



Cancellation Club NEWS

Vol. 26, No. 8, Whole No. 249, November 2003

Early Time-of-Day Markings

The *U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS* 50th Anniversary Issue 2001 reprinted a brief 1973 article reporting a New York cover dated October 3 (1868), 3P.M. The anonymous author, thought to be Arthur Bond, stated the following:

"In many years of studying NYC postmarks, I have seen no earlier use of the time element in a circular dating stamp. It may be significant that a separate obliterating stamp appears to have been used in this instance, although New York had been using duplex stamps since August 1860."

The reason the author thought the "obliterating stamp" might not have been duplexed was that it overlapped the CDS a bit. Illustrated in Figure 1 is an October 16 New York cover bearing a very similar New York CDS with a different killer. These markings appear to be duplexed. An enclosure on National Shoe and Leather Bank letterhead is dated October 16, 1868.

The *NEWS* is eager to explore early uses of townmarks with time indicators and encourages readers to check their collections and report examples dated in October 1868 or earlier from any U.S. post office. The author of the 1973 article did note the use of carrier handstamp markings

for a period in the 1850s showing the hour of delivery and we exclude these from the current inquiry. Please help if you can. ■

Another "Emergency" Handstamp Cover

Norm Shachat writes to report a fifth Philadelphia cover bearing an "emergency" handstamp marking of the type discussed in the February and August 2003 issues of the *NEWS*. It is dated March 1, 1898 and a portion of the cover is shown as Figure 1. This is of special interest for two reasons. It represents the earliest reported use of this style of handstamp from any of the three post offices known to have employed them. Second, it is the only Philadelphia example thus far reported where the ellipse contains a "2" in the center, as opposed to a "1." Obviously, Philadelphia employed two of these "emergency" handstamps. ■

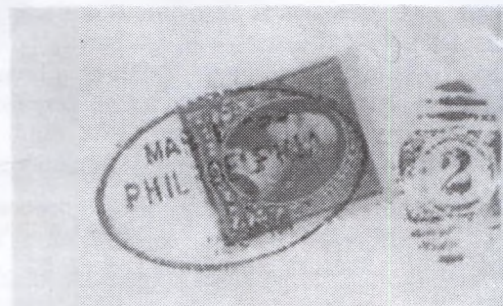


Figure 1

If not called for in FIVE days, the Postmaster will please return this Letter to the NATIONAL SHOE AND LEATHER BANK, New York City.

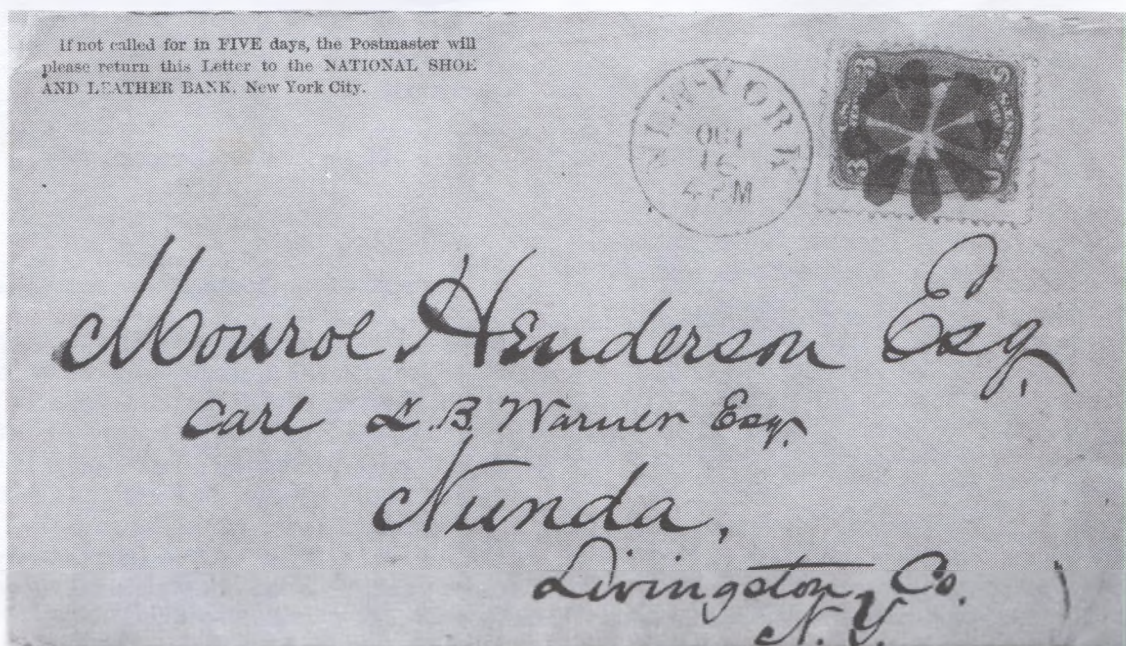


Figure 1

Dear Reader,

The Board of Directors has voted to hold the 2004 USCC annual meeting at the Garfield-Perry March Party in Cleveland which will run March 26-28. As is its regular practice, the Club will (1) staff a society table for all three days to introduce the Club to potential new members and greet present members, (2) sponsor a one-frame cancellations exhibit competition, and (3) hold a seminar on one of the days. Hopefully many Club members will be attending the show and we look forward to members stopping by the table and, if time permits, coming to the seminar. And to all who read these words please think about submitting a one-frame cancel exhibit. The winter months provide a good time to work on such a project and your Club would greatly appreciate it.

Enclosed with this issue is a progress report on the first phase of the USCC study of the large "Boston negative" cancels. We say progress report because, hopefully, this paper will encourage additional reporting leading to a second edition. If you know collectors who are not USCC members but whose collections contain "Boston negative" covers, we encourage you to provide them a copy of this paper and invite their contributions.

NEWS readers do an excellent job of reporting covers and stamps that bear markings pertinent to articles that appear in these pages and this provides considerable information to write about. But we also, of course, seek articles on cancel-related subjects. Articles *are* submitted, for which we are always grateful, but we would like to get more, be they short or long, and assistance is available, if desired, in preparing such. Subjects that interest you are inevitably of interest to others. Whether it is a single cancel or a broad subject or anything in between, please let the NEWS hear from you.

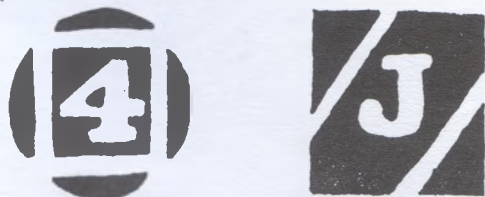
Best wishes to all for a joyous holiday season.

Roger Curran

Help Needed!

Large Boston Negatives -- Phase 2

Enclosed with this issue is a progress report on Phase 1 of a USCC project to identify Boston negative cancels and record their dates of use. We hope to issue a Phase 2 progress report with the February 2004 NEWS which will cover large Boston negatives that have been altered in some way -- corner(s) or section(s) cut away, a negative line cut through the design, etc. We urge readers to check their collections and



report all such cancels on cover that can be year dated. If you have access to the Blake and Davis Boston book and/or the Cole book, please report the cancels by the Blake and Davis or Cole numbers if they are listed and, in these cases, photocopies are desirable but not necessary. If the cancel is

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

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not listed in Blake and Davis or Cole, a photocopy is needed so that we can execute a tracing. And we ask that unlisted cancels be reported even if the year cannot be established. Reports should be submitted by January 10, 2004 (if at all feasible) to project coordinator Ted Wassam at 3504 South Court, Palo Alto, CA 94306. Included with the Phase 2 report will be a reprint of a very informative article that appeared in the October 1952 *U.S. Cancellation Club Quarterly* by Wilbur Davis, co-editor of *Boston Postmarks to 1890*, on the reason for these altered or "variated" designs.

Another Red Star

by Roger D. Curran

The February 2002 *NEWS* illustrated on off-cover red star on a Sc 11 and speculated on its origin. This cancel was of interest because we had not seen a red star on an imperforate issue stamp except for the Philadelphia red star carrier marking that occasionally found its way onto imperforate stamps. The August 2003 *NEWS* reported a cover bearing what is presumably the same red star from Marlow, N.H. but, still, no other red star cancels had been identified.

