

U.S. SPECIAL DELIVERY

Running Messenger Designs

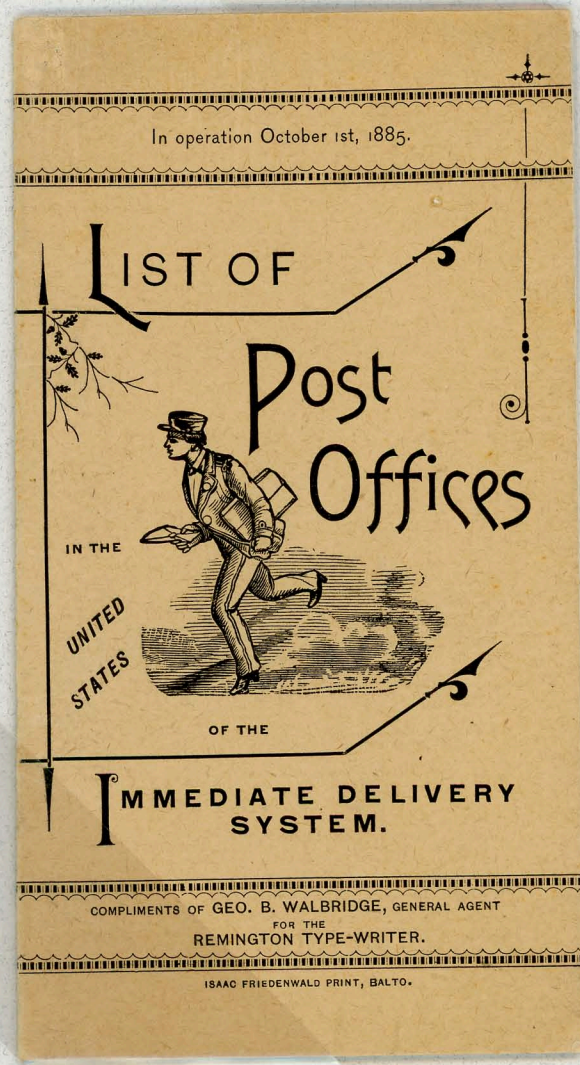
1885 - 1902

The U.P.U. approved a special service to speedily deliver mail for an extra fee in 1885. The U.S. issued the first special service stamp on October 1, 1885, naming the service 'Special Delivery' with only 555 first class post offices providing the service. On October 1, 1886 service was extended to all post offices. No formal service exchange agreements with foreign countries existed until 1923. The U.S. and Canada had an informal agreement beginning in 1896.

The design incorporated a running messenger with a text inscription describing the immediate delivery service. In 1888, the text tablet changed to "at any office". In February, 1893 the stamp's color switched to orange to lessen any confusion with the one cent Columbian Exhibition value. The color reverted to blue in 1894.

This exhibit includes forerunner examples and continues in a traditional fashion presenting U.S. Special Delivery issues from 1885 until 1902 when delivery by bicycle became the norm and the design was revised. The American Banknote Co. printed the first three issues, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing printed the remainder. The rate, without weight limit, remained at 10¢ during this entire period.

Essays, proofs, stamps, local, domestic and territorial usages are followed by foreign destinations and origins. Rarities are specially matted with dark blue borders.



Steamboat Service



Saint Joseph, La. to Natchez, Ms., June, 19, 1886

Backstamped Natchez, Ms., June 20, 1886

Via Steamboat "Leathers"

Only recorded example

Railway Service



Norfolk, Va. to New York, N.Y., November, 1885

Backstamped New York, N.Y., November 7, 1885

Via "Capechas & Norf." (Norfolk) Railroad Post Office

Earliest recorded example of R.P.O. usage

Postal Markings

The Special Delivery service did not require a special device to cancel stamps. Manuscript, hand daters, targets and fancy killer devices were used by post offices.



