

Usages of Navy Department Official Stamps

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Introduction

In 1999, when Robert L. Markovits won the APS Champion of Champions competition at Stampshow in Cleveland, his exhibit continued in the tradition of the great collections of United States official stamps - Ackerman, Knapp, Hughes, Waud, Ehrenberg, Starnes, and Lanphear - by showing the stamps of the Executive Office and the eight subordinate departments. For those who collect this field broadly, as their holdings grow and mature over a twenty year period, the ten frame limitation enforced in competitive exhibitions becomes a serious constraint. Worthwhile material - forerunner free franks, penalty envelopes from the transitional period, official stamped envelopes, even special printings and proofs - may be squeezed out, and each new acquisition compels the deaccessioning an old favorite. This is a vast field which cannot be exhibited in depth, but only with highlights. Few can afford to maintain a massive background reference collection.

So in the future, I would expect to see more competitive exhibits which are specialized studies of the stamps of a single department. Lester C. Lanphear III broke ground with a comprehensive showing of the Department of the Interior in the early 1990's. Dr. David Lobdell has been collecting the War Department for over forty years, and could easily fill ten frames. In recent years, Theodore Lockyear has been a regular participant in the Champion of Champions competition with his five frames of the Department of Justice. The degree of difficulty, of course, varies from department to department, depending on the availability of covers: specialized studies of Treasury, War, Interior and Post Office would each require ten frames, while at the other extreme, Agriculture covers are so rare that anyone foolish enough to undertake this speciality will quickly become disillusioned. With the increased popularity of military postal history, it might seem surprising that no retired admiral has ever formed a specialized collection of the Navy Department stamps. The explanation for this is simple: virtually all of the most important covers (with the exception of the long-missing Starnes material), including the rare high value frankings and the fascinating covers forwarded to sailors overseas, are equally divided between the exhibit collections of Robert L. Markovits and Lester C. Lanphear III. A collector starting from scratch today could readily find some 3¢ covers, but to find a 1¢ cover or a 6¢ cover might take him ten years. Since no one has attempted a specialized study of this department, the basic research appears

never to have been done. The purpose of this article, then, is to outline how and where these controlled stamps were used, and to suggest what sort of covers an ideal collection of the Navy Department ought to contain.

Historical Background

At the end of the Civil War, the Navy's fleet consisted of 471 ships, many incorporating the most advanced naval architecture, ordnance, and steam engineering. Most of the fleet was quickly demobilized, and the iron-clad coastal monitors - unsuitable for active service in peacetime - were mothballed. The Navy returned to its prewar strategy of passive coast defense and a commerce-raiding system of naval warfare. The station squadrons of self-sufficient wooden sailing vessels were reestablished. Steam power was problematic, because the U. S. lacked overseas colonies where reliable coaling stations could be established. By 1870, there were only 52 seaworthy vessels in commission. A feud developed between line officers prejudiced against steam (many of whom were now ashore and awaiting orders) and staff officers - engineers, constructors, the pay corps and medical corps - few of whom were unoccupied.

Adolph E. Borie, Grant's first Secretary of the Navy, was a Philadelphia businessman appointed to serve as a figurehead for Admiral Porter, who was notably hostile to the steam engineers. But Borie caused a scandal by getting drunk at a June week ball at the Naval Academy and was forced to resign after a few months' service. Senator Cattel of New Jersey persuaded Grant to appoint his business partner, George M. Robeson, as Borie's replacement. Robeson in turn steered many lucrative contracts to the Cattel brothers, and received over \$300,000 in bribes for his efforts over the next seven years. Robeson focused on overhauling the monitors and building up the Navy yards at League Island, Mare Island, and Pensacola. The yards were kept busy with Republican workers, and his stockpiling policy kept the contributions coming from grateful Republican contractors and suppliers. Voted large appropriations by a conniving Congress, the Navy Department spent \$6,000,000 annually on labor and materials, and in the end had nothing to show for it but a worthless collection of antique vessels.

The chief naval crisis during Grant's presidency stemmed from the Virginius affair. In October, 1873, a fast ex-Confederate paddlewheel steamer - serving as a gunrunner to the Cuban rebels - was captured by the Spanish flotilla, resulting in the summary execution of the captain and crew. On Grant's orders, and at a cost exceeding \$5,000,000, Robeson had all the squadrons rendezvous at Key West. Even in the event of a declaration of war against Spain, there were no serious plans to deploy the fleet, since the assembled vessels were clearly too

slow and feeble to contest the Caribbean even against the decrepit Spanish fleet. An observer commented: "the authorities in Washington allowed the foreign attaches to come and inspect us and report our warlike condition. We were dreadfully mortified by it all." Congress then appropriated \$900,000 for the reconstruction of armored vessels.

