



Cancellation Club NEWS

Vol. 25, No. 2, Whole No. 235, Spring 2000

"PAID" Cancels on the 1861 Three Cent Issue

by Abe Boyarsky

In 1955 George W. Linn published *The PAID Markings on the Three-Cent Stamp of 1861*. This is an update of additional towns that used "PAID" cancels beyond those found by Mr. Linn. In addition, there are several "PAID" cancels that Mr. Linn illustrated that he had found off cover which I have now identified as to origin. All towns are in black unless otherwise stated.

Chapter Two – The Gothic PAID

Type I Pendleton, N.Y. (double strike)
Smethport, Pa.

Type II Stoddard, N.H.

Type IV Hampton Falls, N.H.
Kittery Point, Me.

Type V Hampton Falls, N.H. (dot in "P")
Charles River Village, Mass.
Melrose, Mass.

Type VII Harrison Square, Mass.
West Medway, Mass.
West Willington, Conn.

Type VIII Edwardstown, Mass.
Belleplaine, Min.
Lincoln, Mass.
Delphi, N.Y.

West Concord, Vt. (blue as well as black)

Chapter Three – The Roman PAID

Type I Pomfret, Vt. (in blue)

Type II Shoreham, Me.
Wiscasset, Me.
Morristown, Vt.
Ware, Ms.
Northfield, Mass. (in blue)

Type III Westborough, Mass.
Monson, Mass.

Type IV North Andover Depot, Mass. (red as well as blue)

Type V Farmington, Mich.
Brookfield, Mass.
Taunton, Mass.
Worcester, Mass.

Norwichtown, Conn. (double strike) (in blue)
Brighton, Mass. (double strike) (in blue)
Warrenton, Pa. (in blue)
Wareham, Mass. (in blue)
Stockbridge, Mass. (listed in black and also
double strike in ultramarine)

Type VIII (in red – town unknown)

Type XIII Baltimore, Md.

Type XV Leominster, Mass.
Yarmouth, Me. (in blue)
North Andover, Mass. (in very dark blue)

Chapter Six – PAID in Oval

Type III Coffstown, N.H.
Beloit, Wis.
Archbald, Ohio

Type X Westborough, Mass.

Chapter Seven – PAID in Oval

Type I Winona, Minn.
Hatfield, Mass. (in red)

Type II North Vassalboro, Me. (in blue as well as black)

Type V North Isleborough, Me.

Type XVI Profile House, N.H.

(Continued on page 20)

Dear Reader,

It was a pleasure meeting with west coast U.S.C.C. members at the recent WESTPEX show in San Francisco. Thanks to all who came out and a special tip-of-the-hat to Carl Stieg for his support in making arrangements for the U.S.C.C. seminar and breakfast meetings.

We now turn attention to our club's annual meeting which will be held this year at the APS STAMPSHOW in Providence, R.I., August 24-27. We hope to have our seminar/meeting on Saturday afternoon August 26 but the show schedule has not yet been finalized. Check the philatelic press as the time draws near for the actual schedule. The seminar, lasting approximately one hour, will involve a slide presentation on the evolution of U.S. canceling practices from 1847, when the Post Office Department first issued stamps, through the early years of machine canceling, ending about 1895. A large number of covers will be shown.

In addition to the seminar, the U.S.C.C. will maintain a society table for the four days of the show and also sponsor awards for the best cancellation exhibit in both single-frame and multi-frame categories. These awards will be postal scales used by post offices to weigh and rate mail matter. To qualify for the award, 40% of the material in the exhibit must consist of obliterations of stamps or postal stationery. Thanks to Tuck Taylor for contributing the scales.

I would like to renew a request made some time ago. We maintain a supply of colorful U.S.C.C. flyers used to introduce the Club (and benefits of membership) that we would like to see distributed as widely as possible. When planning to attend a stamp show, let me know and we'll send a supply to you to put on the show's literature table. We are always looking for ways to reach out to prospective new members and will very much welcome your help with the flyers and also any suggestions on other steps the Club might take to expand its rolls.

Roger Curran

Robert Babb Seeking Name and Address

Robert Babb of 11 Mills Lane, Los Lunas, NM 87031-7170 writes to say that he has misplaced the name and address of the person who wrote him about sending some notes on PAID cancels on the 3¢ 1861 issue. If that person will write again, Bob will be pleased to comply forthwith.

Opportunity for Dealer Members

The U.S.C.C. is offering to establish links between the U.S.C.C. website and the websites of its dealer members. If you are a dealer of philatelic material and wish to have a link from the U.S.C.C. website, please contact Bob Trachomowicz and provide the information you wish to have presented on the link. Bob's e-mail address is:

track@worchester-ma.u-net.com



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Echo from an Earlier Civilization?

In the Winter 1999 *NEWS* we discussed a very unusual type of ellipse marking – one with a negative letter in the center. The ellipse handstamps at issue appear to be manufactured rather than hand carved. Letters “B,” “E,” “G,” “H,” “N,” “S,” and “W” (or is it an “M”?) were reported on off-cover stamps. Several examples are illustrated here as Figure 1. Mention was made of the negative “B” ellipse that Jim Cole attributes to New Brunswick, N.J. in his Banknote era cancels book, and an 1878 New Haven, Connecticut cover with a negative “S” ellipse.



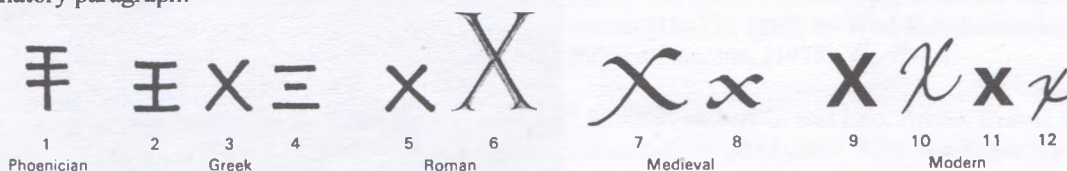
Figure 1

And then there was the “unidentified figure” we show now as Figure 2. Not long ago and just by



Figure 2

happenstance, your editor came across a brief dictionary presentation on the derivation of the letter “x.” We herewith provide the several letter forms illustrated in the dictionary and the explanatory paragraph:¹



Around 1000 B.C. the Phoenicians and other Semites of Syria and Palestine began to use a graphic sign in the form (1). They gave it the name *sāmekh*, meaning “fish,” and used it for their consonant *s*. After 900 B.C. the Greeks borrowed the sign from the Phoenicians, altering its form slightly (2,4), and in some scripts introducing a new form (3). They also changed its value to *x* and renamed it *xi*. The Greek form (3) passed unchanged via Etruscan to the Roman alphabet (5). The Roman Monumental Capital (6) is the prototype of our modern capital, printed (9) and written (10). The written Roman form (5) developed into the late Roman and medieval Uncial (7) and Cursive (8). These are the bases of our modern small letter, printed (11) and written (12).

Yes, it’s true that the “figure” doesn’t precisely match one of the illustrated examples. But it is fully encompassed by the two Greek versions; that is, the shorter middle horizontal bar not present in #2 is used in #4. Could it be that the New Haven postmaster was influenced by a Yale lecture and decided to inject a little mystery in the design of one of the ellipses he ordered? More information and comments are invited.

¹Copyright © 1981 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Reproduced by permission from *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*.

Anchor Update

Wendell Triplett advises that Roger Rhoads reported to him another example of the Middletown Vermont anchor illustrated and discussed on page 116 of the Fall 1999 *NEWS*. Roger’s example is on a UX1 card with a definite date of July 1, 1873. Wendell continued:

In the Cancellation Club News, we gave a date of (1874) for my Middletown, VT anchor cancel, which I now know is not correct. Plating flaws on my UX3 indicated a printing in 1873 or 1874, and these cards were in short supply and used rather quickly. The message side of the card had a question from a cheese salesman, “Will you want a few cheese about the 20th.” In 1873, the 20th was a Sunday and in 1874, the 20th was a Monday. I reasoned that business would be conducted on a Monday. Wrong!

I now know that the date should be 1873, for this well-worn cancel. Roger Rhoads said his cancel was in similar condition.

