April 2021

Judge's Synopsis

The Use of Boston's "PAID in Grid" Cancels – 1851-59

Background

The Act of Congress of March 3, 1851, which further reduced and simplified postal rates, also (in Section 3) required postmasters to deface all postage stamps attached t letters deposited in his office….". Special devices, apart from the city date stamp, were created for this specific purpose. Shortly after the postal issue of 1851 was introduced on July 1, the Boston Post Office also introduced one of the most iconic cancels in postal history, a small 17½mm circular grid, containing the word "PAID". Commonly referred to now as the "small Boston PAID", it was initially struck in red or magenta ink, beginning on July 7. However, it became evident almost immediately that the cancel did not show up well on the 3c orange-brown stamp (the basic 0-½ oz. letter rate).

The cancel began to be struck in black ink by July 12, but it took until the beginning of August before the use of red ink was completely discontinued. By January 1852 a new larger 24-24½mm cancel was introduced. While it is unclear exactly why this larger device was introduced, it could more easily cancel a pair of stamps, such as 2x3c used to the West Coast, or 2x12c used to the U.K. This cancel was used for over a decade.

Treatment, Organization and Development

The objective of this single frame is to illustrate the use of the various colors and sizes of this cancel on the classic U.S. imperforate issues of 1847 and 1851-56. During the period when the 1847 issues were used legally, the cancel was a similarly sized grid without the PAID. However, demonetized examples of the 1847 issue bearing the "PAID in grid" are known and are therefore included in this exhibit.

Importance

As noted above, this is one of the most iconic of the devices produced specifically to cancel these issues of stamps. Like the Binghampton "herringbone" and Johnsbury "scarab", most philatelists know exactly what is meant by the "small" or "large Boston paid". Boston was one of the major commercial cities and ports in the U.S., along with New York and Philadelphia.

Personal Study and Research

I have been studying classic Boston postal history for the last 30+ years. I have shown several very successful exhibits focused on Boston and have identified several new markings and new EKUs/LKUs of known markings in the seminal book on the subject by Blake & Davis, *Boston Postmarks to 1890.* While collecting this particular material, I have gained considerable insight into its use and scarcity, especially the use of the small red PAID on the 1c 1851 and the use of the large black PAID on the 5c 1856 and 12c 1851. While my experience demonstrated that use of the 5c and 12c denominations canceled with the large Boston PAID were uncommon, this was confirmed by an examination of the census in the Frajola website, and of the archives of the Siegel, Rumsey and Bennett auctions houses. Only ten examples of the large Boston PAID canceling the 5c 1856 issue were found. This was not surprising as the adhesive was only available for about a year before the perforated stamp was issued. However, the 12c 1851 stamp was around for ~6 years before being replaced with the imperforate issue. Still, only nine examples of this stamp on cover and canceled with the large PAID were found in those sources, and two others have been identified by this exhibitor.

Most information on the dates and details of the postal markings (cancels and postmarks) are taken from the above noted *Boston Postal Markings to 1890*, which despite being 70 years old, has stood the test of time well. The exception is the latest known use of the small red Boston PAID cancel, which has now been moved up to August 1, 1851. Other resources include the census of covers of the 1847 issue on the website of the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society and the exhibitor's experience in collecting this material for so long a time.

Condition

The covers in this exhibit are generally in excellent condition with very fine examples of the marking.

Rarity

Key covers in this exhibit include:

- A 10c 1847 demonetized cover canceled by the small black Boston PAID. It is also the only recorded demonetized 10c on a cover sent to Canada.
- The only example of the large Boston PAID canceling a demonetized 5c 1847.
- Two covers bearing examples of the 1c 1851, canceled by the small red PAID. These are the only two 1c 1851 covers so cancelled that are known to this exhibitor, although it has been suggested that an additional cover may exist. Even off cover examples are quite scarce.
- One of two known covers bearing the 12c 1851 cancelled by the small black Boston PAID. The other was sent to Germany and is pictured in *The United States Postage Stamps of the 19th Century*, L. G. Brookman, Vol. 1, p. 175, 1966, H. L. Lindquist.
- (New) LDU for the small red PAID cancel
- (New) LDU for the small black PAID cancel.
- EDUs or the small and large black PAID cancels.
- The only recorded (and known) example of the large PAID in red.
- A block of 4 of the 3c 1851 canceled with the large PAID, manuscript and sent to Oregon.
- A strip of 3 of the 5c 1851 canceled with the large PAID and sent to France.

Key Reference

1. Boston Postmarks to 1890, Maurice C. Blake and Wilbur W. Davis, 1945, reprinted in 1974, Quarterman Publications.

The Use of Boston's "PAID in Grid" Cancels: 1851-1859

Purpose and Scope

To show how the use of these cancels changed over time and to show their use on the various imperforate issues of the period.

Organization

Major chapters are organized chronologically by cancel (small red, small black, large black). Within each chapter, by issue and within issue by denomination. Use of the term "reported", in regard to dates used, refers to Blake & Davis' *Boston Postmarks to 1890*. Use of the term "known" means known to the exhibitor.

Background

On July 7, 1851, Boston introduced what is arguably the most iconic cancel of the era - the 17½mm "small Boston PAID" - to be used on the new 1851 issue. The **red / magenta** cancel did not show up well on the new orange brown adhesives, and it was used only until Aug. 1. The same cancel was used in **black** ink from July 12, 1851 to January 23, 1852. It was replaced by a 24-24½mm version and varieties were used for about 10 years. **Important covers are bordered in red.** **e = certificate**

Small Red / Magenta PAID in Grid (7/7/51 to 8/1/51) 1¢ 1851

Two of Only 2-3 Known 1c 1851 Covers with the Small Boston Red PAID

Unsealed Printed Circular

A 1c rate was charged on each circular of less than ½ oz., sent up to 500 miles.*

Boston to Beverly, Mass.

July 14, 1851

This 29½mm Boston CDS is reported used from Feb. 29, 1844 to May 6, 1852.

A 3c rate was charged for a letter of up to ½ oz. sent up to 3000 miles.*

Boston to Hartford, Conn.

July 14, 1851

This 32mm Boston (small "3cts") integral rate CDS is reported used from July 1, 1851 to Jan. 18, 1854.

* all domestic letters were rated per Act of Congress, Mar. 3, 1851 (eff. July 1)