



U. S. Cancellation Club **NEWS**

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New York Foreign Mail (NYFM) Cancels on Large Bank Note 90¢ Stamps

by Nicholas M. Kirke

Bearing in mind the considerable number of 90¢ off-cover stamps with NYFM cancels, it is surprising to learn there is only *one* recorded example of a 90¢ large Bank Note stamp on cover with a NYFM cancel (see Figure 1). Figures 2a and 2b show 51 large Bank Note 90c stamps from my 1870-76 NYFM collection. The cancels are placed chronologically by recorded use on cover. The classification system used is that of William R. Weiss Jr. as presented in his 1990 book, *The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City 1870-1878*.

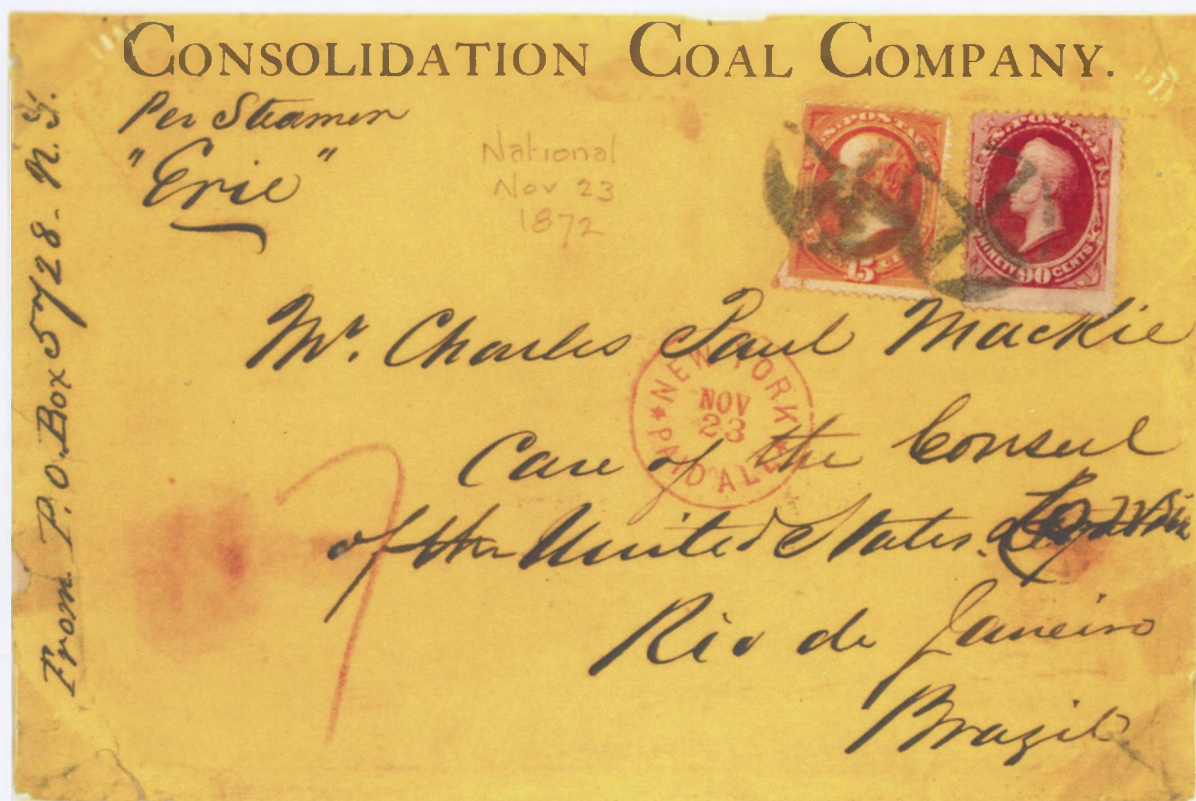


Figure 1. 11/23/1872 Consolidation Coal Co cover with Sc152 15c bright orange and Sc155 90c carmine to Rio de Janeiro canceled with 'cross in a circle' NYFM cancels (GE-S1). The rate was 15c per half ounce and the red "7" crayon indicates a septuple rate franking (7 times 15c = 105c paid). The cover traveled by Steamer 'Erie' from New York on the monthly American Packet sailings to Brazil. Currently it forms part of the Coal Collection of Robert Metcalf who most kindly supplied and gave permission for use of the above photograph.

How 'common' are 90c stamps with NYFM cancels?

My NYFM collection comprises 1,684 off cover stamps of which 74 (4.39%) are 90c values (includes 16 in red indicating Supplementary Mail usage). Initially, I reasoned that, as the bulk of the collection was amassed by the purchase of smaller collections, this percentage might be representative of the proportionate mix of 90¢ stamps in the total of all stamps with NYFM cancels. Was it, therefore, reasonable to deduce that Bank Note 90¢ stamps amounted to 4.39% of NYFM generally?

Continued on page 95....

Editor's Corner

Dear Reader.

This issue contains an obituary for Thomas O. "Tuck" Taylor who passed away earlier this year. Last year the *NEWS* received erroneous information about his death which was announced in the February 2010 issue. Tuck was a great friend of the US Cancellation Club and we very much regret this occurrence.

This year the APS STAMPSHOW is in Columbus, Ohio, running from August 11-14. The USCC will have a society table staffed for the full time and will hold a meeting/seminar on one of the days. Several Club members are entering one-frame cancellations exhibits. And for Friday evening, we want to organize an informal Dutch treat dinner at a nearby restaurant. Our last meeting was at the Pittsburgh APS show two years ago and many of our members got together at the Club's table over the four days. We hope to have a strong turnout again this year and if you would be available to help out at the table for an hour or longer, please contact one of the Club officers (see masthead for email and regular addresses) or me. Also, please let us know if you'd like to join in on the Friday dinner. Hope to see you at the show!

Sincerely, Roger

Roger D. Curran

Editor, U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

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Figure 2a.

90c NYFMs, continued from front page.

How wrong could I be! A New York Postmaster's 1875 report notes an average of 142,211 items of mail were processed *each week* by the New York Foreign Mail Department (originating in New York City and across the country). If I propose that as much as 30% of this originated in New York City, it leaves 42,633 per week or 2,218,916 in 1875. My 4.39% would equate to 1,871 (90c) covers weekly, or 97,297 for the whole year. That is patently absurd.

Even if I drastically reduce my estimated 1875 figure for 90c NYFM usage as a percentage of NYFM usage to 1%, it indicates 22,169 annual uses which is still too high. I am therefore inclined to assume that the figure could be as low as *one sixteenth of 1% at maximum*. Even that produces an annual 1,385 NYFM 90c covers in 1875. Certainly the volume in 1875 and 1876 would have been greater than in 1870-74. So I feel it logical, if conservative, to average out usage over the period of 1870-76; say, 800 90c NYFM covers each year, or a total for the 6 years of 4,800. Three factors, in my opinion, contribute to the extraordinarily low on-cover survival rate.

