



U.S. Cancellation Club **NEWS**

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New York City's 1875 "Rickrack" Cancel A Product of the W. Livingstone "Stamp Canceling Machine" ?

by John Donnes

In the Winter 1986 *NEWS*, Gilbert Levere reported the postal card in Figure 1. This card, and two other cards that were once in his possession, show a very distinctive and unusual New York City cancel. In the accompanying article, Roger Curran asked the question "Can someone advise us on the configuration of the face of the handstamp that produced the rickrack type border?"



Figure 1. *U.S. postal card showing the use of a N.Y. "rickrack" cancel on May 15, 1875.*

To explain in a little more detail Roger's question, he was referring to what caused the two bands of small dots and diagonal dashes appearing between the circular date stamp (CDS) and the series of short vertical bars that make up the "killer" portion of the cancel. Except for a repeat showing of the cancel in the Summer 1999 *NEWS*, Roger's question has gone unanswered. The only thing that seems to have remained constant for all these years is his coining the name "rickrack".

Not until the February 2010 *NEWS*, does Roger once again bring up this "rickrack" cancel. He now pictures seven reported examples of the cancel, two being on postal stationery envelopes, and five on postal cards. After tracing and examining the cancels in question, and doing some research on the internet, I attempt below to shed some light on this situation and throw out a plausible answer to his original question.

Examining the Cancels

Since Roger showed all the known postal cards and covers bearing these cancels in the 2010 article, we'll dispense with showing them again and instead show tracings made from each (in chronological order) and elaborate on the makeup of each cancel. (See Figures 2a through 8.)

Continued on page 136....

The U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

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

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Vince Costello	318 Hoffnagle St., Philadelphia, PA 19111
Matthew Kewriga	P.O. Box 318, Medway, MA 02053
Roger R. Rhoads	6160 Brownstone Ct., Mentor, OH 44060
Dan Richards	10012 Hazelview Dr, Charlotte, NC 28277

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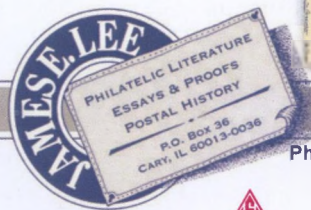
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President's Message

Dear Readers,

Hope this message finds everyone doing well, recovering from summer vacations and back-to-work blues, or maybe just resting and going over all the nice stamps and covers purchased while attending stamp shows or from the internet. Quite a bit has happened since my last message.

Last July the New Orleans based Crescent City Stamp Club held its annual "Happening" get-together and donation auction. I would like to personally thank Joe Crosby, Matthew Kewriga, Nick Kirke, and David Willig for directing \$1,000.00 of the monies spent at the auction to our organization as a charitable contribution. Speaking for myself, the Board and all the Club members, it is very much appreciated.

I believe the Club's participation in the August 2011 APS Columbus StampShow was a great success. Many thanks to all the members who stopped by the Club's booth to say hello, sign the guest registry, and offer to sit at the Club's table so we all could have time to view the exhibits and see what the dealers had to offer. We signed up ten new members and the sales of the Club's Whitfield and Wesson books were quite brisk.

Five of our members entered one frame exhibits at StampShow —Vince Costello, Roger Curran, John Donnes, Bob Grosch and Nick Kirke. Congratulations to Nick who won the USCC award for the best one frame cancellation exhibit. Nick also won the USCC award for the best multi-frame cancellation exhibit. Both of his exhibits featured New York Foreign Mail cancels. A year of *NEWS* issues (2010) was entered in the StampShow literature competition and I'm pleased to report that it received a Vermeil medal.

For those who weren't able to make the show and/or didn't have the opportunity of meeting some of the Club officers, Merritt Jenkins took a photo (shown below) and we thought it would be a nice way of introducing the officers to the general membership. (Unfortunately, Matt Kewriga and Dan Richards were not present at the time of the photo).

With the Club's general membership meeting usually held every other year, the Board is now working on where and when to hold our next general assembly. Hopefully, the place and dates will be posted in the next *NEWS*.

While on the subject of the *NEWS*, it was a pleasure seeing and reading articles by a number of different authors in the August issue. It would be great if every article had a different author's name. Give it a try, I'm sure Roger would be pleased to do the editing.

Respectfully, John Donnes



Officers pictured from the left are John Donnes, Vince Costello, Roger Curran, and Roger Rhoads.

Help Wanted – Urgent – Whitfield Update

Wendell Triplett has been working on a project to update the Whitfield book on 19th century U.S. cancellations by assembling new information about listed cancels that was not available when the book was first published in 2002 or at the time of the first update in 2007. Wendell has collected considerable new data in such areas as name of originating post office, dates of use, additional ink colors, stamps upon which particular cancels have been found, etc. We hope to publish the update in early 2012. If you can supply updating information for the Whitfield book and if it is at all feasible for you to do so by December 15, please send it to Wendell at triplettusa@yahoo.com or 3606 New Colony Drive, Wilmington, NC 28412. Of course, the more information we can provide, the better for this important cancellation resource. Thanks!

NYC's 1875 "Rickrack" Cancel from the front page...

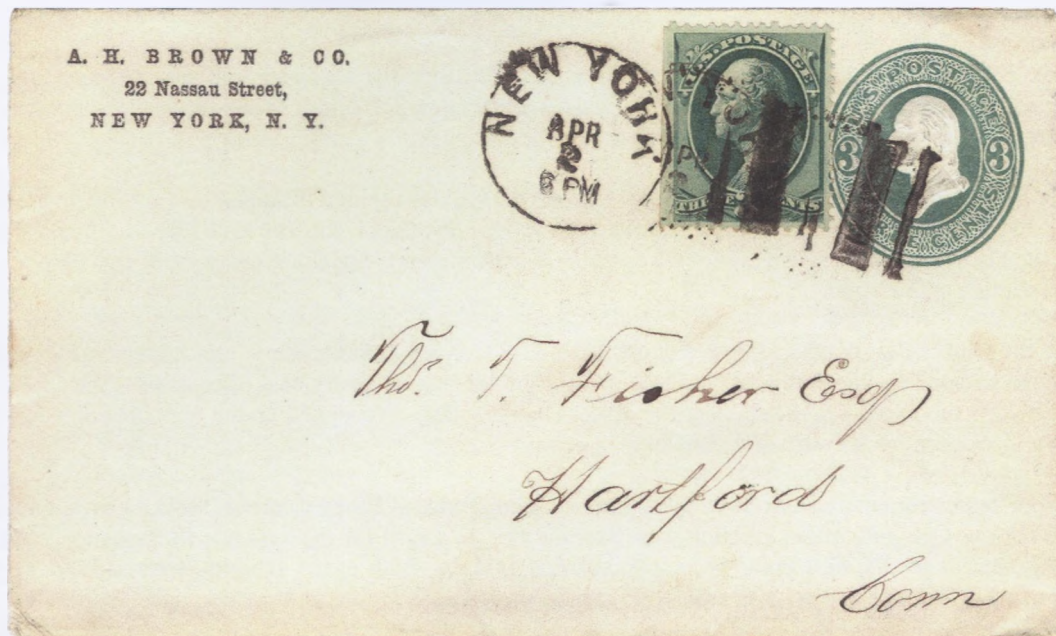


Figure 2. The earliest recorded use of this cancel.

