



# Cancellation Club NEWS

Vol. 28, No.2, Whole No. 259, May 2006

## The Meaning of a Cancel

by Roger D. Curran

Our knowledgeable and ever-vigilant Secretary/Treasurer, Roger Rhoads, reported a most interesting representation he noted in the design of Whitfield cancel #747. Those are, indeed, gymnastic symbols as Whitfield indicated. The letter in the middle is a "T" which, Roger pointed out, stands for Turner, a name given to certain clubs or societies established to promote health and physical education.

From several Turner society and related websites, the following was learned. The Turner movement was established in Germany in 1811 by Friedrich Jahn, known as the father of gymnastics. Turner clubs appeared first in Germany and later, beginning in 1848, in the U.S. The first U.S. clubs were established by German immigrants in Cincinnati and New York City. The word "Turner" is apparently derived from a German word having to do with "gymnastic."

While Turner societies have focused heavily on physical education, there has also been emphasis on developing the mind. Quoted herewith are several paragraphs from a 1984 statement of American Turners principles.

"The American Turners, a federation of Turner Societies in the United States of America and Canada, is organized to promote health and physical education, cultural education, and rational thinking, in order to advance the health, happiness and progress of mankind.

It is the principal duty of our Societies to provide schools in health and physical education for youth and adults and to promote their intellectual and cultural growth and moral character through special classes under qualified and competent instructors."

.....

"The American Turners is not a political or sectarian body obligating its members to any definite demands except United States or Canadian citizenship, but urges its members

Figure 1



to exercise the right of independent thought and action through the ballot and to follow the dictates of their conscience in religious matters."

The organization's motto is "A Sound Mind in a Sound Body."

The American Turners peaked in 1894 with 317 societies and more than 40,000 members. In 2002 there were approximately 60 Turner societies with a membership of 13,000 in the U.S. and Canada. The headquarters is located in Louisville, Ky.

In 1948, a U.S. postage stamp (Sc 979) was issued to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Turners.

Figure 2



Surely the Worcester postmaster or one of the clerks was a Turner society member. Who can show an actual strike of this remarkable cancel on or off cover?■

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to report that an additional small supply of the book *Cancellations Found on 19<sup>th</sup> Century U.S. Stamps* by Kenneth A. Whitfield has been prepared and is now available for sale. It contains more than 6,000 tracings of cancels and upwards of 1,000 tracings of postmarks and miscellaneous postal markings. The contents are housed in a three ring binder and the presentation is rather informal. The book was first offered 2002 and has been well received. The Club's intent in publishing it was to supplement the two standard references in the field: the Skinner-Eno and Cole books. Ordering instructions can be found elsewhere in this issue.

The USCC Board of Directors would like to publicly thank dealer Jim Lee for promoting the U.S. Cancellation Club in his latest newsletter. He encouraged membership in our Club and enclosed an application form in each copy. As a result, we have 21 new members! For those who do not know Jim, he specializes in philatelic literature, essays and proofs, and postal history, often carrying a substantial stock of fancy cancels. His support of the USCC is very much appreciated. An updated membership roster is planned for August.

An article in this issue briefly discusses the world's first cancels of adhesive postage stamps – the "Maltese Cross" cancels used on Great Britain's earliest issues. Information came from a book that is out of print and not easy to locate. It was especially interesting, therefore, to note a report in the April 10, 2006 *Linn's* about a presentation planned for WESTPEX entitled "Maltese Cross Cancellations of Great Britain and Ireland" by S. David Rockoff of California. It was mentioned that Mr. Rockoff is preparing a book on the subject. Many collectors will, no doubt, look forward to seeing it.

Roger Curran



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

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### Different Numerals, Same Set?

In August and September 1874, the NYPO experimented with a set of hand carved cancels containing Roman numerals. Three examples (two from Cole and one from Whitfield) are shown in Figure 1. The numbers range as

Figure 1



high as "14" which is consistent with the much more common New York Arabic numeral cancels of the period. (Isolated reports of New York "15" and "16" Arabic numeral cancels do exist and will be the subject of a future *NEWS* article.)

No number "1" cancel has been seen expressed as a Roman numeral although, of course, Roman numeral "1s" are seen making up numbers "2," "3," "4," etc. What we do find, interestingly, are contemporaneous Arabic numeral "1s" in the same barred style used for the Roman numeral cancels. We can speculate that a single Roman numeral "1" in a cancel was thought to be unrecognizable as a number, so an Arabic "1" was substituted. Figure 2 illustrates a cover in Arthur Beane's collection that bears a very complete strike of such a cancel. Your editor cannot offer proof that the year date is 1874; however, we have not seen any New York positive Roman numeral cancels that were not 1874. Roger Rhoads reported the practice of using an Arabic "1" cancel in a design similar to Roman numeral cancels in the Summer 1999 *NEWS* and illustrated the cancel shown here as Figure 3. It appears to differ from the Figure 2 cancel but they are similar enough that with such factors as wear, ink buildup, possible trimming, etc., perhaps they are the same.

A third example (see Figure 4) in the same basic style, but with differences, was reported by Bill Weiss on page 35 of the Summer 1986 *NEWS*. The cancel appears on a cover

Figure 3



Figure 4



to Egypt but is duplexed to a domestic-style New York CDS in black ink with a time-of-day indicator. This cancel was struck on August 12, 1874. The cover is also illustrated on page 229 of Bill's 1990 book, *The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City 1870-1878*.

The use at the same time of two different cancels that have the same basic design (two "7" in ellipse cancels, to cite another example) has been noted. An explanation that has been put forth is that while one set of handstamps was in use by the stamping clerks, another set was being adjusted by a single clerk to reflect the next half-hour increment on the CDS.

Comments and additional information will be welcomed.■

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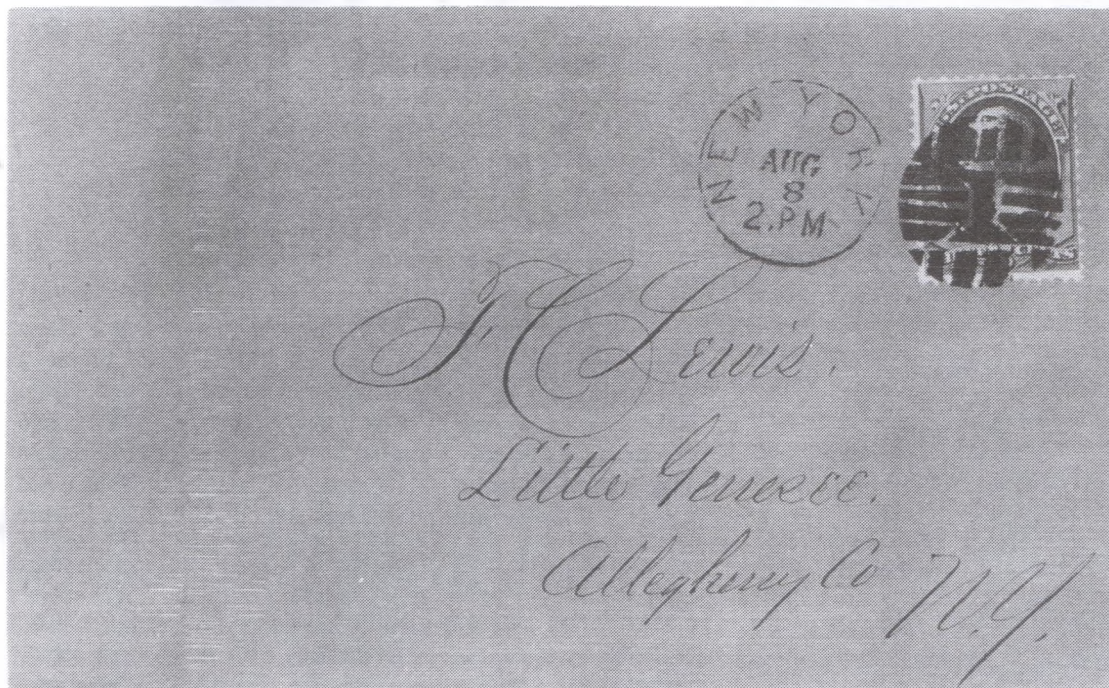
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Figure 2



**"Man With Hooked Nose" Cancel – Scott #88**

by Jim Cate

Some 30 years ago I first began serious stamp collecting. I went to the Chattanooga Public Library and reviewed all the printed material available on stamp collecting. In the course of reviewing the books, I came across a brief section of some long forgotten book that showed an example of a fancy cancel titled, "Man With Hooked Nose." That cancel stuck in my mind. The item created an interest in collecting fancy cancellations on the 3-cent issue of 1861. About 3 or 4 years later, I came across the copy of the cancel in a dealer's stock with numerous others of the 3-cent issues of 1861. I purchased the item and made attempts to again find the example in various books and articles without success.

