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Some Notes on the Telegraph Companies
of the United States; their Stamps
and Franks.

BY JOSEPH S. RICH.

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Some Notes on the Telegraph Companies of the United States; their Stamps and Franks.

It is a matter of history, but still of some interest at this moment, that the telegraph came into existence in 1844. I shall not trouble you with details of the trials, experiments, failures, etc., of the beginning of this great revolution in communication. It is well known that Morse spent every cent he had in the world experimenting and completing his instruments for sending messages by electricity over a wire. After his return from Europe, on April 15, 1839, he was still working at his idea, and in the following year, 1840, the first patent was issued to him. In 1841, Morse wrote a letter to his friend, Alfred Vail, in which these words appear:—"I have not a cent in the world." To his partner, Smith, after still another year of poverty and anxiety, he wrote of his trials and in that letter we find the following:—"While, so far as my invention is concerned, everything is favorable, I find myself without sympathy or help from any who are associated with me, whose interest one would think would impel them, at least, to inquire if they could render any assistance. For nearly two years I have devoted all my time and scanty means, living on a mere pittance and denying myself all pleasures, even necessary food, that I might have a sum to put my telegraph in such a position before Congress as to insure success to the common enterprise. I am crushed for want of means, and means of so trifling a character, too, that they who know how to ask (which I do not) could obtain in a few hours. One more year has gone for want of these means." In February, 1843, a bill was passed by Congress, giving Morse \$30,000 to build an experimental line between Washington and Baltimore. Morse was unaware of the vote in Congress. The daughter of his friend Mr. Ellsworth, Commissioner of Patents (her name was Annie G. and I mention it because it is a name to be remembered), called on the Professor next morning and said to him, "Professor, I have come on purpose to congratulate you." "Congratulate me! for what, my dear friend, can you offer me congratulations?" "Why," she exclaimed gaily, as she enjoyed his wondering surprise, and he was at the time not in the fittest mood for pleasantries, "on the passage of your bill. The Senate last night voted you your money, \$30,000." The news was so unexpected that for some moments he could make no reply. At length he said, "Yes, Annie, you are the first to inform me. I was until now utterly unconscious of the fact, and now I am going to make you a promise. When the line is completed the first despatch sent upon it from Washington to Baltimore shall be yours." "Well she replied, "I will hold you to your promise." It was now arranged that Mr. Morse should be allowed a salary of \$2,500, during the construction of the line and the test. His assistants were Dr. L. D. Gale and Prof. J. C. Fisher. Mr. Alfred Vail took charge of the machinery, and the superintendent of construction was Mr. Ezra

Cornell. The first message was sent over the wire on May 27, 1844, by Miss Annie G. Ellsworth, and it is said that the words of that first message were,—“What hath God wrought!”. In this connection it may not be uninteresting for me to state that, in 1845, Prof. Morse wrote in Miss Ellsworth's album a couple of verses as follows :

To Miss A. G. E.

THE SUN-DIAL.

“Horas non numero nisi serenas.

I note not the hours except they be bright.

“The sun when it shines in a clear cloudless sky
Marks the time on my disk in figures of light.
If clouds gather o'er me, unheeded they fly.
I note not the hours except they be bright.

“So when I review all the scenes that have past
Between me and thee, be they dark, be they light,
I forget what was dark, the light I hold fast.
I note not the hours except they be bright.”

Underneath this Morse wrote the following note :—“In traveling on the Rhine some years ago, I saw on a sun-dial at Worms the above motto. The beauty of its sentiment is well sustained in the euphony of its syllables, and I placed it in my own book, and have ventured to expand it in the stanzas which I now dedicate to my young friend A., sincerely praying that the dial of her life may ever show unclouded hours.”

On April 1, 1845, the line was opened for public business. The operators were Mr. Vail at Washington and Mr. Henry J. Rogers at Baltimore. The Postmaster General had fixed the tariff at one cent for every four characters. The receipts during the first four days amounted to the magnificent sum of ONE CENT. This was brought about by the use of the telegraph line by an office seeker, who said he had nothing but a \$20 bill and one cent; so he bought a cent's worth of telegraphy, the address not being charged for in either direction. Washington asked Baltimore,—“4”, which in the list signified “What time is it?”, and the answer came from Baltimore—“1”—which signified that it was one o'clock. This was one character each way and should have cost $\frac{1}{2}$ a cent. The man paid his cent and was satisfied to go away without his change. On the 5th of the same month the receipts were $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents, on the 7th they ran up to 60 cents, on the 8th to \$1.32. In the year 1896 they were \$22,612,736. The immense value of the telegraph became apparent almost at once, and Prof. Morse offered to sell it to the Government for \$100,000. The Postmaster General decided that telegrams sent at the rate of postage could not produce sufficient revenue to maintain the line without loss, and the offer was refused. Mr. Reid in his book “The Telegraphy in America”, a book from which I shall quote very freely throughout these notes and to which I am indebted for much of the information which I possess on the subject, says :—“It was a fortunate fact for the inventor and for the country.” The American telegraph grew rapidly from this time on, and long before his death, Mr. Morse had the satisfaction of seeing his system in use in every portion of the civilized world.

Having thus introduced you to the telegraph in general, I will proceed to take up the companies in chronological order.

THE MAGNETIC TELEGRAPH COMPANY.

Upon the failure of Morse, in 1845, to sell his experimental, though successful, line to the Government, he endeavored to enlist private capital. In this he was successful, and Mr. Amos Kendall took steps to organize a company to build a line from New York to Baltimore and Washington. It was estimated that a line from Fort Lee, opposite New York City, or rather opposite the residence of the naturalist, Mr. Audubon, to Philadelphia, would cost \$15,000. It was with great difficulty that sufficient money was raised in New York, but in Washington there was greater success. Among the names of the original subscribers to the \$15,000 we find the firm of Corcoran & Riggs, \$1,000; Amos Kendall, \$500; Ezra Cornell, \$500; John M. Broadhead, \$1,000; F. O. J. Smith, \$2,750. As has been the case very often since, two shares of stock were issued on payment of the money sufficient to buy one share, and therefore the \$15,000 represented \$30,000 of stock. The patentees received an additional \$30,000, and therefore the original watered stock was issued to the amount of \$60,000.

The Magnetic Telegraph Co. was incorporated by the Legislature of the State of Maryland, and this was the first charter issued to a telegraph company in the United States. The incorporators were S. F. B. Morse, B. B. French, Geo. C. Penniman, Henry J. Rogers, John S. McKim, J. R. Trimble, W. M. Swain, John O. Sterns, A. Sydney Doane and Associates. The route was from Merchant's Exchange, Philadelphia, via the Columbia R. R. to Morgan's Corners, thence via Norristown, Boylestown and Somerville to Fort Lee by the ordinary wagon road. The reason that we find such a peculiar route taken is, that the railroad refused the right of way except on oppressive terms. By Jan. 20, 1846, the line had been completed to Fort Lee. Mr. Reid became director of the line with an office at Philadelphia. At this time, Mr. Smith of Washington, in the employ of this company, invented what is to-day known as the "climber," that peculiar instrument, which, attached to the feet of men, makes monkeys of them. Messages were sent across to New York by means of pigeons, until a lead pipe, enclosing a wire covered with cotton saturated with pitch, was laid across the North River, under the superintendence of Ezra Cornell, from Fort Lee to Audubon's. But this proved a failure, and boatmen were employed to carry the messages from Fort Lee to Audubon's, to be sent down to the City.

The first office for the reception of messages was opened at 10 Wall Street. The operating office was located in Jersey City, where it remained for more than a year, until a successful crossing of the Hudson River, 60 miles from New York City, was made. Not long after, the New York office was moved to Post's Buildings, behind the Merchants' Exchange. The original Post's Buildings no longer remain, but in their place to-day we find the magnificent office buildings, still behind the reconstructed Merchants' Exchange, now known as the New York Custom House. At that time the glass knobs which were used as insulators, glistened in the sun and made fine targets for boys and rifle shooters. Occasionally a rifleman would make an attempt to split the wire, and less occasionally the rifleman was successful. This, of course, caused much trouble. The great majority of people were entirely ignorant as to the use of the wire, and the question of splitting the wire or breaking the insulators did not concern them. The first calamity which occurred to the telegraph line was one which has been repeated many times since. There was a night rain and a cold atmosphere and the wires were laden with ice—in the morning no two poles were connected.

The line from Philadelphia to Baltimore was built in 1846, under a contract by which it was to cost \$12,000, but which was slightly increased later on. All the wires were directed to be covered with tar. I shall quote in this connection from Mr. Reid's book: "The originator of that sublime conception is unknown. In conformity with the order, however, a newly landed Scotchman was engaged, who, with a tar bucket slung at his side and a monster sponge in his hand, tarred the wire as far as Wilmington, Del. There tar proved too much for him, — he went to sleep and never woke. We buried him there. When he was gone no one would take his place. Being then in charge of the men, I took the bucket and sponge and lathered the electric road to the Susquehanna. There O'Reilly made a bonfire of my saturated garments. It was a sad business. All the tavern keepers on that road long remembered the man with the tar bucket. At the town of North East they would not give me a bed."