Thanks to Wendell and Roger for enabling us to correct the record.

Addition to Club Roster
 Denis J. Donohue, 43-12 56th St., Woodside,
 NY 11377-4739

(Continued from front page)

Chapter Eight – PAID 3 in circle

Type I Muscatine, Ia.
West Newbury, Mass.
Kennebunk, Me.
Somerville, Mass. (in blue)
Hatfield, Mass. (in red)

Type IV East Holliston, Mass.
New Portland, Me.

Type V Berlin, Mass.
Cambridge, Mass.

Type VIII Londonderry, Vt.
Lena, Ill.
Westbrook, Conn.
Lacon, Ill. (in green)

Type XII Warner, N.H. (also in red)

Chapter Nine – Roman PAID 3 in circle

Type XXI Derby, Vt.
Auburndale, Mass.

Ed. This article is a major expansion of George Linn's fine 1955 book and represents years of patient work on a most interesting subject. The NEWS is very appreciative of Mr. Boyarsky's willingness to share the fruits of his labor. Presented below are three covers from his collection that show representative "PAID" cancels including the newly reported Swanzey, N.H. listing.

Type XXX Bristol, Conn. (in red)

Type XXXI Swanzey, N.H.
Birmingham, O. (in blue)

Chapter Ten – PAID 3 in arc

Type I Winstead, Conn.
Barre, Mass.
West Borough, Mass.
Rochester, Pa.
Roxbury, Pa.
Orange, Mass. (in blue)

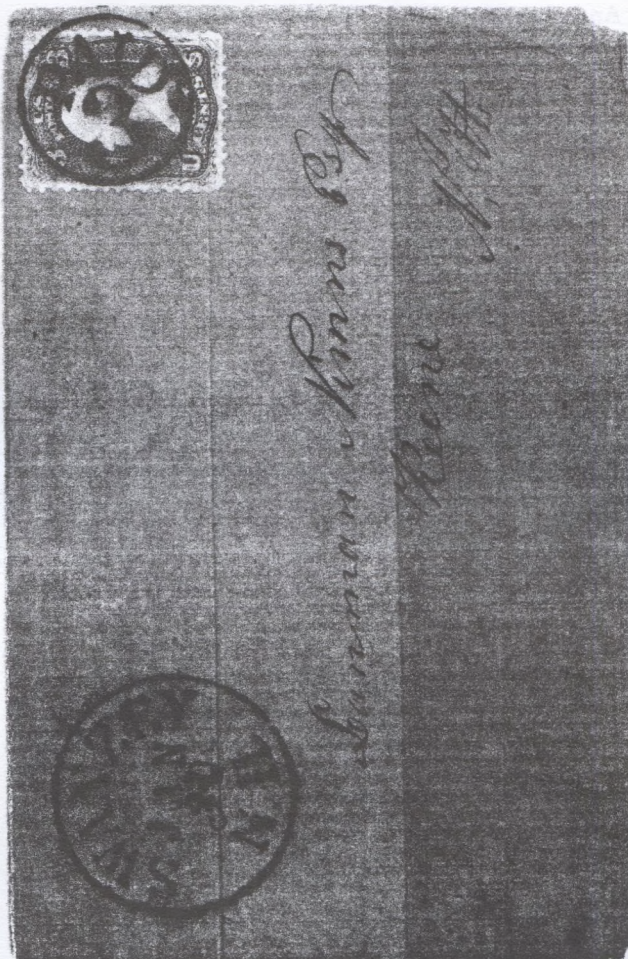
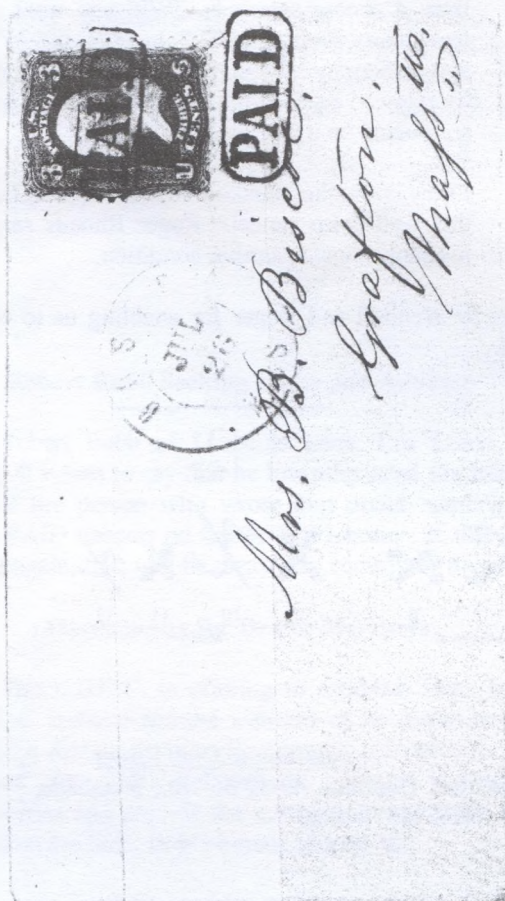
Type II Stockbridge, Mass.

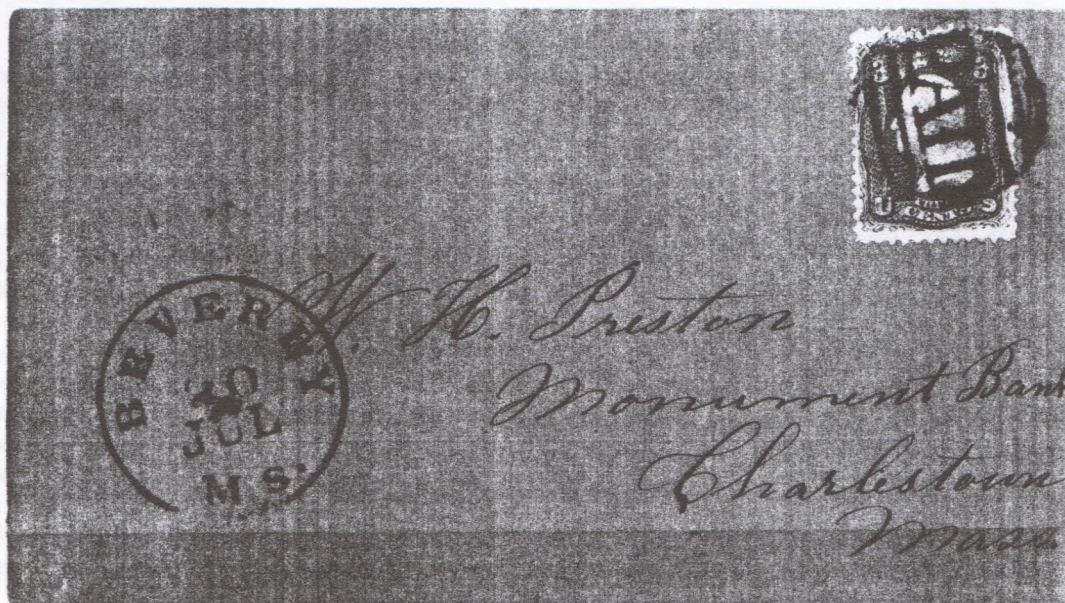
Type III New Britain, Vt.
Troy Grove, Ill.

Chapter Eleven – Fancy PAIDs

Type V Bethel, Vt.

Type VI Putnam, Conn.





Elusive Patent Cancel

Club member Donald Alec Barany submits the cancel in Figure 1 and a summary of the literature concerning it. It is a patent cancel as can be told by examining the back of the piece, which is illustrated as Figure 2. Two indentation lines are clearly visible. Mr. Barany states that both the stamp and piece have been cut by the blades of the cancel in several locations.

