



Cancellation Club NEWS

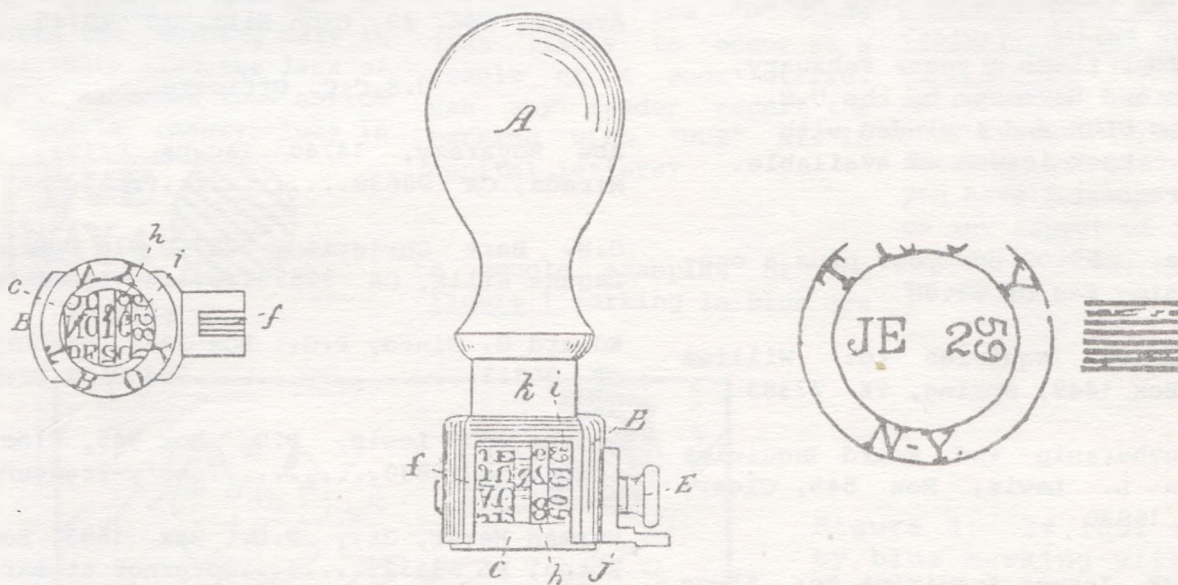
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Refer to Norton Patent --- page 115

FROM THE EDITOR

With this issue of the NEWS, your editor commences a series of articles on the patents obtained by Marcus Norton. In conjunction with these patents I would appreciate receiving articles about Norton and his postmarks. With your assistance, I am sure an interesting and definitive study could be published.

Joe Crosby of Tulsa, OK replied to the recent articles on Washington duplexes. He forwarded a photocopy of the Georgetown "G" in concentric circles dated August 12th, 1884, which is more in agreement with Willard's data, than the latest recorded date that I had. He also sent a photo of the East Capitol station ellipse (Cole #18), which extended the latest known use to January 15th, 1885.

THE U.S. CANCELLATION CLUB NEWS

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Incidentally, Jim Cole is working on a manuscript on Bank-note era cancellations and would appreciate the assistance of the readers.

NOTICE ABOUT BACK ISSUES

In the future, any person wanting issues prior to January 1974 will have to borrow from library and photo copy. For Sale from Alyce Evans:

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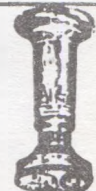
POSTMARKING HANDSTAMPS

WANTED

Please write for free illustrated listing of postal artifacts bought.

DR. SCHEER

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MORE ON MOBILE, AL

by Roger Curran



In the Winter 1989 News we briefly discussed the "Due WAY 1¢" marking with canceling grid used by the Mobile, AL post office during the second half of 1851 and early 1852. One aspect not mentioned was the ink color. Simpson's USPM by Alexander does not report the marking in other than black. The tracing from Simpson's USPM is shown in Figure 1. Chase's report in his The 3¢ Stamp of the United States 1851-1857 Issue, first published in 1929, shows the word "DUE" with all capital letters (see Figure 2) and he reports the marking only in blue. Note also the lack of a "¢". Ashbrook took notice of Chase's observations in



Figure 2.

his 1938 book The United States One Cent Stamp 1851-1857. Ashbrook stated that all examples of the Mobile marking he had seen were black and only the "D" in "Due" was capitalized. He didn't rule out Chase's type but speculated that Chase's tracing was possibly from an indistinct strike.



Figure 3.

Ashbrook illustrated a tracing of a particularly clear strike which we show as Figure 3. I believe the "¢" of "1¢" appears in some strikes as a blob extraneous to the actual design. A smaller appearing "ue" in relation to the "D" seems less likely to occur as a result of a poor strike. Can any reader report the marking with "DUE" all in capital letters?

A couple examples of the Figure 1 marking in blue are

herewith reported. The first was Lot 42 in the Grunin Part III sale in March 1988. It was described as appearing on a January 1852 folded letter. The second was Lot 593 in the February 1989 Kelleher sale with the blue marking on a January 1852 folded letter. The accompanying blue Mobile CDS is dated January 18. (See Figure 4) Perhaps for awhile in January the Mobile post office switched to blue ink. A January 5 (1852) usage as well as the January 29 (1852) usage mentioned in our earlier article are in black.

We'll add one last report. Cancel #554, with the "Due" design, in Herst's Fancy Cancellations on Nineteenth Century United States Postage Stamps (1972 edition), is reported in orange. Can any reader report a confirming example? And if you have further information on any aspect of this interesting marking, we urge you to write.

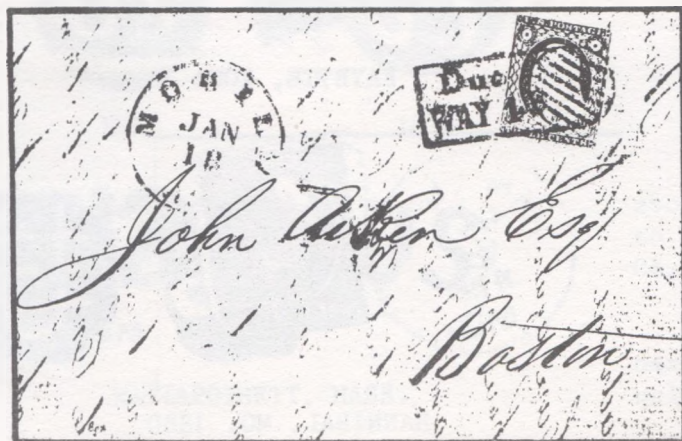


Figure 4. 3¢ 1851 tied by blue marking with matching Mobile January 18th (1852) CDS. From the Kelleher sale of February 1989.

