



1339



1339 detail

SESSION THREE (LOTS 1339-1771)
 TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2012, AT 1:30 P.M.

POSTMASTERS' PROVISIONALS

ALEXANDRIA, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (OR VIRGINIA)

Lot 1339°

Alexandria, District of Columbia (or Virginia), 5c Black on Buff, Type I with 40 Ornaments (1X1). Cut to shape as are all recorded examples of the Alexandria provisional stamp, parts of surrounding rosette ornaments visible all around, uncancelled and neatly affixed by star in octagon wax wafer on August 25, 1846, Quaker-dated folded letter from William Stabler to "Nathan Parkins, Parkins's Mills, near Winchester Va., For Edwd. S. Leadbeater", vivid red "Alexandria D.C. Aug. 25" circular datestamp and matching "PAID" and "5" in rectangular frame, letter mentions retrocession of Alexandria

VERY FINE AND REMARKABLY FRESH. ONE OF SIX RECORDED EXAMPLES OF THE ALEXANDRIA POSTMASTER'S PROVISIONAL ON BUFF PAPER — THREE TYPE I (SCOTT 1X1) AND THREE TYPE II (SCOTT 1X1a) — OF WHICH ONLY THREE ARE ON COMPLETE COVERS. THIS IS THE ONLY TYPE I ALEXANDRIA ON BUFF PAPER KNOWN ON A COMPLETE COVER. A WORLD-RENOWNED PHILATELIC RARITY.

Census No. 1X1-COV(UNC)-02. With 1954 and 1986 P.F. certificates. Discovered in 1926 by Edward S. Leadbeater of Alexandria among correspondence addressed to his father while he was visiting relatives in Parkins' Mills. The cover was sold to Perry W. Fuller, a Baltimore dealer, for \$7,000. Possibly sold to Henry G. Lapham. Ex Consul N. Klep Van Velthoven, T. Cullen Davis, Bernard D. Peyton ("Isleham"), Dr. Leonard Kapiloff and D.K. collectionScott value on cover \$500,000.00

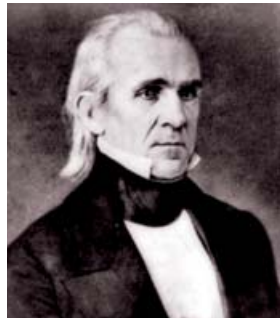
History of Alexandria and Its Postmaster

Alexandria postmaster Daniel Bryan was born in Virginia around 1789 (reports vary) and died on December 22, 1866. Bryan served briefly in the Virginia Senate and was subsequently appointed postmaster by President James Monroe, commencing his term on April 1, 1821. He served as Alexandria's postmaster for 33 years under seven administrations and nine presidents. Bryan was re-appointed in 1853, but resigned his position in April to become Librarian of the Treasury Department.

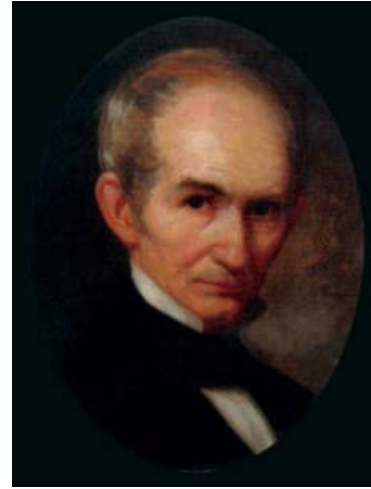
The major Potomac River port city of Alexandria was originally part of Virginia, but became part of the District of Columbia in 1791. During the period when Postmaster Bryan's provisional stamps were in use, Alexandria was ceded back to Virginia. Retrocession took effect in three steps between July 1846 and March 1847. The first step occurred when the legislative campaign by retrocession advocates resulted in a favorable vote by the U.S. Congress on July 9, 1846. According to Post Office Department records, Alexandria technically became a Virginia post office on

this date, although Bryan continued to use the "D.C." postmark, and two further steps were required to complete the retrocession.

On September 1 and 2, 1846, retrocession was voted upon by the white male citizens of Alexandria County (insane persons and paupers excluded), and they voted 763 to 222 in favor. On September 7, 1846, President James K. Polk proclaimed the retrocession in full force and effect. However, it was not until March 13, 1847, that the Virginia General Assembly formally accepted the territory of Alexandria (<http://alexandriava.gov> and May Day Taylor, "The Alexandria Blue Boy," *The American Philatelist*, May 2006). Examples of the Alexandria provisional are dated from May 1846 to November 1847, during the three-step process of Alexandria's retrocession from the District of Columbia to Virginia.



