

U.S. Cancellation Club **NEWS**

Vol. 29, No. 6, Whole No. 271, May 2009

Boston Large Negatives

by Roger D. Curran

In this article, the *NEWS* makes one of its periodic visits to the subject of Boston "large negative" cancels. These cancels comprise what is probably the most distinctive set of cancels used during the Banknote era. There are a number of items to present.

In the August 2006 *NEWS*, the earliest reported use of a Boston large negative was illustrated with a date of May 7, 1878. It resides in the collection of Bob Grosch, a collector who specializes in and exhibits these cancels. The 2006 article mentioned that several examples of the predecessor small negatives (see page 70 of the February 2009 *NEWS*) had been reported on covers postmarked May 4, 1878. A second large

5 and May 6 were a Sunday and Monday. I don't know how much mail was postmarked on Sunday but certainly we should be able to at least find a May 6 strike. Readers are urged to keep an eye out for either a small or large negative dated May 5 or 6, 1878. It will likely come from a postal card since Boston was not using year-dated postmarks at the time. The Figure 1 image will hopefully show the fine vertical ridges and grooves in the cancel. I assume this was a standard feature of these cancelers to hold ink but the grooves rapidly filled with dried ink, producing strikes with a solid surface appearance. This matter was discussed briefly in the August 2004 USCC progress report on Boston large negatives.

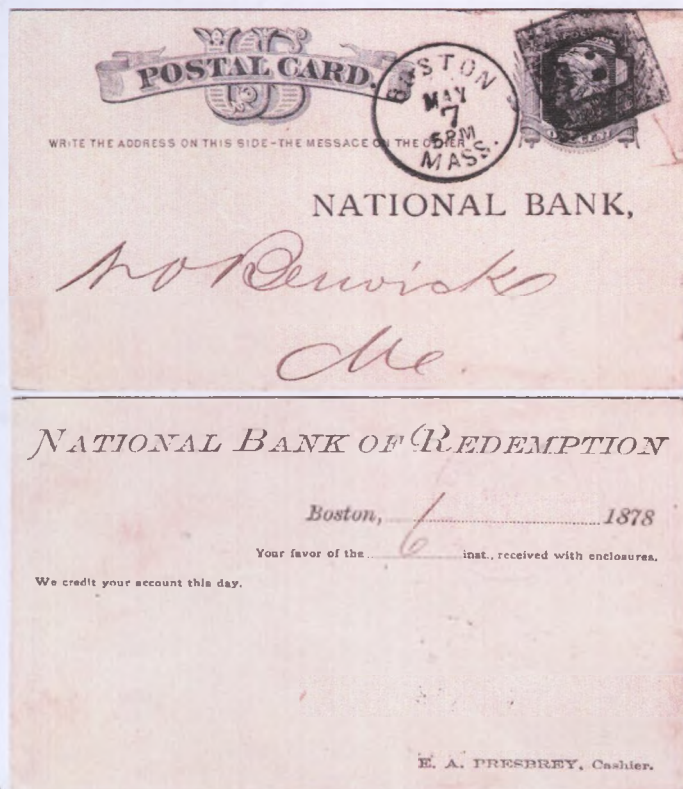


Figure 1.

negative (Figure 1) dated May 7, 1878 can now be shown. Bob's example was postmarked at 1PM and Figure 1 at 5PM, so Bob's remains the earliest, but now by only four hours! In 1878, May

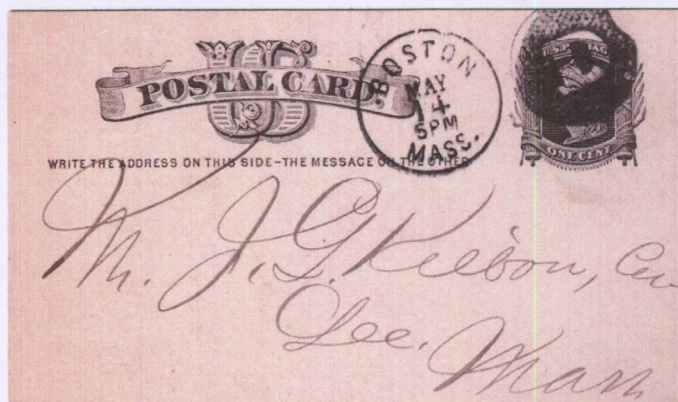


Figure 2.

Figure 2 illustrates a cover dated one week later than Figure 1. It is obviously not a full strike at upper left with only the outline of the outer rim showing. But what about the shallow notch at the 2:30 position? Was that an intentional carving to create a distinct, or to use our terminology, "variated" design? When did varied designs begin to appear? Looking over the 2004 progress report, which focused on varied designs, we do see two single examples dated August 5, 1878 and a "Maltese Cross" carving, S-5-1, dated 11/15/78. Although varied designs were used early in the large negative era, I suspect the Figure 2 canceler was accidentally dented in some way.

Figure 3 illustrates an interesting cover. An enclosure is dated December 8, 1879. The cancel has its own small notch at the 9:00 position with the border line of the notch as sharp as the outer circle line. Again, a judgment call but I incline toward not considering it a varied design for the same reason as above and because the variation is so slight. Comment is invited. The cover itself was well-traveled. My opinion on how it was routed is stated herewith. When this cover was mailed on December 8,



Figure 3.

it was addressed to Iowa and went by rail toward Chicago but didn't reach the Chicago Post Office, given the lack of a Chicago marking. The R.P.O. clerk applied the "No Such Office in State Named" marking at lower left of the cover front. (It has pencil lines through it and may be partially erased.) This marking is not listed in the Chicago book by Piskiewicz but another one (page 449) with the same wording is reported used during the 1874-85 period. It is doubtful that two markings with the same inscription would have been used at the same time. Incidentally, there never has been a Redwood, Iowa post office. The cover was redirected back to Boston and arrived at the Boston Carriers Division at 10AM on December 13. A carrier took the letter to the G.A. Sammet's Son Company (a mattress manufacturer) whereupon "Iowa" was lined out and "N.Y." entered below. The cover was back in the Carriers Division at 2:30 PM and then to another section of the Boston post office at 3PM for transmission to Redwood, N.Y. Unfortunately, the above doesn't account for all the markings. There is the December 13 Boston postmark in the upper right corner of the back that appears to read "2PM." This doesn't fit well with the above explanation. However, we can say that the "P" in "2PM" is somewhat ambiguous. The loop of the "P" appears to be present but there is also the suggestion of a sloping line down from the left side of the loop that is more like the left side of an "A" than the vertical line of a "P." If it is "2AM," this would fit the above scenario nicely. In fact it would seem that there should be a Boston receipt marking when the cover was returned by the RPO before it showed up at the Carriers Division at 10AM. Examining the postmark closely, I regretfully think "AM" is unlikely. Comment is invited. Presumably the letter was ultimately delivered to Redwood, NY (which did exist as a post office) although there is no Redwood received marking as was mandated by postal regulation at the time.

