



Cancellation Club NEWS

Vol. 24, No. 3, Whole No. 228, Summer 1998

Girard, Illinois, the Reich Brewery in Springfield and Some Related Postal Markings

by Harold Dautenhahn

Girard is located about twenty-five miles south (and slightly west) of Springfield, Illinois on highway Route #4. The latest population listing I've seen was 2,164. In the 1880s, a Chicago to St. Louis railroad line went through Girard, and the trains traveling south from Springfield delivered beer to Chatham, to Auburn, to Virden and then to Girard. I have a large number of UX 5 and 7 postal cards sent from small central Illinois towns, during the 1881-5 period, placing orders for beer with the Reich brewery in Springfield.

Orders from two towns showed a high percentage of cards with RPO postmarks, rather than postmaster postmarked. These two towns were New Berlin, Illinois and Girard, Illinois. One can speculate why this occurred. Perhaps the Innkeepers were located nearer to the depot than to the post office, or perhaps the depot hours accommodated them better than the post office hours.

Unpouched mail given to train route agents on a railroad mail route was originally postmarked "Railroad", but by 1880 train mail was nearly always postmarked using the line's terminals with the letters RPO. Sometimes RPO postmarks indicated that they were postmarked "DAY" or "NIGHT". The

RPO clerks processing Girard's beer order cards had regular RPO handstamps and "DAY" RPO handstamps. Nearly one-half of the postals ordering beer for Girard's Inns are RPO postmarked.

The Girard postmaster enjoyed his cork cancellations, and he was quite artistic in making them. In 1881 (August 2 onward), the solid five pointed star was the killer of choice. (See Figure 1.) His postmarking technique was consistent. Both the postmark and the star obliterate the one cent indicia in every instance. All his postmarks are readable, even though the print is small. By 1882 he is using larger letters and numerals within some of his postmarks.

It appears that the Postmaster from Girard changed the general design of his cancellation device each year. I find some stars in his early 1882 postmarks with lines cut in them, such as Figure 2, but later in the year they are nearly all circles with open centers. (See Figure 3.) Considerable additional effort was consumed making the "open centers". The 1882 postals are not as readable as the 1881s. Later in 1882 the year date was omitted, and the letters and numerals



Figure 1

(Continued on page 35)

Dear Reader,

Our annual USCC seminar and business meeting scheduled for Saturday morning, October 3 at the Philadelphia National Stamp Exhibition (PNSE) is rapidly approaching! This year, as we have discussed earlier in these pages, the USCC is sponsoring a showing of one-frame exhibits on the subject of obliterators found on nineteenth century U.S. stamps. These will be five Club member exhibits in this category and the seminar will consist of brief presentations by each exhibitor with time for questions and answers. (Incidentally, another Club member is entering an 8-frame cancellations exhibit so there will be much to see pertinent to our Club specialty.) The seminar will be followed by a board meeting to which all USCC members are invited. Time and room number for the seminar and meeting will appear in the PNSE program. I encourage all members, for whom it is feasible, to attend this fine show that runs October 2-4. The USCC will have a society table throughout the show and would very much enjoy meeting you.

USCC auction #1 is now history. Bids were received on 40 of the 64 lots. There were four consignors and 13 bidders. Although a relatively small number of members participated in this first auction, we presumed it would take several auctions for the activity to become established. However, it is obviously essential to have a broad base of support for us to continue. The USCC is very fortunate to have an excellent auction manager in Sy Stiss and we should take advantage of this fine opportunity to buy and sell duplicate and no longer needed material. By so doing, we can benefit ourselves and the USCC.

Having stated the above, I'm pleased to announce USCC auction #2, the catalog for which will go out with the next issue of the NEWS. The deadline for submitting items for the sale is October 15, 1998 and they should be sent to: Seymour B. Stiss, 436 N. Park Drive, Arlington, VA 22203. I urge you to take a little time now to go through your collections to see what can be consigned to Sy and not wait until the deadline is at hand. Please participate! Refer to the February 1998 USCC auction guidelines for procedural details and contact me at the address on the masthead if another copy is needed. There is one addition to the guidelines: there will be a 50 cent administrative and postage fee per unsold lot.

In the last NEWS, we announced a club undertaking to study the large Boston negative cancellations of 1878-1883 and update the information in the Blake and Davis book Boston Postmarks to 1890. Several enthusiastic contributors have stepped forward but we want to cast as wide a net as possible. Please let the NEWS hear from you if you collect these cancels and we'll share information collected to date and gratefully add additional reports from your collection.



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Coordinators have been identified for our target cancel project and we expect to initiate this study with the establishment of reporting guidelines in the very near future.

I hope all USCC members spent an enjoyable summer and are returning refreshed to the more normal routines. What a pleasant prospect is the heightened philatelic activity this fall will bring. Hope to see you in Philadelphia!

Roger Curran

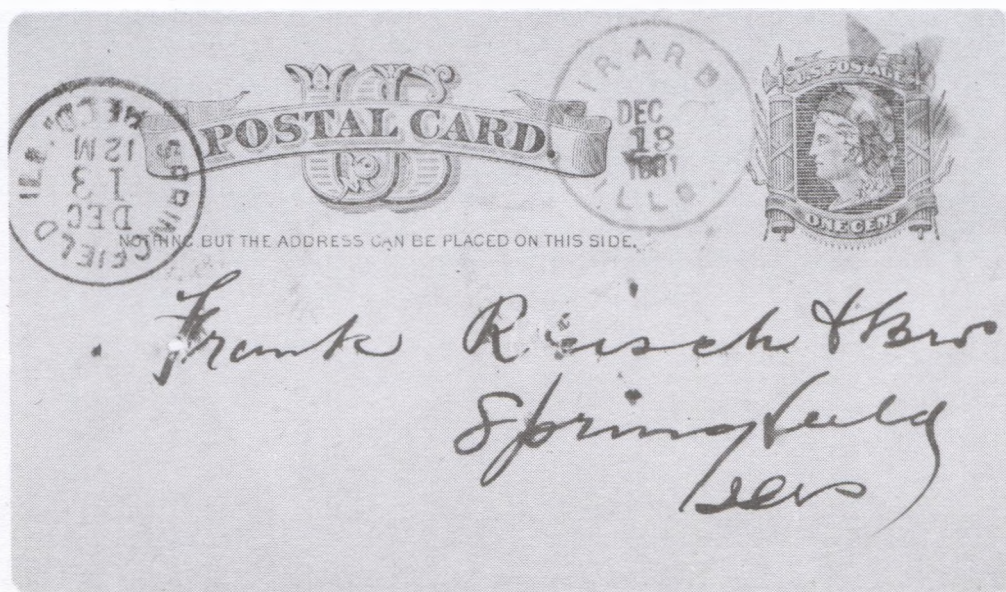


Figure 2

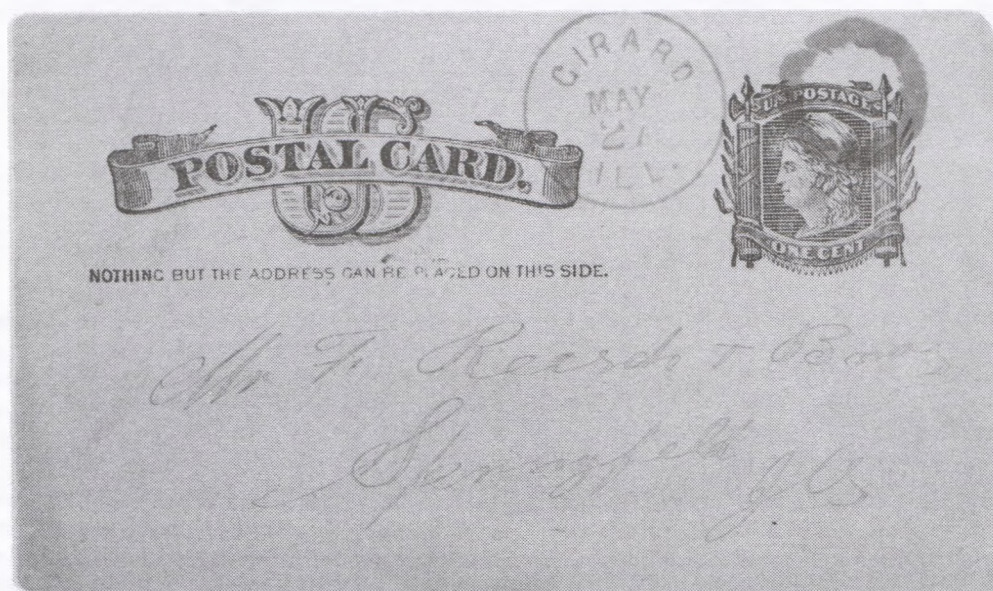


Figure 3

became larger. Late in 1882 the postmark no longer helps to kill the one cent indicia.

