

DAVIS'S PENNY POST, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

William D. Davis advertised for 25 "intelligent youths" in the February 1, 1856, edition of *The Sun* and followed this solicitation for employees with the February 5th announcement of his "One Cent Dispatch". Letters would be delivered within the city or to the post office for 1c each, and a "Special Messenger" service was offered for 5c. Additional advertisements appeared in *The Sun* until February 18, just two weeks later, and none appeared subsequently. Evidently, Davis's Penny Post lasted one Valentine season and was closed (source: Denwood N. Kelly, *Collectors Club Philatelist*, Vol. 50, No. 4).

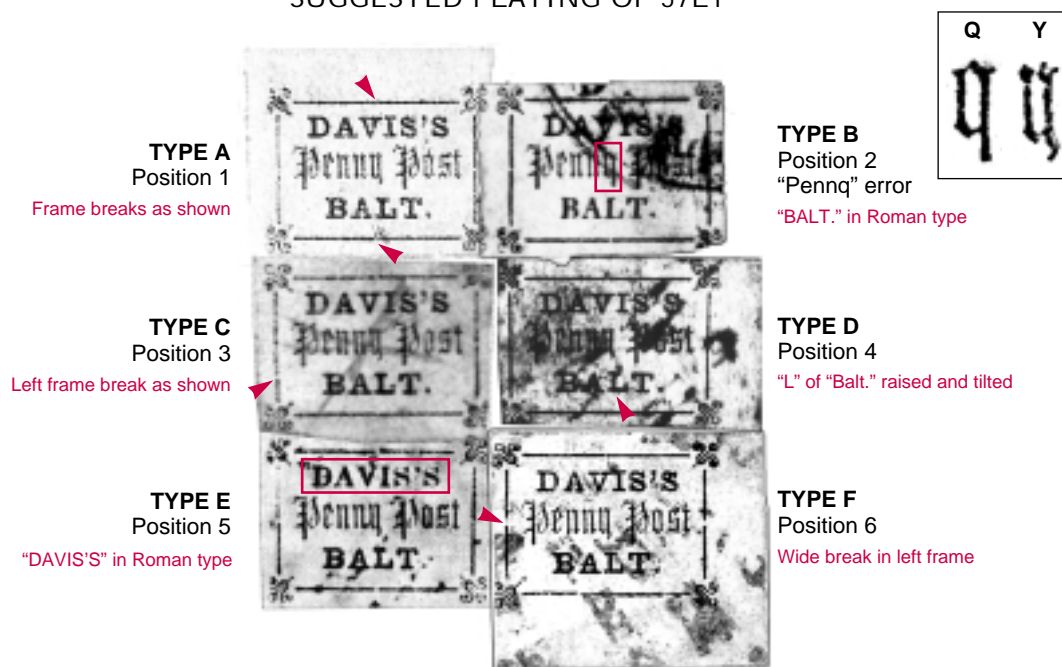
The small typeset stamps issued by Davis's Penny Post are rare, with just 14 examples recorded, including four genuine covers (two of these are offered in this sale). We have attempted to reconstruct the setting, using the typographic differences to distinguish one subject from the other. In Denwood Kelly's comprehensive *CCP* series on Baltimore carriers and locals, he listed eight minor typographic varieties based on two basic types, acknowledging that some of the differences might be influenced by printing. Kelly also felt that the setting comprised ten subjects. In our analysis, the 14 recorded stamps show consistent typographic characteristics that can be classified as six subject types. Comparing this with the Kelly list, we are able to eliminate three of his eight types as duplicate subjects. There are no 57L1 multiples, so the only means to arrange the setting is to study stamps with sheet margins or showing bits of adjoining subjects. While the expectation is to find ten stamps in a setting, the surviving Davis stamps suggest a setting of six, each subject confirmed by one or more examples. A sheet of six stamps is reasonable, if one considers that the standard U.S. postage stamp at the time was 3c, and that the 3c silver coin minted in 1852 was circulating in 1856. Davis could have arranged his sheets as two columns of three stamps to facilitate sales in 3-cent increments.

