St Petersburg – Moscow Railway
[Nikolaevskaya Railway]

This postal marking study explores the first Russian TPO operating between St Petersburg and Moscow and the associated Nikolaev Railway Station Post Offices, from the pre-adhesive period through to the first datestamps incorporating the TPO Route 1-2. [1]

The Exhibit is presented in Sections:

- **Early markings of the Nikolaev Railway Post Offices at St Petersburg and Moscow including Hexagonal Dotted Numeral Cancels [1-2].**

- **Hexagonal Dotted Numeral Cancellations [3,4,5 & 6] used on the TPO.**

- **Circular datestamps with the Serial number [1-4] indicating the Post Wagon number**

- **TPO Route 1-2 bi-directional datestamps – Serial numbers 1-8**

The Nikolaevaskaya Railway between St Petersburg and Moscow was opened in 1851. From the beginning there was an agreement with the Postal department to carry mail between the two cities. The first mail St Petersburg to Moscow was November 16, 1851 and Moscow to St Petersburg November 17, 1851. **The TPO can be considered as operating from April 16, 1852 when the special Post Wagons were introduced.**

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[1] Illustrations from Russian Railway Postmarks by A.V. Kiryushkin & P.E. Robinson with permission of authors.
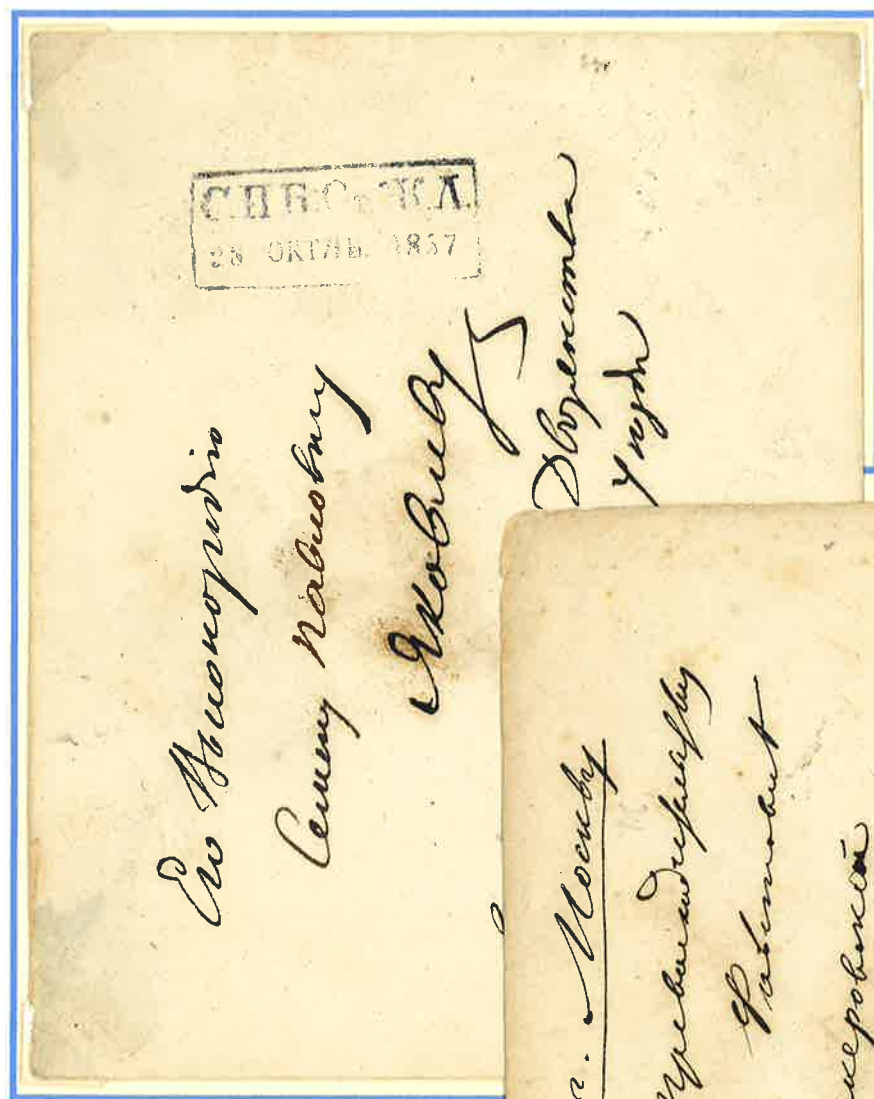
Nikolaev Post Offices

When the special postal wagons were introduced on the St Petersburg – Moscow Railway on **April 16, 1852**, **Post Offices** were opened at the **Railway Station in St Petersburg and Moscow**. These offices accepted and dispatched ordinary correspondence collected before the departure of a train.

