



U.S. Cancellation Club **NEWS**

Vol. 29, No. 8, Whole No. 273, November 2009

Cancels on Sc 210

The "PAID" in circle (Figure 1) is unlisted in the major references. Figure 2, from the same post office, continues the

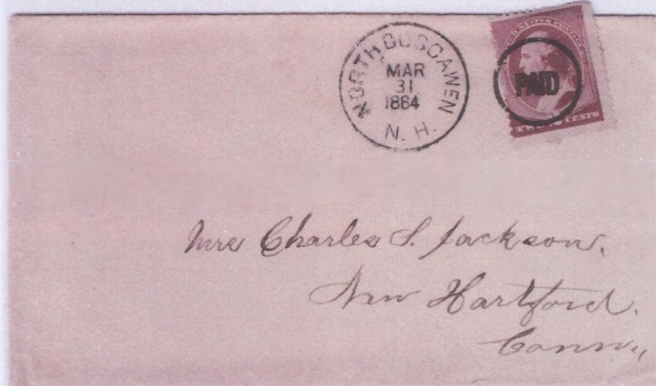


Figure 1.

outline circle theme. It is interesting to note that the 2007 update to the Whitfield book identifies North Boscawen as the post office of origin for Figure 3. This is just speculation but these cancels may have been designed for use on business forms rather than as postal markings. Can readers report other similar cancels, on or off cover, that might be part of such a set?

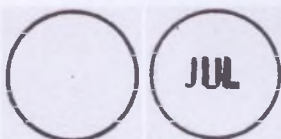


Figure 2. Figure 3.



Figure 4.

The cancels in Figures 4 and 5 are similar to stock cancels used in the Banknote era except for the additional detail in the center. Who can report the origin for either? The tracings were provided by John Donnes.

Figure 5.



New Waterbury Cancel

The "bible" on Waterbury, CT cancels is Paul Rohloff's 1979 book *The Waterbury Cancellations 1865-1890*. It is very well researched and contains excellent tracings along with many full cover images. However, no such reference is ever likely to be complete and new cancels and information come along from time to time to add to the story. The February 2004 *NEWS* presented 14 cancels, unlisted in Rohloff, attributed to Waterbury that have appeared in (1) other cancellation reference books, (2) the 1990 auction of the Henry Houser Waterbury collection or (3) the exhibit of the late Clyde Jennings. (One of the 14 was withdrawn in the May 2004 issue.) The August 2008 *NEWS* illustrated a new discovery of a wonderful man in hat cancel coming to market in a Siegel auction.

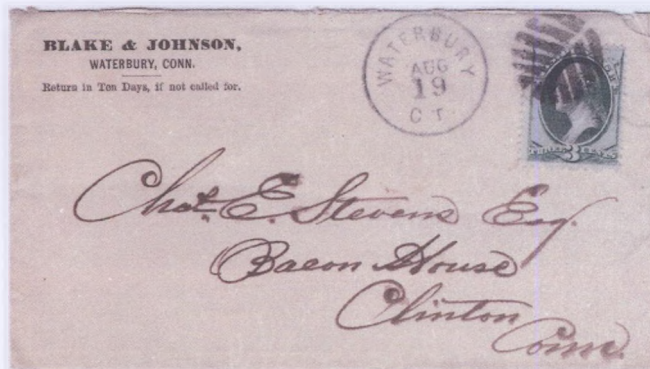


Figure 1.



Presented below (Figure 1) is another cancel, not listed in Rohloff, that was recently submitted by Dan Haskett. John Donnes made the tracing and noted that the cancel is similar to Rohloff L-44 (Figure 2) but differs in size and shape. John pointed out that it is also quite similar to Whitfield 1670 (Figure 3) and wondered if, through a little confusion and strike variation, this is actually Dan's Waterbury cancel.



Figure 2.

The *NEWS* will welcome additional reports of "new" Waterbury cancels.



Figure 3.

Dear Reader,

The APS Stampshow in Pittsburgh this summer served as an excellent venue for Club members to meet and discuss mutual interests. Other than providing an exhibit award to a number of shows for the best cancellations exhibit, this was the first show in several years in which we participated by staffing a society table and holding a seminar. At least 20 members stopped by and many spent considerable time at the table. We sold six Whitfield books and recruited 7 new members over the four day period. Thanks to all who helped out!

Dealer Jim Lee's August 2009 newsletter, which is widely distributed, contained a section that promoted the USCC. This resulted in an additional 10 new members. As many of you know, Jim recently became the president of the American Stamp Dealers Association and has been a tireless supporter of the hobby for many years. We wish him every success as ASDA president and thank him for his continued and very beneficial assistance to the USCC.

One of the services the USCC has offered members over the years is a one on one advisory service on various cancellation-related and postal history subjects. In recent months we have not distributed the hand-out on this service to new members because it was developed eight years ago and is no longer current. We have many members with extensive knowledge and many of us, at least from time to time, have questions that pertain to specialized areas. Enclosed in this issue with the dues notice for 2010 is a form for participating in this effort. Please consider helping out with this service by volunteering to advise in appropriate areas.

The USCC now has a new website address as listed at the bottom of the masthead. Our thanks to Bob Trachimowicz and his son for their work on updating our web pages and transferring them to the new site.

Best wishes to all for a very happy holiday season.

Roger Curran

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.

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

Address all other communications to the NEWS editor Roger D. Curran at the address below.

U.S.C.C. Officers

Roger D. Curran, 20 University Ave., Lewisburg, PA 17837....
rcurran@dejazzd.com.....President

Vince Costello, 318 Hoffnagle St., Philadelphia, PA 19111-1918
vinman2119@aol.com.....First Vice President

Abe Boyarsky, PO Box 570, La Mirada, CA 90637-570.....
abeboyarsky@yahoo.com.....Second Vice President

Roger R. Rhoads, 6160 Brownstone Ct, Mentor, OH 4060.....
rrrhoads@aol.com.....Secretary/Treasurer

John Donnes, 202 Willow Dr., Gretna, LA 70053.....
jdonnes@cox.net.....Governor at Large

