



U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

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Miscellaneous Cancels

Dan Haskett submitted the stamps discussed below, all with interesting cancellation aspects. A strip of three Sc 210 stamps bearing two strikes of a Cincinnati double oval is shown in Figure 1. Odd thing is, the letters in the middle appear to be "RLG." Surely the handstamp was designed with "REG" for use on registered mail, but the fact that the "L" appears crisply in both strikes makes one wonder if the handstamp face was intentionally altered. Could it be that a clerk with "RLG" initials personalized a handstamp he used? Unlikely, yes, but it would be interesting to determine what led to this appearance. Perhaps a study of a number of strikes of the "REG" double oval would show some progressive break-up or distortion.



Figure 1

The August 2012 *NEWS* illustrated a cancel tracing reported many years ago by Edward Willard who did not know the origin. Although the originating post office has still not been identified, we can now show (Figure 2) an actual strike of this very odd cancel.



Figure 2

The bold "P" enclosed by bars (Figure 3) has not been reported in the literature as far as we know. Can any reader tell us where it comes from?

Hand-carved ellipse cancels, typically made in small post offices when the carver imitated the manufactured

cancels used by large post offices, have been featured several times in these pages. Figure 4 shows a nice example with origin unknown.



Figure 3



Figure 4

Figure 5 illustrates a NYFM cancel listed by Bill Weiss as ST-8P7. It is a bold strike of a cancel that Bill reported in his book to be very scarce or rare on or off cover.

Machine cancel specialists have long speculated that the cancel shown in Figure 6 was produced by a British mechanical handstamp referred to as a "Pearson Hill". It was employed briefly



Figure 5



Figure 6

during the September – November 1874 period and, as one would expect, is found largely on 3¢ greens and postal cards. It has been seen on 1¢, 2¢ and 6¢ stamps. I don't believe a pair with two strikes has until now been reported – see Figure 7.

Wouldn't it have been nice to see the original cover!

Figure 8 is a cancel that, at least at first glance, might have been passed over by many as just another of the ubiquitous ellipses. It is not, of course. It was struck from a hand-cranked machine patented by Frederick Myers that was used in the



Figure 7

NYPO for a short period in 1876. An illustration of the full cancel is shown in Figure 9. It is reproduced from *An Exhibit of U.S. Classic Machine Cancels 1871-1991*, Vol. 1, by Bob Payne and published in 1995 by the Machine Cancel Society. Examples of



Figure 8

these cancels are considered to be rare. Uses in April and May show it associated with a standard design New York postmark and then on June 1 with the postmark in Figure 9.



Figure 9

The U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

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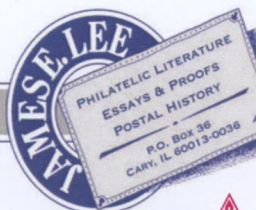
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Editor's Note

Just a quick reminder that NAPEX is almost upon us. It will be held at the Hilton McLean Tysons Corner, McLean, Virginia from May 31 through June 2. The USCC will staff a society table for all three days and hold an open meeting from 2-4PM Saturday, June 1. Ardy Callender will give a talk entitled "New York City Domestic Mail 1859-1862." There will be ample time to ask Ardy questions and also discuss other areas of US 19th century cancellations.

Club members who plan to attend NAPEX and would be available to help out at the table are asked to contact John Donnes or me (see masthead for addresses). We'll set up a schedule at the show and also arrange a dinner get-together for those interested.

Looking forward to the show!

Roger Curran

Gouverneur, NY Man (Abraham Lincoln?) With Beard Cancel

by Donald A. Barany



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

This is a rare cancel. I have not seen an example on cover. The stamps shown above are all Scott #65. Figures 1 and 2 are from The Philatelic Foundation's website. The stamp in Figure 3 is owned by me. All three have Philatelic Foundation certificates which opine that the cancel is genuine which they describe as a "man with beard."

Gouverneur is the only town in the United States with this name.

It is located in the lowlands of the Adirondack region, along the banks of the Oswegatchie River in St. Lawrence County, New York. According to Wikipedia, the population was only 7,085 at the 2010 census. It was, therefore, most likely a very small town in the 1860s. The town is named after statesman and landowner Gouverneur Morris. He was one of the authors of the U.S. Constitution.

None of the PF opinions state that the man with the beard represents Abraham Lincoln. Has anyone seen other examples of this cancel? Has anyone seen this cancel on cover and, if so, is there any indication of a year date? I am not aware of any other fancy cancels from this town during this period nor do I know the name of the postmaster or any postal clerk.

Help Provided

On page 66 of the November 2012 *NEWS*, a "Help Wanted" column asked for information on the origin of two cancellations in the collection of Don Barany. John Donnes reported that both are from New York City. The "wheel" was used on intercity first class domestic mail in May 1868 and the shield on city delivery mail in February 1866 or possibly 1867.

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"running man"

Color Cancellations on the 1869 Series: Crosses

by Ed Field

For this article I have selected some of the more distinctive crosses that appear in color on the 1869 series. Skinner-Eno (SE) designations are given for listed cancels.

Figure 1 shows a strip of 3-cent stamps bearing simple, negative cross-in-circle cancels. Similar crosses were used by more than one town. (Unknown origin; SE CR-G 14)



Figure 1

During the two-month period between the late March advent of the 1869 stamps and late May, Philadelphia produced at least ten different semi-fancy blue cancels for use on domestic mail.

After that brief period, the city switched from blue to black ink for domestic cancels. Two Philadelphia blue crosses are shown below; discussion of the remaining Philadelphia blues is deferred to a future article.

Figure 2 shows a Philadelphia cover dated May 5, 1869 and bearing a blue negative cross cancel. At first glance this cancel appears similar

to the cancel shown in Figure 1, but a closer look reveals this unlisted cross to be imbedded in an octagon rather than in a circle.

Figure 3 shows a Philadelphia cover dated May 10, 1869, only five days later than the cover shown in Figure 2. This cover bears grayish-blue negative cross cancels imbedded in asymmetric polygons that differ markedly in shape and shade from the octagon shown in Figure 2. They are unlisted.

Figure 4 (electronically cropped) shows a blue cancel from Galesburg, Illinois. Most might call this unlisted cancel a complex geometric, but I prefer to call it a negative cross in a square inside a split circle. Galesburg is known to have used other fancy blue cancels during the 1869 era.

Figure 5 shows a piece bearing the blue Maltese Cross cancel of St. Catherine, Missouri. The February 9, 1871 CDS indicates a late use. Skinner

and Eno incorrectly identify the state of origin as Maryland rather than Missouri (SE CR-M27).

