



Cancellation Club NEWS

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Mysterious Patent

The cancel illustrated as Figure 1 (Skinner-Eno PN-H19) has been discussed in the Spring 2000, Fall 2000 and February 2001 issues of the *NEWS*. It was first reported in the 1930s (10 examples noted) on 1861 issue stamps.¹ The

Figure 1



post office of origin, however, has never been identified. Several Club members reported off-cover examples in their collections. From the beginning it has been considered a patent cancel because the "blades" cut through or at least strongly indent the stamps.

Your editor recently encountered the cover in Figure 2 (enclosure dated March 31, 1864) and thought this might provide the long sought answer. This cancel clearly indents the stamp. But the bars are closer together than is the case with the Figure 1 cancel. Indeed when the Figure 1 cancel was first reported, a single example of the Figure 2 cancel was also reported (Figure 3) including the post office of origin – Grantsville, MD. Thus the question remains about where the Figure 1 cancel originated. Grantsville, incidentally, is a DPO that operated from 1846-1872.

An off-cover stamp in Club member Matthew

Figure 2

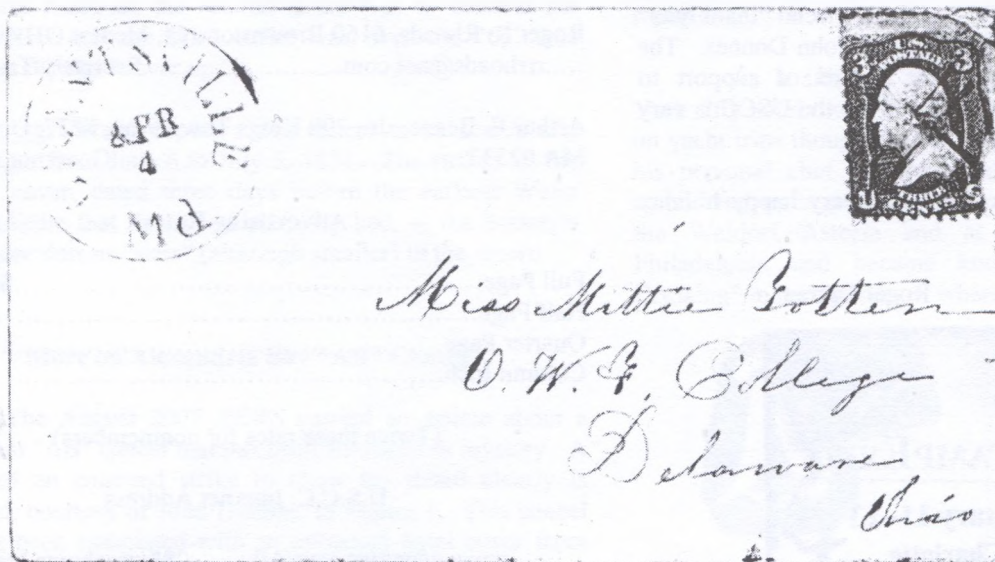


Figure 3



Kewriga's exhibit *U.S. 2¢ Vermilion Banknote: Issues of 1875 and 1879* shows a cancel similar to Figures 1 and 2 and it is presented as a patent cancel with blades. The lines are somewhat uneven suggesting a canceling device that was old and worn. Your editor recently noted another 2¢ vermilion example (Figure 4) in an old accumulation but this cancel

Figure 4



shows no cutting or indenting.

If any reader can add information about the Figure 1 cancel, please do so.■

¹ Schmalzriedt, Fred R. "Patent Cancellations" in *Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks and Postal History* by Delf Norona (1933) Quartermaster reprint, pp. 167-8.

Dear Reader,

It is a real pleasure to announce the availability of an update to the Kenneth A. Whitfield book *Cancellations Found on 19th Century U.S. Stamps*. This book was published in 1992 and the update, while not producing new cancel tracings, provides new information about many of the cancels in the 1992 book. The post offices of origin of a large number of unattributed cancels are now identified. Additional information, which is extensive in the aggregate, is presented for many cancels on such matters as ink color, dates of use, stamp issues on which found, etc. Also, corrections have been made to the numbering system used for the tracings and to the data accompanying the tracings where found to be necessary.

The information for this update came from USCC members and an extensive literature search by Wendell Triplett. Thirty different reference sources were consulted and a column in the report enables the reader to see the sources of "new" information. Because of the large number of new attributions, Wendell prepared an updated Post Office Index which will be provided along with the basic report. A modified Table of Contents will also be included.

Copies of the 1992 book were printed on several different occasions to meet demand. There has been some variation, from printing to printing, in the placement of holes on the pages to fit the 3-ring binders. Hence the update pages may sit a little higher or lower than those of the original book.

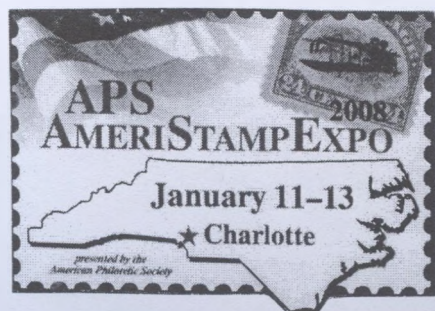
Wendell has provided a very competent and extensive service in compiling the update and it should be noted that he contributed much information personally as well. On behalf of all Club members, I extend to Wendell our sincere gratitude.

Copies of the 48-page update, 21 page PO index and 4 page Table of Contents are available for \$14 postpaid. Orders should be sent to me at 20 University Ave., Lewisburg, PA 17837, with checks payable to "U.S. Cancellation Club."

This summer the USCC was the recipient of very generous donations totaling \$915 from the proceeds of an annual charity auction of the New Orleans based Crescent City Stamp Club and from the CCSC itself. A special "thank you" in this regard is due to Dan Richards and John Donnes. The CCSC has a long and impressive record of support to philatelic organizations and its donation to the USCC is very much appreciated.

I wish you and your families a very happy holiday season.

Roger Curran



The U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

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A New York Foreign Mail (NYFM) "Cover Up"

by Dan Richards

Occasionally I find a cover that makes me chuckle. Figure 1 is just such an example. The 1871 cover was sent by direct service from New York to France. The 10 cent National, ungrilled, prepaid the ½ oz letter rate by the French Line H *St. Laurent* to the port of Harve as indicated by the red orange octagonal 3 JUN 71 mark. This marking and the "8" (8 decimes) marking were applied by a French mail agent aboard the *St. Laurent*. The date in the octagonal mark is the date the cover entered the French mails. The 8 decimes marking was the postage due in Paris for a letter weighing between 10 and 20 grams from the arrival port, Harve.

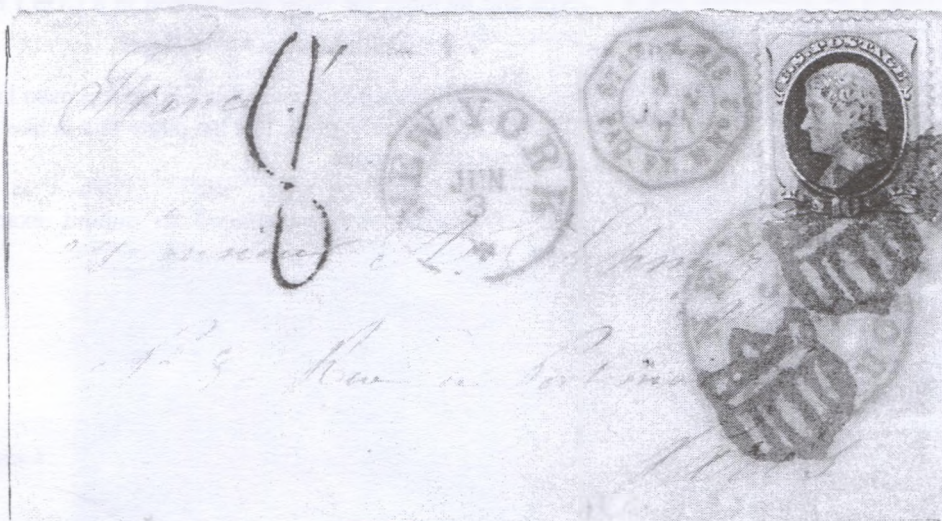


Figure 1

The New York foreign mail department clerk applied in error a 30 mm red orange New York Exchange Office postmark (Weiss #34), Figure 2. The marking indicates that the letter was fully paid and 6 cents was credited to the U.K. This postmark was generally used in an unannounced open mail rate from U.S. to France via U.K. The clerk realized his mistake and proceeded to correct the error. He applied the correct New York exchange office postmark and then took an NYFM killer (Weiss RE-E2) and with heavy ink struck the cover in three places. The first strike was a partial cancel of the 10 cent National, the second strike was to conceal the word "PAID" and the third strike was over the "6," thus creating an NYFM "cover up."

Editor's note. Weiss reported this cancel to be scarce and listed usages from June 6 to July 3, 1871. The strikes on the Figure 1 cover, dated three days before the earliest Weiss report, indicate that the shield probably had, at the outset, a couple more dots or "stars" (although smaller) in the crown.

More on Alexandria Bay "AB" Cancel

The August 2007 *NEWS* carried an article about a monogram "AB" cancel that has been shrouded in mystery. A tracing of an enlarged strike to show the detail clearly is presented, courtesy of John Donnes, in Figure 1. This cancel had long been associated with an unnamed hotel cover from Alexandria Bay, NY and that hotel – Thousand Islands House

– was identified in the article.