All examples have a number of things in common. As expressed in Roger's 2010 article, they all appear to have been canceled in the April - June 1875 period. Besides the "rickrack" appearance, all strikes show a fracture or break (in the same place) in the "K" of "YORK", indicating that the same CDS was used to create the seven postmarks. And last, but not least, all the "killers", though formed by a series of vertical bars, show slight differences. (It is these differences in width, the heavy inking, and the varying angle and apparent movement of the bars, that lead me to the speculation and conclusion as to what may have created these cancels).

The cover (see Figure 2) with its two tracings (Figure 2a) shows the earliest reported example of this cancel. It appears that the cancels on this cover were applied within seconds of each other or, at least, in repeated operations. It also appears that, when comparing Figure 2a to Figure 2b, the very pointed and finely toothed "rickrack" rails are, in relationship to the CDS, both located in the same place which would indicate that they were part of, and firmly attached to, the outside of the CDS.



Figure 2a. Tracings made from the Figure 2 cover.

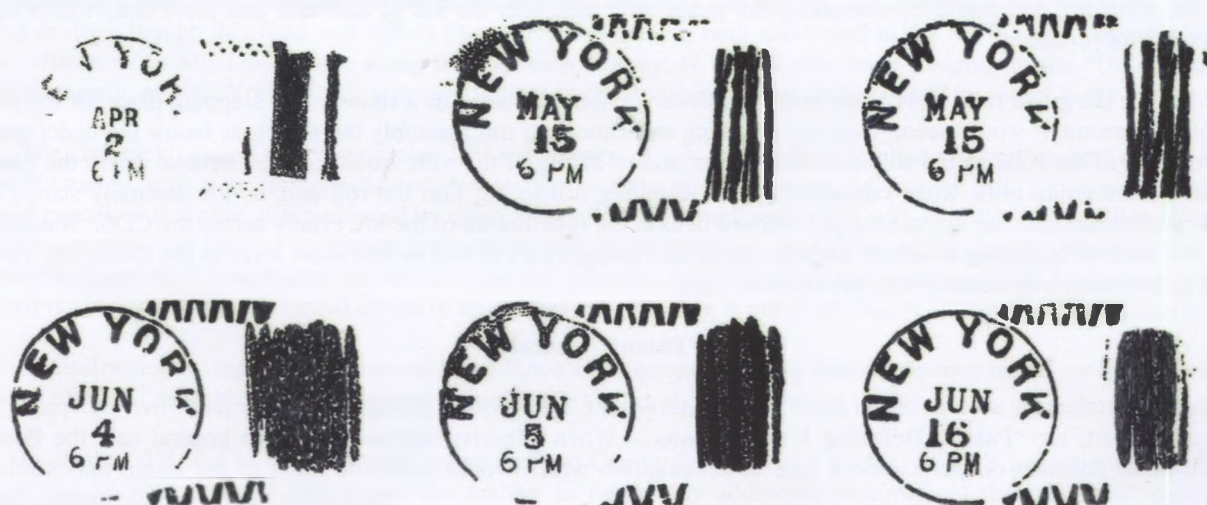
The two vertical bar "killers", besides having differing vertical bar layout arrangements, are not in the same position when compared to the location of the CDS and "rickrack" rails. The differences in vertical bar layout might also indicate that these cancels are not, in the true sense, duplex cancels (that being a canceler where the "killer" and the CDS are both within the same hand canceling device).

The May and June examples, though now having apparently modified "rickrack" rails, still show the rails as being attached to the CDS while the "killer" portion of the cancel varies in its placement and vertical bar layout arrangement.

With all of the above cancels having the same aforementioned characteristics, one might ask "What type of canceling device could create a marking that would have the same CDS (as in a handstamp), but apply a varying and ever changing style "killer"?"

The W. Livingstone "Stamp Canceling Machine"

It appears that, in the latter part of 1874 and early 1875, William Livingstone, a gentleman from Nalley Stream, Queens County, N.Y., was designing and building a device which was, according to the subsequent patent, "for the purpose of stamping



Figures 3 to 8. Tracings made from the remaining six recorded covers shown in their chronological dates of usage in April to June, 1875.

letters with the name of post-office, dates, &c., and at the same time defacing the stamps thereon". A patent application was applied for on November 20, 1875 and on March 14, 1876 Mr. Livingstone received Letters Patent No. 174,734.

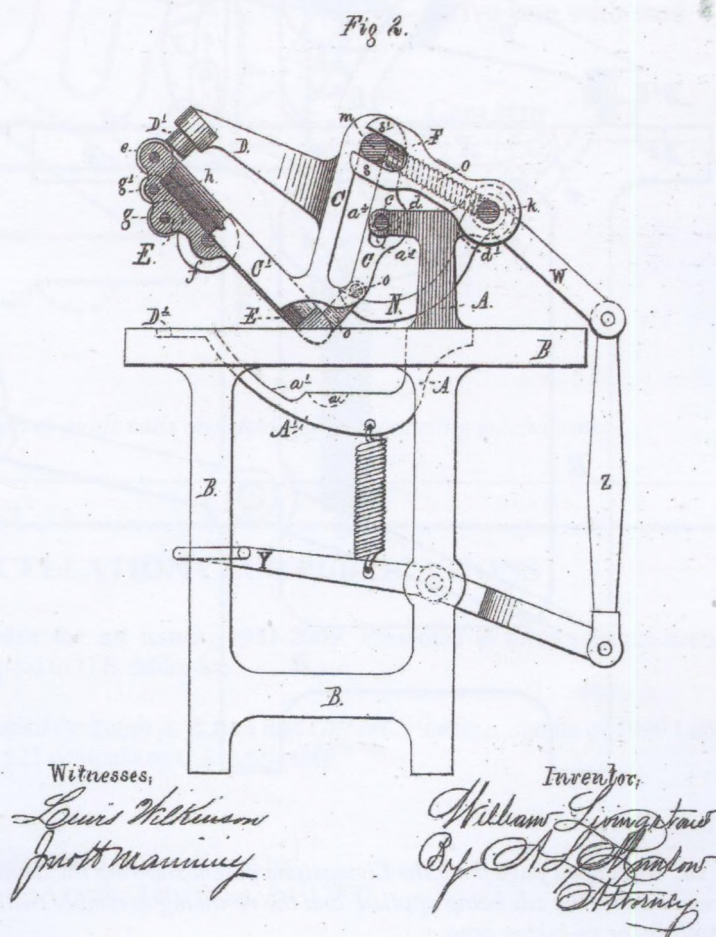
The device, as shown in pages from this patent (see Figures 9 and 10), was designed to be a foot peddle driven apparatus that would, on its downward motion, cancel the stamp with a "roller" (designated in the patent as wheel "g" on mechanism "E"), leave an impression of the CDS with mechanism "D1", and then, on the restoring action to its home position, re-ink both of these independent mechanisms.

The action of the canceling roll in the re-inking assembly is most revealing. The patent describes this assembly as being a "bifurcated rocking carriage". This apparently allowed the canceling roll to contact the subject letter placed on the table below it, and then, through a swiveling action, allow the assembly to move up and over and then down into a re-inking area. It is this swivel action that could account for the doubling and/or smearing seen in a number of the cancels in Figure 3 through Figure 8. If the canceling roll could contact the cover on its downward movement, I see nothing in the patent's design to prevent it from, once again, contacting the cover on the reverse motion.