I have continued to search without success to find the article that showed the cancel illustration. The grill plainly shows on the reverse side and one can easily determine that the stamp is a Scott #88 with 14 x 17 points. The earliest reported use for a #88 is February 12, 1868. This simply indicates that the use period was probably in 1868 or 1869. Skinner-Eno lists several cancellations of figures and heads that have some of the similar characteristics, but not quite the same completely. These include PH-F 20, PH-F 59, PH-F 68, and PH-F 80 found on pages 111 to 117. Over the years I have shown the item to various cancellation collectors without success of identification. The cancel is presented here with anticipation that someone may be able to share additional information on the cancel or provide comments. ■

*Editor's note. Wouldn't it be nice if it was perfectly clear what image was intended in every hand carved 19<sup>th</sup> century cancel? But a couple of forces work against that. The absorbent material typically used (cork or soft wood) was very perishable and soon began to break down in use. And then there is the human dimension – how well was the handstamp inked (too much, too little, just right) and how well struck (too heavy or light, at an angle, doubled accidentally, etc.), not to mention how well was the design carved to begin with. We can certainly see in Jim's example what appears to be a head with a very prominent nose. An eye also seems present. Yet and all there are ambiguous aspects – some obvious breakdown in the center implying the possibility of other, not so obvious, breakdown elsewhere, and the lack of a convincing mouth. It would be very nice if we could find a confirming example of this enigmatic cancel, perhaps showing some additional detail. Please help if you can.*



Figure 1

**Pinwheels**

A distinctive style of pinwheel cancellation was used by the New York Post Office in the mid-1860s. A number of variations exist and several are illustrated in Figure 1. On first class mail they are normally duplexed to the townmark. Unduplexed examples are noted on circulars.

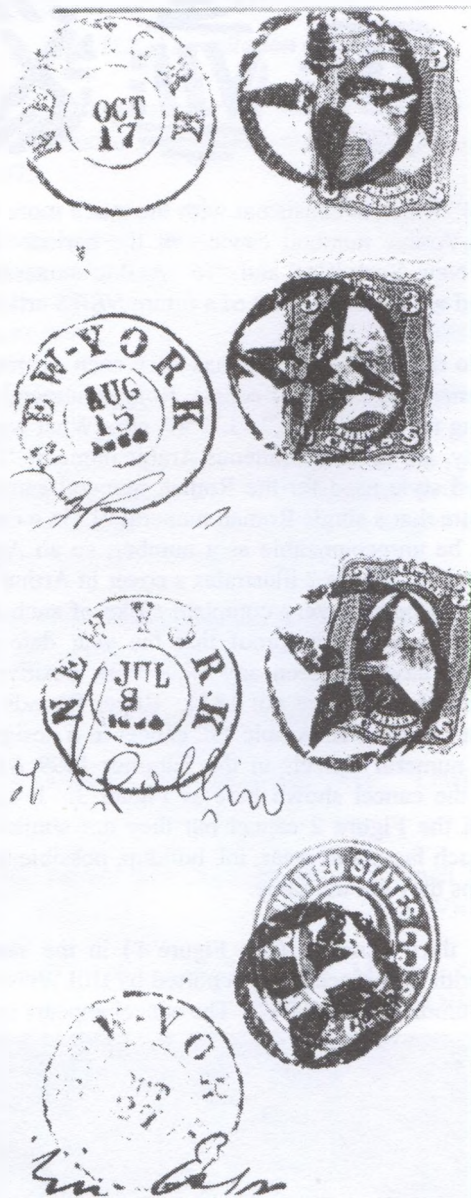


Figure 1

Every once in a while, what we might call a "New York pinwheel" shows up from somewhere else. Figure 2 illustrates such an example on a cover bearing a red Boston double circle postmark. The unduplexed killer is black and the stamp is a Sc 65. A similar but apparently different design (see Figure 3) has been reported for Boston by Blake and Davis.<sup>1</sup> A further Boston variation is reported by Cole (Figure 4) as GE-C 114. Figure 5 is a tracing of a New York cancel in the collection of John Donnes that closely resembles the Figure 1 killer.

Figure 2

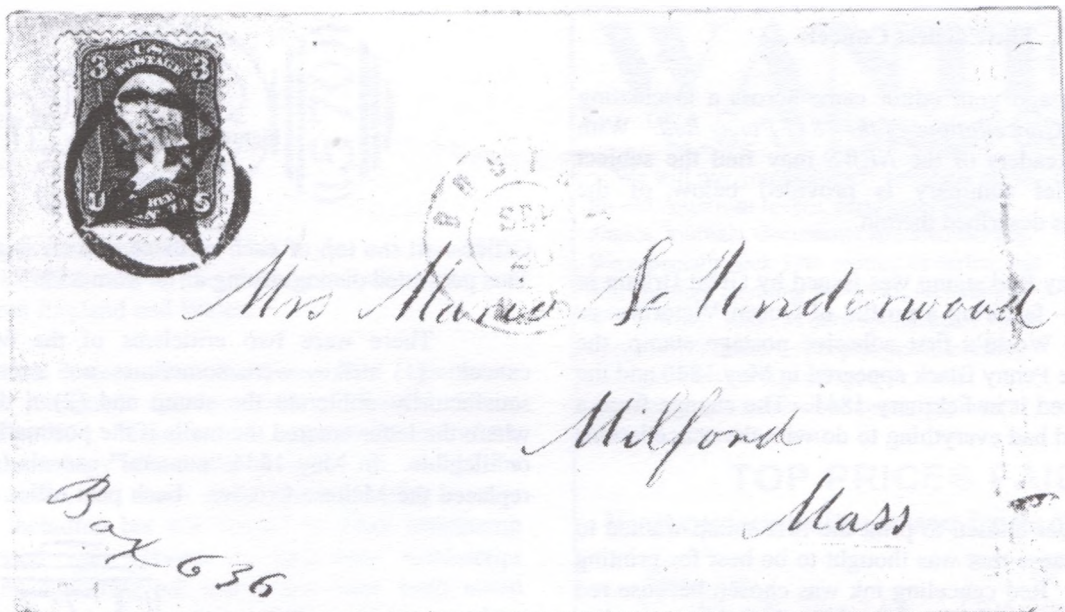


Figure 3



Figure 4

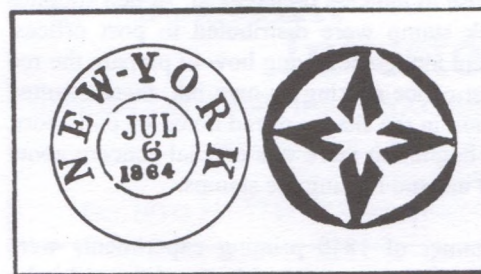


Figure 5

Figure 6

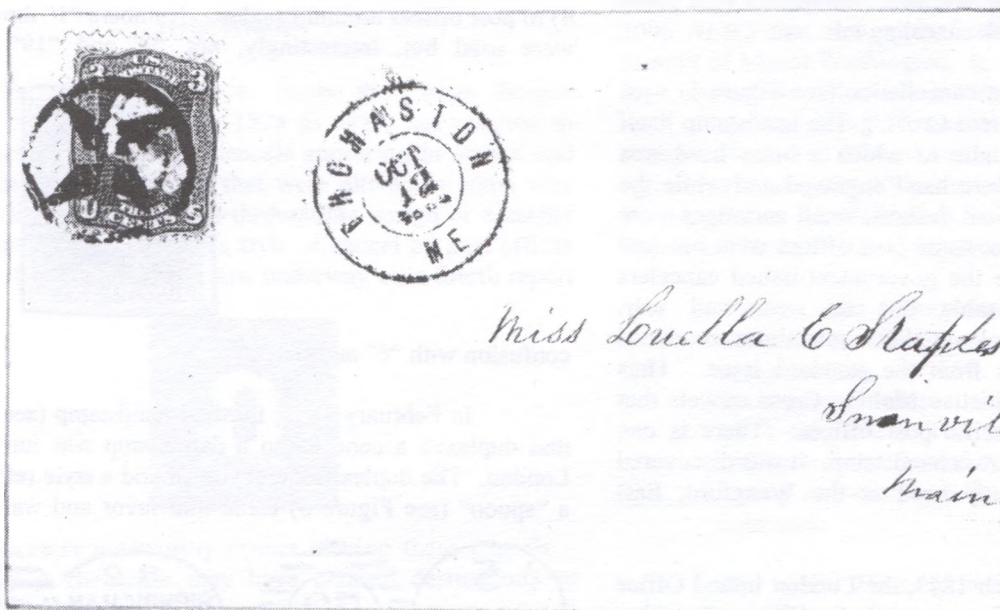


Figure 7

Figure 6 shows another unduplexed "New York pinwheel," this one originating in Thomaston, Maine. Figure 7 illustrates Whitfield #4360 reported from Worthington, Indiana on 1861 issue stamps.

