



U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

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Cancels and Photoshop Techniques

by Victor Kuil

My last buy in 2014 was the stamp depicted as Figure 1. Why would anybody buy such an ugly stamp, badly centered with a straight edge and a split cancel? I know this stamp will never become the star item of my collection, but I bought it anyway and paid only \$1.50.



Figure 1

I suspected that the cancel might be the rare NYFM cancel with the Weiss RE-L3 designation. But how could this be verified? I used Photoshop techniques as explained below.

Figure 2 shows a pair with a fairly complete RE-L3 cancel, although the lower side of the cancel is weakly impressed. What I wanted to achieve was placing the parts of my cancel over this scan and see how they would fit. I would hardly ever dream of owning a NYFM cover with this cancel; I know of only two surviving covers and I would be surprised if more than five still exist. Pairs are the next



Figure 2

best choice as the odds of finding a single stamp with a complete strike are somewhat longer.

I started out with the scan of Figure 1 and replaced the dark gray of the cancel with full black and thereafter the rest of the scan with full white using the color replacement function of my graphics computer program. After some touch-up the result is shown in Figure 3, a scan where the stamp has been removed exhibiting only the cancel.



Figure 3

How would the leg of the "H" of my stamp fit over the cancel in the pair? There are two possibilities.

I started out trying the left leg of the "H." Thus I rotated the Figure 3 scan left to obtain approximately the orientation of the left leg in the pair. I also split the Figure 3 scan in two parts and changed the color from black to blue. The part with the leg can be seen in Figure 4. After some fine tuning rotations, I fitted Figure 4 over the pair and was satisfied with the resulting match.



Figure 4

is not unreasonable to assume that the person who canceled the stamp did not change the orientation of the canceler much between the two strikes. So I tried

But where would the part of the rim in the other strike fit as a portion of the Figure 4 strike? In principle it could be anywhere. But it



Figure 5

the same orientation. You can see the result in Figure 5.

I did not try a match with the right leg of the "H" as I was already convinced that I had indeed bought a RE-L3 cancel. The nice thing about this approach is that all such work can be done prior to placing a bid on an Internet auction such as eBay, thus reducing the chances of a mistakenly bought item. I could have used a tracing instead but I prefer doing it this way.

"S" In Wreath Cancel

The last *NEWS* discussed on page 71 a previously unreported blue "S" in wreath cancel that was sharply struck on a 3c green PSE. It should be noted that a black "S" in wreath dated December 17, 1886 from Bardwell, Pa. was reported by William Robinson in the February 1996 *NEWS*. In that strike the leaves show with reasonable clarity. Figure

1 illustrates a later Bardwell strike involving considerable distortion. The date appears to be June 7, 1889. Even if it is 1888, which is doubtful, this represents a decidedly late usage of a letter in wreath cancel. Determining whether the blue "S" in wreath is also from Bardwell requires more information than we have at hand.



The U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

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

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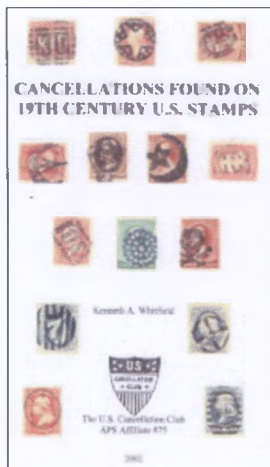
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Cancellations Found on 19th Century U.S. Stamps, by Kenneth A. Whitfield, is now available again. The book contains more than 6,000 tracings and is a valuable supplement to the Skinner-Eno and Cole books. This printing incorporates at no extra cost the latest Whitfield update pages. \$50 postpaid to U.S. addresses.

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Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

Happy new year to all! Our publication schedule doesn't permit a really timely new year's greeting but your editor and all Club officers extend warm wishes for a happy and healthy 2015 with ample time for philatelic pursuits along the way.

As you know, an election has recently been held for the several Club officer positions that comprise our Board of Directors. The listing of officers elected for the 2015-2016 term appears on the masthead of this issue.

The August 2014 *NEWS* announced the decision to hold the next USCC biennial meeting at the APS Stampshow at Grand Rapids, Michigan running from August 20-23, 2015. The Club will staff a society table for the full four days and hold at least one seminar/meeting during the course of the show. More information will follow in the May *NEWS* but readers are encouraged to make plans now to attend this show for at least a portion of the four days. The USCC provides an award for the best cancellations exhibit at a number of national shows including, of course, the annual APS Stampshow. This year's show would be an excellent place for USCC members to present an exhibit of US 19th century cancellations as it would surely reach an interested and appreciative audience. I urge all to give it some thought.

