



# U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

Vol. 32, No. 1, Whole No. 290, February 2014

## The New York Square Grid

by Roger D. Curran



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

The New York square grid has a prominent place in U.S. postal history. It was the first cancel used by a U.S. post office designed for canceling adhesive stamps paying postage to transmit letters between post offices. (It is thus distinguished from an earlier NYPO cancel designed for use on carrier mail.) It was introduced in late 1846 to cancel the New York Postmaster's Provisional and this basic design type continued in use through the 1847 issue era and into the 1851 era. No other U.S. post office (that issued postmasters' provisionals in advance of the 1847 general issue) used handstamps designed as cancelers.

Several variations of the New York square grid are known. Let's begin with the grid of 13 bars that does not have small triangles at two opposite ends. See Figure 1 which reproduces a tracing from Elliott Perry.<sup>1</sup> He referred to this cancel as a "diamond grid."<sup>2</sup> A February 4, 1847 example can be seen on page 16 of the February 2011 *NEWS*.

Creighton Hart, a dedicated student of 1847 issue stamps who was for many

years the *Chronicle* section editor for the 1847-1851 period, stated the following:

"The New York square grid ... is often referred to as having 13 bars and this is acceptable because the two small bars at opposite corners must have worn off early as they are rarely evident."<sup>3</sup>

I believe the 13 and 15 bar cancels do not come from the same handstamp but rather represent two different cancel designs.

A John Donnes tracing of a New York 15-bar cancel appears here as Figure 2. It was taken from an October 12 (1848) cover. At some point a 13-bar New York square grid, possessing small triangles at two opposite ends, was introduced. A John Donnes tracing of such a cancel is shown here as Figure 3. It was taken from a July 14 (1851) cover.

Hubert Skinner described the New York square grid, in part, as follows:

"...consists of 13 fine lines ... (and) is fairly scarce on the

provisional issue but is relatively common on the 1847 issue."<sup>4</sup>

His illustration of the cancel is shown in Figure 4.

Use of the 13-bar grid with two triangles has been reported as late as July 20, 1851.<sup>5</sup> The NYPO introduced an 11-bar square grid in July 1851 which saw regular use only until mid-August – see Figure 5. At that point the use of a square grid was largely finished except on a very limited basis into December 1851 with one use noted on an 1853 circular.<sup>6</sup>

The above presents only some basic information on the subject of the pioneering New York square grid. A detailed study of dated covers, of course, is needed before definite conclusions can be drawn about the periods of use of the several design varieties mentioned herein as well as of any additional varieties that may exist. Readers who have information on this subject are encouraged to contact the *NEWS*.

<sup>1</sup> Elliott Perry *Pat Paragraphs* compiled and edited by George T. Turner and Thomas E. Stanton, Bureau Issues Association, Inc. (1981), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Creighton C. Hart "1847 Covers from New York City," *Chronicle* (Feb. 1978), p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> Hubert C. Skinner "Early Cancellations of New York City: Part 1 1842-1852" *Chronicle* (Aug. 1995), p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> James A. Allen and Roger D. Curran "Off-Cover Postal History and 'Earliest Indicated Uses (EIU)'" *Chronicle* (Nov. 2005), p. 277.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 278.

**The U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS**

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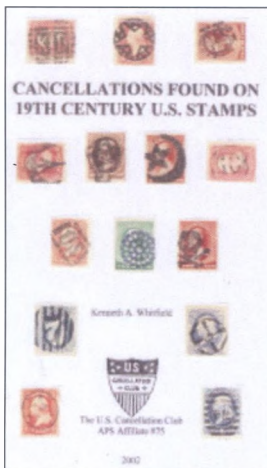
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Dear Reader,

Elsewhere in this issue is an article entitled "Boston Negatives" that discusses briefly the ten-year project of the USCC to study these cancels. The coordinator for this effort has been Ted Wassam who did a very conscientious job of maintaining records and presenting data for reports. On behalf of our Club I extend a hearty "thank you" to Ted for his excellent work. We have now a new coordinator, Vince Costello, a long time collector of these cancels. Contact information for him can be found on the NEWS masthead. If members have new early or late dates, unlisted designs, unusual strikes, interesting postal history usages, etc. please report them to Vince. Periodically, such information will be published in the NEWS.

Roger Curran

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## "New" NYFM?

Victor Kuil submits the image shown as Figure 1 of a June 1870 cover to London with what appears to be an unlisted New York Foreign Mail cancel. The cover was noted by him on eBay in 2012. New York specialists Dan Richards and John Donnes do not have a record of this cancel and readers are asked to report any examples in their collections or in their records to the *NEWS*. It would be good to find a confirming example.

Figure 1



## Pioneering U.S. Ellipse Cancel

The New York City ellipse in Figure 1 has an important place in U.S. postal history. It is, as far as we know, the first



Figure 1

manufactured ellipse used in the U.S. It was employed experimentally by the NYPO at a time when cork or soft wood cancelers with a number carved in the center were the norm in that post office. Dan Richards has been studying NYPO ellipses, including this one, and he prepared a report on uses that was published in the May 2010 *NEWS*. The earliest reported use of the Figure 1 cancel was then and remains today that

of November 16, 1874. However, with the Figure 2 cover recently encountered by Dan, the latest reported use has now been extended two days from March 11 to March 13, 1875. If readers can report additional on cover uses of this cancel, either within or outside the reported date range, they are encouraged to do so. Dan's email and snail mail addresses are on the *NEWS* masthead.



Figure 2



## Elusive "PAID" Cancels

by Roger Curran

According to Blake and Davis, Boston used two framed "PAID" cancels over a three-year period, 1861-1863.<sup>1</sup> Their tracings are shown here as Figure 1.<sup>2</sup> Since the Boston post office was a large operation,

examples are often seen. A typical strike is illustrated as Figure 2. There are, however, two additional Boston "PAID" cancels, both unframed, reported by Blake and Davis on the 3¢ issue that are not common – see Figure

3 which recently came to the attention of the *NEWS*. Figure 4 shows the Blake and Davis tracing for this type.<sup>3</sup> This cancel is also listed in Linn.<sup>4</sup>

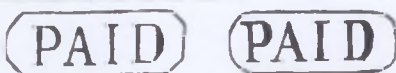


Figure 1

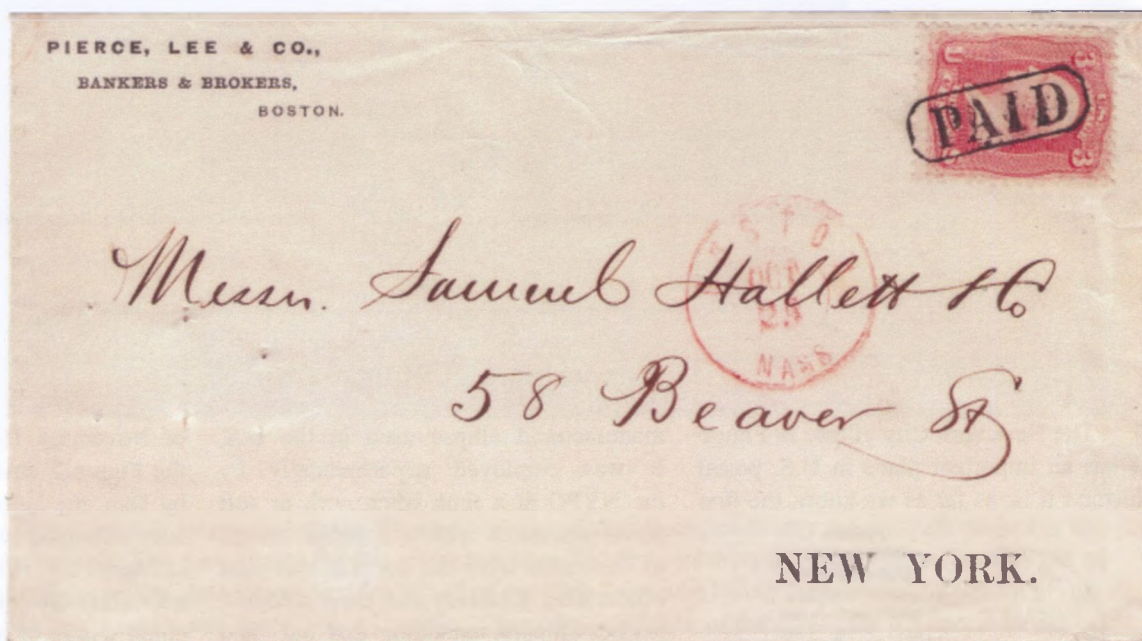


Figure 2



Figure 3

**PAID**

Figure 4

<sup>1</sup> Maurice C. Blake and Wilbur W. Davis *Boston Postmarks to 1890*, (1949), pp. 202, 3..

