



U.S. Cancellation Club **NEWS**

Vol. 29, No. 3, Whole No. 266, August 2008

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Dear Reader,

As you will have quickly noted, there is a dramatic change in the *U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS* with this issue, principally the introduction of color images. In this regard, we have secured the services of Richard Sine, a name that is well known, I'm sure, to a number of our members. Dick has been involved in philatelic publishing, editing and writing for more than 30 years. He was the editor of *The American Philatelist* for some years, served as *New York Times* stamp columnist, editorial director at Scott Publishing Co., etc. and is currently editor of *First Days* and *The Confederate Philatelist*. Incidentally, while at APS, Dick was directly involved in the production of the Skinner-Eno book, a major cancellation resource on most of our bookshelves. I will continue as *NEWS* editor but Dick will handle page layouts and the printing. We have moved from a format of four sheets folded in the middle to create a booklet to using eight (and occasionally more) page-size sheets. Dick's printing equipment is not designed for the larger sheets needed for the former arrangement. I will welcome your comments on our "new look" and suggestions for improvement.

I'm very pleased to report that we have a volunteer – Vince Costello – to develop an index for back issues of the *NEWS*. He is already hard at work on the project and it will probably take at least a year to complete. Thanks, Vince!

In November we will hold elections for Club officers for the 2009-10 term. The current officers have served for lengthy periods and, as I have said before, it is important for any organization to have a regular intake of new perspectives to meet the interests of a varied and evolving membership. The duties are not extensive and primarily involve attendance at occasional conference telephone calls to decide on major activities and to review Club operations. Participation in one or more Club projects might also be included. (The Secretary/Treasurer, of course, also performs the Club's financial administration.) If interested in assisting, or if you just want to learn more about what is involved, please contact me or one of the other officers. Thanks very much!

Roger D. Curran

More on "Air Line"

The May 2008 *NEWS* illustrated a railroad postmark for the Chicago and Dixon Air Line with a request for information on the meaning of "air line" in this context. Roger Rhoads and Wendell Triplett responded and provided essentially the same (and very helpful) explanation. Back in the 1800s, "air line" referred to a straight line, a direct line, or the shortest distance between two points. Thus an "air line" railroad was one with a route that was relatively straight and flat. The invention of airplanes, of course, led to a new meaning for "air line" and the old definition fell into disuse. It is said that there were about 50 railroads with "air line" in the title. Another term popular in the 1800s with the

same meaning was "bee line" and this term is still used, of course, to some extent today. Wendell submitted two UX5 postal cards dated in 1879 with printed advertisements on

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Figure 1.

The U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

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Address library inquires to: U.S. Cancellation Club Library, Box 2219, Sunnyvale, CA 94087. (See the August 2003 NEWS for details or write the editor.)

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Figure 2.

the back for The Piedmont Air Line. They are illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

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"running man"

Cancellation Gallery

We take the occasion of this inaugural color issue to celebrate what is surely one of the most appealing aspects of collecting cancellations – the wonderful aesthetics that are encountered. Featured herewith are two pages of cancels from the collection of Club member Charles Collins. The first four rows of the first page are New York Foreign Mail (NYFM) cancels. The other stamps demonstrate the extraordinary range of imaginative and artistic hand-carved cancellations to be found during the 3¢ green era. These examples speak for themselves and need no write-up. Many are well known and reported in the literature, others are not. We cannot, however, resist offering a few comments.

The middle stamp on the third row of NYFM cancels is the “NYPO” which differs dramatically from other NYFM designs. This cancel was first reported by Bill Weiss in 1988 and he listed it in his 1990 book. Bill reported two known covers and stated that it is a rare cancel on and off-cover. In the Fall 1993 *NEWS*, John Barwis illustrated a remarkable off-cover strip of four Sc 147 bearing three strikes of the “NYPO” and he provided a more complete tracing of the cancel which is shown here as Figure 1. The Collins example is the first reported on a 7¢ stamp.





Page 2.

The second stamp from the left on the bottom row below the NYFMs bears one of the most popular and sought after

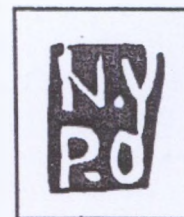


Figure 1.

cancels of the Banknote era – the Chicago “gin barrel.” The Fall 1997 *NEWS* illustrated the cancel with the “G” in “GIN” facing to the right. Paul Berg, author of *Chicago Blue Postal Markings 1870-1877*, wrote in with a correction to that drawing. The Winter 1998 *NEWS* reported Paul’s thought-provoking letter as follows:

“He (Paul Berg) reports that every copy of the gin barrel he has seen shows the ‘G’ in reverse or backwards. (Figure 2) . . .



Figure 2.

presents the three examples (from pages 105 and 106) that his book illustrates. He goes on to state:

‘Furthermore I have never seen a G with the central horizontal bar that distinguishes a G from a C even in what I would consider a perfect strike of the Gin Barrel cancel which is shown on page 106.’

Paul also refers to another cancel illustrated on page 118 which is presented here as Figure 3. He reports

two known examples in blue and states:

'... it is my hypothesis that this one was made by the same individual who made the Gin Barrel. The NIC is a mirror image of the GIN assuming that the C is or was a G.'

We learn from Paul's book and the 1996 supplement that reported dates of use of the gin barrel are 9/14/73-11/4/73 and the one reported date of Figure 3 is 3/25/75."



