British or American, Benjamin was required to prepay the packet postage, which in this case was the double rate due to weight. He must have known that his 48¢ prepayment was nothing but a penalty against the British, although he might have wondered how they would feel the pain of money coming out of his pocket.

With its mail from the New York post office on board, the *Europa* departed from the Cunard's docks at Jersey City on Wednesday, September 27, 1848, as scheduled. The voyage included a stop at Halifax, Nova Scotia. On October 9 the *Europa* reached Liverpool. The mail was brought by train to London, and the back of the envelope containing letters to Richard Rush in Paris was postmarked with the London office's red "10 OC 10 48" (October 10, 1848) receiving datestamp.

The trip from London to Paris via the English Channel took about 14½ hours. The port of departure was Dover, which was connected to London by rail. The French receiving datestamp indicates that the letter entered France at the port of Boulogne, rather than Calais. Boulogne was used as an entry point for only thirteen months, beginning in January 1848 after the railway was nearly complete. The datestamp on the Rush cover reads "ANGL./3/BOULOGNE-S-MER/3/11 OCT 48" ("Angl." is an abbreviation for *Angleterre*, or England).

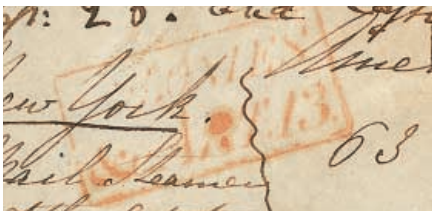


Boulogne-Sur-Mer Datestamp  
*The Rush cover crossed the English Channel from the port of Dover to the port of Boulogne-Sur-Mer.*



#### Weight and Postage Notations

The "15" on the face of the cover (top) represents 15 grams. The notations on the back (center) possibly indicate a revised weight of 16 grams. The "33" (bottom) represents the 33 decimes postage due from the addressee.



#### "COLONIES/&c ART. 13"

Red handstamp applied in London to indicate that the letter was subject to rates for an unpaid letter arriving from overseas.

Once the letter reached the Paris post office, it was weighed and rated for postage charges to be collected from the addressee. When the clerk in Paris weighed the letter, he wrote "15" by hand in the upper left corner, partly over the U.S. stamps, indicating the weight in grams. However, there are additional notations on the back, including a "16", which might indicate that the letter was weighed again at 16 grams. The "33" in large letters on the front of the envelope represents 33 decimes due from the addressee, roughly equivalent to 66¢ (2¢ per decime).

So, how was the 33 decimes divided between Great Britain and France?

The postal arrangements between Great Britain and France were governed by the Anglo-French postal convention of April 1843. Mail exchanged between the two countries was weighed in bulk, and whichever country incurred sea postage and transit costs was compensated by the country that collected postage. The "Colonies/&c. Art. 13" marking refers to Article 13 of the letter bill which accompanied the mail. It was applied by the London post office to identify the letter as unpaid mail arriving from overseas. Under this arrangement, Great Britain received 10 decimes (20¢) per 7.5 grams. In the case of the double-rate Rush letter, the amount received was 20 decimes (40¢).

That leaves 13 decimes for France, which corresponds to the rate for a letter weighing between 15 and 20 grams, traveling 205 kilometers (the distance between Paris and Boulogne). Prior to January 1849, French domestic postage rates were calculated on a sliding scale for both weight and distance. The distance calculation was dropped on January 1, 1849.

In the final analysis, of the \$1.26 paid by two members of the Rush family, the U.S. received 60¢ (including the overpayment), the British received 40¢, and the French received 26¢. Had the letter been mailed just a few months later, after the U.S.-British postal treaty took effect, the postage would have been half of the amount paid by the Rushes.

Another historical twist of fate lies in the fact that George Bancroft, who negotiated the 1848 treaty with the British, and Richard Rush, as U.S. minister to France, were appointed in January 1849 by President Polk to work together in establishing a three-way postal treaty providing for mail exchange with France via Great Britain.



## The First United States General Issue

**T**O PAY THE PUNITIVE RETALIATORY RATE postage, Benjamin Rush used an intact strip of six 10¢ stamps cut from the end of the sixth row of the left pane of 100—what future generations of philatelists would call Positions 55-60L.