A "new" red star is shown in Figure 1. It was offered



Figure 1

approximately 25 years ago in the Fancy Cancelist net price sale #1 and described as in a "brown red" color. I have not found this cancel listed in any of the standard references and the *NEWS* would very much welcome reader reports of information about it. ■

More on Scarab Cancels

The subject of scarab cancels was discussed in the August *NEWS* and Charlie Wood writes to report an attractive Palmer, Michigan CDS (Figure 1) duplexed to a scarab cancel.

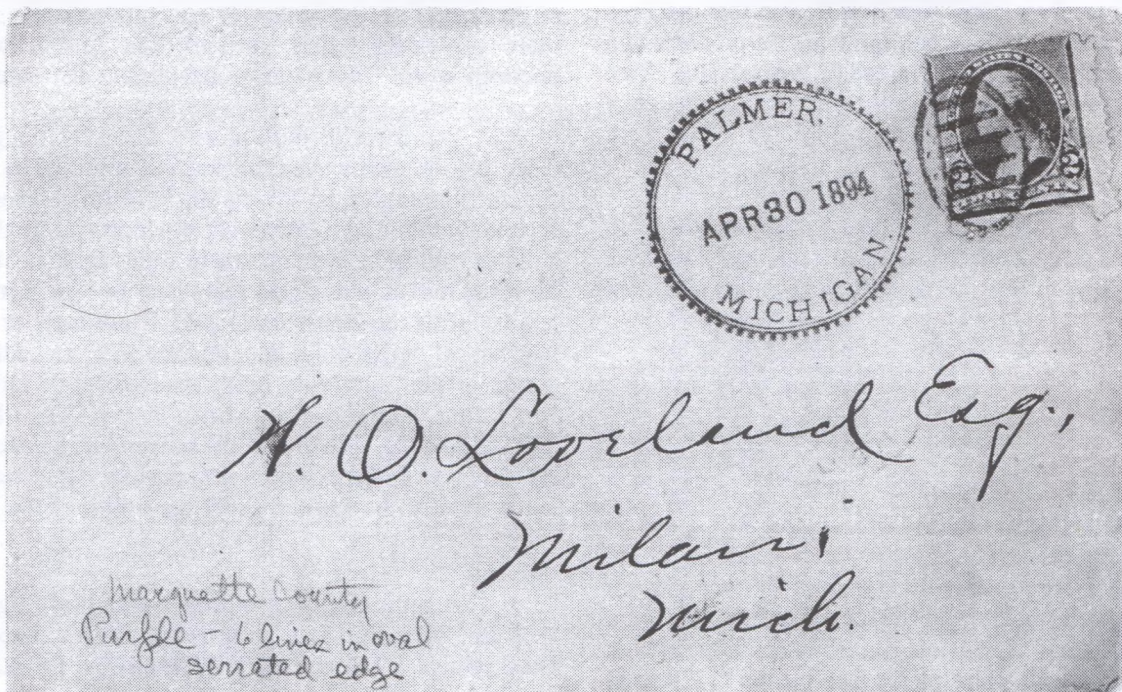
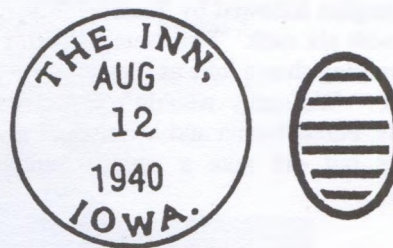


Figure 1

A very interesting showing could probably be made of different CDS designs used with this popular cancel.

In the January 1992 issue of *La Posta* an article by Randy Stehle and Doug DeRoest on the subject of nonstandard 20th century postmarks and cancels reported post offices known to have used these commercially sold scarab handstamps. It may come as a surprise to *NEWS* readers, as it did to your editor, that a 1940 usage was noted, a tracing of which is shown as Figure 2 courtesy of Mr. Stehle. Also listed

Figure 2



was a January 31, 1938 usage from Standard, La. Of the total of 32 post offices reported, no other uses later than 1915 were noted except for a 1916 example from Wade, Oklahoma. Readers who have late uses in their collections or records of such are encouraged to report them to the *NEWS*. ■

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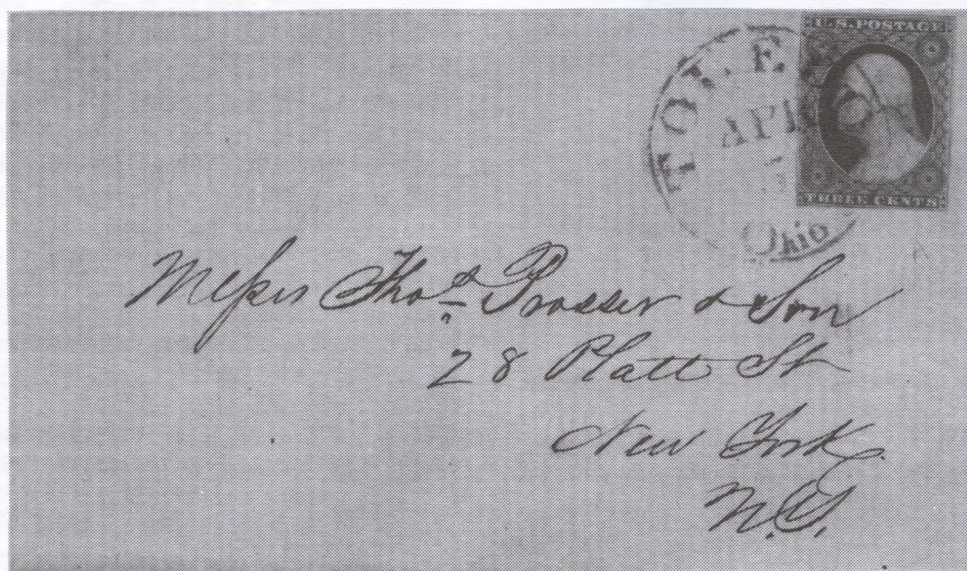
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Full State Name Markings

In several recent issues of the *NEWS* we have touched on killers that include the full state name. Only two were identified – both with “OHIO.” Carrying this general concept further, let’s consider postmarks with the full state name used during the 1851-1861 period. There are more than one might suppose. Alexander’s *U.S. Postal Markings 1851-1861* illustrates, in a section on unusual circular townmarks, examples from ten states for a total of 38. Iowa led the way with nine examples followed by Texas with seven and Maine and Oregon with six each. Two were listed for Ohio but not the Toledo marking shown here as Figure 1, which is datelined April 4, 1856. We really wouldn’t expect examples from Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Mississippi given the length of the names but did note a single example from New Hampshire. ■

Figure 1

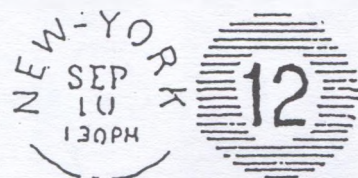


More on British Mechanical Handstamp

The February 2003 *NEWS* carried an article on duplexed markings from New York and Boston that machine cancel specialists have thought perhaps to be the products of a British mechanical handstamp invented by Pearson Hill. Two covers have now come to our attention that challenge a comment made in that article regarding the New York marking.

Figure 1 illustrates the marking in question. Bob Payne records its usage from September 10 through November 9, 1874. Two Pearson Hill mechanical handstamps were sent

Figure 1



to the Post Office Department in Washington, D.C., one in May 1861 and the other on March 30, 1874 according to an article in *The Philatelic Journal of Great Britain* (March 1969) by Kay Horowicz. These handstamps were undoubtedly two different models as discussed in the earlier *NEWS* article. We commented on the fact that the “12” cancel

more nearly resembles cancels used during the period of the earlier model introduced in 1858. The newer model was introduced in 1866 and replaced the earlier one in British post offices. Surely it would have been the device sent to Washington in 1874. And since there was a six-month interval after its arrival in the U.S. before the New York markings began showing up, it seemed reasonable to assume that the newer model would have been tested rather than one that had been on hand for 13 years, notwithstanding the similarity of the “12” cancel to early Pearson Hill cancels.

The February article illustrated a piece bearing the distinctive Figure 1 CDS duplexed to a circle of “V” shaped wedges. It was dated March 30 but there was no indication of year of use. Now come the two covers illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 dated March 20 and April 1 respectively and both can be

dated 1874. A transparency of the March 30 markings was placed over the March 20 card and the two CDS and cancel markings appear to be the same except for some cutting down of the cancel on the March 30 piece, presumably to make it more presentable after portions had broken or become unevenly worn. This indicates the piece is also dated 1874.

