



Cancellation Club NEWS

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Analysis of the Barre, Massachusetts Killers, 1880-91

by John Valenti

In the August 2001 issue of the *NEWS*, Roger Curran presented a fascinating article detailing the very interesting hand-carved letter killers used by the Barre, MA post office in the mid-to-late 1880s ("The Men of Letters in the Barre Post Office"). This article examined covers principally from the collection of USCC member Arthur Beane. How excited I was, therefore, that within a week of the *NEWS* arriving in my mailbox, I was able to acquire an extensive correspondence from a Barre family (the Aldens) that contained numerous examples of these killers (44 covers from the period studied).

Moreover, the correspondence contained examples of new killers not previously reported. Using information and illustrations from the August article and new data from the Alden covers (all of which contained dated letters), I have developed further information about the sequencing of the killers and their periods of use.

My approach to studying the killers involves an analysis of the postmark dials used with these cancellations. Table 1 details the Barre postmarks found on the covers during the period analyzed. Table 2 catalogs and organizes

Table 1 - Postmarks

Number	Description
Dial 1a	Distinct 26 millimeter single ring postmark, sans-serif "BARRE, MASS", with single line date composed of 3 letter month abbreviation, day and 4 digit year, duplexed to 4 ring target killer, 6 millimeter separation from dial. Rubber composition, magenta ink.
Dial 1b	Same as Dial 1a but struck in black ink.
Dial 2	Distinct 27 millimeter single ring postmark (possibly a worn version of Dial 1), sans-serif "BARRE, MASS", with single line date composed of 3 letter month abbreviation, day and "P.M" time indicator, duplexed to 4 ring target killer, 6 millimeter separation from dial. Rubber composition.
Dial 3	Thin 27 millimeter double ring postmark, serif "BARRE MASS.", with 3 line date composed of 3 letter month abbreviation, day and 4 digit year, duplexed to 4 ring target killer, 12 millimeter separation from dial. Rubber composition
Dial 4	Thin 25-27 millimeter octagonal postmark, sans-serif "BARRE MASS.", with 3 line date composed of 3 letter month abbreviation, day and 4 digit year, not duplexed to any killer .
Dial 5a	Moderate 27 millimeter single ring postmark, sans-serif "BARRE MASS.", with 3 line date composed of sans-serif 3 letter month abbreviation, day and wide (9 millimeter) 4 digit year, small (3 millimeter) digits in day date , duplexed to hand-carved killer.
Dial 5b	Moderate 27 millimeter single ring postmark, sans-serif "BARRE MASS.", with 3 line date composed of sans-serif 3 letter month abbreviation, day and wide (9 millimeter) 4 digit year, large (4 millimeter) digits in day date , duplexed to hand-carved killer.
Dial 6a	Moderate 27 millimeter single ring postmark, sans-serif "BARRE MASS.", with 3 line date composed of serif 3 letter month abbreviation , day and 4 digit year small (3 millimeter) digits in day date , duplexed to hand-carved killer.
Dial 6b	Moderate 27 millimeter single ring postmark, sans-serif "BARRE MASS.", with 3 line date composed of serif 3 letter month abbreviation , day and 4 digit year, large (4 millimeter) digits in day date , duplexed to hand-carved killer.
Dial 7a	Moderate 27 millimeter single ring postmark, sans-serif "BARRE MASS.", with 4 line date composed of sans-serif 3 letter month abbreviation, day, time (hour AM/PM format) , and 4 digit year, narrow year date (7 millimeter) , duplexed to hand-carved killer.
Dial 7b	Moderate 27 millimeter single ring postmark, sans-serif "BARRE MASS.", with 4 line date composed of sans-serif 3 letter month abbreviation, day, time (hour AM/PM format) , and 4 digit year, wide year date (9 millimeter) , duplexed to hand-carved killer.
Dial 8	Moderate 27 millimeter single ring postmark, sans-serif "BARRE MASS.", with 3 line date composed of sans-serif 3 letter month abbreviation, day and narrow (7 millimeter) 4 digit year, small digits in day , duplexed to hand-carved killer.
Dial 9	Moderate 27 millimeter single ring postmark, sans-serif "BARRE MASS.", with 3 line date composed of sans-serif 3 letter month abbreviation, day and time (hour AM/PM format) , no year date , small digits in day date, duplexed to hand-carved killer.

(Continued on page 3)

Dear Reader,

As reported in the November 2001 *NEWS*, the USCC will hold its annual meeting this year at NOJEX 2002. The show will run from Saturday, May 25 through Monday, May 27 at the Meadowlands Crowne Plaza Hotel in Secaucus, N.J., near New York City. We will have a one-frame cancellations exhibit "competition," a society table all three days, and a seminar on a cancellation-related topic. We urge club members to attend this excellent World Series of Philately show and, if feasible, to participate in one or more USCC activities. If you are interested in an exhibit prospectus, or are available to help out at the table for an hour or two or have any questions about the show, please contact me by email: rdcnrc@evenlink.com, by phone at: 570-523-0783 or regular mail at the address on the masthead. We hope to have you join us.

I want to call attention to the **USCC Library**, the use of which is a real benefit of club membership. The library contains many excellent reference books on cancellations and related subjects as well as auction catalogs, monographs and articles. If you don't have a copy of the list of library holdings (which also states the procedure for borrowing items), it is available online – see the club's website address at the bottom of the masthead on the second page of each *NEWS* issue. Otherwise, copies are available from me for a SASE.

We are currently working on an interesting project involving a collection of several thousand tracings of cancellations that were made primarily in the 1940s and 1950s. The vast majority were done by former USCC member Kenneth A. Whitfield who has graciously permitted the Club to reproduce them. We are presently developing a table of contents by cancellation type and a state/post office index that identifies the page numbers where cancels from specific post offices can be found. The cancellations range from the 1840s to the 1890s. While many have been reported, a considerable number have not and we believe this set of tracings will make a valuable addition to the literature. The plan is to create two sets for the USCC Library and also offer sets, essentially at cost, to members who would want their own. More to follow on this subject which we hope to bring to fruition in 2002.

Roger Curran

More on San Francisco Cog

Joe Crosby brings to our attention the interesting web page of Rick Mingee devoted to the San Francisco cogwheel cancel:

<http://www.frii.com/~rmingee/cogpage.htm>

It was last updated on May 25, 1998.■



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(Continued from front page)

Table 2 - Killers

Killer*	Description
Grid1	29 millimeter round 12-segment open grid
Grid2	21x25 millimeter rectangular grid composed of 7 vertical 25 millimeter bars
Grid3	18 millimeter squared diamond grid composed of 8 horizontal bars of various lengths
S1 (2)	Block letter S in 19x30 millimeter segmented vertical box grid composed of 2 horizontal bars above and below the letter and a single vertical bar between 2 squares at left and right
S2 (3)	Block letter S in 23-24 millimeter vertical ellipse composed of 12 (possibly 13) horizontal bars
S3 (4)	Reverse block letter S in 25 millimeter circular grid composed of 4 horizontal bars at top and bottom and 4 vertical bars along each side
S4 (5)	Script letter S in 20 millimeter circular grid composed of 8 horizontal bars
S5 (7)	Block letter S in 23 millimeter circular grid composed of 7 horizontal bars
R1 (6)	Thin letter R in 24 millimeter vertical ellipse composed of 11 horizontal bars
H1 (8)	Block letter H in 23 millimeter vertical ellipse composed of 7 horizontal bars
B1 (12)	Block letter B in 24 millimeter pointed vertical ellipse composed of 7 horizontal bars
J1 (13)	Block letter J in 22 millimeter circular grid composed 7 horizontal bars
J2 (11)	Block letter J in 20x22 millimeter vertical box grid composed of 2 horizontal bars above and below the J and 3 horizontal bars at left and right
J3a	Small block letter J in 19-20x13 millimeter horizontal box grid composed of single short bar and circular arch above and below the J and 2 vertical bars at left and right
J3b (16)	Small block letter J in 19-20x13 millimeter horizontal box grid composed of single short bar above and below the J and 2 vertical bars at left and right
W1 (10)	Small block letter W in 24 millimeter circular grid composed of 9 horizontal bars around small interior block
W2a (9)	Block letters W and H (latter smaller and within the W) in 23 millimeter circular grid composed of 9 horizontal bars
W2b (14)	Same as Killer P1 with the letter H removed
W2c (19, 20)	Same as Killer P2 (worn state) missing the short horizontal bars along either side of the letter W
W3 (21)	Small block letter W in circular grid composed of 8(?) horizontal bars around large interior block
MJC1 (17)	Block letters MJC horizontally arrayed in 23 millimeter circular grid with 2 horizontal bars above and below the letters
OC1 (18)	Block letters OC horizontally arrayed in 23 millimeter circular grid composed of 3 vertical segments above and below the letters and 3 horizontal segments at left and right
K1	Single solid trapezoidal block 15x15x17 millimeters containing a negative letter K set horizontally in the killer
Mx1 (15)	Solid Maltese cross within 22 millimeter circular grid composed of a single horizontal bar above and below the cross and a single vertical bar at left and right

* Number in parenthesis represents the illustration figure number from the August 2001 article.

the different killers, describing them in detail. Finally, Table 3 cross-tabulates the killers to the postmarks with which they were used and presents the earliest and latest dates of use for both the postmarks and killers.

As noted in the earlier article, the Barre post office during the late 1870s and early 1880s utilized a cancellation device composed of a duplexed postmark and 4 ring target killer (Table 1, dial 1a and 1b). In the period 1878-9, magenta cancellation ink was used. Thereafter, through 1884, strikes of this cancellation device appear only in black ink.

Beginning in late 1883, while the Barre post office still used this duplexed target killer, it began the unusual practice of canceling stamps both with the duplexed target and with an unduplexed hand-carved killer. The cover in Figure 1, dated November 19, 1883, bears both the dial 1b target and a separate circular grid killer (Table 2, killer Grid1). This same killer appears later with a different duplexed target and double ring postmark (Table 1, dial 3) in early 1884.

The cover in Figure 2 shows the next recorded instance of using an unduplexed killer, this time without a duplex target also being present. This February 18, 1884 cover bears both an octagonal postmark (Table 1, dial 4, the only recorded instance) tying the stamp and a strike of an unduplexed letter S in a vertical segmented box (Table 2,

killer S1). Another example of this same killer appeared in Figure 2 of the earlier article on a August 15, 1884 cover additionally bearing the dial 1b target (its latest recorded use).

Figure 3 illustrates a return to double cancellation. This November 9, 1885 cover features a duplexed target and postmark similar to the 1b dial, but this dial replaces the year date with a "P.M." time indicator (Table 1, dial 2, only recorded use). The unduplexed Grid2 killer is an unusual grid composed of seven vertical bars, struck in such a way as to cover nearly the entire stamp (just tying at right) and giving the appearance of George Washington in jail. Also notable about this cover is its 1885 use, the only one recorded either from the entire Alden correspondence or from the Beane collection.

