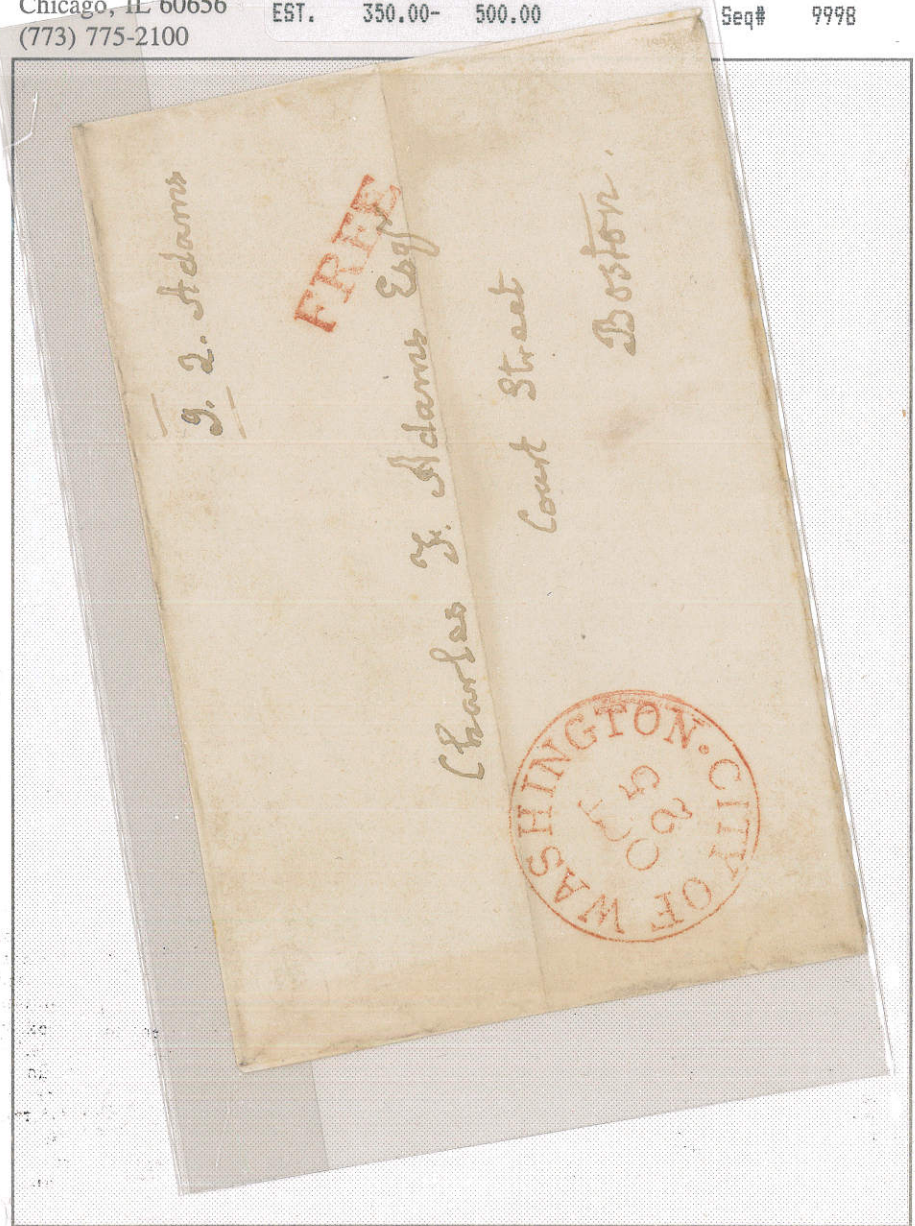


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J. Q. Adams free frank on full front,
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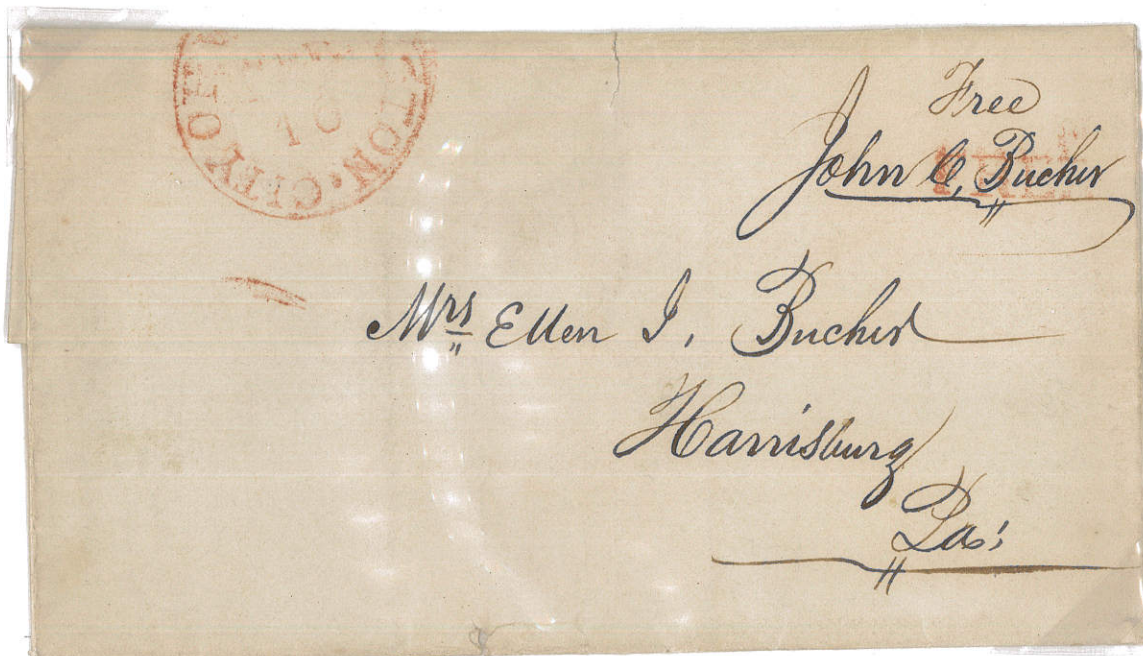
Hammer Price 280

Bidder Number F4

U.S. OFFICIAL MAIL
The Free Franking Privilege and the Official Stamps Issue

The franking privilege for congressmen and other governmental departments allowed them to send mail free of postage by stating such and signing their names. Two examples are the folded letter and cover below. An Act of Congress in March, 1873 abolished this privilege and authorized the issuance of official stamps for each department.

These "Departmental stamps," printed by the Continental Bank Note Company in conjunction with the regular "Bank Note" series, were issued in July, 1873, replaced by the penalty envelope in 1879 and declared obsolete in July, 1884. The official stamps and some representative covers are displayed on the following pages.

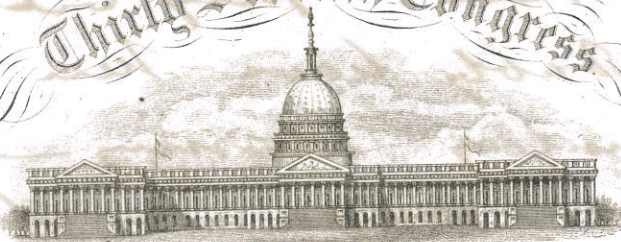


U.S. OFFICIAL MAIL with FREE FRANKING PRIVILEGE

This beautifully engraved and illustrated cover and letter were mailed from Washington, D.C. in February, 1863. The cover with an over-all gray design, signifies it is official business of the House of Representatives of the 37th Congress. The letter head displays a fine engraving of their building in Washington, D.C.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Thirty Seventh Congress



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Washington City Feb 28 1863

I enclose copy
been in

I have

Whether
all

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



37TH CONGRESS

I enclose copy
Supt
Cincinnati
Ohio

via Parkersburg }

home over our Route.
I hope you will have
a good car at Belton

U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE OF 1873-1879
Executive Department Proofs on Cardboard

The free franking privilege for governmental departments was abolished by act of congress in 1873, and special stamps were issued July 1, 1873 for use by each department. These stamps were replaced in 1879 by the penalty envelope which is still in use. All nine departments were issued their own stamps. All except those issued for the Post Office Department, which depicted numerals, pictured the same busts used on the regular stamps issued at that time.