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Figure 4 shows a "4" in circle cancel with a flat top. However, the top is by no means as flat as would be the case with a variated killer but rather has small peaks and valleys telling us that there was another stamp on top of the Figure 4 stamp that received part of the cancel. No variated design here!



Figure 4.

Figure 5 shows two unlisted designs that almost obscure the central number (4) and letter (D). Although only a guess, I would say they are likely to be from Portland, ME judging from the nature of the variation — bold vertical cuts.



Figure 5.

Figure 6 shows two very small "13" cancels. The example with smaller numerals is from an off-cover stamp and

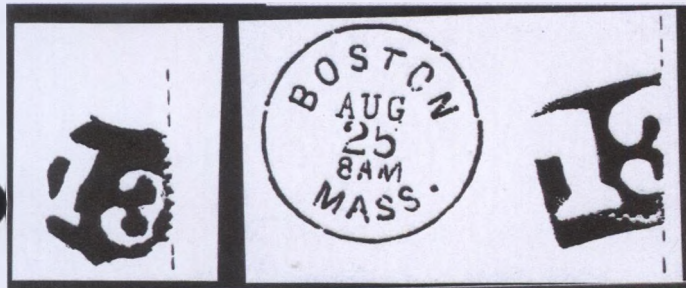


Figure 6.

hence Boston origin is not certain. Blake and Davis illustrate a small Boston "13" (B&D 1794). Were the "13" killers singled out for this treatment for some reason? "13" is the highest

number found in Boston solid square killers.

Figure 7 illustrates two anomalies that have diagonal orientations. The cancel on the cover is Blake and Davis #1969

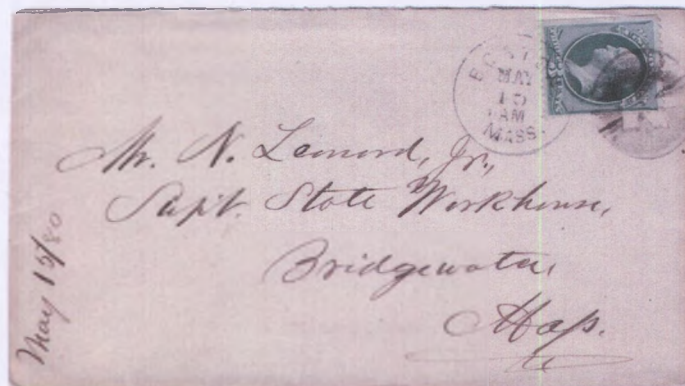


Figure 7.

(or a variant thereof) with their tracing shown here as Figure 8. From examining this cover, it does not appear that the anomaly results from the edge of an underlying enclosure. Do the diagonal lines come from cracks in the surface of the canceler?



Figure 8.



Figure 9 is a cover to Nova Scotia that has puzzled your editor for years, but herewith is an attempted explanation. It entered the mails at Boston at 8PM, April 24, 1881 according to the postmark that is under the stamp on the left. The Boston April 25 postmark on the back may indicate receipt in that section of the Boston post office dealing with outgoing mail to Canada. The cover was a double weight cover, prepaid only for a single weight. According to Wawrukiewicz, a short paid letter from the U.S. to Canada, effective May 1, 1881, would be sent to the addressee, if

Dear Reader,

The Pittsburgh APS Stampshow is rapidly approaching (August 6-9) and, as announced in the February NEWS, the U.S. Cancellation Club will be a participant. We will have a society booth for which we are committed to provide coverage for the full four days. Thus I want to reiterate the call for volunteers made in February to help staff the booth. Please let us hear from you if you plan to attend the show and can provide an hour or two at the booth. We will hold a seminar, hopefully on Friday or Saturday, wherein we will probably ask our single-frame exhibitors, as we have before, to discuss their exhibits and answer questions about them. A lively dialog inevitably ensues. And this leads to the matter of encouraging members to submit a one-frame cancellations exhibit, even if you are not planning to attend the show. There is no better way of supporting our Club and presenting to the philatelic world our collecting field then through an exhibit that shows an aspect of the cancellations specialty that has been of particular interest. If you have any questions or need an exhibit application form, please contact

me at rcurran@dejazzd.com, (570)523-0783, or at the address on the masthead.

There has been some confusion about recent Club offerings in regard to the Whitfield cancellations book. This book was originally published in 2002. In 2007, an update was issued that provided additional information (post offices of origin, dates of use, ink colors, etc.) of cancels listed in the book. This information resulted from an extensive literature search by Wendell Triplett and from data supplied by a number of USCC members. The update is available for \$14 postpaid and would be of interest to holders of the original book. After a period of being out of print, the Whitfield book itself is once again available to Club members for \$52 postpaid. The purchase price includes the 2002 book and 2007 update. While not a substitute for the Skinner-Eno or Cole volumes, the Whitfield book is an excellent reference for those interested in 19th century U.S. cancellations.

Roger Curran



Figure 9.

a full single rate was paid, and the deficiency would be collected upon delivery.¹ Knowing of this, the Boston post office did not immediately dispatch the letter but held it until at least May 1 before sending it to DeBert Station, Nova Scotia where it arrived May 6. (Alternatively, perhaps the letter was initially held for postage but when it didn't arrive by May 1, the letter was sent in accord with the new provision). The blue "due 3" and "60" were applied in Boston. Perhaps the "60" was an identifying number relating to some aspect of the U.S.-Canada postal agreement. The letter could not be delivered at DeBert Station and was sent directly to the Dead Letter Office (DLO) in Washington, D.C. The purple "1807" and "Canada" were added at DeBert with "1807" being another identifying number relating to the postal agreement. The envelope was opened by the DLO to identify the sender. For some reason the deficient postage was added (and canceled) at Washington, D.C. The DLO enclosed the cover in question (containing the letter) in a larger envelope and sent it to Boston so that it could be returned to sender. The Boston post office was to read the letter enough only to determine the sender. The sender was identified and, since there was still a 3¢ deficiency owed, the "HELD/FOR/POSTAGE" was added and the sender contacted with a request to bring in the 3¢ due. Boston "Held for Postage" markings in this style are reported by Blake and Davis from May 1883 to November 1887. This date range seems problematic since the cover in question is dated 1881. Blake and Davis report three other "Held for Postage" markings but none of the reported dates come as close to 1881 as the 1883 report. Thus I believe the cover shows a new date before the Blake and Davis range. If the above is correct, why was the 3¢ postage added in Washington? It seems to involve an unnecessary step. Why not just collect the 3¢ from the sender in Boston, which apparently was done, and dispense with the second 3¢ stamp? The assistance of readers in better understanding this cover is eagerly sought.

