



Cancellation Club NEWS

Vol. 26, No. 4, Whole No. 245, November 2002

An Unusual Registered Mail Marking

by Roger D. Curran

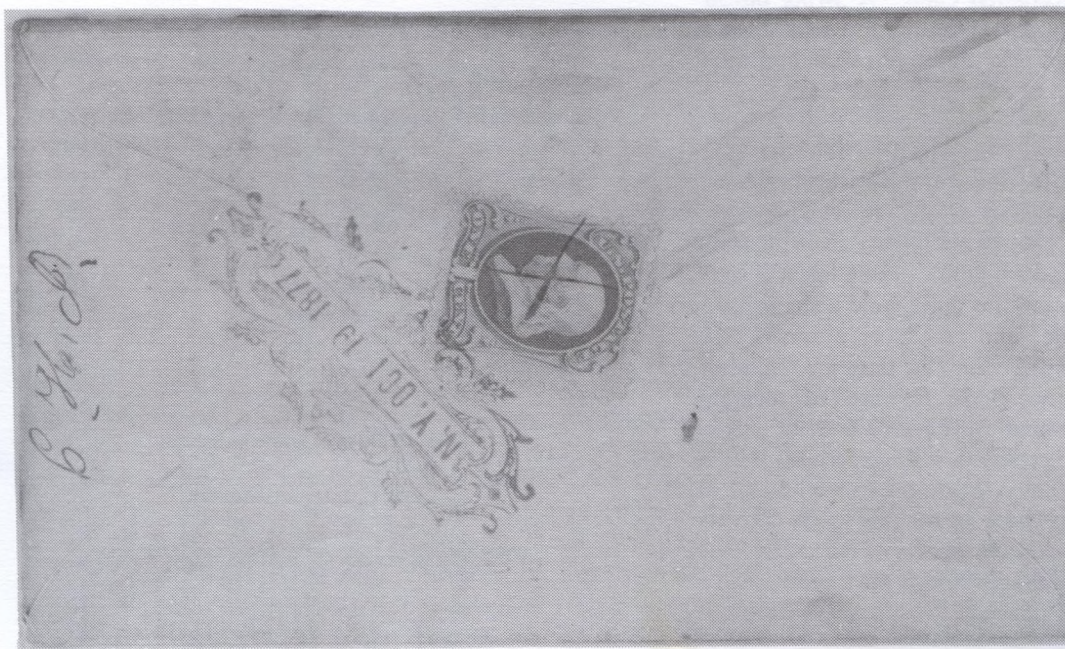
The USCC NEWS focuses, of course, on cancellations found on 19th Century U.S. stamps. However, from time to time these pages visit related subjects such as

other 19th Century markings or 20th Century cancellations. This article briefly discusses a noteworthy example of the former – a very fancy registered mail marking.

Figure 1 illustrates a cover in the collection of Arthur Beane with the marking on the reverse in blue ink. (The tracing is provided through the courtesy of John Donnes.) It is



Figure 1



(Continued on page 55)

Dear Reader,

It is a pleasure to announce completion of the USCC project to present the tracings compiled, organized and, in the overwhelming majority of cases, made by **Kenneth A. Whitfield** of Arlington, Virginia. There are more than 6000 tracings of U.S. 19th century cancellations plus upwards of 1,000 tracings of town postmarks and miscellaneous postal markings. This work was accomplished in the 1940s and 50s.

In addition to his own collection which was sold by Sylvester Colby in the 1950s, Mr. Whitfield was given access to some important cancellation collections. Included were those of Burleigh Jacobs, Walter I. Plant and Harold Stark. Mr. Whitfield was also permitted to examine the highly acclaimed cancellation collection of George W. Hale just before it was sold by Robert A. Siegel in 1955 and some tracings were made at that time.

The intent in publishing this compilation is to supplement the two standard references in the field of 19th century U.S. cancellations:

Skinner, Hubert C. and Eno, Amos *United States Cancellations 1845-1869*, American Philatelic Society and Louisiana Heritage Press of New Orleans (1980); and

Cole, James M. *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894*, U.S. Philatelic Classics society, Inc. (1995).

Some of the cancels being published now in the Whitfield compilation without identifying the post office of origin have been identified in the above references. Although this book provides new information, it is no sense a substitute for the Skinner-Eno and Cole books.

Two copies will be placed in the USCC Library and will thus be available to the USCC membership when the Library is reopened in 2003. Members who wish their own copies may place an order with me at the address on the masthead. The cost is \$40 postpaid and checks should be made payable to: U.S. Cancellation Club. A 3-ring binder will be included with color pages on front and back. Please understand that this is a rather informal publication and does not have the production values of Skinner-Eno or Cole.

Your Board of Directors has voted to hold the U.S. Cancellation Club 2003 annual meeting at the Philatelic Show, Northeastern Federation of Stamp Clubs, in Boxborough, Mass., just outside Boston. This is the largest show in New England and will run from May 2-4, 2003. The Club will staff a society table for the duration of the show, hold a seminar on a cancellations-related topic and sponsor a one-frame cancellations exhibit. This will be the first time the Club has visited New England and we look forward to meeting members from this region whom we haven't seen at earlier shows. More details will be reported in the February *NEWS* but we urge interested members to plan now to attend and, if feasible, enter an exhibit. (There is nothing quite like an exhibit to focus attention quickly on aspects of our collections that we have been meaning to think through but have needed a little push.)

A combination dues payment/election ballot form is enclosed. Why not respond right now while you are thinking about it. We all know how easy it is to set such forms aside and let them slip from our consciousness. The Club tries very hard to retain its membership and undertakes considerable follow up in that regard. However, this requires quite a lot of effort by our Secretary and results in extra postage cost in mailing missed issues at the first class rate. So please complete the form and return it with your check as promptly as possible. And if you have any suggestions for *NEWS* articles or for Club activities, please jot them down on the back of the form. We earnestly solicit your views. Thank you!

Roger Curran

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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(Continued fr. front page)

assumed this letter entered the mails at some fairly small post office but there is no identification of that office. The two-digit registration number (beginning with a "1") on the front implies a post office without much registered mail since by October there had been fewer than twenty. The postage paid totals 13¢ which covered the single weight first class mail rate of 3¢ plus the 10¢ registration fee applicable in 1877.

Since this marking is so unusual I wondered if it was, in fact, a New York Post Office marking or was it applied by a private party for some reason? Contact was made with Dr. James W. Milgram, a specialist in registered mail, who confirmed that it was a NYPO marking and provided an image of another example from his collection, also in blue ink, shown here as Figure 2. His cover originated in New Orleans and was addressed to Southampton, England. Dr. Milgram referred to the marking on his cover as a transit marking as opposed to the receiving marking on the Figure 1 cover. He stated that he believes he has seen the marking also in black

ink and perhaps purple.

I assumed that the handstamp for such a postal marking would have been procured directly by the NYPO from some local source with the design not one that would have been used by other post offices. At least in terms of the latter part of the assumption – wrong! What is essentially the same marking was used by Philadelphia as shown in Figure 3. This cover was reported by Philadelphia postal history specialist Tom Clarke in the January 1998 *La Posta* and we thank him for permission to illustrate it here. Tom reported that Philadelphia used this marking for "... 11-12 months to about the Spring of 1878." (The Figure 3 cover is the earliest reported use.)

We said the Philadelphia marking is "essentially" the same because it does show an additional ornament at the ends of the middle points on either side. Perhaps the NYPO thought the marking a bit "too much" and cut or filed off the two side ornaments to create a slightly more restrained look.

