



# Cancellation Club NEWS

Vol. 27, No. 3, Whole No. 252, August 2004

## 17 and Counting

Usage of the Indian head cancel featured in recent issues of the *NEWS* has been reported from a new post office by Arthur Beane. Figure 1 shows a very nice strike from Maple River Junction, Iowa. In the November 2003 *NEWS*, we listed 15 post offices using this cancel and added a 16<sup>th</sup> in the February 2004 issue. Who can extend the listing?■

## A Second Octagonal Postmark

The May 2004 *NEWS* carried a brief article on the unusual circumstance of an ellipse cancel duplexed to an octagonal postmark. Club member Cliff Woodward reports a similar duplex marking from Fryburg, PA. He has two covers, one dated September 13, 1883 and the other September 18, 1884 (see Figure 1). In each case, a "D" is in the center of the ellipse. If readers can report additional post offices that used this particular handstamp style, they are encouraged to do so.■

Figure 1

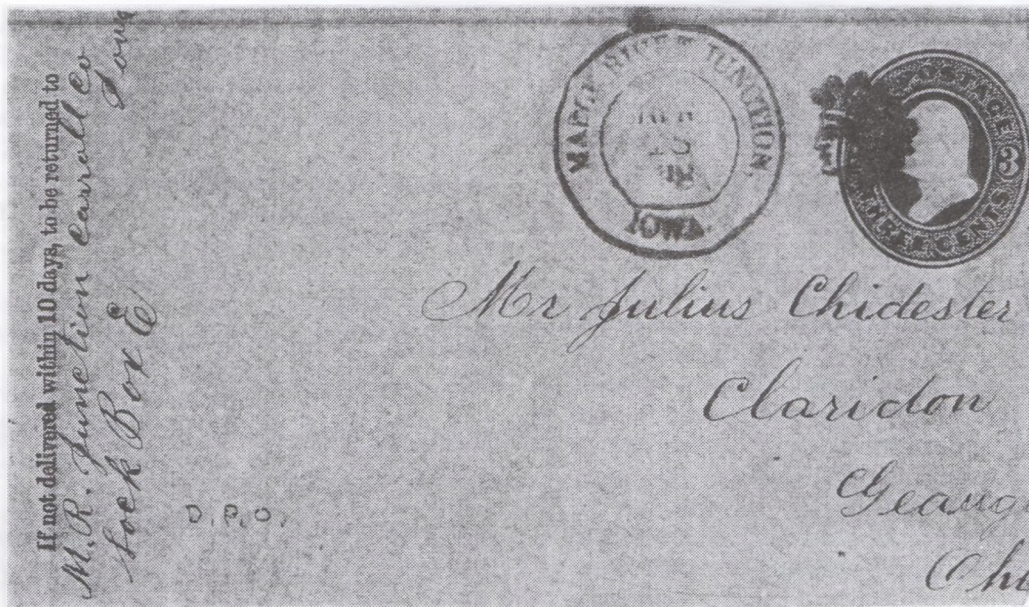
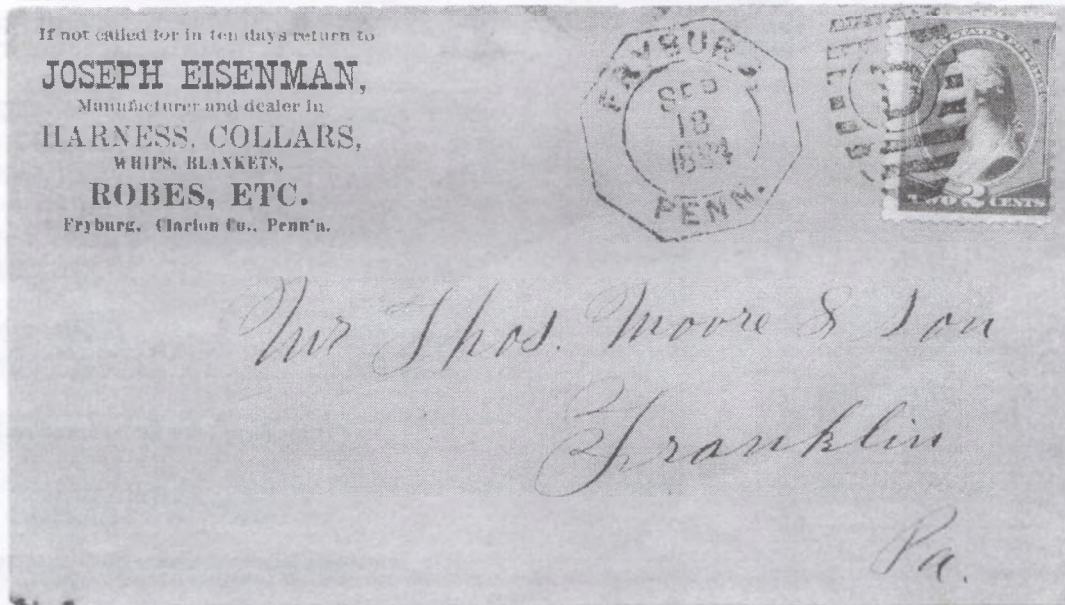


Figure 1



Dear Reader,

This fall we will hold elections for Club officers for the 2005-6 term. Several of the current officers have served for lengthy periods and it is, of course, important for any organization to have a regular intake of new perspectives to meet the interests of a varied and evolving membership. The duties are not extensive and primarily involve attendance at several conference telephone calls during the year to decide on major activities and to review Club operations. (The Secretary/Treasurer, of course, also performs the Club's financial administration.) If you would be willing to consider serving in any of the positions listed on the masthead on this page, please let me know. I believe past and present officers have basically found service to be a satisfying experience and have enjoyed getting to know other officers with whom they weren't already acquainted. Make this the time you offer support to the USCC in this way.

Bill Bauer stepped down as Club librarian in 2002 after more than 20 years of service. In recognition of his excellent work of maintaining the library and responding promptly to member requests, and knowing of Bill's strong commitment to the APS building program, the Club's board approved a \$150 donation to the Match Factory Restoration Fund in his name. We have received kind and appreciative notes from APS president Janet Klug and APS executive director Bob Lamb extending thanks to the Club's membership.

Enclosed with this issue is a report on Phase 2 of the Club's study of the large Boston negative cancels used during the 1878-1883 period. As always, your comments and additional information will be welcomed. Phase 3 involves this style of cancel used by post offices other than Boston. Please send photocopies of covers in your collection bearing such cancels to project coordinator Ted Wassam, 3504 South Court, Palo Alto, CA 94306. If the year date can be established but is not evident on the cover front, please include a note about that, such as "November 10, 1880 from enclosure."

Roger Curran



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### Starburst

There is a very distinctive star cancel seen on large Banknote stamps with a number of very thin lines between the star points that give the appearance of radiating outwards. In his book on the Sc 210 stamp, Edward Willard described it as "... the most delicate of all the star killers." An illustration from Whitfield is shown as Figure 1. Jim Cole has aptly referred to it as a "starburst." This cancel has been seen from a number of post offices. Due to its very fine detailing, and the fact that it is often struck in a colored ink, the starburst is



Figure 1

undoubtedly the product of a rubber-faced handstamp.

Unfortunately, strikes are seldom really clear and the detail work is frequently not fully evident. Your editor has reviewed the four books listed below and consulted Club member Arthur Beane. From the resulting summary table, it

#### Starburst Cancels

<u>PO</u>	<u>Year(s) of Use</u>	<u>Ink Color</u>	<u>Reference</u>
Asbury, NJ	1889	black	Beane
Bethlehem, PA	1877	magenta	Beane
Brewster's Station, NY	1878	red *	Proulx
	--	magenta *	Cole
Clayton, NY	1882-4	black	Proulx
	1882	blue	Beane
	1877	---	Cole
Cobleskill, NY	1874, 81**	black	Proulx
	1887	--	Whitfield
	1888	blue	Beane
Coxsackie Station, NY	1883	magenta	Beane
Ferenbaugh, NY	1881	black	Proulx
	1887	black	Beane
Fresh Pond, NY	--	--	Whitfield
Ilion, NY	1881-83	black	Proulx
	--	purple	Cole
Madison, NJ	1886	black	Beane
Monticello, NY	1881-2	purple	Proulx
	1880	black	Beane
Moreland, NY	1882	blue	Proulx
Mount Kisco, NY	1879-80	red *	Proulx
	1878	magenta	Beane
	1879	magenta *	Cole
New Castle, NY	1880	red	Proulx
Ninevah, NY	1888	black	Proulx
Northport, NY	1884-5	purple	Proulx
	1883	black	Beane
Oyster Bay, NY	1883	purple	Proulx
	1884-6	black	Proulx
	1886	magenta	Beane
Plant City, FL	1885	--	Whitfield
	--	black	Willard
Rutland, PA	1881	red	Beane
Schoharie, NY	1881	black	Proulx
Walton, NY	1881-5	black	Proulx
Watkins, NY	1879	purple	Proulx
	1879	magenta	Beane
Wedgewood, NY	1887	black	Beane
Westbury Station, NY	1885-7	black	Proulx

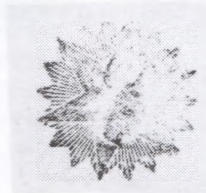
\*In two cases, "red" was listed by Proulx and "magenta" by Cole for the same post office. Possibly these are two designations for the same color.

\*\*1874 is questioned because we believe it too early for a rubber-faced handstamp.

appears that uses are concentrated largely, but by no means exclusively, in New York state. The star has six points and although the Cole and Willard illustrations show only five, we are confident that they are actually reporting the six-point star.

Readers are encouraged to check their collections and report additional data – new dates, new ink colors and new post offices – to the NEWS for a follow-up.■

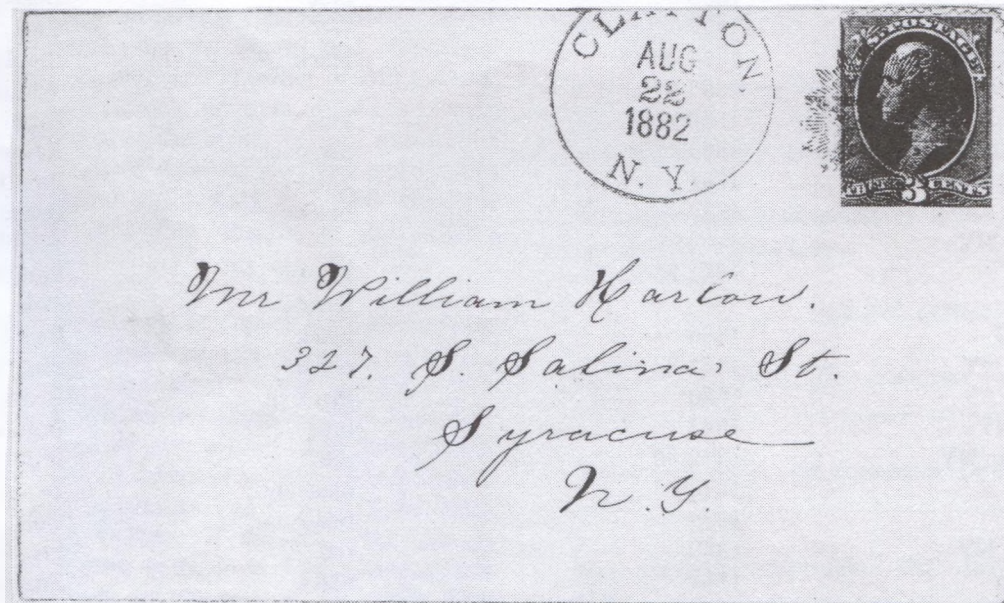
Cole, James M. *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894*, USPS (1995), p. 107



Proulx, Dave (editor) *Star Cancellations of New York State*, Empire State Postal History Society (1987), various pages. (An updated version is currently being developed by the ESPHS.)