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> George W. Linn *The PAID Markings on the 3¢ U.S. Stamp of 1861* (1955), p. 36.



## More on Double Circle Postmarks

The November 2013 *NEWS* provided an update to the listing of post offices that introduced Government-issued double circle postmarkers in 1859. Two more can now be added bringing the total to twelve. Also, a new early date for Troy, NY can be listed.

Frankfort, KY (12/22/59)

Salem, MA (12/29/59)

Troy, NY (10/21/59)

Thanks to John Valenti for the Frankfort and Troy reports. The Frankfort usage comes from a cover in his stock.

Interest in this style of postmark is due to the fact that it was employed by a number of post offices as a canceler of postage stamps before the August 1860 POD edict precluded such use. The cover in Figure 1, however, presents a digression from that focus. As a general proposition, effective January 1, 1856, domestic letter mail was required to be prepaid by stamps. But drop mail (mail addressed to a party served by the same



Figure 1

post office that initially received it) was not covered by that requirement until a February 27, 1861 public law extended it to drop mail.<sup>1</sup> The law was made effective at least by May 1, 1861.<sup>2</sup> The Figure 1 cover was postmarked at Herkimer,

New York on April 25 and addressed to a person in Herkimer. We can assume the year date was 1860 or 1861. The Herkimer post office was established in 1798 and operates today.

<sup>1</sup> Don L. Evans *The United States 1¢ Franklin 1861-1867* Linn's Stamp News (1997), p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



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## Color Cancellations on the 1869 Series: Philadelphia Blues

by Ed Field

In January 1869 the Philadelphia Post Office began using blue ink for domestic cancels. The earliest example I have seen is dated January 5. Then, in June, the PO returned to black ink. To my knowledge, the latest 1869 use of blue ink was June 11. Because the earliest use of an 1869 stamp was March 26, the overlap period of Philadelphia blue cancels with the 1869 series was a mere seventy-seven days, give or take. I am aware of thirteen different Philadelphia domestic cancels from that brief period, and more probably exist. This article shows ten such cancels, arranged chronologically from March 30 to May 31 1869.

Figure 1 shows a crossroad cancel on a cover posted MAR 30, only three

which shows the word "DISPATCHED" and the time "6:30 PM". Such postmarks are not rare, but were somewhat of a mystery until the publication of explanatory articles by J.H. Schreiber (*Chronicle* 90, May 1976) and E.T. Harvey (*Chronicle* 113, Feb 1982). The DISPATCHED markings were used from late 1868 through early 1870. They appear only on mail to New York City and never on mail to other cities. The times that appeared in these markings were 1:20 PM, 3:30 PM, 6:30 PM, and 2:25 AM, which seem compatible with railroad departure times. Despite early speculation that these markings were applied at the railroad station, evidence indicates they were applied at the Post Office along with regular Philadelphia

cancels. The DISPATCHED marking was how the Post Office identified mail sorted out for New York delivery.

Figure 5 shows a negative 6-point star on a cover posted APR 22, which was during the lifespan of the cogwheel cancel. The envelope is an advertising cover for Kline's Emporium, run by J.W. Klein who (as A. C. Klein) in 1862 published the first stamp catalog in the U.S.

Figure 6 shows a Philadelphia carrier cancel on a cover posted APR 29.

Figure 7 shows a negative cross on a cover posted MAY 5. This cancel also exists on a "DISPATCHED" cover posted April 30 (see Harvey's article, cited above.).

Figure 8 shows a different negative cross on a cover posted MAY 10. The slate blue color of this cancel differs markedly from the medium blue of the cancels shown in Figures 1-to-7. A similar slate blue shade is seen in Figure 9, which shows a four-bar grid cancel on a "DISPATCHED" cover posted MAY 17.

Figure 10 shows a simple crossroad cancel on a cover posted MAY 31. It is the latest blue cancel for which I have a colored scan.



Figure 1

days after the EKU of the 3-cent stamp. If an earlier blue Philadelphia cancel exists on an 1869 stamp, I have not seen it.

Figures 2 and 3 show, respectively, a circle of wedges and a pristine early strike of the familiar Philadelphia cogwheel. Note that these two cancels are on covers posted the same day, APR 17 1869. Figure 3a shows the cogwheel cancel as of APR 28, after 11 days of wear and tear.

Figure 4 shows an eight-arm circle of diamonds on a cover posted APR 21 and addressed to New York City. Note the unusual postmark,



Figure 2



However, Schreiber reports a blue letter "M" on a cover posted JUN 11. For later 1869 dates, he reports only black cancels.

In summary, I have shown ten different Philadelphia domestic blue cancels on 1869 stamps. Adding the "M", "spiral", and "oblong" cancels reported by Schreiber increases the

total to thirteen, all of which were used between the late-March advent of the 1869 series and the mid-June return to

black ink by the Philadelphia PO. At least some of these cancels were used simultaneously.