On the subject of the "rickrack" guide rails, I've taken the liberty (see Figure 11) of redrawing, and inserting into the Livingstone patent, the pair of

Figure 9. A page from the Livingstone patent showing the device in its home position.

W. LIVINGSTONE
STAMP CANCELING MACHINE.
No. 174,734. Patented March 14, 1876.



notched rails that, I believe, were added to the design at some point. This tracing rendition also shows at what point in the operation the re-inking roll would be contacting the guide rails and, with the aid of cam arm and drive arm, would be driven across the CDS for re-inking.

I believe the guide rails served two main functions. First, they acted as a runway and stopping place for the rising ink roll assembly. Second, it would seem, once the re-inking and canceling roll assembly left the chute below the under part of the table, the turning of the rolls would stop and distribution and re-inking of the rolls would cease. I believe it was the function of the notches on the guide rails, when contacted by the re-inking roll to dig into the roll and, as the assembly started moving forward, to once again activate the turning process and help in the distribution of the ink evenly across the CDS. Naturally, with the guide rail notches receiving a certain amount of ink, and being a part of and on the same level as the CDS, they could very well leave an impression on contact with the cover or card.

A "Patent" Cancel?

In the introductory section of the *Scott 2010 Specialized Catalog of United States Stamps and Covers* a "patent" cancel is described, in part, as: "**Patent Defacing Cancellations** – When adhesive stamps came into general use, the Post Office Department made constant efforts to find a type of cancellation which would make the reuse of the stamp impossible". The

statement went on to explain the three basic groups, one of which consisted of a cancel that would have, besides its normal inking area, the addition of small pins and/or needles in its makeup. These pins would penetrate the paper, leaving small holes that could fill with ink and would make cleaning and reuse of the stamp much more difficult.

In the February 2010 *NEWS*, Roger alluded to the fact that the two early covers, bearing the April strikes of the "rickrack" cancels were, at one time, in a patent cancel collection formed by the lake Hubert Skinner.

On examining these two covers the fine pointed "rickrack" notches do, in fact, leave a series of small holes in the cover. Noting this, it is understandable why Mr. Skinner placed the covers where he did. However, it is also clear that, within a few days of the early April usages, the teeth on the guide rails, from May onward, had been reworked and modified so as to give them a much larger and flatter surface area.

With this change in design, it appears the designer was intentionally removing the effects of the pointed teeth and any damage (or wear and tear) they might be giving to the cover and/or re-inking roll. It is for the above reason that I personally believe this "rickrack" cancel was not originally designed or intended to be a "patent" cancel.

Conclusion

During the 1874 and early 1875 time frame, the NYPO, with its anticipated move to a new and much larger post office,

Fig 3.

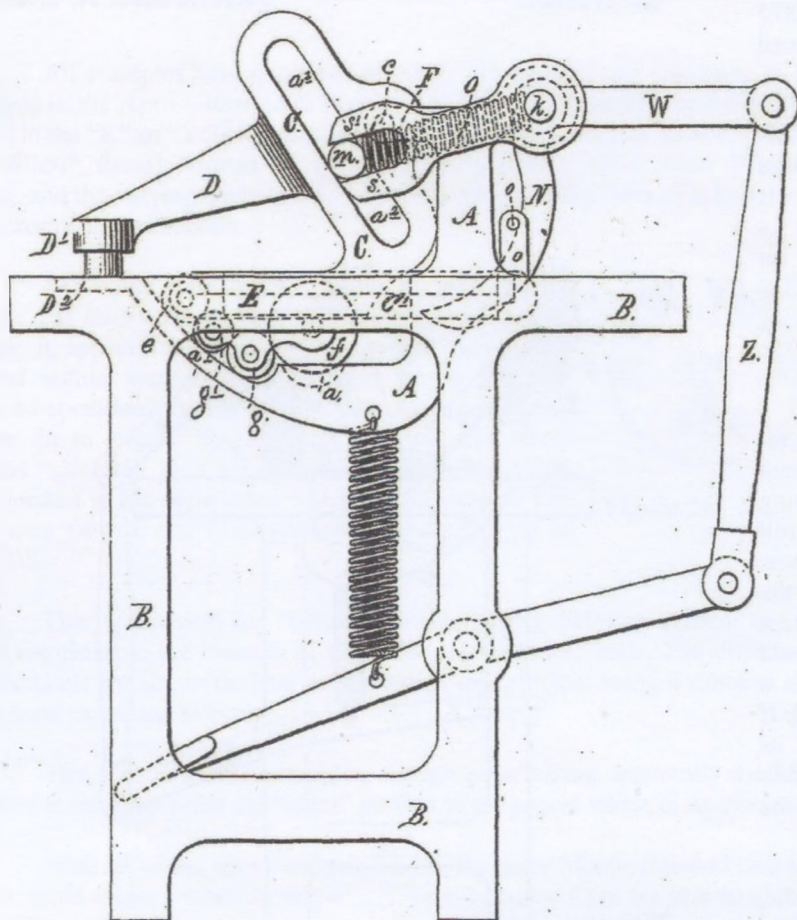


Figure 10. A cropped page from the Livingstone patent showing the device in its fully pressed state, the cds being applied, and the re-inking assembly (with its canceling roll) in the re-inking area.

was experimenting with and evaluating the use of the standard duplexed handstamp. We also know that a number of mechanical canceling devices, though this field was still in its infancy, were being built and tested in the NYPO and various other U.S. big city post offices. With Mr. Livingstone being from Queens County, N.Y. and also being assignor to the "United States Postal Machine Company, of New York, N.Y.", it is very logical and reasonable that his device would be tested in the NYPO.

The "rickrack" cancels, in my opinion, show evidence of not having been applied with a standard duplex handstamp canceler but rather with a more sophisticated device that could create, and what I'd like to call, a compound cancel. The compound cancel, in this case, was produced by using an applied "hammer" style CDS with a "roller" style killer. With the dates of the known covers, the time of the patent application, and the mechanical capabilities of the device delivering this particular style compound cancel, I would consider the Livingstone patented canceling device a good candidate for having created these cancels. (It is not unusual for a patented device to have been used months, if not years, before its awarded patent date).

Naturally, not having any documented proof that a Livingstone patented device was ever tested, or for that matter, even built, much of what I've expressed and the conclusions made are purely speculative.

In closing, I'd like to thank Roger Curran and Joe Crosby for sharing a portion of their collections with me and the readers of the *NEWS*. And I'd like to ask the readers to report any additional examples of the "rickrack" cancel, or new information on this subject, to our editor for any potential follow up articles.

