

## Black Jack Envelopes and Wrappers

Two cent envelopes and wrappers were necessitated by the Act of March 3, 1863 which raised the postal rate for drop letters and unsealed printed matter to 2¢ effective July 1, 1863.

The **drop rate** (for mail to within city of posting) had been 1¢ from 1855 to 1863 and was increased to 2¢. This new rate was not an increase for larger cities since it combined the previous 1¢ drop letter rate with the 1¢ carrier fee, charged in 49 larger cities to deliver mail to individual houses or businesses.

**Unsealed printed matter rate** also rose from 1¢ to 2¢ for up to 4 oz. or up to 3 circulars.

The first issue Black Jack die had 'POSTAGE' spelled out. Envelopes were produced only on buff (cotton fiber) paper and wrappers only on manila paper.

Particularly significant items noted with red frame.

Exhibit outline	
Page	
1	<b>Introduction</b>
2	<b>First Design</b>
2	Essays; Trial colors
3	Drop letters
4,5	Commercial usage, advertising
6	<b>Design change - Second Design</b>
7	Working die types
8	Orange & amber paper
9	Earliest known uses
10,11	Drop uses
12	Precancelled and reuse
13	Commercial usage with advertising
14	Uses to foreign countries
15	Promoting use of stamped envelopes
16	Return request and business cards





The Andrew Jackson bust may have been chosen for two cent stamps and envelopes because, though from Tennessee, he was remembered for his efforts to preserve and strengthen the Union, particularly his toast:

*"Our Federal Union: It must be preserved."*

More likely, a Jackson bust was chosen by James Macdonough of the National Bank Note Company when the Postmaster General requested a 2¢ stamp design "which shall be different from those now in use, as to readily distinguishable from them without reference to color." The National Bank Note Company had dies of the Jackson head from past use and then Nesbitt then needed to issue postal stationery with a similar subject design.



**Essay**

Down stroke touches but does not merge with bottom stroke

**Final Design**

Down stroke merges with bottom stroke

**Essay Trial Colors printed on envelope paper**

The items shown are an essays used for approval and to print trial colors. This essay was not used in regular envelope or wrapper production.

Two or three of each color reported



Blue



Blue green



Green



Red Brown



Brown



Albino



Vermillion



Orange



Dark Purple



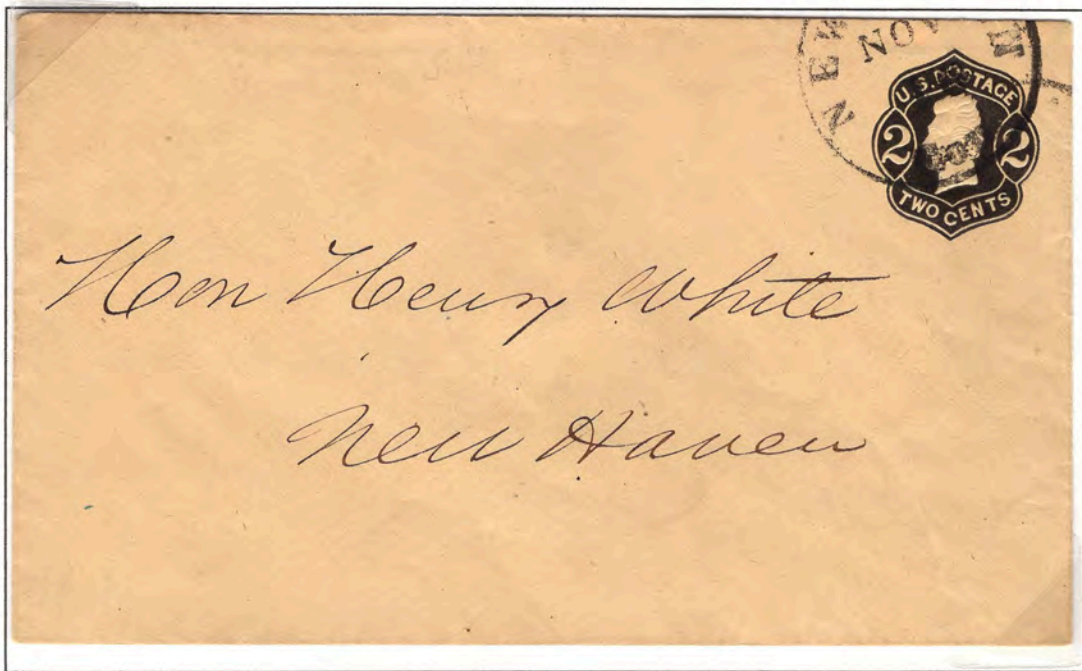
Black



Some catalogs list the die at left as a second type of the "POSTAGE" die (with down-stroke of '2' touching but not merging with the bottom stroke) on both white and orange paper. Only 5 or 6 copies of each are reported and no used copies are known. The envelope knife is not known used for any issued items of this die. It is believed that this is a proof (essay) rather than an issued item.



Drop letters are those handed into a post office for delivery to an addressee at the same post office. They are much less common than 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> class usages. They are identified by sealed envelopes (these envelopes have glue on the top flap) addressed to city of cancel, to 'city' or without city and state as part of address. Mommsen reported that only 11% of Black Jack covers from Vermont were drop uses.



This envelope was cancelled in New Haven, CON and addressed to New Haven. While an ungummed envelope (for commercial unsealed letter rate) this envelope was sealed with wax and is therefore a drop letter.



Black Jack envelopes were more commonly used for first class with a 1¢ stamp added. In the survey of Vermont Black Jack envelopes, Mommsen reported twice as many uprated covers as drop covers. Though, both uses are uncommon.





By far the most common use for Black Jack Envelopes was by businesses. Envelopes were issued without gum for 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Class mailings (which needed to be sent unsealed).

Earliest reported use of Black Jack envelope, July 24, 1863 to Gleggarry Co, (Ontario) Canada (Canada West).

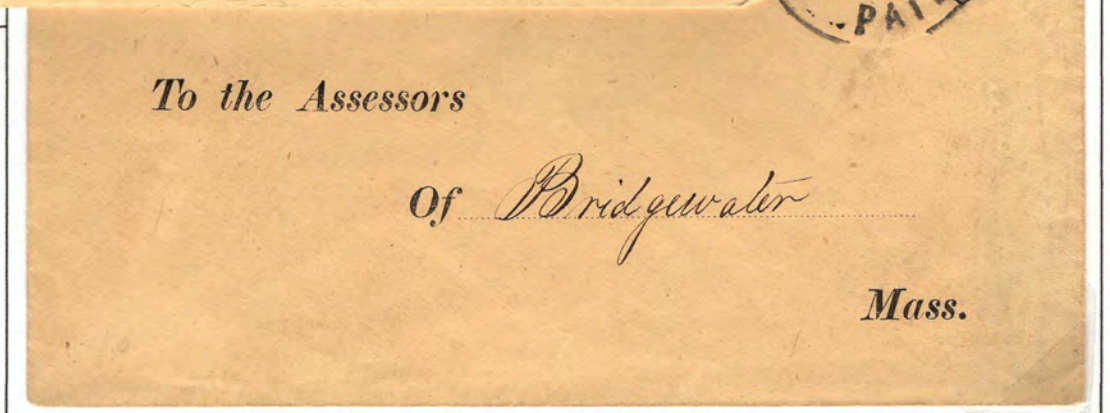
Foreign uses of Black Jack envelopes for 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> class mail are scarce.