- a) By extensive study of NYFM material generally it is clear that, whereas off-cover stamps with NYFM cancels are relatively plentiful, comparative survival rates for *all* NYFM covers are particularly miniscule. The last major study (William R. Weiss) used a mere 4,500 covers as the basis for his datings of cancel use, and that was

for an extended period 1870-78. Yet, as already stated, an estimated 2,218,916 items of mail originating in NYC were processed in the New York Foreign Mail Department in just 1875. To make the point: I possess three covers that are the sole examples of certain NYFM cancels known on cover, ST-4P1, GE-S5 and GE-EP12. The first two listed are relatively common off cover. I have at least 10 other NYFM covers where only two uses are recorded on-cover, whereas off-cover uses of the same cancel are quite common.

- b) Substantially fewer 90c stamps were issued than other Bank Note values. Lester Brookman estimated a joint total of 410,000 were issued by the National and Continental Bank Note Companies. To illustrate the disparity, I'll cite the production of two other values: 75 million 6c and 41 million 10c stamps were issued.
- c) Although all values were soaked in abundance, the 90c stamp was particularly desired to fill the last space on the album page. In that period "stamp collecting" rather than "cover collecting" was the priority.

My deductive total of 4,800 (90c) stamps used on New York Foreign Mail during 1870-76 equates to 1.17% of all 90c stamps issued. I do not think that unreasonable. Comments are invited.

Some other interesting facts emerge from this study. Of the 51 stamps shown in Figures 2a and 2b, one is a grilled National (Scott 144), 22 are ungrilled Nationals (Scott 155) and 28 are the later Continentals (Scott 166). It is intriguing that of the 23 Nationals (issued April 1870) six bear NYFM cancels recorded as only being used between 1873 and 1876 (6 have Philatelic Foundation certificates). On one occasion the recorded period of use for the cancel is long *before* the issue of the stamp (see No.5 below). Assuming the National and Continental stamps are correctly identified, these anomalies indicate that current dates for cancel usage need adjusting.

To address the illustrated stamps specifically (all dates for usage are based on on-cover usage):

No. 4. Pair with TR-C7. This cancel has recorded use 3/25/1871 to 9/28/1872 - yet here it is on a Continental stamp not issued until July 1873. It appears the cancel had a longer use than currently recorded. It's worn appearance might be because it was on a parcel which did not provide a firm surface for the strike.

No. 5. TR-S3. Here is clear evidence that stamp issuance can help confirm dates for cancel usage. This cancel previously had been reported used 5/9/71 to 7/28/1871. Here we see it is on a PF certified Continental stamp Sc166 which was not issued until July 1873. I also have a cover bearing a perfect strike of TR-S3 from 1876. It is clear this cancel has usage far beyond current dating. The stamp confirms the evidence provided by the later cover.

No. 6. TR-M6 is an unusual size being no larger than 21mm in diameter. As on this stamp, the cancel was too small to effectively cancel multiple stamps. Had there been another stamp adjacent to the 90 cent, it would have required two strikes by the over-worked clerk. It has been suggested that the larger NYFM designs post 1870 evolved specifically to cancel the larger Bank Note stamps which succeeded the smaller 1869 Issue.

No. 13. GE-EP11 in red, simply supports the conclusion that this cancel is more common in red than black. (Only two examples have been reported in black - see August 2008 (p. 35) and May 2009 (p. 89) issues of the *NEWS*). Red cancels on the 1c, 2c and 3c Bank Note stamps are almost as scarce as on 90c stamps. This was because these lower values were rarely sufficient to make up the supplementary mail fee (equivalent to the postage paid).

No. 32. ST-4P1. There is only one recorded use of this cancel on cover yet here is a 90c stamp bearing this cancel. Might we assume, using my sixteenth of 1% proposition for 90c NYFM usage compared to other denomination NYFM usage, that there may have been as many as 1,599 other NYFM covers bearing this cancel on the other lower values which are lost, destroyed or soaked? That might not be so far fetched as one might think. This cancel is relatively common off cover. Bear in mind two clerks would often handle the canceling process, one passing and holding the envelope while the other applied the handstamp. It is recorded that well over 60 covers PER

MINUTE could be processed in this manner. So using this particular cancel, the clerk would have canceled 1,599 envelopes in just 26 minutes).

No. 34. ST-8P. To find this cancel in red, rare in black on ANY value, on a 90c is most unusual and by being a "socked on the nose" strike we might assume it was the only stamp on the envelope. One can only salivate in imaging how magnificent this stamp appeared when on cover.

No. 47. GE-EP13. It is apt that this elegant NYFM cancel, with first recorded use January 1876, brought the curtain down NYFM geometrics. There are just four covers reported with this cancel, three of which are inbound from Cuba and one to Europe.

No. 49. TR-S5 is on a PF certified National Sc155, but we have no on-cover evidence that this cancel was used prior to 10/14/1876. It might be thought unlikely a stamp issued in 1870 would be used so long after initial issue when there was a subsequent Continental 90c available for use. The inference is that that this cancel was in use far earlier than currently recorded.

No. 50. TR-WU-5A. I have this cancel on cover used in 1877. I do not believe it deserves a separate classification. I think it is a re-use of a very worn TR-W5 with reported use between 3/74 to 9/74.

No. 51. Unclassified '5'. A mischievous endnote. I do not believe that the numerals were generally designed for use in the Foreign Mail Department. Where they were used abroad it was inadvertent - these numerals probably originated in New York City Domestic Department.

Conclusion

Even although this article raises more areas of debate than it closes, I hope it illuminates the following:

- a) the fact that only one large Bank Note 90c stamp is reported on cover is not so extraordinary bearing in mind the low survival rate for NYFM material generally;
- b) we should be careful not to conclusively date cancel use simply on the evidence of surviving covers. Usage generally is probably FAR wider and extensive than currently recorded; and
- c) noting whether the stamp is a National or a Continental can, in some cases, be a useful cancel dating tool.

[Author's note] - This is the first time the legendary "Coal Cover" has been shown in color. It is interesting to repeat part of the sale notes when it was sold by Robert Siegel on April 16, 1974 (sale 449, lot 201), "A stupendous rarity, signed "Ashbrook", one of the greatest Bank Note covers in existence". It realized \$5,000, the highest price for a cover in the sale.



Figure 2b.

NYFM UPDATE, Part 1

by Dan Richards

Since the release of the William Weiss's book *"The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City 1870 1876"* there have been the four newly recorded NYFM cancels shown in Figure 1. In a four part series in the *USCC News* I will discuss and add four more unlisted NYFM cancels to this growing list.



Figure 1.

The first cancel is a group of wedges with each wedge variegated horizontally except one wedge. It measures 17mm high by 21mm wide as shown in Figure 2. Based on a review of the four recorded covers, the earliest usage is April 26, 1870 and the latest usage is June 11, 1870.



Figure 2.

The Figure 3 cover, from which the tracing was taken, is dated New York May 21, 1870. It is franked with a pair of 3 cent Nationals, not grilled, and French 20 centimes and 40 centimes adhesives which were applied by the sender in New York. It appears the sender was trying to send the letter at the 10 cent French Direct letter rate via French vessel to French port with the 60 centimes paying the inland fee. This special rate was established by a December 22, 1869 decree that remained in effect until July 1, 1871. Unfortunately, the sender did not apply the correct 10c postage and the NYFM clerk sent the underpaid letter forward using the 4 cent British Open Mail Rate to England and then on to France.



Figure 3.

