The 1847 Issue Online Cover Census User's Guide – V 2.0

Welcome to a Comprehensive Census of the first two postage stamps of the United States, the 1847 5 cent Franklin (Scott #1) and the 1847 10 cent Washington (Scott #2) on cover.

The online census is sponsored by the United States Philatelic Classics Society.

Based on the work of Thomas Alexander, which was published in 2001, this census contains nearly 1700 covers not listed in Alexander's book and over 14,700 listings overall. More than 7500 are illustrated totaling more than 52% of all known covers.

These illustrations are made possible by the various auction houses and internet sites that routinely sell these covers to collectors. as well as collectors who have graciously submitted scans of their holdings.

The online census is intended as a research tool where collectors can get information about a single cover or an entire correspondence. Auction lot descriptions, Philatelic Foundation opinions, and prices realized are available for many covers. Historical information has been added to many listings.

Accessing the Census
The census is available to both members of the USPCS and the general public on the website of the USPCS (www.USPCS.org). Navigate to the Resource Center page and, at the top of the selections on the left hand side, click on the Censuses link. Choose the 1847 Cover Census.

Census Content
The census consists of three separate parts: The row view of the listings, the detailed view of each cover, and the Advanced Search filters.

The listings are arranged with one cover per line and contain all the covers listed in Alexander's book, with the exception of about 200 that were purged because they are believed to be duplications. Another 150, or so, more listings are likely duplicates but they are maintained in the census for the time being. The listings also contain almost 1700 covers that are not in Alexander's book.

The listings are arranged primarily in the order presented in Alexander's book, using the following structure:
     1. By State, starting with Alabama (AL), using their current tow-letter abbreviation. Some foreign countries are also included alphabetically, such as Canada, Mexico, and Panama. Several Canadian provinces, although not politically tied to Canada in 1847 are listed under Canada in the census.
     2. By Town, again alphabetically.

3. By Scott number starting with the 5 cent Franklin (#1) alone on cover, then the 10 cent Washington (Scott #2) alone on cover, and, finally, combination covers having both stamps on cover.

4. By mailing date with the earliest covers coming before the later ones. Unknown dates (xx) follow the last day of the month. Unknown months (xx) follow December in any given year. Unknown years (18xx) follow the last known year, which may be beyond 1851. Undated covers, listed as xx/xx/18xx come at the end of each section.

5. For covers with the same mailing date, the listings are generally in alphabetical order by the destination town and state (or country). The destination countries are generally those used by the original writer. For example, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia are included here and are not listed simply as Canada.

The user can apply other sorting rules or data filters to rearrange the listings or obtain desired subsets, as explained below

The Row View
The census opens in the row view using the sorting rules described above. Each row contains a separate cover listing. If one, or more, pictures are available, the first picture is shown as a thumbnail in the leftmost column. Other pictures may be available on the details page, described in another section.

The cover mailing date appears next. Sometimes, if a CDS is not available or readable, a docketing date or internal dateline, if known, is used. Otherwise, the unknown portion of the date is filled in with 'x'.

Next is the origination city and state, again if known. Unknown entries are marked 'unknown.' These are usually at the end of each section.

Moving to the right, the destination Town and State (or Country) appears next. State names use the current two letter official abbreviations for states that existed in 1847. Some territories use more letters such as Indian Territory in Oklahoma and Arkansas. DC is used for the District of Columbia and, remember, West Virginia covers are listed under VA since West Virginia did not become a state until 1863. Alexandria covers are listed under VA, as it existed in 1847, even though some obsolete postmarks show it as part of DC.

The addressee is listed next. Men are usually listed without honorifics, with the exceptions of Prof, Dr, or military titles. The common use of Esquire following a man's name in the mid 1800's has not been used here. Women are generally listed as Miss or Mrs.

The Scott number, either 1 or 2, follows next. Combination covers are designated '1 2'.

If a cover has a Philatelic Foundation certificate, the number of the most current certificate, as posted on the PF website, is listed.

