



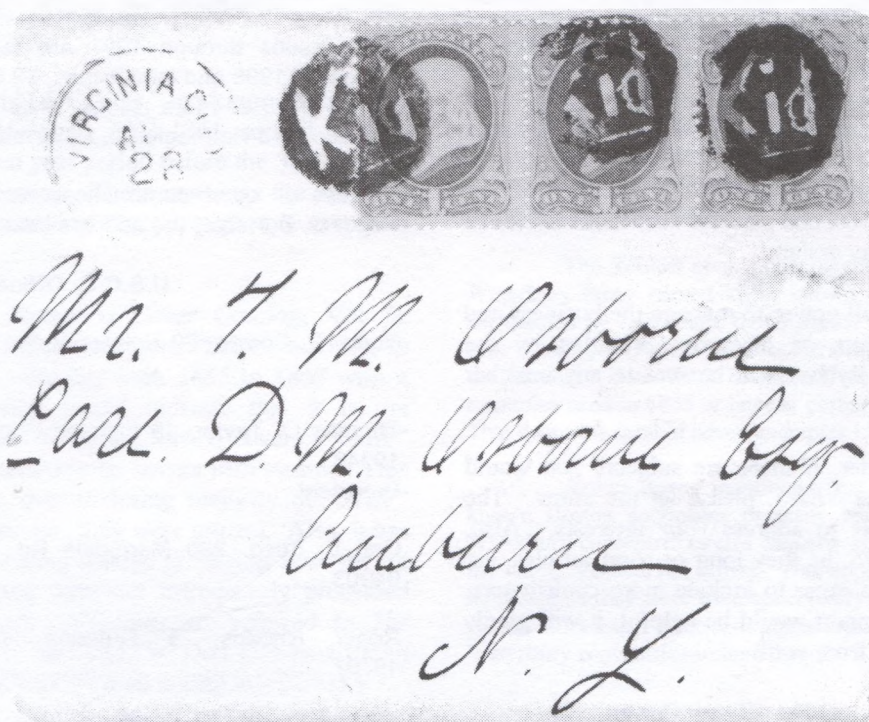
Cancellation Club NEWS

Vol. 25, No. 3, Whole No. 236, Summer 2000

"Kid" Cancel

by Roger D. Curran

Figure 1



The cover in Figure 1 was lot 562 in the Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions sale #4 of May 12/14, 1998. It was described as follows:

(Storey) Virginia City, cds on cover to New York franked by strip of 3 of 1¢ Banknote tied by three strikes of fancy negative (Billy the) "Kid" cancel; cover reduced at left, Very Fine, a rare & popular cancel.

(Storey) refers to Storey County, Nevada. I bought the cover. There was a penciled note on it, since removed, that said "Billy the Kid cancel Montana or Nevada." There is a Virginia City in both states. However, I had not seen the cancel before and had no idea from which Virginia City this cover originated.

The three stamps are Scott #182. The earliest reported use of these stamps is January 3, 1879.¹ They were superseded by Scott #206 which has an earliest reported use of November 2, 1881.² This is helpful information because it brackets the period within which the cover was probably

mailed. Of course, we may have a late use of the stamps, but the greater likelihood is that the cover was mailed in April or August of 1879, 1880 or 1881.

In seeking out more information I wrote to both the Western Cover Society and the Postal History Foundation (formerly the Western Postal History Museum). The Society's secretary, Edward Weinburg, and the Foundation's director, Betsy Towle, were most gracious and generous in their efforts to locate more information.

Mr. Weinburg contacted several collectors of Nevada and/or Montana postal history. None had seen the "Kid" cancel before except for one person who previously owned the cover. From information gathered through these contacts, he reported back was that the townmark is definitely from Nevada with an earliest known use of November 21, 1875 and a latest known use of July 14, 1880. He stated that no other Virginia City, Nevada townmark overlaps this period. Mr. Weinburg further reported that several killers have been noted with this townmark including a Masonic cancel.

(continued on page 36)

Dear Reader,

An election of officers for the 2001-2002 term will be held soon and we invite suggestions to the nominating committee which is composed of the current U.S.C.C. officers. If you would be willing to serve in one of the positions listed below or if you wish to recommend another club member, please come forward as soon as possible.

The election will cover the following positions. An abbreviated statement of duties for each position is provided.

President. Presides at occasional board meetings (see below) and otherwise provides general supervision over officers and committees. (Such meetings are typically handled through telephone conference calls.)

First Vice President, Second Vice President, Governor-at-Large. Serve as members of board and perform such other duties as the President or Board may assign. The First VP presides at board meetings in absence of President.

Secretary-Treasurer. Serves as a member of the board, keeps official records, and perform such other duties as the President or Board may assign.

The board has full power to manage the business and affairs of the Club except as otherwise provided by the Bylaws. A copy of the Bylaws will be sent to any member upon request.

On another matter, if there are subjects you would like to see covered in the *NEWS*, please let me know. The goal of this newsletter is to address *your* interests. Also, contributions to the *NEWS*, be they long or short articles, are solicited. Indeed, we are eager to include more contributors. And if writing/editing support would be helpful, it will gladly be provided. Let us hear from you!

Roger Curran

Bulletin, Bulletin

Just back from the Providence Stampshow and eager to report that club treasurer Roger Rhoads won a Platinum medal and Best-in-show award in the one-frame category for his exhibit of alphabet cancellations on the first postal card. Congratulations, Roger!

For Sale: Cancellations, 3 cent 1861.
Please send \$3.00 for 3 color and 3 black and white Xeroxes. Abe Boyarsky, PO Box 570, La Mirada, CA 90637-0570

Wanted To Trade. I have unused copies of La Posta Pocket Guides (Helbock 1989) for Alaska, Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Wyoming to trade individually for Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Ohio, Michigan and Pennsylvania which need not be unused. Or all six of mine preferably for a copy of the Helbock Midwest, but would accept Eastern States guide. Trade desired but would sell. Bob Benjamin, 1801 Patton Dr., Modesto, CA 95356.■



The U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

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Address all other communications to the *NEWS* editor: Roger D. Curran at the address below.

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Justin A. Underwood
(Elyria, Ohio)

Baltimore "SHIP" as a Canceler

by Roger D. Curran

An interesting and unusual cover is illustrated in Figure 1. A recent APES certificate opines that it is a genuine cover. All the markings are in blue ink. This is a "Ship" letter, which means that it was carried into a port city, from either a foreign or domestic port, by a private vessel. In this case, of course, it was delivered to the Baltimore post office where it entered the mails and was postmarked with the Baltimore CDS, "DUE 2 cts." and "SHIP." Assuming it was a vessel of U.S. registry, the ship's captain would have received 2¢. Presumably, the letter was mailed before July 1, 1863. Beginning on that date, double the regular postage was supposed to be charged.

The "SHIP" and "DUE 2 cts." markings are listed in *Simpson's U.S. Postal Markings 1851-1861*, second edition, 1979, which covers the ten year period before the 3¢ stamp on the Figure 1 cover was issued. These markings are assigned an "8" rarity number, meaning "very rare," 4-6 examples recorded.

The *American Stampless Cover Catalog*, Vol. 2, fourth edition, 1987 lists this Baltimore "SHIP" marking in both blue and black ink occurring from 1855 to 1867 with a fairly modest value which would indicate that it is not especially scarce. But that it is on *stampless* covers. "SHIP" markings are much less common on covers *with* stamps. This is primarily because the overwhelming majority of "SHIP" letters were sent stampless; i.e., they were unpaid. Also, it has been noted that letters bearing stamps prepaying *both* the 2¢ fee and applicable postage were not infrequently processed with no "SHIP" markings. (Readers are referred to *The United States 1¢ Franklin 1861-1867* by Don L. Evans for an informative discussion of "SHIP" mail during this period.)

I have not seen other covers showing this Baltimore "SHIP" marking used as a canceler but they surely exist. Readers are encouraged to report examples in their collections or references in the literature to such covers.

Waterbury Concentric Cancels

The last issue of the *NEWS* illustrated a duplex marking consisting of a Waterbury double circle CDS and a concentric circles killer that was not reported in Rohloff's *The Waterbury Cancellations 1865-1890*. This cover is dated April 5, 1867. Because it was not reported, the thought arose that this common style marking might be scarce from Waterbury. The *NEWS* article reported a second example had been noted in the collection of Club member Bruce Campbell. (Your editor recalled the date to be 1864.) Now, five additional examples have been reported. Prescott Van Horn, Jr. reports a January 24, 1867 example. Ron Pascale reports three examples: September 29, 1863, a lovely patriotic cover dated September 15 (?), 1864 and January 27, 1865. Arthur Beane reports an August 1, 1864 example.

The Rohloff book's coverage begins in 1865. The earliest Waterbury fancy carved killer known to Mr. Rohloff was a star surrounded by five hearts dated March 17, 1865. Therefore, if we base our conjecture that the concentric circles killer may be scarce on the fact that it is not listed in Rohloff, we should narrow our search to examples used in 1865 or later or perhaps even March 1865 or later. That drops the total of seven examples identified above to two.