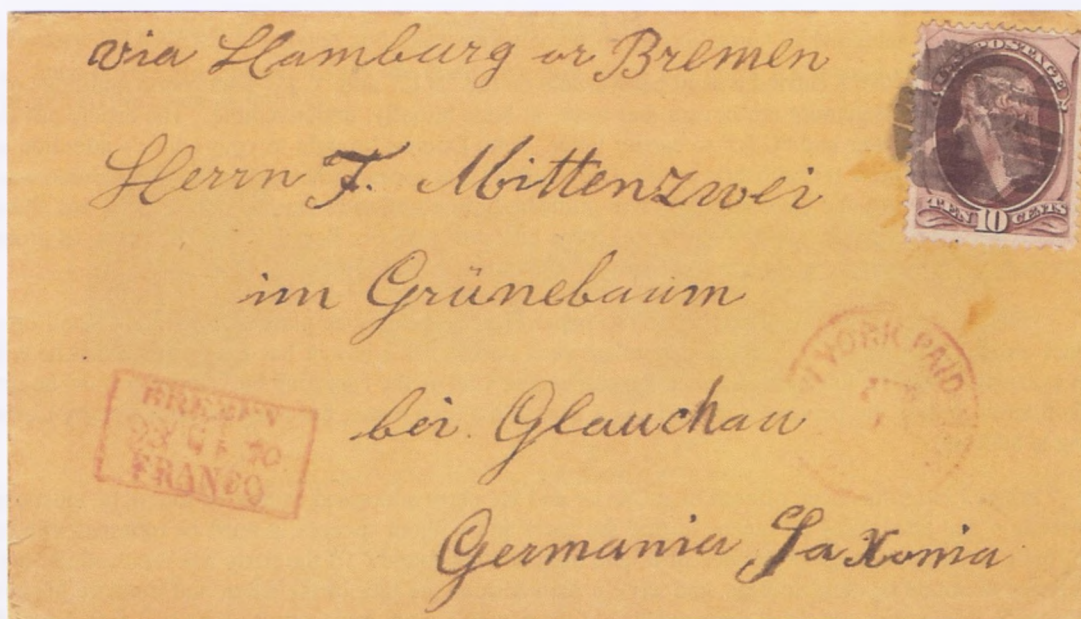


Figure 4.

In Figure 4 we see the same unlisted cancel, heavily inked, on cover with an early usage of a 10c National, not grilled, dated New York June 9, 1870. The 10 cent adhesive paid the North German Union direct mail via Bremen single letter rate. The letter was placed aboard the maiden voyage of NGL Line's "Hanover" and arrived at Bremen on June 23, 1870.



Figure 5.

Our last cover, Figure 5, is from the Schuyler Rumsey Sale 38, Lot 2414. The cover, a Wells Fargo & Co. 1861 10 cent postal stationery entire originating in Victoria, British Columbia and is addressed to London, England. Wells Fargo carried the letter via Puget Sound and it entered the U.S. postal system in New York. There the New York Foreign Mail clerk struck the cover with our subject unlisted killer and with the red "NEW YORK APR 26" exchange office CDS. The April 26, 1870 date makes this the earliest known usage.

It is hard to believe this cancel has gone unnoticed for almost a century and half. Besides the three above mentioned covers one would think there are more covers out there. This author would appreciate any additional information about this cancel.

More on NYPO "B.L." and "C.L." Markings

by Roger D. Curran

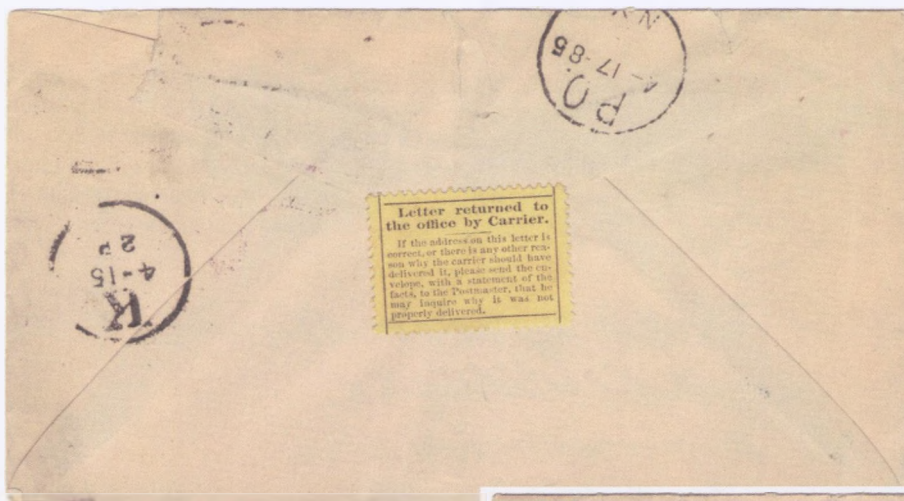
The November 2008 *NEWS* carried a front page article on the "B.L." and "C.L." handstamp markings of the NYPO occasionally encountered on late Banknote era covers that were, at least initially, undeliverable. The article put forward the idea that "B.L." referred to branch letter and "C.L." to carrier letter. John Donnes brought to your editor's attention a section in *Appleton's United States Postal Guide* (republished by Jim Lee in 2001) that appears to be pertinent. This Guide was intended to be a periodical, but only one issue, dated October 1863, was published. In addition to general postal rules, etc. there were sections on local postal rules that were established in some of the large city post offices. Page 71 lists several rules promulgated by the New York postmaster "to be observed at the several Stations" that included the following:

"Each Carrier in whose hands any letter, paper or package may be placed for delivery, shall offer it to the place and party to whom it is addressed, unless such person has a box or has given notice that he will call, and in every such case he must return them marked Box or Call as the case may be. No letter must be returned as a Box letter, unless the person addressed has a Box in his own name, but must be delivered by Carrier according to address.

When a letter has been offered by a Carrier and the party addressed cannot be found, he must examine the Directory, and after using all means to find the party and without success, it must be returned with the initials of the Carrier's name upon the face of it, and marked "not found." If the party has removed, he must use all diligence to obtain the new address, and write it plainly upon the face of the letter, and if not on his own district, return it without his initials; if the residence of the person cannot be ascertained, he will then return it with his initials marked "removed." In all cases the remarks must be plainly made. No uncalled for remarks to be made on letters."

The above still leaves questions, at least in your editor's mind. However, assuming the 1863 rules (or rules similar to them) were still in place 25 or more years later, it appears that "B.L." probably represents box letter and "C.L." call letter. Call letters presumably were those addressed to persons who had a street address that was normally used for delivery but who notified

the post office that, for a temporary period, they would pick up their mail at the post office (and it wouldn't be put in a box). I assume the "Directory" consulted by carriers listed only residents within the boundaries of the particular NYPO Station or perhaps just residents along the individual carrier's route or "district." Residents with PO boxes or who had given notice that they would call for mail would have been so identified on the lists. Incidentally, these local NYPO regulations were stated in a subsequent paragraph to apply to the main post office as well as the Stations "... so far as applicable ...".



