



# Cancellation Club NEWS

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## Fancy Cancel Pricing - What and Why

by Roger Rhoads

Not long ago I got into a discussion as to why authors put value codes (e.g. I, II, etc.) on cancellations and not use real dollars. That's fairly easy to answer in that the dollar value may only be current for a relatively short time while the book is expected to be relevant for years to come. But what is a newcomer to cancel collecting to use for price comparisons? I'd like to try to provide some answers.

First of all, the collector needs experience, and one way to get it without accumulating years of shows, bourses and mail auctions is to use the expertise of others. That is, talk to other experienced collectors. Since we are so far flung about these United States and beyond, sometimes that's not very practical.

The other way is to spend a little money and a lot of time buying and understanding a variety of books on the subject. At the end of this article I've listed basic references that will be of value to many collectors, even if the author's era does not exactly match your collecting interests. Though most of them are out of print, they should be readily available from various philatelic literature dealers.

For example, I collect the early Banknote era of 1870-76, but I also own a copy of *Simpson's US Postal Markings, 1851-61* because some of the town markings and cancels of that time were still being used in later years.

But with all your book reading you will find few if any prices quoted, just rarity, desirability and value ratings. Using my experience (and that of several others who have reviewed this article, especially your editor), let me try to take some of the mystery out of pricing.

First of all, I used the word "desirability" in conjunction with "value". The bottom line is that collectors will pay more for examples of cancels that appeal to them due to their singular appearance, by virtue of articles and books having been written about them or because the cancel falls within their high priority area of collecting. Though rarity certainly has an effect on prices, there are a number of cancels that are somewhat readily available, but due to their appearance or perceived collectability command higher than average prices.

Waterbury, CT is a good example. Collectors formed many prize winning exhibits of cancels from this city even before Paul Rohloff's book. Undoubtedly the most famous philatelic examples of the whittler's art are those many intricate and lovely designs carved by John W. Hill. The auction prices realized for particularly good strikes - especially on-cover - are sometimes breathtaking. A "Running Chicken" canceled cover held the record for highest

price at auction for any US cover for some period of years. There is an aura to the name "Waterbury" that extends far beyond truly singular designs to other rather unremarkable ones which were mostly produced in the later years (1870-1880s). This keeps prices considerably higher than those for comparable cancels from other post offices. The name Waterbury means a lot!

Jim Cole in his book *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era, 1870-1894* uses Roman numeral desirability codes I, II and III along with + and -. A rating of III meaning "quite rare and/or with strong demand". He specifically mentions that these "ratings are for well struck and centered cancels, using the most common values, on off cover stamps. The same cancel on-cover will invariably be valued higher,---" (Cole's emphasis). Cole's comment should be given careful consideration as there are tremendous variations in the quality and completeness of strikes. In other words, a bold cancel rated a I used on a common Banknote stamp will probably be priced at \$1-10. Expect to spend \$5-25 or higher on a well-preserved cover with a similar strike.

However, there are many other factors to consider. Is there only enough strike for identification purposes? Is the killer quite faded or very distinct? Is it in a color and on a stamp that allows good contrast? A light blue killer on a light blue stamp may be of less value than a more common black killer of similar design on the same stamp simply because it "shows" well.

On the subject of color, even though a blue cancel is quite attractive, it is by no means scarce. Over 80% of the killers in my collection are black with 14% being blue. That means other colors such as red, magenta, purple and violet are scarce with brown, green and yellow quite rare. Therefore a true brown cancel on a brown Banknote on-cover will command a good price, probably \$100 or more, regardless of the basic value of the stamp and even though the color contrast may be quite poor.

Of course, the stamp itself has something to do with the asking price. Expect to pay a premium over that of the basic stamp for a good killer. As for the stamp, is it attractive, fresh, bright, not obviously damaged, and well-centered? If so, the price will be higher. Cancel collectors generally accept small stamp faults (e.g. thins, small tears, minor perf problems, poor centering, etc.), but those that affect the overall appearance will lower the value. The

(Continued on p. 149)

Dear Reader,

## The U.S. Cancellation Club News

Many thanks to Roger Rhoads for his slide presentation on the first U.S. postal cards (UX-1 and 3) at the USCC seminar at the National Philadelphia Show September 27. It was very interesting to see the many examples of unusual usages and cancellations Roger illustrated and discussed. The seminar was followed by the USCC annual meeting attended by eight club members including all club officers. As indicated previously, the main item on the agenda was consideration of a proposed updating of Club bylaws which, after discussion, passed unanimously. Other matters consisted primarily of questions of Club insurance and incorporation, a recommended dues increase, continued assignment of membership numbers, USCC exhibit awards, and establishment of a USCC auction. Of these latter issues, only the dues increase question was decided. We will, of course, keep you posted on other developments as they occur. Club members wishing copies of the newly revised bylaws and/or minutes of the annual meeting should write to Mr. Rhoads at the address on the masthead.

I'm delighted to announce that in October we filled the vacancy for U.S.C.C. second vice president. Carl Stieg agreed to serve and has already participated our most recent telephone conference call and is helping to develop plans to restructure the USCC awards program. By way of introducing Carl, the following brief resume is provided:

Carl retired after 39 years in the United States Air Force in both military and civilian capacities and a brief career as an Industrial Engineer working for Merck Pharmaceuticals. He started general collecting at 9 when his parents, on a European trip, mailed back stamps from every country visited. Carl has now narrowed his once broad interests to the postal stationery of Ceylon and Victoria (Australia) and the cancellations of the District of Columbia. He has exhibited extensively nationally and internationally. Carl is a member of APS, United Postal Stationery Society, Society of Australasian Specialists/Oceania, Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria, Collectors Club of San Francisco, and Redwood Empire Collectors Club. He has done extensive research and writing, primarily in the field of Australian States postal stationery. He and the families of his three children, including five grandchildren, all live in the general San Francisco area. Carl served on the WESTPEX (San Francisco) show committee for more than ten years.

In his epic book The 3 cent Stamp of the United States 1851-1857 Issue, Carroll Chase stated at the beginning of the chapter on color: "I fear that this is the most difficult of all the chapters in this hand-book, because satisfactorily to describe colors and variations of color in words is almost impossible." If he had included a chapter on pricing, he might have described that as the most difficult. What appeals to a particular collector is subjective to a considerable degree and each dealer also brings different experiences to the pricing task. Of course, published price lists, auction realizations and discussions with collectors and fellow dealers all help to bring order to the marketplace. But considerable variation remains and will always remain, even for similar examples. And on top of our own subjectivity, there is great variation in the quality of strikes and of the underlying stamps or stationery. Having said all of this, however, it is a very useful endeavor to address the issue of prices and Roger Rhoads has taken an important step, I believe, in that direction. His article in this

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Back Issues are available at \$2.00 each postpaid. Discount of 10% on orders of 25 or more issues. Address inquires to: Roger D. Curran at the address below.

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issue hopefully represents a beginning of such discussion in these pages. Your observations and comments are eagerly sought by Roger as he indicates. Please contribute your experience to this subject!

Included with this issue is a notice that dues are now payable for 1998 along with an explanation of why the dues increase is necessary. I'm confident that members will understand this action and club officers will welcome questions or suggestions pertaining to club finances at any time. I urge you to remit your dues promptly as this will greatly assist our Secretary-Treasurer in his work and will also save expense to the Club. As an incentive for all of us, the USCC is borrowing a practice from several other societies by granting to each member who pays dues by December 31 a free ad of up to 25 words in 1998. So here is our chance to put before the membership, at no cost, a notice on items that we wish to buy, sell or trade.

Roger Curran

## A Different Approach

by Roger D. Curran

The July 23, 1860 supplementary postal regulation reads as follows:

"The last clause of Sec. 297 P.L. & R. 1859 is repealed and postmasters are prohibited from using the marking or rating stamps to cancel the postage stamps, it being found very imperfect, and a distinct *canceler* must be used."

Until that time, the most common means of canceling stamps and postmarking letters was to accomplish both with a single strike of the CDS. The quoted regulation ushered in, of course, the era of separate cancelers, often applied by a handstamp that duplexed the CDS to a grid or other killer.

The regulation seems clear enough, but I suspect that at least a few postmasters misinterpreted its intent as illustrated by the two covers shown in Figure 1. Perhaps it

was thought that a "distinct canceler" was being used here, albeit consisting only of a second strike of the CDS for obliteration purposes. In both cases, the strikes are sharp and bold suggesting conscientious attention by the post office to apply both a clear postmark and a thorough cancel.

The intent of the regulation was clarified in 1866 with the following:

"Sec. 178. The use of the office rating or post-marking stamp as a cancelling instrument is positively prohibited, inasmuch as the post-mark, when impressed on the postage stamp, is usually indistinct, and the cancellation effected thereby is imperfect. The postage stamp must, therefore, be effectually cancelled with a separate instrument" (underlining added).

As an aside, the CDS on the bottom cover reads "CHATHAM 4 CORNERS NY," an unusual situation where a numeral was used as part of the post office name.

