

Study of the Small Circular Design Examiner Markings, Type EM-4 and Type EM-5 used at the General Post Office in New York City, 1883 – 1902.

Purpose: Establish a new type designation for the examiner markings in this period. The markings are divided into two different groups, Type EM-4 are the ones with a two number date. The second, Type EM-5, are the ones with a four number date. Show the “seventy-three” different type size designs of the marker equipment as compared to the original twenty pieces as defined by J.H. Barr in his 1952 research paper.

Scope: The Type EM-4 markers are divided into two different periods. The first period being from December 1, 1883 to December 31, 1889 which will show the marker letters B, C, D, and U. Letters O and S were added in the second part of the period starting on January 1, 1890 to December 31, 1899.

From January 1, 1900 to January 31, 1902, the Type EM-5 markers, all nine letters, B, C, D, E, H, L, O, S, and U, being used through out the period.

The most important part of this research project was to identify the many different design sizes of marker equipment used by each letter type. At the bottom of each page in the exhibit, a listing of the letter size and circle diameter for that special letter. The letter high-lighted in “blue” relates to the one used on the cover shown on that page.

Historical Background: June 1, 1867, Postmaster General, A.W. Randall issued a more detailed plan of instruction for improving the registry system as was published in the “Regulations Respecting the Registration of Letters.” Section eight from this letter addresses the “Receiving Registered Letters for Delivery.” Quoted from this section: “On the arrival of a mail at any office the pouch shall be opened only by the postmaster, his deputy, or a sworn clerk.”

This exhibit will update the research work that began with Dr. William Evans in 1935-36. From a letter sent to the postmaster general in 1935, Dr. Evans requested information about the letter markings used. The clerk that was first one to open the “registered package envelope” at the GPO was identified as an “examiner” as stated in the return letter to Dr. Evans.

J.H. Barr in 1952 continued the work regarding the sworn clerk aka examiner markings used at the GPO in NYC. J.H. Barr's work regarding the nine different smaller letters surrounded by a circle used between 1884-1902 as markings.

Exhibit Plan: Title Page
Type EM-4 Examiner Markings, 1883 – 1899.
Type EM-5 Examiner Markings, 1900 – 1902.

Special Exhibit Notes: *Historical notes are identified in Italic print.*
Important pieces are double matted with “black / red”.

Mailed, Saturday, at “four times” first class UPU registered rate on June 22, 1895 from Cleveland, O. to Goteborg, Sweden. The letter arrived at the GPO in NYC, inspected and hand stamped on the back flap with a Type EM-4 marker. First class UPU rate was five cents per ½ oz plus the registration fee at eight cents per letter.

Special Note:

The only recorded copy from the census of a Type EM-4 markings used to cancel stamps on the front side of a cover.

Marker size:

Letter “B”, 14.0mm tall
x 11.5mm wide and a
22.0 mm diameter circle.

