



# U. S. Cancellation Club **NEWS**

Vol. 31, No. 2, Whole No. 283, May 2012

## Color Cancellations on the 1869 Series

by Ed Field

Figures 1 and 2 show two covers, each bearing a fancy 6-point star-within-a-star cancel from Farmland, Indiana. One cancel is in green, the other in purple. I could be wrong, but I believe both of these covers are unique. However, I have seen (but do not own) the same cancel in black. All three are addressed to the same recipient in the same handwriting. Farmland is an operating post office in Randolph Co. that was established in 1853.

**Figure 1.** Fancy Star in dark purple from Farmland, Ind. Dated Dec 20, circa 1869.



**Figure 2.** Fancy Star in dark green from Farmland, Ind. Dated February 14, 1870.



Continued on page 24....



## The U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

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

Published four times a year by the U.S. Cancellation Club and included with membership. The U.S.C.C. is APS Affiliate #75.

Annual Dues: \$26 per year, \$31 for international members. Address inquiries to: Roger Rhoads at the address below.

Back Issues through 1997 are available at \$2.00 each postpaid. 1998 to May 2008 issues, \$3.00. August 2008 and later issues, \$6.00. Discount of 10% on orders of 25 or more issues. Contact: Vince Costello at address below.

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

### U.S.C.C. Officers

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| John Donnes     | 202 Willow Dr., Gretna, LA 70053          |
| 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   |

|                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| jdonnes@cox.net    | President             |
| vinman2119@aol.com | First Vice President  |
| matt@kewriga.com   | Second Vice President |
| rrrhoads@aol.com   | Secretary/Treasurer   |
| dhr327@att.net     | Governor at Large     |

### Advertising Rates

|              | Per Issue | Yearly   |
|--------------|-----------|----------|
| Half Page    | \$110.00  | \$400.00 |
| Quarter Page | \$55.00   | \$200.00 |
| Column Inch  | \$15.00   | \$50.00  |

### U.S.C.C. Website

<http://bob.trachimowicz.org/uscchome.htm>

For information concerning advertising, please contact: Matt Kewriga, NEWS Layout Artist

## We build America's great collections of... Covers & Fancy Cancels

We consistently have an eye toward the rare and unusual in covers and, especially, United States fancy cancels. Our website and bi-monthly newsletters consistently feature fancy cancels added to our growing inventory. Obviously, we are one of the country's key sources for these. Check with us often.

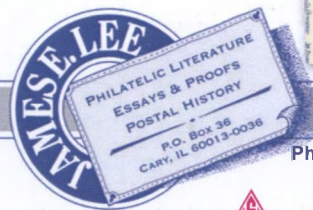
## Essays & Proofs

We believe our stock of this material is the finest ever assembled. Let us give your collection the strength it deserves. What do you need?

## Philatelic Literature

From great literature rarities to our own respected publications in the past 20 years, we can fulfill your needs in U.S., Confederate and Canadian philatelic literature.

Call us with your Want List—and see our stock on our huge website. Our inventory is continually growing!



Phone: (847) 462-9130 • Email: [jim@jameslee.com](mailto:jim@jameslee.com)

[www.JamesLee.com](http://www.JamesLee.com)



## Editor's Message

Dear Reader,

I am pleased to welcome a new contributor to the *NEWS*, Ed Field. His collecting interests involve color cancels on the US 1869 series, an area that he has pursued for about 15 years. Initially, Ed worked on securing an example of every known color for each face value in the series. For the past several years he has concentrated mostly on cancels that are both in color and fancy. The first installment of what will be a series of articles appears in this issue.

In addition to the above, Ed responded to the call for volunteers in the February *NEWS*. He will now coordinate the compilation of lists of recent exhibit award winners who are USCC members. These lists will appear periodically in the *NEWS* and will cover all exhibit subjects, not just cancellations. Ed will have ready access to information about World Series of Philately show results but will need our help in reporting awards given at regional and local shows. He can be reached at [ecfjr@verizon.net](mailto:ecfjr@verizon.net) or 633 Enchanted Way, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Our Club, incidentally is still much in need of a volunteer to maintain a supply of and distribute USCC award plaques and ribbons. Please contact me if you would be willing to help out with this important job.

A newly revised Whitfield book on 19th century US cancellations is now available – see the announcement that appears below. This book, which involves more than 6,500 tracings, has become for many collectors one of three fundamental references on early US cancels, joining the Skinner-Eno book on US cancels from 1842-1869 and the Jim Cole book on Banknote era cancels. A very hearty “thank you” to coordinator Wendell Triplett for his excellent work.

Included with this issue is a *NEWS* index for Volume 30, which covers 2010 and 2011 issues, Numbers 274-281. Actually, it is three separate indexes – by cancellation, post office and article title. This three-part index supplements the *NEWS* index published in 2010 covering all *NEWS* issues from the beginning in 1951 through 2009. These indexes were compiled by Judson Sartain and they have fulfilled a major need that existed for many years. Many thanks to Judd for this latest contribution to the Club's literature.

Roger Curran

### Revised Whitfield Book Available

The US Cancellation Club is pleased to announce the availability of an important revision to the book *Cancellations Found on 19th Century U.S. Stamps* by Kenneth A. Whitfield. Originally published in 2002, a separate update appeared in 2007 which provided 1,608 pieces of new information about the cancels illustrated such as post office of origin, date of use, ink color, etc.

A second revision has now been completed which provides an additional 1,503 updates and the USCC is taking this opportunity to republish the entire book on a heavier, more durable stock. And, for a considerable number of tracings, the information at the bottom now appears in typed rather than hand printed form, often with more information than before. The new edition also includes (1) a 78 page section that combines the updates in Revisions 1 and 2 and (2) a revised, up-to-date Post Office Index.

The newly republished and updated Whitfield book is available for **\$50.00** postpaid to U.S. addresses and may be ordered from the *NEWS* editor at the address on the masthead. The 78 page Revision and Post Office lists are available separately for **\$8.00**. Any profits from sales of the book or the Revision List as a separate purchase will go to the operation of the USCC.