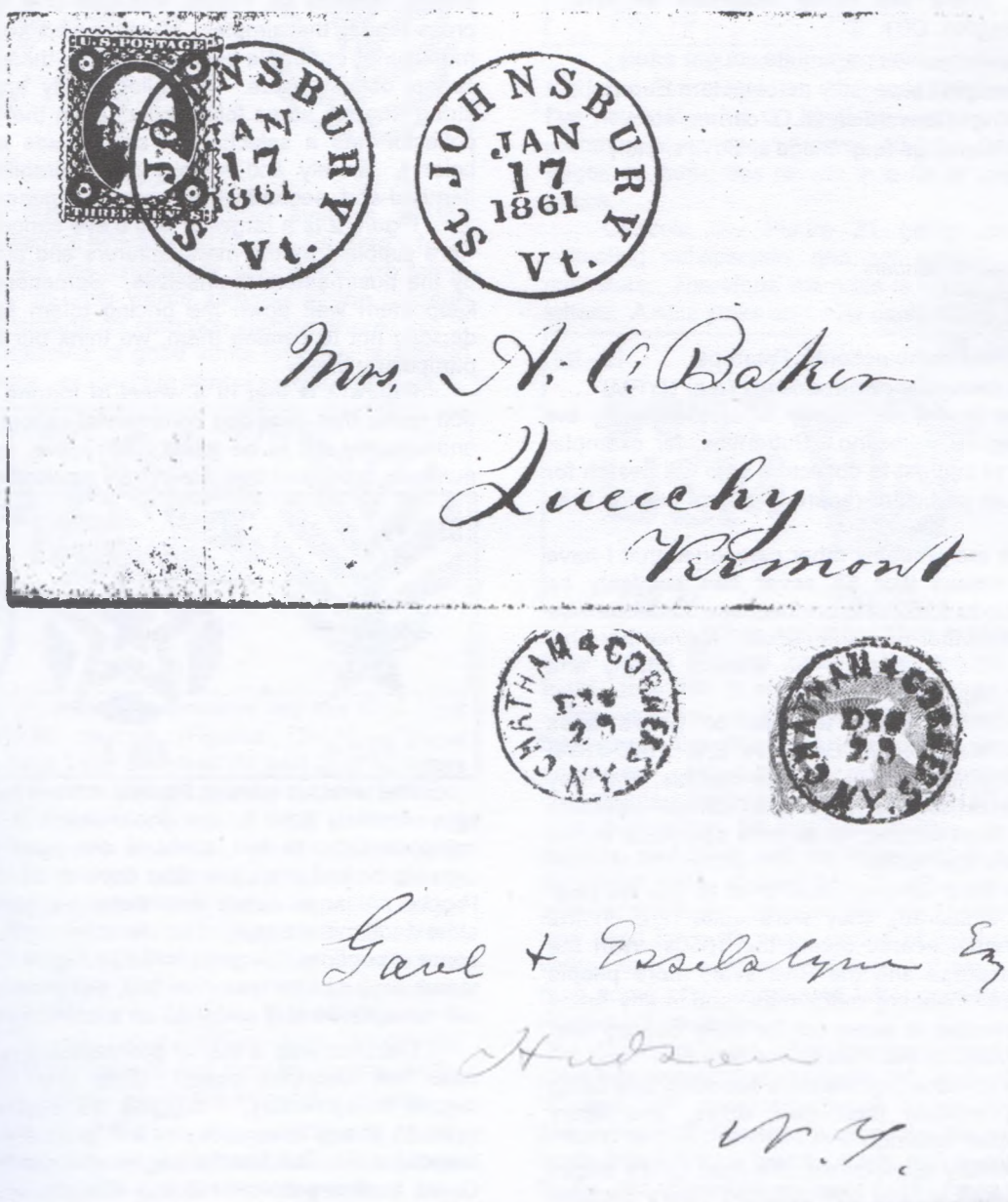


Figure 1

(Continued from front page)

cancel collector is less fussy as it is the cancel that he is after.

Put that cancel on a cover and new rules apply. Is the cancel on postal stationery (Uxx) rather than franked? Usually this type of cover has somewhat lower value to collectors. No good reason for this; simply individual preferences.

Is it an oversized cover? Collectors like standard 6 3/4 covers. Quite large envelopes are difficult to mount on pages or exhibit well.

What's the condition of the cover? A sealed tear well away from the stamp and cancel has little effect on the price. The proverbial "ratty" one is only a space filler and many times the stamp will be soaked or the cover trimmed so that the cancel is "on piece".

Then there is the question of "postal history". Though technically cancellation collections are marcophily and not postal history, many of us collect both. Therefore the cover usage plays an important role in its pricing. The following is a list of varieties that will increase the price of a cover:

- Certain states (e.g. NY is more popular than KS)
- Certain cities (there are many collectors of NYC, Chicago and Washington, DC)
- Territories (Western covers are quite sought after)
- International usages (especially non-western Europe)
- Auxiliary markings (forwarded, DLO, carrier, etc.)
- Private carrier markings (e.g. Blood's, Boyd's, etc.)
- Official usage
- RPOs
- DPOs
- County/Postmaster cancels
- Advertising covers
- Patriotic covers
- Unusual rates and combinations of stamps
- Early and late uses of known markings (e.g. NYFM)

Another trend in philately today is also affecting the cancel market - topical collecting. Butterflies, for example, might be the topic of interest to collectors who will search for such cancels with no particular regard to others outside their area of interest.

Though there are probably other categories that I have omitted, this list means that \$5 cover can suddenly be boosted to \$15 or up to \$100 or more because someone else wants it for a reason other than the cancel. Remember, this hobby runs as a free economy. The laws of supply and demand dictate pricing.

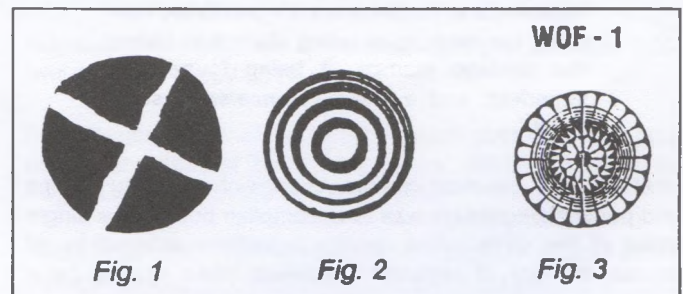
From here on I'm going to refer to Cole's book *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era, 1870-1894*. This time span is the Golden Era of fancy cancels, and may be the area of interest for the majority of cancel collectors though there is a large number of us who specialize in the 1850s and especially the 1860s.

Though there were "fancies" used prior to this era (e.g. St. Johnsbury, VT's scarab), they were quite rare on the 1847 issues and rather scarce during the 1850s. With the advent of cheap postage and the Civil War, more people began writing letters meaning more mail, and many small post offices were created to serve our far flung country with devices being provided by the Post Office only to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class offices. Many of those postmasters sat down and using their imaginations whittled their own killers, and fancy cancels became rather common.

As the 20<sup>th</sup> century approached, the Post Office began to provide official devices and standardized killers became

popular. Several small towns found loopholes in the rules concerning registered mail during the 1920-30s and used unusually creative markings on such mail. Examples from Ed, KY come to mind.

For a long time there was no published compendium for the 1870-90 time span with the eras just before and after being well covered by others. With Jim Cole's book being published two years ago with over 5000 illustrations, we can

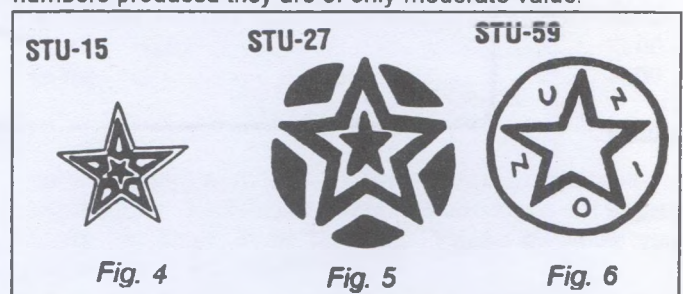


use it to better reference our material. If you have a copy, use it as you read along.

What establishes the value of a cancel? Why are certain cancels less expensive than others? What makes the price? First of all, Figure 1 is that of a quartered cork or cross-roads, the simplest of all carved killers. Other than manuscript or simple blobs or "corks", there is no well struck cancel of less value. Its collectability approaches that of string (though some folks collect even that and at least one collector has a selection of cross-roads in many different colors). Purely and simply, it's desirability which creates demand and, secondly, how many are generally available.

Figure 2 is a target or bull's eye cancel. Many of these were supplied by the manufacturers and others were carved by the postmasters themselves. Sameness and availability keep them well down the pricing totem pole. Since Cole decided not to catalog them, we think our current project is particularly timely.

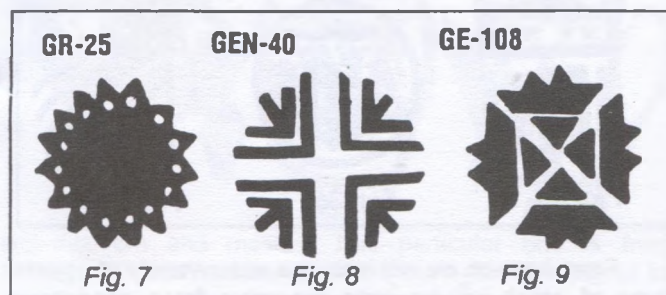
Figure 3 is that of a wheel of fortune. Cole lists over 300 towns that used this commercial cancel with many more undoubtedly still to be found. Attractive, but with the large numbers produced they are of only moderate value.



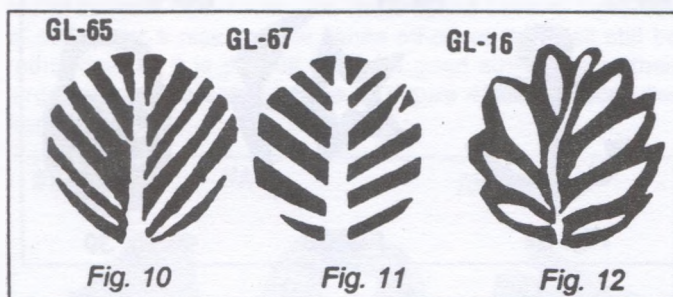
The unusual stars in Figures 4-6 are highlights from the approximately 600 in the book which is still far from a complete list. In fact, there is one book that covers star cancels for just one state, *Star Cancels of NY State* by Dave Proulx. A large variety and some are quite pretty, but an almost unlimited supply. Therefore, generally low pricing with some exceptions. A good strike of Figure 6 on an off-cover stamp may sell for well over \$50, but most of the rest would sell for considerably under \$5 on a common stamp.