Interestingly, the months of January, February, and March were the slowest months of the year for ordering beer. I'm sure that the weather and road conditions played a more important role in beer consumption at such establishments then, as compared to today. Even April with all its rain and mud was a light ordering month.

I have no cards from Girard for 1883 and wonder why. I cannot explain their absence. I have studied the postal cards of several towns, and the other towns have 1883 cards. It makes me wonder if the 1883 postmarks and cancellations were so desirable that they were removed.

By 1884 we have left the hollow circle era, and are now seeing solid circles with carved lines. (See Figure 4.) All

cancellations have a center dividing line. Postmarks have large letters and are more readable again. All but two postmarks infringe on the one cent indicia.

In 1885, the killers generally showed random carving across the face as illustrated in Figure 5, dated June 13, 1885.

Shifting now to RPO markings, Figure 6 shows a regular RPO postmark and killer dated December 12 (1881). The killer in this example is fancier than most of those seen with the regular postmark. A clearer example of this type of postmark is shown in Figure 7. A "CHI & ST. LOUIS, R.P.O./DAY" postmark and killer of February 15, 1883 are illustrated in Figure 8. The killer appears to have the letters "INNEW" (with the "W" being a little unclear), surrounded by hand carved ornamentation. A clearer example of the "DAY" postmark is shown in Figure 9. I have several examples of the regular RPO postmark duplexed to killers in which an "N"

Figure 4

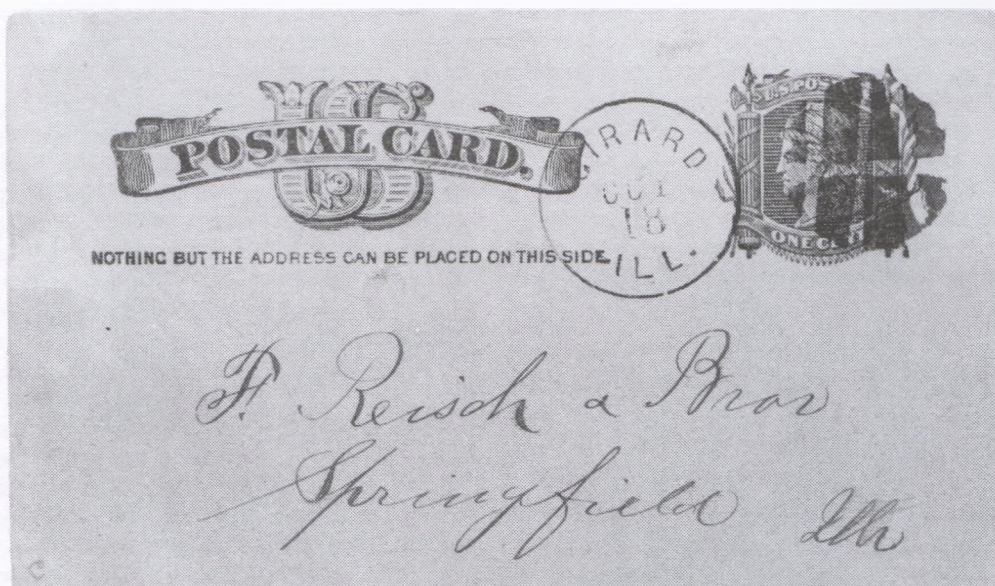


Figure 5

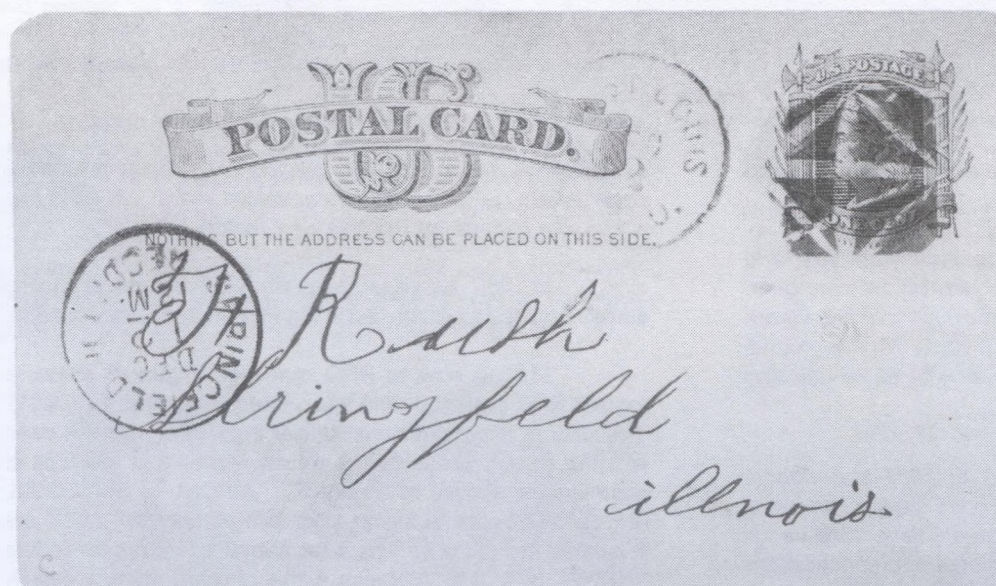
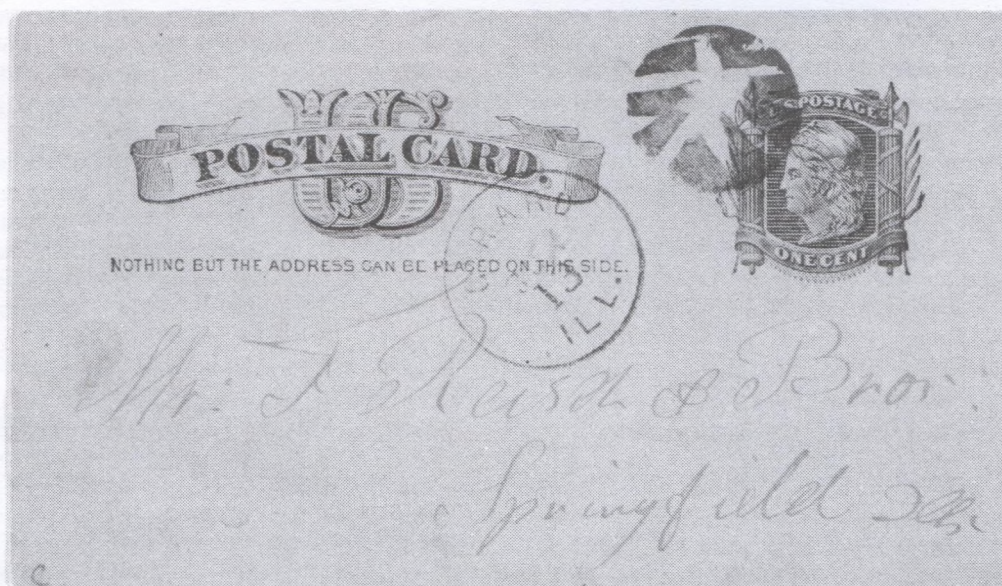