Paterson, N.J. to New York, N.Y., Apr. 24, 1885
Manuscript and Target killers



Sacramento to San Francisco, Ca., Dec. 19, 1885
Fancy 'Checkerboard' killer

Special Delivery forwarded to a non-Special Delivery Post Office



Dover, N.H. to Jamaica Plain, Ma., July 18, 1886

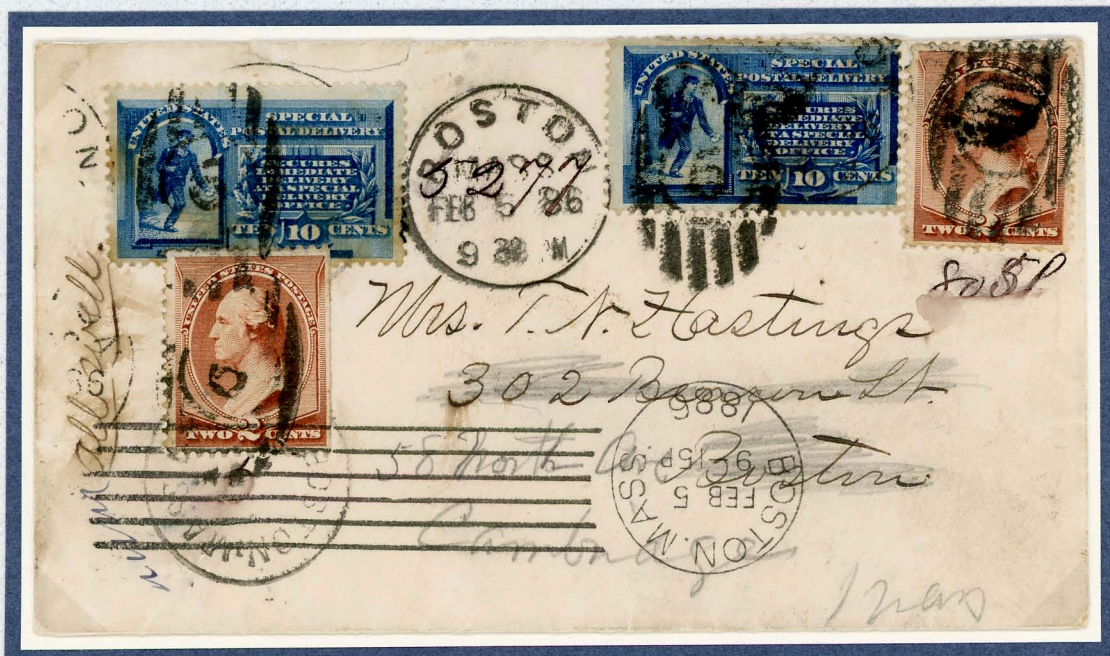
Forwarded to Welled Beach, Me., July 20, 1886 with single line "Forwarded" handstamp

Handstamp with script "fee paid by 1st del" indicates fee claimed

(Question exists as to whether Jamaica Plain was an office entitled to Special Delivery service since it was not officially listed and likely treated as a Boston sub-office)

Only recorded example

Re-Mailing



Boston local service forwarded to Cambridge, Ma., February, 5, 1886

Special Delivery manuscript tracking number '5277' in center of dater

Special Delivery and postage fees paid for re-mailing

Only recorded example

Goates College for Women.
TERRE HAUTE, IND.
JOHN MASON DUNCAN, A. M., Pres't.

To be delivered at once. If
Greenfield is not a Special
Delivery Office Send by messenger
who will be paid.

Mr. Frederick E. Hawkes

Care Mr. Russell

"Tap & Die Manufacturing Co."

Greenfield

Massachusetts.

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Terre Haute, In. to Greenfield, Ma., Feb. 4, 1889

Manuscript note: "To be delivered at once. If Greenfield is not a Special Delivery office Send by messenger who will be paid."

Postage Due Collected



Addressed to Midlothian Post Office, Chesterfield County, Va., circa 1887

Marked "Due 2 cts." with postage due stamps (issue of 1884) collecting postal fee

Special Delivery service was not provided for letters without postage prior to the 1889 regulation change

Double 'X' pen cancel indicates delivery was made and Special Delivery fee claimed

Earliest recorded example of postage due stamps on Special Delivery letter

Local Service



Boston, Ma. local service, Dec. 28, 1888

Receiving mark with manuscript date; time of delivery entered under postage

Service Regulations

Special Delivery letters mailed without first class postage prepaid were to be 'Held for Postage' according to post office regulations until January 16, 1889, when the regulation was corrected.