The next area is that of geometrics (Figures 7-9). What does that descriptor mean? Other than strikes with some degree of symmetry, I suggest it's anything that doesn't seem to fit any other category but "probably should be listed somewhere". The first 50 pages with nearly 800 cancels in Cole's book are devoted to this category and all are rated I

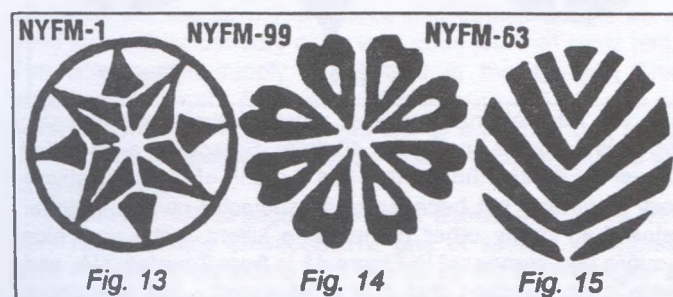
with a single exception from Evergreen, WI and that only because it is green!



Leaves are also included in the geometrics area. Those of the variety shown in Figure 10, an example from NYC, are rather common and priced accordingly. On the other hand, Figure 11 is from Waterbury, CT. For that fact alone it carries a much higher price even with its fairly ordinary appearance. The third figure is also from Waterbury, only this one shows Mr. Hill's much greater skill.



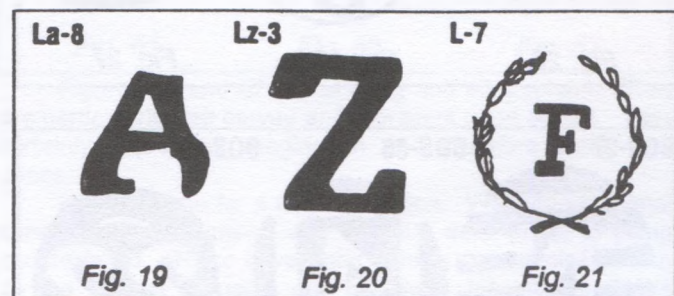
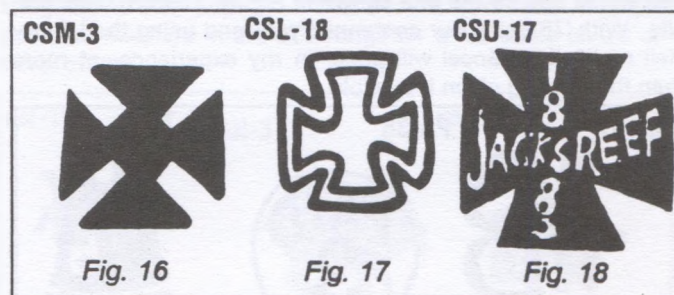
Please note that this section also includes all the Chicago blue geometrics which, in spite of Paul Berg's book on these cancels, are not particularly scarce and are rather moderately priced. In other words, virtually all the Chicago geometrics in that section on common stamps should sell in the \$1-5 range. However, a good strike on-cover is \$20-30 and sometimes higher as the blue cancel shows quite well.



Perhaps the ultimate in geometrics are the New York Foreign Mail (NYFM) cancels (Figures 13-15). These fascinating killers have been collected for well over 50 years with good books written on the subject by authors Milliken, Van Vliissingen and Waud and Weiss. Many of these are beautiful geometric patterns, and fresh, well-struck cancels in black or red (the latter more valuable) bring good prices, particularly on-cover as most of them are so large that only a portion will show on a stamp. A socked-on-the-nose off-cover stamp will cost you \$10-50 or more while on-cover prices well into three figures are not uncommon, particularly for scarcer varieties. Even a leaf like that of Figure 15 carries a good premium over similar from elsewhere. Another reason for this pricing is that they frequently are on higher denomination stamps where the demand is greater.

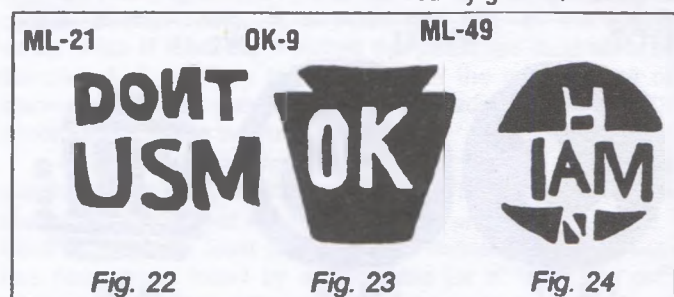
The next category is that of crosses (Figures 16-18). Again, the many varieties are quite common and available with Cole listing nearly 150 varieties. Along with a large

supply comes lower prices. Common Maltese crosses are inexpensive and plentiful, but a good strike of a really fancy one like Figure 18 would cost plenty on-cover as the cancel is so large as not to show well on off-cover stamps.



Letters are also quite popular with virtually the complete alphabet from A (Akron, OH) to Z (Zelienople, PA) (though I've never found a Q) available including some very fancy commercial varieties (Figures 19-21). Cole has pages and pages of them; this results in a lot of collecting fun at low prices.

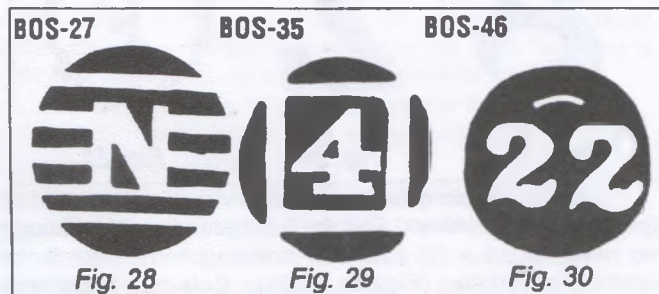
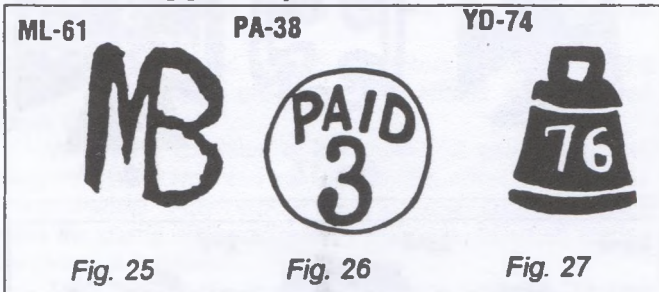
Cancels like Figure 21 (letter in wreath) form a collecting subspecialty and are eagerly sought by some collectors. Therefore, the price is higher than run-of-the-mill letters. A nice strike on-cover could easily go for \$25-40.



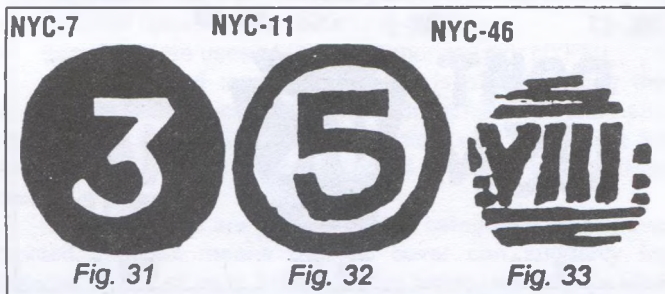
If single letters are cheap then multiple letters are a bit more pricey (Figures 22-25). Bridgeport's "DONT USM" is highly desirable, in my opinion, more than Cole's rating of II. Many varieties of the "OK" from Beloit, WI were used throughout the Banknote period, so the supply is quite adequate. However it's quite attractive, and therefore commands a better price. The "I AM H N" (Harry A. Nichols) from Ann Arbor, MI has been written up by a number of authors, and along with its "cuteness" and scarcity brings a very good price, at least \$50-75, off-cover. And there is the popular and fairly common "MB" for Mystic Bridge, CT which was used for quite some period of time and has also been written-up on several occasions. It also costs a bit more than some other compound letter cancels but less than the Figures 22-24 items.

Numbers were used by many towns. The old rate markings exemplified in Figure 26 and others such as "3", "5" and "10" were superfluous as of Jan. 1, 1856 when prepayment of domestic postage by the use of stamps was made mandatory. Twenty, thirty and even more years later these old handstamps were still being used by thrifty

postmasters in small towns. They are quite attractive, and it is surprising to me that they aren't more popular as a single-line "PAID" on a 3¢ Banknote sells for \$10-15 with other items for a bit more. This is significantly lower than you would pay for the one shown in Figure 27 from Concord, NH. With '76 being our centennial year and using the Liberty Bell motif, this cancel will price, in my experience, at more than the II rating given it by Cole.

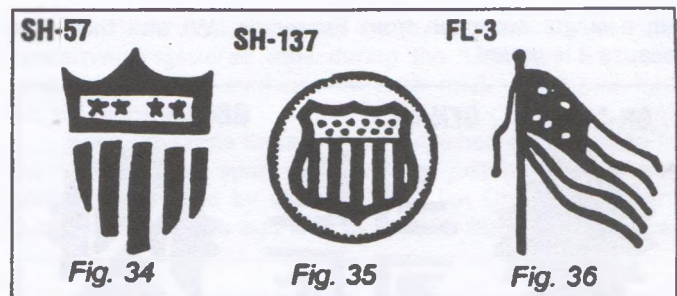


Boston used letters as well as numbers for a few years or more (Figures 28-30), and they are well recorded by Blake and Davis. These are highly collectible, but since this is major city like Chicago, there is a large supply and the prices are generally low.