The two cancels in Figure 10 demonstrate what we might term a "picture frame" effect, especially in the case of the "4."



Figure 10.

(The "L" cancel card is datelined 1879 on the back.) In both cases there is a dotted background in the interior part of the cancel which appears to be a definite pattern in the case of the "4" and may come from the fabric covering the inepad. Also, the lines forming the "4" and "L" are heavy and could be said to show borders. Who will provide an explanation for the odd appearance of these cancels?



Figure 11.

We return now to another matter discussed in the 2004 progress report on variated designs. By "variated" we mean modified in the sense that lines were cut in, corners cut off, etc. to

make otherwise similar cancelers distinctive so that strikes could be identified with particular clerks. One often sees incomplete strikes that appear, at least initially, to be variated designs. A key to distinguishing incomplete from variated is the outer border line of the cancel where the variation exists. That area should be carefully examined to see if there is any fuzziness, especially as compared to the border lines that unquestionably show the edge of the canceler. Figure 11 is an example. Looks like the corner was cut off but notice the difference between outer lines of the cancel away from the corner and that in the corner. (Thanks to John Donnes for the tracing.) Figure 12 illustrates another incomplete strike, this with the whole left side missing.

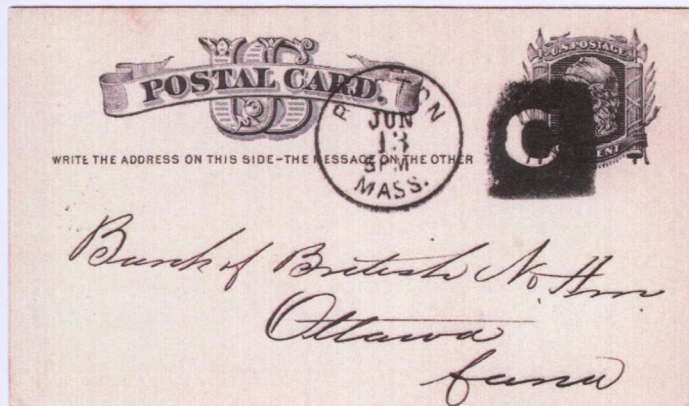


Figure 12.

Figure 13 is a newly reported variated design with the

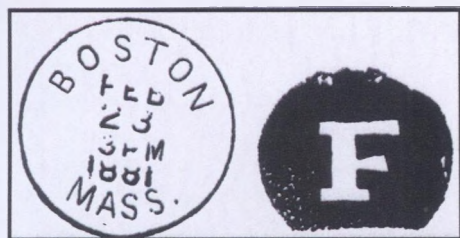


Figure 13.

is dated February 23, 1881, is designated as C-F-1. The cancel in Figure 14, dated October 28, 1879, is also a new variated design but since a full strike is not present, it is not listed at this time. Incidentally, Blake and Davis #1923 is a "D" in square with southeast and northwest corners cut off when the cancel is in the upright position.

Finally, we get to a most interesting strike (Figure 15) of what can be described as both a square and circle cancel

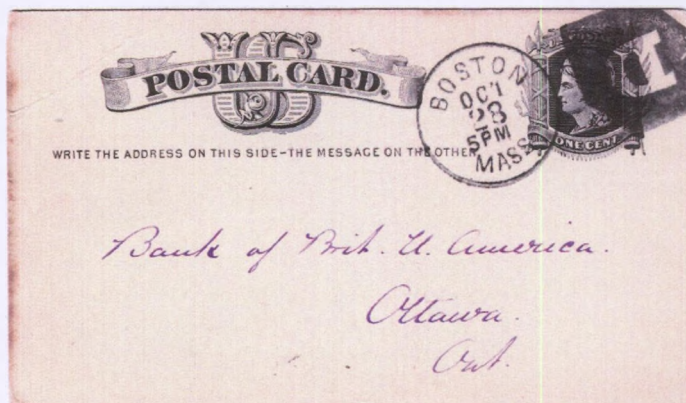


Figure 14.

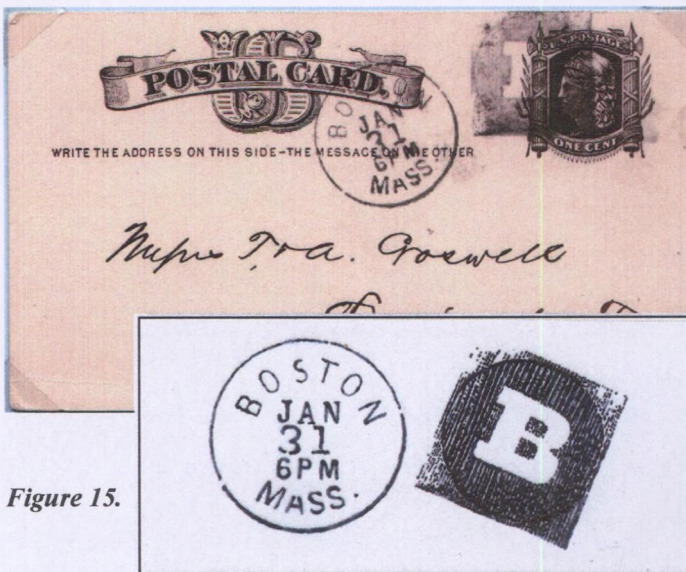


Figure 15.


submitted by Bob Grosch. Thanks to John Donnes for another fine tracing. The year date is 1880. Bob has concluded, and I agree, that the canceler was apparently square with the corners cut back to make a circle. In this case, the corners were not cut back far enough and thus were inked when the canceler hit the ink pad and struck the card. This cutting back was presumably part of the manufacturing process of the canceler. Collectors see lots of "rotation" (odd angles) of the cancels in relation to the CDS and Bob pointed out that it would seem the corners of the canceler would prevent tilting more than about 45 degrees. Perhaps some of the more dramatic variances come from erroneous placements of the cancelers into the handstamps to begin with.

(Endnotes)

1 Wawrukiewicz, Anthony S. *The Forwarding of Mail by the U.S. Post Office Department, 1792-2001*, James E. Lee Publisher, Wheeling IL (2001), p. 176.