This cancel was perhaps first reported by Fred Schmalzriedt. In his article in the 1933 Norona book, he stated that nine examples were known to him on one cent 1861 issue stamps and one example on a three cent 1861 issue stamp. At least in the case of the one-cent stamps, Schmalzriedt reported that the blades cut entirely through the stamp. He also indicated that the origin of the cancellation was unknown.¹

The cancel is also reported in Skinner-Eno without the origin and the tracing from that book is shown here as Figure 3.²

As presented in *Bakers' U.S. Classics*, a compilation of the weekly columns in *Stamps* magazine of Hugh J. and J. David Baker, 1962-69, the December 19, 1964 column illustrated the cancel and attributed it to Charleston, S.C.³ More recently, Don Evans, in his book on the one cent 1861 issue stamp, reported the Charleston attribution but noted that he, Evans, had not seen it recorded on cover and stated that Hubert Skinner and Richard Graham doubted that Charleston was the origin.⁴

If any reader can identify the origin of this patent cancel or provide more information about it, please do so.



Figure 1

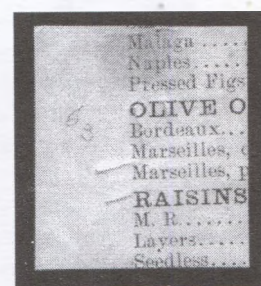


Figure 2

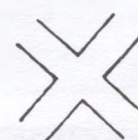


Figure 3

and *Postal History* (containing an article entitled Patent Cancellations (1847 to 1887) by Fred R. Schmalzriedt) Quartermaster Publications, Inc. (1975), pp. 167-8.

² Skinner, Hubert C. and Eno, Amos, *United States Cancellations 1845-1869*, APS Handbook Series, p. 259.

³ Baker, Hugh J. and Baker, J. David, *Bakers' U.S. Classics*, USPCS, Columbus, Ohio (1985), page 259.

⁴ Evans, Don L., *The United States 1¢ Franklin 1861-1867*, Linn's Stamp News, Sidney, Ohio (1997), page 146.

¹ Norona, Delf (editor) *Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks*

A Common Style Duplex Marking That May be Scarce

by Roger D. Curran

Linn's postal history writer Richard Graham reported in his January 4, 1999 column that handstamp markings such as those shown in Figure 1 were produced by the *first* duplex handstamps issued by the U.S. Post Office Department. He said they were made by Edmund Hoole as a subcontractor to the Fairbanks Scale Co. which held the U.S.P.O.D. contract. These handstamps were issued during the 1863-1866 period. In some post offices they remained in service for a number of years thereafter. More than 600 post offices received such handstamps and covers bearing these markings are, of course, often seen in dealer boxes.

Sometimes the concentric circles killer was removed from what was presumably a ring holder and a cut cork or wood killer inserted. The premiere user of cut corks, from a cancellation collector's standpoint, was Waterbury,

Connecticut and some of the most outstanding fancy cancels produced in the U.S. were duplexed at Waterbury to this standard double-circle townmark. One of the best examples is illustrated in Figure 2. The cover was lot 22 in the Christie's-Robson Lowe sale of December 13, 1990 and was described in the catalog as "... inspired by the annual Bridgeport Firemen's parade through Waterbury." Illustrated here as Figure 3 is a Waterbury duplex marking wherein the killer is the standard issue of four concentric circles. Paul C. Rohloff's excellent book entitled *The Waterbury Cancellations 1865-1890* does not list this cancel. It might seem a reasonable assumption that it wasn't listed because it is not at all like the distinctive cancels for which the Waterbury post office is famous. However, it seems clear that Rohloff sought to document *all* Waterbury cancels used during the period in question, including the mundane. For example, Rohloff illustrated the two designs shown in Figure 4 which were described as "... purchased metal designs used during the absence of Mr. Hill."¹

Figure 1



Figure 2

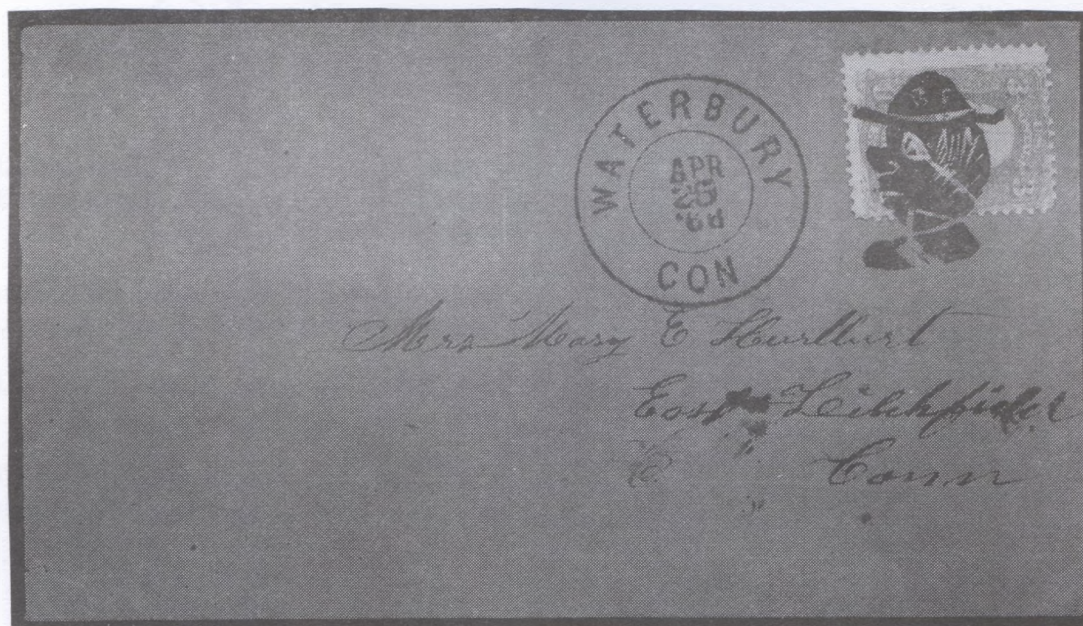




Figure 3

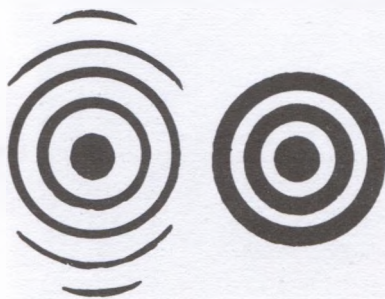


Figure 4

Just recently, I had the pleasure of meeting club member Bruce Campbell at the WESTPEX 2000 show. Bruce brought along some of the cancellations in his collection including a fine showing of Waterbury cancels. Included, to my pleasant surprise, was another example of a Waterbury double-circle postmark duplexed to the standard concentric circles killer, this one dated 1864, as I recall. I would appreciate learning of other covers showing the four concentric circles killer duplexed to the double-circle Waterbury CDS.

On a related matter, club member Jerry Crumal submits a cover bearing the markings shown in Figure 5 and asks whether it is normal for no period to occur after the "I" in the Rhode Island abbreviation. Your editor's first assumption was that this resulted from a production error in making the handstamp or from a happenstance situation of the period not being inked prior to the strike. However, that opinion has changed. Upon checking some Washington, D.C. examples, the same thing is noted – a period after the "D" but not after the "C". In various examples where the state name being abbreviated is one word – Virginia to "VA," for example – no period was found at the end. Therefore, it seems that the period was probably used *only* to separate two abbreviated words. If readers can report examples where this approach was not used in these government-issued double-circle handstamps, please do so.

¹ Rohloff, Paul C. *The Waterbury Cancellations 1865-1890*, Collector's Club of Chicago, 1979, page. 45.