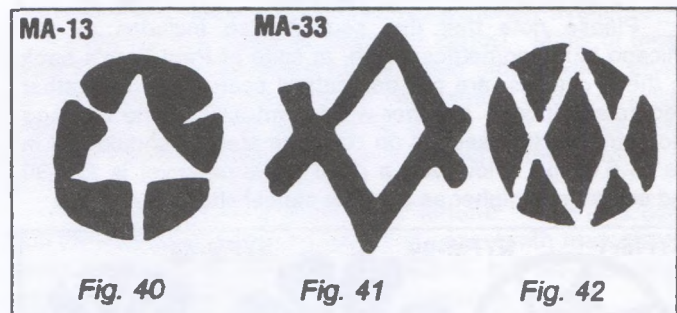
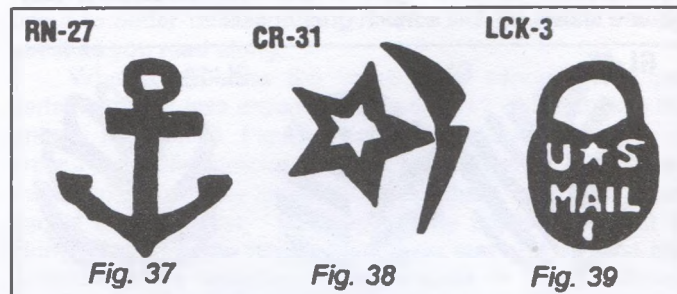


New York City used numbers (Figures 31-33) for several years on all domestic outgoing mail as well as letters to identify their various stations. Note that the differences in the three numbers shown is that the first, the most common, is a negative carved into a circular blank. The second, a more scarce variety, is a positive with an outer rim and, though not noted by Cole, carries a slight premium over negative versions. The third is a Roman numeral and was used only a very short period of time, and though no premium is noted by Cole, it is significantly more scarce. A well-struck, fresh variety will sell on-cover for \$25-50.

With all this discussion of mostly low value cancels, let's look at some that may be more appealing. Figure 34 is a shield from St. Louis where someone carved quite a few varieties in the mid-70s. Certainly the category of patriotic killers probably is collected by all cancel enthusiasts. Though there are well over 100 types listed, all have been rated II and carry a moderate price tag because of their number and demand. Figure 35 is a commercial one that is particularly attractive, while Figure 36 is not only appealing, it's quite scarce as well and would carry a hefty price tag.

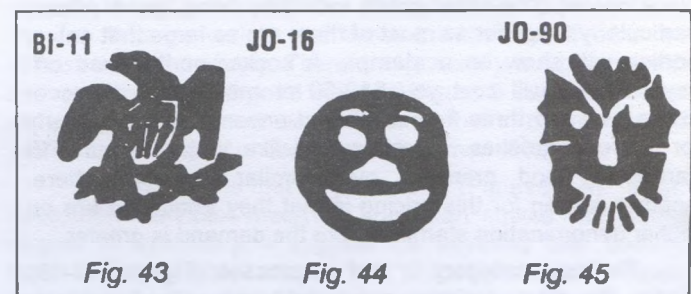


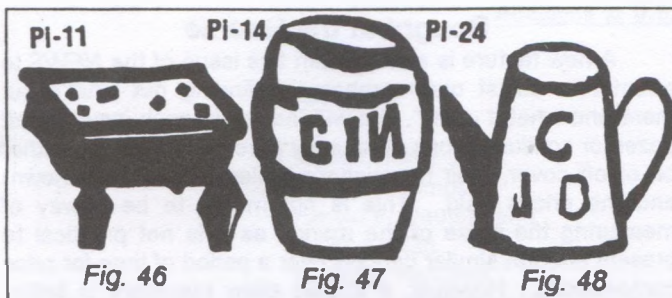
From here on we will look at a wider variety of objects, some of which will be quite expensive for a good copy. Figure 37, an anchor from the 50+ varieties listed, would be priced in the \$10-25 range (off-cover, average strike) as is true of the star and crescent in Figure 38 from Pittsburgh. The padlock in Figure 39 will cost you much more as it represents a very scarce design type, probably at least \$75 for a strong off-cover strike.



As for fraternal cancels, most of them are Masonic symbols such as in Figure 40 from Syracuse, a so-called "trowel". Frankly, though this has a rating of II, it is relatively easy to obtain, but because of its subject it carries a higher value than many other comparable killers. The very nice "square and compass" in Figure 41 is from Taunton, MA, and there is no question that it is a "Masonic". But how about Figure 42? Is it also a square and compass or is it simply two Xs? You make the decision.

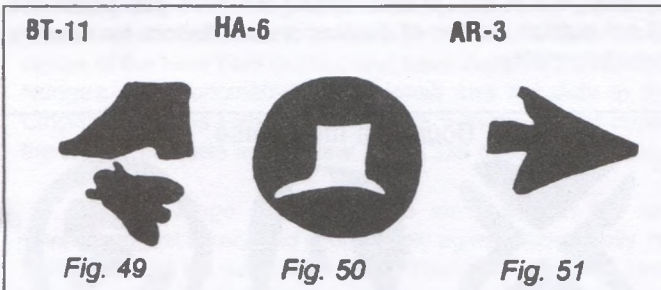
Speaking of patriotics, how about the Corry, PA eagle in Figure 43? Authors have written about it in the past, it's in a popular collecting field and it's scarce. Yes, it's going to cost you. Figure 44 has several names including pumpkin,





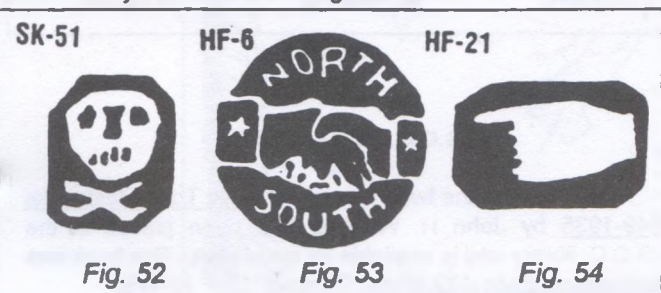
jack-o-lantern and mask. This particular one is from Oswego, NY and is rather common, but again because of its peculiar subject it carries a premium, at least \$25-50 for a nice on-cover strike. As for other masks, Figure 45 is a devil's mask from NYC, and though not rare will also cost you a bit more due to the nature of the subject and the fact that it is from NYC.

Now for some real classics. I mentioned earlier that most of the Chicago blue cancels were simple geometrics. Figures 46 and 47 are the famous Chicago pool table and gin barrel cancels. On-cover, you must spend several hundreds of dollars for a nice sample, while off-cover they will still be rather dear as it is difficult to find a good strike due to their large sizes. The same is true of Figure 48, a tea pot killer from Pekin, IL.

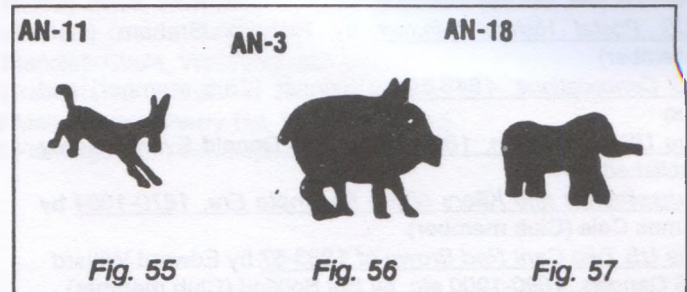


Also look at Figure 49, one of the famous Shoo Fly cancels, while Figure 50 is a Danbury hat. Both quite desirable, but the former is scarce and difficult to get as a good strike while Danbury did a very good job with most hits. The difference in supply is reflected in the prices. The arrowhead in Figure 51 from Fredericksburg, VA is one of several from this town which was one of a handful that used this subject. Attractive but not too pricey, probably due to its simplistic design.

Some of the stranger killers are shown in Figures 52-55. The skull and crossbones is one of several examples from Pittsburgh; attractive and due to its intricate design, a bit expensive at about \$75-100, on-cover. Similar comments could be made about the North South Shaking Hands of Worcester, MA except that it is not as scarce. However, due to its great popularity, if you find one, it will be quite expensive. Take the same general subject, a pointing hand from Pittsburgh (Figure 55) that is not as well carved with several available varieties, and the cost comes down considerably to the \$20-30 range off-cover.



How about some animals? Figure 55 is the famous commercially-made Kicking Mule from Port Townsend, WA. It's not particularly scarce and has been used by other towns as well, but has been written up several times and is quite imaginative and popular. Therefore it carries a moderate price, somewhere in the \$75 range for a full strike on an off-cover stamp.



Figures 56 and 57 are of a pig and an elephant. They are particularly well carved and represent good strikes. They certainly pique the imagination and therefore carry high prices.

Here it's time for a note of caution. Well-struck animal cancels are quite pricey, and they are quite prone to being counterfeited. There have been quite a few articles written on the subject including one by Clyde Jennings in Cole's book and others here in the *NEWS*. If you are not really familiar with a particular cancel and you choose to buy, I suggest expertization.

Also there are quite a few "may bees" and "wanna bees" out there, perhaps in your own collection. How many times have you looked at a cancel and said "It sure looks like a —"? If it does not look unequivocally like its description, make sure the price is low enough if you are later disappointed.

