



U. S. Cancellation Club **NEWS**

Vol. 31, No. 4, Whole No. 285, November 2012

Albany Lincoln and Stars Cancel

by Ernie Webb



In the February 2012 *NEWS* I posted a "help wanted" request for information regarding the 1860s cancel used by the Albany, New York post office illustrated herewith. The purpose of this article is to report what I have learned in the intervening months. Eighteen covers or pieces have now been recorded with only two providing documentation of the year of use. See Table 1 on page 3.

Out of 18 covers and pieces found, one has an enclosure dated 1865 and one is back stamped with 1865 as a year date. Now it is hardly scientific but I feel pretty certain the year of use must be 1865. George Dawson was Albany's Postmaster from March 27th 1861 to August 3, 1866 and was an ardent pro Republican of the time and presumably the postmaster using the Lincoln cancel. The Lincoln and stars cancellation has only been found on Sc 65 and Sc 78 (with one example on an off cover Sc 73). It has 13 stars which probably represent the original 13 states. The cancellation began its use just 5 ½ months after the Lincoln assassination and appears to have been only used for about one month, October 1 through October 22, perhaps making it even rarer than the famous Devil and Pitchfork cancellation of West Meriden, Ct, in use April 16th through August 31st 1866.



Many questions still remain unanswered, such as why it was produced, what was happening in Albany at the time to prompt the design, and why was it used only for a short period, etc., plus many other questions yet unmentioned.

I want to personally thank all the members who responded with input and photos especially Abe Boyarsky, Don Barany, and George McGowan just to mention a few. I will continue to gather information and if anyone has information or ideas I would welcome them. I can be reached at ewebb02@aol.com or 10025 E 29th St., Tulsa, OK 74129.

See Table 1 on Page 63....

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	jdonnes@cox.net	President
Vince Costello	318 Hoffnagle St., Philadelphia, PA 19111	vinman2119@aol.com	First Vice President
Matthew Kewriga	P.O. Box 318, Medway, MA 02053	matt@kewriga.com	Second Vice President
Roger R. Rhoads	6160 Brownstone Ct., Mentor, OH 44060	rrrhoads@aol.com	Secretary/Treasurer
Dan Richards	10012 Hazelview Dr, Charlotte, NC 28277	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.

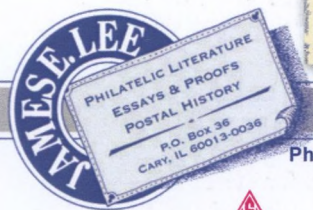
Essays & Proofs

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,

As always in November, one wonders where the time has gone now that a new year approaches. Best wishes to all USCC members for a happy holiday season filled with good health and good work with an ample dose of merriment along the way. The USCC will attend a national show in 2013 and expects to staff a society table for the several days, sponsor a single frame exhibit competition and hold at least one seminar on the subject of early US cancellations. Look for details in the next *NEWS*.

You will find enclosed a combination dues payment notice and ballot. Please take a few moments to complete the form and return it promptly with your check. There is space for write-in votes but if you choose this option please be sure that you have the Club member's permission. If you have comments or recommendations about Club projects or activities, please jot them down on the back of the form. Thanks!

Roger Curran

Albany Lincoln and Stars Cancel Census

	<u>Postmark Date</u>	<u>Day of the week</u>	<u>Name of Addressee</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1.	October 1	Sunday	Libby	on Sc 65
2.	October 2	Monday	Bates	on piece to England, 1865 receiving mark on reverse, Sc 78
3.	October 2	Monday	Dr Webb	on Sc 65
4.	October 3	Tuesday	Bridgen	enclosure dated 1865 in same hand as address
5.	October 5	Thursday	Morrison	on Sc 65
6.	October 6	Friday	Hiller	on Sc 65
7.	October 6	Friday	Dr Wade	on Sc 65
8.	October 6	Friday	Dodds	on Sc 65
9.	October 6	Friday	Williams, Jr	from State of NY Comptroller's Office, on Sc 65
10.	October 6	Friday	Beatte	on Sc 65
11.	October 7	Saturday	?	strip of 3 Sc 65, each with Lincoln cancel
12.	October 7	Saturday	Plunkett	on Sc 65
13.	October 11	Wednesday	?	on piece, Sc 65
14.	October 12	Thursday	?	on piece, Sc 65
15.	October 15	Sunday	?	on PSE with 2 Sc 65
16.	October 17	Tuesday	Garnsey	free frank of Senator Ira Harris
17.	October 20	Friday	Claff	on Sc 65
18.	October 22	Sunday	?	on Sc 65

Table 1

Editor's note: Matt Kewriga pointed out that Albany used another distinctive patriotic cancel design in October 1865. See the cover shown herewith, postmarked October 9. It can be year dated 1865. Actually, Albany used several variations of this design—see Skinner/Eno PT-C 17 through 20 and Whitfield 5056-8. A similar Albany cancel, but involving "USA" in the center, is also known—see S/E PT-USA 1 through 2a. We don't have dates of use for these and if readers can supply any, please contact the *NEWS*. From the tracings, it appears that all cancels show 13 stars.