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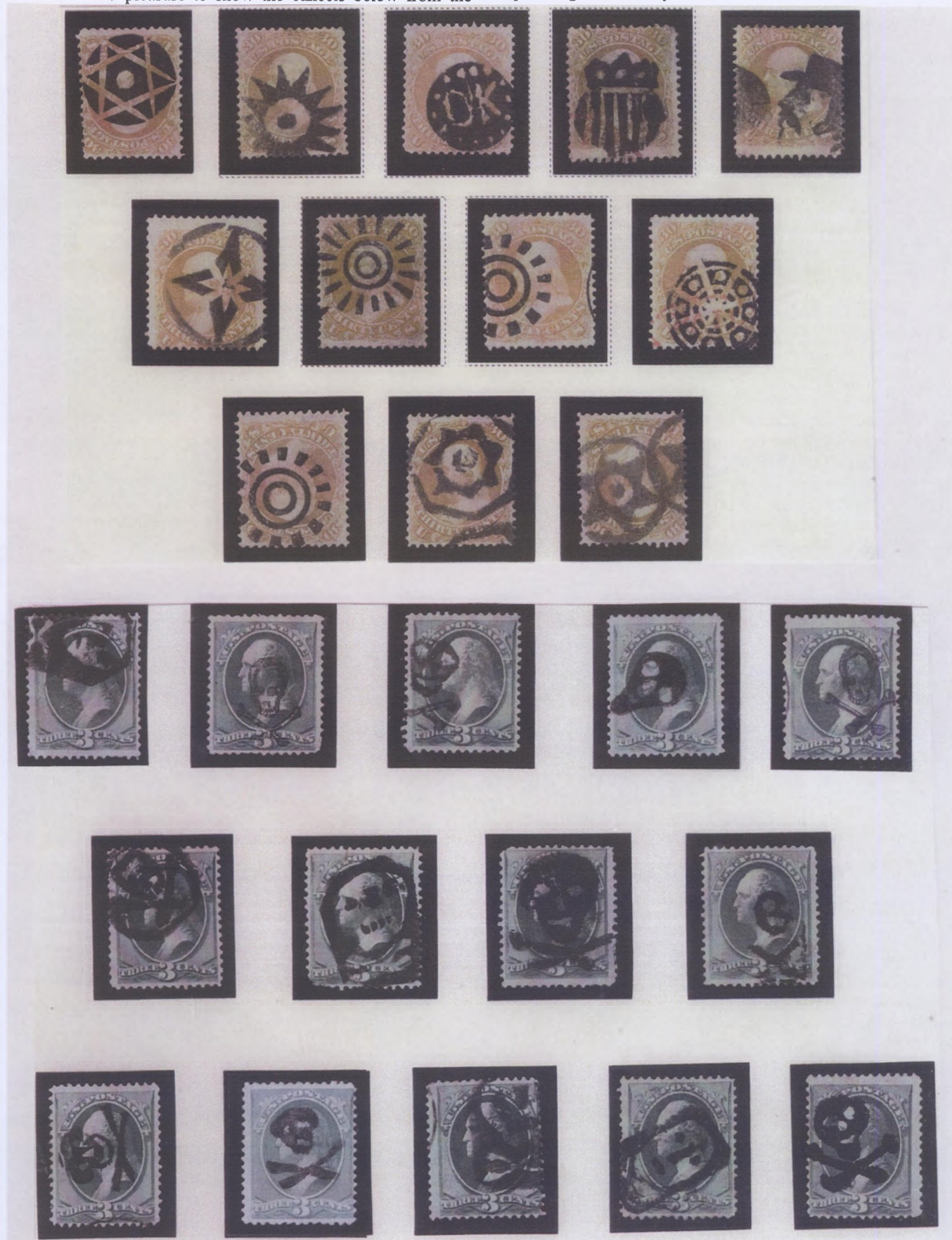


"running man"

Cancellation Gallery

It is a pleasure to show the cancels below from the

collection of Mike Ewen. Mike has submitted scans of a number of his cancels to the *NEWS* and more will be presented in upcoming issues. Stay tuned!



A Step Back in Time

Shown herewith are two pages from the collection of the late Edward Willard. They may have been part of his exhibit of the Sc 210 stamp. Mr. Willard wrote the standard reference

book (2 volumes) on Sc 210 and its postal history. It was published in 1970 and he had been a decades long student of the stamp. These pages were obviously prepared long before the era of computer-assisted layout and graphics. Everything here was done by hand. The use of quadrille paper (light background grid)



Figure 1.

was typical for display pages because, of course, it helped greatly in terms of centering and alignment. Drafting equipment was apparently used to create the letters and the representations of postal markings were inked directly on the pages. (The designs

of the representations were outlined first in a light pencil and some evidence of this is still present.) By today's standards, these pages are a little rough and they lack perfect centering, but they are quite pleasing.

OLD RATE MARKS



Old five and ten cent rate marks used
as killers at Kenduskeag, Maine

Figure 2.

Odd to Say the Least

by Roger D. Curran

Over the years, these pages have presented many unusual U.S. postal markings, especially as they were employed to cancel stamps. However, I doubt that any were more peculiar than the one illustrated in Figure 1. Many thanks to John Donnes for the excellent tracing which was difficult to execute since the marking was very lightly struck on the right side.

Perhaps the first thing to note is that it was intended to accomplish two purposes – postmark the letter and cancel the stamp. In the overwhelming majority of cases, post offices by the 1880s were using handstamps that duplexed a postmarker to a separate canceler or, less commonly, were using two unduplexed handstamps. Here in Figure 1 we have a single marking that was



Figure 1.

apparently designed for the left side to be applied to the cover and the right side, with its canceling bars, applied to the postage stamp. This dual use feature is reminiscent of postmarks introduced by the New York Post Office in 1851 as it was beginning to employ the CDS as a canceler. An example from *Simpson's U.S. Postal Markings 1851-1861* by Alexander is shown as Figure 2.

But the above aspect isn't the most interesting thing. Readers will note the brownish color of the marking. One school of thought is that there is no ink involved whatsoever – the marking was applied by a handstamp that was heated to a point where it would scorch but not burn the cover and stamp. The brownish color does seem consistent with scorching.

Your editor frequently consults with John Donnes for an analysis of particular markings or covers. He examined the cover closely and offers a differing view:

"From what I can tell it looks like the NY double oval cancel was ink based. It's hard to tell if it was oil based or a water based ink. The cancel does not appear to be scorched. It seems to me that applying enough heat to leave an image on the paper would result in the paper beneath the imprint becoming brittle, and I did not see this. In fact there were clear spots on the interior of

some of the letters where, if they had been scorched, I would expect a burning effect. Also, how hot and for how long would the canceler have to be held against the cover to leave an image? I won't rule out some sort of acid based ink, this might account for the brownish and watery look. Of course, this is all speculation on my part."



Figure 2.

It will probably seem hard for readers to imagine that one couldn't immediately determine whether or not there is ink present in a postal marking. But in the case of Figure 1, I believe a visual observation leaves enough ambiguity so that, at least at this point, a "conclusive" answer will not be attempted.

Whether or not the image was transferred by scorching, by an acid-tinged ink or a more traditional postmarking ink that perhaps degraded over time to yield the brown, I think we can safely say it was a very short-lived and unsuccessful experiment. The mind boggles at the thought of how difficult it would be to process mail quickly while maintaining the heat on the face of the handstamp at just the right temperature to permit scorching but not burning. Acid might aid in canceling and be desirable given the limited canceling surface of the oval but with the potential for degrading the face of the handstamp, the chance for error in formulating batches of ink (making it too strong), and the problem of clerks perhaps getting it on their hands, all in the context of a very busy post office, acid seems quite unlikely. (This would be a far cry from the acid cancels on Blood's local stamps in Philadelphia which involved no handstamp.)

Another problem, apart from the ink question, is that considerable care and hence time (in the aggregate) would have been required to apply just the postmark portion on the cover and the canceling bars portion on the stamp which would be a disadvantage in a busy large-city post office.

Just as this article was being written, a second example of the cancel was noted as lot 36 in the October 2009 Spink and Shreves sale 117. The postmark is dated 3/16/80 and the right side of the double oval was struck on a 1¢ Banknote applied to a circular rate cover. The lot description mentions the brown color and states:

"...probably from a mechanical handstamp or a self-inking ticket-dater, which are not normally used as a postmark or cancel . . . being the first example we have ever seen."

As stated above, I believe this marking *was* intended to be a canceler because the horizontal bars on the right side appear to be for that purpose. Conceivably they were decorative elements but that seems to me very doubtful.

Comments and additional information on this intriguing postmark/cancel will be welcomed.

Beyond Our Borders

In terms of number of post offices, probably the most widely used 19th century fancy cancel in the U.S. was the "wheel of fortune" (WOF) illustrated in Figure 1. It was especially popular in the 1880s but had a much longer run. Sold by the F.P. Hammond Co. of Illinois, it was available both as simplex cancel and as a part of a duplex handstamp with a CDS. A large variety of CDS designs were duplexed to these killers. Since the killers (and the accompanying postmarks) were made of molded rubber, they could be produced cheaply and sold at modest prices, which appealed to small post offices throughout the country.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

And as it turns out, the WOF has been noted from at least one foreign country – see Figure 2. This cover is an 1898 usage from Guatemala to Germany. After seeing this, your editor contacted an expert in Mexico postal history and inquired as to whether the WOF had been used in Mexico. This person advised that he had never seen an example, but didn't rule it out. One supposes that additional non-U.S. post offices probably did acquire and use these Hammond killers. Needless to say, if readers can add to the story, they are urged to do so.