This new edition would not have been possible without the extensive time and effort of Wendell Triplett. Although a number of USCC members contributed information for the 2007 and 2012 revisions, the vast majority of the data was supplied directly by Wendell based on his careful and wide-ranging review of pertinent literature, auction catalogs, and dealer listings. He also added all of the new typed information that appears below many of the tracings. Wendell plans a further update in 2017 and, as always, will welcome new information. He can be reached at [triplettusa@yahoo.com](mailto:triplettusa@yahoo.com) or telephone 910.395.5025.

*Color Cancellations on the 1869 Issue, continued from the front page*

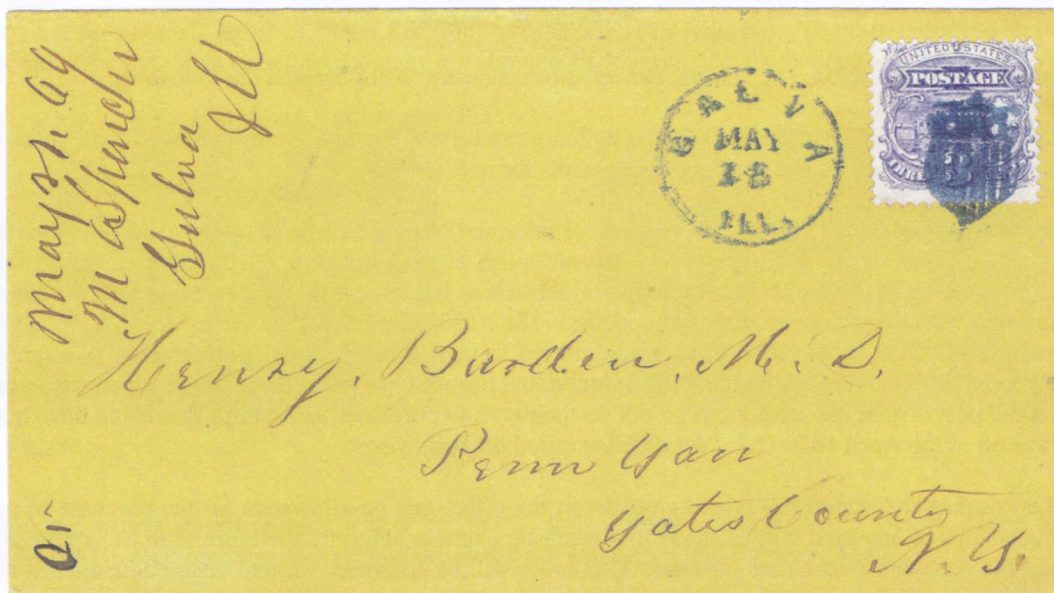
**Figure 3.** "G" in blue from Galva, Illinois dated August 25, circa 1869 to West Cornwall, Connecticut.

The next four illustrations show the only reported fancy blue cancels from Galva, Illinois on the 1869 series. The ornate letter G (Skinner-Eno LS-G 4) in Figure 3 is the only example I have seen on cover, although I have seen a couple off cover. It came from the Beane collection. To my knowledge, the clover (Skinner-Eno PP-C 12) in Figure 4 is the only on-cover example that has been reported. Besides the example shown in Figure 5, I know of one other Galva shield (Skinner-Eno PS-ST 16) on cover. See Siegel's March 2011 auction of the Eubanks collection.



**Figure 4.** Three-Leaf Clover in blue from Galva, Illinois dated Nov 3, circa 1869 from the large correspondence to H.B. Shaw in Alfred, Me. Shaw was a hair and wig purveyor.





**Figure 5.** Shield in blue from Galva, Ill. dated May 15, 1869 to Penn Yan, New York.

The beer mug cover in Figure 6 has a bit of a story. It was last auctioned in 1956 by HR Harmer. The owner never exhibited it. I bought it privately in 1999 and did not display it until 2009. So it was pretty much unknown for 53 years. There are three other examples known on cover, all with inferior strikes. I have seen three or four examples on off-cover stamps. Back in 1984 the Foundation issued a certificate for one of the inferior examples, which had a weak datestamp with a blank space between the L and the A, as in "GAL A". Someone at the Foundation apparently guessed the missing letter(s) were "EN" and mis-attributed the cancel to GALENA IL. From that time on the cancel was mostly known as the Galena beer mug. It is so listed in Skinner & Eno as PO-Bm 1a with a question mark. A Foundation certificate issued in 2005 for an off-cover example again attributed the cancel to Galena. Long story short, the pristine strike shown in Figure 6 leaves no doubt that the "GALENA" beer mug is really the "GALVA" beer mug. Galva is an operating post office in Henry Co. that was established in 1855.



**Figure 6.** Beer Mug in blue from Galva, Illinois dated December 15, circa 1869 to New York City.



## Washington, D.C. 19th Century Ellipse Cancellations

by Roger D. Curran

On the subject of Washington, D.C. ellipse cancellations, Edward Willard stated the following:

“As would be expected, Washington, D.C., the nation’s capital and a target for any salesman with political connections, gave birth to the largest variety of ellipse sets for one municipality.”<sup>1</sup>

While certainly there was remarkable variety, whether or not salesmen from a number of companies sold handstamps during the ellipse cancel era to the Washington, D.C. post office is very much open to question. All ellipse cancelers introduced by the Washington, D.C. post office in 1882 and later (up to the mid-1890s at least) were no doubt steel faced. The Chambers company of Lodge, Virginia was the only company during this period (1882-1900) awarded Post Office Department (POD) contracts to produce such handstamps. First class post offices were entitled to steel faced duplex handstamps at government expense and surely the majority were supplied directly by the POD to individual postmasters based on orders received from eligible post offices. Nonetheless, some post offices apparently did go out on their own to purchase handstamps that could have been requisitioned from the POD. Page 68 of the April 1879 *U.S. Postal Guide* stated the following:

“69. The Postmaster General has issued an order to the effect that no allowance for the purchase of marking and rating stamps of any kind will be made to postmasters, unless authority therefore shall be first be obtained from the First Assistant Postmaster General. This order will be enforced, without distinction, against all postmasters.”