Whitfield, Kenneth A. *Cancellations Found on 19<sup>th</sup> Century U.S. Stamps*, USCC (2002), p. 117.

Willard, Edward L. *The United States Two Cent Red Brown of 1883-1887*, Vol. 2, H.L. Lindquist (1970), p. 39.



**Celebrated Locomotive**

by Roger D. Curran

The South Hanson, Massachusetts locomotive is a remarkable cancel and surely one of the most popular among collectors. Unfortunately, it is also decidedly scarce. It is found primarily on Sc 210 stamps (current from October 1883-September 1887) but also seen on re-engraved issues and War Department stationery. The cancel possesses fascinating detail and it is perhaps of interest to touch on some of the main features. Figure 1 is an enlargement of an actual cancel on piece. It was the illustration for lot 822 in the May 13, 1992 Siegel sale. Figure 2 is an enlargement of Whitfield tracing 752. Figure 3 is tracing 491 from the 1951 Herst-Zarecki book *19<sup>th</sup> Century United States Fancy Cancellations*. Since strikes of the same cancel can and do vary considerably, tracings will thus also vary from one another. Figure 1 is a remarkably clear strike, but not complete. I believe tracings 2

and 3 to be quite accurate and they show a few design aspects more clearly.

Let's consider the features to which attention has been drawn above. Feature (1) shows seven wheels - three on the coal car and four on the locomotive. Feature (2) shows the ends of six railroad ties below the rail. Feature (3) is a representation of the gravel bed that would have been located between and beside the rails. Feature (4) is assumed to reflect the flat ground beside the tracks. Feature (5) is the fireman shoveling coal from the coal car as Edward Willard pointed out on page 3 of his Volume Two on the Sc 210 stamp. Feature (6) is to me an enigmatic aspect. For some time, without really focusing on it, I assumed it was steam but that doesn't seem likely on close inspection. There is no indication that it comes from the locomotive. And there is what looks like a pole showing above the coal car. I assume that (6) represents telegraph lines connected to a pole located beside the tracks. It is my understanding that telegraph lines did

Figure 1



Figure 2

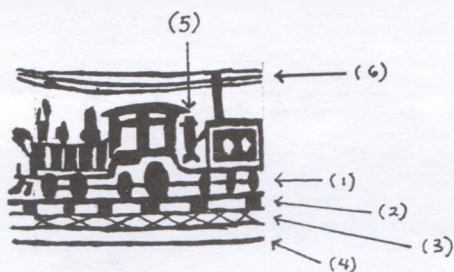


Figure 3



often (perhaps typically?) follow railroad tracks and would have thus been a common sight. Perhaps the reason the lines slope up at the left is to represent the droops in lines that are seen between the connecting poles. Comments and additional information would be very much welcomed.

For those who haven't seen it, club member Don Barany wrote a nice article on this cancel in the May 2003 *Chronicle*. In it he illustrated a number of examples and several are helpful in providing clarifying detail. ■

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### Playing Card Suits

The February 2004 *NEWS* carried an article about several 1870s cancels from Petersburg, Virginia that may represent playing card suits. The article also illustrated four 1860s era cancels from Boston depicting the four suits. Wendell Triplett writes with some background information on how the four suits came to be and he also mentioned a cancel that shows all four suits in the design. Figure 1 shows Whitfield tracing 748. Mr. Whitfield reports the cancel from Galva, Illinois in blue ink on Banknote stamps of the 3¢ green

Figure 1



era. Wendell advises that the four card suits come to us from France. To the French in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, the four society classes were represented as follows:

Symbol	French Name	English Name	Class	Society Order
♠	Pique (Pike or spear point)	Spade	Military	1
♥	Coeur	Heart	Church	2
♦	Carreau (Diamond shaped floor tiles)	Diamond	Merchant	3
♣	Trefle (Clover)	Club	Peasant	4

### Closed Albums

It is with regret that we take note of the passing, in recent months, of two Club members – Calvet M. Hahn and Theodore Lockyear. Each made notable contributions as their obituaries in the philatelic press have recounted. The scope and volume of Cal's scholarship in the field of classic U.S. stamps and postal history was truly remarkable. Ted's development of a major collection and exhibit covering an area where material is in very short supply – Justice Department official stamps – was highly successful and instructive. While the two men followed very different paths, they both demonstrated great enthusiasm for and support to our wonderful hobby. They will be missed. ■

### CORRECTION

On page 19 of the May 2004 *NEWS* we should have identified the Stafford Springs, Conn. cover as being reported by Ted Wassam rather than Wendell Triplett. Both gentlemen have been major contributors of information over the years and the *NEWS* is very grateful for their support. ■

**Oops!**

The postmarks illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 have a most unusual aspect. To the right of the date numerals in each case there is an abbreviated word that seems quite out of place. The Figure 1 cover bears a slate grey Goshen Bridge, Va. postmark duplexed to a Maltese cross killer. The year date cannot be determined but the stamp is a 3¢. The abbreviated word "Ans'd," of course, stands for "Answered." The Figure 2 cover bears a black Siasconset, Mass. postmark duplexed to a 5-point beveled star. A Nantucket received marking on the reverse is dated 1895. The abbreviated word "Ent'd," of course, stands for "Entered."

What is going on here? We can learn much from the advertisement, shown here as Figure 3, which appeared in the July 1891 *United States Official Postal Guide*.<sup>1</sup> This was part of a full page ad in which the Sadler Publishing Co. of Baltimore, Md. offered postmasters two distinct handstamps. See page 112 of the August 2003 *NEWS* for the other handstamp.

It appears that one of the "Endless Rubber Bands" contained several year dates and the five abbreviated words.

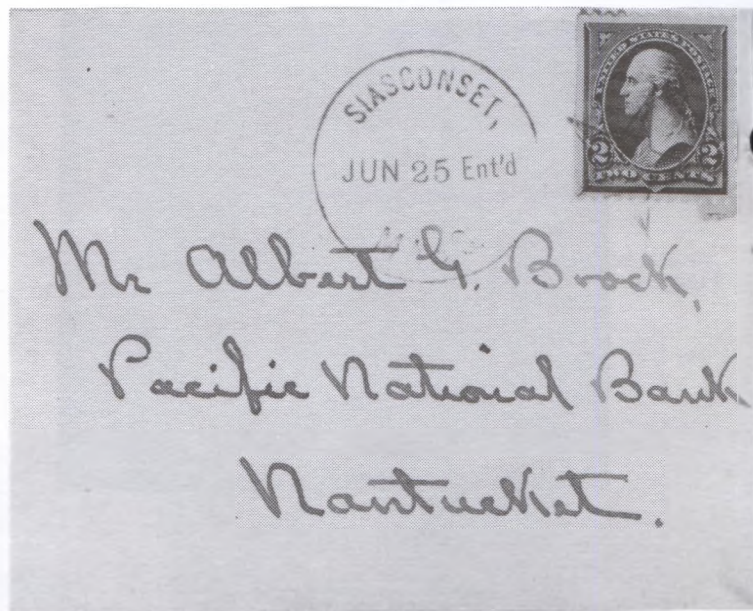


Figure 2

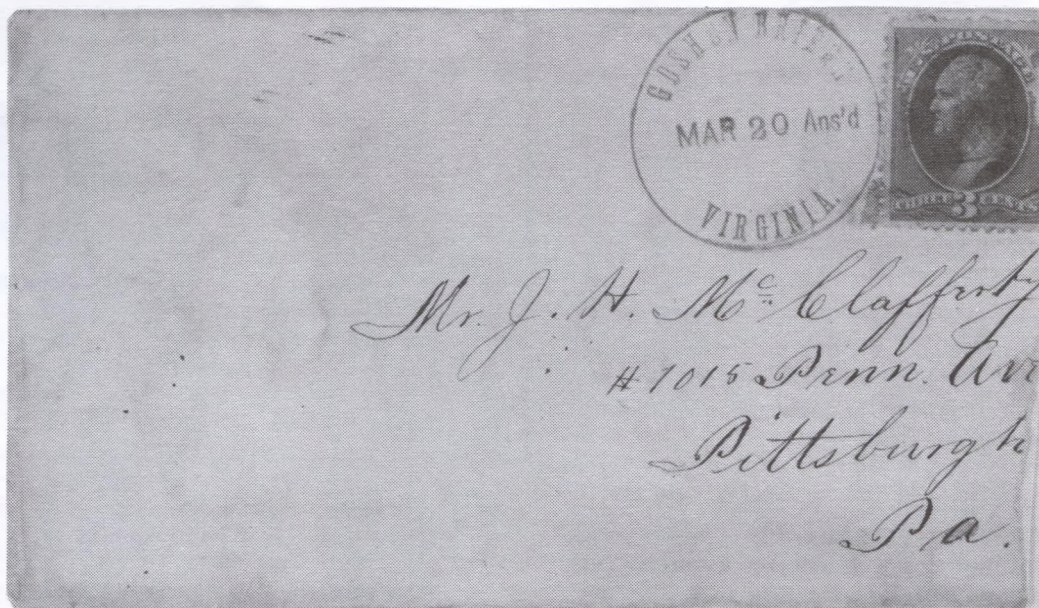


Figure 1

Your editor surmises that the postmasters in these cases didn't bother with the year when setting the date and failed to check how this band was already set. They likely got a surprise in seeing what was produced!

Using the "Rec'd" marking would have been ideal for received markings put on the backs of covers and we assume this was done by some post offices.

Arthur Bond reported that the Sadler company was a major post office supplier in the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting that the Figure 1 cover bears a 3¢ stamp implying use before the rate change to 2¢ effective October 1, 1883. This would mean quite a lengthy run for this handstamp type – 1883-1895, at least. However, it may have been a late use of the 3¢ stamp.