Arthur Beane mentioned that Daniel Kelleher, the well-known Boston auctioneer of many years ago, told him that this Waterbury concentric circles cancel was much scarcer than some of the fancy, hand-carved killers. That appears more likely to be true if he meant as they were used specifically during the Waterbury hand-carved killer era. Please continue to report additional examples of the Waterbury concentric circles killer.■

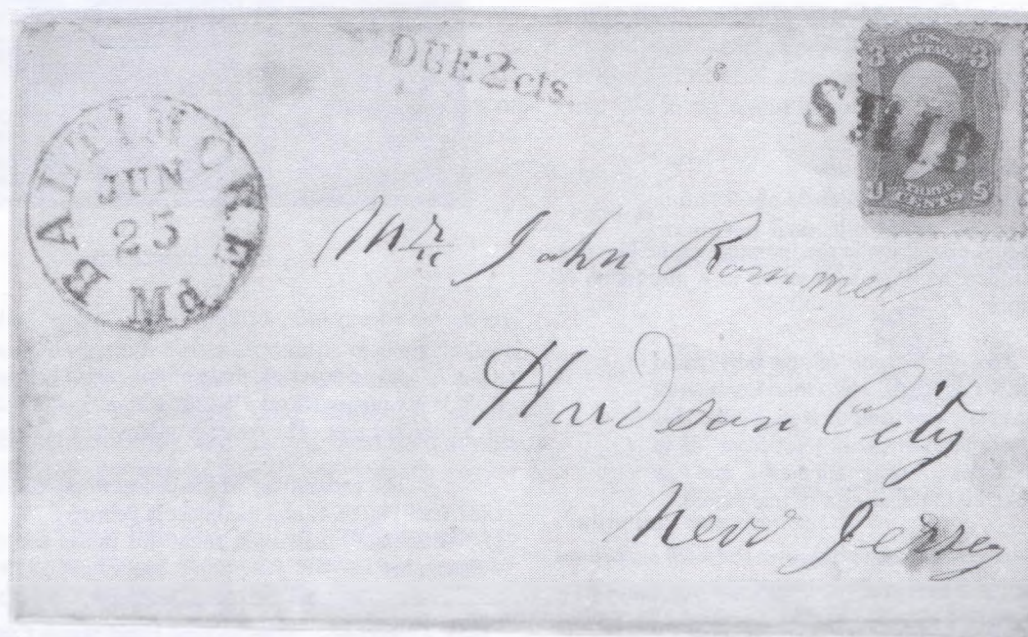


Figure 1

(Continued from front page)

Mrs. Towle was unable to uncover additional information from a search of the Foundation's library and referred the matter to a long-time dealer in postal history of the western states. He said he believes the cover to be from Virginia City, Montana. Betsy was kind enough to provide transparencies of Virginia City, Nevada townmark tracings from a reference catalog as well as transparencies of two covers bearing pertinent (1879 and 1880) Virginia City, Montana townmarks.

Transparencies, incidentally, are very useful. They allow one, of course, to lay the postmark or tracing on the transparency directly over the marking to which it is being compared and any deviation in size or spacing quickly becomes apparent. In this particular case, I didn't get what appeared to be an exact match for any of the Nevada or Montana markings. However, as Betsy pointed out, the production of a transparency, like a photocopy, can introduce a slight distortion, which makes the matching of postmarks very difficult when the differences in the markings are quite minor. And when dealing with tracings, there is the question of whether or not the tracings are fully accurate.

The cover was sent to the APS expertising service and the following opinion was rendered:

"United States, Scott No. 182, strip of three (edge wear at top), and used on Virginia City NV cover with (Billy the) "kid" fancy cancellation, genuine in all respects."

Henry McCarty, alias Billy the Kid and William H. Bonney, lived from 1859 to 1881. His exploits, including an alleged 21 killings, took place in New Mexico. He was ultimately tracked down and killed by Lincoln County, N.M. Sheriff Pat Garrett.

Additional information is eagerly sought. ■

¹ *Pocket Guide to United States EKU/EDC Dates*, 1998 edition, American Philatelic Society, State College, Pa.

² *Ibid.*

NEW YORK U.S.A.

Perhaps the first discussion in the literature of the Figure 1 cancel was that by Gilbert M. Burr who wrote in a discussion of double oval cancellations:

"The . . . item shows one of the only dated cancels of this type that I have found, which of course you can see was used by New York. This appears to have been in use at least from '83 to '87 as I have dates covering this period, and it is found on about all of the stamps of this period."¹

In his book on the two cent red brown, Edward L. Willard illustrated an example of this cancel and commented:

"The top bears the legend "New York U.S.A."
The day and month are in Arabic numerals in the

Figure 1



center and the year at the bottom. Because of the use of the abbreviation U.S.A., many have argued that this double oval was for foreign mail, but covers appear bearing this cancellation, which definitely did not leave the country. We hazard a guess that originally it had been intended to use this cancel on foreign mail, but . . . they occasionally were used, not for that express purpose, but only as the necessities of the service demanded. The New York Post Office was particularly loose in specific use of canceling devices."²

The two cent red brown stamp (Scott #210) was issued on October 1, 1883 and was superseded by the two cent green stamp (Scott #213) in September 1887. Figure 2 shows a group of two cent red browns bearing this cancel and reflecting all five years the stamp was current. (The "1884" example won't show clearly in the photo.) The 1883 example is less common than the others due to the fact that the stamp was in use only for the last three months of the year. The stamp was printed in the dark metallic red color characteristic of early printings of the stamp. One supposes that two cent red browns bearing this cancel dated 1888 or even later are out there to be found because the cancel was, in fact, used after 1887. However, these would involve late uses of this stamp and examples are probably very scarce.



Figure 2

An on-cover example of this cancel is illustrated in Figure 3. It is a wrapper (Scott #W120) with a Scott #206 added to make up a two-cent rate. The cover is addressed to Cordoba, Argentina.

The earliest use of the cancel in my collection is July 15, 1881 (see Figure 4) and the latest is February 15, 1897 (see Figure 5). Additional information about this cancel and its use would be welcomed.■

¹ Burr, Gilbert M. "Standardized Hand Stamp Cancellations on the

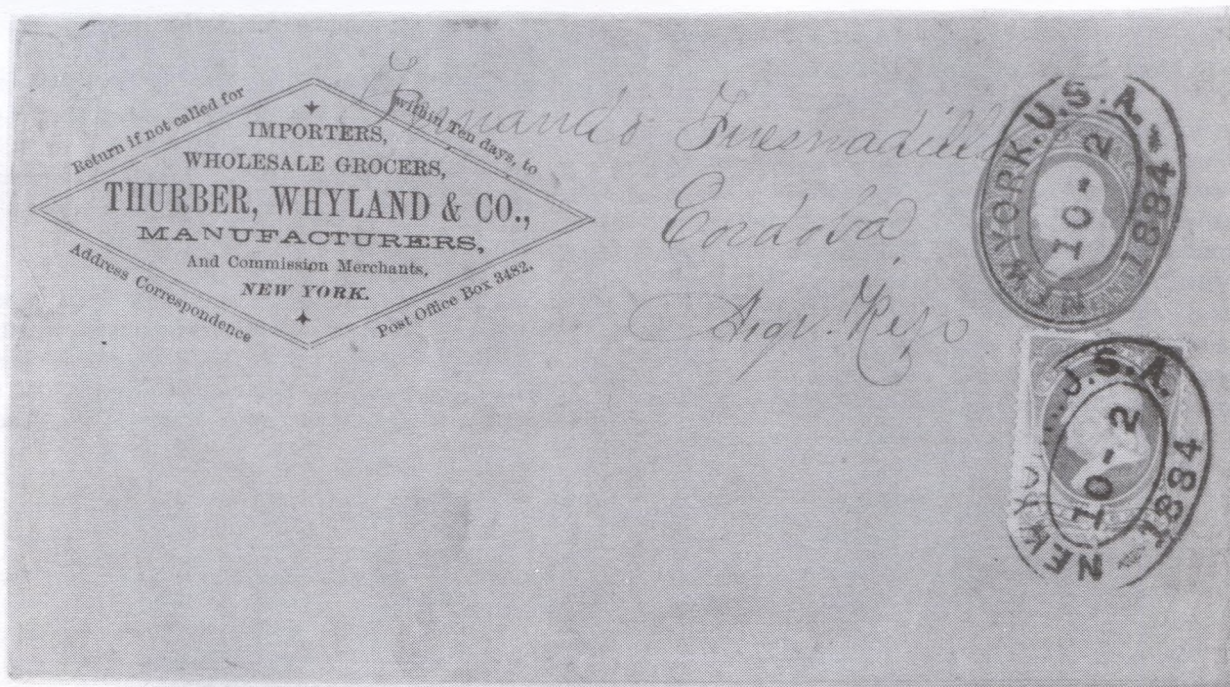


Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

Bank Note Issues." *The American Philatelist*, February, 1936, page 290.

² Willard, Edward L. *The Two Cent Red Brown of 1883-1887*, Volume Two, H.L. Lindquist Publications, Inc., New York (1970), page 107.

Calling All Students

The U.S.C.C. Board of Directors would like to establish a roster of persons, representing different subject matter areas in the broad field of cancellations, who would serve as contact points for club members having questions about specific cancellations or their related postal history. If you are willing to be consulted on questions concerning your area or areas of study, please get in touch with our Secretary, Roger Rhoads, and let him know what areas. (Also include your telephone number and/or e-mail address if these ways of contact are agreeable to you.) Roger's address is 3 Ruthana Way, Hockessin, DE 19707, and his phone number is (302) 235-5535. His e-mail address is

rrhoads@aol.com

Potential "areas" would include, but are by no means limited to, cancels on certain issues of stamps or cancels used in certain time periods, particular types of cancels, postal history matters (such as foreign mail markings, carrier markings or railroad markings), and cancels from certain post offices such as Boston, the state of Illinois, etc.

This would be a fine way to lend a helping hand to fellow collectors as well as to encourage interest and study in fields that have been a source of pleasure for you.

