



U. S. Cancellation Club **NEWS**

Vol. 31, No. 3, Whole No. 284, August 2012

Color Cancellations on the 1869 Series: Masonics

by Ed Field

The 1972 sale of the Greenebaum collection of Masonic cancels (Siegel Auction 406) offered nearly 300 lots, including 38 such cancels on 1869 stamps. Only two of those 38 cancels were in colors other than black. Over more recent years I have been fortunate to locate and acquire four additional colored Masonic cancels on this series. All six are illustrated below. I know of no others.

Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 1 shows the green negative compass & square of McMinnville TN on the 1-cent stamp. For an on-cover example on the 3-cent stamp see Frajola's January 1986 sale of the Eno collection. To my knowledge, these are the only two examples extant.

Figure 2 shows a pale magenta negative compass & square of unknown origin on the 10-cent stamp (ex Eno). It is the only known example of a colored Masonic cancel on a high-value 1869 stamp.

Figure 3.



Figure 3 shows the negative blue compass & square of Painted Post NY. At least one other on-cover example exists, as well as several off-cover examples.

Figure 4 shows the red compass & square of Charlestown MA. This cancel is not particularly scarce in black, but only three examples are known in red, the other two being on cover.

Continued on page 54....

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

jdannes@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.

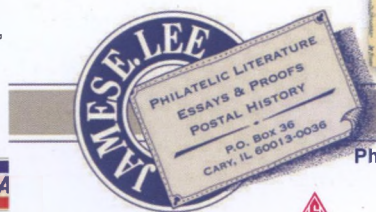
Essays & Proofs

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

www.JamesLee.com

Editor's Message

Dear Reader,

I hope you are spending a pleasant summer with some time for enjoying the great out-of-doors. As this is written, however, much of our nation is gripped with record-setting heat which makes staying inside close to air conditioners the most inviting option. Nevertheless, we live in a beautiful country and, weather permitting, getting out in it provides a wonderful source of refreshment and renewal.

There will be an election of Club officers this year with the ballot going out in the November *NEWS*. Terms are two years and, as has been noted, all clubs benefit from the variety of perspectives and fresh ideas that an intake of new officers can provide. The officer positions are listed on the masthead and if you would be willing to serve as an officer or would just like to learn more about what is involved, please contact our president, John Donnes, or any of the other officers within the next six weeks. The officers work as a board to oversee Club operations and new initiatives. This is accomplished primarily through occasional telephone conference calls.

I would like to renew a call made periodically in these pages for articles from Club members. Whether it concerns a single cover or stamp or the results of a long-term study of a broad cancellation subject, or something in between, please let us hear from you. This is your journal and what interests you will likely be of interest to our readers.

Roger Curran

A "Curious" Ann Arbor Marking

George B Sloane was a celebrated writer for *STAMPS* magazine and his column was introduced with that publication's first issue. It ran every week for 26 years until Sloane's death in July 1958. He was an expert on U.S. varieties and his column focused initially on this subject. Later it was broadened to include U.S. stamps and postal history in general. However, Sloane never gave much attention to cancellations, as there was a separate column devoted to that subject authored first by Dr. William Evans and then by William Reynolds. In 1961 the Bureau Issues Association published a compendium of Sloane's columns in book form. One of Sloane's infrequent forays into the cancellation field is presented below.

A Curious Postmark – A Curious Story



What you see illustrated here is a postmark – "I AM H.N." The letter went through the Ann Arbor, Mich., post office. To the left of the envelope is an engraving picturing the University of Michigan. The stamp that was used is the 2¢ red brown, issue of the 1883, Scott's No. 210. The postmark shown was used to cancel the stamp.

The oddity of the postmark intrigued me. I tried to work it out, "H.N., I AM," or "I AM H.N.?" I tried to link it up in some way with the University pictured, - a student society perhaps?-or what? I could not reconcile it with anything my brain could fathom.

Through a coincidence I discovered through some old clippings that the late W.W. MacLaren, of Cleveland, had had one, in fact he had had a series of covers with odd markings from this office, all used about the same time, and he had succeeded in running down an unusual story.

It seems that sometime in the period of 1883-84, the postmaster at Ann Arbor, Jerome C. Knowlton, was worried and perplexed by a series of thefts in the mails clearing his office. Money and other things of value were disappearing from letters while the usual methods of detection failed.

To complicate matters, mail arrived regularly at the main office from several branch stations, and was also handled over several carriers' routes, but the thievery persisted. In order to narrow down the search and make every letter going through his office directly traceable, the postmaster decided, among other things, that each clerk provide himself with his own separate and distinct handstamp to cancel mail passing through his hands.

There were several clerks in the office. One named Bender is known to have used a "B" in a circle as his postmark. Another postmark is an "H," and there is still another, "Harry." All were seemingly whittled out of cork or wood by the clerks themselves.

But we are concerned with the type illustrated above. This was used by a clerk named Nichols, who neatly identified himself, "I AM, H. N." Harry Nichols.