Thanks to John Donnes for the tracing.

Help Wanted

Abe Boyarsky is seeking CDS strikes on-off cover Sc 65 stamps showing the following dates:

In black ink

March 22, May 10 and 25, October 20

In blue ink

March 27 and 29, July 10 and 28, August 19 and 21, September 26, November 27, December 4 and 28.

Abe will buy or trade dates. He can be contacted at the email or regular address listed on the *NEWS* masthead.

NYFM Exchange Office Postmarks -- Determining the Appropriate One

by Dan Richards

This article examines the mystery of mail processing and the selection of exchange office postmarks in the NYFM Department from January 1870-August 1875. It is important to remember that during this period the NYPO was located in the Old Dutch Church (commencing in January of 1845) and remained there until the new post office opened on August 29th, 1875. It is unclear as to the floor plan and the number of clerks in the various departments. From information in an article in an 1871 *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* entitled "New York City Post-Office" and in an article from the May 1878 *Scribner's Monthly Magazine* entitled "The New York Post-Office" as well as from an analysis of the surviving covers, we are able to detect a pattern in the processing of this mail.

In the domestic mail department, the collected mail was dropped upon a large table for sorting and canceling. One clerk would flip and position the letters so another clerk could rapidly cancel the stamp(s). A third clerk would then sort the mail into the proper boxes for distribution. This process was used because of the high mail volume.

A similar process was used in the foreign department for the same reason. Please remember, we are talking about mail to foreign destinations with origination in New York City and not mail received from other U.S. cities addressed to foreign destinations. The sender would deposit letters in various designated boxes for foreign mailing or present the letters to a mail clerk at the foreign window. The collected uncanceled mail was then dropped on a sorting table where the canceling process would begin. One clerk would quickly expose the stamps for canceling and the other clerk would apply the killer. Roger Curran's article in the February 2009 *NEWS* discusses this process.

At this point how the foreign mails were handled has yet to be documented from official records but after reviewing thousands of surviving covers one starts to see a pattern. From this pattern we can see a logical scenario. The freshly canceled mail would be sorted by postal convention/destination. It was weighed and checked for proper postage. Then, the segregated letters were placed in a designated waiting area for the next available ship. On the day the letter was sent to the ship, the exchange office postmark was applied. This practice held true 100 per-cent of the time, except for the infrequent error. It applied even on occasions when mail was sent closed mail bag to Boston to meet a ship due to a lack of New York sailings. The New York exchange office postmark still read the day that letter left the NYFM department.

We now should discuss why one specific New York exchange office postmark was used over another. The different exchange office postmark types were needed to comply with various postal conventions' agreements. Many of the regulations in the postal conventions laid out the conditions regarding how the mail inbound and outbound was to be marked. This simplified

**Figure 1.**

and eliminated much confusion, allowing a postal clerk to quickly determine a letter's origin, credit, routing etc. Good sources to view the different postmark types are William Weiss's book *The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City 1870-1878*, pages 479-483 and Hubbard/Winter's *North Atlantic Sailings 1840-75*, pages 353-378.

The covers in Figures 1-3, besides being addressed to France, share one thing in common. All were processed using the postal regulations set forth by the U.S./France postal convention of 1874, also known as the 2nd Franco-American treaty. The cover in Figure 4 was sent by terms of the U.S./U.K. convention of 1869. To understand why these covers received their postmarks, we should review a few of the convention regulations.

The U.S./French postal convention of 1874 was signed in Washington on April 28th, 1874 and was ratified by the French in Versailles on June 26th 1874. The new convention and new regulations went into effect on August 1, 1874 and continued until January 1, 1876 when the 5 cent General Postal Union (GPU) rate for France went into effect. The U.S. and France agreed to exchange closed mail bag letters by French and HAPAG packets via a direct route and via England by any packet between the U.S. and U.K. Letters from the U.S. could be sent unpaid or fully paid to destination for a fee 9 cents (50 centimes) per 15 grams. Prepaid mail was to be marked "PAID" in red ink in the U.S. Unpaid and insufficiently paid letters received black New York markings. Credit was given for the amount of adhesives on insufficiently paid mail. The marking "insufficiently prepaid" was to be made in the United States. Unpaid and insufficiently paid letters were charged an additional fee of 25 centimes per letter in France.

**Figure 2.**

The cover in Figure 1 shows an eighth day usage for the 9 cent French packet direct rate. The 3 cent and 6 cent Continentals, canceled by a Weiss ST-8P3, make up the 9 cent letter rate up to 15 grams. On the day the cover was sent to French Lines "Lafayette" the NYFM clerk correctly struck the cover with a 25mm red orange "NEW YORK AUG 8 +PAID+" postmark. The "Lafayette" arrived in Brest on August 18, 1874 where the French clerk immediately could distinguish the letter as fully paid. The French clerk struck the cover with a red octagonal entry mark but failed to strike the cover with "P.D." (paid direct) as per convention. The cover was railed to the Paris and delivered to the addressee.

The cover in Figure 2 shows the 9 cent double letter rate but was routed differently. The cover was routed U.S. to France via U.K., closed mail bag, under the same terms of the convention agreement. This second month usage is franked with 6 cent and 12 cent Continentals for the 18 cents and canceled by two strikes of a Weiss GE-EN8. The NYFM clerk again correctly struck the cover with a 25mm red orange "NEW YORK SEP 16 +PAID+" exchange office postmark on the day the letter was sent

**Figure 3.**

to the ship. The letter was placed aboard Cunard Line's "CUBA" which sailed from New York on the same date as the New York postmark. The letter arrived Queenstown, Ireland on September 27, 1874 and was conveyed to Calais, France. In Calais the letter was placed aboard a postal rail car where the postal clerk applied a 21mm circled/octagonal entry mark dated "18 SEPT. 74" and a boxed "PD" while enroute to Paris.

The cover in Figure 3 was sent under the U.S./France postal convention of 1874 as a partially paid letter. On arrival in the NYFM department the cover's adhesives, a 2 cent and 7 cent (x2) Continentals, were canceled by the clerk with two strikes of a Weiss GE-EN3 killer. It was determined the cover was a double weight letter and underpaid by 2 cents. The clerk applied a blue "2" crayon mark on the cover front indicating the double rate. The cover was placed with other partially paid covers sent under the same convention regulations in a segregated designated area awaiting the ship. On the day the mail was sent to the ship the clerk applied the proper exchange office postmark, a black "NEW YORK NOV 17+". Then, as per convention regulations, a black "INSUFFICIENTLY PAID" auxiliary mark was applied. The two cancels in black would enable a receiving postal clerk to quickly determine an additional fee was needed. The letter at the NYFM Department was placed in a closed mail bag and

**Figure 4.**

sent to meet Eagle Line's "Goethe". On arrival in Brest the French Postal clerk applied a blue double circle entry mark and a handstamp "45" (45 centimes) postage due fee. The postage due was calculated by the 16 cents (80 centimes) in adhesives leaving 2 cents (20 centimes) due plus the 25 centimes additional fee for an underpaid letter for a total of 45 centimes postage due which was paid by the addressee.