Let Roger hear from you on this project!

More on an Unusual Cancel

On page 73 of the Winter 1999 *NEWS*, in an article on tracings and scans, Victor Kuil illustrated a very unusual cancel on a two-cent Interior Department stamp. Indeed, one might wonder whether it was actually a cancel applied by a post office. It has now come to your editor's attention that what is probably the same cancel was reported years earlier. In his outstanding book on the Scott #210 stamp, Edward Willard illustrated a tracing that is shown here as Figure 1 and had this to say about it:

"(It) . . . is somebody's finger ring but it must have been a cumbersome killer unless removed from the finger. What a chore to remove it for each outgoing mail."¹

Figure 1



Can any reader report other examples of this intriguing cancellation?

¹Willard, Edward L. *The United States Two Cent Red Brown of 1883-1887*, Vol. 2, H.L. Lindquist Publications, Inc., New York, NY (1970) pages 29-30.

More on Ellipses with Negative Letters

In the Winter 1999 and Spring 2000 issues of the *NEWS* we have discussed an elusive manufactured ellipse cancel containing any of various negative letters in the center. We mentioned an "S" from New Haven, Connecticut and a "B" reported by Jim Cole in his Banknote era cancels book from New Brunswick, N.J. We are now pleased to add the following: an "N" from Newton, Mass., reported by John Donnes (Figure 1), a "B" from Brockton, Mass. postmarked February 24, (1880) and an "O" from Jersey City, N.J. dated February 5, (1878), both reported by Ted Wassam, and a superb strike of an "M" from Marblehead, Mass. reported by

Arthur White. Arthur points out that his cover answers the question raised in the Spring *NEWS* as to whether the one item illustrated in Figure 1 on page 19 is a "W" or an "M." His "M" has parallel legs while the questioned item has legs that slope. Surely now we can say that the questioned item is a "W."

Perhaps these ellipses were duplexed in handstamps in such a way that considerable rotation was permitted as well as variation in how closely the CDS and ellipse elements were placed together. It is more likely, however, that they were unduplexed. Reports of further examples are eagerly sought.

Figure 1

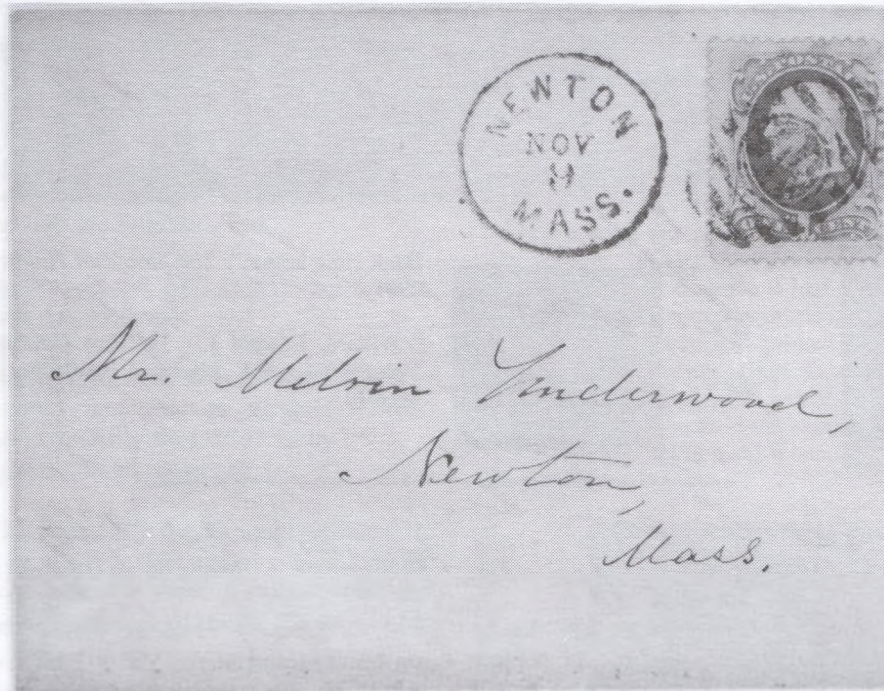


Figure 2

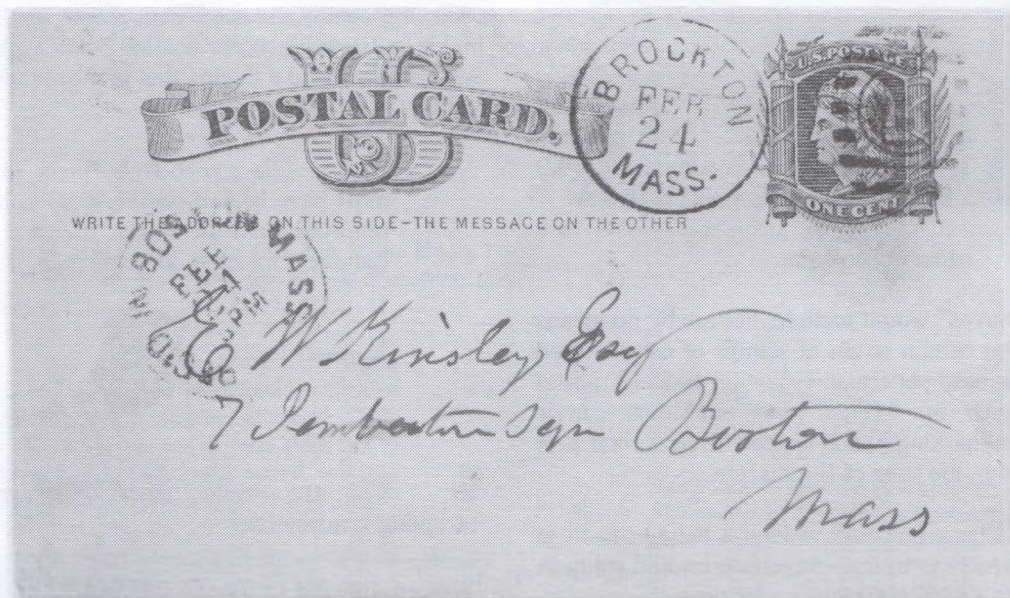


Figure 3

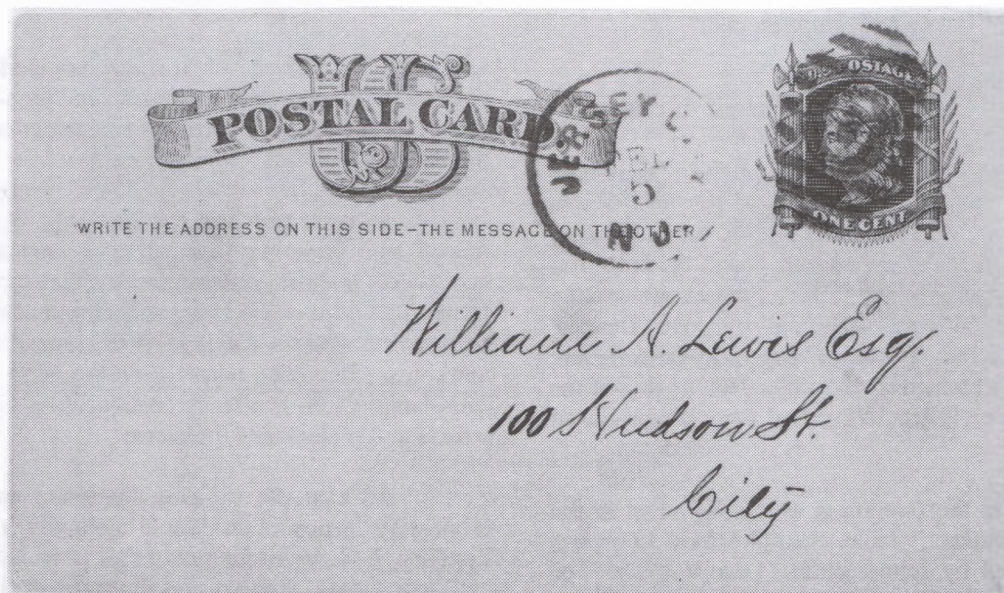
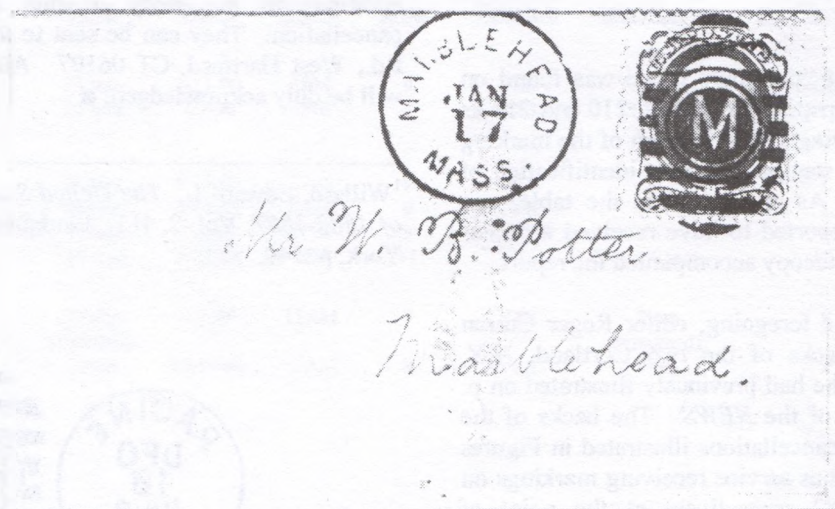


Figure 4



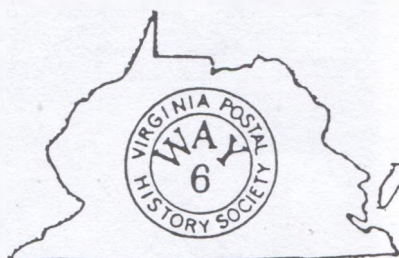
Unusual Star

Club member Jim Cate submits two examples of an unusual star cancel. The design includes spokes radiating out from between the star points. Figure 1 illustrates the two strikes, both on Scott #65, and Jim states these are the only two examples he has seen. He reports having shown them to Joe Crosby and Hubert Skinner who were unfamiliar with the cancel. With the fine lines and the fact that they cut into the stamp, Joe and Hubert said they thought it to be a patent cancel. That seems a reasonable proposition and, if so, it would be, comparatively speaking, quite a fancy one.