When Hayes succeeded Grant, Robeson was replaced by Richard Thompson of Indiana, a man "so densely ignorant of naval affairs as to have expressed surprise, so it was reported, on learning that ships were hollow." During his service, Robeson had been subjected to four partisan congressional investigations, but Thompson managed to keep the Navy free from scandal. He deferred to the Democrat-controlled Congress, which was skeptical about any more misguided appropriations to modernize the fleet. The Navy had fallen into such disrepute that Senator John Sherman proposed that it be run as a subordinate bureau of the War Department (then conveniently under the command of his brother, General William T. Sherman).

In 1881, when Garfield assumed the presidency, there was a large federal surplus. American industry was growing rapidly, and along with it foreign trade, and it was obvious that the merchant marine - in decline since the panic of 1857 - needed to be rebuilt. Also, when the War of the Pacific began in 1879, both Chile and Peru deployed British-built cruisers, either of which could have destroyed the entire U. S. Navy single-handed. It was obvious that in order to protect the shipping lanes, the fleet would have to be rebuilt. Unlike his predecessors, Garfield's Secretary of the Navy, William Hunt, had a long-standing personal interest in the Navy. After Arthur succeeded Garfield, Hunt resigned and was replaced by William E. Chandler. Towards the goal of naval reconstruction, repairs on the obsolete wood vessels of the Old Navy were limited to 20% of their value, and in 1883 four new steam vessels were commissioned to begin the building of the new Navy.

During the 1870's, the Navy's manpower averaged 7,500 officers and seamen combined, with about 6,000 men afloat. The average annual pay was approximately \$7,500,000. The crews were dominated by foreign nationals and young boys, with 22% being punished each year and 10-20% defecting. Many of the officers were geriatric and incompetent, and the Navy yards were cesspools of corruption. The strength of the Marine Corps varied from 1,500-2,000, mostly privates housed at barracks at each of the yards. The annual budget for the Navy Department varied from \$15,000,000 to \$25,000,000, depending on appropriations for ship repair. Throughout this period, the bastion of staff authority resided in the eight bureaus under the civilian control of the Secretary.

These were:

Bureau of Equipment and Recruiting	\$1,955,000
Bureau of Ordnance	\$1,009,000
Bureau of Yards and Docks	\$2,378,000
Bureau of Medicine and Surgery	\$136,000
Bureau of Provisions and Clothing	\$1,792,000
Bureau of Steam-Engineering	\$2,012,000
Bureau of Construction and Repair	\$3,576,000
Bureau of Navigation	\$573,000

The budget figures given above are taken from the Secretary of the Navy's Annual Report for 1874. The Bureau of Navigation controlled the Naval Observatory, the Office of the Signal Officer, the Hydrographic Office, the Nautical Almanac, and the Superintendent of Compasses. The Chief of the Bureau of Navigation was a powerful position, because its incumbent controlled the assignment of all officers. Also part of the Navy Department were the Office of the Secretary, the Office of the Admiral, the Marine Corps (more a military police force than an amphibious landing force at this time), the Naval Academy, the Naval Asylum, and the Naval Examining and Retiring Board. In 1873, the offices of the Navy Department were dispersed through a number of buildings in the capital, but in 1871, ground had been broken for a grand new building on 17th Street to house the State, War, and Navy Departments, completed in 1876 at a cost exceeding \$5,000,000.

Distribution of Official Stamps

On January 5, 1874, at the first session of the 43rd Congress after the issuance of the official stamps, a resolution was passed asking all the secretaries to list the officers and employees of their respective department who were being furnished official stamps. George M. Robeson, Secretary of the Navy, responded on January 9:

List of officers, or offices, to whom official postage-stamps have been furnished for official correspondence.

The eight bureaus of the Navy Department, including Naval Observatory, Hydrographic Office, Nautical Almanac Office, Signal Office, naval hospitals. The commandants of the several navy-yards, *and the rendezvous, receiving-ships, and offices connected therewith.*

The Superintendent of the Naval Academy.
The Admiral of the Navy.
The purchasing paymasters at Portsmouth, N. H., Boston, New York,
Philadelphia,
Baltimore, Washington, Norfolk, and San Francisco.
Naval stations at League Island, new London, Mound City, and New
Orleans.
Naval examining and retiring board.
Such of the vessels of the United States Navy as may be in our ports.

This is ground zero for establishing where the Navy Department official stamps might have been used. But it is not definitive, since over the years when the official stamps were valid for postage, 1873-1884, some facilities were closed and new ones opened elsewhere. By 1878, the Philadelphia Navy Yard was being closed down and its activities transferred to League Island; the naval stations at Mound City, Illinois and New Orleans had been closed down; a naval station had been opened at Key West and a torpedo station established on Goat Island, near Newport, Rhode Island. The paymaster for the Brooklyn Navy Yard was in New York; the paymaster for the Kittery, Maine Navy Yard was just across the Piscataqua River in Portsmouth, New Hampshire; the paymaster for the Charlestown Navy Yard was in Boston. Based on one surviving cover, mail from the Mare Island Navy Yard was posted at Vallejo, California. There was also a small facility at Sackets Harbor in upstate New York on Lake Ontario, and a wharf at Erie, Pennsylvania. Somewhat perplexing is Robeson's inclusion of a paymaster at Baltimore: there was no Navy yard or station there, so he might have been referring to the paymaster of the U. S. Coast Survey. Robeson fails to mention a paymaster at Pensacola (although plagued by yellow fever epidemics, there was a Navy Yard there in 1874, and one cover has survived posted at nearby Warrington, Florida). There were some facilities including a hospital at Yokohama, Japan, but it is highly unlikely that official stamps were sent to the U. S. post office there.