The dates of the Figure 2 and 3 markings make it clear that the distinctive CDS was *not* produced by the device sent to Washington on March 30, 1874 which leaves us with several possibilities – they were produced (1) by the Pearson Hill mechanical handstamp sent to Washington in 1861 which, for some reason, was tested years later in New York, (2) by a regular (that is, non-mechanical) handstamp or (3) by a mechanical device other than Pearson Hill. In addition to the design of the “12” killer being reminiscent of early Pearson Hill killers, the very sharp lines in the CDS (the “NEW-YORK” and the outer rim at the bottom) are suggestive of the cut steel dies found in mechanical devices. Obviously, there is much more to be learned about the origin of the New York “12.”

A somewhat similar New York killer (Figure 4) was used in 1869 and 1870. It is largely found canceling 1869 issue stamps. The tracing is Skinner-Eno LS-A27, p. 280.

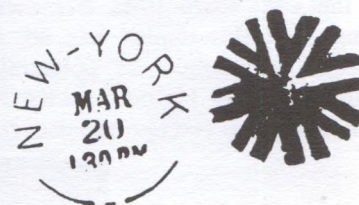
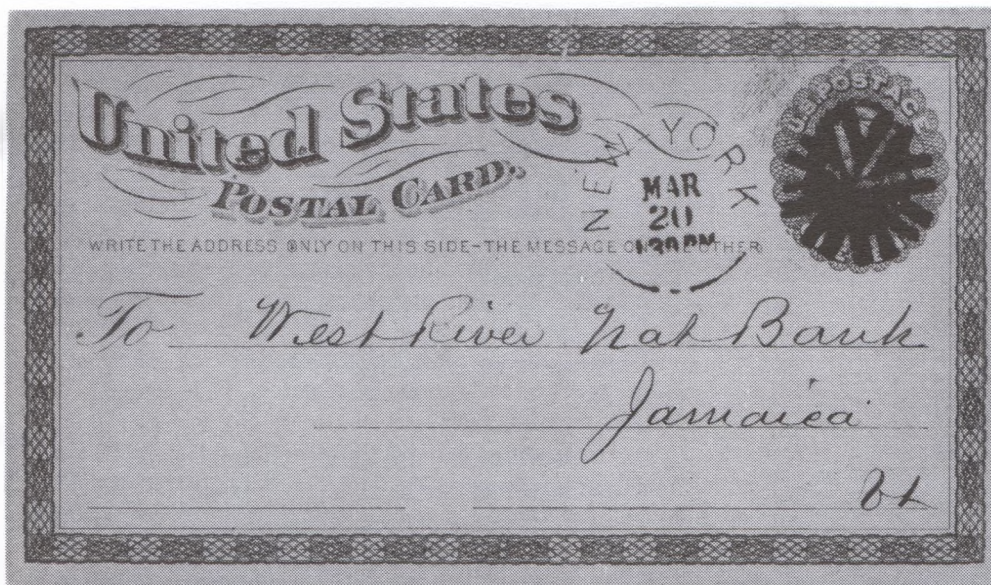


Figure 2

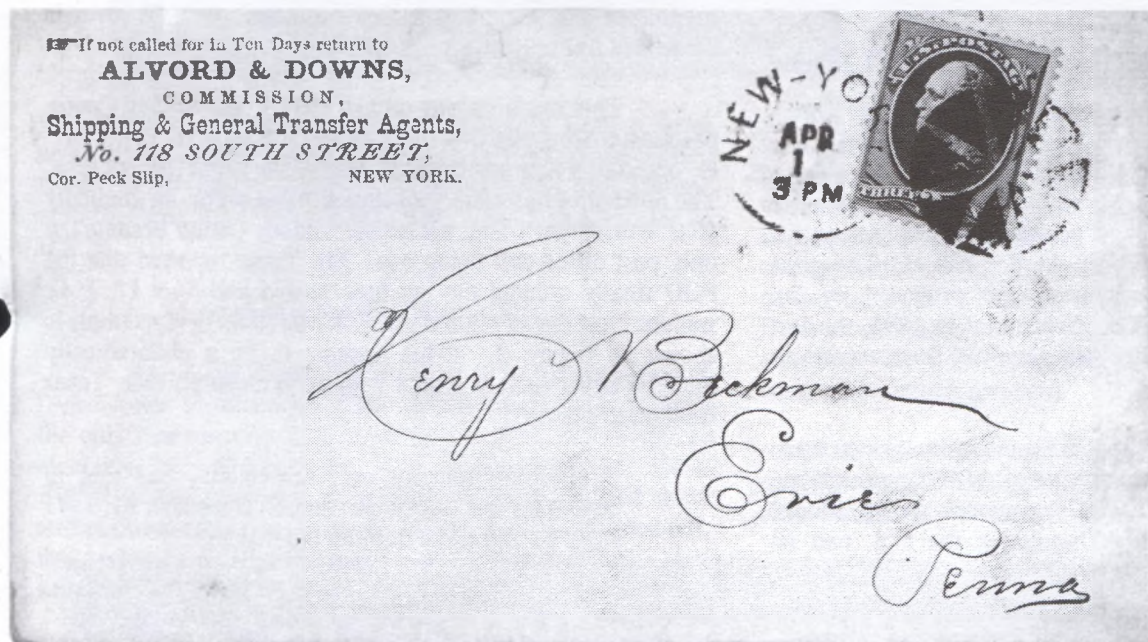


Figure 3

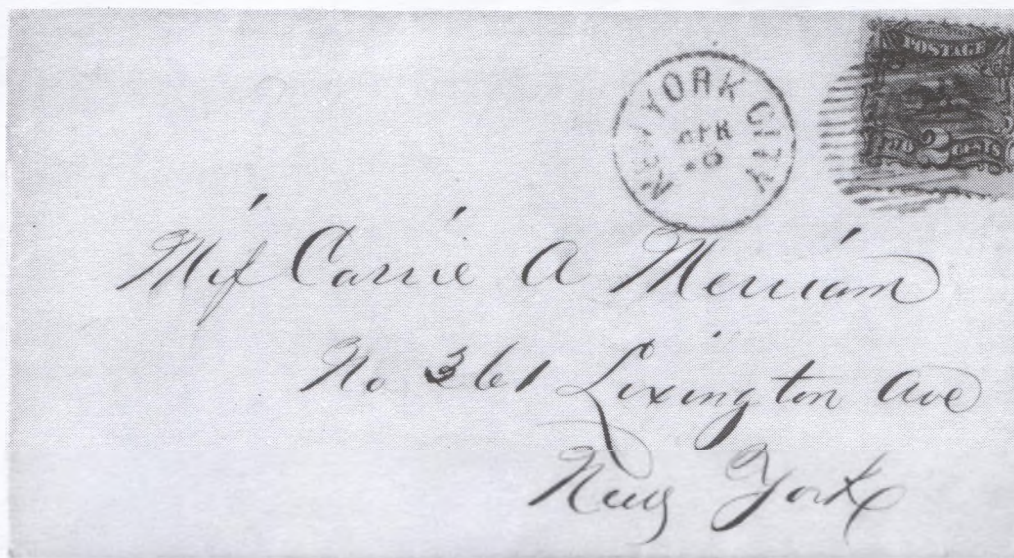


Figure 4

The Figure 4 cover and two others recorded bearing the "A" cancel all have local addresses. The CDS and killer do not show the very sharp lines characteristic of the Figure 1 markings and this duplex has not been, to your editor's knowledge, considered as potentially the product of a mechanical device. Figure 5 shows the A-in-bars killer on a 3¢ National stamp and one surmises the use of the handstamp



Figure 5

for only a short period after this stamp was issued since the cancel is decidedly scarce on this issue.

Thanks to Hubert Skinner for reporting the Figure 3 cover from his collection and to John Donnes for his tracings in Figures 2 and 3.

Comments and additional information are eagerly sought. ■

Flag Cancels

Over the years, the most popular U.S. machine cancel design among collectors has been the flag cancel. The great majority of flag cancel machines were produced by the American Postal Machines Co. Introduced in 1894, the last such machine in a post office was removed from service in 1941.