Figure 1



Jim hopes readers of the *NEWS* will be able to identify the post office of origin. Please help, if you can, by providing information to Jim directly at 7354 McCormack Drive, Hixson, TN 37343-2371 or to the editor. ■



INTERESTED??

CONTACT
VIRGINIA POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 29771
RICHMOND, VA 23242-0771

A "Time-Out" Update

by Gilbert J. Levere

The response to the article about "time-out" cancellations in the Summer 1999 issue of the *NEWS* was most gratifying, thanks to several reports of additional examples found not only on covers and postal cards but on off-cover postage stamps as well. Especially welcome was the copy of a UX-8 postal card submitted by John Donnes, bearing the elusive Racine, Wisconsin "time-out" cancellation, earlier indications of which consisted only of the tracing of the cancellation reported by Willard.¹ Donnes' copy is reproduced here as Figure 1.

In addition to the foregoing, as can be noted in the accompanying supplementary table, examples from Lockport, N.Y. were submitted by John Donnes, Don Vail and Ted Wassam, while Ralph Edson and the writer were able to contribute two more examples of usage at the Northfield, Connecticut Post office.

Further evidence of "time-out" usage was found on off-cover U.S. postage stamps; i.e., Scott 207, 210 and 213 as also noted in the accompanying table. Enough of the marking exists on each of the three stamps to enable identification of the post office of origin. As also noted in the table, one additional Scott 207 was reported to have received a "time-out" cancellation but no photocopy accompanied the report.

Over and above the foregoing, editor Roger Curran submitted copies of the backs of the two Cortland, N.Y. covers, the fronts of which he had previously illustrated on p. 126 of the Fall 1999 issue of the *NEWS*. The backs of the covers show the intriguing cancellations illustrated in Figures 2 and 3, which were applied as service receiving markings on April 4 and April 8, 1882 respectively at the point of destination; i.e., Roxbury, N.Y. The April 4 cancellation appears to have been a triplex hand-cancel from which the time element broke away and perhaps was manually applied obliquely, judging from the extremely heavy impression of the "M" in "A.M." By April 8 the time element was apparently restored to its intended position. However, the time element

was inserted upside down by a careless clerk, thus giving the appearance, nonetheless, of a standard "time-out" cancellation except for the substitution of a 4-ring target canceller in lieu of the standard ellipse.

If, as it appears, the Roxbury, N.Y. markings are indeed true "time-out" cancellations and not just *possible* candidates for such consideration, they not only differ in format by virtue of the target canceller, but represent the only reported usage, to date, of such cancellations as service markings. They also depart from the norm in that the circle date stamp (CDS) is a fancy county cancel with the two small crosses at 3 o'clock and 9 o'clock.

An example showing the same cancellation as an originating cancellation would certainly result in adding Roxbury, N.Y. to the limited list of previously known "time-out" user towns. Reports and illustrations of same as well as of any other "time-out" usages would be most welcome additions to the study of this unusual and interesting cancellation. They can be sent to the writer at 26 Ellsworth Rd., West Hartford, CT 06107. All reports and illustrations will be duly acknowledged. ■

¹Willard, Edward L. *The United States Two Cent Red Brown of 1883-1887*, Vol. 2, H.L. Lindquist Publications, Inc., New York, p. 149.

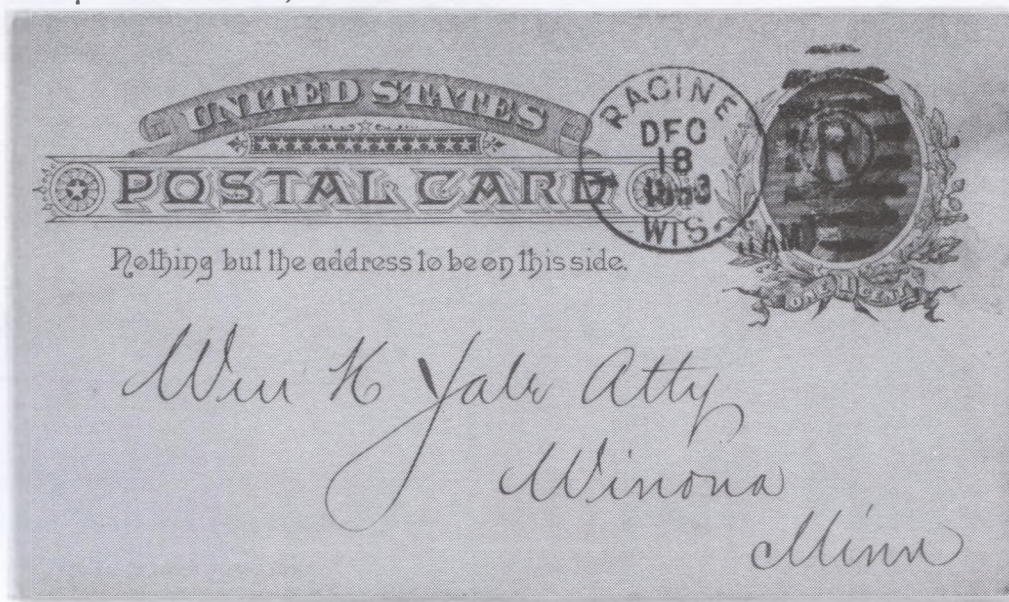
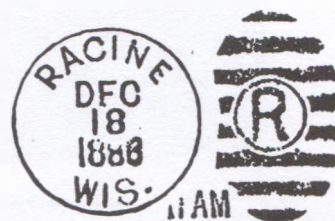


Figure 1

Figure 2

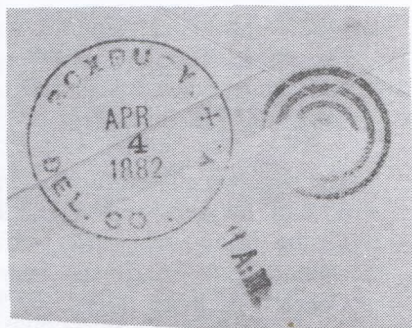
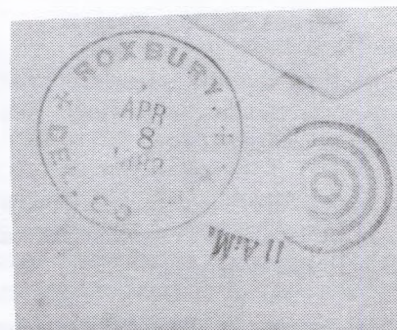


Figure 3



Supplementary Table

<u>Circle Date Stamp</u>				<u>Ellipse</u>				
<u>TOWN</u>	<u>DIAL</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>NO. OF BARS</u>	<u>INNER CIRCLE</u>	<u>INNER CIRCLE DIAMETER</u>	<u>CIRCLE INSCRIPTION</u>	
Northfield, Conn.	24 mm	2-11-90	5PM	9	YES	11 ½ mm	NONE	1
	24 mm	7-7-90	5PM	9	YES	11 ½ mm	NONE	
Lockport, N.Y.	26 mm	5-13-81	12M	9	NO	-	L	2
	26 mm	5-17-81	8AM	9	NO	-	L	3
	26 mm	2-3-82	2PM	9	NO	-	L	4
	25 mm	8-15-82	12M	11	YES	12 ½ mm	US	3
Racine, Wis.	24mm (assumed)	1-5-86	11AM	8	YES	9mm (assumed)	R	5
	24mm	12-18-86	11AM	8	YES	9mm	R	3
Tentative								
Roxbury, N.Y. (Scott 207)	16 ½ mm	4-4-82	11AM			4-ring canceller		6
	16 ½ mm	4-8-82	11AM			4-ring canceller		6
Off Cover Stamps								
Lockport, N.Y. (Scott 207)	-	-	-	11	YES	12 ½ mm	US	3
Racine, Wis. (Scott 207)	-	-	-AM	8	YES	9	R	7
(Scott 210)	-	-	10AM	8	YES	9	R	3
(Scott 213)	-	on or after 9-10-87	-	8	YES	9	R	3

