



Lot 1

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One of the two most outstanding covers with the New York postmaster's provisional stamp used from another post office—in this case, the triple 5¢ rate from Boston is paid by a superb and extremely rare vertical corner sheet-margin pair with small “ACM” initials and a single without initials

ESTIMATE \$20,000-30,000

DESCRIPTION

New York, N.Y., 5¢ Black on Bluish, “ACM” Initials (9X1b variety), Positions 31/36, vertical pair with huge bottom left corner sheet margins and large margins all around, small magenta “ACM” initials unconnected without periods (unlisted variety—similar to small “A.C.M.” with periods), used with **5¢ Black on Bluish, Without Signature (9X1e),** Position 22, full to large margins, each stamp with similar blue manuscript cancel on undated 1845 folded cover from Boston to Howland & Aspinwall in New York City, red **“Boston Mass. Nov. 12”** circular datestamp, magenta manuscript “15” (cents) rate applied in Boston, sender's manuscript notation “U.S. Mail paid”, red “PAID” arc handstamp applied on arrival in New York City to indicate stamps accepted as prepayment of triple 5¢ rate postage

PROVENANCE

G. E. Jones (J. W. Scott, 11/8/1906), according to notation on back

Henry G. Lapham (and his son, Raymond), probably acquired privately in 1922 from the Henry C. Gibson, Sr., collection

Probably Warren H. Colson (stock acquired by Weills in 1963)

Edward Grombacher (bought and sold privately through Weills)

Weill Brothers' Stock, Christie's Robson Lowe sale, 10/12/1989, lot 588, to private collector

Siegel Auction Galleries, 1996 Rarities of the World, 5/21/1996, Sale 777, lot 5, to William H. Gross

CENSUS, LITERATURE AND EXHIBITION REFERENCES

USPCS census no. 20388

<https://www.uspcs.org/resource-center/censuses/postmasters-provisionals-cover-census/>

Stanley M. Piller, *The New York Postmaster's Provisional*, fig. 97, p. 72

Gordon Eubanks, Jr., “The William H. Gross United States Collection,” *Chronicle* 258, May 2018

CERTIFICATION

The Philatelic Foundation (1989)

CONDITION NOTES

Very Fine cover with a superb vertical corner-margin pair; file folds not affecting stamps; light waterstain around No. 9X1e, which also has a pinhole just under Washington's right eye

Pencil note on back “G E Jones Coll, J W Scott Co., Nov. 8, 1906.” Also signed “R. H. Weill” in pencil (Raymond H. Weill)

HISTORY AND COMMENTARY

The First Postmaster Provisional Issue

The New York 5¢ provisional stamp was the first, the most elegantly executed and the most widely used of the provisionals issued by eleven different post offices between 1845 and 1847. It is the only stamp among the 1845-47 provisionals known to have been distributed to other cities.

The stamp, printed in black from an engraved plate of 40 subjects, bears George Washington's portrait, based on the well-known oil paintings by Gilbert Stuart. The Rawdon, Wright and Hatch firm's successful performance in engraving and printing the New York provisional earned them the contract—without competition—for the first General Issue in 1847. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the New York provisional is how it demonstrated the efficacy of adhesive postage stamps to the public and to Congress, paving the way for the first federal issue.

New York City's former mayor and progressive new postmaster, Robert H. Morris (1802-1855), took office on May 21, 1845, and quickly organized his staff. Morris hired his brothers-in-law, Marcena Monson, Jr., and Alonzo Castle Monson (1822-1902), to help manage the enormous post office operations, which had recently been relocated to the “New Post Office” inside the Dutch Reformed Church building on Nassau Street. Morris served as New York's postmaster for the next four years, a period of great change in the nation's postal system. He was replaced in May 1849 after Whig candidate Zachary Taylor assumed the presidency.

The Act of March 1845 postal reforms went into effect on July 1, 1845. Postmaster Morris decided to issue adhesive stamps sometime prior to July 12, 1845. His letter book contains the announcement of the new stamp sent to postmasters in four cities. Morris also arranged to distribute stamps to cities outside of New York and instructed the postmasters to treat the letters as unpaid at origin, but stipulated that New York would accept them as prepaid on arrival. This cover from Boston is prepaid for the triple 5¢ under-300 miles rate with three New York provisional stamps, including a vertical pair with corner sheet margins. It was treated as fully paid when it reached the New York City post office.

There are 22 New York provisional covers recorded from Boston, but several are extensively restored. This cover is the finest multiple-rate use from Boston, bearing the only vertical sheet-margin pair known on or off cover. It is also the only combination of signed and unsigned stamps on one cover. Finally, it is the only example of the unsigned stamp used outside New York City. We consider this cover and the cover from Canada with a sheet-margin pair to be the two most outstanding examples of the New York provisional used from other cities. ■