Figures 6 and 7 show two Kentucky covers, each bearing a bold blue cross-in-circle cancel. The Frankfort cross (SE G-C 70) is scarce; I have seen only one other. On the other hand, I have seen many off-cover examples of the Louisville cross (SE CR-G 16), though only one other on-cover example.

As suggested by the above examples, blue was by far the most common non-black cancel color used on low-value 1869 stamps. That situation reverses for the higher values, where red is the more prevalent color. Figure 8 shows a large red cross on the 6-cent stamp; Figure 9 shows a fancy red cross-road on the 15-cent stamp; and Figure 10 shows a red crossroad on the 90-cent stamp. Colored fancy cancels on high-value 1869 stamps are rare; on-cover examples are nearly non-existent.

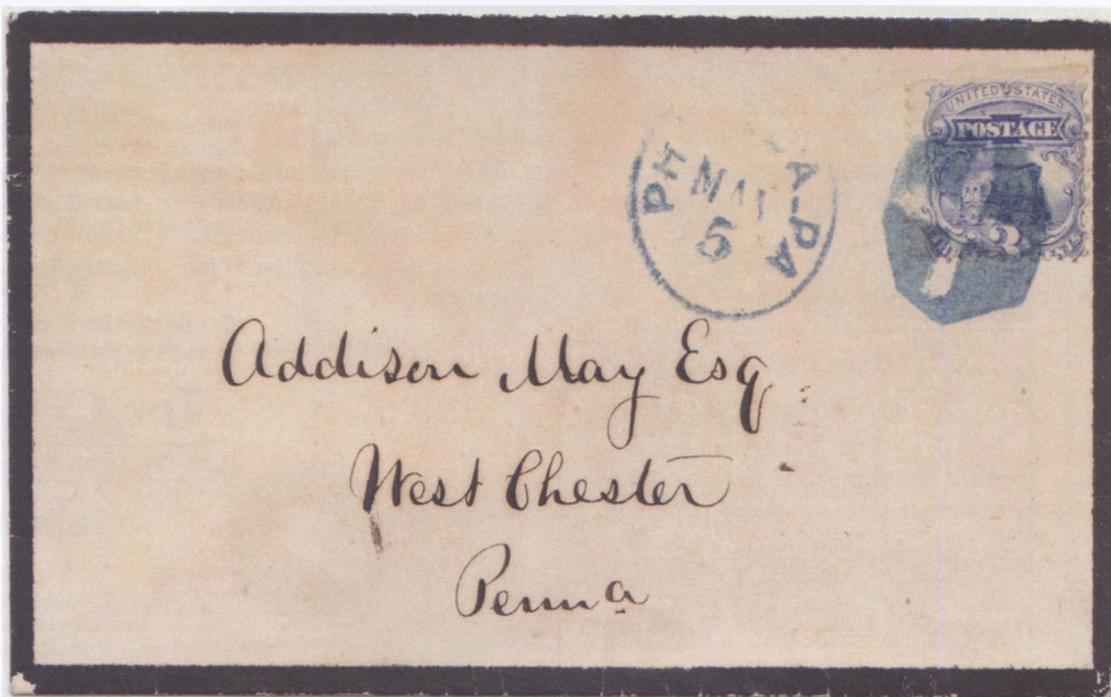


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

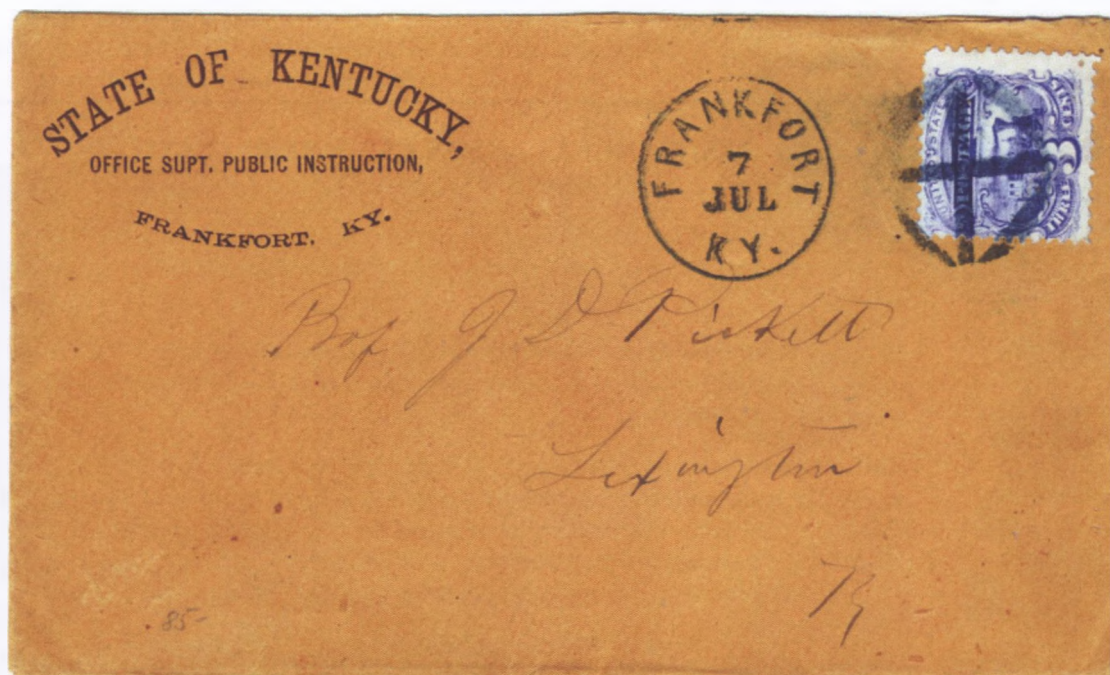


Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



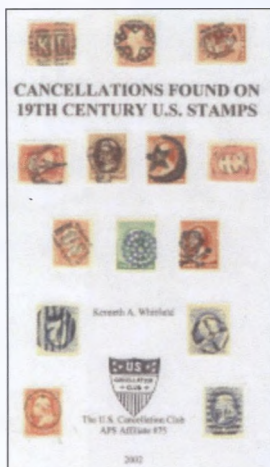
Figure 9



Figure 10



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

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.

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Sc 156 on UX1 With NYFM G13 Cancel

by Donald A. Barany

I recently acquired a Sc 156 on UX1 with a NYFM cancel (Weiss designation GE-EP1) – see Figure 1. This is a rare cancel on cover. Bill Weiss records only four covers in his book with the earliest date being May 29, 1875 and the latest date being June 6, 1875. Only one of the covers is to Germany. He illustrates three of the covers, including the one to Germany. It has a different addressee than my example and the handwriting appears to be by a different person. Nick Kirke's exhibit of NYFM cancels has the fourth cover recorded by Bill (dated June 2, 1875 to France and franked with a 3 cent and 6 cent Banknote). In addition, Nick's exhibit has another cover with a strip of three 6¢ Banknotes to France dated June 5, (1875).