Colored Cancels on the 1869 Series: Pictorials

by Ed Field

In this article, the term “pictorial cancel” means a cancel depicting a person, plant, animal, or object. Though shields and stars fit this definition, presentation of such cancels is deferred for future articles. The blue beer mug cancel of Galva, Illinois was shown in the May 2012 issue of the *NEWS* and is not repeated here.



Figure 1.

Figure 1 shows a cover bearing a three-cent stamp and unique red top hat cancel of Ashland, Ohio. The addressee, Nathaniel Meeker, was a prominent journalist for the *New York Tribune*. With the backing of his editor, Horace Greeley, Meeker went west in 1870 to establish a utopian colony in what is now Greeley, Colorado. On 30 October 1879, he became the most famous fatality of a raid by the Ute Indians now known as the “Meeker Massacre”. The town of Meeker, Colorado and Mount Meeker bear his name.

Figure 2.



Figure 2 shows a cover bearing the three-cent stamp and blue woman's head cancel from Suisun City, California. I know of no others. The Philatelic Foundation certified this use as genuine, but declined opinion as to whether the cancel was intended to be a woman's head. I hope the tracing removes any doubt.

Figure 3.



Figure 4.



Figure 3 shows a piece bearing the 3-cent stamp and greenish-blue Skull & Bones cancel of Charlestown, West Virginia. I am advised that a second example of this cancel exists.

Figure 4 shows the 2-cent stamp bearing the red anchor cancel of Newark, New Jersey (Skinner-Eno PO-An 39). I have not seen another on an 1869 stamp. This example is certified genuine, but I have seen a similar red anchor cancel certified as forged on the 2-cent blackjack stamp.

Figure 5.



Figure 5 shows a cover bearing two 1-cent stamps paying the rate for an unsealed circular. Each stamp bears the blue three-leaf clover cancel of Covington, Kentucky. Note that a nearly identical clover cancel, from Galva, Illinois, was shown in the May 2012 issue of *NEWS*.

Figure 6.



Figure 6 shows five stamps bearing leaf cancels. From left to right: the 2-cent and 10 cent stamps bear blue leaf cancels of unknown origin. The 10-cent, 30-cent, and 90-cent stamps all bear red leaf cancels of the type used to cancel New York supplementary mail dockside, allowing after-hours mailings to go aboard. The red leaf was used from November 1868 through at least the end of 1870. Because such supplementary mail went to foreign destinations, the red leaf---unlike most other fancy cancels---is more common on high-value 1869 stamps than on low-value ones.

Continued on next page....

Colored Cancels on the 1869 Series: Pictorials, continued from prior page



Figure 7.

Figure 7 could be titled “birds and bees”. From left to right: the 2-cent stamp bears the bluebird cancel of Rockford, Illinois. This cancel is not rare, and examples are also known on the 3-cent and 10-cent stamps; the second 2-cent stamp bears the bee cancel of NYC Station B (ex-Coulter). The third 2-cent stamp bears an insect cancel (certified as a bee) of unknown origin. Finally, the 3-cent stamp on the right bears the fly cancel of Mount Vernon, Ohio (Skinner-Eno PA-I 12). I know of two on-cover examples of this cancel, as well as several off-cover examples.

Help Wanted

Don Barany submits two stamps from his collection with unlisted cancels. Figure 1 is a Sc 86 with a “wheel” cancel and what Don describes as a faint trace of a CDS with a couple of letters showing that he cannot discern. Figure 2 is a Sc 73 with a full strike of a shield. If readers can identify either or both of these cancels, please contact the *NEWS*.

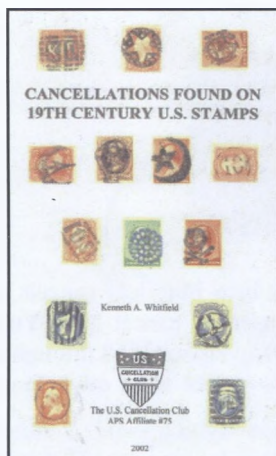
Figure 1.



Figure 2.



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.

A New Boston Negative?

by Bob Grosch

On ebay some months ago there appeared a postal card with a Boston negative cancel in solid square with "V" – see Figure 1. I doubted that this was an authentic "V" cancel, mostly because it had not been previously discovered. However, it does look authentic on the face of it. Here is the evidence against it:

1. There is a very slight hint of a possible horizontal line of "A" extending from what would be the inside of the left leg of the "A".
2. If this is truly a "V", the only known copy of this cancel is upside down, a statistical improbability. (Upside down strikes do exist but they represent a small fraction of the total.)
3. Boston negative letters in a square, such as Figure 1, have been reported for letters "A" – "N", omitting only letters "G" and "I". No letters further down the alphabet have been reported. Since the letters were apparently released in alphabetical order, what happened to the missing letters between N and V? – The large Boston negatives appear in four basic designs, the solid square being one. Boston did use each of three "missing" letters in one or another of the other three designs – "O", "S", and "T". It would be most likely that rather than use a "V" in the square, Boston would have used one of the more common "O", "S" or "T" letters.



