



Cancellation Club NEWS

Vol. 27, No. 1, Whole No. 250, February 2004

A Distinctive "5" Cancel

by Roger D. Curran

Figure 1 illustrates a cover postmarked at Angels Camp, California with a Sc 210 bearing a large "5" cancel. This is not an especially scarce cancel as it is noted with some frequency on off-cover stamps. Three examples are shown in Figure 2. All copies I have seen are "socked on the nose" and the question has occurred as to whether it is a precancel applied by hand to sheets or parts of sheets of stamps. This "socked on the nose" aspect led collectors to think that the Leominster Mass. "3," used as a cancel in the 1850s and 1860s, was a precancel. However, an article in the October 1964 *Chronicle* by Lester Downing debunked that notion. Unless there is positive evidence available about the Angels Camp "5," I think we can assume that it, like the Leominster "3," was simply a cancel applied carefully by the local postmaster.

Angels Camp, a California gold rush town, originated in 1848 when Henry Angel, a shopkeeper from Rhode Island, opened a trading post after trying his hand at digging for gold. During its early years up to 4,000 miners were in the area but the surface gold gave out quickly and the community shrank. Hardrock mining continued until recent years. Today the town has about 3,100 residents, up from approximately 1,100 in 1969. Angels Camp is some 60 miles southeast of

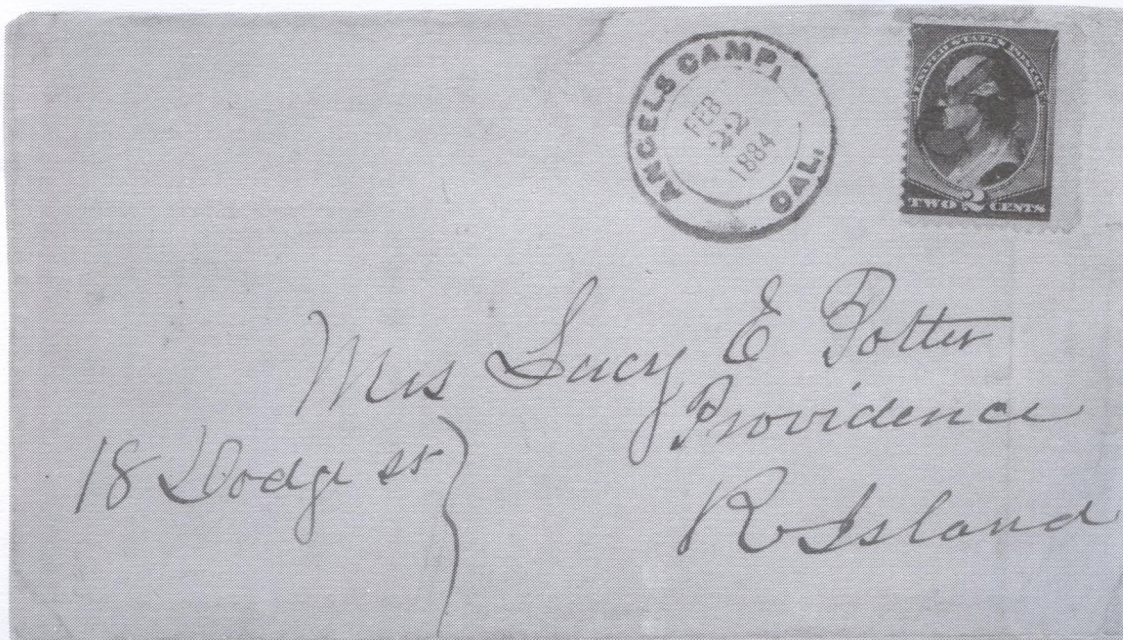


Figure 2

Sacramento at an elevation of almost 1,400 feet. A quaint town in a picturesque location, it has become a tourist destination. Angels Camp advertises itself as the home of the jumping frog, a reference to the famous story by Mark Twain entitled "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" which appeared in 1865. Twain came out west several years earlier and had been writing for newspapers. This is considered his best early work and brought him to the attention of Eastern readers when it appeared in the New York *Saturday Express*.

It is questionable whether the "5" is an old rate marker. The *American Stampless Cover Catalog* (1997) lists "10" and "6" rate markings for Angels Camp but no "5." Readers who can supply additional information or on-cover examples are encouraged to do so. ■

Figure 1





The U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

Published four times a year by the U.S. CANCELLATION CLUB and included with membership. The U.S.C.C. is APS Affiliate #75.

Annual Dues: \$16.00 per year. Address inquiries to: Roger Rhoads at the address below.

Back Issues through 1997 are available at \$2.00 each postpaid. 1998 and later issues, \$3.00. Discount of 10% on orders of 25 or more issues. Address inquiries to: Vince Costello, 318 Hoffnagle St., Philadelphia, PA 19111.

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Dear reader,

As announced in the November *NEWS*, the USCC will be holding its annual meeting this year at the Garfield-Perry March Party in Cleveland which will run from March 26-28. We hope that a considerable number of Club members will be attending the show. If you are there, please be sure to stop by the Club's table and say hello. And, if you are available to help staff the table for an hour or two, the assistance would be much appreciated. We will have available for review a copy of the recent Whitfield book on cancellations for those who have not yet seen it.

The Club will hold a seminar during the show with the date and time still to be set as this is written. Please check the schedule that will appear in the press and, of course, in the show program. In recent years the seminar has focused on the one frame cancellation exhibits on display at the show and we will continue this format.

We plan now to include the Phase 2 progress report on the Club's large Boston negative cancels project in the May issue. This will involve cancels that have been altered in some way by cutting off or carving through a portion of the design. (See page 118 of the November issue for more information.) Your reports of such cancels are eagerly sought with the deadline for reporting now extended to April 10, 2004. Please help if you can.

Hope to see you in Cleveland!

Roger Curran

Billy the Kid – Caught Sight of Again

The front page of the Summer 2000 *NEWS* illustrated a Virginia City cover bearing a strip of three one cent stamps (Sc182) canceled by three strikes of a round cancel in black ink with a negative "Kid" carved in the center. A 1998 APES certificate opines it to be a "Virginia City, NV cover with (Billy the) 'kid' fancy cancellation, genuine in all respects."

Recently, Club member Michael Horan reported the off-cover three cent stamp shown as Figure 1. In December 2003, this stamp received an APES certificate that states, in pertinent part: "... Scott No. 184, used with the Virginia City, NV (Billy the) 'kid' fancy cancellation, genuine..." If



Figure 1

readers can present any additional examples, or reports of such, they are encouraged to do so.

After the first article appeared, Gordon Nelson, a collector of Virginia City, NV postal history, submitted copies of several covers showing cancels cut from cork on soft wood.



Figure 2

Portions of two are shown in Figure 2. The July 11 quartered cork is 1879.■

Augusta, Maine

Bob Markovits submits the interesting cover illustrated in Figure 1. It is postmarked July 2 and from the inside it can be dated 1851. This makes the franking a second day use of the one cent imperforate stamp. Bob notes that Augusta didn't receive a supply of the one cent stamp until July 10 and this stamp, therefore, would have been carried up from Boston.

One may add that the cover tells us, as a virtual

certainty and without any checking of reference materials, that Augusta was one of the larger post offices of the day and had received 1847 issue stamps. This is because of the presence of the 18mm enclosed circular grid cancel which was supplied by the POD to "... certain of the post offices ..." (Sec. 501 of 1847 postal regulations) to cancel 1847 issue stamps. The "certain" post offices were no doubt those processing the most mail. The stamp in Figure 1 is slightly tied to the cover on the right side. According to Mannel Hahn's handbook, *Postal Markings of the United States 1847-1851*, Augusta received 1,200 5¢ and 400 10¢ stamps in August 1847 and, in subsequent years, an additional total of 2,600 5¢ and 200 10¢ stamps.

