

CHICAGO ITEMS.

We may soon expect to hear from the Philatelic Committee appointed to secure space at the World's Columbian Exposition. The committee are awaiting a reply from Gen. Hazen.

A recent number of the Chicago *Tribune* contained an item to the effect that Postmaster-General Wamamaker had sent an order to the American Bank Note Company for 3,000,000,000. It is said that the 3 cent denomination is to be like the 15 cent of the 1869 issue—high violet in color, and the size of the present special delivery stamp.

Mr. C. D. Reimers, of this city, having failed to secure second-class rates for his *Western Philatelist*, discontinued its publication some time since. He has now gone into partnership with Roy F. Green, in the publication of the *Eagle Philatelist*. Consolidation seems to be fashionable with publishers unsuccessful in securing second-class mailing rates.

Another large incorporated stock company has been formed in this city for the purpose of dealing exclusively in stamps. The Chicago Stamp Company has just been incorporated under the State Laws of Illinois for \$12,500. The officers of the company are as follows: M. A. Thompson, President; J. A. Pierce, Vice-President; S. D. Thompson, Sec. Treas. Bank of Nova Scotia, Bankers. The principals of the company are well known here, and it promises to be a success. It is not improbable that this firm will publish a new philatelic journal.

Mr. S. G. Stein, one of Muscatine's leading collectors, was in town a few days since.

Chicago is all activity in the philatelic line at present. Next year it will be even more so.

—COLUMBIA.

IN THE POSTBOY'S DAY.

HOW OUR GRANDFATHERS GOT THEIR LETTERS—
MAIL SERVICE BEFORE THE DAYS OF
POSTAGE STAMPS.

Perhaps a little chat about the methods and difficulties of conveying letters in bygone days may help you to realize and appreciate the advantages of the present.

We will not go further back than the latter part of the 17th century—about 200 years ago. And we will imagine ourselves in England.

There were no steamboats and steam cars to carry travellers to near or distant parts of the country at that time. And as people stayed at home so generally, there was not near so much letter-writing as now.

We go on frequent journeys, and want to let our dear ones know where we are, what we are doing and how we are faring. Besides, there were not many post-offices outside of the cities and large towns, and it was only to important places in the vicinity of London that the mail was sent as often as once a day, and towns at some distance had their letters and newspapers but once a week.

To remote country places, villages, gentlemen's country residences and farms, especially during the winter, when the public and private roads were very bad, the mails were very uncertain, being often a fortnight and sometimes an entire month apart.

At that time the bags containing the letters were all carried by horsemen, the mail-carrier jogging along by night and day at the rate of about five miles an hour—in good weather, and in summer time, for the highways were usually in a very bad condition, so that fast driving was not possible.

The postman often ran the risk of being stopped and plundered by mounted highwaymen, at that time a terror to travellers by horseback or coach. They seemed to be on a sharp lookout for any valuables in money, paper, or otherwise that might be sent in the post bags.

They rode the fastest and finest horses, were bold and daring; and when the postman found himself in a lonely road or crossing a dark moor late at night, you may be sure he urged his weary horse forward and joyfully welcomed the first ray of light that shone from the lantern swinging to the sign of the roadside inn.

Hunslow Heath, Finchley Common and Gadshill, in the neighborhood of London, were celebrated haunts of the highway man, and the secluded roads of Epping Forest, on the route to Cambridge, were often the scenes of plunder in broad daylight.

These desperate robbers at last became so dangerous and the perils of their attacks so serious to travellers of all kinds, as well as to postmen, that the government passed a law making highway robbery an offence punishable by the death of the criminal and the confiscation of all his property. But robberies still occurred.

In 1783, mail coaches protected by armed guards took the place of postboys. The coaches carried passengers also, and, as these generally carried arms, the mails were better protected; but still, daring and oftentimes successful attempts were made upon them.

Before the use of postage stamps various sums were paid for the delivery of letters. The amounts were regulated by the distance, and were collected on the delivery of the letter.

In the early part of this century the postage on a single sheet of paper was eight cents, and over 40 miles the rate was increased; so that over 500 miles a single sheet was 25 cents.

But after a time these rates were gradually reduced, until in 1845 a letter weighing not over half an ounce was five cents under 300 miles, and over that distance 10 cents.

Sir Rowland Hill, who was at the head of the Post-Office Department of England at this time, introduced the use of postage stamps in 1840, and also lessened the charge for postage. In 1847 the United States adopted the use of the postage stamps, the lowest-priced one being five cents.

But railways and steamboats had now taken place of the old-fashioned mail coaches and postboys; and with the more rapid sending of the mails, the cheaper rates of postage, and the growing population of the country, gradual changes and improvements took place in the post-office system.

And here we are, in 1892, receiving our letters from the Pacific coast in six days—also from England in the same time; and a few days or hours will place us in direct communication with our friends and correspondents in almost every part of the country.