Figure 3.

I believe Berg's "perfect strike" is the one in the middle of Figure 2. Paul's hypothesis is probably not provable but his comments surely give collectors something to think about.

To your editor's mind, one of the more intriguing cancels in the entire Whitfield book is #24 on page 1, shown

here as Figure 4. What could be more delicate than that thumb? The stamp just to the right of the "gin barrel" bears a beautiful strike of this cancel. I suspect Whitfield made his tracing from this stamp and probably did so more than 50 years ago.



Figure 4.

Our sincere thanks to Charles for sharing these cancels from his collection, more of which will be shown in the future. The *NEWS* is eager to feature, in what we hope will become a regular "Gallery" section, covers and stamps that are favorites in readers' collections. So please, consider what especially appeals to you and send to the *NEWS* scans at 300 dpi, if possible. Otherwise, color photocopies made at a Staples or other store on glossy paper will probably be satisfactory.

A New NYFM Discovery on National Issues

by John Valenti

For collectors of New York Foreign Mail (NYFM) cancellations on the Banknote issues, one of the great thrills is the pursuit of new, previously unidentified and unpublished killers. The thrill is especially great when a new killer is unusual or fancy. (Many new varieties of NYFM grid and wedge killers continue to surface.) USCC member Dan Richards has recently written an article for the *News* describing an interesting new type.¹ I, too, have previously written on this topic.^{2,3} This article reports a new and obviously scarce NYFM killer. (The two covers pictured below represent the only reported examples of this new killer and currently reside in the collection of noted NYFM collector and USCC member Nick Kirke.)



Figure 1.

Figure 1 shows a 10 cent National issue (Scott #150) tied by a VF strike of an unlisted, fat rounded cross killer on folded letter sheet to Cuba. As with many NYFM killers canceling mail to Mexico and the Caribbean, the killer appears to be duplexed to the NEW YORK postmark.

A blue E. Churchill & Co. forwarder's hand stamp verifies a DEC. 21, 1872 usage.

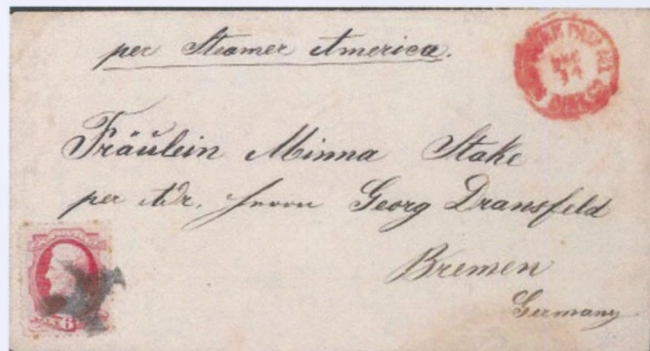


Figure 2.

Figure 2 shows an example of the new killer, this time in a simplex format, canceling a 6 cent National stamp (Scott 148) on cover to Germany. The red NEW YORK PAID ALL DIRECT routing postmark at upper right is dated DEC 14 (1872 as confirmed by receiving back stamp), a date consistent with the DEC 21 posting of the Figure 1



Figure 3.

cover. This short separation of dates is also consistent with the obvious scarcity of this killer.

Enlarged images of the killer in Figures 3 and 4 both clearly show elements common to the killer's design. The cross has three interior curves between branches, but the fourth appears to be gouged out, giving the inside of the cross an irregular shape. Three of the cross branches appear to be flared at the end. However, the branch to the left of the gouge appears to lack these flares. The killer's design suggests that it started out as a simple circular cork or wooden dowel. The cross segments probably are the product of removing similar circular cuts from the edge



Figure 4.

of the original killer. Nick Kirke describes this cancel as a 4 spoke radial with flanges at the top of each radial. His representation below assumes a balanced design of regular curves and flared branches.



Readers are invited to comment and to report additional on or off cover examples of this killer.

Figure 5.

- ¹ Richards, Dan, "Newly Discovered New York Foreign Mail (NYFM) Cancel," *U.S. Cancellation Club News*, Vol. 28, No. 7 (264), August 2007
- ² Valenti, John, "New York City Cancellations On Circulars and Printed Matter, 1870-1878, Part III: Newly Recorded NYFM Cancellations on New York Circular Mail to Foreign Destinations," *U.S. Cancellation Club News*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (216), January 1995
- ³ Valenti, John, "A New NYFM Cancellation Discovery," *U.S. Cancellation Club News*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (216), January 1995

Harrisburgh, PA "Legislative" Precancels

by Roger D. Curran

In his 2004 book *Silent Precancels*, David Smith lists 15 precancels used on mail from members of the Pennsylvania Senate and House of Representatives.¹ Overwhelmingly, these cancels are reported on 1861 issue stamps but there are also listings on 1857, 1863, 1867 and even 1873 issues. The 1873 (1¢ stamp) listing is remarkable because in Smith no examples are reported on 1869 or 1870 issues. The 1873 issue cancel is not described (due to a typographical error, I suspect) except that it is 17 mm high and 10mm wide. Cancels reported on the earlier issues are pen strokes (single or crossed), crossed brush strokes, circular grids, roller cancels, solid circle with hole in center, three and four line concentric circles, and a pinwheel. Three illustrated by Smith are shown here as Figure 1.