Figure 6



Figure 7

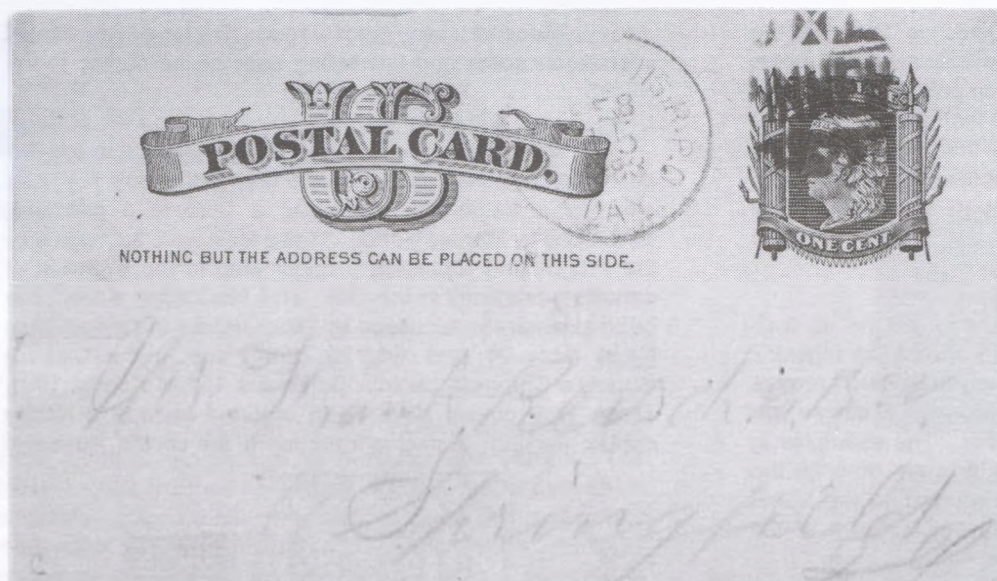


Figure 8

appears to be carved, presumably for "northbound" (up to Springfield).

Although some of the postmarks discussed do not include a year date, the beer order on the back is always dated. Comments and further information pertinent to any aspect of this article would be welcomed.

Pop Quiz Answers

by Roger D. Curran

The question in the last issue of the NEWS was: Can readers name a town that some years prior to 1860 used a duplex handstamp to cancel postage stamps? This would involve a killer duplexed to some other totally separate and distinct postal marking.

The answer, or at least one answer, is Salem, Massachusetts and the marking is illustrated in Figure 1.¹ Figure 2 shows a typical use of the handstamp to kill the stamp and also mark the cover "PAID."² The "PAID" would seem to be redundant since the adhesive stamp itself is



Figure 1

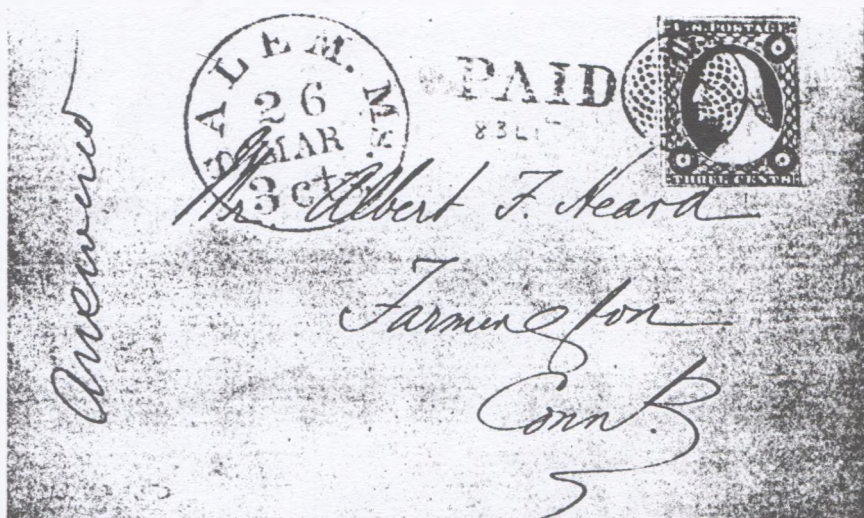


Figure 2

evidence of payment. However, the CDS has "3 cts." at the bottom which, appearing alone, would indicate three cents due. This CDS was designed for use on paid stampless mail and was to be accompanied by a PAID marking. (If the cover was unpaid, of course, the charge at the time would have been five cents.) Even though the 3 cent stamp was affixed, the careful Salem postmaster apparently wanted no misunderstanding about whether or not the "3 cents," referred to in the CDS, was due.

But how do we know that the "PAID" is, in fact, duplexed to the circular killer? First, in covers like Figure 2 with the stamp in the upper right corner, the "PAID" always shows just to the left of the killer. Occasionally, of course, the stamp is placed elsewhere on the cover. The examples in Figures 3 and 4 prove to be revealing because although the "PAID" marking is applied upside down in one case and vertically in the other, the relationship between it and the accompanying killer remains the same.

Salem covers such as those illustrated make for attractive and interesting items because of the unusual duplex marking that includes the intricate and delicate spiral of dots and the fact that the CDS is red while the PAID" and killer are black. I don't know the year date of the Figure 2 cover but those that I have seen, including Figures 3 and 4, are 1852.

Readers are encouraged to report additional information about and interesting uses of the duplex to the NEWS.

Tom Stanton responded to the question in the first paragraph by pointing out the 1859 tests in the Troy, N.Y. post office of a handstamp duplexing a CDS to a grid killer developed by Marcus Norton. These tests were authorized by the P.O.D. and represent a major step in the evolution of canceling practices in the U.S. This fascinating subject has been extensively discussed by Dick Graham in Linn's Stamp News (May 21 and July 23, 1984) and in the Classics Society's Chronicle beginning in issue 151 of August 1991. Three Troy covers have been reported bearing a Norton duplex marking. A tracing from one of the covers, illustrated

