

RAILROAD CANCELLATIONS ON THE U. S. 1851 ISSUE.

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The writer, a specialist in the 1851 United States issue, while examining some stamps of this set noticed a three cent specimen with the cancellation "MORRIS & ESSEX R. R." (Fig. 1) in a circle with the date, month and day in the center. Until he saw this stamp he had no idea that railroad cancellations were used so long ago. He became interested and since then has found several more similar postmarks, which he begs leave to describe with the hope that others may be interested, and also that



Fig I



Fig II

new varieties may be noted. Mr. J. W. Scott, one of the oldest dealers in the country, recently remarked to the writer that he doubted whether stamps were cancelled in railroad trains so long ago, but from the study made it seems certain that they were.

It is sometimes difficult to tell whether a certain cancellation was used on a railroad train or on board boat. These doubtful varieties have been put in with the railroad postmarks until it is made certain where they were used.

In general, these cancellations are of three classes. The first show simply the railroad name and usually the date, without the name of the city or cities from which they ran; the second class were made to designate a certain mail route without the railroad being named; and the third class show generally a single word as "WAY" or "STEAM". It will be understood that black ink was used unless otherwise noted, and that the date is always month and day, the year never being added.

Of the first class the following have been seen in a circle with date in the middle, but no copies have been seen on

covers, so neither the mailing point nor destination can be given:—"MORRIS & ESSEX R. R.", "NEW YORK & ERIE R. R.", "PHILA. & N. YORK R. R.", "MIC. CENTRAL R. R. Mic", "WIL. & RAL. R. R." (Wilmington & Raleigh), "C. Z. & C. R. R. OHIO." Stamps have been seen showing parts of railroad cancellations of the same type, as follows:—"AVEN R. R.", "—R. R. Pa", "—& CLEA—", "—R. RY-VALLEY", "—PA. R. R.", "—& RALEIGH RAILROAD" in blue, and "—D & ERIE—" in blue.

The following of the same type have been seen on cover "EASTERN R. R." from Portland, Me., to New York City; "RALEIGH & GASTON R. R." on a cover from ? to Luray, Page Co., Va.; "P.H. & FISH-KILL R. R." from Providence, R. I., to New York City. (Can anyone tell me what a letter from Providence to New York City was doing on a Fishkill Railroad?) "NEW YORK & PHILA. R. R." from Philadelphia to New York City, "N. YORK & PHILA. R. R." from Philadelphia to New York City; "PHA. & BALTIMORE R. R." from Baltimore to New York City.

"BALTIMORE R. R." in a straight line without date has also been seen, but not on cover.

Of the second class, where the postmark shows the mail route without the railroad being named, the following have been seen:

"U. S. EXPRESS MAIL N. Y." in circle with "N. YORK" in smaller type at the top under "PRES" of "EXPRESS" with the date in the middle (Fig. II.) used on trains running between New York and Boston. The corresponding postmark used in the other direction is the same excepting that "Mass" takes the place of "N. Y." and "BOSTON" takes the place of "N. YORK". It is found on covers from Boston and intermediate points, as Providence, R. I. This postmark is commonly in black ink, but for awhile during the first half of the year 1856 at least, bright red ink was sometimes used. The earliest cover seen in which the black postmark was used is dated Feb. 21, 1852, and the latest May 7, 1857.

Another of this class has "LOUISVILLE & CINCINNATI" in a circle with "MAIL LINE" inside at the top, with the date in the middle; no copy on cover has been seen. Another is "LVILLE & CINTI. MAIL LINE" with the date in the center. It has been seen in both black and blue. The only entire envelope seen bearing this cancellation is addressed to Madison, Tenn., which is on the river about half way between Cincinnati and Louisville, and has only indirect railroad communication with either. From these facts the writer suspects that all of the Cincinnati & Louisville Mail Line cancellations may have been used on steamboats and not on the railroad. Part of another similar cancellation that is probably "LOUISVILLE & CINCINNATI MAIL LINE" has been seen in black.

Of the third class the following have been seen:—"WAY" in black and blue; "WAY" underlined, "WAY" with "5" beneath it in brown and black, and "Way" written with a pen in black ink, and also in lead pencil, and "STEAM" in black. But two copies on cover of this class have been seen. One with "WAY" underlined cancelling the three cent stamp on a letter sheet sent from Mobile, Ala., to New Orleans, La., Jan 14, 1854. The only other postmark on the cover is "New Orleans La." in a circle in red. This must be a receiving postmark. The other specimen is "STEAM" in black cancelling the stamp on a cover to St. Louis, Mo., coming probably from New York City. There is no other postmark on the cover. The date written on the back is April 22, '54.

From the number of varieties described the author judges that railroad cancellations were certainly used to a rather limited extent while the 1851 issue was current. The writer will be glad to examine any new varieties of these cancellations on the 1851 issue which may be submitted to him, or to receive further information regarding those listed. He may be addressed at 936 St. Marks Ave., Brooklyn, New York City.