In Figure 4 we have a cover franked with a 3 cent and a 6 cent Continental for a total of 9 cents. The adhesives were canceled with a Weiss GE-EN3 killer. The letter was weighed and checked for the proper fee to destination. It was determined this letter was an underpaid double letter rate to France. Instead of the new 9 cent direct letter rate to France as employed in Figure 3, the NYFM clerk decided to send the letter using a previous routing method. The letter was sent on the 4 cent open letter rate paid to the United Kingdom. One could send letters to France paid only to the U.K. under the terms of the U.S./U.K. convention of 1869. Under these terms a letter up to 15 grams could pay 4 cents to the United Kingdom leaving all charges from the U.K. to France unpaid. Sending a letter 4 cent open mail paid only to the U.K. cost more and usually increased transit time. In the NYFM Department the letter was segregated and placed in a designated area for the next ship. On the day the letter was sent to NGL Line's "America", the NYFM clerk applied the 25mm red orange "NEW YORK NOV 28 PAID TO ENGLAND" exchange office postmark. On arrival in ??? on the postal clerk applied the black "G B // 1f 60c" handstamp to show that the letter was an unpaid letter to France. The French postal clerk marked the letter with the double circle Calais entry mark and the "12" (120 centimes) indicating the postage due fee to be paid in Paris by the addressee.

We have examined the handling and usage of exchange office postmarks on four covers. We have seen that the type of exchange office postmark was predetermined by the regulations of the postal convention. This shows every postal mark was applied for a purpose and there is no mystery as to postmark selection.

An excellent read for those interested in this subject is Richard Winter's *Understanding Transatlantic Mail* published in 2006. Covers in Figure 3 and 4 are shown courtesy of Nicholas Kirke.

Looking for "Q"

by Roger D. Curran

In a Fall 1997 *NEWS* article on fancy cancel pricing, Roger Rhoads wrote briefly about letter cancels and stated that he had never found a "Q." Club member Dan Haskett saw that article and brought to the Pittsburgh show this summer a cover (Figure 1) with three strikes of a Quincy, MA "Q." Just looking at the cancels from an aesthetic standpoint, they seem rather unremarkable and if an example was found on an off-cover

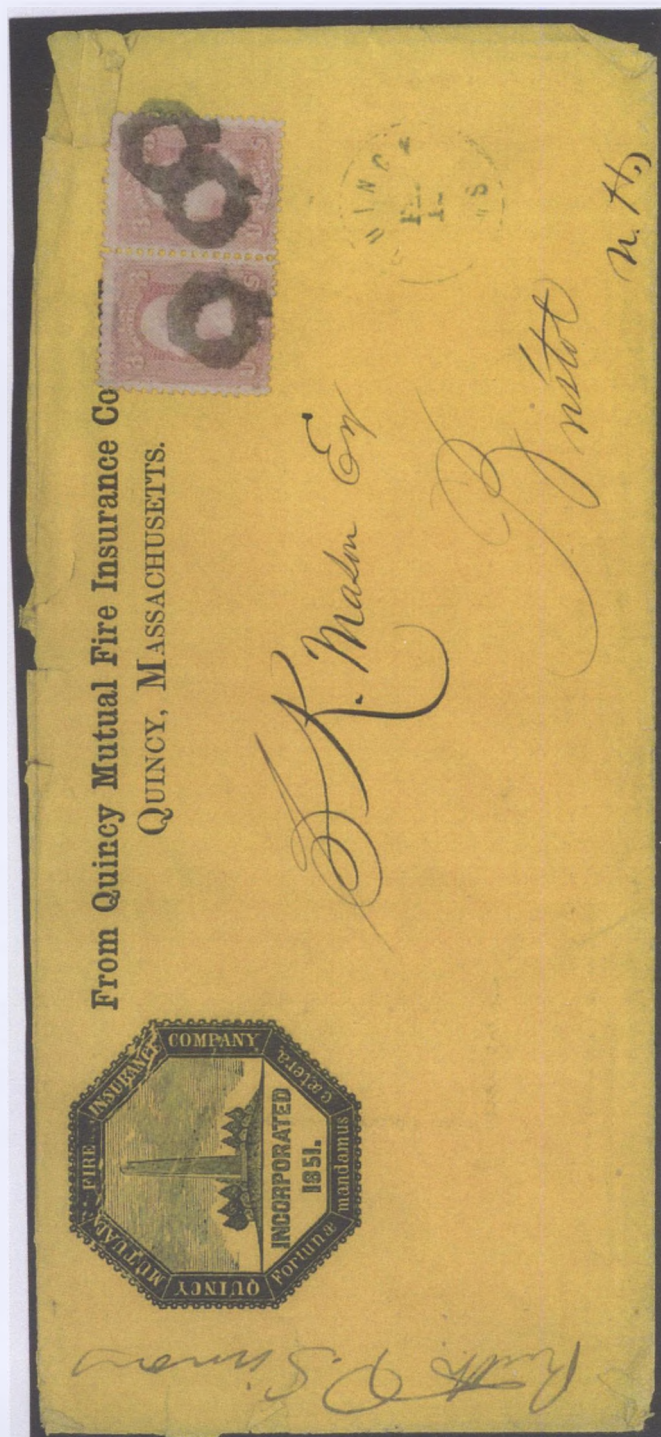
**Figure 1.**



Figure 2.

stamp, it might go unrecognized for what it is. Actually, a hand-carved "Q" is, I believe, rare. I have looked over the Skinner-Eno, Cole and Whitfield reference books and "Q" appears to be the most scarce letter cancel. The only other hand-carved "Q" listed is an example from Skinner-Eno, shown here as Figure 2.

The others, three in Whitfield and one in Cole, are manufactured killers from Quincy, IL. However, a hand-carved ellipse with a "Q" in the center is known from Quincy IL and was illustrated in the February 2003 NEWS. Also, a manufactured "Q" in wreath is known from Quinton, NJ.



Figure 3.

Surely there must be more hand-carved "Qs" out there. Figure 3 is a possibility. Is the tail of the "Q" part of the original design or a partial strike of the hollow circle? If a partial strike, was it intended to make the cancel a "Q"? If the stamp was on-cover, perhaps we could



Figure 4.

match it with the name of the post office or even the postmaster. Figure 4 is a similar example but the cover doesn't help much. The postmark is basically unreadable. The state may be Kansas. A Mendon, IL backstamp appears to read "1885." According to the June 1884 *Postal Guide*, there were five Kansas post office names beginning with a "Q" but none match the letters that are visible in the postmark.

Who can report the origin of the Figure 2 cancel or report other hand-carved "Q" cancels on or off cover? Some other letter cancels are, of course, hard to find. Among the more difficult are "I", "U" and "Z."



Figure 5.

Club member Norman Cohen uses an appealing and whimsical letterhead (Figure 5) made up of letter cancels on the Sc 210 stamp. Fortunately, Norman didn't have to look for a "Q."

Updates of Earlier Articles

The May 2009 NEWS discussed two duplexed ellipse cancels that are upside down in relation to the CDS. Such occurrences are very scarce. The post offices involved were Brooklyn, NY and Toledo, OH. Thanks to John Donnes we can now add a third ellipse, this one from Newport, RI. The December 17 cover in Figure 1 is dated 1884 and the other cannot be year dated. It is interesting to note that Willard reported a "3" of this set from Newport (right side up) but not a "1" or "2" either up or down.



Figure 1.

John also submits the Maltese cross cancel on a Sc 216 shown in Figure 2. In the August NEWS we noted that the only traditional fancy cancel design thus far reported on this stamp was a 5-point star. This is now a second fancy cancel design. Although we have focused largely on Sc 216 stamps because fancy cancels are particularly hard to find on it, Sc 205 (the first Garfield) deserves some attention as well. The Figure 3 cover, from Chester, VT to London, shows a very nice geometric cancel. It is in the collection of Bob Markovits.