I think it most unlikely that the Washington, D.C. post office would have sought out private handstamp suppliers, but it is reasonable to suppose that the wide variety of handstamps used represents some testing of different styles offered by the Chambers company. Comment is invited. Readers interested in the Chambers company and its operations, incidentally, are encouraged to read Frank Scheer’s excellent article “The Chambers Family and Their Postmarking Devices” in the 1994 *American Philatelic Congress Book*. Also, Richard Graham’s article “Postmarks and Postmarking Devices of the Banknote Era” at the beginning of the Jim Cole book provides a very informative review of the overall subject of handstamps used during this period.

The sources identified herewith (in addition to the Willard book footnoted above) were consulted in presenting the data that follows. Also used were the author’s collection and reports received from individual collectors.

1. Cole, Jim “Washington, D.C. Ellipses” in Summer 1988 *NEWS* and Jim’s update in the Spring 1989 *NEWS* (compilation of eight reports).
2. Stanton, Tom “Washington, D.C. – Duplexed Circles” in the Spring 1989 *NEWS*.
3. Stieg, Carl “Early Numeral Duplexes of Washington, D.C.” in the March 1999 *LaPosta* (compilation of three reports).
4. Notes made by Tom Stanton based on his study of the George T. Turner Washington, D.C. postal history collection. (I do not know if this data was published.)

The first ellipse cancelers employed by Washington appeared in 1879 and 1880 (see Figures 1-6). I believe these handstamps were rubber faced. They were struck in a blackish blue ink that occasionally tended toward a more medium blue – lighter strikes showed more blue. As has been mentioned numerous times in these pages, black printer’s ink could not be used successfully because of its adverse effect on rubber. I think the usage of these handstamps (and the style just prior which involved purple ink) is important because the Washington, D.C. post office would be the only big city post office known to have used rubber-faced handstamps on first class mail, except for the brief use (perhaps as a trial) of such a handstamp by the Baltimore post office (see page 71 in the February 2003 *NEWS*).



Figure 1.



Figure 2.



The Figures 1 and 2 cancels are the earliest reported blue ellipses. Dates noted for Figure 1 are May 9 (Cole) to August 6, 1879 (Curran), and for Figure 2 April 23 (Peter Stafford) to May 27, 1879 (Curran). The thin outer rim in Figure 2 typically does not show completely and, in an extreme case, may not show at all, creating the appearance of a different cancel.

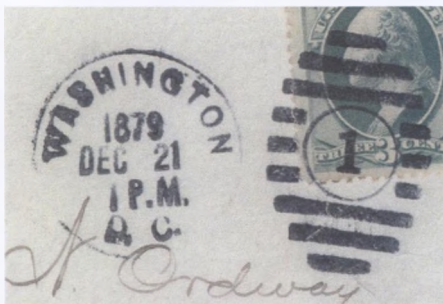


Figure 3.



Figure 4.

Washington next introduced ellipses with a "1" or "2" in the center – see Figures 3 and 4. These are recorded from 8/8/79 (Cole) to 6/26/80 (Cole). I suspect that regular usage did not extend beyond February 1880.



Figure 5.



Figure 6.

Figures 5 and 6 contain an "L" in the center for local mail. The Figure 5 cancel has been seen from 1/3/80 (Cole) to 3/24/80 (Curran). Figure 6 has been noted from 3/9/80 (Curran) to 4/6/80 (Curran) in blackish blue. Later, the Figure 6 ellipse canceler was detached from the duplex handstamp and struck in a magenta ink on postage due stamps (Figure 7) affixed to mail by the Washington, D.C. post office. This simplex ellipse has been noted from 4/25/82 (Curran) to 3/18/85 (Curran).



Figure 7.





Figure 8.

Although not technically ellipses, we'll consider here Washington's next generation of cancelers after the blues which consisted of two sets of concentric circles killers – see Figures 8 and 9. They were undoubtedly struck from steel-faced hand-stamps. Examples of Figure 8 are reported from 2/24/80 (Stanton) to 11/11/82 (Alan Campbell). There was, however, a 4/15/85 usage in Edward Willard's collection – see Figure 10. Also, at least several off-cover Sc 210 stamps have been seen bearing this "6" cancel. One supposes that the duplex "6" handstamp was kept on hand after the set was discontinued and then pressed into service sparingly as a replacement or to meet unusual circumstances. Washington also used an "L" in three circles for local mail – see Figure 11. It is found overwhelmingly on 2¢ vermilion stamps, occasionally on 1¢ and 3¢ stamps and it would be quite challenging to find on other denominations. Reported dates are 4/23/80 (Cole book) to 3/7/81 (Curran).



Figure 9.

The second concentric circles set (Figure 9) appeared somewhat later and overlapped the first to a considerable extent. Reported dates for the basic period of use range from 10/4/80 (Curran) to 11/10/82 (Stanton) but, here again, late uses are noted as well. In this case, the late uses were much more common with all numbers, "1" through "6", seen on the Sc 210 stamp. It should be noted that typically there are design variations among the killers in the same Washington "sets" of this era. Figure 9 shows such variations clearly.



Figure 10.



Figure 11.



Figure 12.



Probably the most distinctive ellipse cancels used by *any* U.S. post office during the Banknote era are the Washington “fishtails” that appeared in two basic designs: (1) eight bars and (2) a central barrel with two bars above and below – see Figures 12 and 13. A variation of the 8-bar format involving a split design is seen involving numerals “2” and “3” – see Figure 14. The split ellipses were introduced (and used exclusively) in 1885 and only on local mail. The “2” ellipse in split format is very scarce, almost rare. The reported date range for Figure 12 is 11/20/82 (Curran) to 6/4/85 (Stieg) and for Figure 13 is 11/14/82



Figure 13.