Sacramento to San Jose, Ca., April 29, 1886

'Held for Postage' marking applied April 29, 10AM; postage paid and letter forwarded April 30, 5PM

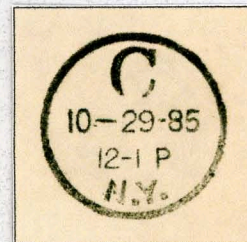


New York, N.Y. to Cleveland, Oh., February 23, 1886

Marked 'DUE 2 CENTS, N.Y.' postage due, paid in New York and letter forwarded

Service Regulations

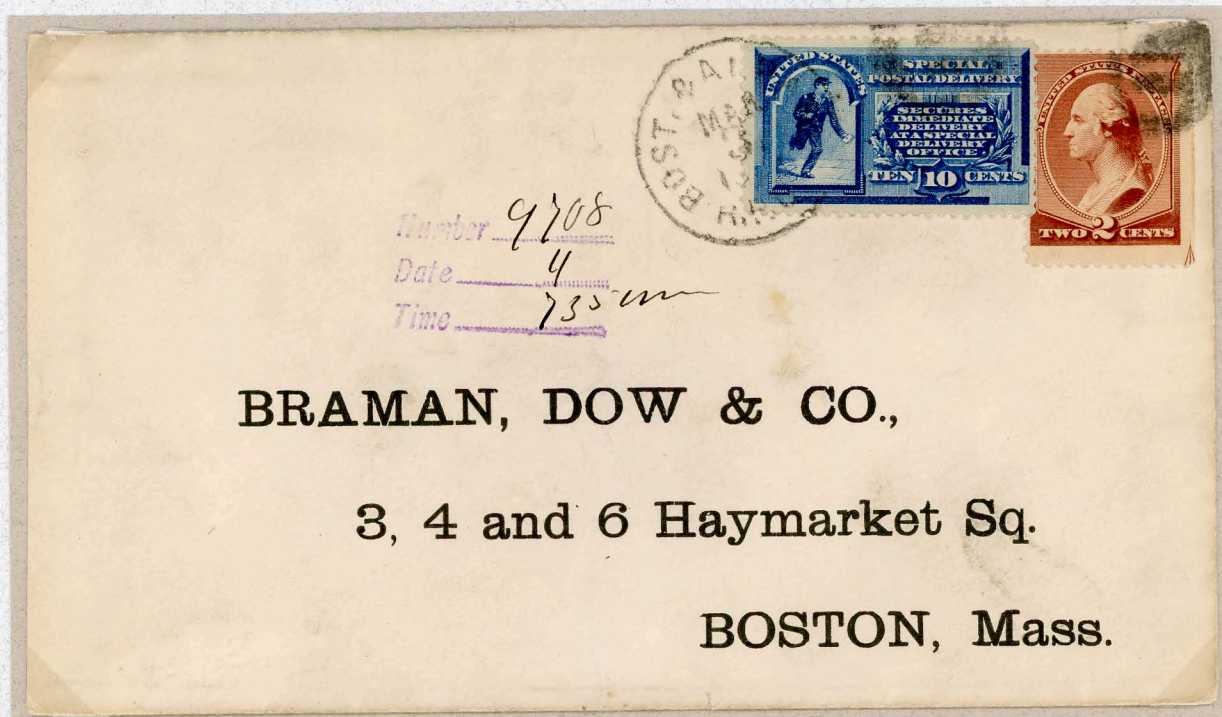
Post Office markings for Special Delivery mail include: Postmark of the post office of origin with town name, date and time; Backstamp of the receiving office with town name, date and time of receipt; Serial number used for accounting purposes.



Backstamp
Station 'C'

New York City local delivery, October 29, 1885

Backstamp includes receiving Station code 'C'; Manuscript serial number 'C1175'



Boston and Amherst Railroad, local service, March 3, 1886
Three line delivery hand stamp without backstamp of receiving post office