Robeson does not mention the U. S. Government Despatch Agency in New York, where a Post Office Department official kept a supply of departmental stamps to aid in forwarding private mail to government officers overseas. While most of the extant covers bear Department of State official stamps, there is one cover to Newfoundland with a supplemental 2¢ Navy stamp (#30 in the survey here). Another cover addressed to a cadet on the U. S. S. Pensacola, care of the U. S. Consul in South Africa, received a supplemental 10¢ State stamp. The reference to official stamps being supplied to Navy vessels in port is intriguing. Presumably this was for the official correspondence of the line officers. The

three covers known posted in Newport from the Captain's Office of the Training Ship New Hampshire are obvious examples, while the ship's letter from the U. S. S. Swatara posted in Washington, D. C. may have been carried outside the mails to the Navy Department and the official postage added there. The ship's letter from the U. S. S. Colea was unfranked, marked postage due in New York, sent to Washington where the 3¢ Navy stamp was added, and forwarded to Baltimore. Even with the reduced fleet size, it would have been a logistical nightmare to keep all Navy vessels continuously supplied with a stock of official stamps, and it seems implausible that official stamps were rushed to port each time a ship docked so the officers' official mail could be franked. Still, this is the most logical explanation for an off-cover 3¢ Navy stamp and a 6¢ Navy cover postmarked Port Royal, South Carolina: Navy vessels docked there, even though there was no station per se.

Presumably a courier system other than the regular mails was in place for transmitting urgent and sensitive communications between the Office of the Admiral and the commanding officers of ships at sea, similar to that used by the War Department, although I have not been able to find any concrete evidence of this. In the Stephen Albert collection of Banknote covers, there was a tantalizing 3¢, 24¢ 1872 cover with a printed address: Assistant Engineer Hiram Parker, Jr., U. S. N., U. S. Steamer "Lancaster," Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Care of U. S. Consul. This cover was posted at Pottsville, Pennsylvania, so it may not have been an official usage. But similar envelopes with pre-printed addresses to officers afloat were found in a collection of unused envelopes that are thought to have been proofs for government use. If the correspondence to officers was heavy enough to justify pre-printing overseas addresses, it is very frustrating that none of these covers used from the 1873-1884 period have survived franked with official stamps.

In Figure 1, we illustrate socked-on-the-nose New York steamship cancellations on five off-cover Navy values. Because no such covers have survived, it is unclear whether the stamps were applied at sea before the letters were brought in by contract carriers, whether the steamships themselves actually carried official stamps, or whether the stamps were applied on shore by the dispatch agent. Robeson's response specifically mentions that Navy official stamps were furnished to the rendezvous receiving-ships associated with the Navy yards. However, because a steamship cancellation has also been found on a 15¢ Treasury stamp, I favor the explanation that such letters were carried in a packet to the main New York post office, where the dispatch agent there - known to have stocked Navy, Post Office, State, and Treasury official stamps for just this purpose - would have applied the appropriate stamps.

In conducting a census of the surviving corner cards, I have had access to photocopies of the active collections of Rollin C. Huggins, Jr., Lester C. Lanphear III, Robert L. Markovits, Dr. Alfred E. Staubus, Dr. Dennis W. Schmidt, and my own; a poor photocopy of the long-missing Starnes collection; and various auction catalogues. Unfortunately, relatively inexpensive 3¢ Navy covers with unusual corner cards are often not illustrated in auction catalogues, and in the older sales, the corner card was often not mentioned, so a few items may have been missed. Actually, Navy Department covers have traditionally fascinated many non-specialists, so I hope that this listing will inspire route agents to report others. It is composed exclusively of official covers franked with Navy Department stamps. Early penalty envelopes, when they represent the only reported example of a particular corner card, will be discussed towards the end of this article. A great many of the entries are based on a single example. The only relatively common corner cards are the Navy Department (i. e. the Office of the Secretary), the U. S. Naval Asylum at Philadelphia, and the Navy Pay Office at Boston. The most elegant printed corner cards have "Navy Department" in a bold Gothic type and the name of the bureau below in an italicized script. In Figure 2, courtesy of Robert L. Markovits, we illustrate the only Navy pictorial imprinted corner card, depicting the two-cannons-crossing-an-anchor emblem of the Bureau of Ordnance. This is one of only two examples of this corner card franked with official stamps, and one of four recorded 1¢, 2¢ Navy combination usages. This emblem, similar to that found on various War Department arsenal covers, has also been seen on early Navy penalty envelopes. The Hydrographic Office had a large pictorial handstamp depicting an eagle perched on a fouled anchor, which has been seen struck on the back of three 1876 covers addressed to Lieutenant J. E. Craig. That the Admiral of the Navy, who was working out of his house, was furnished stamps but no printed envelopes and so had to add his own handwritten endorsement, may be symptomatic of the ongoing tension between the bureaucracy and the line officers. Corner cards found are listed under the city where the letter was posted. Those marked with an asterisk have been recorded on penalty envelopes from the transitional period.