Very strong, black strikes are rather uncommon, and cancel 'strengthening' is a fraudulent way of increasing value. Also if it exactly matches the published illustration of the cancel, it probably is a fake, given the inexact craft of tracing cancels for publication. The old adage still holds, "If it looks too good to be true, it probably is."

Another point is that a killer that carries a high price should not be the discovery example. That is, make sure that at least one other example has been previously reported. Each of us has at least one item that "definitely is a —", but has never been found by anyone else (or at least has not been confirmed by another report).

This article represents basically my own views of pricing with input from several others. I hope I've been of help to those of you who are less experienced. Perhaps the prices that you have been asked to pay make a bit more sense now. Perhaps you may have had other experiences and you would wish to share them with our membership. Drop me a note. I'd also welcome comments on pricing of other cancels that I didn't cover. I'll report these additional comments and information from you readers - collectors and dealers alike - so that a more complete picture can be presented here in the *NEWS*.

#### Bibliography

In addition to the following, I am aware of monographs that have been published for Cleveland, Louisville, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Philadelphia. Past issues of the *NEWS* have featured extensive articles on the cancellations

of New York City, Pittsburgh and Providence, RI.

Simpson's US Postal Markings by Tom Alexander  
US Postmarks and Cancellations, Philatelic Foundation Seminar Series, Textbook No. 3, edited by Scott Trepel (currently available for \$15 from the Editor)  
Cyclopedia of US Postmarks and Postal History by Delf Norona (old, but still valuable)  
US Postal History Sampler by Richard Graham (Club member)  
US Cancellations, 1845-69 by Skinner (Club member) and Eno  
The US 1¢ Franklin, 1861-67, etc. by Donald Evans (Newly published)  
Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era, 1870-1894 by James Cole (Club member)  
The US Two Cent Red Brown of 1883-87 by Edward Willard  
US Cancels, 1890-1900 etc. by Sol Solkind (Club member)  
20<sup>th</sup> Century US Fancy Cancellations by Loso and DeWindt  
19<sup>th</sup> Century US Fancy Cancellations, Billings Philatelic Handbook No. 33 (The updated Herst-Sampson book published in 1972)(Mr. Herst is a Club member)  
US Route and Station Agent Postmarks by Charles Towle  
California Town Postmarks, 1849-1935 by John Williams (Newly published)  
Connecticut Post Offices and Postmarks by Arthur Warmley  
Illinois 19<sup>th</sup> Century Cancels compiled by Richard Russell  
19<sup>th</sup> Century Fancy Cancellations of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Postal History Society  
Boston Postmarks to 1890 by Blake and Davis  
The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City by William Weiss (Club member)  
Chicago Blue Postal Markings, 1870-77 by Paul Berg (Club member)  
The Waterbury Cancellations, 1865-90 by Paul Rohloff

#### George H. Lewis

In the last issue of the NEWS, under the "Closed Album" heading, the passing of George Lewis was noted. George's contributions to the U.S. Cancellation Club were of inestimable value. He joined in 1978 and served as Secretary-Treasurer from 1982-1991 and also as sales manager from 1984 to 1987. No one will ever know, with the exception of his wife Evie, the amount of time he devoted to club responsibilities which were handled with exceptional thoroughness and competence. And beyond this was the genuine warmth and courtesy displayed in his dealings. In short, George was a great ambassador for the club and, indeed, for the cancellation specialty itself. He and Evie attended numerous stamp shows and often exhibited their fine collection of 3 cent 1861 cancellations. Enthusiasm, industry and a desire to contribute to the hobby were hallmarks of the man and he will surely be missed.

Roger Curran

#### New Date for Washington, D.C. Duplex

Fred Schmitt submits a new date for the Washington, D.C. Duplex illustrated as Figure 10 on page 135 of the Summer 1997 NEWS. In addition to reports of March 7 and March 9, 1863 usages, we can now add Fred's March 10, 1863 report.

### Bought at the Bourse

A new feature is starting with this issue of the NEWS to attempt to assist our members in "finding out what's out there and what it costs". We will feature in each issue a half dozen or so illustrations of recently purchased cancels, either on or off cover, their descriptions, cities of origin (if known) and the prices paid. This is not meant to be a way of measuring the pulse of the market as it is not practical to present enough similar cancels over a period of time for price comparisons. However, it should allow members to better understand the market place and the pricing of diverse cancels from various dealers. We will choose to use only dealer transactions rather than individual collector-to-collector sales or auction results as we believe this is a better measure of the marketplace than other methods of sale for lower to moderate value cancels. In the first instance, prices can be determined by factors far different than supply and demand (e.g. personal friendship). In the second, only quite scarce cancels are generally listed individually in auction catalogs due to the need to maintain a higher average lot price.

We would like your cooperation by sharing your buys with the membership. Send us a sharp photocopy or tracing of the cancel and a written description of it along with the description of the stamp or cover (Scott number, please), the city and year of use (if known) and the price you paid. We will not publish names of dealers or contributors for reasons of confidentiality.

#### Bought at the Bourse



Chicago blue  
Geometric  
1875  
\$20 on-cover



NYC City Del'y.  
neg. "A" "A" in CDS  
1874  
\$15 on-cover



NYC positive  
"3" in circle  
1874  
\$15 on-cover



Brooklyn, NY  
Maltese Cross  
1873  
\$12 on-cover



Richmond, IN  
Basket Weave Geo.  
Blue 1873  
\$25 on-cover



Trotwood, OH  
Shaded Star in Circle  
STB-30. 1893  
\$8 on-cover

#### U.S.C.C. Library Addition

A copy of the two-volume California Town Postmarks 1849-1935 by John H. Williams has been placed in the U.S.C.C. library and is available for circulation. This book was reviewed on page 132 of the Summer 1997 NEWS.

Additions to U.S.C.C. Membership Roster

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
Robert Bailey	410 Bechan Rd., Oakham, MA 01068-9772
J. Bruce Campbell	1462 Paseo Nogales, Alamo, CA 94507
Harold F. Dautenhahn	12 Melody Drive, Rochester, IL 62563-9213
K. W. Ekman	2 Valley Dr., Orinda, CA 94563
Nicholas Kardasis	70 Standish Circle, Wellesley, MA 02181
Murray H. Ringold, M.D.	43 Firebush Rd., Levittown, PA 19056
John D. Roberts	209 Maine Ave., Cherry Hill, NJ 08002-3015
David S. Spangler	613 Flamingo St., Philadelphia, PA 19128

**An Unusual New York Target, Part II**

*by Roger D. Curran*

Take a look at the cover in Figure 1. Do you think you may have seen it before, say, on the back page of the Summer 1997 NEWS? Well, you did . . . almost. To say that the covers have similarities would be an understatement. As pointed out by R.J. Nunge who submitted the present cover: "The two are addressed to the same person, have three strikes of the New York duplex, and have identical dates." Mr. Nunge's cover originated in Cincinnati and the date in the Cincinnati CDS is February 27(?). As with the earlier cover, the December date in the New York CDS doesn't compute.

Mr. Nunge states that the similarities in the two covers suggest fakery and I completely agree. Incidentally, he points out that his cover has an additional strike of the New York duplex on the back which the earlier cover doesn't have. He also notes that (1) the three outer circles in the target on his cover appear to cut into the paper like a patent cancel and (2) the presence of a "." after "NEW" as well as after "YORK." Although not noticed before, I see now that a "." after "NEW" appears on the earlier cover, too.

Fakery is not limited, of course, to high ticket items and vigilance is needed as a matter of course on unusual items of any sort. Comments or additional reports will be welcomed.

**Volunteer Needed**

We are seeking an advertising manager for the U.S.C.C. NEWS. No experience needed! The NEWS has, over the years, carried many ads and the Board of Governors would like to encourage an advertisement section once again as a regular part of the publication. The advertising manager would help establish rates and solicit ads, receive and review ads and submit them to the editor to meet publication deadlines, and coordinate the submission of payments to the club treasurer. This job would involve only a limited commitment of time but would be a much appreciated way in which a member can support our club. And, of course, our club must have the help of its members if it is to function effectively. If you are willing to serve or would like to learn more about it, please contact any club officer.

Figure 1



## Cancels With a Punch

by Roger D. Curran

In recent issues of the NEWS, we have discussed late uses of "STEAMBOAT" markings. Figure 1 illustrates a further example. However, the focus of this article is on the unusual cancellation, and others similar to it, found on postage due stamps. The cancellation shown consists of two small heart-shaped holes produced, in all probability, by a ticket punch. The cover is undated but the postage due stamp is a J1. Since the holes penetrate the stamp only and not the cover, they obviously represent a precancel.

I am aware of three other covers bearing postage due stamps canceled by Baltimore hearts. One is an 1879 cover from New Orleans to Baltimore. It was advertised on July 15, 1879 resulting in a one cent charge. A one cent postage due stamp (J1), canceled by two heart-shaped punched holes, was affixed. This cover was mentioned in Warren Bower's August 1975 article in The United States Specialist journal of the BIA, entitled "Ticket Punched Precancelled Postage Dues of Baltimore," and in Charles C. Souder's 1989 book on 1907 and earlier precancels.<sup>1</sup> Both authors referred to a July 1936 article appearing in The Precancel Bee.

The second cover, which is in Warren Bower's collection, was sent in 1879 from Romney, West Virginia to Baltimore. It is franked with a three cent green and was determined in Baltimore to be a double rate letter, whereupon a three cent postage due stamp (J3), with two heart-shaped punches, was affixed reflecting the extra charge.

