



Cancellation Club NEWS

Vol. No. 24, No. 8, Whole No. 233, Fall 1999

Old Stamps Not Recognized

by Tom Stanton

The hand stamp "Old Stamps/not Recognized" depicted the demonetization of the then current (pre-1861) stamps and envelopes during the first year of the Civil War. Besides the use at Philadelphia, as illustrated on the cover in Figure 1, the Chicago and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania post offices used similar, albeit different markings. The subject cover is interesting for three reasons, namely:

- 1) It was addressed to an army surgeon at Fort Pickens, Florida at the beginning of the war;
- 2) It illustrates a carrier usage at the Philadelphia post office; and
- 3) It depicts a feature of the demonetization procedure not normally observed.

This article will focus on the first and third of these items as the other is readily apparent on the illustration.

Dr. Charles Sutherland entered the army as an assistant surgeon in August 1852. He was promoted to major in April 1862. The doctor remained in the army after the war and retired in May 1893 as the Surgeon General, with the rank of Brigadier-General. Obviously, from the cover, he was stationed at Fort Pickens in August 1861. The fort was located on Santa Rosa Island at the entrance to Pensacola Harbor. The fort remained under Union control throughout

the war.

The period of demonetization lasted for six days after the post office in question received the new issue of stamps and/or envelopes. At Philadelphia, as was the norm, the periods differed. Philadelphia received the new issue of envelopes on August 8. Thus, when the letter was mailed on August 16, the three-cent star die envelope was no longer valid for postage. However, Philadelphia did not receive the 1861 issue of stamps until August 19. Thus the one-cent stamp of the 1857 issue was still valid for use to pay the carrier fee. The post office recognized this fact by indication that only three cents was due from the addressee. In essence, we have a situation where a stamp is cancelled by the "Old Stamps/not Recognized" marking, but the stamp was still valid.

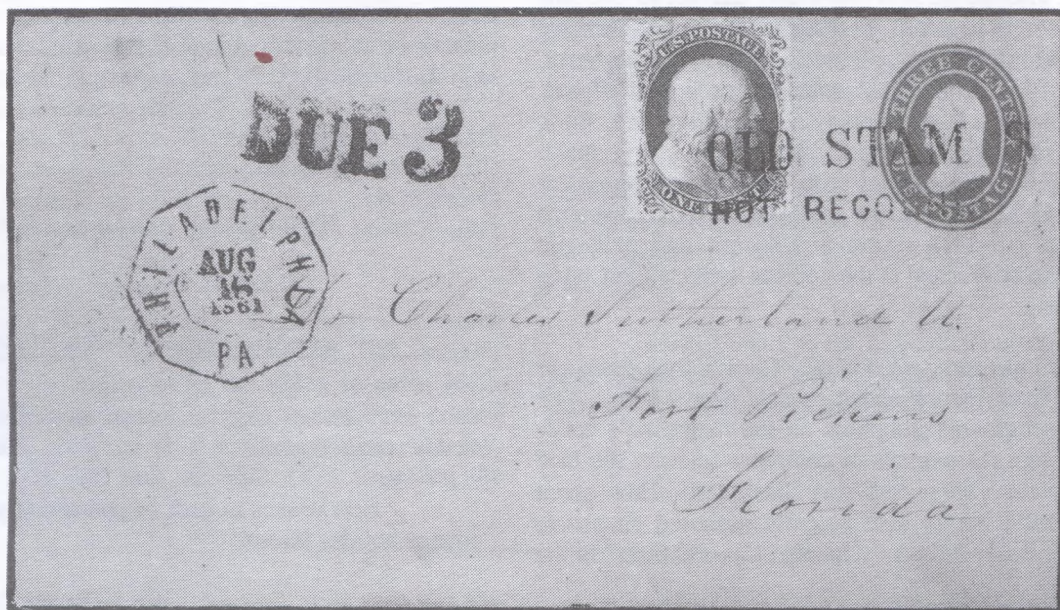
The cover appeared in the February 18, 1998 auction of Daniel F. Kelleher Co., Inc.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Heitman, Francis B., *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1903. (Volume 1, p. 937).

Perry, Elliott, *Pat Paragraphs*, Bureau Issues Association, 1981, p. 139.

Figure 1



Dear Reader,

Enclosed with this issue is a dues notice for 2000. Please complete and return it with your check as soon as possible. And take time to fill out the collecting interests section if you didn't do so earlier or if you wish to *expand* or *change* what has already been submitted. Remember, the more specific and detailed it is, the more helpful to others. We sent out a separate roster of collecting interests for the first time this year and want to provide an expanded version for 2000. I believe one of the most valuable functions a club such as ours can perform is to help put collectors with common interests in touch with one another. Let us hear from you on this. The catalog for U.S.C.C. auction #4 is also enclosed. Hopefully you will find some items of interest!

The Philadelphia show in early October, where we held the annual U.S.C.C. meeting, was very pleasant. It was moved to a new venue this year – the Fort Washington Expo Center. The hall was spacious and well-lit and excellent road markers pointed the way from the Turnpike. The U.S.C.C. presented five one-frame exhibits: Arthur Beane on noteworthy 19th century fancy cancels, Roger Rhoads on color cancels on the first postal cards, Tuck Taylor on Washington, D.C. cancellations and a second frame on early Washington, D.C. postal history, and your editor on New York ellipse cancels with a number in the center. Roger Rhoads again won the award for best U.S.C.C. exhibit and congratulations are due to Rog for a most interesting and attractive showing that was also very well written and presented. Congratulations also to the Pennsylvania Postal History Society for the best club exhibit award. I think we gave good competition but their members did an excellent job with a well-balanced showing of Pennsylvania postal history. There were nine attendees at the U.S.C.C. seminar Saturday morning, which involved an enjoyable discussion of the material exhibited by club members.

I want to thank club member and dealer Jim Lee for his support of the U.S.C.C. A couple of years ago Jim publicized our club in his newsletter and that led to ten plus new members. At our request, he featured the U.S.C.C. again in his most recent newsletter and we have, as a consequence, signed up a similar number this year. A steady flow of new members has been a top priority of the club and Jim's outstanding contribution toward this end is very much appreciated. For those of you who don't know him, Jim specializes in U.S. 19th century postal history and stamps (including fancy cancels), essays and proofs, and philatelic literature and can be reached at the address listed in the Club's membership roster.

It was a pleasure to see Nancy Clark's fine *American Philatelist* article on pumpkinhead cancels from Maine. The faces on the background pumpkins on the magazine's cover reproduce, through the marvels of computer science, the face carved in the actual killer that was illustrated. How about that! Incidentally, Nancy also recently authored an article entitled "Maine Fancy Killers: Alphabet Cancellations" in the



The U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

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June 1999 *Postal History Journal* that includes a number of newly reported items.

Best wishes to each of you and to your families for a joyous holiday season.

Roger Curran

New York City Number Cancellations – Addenda

by Roger R. Rhoads

In the last issue of the *NEWS*, I reported a wide variety of information concerning number cancels used in the NYC in the 19th century with particular emphasis on the hand carved varieties. Since that time, members have sent in new data which considerably expands our knowledge on this subject.

John Donnes sent in a number of photocopies among which is the new earliest known hand carved number, a negative “7” dated January 6, 1872 (Figure 1) used on a folded letter. This beats the previously reported April 19, 1872 date. This same cancel was also reported by Roger Curran used (probably) on December 6, 1872. Docketing on the cover states that the letter was answered on December 13, 1872.