One supposes that the Sadler company made this particular "Endless Rubber Band" for use by businesses and

saw no need to have a second band produced without the abbreviations for the post office market. After all, if post offices didn't want to use the abbreviations, they didn't have to set the band on one of them. The fact that Sadler did call attention to them in their ads, however, suggests the company did think that post offices might find them helpful – presumably for docketing their own incoming mail related to post office business.

Finally, in Figure 3 we show a cover struck twice with the date elements only: "JUL 11 Ent'd" and "JUL 11 Ans'd." Undoubtedly the Sadler company offered handstamps with just the date elements. Date handstamps incorporating the rubber band concept are, if course, still widely available today.

Can readers report postmarks with "Rec'd," "Accp'd" or "Paid"? Comments and additional information are eagerly solicited. ■



Figure 3



(With either of these Cancellors.)

This Band Dater is without doubt the best and simplest Dater and Cancellor. All the Dates, Months, and Years are arranged on Endless Rubber Bands, and can be instantly changed by a simple turn of the Band. In this way no tweezers or loose dates are needed. In addition to Dates from 1 to 31, there are the names of the Months, Yearly Dates from 1891 to 1896, and also extra dies, viz: "Paid," "Ent'd," "Accp'd," "Rec'd," and "Answ'd." We offer this Dater complete with Ink, Pads, etc., at the remarkably low price, postage prepaid, of

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OUTFIT No. 3 consists of this Dater and the 15 one-line Stamps (shown on next page,) postage paid, only - **\$2.28**

## EVERYTHING FOR POSTMASTERS.

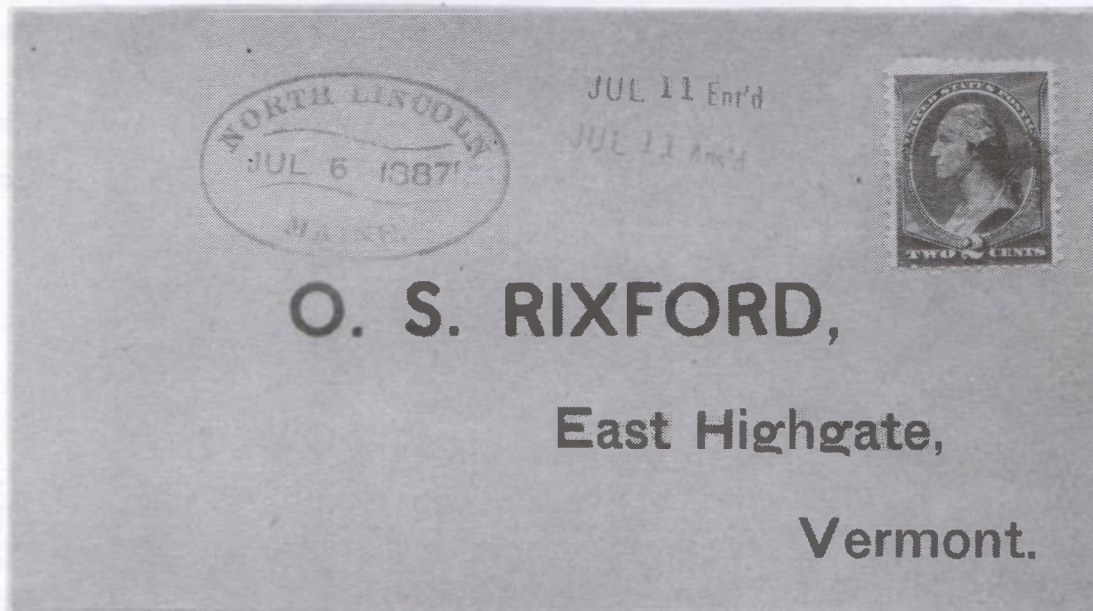


Figure 4

David Baker (1976), pp. 377 and 379.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 377.

<sup>1</sup> Bond, Arthur H. "19<sup>th</sup> Century Development of Postal Markings" in *The Postal History of Indiana*, Volume 1, by J.

### "Love and Kisses" Revisited

by Roger D. Curran

The May 2004 *NEWS* (page 30) illustrated a cancel with negative letters "LOV" in the center and negative crosshatching at the top. It also reproduced two Cole illustrations of similar "LOV" cancels, one with crosshatching at the bottom and one with no crosshatching. Cole attributed the former to Schuylersville, N.Y.

Bill Bauer responded with one "LOV" cancel cover and Arthur Beane with four. The first point to make is that they are all from Schuyler's Lake, N.Y. I assume the Cole attribution was based on a partial CDS strike that was interpreted as Schuylersville. Schuylersville was (and still is)

an operating New York post office. It is not located close to Schuyler's Lake.

The second point pertains to the message conveyed by the cancel. It has generally been assumed by collectors that the message is "love and kisses" and your editor advanced that conclusion in the May *NEWS*. And perhaps that is what was intended. Salkind shows a strike of a "LOV" cancel on off-cover Sc 220 with three sharp "xs" at the bottom. (See Figure 1.)<sup>1</sup> An actual strike of what is probably the same cancel (Beane collection) is illustrated in Figure 2. This cancel makes quite a good case for "love and kisses" but there is other evidence suggesting that some reconsideration is warranted.

(1) All the tracings and actual examples



Figure 1



Figure 2

noted to date are "LOV" and never "LOVE."

- (2) In the cancel shown on the Figure 3 cover (Bauer collection) the crosshatching above "LOV" does not appear to represent "Xs" but rather something a bit more extensive such as a basket weave pattern. Might that indicate the crosshatching on all examples was meant to be just a decorative accessory?
- (3) One of the "LOV" cancels has very clear periods after the "L" and "O." Figure 4 is Whitfield tracing 4627. Figure 5 shows an actual strike from a cover in the Beane collection. A sharp strike of this cancel appearing on an off-cover Sc 220 is illustrated in Salkind.<sup>2</sup> The periods suggest the letters are initials - perhaps of someone's name, such as the local postmaster.

The five covers submitted are summarized as follows:

- (1) July 29 (no year date). Cancel is a negative "LOV," apparently without periods, in a primitive-appearing configuration that may be a rounded square. There is a 3¢ stamp implying use before October 1883.
- (2) September 11, 1890. Cancel is a negative "LOV" (with two periods) in a round killer.
- (3) March 9, 1891. Cancel is a negative "LOV" lightly struck and may be same as (2) above.
- (4) February 18, 1892. Cancel is a negative "LOV" with crosshatching below.
- (5) October 3, 1892 cancel is a negative "LOV" with crosshatching above and below.

It would be very much appreciated if readers would check their collections and report further examples of this distinctive group of cancels. Comments and any other pertinent information will also be welcomed.

As an aside, Bill Bauer submitted a Schuyler's Lake cover bearing the cancel shown here as Figure 6. It is, I believe, the same as Whitfield tracing 5147 which is unattributed.■

<sup>1</sup> Salkind, Sol. *U.S. Cancels 1890-1900*, 1990, p. 70.  
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Figure 3

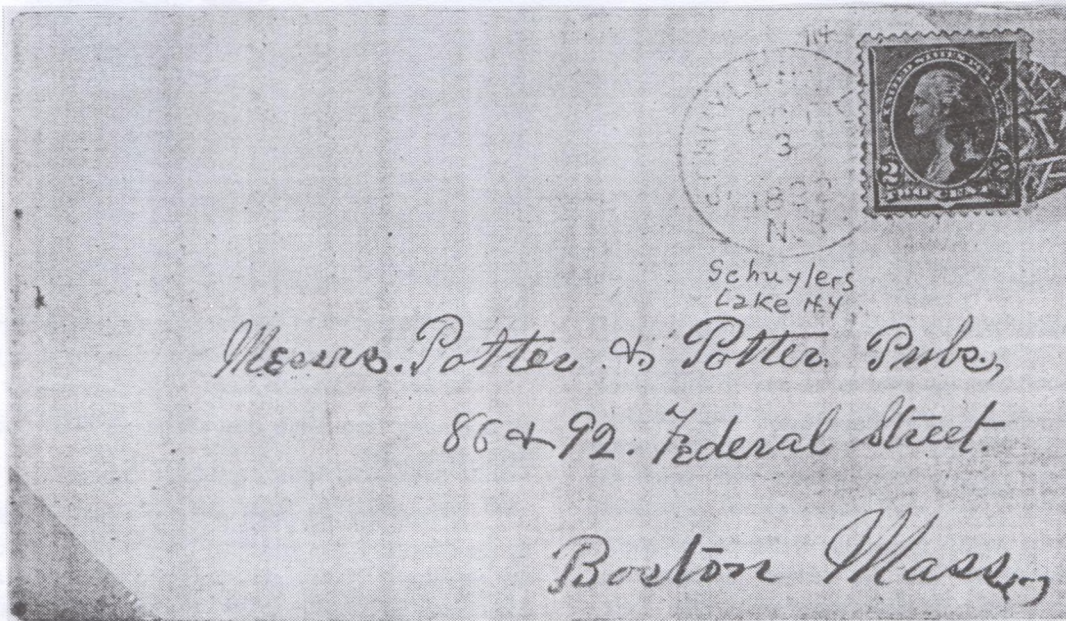


Figure 4

Figure 5

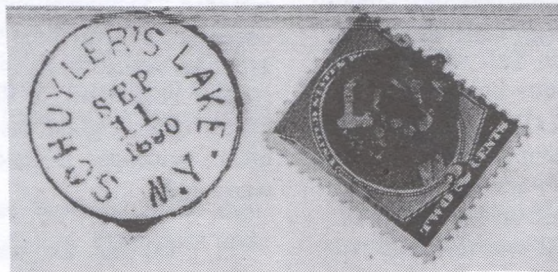


Figure 6



**Canceling the U.S. Large Numeral Postage Due Stamps**

*(Continued from previous issue)*

by Roger D. Curran

*Precancels*

Due stamps were ideal for precancels because they were affixed by post offices. It was, of course, more efficient to precancel sheets of stamps than to post-cancel separated stamps on covers. And it is from larger post offices, where time savings added up more quickly, that precancels are typically seen. One wonders why the practice wasn't even more widespread. The main New York Post Office, for example, ceased precanceling after about eight years and didn't resume it until after the era of the large numeral due stamps had ended.

As a generic type, the most common precancels were lines and bars and those were used on due stamps by numerous post offices. Figures 6 and 7 show precancels applied at St. Paul and St. Louis respectively. Figures 8 and 9 show Cleveland and Chicago precancels.