While in due course of time the thief is reported to have been apprehended, there is no evidence at hand to prove that the identifying postmarks had anything to do with it. But I think it's a good yarn, and I believe it. Don't you? Anyway, that's my story and I'm stuck with it.

-August 13, 1938

Early Philadelphia Ellipses – An Update

Philadelphia didn't get serious about ellipse cancels until 1878 when it adopted a set containing numbers "1" through "10", except that no "5" has been seen. Clarke reported dates of use for this set from 3/18/78-9/15/79.¹ The last page of the August 2010 *NEWS* provides illustrations of these ellipses. The handstamps involved were undoubtedly supplied by John Goldsborough of Philadelphia who showed Philadelphia markings of this type in his advertisements.



Figure 1.

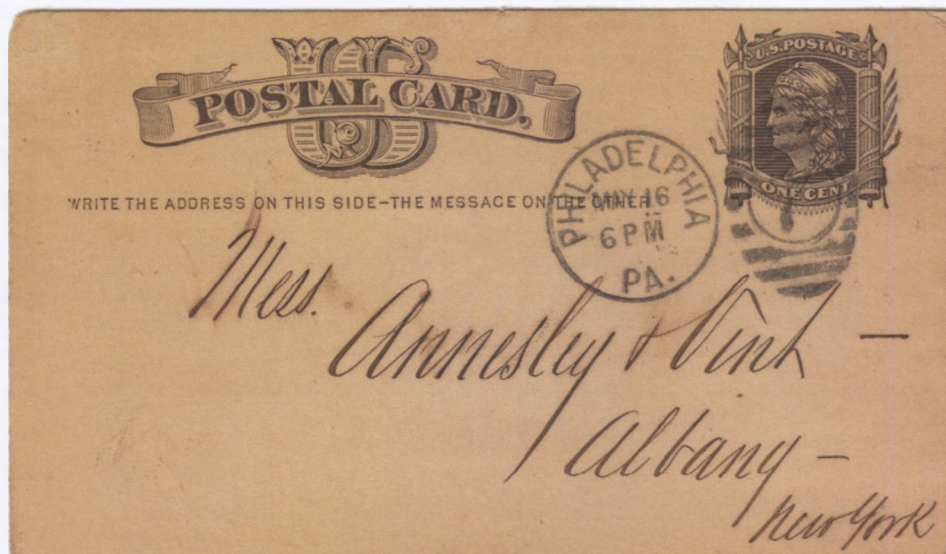


Figure 2.

Philadelphia did, however, experiment with ellipse cancelers in 1877. We say "experiment" because they were used on a very limited basis. The earliest ellipse (see Figure 1) consisted of 13 bars with a "2" in the center and has been reported in February and April 1877 with a total of only three covers so far. See page 82 of the February 2011 *NEWS* for an illustration of one cover. It is interesting to note that the month abbreviation in the CDS consists of two rather than three letters, "AP" for April, which is in the manner of British postmarks. However, I assume the handstamp that produced the Philadelphia marking was a Goldsborough product.



Figure 3.



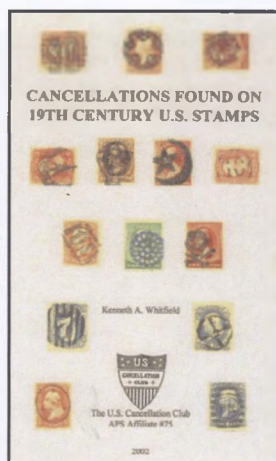
The second ellipse test involved a set of several 9-bar ellipses. Clarke identified numbers "1", "3", "5", and "8" and the February 2011 *NEWS* presented a "9". A "7" can now be added dated May 16, 1877 – see Figure 2. The date range for the ellipses reported by Clarke is 3/28/77-5/13/79. (At least two of the handstamps were used beyond 1877.) A 10-bar "8," presumably not part of this set, can also be mentioned – see Figure 3. The dateline on the back is April 12, 1877. Could it be that

Clarke's 9-bar "8" is actually the very similar 10-bar "8"? If so, the reported examples of the 9-bar ellipses show a run of odd numbers "1" to "9". Are there even numbered ellipses out there that are part of this set? Examples of the odd numbers "3", "5", and "9" are shown in Figure 4. Readers who can add to the story are encouraged to do so.

¹ Clarke, Tom *A Catalog of Philadelphia Postmarks 18th Century to the Present*, Part 1, Revised Edition-1991, pp. 28, 30.



Figure 4.

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.

Early Philadelphia Duplex

by Roger D. Curran

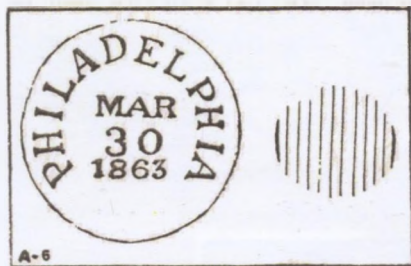


Figure 1.