Wendell Triplett confirms that the Figure 2. Whitfield #6452 cancel (Figure 4) illustrated in John Valenti's article in the August NEWS is, indeed, from Mittineague, MA. He reports a June 9 cover (year unknown) bearing a Sc 207 with this cancel. Wendell also notes that the

**Figure 3.**

fancy "G" cancel (Whitfield #5739) on Ted Wassam's 3¢ green on page 107 of the August *NEWS* has been identified by dealer Frank Kaplan as originating at Perch River, NY.

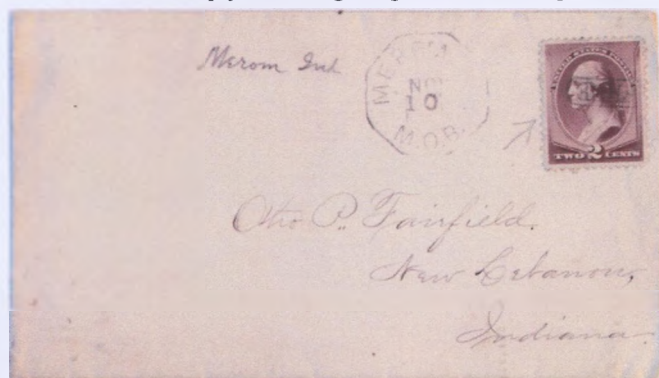
**Figure 4.**

A Most Unusual Cover

by Roger D. Curran

Norman Cohen submits the cover shown here as Figure 1. Both postmark and cancel are unusual and to have both features on the same cover is quite remarkable. Let's begin with the postmark. The "M.O.B." at the bottom stands for "money order business." This marking was intended for post office forms, not as a postmark on mail. One encounters such "M.O.B." markings on mail from time to time and they are by no means rare. However, they are not common and do represent an interesting departure from the norm.

A "FREE" cancel on a Sc 210 stamp, such as we see in Figure 1, is much harder to find. "FREE" handstamps were, of course, employed as cancelers in the 19th century over a considerable period of years but never was it a common practice. Such handstamps were, of course, basically intended for use on mail that was free from postage during the stampless mail era which essentially ended on January 1, 1856. One sees most examples of "FREE" handstamps employed as cancels during the 1850s with sharply declining usage in succeeding decades.

**Figure 1.****Figure 2.**

By 1883 when the Sc 210 stamp was issued, such cancels were minimal and an example on cover is, I believe, rare. Willard lists only one "FREE" on Sc 210 which is shown here as Figure 2. Figure 3 illustrates another example but, unfortunately, the cancel was judged a fake by the PF. Beware of this cancel as two examples have been seen and more may be in circulation. The 2009 *Scott Specialized U.S.* does not list "FREE" as a cancel on Sc 210.

**Figure 3.**

The Figure 1 style, enclosed as it is in a lozenge or flat oval, has been seen at least as far back as the 1850s and is illustrated in Alexander as a stock marking used by various post offices. A slight variation is reported by Alexander from Wakefield, RI. Whitfield illustrates this general style of "FREE" marking (Figure 4) and a 3¢ green cover can be reported with what I believe is this marking from Scituate, MA.

FREE

Readers are urged to report any examples of **Figure 4.** "FREE" cancels on Sc 210 or later issues. Figure 5 shows an example on a Sc 219 and this cancel does have a "genuine" PF certificate.

A broader article on the subject of "FREE" cancels appeared in the November 2002 *NEWS*.

**Figure 5.**

Volunteer Needed – USCC NEWS Index

We have written on several occasions about the need for an index of articles that have appeared in the *NEWS*. Most recently we announced that Vince Costello graciously agreed to take on this project. However, with the press of other obligations, Vince finds that it is not feasible now to do it. Therefore, we renew the call for a volunteer. This job should probably be broken down into segments – say, developing an index for the years 1995-2009, and then taking on another block of years, etc. The index would likely follow the model used in Skinner-Eno, Cole and Whitfield: a subject matter index along with a post office index organized by State. We can supply back issues as needed and consultation would be available from the *NEWS* editor along the way. An index is greatly needed, as many readers can no doubt attest and would represent a most valuable contribution to our common enterprise. Please consider this project (or perhaps just a portion of it) and contact Roger Curran if interested in exploring the matter further or raising any questions.

Binghamton Herringbones

The August NEWS discussed the well-known Binghamton, NY herringbone cancel found on 1847 issue

stamps. In response, Gordon Eubanks submits this remarkable page from his collection showing all four reported ink colors. As indicated in the August article, herringbones in colors other than red, especially blue and green, are truly rare.



Binghamton NY Herringbone Cancel



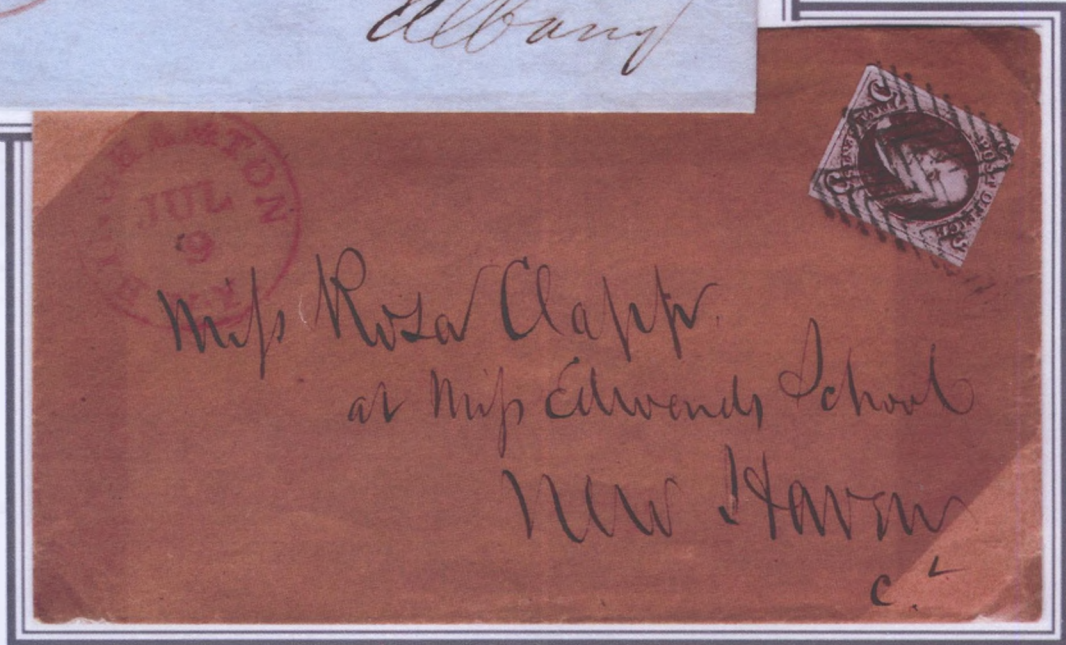
Green cancel



Blue cancel on folded letter sheet



Red cancel on Nov 1848 folded letter
Addressed to future President of the US



Black cancel on cover

In Search of the "Blue" NYFM Cancel

by John Donnes

For years there have been reports that the New York Foreign Mail Department used, during the 1870 to 1875 time period, black, red, reddish brown, and (supposedly) blue ink to cancel foreign mail. Up to this point I have seen no concrete evidence that the foreign department used a true blue ink as a rate marker, postmark, or to cancel the stamps during this period. Having said that, Ted Wassam recently acquired two folded letter sheets canceled in the New York Foreign Mail Department with one of the items bearing an attached note:

First Reported ST-8P2* to Mexico,
Blue CDS -----* Scarce on Cover

along with the apparent dealer's name and asking price.