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A Cancel Identified

by Roger D. Curran

Club member Dick Scott submitted the Figure 1 piece and thereby identified the post office of origin for a cancel illustrated but not attributed in Willard, Whitfield and Cole – see Figure 2. A rather similar



Figure 1.

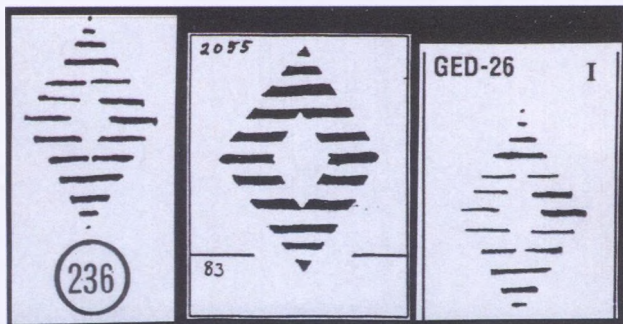


Figure 2.



Figure 3.

cancel is shown in Figure 3. Since the bars on the Figure 3 cancel are a bit thicker than on Figure 1, I thought that perhaps Figure 3 was a strike applied with more pressure resulting in the "T" in the middle making contact with the stamp. A check with the USPS postmaster database yielded no Orford postmaster during the Sc 210 period with either a first or last name beginning with a "T." As Dick pointed out, however, a close comparison of the two cancels yields several design differences that inform us that they are different cancels.

Willard said this about the cancel he identified as #236: "... is believed to come from a New Hampshire town." Oh, if he had only known, for Orford, NH held a very sentimental interest for him. As he explained on page 1 of Volume 1, his grandfather, Isaac Willard, served as the Orford postmaster in the late 19th century. From the postmaster database we learn that he served for three periods: 8/28/74-8/23/85, 3/13/91-4/7/93, and 4/27/97-6/11/05. Willard stated that since Orford was such a small post office it was not supplied with cancelers and his grandfather thus made his own including the two shown here as Figure 4. Mr. Willard also mentioned the Indian head cancel shown here as Figure 5. He said that while a student at Dartmouth, his father worked summers at the post office and "... we have every reason to believe my father made



Figure 4.



Figure 5.

it to represent the mascot of Dartmouth College, the Indian." How interested Mr. Willard would have been to know that the diamond-shaped cancel was used from Orford during one of his grandfather's terms as postmaster.

Orford is a small town in the central part of the state (from a north-south perspective) but almost on the Vermont border. In the late 1960s, the town population was 167 with an entire township of 667. The post office was established in 1795 and operates to this day.

Cancels Clarification

The cover article of the January 2009 *American Philatelist* featured what are generally referred to as target cancels. Abe Boyarsky was prompted to write and remind us that there are two distinct types that very clearly differ from one another. One,



Figure 1.

the true target, has a solid center or bulls eye (Figure 1) in the center and the other (Figure 2) a concentric circles cancel, does not. Abe has reported that, at least in terms of the Sc 65 stamp, target cancels are much less common. The reason for this is that the Post Office



Figure 2.

Department began issuing handstamps in 1863 that duplexed the postmark to a four-ring concentric circles canceler. More than 600 post offices ultimately received these handstamps. An example is shown as Figure 3. Incidentally, these were the first duplex handstamps issued by the POD.



Figure 2.

Gilbert M. Burr Articles

In a series of *American Philatelist* articles (56 pages) appearing in 1935 and 1936, Gilbert M. Burr presented the first serious study of 19th century ellipse and other standardized cancels. While much new information has been published since 1936, those articles represent an excellent and quite thorough introduction to the subject and provide a number of excellent tracings. Several years ago, the USCC reproduced copies of these articles enclosed in a spiral binder with a clear plastic cover and offered them for sale through these pages. Several copies remain available for purchase at \$14 postpaid. Checks should be made payable to "U.S. Cancellation Club" and orders sent to USCC, 20 University Ave., Lewisburg PA 17837.

Cancellation Gallery

The "Boston large negatives" were used in the Boston Post Office from May 1876 through December 1883, although use began to taper off in early 1883. A limited number of other post offices, primarily in New England, employed these cancels, especially Portland, Maine and Andover, Massachusetts.



Cancellation Gallery

Two late 19th century covers in the collection of Donald Barany are shown below. The aesthetics are very pleasing.



The Ellipse Alone

by Roger D. Curran

Ellipse cancels are almost invariably duplexed to the town postmark. Indeed, one often sees ellipses referred to as “duplexes.” I suppose this is because ellipse cancelers are typically set in very close proximity to the CDS which emphasizes that association. From small post offices where postmasters purchased inexpensive rubber-faced handstamps, we occasionally see ellipses that are not duplexed. Rubber-faced ellipses are uncommon but they do constitute, duplexed and unduplexed, a considerable percentage of the ellipses (other than Washington, D.C.) that we see in colored inks. An unduplexed example is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1.

The intent of this article, however, is to focus on unduplexed steel ellipses used by large cities on unsealed circulars to domestic addressees. New York was the principal user of such ellipses but, even here, instances are not common. Figure 2 is an



Figure 2.

example. Almost invariably, these ellipses cancel a 1¢ stamp but this unsealed envelope, together with its enclosure which is no longer present, was apparently double weight.

Figure 3 is simplex ellipse from Boston. The enclosure, dated 1/20/77, announces in bold print “a new era in the wholesale shirt trade.” I have no records on the use of simplex ellipses from Boston but I believe it to have been very limited. Reports of examples from New York or Boston as well as from any other cities would be welcomed.

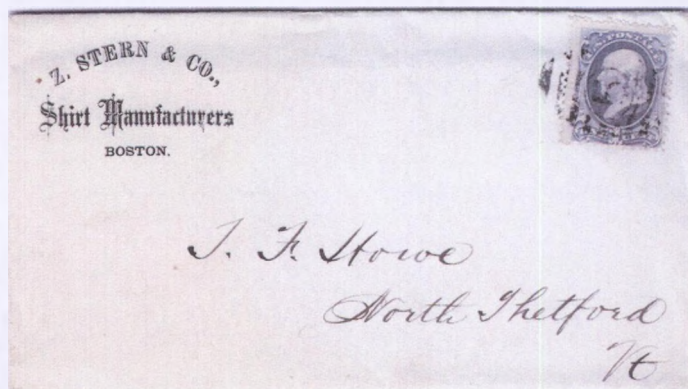


Figure 3.