I believe it can be persuasively argued that (1) the adoption of handstamps duplexing a canceler and postmarker and (2) the introduction of machine cancels, were the two most important steps in the evolution of 19th century U.S. canceling practices. The impetus for duplexes was the July 24, 1860 postal regulation prohibiting use of the postmarker as a canceler of postage. This meant, of course, a doubling of the handstamping workload for a very large number of post offices. The New York Post Office was the first to solve the increased workload problem by introducing a duplex handstamp at least as early as August 8, 1860, followed by two Ohio post offices, Cleveland and Cincinnati, by August 17, 1860. Others jumped on the bandwagon soon.

It has always puzzled me why some of the largest U.S. post offices were so slow to adopt duplex handstamps, given how much time, in the aggregate, would be saved by using them. One of the late comers was Philadelphia and this article takes a brief look at that situation.

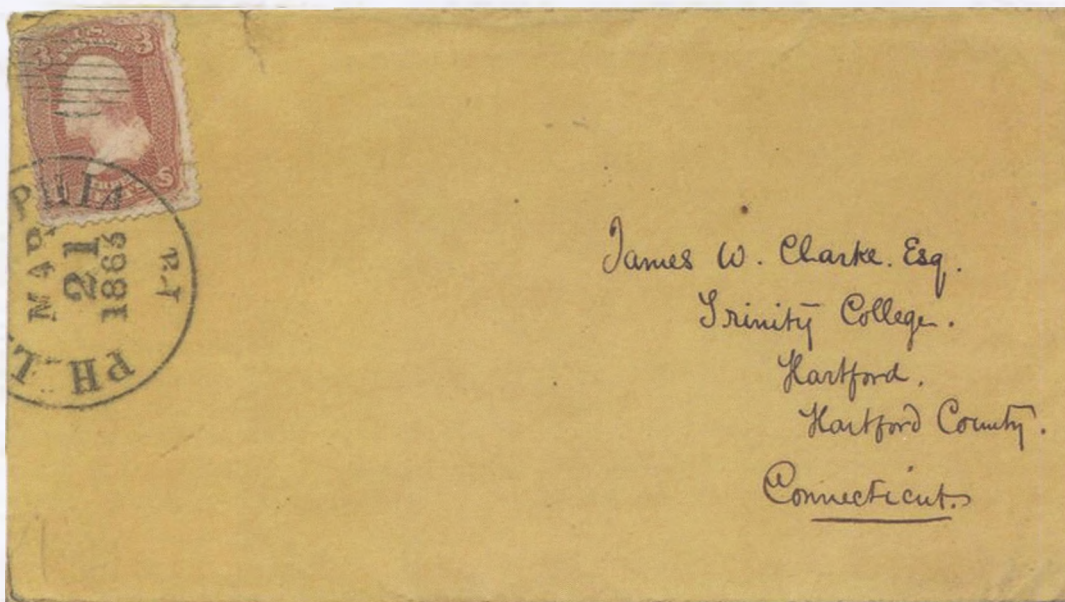


Figure 2.

In the excellent publication *A Catalog of Philadelphia Postmarks 18th Century to the Present*, Tom Clarke lists March 12, 1863 as the earliest reported use of Philadelphia's first handstamp that duplexed a canceler (in this case a 12 line grid) to a postmarker. Norm Shachat pointed out to me recently that the March 12, 1863 date came from Fred Schmalzriedt's seminal article on patent cancels wherein he illustrated an example of the duplex marking with a 12-line grid, shown here as Figure 1, and said this about it:

"12 blades. Unquestionably attached. Earlier copies cut into stamp, but later specimens appear as ordinary cancellations due probably to dulling or wearing. Mar. 12-May, 1863."¹

The Skinner-Eno book also lists the 12-line grid as a patent cancel. See PN-A6.



Figure 3.

Joe Crosby is the present owner the Schmalzriedt patent cancel collection and he reports that it includes March 21, 26 and 30, 1863 strikes of the Figure 1 duplex but no March 12. See Figure 2 for the March 21 example, courtesy of Mr. Crosby. I think there is a reasonable likelihood that March 21 is the date that Schmalzriedt intended to report and "MAR. 12" is a typographical error whereby the "2" and "1" were transposed. In either event, I assume March 1863 is when Philadelphia began with duplexes. As far as I know, no dates before March 12 have been reported.

Figure 3 is a Philadelphia pre-duplex cover dated February 21, 1863. Additional information pertaining to the introduction Philadelphia duplexes would be very much welcomed.

1. Schmalzriedt, Fred R. "Patent Cancellations 1847 to 1887," in the book *Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks and Postal History* by Delf Norona (1933), 1975 Quarterman Publications reprint (1975), p. 150.

A Voice From the Past

Before there was the *US Cancellation Club NEWS*, there was *Postal Markings*, a monthly "magazine." It began in October 1930 and was discontinued after the July 1944 issue. Our Club was established in 1938 and members considered *Postal Markings* to be a (if not the) principal publication for coverage of U.S. cancellations. After its demise, there were efforts to revive *Postal Markings* in cooperation with the USCC but they were unsuccessful. Finally, the *NEWS* appeared in April 1951.