Lancaster, CW receiving stamp



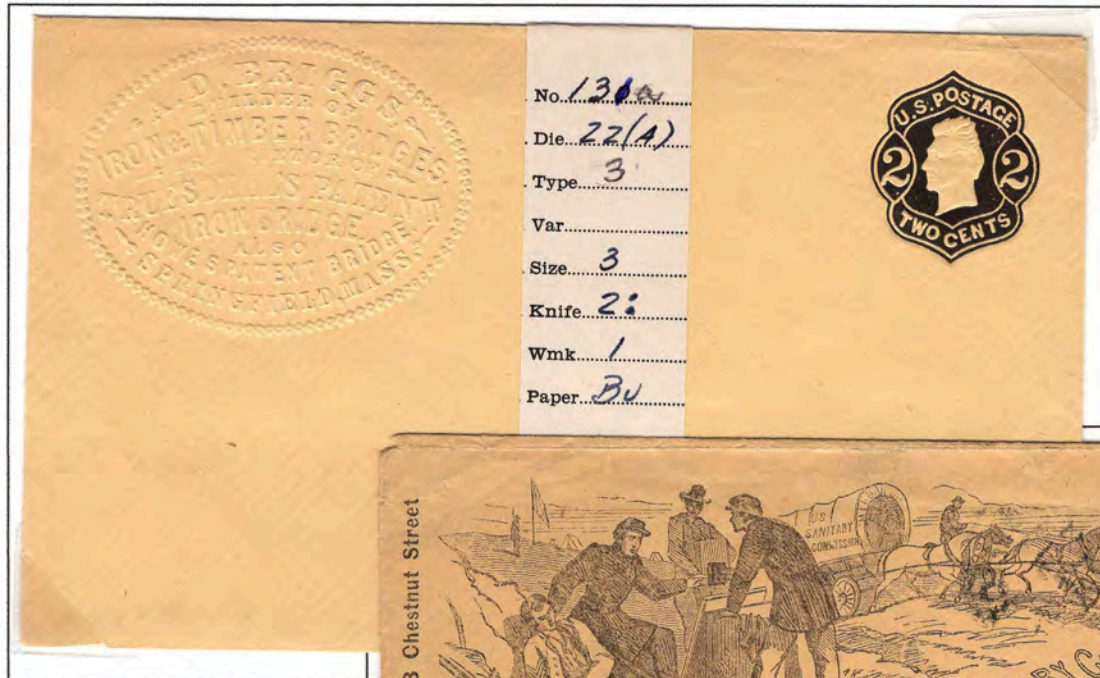
4<sup>th</sup> class used commercially for mailing pricelist (included).



Bulk mailing from State Office to local tax assessors.

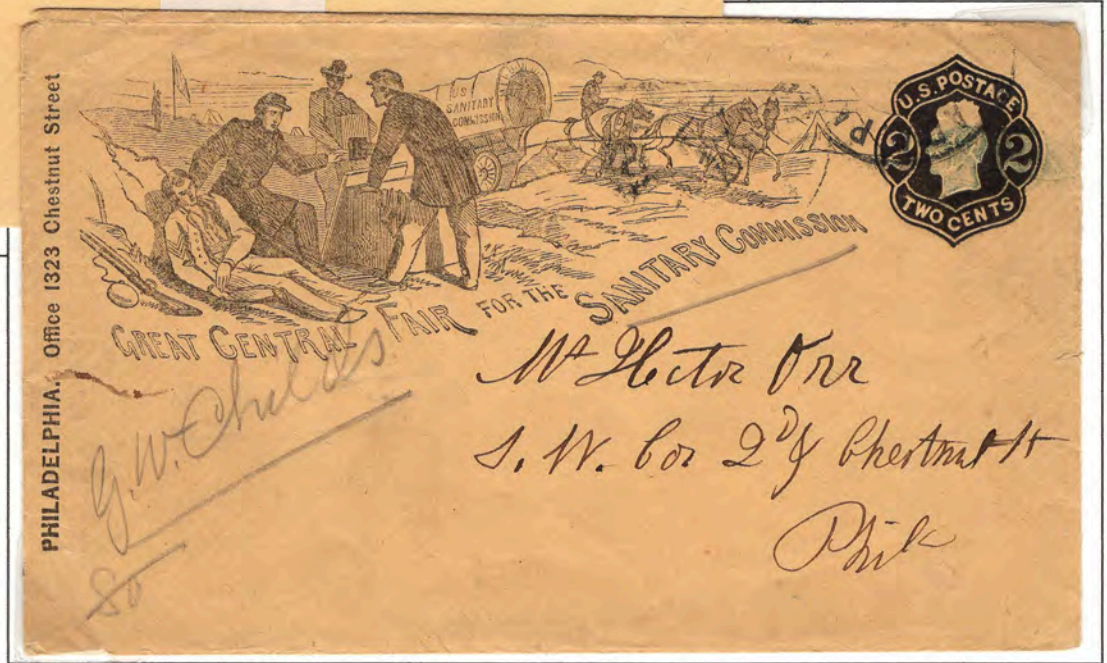


Envelopes for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> class use often had return addresses and sometimes embossing or additional advertising.



Embossed advertising for bridge builder in Springfield, MA. The embossing is only on envelope front, so each envelope was opened and embossed individually.

Advertising for a "Sanitary Fair" to raise funds for the United States Sanitary Commission, a privately funded group which provided medical supplies, sanitary articles, and care for sick and wounded. The Sanitary Fair in Philadelphia was in the summer of 1864.



Earliest recorded printed advertising on a wrapper.

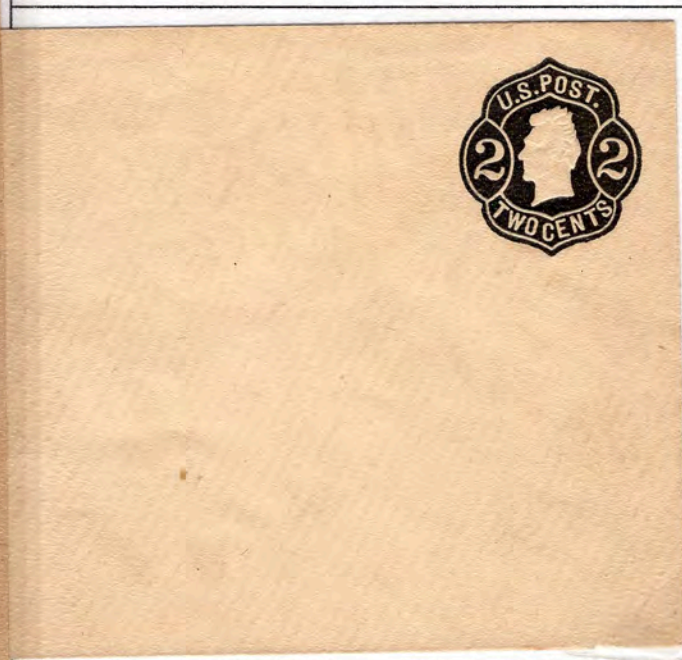
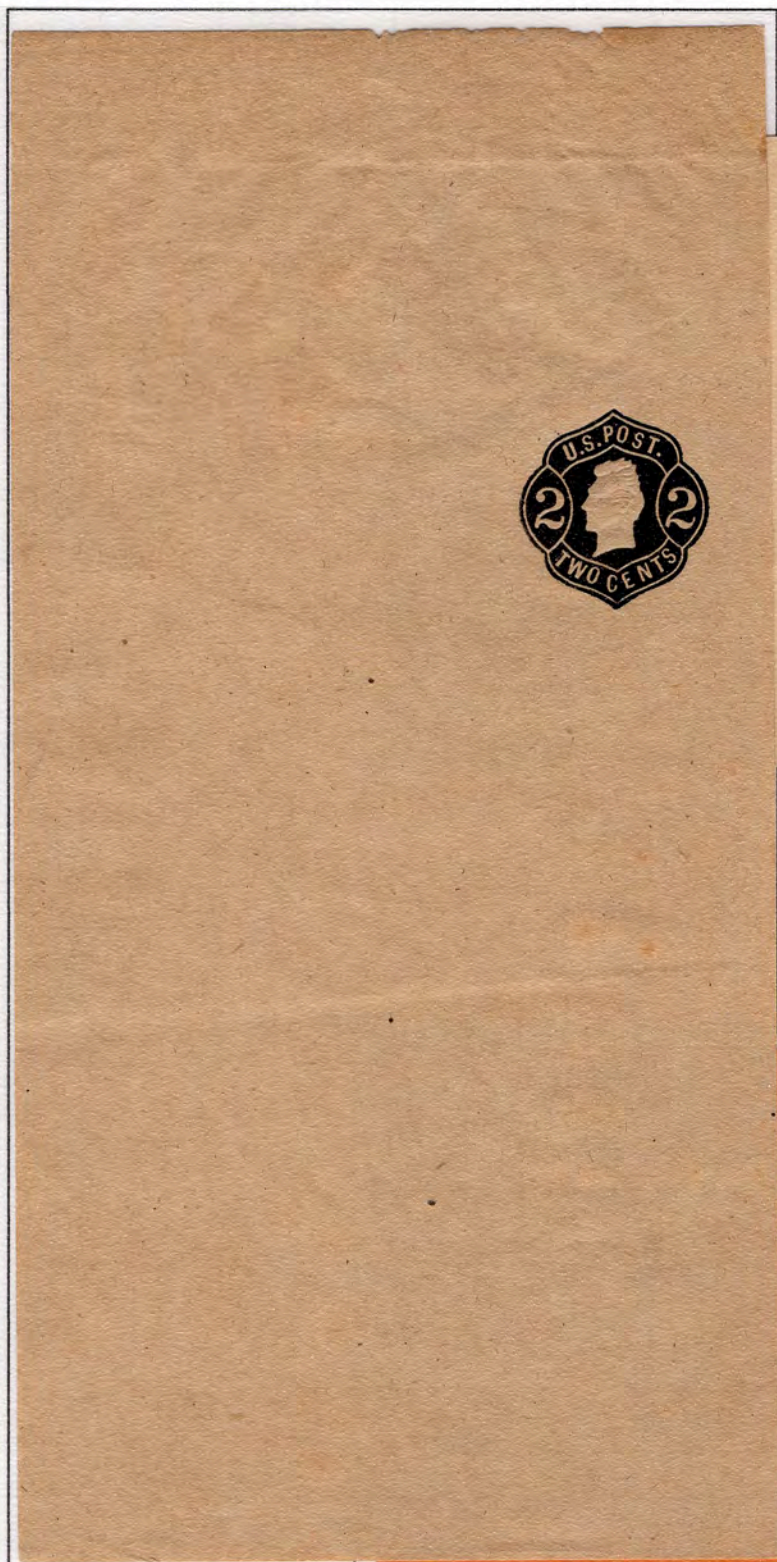
Only reported copy