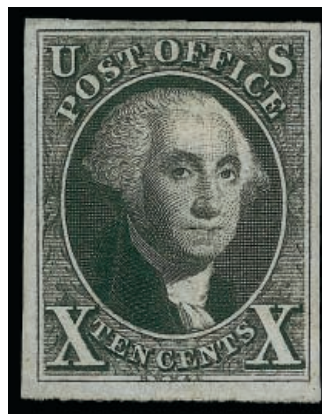
Benjamin could never have imagined that the strip of six would survive to become the largest recorded multiple of the 10¢ 1847 on cover (only one other strip of six is known on cover, used from Mobile to New York). He must have also been oblivious to the small plate flaw on the third stamp from the left (Position 57L), appearing as a short diagonal line across Washington's upper lip, which philatelists unkindly label the "Harelip" variety.

The 5¢ Franklin and 10¢ Washington were issued in July 1847, a significant step in the effort to reform the U.S. postal system that Daniel Webster had proposed seven years earlier. The Act of March 3, 1845, established basic uniform letter rates of 5¢ (per half-ounce for any distance up to 300 miles) and 10¢ (per half-ounce for any distance over 300 miles), paving the way for adhesive stamps to be used to indicate prepayment.

Between July 1, 1845—the effective date of the new rates—and July 1, 1847—the issue date of the first General Issue—postmasters in several cities and towns issued their own stamps for the convenience of local residents. These are known as the Postmasters' Provisionals. The earliest and most widely used provisional is the 5¢ Washington issued by Robert H. Morris, the New York City postmaster.

The New York provisional was printed by Rawdon, Wright, Hatch & Edson, a major security printer based in New York City. They were also chosen to engrave and print the 5¢ and 10¢ 1847 Issue. The New York stamp was issued by Postmaster Morris around July 12, 1845, and it circulated for almost two years until the 1847 Issue was released. By distributing stamps to post offices in other cities, to be used on mail addressed to New York, Morris actually tested the use of prepaid adhesive stamps in the U.S. postal system.

The 1847 Issue was valid for postage from July 1, 1847, until June 30, 1851, when it was replaced by the new 1851 Issue. When the 1851 Issue was ordered, the Post Office Department



1847 Issue

*5¢ and 10¢ 1847 Issue with portraits of Benjamin Franklin and George Washington. These were the first stamps issued for general use by the U.S. Post Office Department.*



1845 New York Provisional

*The 5¢ Washington stamp was issued by Robert H. Morris, postmaster of New York, between July 1845 and July 1847. It is the first and most widely used of the Postmasters' Provisionals.*



Robert H. Morris (1802-1855)  
*Morris was Mayor of New York City from 1841 to 1843 and Postmaster of New York City from 1845 to 1849.*

chose another firm—Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co.—to engrave and print the stamps. Evidence suggests that postal officials became concerned that the dies and plates in the hands of Rawdon, Wright, Hatch & Edson might be used to produce stamps illegally. Apparently in anticipation of this possibility, Postmaster General Nathan K. Hall ordered that the 5¢ and 10¢ 1847's would no longer be valid for postage after June 30, 1851. The public was allowed to redeem the old stamps until September 30, 1851. This circumstance explains the rarity of unused multiples.

### **How Many 10¢ 1847 Multiples Exist on Cover?**

THE RARITY OF USED 1847 MULTIPLES INCREASES significantly in proportion to the number of stamps contained in the multiple. Because the rates were based on distance and weight, the 10¢ 1847 was frequently used in pairs to pay the over-300 miles rate on a letter weighing more than a half-ounce (up to one ounce). However, 10¢ 1847 multiples larger than a pair are rare, and no blocks are known on cover.

10¢ 1847 strips of three were used to pay the three-times over-300 miles rate for a letter weighing 1-1½ ounces. Much rarer are strips of three used to pay the 30¢ Via Panama rate or the 29¢ Retaliatory Rate.

The next step up in size and rarity are strips of four. The Alexander census (*The United States 1847 Issue: Cover Census*, U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, 2001) lists eight covers with strips of four of the 10¢ 1847, including six used to pay the 40¢ rate to or from California.

Only three covers bearing strips of five are recorded in the Alexander census. The first was sent from Mobile to Washington, D.C. The second is a legal-size cover from Cincinnati with the Little Miami R.R. route agent's marking. The third has a strip of five and another strip of three, paying the double 40¢ rate from New York to San Francisco.

Finally, there are the two covers bearing strips of six of the 10¢ 1847, the largest multiples known on cover. One was sent from Mobile to New York, and the other is the Rush cover offered in this sale.