President James K. Polk



Daniel Bryan (c.1789-1866)
 Alexandria Postmaster 1821-1853
 Courtesy The Lyceum, Alexandria, Virginia,
 Gift of Peter Lawrence and Family

A noteworthy aspect of this Alexandria cover is the letter, which refers to the September vote on the question of Alexandria's status. It reads (in part): "What do the folks in Frederick County say about retrocession? There is a good deal of talk about it here. The commissioners have appointed the first and second days of next month to take the vote... a stranger to whom she had been introduced told her he hoped she would persuade the Alexandrians to go back to Virginia. I think the country people will mostly vote against it and the town people mostly for it."

continued

Alexandria—Lot 1339 continued

The Alexandria Provisional Stamps

The Alexandria provisional stamps were printed from a two-subject typeset form on Buff and Blue papers. The two settings differ slightly and are catalogued as two types: Type I has 40 ornaments (called rosettes or stars) arranged in a circle, and Type II has 39 ornaments. Type I (40 rosettes) shows gaps between the asterisks and the two letter A's at the beginning and end of "Alexandria." Type II (39 rosettes) does not have these gaps. The six recorded stamps printed on Buff paper are evenly divided into Type I (Scott 1X1) and Type II (Scott 1X1a). Only one example on Blue paper has been recorded — the famous Alexandria "Blue Boy" provisional on cover — and it is Type I (40 rosettes).



Type I at left has 40 ornaments in circle and gaps between the asterisks and two letter A's

Type II at right has 39 ornaments in circle and no space between asterisks and letters

The identity of the Alexandria stamps' printer has not been documented, but is presumed to be Edgar Snowden (1810-1875), publisher of *The Alexandria Gazette*, whose office at 310 Prince Street was just a short distance from Bryan's post office at 400 Prince Street. The *Gazette* was founded by his father, Samuel Snowden, a native of New Jersey who moved to Alexandria in 1800. Samuel published the paper until his death in 1831, when his sons took over, but Edgar eventually assumed control. Trained as a lawyer, Edgar was a Whig and an advocate for an industrialized South. In 1836, while still editor of the newspaper, he was elected to the City Council. He was elected mayor of Alexandria on March 6, 1840, and served until 1843. Edgar used the family newspaper to advocate many causes, especially retrocession of Alexandria back to Virginia in 1846. After retrocession Edgar was elected as a Whig to represent the city in the Virginia House of Delegates (Michael Lee Pope, October 17, 2005, at <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com>).



Edgar Snowden (1810-1875)
Publisher of *The Alexandria Gazette* and believed to be the printer of the Alexandria provisional stamps

Sale History of the Alexandria "Leadbeater Copy"

According to J. Murray Bartels (*Collectors Club Philatelist*, July 1926), the Alexandria provisional cover offered here was discovered in April 1926 when Edward S. Leadbeater, proprietor of the Stabler-Leadbeater apothecary, "ran across three old letters addressed to his father of same name, while visiting relatives at Parkins' Mills near Winchester, Va..." According to Bartels, there were three letters from Alexandria dated within a few days of each other, but only one — this letter dated August 25, 1846 — still had an Alexandria provisional stamp affixed. Bartels reported, "It was evident that one of the other letters has also at one time borne a similar stamp but had been removed or dropped off and lost. This showed remnants of a similar wafer but the third letter had been mailed in the ordinary manner without a stamp."

he rented space in 1792 at the corner of King and S. Fairfax to start his business and by 1796, he began renting 107 S. Fairfax. Nine years later, he took ownership of the building and turned it into a bustling apothecary business. By 1829, he had purchased 105 S. Fairfax and incorporated the building into his operation.

The Stabler-Leadbeater pharmacy was one of the region's largest during the 19th century. According to internet sources, "It was founded by Edward Stabler, who came to Alexandria after apprenticing in the apothecary business with his brother in Leesburg, Virginia. A devout Quaker and savvy businessman,

"Edward Stabler sold to a variety of city and country residents — from Martha Washington to Robert E. Lee, the local doctor to the local farmer. The typical products Stabler sold included medicine, farm and garden equipment, surgical instruments, dental equipment, soap, perfume, Buffalo and Bedford mineral water, cigars, window glass, paint and varnish, artists' supplies, combs and brushes. Much of the medicine he sold was created on-site, using plant and herb materials.

"By 1806, Stabler began traveling extensively to Quaker church meetings throughout the region, leaving oldest son William to run the business in his absence. After his father's death in 1831, the business passed to William. Keeping with the family-run tradition, William brought several of his brothers and also his brother-in-law, John Leadbeater, into the business between 1832 and his death in 1852. John Leadbeater, a trained



Leadbeater drugstore in Alexandria

apothecary and dentist, purchased the business from William's wife, as the couple had no children, and changed the name of the business from William Stabler and Co. to John Leadbeater.