## Second Design "POST" Die

In 1864 Nesbitt, negotiated a new contract with Congress and the Post Office due to increased paper costs. The contract required changed dies. New Black Jack dies with "POST" rather than "POSTAGE" were issued in 1865 and used until the end of this contract in 1870. No essays or proofs are known for this redesigned die.

Two master dies were used for the frame: narrow (25 mm or less, upper envelope & wrapper) and wide (25.5 mm or more, lower envelope).



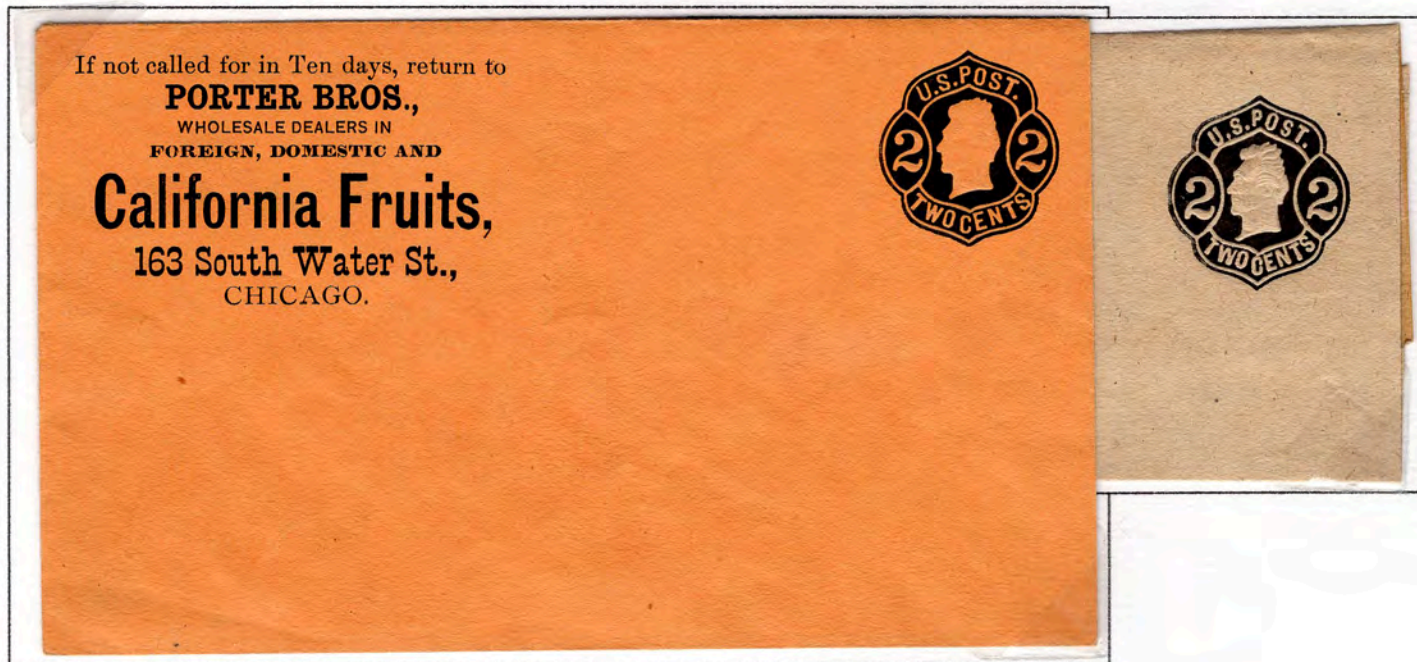
This was the first use of orange paper for a U.S. postal contract. Orange paper was a third quality paper made from reused cotton rags. The best rags were used for white paper, dirtier rags for buff paper and then the orange coloring covered the most dirt and stains.