Nikolaev Post Office St Petersburg

<div align="center">

37mm x 15mm Dated Boxed Cancellation **С. П.Б. Ст. Ж. Д.**
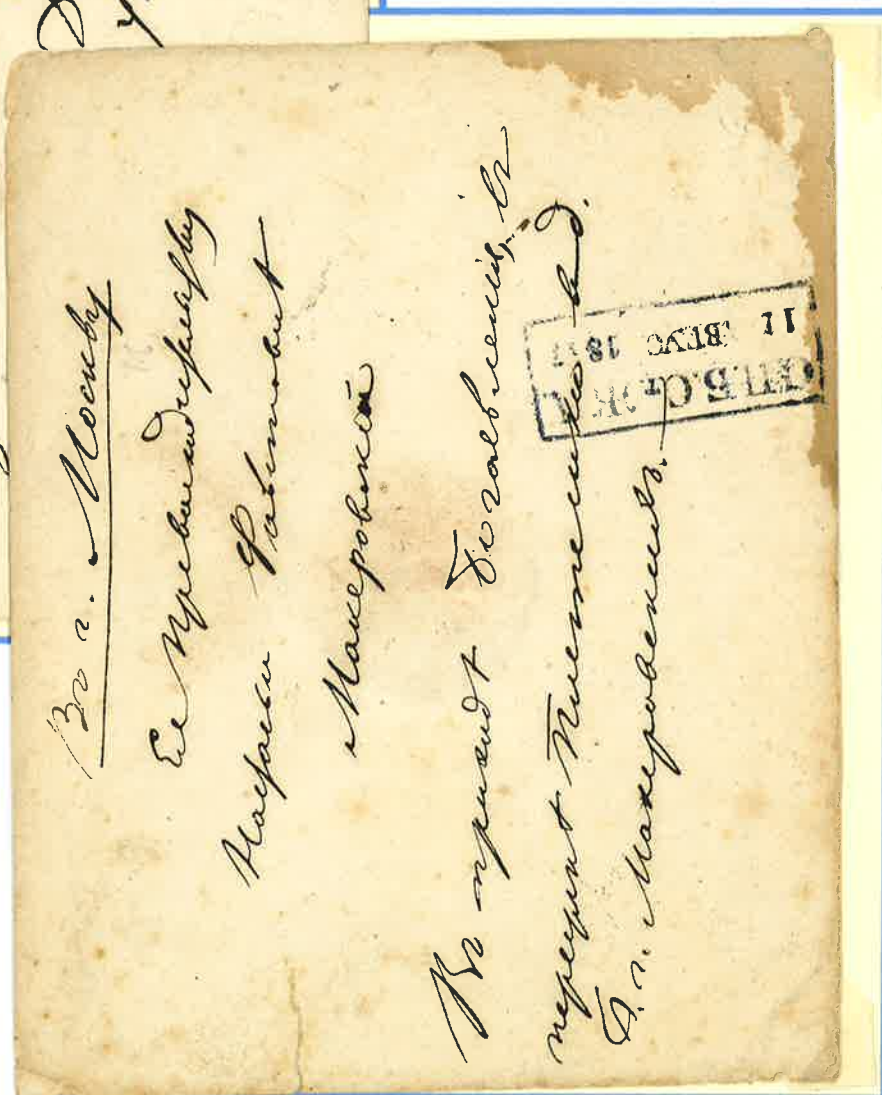
Recorded 8 Dec 1852 to 30 Jul 1859

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**St Petersburg Nikolaev
Station Post Office
28 October 1857**

Stamped envelope correctly
cancelled in manuscript

**St Petersburg Nikolaev
Station Post Office
11 August 1857**

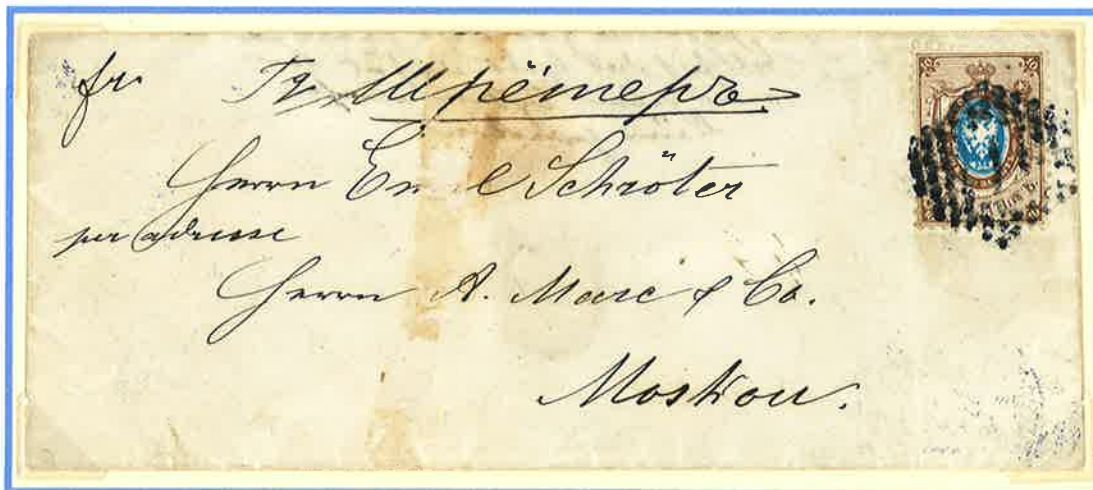Stamped envelope correctly
cancelled in manuscript

St Petersburg Nikolaev Station boxed marking **30 July 1859**. Adhesive cancelled with hexagonal **dotted numeral 1**. Addressed to Helsinki, received 15.8 [NS] 3.8.59 [OS] – 5 days

Numeral 1

Circular 138 dated 26 February 1858 announced that dotted Numeral Cancellations were to be used to cancel the newly issued postage stamps. The **St Petersburg Nikolaev Station Post Office** was allocated the **hexagonal dotted numeral "1"** – the pre-adhesive datestamp continued to be used as a backstamp.