"U.S." CANCELS USED DURING THE BANKNOTE ERA, Part I

By Alyce Evans

The letters "U.S.", an abbreviation for the United States, were popular with the whittling fraternity as a means of expressing their patriotic zeal. And, if one chose not to whittle, a choice could be made from the several varieties of commercially prepared handstamps available for sale.

The following examples are found either on banknotes, or during the time frame of the banknote era. The year date is given when known and all cancels are black unless stated otherwise.

I would like to thank the following for taking the time to send in their examples, their assistance is greatly appreciated: Paul Berg, Ed Hines, Greg Sutherland, Jim Wrobliske and, posthumously, Ted Mills. Ted was always ready to share his knowledge and his examples of fancy cancels whenever asked. He will be sadly missed. He was a true philatelist.



ASHLAND, O.



AVOCA, N.Y.



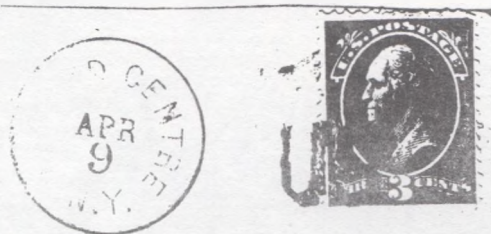
DENVER, COLO. 1880



ADAIRSVILLE, GA.



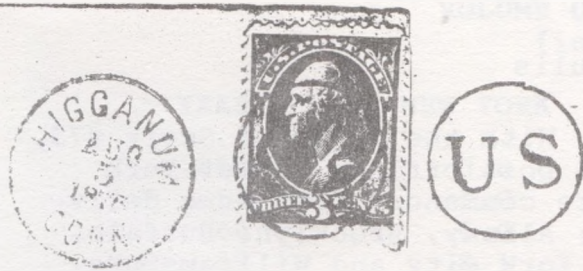
FAYETTE, IOWA



ALFRED CENTRE, N.Y.



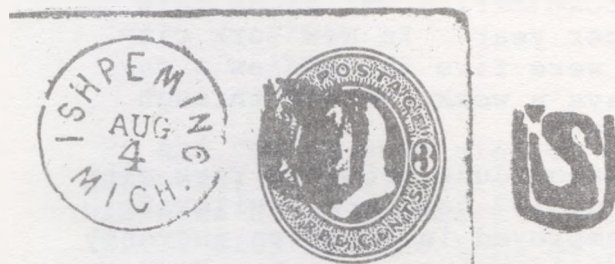
HANNIBAL, MO. 1880



HIGGANUM, CONN. 1876



MEXICO, MO.



ISHPEMING, MICH.



MOUNT PLEASANT, MICH. 1881



LAKE-SIDE, N.Y. 1873



NORWALK, O.



1873



1874



1875



MATTAPOISETT, MASS.

Members with dated examples of the above cancels, please send a photocopy to the author at P.O. Box 286, Bonsall CA. 92003.

Part II will be continued in the next (Nov.) issue. Please send your unlisted examples for inclusion.

NEW YORK LOCAL MAILS - POST 1863

by Martin Margulis

In July 1863, the Post Office Dept. issued Scott #73, the two cent "Black Jack." This stamp paid the newly established local mail rate necessitated by the change from the fee to the free carrier service. Where there was no home delivery service available, the rate was also two cents. In 1869, this stamp was replaced by Scott #113, the two cent post horse and rider stamp.

In 1870, the banknote issues were started. Scott #135, the two cent red brown Jackson (it also came in shades) grilled and shortly afterward a very similar stamp Scott #146, ungrilled made their appearance. The first three all have a relatively high catalog value. With Scott #146 the catalog value falls rapidly. Obviously, this effects the price of covers. Well postmarked, well-centered stamped covers can cost more than \$50.

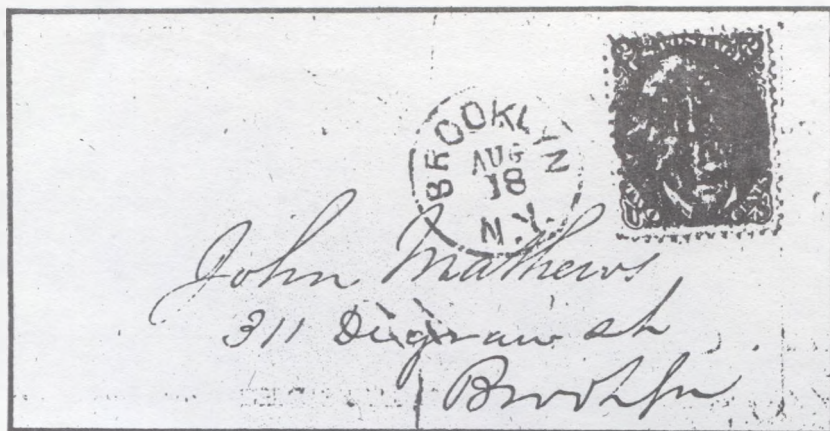
In 1873 Scott #157, a similar stamp but in brown and brown hues, was issued, followed by Scott #183 in vermilion. This is a relatively cheap stamp and covers with this stamp are comparatively inexpensive and plentiful. Two one cent stamps could, of course, also pay the fee.

With the issue of Scott #73, five post offices in New York state commenced free home delivery; Albany, Brooklyn, Buffalo, New York city and Williamsburg. Previously, the service was available for a one or two cent fee through carriers paid on a commission basis. Now the deliverers were post office employees paid \$700 per year. In New York city there were five deliveries a day, six days a week, Monday through Saturday.

As of June 1863 New York city employed 137 carriers, while 18 were employed in Brooklyn and only 6 in Williamsburg. In New York city they delivered, between June 1865 and June 1866, 12 million pieces of mail of all kinds, in Brooklyn 760,000. There are no figures available for Williamsburg.