Before John’s response, numbers “4”, “7” and “12” had been reported used in that same year. The short list was as follows:

Number	Use Date
“4”	April 19, June 26, Sept. 25, Nov. 12, Nov. 19
“7”	Dec. 6 (?)
“12”	April 18, Nov. 23

Possibly the most important information provided by John was a set of photocopies of 35 covers from the Miss C.F. Green correspondence from NYC. The earliest was October 1870 and the latest June 1873. Each of these covers has a serial number going at least as high as #291 which allows the year to be determined by means other than the CDS, docketing, or enclosure.

It’s quite easy to identify when hand carved numbers came into more general use. All the cancels November 11, 1872 and earlier are the normally expected geometrics, each one differing from the others. Then suddenly on November 20, 1872, numbers began to be used, with no further geometrics at all, including similarly sized “1”, “4” and “6” until December 30, 1872 with “3” being used as well until April 1873 when the small number cancels reported in the previous article began to be used. In sum, only six numbers have been reported used prior to Monday, April 14, 1873 after which all the rest began to appear.

November 20, 1872 was a Wednesday. It seems reasonable that certain individuals chose to identify themselves, by using a number in the killer, in early 1872. The NYPO then decided that identifying numbers was a good idea and started to use them on a limited basis on Monday, November 18, 1872 and then in April 1873 expanded the

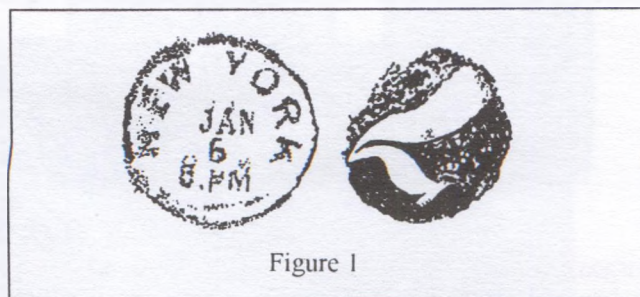


Figure 1

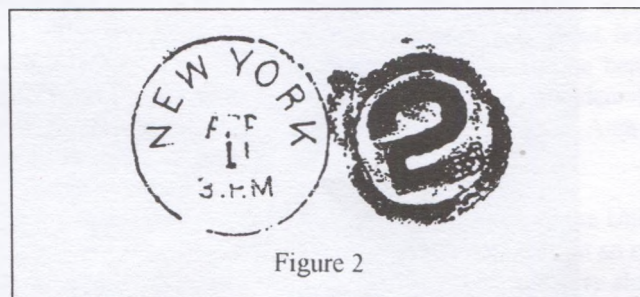


Figure 2

system to all 14 clerks. Do any of you have other number cancels documented as being used in the 1872 to mid-April 1873 time span?

Then there is the question of the positive Arabic “2” cancel. My earlier article discussed this as the only one used outside of 1874 with the exception of an “8” used in 1875. Outlier dates of July 23 and December 30, 1873 and April and December 1874 were mentioned. John again weighs in with a use date of April 1, 1873, the earliest positive Arabic number reported (Figure 2). Again, it seems to have been carved by the same hand and was used concurrently with the smaller numbers previously mentioned.

Finally, though we have not made an effort to report unduplexed numbers used on circular-rate mail due to the lack of any dating technique, John reports a 9-bar “19” ellipse. This supplements Roger Curran’s report on the subject in the Fall 1997 *NEWS*.

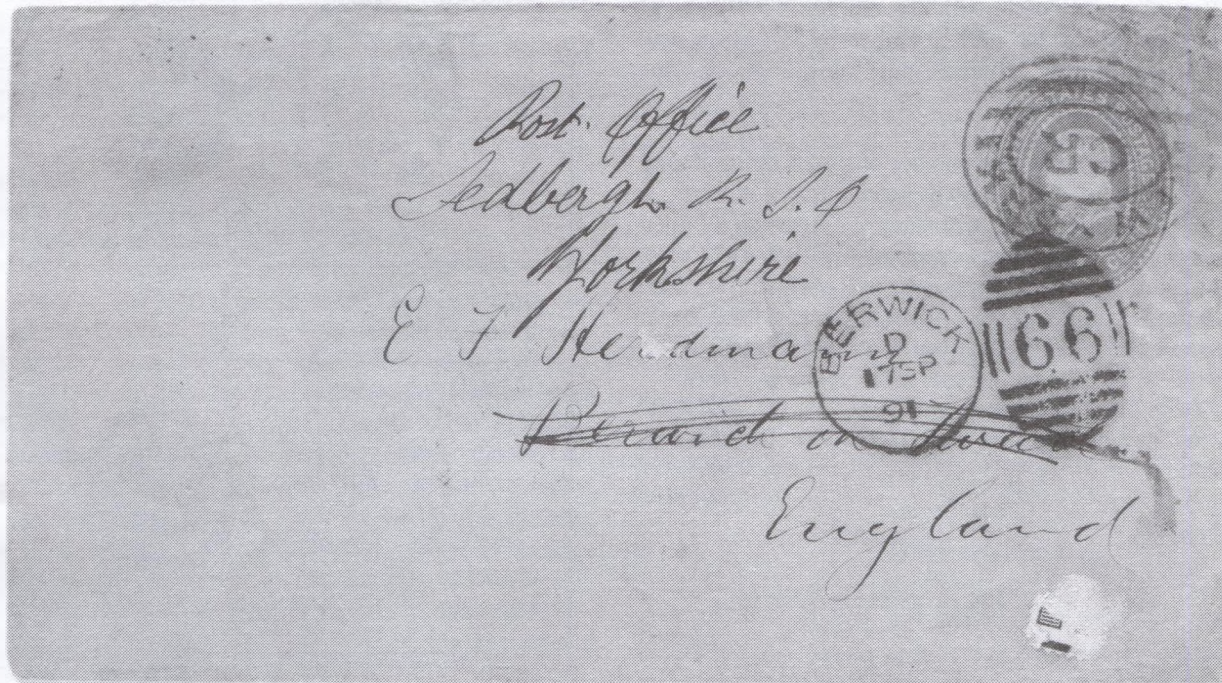
Many thanks to the individuals noted above for their help in this effort as well as Brad Horton, Wendell Triplett, Gary O’Neill and Ardy Callender for their earlier submissions.

Bargain Rate

The Winter 1999 NEWS discussed several unusual uses of the New York double oval "CR" cancel. "CR" is assumed to stand for "Circular Room" and the cancel is found overwhelmingly on one-cent stamps paying the one-cent unsealed circular rate. Shown herewith as Figure 1 is another "CR" cancel cover. However, the interesting aspect

is not the use of the cancel but what this cover demonstrates about the one cent rate. The cover was sent from New York to "Berwick on Tweed," England. Addressee E.F. Herdman had apparently relocated and the unsealed cover was redirected, on September 17, 1891, free of additional charge, to Fedbergh in "Yorkshire." Rather considerable service, don't you think, for the payment involved?

Figure 1



Unlisted Anchor

Wendell Triplett writes to report an anchor cancellation from Middletown, Vermont. It is a small cancel measuring 16 mm. in diameter, struck in black ink. It appears on a postal card postmarked July 17 (1874). A duplex handstamp may well have been used.

We have not found this cancel referenced in the literature and would welcome reports of same. Viewing the item, one quickly understands why it might not have been reported before. The cancel appears to have been carved in cork or soft wood and it wouldn't have taken much use for breakage around the rather intricate design to distort it beyond recognition. In fact, Wendell's example shows the beginning of this process. Figure 1 illustrates the actual cancel and Figure 2 a tracing.

