

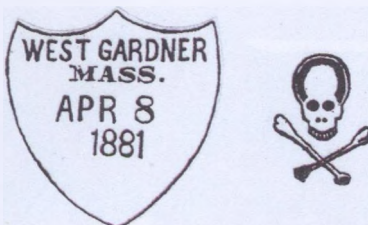


U.S. Cancellation Club **NEWS**

Vol. 30, No. 1, Whole No. 274, February 2010

West Gardner Shield

The August 2009 *NEWS* discussed briefly a well-known skull and crossbones cancel that is sometimes referred to as a "laughing skull." Various post offices used it in the 1880s but the one that is primarily associated with the cancel is West Gardner, MA. There are probably two reasons for this. First, it was used there for more than a year – the 2007 Whitfield book update reports a date range of 5/3/80-8/4/81. The second and perhaps more important factor is that it was associated with a fancy shield postmark. Whitfield tracings of the postmark and cancel are shown in Figure 1. It is assumed that these are duplexed markings.



But how many of us knew that the West Gardner shield was also used with two other cancels? Jim Kesterson submits examples (Figure 2) with a negative star in solid circle killer dated 7/13/82 and with a target killer, consisting of two rings plus bulls eye, dated 4/7/84. West Gardner is a DPO that operated from only 1880 to 1900.



Figure 2.

Dear Reader,

Greetings to all as we begin a new year in earnest. Who knows what philatelic breakthroughs await collectors in 2010. What a pleasant prospect to contemplate!

I want to take this opportunity to give thanks for all the support that is rendered to the *NEWS*. In issue after issue the response of readers is extensive. It is remarkable to me how consistently readers are able and willing to submit new information and insights about cancellations that appear in these pages. And in this issue we may have reached a high watermark in terms of authors – five in addition to your editor. Such participation adds an invaluable breadth of perspective and subject matter knowledge. Please know that your efforts are greatly appreciated by me and, more importantly, the readership at large.

An article herein by Roger Rhoads presents a bibliography on U.S. cancellations and related matters. A desirable companion to this would be a listing of auction sale catalogs that have important showings of U.S. cancels. There have been, of course, some wonderful sales over the years that contain much information of interest and value to collectors. At some point in the near future, the *NEWS* will publish such a list and I appeal to readers who already have such information to submit it to the *NEWS* so that we can make as complete a presentation as possible.

The last issue contained an appeal for a volunteer to work on an index for the *NEWS*. I am pleased to report that Judson Sartain has stepped forward and agreed to do so. Thanks to Judson for his willingness to help out with this much-needed undertaking.

Roger Curran

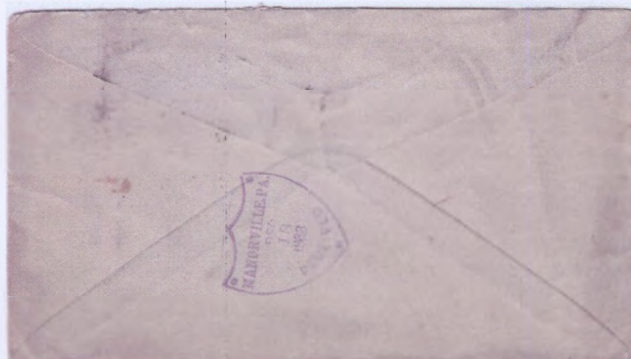


Figure 3.

As a related item, Jim also reports a similar shield design (Figure 3) used as a received marking from Manorville, PA dated 12/18/88. This shield has three corner dots that a viewer might liken to rivets used to attach metal plates to plaques, building walls, etc.

F. P. Hammond & Co. advertised a shield with "rivets" or screw heads similar to the Manorville shield, but with an additional "rivet" in the middle. See the Figure 4 ad which appeared in the January 1884 *Postal Guide*.

LOOK OVER THIS PAGE OF
NEW STYLES FOR MONEY-ORDER BUSINESS.

The above style of date for only \$2.00, all complete with any die wanted. Remember: we can furnish anything made in the United States. If you don't see what you want, describe it, and we will furnish at lowest price.

This elegant stamp complete for \$5.00
The very best in use.

Ribbon Machine Stamp. We furnish the best kind made; a splendid stamp with solid brass die and brass wheels, with dates for 10 years, months, and days. We can refer you to hundreds of Postmasters who have purchased from us, as to its good qualities. Price \$8.00 by express, by registered mail only \$8.75.

All goods sent by mail post-paid, unless otherwise stated in description given.

Manufactured by F. P. HAMMOND & CO., Aurora, Illinois.

Figure 4.

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.)

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"running man"



The Three Collinsville Axes

By

W.J. Duffney



In 1826, twenty-four year old Samuel W. Collins, his younger brother David, and their cousin William Wells joined in partnership to establish The Collins Company in Canton, Connecticut. Each of them invested \$5,000 in the venture. The sawmill and gristmill site that they purchased offered excellent access to water power as it was along the east bank of the Farmington River near the junction of the Albany and Litchfield Turnpikes. It was originally built by Captain Fred Humphrey in 1805. They began producing high quality axes at a time when they were greatly needed throughout the expanding, yet still predominately rural, United States. Eventually their product line grew to include axes, machetes, hatchets, picks, knives, swords and bayonets. It became one of the legendary early American manufacturing success stories. The return on their original nest egg was in the millions.

They started out with just eight workmen, but that increased to 300 by 1832. The pay was twelve to sixteen dollars a month for a twelve hour day, six days a week. While they clearly preferred hiring blacksmiths, the demand for workers required that they employ and train unskilled local farmhands. Samuel Collins had a policy of not hiring foreigners. This in itself created problems when in the summer the "Yankees" disappeared, preferring to stay home to do their own farm work. To combat this situation the Collins Company increased pay during the summer months.

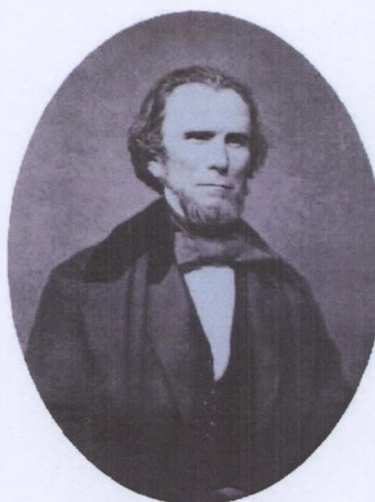
The manufacturing process was divided into four steps: forging, grinding, tempering, and polishing. Individual workers performed only one operation. It was soon obvious

that grinding was the most hazardous station. The particles that the men inhaled led quickly to the progressive lung disease silicosis, and death. Wetting the large stone grinding wheels did not help much; grinders were dying in their twenties and early thirties.

This did not go unnoticed by the Yankees who eventually refused to do the grinding. Management knew, too. In a letter to his brother, Samuel Collins wrote, "Encourage stout men to come on, I want to see our gang improved in muscle — I want to hire 3 stout fellows to grind nights *as long as they live*." (author's emphasis) He began reluctantly recruiting the newly arriving poor Irish, who were escaping certain starvation in their homeland, to do the job.

