

A Layman's Forensic Adventure

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This PowerPoint presentation describes how current developments in analytical philately were used by a layman, that is, someone without formal scientific training, to determine that an exciting, newly discovered U.S. postal history item was not a fake. Access to the equipment used was provided by the Smithsonian National Postal Museum. It included the Foster + Freeman, Ltd. Video Spectral Comparator 6000, the Bruker Tracer III SD X-Ray Florescence Analyzer, and the Bruker Alpha FT-IR. The author used these analytical tools to determine if there were any anomalies along the cut sides of a bisected stamp, the application of the cancellation, or the chemistry of the sheet to which the stamp was applied (Figure 1). The PowerPoint presentation can be found at <http://www.analyticalphilately.org/symposium.html>. A detailed article was published in *The Chronicle* (Cipolla, 2013) and in the 26 March 2013 Robert A. Siegel Auction Catalog, Sale 1041A.



FIGURE 1. Diagonal half of a 1¢ 1851 U.S. stamp, type 4, tied by a “NEW HAVEN CONN JUL 29” circular date stamp to a printed circular, internally dated 1853 and addressed to Hartford. Image courtesy of the author.

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REFERENCES

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Robert A. Siegel Auction Catalog, 26 March 2013, Sale 1041A, Lot 1179A, the 1851 Half-Cent Bisect, <http://www.siegelauctions.com/2013/1040/1040A.pdf> (accessed 17 June 2013).