



# Cancellation Club NEWS

Vol. 23, No. 3, Whole No. 218, Winter 1996

## NEW YORK "FACES" ON BANKNOTE STAMPS

by  
Roger D. Curran

Very few killers used by the New York Post Office on first-class domestic mail during the 1870-1876 period would, I believe, be considered noteworthy fancy cancels. This differs considerably from the 1860's which produced a number of decidedly attractive killers, including some that are highly celebrated. Beginning at least by November 1872, New York began using, on some out-of-town domestic mail, killers that included a hand-carved number in the design. Letters in killers are also noted but to a much lesser extent and their use began in the 1860's. These letters and numbers are interesting but not really fancy. The other designs are basically very mundane rising occasionally to something as interesting as a star and only occasionally above that. In 1876, the hand-carved canceler era in New York on domestic mail gave way to manufactured metal ellipse cancelers.

The clerks who processed first-class mail for city delivery during the period in question used some higher quality geometrics than those canceling domestic out-of-town mail, but overall they were not really remarkable. Figure 1 illustrates what might be considered one of the "better" fancy cancels for each out-of-town and city delivery mail. And, of course, clerks processing city delivery and circular mail did occasionally use "New York Foreign Mail" and other comparable designs and at these times moved themselves up in the canceling world.

One of the fanciest cancels on domestic out-of-town mail is surely the "Devil's mask" (Figure 2)<sup>1</sup> which is common enough to be found in a number of collections. All of which brings us to the purpose of this article which is to report on a few other "faces" out there in the New York crowd.

Let's begin with an interesting cover that was in the Edward Knapp collection. In the 1941 sale of the Knapp collection, lot 1197 consisted of a cover described as follows:



Figure 1

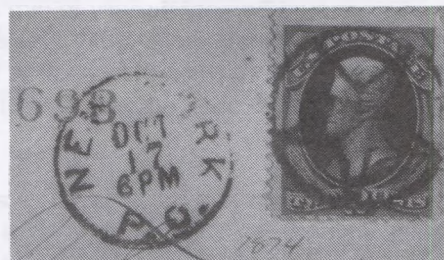


Figure 2

#158, 3c green, tied by grotesque "man's profile" (New York, P.O.), on an unusual Hotel advertising cover...

Figure 3 is an enlargement of the lot illustration which shows the cover and what presumably is a representation of the killer superimposed on the cover.<sup>2</sup>

(continued on p. 36)

Dear Reader,

Best wishes to all for a fine 1996! It will be very busy here for the first several months. Nancy and I are on the verge of moving after 35 years in the Washington, D.C. area. As of March 1, our new address will be 20 University Avenue, Lewisburg, PA 17837. Lewisburg is a relatively small town on the Susquehanna River about 60 miles north of Harrisburg in central Pennsylvania. It will be quite a change of pace but one which we welcome. Incidentally, Lewisburg is only 60 miles from State College where, of course, the APS is located.

Jim Cole's book on Banknote era cancellations was published by the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society and he plans to present updates through Classics Society publications. However, he has agreed to do so also through the NEWS. Historically, the U.S. Cancellation Club has been a continuing resource of information on cancellations and has added much to our knowledge in this field. I have no doubt that our readership is in an excellent position to continue that tradition through helping to supplement Jim's fine book. Therefore, please look through your collection, as I will mine, and send along good photocopies of cancellations that might be added. Tracings would be very helpful, if feasible, and please identify town of origin whenever possible. If the ink color is other than black, specify that. Information should be sent directly to Jim at 804-D Orchardglow Close, Fairfield, OH 45014. He expects to present updates not more often than once or twice a year, at most, so that a sufficient amount of information can be presented at one time.

One of the earlier features of the News was a report on exhibit medals won by USCC members. This should be reinstated and I am seeking a volunteer to help. The volunteer, who would have an up-to-date club roster, should be a Linn's subscriber because much of this data is reported in Linn's. Also, the person would be the contact point for club members if they wished to report directly. Once a quarter, the volunteer would pass the information on to me for publication. If you are available, please let me know. Incidentally, with the next issue, we plan to provide a new club roster to all members.

As you can tell, I'm experimenting with different formats for the News. I'm eager to enhance the overall presentation and your comments are sought. For example, what do you think of the typeface? I chose a smaller size to get more text per page. Can it be easily read? And, of course, clear illustrations are always a priority and represent an area that needs constant attention.

Finally, while looking for Banknote cancels to send Jim Cole, please remember to look for items of any era that might be presented in the NEWS. These long winter months provide just the time for pouring over stamp collections and we all know how pleasurable that can be!

Roger D. Curran

### **URGENT DUES REMINDER**

For those who have not yet sent in 1996 dues, please take a moment to do so now. We will work hard at presenting a continuous supply of worthwhile articles and don't want to lose any USCC members. Your interest and support are vital to our undertaking! Dues are payable at \$8.00 for domestic members and \$15.00 for overseas and Canada members and should be sent to Gene Schrier at the address below.

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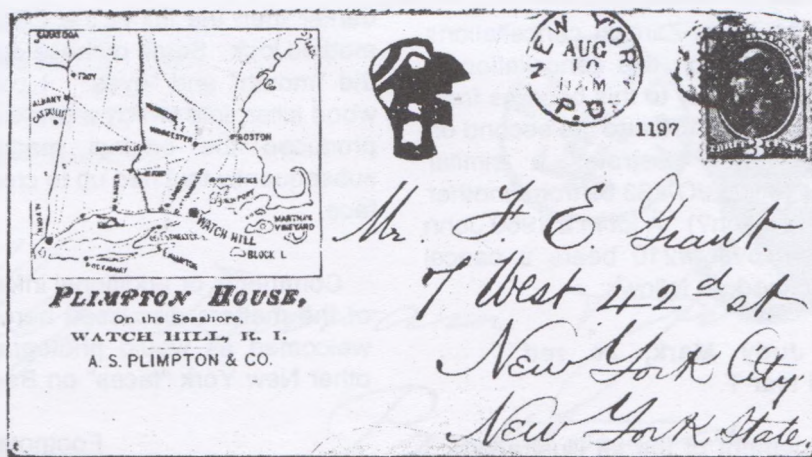


Figure 3

In a 1985 Frajola sale<sup>3</sup> were two postal cards described as follows:

**#UX3, 1c Brown** tied by large head fancy cancel, "New York P.O. Aug 10 6 P.M." cds, 1874, very fine.

**#UX3, 1c Brown** tied by large head fancy cancel, "New York P.O. Aug 10 4 P.M." cds, very fine.

Figure 4 is an enlarged copy of the lot illustrations. Please note that all three items are postmarked "**AUG 10**" with a CDS including "**P.O.**" at the bottom. (The "**P.O.**" in the design of a New York CDS is generally associated with first-class mail for city delivery only. (The postal card in Figure 4 partially addressed to "Mt. Carmel" may be an exception.) I'm confident that these all represent use of the same killer. The variations between the killers on the two cards are attributable, I believe, to variations in inking. Although the killer drawn in Figure 3 seems somewhat different from those on the cards and the illustration of the actual killer in Figure 3 is unclear, the variation is presumably attributable to the accuracy of the drawing/tracing (?), inking variations, strike variations or some combination thereof.