(Stieg) to 6/26/85 (Cole). It is interesting to note that Willard did not report a “6” in the 8-bar design canceling a Sc 210.<sup>2</sup> I have seen an example on cover dated 7/3/83, less than three months before the issuance of Sc 210. Perhaps the handstamp went missing or was broken before October 1. If any readers can report an off-cover Sc 210 with the 8-bar “6” cancel or any stamp canceled by the 8-bar “6” on cover dated October 1, 1883 or later, please contact the *NEWS*. Two examples are known of the earliest fishtail date – 11/14/82 – and both (Stieg’s example and a cover in the collection of Alan Campbell) involve the numeral “5”. The split ellipses have been reported from 3/28/85 (Stieg) to 11/18/85 (Curran). Since a new ellipse set was introduced in late 1884, use of the two basic fishtail sets was probably considerably diminished in 1885. The May 2003 *NEWS* illustrates a number of fishtail covers.



Figure 14.





Figure 15.

The successor ellipses to the fishtails also had unusually large numerals and they similarly featured one set consisting of horizontal bars and the other with a central “barrel” and horizontal bars above and below. The numerals run from “1” through “7” – see Figures 15 and 16. The handstamps producing these ellipses were used heavily in 1885 and 1886, although they have been reported in later years. For the 10-bar ellipse, reported dates are 12/10/84 (Curran) to 6/12/89 (Cole) and for the barrel 12/11/84 (Stieg) to 8/6/88 (Cole). Uses after 1886 are, I assume, quite limited. Looking through Volume Two of the Willard book one notes a number of ellipses from various post offices that are similar in terms of the design of both the ellipse itself and the numeral within. Generally speaking, however, the overall size of the numerals was smaller than those for Washington but a set from Buffalo, NY was certainly their match – see Figure 17.



Figure 16.



Figure 17.

Another large ellipse, this for local mail, was introduced in early 1886 – see Figure 18. It is fairly common and has been reported from 2/16/86 (Cole) to 4/20/89 (Curran).

This is probably a good point to illustrate a proof impression (Figure 19) from the Chambers company that, in my opinion, clearly establishes what firm made the handstamps that produced the Figure 15 and 16 strikes. It is reproduced from Frank Scheer's article noted above. Minneapolis did use a set of ellipses (“1” through “3”) similar to Figure 19 but considerably smaller in size.



Figure 18.



Figure 19.



Figure 20.



Figure 21.



Figure 22.

The next generation of Washington ellipses presents a complicated picture. We'll begin with the simpler portion. Early in 1887, two new ellipse sets appeared, once again with and without a central barrel, but this time only including numerals "5" through "7" – see Figure 20 and 21. The range reported for the 10-bar set is 2/23/87 (Curran) to 5/6/90 (Curran) and for the barrel set 1/24/87 (Cole) to 6/30/94 (Cole). Why not the full range of numbers from "1" to "7"? To attempt an answer, we'll start with the cancel shown in Figure 22. I have recorded seven covers bearing this 10-bar "1" ellipse with pointed bars at top and bottom from 1/23/87 – 4/24/89, but no examples with a number other than "1". Such numbers in this pointed ellipse are, however, reported by Willard, Cole and Stanton. Willard reports numbers "1", "3" and "4",<sup>2</sup> Cole reports "1" – "7" with dates of 12/2/83 – 5/7/89 and Stanton reports a "1" and "4" with a date range of 10/20/86 – 12/13/89. Stanton's date of 10/20/86 definitely involves a 10-bar ellipse with a "1" in the center. It may be noteworthy that in illustrating this 10-bar ellipse, each person presented a tracing with a "1" in the center. No Figure 22 ellipses were shown with a number other than "1".



Figure 23.

Now, there was another pair of ellipse sets (to some extent) used during this period – one with a central barrel with two bars above and below and the other consisting of eight bars. Cole reports the 8-bar design with numbers "1" through "4" with dates of 4/1/87-5/12/90. Stanton reported numbers "2" through "4" with dates of 4/11/87 – 4/10/90. I have recorded 11 copies of the 8-bar "3", four copies of the "2" and one copy of the "4" with dates of 4/18/87-7/8/90. See examples at Figure 23.

Returning to the Figure 22 10-bar pointed ellipse, I have examined Willard's collection of Washington, D.C. ellipses and believe his reports of a "3" and "4", which were apparently based on off-cover stamps in the collection showing parts of a Washington, D.C. CDS and accompanying ellipse, actually involve Figure 23 ellipses. The bar arrangement on the off-cover stamps is ambiguous and the full design does not show. I also suspect Cole's report of numbers "2" through "7" and Stanton's "4" are in error, possibly due to similar confusion although Cole's "5"–"7" could not be so explained. Further, I believe Cole's report of 12/2/83 usage was based on the illustration of the pointed "1" ellipse with duplexed CDS dated 12/2/83 shown in the Willard book.<sup>3</sup> Figure 24 shows a piece from the Willard collection from which his book illustration, in my opinion, was surely derived. I think the second numeral of the year date at the bottom of the CDS is actually a "6", not a "3."





Figure 24.



Figure 25.

Based on the above, I believe there was a mixed “group” involving a 10-bar pointed “1” ellipse, 8-bar rounded ellipses with numbers “2” – “4”, and 10-bar ellipses with no internal circle for numbers “5” through “7”. Carl Stieg organized his ellipse study on the basis of duplexes having the same or very similar CDS and his Type Va listing, involving a 24.5 mm CDS diameter, matches this “set”.

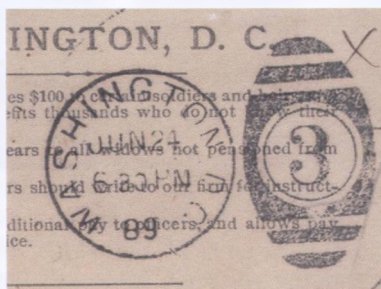
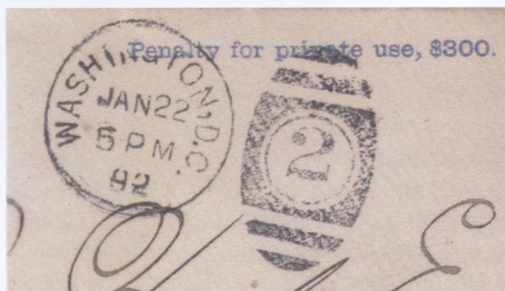


Figure 26.

