

Evolution & Impact of Blood's Local Post: 1842 to 1862

Purpose and Scope For 20 years mid 19th century a succession of Blood's companies was the dominant force in Philadelphia's local mail service. This traditional exhibit illustrates 19 stamps (on cover, largest known unused multiples, proof & essays), 31 handstamps, and 9 postal envelopes all designed to facilitate local service within old Philadelphia and outbound letters given to the post office.

Background The United States Post Office focused on nation wide mail including service to very remote towns, with little interest in local city delivery to thousands of addresses. In 1842 American private entrepreneurs seized the opportunity and received a handsome 3 cents each service. A New York City local post was so successful that within 6 months purchased by the post office. To the contrary the Philadelphia Despatch Post continued as the **only private local post** in America for 18 months. The Postal Act of 1845 prohibited private inter-city mail, but allowed intra city local city service. Local posts soon appeared in 30 cities. Blood's companies contributed more to our nation's postal innovations than the nation's other 130 local post companies and government combined. The Civil War resulted in government abolishing local post service.

Philatelic Significance

- **World 3rd producer of prepaid postage stamps**, before Switzerland and Brazil.
- **World's first pictorial stamp**: the iconic "striding messenger."
- **World's first special purpose stamp**, cheaper "to the post office" for outbound letters.
- **America's first prepaid postal envelopes.**
- **America's only one cent fee** for all local service, half all other cities for eleven years until 1860.
- **500 collection boxes, delivery each daylight hour**, and valentines by **special messenger.**
- America's only local post cover with strip of 5 stamps.
- America's only local post stamp on "free" outbound letter to an American President.
- Earliest American local post transatlantic cover.
- Three unique handstamps, 2 new to philately, necessitating reclassification of the ASCC.

Organization Eight frames display five successive name specific companies, organized chronologically in five chapters. All companies **serviced previously sold stamps.** Within each chapter stamps are introduced chronologically.