



Cancellation Club NEWS

Vol. 28, No. 7, Whole No. 264, August 2007

More Unlisted Cancels

The February *NEWS* illustrated six cancels from the collection of John Kellerman and asked for information about the post offices of origin. No responses were received. These are scarce or even rare cancels, but we renew the request for identifications and now show additional cancels from John's collection that neither he nor your editor have been able to pin down. The Figure 1 rectangle encloses a negative "1." The numeral is slender with a serif at the base. The top slopes down to the left with a serif at the left. What appear to be screw heads are shown in Figures 2 and 3. The Figure 4 circle encloses four wedges. Reading clockwise from the left wedge are letters "S," "M?," "E," and "P." Figure 5 appears as though it might have been a target cancel with six rings cut down to form an "x" shape. Figure 6 shows what is likely a stylized "B." The bottom loop is thicker than the top and neither touch the vertical bar. Any information that readers can provide on these cancels or reports of other strikes will be welcomed.

John submitted four cancels in response to the article in the February issue about "6" cancels, three of which (all on Sc 11 stamps) are shown in Figure 7. The black "6" in circle is intriguing. It appears to be Whitfield 6436. A very similar cancel is illustrated in Skinner-Eno as a "9" on the 1861 issue and attributed to Chicago, but it was apparently not seen on cover. The new Chicago book by Leonard Piskiewicz shows an actual size tracing of a somewhat similar but decidedly smaller version and reports uses from 6/13/54-9/13/54 in both red and black. It was reported used both as a "6" and "9." Since (1) Piskiewicz doesn't report the large "6" in circle in his quite comprehensive book, (2) the Kellerman example is on a Sc 11 and (3) the Skinner-Eno report doesn't indicate that a cover was seen, it may be that the Skinner-Eno report is incorrect. The black "PAID/6" in circle was likely a standard rate marker supplied to various postmasters but we have identified no post offices of origin. The "WAY/6" is blue and this marking in blue is known from Richmond, VA and reported in Alexander as "very rare." The handstamp that produced it was designed for use on unpaid single rate letters with an added 1¢ way fee to be collected. The fourth cancel John submitted isn't presented because it would not show clearly. It is a red "6" (not enclosed in a circle) on a Sc 10. The shape of the numeral is similar to the large Figure 7 example but smaller in size, approximately 15mm as opposed to 17 mm. Readers who can identify the post office of origin for any of these cancels are urged to do so.

A cover in the collection of Arthur Beane bearing a bold strike of a large "6" from Montgomery, NY is shown in Figure 8. The first two off-cover stamps in Figure 9 show what appears to be a "PAID/0" in a circle. Presumably, a "6" was cut down to form a "0." The third stamp appears to be a worn "6" in a circle. The "PAID/6" in circle at right is blue and the other cancels are black.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

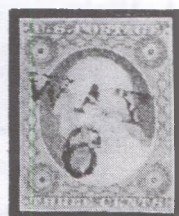


Figure 7

A late "6" from your editor's collection is shown in Figure 10, with the tracing courtesy of John Donnes. Perhaps the original marking had "PAID" or more likely "DUE" above the "6." The Upper Sandusky postmaster may have thought that such a word, especially a "DUE," would be confusing to the postmaster at the destination post office and so eliminated

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Dear Reader,

From time to time the *NEWS* presents an article on machine cancels and the present issue will feature two or three. It is a happenstance occurrence rather than a conscious attempt to focus greater attention in this direction. Machine cancels do form an integral and, indeed, crucial part of the evolution of 19th century U.S. cancellations and, it seems to me, represent a most interesting aspect of the overall story. The *NEWS* might do more in this area, but it so happens, of course, that there is a society devoted exclusively to the subject. The Machine Cancel Society studies and reports on U.S. machine cancels generally, not just 19th century, and also delves to some extent into foreign machine cancels. It is known for its excellent publications – both the quarterly journal and the various monographs produced over the years on particular machine companies and the like. Many of our members also belong to the MCS, but for those who don't and find the coverage of the MCS to be pertinent to their interests, I suggest that consideration be given to joining. The MCS secretary is Gary Carlson who can be reached at 3097 Frobisher Ave., Dublin, OH 43017 or gcarlson@columbus.rr.com.

Roger Curran

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(Continued from front page)

Figure 8

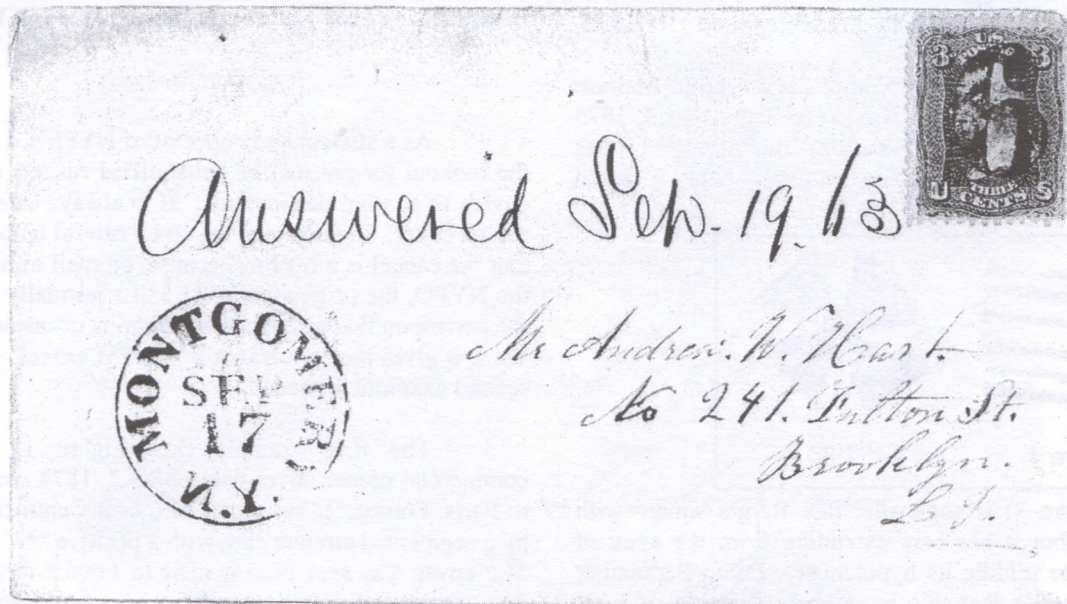
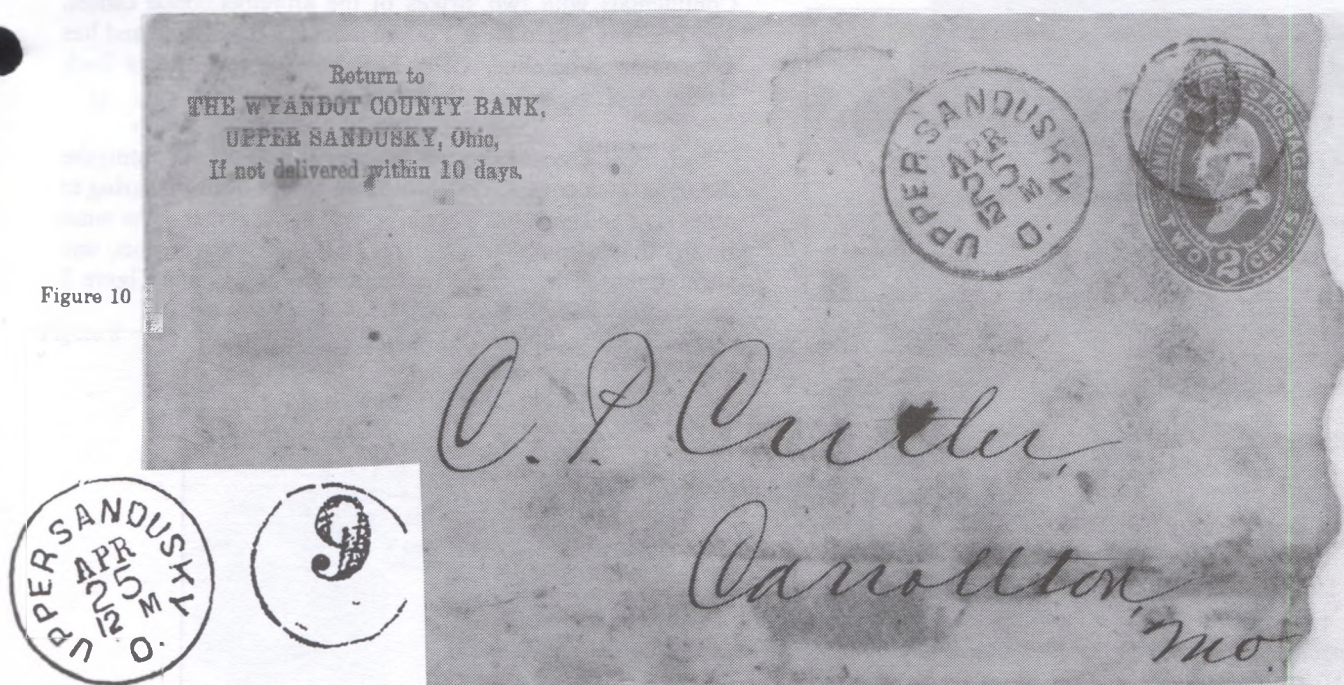