The St. Lawrence River separates Ontario from New York along the northernmost section of the state. Down where the river meets Lake Ontario is an area referred to as "Thousand Islands." Alexandria Bay is located on the river bank in this area. In 1968 the population was reported as 1,583. It is interesting to note that the Alexandria Bay post office was only established in 1883. It took over from the Alexandria post office which operated from 1823-1883. The Alexandria Bay name for the community, however, was probably used informally before that. Perhaps the citizens wanted a formal town name that was more suggestive of a tourist village.

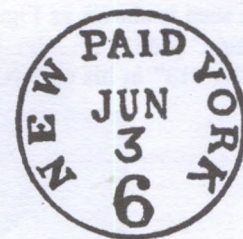


Figure 2

The earlier article reported magenta "AB" cancels on 1¢ 1873 and 1879 issue stamps and it thus may well be that at least a majority of these stamps were processed through the Alexandria post office rather than Alexandria Bay. Support for this idea comes from a new report of the "AB" in black ink from John Donnes on a Sc 206 – see Figure 2. (The earliest reported uses of Sc 206 are in August 1881.) The implication is that there may have been a switch to black ink during or after 1881. However, with but one example, nothing very conclusive can be stated now. Can readers supply additional reports?

As a sidelight about this region, millionaire New York City hotel owner George Brodt enjoyed taking his guests on yacht trips though the Thousand Islands. On one occasion his personal chef created a salad dressing that his guests considered unforgettable. It was subsequently introduced at the Waldorf Astoria and at the Bellevue Stratford in Philadelphia and became known as "Thousand Islands Dressing" in recognition of where it first appeared.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Going to an Extreme

by Roger D. Curran

Collectors occasionally come across cancellations that are unusually large. Sometimes the motivation is to permit the cancellation of more than one stamp. The practice of several California post offices during the July 1851 – April 1855 period comes to mind where the prepaid rate of a single weight letter from the west coast to the east was 6¢ and, if prepaid by stamps, required multiple stamps (normally a pair of 3¢) to pay the rate exactly. An example from Weaverville, California is shown in Figure 1.

In some other instances, the motivation for a large cancel is not clear and should probably be considered just a matter of personal preference. During the 1872-6 period the New York Post Office regularly used cancels with hand-carved numbers in the center on outgoing domestic mail. They were produced with great variation. One of the largest I have seen is shown as Figure 2. It measures 29 mm. tall and 28 mm. wide. A John Donnes tracing of a considerably smaller "13" in his collection is shown in Figure 3. Was the

size difference due to random variation in size of corks used or was it deliberate for some reason? Was it thought that using a larger killer made it easier (and thus quicker) for the clerk to effectively cancel the stamp?

Figure 4 shows a remarkably large cancel, the design of which is usually referred to as a "quartered cork" or "cross-roads." It is probably the most common hand-carved design seen from the 1860s onward. It is noted to a limited extent on 1857 issue stamps and is quite scarce on the 1851 issue. Some previous owner of the Figure 4 cover penciled a light-hearted note on the back – "U115 – ultimate cork cancel!" A cover bearing a much smaller and more typical cross-roads cancel is presented in Figure 5. However, the rimless postmark is very unusual. It appears to have been made from a set of printer's type and includes the most punctuation in a CDS I have ever seen – two commas and three periods.

The cross-roads cancel in Figure 6 is even larger than that in Figure 4. The piece is a tan paper that is likely to have been part of a wrapper.