Awhile ago I received a catalog that listed the two cent brown (Scott #157) illustrated as Figure 5 which was offered "as is" meaning that its genuineness was not guaranteed. Certainly it is an odd thing and one can appreciate why the describer was suspicious. However, after examining the item I believe it to be genuine and a further example of the cancellation discussed above. The two cent postage fits the first-class city delivery rate at the time. Since then I have seen two additional two cent browns with the killer. Incidentally, the Knapp cover reflects a one cent overpayment, given that it is franked with a three cent adhesive and entered the mails in New York for city delivery.



Figure 5



Figure 4

Two illustrations in the Herst-Zareski cancellations book<sup>4</sup> were, I believe, based on this cancellation. Both are identified in a successor to this book as from New York - the first on a Scott #158 and the second on a #210.<sup>5</sup> Cole (page 167) illustrates a similar cancellation as JO-134. (Might JO-133 be from another strike of this same cancellation?) A lot in a 1960 John A. Fox sale<sup>6</sup> on an off-cover #210 bears a cancel similar to JO-134 described as follows:

**Punch and Judy Mark, 2c red brown, closed tear T.**

Figure 6 is an enlargement of the lot illustration. I find it remarkable that a cancel so similar to the 1874 New York profile would show up on a stamp that was not issued until late 1883. It would be wise, in my judgement for any potential purchaser of this item to secure an expert opinion first. By the time Scott #210 was issued, New York had been using standardized ellipse cancels for seven years and any fancy carved handstamp cancels on domestic or foreign mail from New York must be very scarce. Off-cover #210s with New York Foreign Mail cancels are, of course, known but unexplained. Perhaps a genuine example from 1874 provided inspiration to a faker who applied his creation to a #210. Subsequently, based on its similarity to known usages from New York, the strike on a #210 was possibly assumed to be and labeled as being from New York. This is, of course, only speculation.



Figure 6

Gary O'Neill kindly supplied a photocopy of a New York cover in his collection bearing a round face killer with two eyes and a nose but apparently no mouth. Figure 7 illustrates this cover. Cole lists this killer as JO-102 (page 166). It is surely an unusual item.

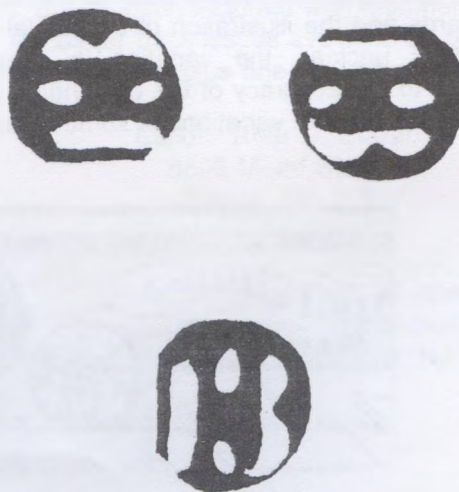
Next, illustrated as Figure 8 is a New York cancel that I assumed for several years was a stylized face. Does the double hump represent eyebrows or a moustache? Grudgingly, and perhaps more to the point, is it really a "13?" Alas, I think it is definitely a "13" although I must confess to having acquired it with the belief that it was a face. We really do have to guard against believing something is what we want it to be. Finally, in a similar vein, I noted in a dealer's stock the postal card illustrated in Figure 9. It certainly appears to be a "face" killer but a close inspection proved disappointing. The killer had areas that were darker than others (and

darker than the ink in the CDS) creating a somewhat mottled look. Some of these darker areas were around the "mouth" and "eyes." I concluded that a cork or wood killer, into which a two-digit number was carved, produced the original marking and that it was subsequently touched up to create the appearance of a face.

Comments or additional information pertinent to any of the matters discussed herein would be very much welcomed as would photographs or photocopies of other New York "faces" on Banknote stamps.

#### Footnotes

1. Cole, James M. Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894, p. 165, listing JO-90.
2. The Edward S. Knapp Collection, Part Two, Parke-Bernet Galleries, Inc., November 3/8, 1941, pp. 84-5.
3. Richard C. Frajola sale of June 15, 1985.
4. Michael Zareski, Fancy Cancellations on 19th Century United States Postage Stamps, 1951, Herman Herst, Jr., pp. 217, 219, listings 192 and 211.
5. Billigs Philatelic Handbook, Volume 33. Fancy Cancellations on Nineteenth Century United States Postage Stamps, 1972, Herman Herst, Jr., pp. 217, 219; listings 1488 and 1507.
6. John A. Fox sale of November 14/16, 1960, pp. 65-6.



(See Figure 8)

