

UNOFFICIAL REGISTRATION OF NEW JERSEY STAMPLESS COVERS

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From November 1, 1845 to June 30, 1855 there was an unofficial type of Registration of valuable letters at most post offices within the United States. The first marking is the large blue “R” applied on receipt at Philadelphia beginning in 1845. Later beginning in 1847 some post offices began to mark valuable mail at the post offices of mailing. There were other post offices which applied markings on receipt and a few which applied markings on transient mail that was registered. The author has written several articles and a book on this subject.¹

Among the covers that bear unusual postmarks with blue “R” markings are several covers from New Jersey. The cover in *Figure 1* is dated “TRENTON N.J. AUG 27” (1846) with a single rate due “5” with hollow numeral. The “R” was used from November, 1845 to October, 1849.



Fig. 1. “TRENTON N.J. AUG 27” (1846), hollow “5” in blue, large blue “R” applied at Philadelphia.

In 1846 the strikes were usually pretty clear, but in later years it became less well defined. It is felt that the Trenton postmaster marked the waybill that traveled with every letter to indicate valuable contents. Thus the Philadelphia postmaster marked it with the blue “R”.

The cover in *Figure 2* has the same address and was postmarked only two weeks before the cover shown in *Figure 1*. This cover has a nice strike of the hollow “10” used at Trenton. The letter is missing now, but it must have been two sheets because of the double rate.



Fig. 2. "TRENTON N.J. AUG 13" (1846), hollow "10" in blue, large blue "R" applied at Philadelphia.

The third cover shown in Figure 3 is quite unusual. First it was sent PAID, not due, with a post office box account charge marking "Paid Box 77". There is the "TRENTON N.J. JAN 12" postmark, but the letter lacks contents so we can guess at early 1847 because of the condition of the handstamped "R" above "Peter". However, it is the rate marking which is most unusual. There appears to be a "10" in octagonal box (unlisted in Coles) with "15" in circle struck heavily over it. Because of the large cover, one can surmise a heavy enclosure requiring a triple rate.



Fig. 3a:



Fig. 3. "TRENTON N.J. JAN 12" (?1847), "PAID", "15" in blue circle struck over "10" in octagon, large blue "R" applied at Philadelphia.

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A final cover shown in *Figure 4* was also another paid usage with “Paid 61” indicating the box account. The postmark is a red “NEWARK N.J. DEC 25” with red “PAID” and “10” in double circle. Although the contents are missing, the excellent strike of the blue “R” makes 1845 the likely date. Note that the post office was open on Christmas Day.



Fig. 4. “NEWARK N.J. DEC 25” (?1845). “PAID”, “10” in red double circle, large blue “R” applied at Philadelphia.

I am sure there must be registered covers from other New Jersey towns and I would like to receive scans at j-milgram@northwestern.edu.

ENDNOTES:

¹ Milgram, James W. *United States Registered Mail 1845-1870*, David G. Phillips Co., N. Miami, Fla., 1999, & Milgram, James W. “Unofficial Registration of Mail in the U.S.: 1845-1855,” in *The Chronicle of U.S. Classic Postal Issues*, No. 221, 61: 9-24, 2009