In 1866 the Post-Master General's report segregates the mail by types, a practice which was continued until 1877. The figures for local letters, i.e. mailed in and delivered to the same city are illustrated in table that follows.

In New York city special postmarks were used to cancel local letters. The main post office had a postmark with the letters



1863 "Blackjack" tied by a geometric cancel on a local Brooklyn cover.

VOLUME OF LOCAL LETTERS
(in millions)

YEAR	NEW YORK	BROOKLYN	WILLIAMSBURG
1866	3.0	0.130	0.011
67	5.0	0.190	0.020
68	6.0	0.264	0.050
69	8.1	0.300	0.065
1870	9.3	0.415	0.082
71	11.5	0.400	
72	15.1	0.509	
73	16.9	0.850	0.083
74	22.0	1.200	
75		1.400	
76		1.600	
77		1.900	

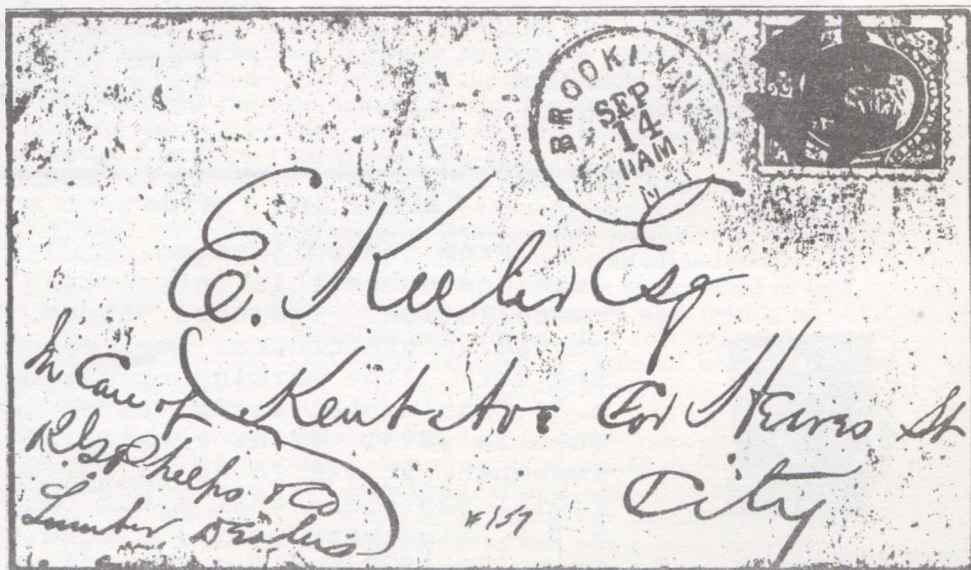
"P" and "O" on each side of the postmark, in the middle. The branches had a postmark stating "N. Y. City" at the top, below which was the date and the letter of the branch post office at which the letter was mailed.

Neither Brooklyn nor Williamsburg used distinctive postmarks to distinguish local letters though obviously, they were counted. Also, at the beginning of the period, there were no branches established at either of these latter offices. It was not until

September of 1873 that two independent post offices were converted to branches of the Brooklyn post office. These were Brevoort and Williamsburg.

Illustrated herein are a few local covers mailed in and to the Brooklyn post office. However, this is a very preliminary report and I would appreciate any information readers may have on either Brooklyn or Williamsburg local letters. I will cover the local letters of New York city in another article(s).

2¢ Continental Banknote stamp tied by quartered cork on another Brooklyn local cover.



SECRETARY'S REPORT

DROPPED: Non-payment of dues

James G. Baird
 Joseph C. Banchak
 John R. Biddle
 Henry Allen Bordwell
 Carey Brown
 Neil Cheshire
 Bruce L. Corey
 William T. Crowe
 Tony Dean
 Richard M. Denton
 Samuel Fisvitz
 H. P. Kagen
 John P. Kellerman
 James W. Kern
 Gary A. Konopka
 Paul Laurn
 Bruce London
 Howard Lee McLean
 Bernard Newman
 King Parker
 James E. Reuter
 William B. Robinson, III
 Howard J. Selzer
 Oakley Shields
 Frederick G. Steele
 Nicholas J. Todaro
 Donald W. Tucker
 Daniel R. J. Wells
 Jon M. Wilson
 Lora F. Wright
 Jack Yao
 Douglas E. Youngblood

CLOSED ALBUMS

Allan D. Parsons
 Joseph von Hake

NEW MEMBERS

- 1789 Alan Parsons, 809 Holley Rd., Elmira, NY 14905; PH of Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben Counties (NY), black Hardings, coils (including vend. machine) on cover.
- 1790 Otis L. Alley, P.O. Box 2313 Temple, TX 76503; Texas PH, RPOs, Ship Cancellations, 776 FDCs.
- 1791 Steven Greenway, 1846 Carlton NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505; Fancy cancels on & off cover.
- 1792 Robert E. Johnson, 210 Elizabeth St., Albany, GA 31705 *
- 1793 Rev. Lamar McClain, 1627 12th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009; Cancels on C-11, the Beacon Airmail.
- 1794 Thomas G. Hennighan, 413 Railroad Ave., Pen Argyl, PA 18072; PH, 3¢ of 1851-57 and the 1861 issue.

REINSTATED

- 1042 Robert M. Sommerell, P.O. Box 39597, Downey, CA 90241; Western covers incl. Alaska and Yukon Terr, Unusual 20th century cancellations.

CAIRO, IL "Sloo"

From the collection of Clyde Jennings comes this interesting cancellation. The name "Sloo" is carved in the central portion of the cork. The marking occurs on a 3¢ Continental stamp, first issued in 1873. After considerable research, it was found in the Official Registers that a W.A. and a T.J. Sloo were postal clerks at Cairo in 1877 and T.J. continued in 1879. Nice work Clyde.



THE FIRST MARCUS NORTON POSTMARK PATENT

MARCUS P. NORTON, OF TROY, NEW YORK, ASSIGNOR TO FREDK. G. RANSFORD AND PETER LOW, OF SAME PLACE.

IMPROVEMENT IN POSTMARKING-STAMPS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. 25,036, dated August 9, 1859.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, MARCUS P. NORTON, of the city of Troy, county of Rensselaer, and State of New York, have invented new and useful Improvements in Post-Office Postmarking-Stamps; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full and exact description of the nature, construction, and operation thereof, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, and to the letters of reference marked thereon, making a part of this specification.