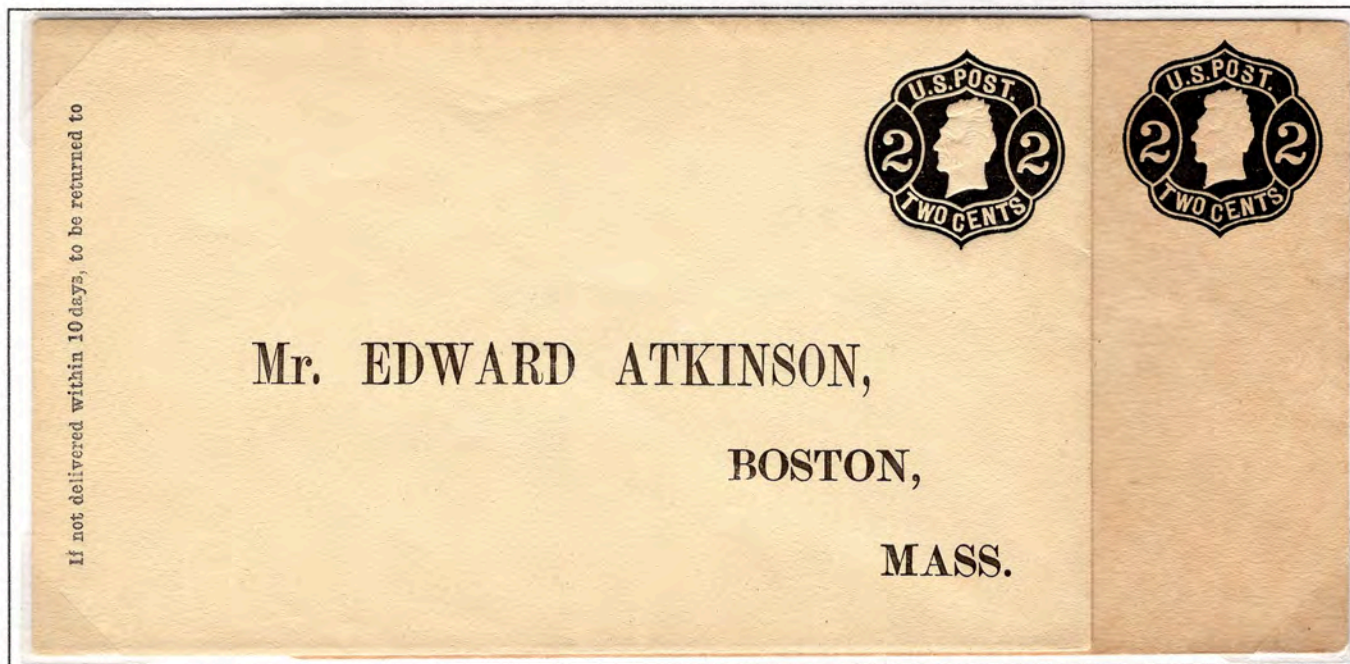


At this time, working dies differed because they were made individually by stamping the master bust die, then the master frame die (so the bust position varied relative to the frame), and then the letters individually (so spacing and position of the letters varied). There are 7 working dies of the "Postage" die, 112 types of the narrow "Post" die and 121 types of the wide "Post" die. While the objective of this exhibit is not to illustrate working die types, below are examples of die variations for the narrow and wide "Post" die. Note differences in front tip of bust relative to "TWO" and spacing of letters.

Narrow working dies



Wide working dies

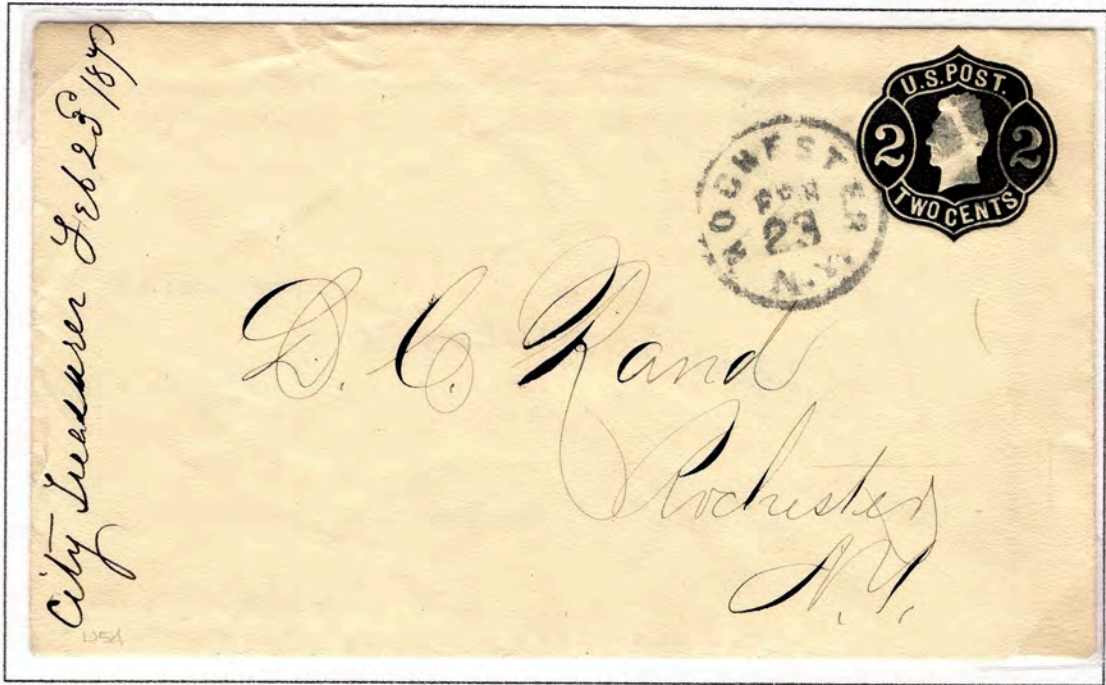




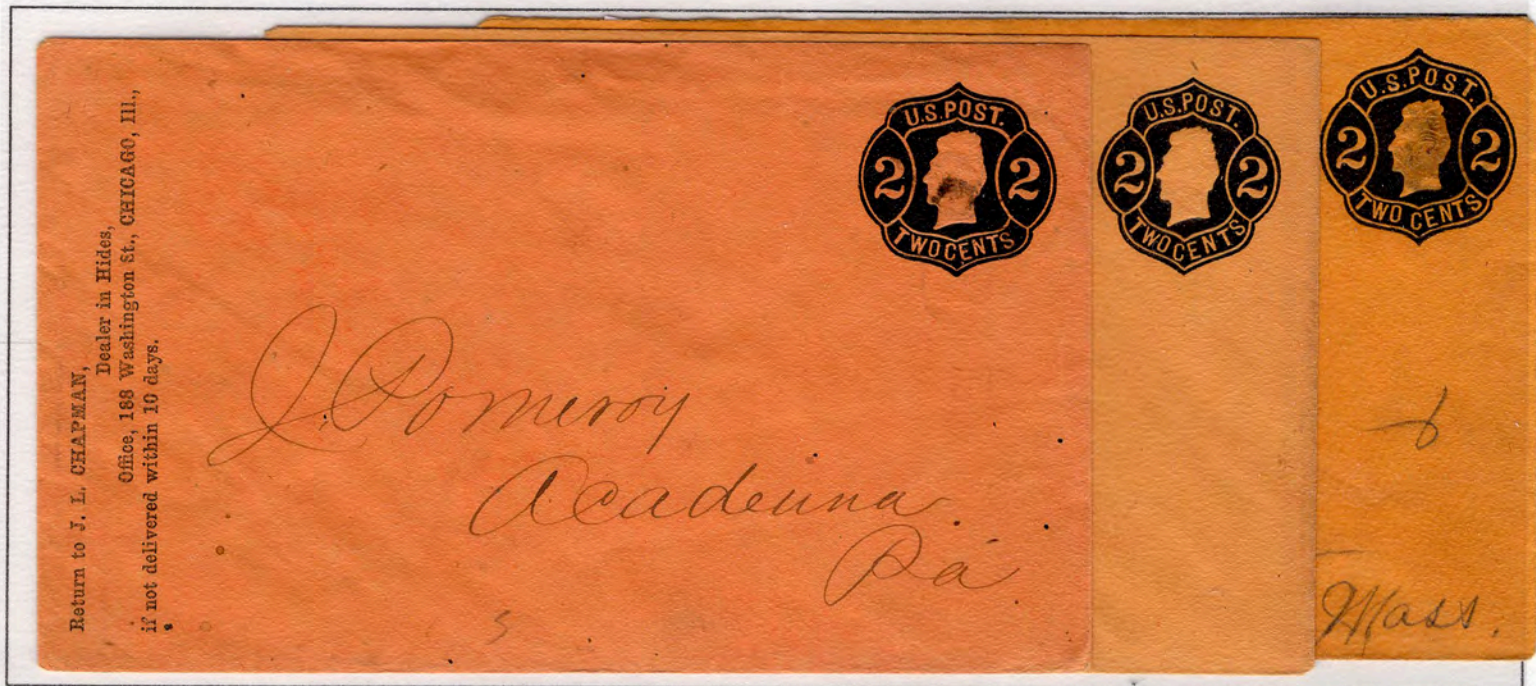
Second Design "POST" Die

Paper types

Amber paper is newly presented. This paper is paper not noted in PO records, being a variant of buff paper. Amber paper is a lighter shade than buff and has a harder, more finished surface.



Orange paper, being of third quality, had a wide range of color shades as shown below.