Adhesive cancelled **with dotted numeral 1 of St Petersburg Nikolaev Station**.
It has a circular datestamp **НИКОЛАЕВСКОЙ С. ПЕТЕРЬУРГ 8 Aug 1861** on the back

In April 1860 a new series of circular dated stamps was issued to many offices. These were to replace the pre-adhesive boxed and straight-line dated stamps then in use

Nikolaev Post Office Moscow

43mm x 21mm Dated Boxed Cancellation **МОС. СТ. ЖЕЛ. ДОР.**
Recorded 27 Jan 1853 to 27 Feb 1859
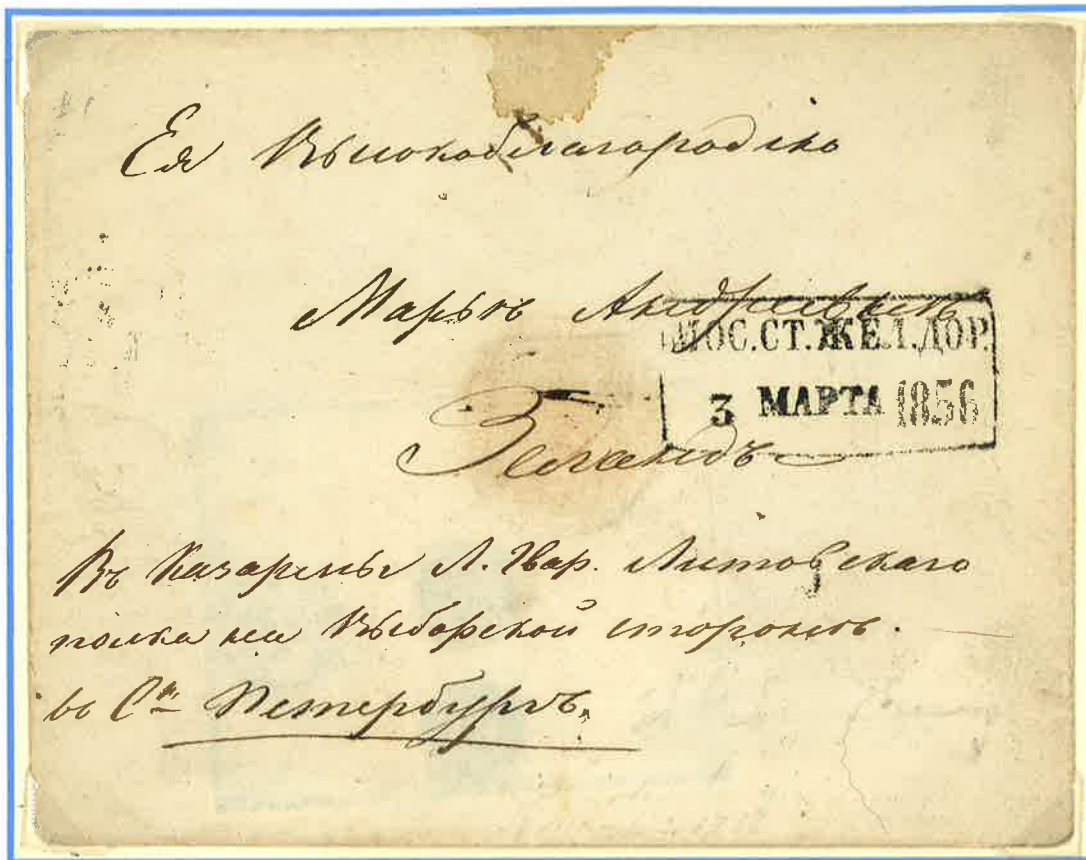
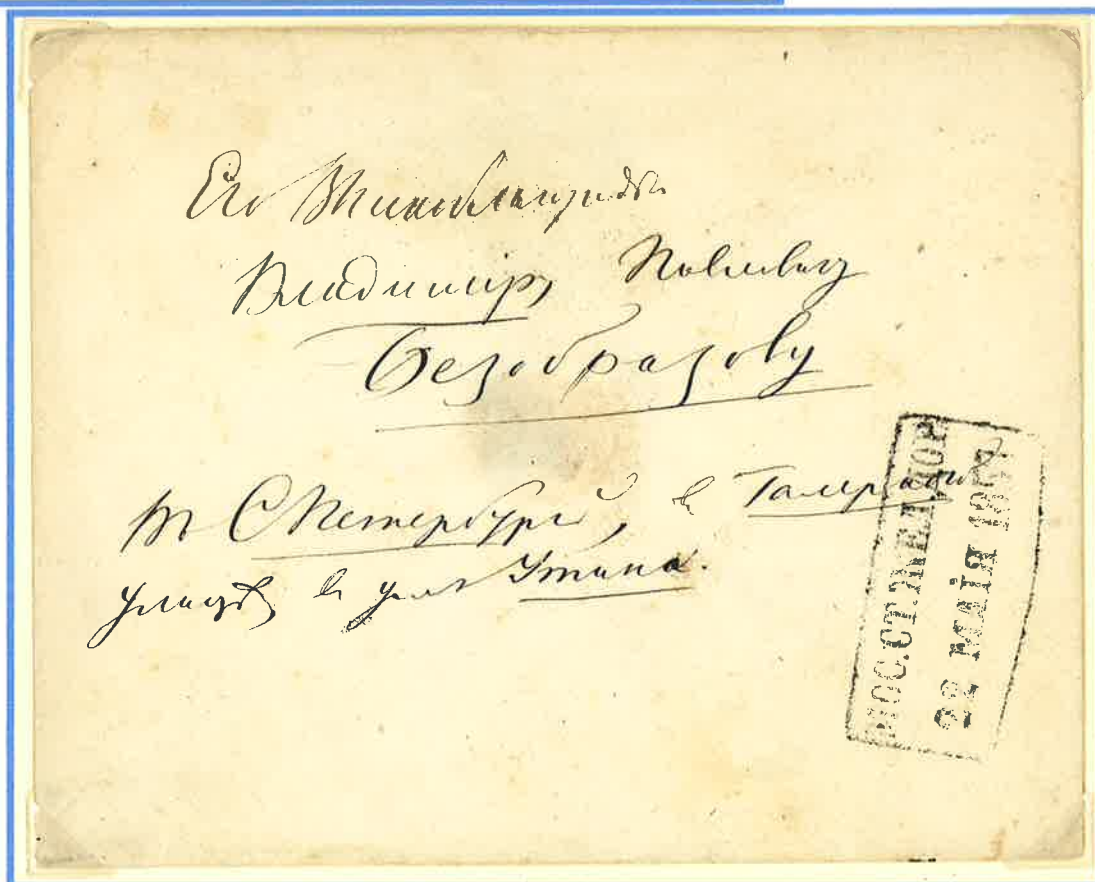**Moscow Nikolaev
Station Post Office
3 March 1856**