1 Courtesy Ralph Edson
2 Courtesy Ted Wassam
3 Courtesy John Donnes

4 Courtesy Don Vail
5 Edward Willard, Vol. Two, p. 149
6 Courtesy Roger Curran
7 Reported — not seen

Targets and Non-Targets

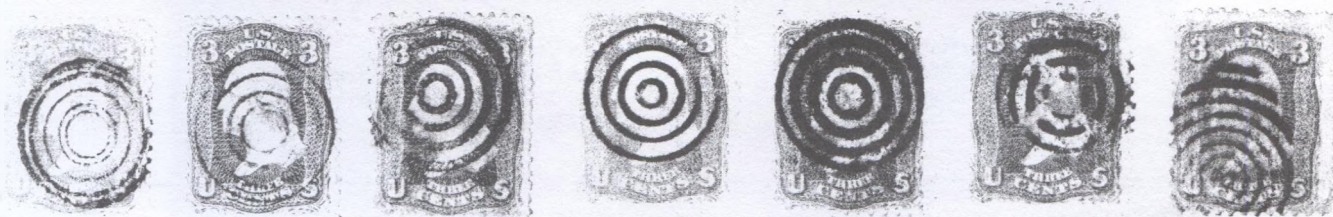
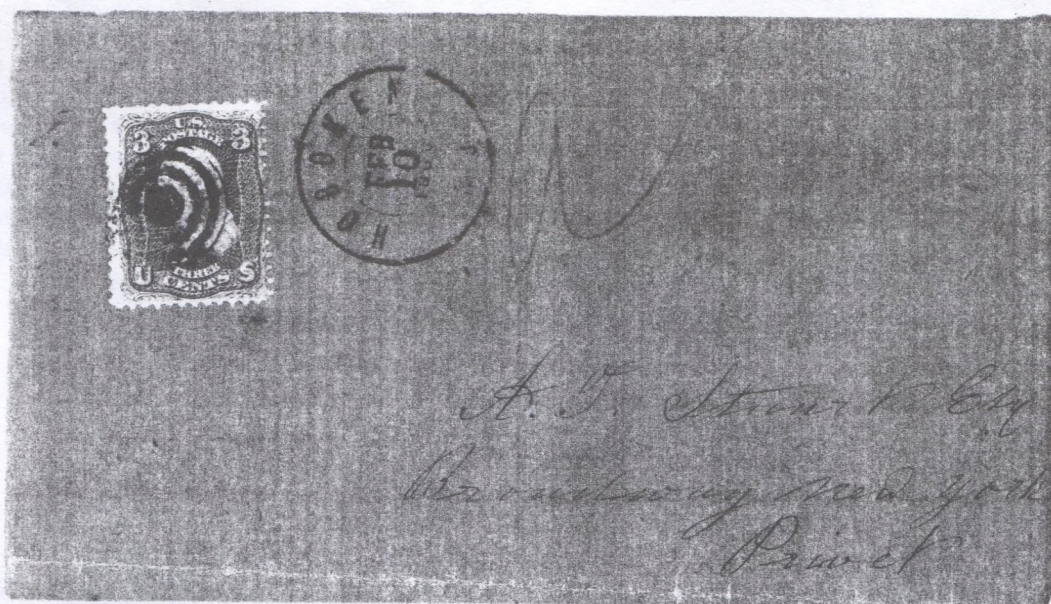
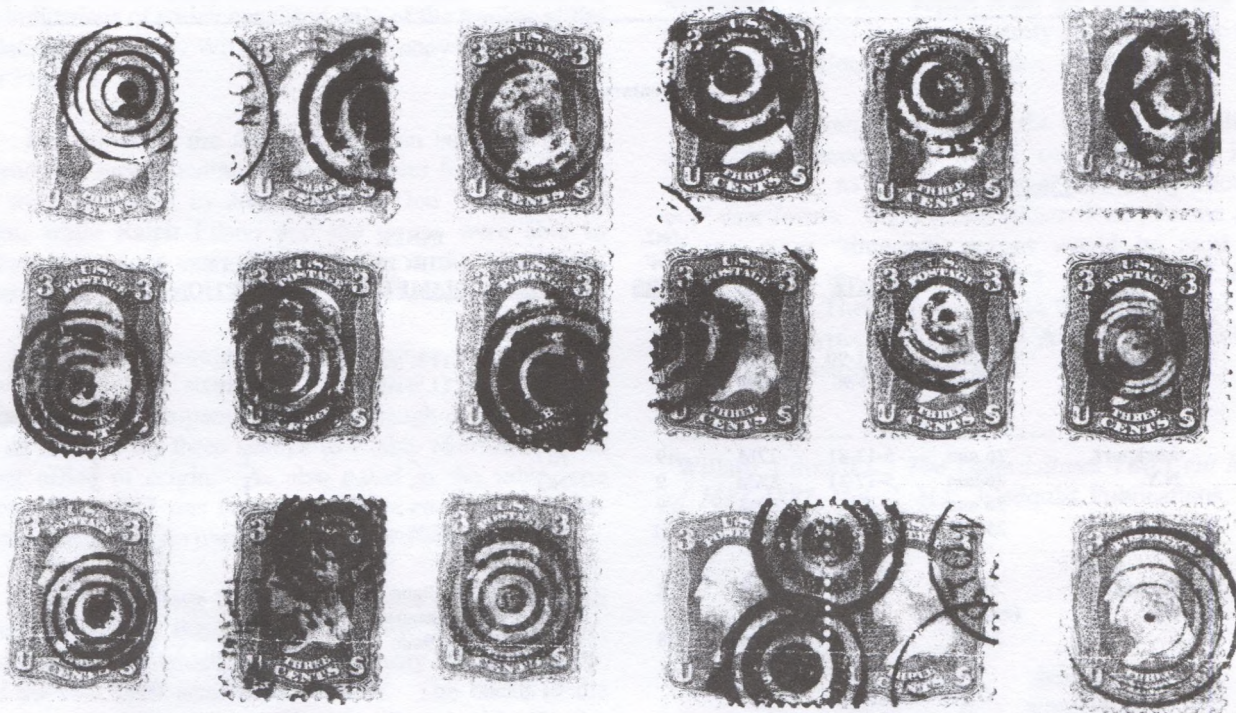
Abe Boyarsky recently wrote the *NEWS* about the nomenclature used for certain cancellations. We quote from his interesting and informative letter.

I see lately that many descriptions in catalogs are calling the common concentric circles bullseyes or targets.

The true targets are the ones that have a

solid center and they are quite scarce. Concentric circles are common on the 3 cent 1861 issue although some of the concentric circles are difficult to find.

The common concentric circles measure 19-20 mm. for the outside circle and 4-5 mm. for the inside circle. This would be for the common 4 ring concentric circles. Concentric circles killers that have a 6 or



larger mm. for the inside circle and 21 mm. or larger for the outside circle are not common.

In the 3rd row number 5 with the small dot in the center is from Oaks Corners, NY. The townmark included Jul 20 and the shade appears to be used in late 1864 and early 1865.

I would appreciate hearing from members who have these solid center cancellations on the 1861 3 cent issue on and off cover.

Abe can be reached at P.O. Box 570, La Mirada CA 90637-0570.

Another Early Duplex?

by Roger D. Curran

One of the most important steps in the evolution of canceling postage stamps was the adoption of handstamps that duplexed the townmark to a killer. In the U.S. this was brought about by a postal regulation dated July 23, 1860 that forbade use of the townmark as an obliterator of postage stamps. Townmarks did not do an effective job obliterating

postage stamps and using them on postage stamps tended to make them less readable.

New York was the first post office to adopt the time-saving duplex and examples from New York have been seen as early as August 8, 1860. Two Ohio post offices, Cleveland and Cincinnati, introduced duplex handstamps by August 17, 1860. A Chicago duplex dated September 28, 1860 has been reported. Savannah, Ga. began using duplexes by October 20, 1860.

Pittsburgh, Pa. may also have been a pioneer in this area. Figure 1 illustrates a cover postmarked at the Pittsburgh post office on November 10, 1860. The grid killer to the right suggests that the townmark and killer were struck from a single handstamp, but more examples are needed to reach a definite conclusion. A second example noted was lot 2139 in *Nutmeg Mail Auctions Sale No. 25* of April 26, 2000. It appears to be dated October 26, 1860. Figure 2 reproduces the catalog illustration of that lot.

Readers are encouraged to check their collections for other examples of these Pittsburgh markings and report them to the *NEWS* for a future update. All contributions will be acknowledged. ■

Figure 1

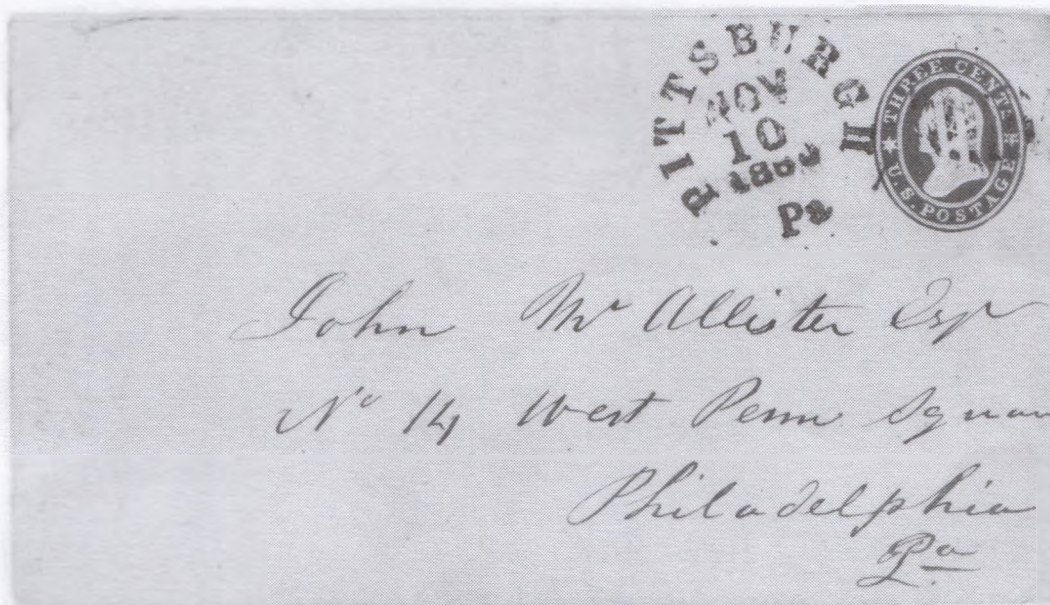
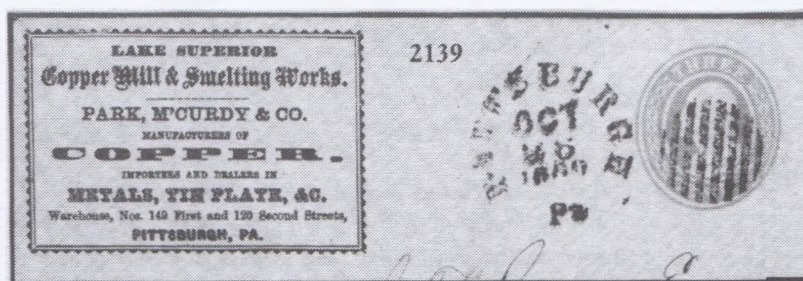


Figure 2



Odd Duplexed Killers

By the late 1890s, standardized cancels were certainly the norm, particularly as the larger post offices had by then adopted the routine use of letter canceling machines. Many small post offices, however, continued to use distinctive (albeit by this time usually not very "fancy") killers in processing mail.