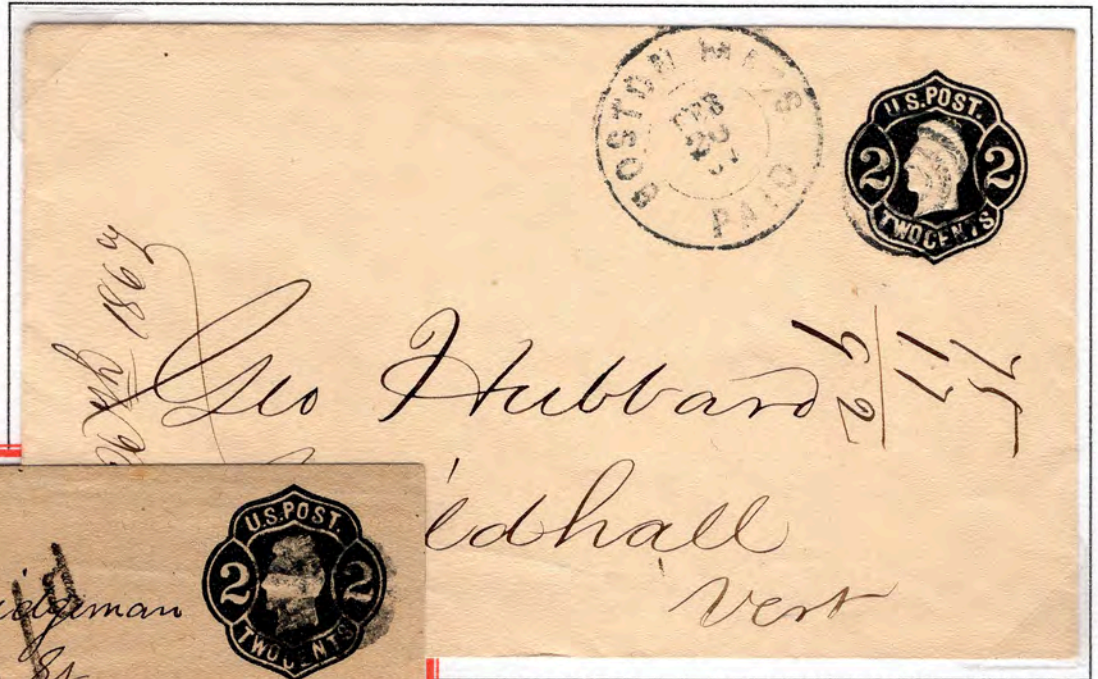


**Second Design "POST" Die**

*Earliest Known Uses*

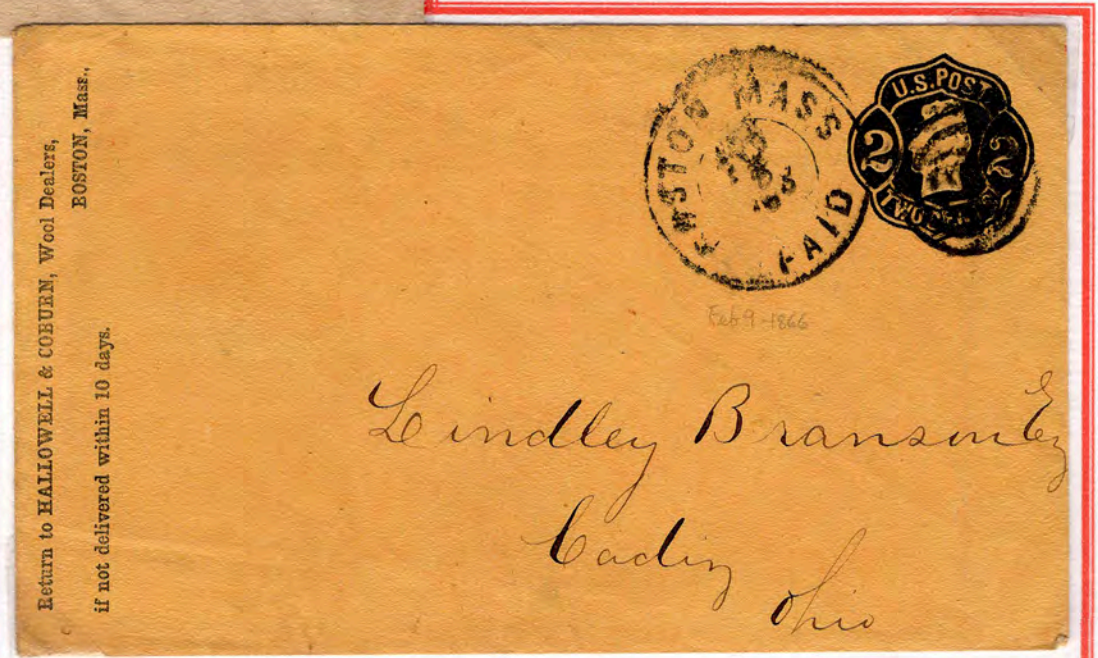
Most Black Jack envelopes and wrappers cannot be dated because U.S. cancels for second and third class mail generally did not have a month or year date. While the second design was thought to have been issued in 1865, no uses are dated before 1866.

**Earliest known use of narrow die on buff paper envelope, Feb. 26, 1867** dated by double circle BOSTON MASS PAID cds; to Guildhall, Vermont.



**Earliest known date of wrapper use sent to England and dated by Norwich receiving stamp (at lower left) of Aug. 31, 1867.** Marked one penny due (1<sup>d</sup>) in black.