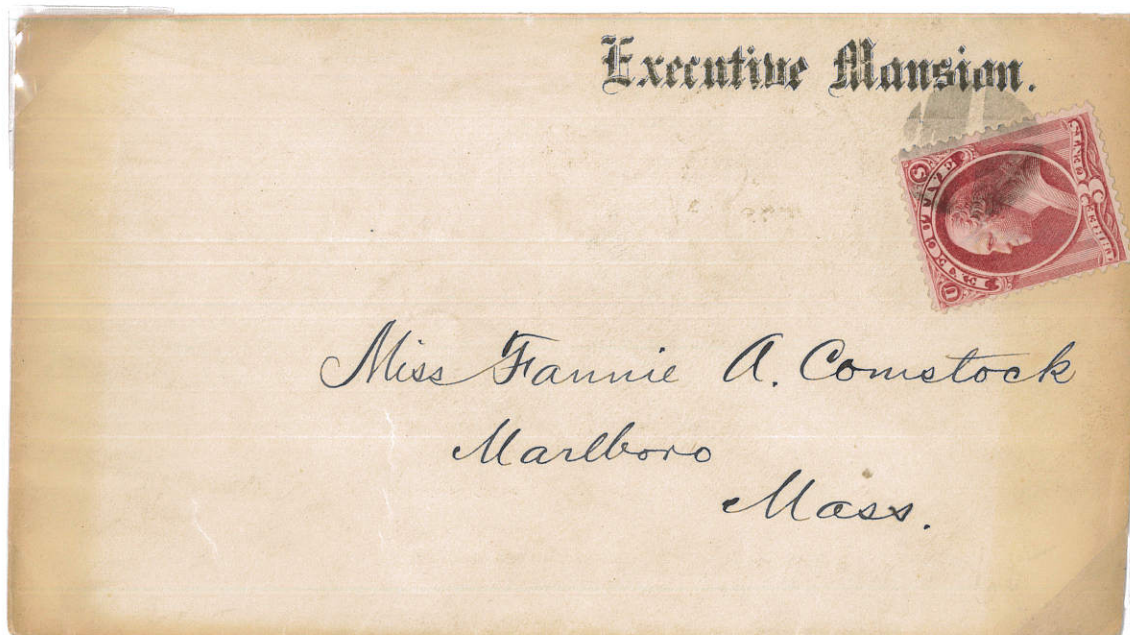


U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
Executive Department Issue
Printed by the Continental Bank Note Company

Plates of 100 subjects were used for all stamps except the lower values in the War, Treasury and Post Office Departments; and the dollar values in the State Department Issue, which were issued in plates of ten.



A 3-cent stamp on a cover from the Executive Mansion -- possibly during President Arthur's administration, dated by the 2.9cm width of the very dim Washington Cds.
A faint Marlboro receiving stamp is present on the back but is also undated.



U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
The Interior Department Issue
Printed by the Continental Bank Note Company



U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
Interior Department Proofs on Cardboard



U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
Interior Department Covers

These U.S. Land Office covers, one mailed in 1884 for 2-cent postage was unclaimed and returned (shown with enclosure), and the other in 1882 still required 3-cents.

(4-343.)

U. S. Land Office,

Springfield, Mo.

unclaimed &

Department of the
UNITED STATES LAND
Office,
Springfield, Mo.

Any person using this envelope to avoid
postage on private matter of any kind
is subject to a fine of Three Hundred Dollars.
Return if not called for in 10 days.



1884.

Returned to writer

1878.

ed by law

Andrew Cutbirth



Department of the Interior,
UNITED STATES LAND OFFICE,
Independence, Kansas.

Any person using this envelope to avoid the payment of
postage on private matter of any kind will be sub-
ject to a fine of Three Hundred Dollars.

*W.E. Hogue and Dry
Males Center*

Raus.

This envelope, without postage stamps, can only be
used for correspondence with the Executive Departments
and officers of the United States.

Return if not called for in 10 days

Department of the Interior,

UNITED STATES LAND OFFICE,

Wa-Keeny, Kansas.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS.

Any person using this envelope to avoid the payment of postage on private matter of any kind will be subject to a fine of Three Hundred Dollars.



