

Pomeroy's Letter Express

A Tale of Deceit, Success and Shutdown

The Story: George Pomeroy founded Pomeroy & Co. in 1841, as an express operating between Buffalo, Albany and New York City handling small packages and bank notes. Only the Post Office Department was supposed to carry letters from one city to another but Pomeroy was handling an ever-increasing amount of mail matter. To shield himself from the government campaign against letter carrying expresses George Pomeroy publicly disposed of his interest in Pomeroy & Co. and on June 26, 1844 announced the Pomeroy Letter Express to carry pre-paid mail. Adhesive stamps were issued and Pomeroy dominated his route because he was cheaper and more efficient than the post office. Secretly George Pomeroy continued to be involved in the predecessor express company.

Plan: To show the adhesive stamps of the Pomeroy Letter Express, an Independent Mail Company, and show stampless covers indicating that Pomeroy & Co., the express package service, continued to carry letters. The adhesives on covers are best presented by color.

Purpose: To explain the operations of Pomeroy Letter Express on the 175th anniversary of the founding of the company.

Treatment: To show and explain the intricacies of carrying intra-city mail using prepaid adhesive stamps.

Importance: New York State had the largest population of any state and cheap, efficient letter handling between the various cities was demanded. Pomeroy fulfilled the need as a successful Independent Mail Company ultimately causing the Post Office to issue U.S. stamps at a lower rate in 1847. Pomeroy showed that prepaid mail worked.

Study and Personal Research: The exhibitor has prepared extensive census data to explain the rarity of each cover and stamp. The exhibitor has published his plating study of the adhesives which has led historians to rethink the earlier beliefs on the production of the Pomeroy adhesives.

Rarity: Many of the covers shown here are great rarities including two Independent Mail covers with the stamps of three different companies which are acknowledged as the most important covers of the Independent Mail era. The selected covers often show unusual usages.

Pomeroy's Blue Adhesive

A Great Distance – A Single Rate – Two Day Delivery



Folded letter dated September 2, 1844 from Rochester to New York City and delivered by Boyd's Post on September 4 at 9am. This letter traveled over 400 miles. PF