Figure 1 is a perspective view. Fig. 2 shows a division of the entire stamp vertically through the center. Fig. 3 shows the face of the stationary form of type *c c* and each of the cylinder-type as in a condition ready to give an impression in print upon an envelope, letter, or anything else desired. Fig. 4 shows a gage for the purpose of adjusting each and every of the aforesaid type-cylinders. This gage is made as shown at I, same figure. This is placed upon the face of the said stationary form of type *c c* and over the said cylinders, as shown at said Fig. 4, and then by means of ribs or projections upon the under side of said gage I, which fit between the rows of type upon aforesaid cylinders, and then by sliding it from the cylinder of months over and toward each of the other of said cylinders until each is gathered up therein, and are then and there held upon a level and even surface to and with the aforesaid stationary form of *c c* until made for use by the nut E or by the use of the blotter J, as aforesaid. Fig. 5 shows the channel or grooved form for the cast type, as shown at Fig. 7. Fig. 6 is a section of Fig. 5 divided vertically through the center thereof and showing the said channel or groove.

Like figures represent and refer to like parts.

The nature of my invention consists in constructing, combining, and arranging a hand-stamp, hereinafter described, so as to contain a cylinder with the initials of each and every month in a year and two other cylinders with figures for the respective days of each and every month; also, a cylinder with figures to represent ten years, (more or less, as the case may be,) which cylinders shall revolve upon

the same shaft with each, and within a stationary form of type, and thereby print the month, the day of the month, and the year in connection with each, and each in connection with and at the same time of the printing of the subject-matter upon the aforesaid stationary form of type.

It also consists in attaching a blotter, hereinafter described, to the hand-stamp aforesaid upon one or two sides thereof for the purpose of cutting, blotting, canceling, or effacing the "frank" or "postage-stamp," so as to prevent a second use of the same, while at the same time the name of the "post-office," the year, the month, and the day of the month are printed upon the envelope and one side of the said frank or postage-stamp, thereby giving a good impression of the same, and prevent undue wear of the said postmarking-stamp in consequence of being used upon the uneven surface made by the said frank or postage-stamp.

It is now almost impossible to get a good impression upon envelopes containing letters, &c., of the name of post-office and the date, &c., by reason of using the hand-stamp upon the said frank or postage-stamp in order to cancel or efface the same.

It further consists in constructing a ring or stationary type-holder with a dovetail channel or groove, so that the name of any town required may be set therein, together with the initials of any State required, and when thus arranged is then and there firmly secured ready for use.

It also further consists in firmly securing and fastening each and every of the aforesaid cylinders in its respective place as and when adjusted by the means hereinafter described.

The respective parts are so arranged as to render them easily cleaned and readily adjusted to their proper and required places; also, easily repaired or replaced when worn out. By arranging and combining each and every part required to postmark any letter or envelope and to cancel the frank or postage-stamp thereupon, as aforesaid, in the manner and form hereinafter described and set forth there will be no liability or possibility of any part thereof being lost while being transmitted in the mails or being lost at the post-

office or elsewhere when the same may be required, unless the entire stamp is lost. This stamp is more convenient for postmasters and others using it on account of being easily and readily adjusted to the year, the month, and the day of the month, and requiring not as much care to look after the various parts as now required. It occupies much less room in the mail-bags while being transmitted to its place of destination. It takes less time, trouble, and expense to prepare it for such transmission. It cuts the frank or postage-stamp in as many places as there are sharp edge projections upon the face of the said blotter, while at the same operation the places thus cut through the said frank or postage-stamp are inked by the same means whereby the cutting was done, thus preventing a second use of such frank or postage-stamp, for, although the ink thus put on be washed therefrom by any process, the places thus cut will show the first use and detect and expose the second or fraudulent use of such frank or postage-stamp.

All the difficulties attending the efficient and successful postmarking of letters and the blotting and canceling of franks or postage-stamps by the use of any kind of stamp now used by the Government are fully and completely overcome by the use of this stamp.

Each and every part containing letters or figures is cast in a mold made expressly for such purpose, which parts, when in their respective places, are ready for use without any engraving thereon. The letters and figures are cast, chilled, or case-hardened, thereby making them cheaper and better than if made of wrought-iron or steel, although they may be made of such, if desired.

This stamp may be used by railroad companies for the purpose of dating tickets &c., and may be used by banks for any purpose there required. It may also be used whenever desired when and where it can be.

To enable others skilled in the art to make and to use my invention, I will now proceed to describe its construction and operation.

I construct my "post-office postmarking-stamp" as follows, to wit:

A, Figs. 1 and 2, is the handle, and is made of wood.

B is the frame to receive and hold the type wheels or cylinders *f g h i*, also the stationary form *c c*, also the blotter *J*. This frame is made of malleable cast-iron, and is cast in a mold to give the desired form or shape.

f is the type-cylinder, containing initials for each and every month in the year, and is cast in a mold made expressly for the purpose, making such cylinder and letters thereon ready for use. This mold is made in six or twelve parts, so that it may be drawn from the said cylinder when cast.

g is a cylinder of the same diameter as *f*, and contains the numerals 1, 2, 3, which are the only ones required upon this cylinder to

give, in connection with the cylinder *h*, the respective days of each month as may be required. This cylinder is made in the same way and manner as the cylinder *f*.

h is another type-cylinder, of the same diameter as *f* and *g*, and contains the numerals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and a cipher 0. This cylinder, in connection with *g*, will give any day in any month desired, and is made in the same way and manner as the cylinders *f* and *g*, and is placed in close proximity with the cylinder *g*.