If the PF opinion is that the cover is a fake it is listed in the Fake column as NG (Not Genuine). Doubtful covers, either with or without a PF certificate are listed as NG? If the PF has declined to give an opinion on the cover, it is listed as DO (for Decline Opinion). Covers where a certificate has been issued but is not posted yet on the website AND the number is unknown are listed as '?'. Generally these covers have been indicated as having PF certificates in Alexander's book but he did not supply the ID number or the opinion. I suspect in these cases, the existence of a certificate was mentioned in an auction lot description.

The number of #1's on cover comes next, followed by the number of #2 on cover. Combination covers will show entries in both columns. Bisected #2 will be shown as 0.5 in the #2 column.

The bisect column will indicate the shape of the bisected stamp using RH (right half), LH (left half), T (top half) or B (bottom half) for horizontal or vertical cuts. Diagonal cuts will indicate the location of the 90 degree angle: LL (lower left), UL (upper left), LR (lower right), or UR (upper right)

Other Stamps will identify other stamps on the cover; including local stamps, hand stamp markings, foreign stamps, or later issued stamps. These are generally listed by Scott number and will include the country name if they are foreign. Handstamps, such as Swart's, are spelled out.

Sorting the Row View
The row view listing of covers can be resorted, either ascending or descending, by clicking on the headings at the top of the list. An upward or downward pointing triangle will indicate the direction of the sort. The headings at the bottom of the list simply duplicate the upper text and cannot be clicked on to perform sorts.

The sorts in multiple columns will work in combination so the order in which the column headers are clicked is important. Sometimes this can be counter intuitive and strange (unwanted) results may occur. When all else fails, the blue "Reset Sort" button will restore the list to its default state.

The Advanced Search - Using Filters
If you are searching for a single or select group of covers, using the filters in the Advanced Search is the best option. Clicking the blue button will expose a selection of filter boxes above the listings.

You do not have to enter the complete information in any box. Typing 'New' in the From Town box will provide covers from New York and New Orleans as well as Newark NJ and Newark NY but only a few more characters will quickly limit the row view. Adding LA (for Louisiana) will obtain the covers from New Orleans only. You can also type "w Yor" to obtain the covers from New York. The text does not have to start at the beginning.

The filters can be used in combination so many different paths can quickly lead to the same cover. After some practice, you should be able to quickly find the unique cover you are looking for.

Once you make an entry, hit the Enter key to start a search. Or, use the TAB key to move to the next box and start the search. Finally, just click on a different box or the blue Search button to start a search. It may not be the entire filter you want but each of these actions will quickly check the database and return all covers that match your criteria.

Only single entries are allowed in each box. You cannot apply AND or OR criteria to any field. You cannot apply a NOT criteria, either. The goal is not to find only the cover(s) you are interested in but simply to make sure it is included in the list.

If you know the cover ID, type it in the ID box. Each ID is unique and this will quickly find the desired cover. Unique covers can also by found by typing in the PF certificate number in the PF box, but only the one shown on the row view. If you have an earlier PF number, try typing it in the text box to find the cover.

The Date filter requires more explanation. The dates can be entered as either a single date, using the Date boxes, or a Date Range using both the From and To boxes. In the single Date boxes, enter the month (Jan = 1, Dec =12), the day (1 or 2 digits) and the year (use 4 digits). If you want all the possibilities, leave the associated box empty.

The Date filter also has a single character wild card feature. The ? will substitute for a single number 0-9 or an x. So typing ? in the month portion will return all covers mailed between January and September. Not too useful, perhaps. Typing 1? in the day field will return all covers mailed between the 10th and 19th. This is handy if you can't read the second digit in the CDS.

The date range is useful for finding all covers between a given date range. A calendar pop up will help you select the From and To dates in the range. It appears as soon as you click inside either box. The date range will not give any covers with missing numbers replaced by an **x**. Providing only the From date will give all covers to the end (Dec 12, 1914 cover is the last one). Providing only the To date will give all the covers from the start to that date. (The earliest cover in the census is dated 2/25/1847, an obvious fake.) Use the column headers to sort these covers in date order.

The best way to demonstrate the use of multiple filters is to consider a few examples. More are available in the Appendix

1. You run across a cover in an auction sale. The Baltimore to Lynchburg Va cover dated Aug 18, 1850 in the Robert A Siegel sale 1023, lot 2070, with a Scott #2.

