

Yesterday in STAMPS: **Chicago Local Post**

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Following the introduction of cheap postal rates in 1851, the volume of mail increased to such an extent that it became a task for many people to call at the postoffice for their mail and to deposit letters which they wished sent away. There was no certainty that a letter would reach the addressee quickly, for the latter might allow his mail to accumulate for several days.

In many of the larger cities of the United States there were enterprising individuals who were quick to see that a collection and delivery service would prove to be a blessing to the people living far from the postoffice, and if properly managed would earn its owners a comfortable living.

Chicago was not far behind eastern cities in the introduction of these local posts, but unfortunately little is known of many of them beyond their names and the fact that a few covers and stamps remain to show that they really existed. Among the names which have been preserved are the following:

William McMillan's Penny Post; Floyd's Penny Post; Chicago Penny Post; Brady & Co.; Bronson & Forbes; Moody's Penny Dispatch; Whittelsey's Express, and much later, Allen's City Despatch.

McMillan's Penny Post—Andreas in his *History of Chicago* states that in February, 1855, William McMillan established a penny post, the terms being one cent for each letter if prepaid, and two cents if collected on delivery. This McMillan is listed as being the 1st Lieut. of Company B, National Guards, which was organized in April, 1854. No other reference has been found to

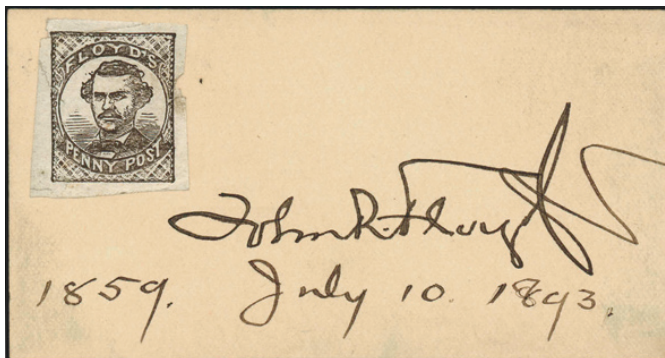


McMillan's black on rose paper with manuscript "X" cancel and trace of red Chicago circular date stamp, Sc. 100L1, unique

the man or his post, and since no stamps are listed, it is probable that he operated his post without these useful accessories.

[Note: Subsequent to this article, one example of a crudely made McMillan's City Dispatch Post was discovered. It is listed in *Scott's Specialized* as Sc. 100L1, and is illustrated on page 1. JFD.]

Floyd's Penny Post—Andreas in the work above mentioned gives a biography of Floyd and a short story of his post, written while Floyd was still alive and cashier for the American Express Co. There is no doubt but that the information contained in this article was obtained from Floyd or his family, and may be considered authentic. Since the article makes no mention of other costs, it is almost certain that Floyd was not connected with any post but the one which bears his name and stamps of which bear his portrait. The fol-



Floyd's Penny Post (1¢) brown, Sc. 68L2, uncanceled and affixed to Floyd's business card and signed by him, dated July 10, 1893. The "1859" written by him is thought to be his recollection of the year of issue.



Floyd's Penny Post, (1¢) green, Sc. 68L3, tied by "Floyd's Chicago Penny Post" handstamp on 3¢ pink entire, Sc. U35, with target and "Chicago Ill. Nov. 3, 1862" double-circle date stamp. One of two known covers. The green stamp, issued in 1862, is the scarcest of the three Floyd's stamps that were issued, the other two being the blue and the brown, issued in 1860.

lowing extracts are given verbatim from Andreas:

“Floyd’s Penny Post – John R. Floyd cashier of Chicago Penny Post the American Express Company has occupied an important and responsible position in the employ of that company since 1864 and has been a resident of Chicago for over thirty-six years. For a long time anterior to the War his name was a household word in this community, and as the originator of Floyd’s Penny Post he did more to suggest a valuable [mail collection service] auxiliary to the postal service than any man of his time.

“Mr. Floyd was born Sept. 3, 1837 near Pittsburgh, Penn. When 12 years of age he accompanied his father, Thomas Floyd, to Chicago, and here completed his studies. He began business in the iron and hardware establishment which his father founded; upon the decease of the latter in 1857, he abandoned it to develop a plan he had formed for the cheap delivery of letters on a new stamp system. The scheme involved the prompt delivery of all letters entrusted to the care of his carriers, in all parts of the city, for one cent, and was a popular and convenient means of mail transportation at that time.