Readers are encouraged to submit examples of



Figure 1

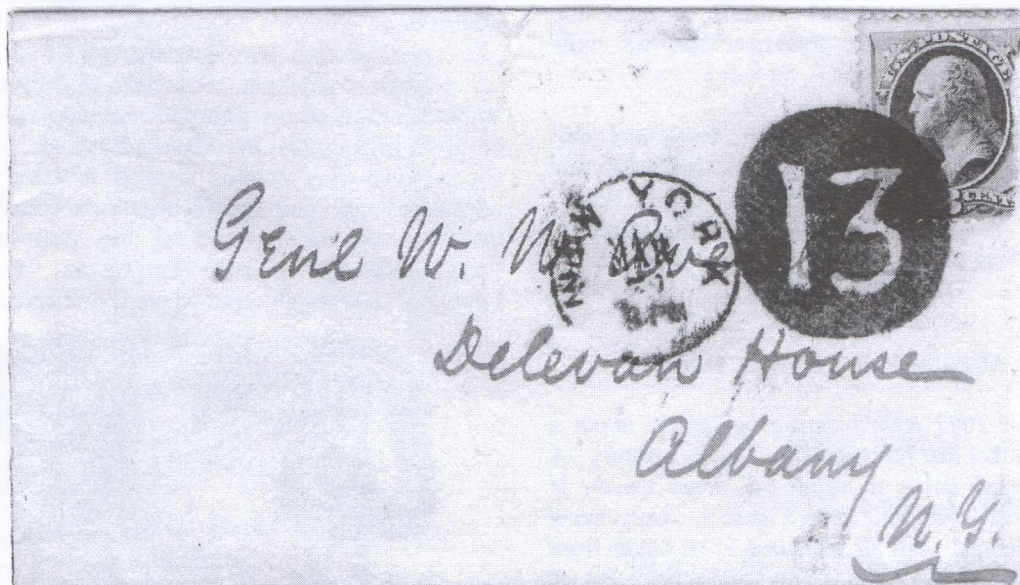


Figure 2



Figure 3

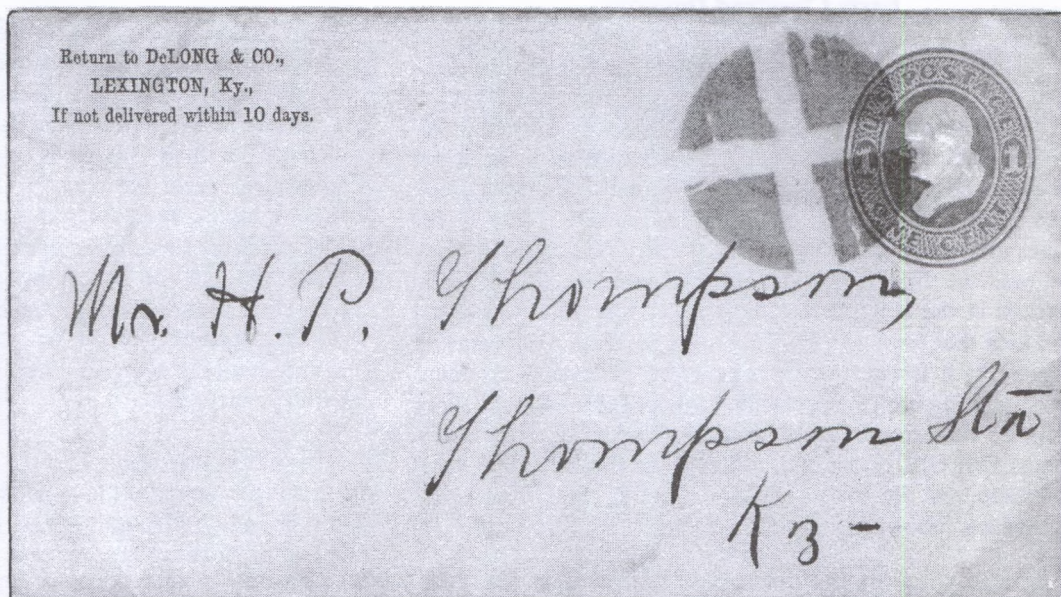


Figure 4

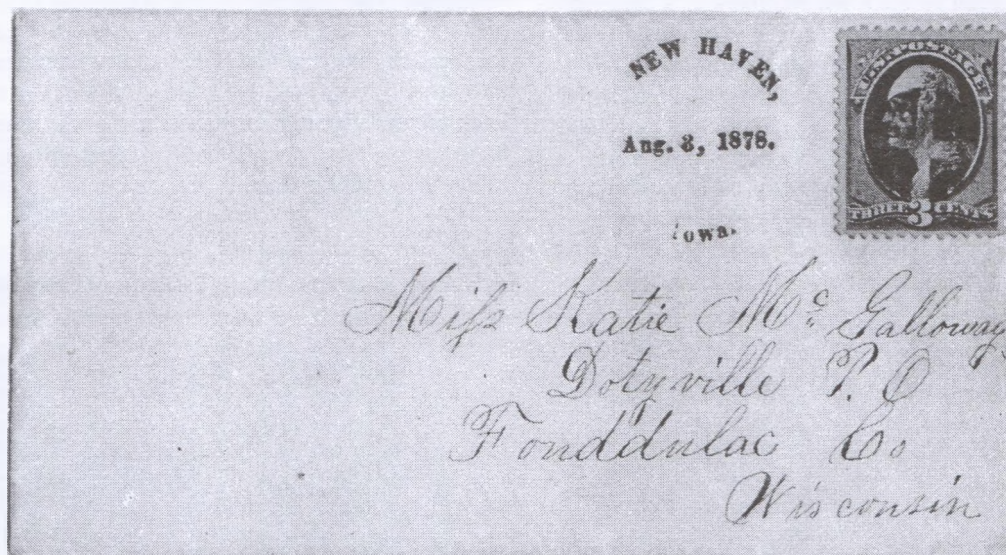


Figure 5

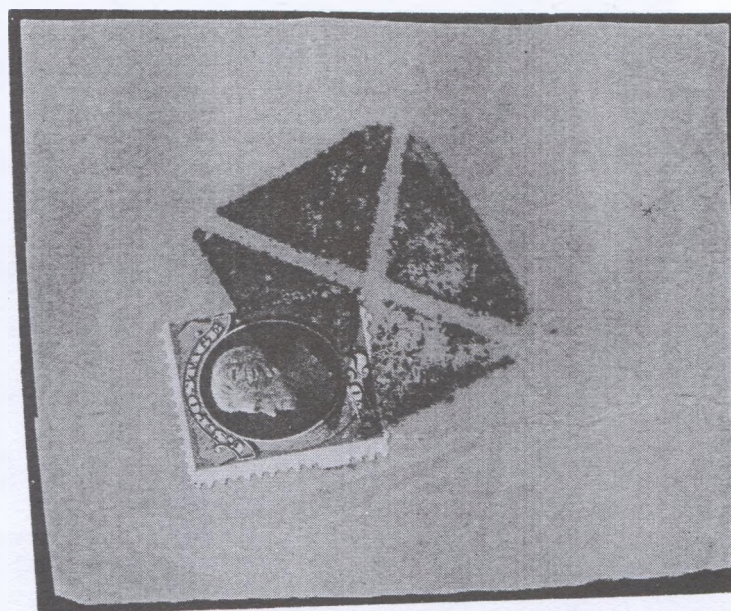


Figure 6

especially large cancellations in their collections as well as comments on the subject. ■

Early Cleveland Duplexes

by Roger D. Curran

Considerable attention has been given in these pages over the past decade to the early introduction of handstamps that duplexed a canceler to the town postmark. By "early," we mean 1860 and the first couple of months of 1861. This action, ultimately taken by virtually every post office of any size, was the first major step in the evolution of canceling practices in the U.S. It resulted from a July 23, 1860 postal regulation that forbade use of the town postmark as a canceler because (1) it frequently did a poor job of canceling stamps and (2) placing it on stamps often contributed to incomplete or otherwise hard-to-read strikes. The New York Post Office was the first U.S. post office to adopt the duplex CDS/cancel handstamp, and did so as early as August 8, 1860. Other post offices soon followed.

Back in 1851, like many other post offices – especially the larger ones, Cleveland stopped using a separate canceler and relied instead on the town postmark as a canceler. This was due to increased usage of postage stamps by the public beginning in July 1851 whereupon the time-saving advantage of having one strike doing double duty as canceler and postmarker came into sharp focus. For all intents and purposes, the Cleveland post office discontinued using a separate canceler (grid) in August 1851. An early example of employing the CDS as a canceler is the September 14 cover shown in Figure 1. An enclosure is dated 1851. The CDS was struck in red. A later example, struck in black, is shown as Figure 2.

Cleveland's initial response to the July 1860 regulation, again like many post offices, was to return to using a separate handstamp that produced a cancel – see Figure 3. An August 5 example has been reported and I wonder how much earlier than August 5, if at all, Cleveland came into conformance with the new regulation. The earliest reported use of a duplex by Cleveland is August 17, 1860 – see Figure 4. Cleveland used two duplex handstamps during this early period. The second handstamp produced the marking shown in Figure 5. The August 21 example in the earliest reported use. Transparent overlays show that the two postmarks differ from one another. In addition, of course, the grids are very obviously different.

It is interesting to note that unduplexed handstamps producing essentially identical strikes of both postmark types are seen both before and during the period of use (1860-1) of the two duplexes. One has been noted beginning in 1858 and the other beginning in 1859. This strongly implies that the handstamps were originally ordered in pairs or larger multiples. I assume that in both 1858 and 1859 the handstamp makers were carefully following a laid-out pattern or design for the CDS since at this time the dies would surely have been individually engraved by hand. Obviously, the person who later created the duplex handstamps was given two simplex handstamps, that the Cleveland post office had available, rather than making them from scratch.

The enclosed grid duplexed to the August 21, 1860 postmark measures 17mm in diameter. Unduplexed strikes of a 17 mm grid have been noted from Cleveland during the