The intriguing question arises as to whether there may have been a handstamp supplier that sold such killers, rather than the designs being carved by local post office personnel. Your editor doubts it. It seems much more likely that the New York style was noted and copied by whittlers in other post offices. We certainly know that smaller post offices did mimic the cancels of larger post offices. For example,

several articles in these pages have presented hand-carved ellipse cancels in designs similar to the manufactured steel cancels of big city post offices. These consisted of horizontal or vertical bars with a number or letter in the center.

We would like to survey this subject further and encourage readers to report additional post offices that used "New York pinwheels."■

<sup>1</sup> Maurice C. Blake and Wilbur W. Davis *Boston Postmarks to 1890*, Quarterman Publications, Inc., 1974, reprint, p. 205.

## The Earliest Cancels

Not long ago your editor came across a fascinating book entitled *The Cancellations of the 1841 Penny Red*.<sup>1</sup> With the thought that readers of the *NEWS* may find the subject interesting, a brief summary is provided below of the canceling practices described therein.

The Penny Red stamp was issued by Great Britain in the same design – featuring a profile of Queen Victoria – as that used for the World's first adhesive postage stamp, the Penny Black. The Penny Black appeared in May 1840 and the Penny Red replaced it in February 1841. The change from a black stamp to red had everything to do with the cancellations placed upon it.

The printer chosen to print the first stamp wanted to use black ink because that was thought to be best for printing from steel plates. Red canceling ink was chosen because red ink was already in use to indicate prepayment. When supplies of the Penny Black stamp were distributed to post offices, instructions were sent along specifying how to prepare the red ink. With each post office making its own ink, there resulted considerable variation in the shades of red noted by collectors. And from the very beginning there was official concern about washing off the red ink and reusing the stamps.

In the summer of 1840 printing experiments were undertaken involving different stamp colors and the red color was settled upon. It was also decided to use a black canceling ink. When the red stamps were issued, post offices were *given* a supply of the required black canceling ink.

Great Britain's first cancellation (see Figure 1) was, of course, the famous "Maltese Cross." The handstamp itself consisted of a wooden handle to which a brass head was nailed. The brass heads were hand engraved and while the intent was to provide identical designs, small variations were inevitably introduced. Also, some post offices went out into the local market to replace the government-issued cancelers when they became unusable due to wear and tear. Handstamps made by local suppliers sometimes produced quite significant variations from the standard issue. Thus there are a number of distinctive Maltese Cross cancels that can be identified with specific post offices. There is one known surviving Maltese Cross handstamp. It was discovered in 1963 and was apparently used at the Wangford, East Suffolk post office.

Beginning in March 1843, the London Inland Office of the GPO used Maltese Cross cancels (see Figure 2) with a number, ranging from 1-12, in the center. There is some question as to what these numbers represented. One theory is that they identified individual clerks and another that they indicated different departments within the London Inland



Figure 1

Figure 2



Office. At the top of each of these cancels is a small cross. This permitted distinguishing a "6" from a "9."

There were two criticisms of the Maltese Cross cancel: (1) strikes were sometimes not strong enough to satisfactorily obliterate the stamp and (2) it didn't identify where the letter entered the mails if the postmark was omitted or illegible. In May 1844 "numeral" cancels (see Figure 3) replaced the Maltese Crosses. Each post office of significant

Figure 3



size was assigned a number which appeared in the center of the cancel. The surrounding design was an oval in the case of English post offices, rectangular for Scotland and diamond-shaped for Ireland. Hundreds of these handstamps were issued.

Shortly after the "numeral" cancels were introduced, the London Postal District issued a distinctive set (see Figure 4) to post offices around London. Numbers "1" through "72" were used but, interestingly, not "9" and "19" to avoid

Figure 4



confusion with "6" and "61."

In February 1853, the first handstamp (see Figure 5) that duplexed a canceler to a date stamp was introduced in London. The duplex design evolved and a style referred to as a "spoon" (see Figure 6) came into favor and was issued to

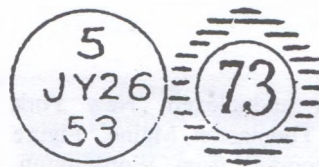


Figure 5

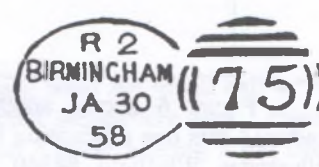


Figure 6

larger post offices in England and Ireland, beginning in December 1853. In these markings, the canceler appears to overlap somewhat the town postmark to its left.

Beginning in May 1854, an interesting style of marking (see Figure 7) was used that is referred to as a

Figure 7



“sideways” duplex cancellation. This style was issued to some London Districts and to numerous provincial cities and towns throughout England and Wales.

The book is devoted to the Penny Red imperforate stamp, which remained current until perforated issues appeared in early 1854. Thus we have come to the end of the cancellation chronology discussed therein. It should be mentioned, however, that many additional interesting matters are addressed including but not limited to other handstamp markings pressed into service as cancelers, manuscript cancels, unusual canceling ink colors that have been noted during the period, and noteworthy variations of the standard canceling design. Numerous illustrations are also presented including some of those shown in the present article. Unfortunately, this very informative and readable book is out of print. Presumably, occasional copies are available from philatelic literature dealers.■

<sup>1</sup> Robert Danzig and David Goldsmith, *The Cancellations of the 1841 Penny Red*, Philatelic Imprint, 12 Holyoake Walk, London N2 OJK (1991).

### Help Wanted

The USCC project to study the “large Boston negative” cancels, used from 1878 to 1883, has resulted in three reports: (1) the basic cancels appearing in square and circle formats, (2) examples that were altered in some way such as a line or lines carved through the design or a corner cut off, and (3) the use of this style of cancel by post offices other than Boston. Work is now underway on a fourth report



that will present noteworthy covers bearing these cancels – noteworthy in the sense they have unusual destinations or frankings, involve especially attractive advertising, include auxiliary markings of interest, and the like. As before, we are dependent on the submissions of Club members. If you have Boston negative covers in your collection that you consider “noteworthy” and you haven’t already sent in images in response to our earlier efforts, please do so now. They should be directed to project coordinator Ted Wassam, 3504 South Court, Palo Alto, CA 9430, hopefully by June 15.

Thanks very much!■

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**Mount Washington, N.H.**

Roger Rhoads wrote about a cancel in the February 2006 *NEWS* that was applied by a hotel post office at the summit of Mount Washington. In the article he mentioned the high winds there. The February 2006 *Vermont Philatelist* took note of the upcoming “Wonders of America” sheet of 40 stamps to be issued at Washington 2006 and identified three of “great regional interest.” One stamp will recognize Mount Washington as the “Windiest Place.” The journal provided interesting background information, which is herewith quoted.

“The first regular meteorological observations on Mount Washington were conducted by the U.S. Signal Service, a forerunner of today’s Weather Bureau, from 1870 to 1892. The Mount Washington station was the first of its kind in the world, setting an example followed in many other countries.

The Mount Washington Observatory was re-established at the summit in 1932 through the enthusiasm of a group of individuals who recognized the value of a scientific facility at that demanding location. In April of 1934, observers measured a wind gust of 231 mph, which remains a world record for a surface station. In spite of the hardships imposed by their environment, observers regularly monitored weather under the auspices of the U.S. Weather Bureau, and conducted landmark research in short-wave radio propagation, ice physics and the constitution of clouds.”■

### Early "Boston Negative" Cancel

The August 2005 *NEWS* illustrated the latest reported use of a Boston large negative cancel. We use the term "large" because before employing these particular cancels, which contain a negative number or letter in the center, Boston used a series of small killers incorporating a negative letter.

In the present article we illustrate the *earliest* reported use of a Boston large negative. Figure 1 shows a postal card canceled by a "K" in a square dated May 8, 1878. The cancel is crisp with the lines of the four sides sharply defined. This card had not been reported at the time of the November 2003 progress report on these cancels but will be

included in an update.