Given that these regulations were in effect at least as far back as 1863, one would expect to see "Box" or "Call" (or "B.L." or "C.L.") markings on 1860s New York covers but who can report one? Indeed, are they seen before the 1880s? And while we are at it, let's raise a quite basic question: did the Stations have boxes or was it only the main NYPO? Also, are there any records available listing who held NYPO boxes in the 1860s and 70s? Comments and additional information will be welcomed.



Two NYFM Cancels on a Second Cover

The February 2011 *NEWS* illustrated and discussed a cover in the collection of Nicholas Kirke that bears two different NYFM cancels. Such covers are unusual, to say the least. We now show in Figure 1 a second example, courtesy of Alexander Gundel. Alex described the cover as follows:



Figure 1.

"The illustrated UX4 postal card shows a supplementary mail postmark (Type E, Winter #261) of October 28, 1876 and two different New York Foreign Mail cancellations. The one cent Banknote stamp is tied by TR-S5 (Weiss, see Fig. 2). Later, when it was decided to send the card by supplementary mail, a five cent banknote was applied and overpaid the supplementary fee by 3 cents. The five cent stamp is tied by a NYFM cancel type TR-W17 (Weiss, see Fig. 2). It seems to be the same cancel as illustrated in the book of Weiss on page 480, which was applied 4 days later on November 1. The card bears a Hamburg horseshoe receiving marking of November 10 (PF Certificate 453406 of 2008)."

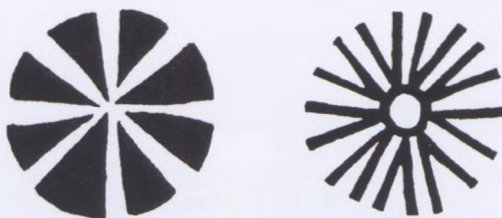


Figure 2. Tracings of TR-W17 and TR-S5

Determining the steps in the handling of this cover in New York presents an interesting puzzle. Was the card, with just the 1¢ stamp added, returned to the sender by the NYPO after being initially processed in the canceling section of the foreign department? If so, what would have made the post office do that? Was there some indication on the card that the sender wanted or expected supplementary mail service? Could it be that (1) the card was received by the NYPO foreign department with both stamps affixed and the two strikes of TR-S5 were initially applied and (2) the 5¢ stamp was then noted and the clerk decided that it was intended to be supplementary mail and he referred it over to the supplementary mail unit for further handling where the TR-W17 and the postmark were applied? Another guess would be that the card was handed in at the window for foreign mail and immediately canceled. Then the clerk noticed that it was too late for regular mail. Subsequently the supplementary mail window became involved and possibly in a hurry the five cent stamp was affixed and canceled.

Comments and additional explanations will be welcomed.

11-Bar Ellipses With "24"

Figure 1 shows a portion of a F.P. Hammond & Co. ad that appeared in the February 1882 *Postal Guide*. The identical image has also been seen in a flyer advertising post office handstamps from John Goldsborough of Philadelphia. The Fall 1998 and August and November 2001 issues of the *NEWS* carried brief articles on the advertisement of this ellipse.

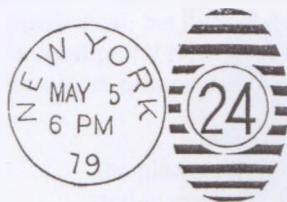


Figure 1.

To recap briefly, the Figure 1 illustration is very similar to actual New York City markings during the Banknote era with one exception. While the New York numerals are of the same style as the "24", the New York ellipses have nine as opposed to 11 bars. However, 11-bar ellipses with this style "24" in the center have been reported from what were two small Pennsylvania post offices – Haverford College and Morrisville. The question arises as to why small post offices would need or want cancelers with such a large identifying number. Surely there weren't 24 clerks. Indeed it is likely that there was only one – the postmaster. We speculated that orders in response to the Figure 1 illustration were supplied with exactly that, including the "24" as part of the design. It was also speculated that the handstamps with the "24" ellipses were rubber-faced since they went to small post offices, notwithstanding the fact that the Hammond ad offered the "24" duplex in brass and the Goldsborough ad offered it in steel. The lettering in the Haverford College and Morrisville CDSs differed considerably from the cut steel appearance of that in the New York CDS in Figure 1.

The present article adds several items to the story. First, a Haverford College strike in a dull purple ink is shown in Figure 2. Second, a new post office (see Figure 3) can be added to the list – General Wayne, Pennsylvania. This cover is dated February 7, 1887 and is in blue ink. The use of purple and blue inks supports the idea that the handstamps were rubber-faced. The Figure 3 cover resides in the collection of Ardy Callender who also reports a General Wayne "24" in black dated July 27, 1886. A second example in black can also be reported with date of April 3, year undetermined.



Figure 2. Haverford College

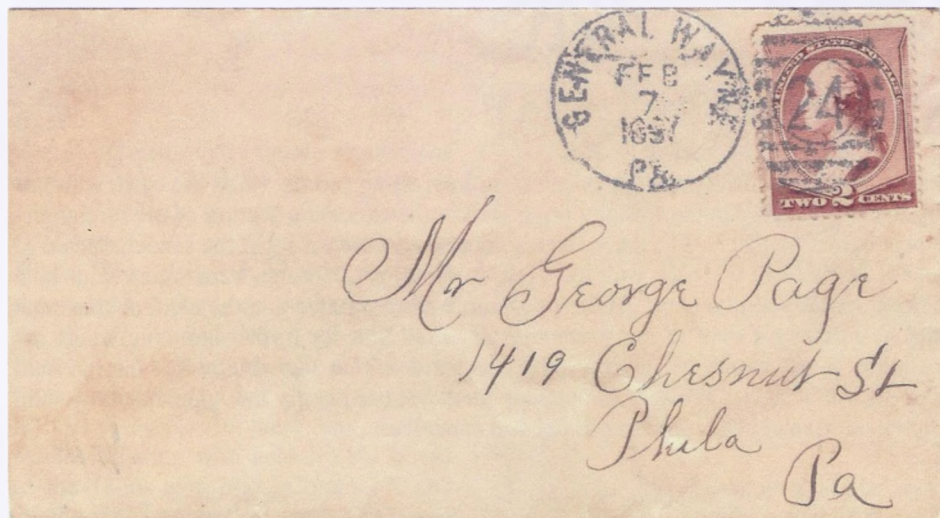


Figure 3. General Wayne

The Haverford College "24" ellipse is seen more often than those of Morrisville or General Wayne, although it is not a common cancel. Haverford College is a DPO that operated from 1871-1892. The Morrisville PO was established in 1794 and operates today. The General Wayne PO was short lived: 1883-1888. All three of these POs were located close to Philadelphia and one supposes that their "24" ellipse handstamps were supplied by Goldsborough.

When is a Waterbury Ct Fancy Cancel not a Waterbury Cancel?

by William T. Crowe

On occasion stamps are offered on E-Bay as having a Waterbury CT fancy cancel, but without any evidence of a Waterbury postmark. In most cases the seller is correct, but there are examples of cancels that look like Waterbury cancels that are not.