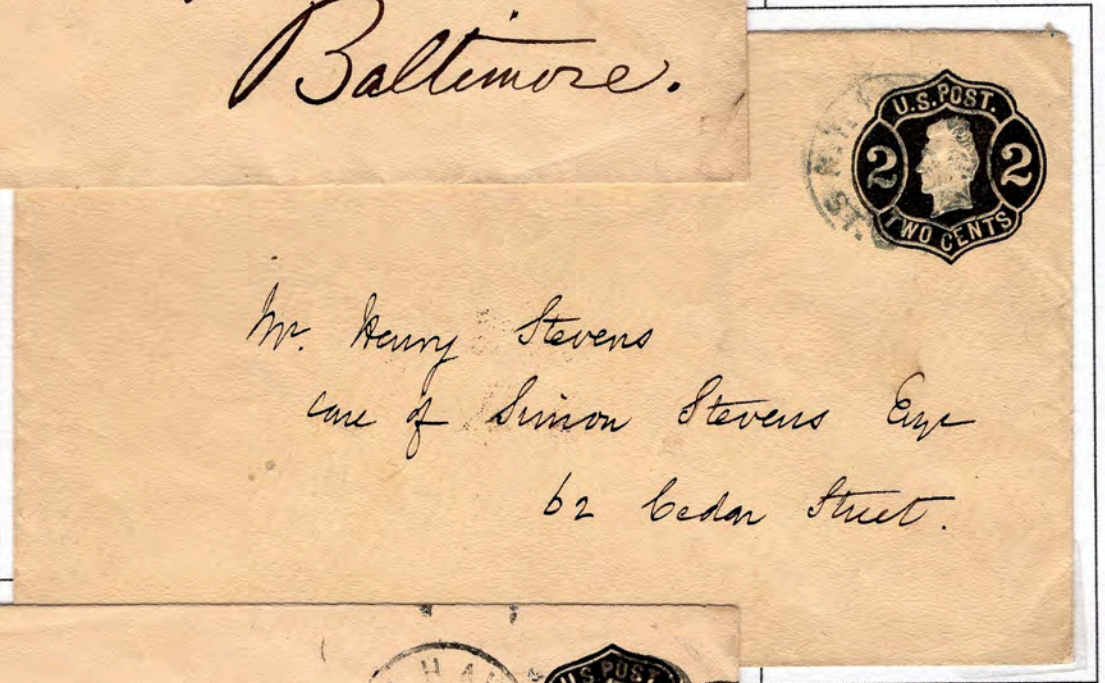
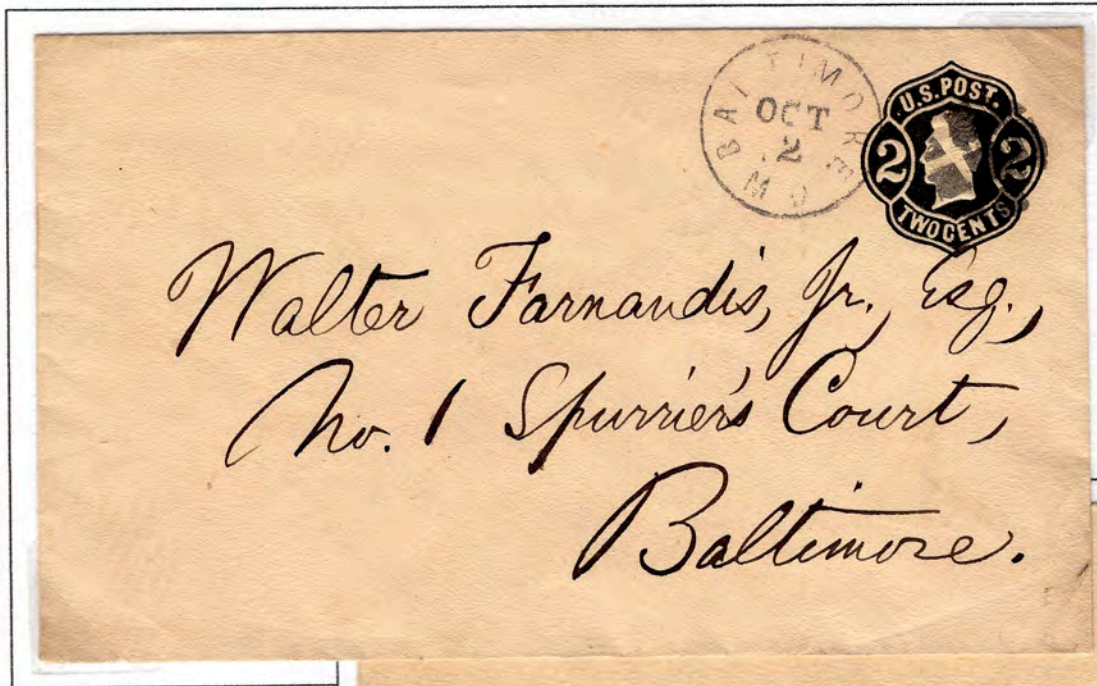
**Earliest known use of second design on orange paper envelope Feb. 9, 1866** dated by double circle BOSTON MASS PAID cds; to Coding, Ohio.





Black Jack envelope drop uses are not common. In fact, when the drop rate was reduced to 1¢ on March 3, 1865 for all post offices without free delivery, commercial sales quickly overcame the reduced purpose to increase Black Jack envelope sales by the Post Office.

Drop uses can be identified by sealed envelopes addressed to city of cancel or without city and state as part of address.



Return to OFFICE OF COLLECTOR INTERNAL REVENUE, NEW HAVEN, Conn., if not delivered within 10 days.



Wrapper with form printed inside used to request delivery of books from Mercantile Library of New York.

This pre-printed wrapper and local stamp were purchased at the library beginning in 1865. The customer filled out the form and **mailed the wrapper with preprinted address to the library.** Requested books would be delivered from the library for a fee of five cents paid by the local stamp.

**Folio** *L 483*

} Returns.....

Wants one of the following:

.....

.....

.....

Name *W. G. Lambert Jr* Address, *58 West 52 St*

**RULES TO BE OBSERVED IN USING STAMPED ORDERS.**

1. Write your name and address very distinctly in ink.
2. Never apply for a book the title of which you do not find in the Library Catalogue, or in one of its Supplements.
3. Be careful to give the names of the Authors of all books applied for except Novels.
4. Put the names of several books on every order. One of the books named will then be promptly sent. If your order bears the name of one book only, it may remain in the Library for weeks before the book can be procured.
5. Have the Return Book ready for the Carrier when he calls for it.
6. Address rec

Drop this in any P. O. Box.

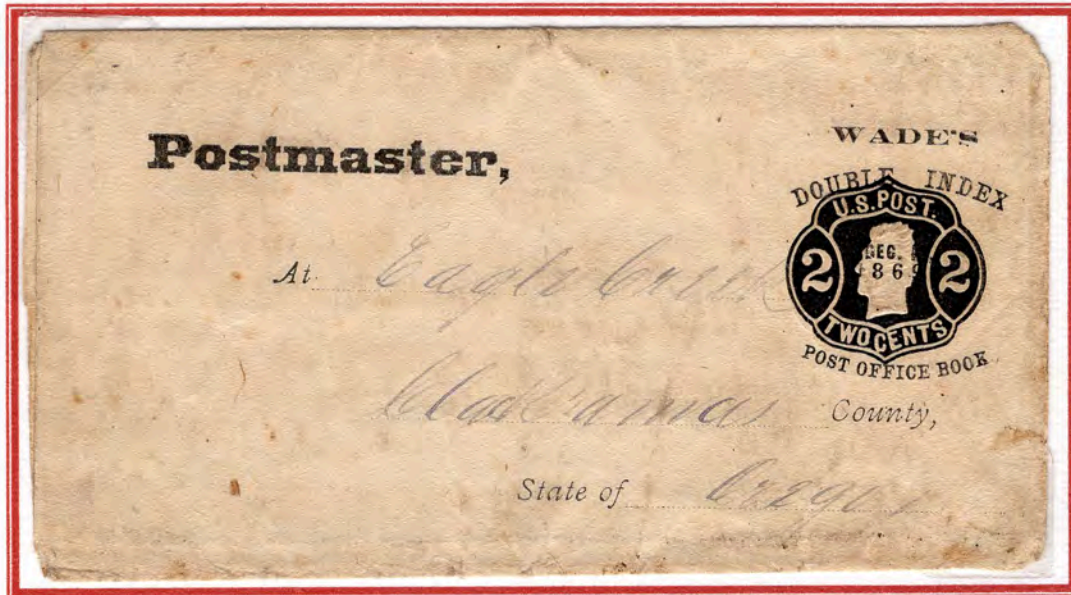
**MERCANTILE LIBRARY,**  
Astor Place,  
City.





First Precancelled Postal Stationery known

One of two reported usages of earliest precanceled wrapper



This wrapper is the **earliest U.S. precanceled wrapper** or envelope known. A.B. Wade was postmaster at South Bend, Indiana during the latter 1860's. On the side he was a publisher of account books for keeping post-office records. The wrappers were used to mail circulars, prospectuses, or sample pages promoting the accounting books to various postmasters. The 'WADE'S/DOUBLE INDEX/POST OFFICE BOOK' and the date of 'Dec 11, 1869' were preprinted precancels. 'Postmaster' and 'at,' 'County,' and 'State of' address lines, were also separately preprinted. This wrapper was sent to a postmaster in Eagle Creek, Oregon.

Turned covers are less common from Northern States than in the South.