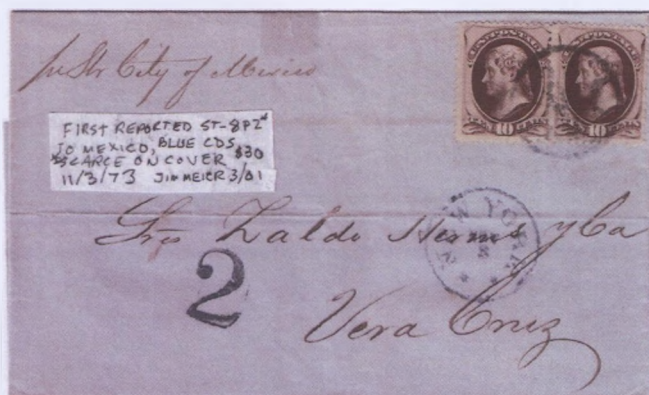


Figure 1.

Having some reservations about the accuracy of the attached note, Ted sent both items to Roger Curran for his thoughts and comments. Roger agreed that the cancellations on the items were questionable and sent them to me for further examination.

Though the *NEWS* is now in color, trying to show the slight differences of colors from a scan could prove to be quite challenging, so I've taken the liberty of putting into words the examination of the items as seen from clear and greater magnification.

Both items (see Figures 1 and 2) were addressed to the



Figure 2.

same party in Mexico, written on blue folded letter cover sheets, and apparently mailed a few months apart.

The Figure 1 cover bears two Continental Bank Note stamps, canceled by an indistinct Weiss type ST-8P2 cancel, and has a November 3 (1873) New York postmark. There is also a black "2" reales Mexican rate marking handstamp.

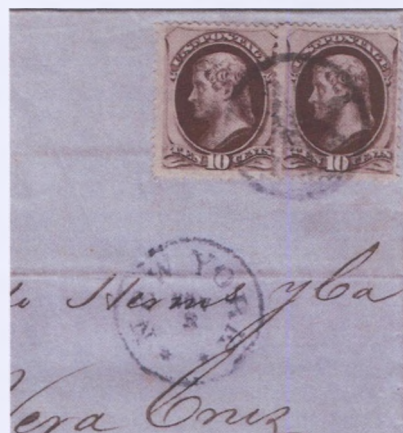


Figure 3.

When comparing the color of the black "2" reales handstamp to the color of the New York postmark, one can definitely see what appears to be a difference in color. When looking at an enlargement of the cancel on the two stamps (see Figure 3), the portion of the cancel that is on the stamps is black, while the lower portion of the cancel on the cover has a bluish cast. The New York postmark also shows this same bluish cast.

Now for the Figure 2 cover. This cover bears two National Bank Note stamps which are canceled by a NYFM cancel (Weiss type TR-W series cancel) that is duplexed to the New York postmark. The cover also shows the black "2" reales Mexican handstamp. Again, there is a marked difference in color between the "2" reales handstamp and the NYFM cancel. When looking at an enlargement of the cancel on this cover (see Figure 4), we again see the cancel on the stamps as being black,



Figure 4.

while that portion of the cancel on the cover has the same bluish cast mentioned above. Being a duplex cancel, the color of the entire NYFM cancel on the cover should all be the same: *black*.

Conclusion: The oils in the black ink of the NYFM cancel were not affected, in terms of color, when applied to the stamps, but when the cancel came into contact with the blue cover sheet, a blue enhanced halo was created around that portion of the black cancel causing the dealer to see "blue". The black Mexican "2" reales handstamp does not show this same halo effect, possibly due to it being more of a water based ink.

While on the subject of NYFM blue cancels, prominent

and recently deceased NYFM collector Hubert Skinner told me a few years ago that he had a blue NYFM cancel on cover. I unfortunately did not get a chance to view this item. With the break up and sale of Hubert's philatelic estate it is hoped that the new owner of this cover, or the owner of any other blue NYFM items, if they exist, will be encouraged to contact the *NEWS* so that we may all share in the knowledge of such a new find.

In closing, I would like to thank Ted Wassam for sharing his items with the readers of the *NEWS* and our club president and editor, Roger Curran, for all his help and thoughts concerning this short article.

New York Ellipses

Club member Dan Richards has been studying ellipse cancels used by the New York Post Office during the 1876-1889 period and has thus far concentrated on the earlier years. When he completes the project, a report will be published. Dan recently contacted the *NEWS* to present one particular find and to ask readers for help on a couple of ellipses.

First, the new find. The standard ellipse used by the main NYPO on outgoing domestic mail consisted of nine horizontal bars with a number in the center. They were introduced in 1876.

Initially, ellipses with numbers "1" through "30" were used and later, but still during the 3¢ green era, numbers "31" and "32" were added. In the April 1952 *U.S. Cancellation Club Quarterly*, pioneering ellipse student Gilbert Burr reported:

"...after accumulating and studying these numerals for 30 years, I found a cover bearing the number 33 used in 1879, which was rather early in their use. This number must have been discontinued, because out of the many thousands I have gone over, it is the only one ever found."



Figure 2.

Joe Crosby presently owns the Burr collection and we show in Figure 1 the Burr "33" cancel with Joe's kind permission. (Burr apparently reduced the cover to the piece we see here.) Dan now submits only the second reported New York "33" shown here as Figure 2. Can any reader show a third example? As a related matter,

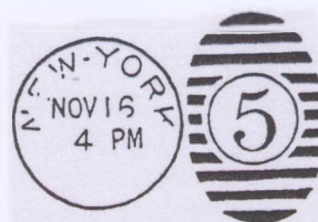


Figure 3.

we'll note that there are two known examples of a New York Leavitt machine cancel, involving an 8-bar ellipse with a "33" in the center, dated 8/27/78 and 1/17/82. The designs of the two accompanying CDSs differ from one another.

Dan is now working on two intriguing 11-bar ellipses used by the NYPO for short periods of time. The Figure 3 cancel has been reported in late 1874 and early 1875. It has the distinction of being the earliest reported manufactured ellipse canceler used in the U.S. The Figure 4 canceler has been noted in 1877 and 1878 and was probably used as a replacement for one of the 9-bar "6" ellipse cancelers. Readers are encouraged to check their collections and report any examples to Dan at drichards14@carolina.rr.com or 704.756.0933. It would be of considerable interest to get a more complete picture of the use of these cancels.

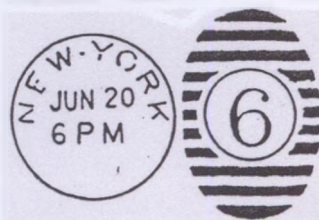


Figure 4.

What Happened Here?

by Roger D. Curran

Figure 1 shows a well-struck Boston large negative cancel in the collection of Peter Miselis. Only thing is, of course, the lack of a stamp being canceled. There are no markings on the back of this cover which is addressed to Needham, MA. I am quite certain that the cancel and postmark are genuine. Several possible explanations are offered below, none of which seems very likely. First, perhaps the Boston postal clerk overlooked the fact that no stamp was present and the cover simply "slipped through." And maybe the Needham post office assumed the letter was somehow paid and thus allowed delivery. A second scenario would have the postmark/cancel applied as a favor with the cover handed back to the person making the request. A third possibility is that the carrier returned the letter to the sender to obtain the postage, but the sender decided not to mail the letter and the cover was given back to the sender. The lack of a received marking is consistent with explanations two and three. A fourth possibility,



Figure 1.

**Figure 2.**

at least as improbable as the others, is that a cash payment was accepted, notwithstanding the fact that this violated procedure. I don't recall ever seeing a cash payment reflected on an 1880s cover. Comments from readers on the handling of this cover are eagerly sought.