Figure 1.

Smith did not report specific dates of use. A 1970 article by Edwin Christ and Richard Graham illustrated a cover with the latest recorded use of a Harrisburgh "legislative" precancel known to them of 3/11/69.² Souder reported in 1989 an earliest known use of such a precancel as being on a Sc 23 affixed to a wrapper containing a *Daily Legislative Record* dated 4/1/61.³ The cancel itself was not described.

Several years ago, a correspondence came to my attention that had, until shortly before that, been stored away in an attic in central Pennsylvania. Primarily, it consisted of letters to a James Freeland who lived in or near Millersburg, Pa., not far from Harrisburg. Several of the covers bore stamps with these cancels or were in some other way pertinent to this fascinating period of precanceling.

Figure 2 shows a cover with the stamp precanceled by what I believe is the 8-bar circular grid pictured in Figure 1. In this example, the cancel is struck squarely on the stamp and would not have extended to the cover even if it had been a post-cancel. However, Smith illustrates a Sc 26 stamp with a strong strike of the cancel centered to one corner which would presumably have appeared clearly on the cover had it been a post-cancel. Unfortunately, the underlying cover doesn't show in the Smith illustration. The Figure 2 cover



Figure 2.

has an enclosure dated 2/26/61 and the indistinct date in the Harrisburgh postmark appears to be "FEB/27" with the year date unreadable, but surely "1861." This is more than a month earlier than the Souder report.

Figure 3 shows three covers with each bearing a precancel reported by Smith. The top cover appears to be postmarked 2/18/65. The bottom item is a cover front and



Figure 3.

readers will note the postmark is duplexed to a lightly struck square shaped cancel. The poor strike is unfortunate because this cancel happens to be a remarkably fancy eagle cancel. Two tracings are presented in Figure 4 – from Whitfield on the left and Skinner-Eno on the right. Skinner and Eno added



Figure 4a. Figure 4b.

the comment "genuine?" next to their tracing but I'm confident that such a cancel was used by Harrisburgh. Having said that, however, Figure 5 illustrates a portion of a cover with a somewhat similar but, in fact, a very



Figure 5.

different design. I have not seen the actual cover but did see a clear photocopy that showed a remarkably crisp and clear cancel – almost too clear. The design of this cancel does not show an eagle but some other bird facing right (darkened area on left side). Perhaps there were two cancels used but at this point I'm not at all sure. Readers who have examples of these cancels, on or off cover, are urged to submit copies to the NEWS.

Covers with the Harrisburgh "legislative" precancels have the signature of the legislator sending the letter, typically with "Senate" or "HR" written underneath it, in the upper right hand corner. The precanceled stamps are usually affixed over the signatures. Where an unduplexed postmark is used, the stamp has no other cancel. Later, when duplexed cancels were used, the duplexed killer may or may not appear on the stamp. Presumably, legislators' mail with signature endorsements went to a central point at the Capitol where precanceled postage stamps were applied and batches of such mail were taken to the Harrisburgh Post Office where the "legislative" cancels were recognized and accepted. It could be argued that the Legislature provided for the cancellation of stamps on its mail as a favor to the post office to reduce processing workload, especially before the introduction of duplex handstamps. But I think a more likely reason was to avoid pilfering of unused stamps at the Capitol.

A 1925 article by Allan R. Brown on these precancels noted that stampless covers are reported with similar signature endorsements and accompanied by handstamped "PAID 10", "PAID 3" and "PAID 6" markings.⁴ He cited dates from 1843 to 11/8/59. A folded letter of this type, datelined 3/28/40, is illustrated as Figure 6. Note the faint and almost unreadable "PAID" above the signature on the left side. A February 18 (1857) example, with the year date established by the enclosure, is shown as Figure 7. Mr. Brown, incidentally, illustrated a cover bearing a Sc 65 with a concentric circles precancel. A Harrisburgh postmark and killer duplex is clearly struck and the killer is the eagle marking discussed above.

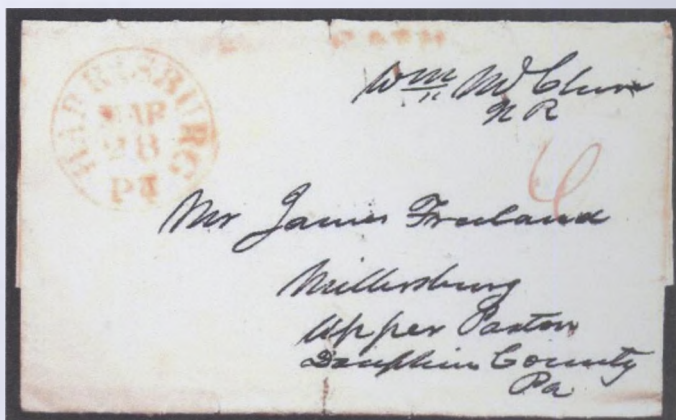


Figure 6.



Figure 7.

The cover in Figure 8 is also endorsed but is “a different kettle of fish.” To be sure the endorser was a legislator and the signature is related to postage for the



Figure 8.

letter. However, in this case, the sender, Alexander Rumsey, was a member of the U.S. Congress and his letters were eligible to go through the mails free of postage. In the case of the Pennsylvania legislators, of course, the U.S. postage had to be paid and the State of Pennsylvania permitted mail from legislators to be sent at the expense of the State.