Wendell also submits several 20th century anchor cancels showing that it was a popular subject well beyond the hand carved era. These include a magenta anchor in two circles from Anchora, Illinois dated November 26, 1932; a blue anchor postmarked on Navy Day, October 27, 1934; a black anchor on a "last day in commission" submarine cover dated September 10, 1935; and a purple anchor on a U.S.S. Arctic registered cover dated April 1, 1936, among others. The 1934 Navy Day cancel is illustrated as Figure 3.

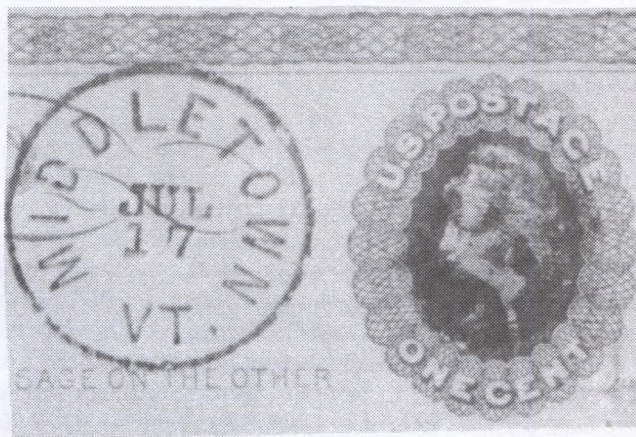


Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Kazuyuki Takahashi, M.D. and His Collection of Fancy Cancellations

by Roger D. Curran

Dr. Kazuyuki Takahashi joined the U.S. Cancellation Club in the late 1970s and remained a member until his death earlier this year. In a U.S.C.C. roster issued not long after he joined, his collecting interests, as they pertained to our club, were listed as follows:

"NYFM Cancels, 'Fort' Cancels on Officials; Japan Cancels on U.S. stamps."

Ed Hines knew Dr. Takahashi for about 15 years and spoke warmly of the man whom he described as spry even in his advanced years, possessed of a quick intellect and very much a gentle man. Ed said he developed a wonderful collection of U.S. and a great NYFM collection. In a 1986 letter to Ed, "Kaz," as he liked to be called, reminisced a bit about his collecting pursuits over the years:

"The thought of Internationals makes me recall fondly exhibiting some pages from my Japan collection at TIPEX, the Third International in New York in 1936, and winning a bronze in the junior division. I was a senior in high school then and we were living in New Rochelle, N.Y. We moved to California in 1936.

I gave up my collection while I was in college (1936-1940), selling my stamps and buying a phonograph for the \$40 or \$50, which I got for the stamps.

I didn't resume collecting until after I finished medical school in 1949, starting Japan again and also taking up U.S. I stopped collecting Japan in the 1960's and stopped collecting general U.S. in the late 1970's. I continued my topical collection (medical subjects), NYFM's, and recently became interested in certain selected fancy cancels."

The Robert A. Siegel firm auctioned Dr. Takahashi's collection of fancy cancellations in September 1999. Your editor viewed the lots and the collection was impressive, to say the least. Let's take a brief tour, pausing by some of the highlights. Lot 2565 was an exceedingly fresh cover with a lovely Waterbury skull & crossbones cancel. In his book *The Waterbury Cancellations 1865-1890*, which is the standard reference on the subject, Paul Rohloff lists the cancel as R-1 and notes it used for only a two-day period, April 13/14, 1866 and gave it a "RRRR" rating meaning "not more than 5 copies known." Rohloff's R-3 is another skull and crossbones cancel and the Siegel sale presented five examples, two on cover, two off-cover, and one on a cut square (Figure 1). This is remarkable inasmuch as Rohloff also rated this cancel as "RRRR." However, he only reported the cancel on 3 cent 1869 stamps, so one of the covers (3 cent pink entire) and the cut square were unknown to him. The strike in Figure 1 is crisp indeed with the six negative teeth showing very clearly.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Lot 2581 (Figure 2) is superb. The fine negative detail of this Waterbury cancel, especially associated with the skull, is as good as one could want it. The delicate "A" and the "J" are also beautifully struck with just a trace of incompleteness at the left foot of the "A" where the left side of the killer apparently was not fully (although just about fully) struck. One doubts that any other example would be better. This cancel was also assigned a "RRRR" rating. Incidentally, this tombstone is thought to signify the end of Andrew Johnson's term as president.

Lot 2584 (Figure 3) is a very crisp strike of the Union Mills, Pa. "KKK" with skull and crossbones cancel on an off-cover stamp. The lines forming the "K" letters are very sharp denoting early use of the killer. And talk about socked on the stamp! Incidentally, the hammer price for the very rare example of this cancel on cover, Lot 2583, was \$40,000.

Lot 2585 (Figure 4) is an absolutely super item. It is a popular and well-known "Chicago blue" cancel. The outer frame is referred to as a "coffin" and contained within it are two "K" letters separated by a diamond. Why it is that this killer is referred to over and over as a "KKK" in a coffin is hard to understand. Admittedly, the figure 4 strike is probably the ultimate in clarity and a definitive tracing could certainly be taken from it. However, other strikes generally make it clear that it is a diamond, and not a "K", in the middle.



Figure 3



Figure 4

Have you ever wondered about the difference between the West Meriden, Connecticut and Brattleboro, Vermont "devil and pitchfork" cancels? If so, the Siegel catalog clarifies the situation instantly with West Meriden and Brattleboro covers, bearing nice strikes, shown together. The design concepts for the two killers are very similar but the execution (i.e., the way in which each is carved) is not at all similar. The Brattleboro strike is not blurry, it just reflects the carving.

A rather narrow skull that collectors occasionally encounter comes from Cambridge, Mass. Lot 2595 (Figure 5) is an example on a Scott #68. The bright green background provided by this very fresh stamp makes for a most appealing item.

In contrast to the 1860s, there are relatively few fancy cancels from New York City in the 1870s on domestic mail. Probably the best known is the "Devil's Mask." Lot 2605 (Figure 6) is a very presentable strike on an off-cover 24



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

cent Banknote (Scott #153), certainly a rare item. And speaking of rare, let's consider Lot 2609 (Figure 7) which is a negative skull and crossbones in a jug! Has any reader seen or heard of such before? Close inspection reveals it to be a wonderful strike. One supposes the symbolism to be the evils of alcohol. What a great item!

Lot 2610 (Figure 8) with a "Berwick Pa." CDS is a curious thing. The killer is applied in a decidedly grayer ink than the CDS which raises the question of genuineness. The very incomplete CDS is comprised of a dark, intense black ink. However, the accompanying PF certificate states the opinion: "It is genuinely used on piece." Although not listed in Cole's *Cancellation and Killers of the Banknote Era, 1870-1894* it is assumed that this cancel is known from Berwick.

Lot 2612 (Figure 9) shows the traditional skull and crossbones design but with an interesting presentation of teeth at the bottom of the skull.

Lot 2629 (Figure 10) is, in my opinion, one of the great Banknote covers extant. It has to be seen to really appreciate the overall effect. Although slightly reduced at right, it is in otherwise pristine condition with a lovely corner card, the CDS is clear and the very large killer with negative skull and crossbones is completely and very sharply struck. One might go a bit further to note that a skull and crossbones cancel on an envelope from the Auditor General's Office seems a fitting combination! Your editor lives just 60 miles up the Susquehanna River from Harrisburg and would have been very pleased to add this cover to his collection. Alas, it went for \$3,500 plus ten percent.