Figure 2 shows how a cover mailed without postage should have been handled. Like the Boston cover, this New York cover was postmarked in the upper right corner to show when it entered the mails. However, it was then struck with a Station F "HELD FOR POSTAGE" marking. When postage was received one day later on June 4, the stamp was canceled by the New York duplex and the "HELD FOR POSTAGE" was struck over (canceled, we might say) by a Station F double oval.

The cover is addressed to a William Burgess, in care of another person, in San Francisco. The unusual envelope has numerous stars printed in a sparkling silver ink. The enclosure is present and is a plain sheet with no stars. It is a letter to "My dear Willie" from his mother expressing considerable concern for his health and impatience at hearing nothing. She states that she knows he is now in San Francisco and assumes he is with "Aunt Sarah." She said she thought someone would have telegraphed her about his condition. After about 15 lines, and in a second note added two days later, she begins with "not a word from Cal." And concludes:

"My dear child I can only pray and hope this will find you greatly improved."

One can understand how a rather distraught mother might have forgotten a stamp in her haste to mail such a letter, after deciding to wait no longer for some communication.

Small Ellipses

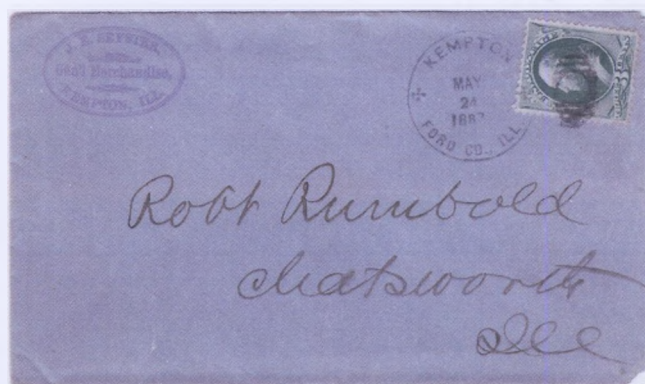
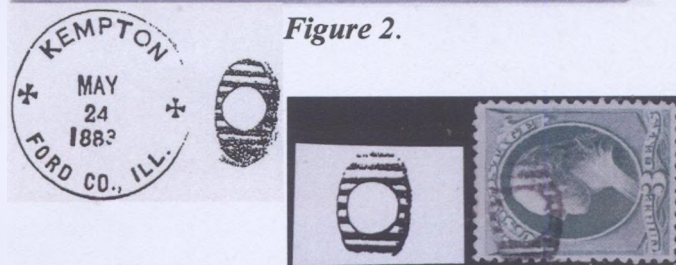
Gilbert Burr illustrated the Figure 1 ellipse and said this about it:¹

"The . . . small ellipse with the letter "P" is one of the most unusual items that I have ever found, and is the only one of this one that I have seen. It is printed in blue ink on an early printing of the 3¢ greens, and I especially wish that if other copies exist, that they will be reported, or any information regarding it."

**Figure 1.**

Cole lists it as EL-148 on page 324 in blue and without attribution. This cancel measures about 16.5 mm top to bottom. Figure 2 shows a similar sized ellipse from Kempton, Illinois but with a void in the central circle. Figure 3 is probably also from Kempton. Who can report other very small ellipses or identify the post office for Figure 1?

On the back of the Figure 2 cover is a Chatsworth, Illinois received marking, a tracing of which is presented in Figure 4. Cole lists the cancel as Lc-16 on page 245 with a 11/7/74 date. Was this style of CDS and killer produced as early as 1874? This duplex has the appearance, especially the CDS, of being struck from a rubber-faced handstamp. Readers who can report dated examples of this duplex are asked to do so.

**Figure 2.****Figure 3.**

Thanks to John
Donnes for all the tracings.

(Endnote)

1 Burr, Gilbert M.
"Standardized Hand Stamp
Cancellations on the Bank
Note Issues" *The American
Philatelist*, May 1935, p.
397.

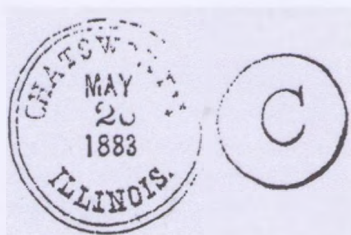


Figure 4.

Superb Strikes, Anyone?

Club member Don Barany submits the cover shown in Figure 1 with a wonderful strike of a most unusual face cancel.



Figure 1.

But what is it? Don refers to it as a "mongoose" as did Richard Frajola in his 1986 sale of the Amos Eno collection which contained two examples of this cancel. Whitfield (#260) termed it a "pumpkin head." This cover, which Don acquired from the Hubert Skinner collection, was sold in a 1993 David G. Phillips auction and was described there as a "cat face." The design is, indeed, difficult to interpret but, whatever was intended, it is a delightfully whimsical creation of the whittler's art. Memphis, NY is located in Onondaga County and was opened in 1860. The cover, a postal stationery entire #U59, was issued in 1864.

The Figure 2 cover resides in the collection of Dan Richards and the cancel is a remarkably intricate design to be

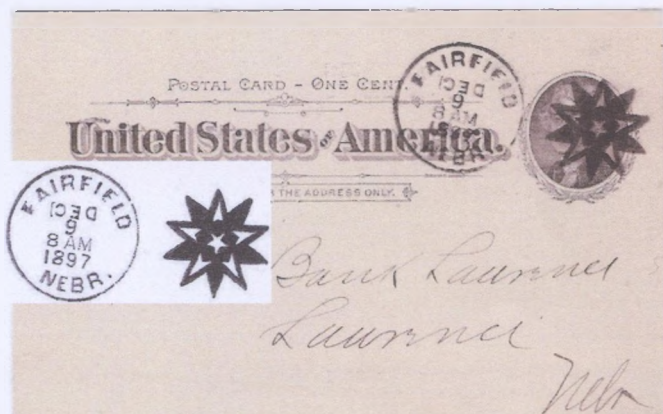


Figure 2.

seen at such a late date. We might call it a hollow star over a pentagon over a second hollow star over a solid star.

Early Ellipse

by Roger D. Curran

The blue cancellation in Figure 1 from Junction City, KS has its place, I believe, in cancellation history for I suspect it is the first ellipse cancel used in the U.S. with a number in the center. Cole lists it as YD-25 in his section on year-dated cancels



Figure 1.



and I agree that "73" surely must refer to "1873." The stamp appears to be a Sc 158. With the vertical sidebars reminiscent of British cancels of the period, I assume the Junction City

postmaster saw at least one such cancel on incoming mail and decided to carve something similar. A typical British cancel of the period is shown in Figure 2.



Cancels with an elliptical shape, but with no number or letter in the center, were used before 1873. While

I can't identify the post office of origin or date of the ellipse in Figure 3, it was in all probability used somewhere during the 1861-68 period. Whitfield #3901 shows what might be considered an ellipse reported on 1861 issue stamps. There is also an ellipse listed by Whitfield (#5641), with a "D" in the center, reported on the 1861 issue. (See Figure 4.) I suspect the year attribution is wrong or is based on a late use of the stamp. A cancel like Figure 4 used during the 1861-68 period would be an extraordinary item.



Figure 3.

Little did the Junction City postmaster realize that within a very few years ellipse cancels with a number in the center would start sweeping the nation. In May 1876, the first regular use of ellipses started in New York City with a set enclosing numbers "1" through "30." These, however, were manufactured in a durable metal which was presumably steel. The Junction City, KS post office is in Geary Co. and opened in 1858.



Figure 4.

Readers who can report other examples of the Junction City "73" cancel or any ellipse cancels before 1873, with or without an enclosed number or letter, are urged to contact the NEWS.