The writing on the back of the postal card appears to be in German. It is in black ink. There is a date written in blue ink with handwriting that

appears to be done by a different person (perhaps not contemporary). It appears to read May 27, 1873, but the numbers

postmarked in 1873, given that the other known covers were postmarked in 1875. In any event, it is a wonderful example



5 and 3 appear to have been enhanced. I find it hard to imagine that this card was

with the best strike recorded and made even rarer because it is on a postal card.

Cancellation Gallery

Presented below are "PAID" cancels on the Sc 65 stamp from the collection of Abe Boyarsky.



Noted in Passing

by Roger D. Curran

On page 110 of the May 2011 *NEWS*, an on-cover wheel of fortune (WOF) cancel was shown that an auction house described as "...purported to be the largest size reported." The auction lot illustration, which was reproduced in the *NEWS*, was reduced in size. I have attempted to calculate actual size and I estimate, at the widest point, it is about 22.7mm in diameter. (The strike has a slightly oblong shape due to how the rubber canceler was struck.)

Figure 1 presents a new candidate for largest WOF – about 23.5 mm diameter. The post office name is not legible in the CDS but near the top are two partial letters that could be "LA." At the bottom of the CDS is "WASH." and the date is October 6, year unknown. Surely the post office is Kalama, located in Cowlitz County. It is an operating post office established in 1868. The typical WOF cancel is about 17mm in diameter and I believe the reason for the large Kalama strike is due to considerable, quite evenly applied, downward pressure causing the rubber face of the canceler to spread out. The cancel overlaps the CDS and it is thus clear that two separate handstamps were involved. The *NEWS* is always seeking interesting and unusual WOF varieties and readers are urged to report any that are encountered.

On page 57 of the August 2012 *NEWS*, the one reported cover bearing an official stamp canceled by a WOF is illustrated. Surely there are others "out there" but presumably few in number.

Off-cover officials so canceled are occasionally noted. WOF cancels on official postal stationery are seen to a limited extent – see Figure 2. A second example on a War Department PSE was shown on page 91 of the February 2013 *Chronicle*. That cover was postmarked Pimento, Indiana, May 1, 1885 with an unduplexed WOF canceling the indicium. This speaks to what must be the preponderance of official postal stationery over adhesive stamped mail

used by the War Department at least for letters that would originate at the smaller post offices.

By 1890, the prevalence of hand-carved "fancy" cancels had greatly diminished but they were, of course, still used to some extent. Figure 3 illustrates a negative "PR" from Point Reyes, California along with Whitfield tracing 5246. Point Reyes is a DPO that had a short life in its first incarnation – 1882 to 1891. Apparently it was re-established



Figure 1

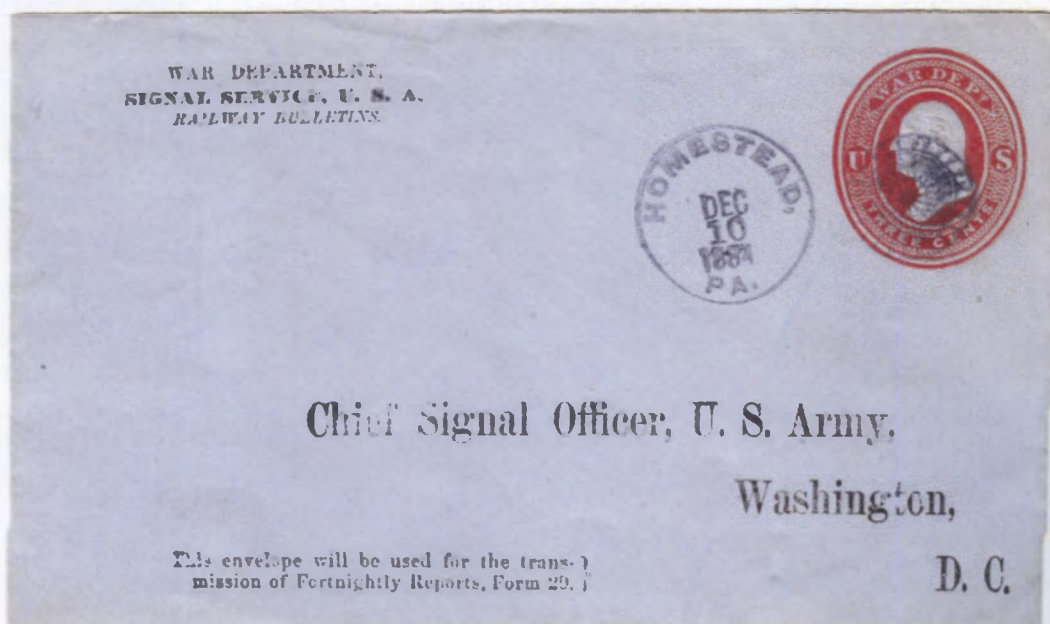


Figure 2

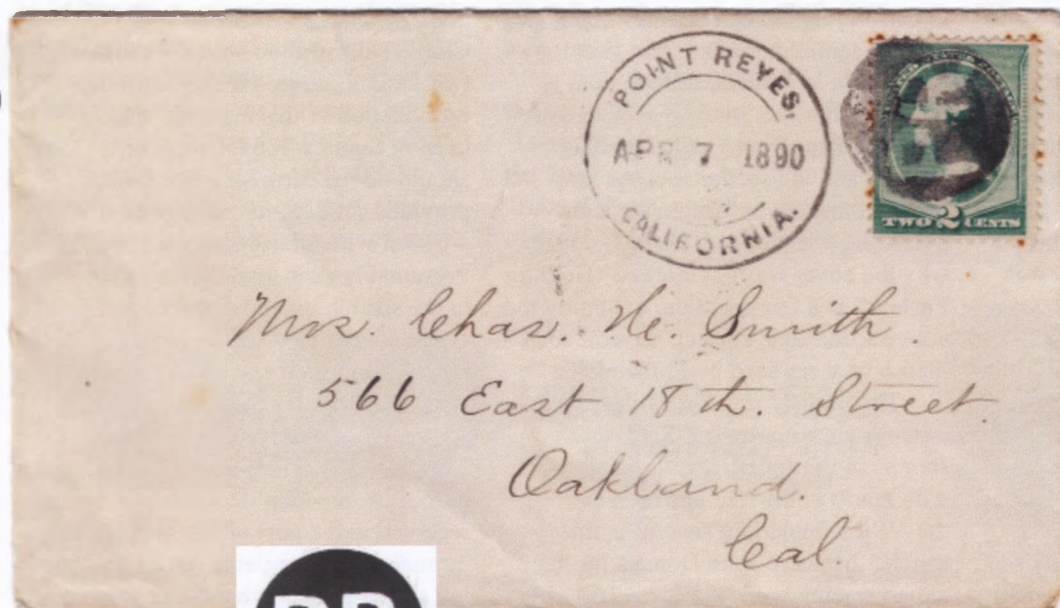


Figure 3



later in 1891 and it continued to 1948. Located just north of San Francisco, the area is now a national seashore that attracts many visitors. In 1870, a lighthouse was built on a scenic promontory that continues to operate to this day. It is said to be the windiest location along the U. S. Pacific Coast and I believe I was told during a visit years ago that the wind averages about 40 mph. A walk down to the lighthouse is a memorable experience. The town, Point Reyes Station, used to be a stop on the North Pacific Coast Railroad.

