



U.S. Cancellation Club **NEWS**

Vol. 29, No. 5, Whole No. 270, February 2009

NYFM Cancels and Postmarks

by Roger D. Curran

The cover in Figure 1 appeared in a recent Nutmeg sale. The image is presented through the courtesy of its new owner, Dan Richards. The manner in which the stamps were canceled is quite interesting and, I believe, it tells us something about the processing of first class mail in the foreign section of the New York Post Office during the 1870-1876 period.



Figure 1.

We know that the domestic mail section of this very busy post office began using duplex handstamps as a time saver in 1860. But over in the foreign section, which handled all foreign mail except that to Canada and environs, simplex handstamps for postmarking and canceling remained very much the norm through 1876. We find red postmarks and black cancels on the typical cover.

There were two general exceptions. In the case of supplementary mail, while simplex handstamps were used, one finds red ink employed for both cancels and postmarks. Van Vlissingen and Waud stated that all red and claret NYFM cancels on cover known to them were on supplementary mail covers and that black cancels were also used on supplementary mail "... but much less frequently".¹ Figure 2 illustrates a cover in the collection of John Donnes, dated August 9, 1873, bearing a red postmark and a black cancel. This is, incidentally, the earliest reported use of the Type D supplementary mail marking.

The second exception involved mail to Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean Islands. All such mail seen by Van Vlissingen and Waud bore black postmarks and cancels although



Figure 2.

a few covers also had red postmarks.² An example of a cover to Mexico with both black and red postmarks is illustrated in Weiss.³ A circular to Mexico with the 2¢ stamp canceled by a large cross-roads in red is also illustrated in Weiss. The cover is quite an oddity. One other distinguishing feature of this mail, beyond black postmarks, is that duplex handstamps were used, as far as I can tell, throughout the entire period. (Most of those seen do not show time designations in the postmark.) Van Vlissingen and Waud report that mail to South America, as opposed to Central America, bore red postmarks with one cover noted with both red and black postmarks.⁴

If the above presents the facts of the situation, what can we speculate about the reasons therefore? I think that, apart from mail involving the two exceptions above, there was a two person procedure for the marking of first class foreign mail with stamps affixed. Step one was the canceling of the postage stamps. Since there were any of a considerable number of postmarks to be used depending on the circumstance of the letter and since some portion of the mail was stampless, it was likely thought inadvisable to create duplexes for these foreign mail postmarkers. Possibly entering into the decision also was the fact that multiple stamps were often present and were sometimes affixed to the left side of the cover. (Both of these situations complicated the application of duplexed markings.) The second step in the procedure involved a second clerk who applied the correct postmark and this required specialized knowledge of rates and sailings. Therefore, it would make sense to remove the routine canceling burden from these clerks. Returning now to the Figure 1 cover, I believe the first clerk neglected to cancel the 3¢ stamps. The postmarking clerk subsequently noticed the omission and canceled the stamps with a handstamp that was on hand (and probably literally in hand).

I suspect that the luxury of a two person process could not be justified for the small volume supplementary mail operation. Thus the same clerk (perhaps it was a one person unit) canceled the stamps and postmarked the covers without taking the extra time of dealing with two inkpads – using only the one with red ink. Speed was, of course, essential to meet tight deadlines.

Probably it was due to a standardized rate structure that duplex handstamps were used on mail to Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean Islands.

Just when NYFM cancels came to an end is an interesting question. The latest reported use on cover is still, I believe, the 1881 wrapper to Madeira reported by Weiss with an August 18, 1881 transit or arrival date.⁵ There are a very few off-cover Sc 210 stamps with NYFMs but I wonder if the cancels are genuine. The strikes are very sharp. Do any of these have good certificates?

The use of NYFMs probably stopped, for all intents and purposes, in December 1876 on regular first class mail. John Donnes reported that the New York vertical bar ellipse duplexes appeared as early as December 20, 1876.⁶ One does see continued use beyond 1876 of hand carved NYFMs on mail not requiring a CDS (circulars and wrappers basically) and on supplementary mail to late December 1877 because until then supplementary mail CDSs were not duplexed. However, Weiss does list 1877 and 1878 NYFM covers involving single 5¢ stamps which imply nonsupplementary first class mail.⁷ I noted two post-1876 covers he illustrated involving single 5¢ stamps and neither appeared to have a CDS.⁸ It is not clear to me why there are no CDSs on these covers. However, John Donnes has advised that there is one more category of mail on which hand-carved NYFMs were used after 1876 and this may explain the two covers. Hand-carved NYFMs were used from October 1877-June 1878 on foreign letter mail posted at branch stations. The branch stations postmarked the letters on the back but did not cancel the stamps before transmission to the main NYPO.



Figure 3.

(There is more to this interesting practice but it is beyond the scope of the present article.) Thanks to John for the above observation and for his review of the entire article in draft which led to very helpful comments and suggestions.



We'll close with a NYFM cancel that is definitely a step up from the various wedges that are often seen late in the NYFM period but one that may not have been introduced until October 1876. Weiss lists 15 dated covers bearing this cancel (Weiss TR-S5) between October 14 and December 7, 1876. A tracing and

The U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

Published four times a year by the U.S. CANCELLATION CLUB and included with membership. The U.S.C.C. is APS Affiliate #75.

Annual Dues: \$21.00 per year. Address inquiries to: Roger Rhoads at the address below.

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Comments and additional information on what is presented above will be very much welcomed.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Van Vliissingen, Arthur and Waud, Morrison *New York Foreign Mail Cancellations*, Collectors Club of Chicago (1968), p. 66.
- 2 Ibid., p. 14.
- 3 Weiss, William R., Jr. *The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City 1870-1878* (1990), p. 381.
- 4 Van Vliissingen and Waud, op. cit., p. 88.
- 5 Weiss, op. cit., p. 46.
- 6 Donnes, John "New York City Ellipse Foreign Mail Cancels," *U.S. Cancellation Club News* (February 2006), p. 4.
- 7 Weiss, op. cit., pp. 264, 424.
- 8 Weiss, op. cit., pp. 264, 424.

Canceling the Garfields

Club member Bob Markovits writes with information about an interest he has pursued for more than ten years – that of collecting fancy cancels on the 5¢ Garfield stamps, Sc 205 and Sc 216. These stamps, issued in April 1882 and February 1888 respectively, paid the basic letter rate to foreign destinations covered by the Universal Postal Union. They also found limited use on other mail such as packages and registered letters. Overwhelmingly these stamps appeared on letters mailed from large city post offices that by 1882 were using "standardized" ellipse or concentric circles cancels which replaced the earlier hand-carved designs. Foreign mail also originated, of course, from small towns and such letters thereby produced the large proportion of fancy cancels that are seen on these two stamps. However, as Bob points out, finding even a few fancy or unusual cancels on Sc 216 is really challenging. Several on Sc 205 are shown in Figure 1 with the cancel at top left struck in a bold