Figure 1

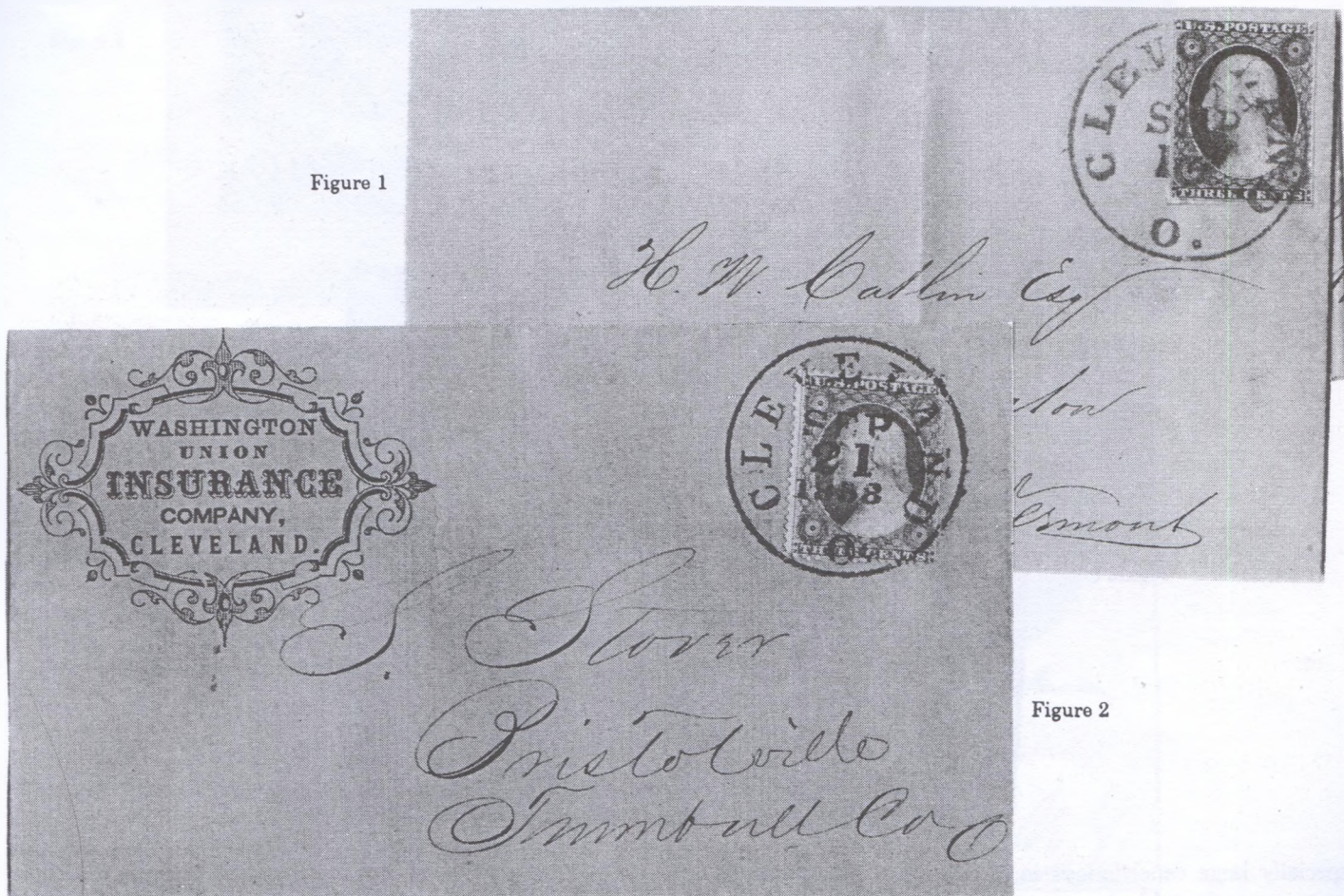


Figure 2

Figure 3

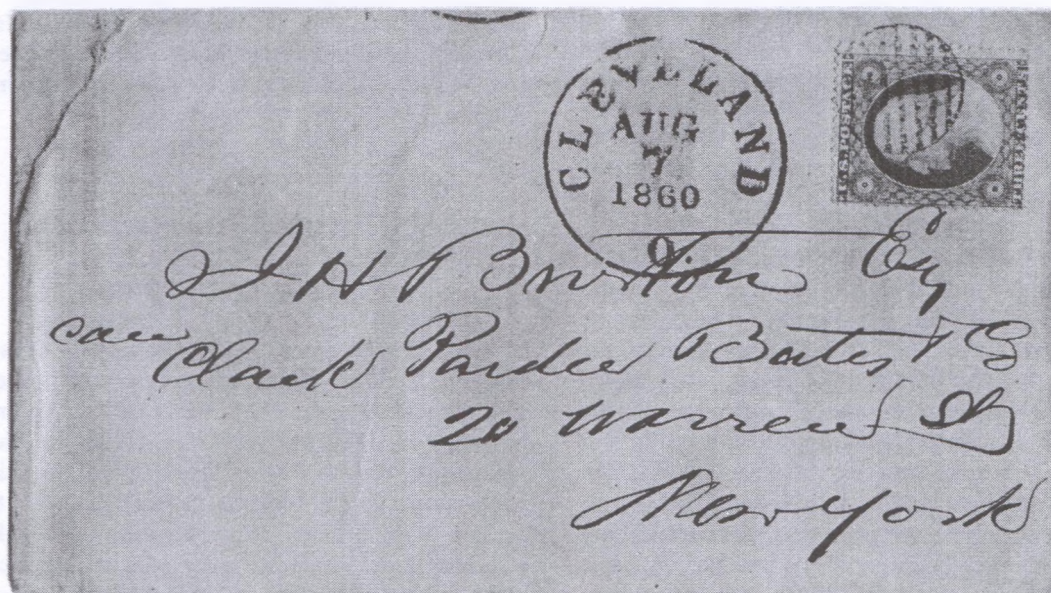


Figure 4

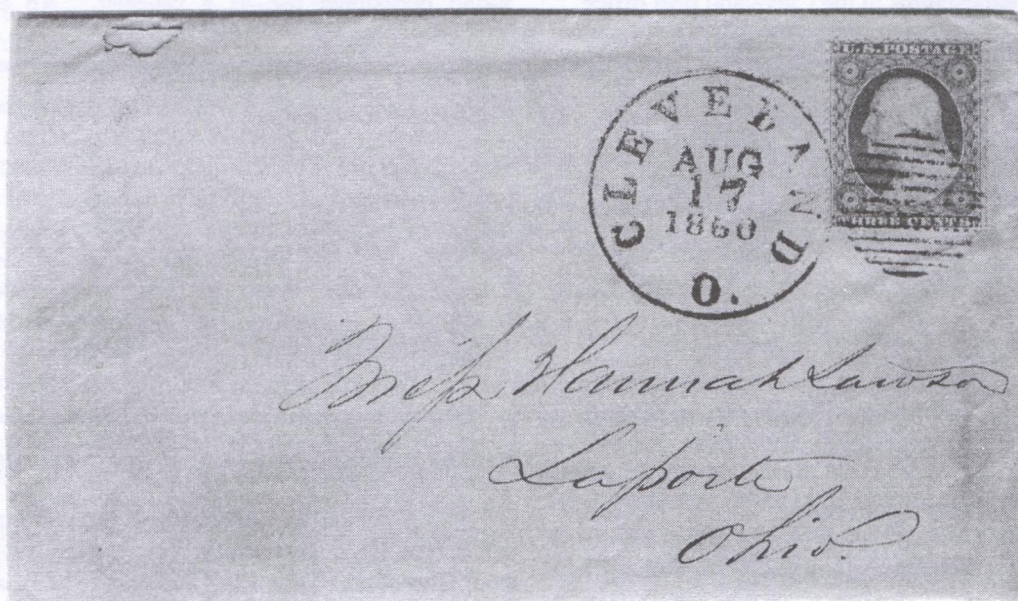


Figure 5

October 1849 – April 1851 period with an isolated example in September 1858 and the August 5 and 7, 1860 examples. Therefore, we can assume the 17mm grid was given to the handstamp maker as well as the two unduplexed postmarkers. The 12-bar open grid duplexed to the August 17 postmark has not been reported used by the Cleveland post office before the appearance of the duplex handstamp.

A Matthew Bennett auction not long ago featured the collection of Cleveland postal history formed by Thomas Allen. Included in a lot with the Figure 4 cover was an original receipt prepared for the Cleveland postmaster by the person who created the two duplex handstamps. It is shown here as Figure 6 together with my interpretation of the wording. A portion of a ledger book page was used for this informal receipt. I assume the two postmarkers and the enclosed grid canceler were provided to Schwartzburg on August 7, 1860 along with a \$1 payment. Schwartzburg thereupon gave Postmaster Harrington this receipt. At some later date, on or before August 17, 2007, Schwartzburg delivered the duplex handstamps to the Cleveland post office.

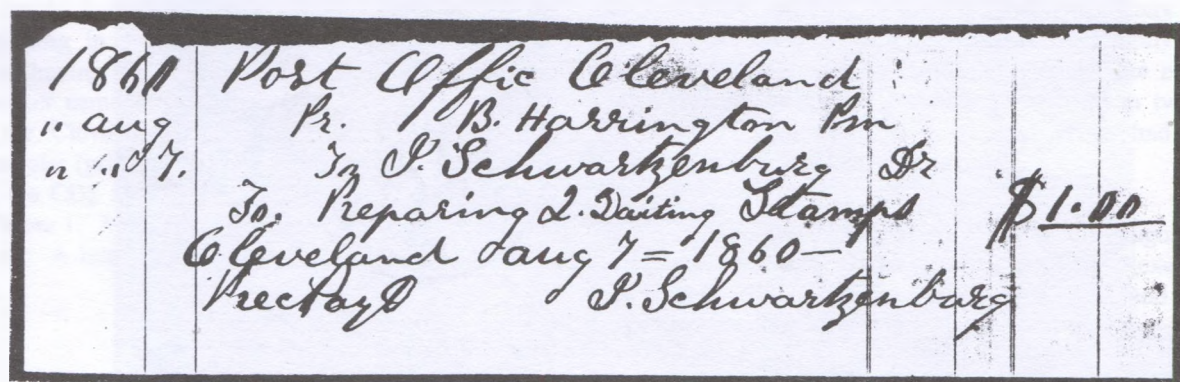
attention given to a section of the book entitled "Cleveland Circular Townmarks and the Post Office Department Government Issue; Early Duplex" by Richard Graham and Mr. Allen.■

"HELD FOR POSTAGE"

By Roger D. Curran

In Alexander's *U.S. Postal Markings 1851-61* the Figure 1 auxiliary postal service marking is shown and rated as "moderately scarce." A cover bearing the marking dated February 19, 1859 from Hartford, CT is also illustrated. This marking is reported as a "stock style," meaning that some handstamp supplier offered handstamps with this design to various post offices, some number of which presumably acquired them. Like so many other post office handstamps that were not intended to cancel postage stamps, this one found occasional use as a canceler. An example of the

Figure 6



1860 Post Office Cleveland

" Aug Pr. B. Harrington PM

" " 7. ? I Schwartzburg Dr

? Preparing 2. Daiting Stamps \$1.00

Cleveland aug 7 = 1860-

PrePayD I. Schwartzburg

After these initial duplex handstamps wore out or were otherwise discontinued, there followed a steady stream of additional duplex handstamps at the Cleveland post office that carried the postmarking and canceling burden. Their use was curtailed, beginning significantly in 1892, due to the advent of canceling machines.

Cincinnati is also known to have introduced a CDS/canceler duplex as early as August 17, 1860 – see Spring 1998 *NEWS*. It is interesting that two Ohio cities were next after New York to capitalize on the workload - saving advantage of these handstamps.

Much of the above information was taken from the excellent book *19th Century Cleveland, Ohio Postal Markings* by Thomas A. Allen, published in 1991, with particular

marking in blue ink on a Sc 65 is shown as Figure 2.

A design variation without the two inner lines (we'll call it type II) is shown in Figure 3. Both types are reported from Cleveland. Type I in 1863 and Type II on several dates from 1885-1892.¹

A typical use of these markings is shown as Figure 4. I assume it is a Type I design but there is some ambiguity. While a year date is not present, we can say that it was mailed before the intercity rate was reduced to 2¢ on October 1, 1883. What we have here is a 2¢ local letter rated up to 3¢ to pay the first class rate from one post office to another. This resulted,

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



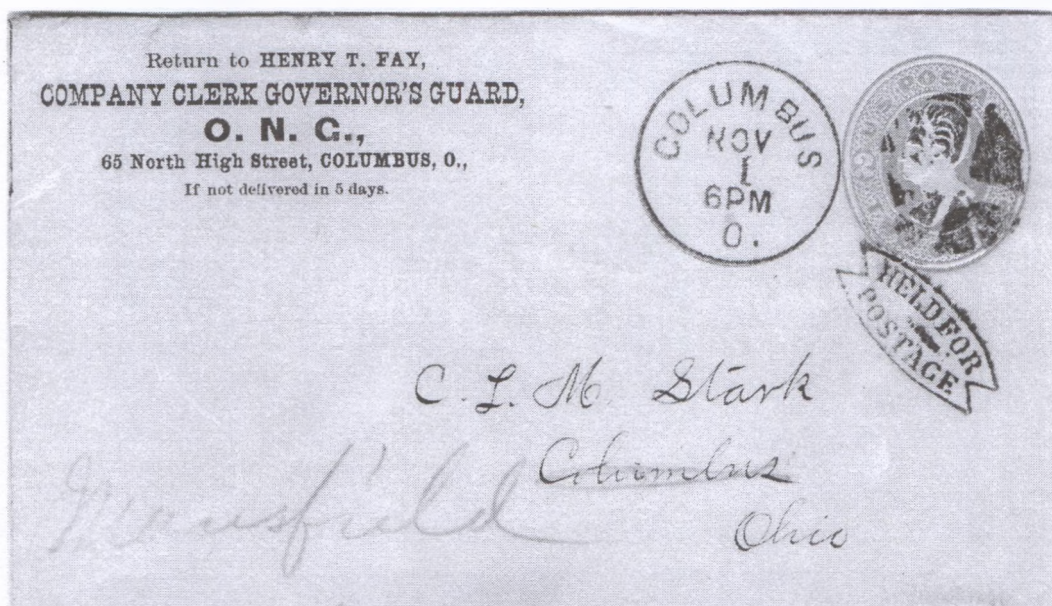


Figure 4

of course, from the determination that the addressee was now in Mansfield, Ohio.