NYFM Colors and More

The February 2009 *NEWS* noted that a NYFM cancel shown in black ink by Charles Collins in the August 2008 issue was a cancel that had not previously been reported in black. The cancel design in question, listed as GE-EP11 by Bill Weiss in his excellent 1990 NYFM book, is shown as Figure 1. Indeed, Bill stated that this NYFM design “. . . is the only NYFM that has never been reported in black.” Club member Dan Haskett now submits a second example



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

(Figure 2) in black, this time a socked-on-the nose strike on a 24¢ stamp, Sc 153. Are there others out there?

Dan also reports an unlisted color for the Weiss-designated GE-S1, shown here as Figure 3. Bill stated on page 24 of the book the following: “We have no record of the cancel being struck in red . . .” The Sc 148 in Figure 4 bears the GE-S1 cancel in red ink. We can be virtually certain now that the cancel was used on supplementary as well as regular mail. There should be more red examples around – who can report another?



Figure 3.



Figure 4.

Three strikes of one last NYFM cancel from Dan’s collection, albeit not one that is hand-carved, appear as Figure 5. The cancel date is August 4, 1888. A strip of five Sc 213 paying the 10¢ supplementary mail rate must be very scarce if not rare.



Figure 5.

Mexico Months

The May 2002 *NEWS* carried an article about the month cancels used by the Mexico, NY post office. Seven covers from the collection of Nick Todaro were illustrated. Wendell Triplett has been compiling information on these cancels and recently



Figure 1.

provided the *NEWS* with a nice update which is presented below. These cancels, incidentally, always appeared as a three-letter abbreviation of the month involved. Normally, the month cancel matched the month in which the letter was posted but sometimes cancels were held over to later months as evidenced by Figure 1 involving a "MAY" cancel used on July 14. By mid-July this cancel is not easy to read. Figure 2 shows a Whitfield tracing of a much clearer "MAY", probably struck in May.

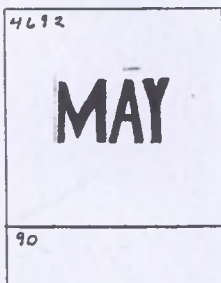


Figure 2.

Mexico, New York Dated Month Cancels

Year	Month Cancel	Date	Source	On Scott Number
1891	NOV DEC	11/19/189	1	U311
1892	JAN	2/05/1892	2&3	220
	JAN	2/19/1892	3	?
	FEB			
	MAR	3/28/1892	4	U311
	APR			
	MAY	5/30/1892	3	219
	MAY	7/14/1892	5	U311
	JUN			
	JUL			
	AUG	8/12/1892	3	220
	SEP			
	OCT	10/17/1892	3	?
	NOV			
	DEC	12/10/1892	3	219
	DEC	12/28/1892	3	220
1893	JAN			
	FEB			
	MAR	3/1893	6	231

(No month cancels have been reported for the rest of 1893.)

1894 (No month cancels have been reported for 1894.)

1895 JUN 6/27/1895 3 220

Sources

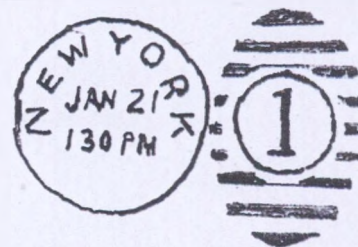
- 1 Kukstis Sale 24, item 402, 11/22/1996.
2. Whitfield, revision 1, #4691
- 3 *U.S. Cancellation Club News*, May 2002, pp. 30-31.
- 4 Nutmeg Sale 98, item 1589.
- 5 Curran collection
- 6 Triplett collection, Scott 231 issued 1/1/1893.

Mexico, New York Month Only Cancels No Year Date

Month Cancel	Source	On Scott Number
JAN	Salkind ¹ , p. 67	220
FEB	Salkind, p. 62	220
FEB	Cole ML-34	?
MAR	Salkind, p. 71	220
APR		
MAY	Salkind, p. 71	220
JUN		
JUL		
AUG	Salkind, p. 55	220
AUG	Barany collection	219
SEP		
OCT	Salkind, p. 74	220
NOV	Salkind, p. 73	220
DEC	Salkind, p. 59	220

¹Salkind, Sal *U.S. Cancels 1890-1900*, (1985).

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More on Canceling the Garfields



Figure 1.

The February 2009 *NEWS* carried an article about cancels found on the 5¢ Garfield stamps, Sc 205 and 216. Bob Markovits had noted that fancy cancels are hard to find on these stamps, especially on Sc 216. Walt Demmerle submits several unusual cancels from his collection illustrated here as Figure 1. He shows red Shanghai grids and a San Juan Porto Rico CDS on Sc 205 and a black Shanghai CDS, socked-on-the-nose French transit and a large red fake star on Sc 216. Who will report additional noteworthy cancels on these stamps?

A Second "Unusual New York Cover"

by Roger D. Curran

The Fall 1995 *NEWS* carried an article about an unusual cover shown here as Figure 1 – unusual in the sense that a New York foreign mail cancel was used on a cover to a domestic addressee. In my experience, one almost never encounters this. These vertical bar ellipses, containing numbers "1" through "6" in the center, replaced in late 1876 the hand-carved and often elaborately geometric cancels that have been so popular with

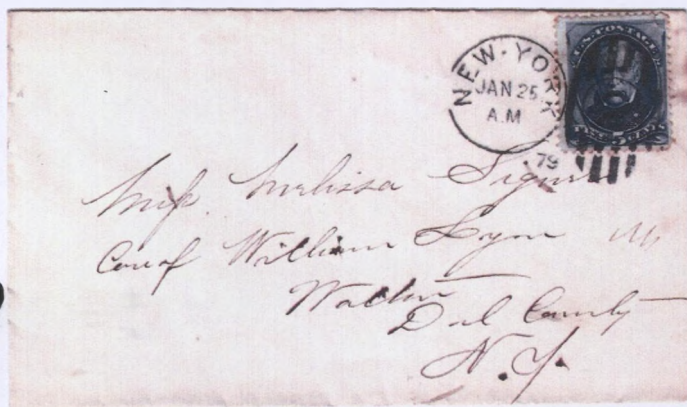


Figure 1.