Figure 2

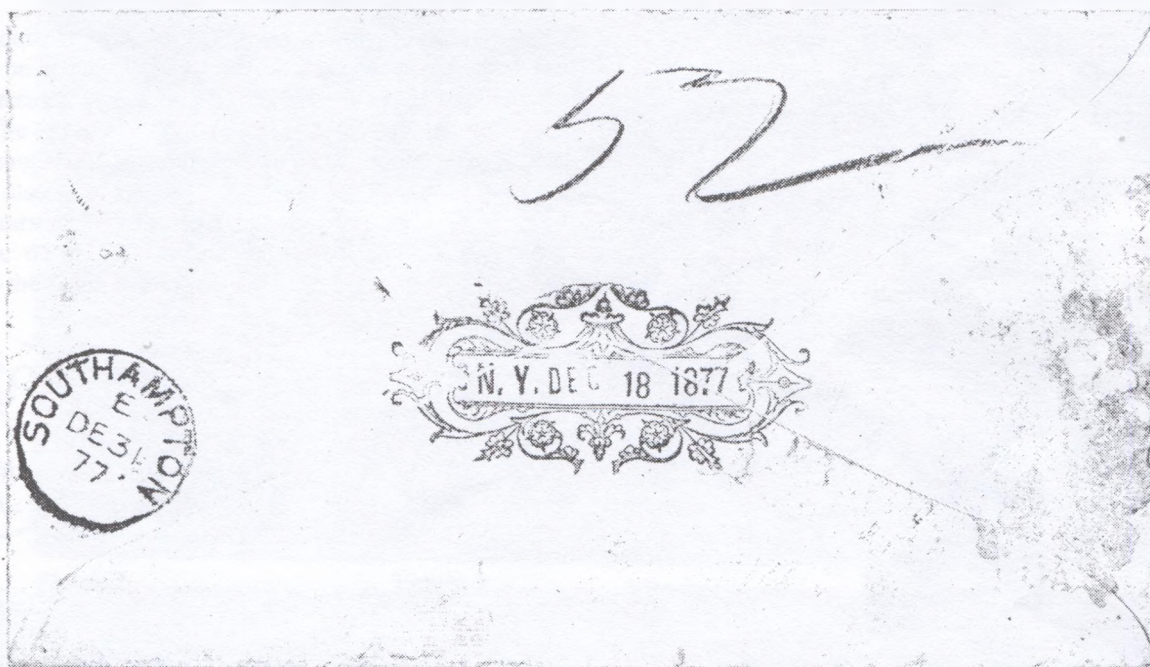
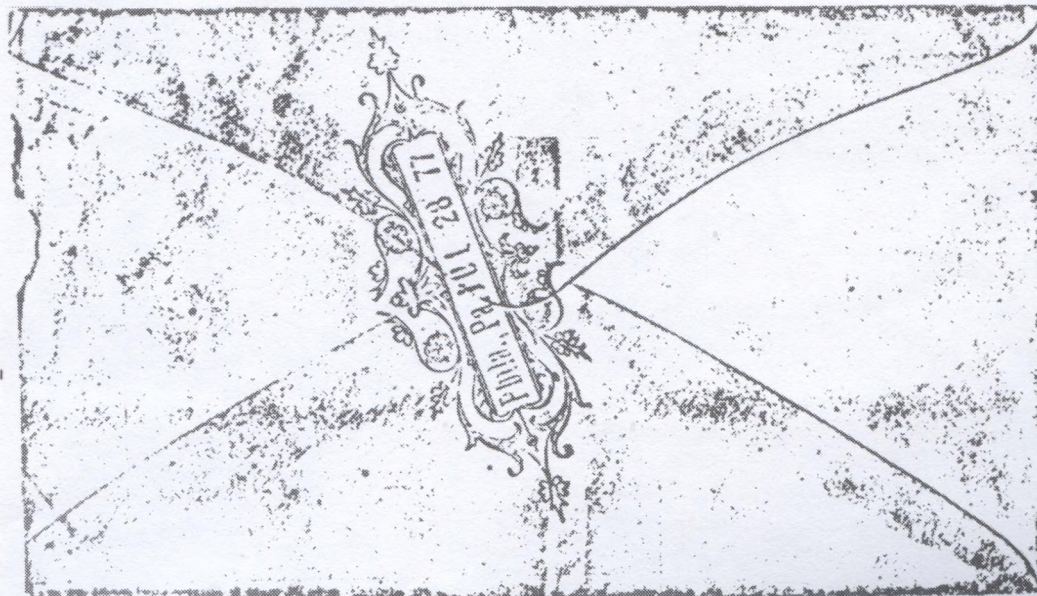


Figure 3



These markings are reminiscent of a few fancy postmarks found in earlier years. An example, from Alexander's *U.S. Postal Markings 1851-61*, reflecting a patriotic theme, is shown as Figure 4. It has been said that

Figure 4



such handstamps were designed as linen markers and were popular in the 1840s and 1850s. They were not engraved but cast in an inexpensive metal. A slot in the center was to be filled with printer's type (held in place by a set screw) spelling out the name of the owner of the linen garment or article. Postmasters saw that these handstamps could be used to create really fancy postmarks by inserting type to spell out the name of the post office.

The purpose of the New York and Philadelphia markings is assumed to be as a safeguard against tampering. Struck over the flap of an envelope where sealed down, it would make more difficult the job of any thief who would seek to open the envelope, remove any valuable contents, and then reseal it in such a way that it wasn't noticeable that the flap had been lifted. Matching up exactly the lines of the marking on the flap and on the envelope back would pose an extra burden that could be difficult to overcome. Indeed, even today the same practice is used to process registered mail where the postmark is typically struck several times along the flap line. A postal guideline precludes the use of plastic tape over the flap of a registered letter because postmark impressions won't take well on such a surface.

The Figure 1 through 3 markings were presumably forerunners of the Figure 5 and 6 reddish markings on the back of 1885 and 1897 New York covers.

Comments and additional information are invited.

Figure 5

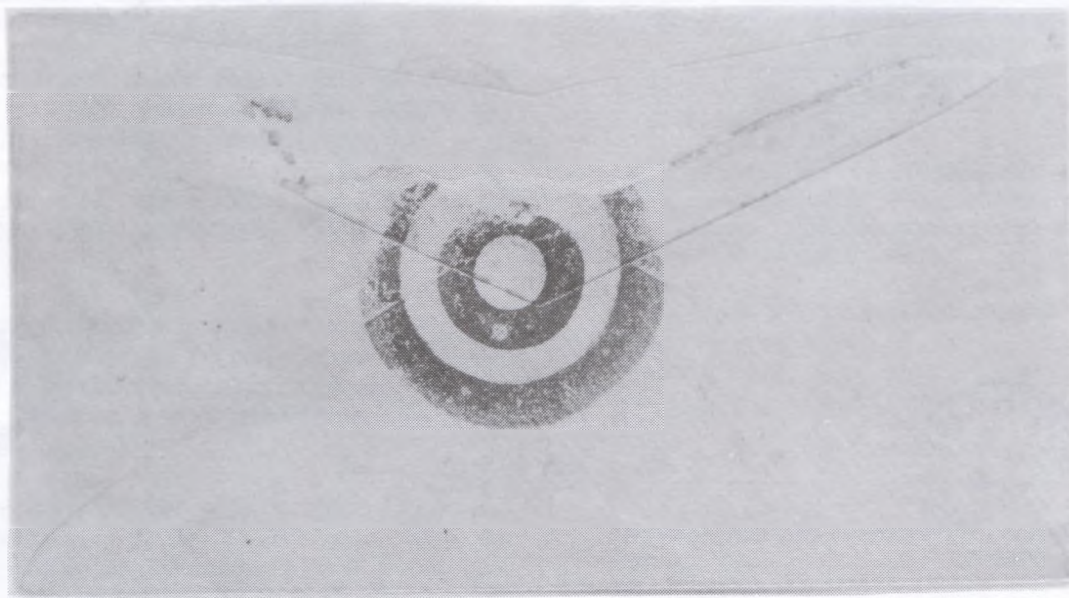


Figure 6



Letters and More Letters

Letter cancels seem lately to be a regular feature of the *NEWS* and several more are gathered here to report.

From a postal stationery entire (SC. U82) in the collection of John Donnes, we have a "Z" cancel traced in Figure 1. It is in blue ink. The cover is addressed to Clinton, Iowa. In the 1875 *Postal Guide*, there are listings for Bronson in Branch County, Michigan and for Bronson (c.h.) in Levy County, Florida. Later editions show additional Bronson post offices but we suspect it is the Michigan post office. In 1890 the Florida post office had a population of 291 and Michigan 875.



Figure 1

A quite remarkable "Q" from Quincy, Illinois (Figure 2) appears on a Sc. UX5, locally addressed, postal card in John's collection. A dateline on the reverse reads September 2, 1881. The letter "Q" as a cancel is rare with but a single example being listed in Skinner-Eno and in Cole. The Cole example is also from Quincy. John reports that the Figure 2 cancel appears to be hand-carved. Figure 3 is a wonderful "Q" on a Sc. 65 in Abe Boyarsky's collection. It is probably the same as the Skinner-Eno example.