Figure 4 illustrates what must be a very small category of cancellations –

those made by a stencil. This particular marking, of course, was not designed to be a canceler but was pressed into such service. Dick Graham illustrated a cover showing this postmark from Waverly, Ohio, used as both a postmark and a canceler, on page 269 of the November 1985 *Chronicle*. The postmark date is February 8 (1862). He also reported a second example from the same correspondence dated January 23. In both cases the date had been added in manuscript. I have wondered if



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



some of the 1860s cancels from Putnam, Connecticut were made by stencils. Two possibilities are shown in Figure 5. They are Skinner-Eno ST-E29 and PT-C 21. Other possibilities include GE-R 53 and 54, PT-C 23, PT-USM1, and GE-E 1 and 2. The cancel ink generally seems quite dark. I do not say that I think they were produced by stencils but rather these cancels constitute an area worthy of study. Comment is invited.

The May 2011 *NEWS* discussed a geometric cancel listed in the Jim Cole book as GE-31 that is interpreted

to depict the proof of the Pythagorean Theorem. Two off-cover Sc 94 stamps bearing a different version of this design were also illustrated. They had been in the Hubert Skinner collection but origin was not identified. In the Spring 1982 *NEWS*, Alyce Evans illustrated a tracing shown here as Figure 6 as well as a portion of a cover bearing an actual strike which she described as "...on an 1867 3 cent rose grill and tied to a Topeka, Kansas cover." Undoubtedly, the Skinner cancels are also from Topeka.

It was not the cancels in Figure 7 that caught our attention but the unusual postmark with fancy letters. One wonders whether the handstamp that produced it was ordered through normal post office supply channels. Milburn is an operating post office established in 1837 located in the southwest corner of Kentucky. The population in 1969 was 150. Can readers report postmarks from other post offices that incorporate this style of lettering?

Figure 8 provides a more complete strike of Whitfield 5267. Revision 2 of Whitfield lists the cancel with a January 15, 1894 date and we can now add January 20. How to explain the cover in Figure 9? Collectors occasionally see strikes of killers that touch only a small portion of the stamp, but Figure 9 seems

to carry things to an extreme. One hopes there is something more than simple inattention at work here. My guess is that the letter was initially received at the Philadelphia post office without postage and the sender subsequently provided the stamp which, through oversight, was not canceled. Of course, why the cover was not marked "Held for Postage" is a fair question, assuming the above scenario is correct. Several such markings were used by Philadelphia.

This brings us to the Philadelphia cancel struck on the two Sc 210 stamps in Figure 10. (As in the case with many of the tracings used in the *NEWS*, including several in this article, thanks to John Donnes for his expert tracing work in Figure 10.) This marking is listed in the Philadelphia

book by Clarke.¹ Interestingly, Clarke's illustration shows it canceling two 1¢ Banknotes. He estimates the introduction of this marking to have been in January 1885. I suppose it should not be surprising that stamps provided for held for postage mail are seen with unorthodox cancels. Presumably such mail was not kept in the section that postmarked and canceled mail that was initially received by the post office and, even if it was, the normal duplex handstamp would not be appropriate since use of the CDS at that juncture would incorrectly imply that the mail item was just being received in the post office. Without the normal duplexes, clerks were sometimes left to use whatever handstamps were available.



Figure 8

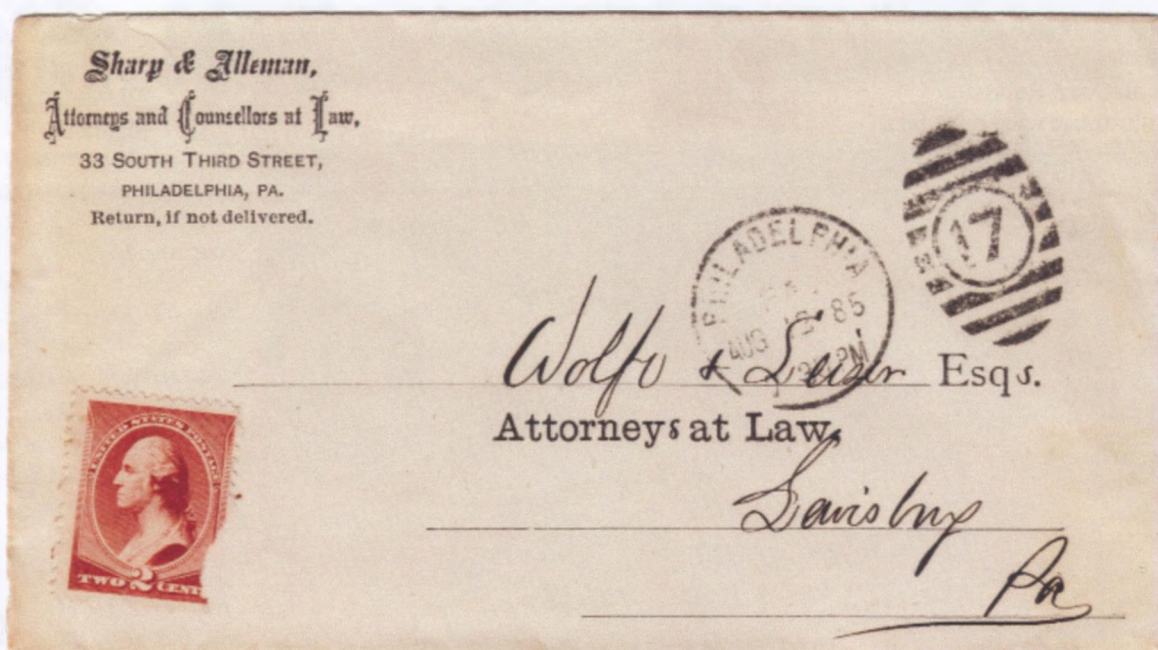


Figure 9

¹ Clarke, Tom *A Catalog of Philadelphia Postmarks 18th Century to the Present*, Part III, (1992), pp 18-18, 19-19.