There is a bright spot in all this, however, in an outstanding employee, Elisha K. Root, an intellectually gifted machinist-inventor who became superintendent of the Collins Company. When production fell because even the Irish became wary of the grinding, Root invented an

alternate shaving process in about 1845. Samuel Collins wrote, "Mr. Root invented a process for shaving the axes as a substitute for grinding but it was not put into operation in time to aide us much this year." Most significantly, while at the Collins Company, Root is credited with the invention of the die casting process. Much to Samuel Collins's chagrin, this prized superintendent was "hired away" by Hartford's famous firearms manufacturer Samuel Colt in 1849. After Colt's death, Root became President of Colt's Arms Company.



S. W. Collins

The Post Office

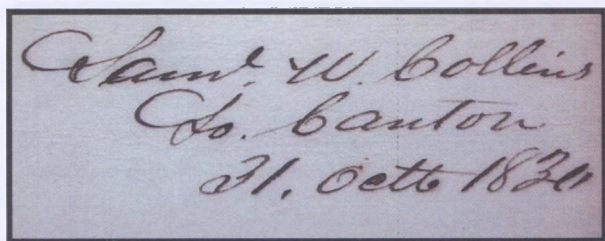
Mail communication was obviously critical to the success of a firm that intended to sell its goods wholesale throughout the country and beyond. In his memoirs, Samuel Collins wrote:

1828 — Contracted with Oliver Couch to take his four-horse stage off the Albany Turnpike and run through Collinsville to Farmington and Hartford, and so got a post office established at Collinsville. There was a great rush to see the stage as there was to see the railroad cars when they first reached here in 1850.

The largest surviving stampless correspondence of Collinsville was between Samuel and brother David in the firm's Hartford office. Any stampless letters written between 1828 and the establishment of the post office without a postmark must have traveled on the Oliver Couch Stage.

This informal mail service continued for three years until the Collins mail volume increased to a point where it was decided to apply for an official post office. The effort was successful, but Samuel Collins was disappointed in the choice of the name.

The Collins Company was located in Canton, in an area in the southern part of that township, to be exact. Samuel Collins had been datelining his letters as 'South Canton' and he had also been receiving letters directed to that non-existing office. He assumed that the new post office would be named as such, even though he preferred, "Collinsford, like Torrington and Ashford, which are good Saxon names."



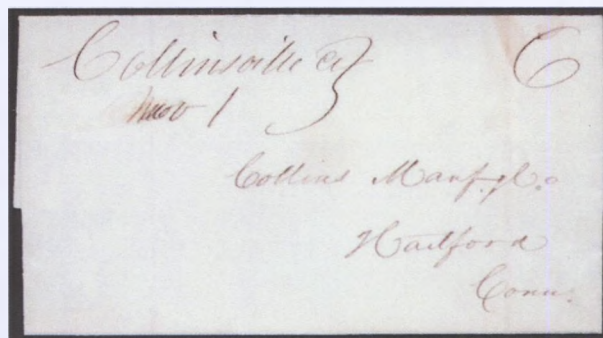
'South Canton' dateline on the back of an October 31, 1830 folded letter written by Samuel W. Collins (Canton Historical Museum)

At the time there was considerable concern voiced, led by a former Canton Postmaster, that naming the new post office 'South Canton' would lead to confusion in the direction of letters with the already existing offices of 'Canton' and 'North Canton'. Collins was left out of the decision. He wrote:

It may be supposed by some that the village was named 'Collinsville' by me or at my suggestion but that is not so. The name has always been distasteful to me and my family. If I had been consulted and consented to have my name used it would not have had any 'ville' attached to it or been Frenchified at all.

With the support of the local leaders, it was decided that the new office would be named 'Collinsville'. It opened on October 8, 1831, with Charles Mygatt as its first postmaster, and was located in the company plough shop because the office building had run out of space.

There was clearly a special relationship between the Collins firm and the new post office. After all, it had been established to serve the axe factory and its workers, who were living in the small village developing around the factory. The choice of location for the post office demonstrates this relationship. Also, many of the stampless folded letters have both manuscript postmarks and addresses apparently written in the hand of Samuel Collins rather than that of the officially appointed postmaster. There appears, however, to have been no attempt at avoiding postage rates.



Collinsville November 1, 1842 manuscript postmark apparently in the hand of Samuel Collins

The Early Handstamp

Even more obvious is the first handstamp used by the new post office, well-known 'Collinsville Large Axe'. The postmark has COLLINSVILLE in an arc within the blade of a fancy frame based on the design of a broad axe head which was being manufactured by Collins. The postmark measures 31.5 mm wide and 32.5 mm in height. It is one of the first advertising postmarks used in the United States. Compiling a census of Collinsville postmark examples yields a few interesting points.

The earliest Collinsville Large Axe postmark recorded by this study is dated May 15, 1832, but certainly was used prior to that. It was struck in black ink on folded letters until late 1840 when red ink began to be used during the tenure of Postmaster Stephen H. Brown. A total of thirty black ink examples have been recorded, but only four examples in red ink were found (1840-1841).

A Late Use

There is a considerable gap in the census before we find the next Collinsville Large Axe postmark. It is on an envelope and is the only example currently recorded used in



Collinsville June 2, 1832 — early stampless period Large Axe postmark to Windham.

conjunction with an adhesive. The stamp is a 3¢ 1857 Scott # 25 which is cancelled by a 'PAID' in an arc over '3' rate handstamp. Another unusual, and possibly unique, feature is that the well-struck Collinsville postmark has '31 OCT' in type within the upper mortise sections of the device. It is possible that they were added using a separate handstamp. This must be considered a very uncommon late use of the Large Axe since we know that ordinary 28mm, 30mm, or 32mm COLLINSVILLE/CT. circle date handstamps were in use during the 1850s. The cover, addressed to North Guilford, has received a Philatelic Foundation Certificate stating that it is a genuine use.

Fancy Hatchet Cancellation

A fancy cancellation usually referred to as the 'Collinsville Small Axe' also makes an appearance. Not many dated examples survive. It was found obliterating the following:

Scott 3¢ #11 1851 (1 example), #26 1857 (4), #64b 1861 (1), #65 1861 (8), and U35 Pink on Buff PSE 1861 (2). Based on the issue dates of the stamps, we can at least establish the general period of use as the 1850s-1860s. Virtually all are found used in conjunction with the aforementioned COLLINSVILLE/CT. style cds. The design is again based on the same Collins Company pattern. It is illustrated and listed as a Broad Head "Hatchet" in a Collins catalogue, therefore, we should more properly call the fancy cancel *The Collinsville Hatchet*.