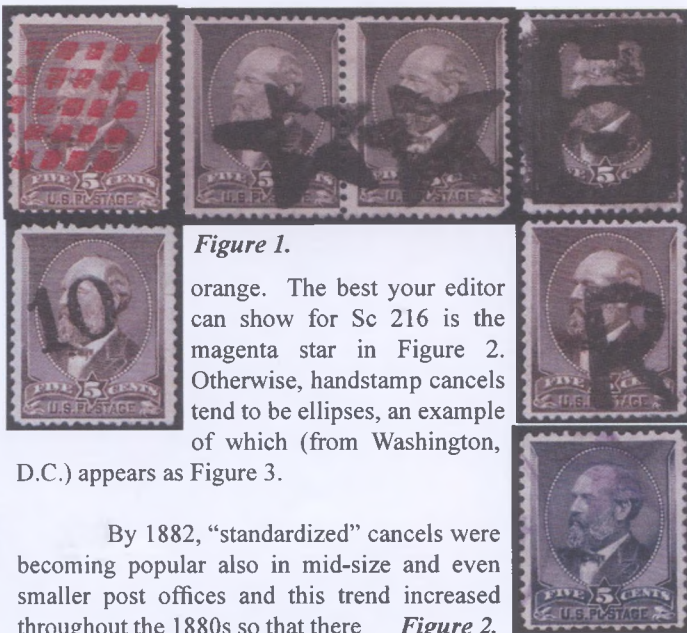


Figure 1.

orange. The best your editor can show for Sc 216 is the magenta star in Figure 2. Otherwise, handstamp cancels tend to be ellipses, an example of which (from Washington, D.C.) appears as Figure 3.

By 1882, "standardized" cancels were becoming popular also in mid-size and even smaller post offices and this trend increased throughout the 1880s so that there

Figure 2.

Dear Reader,

I want to begin this column by recognizing Arthur Beane for his service to the USCC as Governor at Large from 2003-2008. He has supported the Club in many ways: as exhibitor, host of the Club when we held our first annual meeting at the Boxborough show, advisor on all important Club decisions and actions during his tenure, and continuous support of the *NEWS* by supplying outstanding covers to be shown and discussed in these pages. I'm sure I speak for the entire membership when I extend sincere appreciation to Arthur for his contribution to the USCC.

It is a pleasure to welcome John Donnes as our new Governor at Large. John has also been a very strong supporter of the Club: as an exhibitor, a volunteer helping to staff our society table at shows, and as a major contributor to the *NEWS* through his expert tracings of many of the markings discussed, his consultation to the editor on numerous substantive matters, and as an author of articles.

The U.S. Cancellation Club will be at the APS Stampshow this year in Pittsburgh, PA running from August 6-9. We will staff a society table throughout the show, conduct a one-frame cancellations exhibit competition and hold a meeting/seminar on one of the afternoons. Since the show runs for four days, we will need lots of volunteers to assure coverage at the table. If you plan to attend and can spend an hour or two for this worthwhile purpose please contact me at rcurran@dejazzd.com or at the address on the masthead. Thank you!

I also want to encourage all Club members to consider submitting a one-frame cancellations exhibit, even if you will not be attending the show. Exhibits present a most effective way to introduce viewers to a field of study that they may not be familiar with and the one-frame format is quite manageable even for the novice exhibitor. Your Club officers have all had at least some exhibiting experiencing and would be glad to provide consultation to any who would wish it. It would be wonderful for our Club to provide a strong showing of exhibits at this the largest stamp show of the year and engage the attention of the larger philatelic community in a most enjoyable collecting area.

Roger Curran

were fewer fancies by the time Sc 216 arrived in 1888. And we should mention that Sc 205 was current for almost six years while Sc 216 was current for less than 2 ½ years.

As an aside, machine cancels first came into regular use on letter mail during the Sc 205 era, but only in one post office. Boston began employing American Postal Machines Co. canceling machines in November 1884 and this stamp, during its currency, can be used to document the use, over time, of canceling bars with no numbers and with numbers "1"



Figure 3.



Figure 3.

through "7." Figure 4 shows a strike from machine "6."

Bob reports that he recently came across a superb strike of the Blairstown "JDV" monogram (Cole EL-166, page 326) and also a Lebanon, PA patent cancel (Cole PT-5D, page 203) on Sc 205 covers. Dave Smith in his book *Silent Precancels* lists a Glen Allen, VA precancel star on Sc 205. The star is not the standard Glen Allen star that is normally seen comprised of a thin border, fine lines within the border, and 18mm from tip to tip across the design but rather a smaller solid star measuring 13 mm tip to tip.

Bob is eager to see additional reports of fancy or unusual cancels on the two Garfield stamps, especially any on Sc 216. Readers are encouraged to look through their collections and submit copies or scans of pertinent examples to the *NEWS*.

More on "SAM" Cancel

The front page of the Summer 1999 *NEWS* carried an article on an unusual cancel sent in by Wendell Triplett, illustrated here as Figure 1. (The section to the left and below the "S" is cut off because the cancel wasn't fully struck on the cover.) The stamp is a Sc 156 and there is no postmark on the unsealed cover. We asked readers for any additional information that could be provided about this intriguing cancel, which had not been previously reported in the literature to our knowledge. In the ensuing nine years no reports were received. Not until very recently, that is.



Figure 1.

Michael Horan has now submitted a second example (Figure 2) on a very similar cover – unsealed, bearing a Sc 156 stamp, and no postmark. The Triplett cover is addressed to Fayetteville, NY and the Horton to Franklin Park, NJ. Wendell had checked the list of Fayetteville postmasters for the period in question but none of the names allowed a match with "SAM." Michael noticed that the handwriting on the two covers is not the same. Thus they may not come from the same mailing.

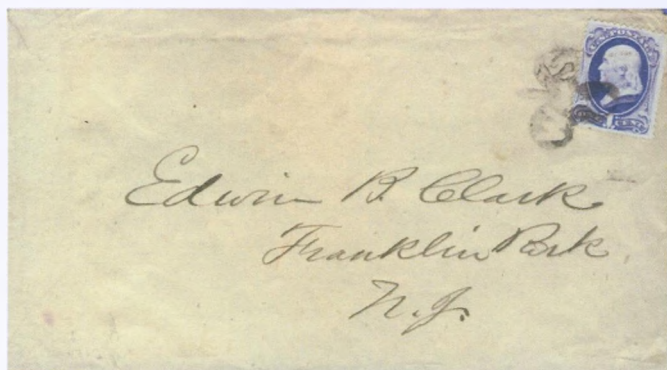



Figure 2.

It is certainly nice to see a second copy of this cancel but it doesn't bring us closer to identifying the post office of origin or the meaning of "SAM." However, if we were to make a different interpretation of the address in Figure 2, an interesting possibility opens up. Suppose the slightly odd-shaped "J" in "N.J." was really a "Y." There never has been a post office in New York named Franklin Park, but there is now and presumably has been for some time a Franklin Park community near Syracuse which is close to Fayetteville. It also happens that a nearby town Jamesville had a postmaster by the name of Samuel Hill who served from 4/10/61 – 2/19/78. Could it be that these two covers were part of a mailing to recipients in and around Syracuse, NY from a post office also near Syracuse? Unfortunately, it seems quite unlikely that the Figure 2 cover was intended for a New York addressee. Let's chalk it up to coincidence.