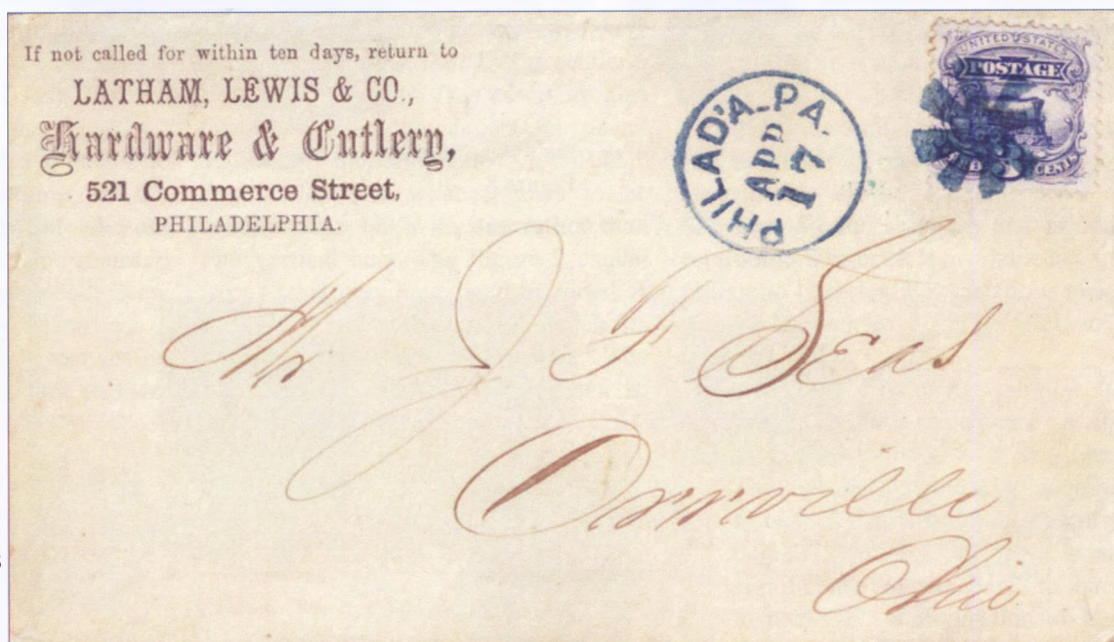


Figure 3



Figure 3A



Figure 4



Figure 5

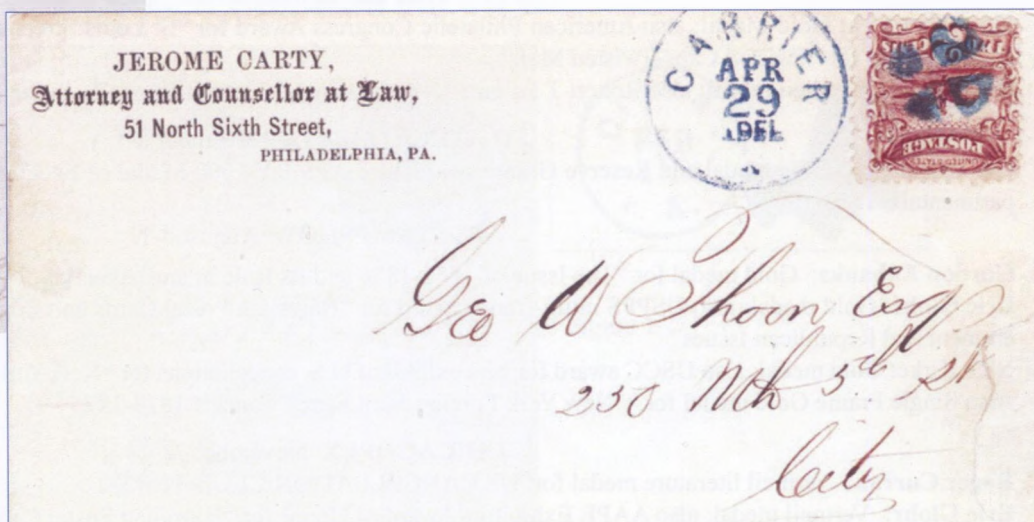


Figure 6





Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



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#### SESCAL October 3-6

**Gordon Eubanks:** Gold medal and Federation Grand Award; also APS Medal of Excellence--Pre 1900 award and American Philatelic Congress award for "The United States Imperforate Issues of 1851-56"

**Ed Field:** Vermeil medal; also USCC award for Best US Cancellation Exhibit for "US Stamps of 1869 Bearing Colored Cancels"

**Eric Glohr:** Gold medal for "Hawaiian Postal Cards and Envelopes: Provisional Government and Republic Issues"

**Les Lanphear:** Gold medal and George Bennett Memorial Reserve Grand Award; also SESCAL Back of the Book award and USSS Statue of Freedom award for "US Departmentals, 1873 to 1884. Also Single-frame Vermeil medal and UPSS award for "US Penalty Clause Mail Use Outside the 48 States"

#### OKPEX October 25-26

**Gary Hendren:** Gold Medal; also American Philatelic Congress Award for "St Louis Streetcar Mail". Also Single-Frame Silver Bronze medal for "Twisted Caps-Twisted Mail"

**Brady Hunt:** Vermeil medal; also Robert T Pollard Memorial medal for "Oklahoma Documentary Stamps"

#### FILATELIC FIESTA November 8-13

**Les Lanphear:** Gold medal and Reserve Grand Award; also APS Pre-1900 Medal of Excellence and USCPS medal for "US Departmentals, 1873-1884"

#### APS STAMPSHOW August 8-11

**Gordon Eubanks:** Gold medal for "The Issue of 1851-1856 and Its Role in an Expanding Postal System"

**Eric Glohr:** Gold medal; also USPPS multi-frame award for "Hawaiian Postal Cards and Envelopes: Kingdom, Provisional Government and Republican Issues"

Nick Kirke: Gold medal; also USCC award for best exhibit of U.S. cancellations for "New York Foreign Mail Cancels 1845-1878". Also Single Frame Gold medal for "New York Foreign Mail Fancy Cancels 1873-1875"

#### CHICAGOPEX November 22-24

**Roger Curran:** Vermeil literature medal for: US CANCELLATION CLUB NEWS

**Eric Glohr:** Vermeil medal; also AAPE Exhibitors Award of Honor for "Hawaiian Postal Cards and Envelopes: Provisional Government and Republic Issues"



## Another Double “E” Cancel

The November 2012 *NEWS* discussed an odd cancellation from Eaton, Colorado in the form of two “E” letters juxtaposed back to back inside a circle – see Figure 1. Josh Furman submits the Figure 2 image of a remarkable card, residing in the collection of Arnold Selengut, postmarked East Hampstead, New Hampshire bearing a precancel consisting of two “E” letters placed face to face.



Figure 1

The blue ink of the cancel matches the other colored ink on the card and one assumes that all the blue markings were printed at the same time by the sender – Globe Printing Co. This company also produced other precancels on postal stationery including an “X,” E.H., “H,” “76” and what appears to be a dollar sign but with one rather than two vertical bars. The Figure 2 cancel forms what may have been intended as a negative “H” in the middle, which fits somewhat with “East Hampstead.” The postmaster at the time was Hosea B.

Carter.

Josh is the author of *Precanceled U.S. Postal Cards 1879-1961*, a 180 page softbound book that catalogs and displays (full size in color) classic precanceled postal cards for the period. For members of the USCC, the book is available at the discount price of \$55 plus \$6 for shipping and is non-returnable. The book is available at most philatelic libraries. For questions about the book, contact Josh at [jfurman@rivercross.com](mailto:jfurman@rivercross.com).

A cancel somewhat similar to that in Figure 1 appears in the Skinner-Eno book – see Figure 3 which is listed on a page of Masonics that is headed “identified degree symbols.” Is there some significance to the back to back “E” configuration or is it simply intended to convey the idea of lines of print on book pages?

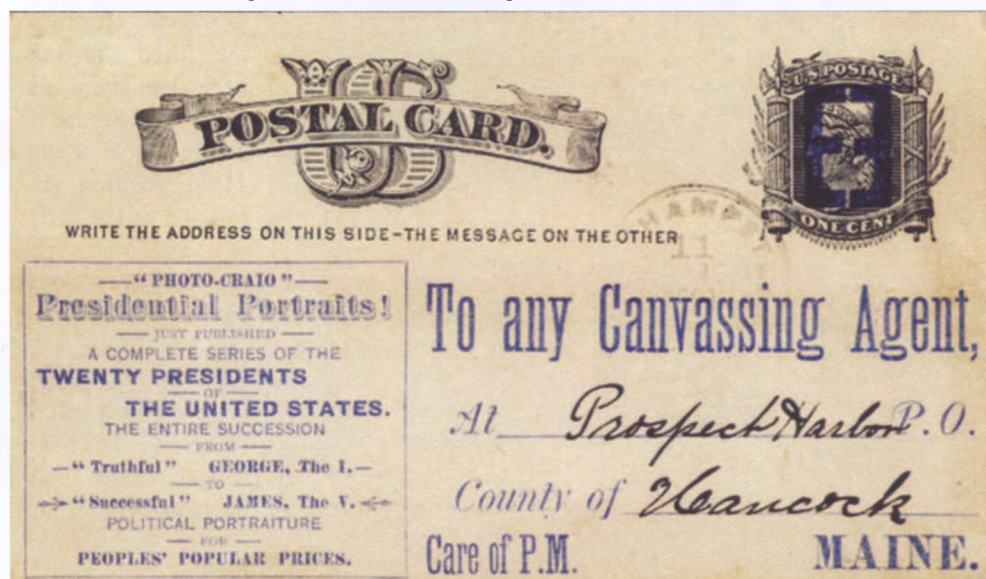


Figure 2



Figure 3

## Another Corry, Pennsylvania “Face”

In response to articles in the last two issues about Corry “face” cancels. John Valenti submits the cover image shown here as Figure 1. This cover was offered

on eBay within the past 18 months. John Donnes was able to accomplish the tracing from the image. A considerable number of Corry cancels were sold by

the Siegel firm in December including some “face” cancels but not an example of the Figure 1 cancel.



Figure 1



## Noted in Passing

by Roger D. Curran

Dan Haskett submits the Figure 1 cover bearing a beautiful example of an elaborate hand carved ellipse cancel. Surely it was produced from an early strike of this killer, given the clarity of the image. Dan was prompted to report this cover by the appearance on page of 130 of the August *NEWS* of an off cover example of this cancel.

duplex handstamp was not used on either cover but rather two simplex handstamps – see Figure 3. On reflection it can be seen that the CDS and killer in Figure 2 do not line up exactly. By December 1881, using two simplexes was, I believe unusual, albeit not rare.

The cover page of the November 2013 *NEWS* illustrated ellipses with

Chicago cancels listed by Leonard Piskiewicz with ellipses bearing letters “A” through “D” in the center with dates from April 1883 through January 1886.<sup>1</sup> An illustration of a full handstamp marking from this set, designated Piskiewicz D-8, is shown here as Figure 5.<sup>2</sup> What caused these holes is unclear.