i is another type-cylinder, of the same diameter as *f g h*, and contains figures and abridgment for ten successive years, and is made in the same way and manner as each of the aforesaid cylinders. These cylinders are each and all arranged upon the shaft *D* and are made fast in the required place of each by the nut *E* upon one end of the shaft *D*, or it may thus be secured by making the blotter *J* to serve as a nut in the place of *E*, in which case the shaft *D* would receive the blotter *J* as the nut and be moved therein for the aforesaid purpose by means of a thumb-piece at the opposite end of the said shaft. The said shaft *D* has a shoulder or stop upon the opposite end from the nut or screw end, which shoulder bears directly against the cylinder *f*, and the said cylinder against the cylinder *g*, and the cylinder *g* against the cylinder *h*, and the cylinder *h* against the cylinder *i*, and the cylinder *i* against one part of the frame *B* between the said last-named cylinder and the said blotter *J* or nut *E*. By moving the said nut *E*, or by turning the said shaft *D* when the blotter *J* is used as a nut, as aforesaid, each cylinder is drawn against the other, as aforesaid, thereby holding the cylinder by the friction of the cylinder or cylinders next thereto. The shaft *D* has a bearing of greater diameter at one end thereof than at the other end. This is for the purpose as hereinbefore described. The blotter *J* is fastened to the frame *B*, upon one side thereof by the use of the shaft *D*, one end of which passes through the upper part of the said blotter, and which is firmly secured to the said frame by means of the nut *E*, or by using it for the nut in place of the said nut *E*, as aforesaid. This blotter is then and thereby retained in a fixed and strong position by means of the screw *S* in connection with the said shaft *D*, the blotter *J*, or nut *E*, and in for the purpose of cutting, inking, blotting, effacing, and effectually canceling the frank or postage-stamp, while at the same time and operation the name of the post-office, the year, the month, and the day thereof are given upon the envelope or letter at one side of the said frank or postage-stamp, and not upon it, as now practiced, in order to efface and to cancel it under the operation of stamping, which unduly wears out the marking-stamp, gives a bad and unintelligible impression, and is in direct violation of the rules or statute of the Post-Office Department. This stamp may

have another blotter like J, which shall be upon the opposite side thereof, by the use of which the frank or postage-stamp would be cut, inked, blotted, effaced, and canceled upon any part of the letter or envelope where it may be placed. One blotter like J, however, is believed to answer the required purpose. This blotter J may be made of any size or shape and of any material to answer the end or purpose sought to be attained. The face which receives the ink and which comes directly upon the frank or postage-stamp is grooved or cut, thereby leaving various projections which have a sharp or knife edge sufficient for each to cut entirely through the frank or postage-stamp, but not through the envelope immediately under the same, while at the same time the places thus cut are inked by the same sharp edge projections or cutters on the face of the said blotter, as aforesaid. The said blotter J should be made of the best kind of cast-steel and in such shape as not to break any part thereof. The projections upon the face of the said blotter may be kept sharp and in cutting order by filing and sharpening them when dull. The said stationary form *c c* may be made in a circle or any other shape desired which shall contain the name of the post-office where used and the initials of the State where such post-office may be located, or any other matter may be therein contained, as the case may require. It is made of any required thickness, and has an inside and an outside ring or circle around the said type representing the name of the town or post-office where used, &c. It may be cast, chilled, or case-hardened in the same manner as the aforesaid type-cylinders; but the cheapest, best, and most convenient way or manner to construct it is as shown at Fig. 5, where *c'* represents or shows a channel or groove down and in the said ring *c c*. This channel or groove is cut from one-fourth to three-eighths of an inch in depth, or more or less, as may be found necessary. It is cut square down with the inner ring, while the side next to the outer ring is cut "dovetailing," thus making the said channel or groove wider at the bottom than at the top thereof. This is to hold any type set therein in the proper place of each and in condition for printing, &c., as aforesaid.

At *q* is an opening, so as to receive the type, as shown at Fig. 7. When the type as required for any name of any town or post-office are placed in the said channel or groove through the said opening *q*, then the remaining channel or groove is filled up with blocks or spaces of the same or other material than the said type, which prevent any type from coming out of the said channel or groove. When the said form, as shown at Fig. 5, is placed within the frame B, Fig. 2, *q* is closed up by means thereof. When the type, as shown at Fig. 7, are placed in the channel or groove *c'*, Fig. 5, the face of the said form and the face of the said type are upon a line with

each, and thereby give an impression in print even and at the same time and operation. The said type are cast in molds, as required, to fit the said channel or groove. By this arrangement there will be no engraving required nor any setting up of form for the purpose of casting from for the respective post-offices, towns, States, &c., for such can be set from a font of type made purposely and kept at the Post-Office Department, and set up in the said groove or channel, as aforesaid. The form *c c*, Figs. 1, 2, and 5, is fitted into the lower part of the frame B and then firmly fastened by means of the screws *s* and *t*, Fig. 2. There is a mortise in and through the aforesaid form *c c* for the purpose of receiving the aforesaid cylinders *f g h i*, whereby the printing-surface of the same is upon a direct and even line of and with the aforesaid stationary form of type *c c* and that of the aforesaid blotter J, so as to give an equal impression in print each with each. The aforesaid type-cylinders *f g h i* revolve within the said stationary form of type *c c*, and the printing-surface of each is then and always upon a line with each other, also with the face of the blotter J, whereby the desired impression in print and ink is given and the frank or postage-stamp cut, as aforesaid, at the same time and operation. The frame B may be secured to the handle A in any manner deemed best.

k, Figs. 1 and 2, is a ferrule upon the handle A and rests directly down and upon the upper part of the frame B. This ferrule may be of any required size or thickness. A stem extends upward into the handle A. This arrangement makes a strong joining of the said handle A and the said frame B; or there may be a socket cast upon and with the said frame B and the handle A driven downward therein.

This stamp can be made at much less expense than any other kind of stamp or stamps for the same use and purpose, and is much more convenient and not as liable to get out of repair. No part of it can well be lost unless the entire stamp is lost, which is to be considered in the transmission of postmarking, rating, blotting, or canceling stamps through the mails, for now there are so many separate and disconnected members or pieces that they are liable to and in very many instances are lost in such transmission and at post-offices where used. It is more easily adjusted for use and can be kept in repair at much less expense than any other stamp for the same use and purpose. Any other matter required to be printed upon envelopes, letters, &c., at any post-office may be done in the same way and manner by preparing type expressly therefor upon one cylinder to revolve in said stationary form *c c*.