By 1886 it appears that the practice of double cancellation ceased. Instead, the various killers were locked into a duplexed cancellation device composed of a 27-millimeter metal rimmed postmark reading "BARRE" at top and "MASS." at the bottom. A number of dial variations exist for this device. (See Table 1.) It appears that the Barre post office used dial varieties 5, 6 and 8 from mid-to-late 1886 through mid-1888. These dial types consist of a three line date composed of month, day and year. Dial type 7, composed of a four line month, day, time and year, appears to

Table 3 - Postmark and Killer Crosstabulation

		Killer											
		Grid1	Grid2	Grid3	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	R1	H1	B1	J1
Dial	EKU LKU	11/19/83 1/9/84	11/9/85 1/9/85	5/9/87 1/6/88	2/18/84 8/15/84	7/2/86 7/2/86	8/7/86 8/16/86	11/17/86 11/17/86	1/21/87 1/29/87	11/15/86 2/17/88	10/29/86 9/9/87	7/8/87 5/28/88	10/12/88 1/30/89
1a	11/25/78 11/10/79												
1b	8/9/80 8/15/84	11/19/83 -			8/15/84								
2	11/9/85 11/9/85		11/9/85 -										
3	1/9/84 3/10/84	- 1/9/84											
4	2/18/84 2/18/84				2/18/84 -								
5a	8/7/86 5/28/88			5/9/87 -			8/7/86 8/16/86	11/17/86 -			8/9/87 9/9/87	- 5/28/88	
5b	7/2/86 11/15/86					7/2/86 -				11/15/86 -	10/29/86 -		
6a	1/29/87 7/8/87								- 1/29/87			7/8/87 -	
6b	1/21/87 1/21/87								1/21/87 -				
7a	1/6/88 11/26/88			- 1/6/88									10/12/88 11/26/88
7b	10/8/87 11/9/89												- 1/30/89
8	2/17/88 2/17/88									- 2/17/88			
9	1/22/90 8/8/91												

		Killer											
		J2*	J3a	J3b	W1	W2a	W2b	W2c#	W3	MJC1*	OC1	K1	Mx1
Dial	EKU LKU	3/9/88 3/9/88	4/16/89 4/16/89	5/4/89 5/4/89	10/8/87 10/8/87	2/23/89 2/23/89	2/25/89 2/26/89	1/21/90 4/15/90	6/12/90 6/12/90	5/28/89 12/30/89	7/1/90 7/1/90	8/8/91 8/8/91	3/6/89 3/25/89
7a	1/6/88 11/26/88	3/9/88 4/18/88											
7b	10/8/87 11/9/89		4/16/89 -	5/4/89 -	10/8/87 -	2/23/89 -	2/25/89 2/26/89			5/28/89 12/30/89			3/6/89 3/25/89
8	2/17/88 2/17/88												
9	1/22/90 8/8/91							1/22/90 4/15/90	6/12/90		7/1/90 -	8/8/91 -	

The EKU cover dated 1/21 (1890, based upon the two Beane covers) is reported by Bob Markovits.

* The EKU and LKU dates for killer MJC1 are based, respectively, on a cover that I have previously handled and Cole's listed date of use for killer ML-68, a very worn version of the MJC1 killer. The LKU date for killer J2 comes from a cover in the retail stock of postal history dealer and USCC member Ed Hines.

Figure 1

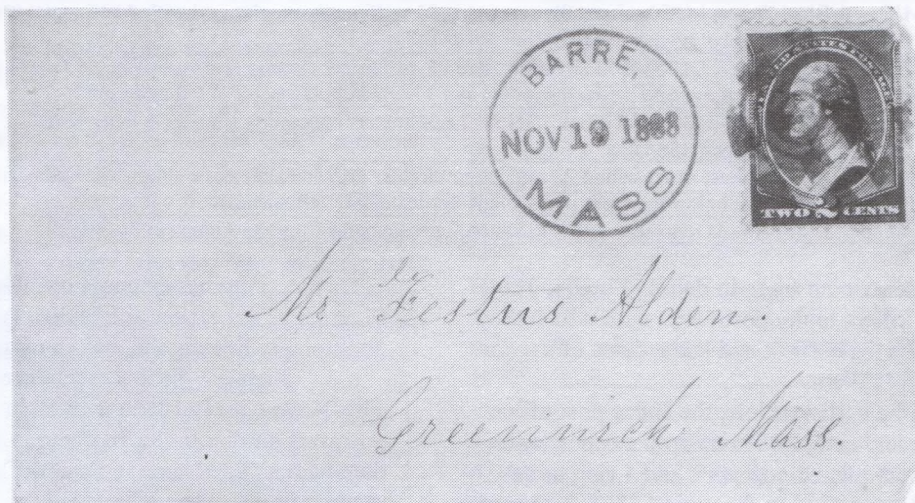


Figure 2



Figure 3

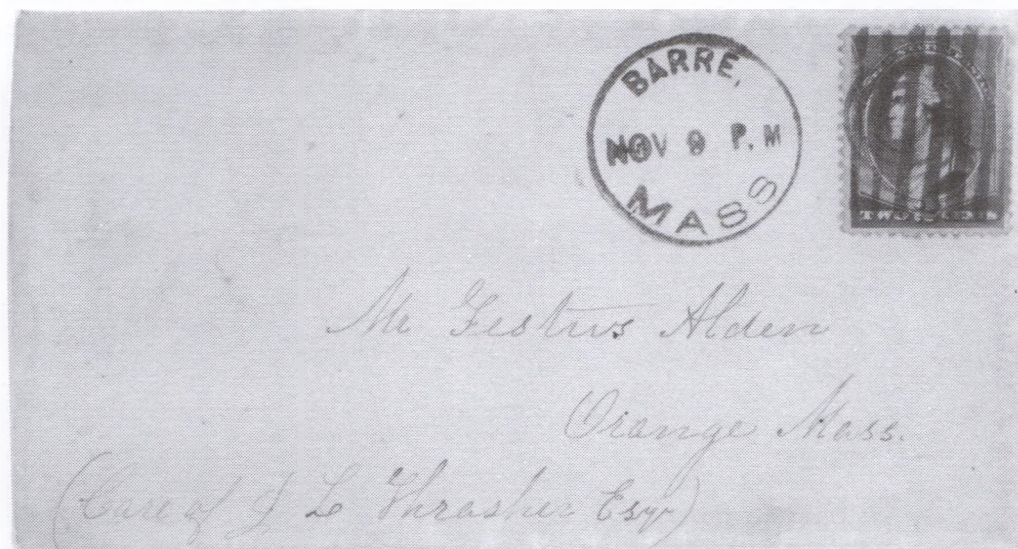


Table 4
Time Line of Barre, MA. Hand-Carved Killers
Sorted in Order of Appearance, by Month
1883-1891

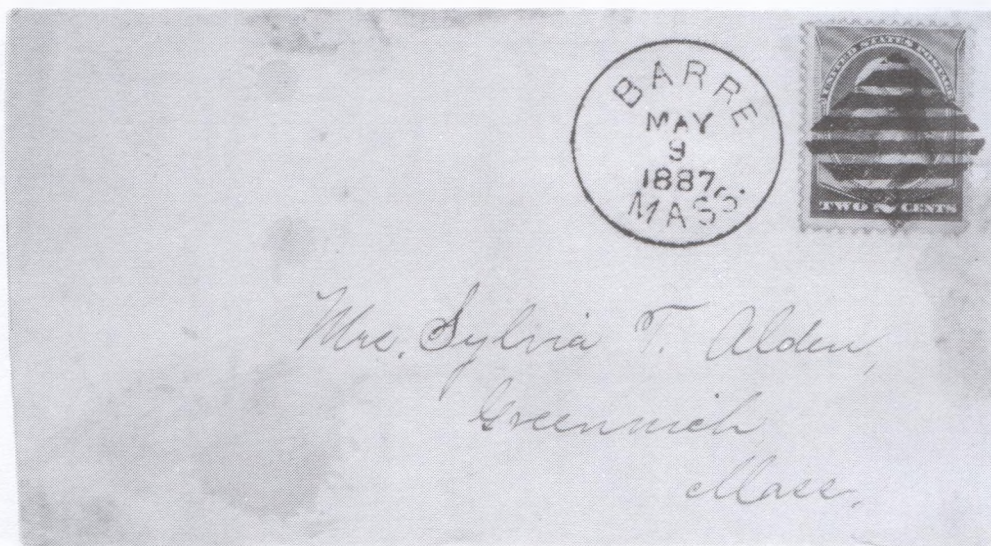
Killer	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91
Grid1									
S1									
Grid2									
S2									
S3									
H1									
R1									
S4									
S5									
Grid3									
B1									
W1									
J2									
J1									
W2a									
W2b									
Mx1									
J3a									
J3b									
MJC1									
W2c									
W3									
OC1									
K1									

have seen use from late 1887 through late 1889. Finally, dial type 9 shows use from early 1890 well into 1891, for the covers examined.

The earliest and latest recorded uses of both the dial varieties and different killers are crosstabulated in Table 3. In addition, table 4 charts the various cancellations in order of their appearance. This compilation generally confirms the sequencing noted in the earlier article. Looking at these tables, one can make several observations:

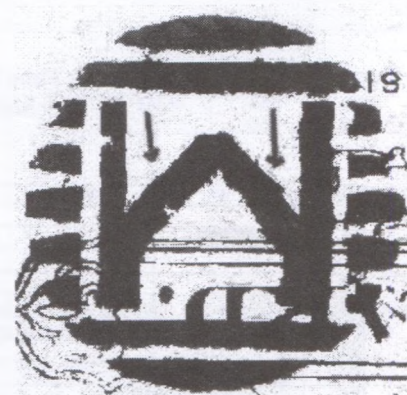
- Simpler killers, such as grids, are concentrated in the middle years of the decade. The latest grid variety killer (Table 2, killer Grid3) appears in mid-1887 through early 1888. Figure 4 shows an example of this killer.
- The letter S killers (Table 2, killers S1 through S5) clearly congregate together as the first letter appearing in the Barre killers. Killer S1 is unusual in that it appears in early 1884. The remaining letter S killers show usage from mid-1886 through early 1887. The only non-letter S killer overlapping this period is the letter R in vertical ellipse (Table 2, killer R1). This killer also has the distinction of the longest period of recorded use, more than a year from late 1886 to early 1888. Notably, the two covers from the Alden correspondence that establish this lengthy use show little deterioration in the quality of the killer, perhaps indicating discontinuous use over this period.
- Be wary of reported dates of use in cancellation catalogs. Cole (*Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894*) reports usage of killer W2a, overlaid "WH" (or is it an "MH"?) in circular horizontal grid, from May 23, 1887 to September 19, 1887. The one cover with this cancellation reported in the Beane collection dates February 1889 and it bears an immaculate strike. Killers with detailed carving like P1 invariably deteriorate rapidly from use. Thus, it is unlikely that killer W2a could have lasted this long without recarving.
- Not only did killer W2a not last in its pristine state from late 1887 to early 1889, but also it is highly likely that it

Figure 4



lasted but a few days before being recarved into killer W2a cover illustrated W2b. The date of the one reported in the earlier article is not entirely distinct. Roger Curran reported it as FEB 2?, 1889. My examination of this indistinct digit in the photograph, compared to similar dials from covers in the Alden correspondence, leads me to conclude that the digit is the numeral 3. Since the earliest recorded use of the W2b killer is February 25, 1889, the W2a killer may have had a life of but a few days. Besides this sequencing of the W2a and W2b killers, I conclude recarving of killer W2a as the source for the W2b killer. I base this upon a magnified examination of a detailed strike on postal card (UX9) from the Alden correspondence dated February 26, 1889. Figure 5 contains an enlargement of this strike. I have added arrows at both left and right that point to the remains of the incompletely removed vertical bars of the deleted letter "H". Additionally, I conclude that the W2c killer is a well worn and deteriorated version of the W2b killer that has either lost its short horizontal side bars or had them cut away. Examination and measurements of the W2c killers pictured in the earlier article and their

Figure 5



early 1890 usage lead me to this conclusion.