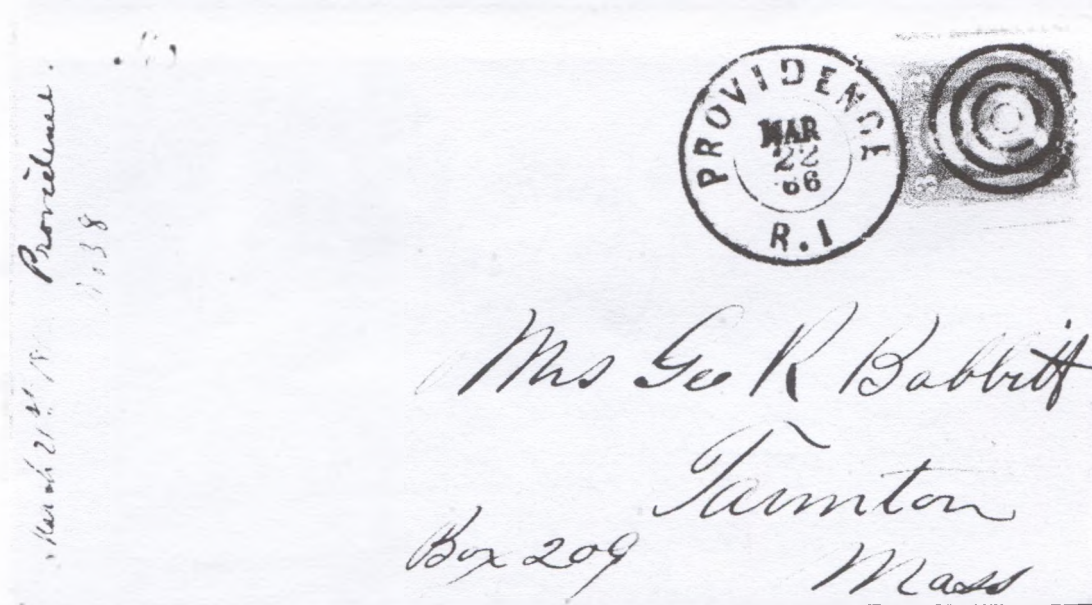


Figure 5

More Early (1882-1883) Providence Wesson TOB Killers

by Vince Costello and Norman Shachat

Gerald J. Gorman in his January 1988 *La Posta* article (pages 47-56) points out that Walter D. Wesson, a Providence, Rhode Island postal clerk, experimented with various wood or cork hand carved killers from January 1882 to May 1883. Since each killer lasted for only a very few days, he estimates that there were a minimum of 119 hand-carved killers used during that period. Although Gorman's article illustrates a relatively large number of them, many more remain to be found.

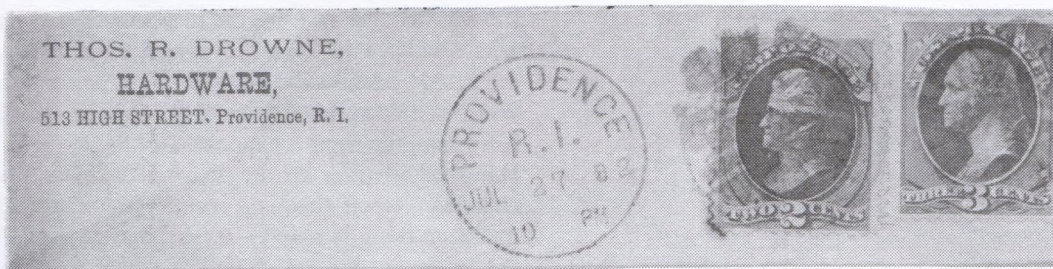
Recently, one of us (Vince Costello) acquired a small correspondence of nine covers from Providence to Europe posted from July 27, 1882 to January 23, 1883. The letters were sent from Thomas R. Drowne to Miss Addie V. Drowne who was apparently traveling in Europe at the time. The first two letters were addressed to London. All of the others were

addressed to Paris and were forwarded respectively to Geneva, Venice, and back to Providence. Apparently Miss Drowne visited London, Paris, Geneva and Venice, and then returned home in January.

All are franked with the normal 5 cent Universal Postal Union (UPU) single letter postage. Forwarding within the Union did not require any additional postage.

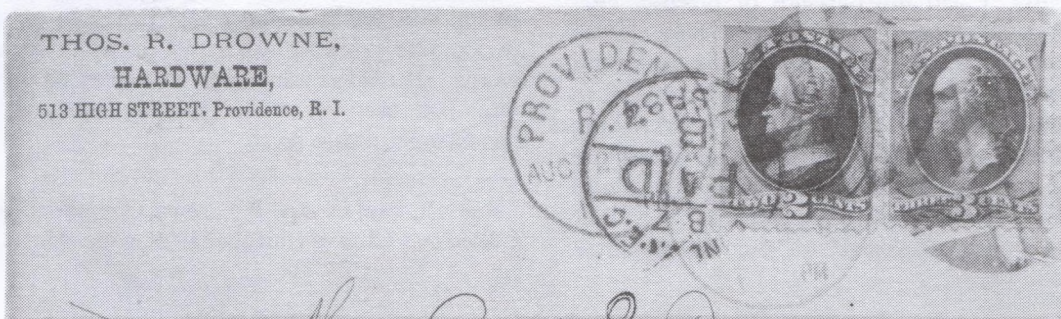
Each of the nine letters was posted at the Providence P.O. and contains a Wesson "Time on Bottom" (TOB) duplex cancel. Most interestingly, each of the cancels has a different distinctive killer. Although some of the killers are shown in Gorman's article, several are not. Because all nine are clearly dated and have reasonably clear killer strikes, they are shown in this article in chronological order as Figures 1 to 9.

Figure 1



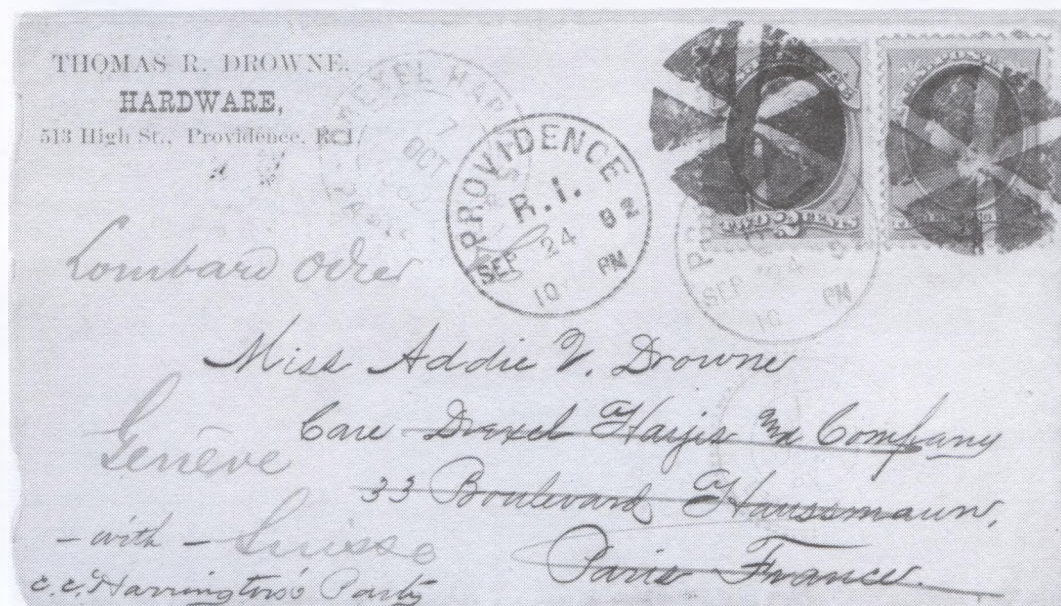
Posted July 27, 1882

Figure 2



Posted Aug. 25, 1882

Figure 3



Posted Sept. 24, 1882

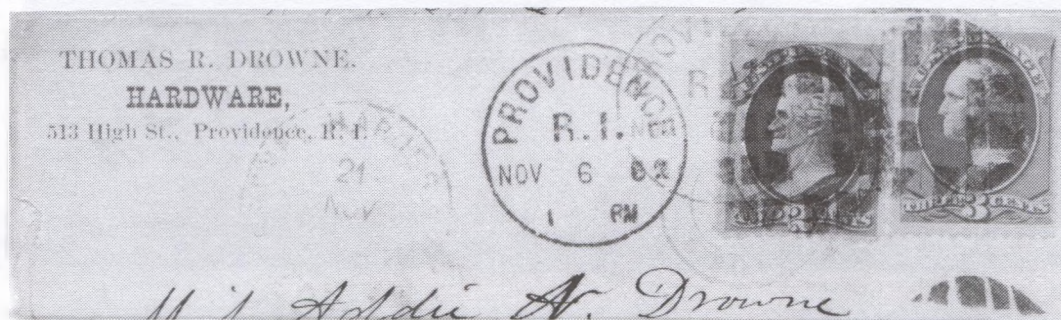
(forwarded to Geneva)