Significantly, of the 10¢ 1847 covers bearing strips of four, five or six, only the Rush cover is addressed to a foreign country.

## How Many 1847 Issue Retaliatory Rate Covers Exist?

THE ALEXANDER CENSUS LISTS EIGHT 1847 ISSUE Retaliatory Rate covers, and there is a ninth cover that was unknown to the compilers. The Rush cover is the only double-rate cover and the only cover bearing a strip of six 10¢ 1847 stamps. Steven C. Walske has kept records of 1847 covers to France, and he reports that only seven 10¢ 1847 covers—all single usages except the Rush cover—are known to him. They are dated in the November 1847 to May 1850 period, and he notes that “usage of the 10¢ dropped off precipitously after the uniform 5¢ U.S. inland rate was introduced in February 1849 per the U.S.-Great Britain treaty”.

The following list of the nine 1847 Retaliatory Rate covers is arranged by destination.

## Census of 1847 Issue Retaliatory Rate Covers

- 1) **Belgium (Gand)**, Charleston S.C. 10/28/48 (dateline) via NYC and Boston, carried on RMS *Niagara* 11/1/48 from Boston, 5¢ and strip of three 10¢, ex Waterhouse, Gibson, Brigham, Pope, Kapiloff, Craveri, Walske, last sold in Siegel 2005 Rarities Sale (lot 65).



- 2) **France (Paris)**, Philadelphia 9/26/48 via NYC (“Philada. Railroad” s/l), carried on RMS *Europa* 9/27/48 from NY, 10¢ strip of six (Pos. 55-60L), ex Seybold, Gibson, Rust, Kapiloff, the cover offered here.





Census of 1847 Issue Retaliatory Rate Covers



- 3) France (Bagneres-de-Bigorre), Augusta Ga. 7/14/48 via NYC, carried on RMS *Caledonia* 7/19/48 from NY, 10¢ single plus 24¢ charged to box 298, Walske collection.



- 4) Great Britain (Sheffield), NYC 10/31/48 ("U.S. Express Mail N.York") via Boston, carried on RMS *Niagara* 11/1/48 from Boston, 10¢ strip of three, ex LeBow (Siegel Sale 886, lot 3047).



- 5) Great Britain (Kingston), Boston 10/xx/48 ("U.S. Express Mail N.York") via NYC, carried on RMS *America* 10/11/48 from NY, 10¢ strip of three (Pos. 35-37R).

No photo available

- 6) Great Britain (Blackburn), Boston 12/16/48 via NYC, carried on RMS *Canada* 12/20/48 from NY, 10¢ strip of three (Pos. 41-43R), "5¢ stamp may be missing" (Alexander).



## Census of 1847 Issue Retaliatory Rate Covers

- 7) Nova Scotia (Halifax), front only, “Baltimore RR” s/l, via NYC 8/22/48 and Boston, carried on RMS *Acadia* 8/23/48 from Boston, 5¢ strip of three and two 10¢, ex Hart (photo from Robert G. Kaufmann catalogue).



- 8) Nova Scotia (Pictou), Boston 8/15/48 via NYC (“U.S. Express Mail Boston”), carried on RMS *America* 8/16/48 from NY, 10¢ strip of three, ex Pope, Robertson (photo from Matthew Bennett catalogue).



- 9) Scotland (Greenock), Mobile 12/2/48 (datelined New Orleans) via Boston, carried on RMS *Britannia* 12/13/48 from Boston, 5¢ and 10¢ strip of three, ex Krug, Ishikawa (photo from Christie's catalogue).





John F. Seybold (1858-1909)

*Considered by many to be the "Father of Postal History," Seybold was one of the first collectors to appreciate stamps used on their original covers.*



Henry C. Gibson, Sr. (1885-1987)

*Gibson was one of the outstanding collectors of classic United States stamps and covers during the 20th century. He owned at various times the largest known 1847 Issue blocks, the U.S.-Canada mixed franking cover with a strip of the 5¢, the Rush cover and the Retaliatory Rate cover to Belgium.*

## The Rush Cover's Travels After 1848

RUSH RETURNED TO PHILADELPHIA AFTER HIS term as the American minister to France, bringing with him his papers and correspondence. Included was the Retaliatory Rate cover and at least one other 1847 Issue cover to Paris, a 5¢ dated June 6, 1848, listed in the Alexander census.