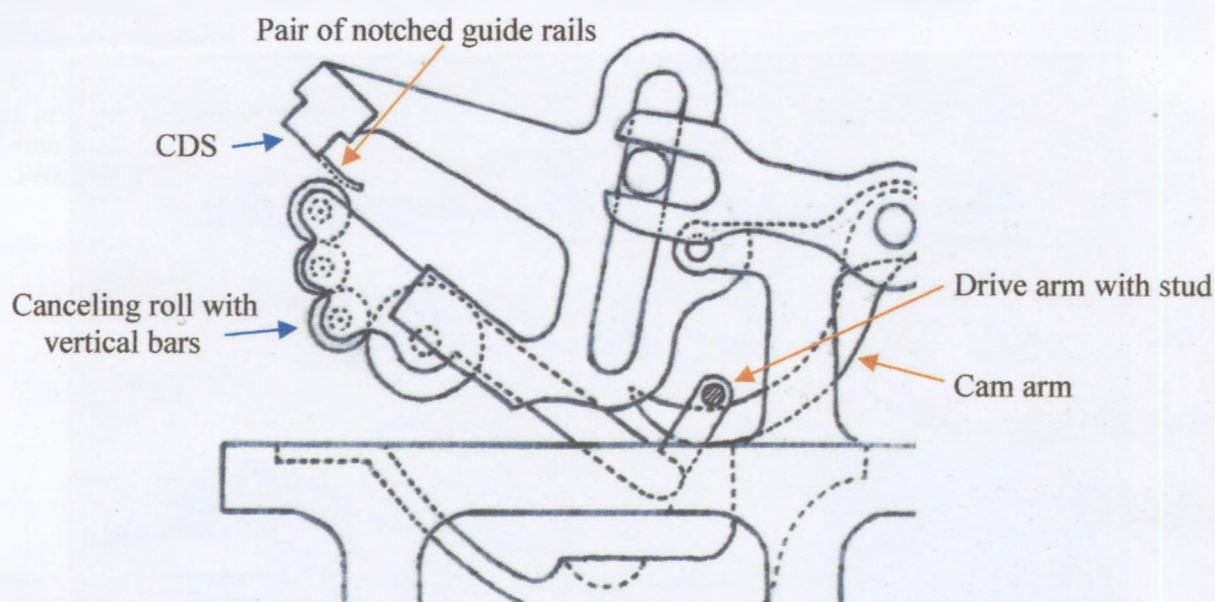


Figure 11. Drawing by the author showing the addition of guide rails and detail of the canceling mechanism.

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Wesson "Time-On-Bottom" Markings Revisited, Compiled by Ralph A. Edson and Gilbert L. Levere, update of 1990 Laposta monograph, 190p., see p. 70 of November 2010 *NEWS*, \$25 postpaid to U.S. addresses.

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New York Foreign Mail Update, Part 3

by Dan Richards



Figure 1.

The unlisted NYFM killer in Figure 1 is three wedges in a circular pattern measuring 21 to 22.5mm. This killer is found primarily in red both on and off cover. All the covers with red cancels are accompanied by a Supplementary Mail Type A auxiliary marking. Of the five recorded covers only one is known with a black cancel. The earliest usage date is September 12, 1872 and the latest is October 2, 1872. Note: one should be careful in identifying this cancel in black on off cover stamps as other towns used this same style of cancel.

The following are the five recorded cover dates with this NYFM unlisted cancel:

Date	Origin	Destination	Cancel	Notes
1. Sept. 12, 1872	New York, NY	Frankfurt, Germany	Red	Stolen
2. Sept. 21, 1872	New York, NY	London, England	Red	Pictured in Weiss on page 381.
3. Sept. 26, 1872	New York, NY	Frankfurt, Germany	Red	
4. Sept. 28, 1872	New York, NY	London, England	Red	Stolen
5. Oct. 2, 1872	New York, NY	London, England	Black	

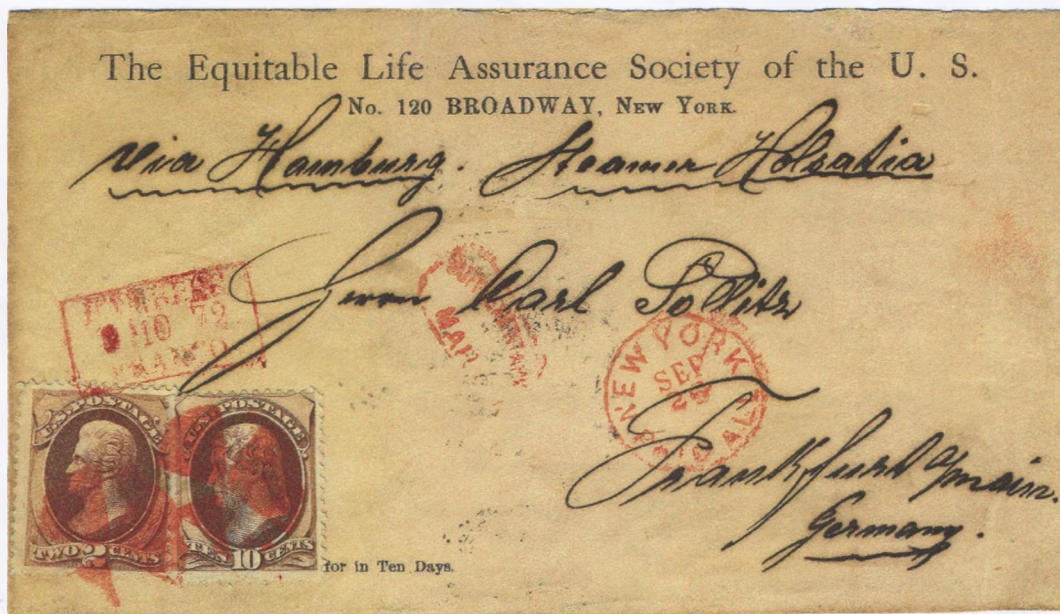


Figure 2. September 26, 1872 New York to Frankfurt, Germany. (Census #3)

The Equitable Life ad cover in Figure 2 is dated New York City September 26, 1872 and addressed to Frankfurt, Germany. The 2¢ and 10¢ Nationals are canceled with a pair of the unlisted three wedge strikes in red. The 12¢ prepaid the 6¢ single letter NGU rate via Hamburg plus 6¢ for the Supplementary Mail fee. It was carried aboard HAPAG Line's *Holsatia*.

The cover in Figure 3 has two strikes in black of our subject killer. It is the only known cover with this cancel in black and was not used on Supplementary Mail. The cover is dated NYC October 2, 1872, addressed to London and franked with a pair of 6 cent Nationals prepaying double the 6¢ letter rate to London. The cover was carried aboard Guion Line's *Wisconsin* that arrived at Liverpool on October 14, 1872.

The covers in Figures 4 and 5 are from Ardy Callendar's collection that was stolen and not recovered. They are presumed lost to philately. The first cover originated in Santiago de Cuba, Cuba and carried privately by forwarder to New York where it entered the mails on September 28, 1872 destined for London, England. The 6¢ National was canceled by the three wedge killed in red and prepaid the 6¢ treaty rate with the 6¢ supplementary fee paid in cash. The cancel is heavily struck and show slightly different than the other covers. It was carried on Inman Line's *City of Montreal* that arrived at Queenstown on October 8, 1872. The second cover is dated New York September 12, 1872 and addressed to Frankfurt, Germany with two 6¢



Figure 3. October 2, 1872
New York to London, Eng-
land. (Census #5).
The only strike in black.



Figure 4. Santiago
de Cuba, Cuba to
London, England via
New York September
28, 1872.
(Census #4)



Figure 5. September
12, 1872 New York
to Frankfurt, Ger-
many (Census #1)

National singles that prepaid the 6¢ NGU rate plus 6¢ for the Supplementary Mail fee. It was carried on the HAPAG Line's *Frisia* that arrived in Plymouth on September 22, 1872.

The author would appreciate any information on this cancel or on noteworthy aspects of other NYFM cancels. Please send via email to dhr327@att.net.

In NYFM Update, part 4, an additional unlisted NYFM grid will be presented.

Quarterly Payment Markings



Figure 1.