Figure 9



Figure 10



it from a handstamp he wanted to use as a canceler. On the back of the cover, there is a Carrollton received marking dated April 1891 with the day numerals unreadable.■

More Chicago Blues by Roger Rhoads

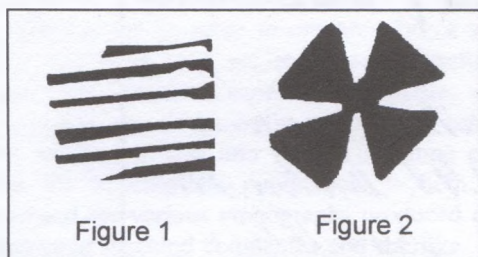
In the February 2007 issue of the *NEWS* (Whole No. 262) I illustrated 15 new Chicago blue cancels or those that had been

previously not verified. I have a few new ones to show that I have found since that time.

But first I need to apologize to the membership about Figure 4 in the past issue, the 7 bar cancel that Berg lists as a six bar, 6B-4. The "Figure 4" identification box was inadvertently moved so that it masked the bottom bar. The entire cancel is shown in Figure 1. And Dennis Schmidt chimed in with the same cancel on a 3¢ official stamped envelope, but used a day

earlier, December 21, 1874, than I had reported. Thanks, Dennis.

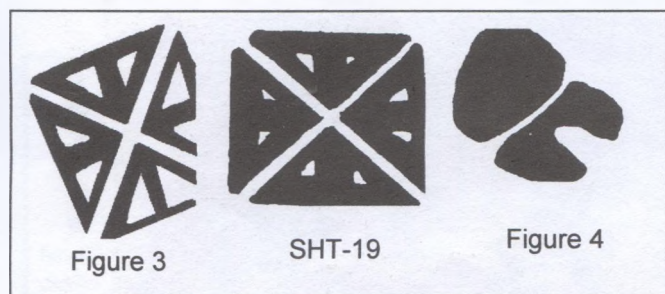
The first new one, shown in Figure 2, is a type of Maltese cross, but it is unlisted by Berg. It is dated September 3, 1875 which is later than any listed by about three months, and it has solid arms rather than hollow ones. It would probably be listed as M-10.



The next (Figure 3) is somewhat like Berg's square with hollow triangles, but it has bars extending from the apex of each triangle to the middle its hypotenuse. Dated September 16, 1875, it's possible that this is an early example of what Berg calls SHT-19 that is dated October 16, 1875.

The last (Figure 4) is the ugliest, dated September 16, 1875, and it has a N.D. Sta. (North Division Station) CDS while the others shown here are simply marked "Chicago". I simply don't know what to call it as there isn't anything quite like it in Berg's book, and I don't like to use "Blob". So I guess I'll do the same as the book and call it a Geometric and identify it as GEO-83.

Got others not listed? Send them in. ■



Newly Discovered New York Foreign Mail (NYFM) Cancel

by Dan Richards

As a student and collector of NYFMs, I am always on the lookout for unusual or unidentified cancels on New York covers to foreign destinations. It is always satisfying to find such a cover. I realize one has to be careful before concluding that the cancel is a NYFM because, on mail transiting through the NYPO, the originating town killer normally is present but the corresponding circular date stamp is occasionally missing. Thus, it gives the appearance of NYFM cancel. This is why a second example is needed.

The first example (See Figure 1) is a yellow commercial corner cover dated May 2, 1874 and is addressed to Paris, France. It has a pair of 6 cent Continentals canceled by a segmented circular ring with a positive "N" in the middle. The cover was sent British mail to France through London. The sender, an insurance company, was located across the river in Jersey City, NJ. The cover made its way across the Hudson River and was dropped in the New York mail system. There it was canceled at the Main Post Office in the Foreign Mail Department.

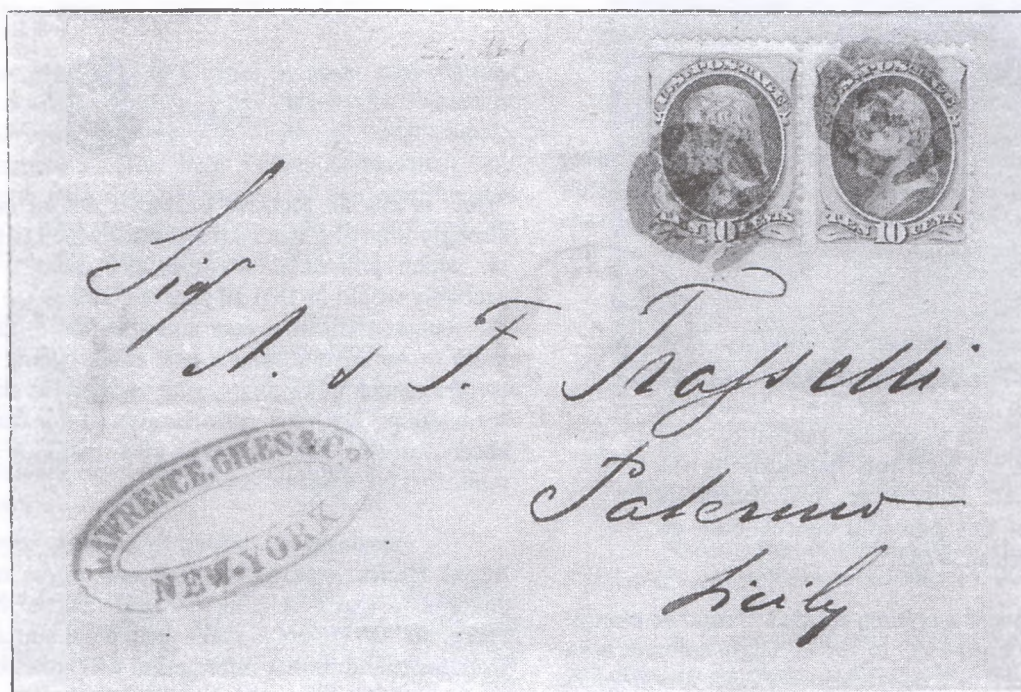
The second example (See Figure 2) is a folded letter sheet (FLS) addressed to Palermo, Sicily and dated just 71 days later than example one. The New York date on this example is July 11, 1874. It is franked with a pair of 10 cent Continentals with two strikes of the aforementioned cancel. The FLS has a blue New York merchant's handstamp and has a manuscript dateline. The FLS has the appropriate back stamps.

All the cancels in Figure 3 are traced from the discussed two covers. They measure 18mm from outer ring to outer ring and each has a positive "N" in the center. The outer ring is made from five segments. Of the five segments, one segment has a distinct pointed end. The tracings in Figure 3 are courtesy of John Donnes.

Figure 1



Figure 2



The off cover examples in Figure 4 - the 6 cent, 7 cent and the 90 cent - exhibit many of the same characteristics. Of the three, the 90 cent Continental (See Figure 5) which sold on Ebay and was mis-identified as a Cole LN-28, shows the greatest similarity to the cancels in Figures 1 and 2. In Figure 5 the arrows point to the segment breaks and pointed end.

In summary,

- 1) both foreign mail covers have New York Exchange Office postmarks and the same killer,
- 2) both covers were used in same time period, 71 days apart,

Figure 3



Tracing from Figure 1



Tracings from Figure 2

Figure 5



- 3) all of the off cover examples have the same basic characteristics, and
- 4) the denominations of the off cover examples were used extensively on foreign mail.

My conclusion: a new "now" identified NYFM cancel. I believe if Mr. Weiss was to give this NYFM cancel a designation, it would receive a RE-L5. I welcome your comments and any information on this cancellation. ■

Figure 4



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A Precancel's Origin

by Roger D. Curran

In Part V of an excellent series of articles appearing in the *NEWS* during the 1980s on the subject of multiple letter cancels on Banknote issues, former *NEWS* editor Alyce Evans illustrated the cancel shown here as Figure 1. She said this about it:

I'm grasping at straws on this one, but Konwiser in his *Postal Markings* described a cancel on a Hotel cover from Alexandria Bay, NY as "AB in oblong, purple, on a 1¢ Continental." Could this hopefully be the same cancel? I have two off-cover examples of this beautiful cancel, both on the 1¢ American, #182.¹

Harry Konwiser authored a column entitled "Postal Markings" in *Stamps Magazine* from 1933 to 1954. These columns were subsequently published as a book entitled *Postal Markings* by Quarterman Publications, Inc. in 1980.