Stamped envelope
correctly cancelled in
manuscript

ПОЛУЧЕНО cds
Mar 4 1856
[Received from train]
St Petersburg

**Moscow Nikolaev
Station Post Office
22 May 1859**

New Latest Date

Stamped envelope
correctly cancelled in
manuscript

Numeral 2

Circular 138 dated 26 February 1858 announced that dotted Numeral Cancellations were to be used to cancel the newly issued postage stamps. The **Moscow Nikolaev Station Post Office** was allocated the **hexagonal dotted numeral "2"** – the pre-adhesive datestamp continued to be used as a backstamp.

Moscow Nikolaev Station boxed marking **14 Nov 1858**.
Adhesive cancelled with hexagonal **dotted numeral 2**.

Adhesive cancelled **with dotted numeral 2 of Moscow Nikolaev Station**.
It has a circular datestamp **НИКОЛАЕВСКОЙ МОСКВА** 19 April 1864 on the back.
Received St Petersburg 20 Apr 1864

Dotted Numeral Cancellations

The TPO became operational April, 16, 1852 when the special postal wagons were introduced. Mail was initially restricted to letters betrween St Petersburg and Moscow. From April 20, 1857 regular postal service commenced. Following the introduction of postage stamps from January 1, 1858, Circular No. 128 dated February 26, 1858 announced that **hexagonal cancellations with numerals 3, 4, 5 & 6** were to be used on **TPO Route 1-2** to cancel the adhesive stamps. These are the **first TPO markings**
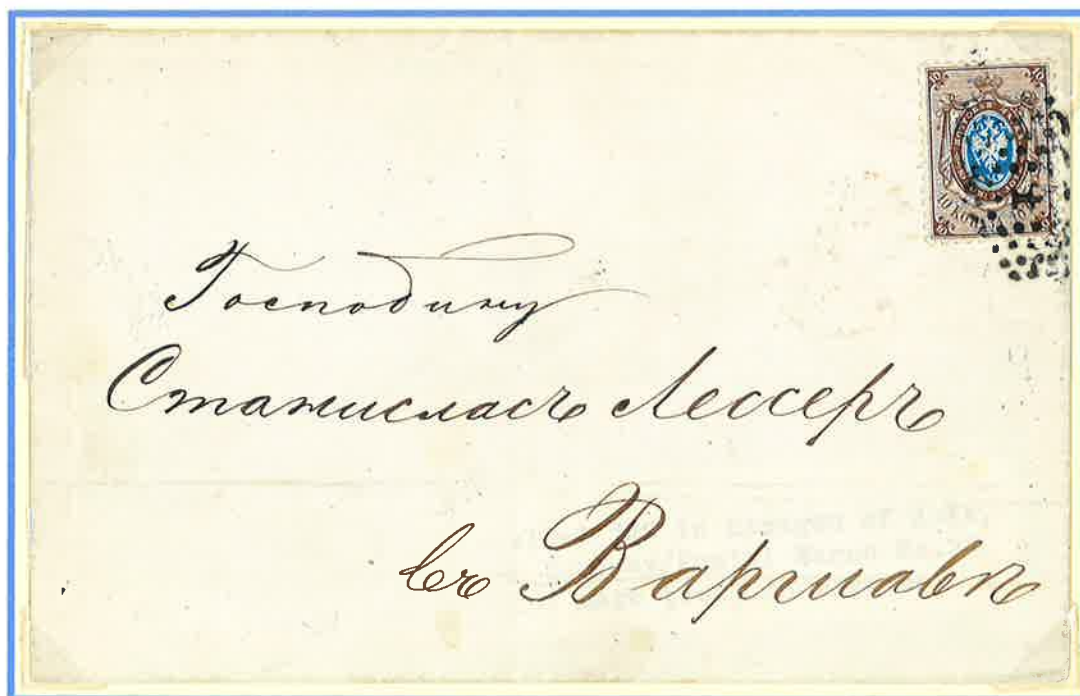
Numeral 3