Post offices, especially the larger ones, had myriad postal handstamps beyond those designed for the routine postmarking and canceling of first class mail, and it seems as though the full spectrum found use, at one time or another, as happenstance cancelers of postage stamps. Odd usages abound and some are decidedly scarce. One such example is the use of a quarterly payment marking. Figure 1 illustrates two examples, the 3¢ green canceled by a marking that appears similar to but actually differs from reported NYPO markings, and the 2¢ brown by a Philadelphia marking. These handstamps were designed for use on unstamped covers enclosing small periodicals to indicate that bulk rate postage had been paid. The actual amount of postage paid was dependent on the numbers of times a quarter the periodical was sent out.

Figure 2 shows a cover in the collection of John Donnes with a New York quarterly payment marking. The enclosure is a prices current that must have been updated at regular intervals. *The American Stampless Cover Catalog* (Volume 1, 1997) illustrates two New York quarterly payment markings.

Figure 3 shows a reduced size image of a cover bearing the same marking that is on the 2¢ brown. Dick Graham illustrated this cover on page 47 of his *United States Postal History Sampler* published by Linn's Stamp News in 1992. A tracing of the marking from page 18-8 of Part III of Tom Clarke's *A Catalog of Philadelphia Postmarks 18th Century to the Present* is shown in Figure 4.

What were the circumstances of the strikes in Figure 1, given that these handstamps were not intended for stamped mail? Was it just a case of some stamped mail mixed in by mistake with the bulk mail? The 3¢ stamp certainly implies first class mail that would have needed a dated postmark. Comments and reports of additional examples of this type of marking used as a canceler will be welcomed.

Figure 2. Nov. 25, 1871 cover with "New York Paid Quarterly" cir. datestamp.



Figure 2a.

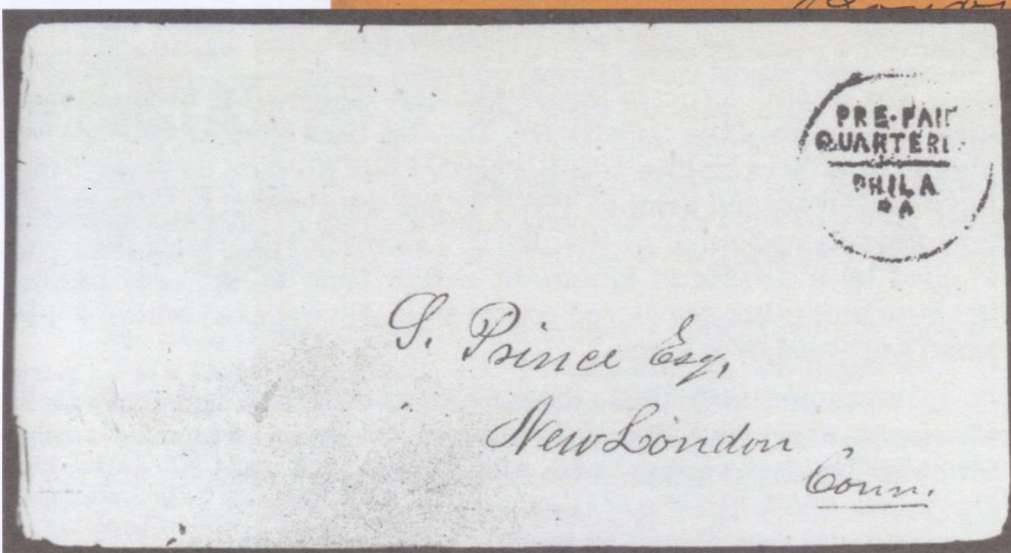


Figure 4.

Figure 3. Cover with "Pre-Paid Quarterly / Phila Pa" cir. h.s.

New Wesson "T.O.B." Reports – Chicago, Ill. and Washington, D.C.



Figure 1.

Chicago was a major user of Wesson cancels. A series of duplex handstamps with ellipse numbers "1" to "16" was employed heavily during the 1883-1885 period. Two Wesson handstamps are reported to have been in service earlier – see Figures 1 and 2.¹ The 2010 USCC publication *Wesson "Time on Bottom Markings Revisited"* lists Figure 1 used from 1/14/82-2/26/83 and Figure 2 from 3/29/82-4/10/82. Just recently, the cover in Figure 3 has come to the attention of the *NEWS*. An "A" is assumed to be in the center of the 3-ring killer. We contacted Chicago postal history specialist Leonard Piskiewicz. He placed overlays of the Figures 1 and 2 postmarks on the Figure 3 postmark and determined that the Figures 2 and 3 postmarks are identical. Currently, the earliest use known to Piskiewicz of Figure 2 markings is March 22, 1882. Therefore, we can say the Figure 2 killer was placed in this handstamp not more than two days later than the March 20, 1882 date of the Figure 3 postmark. One assumes the Figure 3 duplex was subjected to only a brief, perhaps very brief, trial. If readers can report additional strikes of the Figure 3 cancel (on or off cover) or an earlier date for the Figure 2 cancel, please contact the *NEWS*.



Figure 2.



Figure 3. March 20, 1882 Chicago, Ill. Wesson "T.O.B." datestamp with "A" in three-ring killer.



Figure 4. May 17, 1883 Washington, D.C. Wesson "T.O.B." datestamp.

The 2010 "Time on Bottom" publication mentioned above announced an important discovery by Dennis Schmidt of a Washington, D.C. Wesson postmark – see Figure 4. No Wesson from Washington, D.C. had heretofore been reported. The image is not the actual size. The diameter of the postmark is 26.5-27 mm and it is not duplexed to a killer. The "3" above "D.C." is suggestive of Washington received postmarks which contained any of several numerals, the purpose of which presumably was to allow the identification of the clerk using the handstamp. Schmidt reports three strikes, all on penalty envelopes which, of course, required only a postmark and no canceler. Possibly a wider usage of this marking may be discovered in the future. Reports of additional examples are eagerly sought.

1. Piskiewicz, Leonard *Chicago Postal Markings and Postal History* James E. Lee Publishing, Cary, IL (2006), p. 54.

Ellipse Cancellations

Ellipse cancellations played a major role in the evolution of 19th century U.S. cancellations. They were the bridge between the era of highly individualized cancels and the advent of machine cancels which have, of course, been the overwhelmingly dominant cancellation form for more than a century. Unfortunately, the rather standardized non-artistic appearance of ellipse cancels and their almost universal application in black ink have resulted in only limited collector interest. The good news, however, is that there are great opportunities for important information to be discovered about this period of cancellation history. And excellent collections can be formed at comparatively modest cost.



Figure 1.

Dan Haskett recently submitted a number of interesting ellipse cancels to the *NEWS*. We'll begin with the very significant cancel in Figure 1. There are only two reported on-cover examples of this Chicago cancel, one dated July 22, 1889 and the other July 30, 1889. Machine cancel specialists believe this cancel may well be the product of a "mechanical device" patented by Chicago resident John Sigwalt, Jr. The patent was issued on March 5, 1889 and involves the use of an inked ribbon. The July 22 example shows ink smudges in and around the cancel portion of the duplex marking that are thought to be suggestive of an inked ribbon. However, the July 30 strike (see page 63 of the Leonard Piskiewicz Chicago book) does not show such smudges nor does the Figure 1 stamp. Also, the "large, thin and evenly spaced" letters and numbers in the CDS time, date and year lines are considered suggestive of a mechanical aspect – use of type wheels which could be rotated to make changes rather than the traditional insertion and removal of individual slugs. Except for the Figure 2 illustration, the above information comes from page 49 of *U. S. Classic Machine Cancels 1871-1991*, published in 1995 by the Machine Cancel Society. The Figure 2 tracing appears in *A Primer/U.S. Machine Postal Markings*, authored and published in 2005 by Bart Billings, Bob Payne and Reg Morris. These two references, incidentally, are outstanding sources of information on 19th century U.S. machine cancels.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.