If Figure 4 is a typical use, Figure 5 shows a very atypical use of the "HELD FOR POSTAGE" – canceling a postage due stamp. We know, of course, that the due stamps of this era were the recipients of all sorts of unusual cancels, particularly auxiliary markings associated with incorrect payment, no payment, or extra fee charges, such as "advertised," "short paid" and the many "due" markings. However, this is the first large numeral postage due stamp I have seen with this style of marking. Surely there are more out there. Figure 5, incidentally, is a Type II.



Figure 5

HELD
FOR
POSTAGE

Figure 7

Just how long were these markings in use? Quite a while, apparently. Figure 6 is a Philadelphia cover dated March 8, 1922. In Part III of Tom Clarke's *A Catalog of Philadelphia Postmarks*, the Type I marking is listed with a latest known use of "1932 (sic) 4/13."

We move now to another "HELD FOR POSTAGE" marking illustrated here as Figure 7. The tracing is from *Boston Postmarks to 1890* by Blake and Davis, and I assume it is another stock style used by more than one post office. Dates of use in Boston are reported to be May 21, 1883 – November 16, 1887. I have seen a limited number of examples of this marking used as a canceler, basically on Sc 210 but also Sc 206, the 1¢ re-engraved. Figure 8 shows an

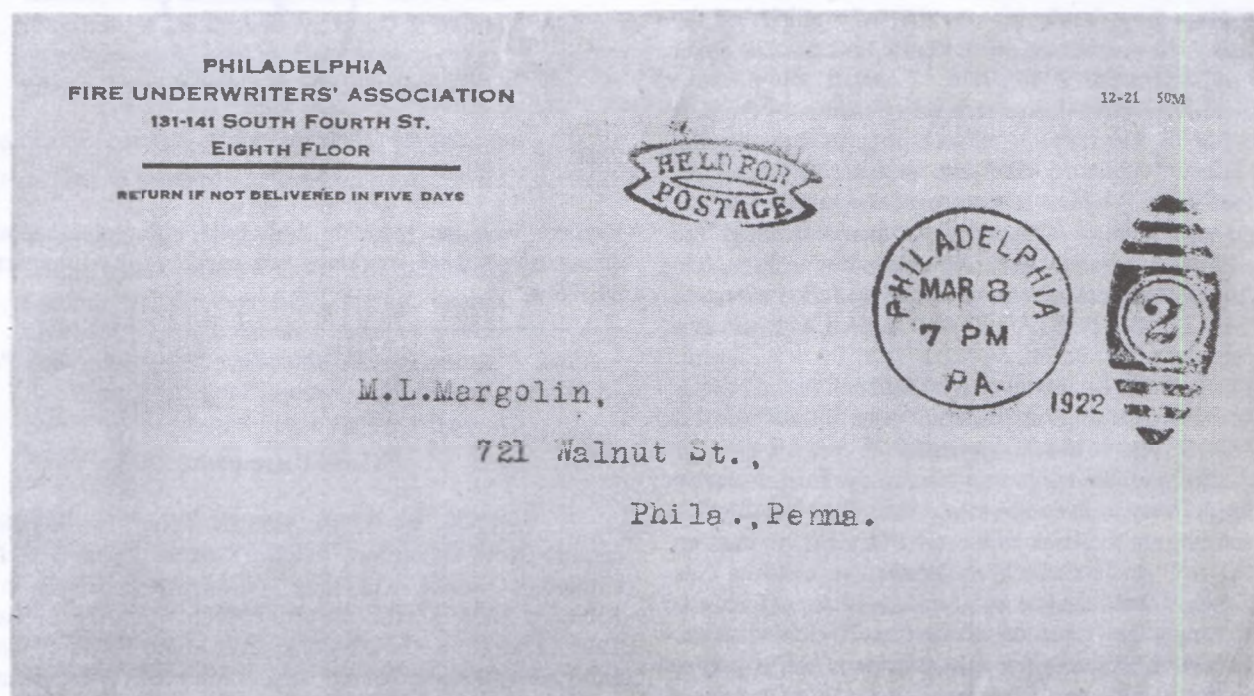


Figure 6

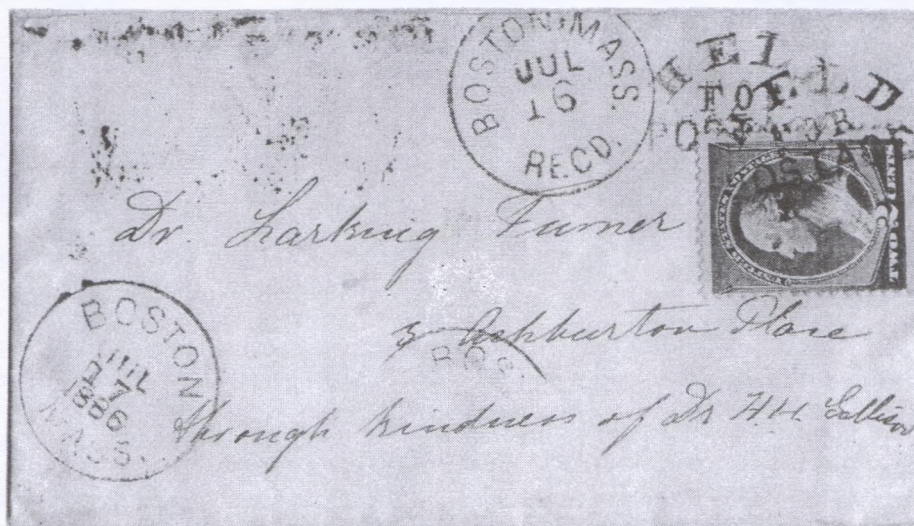
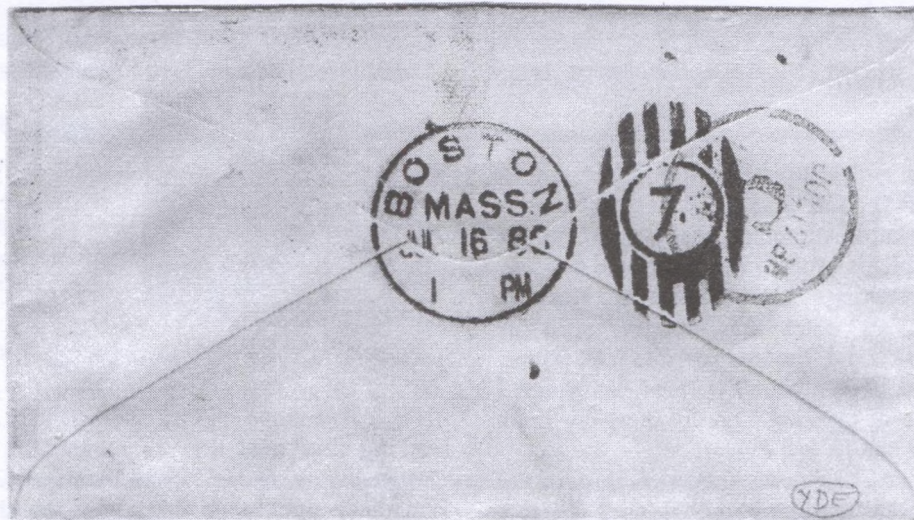


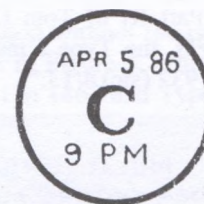
Figure 8



on-cover example. I think this cover was handled within the Boston Post Office as follows:

- (1) It entered the mails at 1 P.M. on July 16, 1886 as indicated by the duplex marking with ellipse on the back. It was struck on the back because the cover had no postage.
- (2) The cover was referred to another section of the post office for handling. That section applied the Boston "RECD." July 16 CDS and the first "HELD FOR POSTAGE" which is now partially underneath the postage stamp. This section then contacted the addressee, who was local, to obtain the postage. On July 17 the postage was provided and then a second "HELD FOR POSTAGE" was applied, but just as a canceler of the Sc 210.
- (3) The now fully paid cover was put back in the regular postal processing mainstream where the July 17, 1886 Boston CDS was applied.
- (4) Finally, the letter was sent over to the carrier section for delivery to the addressee. The July 17, 1886 "C" marking on the back of the cover appears to read on "11AM" under the "C." I gather this marking (see Figure 9 for a sample tracing from Blake and Davis) records either when the letter was distributed to the carrier section or when it was received in the carrier section. With no further markings on the cover, we

Figure 9



can assume that it safely reached its intended recipient.

Readers who can provide additional information about or examples of these markings are encouraged to contact the *NEWS*.■

¹ Allen, Thomas F. *19th Century Cleveland, Ohio Postal Markings*, Garfield-Perry Stamp Club (1991), p. 89.