Washington, D. C.

Bureau of Equipment and Recruiting	Nautical Almanac Office
Bureau of Ordnance	U. S. Naval Observatory
Bureau of Yards and Docks	Navy Yard
Bureau of Medicine and Surgery	Paymaster Office, Navy Yard
Bureau of Provisions and Clothing*	U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey (ms)
Bureau of Steam-Engineering	Ship's Letter, U. S. S. Swatara (ms)
Bureau of Navigation & Office of Detail	Hydrographic Office (handstamp)
Navy Department	Office of the Admiral (ms)

House of Representatives

Judge Advocate General

Boston

Navy Pay Office*
U. S. Navy Yard, Paymaster's Office
U. S. Torpedo Station, Newport, R. I.

Annapolis

U. S. Naval Academy*
Superintendent, U. S. Naval Academy

Philadelphia

U. S. Naval Asylum*
Assist. QM's Office, USMC
(handstamp)
Pay Director, U. S. Navy Yard
Pay Office, 427 Chestnut Street
Naval Construct's Office, U. S.
Navy Yard,
League Island

New York

Commandant's Office, Navy Yard
Navy Pay Office, 29 Broadway

Navy Pay Office, 17 State Street (red
overprint)
Pay Department, Navy Yard

Ship's Letter, U. S. S. Colea (ms)

Cambridge, Maryland

Navy Paymaster, U. S. Coast Survey
U. S. Coast Survey

Brooklyn

Paymaster J. T. Stevenson, U. S. N.,
Navy Yard, New York

Newport, Rhode Island

Captain's Office, Training Ship New
Hampshire

Vallejo, California

Inspector of Provisions and Clothing,
Navy Yard, Mare Island

Warrington, Florida

O. B. (ms)

Notably missing from this survey are any covers from the Bureau of Construction and Repair, which had a larger annual budget than any of the other bureaus. A fair number of covers survive from the Navy Yards in Washington, New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, yet I record only one each from Mare Island and Pensacola, and incredibly, none from Portsmouth or Norfolk. Still, it is wrong to assume that since official covers haven't survived from these places, they didn't once exist. Until penalty envelopes were authorized, official stamps, despite their unpopularity, were the only fiscally sane choice of postage for the federal bureaucracy. In emergencies, regular postage stamps might occasionally be purchased as an out-of-pocket expense, but this was never a common occurrence. The gaps in the record are simply due to the terrible attrition rate for official covers. Most of the surviving covers are addressed to Naval officers or private individuals. Covers addressed to bureaucrats would have gone into government

archives and have rarely made it out into collectors' hands.

One purpose of this survey was to assist in the attribution of cancellations on off-cover Navy stamps. Many of the distinctive cancellations of Washington, D. C, New York, Boston, Philadelphia and New Orleans are instantly recognizable. Blue cancellations have been reported on all Navy values except the 90¢, but few are strikes of the crisp geometrics of New Orleans, the only one of the major ports listed above where blue canceling ink was used during this period. Some Navy stamps may have received blue cancellations in Savannah, and the one cover cited posted in Vallejo from the Mare Island Navy Yard also has ultramarine blob killers. Except in the most unusual circumstances, Navy Department mail would have been posted exclusively at ports, so I am relieved to report that in my exhaustive collection of off-cover used official stamps, there are no mystifying strikes of Chicago or Cincinnati blue cancellations on Navy stamps.

Foreign Destinations, Registered Mail, Third Class Mail, Local Mail

Despite the obvious need for regular communication with station squadrons in foreign waters, little foreign mail from the Navy Department has survived. I record only six covers, three of which were in the Starnes collection stolen in 1983 and may have been lost to philately forever. These were the celebrated pair to Commodore Caldwell (24¢ to Uruguay, 12¢, 30¢ combination to Brazil) and a 2¢, 3¢ combination on an 1875 cover to Italy. The remaining three are now in the collection of Lester C. Lanphear, including a strip of four 3¢ stamps on a cover from the Office of the Admiral to Japan (12¢ treaty rate, 1879), and a 3¢ pair from Annapolis, addressed to London and forwarded by the dispatch agent B. F. Stevens to Constantinople (5¢ U.P.U. rate, overpaid 1¢, 1882). In Figure 3, courtesy of Mr. Lanphear, we illustrate a 10¢ cover from the Naval Observatory to France (double U.P.U. rate, 1877, ex-Ehrenberg). This is the only recorded 10¢ Navy cover. A handful of strikes of New York foreign mail cancellations survive on off-cover Navy stamps, including both the classic large geometrics and the later numeral in vertical barred ellipse and the third class double oval. In Figure 4, we illustrate a selection of these. The 30¢ stamp was canceled in Washington, D. C. (Maltese cross, November 1873) and then routed to New York, where the Foreign Department at the main Post Office applied a red "New York Paid All" transit marking. Only one registered cover with an official stamp has been reported (#34 in the following survey), and I have never seen an off-cover stamp with the distinctive registry cancellations of Washington, D. C. or New York. Three 1¢ solo covers (one ex-Starnes) constitute the only surviving usages of Navy stamps to pay the single unsealed circular rate. In Figure 5, courtesy of