Large Axe II

The Canton Historical Museum, which is located in one of the old Collins Company buildings on Front Street in Collinsville, has an item on display that is purported to be "the original Collinsville Axe Die Hand Stamp used 1833-40 on Stampless Covers." — At least that is the claim that



Black 32mm COLLINSVILLE/CT. Apr 2, NYD CDS, with Hatchet fancy cancellation tying Sc #11 (Roger Curran Collection)



Black 32mm COLLINSVILLE/CT. Nov 14, NYD CDS, with Hatchet fancy cancellation tying Sc #65

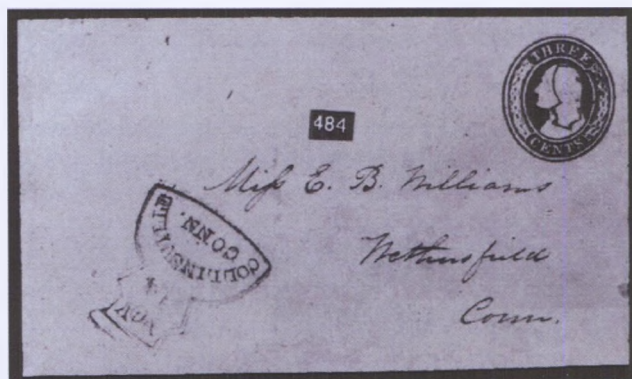
the Farmington Valley Stamp Club had printed on its cachet for National Stamp Collecting Week of November 13-18, 1950, and again on their FARVEX 1964 25th Anniversary Stamp Show souvenir cover and post card. Unfortunately, this is incorrect. Placed in a side by side comparison the differences between the markings are obvious. You have to wonder why club members didn't take a closer look themselves. Perhaps someone did.

The first axe townmark and the museum handstamp (presently without a handle) have similar designs, but are not identical: the axe framelines and letter alignments are clearly not the same. The early period townmark uses manuscript day and month at the top; the other uses metal type. Although measurements usually depend upon who is wielding the ruler, the difference here is too great to ignore: museum handstamp - height 35.5mm, width 31mm; known first axe townmark - height 32.5mm, width 31mm. Having pointed all of that out, the plot thickens...

The Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries Sale #575, held February 18-20, 1981, included a key item relative to this subject, lot #484. It is important because it bears two different Collinsville axes: The entire is cancelled by a Collinsville Hatchet and the Canton Historical Museum's Large Axe postmark is struck on the left. The lot realized \$800. The description reads:

3¢ Red on Buff Entire, Die 5 (U10). Clear Fancy Axehead cancel (11x13.5mm), matching Fancy "Collinsville, Conn. Nov. 14" Axehead pmk. (32x33) addressed to Wethersfield, Conn., V.F., Only Known Example.

Finding the axes used together helps establish that the Large Axe II might have been used during the 1850s-60s. The issue date for the U10 is 1854, and we know that the Hatchet cancel was used during that time period. Of course, that is assuming that the Large Axe II is a genuine use. It is difficult at best to attempt authenticate an item from an old black and white photograph. Until scrutinized by a panel of philatelic experts, a definitive opinion is not possible. The Philatelic Foundation does not have a record of this item in its files of submissions.



Collinsville November 14, NYD — 3¢ U10, the only known example of the Large Axe II used in the 19th Century (R. A. Siegel Auction Galleries)



Collinsville October 31, NYD — Latest recorded Large Axe postmark (with integral month and day in type) and also the only known example used with an adhesive (Sc #25)



Side by Side Comparison —

Collinsville Large Axe Postmark (left); the later Large Axe II Postmark (right)

More on Boston Cancel

At the top of page 85 of the May 2009 *NEWS*, an unlisted large Boston negative cancel was shown. Unfortunately it was not a full strike as the killer extended beyond the underlying postal card in two areas. Thanks to Dan Haskett, who submitted the Figure 1 cover, we can now illustrate the full design and designate



Figure 1.

the cancel as S-D-2. This listing number derives from our Phase 2 Progress Report (August 2004) which reported previously unlisted Boston negative cancels that had been altered in some way. The cancel in the earlier article was dated October 28, 1879.

Thanks to John Donnes for the tracing.

Postal Markings on a Reply Card from St. Helena

Len McMaster

I acquired the reply postal card shown in Figure 1 along with several similar reply cards that the addressee, Edward P. Lyons, Jr., sent to different foreign post offices requesting information on stamps available for sale. All the others were up-rated with the 1898 1¢ Franklin (Scott No. 279) to make up the 2¢ UPU foreign post card rate, and were cancelled by the foreign

post office in returning them to the addressee. Wawrukiewicz & Beecher note that “the prepayment of the reply half of a paid postal reply card by means of the postage stamp of the country which had issued the card was valid” if the card was delivered to a destination in the issuing country [ref.1], which is true for all of the reply cards. However, this is the only reply card that was assessed postage due, which raises several questions about what rate the post office staff thought was appropriate, and whether the up-rating stamp was in fact attached to the reply card when it arrived in St. Helena, or possibly added later to partially pay the postage due.

The reply card was postmarked by the St. Helena post office June 8th 1898, but the cds does not touch either the postal indicium or the postage stamp. However, we know that the up-rating 1898 1¢ Franklin was canceled in St. Helena, because of the unique cancel used, i.e., the up-rating stamp was in fact on the reply card when it arrived in St. Helena. Figure 2 shows a St. Helena stamp cancelled by the same cork cancel (note the irregular shape of one of the inner triangles in both photos). Proud lists the cancel as type K82 in use between May 17 and August 27 1898 [ref.2] consistent with Mr. Lyons having added this stamp to all of the reply cards he sent to foreign post offices, and St. Helena canceling the stamp July 8, 1898.



Figure 2.

Since the correct UPU rate of 2¢ was prepaid, this leaves the question of why the short-paid markings were added. The rules for short paid mail were complex for the postal employees having to apply the rules. The statutes of the 1878 International Congress stated that “in the case of insufficient prepayment, articles of correspondence of all kinds were liable to a charge equal to double the amount of the deficiency, to be paid by the addressee ... that is, the amount prepaid was first subtracted from the ... rate, and the short paid amount was then doubled” [ref.3]. The statutes of the 1891 UPU Convention indicated that if the reply postal card was not fully paid, “it was subject to the rate applicable to unpaid letters” [ref.4]. The statutes of the 1897 UPU Congress, which didn’t become effective until January 1st 1899 (after this card was received), stated that if the reply postal card was not fully paid, “it was treated as an unpaid post card” [ref.5].

From the markings it is obvious that the post office staff was uncertain how to handle this postal card. The purple box in which the card is rated 20 centimes (4¢) due, later changed to 15 centimes (3¢), is a St. Helena post office marking, Proud type UP2 [ref.6], but neither of these due amounts are consistent with any UPU regulations. The postal card went through the New York Foreign Office July 6th 1898, as indicated by the circular date stamp, on its way back to Richmond. The “collect 2 cents postage” marking is one that was used by U.S. post offices serving as exchange offices for foreign mail during this period and was added to the card in New York [ref.7]. However, in spite of the 15 centimes short-paid marking, only 2¢ due was noted, suggesting the New York post office staff realized that 3¢ was incorrect



Fig. 1. UY1r used from St. Helena to Richmond, Virginia

and interpreted the postage due as double the 1¢ short payment, possibly based on the mistaken assumption that the up-rating stamp had been previously used or otherwise not accepted. The 2¢ postage due stamp (Scott No. J39) was added and cancelled with the purple "dot" in Richmond to account for the money collected upon delivery of the card to Mr. Lyons. [ref.7]

In summary, since it appears the 1¢ Franklin stamp was on the postal card when it arrived in St. Helena to make up the correct 2¢ UPU reply card rate, the addition of the short-paid markings and postage due stamp were simply a misunderstanding of either the UPU regulations or the fact that the up-rating stamp was a legitimate use.