Adhesive with **Numeral 3 cancellation** and **TPO Post Wagon No. 3, Station 37, 10 SEP 1863**

Numeral 4

Adhesive with **Numeral 4 cancellation** and **TPO Post Wagon No. 2, Station 37, 20 SEP 1865**

Adhesive with **Numeral 5 cancellation** and **TPO Post Wagon No. 1, Station 29, 4 Aug 1862**

Numeral 6

Adhesive with **Numeral 6 cancellation** and **TPO Post Wagon No. 1, Station 1, 12 Sept 1862**

These cancellers were initially used alone but when the circular datestamps were introduced in April 1862, both were used. Circular No. 123 of February 11, 1863 stated that these marks were to be replaced by the circular datestamps. The reason was that the postal authorities found it too complicated to have separate devices for canceling the postage stamp and for backstamping the envelopes. In fact, the dual use continued.

Circular Datestamps with Post Wagon Index 1-4

In April 1860, a standard series of dated cancellations was introduced. Initially these were used in conjunction with the dotted numeral cancellations. Circular No. 123 dated 11 February 1863 gave instructions that they were to be applied twice on each letter; one impression for canceling each postage stamp and an additional impression clear of the stamps. The postal clerks often continued to use the dotted cancellers after February 1863.

The datestamps are inscribed ΗИΚΟЛΑΕΒСΚОЙ Ж. Д. ПОЧТ. ВАГ. №

The datestamps have serial numbers 1, 2, 3 & 4 and these relate to the number of the Post Wagon

Post Wagon № 1
Recorded 14 Nov 1861 to 2 Jun 1864

Post Wagon No. 1   14 Nov 1861
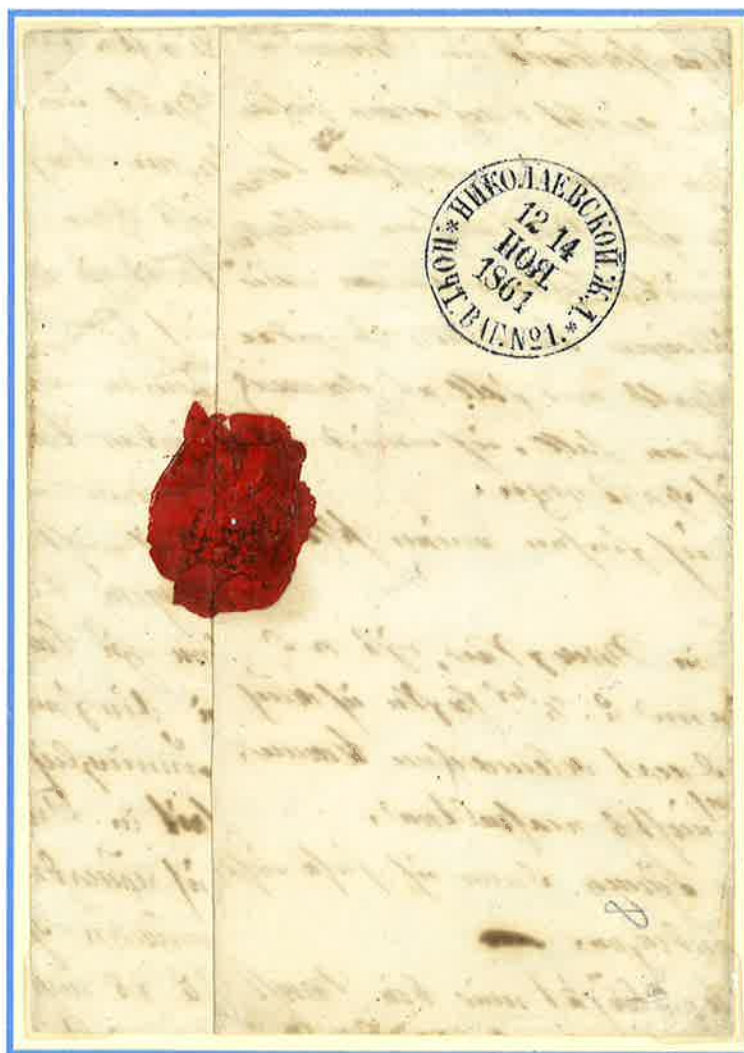**Station 12** Kalashnikovskaya
10 kop adhesive with
Dotted Numeral "5"
To St Petersburg