As we have seen in each previous case beginning with the “fishtail” ellipses, the norm for Washington has been to use two sets of ellipses during the same period that are similar but differ with one set comprised of horizontal bars and the other of a central barrel with horizontal bars above and below. It is not clear to me, however, that there are barrel ellipses that correspond fully with the mixed “group” above. Figure 25 does clearly appear to be the mate of Figure 22 and it is of interest to note that there are no reports of a number other than “1” in this pointed bar ellipse. It is reported from 10/19/86 (Cole) – 5/7/89 (Cole). Next we have the “5” – “7” ellipses noted earlier in Figure 21. Figure 26 shows ellipse numbers “2” – “4” duplexed to 24.5 mm CDSs as are the ellipses in Figures 21 and 25. (But are these duplexes similar enough to one another to be part of the same “set”?) The “4” ellipse is 32 mm. tall while the “2” and “3” are 30 mm. The “WASHINGTON, D.C.” wraps around the CDS less completely in the case of the “2” ellipse duplex.) I have seen no numbers in this set (if it is a set) beyond “2” – “4” nor were they reported by Stieg whose study stopped in 1890. However, both Cole and Stanton report numbers “1” – “7”. Stanton’s dates are 12/29/86 – 12/11/89 and Cole’s are 12/29/86 – 2/5/92. I have no reason to believe their reports are in error although I would have expected the same mixed “group” as described for the non-barrel set just above.

In the 1880s Leavitt machines began taking over a major portion of the postmarking/canceling workload in the Washington, D.C. post office on postal cards. In 1891, the first contract with the American Postal Machines Co. was let and machines then secured a significant foothold in processing Washington’s letter mail. International Postal Machines Co. machines became a major factor in 1892. Canceling machines were now dominant. See Figure 27 for a typical early American strike. The

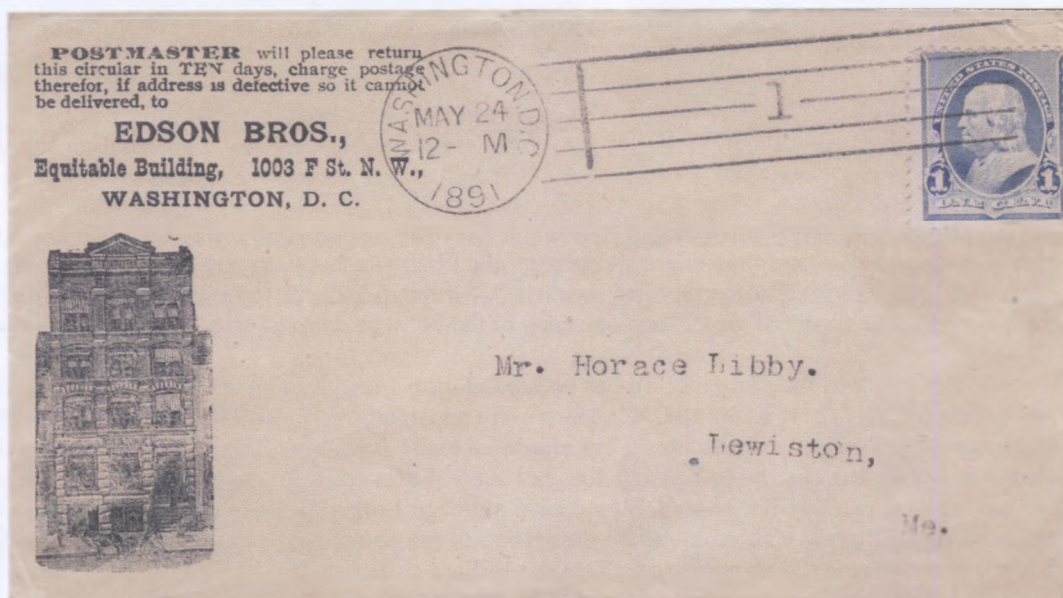


Figure 27.



Washington, D.C. post office was, incidentally, quite a testing laboratory for canceling machines. The products of 13 different companies had been tested (and in a few cases used extensively) by 1900. While Washington ellipses are noted throughout the 1890s and well into the 20th century, there is much less material to study. What is presented below is based on very limited data. It is taken from my records unless otherwise noted.



Figure 28.



Figure 29.

Two examples of an "L" for local mail ellipse with barrel are shown in Figures 28 and 29. Figure 28 has a 25 mm. CDS and is dated 12/11/90. A 12/27/90 example was reported by Stieg in the Fall 1988 *NEWS*. Figure 29, which as a 24.5 mm CDS, has no date between the CDS and ellipse. The number at the bottom of the CDS in both cases presumably denotes the clerk who used the handstamp.



Figure 30.



Figure 31.

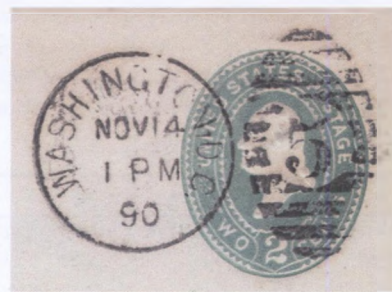


Figure 32.

Stanton reported ellipses containing large numerals "3" and "4" (Figure 30) within barrels from 8/17/91-4/15/96. CDS diameter is 25.5mm. I can add a 4/29/99 date where by this time the CDS rim is dented on the left side. I believe the "2" ellipse in Figure 31 is part of this set. There is also an 8/17/99 strikes with this ellipse recorded on a PSE cover to Switzerland with an extra stamp added.



Figure 33.



Figure 34.



Figure 35.

