



Cancellation Club NEWS

Vol. 28, No. 1, Whole No. 258, February 2006

New York City Ellipse Foreign Mail Cancellers

by John Donnes

Editor's note: This article presents the one frame exhibit, titled as above, of Mr. Donnes. It has been shortened and edited to conform to NEWS space limitations. The exhibit is based on a 20-year study of the subject by the author. Readers are encouraged to report on and off cover cancels and other pertinent data to John at 202 Willow Drive, Gretna, LA 70053 or jdonnes@cox.net.

The Basic Ellipse Canceler and a Report on its Early Usage

In an attempt to find a more durable canceler, the New York Post Office (NYPO), in the latter part of 1874, ordered and used, on an experimental basis, a new style of hand canceling device. This canceler, purchased from a commercial manufacturer, was made of metal and consisted of a circular date stamp (CDS) duplexed to an elliptical shaped "killer" comprised of 11 horizontal bars with a numeral "5" in the center. This device was employed for approximately five months and is now reported as being the first metal ellipse canceler used in the United States. An example bearing the earliest reported date is shown in Figure 1.

Apparently being satisfied with the trial test, the NYPO ordered, and started using in May of 1876, a set of horizontal bar ellipse hand cancelers incorporating numbers "1" through

"30" for canceling domestic out-of-town mail. It is reported that each clerk canceling the mail in the main post office was assigned a number. This horizontal bar format is the distinguishing feature from the vertical bar ellipse cancelers that were soon to be used in the Foreign Department.

In December 1876, the Foreign Department was given its first set of ellipse cancelers. These replaced the well known fancy geometric foreign mail cancelers that were in use for so many years.

Exhibit Layout

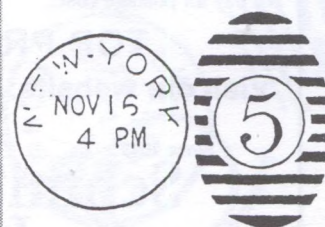
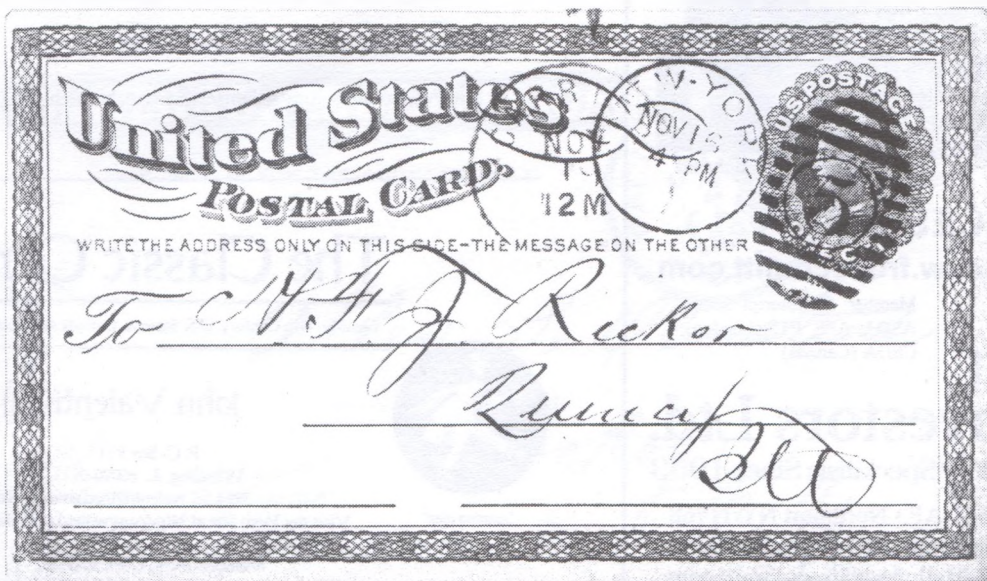
This exhibit shows the three different style ellipse cancelers used in the Foreign Department of the main NYPO, along with their distinguishing features, their purpose and dates of usage, and a census of the quantities reported for the scarcer "Simplex Ellipse" style, both on and off cover.

The first set involves the "Duplex Ellipse" style, numerals "1" through "6". These cancelers were used by the foreign mail clerks handling mail received through the Department's front counter window.

The second set involves the "Duplex Ellipse Supplementary" style, numerals "1" and "2," used at the Foreign Department supplementary mail window.

The third set involves the scarcer "Simplex Ellipse" style, numbers ranging from "1" to "13" used at the Foreign Department on (1) outgoing foreign mail received from

Figure 1



(Continued on page 4)

Dear Reader,

The new year brings with it the prospect of a wonderful international stamp show – Washington 2006 – to be held in Washington, D.C. from May 27-June 3, 2006. The philatelic press has already, of course, provided extensive publicity and it will only increase as the time approaches. Two hundred dealers, 3,800 competitive exhibit frames, great rarities on display, educational presentations galore, five auctions and much more await the philatelic community. As will a number of other societies, the USCC will display a one-frame exhibit designed to introduce the viewer to the organization's field of interest. We will also have a flyer about the Club and application forms on hand for distribution at the show. However, we will not have a society table since providing full staffing for the eight days is more than we could effectively manage. I hope a large number of Club members will plan to attend for at least a couple of days. Washington is a great show venue with so many attractions to enjoy. In the words of the show logo – "See you there!"

Periodically your editor is moved to use this space to make a plea for articles from Club members. Many have specialized knowledge and we all share the excitement of coming across and learning about interesting cancellations. Sitting within the albums and cover boxes of our collections there are undoubtedly a great many items that would be of interest to the membership. And there is often information to share, perhaps extensive or maybe just on one small point, that we have individually acquired by thinking about or looking into a particular cancel or group of cancels. Won't you please consider selecting one or a few such items and contacting the *NEWS* in 2006! And thanks to all for your continued support of the USCC and its activities.

Roger Curran

The U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

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Closed Album

Robert J. Payne died on November 23, 2005. He was 77. Bob was one of the foremost students of machine cancels and he leaves a remarkable legacy of information for present and future generations of machine cancel collectors. In addition, for those who knew him, are the memories of a warm and helpful person who was always willing – indeed, eager – to share his encyclopedic knowledge and records. He brought to the hobby a youthful enthusiasm that inspired many in their collecting pursuits.

Bob's publishing record is extensive and what is mentioned here is by no means all-inclusive. His book, *Thomas Leavitt His History and Postal Markings 1875-1892*, published in 1999 by the United Postal Stationery Society, is a monumental updating of the Frank Stratton catalogs that will serve as the essential reference on the subject for years to come. Bob collaborated with Reg Morris on a three volume work, *The Barry Story*, appearing in 1988, providing a definitive treatment of the origin and use of cancels produced by the Barry Postal Supply Co. In response to viewing his 24-frame exhibit of early machine cancels at COLOPEX 95, members of the Machine Cancel Society (MCS) asked that he prepare a book to permanently record the covers and information presented. This resulted in a two volume set entitled *An Exhibit of U.S. Classic Machine Cancels 1871-1891*. In 2001, the MCS published Bob's *Development and Use of Flag Cancellations 1894-1941*, a 450-page work based on his INDYPEX 2001 Court of Honor exhibit on the subject. Bob was one of three authors, along with Bart Billings and Reg Morris, of the 2005 MCS publication *A Primer U.S. Machine Postal Markings*. And in the December 5, 2005 *Linn's*, Dick Graham reviewed a new book by Bob, *United States Promotional Slogan Cancellations 1899-1940*.

Beyond his individual work, Bob was very active in the MCS, serving as officer and journal contributor. He was also a long time member of the USCC. In the years before Flag Cancel Society became the MCS with its broadened coverage, the USCC *NEWS* was a vehicle for the presentation of journal articles and the production of monographs on

machine cancel subjects other than flag cancels. Bob was an important contributor to the *NEWS* in that regard. In recent years he regularly provided data, cover illustrations and valuable insight to the present editor, not just on machine cancels but on various other 19th century U.S. postal markings as well.