Flag cancel expert Frederick Langford reported there are more than 7,200 known varieties of APMC postmarking and canceling dies and that APMC flag cancels were produced at more than 3,200 locations throughout the U.S. and its

possessions. This article touches very briefly on the beginning and end of these cancels.

The flag cancel first made its appearance at the Boston post office on October 31, 1894. In the April 1994 issue of *Machine Cancel Forum*, Brett Barker reported information from Frederick Langford and Sam Ockun on what was currently known about the earliest uses. Four examples dated October 31, 1894 had been identified – three covers and a 2x4 piece. The present whereabouts of one of the covers, which the philatelic community first became aware of in 1950, is not known. Your editor has seen no later reports about the missing cover or of additional October 31, 1894 covers.

Regarding the latest uses of a flag cancel, there was a fascinating article by Harry Taber in the Fall/Winter 1991-2 issue of the *Empire State Postal History Society Bulletin* which we summarize herewith. Three clerks in the Sidney, N.Y. post office jointly purchased a flag cancel machine in 1911. This purchase was reported in a weekly newspaper, *Delaware County Enterprise*, to be a hand canceling machine capable of canceling 250 letters a minute. A 1912 cover is illustrated as Figure 1.

This machine was sold in 1928 to the Sidney Center postmaster who was described as an "enthusiastic collector." He obtained a new postmark die and began using the machine. The number of flag cancel machines began dropping gradually after World War I and, ultimately, Sidney Center became the only post office still using one. Mr. Taber reported that the POD finally ordered the machine retired and May 17, 1941 was the "last day of regular use." A March 6, 1941 example is shown as Figure 2. (This appears to be a philatelically inspired cover as it is sealed with no enclosure.) Mr. Taber went on to say:

"Collectors from all over the country had sent in covers for last day of use, and on December 31, 1941 the P.M. ran these through the machine."

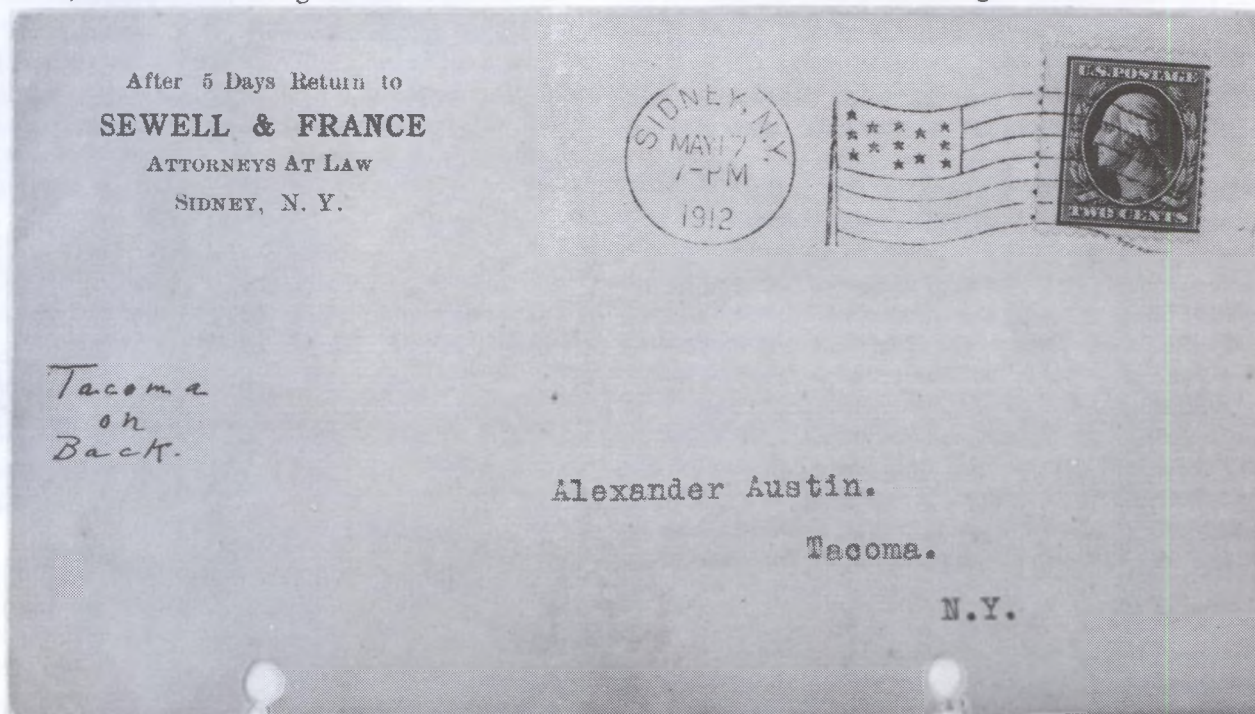


Figure 1

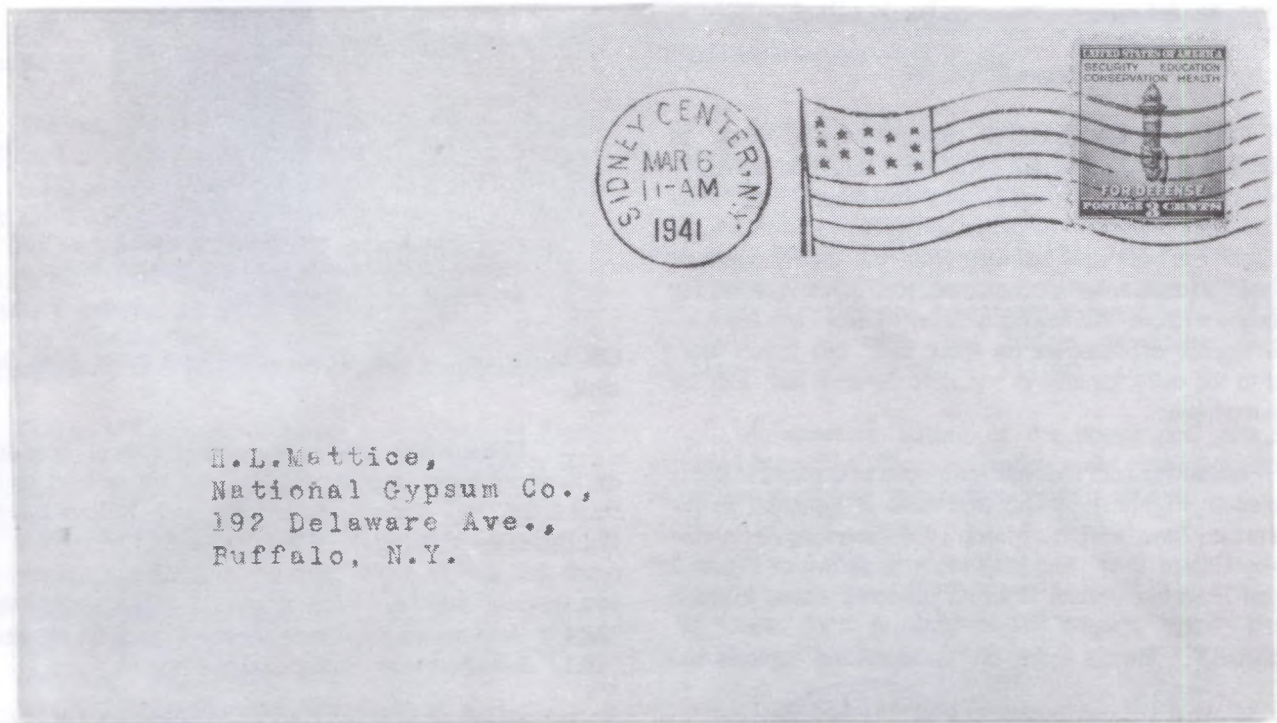


Figure 2

He concluded the article with a photograph from a local newspaper, thought to have been issued in 1941, of the Sidney Center postmaster earnestly at work operating the machine with the headline "Mrs. Gehrke Uses Only Flag Canceler in U.S."■

An Unusual North Carolina Cover

The cover illustrated in Figure 1, in the collection of Dick Winter, is interesting from several standpoints. It bears the only reported postmark from Sardis, N.C., which was in operation from February 28, 1884 to September 30, 1903. And it is a transatlantic with multiple frankings and three strikes of an attractive geometric killer. As Dick pointed out, the unduplexed killer is similar to Cole's GRC-177, but smaller, and may possibly be GRC-178.