As an aside, many of our readers know that Bob won the 1999 U.S. champion of champions award for his exhibit of U.S. official stamps and postal history. It also garnered four International large gold awards. His entire holding of U.S. officials - which include a number with noteworthy cancellations - will be auctioned in February 2004 by Matthew Bennett, Inc.■

Help Wanted

Club member Jim Cate is conducting a survey of the dates of use of the Chattanooga straight-line cancellations used in December 1863 and January 1864. There are three types and an illustration of one type appears below.

CHATTANOOGA, TENN.
January 6 1864

Jim requests that readers send photocopies of covers bearing these cancels to him at 7354 McCormack Drive, Hixson, TN 37343-2371. Contributions to the survey will be greatly appreciated.



Figure 1

San Francisco Cancel – Skinner-Eno SD-G 69

by Jim Cate

The Skinner-Eno cancellation SD-G 69 has been a source of interest for a number of years. It is a simple grid enclosed in a circle as shown in Figure 1. The cancel as illustrated is 22 mm in diameter and has 11 grid lines enclosed in a circle. Several years ago, the writer acquired a cover (Figure 2) and noted the cancellation on the cover was smaller than the one shown in Skinner-Eno. The one on cover measures 18 mm in diameter, some 4 mm smaller than the one in the book.

Over the years, the writer has questioned knowledgeable collectors and dealers but could not find anyone who had ever seen a cancel of the size shown in Skinner-Eno. *San Francisco Postal Markings 1847-1900* by John Mahoney (LaPosta Monograph Series Volume 8) does not list this cancellation. The writer acquired another cover (Figure 3) with a cancel identical to the cancellation in Figure 2 and has found a very limited number of examples of this cancellation in other collections. None were of the size shown

Figure 1



in Figure 1. The writer finally reached a conclusion that the original person who submitted the cancellation to Skinner-Eno might have submitted a copy enlarged version.

Recently while doing some philatelic research on another cancellation subject, the writer came across a tracing of this cancellation in *Pat Paragraphs* by Elliott Perry (BIA compilation of Perry's articles by Bureau Issues Association in 1981, page 520) shown here as Figure 4. This illustration is 18 mm in diameter and matches the size shown on the covers in Figure 2 and Figure 3. Commenting on San Francisco cancellations, Perry wrote,

"Several more or less well known

Figure 2

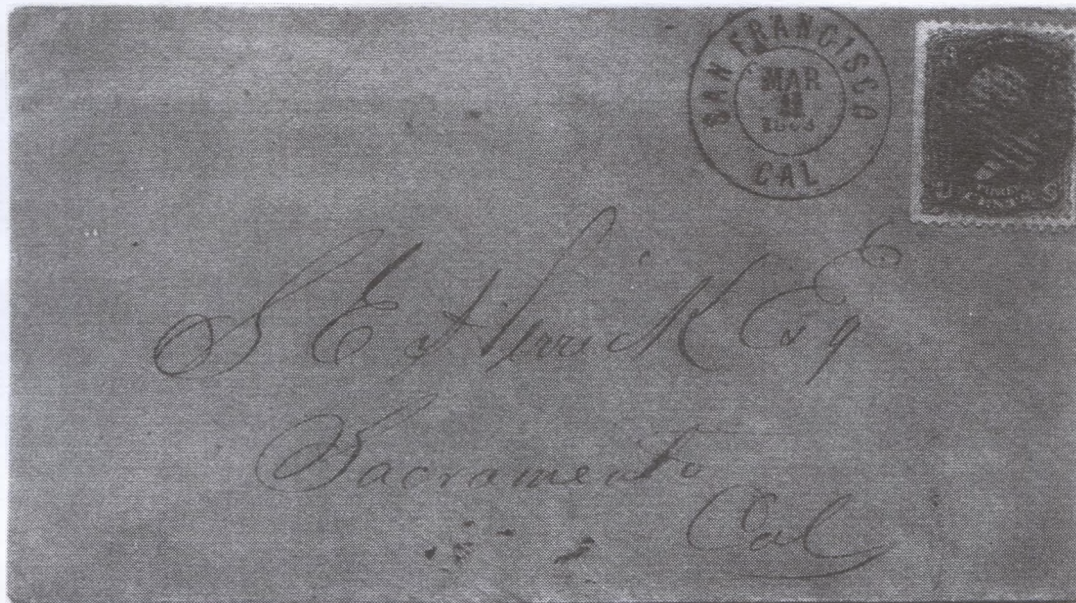


Figure 3

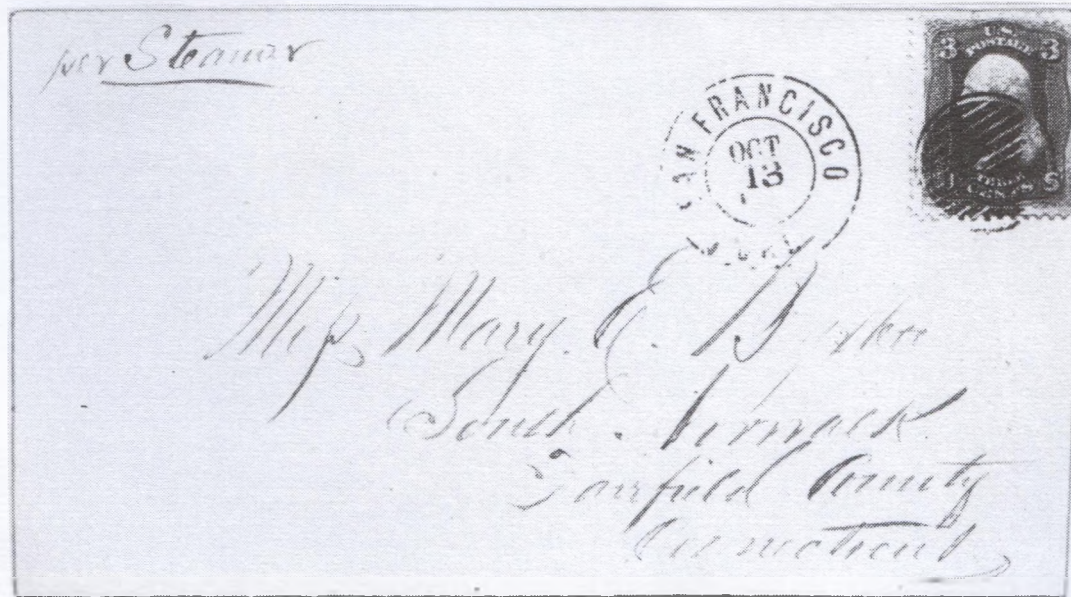


Figure 4



cancellations and postmarks are illustrated and others are in preparation. The encircled grid was not in use long and so is rather scarce. It was struck in black as were the well known cogwheels."

The "not in use long and so is rather scarce" statement probably explains why it does not appear in the La Posta publication. This may also help our understanding of the Skinner-Eno illustration. There probably was only one cancel and the submitter probably provided a 4 mm enlarged copy version.■

Noted With Interest

The New York Post Office was the first post office to receive 1847 issue postage stamps. It was on July 1, 1847 and one assumes there might be "somewhere out there" an 1847 issue cover postmarked by the NYPO on that date.¹ There is a New York cover postmarked on July 2, 1847 with a pair of 10¢ 1847s.