- Cancellation Club member Ted Wassam provides an example of a previously unreported Barre letter killer that demonstrates another possible re-carving. I record this killer in Table 2 as killer J3a. Figure 6 illustrates this cover, dated April 16, 1889. This date is less than one month before the single recorded date of use for killer J3b

Figure 6



Figure 7

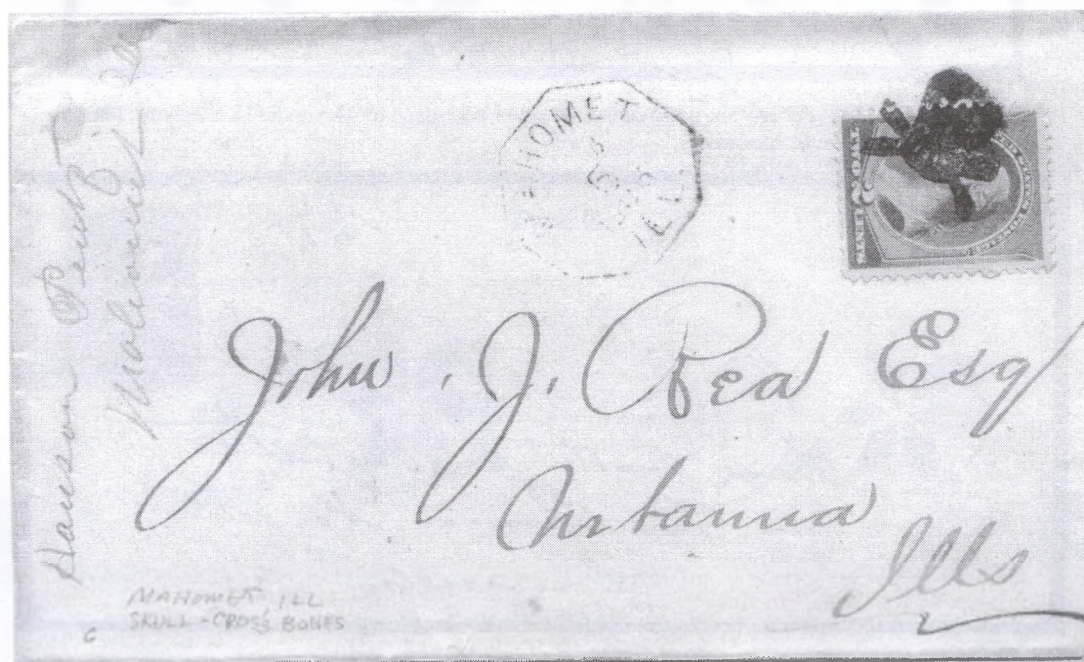
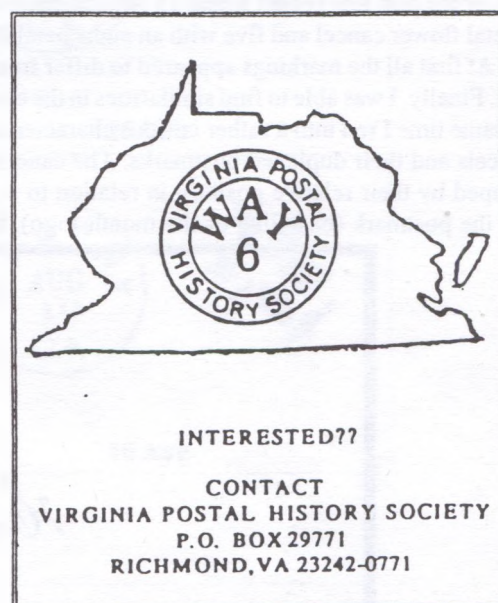


pictured in Figure 16 of the earlier article. Note that the J3a killer has a circular arch above and below the grid surrounding the letter "J", missing on J3b either because they broke away with use or were removed.

My final addition to the story of the Barre killers is a cover bearing an unusual letter cancellation not previously identified. Figure 7 illustrates the cover, which bears a bold strike of a negative letter "K" in a solid trapezoid (Table 2, killer K1). The killer is horizontally duplexed to its postmark, leaving the letter facing up. The cover is postmarked August 8 and the correspondence verifies an 1891 usage.■

Skull and Bones

Don Barany submits information about the cover illustrated in Figure 1. It is from Mahomet, Illinois and the stamp canceled is a Scott #210. We have not found it in the literature and ask readers to report any additional examples of which they are aware. It is similar to Cole's listing SK-26 (page 171) reported from Columbus, Indiana on 1870 issues. The cover has a good PF certificate and Don reports that the cancel shows eyes, nose and five teeth.■



The Albany, Georgia Flower Cancels

By Francis J. Crown, Jr.

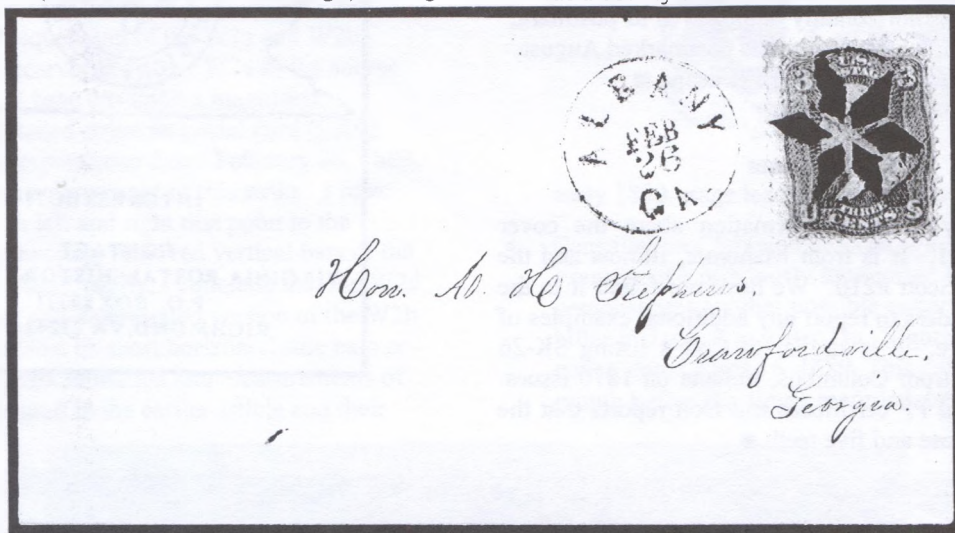
Historically my main collecting interests are Confederates from Columbus, Georgia and stampless covers from Georgia. During the past few years I branched out into the post Civil War period of Georgia postal history and began collecting town markings and advertising covers.

Fancy cancels always had some appeal to me but never to the point that I actually collected them. After branching into post Civil War Georgia postal history I bought an Albany cover with what most collectors would call a segmented or geometric fancy cancel. Shortly afterward I saw another cover with the same marking. At least I thought it was the same. However, on closer examination it was not. Thus started my pursuit of what I call the Albany flower cancels.

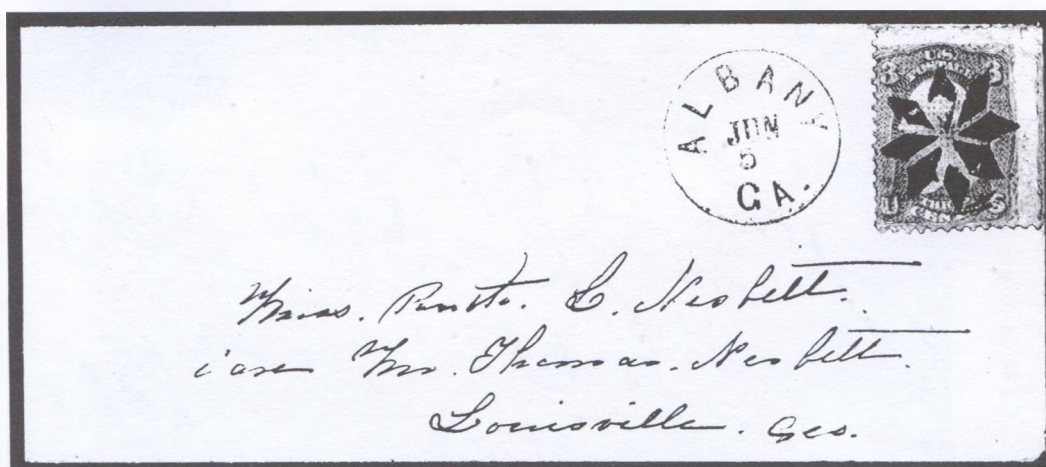
Over the past few years I found 15 Albany covers with a six-petal flower cancel and five with an eight-petal flower cancel. At first all the markings appeared to differ from one another. Finally, I was able to find similarities in the cancels. At the same time I ran into a rather curious characteristic of the cancels and their duplexed postmarks. The cancels can be grouped by their relative position in relation to a fixed axis of the postmark (base line of the month logo). Using

this method some of the cancels are high, some in a mid-range and some low in relation to the postmark (Figure 1).

What can account for this? The illustrations I have seen of duplex devices used during the late 1860s and early 1870s show the postmark and cancel holder cast as a single piece of metal or attached to a bar of metal. Thus, the postmark and cancel have a fixed axis and maintain the same relative position to each other. I can think of only three ways for the cancel to move high or low in relation to the postmark: (1) the cancel is attached to the postmark in such a way that it can rotate about the postmark in an arc; (2) the postmark itself is in a holder and can rotate within the holder (any rotation of the postmark will change the relative position of the cancel to the fixed axis of the postmark); or (3) there are multiple duplex handstamps, each with the same postmark design, but with the cancel in different positions relative to a fixed axis of the postmark. Originally I dismissed this third possibility because Albany had a population of only 2,100 in 1870. I later found that the Albany post office did a brisk business, probably because it was a county seat and at the head of navigation on the Flint

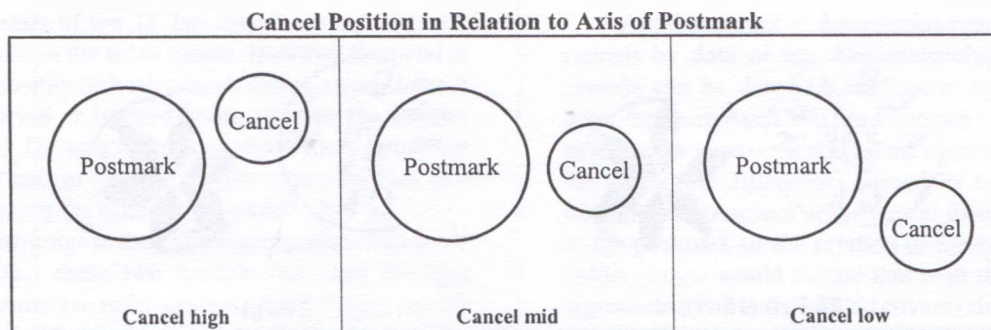


Black 26 Feb (1869) Albany six-petal cancel on cover addressed to Alexander H. Stephens, former Vice President of the Confederacy.