Leory Judd, Esq.

Leory Judd, Esq.

Ellis Co.

Kansas



If not called for in ten days, return to

W. S. Land Office,

GAINESVILLE, FLA.

JOHN S. BANKS,
Register.

S. F. HALLIDAY,
Receiver.

George H. Howard
Charlotte Harbor

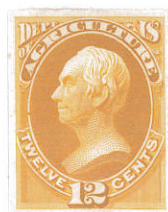
Florida

1.30

This envelope, without postage stamps, can only be used for correspondence with the Executive Departments and officers of the United States.

Two large Interior Department covers, each paying a double or triple rate.

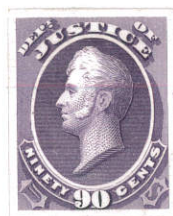
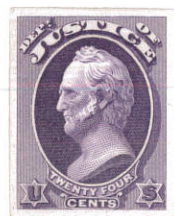
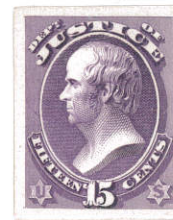
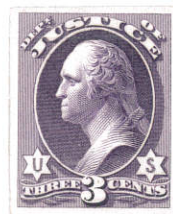
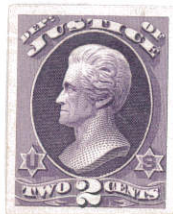
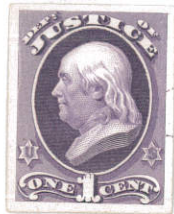
U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
Agriculture Department Proofs on Cardboard



U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
Agriculture Department Issue
Printed by the Continental Bank Note Company



U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
Justice Department Proofs on Cardboard



U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
The Justice Department Issue
Printed by the Continental Bank Note Company



U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
State Department Proofs on Cardboard



U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
The State Department Issue
Printed by the Continental Bank Note Company

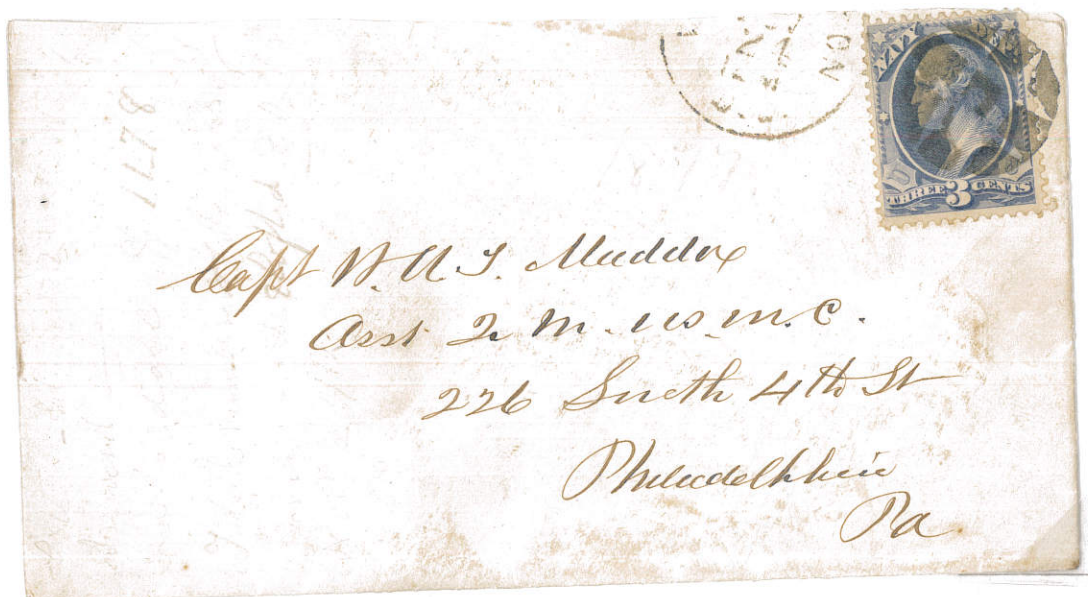


U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
State & Navy Department Covers