"By the turn of the century however, the family business was beginning to feel the effects of the growing commercial pharmacies and synthetic drug companies, as well as the downturn in the economy, and the business declared bankruptcy in 1933, just days before the death of its owner, Edward S. Leadbeater, Jr."

The addressee, Edward S. Leadbeater, received this letter at the home of Nathan Parkins. From 1836 to 1874, the Parkins family operated multiple flour mills on Abram's Creek in Virginia. The mills were located south of Winchester under the name "The Union Mills, Nathan Parkins & Co. Owners."

Edward S. Leadbeater Jr., the son of the addressee, sold this Alexandria provisional cover to Perry W. Fuller, a Baltimore stamp dealer, for \$7,000 at a time when the family's pharmaceutical business was in decline. It was presumably bought for or sold immediately to Henry G. Lapham, because Lapham displayed a "used copy [of the Alexandria] on cover [Type I]" at the Collectors Club of New York on April 4, 1928, in his display of United States Postmasters' Provisionals. Henry Lapham later transferred ownership of his collection to his son, Raymond W. Lapham, who was the exhibitor of record at the 1936 Third International Philatelic Exhibition (TIPEX) in New York City. Lapham's five frames of Postmasters' Provisionals, including both of his Alexandria provisionals, won the Grand Award at TIPEX, the first time a United States collection won an international grand award.

Sometime after Henry G. Lapham died on December 13, 1939, Warren H. Colson started selling items from the Lapham collection. It is likely that Colson sold the Alexandria cover to Consul Klep (N. Klep Van Velthoven) of Belgium. When the Klep collection was sold at auction by Willy Balasse on March 27, 1956, the Leadbeater cover was lot 86 and sold to Harry Keffer for \$5,250, who outbid Raymond H. Weill (both of whom attended the sale in Brussels). Shortly after the Klep sale the Weills apparently acquired the Leadbeater cover, either for themselves or on behalf of a client, because they displayed it at the 1960 London International Stamp Exhibition.

The cover next appeared in the Siegel November 19, 1964, sale of United States Postmasters' Provisionals formed by a "Texas Collector." The unnamed collector was Thomas Cullen Davis, heir to a Texas oil fortune, who formed his collection relatively quickly while still in his late 20's and early 30's.



T. Cullen Davis, the "Texas Collector" of United States Postmasters' Provisionals

Davis gained notoriety in the 1970's when he was acquitted for the murder of his estranged wife's boyfriend and her daughter, and acquitted a second time for hiring a hitman to kill his wife and the judge overseeing their ongoing divorce case. In the 1964 "Texas Collector" sale the Leadbeater cover sold for \$9,000 to Eugene Costales, acting as agent for Bernard D. Peyton, whose collections were later sold by the Siegel firm and Christie's Robson Lowe under the pseudonym "Isleham."

At the Ameripex sale of the "Isleham" United States collection on May 25, 1986 (Siegel Sale 662, lot 1012), the Leadbeater cover sold for \$70,000 hammer to Stanley J. Richmond. In the January 20, 1988, auction held by Richmond's firm, Daniel F. Kelleher Co., the cover was sold as lot 46 for \$90,000 hammer to Stanley M. Piller, acting as agent for Dr. Leonard Kapiloff, a Maryland real estate investor (and dentist by training, who performed free dental work at a local clinic).

The cover was offered in the Siegel 1992 Rarities sale (Sale 745, lot 279) and went unsold in the auction, but shortly thereafter was sold privately to an anonymous buyer. It was offered in the Siegel 2000 Rarities (Sale 824, lot 3) and realized \$130,000 hammer, selling to "D.K." for his collection of "Stamps Issued by People." The D.K. collection of U.S. Postmasters' Provisionals, Carriers and Locals, and Southern Postmasters' Provisionals, excluding the Leadbeater cover, was subsequently dispersed in Siegel sales.

Since the last appearance of this cover at auction in 2000, only two Alexandria provisional stamps have been offered, both off cover and sold in Siegel auctions. The Frelinghuysen collection featured the uncanceled Ferrary-Lapham copy, which realized \$550,000 hammer (Mar. 28, 2012, Sale 1020, lot 1). The Siegel 2012 Rarities sale featured the cancelled Worthington-Caspary-Phillips-Lilly copy, which realized \$290,000 hammer (Sale 1025, lot 8).



Henry G. Lapham (1875-1939)