Figure 2



Figure 3

Figure 4

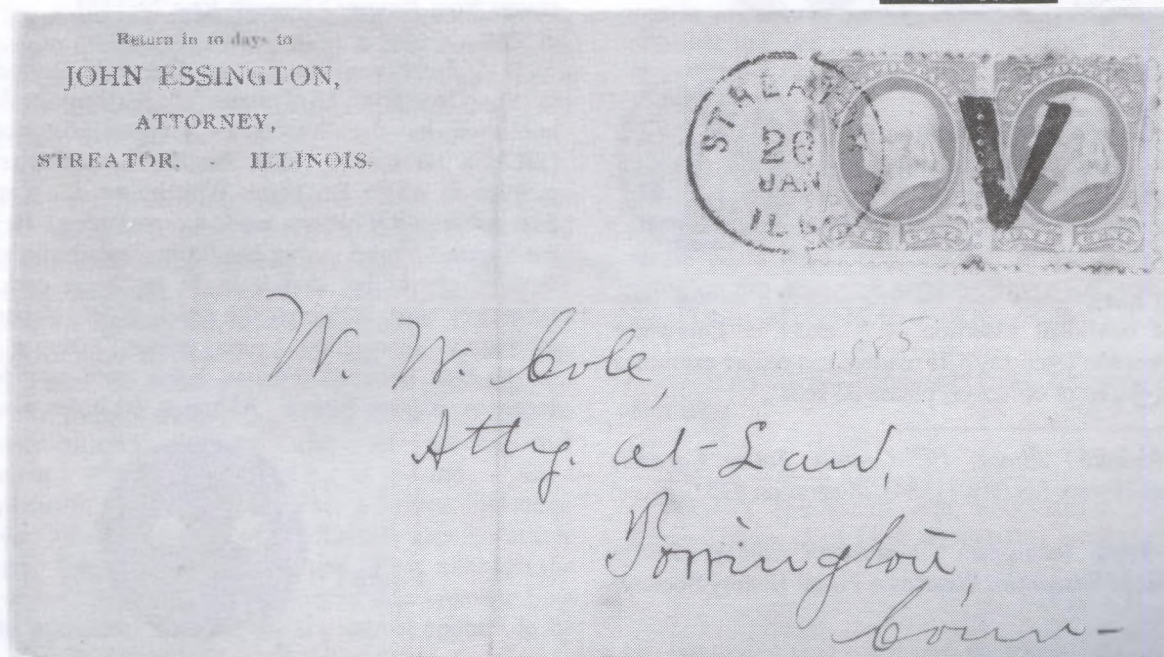


Figure 4



Figure 4 shows a bold Streator, Illinois "V" canceling a pair of Sc. 206. As John pointed out, it is interesting to associate this cancel with two "OV" cancels from Streator reported on page 213 of Cole. In the Summer 1986 *NEWS* Alyce Evans illustrated these cancels and reported that the name of the postmaster was Oscar Vielinghopp. Another Streator "V" cancel appeared in the November 1958 *NEWS* and is reproduced here as Figure 5. It was reported by Edward Willard canceling a Sc. #210. In Willard's 1970 book on this stamp, he illustrates two additional Streator "V" cancels on pages 79 and 80. Valparaiso, Indiana used "V" cancels on the 1861 issue and an example from Abe's collection is shown as Figure 6.

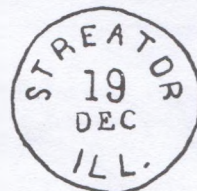


Figure 5



Figure 6

We turn attention to a couple of noteworthy Ohio cancels. Figure 7 is literally "OHIO" and a tracing from page 316 of the Skinner-Eno book accompanies. Are there any other hand-carved cancels that spell out an entire state name?

Figure 7



The fact that Ohio is spelled in four letters, of course, makes this state a good candidate for such a cancel. The cover in Figure 8 shows a negative "W" which undoubtedly stands for Wooster. But the unusual aspect is the negative dot below the "W" that surely must be an "O" for Ohio. Thanks to Arthur Beane for sharing this cover and to John Donnes for his excellent tracing.

We'll close with two cancels reported in the literature. Figure 9 is from Chicago and reported in blue on a Sc. #U82¹ and Figure 10 is from Mineral Point, Wisconsin and reported in black in 1870.² These cancels show the same three letters – "IXL." When Kenneth Whitfield traced the Mineral

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P. O. Box 211

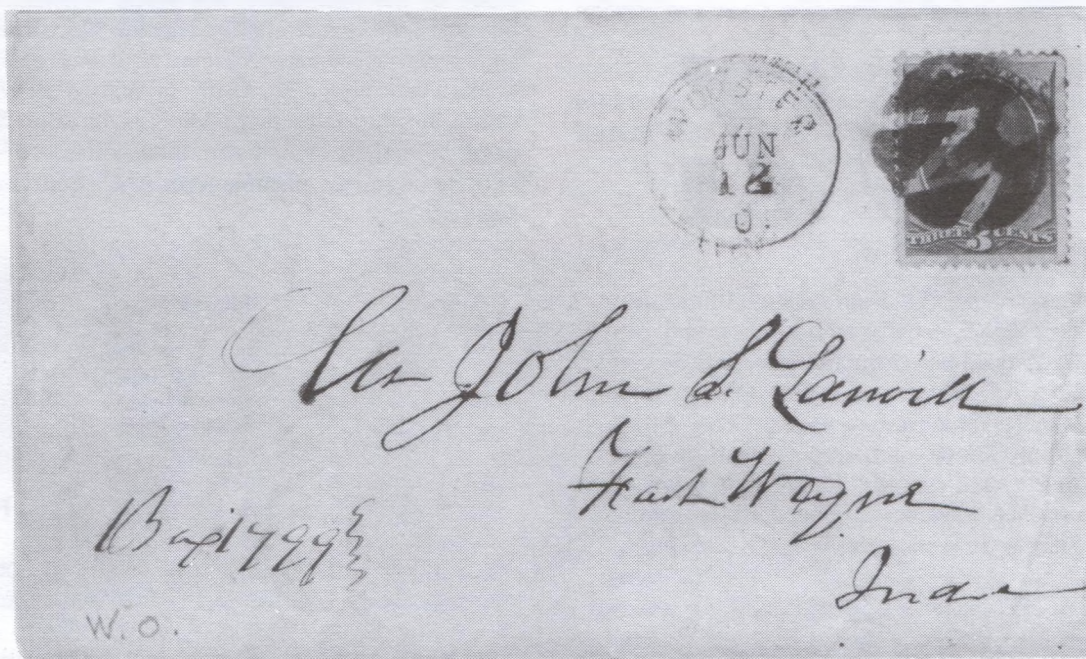
Wheeling, IL 60090-0211

E-mail ☐ jvalenti@theclassiccancel.com

Visit my Web Site at <http://www.theclassiccancel.com>

Member: APS, USPCS, USCC

Figure 8



Ann Arbor

The 50th anniversary issue of the *NEWS* carried an article on the cancels of Ann Arbor, Michigan used during the 1878 through 1887 period. The cancel reported on the most covers is illustrated here as Figure 1. It was noted on 94 covers from January 2 through June 29, 1881.

Another article that mentioned this cancel appeared in the December 1878 issue of *Washtenaw Impressions* published by the Washtenaw County Historical Society (WCHS). Written by Alice Ziegler, it reported on a WCHS meeting at which Dr. Frank Whitehouse, Jr., a specialist in Ann Arbor postal history, made a presentation. He referred to the Figure 1 cancel saying one dealer described it as a "jack o lantern" cancel but that it is, in reality, a cork made for laboratory use. Although the article didn't elaborate on the laboratory association, your editor assumes that Dr. Whitehouse believed the two holes were intended for the insertion of glass tubing. Although the holes would expand

Figure 9



Figure 10



Point cancel many years ago, he interpreted it as the very positive and confident assertion – "I excel." Eminently reasonable, wouldn't you say? If readers can report examples of these cancels, on or off cover, please do so. ■

¹ Russell, Richard *Illinois 19th Century Fancy Cancels*, Illinois Postal History Society, (1984), illustration #33.

² Moertle, Frank (compiler) *Nineteenth Century Fancy Cancellations of Wisconsin*, Wisconsin Postal History Society, (1987), p. 4.

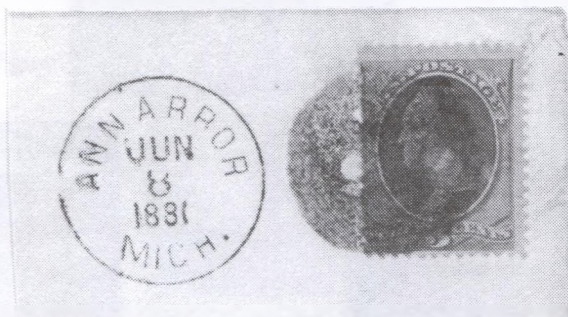
Figure 1



somewhat as the tubes are inserted, one might wonder, still and all, whether glass tubing would be that narrow. However, we gladly yield to Dr. Whitehouse who was described in the article as a University of Michigan microbiology professor. One additional point. Could it have been a rubber stopper? Rubber stoppers were definitely being used as cancelers by some post offices in and before 1881.