I was interested in the penciled comments, presumably added many years ago, on the back of Lot 2648 (Figure 11). There were two notes in two different hands. One said: "V. rare and valuable says Warner Bates cancellation expert." The other said "Very rare when so superbly . . . (struck?) Southwick, Mass." Warner Bates belonged to the U.S.C.C. in the early years. He must have been one of the organizers of the club in 1938 since he held membership number "6." He carried out an important responsibility for the Club, which is described in an extract from an early 1940s club pamphlet presented below:

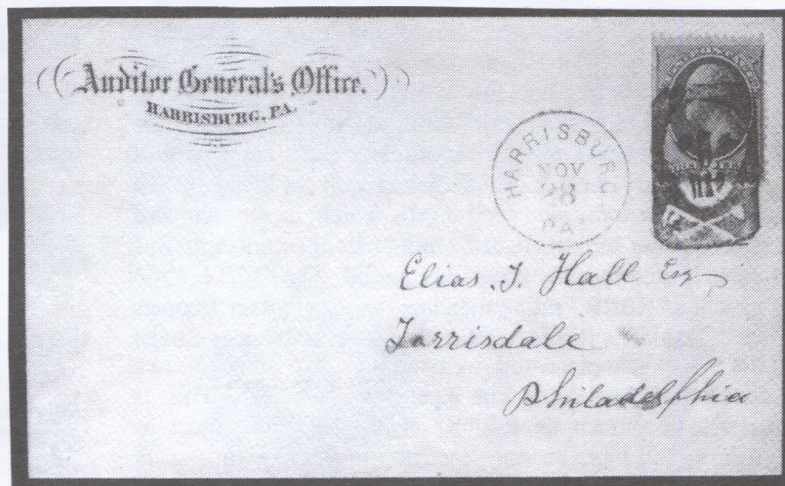


Figure 10

DEPARTMENT OF EXPERTIZING

An important and valuable feature available to members is a department that will give expert advice as to whether a given cancellation is genuine or not. Faked cancellations are an ever-present possibility, especially the rare types. This department is operated by Mr. Warner Bates, 91 State St., Albany, N. Y. Mr. Bates is an authority on this subject and his articles on Bank Note Issues are familiar to us all. He will accept an occasional stamp or cover (preferably postal stationery) free of charge and will give his opinion as to the validity of it. The item should be mounted with sufficient space underneath for his notation. Return postage must be included. This important service is available to members only.

In a January 1955 membership roster he was listed as follows:

6 WARNER BATES, WARDSBORO, VT. -
DEALER & COLLECTOR.
ANYTHING INTERESTING ON
ANY ISSUE, POSTAL STA.



Figure 11



Figure 12

Project Outreach

We trust you enjoy receiving the *NEWS* each quarter and hope that you have taken advantage, at least occasionally, of some of the other benefits of club membership such as the library service, mail auctions and back issues programs. And we presume you know other collectors, who are not Club members, who share those interests that attracted you to the U.S. Cancellation Club. We'd like to send potential new members a complimentary copy of the *NEWS* and briefly introduce the U.S.C.C. and its activities. Therefore, your club officers urge you to jot down the names and addresses of such persons on the back of the enclosed dues notice before you return it with your payment. Then we'll do the rest. Thanks!

Bulletin, Bulletin

The next annual meeting of the U.S. Cancellation Club will be at the APS STAMPSHOW 2000, which runs from August 24 through 27 in Providence, Rhode Island. We will hold at least one seminar and will staff a society table for the duration. Club members are encouraged to attend and, if feasible, consider entering an exhibit on cancellations. Full details on U.S.C.C. activities will be presented in upcoming *NEWS* issues, but we want to place the thought now about this fine show.

Lot 2652 with 1887 docketing was of interest because the "Devil" cancel from Tunkhannock, Pa. was quite reminiscent of the Devil's Mask cancel used by New York some sixteen years earlier. Possibly the Pennsylvania postmaster remembered the New York killer, or the general design was one that appeared in books or periodicals of the time.

Lot 2653 (Figure 12) from Ochoaville, Arizona shows a strike of a commercially prepared skull and crossbones killer in exquisite detail. One can count the teeth with great confidence. From Pine Mills, New Mexico, lot 2655 shows a commercially prepared skull and crossbones, but with an "X" (negative) carved in the skull.

There is much that could be said about other items in the collection, both those individually featured in the catalog and in group lots. However, your editor has run out of superlatives and space. Our appreciation is extended to Scott Trepel, president of the Siegel firm, for his courtesy in permitting the *NEWS* to reproduce illustrations from the catalog. It should be mentioned that this catalog (Siegel Sale 814) provides an excellent record of the material through clear illustrations and meticulous lot descriptions.

Viewing the collection one senses a very dedicated, serious and patient collector who carefully assembled this truly remarkable collection. It must have brought Dr. Takahashi very considerable satisfaction and pleasure.

Unusual Handstamps With Ellipses

by Roger D. Curran

The most common handstamp killer used in the last quarter of the 19th century is the elliptical grid with a number or letter in the center. Featured in this article are two unusual handstamp markings that involve a townmark duplexed to an ellipse killer. The first, illustrated in Figure 1, was postmarked at Philadelphia on September 28, 1884. The cover is franked with a pair of Scott #210 and a single #206. I had never before seen an ellipse duplexed with a "PAID" townmark. Willard does not list this marking nor does he list such duplex markings from any other cities.¹ ("PAID" markings designed for use at this time would have only been for international mail.) Any thought of a rare postmark, however, was eliminated after a check of Tom Clarke's book.² Not only is it listed, this "PAID" townmark is reported used with ellipses containing a "1," "2," and a "3" in the center and noted from May 22, 1884 through March 12, 1888! I believe

the reason it wasn't listed in Willard is because the international postage rate of five cents, in the great majority of cases, was paid with a five cent stamp and *not* through using two cent stamps. Incidentally, the address on the front of this cover is written in an old style German script. On the back is a circular datestamp of Niederhone, Germany.

The cover illustrated in Figure 2 shows a Brooklyn "V" townmark duplexed to an ellipse with an inverted "2." The adhesive stamp is a #210. The date in the postmark is April 20, 1887. The last digit is probably a "5." On the back is a pair of five cent brown Garfields. The most likely explanation for the upside-down anomaly is that the ellipse element itself screwed into the handstamp and was left in the wrong position.

Figure 1



Figure 2



As in the case of Figure 1, this townmark is not listed by Willard. In a discussion of other Brooklyn markings, he mentions the 1887 *Postal Guides* as listing the following Brooklyn "substations":³

- B. Brevoort
- E. Corner of Atlantic and Smith Avenue
- G. Green Point
- S. Corner of Broadway and Willoughby Avenue
- V. Van Brunt
- W. Williamsburg

(We assume that Van Brunt was technically a substation even though the registry postmark on the front of the Figure 2 cover refers to "Station.") Willard reported seeing Brooklyn substation postmarks with either a large "W" or "B" duplexed

to ellipses containing a "1," "2," or "3" in the center. He did not report any with an "E," "G," "S," or "V." Substations at this time did not postmark and process mail other than registered letters, so probably all of these markings are on the scarce side. Can readers report additional substation "V" markings or markings from any other substations not found by Willard?

¹ Willard, Edward L. *The Two Cent Red Brown of 1883-1887*, Volume II, (H.L. Lindquist Publications, Inc., 1970).

² Clarke, Tom *A Catalog of Philadelphia Postmarks 18th Century to the Present*, Part II, 1990, p. 12-56.

³ Willard, op. cit., p. 124.