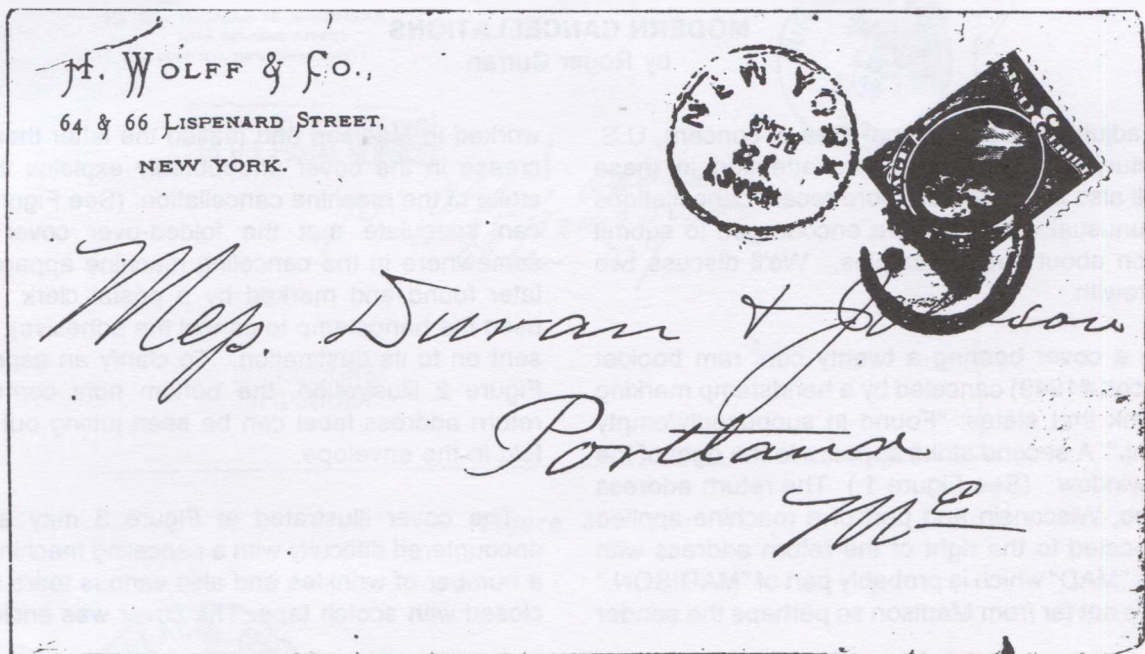


Figure 7

Figure 8

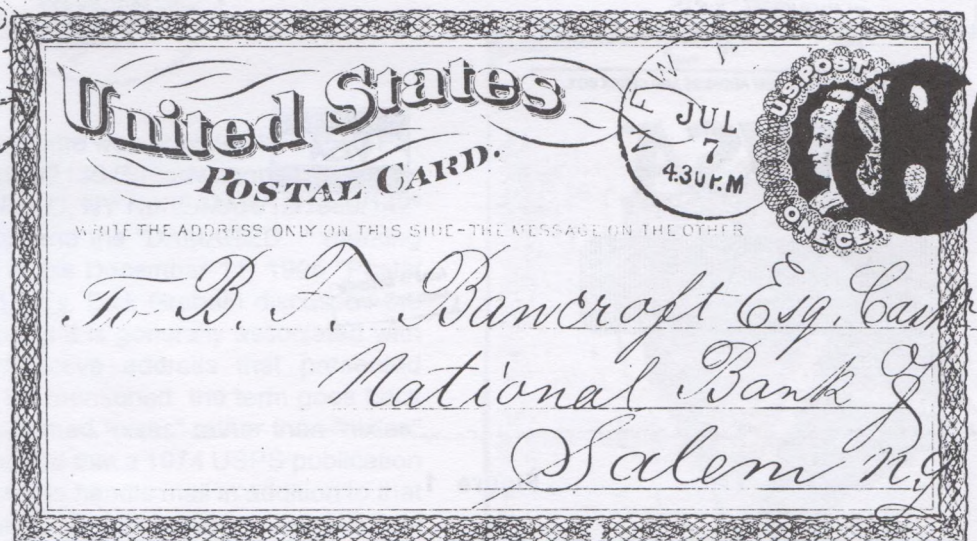
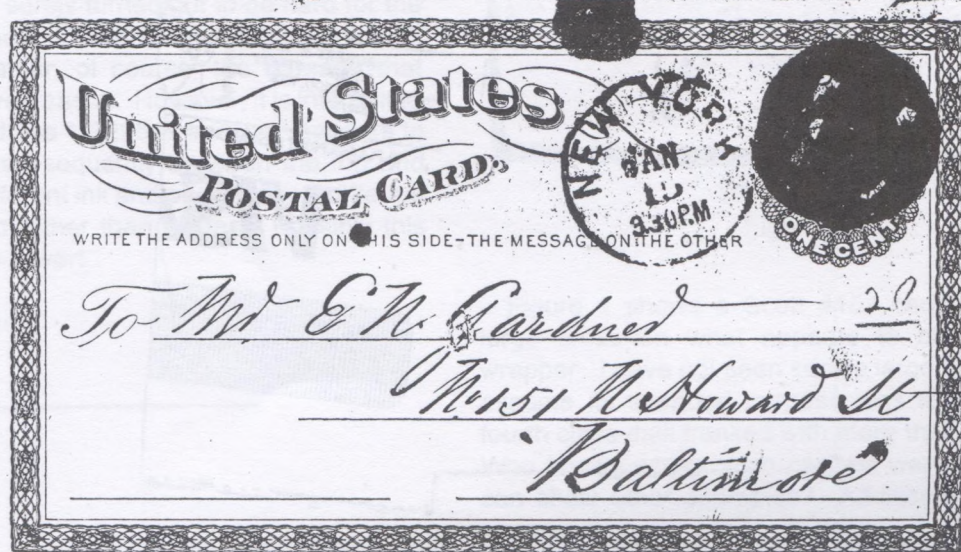


Figure 9



## MODERN CANCELLATIONS

by Roger Curran

As an adjunct to our principal area of concern, U.S. 19th century cancellations, some attention in these pages will also be placed on more recent cancellations that are unusual. Readers are encouraged to submit information about such examples. We'll discuss two items herewith.

First is a cover bearing a twenty cent ram booklet stamp (Scott #1949) canceled by a handstamp marking in violet ink that states: "Found in supposedly/empty equipment." A second strike appears to the right of the address window. (See Figure 1.) The return address is Baraboo, Wisconsin and part of a machine-applied CDS is located to the right of the return address with the letters "MAD" which is probably part of "MADISON." Baraboo is not far from Madison so perhaps the sender

worked in Madison and mailed the letter there. A big crease in the cover undoubtedly explains the partial strike of the machine cancellation. (See Figure 2.) We can speculate that the folded-over cover jammed somewhere in the canceling machine apparatus, was later found and marked by a postal clerk (who also used the handstamp to cancel the adhesive), and then sent on to its destination. To clarify an aspect of the Figure 2 illustration, the bottom right corner of the return address label can be seen jutting out from the fold in the envelope.

The cover illustrated at Figure 3 may also have encountered difficulty with a canceling machine. It has a number of wrinkles and also various tears that were closed with scotch tape. The cover was enclosed in a