The question arises as to exactly when these cancels were introduced. Figure 2 illustrates a card bearing a small Boston negative "H" cancel on May 4, 1878. It certainly appears that at some point during the May 4-8 period the switch was made, although there may have been some overlapping use. Readers are encouraged to check their collections for cancels that provide additional information on this matter and report such to the *NEWS*.■

Figure 2

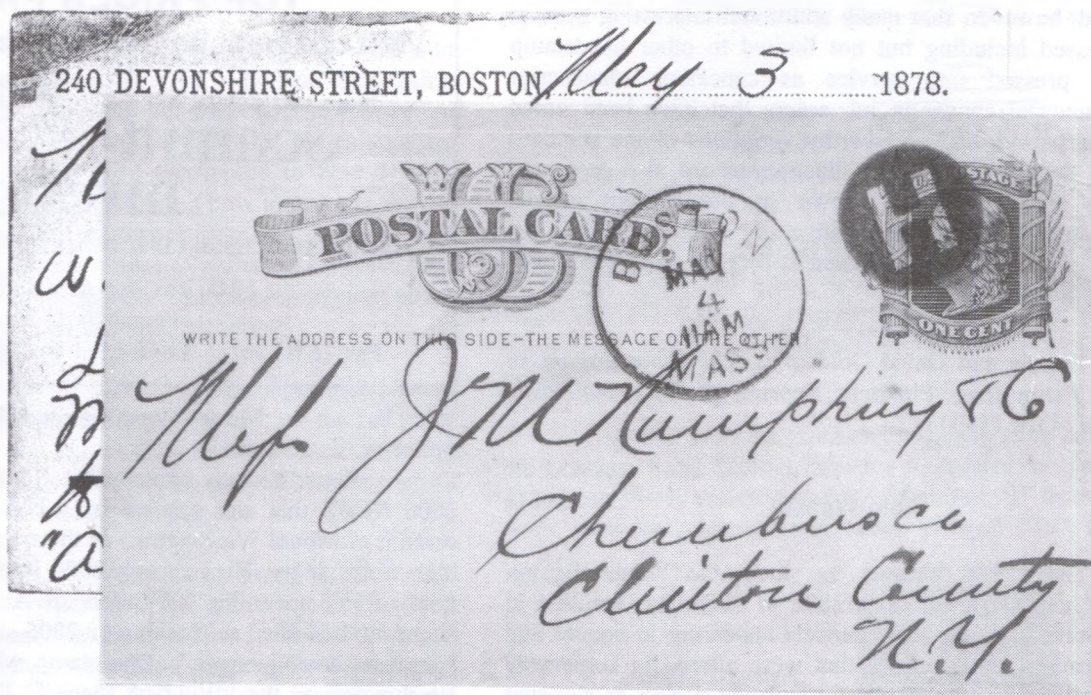
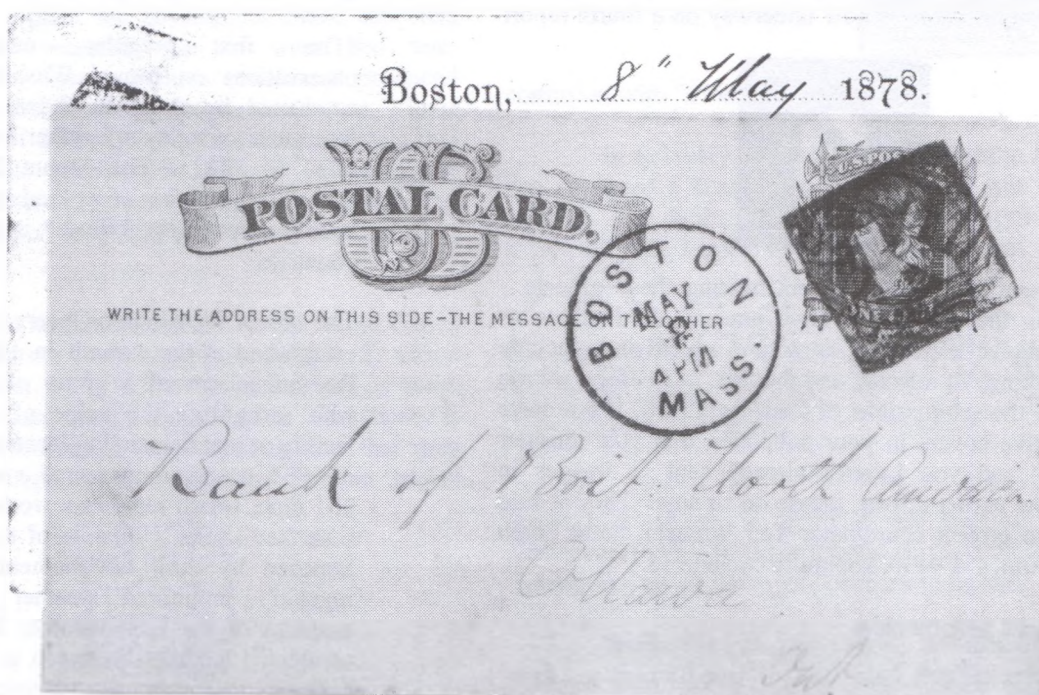


Figure 1



### Adding and Subtracting

We'll add an interesting "Boston-style" large negative cancel to the record presented in our Phase 3 progress report issued with the November 2005 *NEWS*. Except for Boston itself, Portland, Maine made more extensive use of these cancels than any other post office. Recently, the Figure 1 cancel came to our attention, which, from a quick look, appears to be a rather simple geometric killer. Lurking within, however, are unmistakable indications (as the tracing by John Donnes makes clear) of a negative "4" that is shrouded by the hand carved lines cut through the design. Boston carved some



Figure 1



of its cancels so that those that were otherwise the same – two "4" in a circle cancels, for example – could be easily distinguished from one another. Individual cancels were assigned to hand stamping clerks so that their work could be audited for quality control purposes. Apparently, Portland did the same.

The cover in Figure 2 caused a reconsideration of a previously reported Boston cancel that was thought to be an altered design. It is quite clear that the Figure 3 cancel is an incompletely struck example of the well-established design of a number or letter in circle with negative ring. A typical cancel, taken from the Blake and Davis book *Boston*

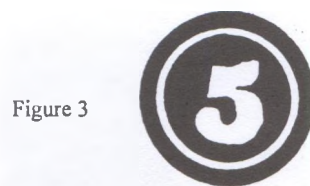


Figure 3



Figure 4

*Postmarks to 1890*, is shown in Figure 3. Fast-forward now to tracing C-3-1 in our Phase 2 progress report of August 2004, shown here in Figure 4. Your editor now believes that the Figure 4 cancel is, in fact, an incompletely stuck "3" in circle with negative ring and not a "variated" or altered design as reported in the progress report. We'll consider it deleted from that report. ■

### More Circles and Such

Gil Levere writes to report that, just by happenstance, he was reorganizing parts of his collection two days before the February 2006 *NEWS* arrived and came across six cards from North Boscawen, N.H. beyond the one illustrated on page 12 of that issue. They are all from the same correspondence.

Readers will recall that the illustrated card was canceled by a precisely circular killer dated April 23, 1883 and consisting of an outer ring and a large solid "bulls eye" with a diameter only slightly less than the ring. The question was raised as to whether the cancel was duplexed to the CDS, given other markings on the card. Also, a Whitfield tracing of a different North Boscawen cancel – a thin, precisely circular ring, with a reported date of January 1, 1885 was shown.