“In 1861, Mr. Floyd sold out the enterprise to enter the army. He was a member of the famous Ellsworth United States Zouave cadets, being one of the first nine to join the company. After the close of the War, Captain Floyd returned to Chicago, and in December, 1864, entered the service of the American Express Company as corresponding clerk. On Jan. 1, 1868, he was advanced to his present post of duty. Mr. Floyd was married in 1867, to Miss Netty Kelly, of this city. They have one child, a daughter, named Flora. *Andreas, A. T. History of Chicago. Chicago, 1886, v.111. p 601.*”

Chicago Penny Post—An almost impenetrable veil of secrecy shrouds the history of this post, the stamps of which show the beehive, and form the basis for the emblem of the Chicago Philatelic Society. Henry Needham states that when Floyd sold out his post to enter the army, the new owner was Charles W. Mappa, of the real estate firm of Mappa and Collins, and that Mr. Mappa continued the



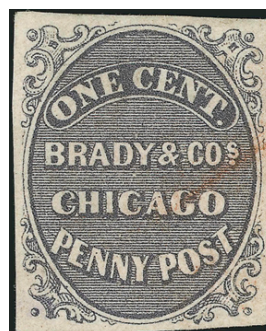
Left, Chicago Penny Post 1¢ orange brown, Sc. 38L1; left, the (1¢) orange brown with serrated perforations, Sc. 38L1 variety; above, the same stamp with a manuscript cancel on a

cover to a local street address—one of only three known (1¢) covers, two of which have the serrated perfs.

business under the name of the Chicago Penny Post, as well as under the old name, Floyd's Penny Post. Further notes on this post by Elmer Stuart will be found elsewhere in this issue.

Brady & Co.—Beyond the bare fact that stamps exist, nothing has been discovered regarding this post.

Bronson & Forbes—Needham states that this post was established in 1855-56 by W. H. Bronson, formerly of Detroit, and G. F. Forbes. This firm handled books, periodicals and newspapers, etc., as well as the collection and delivery of letters. It ceased to act as a carrier in 1858-59.



Brady & Co.'s Penny Post 1¢ violet, Sc. 23L1

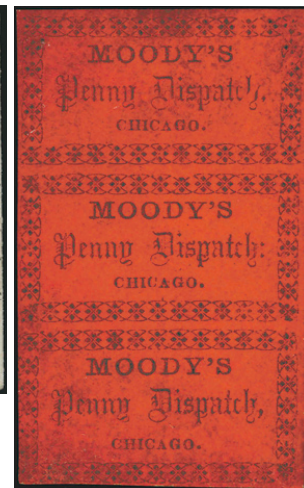


Bronson & Forbes' City Express Post, no stated value, black on green, Sc. 27L1, used with 1851-57 3¢, Sc. 11, both tied by "Chicago Ill. May 3" circular datestamp on cover to Iowa City

Bronson & Forbes' City Express Post, no stated value, black on lilac paper, Sc. 27L2, tied by red "(Bronson & Forbes) Express Post/ (On)e Cent" red circular handstamp on piece. When offered at auction by the Siegel Galleries they stated that "there is no other example of a red handstamp used by this post.... we have complete confidence in the genuineness of this Black on Lilac stamp. However, we are of the opinion that the red handstamp is faked. The stamp was probably used on this piece and left uncanceled..."



Moody's Penny Dispatch—The Chicago Directory of 1856-57 lists Robert J. Moody as the proprietor of a City Mail and Express Post, at 30 Dearborn Street.



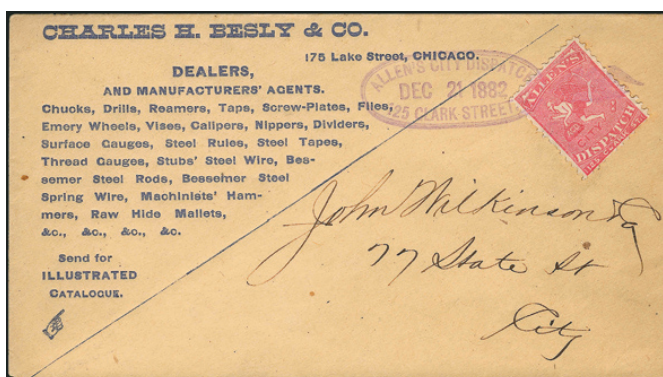
Left, Moody's Penny Dispatch 1¢ black on red glazed paper, Sc. 110L1, type Ic with comma after "Dispatch", tied by blue "Moody's Dispatch, 6PM, Nov. 14, 1856" circular datestamp, used with three 1¢ blue, type IV, Sc. 9, tied by "Chicago Ill. Nov. 14, 1856" c.d.s. on cover to Middletown, Newport Post Office, Rhode Island; right, Moody's Penny Dispatch, (1¢) black on red glazed, Sc. 110L1, in a vertical strip of three—the only recorded multiple—showing three varieties of punctuation after "Dispatch", top to bottom, types Ia (period), Ib (colon) and Ic (comma)

Whittelsey's Express - The Chicago Directory of 1857-58 states that Whittelsey & Company conducted a City Dispatch Post at No. 7 Exchange Building. No other directory makes reference to the post.