Hotel Champlain

Articles by Roger Rhoads about two nineteenth century New Hampshire hotels (Summit House Hotel and Crawford House) and their postmarks appeared in the February 2006 *NEWS*. In a follow-up article in the August 2006 issue, Roger wrote about other grand hotels of the era, and their postmarks, based on a number of covers submitted by Club member Don Garrett.

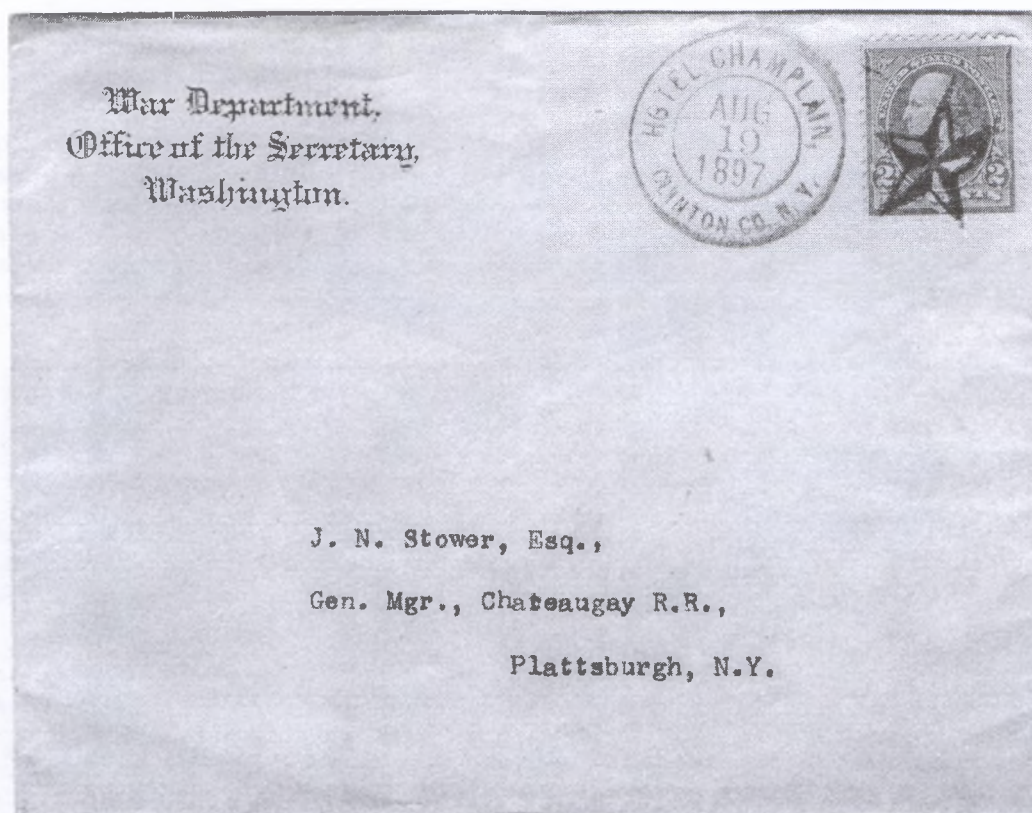


Figure 1

In the present article, an additional hotel and its postmark are presented. Figure 1 shows a cover postmarked Hotel Champlain/Clinton Co., N.Y. and dated August 19, 1897. The Clinton County Historical Society provides interesting information at its website about the hotel. An early description of the hotel stated the following:

The Hotel Champlain on Bluff Point, the most commanding Promontory on Lake Champlain, three miles south of Plattsburgh, New York, overlooks an unrivalled landscape of mountains, lakes, forest and intervals. First opened in 1890, it was at once recognized as a leading summer resort, unequalled in location and management.

Portions of the Historical Association's description of the hotel are presented below:

The grounds consisted of parks, wood lawns, paths and walks. Bridle paths accommodated the fifty riding horses provided by the hotel stables. There were also tennis courts, a bowling alley, and the five-hundred-foot "Beach of Singing Sands," with a beach house for the fifty-two boats.

Golf was the reigning sport of Hotel Champlain. The eighteen-hole course was the first hotel course constructed, and the third oldest in America today. Turf for the course had to be trucked in because of the rock surface. For guests waiting to play, there was a small nine-hole pitch and putt

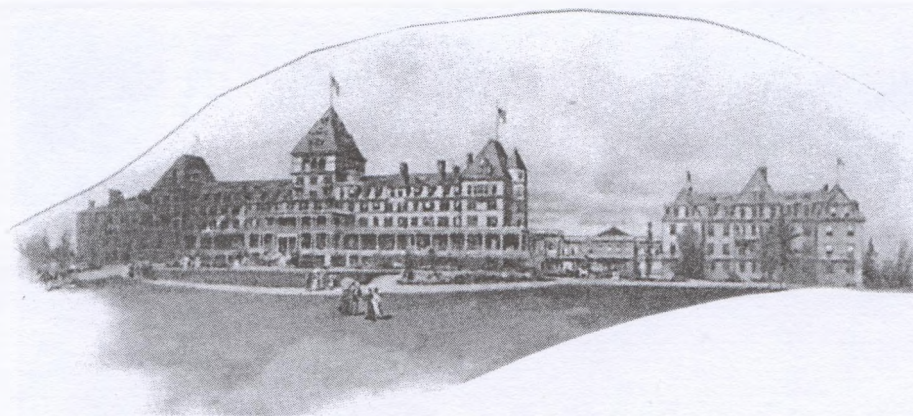
course. It was said that once while playing the course, Babe Ruth hit a ball over two hundred feet into the lake. In 1911, the National Golf Tournament was played on the Hotel Champlain course.

The Hotel Champlain was a resort for many dignitaries. The President of Cuba and his family spent many seasons there. President McKinley and his wife spent the summers of 1897 and 1899 at the hotel. It was sometimes referred to as the "Summer White House." Mrs. McKinley suffered from epilepsy and doctors advocated the air and sunshine of the region. They were mainly visits of rest. Mrs. McKinley kept mostly to the apartment; however, the President especially enjoyed walking about the hotel grounds. Other dignitaries included ambassadors, senators, governors .

In 1910 the hotel, which had been designed to accommodate 400 guests, burned to the ground. It was rebuilt and opened again in 1911 and stands today as the Clinton Community College. An image of the hotel as it appeared in 1902 is shown as Figure 2.

The hotel post office operated from 1890 to 1951. From the Figure 1 cover we can assume that the Secretary of War was visiting the President in August 1897. Perhaps the Secretary's letter to the railroad manager was about lost luggage!■

Figure 2



Stafford, Inc.

by Roger D. Curran

The Sc 210 stamp illustrated in Figure 1 has been in my collection for years. It has reverse lettering and I was never clear about what was spelled out. A similar cancel appears in Willard which is shown here as Figure 2. Willard

Figure 1



Figure 2



said this about it:

"... is some sort of a bottle cap or trade mark including a star, but the letters used cannot be deciphered because they are in reverse, but it seems obvious that the killer was unintentionally used."

After coming across the Figure 1 stamp recently, I sent it to John Donnes for his consideration. John quickly solved the mystery. Figure 3 shows his tracing of the cancel as it appears on the stamp. Figure 4 shows a reversed image of Figure 3, created by turning over the transparency, which shows how the face of the canceler appeared. Through an

Figure 3



Figure 4



internet search, John learned that the Stafford company was a prominent seller of ink during the time period of Sc 210 stamps. (The label from a 1910 ink bottle reads "S.S. Stafford, Inc./New York and Toronto.") The cancel in Figure 1 was produced by using a metal Stafford ink bottle cap with raised lettering and decorative features.

Turning back now to Willard's cancel, I think we can

say that it is very likely that this cancel was also made by a Stafford bottle cap. Figure 5 shows a rough reconstruction of how the original design may have appeared if fully struck and a reverse image of the reconstructed design.

Figure 5



Perhaps Stafford's ink was popular with postmasters for canceling and postmarking.

Reports of additional examples of Stafford or similar cancels are eagerly sought.■

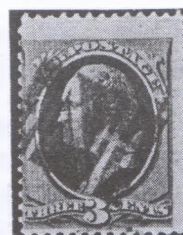
Unknown Meaning

by Roger D. Curran

Figure 1 represents an intriguing cancel on a Sc 158 that as far as I know has not appeared in the literature. Thanks to John Donnes for the tracing. The lines are quite sharp, suggesting that they may have been cut in some material harder than cork, but who knows. The letters form what is apparently a monogram. Do they represent the initials of a postmaster, the letters for a post office and state, or something else? Given the location of the partial CDS rim, and assuming the CDS was to the right of the rim, one might think that the killer was struck on its end, but still somewhat askew, with the letters reading up or down. Given the evidence at hand, however, it is very hard to know if the small "H" is to be read first or the small "N."

I'll hazard a guess that the letters stand for Nashua, New Hampshire. Comments and additional ideas will be welcomed.■

Figure 1



Brush Precancels

by Roger D. Curran

Some precancels were applied by brush strokes. An example is presented in Figure 1. The postmark reads Mount Lebanon, N.Y. and is dated December 15, 1865. The brush strokes on the two Sc 65 stamps do not extend beyond the perforations onto the cover. This indicates, of course, that they were likely applied before the stamps were affixed to the cover.