The first collector known to have owned the Rush 1847 cover was John F. Seybold, the son of German immigrants who settled in Syracuse, New York. At age 23, Seybold started a department store, the success of which provided the funds to pursue his childhood interest in stamp collecting. Seybold patronized dealers from around the world during the 1880's and 90's, acquiring approximately 90,000 stamps off cover and what was regarded at the time as the world's most important collection of stamps on covers. Some of his best covers were pictured in a series of articles published in *The Perforator* from 1902 to 1905.

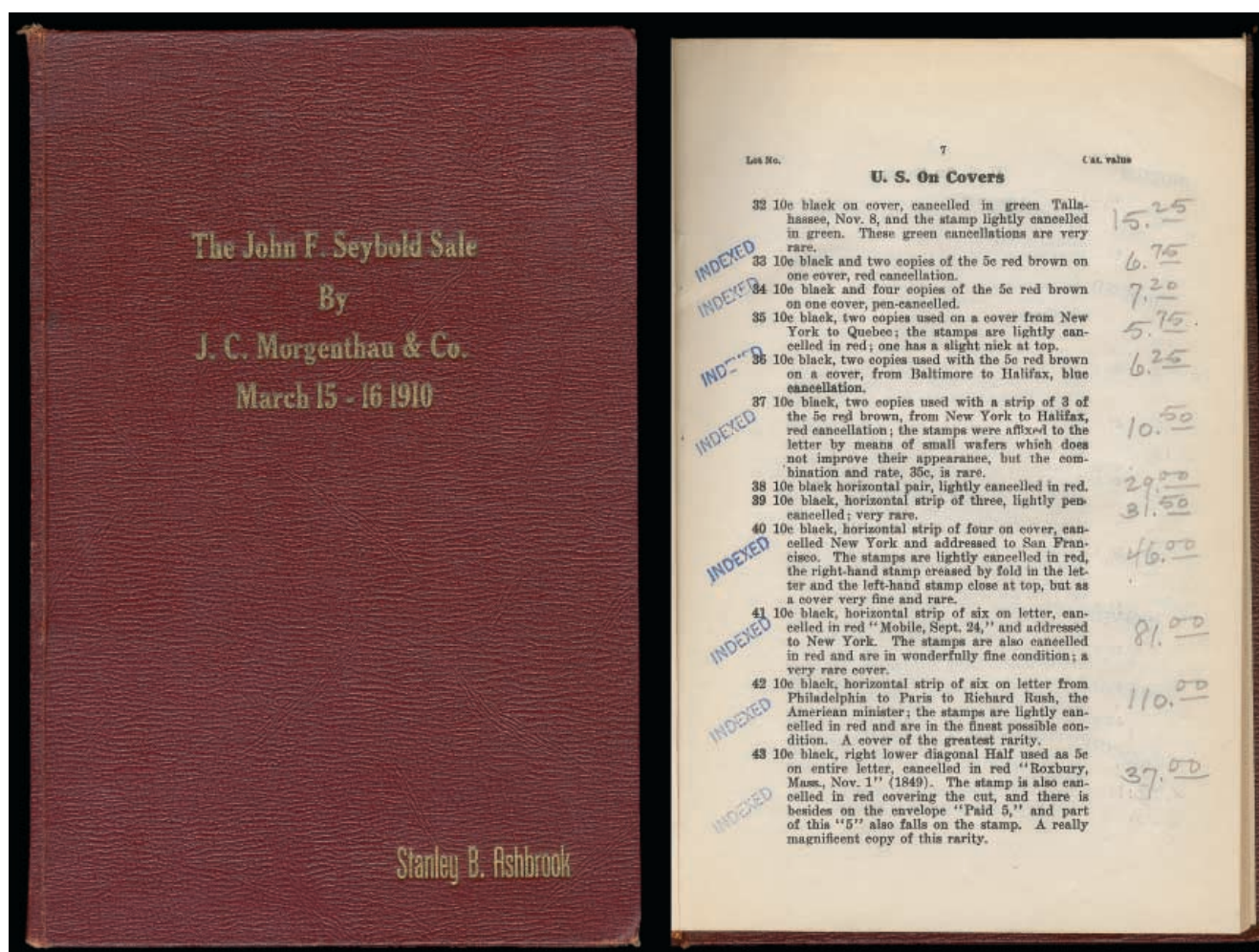
In 1909 there was a tragic turn in Seybold's life. According to contemporary reports, he became emotionally distraught and withdrawn. On August 12, 1909, the 51-year old Seybold committed suicide with a bullet to his right temple.