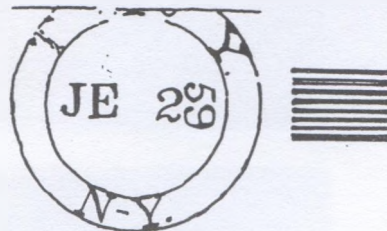


Figure 5

Figure 3

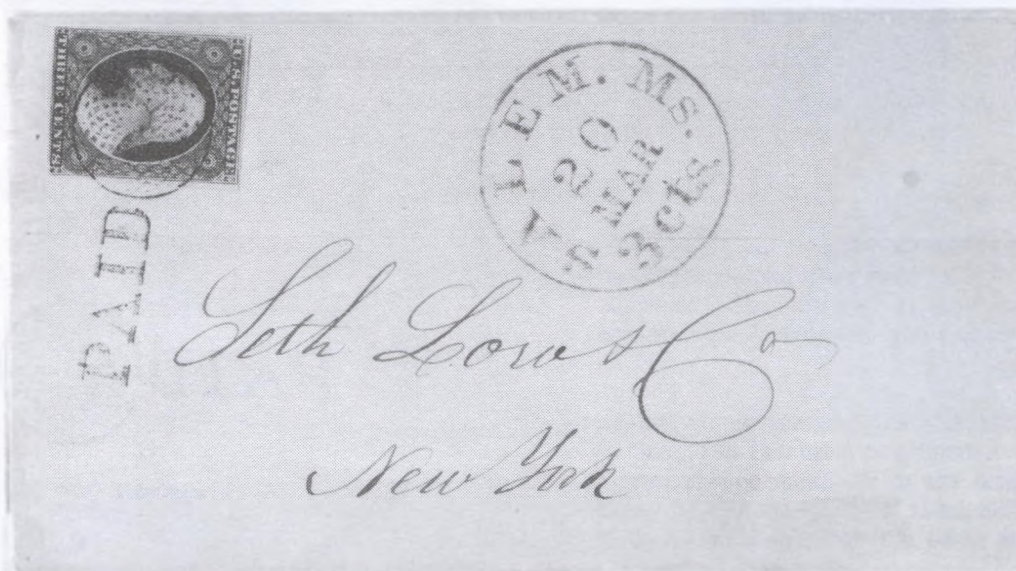
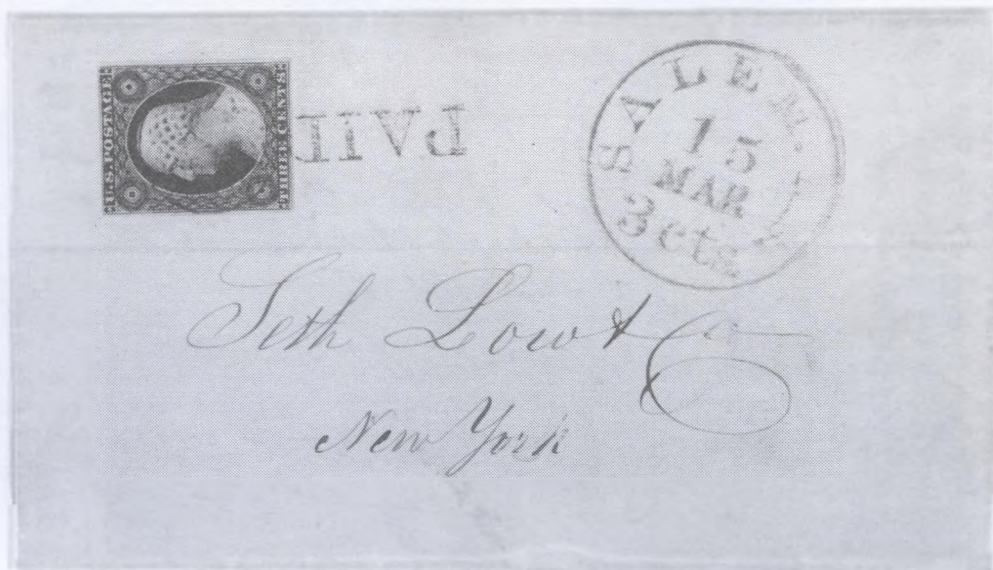


Figure 4



in Mr. Graham's August 1991 article, is shown in Figure 5.

¹Alexander, Thomas J. Simpson's U.S. Postal Markings 1851-61, U.S. Philatelic Classics Society (1979), page 139.

²Ibid

Manuscript "3"

In the Spring 1998 NEWS, we discussed uses of "3" rating numeral handstamps as obliterators of stamps. The present article touches very briefly on "3" in manuscript as an oblierator. One problem, right off, is whether the particular manuscript marking is, in fact, a "3." For example, one might ponder whether or not the Strykersville, N.Y. obliteration in Figure 1 is a "3" or just a random squiggle. However, when the Figure 2 cover is added, greater confidence emerges that a "3" was intended. Both covers have enclosures and the Figure 1 cover can be dated August 25 (1852) and Figure 2 dated October 11 (1853).

Two off-cover stamps bearing "3" obliterations are shown as Figure 3 and what are assumed to be three manuscript "3" markings are shown in Figure 4. Figure 5 illustrates a manuscript "3" killer with a "c," presumably to denote "cents," added for good measure.

Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

Figure 1

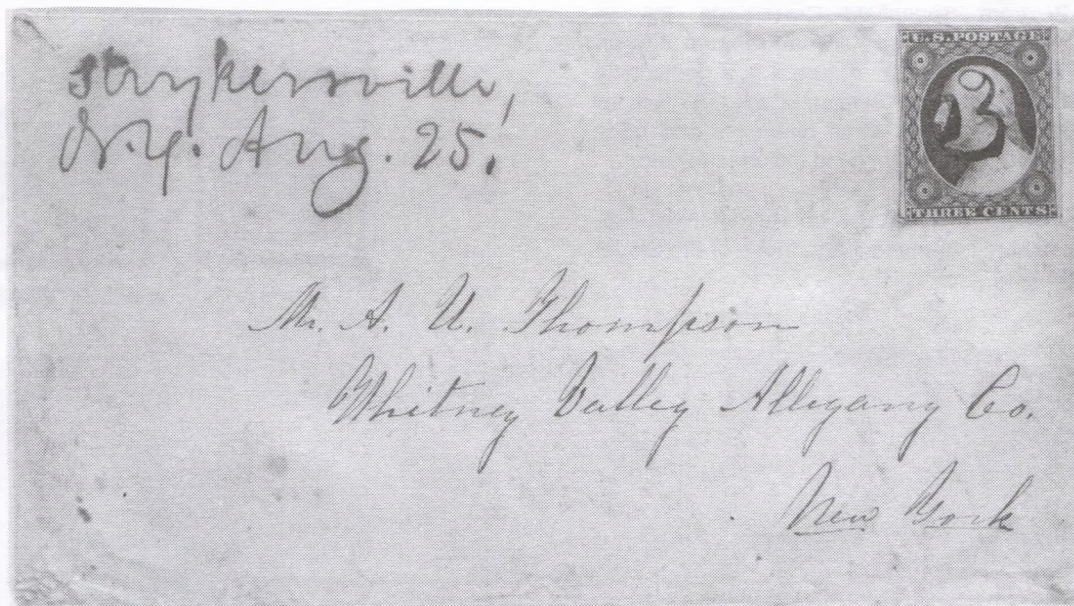
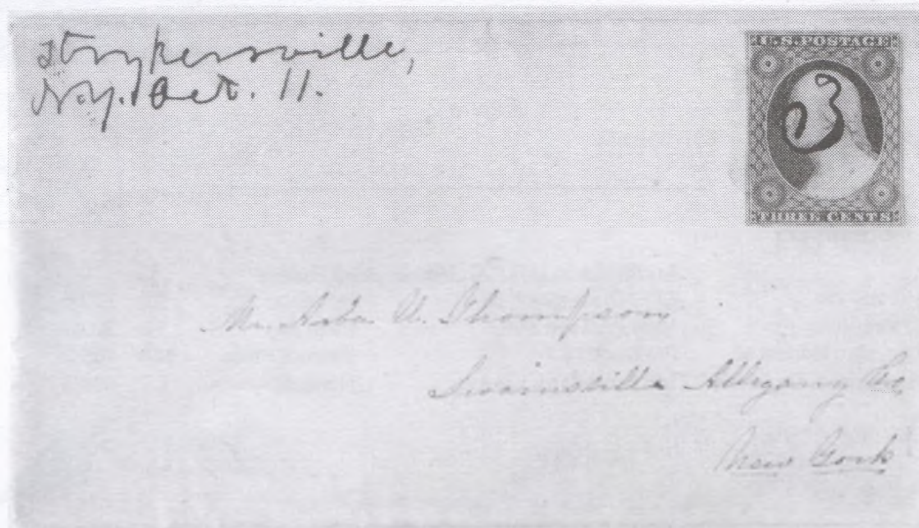


Figure 2



More on Masonic Cancellations

by Roger D. Curran

The Winter 1998 NEWS presented an article on Masonic cancellations used by U.S. post offices in the nineteenth century. Roger Rhoads brought to your editor's attention the sale of an outstanding collection of Masonic cancels some years ago. The collection belonged to Milton Greenebaum who developed a chart to classify the various types of such cancels he encountered. This chart was included in the catalog - Robert A. Siegel sale #406 of January 25, 1972. Through the courtesy of Robert A. Siegel Auctions, we reproduce Mr. Greenebaum's chart on the opposite page as well as illustrations of several of the lots in that sale.

The pair illustrated in Figure 1 shows two strikes of an extraordinary cancel. Who among us wouldn't see it as a bell with clapper? But in reality it is a plumb and level. (See category 14 on the chart.) A plumb is the weight suspended at the end of a line used to determine a true vertical position from the "level" or horizontal plane. The grouping of Masonic symbols in Figure 5 on page 11 of the Winter 1998 NEWS shows a plumb and level next to the anchor at the bottom left.