Figure 4



Posted Oct. 24, 1882

Figure 5



Posted Nov. 6, 1882

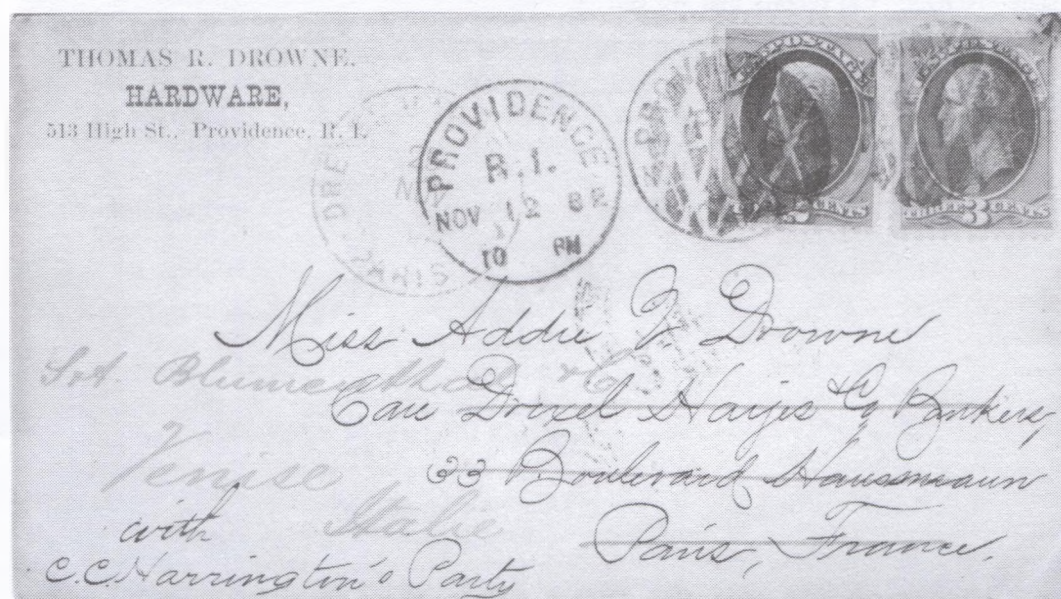
Figure 6



Posted Nov. 7, 1882

(forwarded to Venice)

Figure 7



Posted Nov. 12, 1882

(forwarded to Venice)



Figure 8

Posted Jan. 4, 1883

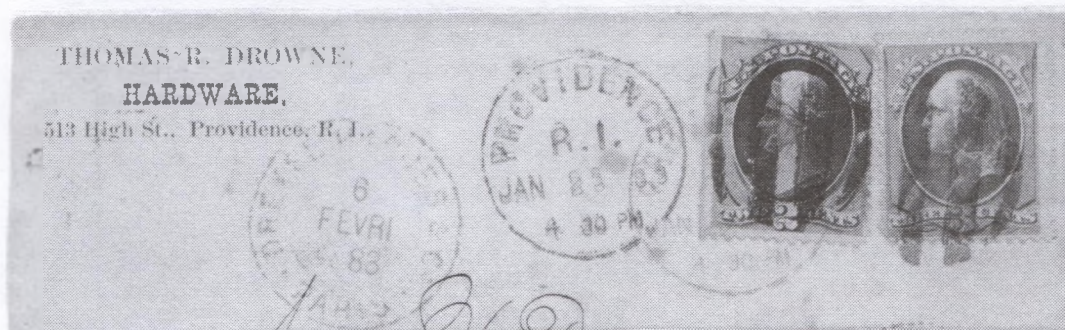
(forwarded to
Providence)

Figure 9

Posted Jan. 23, 1883

(forwarded to
Providence)

A NOON-Related Marking

In the Winter 2000 *NEWS*, Gil Levere illustrated and discussed three versions of "NOON" postmarks: "12 NOON," "NOON," and "12:00/NOON." Calvet Hahn submits in Figure 1 an example of a closely related marking, years earlier, in red ink applied by the Boyd's City Express Post. While it doesn't state "NOON," Cal reports that we can be

confident that the "12 o'clock" inscription means noontime because this Post, as well as the Blood post which also used "12 o'clock," didn't operate at midnight.

Figure 1



"DIAMOND RUBBER"

Surely one of the most intriguing 19th century cancels is the "DIAMOND RUBBER" cancel, struck in magenta ink, from McIndoe's Falls, Vermont. It is listed in the Cole book on Banknote era cancellations and in the Vermont postal history book by Slawson, et al. Figure 1 reproduces the illustration from Slawson.¹

Figure 1



Alyce Evans discussed this cancel in the Fall 1992 NEWS as follows:

William H. Gilchrist, postmaster of McIndoe's Falls, Vermont from 1870-1885, practiced frugality to its limit by using a rubber trade mark from the bottom of a boot as a canceling device. This trade mark, a diamond-shaped piece of rubber with the words DIAMOND RUBBER, was vulcanized to the instep of the sole, and could be removed . . . naturally, the words appear in reverse order.

A postal card bearing this cancellation in the collection of Jim Kesterson is illustrated as Figure 2. It was postmarked September 9 (1879). Jim has recently submitted a second style of "DIAMOND RUBBER" trademark used as a cancel, this time from Milton, Indiana. See Figure 3. He has two examples from different correspondences, both in magenta ink. He reports the strikes on both covers being

Figure 2

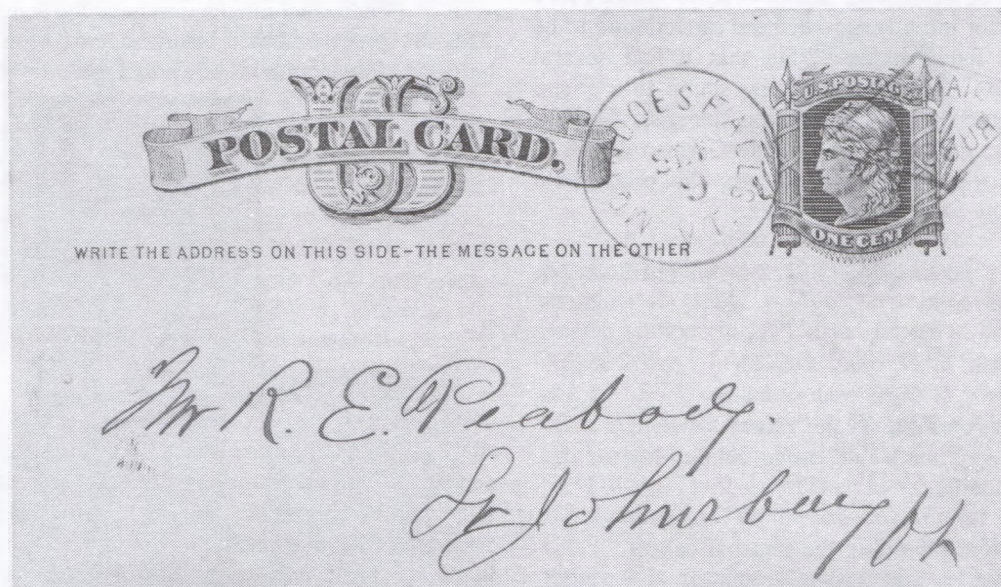
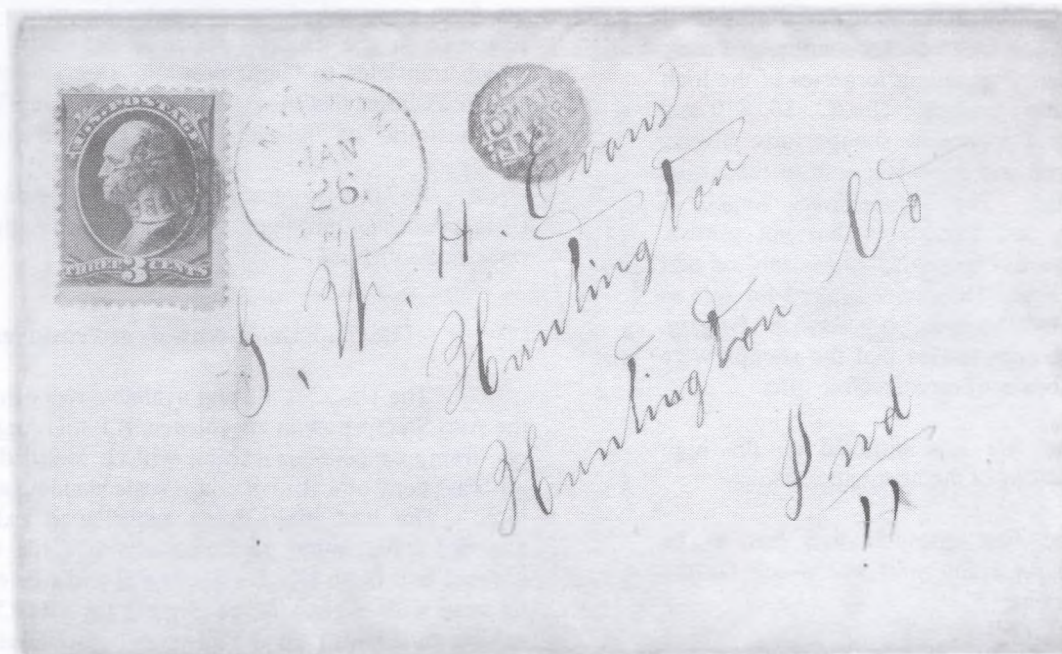