There are many interesting reports and articles in *Postal Markings* although after 60 plus years one cannot expect that they would be, generally speaking, up to date. Your editor recently came across the entertaining article below from the August 1940 issue. It concerns a cancel that shouldn't be. Lee Cornell is best remembered for his very informative 1949 booklet *The Tale of the Kicking Mule* which remains today the standard reference on these popular cancels.

A "CANCELLATION" TO LOOK OUT FOR

by Lee H. Cornell



About four or five years ago, I was surprised to see in the collection of a local dealer an "odd cancellation" on a 3¢ green, like the illustration I enclose.

I questioned the local dealer about his "cancellation" and he told me that he had purchased it about 20 years ago from an itinerant stamp dealer, who had many more of the same "cancellations" in his stock book. It so happens that this "cancellation" is a replica of the fraternity pin of Alpha Gamma Gamma, a local social fraternity at Wichita University, of which I am a member.

This pin was designed by one of our members, and the first order for the pin was placed with a manufacturing jewelry firm in Chicago in 1922 or 1923. Later, about 1924 or 1925, the fraternity decided to have a cut of the pin made to be used in embossing dance programs, letterheads, etc. The cut, which I think was also made in Chicago, is slightly larger than the pin, and the design is not so clear as that of the pin. The figure above the Greek letters is a lamp of knowledge and the small figures below the Greek letters are supposed to be a sunflower (for Kansas) and a wheatshock (for "Wheatshockers"-the athletic teams of W. U.)

I produced my fraternity pin to prove my contention, and the local dealer admitted that it was identical to his "cancellation," but insisted that he had secured the stamp long before I said the pin and cut were made. He promised not to dispose of the "cancellation" until I could find the cut, but shortly thereafter the stamp was gone from his collection and he couldn't remember just what he did with it.

It was not until a few days ago that I was able to locate the cut of the emblem which has not been used by my fraternity for a number of years. I think it would be well to illustrate this "cancellation and see how many copies might turn up.

Has any reader seen an example of this "odd cancellation"?

More on 1851 Cancels

by Roger D. Curran



Figure 1.

The November 2011 *NEWS* carried a brief article on a hand-carved circle of wedges cancel used by the Cincinnati, Ohio post office shortly after the 1851 issue stamps appeared. At this time, hand carved killers were very scarce and readers were asked to report other hand carved cancels used in 1851. Greg Hanson responded with a most unusual grid cancel (Figure 1) from Sterling, Massachusetts. It is dated October 24 and, based on the stamps affixed to the cover, it is assumed by Greg to be an 1851 usage. The stamps are Sc 10A, medium orange brown. It would be a late usage to find these stamps posted in August 1852 or after. The primitive cancel, which one might presume to have been struck from a canceler made of cork or wood, appears to mimic somewhat the standard 18mm circular grid that had been distributed by the Post Office Department to larger post offices beginning with the introduction of the 1847 issue. However, Greg also submitted a cover from Sterling with the same cancel on an 1857 issue stamp (Figure 2) which implies a several year period between the two uses. In 1850, Sterling was a town of 1,800 and the post office workload would have been fairly substantial. It seems quite unlikely that a cork or wood canceler would still be seeing service several years after the Figure 1 strike. One wonders if the Sterling postmaster had someone craft a rudimentary grid in metal or did it himself. Very speculative, of course.



Figure 2.

Louisville, Kentucky, not far down the Ohio River from Cincinnati, was also an early user of what Carroll Chase called “pinwheel” cancels. I don’t have records of dates and hopefully readers will be able to supply some. However, as I understand it, these cancels were used in 1851 (extending into 1852?) before the Louisville post office switched to using the postmarker as a canceler. I know of three of these Louisville cancels in the literature, Figures 3 and 4 in Alexander¹ and Figure 5 in Cohen.²



Figure 3.



Figure 4.



Figure 5.

Alexander rates Figures 3 and 4 as "moderately scarce." The Figure 5 cancel is probably reduced in size.

Readers who can supply additional information are encouraged to do so.

¹ Alexander, Thomas J. *Simpson's U.S. Postal Markings 1851-1861*, USPCS, Inc. (1979), pages 134-5.

² Cohen, Louis *Postal History of Louisville, Kentucky*, La Posta Monograph Series, Vol. 1 (1987), page 5.



Exhibit Awards Won by USCC Members

PHILATELIC SHOW May 4-6 2012

Nancy B Clark: Vermeil medal for "Postal History for District of Maine"

Silver medal; also Aux Marking Society Award for "Got Postage?"