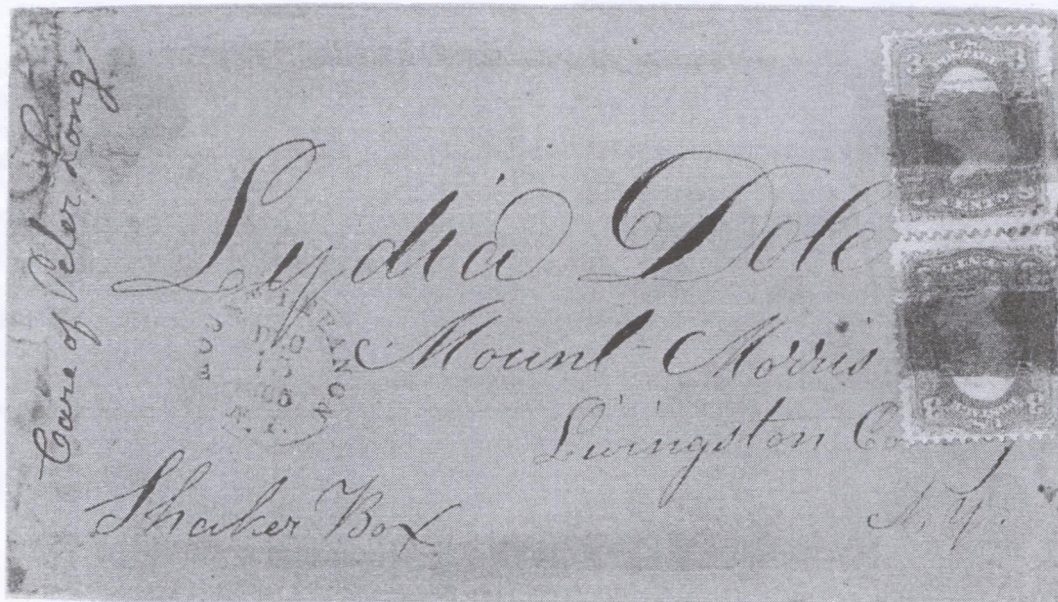


Figure 1

Precancels on first class mail of this era are not at all common. Why were these particular stamps precanceled? This question reminds me of a Weston, Massachusetts postal history exhibit I saw at the recent Philadelphia show. In it, attention was given to the well-known manuscript "W" cancels from Weston. Many collectors have considered them as precancels because they were typically placed completely on the stamp. Some, however, are tied to the cover and this raises the question of whether all the manuscript "W" cancels are just carefully applied post-cancels that usually didn't extend to the cover. The exhibitor, Guy Dillaway, put forward an interesting explanation. Covers brought to the post office with stamps affixed were post-canceled. In cases where customers brought unstamped letters to the post office and bought stamps just before mailing, the postmaster would sell precanceled stamps to ease the subsequent processing workload.

Was this the arrangement used at Mount Lebanon? Regarding the Figure 1 cover, the cancels certainly appear to be precancels. And one additional thing is clear. The stamps were applied to the cover after it was addressed since the bottom stamp was affixed over a portion of the address. Also, one might speculate that if the sender affixed the stamps, he or she would likely have done it more neatly than we see here — one stamp upside down and extending slightly off the cover.

The Figure 1 cover has a 2004 PF Certificate stating that the stamps were precanceled and genuinely used on the cover. A brush stroke precancel is listed on the 1861 issue from Mount Lebanon in the book *Silent Precancels* by David

Smith.

The "Shaker Box" notation at the lower left of the cover is interesting. Presumably there was one box at the Mount Morris post office for mail received by members of a Shaker community living in the area.

Figure 2 is a pair of Sc 183 with a brush cancel of unknown origin. Since it is not on cover, one cannot say that the cancel is a precancel but it seems likely. The black and white illustration doesn't do justice to the rather dramatic



Figure 2

effect of the cancel, creating the appearance somewhat of a photographic negative. The two Jackson profiles, instead of being very light, appear as a dark grayish black and the oval medallions, since they picked up little canceling ink, are lighter and brighter. Assuming these are precancels, what would have been the circumstance of their use? Just as a guess, perhaps a postmaster precanceled some stamps to use on packages brought to the post office for mailing with no stamps affixed. ■

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Two Killers, Different Purposes

Killers weren't always used to obliterate stamps. Sometimes they were applied to obliterate postal markings. In the early days of adhesive stamps, cancellations are sometimes noted blotting out rate numerals that were incorrect for some reason. After the stampless era came to an end, the use of a killer to blot out a postmark date is seen very occasionally. Such a usage from the collection of Arthur Beane (markings in blue) is shown in Figure 1 where a Philadelphia clerk determined that the letter was not "dispatched" at 1:20 PM on whatever date appeared in the CDS. The letter was probably found at some point after that batch of mail had been processed. The date in the original CDS was corrected by the strike of the second handstamp that applied the correct date and canceled the old date in one operation.

The cancel on the left is one of several similar cancels thought to represent the mummers, a group that is famous for its New Years Day parade in Philadelphia – see Skinner-Eno FR-NMC 1 through 8. For an interesting discussion of Philadelphia mummers cancels, see Club member Jim Cate's article in the May 2005 *Chronicle*. In it he notes that Skinner-Eno LS-D7 is also a mummers cancel and adds a new, previously unreported variety of LS-D7 to the

literature.

The Winter 2000 *NEWS* on page 5 illustrates an 1860s San Francisco cover that also shows two duplex markings, each with a fancy cancel, with the killer of one strike blotting out the date of the other. Coincidentally, the covers are very similar in terms of their unusual size.

Figure 2 shows another cover mailed at the Philadelphia post office, but this one about 20 years later. It was initially struck by a July 26 2:30PM duplex. (A numeral "8" appears in the ellipse.) Very shortly thereafter, at 5PM, what was a local cover was marked for forwarding to an out-of-town address. From the placement of the 5PM duplex, it would appear that it was the clerk's intention to blot out the 2:30PM CDS in favor of 5PM since the duplex could have just as easily been placed to the left without obliterating the 2:30PM CDS.

The forwarding address is of interest. Readers of the *NEWS* will remember a couple of *NEWS* articles (November 2005, February 2006) on the "summer vacation cancel" shown here as Figure 3. This unusual and purely commercial cancel has been noted during the summer months of 1880 to 1882 and is associated with a Spring Lake, NJ postmark.■

Figure 1

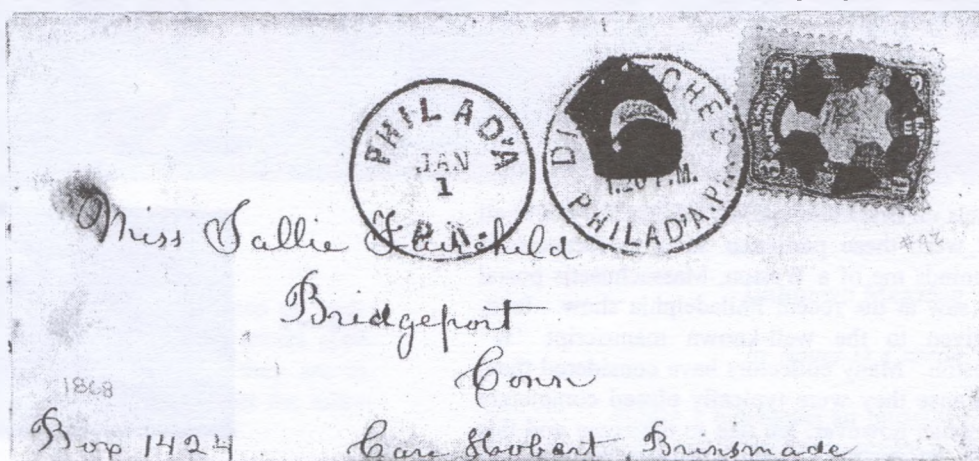


Figure 2

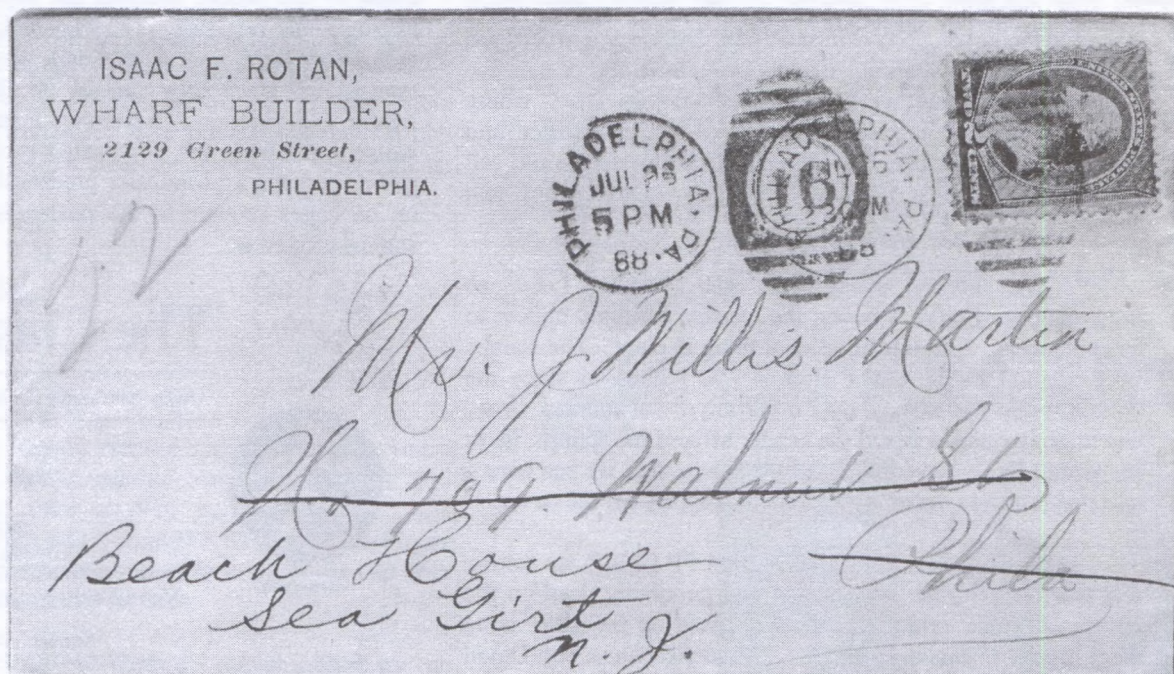


Figure 3



A Pseudo Series?