For some years the earliest reported use of an 1847 issue stamp outside New York City was on a July 12, 1847 cover from Philadelphia, Pa.² However, Tom Alexander's outstanding census of 1847 issue covers presents a July 8, 1847 cover from New Hamburg, N.Y. to Ithaca, N.Y.³ (See Figure 1.) It is the only reported 1847 issue stamp used from New Hamburg which was in Dutchess County above New York City.⁴ (The post office operated from 1828 to 1882.) Mr. Alexander illustrated the cover and concluded this about it:

"The stamp was surely purchased in New York City and carried to New Hamburg by the writer, James Lenox, who was in the small town while his Fifth Avenue townhouse was being built."⁵

The stamp has no cancel. Apparently, neither the New Hamburg or Ithaca postmasters were aware of the need to cancel the stamp although Ch. 68, Sec. 501 of the 1847 postal regulations was explicit about the responsibilities of both the origination and delivery post offices in that regard. We can readily forgive this omission as the procedure was very new and, since neither post office was scheduled to receive an initial allotment of stamps, little attention was likely given to the matter. New Hamburg never did receive any 1847 stamps and Ithaca not until May 14, 1849.■

¹ McDonald, Susan M. "A Day to Remember", *The Chronicle*, May 1872, pp. 59-67.

² Hart, Creighton C. "A Second Day 1847 Cover", *The Chronicle*, May 1972, pp. 57-8.

³ Alexander, Thomas J. *The United States 1847 Issue: A Cover Census*, USPS (2001), pp.379-80.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

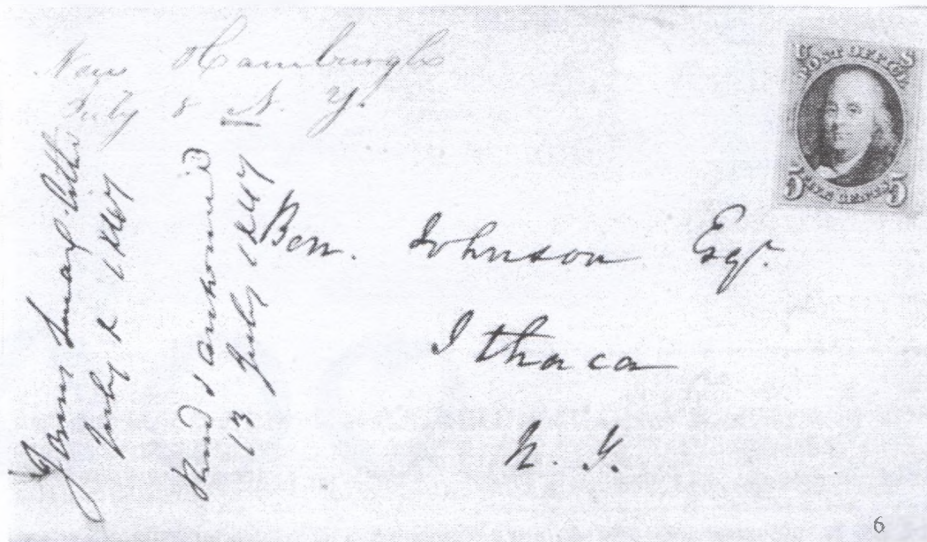
Seeking Patent Cancel Information

In the November 2003 *NEWS* we briefly discussed several patent cancels, two of which had not been, insofar as your editor knows, reported in the literature. "Patent" cancels (those intended to cut, punch or scrape stamps as part of the cancellation process) have long been of interest to cancellation collectors and there are no doubt many unreported examples still out there. This note is to request that Club members who have patent cancels in their collections, on or off cover, that have perhaps not yet been reported, to submit information about them to the *NEWS*. We hope to publish more on such patent cancels and would, of course, acknowledge all contributors.■

Indian Head Cancel

The November 2003 *NEWS* provided an update on post offices that used a commercially supplied rubber-faced handstamp bearing an Indian head canceler. Thanks to Jim Kesterson we can now add Granville, Iowa to the list with a March 1888 usage.■

Figure 1

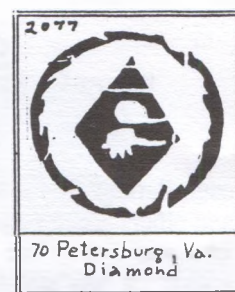


Anyone for Bridge?

by Roger D. Curran

The cancels on the two Petersburg, Virginia covers illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 seem to go together and I gather they were used at about the same time. The tracings that accompany the covers were taken from the Whitfield book. One cancel depicts a heart in the center and the other a shield. Or at least that is what I thought until a more intriguing possibility presented itself. The catalyst for this thought was Mr. Whitfield's tracing shown here as Figure 3. Not only is the cancel of a similar presentation, but the three subjects in the center can be said to display a unity of their own depending on how one views the "shield."

Figure 3



in such a set, they comprise, it seems to me, a much bolder and more dramatic group than that produced by Boston.

I am probably getting ahead of myself here. It is

Figure 1

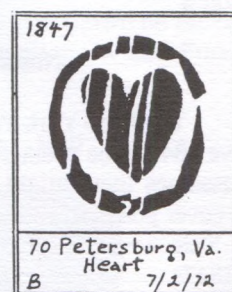
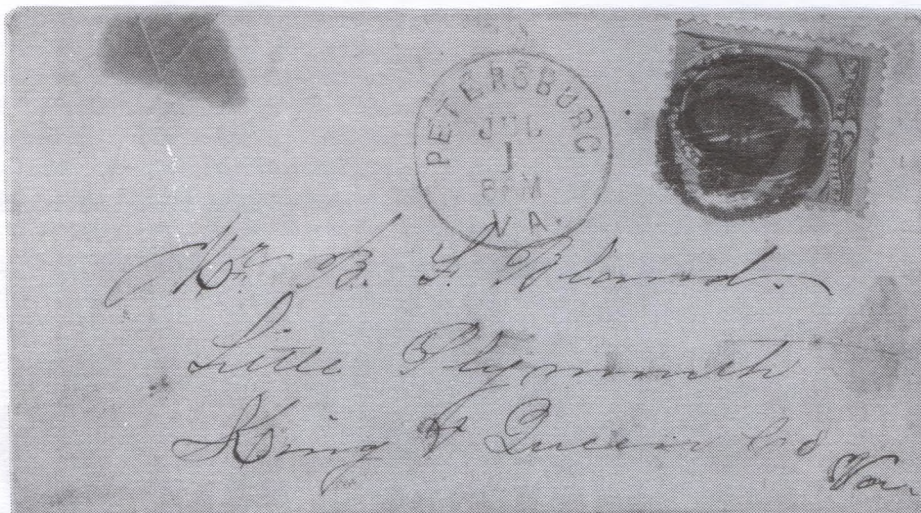
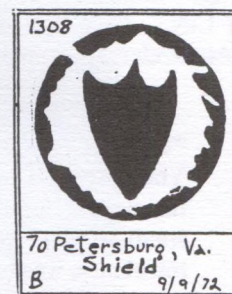
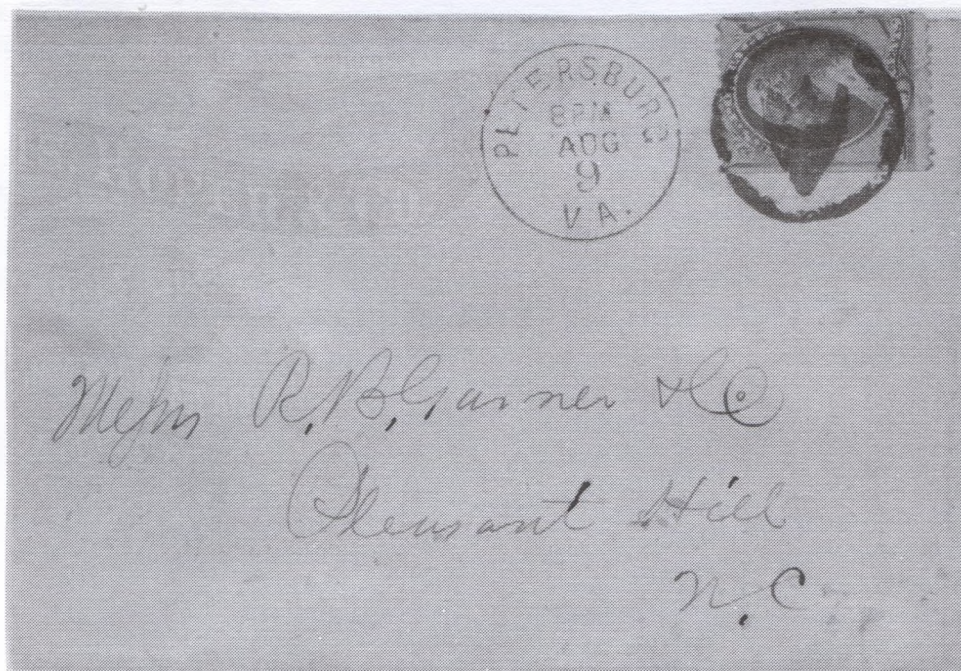