I have wondered why there aren't more of the Harrisburgh “legislative” precancels available. Souder lists covers from fewer than 15 legislators in his report. The cover in



Figure 9.

Figure 9 suggests a possible answer or, at least, a contributing factor to their scarcity. Perhaps this practice was not regularly used for some reason, but rather only occasionally. This cover is endorsed with “HR” written over the right side of the signature making the signature difficult to read. The stamp is canceled by a duplexed circle of wedges killer and there is no evidence of a separate precancel on the stamp.

As in the case with so many of the subjects addressed in these pages, there is much more to be learned about this group of cancels and readers are encouraged to submit comments, information and, of course, copies of covers that bear on this interesting practice of the Pennsylvania legislature.

Endnotes

1. David W. Smith, *Silent Precancels*, The Precancel Stamp Society (2004), pp. 135-7.
2. Edwin A. Christ and Richard B. Graham, “The Harrisburgh Legislative Usages; Precanceled 1861 Stamps?”, *Chronicle* August 1970, pp. 115-21.
3. Charles C. Souder, *Postal History and Usage of 1907 and Earlier Precancels*, David G. Phillips Co., Inc. (1989), pp. 224-5.
4. Allen R. Brown, “Harrisburgh, Pa. Legislative Precancels (1865-1867)”, *Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks and Postal History* (1933, 1935), Delf Norona, ed., Quarterman reprint, pp. 204-7.

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More on Boston Ellipses

by Roger D. Curran

In the May 2008 *NEWS*, we discussed the earliest Boston ellipses and these occurred in a long set of numbers that began with “1” and reached at least as high as “63.” However, quite a few numbers at the higher end of the range have not yet been reported and some probably don’t exist. We showed an off-cover stamp with a “41” ellipse and opined that it was from the Boston set. A cover can now be presented (Figure 1) that confirms that assumption.



Figure 1.

Another set of Boston ellipses that is very distinctive and quite elusive involves four thick vertical bars with thick block numerals in the center. Blake and Davis report



Figure 2.



Figure 3.




Figure 3. “6” but with no “4” in his study of the Sc 210 stamp. In my collection I have four examples that can be dated: 9/26/82 – “7” (see Figure 4), 10/4/82 – “2”, 10/27/83 – “3” and 12/23/83 – “5.” In a collection of 19 off cover examples, I have no numbers above “6” on the Sc 210 stamp, but six examples on stamps issued before Sc 210 showing numbers above “6.” There are two “12’s and,



Figure 4.

curiously, they are both on official stamps. As with Blake and Davis, I have no “9” or “10.” Figure 5 illustrates some strikes on off-cover stamps.

Several questions are suggested by the above. Were there cancelers used with a “9”? Were the handstamps with numbers above “6” retired by the time the Sc 210 stamp was introduced on 10/1/83? How early did these ellipses appear and how late were they used? I appeal to readers to check their collections for on and off-cover examples and report them to the *NEWS*. This set provides a further example of cancellations about which there is much more to be learned. Hopefully, the *NEWS* will present in the future, if not the rest of the story, at least considerably more than is stated in this article.



Figure 5.

Endnotes

- 1 Blake, Maurice C. and Davis, Wilbur W. *Boston Postmarks to 1890*, Quarterman Publications, Inc. (1949), pp. 270, 275.
- 2 Burr, Gilbert M., "Standardized Hand Stamp Cancellations on the Bank Note Issues" *The American Philatelist* (June 1935), p. 464.

Cancellations Resource Book

Through the courtesy of Joe Crosby, two copies of *Marcophily – The Introductory Exhibit* have been made available for sale to USCC members. A third copy is being placed in the USCC Library. This book is two inches thick and consists of photocopies of seven exhibits of cancellations that were shown at VAPEX 1987 (Virginia Beach, VA). Exhibitors were Jim Cole, Joe Crosby, Clyde Jennings, Roy Lipman, Bruce London, Tuck Taylor and Bill Weiss. The exhibits garnered three golds, one vermeil, and three silvers with Clyde's exhibit taking the Grand Award. The sharpness of the photocopies varies with the quality of the original copies submitted by the exhibitors. But overall, they form an important and very interesting record of a large number of 19th century U.S. cancellations. "Marcophily," incidentally, is a term that was used years ago for a possible new exhibit category, at the international level, for cancellations and postal markings that would not include rates and routes.

The price of the book is \$15 which covers mailing costs plus a modest contribution to the USCC treasury. We will accept orders until August 31 and, if we have more than two, will select the winners by a random process on September 1. Books will be in the mail during the first week of September.

Recently at Auction

The 2008 Siegel "Rarities" sale held on June 7 contained two very remarkable cancellation items. They are illustrated in this article courtesy of Siegel. The first item (Figure 1) was lot 516, a Wheeling, Va. cover bearing a 5¢ 1847 issue stamp canceled by a partial strike of the standard 7-bar circular grid in red ink. Such uses from Wheeling have frequently been referred to as "control marks." It is clear that strikes of this grid in red were applied before the stamps were affixed to the covers as no portion of the cancel in any reported cases extends to the cover itself. Apparently, the Wheeling postmaster canceled a few sheets of stamps by applying the grid to the center of blocks of four so that one quadrant fell on a corner of each stamp. Since covers bearing stamps with these red quadrants had only been seen where the stamps were also struck with an additional cancel, the assumption has been that the red grid cancel served some internal-to-the-post office function. The lot 516 description states that it is a newly discovered cover coming to the market for the first time. The stamp on this cover was struck *only* by the red grid.