Figure 1.

Still troubled by the apparent authentic appearance of the cancel I wrote to the present owner of the card, fellow Club member Charles Souder, who graciously sent me a scan of the message side of the card. Although there is not a complete date on the message side, it does contain the notation by the writer: "Sunday Eve."

The "Sunday Eve." is the hint that the card is probably an "A" cancel with ink somehow printing over the horizontal bar of the letter, perhaps due to dirt or paper fibers clogging the cancel device. This is so because July 22 (the CDS date) fell on the following days of the week:

1878 – Monday
 1879 – Tuesday
 1880 – Thursday
 1881 – Friday
 1882 – Saturday
 1883 – Sunday

It would certainly be more likely that a "Sunday Eve" card would be mailed the next day – on Monday – than on any other day of the week. And if not on Monday, then on Tuesday. In order to fit the known pattern of use for the letters in solid square, the card with a "V" would have had to be mailed no sooner than May of 1881. All the letters in square from "A" – "K" (without "G" and "I", of course) are reported in mid – 1878. The "L" is first reported in 1879 and the "M" and "N" in 1881.

Conclusion: not an authentic "V", but merely a clogged killer for "A", probably mailed on Monday, July 22, 1878.

Noted in Passing

by Roger D. Curran



Figure 1.

Figure 1 illustrates a piece with two strikes of an unlisted "JR" cancel. A Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia postmark is also present. The markings cannot be year dated but the stamp is a Sc 252 issued in 1895 and the PSE indicium is a U80 design issued in 1899. The idea of finding a Philadelphia station using a hand carved killer in 1899 or later is surprising to say the least. Surprising enough that we should take a closer look at the evidence at hand. First of all, we see a light strike of the rim of a postmark, diameter about 27.5 diameter, to the left of the "JR" at right. Light because this strike, from a duplexed handstamp, was no doubt only intended to kill the stamp and not put a postmark on the cover. (The cover was presumably postmarked with a postmark duplexed to the "JR" on the left side of the piece.) The Chestnut Hill postmark has a diameter of about 25mm. Also, we note a small portion of a killer in the bottom right corner of the piece that was no doubt duplexed to the Chestnut Hill postmark. This postmark was apparently struck for some purpose other than to show where and when the cover entered the mails. Struck to show transit or receipt comes to mind but such markings are normally found on the back of a cover. (Too bad that we don't have the opportunity to see the full cover.) OK, now that a Philadelphia origin has been debunked, who can identify the post office that did use the cancel? Did I hear someone say "Dallas"?



Figure 2.

Figure 2 shows a very primitive cancel that would have been indecipherable but for the fact that it was largely struck on the light colored surface of the cover itself rather than fully on the stamp. There is a "D" placed inside what we will interpret as a "V" creating a representation of the post office name of Dansville. Some ambiguity is interjected with the cross-bar at the top of the "V" making it technically a triangle. However "DV" is far more appealing than "D in a triangle."



Figure 3.

Figure 3 presents another cancel that is apparently composed of two letters. When considering the postmark, a negative "AM" for Albion, Michigan makes sense but, of course, the letter "A" is upside down. We'll guess the postmaster wanted a monogram and this is what he considered to be the best way to create it.

Figure 4 shows an odd Boston cancel along with a tracing that we assume was made years ago because it was pasted on an old album page. It was described as a "Jack-O-Lantern" and one can readily see why. However, like the "Philadelphia" cancel above, it would be very much out of place in terms of its period of use. The stamp is a Sc 207 so we can assume that the cover, postmarked January 1 but with no enclosure or year date indication on the front or back, was postmarked in 1882 or 1883. Also, the style of the accompanying Boston postmark is consistent with this period which saw extensive use of the "large Boston negative" cancels. These included one design that had a thick outer ring with a circular inner core enclosing a negative number or



Figure 4.



Figure 5.

letter. John Donnes examined the cancel and opines that it is likely to be a very worn strike of a negative "4" in a ringed cancel. (See Figure 5 for the Blake and Davis tracing of this cancel.) I agree and, given the wear, speculate that the year was 1883, the latest year in which these Boston cancels are reported.

This first obliteration of an adhesive postage stamp was, of course, the Maltese cross cancel used on Great Britain's penny black and two penny blue stamps issued in 1840. A question for collectors of U.S. cancels is when did Maltese cross cancels appear in the U.S.? (What collectors consider Maltese cross cancels varies somewhat but basically it involves a cross where the four bars broaden out from the center.) As far as your editor knows, Maltese cross cancels are nonexistent on the 1847 issue.



Figure 6.