Method 1: Type **Balt** in the From box, **chbu** in the To box, and **18** in the day field (middle box in the Date). The cover is uniquely found

Method 2: Type lot 2070 in the text box. .Two covers are found. Our desired cover is the second entry.

Method 3: Type 8, 18, 1850 in the date box. Four covers are found. Our desired cover is the second entry.

2. You want all 10 cent covers with blocks of 4.
Method: Type 4 in the Qty of #2 box. 17 entries are found but many are strips or singles. Fifteen are pictured and 2 are not yet in the census. Only 2 have the stamps arranged in a 2x2 block. Now type **block** in the text box. Only 1 cover remains, ID 5093. What happened to ID 1618? It looks like a block of 4 but, according to the text, it's actually two horizontal pairs.

3. You want all the bisected #2 on cover.
Method: Type 0.5 in the Qty of #2 box. All 124 covers are listed. Note that simply typing a 5 in this box won't work. You also get the two covers with 5 stamps.

4. You want to see the famous Richard Rush cover.
Method 1: Type Rush in the Addressee box. It is the second of 4 covers

Method 2. Type **6** in the Qty of #2 box. It is the second of three covers.

5. You want to know how many covers have illustrations.
Method 1. Type a space in the Text field. Only 4 covers in the census currently have detailed information without a scan. and all the detailed text has more than 1 added word, hence they have spaces in the text.

The Detailed View
This view contains all the found information about the cover. The row view data is summarized in the upper left. The images are on the right. Lot descriptions, prices realized, and the listing date in Alexander's book are in the lower left text area.

If there is neither image nor added text, the row view data still contains the information (and date) listed in Alexander. If you have this cover, or a source for it, please contact the census administrator at markscensus@uspcs.org. All submissions of cover scans (300 dpi or better, please) are credited in the text. Cover backs and enclosed letters can also be submitted.

The images include cover fronts, cover backs, close ups of the CDS (modified to enhance the date), close up of the stamps, and copies of the enclosed letters, if available. The color of the scans can vary between different sources. Where appreciably different, multiple copies of the cover may be included.

The text usually contains auction lot descriptions and/or PF opinions. If the cover has been offered in many different auctions, there may be several listings. Each lot

description is not included, particularly if the information is redundant. Sometime different facts, such as date of mailing or prices realized, may be noted.

Some cover fronts may also have multiple images. Sometimes a black and white image may show better detail than a full color one, due to better contrast. Other covers may have been cleaned or repaired and the second image may show its original state. There is usually some text indicating why this image is included.

The census does not contain a complete history of the cover going back to the 19th century. Early catalogs before 1990 are rarely searched, except for the Siegel catalogs and the Richard C Frajola postal history sales, both of which are available online in pdf format. Richard also posted the Ashbrook Special Services collection on his PhilaMercury site. Covers from the Chronicle are also included.

Several famous holdings were found at the American Philatelic Research Library and have been included but early catalogs tend to have poor pictures of covers, due to overlap of images and low resolution, so these sources have not been thoroughly examined.

Comments and corrections are always welcome. Please submit them to me at markscensus@uspcs.org.

Copies on DVD
If you would like a copy of the census on a single DVD, with the listings in Excel and the cover files in Word, contact me at the above email or at mscheue1@rochester.rr.com . The DVD version is released every 6-9 months when a significant number of new covers are added. The 2nd edition, with 7700 covers, will be available shortly. USPCS members get a special price of only $5, which is the cost of materials and postage. Non-members can get a copy for $12.95.

Cover Sources
Covers come from many online sources that are checked regularly for new additions are updated information. These include auction firms including Robert A Siegel, Matthew Bennett International, H R. Harmer, Schuyler J Rumsey, Regency Superior, Earl P. Apfelbaum, and Harmer-Schau. Many of these, and others, are accessed through Stamp Auction Network. PhilaMercury, EBAY, and Bidstart are also regularly checked for new listings. The Philatelic Foundation is in the process of putting their certificates online and they are about 60% complete. As they post more certificates, the census data will be updated. Profession Stamp Experts, Inc also made their certificates available to the census

If you see an 1847 cover on one of these sites, please do not rush to tell me. I will generally find them during my regular visits to the sites. If, however, an auction approaches its closing date and I still have not updated the listings, please let me know so I can do so before the cover is taken offline.