George DeKornfeld: Gold medal for "The Marcophily of Hudson NY"

Gary Hendren: Bronze medal for "Twisted Caps--Twisted Mail" (single frame)

Matt Kewriga: Gold medal; also USPCS Award for "The 2-Cent Jackson Regular Issue"

PIPEX May 11-13 2012

Lester Lanphear: Reserve Grand Award & Gold medal; also USSS Statue of Freedom Award for "U.S. Departmentals 1873 to 1884"

ROPEX May 18-20 2012

Alan Parsons: Vermeil medal; also American First Day Society Award for "The Sullivan Commemorative of 1929"

Ada M Prill: Vermeil medal; also AAPE Award for Presentation Excellence and LRM Popularity Award for "What's a Telephone Good For?"

NAPEX June 1-3 2012

Gordon Eubanks: Court of Honor for "A Traditional Exhibit of the US Issue of 1851-1856"

Wade Saadi: Gold medal for "Evolution of US Cancells--Struck on Stamps--1851 to 1856"

COLOPEX June 8-10 2012

Nancy Clark: Gold medal; also Postal History Society Posthorn Award for "The Massachusetts Island Counties"

Henry Fisher: Vermeil medal for "Third Federal Issue" (single frame)


NATIONAL TOPICAL STAMP SHOW June 23 2012

Fran Adams: Vermeil medal; also AAPE Award of Excellence for "Eskimo" (single frame)

Nancy B Clark: Grand Award and Gold medal; also Casey Jones Railroad Unit Award for "A Trip in the Mail Car" (single frame)

The Classic Cancel

Quality 19th Century U.S. Stamps, Cancells 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

Noted in Passing

by Roger D. Curran

The February 2012 NEWS featured covers involving different inks for postmarking and canceling. Typically, there was a colored ink for the postmark and black ink for the cancel. In response, Jim Doolin submitted the beautiful pair of 1880 covers from Columbus City, Iowa, shown here as Figure 1.



Figure 1.

Figure 2 illustrates a February 12 cover bearing a large Boston negative “F” cancel in a circle. From the dateline on the back, we can identify 1878 as the year date. But is it? These large Boston negatives have been intensively studied by USCC members and there are no reports of this category of cancels before May 1878. We do, of course, see examples of post offices failing to change year date slugs in postmarkers for a while after the beginning of a new year and it is reasonable to expect that businesses would occasionally do something similar regarding such things as the use of pre-printed postal cards. Presumably the inadvertent use of an “1878” postal card in 1879 is what happened here, although it is a little surprising that this occurred so late in the new year and also by a large bank that one would expect to be very accurate in its record keeping and reporting. But, as the expression goes, “to err is human” and no business would escape mistakes. Needless to say, if any reader can show a large Boston negative cancel in February 1878, we would like to learn about it.

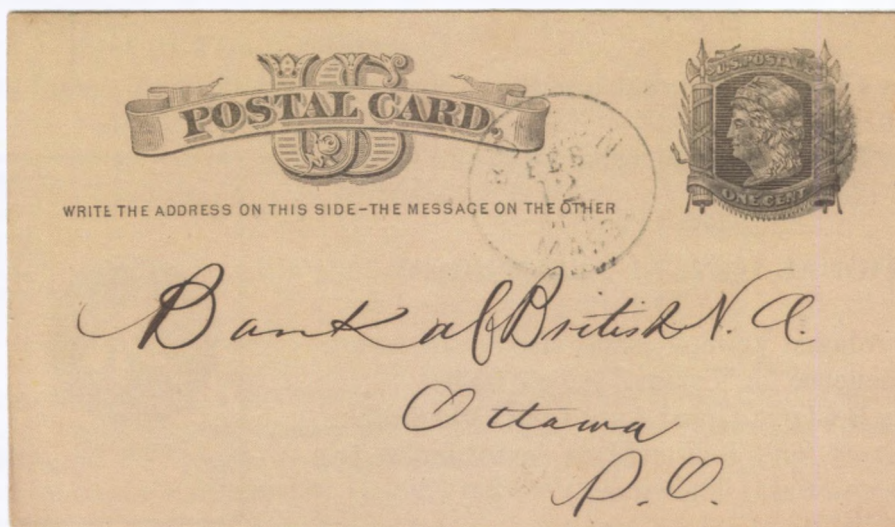


Figure 2. Feb. 12, Boston, Mass.
Negative “F” in Circle
cancellation on 1c postal card.



Figure 3.

Figure 3 presents a curious anomaly. What is unusual here is not that date slugs were used as a cancel – this is something that is seen on occasion – but the fact that these slugs are larger than those used in the postmarker. There must have been two separate handstamps involved. Did the Lawrence postmaster change the slugs in two handstamps every day? One can imagine that such a practice would not have lasted long!

Two covers with noteworthy postmarks are shown in Figure 4. According to the top cover, the New Brighton, N.Y. post office processed this cover at 4:30AM. In 1890, this town had about 7,000 residents. Would that workload necessitate all-night shifts? And it is surprising that this postal mark had half-hour increments, just like some of the nation's largest post offices. A wonderful received marking in red ink was struck on the bottom cover. Note the unusual placement of the time indicator. It, too, shows a half hour time increment and in 1890 New Lebanon had only 193 residents.