The stockholders met and organized on Jan. 14, 1846. The officers were:—President, Amos Kendall; Secretary, Thos. M. Clark; Treasurer, A. Sydney Doane. The force was as follows: Washington, one operator; Jersey City, three operators; Wall St., one clerk and four boys; Philadelphia, three operators, one clerk and three boys; Wilmington, one operator; Baltimore, two operators and one boy. In those days enormous rents were paid by telegraph companies for offices. The annual rent of the New York office was \$250, Philadelphia office \$150, Baltimore \$150, Washington \$50. On Feb. 1, 1875, the Western Union Telegraph Co., which is the successor of all early telegraph lines, moved into a modest little office at the corner of Dey St. and Broadway, measuring 75 x 150 ft. and 230 ft. from the pavement to the top, containing thirteen floors and built of iron, having three elevators and one special trunk elevator. This modest little office cost \$2,200,000.

Now, for the rates. The rates between Baltimore and Washington were 10-1. This means 10 cents for the first ten words and 1 cent for every extra word. New York to New Brunswick, 10-1; New York to Philadelphia, 25-2, New York to Washington, 50-5. This was considered at the time very exorbitant, and in connection with exorbitant rates for messages I will quote a little story from Tegg's "Posts and Telegraphs". Of course, these exorbitant rates led to the use of abbreviations and words meaning sentences, and this anecdote will fit the case. Mr. Tegg says:—"The despatches which pass over a line in the course of a year, if collected together, would present a very curious and interesting volume of correspondence. The price of transmission for a message depending upon the number of words which it contains, of course renders the construction of it necessarily as brief as possible. Most despatches are contained in less than ten words, *exclusive of address and signature which are not charged for*, and it is surprising how much matter is frequently contained in this small number. Among the best examples of brevity which we have met with, however, are the two following: A lady in a neighboring city desirous of ascertaining when her husband would return home, sent him a message making the inquiry, to which he responded that important business detained him and that he could not leave for some days. The lady immediately replied by sending him another despatch couched in the following laconic manner:—"To F. C. P. Despatch received. Deut. XXIV: 5. Kate." The gentleman to whom the despatch was addressed, upon referring to the passage of scripture quoted, obtained the following lengthy and suggestive epistle: "When a man hath taken a new wife he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business, but he shall be free at home one year and shall cheer up his wife

which he hath taken.' The second example is the reply sent to a person in a distant city, who, having committed some offense against the laws, was desirous of ascertaining whether it would be prudent for him to return. He therefore telegraphed in the following style :—'New York. To B. C. M., Philadelphia. Is everything O. K.? D. T. M. To which he obtained the following brief reply:—"Philadelphia. To D. T. M., New York. Prov. Chap. XXVII: 12, B. C. M.' Upon referring to the passage indicated, the inquiring individual obtained the following valuable advice, which it is presumed he followed:—"A prudent man forseeth evil and hideth himself; but the simple pass on and are punished.'"



On the reverse of the envelopes, which enclosed telegrams in the early days, are found various seals. It does not appear just when the sealing labels were introduced, but they were probably brought into use during the administration of Mr. Wm. M. Swain, or possibly while he was one of the directors in the company. He was a man of great energy, and possibly the only one in the corporation, at that time, who had very clear ideas of business methods. Almost all telegraphic business management of the day was due to his energy. These seals cannot in any way be considered as telegraph stamps. An examination of the envelopes on which they appear shows plainly what they were used for. None of the envelopes have any gum on the upper flap, and, the messages enclosed in these envelopes being usually of a private and confidential nature, some method was necessary to seal them, and the four flaps at their junction were covered by a circular seal 25 mm. in diameter, printed on a very deep blue glazed paper.

Through the courtesy of Mr. Clarence H. Eagle I have had the privilege of seeing one of these envelopes, enclosing a telegram, dated Baltimore, Jan. 12, 1849, which clearly fixes its date. The face of the envelope bears an inscription in six lines :

MAGNETIC TELEGRAPH.

INVENTED BY

S. F. B. MORSE, AN AMERICAN CITIZEN

Office in Washington,

CONGRESS HALL,

Pennsylvania Avenue, opposite National Hotel.

In the lower left hand corner, in two lines :

If you desire an answer,
The bearer will wait.

In the lower right hand corner in two lines :

No charge for
Delivery.

The seal on the back reads, in circle :

MAGNETIC TELEGRAPH CO.

In the center in four lines :

OFFICE
Cor. Louisiana
Avenue & Six St.
Washington.

NEW YORK & ERIE MAGNETIC TELEGRAPH CO.

In August, 1847, the construction of this line was begun. The route was by the public roads from New York through Harlem, White Plains, Sing Sing, Peekskill, Newburgh, Goshen, Middletown, Honesdale, Montrose, Binghamton, Ithaca, Dansville, Nunda, and Pike, to Fredonia. The line was 440 miles long. A line from Ithaca to Binghamton was incorporated with this. The construction price was \$250 per mile for the first wire and \$100 per mile for each additional wire. The company was organized October 1, 1849, as the New York & Erie Telegraph Association. It was expected that this line would be a wonderful success, but, to use the words of a writer: "It was a great artery, but had no vitality for propelling blood. It soon became tributary to other companies." A seal was used by this company which is almost a perfect duplicate of that used by the Magnetic Telegraph Co. The only difference is in the words of the inscription. In this case there are, in a circle: "New York & Erie Telegraph Co."; inside of this circle, in four horizontal lines :

OFFICE
No. 5 Hanover
Cor. Beaver St.
NEW YORK.

(No. 5 Hanover St., by the way, was Post's buildings.)

The seal is printed on deep blue, surface-glazed paper, exactly like the other, and is placed on the envelope in the same manner as the previously described seal.

NEW YORK & BOSTON MAGNETIC TELEGRAPH ASS'N.

Organized under an Act of the Legislature of Connecticut, passed in the session of 1845-46, with a capital of \$175 000. On February 21, 1846, the line between Boston and Lowell had been completed, and Miss Sarah G. Bagley was appointed operator at the Lowell depot. She is the first woman telegraph operator on record. By March 22d the line had been extended to Springfield, by the 26th to Hartford, by the 1st of May to New Haven. New York was reached on the 27th of June, 1846. The office in Boston was in the Merchants' Exchange Building; in Worcester in a building of the same

name; in Springfield it was in Massasoit Row (probably that ugly row of buildings which to-day is known as the Massasoit House). The New York office was in Post's buildings. In the New York office a single messenger was able to do all the work of delivery. The line was subject to many delays, owing to poor construction, and this became very annoying to those who found it necessary, for business reasons, to use the telegraph. At this time Mr. Smith stepped in and spent \$25,000 on improvements on the line and in making it the best in those days. Just then another company was looking for the business from Boston, and Mr. Smith threw down the gauntlet, in the form of a letter to the opposition company, which is of sufficient interest to quote in full:— "To-day I bring out an offer in Boston. I propose to deposit \$1,000 in the Merchants' Bank in Boston, against \$1,000, that my Durham bull, weighing over 2500 lbs, will carry a message of 1000 words from Boston to New York, in less time than the House Patent can carry it; and I give the House instruments and the Boston wires gratis to try on, and October and November to accept the offer in. If this offer don't get the public right, I don't know how big a bull they want to do that for them. Let this proposition have a good run through the United States, as it certainly will, if its mixture of the serious, ridiculous and sublime will make it take, and House and his Cincinnati coadjutors will run bull mad."

(Signed) F. O. J. Smith.

Much amusement was caused by this challenge. The rate between New York and Boston was 50 cents for each ten words, and no reduction to the press. Mr. Alexander Jones in his *Historical Sketch of the Electric Telegraph*, written and published in 1851, writes: "We early invented a kind of short-hand system, or cipher, intended greatly to abbreviate commercial news transmitted by telegraph, a notice of which appeared in the *Herald* in 1847. This was so arranged, that the receipts of produce and the sales and prices of all leading articles of breadstuffs, provisions, &c., could be sent from Buffalo and Albany daily, in twenty words, for both cities, which, when written out, would make one hundred or more words. This plan of abbreviation, or some modification of it is continued on the same route, besides others, to the present day. Copies of the cipher, either in manuscript or in print, were placed in the hands of correspondents who should either compose or translate messages for the press. Another party also contrived a cipher, but on an entirely different plan. Our first effort was found, in its daily use, to be imperfect, and we soon prepared a second edition. We commenced sending and receiving commercial reports by it early in 1847, between New York, Baltimore, Boston and Buffalo, and subsequently between New York and Cincinnati, New Orleans and St. Louis.

Mr. F. O. J. Smith, the controller of the New York and Boston Morse line, established his charges at fifty cents for each ten words. We received a daily report from Boston of the markets over his line, of ten words in our cipher, which, when translated for the press, made at least from fifty to sixty. Mr. Smith, thinking we were getting more than our money's worth, decided that five letters constituted the average of English words, and directed that all the letters, in a message sent in cipher, should be counted, and the whole divided by five for the number of words, and charged accordingly. We then, thinking other lines might follow his example, set down and ransacked Walker's Dictionary for a collection of short words, and in no case, as far as practicable, did we select one with more than five to six letters. After much labor we had a new cipher ready for the press. When printed

it made about 70 or 80 pages octavo, and altogether, the edition comprising only a few hundred copies for private use, cost us a considerable sum of money, on account of the large amount of figure work. Mr. Smith soon after decided that three letters made an English word, and we then abandoned receiving markets over his line from Boston, but supplied some of the papers in that city for some time with New York markets prepared by it, and also used it on lines leading to Baltimore, Cincinnati, and Buffalo."