They did appear in the 1851-61 period but are very scarce, perhaps even rare. We illustrate in Figure 6 and 7 two examples. The cover in Figure 6 is postmarked Lafayette, Indiana with date of February 10. Docketing indicates the year to be 1852. Both the postmark and cancel are in blue ink. Figure 7 is from East Smithfield, Pennsylvania on an 1857 issue stamp. There is no indication of a year date. The cancel is listed in both Alexander and Skinner-Eno attributed to East Smithfield and, in the latter case, on an 1851 issue cover. I found only one other Maltese cross cancel during the 1851-57 era reported in the



Figure 8.

literature and it is a rather remarkable one from Elmira, New York – see Figure 8. The cancel on the left is from the Alexander 1851-61 book which also illustrates a wonderful cover bearing the cancel dated August 31, 1860. The cancel on the right of Figure 8 is from Skinner-Eno and I believe it is the same cancel but taken from a less complete strike. Maltese cross cancels, of course, became popular on 1861 and later issues. If readers can report additional examples on stamps before the 1861 issue, the NEWS would be eager to learn about them.



Figure 7.



Exhibit Awards Won by USCC Members

APS STAMPSHOW: August 16-19 2012

Gordon Eubanks: Gold medal & **World Series Champion of Champions** for "First Federally Issued Postage Stamps"
W.S. of Philately Prix d'Honneur for "The Imperf Issues of the U.S., 1851-56"

Edward Field: Vermeil medal; also U.S. Cancellation Club Best Multi-Frame Award for "U.S. Stamps of 1869 Bearing Colored Cancels"

Nick Kirke: W.S. of Philately Prix d'Honneur for "The Progression of the New York Foreign Mail Cancellations 1870-78".
Vermeil Medal; also U.S. Cancellation Club Best Single Frame Award for "New York Foreign Mail Fancy Cancels"


Matthew Kewriga: Gold Medal; also APS Pre-1900 Medal of Excellence and USSS Statue of Freedom Award for "The U.S. 2-Cent Jackson Regular Issues of 1870-79"

MILCOPEX 2012: September 21-3 2012

Gary Hendren: Gold Medal; also Charles Towle Annual Exhibit Award & Collectors Club of Chicago Exhibitor's Award for "St. Louis Street Car Mail 1892-1915"

The Classic Cancel

Quality 19th Century U.S. Stamps, Cancels 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

Rolling Out the Barrel

by Roger D. Curran

The earliest sets of U.S. ellipse cancels (which began appearing in the mid 1870s) were comprised of horizontal bars – see Figure 1. The number of bars varied but an ellipse with nine bars was typical. Horizontal (and to a lesser extend vertical) bar ellipses were used for many years but a competing design appeared in the 1880s that came to be the most common form, at least in terms of the number of post offices that used it. It involved what collectors call a “barrel” in the center with normally two or three bars above and below. A typical example is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

It is an interesting question as to just when the barrel ellipses were introduced in the U.S. I am aware of no reports in the literature that address this point directly. The first detailed study of U.S. ellipse cancels published in the philatelic press was Gilbert Burr's multi-part article “Standardized Hand Stamp Cancellations on the Bank Note Issues” that appeared in the *American Philatelist* from January 1935 to April 1936. In his introductory section, Burr illustrated the Figure 2 ellipse and stated this about it:

“Nearly all of these cancels are of the later datings, and largely on the 2¢ postage of this period. In many instances they replaced some of the former types in some cities. They seem to indicate more of a pronounced effort on the part of the Department to standardize the cancels to one type, and are quite similar to those used today.”

Burr illustrated a large number of ellipses and while he did not report dates of use he did, in the majority of cases, identify the stamp issues on which the particular cancels were found. I reviewed his article to identify those “barrel” ellipses that were reported on stamps issued before the two cents first class postage era; that is, stamps issued before 10/1/83. A very short list resulted - see Figure 3. Two of the cancels illustrated are not really barrel ellipses but what one might call “transitional” because they exhibit a slight or limited approximation of such cancels. The first is from St. Paul, MN reported on a “3¢ green” and the second from Bethlehem, PA on a “3¢ re-engraved.” The third cancel, a true barrel ellipse, is from the Washington, D.C. “fishtail” set. This set involved numerals “1” through “6” and the earliest reported date is November 14, 1882.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.

After the Burr article, the next major report in the literature of U.S. ellipse cancels appeared in Volume Two of Edward Willard's *The United States Two Cent Red Brown of 1883-1887*. However, since our question concerns uses of barrel ellipses before the issuance of Willard's stamp (Sc 210), his book doesn't help. The next and most recent broad published study of ellipses is the ellipse section in the 1995 Cole book. He reports one example (Figure 4) prior to October 1883 and it is perhaps noteworthy that it comes from a station of the Washington, D.C. post office.

Beyond the above references, attention was given to books and articles that focus on the postal history of specific cities, including Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Louisville, Philadelphia, and San Francisco and no examples of barrel ellipses were noted before October 1883. From reports in this journal over the years, we can rule out any early uses of barrel ellipses by the New York Post Office.

Given the above, we'll put forward the Washington, DC “fishtail” barrel ellipses as very early and perhaps the earliest barrel ellipses, in the true form of such cancels, used in the U.S. We will, however, not be surprised to learn of earlier examples and encourage readers to report any such cancels to the *NEWS*. The introduction of barrel ellipses was, I believe, an important step in the evolution of U.S. canceling practices.