Both the postmark and killer on the Figure 1 cover are in black ink and are surely the product of a rubber-faced handstamp, given its highly intricate design which is uncharacteristic of wood or metal cancelers. These were inexpensive and particularly appealed to small post offices such as Sardis. Figure 2 illustrates what is probably the same cancel on a Sc 210 struck with more force on the bottom. Readers will note the two rings are enlarged at the bottom resulting from the spreading out of the flexible rubber composition under pressure.

Readers who can show additional Sardis markings, provide further information on the killer or report its manufacturer are encouraged to do so.

Thanks to Dick for supplying the image of this cover and the information about it.■



Figure 1



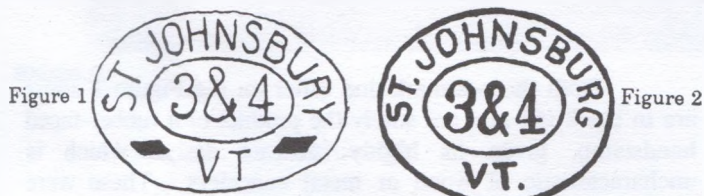
Figure 2

St. Johnsbury, Vermont Double Oval

by Roger D. Curran

One of the appealing aspects of the study of cancellations is coming across little anomalies that leave the collector saying "What on earth does this mean?" or "Why was that done?" Some will never be explained from a logic standpoint. Perhaps they resulted from someone's whim or were based on an unusual circumstance that cannot reasonably be surmised without "having been there." Other such items *do* have a logical explanation on their face, but it just isn't evident to the collector who is trying to figure it out. Let me give an example.

An odd cancel that has long been of interest to me is illustrated in Figure 1.¹ The first time it appeared in the literature may have been in a March 1936 *American Philatelist* article by Gilbert Burr. His illustration is shown as Figure 2 and must have been taken from an off-cover stamp because the last letter should have been a "Y" for "ST. JOHNSBURY." Burr's article on "standardized" cancels had



been running in a number of *AP* issues and we quote his comments surrounding this particular cancel:

"Since I have been writing this article I have had numerous letters from various collectors of these cancels, one of whom, Mr. W. B. Hartman, of Pittsburgh, Pa. sent me his collection to check over. My only regret is that I did not receive it earlier in the article, as he has a very fine accumulation of these cancels of all the different types . . . The . . . item shown is one from his collection, and certainly is one of the finest items that I have seen, one of which I would be proud to own. This item needs no description except that it was on No. 210."²

By "these cancels," Mr. Burr was referring to ellipses, double ovals and the like. Figure 3 shows the St. Johnsbury cancel on a Sc 210.

In Volume Two of his book on the Sc 210 stamp, Edward Willard also provided an interesting personal observation in connection with this cancellation which we quote herewith:

"St. Johnsbury, Vermont, is shown in Figure 987. We have seen two copies both the central numerals 3 and 4. One would expect that there would likewise have been a 1 and 2 but no copies are known. This is a relatively small town where the author's father went to private school, St. Johnsbury Academy, and one of the two

Figure 3



copies probably was used on laundry home to Orford, New Hampshire."³

Obviously, one of the copies mentioned came from family mail.

Philadelphia used a very extensive set of these double ovals with numbers ranging from "1" to "29," at least, on large Banknotes and various other city post offices (such as Washington, Pittsburgh, Chicago and Cincinnati) used numbered double ovals. But nowhere else apparently were two discrete members used together. What would explain "3&4"? And from a small post office and with no reports of a "1&2." It had certainly stumped this writer.

Well, it was very interesting to note an item in Nutmeg Mail Auctions Sale #65 of July 10, 2003. Lot 8124 contained a single and pair of Sc 211 bearing this cancel which were described as being "3rd and 4th Class Mail Strikes." But, of course! It makes perfect sense. Double ovals were designed to cancel postage on third and fourth class mail. The "3&4" had nothing to do with identifying particular clerks (there was presumably only one!) but rather denoted, in all probability, the categories of mail the canceler was used on.

Comments and additional information are invited. Also, who can show this cancel on cover?■

¹ Willard, Edward L. *The United States Two Cent Red Brown of 1883-1887*, H.L. Lindquist Publications, Inc., p. 106.

² Burr, Gilbert M. "Standardized Hand Stamp Cancellations on the Bank Note Issues" *The American Philatelist*, March 1936, p. 292.

³ Willard, p. 108.

Indian Head Cancel Update

by Roger D. Curran

This article presents a summary of information noted in the literature on the Indian head cancel of the type illustrated in Figure 1, which is Whitfield tracing #90. It is a very finely detailed design and the tracings one encounters all seem to vary from one another. Some reports involve multiple

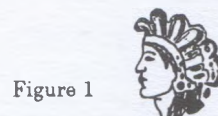


Figure 1

tracings and separate attributions for each. Your editor is of the view, however, that they are all likely produced from the same manufactured design (with differences attributable to

inking, strike and wear variations), and they are reported below as such.

The post office most associated with this cancel is Head Tide, Maine. Willard noted it in magenta and black (Vol. 2, p. 10) on Sc 210 and Nancy Clark (Nov. 2001 *NEWS*) in slate (10/8/85), magenta (4/14/86) and black (7/27/86). "Slate" ink, which is an excellent description of how it appears, is seen used with various cancels of the period and represents, I believe, an additional approach, along with colored inks, of employing an alternative to black printer's ink with its apparently corrosive effects on rubber handstamps.

Damon's Crossing, Vermont is reported by Cole (page 169) to have used the Indian head on September 23, 1884. Slawson, et al also reported it from Damon's Crossing and added this interesting comment:

"Damon's Crossing had its first canceller, in 1884, a fine Indian Head. Apparently this tiny office had little mail and with only an occasional application of ink on a dust covered handstamp the fine lines of the device rapidly clogged up, causing it to be discarded after but a short span of use."¹

If black ink was used, which we assume it was, this probably sped up the deterioration.

Rose Hill, Virginia (10/17/81) and Larkin's Fork, Alabama (3/10/84) used this cancel with a very large single oval CDS. (See the August 2001 and May 2001 *NEWS*.)

Anclote, Florida used the cancel on 12/29/82 (Feb. 2001 *NEWS*) with a double circle CDS with the outer circle actually being two circles spaced closely together. This CDS style was also used by Head Tide. A Bonanza, Colorado use



in blue ink dated 10/10/81 involves the same style CDS. (See August, 2001 *NEWS*.) Fort Keogh, Montana employed the cancel with 2/24/81 (Feb. 2001 *NEWS*) and 9/22/82 (Whitfield, p. 4) uses reported. At least the 2/24/81 example

is struck in blue with a boxed (rectangular) CDS and this is the earliest reported use noted herein.

Willard (Vol. 2, p. 10) mentions the cancel from Lunenburg, Mass. in magenta on Sc 210 and Herst² and Whitfield (p. 4) mention Chester, N.Y. and Troutville, Pa. Cole (p. 169) also reports Troutville as well as Cranes, New Mexico in blue from March 6-14, 1885 and a Chug Water, Wyoming use dated 4/26/82. The Chug Water CDS apparently included the postmaster's name - B.F. Kelley. Whitfield (p. 4) adds Fort Bridger, Wyoming, Omena, Michigan, and Wilmer, Texas (9/11/84).

A summary listing of the above post offices is provided herewith. There are undoubtedly a number more to be added and reports from readers eagerly sought.

Anclote, FL
Bonanza, CO
Chester, NY
Cranes, NM
Chug Water, NY
Damon's Crossing, VT
Fort Bridger, WY
Fort Keogh, MT
Head Tide, ME
Larkin's Fork, AL
Lunenburg, MA
Omena, MI
Rose Hill, VA
Troutville, PA
Wilmer, TX

In the outstanding exhibit of fancy cancels assembled by Clyde Jennings, copies of which are made available by the Classics Society exhibit photocopy service, there is on page 112 of the 1988 exhibit a portion of a cover shown (Figure 2) bearing the Head Tide style CDS with a Sc 212 canceled by what appears to be a very heavy strike of the Indian head. The cancel is not as close to the CDS as one would normally expect in a duplex handstamp. Page 112 is headed "FAKE CANCELS"!■

¹ Slawson, George C. et al *The Postal History of Vermont*, The Collectors Club, New York, N.Y. (1969), p. 127.