Earliest Recorded Date

Post Wagon № 2
Recorded 23 Aug 1862 to 22 Nov 1866

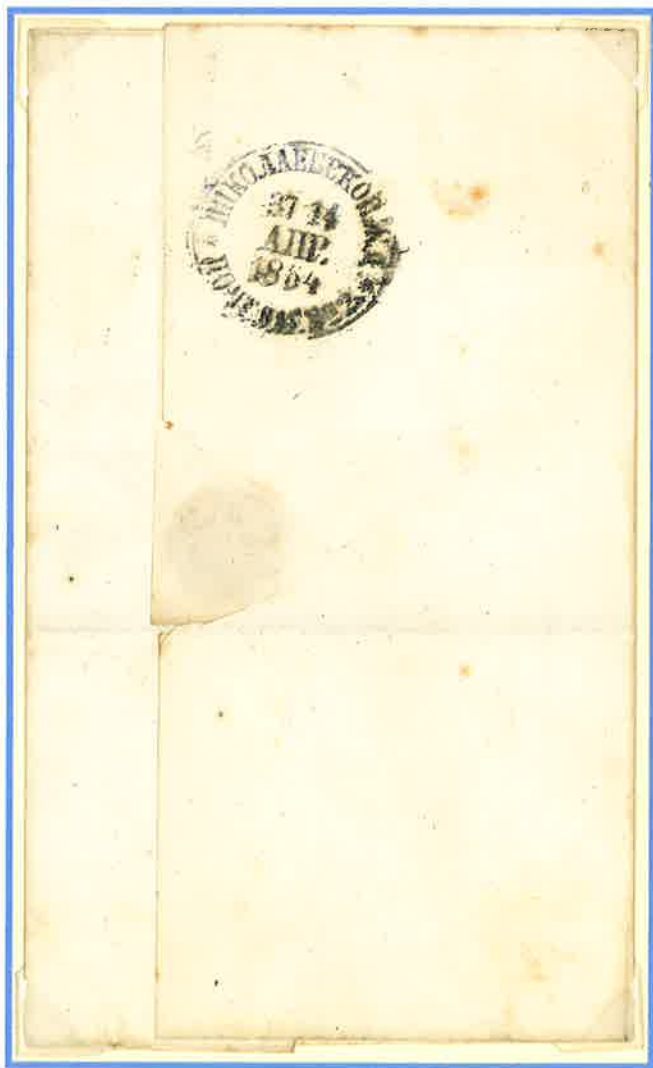**Post Wagon No. 2   14 Apr 1864**
Station 37 [St Petersburg]

10 kop adhesive with
Dotted Numeral "4"
To St Petersburg

Recorded 26 Mar 1861 to 16 Aug 1865

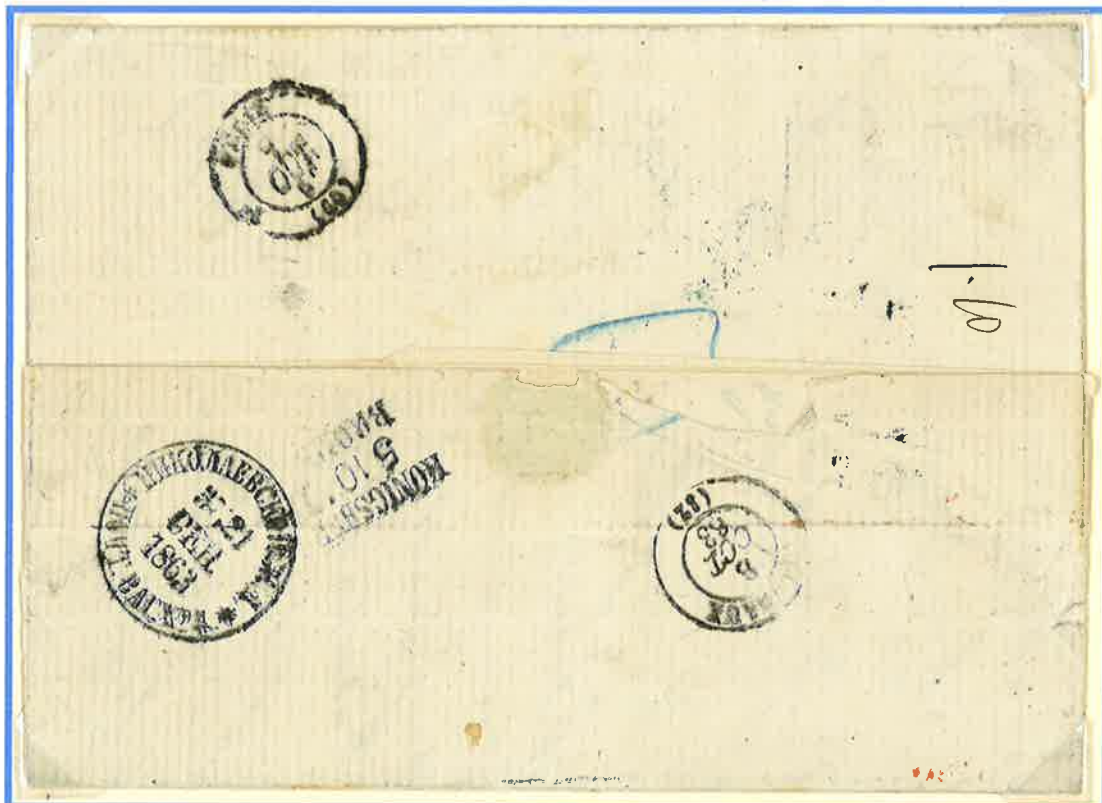**Post Wagon No. 3 Station 29 [Tver] 19 Jun 1861** with **Dotted Numeral "5"** To St Petersburg