Presumably, they are not present on all strikes. Perhaps they come from quite shallow holes in the canceler face that filled with ink as the handstamp was used. See Figure 6 where a hole at the 11:00 position (in relation to the “C”) is vaguely present. Comments and additional reports will be welcomed.

The *NEWS* occasionally illustrates fancy cancels dated 1900 or later. These, of course, involve the tail end of the fancy cancel era. Figure 7

presents an example from Graniteville, Massachusetts dated April 16, 1901. The segments between the star points

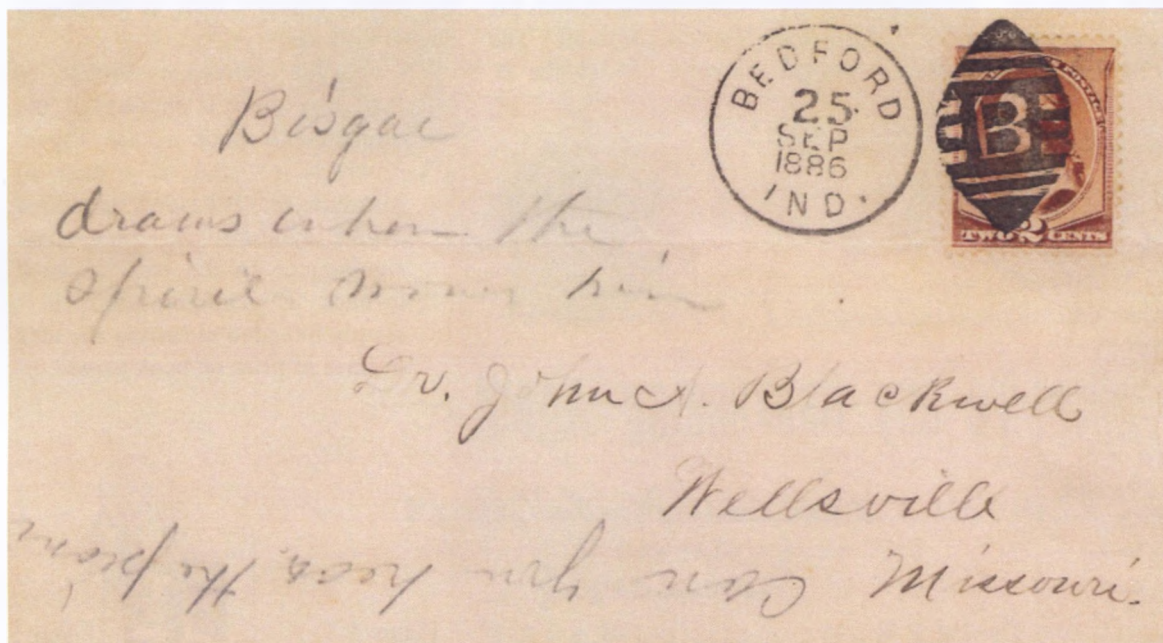


Figure 1

The cover in Figure 2 shows a negative “S” cancel where, as with many letter cancels of the period, the “S” can be assumed to represent the first letter of the town name. However, there is an unusual aspect of the killer that was unrecognized by your editor. John Donnes executed the tracing and reported a similar Stockbridge cover from his collection, which demonstrates the fact that a

“blanks” in the center. In Figure 4, ellipses with holes in the bars are shown. They are present in a set of

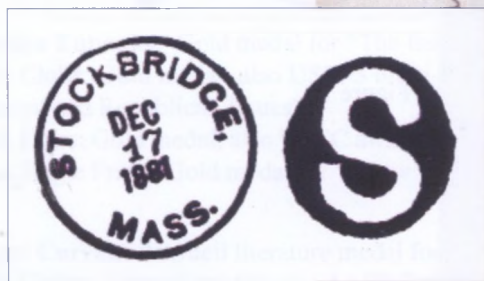


Figure 2



are not clear. Possibly they are (or were originally) wedges. Can a reader show a clearer strike?

The 1892 Cincinnati "A" cancel in Figure 8 may refer to the Cumminsville Station that was also, I gather from Willard (vol. two, page 128), referred to as Station A. Three of Cincinnati's nine stations apparently had letter identifiers in addition to place names but the other two do not seem to have used cancelers with letters. The "A" canceler was used for some years – see Figure 9. There is a lack of alignment between CDS and cancel in Figure 8. One would expect a

Cincinnati postmarking handstamp to be duplexed by the 1890s but conceivably a Station's volume of mail did not require it. Readers who can report other "A" covers are urged to do so.

Cincinnati is one of those post offices with a very rich cancellation history that is, to my knowledge, yet to be covered by the detailed published study it deserves.



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

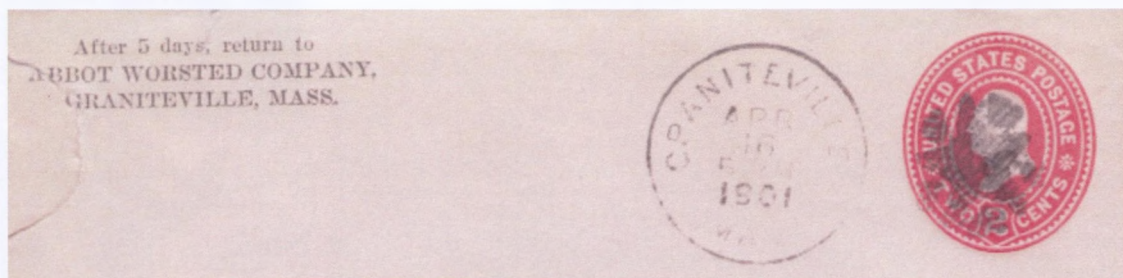


Figure 7



Figure 8

Figure 9

<sup>1</sup> Leonard Piskiewicz *Chicago Postal Markings and Postal History*, James E. Lee Publishing, Chicago, IL (2006), p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 54.



## NYFM Killers, Three Unusual Additions

by John A. Valenti

On many occasions the pages of the *NEWS* have contained articles reporting new, previously unreported killers used to cancel mail handled in the foreign mail division of the New York City general post office. These New York foreign mail (NYFM) killers are among the most highly studied and documented in our hobby. Nevertheless, new discoveries await the alert and curious student of these cancellations. This article reports three new and very interesting additions.

### A New Numeral Killer

When Bill Weiss published his book, *The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City 1870-1878*<sup>1</sup>, it added fire to the debate on the proper definition of a NYFM killer. Bill expressed a liberal viewpoint, believing that any killer that could be demonstrated as having been used to cancel mail originating at New York City to a foreign destination (other than Canada) justified inclusion in the NYFM category. Bill's book contains several examples of foreign destination covers canceled by numeral killers typically found on domestic New York City mail from this period (representative type killers RE-N2 through RE-N8). Notably, illustrated cover examples show these killers duplexed to domestic style postmarks. Those who disagree with Bill's NYFM definition emphasize this fact. For them such covers only demonstrate the occasional exceptions where a foreign bound cover initially processed in the domestic division before ultimately being delivered to the foreign division for correct processing. The cover illustrated in Figure 1 represents a curious twist to this debate.

The cover is dated DEC 26 (1875 based upon French receiving mark) and bears three 3¢ Continental issue stamps paying the 9¢ treaty rate to France (only a few days before the UPU rate of 5 cents became effective JAN 1, 1876). The stamps are canceled by two complete and

two partial strikes of a negative Roman numeral 12 (XII) killer. According to USCC member John Donnes, this killer is known used on domestic New York City mail from SEP 11 to OCT 31 in 1874. (A late example on a UX3 from John's collection dated OCT 30 is shown in Figure 2.) On the cover we see the killer clearly used without a duplexed postmark; only the red NEW YORK DEC 26 PAID exchange office hand stamp provides a date.<sup>2</sup> Apparently, this numeral killer was re-tasked for use in the foreign mail division after being retired from its domestic use. Note that the two complete strikes show significant wear much like the late domestic use. John Donnes also reports the use of the simplex Roman numeral XII killer canceling a 1¢ Banknote on a circular out of the New York GPO (no date of use available).