This "kind of short-hand system, or cipher," invented by Mr. Jones in 1847, is probably the origin of all our modern elaborate telegraph and cable codes.

In July, 1852, this company absorbed its competitor, the New York & New England, and a single company, under the name of the New York & New England Union Telegraph Co., was formed. We find that the New York & Boston Magnetic Telegraph Association used, in 1850, a seal which is almost an exact duplicate of the two seals previously described, except that the words in the circle were changed to fit the name of this Association, and read as follows: "New York & Boston Magnetic Telegraph Association." This is printed on deep blue, surface-glazed paper.

NEW YORK & NEW ENGLAND UNION TELEGRAPH CO.



This company was organized in 1849. It established a line in opposition to the New York and Boston Magnetic Telegraph Ass'n, which used the Morse system of telegraphy. Under the influence of Genl. Lefferts, the capital, which was fixed at \$100,000, was subscribed. The route was along the Pawtucket pike road from Boston to Providence, thence it followed the railroad to Olneyville and southward, by the New London, Middletown, Norwich and New Haven pike, to Eighth Avenue, New York. It was built of a single line of No. 9 galvanized wire. A peculiar insulator, known as the Leffert block insulator, was used. The system was a chemical one and was supposed to be the invention of a Mr. Bain, but the evidence is in favor of his having stolen whatever ideas he may have had on the subject from Mr. Morse's early instruments, because he was unable to obtain a patent in the United States for his invention.

The company established neat offices, well located and attractively fitted up. I will quote a few words as to the employees: "The receivers were selected for their politeness, were well dressed and silver tongued. A large business was offered and was promptly and skillfully handled. The receipts for the year ending March 30, 1851, were \$34,529 24, the second year they were \$41,521.-30." The company, that is this Merchants' Line—the name by which it is generally known—and the New York & Boston Magnetic were at continual warfare, and suits for infringement of patent were brought against the Merchants' Line. This resulted in the union of the two companies, under the title of the New York & New England Union Telegraph Co. The general director was Thos. M. Clark, whose business methods led to many economies. One was an order that "all Morse operators be instructed to copy their own messages as they receive them, and this led to what is known to day as 'sound reading', in order that they might save themselves the trouble of making two copies. I have a little story to record in connection with sound reading which I have stolen from Tegg, who stole it from the London Times. It is as follows:

" We are requested by the Reuter Telegraph Co. to correct an erroneous announcement, made in their Brisbane telegram of the 2d inst. (published on the 5th inst.), stating that "Lady Kennedy has given birth to twins, the eldest being a son." The company explained that the message they received contained the words 'Governor—Queensland—Twins—First Son.' Being, however, subsequently informed that Sir Arthur Kennedy was unmarried and that there must be some mistake, a telegraphic repetition was at once demanded. It has been received to-day (11th inst.), and shows that the words really telegraphed by the Reuter agent were: 'Governor—Queensland—*Turns—First—Sod*,' alluding to the Maryborough Gympic R. R. in course of construction. The words in italics were mutilated by the telegraph in transmission from Australia, and reaching the company in the form mentioned, gave rise to the mistake."

It will be noticed from what I have stated just before, that the lines passed through certain cities. We know seals used by this company in New York, Providence and New Haven. There is every reason to believe that a seal will some day be found bearing the name of the Boston office. It is, of course, out of the question to consider the seals of this company as stamps. There is not the slightest evidence that they were ever used either to pre-pay a message or to pay for carrying a message from the telegraph office to the point of destination, or that they were used as franks. I have had the privilege of examining a number of these seals, some in the collections of Mr. Clarence H. Eagle and Mr. H. E. Deats, I have also three in my own collection, and have seen quite a number within the last ten years, in the hands of dealers. In no instance have I found the slightest trace of gum on the upper flap of any of the envelopes sealed with these Merchants' Line seals. They are no more telegraph stamps than the circular labels of the Magnetic Telegraph Co. The New York & Erie and the New York & Boston both have exactly the same status; nothing more, nothing less. The label of the Merchants' Line is a copper plate engraving, and consists of an eagle couchant with spread wings, on a double line shield. In the shield is a six-line inscription ornamentally arranged:

" Merchants'
Line
Telegraph
29
Wall St.,
N. York."

" 23—Canal St.—Providence. " 146—Chapel St.—New Haven."

The whole design is surrounded by a single lined rectangle, having the corners broken by small quarter circles, and measuring 19x24 mm. in the New York stamp, 18½x25 mm. in the Providence stamp, and the same in the New Haven stamp. They are printed on a heavy, surface-glazed paper and are trimmed to measure about 20x25 mm. In the majority of cases the corners have been cut off diagonally, making an irregular octagon. They were used in 1850.

The labels of the Merchants' Line Telegraph are in bad repute, because of some of the things which are known about them. For many years the labels held an honored position in the catalogues and at one time were priced as high as \$5 per copy. But one day a firm of stamp dealers, of New York City, unearthed a lot with the Providence address on them, for which they charged the modest sum of \$20 each. Then some one discovered

(I wonder how that discovery was made) that the long accepted stamp was only a label for sealing the envelopes, and the firm of stamp dealers were obliged to disgorge. My copy cost me \$20, and I know a man who paid \$50 for one not much better. There is an old Spanish proverb which applies to this case, "If fools went not to market, bad wares would not be sold." We must therefore, conclude that the long-listed first issue U. S. Telegraph stamp is not a telegraph stamp at all. The list of varieties of this label, so far as known, is as follows :

New York,	black on red glazed paper
"	" " yellow " "
Providence,	" " red " "
"	" " green " "
	(?) " " yellow " "
New Haven,	" " red " "

CITY & SUBURBAN.



The City and Suburban, as it is known to collectors of stamps, but properly, The New York City & Suburban Printing Telegraph Co., was the first telegraph company to do a purely local business. It was organized in 1855. It grew from the practice, originated in 1849 by Col. R. M. Hoe, of having the business office and factories of the same firm con-

ected by a private wire. The company began business with a central office in a deep basement in Chambers St., near Broadway. Three wires radiated from there to Chatham Sq., East Broadway and Pike Slip,—to a basement opposite the St. Nicholas Hotel,—to the Astor House and 21 Wall St. The tariff was 10 cents for 10 words. Messages were few and far between and the scheme was a failure. Henry Bentley had been general manager, constructor, repairer, batteryman and cashier. The company having failed, he leased the lines from the stockholders, agreeing to pay them 25 per cent. of all he made. He arranged for office rent free in a number of hotels and for board, without charge, for an operator. On these terms he opened offices at the Metropolitan, New York and St. Germain hotels. He also established offices at the Broadway Post Office, near Canal St., Broadway & 17th St., Fourth Ave. & 26th St, Crystal Palace, and at two other points on the east side of the city. Immediately a fine business sprang up. I now quote from Reid's book "The Telegraph in America":

"While thus carrying out his project of a City Telegraph, Bentley started a system of message depositories where messages might be left, called for and carried by messengers to the telegraph offices. For this purpose he had stamps of various denominations in the form of a small shield engraved, which could be purchased and affixed to a dispatch when deposited. Boxes for the reception of dispatches were left with druggists and others. Messengers called at stated hours and carried them to the telegraph stations. But, spirited as all this was, it would not work. Wrong tariffs were paid. Illegible messages were dropped in the boxes. Answers, also, were received with imperfect addresses, which made delivery impossible. All this soon raised a storm, and claims for damages became unpleasantly frequent. Under such circumstances the boxes were withdrawn, and the experiment has not been

repeated except in two or three European cities where it is now being attempted.

In connection with these telegraphic arrangements, Bentley started the Madison Square Post Office, soon after known as "Bentley's Dispatch", for the delivery of letters in the city and for deposit at the General Post Office. There were, at that time, no auxiliary post offices. Letter carriers were rare and deliveries few. Letter writers had to go or send to the General Post Office to deposit their letters. Bentley offered to do this for a cent each. The project was well received and thousands of letters were brought to him daily. This was maintained for several years with great success and profit. At last Bentley sold out at a large price. Ill health also induced him to dispose of his telegraphic arrangements and lines to the American Telegraph Company by whom they were, subsequently, greatly enlarged."

The stamps issued were of three values, 1, 2 and 3c, and were printed in sheets together. Just how many were in a sheet is unknown. The largest number ever seen together is three, the 1, 2 and 3c, in a horizontal strip. Probably they were printed in sheets of 100 stamps and, as the tariff is known to have been 10 cents for 10 words, two 3's and two 2's would answer that purpose. The extra cent was probably used in case the words ran over the ten. These stamps, for a long time, were supposed to have been Telegraph Delivery stamps, and were believed to have been used by the Western Union Telegraph Co., doing business under the name of the City & Suburban Telegraph Co., in Brooklyn; and it is also reported that these were checks given to messenger boys as a fee for the delivery of telegrams in various parts of the City of Brooklyn, and that, on Saturday nights, they were cashed. Hence, so few are to be seen. They may be described as follows:—Two concentric horizontal ovals, the outer being scalloped and measuring 30x20 mm. Between the two concentric circles the name, "The City & Suburban Telegraph"; in the center the value, "One Cent" (2 cents—3 cents), with ornamental dashes; printed on a thin white wove paper, imperforate.