Robert L. Markovits, we illustrate a remarkable parcel front from the Nautical Almanac Office, franked with a 2¢, 3-6¢, and a 24¢ Navy stamps. This, along with a 6¢ cover canceled by a New York CR double oval (Circular Room), are the only recorded examples of Navy stamps used to pay a multiple printed matter rate, although a fair number of off-cover strikes exist of the later Washington, D. C. oval and double oval third class postmarks. A handful of 2¢ covers survive showing payment of single and double local rates within the nation's capital and elsewhere.

Forwarded Private Mail

When a private letter addressed to a Naval officer or seaman was undeliverable because his ship had already sailed, the letter was then forwarded to Washington, D. C. A clerk there would research the itinerary of the vessel, readdress the letter, add the necessary supplemental postage in Navy stamps to make up the foreign rate, and repost the letter, often in the care of the nearest U. S. consulate. Calculating when the mail on board ship might catch up to and rendezvous with a Navy vessel in a foreign port was not an exact science, and some of these letters chased their recipients around the globe before being pronounced undeliverable. Five such covers, bearing a combination of regular issue and official stamps, have been recorded. There also exist three examples of inboard foreign letters where the Navy Department in Washington, D. C. provided official postage for forwarding within the U. S., resulting in a combination franking of foreign and official stamps. And one cover has survived, mailed in Japan via San Francisco to Washington, D. C. that was forwarded to Aspinwell, Colombia with a 6¢ Navy stamp. This fine courtesy is in some ways similar to the Department of State's practice of adding State adhesives to private letters from diplomats overseas so that once out of the pouch they could enter the regular U. S. mails. These nine extraordinary covers (all of which, with the exception of the celebrated 24¢ cover to Uruguay recently illustrated here, are in the firm grasp of either Robert L. Markovits or Lester C. Lanphear III) deserve to be the subject of a dedicated, in-depth article. A related but long-missing item from the Ackerman collection was a piece of a cover posted at Amherst, Mass. with 2¢ and 3¢ Banknote stamps, with supplemental Navy postage (2-2¢ and a 10¢) added in Washington, D. C.

Most of these covers bear a "FORWARDED" handstamp struck in black. In figure 6, we illustrate five off-cover Navy stamps canceled with the same handstamp. It has been suggested that these constitute the remnants of a presentation set, even though they were purchased one at a time from different sources. Official presentation sets were usually neatly favor-canceled to

demonetize them in the departmental mailrooms with a variety of receiving handstamps. These stamps, with their single, double and triple strikes applied horizontally and diagonally, do not look like careful conscientious work. Because the same handstamp has been seen on official covers from other departments, it was probably applied at the main Washington, D. C. post office. Although no Navy cover has been reported showing the forwarding official postage stamps canceled in such a way, I have seen non-official covers with supplemental regular large Banknote stamps killed by the "FORWARDED" handstamp.

Illegitimate Private Usages

Covers franked with official stamps but lacking an imprinted corner card or a manuscript "O. B." designation are typically suspected of being private, illegitimate usages, but it is rarely possible to confirm this. There has survived a large correspondence addressed to Captain Maddox, Assistant Quartermaster of the U. S. Marine Corps in Philadelphia which is clearly illegitimate, because Maddox's docketing on the covers indicates they contained personal letters from his sister. All were posted at the main post office in Washington, D. C. during the 1876-1878 period except for one 1878 cover with a violet Georgetown postmark (confirmation that this branch was also enlisted in the trial of an experimental canceling ink). The covers from this correspondence are typically of small size, franked with one or two 3¢ Navy stamps. The pencil docketing on some has been erased to improve their appearance, but the marketplace has been slow to absorb those examples docketed in pen. One dealer recently offered the self-serving but creative explanation that since during the free frank period, mail from and to government officials went free of postage, the Maddox covers were by time-honored tradition legitimate personal usages. Never mind that the official stamps were specifically authorized for use only on official business mail. Captain Maddox had been furnished his own supply of Navy stamps for official purposes, and presumably misappropriated a sheet or two for his sister's use. In Figure 7, courtesy of Robert L. Markovits, we illustrate a legitimate 1875 cover from Captain Maddox, with a handstamped Marine Corps corner card. This is the only reported example of a Marine Corps corner card franked with official stamps. Aside from the Maddox correspondence, official covers addressed to marines are fairly scarce, with most examples being from a correspondence addressed to Major Thomas Field, posted from Philadelphia to Atlantic City or from Washington, D. C. to Philadelphia. In Figure 8, courtesy of Lester C. Lanphear, we illustrate the best of these, a 3¢, 12¢ combination paying the quintuple domestic rate. With the loss of the Starnes material, this is believed to be the only 12¢ Navy cover in private hands. These covers also lack corner cards, so they could be private usages too, or perhaps the Marine Corps had not been

furnished imprinted envelopes and the sender in this case neglected to add the required "O. B." endorsement.