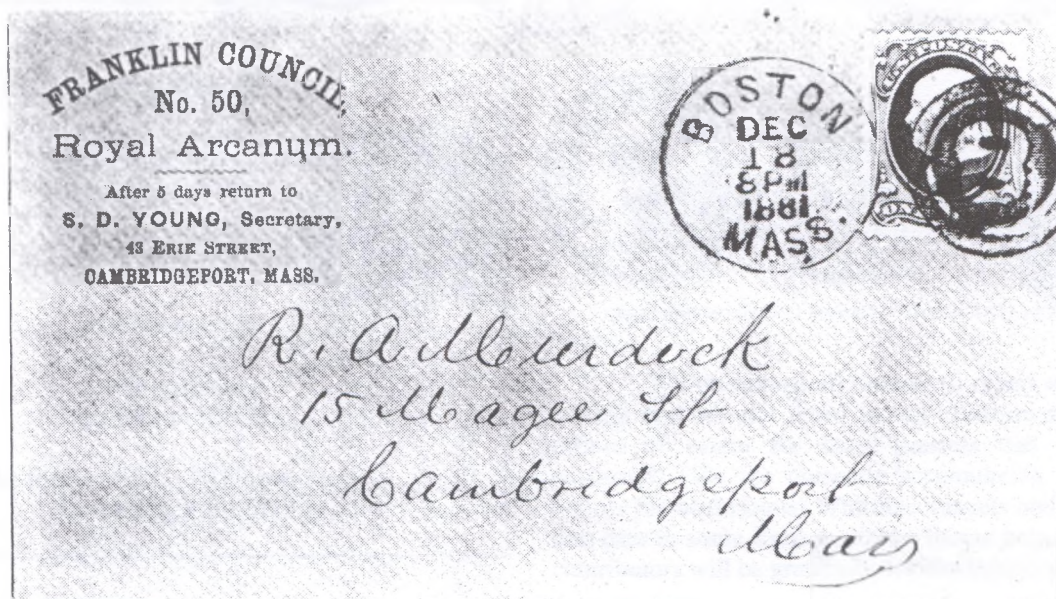


Figure 2

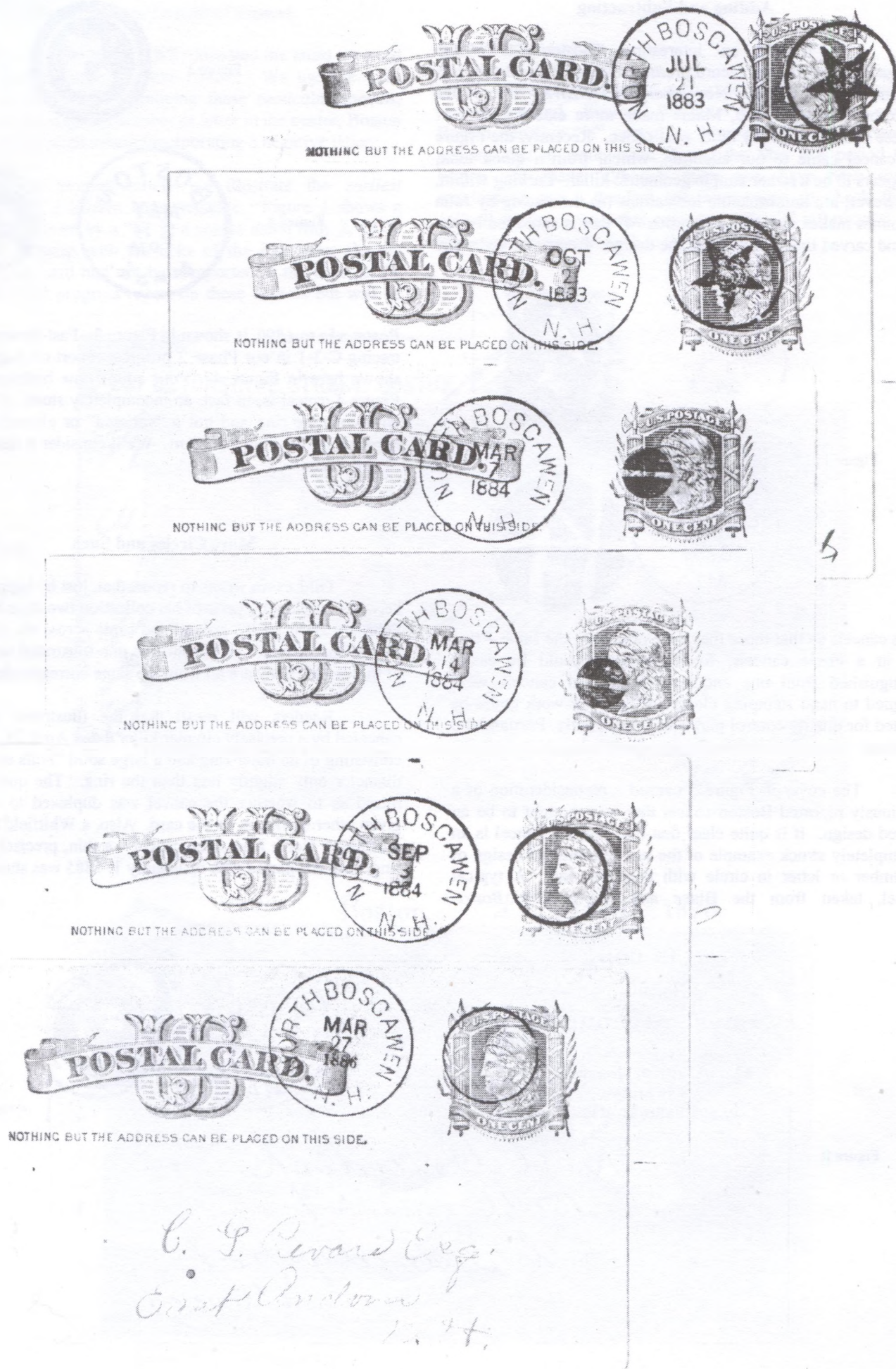
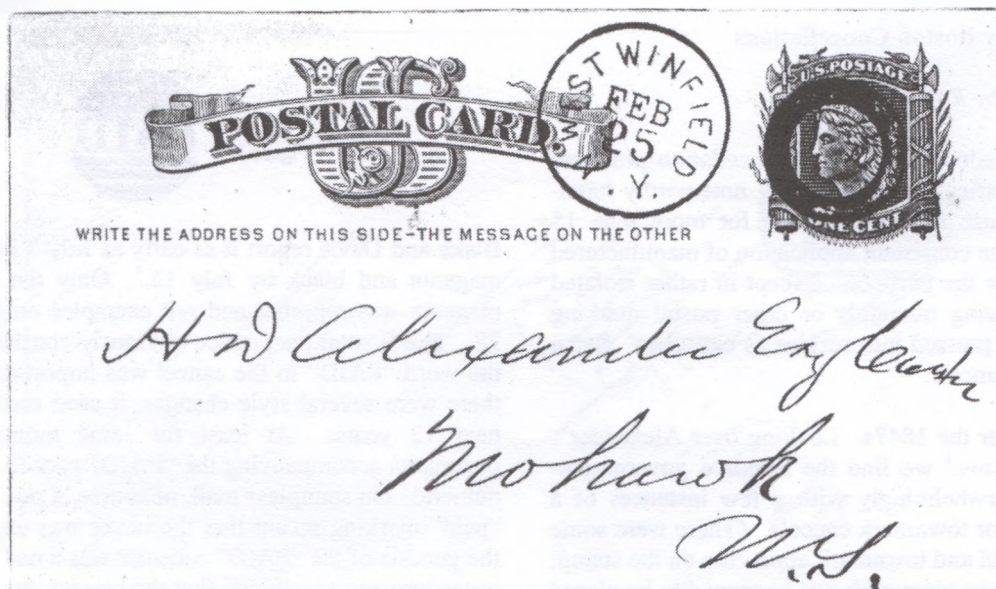


Figure 1

Figure 2



Gil's additional cards are interesting and helpful. They all postdate the "bulls eye" cancel but fall within three years of it. Gil's first observation was that the same CDS handstamp was used for all strikes, which is evident because of the consistently appearing broken "E." A second observation is that, except for the "screwhead" cancels, the distance between CDS and killer is approximately 5mm in all cases. Thus we can strongly infer that the "bulls eye" was duplexed to the CDS in a single handstamp.

Although it will not be clear in the illustration, the star cancel has a small negative circle in the center with a positive star inside. This cancel is of a type that collectors commonly encounter but the "screw head" is another of those precisely geometric designs that seems odd to be used as a canceler.

We'll throw in one more precise circular cancel, this from West Winfield, N.Y. The message dateline is 1882. The cancel is very sharp and appears as though it might have been applied by a washer or something similar.■

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#### Large "S" Cancel Identified

Michael Horan reports the post office of origin for the large and fancy negative "S" cancel that Whitfield lists as #6163 – see Figure 1. Portions of the two covers illustrated here as Figure 2 show that the cancel originated in Memphis, Tennessee. One of the two covers has an "1876" notation written on the front.

Figure 1



Figure 2



We encourage all readers to report to the *NEWS* (1) cancels that are not listed in the literature and (2) the post offices of origin for listed cancels that have not been attributed. We are presently accumulating reports on post offices for unattributed Whitfield cancels and plan to publish that data in some form in 2006. Please help if you can. All contributors will be gratefully acknowledged.■

## Early Boston Cancellations

by Roger D. Curran

I have long admired the early cancellation practices of the Boston post office, not due to any noteworthy hand-carved designs, because there were none for more than 15 years, but rather for the consistent application of manufactured cancelers designed for the purpose. Except in rather isolated cases, townmarks, rating numerals or other postal marking handstamps were not pressed into service as cancelers. Same goes for manuscript cancels.

Let's consider the 1847s. Looking over Alexander's 1847-issue cover census,<sup>1</sup> we find the standard government-issued grid used overwhelmingly with a few instances of a straight-line "PAID" or townmark cancels. (There were some listings of both the grid and townmark appearing on the stamp; however, we surmise the townmark just happened to be placed partly on the stamp and was not intended as a canceler.) Occasional manuscript cancels were found on stamps along with other cancels.

Through 1849, Boston struck the grid in red ink. Beginning in early 1850, a very few strikes of the grid in black are noted and by the end of August 1850, black ink was taking over with only occasional uses of red. In 1851, red canceling ink is seen with more frequency but black still predominated.