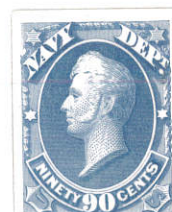
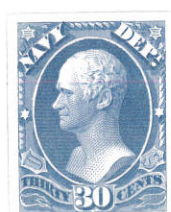
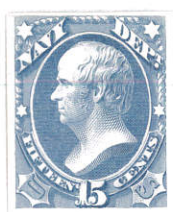
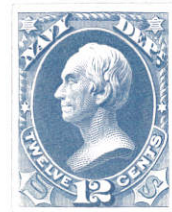
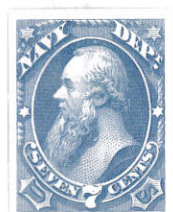
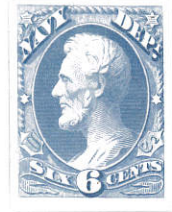
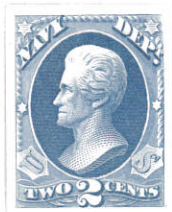
A 3-cent State Department stamp pays the regular first class rate on a cover canceled in Washington, D.C. and with a stamped "Department of State" corner card.



A 3-cent Navy official stamp on this small cover addressed to a Marine Corp. officer has a fancy negative "#" cancel, a Washington Cds and a Philadelphia receiving backstamp.



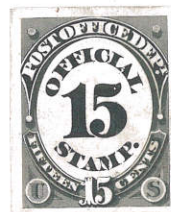
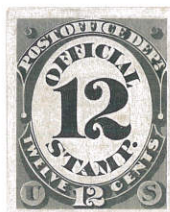
U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
Navy Department Proofs on Cardboard



U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
The Navy Department Issue
Printed by the Continental Bank Note Company



U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
Post Office Proofs on Cardboard



U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
The Post Office Department Issue
Printed by the Continental Bank Note Company

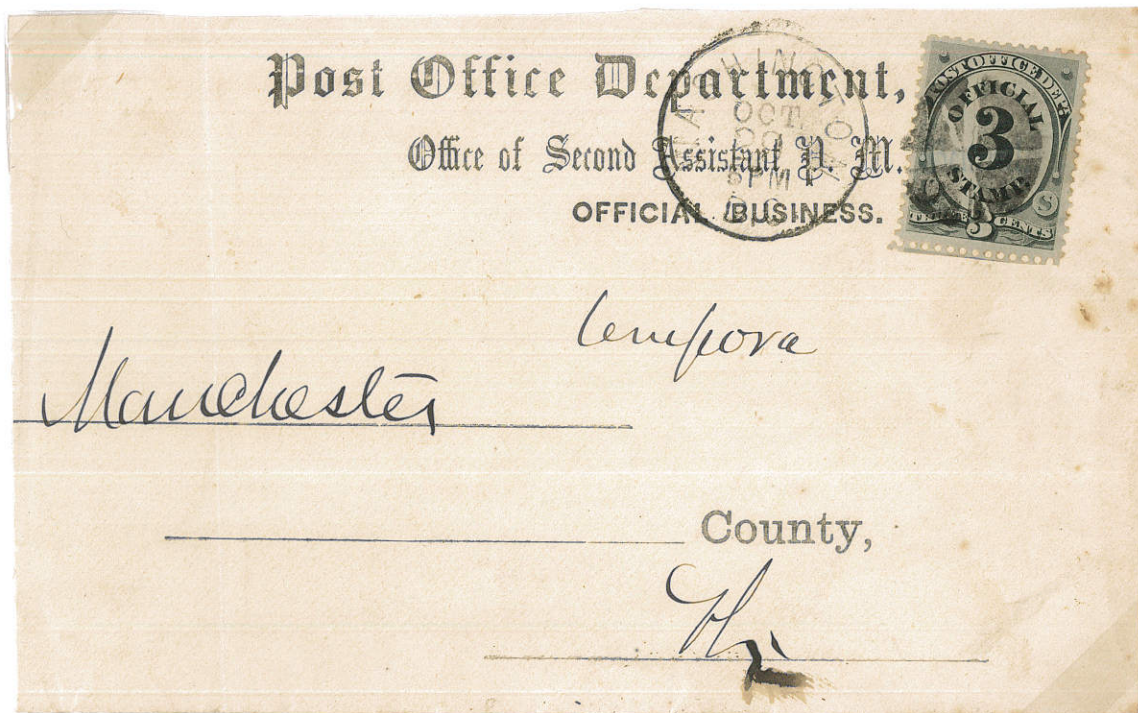


U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUES of 1873-1879
Post Office Department Covers