Lester C. Lanphear III has assembled three covers from another correspondence, posted in New Orleans with 3¢ Navy stamps. Two of these were intercepted, handstamped "Insufficiently Paid" and returned to the sender, but a third one got through. Earlier this year, a 3¢ Navy cover postmarked in Brooklyn came up for sale at auction. An alert postal clerk wrote "Navy Dept. stamp" around the adhesive and then handstamped the cover "Held for Postage". Such examples of illegitimate private usages being detected are extremely rare. None of the many letters to Maddox from his sister were ever intercepted, probably because the clerks at the main Washington, D. C. post office were more familiar with and hence less suspicious of the blue Navy Department stamps.

Census of Covers

All values of the Navy Department official stamps are scarce on cover, except for the 3¢.

I would estimate that well over one hundred 3¢ covers have survived, and because of their fairly humble catalog value (\$150.00 currently, and static for many years) it is neither practical nor worthwhile to attempt an accurate census. Among specialists, there is little consensus as to the relative scarcity of covers from different departments. Agriculture covers are certainly the rarest in terms of overall numbers, and Executive covers are the second rarest. Beyond that, it is a toss-up as to whether there are fewer Navy, Justice, or State covers. In each case, one or two common values (3¢ Navy, 3¢ and 6¢ Justice, 3¢ and 6¢ State) exist in fairly large numbers, while all other values are scarce, rare, or non-existent. This survey includes all covers that Lester C. Lanphear and I have recorded, except for a mixed franking with a 6¢ Navy in a German Lincoln exhibit (shown in Chicago in 1986) that I was not able to track down. A few others undoubtedly exist, including I am led to believe some important ones that their present owners do not want publicized at this time.

1¢ Navy Covers (11 recorded, #1-10, #45)

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|----|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | 1¢ circular rate, legal size, Bureau of Steam Engineering | ACC |
| 2. | 1¢ circular rate, legal size, Navy Department | CJS (ex-Hughes, Ackerman) |
| 3. | 1¢ circular rate, legal size, Bureau of Steam Engineering | TOL |
| 4. | 1¢, 1¢ domestic rate, Ship's Letter, U S S Swatara, 1883 | LCL (Siegel #626, 4/13/83, lot 820) |

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|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| 5. | 1¢, 2¢ domestic rate, legal size, Commandant's Office, Navy Yard, New York, to Key West | ACC |
| 6. | 1¢, 2¢ domestic rate, Bureau of Ordnance | RLM (ex-Waud) |
| 7. | 1¢, 2¢ domestic rate, Navy Pay Office, D. C., violet local 1878 cds. | AC (ex-Korff) |
| 8. | 1¢, 2¢ domestic rate, 1882, cc. erased, to a Marine, possible foreign origin | RLM (ex-Waud) |
| 9. | 1¢ pair 3¢ Banknote, forwarded UPU rate to Panama | RLM (ex-Waud, Hughes) |
| 10. | 1¢, 1¢, 1¢, domestic rate, no corner card | TOL |
| 2¢ Navy Covers (26 recorded, #5-8, #11-30, #47, #55) | | |
| 11. | 2¢ local rate, U. S. Coast & Geodetic Survey (ms), 1881, to Peary | ACC (ex-Waud) |
| 12. | 2¢ local rate, no cc., 1881, to Peary | RLM (ex-Waud) |
| 13. | 2¢ local rate, Paymaster's Office, Navy Yard, D. C. | CJS (ex-Ackerman) |
| 14. | 2¢ local rate, New York City Delivery cds. | ? (ex-Ackerman) |
| 15. | 2¢ local rate, Nautical Almanac Office, 1879, indigo | CJS (ex-Knapp, Ackerman) |
| 16. | 2¢ local rate, Paymaster's Office, Navy Yard, D. C. | DLS (ex-Lehto) |
| 17. | 2¢ local rate, Navy Yard, D. C., 1874, red cancel | RE (ex-Lehto) |
| 18. | 2¢ local rate, legal size, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, 1874, red cancel | ACC |
| 19. | 2¢ local rate, legal size, Navy Department, red cancel | LCL (ex-Ehrenberg, Burrus, Ackerman) |
| 20. | 2¢ local rate, Newport, R. I., on a reduced penalty envelope | LCL |
| 21. | 2¢, legal size, Bureau of Provisions and Clothing, 1874 carried outside the mails to Yokohama, Japan | RLM (ex-Waud) |
| 22. | 2¢ right sheet margin pair, double local rate, no cc., D. C. | ? (ex-Knapp, Ackerman) |
| 23. | 2¢, 2¢ double local rate, Paymaster's Office Navy Yard, D. C., 1876 | RLM (ex-Waud, Knapp) |
| 24. | 2¢ pair, double local rate, Naval Constructor's Office, Navy Yard, League Island (handstamp), from Philadelphia, 1882 | AC (ex-Stone, Ackerman) |
| 25. | 2¢ pair, double domestic rate, Captain's Office, Training Ship New Hampshire, from Newport, R. I. | LCL (ex-Ehrenberg) |
| 26. | 2¢ pair, double domestic rate, Captain's Office, Training Ship New Hampshire | CJS |
| 27. | 2¢, 3¢ GPU rate, legal size, Navy Department to Italy, 1875 | CJS |
| 28. | 2¢, 3¢ Banknote, UPU rate, forwarded to London, 1879, addressed to a Marine | RLM (ex-Waud) |
| 29. | 2¢, 3¢ Banknote, UPU rate, forwarded to Panama | ? (ex-Knapp) |
| 30. | 2¢, 5¢ Garfield, 7¢ treaty rate, from Baltimore to Newfoundland, 2¢ applied as postage due by dispatch agent in N. Y. | RLM (ex-Waud, Hughes) |
| 31. | 2¢, 2¢, 2¢, 3¢, triple domestic rate, legal size, Navy Pay Office, N. Y. | ACC (Siegel #616, 4/13/83, lot 821) |