We come now to the introduction of 1851 issue stamps on July 1 1851. As early as July 3, Boston introduced what Chase called a "purplish red"<sup>2</sup> ink and Blake and Davis referred to as "magenta."<sup>3</sup> I have before me the July 5 cover illustrated in Figure 1. Both the grid and the straight-line "PAID" are in this magenta ink. The Boston postmark is a rather bright red, a very different color. One supposes the post office was seeking a darker color than the regular red to use on the reddish stamps, but why not simply use black? Magenta ink was employed only for a short period, perhaps less than two weeks, and concurrently with red and black inks.

Early in July, what collectors often refer to as the "small Boston paid" cancel (see Figure 2) was introduced.

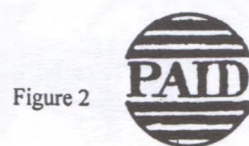


Figure 2

Blake and Davis report it as early as July 7 in red and in both magenta and black by July 12.<sup>4</sup> Only the one example in magenta was reported and red examples only as late as July 28. The Boston post office obviously considered that having the word "PAID" in the cancel was important because, while there were several style changes, it used such cancels for the next 12 years. At least for some months initially, the postmarks accompanying the "PAID" cancels showed the rate numeral. On stampless mail, of course, a rate numeral with no "paid" marking meant that the cover was unpaid, so perhaps the genesis of the "PAID" canceler was a nod to the stampless procedure and to confirm that the correct rate was paid by the stamp. Old practices that are no longer necessary sometimes die hard.

Blake and Davis only report the Figure 2 cancel in black after July 28, 1851. For many years the latest reported date of this cancel, insofar as I know, was the January 15, 1852 date listed in Blake and Davis.<sup>5</sup> Giving added impetus to that date was their report of a January 16, 1852 cover bearing the "large Boston paid" cancel.<sup>6</sup> (The January 16 cover illustrated by Blake and Davis is shown here as Figure 3.) Last year, however, an interesting cover (Figure 4) came upon the market bearing the "small Boston paid." The date in the CDS is not clear but was reported by the auctioneer as January 16. After a careful examination, John Donnes agreed with that conclusion and his tracing is included in Figure 4. Although the cover is not year dated, the stamps are Sc. 10s (experimental O.B. according to the PF certificate). Given what is known about the use of the "small Boston paid," it seems inconceivable that the cover was dated later than 1852.

The "small Boston paid" cancel is important. While I have undertaken no survey on the subject, I believe that, next to the government-issued grid which was, of course, used by a number of post offices, the "small Boston paid" is the most

Figure 1

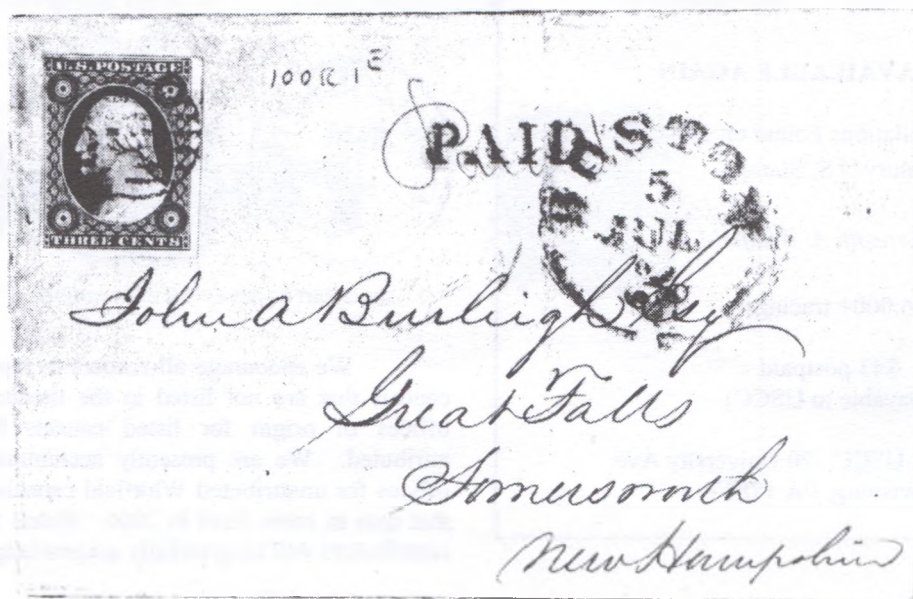


Figure 3

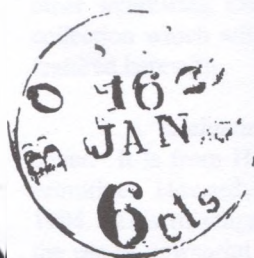
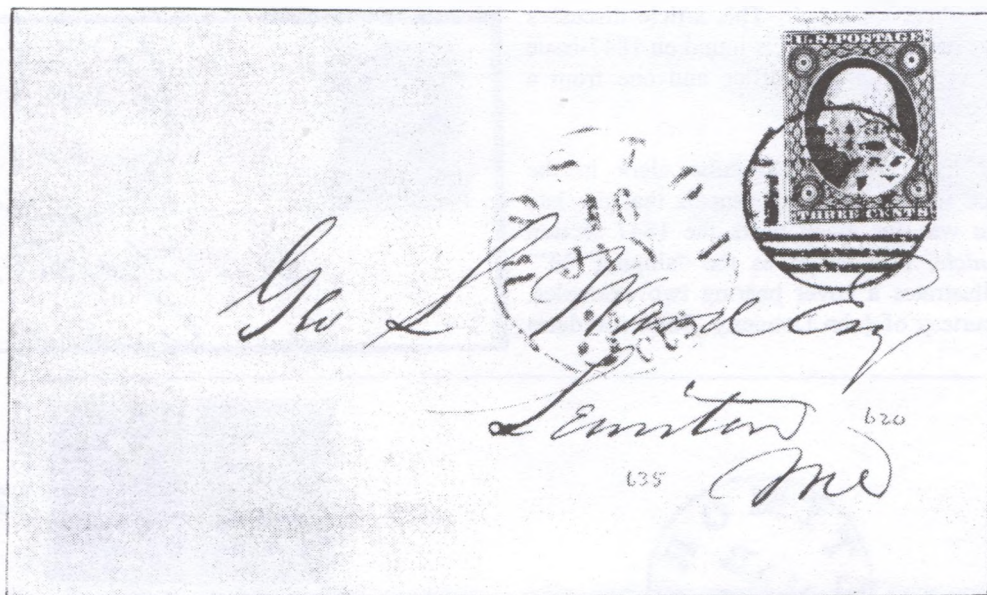
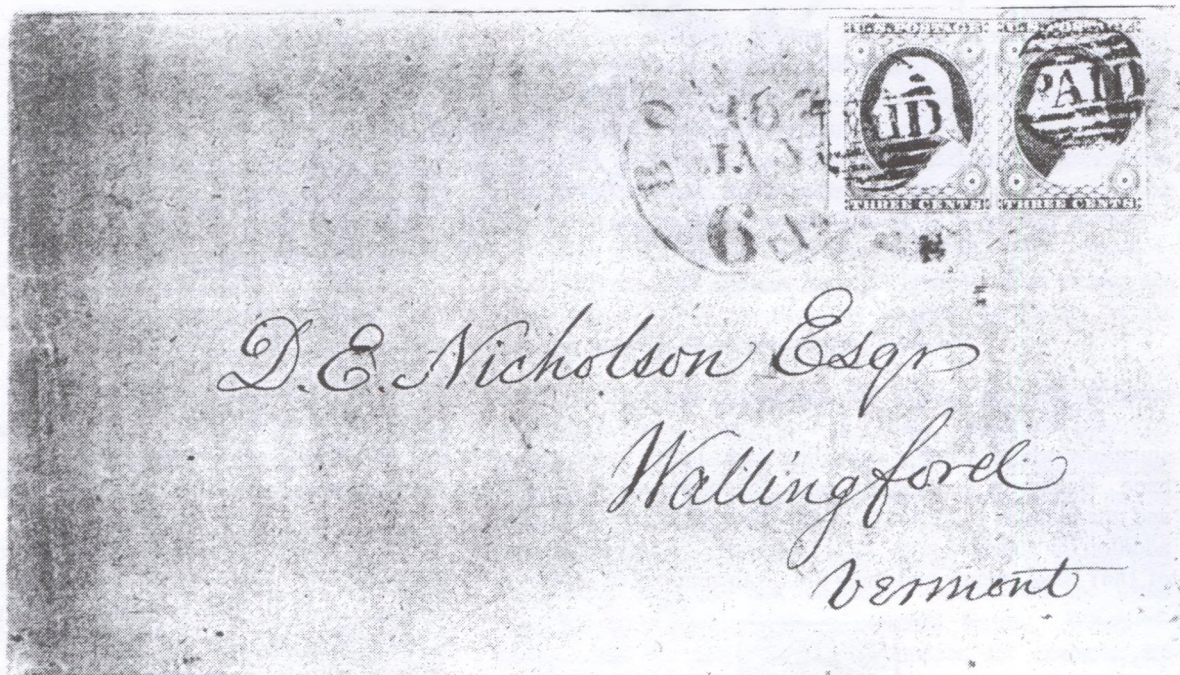


Figure 4



common cancel found on Sc10 stamps,. (This excludes townmarks and other handstamps that were not intended as cancelers and also manuscript cancels.) Indeed, I can think of no canceler that would even come close.