Figure 1

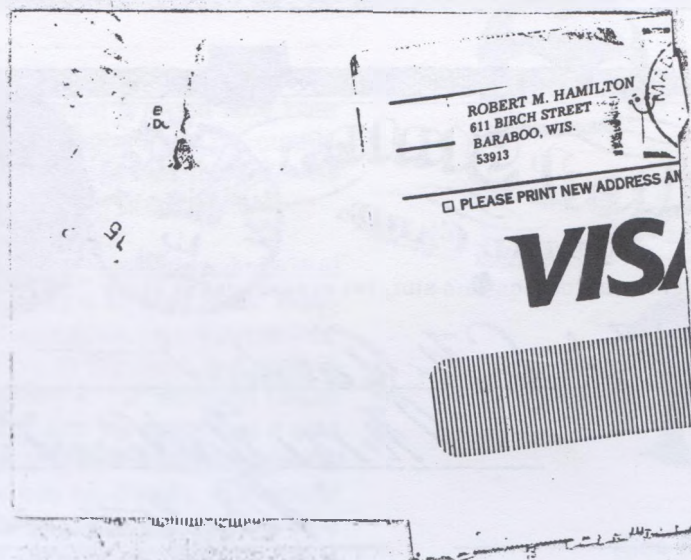


Figure 2

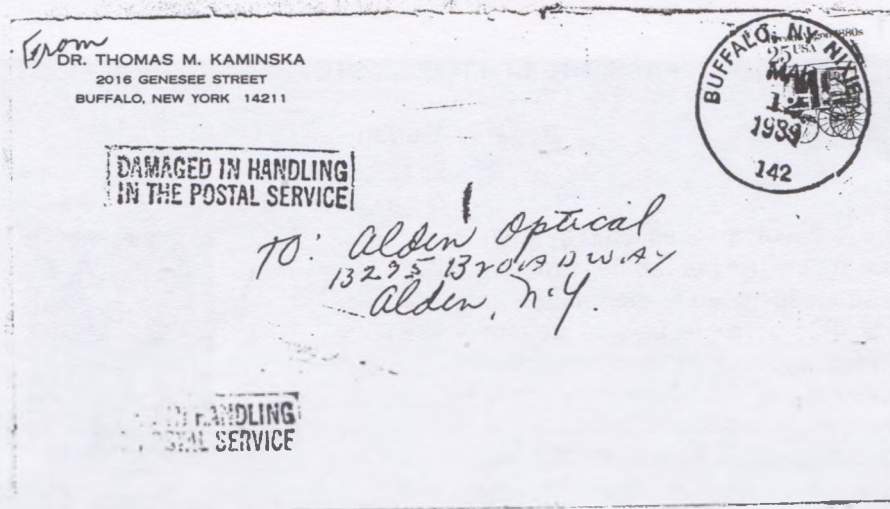


Figure 3



**LARGE CROSS**  
by Roger Curran



Figure 1

plastic pouchette I assume was provided by the USPS. The adhesive, a Scott #2136 (Breadwagon 1880's) was canceled by a "BUFFALO, NY NIXIE/MAR/12/1989/142" CDS. Both the CDS and the "DAMAGED..." marking are in a violet ink. In his December 11, 1995 "Postal History" column in Linn's, Dick Graham discusses the term "nixie" and reports it is generally associated with mail that has a defective address that presented delivery problems. He mentioned the term goes back to the 19th century, termed "nixes" rather than "nixies" at that time, and reported that a 1974 USPS publication defined a nixie as hard to handle mail in addition to that with address problems. But he stated a later issue of the publication dropped the reference to hard to handle. The Figure 3 cover surely turned out to be hard for the USPS to handle and the most obvious problem wasn't the address but rather, of course, the damage that occurred for whatever reason. However, it is interesting to note that the address "13295 Broadway" appears to have been added subsequently between the top and bottom lines in a different ink and perhaps by a different hand, albeit printed rather than written. Possibly this was a two-problem cover!

Comment is invited.

Figure 1 shows a Scott #157 canceled by a very large cross on what appears to be a piece of a wrapper. I have not seen such a large killer before and assume its intended purpose was to cancel third or fourth class mail franked with more than one adhesive. Who knows where such cancels were used and who can show other examples? Additional information is eagerly sought.

## PASS THE BOTTLE ..... STOPPER

by  
Roger D. Curran

One of the quaint cancellation devices used by 19th century post offices was the rubber bottle stopper. They can be recognized as such due to the number in the center such as "2 1/2" which is said to denote stopper size and always appears in reverse in the cancellation. In the case of the "3", however, which is probably the most common number encountered, the reverse image, which appears rather like an "E," will become a "3" again when positioned upside down. Therefore, we see "3s" that don't appear to be reversed.

Just how many different size numbers can be located is an interesting question. Clyde Jennings reported in the Spring 1988 Cancellation Club News the following numbers: 2, 2 1/2, 3, 4, 5 1/2 and "6." Edward Willard reported a "3 1/2" in his book on Scott #210.<sup>1</sup>

Usually, as one would expect, these cancellations are found in black ink. Blue and magenta, at least, have also been noted. Indeed, a well-known blue Chicago cancellation was apparently fashioned from a stopper. Figure 1 illustrates the cancel as presented by Richard Russell in the March 1963 Cancellation Club News. Figure 2 shows a variation, struck in the distinctive Chicago blue ink, with a horizontal bar cut into the stopper below the "3." It may be a little surprising to think of carving rubber stoppers but such examples are not rare. Figure 3 illustrates several examples, the first two on #210 and the third on #213. Figure 4 shows radical carving to yield an "E."



Figure 1



Figure 2

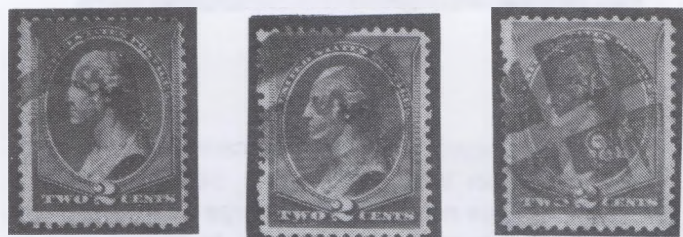


Figure 3



Figure 4

It is speculated that these cancels were frequently the result of a pharmacy and post office being under one roof and one management in small country towns. This is probably true in many cases. But how then to explain uses in Chicago or the nation's largest post office? Figure 5 shows a size "2" stopper used as a killer by the NYPO. I assume that the NYPO was employing at that time (1874 by the dateline) handstamps that duplexed a CDS with a ring attached to the handle into which were usually fitted wood or cork killers. However, in this case a rubber stopper was inserted.

Just recently I became aware of a second example of this NYC "2" on a cover, also dated November 4, in the collection of John Donnes. However, the strike on his cover shows a negative "12" (see tracing in Figure 6), the vague outlines of which I can now see in the Figure 5 killer but would have never recognized before. Perhaps this killer was used very briefly and then taken out of service since it confused a "2" with the "12."

The latest usage of a stopper killer that I have noted is the Scott #267 illustrated in Figure 7. This was a size "2" stopper but obviously smaller than the NYPO "2." Also present in the Figure 7 killer is apparently an "E8." What this means I have no idea.

Comments or additional information would be very much welcomed as would photographs or clear photocopies of interesting examples.

1. Willard, Edward L. The United States Two Cent Red Brown of 1883-1887, vol. 2, H.L. Lindquist Publications, Inc., 1970, pp. 25, 6.