The article also reported interesting comments by Dr. Whitehouse on thrifty practices by the early Ann Arbor post office; for example, using a metal canceler until the rim wore off. Some of Dr. Whitehouse's covers showed that part of the "0" in 1860 was cut off to form a "1" for 1861 and part of the second "8" was cut away in 1898 to create 1899. Figure 2 shows a portion of a cover bearing the Figure 1 cancel duplexed to a CDS that shows apparent use of a cut away "0" to create a "1" for 1881.

Figure 2



Thanks to Charles A. Wood, editor of *The Peninsular Philatelist* published by The Peninsular State Philatelic Society, for bringing the *Washtenaw Impressions* article to our attention and for supplying the image of the Figure 2 cover from his collection.■

More on San Francisco Cog

A landmark article by W. Scott Polland, M.D. entitled "The San Francisco Cog and its Imitations," appearing in the April 1966 issue of *Western Express*, was referenced by Prescott Van Horn, Jr. in his article in the November 2001 *NEWS*. Dr. Polland's description of one cover, however, raised a couple of questions in the August 2002 *NEWS*. Dr. Polland reported it dated December 27, 1861 and said that it bears the "Earliest known use of a San Francisco Cog." He reported the cog to be a Type I cog.

This cover was illustrated on the front page of the August 2002 *NEWS* in conjunction with an article by Jim Cate who stated that the postage on the cover, which originated in San Francisco and was addressed to Poughkeepsie, N.Y., appears to be wrong. In 1861, the postage rate for a single rate letter from California to New York was ten cents. The cover bears only a three cent stamp with no indication (at least on the front) of a postage deficiency. It seems unlikely that the cover just slipped through with an unrecognized underpayment. A note by your editor at the end of Jim's article reported that, in an attempt to see a clearer illustration of the cover, an original copy of the *Western Express* article was located. Two observations emerged. First, although the last digit of the "1861(?)" in the CDS year date seems to be a "1," it was not clear. Second, the cog cancel appears to be



Type I



Type II

Type II rather than Type I.

John M. Mahoney, in his LaPosta monograph *San Francisco Postal Markings 1847-1900* reported the Type II cog used as early as January 1862. It apparently continued in service for several consecutive years ending no later than 1868.

Both cog Types I and II have 16 cogs but not Type III. The stamp on the cover has 16 cogs. The outer circle in the center of Type I measures about 9mm in diameter and for Type II it is about 11 mm.¹ The illustrations of the cover in question in the original Polland article and in the August 2002 *NEWS* are photo-reduced. The diameter of the postmark in the photo-reduced illustration is 20 mm. and the diameter of the outer circle at the center of the cog is 8.5 mm. Knowing that this style of postmark has an actual diameter of 26 mm., Wendell Triplett scaled up the dimensions: 20 mm./26 mm. = 8.5 mm/X. "X" then equals 11 mm. Prescott Van Horn came to the same conclusion by scaling up from the actual vertical dimension of a Scott #65 design. I think we can be quite confident that the cog on the cover is a Type II.

Since Mr. Mahoney reports Type II cogs as early as January 1862, it is not much of a stretch to think an example could be found in late December 1861, Polland's date for the cover. However, the rate problem remains and that is a considerable burden to overcome.

If the date of the cover is not 1861, what year is it? There is an illustration (#IX) in Polland's article of an 1862 San Francisco CDS that suggests to your editor that an incomplete "2" could look like the last digit on the cover in question. However, that won't work because the ten cent rate was in effect until July 1, 1863. Tom Mazza suggests 1864 and that may be the answer, given that the last digit does rather have the appearance of containing a vertical shaft.

As alluded to in Jim Cate's article, one aspect of the cover cannot be assessed, given the quality of the illustration. That concerns whether the three cent stamp originated on the cover. If it didn't, one supposes that a damaged ten cent stamp could have been replaced with a fresh three cent to dress up this attractive patriotic cover. A year date of 1861 would then, of course, be quite reasonable.

As always, comments and additional information are invited.■

¹ Skinner, Hubert C. and Eno, Amos *United States Cancellations 1845-1869*, APS (1980), p. 60.

"FREE" Wasn't Always Free

by Roger D. Curran

In fact, we might say that when a handstamped "FREE" was used to cancel a 19th Century U.S. stamp, "FREE" was never free. Such postal markings were designed for application to mail that could be sent free of postage as a means of alerting the addressee's post office not to collect payment for postage on delivery. "FREE" handstamps were used overwhelmingly on stampless mail and uses on 1856 and later letters, to indicate that they were indeed "free" of postage, are not so common.

In some post offices, however, "FREE" handstamps continued in service purely as cancelers of postage stamps with no intention of conveying a notification that the letter was free of postage payment. Of course, over the years, a number of postal markings intended for other purposes were similarly pressed into service as cancelers. Rate number and "PAID" markings, also used largely during the "stampless" mail era, quickly come to mind.

But surely the word "FREE" is the most anomalous of these markings when we compare the intent of its design to its use as a canceler. Some postmasters, of course, actually included "PAID" in the design of their cancelers. Boston made the most extensive use of such cancelers and two examples are shown as Figure 1. Just why the Boston postmaster thought this necessary or desirable, since the adhesive stamps themselves were evidence of prepayment, is not clear. Some post offices used a handstamped rate number of the same value as the denomination of the stamp being canceled.

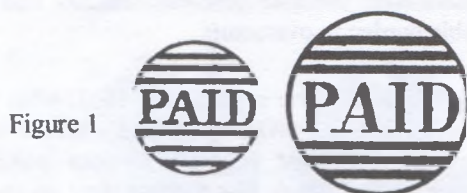


Figure 1

The use of "FREE" handstamps as cancelers goes back to the Post Office Department's first issue stamps – the 1847s. Both the 5¢ and 10¢ denominations are listed so canceled in the *Scott Specialized* catalog. The Skinner-Eno book reports two crossed "FREE" markings on the 1847 issue from Poughkeepsie, N.Y. and a review of Tom Alexander's new census of 1847 covers¹ may well identify other post offices that canceled these early U.S. stamps with a "FREE."

The Scott Specialized catalog lists "FREE" cancels on stamps as late as the 3¢ American printing of 1879 (Scott #184). Figure 2 shows an 1851 issue example and Figure 3 three 1857 issue stamps. The stamp in the large image reposes in the collection of Don Barany and has a good PF certificate.

Figure 4 shows intriguing examples of 1857 and 1861 issue stamps canceled by a "FREE" and also a rate number and grid respectively. One wonders what the reason was for the double cancels. Were the "FREE" cancels applied first and then the same post office – or perhaps the destination post office – concluded that "FREE" wasn't a proper cancel and applied an additional one? The inks for the two cancels on each stamp are quite similar.

Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5 shows the combination of "FREE" and "PAID" cancels.

Figure 6 is another stamp (Scott #184) in Don Barany's collection, also with a good PF Certificate. Several

Figure 5



Figure 6

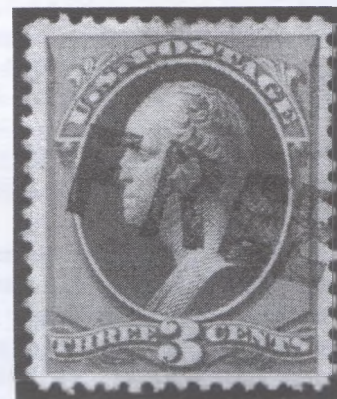
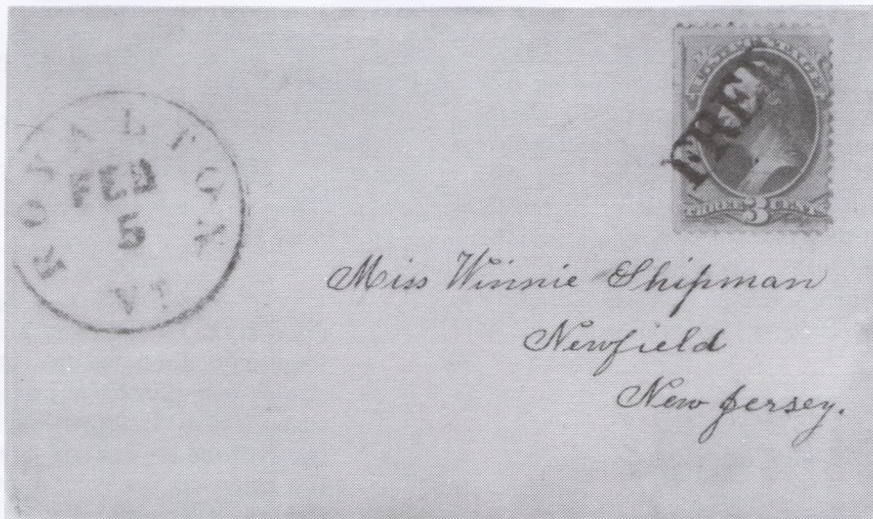




Figure 7

Figure 8



other styles of "FREE" on 3¢ greens are illustrated in Figure 7. Figure 8 shows a "FREE" cancel on a 3¢ National printing from Royalton, Vermont which is also known to have used a rate number "10"² on the 1883 issue and a "PAID" in arc over "3" on the 1879 issue.³ The CDS and "FREE" in Figure 7 are in a brownish ink.