The Seybold collection was bought from the estate by a New York banker named John T. Coit and the prominent New York dealer, Julius Caesar Morgenthau. The sale price was \$26,000, considerably less than the value placed on the collection by the court appraisers. When Morgenthau put the Seybold collection into three auctions between March and April 1910, he specifically stated that nothing had been sold privately. However, some items known to have been in the collection did not appear in the auction catalogues. Whether Morgenthau actually sold items privately or some material was "held out" from the estate sale will never be known.

The first Seybold auction on March 15-16, 1910, at the Collectors Club of New York, contained an extraordinary array of postal history rarities. Unfortunately, none of the U.S. could be illustrated in the catalogue, because anti-counterfeiting laws prohibited photographic reproduction. Seybold owned both covers with 10¢ 1847 strips of six (the Rush cover and the other from Mobile). The Rush cover was listed as lot 42 with a five-line description. It was sold for \$110 to Henry C. Gibson.



## *The Rush 1847 Cover*



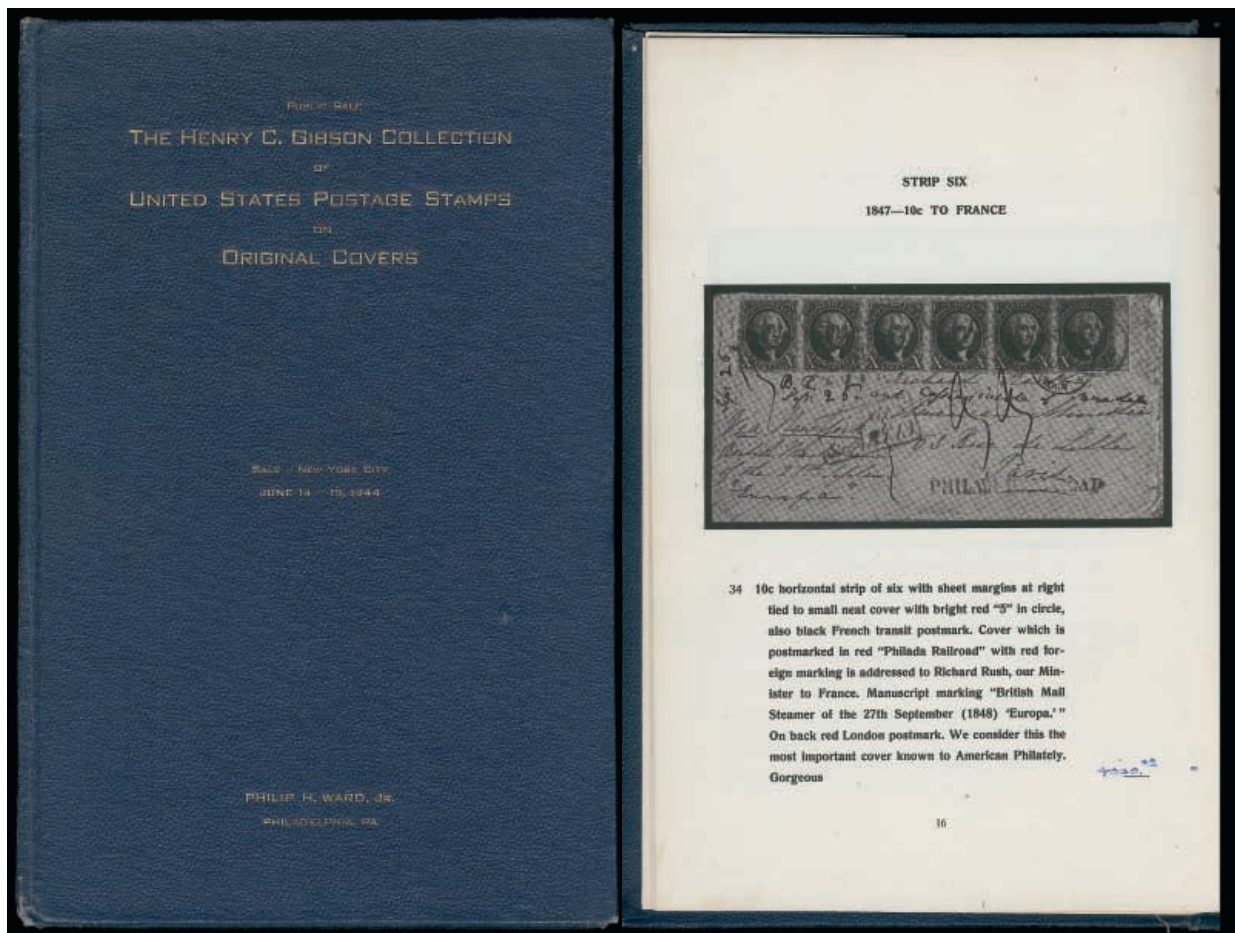
Henry C. Gibson, Sr., the scion of a wealthy Philadelphia family and an accomplished banking professional and businessman in his own right, started collecting stamps and covers around the time of the first Seybold sale.