One such cancel was the subject of an article by Clyde Jennings in The Philatelic Foundation's *Opinions VI*¹. In the article Mr. Jennings discusses and illustrates a cover with a three leaf shamrock fancy cancel similar to Rohloff's type F-14². The cancel in question appears to be a worn example of the Rohloff type 7 three leaf shamrock cancel of Waterbury Ct used on a cover with an October 3, 1877 enclosure. The postmark on the cover is dated October 1. Jennings' example is on a cover with a Naugatuck RR postmark (Towle³ 87-B-1) which is listed by Towle as being used from sometime in the 1860's until 1877. This is consistent with the stamp tied by this cancel, a Scott 158. The finding of The Philatelic Foundation was that the cancellation was genuine, but not a Waterbury fancy cancel. Jennings was puzzled by the difference in dates on the enclosure and the cover. Most likely the enclosure belongs to another cover as this cover is part of the Hotchkiss correspondence. My personal census shows that there are 24 or more covers extant addressed to the Hotchkiss family.

Any collector of the 1870-90 US Banknote issues has seen a number of stylized leaf cancels, which may or may not be from Waterbury. Cole⁴ in his book on Bank Note era cancellations lists 97 different leaf cancels, only 32 of which are identified as used at Waterbury, Ct. Similarly in his rosette section Cole lists 60 different rosettes, but only 10 are attributed to Waterbury. My personal census of Waterbury fancy cancel covers shows at least 50 different leaves and 17 different rosettes were used during the 1870-90 time period, but many can only be definitively identified as used from Waterbury when found on cover with a Waterbury postmark.



Figure 1.

Waterbury has a very distinctive rosette cancel identified by Rohloff as type P-25 (Rosette, Eight Hollow Segments, type 1, see Figure 1). This cancel is known used circa 1877-82. Surprisingly there exists a clone or "copy cat" of this cancel. Like the shamrock on Clyde Jennings' cover, this cancel was also found used by the Naugatuck R.R. This cover is addressed to Ansonia, Conn. and the postmark reads "WIN & BRIDGE'PT AGT" (Towle 87-D-1, known used in 1878). Winsted is located about 28 miles north of Waterbury and Bridgeport about 31 miles south of Waterbury with the Naugatuck Railroad going through Waterbury. It is certainly plausible that the agent on the Naugatuck RR saw examples of this cancel and decided to make a copy. It is also possible that the postmaster at Waterbury lent or gave retired Waterbury cancels to the agent to use on the Naugatuck R.R. In either event the cancel can no longer be considered to be a Waterbury, Ct fancy cancel unless it is found on a cover with a Waterbury, CT postmark. Figure 2 shows an example of the Rohloff type P-25 cancel and Waterbury postmark. Figure 3 shows the clone or copy cat cancel on the Naugatuck RR cover.



Figure 2. Waterbury, Ct.



Figure 3. "Win & Bridg'Pt Agt" (Ct.)

- 1) Clyde Jennings, *A Genuine Fake*, *Opinions VI – Philatelic Expertizing – An Inside View* (The Philatelic Foundation, 1992), pages 91-3
- 2) Paul C. Rohloff, *The Waterbury Cancellations, 1865-1890* (The Collectors Club of Chicago, 1979), pages 76-7, 85.
- 3) C. L. Towle, *U. S. Route and Station Agent Postmarks* (Mobile Post Office Society, 1986), pages 134-5, 325.
- 4) James M. Cole, *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era, 1870-1894* (The U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., 1995)

Date Slugs as Cancelers

A great many post office handstamps, not designed as cancelers, were pressed into such service, sometimes on a regular basis and, in other cases, perhaps to only meet happenstance circumstances. Numerous examples over the years have been illustrated in these pages. The present article will briefly consider three covers where the cancels are date slugs intended for use in postmarkers. A curious aspect here is that, at first glance at least, it appears that the month and day slugs were held together as a single unit. But surely the month and day slugs were placed in separate holes (mortises) in the face of the handstamp, so how could they comprise a single unit?



Figure 1.

Figures 2 and 3 show telltale signs that yield an answer – signs of the outer rim of the postmarker in which the slugs were still contained. In the case of Figure 2, the rim shows only very slightly beyond the bottom of the stamp in the upper right corner of the cover. The Figure 1 cover shows no sign of an outer rim. I assume the three cancels were created by loosening the set screw (assuming the slugs were already in their respective holes) to allow the slugs to slip partially out of the holes and the screw then was tightened again so that the ensuing strike would show only (or almost only) the slugs raised above the face of the postmarker.



Figure 2.

Each of the three covers presents its own quirks. The Figure 1 cancel is a simple repetition of the date in the postmark. In Figure 2, there were apparently no date slugs in the postmark when it struck the postmark. A possible explanation, and it is pure speculation, is that the slugs, which don't match the size of the letters in the postmark, didn't fit all the way down in the postmarker and the postmark would only show if there were no slugs inserted. In Figure 3, the day

slugs – “26” – didn't show well (the “6” not at all) in the postmark and this may have had a bearing on the use of that particular cancel. The smudge above the “26” in the cancel is, I believe, “JUL”. Incidentally the Figure 3 cover has a Scranton received marking on the back dated July 26, 1PM.

Comment is invited.

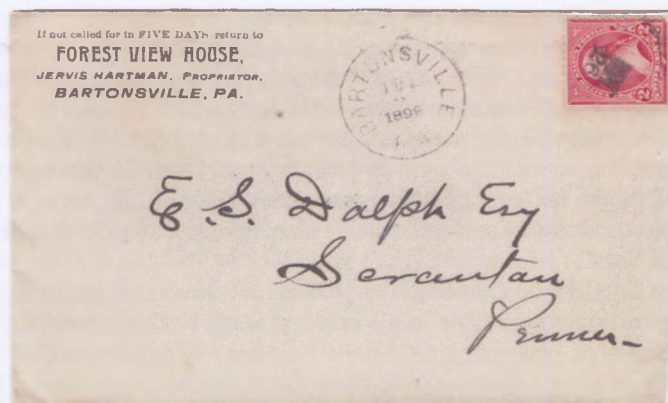


Figure 3.

Morning in America – Another “Sunrise” Cancel?

by Roger D. Curran

Wendell Triplet presented five different “sunrise” cancels in the February 2011 NEWS. John Valenti reports that he came across a possible sixth “sunrise”, shown here as Figure 1. It involves a crisp strike of a very attractive unlisted cancel from Wooster, Ohio dated August 19 (1876 from enclosure). This cancel raises a matter that from time to time generates extensive debate among collectors – what does a particular design represent? Some cancels are, of course, ambiguous and I'd put Figure 1 in that category. What could be said to be missing here is the “sun” in this design. We have the sun's rays and the horizon, which could be either land or water. Indeed, one might argue that the negative triangle shows the reflection of sun on water. But in cases like this, how does one really know? It's a judgment call, like many other things in life. Comment is invited.



A Lesson in Geometry

by Roger D. Curran

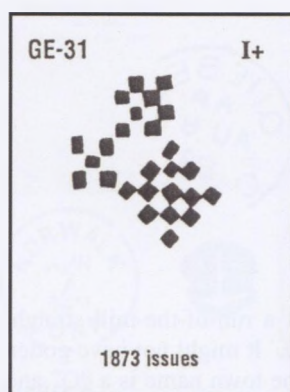


Figure 1.