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Cancellation Gallery

Presented below are more cancellations from the collection of Charles Collins. (Two pages were shown in the August 2008 issue.) Noteworthy strikes abound and we will again comment on just a few. The cancel on the middle stamp, top row, was reported by Alyce Evans in the Summer 1987 *NEWS*. She noted that this very scarce if not rare cancel is found on 3¢ green stamps and has been reported also on Canadian stamps. Alyce speculated that covers from Canada to the U.S. (or possibly vice versa) arrived with uncanceled stamps that were canceled by the destination post office. The cancel on the 10¢ stamp in the fourth

row is from New Orleans and a better strike is hard to imagine. Centering of the cancel on the stamp is virtually perfect and the highly intricate design is fully struck. What a skilled artisan it was who produced the fine New Orleans carvings of which there are so many during the Banknote period. The next stamp over, the \$1 Columbian, bears a cancel that your editor has seen in a bright magenta on a 4¢ Columbian. Can readers report additional examples? The fifth row shows rubber bottle stoppers and the small "5" cancel on the second stamp from the right illustrates a point. Stopper sizes ranged from "1" to "6" with a "1" being the largest and "6" the smallest.



Small Boston Negatives

Before there were the large Boston negative cancels, there were the small Boston negatives that appeared in 1875 and were replaced by the large negatives in 1878. Only letters "A" – "H" have been reported and no numbers. They came in square

and circle formats presumably so that different cancels with the same letter could be attributed to a specific clerk. Some were also varied (lines cut into, notched, corners removed, etc.) to create distinctive cancels.



Collectors also note what is perhaps intended to be an "O" in several formats – see Blake and Davis, pp. 240 and 247. A couple formats show a bulge which may simply be an artifact resulting from the manufacture of "C" and "G" designs.



Loon Lake, NY Once Again

The February and November 2008 issues of the *NEWS* discussed a March 1882 postmark that referred to Loon Lake House rather than the correct post office name of Loon Lake. This postmark was used very soon after the name of the Merrillville, NY post office was changed to Loon Lake. We saw that this postmark was withdrawn within three months and a correct one put in service.



Figure 2.

Jim Blandford now submits an 1885 Loon Lake cover (Figure 1) that contains an enclosure on Loon Lake House letterhead. Note the reference to “Post and Telegraph Offices/ in the house.” Perhaps the post office was located at the hotel at the time of the post office name change to Loon Lake. If so, that would help explain why the postmaster thought a postmark that referred to “LOON LAKE HOUSE, Merrillville, N.Y.” was appropriate.

The 1992 Philatelic Foundation publication *U.S. Postmarks and Cancellations* reports on page 40 a Loon Lake CDS and “POD” killer duplex dated 6/30/86 in red ink. The “POD” monogram is very clear. What a nice cover!

Black Diamond Revisited

by Victor Kuil

Black Diamond is located in the San Francisco Bay area and was called New York Landing when it was founded in 1839. The town soon changed its name to Black Diamond and later to Pittsburg. This town should not be confused with the Black Diamond town located in the state of Washington, a few miles east of Auburn, as the Washington Black Diamond was only founded in 1882 and the diamond cancels of Black Diamond are from 1870 and onwards. Black Diamond thanks its name to coal mining there.

A Fall 2000 *NEWS* article mentions two types of Black Diamond, CA cancellations, one being a single diamond and the other a diamond in a circle. The post office used blue ink. Two covers are shown below with each type of cancellation. Tracings of both cancels (not to scale) are illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1.

The Figures 2 and 3 illustrations exhibit the diamond in a circle cancel. The first cover is dated April 3 or 30, 1870. The year date is clearly visible on the back. The second is dated May 25, 1870.

The third Black Diamond cover (Figure 4) apparently was struck with the single diamond. It looks like the strike hit



Figure 2.

hard so that the surroundings of the diamond touched the paper as well but there is little doubt that it is the single diamond cancel. The cover is dated May 28, 1872 and is underpaid. The year date is noted from the arrival stamp on the back.

The last Black Diamond cover shown in Figure 5 is dated February 26, 1874 (year date on back), also with a single diamond strike.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.



Figure 5.

A tracing of the unusual oval postmark, from *California Town Postmarks 1849-1935* by John H. Williams, appears here as Figure 6. Mr. Williams reported it used from 1869-1876.

The Whitfield and Cole books both illustrate several single diamond cancels (none from Black Diamond) but don't list a diamond in circle. More information on these scarce cancels would be welcomed.



Figure 6.

More on "PAID ALL"

John Kellerman submits two "PAID ALL" cancels (Figure 1) on 1857 issue stamps in response to the article on this subject in the August 2008 *NEWS*. The example enclosed in a circular rim deserves particular comment. This postmark is not listed in Alexander nor, indeed, is any other "PAID ALL", although we know "PAID ALL" markings were used during the 1851-61 period.



Figure 1.

Several markings in the literature that resemble it are presented herewith. The example in Figure 2 is reported from Boston by Blake and Davis but with usage beginning in 1870 and only in red.¹ (Two rather similar markings, however, are reported by the authors in both red and black.) The marking in Figure 3 was reported by Norona but no date or ink color was given.² Leonard Piskiewicz lists what is very likely the same marking (FN-450) and reports usage, only in red, from April 1870 – September 1871.³ Figure 4 shows two markings reported by Hubbard and Winter.⁴ If one of the markings in Figures 2-4 was struck on John's stamp, it was probably a late and demonetized use of the stamp. The grid cancel that is also on the stamp, however, is much more characteristic of the 1851-61 period than 1870 or later. For all of the above, the Figure 1 cancel is quite puzzling. The assistance of readers is requested in identifying any other postmarks that might be the cancel on John's stamp.

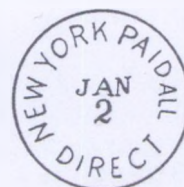


Figure 2.



Figure 3.

The second "PAID ALL" cancel submitted by John in Figure 1 is only rarely seen on this stamp.



(Endnotes)

- 1 Blake, Maurice C. and Davis, Wilbur W. *Boston Postmarks to 1890*, Quarterman Reprint (1974), pp. 190-1.
- 2 Norona, Delf *Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks and Postal History*, Quarterman Reprint (1975), p. 338.
- 3 Piskiewicz, Leonard *Chicago Postal Markings and Postal History*, James E. Lee Publishing (2006), pp. 177-8.
- 4 Hubbard, Walter and Winter, Richard F. *North Atlantic Mail Sailings 1840-1875*, USPCS (1988), p. 360, 366.

Forward and Backward

The February 2007 *NEWS* illustrated what surely must be a unique "PAID" cancel from the collection of John Kellerman. Now that we are printing in color, a better image is feasible and it is, therefore, presented once again (Figure 1). John estimates that



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

this cancel has been in his collection for more than 15 years. In a lot he purchased at the recent Siegel sale of the Wilson Hulme collection, a remarkable mate (Figure 2) to the Figure 1 cancel was included.



In a similar vein, Norwich, CT is known to have used a reverse

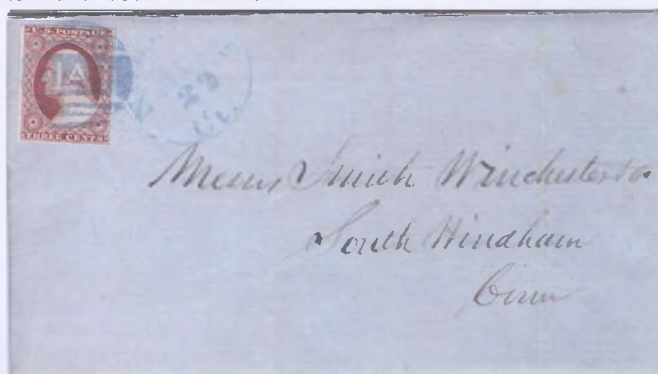


Figure 4.