Figure 2



Given that there is definitely a heart and diamond present, perhaps the "shield" is really intended to be a spade and there is also out there a "club" cancel to form the four suits in a deck of cards. What a pleasant prospect that is to consider! Boston has long been known for a set of the four card suit cancels used in the 1860s and tracings are illustrated here as Figure 4.¹ If the Petersburg cancels are indeed found



Figure 4

certainly not clear that the "spade" is a spade. It does appear, truth be told, more like a shield. And I'm unaware of any Petersburg "club" cancel that has been reported in the literature to round out the set. An earlier version of this article appeared in *Way Markings*, the journal of the Virginia Postal History Society, but no additional information was forthcoming.

The assistance of readers is requested in reporting the dates of covers bearing these cancels and any other designs in this "set." ■

¹ Hubert C. Skinner and Amos Eno, *United States Cancellations 1845-1869*, American Philatelic Society, State College, PA (1980), page 174.

Two New England Cancels

Two remarkable cancellations from the collection of Arthur Beane are presented herewith. The Figure 1 cover was posted at Danforth, Maine on September 20, 1893 and bears a circular "cork" killer with four notches around the perimeter.

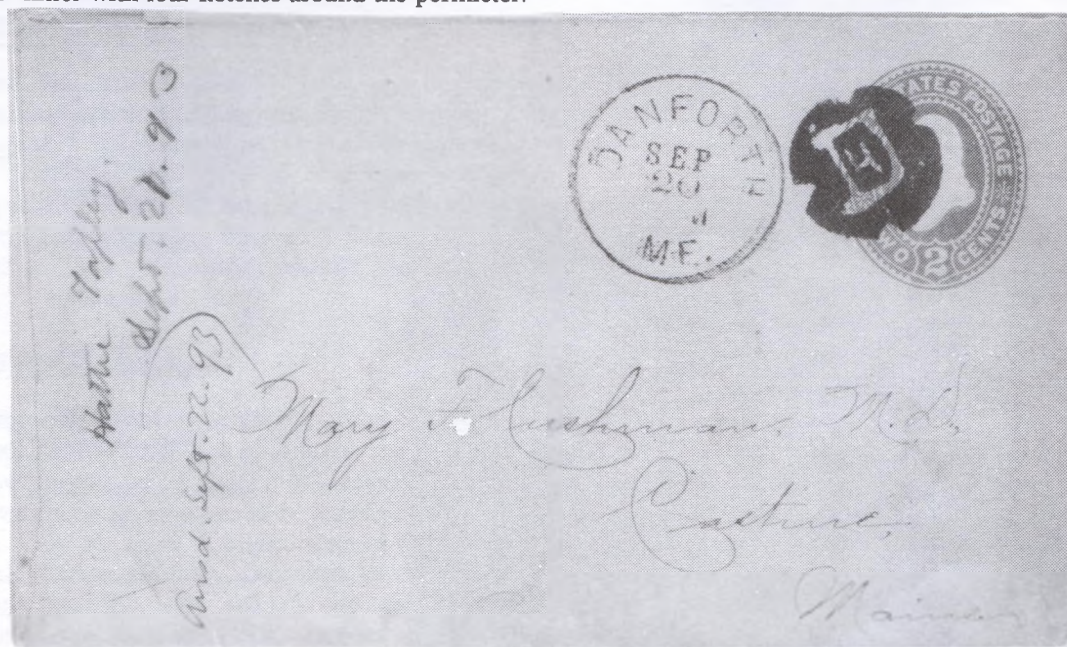


Figure 1

In the center is a negative "D" enclosing a numeral "4." Undoubtedly the "D" is for Dan and the "4" for forth. What a delightful form of Yankee ingenuity!

The Figure 2 cover bears an ornamental double circle CDS from Cabot, Vermont struck in a bright blue ink dated January 5, 1887. The unduplexed concentric circles killer is struck in black. What is noteworthy is the extremely thin "C" in the center of the killer, undoubtedly for Cabot. The tracing was provided through the courtesy of John Donnes. ■

More on "Emergency" Handstamps

Summing up reports in the last three *NEWS* issues on "emergency" handstamps that were used for a short period beginning in March 1898, there have been 14 noted for Washington, D.C., five for Philadelphia and two for New York. Adding to the record, Bill Stearns has submitted copies of a piece bearing a New York example, apparently dated March 3, 1898 (a little blurred), and a cover from Washington dated March 10, 1898. ■



Figure 2

Is it a Philadelphia Cancel?

by Norman Shachat

Unfortunately, during the early 1870's, townmarks were not normally used on third-class mail. During that period Philadelphia apparently employed oversized geometric cancels on such mail as illustrated in Figure 1. The corner card indicates it was sent by the Public Ledger, Philadelphia, and the address indicates local delivery. The 1¢ franking with an 1870 National Bank Note suggests it was sent during the early 1870s.

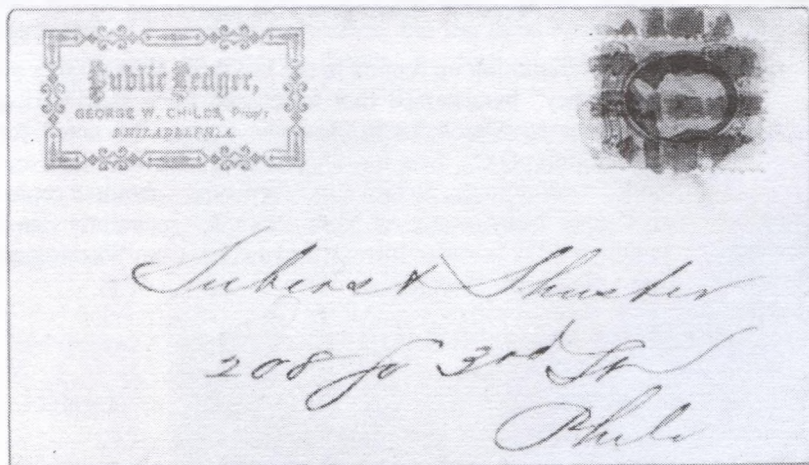


Figure 1

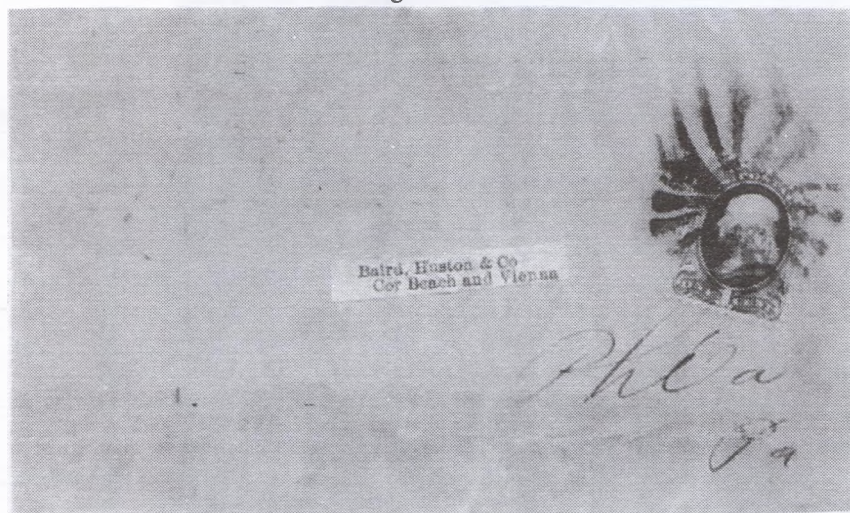


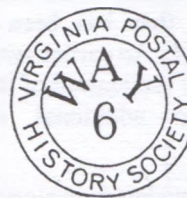
Figure 2

In view of the above, I wonder whether the cancel shown on the wrapper in Figure 2 was also applied at Philadelphia, or was it elsewhere? It is franked with a 1¢ 1870 National Bank Note and addressed to Philadelphia, but unfortunately does not contain any indication of origin. Can anyone identify the origin of the rather spectacular cancel? ■