Bob Payne – indefatigable researcher and author, generous friend to collectors and students, and driving force generally in his chosen area of postal history – will long be remembered and appreciated.■

California Cancel

by Roger D. Curran

The cancel in Figure 1 (on a Sc 267 stamp) is a rather roughly cut but clear negative monogram with primitive ornamentation on the sides. Obviously hand-carved in cork or soft wood, it is comprised of a letter "P" and what appears to be either a "C" or "G." I have not seen this cancel listed in the literature. Not long ago I came across the card in Figure 2, postmarked at Pacific Grove, California and immediately

Figure 1



Figure 3



thought of the Figure 1 stamp. I came to realize that it was not, of course, the same cancel since there were vertical bars at the side and negative lines above and below the central square. Nonetheless, I think we can be confident that the two cancels are from the same post office given the great similarity in the shape of the letters and how they are configured. What is possibly a third Pacific Grove "PG" design is shown as Figure 3 (also a Sc 267 stamp) with some short bars or squares at the top. A thin "P" shows rather clearly but finding a "G" is problematic. Readers who can report other examples of the "PG" cancels are encouraged to do so.■

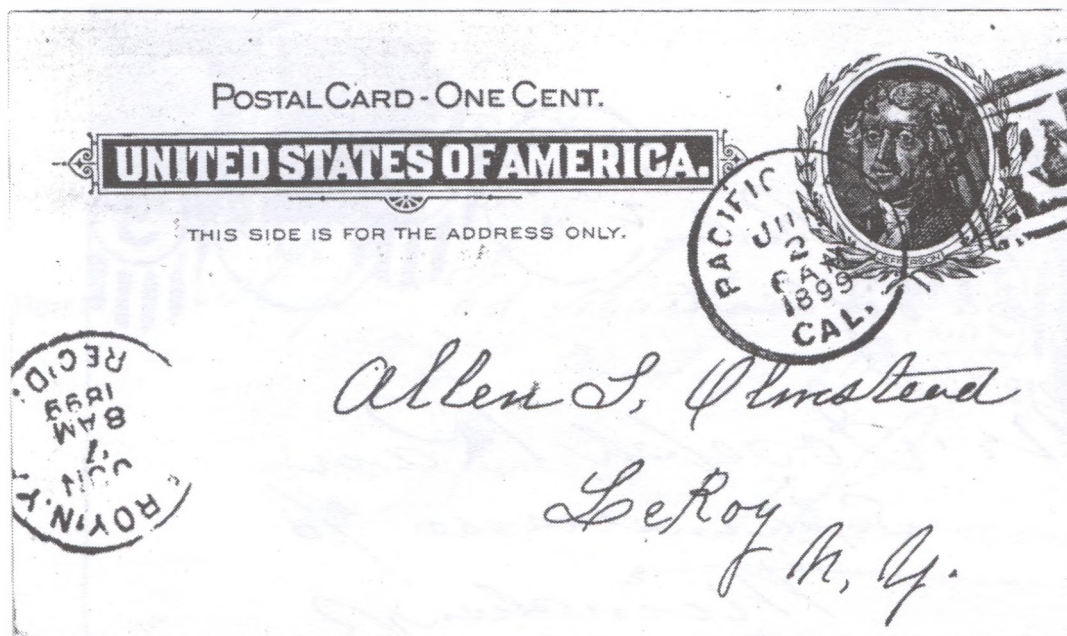


Figure 2

(Continued from front page)

Branch Stations, (2) incoming foreign mail where the stamps hadn't been canceled, and (3) outgoing foreign mail circulars and wrappers deposited at the main post office.

"Duplex Ellipse" Style

It is likely that the NYPO, after seeing the positive effects that the metal ellipse canceler had on processing of domestic mails, ordered a set of ellipse cancelers with numbers for use in the Foreign Department. These cancelers, which have been noted from December 20, 1876 to at least September 1885, were intended to be used on first class foreign mail and are known only in black. To make these six cancelers easily distinguishable from those used in the domestic section, they requested the numerals be placed in an ellipse format with the bars running vertically rather than horizontally. The initial set did not show a year date. It appears the two digit year date (between the CDS and ellipse) was added in August 1878. Tracings of the six duplex markings are illustrated in Figure 2.

As was customary with New York foreign mail cancelers, no specific time of day was indicated in the CDS, except that now, in these ellipse cancelers, numerals "1" and "2" have an "AM", numerals "3" and "4" a "PM", and numerals "5" and "6" an "N". ("N" likely stands for "Night".) It appears, by these indications, that there were six clerks handling the foreign mail received across the front counter window: two on the morning shift, two in the afternoon, and two at night. I have noted a few examples (see Figure 3) where the "Duplex Ellipse" numeral "3" has an "AM" instead of the "PM" in the circular date stamp. It is quite possible that one of the morning clerks, for some reason, could not come into work, or there may have been just an overload of mail to be processed and the afternoon clerk was called in early. This was apparently not a common practice, as this is the only deviance I have seen in these cancelers.

These "duplex ellipse" cancelers are quite common, both on and off cover. The key would be to find these cancels on the more elusive stamps, such as on U.S. officials that saw foreign usage.

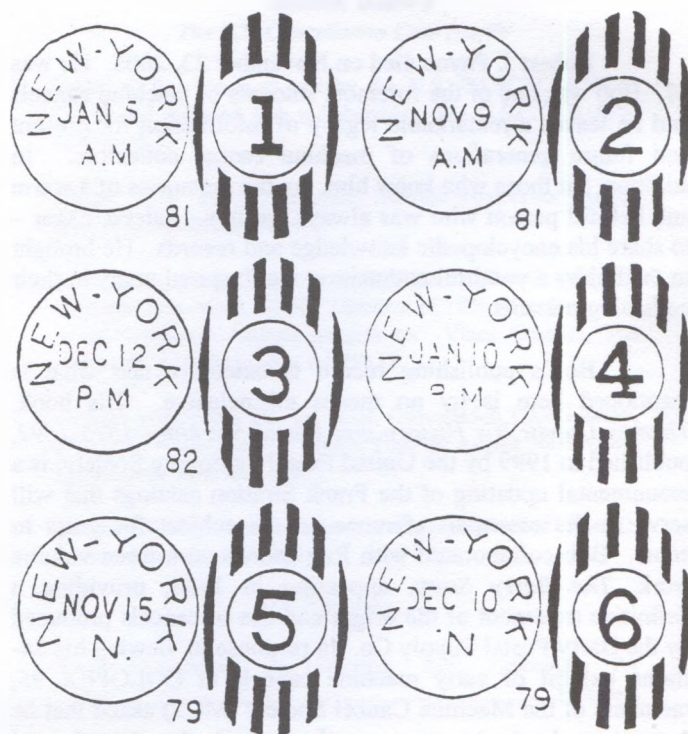


Figure 2

"Duplex Ellipse Supplementary" Style

These ellipses, involving numerals "1" and "2," are known only on first class mail. The earliest reported use is December 29, 1877 and they have been recorded as late as October 1898. The year date was added in August 1878. Tracings are shown in Figure 4.

These two ellipse cancelers constitute the fourth type in a series of supplementary mail cancels used by the Foreign Department. The supplementary mail service, first authorized in 1853, was implemented so that foreign mail could be received and put aboard the ship after the regular closing hour of the post office. Double the regular rate was charged for this service.

Figure 3





Figure 4

Keeping with consistency, these ellipse numeral cancelers were also arranged in a vertical bar format. Besides having the words "PAID" and "SUPPLEMENTARY" in the circular date stamp, the numerals are quite large and with serifs, making the ellipses readily identifiable. These cancelers are known only in black. A single weight supplementary mail cover to Cuba, prior to its acceptance into the UPU, is shown as Figure 5.

"Simplex Ellipse" Style

This set of ellipse cancelers involves numbers ranging from "1" to "13," but numbers "8" and "9" have not been seen. These cancelers, having been prepared for use in the Foreign Department, were also made in a vertical bar format. The numerals have serifs and are fairly tall and slender. The ellipses are not accompanied by a circular date stamp, hence the "simplex" designation. They are only known in black.

Early studies of the "simplex" ellipses, which just involved numbers "1" through "6" and number "12," were focused on foreign stamps and covers, where the foreign stamps, for some reason, were not canceled in the country of origin, and upon arrival in New York were made unusable by canceling them with one of these cancelers. The early students referred to these ellipses as "Incoming Foreign Mail" or "IFM" cancelers, and with their focus on finding these cancelers on incoming foreign mail covers and stamps, almost totally overlooked their existence on outgoing U.S. foreign mail covers and on U.S. stamps.

The use of the "simplex ellipse" cancelers on outgoing U.S. foreign mail can be broken down into two main categories:

1. Foreign mail received at the NYPO Branch Stations: It is evident by the markings on these outgoing foreign mail covers that the Branch Stations, for whatever reason, did not have the authority to cancel stamps on foreign mail at the time these cancelers appeared in 1878. Such foreign mail covers, obtained by way of Branch counter windows and perhaps also from lamp post collection boxes, were docketed as received by the Branch Stations, put into a pouch, and sent to the main post office foreign department for processing. The covers were checked for proper weight and postage, the stamps canceled with a "simplex" canceler (since the cover already had a Branch date and time postmark) and then directed to the proper steamship line. This docketing procedure continued until the early part of 1880 when the Branch Stations began canceling the stamps on foreign mail.

2. Circular mail: It appears that "simplex ellipse" canceler numbers "7" and higher, with the exception of number "12," were unreported by early students. These higher numbers are known only used on U.S. outgoing 2nd and 3rd class foreign mail, such as circulars and wrappers.

Each "simplex ellipse" number is shown separately below accompanied by a brief report.



Seen on both outgoing and incoming 1st class foreign mail.

Figure 5



Earliest reported date on cover: Oct. 8, 1878

Latest reported date on cover: Mar. 13, 1879

U.S. outgoing covers: 5

U.S. off cover stamps: 7

Incoming foreign covers: 3

Foreign off cover stamps: 5

The cover in Figure 6 shows a NYPO Branch Station "E" postmark dated March 8, 1879 on the reverse side.



Seen on both outgoing and incoming 1st class foreign mail.

Earliest reported date on cover: Jun. 8, 1878

Latest reported date on cover: Mar. 11, 1886

U.S. outgoing covers: 15

U.S. off cover stamps: 8

Incoming foreign covers: 7

Foreign off cover stamps: 78



Seen on both outgoing and incoming 1st class foreign mail.