Updates on Early Philadelphia and Boston Ellipses

Andy Callender reports two covers that bear on discussions in these pages about the earliest ellipse cancels used by Philadelphia and Boston. The February 2011 *NEWS* illustrated a cover submitted by Dan Haskett that represented only the third cover reported with the 13-bar Philadelphia ellipse with a "2" in the center. The dates of these covers are February 20, April 5 and April 7, all in 1877. Ardy now submits a fourth cover (see Figure 1), this with a date of April 16, 1877 which extends the known period of use. Additional reports of this pioneer ellipse are eagerly sought.

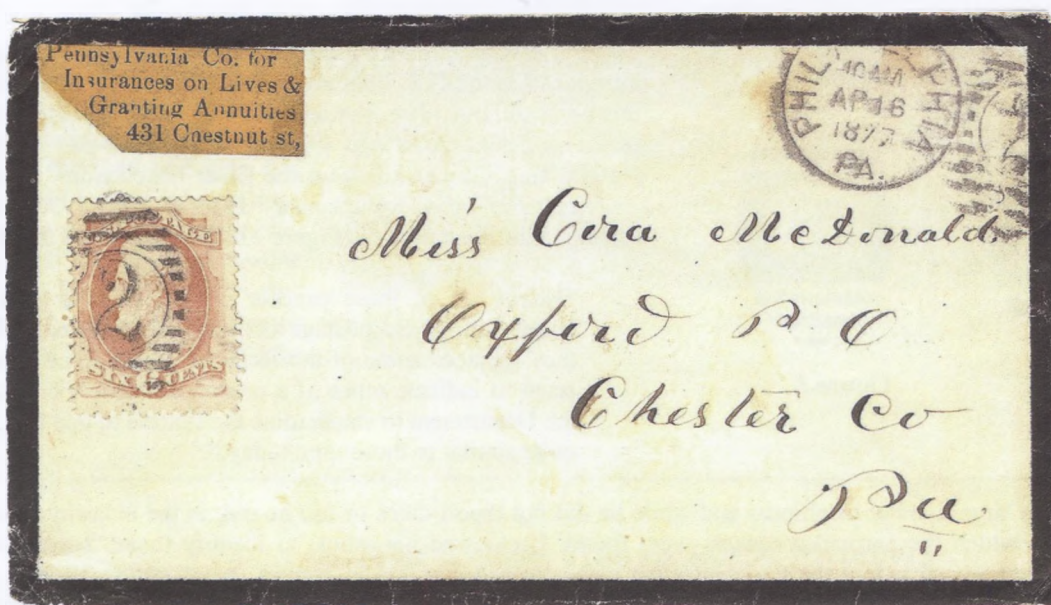


Figure 1.

Boston's earliest ellipses were discussed in the May 2008 *NEWS*. Those that your editor has seen on dated covers are concentrated in the first several months of 1878, but the Blake and Davis book lists earlier dates. The numbers in the center, as reported by Blake and Davis, range from "1" to "44" with also a "63." Not all the numbers up to "44" are listed but some of the unlisted numbers have been seen and a full run probably exists. (The November 2011 *NEWS* illustrated and described the "63" cover from which the "63" listing was likely derived. It was concluded the "63" was actually a poorly struck 39.) The 2008 article presented a "48" on an off-cover 1¢ Banknote that appears clearly to be part of this Boston set as well as a "48" cover that entered the mails at a Massachusetts post office other than Boston. This cover went through Boston where the unduplexed Boston ellipse was struck before it was sent on to Shelburne Falls,



Scan of Backstamps

Figure 2.



Figure 3.

Massachusetts. It seemed reasonable to presume that the "48" on the 1¢ off-cover Banknote was also unduplexed and the cover on which it was originally affixed was an unsealed circular.

The above paragraph is all by way of background to the cover in Figure 2 which shows another use of an unduplexed "48". I believe this cover originated in a post office that neglected to apply a postmark or cancel whereupon it went through Boston in transit to New York City. Since it didn't originate in Boston, no Boston postmark was put on the front. However, the stamp needed to be canceled, hence an unduplexed killer was used. The question arises as to whether Boston ellipses in this set were used with numbers between "44" and "48"? One would think so but, with one additional report of a "48" – see Figure 3 – we now have four reports of the "48" and it begins to seem plausible that the "45" to "47" ellipses may not exist. Needless to say, if readers can report any of the missing numbers in this Boston set, you are encouraged to do so.