Many years later, between 500 and 350 B.C., the Greeks, who had learned from the Egyptians this way of producing a 90° angle, studied the 3, 4, 5 triangle and came to the idea of looking at each side as a side of a square. The area of a square is the length of a side multiplied by itself. Thus, in the above example, we would have 3×3 , 4×4 and 5×5 squares to calculate the areas. The Greeks realized that the areas of the squares of the two shorter sides equaled the area of the larger square. This was generalized to all 90° triangles and became known as the Pythagorean Theorem.

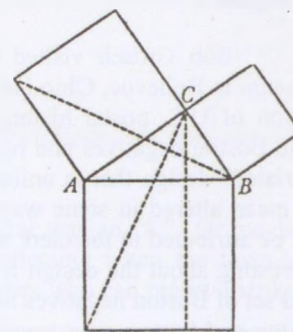


Figure 2.

About 300 B.C. the Greek mathematician Euclid developed a famous proof of the Theorem which can be illustrated by the Figure 2 drawing. ABC shows the original triangle. Through a sequence of statements, various facts are shown which, taken together, demonstrate conclusively that, in Figure 2 for example, $c^2 = a^2 + b^2$. The design similarity between Figures 1 and 2 is unmistakable and, I believe, clearly no coincidence.

Our attention was called to this cancel by Randy Armstrong who mentioned his desire to learn more about it at recent meeting of the Houston Philatelic Society. He was referred to our Club and commented as follows:

"My interest in this cancel (Cole GE-31) is to discover why Euclid's Proof of the Pythagorean Theorem was used. ... This cancel was carefully created to ensure that it faithfully demonstrated Euclid's Proof, which has been called one of the most elegant and succinct proofs in mathematics. As such, it is one of the few proofs that can be demonstrated in a single graphic without a single word needed. So, in a single strike, a postal worker cancelled a stamp and simultaneously taught an important and practical mathematic / geometric truth. There is a vast amount of information conveyed in this single strike, and I believe the creator of this cancel was aware of this. What was the creator's background and motivation?"

And Randy stated that he is seeking answers to any or all of the following questions:

- What Post Office used this cancel?
- Who was the Postmaster?
- How long was it used?
- Does anyone have additional history on this cancel?
- Does anyone have any examples (on cover or not)?

Readers who can provide any pertinent information are urged to contact the NEWS.

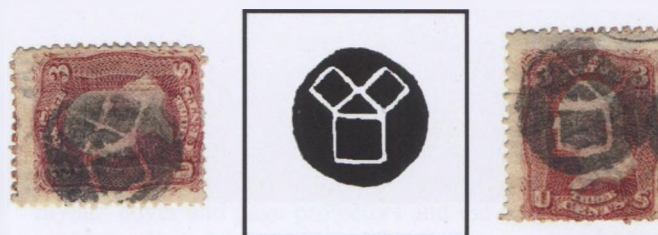


Figure 3.

There were, incidentally, three off cover Sc 94 stamps bearing a different Pythagorean Theorem cancel in the Hubert Skinner collection. Figure 3 illustrates two of these stamps. More information about this cancel is also sought.

There may be a simple reason for why this cancel was used. Masonic designs are, of course, sometimes seen in 19th century cancellations, primarily the square and compass but occasionally others as well. The illustration of the Pythagorean Theorem is one of the symbols of the Master Mason Degree. The first degree, or level of membership, is Entered Apprentice, the second degree is Fellowcraft (or journeyman) and the third degree is Master Mason. Another symbol, incidentally, for the Master Mason Degree is the anchor, a design that is also encountered in 19th century cancellations. Perhaps the creators of the Figures 1 and 3 cancels were postmasters who wanted to tell the world of their level in Freemasonry.

Noted in Passing

By Roger Curran



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

Bob Grosch visited the Post Mark Collectors Club museum in Bellevue, Ohio last summer that houses a large collection of U.S. postal history. He collects and exhibits the large Boston negatives and reported seeing there a noteworthy “variated” design that is unlisted – see Figure 1. By varied, we mean altered in some way to make it distinctive so that it can be attributed to the clerk who used it. What is particularly interesting about the design is that it is quite similar to a standard set of Boston negatives having negative horizontal lines at the top and bottom of a square – see an example in Figure 2. However, the two negative lines arrangement was not used in a set of round Boston negatives. The Figure 2 cancels were introduced in 1881 as a supplement to the set of cancels, without the negative lines, introduced in 1878. What we have in Figure 1, however, is a random cutting of a round killer, of which there are many, rather than a cancel that is part of a series. This can be said, I believe, because not only has there been a lack of other round killers noted with this appearance but the top bar shows the irregular cut that results from casual hand carving as opposed to the professional work that would be provided by handstamp suppliers.

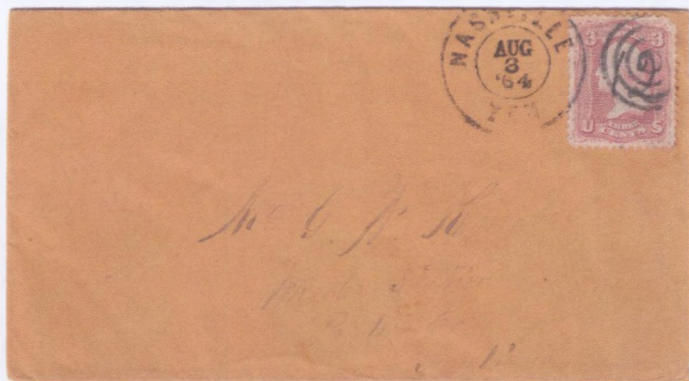


Figure 3.

Figure 3 shows a cover with a Nashville, Tennessee postmark dated August 3, 1864. On top of the concentric circles killer, the number “12” has been carefully written in pencil. It is hard to imagine that it has any postal significance but, as a long shot, could it be Civil War related in some way? The cover is addressed to a Mr. G. W. Kimball, Wheeler Station, Indiana and perhaps the “12” was added by the addressee. Have readers seen other examples of numbers penciled on stamps sent from Memphis during this period?



Figure 4

Figure 4 appears to be just a run-of-the-mill straight edge Sc 210 with a light CDS cancel. It might not have gotten a second look but the first letter of the town name is a “Q” and that sparked an interest in identifying the town. Turns out to be a Quebec cancel as the tracing illustrates. A portion of a second strike can be seen on the right side of the stamp. It would be interesting to see the cover from which the stamp came.



Figure 5.



Figure 6.

The cancel in Figure 5 appears to be a very clear strike of a rather intricate cancel. Whitfield 1732 (Figure 6) shows a tracing of what is certainly a similar cancel but with detail in the center portion that is absent in Figure 5. Willard illustrates what is probably the Figure 5 cancel and also shows an additional three cancels that are similar, especially in terms of the hexagonal frame with negative lines. One is the Figure 6 cancel, which he also attributes to Lansing, one has what he terms a “Club” in the center and the third with a “clover leaf” (both negative). These latter two cancels are unattributed. He further shows an oval cancel, unattributed, also with a somewhat similar design of negative lines with what appears to be a negative club in the center. Who can help sort out where these can-



Figure 7.

cels originated? Are they from one or several post offices?



Figure 8.