In the book *Silent Precancels*, published by the Precancel Stamp Society in 2004, author David Smith reports the Figure 1 cancel as a precancel from Alexandria Bay found on 1¢ Continental stamps, Sc 156. He also lists it as "Used by _____ Hotel," likely based on the same Konwiser report noted by Alyce Evans.

A nice cover bearing the cancel (Figure 2) has recently come to our attention. Undoubtedly the hotel on the cover seen by Konwiser was Thousand Island House.

How was the cancel determined to be a precancel? This is an interesting question. The answer would be a matter of circumstantial evidence. I assume the most important

Figure 1



"fact" is that all reported examples are on one cent stamps, strongly implying business circulars which is the type of mail on which precancels are typically found. Another point probably would be that all reported strikes are placed fully on the stamps, indicating care and attention to detail that would seem to go beyond how a post office would be expected to handle a stack of circulars, with uncanceled stamps, presented for mailing. A further consideration (if it is true) would be the absence of the "AB" cancel on other outgoing Alexandria Bay mail, first class and otherwise.

Assuming the above to be true, why did Thousand Island House expend the time and effort to precancel its advertising mail? I think it likely that the hotel wanted to "dress up" the covers to make them more appealing. Comments and further information will be welcomed.■

¹ *U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS*, Summer 1987, p. 115.

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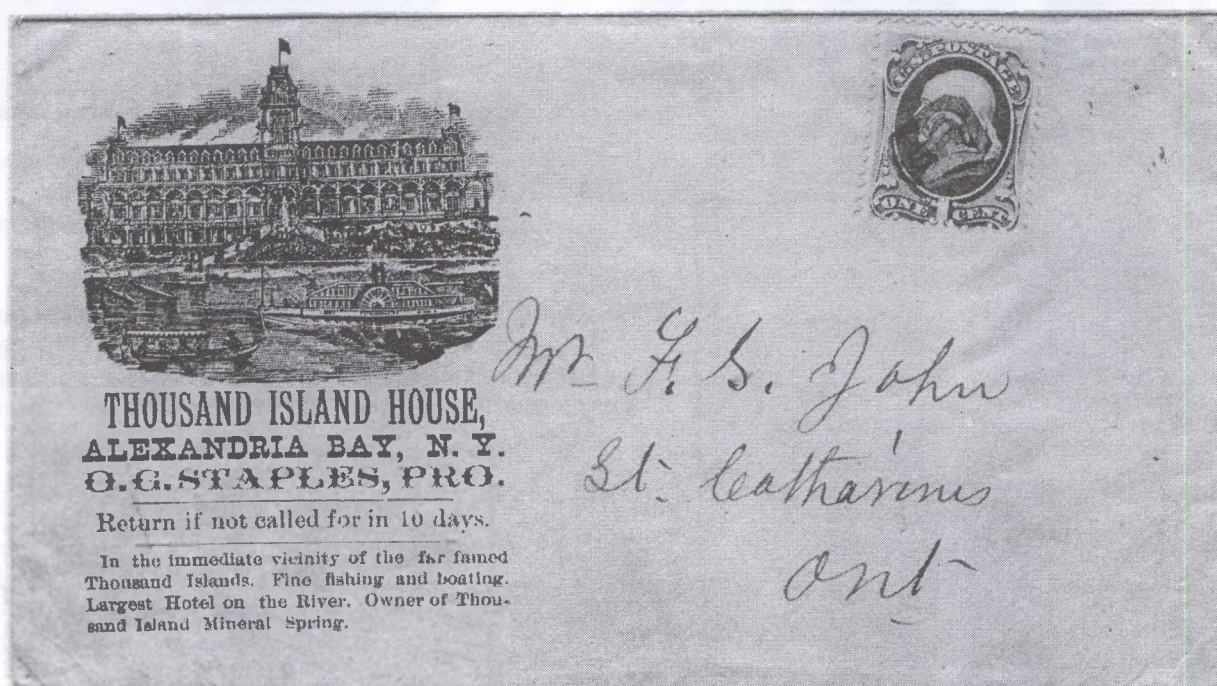
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Figure 2



New Machine Cancel Reported

In the February 2003 *NEWS*, rare cancellations attributed to a machine developed by Timothy G. Palmer of Schultsville, NY and Dr. Henry F. Clark of Poughkeepsie, N.Y. were discussed. The Post Office Department was impressed enough with a demonstration of this machine that on March 30, 1876 the Postmaster General ordered ten machines, at \$100 each, to be shipped as follows:

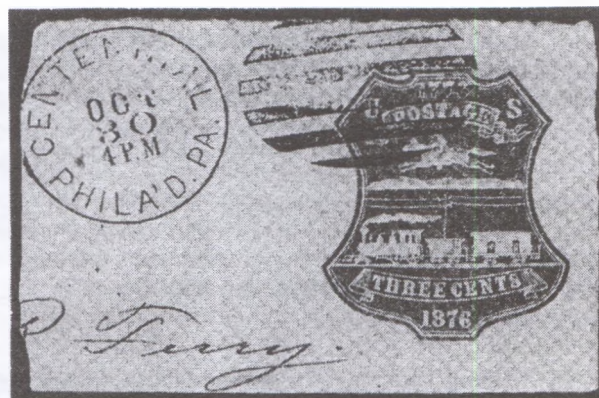
New York	2 machines
Boston	2 machines
Philadelphia	2 machines
Albany	1 machine
Cleveland	1 machine
Washington	1 machine
Hartford	1 machine

For some years, markings had only been reported from Washington (11/22/76-1/2/77), Albany (1/10/77-1/17/77) and Poughkeepsie (9/30/76, 1/30/77-3/27/77). Poughkeepsie was not designated to receive a machine but it was the town of Mr. Clark's residence.

Several years ago a single example from Baltimore was discovered, dated December 8 (1876). It was illustrated in the above-mentioned *NEWS*.

Now, in an article by Mike Ellingson in the April 2007 *Machine Cancel Forum*, there is a first report of an example from Philadelphia. The report to Mike came via Art Hadley from the owner John Becker who noted that it looked like a Palmer and Clark but did not appear in any of his reference works.

The Palmer and Clark machine never did meet the expectations of its inventors or the PMG. Indeed, in looking over the dates of the recorded covers, it appears that one machine may have had a very brief test first in Poughkeepsie



and then shipped successively to Philadelphia, Washington, Albany and Poughkeepsie. While at Washington, it would have been taken to nearby Baltimore and tested.

Mike's report was featured in Michael Schreiber's "Open Album" column in the May 14, 2007 issue of *Linn's*.

It is wonderful that such remarkable new finds are out there to be made. One of the great allures of collecting cancellations is that there are many prizes waiting to be discovered. And beyond that, of course, collectors are more or less continuously uncovering additional information about cancellations that are already well known. Good luck to all of us in turning up or learning more about some item of interest on-line, at the next show or in the next catalog.■

A Company Comes and Goes

The Hampden Cancelling Machine Co. was incorporated in July 1898 but its story begins several years earlier. In 1891 and 1892 mechanical engineer William R. Landfear of Hartford, CT filed for patents for two canceling machine designs. As far as is known, no machine consistent with these designs was ever used to cancel mail. However, in 1896 there was a test of a Landfear machine in the NYPO intermittently from March 16 to April 29. Figure 1 illustrates a cover from the first day of the test.