Speculation is a necessary part of plating the Davis stamps, owing to the absence of multiples or a larger number of examples from which to work. The plating shown here is our best guess based on the material at hand. Positions 1 (Ty. A), 2 (Ty. B), 4 (Ty. D) and 6 (Ty. F) are based on sheet-margin stamps. Stamps from these positions with margins showing bits of adjoining stamps have been used to establish the spacing between subjects. Type C is found with what appears to be a trace of the ornament from the upper right corner of the stamp below, which puts it in Position 4. Again, the 14 recorded stamps can be matched with these six subject types.

The most significant stamp to come from this setting is Type B, Position 2, which shows the **spelling error "Pennq" for "Penny"**. A detail of the different characters is shown here. Remarkably, this error is not listed in Scott, nor mentioned in the Kelly series, nor in Sloane's notes, nor in any publication we have read. However, we are not the first to notice the "Pennq" variety. Elliott Perry, writing in April 1959 to Eugene Costales, the Scott Catalogue editor, noted a variety in which "the y of Penny is a q." For whatever reason, Costales did not change the Scott listing to reflect Perry's report.

Currently, there are four recorded examples of the "Pennq" error, two of which are offered in lots 1022 and 1023. This is the first auction offering of these stamps that identifies them for what they are, and we anticipate that the current Scott editors will maintain consistency by listing them as 57L1a, along with other errors, such as the Honour's "Conours" and "Bents" (4LB8c), Glen Haven "Gien" (71L1a, see lot 1088), Moody's "Henny Dispatch" (110L1b) and Hoyts "Lettcr" (85L1).

SUGGESTED PLATING OF 57L1





A1019

A1019 ☒ **Davis's Penny Post, Baltimore Md., (1c) Black on Lilac (57L1).** Type F (Position 6), ample margins just touching corner ornaments, tiny triangular piece of paper at upper left has been previously described as an added corner, but this appears to us to be a small extraneous piece of the adjoining stamp that was clipped when separated, faint crease, tied by red "Davis' One Cent Dispatch" circular handstamp on ca. 1856 brown cover to Capt. Wm. W. Virdin at the Western Hotel in Baltimore, blue embossed woodcut corner card of Fountain Hotel, some slight creasing in cover and mended tears in backflap

VERY FINE. THE FINEST AND MOST OUTSTANDING OF THE FOUR RECORDED COVERS BEARING THE RARE DAVIS'S PENNY POST STAMP.

Our records of 14 Davis's Penny Post stamps contain four genuine covers: 1) Ty. F, tied by red handstamp on Fountain Hotel corner card cover to Western Hotel, Baltimore, ex Hollowbush, Malcolm, the cover offered here; 2) Ty. F, with bottom right corner sheet margins, tied by red handstamp on back of cover to Miss Louise Senss (?), Baltimore, ex Caspary, Boker; 3) Ty. A, with top left sheet corner margins, uncanceled on small Valentine cover to Miss Caroline Lamden, ex Hollowbush, offered in lot 1020; and 4) Type unknown, tied by red handstamp, ex Brown (5c 1847 stamp added to cover at the time — possibly removed now). In addition to the genuine covers, there are other covers to which genuine Davis stamps have been added (all predate the post's existence). The cover census by Steven M. Roth (*Chronicle* 173) agrees with our data.

Ex Hollowbush (his partly erased cost code on back) and Malcolm. E. 10,000-15,000

**SPECIAL NOTE: Lot numbers with an "A" prefix will be offered in the second session.
Please refer to Sale Arrangement and Schedule on page 6.**



A1020



A1020 ☒ **Davis's Penny Post, Baltimore Md., (1c) Black on Lilac (57L1).** Type A with top left corner sheet margins (Position 1), a superb uncanceled stamp used on small enameled Valentine cover to Miss Caroline Lamden, embossed flaps with "The Heart that can feel for another" label, accompanied by an ornate Valentine card which fits envelope (folded at top — possibly original to cover)

EXTREMELY FINE — AS FRESH AND CHOICE AS ONE COULD HOPE FOR. ONLY FOUR STAMPED COVERS RECORDED, OF WHICH TWO ARE VALENTINES FROM DAVIS'S BRIEF PERIOD OF EXISTENCE IN 1856.

This cover is No. 3 in the list of 57L1 covers provided in the previous lot description. The absence of a cancellation on this cover may reflect Davis's reluctance to mar the beauty of a Valentine, to which the sender affixed the stamp on front (see lot 1333).