More on Odd Baltimore Ellipse

by Roger D. Curran

The August 2012 *NEWS* (page 52) illustrated a very unusual ellipse cancel from Baltimore, Maryland where the central numeral is sideways in relation to the overall configuration of the canceling bars and to the duplexed postmark. Was this a manufacturing error or did it represent a post office error in not properly aligning the canceler with the postmarker in the handstamp? The latter possibility wouldn't be mentioned but for a report from Joe Crosby of a cancel that was in the collection of Gilbert Burr. Joe submitted the three cancels shown in Figure 1, all attributed to Baltimore. Note the upside down "5" in the ellipse on piece. I believe the ellipse cancelers overwhelmingly were stationary on the face of a duplex handstamp and the isolated cases that are seen of upside down ellipses are basically errors in handstamp construction. One does note varying angles in the case of Boston's earliest ellipses and a few from other post offices in that time period and these certainly imply that those ellipse cancelers were not stationary. However, I think it most unlikely that the Baltimore ellipse under discussion here, (the "4" in the August *NEWS*), apparently used in the mid 1880s, was subject to rotation on the handstamp. The 9-bar ellipses on Burr's stamps in Figure 1 are very similar to that of the sideways "4" as are the Baltimore postmarks that accompany the sideways "4" and upside down "5." However, the "4", of course, has short bars above and below the numeral while Burr's "1", "2" and "5" show short bars at the sides of the numerals. Also, Burr's examples are all on re-engraved stamp while the "4" was struck on a Sc 210 with a postmark date that may be "1886".



Figure 1.

To sum up, the Burr stamps point to the existence of Baltimore ellipses that are very similar to that of the sideways "4", but with other numbers in the center including one that is upside down in relation to postmark. While nothing here is at all conclusive, possibly there was an ellipse set that contained errors in manufacture that was not used regularly but individual handstamps from the set were occasionally pressed into service for short periods when regular handstamps broke, wore out or went missing. Comments and further information will be welcomed.

Washington Ellipse Updates

by Roger D. Curran

We are now able to report several updates to the article on Washington, D.C. 19th century ellipse cancels that appeared in the May 2012 *NEWS*. Most of these were submitted by Ken Pitt who recently acquired a substantial correspondence of the period from Washington, D.C. to an attorney, Edmund Flagg, in Falls Church, Virginia.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

Figure 1 shows the upper right corner of a cover that is dated August 5, 1879. Although the postage stamp bearing most of the cancel is missing, there is enough of the ellipse remaining to positively identify it as an example of the Figures 3 / 4 ellipse style from the May *NEWS*. The Figure 1 date is four days earlier than the previous ERU report.



Figure 3.



Figure 2, dated November 15, is very interesting. It is five days earlier than the ERU for Figure 12 in the May *NEWS*. It also places the ERU for the 8-bar fishtail very close to that of the fishtail set with a barrel – November 14, 1882. The two fishtail sets replaced two sets of concentric circles cancels with basic periods of use that have been reported to November 10 and 11, 1882. (There are some late uses known but they are all thought to be isolated examples and not from regular, production workload.) I assume we are now very close to identifying the first day of use for the fishtails. An interesting sidelight is that the three earliest dates I record for the 8-bar fishtail – November 15, 20 and 21, 1882 – all involve the numeral “3.” See Figure 3 for November 20 and 21. Is this just a coincidence? The two earliest fishtail ellipses with a barrel both involve a “5” in the center but I record a November 21, 1882 example with a “1” in the center.



Figure 4.

Figure 4 shows an “L” ellipse dated January 5. The full cover has manuscript docketing indicating that it was received on January 7, 1890. This cover considerably extends the LRU for Figure 18 in the May *NEWS* which is April 20, 1889. At this point mention should be made that I neglected to report an additional ellipse for local mail that was well documented by Carl Stieg in the Fall 1998 *NEWS*. He identified a gap in dates for the large “L” ellipses in his collection between August 28, 1886 and April 17, 1889. However, he noted a similar appearing ellipse with a “C” in the center and reported it from October 17, 1887 to February 17, 1889. See Figure 5 for an example. Carl noted that all examples of this “C” ellipse that he had seen were to local addresses and he credited Bill Sandrik with first suggesting to him that this “C” ellipse might be a local cancel. I have three examples in my collection and all are addressed locally. If readers can report these “L” or “C” ellipses that modify the gap identified by Carl Stieg, please contact the *NEWS*. It should be