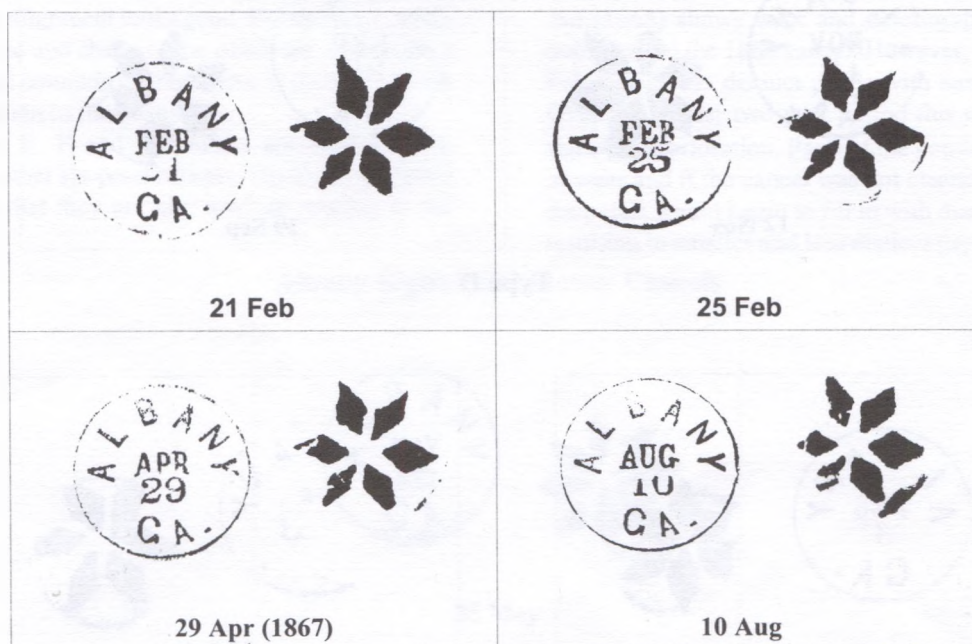


Black 5 Jun Albany eight-petal cancel on cover bearing a grilled 1867/8 3¢ stamp.

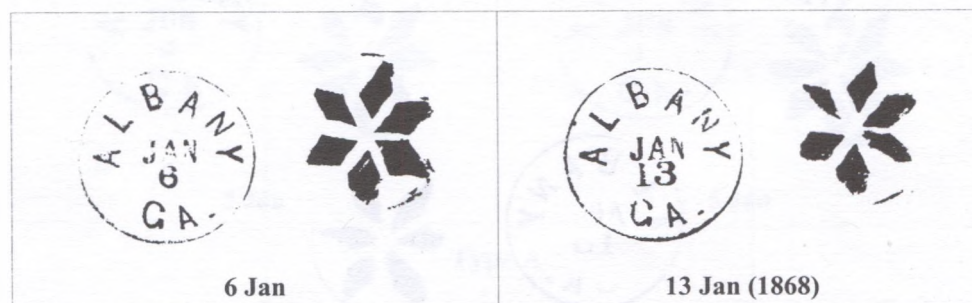
Figure 1



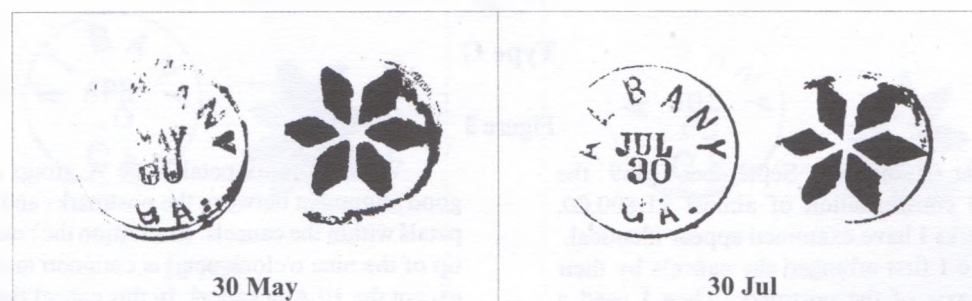
Albany Six-Petal Flower Cancels



Type A

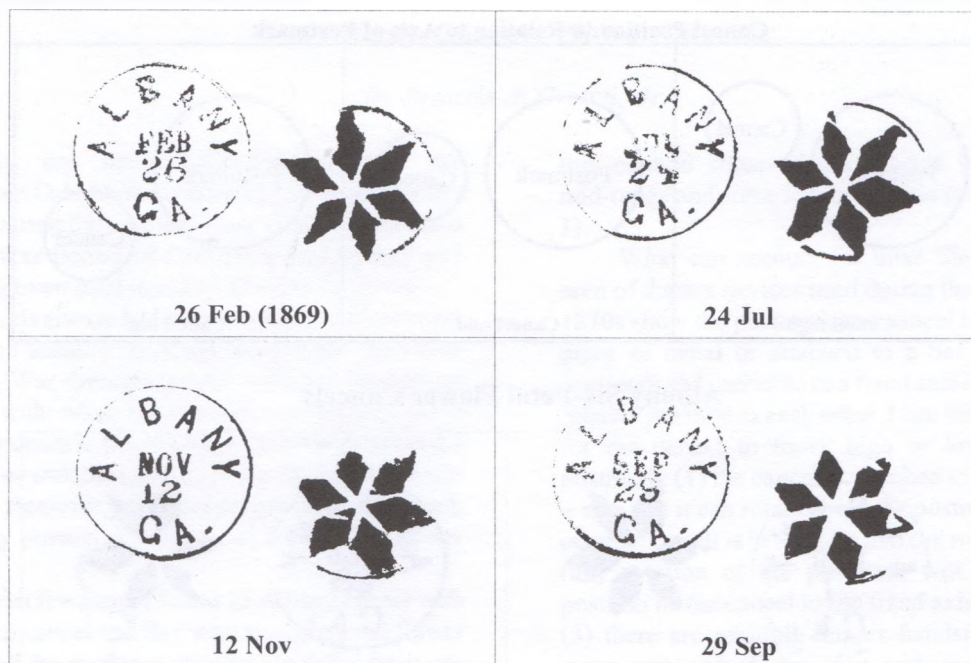


Type B

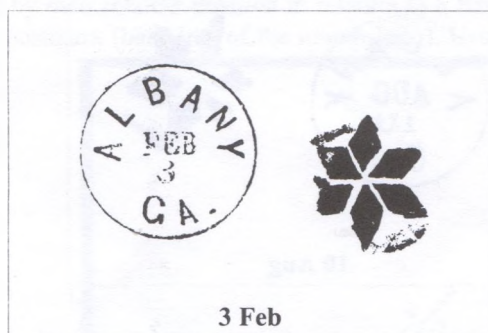


Type C

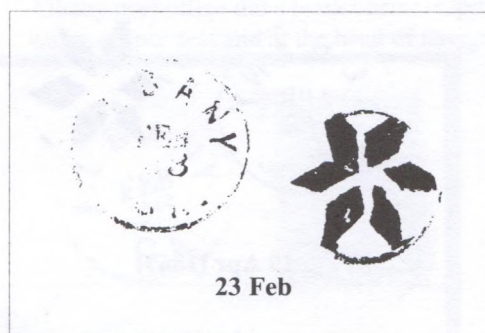
Figure 2



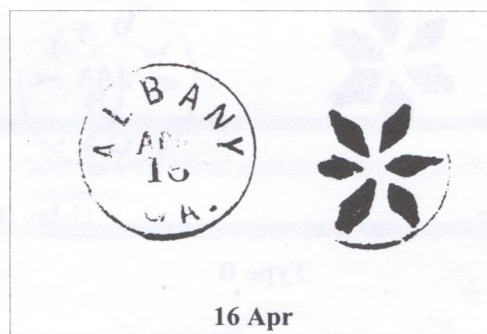
Type D



Type E



Type F



Type G

Figure 3

River. For the year ending 30 September 1869 the postmaster received compensation of almost \$1,800.00. However, all postmarks I have examined appear identical.

As noted above I first arranged the cancels by their relation to a fixed axis of the postmark. Then I used a transparency to identify similarities and differences. Using this procedure I identified seven different types of six-petal cancels (Figures 2 and 3).

Within the six-petal Type A group cancels there is good alignment between the postmarks and cancels and the petals within the cancels. In addition the colorless area at the tip of the nine o'clock petal is common to all the examples except the 10 Aug cancel. In this cancel the tip of the petal is significantly reduced in size.

Within the Type B group there is also good alignment between the postmarks and cancels and the petals within the

cancels. The petals of the 13 Jan cancel are significantly smaller than those in the 6 Jan cancel. However the petal at the six o'clock position in both cancels shows a very distinct and similar gnarled or blunted point. Perhaps the smaller petals in the 13 Jan cancel resulted from them being cut down. It is not hard to imagine a clerk removing part of a petal when cleaning the cancel with a knife.

The two markings in the Type C group also show good alignment. In fact these two cancels represent the best matches among the six-petal cancels. The 30 May cancel appears thicker but this is due to over inking.

There is only fair alignment between the postmarks and petals of the cancels in the Type D group. I say fair because at first glance the alignment looks good. But when you study the alignment, size and shape of the petals the alignment is only fair. The real common characteristic is that the cancels are "low" in relation to the postmarks.

The Types E, F and G cancels are unique when compared to the other six-petal cancels. Their only common characteristic is that they are all "low" in relation to the postmark.

Another means of determining types is to examine the cancels by date of use. Unfortunately, only three of the cancels can be dated by enclosures or docketing. These dates run from April 1867 to February 1869, a period of 22 months. Let us assume that all the cancels are the same with the noticeable differences caused by wear, over or under inking, the movement of the cancel in an arc about the axis of the postmark or the rotation of the cancel in the cancel holder. Logic would dictate that over the span of the time represented by the three dated covers (almost two years) that there would be a noticeable deterioration in the cancel. But this is not the case. The cover dated 29 April (1867) has distinct petals with wide gaps between. The cover dated 13 Jan (1868) shows wear and deterioration expected when compared to the 1867 cancel. However, the cancel dated 26 Feb (1869) has distinct petals with narrow gaps between. Over the almost two year period this cancel should show signs of deterioration. Parts of the petals should show signs of wear and if the cancel was not cleaned the gaps between the petals would begin to fill in with dust saturated with ink resulting in smaller and less distinct gap lines. If the cancel