Post Wagon № 4
Recorded 7 Sept 1864 to 4 Jan 1866   **New Earliest Date 21 Sept 1863**

Entire from Moscow with **Post Wagon No. 4 Station 37** [St Petersburg] **21 Sept 1863**. Entered Prussia
P.33 contract via TPO Konigsberg Bromberg 5.10.63 [NS]; Boxed AUS RUSSLAND; to France at
Erquelines 7 Oct 63[NS] received Bordeaux 8 Oct 63[NS] 25 Sept 63 [OS] 11 decimes charge. 5 days

TPO Route 1-2 Datestamps – serial numbers 1-8.

- The St Petersburg-Moscow Nikolaevskaya Railway was the first Traveling Post Office established in Russia. **TPO-1** was from St Petersburg. **TPO-2** was from Moscow.
- A new series of dated cancellations with a pair of numbers, indicating both directions of the Route, was introduced shortly before the Railway Post Office Department was established in 1869.
- The design includes a serial number in brackets at the base. The serial designated the postal clerk to whom the datestamp was assigned. Serials 1-8 are now known but the reference *Russian Railway Postmarks* by Kiryushkin & Robinson **records examples only of serials 1, 6 & 7 not 2, 3, 4, 5 & 8.**
- The **Station number** is upright or sideways on the first line of the date recording the number of the Station at which the item of mail was collected. The number varied with the direction of the TPO travel. St Petersburg and Moscow are either 1 or 37 depending on which direction the train was traveling.

Serial 1

Recorded 9 Mar 1871 to 19 Mar 1878

New Earliest Date 24 Mar 1867

TPO 1-2 serial 1

Station 37
[St Petersburg]
24 Mar 1867

TPO 1-2 serial 1
Station Number
Omitted
3 Jul 1881
St Petersburg
3 Jul 1881

New Latest Date 3 Jul 1881

Earliest date 7 Aug 1878

TPO 1-2 serial 2, Station 37 [Moscow] **7 Aug 1878,** on 8 kop stamp and Roman numeral 4 routing mark
of the Italian Post Office. Received Naples 25.8.78{NS} 13.8.78[OS] – 6 days

Latest Date 30 Dec 1879

Tver 30 Dec 1881
On 7k envelope
Via

**TPO 1-2 serial 2
Station 29
[Tver]
30 Dec 1879**

via Warsaw 31 Dec 79
to Pskov 31 Dec 1879

Earliest date 23 Jul 1868

**TPO 1-2 serial 3
Station 1
[St Petersburg]
23 July 1868**

Moscow Central
Post Office
1868 July 24
2 o'clock

Latest Date 3 Oct 1871

TPO 1-2 serial 3, Station 37 [St Petersburg] **3 Oct 1871,** franking 10+3+5kop via St Petersburg-Warsaw Station 4 Oct 1871. To Montpelleir via Prussia with boxed P.D. [Paid to Destination] FRANCO 17.10.71[NS] entered France at Erquelines 19 Oct 71[NS] via Paris 19 Oct 71, received 21 Oct 71[NS] – 6 days

Earliest date 17 July 1867

TPO 1-2 serial 4, Station 37 [Moscow] **17 July 1867,** Franking 10+5+3 kop cancelled TPO 1-2 via
St Petersburg Nikolaev Station 18 July 1867. FRANCO [prepaid] Via Prussia Franco 31.7.67 [NS]
19.7.67[OS]. To Amsterdam Received 2.8.67[NS] – 4 days

Latest Date 22 Feb 1873

Letter written Moscow 22 February / 6 March 1873 with 8 kop cancelled **TPO 1-2 serial 4, Station 37**
[Moscow] **22 Feb 1873,** via St Petersburg Nikolaev Station 24 Feb 1873.
To London Received Paid 10 MR 73[NS] 26 Feb 73[OS] – 4 days. No Prussian transit markings