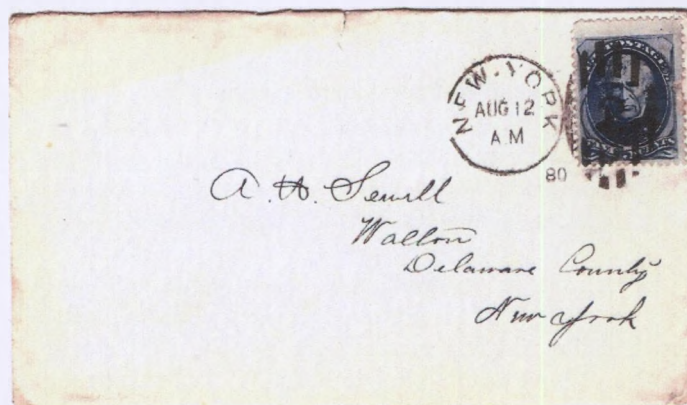


Figure 2.

collectors over the years. It was speculated in the 1995 article that the sender made a couple of mistakes – putting a 5¢ stamp on a domestic cover at the same time he or she was preparing some letters for foreign destinations and then dropping all the letters in one or more foreign mail slots in the lobby of the main NYPO. It was assumed that the first task of clerks was to face and cancel this mail and, with a 5¢ stamp on the Figure 1 cover, the domestic address was initially overlooked and the cover was postmarked and canceled by a foreign mail handstamp. Since there were no other markings on the front or back, the domestic address was surely recognized later and the cover dispatched appropriately.

Dan Richards remembered the Figure 1 cover when he came across the cover shown as Figure 2. Both covers may well have been sent by the same person but they are dated 19 months apart. What a surprise to see this! Did the sender – assuming there was only one – simply make the same mistake twice with the same outcome, or does some other explanation now suggest itself? Both covers were apparently canceled by the same handstamp – break in the postmark rim at the 9:00 position and a "2" in the ellipse center. Dan speculates that there was some initial sorting of mail in the domestic section before postmarking and the 5¢ blue stamp caused the cover to be transferred to the foreign section without reference to the address.

Reader comment is invited.

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.

New Website on Digital Philately

USCC member Fran Adams reports a new website devoted to providing information and instruction on how to use modern technology to enhance the collecting and exhibiting experience. The DPS Workshop (dpsworkshop.com) is available to anyone wishing to view. Fran is the workshop editor.

The site is updated 3 times each month with short articles on how to design and prepare all types of electronic files for use in digital philatelic presentations, exhibits and literature. A number of contributors provide insightful and step-by-step instructions in these articles.

In the future, there will be articles on using mobile devices such as ipods and cell phones as well as further how-to articles using various programs and free web-based applications and services.

All members are invited to view and use this digital resource.

Not What It Seems?

One of the "patriotic" cancels seen by collectors is the "US" cancel. Normally they are hand carved but not always. When one sees a "US" cancel, the natural reaction is to assume it stands for "United States." But we do see examples where that assumption is very much thrown into question. Take Figure 1, from the collection of Nick Todaro, which shows an attractive negative "US" with "S" inverted. No postmark on the front

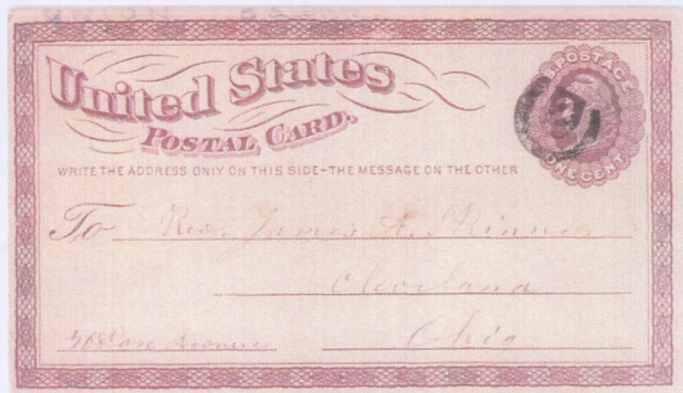


Figure 1.

but the back is datelined "Union Square March 31st." Union Square was located in Oswego Co., N.Y. and operated from 1823-1907. "US" for "United States" or "Union Square"? Who can say for certain? Other examples include "US" cancels from Union Springs, AL (Whitfield 5083) and Upper Sandusky, OH (Cole US-108). Surely there are others.

What we can term a related situation is presented by the "OK" cancel (Figure 2) submitted by John Donnes. "OK", of course, has a well-established meaning and a considerable number of "OK" cancels, again typically handcarved, are known from 19th century post offices. However, when we see an "OK"

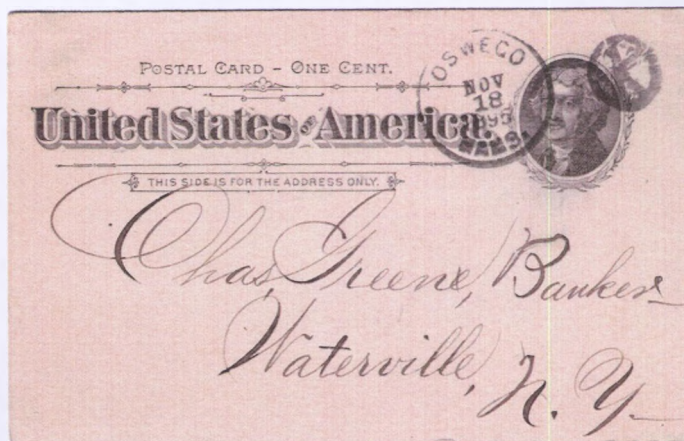
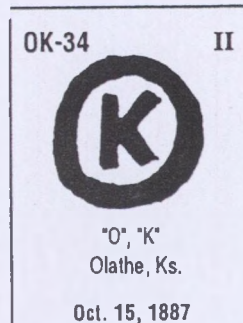


Figure 2.



cancel from Oswego, KS, what are we to think? Cole reports a similar example (Figure 3) where he obviously views the cancel as showing initials representing Olathe, Kansas.

Figure 3.

Early Cancel, New Color?

Figure 1 presents an intriguing blue cancel. It appears to be the well known 13-bar square grid used by the NYPO throughout the four year period when 1847 issue stamps were current. However, this New York cancel, as "common" as it is on the 1847s, is only known in red ink. Very shortly after the 1851 issue appeared, the NYPO switched to black ink for a brief period (less than one month) before the cancel was discontinued.



Figure 1.

The question arises as to whether the Figure 1 cancel really is a New York square grid. As far as I know, there is no square grid reported on the 1847s but the New York grid. The Figure 1 cancel design is very similar to the New York grid. (For a discussion of the New York square grid cancels, see the *Chronicle*, No. 208, November 2005.) The cancel in Figure 1 is unusually sharp. Could this be due to the blue ink providing a more dramatic contrast with the underlying color of the stamp? The cancel in Figure 1 has a slightly grainy quality and some of the border lines are a bit pronounced, qualities that are sometimes associated with fakery. However, this stamp has 1994 PSE and 2008 PF certificates opining that stamp and cancel are genuine.

No comment was made on the certificates regarding the origin of the cancel.