References

1. Wawrukiewicz, Anthony S, and Henry W. Beecher, *U.S. International Postal Rates, 1872-1996*, Cama Publishing Company, Portland, Oregon, 1996, p.81
2. Proud, Edward B., *The Postal History of Ascension, St Helena & Tristan da Cunha*, Proud-Bailey Co. Ltd., Heathfield, East Sussex, 2005, p. 153
3. Wawrukiewicz, Anthony S, and Henry W. Beecher, *U.S. International Postal Rates, 1872-1996* Cama Publishing Company, Portland, Oregon, 1996, p.254
4. *ibid.*, p.81
5. *ibid.*, p.81
6. Proud, Edward B., *The Postal History of Ascension, St Helena & Tristan da Cunha*, Proud-Bailey Co. Ltd., Heathfield, East Sussex, 2005, p159
7. Berthelot, Hank and John Donnes, Private communication, November 2, 2009

Note: This article is based on a similar article appearing in *Cameo*, the West Africa Study Circle journal. (McMaster, Len, "US Reply Card Postmarked in St. Helena" *Cameo*, Vol. 11, No. 3, October 2009, page 196-198)

Another New Waterbury, CT Leaf and More

by Roger D. Curran

The front page of the November 2009 *NEWS* presented an unlisted Waterbury leaf cancel from the collection of Dan Haskett. Ron Pascale now reports another leaf, unlisted in Rohloff, that is apparently from Waterbury. See Figure 1. It has a 2008 PF certificate stating the opinion that it is a genuine maple leaf cancel from Waterbury, but makes no mention of a Rohloff designation. Ron points out that the cancel is similar to Rohloff L-6¹ (Figure 2) but differs in significant ways. L-6 is reported by Rohloff on 1869 issue stamps and the Figure 1 stamp is a Sc 65. Although not listed in Rohloff, it is interesting to note that a cancel of very similar shape (Figure 3), attributed to Waterbury, is listed on page 162 of the Skinner-Eno book as PP-L48, albeit of



Figure 1.

a slightly smaller size. The Skinner-Eno tracings, incidentally, are said by the authors (page 20) to be actual size. Skinner and Eno report this cancel, on cover, on 1869 issue stamps. It could be, of course, that Figure 1 represents a late use of the stamp. Given the shape similarities between the Figures 1



Figure 3.

and 3 cancels, I'm inclined to think they are the same cancel. Ron believes they are different, however, because the veins in the Skinner-Eno leaf at the top, branching to the left and right, are not as dramatic as in Figure 1 and because the overall size is smaller. Comments and reports of other examples are solicited.



Figure 2.



Figure 4.

Ron also reports the intriguing and unlisted cancel from Burnside, CT shown here as Figure 4. The cover has hand written notation "U35" which refers to the Scott number of an 1861 issue postal stationery entire. It is quite interesting how closely the size and shape of the killer correspond to that of the 3¢ pink indicium. Could it be that it was prepared with that in mind? Certainly the post office applied it with considerable care to ensure a thorough cancel. I don't recall ever seeing a cancel before that parallels so closely the dimensions of an indicium. Comments and reports of other examples are solicited.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Rohloff, Paul C. *The Waterbury Cancellations 1865-1890*, Collectors Club of Chicago (1979), p. 135.

Cancellation Gallery

The cancellations below are from the collection of Mike Ewen and we'll single out three for comment here. The pair in the top row bears two strikes of the St. Louis "eagle" cancel. The strike on the left shows very nicely not only the negative "eye" but also the downward curve of the beak which your editor doesn't recall seeing in other strikes or tracings. All in all, a very regal eagle, indeed! And what material was used to make the killer, creating the dotted impression, remains an interesting question. The star in the second row is a Glen Allen, VA precancel star, but not clearly, this is the beveled star, reported only on Sc 206, and 1, but the tracing is not that of a Glen Allen star, which is on a 90¢ stamp, as appears in the bottom row.



Figure 1.



Cancellation Gallery

The cancellations below constitute a third installment to appear in these pages of examples from the collection of Charles Collins. The five bold strikes in the second row are as nice a group as one could reasonably expect to find on the Sc 210 stamp.



Cancellation References

by Roger R. Rhoads

In the fall 1997 issue (whole no. 225) of the *USCC NEWS* my article on fancy cancel pricing included a list of reference books for the collector. Now, in the 2007 update to the Kenneth Whitfield book on 19th century cancellations, Wendell Triplett has included an even broader bibliography that should be of distinct value to every fancy cancel collector. I've attempted to broaden this subject even further by categorizing them by era, state, city and just plain good background reference. If I've missed any important ones, please let me know.

By Era

- *Simpson's *U.S. Postal Markings, 1851-61*, Thomas Alexander, 2nd ed., 1979
- **U.S. Cancellations, 1845-69*, Skinner and Eno, 1980
- The PAID Markings on the 3¢ Cent U.S. Stamp of 1861*, George Linn, 1955
- **Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era, 1870-1894*, James Cole, 1995
- **The US Two Cent Red Brown of 1883-87*, Edward Willard, 1970
- ***Cancellations Found on 19th Century U.S. Stamps*, Kenneth Whitfield, 2002, rev. 2007
- **19th Century U.S. Fancy Cancellations*, Billings Philatelic

Handbook #33, 1972 (the updated Herst-Sampson book)

**U.S. Cancels, 1890-1900*, Sol Salkind, 1985

**20th Century U.S. Fancy Cancellations*, Loso and DeWindt, 1987

The Complete Pricing Guide of United States 20th Century

Fancy Cancellations, William Weiss, 1987

Those titles in **bold** are, in the author's opinion, the best general references for the era.