### A New Dual Domestic and Foreign Mail Use on Circular

In a series of articles published

be processed and canceled first in the circular mail room before delivery to the foreign mail division for processing<sup>3</sup>. The article published several examples of this dual use of killers on both domestic and foreign destination circulars. The 6-pronged spoke killer with hollow center illustrated here in the Figure 3 tracing is a new addition to this dual use pattern. The two covers in Figure 4 and 5 demonstrate this use.

The Figure 4 item bears a Scott #146 paying the 2¢ printed matter rate to England on a printed prices current circular (New York Merchants' Chronicle) dated May 10, 1871. The killer tracing is taken from the cancellation tying the stamp to the circular. The cover in Figure 5 (courtesy of Matt Kewriga) bears this same killer, only used domestically. It is an unsealed circular mail envelope, also bearing the 2¢ National stamp, addressed to New Haven, Connecticut, with a New York City jeweler corner advertisement.



Figure 1

in the *NEWS* in 1995,<sup>3, 4</sup> I wrote about the cancellations found on circulars and newspapers originating at New York City (NYCM killers). Part II of the first article, "New York Circular Mail to Foreign Destinations," posited that "it may be theoretically proper to classify all NYCM cancellations as NYFM" because even foreign destination circulars appeared to



Figure 2



### A New Ringed Killer

The final Figure 6 item bears a very puzzling, never before reported New York City killer. It ties a 1¢ Continental issue (Scott #156) on UX3 paying the uprated postal card rate to England. Dated August 6, the card bears a red AUG 7 exchange office postmark and a red London AU 17 1875 receiving mark.

What makes this killer so puzzling is that it is a ringed killer of style typically seen on NYCM in the 1874-75 period. This new killer is most like the representational style NYFM killers RE-S6 (ringed shamrock) and RE-E1 (ringed shield), both of which are NYCM killers.<sup>6</sup> (A dual foreign/domestic circular use of a ringed Maltese cross is also known.) I cannot, however, discern a particular object as the

central element of the design. It appears to be somewhat hexagonal in shape with a negative interior design that resembles a worn anchor. It truly confounds me that, despite the distinct and unique design of this killer, I have seen it nowhere else on or off cover. Can anyone identify a confirming second example?

<sup>1</sup> Weiss, William R., Jr. *The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City 1870-1878*. Published by the author, 1990.

<sup>2</sup> John Donnes suggests that this cover may have been posted DEC 26, 1874, not 1875. Utilizing information in *North Atlantic Mail Sailings 1840-75* (Walter Hubbard and Richard Winter, U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, 1988), the one sailing fitting the destination and DEC 26 date is the French Line in 1874. I also note in support of John's observation that Hubbard and Winter record the use of this particular New York Exchange Office marking between the dates of 22 Jun 72 and 23 Nov 75. Postal markings on this cover are slightly blurred, so a confusion of dates is entirely possible.

<sup>3</sup> Valenti, John "New York City Cancellations On Circulars and Printed Matter, 1870-1878," Parts I-III, *U.S. Cancellation Club News*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (216) January 1995

<sup>4</sup> Valenti, John "New York City Cancellations On Circulars and Printed Matter, 1870-1878," Part IV, *U.S. Cancellation Club News*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (217), Fall 1995.

<sup>5</sup> Valenti, John "New York City Cancellations On Circulars and Printed Matter, 1870-1878," Parts I-III, op cit., p 6.

<sup>6</sup> Valenti, John "New York City Cancellations On Circulars and Printed Matter, 1870-1878," Parts I-III, op cit., pp 7-8.



Figure 3

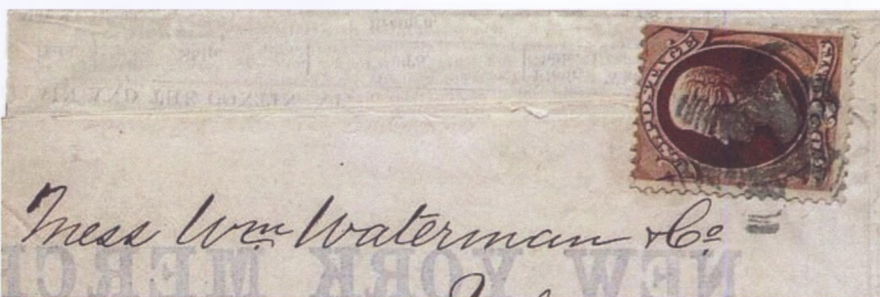


Figure 4

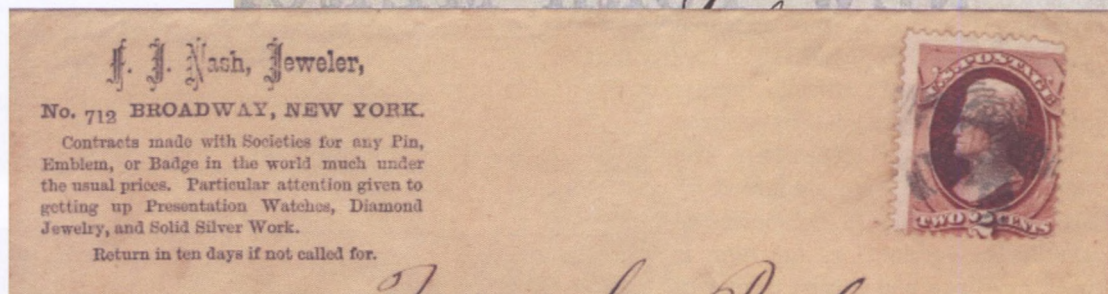


Figure 5

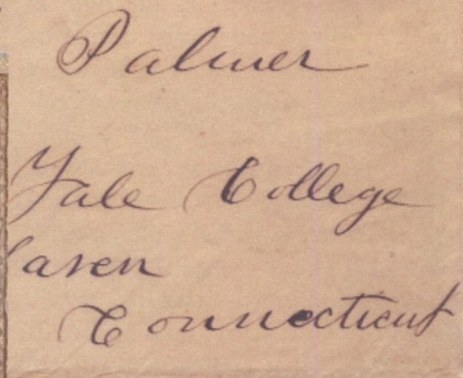


Figure 6



## Boston Negatives

by Roger D. Curran

Probably the most recognizable category of Banknote era cancellations is what collectors refer to as the "Boston negatives." Sometimes the term "large Boston negatives" is used to distinguish this type from the smaller Boston cancels used just before the introduction of the large negatives. The small negatives involved negative letters but not numbers in the center. For more than ten years, the USCC has been conducting a study of the large negatives. Three reports have been issued. The first, in November 2003, listed the earliest and latest reported dates for each of the known cancels. An August 2004 report provided data on the large negatives that have been altered in some way to create unique designs that allowed tracking back to the individual handstamping clerks. A November 2005 report provided data on the "Boston negatives" type used by post offices other than Boston. (Readers who wish to acquire these three reports may write the *NEWS* editor and enclose \$1 to cover the postage cost.) Since 2005, brief updating information has appeared occasionally in the *NEWS*.

The present article reports on various usages that have been encountered in the recent past. The first three items were submitted by Dan Haskett. Figure 1 shows an altered (or varied" as the term is used by Blake and Davis) design of an "F" in square – upper right corner cut off. This particular strike is not complete at upper left but enough ink is present to allow a conclusion that the full corner is present on the face of the killer with no alteration at that location. The August 2004 report listed several other alterations to "F" in square killers – (1) both upper left and lower right corners cut off, (2) bottom left corner cut off, and (3) upper left and upper right and bottom left corners all cut off. In addition, Blake and Davis show on page 261 an "F" in square where both the bottom left and upper right corners are cut off. So, over the years, "F" in square

killers were subjected to various similar (all involved corners) but differing alterations to make them distinctive.

The May 2009 *NEWS* illustrated two large negative strikes that possess a dark border around the outside of the cancel that was referred to as creating a "picture frame" effect. One example is quite dramatic. A further example is shown here as Figure 2. What caused this effect is not known and it appears to occur only very occasionally. Reader comment is invited.

