

SYNOPSIS: THE EXPRESSES OF MAINE – PRIVATE & POSTAL **1840 - 1865**

FOCUS:

The twenty-five year period, 1840-1865, was selected because it captures the pioneering days of expressing in Maine as various routes were established followed by the development of competition, conjunctive arrangements, consolidation and ends with a mature industry expressing money for Maine's soldiers during the Civil War.

ARRANGEMENT & PRESENTATION:

Companies appear chronologically from the time that they started expressing in Maine. Each company's condensed history is followed by its postal history, also presented chronologically. This allows the viewer to see the postal history of each company intact while still being able to experience the flow of expressing through the quarter century of focus as presented in this ten frame exhibit. (On average the exhibited companies were in business less than four years; there is therefore minimal disruption to the overall flow of the exhibit.) Other arrangements were considered such as by route or period (e.g. Pioneering Period, Independent Mails Period, etc.).

RESEARCH & KNOWLEDGE:

Through the appreciated access to Cornell University's Olin Library and the Carl A. Kroch Rare Book Collection as well as the resources of various public libraries located in Maine and the Library of Congress, original research has been done. Primary sources (period newspapers, directories, almanacs and shipping guides) have yielded dates of operation, routes, transportation, schedules, rates, conjunctive arrangements, office addresses and agents. Files and a database containing all known period Maine express covers, office addresses, steamship, stage and railroad schedules and histories have been established to determine the correct progression of handstamps, forwarding labels, service ranges, transportation, conjunctive arrangements and rates for each company. Original research has led to a new understanding of the federal Atlantic "EXPRESS MAIL" datestamp types and their usages with a new-find exhibited. Postal Laws & Regulations were studied.

RARITY & CONDITION:

More than half of the exhibited items could be categorized as unique to scarce. Condition problems are to be expected. Prior to sharing knowledge with Bruce H. Mosher for his *Catalog of Private Express Labels and Stamps* twenty-two forwarding labels could have been declared "previously unreported." More than twenty additional exhibited labels and handstamps presently qualify as "previously unreported." Missing items are sought but in some cases have not been on the market for fifty years or more.

SELECTED RESOURCES:

- Dow, Sterling T.: *Maine Postal History and Postmarks*, 1976.
- Phillips, David G.: "Eastern Independent Letter Mail and Express Markings." *American Stampless Cover Catalog. Vol. II*, Fourth Edition, 1987.
- Sammis, William W.: "Rail Road Exchange Circular Die-Cut Forwarding Labels: 1850-1853." *Penny Post*, April 2006, 49-70.
- Sammis, William W.: "Gilman's Express: Their Handstamps & Forwarding Labels." *Penny Post*, April 2004, 5-9.
- Sammis, William W.: "John J. Jerome's Express & A "Patient" Cover." *Penny Post*, July 2008, 22-42.