Having thus set out the nature and the construction of my stamp aforesaid, I will now proceed to describe its operation, which is simple and easy to be understood. The cyl-

under *f* for the months revolves upon the shaft *D*, and is brought into any required position on a line with the printing-surface of the stationary type or form *c c*, and there remains for and during the month for which it is set or fixed, which, when the month is ended, is then moved forward for the next month in succession, and so the operation continues until the year is completed, when the same operation is again repeated. The cylinder *g* is moved forward one figure every ten days during any month or year. The cylinder *h* is moved forward one figure every day of the week, month, and year. The cylinder *i* is moved forward one figure every year during the term of ten years, when a new cylinder is put in its place to answer to the next ten successive years, and so on the operation continues without limitation. By the use of these cylinders as herein described any year, month, and day of the month of any year may be given and printed, while at the same time and operation the frank or postage stamp is cut and inked, thereby canceling the same, as aforesaid. When each cylinder is adjusted to its proper and desired place, it is there firmly held by turning the nut *E* or by the use of the blotter *J*, as aforesaid, which will then bring each cylinder against each and the side of one cylinder against the frame *B*, in the man-

ner and form as hereinbefore described. The impression is then made upon the envelope, letter, &c., by giving a downward and striking motion thereon, and so the operation continues for postmarking letters or for anything else desired by use of this stamp. This stamp may be made of any size and strength desired. Any part thereof can easily be replaced whenever for any cause it may be required.

Having thus set forth and described my invention, what I claim, and desire to secure by Letters Patent of the United States, is—

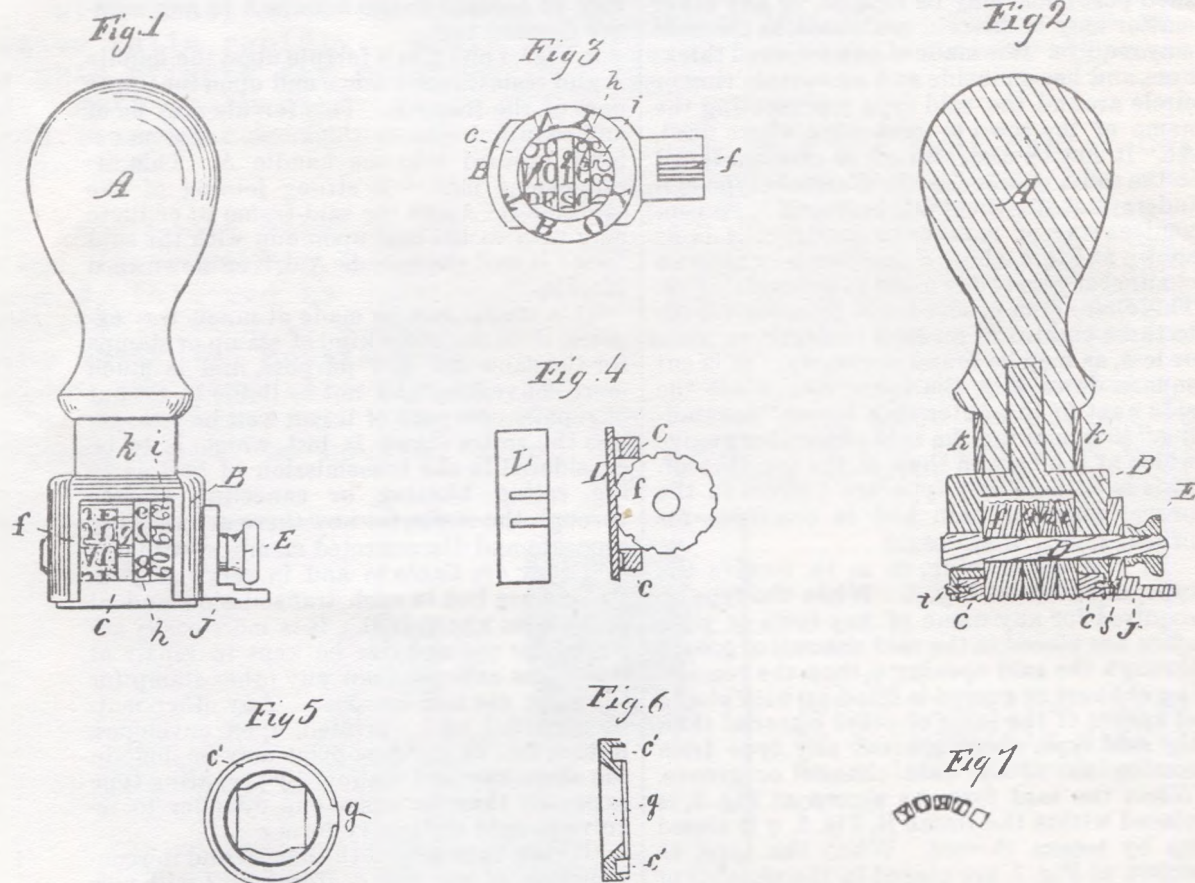
The blotter *J*, connected or attached to the main part of any post-office postmarking-stamp, for the purpose of cutting and inking, blotting, and effacing, so as to successfully cancel the frank or postage-stamp of any letter or any package at the same time and operation of marking or printing upon such letter or package the name of any post-office, the year, the month, and the day of the month, substantially as and for the purpose herein set forth.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name on this 3d day of May, 1859.

MARCUS P. NORTON.

Witnesses:

JNO. H. JOHNSON,
T. T. EVERETT.



MACHINE ERA PROCEDURAL CANCELLATION IRREGULARITIES

by Geoffrey Remond

There is a group of covers in wide circulation in dealer's boxes and collector's cast-off material which lies relatively undisturbed to this day. This category of covers can be one of the most interesting of cancellation specialties to collect, and yet perusal of the USCC membership list turned up not a single collector of procedural cancellation irregularities or what can be more commonly called mis-faced and mis-struck covers. They are the ignored fingerprints of the machine age in the post offices.

Without getting into the history of machine cancels in detail, I feel I can generalize by saying that the mid-1890's began to see the serious inroads and penetration of automated cancelling equipment into America's postal offices. It was this era that saw substantial requests for cancelling equipment from large city post offices, and the smaller ones would soon express their desire for automated equipment as well.

Prior to this era virtually every mailed card or cover was cancelled by hand and obviously it was tough to miss the stamps with a hand canceller directed by the human eye. With the machine came speed and an interesting set of procedural problems as well. An envelope too large or small might see the stamp go uncanceled requiring cancellation by hand. A mis-faced item would get cancelled by the machine on the back or in the wrong corner of the envelope again necessitating hand cancelling. Sure, the machines were faster and saved time, but sorting clerks now had to be on the lookout for uncanceled stamps that the machine had missed.