In the last issue of the *NEWS*, Joe Crosby discussed a very fancy "P" cancel from Princeton, Illinois. A second example resides in the collection of Alan Campbell – see Figure 11. The fact that the cancel is so well struck on both stamps makes one think that the postmaster or clerk was intent on

showing his artistic creation to full advantage.

The stamp in Figure 12 has been in the collection of Dick Nunge for years. He has not seen the cancel reported in the literature and to him it looks like a "shoo-fly" with the blob above the toe of the shoe being the fly. There seems

no doubt that something specific was intended but exactly what is uncertain. Can readers report other examples of this cancel that might help us to identify it and hopefully even confirm Dick's idea?



Figure 10

HELD FOR POSTAGE
FORWARDED UPON
RECEIPT OF STAMP.



Figure 11



Figure 12

Corrections

Several corrections are herewith noted to articles that appeared in previous *NEWS* issues. We very much appreciate having such information brought to our attention.

On page 91 of the February 2013 *NEWS* we referred to the "Patterson," New Jersey post office and put forward the view that the Paramus community was served in the 1860s by the "Patterson" post office. David Petruzelli pointed out that the correct spelling is Paterson and this post office, albeit near the Paramus community, is located in a different county and was not the servicing post

office for Paramus. David stated that the references to the Paterson Post Office on the two covers were likely requests that the letters be transmitted "via" the Paterson post office.

In the article entitled "NYFM Update, Part 1" by Dan Richards in the May 2011 *NEWS*, several tracings are shown in Figure 1. Victor Kuil reports that the second tracing from the left shows a mirror image of the actual cancel. This no doubt results from the transparency on which the cancel was traced being inadvertently flipped before a copy was made. A correct image is shown as Figure 1, along an

1870 cover to England bearing this cancel.

The Treasurer's Report distributed with the November 2012 *NEWS* contained a computational error. The bottom line of the report should have stated a net loss of \$26.71 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012.

On page 56 of the August 2012 *NEWS*, there is a listing of post offices for which wheel of fortune cancels are reported used in 1880. The Cantonment, Indian Territory entry should be deleted. WOF cancels are reported from this post office but not until 1884.

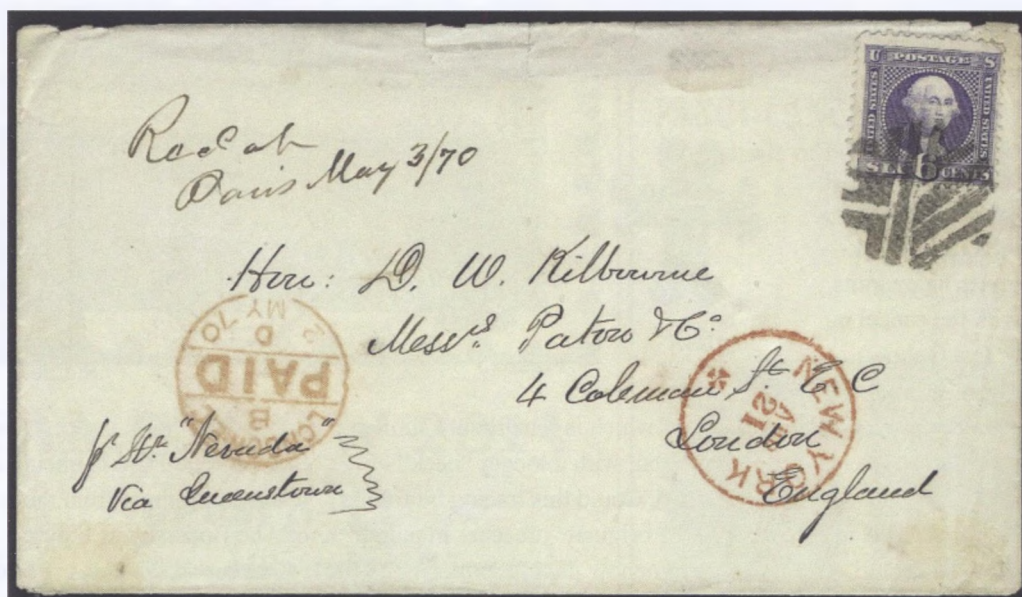


Figure 1

The Names We Give and More

There are a fair number of U.S. 19th century cancels that have been given questionable names (in terms of accuracy) based on what someone many years ago thought they resembled. The name is usually colorful and we collectors are happy to accept it even though it is a stretch – in some cases quite a stretch – to conclude that it is an apt description.

One example is the Hingham, Massachusetts “bat” cancel, see Figure 1. Really? “Flying squirrel,” maybe, but who has seen a bat like this? Being described as a “bat” glamorizes the cancel and gives it an exotic quality.

Another such cancel is the Boston “preacher in pulpit.” Figure 2 shows three tracings from the literature. The left is Whitfield 18A, the middle is Blake and Davis 1188, and the cancel on the right is Skinner-Eno PH-F 104. The Kelleher Auction 623 of January 14-16, 2011 offered three on-cover examples described as “preacher in pulpit”, lots 1313 through 15 - see illustrations at Figure 3. The left and middle covers are postmarked August 16 and the cover on the right August 18. Note the progressive break-up of the cancel going from left to right. Wendell Triplett submitted his reconstruction of what he believes to have been the shape of the original cancel. In short, he thinks the “preacher in pulpit” results from break-up of a cancel that was quite fancy in its own right. Let’s begin with the cancel on the left in Figure 2. Note that it shows what might be termed partial “clover leaves” on the ends of both sides as well as at the top. He speculates that “clover leaves” were originally on all four ends – see his modification of Whitfield 18A in Figure 4. (Similar modifications could, of course, be made for the Blake and

Davis and Skinner-Eno tracings.)

Wendell also noted a Skinner-Eno tracing (GE-E70) of a cancel found on

attributed indicates that it was likely on an off-cover stamp and, if so, was it fully struck on the stamp? If not fully struck,



Figure 1



Figure 2

perhaps some assumptions were made. I consider Wendell’s conclusion about the original appearance of the “preacher in pulpit” to be very plausible and, indeed, likely. Comments and additional information will be welcomed.

We’ll close with a third example,



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

1861 issues which is remarkably similar to Figure 4 but with a longer “neck” – see Figure 5. Could this tracing be from a strike of the original “preacher in pulpit” that was somehow misinterpreted or distorted? The fact that this cancel is not

dubbed the “mail pouch.” See the Skinner-Eno PO-Ms tracing as Figure 6 and an example from the collection of Abe Boyarsky as Figure 7. Can any reader report the post office of origin for this intriguing cancel?