Service Regulations

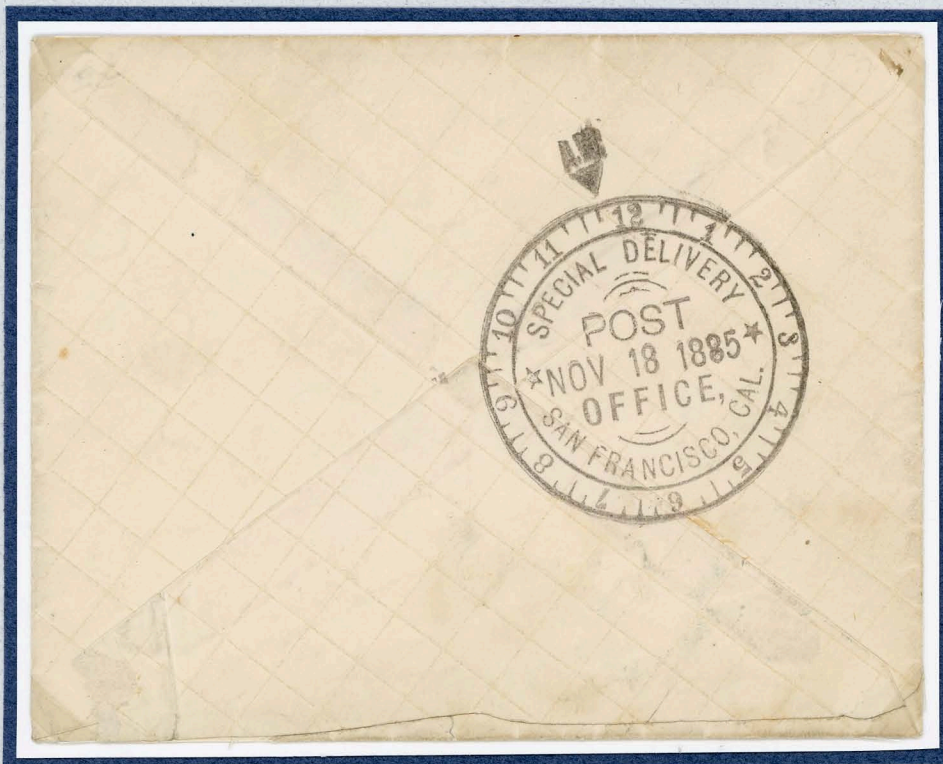
Serial numbers could be applied to the face of a letter in manuscript or printed form.



Oroville to San Francisco, Ca., Nov. 21, 1885

Special Delivery tracking number 3925 applied in San Francisco by machine

Receiving marks include hand daters as well as special 'Clock' cancellation devices used in various cities. San Francisco was the first city to use the 'Clock' device.



San Francisco local delivery, Nov. 18, 1885

Earliest recorded 'Special Delivery Clock' marking (Istograph Co.)



Copy of front

Special Delivery Associated Markings

Post Offices developed handstamps to document delivery and non-delivery attempts with manuscript notes describing delivery circumstances.



Utica, N.Y. to Washington, D.C., December 19, 1885
Boxed "TRIED by Special Messenger" with lines for manuscript notations



New York City, Station 'L', local delivery, Jun. 11, 1886
Four line handstamp for non-delivery (1st attempt) and manuscript (2nd attempt next day)

Local Service



Grant letter sheet locally used within Washington, D.C.