Albany Eight-Petal Flower Cancels

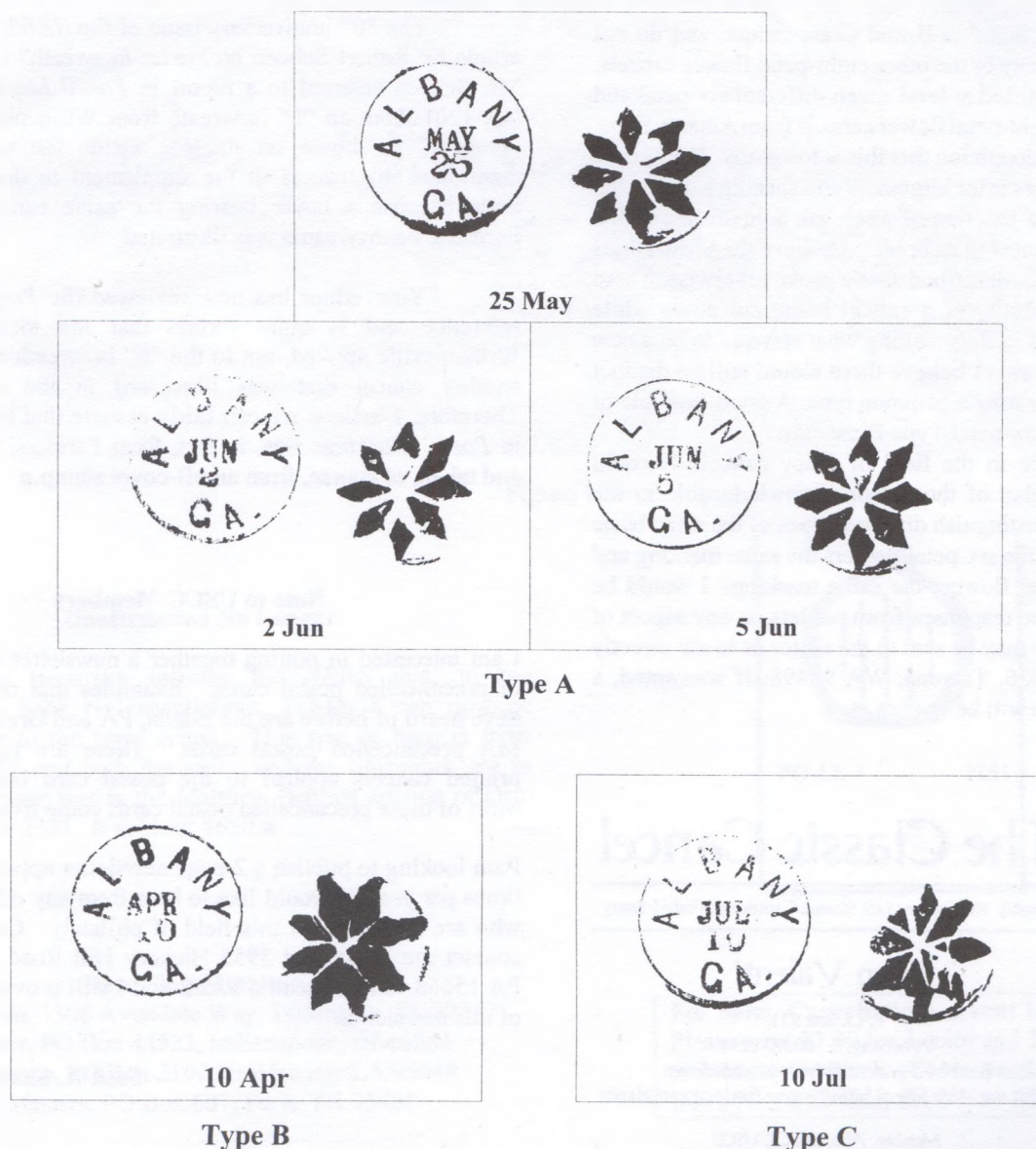


Figure 4

was cleaned and "touched up" by the carving knife the gaps between the petals would be widened, not narrowed. Further the markings do not appear to be either under or over inked. In spite of the similarities the only conclusion that can be drawn is that the markings are different.

Although I do not have as many examples of the eight-petal cancel they appear to show as many differences as the six-petal cancels though with a different twist (Figure 4). The most apparent characteristic of the five eight-petal cancels is that they are all "low" in relation to their postmarks.

The alignment of the Type A postmarks and cancels is only good between the 2 Jun and 5 Jun markings. However, the cancel is definitely the same in all three markings. In the 2 Jun and 5 Jun cancels the lower half of the petal at the 12 o'clock position is colorless and the inner point of the opposite petal is somewhat reduced. In the 25 May cancel the petal with the colorless lower half is at the two o'clock position and the inner point of the opposite petal is reduced. Apparently this cancel rotated in its holder. Even though these cancels are the same they exhibit small differences in the colorless lines between the petals and in the shape of the petals.

The Types listed as B and C are unique and do not appear to match any of the other eight-petal flower cancels.

I have identified at least seven different six-petal and three different eight-petal flower cancels from Albany. Some have expressed an opinion that this is too many. They argue that the differences in the alignment and spacing between the petals are more a function of wear, ink adherence and the rotation of the cancel in its holder. I believe the illustrations and characteristics described above prove otherwise. There is also the possibility of a cancel being cut down while someone cleaned it, thus making what appears to be a new cancel. In such cases I believe there would still be distinct similarities suggesting a common type. A good example of this are the two six-petal Type B cancels.

As a novice in the field of fancy cancels I would appreciate thoughts of those more knowledgeable in the field on how to distinguish different types of the same basic marking. Are all the six-petal flowers the same marking and all the eight-petal flowers the same marking? I would be pleased to receive responses from readers on any aspect of this article. They may be sent to the editor or to me directly at P.O. Box 98626, Tacoma, WA 98498. If warranted, a follow-up article will be written.■

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More on "EAH" Killer and Buffalo "Duplex"

Cal Hahn reports that, according to the official Register of Postmasters, the last name of the Richfield Springs, N.Y. postmaster is neither Hinds or Hines, as mentioned in the November 2001 *NEWS*, but rather Hind. He also expresses reservations about whether the Buffalo CDS and killer markings dated December 9, 1860 are truly duplexed. Additional contemporary examples are needed to provide confirmation and are eagerly sought.■



"Letter in Wreath" Cancels

The 50th anniversary issue of the *NEWS* contained an article by Robert Schoen on "letter in wreath" cancels. In it Mr. Schoen referred to a report in *Postal Markings* (Whole No. 120) about an "F" in wreath from Williamsville, Illinois. (The "F" is shown on its side inside the wreath.) We mentioned this cancel in the supplement to the anniversary issue because a cover bearing the same cancel, but from Farmers, Pennsylvania was illustrated.

Your editor has now reviewed the *Postal Markings* reference and is quite certain that the identification of Williamsville applied, not to the "F" in wreath cancel, but to another cancel that was illustrated in the same article. Therefore, I believe we can fairly assume that the "F" cancel in *Postal Markings* was, in fact, from Farmers, Pennsylvania and taken, of course, from an off-cover stamp.■

Note to USCC Members

I am interested in putting together a newsletter for collectors of precancelled postal cards. Examples that collectors may have heard of before are the Edella, PA and Great Barrington, MA precancelled postal cards. These are typically press printed cancels applied to the postal card before mailing. Most of these precancelled postal cards come from 1875-1950.

I am looking to publish a 2-page newsletter approximately 4-6 times per year. I would like to hear from any other collectors who are interested in this field of philately. Collectors may contact me directly at 3955 Hickory Hill Road, Murrysburg, PA 15668. Please send a SASE and I will provide full details of this newsletter.

Scott A. Shaulis

"X" Marks the . . . Station

Figure 1 illustrates a New York cover postmarked June 30, 1896. It was mailed at Branch Station "X" (Westchester) as can be seen by the "X" at the bottom of the CDS and in the ellipse. This is a scarce marking in my experience. For one thing, this station initially operated only from January 1, 1896 to January 1, 1898 according to the Kay and Smith book. Also, I assume that canceling machines were installed in Branch stations in the mid-1890s and would have taken up the major canceling workload in Station "X" during the period in question. Readers are encouraged to report additional information on the subject.

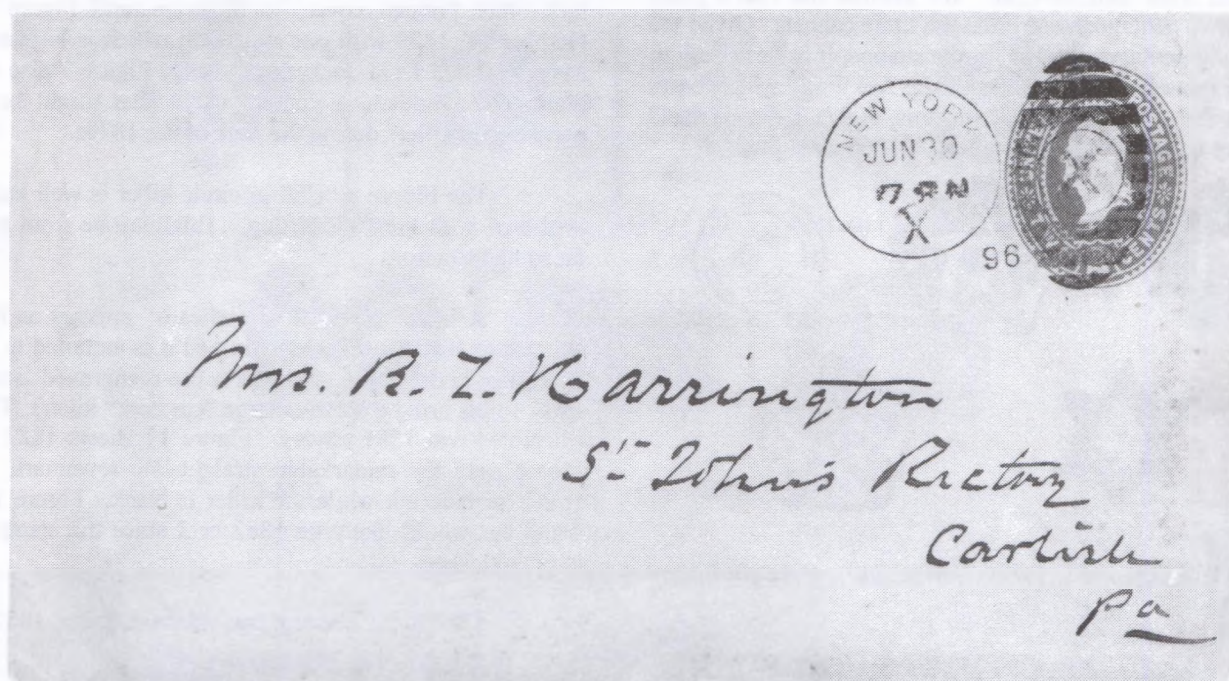
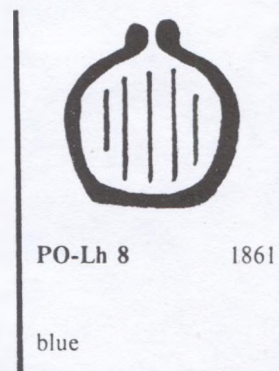


Figure 1

Unattributed No Longer

Abe Boyarsky informs the *NEWS* that, in the Skinner-Eno book on cancellations, PO-Lh 8 can now be identified as to the town origin. This lyre or harp is from Hancock, Md and both the strike and the townmark are in blue. The cover was in the Matthew Bennett auction of Dec. 2, 2001 as lot 2381. It sold for \$650.■

**New Club Members**

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Putnam Cancels

by Roger D. Curran

We take up here the subject of Putnam, Connecticut cancels by presenting a listing in general chronological order collected from reports in Alexander,¹ Skinner-Eno² and Cole³ together with such additional information as we have available. The covers are shown through the courtesy of Arthur Beane and we thank him for the support. There are undoubtedly many more cancels to be listed as well as a great deal of data to be accumulated on dates of use. It is hoped that readers will check their collections for Putnam cancel dates and new designs and report them to the *NEWS*.