EXHIBIT AWARDS WON BY USCC MEMBERS

SOUTHWESTERN STAMP EXPO January 24-26, 2013

- James Cate:** Single-Frame Vermeil medal for "Confederate Military Mail-Chattanooga 1862-1864"
Nancy Clarke: Gold Medal for "The Development of Railway Mail Routes in Georgia 1846-1890"
 Single Frame Vermeil Medal; also AAPE Award of Honor for "A Trip to the Rail Car"

SARASOTA NATIONAL STAMP EXPO February 1-3 2013

- Les Lanphear:** Gold Medal and Reserve Grand Award for "U.S. Departmentals, 1873 to 1884"

SAINT LOUIS STAMP EXPO 2013 March 22-24 2013

- John Barwis:** Gold Medal; also APC and Lighthouse Stamp Society Awards for "Philadelphia's Pre-GPU British Mail"
Gordon Eubanks: Gold Medal and Reserve Grand Award for "The United States Imperforate Issue of 1851-6"
Gary Hendren: Vermeil Medal for "St. Louis Street Car Mail 1892-1915"
 Single-Frame Silver Medal; also AAPE Creativity Award for "Twisted Caps-Twisted Mail"
Les Lanphear: Gold Medal; also USSS Statue of Freedom for "U.S Departmentals 1873-1884"
Michael Plett: Single-Frame Gold Medal for "A Study in Black and White-USPOD Stamps, 1873-1884"

GARFIELD-PERRY MARCH PARTY March 29-31 2013

- Eric Glohr:** Gold Medal; also Marcus White Award for : "Hawaiian Postal Cards and Envelopes: Kingdom, Provisional Government and Republic Issues"
Nick Kirke: Gold medal; also Thomas Allen Postal History Award, USSS Statue of Freedom Award, and USCC Award for Best Cancellation Exhibit for "New York Foreign Mail Cancels 1851-1878"
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More on Bottle Stopper Cancels

by Roger D. Curran

Rubber bottle stoppers produced one of the distinct categories of 19th century U.S. cancels. Many duplex hand stamps of the 1860s and beyond combined a circular date stamp and a ring into which corks or soft wood cancelers would be inserted. When rubber bottle stoppers came into use, it was convenient to insert these into handstamp rings and employ them as cancelers. On the wider end of these manufactured stoppers would be the size number raised above the stopper surface. When struck, these numbers show in reverse. Numbers "1" through "6" (including half sizes) were used in the 1870s and 1880s, when most of the bottle stopper cancels were applied. The larger the number, the smaller the stopper size. According to the *NEWS* cross-reference index, this subject has been visited 14 times in recent years and we'll take it up again now, primarily to show a few examples submitted by Wendell Triplett.

The canceling surface of rubber stoppers was sometimes carved. Figure 1 shows a strike from a carved "2" stopper that is nicely enhanced by the purple ink.



Figure 1



Figure 2

numbers above "3," the higher the number the less common its use as a canceller.

The card in Figure 3 shows a bottle stopper cancel with two "x" letters below the "9" numeral. It is postmarked Batavia, New York, March 29 (1888 from reverse

side). This stopper is unlike any we have seen used as cancelers. Our initial reaction was that the cancel was fraudulently added, creating the appearance of a strike from a duplex handstamp using a stopper from a later era. However, Figure 4 illustrates a Sc 267 stamp (introduced in June 1895) with a "2" stopper and what appears to be "E8" below the "2." This stopper cancel is smaller than the usual "2" stopper cancels. Viewing a high resolution enlargement of Figure 3, it appears that

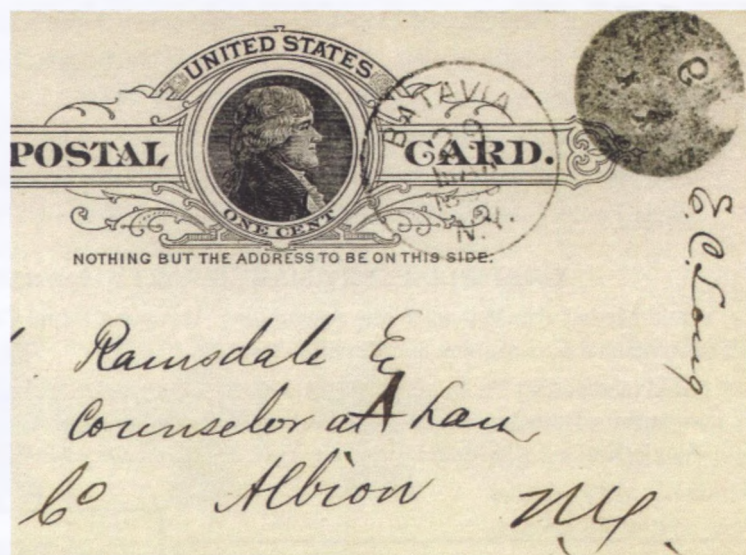


Figure 3

the inks from the CDS and cancel are the same. If a fake cancel, the faker did an excellent job matching the inks. However, on the other hand, a duplexed killer is normally centered with the CDS. In this case, the center of the killer sits higher than that of the CDS. Nonetheless, our view is that the cancel is, in all probability, genuine.

If we could find a confirming example of the cancel from Batavia, that would, of course, be ideal. Otherwise, there is the question we have been unable thus far to answer – when did stopper number systems beyond the familiar "1" – "6" begin coming into use and, if by 1888, what were they? Now, take a look at Figure 5 (Whitfield 4709) which is reported on 1887 issue stamps. It has the look of a cancel struck from a rubber stopper with an odd sequence of raised

letters.

An unusual combination of stamp and cancel is shown in Figure 6. Bottle stopper cancels are most commonly seen on 3¢ greens, Sc 210 and to a lesser extent Sc 213. They are also noted on 1¢ stamps, 2¢ vermilions and occasionally on 6¢ stamps. On other general issue stamps, I would say they are decidedly scarce, at least. Your editor recalls seeing no examples on 10¢ stamps although some number surely exist. On denominations above 10¢, examples



Figure 4

must be few and far between.

The term "general issue" was used above because, in the case of official stamps, a few high denominations with bottle stoppers are seen, at least up to 30¢.



Figure 5



Figure 6

In fact, there seems to be a pattern of a greater use of high denomination official stamps on first class mail than is the case for general issue stamps. This results in proportionately more fancy and standardized cancels found on the highest denominations of official stamps including some that are hardly seen at all on high denomination general issues.

Unusual Ellipse Centers

Over the years there have been numerous references in the *NEWS* to the pioneering study of "standardized" cancels (ellipses, largely) by Gilbert Burr published in 1935 and 1936 issues of the *American Philatelist*¹. In the September 1935 issue the cancels shown here as Figure 1, reported on 3¢ greens, were illustrated and Burr stated this about them: "the two items ... are



Figure 1

the most unusual I have seen since studying these cancellations." They were sent to him by Dr. William Evans who for many years was the author of the "U.S. Cancellations" column in *Stamps* magazine. Dr. Evans illustrated the cancels in his column of June 6, 1936, but with his own more primitive tracings – see Figure 2. He referred to them as "quite curious."