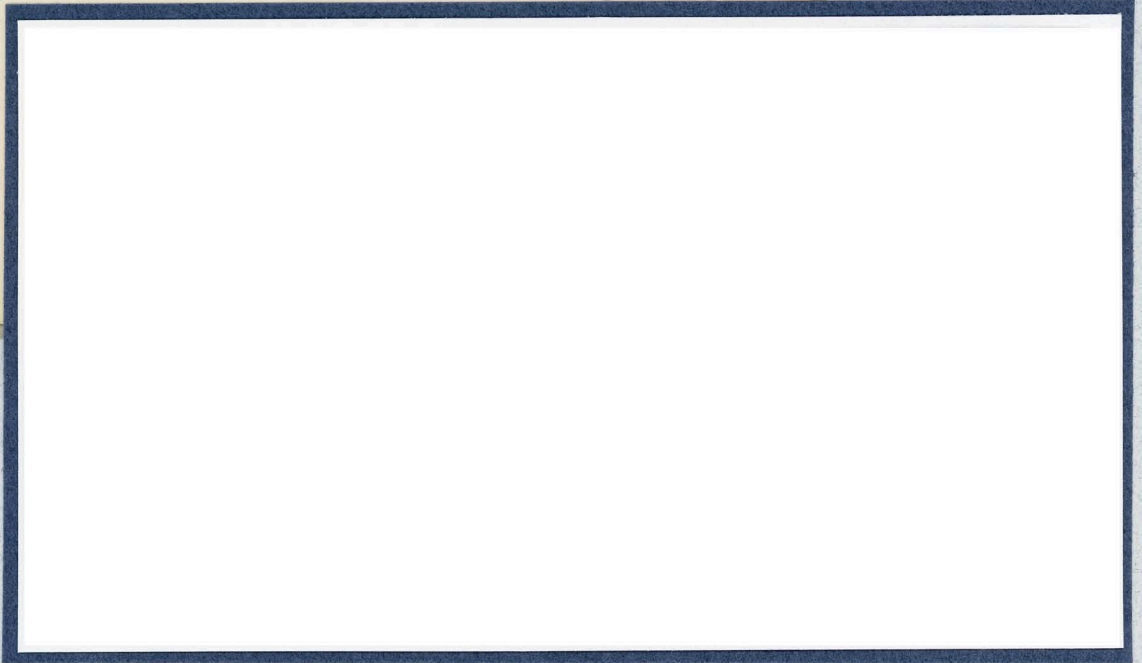
Penalty stationery privately used within Washington, D.C.

Local Service

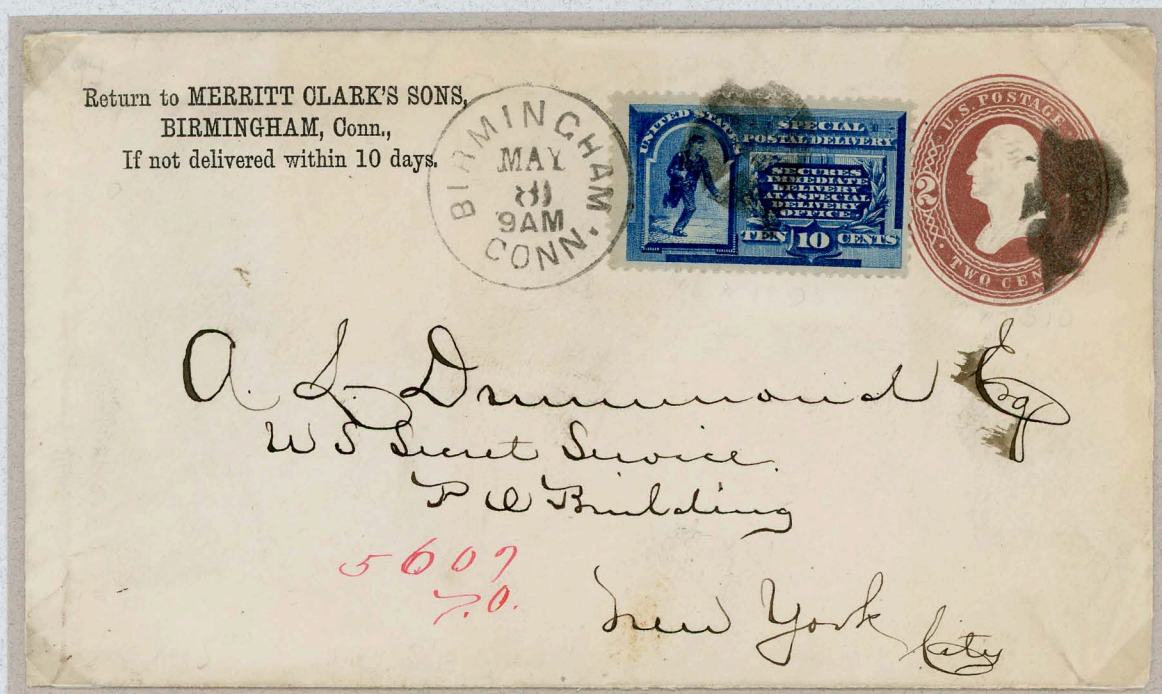


Local post card
within New York City
May 28, 1886

Private postal
lettersheet
within New York City
Oct. 30, 1885
Earliest recorded use



Domestic Service



Birmingham, Conn. to New York, N.Y., May 8, 1886
Addressed to U.S. Secret Service