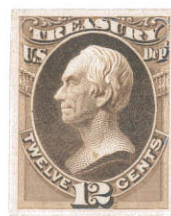
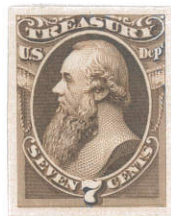
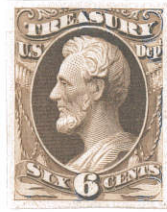
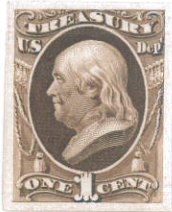
3-cent stamp on returned letter cover from Washington, with content letter displayed.



Letter from 2nd Assistant Postmaster in Washington, D.C. with 3-cent franking.



U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
Treasury Department Proofs on Cardboard

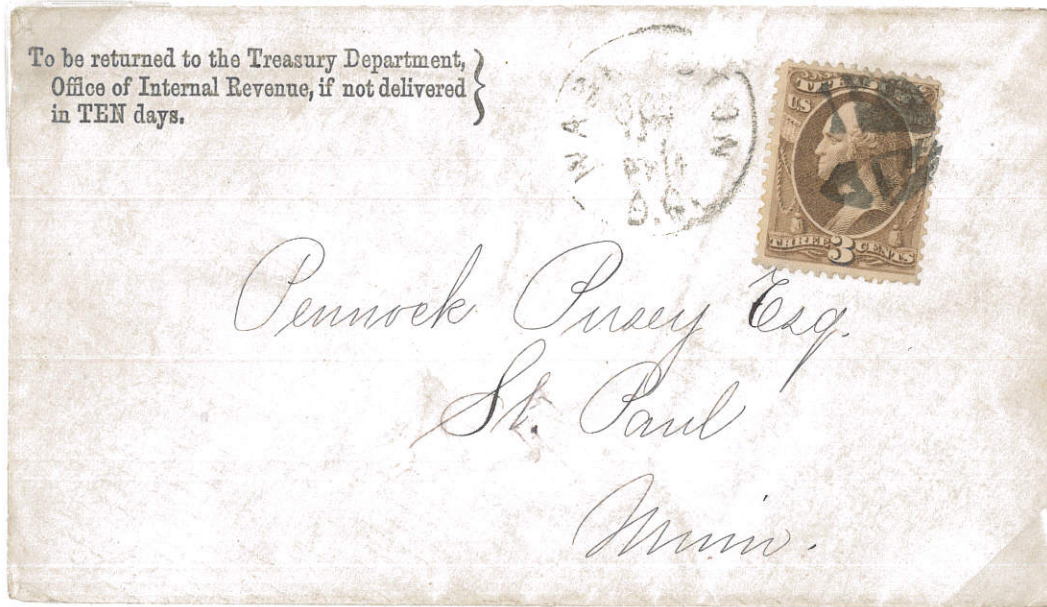


U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
The Treasury Department Issue
Printed by the Continental Bank Note Company