Other Censuses

The USPCS is planning to make other censuses available on its website. A listing of all Postmaster Provisional stamps on cover is now available. Other censuses are desired. If you compile a census and want to host it, contact Gordon Eubanks (gordoneubanks@gmail.com). Each census requires someone to administer the census and keep it current.

Afterword
The census is available as a tool for research or buying for your benefit. You can examine an entire correspondence without having to search out dozens of sales catalogs. You can see the price realized over multiple auctions to better determine your top bid. You can also see Philatelic Foundation opinions to determine if the cover is genuine or has been misrepresented.

Many collectors compile censuses and, after significant work, simply give up. Perhaps they lose interest. Maybe it gets too hard to find new entries. With an online census, there are more people invested in the data, more eyes watching the marketplace, and more ability to get closer to completeness. This is no longer my census. It is now ours.

Mark A Scheuer
USPCS Route Agent 4289
December 5, 2013

Appendix – More Search Examples and Definitions

1. The From City field – The town or city where the cover entered the mail. Steamboat and Railroad covers were sometime cancelled onboard and will be listed as such but many covers entered the mail at the closest City, such as New York, New Orleans or Boston. In general, the cover is listed under the postmark. As mentioned earlier, this field searches out partial text that doesn't have to begin at the start.

To find covers from New York City, the following entries will all work:
        New York, New, York, New Y, w Yor,
although the list may include other covers as well.

2. The From State / Country Field – the state or country where the cover entered the mail. The state is give by its two letter abbreviation such as AL, AR, etc., as it appeared in the 1840s, with some exceptions. Covers from Canada and Panama are spelled out. Covers also come from Indian Terr and Ore Terr. Wisconsin covers, even before statehood, are simply noted as WI   Railroad covers are listed under RR and steamboat covers are listed under WW (for Waterways.)

Again, partial text is allowed, even if it doesn't make too much sense. For example, typing just a C in this field will include covers from Connecticut, Canada, District of Columbia, North and South Carolina

3. The To City Field – This field should contain the final destination of the cover but I'm not 100% sure that this is completely true. Forwarded covers can be tricky. Did the stamp pay the whole way inside the US or did the cover arrive stampless in New York or Boston and then had postage applied for the forwarding portion of its trip? Each cover is treated on its own merits.

4. The To State / Country Field -again the two letter abbreviations and country names are included but there are a lot more choices. The Sandwich Islands cover is listed under HI. Covers to New Brunswick are under NB (not Canada). NS is used for Nova Scotia and PEI is used for Prince Edward Island. Covers to Wisconsin are listed under either WI and Wisc Terr, depending on the mailing date

5. The Addressee – Names are spelled as they appear on the cover, with some corrections from Alexander's book. For example, if the middle initial is different on a single cover, compared to the other listings in the correspondence, and I have a copy of the cover, then I will examine to cover to see if the usual initial is possible and the difference is simply due to an interpretation of the handwriting. If so, the entry is corrected with the risk that the letter was mailed to a father or son with a different middle name.

6. The PF number – contains only the number shown in the row vies. Other certificate numbers may appear in the text. If you cannot find a cover using this field, try the number in the text field. If it isn't there either, let me know. I have only included those numbers listed in Alexander's book (except for the ones that are wrong), or on the PF website.

7. Fake – This is not a Yes / No entry. If the certificate claims the cover is genuine, the field is blank. If the cover is a fake, in total or partially (such as a local added recently), the cover is declared NG (not genuine). If the cover is suspect, it is marked NG?. If a cover is listed as having a PF certificate but the number is not given in Alexander's book and not yet posted online, the entry is ?. DO is used for declined opinion.

8. Bisect contains the shape of the bisected #2. Vertically cut stamps are either RH or LH for right and left half. Horizontally cut stamps are T or B for top or bottom half. Diagonally cut stamps give the location of the remaining 90 degree corner as LL (lower left), UL (upper left), UR (upper right) or LR (lower right).

If you want to see all the bisected covers, do not use this field. Simply enter 0.5 in the Qty of #2 field.