Gilbert M. Burr Articles

In a series of *American Philatelist* articles (56 pages) appearing in 1935 and 1936, Gilbert M. Burr presented the



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See announcement on page 54
of November 2002 NEWS

first serious study of ellipse and other standardized cancels used primarily from 1876 into the early 1990s. Through the courtesy of Tuck Taylor, we have a very fine set of these articles on the original magazine pages. If there is sufficient interest, we will provide high quality photocopy sets in soft binders. The price is projected to be \$10-15 per set depending on the actual cost to produce.

If you wish to purchase a set, please notify me by email at rdcnrc@evenlink.com or by regular mail: 20 University Ave., Lewisburg, PA 17837 within the next 3-4 weeks. You will be notified when a decision has been made and of the cost if it is a "go." While much new information has, of course, been published since 1936, the Burr articles represent an excellent and quite thorough introduction to the subject and provide a number of excellent tracings.

Roger Curran

Waterbury Cancels

It's hard to imagine the cancels of another post office having been more carefully studied than those of Waterbury, Ct. from 1865 up to the mid-1880s. This interest is due, of course, to the artistic designs whittled into cork by postal clerk and then postmaster John W. Hill. Thorough study over the years has led to thorough documentation culminating in the outstanding 1979 book on the subject by Paul C. Rohloff.¹

As one would expect, despite all the attention, new information about Waterbury cancels comes to light from time to time. Club member Wendell Triplett has developed a data base of all the cancels listed by Mr. Rohloff including one section devoted to cancels that have been said to be Waterburys but which Rohloff could not prove to actually be from Waterbury. In an effort to add to the database, Wendell has researched the sources listed at the end of this article. He has identified cancels not reported by Rohloff as well as information bearing on some of Rohloff's "unauthenticated" cancels. This data is presented below with the hope that it will start the ball rolling toward a fuller update of the Rohloff book in these pages at a future date.

Abe Boyarsky reported in 1998 three interesting letters pertaining to the Waterbury cancels that "recently have been discovered."² Two were from Mr. Hill, written in 1919 and 1920, and one was from a Waterbury newspaper publisher, probably written in December 1918 or early 1919, listing Waterbury postmasters from 1853 through Mr. Hill's appointment in 1869. We quote herewith Mr. Hill's 1920 letter:

My dear Mr. Clark:

Your letter certainly recalls old times. And I shall have to go back a good many years to give you any sort of answer. My memory is not as good as it used to be. I was Clerk in the Wby PO about 6 years. Having taken that position after my discharge from the army in 1863. In 1869 I was app'td. Postmaster succeeding Dr. Jacques. In which position I served until 1886. (17 years) - Reentering again 1890, MO Dept., J.B. Doherty PM, and served in that capacity (and otherwise) until 1917, when I resigned.

Shall be 86 as of the 13 of April if I live till then.

Cannot just remember when I started the stamp canceling business but I think it was between the years of [18]67 and [18]80, anywhere along about that time at any rate! In those days the dating stamp consisted of one upright hand stamp with a little brass cup attachment in which we placed a cork - the cork having about an inch surface on top and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch small and *I did all of the cork cutting* during the time I speak of. I used nothing *but a very sharp knife* in the cutting of the aforesaid corks, so if there is any *credit* due for disfiguring "Uncle Sam's head" in those days it belongs to me. I certainly had no idea of *fame* or of having it "thrust" upon me at this time of life. Every time a cork wore out I would cut a new one - acting on the impulse of the moment and the want of a new defacer. The designs were of a decidedly impromptu nature. Hence we deduce. I have no copies of the designs used at the time you mention nor any old envelopes in use at the time. Later the Dept. [POD] furnished the post office with its own "defacer," thus putting me out of business.

You are at liberty to use this any way you see fit. I presume there is no *pecuniary* benefit connected with matter.

Yours very truly,
John W. Hill

Please help with any information pertinent to the above or additional data for the tables below. We'll limit our inquiry here to hand-carved designs (and to the Boston-style negative letters and numbers which Waterbury also used to a limited extent) and not include the ellipses. ■

¹ Rohloff, Paul C. *The Waterbury Cancellations 1865-1890* The Collectors Club of Chicago (1979).

² Boyarsky, Abe "The 'Whittling Yankee' Speaks Out," *American Philatelist*, April, 1998, p. 336.

Sources

1. Skinner and Eno, *United States Cancellations 1845-1869* (1980)
2. Cole, *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894* (1995)
3. Whitfield, *Cancellations Found on 19th Century U.S. Stamps* (2002)
4. Henry W. Houser *Collection of Waterbury Fancy Cancellations*, Christie's catalog of 12/13/90 sale
5. Clyde Jennings, *U.S. Mail, Cancels and Postal Markings* (April 1990) offered by the Classics Society exhibit photocopy service.

(Reliance is placed on the direct reports in references 1-3 above with no attempt to verify source records.)

Designs Not Reported in Rohloff

Table 1

Description	Source	Illustration
1. 7 arrowheads	Skinner-Eno, SD-C10, p. 32	Figure 1
2. garden path	Skinner-Eno, GE-C166, p. 49 ¹	Figure 2
3. concentric circles	USCC NEWS, Spring 2000, p. 23 ²	
4. letter "T"	Houser sale, lot 54, p. 29	Figure 3
5. letter "W"	Skinner-Eno, LS-W7, p. 300	Figure 4
6. letter "W"	Skinner-Eno, LS-W22, p. 301	Figure 5
7. maple leaf	Skinner-Eno, PP-L50, p. 163	Figure 6
8. negative "4"	Skinner-Eno NS-D2, p. 264	Figure 7
9. 5-point star	Jennings exhibit, p. 90	Figure 8
10. 5-point star	Jennings exhibit, p. 90	Figure 9
11. 6-point star	Skinner-Eno, ST-6P35, p. 106	Figure 10
12. 6-point star	Houser sale, lot 114, p. 45	Figure 11
13. maple leaf	Cole GL-21, p. 73	Figure 12
14. negative "SS"	Whitfield, 5250, p. 177	Figure 13

¹See also Houser sale, lot 14, p. 16.

²From a government-issue duplex handstamp.