The postmark on the Figure 1 cover is dated October 1 and the folded letter itself is dated 1847. The 2001



Figure 1.

Alexander census of 1847 issue covers lists 15 Wheeling covers, 12 of which can be year dated.¹ The stamps on seven covers show the control mark and they range in date from 9/1/47-3/2/48. None of the stamps on the other covers that can be year dated bear "control marks." They range in date from 2/17/50-1/11/51. The 9/1/47 cover is the one example postmarked before the Figure 1 cover. In addition to the red grid, the stamp on the September 1 cover is canceled by a blue grid tying the stamp to the cover. Given the one use before and all reported uses after the Figure 1 cover, all of which have post-cancels as well as the red grids, one may infer that the clear intent of the Wheeling postmaster was to post-cancel the stamps. He did not rely on the red grids as cancels in the traditional sense; i.e., to obliterate the stamp to prevent further use. But in the case of Figure 1, the cancel *did* serve that purpose whether intended or not. Did the postmaster just overlook the post-canceling on 10/1/47 or did he have second thoughts, at least on that day, about whether a second cancel was really needed and decide not to bother with it? Either way, the Figure 1 cover is a fascinating cancellation piece that can be counted on to be the subject of lively debate well into the future. Comment is invited.

The second cancel (Figure 2) was lot 561, also described as newly discovered and with a 2008 P.F. certificate. It is a wonderful Waterbury, Ct. cancel that



Figure 2.

was perfectly struck on a 5c 65 stamp. It is not listed in the literature and as readers know, the Waterbury cancels of this period have been



more closely studied and eagerly sought out than those of any other group. The design concept is quite similar to the Waterbury "Bridgeport Fireman" (Figure 3) but with obvious and significant differences.² The apt description in the auction catalog for the Figure 2 cancel is "man in a straw hat" which will probably become the accepted term for it. Isn't it nice to think that there are such items still out there waiting to be found.

Endnotes

- 1 Alexander, Thomas J. *The United States 1847 Issue: A Cover Census*. The U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc. (2001), pp. 799-800.
- 2 Rohloff, Paul C. *The Waterbury Cancellations 1865-1890*, The Collectors Club of Chicago (1979), pp. 64-5.

Research Help Needed

Gregory Hanson is working on a research project and has appealed to Club members for assistance. He needs photocopies or scans of Peoria, Illinois duplex cancels together with the enclosure, auxiliary markings or docketing that would prove a December 1873 mailing. Responses may be forwarded to Gregory A. Hanson, 101 N.E. Lynwood Drive, Belair, WA 98528 or webberliz@aol.com. His phone number is (206)799-2249. Greg would be glad to reimburse any expenses incurred in providing this information.

Cancels of Interest

Several cancellations are presented herewith that have a noteworthy aspect. The ellipse in Figure 1 is distinctive to say the least. (Ever have the feeling a cancel is looking back at you?) John Donnes examined it and the underlying card and offers



Figure 1.



a very thoughtful and plausible explanation of what it is. The CDS and dots are very bold, but the ellipse itself appears to be struck rather lightly. The dot on the right side dented the card. One can see a clear bulge on the back of the card just behind where the dot was struck. John also noted that the ellipse is slightly askew in relation to the CDS, although the CDS and ellipse appear to be duplexed together. (We do, of course, occasionally see duplexed ellipses that are askew but they seem to occur early during the ellipse period and not as late as the 1890s.) Adding up the observations leads John to the conclusion that the ellipse was attached to the handstamp by two pins or small nails, the heads of which rested above the surface of the ellipse that may have had a "1" in the center. If so, did the ellipse break off a duplex handstamp and need repair or was this a situation where the postmaster decided to construct a duplex by putting together a simplex CDS with a simplex killer?

Figure 2 shows an unusual "PAID" cancel. There is a penciled note on the back of the cover, probably added years ago, stating "Rare: Tapered 'PAID'." Your editor is



Figure 2.

confident that this tapering wasn't part of the handstamp design but rather came with greater pressure applied to the right side when struck on the cover. We see such distortions more often with rubber cancelers but here we have a nice example showing the flexible nature of



Figure 3.

the cork or soft wood commonly used at the time of this National printing stamp.

Figure 3 is an item we wouldn't have shown without color printing. This card entered the mails on 9/29/79, addressed to England, but was initially held for postage because of a 1¢ postage deficiency. The needed postage was promptly added and the card put back in the mail stream on 9/30/79. But the interesting thing from a cancellation standpoint is the presence, on the same piece of mail, of the two distinct shades of blue ink that collectors see with these circular Cincinnati cancels – dark blue on the left and a lighter and warmer blue on the right.

Finally, in Figure 4, we have a remarkable combination of markings that truly represent the ends of the “fancy/plain” continuum. The large blue 1886 postmark



Figure 4.

with serrated outer rim contains both the county and postmaster names. The cancel, on the other hand, required no implement at all beyond the hand itself. It is, of course, a simple fingerprint. The postmaster of Kilmore, Indiana apparently decided to put all he was willing to spend on the postmarker and just make do for the canceler.