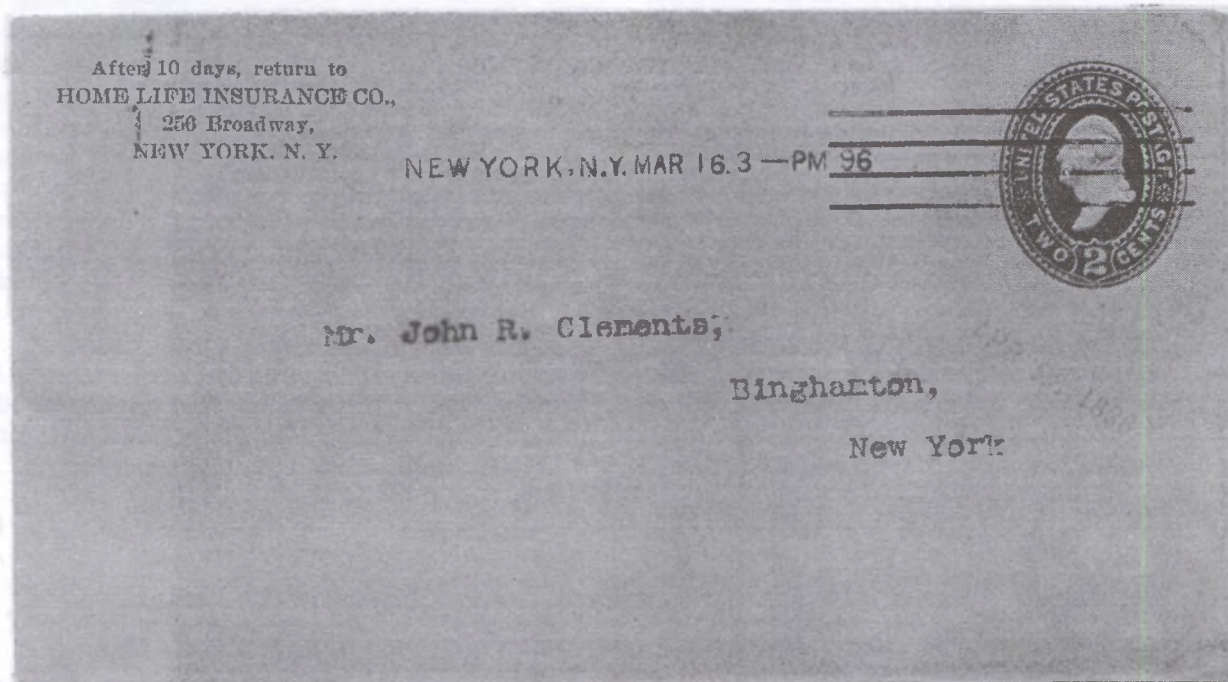


Figure 1

In the summer of 1897 the Post Office Department awarded Landfear a contract for the rental of ten machines. Eight mid-sized post offices are known to have used these machines with dates ranging from April 1898 to July 1899. A machine was also placed at Station S of the NYPO, but covers are recorded only for a short period – June 20-September 18, 1898. Around October 1898, Station S received a Barry machine. Markings from several of the post offices are shown in Figure 2, including the unique arc arrangement of the Ann Arbor postmark.

William Landfear was a principal (although not the primary stockholder) in the Hampden Cancelling Machine Co. when it was registered in June 1898. Fortune smiled on the new company in December 1898 when a Post Office Department purchase order was placed for 50 machines and then for an additional 50 several months later. A cover from this period is shown as Figure 3. Unfortunately, technical problems were apparent from the beginning. An inspection at the Landfear plant in Hartford, before any shipments were made, sounded alarm bells but deliveries and installations

began in mid-1899 without regard to such report. There ensued a stream of complaints from local postmasters. By early 1900 the Post Office Department issued a request for bids to refurbish the Hampden machines. The Doremus Company, itself a maker of canceling machines, won the contract but the refurbishment efforts apparently did little to prolong the life of the machines. The Hampden company dissolved on April 25, 1903 at which time perhaps only 10% of the machines installed in 1898 and 1899 were still in service. It has been estimated that 125 to 150 post offices used Hampden machines, at least briefly. By mid-1906 they were all gone.

The success of the Hampden company in securing the contracts has been attributed more to political connections than to any objective appraisal of the effectiveness of its product.■

Figure 2

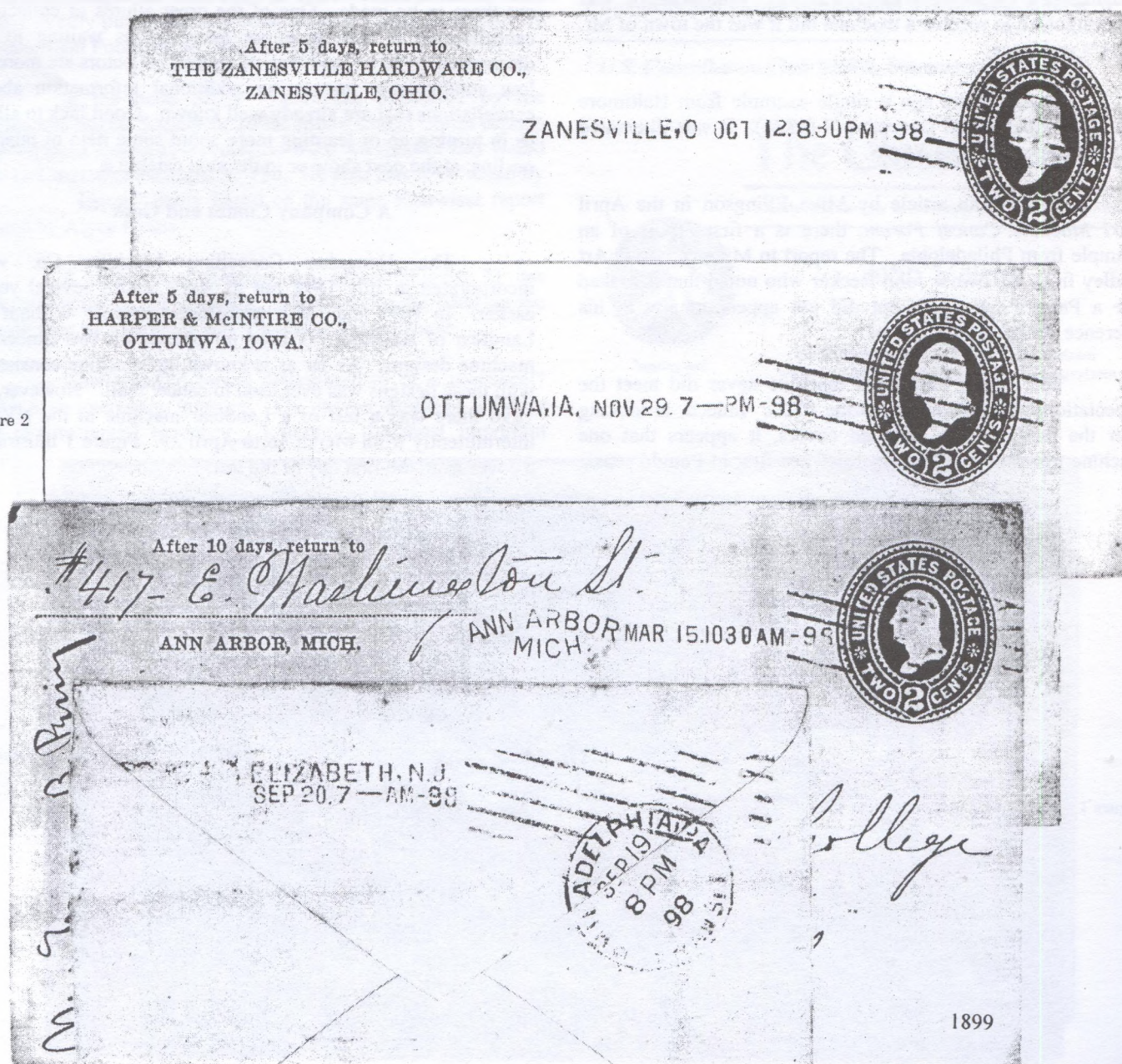
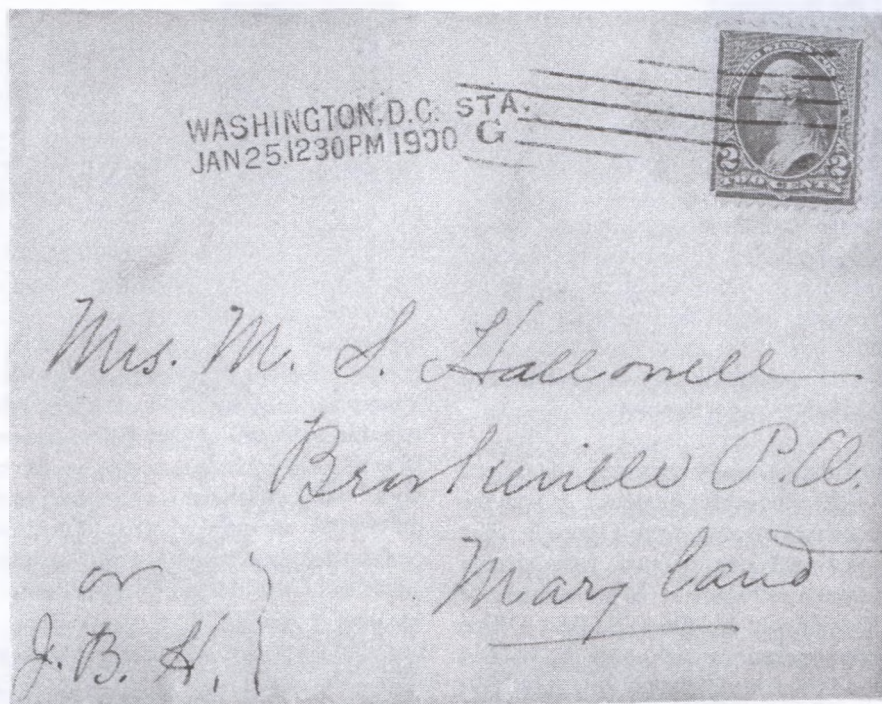


Figure 3



Closed Album

Club member Edward Hines died February 18. Ed was very well known to the U.S. cancellation collecting community and, indeed, was one of the leading dealers of classic U.S. postal history in general. Fancy and unusual cancellations, however, always constituted his signature specialty and I think it can be fairly said that he did more than any other dealer in the last 20 years to give prominence to the collecting of cancellations. He was a fixture at various national shows and his booth was always popular. Ed also maintained a major website with a large inventory of covers and off-cover stamps.