The third item is a short paid cover from England to Baltimore which was franked at Baltimore with a strip of three five cent postage due stamps (J4) punched with hearts, two to a stamp. There should have also been a one cent postage due stamp to make up the actual 16 cent charge. This cover entered the mails in England on August 6, 1879. It was illustrated and discussed in George B. Arfken's book on the large numeral U.S. postage due stamps.<sup>2</sup>

David W. Smith, in his 1995 book on silent precancels, reports Baltimore heart punch cancels, two to a

stamp, on J1-5 inclusive and also that they were used in 1879-80.<sup>3</sup> Possibly 1880 was inferred from seeing off-cover stamps in what specialists refer to as the "1879-1880 shade." The several off-cover examples in Warren Bower's collection are in this shade and include items canceled by one heart and items canceled by two hearts.

One other post office is known to have used a punch to cancel postage due stamps - Binghamton, NY. Figure 2 illustrates a cover from Boston to Binghamton that was rated a double weight letter in Binghamton and charged an additional three cents with a three cent postage due stamp (J3) added. The cover is not dated but Arfken stated that it is "probably 1879." Souder does not report these star cancels and Smith only reports them on three cent postage due stamps (J3). Warren Bower has an off-cover J1 bearing the star. In correspondence with this writer, Warren mentioned that he has noted no covers, other than Figure 2, that have stamps canceled by the Binghamton star. Incidentally, the covers shown in Figures 1 and 2 are both illustrated in Arfken's book and were in his collection before it was sold.

We'll close with a punch cancel of unknown origin. Figure 3, in Warren's collection, is a J1 bearing a diamond-shaped cancellation and he reports never seeing another example on or off cover.

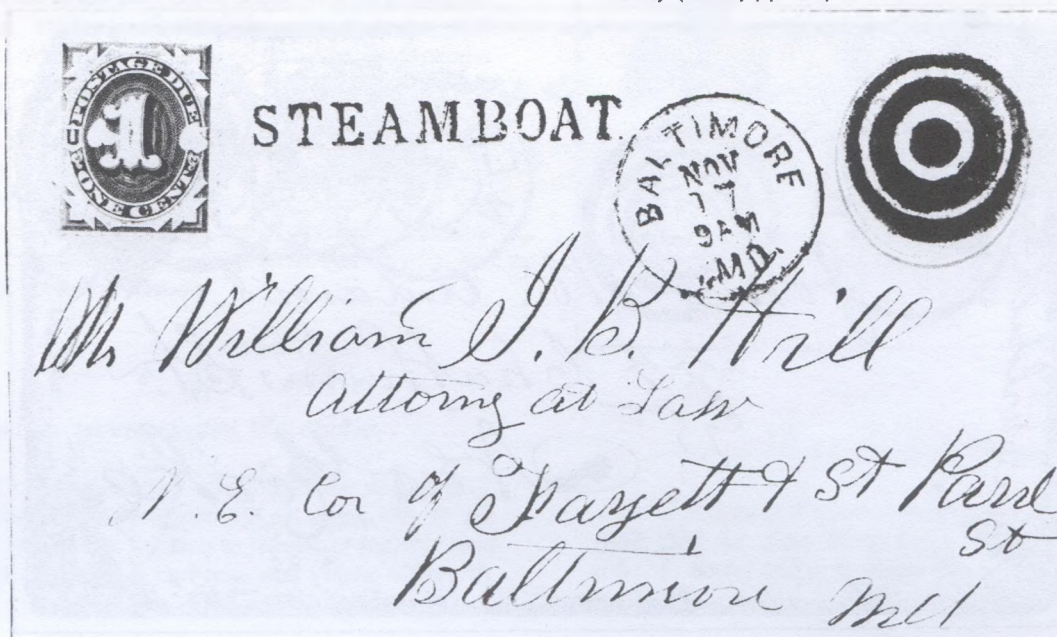
Additional data and reader comments are eagerly sought. As with so many other canceling practices, there is a great deal yet to be learned and understood about cancels made by punches. Please help out if you can. All contributions will be gratefully acknowledged.

<sup>1</sup>Souder, Charles C. Postal History and Usage of 1907 and Earlier Precancels, David G. Phillips Publishing Co., Inc. (1989), pp. 91, 94, 285.

<sup>2</sup>Arfken, George B. POSTAGE DUE the United States Large Numeral Postage Due Stamps 1879-1894, The Collectors Club of Chicago (1991), pp. 103, 212-14.

<sup>3</sup>Smith, David W. Silent Precancels, The Precancel Stamp Society (1995) pp. 50, 81.

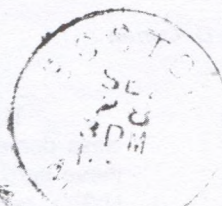
Figure 1



L. LOVEJOY & CO.  
NO. 182 CAUSEWAY STREET.  
BOSTON.



Due 3 Cents



Mrs LK Bronson  
Fairview Institute  
Binghampton  
New York



Figure 3

Figure 2

Editor's note: Souder mentions the following report of another Baltimore punch cancel:

"Punch holes about 2mm in diameter used to precancel stamps for use on newspapers. Also reported to exist on 1879 and 1887 Postage Dues."

Souder states that the source for this report is an article by Daniel S. Pagter entitled "EFO Citings" in Stamp Collector of March 26, 1988. Upon an inquiry from your editor, club member Pagter graciously reviewed his records and has now concluded that the report of punch holes applied by Baltimore to 1879 and 1887 postage dues was in error.

#### Fancy Head Cancel

by John H. Barwis

I recently purchased the cover shown in Figure 1 as part of a bulk lot. It bears a three-cent F grill (Scott 94) tied by a weakly struck "-EDO / FEB 1 / -" cds in blue. Year of use is unknown as the cover carries no backstamp or contents. The state initial is indistinct, but is finished with a vertical stroke roughly parallel to the "E" in "EDO". It is not an "O" (e.g., not TOLEDO / O.) It could be TOLEDO / OH., or TOLEDO / I. Perhaps another member will recognize the postmark.

The cancel, in matching blue, at first glance looked like a simple cork killer that had deteriorated. When turned upside down, however, it is obviously a very detailed man's head, facing left (Figure 2). Although the front of the face is missing, the nape, neck and jaw are very well proportioned and defined. The forehead, with a receding hairline, is in negative, as are the eye socket, cheekbone, and ear. Alignment and proximity to the datestamp suggest that the devices may have been duplexed.

Can anyone provide information on this cancel?

Figure 1

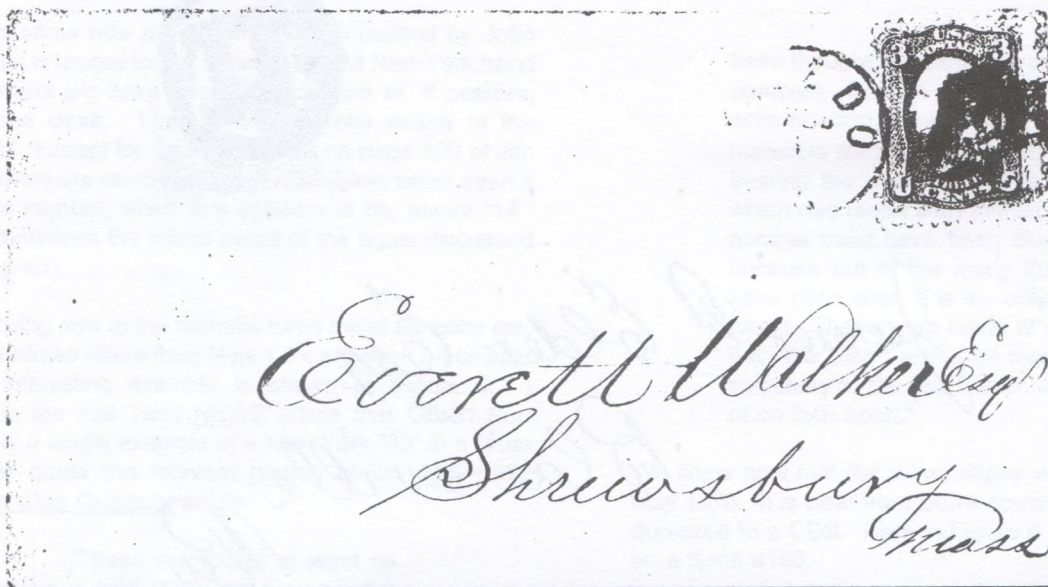


Figure 2

# Cancelers With Numbers in NYC Handstamps - Non-First Class Mail

by Roger D. Curran

In the Fall 1996 NEWS, I discussed handstamp cancelers with numbers used by the NYPO during the 1872-1895 period on first-class mail. The present article considers such cancelers used on non-first class mail, primarily circulars.

This is a more difficult subject, I believe, owing to the fact that circulars, wrappers and package coverings were typically kept with much less frequency than first-class mail. Hence there are far fewer covers available for study today. Nonetheless, the NYPO processed a tremendous volume of mail and many such covers are still out there. A clear picture can no doubt be formed through the cooperation of collectors interested in these cancels. What follows represents just a first tentative step in seeking to understand the subject.

The NYPO began using killers with numbers on first-class domestic mail in 1872. The overwhelming majority of these early cancelers were hand carved and this phase of NYPO canceling practices lasted until May 1876 when manufactured metal ellipse cancelers were adopted. The handcarved killers are sometimes noted, in unduplexed form, on circular mail. Several examples reported by John Valenti are illustrated. Figure 1 shows a Scott #134 bearing two partial strikes of a negative "10." The cover contains a circular dated May 27, 1873. Figure 2 shows a Scott #156 canceled by an "11" in circle. The cover enclosed a circular reporting various product testimonials dated as late as March 30, 1873. Figure 3 shows a Scott #156 bearing a negative "11." No dating information is available. Figure 4 is a "12" from my collection.