Thanks to John Donnes for the tracings in Figures 1 and 2.

For Sale: Cancellations, 3 cent 1861.

Please send \$3.00 for 3 color and 3 black and white Xeroxes. Abe Boyarsky, PO Box 570, La Mirada, CA 90637-0570

“Target” Cancellations

by Roger D. Curran

The most commonly found cancellation on Sc 65 stamps, the workhorse adhesive used to pay the first class single rate postage on domestic letters during the 1861-1867 period, is probably the “target.” We put the word in quotes because students distinguish two distinct cancel types that are often lumped together as “targets.” These are “concentric circles” cancels that consist of two or more concentric rings but no dot in the middle and “target” which refers to two or more rings with a dot in the center. For purposes of this article, however, we’ll use “target” to refer to both. During the Sc 65 era, the concentric circles cancel type is much more often seen, and with good reason. The first government-issued duplex appeared in 1863 and the killer used consisted of four rings, a typical example of which is illustrated as Figure 1. It is said that these handstamps were



Figure 1.

distributed to upwards of 600 post offices during the 1863-1866 period. We should quickly add, however, that many other targets are noted both with and without dots in the center on Sc 65 stamps which, in the aggregate, constitute a very considerable number.

The above is all by way of introducing the use of targets on U.S. stamps issued a decade earlier – the 3¢ imperforate issues. Back then, the situation was dramatically different. The great pioneering student of these stamps, Carroll Chase, had this to say:

“The target obliteration, consisting of a number of concentric circles, was used but rarely on the imperforate stamps, the following towns being all of which I have a record:

Danbury, Ct.-green
Claremont, N.H.-blue
East Wilton, N.H.-black



Figure 2.

Killingworth, Ct.-black
 Stony Brook, N.Y.-black
 Several others, including two in red, have been seen off cover so that the name of the town using them is not known.”¹

The folded letter in Figure 2 is docketed on the inside “Danbury” and “Oct. 1, 1851.” The Danbury postmark has a “2” above state abbreviation and the letter no doubt entered the mails on 10/2/51. The stamp is a Sc 10 plated as 66L5E. The letter is signed on the back by Ashbrook and also has a note by Chase referring to a “green target.” However, in my opinion the cancel is clearly blue, not green. Figure 3 shows another strike of this cancel which, I’m equally confident, is also in blue ink. A



Figure 3.

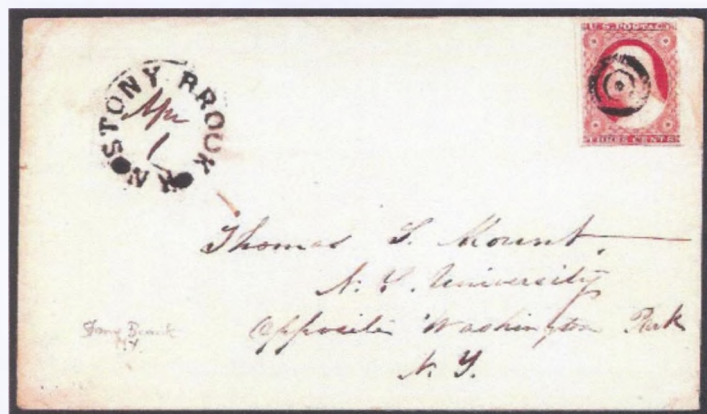


Figure 4.

pencil note on the back attributes the cancel to Danbury, CT, dated 9/10/51, with plating as 7L5E. Figure 4 illustrates an example of the Stony Brook, NY target reported by Chase. Figure 5 is Chase’s tracing of a Killingworth, CT cancel along with an off-cover strike.



Figure 5.

Arthur Beane, a dedicated specialist in Massachusetts postal history for more than 50 years, reported the following from Massachusetts post offices in his collection:

Freetown (Sc10) 3 rings, 18mm, 4/19/52, black
 Manchester (Sc11) 6 rings, 16mm, green
 Winchester (Sc 11) 4 rings, 24mm, 11/8/56, black

The Whitfield book reports no targets on the 1851 issue and Skinner-Eno only the unattributed cancel shown here as Figure 6. Alexander’s book on 1851-61 postal markings shows a fair number but the examples are not used in this article because the Alexander listings do not distinguish between 1851 and 1857 issue stamps. I believe that considerably more targets are seen on the 1857 issue, although they are not very common.



Figure 6.

Nutmeg sale 154 (9/18/07) offered six target cancels on off-cover 1851 issue stamps. Presumably they came from one person’s collection as the likelihood of so many examples coming coincidentally from various holdings is remote, indeed. The catalog images are shown here (Figure 7) along with a tracing from Alexander of a Hinsdale, NH cancel that may be the cancel on the far left stamp. Club member John Kellerman,



Figure 7.

a collector who specializes in cancels on the 3¢ 1851 and 57 issues, reported the three examples shown here as Figure 8.

Three examples from the writer’s collection are illustrated as Figure 9. The stamp on the left is a Sc 10 (10L1E) and the others Sc 11. The post office of origin is unknown for the cancels in Figures 8 and 9.



Readers are encouraged to report examples of targets in their collections, on and off cover, canceling 1851 issue stamps. It would be nice to nail down the post office of origin for some of the above unattributed cancels and to



Figure 8.