The cover in Figure 3 is very puzzling. What could be the explanation

for this pattern of three strikes? Complete inattention? It seems apparent that the middle strike came before the top strike. One can imagine the middle strike coming first with the clerk then thinking a second strike of the killer was needed to do a more complete canceling job. But how does the bottom strike fit in? Why was it applied, especially since it covers part of the address, which surely was contrary to POD guidelines? Even the middle strike is poorly placed, given the considerable blank expanse on the cover above the marking. Incidentally, Dan points out that, even though there

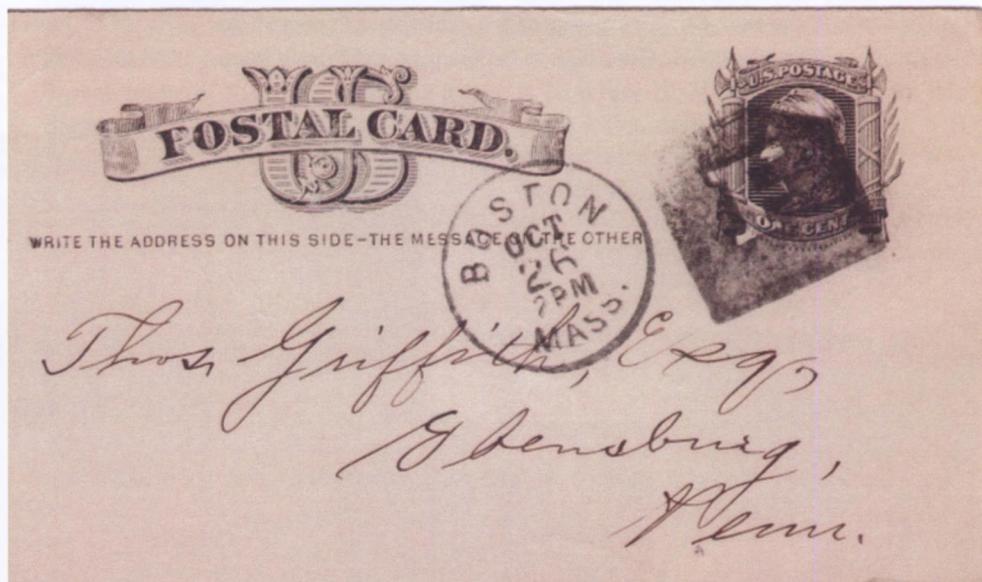


Figure 1



Figure 2



is no year date indicated, this cover presents either an ERU or LRU because the currently reported uses of the "11" in circle with negative circle are 12/2/81 to 6/18/82.

An aspect of the Boston negatives subject that is of great interest concerns when they were introduced. We know it was in May 1878 for regular use and the current ERU is May 7. The LRU for the small negatives that preceded the large negatives is May 4, 1878. However, the August 2012 *NEWS* illustrated a large negative "F" in circle on a card postmarked February 12 with a dateline on the back of February 12, 1878. It was concluded that in all probability it involved the use of a pre-printed "1878" card in 1879. The back of the card wasn't shown in the 2012 *NEWS* and appears here as Figure 4. As Boston negative specialist Bob Grosch has pointed out, it seems unlikely that unused "1878" postal cards would be discarded at the beginning of 1879, but rather clerks would be instructed to cross out the "1878" write in "1879." After all, they had to fill in a portion of these cards anyway. Since the Figure 4 card appeared in the *NEWS*, Bob has reported the card shown here as Figure 5, with a January 21, 1878 manuscript date. Erroneous datelines are, of course, not uncommon shortly after the beginning of a new year and it may well be that the actual year date was 1879. However, it behooves



Figure 3

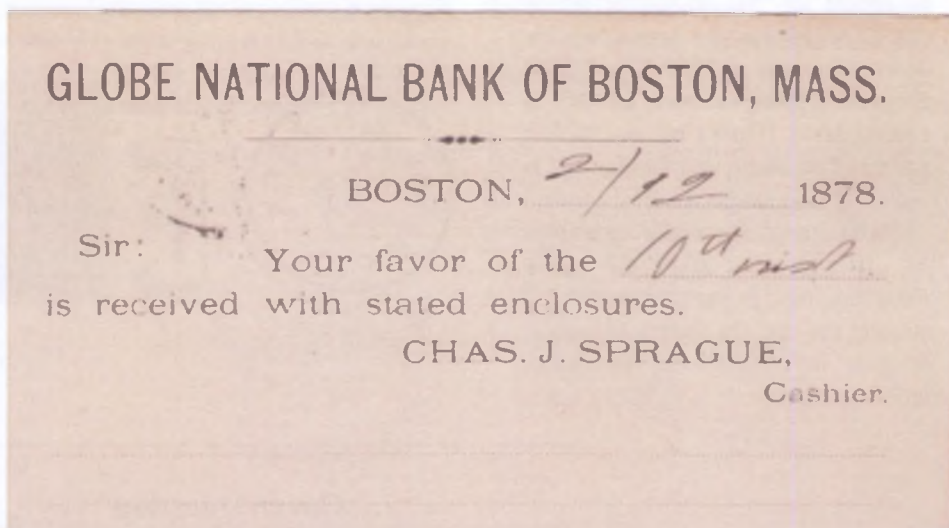


Figure 4

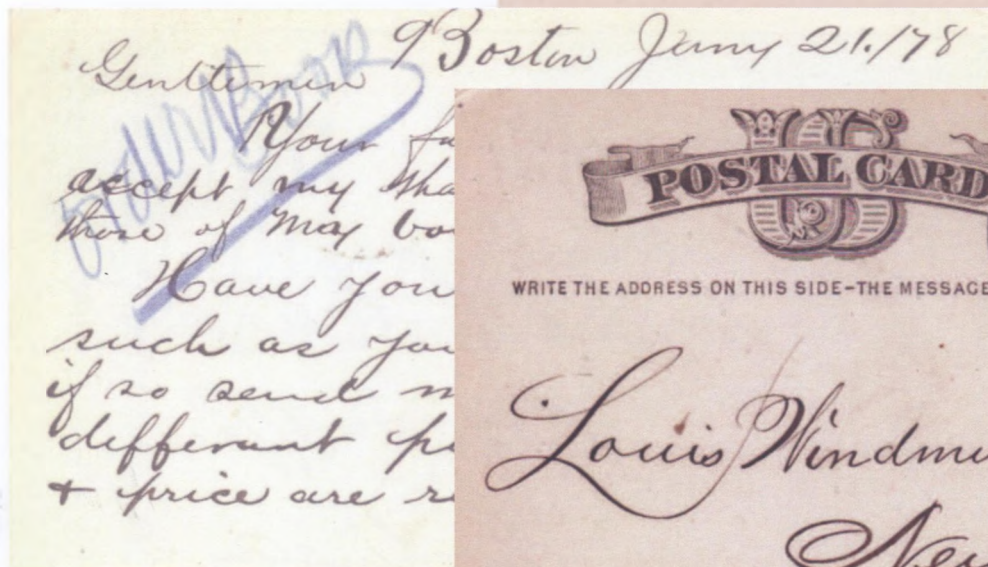
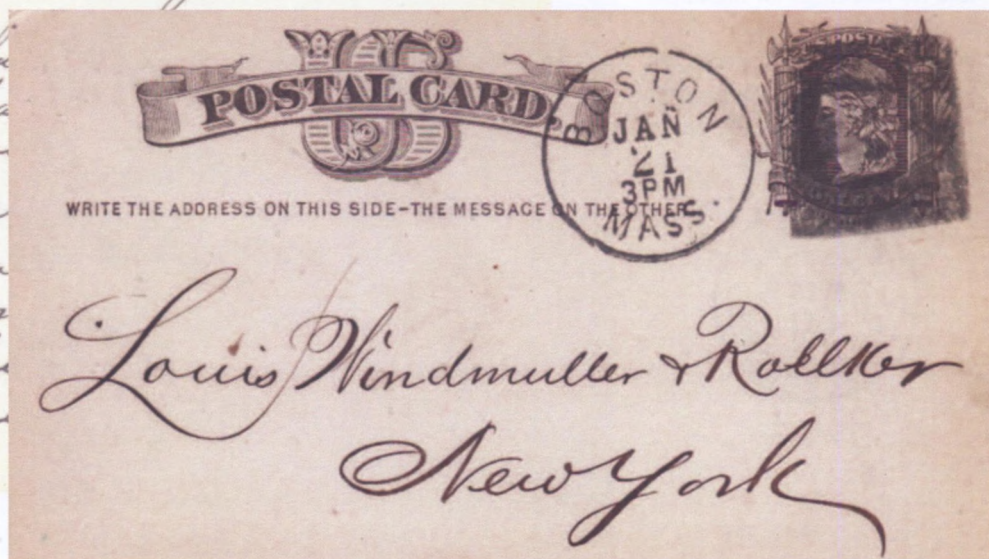


Figure 5





collectors to be on the alert for further uses of the large negatives in the early months of "1878." If other examples emerge, consideration would be given to the idea of some early testing of handstamps with large negatives cancelers in advance of their adoption as the principal Boston cancelers in May 1878.