The City & Suburban Telegraph Co.

1c black
2c "
3c "

A fairly well made counterfeit is in existence, also a poorer made counterfeit which is printed in blue.

CALIFORNIA STATE TELEGRAPH CO.

If there was any portion of the United States which, in the early '50's felt the need of the telegraph more than another, it was California, and the first movement to establish a line was made by Messrs. Oliver C. Allen and Clark Burnham, of New York. In 1852, these gentlemen obtained from the Legislature of California the right to operate a line between San Francisco, San Jose, Stockton, Sacramento and Marysville, on condition that the line should be finished by Nov. 1, 1853. The California Telegraph Co. was organized in the fall of 1852, but the line was never completed on account of the price of money, which at that time was worth from 5 to 10 per cent. a month in California. Early in 1853 another unsuccessful attempt was made. In the meantime, however, J. E. Strong had obtained sufficient subscriptions from the mining towns of Nevada, Grass Valley and Auburn to erect a wire

upon trees between these places. It went into operation in July 1853, and was the first line of telegraph erected upon the Pacific coast. In 1853 the California Telegraph Co. was re-organized and re-incorporated, the name this time being the California State Telegraph Co. The old franchise and the material of the old company were purchased. This new company meant business, and immediately they made arrangements to build a line of two wires to follow the stage line to Marysville via Sacramento. The two wires were, one for "up" and the other for "down" business. The duplex system was not then in use. The builders of this line had no perception of the value of their work, as the line was built of very indifferent material. The first section was from San Francisco to San Jose, and it was not then realized that this was the beginning of a union of the East and the West by means of the telegraph wire. The line was completed to Marysville by Oct. 26, 1853. The tariff was high—\$2 for ten words between San Francisco, Stockton, Sacramento and Marysville, and \$1 between San Francisco and San Jose. When it is remembered that San Jose is but a few miles from San Francisco, it will be understood how high this tariff was.

Another line was built in California not long after, known as the Alta Telegraph Co. This was, at first, in competition with the California State Telegraph Co. and was finally absorbed by it. In 1856 the Northern Telegraph Co. was organized to construct a line between Marysville and Yreka. This was also, after competition, absorbed by the California State Telegraph Co. In 1860 an agent of the Western Union Telegraph Co. arrived in San Francisco, with the intention of starting a movement for a telegraph line across the continent. A few weeks after his arrival the Northern Telegraph Co. had been absorbed. The Atlantic & Pacific, another line which had been built in California, also came under the influence of the Western Union, and the Placerville & Humboldt Telegraph Co. was also taken into this friendly family (all by means of union with the California State Telegraph Co.) with a united capital of \$1,250,000. It was in 1866 that the Western Union Telegraph Co. really absorbed the California State Telegraph Co. by purchasing the control of its stock. In January, 1867, the Western Union Co. decided to take direct control of the lines, and George Hart Mumford, who was afterwards Vice-President and Secretary of the Western Union Telegraph Co., was put in charge.

It would appear, therefore, that the franks of the California State Telegraph Co. were really issued by the Western Union Telegraph Co., as the Western Union was then in control of its lines. It would also appear to be safe to speculate upon the Western Union Telegraph franks having their origin in the telegraph franks issued by the California State Telegraph Co., as we find that this company was the first to issue a frank, which is dated "1870." It may be interesting, in this connection, to state that the Trans-Atlantic Cable might not have been necessary, had a scheme, which was proposed in California in 1861, gone through. The scheme was nothing less than to build a telegraph line from San Francisco along the coast to Alaska and Behring Strait, crossing that by a cable 39 miles long and sunk only to a depth of 160 feet, thence, by Asiatic Russia (known to us as Siberia), into Europe. It was estimated that this line would not cost very much. Russia had guaranteed to build from Moscow to the Pacific; the line from San Francisco to Vancouver had already been built; it lacked only 1800 miles to Behring Strait. At an estimated cost of \$100 per mile, the total would only have been \$180,000. To this amount must be added \$100,000 for a survey and other expenses.



ink from steel dies. The highest control number seen is "101". They were printed in sheets of at least six stamps and perforated.

1870. No value; black and blue on white.



Second type, 1870, lithographed. The design consists of a central oval printed in red, and bearing, in colorless characters, "1870"; just above this, in an ornamental frame, the word "Frank"; in two curved labels, one above and the other below, the words "Cal. State" and "Telegraph"; in a colorless label, below the lower curved label, "G. H. Mumford, Pres't." The corners are occupied by ornamental scrolls. The design measures 22x26 mm. and is printed in black on wove paper, perforated.

1870. No value, black and red on white, perforated.



The third design is very similar to the second, and any description of it would coincide with that of the second type of 1870. The main difference is that the central oval lacks any color, and that the label above the central oval, bearing the word "Frank", is of a more ornamental design. The date is printed in salmon, vertically, and across this the control number; the highest number seen being 103.

The years following, namely, 1872, 1873, 1874 and finally, 1875, are all similar, though not the same, and vary in the color of the impression as well as in the color of the date printed in the central oval.

1871	no value	black and salmon	on white wove,	perforated
1872	"	green and red	"	"
1873	"	red and salmon	"	"
1874	"	blue and salmon	"	"
1875	"	brown and green	"	"

In 1875 there was also issued a form of telegraph "pass", which, it seems, accompanied the book of stamps, if they were issued in book form. Of course, this cannot be considered in any sense a frank or a stamp. I merely refer to it because it has come under my notice.

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH CO.

The Western Union Telegraph Co. had its origin in two inventions, both rivals of the Morse system of telegraphy. Of these two the more important was the House Printing Telegraph. This instrument was patented in 1846 and at that time appeared to be the highest product of the human mind, as

applied to telegraphic invention. This was owned by the American Telegraph Co. The other competitor was the Hughes instrument, also owned by the American Telegraph Co., and upon which its business career depended. In 1847 Hugh Downing, of Philadelphia thought that he saw a fortune in the House patent and bought a trifling interest in it, and in 1849 constructed a line from New York to Philadelphia, called the "New Jersey Magnetic Telegraph Co." The capital was \$100,000. The line was along the turnpike between Philadelphia and Fort Lee, and across the Delaware, Raritan and North Rivers by the use of masts. Mr. Downing was a very industrious and active man, but indiscreet and self-willed, and thereby lost a great deal of business. Henry J. Rogers was appointed superintendent, and the company built up a large and prosperous business. In fact, it became so prosperous that the greatest mass of business of the press was taken from the Magnetic Telegraph Co. and given to the House Printing Co. In 1859, it became consolidated with the American Telegraph Co.

In 1849, there was organized in the state of New York a line known as the "New York State Telegraph Co.". The line ran from New York to Buffalo and was to cost about \$100,000.

On April 1, 1851, a number of gentlemen from New York and Rochester organized the New York & Mississippi Valley Printing Telegraph Co., with a capital of \$360,000. The route was to be through the state of New York, from Buffalo to Pennsylvania, and along the south side of Lake Erie, and thence to St. Louis. In April, 1854 these companies agreed to consolidate. On April 4, 1856, a charter was granted in New York state to the Western Union Telegraph Co., this being the name which Mr. Ezra Cornell, who was a large owner of the stocks of the corporations, insisted the new combination should bear. The headquarters of the Western Union Telegraph Co. were at first located at Rochester, N. Y. Shortly afterwards it moved to New York and established itself at 145 Broadway. It will be unnecessary to go into its further history.

In 1871 this company began the practice of issuing franks to its stockholders, to members of the press, to politicians who might grant it favors, to railroad officials whom it desired to own. These franks may be described as follows: In the center are the words "FRANK" and "No." in solid letters; under it in red or other colors is the surcharged control number of the frank, and this number usually has in front of it a serial number or letter, all of which is in a square, the ground of which is made up of "Western Union Telegraph Co." repeated many times. Over this square is a double curved solid tablet, on which are the words "Telegraph Co." in white letters, and above this, in a solid arched tablet, "Western Union" in white letters. Directly over the word "Frank" is a white, geometric ornament. Below the square is an oblong tablet containing the name of the president in script, and the word "President" at the base of the tablet in solid letters. The groundwork of the tablet is "Western Union" many times repeated, in a series of geometric curves in color. The entire engraving is on a tablet of vertical parallel lines; at the base of the design is the word "Complimentary" in white letters on a solid ground. Engraved by the National Bank Note Co., and printed on white wove paper, perf. 12; size 25x30½ mm. The franks of 1870 were probably printed in blocks of eight, two of these blocks being enclosed in a cover bearing the title of the company and other information, including the conditions upon which the frank was issued. In 1872 they were bound in covers of a smaller size, in blocks of four, and this form has been retained up to the present day. The first four used did not bear any date, and are known only by their color.



WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH FRANKS.

Printed by the National Bank Note Company.

1871,	no value,	green,	William Orton,	Pres't.
1872,	"	vermilion,	"	"
1873,	"	blue,	"	"
1874,	"	brown,	"	"

Date at sides in solid color.