Putnam's love affair with fancy cancels began in the 1850s. The top row of Figure 1 comes from Alexander and the bottom from Skinner-Eno. We assume the two 6-point stars and two pentagons represent the same cancels. Given the usage of the pentagon on 1857 issue stamps, it is surprising to note the Figure 2 cover docketed "Ans Apl 9/65" which bears a sharp strike of the cancel. Or was this, in fact, a new cancel? I also have a record of a September 27, 1866 example.



Figure 1

An interesting question presents itself from a review of the five covers above. Were the killers duplexed to the Putnam town postmark? The answer certainly seems to be "no" in the case of the Figure 1 cover where the left-most point touches and even extends slightly into the townmark. What we need, generally speaking, are multiple examples to compare the distance between townmark and killer and look for other indicators of constancy from strike to strike.

Entering the decade of the 1870s we encounter a large "P" (Figure 5), which can be dated from the enclosure as March 13, 1870. A much smaller "P" is found on a May 13 entire (U82) which is probably 1870 or 1871. Figure 6 illustrates a simple geometric dated September 7 with "72" docketing. This killer is rather plain in appearance and we lack other Putnam covers to illustrate until Figure 8 dated October 18, 1879 with one exception which is Figure 7 dated May 26 (1875 from docketing). Since Figure 7 also is rather plain, one wonders if Putnam used what might be termed nondescript killers during the bulk of the 1870s.

The Figure 8 "US" in circle killer is well known and is shown with the Cole listing. This may be from a rubber-faced handstamp.

A large circle of "arrowheads" appears as Figure 9. While the year date is undetermined it is assumed to be 1881 or earlier because the stamp is a pre-reengraved issue. The early 1880s bring a spate of large "cut cork" killers. Figure 10 illustrates two 1881 covers. Figure 11 shows 1882 cancels. Please note the remarkable straight-line townmark. It was struck in blue ink while the killer is black. Figure 12 is not dated but would likely be 1882 or 3 since the stamp is a re-engraved issue.

The "U.S." concept was reintroduced in 1882 (Figure

Figure 2

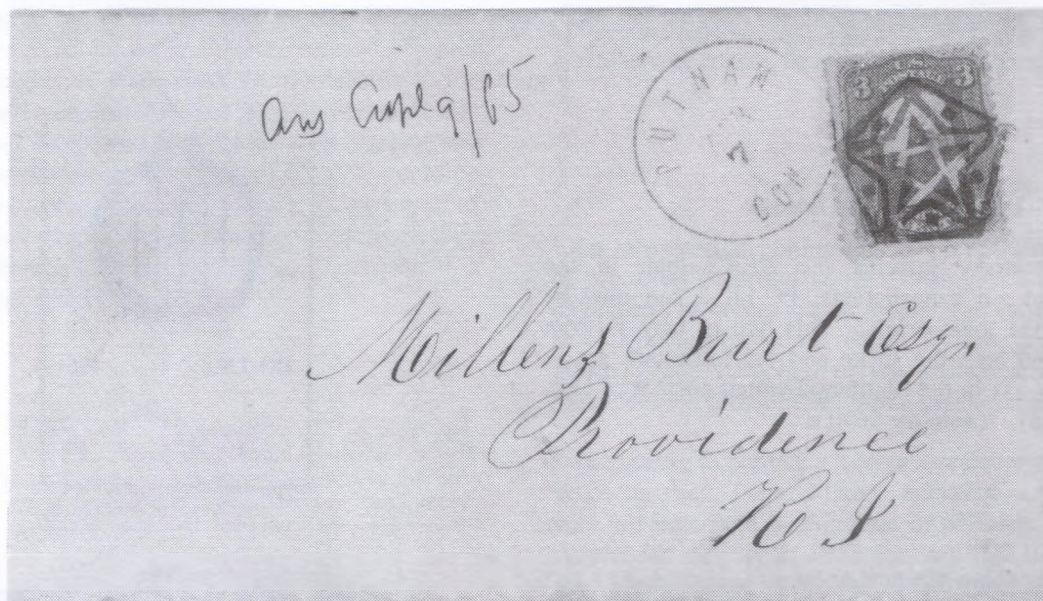


Figure 3 shows Skinner-Eno listed Putnam cancels that were not noted before the 1860s and Figure 4 several covers bearing such cancels. From an enclosure, the "US" cover can be dated November 7, 1866.

13). Cole reports the August 23 killer from July-November 17, 1882.

Figure 14 is from Cole. The "1875" postal card was current until replaced in late 1881. I have records of this cancel dated September 26 and November 2, 1882.