6¢ Navy Covers (16 recorded, #32-46, #55)

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------------------------|
| 32. | 6¢, double domestic rate, legal size, House of Representatives, 1874 | ACC (ex-Shumsky) |
| 33. | 6¢, double domestic rate, Bureau of Equipment and Recruiting, 1880 | RLM (ex-Waud) |
| 34. | 6¢ double domestic rate, D. C. violet killer, 1878-1879 | ? (ex-Ackerman) |
| 35. | 6¢, double domestic rate, Navy Pay Office, N. Y. | CJS |
| 36. | 6¢ double domestic rate, docketed October 12, 1876, Hydrographic Office (handstamp on reverse) | AES |
| 37. | 6¢ double domestic rate, docketed December 8, 1876, Hydrographic Office (handstamp on reverse), line through "N" | AES |
| 38. | 6¢ double domestic rate, Cambridge, Mass. to the Coast Survey Steamer Aragon, Baltimore, Md. | CJS |
| 39. | 6¢ double domestic rate, Judge Advocate General, Washington, D. C., face only, address cut out | ? (ex-Steinmetz) |
| 40. | 6¢ double domestic rate, private usage, Washington, D. C., ? to Capt. Maddox in Philadelphia | ? |
| 41. | 6¢ sextuple circular rate, Navy Pay Office, New York (CR= circular room in double oval cancel), return address overprinted in red | AES (Siegel #616, 4/13/83, lot 826) |
| 42. | 6¢, overpayment of UPU rate to Aspinwell, Colombia, forwarded private letter from Japan via San Francisco and Washington, D. C. | LCL |
| 43. | 6¢, 3¢, triple domestic rate, legal size, no corner card, Philadelphia to Major Field, USMC, in Atlantic City, N. J. | RLM (ex-Waud) |
| 44. | 6¢, 3¢, triple domestic rate, reduced legal size, Bureau of Navigation, Washington, D. C. | ? |
| 45. | 6¢, 1¢, 3¢ Banknote, treaty rate, forwarded to Brazil, 1878 | RLM (ex-Waud) |
| 46. | 6¢, 10¢ Banknote, double domestic rate registered, legal size, Port Royal, S. C. | ? (ex-Ehrenberg) |

7¢ Navy Covers (3 covers recorded, #47-49)

- | | | |
|-----|---|----------------|
| 47. | 7¢, 2¢, triple domestic rate, legal size, Navy Department | RLM (ex-Waud) |
| 48. | 7¢, 3¢ Banknote, treaty rate, forwarded to Brazil, 1878 | RLM (ex-Waud) |
| 49. | 7¢, 3¢ Banknote, treaty rate, forwarded to Brazil, 1877 | LCL (ex-Stone) |

10¢ Navy Covers (1 cover recorded, #50)

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|-----|---|--------------------|
| 50. | 10¢, double UPU rate, legal size, U. S. Naval Observatory to France, 1877 | LCL (ex-Ehrenberg) |
|-----|---|--------------------|

12¢ Navy Covers (2 covers recorded, #51 and #56)

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|-----|---|--|
| 51. | 12¢, 3¢, quintuple domestic rate, legal size, no cc., from Philadelphia to a Marine | LCL (Siegel #616, 4/13/83, lot 828, ex-Hughes) |
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15¢ Navy Covers (1 cover recorded, #52)