Figure 5.

Figure 3 presents an unusual combination of stamp and cancel. On the large Banknotes, one can put together an attractive group of New York station letter ellipses but it is unlikely that this New York Station "O" killer would be among them. That is because this cancel was introduced after the currency of the large Banknotes, probably not before December 1890 and perhaps later. That Figure 3 is a late use of the stamp is confirmed by the year date "91" struck at the lower left.

Another ellipse not often found on the large Banknotes is shown as Figure 4 with "K.B." in the center. It is assumed that "K.B." stands for the Kings Bridge Station in the Bronx. This ellipse was surely placed in service after the currency of the Sc 210 stamp, probably not earlier than January 1898. Figure 5 illustrates the cancel on a Sc 279B stamp.



Figure 6.



Figure 7.



Figure 8.

The last page of the May 2011 *NEWS* illustrated several examples of the unusual ellipse type that has a negative letter in the center. Letters "B," "E," "G," "H," "N," "S," and "W" were shown. An "M" from Marblehead, Massachusetts is also known. A "C" can now be added to the list – see Figure 6. These cancels are very difficult to find on denominations other than

one cent and three cent. Figure 7 shows a nice strike on a 6c. A vertical bar ellipse with a solid center enclosing what appears to be a letter or number, albeit unidentifiable, can now be shown – see Figure 8. Your editor has never before seen a vertical bar ellipse with a solid center. This killer may well have been hand carved.



Figure 9.

The *NEWS* has previously shown hand carved ellipse cancels, presumably created by small town postmasters, mimicking cancels noted on incoming mail from larger post offices. Three additional examples are presented in Figure 9.



Figure 10.

We'll call the very distinctive Figure 10 cancel an ellipse although the ends are more blunt than the typical "ellipse" cancel. Pencil on the bottom of the piece is "Millersburg, KY 'B'" which was added by a previous owner. Checking the online USPS postmaster database, we find that the Millersburg, KY postmaster from October 24, 1876 through August 24, 1885 was a Rezin B. Bouldren.

The cover in Figure 11 is of considerable importance. The ellipse cancel is part of an extensive set that was used by Boston. Examples are not particularly common and usage appears to be centered on the January through March 1878 period. These were the first ellipses used by Boston. The bible of early Boston postal history, *Boston Postmarks to 1890* by Blake and Davis, lists most numbers in this set through "44" and then jumps to "63." All numbers through "44" were probably used as numbers missing in Blake and Davis are seen.



Figure 11. Boston, Mass. with Number "63" ellipse killer.

The Figure 11 "63" is intriguing. It is higher than any other ellipse number used by U.S. post offices during the large Banknote era. New York City employed ellipse numbers as high as "52" on large Banknotes and no other post office came close to that. Why a "63"? Were there, in fact, Boston numbers above "44" for which strikes just haven't yet turned up? The Figure 11 cover provides an answer.

To begin with, the Figure 11 cover was very likely the basis for the Blake and Davis tracings shown here as Figure 12. Note the same date and time in the CDS. When placed over the Figure 11 cover, a transparency of the Figure 12 tracings

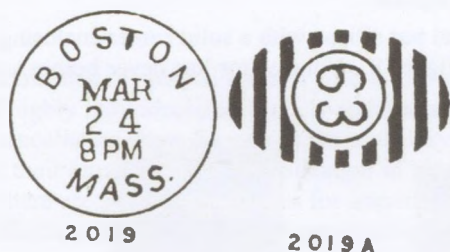


Figure 12.



Figure 13.

matches the duplex markings on the cover very well. The pair of Blake and Davis tracings shown in Figure 13 reflect a similar orientation of the ellipse to the CDS except that the ellipse is what may be called “face up” rather than “face down.” This early set of Boston ellipses, incidentally, is well known for showing the ellipse, in a significant percentage of cases, askew to a greater or lesser extent, in relation to the CDS.



Figure 14.

Figure 14 shows a “39” from the Boston set. When a transparency of this stamp is placed over the ellipse on the Figure 11 cover, there is a good match. Is the Blake and Davis tracing in Figure 12 actually an incomplete “39” that was misinterpreted? The Figure 11 strike is incomplete. This is probably due to uneven striking surface caused by the stamp being raised above the cover to which it is affixed.

There is, however, a “fly in the ointment” with thinking the “63” is really a “39.” Transparencies show that the postmarks in Figures 12 and 13 do not match. Were there two different Boston handstamps with a “39” ellipse? That seems doubtful unless two sets of handstamps were supplied at the outset because these ellipses were used only for a short time and ordering a replacement for a broken or lost handstamp appears unlikely. Was there an error in the listing? Human error is always possible but the Blake and Davis book has proven to be very reliable. Despite the lack of a postmark match, when considering all of the above, your editor now believes there was no “63.”

The Figure 11 cover and the transparencies mentioned above were sent to John Donnes for his study and comparison with strikes in his collection. He concluded, as did your editor, that the “63” is actually a “39.” John did a tracing of the Figure 11 markings that is shown here as Figure 15 along with his comments. He makes very telling points about the numeral in question curving inward on the one side (along the edge of the stamp) and stopping abruptly on the other that is not along the edge of the stamp. Reader comment is invited as are reports of pertinent cancels.

Finally, Dan submits the “What was the clerk thinking?” postmark with not one but two months indicated —see Figure 16. Given that the date is the first of the month, we can speculate that the September slugs were correctly entered but removal of the August slugs was overlooked. A similar error was presented on page 44 of the August 2010 *NEWS* involving an 1880s Boston postmark with two time designations (6PM and 7PM) but no month.



Figure 16.

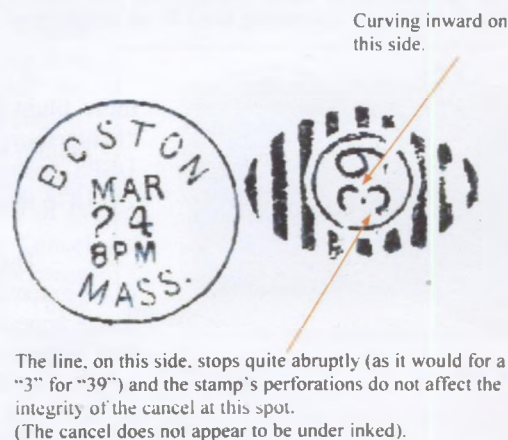



Figure 15.

The Classic Cancel

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Early Whittled Cancels



Figure 1.

When postage stamps were first introduced by the Post Office Department, the 1847 regulations specified that they were to be canceled either by an "instrument" issued to "certain" (larger) post offices or by making a cross with a pen. The cancel produced by the "instrument" is shown in Figure 1. While the 1851 postal regulations didn't make mention of the instrument, a Postmaster General's letter dated June 10, 1851 discussing "Regulations Concerning Postage Stamps" did state that an "instrument" would be provided to the "larger" post offices. An interesting question is how long did the Post Office Department continue to furnish these cancelers. Not long after the 1851 issue stamps were introduced in mid-1851 there was a rather precipitous drop-off in use of this grid that coincided with the rapid ascendancy of using the postmarker as a canceler.