I looked through the New York City listings presented in Tom Alexander's census book in 1847 issue covers and saw no listings for the square grid in any color but red. There was a cover to Philadelphia listed on page 452 with a blue round grid and blue postmark but also with a notation that the authenticity of the cover has been questioned. Another point to consider: the NYPO used very little blue ink in its postal markings during the 1847-1851 period.

It would certainly be nice to conclude that Figure 1 is a genuine NYPO square grid, but the circumstances involved to create it would have been most unusual – presumably no red or black ink available but a supply of blue ink on hand. The assistance of readers in further considering this matter is eagerly sought.

“Stampless” Postmarks

Collectors see numerous examples of markings designed for stampless covers but used as cancels of postage stamps. “PAID” markings are the most common cancelers. However, rate markings (“3,” “5,” “10,” etc.), “FREE” and combined “PAID” and rate markings are noted with considerable frequency. These occurred almost entirely, as would be expected, on 19th century mail, most commonly in the early years after prepayment by postage stamps largely became mandatory in January 1856 with usage declining through the remainder of the century.

A related area that has interested your editor is that of “stampless” postmarks (i.e. those that contained “PAID,”



Figure 1.

rate numerals, etc.) used in the post -1855 period. I have seen a number of examples from several different post offices on covers with 1861 issue stamps but not on any cover bearing the 1867/1868 grills or later issue stamps. Two covers bearing Sc 65 stamps are illustrated in Figure 1. Neither can be year dated but the one with the star cancels (courtesy of Arthur Beane) appears to show postmark deterioration. Perhaps after a long period of use it was taken out of service shortly thereafter.

An article on the above subject, which illustrated several additional covers bearing Sc 65 stamps, appeared in the Spring 1996 NEWS. I'd like to renew a request made then for reports of covers with “stampless” postmarks and stamps issued in 1867 or later. I'd like to think that covers exist with these postmarks into the early 1870s, at least. Please help out if you can.



Closed Album - Tom Stanton

Former editor of the *U.S. Cancellation Club News*, Thomas E. Stanton, died February 11 at age 75 in Jacksonville, NC where he had resided in recent years.

Tom served as a meteorologist with the U.S. Air Force for 20 years, retiring as a Major. Subsequently he devoted himself to philatelic pursuits. He worked for a period with the John Kaufmann auction house in Washington, D.C. Building on the initial work of George T. Turner, Tom compiled and arranged the 58 issues of *Pat Paragraphs*, appearing from 1931-1958 as the house organ of philatelic legend Elliott Perry. This led to the book of the same name published by the Bureau Issues Association in 1981.

Tom was an avid researcher who spent innumerable hours at the National Archives where he was known on a first-name basis. He was an expert in a remarkably wide range of U.S. postal history subjects – pre-U.P.U. transatlantic mails, railroads used for the mails and their markings, machine cancellations, and much in between. Tom was generous with his time in helping fellow collectors understand the intricacies of postal regulations as applied to particular situations. And he always maintained a fine sense of humor that could be counted on to keep things lively.

Tom was editor of the *NEWS* from 1989-1992 and for a much longer period was editor of *Way Markings*, journal of the Virginia Postal History Society.

Widely respected and appreciated in the philatelic community, he will be missed.

Upside Down Ellipses

This brief article features two ellipse duplexes with a similar and very unusual feature – the ellipse is upside down in relation to the CDS. Figure 1, from Brooklyn, NY is dated April 20, 1885 and I have a record of an April 2, 1885 example. Willard reports this ellipse design from Brooklyn with numbers “1” to “3.” He notes large letters “W” or “B” on the right side of the CDS and suggested that they may stand for Williamsburg or Brevoort stations, but was not at all sure this was correct. In Figure 1, it certainly appears that the “V” stands for Van Brunt



Figure 1.

station, so I assume the idea of station designations is correct. I suspect that he never actually saw a “V” cover since he omitted reference to it as well as reference to the upside down ellipse. I gather from other information in the Willard book that ellipses with a “1” in this set (and in a later set) were from Williamsburg and those with a “3” from Brevoort. Readers may wonder how Figure 1 was accepted as a registered cover with 4¢ postage but, as may well have been guessed, there is postage on the back – a pair of 5¢ Garfields.

The Figure 2 double weight cover is from Toledo, OH and dated February 15, 1888. The upside down ellipse with a “3” in the center is reported by Willard. Possibly the Figure 2 cover was the basis for his report as the date is the same as in his illustration.

The NEWS is eager to learn of other upside down ellipses in duplex handstamps as well as additional dates for the Brooklyn and Toledo examples. If you have such information, please advise.



Figure 2.

University Post Offices

by Roger D. Curran

The small town where I live, Lewisburg, PA is home to Bucknell University, a largely undergraduate institution of about 3,400 students. It was established in 1846 as the University at Lewisburg and renamed in 1886 in honor of William Bucknell, a University benefactor. For 13 years, from 1898-1911, there was a post office on campus. I recently came across a Bucknell postmark shown here as Figure 1. The Bucknell post office



Figure 1.

couldn't have been more than a half mile from the Lewisburg post office because the edge of the campus is only four blocks from the center of town. I have wondered why a separate post office was thought to be needed. Bucknell was much smaller then and there were presumably very few students there during the summer months. The Figure 1 card must have been posted early in the day as it arrived at the Lewisburg post office by 9AM.

There were, of course, a number of college and university post offices in this general time period and covers with such postmarks constitute a popular collecting area. From the standpoint of noteworthy cancels associated with these post offices, the University of Virginia would stand out in any listing. It operated from 1826 to 1890. Figure 2 illustrates a cover dated May 31 with “1879” in the center of the blue hand-

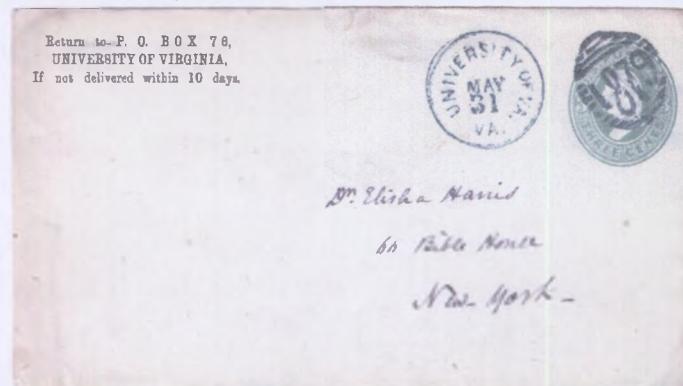


Figure 2.

carved ellipse cancel. What must be the same cancel is listed in Whitfield (Figure 3) as being from Charlottesville, VA, the town where UVA is located. How this occurred is an interesting question. The two post offices surely wouldn't have been co-

located because that would defeat what I assume to be the whole purpose of having a separate university post office – convenient location on campus.