Failure to catch such errors after a cancelling run meant that downstream postal employees would be examining your office's incompetencies daily and much of your processed mail would be found in clear violation of postal laws and regulations requiring the cancelling of all stamps on all mail. Thus, the bonuses of the machinery were partly counterbalanced by extra review procedures that had to be put in place at virtually all post offices with such equipment. It is the corrected and uncorrected covers and cards from 1895 to present which provide a fertile collecting ground for cancellation specialists interested in not just imprint varieties but procedural matters. It is covers and cards that tell the whole story most completely and the used stamp is but a hollow remnant of the situation as it unfolded.

Illustrated with this article are five very common covers that demonstrate only a few of the dozens of problems created, but not always solved, by the mechanization of mail.

Figure 1 shows the most common variety of cancelling irregularity. This envelope was mis-faced in the stack resulting in a cancel by machine #2 in the lower left of the envelope at 6PM. This error in facing was caught immediately by the machine operator it would seem, because machine #2 makes a corrective cancel also at 6PM. If you look for these, watch those time entries. If the error had not been caught right away there might have been a correcting cancel at a later hour, and sometimes at a later hour on a second machine, spicing up interest levels considerably for the astute collector.

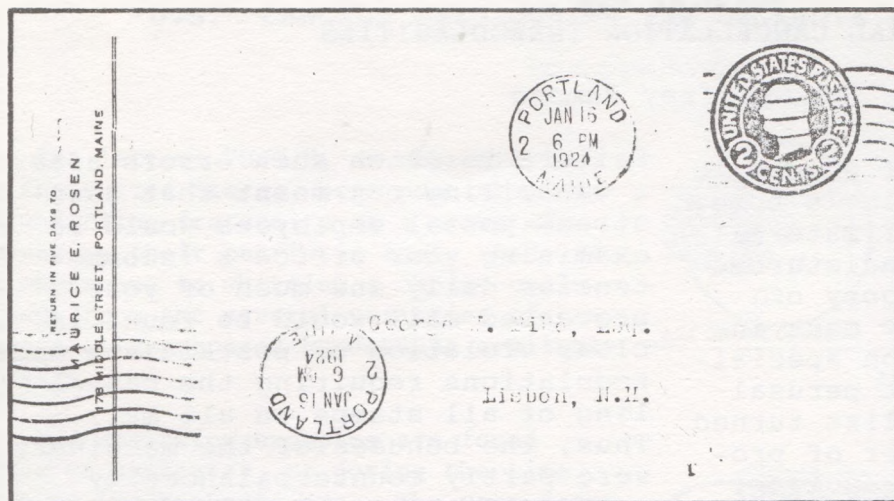


Figure 1. 1924 circular die cover used from Portland, Me. to Lisbon, NH.

The 1957 figure 2 cover shows another tactic. The cover was mis-faced on the machine at 6PM, and caught immediately, but the clerk did not rerun the cover, choosing a nearby handstamp for correcting the situation instead. The readers hopefully are beginning to see that these covers provide a tiny mail room mystery or glimpse into the procedures and habits of America's post offices through the analysis of their outputs.

The next two covers were faced correctly in the stacks of mail to be cancelled, yet procedural abnormalities occurred despite the proper placement and alignment of the envelopes. Fig.

3 shows a Christmas rush victim, twice processed properly by two different Springfield, Mass. machines, one with a slogan and one without. We can assume, but not prove, that a group of previously cancelled covers made its way into a stack of to-be-cancelled covers, resulting in wasteful double processing at Springfield, but a nice example of lack of coordination and communication in the post office processing areas. The third class Christmas card sized cover in figure 4 was also faced properly in the stack but the machine seems to have temporarily lost its timing/spacing capability, perhaps due to the odd sized Christmas items throwing it out of synchronization. The machine cancel em-

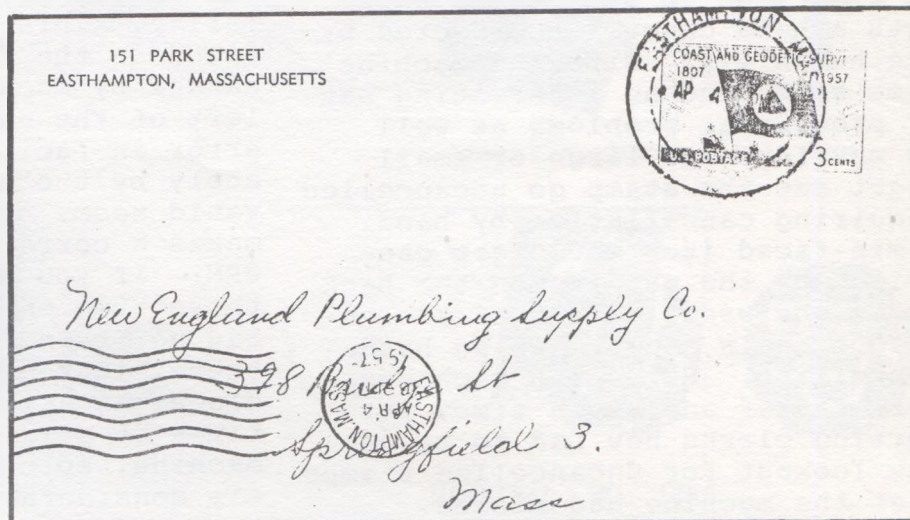


Figure 2. 1957 cover from Easthampton to Springfield, Mass.

Figure 3. 1980 cover
from Springfield,
Mass. to Lisbon, NH.