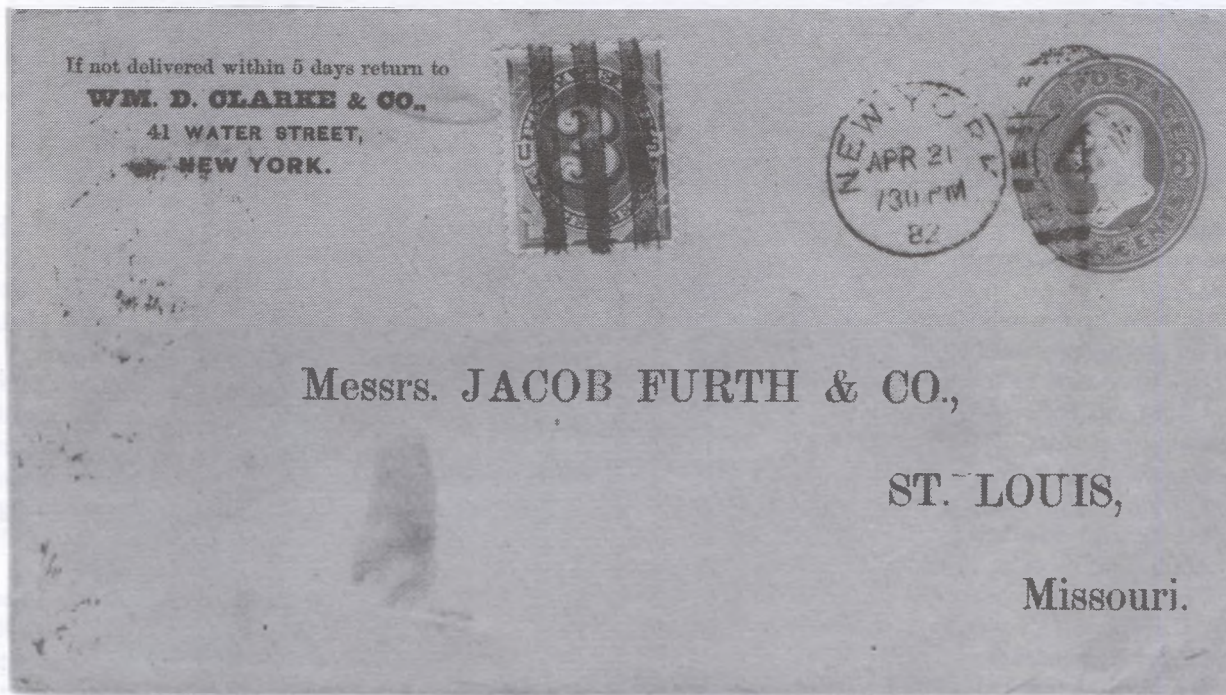
Double and single oval cancels and others designed for non-first class mail were sometimes used to precancel due stamps. Two Connecticut examples are shown in Figures 10 and 11 - Hartford and Norwich. The Figure 11 cover is remarkable. The same or identical handstamp was used to post-cancel the postage stamp and precancel the due stamp. I believe it is the only reported cover showing such a combination. This circular reached Cincinnati where it was recognized that no Pinewood, Missouri existed and was then returned, due one cent, to the originating post office.

Figure 12 is a foreign cover that came into the NYPO

Figure 6



Figure 7



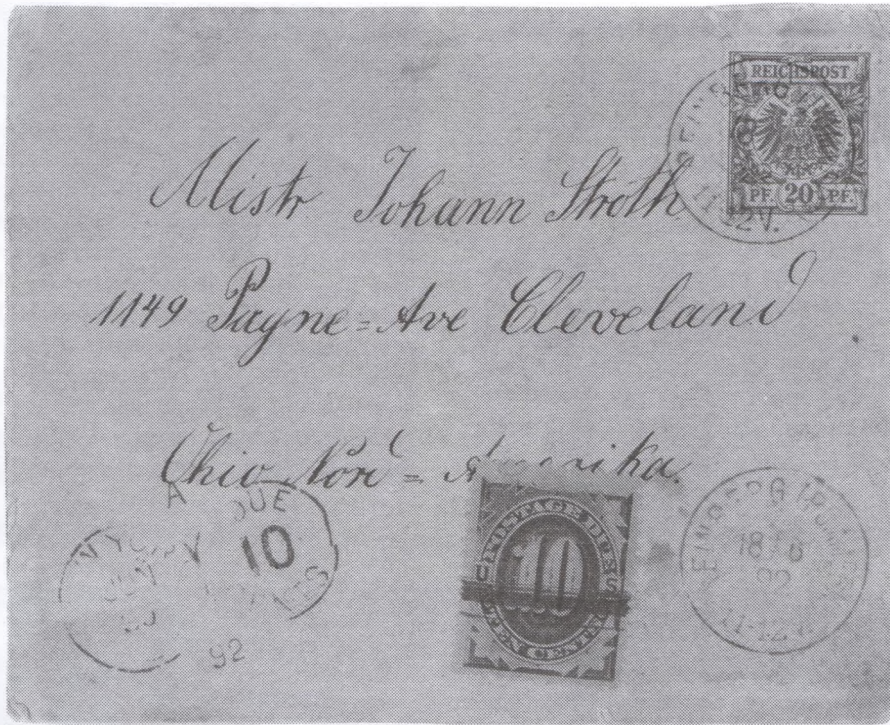


Figure 8

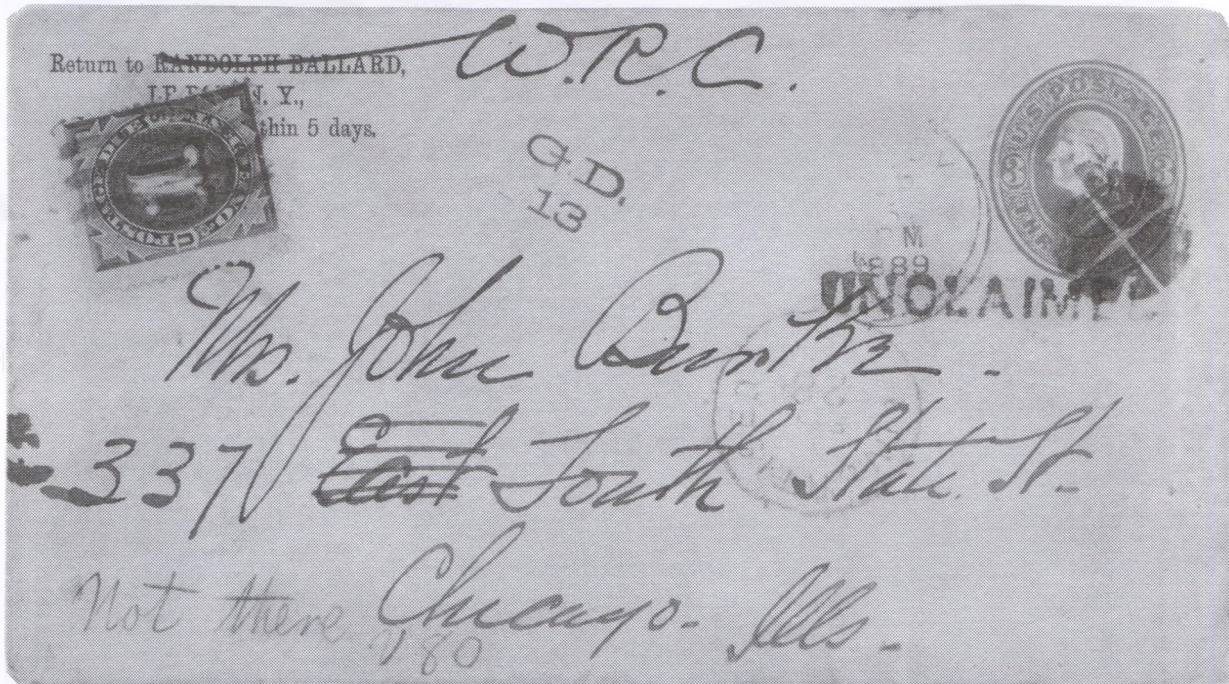


Figure 9

on November 16, 1890 where it was marked "due 10 cents" before transmission to Providence.

The "New York pearls" cancel is the most common and widely recognized precancel on large numeral postage due stamps. They were used in a grayish blank ink initially and then blue. They are believed to have been produced by a roller containing two rows of five cancels each. Normally applied horizontally across the pane, with the top of the "Y" facing right or left (Figure 13), stamps are seen that show the cancel with a vertical orientation). Fewer than 25 vertical examples are thought to exist. Figures 14 and 15 illustrate very early and very late usages of the New York pearls precancel. The Figure 14 cover bears a New York received marking on the reverse dated August 8, 1879. (One cover has been reported dated August 1, 1879.) The latest reported use

of the New York pearls precancel is May 7, 1887. Figure 15 is a cover front posted in London on May 5, 1887. A conservative estimate is 8-10 days transit to New York. Unfortunately, since we don't have the back of the cover, there is no New York received marking.

Surely the most unusual precancels are the ticket punches. Perhaps no more than five post offices used them and all examples are scarce, if not rare. Baltimore used a heart punch. Figure 17 is the only reported on-cover example of the Binghamton, N.Y. star punch.

Through the courtesy of Arnold H. Selengut, we illustrate in Figure 18 two covers with Westerly, R.I. ticket punches. The top cover shows due stamps canceled by the configuration of a 3 mm hole flanked on either side by 2mm