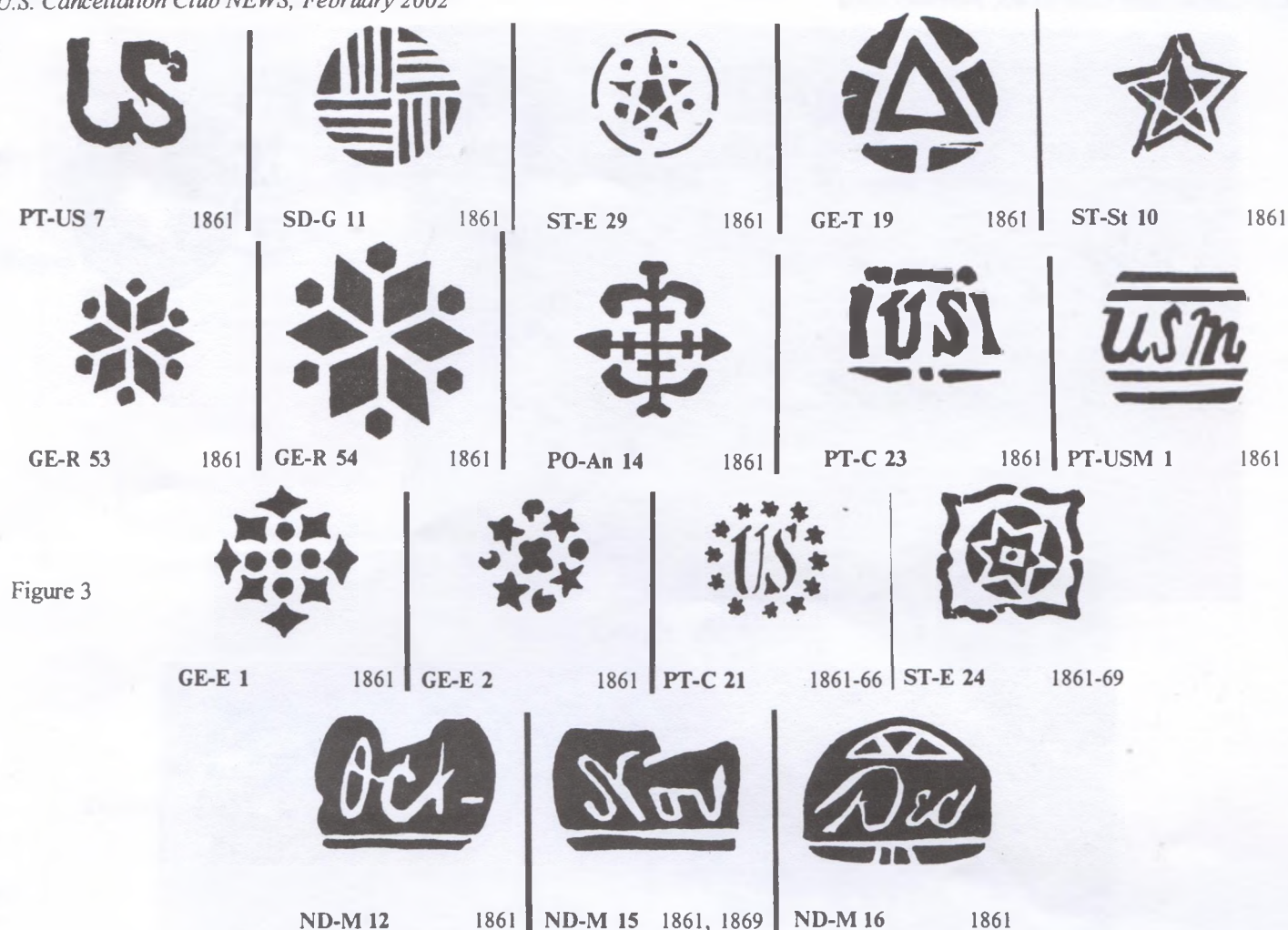


Figure 4

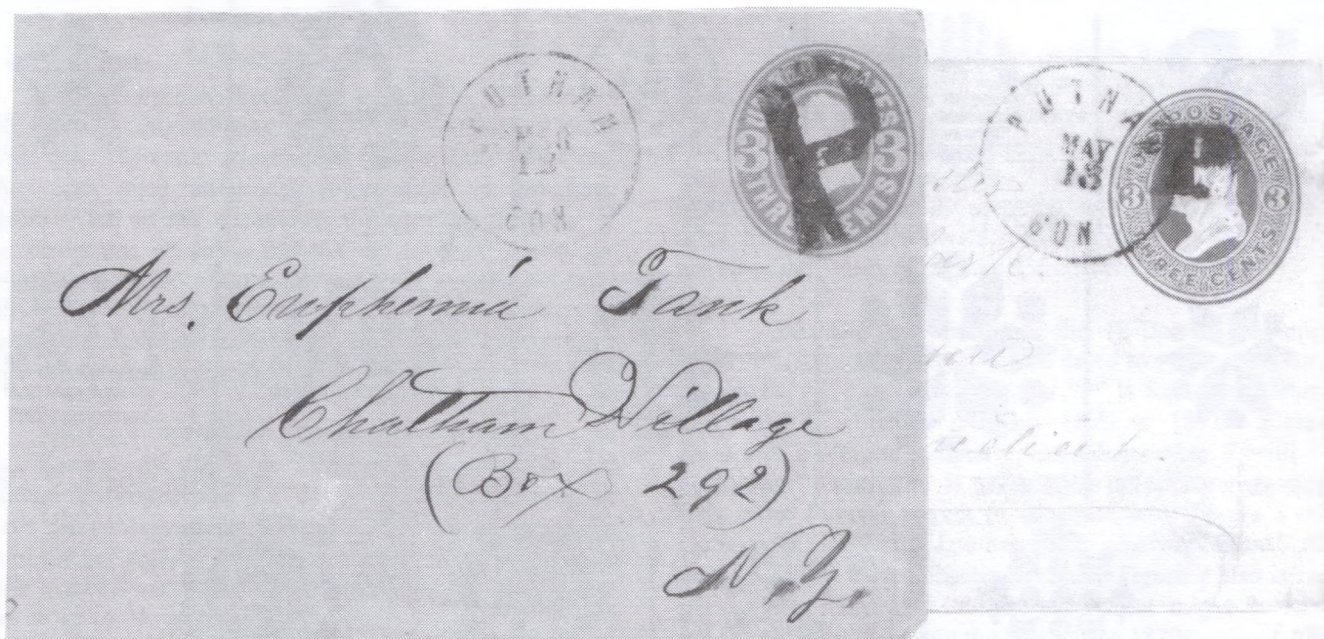


Figure 5

Figure 6

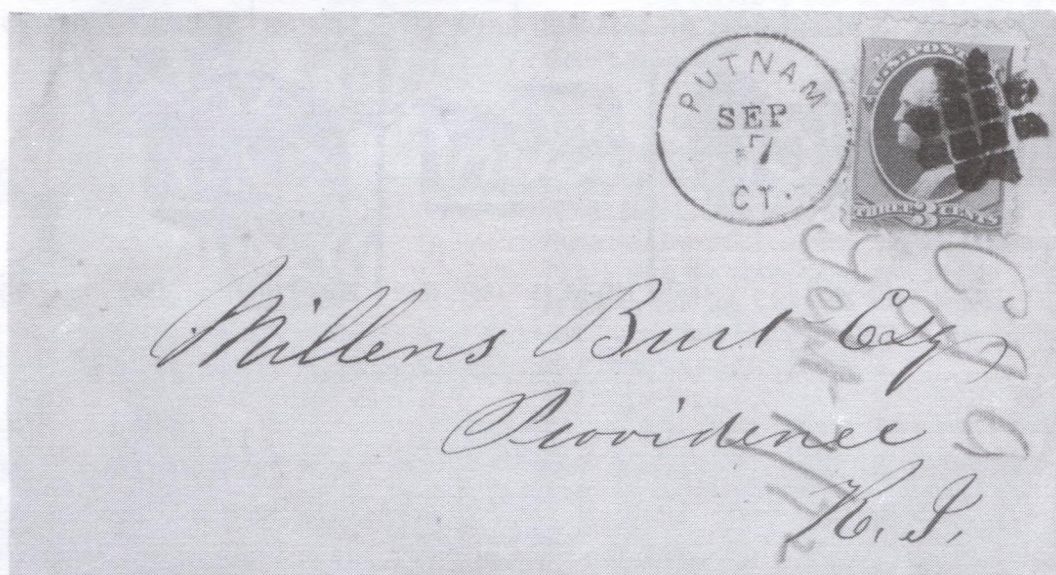
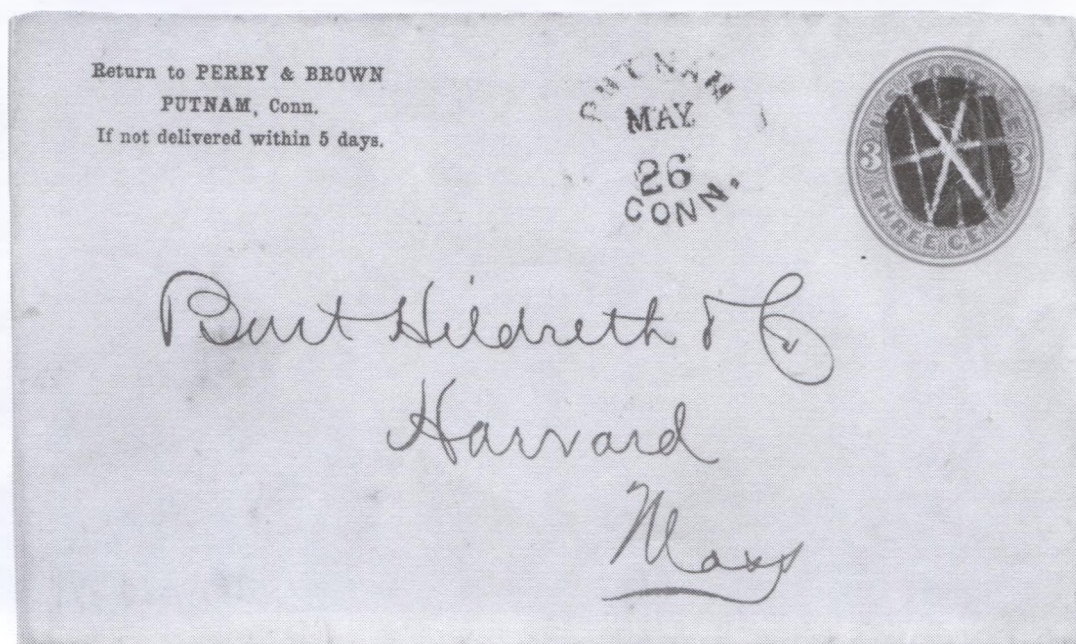