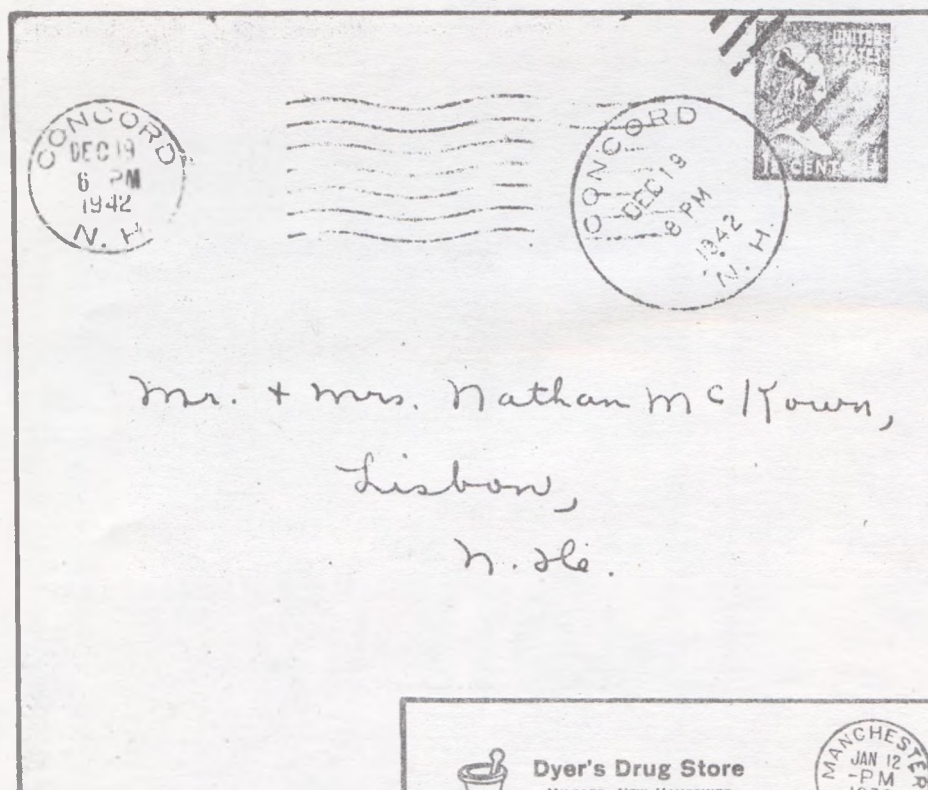
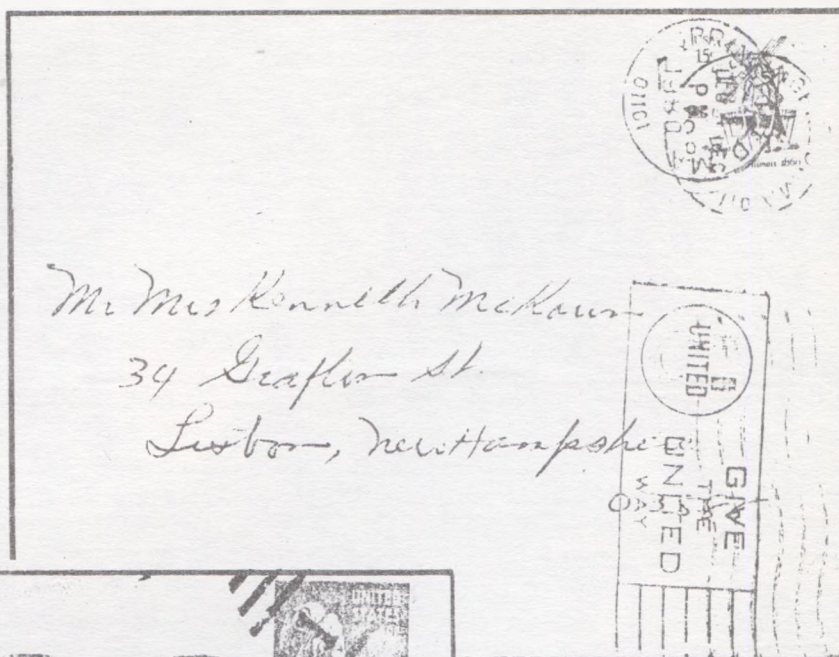
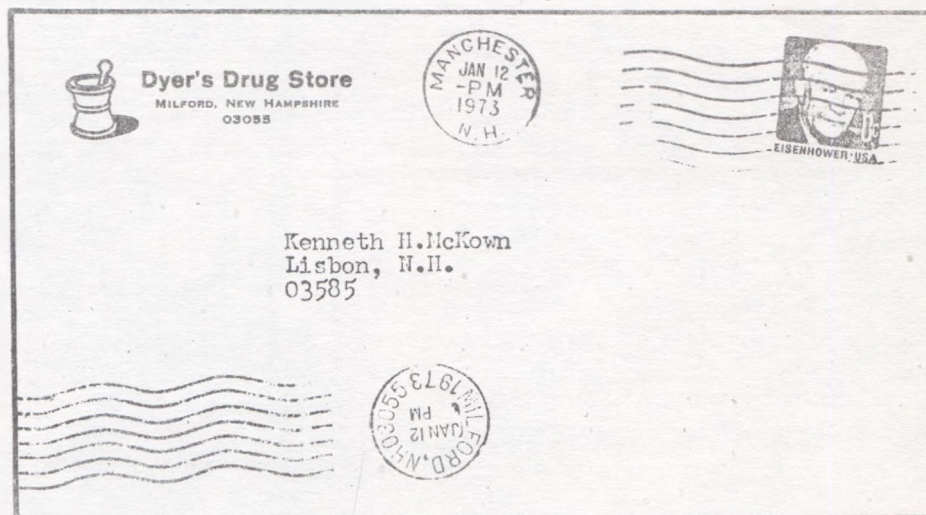


Figure 4. 1942 third
class mail cover from
Concord to Lisbon, NH.

Figure 5. 1973 cover
from Milford via Man-
chester to Lisbon, NH



placement did not reach the stamp leaving it uncanceled at 6PM. The error was caught, but not until later, when an 8PM duplex was applied to the uncanceled stamp.

Not all mis-struck and mis-faced covers are so common as the four shown so far. A collector would have to flip through a lot of bargain boxes to find many examples like that in figure 5. This is a Milford, N.H. mailing, mis-faced and not caught and corrected. It was sent out of Milford in clear violation of postal regulations with an uncanceled stamp. While enroute to Lisbon,

N.H. the cancelling error was discovered by an alert sorting clerk in Manchester, a large post office where the Milford bag being broken down and resorted. The clerk routed the envelope to a Manchester machine where their post office's marking was applied to correct the improper circumstance.

The readers might realize that quite an interesting display of such covers can be assembled at ~~very~~ little cost, and each has its own little story to unravel about what went wrong and how or if it was corrected.

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My Lady, My Lady, such fun
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Shall we retie them
Or shall we apply them
To stringing a necklace of some?

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