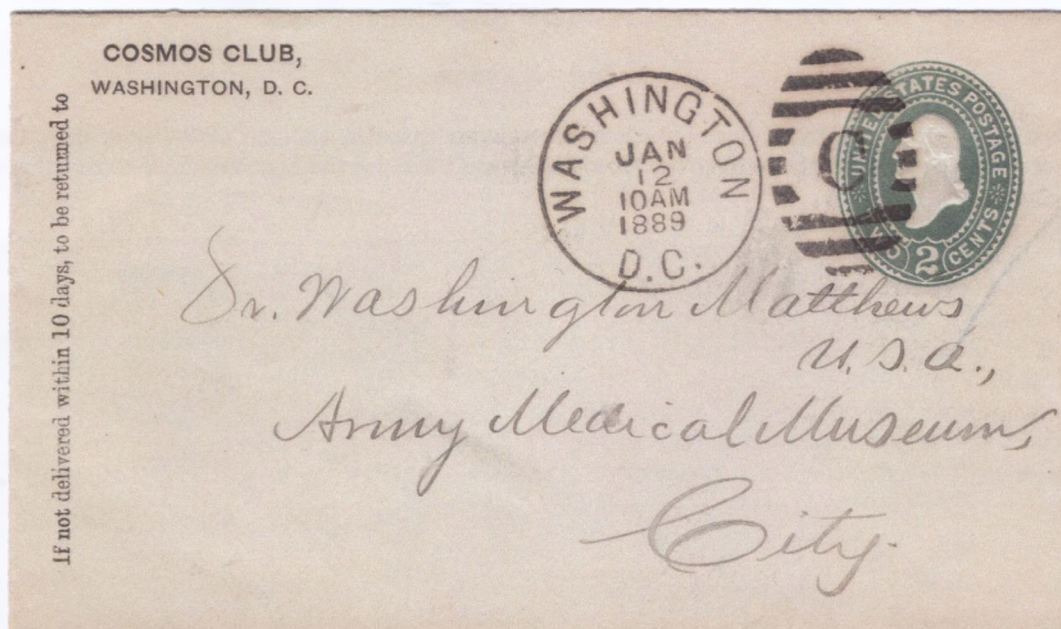


Figure 5.

mentioned that there was a Station C in Washington at the time and there were Station C ellipses used, but always, I believe, with a "C" also in the CDS.



Figure 6.



Figure 7.

Figure 6 shows a new ERU for the Figure 22 ellipse in the May *NEWS* – September 23, 1886. It is four months earlier than previously reported.

Figures 28 and 29 in the May *NEWS* illustrated two "L" ellipses with barrels in the center on Sc 220 stamps. In one case, a two digit year dated appeared between the CDS and ellipse, and the other had no year date but there was a "3" at the bottom of the CDS. Figure 7 here introduces a third configuration, this on a Sc 250 stamp, involving a 25 mm CDS with year date inside. The year date is not clear but may be "98."

Figure 8 shows a new ERU for the Figure 33 ellipse in the May *NEWS* – May 28, 1891. The previous ERU was October 16, 1892! Another major date change involves Figure 37 from the May *NEWS*. Two 1895 examples were previously reported and Figure 9 here illustrates a November 19, 1892 example with the same 26 mm CDS.

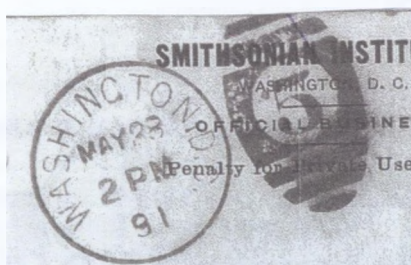


Figure 8.



Figure 9.

A Question to Consider

by Roger D. Curran

The adoption of handstamps that duplexed a postmarker to a canceler was one of the most important steps in the evolution of 19th century U.S. canceling practices. The New York Post Office was the first post office to take this step and did so at least as early as August 8, 1860.

Figure 1.



The concept of duplexing a postmarker to another postal marking was not a new idea in 1860. Handstamps that duplexed a postmark to a rate number go back at least to 1830. Two examples of “attached rate” markings are shown in Figure 1, (note that Dryden has two attached markings).¹ However, let’s limit our attention here to only those duplexed markings where one of the markings was designed as a canceler of postage stamps. And we will be careful not to include single markings that serves two purposes – see an illustration in Figure 2. An interesting question is herewith presented. What is the earliest example of a U.S. duplex that involves a canceler as one of the markings? Was it the NYPO duplex of 1860 or are there earlier ones?

Figure 2.



Please submit your answers to me at rcurran@dejazzd.com or 20 University Ave., Lewisburg PA 17837. We will discuss the matter in the February 2013 issue and report responses to this survey.

¹Norona, Delf, *Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks and Postal History*, Quarterman reprint (1975), p. 13.

Philipsburgh, Pennsylvania Fancy Cancels

by Wendell Triplett

Philipsburgh, Pennsylvania is a town located just northwest of State College, Pennsylvania. The Philipsburgh post office has been in operation since 1813. Several Banknote era fancy cancels have been recorded from this post office.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.

The cross in Figure 1 is Whitfield #2494, attributed to Philipsburgh and reported on 3¢ green era stamps. Figure 2 is Cole #Lb-22, attributed to Philipsburgh with dates of May 4-12, 1875. It is also listed as Whitfield #5504, attributed to Philipsburgh. Figure 3 is Cole Pi-19 which is unattributed but reported on an 1876 envelope. The cover in Figure 4 identifies the Figure 3 cancel as originating in Philipsburgh. Figure 5 shows three “76” cancels that Cole lists as YD-57, YD-68 and YD-69. YD-68 is reported with date of November 27, 1876 and it is reasonable to assume that all three cancels were used in 1876. YD-69 is also listed as Whitfield #4865.



Figure 4.

An unlisted Philipsburgh, Pennsylvania cancel has recently been identified – see Figure 6. It is a hand-carved encircled “mortar and pestle” with a “76”. Part of the Philipsburgh postmark is visible on the piece, the “...URGH”, and the postmark diameter of 26-mm agrees with the typical Philipsburgh postmark diameter. The “mortar and pestle” design provides further evidence.