With the issuance of the May *NEWS*, I will be stepping down as editor. Ardy Callender and John Donnes have agreed to take up the reins as *NEWS* co-editors beginning with the August issue. It is a great understatement to say that the Club is fortunate to have such knowledgeable philatelists willing to assume this responsibility. The future prospects for our journal are bright, indeed.

Roger Curran

Fake Cancels

Additional examples of fake cancels submitted by Steve Hines are shown below. Probably many readers of the *NEWS* (and certainly your editor) have been occasionally fooled by well executed fakes. Fakes are often rather obvious. Unfortunately some are not.



"Postmasters" Postmarks

Postmarks containing the name of the postmaster were popular, especially in the 1880s, with postmasters of 4th class POs who had to buy their own handstamps. Usually, the postmaster name appeared at the bottom of the postmark, but a fair number show it at the top, almost as if the PO name was of secondary importance. The Holt, Pennsylvania PO operated in Beaver Co. from 1861 - 1901.



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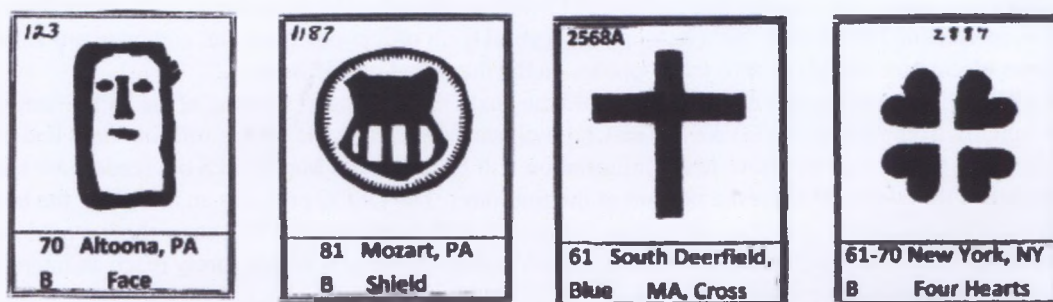
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Recently Identified Whitfield Cancels

by Wendell Triplett



Whitfield "face" cancel #123 has been identified as being from Altoona, Pennsylvania. It is rectangular and struck in black ink on Sc 136 and UX1. A known use date is December 11, 1873. Cole shows a similar cancel on page 165, "JO-99," but it is not rectangular.

Whitfield "shield" cancel #1187 has been identified as being from Mozart, Pennsylvania and was struck in black ink on 1881 issues. Cole also lists this cancel on page 130 as "SH-135."

Whitfield "cross" cancel #2568A

has been identified as being from South Deerfield, Massachusetts. It was struck in blue ink on a Sc 65 and dated March 23. Skinner - Eno also lists this cancel as "CR-C7" on page 77.

Whitfield "four hearts" cancel #2887 has been identified as being from New York City and was struck in black ink. An example on Sc 65 was dated August 16, 1867. Skinner - Eno also lists this cancel as PH-H 70 on page 135. A similar cancel struck in black ink, unlisted in Whitfield and Skinner-

Eno, from Tunkhannock, Pennsylvania on cover dated April 11 (1862) is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1

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SESCAL: October 17-19

Larry Haller: Gold medal; also AAPE Creativity Award, AAPE Novice Award, and USCC Award for best U.S. Cancellation Exhibit for "United States Hand Applied Flag Cancellations 1852-1949."

Matthew Kewriga: Gold medal and Grand Award; Also Postal History Society Award for "Danish West Indies Foreign Mails: 1748-UPU."

FILATELIC FIESTA: November 14-16

William Barlow: Gold medal; also USSS Statue of Freedom Award for "The Boston Post Office and the Development of Machine Cancellations."

A Favorite Cover

by Roger D. Curran

John W. Hill, a person who will always be prominently remembered in the literature of early US cancellations, began work in the Waterbury, Connecticut post office after the Civil War. He was, of course, an expert whittler and the maker of the wonderful array of Waterbury fancy cancels that have been so extensively chronicled and celebrated. The earliest Hill cancel, as reported in Paul Rohloff's standard reference on the subject, *The Waterbury Cancellations 1865-1890*, is the star surrounded by five hearts – see Figure 1. This cancel is mentioned in two places in the



Figure 1

Rohloff book, one with an earliest date of March 17, 1865 (page 2) and the other where it is listed as March 7, 1865 (page 112). But the subject of this brief article is a cover (Figure 2) that was mailed on September 30, 1862, two and a half years before the star and hearts cancel appeared. From a cancellation standpoint, the most that can be said is that it shows a rather late use of the standard circular 7-bar grid that

was introduced by the Post Office Department in 1847 to be used on the first general issue US stamps. The cover's merit is simple aesthetics – clean buff paper, a lovely dark shade of the Sc 65 stamp and the well-struck postmark and cancel in separate colors. Running across this cover recently, the phrase "calm before the storm" came to mind. Not a storm, of course, in a negative sense but in terms of a burst of creativity and exuberance manifested through remarkable artistic talent. Who would have guessed in 1862.