Ed was consistently able to secure and offer high quality material and his prices reflected that. He was direct and to-the-point in his dealings. I have often reflected on what a fascinating and informative "window on the world" he had regarding U.S. cancellations. I recall years ago Ed telling me that he had bought a large collection of 3¢ greens that contained, among other things, a page of the Worcester, Mass. "north and south shaking hands" cancels. And this, of course, was just one of any number of collections that came his way. I daresay many of us have mused over what it would have been like to see all the material that passed through his hands.

Ed was a leader as a dealer and as a knowledgeable student of cancels and postal history. He was a supporter of philatelic organizations and willing to help. Our field of study is a better place for his having been a part of it and he will be missed.

Roger Curran

A Rare NYFM Find

by Roger Rhoads

Once again Victor Kuil comes forward with a new find. Recently Victor emailed a scan to myself showing a 24¢

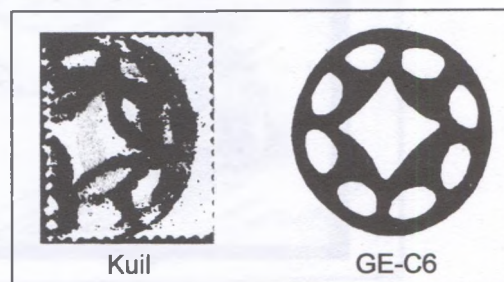
Winfield Scott Banknote with a very unusual cancel that is probably an earlier, less worn, version of 'Weiss' GE-C6. Weiss notes that this is a very rare cancel with but one example on cover, dated Aug. 21, 1873.

I strongly believe this cancel is a NYFM and not a look-alike. Weiss in his book *The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City, 1870-1878* notes on pages 57-58 that there are dangerous look-alikes used on domestic mail in the late 1870s. However the illustrated look-alikes have circular openings in their centers and are not similar to the cancel submitted by Kuil. His cancel has an open square in the center with inwardly bowed sides, very much like GE-C6, the only listed NYFM with this characteristic.

The stamp is a 24¢ Banknote that was almost always used on international mail and very rarely on domestic letters. Assuming this cancel is a GE-C6, then it was used earlier than the Weiss cover illustration based on there being less evident wear.

The stamp itself cannot be used to establish an approximate year of use. The 24¢ variety was first issued in April 1870, printed by the National Bank Note Co. When the contract went to the Continental Bank Note Co. in 1873 there were no secret marks on the 24¢ stamp to distinguish them from the National Bank Note printing as there are on most others of the issue. Thus we can only say that the stamp was used in or after April 1870.

With this in mind, keep an eye out for this cancel with this new find in mind. Perhaps a cover with this killer can be found that can better date the use of this cancel. ■



At the Beginning

by Roger D. Curran

On May 22, 2007 Matthew Bennett Auctions sold what was described as "The Aristocrat Collection of First Day Covers and Earliest Documented Usages." Lot 1, illustrated here as Figure 1 was a most interesting piece, dated August 16, 1842, headlined as "The First Possible First Day Cover of a Government-Issued Adhesive." One might quibble a bit with the phrase "Government-Issued Adhesive," but there is no question that this item is one of the most important covers from the standpoint of U.S. postal history in general and certainly in terms of United States cancellations.

In February 1842 the privately operated New York City Despatch Post (NYCDP) opened for business. It was the first local post to issue adhesive stamps – see Figure 2. The canceler used by the post and one of two very similar postmarks employed are shown as Figure 3. In the summer of 1842 the NYCDP was bought out by the U.S. Post Office Department and commenced operations on August 16, 1842 as a carrier service – now the U.S. City Despatch Post (USCDP) – of the New York Post Office. As the cover in question demonstrates, the USCDP was ready at the outset with a new circular date stamp and a new killer. Tracings of the types of markings involved are shown in Figure 4. The Figure 1 cover bears what is the earliest known use of a U.S. post office cancel of a government recognized adhesive. It is theoretically possible that a "first day" USCDP cover will turn up with a time in the postmark earlier than the "4 o'clock" postmark in Figure 1, but how likely is that after all these years and all the attention focused on this cover?

The USCDP was soon to issue its own adhesive stamps (see Figure 5) very similar to those of the NYCDP, but it is not clear that they were ready on August 16. It had been publicly announced just before the USCDP took over that the NYCDP stamps would be accepted by the government post and examples are known canceled by the "U.S." in octagon. Indeed, the Figure 1 cover bears a NYCDP stamp. There is a cover known bearing a USCDP stamp dated August 19, 1842, so the interval of USCDP operations without its own stamps,



Figure 2

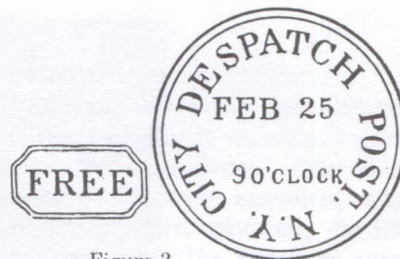


Figure 3

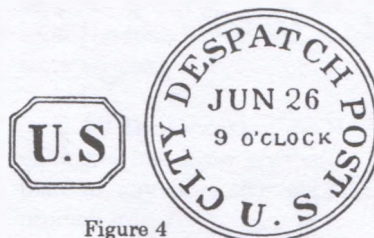


Figure 4



Figure 5

if it existed, was quite short. One can speculate that the USCDP not only recognized NYCDP stamps previously sold by the NYCDP but actually sold such stamps itself until a supply of USCDP stamps arrived. If so, referring to the NYCDP stamp as "Government-Issued Adhesive" would seem quite appropriate.

The USCDP discontinued operations on November 28, 1846 and it is interesting to note that the "U.S." in octagon found use on New York Postmaster Provisional (NYPP) stamps both before and after this date. I have noted two "before" examples. The first is a cover postmarked New York on December 5 (1845) addressed to Newport, R.I. The "U.S." in octagon is the only cancel on the stamp and indicates that the cover was collected for delivery to the NYPO by the USCDP. The second cover was postmarked Washington City on November 15, 1845 and addressed to NYC. The stamp is canceled by the curved red "PAID" of the main NYPO and by the "U.S." in octagon. Apparently, the cover, bearing a street address, was turned over to the USCDP for delivery.

Three examples of use of the "U.S." cancel after

Figure 1



discontinuance of the USCDP have been noted. First is a cover postmarked New York on December 8 (1846) addressed to Albany, N.Y. Second is a cover bearing two NYPP singles, each canceled by the "U.S" in octagon, postmarked New York on December 3, 1846 and addressed to Sandusky, Ohio. The third cover is postmarked New York on December 3 (1846) and addressed to Plattsburgh, N.Y. It was lot 1419 in the Siegel sale 906 of March 14, 2006. The accompanying 2004 PF certificate was said to state that "the stamp did not originate on this cover, and the stamp affected by the cover file fold ending in small tears." However, the Siegel description disagrees, saying that the PF opinion "seems contradictory to us as the file fold effectively ties the stamp, we are confident the stamp originates." The file fold that affects the stamp has the darkening along the line that one sees on file folds that have been present for a long time. This cover is shown here as Figure 6. It may be that the CDS with "10cts" at the bottom entered into the Foundation's thinking. Plattsburgh is up along the northern border of New York State. I believe it is 300 or more miles from NYC and hence required a 10¢ rate. For me, a likely scenario is that a representative of the sender, Horton and McCowly, took the folded letter, with stamp already affixed, to the post office and, wanting to prepay it, paid 5¢ in cash after checking to see if 10¢ was

required.

I know of one other NYPP cover with the "U.S" in octagon cancel and it is shown here as Figure 7. Unfortunately the year date cannot be determined. The stamp is canceled by both the curved "PAID" and "U.S" in octagon. Readers will note that a street address is present. The Washington post office didn't bother to cancel the stamp and marked the cover "5" indicating 5¢ due because, of course, it did not recognize the New York stamp.

After the USCDP was discontinued on November 28, 1846, the "U.S" handstamp was apparently turned over to the clerks processing regular letter mail at the NYPO where it received some use, albeit very limited. Perhaps it did not receive more use because the square grid, which was a larger and better canceler, had by then been introduced and precluded any real need for the "U.S".