An ellipse with ten bars and a "5" in the center (Figure 32), duplexed to a 24 mm CDS is recorded from 11/14/90 to 8/8/95 and what seems to be the mate to Figure 32 with a barrel and three bars above and below (Figure 33) is recorded from 10/16/92 to 3/8/96. A 10-bar "6" is recorded with date of 8/7/90 – see Figure 34. A 10-bar "7" (Figure 35) with 25.5 mm CDS is recorded from 7/1/91 – 8/12/92. The same cancel with 24.5 mm CDS is recorded from 9/10/90-5/18/92. See also a mate with barrel (Figure 36) dated 3/1/95. A 10-bar "8" duplexed to a 25.5 mm CDS (Figure 37) is recorded with date of 6/29/92 as well as two 1895 strikes of the same "8" ellipse design duplexed to a 26 mm CDS. There is a mate to this ellipse with a barrel and three bars above and below duplexed to a 25.5 mm CDS recorded with 11/10/91 – 3/7/95 dates – see Figure 38.

Stanton reports the ellipses shown in Figure 39 without year dates and observed that they all occurred in January. He noted 8-bar ellipse numbers "2" and "3" dated (year determined from, of course, information apart from the CDS) 1/7/88 – 1/13/90 and the barrel ellipse with a "2" dated 1/8/90. Stieg reported a Figure 39 8-bar "3" dated January 10 and a Figure 39 bar-





Figure 36.



Figure 37.

rel "2" dated January 14. He also reported a January 13 no-year-date Figure 25 "5" and a no-year-date February 3 Figure 21. I can report the 8-bar from 12/9/90 – 2/16/91 and a cover with what I believe is this cancel dated 1/31/99. These covers show a two digit year date at the bottom of the CDS. The 1899 cover, incidentally, involves a CDS/ellipse duplex strike as an additional cancel to make up for an inadequate machine cancel.

We'll close with a 1900 cover (Figure 40) that shows a Washington duplex used as a forwarded marking. It appears to be very similar to the small town Marysville, Maryland duplex that also appears on the cover. I think the handstamps that produced both were likely rubber faced. Although Washington would no doubt still employ some steel faced handstamps (perhaps as holdovers), production workload for postmarking/canceling handstamps was definitely in the past and, perhaps with it, the need for purchasing expensive steel faced handstamps when the old ones wore out.

Additional reports or information pertaining to any of the above will be welcomed. A great deal of data is still needed to provide a really clear picture of the evolution of Washington ellipse cancels. The ellipses of the stations of this post office will be the subject of a future article.

1. Willard, Edward L. *The United States Two Cent Red Brown 1883-1887* Volume Two, H.L. Lindquist (1970), p. 156.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 155.

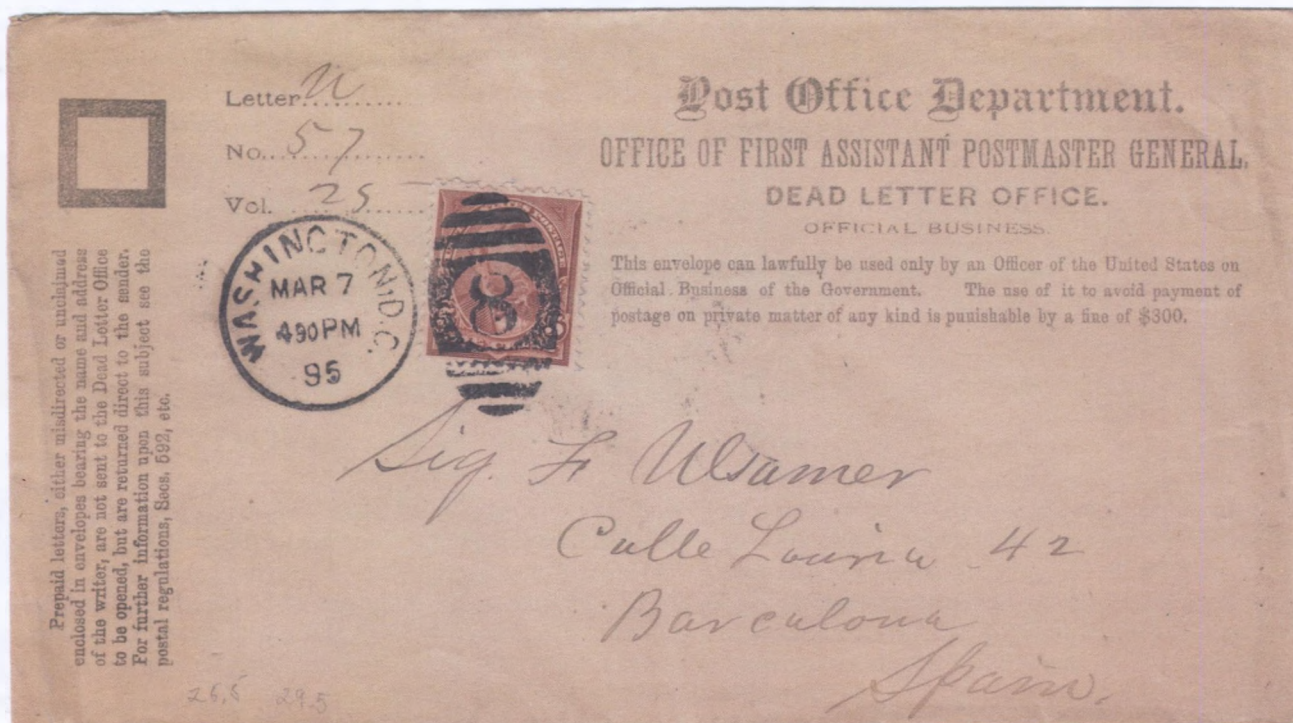


Figure 38.





Figure 39.



Figure 40.

### More on Square Grid

The August 2011 *NEWS* illustrated square grid cancels from Montague, Massachusetts and Detroit Michigan, found on 1857 issue stamps, that are similar to the pioneering 13-bar square grid used by the New York Post Office from 1846-1851. Mention was made also of a square grid reported in the literature from Bleeker, New York used at some point during the 1851-1857 issues era. We illustrated a tracing of the cancel but had no images of actual examples to show. In response, Dick Nunge submitted two Bleeker grids – see Figures 1 and 2. Can readers show square grids from additional post offices during the 1851-61 period? If others exist, they are likely to be very scarce if not rare.