Distinctive Killer

Rob Lund sends the stamp illustrated in Figure 1 and asks about the origin of the cancellation. It doesn't appear in the Skinner-Eno book and your editor has seen no reports of it elsewhere in the literature. The design is fascinating. There is a central negative circle and four "3" numerals connected to and radiating out from it at right angles to one another. There are also four negative circles or discs separating the four "3" numerals. The "3" numerals are not the same in appearance but the killer evidences a high degree of carving skill in the fine detail of the numerals and in the very round negative circles which are quite a bit more geometrically circular than your editor's rough tracing shows. The killer has a psychedelic appearance, albeit used in the 1860s rather than the 1960s! Presumably the use of a "3" was intended to denote the standard postage rate at the time.

There is part of a townmark, apparently duplexed to the killer, that shows a "W," followed by a space and then an "E," an "S," and what may be a "T."

Who can report additional examples or identify the post office that used this killer?



Figure 1

U.S.C.C. Winners

William H. Bauer
Vermeil: Nojex 99, Seacaucus, NJ
Boosterism in Colorado, 1859 to the Present

Alan Campbell
Grand, Gold, APS pre-1900.
BIA and USPCS awards
Stampshow 99, Cleveland, OH
U.S. Official Stamps, 1873-1884

Robert L. Markovits
Champion of Champions (top U.S. exhibiting award)
Stampshow 99, Cleveland, OH
Large Gold: Philexfrance 99, Paris
U.S. Officials, 1873-1884

Gold: China 99, Beijing
Gold: Napex 99, Washington, D.C.
U.S. Special Delivery Issues, 1885-1917

Robert J. Payne
Gold, MCS and APS research awards
Colopex 99, Columbus, OH
The U.S. Post Office - Washington, D.C.

Thomas O. Taylor
Vermeil: Nojex 99, Seacaucus, NJ
Washington, D.C. Postal Markings, 1788-1847

More on Early Machine Cancels

In the Winter 1998 *NEWS*, there was an article entitled "Early Machine Cancel?" that discussed New York Post Office markings on two covers dated March 28 and April 8, 1863. The same type of New York CDS die was used on each cover. The cancelers were similar but not the same. They were both elliptical in shape and comprised of horizontal bars. However, the canceler bars on one cover were thicker than those on the other. It was speculated by Bob Payne, owner of both covers, that the canceler with thicker bars (April 8) was substituted for the thinner bar killer (March 28) because the thicker bars would do a better job of canceling and postal officials were very concerned about the re-use of lightly canceled stamps.

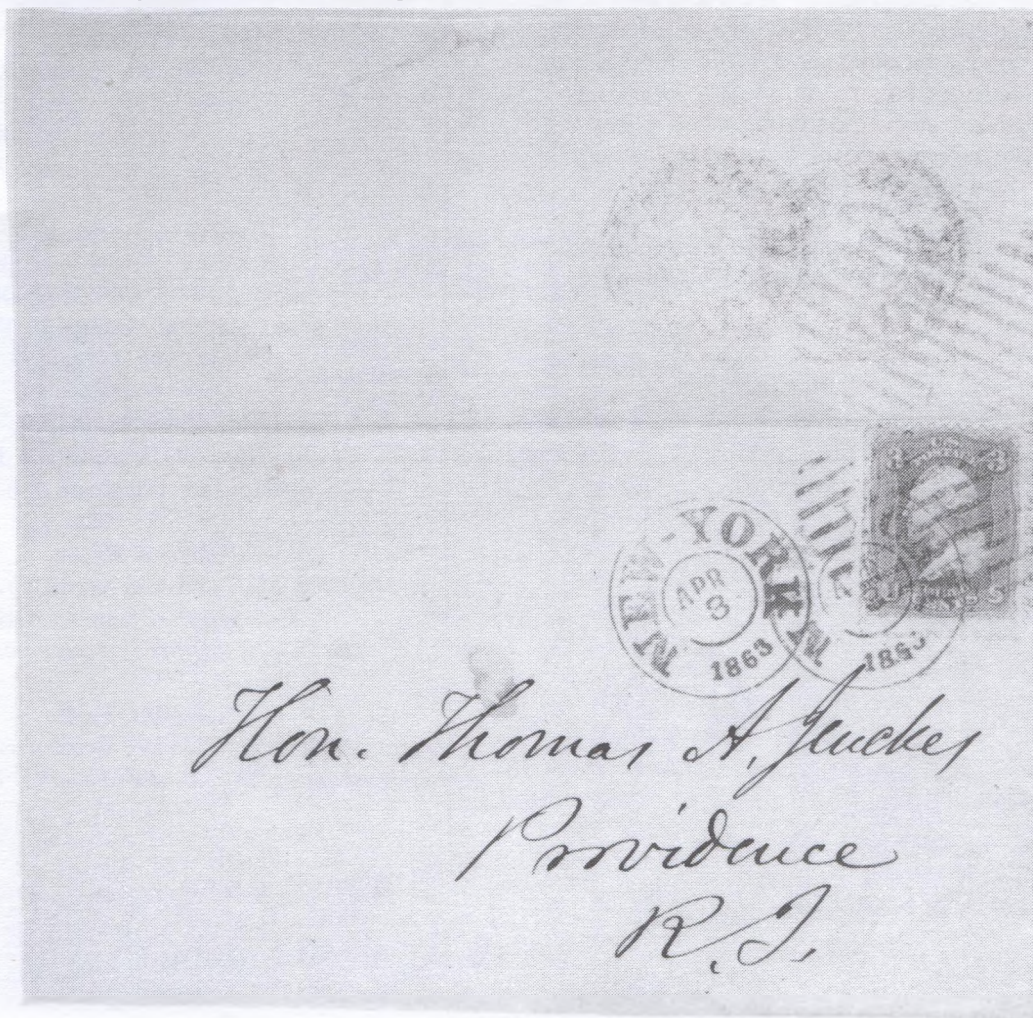
The 1998 article discussed a strong indication that the CDS and canceler markings on these two covers are the product of a "letter canceling machine." Crucial to this judgment was the presence of a mirror image offset of the markings on the back of each cover. Sometimes, especially in the early years of the evolution of canceling machines, when they were hand operated and hand fed one piece at a time, the dies continued to be activated from a power source when no letter or postal card was in position to receive the markings. The ink was then applied to the underlying surface on which a piece of mail was supposed to be resting. When a mail piece was subsequently placed in that area and canceled, the force of the strike created pressure on the underlying surface which then deposited a mirror image offset of the markings on the

back of the cover. Not only do Bob's covers both show an offset, but in each case the offset is *directly* opposite and in register with the front CDS and canceler markings.

Two more covers have now been reported - by Tom Mazza and Bob Payne - that show the same type of CDS (in these cases dated April 6 and April 3, 1863 respectively) with the thin bar ellipse canceler. And they both have an in-register offset on the back that is directly opposite the CDS and canceler markings on the front. A remarkable aspect of the April 3 (Figure 1) cover is that there is an overlapping double-strike of the CDS and canceler on the front. One strike of the CDS and canceler is about 20mm to the left of the other. And sure enough, the same overlapping and positioning occurs on the offset!

Offsets on the backs of 19th century covers are, of course, occasionally noted. No doubt these generally result from letters being stacked immediately after postmarking. But they are not regularly seen and one wouldn't expect the offset to appear directly opposite the CDS and canceler markings on the front, except by happenstance, *unless a canceling machine was involved*. And that is the situation for each of the four known covers bearing the markings in question. To have offsets on the backs of all four covers and to have *all* of them directly opposite the postmarks on the fronts of the covers seems beyond coincidence.

Figure 1



The reports of the new covers, combined with those previously identified, have led Bob Payne to the following view:

"In my opinion, the duplex markings on these four covers are the earliest known machine cancels to mark letters in New York City and even more important the earliest in the United States. I believe they were impressed by the John McAdams machine discussed in the Winter 1998 and Summer 1998 issues of the *U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS*."