Earliest reported date on cover: Aug. 2, 1878

Latest reported date on cover: Oct. 11, 1884

U.S. outgoing covers: 14

U.S. off cover stamps: 27

Incoming foreign covers: 5

Foreign off cover stamps: 79

The cover in Figure 7 shows a late usage of the "simplex" numeral "3" on a piece of incoming mail.



Seen on both outgoing and incoming 1st class foreign mail.

Earliest reported date on cover: Nov. 7, 1878

Latest reported date on cover: Jul. 6, 1887

U.S. outgoing covers: 1

U.S. off cover stamps: 9

Incoming foreign covers: 2

Foreign off cover stamps: 44



Seen on both outgoing and incoming 1st class foreign mail.

Earliest reported date on cover: Jun 25, 1878

Latest reported date on cover: Dec. 6, 1883

U.S. outgoing covers: 5

U.S. off cover stamps: 15

Incoming foreign covers: 2

Foreign off cover stamps: 39

The cover in Figure 8 was postmarked (received) at NYPO Branch Station F on June 25, 1878. This is the earliest known use of "simplex" numeral "5."

Figure 6

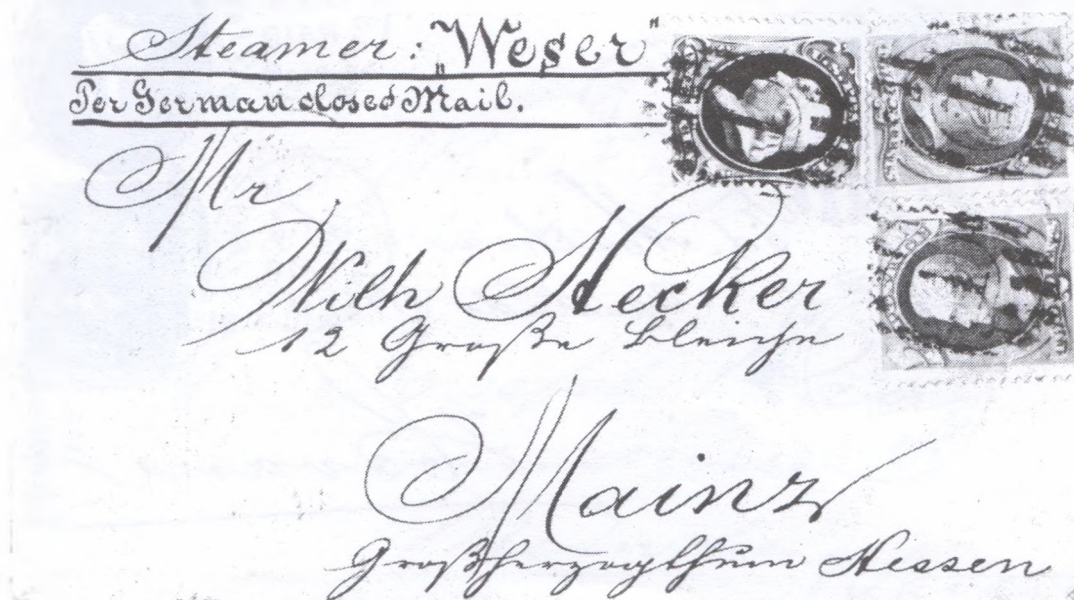


Figure 7

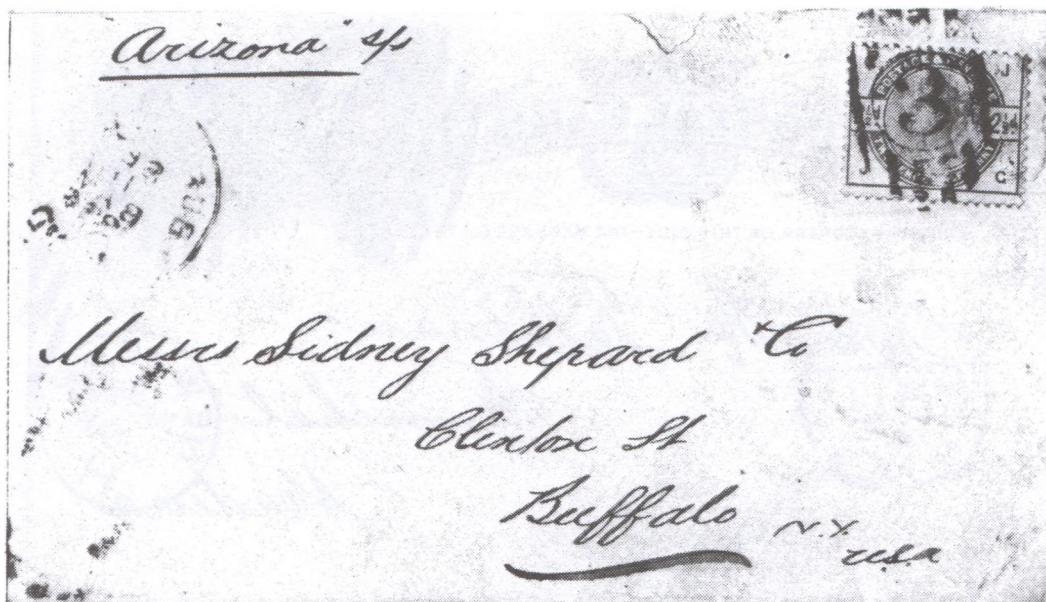
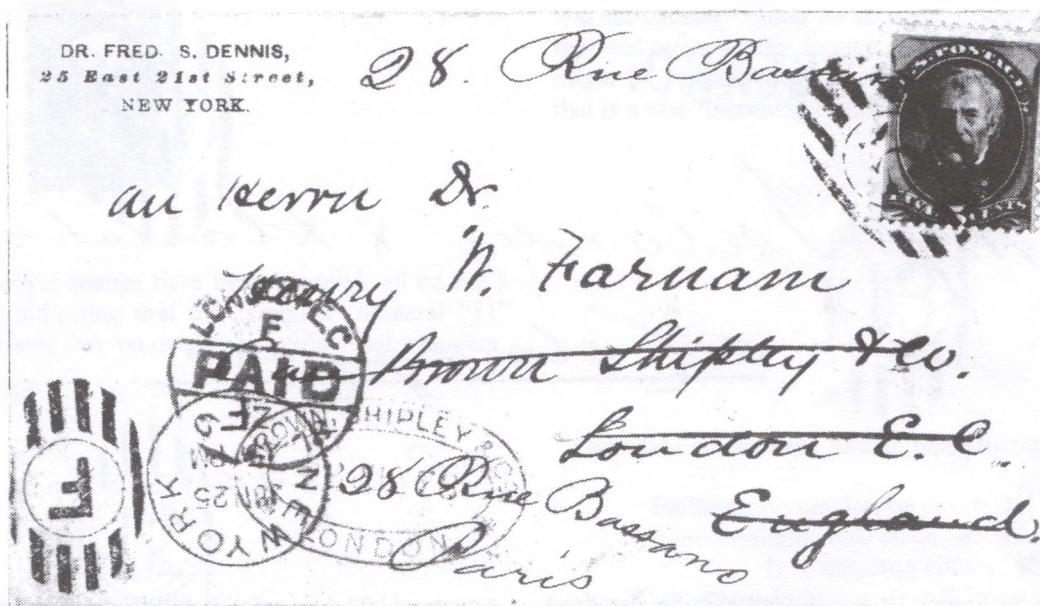


Figure 8



Seen on both outgoing and incoming 1st class foreign mail.

Earliest reported date on cover: Jul. 16, 1878

Latest reported date on cover: Apr. 17, 1885

U.S. outgoing covers: 11

U.S. off cover stamps: 15

Incoming foreign covers: 4

Foreign off cover stamps: 54

The cover in Figure 9 was received at Branch Station "H" on March 28, 1879 and addressed to Madeira, which is located off the northwest coast of Africa.

As indicated above, the early students of these "simplex" cancels were not aware of the existence of numerals "7", "10", "11", and "13." All indications point to these four ellipses being used only on outgoing foreign mail circulars and wrappers. Their early use also indicates that they were part of the initial set when ordered.