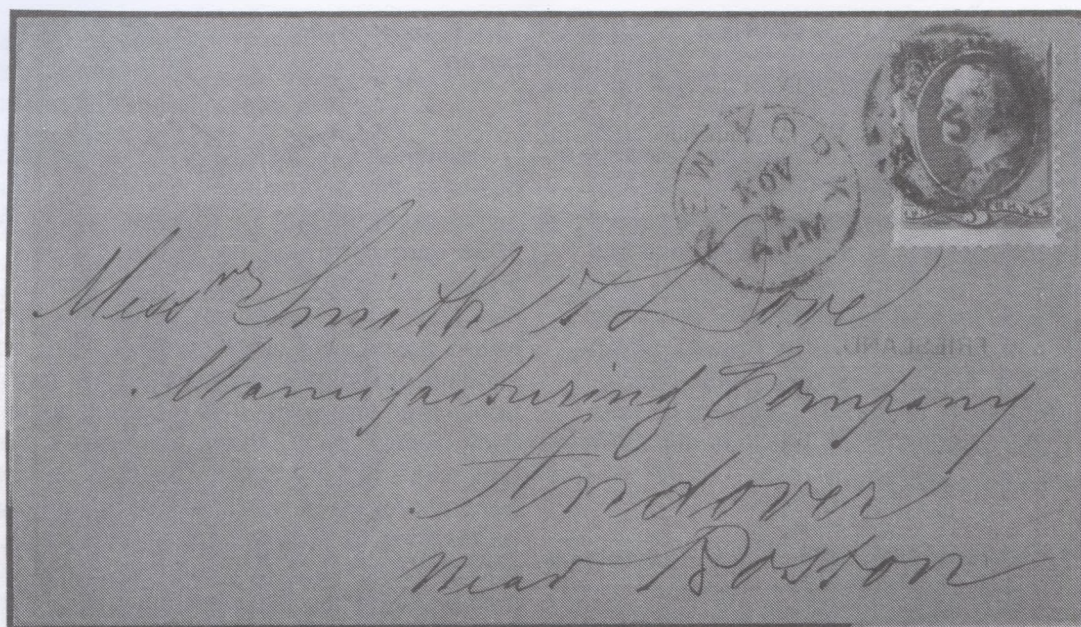


Figure 5

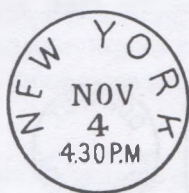


Figure 6



Figure 7

#### Louisville Grid Article - Additional Information

The Fall 1995 NEWS included an article about unusual uses of a canceling grid on two covers with Louisville, Kentucky "ADVERTISED" markings. There are a couple of points I want to add. First, in 1994 correspondence with Louis Cohen, author of the Louisville monograph cited previously, he advised me of three additional covers bearing the grid and Louisville "ADVERTISED" markings. One cover was postmarked in August 1865.

Second, U.S. Postal Markings, 1851-1861 by Tom Alexander reports the use of a small star with "ADVERTISED" markings by Lowell, Mass. and Figure 1 reproduces an illustration from page 247. A photo of a cover bearing these markings may be found on page 53 of Siegel's Piller sale catalog of March 25, 1993. Possibly the star served a purpose similar to the Louisville grid.



Figure 1

# USING A "CORRECT" CANCELLATION by Roger Curran

Every once in a while one notes a stamp canceled by a marking containing the word "CORRECT." Those I have seen are on Banknotes and an example is shown as Figure 1. Advertisements of the period sometimes offered "CORRECT" handstamps along with handstamps designed for postmarking mail or canceling stamps. A portion of an ad is shown as Figure 2 which was illustrated more fully in the May 1968 NEWS. Please note markings 11, 14 and 37. Marking 37 was reported on an off-cover stamp in the January 1953 U.S. Cancellation Club Quarterly.



Figure 1

I assumed the "CORRECT" marking was for use on business forms processed by postmasters but hadn't given much thought as to what specific forms. The 1888 card illustrated as Figure 3 points toward the answer. At the time, post offices receiving registered mail from other post offices apparently also received a return postal card (considered a "Bill") on which the sending postmaster enumerated the registered items transmitted therewith. The receiving postmaster would verify receipt of the items enumerated and complete and return the card to the sending postmaster. This general procedure was specified in the May 1855 POD Instructions to Postmasters and Notice to the Public, effective July 1, 1855 implementing the Act of Congress that provided for the registration of valuable letters. One section of the Instructions is quoted herewith<sup>1</sup>.

"6. On the receipt at a distributing office, of registered letters for distribution, the clerk who opens and distributes the mail, will apply to the

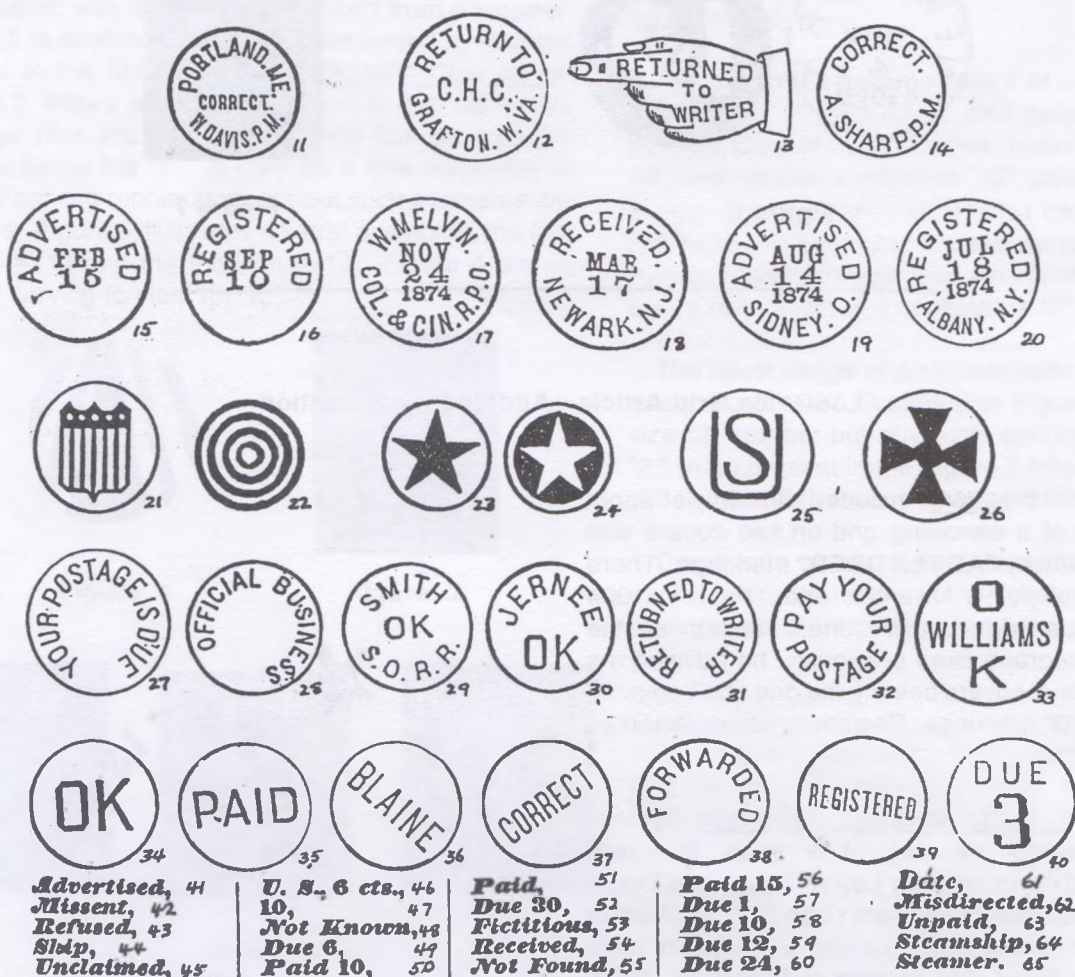


Figure 2

1 Barker, J. David. *The Postal History of Indiana*, Volume II, Leonard H. Hartmann, Louisville, KY., p. 832

**Unusual Ellipse Containing a Negative Letter**  
by Roger D. Curran



Figure 1

In The American Philatelist for May 1935, Gilbert M. Burr illustrated on page 398 a cancellation shown here as Figure 1. About it he stated:

"The colorless 'B' shown... is another unusual item. I have a letter 'H' that is the same type, both of which are on 3c greens, but I do not know where they were used."