Reports of covers pertinent to the above and your comments are eagerly sought.■

<sup>1</sup> Thomas J. Alexander *The United States 1847 Issue: A Cover Census*, The U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc. (2001) pp. 204-38.

<sup>2</sup> Carroll Chase *The 3¢ Stamp of the United States 1851-1857 Issue* (revised) Quarterman Publications, Inc. (1975), p. 348.

<sup>3</sup> Maurice C. Blake and Wilbur W. Davis *Boston Postmarks to 1890*, Quarterman Publications Inc. (1974), p. 348.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. <sup>5</sup> Ibid. <sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

## Noteworthy Manuscripts

by Roger D. Curran

When the U.S. Post Office Department first issued postage stamps in 1847, it provided to the largest post offices an "instrument" to cancel the stamps. The cancellation produced by the instrument is illustrated as Figure 1. Post offices not receiving the instrument were advised, by regulation, to cancel the stamps "... by making a cross x on each with a pen." While some of the resulting cancels were in

Figure 1



the prescribed form, others were not. This article discusses briefly two distinctive manuscript cancels found on 1847-issue stamps, one from a very large post office and one from a decidedly small post office.

There must have been a particular clerk in the Baltimore post office who applied the cancels that the late Creighton Hart, who was for many years the 1847 section editor of the *Chronicle*, referred to as the "sloping 'M'" cancel. Figure 2 illustrates a cover bearing two examples. (The tracings are courtesy of John Donnes.) Since the dates

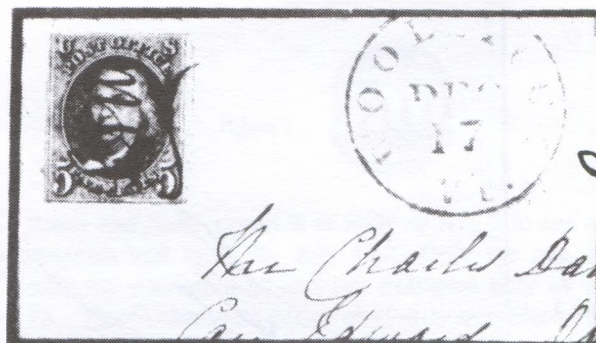


Figure 3

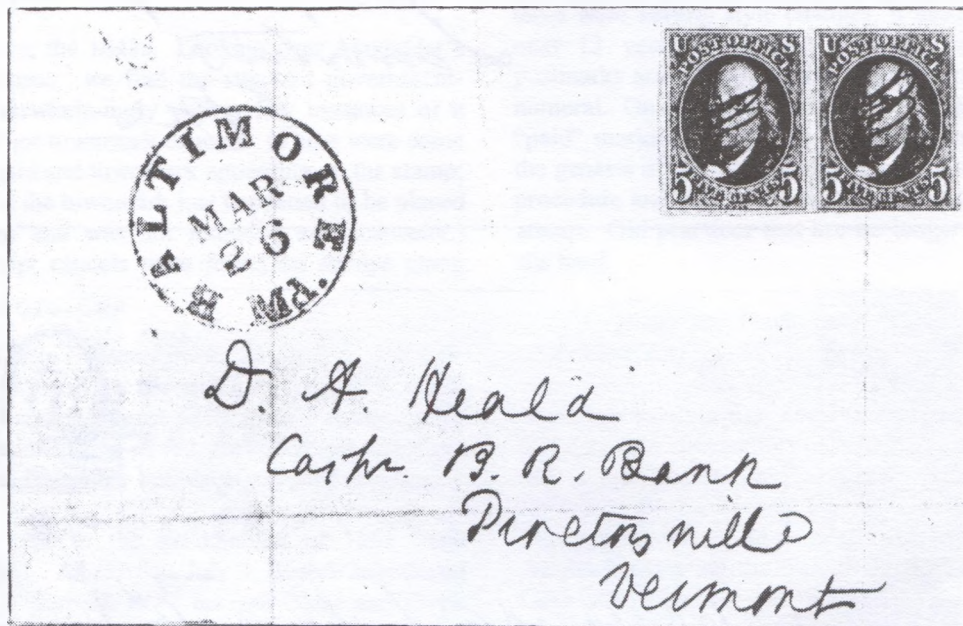


Figure 2

noted for the "M" cancel are spread out over time and thus represent occasional uses, it may have been applied in situations where suitable canceling handstamps were not at hand. Baltimore, incidentally, made extensive use of "PAID" and rate numeral handstamps as cancelers during this period in addition the standard grid. As a large city, it was a major user of 1847 issue stamps and there are a fair number of off-cover



stamps bearing the identifiable manuscript cancel.

A much less common cancellation, likely fewer than ten and probably closer to five on and off cover, is from Woodstock, Vermont. I have auction lot illustrations of four examples, all on 5¢ stamps. The cancel is said to consist of the initials "LAM," referring to Lester A. Miller, a postal clerk in the Woodstock post office. An approximation of one of the cancels is shown as Figure 3. In each case, the "LAM" reads vertically up from the bottom of the stamp. Two "LAM" covers are listed in Alexander's 1847 issue cover census.<sup>1</sup> Insofar as is known, both are genuine. Two Woodstock covers are listed with unidentified manuscript cancels which, one supposes, may involve the "LAM." A wrapper is also

listed with an unidentified manuscript cancel (which, I'm confident, is an "LAM" based on an auction lot record) but this item was given a "not genuine" PF opinion. Woodstock received no supplies of the 1847 issue stamp.

Overall, Alexander lists eleven 1847 issue covers (including the wrapper) from Woodstock but the Philatelic Foundation declined an opinion on two of them. As an aside, it is interesting to note that one of the covers, for which an opinion was declined, bore a stamp with a red grid cancel. Since Woodstock received no 1847 issue stamps, surely it didn't receive the standard grid. Conceivably, Woodstock made its own grid but how likely is that for a post office that handled so few 1847 issue covers? The cover is addressed to Montpelier, Vt., which did receive 1847 issue stamps and did use a red grid. Possibly the stamp was not canceled at Woodstock, but was canceled when the cover arrived at Montpelier. The Woodstock postmark on this cover contains a "5 cts" and there is also a straight-line "PAID" present.■

<sup>1</sup> Alexander, Thomas J. *The United States 1847 Issue: A Cover Census*, US Philatelic Classics Society, Inc. (2001), p. 783.

More from Oswego County, N.Y.

The May 2002 *NEWS* carried an article on cancels from Mexico, New York consisting of month abbreviations –

Figure 1

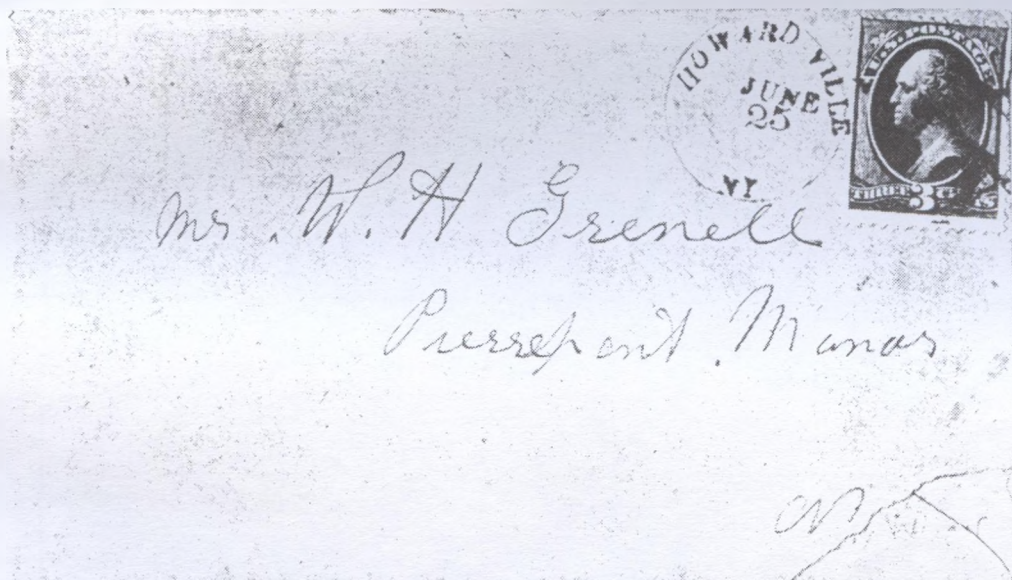


Figure 2



"DEC," for example. The covers illustrated were provided through the courtesy of a long-time collector of Oswego County postal history, Nick Todaro. We also have images of other interesting Oswego County covers from Nick's fine collection which will be presented in future issues. Two are featured herewith.