The late Bob Payne presented in the May 2003 *NEWS* a listing he developed of what he termed "pseudo-machine" cancels. These were U.S. 19th century handstamp cancels the designs of which were similar to and presumably inspired by machine cancels. They are dated primarily in the late 1880s and the 1890s.

One of Bob's entries was for Martin's Ferry, Ohio involving a CDS dated February 4, 1887 and a killer comprised of five horizontal bars, 27 mm long, containing a die space in which there is the number "11." Figure 1 shows a cover that probably provided the basis for that listing. Figure 2 shows a Martin's Ferry cover dated August 28, 1889 with a somewhat similar five bar killer enclosing a "1" with serifs at top and bottom. One wonders whether there were Martin's Ferry handstmps with additional numbers. If readers have

covers in their collections that can add dates of usage for the "1" and "11" or add new numbers, please contact the *NEWS*.

The manner in which the Figure 1 cover is addressed is interesting, given that New York was the largest city in the country. No address or even a business title was used, just the person's name and "Publisher." Obviously the person was well known. The letter apparently arrived at its destination without difficulty because there are no markings indicating otherwise. However, even though it reached New York the day after entering the mails in Ohio, it was considered a "late arrival" as indicated by the New York received marking.

Martin's Ferry is on the Ohio border with West Virginia, very close to Wheeling, WV. Cole reports a blue wheel-of-fortune cancel from Martin's Ferry dated January 9, 1892.■

Figure 1

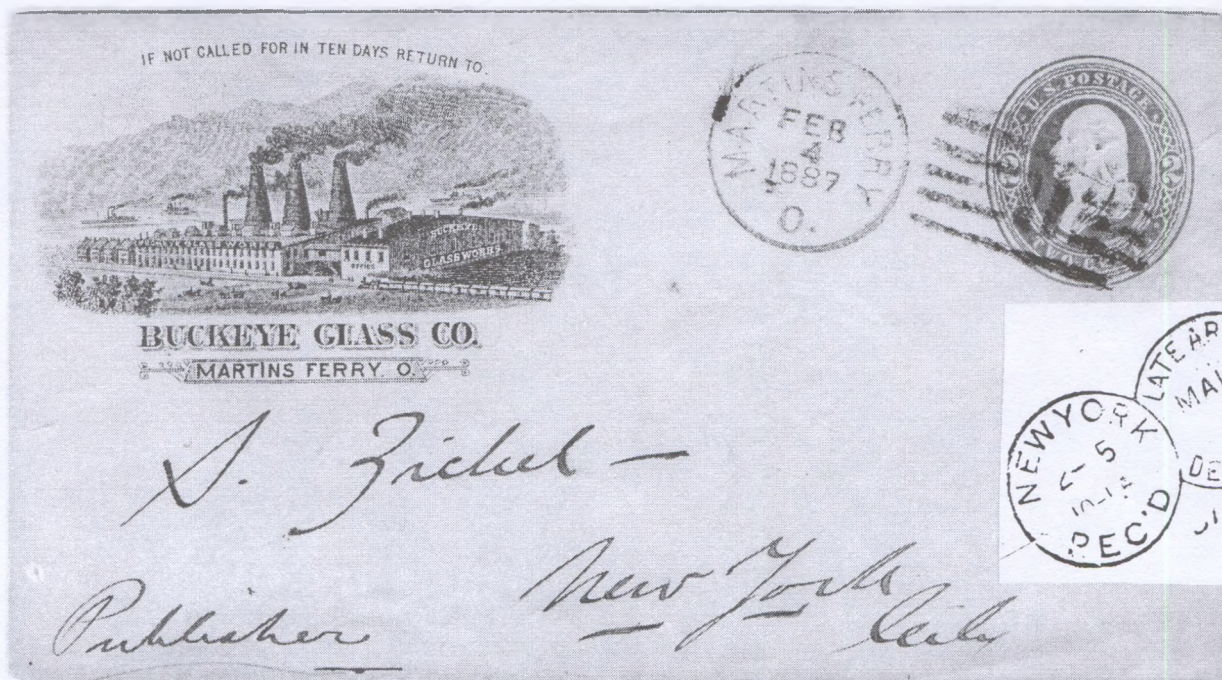


Figure 2



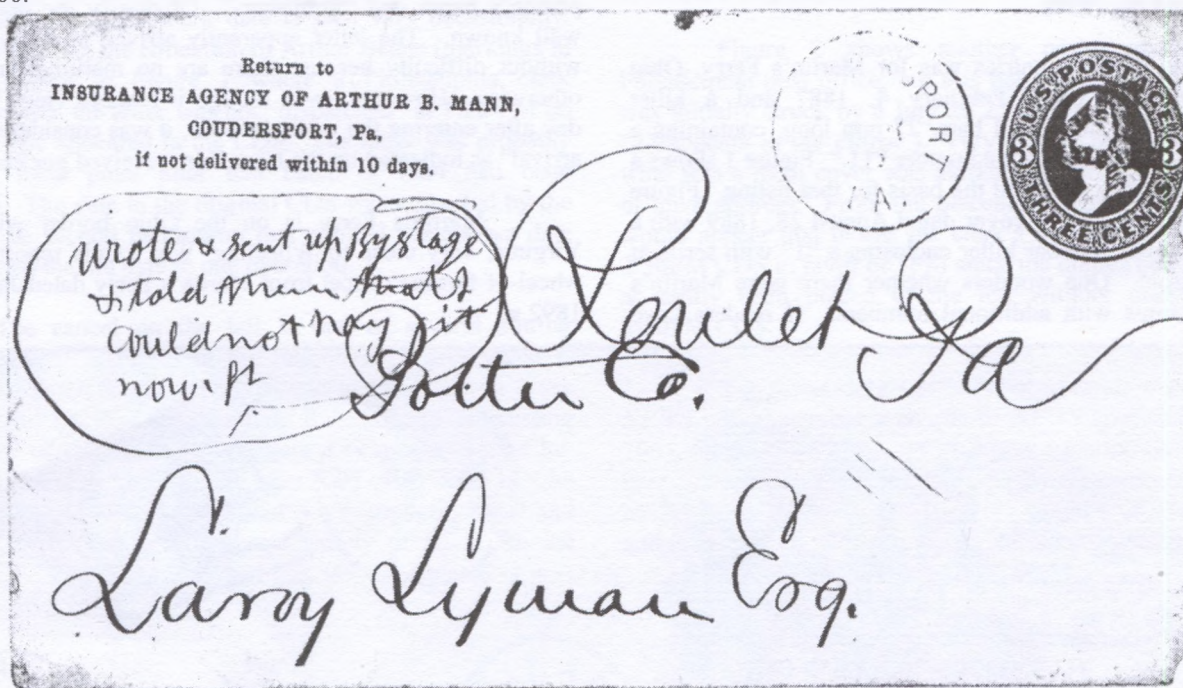
Putting Pieces Together

The cover in Figure 1 bears an unusual cancellation – a simple, hand-carved “4.” Coudersport, a town in north-central Pennsylvania, is the county seat for Potter County. Its post office opened in 1864 and the population in 1968 was about 2,900.

Cancel Identified

Jim Kesterson reports the post office of origin for the Figure 6 cancel on the cover page of the August 2007 *NEWS*. The stylized “B” in a group of dots was used by Bartonville, VT.

Figure 1



4

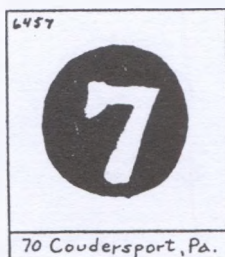
Why was a “4” used as a cancel, or does the “4” not have a particular meaning? Although the cancel is not listed in Cole or Whitfield, a check of these books suggests an answer. Cole lists as NU-43 a “6” (Figure 2) from Coudersport and cites “1876” below it. Whitfield #6457 (Figure 3) is a negative “7.” We can thus deduce that all three numerals are likely to be year dates in the 1870s. Presumably, there is at least one more Coudersport numeral out there – a “5.” Who can report additional Coudersport numeral cancel covers?

The encircled docketing on the Figure 1 cover reads: “wrote and sent up by stage and told them that I could not pay it now” followed by what appear to be one or two initials. Perhaps it was insurance policy payment that couldn’t be made. ■

Figure 2

6

Figure 3



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