Figure 2, from Springfield Crossroads, PA, is apparently a rod with dots (category 12) and Figure 3 is an example of "7 dots" (category 14). Figure 4 is a particularly bold example of a category 8 cancellation. Category 14 is for "other Masonic designs." It lists three examples and adds "etc." Apparently, a dagger (Figure 5) is included in "etc."

Auction catalogs represent, of course, an invaluable resource of postal history information, and those of the Siegel firm are among the best.



Figure 1



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



OPEN BOOK

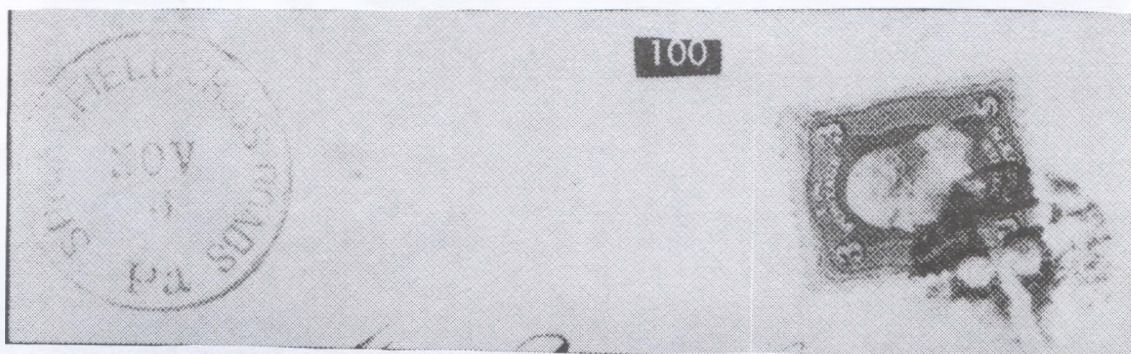


















Figure 2

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

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Horton, Bradley B. | 6239 Queensloch Dr. | Houston | TX 77096-37 |
| O'Neil, John J. | 1864 Saracen Ave. | Palm Bay | FL 32909 |
| Oprysko, Modest M. | PO Box 218 | Baldwin Place | NW 10505 |
| Samuelson, Dr. Shiela | 148 Strawberry Hill Ave. | Norwalk | CT 06851 |

MASONIC CANCELLATIONS CLASSIFICATION CHART

- Notes: 1. Only nineteenth century cancellations are illustrated.
 2. Normal cancellation is in black, but examples are known in red, blue, green and purple.
 3. True Masonic Cancels of the Square and Compass Type should contain one right (90°) angle.

| TYPE | EXAMPLE | CHARACTERISTICS | TYPE | EXAMPLE | CHARACTERISTICS |
|------|---|---|------|--|---|
| 1 |  | NEGATIVE SQUARE AND COMPASS. WITHOUT G | 11 |  | SEEING EYE ALL DESIGNS |
| 2 |  | POSITIVE SQUARE AND COMPASS. WITHOUT G | 12 |  | ROD WITH OR WITHOUT DOTS. ALL DESIGNS |
| 3 |  | NEGATIVE SQUARE AND COMPASS. WITH G | 13 |  | ^G ALL DESIGNS |
| 4 |  | POSITIVE SQUARE AND COMPASS. WITH G | 14 |  | OTHER MASONIC DESIGNS OPEN BOOK PLUMB AND LEVEL 7 DOTS ETC. |
| 5 |  | NEGATIVE SQUARE AND COMPASS WITHOUT G. ENCLOSED IN GEOMETRIC DESIGN. | 15 |  | CROSS ALL DESIGNS |
| 6 |  | POSITIVE SQUARE AND COMPASS WITHOUT G. ENCLOSED IN GEOMETRIC DESIGN. | 16 |  | SOLOMON'S SEAL OR STAR OF DAVID ALL DESIGNS |
| 7 |  | NEGATIVE SQUARE AND COMPASS WITH G. ENCLOSED IN GEOMETRIC DESIGN. | 17 | CANADIAN | ALL DESIGNS |
| 8 |  | POSITIVE SQUARE AND COMPASS WITH G. ENCLOSED IN GEOMETRIC DESIGN | 18 | MASONIC SIGNIFICANCE | TRIANGLE-STAR AND CRESCENT-MALTESE CROSS. |
| 9 |  | KEYSTONE ALL DESIGNS | 19 | ALLIED MASONIC MATERIAL | CORNER CARD POST CARD ETC. |
| 10 |  | TROWEL ALL DESIGNS | 20 | | ANYTHING NOT COVERED IN ABOVE TABLE |

More on Early Machine Cancels at New York
A Very Important Observation

In the Summer 1997 NEWS we illustrated the front of a cover bearing multiple strikes of a New York December 16 CDS duplexed to a target killer. For convenience we present the cover here as Figure 1 and include now the back as well as the front. We wondered why this cover, which entered the mails at Boston, had three New York postmarks on the front. Your editor assumed they were applied to correct the June date in the Boston CDS.

That explanation went by the boards when Dick Nunge submitted a very similar cover, in this case entering the mails at Cincinnati in February, with three strikes of the same New York duplex marking bearing the same December 16 date. It was illustrated and discussed in the Fall 1997 NEWS. (We mentioned that Mr. Nunge's cover bears an additional strike of the New York marking on the reverse but did not

illustrate it. Just for the record, we show it here as Figure 2 along with the front.) Mr. Nunge and your editor concluded that the similarities in the two covers suggested fakery to make otherwise mundane covers more interesting.

The Winter 1998 NEWS carried an article about two 1863 covers in Bob Payne's collection bearing New York markings that might be the product of a machine. Reference was made to a May 13, 1863 New York Post Office memorandum addressed to a John McAdams asking him to "... call at this office and sign proper voucher for payment on letter stamping machine." Whether the postmarks and killers on Bob's covers, dated March 28 and April 8, 1863, came from a machine and, if so, by the one referred to in the NYPO memorandum, are interesting questions.



Figure 1



Figure 2

The NEWS made no connection between the New York CDS and target markings (Figures 1 and 2) and the NYPO memorandum. Fortunately, Mr. Nunge did make this observation by pointing out that the covers bearing the New York CDS and target markings and the NYPO memorandum were all addressed to a person named John McAdams. Mr. Nunge suggests the addressees might well be one and the same person and Mr. McAdams may have experimented with his machine on old, used envelopes addressed to him with the markings in question being the products of that machine. Your editor agrees.

Attention is called to the following points.

- (1) On both covers the New York CDS and target markings are on top of the markings (Boston and Cincinnati) that showed where the covers entered the mails. Therefore, the New York markings were applied after the other markings.
- (2) Both covers are docketed "1862." Therefore, they would have been available to Mr. McAdams for testing in December

1862.

(3) The backs of both covers show ink smearing, suggestive of a less than optimum canceling process. Indeed the fronts and backs of both covers have an overall dingy appearance that might have come from processing in a machine or mechanical device of some sort.

(4) The multiple strikes of the New York CDS and target markings, at varying locations on the Figures 1 and 2 covers, reflect the absence of an automatic feed mechanism or even a guide for hand placing covers to receive the strikes.

This brings us to the statement (discussed earlier in these pages) that appeared in the February 1863 U.S. Mail and Post Office Assistant (USMPOA).

This report raises a couple of questions. What does "recently" mean? Does it mean January 1863 or perhaps earlier? Does the wording " . . . has been in operation in the New York office" mean that it was used in the processing of actual mail?

MACHINE FOR STAMPING LETTERS.—An ingenious contrivance for post-marking letters and cancelling postage stamps, has been in operation in the New York office recently. It is kept in motion with the foot, and requires two persons to operate it—one to arrange the letters, and the other to adjust them for receiving the stamp. It is as much work to feed it as it would be to feed a small family of children.—This prevents it from stamping with sufficient rapidity to answer the purpose, in large offices at least, where despatch is so essential. In fact one of the experienced stamping clerks, on a race with the machine, stamped three to its one with the common hand-stamp.