The August 2009 *NEWS* carried an article by Bob on cancels, principally "Boston negatives, used by railway post offices that had a terminus at Boston. Figure 6 is an unlisted "Boston negative" from the Boston, Springfield and New York R.P.O. Figure 7 shows a Blake and Davis tracing of the CDS involved plus the two very distinctive killers with which this CDS is most often associated. Blake and Davis report no cancels with "W" in square but do report an "M" in square which could, of course, be turned upside down to create a "W." The USCC Progress Report 1 reports an "M" in square dated 1/16/81 but no "W" in square. The Blake and Davis "M" is not the same shape as the Figure 6 "W" but there are many examples of differing shapes of the same letter among "Boston negatives." I suspect the "M" in square is scarce, at least in comparison with other letters in square. It is the only letter

in square that does not have a range of dates listed in the above-mentioned Progress Report. Whether the Figure 6 killer just involved an upside-down

"M" or was ordered as a "W" from the supplier ... who knows! However, we can say that its intended use was as a "W," undoubtedly to indicate "west."



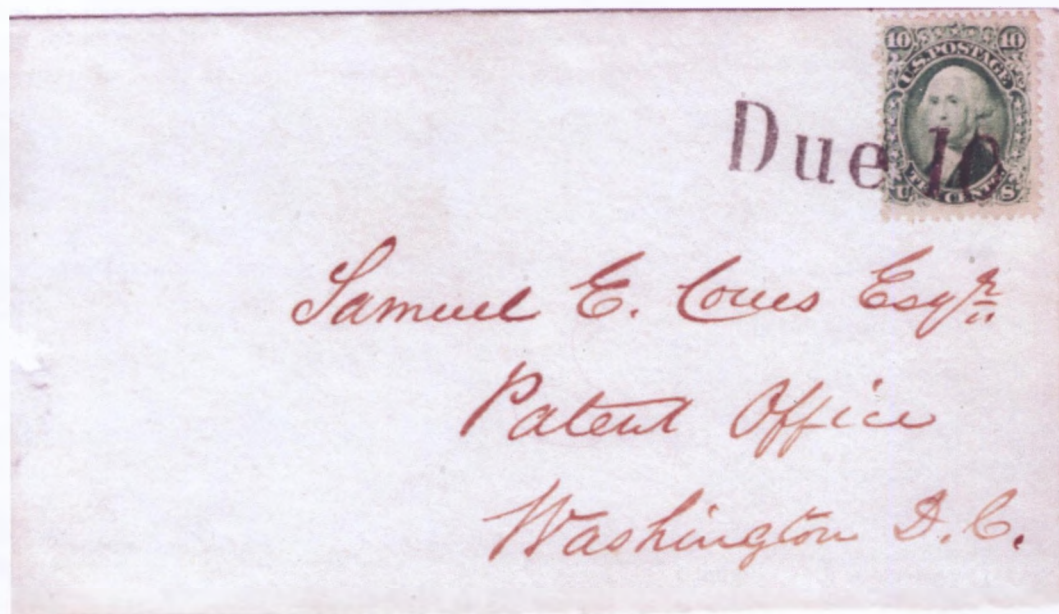
Figure 6



Figure 7

### Cover Question

This cover has no postmark and no markings on the back. It does have a good 1993 APES certificate. Readers are invited to offer an explanation of why (and where) the cover was handled as it was.





## Washington, D.C. to Switzerland

The 1870 cover in Figure 1 is interesting in several respects. It entered the mails at an unofficial station of the Washington, D.C. post office located in the U.S. Capitol building that was apparently established without fanfare in the early 1860s. A small double circle CDS with "CONGRESS" at the top was the first postmark and has been seen used as early as 1862 – see Figure 2. The typical usage was on letters sent free of postage franked by a member of Congress. Thus we can understand why it was not duplexed to a killer. When letters were sent with postage stamps affixed, the stamps were normally canceled by a four ring killer, as we see in Figure 1. In the mid 1860s, a "CONGRESS" postmark was introduced that contained the word "FREE" at the bottom, but the Figure 2 postmark was still used on mail (largely private mail) that bore postage stamps. It has been seen at least as late as 1871. The "CONGRESS" station operated until 1881 and there were at least five distinct "CONGRESS" postmarks used over the nearly 20 year period. See the article entitled "Congress Postmarks" by Rollin Huggins, Jr. that appeared in the Spring 1990 NEWS.

At the time of this cover, the only route for mail to Switzerland was the closed mail route under the U.S. – Swiss convention. Effective May 1, 1870, the rate was reduced to 10 cents per 15 grams, so the cover was overpaid by two cents. It was carried from New York on the North German Lloyd steamship "Rhein," arriving at Southampton on May 24, traveling then through England and France to Basel, whereupon the closed bag was opened on May 26 and the letter sent by train to Geneva. Thanks to Dick Winter for his help on the routing and rating.

The addressee of this cover is well known in U.S. history – Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross. According to the *World Book Encyclopedia*, she initially came to national attention for her efforts during the Civil War in carrying supplies to soldiers and nursing the wounded. In 1864 she was appointed Superintendent of Nurses

for the Army of the James. Clara Barton traveled to Switzerland in 1869 and during the Franco-Prussian War served as a battle front nurse. She observed the excellent work done by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Europe and, upon her return to the U.S. in 1873, she immediately began to promote the idea of the U.S. taking part in Red Cross work. She helped establish the American branch of the Red Cross in 1881 and became its first president in 1882, a post she held until 1904. Realizing that the Red Cross could help civilians as well as soldiers, she originated the clause in the Red Cross constitution that authorized help in disasters other than war. She led relief efforts in response to the 1877 Florida yellow fever epidemic, the 1889 Johnstown flood and the 1900 Galveston flood. After retirement she remained active in charitable and patriotic work and died in 1912.



Figure 1



Figure 2



## More on Albany Lincoln and Stars Cancel

by Ernie Webb



In the February 2012 *NEWS* I posted a "help wanted" request for information regarding the 1860s Lincoln and stars cancel used by the Albany, New York post office. In the November 2012 issue I briefly discussed the cancel and the environment in which it appeared and provided an initial report listing 18 covers or pieces with two that documented the year of use – 1865. The purpose of this article is to report what has been learned in the intervening

possibly prompted the design.

Earlier I mentioned several members who had helped with input and now add Rick Rettig to the list. I will continue to gather information and if anyone has additions or ideas I would welcome them. I can be reached at ewebb02@aol.com.

Time continues to march on, day by day, year by year, generations come and go and we forget why things happened the way they did. Today more than 153 years later no one knows exactly why the Lincoln and stars cancel was

Americans killed. General Ulysses Grant becomes an immediate national hero.