² Herst-Zareski *19th Century United States Fancy Cancellations*, Herman Herst, Jr., Shrub Oak, N.Y. (1951) pp. 220, 222.

Figure 2

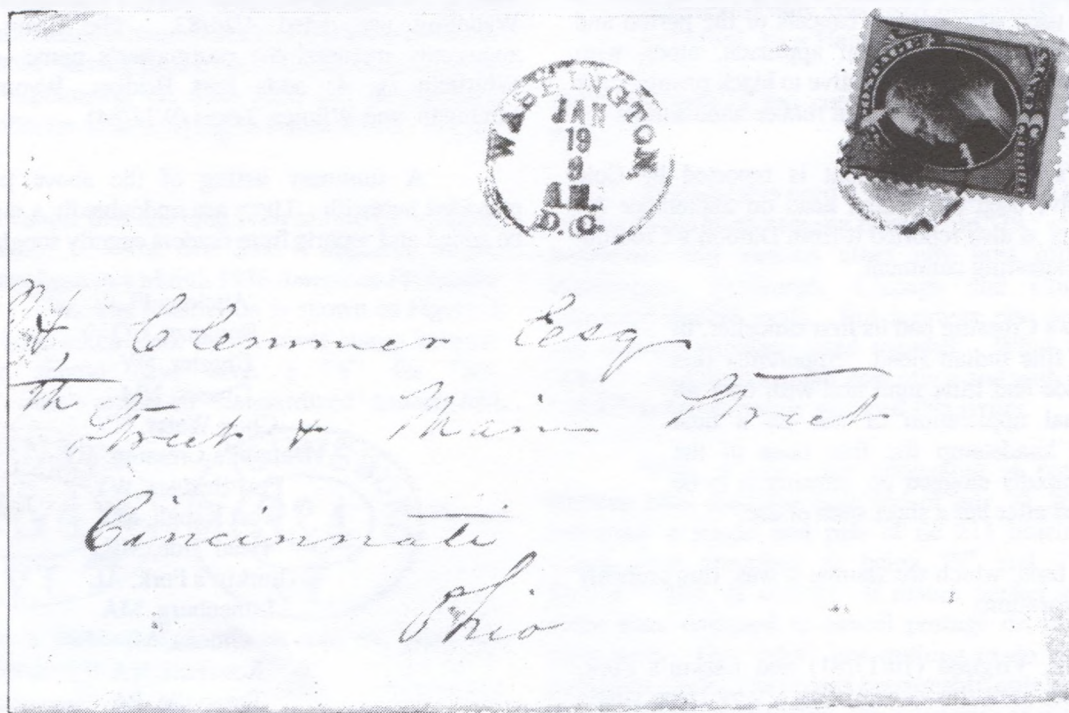


Patent Cancels

by Roger D. Curran

An interesting Washington, D.C. cancellation is illustrated in Figure 1. The outer ring has scraped away the surface of the postage stamp in a couple of places, thus indicating a patent cancel. A solid (that is, wholly inked) circle is in the center. To the left of the scraped area (and slightly below it) at George Washington's hairline there is a small tear along the edge of the stamp with one of the perforations pressed back against the stamp. The postmark

Figure 1



and canceler ink are in the "violet" (or "purple") color characteristic of Washington, D.C. markings applied by the main post office through much of 1878. On the back of the cover is a pencil notation as follows:

Dec 24-
Jay 24th/79
Decree \$246.47
30 days ? ???

Does this tell us the cover was sent in 1879? It is addressed to an attorney.

The Skinner-Eno and Cole books both provide excellent sections devoted to tracings of patent cancels but to find a detailed commentary and a review of actual patents we turn to articles written in the early 1930s by Fred R. Schmalzriedt – in the *Collectors Club Philatelist* in 1931 and 1932 in the 1933 *Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks* edited by Delf Norona. Mr. Schmalzriedt illustrated a tracing of what I believe to be Figure 1 cancel, shown here as Figure 2.¹ He stated that it was "apparently covered" by a patent granted to David M. Cooper of Georgetown, D.C. on July 6, 1875 and he noted three known examples, all on 2¢ 1879 issue stamps. Mr. Schmalzriedt quoted the patent specification as follows (emphasis added):²

"This invention relates to that class of instruments in which a handle, a revolving disk attached to a stem, and a spring are so combined that when the disk is pressed against any object, by means of pressure applied at the handle, the disk will rotate in contact with the object against which it is pressed, and cut or bore away a portion of the substance, and when the pressure is removed the spring will return all the parts to their original position, ready for operation again. In such instruments, when they are to be used to remove a portion of a stamp for the cancellation, they are provided with a ring or annular plate, extending around the cutting-disk, for the purpose of holding both the stamp and the canceling-instrument properly in place during the operation. The mainspring has been heretofore employed for the purpose of pressing said ring upon the stamp, but this renders the instrument inconvenient to handle. If the spring is enclosed within a suitable case it adds to the weight and bulk of the instrument, and interferes with the proper freedom of movement of the annular plate; and, if not so enclosed, the instrument must be handled very carefully, or the spring is liable to injure the fingers. Whether enclosed or not, the pressure

upon the annular plate around the head cannot be adjusted without at the same time adjusting the pressure upon the rotary cutting-plate inclosed by the ring. Again, such instruments have always been made to operate by cutting out a definite portion of the stamp, as, for example, by cutting out and removing a circle or a ring from the substance of the stamp. This mode of cancellation is objectionable and never has obtained the sanction of the Government for postal purposes, for the reason that the cutting-edges are apt to cut too deep, and injure the envelope itself or its contents. My object is to remedy these two defects, and adapt the instruments referred to for practical use for the cancellation of Government stamps. . . . The lower surface of the rotating disk is roughened, or provided with a series of scrapers extending radially outward from the center which operate to scrape off or file off, as it were, the outer surface of the stamp, not cutting out any particular portion, but defacing it generally, so that it cannot be used again without instant detection. No guard or adjustment is needed to prevent the disk from cutting through the stamp into the envelope or letter, because, from the very nature of its cutting-surface, it can do no damage to anything except the stamp."

This specification does not, as I read it, cover the cancellation illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. Indeed, Cooper describes cancelers that would cut out a circle or ring as "objectionable" because they are subject to cutting too

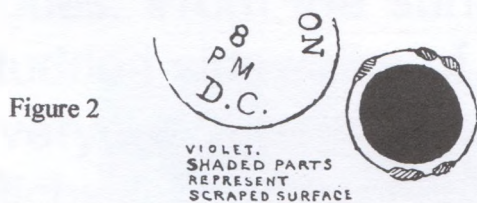


Figure 2

Figure 3

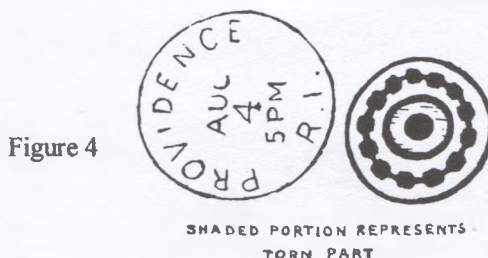
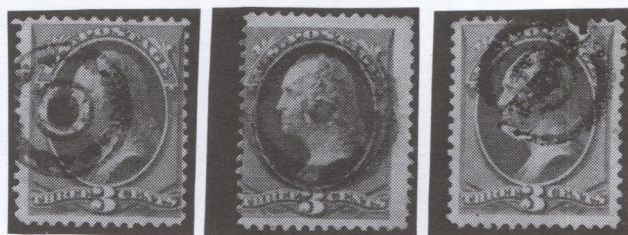


Figure 4

deeply. His solution is to employ a rotating disk with the lower surface roughened in its entirety to deface all areas of the postage stamps it comes in contact with. Presumably the disk would be roughened only superficially to "prevent" it from cutting too deeply.

We'll close with three further examples (Figure 3) of the type of cancel that Cooper decried. The cancel on the left is almost certainly Schmalzriedt's 101 (in CCP) from Providence, R.I. shown here as Figure 4.³ The surface of the stamp under the colorless ring around the bullseye is largely cut away. He reports 20 examples of this killer, 15 of which are on Sc 183.

The middle stamp has a thick outer ring that varies in width along with a small inner ring consisting largely of scraped areas. On the back of the stamp is a pencil notation that reads in part "Prov. RI/Not illustrated/by Schmal." The cancel is not listed in Schmalzriedt or Cole.