Figure 7



Figures 8

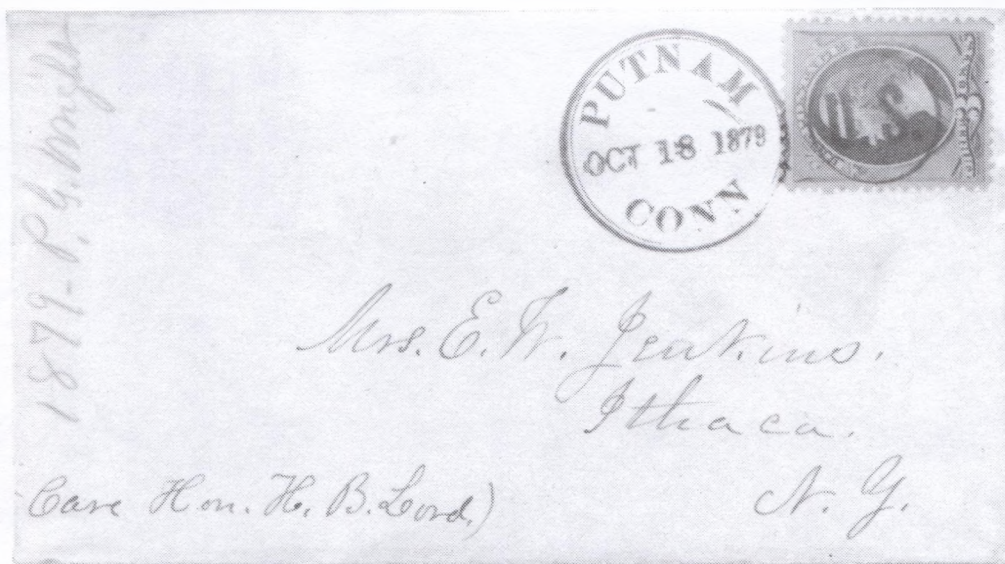


Figure 9

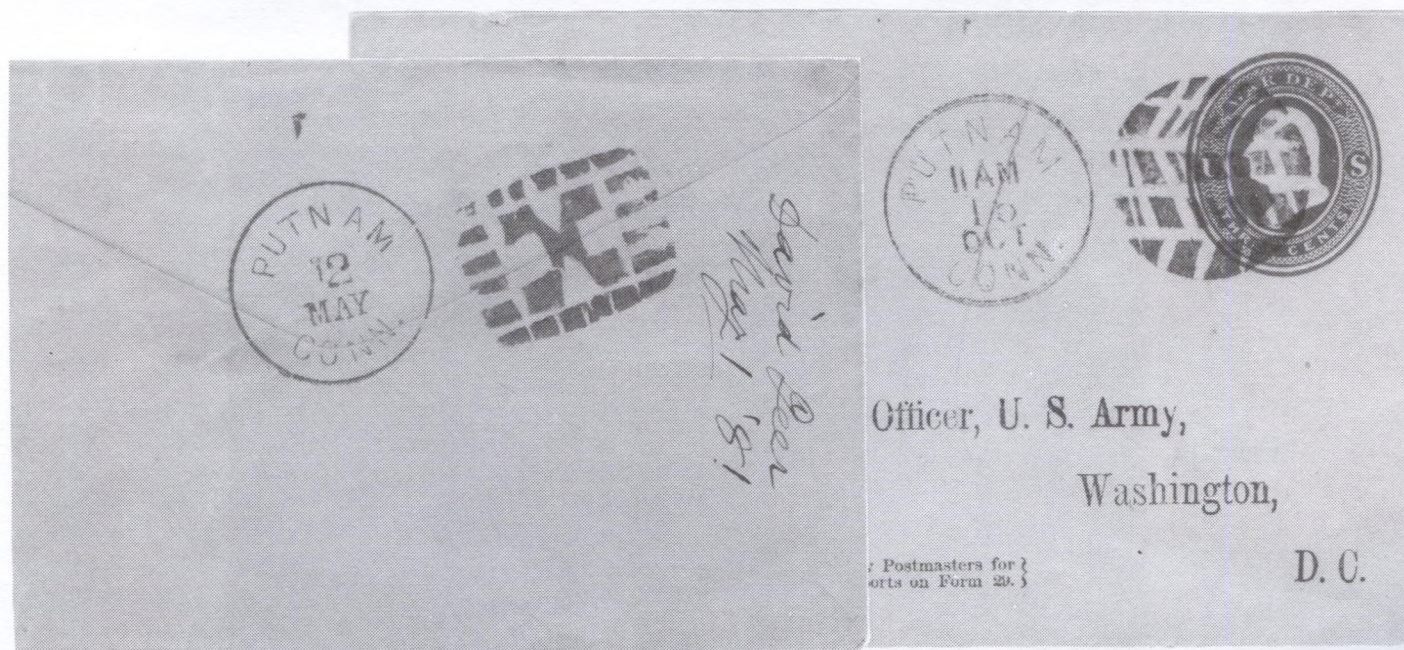


Figure 10

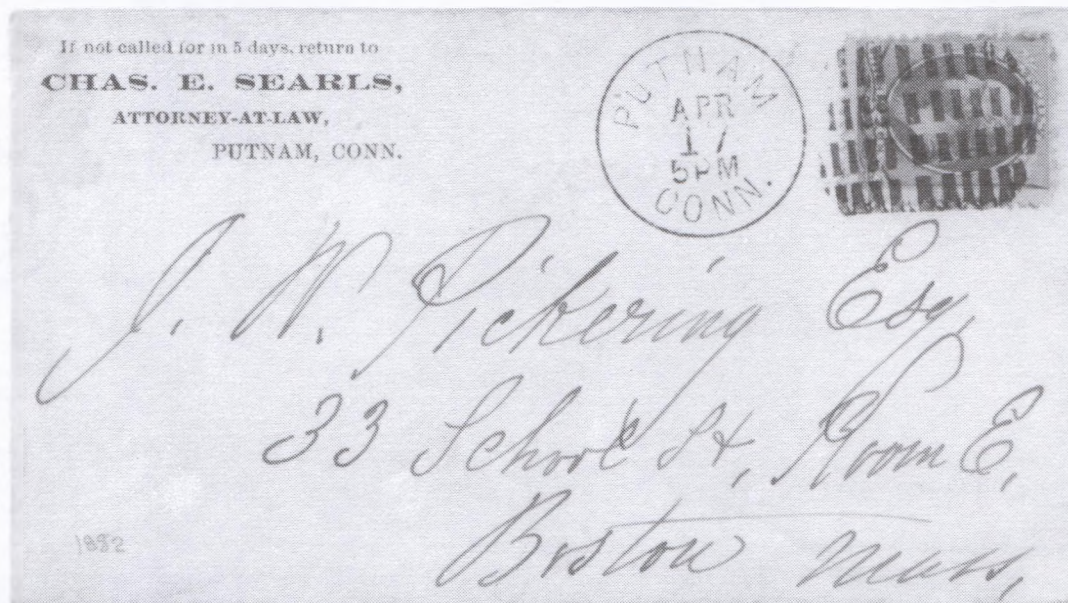


Figure 11

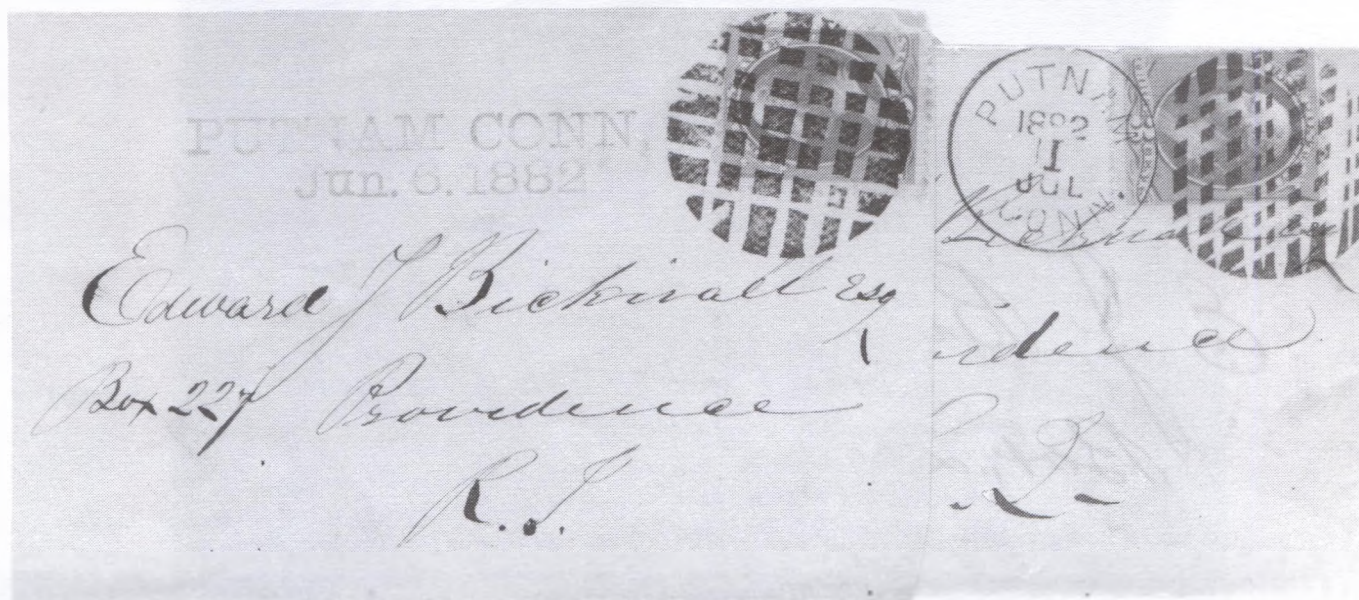


Figure 12

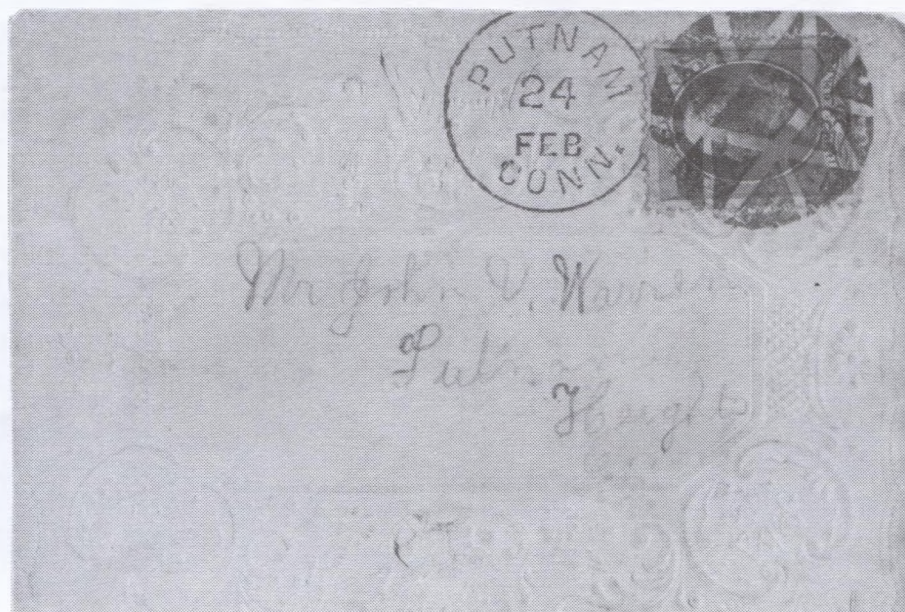




Figure 13

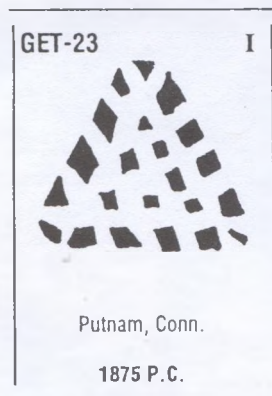


Figure 14

The Figure 15 townmark is a bit difficult to read but the last numeral in the year date is assumed to be a "3." Three 1883 killers and one undated killer, all from Cole, are shown in Figure 16.

Figure 17 presents an 1886 Cole-listed cancel. I have a record of what I believe to be the same cancel dated April 14, 1883.

We'll conclude with the introduction into the Putnam post office of Wesson "time on bottom" handstamps as illustrated in Figure 18. In a November 1992 *La Posta* update to a 1990 *La Posta* monograph on these handstamps, the Figure 18 killer is reported from December 9, 1883 to March 28, 1896. The monograph also reports a leaf design killer duplexed to a Putnam "time on bottom" townmark dated September 22, 1883 and also one of the most interesting and unusual Banknote era cancel designs dated December 9, 1884. The Cole listing for this latter design is shown as Figure 19.

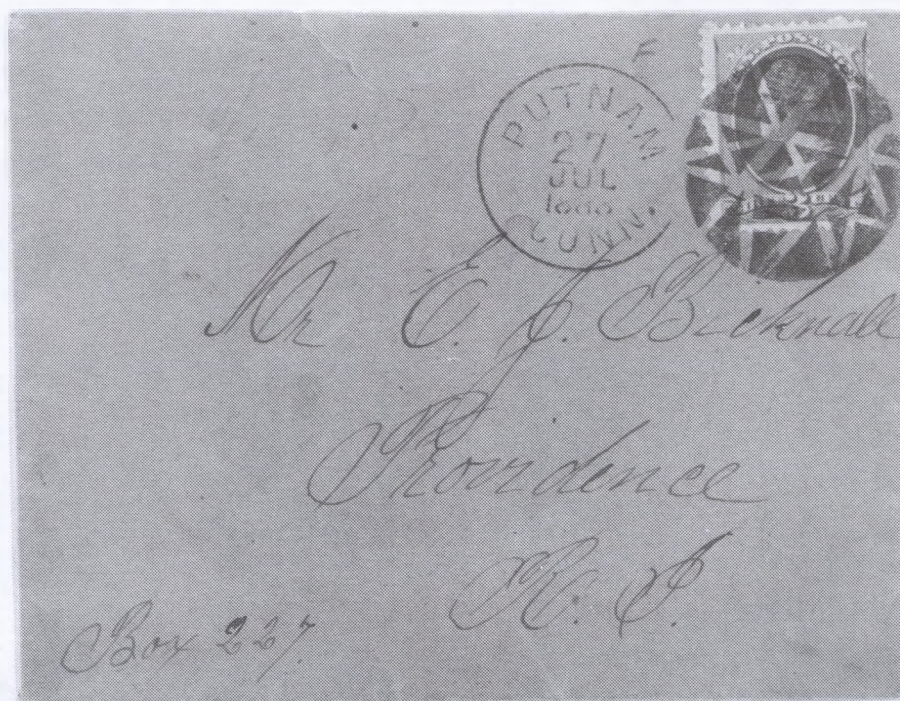


Figure 15

GE-68

I-

GCR-13

I-

GL-36

I-

MA-11

I+

Figure 16



Putnam, Conn.

Jan. 30, 1883



Putnam, Conn.

February 3, 1883



Putnam, Conn.

September 24, 1883



"Trowel"

Putnam, Conn.

The Putnam post office produced a rich and extensive array of cancels over a considerable period of time. As indicated at the outset, we are eager to accumulate further data and solicit the assistance of readers.■

¹ Alexander, Thomas J. *U.S. Postal Markings 1851-61*, U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Columbus, Ohio (1979), various pages.

² Skinner, Hubert C. and Eno, Amos, *United States Cancellations 1845-1869*, APS Handbook Series (1980), various pages.

³ Cole, James M. *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894*, The U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Columbus, Ohio (1995), various pages.

GE-175

I-

ML-111

III



Putnam, Conn.

1886

Figure 17

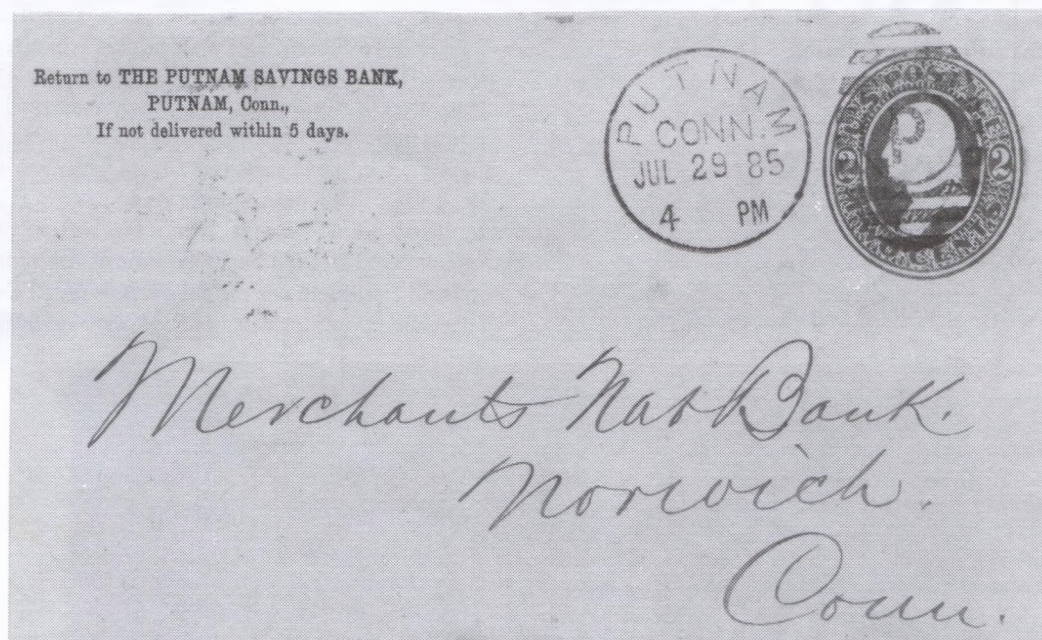


"Jehovah" in Hebrew
Putnam, Conn.

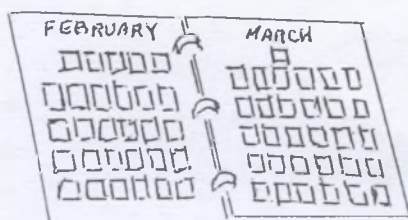
October 17, 1884

Figure 18

Figure 19



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