1875,	no value,	green,	William Orton,	Pres't.
1876,	"	vermilion,	"	"
1877,	"	mauve,	"	"
1878,	"	bistre,	"	"
1879,	"	blue,	Norvin Green,	"

Printed by the American Bank Note Co.

1880,	no value,	rose,	Norvin Green,	Pres't.
1881,	"	green,	"	"
1882,	"	blue,	"	"
1883,	"	brown,	"	"
1884,	"	violet,	"	"
1885,	"	green,	"	"
1886,	"	purple,	"	"
1887,	"	red brown,	"	"
1888,	"	blue,	"	"
1889,	"	olive,	"	"
1890,	"	purple,	"	"
1891,	"	brown,	"	"
1892,	"	vermilion,	"	"
1893,	"	blue,	"	"
1894,	"	green,	Thos. T. Eckert,	"

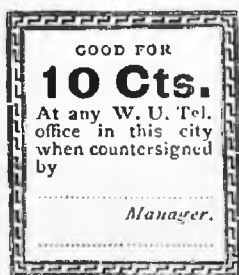
In 1895, the design was somewhat changed. The word "Frank" in the center is now in a more ornamental and shaded letter; the word "No." is in a white outline Roman letter; the lower label ceases to be ornamental and the background, instead of being made up of the words "Western Union" repeated, consists of ornamental figures. The size remains about the same, but the perforation is 14 instead of 12.



Printed by the International Bank Note Co.

1895,	no value,	brown,	Thos. T. Eckert,	Pres't.
1896,	"	purple,	"	"
1897,	"	red,	"	"
1898,	"	green,	"	"
1899,	"	olive,	"	"

The control number was either written with a pen, stamped with a rubber hand stamp, or printed on a printing press. In the early numbers, the serial number which appears most frequently is "O". In 1875, we find A, B, C, D, E, and these appear to run through the entire series.



Four curious labels have come under my notice, which are worthy of description, because they may lead to the unearthing of a scheme for the prepayment of telegrams. They are printed on salmon colored paper and measure 28x31 mm. The design consists of an ordinary type set Grecian border, inside of which is the inscription "Good for 5 (10, 25, 50) cents at any W. U. Tel. Office in this city, when countersigned by... Manager"; with blank lines for the name of the manager. Whether these are merely essays, or whether they were in use by some of the offices under the control of the Western Union Telegraph Co., is not known. I shall be glad to receive any information upon the subject.

COLUSA, LAKE, AND MENDOCINO TELEGRAPH CO.

I cannot find anything about this company, except a mere statement that such a company did exist, and that it had 27 offices, 32 employees, owned 260 miles of poles and 260 miles of wire; therefore, it was a single line telegraph. What other information we have on the subject appeared in *Filatelie Facts and Fallacies*, some years ago. I quote it in full:

"During a conversation with an old time collector not long since, the subject of Locals and Franks was touched upon, and incidentally he mentioned that somewhere in his collections he had some stamps that he could find no mention of in the published catalogues.

With a collector's keen instinct of something new in sight, it was suggested they be hunted up, which was done, and some three or four sheets of the stamps illustrated herewith were the result of the search.

The owner could give but little information, further than he had had them for upward of fifteen years, and they were given him by a friend now dead.

With a sample in hand the next attempt was to authenticate the stamp, find its progenitors and dig up its history.

Mr. Finn of the Western Union Telegraph Company, who has been a constructor of telegraph lines in all parts of this coast for 30 years past, was sought, as being most likely to be informed as to the existence of any and all lines in the State. The result was most satisfactory, Mr. Finn having personally superintended the construction of a portion of this line about 20 years ago.

The line was known when first built, as the "PRINCETON, COLUSA AND GRAND ISLAND TELEGRAPH CO.," and was situated in Colusa County, Calif. It was shortly afterward extended to Lake County, and the name changed to "COLUSA, LAKE AND MENDOCINO TELEGRAPH CO.," with Mr. P. L. Washburn as its Superintendent.

Stamps were issued for the prepayment of telegrams and sold in the form of coupon books.

This much by the way of history; as to the stamps themselves, they are type-set and printed in black on a white wove gummed paper, 10 stamps in a sheet, in two horizontal rows of five each, each sheet being a page in the coupon book, and measuring $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches horizontally, and $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches vertically, perforated 12, the outside margins not perforated, thus leaving eight stamps in each sheet perforated on three sides, and two stamps on two sides only, while none are perforated on all four sides.

When sold, they were surcharged in blue with the initials of the superintendent, "P. L. W."

The fact that this was a country line, with no San Francisco terminal, probably explains why it had been overlooked by the collectors of its time.

This stamp should certainly take an equal place with the well-known California State Telegraph stamps in the estimation of all collectors."

Two values are known, the 5c and 10c.

5c black, blue surcharge.

10c black, " "



AMERICAN RAPID TELEGRAPH CO.

This company was organized in February, 1879, under the laws of the state of New York, with a capital of \$3,000,000. It was a pretentious company. They proposed, by means of a machine which they owned, to revolutionize the telegraphy of the world. Mr. D. H. Craig had received, during the summer of 1878, permission to use the wires of the Western Union Telegraph Co., to test a system of automatic telegraphic transmission, practically the same as that of Bain, which many years previously had proved a failure. Mr. Craig was very sanguine, and in a manual for the telegraph, speaking of his system, he writes:—"What the postal car is, as compared with the postal coach of fifty years ago, the new system of machine telegraphing is, as compared with the Morse or other hand key systems of the present day. Practically demonstrated results already justify the assertion that ordinary business letters can now be telegraphed at a speed of one thousand words per minute, between any two points within five hundred miles, for less than the postal charges on half-ounce letters, carried an equal distance, forty years ago. The circular of the company claimed the introduction of six new features,—

One : Impression messages at a uniform tariff of 25 cents for thirty words, with instant transmission and delivery.

Second : Mail messages: delivery of fifty words for 25 cents guaranteed within two hours.

Third : Night messages, fifty words for 15 cents, mailed before 9 A. M.

Fourth : Press reports, 500 miles, one hundred words for ten cents.

Fifth : The use of stamps.

Sixth : Street boxes with collections, every 15 minutes."

The circular goes on to show the difference in the capacity of the Morse system and the American Rapid system,—how the employment of girls, constituting cheap labor, would reduce the cost of telegraphing enormously; of the enormous power of transmission over a single wire, and how one thousand words will cost the company 19 cents the first year, 15 cents the second year, and, in the 13th year it would be reduced to 6½ cents per thousand words. Too bad the company never lived to be 13 years old!

Mr. Gerrit Smith, one of the ablest electricians, and with whom I was, at that time, acquainted, greatly improved the system. Under his guidance 480,000 words a day could be sent. This was in 1881. I trust you will pardon me for quoting from a memorandum journal which I kept in those days, when I had very little to do and visited everything that was worth visiting around New York. I find, under date of May 3rd, 1881, that I visited the office of the American Rapid Co., where I called on Mr. Smith, the chief engineer, who took me through the operating room to see the company's system. My notes read : "The messages are received from the general public at Cortlandt St. and Broadway, and sent through tubes, by means of compressed air, to the operating rooms on the fourth floor of the Benedict Building, opposite. However, before being sent up there they are stamped with a green stamp. When the message reaches the operating room, it is put into its proper bin, with reference to its destination, and from this it is again taken in hand by one of the operators (mostly girls), who proceeds to make a perforation of it by means of a machine, which seems to be a combination of a sewing machine, punching apparatus and typewriter. The operators are able to perforate about 35 words per minute. The perforated sheet is received on a reel automatically and is then taken to the transmitting table to await its turn to be sent to its destination. The transmitter consists of two metal disks, separated by one of vulcanite, and of two metal bands, which are attached to a spring and, when in use, rest on these two metal disks. The perforation is attached to these disks, the spring lowered and the crank turned, and the two metal bands make an electric circuit everytime they fall into one of these holes. The result at the receiving end is dot, double dot or dash, or quadruple dot or long dash. The perforations can be transmitted at the rate of 800 words a minute, and can be received at the other end at the same rate. The receiving machine consists of a revolving disk and a marker, which is worked somewhat like a Morse receiver. The operator is signalled, whereupon he turns the disk by means of the crank, and the prepared paper which is attached to it receives the message in Morse characters. The slip is given to girls who copy it on a typewriter, and the operation is complete."

The stamps called for in the circular were issued and were sold. They were printed by the American Bank Note Co. in sheets of 100, and were of three kinds : the first kind, labeled "Telegram" for the prepayment of messages; the second kind, "Duplicate"; and the third kind, "Collect". These "duplicate" and "collect" stamps were printed in alternate rows on the same sheet. The cancellation in use was either the word "Paid" in a rect-

angle, or the letters "O C" or some other letters, or the name of the receiving office.

The "Duplicate" stamps were used in the office of the company to indicate the amount paid, for what are known as, "repeated messages". It is well known that repeated messages are transmitted at a less price than the originals, and accounts for the denominations of these stamps differing somewhat from those marked "Telegram".

The "Collect" stamps, as their name indicates, were attached to telegrams which had not been prepaid, and indicated to the receiver the amount which the company desired to collect. The blanks of the company bear at the right hand side the following imprint:—"Please pay no charges on this message unless the amount is denoted hereon by the Company's stamp."