By State

**Arizona Territorial Postmark Catalog*, 4th ed., Owen Kriege, 1985

**California Towns Postmarks, 1849-1935*, John Williams, 1997

Colorado Territory and Pre-Territorial Postmarks, Jarrett, 1976

**Connecticut Post Offices and Postmarks*, Arthur Warmesley, 1977

**Illinois 19th Century Cancels*, Richard Russell, compiler, 1984
Doane Cancels of Illinois and Nebraska, Mehrer, 1995

**Postal History of Indiana*, Vols 1 and 2, David Baker, 1976

Maine Postal History and Postmarks, Sterling Dow, 1943

Maryland Postal History and Handstamped Markings of the Stampless Period, Homer Kendall, 1984

Montana Territorial Postmarks, Shellen and Dunn, 2003

Stars of New York State, Edited by Dave Proulx, 1987

Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina, Vol. I-IV,
North Carolina Postal History Society, 1987

The Postal History of Vermont, Slawson, Bingham, and Drenan,
Collectors Club of NY 1969

19th Century Fancy Cancellations of Wisconsin, Wisconsin
Postal History Society, 1987

**Highlights from a Collection of Massachusetts, Fancy Cancels
1855-1895*, Arthur Beane, a single-frame exhibit from the
1998 PNSE show

By City

**Boston Postmarks to 1890*, Blake and Davis, 1974 reprint

Chicago Postal Markings and Postal History, Leonard
Piskiewicz, 2006

Chicago Blue Postal Markings, 1870-77, Paul Berg, 1992

Illustrated Postal History - Chillicothe, Ohio, Brust, 1999

19th Century Cleveland, Ohio Postal Markings, Thomas Allen,
editor 1991

Postal History of Louisville, Kentucky, Louis Cohen, 1987***

The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City 1870-1878,
William Weiss, 1990

**A Catalog of Philadelphia Postmarks, 18th Century to the
Present*, Vol. 1-3, Tom Clarke, 1990-1992

*Providence, RI Postal Markings and Cancellations before the
Twentieth Century*, Smith 1960

San Francisco Postal Markings, 1847-1900, John Mahoney,
1992***

Washington, D.C. Machine Cancels, Robert Payne, 2006 (only
30 copies printed)

**The Waterbury Cancellations, 1865-90*, Paul Rohloff, 1979

Past issues of the USCC NEWS have also featured lengthy
articles on the cancellations of New York City, Pittsburgh
and Providence, RI.

Specialized

**U.S. Route and Station Agent Postmarks*, Charles Towle, 1986

Silent Precancels, David Smith, 2004

Postal History and Usage of 1907 and Earlier Precancels,
Charles Souder, 1989

**Walter D. Wesson's "Time on Bottom" Duplex Hand Cancels*,
Theodore Bozarth, 1990***

Catalog of U.S. County & Postmaster Postmarks, Kenneth
Gilman, 1990

Thomas Leavitt, His History and Postal Markings, 1875-1892,
Robert Payne, 2000

**Encyclopedia of RFD Cancels*, Harold Richow, 1983

**Railroad Postmarks of the United States*, Towle and Meyer,
1968

*Postage Dues: the U.S. Large Numeral Postage Due Stamps,
1879-1894*, George Arken, 1991

Background

**Philatelic Foundation Seminar Series #3*, Scott Trepel, editor,
1992

United States Postal History Sampler, Richard Graham, 1992

The US 1¢ Franklin, 1961-67, Donald Evans, 1997

**Cyclopedia of US Postmarks and Postal History*, Delf Norona,
1975 reprint of 1933 (old but useful)

The United States 1847 Issue - A Cover Census, Thomas
Alexander, 2001

*The 1851 Issue of the U.S. Stamps: A Sesquicentennial
Retrospective*, Skinner and Petersen, editors, 2006

A Guide to 19th Century U.S. Postmarks and Cancellations,
Kenneth Gilman, 1989

*Available from the USCC Library

**Published by the USCC and available from Roger Curran for
\$52 postpaid

****La Posta Monograph Series* available to subscribers only at
time of publication.

Don't forget the back issues of the *U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS*. Our house organ goes back to 1951, and an index is available from the Library published in 1973 that covers the first 10 volumes of the *NEWS* and forerunner *Quarterly*. Hopefully in the relatively near future we will have an up-to-date index.

Members of the American Philatelic Society, of course, have access to an outstanding lending library - The American Philatelic Research Library (APRL).

The next question is that if you don't have and wish a copy of any of these, where do you go to buy one? Two very good sources for philatelic literature are as follows. The first is Jim Lee, a member and big booster of our club. His website can be viewed at www.jameslee.com. The second is Leonard Hartmann at www.pbbooks.com. Jim and Leonard have been around a long time and deserve your business.

For Sale: Cancellations, 3 cent 1861. Please send \$3.00 for 3 color and 3 black and white photocopies. Abe Boyarsky, P.O. Box 570, La Mirada, CA 90637-0570

Another New York "33" Ellipse

by Roger D. Curran

Fifty-seven years ago Gilbert Burr reported in these pages that, after many years of collecting, he came across a first example of a New York City 9-bar ellipse with a "33" in the center. In the 11/09 NEWS, Dan Richards reported a second New York "33," this on a 6¢ Banknote. Christopher Perry now submits a third example – see Figure 1. Although there is not enough of the CDS present to confirm New York, I have no doubt but what this is a New York "33." No other U.S. post office is reported to have used a "33" in an ellipse that looks like this.



Figure 1.

New York ellipse numbers "1" through "30" were used initially. They were introduced in May 1876. In 1878 or later, numbers "31" and "32" were added. These two numbers are, therefore, less commonly seen on 3¢ greens. A dramatic change in the use of New York ellipses occurred in October 1883. Apparently, the specific date was October 1, a Monday, which coincided with the issuance of the Sc 210 stamp. No longer were odd numbers above "23" used. Indeed, I have never seen or seen reported any uses of a New York ellipse with an odd number above "23" on the Sc 210 stamp. At the same time it discontinued use of odd numbers above "23", the NYPO extended the sequence of even numbers which ultimately reached as high as "52" on the Sc 210 stamp. I suspect the highest numbers, perhaps "48" and up, were introduced later than the other even numbers above "32." Very occasionally, collectors see 3¢ greens canceled by New York 9-bar ellipses with even numbers above "32," but such examples, in my experience, are very scarce, bordering on rare. I assume they all represent late uses of the 3¢ green stamp. If readers can report such cancels, please contact the NEWS.

Why the New York "33" was used so sparingly is an interesting question. We know from the Burr example, which is dated November 1, 1879, that the "33" was introduced long before the odd numbers above "23" were discontinued.

Fancy "B" Cancel

New Club member Bill Strauss is looking for information on the old English "B" cancel illustrated in Figure 1. We have not seen this remarkable cancel in the literature. Can any reader identify the post office of origin or even report additional examples off cover?



Figure 1.

More on North Boscawen Cancels

The front page of the 11/09 NEWS illustrated a cancel from North Boscawen, NH consisting of a small circle enclosing the word "PAID." Also known from this post office is a blank circle cancel and a circle cancel enclosing "JUL" which is assumed to represent "July." All three circles appear to be the same size. Speculation was offered that these three might be part of a larger set of cancels, possibly produced from handstamps designed for use on business forms.



Figure 1.

Wendell Triplett now reports that lot 78 of the December 2004 Harmer Schau sale was the North Boscawen cover shown here as Figure 1. The cancel consists of the small circle enclosing "JUN" and the cover is postmarked June 11, 1884. Who can add further to this set of cancels?