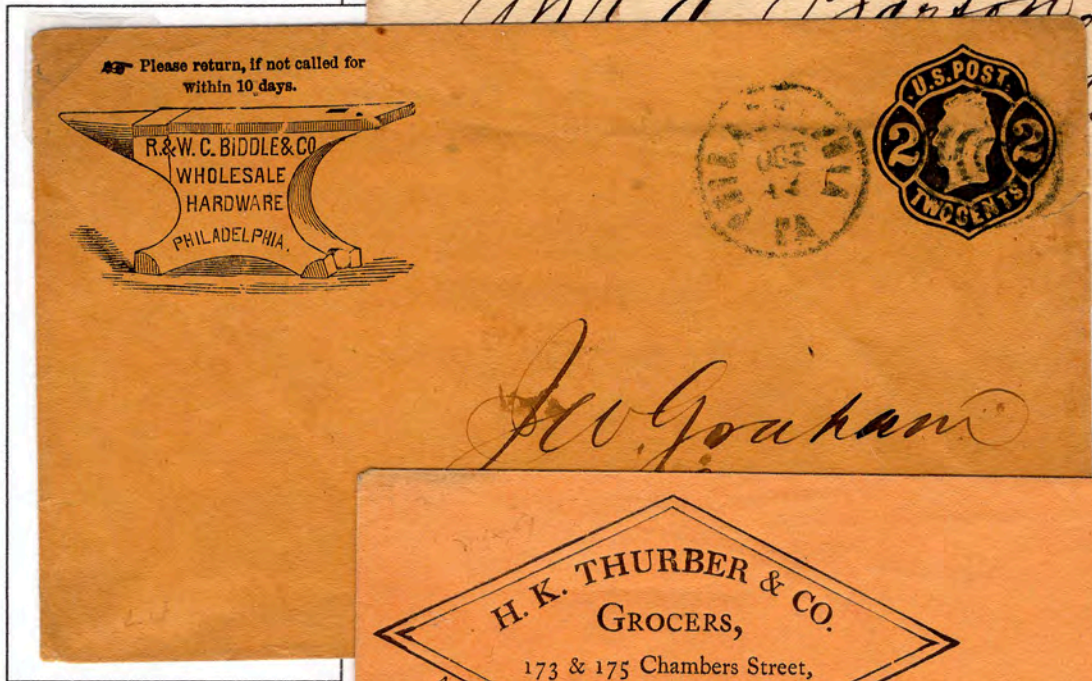


Envelope first addressed to E.S. Merrill in Lowville, NY, then turned and mailed to an individual in Turin, Lewis Co, NY with 3¢ stamp added for first class.

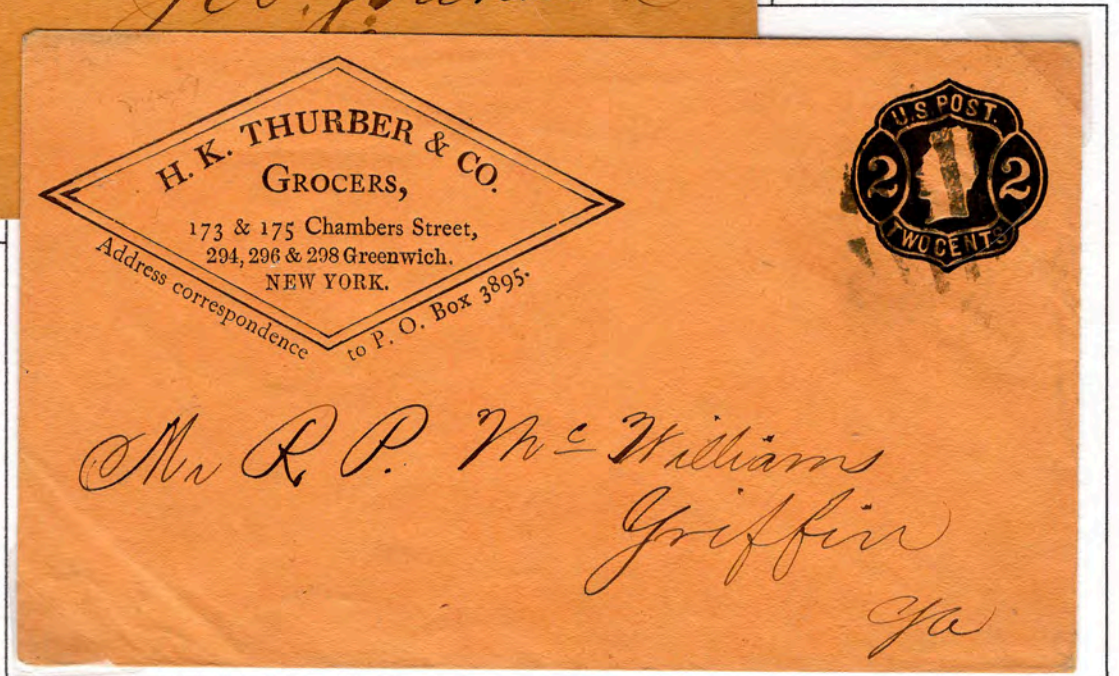


Envelopes used for mailing pricelists and other advertising often had advertising printed on the outside of the envelope.

Advertising came on top flap.



Engraved designs are even less common.





## Second Design "POST" Die

Uses to Foreign Countries

Uses of the Black Jack envelopes and wrapper to foreign countries are extremely scarce in this pre-UPU period.

Sent by Cusachs & Ogden (per backstamp) August 30 from New Orleans, LA to **Barcelona, Spain** with partial New Orleans duplex circular date stamp. On arrival in Spain, stamped with 'Barcelona, 16 Sep' receiving stamp on back and blue Spanish " $\frac{1}{2}$  Rs" postage due handstamp.



Backstamp



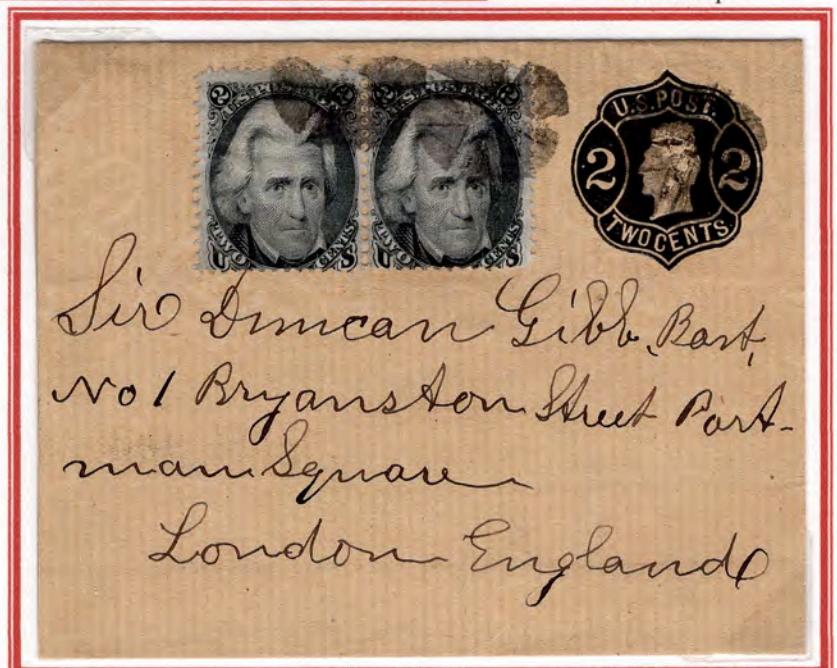
Envelope carried on the St. Pereire French vessel leaving New York Sept 22, 1866 and arriving in Bordeaux on Oct 4 (per back stamp below). Earliest known use of wide die on buff paper



Backstamp

ca. 1868 (New York, N.Y.) to London, England. 2¢ Wrapper (up-rated with pair of 1863 2¢ Blacks tied by cork cancels. An uncommon franking for the short-lived 6¢ newspaper rate per the 1867 convention with Great Britain where printed circulars were included in the book rate of 6¢. This rate was in effect from September 1, 1867 to December 1868.

Only known wrapper use for 6¢ newspaper rate to England.





In 1865 the Post Office requested 'SPECIMEN' overprinted envelopes to demonetize them so they could be used for promotion of envelope use. These envelopes were given to larger post offices to promote envelope sales and 'Business Cards' with return request.



Envelopes with 'SPECIMEN' printed diagonally, without or without the vertical return request, were distributed to Post Offices.