If all letters were uniform in size, and the postage stamps always in the same place, there would be less difficulty in inventing a machine to do this important part of post office labor.

overstates the case and what was involved was a guide that probably consisted of a right angle frame up against which the upper right hand corner of letters was placed to receive the postmark and killer.)

It is obviously speculative to put all the above pieces together if, indeed, they are even part of the same puzzle. But one possible scenario would be that McAdams did some personal testing of a canceling machine in December 1862, subsequently brought it to the NYPO where it underwent some live testing in January 1863, which was reported in the USMPOA. Further work was then done to improve the feeding of letters, with additional trials in the March/April period, at least, leading ultimately to the abandonment of the machine because it did not, for whatever reason or reasons, represent an improvement in mail processing. (It would not be surprising that the feed arrangement was worked on after a test in January since the USMPOA statement specifically criticized all the work required to feed the "ingenious contrivance.")

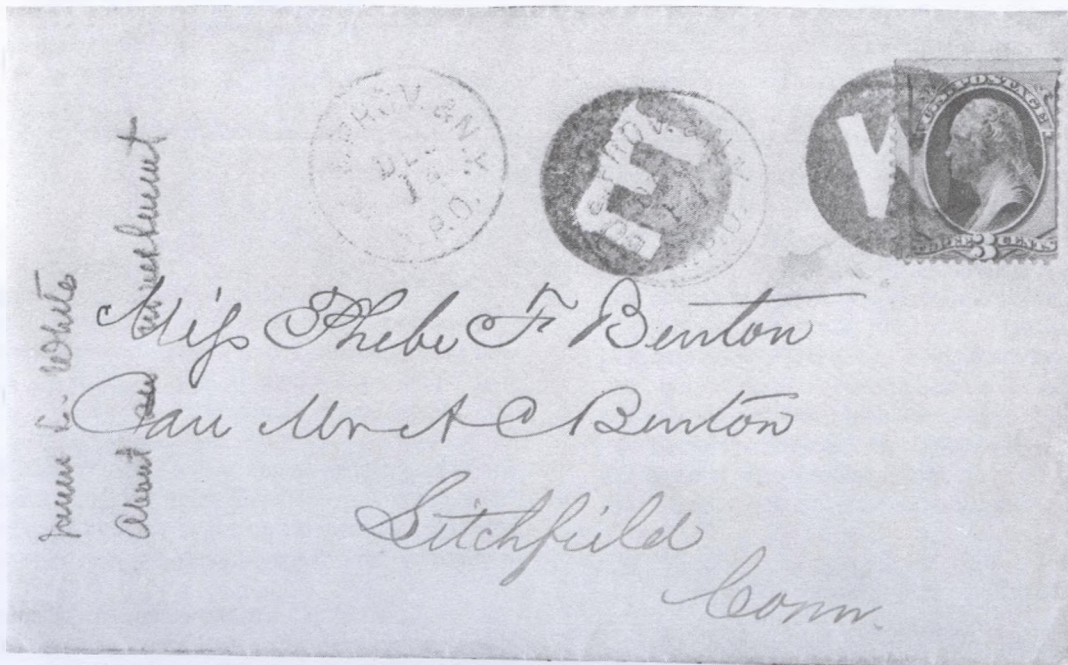
Appreciation is extended to Bob Payne for his very helpful comments on a draft of this article. However, any erroneous conclusions are strictly the responsibility of your editor.

Comments and additional data will be very much welcomed.

It certainly implies that. Another matter concerns the reference to one person being needed to "adjust" letters to receive the postmark after the letters had already been arranged. This was a machine without an automatic feed mechanism. (The attention of readers is directed to page 26 of the Spring 1998 *NEWS* wherein your editor explained why he thinks the March 28 and April 8, 1863 covers do present evidence of processing by a machine with a feed mechanism. Actually, it is very likely that the term "feed mechanism"

Boston, Providence & New York RPO

by Tom Stanton



The illustrated cover contains strikes of the "BOS, PROV & NY/RPO" CDS (Towle 70-N-1). There appears to be some confusion among the postal clerks as to how to handle the missive. The first strike was applied on a train traveling toward New York as evinced by the negative "W" in the

cancelling portion of the postmark. This strike is dated December 13, but the year is unknown. However, the stamp is a Continental 3-cent, thus the usage is probably in the mid-1870s.

The second strike was made on an east bound train and is dated the next day. This seems to indicate that the cover was mishandled and on the thirteenth it was carried past its connection for Litchfield at Bridgeport. At the latter point a connection was possible on two routes. Either northward on the Naugatuck RR to Waterbury and thence overland to Litchfield. The second route would be by the Housatonic RR from Bridgeport to Hawleyville and then on the Shepang RR to Litchfield.

The New York to Boston via Providence was one of the two possible routes between the terminals. It followed the north coast of Long Island Sound via New Haven, New London and Providence. The other and primary postal route was via New Haven, Hartford, Springfield and Worcester. This latter route is deemed primary since its rate of compensation was nearly four times that of the former route. From this it seems probable that the cover originated somewhere east of New Haven on the coastal route, however, knowledge of the actual origin would have facilitated this analysis.

Early Duplexes - Chicago

by Roger D. Curran

Soon after the July 23, 1860 postal regulation was issued that precluded use of the CDS as a canceler of adhesive stamps, post offices began adopting handstamps that duplexed a CDS and killer. With one strike, the postal clerk would postmark a letter and cancel the stamp just as when using a single strike of the CDS to do both jobs simultaneously. It was the larger post offices, concerned about the additional workload required by making two strikes with different handstamps, that generally moved most quickly to adopt the duplex handstamps.

We have previously discussed the New York, Cincinnati and Cleveland post offices as early duplex users. In the present article we will take a brief look at Chicago. Leonard Piskiewicz, a student of Chicago postal history, has been recording uses of various Chicago CDSs for the past 15 years. He kindly shared the following data regarding earliest and latest noted uses of the one inch double circle CDS:

CDS as the canceler of stamps:
2/27/1860-7/18/1860

CDS with large grid (unduplexed):
8/14/60-9/20/60¹

CDS with duplexed small grid:
9/27/60-6/29/62²

¹both blue and black ink used

²both blue and black ink used in late 1860

I assume the CDS as a canceler continued for several days, at least, after the July 23, 1860 regulation was issued, to allow for its receipt in the Chicago post office and acquisition of a suitable supply of separate grids if they were not already on hand.

In correspondence with your editor, Mr. Piskiewicz noted the following:

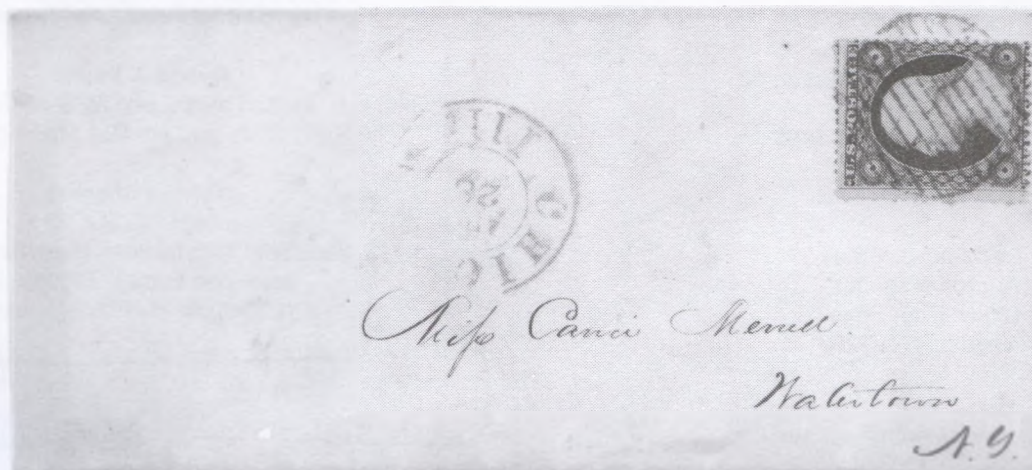
"September 27, 1860 is close to the first day of use of the duplex, I'm sure, based on a SEP 28 cover I have. It's apparent that the CDS is new, with sharp edges on the letters."