Figure 9.

learn of other targets that were used.

Endnotes

1 Carroll Chase, *The 3¢ Stamp of the United States 1851-1857 Issue* (1929) 1975 Quarterman reprint, p. 334.

Split Ellipses

by Roger D. Curran

Surely one of the most distinctive sets of ellipses is that from Washington, D.C. involving “fish tail” numerals. The numbers in the center run from “1” to “6.” Actually, there are two sets with these numerals, one with 8 horizontal bars and one with four bars and a solid central section, often referred to as a “barrel.” There is an additional subset for the 8-bar type involving a negative line down the middle creating a design that is split into two halves. Split ellipses with numbers “2” and “3” have been discussed in the literature. Figure 1 illustrates an example of each. The “2” is truly scarce, perhaps even rare. These split ellipses were used largely, maybe exclusively, on local mail. A detailed article on the Washington “fish tails” appeared in the May 2003 *NEWS*.



Figure 1.

Years ago I heard it whispered that a split “1” may exist, although the person who mentioned it discounted such a report as unlikely. With the “2” and “3” splits known, why not a “1”? Seems reasonable enough. However, after some reflection on the matter, it occurs that there may be a good reason for not having a split “1”. A split down the middle would essentially eliminate the “1” altogether and,

with no numeral present, might cause confusion in terms of whether it was a split “1” or an incomplete strike of another ellipse. This all came to mind when the stamp shown in Figure 2 was encountered. It is



Figure 2.



obviously an incomplete strike but one that shows how it might be that an incomplete strike could be interpreted as a split. (Also, of course, this is a barrel rather than 8-bar cancel.) Figure 3 shows two covers – from Wheeling, WV

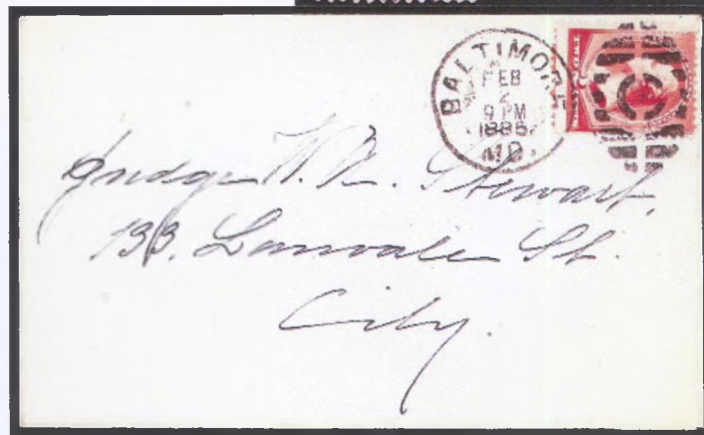


Figure 3.

and Baltimore, MD. They present more convincing (but still false) split ellipses. The raised surface of the stamp caused the split on the Wheeling cover while an enclosure on the Baltimore cover, that ended at the split, apparently caused the uneven strike. It is a coincidence that such a strike would come from Baltimore because this city is known for using several split ellipses, albeit beginning a little later than the 1884 covers in Figure 3. The most commonly



Figure 4.



seen Baltimore split is shown in Figure 4. I have two on-cover examples of this ellipse and both covers are locally addressed. Perhaps this split, like those of Washington, were intended for local mail.

Returning briefly to the Washington fish tails, Figure 5 shows a "1" with a very unusual top. The serif at top left is fuller than what one normally sees and the curvature of the left side of the shaft of the "1" just below the top is also very atypical. (The tracing in Figure 2 illustrates well the typical appearance of upper sections of the "1.") I have never seen another example like Figure 5. Was it a happenstance strike that caused it or something more?



Figure 5.

Thanks to John Donnes for the tracings in Figures 2 and 5.

"PAID ALL"

A brief article appeared in the May 1991 *Chronicle* about an unusual cancellation found on 3¢ 1857 issue stamps. It began with a comment made in the July 1967 *Chronicle* by Tracy Simpson, who was a leading student of postal history of the 1851-61 period, about "PAID ALL" cancels on Scott Nos. 26 and 26a. He noted that *Scott Specialized* had for a number of years listed the cancel on these stamps but he had never seen any examples or noted any in auctions. He asked if readers could report examples. In the February 1968 *Chronicle*, Simpson stated, "Mr. W. Hubbard reports PAID ALL in red (about 42 x 6mm.) on a folded printed circular sent under the Hamburg Mail arrangement from New Orleans to Germany, leaving New Orleans Aug 2, 1859. . . ." The circular was described as bearing two Scott No. 24s tied by a New Orleans postmark.

The 1991 article illustrated three off-cover examples of what are assumed to be partial strikes (black ink) of "PAID ALL" on Sc 26. The article also reported three uses of Sc 26, from Dick Winter's printed matter records, on wrappers to foreign destinations that bore "PAID ALL" markings. In one case, two copies of Sc 26 were tied by a "PAID ALL."



Figure 1.

The Hubbard report of a red "PAID ALL" on a printed circular bearing two Sc 24 stamps from New Orleans to Germany is interesting. *Scott Specialized* does not list "PAID ALL" on Sc 24. What appears to be such (Figure 1) recently came to your editor's attention. "ALL" is clearly readable. The stamp is also struck by a black grid of indeterminate shape. The letters are 7.5 or 8 mm high,, thus larger than those in the Hubbard example.