If not delivered within 10 days, to be returned to

**SPECIMEN.**

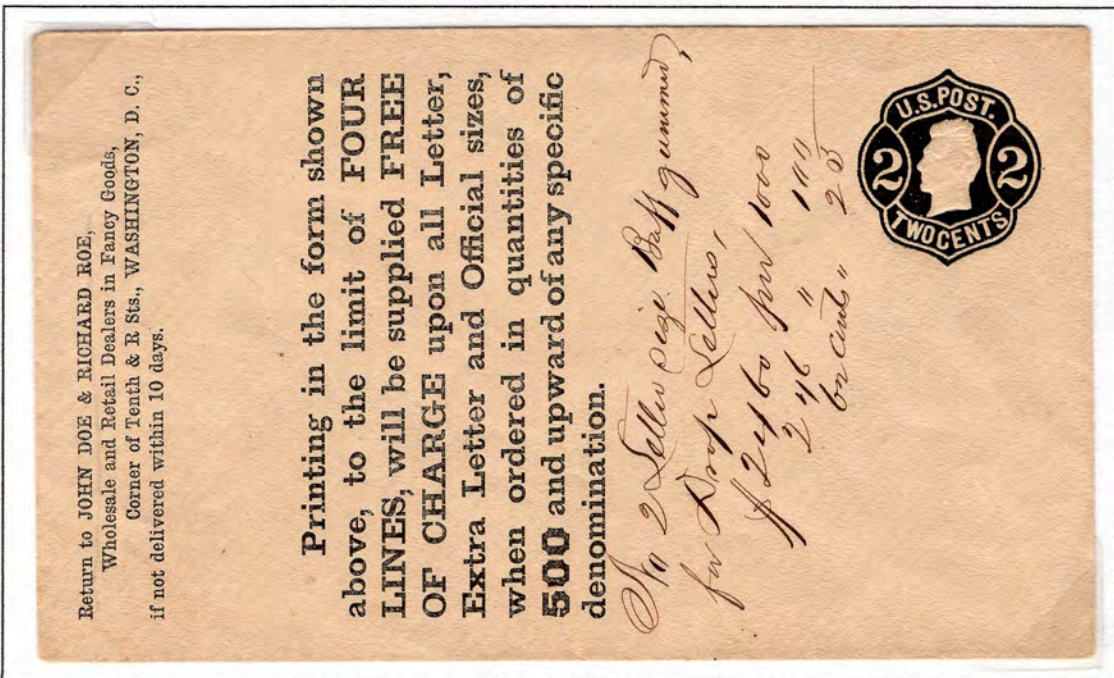
If not delivered within 10 days, to be returned to

No. 2 Letter size, Buff, gummed,  
for Drop Letters:

\$24 60	per	1,000.
2 46	"	100.
62 cents	"	25.



Some envelopes were printed with size and pricing information.



Envelopes with example 'Business Cards' were printed with order information; some Post Offices hand wrote additional pricing information

Return to JOHN DOE & RICHARD ROE,  
Wholesale and Retail Dealers in Fancy Goods,  
Corner of Tenth & R Sts., WASHINGTON, D. C.,  
if not delivered within 10 days.

Printing in the form shown  
above, to the limit of **FOUR**  
**LINES**, will be supplied **FREE**  
**OF CHARGE** upon all Letter,  
Extra Letter and Official sizes,  
when ordered in quantities of  
**500** and upward of any specific  
denomination.

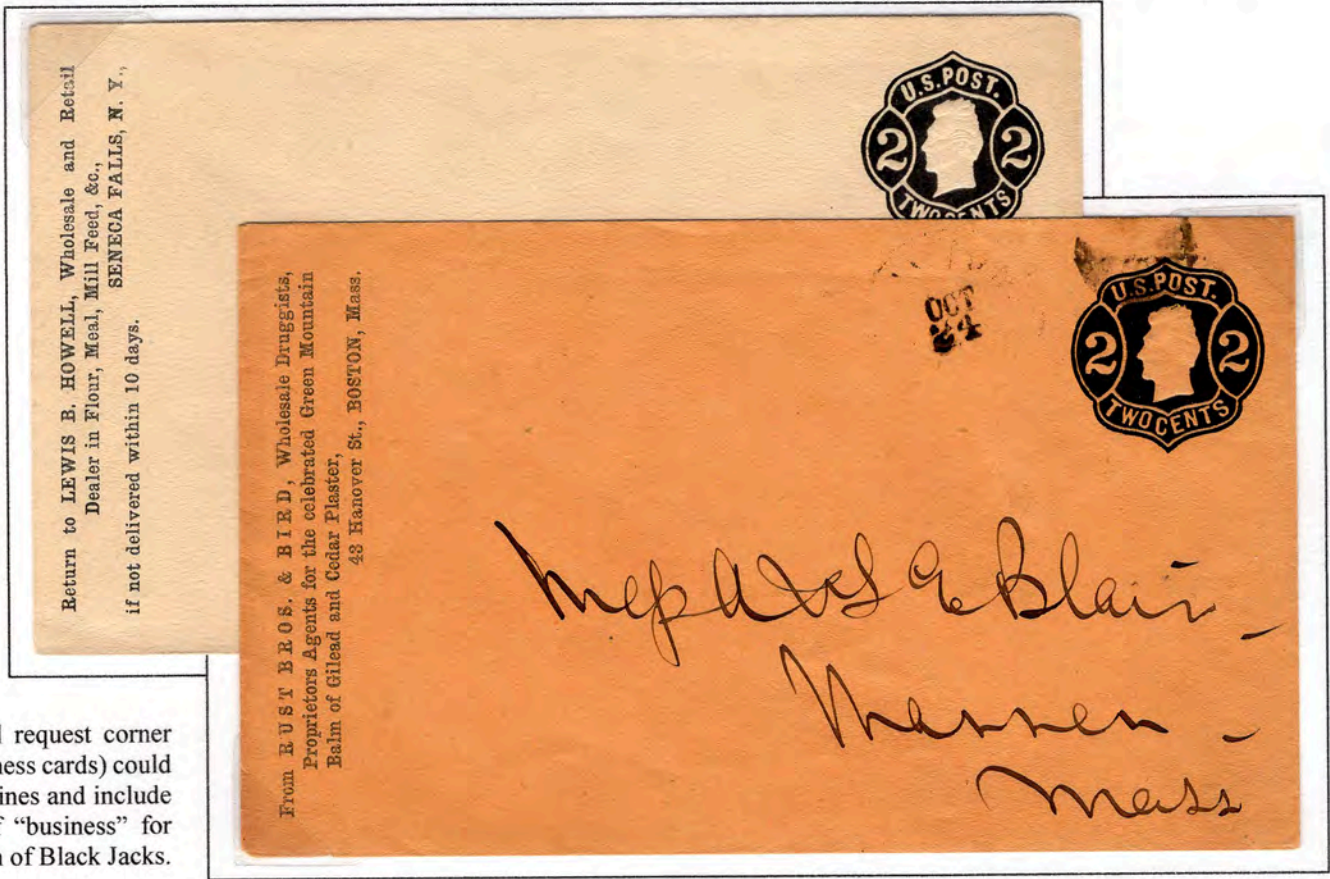
*No. 2 Letter size, Buff gummed,  
for Drop Letters,  
\$24 60 per 1000  
2 46 " 100  
62 cents " 25*





The Postmaster General reported (1865) that less than 25% of advertised letters were delivered and in some larger post offices less than 15%. Undelivered letters were overwhelming the Dead Letter Office. The Postal Act of 1860 established return of letters to sender if uncalled for and a return request was on the envelope. But the return was charged another postage rate and little used until the return charge was eliminated on July 1, 1866.

**Free address (business card) printing** with return requests began in **May 1865**. These do not occur on the first design, as production had ceased. Second design Black Jack envelopes were only about 9% of total envelope production and **less than 10%** of those had Government printed corner cards.



The special request corner cards (business cards) could be up to 4 lines and include one line of "business" for the duration of Black Jacks.

Business cards were first printed vertically on the left end of envelopes; the Post Office did not begin printing horizontal corner cards until October, 1870 after Black Jack envelope production ended.

Therefore, the corner card at right is privately printed.