Figure 1



Figure 2

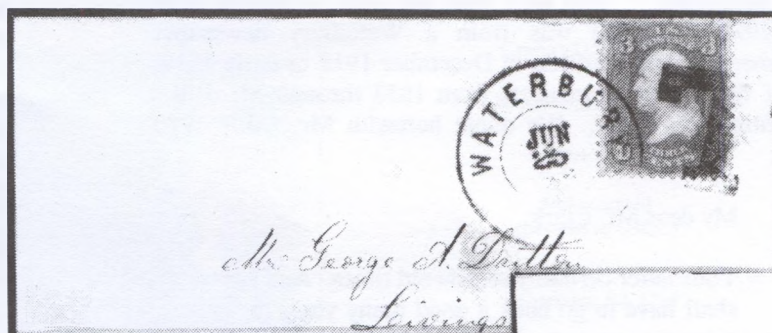


Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

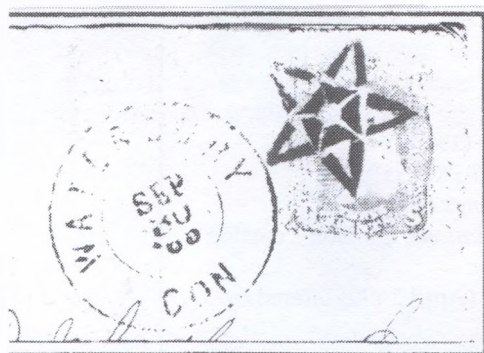


Figure 8

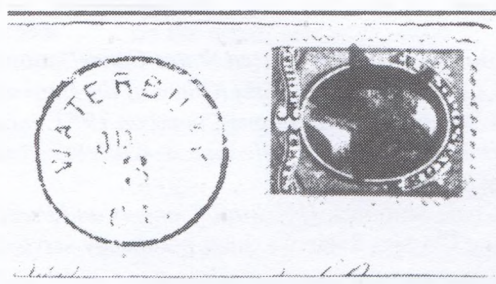


Figure 9



Figure 10

Figure 11

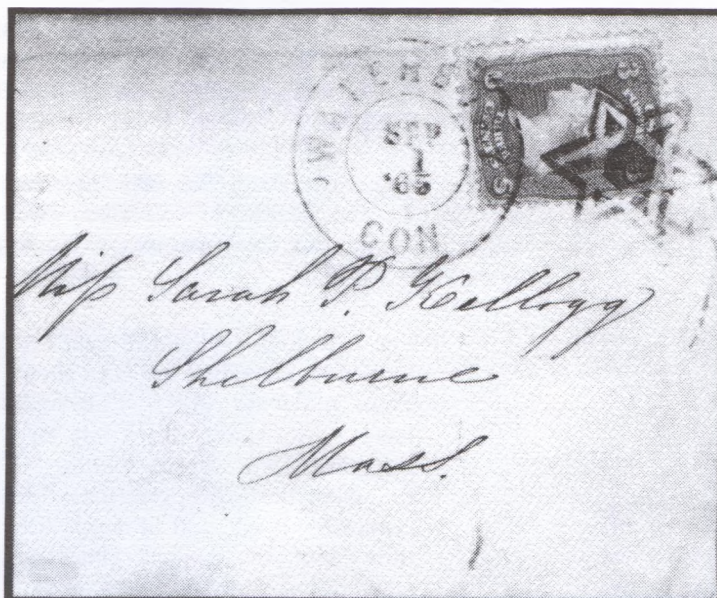


Figure 12



Figure 13

Table 2

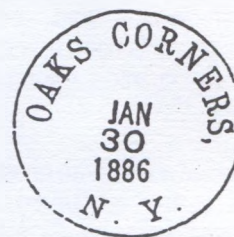
Rohloff "Unauthenticated" Cancels

<u>Rohloff #</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Origin</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Other Data</u>
U-6, p. 231	man with cane	-	-	A Sc 94 in Wendell's collection with one strike received a 2002 PSEC as genuine but with no attribution.
U-9, p. 231	3-leaf shamrock	Waterbury, CT	Skinner-Eno PP-C34a, p. 151	-
U-14, p. 233	stylized leaf	Cambridge MA	Skinner-Eno PP-L51, p. 163	-
U-17, p. 233	anchor	Fayville, MA	Skinner-Eno PO-AN 33a, p. 166	-
U-19, p. 233	shield	Waterbury, CT	Cole SH-26, p. 125	-

Old English "W"

The August 2003 *NEWS* illustrated an intricate "W" cancel, struck in blue ink, from Oaks Corners, N.Y. on a cover postmarked January 30, 1886. A tracing of the duplexed marking is shown in Figure 1. There was some question in the minds of previous cancellation students about whether it was a "W" or an "M," presumably based on seeing the cancel on off-cover stamps. The Figure 1 tracing clarifies that it is a "W."

Figure 1



The November 2003 *NEWS* noted that Cal Hahn had written to say his 1869 Directory of Postmasters lists the Oaks Corners postmaster as C.M. Wright. Roger Rhoads now advises that C.M. Wright was the Oaks Corners postmaster in 1875 and earned \$115.87 that year. "W" for Wright seems very likely.

Bill Stearns recently provided copies of three Oaks Corners covers bearing the "W" cancel: in black dated July 4, 1881 and in blue dated March 12, 1884 and January 21, 1885. It is interesting to note that such a delicate cancel was in use, apparently, for at least 4 1/2 years. Possibly, however, Mr. Wright used more than one handstamp over the period. ■



Edward L. Willard – His Collection and Contribution

by Roger D. Curran

An event of major interest and significance to collectors of early U.S. cancels took place in December 2003 – the bringing to market of a remarkable intact collection of the Sc 210 stamp and its postal history. It was formed by Edward L. Willard who passed away 30 years ago. In a December 13 Registry Superior auction, the Willard collection was dispersed in 108 lots.

Reported elsewhere in the philatelic press is information about the extensive contributions made by Mr. Willard to organized philately. We will comment here only on his collection and work in the area of cancellations, most particularly the two-volume book that resulted from his collection – *The United States Two Cent Red Brown of 1883-1887* published in 1970. Readers of these pages will have noted numerous references to information contained to Volume Two (devoted wholly to cancellations) over the years. As a personal observation I can say without hesitation that, apart from the Skinner-Eno and Cole compendiums, there is no single publication I have referred to as often as Willard's Volume Two. It is a thoughtful and extensive study of U.S. cancellation practices during the critical transition period of the mid-1880s that saw the continued decline of free form cancels, the heyday of "standardized" ellipses and the like, and the first successful use of machine cancels on letter mail. Written with that might be termed a characteristic New England sparseness of words (one wishes he would have gone on and on in the descriptions and commentary!) he conveyed clearly the essential information and did so with the enthusiasm of a true collector. His book is still today regarded as a modern (that is to say, current) reference even though published nearly 35 years ago.

Mr. Willard provided a link with an earlier generation of cancellation students including Gilbert M. Burr (who visited his home on several occasions), Ezra D. Cole and Dr. Robert de Wasserman, among others. He referred at various points to cancels reported in the periodical *Postal Markings*, which ran from 1930 to 1944, a publication hardly known to today's collectors.

A long time member of the U.S. Cancellation Club, Mr. Willard contributed a number of articles to the *NEWS*

including a three-part series on third class cancels of the late Banknote period that began with its second issue in 1951. He served as a Club vice-president in the 1950s and on the Club's expert committee.

And what about the collection itself, which was decades in the making? Volume Two discusses his cancellations in great detail and we will simply quote from the book's dust jacket:

The collection of the two cent red brown formed by the author has been shown at the Court of Honor, A.P.S. Convention, Salt Lake City, Utah; the Court of Honor, Interpex, New York; Exfilbo, Bogota, Colombia; the First International Exhibition, Barcelona, Spain, and in many other shows throughout the United States where it received many medals and trophies.