It was early Saturday morning April 15th when the announcement comes that President Lincoln had been shot and killed. Instantly flags were set at half-staff all over Washington, D.C., with church bells tolling and the city going into deep and universal mourning. At this time, Secretary Stanton began preparing for not one, but twelve separate funerals to be held from Washington D.C. to Springfield,

Albany Lincoln and Stars Cancel Census

|     | Postmark Date | Day of the week | Name of Addressee | Notes                                                      |
|-----|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | September 30  | Saturday        | B Claff           | on cover, Sc 65                                            |
| 2.  | October 1     | Sunday          | Libby             | on cover, Sc 65                                            |
| 3.  | October 2     | Monday          | ?                 | on piece to England, 1865 receiving mark on reverse, Sc 78 |
| 4.  | October 2     | Monday          | Dr Webb           | on cover, Sc 65                                            |
| 5.  | October 3     | Tuesday         | Bridgen           | enclosure dated 1865 in same hand as address               |
| 6.  | October 4     | Wednesday       | Capt Flager       | free frank by quartermaster general                        |
| 7.  | October 5     | Thursday        | Morrison          | on cover, Sc 65                                            |
| 8.  | October 6     | Friday          | Hiller            | on cover, Sc 65                                            |
| 9.  | October 6     | Friday          | Dr Wade           | on cover, Sc 65                                            |
| 10. | October 6     | Friday          | Chappell Dodds    | on cover, Sc 65                                            |
| 11. | October 6     | Friday          | D Williams, Jr    | from State of NY Comptroller's Office, on cover, Sc 65     |
| 12. | October 6     | Friday          | Beatte            | on cover, Sc 65                                            |
| 13. | October 7     | Saturday        | Esq               | on cover, strip of 3 Sc 65, each with Lincoln cancel       |
| 14. | October 7     | Saturday        | Plunkett, Esq     | on cover, Sc 65                                            |
| 15. | October 11    | Wednesday       | ?                 | on piece, Sc 65                                            |
| 16. | October 12    | Thursday        | ?                 | on piece, Sc 65                                            |
| 17. | October 13    | Friday          | ?                 | on piece, Sc 65                                            |
| 18. | October 15    | Sunday          | Lagrange          | on PSE with 2 Sc 65                                        |
| 19. | October 15    | Sunday          | Jas. Pierce, Esq  | on cover with enclosure, Sc 65                             |
| 20. | October 17    | Tuesday         | Cyrus Garnsey     | on cover, free frank of Senator Ira Harris                 |
| 21. | October 20    | Friday          | B Claff           | on cover, Sc 65                                            |
| 22. | October 22    | Sunday          | ?                 | on cover, Sc 65                                            |
| 23. | November 15   | Wednesday       | Frank Butterworth | on cover, Sc 65                                            |

Table 1

months. Twenty-three covers or pieces have now been recorded with three providing documentation of the year of use – see Table 1.

Some questions have been answered but several remain a mystery. We now know more about what was happening in Albany at the time that would have

produced and used.

The times were extremely turbulent with the Confederate Army surrendering at Appomattox, Virginia on April 9th 1865. The meeting between Generals Grant and Lee lasted only an hour or so concluding the bloodiest conflict in the Nations' history with over 600,000

Illinois over the next few weeks. Nearly 30 million mourners will view the procession, with the train often traveling 5 mph and no faster than 20 mph, departing April 21st. Over 500,000 people are at the depot as it departs on its journey, with nine rail cars and the most elaborate car reserved for mayors,



the honor guard, and Robert Lincoln, his oldest son. Among the stops were Baltimore, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, New York City, Albany, Buffalo, Cleveland, Chicago and lastly Springfield. Dignitaries got on and off throughout the journey paying their respects and experiencing part of the journey across the country. Among them was George Dawson, Albany postmaster, appointed by President Lincoln, riding the train through New York to the Ohio state border and viewing the hundreds of thousands of spectators that gathered

along the route. With each major city, the remains were carried off the train by the honor guard allowing that city to conduct its funeral and then the guard would reload the coffin back on board to continue the journey. The train finally reaches Springfield on May 3rd 1865, where the president was laid to rest.

Shortly after President Lincoln's burial, Albany began planning the grandest Flag presentation ceremony which would occur in conjunction with the 4th of July, Independence Day public celebration. General Grant would attend and lead the ceremony along with many of the generals of the Army of the Potomac and even some from the Western armies. During the day of parades and celebrations, more than 200 battle rent and weather stained banners belonging to the New York regiments were formally presented. General Grant was at the podium as each flag was marched in and presented that day but many of the regiments could not arrive in Albany by July 5th due to continued military operations, logistical problems, or the like. However, they were later submitted for the collection.

It is difficult for me to grasp the patriotic fervor of that day, and those times as veterans, fireman, soldiers, black and white brought in their standards to what was known as the celebration of celebrations.

General Grant was already a hero but this celebration and notoriety surely helped propel him to the future presidency.

There was a publication printed for that day listing all the key speakers, dignitaries, schedules of important events throughout the day, as well as listings of all the battle regiments making presentations. This publication was printed very elaborately with a prominent cover page – see Figure 1. It is interesting to note that this publication was printed by Weed, Parsons and Company. George Dawson was editor of the publication and part owner at the time of the printing company.

I believe as more regimental banners came into Albany, parades and general military fanfare must have occurred a number of times from July 4th through the fall of 1865. It makes total sense that George Dawson, feeling so patriotic, and a huge supporter of Abraham Lincoln, would get an idea to create the Lincoln and Stars fancy cancellation. The shapes of the 13 stars with five points, the different size stars and a surface that appears to billow all look very similar to those pictured on the cover page of July 4th 1865 publication for the flag ceremony. It is this cover page or what they called the presentation page that I believe gave George Dawson the inspiration to create the prized cancellation that we now know began to appear as early as September 1865.



Figure 1





## "Sloo" and More

The November 2013 *NEWS* illustrated two off cover "Sloo" cancels and asked whether any reader could show this cancel on cover. Chuck Collins has now reported an example (see Figure 1) as well as two other interesting cancels from his collection.

The Figure 2 cancel is listed in Cole without attribution. However, it is attributed in Whitfield – see Figure 3. "NUTTE" does not correlate with the postmaster's name.

The cancel in Figure 4 is enigmatic. Figure 5 is from Cole, unattributed, and is assumed to be

the same cancel. It provides some clarification of the design. As with Figure 2, the letters "JNC" (or other combinations of these) do not correlate with the postmaster's name. Perhaps in both cases they refer to a clerk in the post office.

Figure 1



Figure 2

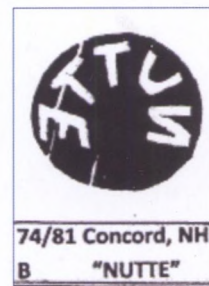
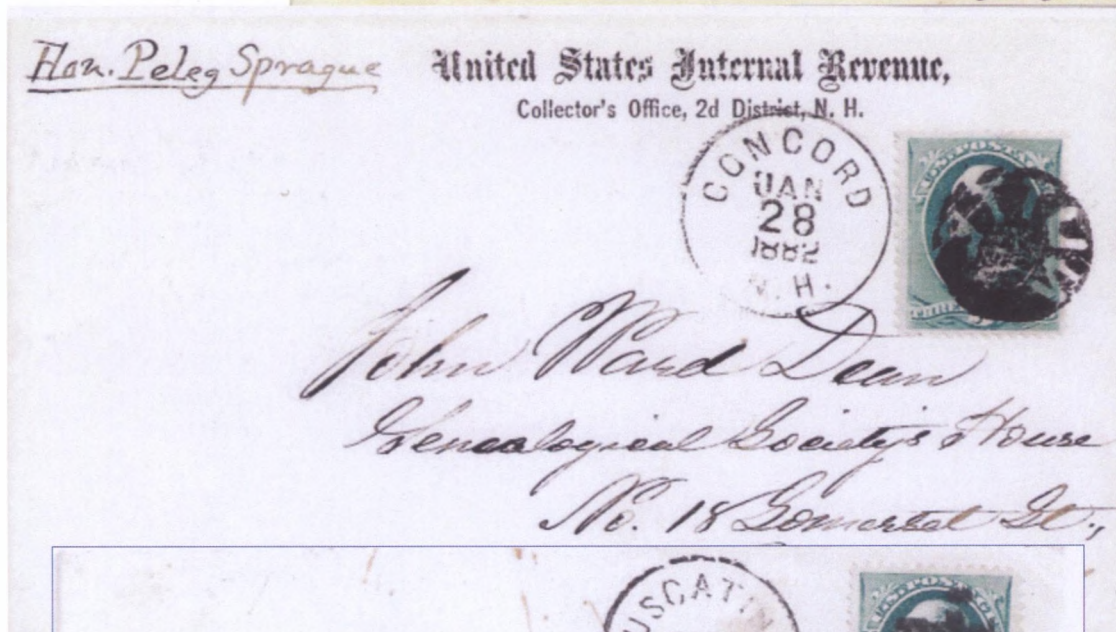


Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5