The design of the "Telegram" stamps consists of a central ornamental numeral or numerals on a background of lathe-work and surrounded by a twelve-scolloped circle. Above, in left corner, "AM"; immediately beneath it in an oblique label "Rapid Tel." and directly under "Tel.", in a curved label, the letters "Co." At the base in an oblique label, parallel to the one above, the word "Telegram".

Printed on white, wove paper, perforated 12.

- 1c black
- 3c orange
- 5c brown
- 10c lilac
- 15c emerald green
- 20c red
- 25c pink
- 50c ultramarine



The "collect" stamps are all of the same design, as the "Telegram" stamps except that in the lower label the word "COLLECT" takes the place of the word "Telegram".

Printed on white wove paper, perforated 12.

- 1c brown
- 5c blue
- 15c puce brown
- 20c olive



The "Duplicate" stamps are all of the same design, which consists of large ornamental figure or figures of value on an involved background of lathe-work and enclosed within an ornamental diamond-shaped frame. The diamond rests on an ornamental shaded shield which contains in either upper corner the letters "A" or "R" and in the lower corners "T" or "CO." At the base of this shield is a label of solid color bearing in white letters the word "DUPLICATE".

Printed on white wove paper, perforated 12.

- 1c brown
- 5c blue
- 15c puce brown
- 20c olive

MUTUAL UNION TELEGRAPH CO.



This company was organized in 1879 and incorporated Oct. 4, 1880, with a capital of \$600,000, all wind. In January, 1881, the capital was increased to \$10,000,000, mostly water. A few wealthy gentlemen put in some money, and a line was built up in less than two years, amounting to 25,000 miles, the wire connecting 22 states. Valuable contracts were effected with important railroads, and \$5,000,000 in bonds were offered on the market to further extend the lines. Then crookedness set in and the result was lawsuits, and eventually absorption by the Western Union Telegraph Co. The Western Union Telegraph Co., at the time of the absorption, also absorbed Mr. Jay Gould who was one of the moving spirits of the Mutual Union Telegraph Co.

In 1882 and 1883 the company issued franks for the use of its stockholders, probably in books containing 100 each. The stamp or frank is a colored impression on white wove paper. Above, in a solid arch, framed by two white curved lines, are the words "Mutual Union" in white capitals; below this in a solid double-curved scroll, ornamented above and below by outline scrolls, are the words "Telegraph Company". In the center is an ornamental groundwork upon which appears, in white letters, the word "Frank", and below this "No." in solid letters. At each side the date "1882" or "1883", as the case may be. Below, in a lozenge shaped tablet of horizontal lines, is "John O. Evans, Pres't." in solid script for 1882, and "John G. Moore, Pres't." for 1883; below this in white capitals, the word "Complimentary". The control number is printed in blue figures in the center of the stamp, below the word "No."

Engraved. Colored impression on white wove paper. Size: 25x30 mm. Perf. 13½.

1882, no value, blue on white
 " " " " " imperforate
 1883, " red on white, perforated

NORTHERN MUTUAL TELEGRAPH CO.

This company did business in Oswego, N. Y. It owned 13 offices, had 13 employees, 200 miles of poles and 200 miles of wire. In 1887, the stamps were discovered by Mr. Wm. P. Brown, a stamp dealer of New York City, and he wrote to Oswego to the president of the company, Mr. Joseph Owens, and in reply received the following letter :

"Mr. W. P. BROWN, ESQ.,

DEAR SIR :—Your favor regarding the Northern Mutual Telegraph Co., received. I was the president of the company and the company did business for years, then sold its wires to another company and went out of business. The stamps you refer to were only used a very few days, and very few, indeed, were ever actually used, not probably fifty in all. I have the unsold stamps on hand now. I had an idea that some day more remote they would be of value, should the company resume active business. I would be glad to treat with you for the stamps on hand, several hundred. I send a set herewith as a sample.

Truly,

(Signed) JOSEPH OWEN."

This letter is now in my collection ; also, sheet No. 46 of originals. It consists of ten stamps of 25c, five of 20c, ten of 10c and ten of 5c. The stamps were in actual use on Apr. 16, 1883, in the city of Oswego, the stamps of the 20c value prepaying a ten-word message to Syracuse, N. Y., and, on the same date, a 25 and a 10c stamp prepaying a fifteen-word message from Oswego to Buffalo. It would appear that Mr. Brown not only came into possession of the remainders in the hands of Mr. Owens, the president, but also obtained the dies, for it is well known that reprints exist of these stamps. The reprint sheets show an arrangement of the stamps different from the originals. While the original sheets consist of seven horizontal rows of five stamps each, the reprint sheets show four horizontal rows of ten stamps of each value. Thus we see that duplicates must, at some time, have been made of the 20c value.

There are a number of ways of telling the originals from the reprints. The reprints, in the first place, are on a whiter paper ; the gum of the originals is whiter and thinner than that of the reprints. The perforation is identical in measurement, but not in character—the reprints are not perforated in so clear a manner as the originals



The design is an upright oblong; above, in two lines, "Northern Mutual"; below, in a curved label of solid color, "Telegraph"; between the two, and occupying the centre, in an ornamental octagon, the numerals of value, $7\frac{1}{2}$ mm. high.

Lithographed. Colored impression on white wove paper. Perforated $12\frac{1}{2}$. Size: 20x25 mm.

1883, 5c brown
 10c "
 20c "
 25c "

PACIFIC MUTUAL TELEGRAPH CO.



This company, it would appear, did business in 1883. It had 15 offices in operation, owned 475 miles of poles and 1,272 miles of wire. Nothing further is known of the company, except that it issued stamps. None of these stamps have ever been seen in a used condition. The stamps are all of the same design and measure 20x25 mm. At the top, in an ornamental label, bordered on each side by ornamental scrollwork, are the figures of value; below this, and occupying the center, a United States shield bearing the words "Pacific Mutual"; below this, a ribbon upon which appears in white letters the words "Telegraph Co."; and in a label at bottom, the word "Commutation". They are lithographed and printed in sheets of ten, perforated between but not around. They were sold in books containing "stamps of various denominations to the amount of \$10.00" as follows: 20 25c., 35 10c., 20 5c., and 50 1c. stamps.

1c slate	on white,	perf. 12
1c black	“ “	“
5c	“ yellow surface glazed	“
10c	“ green “	“
25c	“ orange red surface glazed	“

POSTAL TELEGRAPH CO.

The Postal Telegraph Co was organized under the laws of the State of New York, on June 21, 1881, with a capital of \$21,000,000 and a bond issue of \$10,000,000 of 6 per cent. bonds, to use what was known as the Gray Harmonic system and the Snow wire, which involved the purchase of a large wire factory. It was reported that it was to do an enormous business, but it had only been organized a few weeks, when most of the wire the company owned was used for "pulling" purposes. It was openly announced at the time, that the company would sell out to the Government, and it was likewise openly announced that the Government would buy the company; but the Government did not buy and the company did not sell. They did a large business at first, which fell away, and then Mr. John W. Mackay, of California fame, became interested in the company. It was put on a stronger basis, re-organized under a new name, "The Postal Telegraph-Cable Co.", with a capital stock of \$10,500,000. In the summer of 1884 it absorbed the Baltimore & Ohio Telegraph Co. and the Bankers' & Merchants' Telegraph Co.

In 1885 the company issued a series of stamps for the prepayment of telegrams. They are of highly ornamental design, and were printed by the Hamilton Bank Note Co. of New York, in sheets of 100 stamps. Each



stamp is different, although a general description can be given, covering all four values. In the center the value in Roman figures, which appear upon either an oval, a shield, a quatrefoil, or a losenge; above, in ornamental lines, the name "Postal Telegraph Co.", except in the 10c value, where the word "Co." appears below; at the bottom, the value in either a straight or a curved line, the corners being ornamental.

Engraved. Colored impression on white wove paper. Perforated 14.

Feb. 12, 1885

10c green
15c vermilion
25c blue
50c brown

Later on, that is to say, after January, 1891, the small remnant that was left of the Postal Telegraph Co. became the agent to conduct the business of the United Lines Co., which, under the leadership of E. S. Stokes and others, had bought the property of the defunct Bankers' & Merchants' Co., and had absorbed the lines of the Baltimore & Ohio Telegraph Co. when that company ceased to do a telegraph business, owing to its financial embarrassment and the unfortunate events in the life of Robert Garrett which followed.



No more stamps for the prepayment of telegrams were issued, but in 1892 the company began to issue franks to its stockholders and others whom it favored. The design consists of a central circle bearing within it the inscription "Postal Telegraph Co.", in a curve following the outline of this circle; at the bottom the figures indicating the date, "1892" etc.; above which, in a curved band, "COMPLIMENTARY FRANK". The space between the name of the company and this band is filled by a ribbon in three folds, bearing the inscription "Good for one message of 20 words."; above, an ornamental label for the control number, bearing the word "No."; in another ornamental label below, "A. B. Chandler, Pres't."

They were typographed by the Morse Engraving Co., N. Y. The number printed on a sheet is not known, but they were bound up in books made up of blocks of four, and the color varied with the year. In 1896, the inscription following the line of the inner circle was changed to read "Postal Telegraph Cable Co." The design remained the same. Typographed on white wove paper, perforated 12 between



1892, no value,	blue
	gray blue
	dark blue
	violet blue
1893, no value,	red (shades)
1894	" green
	brown
	green, imperforate
1895	" blue
1896	" sage green
1897	" violet brown
1898	" (?)
1899	orange brown

BALTIMORE & OHIO.