The work of a first-rate student of postal history, Edward Willard, and the return of his magnificent collection to the philatelic community are causes for celebration, indeed.■

More on Washington, D.C. Cancels

Dennis Schmidt provides information bearing on the year date of the Washington, D.C. January 19 patent cancel, struck in a violet/purple ink, discussed on pages 126 and 127 of the November 2003 *NEWS*. He submits photocopies of covers bearing the same cancellation as follows: January 17, January 30 (two examples), and February 28. The February cover was struck by a London received marking dated 1879. This patent cancel was not duplexed to the CDS. Both the cancel and the CDS were struck by simplex handstamps. In this regard, Dennis also submits a penalty cover postmarked with the same style CDS, struck in the same purple/violet ink, dated January 17 with an 1879 received marking applied in New York. There was no killer struck on this cover because, of course, there was no postage stamp. It seems clear that the year date of all the above cancels, as well as the earlier reported January 19 example, is 1879. Incidentally, while we have used both "purple" and "violet" to describe the ink color, your editor now believes, based on reflection, that "violet" is more appropriately descriptive.

Carl Stieg writes to report that he has a photocopy of a December 30 cover that bears what is apparently the same patent cancel.

The last page of the November 2003 *NEWS* illustrated three 1872 Washington, D.C. covers, the first bearing an "A," the second an "N" and the third a "W" cut cork killer. Carl reports Washington "A" covers from November 29, 1872 to June 17, 1873 but has not seen and does not have records of the "N" and "W" cancels.■

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Making Connections

The cover illustrated in Figure 1 bears the well-known "devil with pitchfork" cancel from West Meriden, Connecticut. It was postmarked on June 6, 1866 . . . Let's see now, that makes the date the sixth day of the sixth month of the sixth year of the decade. We could state it as "666" and if we did, of course, this creates a number that, in the minds of some, relates to the devil.

This journal is not the place nor is your editor the person to attempt a thorough discussion of the "666" subject. However, according to the book of Revelation, after the devil was thrown down to earth from Heaven, two "beasts" appeared on earth, the first from the sea (the antichrist) and the second from the earth (the false prophet) and formed, with the devil, the evil trinity. There apparently is some divided opinion among scholars as to which beast the author of Revelation was referring to in stating that the beast's number was "666."

Some have sought to translate letters into numerical values and then apply them to names, such as Nero Caesar, to

determine what names equal "666." Others have viewed "666" as the symbol for the evil trinity. A paper posted on the Internet looks at significant events occurring at 666 day intervals (or close to it) from the beginning date of World War I. And so it goes.

We have sought a connection between the date of posting of the Figure 1 cover and the "devil" cancel but there are not just three "6's" involved here. Stated more completely, the cover was postmarked on the 6th day of the 6th month of the 6th year of the 6th decade of the century, so is it more logical to extend it to "6666"?

All this reminds your editor of another cover (see Figure 2) – one that came up in the Rorke Black Jack sale by Christie's in March 1988. It bore a West Meriden "devil" cancel and a "United States Internal Revenue" corner card. The tax collector, in generic terms, has connoted evil in the minds of some, dating back to biblical times, at least.

Incidentally, the image of the devil having horns, a tail and cloven hoofs became a typical representation in the Middle Ages.■

Figure 1

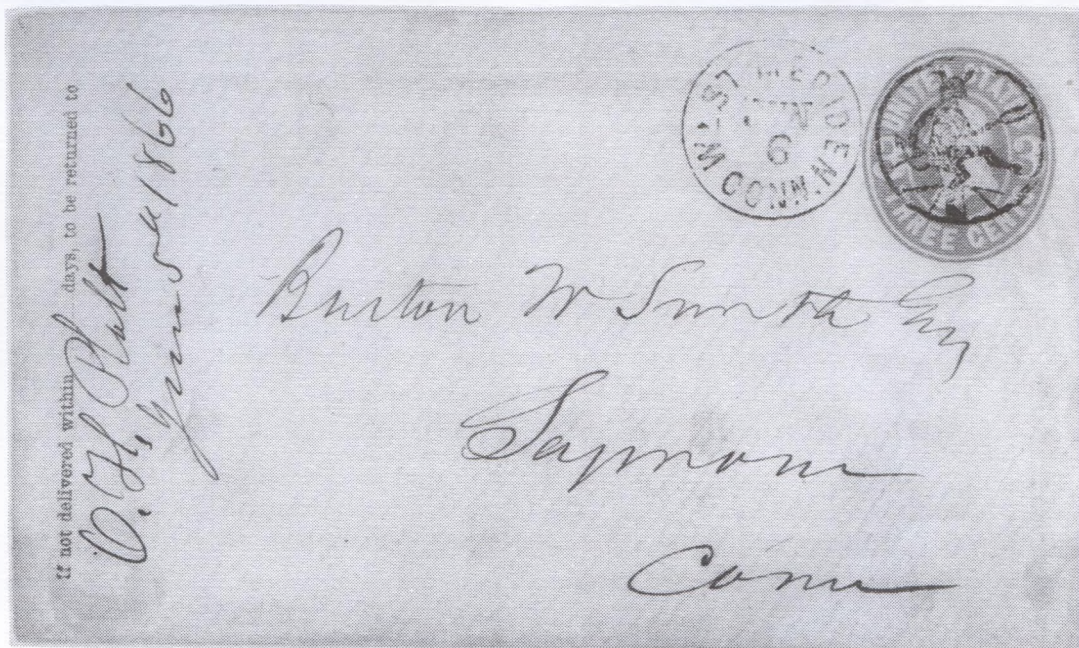
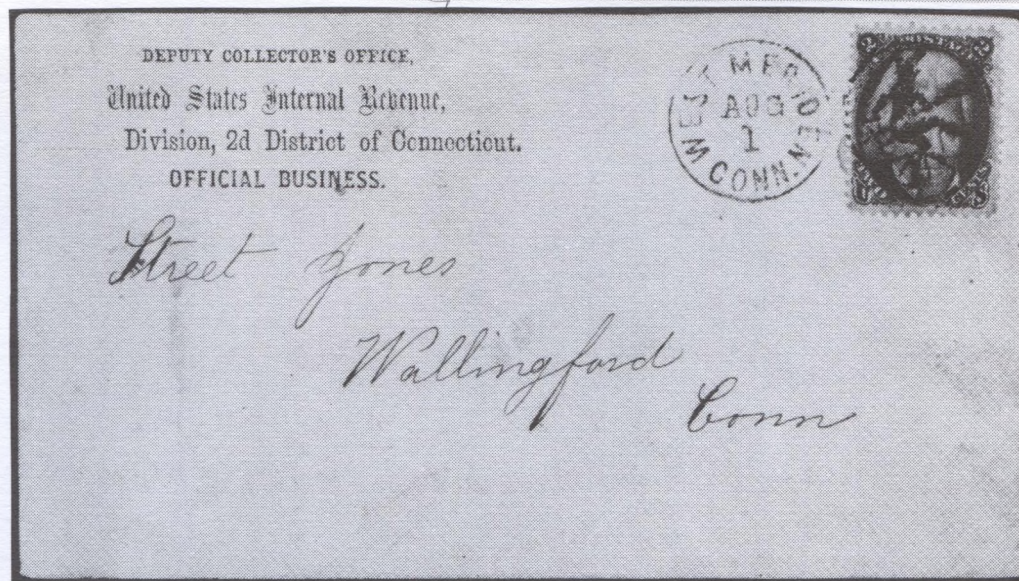


Figure 2



Two Strikes of an Old Rate Marker

by Roger D. Curran

An intriguing cover is illustrated in Figure 1. It bears a Sc 207 canceled by an old "10" in-a-circle rate marker. The double-lined octagon townmark is struck in a pale magenta and reads "Stockholm Depot/Feb 8 1883/St. Lawrence Co., N.Y." Placed over the townmark for some reason is a second strike of the "10" rate marker.

Your editor theorizes a possible explanation as follows. Normally, the Stockholm Depot postmaster used a separate (unduplexed) killer of some sort since there is no evidence of a magenta ink killer on the stamp. The postmaster recognized that the date in his handstamp was wrong immediately after applying it and came up with the solution of using the "10" rate marker to reflect Feb "10" and then went ahead and canceled the stamp while he was at it. This explanation would seem more likely if it was only a one-day correction being made rather than two. However, we assume Stockholm Depot was a small post office and, perhaps, no mail was sent on February 9. It is a dead post office that operated from 1851-1891.

