

POST OFFICE PAYMENTS FOR TRANSPORTATION OF THE MAILS

By Don Bowe

Three interesting items in my collection are checks which were used for payment of transportation of the mails and associated expenses. They are from three different dates, May 26, 1856, Sept. 17, 1859, and February 25, 1861. It is an opportunity to see the differences.

All are checks written on the Post Office Department, and all say “Transportation of the Mails” at left. Presumably they drew on funds in the Post Office’s own vaults – note no banking firm is mentioned.

The first, from 1856, has a picture of George Washington at top center, and is signed by the Auditor for the Post Office Department and the Postmaster General (James Campbell). It is dated May 26, 1856, and authorized C.T. Gray, Postmaster at Newark, N.J.,¹ to pay to Isaac Van Wagonen, Treasurer of the Morris & Essex R.R. Co., the amount of eight hundred and sixty-nine dollars and 70 cents.



Fig. 1: Post Office Department draft issued to the Newark postmaster to pay to the Treasurer of the Morris & Essex Railroad Company, Isaac Van Wagonen, for transportation of the mails. Endorsed on back by Van Wagonen. The cancel at bottom center in red is illegible, and even with digital enhancement, the image nets little except what may be a Jun 1 date hub and PAID at bottom of the cds.



Fig. 2: Printed by Hufty & Danforth, Philadelphia and New York. Note the transportation at either end picturing a steamboat and a train.

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The second, in 1859, includes an unidentified portrait of Aaron V. Brown, PMG. The cancel on this one is clearer, making it possible to assume that the 1856 draft cancel was similar.



Fig. 2: Post Office Department draft dated Sept. 17, 1859, and issued to the Newark postmaster to pay to Fanny P. Hazen & Winfield Hazen, administrators of the estate of Moses Hazen, late postmaster at Allamuchy, NJ,² with “transportation of the mails” crossed out, as this seems to have been for a part of his estate settlement upon his death. It is for \$166.52 and is endorsed on back by Winfield Hazen. The cancel at bottom center reads Newark, NJ/PAID, with an Oct. 4 date.



Printed by Bald, Consland, Philadelphia and New York. Note eagle vignette at center pictures a steamboat and a sailboat, but no train.

Cancel at bottom on draft.

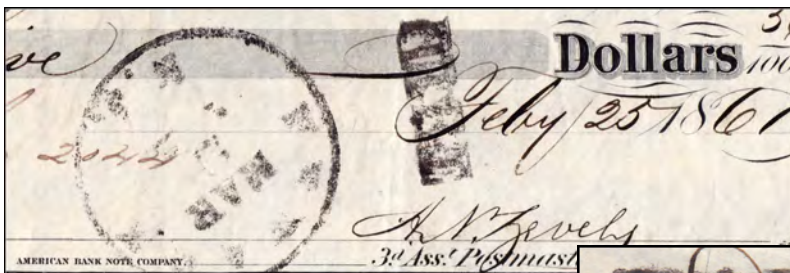
The Postmaster General signature no longer appears on the draft, which is now signed by the Auditor and the 3rd Asst. Postmaster General, A. Zevely.

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The third draft, dated February 25, 1861, is very similar to the second, having the same eagle vignette at top, and the portrait of the Postmaster General at lower left.

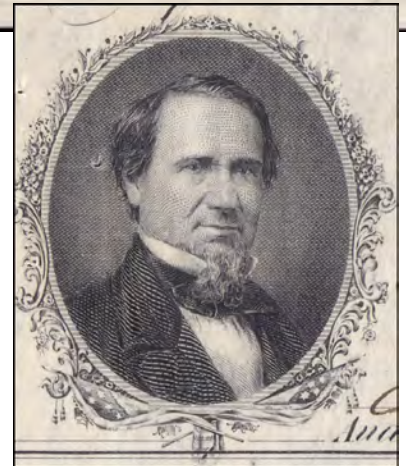


Fig. 3: Post Office Department draft dated Feb 25, 1861, and issued to the Newark postmaster C.J. Gray to pay T.P. Barkalow. “Transportation of the mails” is not crossed out but it is unclear what connection Barkalow had with the transportation of mail. He owned the Union Hotel in Freehold which backed on the RR line, and that part of the property had barns and sheds³, perhaps leased to the railroad. Endorsed on back by Barkalow, and signed by him to O.L. Baldwin. The cancel at bottom center reads Newark, NJ with a March 20 date.



The cancel no longer contains a Paid marking. It has been added separately as a handstamp which appears to be doubled or overprinted on a second strike.

The unidentified vignette at lower left is a picture of the Postmaster General Aaron Brown. Printed by the American Bank Note Company, using the same eagle vignette as above.



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The succession of Postmasters General during this period is shown below:⁴



Fig. 4: James Campbell
Appt. March 7, 1853

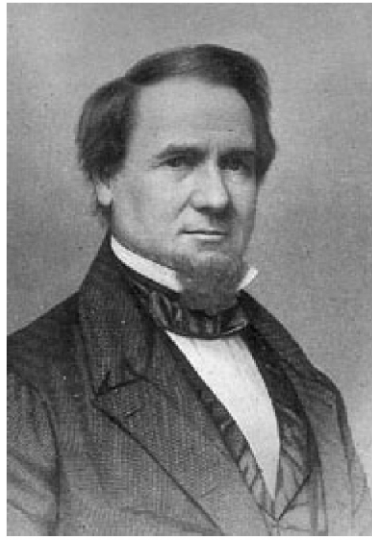


Fig. 5: Aaron Brown
Appt. March 6, 1857



Fig. 6: Joseph Holt
Appt. March 14,
1859

James Campbell was the PMG in place when the first draft was issued, and his signature appears at the bottom. Aaron Brown took over the position in March 1857, and while his picture appears without identification, his signature has been replaced by the 3rd Assistant PMG. The portrait used however seems to have remained in use through 1861, even after Holt became PMG – as witness the 1859 & 1861 drafts that still carry that image. Joseph Holt was succeeded by Horatio King in early February 1861, so in fact was the PMG for the last one. King was soon replaced by Montgomery Blair in March 1861, so the idea of changing the portrait for each new PMG was obviously going to be costly.

The last item shown is printed by the American Bank Note Company, and is a fairly early piece for that company, following its establishment in April 1858 after the Panic of 1857. The American Bank Note Company, known to philatelists for its printing of postage stamps, was formed by an amalgamation of various security printers, and was headquartered in New York.

ENDNOTES:

¹ Charles T. Gray was appointed Postmaster at Newark in April 1853, and reappointed in March 1857, and served until 1861. National Archives Postmaster appointments on microfilm, and USPS Postmasterfinder at <http://webpmt.usps.gov/pmt002.cfm> (search for Newark, NJ)

² Moses Hazen was appointed postmaster at Allamuchy on May 7, 1853. Winfield Hazen replaced him on Mar 17, 1858. National Archives Postmaster appointments on microfilm. Moses Hazen was born May 01, 1801, near Johnsonburg, N. J.; and died March 07, 1858, at Allamuchy, N. J. Winfield was his son (b. 1835/ d. November 14, 1861, Allamuchy, N. J. (<http://www.genealogy.com/ftm/h/a/z/Walter-E-Hazen-CO/GENE3-0055.html#CHILD268>)

³ George Crawford Beekman, *Early Dutch Settlers in Monmouth*, p. 112.

⁴ National Postal Museum at <https://postalmuseum.si.edu/research/topical-reference-pages/postmasters-general.html> (11/18/2017).