Who will be the first to discover the John McAdams patent and any background on the man himself?

Thanks to Bob Payne for his consultation on the writing of this report.

One Small Mystery Solved

by Roger D. Curran

One of the interesting byways of 19th century cancellations involves the use of rating numerals and other "stampless" handstamp markings to cancel stamps. Some uses are surprisingly late. One way to define "late" in this context would be to say it applies to uses at least 25 years after the stampless era came to a close for domestic mail. That would be 25 years after January 1, 1856 when prepayment of postage using stamps, with few exceptions, became mandatory. In 1881 the re-engraved stamps began appearing and rating numeral cancels on those and later issues can certainly be termed "late." Rating numerals as cancelers are, of course, noted well into the 1890s.

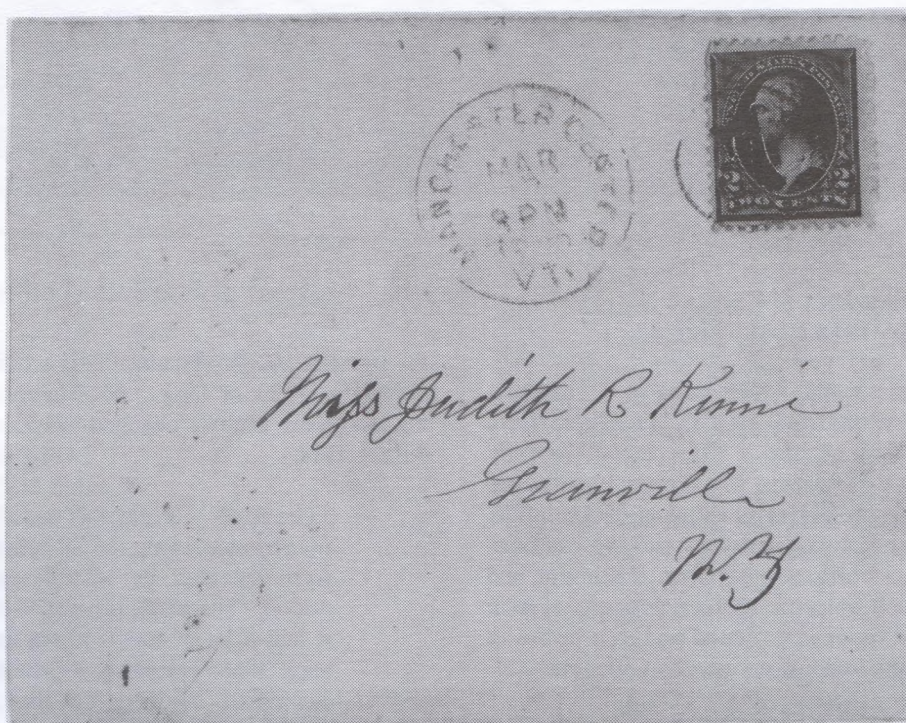


Figure 2

One of the cancels I have seen (perhaps 5-10 examples off-cover) on Scott #220 is a "7" in a circle. Three examples are shown in Figure 1. I have often wondered where it came from. There is a "7" reported from Manchester Center, Vermont on 1895 issue stamps in the Slawson et al book *The Postal History of Vermont*, but with no mention of an outer circle. Some other numerals are listed in the book with an outer circle. Not long ago I came across a cover (see Figure 2) that answers the question. It is postmarked Manchester Center, Vermont and bears an 1895 issue stamp canceled by the same "7" in a circle. (The killer is strengthened in the illustration to make it stand out.) Just this summer, an off-cover four cent 1895 issue stamp (Scott #269) bearing this cancel appeared as lot 3595 in Nutmeg Mail Auctions Sale No. 19.

Since the cancel is not listed in Slawson on other than 1895 issues (although, as mentioned above, it is seen on off-cover 1890 issues), it was presumably placed in service as a canceler at a very late date. What were the circumstances of its introduction? Was the "7" used by Manchester Center during the stampless era, assuming there was a Manchester Center at that time? Actually, I have doubt about whether it really is a "stampless" rating numeral given what seems to be its late appearance and the fact that a "7" would be a very scarce rating numeral. A "7" was used on some unpaid ship mail where a 2 cent fee is added to a 5 cent rate. Who will shed more light on this cancel or on the 7 cent rate?

Figure 1



Early Trial?

The New York 9-bar ellipse cancels were the first regularly used ellipse cancels in the U.S. This is an important postal history event because ellipse cancels were ultimately employed by every large city in the U.S. and a great many smaller cities and towns as well. As mentioned in Roger Rhoads' article entitled "New York City Numeral Cancellations, 1872-99" on page 106 of the Summer 1999 *NEWS*, the earliest reported use of the New York 9-bar ellipse is May 3, 1876. A number of May 1876 uses have been recorded and there seems to be no question at all but what this is when regular use started.

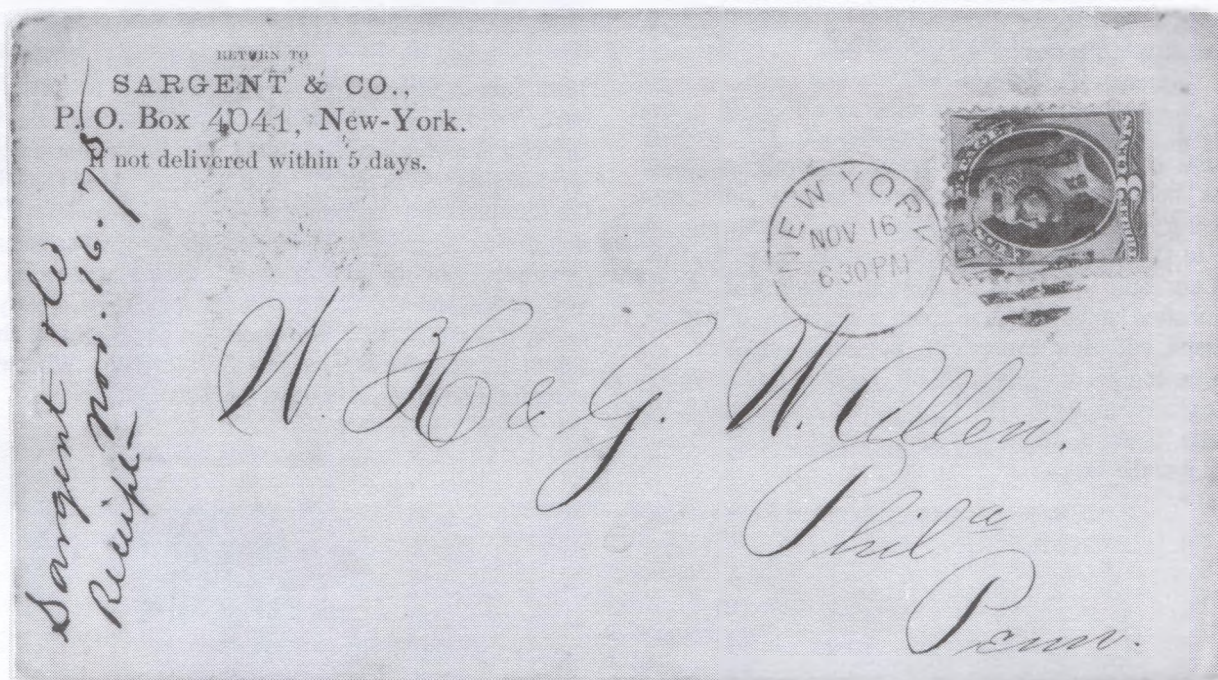
A cover has now come to our attention that raises the question of a possible earlier trial. Figure 1 illustrates the cover front and Figure 2 the receipt marking on the back. The docketing on the left end of the cover front is:

"Sargent & Co.
Nov. 16.75
Receipt"

Figure 2



Figure 1



Another User of Large "STEAMBOAT" Marking

A large and distinctive "STEAMBOAT" marking was discussed in the Spring 1999 *NEWS*. Examples were noted from Baltimore and Mobile. Niles Schuh recently submitted a cover (Figure 1) bearing what certainly seems to be the same marking, apparently originating at Jacksonville, Florida. Your editor is not aware that this marking has been reported before from post offices other than Baltimore and Mobile and will very much welcome additional reports of such usage. Niles reports the cover is wrinkled and torn in a way indicating that it was stuffed with many pages at one time.