P. O. BOX,  
3636,  
N. Y.



Figure 1

Francistown Savings Bank,  
Francistown.  
N.H.



Figure 2

James P. Elder Esq.  
Blairsville  
Pa.

Figure 3

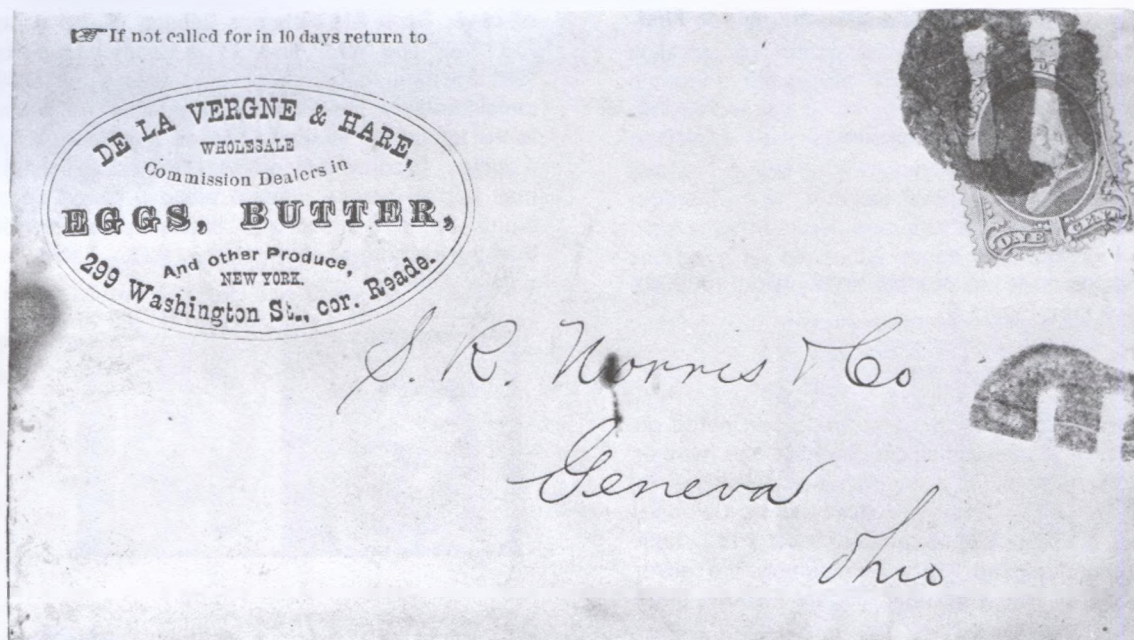
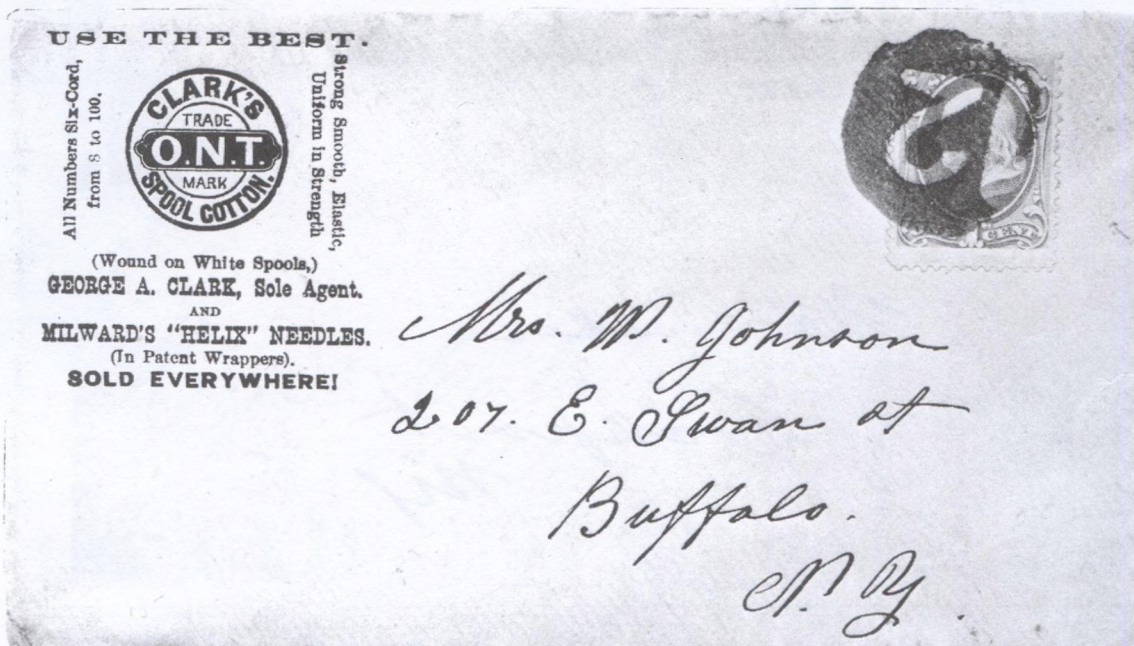


Figure 4



We come now to Figure 5, also submitted by John Valenti, which is unique in our experience. All New York hand carved numbers we have seen are negative or, if positive, enclosed in a circle. The U116 bears two strikes of the number "15." Except for tracing NYC-38 on page 300 of Jim Cole's Banknote era cancellation book, we have never seen a hand carved number, which this appears to be, above "14." Table 1 summarizes the killers noted of the types discussed in this paragraph.

Moving now to the manufactured metal canceler era, unduplexed ellipse killers from New York are seen on circular mail. An interesting example is shown as Figure 6. I mentioned in the Fall 1996 NEWS article that Gilbert Burr reported only a single example of a New York "33" in a 9-bar ellipse. We quote the relevant portion of his April 1952 Cancellation Club Quarterly article:

"These are found at least as early as in April 1877, and have always

been thought to include the consecutive numbers from 1 to 32, but after accumulating and studying these numerals for 30 years, I found a cover bearing the number 33 used in 1879, which was rather early in their use. This number must have been discontinued, because out of the many thousands I have gone over, it is the only one ever found. These were made of metal with both the "killer" and town marking fixed stationary to the one handle about 1/16 of an inch apart."

We know now that the 9-bar ellipse was introduced early in May 1876. It is clear from Burr's comments that the "33" was duplexed to a CDS. Here in Figure 6 is an unduplexed "33" on a Scott #156.

**NYC Numbers in Killers seen by Valent/Curran on non-First Class Mail<sup>1</sup>**

Negative Numbers	Positive With Outer Rim	Positive Numbers
2, 3, 5, 7, 10 11, 12	11	15

<sup>1</sup>Excludes numbers seen in double oval killers and in horizontal ellipses (see Figure 9).

**Table 1.**

Various unduplexed numbers have been noted on New York circular mail covers including at least one number that has not been seen used in a duplex. A postal stationery cover reported by John Donnes, addressed to Cologne, Germany, bears a Scott #U116 and a Scott #182, both canceled by an unduplexed "39." Presumably the cover contained a circular or was a wrapper. Figure 7 shows three

off-cover Scott #182 stamps bearing ellipse cancels with a "33," "39," and "49." The "33" is clearly unduplexed and the "39" appears to be unduplexed unless the CDS was set considerably to the left of the killer. The "49" is struck too far to the left on the stamp to assess whether or not it is part of a duplex. I believe they are all NYPO cancels used on circular mail but, of course, cannot prove it based on the stamps alone. Figure 8 shows a "5" that is of a clearly different style than the set normally used by the NYPO. Table 2 summarizes data reported on these cancels.



**Figure 7**

**FRENCH & CO.,  
PRODUCE COMMISSION MERCHANTS,  
180 READE STREET,  
New York.**

**Figure 5**

*W. A. Encker  
Lockport  
N.Y.*

THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW,

549 & 551 Broadway, New York.

**Figure 6**

*Rev. C. Burgess.  
Silver Creek  
N. Y.*



### NYC Unduplexed Vertical Ellipse Cancels

on-cover	off cover <sup>1</sup>
5, 20, 33, 39, 40	33, 39, 49

<sup>1</sup>Assumed uses. To qualify, they must first have numbers that appear to be part of the NYC set. There must also be either a) enough space to the left of the ellipse without a CDS to conclude it is probably unduplexed, or, b) the number is one not normally seen on first-class mail; that is, odd numbers "33" or above.

Table 2

Figure 9 could also be termed an unduplexed ellipse, possessing a horizontal rather than vertical orientation, with a number in the center. Figure 10 shows off-cover Scott #182 stamps bearing a "21" and a "54" which I am quite confident also came from New York. A one cent Banknote canceled by the "21" cancel on a cover with a New York corner card was reported on p. 19 of the Spring 1982 NEWS. One wonders what other numbers from this "set" were made and placed in service. This horizontal ellipse type appears to be quite a bit scarcer than even the unduplexed vertical ellipse.