The first right of way given to a telegraph company in America, for the construction of a line along a railroad, was granted by the Baltimore & Ohio R. R. to Prof. Morse, under a resolution of the Board of Directors, passed April 5, 1843, and the resolution is worth reproducing as a model of careful wording:

" Resolved :

That the president be authorized to afford to Mr. Morse such facilities as may be requisite to give his invention a proper trial upon the Washington road, Provided that, in his opinion and in that of the engineer, it can be done without injury to the road and without embarrassment to the operations of the company. And Provided that Mr. Morse will concede to the company the use of the telegraph upon the road without expense, and reserving the right to discontinue the use, if, upon experiment, it should prove in any manner injurious."

The passage of this resolution led to the construction of the experimental line which is mentioned in connection with the introduction of the telegraph.

The Baltimore & Ohio R. R. granted from time to time, as its road was extended, the privilege to various telegraph companies of maintaining telegraph lines along its road, and the license in each case was for "as long as it existed as a telegraph company, or for thirty years." This seemed a long license, but thirty years soon passed by, telegraph companies consolidated, and most of them had passed under the control of the Western Union Telegraph Co. At the termination of these licenses, the Baltimore & Ohio R. R. Co. refused to renew them, and ordered the telegraph companies to remove their poles and property from its road. This, naturally, was objected to by the telegraph companies, and the courts were invoked to interfere. The outcome of the matter was that the Baltimore & Ohio R. R. Co. took control of the telegraph along its lines, organized the Baltimore & Ohio Telegraph Co., of the City of Baltimore, and 26 other telegraph companies in as many states, each one bearing the name of the Baltimore & Ohio Telegraph Co. of New York, etc., as the case might be.

The National Telegraph Co., with a capital of \$1,000,000, 949 miles of poles and 10,623 miles of wire, was built in New York State along the West Shore R. R. and was controlled by the B. & O. Telegraph Co. The Bankers' & Merchants' and the Postal of that time were also partially controlled. A bid was made for Government business by offering to take messages of 20 words, exclusive of date, for 20 cents. The Government adopted the rates, but made no contract. The President of the company was D. H. Bates, who was also general manager. Mr. J. W. Mackay and Robert Garret were prominent on the executive board.

April 14, 1885 this company issued stamps in books, at \$5 and \$10 per book. The \$5 book contained \$6.25 in stamps, and the \$10 book \$11.25. The books were made up of four values,—1, 5, 10 and 25c.—The stamps were at first engraved by the American Bank Note Co. and later by the Kendall Bank Note Co., Hoen & Co., of Baltimore and Forbes & Co., Boston.



The American Bank Note Co. stamps are to be found with and without control number. The design, which is the same in all four values and is also carried through the various issues, consists of a central Maltese cross with ornamental center and label bearing the letters "B. & O". This is on a solid ground, surrounded by a frame; at the top arc curved ornaments in the corners and a central label bearing the figures of value; below is a label with ornamental ends, bearing the word "Commutation".

First issue.

Made by the American Bank Note Co.

April 14, 1885, perforated 12, printed in blocks of 6.

1c vermilion	10c brown
5c blue	25c orange

Second issue.

With control number.

June 1, 1885 to Sept. 25, 1885.

1c vermilion	10c brown
5c blue	25c orange

Third issue.

Made by the Kendall Bank Note Co. Same design; control number in carmine. Perforated 14, between.

1c green	10c chocolate
5c blue	25c ochre

The 1c green has been found on an oiled paper.

Fourth issue.

Made by Kendall Bank Note Co. Same design ; control number in carmine ; on thin paper.

1c green	10c chocolate
5c blue	25c ochre

Fifth issue.

Lithographed by A. Hoen & Co. of Baltimore. In sheets of 6 ; perforated 12, between.

1c green
5c blue
10c brown

On paper watermarked with papermaker's name.

10c brown

Sixth issue

Lithographed by Forbes & Co. of Boston. Perforated 12 ½.

1c green	10c brown
5c blue	25c orange

FRANKS.



Engraved. Colored impression on white wove paper. Perforated 12.

1885, no value, brown, control number in blue
1886, " black, " " " red

BALTIMORE & OHIO—CONNECTICUT RIVER.

In the *American Philatelist* for May, 1889, we find the following :

"When the Baltimore and Ohio Telegraph Co. entered Connecticut for business, there was a local line in operation, whose wires ran from Hartford to New Haven via the towns along the Connecticut River, called the Connecticut River Telegraph Co. With this Company, the B. and O. made a contract by which messages were sent mutually over the lines as connected.

It was then suggested that as the B and O. had commutation stamps, that the Connecticut River Co. should also issue a set, which was done, and the result was two stamps of the denominations of one and five cents, black on buff, which were sold in books of \$10, and used for several years. This was sometime in 1885.

After the contract above mentioned had been made and above stamps were issued, the Connecticut River extended its line from Hartford, through New Britain, Collinsville, New Hartford and West Winsted, to New Boston, Mass., and another set of one and five cent stamps were issued, using the same die, but changing the color of the paper to blue. These stamps could be used only at the above-named places and intermediate points. They were put on sale in October, 1887.

When the B. and O. was absorbed by the Western Union, the Connecticut River contract being voided, it was at once leased to the United Lines, which was in the field in Connecticut as a competitor of the Western Union, and the stamps then ceased to be issued."



The design is the same as the B. & O., except that, in the upper arm of the Maltese cross, we find the word "CONN" and in the lower arm of the same cross the word "RIVER".

Lithographed impression on colored wove paper, perforated 11.

1c black on yellow
5c " on yellow
1c " on blue
5c " on blue

Mr. Sterling mentions two varieties of this stamp surcharged "D. H." in red.

1c black on orange
5c " " "

ATLANTIC TELEGRAPH CO.

The Atlantic Telegraph Co. was organized in Portland, Me., in 1881. It was bought out by the B. & O. Telegraph Co., and run in connection with that company as an eastern outlet for its business. Four values of stamps were issued, and there is a similarity in these stamps to those of the Baltimore & Ohio Telegraph Co. We find the same Maltese cross, which was the emblem of the Baltimore & Ohio R. R. Co., and was formerly on their tugs and advertising material.



The stamps consist of this central Maltese cross with a ground of diagonal lines, upon which appear three ornamental letters: "A" in the left arm of the cross, a large "T" reaching from the upper into the lower arm of the cross, and "CO." in the right arm. This cross is surrounded by an ornamental border, which is interrupted in the middle of the top by an ornamental label bearing the figure of value, and below by a label containing the word "COMMUTATION".

Printed in blocks of six and bound in books. The front cover of the book bears, in red, the design to be found on the stamps and a control number. On the last page of the cover we find the following:

"ATLANTIC TELEGRAPH CO.

BOOK OF COMMUTATION STAMPS.

Instructions.

This book of stamps has been issued for the convenience of customers in prepaying Telegrams. For example, a telegram with sufficient stamps

affixed to cover the tolls will be accepted for transmission in the same manner and on the same conditions as if the cash accompanied such telegram.

Tolls on cablegrams and "this line" and "other line" tolls on telegrams destined for points beyond the lines of the Atlantic and B. & O. Telegraph Companies must be paid for in cash.

This book contains 24 one cent, 36 five cent, 30 ten-cent, 24 twenty-five cent stamps, face value being \$11.04, and can be purchased at the principal Atlantic Telegraph Offices for \$10.00 each.

Stamps should be affixed to the Telegram on the upper right hand corner.

J. W. DEERING, *President.*"

The control number is usually printed above the upper row of stamps and below the lower row of stamps, in a purple ink. There are cases in which the control number appears in the lower instead of the upper margin of the upper row of three stamps.

Lithographed on white wove paper, perforated 12½.

- 1c green
- 5c blue
- 10c purple
- 25c carmine

PACIFIC POSTAL TELEGRAPH CO.

The *American Philatelist* for April, 1892, has the following :

"We have received from Mr. A. W. Dunning a set of four stamps which have been issued by this company, whether recently or not, we are not informed. They are oblong, measuring 44x72 mm. At the top, in two lines, is the name of the company on a background, showing the sun peeping over a range of hills with a telegraph pole in the foreground. Below this is: 'This stamp will be accepted at any office of the Pacific Postal Telegraph Co. in payment for telegrams, Chas. L. Hosmer, General Manager'; in the lower right corner is a circle, 11 mm. in diameter, containing the value in both words and figures. The perforation gauges 12, but none of the specimens sent are perforated on all sides and none of them on the ends."

I am informed that they were in use in Seattle and Tacoma, Washington Territory and I have in my collection a set, formerly the property of Mr. H. B. Phillips, of San Francisco, which are cancelled "Hadley Wash." The control number is printed in carmine in the blank space at the left. Mr. Phillips writes that they were sold in books "about in the form of mileage tickets of the R. R. Cos." They are perforated at the top and bottom only.



Lithographed impression on white wove paper, perforated 12.