Earliest reported date on cover: July 1, 1878

Latest reported date on cover: Aug 2, 1878

U.S. outgoing covers: 2

U.S. off cover stamps: 10

Incoming foreign covers: none

Foreign off cover stamps: none

Figure 9

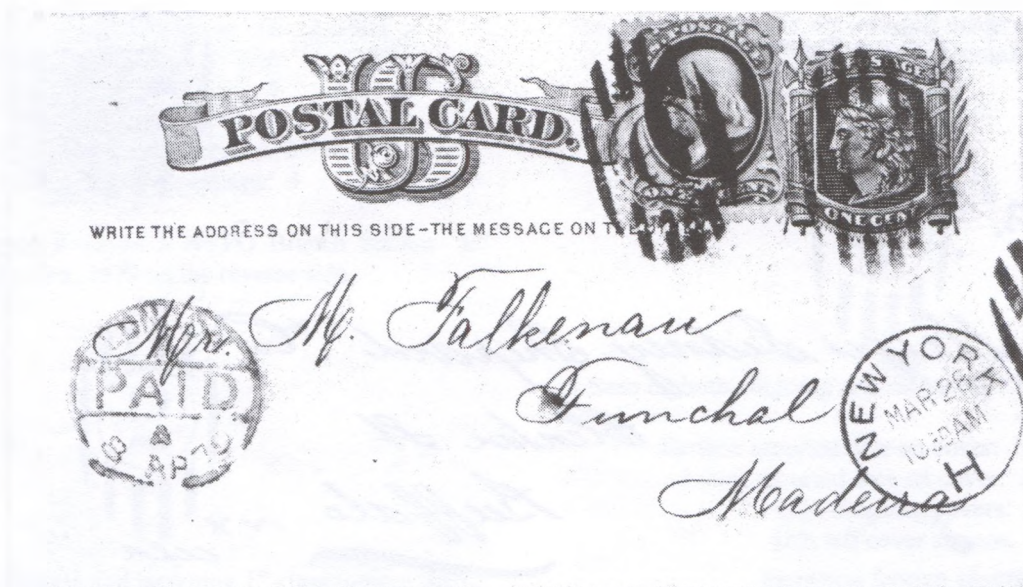
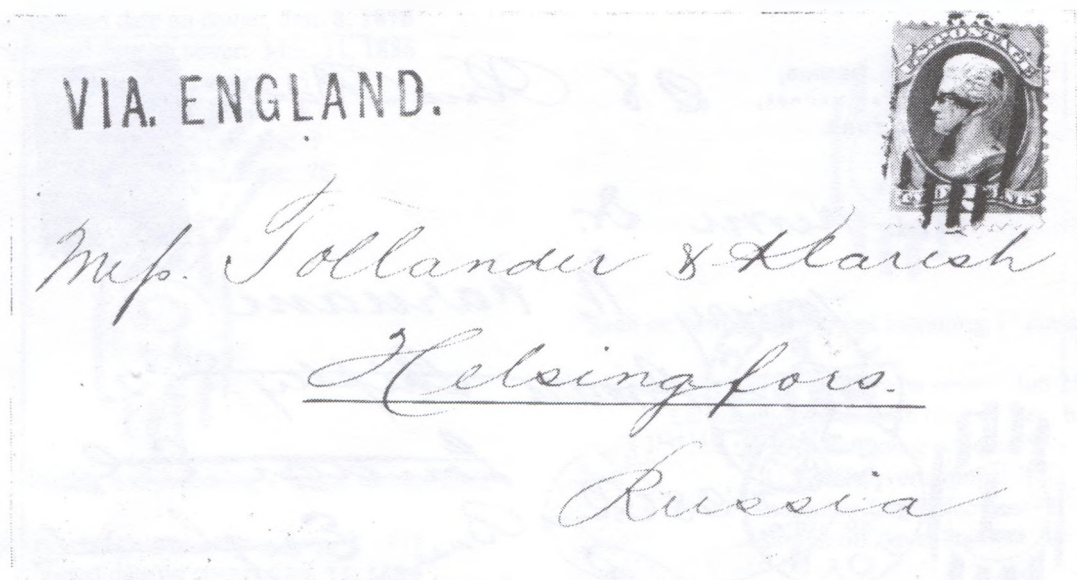


Figure 10



The cover shown in Figure 10 is a folded circular datelined July 1, 1878 from a New York firm to Helsinki, Finland (then Russia).

a numeral "9" does exist, it will likely show up on a circular or wrapper.

There are no "simplex" ellipse numeral "8" cancels reported on or off cover. If this numeral does exist, it likely will be found on a circular or wrapper, or on an off-cover low denomination stamp. There are also no reported examples of a "simplex" numeral "9." Although one might initially think the stamp in Figure 11 has a numeral "9" cancel, I believe it to be an inverted "6." All of the "simplex" numeral "6's" known to me have the features indicated on the tracing. This applies to the cancel on the Figure 11 stamp. As with the numeral "8," if

Figure 11



Wide spacing
between these
two upper bars.

Narrow spacing



Earliest reported date on cover: Aug. 1, 1878

Latest reported date on cover: same

U.S. outgoing covers: 1

U.S. off cover stamps: 8

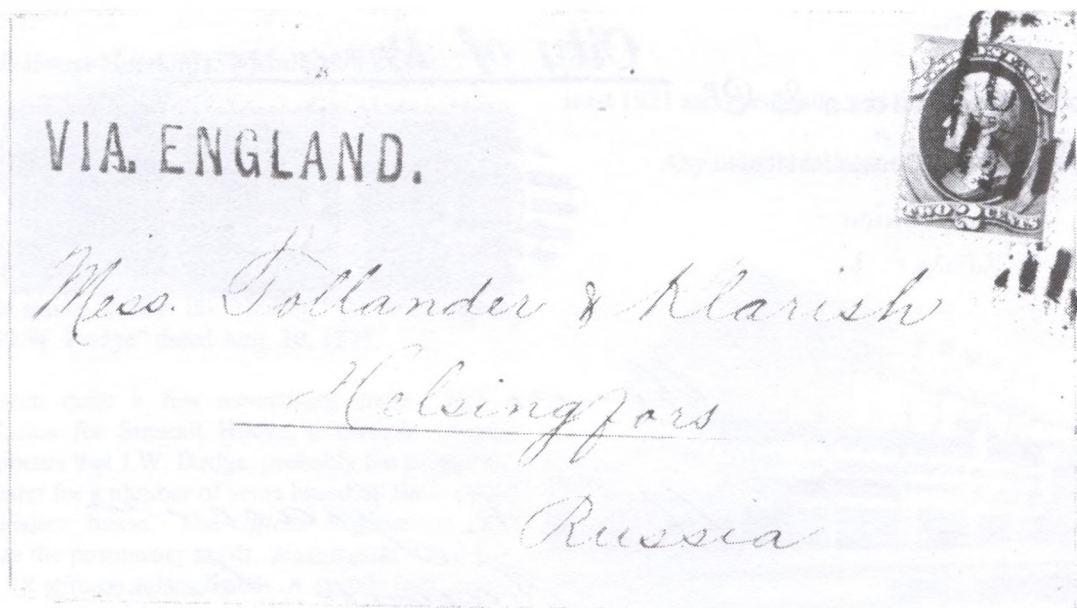
(a block of 6 of the 2 cent vermilion and a pair of the 1 cent Continental)

Incoming foreign covers: none

Foreign off cover stamps: none

Figure 12 shows the only reported "simplex" number "10" on cover. It is datelined August 1, 1878.

Figure 12



Only three off cover stamps have been reported, all on the 2 cent vermilion, indicating that the "simplex" numeral "11" was most likely used only on outgoing circulars and wrappers.



Seen only on incoming 1st class foreign mail.

Earliest reported date on cover: Aug. 15, 1888

Latest reported date on cover: May 18, 1914

U.S. outgoing covers: none

U.S. off cover stamps: 4

Incoming foreign covers: 82

Foreign off cover stamps: 379

The numeral "12" is by far the most common (on foreign stamps) of all the "Simplex Ellipses," and also one of the more intriguing. The earliest reported use is in 1888 – almost two and a half years after the last known use of any of the other "simplex" numbers. Once its use was started, it appears it was the only "simplex" canceler to be used in the Foreign Department. Its existence on a few off cover U.S. stamps, including a 15 cent Bank Note, may indicate outgoing foreign mail usage, although no such covers have been reported. If this number was part of the original set when ordered, where

was the canceler sitting for so many years? Having only been reported on incoming foreign mail, for now the number "12" might be considered as being the only number from this set that is a true "Incoming Foreign Mail" cancel. See Figure 13.



Only seen on outgoing foreign mail circulars and wrappers.

Earliest reported date on cover: Jul. 27, 1878

Latest reported date on cover: Aug. 1, 1878

U.S. outgoing covers: 4

U.S. off cover stamps: 3 (All 2 cent vermilions)

Incoming foreign covers: none

Foreign off cover stamps: none

A "simplex" ellipse with the "13" is illustrated in Figure 14.

"Simplex Ellipse" analysis

Although seven of the so called "IFM" numbers are known canceling incoming foreign mail, their early use on outgoing Branch Station mail and the discovery of a group of new numbers canceling outgoing circular mail may warrant a new classification for these cancels, namely, New York City "Simplex Ellipse Foreign Mail" cancels.

With the commencement of Branch Stations canceling stamps on outgoing foreign mail in 1880, and the introduction of the double oval rubber hand canceler used to cancel 2nd and 3rd class foreign mail at approximately the same time, there was a drastic drop in the "simplex" cancel usage.

One of the puzzling aspects of these cancels is the showing of a fair number of off cover 5 and 10 cent U.S.