Figure 1. Off-cover example of the Bleeker N.Y. grid.

Figure 1. Squared Grid from Bleeker, New York dated November 27.



## Noted in Passing

by Roger D. Curran



Figure 1.

It used to be, way back when, that college honorary societies, fraternal organizations, etc. would sometimes produce pieces of jewelry, incorporating initials or other representations of the particular group, surmounted on a thin vertical shaft with a loop at the top. The idea was that these “keys” would be attached to a small watch chain (or “fob”) that men would wear, usually hanging on the front of a vest. Long after the wearing of fobs went out of fashion, organizations continued to use the key design although now with a standard jewelry pin on the back. Figure 1 is an example of a 1950s key for Sigma Xi, a scientific research honorary society. All of this is by way of an introduction to the cancel on the stamp in Figure 2. On the back of the stamp is a pencil note stating that it is a Phi Beta Kappa key. It seems most unlikely that this is so for a couple of reasons. First, there appears to be no match of letters that correspond to this honor society. The idea that this cancel was struck from a “key” no doubt derives from what was interpreted to be a loop on the right hand side. John Donnes, who made the tracing, speculated that it is actually a “Q” rather than a loop. The second reason for dismissing the Phi Beta Kappa idea concerns the circular background. If it was a “key” it was apparently affixed to some sort of a disc with a raised rim which seems unlikely. If any reader can identify this mysterious cancel or report other examples, please contact the *NEWS*.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.

The most commonly seen fancy cancel design is surely the 5-point star. But, of course, there is tremendous variety in how stars are presented as cancels. One of the more unusual is illustrated as Figure 3, a cluster of four separate stars from Ocone, Illinois. Ocone is an operating post office in Shelby Co. established in 1872. And the star motif doesn't end with the cancel – the CDS to which it is duplexed boasts two prominently placed stars. Cole illustrates this star as STU-41 and reports a date of July 27, 1878. He also shows a considerably smaller 4-star cluster (STU-40) and lists it in purple and magenta inks. Willard shows the STU-41 cancel and reports that it was first noted in the literature by R.L. Hustis in the April 1940 *Postal Markings*. Hustis reports in both purple and magenta and Willard repeats this. I wonder if STU-40 is actually derived from the STU-41 cancel and the illustration somewhere along the line, in subsequent reports, was erroneously reduced in size. Needless to say, if any reader can show the smaller size cluster on or off cover, the *NEWS* would very much welcome such information.



Figure 4.

There is a somewhat similar but more elaborate star cancel from New York City reported by both Cole (STU-42) and Whitfield (3251) – see Figure 4 which is the Whitfield tracing. Cole reports it on 1873 issue stamps and Whitfield denotes it used sometime during the 3¢ green era. Can any reader report an example of this most attractive cancel?



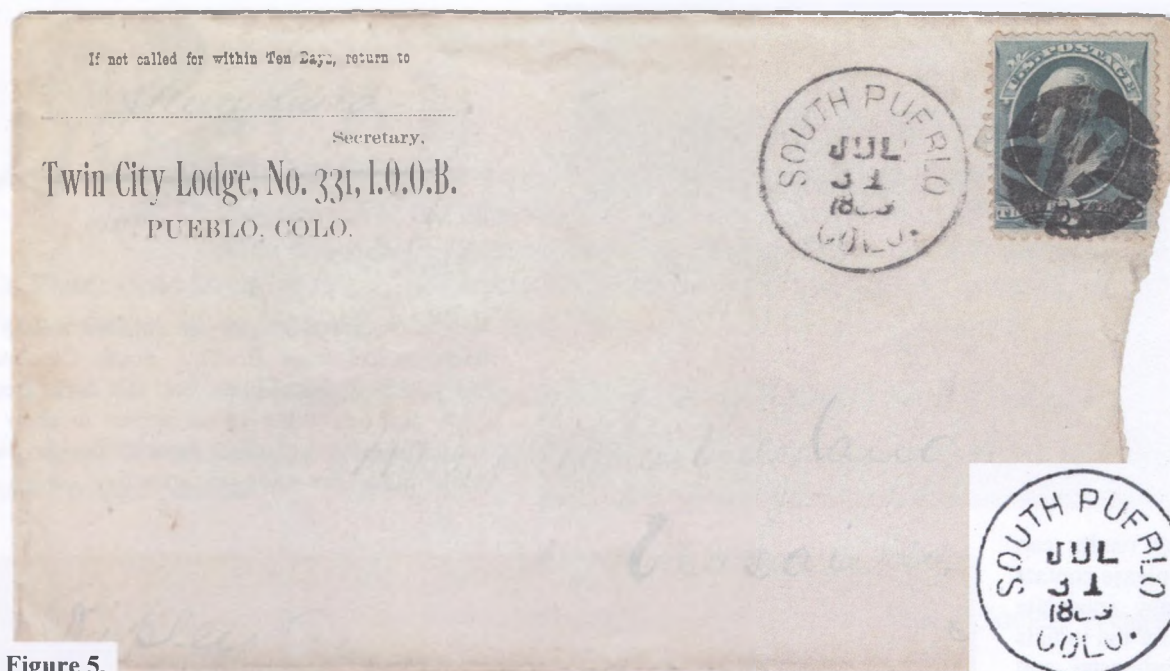


Figure 5.

It is, of course, human nature for collectors to want items in their collections to be interesting and desirable. This can, of course, occasionally overcome objective judgment. And the field of 19th century cancellations provides more than its share of ambiguity. Illustrated herewith as Figures 5 and 6 are two examples, the first being slightly questionable and the second displaying great ambiguity. The “S” in Figure 5 is backwards and distorted due to what appears to be cancel breakage, but the “P” seems very clear. “SP” for South Pueblo would probably draw little argument. But how about reading an “MM” for Mattapoisett, Massachusetts in Figure 6. I’m inclined to say “yes” but this is what I want it to be. If we could establish that the Mattapoisett post office used other killers in the same general time frame that involved single or double “M” letters, that would go a long way toward determining intent.