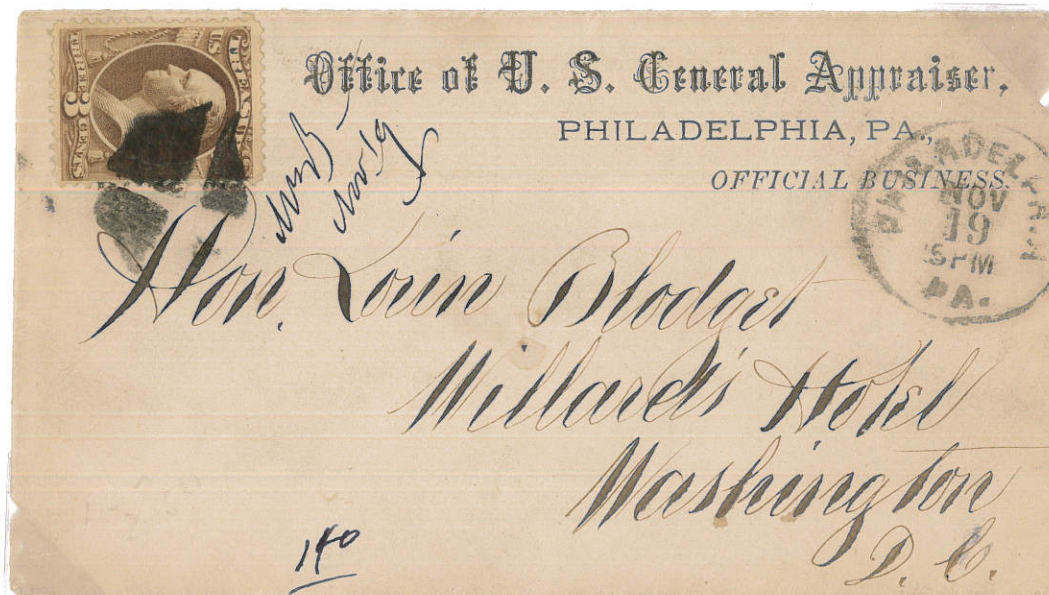


U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
Treasury Department Covers

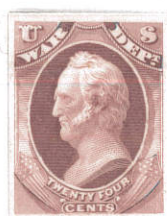
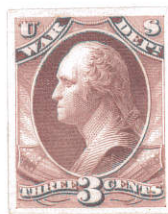
3-cent stamp on a single-rate Internal Revenue Service Cover from Washington, D.C.



3-cent stamp on a General Appraiser cover from Philadelphia.



U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
War Department Proofs on Cardboard

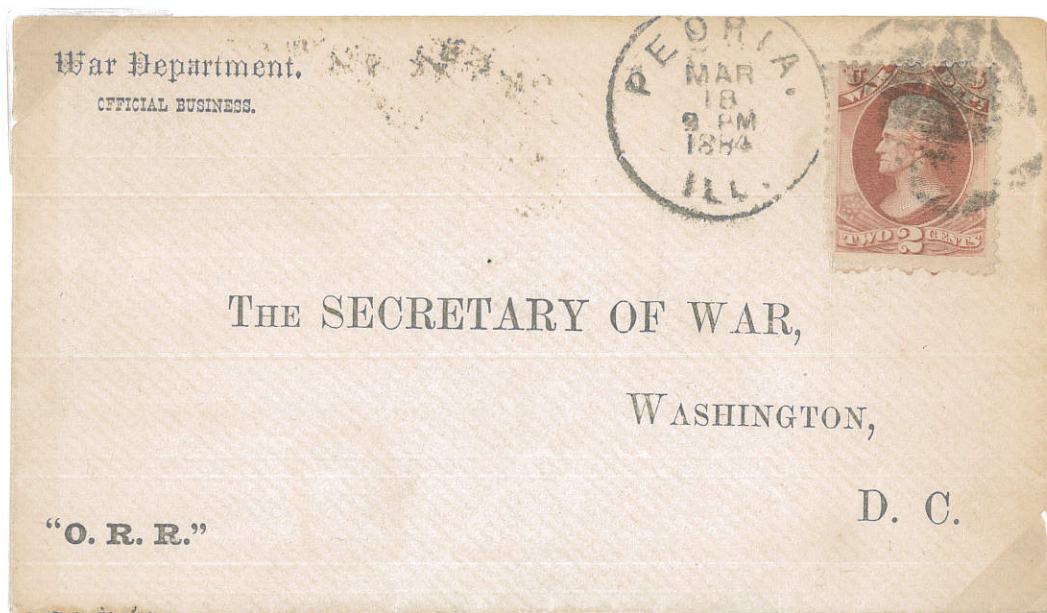


U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
The War Department Issue
Printed by the Continental Bank Note Company



U.S. OFFICIAL ISSUE of 1873-1879
War Department Covers

2-cent stamp pays the new first-class rate from Peoria to Washington, D.C. in 1884.



6-cent cover from Washington, D.C. pays double 3 cent first-class rate in effect in 1881.



450