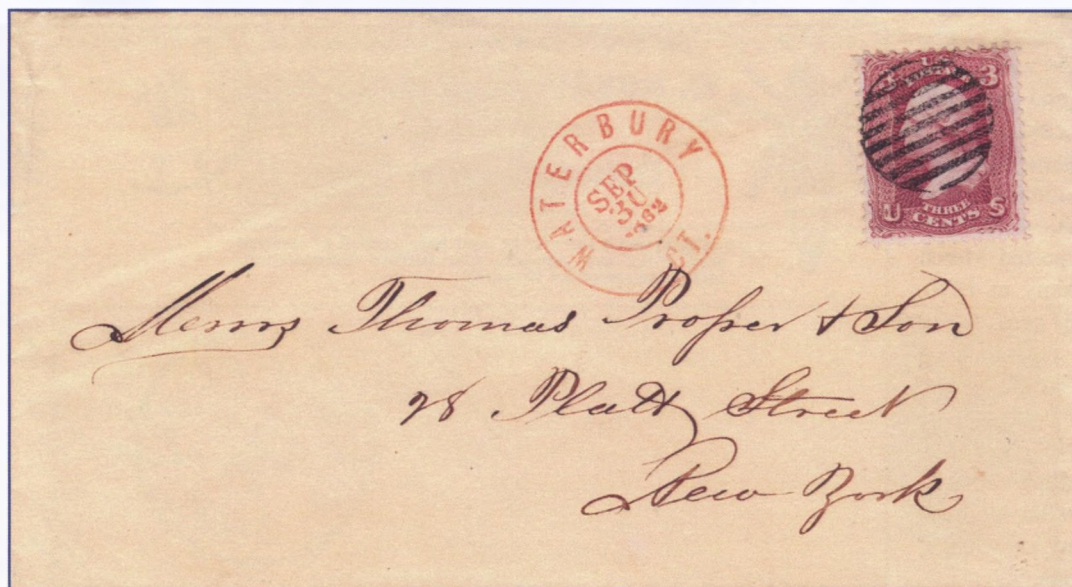


Figure 2

Color Cancellations on the 1869 Series: Grids

by Ed Field

This article shows colored grid cancels struck on U.S. stamps of 1869. My inclusion criteria are that a cancel be of distinctive design or struck in a scarce color. The multitude of simple blue or red grids struck by commercial or government-issued cancelers are omitted. Also omitted are grids shown in past *NEWS* articles, specifically: red Baltimore grids (Feb 2013); green grids of Owego, New York and Cornish Flat, New Hampshire (Nov 2013); and blue grids of Savannah, Georgia (May 2014).

Figure 1 shows a five-bar circular grid in the characteristic blue ink of Galesburg,

cover (ex Knapp) bearing a negative red geometric grid from Millersburg, Ohio. At least two other fancy red cancels (five- and nine-point stars) are known from Millersburg.

Figure 4 shows a three-bar purple grid on a cover from Owego, New York. What makes this cancel exceptional is that it is not green. More to the point, I have seen twenty-six different 1869 covers from Owego and, with the exception of the one shown, all bore green cancels. This cover originated in Tunkhannock, Pennsylvania and bears a black April 27 postmark. It was addressed to a school in

Oswego, New York but was mis-delivered to the nearby and similarly-named Owego post office, which added the purple postmark and cancel before forwarding to the intended destination. Such mix-ups between Oswego and Owego must have been common.

Figure 5 shows a three-cent stamp canceled in purple by a small, intricate rectangular grid. I have never seen another. There is no date stamp, but the purple docketing at the left edge of the cover that bears this stamp reads: "Troy Mills Iowa, Feb 23/70."

Throughout the 1869 issue era, Philadelphia used purple ink postmarks exclusively to mark all foreign mail. On the other hand, foreign mail cancel colors had no postal significance and were applied in whatever ink the clerk had at hand. Most such cancels were black, but Figure 6 shows a May 18, 1869 cover with three-bar grids struck in the same purple as the date stamp. Used during May/June 1869, this cancel is known on only three covers, all to England. However, many examples can be found on off-cover 6-cent stamps, and a few can be found on off-cover 6-cent and 24-cent stamps.



Figure 1

Illinois. The cover was posted July 21, 1889 and bears an attractive corner card.

Figure 2 shows a large blue nine-bar circular grid from Cynthiana, Kentucky. The cover was posted March 28, almost certainly in 1870. It bears a two cent stamp and probably contained a circular from H. Nesbit, whose elaborate corner card appears on the cover. Note that Mr. Nesbit is not selling ordinary queen bees, but rather "Italian" queen bees. To my knowledge, this cover is unique.