Figure 9 shows an orange-red "FREE" canceling a

Figure 9



Scott #147. Unfortunately, the APES concluded that it is a fake cancellation.

Figure 10 is surely an odd-ball item. Fine tracings of the CDS and "FREE," courtesy of John Donnes, are shown next to the cover. Both markings are in the characteristic purple ink used by the Washington, D.C. post office during 1878. We can only imagine that the "FREE" was employed in an isolated instance here when the killer portion of a duplex handstamp didn't take or when, for some reason, a simplex handstamp was used. The letter is addressed to Chittenango Station, N.Y. which was in Madison County. The name of the addressee is written below the address.

Figure 11 is a "FREE" cancel on either an ungrilled National printing (Scott #152) or a Continental printing (Scott

Figure 10



#163). The 15¢ stamp is on a hard paper and such stamps can be difficult to classify in terms of these printings. However, "FREE" cancels are not listed in Scott Specialized for the 15¢ stamps of either printing.



Figure 11

We move ahead to the 1883 issues (Scott #210). "FREE" cancels are not listed in *Scott Specialized* on this issue or in Willard. Some years ago I bought the Figure 12 example with that in mind. In preparation for writing this article, both the red "FREE," mentioned above, and this example were sent for certification. Unfortunately, Figure 12 also came back with the APES opinion that the cancellation is a fake. However, another "FREE" on a Scott #210 can be reported as shown in Figure 13. It is in Vince Costello's collection and although the cancel has not been expertised, it appears to be genuine.



Figure 12



Figure 13



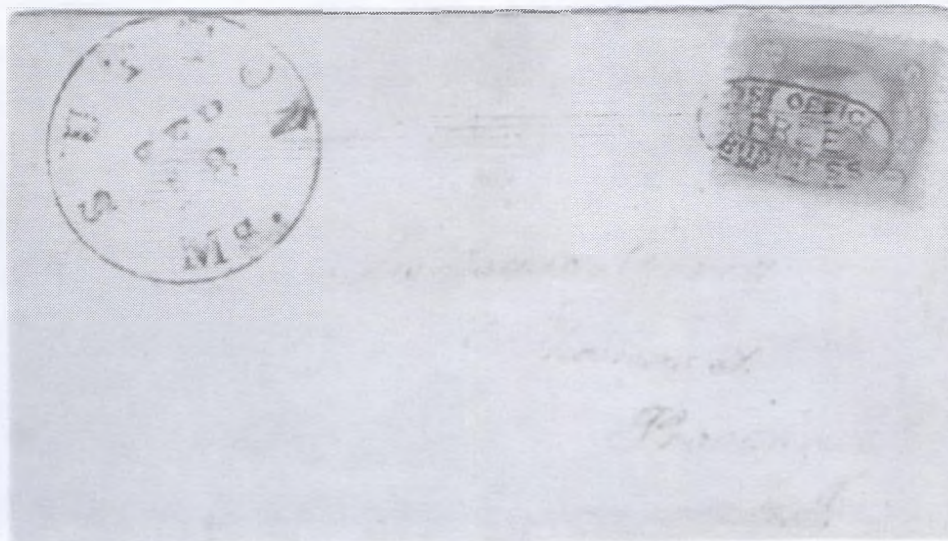
The latest example I know of a "FREE" cancel is illustrated in Figure 14 on a 2¢ 1890 issue stamp. It has a good PF certificate.

Three postal markings that contain the word "FREE"



Figure 14

Figure 15



plus additional letters, etc. are mentioned herewith. I don't recall the origin of the Figure 15 image but it depicts a POST OFFICE/FREE/BUSINESS in a double oval canceling an 1861 issue stamp, from Sutton, Mass. A tracing by Kenneth Whitfield is shown along with it.

A Scott #210 is shown in Figure 16 along with a Kenneth Whitfield tracing of what is undoubtedly the same



Figure 16



cancel. Willard illustrates what is likely the same cancel and had this to say about it:³

"Post Office Business Free was a discovery of Gilbert Burr. Such a killer was frequently illustrated on many different stamps over the whole period of adhesive stamp issues. It occurs as a killer both on two cent red browns and three cent greens. If a letter was free, why the necessity for a stamp? A similar killer is reported on a stampless cover from Bethel, Maine, in *Postal Markings*, Vol. 8, No. 4, of October 1938."

Figure 17 also illustrates a #210 but this time with a cancel that is not listed in Willard. A Kenneth Whitfield tracing of what is assumed to be the same cancel is also shown but Mr. Whitfield reported it, without attribution, on a 3¢ green (or contemporaneous) issue. Figure 17 is from Fairview, Pa.

This article will close with a "before the beginning" cancel; i.e., one that predates the introduction of postage stamps by the Post Office Department. The first adhesive stamps for mail issued within the U.S. appeared in February 1842 as products of the private New York City Despatch Post. A canceler in the design of Figure 18 was employed to cancel the stamps.⁴ An announcement of the establishment of this

Figure 17

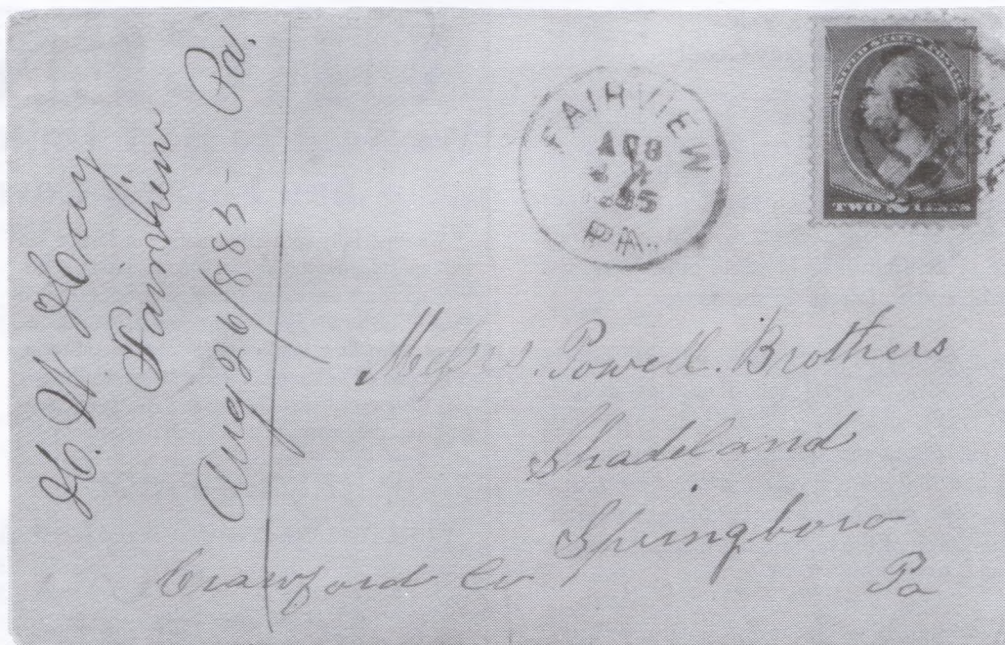
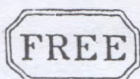


Figure 18



post stated, among other things, the following:

"Letters which the writers desire to send free, must have a free stamp affixed to them. An ornamental stamp has been prepared for this purpose . . ."⁵

This city delivery post was bought out by the New York Post Office in August 1842 and a similar killer, but substituting "U.S" in the design, was used by the U.S. City Despatch Post.

We have really only scratched the surface on the subject of "FREE" cancels. Readers are urged to supply additional information.■

¹ Alexander, Thomas J. *The United States 1847 Issue: A Cover Census*, USPCS, 2001.

² George Slawson et al, *The Postal History of Vermont*, 1969, p. 122.

³ Cole, James M. *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894*, USPCS, 1995, p. 208.

⁴ Perry, Elliott and Hall, Arthur, *100 Years Ago 1842-1942*, APS, 1942, p. 16.

⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

Cole Book Update

Jim Cole reports the post office of origin for a number of tracings in his book *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894* as follows:

GE-100 Savannah, Ga.
 GE-126 Leavenworth, Ks.
 GCR-3 Barre, Mass.
 GCR-129 Salisbury, Md.
 GR-92 New Orleans, La.
 STX-56 Asbury Park, N.J. Dec. 17, 1879
 STU-28 Troy, N.Y.
 RN-27 Norwood, N.Y.
 SK-4 Winstead, Conn. 1873 issues
 NU-30 Worcester, Mass.
 ML-173 East End, Pittsburgh, Pa.
 OK-52 Palatine, Ill.
 Le-46 Ft. Leavenworth, Ks.
 LI-24 Athol, Mass.
 Ls-56 Barre, Mass. Aug. 7, 1886
 Lv-9 Jamestown, Pa.
 Lw-76 Chi. & Det. RPO
 EL-150 Riverside, Calif.
 EL-163 Barre, Mass. Nov. 17, 1886
 EL-164 Barre, Mass. Jan. 29, 1887

STN-36 is Columbus, N.Y. not Ohio
 SH-67 is Oswego, Ill. not N.Y.

Jim continues to compile such data and if readers are able to identify other cancels listed without attribution in his book, please contact him at jmcole1955@aol.com or 108-D Mendingwall Way, Fairfield OH 45014.■

**You CAN Take it With You –
But It Won't do Anyone Any Good!**

We are each of us a fascinating, compelling story. But most of us go on to our heavenly reward with that story untold except, perhaps, to a few who are near and dear. In its way this is a tragedy for we each have much to teach, and whether it be by speech, the written word, by converting our feelings into painting or sculpture, or in some other way, we can influence those who come after us for the better.

Now this is a philatelic publication and the point I want to make to our readers is that each of us has spent a goodly number of years acquiring knowledge on our collecting area; not just acquiring quantities of stamps and facts, but processing that knowledge; often integrating it, and coming up with new finds and new nuggets of information. Not all of us get to this stage of the hobby, but many do, and it is a great feeling when it happens.

Neither the feeling nor the information is often shared with those near and dear. Frankly, they don't much care. Only another stamp collector can appreciate it. If you are a club member and can share your find or your conclusion that is wonderful. But too often that's as far as it goes.

Bluntly, too many of us allow our knowledge to die with us. My hope is that those reading this will consider sharing our collections and the information you have generated with the hobby as a means of acquiring a little immortality. Actually, the stamp hobby has a pretty good record when it comes to this. Our philatelic libraries are full of studies that thoughtful people did to present and advance knowledge. But when I think of the number of people I have known whose knowledge has died with them, I am doubly saddened.

It is not so difficult to get your knowledge on record. The easiest way is to do an exhibit, and contribute a copy to the American Philatelic Research Library. But writing a pamphlet or a book, daunting as it might seem before you do it, is not so hard once you break the task into bite-sized chunks. I have seen many people do this who did not think of themselves as writers, but who were pleasantly surprised by the result when they tried. Could YOU do it? One thing I have learned in life is that given the will to try, I have been amazed at what I found I could do. I'd bet you would be too!

-Anonymous

Note: This article appeared in The Virginia Philatelic Forum and is reproduced here through the courtesy of editor Bill Wickert. Thanks to Wendell Triplett for bringing it to our attention.



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Closed Album

Donald Smith of Eugene, Oregon died April 15 of cancer. He was 79.

He attended Oberlin College in Ohio and Wesley University in Connecticut, where he received a bachelor's and a master's degree. He received a second master's degree in library science from Columbia University in New York. Smith worked as a librarian at Clarkson College and Wagner College, both in New York and at Boston University. He worked as an administrator at the University of Oregon library from 1963 until his retirement.

After retirement, Mr. Smith resumed his lifetime interest in postal history. He was a member of several philatelic societies and a lifetime member of the American Library Association. Mr. Smith served on the board of the Lane County Historical Society for 15 years. ■

Double Oval With Grid Cancel

A number of post offices in the larger cities used double ovals to cancel stamps on third and fourth class mail in the 1880s and beyond. They typically had a number or letter in the center, or, perhaps, an abbreviation such as "REG" for registered mail. An example is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1



One design involved a three-bar grid cancel in the center. The most commonly seen of these cancels is from Poughkeepsie, N.Y. Figure 2 illustrates an example. Jim Cole reports it on 1881-1887 issue stamps.¹ Another post office that used this design was Buffalo, N.Y. and Cole's illustration is shown as Figure 3 which he reported on 1887 issue stamps.² Several examples of the Buffalo version on off-cover stamps are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 5 illustrates a strike from Chattanooga, Tennessee canceling a Sc. 219. It is the only one seen by your

editor.

We would like to identify other post offices that used this handstamp design and solicit the assistance of readers who have examples in their collections or records of such.■

¹ Cole, James M. *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894*, USPCS, 1995, p. 308.

² Ibid., 307.