Figures 7 and 8 illustrate two examples, struck several days apart, of an unlisted “mask” cancel from Norwalk, Connecticut. One assumes the delicate features in the cancel would have deteriorated quickly, thus probably explaining why the cancel had not been previously reported. However, as we can see, the cancel held up quite well for the four days in April.



Figure 9. front and back

Dan Haskett submits the Figure 9 stamp with a seemingly mundane blue cancel. However, Dan recognized it in a dealer's stock as the product of a patent cancel handstamp developed by J.C. Gaston of Cincinnati that was tested successively in three Ohio post offices: Cincinnati, Columbus and Cleveland. Figure 10 shows a tracing from Cole (PT-85). The key thing about this cancel is the row of pinholes just above the bar. The pinholes are very clear on the back of Dan's stamp and hopefully they will show in the Figure 9 image of reverse. Blue ink was used at Cleveland and Cincinnati.

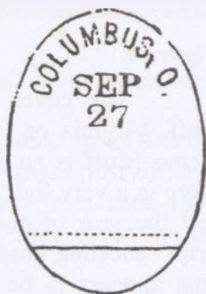


Figure 10.

Finally, Figure 11 shows a cover submitted by Matt Kewriga with the large and bold “1883” cancel listed as 4784 in Whitfield. Although unattributed by Whitfield, the 2007 USCC update does list this cover, which was in the Skinner collection. We'll also mention here two interesting Wurtsborough, New York cancels that are somewhat similar to Figure 11, the “1781” from Whitfield (4789) and the “1882” from Cole (YD-143) – see Figure 12. Wurtsborough is an operating post office in Sullivan Co. that was established in 1830. I don't recall seeing an example of the “1781” cancel and wonder whether there was some distortion that created the appearance



Figure 11.

of the “7” when the actual numeral was an “8.” Or maybe it was a commemorative cancel reflecting when the town was established (very unlikely). Readers who can report a strike of this cancel are urged to do so.

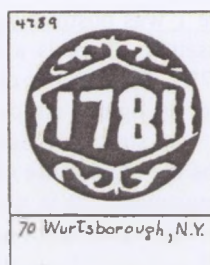


Fig. 12.

Closed Album

Thomas O. “Tuck” Taylor

Tuck Taylor died at 89 after a long illness on January 27, 2011. He was born in Washington, D.C., where he lived his early years, and graduated from Swarthmore College in 1943. He joined the Marine Corps and went to the Pacific Theater in 1944, returning home in 1945. Tuck joined DuPont in sales and was ultimately DuPont's top salesman of packaging films.

After retiring from DuPont, he and his wife became business partners in the Taylor Made Co. which sold ‘mylar’ cover and page protectors and the company was a major supplier of these to the philatelic community.

Tuck was a lifelong stamp collector. He specialized in Washington, D.C. postal history and was frequently consulted by writers and collectors on this subject. His Washington, D.C. cancellations exhibit was seen at various national shows. He also pursued other philatelic interests, one of which was collecting French Cameroons stamps as a consequence of a daughter's missionary work in what is now Cameroon. Tuck served as 1st Vice President of the USCC from 1997-2006 and supported the Club in many ways beyond that.

One Stamp, Two Cancels

by Roger D. Curran

Occasionally, more than one cancellation on a stamp is noted. The reasons vary from the obvious to the inexplicable. This article takes a brief look at several examples.



Figure 1.

The small cover in Figure 1 was postmarked on September 3 at Sandwich, Massachusetts. There is a remaining enclosure dated September 2, 1878. The double circle postmark with concentric circles killer is lightly struck and one supposes the negative "S" killer was struck in Sandwich to make a better cancellation. Perhaps the regular use of this cancel was for mail not requiring a postmark. It is not listed in Cole or Whitfield and readers who can report additional examples are urged to contact the *NEWS*.



Figure 2.

Figure 2 shows a similar circumstance except that it is likely the bold cancel was applied by the destination post office, Canandaigua, New York. The purple star-in-circle killer duplexed to the Pittsford, NY January 10 postmark is only lightly struck.

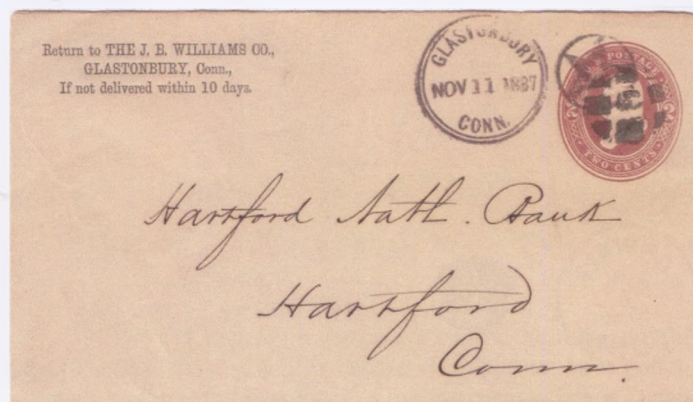


Figure 3.

One supposes that the Figure 2 handling was replicated in Figure 3, but the Glastonbury star-in-circle killer is more clearly struck, thus lessening the need for a second cancel. The ink in the grid cancel is a darker, more intense black than that in the duplex.

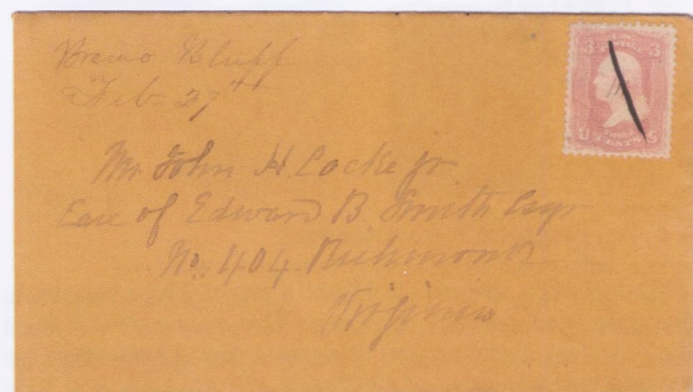


Figure 4.

The cover in Figure 4 was postmarked at Bremo Bluff, Virginia on February 27 and addressed to Richmond. Bremo Bluff is an operating post office established in 1856. There is a very light "1866" written on the cover that may reflect the year of mailing. Three short, fine, diagonal manuscript canceling lines can be seen in the middle of the stamp in what appears to be the same ink as used for the postmark.

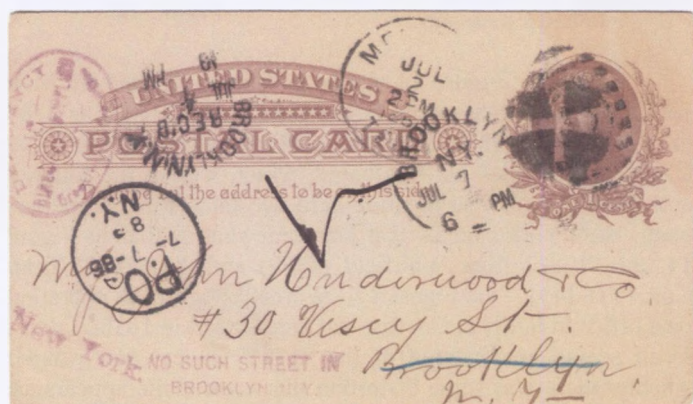


Figure 5.