Now, if we knew that the Stockholm Depot postmaster was using a "10" rate marker to cancel stamps as a general practice or, at least, had used it some number of times, this would strongly argue against the above theory. Reader comments will be welcomed as well as any information on the canceling practices of this post office around the time of the cover.■

Unusual Duplexed Marking

by Roger D. Curran

The postal card shown in Figure 1 is interesting from a couple of standpoints. It entered the mails in Elgin, Illinois and was addressed to Dagus Mines, Pa. The postal service erroneously sent the card to Daguscahonda, Pa. where it received the "MISSENT" and the transit marking that reads around the CDS: "H.H. EATON, P.M./Daguscahonda Elk Co., Pa." What particularly caught my attention is the "D" duplexed to the right of the CDS. One assumes the "D" is intended as a killer for use on mail originating in Daguscahonda, but it is much smaller than any typical killer of the period. Has any reader seen this "D" used as a stamp killer?■

Figure 1

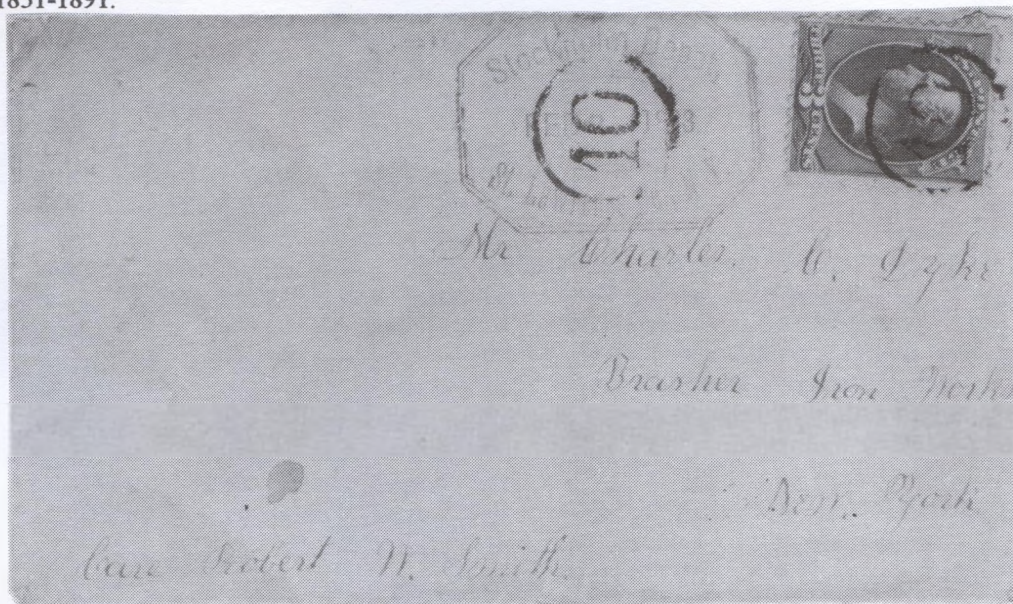


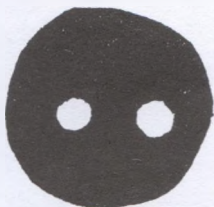
Figure 1



Another "Laboratory" Cancel?

The November *NEWS* carried a brief article about the Ann Arbor, Michigan cancel illustrated here as Figure 1. Its use was reported from January through June 1881. University of Michigan microbiologist Dr. Frank Whitehouse, Jr., who is also an Ann Arbor postal history specialist, was quoted as saying in a 1978 presentation that the cancel was produced by a cork made for laboratory use. We assume Dr. Whitehouse concluded that the two holes were made for the insertion of glass tubing and we wondered if the "cork" might have been made of rubber.

Figure 1



A similar cancel (Figures 2 and 3) has now come to our attention from Rochester, New York, home of the

University of Rochester, a major university with a medical school and various departments of scientific study. On the back of the Figure 2 cover is a Canandaigua "REC'D" marking dated March 13, 1880. Can we assume it likely that a wayward University cork or stopper found its way to the post office, or is the size too small for that? Comments and additional information are eagerly sought. ■

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"running man"

Figure 2

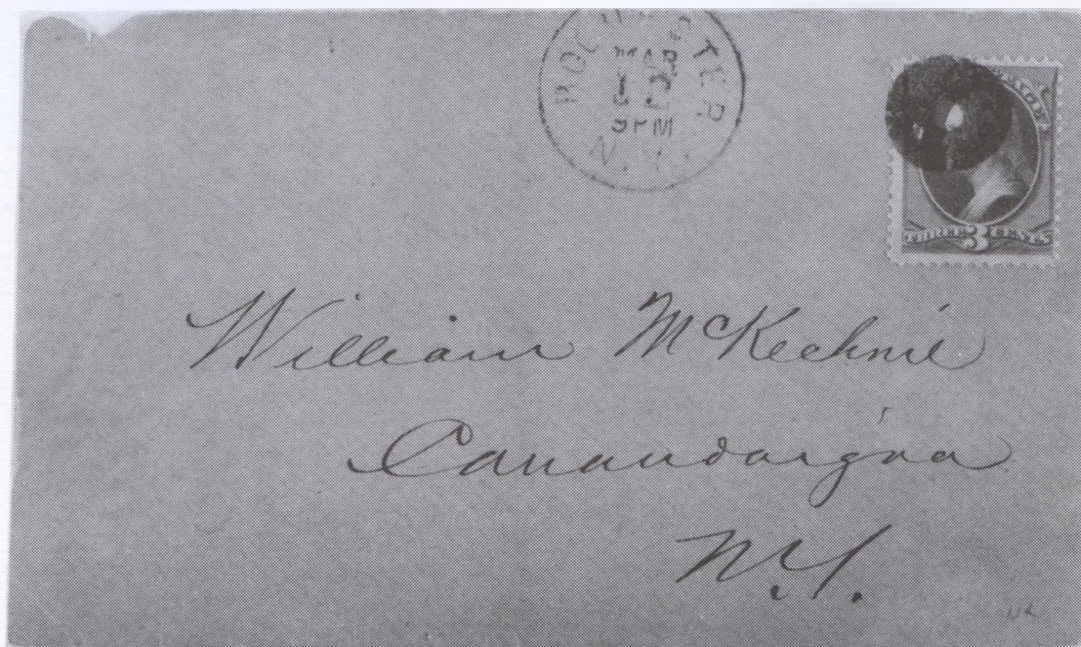


Figure 3



Not from Cincinnati

Among the ellipse cancels used by Cincinnati is a very distinctive design (Figure 1) that involves a letter "C" and a number within the "C." The numbers range from "1" to "5" in more than one style of ellipse. For years Cincinnati was the only reported post office, known to your editor, to combine a number and letter in a 19th century ellipse cancel.



Figure 1

Figure 2 presents a variation on the same theme with a "1" inside a "C" where the "C" has a serif at the top as opposed to it being a simple block letter "C." Presumably another Cincinnati ellipse, wouldn't one say?



Figure 2

Surprise of surprises, then, to learn that this was not from Cincinnati but rather from Lafayette, Indiana as shown on the 1904 post card illustrated in Figure 3. The Figure 2 stamp is an 1890 issue (Sc 220) and, unless it represents a late usage of the stamp, these cancels ("C1" and "C2") appear to have been used for a considerable period. Your editor is eager to present further information on this cancel and would welcome additional reports and information. Why a "C"? Does it stand for *collected* as opposed to *deposited* mail?

Thanks to Gil Levere for reporting the Figure 3 card. ■

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Figure 3