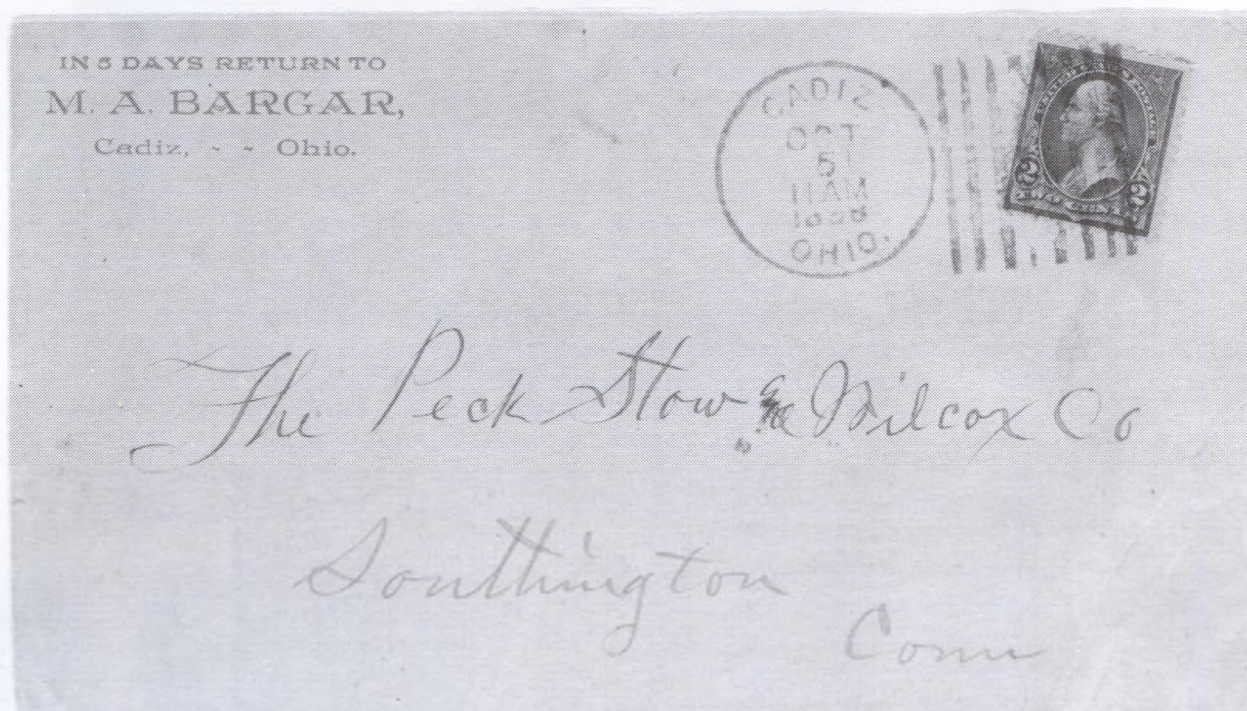
Illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 are two 1898 examples of unusual killers duplexed to town postmarks. The Moodus, Connecticut killer is in the shape of a horizontal ellipse (certainly the ellipse is a common enough shape) but in this case composed entirely

of "dots." The Cadiz, Ohio killer is a rather large square of eight vertical bars. One supposes that both killers were handmade but perhaps not. Readers who can report other examples of these killers, either from the same post offices or others, are urged to do so.

Figure 1



Figure 2



More on Glen Allen Precancels

In the Winter 2000 *NEWS* a brief article was presented that illustrated three examples of precancels applied at Glen Allen, Virginia. In response, club member Bob Payne submitted two examples from his collection. Figure 1 is a beautiful cover bearing the corner card of the business that printed the townmark and star which are in black ink. Figure 2 is also a lovely cover but one that I suspect may be surprising to many readers. The very elaborate townmark in black ink is printed with space allowed for entering the month and day in manuscript. The townmark date on this cover is June 12, 1871. The "precancel" did not, of course, in this case include a separate killer to cancel the postage stamp.

reports Glen Allen stars on 1873 issue stamps through 1882 issues and on two later issue stamps. Smith also reports an example on an 1870 issue stamp but with a "?," suggesting that it is not confirmed. *Postal History and Usage of 1907 and Earlier Precancels* by Charles C. Souder does not list any Glen Allen precancels on stamps before the 1873 issue. Your editor assumes that the Glen Allen Druggists' Label Concern was a predecessor to Cussons, May & Co. and Cussons, May and Sheppard and that the precanceling practice began by printing just the townmark and only later did the company print both the townmark and the star cancel. Additional information would be greatly appreciated. ■

It was interesting to consult a couple of reference books on precancels. *Silent Precancels* by David W. Smith