No 1847 issue stamps are known canceled by the "U.S" in octagon but at least one 1851 issue stamp (Figure 8) is known with the cancel. It is in red ink. Was the cancel used briefly on circular mail?

Figure 6



Figure 7

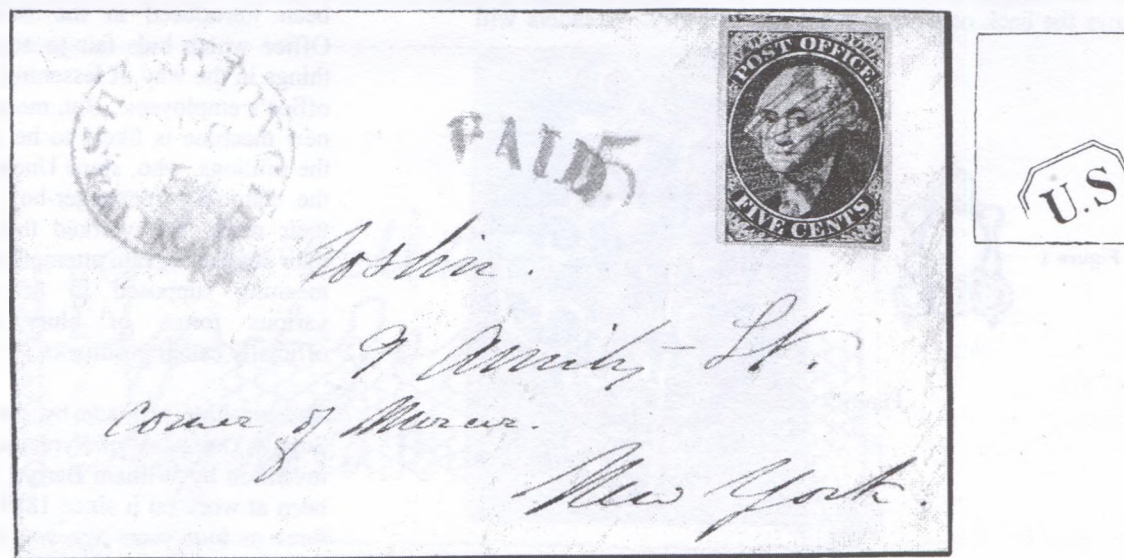




Figure 8

Figure 9



Finally, the "U.S" is known as an exchange office marking on stampless cross-border mail from New York to British North America. Figure 9 is an example. The "U.S" is in black ink and there is an 1852 received marking on the back. A second example, addressed to Toronto, is postmarked New York on November 8 (1851) and has the "U.S" in red. Such usages are rare and there may not be others recorded.

What more can be added to the story of the *first* United States cancellation for adhesive stamps? Please contact the *NEWS* if you can provide further information.■

More on Decorative Cancellation

The strange cancellation from Granger, Indiana, shown here as Figure 1, was illustrated on the front page of the May 2007 *NEWS*. Despite being very odd and unusual, we described it as designed apparently as a canceler of stamps and suggested that the large circle in the middle was possibly intended to frame the face on the stamp. Roger Rhoads has now put forward an intriguing and much more plausible explanation. He thinks the cancellation device may have been the back of a piece of jewelry – a brooch, perhaps. And let's bear in mind that the postmaster was a woman! Figure 2 shows the back of a piece of antique jewelry. (Readers will



Figure 1

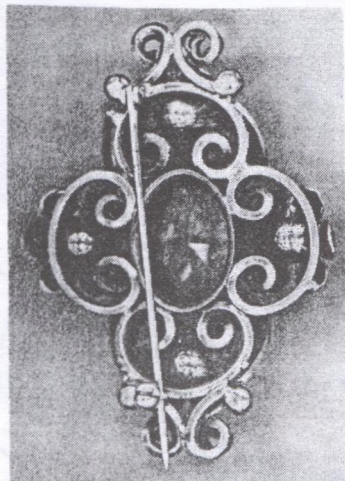


Figure 2

note the pin is still affixed.) Margaret Fallmer was appointed postmaster on April 28, 1875 and Roger determined that her compensation from that date through June 30, 1875 was \$8.20.

Comments and additional thoughts regarding this cancellation will be welcomed.■

Looking for Linkage

by Roger D. Curran

William Barry was a major figure in the field of 19th century U.S. machine cancellations. He and his company came to national prominence in 1895 after the American Postal Machines Co. and the International Postal Supply Co. (IPSC) were already well established. These companies were the recipients of sizeable POD contracts to supply canceling machines to larger post offices. Basically due to cost considerations, contracting with the IPSC ceased abruptly on July 1, 1895 and a large contract was awarded to the Barry company. An August 1895 *New York Tribune* article commented as follows:

"A new letter-stamping machine has just been introduced in the New York Post Office which bids fair to accomplish great things in the way of lessening the toil of the office's employees. But, more than that, the new machine is likely to be a God-send to the millions, who, since Uncle Sam became the country's messenger-boy, have twisted their necks and worked their-eyes out of their sockets in vain attempts to discover the meaning supposed to be conveyed by various forms of blurs and blotches officially called postmarks.

The machine is made by the Barry Postal Supply Company of Syracuse and was the invention by William Barry. Mr. Barry has been at work on it since 1885, and not until three or four years ago was it brought into

public notice. It has had more than one thorough trial, but it has scored such high marks in all of its examinations, that the Post Office Department at Washington has just given Mr. Barry contract to make 200 of them for use in the big offices throughout the country."

Unfortunately, the Barry company could not meet its contractual obligation of providing 200 machines and, with the return of high-quality International machines in 1900 and the appearance of new machines by other makers, the competition was too great. By 1910, the Barry machines were gone. A typical Barry cancel from the early contract period is shown in Figure 1.

Years before the 1895 contract, as the *Tribune* article pointed out, Barry was working on the development of a canceling machine. The earliest known markings are strictly prototypes and involve three business cards run through a machine constructed by Barry. One card is illustrated as

Figure 2. (The handwriting is Barry's.) The marking consists of a continuous band of crosshatching interrupted by vertical columns of blank space in which "Syracuse" appears, reading up from bottom to top. "Syracuse" apparently refers to the Syracuse Post Office, not far from Barry's home in Oswego, NY, where Barry visited to learn about post office operations. It is said that Barry conducted a test of his machine in the Oswego post office in 1885 but no examples from that test have been reported.

The above information is taken from two Bob Payne publications: *U.S. Classic Machine Cancels 1871-91*, Vol. 1 (1995) and an introductory section in *Washington, D.C. Machine Cancels*, Vol. 1 (2006).

We move now to the cover that appears in Figure 3. The tracing is from the Whitfield book. Willard illustrated the cover and stated this about it:

"... is a unique precancel from an unknown location. The grid killer, when examined