Figure 10

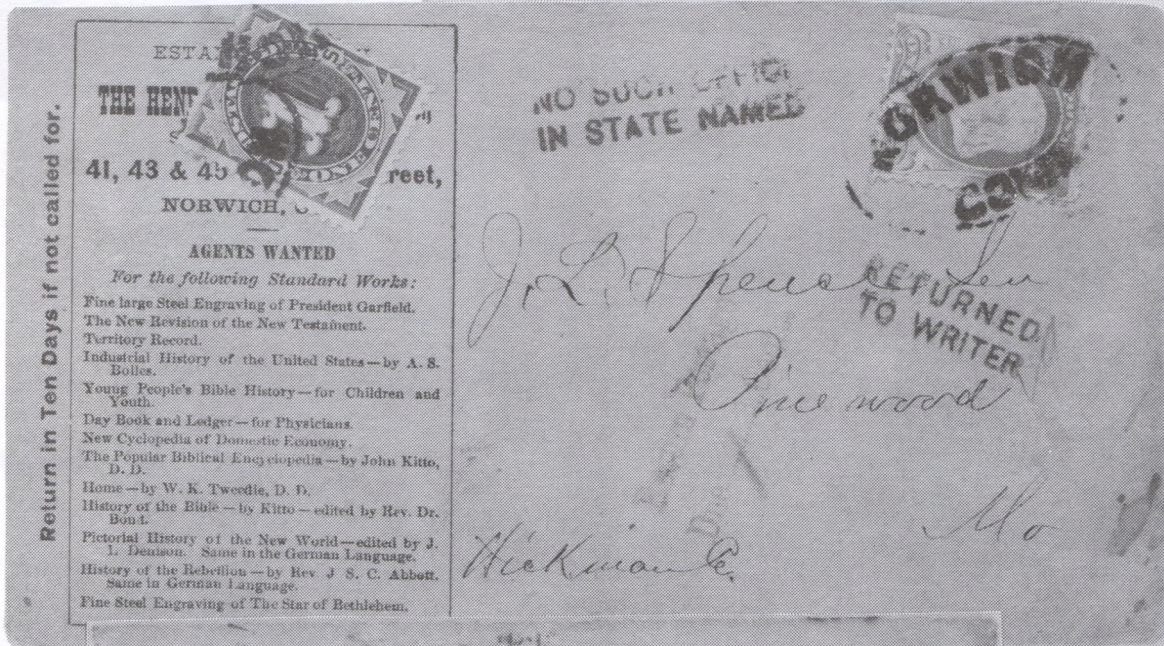
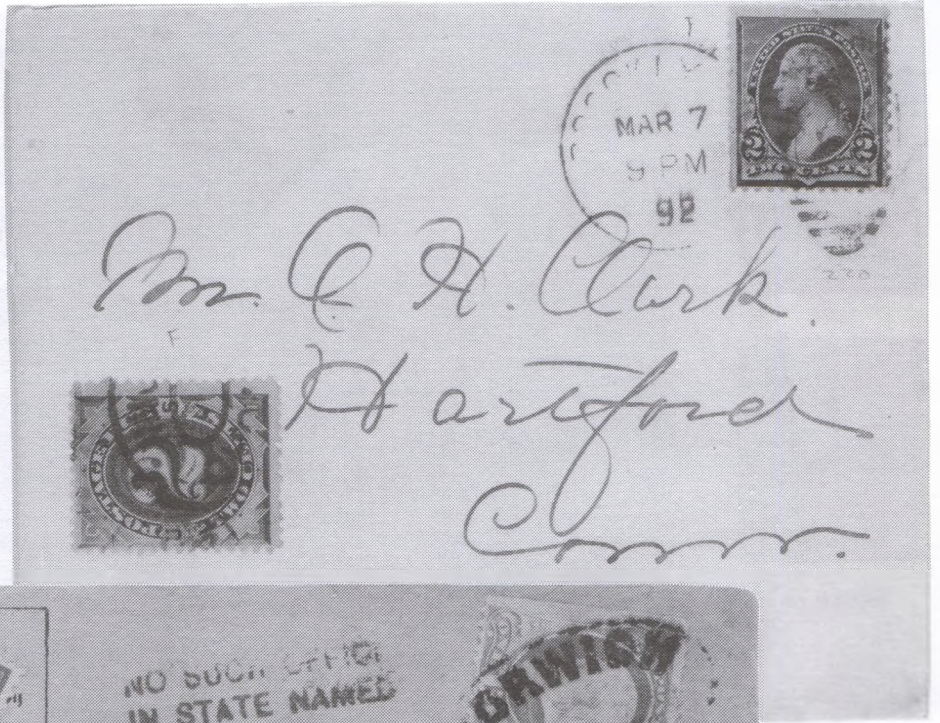


Figure 11

Figure 12

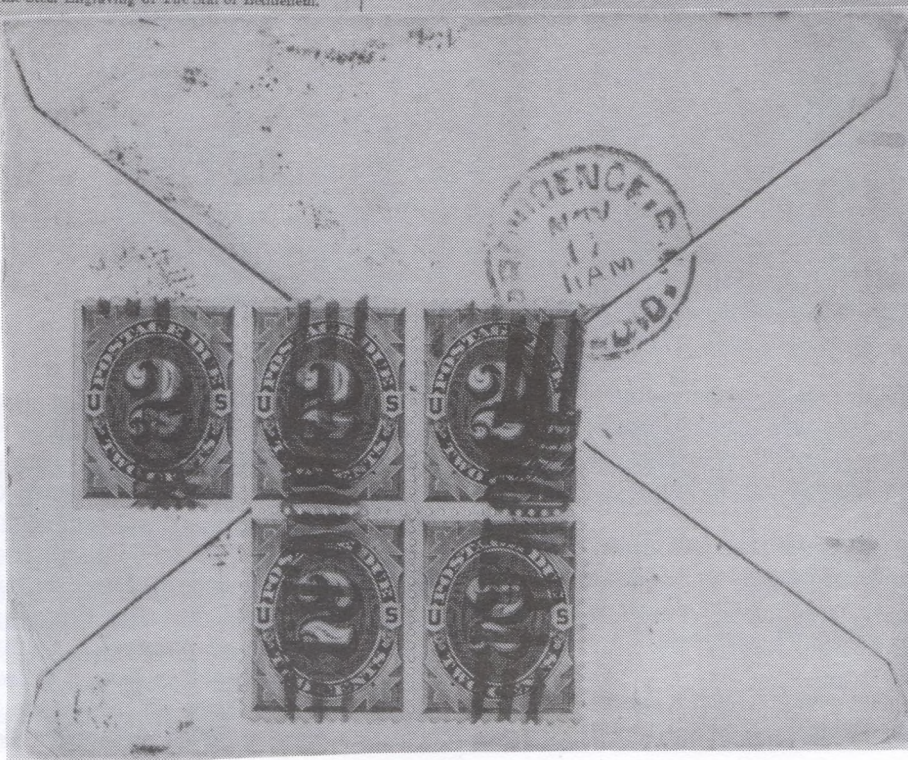




Figure 13

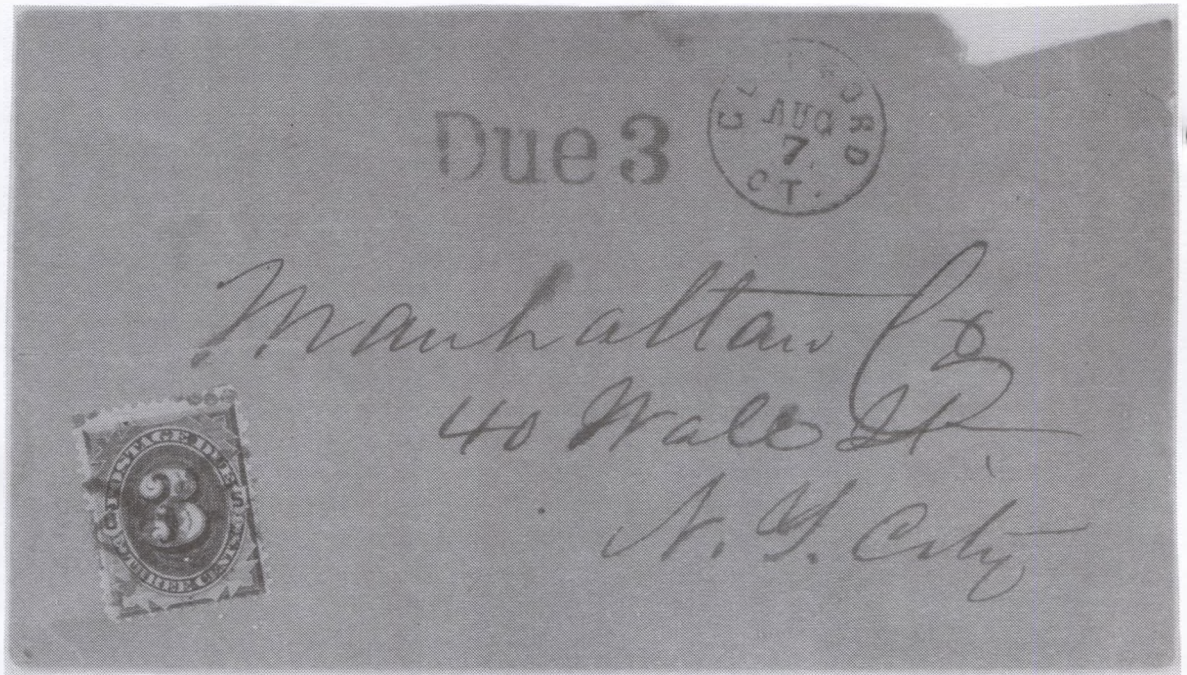


Figure 14



Figure 15

holes. The bottom cover shows the due stamps canceled by a 3 1/2 mm. single hole punch applied three times to each stamp. Another cover in Mr. Selengut's collection addressed to Westerly shows a due stamp canceled by two 3 1/2 mm holes.

Through the courtesy of Club member and dealer Bill Stearns, a cover in his stock addressed to Westerly bearing due stamps canceled by a "cross" ticket punch is shown as Figure 19. The cover has a 1998 PF certificate.

Figure 20 illustrates a square punch. Such a cancel has been reported used in 1882 from Farmington, Maine.<sup>1</sup>

The cancels applied by the Boston post office to large numeral postage due stamps have been the source of discussion and some disagreement as to whether or not they are precancels. The 1976 *American Philatelic Congress Book* carried an article by Morrison Waud entitled "Postage Due in the United States to 1894." In it Mr. Waud stated "Precancels on postage dues generally emanated from the larger cities . . ." and he identified six cities, including Boston, as the primary sources. He illustrated, as precancels, a cover with a red Boston "propeller" and another with a "Bow and Arrow" which was actually, I believe, an incomplete "X" in a box. (See Figure 21.) Warren Bower presented a different view in