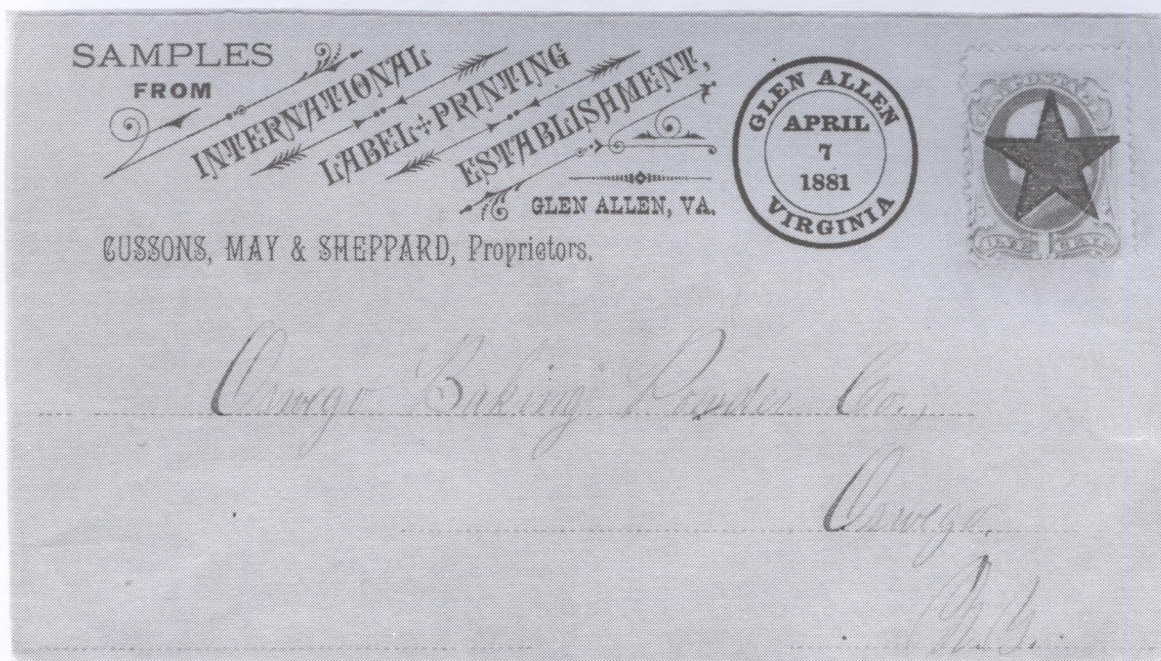


Figure 1

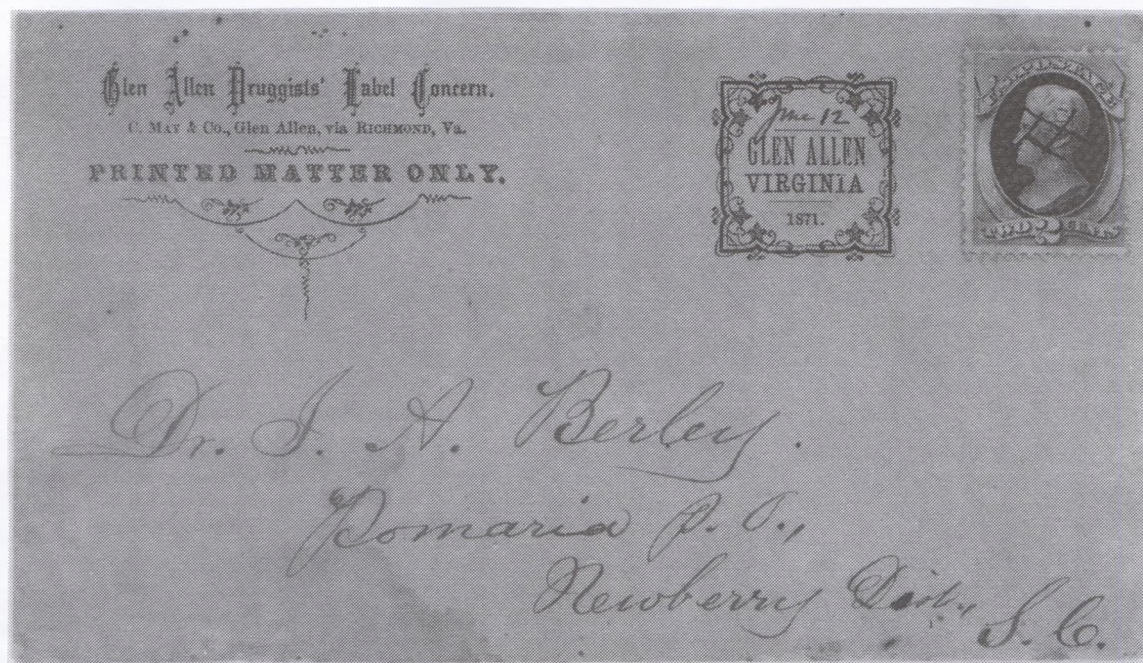


Figure 2

Sets of Letters

Figure 1 and 2 illustrate 1877 covers from Hartford, Connecticut. One might assume Figure 1 was a negative cross until viewing Figure 2. Neither cancel is listed in *Connecticut Post Offices and Postmarks* but the author, Arthur J. Warmsley, stated that he was only providing a cross-section of what is available. In *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894*, Jim Cole illustrates what may be the Figure 1 "X," but without attribution, as Lx-8 and also a "Y" (Ly-8) shown here as Figure 3 attributed to Hartford. Interesting, isn't it, that all three letters are close to the end of the alphabet.

Figure 4 is a "B" in an ellipse from Barre, Mass. "B" for Barre seems reasonable enough, but one begins to wonder when noting the "H" in Figure 5. Indeed, Barre is known to have used other letters, as illustrated by several examples from Cole shown here as Figure 6.

Figure 3



For both Hartford and Barre, your editor would very much welcome receiving reports of other letter cancels used during the middle and late 1870s.