Figure 13

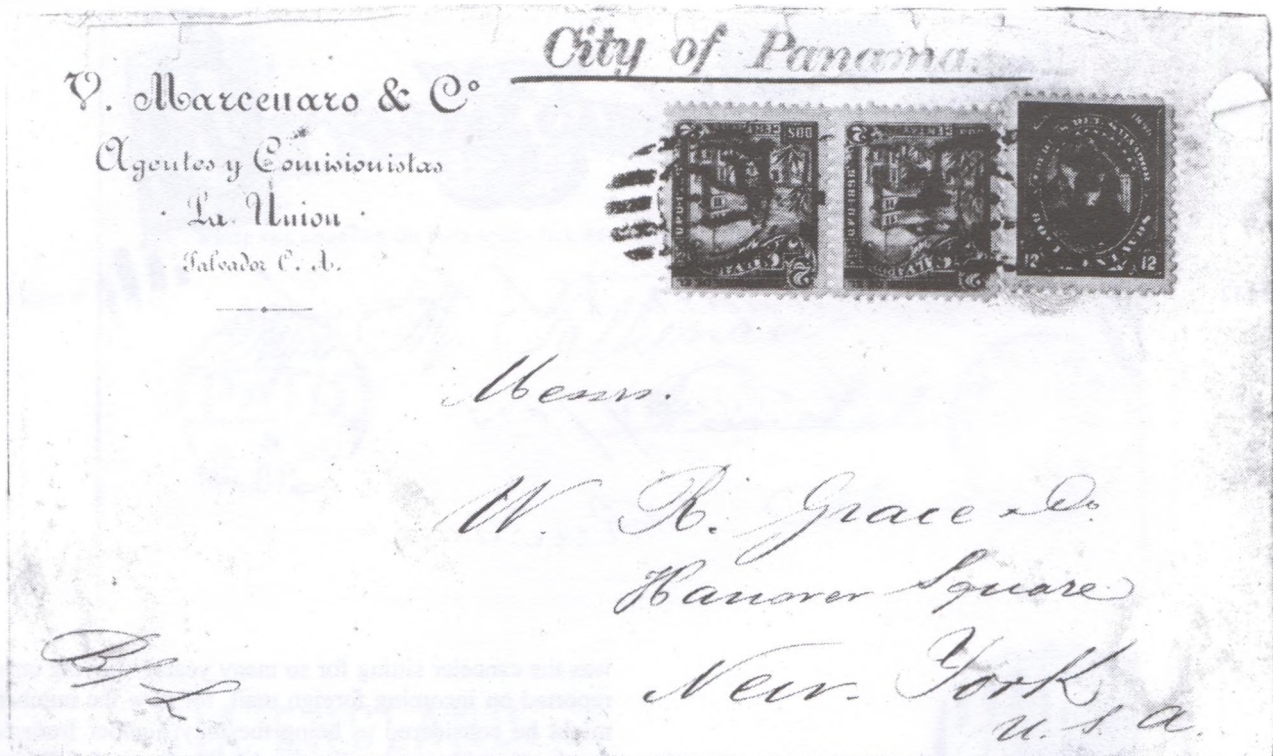
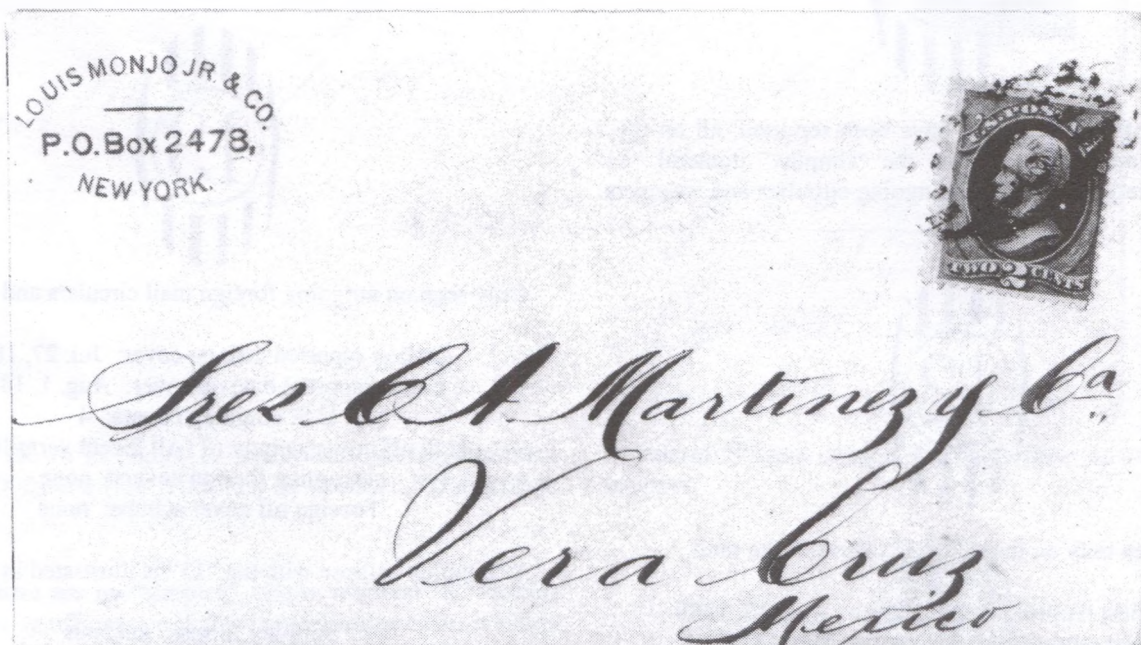


Figure 14



stamps, issued in 1882 and later, bearing the "simplex" cancels. Since no outgoing "simplex" covers have been reported during this period, one can only wonder about their usage.■

"X" in Box

Victor Kuil, our club member from The Netherlands, writes with comment on the "X" in box cancel discussed on page 105 in the August 2005 NEWS. This is a Boston cancel found only on large numeral postage due stamps. In the earlier article, your editor stated the opinion that incomplete strikes of this cancel were sometimes misinterpreted as "bow and arrow" cancels. Victor reports a cancel in his collection

Figure 1



(Figure 1) that gives the "bow and arrow" appearance, which he believes is not from an "X" in box. Ambiguity certainly exists as to exactly what canceler design produced this strike. Is what we see due to wear, due to a distortion resulting from how an "X" in box was inked or struck, or do we have a different cancel design? To further explore this question, readers are encouraged to report examples of similar Boston cancels.■

Summit House Hotel, Mt. Washington, N.H.

by Roger Rhoads

In the November 2005 issue Roger Curran highlighted an unofficial Beach House, Sea Girt, NJ, cancellation. Figure 1 illustrates a cancellation for a hotel that was also an official post office. This card is canceled with a double line date stamp, in blue ink, reading "Mt. Washington, Summit House/J.W. Dodge" dated Aug. 30, 1875.

I've seen quite a few advertising covers with a similar cancellation for Summit House, a favorite summer resort, and it appears that J.W. Dodge, probably the proprietor, was the postmaster for a number of years based on the covers I have seen in dealers' boxes. The *Official Register* for 1875 has him listed as the postmaster at Mt. Washington, Coos Co., NH, as of July 18 with no salary listed. A cryptic note beside the date says "not rendered," whatever that means.

Summit House hotel was originally opened in 1852 at the very top of Mt. Washington prior to when the road or the famous cog railway were opened. Two other such structures were built with the last being in 1870 at the summit terminus of the cog railway that was completed in 1869. Figure 2 is a post card picture taken in 1895 showing the building as well as the cog railway.

A contemporary description of the hotel notes that the railroad company owned it, and, considering the tourist season was only July through September, it received more than 10,000 visitors annually. It was a long, plain three-story structure "solidly bounded to the ledges" and adequate to accommodate 150 guests. The note about "solidly bound," etc. refers to the need for a substantial structure due to very high winds at the top of the mountain.

The two top stories were steam-heated, and guests were furnished candles "of the good old honest, non-explosive(?) variety." The lower story contained parlors, a large dining room, a bric-a-brac counter and the hotel office that contained a telegraph and post office. It lasted until at

least 1921 and eventually was destroyed in a fire.

Any more hotel/post office cancels out there? ■

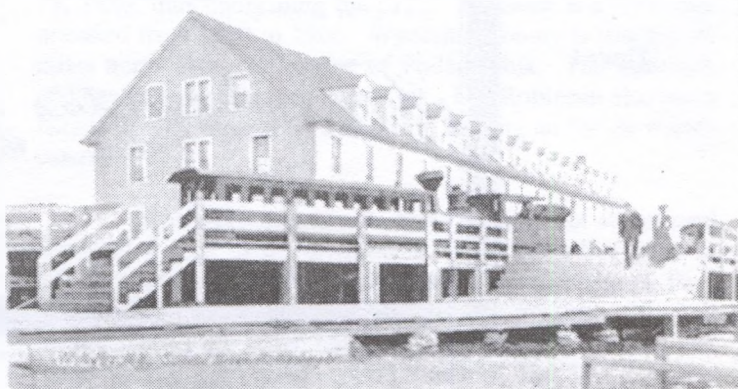


Figure 2

Crawford House, White Mountains, NH

by Roger Rhoads

I had hardly finished my short article on Summit House when I came upon the card shown below canceled "Crawford House/White Mountains" and dated Aug. 12, 1873 in blue. Like Summit House, this was one of the important grand hotels in Coos Co., New Hampshire. Also like Summit House, it housed a post office, and in 1875 the postmaster was A.T. Barron with a salary of \$149.55 that was mostly earned by the sales of postage.