Figure 16

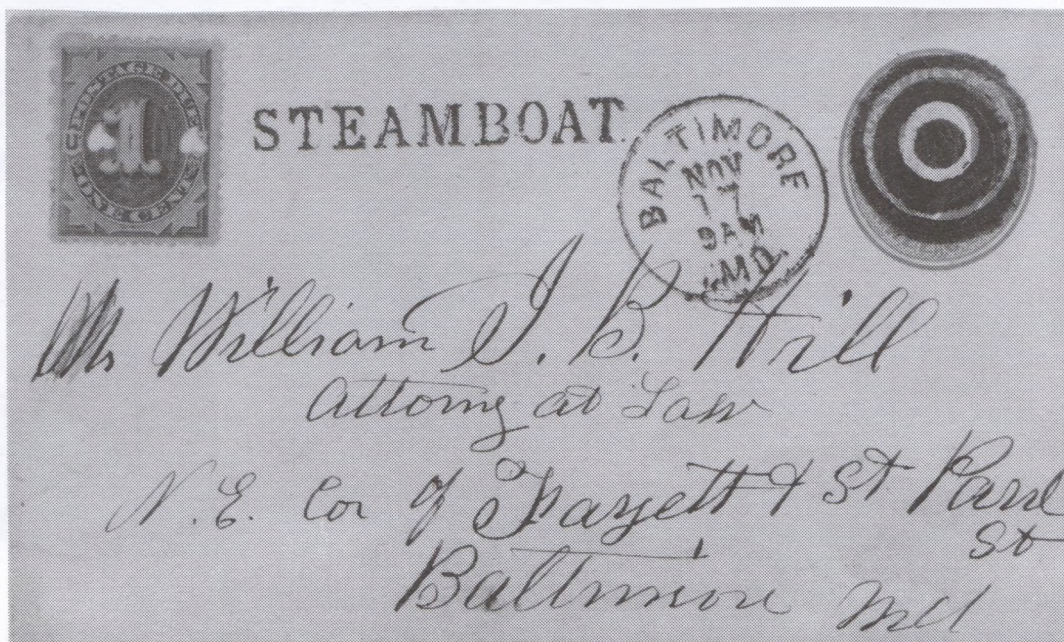
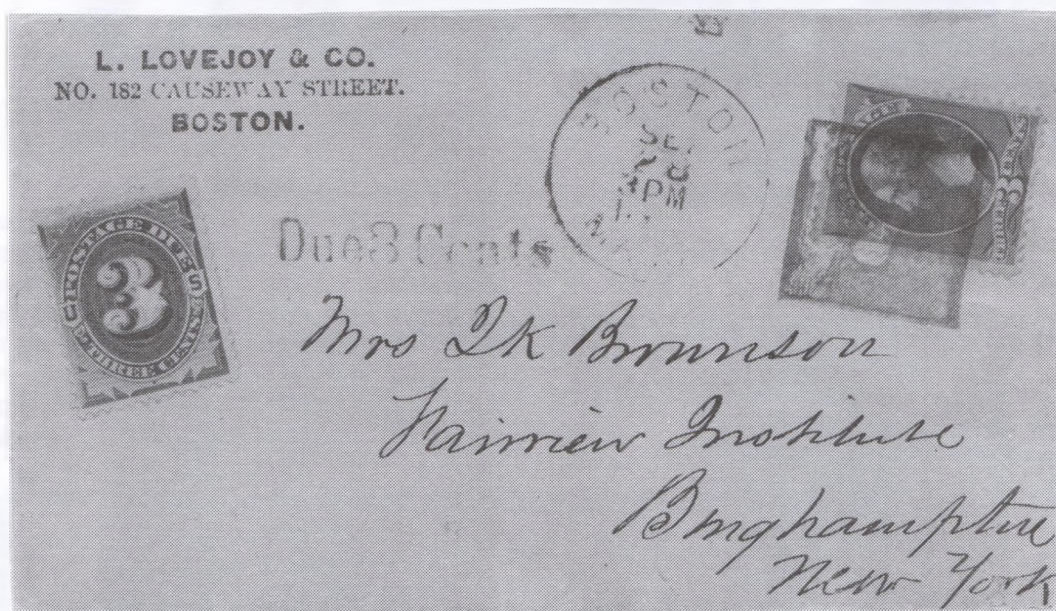


Figure 17



an article in the May 1876 issue of *The United States Specialist* entitled "Cancels Used at Boston on Bank Note Era Postage Due stamps." On page 212 he reported the following observations:

With only a few exceptions, these Boston postage due cancels used from 1879-1894 were largely a sequence of various fancy "X's" in red or black ink. They were used only to cancel postage due stamps, not postage. Some precancel collectors consider many varieties to be precancels of Boston, but upon study these items appear to be neat "on-the-nose" post cancels. A collection of sufficient covers shows many of the dues tied to cover and/or their canceling ink smeared on the envelopes.

Tracings of several of these cancels are shown in Figure 22. Years later, George Arfken briefly restated Bower's view and discussed several covers including one where a large red propeller reported by R. Malcom Hooper comes to the edge of the stamp but not onto the cover, suggesting a precancel.<sup>2</sup>

In the 2004 book *Silent Precancels* published by the Precancel Stamp Society, David Smith lists only the cross in a circle cancel as a precancel on large numeral dues but, under the Boston heading, also made the following comments.

"Several other cancels were used on Postage Dues. Some were used provisionally as precancels. Most are well centered post cancels. Additional listings will be made if new information becomes available."

Figure 18

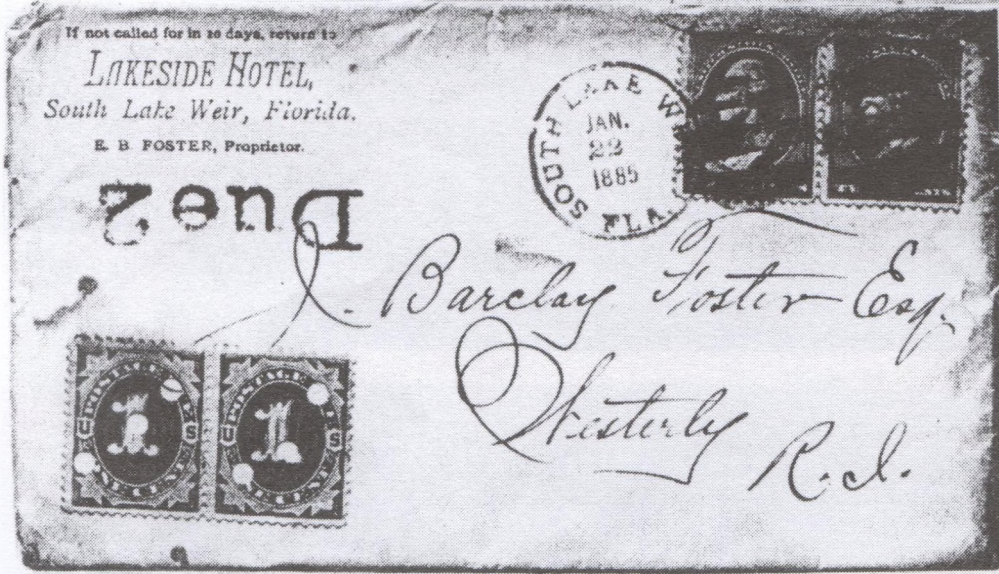


Figure 19



Figure 20

Figure 21

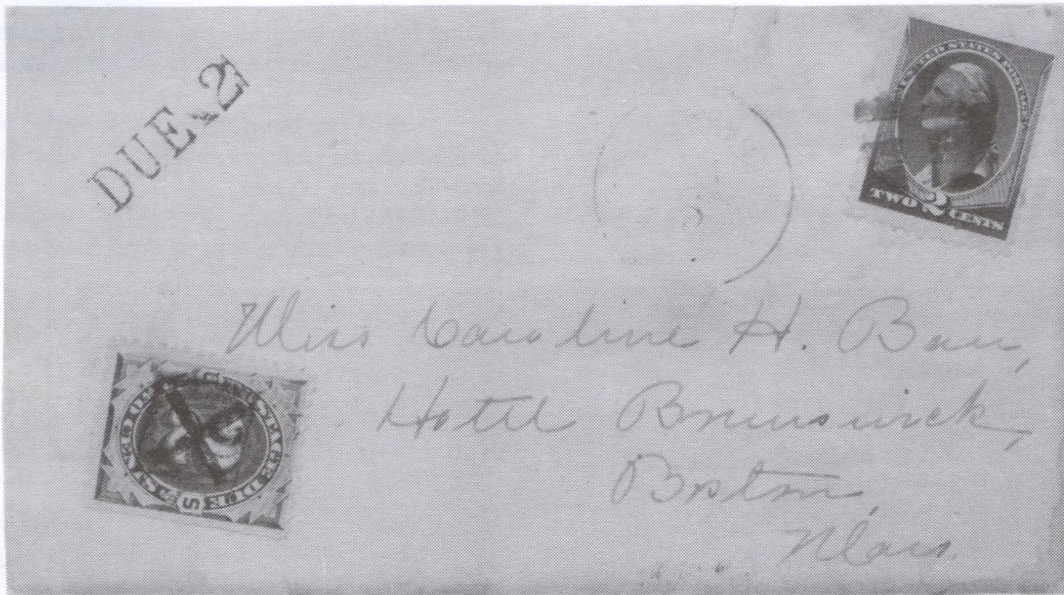
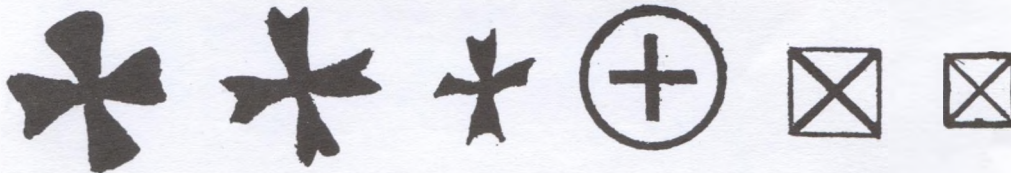


Figure 22



Just here we believe it worthwhile to mention a few words about “provisional” precancels as the term is used by precancel collectors. Generally speaking, a provisional precancel, as opposed to a traditional precancel, is applied by a device that was also used to post cancel stamps. Therefore, one would not be able to determine that an off-cover stamp bearing this cancel was precanceled. Figures 10, 11 and 12 above are examples of “provisional” precancels and provisionals are typically not listed in precancel catalogs. Thanks to Mr. Selengut for drawing our attention to this

subject.

(To be continued)

<sup>1</sup> Smith, David W. *Silent Precancels* Precancel Stamp Society (2004), p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Arfken, George B. *Postage Due the United States Large Numeral Postage Due Stamps 1879-1894* Collector's Club of Chicago (1991), p. 195.

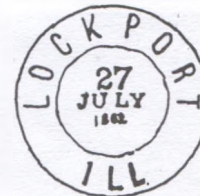
**Double Circle Postmark**

by Roger D. Curran

In the February 1986 *Chronicle*, Richard Graham discussed a well-known “Government Issue” handstamp that he reports was introduced in 1859. An example is shown in Figure 1. The diameter of the outer circle is approximately 25 mm. Later examples were slightly larger. It is seen from a number of post offices and a single strike was often used both to postmark the letter and cancel the postage stamp, at least until the POD issued a regulation in 1860 banning the practice and requiring a separate obliterator.

As is generally the case with markings that were widely used or possess some other noteworthy aspect, postal history students find it of interest to explore dates of use. Early uses of these double oval postmarks are usually associated with Mobile, Alabama. Indeed, Mr. Graham reported in the 1986 article that he had seen “a few late 1859

Figure 1



uses from Mobile” and went on to say that he suspected “at least a few other cities used the small double circles as early as 1859 . . .” We illustrate in Figure 2 an off-cover Sc 35 bearing a Mobile double circle dated “NOV/3/1859.” A tracing by John Donnes is included. While the last two numerals in the year date are not clearly struck, John and I are confident that they are indeed the numerals “5” and “9.”

New Orleans was another early user of this double circle postmark. A cover (outer folded letter sheet only) from New Orleans postmarked on what must surely be October 21, 1859 is shown in Figure 3 along with a John Donnes tracing.