The stamp on the right has an outer "circle" comprised of two arcs that don't connect with one another. At the end of each arc on one side there is a scraped area that has a section where the stamp paper is completely cut away. This cancel is not listed in either Schmalzriedt or Cole.■

¹ Schmalzriedt, Fred R. "Patent Canceling Devices and Cancellations," *Collectors Club Philatelist*, Vol. 10, No. 2, April 1931, p. 129.

² Ibid., No. 1, January 1931, pp. 38-9.

³ Ibid., No. 2, April 1931, p. 129.

Mutual Recriminations?

The covers in Figures 1 and 2 are linked in time and place and by originating post office error. Neither was struck

with a town postmark yet they bear canceled postage stamps paying the first class letter rate.

The Figure 1 letter is datelined New York, December

Figure 1

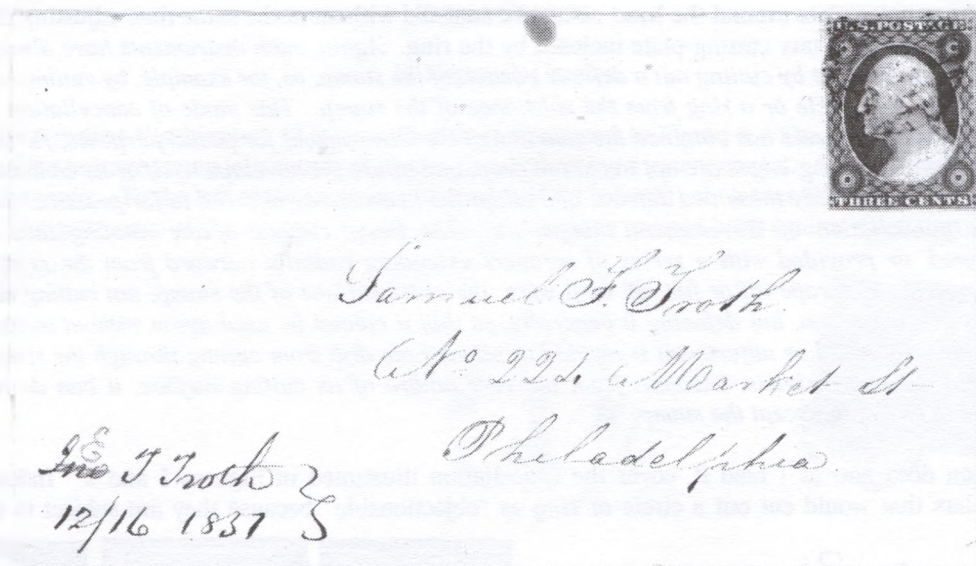
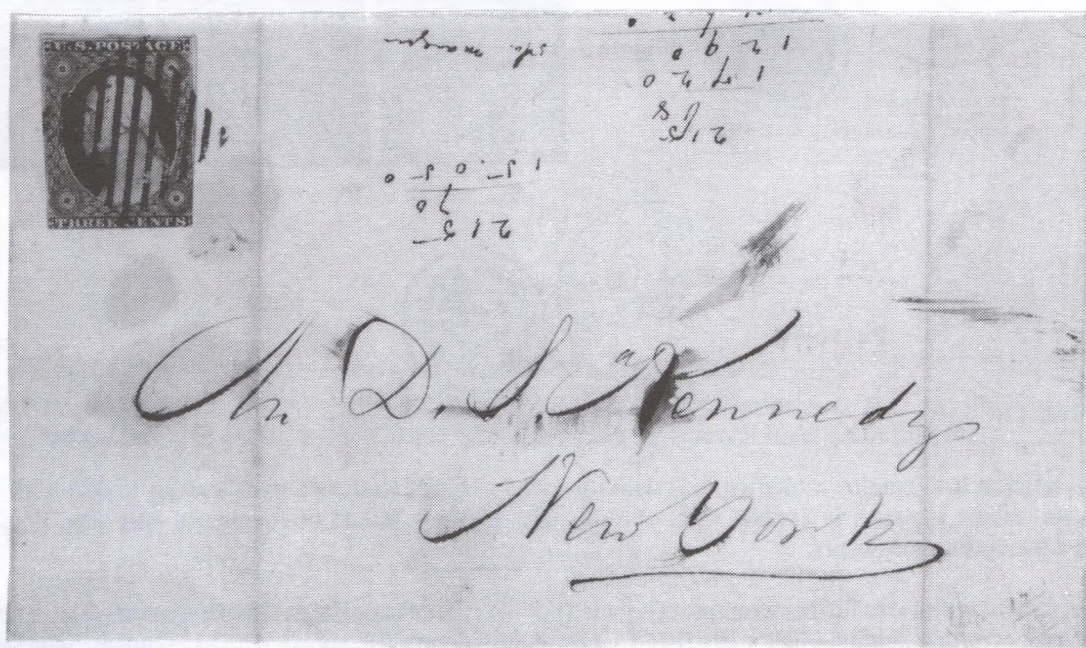


Figure 2



16th, 1851 and the stamp is canceled by the standard circular grid of the period in a blue ink typical of Philadelphia.

The Figure 2 letter is datelined Philadelphia, December 13, 1851 and the stamp is canceled by the 11-bar square grid of New York. After the NYPO began using the town postmark as the canceler of stamps in August 1851, the square grid saw use for a limited period on incoming mail where the originating post office had failed to cancel the stamps. Chase wrote about such usages of the square grid and reported a letter datelined December 11, 1851 as the latest example known to him.¹ The Figure 2 cover is, of course, two days later and the Siegel firm sold an example datelined Philadelphia, December 17th, 1851 in its sale of February 27-8, 2003.

The reason the destination (or "delivery") post offices didn't also add a postmark, of course, is because the postmark denoted where and when the covers entered the mails. Thus, Philadelphia (in Figure 1) and New York (in Figure 2) could only apply their obliterations to resolve the problem of the

uncanceled stamps.

Section 337 of the 1851 postal regulations stated the following:

"If the canceling have been omitted on the mailing of the letter, packet, or parcel, or if the cancellation be incomplete, the postmaster at the office of delivery will cancel the stamp in the manner directed, and forthwith report the delinquent postmaster to the Postmaster General, as the law requires."

One can just imagine the PMG receiving reports from the New York and Philadelphia postmasters, each complaining about the other. The Figures 1 and 2 letters didn't pass in the mails but certainly came close to it. ■

¹ Chase, Carroll *The 3¢ Stamp of the United States 1851-1857 Issue*, Quarterman Publications, Inc., Lawrence, MA (1975), p. 347.



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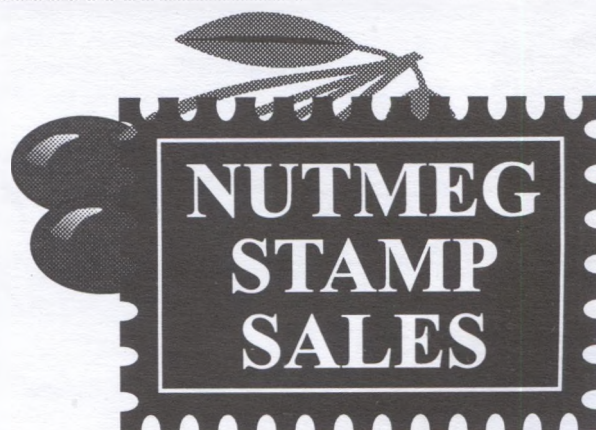


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More on "Psychedelic" Cancels

In the May 2002 *NEWS* readers were asked about a distinctive concentric circles cancel illustrated here as Figure 1. In the August issue Dick Nunge and Allan Schefer reported it in blue ink from Meridian, N.Y. Allan's cover was dated 1862. Dick stated that he had also seen the cancel in black from Meridian and thought it was used in other post offices as well. He pointed out a similarly designed cancel (except only three rings) from Topeka, Kansas reported in Alexander's *U.S. Postal Markings 1851-61*, shown here as Figure 2. The

Figure 1



Figure 2



February 2003 *NEWS* carried an illustration of the Figure 1 cancel in black from Alleghany, Pa. in Vic Reichenbach's collection dated October 20, 1863.