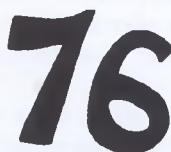


Figure 5.

Most likely the “B” cancel, shown earlier, was a postal employee’s initial, and possibly the carver of these cancels. Who can identify that person?



Figure 6. Newly recorded Mortar & Pestle with “76”.

1. Cole, James M. *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era, 1870-1894*, U.S. Philatelic Classics Society (1995), pp. 150, 192-3, 242.
2. Whitfield, Kenneth A. *Cancellations Found on 19th Century U.S. Stamps*, USCC (2002, 2007 and 2012), pp. 85, 164, 186.

Late Fancy Cancels (Part II)

by Roger D. Curran

The February 2009 *NEWS* carried the first installment of an article on late fancy cancels. Additional cancels from the 1900-1910 period are presented below together with some introductory remarks.

Collecting fancy cancels has long been a popular specialty among U.S. postal history enthusiasts and it is easy to understand why. Many designs are aesthetically pleasing, there is an ample supply on the market, and opportunities for research and new discoveries abound. By the early 1890s, however, the use of fancy cancels had reduced dramatically. This trend began in the mid 1870s when the largest post offices started using standardized cancels, consisting basically of ellipses or concentric circles with a number or letter in the center. Such cancels were soon adopted by many medium sized post offices as well.



Figure 1.

As a general proposition, it was small post offices that kept alive the practice of using hand-carved cork cancels. And there was, by the mid to late 1870s, a technological development that actually increased the number of fancy cancels emanating from small post offices – the use of molded rubber facings on handstamp cancelers. The “wheel of fortune” and “scarab” cancels are the most commonly seen designs produced from rubber faced cancelers, but there were many others. These cancelers were cheap and appealed to small post offices that processed a limited amount of mail and the lack of durability under heavy use was not really a problem.

At the turn of the century the use of both carved corks and fancy molded rubber killers had largely disappeared. By 1900 the Post Office Department was supplying small post offices with handstamps that consisted of separate handstamps for postmarking and canceling as opposed to duplexes. The canceler was a four-ring target. In 1903, the POD began distribution of Doane cancels to the smaller fourth class post offices after successful testing in the Rural Free Delivery Service. See Richard Helbock’s informative books *Postmarks on Postcards* and *United States Doanes* (the revised 2nd edition in both cases).

Despite the overwhelming trend to standardization, there were some postmasters, as one would expect, who for whatever reasons continued the practice of using fancy cancels in the style of a bygone era. The study of these cancels has been somewhat neglected by writers and collectors due probably to the lack of much material and to the fact that the relatively mundane designs don’t generate as much interest as the earlier examples. However, they are significant from a postal history standpoint and warrant some attention in these pages.

At least three of the molded rubber designs survived into the 20th century – the wheel of fortune, scarab and double lined Maltese cross. Helbock noted that 30 post offices are reported to have used the six bar scarab cancel after 1900, two that used the wheel of fortune, and one that used the double lined Maltese cross. (See the February 2011 *NEWS* for an illustration of the latest reported wheel of fortune use.) I question one observation of Mr. Helbock. He refers to the late uses of the wheel and scarab as “mimics” of the earlier cancels which would indicate that they are copies or imitations. My assumption is that they



Figure 2.

simply represent the last uses of regular wheel of fortune and scarab handstamps. I assume the handstamps were still being sold by private handstamp suppliers. As to why these and the very occasional other fancy designs were still being used at all, presumably the postmasters just wanted something distinctive and interesting and were willing to go to some personal cost or effort (in carving) to achieve it. And perhaps in some cases these cancels were temporary replacements for broken or lost standard cancelers.



Figure 3.

Figure 1 adds several cut corks as follows: Watertown, CT (4/5/01); Margaretville, NY (9/17/01); Auburn, NH 11/13/04; Idlewild, NY (12/17/06); and Santa Maria, CA (1/9/08). Figure 2 adds letter cancels as follows: "N" for Nahant, MA (1/10/00) - also a cut down version (6/6/00); "G" for Guysville, OH (4/2/01); "A" for Adams, MA (4/18/05); "E" for Erving, MA (8/24/07); and "H" for Haverhill, MA (11/13/08). Two negative "SM" cancels from Santa Maria, California are shown in Figures 3 and 4. A May 18, 1907 strike of the Figure 3 cancel is illustrated in the Helbock book *Postmarks on Postcards* mentioned above. A June 25, 1907 strike can also be added. In making the tracings, John Donnes noticed a small break in the "S" in "Santa" in both postmarks which indicates that the same postmarker was used with (presumably duplexed to) both killers. That break also appears to exist in the January 1908 Santa Maria cover in Figure 1. An "SS" for Soda Springs, Idaho, dated May 22, 1909 is shown in Figure 5.

Readers who can submit additional examples are urged to do so.



Figure 4.

Figure 5.

Cancellation Gallery

Here is a group of attractive New Orleans cancellations from the collection of Matt Kewriga.