Figure 1

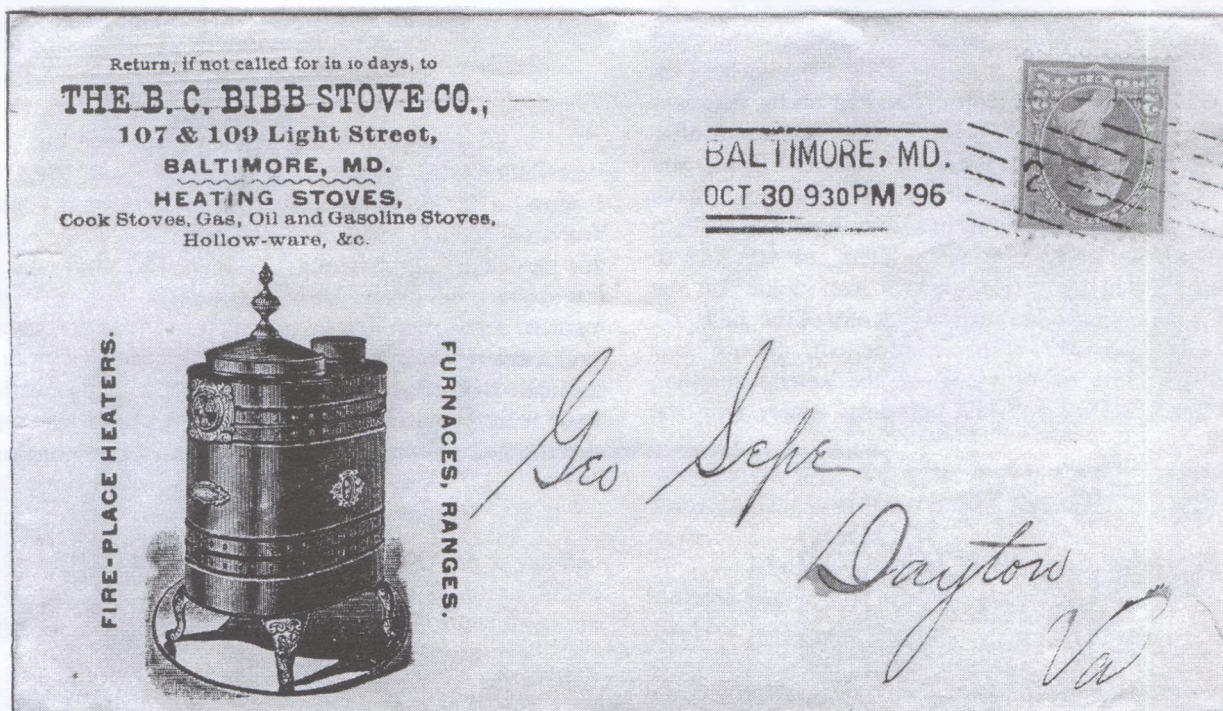
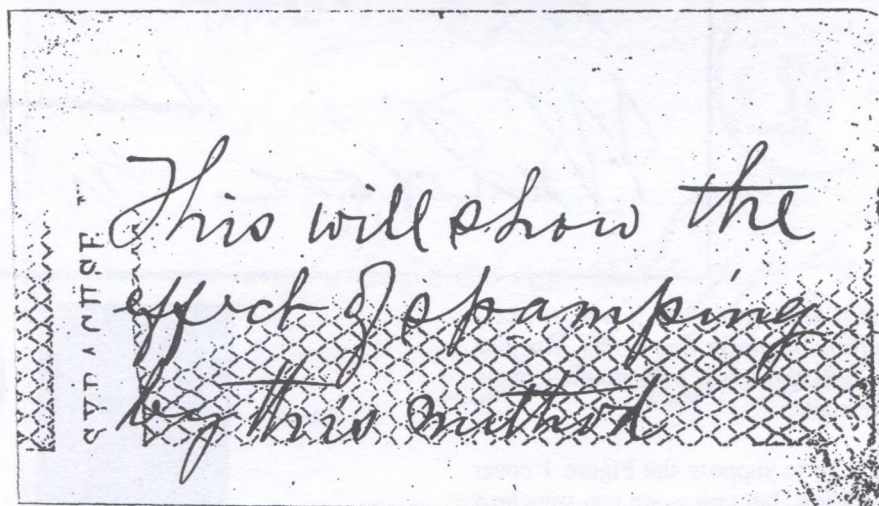


Figure 2



under a glass, ties the stamp to the cover. The envelopes were first filled with what must have been rather thick material, the stamp was affixed next, and finally the cancellation was printed on. The cover is part of the Mot Ransom correspondence which produced many interesting items. Mr. Ransom was at the time a United States Senator from North Carolina. The letter was sent to Raleigh, North Carolina, and was forwarded to Weldon, North Carolina. The Raleigh dater and killer is a forwarding mark, not an original cancellation. This cover is doubly interesting because it refers to a "transfer office." According to the then current P. L. & R., a transfer office was not supposed to have a cancellation on the face because it did not originate mail. A wild guess is that this cover originated at Washington, D.C., but there is no proof."¹

Is there a connection between this cover and the early test of a Barry machine in the Oswego post office? The 1885 year date matches the Payne report and the crosshatching on the cover is similar in design concept to that on the business card. The "postmark" is very peculiar with a comma after "TRANSFER" and the odd layout of "TRANSFER" and "OFFICE." It certainly looks like something that might have been cobbled together for a test. Also, we note that Willard considered the ink to have been "printed" as opposed to having been applied by a handstamp. Just looking at the illustration, I see no reason to suspect that any of the markings are fraudulent. I wondered if the cover actually did originate in Raleigh as a local letter. However, the Raleigh marking appears to read "JUN/17" which correlates nicely with the

infer a relationship between Senator Ransom and Oswego, or find other illuminating examples, the evidence seems too tenuous to make any such connection. Reader comments and any pertinent information will be welcomed. ■

¹Willard, Edward L. *The United States Two Cent Red Brown of 1883-1887*, Vol. 2 (1970) p. 3.

Note: After the article was prepared, the off-cover stamp shown below was noted in an old clipping file. It appears to bear another strike of the same cancel discussed above.



"Boston Negatives" – Odds and Ends

by Roger D. Curran

We make a brief return to one of our favorite cancellation types to report several unusual examples. Figure 1 shows a "P" in what appears to be a variated circle. By "variatered" we mean the circle was altered in some way so that this particular cancel would be distinguishable from a cancel that shows a full circle. Only thing is, there are no "P" cancels reported for Boston's large negatives. Boston letters in solid circles are reported from "A" to "O" with no "G" or "I." I'll speculate that it is from Portland, Maine - the post office that made more extensive use of this type of cancel than any post

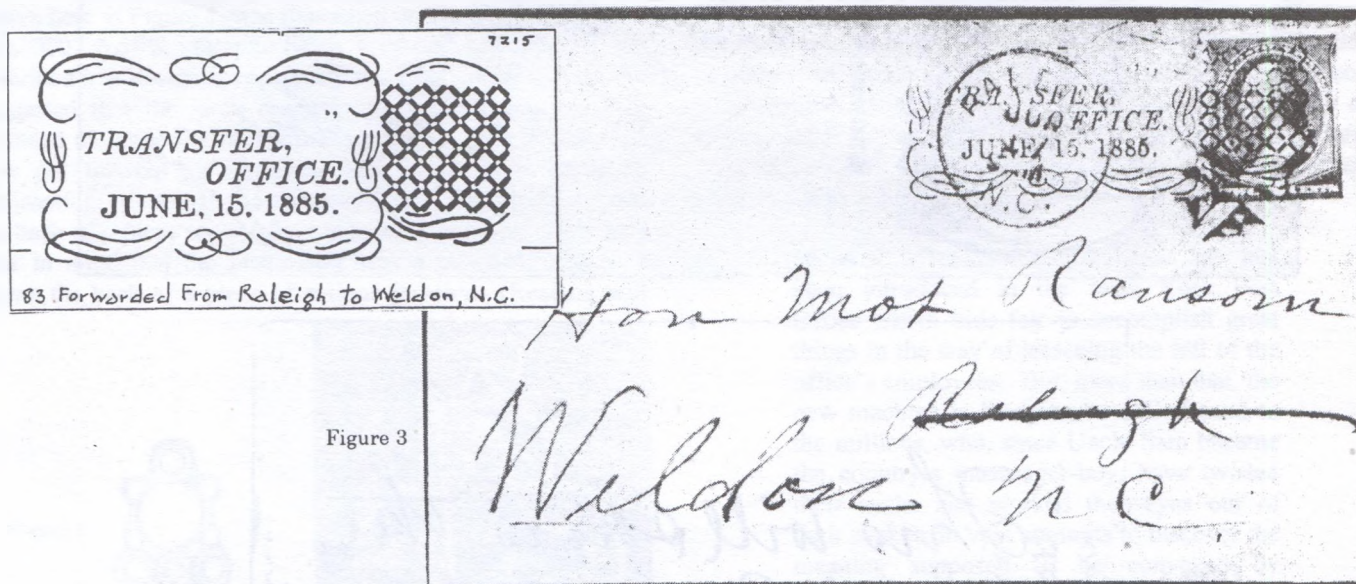


Figure 3

June 15 "TRANSFER, OFFICE" date. I think it is more likely that the originating post office, whatever one it was, accepted the odd test "postmark" even though it said nothing about where the letter entered the mails.

How nice it would be to suppose the Figure 1 cover was from the first live Barry test, but unless we can somehow



Figure 1



Figure 2



office other than Boston. Boston numbers in solid circles run from "1" to "13" and then a "16." (There are also "20," "21" and "22" but the circles show differences.) Portland used a "17" in solid circle (Figure 2) with what appears to be a quite similar flat top. What we have are two cancels in solid circles, one the next *number* up from what is reported from Boston, the other the next *letter* up, both with flat tops, one known to be Portland, a large user of these cancels, and the other of unknown origin. Although there is nothing conclusive here about the "P" being from Portland, there is enough to theorize that such is the case.

The unusual aspect of the Figure 3 cancel is that the ink is blue. Washington, D.C. used two Boston negatives in blackish blue ink. However, the Figure 3 ink is a much brighter blue. I have no idea where it is from.