Earliest date 4 Dec 1869

TPO 1-2 serial 5, Station 37 [St Petersburg] **4 Dec 1869,** Franking 10+3+1kop cancelled TPO 1-2 via
St Petersburg-Warsaw Station 6 Dec 1869. Via Prussia Franco 19.12.1869 [NS] 7.12.1869[OS]. To
Konigsberg Received 19.12 – 3 days

10kop stamped
envelope of 1872
cancelled and
backstamped

TPO 1-2 serial 5
Station 1
St Petersburg
24 Sept 1873

Latest Date

Moscow
25 Sept 1873
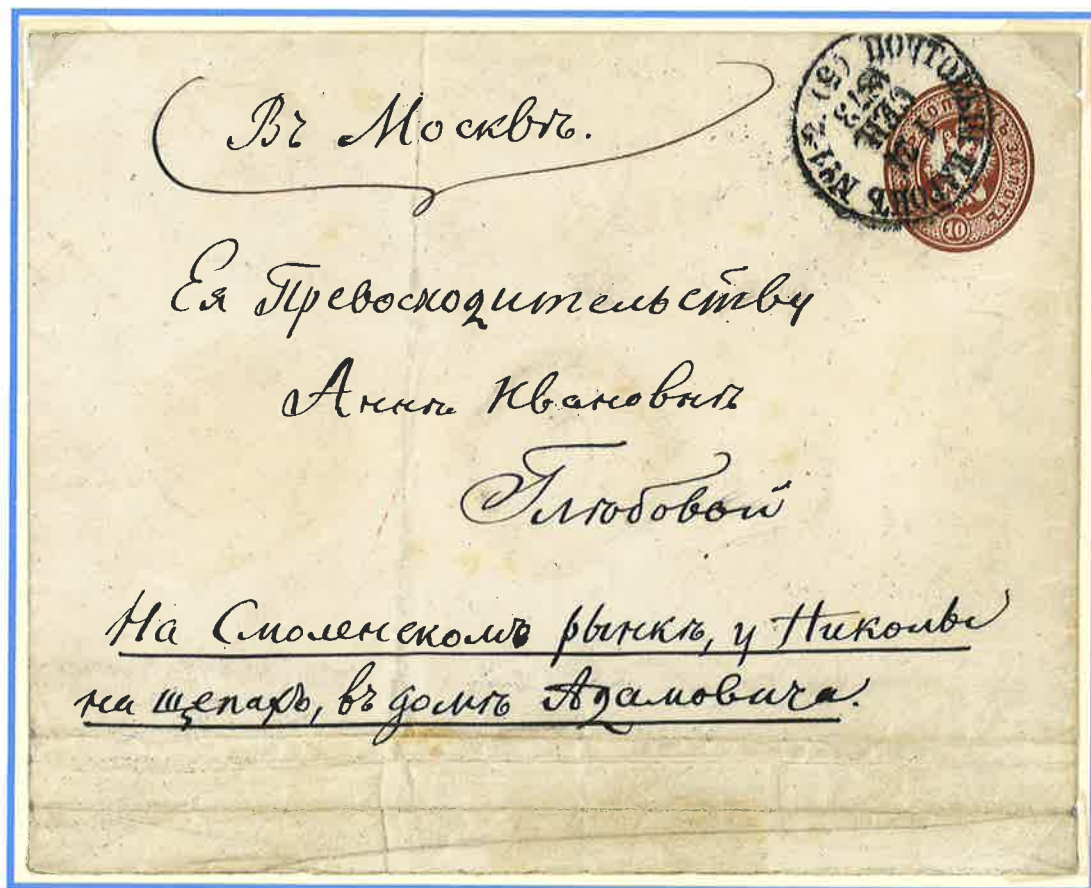
Serial 6

Recorded usage 5 May 1868 to 8 Nov 1880

Earliest date 26 Jun 1867

10kop stamped
envelope cancelled
Tver 26 Jun 1867.

Via
TPO 1-2 serial 6

Station 31
Pomeran'e Novgorod
26 Jun 1867

St Petersburg
27 Jun 1867.

Serial 7

Recorded 17 Oct 1869 to 1 Oct 1872

TPO 1-2 Serial 7 Station 37 [Moscow] **24 Oct 1871**, St Petersburg 25 Oct 1871

Serial 8
Unrecorded

TPO 1-2 serial 8

Station 29
Chudovskaya
Novgorod

21 Aug 1872
Earliest Date

St Petersburg
22 Aug 1872.

From Moscow

TPO 1-2 serial 8
Station Omitted
15 Sept 1873
Latest Date

St Petersburg
Nikolaev Stn
16 Sept 1873

Prepaid FRANCO
16kop
to London via
Prussia border
29.9.73 [NS]
17.9.73 [OS]
at Bromberg.

London Paid
2 OC 73 [NS]

6 days

These bi-directional Route 1-2 datestamps were replaced from the late 1870's with similar datestamps with the route number in only **one direction**.