New York "PAID ALL" on Postal Card to Germany

by Alex Gundel

Information about an intriguing postal card is presented herewith. The card is a UX3 (small watermark, subject plate number 30, early printing) addressed to Oppenheimer & Schloss, Frankfurt on Main, Germany (Figure 1). The Frankfurt address book shows that the recipients Oppenheimer and Schloss were merchants residing at Schnurgasse 1 in the historical center of Frankfurt/Main.



Figure 1.

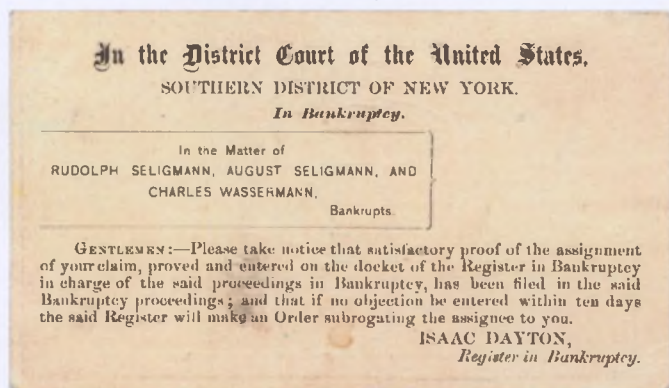


Figure 2.

The card was mailed by the District Court of the United States, Southern District of New York "In the Matter of RUDOLPH SELIGMANN, AUGUST SELIGMANN, AND CHARLES WASSERMAN, Bankrupts" (Figure 2). Oppenheimer and Schloss were creditors of the bankrupts and had filed claims. The note announces "an Order subrogating the assignee to" Oppenheimer and Schloss if no objection is entered within ten days.

The card was postmarked by a one-line "PAID ALL" and does not show additional franking or a killer. And it is undated. Two questions immediately present themselves. When was the card mailed? Under which postage rate was the card mailed?

The official nature of the card allowed for searching archives with the aim to find out a possible date of usage. In addition, there are two relevant postal history dates to consider. The earliest date of usage of a card with a small watermark is June 6, 1873. A 2¢ postal card rate to the Austrian-German Postal Union became effective on December 1, 1873.

An internet search of the *New York Times* archive led to the first results. The *NYT* of September 21, 1869 reports that Rudolph Seligmann, August Seligmann and Charles Wassermann were adjudged bankrupts upon their own petition on May 17, 1869. Frederick Kapp was appointed assignee on August 1869.

Another note was found in the *NYT* of September 18, 1869. This note provides an idea about the business of the bankrupts. It announced the sale of the estate and effects of the bankrupts at public auction on September 30, 1869, and it lists merchandise to be auctioned, mainly textile goods manufactured in Germany.

Finally, a request to the National Archives and Records Administration solved the task. The archivist at NARA was extremely supportive and helpful. The box with the bankruptcy case file was found and evaluated. According to the file, Oppenheimer and Schloss were unsecured creditors, and the company name appears on several documents. A Petition for Discharge of the bankrupts was filed on June 10, 1873 and the bankrupts were discharged on August 26, 1873. The last document in the file concerns the discharge of the assignee; it is dated September 23, 1873.

It can be concluded that the card announcing an Order

must have been mailed well before the closure of the case on August 26 to allow for objections; i.e., it is most likely a usage of June or July 1873 following the Petition for Discharge of June 10.

At that time there was no postal card rate to Germany and a card could be mailed as a letter for 7¢ or as printed matter for 2¢. The New York one-line "PAID ALL" marking was used on all printed matter processed by the New York exchange office to Germany and other countries before the General Postal Union was established on July 1, 1875.^{1,2} It suggests that the card was mailed as printed matter. Either the additional postage was paid in cash or the card slipped through postage controls. A philatelic expert for paper has scrutinized the card under a microscope and found no signs of a stamp removal.

After the above research, the card presents itself as an extraordinary philatelic document. It is the earliest known printed matter usage of a postal card, the earliest known pioneer official (U.S. District Court) postal card, a pre-treaty usage of a postal card and also the earliest postal card known to be mailed to Germany. And it is a New York Foreign Mail item.

(Endnotes)

¹Gundel A (2006) "Some Observations About NYFM Cancels on Printed Matter," *USCC News* 28(4), 60-67.

²Gundel A (2008) Addendum: "Some Observations About NYFM Cancels on Printed Matter," *USCC News* 29 (1), 8-11.

Trying To Clear up a Two Decade Question

by Dan Richards

In Mr. Weiss's book *The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City 1870-1878*, he reports on pages 322-324 a six section grid cancel, TR-G12. This cancel, which he calls a "tilted cross plus wedge", measures 21mm wide and 22mm high. It contains three sections in each direction – see Figure 1. The cancel measurements were obtained from a cover illustrated on page 322 which is addressed to Switzerland. He first reported this cancel in the Winter 1988 *U.S. Cancellation Club News*. In response to his article, a reader questioned whether the cancel is a new type. The reader believed the cancel to be a nine section circular grid (a cancel reported by Van Vlissingen and Waud in their

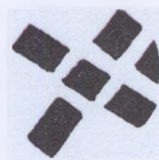


Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3. earlier NYFM book but not listed in Weiss) which evolved into a six section grid by removal of three corner sections, possibly through wear and tear. The argument posed by the reader and the grid from which the cancel may have evolved gave Mr. Weiss much to think about. This theory of a different cancel evolving into the Figure 1 cancel had already crossed Mr. Weiss's mind and he stated the possibility in his article and book.

Two decades later, one can now report new evidence that the reader was incorrect and Mr. Weiss was on the right path as, you will see. The two covers in Figures 2 and 3 were canceled on the same day, November 16, 1870, just ten days prior to what was previously the only reported cover, dated November 26, 1870. The November 26 cover was used for the Figure 1 tracing by Mr. Weiss. The cancel tracing in Figure 4 originated from the cover in Figure 2. It clearly indicates the Weiss 22mm, three section high cancel was originally a four section high cancel. The height measurements taken from the strikes in Figures 2 and 3 vary from 22mm to 23.5mm, but the three section width in all examples maintains the same 21mm.



Figure 4.

In my opinion all these strikes came from the same canceling device. Killer usage over the ten days shows wear and the device was not properly cleaned. From this use, dirt and/or lint appears to have built up between the third and fourth sections to help close the gap and create what looks to be just one section. Then again, this imposes a new question as to whether this seven section cancel is a new NYFM type. Hmmm.

This author would appreciate any unreported usages or information in regards to this cancel.