Readers who can report further examples, on or off cover, of "PAID ALL" on Sc Nos. 24, 26 or 26A are encouraged to do so.

A Confluence of Celebrated Cancellations

by Roger D. Curran

OK, the alliteration in the title is a bit overdone but there is no denying that a surprising association exists between two of the most popular fancy cancels of the Banknote era – the Glen Allen, Va. star precancel and the "Japanese fan" noted from Belfast, N.Y. Whitfield tracings of both are shown in Figure 1. The star is known in black (by far the most common) red (decidedly scarce) and green (rare). The fan is seen largely in blue but also in violet.



Figure 1.

In the Schuyler Rumsey sale #30, conducted in April 2008, lot 391 consisted of the cover and enclosure shown here as Figure 2. There, in the upper right corner

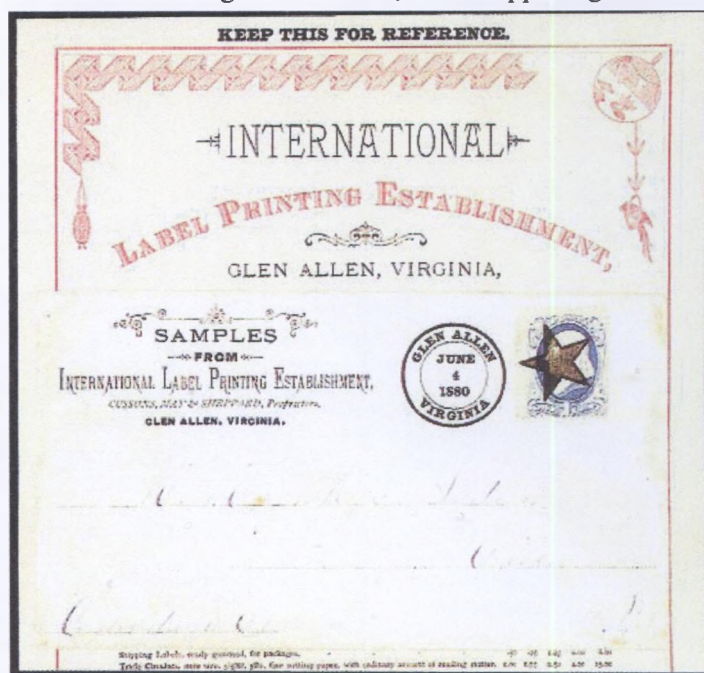


Figure 2.

of the enclosure, is the Japanese fan design used in the Belfast, N.Y. cancel. In the November 2007 *Chronicle*, Joe Crosby illustrated an example of the fan used as ornamentation for an advertisement. He also presented an enlargement of the fan, taken from the advertisement, which depicted, for the first time in the philatelic literature, the design in



Figure 3.

all its particulars. It is reproduced here as Figure 3 with his kind permission. The Figure 3 fan shows detail not present in Whitfield's Figure 1 tracing and the logical question arises, and was stated by Joe, as to whether the full design was used in the canceler. Based on an examination of a very clear strike on an off-cover stamp, I can say that most, if not all, of the detail missing in the Whitfield tracing was present on the canceler, which was undoubtedly made of molded rubber. In the "sky" portion of the design, the three clouds and the fingernail moon with beams of light radiating down toward the water are present. Also, the sailboat is there. I'm not able to say conclusively that the sprigs of foliage at lower left and right are present but I think they are.



Figure 4.

Joe illustrated a cover in the collection of Matthew Kewriga postmarked "Belfast, Allegany Co., N.Y." on November 24, 1883. The 2¢ vermilion on the cover was canceled by the fan. In the August 2005 *NEWS*, a Belfast cover in the

collection of Arthur Beane was illustrated with the fan canceling a 2¢ red brown dated December 13, 1883. Edward Willard reported the fan on the Sc 210 stamp in his 1970 book and his tracing is illustrated here as Figure 4. Willard made reference to a report of what he stated was undoubtedly the fan cancel by



Figure 5.

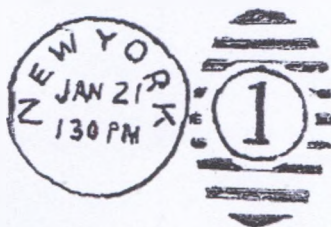
R.L. Hustes in the April 1940 issue of *Postal Markings*. The interesting Hustes tracing is shown here as Figure 5. The detail that is not present in any of the three tracings above is, of course, composed of very fine lines and anything short of just the right amount of ink and pressure would be sure to cause at least some distortion. I'm confident that all the tracings reflect what the tracer saw but, in the case of Hustes, perhaps he also applied a bit of imagination in interpreting what he assumed was present above the water line.

As mentioned in the August 2005 *NEWS*, I have a note in my copy of the Whitfield book about an example of the fan on cover from Belmont, N.Y. dated 6/23/85. It may have been in the stock of Ed Hines. Whitfield reported the cancel only in violet and perhaps the ink on the Belmont cover is violet or what is often called magenta today. I'm not certain, however, that the note about Belmont is correct. Incidentally, Belmont is also located in Allegany Co. and only about nine miles away from Belfast as the crow flies.

Readers who have information or covers that can add to the story of this remarkable cancel are urged to contact the *NEWS*.

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