Local Service



Milwaukee, Wi, August 15, 1888
Early use of marking with word "SPECIAL"

Domestic Service



Railway Post Office (R.P.O.), February 2, 1888

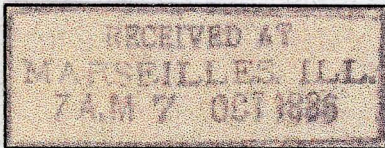
Domestic Service



Oakland, Ca. receiving dater used to cancel stamps
 Clock receiving device, applied on reverse, was used
 between Nov. 1888 and Oct. 1889 (to right)



Backstamp



Backstamp



Unusual backstamp (above left)

Combined Services



Backstamp



Bridgewater, N.J. to Philadelphia, Pa., Early Special Delivery and Registry combination, May 30, 1887 with single line 'SPECIAL' marking



Special Delivery and Registered mail after expanded service

Fancy Cancellations



Alexandria Bay to Corymans Hollow, N.Y., August 11, 1887
Early use of fancy cancel



Rockland Lake, N.Y. to Minneapolis, Mn., June 11, 1889 with 'Star of David' cancel
Manuscript hour added to dater

Territorial Destination

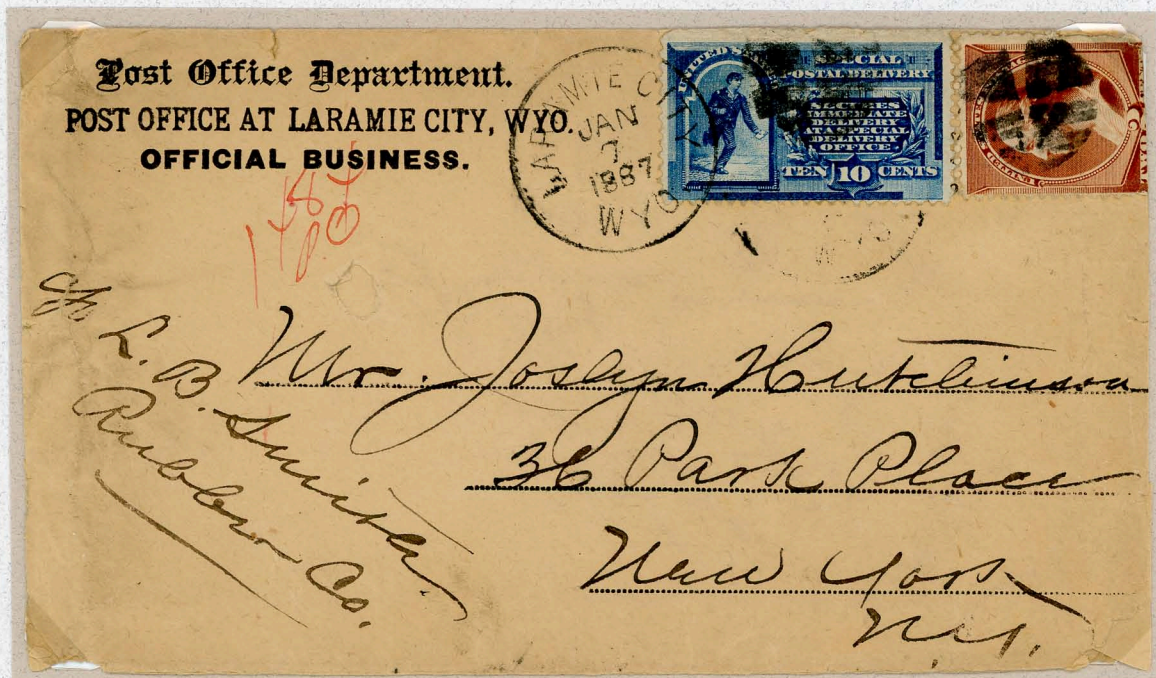


Middlebury, Vt. to Anvik, Ak., April 23, 1888
via unofficial carrier - Alaska Commercial Company, San Francisco, Ca.



Springfield, Tn. to Helena, Mt., Dec. 17, 1888 with 5 point star duplex device
Backstamp Helena, Mt., Rec'd, Dec. 22, 1888

Territorial Origin



Laramie City, Wyo., Jan. 7, 1887

Backstamp New York, N.Y., Jan. 12, 1887