Ex Hollowbush (acquired from Perry M. Fuller, a Baltimore stamp dealer, in 1954).
 E. 10,000-15,000



A1021

A1021 ° **Davis's Penny Post, Baltimore Md., (1c) Black on Lilac (57L1).** Type A (Position 1), small margins but framelines complete and corner ornaments visible, slight crease, tied by red "Davis' One Cent Dispatch" circular handstamp on small piece

VERY FINE APPEARANCE. ONE OF FOURTEEN RECORDED EXAMPLES OF THIS RARITY.

Only six of the fourteen recorded stamps, including those on covers, are cancelled by the red handstamp.

Ex Kelly. E. 2,000-3,000

"PENNO" ERROR, POSITION 2



A1022



A1023

A1022° ★ Davis's Penny Post, Baltimore Md., (1c) Black on Lilac, "Pennq" for "Penny" (57L1 var). Type B (Position 2), original gum, huge bottom margin showing tips of ornaments from stamp below, other sides large except just barely into corner ornaments, crease in bottom margin outside design, faint horizontal crease in stamp

EXTREMELY FINE APPEARANCE. THE "PENNO" SPELLING ERROR WAS RECOGNIZED BY ELLIOTT PERRY IN 1959 BUT IS STILL UNLISTED IN SCOTT AND GENERALLY UNRECOGNIZED. AN EXCITING AND RARE RE-DISCOVERY IN THE FIELD OF LOCALS. THIS IS THE ONLY ORIGINAL-GUM EXAMPLE AMONG THE FOUR RECORDED ERRORS.

Typeset stamps are by nature more prone to variation. Typesetters composing a sheet of stamps were sometimes forced to sacrifice uniformity to complete the setting. Fonts or border pieces were interchanged. Even individual characters were used incorrectly, if misread by the typesetter or deliberately substituted for used-up type. Stamps such as the Honour's "Conours" and "Bents" (4LB8c), Glen Haven "Gien" (71L1a, see lot 1088), Moody's "Henny Dispatch" (110L1b) and Hoyts "Lettcr" (85L1) are a few prominent examples of typographical errors among the carrier and local issues.

The Davis's "Pennq Post" error was not noted by Denwood Kelly, nor has it been listed in Scott since Elliott Perry wrote to the U.S. Specialized editor, Eugene Costales, in April 1959, reporting the "Pennq" variety. Of the fourteen recorded 57L1 stamps, four come from Position 2, which we classify as Type B, in which the "q" character is used instead of "y". This is the only original-gum example among the four. A pencil-cancelled corner copy is offered in the following lot. A copy cancelled by the red handstamp is shown in Kelly's records, as is the fourth copy, which is cut to shape.

To maintain consistency, one would expect the Scott Catalogue to create a new listing, 57L1a, for the error. Therefore, this offering represents a rare opportunity to acquire a stamp before it receives Scott Catalogue recognition.

Ex Lilly and Kelly. E. 7,500-10,000

A1023° Davis's Penny Post, Baltimore Md., (1c) Black on Lilac, "Pennq" for "Penny" (57L1 var). Type B, Position 2 with large top right sheet margins, other sides ample to large with left ornaments just touched, pencil "X" cancel, tiny corner creases at bottom, truly insignificant, small red mark on back

EXTREMELY FINE. THE FINEST OF THE THREE USED EXAMPLES OF THE "PENNO" ERROR, OF WHICH FOUR ARE KNOWN IN TOTAL. THIS CORNER-MARGIN COPY IS PROOF THAT THE ERROR OCCUPIED POSITION 2 IN THE SETTING.

This stamp was part of the C. E. Chapman collection, and, as far back as the 1890's, it was affixed to an 1852 folded letter to which it did not belong. The stamp has been removed from the cover and is offered as the "Pennq" error for the first time. It is the finest known used example.

Ex Chapman. E. 7,500-10,000

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A1024

A1024 ☒ **Davis' One Cent Despatch.** Red circular handstamp boldly struck on back of embossed Valentine cover to local street address, minor toning, with Valentine enclosure that appears to belong (but cannot be guaranteed), Very Fine strike of this rare marking, ex Kelly, who recorded this as the only stampless Davis cover he had seen . E. 2,000-3,000

***SPECIAL NOTE: Lot numbers with an "A" prefix will be offered in the second session.
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