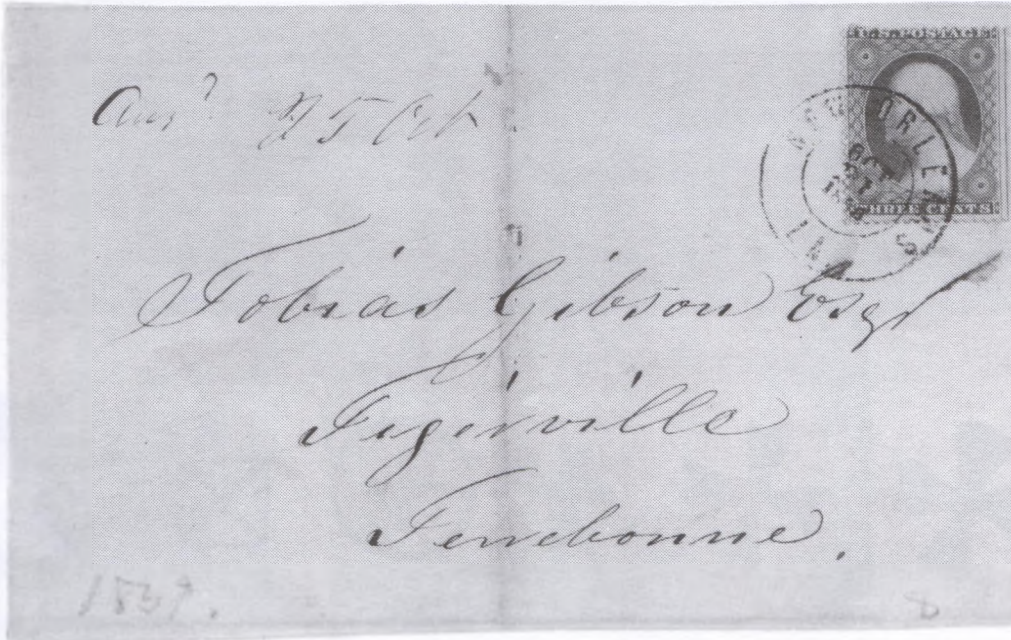
Figure 2



issuing in 1863 larger double circle postmarks (about 29 mm generally) duplexed to a concentric circles killer.

How late these small double circles were used is also an interesting question. We'll offer one late usage shown herewith as Figure 4. The postmark reads "SHIMERSVILLE/PA" with "11/27" written in the middle. The several references I have checked all list the post office

Figure 3



The "5" in the year date of this strike is unmistakable but the "9" is not clear and, with the inking on the left side, it could well be interpreted as an "8." Indeed, we note in *The Great Mail* by Huber and Wagner, a book devoted to New Orleans postal history, this New Orleans postmark is reported used beginning in 1858.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the "9" slug extended slightly more from the slot for the year date than did the other numeral slugs and hence picked up and deposited more ink leading to the distorted appearance. Long time New Orleans postal history student Erin Gunter reports the earliest use of this New Orleans double oval in his collection to be dated September 16, 1859. Incidentally, references to these postmarks as "small double circles" are due to the fact that the POD began

name as "Shimerville." This includes the 1878 and 1884 *Postal Guide*. The sender of the card, interestingly, was a person names Shimer. The Shimerville post office operated from 1854 to 1935.

Readers who can add to the above are encouraged to do so. We are eager to learn of any earlier dates for Mobile and New Orleans than those mentioned, of additional post offices that used these double circles in 1859, and of other examples of late usages. ■

<sup>1</sup> Leonard V. Huber and Clarence A. Wagner *The Great Mail* APS, State College, Pa. (1949), pp. 160 and 194.

Figure 4

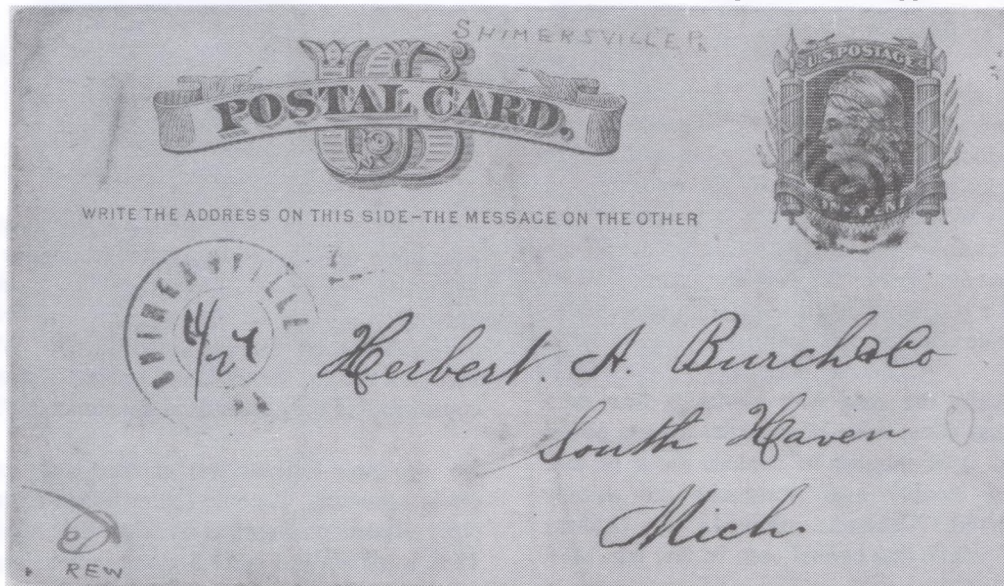




Figure 4

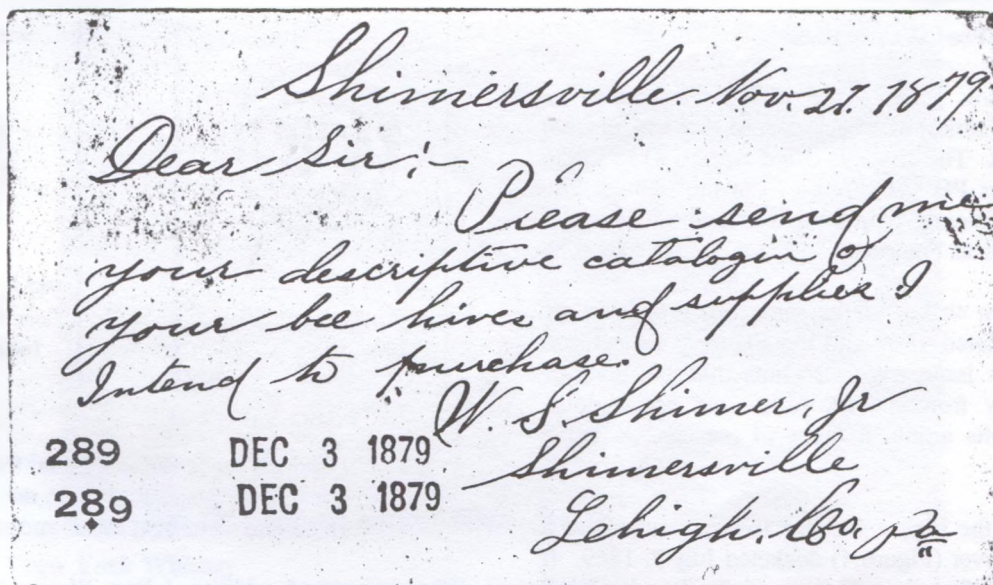


Figure 1



More on "IXL"

The November 2002 *NEWS*, page 58, reported on two cancels that incorporated the letters "IXL" in the design, one from Chicago and the other from Mineral Point, Wisconsin. We mentioned that the Mineral Point example was interpreted by Kenneth Whitfield as "I excel." It was of considerable interest, therefore, to note on page 35 of an April 2004 "Massachusetts Illustrated" listing of covers, distributed by Amberman Postal History, a portion of the cover that is reproduced here as Figure 1. Please note the top line on the cover. We can quickly interpret an "I excel" meaning but what about the illustration to the right of the "L"? Your editor submits that it is an awl – a pointed tool for making holes in wood, leather, or the like. Perhaps a more familiar image would have the point straight as in Figure 2 but we assume the

Figure 2

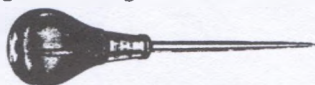


Figure 1 image is an awl nonetheless. If so, we could read the expanded phrase as "I excel all" meaning I surpass, exceed, or outdo the others. Perhaps the "I excel" phrase was a popular and fairly common one in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Information for this article was gathered from the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (1970).■

Members Who Were Left Off the Recent Roster

- Claghorn, William, 253 Essex Way, Benecia CA 94510, NYFM, claghorn@crl.com
- Crowley, John, 7758 Strathmore Rd., Dublin, OH 43016, 19<sup>th</sup> C. upstate NY, RPOs and Rec'd. cancels
- Curran, Roger, 20 University Ave., Lewisburg, PA 17837, 19<sup>th</sup> C. cancels, esp. NYC, Boston, ellipses, rating numerals, rdcnrc@evenlink.com
- Edmondson, Steve, PO Box 871, Shelton, WA 98584, TN machines and PH, tenac@hctc.com
- Jatho, Jr., Edgar, 1513 Michigan Ave., Kenner, LA 70062, US, German, Ryukus
- Manson, Walter, 10441 North Bay Rd., Sister Bay, WI 54234, US postal cards
- Naas, David, 31 Sierra Oaks Dr., Sugarland, TX 77479, Large BNs, mage346@yahoo.com
- Skinner, Hubert, PO Box 4097, New Orleans, LA 70178, FC, PH, US classics
- Tedesco, Stephen, PO Box 2109, Healdsburg, CA 95448, US essays, proofs, Latin and South Amer., nbstamp@sonic.net
- Todaro, Nick, PO Box 193, Oswego, NY, 13126, FC including Oswego, NY

### Fort Wayne Faces

Jim Kesterson submits the nice cover shown in Figure 1 bearing two strikes of a hand-carved face cancel from Fort Wayne, Indiana. The cover is dated April 3 (1869) and the cancel is listed as PH-M4 (Figure 2) in the Skinner-Eno book. Next to this tracing, Skinner and Eno show a similar cancel, illustrated here as Figure 3.

Are they two strikes of the same cancel? We note that Jim's cover is dated 1869 and the Figure 3 cancel was reported on the 1861 issue. We also note that this intricate cancel was probably from a cork killer that broke down quickly. These points argue in favor of the cancels being different.

Along with the Figure 1 cover Jim also submitted a July 8 Fort Wayne cover (Figure 4) docketed July 7, 1869. It shows a face cancel that he refers to as the "peek-a-boo" version. He describes it thusly:

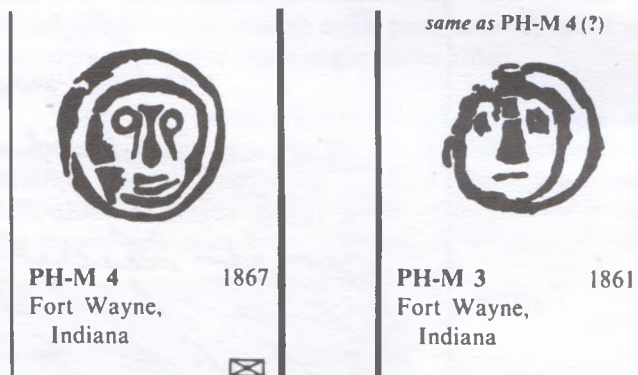


Figure 2

Figure 3

"It appears to be unfinished on the left side, has a thin long line for mouth and the eye is formed like a crescent moon and star."