Figure 2

Beginning in 1956, Dr. Robert deWasserman, a Belgian philatelist, began reporting in the *NEWS* an expansion of the Burr study. In the March 1958 issue, he presented the cancels shown here as Figure 3 and said this about them:

"(20) has '1e' and is of shaded type. It is on a 212; (21) has 9E in the centre, and is also rather of shaded type. This is on the 3¢ green American. The next (22) has a C1 in the circle, and is on a 210. This '1' has no serifs at all like the ones used by New York. This cancellation is

in block type. The last (23) is a horizontal ellipse formed by 6 heavy bars, and has the centre F-1. It is on a 212 from New York. Please note that the 1 is shorter than the F.

All these four cancellations must have been used for special purposes and I would be much obliged to any reader who could give me further information on the subject."

The above cancels form a very interesting group that call out for theories to explain their occurrence. Presented below are the thoughts of your editor, some of them very speculative. Burr stated the following about the cancel on the left of Figure 1:

"I believe that the first one, apparently a '16' is from the



Figure 3

set used by Chicago ... I have a cancel showing a '16' in this set that is very similar, even to the short bars of the ellipse being heavier on the one side of the circle than on the other as this one is, except that they are reversed from this one, which would be only natural if the cancellor was reversed in some way, but this cannot be possible because then the '1' would be reversed instead of right as it is."

A tracing of the "16" cancel to which Burr referred is shown here as Figure 4 (Piskiewicz No. D-4.)² Three examples on off-cover stamps are shown in Figure 5. I believe

there are two plausible explanations for the apparent reverse "6": (1) the "6" in the "16" was erroneously engraved in reverse or (2) the image of a correctly engraved "6" was distorted by inking or strike irregularities. I favor the latter.

Burr stated the following about the cancel on the right in Figure 1:

"The cancel is I believe from a set used by Boston. The curved line at the left ... shows the location of the town and date barrel, and this corresponds with the '2' in the Boston set, because for some reason unknown there seems to be more space between these in the cancellor using the '2' than in any of the others."

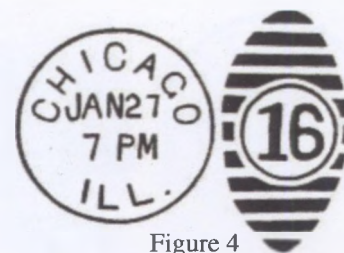


Figure 4



Figure 5

I have no doubt but that it is a Boston cancel. The comment about the distance between CDS and ellipse is interesting but whether it has a bearing on the existence of a reversed "2" is unclear. See Figure 6 for an example of the wider spacing noted by Burr. However, the strikes in Figure 7 illustrate spacing in a "2" handstamp similar to that involving other numbers. Once again, it would seem that either we have a numeral engraved in reverse or a distorted strike. In this case your editor suspects the former with the post office discontinuing the "2" handstamp shortly after the error was noticed.

The cancel on the left in Figure 3 bears an obvious resemblance to the cancel on the left of Figure 1 but with nine rather than 11 bars and what appears to be a small "e" rather than a reverse "6." Would this be another example of the Figure 1 cancel with a misinterpretation by the person doing the tracing in terms of the number of bars, and a different distortion of the "6" due to the particular strike? That would be my guess.

The second cancel from left in Figure 3 is quite ambiguous. Figure 8 shows the cancel upside down along with three off-cover strikes. I believe it to be a worn "35." Figure 9 shows several less worn strikes of what I

assume is the same cancel showing some progressive wear from left to right. If "35" is correct for Figure 8, then all three strikes are upside down on the stamps. And presumably that is also true for the cancel de Wasserman traced. Yet in Figure 9, the "35" is right side up on seven of the stamps and upside down on the three that appear to show the most wear. How to explain? Was the ellipse killer movable on the handstamp and at some point switched to an upside down position? I suspect the cancel is from Rochester, New York (home of some odd ellipses) and not part of a set – just the "35." If the Figure 8 cancels do show wear, that suggests the material used to make the canceler was of a soft metal or even wood. Figure 10 shows an portion of a cover with a partial strike of what appears to be a "35" ellipse with a rather thin "3" which may indicate early use. If any reader can show the Figure 8 cancels on cover, please contact the *NEWS*.

Next we come to the "C1" ellipse which I believe to be an upside down New York City "10" with an uninked section of the "0." The cancel on the left of Figure 11 is very similar to the "C1" and can be compared to the NYC "10" on the right.

I believe deWasserman's "F-1" shows what is clearly an incomplete

(and slightly distorted) design because it makes no sense as it appears now. He reports it on a New York City cover. Figure 12 shows a NYC Station E cancel and two modified strikes of the deWasserman tracing to show what I think would be the actual design of the cancel properly struck and inked. Figure 13 shows three strikes with ink breaks (albeit not as dramatic as the "F-1") in the central letters.

We'll turn attention now to a reverse "S" from Riverside, California – see Figure 14. This would not have been reported by Burr or deWasserman because their coverage was limited to the 1870-1890 period. The Riverside post office was apparently not troubled by the error because it used the cancel for more than a year.

A second basic category of manufactured ellipse anomalies, apart from erroneous designs, consists of those where the number in the ellipse is upside down in relation to the CDS. Examples have been illustrated in the *NEWS* on a few occasions, most recently on page 73 of the November 2012 issue. It is assumed that these result from errors in handstamp construction, not in engraving the number.

Comments and additional information on any of the above will be welcomed.



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

¹ Burr, Gilbert M. "Standardized Hand Stamp Cancellations on the Bank Note Issues," *The American Philatelist*, January 1935-April 1936.

² Piskiewicz, Leonard *Chicago Postal Markings and Postal History*, James E. Lee Publishing (2006), p. 54..



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14

NYFM Roller Cancels

by Roger D. Curran

The August 2002 *NEWS* presented an article on NYC roller cancels used on domestic mail circulars. Four covers were illustrated. One cover (John Donnes collection) contains an enclosure dated April 30, 1875. The January 1995 *NEWS* carried an article by John Valenti on NYC cancels on circulars and printed matter that showed two covers that I believe also bear roller cancels. One is a circular to Norway (see also Weiss, p. 344) with an enclosure dated May 7, 1875. The other is a domestic mail circular with enclosure dated May 1, 1875.

New York roller cancels are typically composed of columns of horizontal bars with a rather primitive appearance but examples are also noted composed of horizontal lines of squares rather than bars.