We are not able to date this cover except to say that

the stamp is a Continental printing which means the cover was mailed in 1873 or later. It certainly appears to have been mailed before the rate changed to two cents in October 1883. Niles writes:

"The cover's origin was probably one of the many towns along the St. Johns River which were serviced by steamboats during that period. The St. Johns is 273 miles long and it had a lot of towns along its banks, even back then. I have a list of about 100 steamboat landings on the St. Johns in 1884."

Figure 1

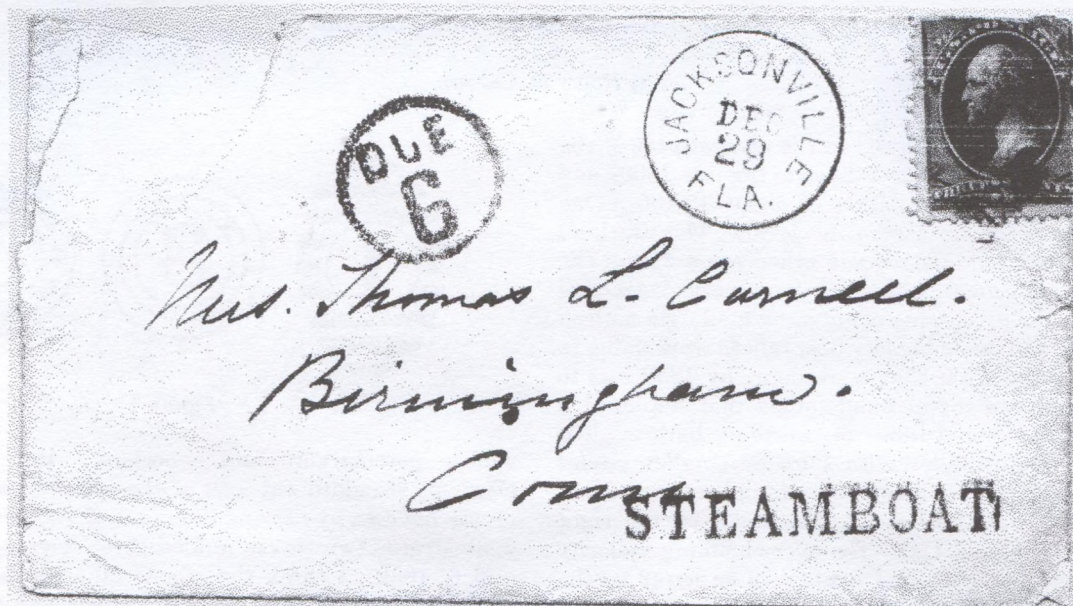


Figure 2



Both contract and non-contract steamboats operated on the St. Johns River. The carrier of the Figure 1 cover was a steamboat without a mail contract. Niles sent along two ads for contract steamers. One of them, for Baya's Line, advertised "triple daily service (Sundays excluded)" between Jacksonville and Palatka. It identified itself with "United States Fast Mail." The other ad, featuring the steamer "Debary," is shown in Figure 2.

Additions to the Membership Roster

Donald A. Barany, 1137 Second St., Suite 202
Santa Monica, CA 90403
John Beatty, Box 129
Cherry Hill, IL 61317
John Beirne, 43-20 Judge St.
Elmhurst, NY 11373-3458
Nancy B. Z. Clark, PO Box 451
Lexington, GA 30648
Edward Field, 2502 Marguerita Ave.
Santa Monica, CA 90402
Ronald J. Friedman, 1186 Waterwheel Dr.
Yardley, PA 19067

Eric Glohr, 139 Richard Ave.
Lansing, MI 48917
Todd A. Hirn, 3551 Russett Lane
Port Orange, FL 32119
B. Clyde Hutchinson, 6672 Sims Dr.
Oakland, CA 94611
Donald Johnstone, 183 Rudgate Rd.
Colchester, VT 05446
Vincent Maiorama, 112 Ashmore Rd.
Greer, SC 29650-2926
Lawrence J. Montello, PO Box 268
Bird Island, MN 55310
Richard Singer, 84 Ridge Rd.
Glen Rock, NJ 07452-2322
Nolan Starks, 338 Beechwood Dr.
Adrian, MI 49221
Prescott Van Horn, Jr., 3017 Chimneywood Dr.
Floyds Knobs, IN 47119
Shawn Wilson, 19191 Ravenna Rd.
Mantua, OH 44255-9533

"Standardized" Killers from Cortland

by Roger D. Curran

Cortland, N.Y. is located in the central part of the state. The map I have before me dates to the late 1960s and shows Cortland with a population of about 19,100. One presumes it was much smaller in the 1880s. The Cortland postmaster in 1882 (and perhaps in other years within the same general timeframe), fashioned some very distinctive killers to use in the processing of outgoing mail. He noticed what New York and other big city post offices were doing to cancel stamps. And what they were doing by 1882 was to employ manufactured metal handstamps that duplexed a CDS to an ellipse-shaped killer of canceling bars or, less frequently, a circular killer with bars or smaller circles inside. Figure 1 illustrates a common example of the former and two variations of the latter.¹ The killer on the right comes from Washington, D.C. The overwhelming majority of these killers, of course, had a number or letter in the center.

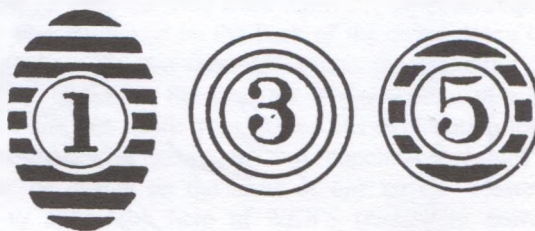


Figure 1

rubber postmarkers and cancelers. But he liked the efficient, standardized look of these killers and decided to create his own by carving them out of wood or cork. Figure 2 illustrates two covers mailed three days apart – April 3 and 6, 1882. I think the ellipse killer is duplexed to the CDS as the space between is 9 mm. on both covers. In the center of the ellipse is a numeral "8."