Covers bearing the large and small grids are illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. From docketing or enclosure, both can be dated 1860. Figure 3 illustrates a tracing of the duplex marking from Arthur Bond's 1963 article on the introduction of duplex handstamps.³

Readers are urged to check their collections and add to the story, if possible. If earlier or later known uses can be reported for any of the three categories listed above, please do so. Contributions will be gratefully received and acknowledged in a follow-up report.

³Arthur Bond, "Time-saving, Duplex Handstamp; Its Invention, Use and Manufacture" Postal History Journal, Vol. 3, #1 June/1963, page 62.

Figure 1



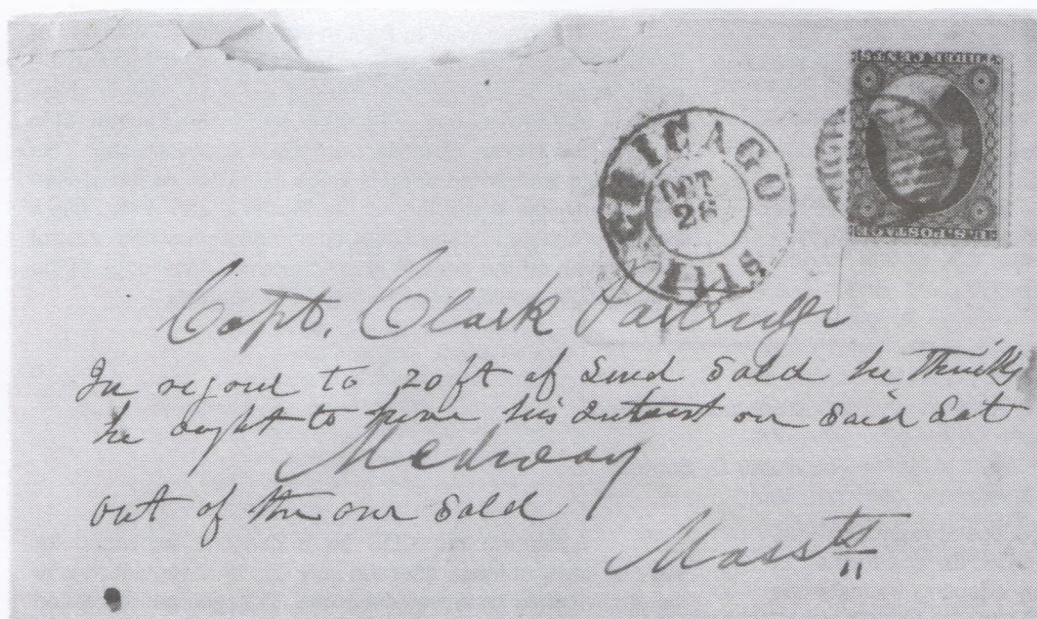


Figure 2

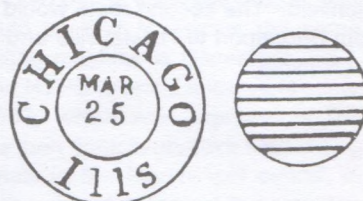


Figure 3

Promote Our Club

One of the ways we can publicize the USCC is to set out a stack of flyers on the literature or information tables at shows we attend. The USCC has a supply of such flyers just waiting for you! So please think of our club when planning to attend stamp shows and request flyers from the NEWS editor to take along and thereby introduce others to the USCC and its benefits.

Seeking to buy: Negative north/south handshake cancel from Worcester, Mass. on envelope or on stamp alone. Send photocopy and price to: Brian Burke, Box 287, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

Please Note

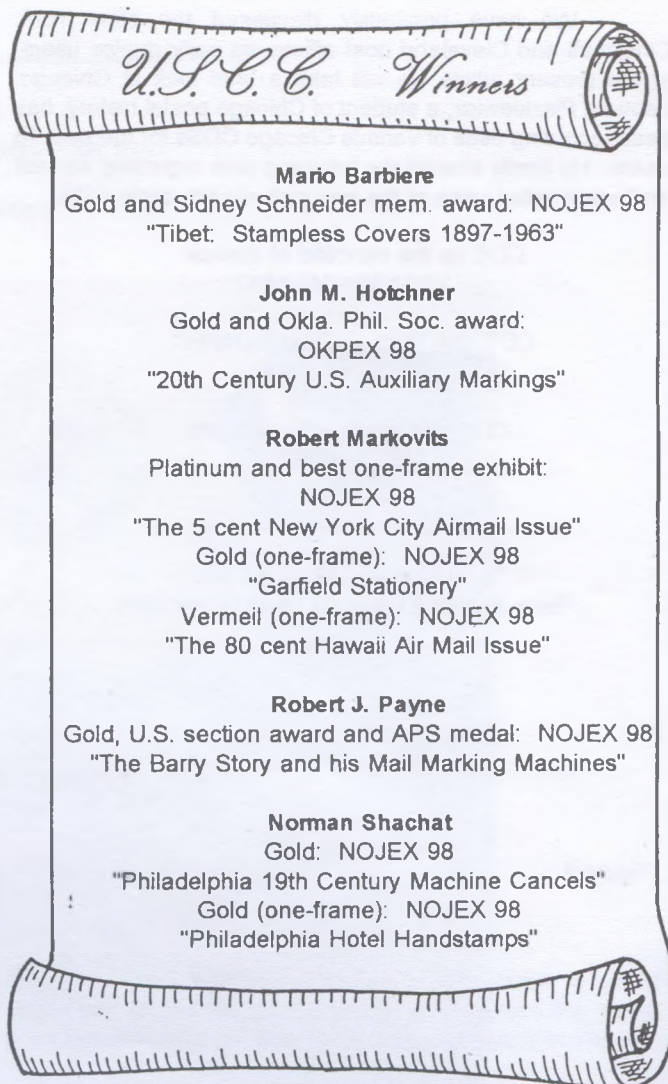
Consign now for USCC Auction #2

Deadline: October 15, 1998

contact:

Seymour B. Stiss
Auction Manager
436 N. Park Drive
Arlington, VA 22203

Turn excess material into cash!



Noteworthy Postmarks

by Roger D. Curran

The November 1997 Chronicle, published by the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, carried a census of earliest known dates of use of U.S. stamps from the 1847s through the Columbian issue of 1893. For Scott #207, the three cent re-engraved issue, the earliest known use is reported as October 29, 1881. That is the same date reported in the 1998 Scott Specialized Catalogue of U.S. Stamps.

The cover illustrated in Figure 1 is franked with a Scott #207 and is postmarked October 28, 1881, one day earlier than the published earliest known use. But wait, there's more! The cover in Figure 2, also franked with a #207, is postmarked January 4, 1881 or almost ten months earlier than the October 29, 1881 date. Talk about pushing the date back!

Upon a bit of reflection, however, the second cover should not be reported as a new early date. First of all, finding a use nearly ten months earlier than what is already known about a nineteenth century U.S. stamp seems extraordinary - if not incredible - on its face. This would be some story. Secondly, one notes January 4 is very early in a new year, opening up the notion that the die showing the previous year had not yet been changed. Thirdly, machine cancel specialist Bob Payne reports that known uses of this particular machine postmark and killer range from December 20, 1881 to April 19, 1882. I think we can safely conclude that the Figure 2 cover was actually postmarked in 1882.