Figure 3



reasonably clear, considering the subject matter, and he notes that one edge is imperfectly struck or missing. Jim attributes this to the rubber trademark having a curvature. The examples are dated January 26 and February 20 (1870s). Your editor knows of no previous reports of this Milton Indiana cancel in the literature.

¹ Slawson, George C., Bingham, Arthur W. and Drenan, Sprague W. *The Postal History of Vermont*, Collectors Club, New York, N.Y. (1969), Page 129.

More on "All German USA Cancel?"

On page 99 of the Summer 1999 *NEWS* we reported an interesting cancellation that Victor Kuil encountered on what we thought to be newspaper stamp #PR79. Since PR79 is a U.S. stamp, Victor initially assumed the cancellation to be of U.S. origin but found it interesting that it had several German connotations. After showing the stamp to a friend and getting his comments, Victor's opinion changed. He then speculated that either the cancel was a fake German cancel or a genuine German cancel with the handstamp that produced it brought to the U.S. by German immigrants.

That article generated a very helpful letter to Mr. Kuil which is quoted below.

Dear Mr. Kuil,

Your letters reprinted in the recent issue of "Cancellation Club News" have caught my attention.

You speculated regarding the unusual cancel on PR79, the U.S. \$60 newspaper stamp.

I do not collect the newspaper stamps, but I do collect the U.S. official stamps, and there is a similarity regarding forgeries of the high denomination stamps. The \$2, \$5, \$10 and \$20 State Department stamps have always been scarce and expensive due to their high face value. The stamps were forged in Germany, and sometimes, but not always, had the words "facsimile" or "falsch" as part of the design. They were offered for sale as reprints by the Senf brothers in Leipzig. There are even stories that the stamps were added to boxes of cereal as free gifts.

The same fate was inflicted on the high denominations of the newspaper stamps.

Thus, the first question that has to be answered regarding your stamp is: "Is the stamp genuine?"

The cancel is blurred in the article I read, but

you indicated that the word "Lichtdruck" is there. Could this possibly be "Nachdruck", the German word for reprint??

Even if the word really is "Lichtdruck", this still could be an advertising sample from a German printing firm showing how good were the forgeries they were able to make.

If your stamp is genuine, you have a rare and expensive stamp. However, before speculating about the cancel, you need to have the stamp expertised. The stamp can be submitted to the APS expertization service for an opinion.

Yours sincerely,

Rollin C. Huggins, Jr.

Victor had intended to have the stamp expertised, but with the press of other business, etc., didn't get to it. (A halftone of the stamp is shown as Figure 1.) Along the way he



Figure 1

consulted a friend who has knowledge of stamp fakes and a subsequent examination of the stamp led Victor to the strong conviction that the stamp is a fake. He then "donated" it to the U.S. Cancellation Club, hoping not to see it again! While your editor is no specialist in stamp fakery, it does seem clear that this stamp is *not* a printing from an engraved plate since it has a fuzzy, grainy quality. Genuine U.S. newspaper stamps are from engraved plates. Perhaps due to the "Lichtdruck" reference in the cancel (and it is definitely "Lichtdruck") which translates to "light printing" (see earlier article), the printer assumed that there was no need for additional indicator of "facsimile" of "falsch" in the design or as an overprint.

At the suggestion of Mr. Huggins in further correspondence, the stamp is being donated to the APS for its reference collection.

USCC Exhibit Awards at Providence

The USCC is making available two exhibit awards at the APS Stampshow in Providence, R.I. this August. The best one-frame cancellation exhibit will be awarded an attractive all-brass copy of a British postal scale standing about one foot high. The best multi-frame cancellation exhibit will be awarded a regulation postal scale with a tile surface, glass covered face (with all rates displayed) and a fancy painting on tin base with eagle. To be eligible for a USCC award, the exhibit must have earned a silver or higher-level medal at the show and at least 40% of the material in the exhibit shall consist of obliterations on U.S. stamps.

Difficult Letters

by Roger D. Curran

One of the most common designs found in hand-carved killers is that of a letter of the alphabet. Both positive and negative letters exist, of course, in great profusion. Collectors often work to complete an alphabet of cancels and quickly find, as one would expect, that some letters are much harder to locate than others. We discussed in the Winter 2000 *NEWS* a hand-carved "Z" and this is a scarce letter.

Manufactured metal ellipse handstamps largely replaced hand-carved killers in the late 1870s and 1880s. Many of these also contained letters in the middle. Those letters that are hard to find in hand-carved killers are largely the same as those letters hard to find in ellipse (and concentric circles) killers.

In this article, we touch on two letters that, in addition to the "Z," are very much at the scarcer end of the continuum – "Q" and "I." Quincy, Illinois used an ellipse with a "Q" in the center and also a distinctive "Q" in a double circle. Cole #Lq-1 is reproduced here as Figure 1 and an off-cover Scott #156, bearing two partial strikes of the Quincy killer, is shown as Figure 2. The cancel on the off-cover Scott #210 in Figure 3 is interesting and I have no idea where it originated. Was this killer carved that way or was it formed by using an "O" cancel with a second partial strike to create the design of a "Q"? That two-step process I am quite sure was used on the postal card in Figure 4, postmarked "CANANDAIGUA/ N.Y./SEP/ 15." I have seen two other



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

examples of this Canandaigua killer and in both cases it shows as a simple "doughnut" design, albeit in one case a double strike. Indeed, I wonder if the cancel on the #210 is also from Canandaigua since the cancels are so similar. However, the postal card is dated 1881 so there is at least a two year period between the strikes since #210 wasn't issued until October 1883. If there are readers who can supply more information on "Q" cancels, please let us hear from you.

"Q" cancels bring to mind a Pittsburgh killer (see Figure 5) that has puzzled me. The general consensus is that it is a reverse "P" for Pittsburgh. I am no expert on the proper form of letters and the serifs at the top and bottom may well be telltale signs that a "P" was intended. But several other hand-carved letter killers were used by Pittsburgh including "D," "E" and "W," so why not a "Q"? The Figure 5 illustration was taken from Bob McKain's fine article entitled "Pittsburgh Fancy Cancels 1872-1882" that appeared in the Spring 1986 *NEWS*.



