

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

Distinction from 2006 grand award winning postal history exhibit **Fighting the Fed in Philadelphia: Carrier, Local Posts, and Independent Mails, 1835 to 1867** is certain. The previous subject had included three other areas of philatelic content: government Carrier Department; Independent mail companies; Parcel Express companies. Second, this exhibit is traditional inclusive of unused stamps, proofs and essays. Third, different start and finish dates. Fourth, only Blood's succession of companies accepted and serviced prepaid stamps sold by their prior companies. This 8 frame traditional exhibit is clearly different by topic, time period, and classification. The many postal innovations created by a single local post are on display.

Historical Significance A local post is private mail service operating separate from the government in a limited geographical area restricted to within a single government mail route. Private posts charged a fee for service, whereas government Carrier Departments charged official government rates. Private post service seldom reached beyond a mile or two, Carrier Departments perhaps further. Local posts delivered outbound letters to the nearby post office. Inbound letters arriving by government Mail, however, were always given to government carriers for delivery, and not to a private post.

By mid 19th century Philadelphia was the second most populous city in the United States and fourth largest English speaking in the Western World, with booming growth extending outside the old city into adjacent Philadelphia County districts. The United States Post Office focused on nation wide mail including service to very remote towns, with little interest in local city delivery to thousand's of street addresses. In 1842 private entrepreneurs seized local opportunity for a handsome 3 cents per letter. In New York the City Despatch Post was so successful that within 6 months it was wisely purchased by the post office. The Philadelphia Despatch Post to the contrary continued as the only private local post in America for 18 months.

The Postal Act of 1845 effective July 1st prohibited private inter-city mail, but allowed intra-city local post service to continue. That same day Daniel Blood purchased the Philadelphia Despatch Post. Within several years local posts appeared in over 30 cities. In Philadelphia D.O.Blood & Co's aggressive volume discounts, hundreds of collection boxes, and multiple deliveries per day pressed 18 other Philadelphia upstart companies which were usually short lived due to intense competition. By 1849 Philadelphia was the only city offering all local services for one cent prepaid forcing the same upon Philadelphia's Carrier Department. Blood's sold our nation's first prepaid postal envelopes in 1848. Blood's Despatch boldly offered to relieve the government of all Philadelphia city letter collection and delivery 1851.

Philadelphia's Consolidation Act of 1854 extended the old city of Philadelphia to the limits of Philadelphia County, which had been largely rural with 24 postal districts. Blood's had always been very tempted, and now given a plausible excuse to conduct business in adjacent Kensington, Spring Garden, and West Philadelphia, previously forbidden because each had their own post office. By 1857 Philadelphia renumbered their street addresses, and the Philadelphia Carrier Department assimilated several adjacent urban post offices into a Sub Post Office system. Forever indefatigable, Blood's Penny Post had responded with 500 city boxes with collection and delivery every daylight hour. The other private posts could not compete.

Blood's contributed more to our postal innovations than all the nation's other 130 local post companies combined. Blood's intense competition had reduced all prepaid local letter service by 66%, lowest in the country, and approximately half of all other cities which remained 2 cents until 1860. With the outbreak of Civil War in 1861 congress declared all city streets as post roads. On January 12, 1862 Blood's ceased to serve the public.

Since the last showing this exhibit has been reduced from 10 to 8 frames. An important addition has been the latest known date certain Blood's cover, just three days before closure in early 1862. Given the context of the world's first adhesive stamps, the title page displays the few other contemporary examples. Also included are three unique handstamps, 2 new to philately, necessitating reclassification of the ASCC.

Important Exhibit Items:

1. **World's 3rd producer of prepaid postage stamps 1842**, before Switzerland and Brazil; frame 1.
2. **World's first pictorial stamp 1843**: the iconic "striding messenger;" frame 1
3. **World's first special purpose stamp 1846**; frame 3.
4. **America's first prepaid embossed postal envelopes 1848**; frame 8.
5. **America's only one cent fee 1849** all local service, half all American cities 11 years until 1860.
6. **First Trans-Atlantic All American Local Posts**; frame 3
7. **First combination with 1847 general issue All American Local Posts**; frame 2.
8. **Only one valentine with 1847 general issue All American Local Posts**; frame 4.
9. **Only strip of 5 stamps All American Local Posts**; frame 5.
10. **Only one All Over Illustrated Caricature cover All American Local Posts**; frame 5.
11. **Only one inbound delivery All American Local Posts**; frame 7.
12. **Only one originated in Europe All American Local Posts**; frame 7.
13. **Only one combination with Eagle Carrier stamp All American Local Posts**; frame 6.
14. **Only one combination Eagle Carrier stamp All American Local Post embossed envelopes**.
15. **Only one Eagle Carrier embossed envelope serviced by an American Local Post**; frame 8.
16. **Only one Trans-Atlantic All American Local Post embossed envelopes**; frame 8.
17. **Only one demonetized 10 cent 1847 general issue combination All American Local Post embossed envelopes**.

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