Figure 3



Figure 4

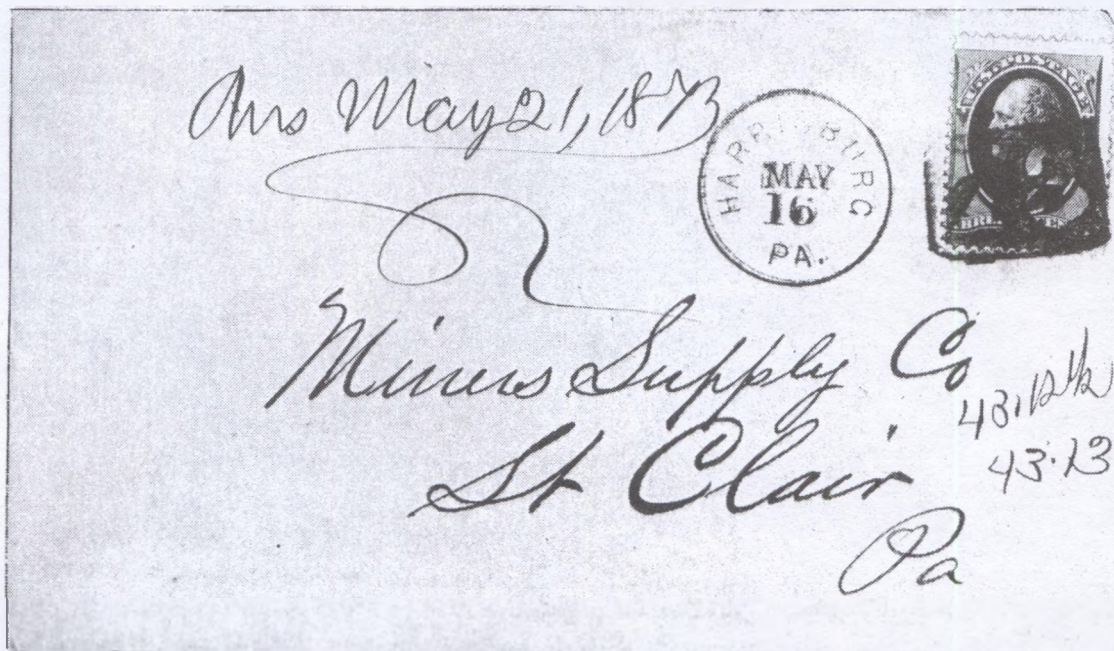


The third cancel (Figure 4) is an "O" in a variated circle on a Sc 183 in the collection of John Donnes. While there are "O" in solid circles reported for Boston, there are



Figure 9

Figure 10



none in variated circles.

The "7" in circle is known from Boston in both solid and variated circles. The Figure 5 example is presented because it is especially well struck and displays a very attractively designed numeral. Many Boston negatives have a rather plain and almost primitive look, but this is anything but that. The shape of the numeral is similar to a Boston rate numeral "7" (Figure 6) that has been noted during the 1845-51 period. Did the handstamp supplier who provided the rate marker also provide Boston negative killers more than 30 years later?

Who can decipher Figure 7? The bottom loop certainly has the "Boston negatives" look. The overall appearance is rather like a backwards "5" – see Figure 8 for a normal "5." However, the top is not completely convincing and the circle is smaller than what we normally (but not always) see from Boston. It would appear that the CDS was duplexed to the left side, with the stamp right side up on the cover. However, one finds considerable variation in distance

Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



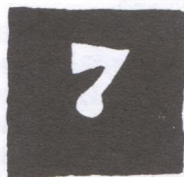
Figure 8



between the CDS and killer in regard to Boston negatives, so the duplexing could have been to the right.

The final cancel is not from Boston but bears a definite similarity. Figure 9 shows a nicely struck "73" on a Sc 146. Lest anyone think that "73" may not represent 1873,

Figure 11



we illustrate a Harrisburg, Pa. cover in Figure 10 from the collection of Arthur Beane. What interests me is how similar the "3" is to the Boston negative "3." The "7" is nothing like the typical Boston negative "7" but Figure 11 (Blake and Davis 1786) shows a variation that is similar. I think it is interesting that the Harrisburg cancel is five years earlier than any Boston large negative cancels.

Thanks to John Donnes for most of the tracings in this article. Comments or additional information on any of the above will be welcomed.■

A Last Gasp

One of the stock cancelers used in the latter part of the 19th century, beginning in the late 1870s, is a "US" in circle with a diamond in the center of the "S." Whitfield illustrates five variations, one of which is presented here as Figure 1. Cole shows an example (US-43, page 230) without the circle as well as four with it (page 232). An 1887 strike is illustrated as Figure 2. A remarkably late usage from Sugar Hill, N.Y. dated May 15, 1901 appears as Figure 3. Sugar Hill is a DPO that operated in Schuylar Co. from 1827-1904.

This style of "US" is not listed in Sol Salkind's *U.S. Cancels 1890-1900*. Readers who can report usages in the 1890s or later are encouraged to do so.■



Figure 1

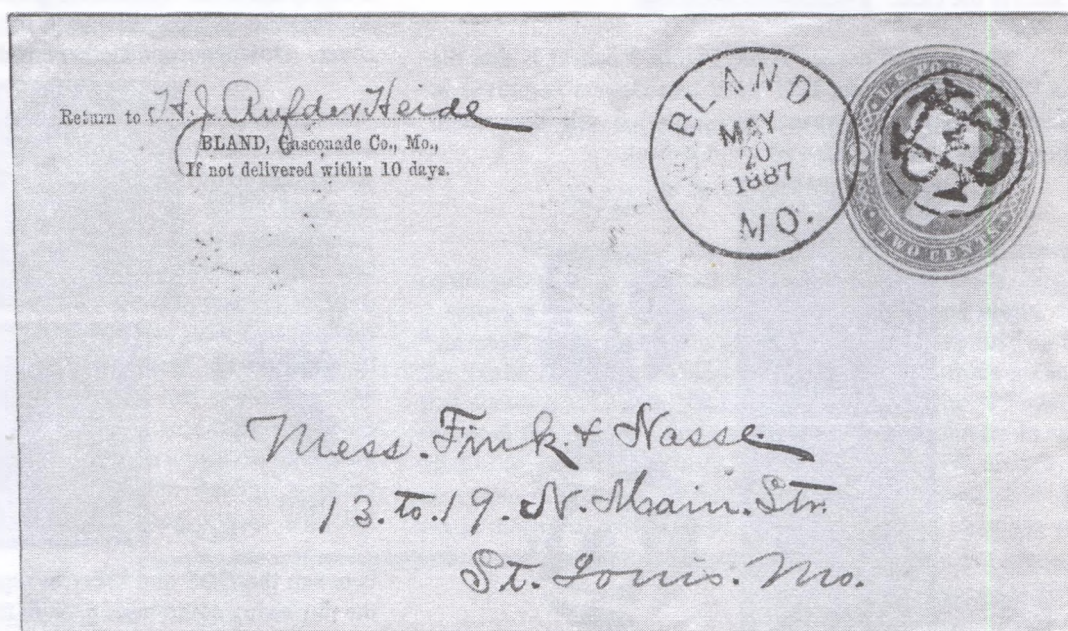


Figure 2

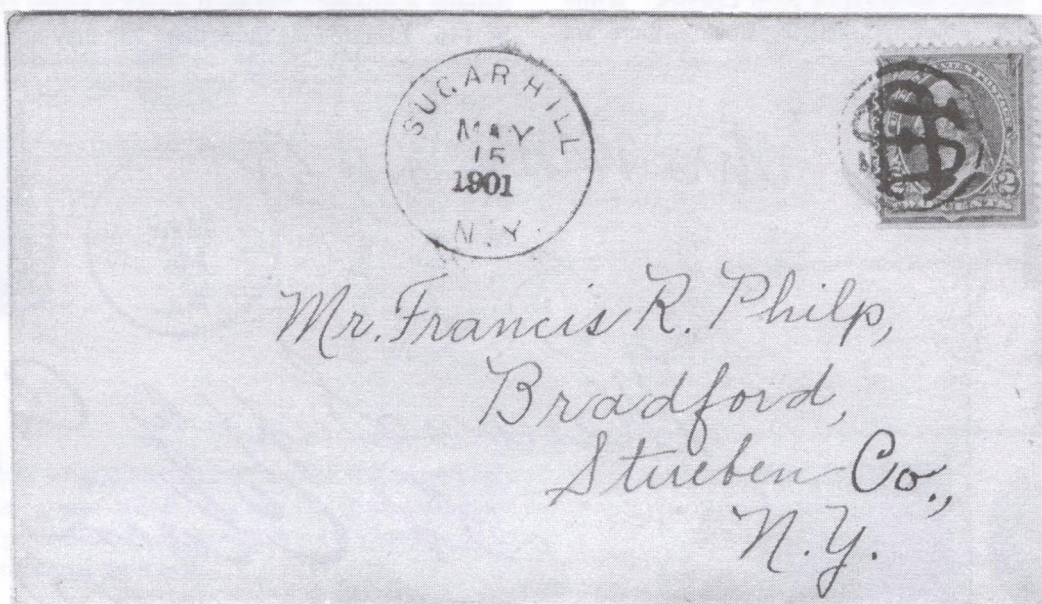


Figure 3