Whittelsey's Express 2¢ red, Sc. 146L1, cancelled by blue "Whittelsey's Letter Express" oval cancel.



Allen's City Despatch—Again referring to Andreas, there is found a biography of Edward R. Allen and a story of his City Despatch written while Allen was living and while his post still existed in a modified form. The article reads as follows:



Allen's City Dispatch, no stated value, pink, Sc. 3L1, tied to a machine tool advertising cover to a local street by a purple "Allen's City Dispatch, 125 Clark Street, Dec. 21, 1882" double-line oval datestamp and Eagle fancy cancel.

"Allen's City Despatch - Edward R. Allen, the originator of Allen's City Despatch came to Chicago on July 12, 1881, and on the first day of October of the same year established an original enterprise, known as Allen's City Despatch. This recent business venture, as it now exists, consists of the delivery to all parts of the city, by carrier, of printed matter. As it was originally established, it included all mail matter, the charges being one cent for each piece of mail.

"When introducing into Chicago this expeditious and highly beneficial system, Mr. Allen issued a private postage stamp, which was affixed to each piece of mail before it was deposited in a convenient mail box, and all mail and packages bearing this stamp were collected and delivered by carriers to all parts of the city. The value of each stamp was one cent, and the revenue of the business consisted in selling these stamps to patrons, who, upon the purchase of a number of them, were included among the subscribers to the enterprise and were called upon regularly by carriers twice each day.

"Scarcely had the business been started when bankers and merchants saw the advantage of a delivery which was in advance of the United States mail fully twelve hours in distant parts of the city, and which was done for one-half the price charged by the Government. Mr. Allen continued

this business until February 5, 1882, when he received official notice from Postmaster-General Howe, declaring his business was wholly illegal, and citing the statute which made the carrying of mail over established post routes, a direct violation of the Federal law.

“As it was not the intention of Mr. Allen to violate the law in any manner, he discontinued the carrying of mail, and was engaged by the Chicago Telephone Company as manager of the circular delivery service of the A.D.T. department, and was with them until Jan. 1, 1884, a short time afterward establishing what was known as Allen’s Circular Delivery, continuing until May 1, 1885, when, upon the removal of his office to the Chicago Opera House Block, he took the original name of the enterprise Allen’s City Despatch, confining the business exclusively to the carrying of printed matter.

“Mr. Allen was born at North Adams Mass., on Oct. 24, 1845. His father John E. Allen, was a cotton manufacturer and came to Chicago in 1876, where he died on May 10, 1885. Mr. Allen received his early education in the common schools, afterward attending the academy. At the age of nineteen, he went to Poughkeepsie, N.Y., where he attended Eastman’s Business College, graduating in the spring of 1865. After leaving college, he engaged in the manufacture of woolen goods at Westfield, Mass., and the following year was forced to close out his business, owing to the depression in trade incident to the ending of the Civil War.

“He then went to East Saginaw, Mich., and engaged in the lumber business in the employ of his father, who was one of the firm of Hitchcock & Co. Later on he went to Jackson and became chief clerk of the Marion House, working in that capacity until the house burned in 1870. For some months afterward he was employed by the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern Railroad leaving his position with that company to take the management of the Renson House at Jonesville, Mich.

“After some years of diversified business undertakings he went to Philadelphia, and started in the manufacture

of dress trimmings, selling out two years later to establish a similar business in New York City. While there he received a patent upon a hose-supporter. A company was formed, of which he was a prominent stockholder, for the manufacture of the patented article, and he left New York City to travel and establish general agents to handle the same throughout the United States. While working in that capacity he came to Chicago, partly on business and partly to visit his parents, who were residents of this city. Finding them in very poor health, he was obliged to remain here over three months, and during this stay established his City Despatch, which has grown under his careful management to be the largest of any in the country.”

Mr. Needham states that Allen had an early experience as an employee of an eastern local post, but there is nothing in his personal history, as outlined by Andreas, which would indicate such a thing.