The October 1851 issue of the *United States Postal Guide and Official Advertiser* carried a very interesting statement in Section 9, page 104, responding to a question received from a North Carolina postmaster who, we can presume, did not receive the Post Office Department grid:

In relation to canceling stamps, the canceling is primarily required of the mailing office, and in an office like our correspondent's, it may be done by scoring the stamp with a pen, but in less than a minute he can make perhaps the best instrument out of a piece of cork by cutting it so as to leave a few ridges at one of the ends.

This statement was made, of course, very early during the currency of 1851 issue stamps and there were very few post offices using whittled corks at that time. Remember, such cancels are virtually nonexistent on 1847 issue stamps. One of the earliest users of the whittler's knife was Cincinnati, Ohio. In Figure 2, we show a Cincinnati cover dated August 8, 1851 with the stamp canceled by a circle of wedges cancel. This cover was lot 1431 in Siegel sale #1011 of June 2011. The piece in Figure 3 shows a similar Cincinnati cancel on an orange brown stamp. The date in the postmark cannot be read with certainty. It may be July 24. Surely, the year is 1851.

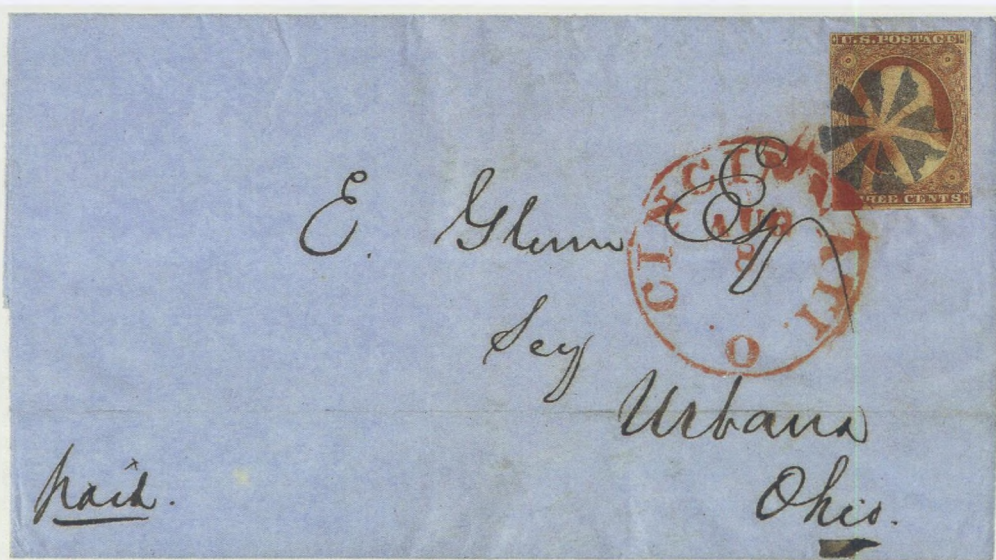


Figure 2. August 8, 1851 from Cincinnati, Ohio with 1851 3¢ orange brown canceled by circle of wedges. (Photo courtesy of Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries).

If readers can show other early (we'll define it here as 1851) uses of whittled cancels, please contact the NEWS.



Figure 3. July (?) 24, 1851 piece from Cincinnati, OH with same circle of wedges.

Precursors to the Doane Cancellations

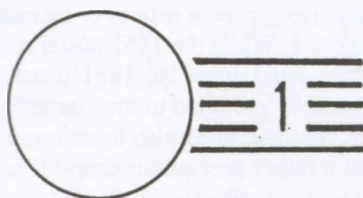


Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.



Figure 5.

A popular collecting specialty involves markings from a type of rubber-faced handstamp that was distributed by the Post Office Department to an estimated 28,000 post offices (largely 4th class) during the 1903-1906 period. These handstamps were intended to improve the clarity of postmarks which too often had been found to be indistinct.

The first serious study of these markings was undertaken by Edith R. Doane beginning in the 1950s. She first published information on the subject in the *NEWS* in a series of three articles beginning in the September 1970 issue. She called these markings "U.

S. 20th century numeral cancellations" but they became known as "Doane cancellations" due to her leadership in this field. Mrs. Doane published in *La Posta* beginning in 1978 and a 1993 La Posta Publications book contained a first nationwide census of Doane cancels. A revised edition, *United States Doanes*, edited by Richard W. Helbock and Gary Anderson, appeared in 1997 and lists more than 21,000 different Doane cancels.

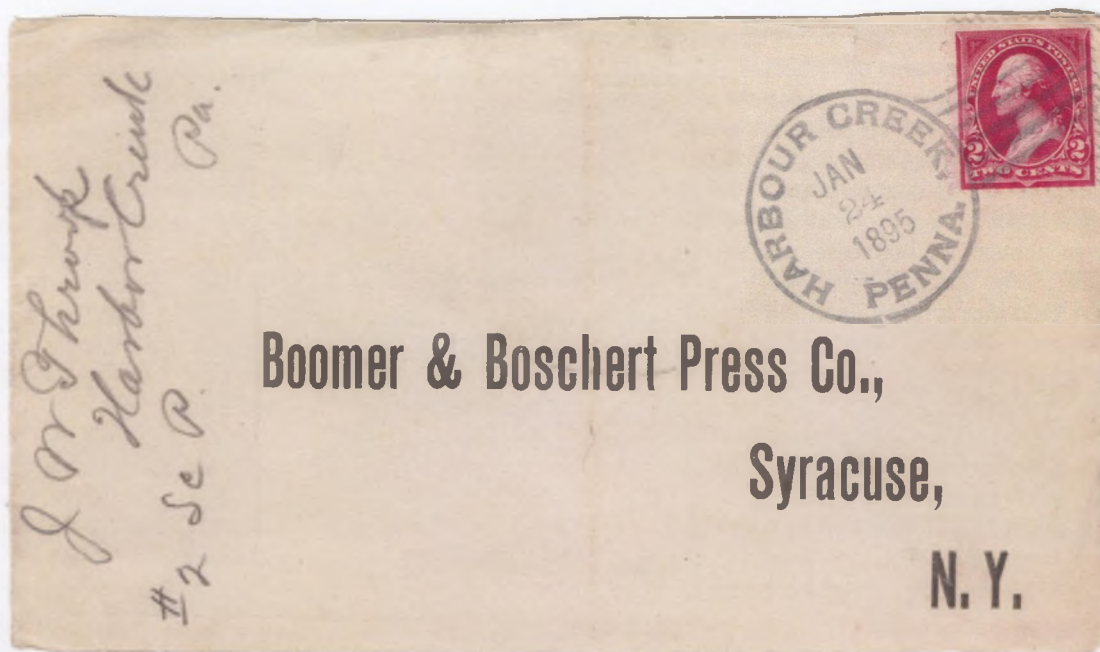


Figure 6. January 24, 1895, Harbour Creek, Pa. Doane precursor

There were three similar designs issued by the POD and what is referred to by collectors as “Type 1” is shown here as Figure 1, an image presented in 1997 book mentioned above. Copies of actual Type 1 postmarks are illustrated in Figure 2. These are taken from the early articles in the *NEWS* by Mrs. Doane.