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Figure 1

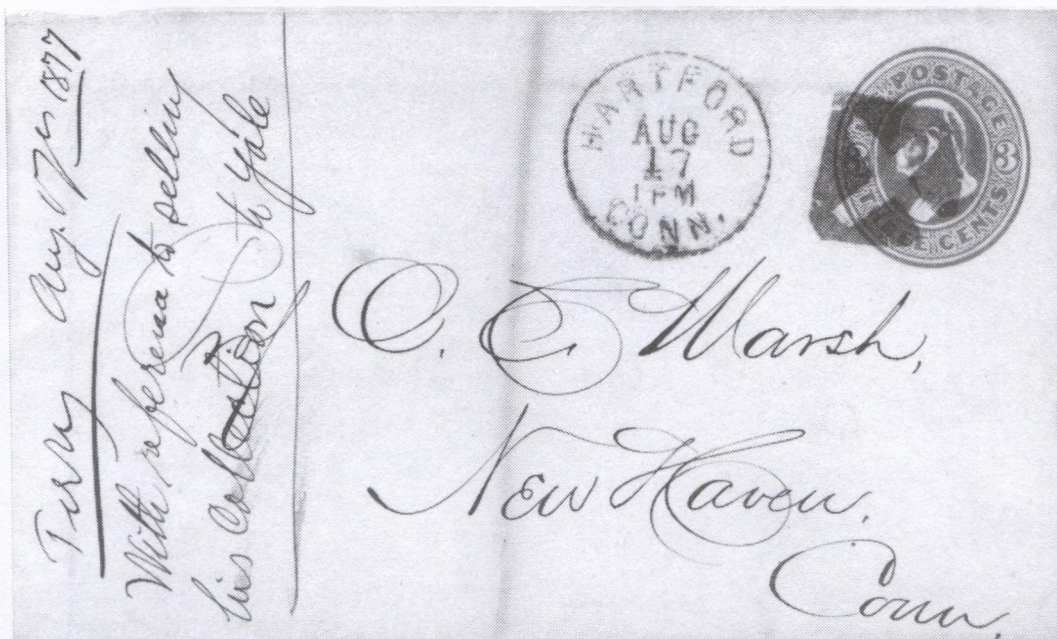


Figure 2

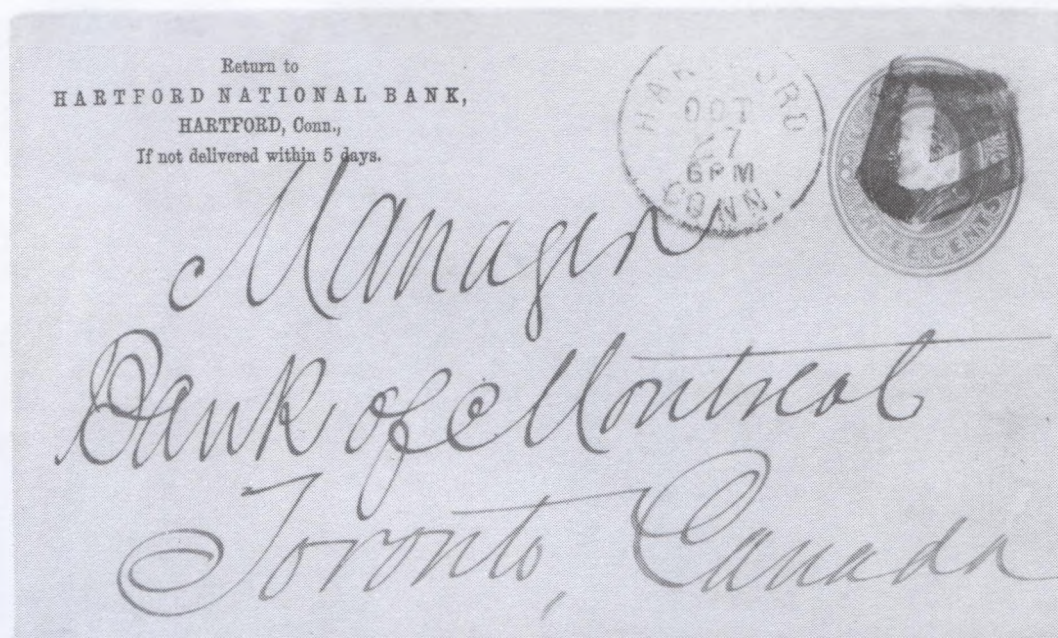


Figure 4

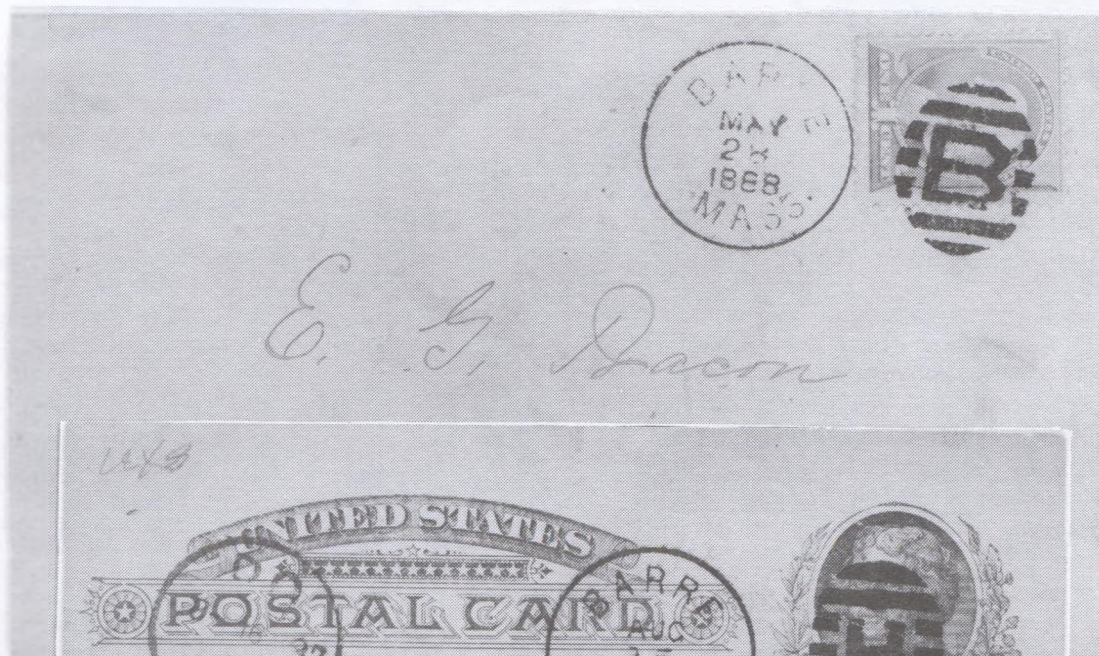


Figure 5

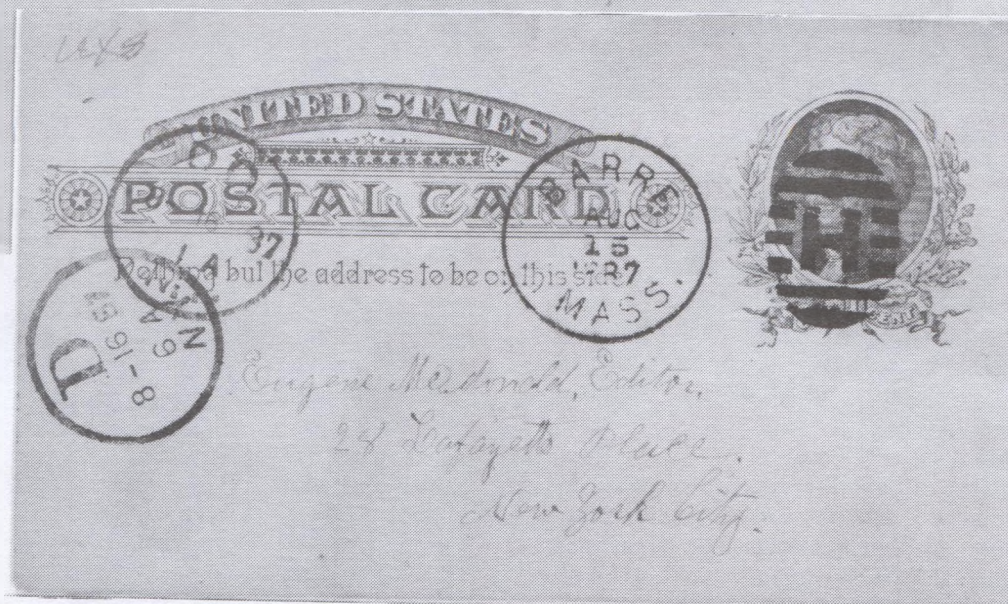
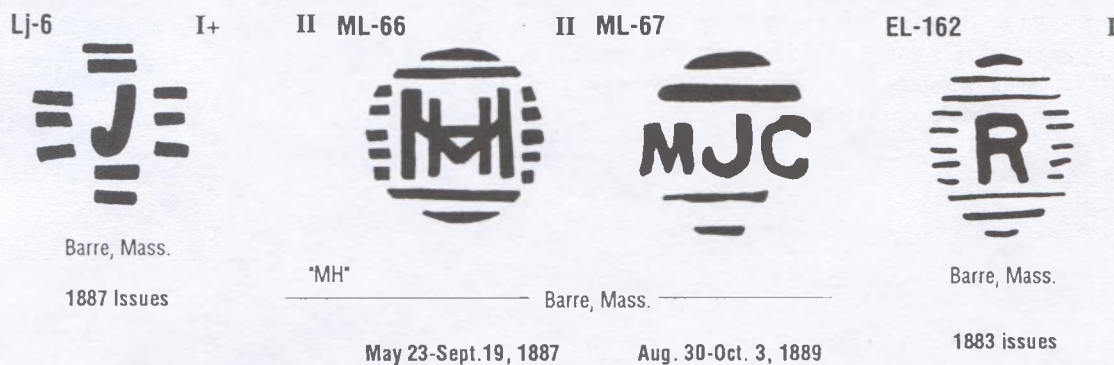


Figure 6

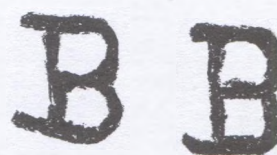


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Brunswick "B"

Club member Charles O'Dell sends two covers postmarked from the river town of Brunswick, Missouri with a letter "B" killer. Tracings are included here as Figure 1. Whether the differences are attributable to two different "B" handstamps, with slightly different designs, or just variations in the inking or strikes from a single handstamp, is difficult to tell. The main distinguishing characteristic of the Brunswick "B" may be the rather long tail at the bottom. ■

Figure 1



Earliest "Fancy" Cancel?

In 1844 and the first half of 1845, independent mail companies were actively engaged in providing letter mail service between cities. This service was a major challenge to the U.S. Post Office Department that ended only when the POD monopoly in this area was re-established in 1845. Nine of these companies issued their own stamps in 1844, including the American Letter Mail Company (ALMC).

The Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions sale No. 8 of November 11-13, 1999 contained the Richard Frajola collection of 1844 independent mail company covers. The catalog identified several "firsts" associated with the 1844 independent mail adhesives. One of them was as follows:

"The earliest use of 'fancy' cancels
(American Letter Mail Company)"

Lot 1747 was a cover bearing an ALMC 5¢ black small eagle adhesive canceled by a "red oval of stars fancy cancel." The lot description mentioned that "... fewer than ten examples of this cancel are reported on cover." The Robert A. Siegel sale 817 of November 15-17, 1999 offered two more such covers dated March 4, 1844 and January 21, 1845 respectively. The January 21 cover is shown here as Figure 1. This cover also bears a red ALMC New York oval handstamp marking.

Surely the "earliest use" description was intended to apply to cancels within the U.S. as the British "Maltese" cross cancels had been used to obliterate adhesive stamps since 1840. And we would also have to disqualify the "U.S." killer (Figure 2) introduced in 1842 by the U.S. City Despatch Post in New York City for use on local mail adhesive stamps. We suppose the "U.S." could be argued either as a fancy cancel or as not. Certainly the oval of stars is a true fancy cancel with eye-appeal and a dash of whimsy going well beyond what a strictly functional cancel would require. ■

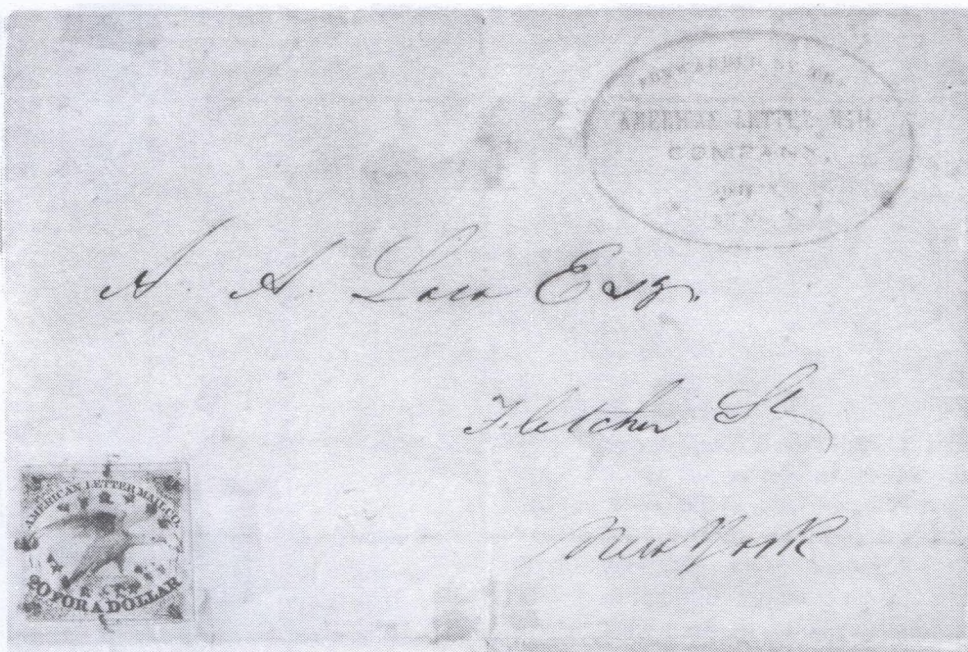
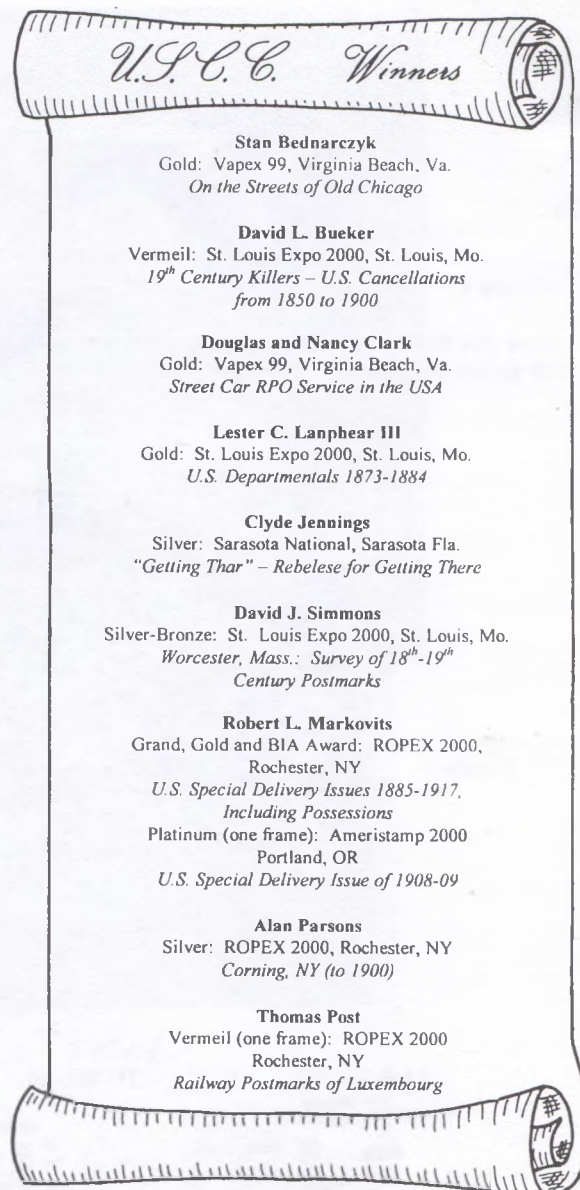


Figure 1



Figure 2