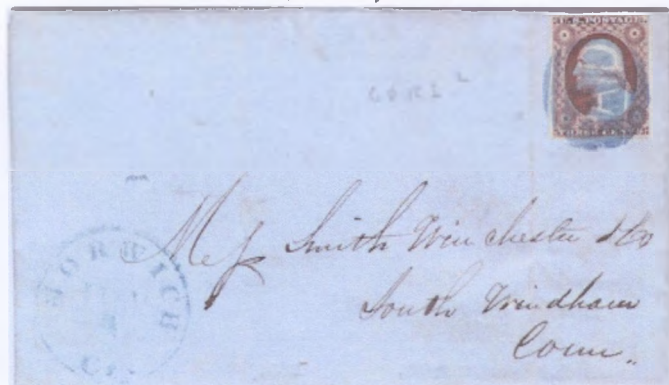


Figure 5.



Figure 6.

"PAID" cancel on imperforate stamps as well as at least two versions of a normal "PAID." Tracings from Whitfield (page 223) are shown in Figure 3. Illustrated herewith are Norwich covers from John's collection bearing a reverse "PAID" dated 3/22/52 (Figure 4) and a normal "PAID" dated 5/4/52 (Figure 5). It is interesting to note that the Skinner-Eno book (page 304) lists the Figure 6 cancel on 1857 issue stamps.

We can speculate about what happened in the above cases. Perhaps the postmasters initially carved the reverse "PAID" images, forgetting that it is necessary to do the carvings in reverse to produce a "PAID" that reads correctly. After presumably short periods of use, the postmasters then carved replacements that yielded "PAID" cancels in the format originally intended. Some support for this idea comes from Alexander wherein he rates the reverse Norwich "PAID" as an "8" (very rare) but the two regular Norwich "PAID"s only as "4" (moderately scarce).¹



Figure 7.



Figure 8.

Alexander also lists a reverse "PAID" (Figure 7) from East Sanbornton, NH with a rating of "7" (rare) and a "IDPA" cancel (Figure 8) that ranks right up there as an oddity with Figure 1.² As the expression goes, "what was he thinking?" This cancel came from Haverhill, MA and has an "8" rating.³

(Endnotes)

- 1 Alexander, Thomas J. *U.S. Postal Markings 1857-1861* (1979), USPS, pp. 112-3.
- 2 Ibid., pp. 114-5.
- 3 Ibid.

Similar Theme

Don Barany submits the card shown here in Figure 1 in response to the articles in the May 2006 and November 2008 *NEWS* on the cancels carved by Andrew J. Morrison, a railway mail clerk who worked the line from Rutland, Vermont to Troy, New York. The "West Rutland" cancel is, of course, similar to cancels carved by Morrison with the thick wraparound letters. The Figure 1 card is a UX-7 that first appeared in October 1881.

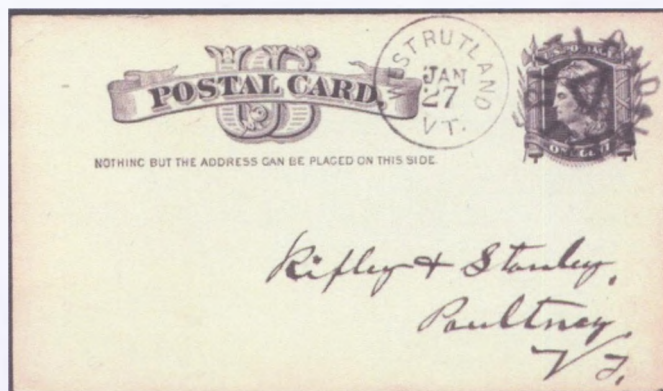


Figure 1.

The earliest reported date by Prendergast for a Morrison-carved wraparound cancel is January 1883.¹ Was the Figure 1 cancel inspiration to Morrison for his cancels or was it vice versa? It seems likely that some relationship exists.

West Rutland is about four miles from Rutland and was on the railway mail route from Rutland to Troy. The Rutland post office was established in 1784 and the West Rutland in 1826. Both are in operation today.

(Endnotes)

1. Prendergast, Jr., John M. *More on Morrison* (1987) p. 27.

More on Chicago Postage Due Cancels

by Roger D. Curran

One of the most distinctive and common cancel designs of the Chicago post office on the large Banknotes involves seven vertical bars with the middle bar considerably thicker than the three bars on either side. An example is shown in Figure 1. A second example appears in Figure 9 on page 55 of the November



Figure 1.

2008 *NEWS*. Occasionally one sees magenta strikes of this basic design on off-cover examples of the first issue postage due stamps. Figure 2 illustrates several. The ink is at least very similar to that



Figure 2.

found on postage due stamps canceled in Chicago in 1880 and 1881. However, I have never seen a cover or report of a cover bearing a postage due stamp with this cancel. Perhaps it will be shown to be a Chicago cancel and, if so, as a guess we might place it just before the Chicago pearls precancel. In addition to determining post office of origin, a cover might answer another question: is it a precancel? Can any reader report the Figure 2 cancel on cover?



Figure 3.

A second intriguing item is presented in Figure 3. The wavy bar cancel on the J15 stamp is from Chicago and is reported by Piskiewicz from 1888 to 1899.¹ He lists the "UNCLAIMED" marking from Chicago

from 1879-1901.² The story is apparently this: a letter from Canada was mailed to Chicago. The addressee was not known or at least not found initially whereupon the letter was advertised. The due stamp was affixed to note the 1¢ fee for advertising. The letter was unclaimed after the advertising. Was it sent to the Dead Letter Office and ultimately returned to sender or did something else occur?

(Endnotes)

- 1 Piskiewicz, Leonard *Chicago Postal Markings and Postal History* (2006) James E. Lee Publishing, p. 432.
- 2 Ibid., p. 411.

More on "Legislative" Precancel

by Roger D. Curran

The August 2008 *NEWS* carried an article about precancels on mail sent by Pennsylvania legislators in Harrisburg. The covers illustrated came from a recent find of correspondence to a James Freeland. I have no doubt but that the covers are completely genuine. This point is emphasized because the cover in Figure 1, one more item from that correspondence, is rather odd. This cover entered the mails at Harrisburg on April 10, 1862. There is an enclosure also dated April 10, 1862. The



Figure 1.

postmark appears to be unduplexed. There is a "held for postage" in oblong oval underneath the stamp that shows slightly near the postmark. The stamp has a multi-bar grid cancel that I think is a poor strike of the 8-bar grid in Figure 1 of the earlier article. That grid was applied as a precancel which also seems to be the case in Figure 1 since no portion of the ink extends to the cover.

The enclosure is datelined "Churchville" with no indication of state. There was a Churchville, Pa. post office in Bucks County near Philadelphia that operated from 1872-1959 and there were several outside Pennsylvania. Perhaps the Bucks County Churchville was an informal community with that name before 1872 and the letter came from there. Or perhaps there was a "Churchville" community near Harrisburg that never had a post office. A Churchville outside Pennsylvania seems most unlikely. The letter, on very informal stationery, requests a personal favor. It seems clear that the sender was not a legislator, but Mr. Freeland apparently was at that time.