The Cortland postmaster likely couldn't afford (or couldn't justify in his own mind) the purchase of a manufactured metal handstamp for the amount of mail he processed. Perhaps he also was uncomfortable with the idea, albeit less expensive, of using the newly popular

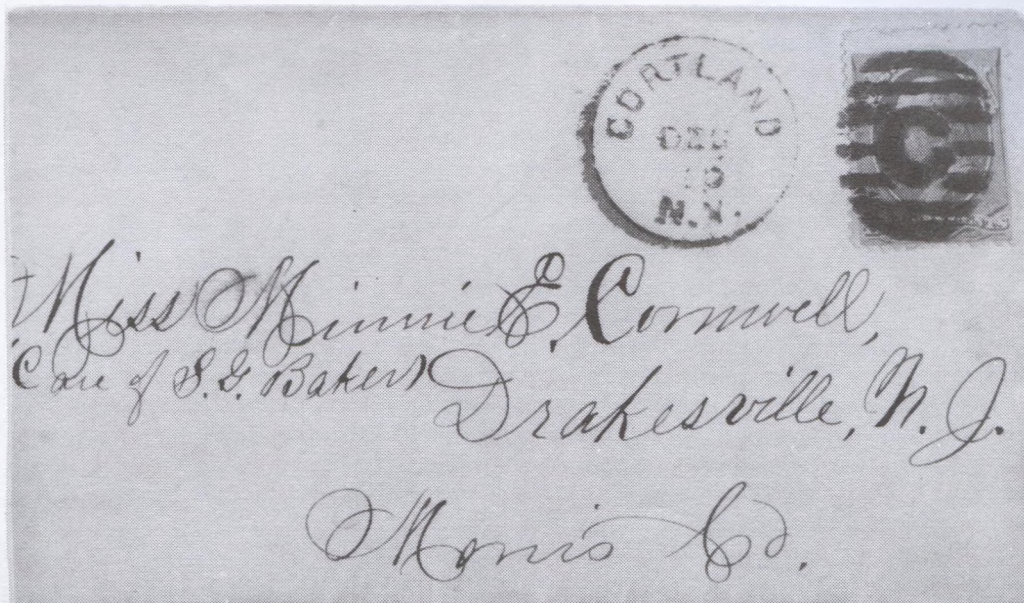
Figure 3 illustrates a carved ellipse killer with a letter "C" (no doubt for Cortland) in the center. On the back of the cover is a New York "transit" marking dated December 25, 1882.



Figure 2



Figure 3



On a closely related matter, one of the many things I have learned from Jim Cole's fine book *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894* is the origin of the "8" killer illustrated in Figure 4 on an off-cover Scott #207. It is from Cortland and identified by Cole as an "Eight Ball." What an apt and colorful description! Jim illustrates on page 186 a very nice cover bearing this cancel with the following caption:

"The Cortland, N.Y. 'eight-ball' cancel appears to be duplexed on this example, but if so, the '8' is inverted as the small loop is at the bottom. Perhaps the inverted eight ball reflects the idea of being 'behind the eight-ball.'"

This may be true but with the presence also of an "8" in the ellipse cancel, I incline to the view that the Cortland postmaster just wanted his killers to resemble those he had seen on incoming mail and since they much more commonly

Figure 4

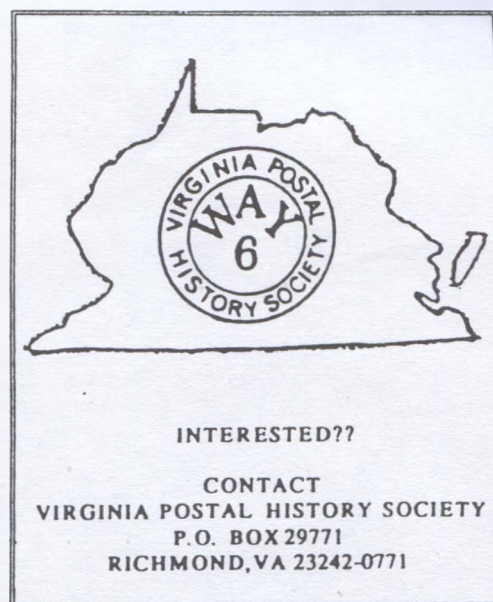


employed a number in the center, he picked a number – any number – to make the similarity complete. Comments and information about other Cortland killers of this general type are invited.

There are actually a fair number of hand carved ellipse cancels available. This subject warrants an article at some point and readers are urged to report examples, regardless of where they are from or whether they are on or off cover. Figure 5 is a favorite of mine and I have no idea where it originated. A nice clear design was created but with a bit of a reverse-image problem!



Figure 5



¹Burr, Gilbert M. "Standardized Handstamp Cancellations on the Bank Note Issues," *American Philatelist*, January 1935-April 1936, pages 203, 516-7.

More on Manuscripts

Various manuscript cancels were illustrated in the Summer 1999 *NEWS* and Rob Lund responded with several interesting examples from his collection. Figure 1 illustrates a cover addressed in a fancy script to George A. Chase in Somerset, Mass. In several of the enclosed loops – for example, in the “G” of George and in the “Ch” of Chase – diagonal shading lines are drawn in. Undulating lines of dots appear above and below most of Somerset and ornamental bracketing occurs around Somerset/Mass. Rising to the challenge of such ruffles and flourishes, the postmaster at Dighton, Mass. added his own fancy penmanship in applying the post office name and the “Feb 17th 1860” date.

In Figure 2, Rob shows three off cover stamps, two

of which bear humorous modifications of Washington's portrait. A profile is added to the left stamp while a dark head of hair as well as some long whiskers and a collar or necklace is added to the right stamp. Rob's stamp in the middle probably bears a privately applied precancel. The book *Silent Precancels* lists such cancels (crossed pen lines extending to the edges of the stamp) from San Francisco and Marysville, California.¹ In the case of San Francisco, they were reportedly used by Wells Fargo and from Marysville by Wells Fargo and Adams Express.

We'll add a third whimsical cancel in Figure 3 postmarked “E. Berlin/May 23.”

¹ Smith, David W. *Silent Precancels*, The Precancel Stamp Society (1995), pp. 5-6.

Figure 1

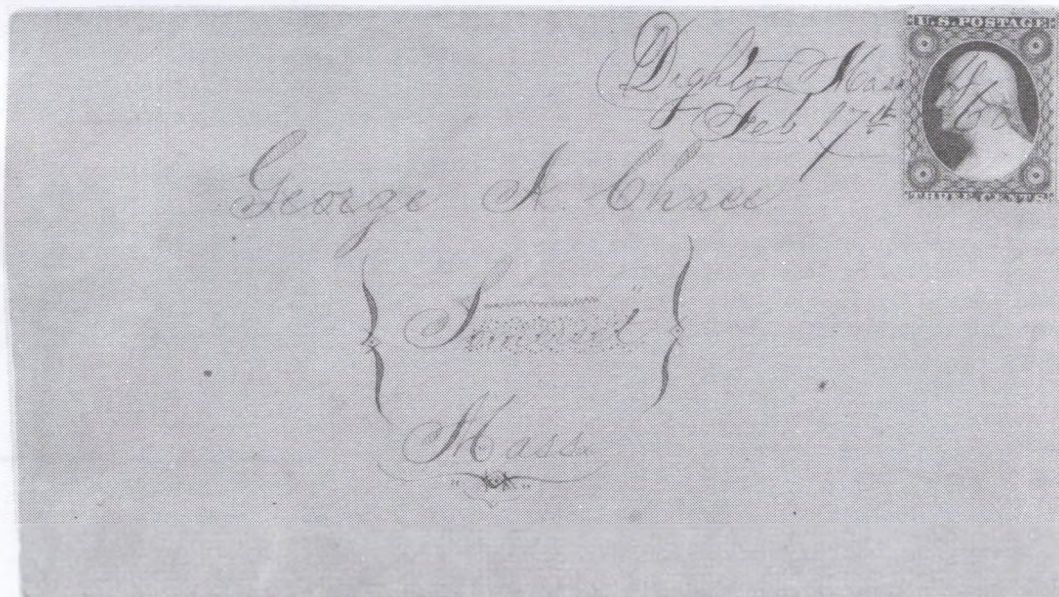


Figure 2



Figure 3