Major hotels such as the Crawford House, Fabyan House, Profile House, the Maplewood, the Waumbek, and the Glen House each had its own train station or livery service and its own versions of comfort and elegance: gas lighting, fancy dining, lawn tennis, coaching parades, and mountain guides.

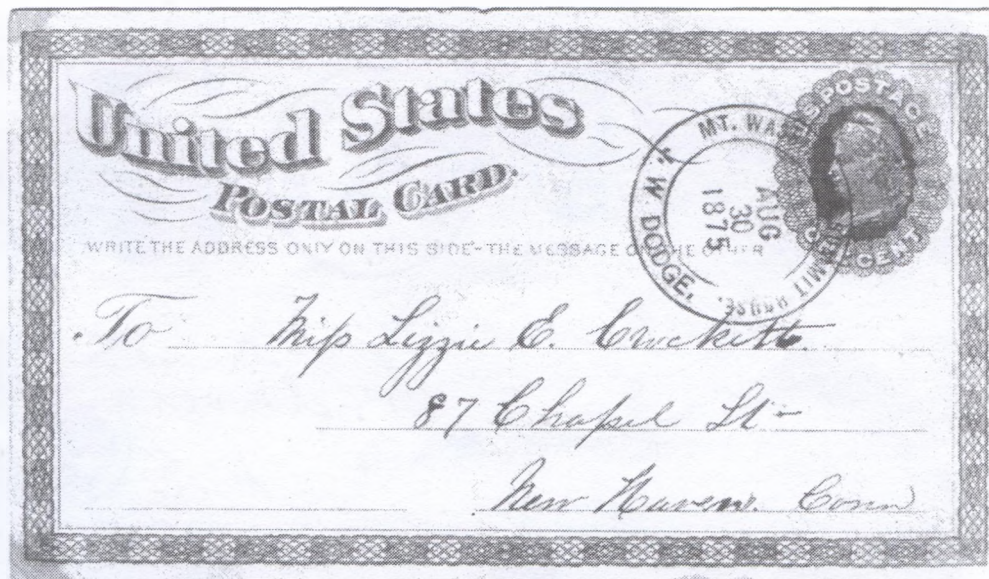
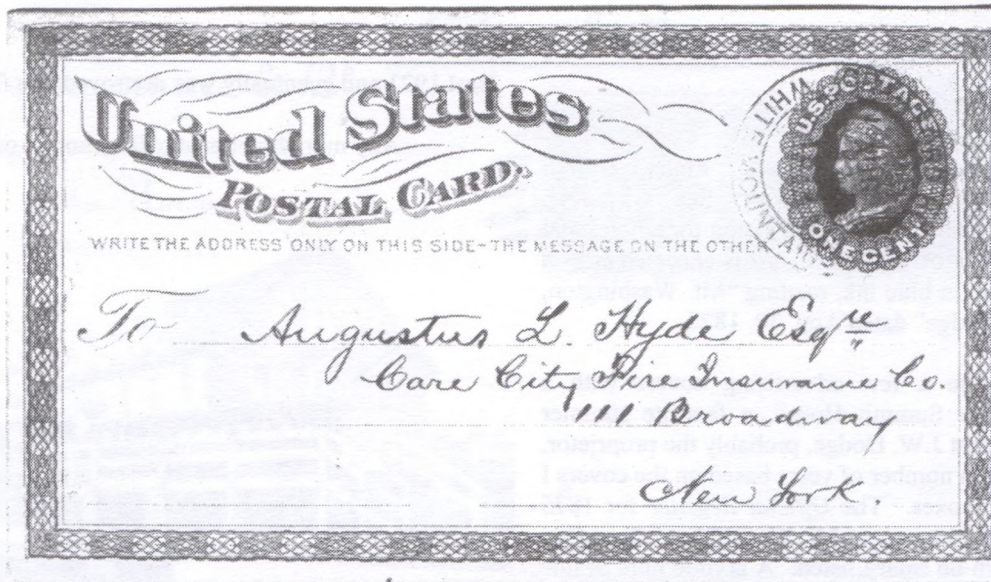


Figure 1

Figure 1



The *Official Register* of 1875 lists both Fabyan House and Profile House as having post offices as well. Each of these establishments had a guest capacity of 400 or more, each was built entirely of wood, and each was eventually destroyed by fire.

The first Crawford House was built by the Crawford family in 1859. It was destroyed by fire, as was its replacement. The third structure was completed in the summer of 1859 and continued offering summer pleasures until 1976 when again it was razed by fire. Over the years famous folks such as Daniel Webster, Nathaniel Hawthorne and John Greenleaf Whittier stayed here as did Presidents Pierce, Grant, Hayes, Garfield and Harding.

Can anyone come up with postmarks for Fabyan House and Profile House?■

Mysterious Circles

A very effective and precisely circular cancellation, submitted by Gil Levere, is shown in Figure 1. It has not been

noted in Cole or Whitfield. The postmark reads North Boscawen, N.H. and is dated April 23, 1883. Just off hand, the cancel appears to be duplexed to the postmark but there are other markings present that provide us more to think about. Note two strikes of smaller circular markings below the indicium. The lower of the two clearly appears to be a smaller version of the cancel on the indicium and the higher is probably a lighter strike of the same.

These smaller circles raise several questions. Was there a set of markers in different sizes? Were these markers really intended as cancellers or were they for some other purpose? Is the CDS duplexed to the large circle, given that the smaller circles appear not to be duplexed? Readers who can report additional examples of this killer, from North Boscawen or elsewhere, are urged to do so. We'd like to learn more!

Figure 2 illustrates Whitfield #4205 which is reported from North Boscawen, dated January 1, 1885.■

Figure 1

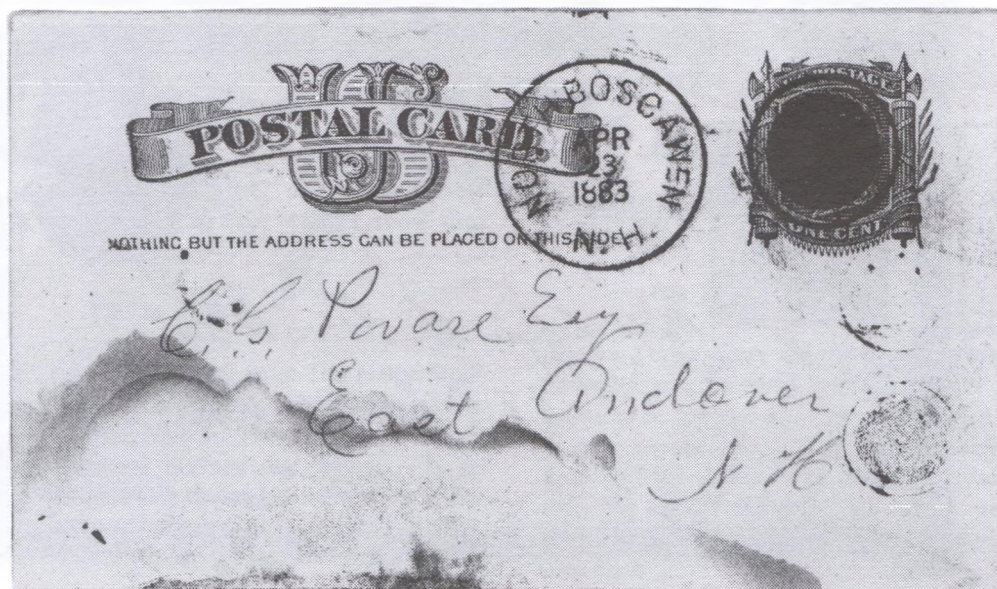


Figure 2



A Feminine Touch

Wendell Triplett sends an interesting postal card, illustrated here as Figure 1, which entered the mails at Wellsborough, Pennsylvania on January 30, 1884. The attractive cancellation is comprised of four hearts and Wendell reports that the Wellsborough postmaster from June 14, 1882 to July 25, 1886 was Susan R. Hart! Can readers report other Wellsborough covers sent during her tenure?

The Figure 1 cancel is not listed in either Cole or Whitfield but Cole does list a quite similar cancel (HE-45) from Waterbury, Ct. dated February 14, 1879 (Valentine's Day). Rohloff reports two types of the Waterbury "Four Hearts Pointing Inward" design, but gives dates of use only for one of the types - February 14, 1879 to March 18 (188?).¹ Presumably this cancel was introduced for Valentine's Day but also used later.

Wellsborough, now "Wellsboro," is a delightful and quite small old town located in the north central part of the state. Nearby is an area known as the "Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania." At certain times of the year, a horse drawn wagon tour is offered along the canyon floor that makes for a pleasant outing.■

¹ Rohloff, Paul C. *The Waterbury Cancellations 1865-1890*, The Collectors Club of Chicago (1979), pages 112-3.