Figure 2

Dr. Robert S. deWasserman illustrated in the March 1958 Cancellation Club News the cancellation shown here as Figure 2 and commented:

"From the colourless letters I have a 'B' on a 6c 1875 (sic) and 'E' and 'W'... on 184s, and an 'N' on a 182, but the origin is in each case unknown."

I have noted the following items which are all also off-cover.

1. Three examples of a "B", one on a #158 and two on #184. The #158 example and one of the #184s closely resemble the Figure 1 illustration. The other #184 shows a thinner lined "B" possessing a slightly crude quality. The ellipse portion and black circle surrounding the "B", however, appear clearly to be machine made.
2. An "E" on a #178.
3. A "G" on a #147. (late usage of stamp?)
4. An "H" on a #178 and a #184.
5. An "N" on a #182 and on a #158.
6. An "S" on a #178. (The "S" is a bit crude in that the bottom loop is somewhat flat in comparison with the top loop.)



Figure 3

7. A "W" on a #156.
8. An unidentified figure on a #184 (See Figure 3.)

The "G" and particularly the "S" suggest that the ellipses may not have been duplexed because no CDS shows to the left of the ellipse. The other strikes listed above permit very little or no judgement on this point.

These ellipses are interesting to me because I know of no other types where a manufactured ellipse contains a negative letter or number, although they may well exist. (Collectors have noted what appear to be hand carved examples such as the "B" illustrated in Figure 4. This particular cancel is attributed to Brooklyn,



Figure 4

N.Y.) In a 1992 Kukstis Auctions sale, a cover appeared which is illustrated as Figure 5 bearing an apparently unduplexed ellipse cancellation with a negative "S" in the center with the same rather flat bottom loop mentioned above. There is a "NEW HAVEN CONN" CDS with a "FEB 1?" date. A February 16 New York postmark is also present and from the Capetown and Wellington markings we can determine the year date to be 1878. The cover bears a desirable destination and I wonder if the purchaser was interested in the destination, the cancel, the other markings, or perhaps some combination thereof. It appears that the cover was mailed in New Haven and the stamp canceled there. However, since the killer appears to be unduplexed, I would like to see a confirming example.

Recently, the stamp identified in Figure 6 came to my attention. The ellipse appears to have a solid center with the same thin negative ring between the center

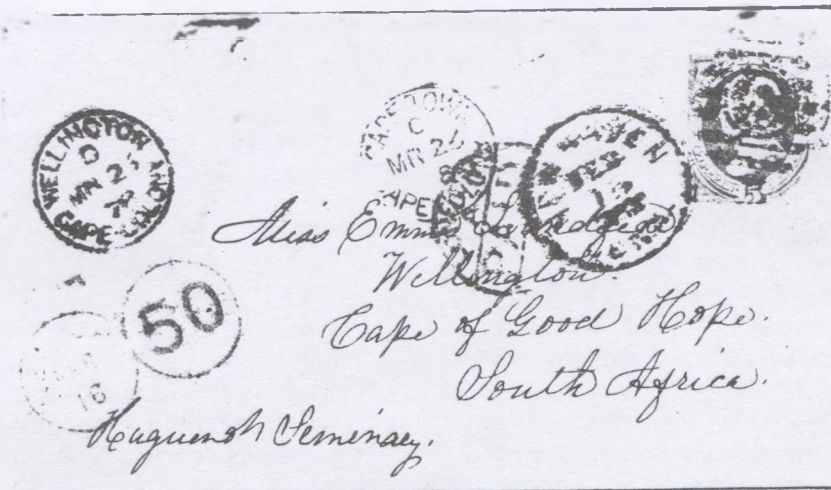


Figure 5



Figure 6

cancellation practices generally during the middle and latter part of the 1870s would be welcomed. For example, what negative letters are known from these two post offices and for what periods of time? Assistance on this subject would be very much appreciated.

and the outer ring as is characteristic of the other noted examples. Whatever negative letter or number may have been in the center is indistinguishable in this strike. However, the position of what is presumed to be the CDS (bottom of stamp) in relation to the ellipse killer seems to be the same as that in Figure 5. Perhaps it was indeed a duplex handstamp producing a CDS with an askew ellipse.

After this article was written, Jim Cole's book on Banknote era cancellations appeared and the tracings depicted in Figure 7 were presented. The "B" was reported on 1879 issue stamps and attributed to New Brunswick, N.J. There was no identification as to stamp issue or post office of origin for the "W" item.

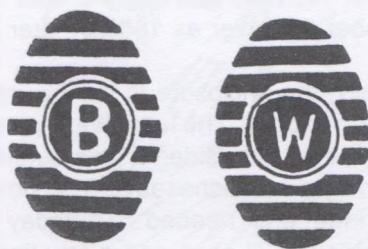


Figure 7

Readers are encouraged to report additional examples of this type of ellipse on or off cover and any additional citations in the literature about it. Also, information on New Haven and New Brunswick

### Late Usages of New York Square Grid?

by Roger D. Curran

The New York square grid was introduced in November 1846 to cancel the New York Postmaster's Provisional. It was also used by the NYPO as the primary canceler of 1847 issue stamps. In July 1851 the "13-bar" grid was replaced by an 11-bar grid of the same basic design. In August, the NYPO began canceling stamps with the townmark and uses of the grid in September and later are scarce. I have seen none after December 1851.

No uses, that is, unless the killer on the 1853 cover in Figure 1 qualifies. Both the CDS and grid are black. I have examined this item and am reasonably confident that the killer used is the 11-bar grid. For comparison purposes, a clear strike of this grid, dated 8/1/(51), is illustrated in Figure 2. I am aware of two other covers bearing the N. York and N. Haven R.R. CDS combined with what appears to be the 11-bar grid canceling the stamp. One example, that was in the collection of Charles L. Towle, is dated 2/7/(53) and the other, which appeared in the 1977 Kelleher sale of the William Wyer collection, is dated November 17. In each case the CDS is red and the grid is black.