Now, for some real speculation. We know this cover was mailed at the Harrisburg post office without postage. Perhaps the sender intended personal delivery but, for some reason, that didn't happen or maybe he just forgot the stamp. Anyway, Mr. Freeland was notified by the Harrisburg post office of this unpaid letter and I suspect a precanceled postage stamp was provided by a central unit at the Capital that handled mail for the legislators. If so, did Mr. Freeland's office pay for the postage stamp? I would assume so since incoming mail to Pennsylvania legislators, I'm confident, was never authorized to be sent at the expense of the State. Comment is invited.

Late Fancy Cancels, Early 1900s

The use of fancy cancels began to diminish in the 1870s. By the mid-1890s, canceling machines and handstamps with "standardized" cancels had taken over the vast majority of the canceling workload in large and most medium sized post offices. But fancy cancels didn't disappear, of course, and we find occasional examples well into the early 1900s. The front page of the February 2005 *NEWS* illustrated a bold star-in-circle from Ludlowville, NY that was dated no earlier than 1903. Mention was made of a negative "SM" Santa Marta, CA, an "S" from Soda Springs, Idaho and a circle of numerous thin wedges from Westminster, MA as other post-1900 cancels. Hebron, CT used an anchor in a circle in 1901. Whitfield illustrates (Figure 1)



Figure 1.

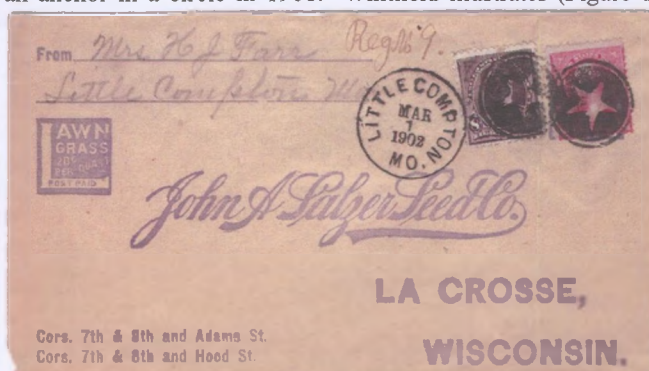


Figure 2.

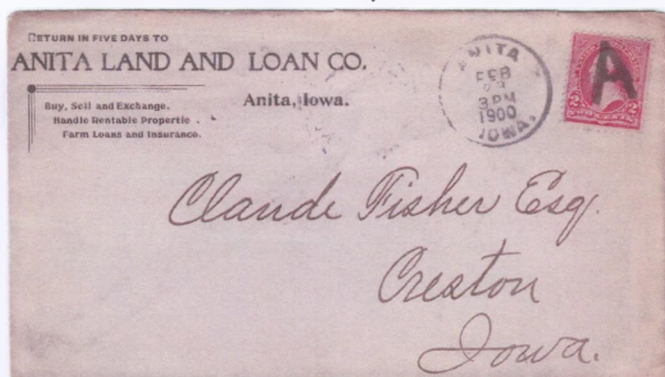


Figure 3.



Figure 4.

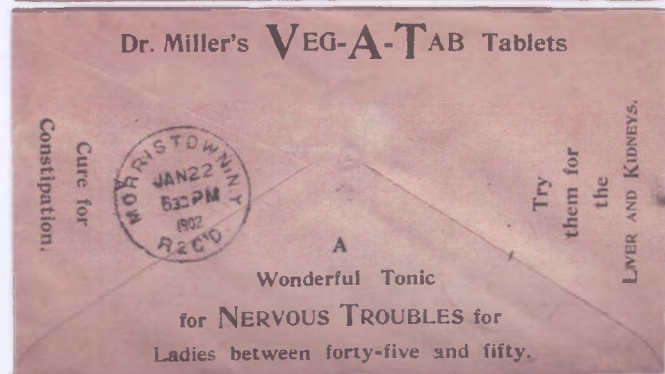
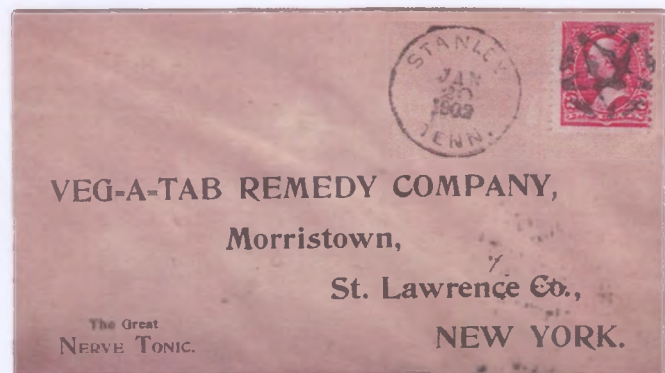


Figure 5.

what is the same or very similar cancel (#702) from Hebron but notes it used during the 3¢ green era, as does Cole (RN-33, p. 132) with an 1876 date. Apparently it was a stock style as Cole reports it also from Newark, NJ on the 1873 issue. One wonders whether in Hebron this apparently unduplexed cancel was retired to the back of the drawer for years without use and then put back in service briefly for some reason. If any reader has more information on the use of this cancel, please let us know.

Presented above are several more 1900 and later cancels. We'll begin with a nice advertising cover (Figure 2) in the

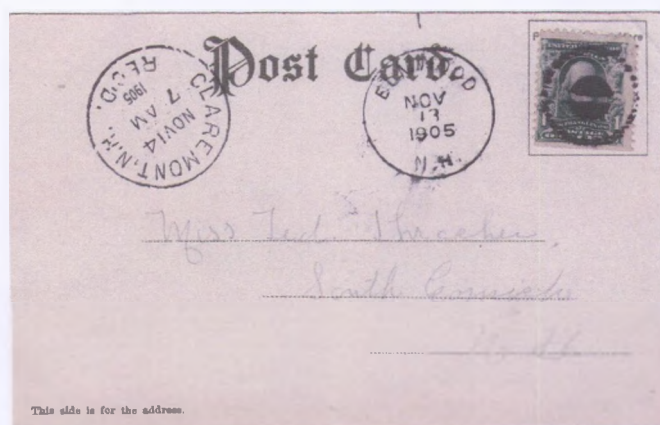


Figure 6.

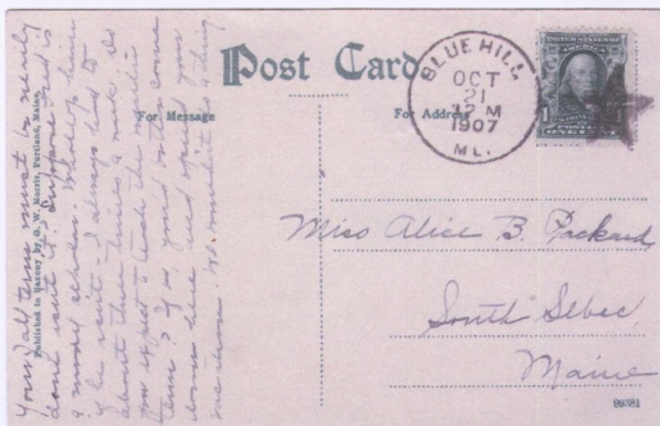


Figure 7.