Figure 5

The problem with using a letter "I" is, in my opinion, distinguishing it from the numeral "1." An "I" may well be mistaken for a "1" without serifs or a Roman numeral one. Branch stations in NYC used letters in both hand-carved and ellipse killers. In 1873-4, there was a Station "I" at Broadway and 84th St. It ceased to exist in 1875 when it became Station "O." A new Station "I" at Columbus Ave. and 105th St. was established in 1897. Figures 6 and 7 clearly illustrate numeral "1" killers. The base of each has right and left serifs but there is only a top serif on the left side. Figure 8 is on a Scott #U82 entire canceled by what is assumed to be a letter "I" cancel. Figure 9 is a cover postmarked by Station I on January 11, 1899. The illustration won't show the letter "I" clearly in the killer but it definitely has the full serifs, extending left and right, across the top and bottom of the letter. (A clearer off-

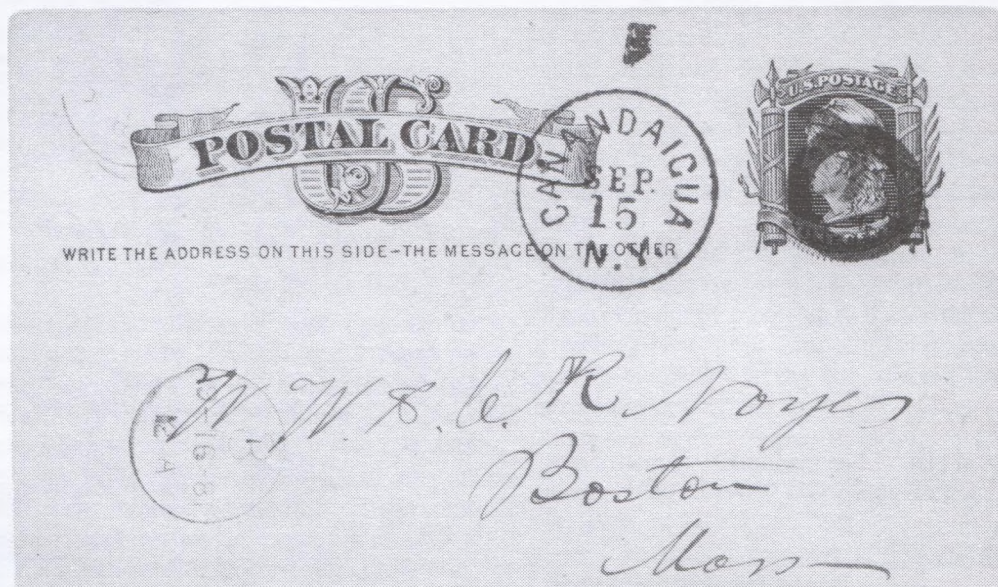


Figure 4

Figure 6

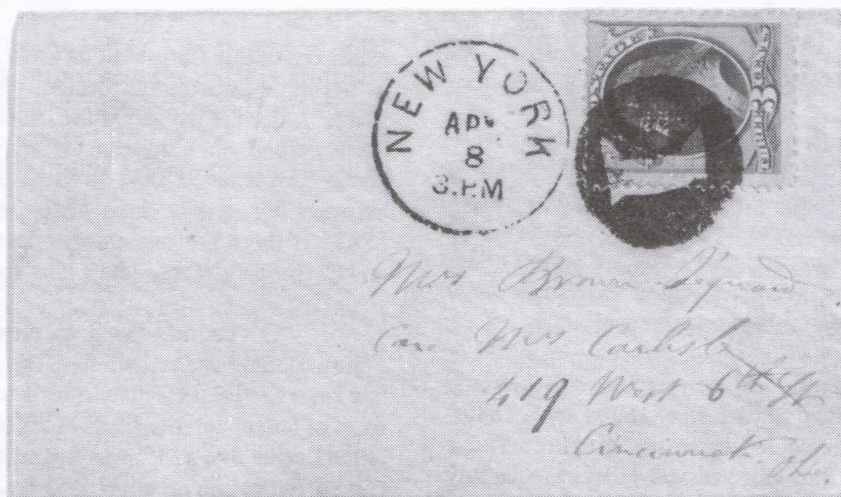


Figure 7

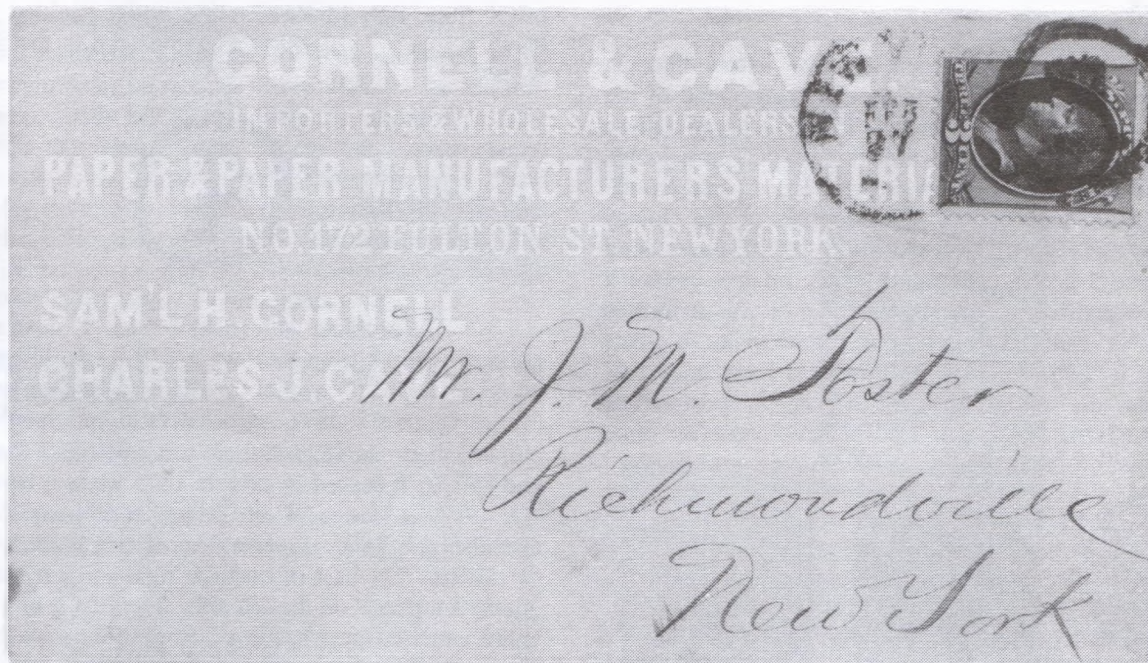
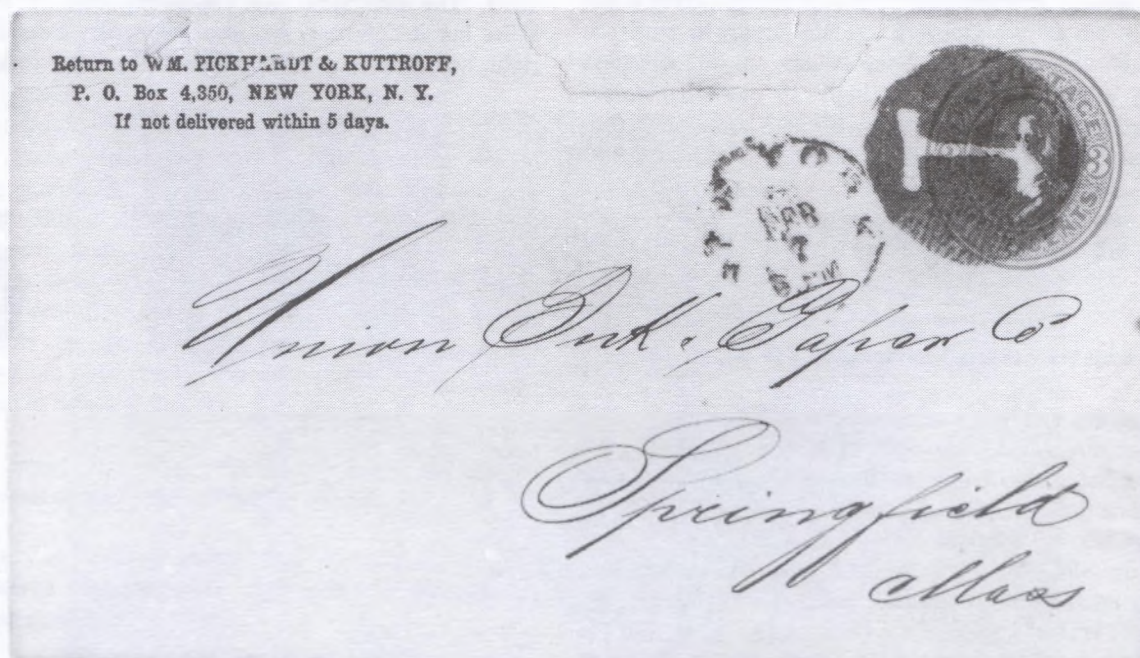
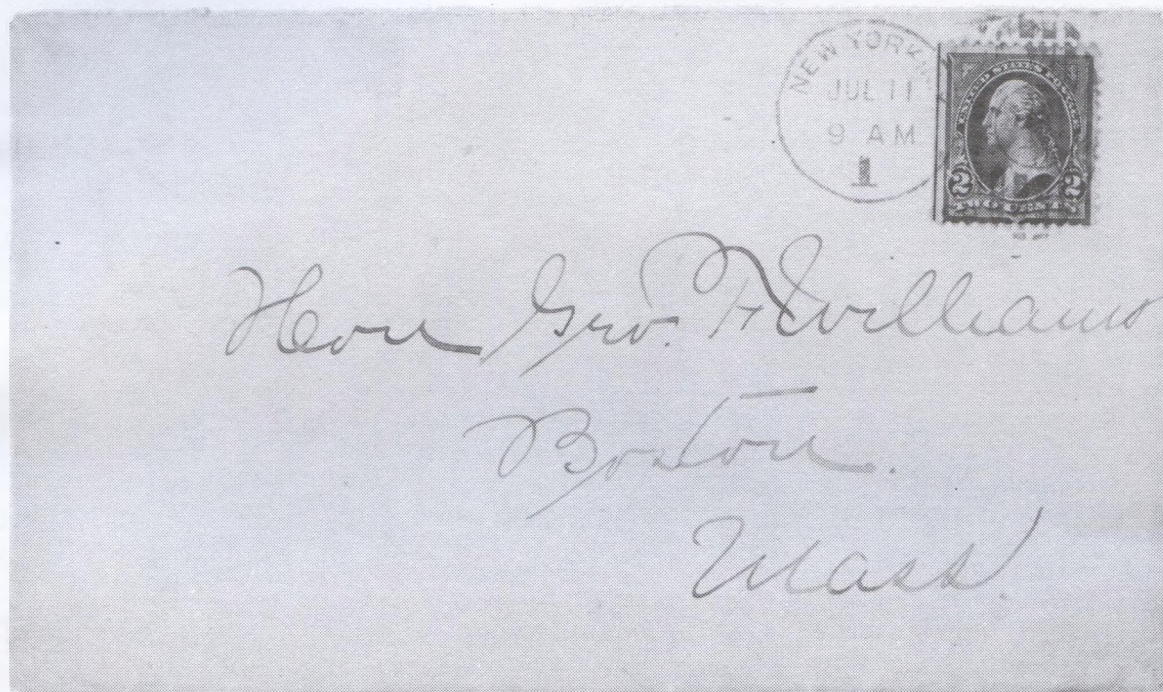