Figure 4.



Figure 6.

Figure 5 illustrates an ellipse from Baltimore, Maryland that has a very atypical configuration. The year date is unclear but appears to be 1886. In Volume 2 of Edward Willard's book on the Sc 210 stamp, he presents on page 163 the cancel shown as Figure 6. He was not able to identify the post office of origin but did say that it was part of a set from "1" to "4." The Figure 6 design is not identical to that in Figure 5 – the number is an oval rather than a circle, the number is larger than in Figure 5, and there appears to be only three short bars above and below the number in Figure 5. However, Figure 6 is a

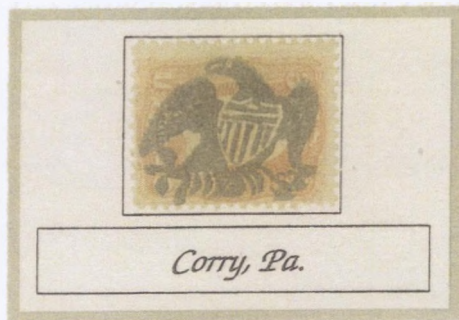
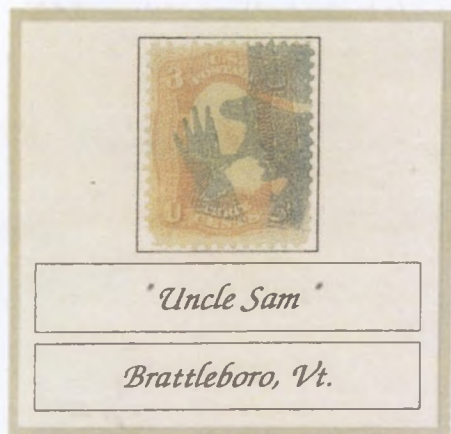
rather rough drawing and may not be fully accurate. The orientation of the canceling bars to the numeral is essentially the same and both show three bars on each side of the numerals. This Baltimore ellipse is one of the most unusual I have ever seen and the fact that the numeral appears sideways in relation to the CDS is odd, especially appearing as late as 1886. Did Baltimore briefly use a set of these ellipses? If so, were the designs identical or was there some variation? If readers can report further examples of this cancel, on or off cover, please do so.

Figure 5.



Cancellation Gallery

Presented below are several cancellations from the three cent 1861 issue collection of Abe Boyarsky. All show excellent strikes.



Cancellation Gallery

Presented below are several cancellations from the three cent 1861 issue collection of Abe Boyarsky. All show excellent strikes.



George Washington

Tunkhannock, Pa.



Man in Moon

Boston, Mass.



Fox

Hockanum, Conn.



Pointing Hand

Lansing Mich.



Skull

Cambridge, Ms.



Heart Face

Dayton, Ohio



Barrel

Waterbury, Conn.



Deer

Deerfield, Mass.



Cat's Head

Cambridge, Mass.

Color Cancellations on the 1869 Series: Masonics *continued from page no. 1*

Figure 4.



Figure 5.



Figure 5 shows a red cancel of interwoven negative triangles, origin unknown. For the only other known example (certified as Masonic) see Siegel's October 2011 sale of the Lachder collection.

Figure 6.

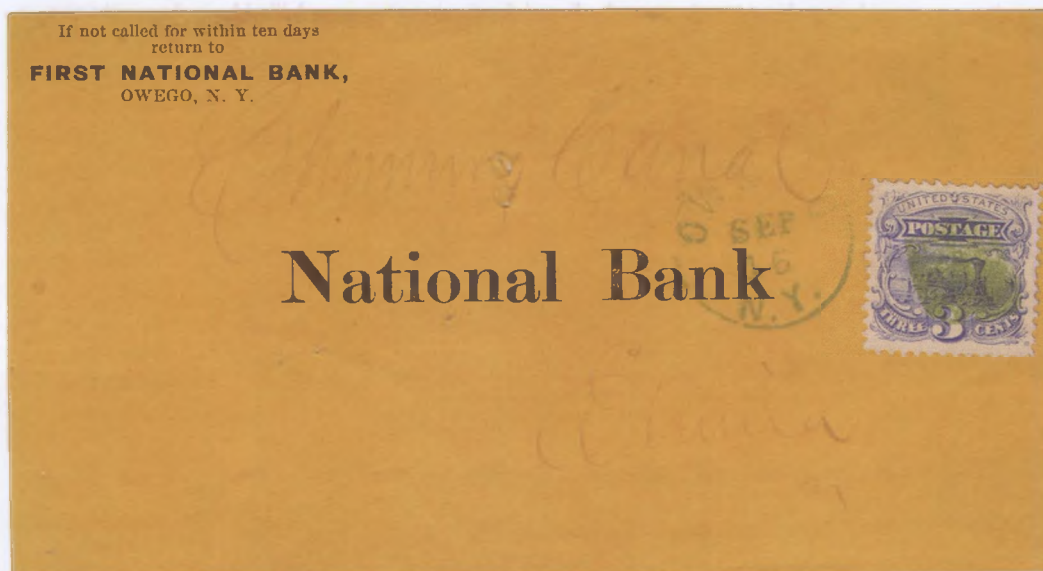


Figure 6 shows a cover from Owego NY bearing a cancel similar in shape to the "bright green" 1869 "keystone" tracing shown by Skinner and Eno (PO-Ks 1). Was the cancel really intended to depict a Masonic keystone? Or just a square? Only the postal employee who carved it knew. With the exception of the negative triangles shown in Figure 2, all of the above cancels are listed by Skinner and Eno.