A New "Letter in Wreath" Cancel

William Robinson reports an "S" in wreath cancel from Bardwell, Pennsylvania on a cover (Figure 1) dated December 17, 1886. The handstamped postmark reads "DEC/6/1886" with a "17" added in manuscript. On the back of the cover is a Tunkhannock, Pa. postmark dated December 18, 1886, thus confirming the "17." Bardwell is a DPO that operated from 1879 to 1906. Wyoming County is roughly 90 miles north and a little west of Philadelphia. The postmark and cancel were struck in a gray ink. Mr. Robinson also has a record of an off-cover Sc 210 stamp bearing an "S" in wreath cancel.

It is interesting to note that "S" does not correspond to the first letter of the town name. Only one other letter in wreath cancel - a "D" in wreath from New Wilmington, Pa - has been recorded without this match. One may speculate that in these cases the letter represents the first letter of the last name of the postmaster. Unfortunately, the USPS online postmaster database does not yet list the postmasters for either Bardwell or New Wilmington.

Bardwell brings to 14 the number of post offices that have been reported to use a letter in wreath cancel and we know there was a "T" in wreath cancel used by an as yet unidentified post office.■

Figure 1

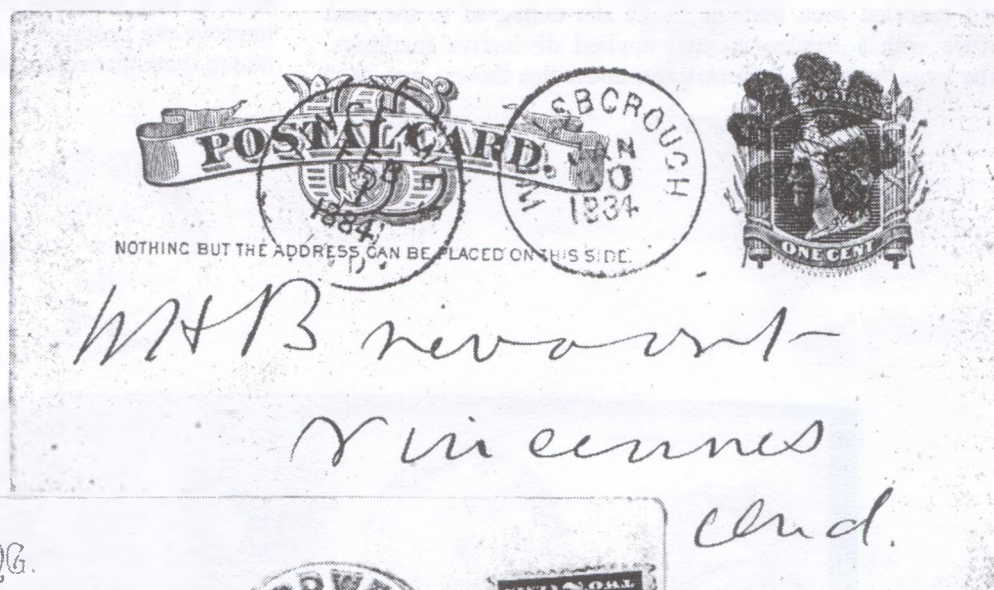
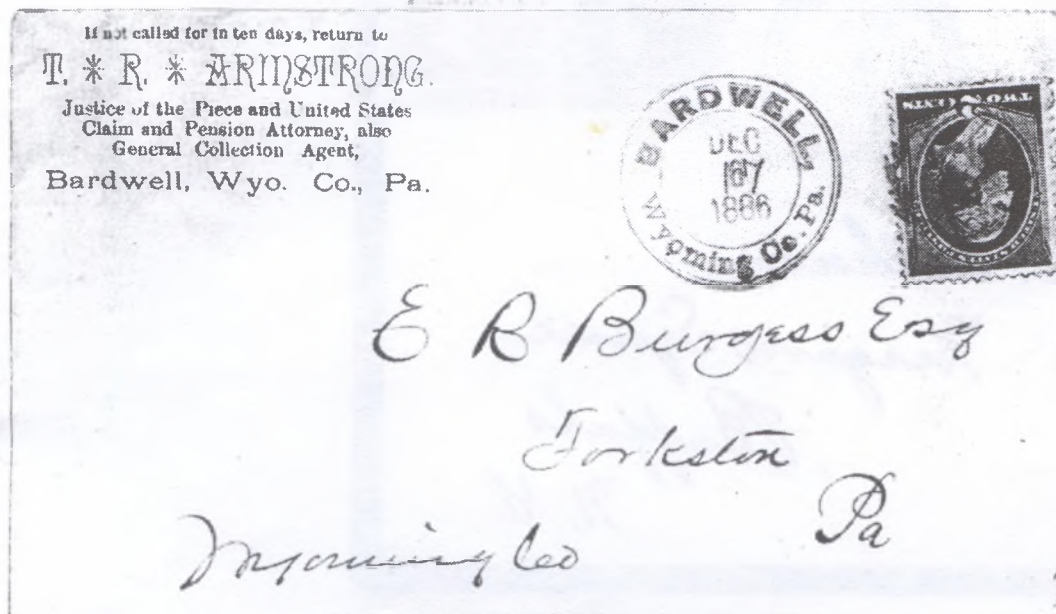


Figure 1



Seeing Stars

Several noteworthy covers bearing star cancels have recently been reported by Arthur Beane. Let's begin with the "BEACH HOUSE" cancel discussed on pages 125 and 126 of the last *NEWS*. We now have two additional covers (see Figure 1) to list, one dated August 4, 1880 and the other August 3, 1882. The 1882 cover was struck in black ink, the first so reported. The 1880 cover bears the familiar magenta markings. As stated in the earlier article, the cancel and postmark clearly appear to have been duplexed to a single handstamp. The "BEACH HOUSE" cancel on the right stamp of the 1882 cover reads vertically from top to bottom, so the handstamp must have been held in such a way that the postmarker was above the top of the cover. Whoever did the canceling paid careful attention to detail to avoid having the town postmark appear on the left stamp. What a lovely cover! It is also of interest to note that the strike of the star on the left stamp is thicker than the star on the right stamp, which no doubt indicates a firmer strike that flattened the rubber surface of the canceler.

Figure 2 illustrates what your editor understands to be the more common Spring Lake postmark of the period, also in a magenta ink. Note that it is dated only 15 days later than the 1880 cover in Figure 1. Our idea has been that a person made mail runs from the three summer hotels in Spring Lake and Sea Girt to the Spring Lake post office and postmarked and canceled such mail as he or she delivered to the post office with a handstamp that applied distinctive markings. The large "sawtooth" postmarker, under this theory, was used

contemporaneously on other mail received at the post office. One last point: the Figure 2 CDS appears to be duplexed to a star that is very similar to if not the same as the star in the center of the "BEACH HOUSE" cancel. Perhaps the Spring Lake postmaster ordered from his handstamp supplier a special canceler to be used on mail brought in from the hotels. Comments and reports of additional covers will be welcomed.

Rollo, Illinois employed a huge shaded star on the cover in Figure 3, dated February 3, 1891. Cole lists this star as STB-20 on "1890 issues" but does not identify the post office. The shaded star was a popular cancel but this surely must be the largest version known.

How should we refer to the Unionville, Missouri cancel in Figure 4, dated September 27, 1882 – as a star cancel with rings or a bulls eye cancel incorporating a star? I suppose the former would be chosen by most collectors. Whitfield reports a somewhat similar but clearly different cancel as 3362. He noted it on one or more of the 1870-1881 issues but didn't identify the post office.

We come finally to Calumet, Ohio. Unique may not be too strong a description for the marking in Figure 5. The "O" for Ohio and the date – August 9, 1883 – are, of course, in manuscript. Since the magenta star and town marking is also struck on the stamp, the question arises as to whether the star was, in fact, intended to serve as a canceler or, at least, to improve the postmarker in its role as a canceler. We would like to think that such is the case.■