Figure 8.

collection of Dan Richards. "A" for Anita, Iowa in 1900 (Figure 3) and "T" for Troy, NY (Figure 4) in 1901. An interesting star design (Figure 5) comes from Stanley, TN in 1902 with advertising on the front and back of the cover for a product recommended for a remarkably wide range of health problems. How shall we describe the cancel design (Figure 6) from Elmwood, NH – circle of rope enclosing a screw head? The most popular "fancy" design from all 19th century decades and also the early 1900s was surely the five point star. Figure 7 and 8 illustrate two more – Blue Hill, ME in 1907 and Seven Stars, PA in 1911. Figure 9 shows a star that was traced from a Stuyvesent, NY cover dated November 8, 1900.



Figure 9.

Taken in the aggregate, fancy cancels in the early 1900s are scarce but not rare. The fact that small post offices continued an appealing tradition makes for an interesting story. The *NEWS* would welcome reports of additional fancy cancels used during the 1900-1920 period.

Thriftness is a Virtue But . . .

by Roger D. Curran

This article presents two covers bearing postmarks applied by handstamps that had probably outlived their usefulness. I am quite sure the cover in Figure 1 entered the mails at Kingfield, Maine, but it is not at all clear. The post office was established in 1820 and operates today. From the appearance of the postmark we can surmise that the postmarker was well worn. The idea that the postmaster would be employing an old postmarker is reinforced by the use of a "PAID" handstamp as the canceler. "PAID"



Figure 1.

markings such as this were basically discontinued in 1856 and this cover, with the Sc 147 stamp, would have presumably been sent in the early 1870s. I'm a collector of stampless handstamp markings employed as cancelers and it is surprising how late they were so used – in some cases well into the 1890s and even after 1900!



Figure 2.

The cover in Figure 2, submitted by Victor Kuil, shows a postmark in which no letters are readable without the manuscript additions. The Moundsville, WVA post office was established in 1881, so the postmarker used here wouldn't likely be an old Moundsville handstamp since this cover was apparently

mailed well before the October 1883 rate change. Perhaps the postmaster used a discarded postmarker from some other post office just to create the circle. It appears that the postmaster added date slugs but he should have written the date in as well since it is unreadable. The purple ink used to cancel the stamp and fill in the postmark serves to create a colorful cover.

Making do with what one has on hand is an enduring American value that we can still appreciate today and these examples took it to considerable lengths.

Odd to Say the Least

by Roger D. Curran

Figures 1-4 shows postal cards reflecting an odd canceling and postmarking practice. They all originated in Brockport, NY and, although there is a bit of ambiguity in a couple

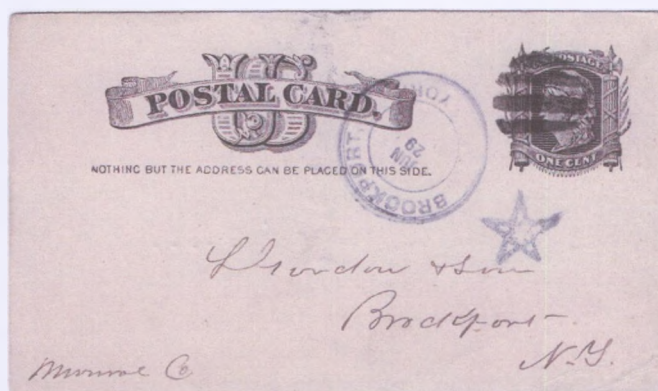


Figure 1.

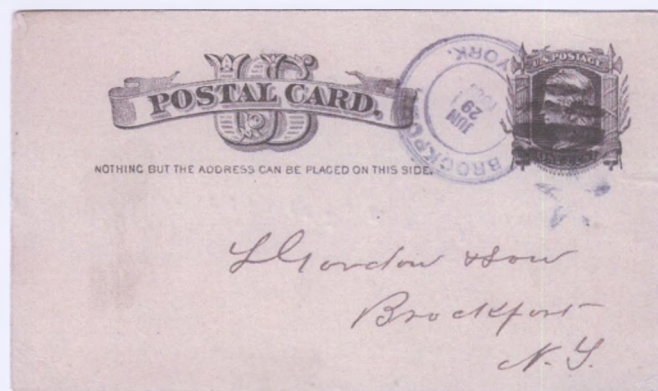


Figure 2.

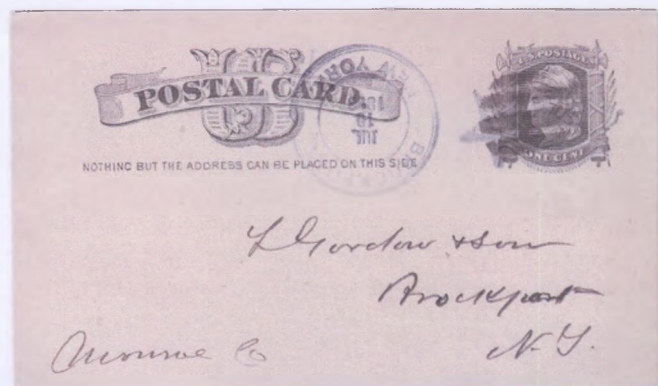


Figure 3.

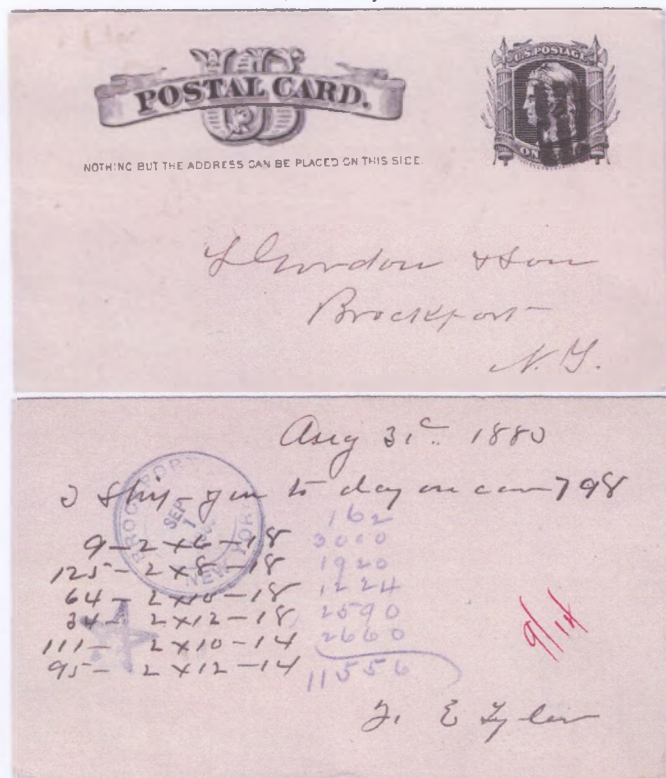


Figure 4.

of manuscript datelines, I'm confident they are all dated during the June 29 – September 1, 1883 period. They were addressed locally. The first two, each dated June 29, were struck in such a way that there may have been a conscious attempt to avoid striking the cancel on the indicium. The cancel, incidentally, seems to be a slight variation of Whitfield #3214 (Figure 5) where the inked areas in the Brockport cancel are joined together and extend up to the border of the central star. By July 10, avoiding the indicium didn't seem to matter and on September 1, the postmark was struck on the message side. The ink is grey with a slight bluish cast. Ink with this appearance is often seen used with rubber faced handstamps.