Gibson's interest in the 1847 Issue and classic multiples developed early, and his acquisition of the Rush cover in 1910 was followed soon after by the purchase of the 10¢ 1847 block of six with original gum at the Philadelphia Stamp Company sale of June 18, 1912. Remarkably, Gibson was only 27 when he owned both of the greatest 10¢ 1847 items extant.

Gibson acquired and sold several collections and major philatelic items over the course of his lifetime, and his lifetime lasted nearly 102 years. When Gibson died in 1987, his final cover collection was discovered among his personal effects and sold through Christie's Robson Lowe in New York. It included a Pony Express cover and a number of exceptionally colorful 1869 Pictorial Issue covers. Gibson always had the eye.

### The 1910 Seybold Sale

*This was Stanley B. Ashbrook's personal copy of the March 1910 Morgenthau sale of the John F. Seybold collection. The "Indexed" marks (referring to the Ashbrook card file) and prices were applied by Ashbrook. Lot 42 was the Rush 1847 cover. It sold for \$110 to Henry C. Gibson.*



The 1944 Gibson Sale  
*Emmerson C. Krug's personal copy of the 1944 Ward sale of the Henry C. Gibson collection of United States covers. The Rush cover, lot 34, was described by Philip H. Ward Jr. (shown below) as "The most important cover known to American Philately." It hammered down for \$4,000.*



On June 14, 1944, the Collectors Club of New York was again the venue for offering the Rush 1847 cover. The sale of the Henry C. Gibson collection of "United States Postage Stamps on Original Covers 1845-1940" was conducted by Philip H. Ward Jr., the Philadelphia dealer and sometimes auctioneer, who had helped Gibson buy and sell important items and collections over the years.

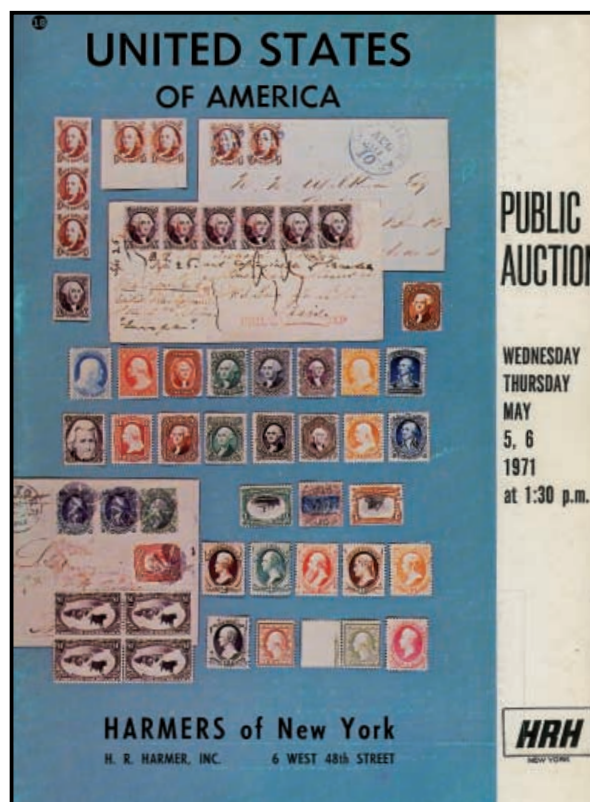
Four pages in the small black-and-white Gibson sale catalogue stand out. On page 12 is the 5¢/10¢ 1847 cover to Heidelberg, which realized \$850 (sold in the Siegel 1999 Rarities sale for \$210,000 hammer). Page 14 features the U.S.-Canada mixed franking with a strip of the 5¢ 1847, which realized \$6,000 (sold in the 1993 Ishikawa sale for \$650,000 hammer). On page 15 is the 5¢/10¢ 1847 Retaliatory Rate cover to Belgium, which brought just \$700 (sold in the Siegel 2000 Rarities sale for \$300,000 hammer). Finally, the Rush cover appears on page 16. It sold for \$4,000, nearly *six times* the price paid for the Retaliatory Rate cover to Belgium.