More on "Q"

The November 2009 *NEWS* discussed hand-carved "Q" cancels and it was mentioned that very few have been noted by collectors. Only one appears in Skinner-Eno and none in Cole or Whitfield. The Skinner-Eno cancel was illustrated but the post office of origin was not identified. In response, Allan Schefer submits the very nice cover, shown here as Figure 1, postmarked Saint Johns, Michigan. One "Q" on Allan's cover overlaps the other as opposed to the side by side arrangement of two "Qs" in the Skinner-Eno tracing. The shape of the letters in

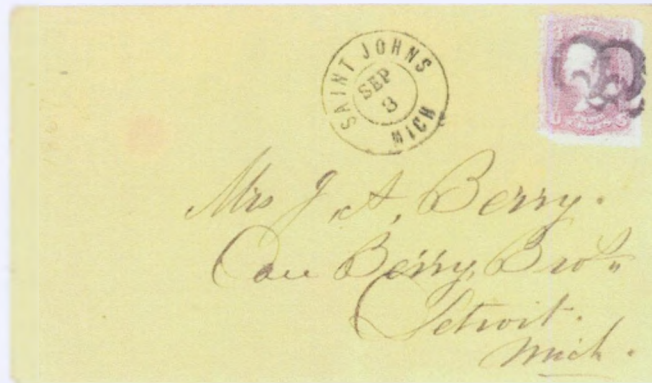


Figure 1.

the Skinner-Eno and Schefer cancels, however, appears to be the same. A single "Q" handstamp was apparently struck twice to insure an adequate cancellation. What is the significance of the "Q"? Perhaps it is the first letter of the postmaster's last name. Saint Johns is an operating post office in Clinton Co. that was established in 1855.

While there is no question about whether the Figure 1 cancel is a "Q", there is a cancel design that certainly could be a "Q" but which is, at least, somewhat ambiguous because the tail is short and doesn't extend into the inner circle. The dictionary I use shows various "Roman" and "modern" representations of "Q" that don't have the tail entering the inner circle; however, the tail is longer than in the examples below. We encountered this design recently on page 70 of the February 2009 *NEWS*



Figure 2.



Figure 3.

illustrating the small Boston negative cancels. These run basically from "A" to "H" but included what we said was perhaps an "O" but with an outward bulge in one small area. Figure 2 was reported by Wendell Triplett as a cover offered on eBay in August 2009 by dealer Frank Kaplan. Figure 3 is in the collection of Christopher Perry. Should we classify these as "Q" cancels? Reader comments as well as additional examples are encouraged.

Odd Profile Cancel

Dick Nunge submits two examples of an odd profile cancel from Albany, NY shown here as Figure 1. From an



Figure 1.

enclosure, the cover can be dated April 23, 1866. We have not seen this cancel reported in the literature but Dick points out that a third example was sold as lot #60 in the 1953 Collector's Shop auction of the B.H. Handy collection – see Figure 2. It was described there as a “negative man's head.”



Figure 2.

The cancel appears to be a man's profile, facing left, and bearing a hat of some sort. The nose, eye, mouth, chin and hairline around the ear seem clear enough. The tracing might be said to show aspects of a negative top hat and a positive beany but these are quite ambiguous. Dick reports that, although the tracing in Figure 1 doesn't show it, the cancel on the off-cover stamp has two negative breaks (or lines) on the left side, running together at the outer circle, which appear to form the bill of a cap. (The bottom line, just above the nose, of course, does show clearly.) Perhaps the top of the cap is a combination of negative and positive aspects. The overall appearance of the “hat,” particularly with the presence of a bill, led Dick to think that the man might be a soldier, but the date of use puts it after the Civil War.

Can readers report other examples of this enigmatic cancel or provide further interpretations of the design? If so, please contact the NEWS.

New York Horizontal Ellipse

by Roger D. Curran

There was an odd horizontal ellipse used by the New York Post Office on circular mail that qualifies as scarce off cover and very scarce on cover. I believe it was used in the late 1870s, probably 1879 and perhaps 1878. See Figure 1 for a Whitfield tracing. It has a rather primitive look as though it may have been produced



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

by a hand-carved killer. However, in my opinion, judging from the numbers in the center, it is likely from a wood killer that was professionally engraved. Only three numbers in this set have been recorded – “21”, “31”, and “54.” Were these randomly chosen just to have some identifying number in the center that could be traced back to the clerk who used it? It's hard to imagine that there are more than a few, if any, additional numbers out there yet to be found. Figure 2 shows the three numbers on off-cover stamps and Figures 3-5 illustrate on-cover examples. The “21” and “31” have previously been seen on cover but the “54” may

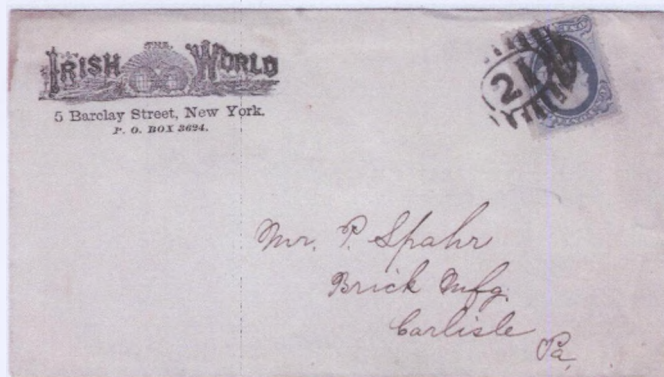


Figure 3.

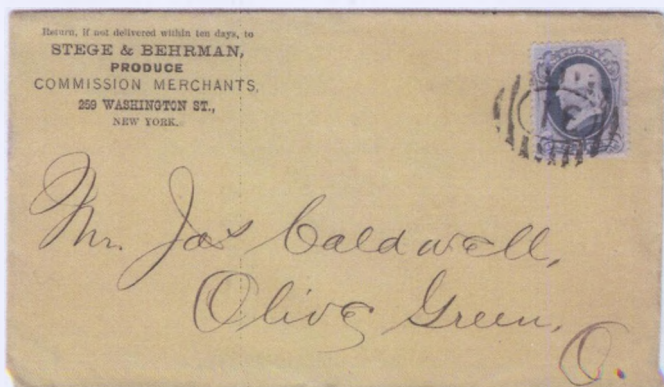


Figure 4.

The New York "Rickrack" Cancels

by Roger D. Curran

The Winter 1986 *NEWS* carried a brief article on an unusual cancel noted on several early postal cards that, for lack of a better term, was described as having "rickrack" borders due to the odd zigzag bands that appear between the CDS and killer. No new information on this subject has been reported in the *NEWS* since 1986, nor have these odd markings been discussed elsewhere in the literature to our knowledge. It is time to revisit this matter, state several observations and appeal again to readers to add to the story. Also, we can now illustrate two more examples that recently came to light.

Figures 1-5 show the initially reported strikes, four of which can be dated 1875 from datelines on the reverse. The fifth

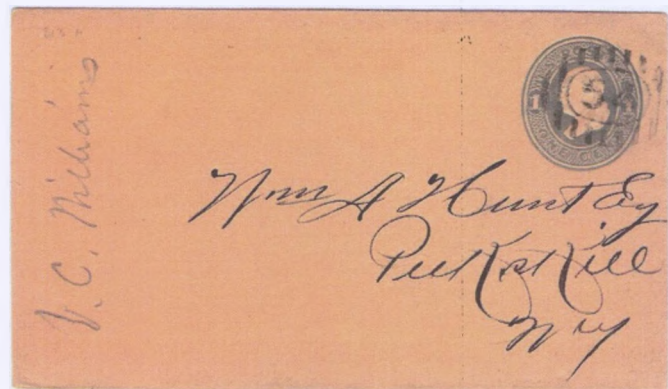


Figure 5.

not have been seen, at least by current students, before Figure 5 was recently reported by Ardy Callender. Although there is no corner card or other evidence tying this cancel directly to New York, it is so similar to the "21" and "31" ellipses that I believe we can be confident that is also from New York. Incidentally, it may be that the higher the number, the harder the cancel is to find.