Moving now from the unclear to the very clear, Figure 7 shows a crisp and bold “NG” for New Galilee, Pennsylvania which is an operating post office established in 1857 in Beaver Co. I believe this is the same cancel as Whitfield 5352 (which is unattributed) except that Whitfield’s strike led him to interpret it as “NC”.



Figure 6.





Figure 7.

Figure 8 shows an unlisted multiple letters cancel from Bradley, South Carolina. The strike is incomplete but the dark areas above and below the letters appear to show a "cross-hatch" or "basket weave" design that would make for quite an attractive cancel if

fully struck. If any reader can report a full strike, please contact the *NEWS*. We may speculate that "PHB" stands for the initials of the Bradley postmaster and possibly even that his last name is Bradley. The Bradley post office was established in 1882 in Greenwood Co. Although somewhat ambiguous, I believe the dateline on the back of the card is December 17, 1885.

Figure 9 presents a most unusual cancel. Struck in a pale pinkish red, it has, to my mind, a rather modern look. With the pen in hand, John Donnes put it under the microscope and a remarkable and surprising image emerged – Figure 10. A quick search of the literature yielded an image of the full design – Figure 11.<sup>1</sup> Among the many Wells, Fargo markings noted, the Figure 11 cancel is distinctive due to the overall inked design enclosing negative letters. It is assumed that the basic rectangle was struck first and then, as a second step, the date was handstamped with the same ink in the blank space in the middle.



Figure 8.



Figures 9 and 10.




Figure 11.

<sup>1</sup>Leutzing, John F. *The Handstamps of Wells, Fargo & Co. 1852-1895*, second edition, Western Cover Society (1993), p. 300.

## The Classic Cancel

Quality 19th Century U.S. Stamps, Cancellations and Postal History



### John Valenti

P.O. Box 211  
Wheeling, IL 60090-0211  
(847) 224-2401 ✉ classiccancel@att.net  
Visit my Web Site at <http://www.theclassiccancel.com>

Member: APS, USPCS, USCC





## EXHIBIT AWARDS WON BY USCC MEMBERS

### SANDICAL Jan 20-22 2012

**Nick Kirke:** Grand Award & Gold Medal; also Lynn Warm Griffiths Award for "The Progression of the New York Foreign Mail Cancellation 1870-1878"

**Alan Campbell:** Court of Honor for "United States Official Stamps 1873-1884"

**Ed Field:** Gold Medal & USCC Award for "U.S. Stamps of 1869 Bearing Colored Cancels"

**Fran Adams:** Silver Medal & AAPE Honor Award for "Eskimo" (single frame)

### SARASOTA NATIONAL STAMP EXPO Feb 3-5 2012

**Gordon Eubanks:** Grand Award and Gold Medal; also US Stamps Society Award for "First Federally Issued Postage Stamps"

### ARIPEX Feb 24-26 2012

**Gordon Eubanks:** Grand Award & Gold Medal; also US Philatelic Classics Society Award for "The Imperf Issues of the U.S. 1851-1856"

**Nick Kirke:** Gold Medal for "New York Foreign Mail Fancy Cancels"

#### COURT OF HONOR

**Gordon Eubanks:** for "First Federally Issued Postage Stamps of the U.S."

**Nick Kirke:** for "The Progression of The New York Foreign Mail Cancellation"

**Les Lanphear:** for "U.S. Department Issues"

### SAINT LOUIS STAMP EXPO March 16-18 2012

**Gary Hendren:** Silver Medal for "Rural Free Delivery-The Early Years"

### PHILADELPHIA NATIONAL STAMP EXPO March 30-April 1 2012

**John Barwis:** Reserve Grand Award and Gold medal; also American Philatelic Congress Award, Penn. Postal History Society Yaeger Award for "Pre-GPU Philadelphia-Great Britain Mails"

**Nancy B Clark:** Gold Medal; also APS 1940-80 Medal of Excellence, U.S. Postal History Marcus White Award for "The U.S. Revalued Postal Stationary of 1971"

## AVAILABLE — U.S. CANCELLATION CLUB PUBLICATIONS

**U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS, Cross Reference Index for all issues: 1951-2009.** Presented in three separate sections: Cancellations, Post Offices, and Article Titles, \$18 postpaid to U.S. addresses.

**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.

**Cancellations found on 19th Century U.S. Stamps, by Kenneth A. Whitfield,** is now available again. 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. \$50 postpaid to U.S. addresses.

For Whitfield update pages only, \$8 postpaid to U.S. addresses.

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



## Comments on Earlier Articles

Wendell Triplett sends comments on two articles appearing in the February 2012 *NEWS*. Regarding the lower case "e" cancel (page 14) from Decatur, AL, we speculated that this letter might be the first letter of the last name of the Decatur postmaster. Wendell has learned that the name of the postmaster during the period in question is L. Hensley Grubbs. On page 13 a portion of a cover was shown bearing a "linen marker" postmark from Kingsessing, PA (see corrected spelling) canceling a 3¢ 1861 issue stamp. We speculated that it may represent the only on-cover example of a "linen marker" as a canceler. While that is possible, there are certainly off-cover strikes known. Wendell reports two examples on Sc 65 stamps in his collection and lot 172 in the Schuyler Rumsey firm's auction 47 of April 26, 2012 was a Sc 26 on piece bearing an excellent strike of this very fancy marking – see Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** This cancel from Kingsessing, Pa. realized \$12,075 in the recent Schuyler Rumsey auction at Westpex on April 26, 2012.

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

Please visit our website to see our extensive inventory of fancy cancels. We have material from many sources including the Hubert C. Skinner mounted collections of Fancy Cancels.



**Matthew W. Kewriga**

P.O. Box 318 • Medway, MA 02053 • 774-292-9073 • [matt@kewriga.com](mailto:matt@kewriga.com)

[www.kewriga.com](http://www.kewriga.com)