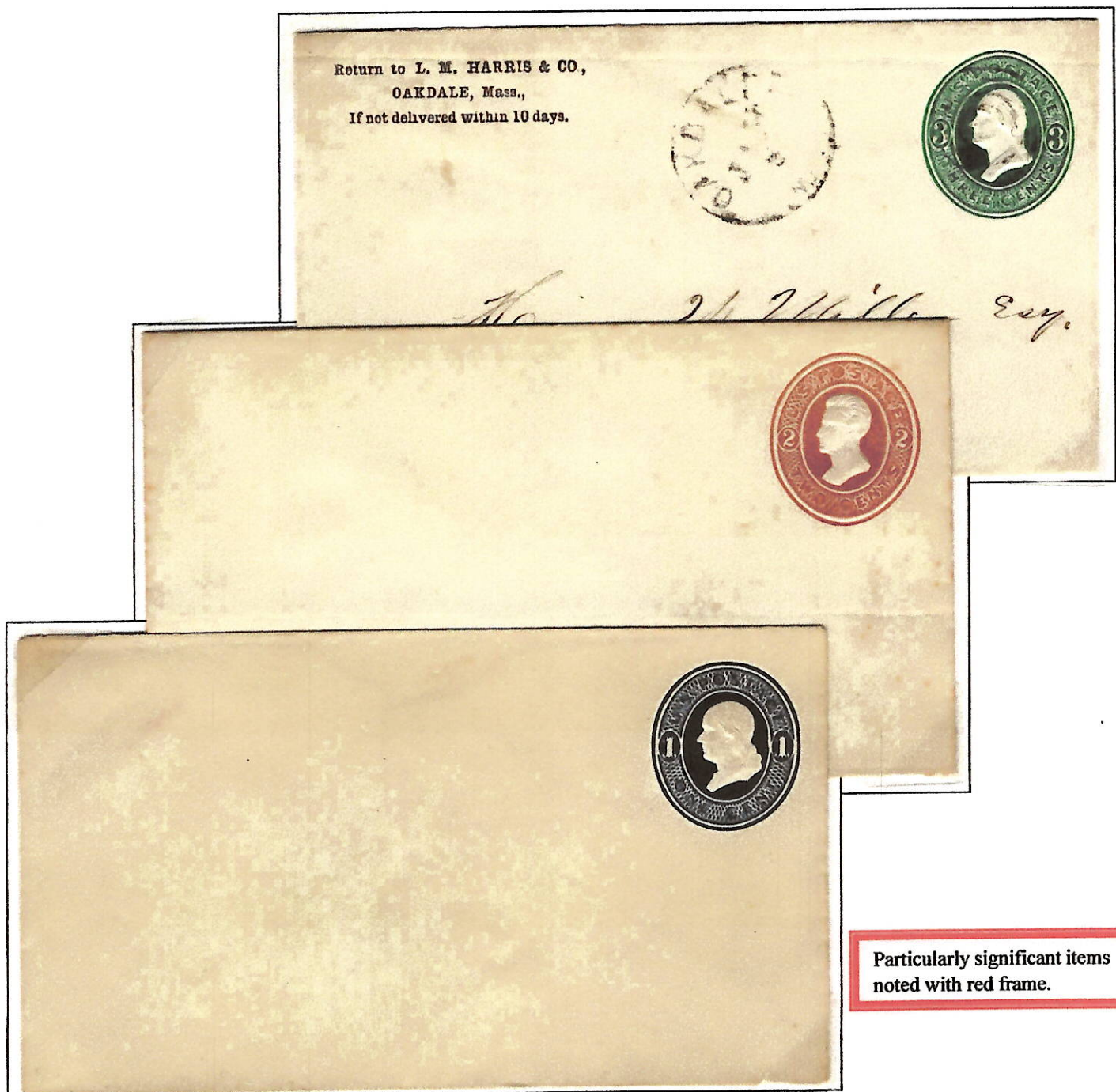


The First Plimpton Postal Stationery Issue of 1874

Plimpton Manufacturing Company was the low bidder for the 1874 to 1878 U.S. postal stationery contract taking it over from Reay. Plimpton had to make embossing dies following the designs of the current (Reay) issue for the contract beginning Oct 1, 1874. However, Reay had the best médailleurs under contract, intending for Plimpton to have such poor dies that the postal stationery contract would be forfeited (to Reay). Plimpton did get 1, 2, and 3¢ dies made of lower than desired quality that were accepted by the Post Office with agreement to replace the dies quickly.

This exhibit follows these first, short-lived issues which exist for the 1¢, 2¢, and 3¢ denominations.

Exhibit Outline	
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1	Introduction
2-4	Proofs
5-7	Special Production Items
8-9	1¢ Uses
10-11	2¢ Uses
12-15-	3¢ Uses
16	The Second Plimpton Issue



The First Plimpton Postal Stationery Issue of 1874

Purpose of exhibit:

Bids for the 1874 to 1878 Postal Stationery 4-year contract were advertised on July 13, 1874. Plimpton Manufacturing Company was the low bidder, beating out the current contract holder (Reay). The new contract began October 1, 1874.

Embossed stamp dies were not transferred from one company to the next, so Plimpton had to make embossing dies to begin manufacturing envelopes. The new set of stamped envelopes were to follow the design of the previous set as closely as possible. Artists who engrave embossed items (medals, coins and embossed postal dies) are known as médailleurs rather than engravers. The then current contractor (Reay) put the best médailleurs under contract intending for Plimpton to have such poor dies that the postal contract would be forfeited (to Reay).

However, Plimpton did get 1, 2, and 3¢ dies made, admittedly, of lower than desired quality but they were accepted by the Post Office with agreement to replace them quickly. This exhibit shows proofs and usages of these first, short-lived envelopes and wrappers.

When the Postmaster Marshall Jewell accepted these dies provisionally, Reay tried to get the U.S. Congress Committee on Postal Affairs to overrule the Postmaster General and to pronounce the contract in default due to defective dies of disgraceful execution, but the Congressional Committee "did not see it."

Challenge Factor:

These dies were only used to produce envelopes for the first 6 to 8 weeks of the 1874 contract before being replaced by second Plimpton issue. While the total production with these dies is unknown, it is likely that production was lower than average during the startup of the new contract. Estimates that envelopes and wrappers with these dies were less than 10% of 1874 total 3¢ production and less than 2% for 1¢ and 2¢ envelopes and wrappers. None of these dies were used to manufacture envelopes in later years.

Thus, all of these envelopes are scarce, particularly the 1¢ and 2¢ envelopes and wrappers.

What is presented

This exhibit contains proofs of the three denominations. It contains centennial production of the issues (less than 6 known), specimen overprinted issues (less than three known of each), and thin paper types. The exhibit also presents uses of each issue, domestic and international (preUPU).

References

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