The August 2001 *NEWS* reported an observation by Ken Pitt that all examples seen by him show the cancel extending to the top of the cover. He concluded the reason for this was that the envelopes were placed on the canceling table in overlapping fashion so that multiple covers could be canceled with one sweep of the roller.

This seems very plausible.

The subject of roller cancels was brought to mind when the cover in Figure 1 came to our attention. It is a Sc U123 pse with no markings on the back. While it's not possible to say with absolute confidence, it appears to bear the same cancel as that on the above-mentioned Norway cover (see Figure 2).

It is assumed that there were separate sections handling domestic

collectors should take note of the existence of this category of NYFM cancels that apparently contains few examples and relies on quite a different approach to the canceling process than does the traditional handstamp.

It would be greatly appreciated if readers would report examples of roller and other styles of NYFM cancels on circular rate covers to the *NEWS* for a possible follow-up article.

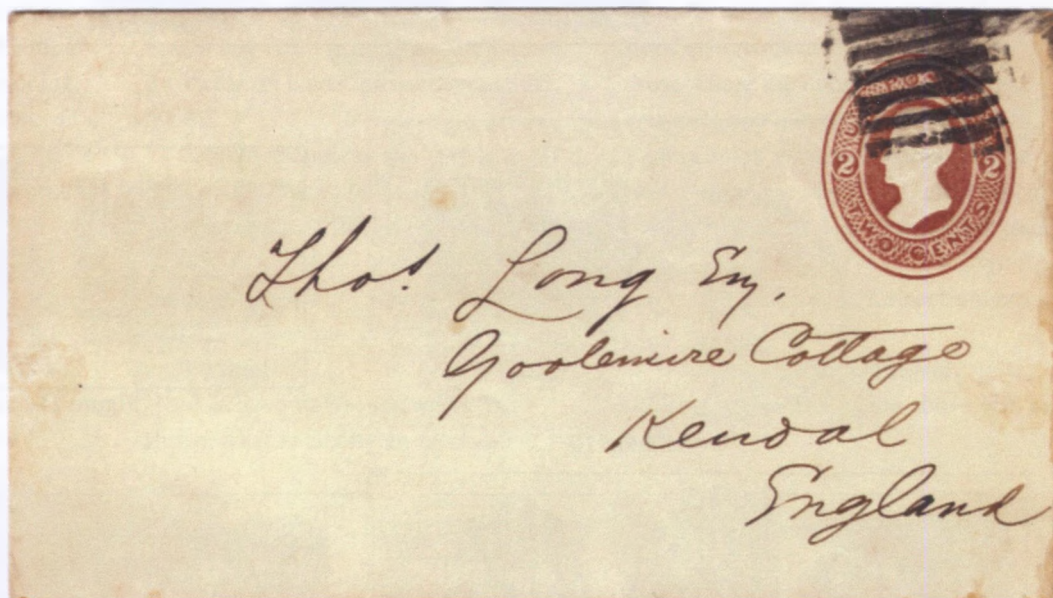


Figure 1

and foreign circulars in the NYPO and your editor is not aware of any domestic mail rollers matching that in Figure 1. Perhaps both sections experimented with roller cancels at about the same time for brief periods.

I believe NYFM



Figure 2

Small “D” for Daguscahonda, PA

The “D” cancel in Figure 1 is distinctive. Much smaller than the typical cancel of the period, it was placed on the center of the stamp and the strike is



unusually sharp. One wonders if it might be a printed precancel. However, the ink has the appearance of regular canceling ink and there is evidence of a CDS rim to the left of the “D” that just touches the perforations.

It so happens that the origin of this cancel can be seen on a postal card that was illustrated in the February 2004 NEWS – see Figure 2. The CDS reads “H.H. Eaton, P.M./Daguscahonda Elk

Co. Pa.” We assumed the “D” was a killer but were puzzled by its small

forwarding it on to Dagus Mines, also in Elk County, where the sender intended



Figure 2

size. The postal card had been missent to Daguscahonda and Mr. Eaton was

it to go. Daguscahonda is a DPO that operated from 1873 to 1959.

A Remarkable Transformation

Some cancels are very odd and mysterious, even when clearly struck – see the Whitfield (529) and Cole (Pi 13) tracings in Figure 1 from Conway, Massachusetts. Would you say inexplicable? Fortunately, Wendell Triplett solves the mystery by

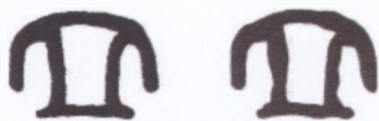


Figure 1

presenting a remarkably crisp strike of the complete cancel (Figure 2) which must have been applied very early in the life of the killer. (The dateline of the message on the back is October 23, 1873. Perhaps a section on one side of the killer broke off and the postmaster removed a similar section on the other side to maintain a balanced appearance. Wendell refers to the full strike as a “belt buckle.”



Conway Oct 23rd 1873
Dear Sir
If you have not made the saddle to my harness you may line it with leather instead of cloth and I will make it all right with you. Have the cheek leathers about 4 inches higher than a common bridle yours truly L.B. Arms

Figure 2

Unusual Use of Philadelphia Double Oval

by Roger D. Curran

Philadelphia employed a set of double ovals on the large Banknotes containing numbers "1" through "30" in the center – see Figure 1. I am confident that the cancels were produced by rubber-faced handstamps. They were, of course, designed for use on non-first class mail; i.e., mail that didn't require a dated postmark.

There is, however, the curious use of a "14" double oval by Philadelphia's Station B on first class mail. The canceler face was cut down so that it would fit in a duplex handstamp. Tom Clarke, author of the excellent reference *A Catalog of Philadelphia Postmarks*,

has kept records on these cancels for a considerable period. To sum up, the covers he has noted range in dates from April 25 to June 21, 1882 and there are two distinct cuttings of the "14" double oval. The first shows a portion of the "PHILADELPHIA" at the top and the "PA" with a portion of the canceling bars at the bottom. Figure 2, courtesy of Mr. Clarke, illustrates this cutting clearly. At some point between May 13 and 18, according to his records, there was a further cutting leaving just the "14" and most of the surrounding rim. See Figures 3 and 4 for on and off-cover examples of both cuttings.

We can add no new information to Mr. Clarke's report but wanted to call the attention of *NEWS* readers to these interesting cancels. Should you have information pertinent to these cancels, you are encouraged to report it. For a full run of the Philadelphia double ovals, "1" – "30," see page 103 of the August 2009 *NEWS*.

We'll close with what appears to be an incomplete strike of a Philadelphia "15" double oval on a Sc 210 – see Figure 5. What was the circumstance of this cancel – simply poor inking or something more?



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 4



Figure 3



Figure 5