Thanks to John Donnes for the excellent tracing.

Small Boston Negatives

The February 2009 NEWS illustrated and discussed briefly the small Boston negative cancels used just prior to the large Boston negatives which appeared in 1878. We stated that these cancels had only been reported with letters "A" through "H" in the center, although there was a possible "O" as well. Dan Haskett now reports the Figure 1 cover with what looks to be a

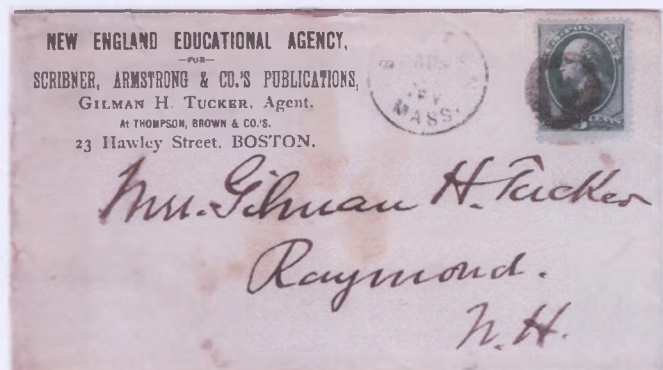


Figure 1.

small negative "P." It made your editor wonder if there are more "out there" to be found, such as "J," "K," and "L," etc. Since a new design deserves a nice tracing and there was an element of uncertainty about the cancel, I asked John Donnes to examine it and make a tracing. Figure 2 is John's result which clarifies the fact

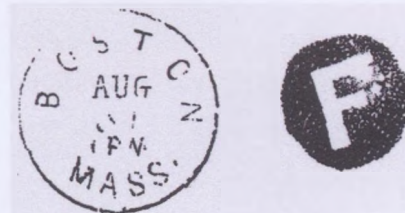


Figure 2.

that it is an "F," especially through bringing out the light traces of ink between and at the ends of the horizontal bars of the "F" on the right side. The initial uncertainty was caused by two aspects that were more

evident to the naked eye – the flat rather than a rounded top, and the rough border of what appeared to be the loop of the "P" connecting the two bars on the right side.

Like the large Boston negatives, some of these small negatives are noted with varied designs created to make similar cancels distinct from one another so that they could be associated with a particular clerk. Examples include cutting down the cancel to a smaller size, cutting off one or more sides, cutting out a wedge, etc. Occasionally the variation was more dramatic such as the delightful example shown in Figure 3, courtesy of Dan. There are surely numerous designs yet to be reported and the NEWS will welcome additional submissions.



Figure 3.

NYFM Update

In response to Weiss TR-S5 cancels discussed on pages 66-7 of the February 2009 NEWS, Dan Haskett has reported the cancel illustrated here as Figure 1. TR-S5 is interesting because it was introduced so late for an NYFM used on routine outgoing first class mail. It has been recorded by Weiss from 10/14-12/7/76. While Dan's cancel is indeed, quite similar to TR-S5, there are design differences. TR-S5 has nine thin "V" wedges resulting in 18 lines or spokes radiating out from the center. As Dan pointed out, his cancel has 20 spokes and includes a single spoke at the 1:30 position and a wedge with three spokes at the 4:00 position. Your editor assumes this is a fake that attempts to match TR-S5. The ink has a very grainy quality which is not seen on NYFMs but is sometimes seen on fake cancels. Also, it is just about a perfectly struck socked-on-the-nose cancel. The stamp is a soft paper which, by itself, rules out TR-S5 unless it was an extraordinarily last usage. Conceivably, it is a genuine cancel from a post office other than New York. Can readers report other examples of the Figure 1 cancel on or off cover?



Figure 1.

Seeing Double

by Roger D. Curran

Figure 1 may appear to show two images of the same stamp. But look closely and you will note that these are two different stamps with the same cancel placed in virtually identical positions on the stamps. The stamp on the right appeared on page 69 of the February 2009 NEWS and resides in the collection of Charles Collins. Soon after the February issue was distributed, Dan Haskett submitted the stamp on the left. Who would have guessed there is a second example that is so similar! It was so surprising that I began to worry about



Figure 1.

possible fakery. But after considering the matter and discussion with several collectors including the two owners, I believe we have two genuine cancels applied by a very conscientious postal clerk. There is no bleeding of ink through to the back of the stamps, the intense black ink is consistent with the black ink used in other New Orleans cancels of the period, and such New Orleans cancels are often struck very completely. Two beautiful examples, each of which would be an asset in any fancy cancel collection.

For Sale: Cancellations, 3 cent 1861

Please send \$3.00 for 3 color and 3 black and white Xeroxes. Abe Boyarsky, PO Box 550, La Mirada, CA 90637-0570

Shield Postmarks

Chris Masters submits the Kentucky covers shown in Figure 1. Although of the same design, the Troy shield is



Figure 1.

considerably larger than the Morton's Gap. Also, the Morton's Gap postmark is not duplexed while the Troy clearly is. The 1990 Doane-Thompson catalog of county and postmaster postmarks lists two county postmarks of this design – Hamburg, CA (1892-4) and Salladasburg, PA (1881-8). The Troy shield is the only listed postmaster shield. Can any reader report the Troy shield as an originating postmark with the concentric circles canceling a stamp, or additional post offices that used this shield design either as an originating or receiving postmark? Has anyone seen an advertisement for these shield postmarks?

Figure 2 shows a somewhat similar shield (Lowell, MI) from the collection of Arthur Beane.



Figure 2.

More on Future Whitfield Update

On page 107 of the August NEWS, it was noted that Wendell Triplett has begun working on a second update to the Whitfield cancellations book that was initially published in 2001.

Wendell's first update appeared in 2007. This article expands on Wendell's plan. He anticipates the next update to appear in 2012, but it will differ considerably from the first one and will be a reissue of the whole book. First, and most importantly, the new information will be incorporated, to the extent possible, in the boxes below the tracings. Any additional cancel information will be listed in a separate section at the end of the book. Second, in a few cases, new images of particular cancels will be substituted where they present more complete or accurate representations. Third, while no general attempt will be made to add unlisted cancels to expand the book's coverage, there are blank spaces on some pages that Wendell would like to fill with new cancels of the same types as reported on those pages. For example, Whitfield pages 1 and 2 have a few spaces calling out for unlisted human figure, face or head cancels. If readers can supply these, we will work to obtain suitable tracings.

If you have any questions or suggestions about this project, or if you have any updates, please contact Wendell at triplettusa@yahoo.com or 3606 New Colony Drive, Wilmington, NC 28412-2075. The Whitfield book has been very popular and this current project will undoubtedly lead to making this important reference even better. Please keep the project in mind and help out when you can. And remember, beyond adding post offices of origin, we also seek information on dates of use, ink colors, postmaster names, Scott numbers of canceled stamps, etc.

Cash Paid! (Immediately!)

For United States Covers, Correspondences & Postal History

IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THESE U.S. COVERS, SEND THEM TO ME FOR MY IMMEDIATE OFFER AND INSTANT CHECK: Stampless/Classic covers, Paquebots/Maritime, Letters and Correspondences, all kinds of U.S. Military Mail, Registered/Censored, Airmails, Zeppelins, Balloons, Officials, Navals, APOs, Possessions, Territorials, Expedition mail, Locals/Confederates, Used postal stationery, Arctic & Antarctic, Civil War, World Wars I and II, Postcard lots (pre-1945)...and please: No FDCs or stamps.

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Phone: (631) 261-6600 (24 hours)

Fax: (631) 261-7744 • E-Mail: fred@fredschmitt.com