Figure 2

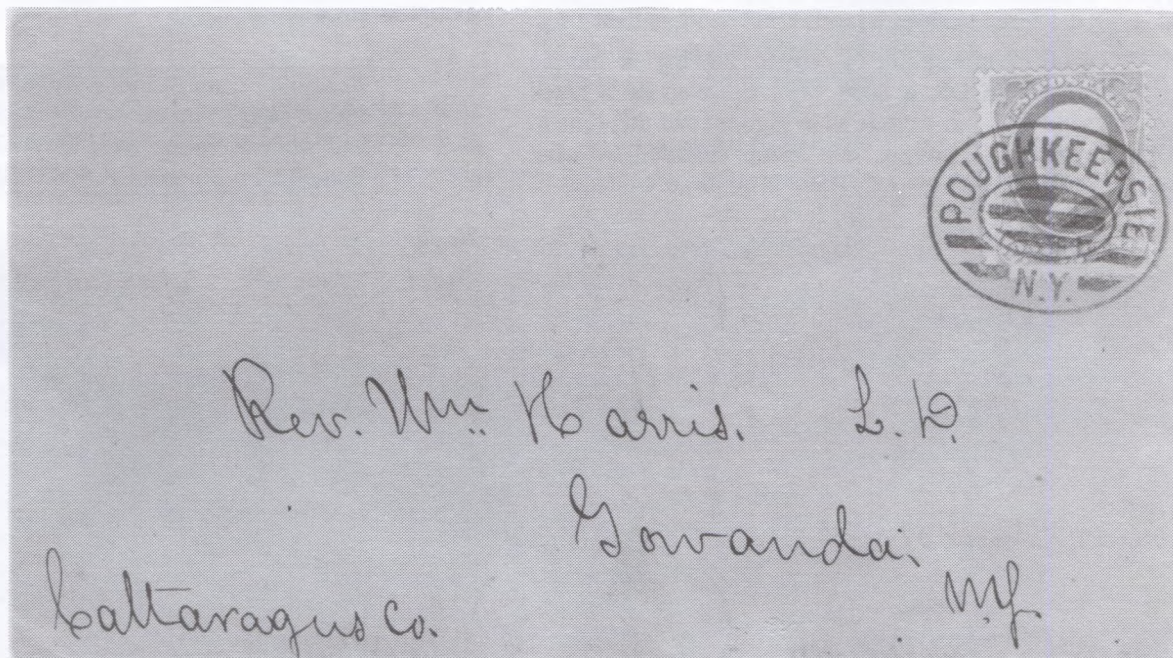


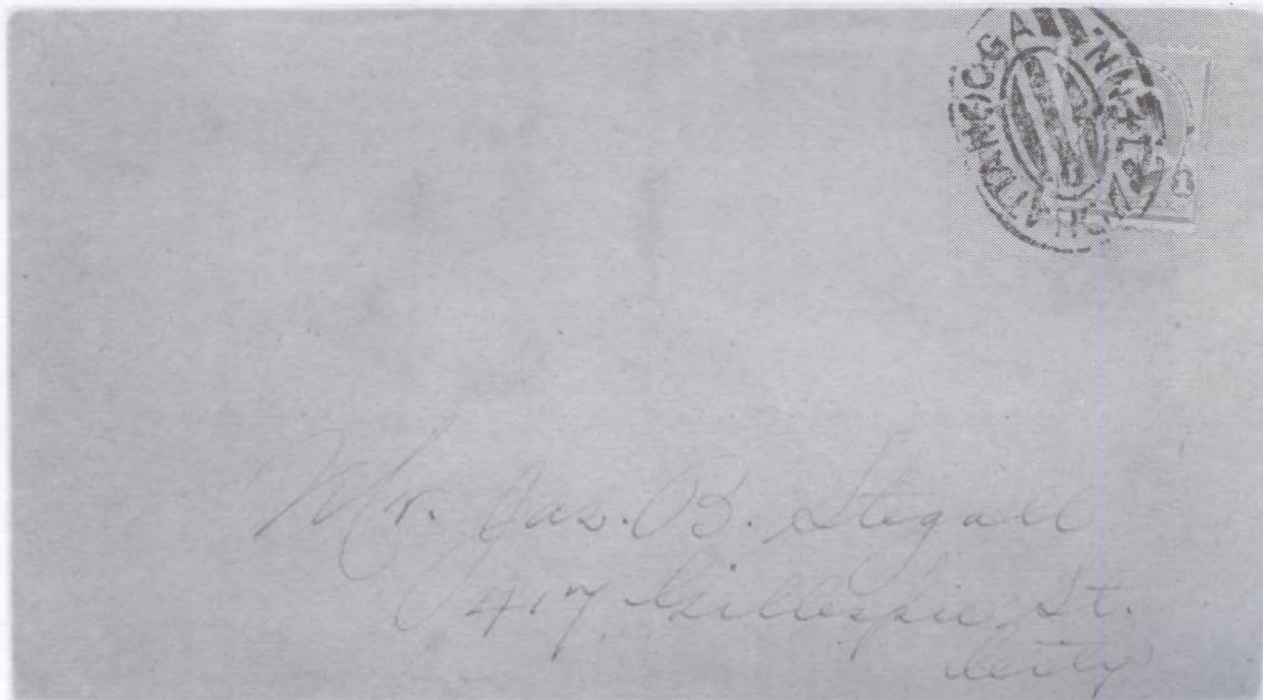
Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Clarendon Springs "3"

Figure 1 illustrates a July 3, 1861 cover that was in the stock of U.S. postal history and fancy cancels dealer Ed Hines. It bears a Scott #26 canceled by a "3"-in-circle rate number handstamp. One assumes this handstamp was introduced by the Clarendon Springs, Vermont post office in 1851 or later for stampless mail that was prepaid at the three cents rate. "3" handstamps were also used to note three cents due when single rate letters were forwarded beginning April 1, 1855.

Figure 2 illustrates a cover bearing a purple Clarendon Springs CDS, a Scott #184 canceled by a black target, the same "3" - in - circle as in Figure 1 but this time in purple ink, and a J3 postage due stamp canceled by what appear to be light pencil marks. There is no direct evidence of

a year date (dated enclosure, backstamp, etc.) but "1881" has been penciled on the back, presumably by a collector. This was apparently a double weight letter prepaid at only the single weight rate.

It is quite interesting to see "stampless" markings, that were pressed into service purely as cancellers, used also for the intended purpose such as to convey a postage rate. In this particular case, the "stampless" marking found an appropriate use on stamped mail long after the close of the stampless era. ■

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

Figure 1

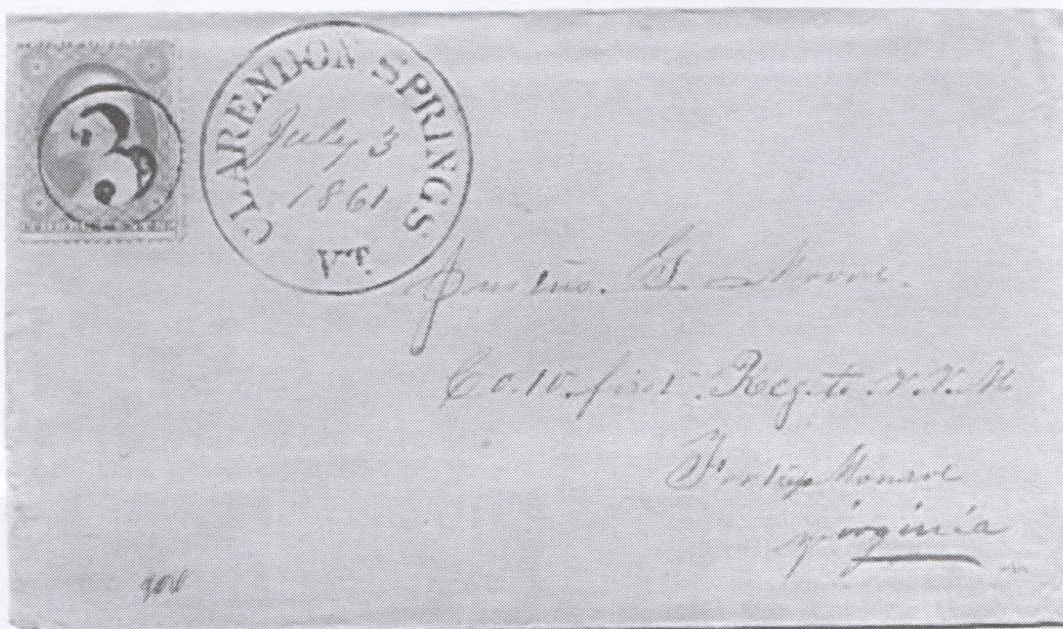
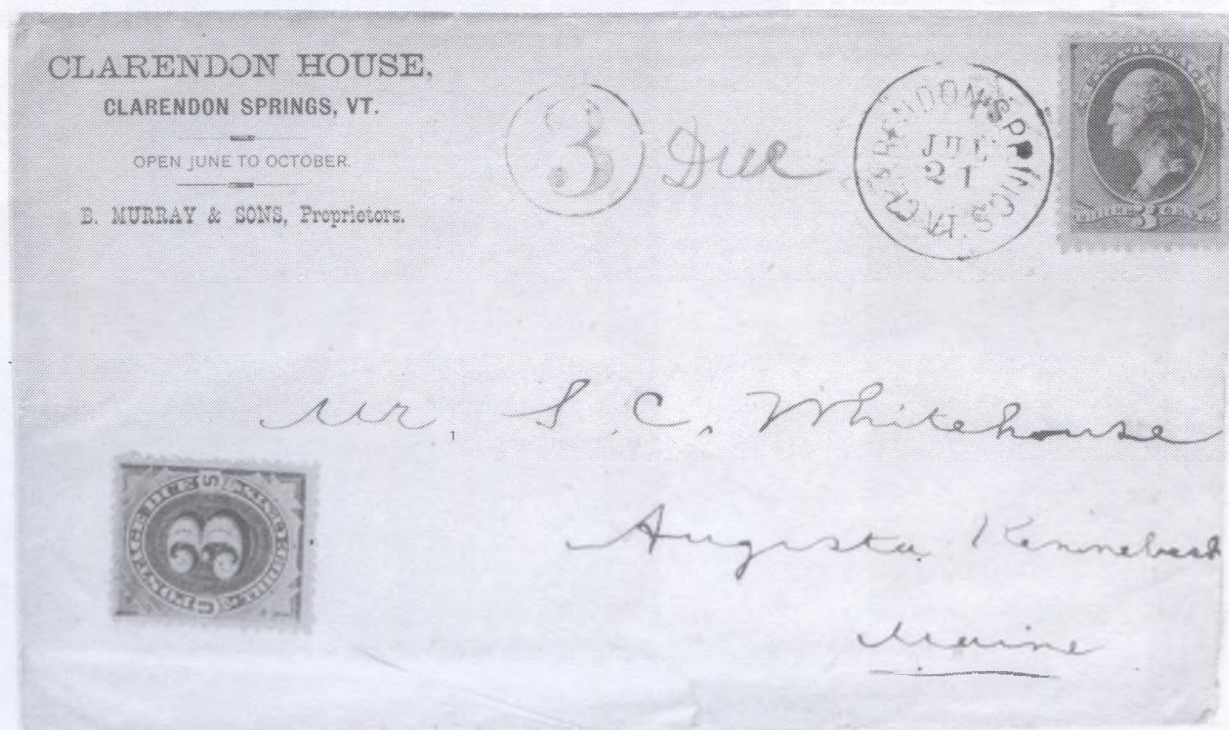


Figure 2



A Failure to Learn?

What comes to mind when you think of New Haven, Connecticut? I suspect for many it is Yale University, one of the most prestigious of Ivy League schools. No doubt a tremendous amount of learning, often highly advanced, has taken place in New Haven. However, the remarkable pair of covers illustrated in Figure 1, courtesy of Arthur Beane, show that in one case a fundamental lesson taught in the New Haven post office may not have been a lesson learned. Put another way, while experience may be the best teacher, it is surely not foolproof.