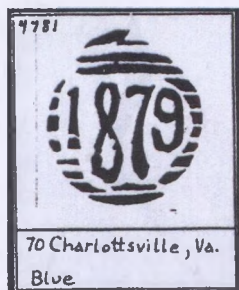


Figure 3.



Figure 4.

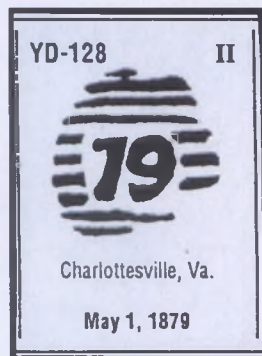


Figure 6.

Presented in Figures 4 and 5 are two cancels that may or may not be related to that in Figure 2. The blue cancel in Figure 4 is listed in Cole (YD-128) but not attributed. Figure 5 is in a brownish red ink. Cole lists a similar cancel (Figure 6), attributed to Charlottesville,

but doesn't report it in red ink. However, the UVA post office is known to have used red ink as a canceler on 1879 issue stamps – see Cole STU-50 on page 110. Were the Figures 4 and 5 cancels used at either the UVA or Charlottesville post offices? I think it is plausible, perhaps even likely. The Figure 2, 4 and 5 cancels all involve hand-carved ellipse designs, with year dates in the center, struck in colored



Figure 5.

inks. Readers who can supply additional information about these cancels or about the canceling practices at the two post offices in question are urged to contact the NEWS.

Noted in Passing

A couple of cancel sitings are reported herewith. Edward Willard made a decades-long study of cancels found on the Sc 210 stamp and his book on the subject devoted an extensive section to ellipse cancels. He would have been the first to acknowledge that such a work, covering a very common stamp, would never achieve completeness and new reports have been coming in ever since the book's publication in 1970. Figure 1 shows a new report from Greenfield, MO with a rather delicate "G" in the ellipse center.



Figure 1.

Concentric

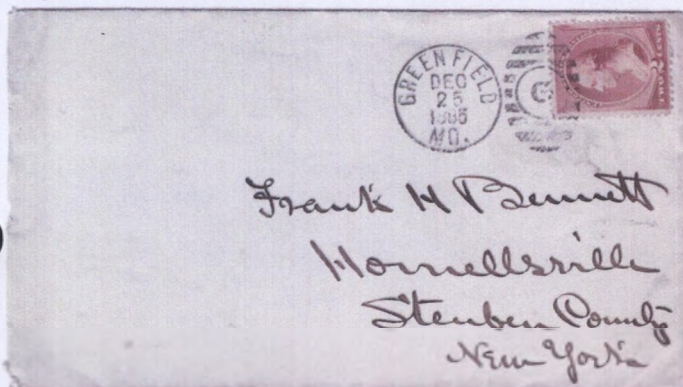


Figure 2.

circles cancels with a number or letter in the center were very commonly used in the 1870s and 80s but some examples are decidedly uncommon. Figure 2 shows an unlisted "D" in four circles. No year date is present but the stamp is a National printing. Danville, NH is a DPO that operated from 1836-1927.

Thanks to John Donnes for the two tracings.

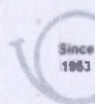
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Unlisted Precancel

Figure 1 shows an unlisted precancel which is apparently from Lowell, MA, judging from the bottom right portion of the corner card. Perhaps the portion of the cancel appearing on the stamp is part of a "LOWELL" marking but that is not clear. The marking is odd because it is so large. Can readers report additional examples, on or off cover, so that we might begin to reconstruct the design of the full marking?



Figure 1.

More on an "Odd" Practice

The February 2009 *NEWS* carried an article on four postal cards that were postmarked at Brockport, NY during the June-September 1883 period. The duplexed postmarks were struck upside down and, in one case, placed on the back. Additionally, the indicium on each card was canceled separately in a different ink. What was going on here?

The answer, I'm quite sure, has been provided by Alex Gundel. He concluded that the Brockport postmarks do not identify where the cards entered the mails but rather are received markings. One supposes that they were put on the front initially so as to not obliterate the message but then, later, the postmaster concluded that placing it on the back wouldn't do that, so he put the September 1 marking on the back where, in the case of envelopes, such markings were normally located. Your editor had assumed that the cards were mailed at Brockport to a local addressee. But looking now at how they are addressed, with "N.Y." cited in each case and the county name given in two instances, it is apparent that these cards were not locally addressed. Since the February article, the image of a partial cover has been noted with the same Brockport CDS and star duplex (dated August 10, 1883). The star struck a 3¢ green and there is no evidence of any other cancel on the stamp.

There is now, of course, a new mystery and that is why the originating post office, whatever one it was, didn't postmark the cards as well as cancel them. Did the postmaster somehow think that postal cards didn't require postmarking?

Many thanks to Alex for his explanation of an odd-appearing situation.

Closed Album – Hubert Skinner

Outstanding philatelist Hubert C. Skinner died February 26 at age 79. His accomplishments, recognitions and volunteer activities are legion. Hubert served as APS vice president from 1973-1977, as APRL trustee for more than 30 years and as associate editor and senior editor for Volumes I and II respectively of the *American Stampless Cover Catalog*. He was an APS-accredited judge and a successful exhibitor who received gold and large gold medals in national and international competition. He was the recipient of awards from the Confederate Stamp Alliance and American Philatelic Congress and was presented the APS John N. Luff award for distinguished philatelic research in 1994. He was named in 1997 to the APS Writers Unit 30 Hall of Fame.

Hubert's interests centered on 19th century U.S. and Confederate stamps and postal history with particular attention to New Orleans and New York City. He maintained a broad and passionate interest in cancellations, recalling in the preface of the landmark book he co-authored with Amos Eno, *United States Cancellations 1845-1869*, that he was introduced to fancy cancels in early 1957 by Raymond H. Weil and thereupon began his own collection. The Skinner-Eno book, published in 1980, established the standard by which future compilations of cancellations will be judged for years to come. It remains today the primary reference for cancels found on early U.S. stamps through the 1869 issue and has contributed greatly to knowledge about and interest in this collecting field. In recent years Hubert served as section editor for the 1851-1861 period for the *Chronicle*, journal of the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, and he presented numerous articles on a range of postal history subjects with considerable emphasis on cancellations.

The contributions and enthusiasm of Hubert Skinner as a student and collector will long be remembered.



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!!