Why it is that we see killers duplexed to the left side of the postmarkers (when the postmarker is in the straight up position) has never been completely clear to me. I have assumed they were designed to accommodate stamps placed on the left side of a cover, but would a post office the size of Brockport (population about 6,000 in 1969) invest in such a device as opposed to, say, just using a manuscript cancel to cancel stamps on the left side or by inverting a regular duplex handstamp? And why did the postmaster insist on striking the handstamp upside down in the above cases? It would be interesting to see examples of other mail from Brockport during 1883 for comparison purposes.



Figure 5.

Another aspect that makes the handling of this card unusual is the presence of the grid cancels. Not that they are unusual per se, but their combination with the duplexed markings, especially since they are in a different ink, reflects additional work that is surprising. The ink used for the grids is black printers ink. It is difficult to determine which was applied first where the two inks overlap, but I lean toward thinking that the

grayish ink was applied first.

Comments on this canceling practice and what may have been the reasons for it will be welcomed.

Change in Procedure

During the 1847-51 period, when the Sc 1 and 2 stamps were current, town postmarks were used as cancelers only to a limited extent. Red ink was typically used for both canceling and postmarking although blue is noted with some frequency. Other colors and black were much less common. Soon after the appearance of 1851 issue stamps, black ink began replacing red for cancellations. This was due to a change in the postal regulations specifying black ink and to the obvious fact that the reddish color of the new 3¢ stamp rendered red canceling ink ineffective. Black ink also came to be the standard for postmarking and there were a couple of reasons for that. First, it simplified things to use only one ink pad for postmarking and canceling. Second, it was spurred by a major change in canceling procedure – the use



Figure 1.

of the postmarker itself as the canceler. This “innovation,” if we can call it that, was surely due to the greater canceling workload associated with the increase in postage stamp usage and the overall increase in mail. It was, of course, much quicker to postmark a cover and cancel the stamp with one strike rather than to use two separate handstamps. (Bear in mind that in 1851 we were years away from the introduction of duplex handstamps.) The busy New York Post Office began using the townmark as a canceler in less than two months after the 1851 issue stamps first appeared. Chase estimated that, omitting manuscript cancels, two-thirds

of the 1851 and 1857 issue stamps were canceled by the town postmark.¹ We can assume the proportion is even higher for just the 1851 issue since the postmarker was disallowed as a canceler during the currency of 1857 issue stamps.

The pair of Middletown, CT covers shown in Figure 1 is illustrative. U9 covers such as these were first issued in 1854. The top cover was undoubtedly sent at an earlier date than the bottom. We should note that the approximately 18mm 7-bar grid cancel was applied by the handstamp supplied by the Post Office Department to the larger post offices for use on the 1847 issue stamps. The Alexander census lists multiple examples of this grid in blue (one in red) from Middletown on 1847 issue stamps, although it was not the exclusive cancel employed.² One wonders just when the switch to black canceling ink took place. If any reader can show a Middletown 1¢ or 3¢ imperforate cover canceled by a blue or red grid, please submit a scan or copy to the NEWS.

(Endnotes)

1. Chase, Carroll *The 3¢ Stamp of the United States 1851-1858 Issue* (1919) Quartermaster Reprint. p. 334.
2. Alexander, Thomas J. *The United States 1847 Issue: A Cover Census* (2001), USPCS. pp. 45-6.

An Official Precancel?

by Roger D. Curran

The 047 stamp shown in Figure 1 has been in my collection for years. I have no idea when it was acquired or, frankly, even why. I came across it recently while looking for something else and noticed something that had not previously caught my attention. The manuscript cancel consists of what appear to be ruled lines. Ruled lines suggest a precancel. Neither Smith¹ or Souder² report precancels on official stamps, but I began to imagine a possible scenario.



Figure 1.

First, it is interesting to note that the stamp is a Post Office Department (POD) official stamp. There is what we might term a "cancel-related" similarity between POD stamps and postage due stamps. We see lots of precancels on postage due stamps because they were affixed by post offices, not the mailing public. I assume a large percentage of POD stamps were used on mail where the sender, and thus the party affixing the stamps, was a post office. (The remaining percentage would have been on mail originating from POD headquarters components.)

Second, the Figure 1 stamp is a 1¢ denomination which raises the possibility of use on a circular. Circulars didn't require a postmark, thus eliminating the need for duplex handstamps which were widely used by the 1870s, and precancels were employed on numerous occasions on circular mail.

A first reported precancel on an official stamp is pleasant to think about but confirmation, of course, would be needed by an on-cover example. Anyway, I wanted to check this idea with a specialist in official stamps so it was presented to Club member Alan Campbell, a leading collector and exhibitor of official

stamps who has written extensively on cancellations found on official stamps. The inquiry led to an informative response which is quoted in part herewith.

"... I am quite certain this is a form of favor cancel. The more collectible ones have mailroom handstamps from the various departments to demonetize them, but tiny pen X's or ruled lined lines are also seen. The ruled lines are usually a single line horizontally – the double line and diagonal orientation on your stamp are a bit unusual. Remember, collectors had nowhere to buy these stamps, so often sent letters of solicitation to the various departments, all of which made them available from time to time, depending on supply... I have seen ruled line pen cancels on all PO values, sometimes several from the same set together. Red ink was quite commonly used by the POD."

Alan noted that it was necessary to demonetize (cancel) official stamps provided to the public since they were valid only for official business correspondence.

Well, OK, back to the stockbook and relative obscurity goes the Figure 1 stamp, but with more knowledge about an area of cancels found on official stamps.

(Endnotes)

1. Smith, David W. *Silent Precancels*, published by the Precancel Stamp Society (2004).
2. Souder, Charles C. *Postal History and Usage of 1907 and Earlier Precancels*, published by David G. Phillips Publishing Co. (1989)

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

Massachusetts Postmark Survey

The Massachusetts Postal Research Society (MPRS) is conducting a survey of the rarity of postmarks of Massachusetts post offices. The survey is being conducted through a Smithsonian Institution website: www.postalmuseum.si.edu/statepostalhistory/massachusetts.html.

Anyone with covers postmarked at a Massachusetts post office is invited to visit the site and fill out the survey. Microsoft Excel or Microsoft Excel Reader is required to download the survey, which can be submitted by email or by mailing a hard copy. More information about the MPRS is also available at the site.

Massachusetts collectors have long been using *The Post Offices of Massachusetts* by Crowther and Merolla, which lists all of those offices. The book assigns each office a scarcity rating varying from 1 (post office currently operating) to 10 (no covers known). A revision of these ratings is long overdue. The society has started a census of covers known, focusing on those post offices carrying a rating of 5 or higher.