We now have a number of additional reports to record, the first four from Hubert Skinner. We'll begin with a second Alleghany, Pa. cover with the cancel in black dated May 14, 1863. Next is a Meridian, N.Y. cover with the Figure 1 cancel in black, confirming Dick Nunge's report. Third is a photocopy of a cover in Hubert's files from St. Johnsbury, Vermont bearing what is probably a variation of the Figure 1 design. A tracing by John Donnes from the photocopy appears here as Figure 3. Since the photocopy was enlarged,

Figure 3



the tracing is also larger than actual size. John notes that while the strike is not clear, it appears that there is a small inner ring that may not have a varying width. (Incidentally, Hubert refers to the type of ring that varies in width as a "cam," a term that we will henceforth use.) The CDS appears to be dated October 26, 1861 and is not duplexed to the killer. Also from his files is a photocopy of a Topeka, Kansas cover with a Sc 26 socked with a beautiful strike of the three-ring

Figure 4



Figure 2 unduplexed cancel. Actually, the killer is considerably less primitive than Figure 2 as can be seen in John Donnes' tracing in Figure 4. The cover is dated August 23 (1861). As John points out, this appears to be Whitfield #4118.

Ed Jatho reports four St. Louis covers bearing five ring "cam" cancels in black ink duplexed to the townmark. Only one can be year dated (1864) and it is shown here as Figure 5. The dates of the others are April 19, May 22 and October 12. John Donnes studied these covers and made tracings. He noted two distinct CDSs – one with a 27.5 mm. outer CDS diameter and the other 26.5. The larger CDS was duplexed to an 18 mm. killer (see Whitfield #4116) and the smaller to a 20 mm. The larger CDS is shown in Figure 5 and the smaller in Figure 6. Three off-cover 30¢ stamps (Sc 71) were submitted canceled by the St. Louis "cams," two in Hubert's collection and one in Ed's.

Hubert and Ed each reported two covers from Memphis, Tennessee showing a four-ring "cam" cancel duplexed to the townmark. Again, John studied the markings and found two distinct CDSs. The most noticeable difference is the space between the "T" and "E" in "TENN." John's Type I (Figure 7) has a 2 ½ mm. space and Type II (Figure 8) a 3 ½ mm. Ed also submitted a 30¢ off-cover stamp (Sc 71) with the four-ring "cam" cancel and part of the Memphis CDS. Three of the four covers can be year dated: May 31 (1864) – Type II, October 7 (1865) – Type I and October 16 (1865) – Type II. The fourth is dated March 26 – Type I.

It is not surprising that variations in CDS designs would be noted from St. Louis and Memphis. These were large enough post offices so that more than one handstamp would be needed and the faces of those handstamps were individually engraved. Were there more than two "stamping"



Figure 5

clerks working the same shifts in these post offices in 1864 and 1865?■

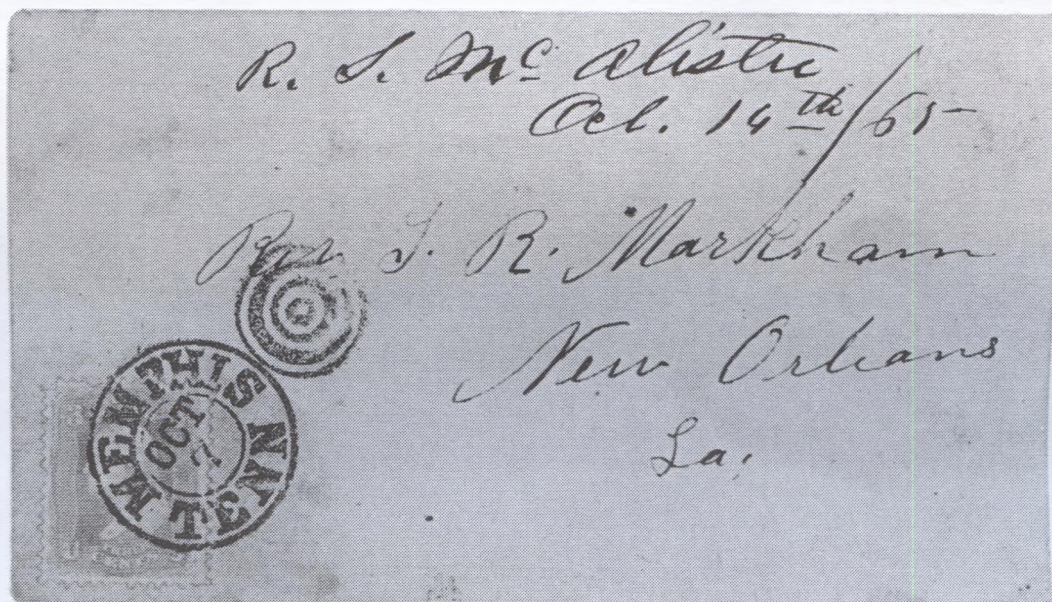
Figure 6



Figure 8



Figure 7



More on "Fishtails"

Carl Stieg writes with more information on the Washington, D.C. "Fishtail" cancels discussed in the last two issues. We noted in May a latest reported use of the 8-bar design as April 13, 1885 and Carl now adds a June 4, 1885 example.

Regarding the split designs, Carl reports four additional examples, all with local addressees and all with a "3" in the center. He also reports a May 9 usage which almost certainly is 1885. If so, this predates the previous ERU of May 15, 1885. Finally, Carl notes having seen a copy of the "split" design with a "2" dated September 28, 1885. This is the only date we record for the "2" which is much scarcer than the split "3," possibly on the order of 4-5 times as scarce based on the limited data at hand.■

Old English "M" or "W"

The August 2003 *NEWS* carried a brief article on a very elaborate Old English style letter from Oaks Corners, NY. A cover dated January 30, 1886 was illustrated. The question was raised as to whether it was a letter "M" or "W." Calvet Hahn writes to say he consulted his 1869 Directory of Postmasters and learned that the Oaks Corners postmaster in 1869 was C.M. Wright. Of course, 1886 is 17 years later but Cal suspects that Mr. Wright served as postmaster for some years.■

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Washington Letters

In the early 1870s, Washington, D.C. employed rather nondescript cut cork cancels. However, some designs were more interesting than others. In November 1872, corks with letters "A," "N" and "W" were used. The covers in Figures 1 and 2 both have 1872 enclosures. The November 26 cover in Figure 3 has no remaining enclosure or other indication of year of use. However, John Donnes has, in his collection, a November 26 Washington cover, with what is clearly the same cancel, that he was able to date as 1872. John's tracing of the postmark and cancel is shown as Figure

4. Can readers show other Washington letters used at this time? Do the letters refer to the clerks who used the particular handstamps?■

Figure 4



Figure 1



Figure 2

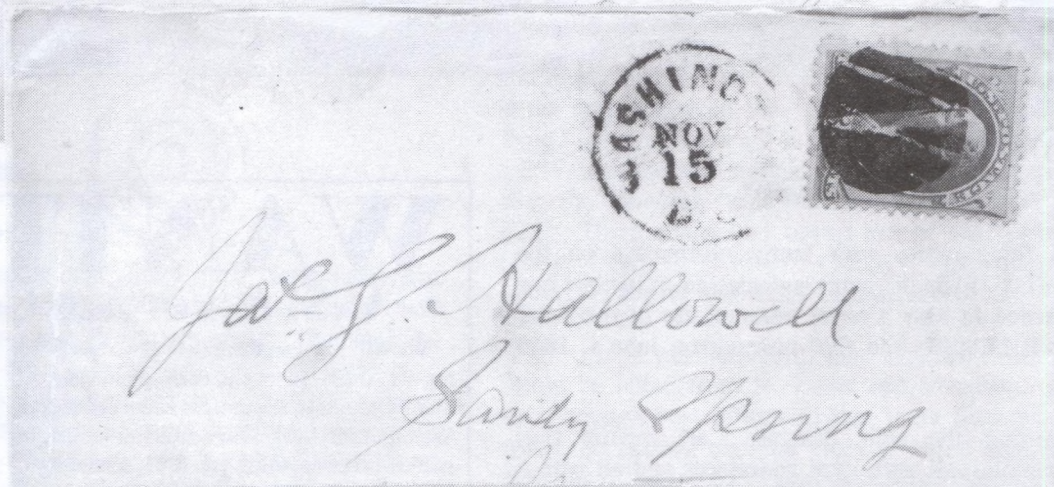


Figure 3