Completely apart from the dates involved, these two

Figure 1

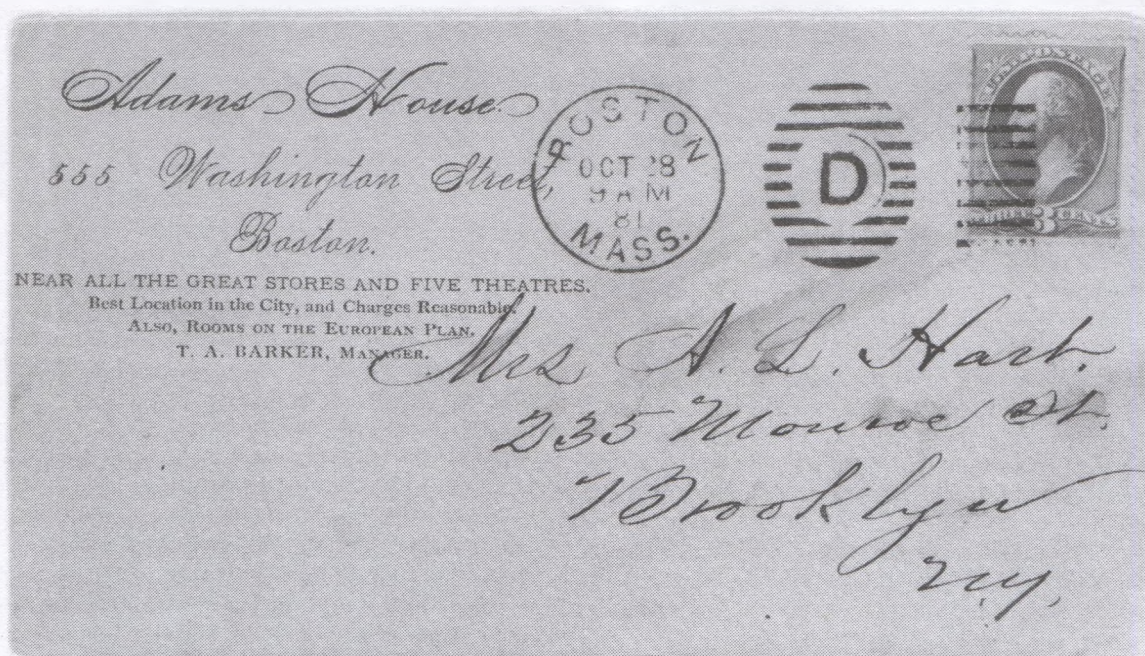
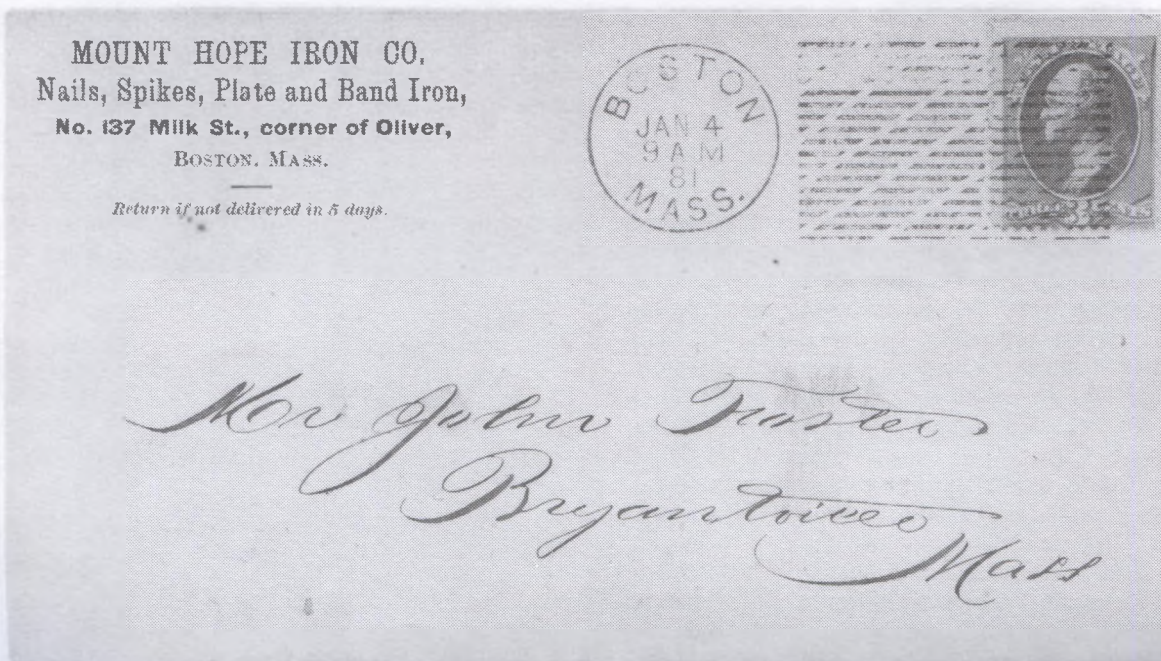


Figure 2



covers in Mr. Payne's collection are outstanding and rare Leavitt machine cancellations on first-class mail. Leavitt machines are considered to be the first successful U.S. canceling machines because, in the aggregate, they canceled a significant amount of mail. (This mail was overwhelmingly postal cards because of their uniform dimensions.) The word successful should probably be in quotes since acceptance of the machines ultimately failed because they could never satisfactorily process mail of varying size and thickness.

Indeed, the markings on the two illustrated covers come from a group that specialists term "experimental" in that they represent an attempt by Leavitt to produce a machine that would cancel covers as well as cards.

The Figure 1 cover was reported to the Chronicle and it has been learned that an even earlier use, September 29, 1881, has also been reported.

Favorite Cancels

by Roger D. Curran

I have no doubt but what all readers of the NEWS have favorite stamps or covers where the appeal has more to do with our own particular collecting interests rather than traditional considerations of cost and value. This article describes three of mine with the hope that club members will come forward with examples of theirs for a future article.

The first item, a two cent green (Scott #213), bears a machine flag cancel. The stamp is bright and fresh and, as you can see, well centered. The cancellation is of a very common type that was in use for many years. However, one doesn't often encounter a Scott #213 with a machine flag cancel because such cancels weren't introduced until late 1894 and this stamp was only current from 1877 to 1890 when it was replaced by the two cent small Banknote. Thus it was a late usage - but, still and all, no big deal. True enough, but it is very attractive and also rather unusual with its own story to tell. I like to think the dealer who sold it felt the same way as it had its own stock page and write-up, even though priced at fifteen cents.



Figure 1

The second item (Figure 2) is a two cent red brown (Scott #210). It is, of course, quite off-center and the cancel has a somewhat grainy quality. That's the bad news. The good news begins with the cancel being one of the Washington, D.C. "fishtail" series used during the 1882-1885 period. These cancels are by no means rare, or even scarce, really. But the numerals are surely among the most fancy of those appearing in ellipse killers and thus quite interesting. The other aspect is that these particular ellipses are larger than the vast majority of ellipses seen with a number or letter in the center. And this brings us to the reason why it is a favorite item. The stamp is very tall and, as it just so happens, the killer is struck in such a way, top to bottom and side to side, that virtually the whole design is on the stamp. I have an idea that there are probably only a few other stamps that show a "fishtail" killer so completely. If readers hold such



Figure 2

examples, please report them to the NEWS. This is another stamp about which I remember the details of its acquisition. Came from a dealer out of a small town near Richmond, Virginia and the cost was ten cents.

The third item is a three cent re-engraved stamp (Scott #207) that also bears an ellipse cancel. There is quite a vertical crease. The stamp isn't very well centered, either. But the very common killer is socked straight up and down and almost completely on the stamp. And there is just enough of the CDS present to confirm the post office of origin. In this case it is the New York Post Office as the tips of the top two bars of the "K" in "YORK" are clearly visible and just in the position where they would be expected. Very nice.



Figure 3

As already mentioned, your editor is eager to report additional favorites. Please write about one or more such items in your collection. I know our readers will find them interesting.