Figure 1



Figure 2

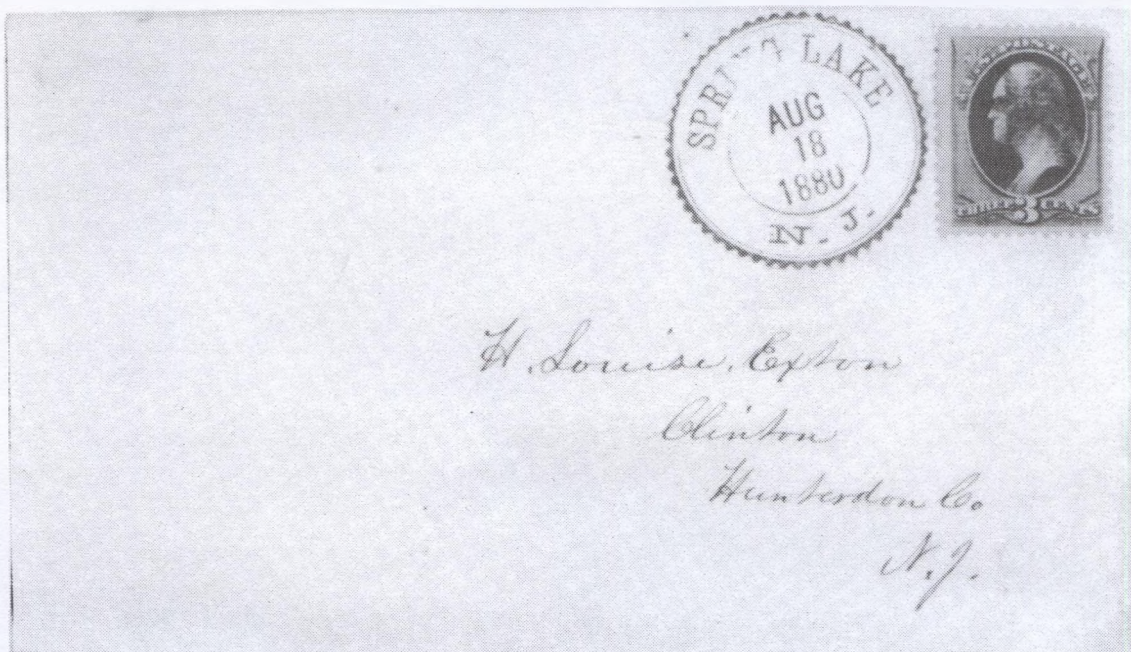


Figure 3

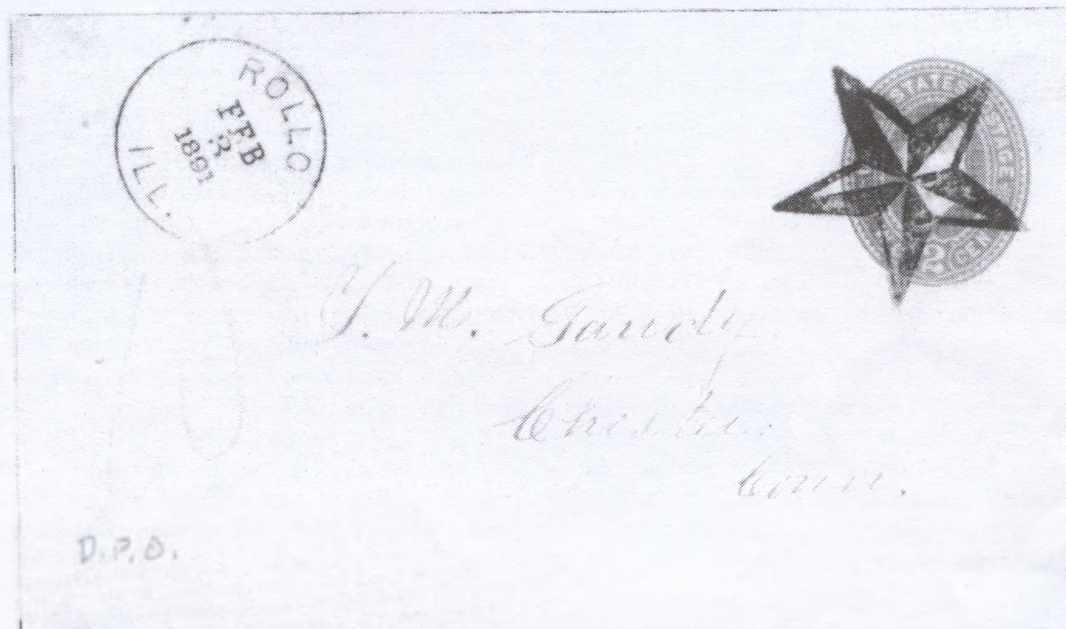


Figure 4

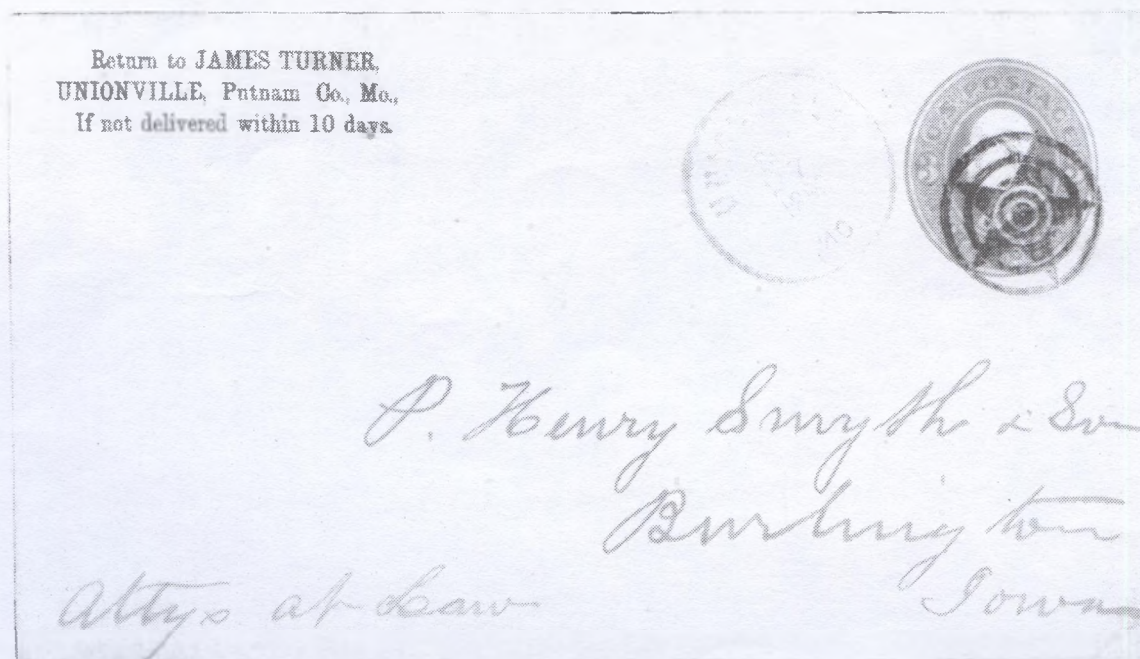
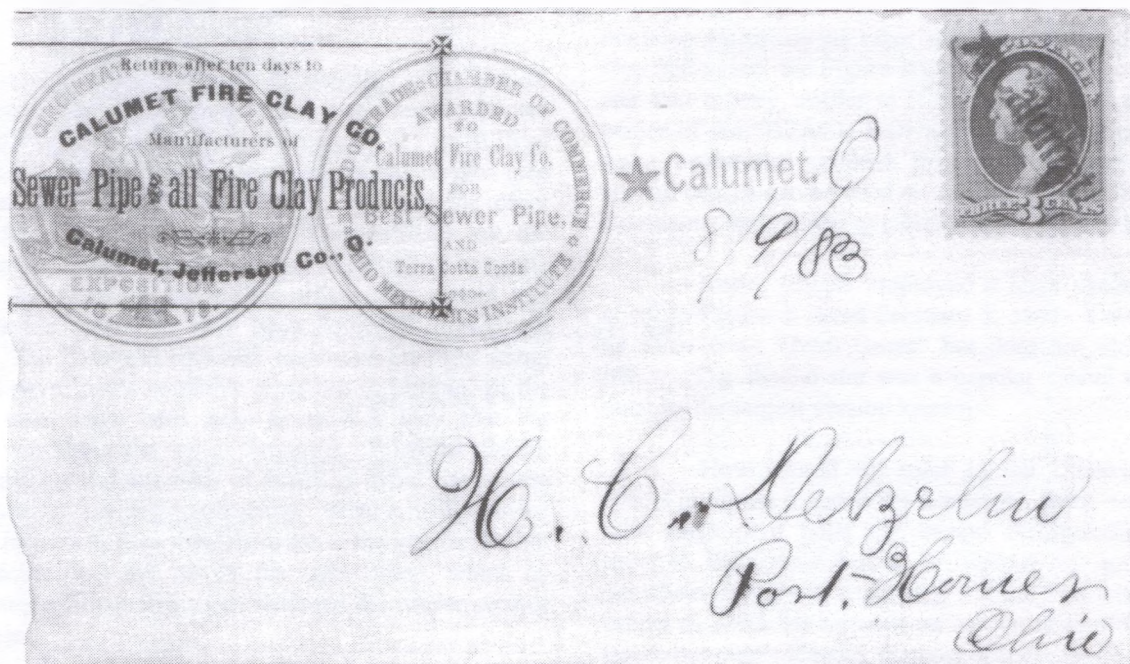


Figure 5



Three Machine Cancels, Three Companies

Figure 1 illustrates a postal card with an interesting combination of machine cancels. It entered the mails at Station D of the Boston post office on April 2, 1897 at what appears to be 3AM. Station D applied the CDS and flag cancel with a machine manufactured by the American Postal Machines Co.

The card is addressed to a party at the Cochran Hotel in Washington, D.C. An upside down Washington received marking, dated April 2, 1897, 9PM, shows at the lower left. This marking was applied by a machine produced by the Barry Postal Supply Co., a major contractor to the POD during the 1895-1900 period. The addressee on the card was determined

to not be located in Washington and the card was forwarded to South Boston. The forwarded marking was applied by a different machine in the Washington post office, one produced by the Barr-Fyke Machine Co. This postmark, dated April 3, 1897, 11:30PM, appears in the top center portion of the card followed by a succession of narrowly spaced vertical canceling bars. The Barr-Fyke company was a much smaller player in the machine cancel market than were the American and Barry companies.

We assume it quite unusual to find machine cancels of three different companies present on the same cover and will welcome reports of other such examples.■

Figure 1