## *The Rush 1847 Cover*

Following the Gibson sale, the Rush cover did not appear at auction for another 27 years. In the H. R. Harmer sale of May 5-6, 1971, a large group of outstanding classic U.S. covers was offered. The title page lists three owners of collections contained in the catalogue: Edwin S. Bayer, Jr., Mary Flager Cary, and “A Selection of Classic Issues [second line in miniscule type] by order of Mr. P. G. Rust of Georgia.” It is the third name in tiny type that holds the key to ownership of the Rush 1847 cover in the 1971 Harmer sale.

Philip G. Rust owned a farm in Georgia, but he was hardly your average struggling farmer. A chemical engineer by training and former employee of the DuPont company, Phil Rust met, fell in love with, and married Eleanor Francis du Pont, a fifth generation heiress to the family fortune. Rebuffed in his desire to take a senior position with the company, Rust moved his family to the rural community of Thomasville, Georgia. In between chores on the farm, Rust quietly formed a spectacular collection of classic U.S. covers, buying in sales throughout the 1950's and 60's. As an example of his collecting prowess, it was Rust who bought the 90c 1860 cover to Spain in the 1956 Caspary sale.



The 1971 Rust Sale  
*Sharing the catalogue marquee with other stamps and covers is the Rush 1847 cover, which was consigned to H. R. Harmer by the reclusive collector, Philip G. Rust of Georgia.*

Although at least two Harmer sales were held in Rust's name during his lifetime, he typically kept a low profile when selling. Some of the great 1847 covers in Siegel Rarities sales during the early 1980's were consigned by Rust. He would simply place them in an envelope and send it by registered mail.

When Rust passed away, his holdings were dispersed through auctions held by the Siegel and Kelleher firms. The quantity of 1847 Issue covers owned by Philip Rust over decades is truly staggering. Viewed as a whole, it is one of the greatest collections of 1847 covers ever formed.

The next collector to own the Rush 1847 cover was another gentleman who kept a low profile for many years. His name was Dr. Leonard Kapiloff, and he had been a close personal friend of Robert A. Siegel since the 1930's.



Dr. Leonard Kapiloff and  
Robert A. Siegel

*After receiving The Philatelic Foundation's  
Mortimer L. Neinken Award, Dr. Kapiloff  
(at left) speaks with Robert A. Siegel.*

"Doc" Kapiloff was a dentist by training, but he earned his livelihood from developing real estate. The only dentistry he practiced was volunteering at the free clinic. As he accumulated wealth, Dr. Kapiloff was able to enjoy philately by acquiring items that impressed him. Eventually he developed a profound interest in classic U.S. covers and, in particular, the 1847 Issue. When the Duane Garrett 1847 collection was offered privately in the early 1980's, Dr. Kapiloff stepped up and bought it intact. It was perhaps the last and greatest land grab in classic U.S. philately.

Dr. Kapiloff already owned many outstanding 1847 covers, including the Rush cover. Combined with the Garrett collection, he was able to form a spectacular exhibit for public display. He made his debut at Aripex in 1984 and took the Grand Award against stiff competition. That particular Aripex was organized with the help of the late Bob Paliafito, who leaned on his friends to make sure the best U.S. collections were shown.

The Kapiloff 1847 collection went on to win the Grand Prix International at ISRAPHIL in 1985. In 1992 he asked the Siegel firm to sell it, along with his 1851-57 collection. Held back from the sale were a few of his favorite covers, including the Rush 1847 cover.

Having traced the Rush cover's journey from 1848 to present, the Siegel firm will now join the Morgenthau, Ward and Harmer firms in offering what Ward and many others have called "the most important cover known to American Philately."

## Acknowledgments and Sources

The assistance of Richard F. Winter and Steven C. Walske in reviewing this manuscript and providing information was crucial to the author's interpretation of the complex routes, rates and regulations governing transatlantic mails. That said, any errors or omissions are entirely the responsibility of the author.

We are grateful to The National Postal Museum, The New York Public Library, The National Portrait Gallery (London) and The Philatelic Foundation for their cooperation in providing certain images.