- 10c brown
- 15c black
- 25c vermilion
- 40c light green
- 50c blue

I have in my collection two sets of these stamps, one showing the control number printed in red, in the white label at the left of the design; the other, without control number, and cancelled with red ink marks.

The date of issue appears not to be known.

COMMERCIAL UNION TELEGRAPH CO.



I have been unable to find anything relating to this company. The catalogues give 1894 as the date of issue; how this was arrived at I do not know. There are three stamps, and the design consists of a central circle, across which runs a horizontal label bearing either the word "Commutation" or "Complimentary"; in a curved line above this band, the words "Commercial Union"; below, "Telegraph Co."; at either side "20 words"; or, in the case of the Commutation, on one side "20 words" and on the other side "25 cents".

Lithographed by A. C. Goodwin, Albany, N. Y., and printed on white wove surface glazed paper, perforated 12.

20 words Complimentary, carmine
20 " 25c, green
25c yellow

NORTHERN NEW YORK TELEGRAPH CO.



Practically nothing is known of this company, except that we have some stamps bearing the name, and that the company had 7 offices and 7 employees, 25 miles of poles and 25 miles of wire. I have not been able to find from what point to what other point these 25 miles of wires extended. We presume that it was in operation in 1894, as will appear from the inscription on the stamps. The design consists of an upright rectangle made up of series of vertical and horizontal lines. Within this rectangle is a circle bearing a shaded five-pointed star. Above, in two lines which overlap each other, "NORTHERN NEW YORK"; below, in a white label running diagonally, the word "TELEGRAPH"; and beneath the right hand corner of this label, in white letters upon a shaded ground, "CO." The stamp occurs in two colors, one a gray green and the other blue. The gray green is surcharged in Roman letters "FRANK 1894"; the blue one is surcharged in much larger type "10".

CONTINENTAL TELEGRAPH CO.

The Continental Telegraph Co. was built in 1878, by Garret S. Mott and James L. Shaw, between New York and Philadelphia, and upon its completion Mr. Mott became general manager. I do not know that this

company issued any stamps. I only know that I have in my possession a series of beautifully engraved labels, bearing the name of the Continental Telegraph Co., and they evidently were prepared for use, though probably not issued.



They consist of a triangular design, composed of an outer and inner triangle. Between the outer and inner triangle is a groundwork of color, covered by a lathe work design, broken at the left by the word "CONTINENTAL"; at the right by "TELEGRAPH"; below by "COMPANY". The inner triangle is filled with ornamental lathe work. In the center appears the figure of value, 1, 2, 5, 20, 25 or 50, as the case may be. Above this figure of value "Good for"; on either side or across the figure of value, the amount in words "one cent"; "two cents", etc; below in a double curved label with ornamental ends, "in telegraph service", and underneath this in a smaller label, "over its lines".

1c orange
 2c carmine
 5c green
 20c purple brown
 25c deep blue
 50c brown

I have now named all the telegraph companies which have come under my notice, and it only remains for me to say that stamps have been issued by a number of telephone companies and in each case they are in the nature of franks, rather than stamps. I shall not go into the matter of telephone franks. It will be sufficient for me to mention that the American Telephone & Telegraph Co. issued such, in books, made up of sheets of 25 franks each. That the Southern New England Telephone Co. has issued a series in various colors, bearing the well-known emblem of a bell, and surrounded by a circular label bearing the words "GOOD FOR MESSAGES BETWEEN ALL POINTS IN CONNECTICUT". The New England Telephone & Telegraph Co. have issued a frank, somewhat in the nature of a railroad transfer, being merely a slip of paper printed with a control number in the corner, and surcharged with the year of use. This latter is in the collection of Mr. Deats.

In conclusion, I wish to offer my thanks to Mr. Deats, who has kindly loaned me his collection for study and comparison, to Mr. Clarence H. Eagle, for his courtesy in allowing me to examine his seals of the early telegraph companies; and to Mr. H. B. Phillips of San Francisco, for information concerning the Colusa, Lake & Mendocino Telegraph Co. and the Pacific Postal Telegraph Co.'s stamps.

CONTROL NUMBERS ON THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY'S
FRANK STAMPS.

In a criticism on the "Notes on the Telegraph Companies of the United States; Their Stamps and Franks," it has been suggested that a list of the control numbers to be found on the Western Union Telegraph franks would be of value to collectors. I have examined the collection of Mr. H. E. Deats and have received a check list from Mr. William C. Stone, which I have compared with the franks in my own collection and one of the largest stocks in this country, and, as a result, I submit to those interested the following table:

WESTERN UNION FRANKS.					
1871	Red, Machine.	Blue, Machine.	Hand Stamp.	Manuscript.	Remarks.
1871	O				
1872		O			
1873	O				
1874		O			
1875	ABCDE				
1876		A CDE		BC	
1877	BCDE			CDE	Manuscript in red
1878		BCDE		BCDE	
1879	BCDE			CDE	
1880		CDE	C		
1881	BCDE		CDE	C	Manuscript in red
1882	ABCDE		BCDE	C	
1883		BCDE	BCD		{ Red D over blue A handstamp above machine
1884	ABCDE		ABCDE	BCDE	Manuscript, both black & red
1885	ABCDE		Red: BCDE Blue: CD		
1886	ABCDE		CDE		
1887	ABCDE		BCD		
1888	ABCDE		BCDE		
1889	ABCDE		ABCDE	E	
1890	ABCDE	Blk.: BC	ABCDE	B	Handstamp, both violet & black
1891		ABCDE	BCDE		
1892		BCDE	BCDE		
1893	ABCDE		BCDE		Handstamp, both violet & black
1894	ABCDE		ABCDE		
1895	BCDE		BCDE		
1896	ABCDE		BCDE		
1897		ABCDE	ABCDE		
1898	ABCDE		V'lt: ABCDE Bl'k: BCDE		

	Red Machine.	Blue Machine.	Hand Stamp.	Manuscript.	Remarks.
1899	ABCDE	ABCDE	AB DE	E	Machine letter in blue after the number.
1900	ABCDE	CDE			“ “ “

The control numbers are printed on the stamps by the Bates numbering machine or are put on by means of a rubber hand stamp, in which latter case each stamp is numbered separately, the Bates machine being a compound machine numbering four at a time. We also find the control numbers in manuscript, in black or red ink.

There has been some speculation among collectors as to the meaning of the various letters in the control numbers. Some collectors have thought that the letter preceding the number had reference to some particular class of persons using the frank, such as, officials of a company, railroad corporations in exchange for passes, etc., etc. The franks are issued for the use of officials, railroad presidents, merchants and friends, and are available for social correspondence only; in no case are they allowed to prepay either commercial, political, news, or railroad business; and they only prepay messages to the extent of twenty words, exclusive of the address and signature, an extra frank stamp being used for every extra twenty words or part thereof.

The books as issued are stamped by the Bates machine; reissues are numbered by the rubber hand stamp or in manuscript. The letters in front of the numbers have no other meaning than series initials.

It will be noticed that the franks of 1871, 1872, 1873 and 1874 are only in machine numbering and only with the letter "O" preceding the number; in 1875 we find first the series letters; the 1881 franks come with the manuscript control number, in black and also in red ink; the 1890 franks of the series B and C are found with machine surcharge in black, as well as in red; the 1893 franks are found with both black and red handstamped surcharges; the 1898 are also found with two different handstamped surcharges, the one red and the other violet. In general, the handstamped surcharges have been done with what is known as violet ink. This ink deteriorates rapidly, and we therefore find the surcharges varying from bluish violet to almost a black.

It will be noticed in looking over the list that certain letters are missing. It is reasonable to suppose that many of these exist, and may possibly be in collections to which I have not had access. The chances are that the 1876, with machine surcharge in blue B exists; also, 1877, machine A; 1878, machine A; 1879, machine A; 1880, A and B; 1881, A; 1882, hand stamp A; 1895, machine A; 1900, machine in blue A and B

AMERICAN RAPID TELEGRAPH CO.

When mentioning the "Duplicate" stamps of this company, I stated that they were used to indicate the amount paid for repeated messages. It has always been my impression, based upon statements to that effect, that this was the object of the stamps. In looking over "A Catalogue of Telegraph Stamps, Stamped Forms, etc.," published in the *Philatelic Record* in 1889, I find a note at the foot of page 50 as follows:

"These "Duplicate" stamps form a part of the stamps for unpaid telegrams, above described, and are printed attached to them. The "Collect" stamp is affixed to the despatch, and the "Duplicate" retained by the company as a voucher."

This seems the more probable use for these stamps, especially as they were printed, as described, in alternate horizontal rows of "Duplicate" and "Collect."

PACIFIC MUTUAL TELEGRAPH CO.

The book of stamps of the Pacific Mutual Telegraph Co is made of manila paper covered with cloth, and holds 121 stamps as follows :

50	1c	45	10c
20	5c	16	25c

In the books which I have seen, strange to say, the slate and black 1c stamps are both to be found, showing that they are simply differences in the amount of ink used in printing.

On the inside of the front cover we find the following printed :

PACIFIC MUTUAL TELEGRAPH CO.

BOOK OF COMMUTATION STAMPS.

This Book Contains Stamps of Various Denominations to the Amount of \$10.00

Stamps Should be Affixed to the Telegram on the Upper Right Hand Corner.