Who can report additional Fort Wayne face cancels of the period or more information about those discussed above. ■

Figure 1

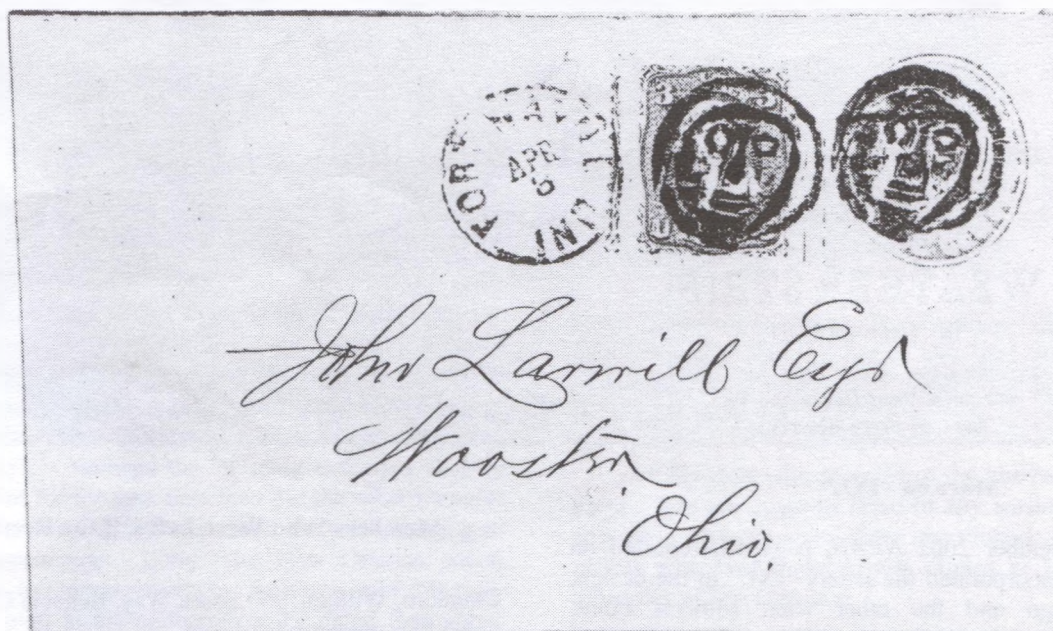


Figure 4



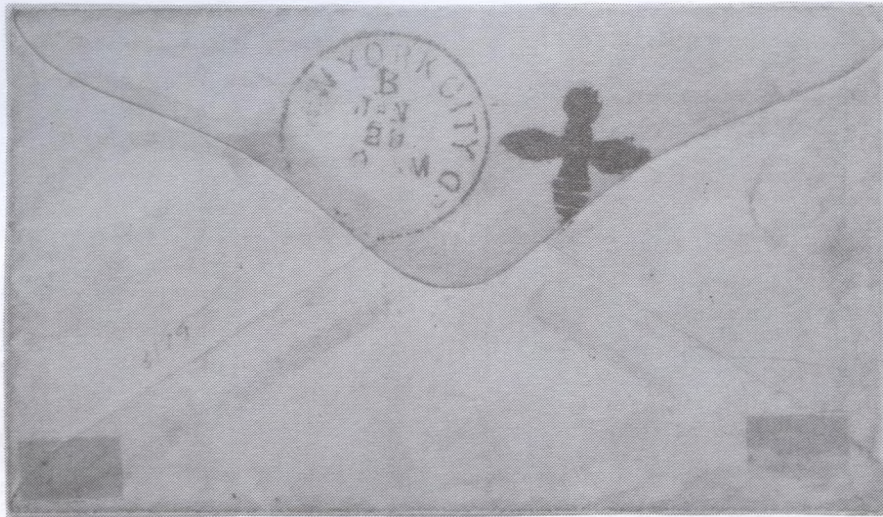


Figure 1

**New York Whimsy**

The cover in Figure 1 was mailed locally. On the front is a grilled Black Jack canceled by a nondescript blue killer which was apparently duplexed to a blue "NEW YORK CITY /G/ RECEIVED" postmark dated January 29, 9AM. The "G" indicates Station G. On the back we see the same style postmark, struck this time in red ink, except for the "B" instead of "G." The remarkable aspect is the duplexed killer which is a bee for "B"! What a delightful flight-of-fancy by someone at Station B.

In the March 1968 *NEWS*, Arthur Bond illustrated the tracing shown here as Figure 2 which was taken from a December 1869 cover. He stated his belief that New York

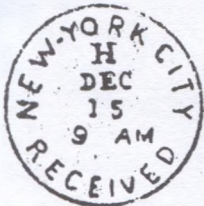


Figure 2



Figure 3

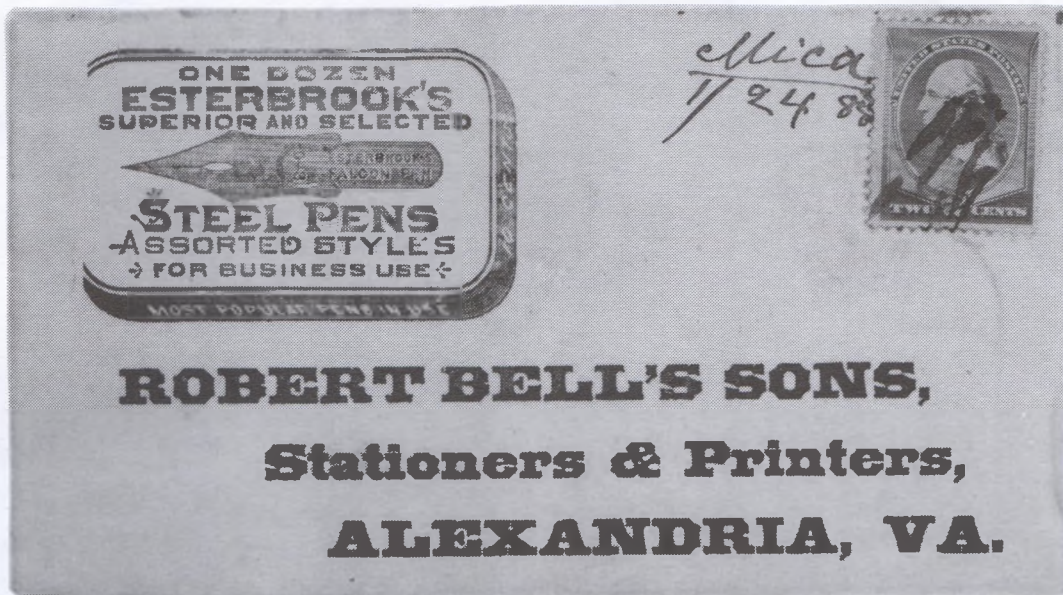
station letters as killers were first used in 1863 when free delivery started. They were duplexed to some of the city

delivery handstamps reading "N.Y. City" with the station letter below (Figure 3).■

**Pen Cancel**

The cover illustrated in Figure 1 took your editor back to his childhood. Before the advent of ballpoint pens, fountain pens were the norm with their reservoirs of ink precluding the need for frequent dipping of the points of the earlier steel pens such as advertised in the corner card. The most characteristic ink color of fountain pens and of steel pens (at least in later years as we can recall) ranged from blue black to medium blue.

We were struck, therefore, to see such an ink color in the Figure 1 manuscript postmark and cancel. And the shaping of the lines that form the letters and numbers in the postmark is very reminiscent of what those split nibs produced. One can almost hear the slight scratching sound that would have been present as the point moved across the paper. Was the Mica postmaster trying out (or showing off) his new Esterbrook steel pen or was it his regular marker? Mica, incidentally, was listed in the 1884 *Postal Guide* as located Pickens County, Georgia.■



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### Obscured Numeral

Killers containing hand carved numerals are seen with some frequency on stamps of the Banknote era, especially those prior to the 1881 re-engraved stamps. This was due largely to the New York Post Office which used such cancels on out-of-town mail from 1872 to 1876. No other post office remotely equaled New York's output but a substantial number produced one or more examples.

A leading contributor was the Worcester, Mass. post office and one of the most interesting designs is shown in

Figure 1, dated November 22 (1880), from the collection of John Donnes. Figure 2 shows a tracing of the full design (Whitfield 6942). Especially off cover, it is very easy to overlook the fact that there is a numeral in the design, which brings us to the matter of what numeral it is. Surely in Figure 1 it is "9," but most examples your editor has seen – and they are admittedly off cover – appear, by virtue of their orientation, to be "6". Perhaps we have both "6s" and "9s." And there is also the question of how many different carvings there were. Figure 3 shows four strikes and the carving on the left clearly differs from the others. There are some differences

Figure 2



Figure 3



among the remaining three but it is hard to tell if they result from different carvings. Readers who can provide further information are encouraged to do so. ■

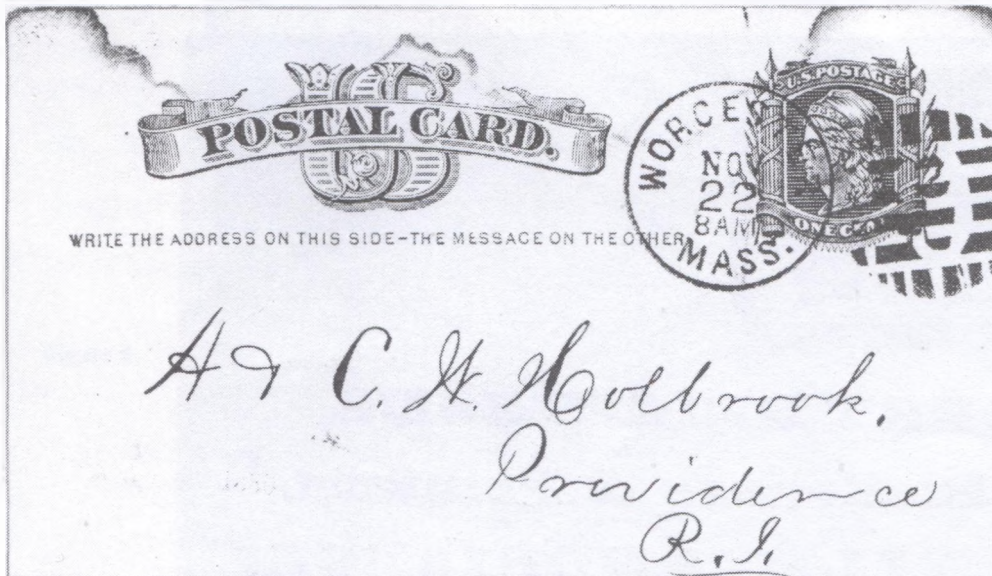


Figure 1