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Rush, Richard—[www.nndb.com/people/601/000114259](http://www.nndb.com/people/601/000114259)





Lot 501  
Front and back

## *The Rush 1847 Cover*

Lot 501°

United States 1847 Issue

10¢ Black (2)

Positions 55-60L, horizontal strip of six with inter-pane sheet margin at right, Position 57L (third stamp from left) is the “Harelip” variety, mostly full to large margins except at bottom center where just barely into frame-lines, tied by multiple strikes of red “5” in circle cancel, matching “PHILAD<sup>A</sup>. RAILROAD” straightline handstamp applied at New York City post office on cover from Benjamin Rush in Philadelphia to his father, Richard Rush, the American minister to France, addressed to Paris with Benjamin’s instructions “*Via New York, British Mail Steamer of the 27th Septem. ‘Europa’*”, carried on the R.M.S. *Europa*, which departed from Cunard’s docks at Jersey City on Wednesday, September 27, 1848, and arrived in Liverpool, England, on October 9, red “10 OC 10 48” (October 10, 1848) receiving datestamp and matching “COLONIES/&c. ART. 13” Anglo-French accountancy handstamp applied at London post office, carried by rail to Dover, across the channel to Boulogne, and then by rail to Paris where “ANGL./3/BOULOGNE-S-MER/3/11 OCT 48” receiving datestamp was applied (also tying strip), manuscript “15” (grams) weight notation at upper left partly on stamp, manuscript “33” (decimes) due marking, additional notations on back possibly applied at Paris post office, docketed upon receipt “*B.R. [Benjamin Rush] Sep. 26 and copies inside of same date*”, small nicks in corners at top right and bottom left have been mended with paper and archival tape, the strip appears sound, but there is a horizontal crease across all stamps and a diagonal crease in the right stamp, which were present before the strip was affixed by the sender, they do not noticeably affect the appearance

VERY FINE. A STRIP OF SIX IS THE LARGEST MULTIPLE OF THE 10-CENT 1847 ISSUE KNOWN ON COVER. ONLY TWO COVERS ARE RECORDED, THIS BEING SIGNIFICANTLY MORE IMPORTANT AS AN 1848 RETALIATORY RATE USAGE. IN THE 1944 GIBSON SALE CATALOGUE, PHILIP H. WARD JR. DESCRIBED THIS REMARKABLE ARTIFACT OF POSTAL HISTORY AS “THE MOST IMPORTANT COVER KNOWN TO AMERICAN PHILATELY.”

Ex Seybold, Gibson, Rust and Kapiloff.

With Philatelic Foundation certificate.

Estimate \$1,000,000-1,500,000

Bid.

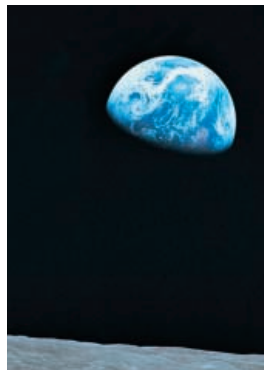
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Lot and Description	Bidding
Postal History, California Mails and Western Expre Carriers and Locals Group Lots <b>Lot 5010.</b> Carriers and Locals. More than 30 covers and a few off cover, 1840's, 50's and 60's, comprising General Issue Carriers incl. LO2, LO3, LO5 and Franklin plate proof on card, LO2 on small blue cover to Philadelphia "U.States" indicating origin f E. 1,500-2,000  <b>Sold for 3,500.00</b> <b>Your Bid 3,500.00</b>  <a href="#">1 sec refresh</a> <a href="#">3 sec</a> <a href="#">5 sec</a> <a href="#">Show Images</a>	<a href="#">Bid 3750</a> <a href="#">Bid 4000</a> <a href="#">Bid 4250</a> <a href="#">Bid 4500</a> <a href="#">Bid 4750</a> <a href="#">Bid 5000</a> <a href="#">Send a Message to the Auction Floor</a>

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Please remember that to participate in the auction, you must be pre-registered at Stamp Auction Network and approved by Siegel Auction Galleries as a bidder. Qualified bidders will see a page like the one illustrated above and have a valid paddle number assignment.

**Important Note for Live Internet Bidders:** If you are bidding, please set the screen refresh rate to "1 sec refresh," which is located at the bottom left corner of your screen.

Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc.  
Prices Realized for  
Sale 912 5/13/2006 The Rush 1847 Cover

Lot#	Realized
501	1,200,000

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