Figure 8





cover example of this ellipse is shown next to the cover.) Unfortunately, on the cover, the top serif of the "I" at the bottom of the townmark didn't strike.

An assumed letter "I" cancel on an off-cover Scott #113 is shown as Figure 10.

Information about other examples of "Q," "I" and "Z" cancels is eagerly sought.

Figure 9



Letters in Ellipses in New York City Handstamps

The subject of numbers in killers in NYPO handstamps has, of course, occupied numerous articles in the *NEWS* over the past 15 years. Such numbers appeared by the early 1870s and were used by the main NYPO on out-of-town domestic mail. The primary purpose of numbers was to permit supervisors, for quality control purposes, to determine what clerks handstamped what pieces of mail.

The purpose of this article is to introduce very briefly the subject of letters in ellipses in NYC handstamps. In the pre-ellipse era, hand-carved letters were used earlier than hand-carved numbers, dating as far back, perhaps, as 1863. Handstamps with letters were not employed by the main NYPO but rather by stations of the NYPO, which were designated by letters; i.e., Stations A, B and C, etc.

The use of numbers in ellipses in NYC handstamps on a regular basis began in 1876. Arthur Bond listed an "earliest date recorded" of May 18, 1876.¹ Club member Gil Levere reported a May 3, 1876 usage in his collection. Given these dates, it is interesting to note that Bond's "earliest date recorded" for a letter in a NYC ellipse is about a year later on May 21, 1877.² This usage involved a letter "F." The present article identifies two considerably earlier examples involving Station A. Figure 1 is a transatlantic cover postmarked May 23, (1876). Club member Brad Horton reports a Station A

example in his collection dated April 17, (1876), addressed domestically, which is very interesting in that it predates the regular use of numbered ellipses. A theory developed that Station A was the first station to use these lettered ellipses and did so only sparingly as an experiment for some period.

A recent report makes that theory much less likely. Ted Wassam submits the card illustrated as Figure 2. From the front we see that it was postmarked February 15. The ellipse contains an "F" in the center. On the back, written in blue crayon, is "Feby 15-1876" presumably documenting the date of the note and the birthday. However, one supposes that it *could* have been written by someone (perhaps even a philatelist?) setting forth his or her conclusion of the full date of the card. If we can locate another card or two that can be dated to this general time period, it would lend further credence to the view that it is, indeed, a February 1876 usage. Please help out by reporting to the *NEWS* any early (May 1876 or earlier) New York City ellipses in your collection with a letter in the center or any hand-carved letters in NYC killers dated 1876 or later.

¹ Bond, Arthur. "Numbers and Letters in New York City Handstamps, 1869 to 1900" *U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS*, May 1968, p. 24.

² *Ibid.*, July 1968, p. 30.

Figure 1

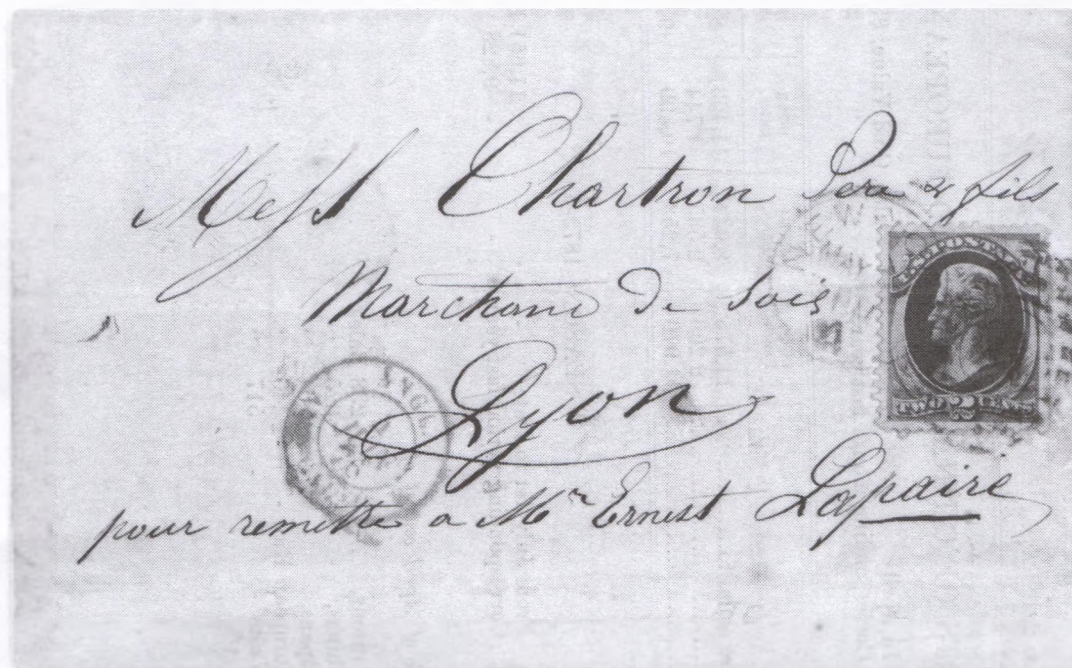


Figure 2