The "cover" in this case is the cover of the January 2009 *American Philatelist*. What an attractive presentation of U.S. target and, to use our nomenclature, concentric circles cancels, several of which are in bright and appealing colors. The article by Wayne Youngblood discussed and illustrated a range of these cancels, primarily as they are found on 19th century stamps. It reminded your editor of another *American Philatelist* cover (November 1985) that featured a remarkable circle of wedges cancel from Rutland, VT – see Figure 1. In all but one of the wedges, there is a negative letter which, in the aggregate, spell out "BULLY." The wedge between the "B" and "Y" appears to contain a rather square-shaped negative period. The cover is dated May 26, 1863. The accompanying article by David Jarrett tells of a correspondence of 73 Rutland covers, from which this

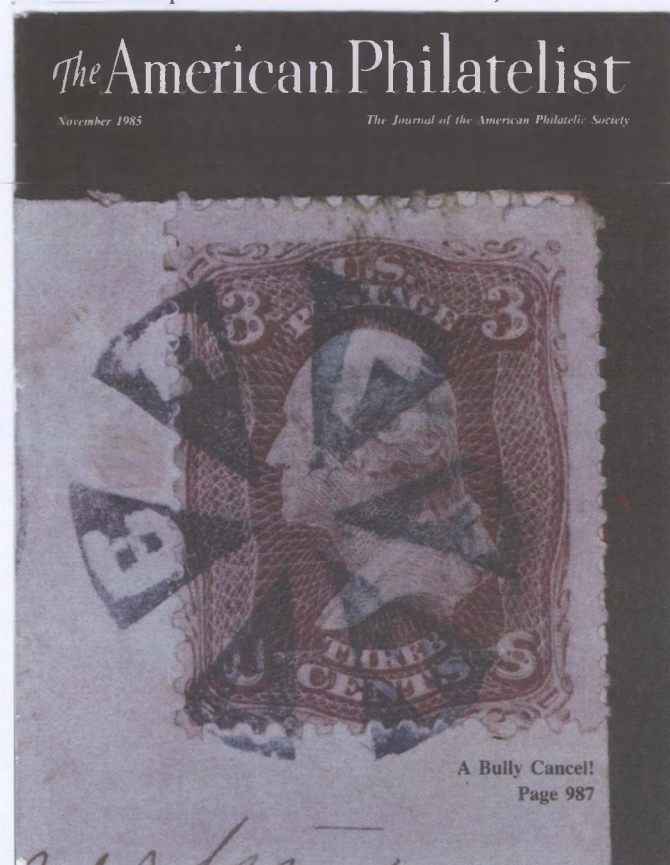


Figure 1.

cover came, addressed to the same person and ranging in dates from March 10-November 11, 1863. A cover dated one day later than Figure 1 has a different geometric cancel which is identical, reported Jarrett, to a May 23 and earlier cancels. He speculated that the Figure 1 cancel "fell apart" and a previous cancel placed back in service. Can readers show or provide reports of other examples of this unusual and probably very rare cancel?

Hard to Explain

The cancellation field is loaded with small mysteries and oddities that challenge the imagination and add variety to collections. We are not talking about items of postal history significance but rather the stuff of day-to-day postal operations

that happens to produce something different and appealing. Particularly when it involves off-cover stamps, the circumstances that produced such items are often impossible to know.



Figure 1.

Such is the case with Figure 1, a pair of Sc 182 bearing magenta and black concentric circles cancels. How did this happen? Two ink colors require two distinct operations. One might speculate that a duplex handstamp applied the magenta cancel and an unduplexed canceler was used on the right stamp to avoid a second strike of the postmark. But why then would the inks be different? Two inks imply two post offices. Perhaps the black cancel was added at the destination post office after it was noted that the originating post office neglected to do it. On the right edge of the right stamp there is a partial marking that may be the outer rim of another strike of the black concentric circles cancel. Perhaps there was a third 1¢ stamp on the cover to make up the first class mail rate applicable while Sc 182 was current. But how likely is it that the originating post office would overlook the canceling of two stamps on the cover? Your editor has come up with no plausible explanation for the presence together of these two cancels. The help of readers is eagerly sought.

More on Concentric Circles

The November 2008 *NEWS* presented an unusual concentric circles cancel with a negative line through it from Washington, D.C. This cancel is not reported in Skinner-Eno or Whitfield. In response, Christopher Perry submits a similar unlisted concentric circles cancel (Figure 1), this with two negative lines which cut the circles into quadrants. Chris measures the outer diameter of both the off-cover and on-



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

cover examples at 19.75 mm. He notes that the centering of each stamp is such that they might come from the same sheet. He reports a subtle shade difference, but this may be due to varying exposure or storage conditions. The cover is postmarked Dubuque, Iowa with an unreadable date.

The Dubuque and Washington, D.C. cancels were perhaps supplied by a commercial source. If so, there may well be other post offices that used them. Reports of additional examples, especially on cover, are solicited. The Washington covers shown in the earlier article were dated August 1862 and your editor suspects the date of the Dubuque cover is within a year or two of that date.

Tennessee Ellipse and a Correction

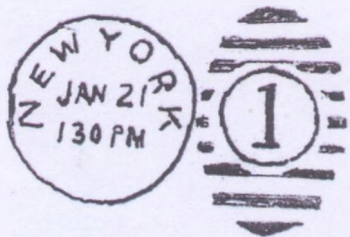
Club member Steve Edmondson, editor of *Tennessee Posts*, journal of the Tennessee Postal History Society, writes to say that the next issue (publication date around January 1, 2009) will feature an article about a privately manufactured ovate bar cancellation from a small Tennessee town. This duplex, which features a 17 or 18 bar ellipse, isn't in Cole or Whitfield. Ellipses have, of course, been a favorite subject of *NEWS* articles over the years. The Tennessee Postal History Society, incidentally, is always looking for new members. Anyone desiring more information can contact Steve at tenac@htc.com.

Steve also corrects the post office of origin for the Figure 1 cover on page 54 of the November *NEWS*. It is Rogersville rather than Robertsville. Rogersville is the county seat for Harkins Co. The post office was established in 1793 and is one of the oldest in the State. It still operates today.

Whitfield Book Available Again

Additional copies of the book *Cancellations Found on 19th Century U.S. Stamps* by Kenneth A. Whitfield are now available. The book contains more than 6,000 tracings and is a valuable supplement to the Skinner-Eno and Cole books. This printing incorporates the new Whitfield update that has been offered recently. The cost is \$52 postpaid. Checks should be made payable to U.S.C.C. and orders sent to U.S.C.C., 20 University Avenue, Lewisburg, PA 17837.

WANTED NEW YORK ELLIPSES



Years 1876 – 1889 – Covers, Postal Cards
& Postal Stationery – NEEDED for STUDY

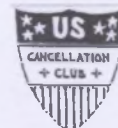
Dan Richards 704.756.0933
Email: drichards14@carolina.rr.com

More on New York Registry Marking

The November 2008 *NEWS* carried a brief article (page 63) on a rectangular registry marking from Branch D of the NYPO. One strike on a small piece had been reported many years ago as a canceler of two Banknote stamps. Your editor illustrated two off-cover stamps bearing this Station D marking and asked if any other New York branch stations also used the marking as a canceler. Alan Campbell reported it from Station A on an off-cover 90¢ War Department stamp and an interesting cover showing a pair of 2¢ POD official stamps canceled by a Station C rectangle, dated September 13, 1877, paying the 4¢ rate for a double weight local cover. There were no other stamps on the cover because the registry fee was not charged for official post office business. Wendell Triplett submitted the Figure 1 cover from Station F dated November 19, 1877. Now, who can show the rectangular registry marking as a canceler from Stations beyond A, C, D and F?



Figure 1.



Help Our Club Grow

Please notify us of the names and addresses of philatelic acquaintances who are not USCC members but who you think might be interested. We'll send them a completely no-obligation sample of the *NEWS* plus a flyer outlining membership benefits.

Thanks!!