The basic design concept – circular postmark with several horizontal bars placed close to the postmark – was not new in 1903. Although this style became, of course, very common with the Doanes, examples of similar designs are seen during the later years of the 19th century. They are by no means rare, but are slightly scarce. The vast majority came from rubber-faced hand-stamps. Four examples are shown in Figures 3-6. The earliest example that your editor has noted appeared on page 57 of the July/August 2011 issue of *Stamp Insider*. It is shown here in Figure 7 courtesy of Heather Sweeting, Associate Editor. The cover is postmarked Palermo, Oswego Co., N.Y. and dated April 12, 1880. The strike is rather light and the six horizontal bars on the 1¢ stamp unfortunately will not show clearly in the image.



Figure 7. April 12, 1880, Palermo, N.Y. with earliest recorded use Doane 6-Bar style killer.

Unusual Uses of "Wheel of Fortune" Cancels

Figures 1 and 2 show uses of "wheel of fortune" cancels that may say something about the work ethic in small town post offices. Like all postmasters, Mr. Kline (Figure 1) was accustomed to seeing stamps placed in the upper right corners of the covers he processed. Even though in this case the stamp was placed on the left side, he apparently thought it a good idea to put a cancel in the upper right corner in accord with established procedure.

Figure 2 shows great thoroughness. The 2¢ Columbian bears three cancellations: a shield in circle that was probably duplexed to the Abiff, Tennessee postmark and two strikes of what was probably an unduplexed "wheel of fortune" killer. Why postmaster



Figure 1.

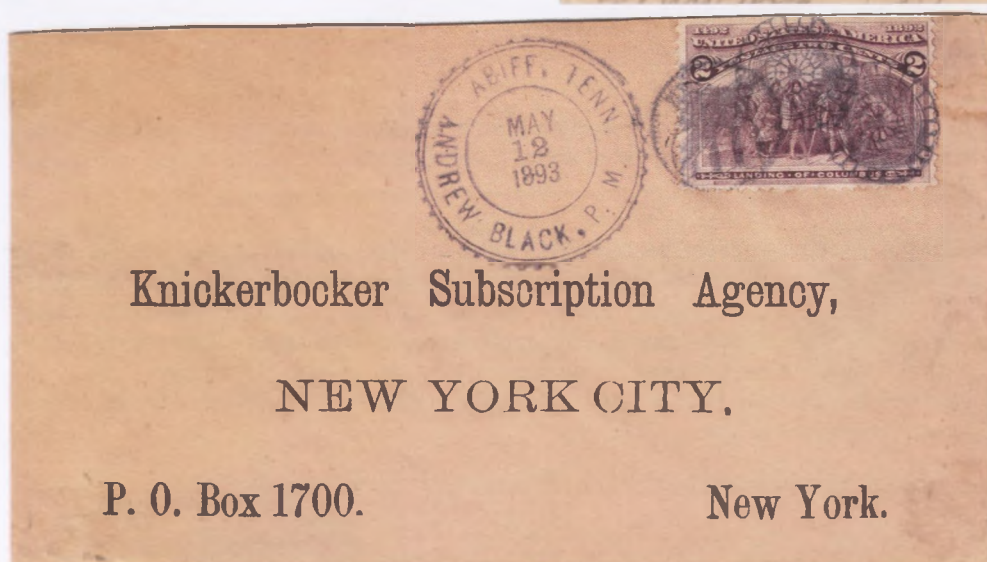


Figure 2.

Black thought the two wheels were needed is not completely clear. Perhaps he hadn't yet seen many of the unusually large postage stamps that had been issued less than six months earlier and thought more than one cancel was called for.

1862 Report of the Postmaster General

In his report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1862, the PMG (Montgomery Blair) made some interesting comments about canceling postage stamps and also recommended an action that would certainly have gotten the attention of stamp collectors – criminalize the removal of postage stamps from the envelope paper. The pertinent paragraph, taken from the 1977 Theron Wirenga reprint of the Report, is presented herewith.

FRAUDULENT USE OF CANCELLED STAMPS—AMENDMENT.

In pursuance of the provisions of an act approved July 16, 1862, this department has endeavored to punish, and to prevent thereby, as well as by the attainment of a more effectual mode of cancellation, the fraudulent use or sale of cancelled postage stamps. The law, to be effective in its purpose, should absolutely prohibit the removal of cancelled stamps from the paper to which they are attached, for whatever purpose. Not being criminal in itself, it should be made so by statute, to prevent the evil consequences of the practice.

An effort has been made to procure a cancelling ink which cannot be effaced without involving the destruction of the postage stamp; and three varieties of ink claimed to possess this quality are now being tested by actual use in post offices.

Various new instruments and devices for cancelling postage stamps have been examined and submitted to a trial, and two machines are now in process of construction which are designed to replace cancelling by hand at the larger offices.

Two Cincinnati Cancels on One Cover

The cover in Figure 1 is franked with a pair of Sc 212 stamps making up the 2¢ first class letter rate. The cover was postmarked and the stamp on left canceled by one strike of a duplex handstamp. We typically see additional strikes of the duplex (full or partial) to cancel additional stamps on the same cover, but not here. We have the use of a double oval cancel designed for use on 3rd and 4th class mail. And the interesting thing is that the number "5" appears in both killers. Is that a coincidence or did the same clerk apply both cancels? If the same clerk, that raises a question of procedure. It is generally assumed that, particularly in large post offices, there were separate sections for handling first class mail and non-first class mail and these sections involved separate sets of clerks. But this cover makes one wonder whether both categories of mail in Cincinnati were handled by the same clerk, albeit perhaps at different times of the day. It seems doubtful that this cover was sent over to a separate section of the post office, after being initially struck with the duplex, where the double oval was applied. Of course, it could just be that the clerks in the first class mail section were assigned extra handstamps (cheap rubber-faced simplexes) to handle multiple stamps on first class covers. Comment is invited as well as reports of pertinent Cincinnati covers.



Figure 1.

United States Stamps and Postal History, and Worldwide Literature Specialized Fancy Cancels

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"Flying Witch" (Skinner-Eno PH-F47) of New Orleans, La., clear strike ties 3c red, F. grill (94), on circa 1868 cover to Scooba Station, Miss.

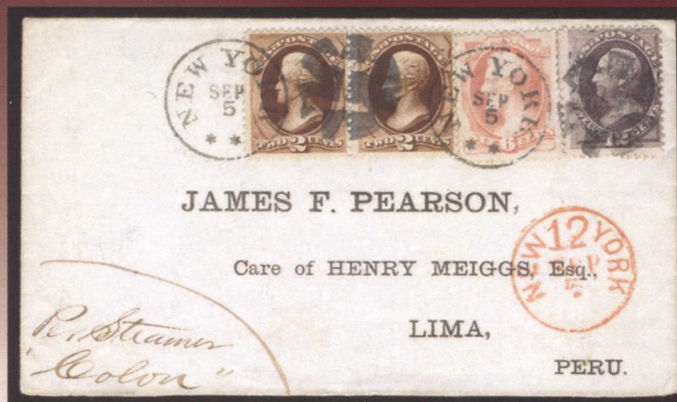
One of less than five recorded covers.

Matthew W. Kewriga

P.O. Box 318 • Medway, MA 02053 • 774-292-9073 • matt@kewriga.com

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8096 Edwin Raynor Blvd, Suite B • Pasadena, MD 21122
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