Figure 10

Figure 8

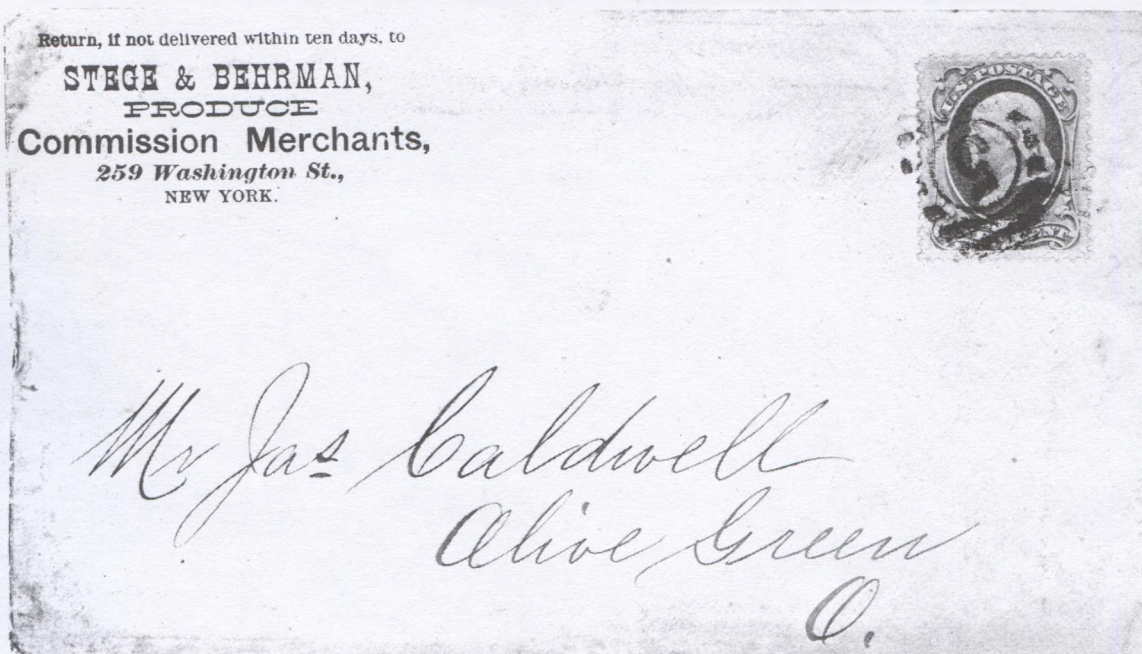
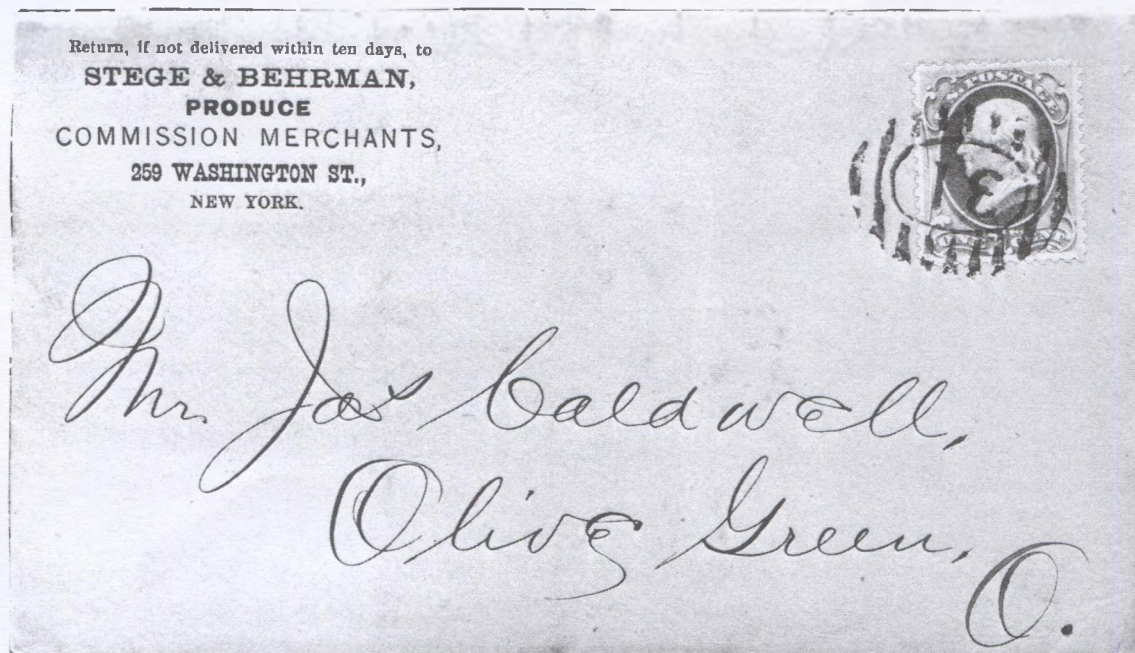


Figure 9



We turn finally to rubber handstamps containing a number in the center. Arthur Bond reported in the July 1968 NEWS that these New York double oval handstamps were introduced at least as early as 1881. Figure 11 illustrates off-cover double ovals with numbers "1", "2" and "3." Bond reported their use on newspaper wrappers. Figure 12 is an example. Figure 13 shows a "15" of this type used on a cover that presumably enclosed a circular. Was the "15" used for a different purpose than the numbers 1-3? Figure 14 shows an off-cover Scott #183 bearing the "15" double oval.

welcomed. Hopefully, a further article will be warranted on this fascinating subject.



Figure 14



Figure 11

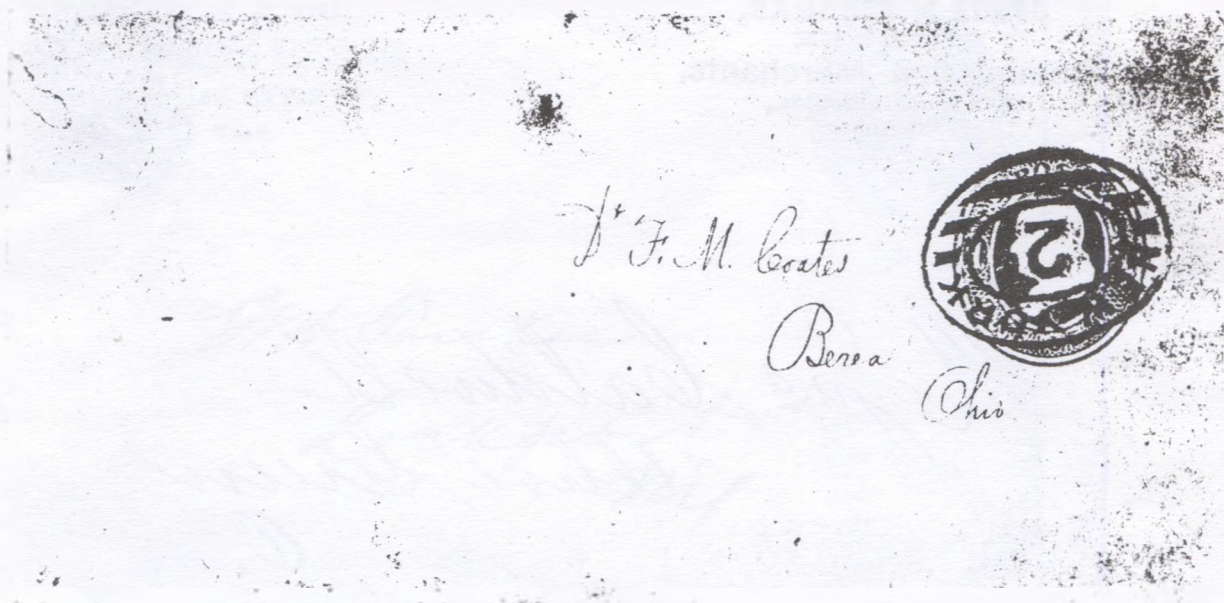


Figure 12

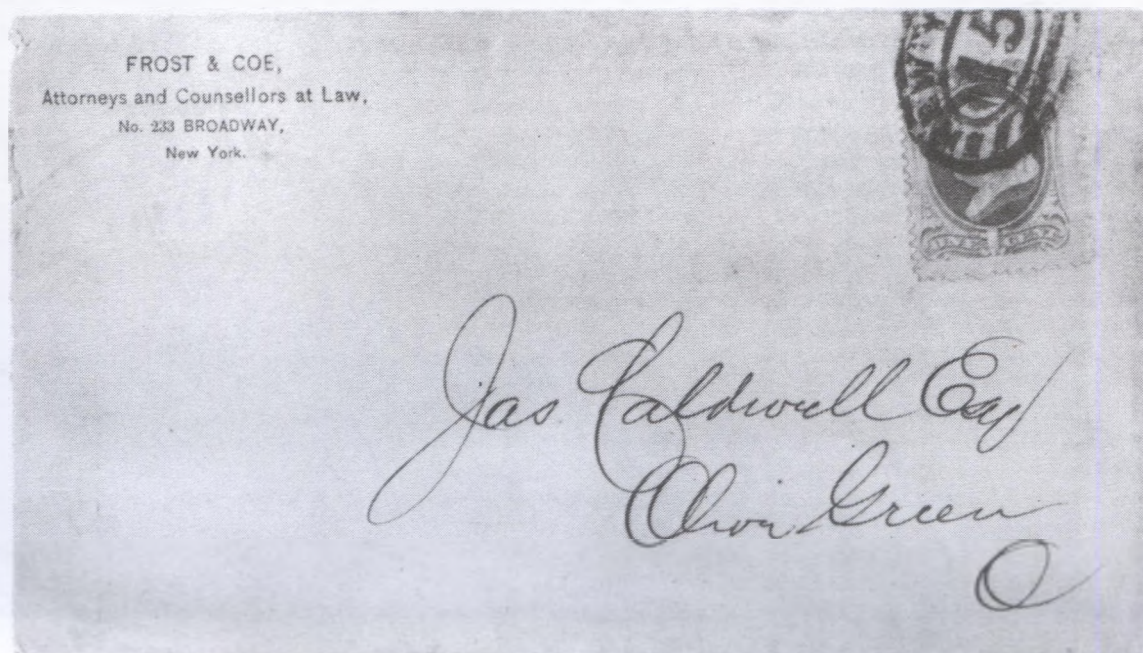


Figure 13