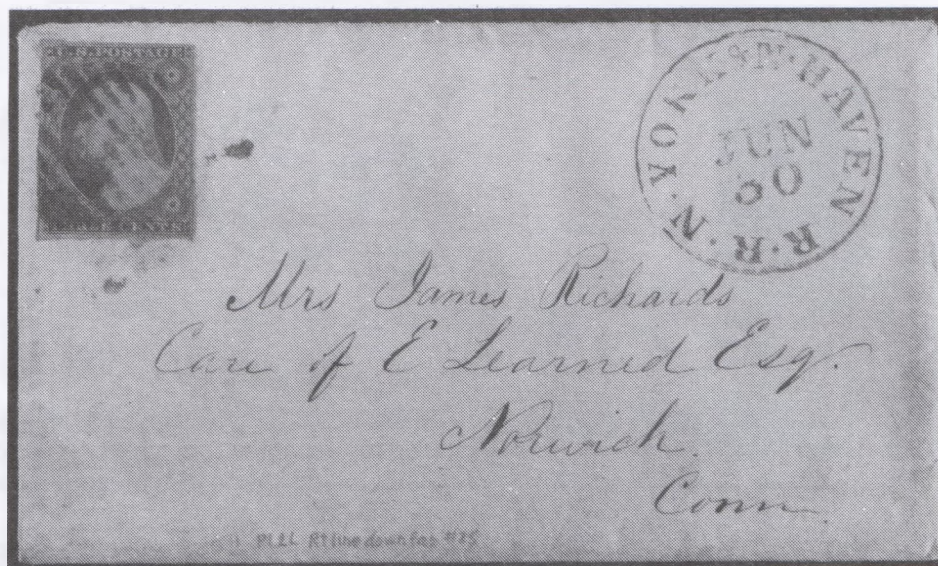


Figure 1

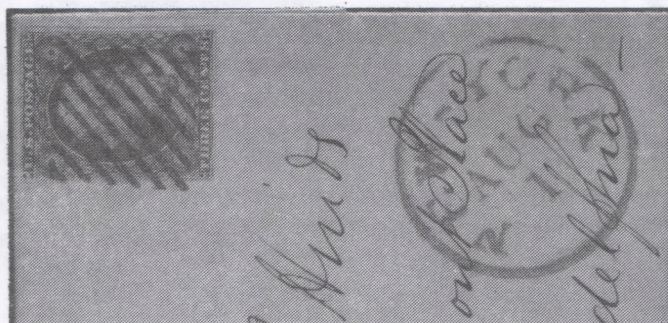


Figure 2

Route agents were under the supervision of a post office at one end or the other of the route and it seems reasonable that at least one route agent for this line was under the supervision of the NYPO. One can speculate that at some point the grid was turned over to an agent. Incidentally, the N. York and N. Haven CDS is known as a canceler of adhesive stamps and one may wonder why a route agent, under the supervision of the NYPO (if that is true), would use a grid when the NYPO clerks were in 1852 and beyond using the New York CDS to cancel adhesives virtually without exception on domestic mail. Nonetheless, the killer on the Figure 1 cover, as mentioned above, does appear to be the 11-bar grid, especially when holding the cover at arm's length and studying the overall effect. (This doesn't sound especially precise, does it?)

I wonder if the November 17 cover is 1852. Does the fact that the CDS is red, like that of the 2/7/(53) cover, imply 1852 usage with a switch to black CDS ink later in 1853? Written on the back of the Figure 1 cover is the following: "Ashbrook notes 'scarcer' in black." I have not been able to locate this reference

and thus do not know if Ashbrook discusses dates of usages of red and black inks. There is a break in the CDS rim in the Figure 1 cover just to the left of the "N" in "N. York." The November 17 cover also shows the break and it appears to be virtually the same. If it could be shown that some additional feature of the CDS changed as a result of damage or wear from June 30 to November 17, 1853 that might enable us to rule out the November 17 cover as 1853 or later.

Incidentally, the enclosure to the Figure 1 cover has an interesting aspect. The letter was apparently written one day and then set aside. It was datelined June 29, 1853 which was a Wednesday. The next day a note was appended and headed "Thursday morning." It began as follows: "I shall add a few lines, close and take to the 7 o'clock train..." Apparently, the dutiful son, who was writing his mother, wanted to make up for time lost in not mailing the letter Wednesday.

Comments and additional information are invited.

## More on New York "Ocean Mail" Postmarks

In the last NEWS, I discussed the scarce red "ocean mail" postmark. Examples in black are common but Calvet Hahn points out that even they are rare on stampless mail and he shares with NEWS readers the following information about two covers.

The Figure 1 cover, franked by an ex-Senator, has a June 20th (1855) "ocean mail" cds in black and is addressed to San Jose, California. It also bears the red FREE over cds (32mm size). It went out from New York on the SS Illinois that was used from 1851 until sold to the War Department in 1865. After the letter crossed the Isthmus, it was carried on the John L. Stevens launched at NYC in 1852 and abandoned in 1879. The Panama R.R. was completed in late January 1855.

Figure 2 is a letter from Germany that began in Coeln on July 15, 1856 and was prepaid to Shaw's Flat, Upper California with the 30 cent Prussian Closed

Mail rate. It bears the red AACHEN PAID 25 of July 16th and the N. YORK 30 AM. PKT./ PAID of August 12 to show its passage on the Havre liner Argo, departing Havre July 30 and Southampton the same day, arriving in NYC on August 11. It was stamped with an unusual predated black "ocean mail" cds of August 11 to go in 1856 on the George Law to Panama. This vessel, launched in 1853, foundered at sea on September 12, 1857 with a loss of 423 lives. The letter crossed on the Panama R.R. and was picked up at Panama by the Pacific Mails Sonora which had first arrived May 5, 1854 on the West Coast. The Sonora lasted on the Panama/SF run until May 1863. She made one trip with troops to Panama in 1865 and in 1868 was dismantled and broken up at Sausalito.

Thanks to Calvet for this report.