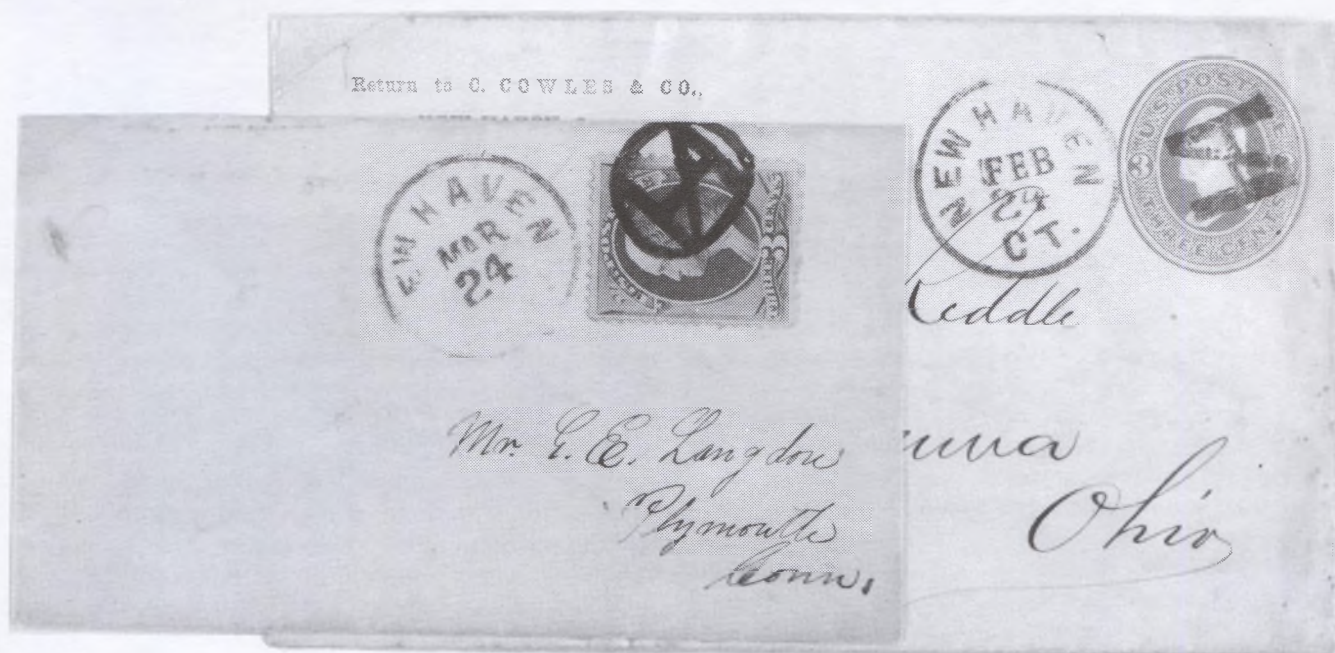
The two cancels in Figure 1 both involve the initials "N" and "H" (undoubtedly for New Haven) with one letter superimposed on the other monogram style. Only problem is,

of course, the "N" in each case is reversed. Certainly it is understandable that one cancel might have a reverse image problem, but then to use another with the same problem is unusual. We don't know the year date of either cover. The adhesive stamp is a National printing and the PSE imprint is of the 1870-71 issue. We surmise early 1870s usages with probably both in the same year.

Of course it may be that the killers were made at the same time, especially given the fact that they employed the same design concept. If so, perhaps the postmaster decided to go ahead and use them notwithstanding the error, because all he really wanted to do was cancel the stamps effectively and a reverse image didn't affect that.

Comment is invited.■

Figure 1



More on Putnam

An article in the February 2002 NEWS presented cancellations from Putnam, Connecticut. We now have three more to add. Ted Wassam reports the Figure 1 and 2 cancels. The date of the Figure 1 cancel is May 18 (1882) and Figure 2 is dated September 6, 1882. The Figure 3 cancel has been seen on an April 26 UX5 postal card. Unfortunately, the dateline on the reverse does not indicate the year date.■

Figure 2



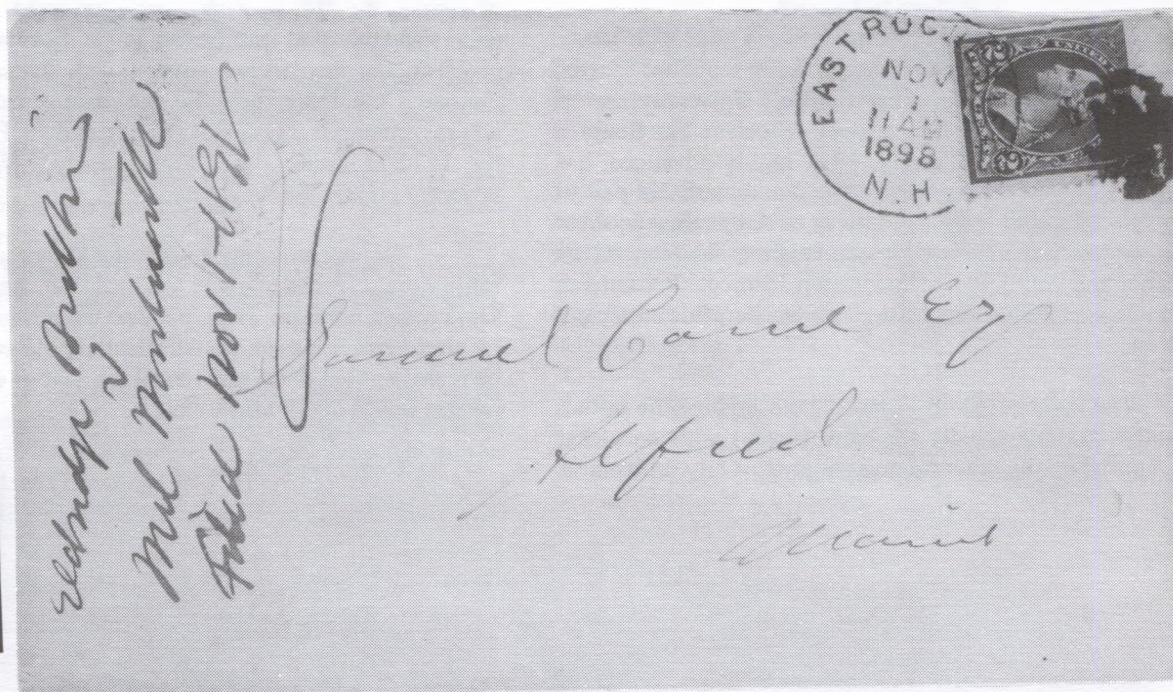
Figure 1



Figure 3



Figure 1

**ER**

No, we're not talking about the popular TV show, but rather an obliterator, used very late in the fancy cancel era, that can now be identified as to origin. Wendell Triplett reports a cover in his collection postmarked "East Rochester, N.H." on November 1, 1898 bearing a cancel with a hand-carved "ER." He also provided a second strike on an off-cover 2¢ red. These items are illustrated in Figure 1.

What is definitely the same cancel is shown on page 219 of the Cole book, except that the incomplete strike used for this listing was interpreted as "EK." That it is the same cancel is evident from the negative space or line to the left of the central prong of the "E." It would appear that the strike on the off-cover stamp in Figure 1 was earlier than the on-cover strike since the lines of the E" are sharper. Salkind illustrates this cancel on page 61 of his 1890-1900 era cancels book.

Wendell points out an example of the difficulty that can be encountered in deciphering manuscript dates. The docketing on the left side of the cover includes "Nov. 1-1898." We know it is 1898 from the postmark, but if that wasn't present, the "8"s look like nothing more than "V"s.■

"PAID UP"

by Roger D. Curran

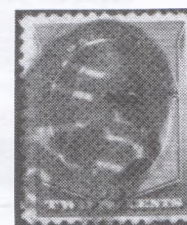
Figure 1 shows a Sc. 213 and a pair of Sc. 252 canceled with an oblong killer that contains a negative "PAID UP." I'm quite sure that these are two strikes of the same (or identical) cancel. I also have a record (Figure 2) of a Sc. 210 with what appears to be the same cancel. This item appeared in a (now forgotten) auction of some years ago and was described thusly:

2c red brown, negative "PAID UP" oval, minor flaws, but a rare cancel.

Figure 1



Figure 2



This cancel seems to be a rather delicate marking, yet it appears surprisingly to have been in use for some years – perhaps 8-10. It looks to be hand carved. However, is it at all plausible that it was commercially prepared and supplied to several post offices?

Insofar as its intended purpose, the only idea that occurs to me is for use on post office account statements given to patrons in connection with box rents and/or accumulated postage charges.

Who can provide more information on this intriguing marking – additional examples, explanation of what it was designed for, the post office or offices that applied it, etc?■