52. 15¢, quintuple domestic rate, legal size, Navy Department CJS

24¢ Navy Covers (3 covers recorded, #53-55)

53. 24¢, treaty rate, legal size, Navy Department to Uruguay CJS
54. 24¢, 3¢ stamped envelope, treaty rate, forwarded to ? (ex-Lehto)
Uruguay, 1878
55. 24¢, 6¢, 6¢, 6¢, 2¢, printed matter rate on label from RLM (ex-Waud)
Nautical Almanac Office

30¢ Navy Covers (1 cover recorded, #48)

56. 30¢, 12¢, treaty rate, legal size, Navy Department to Brazil CJS

90¢ Navy Covers (none recorded)

Collector's Initials:

AC (Albert Chang), ACC (Alan C. Campbell), CJS (Charles J. Starnes, deceased), RE (Ralph Ebner), LCL (Lester C. Lanphear III); TOL (Theodore O. Lockyear); RLM (Robert L. Markovits), DWS (Dr. Dennis W. Schmidt), AES (Dr. Alfred E. Staubus)

Major Sales:

Congressman Ernest R. Ackerman, J. C. Morgenthau & Co, Inc., 1933 (lots #97-125); Edward S. Knapp, Parke-Bernet Galleries, Inc., 1941 (lots #2710-2715); James E. Hughes, Bruce G. Daniels, 1953 (lots #233-243); Rae Ehrenberg ("The Crystal Collection") Robert A. Siegel, 1981 (lots #298-305, #307); Morrison Waud, private treaty 1982; Charles J. Starnes, stolen, 1983; Robert A. Siegel, 616th Sale, 4/12/83, lots #820-826, #828); Marshall Stone, Robert A. Siegel, 1990 (lot #86, #89-92, #96); George Lehto, Matthew Bennett, Inc. (lots #691-697).

Conversion to Penalty Envelopes

The use of penalty franks was authorized on March 3, 1877, and this new method of transmitting official business mail was enthusiastically embraced by the Navy Department. After the fiscal year 1879, no value higher than the 6¢ was ordered, and no official stamps at all were requisitioned in the fiscal years 1881 and 1884. Initially restricted to use at the seat of government (i.e. Washington, D. C.), the use of penalty envelopes was extended to all officers in March, 1879, although the Attorney General later ruled in January, 1882 that they were not valid for field office correspondence with private citizens. Therefore, until they were declared obsolete on July 5, 1884, the official stamps continued to serve a limited purpose. Field officers of the Navy Department, such as the commandants and paymasters of the various Navy Yards, would have needed official stamps for official business correspondence with private citizens. A very few early Navy penalty covers have survived with the required supplemental official franking. The precipitous fall-off in ordering the higher values might

suggest that the field offices only needed the lower values, and that usage of the higher values had always been predominately out of Washington, D. C. However, based on the evidence from off-cover used official stamps with distinctive cancellations, all values through the 90¢ were extensively used in Boston and New York and presumably elsewhere. Also, through the 1880's, Navy official stamps continued to be used on a limited basis in Washington, D. C. Unlike the Executive Office and the Agriculture, Justice, Post Office and Treasury Departments, where it is virtually impossible to find used stamps with the steel numeral cancellation used by the main D. C. post office from 1880 on, such stamps on and off-cover have survived from the Navy Department. My sense is that the Navy Department decided that for some of the lesser bureaus, it was expedient to use up the remaining stocks of official stamps and corner card envelopes designed for use with official stamps, as opposed to having these obsolete envelopes overprinted with penalty clauses. In doing so, the Navy Department's approach resembled to a degree that of the War Department, which never truly embraced the concept of penalty envelopes during the transitional period and continued ordering large quantities of their official stamps, all values through the 90¢, into 1884.

Assistant Editor Lester C. Lanphear III has the definitive collection of early penalty envelopes. Navy Department penalty envelopes from the transitional period, 1877-1884, are uncommon. Mr. Lanphear's collection includes an 1879 cover from the Secretary's Office, a corner card which has not been found franked with official stamps.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for the continued cooperation of my fellow collectors, and would especially like to thank my friend Major Ted Bahry (USMC, retired) who first suggested that the annual reports of the Secretary of the Navy might prove to be a gold mine of information. Assistant Editor Lester C. Lanphear has long maintained his own census of rare official covers, and was kind enough to review and supplement this survey.

Figure Captions

Figure 1. New York steamship cancellations.

Figure 2. Bureau of Ordnance pictorial corner card, courtesy of Robert L. Markovits.

Figure 3. 10¢ Navy on cover from the Naval Observatory to France, 1877, courtesy of Lester C. Lanphear III.

Figure 4. New York foreign mail cancellations.

Figure 5. Parcel front from the Nautical Almanac Office, courtesy of Robert L. Markovits.

Figure 6. "FORWARDED" handstamps.

Figure 7. Handstamped Marine Corps corner card, courtesy of Robert L. Markovits.

Figure 8. 3¢, 12¢ Navy combination cover, courtesy of Lester C. Lanphear III.