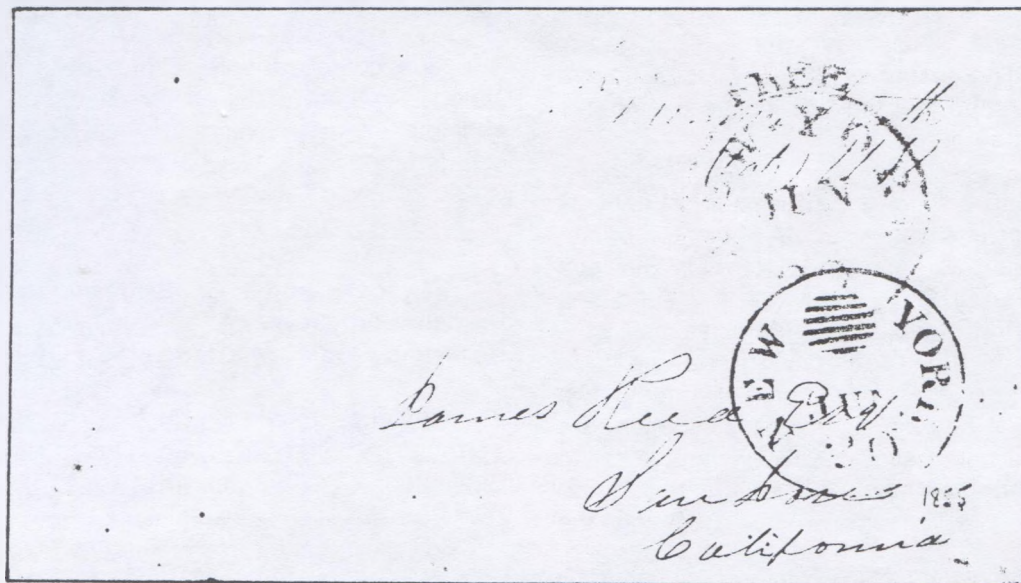


Figure 1

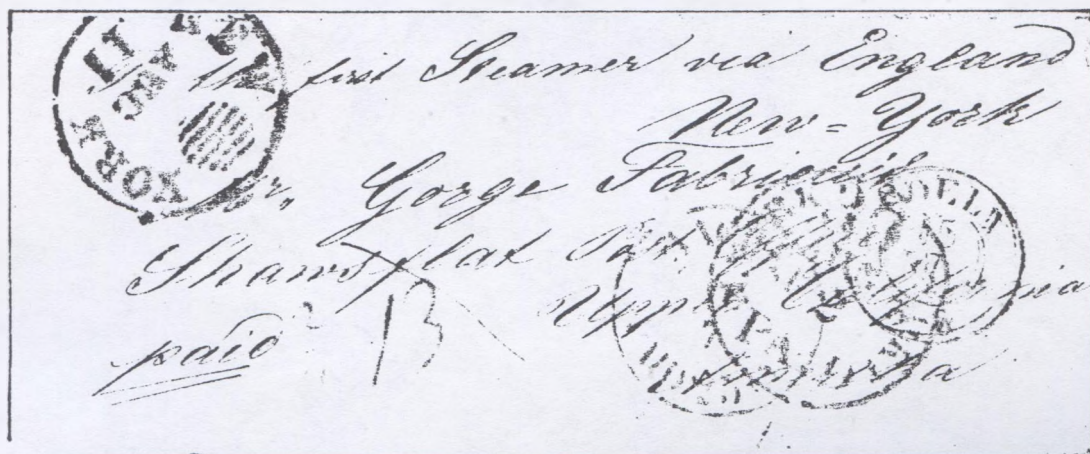


Figure 2

## Aspects of Concern

by

Roger D. Curran

The cover illustrated in Figure 1 appeared on the auction market in 1995. When the successful bidder received the item, an examination was undertaken that aroused concern. This led to a request for an opinion from the Philatelic Foundation (PF). Included with the request was a "pros and cons" statement making several, mostly "cons," observations. With the thought that the statement may be of interest to readers of the News, it is provided below in a slightly modified and expanded form.

(1) Under magnification, faint horizontal lines appear to exist at about Mr. Franklin's hairline, across the forehead and just under the eye on the right that could well be lightened manuscript cancel lines.

(2) The vertical crease in the stamp does not have a convincing counterpart on the cover.

(3) Slawson et al in The Postal History of Vermont<sup>1</sup> report that only one example of a large 8-bar grid is known from Burlington out of 26 1847-issue covers listed. It is assumed that the one known example is the cover submitted herewith.

(4) The CDS with a "5" was designed for stampless mail and CDS designs were used by Burlington during this period without rate numerals. However, Slawson et al illustrate the CDS type used on the submitted cover and state that in addition to stampless mail, it "... was also used on the 1847 issue of stamps." In Johnstone's Postal History of Burlington, Vermont<sup>2</sup>, two Burlington covers bearing 1847 issue stamps are illustrated and in both cases a CDS without a rating numeral was used - to Malone, NY and Cleveland, the latter on 11/8/50. Incidentally, the CDS on the

submitted cover does not compare well with the CDS designs illustrated and described in Johnstone. It appears to be a hybrid of two - the design of one but with a diameter more nearly that of another similar but different design. However, the CDS on the submitted cover appears genuine and the diameter is the same as that in the Slawson illustration.

(5) The ink colors of the CDS and grid appear identical although, under magnification, one notes some bits and strands of a darker red in the grid that are not visible in the CDS.

(6) The placement of the stamp in the middle of the cover is unusual but surely not unique. This cover without the stamp and killer but with the "5" CDS (for 5 cents due, of course), placed where it is, is very easy to visualize as a genuine usage. The under 300 miles rate of five cents would apply to single letters going from Burlington to Orange, Massachusetts.

In due course, the PF returned its opinion which stated "... we are of the opinion that: the stamp did not originate on this cover and the tying cancellation is counterfeit."

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1 Slawson, George C.; Bingham, Arthur W.; and Drenan, Sprague W., The Postal History of Vermont, Collectors Club, New York, 1969, p. 162

2 Johnstone, Donald B., Postal History of Burlington, Vermont/The First 100 Years, Queen City Press, Inc., Burlington, VT, 1992, pp. 46, 49.

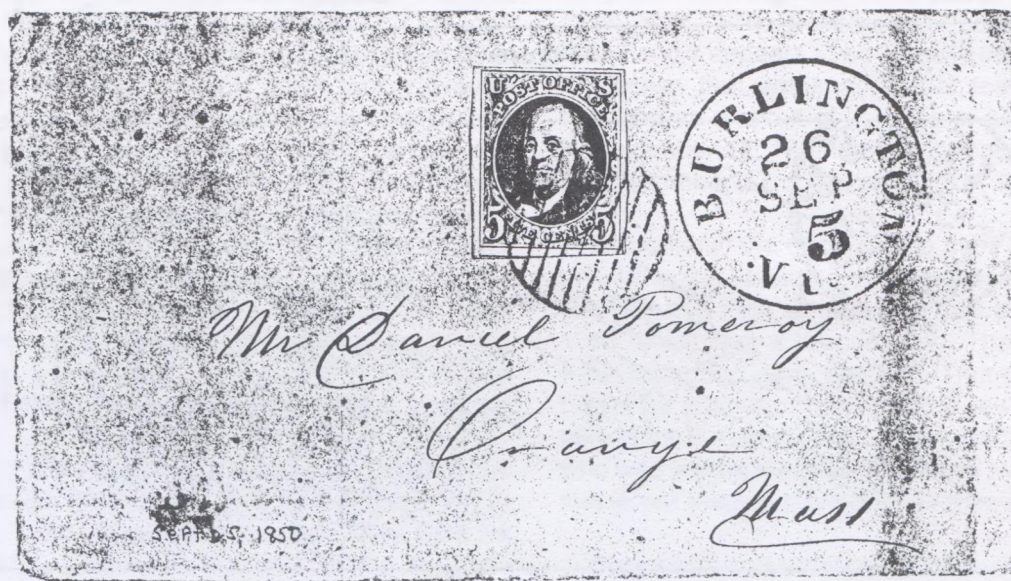


Figure 1