We conclude with figure 7 that appears to be a bold strike of the magenta compass and square illustrated in Skinner and Eno and attributed to Chelsea VT. I purchased it 15 years ago from a knowledgeable and widely respected dealer in classic U.S. covers. However, the cancel is FAKE. The faker apparently came to possess a genuine Chelsea cover bearing a red target cancel so faint as to be discernible only under high magnification. The faker probably modeled his carving after tracing FR-M4c 22 in S&Es handbook. The color difference between the cancel and CDS provides further evidence of the fakery. This illustrates how one must be careful to examine fancy cancels.

Figure 7.



Early Wheels and More

by Roger D. Curran

The February 2011 *NEWS* illustrated the front and back of a cover, addressed to Brooklyn, New York bearing a "wheel of fortune" (WOF) cancel duplexed to a January 7, 1880 Norfolk, Nebraska postmark. It was lot 915 in the Kelleher sale No. 623 of January 14, 2011 and described as "Purported to be the earliest use of 'Wheel of Fortune' cancel." However, on the back was a Brooklyn received marking dated January 10, 1881. The Norfolk postmaster had neglected to change the "0" slug to "1" in the postmark year date. The failure to change year slugs at the beginning of a new year was not a rare occurrence and is seen occasionally on covers of this era.

January 7, 1881 is an early date for WOF cancels but by no means the earliest. Table 1 lists 1880 usages that have been (1) reported in the literature, (2) reported to the *NEWS* or (3) seen personally by your editor. Readers will note that in some cases there is reference to the year only which is how these dates were reported. In a few cases, there are multiple 1880 reports from the same post office and in these situations only the earliest date is shown.

The first advertisement for WOF cancels in the *U.S. Official Postal Guide* was in the January 1881 issue – see Figure 1. Readers will note that WOF cancels are shown next to, in duplex fashion, postmarks dated as early as 1872! However, these images were surely for illustrative purposes only and should not be interpreted as representations of actual duplex markings. Note under the "Best Offer" section the rather extensive kit of postal markers and associated hardware that could be purchased for \$3. The *Postal Guide* is said to have gone to every postmaster and Railway Mail Service employee in the U.S. The F.P. Hammond Co., which sold the WOF cancels, had advertised in the *Postal Guide* before 1881 but with no reference to WOF cancels. It must have advertised WOF cancels before January 1881 by other means, likely through circulars sent to postmasters in some but not all areas of the U.S.

The earliest reported WOF cancel in Table 1 is from New Lisbon, Wisconsin dated February 26, 1880. A portion of the large legal cover is shown in Figure 2. The cover is addressed to the Circuit Court in Mauston, Wisconsin and on the back is a clear Mauston received marking dated February 27, 1880. The second earliest report, from Irving, Kansas dated April 5, 1880, is shown in Figure 3. The Table 1 listing is just a beginning effort and non doubt very incomplete. Readers are urged to report additional 1880 uses and, of course, any 1879 examples that have been seen.

POST OFFICE SUPPLIES
ESTABLISHED 1872.

WE ARE HEADQUARTERS
For the most complete line of articles used by P. M.'s and their Clerks.

Engraved Letter Headings,
" Note Headings,
Stamp Ribbons (all colors),
Money Order Daters,
Post-Office Daters,
Registered Letter Daters,
Received Daters,
Patent Inking Pads,
P. O. Canceling Ink (*by Express*),
P. O. Rubber Canceling Corks,
Twine Cutters,
Steel and Rubber Stamp Racks,
Coin Detectors,
Paper Weights,
Letter and Package Scales,
Check Protectors,
Gem Type Case,

THE BEST OFFER YET.
One RUBBER P. O. Dater and Canceller, Ink Powder, and Pads, Dates for ten years in Walnut case with tweezers, and all the single line stamps needed in a Post Office, this style type: **UNCLAIMED**
By mail, postage paid, on receipt of price, \$3.00.