We'll speculate that the bold stroke was added by a clerk at the Richmond post office to make sure the stamp wasn't reused.

The Figure 5 card got a lot of attention. It entered the mails at Memphis, Tennessee on July 2, 1866. The cross-roads cancel was duplexed to the Memphis postmark. Addressed to Brooklyn, N.Y., it was ultimately forwarded to New York City and the Brooklyn duplex dated July 7 was applied at that time. I assume the strike of the ellipse cancel from this duplex was strictly incidental and is present only because it was attached to the postmarker. In other words, it served no intended purpose.



Figure 6.

Figure 6 shows a cover addressed Mount Florence, Kansas. It entered the mails at Saint Joseph, Missouri where the circle of dots cancel was applied. It was forwarded to Topeka from Mount Florence. For some reason, the Mount Florence postmaster decided to add a second cancel to the stamp which he did presumably at the same time he struck the very incomplete Mount Florence postmark on the left side of the cover. There is an intriguing note penned at the bottom of the cover, apparently written in Mount Florence that reads as follows:

"You will find two letters in the Eugene P.O. from this office".

Who will explain this message? Mount Florence is a DPO that operated from 1857-1873. The Eugene, Kansas post office in Shawnee County, also a DPO, operated only from 1866-1870. Given the presence of the Sc 147 stamp on the cover, we can determine that the cover was mailed in 1870.

Comments on the above and reports of additional examples will be welcomed.

WANTED

Scotts Type A-25 (#65, 88, 94, etc.) both on and off cover with an S&E GE-P 29 San Francisco Type 1 Cogwheel cancel.

Ronald Williams
PO Box 132
Brunswick, TN 38014
rnbwilliams@earthlink.net

Early Wesson "Time on Bottom" Cancels

by Roger D. Curran

The February 2011 *NEWS* illustrated a Worcester, Massachusetts cover in the collection of Bob Trachimowicz, dated July 2, 1881, which is the earliest reported date for a Wesson "time on bottom" handstamp from Worcester. And Worcester was the first post office to employ Wesson TOB handstamps. The killer in Bob's example has a negative "N" in the center. A Worcester TOB cover with a negative "S" in the center has recently been reported with a date of July 4, 1881 – see Figure 1. This "S" killer had been reported previously but not with a date before July 29, 1881. It is interesting to note that the killer for the next earliest date in a Worcester TOB duplex (July 5, 1881) is the "positive north-south shaking hands" – see Whitfield tracing in Figure 2. I suspect there is a connection between the "N" and "S" cancels and the Figure 2 cancel which refers to the North and South. Figure 2 appears to be a manufactured or at least an expertly carved design. Perhaps the Wesson post office acquired that killer first and someone carved two primitive companion killers and these were the first three killers used in the new Wesson handstamp. This is very speculative, of course. Comment is invited.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

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 payable to U.S.C.C. and orders sent to U.S.C.C., 20 University Avenue, Lewisburg, PA 17837.

Big Wheels

Figure 1 shows the illustration of lot 928 in the Kelleher Sale No. 623 of January 16, 2011. The lot description included the following statement: "This Wheel of Fortune is purported to be the largest size reported." The cover is postmarked Walkerton, Indiana with date of July 30, 1883. WOF cancelers were sold by the F.P. Hammond & Co. of Chicago. Very intricate canceling designs, such as that of the WOF, were made feasible by the development of practical molds for vulcanized rubber. The above cover raises the question of whether WOF handstamps were manufactured with more than one size wheel.



Figure 1.

The typical WOF cancel measures about 17mm in diameter or a bit less. Since the cancelers were rubber faced, considerable variation in size will be noted, depending on amount of pressure used to apply them. Figure 2 shows large wheels. The strike on the Sc 210 is about 20 mm. The Figure 3 wheel, struck about six months earlier, shows a wheel about 19mm. "high" and not quite "18" mm. "wide". The Figures 2 and 3 strikes presumably came from the same handstamp. Even the Figure 3 strike is larger than the norm. Let us say that the postmaster of Goodyear was apparently rather heavy handed. Goodyear, incidentally, is a DPO that operated only from 1883-1899.



Figure 2.

The Figure 4 cover, postmarked at Washougal, Washington, and dated May 18, 1892, is instructive. The wheel on the left, at the bottom of the cover, is about 16.5mm as is, ap-

proximately, the wheel on the 10¢ green. The partial strike on the 2¢ red, however, is obviously larger although very incomplete. It wasn't possible to get a reliable measurement but this cover demonstrates the elasticity of the WOF canceler.



Figure 3.

Returning now to the Figure 1 wheel, it does not consist of a true circle but is rather oblong with greater "height" than "width". The canceler does not appear to have been duplexed to the CDS and the strike was probably "rocked in" up and down with, of course, considerable pressure.



Figure 4.

Comments and further information on this subject will be welcomed.

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Cancellation Gallery

Presented below are two covers in the collection of Bruce Campbell. The top shows one of the Danbury, Connecticut hat cancels and the bottom a "kicking mule" cancellation from Port Townsend, Washington. The bottom cover is addressed to August Dietz, a prominent authority on Confederate States philately at the time, who developed an interest in the kicking mule and wrote about the cancel. According to Lee Cornell, author of an important 1949 "booklet" entitled *The Tale of the Kicking Mule*, this cover contained a letter from W.L. Clark of Post Townsend stating an opinion as to why the mule cancel was used. This opinion was said to be the basis for a brief article by Dietz in the March 1900 issue of the *Virginia Philatelist*, the first reference to the mule in the philatelic press. Incidentally, Cornell reported that the first "mention" of the cancel was in an 1886 Scott Auction which offered the following lot: "11 copies War Dept., used unique mule rampant cancellation." The lot sold for \$2.86.



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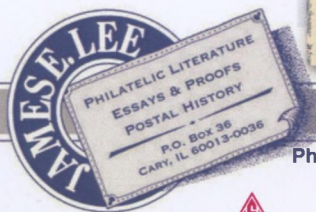
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Cancellation Gallery

Several post offices used ellipse cancels containing negative letters in a solid central section. These include but are possibly not limited to New Haven, Ct., Newton, Mass, Jersey City, N.J., Camden, N.J., Marblehead, Mass. and New Brunswick, N.J. Examples are occasionally seen with just a solid black dot in the middle. The odd character in the black dot on the middle stamp, bottom row, was discussed in the Spring 2000 *NEWS*.



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Leaf (Eight Section)
(Skinner-Eno #PP-L
unlisted) bold strike on
12c black (69), well
centered within large
margins, Very Fine and
choice. *Ex-Beane*.
[Item #002672]



Fancy Cross-Roads with "T" for Territory (Skinner-Eno #CR-X
11 var.) clear strike ties 3c rose (65) on yellow cover to West Killingly
Ct., matching "Virginia City N.T. Jan 31" dcds; Very Fine and rare
territorial fancy cancel. *Ex-Kramer*. [Item #002864]



Three-Leaf Clover
(Skinner-Eno #PP-C
unlisted) on 3c rose
(65), fresh and Ex-
tremely Fine.
[Item #003990]

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