THE BRATTLEBORO’ STAMP
BY DR. J.A. PETRIE
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There are a number of stamps that have been issued in the United States in whose history I have felt considerable interest.

One of these is the Brattleboro’ stamp, which, although its existence has been well known in this country, has never been described by any of the stamp magazines either at home or abroad, with a single exception.

But very few dealers have ever entered it in their catalogues, either because they did not know that it existed or doubted its genuineness.

I have spent considerable time in tracing its history, and it is with great satisfaction that I now lay before your readers the result of my research.

I submit to you the following letter which gives a clear, concise and accurate account of it.

NEWTON CORNER, MASS., DEC. 10TH, 1868.

DEAR SIR: You are mistaken in saying that the stamps about which you inquire have never been described.

I received about two years ago a little paper printed in Vermont **Note: We are not aware of any philatelic paper ever having been published in Vermont, neither has any article on the Brattleboro’ stamp come under our notice – ED.** (I now forget by whom and in what exact locality) devoted to the subject of postage stamps.

It mentioned the private stamp issued by me while P.M. at Bratleboro.

This paper was sent me in a letter by a person who was very desirous to obtain the original plate from which they were printed.

I was appointed sometime during the first year of Mr. Polk’s administration; Hon. Cave Johnson, P.M. General.

Mr. Polk was elected in 1845.

The stamps were issued, I think, during my first year as P.M., and I suppose them to be the very first P.O. stamps issued in this country.

It was a strictly private thing, neither ordered or repudiated by the P.O. Department, and in my account with the Department made no difference.

My object in issuing it as to accommodate the people and save myself labor in making and collecting quarterly bills, almost every thing a that time being either charged or forwarded without prepayment.

I was disappointed in the effect, having still to charge the stamps and collect my bills.

I retained the office during the balance of Mr. Polk’s term, and used the stamps more or less during my connection with the office.

The canceling with the red ink was uniform, though much a matter of choice.
As to the number issued, I should say only five or six hundred as an experiment.

They were engraved by Mr. Thomas Chubbck, then of Brattleboro’, now of Springfield, mass., who wrote me about a year since inquiring about the original plate.

The plate was laid aside and I have never been able to find it, though it may yet come to light.

I have none of the stamps by me, have not seen one for a great while, and think I could scarcely describe it correctly.

Yours, &c.,

F.N. PALMER, M.D.

To J.A. PETRIE, M.D.,
Elizabeth, N.J.

The description of the stamp which is the subject of the above letter is as follows:

It is from a steel plate (hand engraved) printed in black on buff paper, oblong, the groundwork of the stamp is made up of diagonally waved lines, at top is Brattleboro’, Vt., on one side P. on the other O. at the bottom 5 cts. The central portion of the stamp is occupied by an octagonal figure, with groundwork of perpendicular straight lines on which appear the initials F.N.P., with dash underneath in fac-simile. They are, so far as I have been able to find, canceled with a stroke of red ink drawn in part across them. They are unperforated, and contain a single fine line of black surrounding a single fine line of buff.

In regard to the above described stamp, from the letter we learn several points of interest: viz.:

1st. Its authenticity. 2nd. When issued and how long in use, 1845-1849. 3rd. By whose authority and for what purpose. 4th. The number issued, there being but few, not having satisfactorily fulfilled the obligation for which intended. 5th. That great efforts have been made to obtain the original plate, but as yet without success.