PROOFS FROM POSTMASTERS.
Your Quarterly Record received, and I like it very much. JOHN CECIL, P. M., California, Md.
The \$5 Outfit ordered by me was duly received this evening. They are all A No. 1 articles, and give entire satisfaction. — JAS. S. HARKIN, P. M., Orangeburg, N. Y.
The Rubber Stamps, Note and Bill Heads, came to hand all right and meet with favor with those who have examined them, for cheapness, neatness, and durability. — T. W. LITTLE, P. M., Picture Rocks, Pa.
I have been using one of your Stamps and Pads for the last year and it gives satisfaction. — W. S. BOWEN, P. M., Sheffield, Iowa.
I received my Note and Letter Heads, Dater, etc., all O. K. Am satisfied with your job. It far exceeds my expectations. WM. J. KIRK, P. M., Maxwell, Mo.
The Dater received, and I am well pleased with it. — CHAS. COOK, P. M., Albion, Idaho.
Your Box Record received, and is all O. K. — J. W. FROW, P. M., Fort Madison, Iowa.
The Pads ordered came to-day. I am very much pleased with them. — ED. S. MENARD, P. M., St. Genevieve, Mo.

Illustrated Catalogue of Post Office Supplies sent free to Postmasters only. For samples of Note and Letter Headings send 6 cts. Address
F. P. HAMMOND & CO., Aurora Illinois.

Figure 1.

Table 1: 1880 Wheel of Fortune Strikes

<u>Arizona</u> Algona, 9/30/80	<u>Arkansas</u> Searcy, 8/19/80	<u>Colorado</u> Arkansas, 7/27/80 Buena Vista 8/8/80	<u>Illinois</u> Secor, 11/10/80
<u>Indian Territory</u> Cantonment, 1880	<u>Iowa</u> Clarion, 9/16/80 Farragut, 5/11/80	<u>Kansas</u> Frankfort, 6/7/80 Halstead, 11/12/80 Irving, 4/5/80 Lyons, 9/17/89	<u>Minnesota</u> Stillwater, 6/5/80
<u>Montana</u> Fort Benton	<u>Nebraska</u> Dawson, 1880	<u>South Dakota</u> Eden, 10/16/80	<u>Utah</u> Park City, 1880
<u>W. Virginia</u> Parkersburg, 7/30/80		<u>Wisconsin</u> Jenny & Toman, Agt, 1880 Merril & Tomah, Agt, 1880	New Liston, 2/26/80 Sparta, 1880 Tomah, 1880

**Figure 2.****Figure 2a.**

An interesting sidelight is what stamps are found bearing WOF cancels. We'll consider the matter here in terms of the large Banknotes although, of course, WOF usage extended far beyond this era. As one would expect, the cancels are found overwhelmingly on the stamps that paid the single weight, first class rate: Sc #s 184, 207, 210 and 213. To a much lesser extent, wheels on one cent values and two cent vermilion are seen. Ten cent values are noted basically on registered covers – see Figure 4 for a typical example. Occasionally five cent Taylors and Garfields are noted and these, of course, almost exclusively involve mail to foreign destinations – see Figure 5 for Garfield examples. Wheels on denominations above ten cents would be extremely scarce or rare. Not as hard to find but undoubtedly very scarce would be wheels on Sc #s 211, 214, 215 and the six cent values.

**Figure 3.**



Figure 4.



Figure 5.



Figure 6.



Figure 7.

Lot 908 in the above-mentioned Kelleher sale shows a Sc 211 so canceled. One sees a few wheels on off-cover officials but I know of only one on-cover example and it is in the collection of Alan Campbell – see Figure 6.

Several WOF cancels are presented in Figures 7 and 8 that demonstrate how the use of black printers ink led to deterioration of vulcanized rubber designs.



Figure 8a.

Figure 8b. Two additional covers showing deterioration of the wheel.



Figure 9 shows an interesting design variation wherein the outer section is quite similar to the WOF but the center prevents a dramatic departure. If any reader can identify the post office of origin, please let us hear from you. The large wheel in Figure 10 is assumed to be the result of more than normal pressure in applying the cancel. What I assume is an unusual usage of a wheel is shown in Figure 11. The Hawaiian stamp is Sc 45 issued in 1883.



Figure 9.



Figure 10.



Figure 11.

In the November 2009 *NEWS* an 1899 usage from Guatemala was illustrated and the question was raised about whether there are any reports of uses from Mexico. I subsequently realized that the Jim Cole book does report a WOF cancel from a Mexico post office – Lampazos de Naranjo, Nueva, Leon.

Figure 12 shows a portion of a cover to Buckhannon, West Virginia. Apparently, the Buckhannon postmaster was dissatisfied with the light Morgantown wheel cancel and applied a much bolder strike of his blue target cancel.

The Freeport, Ohio cancel in Figure 13 is puzzling. How is it that the cancel was fully struck around the outside rim but largely void in the center? Most distorted strikes result, of course, from deterioration of the rubber facing of the handstamp that applied the cancel design. But not here, apparently, because the portion of the cancel that was struck shows no evidence of deterioration. Perhaps the surface of the canceler had a slight natural indentation in the center whereby a light strike would not press the center onto the card. However, in the case of Figure 13, it doesn't appear to be a light strike. Was it a happenstance lack of ink picked up from the inkpad? Who knows. Explanations and comments will be welcomed.

Figure 12.



Figure 13.

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

www.kewriga.com