Readers are encouraged to check their collections for examples of this style of New York ellipse on or off cover and report any such cancels to the *NEWS*. It would be nice to gain some information on dates of use and learn of any uses on higher denomination stamps or involving additional numbers in the center. Please help if you can.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.

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Figure 4.



Figure 5.

card, which shows no evidence of a year date, is surely 1875 as well. These cards cover about a one month period of usage. All show "6PM" time elements, possibly indicating test periods after the main workload crush of the day. All CDS strikes show a split diagonal bar in the "K" that indicates they all came from the same handstamp. The CDS is of the same style and appearance as other New York CDSs used contemporaneously with non "rickrack" cancels which implies that a handstamp of standard manufacture was used for this "experiment" rather than a specially created handstamp. Was the grid killer laid over the socket portion of the standard duplex handstamp (that normally held a hand-carved numeral killer) and was it somehow connected to the handstamp by means of the "rickrack" bands?

One of the particular interests of the late Hubert Skinner was that of patent cancels and he formed a major collection of this interesting type. His philatelic estate was recently dispersed and John Donnes reports that the patent cancel collection contained



Figure 6.



Figure 7.

two "rickrack" cancel covers shown here as Figures 6 and 7. They are both postmarked in April and it is assumed that a year date cannot be identified for either. Both show the split bar "K" and "6PM" time elements. The April 2 cover shows killer bars that differ from those on the April 24 cover. The killer bars on the latter cover may well be the same as those on the May and June cards.

It is not clear why Mr. Skinner considered the cancels on his covers to be patent cancels. I'll speculate that it was because he assumed the dots in the two strikes (where the "rickrack" bands showed on the cards) were applied by sharp points on the handstamp that were intended to (but didn't actually) penetrate the stamps being canceled. These dots make an interesting distinction between the on cover and on card strikes. Are these differences just of a happenstance nature due to conditions of the strikes or do they represent some actual change made to the face of the handstamp that was later tested in May and June?

Readers who can report further examples of this interesting New York cancel are urged to do so. Also, additional observations and conclusions would be very much welcomed.

Unusual Ellipses

by Roger D. Curran

The four interesting ellipse cancels shown in Figure 1 were submitted by Dick Nunge. The curious thing about the cancel on the left is that it was designed to be struck in a horizontal position rather than vertical. Out of the hundreds of U.S. ellipses noted over the years, I don't recall seeing before such an ellipse produced by what was apparently a manufactured metal canceler. Can any reader report additional examples of this or similar U.S. horizontal ellipses?

The cancel on the second stamp from the left is from a set reported on Whitfield (#6480) to include seven other numbers from "13" to "31", yet no examples have yet been reported on cover that would identify post office of origin. An example may have been seen on a wrapper with no PO identification. A similar cancel, but with diagonal bars, is also reported by Whitfield (#6466) with several different numbers in the center. I had assumed these were cancels used basically on circular mail but here we have it on a 6¢ stamp. Maybe they were used on packages, circular mail and wrappers. I still assume the cancels



Figure 1.

were intended just for non-first class mail and were not duplexed to a CDS. If readers can help out with more information, please do so. The Whitfield tracings were illustrated in the November 2004 NEWS.

The two stamps on the right are from a scarce Boston set used during the 1882-1884 period. Numbers reported are "1" – "12" but including no "9". With the "4" and "10" from Dick, we have now illustrated all numbers except for any "9" that may exist. To verify a "9" we would, of course, need to see it on cover, or with enough of the CDS showing on an off-cover stamp to confirm that it isn't a "6". There is no question but what these cancels were duplexed to the CDS. Earlier NEWS articles on these cancels appeared in the August and November 2008 issues.

Unusual on Two Counts

by Roger D. Curran

Dan Haskett submits the Sc188 stamp shown in Figure 1 (tracing courtesy of John Donnes) with the bold and unusual cross-in-cogwheel cancel. Nothing similar has been noted in the literature.



Figure 1.

Who can identify the post office of origin? A second noteworthy aspect concerns the ink. Several specialists have examined the stamp and the canceling ink is thought to be ultramarine. When considering colors, apart from the most basic and common colors, I am reminded of what Carroll Chase said in his book at the beginning of the chapter on color varieties of the 3¢ 1851-7 stamps:

"I fear that this is the most difficult of all the chapters of this hand-book, because to satisfactorily describe colors and varieties of color in words is almost impossible."¹

18
The dictionary on your editor's desk describes "ultramarine" in two phrases: "Vivid or strong blue to purplish blue" and "Having a deep-blue purplish color."² Among the accepted philatelic designations of ultramarine are the colors listed for the Sc 114, Sc 115 and Sc 233 stamps. To my eye, the subtle purplish tinge is most obvious on some examples of Sc 114, the 3¢ locomotive stamp of the 1869 issue. Comments will be welcomed as well as images of additional cancels in ultramarine ink.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Carroll Chase *The 3¢ Stamp of the United States 1851-1857 Issue* (Quarterman Reprint 1975), p. 154.
- 2 *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, American Heritage Publishing Co. and Houghton Mifflin Co. (1970), p. 1391.

Closed Albums

It is with sadness that we report the recent deaths of three long time members of the U.S. Cancellation Club.

William H. Bauer was a prominent leader in organized philately in the U.S. including service, some years ago, as president of the American Philatelic Society. He was an expert student of Colorado postal history and also of Otsego County, NY and was generous in sharing information on both of those subjects. For many years, he was the USCC librarian, a job he carried out very conscientiously.

Gilbert J. Levere collected postal markings for more than 50 years, primarily as they occurred on postal cards. Over the last quarter century, no one submitted more reports of cancellations and postmarks to the NEWS than Gil, who did so either in response to articles or because he saw something unusual that he thought might be of interest to others. In recent years, together with Club member Ralph Edson, Gil developed an extensive update to the 1990 *La Posta* monograph on Wesson "time on bottom" cancels, which the USCC expects to publish in 2010.

Thomas O. "Tuck" Taylor served as USCC 1st Vice President from 1997 through 2006 and was a booster of the Club in many ways beyond that. Tuck pursued several collecting interests but his principal one was Washington, D.C. postal history and he was frequently consulted by collectors and writers on this subject. His Washington, D.C. exhibit was seen at various national shows. Tuck owned and operated Taylor Made Co. which sold "mylar" cover and page protectors and he was a major supplier of these to the philatelic community.

These gentlemen will be sincerely missed.