A fascinating postmark was struck on the Figure 1 cover. It is from Howardville, N.Y. and is, to say the least, primitive. Howardville is a DPO that operated from 1875 – 1904. This misalignment of letters around the rim suggests the use of newsprint type stuck by hand into a round piece of some material. (The image used for Figure 1 was darkened to bring out the rim that is actually very light.) But what would be the material in such a concoction? Cork or wood wouldn't be expected to yield the thin rim line. A tracing of the killer is shown on Figure 2. Hard to imagine what was pressed into service to produce *that* design!

Dick Graham illustrated two covers with handmade postmarks in his *Linn's* column of November 21, 2005. He was discussing situations where newly appointed small town postmasters, on occasion, entered on duty with no handstamps being left behind by their predecessors. If these postmasters didn't want to use manuscript cancels, they had to come up

with temporary expedients until their orders from handstamp suppliers were filled

The cover in Figure 3 bears a cancel of the type shown in Figure 4, which is Whitfield #4178. It is a stock style and Whitfield reports it from Franklinton, Pa. Note the wide spacing between the cancel and the CDS, which is suggestive of separate hand stamps. In this case, however, the markings are from a duplexed hand stamp as evidenced by the same spacing found on other Orwell, N.Y. covers in Nick's collection which show usage from March 2, 1887 – April 4, 1889. An example appears here as Figure 5. Nick reports six covers, all of which are struck in magenta ink except for the earliest, which is in a gray black ink.

Cole lists the Figure 4 cancel on page 53 as GCR-179A from Laketon, Indiana. He provides a photo illustration of a section of the cover and it is interesting to note that the CDS and cancel are considerably closer together than on the Orwell covers. Cole states that the Laketon CDS and cancel "...were probably separate rubber stamps." It is known that handstamp suppliers did, to some extent, sell the same canceler in duplexed and unduplexed forms. Wheel-of-fortune and the common scarab cancels, for example, are known in both formats.■

Figure 3

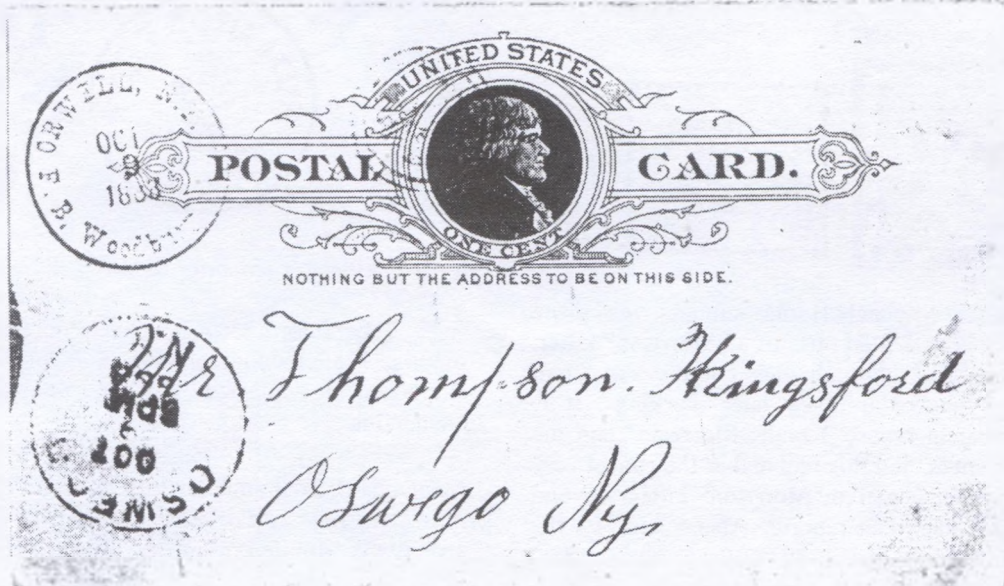
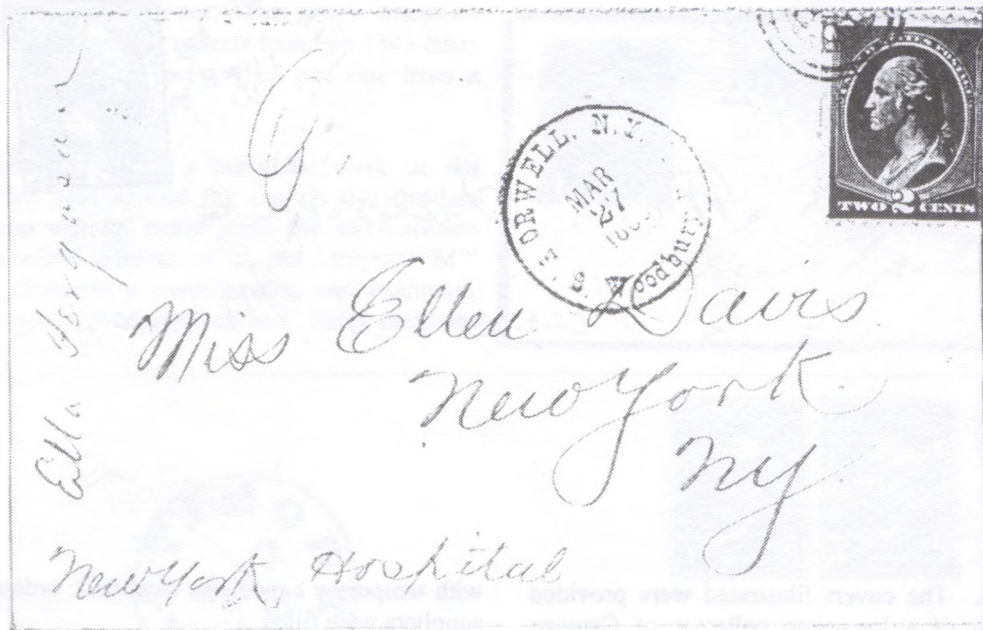


Figure 4



Figure 5



### Negative "Morrison" Marking

A number of distinctive cancels produced by a railway mail clerk named Andrew J. Morrison have been noted by collectors. His 35 years of service were basically on a line that ran from Rutland, Vermont to Troy, N.Y., a distance of 94 miles. It is believed that he made a daily round trip leaving from Troy in the morning. Morrison began this work in 1869 and retired on December 7, 1904. His cancels started to appear by 1878 and included "S" (positive and negative) and "N." These no doubt referred to "south" and "north." Soon his hand-carved cancels became more elaborate and several are shown in Figure 1. Two on off cover stamps are illustrated in Figure 2.



Figure 1

Figure 2



Figure 3

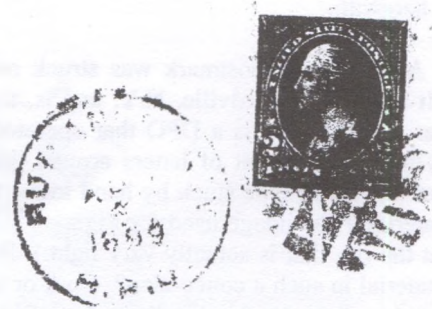
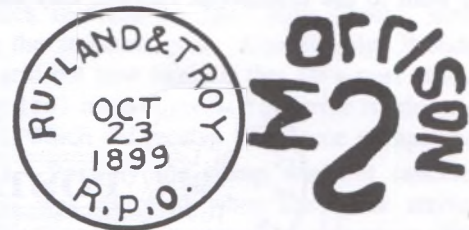


Figure 4



Morrison killers or any prior to May 1878.

Club member Michael Horan submits the piece shown here as Figure 3 with a late use of a "Morrison" killer. (The tracing is provided through the courtesy of John Donnes.) Figure 4 shows an even later marking.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that in Figure 3 both "Morrison" and the "N" are in negative letters, and this fact makes the cancel very unusual. Are there other negative "Morrison" killers beyond the simple "S" that readers can report? Also, please let the NEWS know of any additional 1899 or later hand-carved

The information for this article was largely taken from the 1989 monograph *More on Morrison* by John M. Prendergast, Jr. published by the 56<sup>th</sup> Street Publishing House, Indianapolis.

<sup>1</sup> MacDonald, Fred and Towle, Charles L. *The United States Railway Post Office Postmark Catalog 1864 to 1977*, Volume 3 (ca. 1995), Mobile Post Office Society, Inc., p. 783.