Figure 3 shows part of a

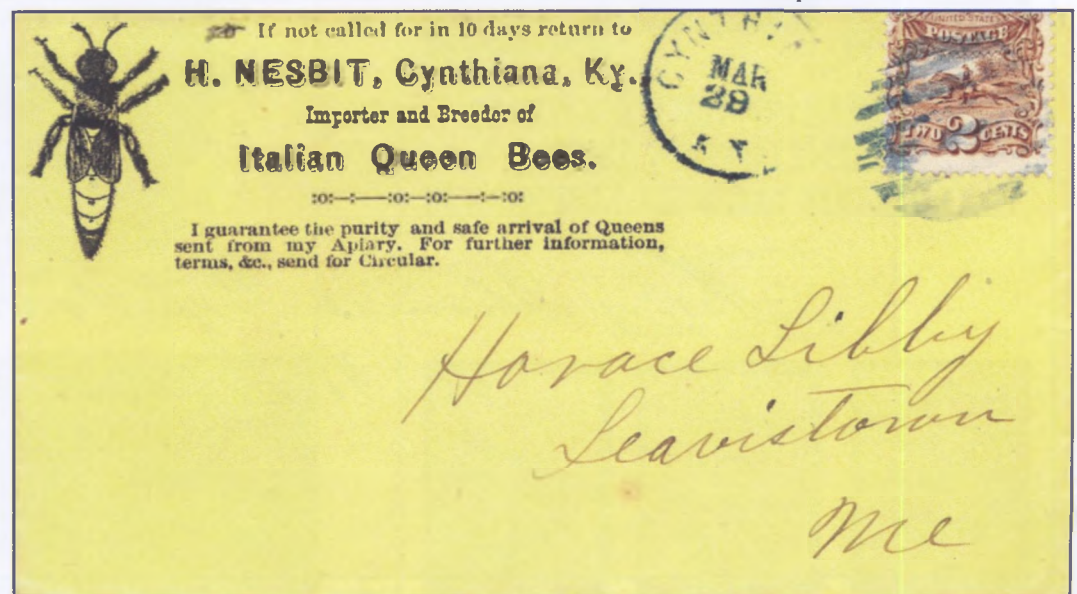


Figure 2

Figure 7 shows part of a September 12 cover from South Deerfield, Massachusetts. It bears an elliptical grid stuck in ultramarine, a rare color confirmed from only two post offices.

Figure 8 shows a July 16 cover from Danville, Massachusetts which bears a simple circular grid struck boldly in brown. True brown cancels are scarce on 1869 stamps, though not as rare as ultramarine. Many if not most 1869 cancels described as being brown are in fact dirty or oxidized red. This is

especially true for eBay offerings.

Figure 9 shows part of a cover from Saxtons River, Vermont posted October 8, probably 1869. It bears a true orange six-bar grid. Confirmed from only three post offices, true orange is rarest of known cancel colors (yellow probably does not exist on 1869 stamps). This cover shows the boldest orange strike that I have seen.

Figure 10 shows a modest four-line grid drawn in blue crayon. It is noteworthy only because it appears on the 15-cent invert. It is one of two colored

cancels known on this stamp, the other being a red New York CDS.

Only fourteen blue cancels are known on the 90-cent stamp, and most of those are nondescript blobs. However, two are well-struck grids of unknown origin. Figure 11 shows a 90-cent stamp with a bright blue five-bar grid; Figure 12 shows a 90-cent stamp with a dark blue segmented grid (ex Hind, Haas).

Figure 13 shows a bold, brick-red grid on the 30-cent stamp.



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

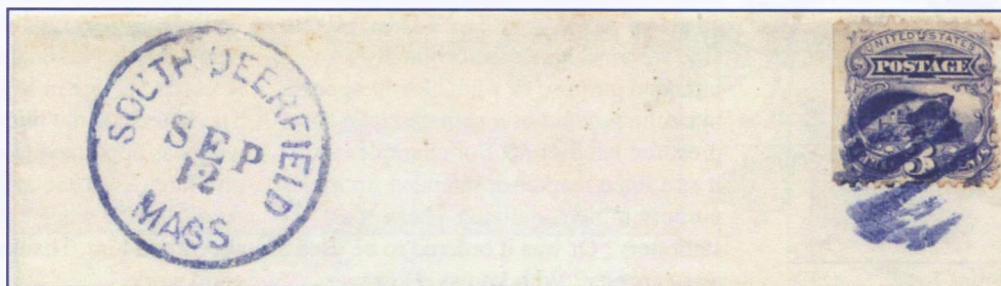


Figure 7

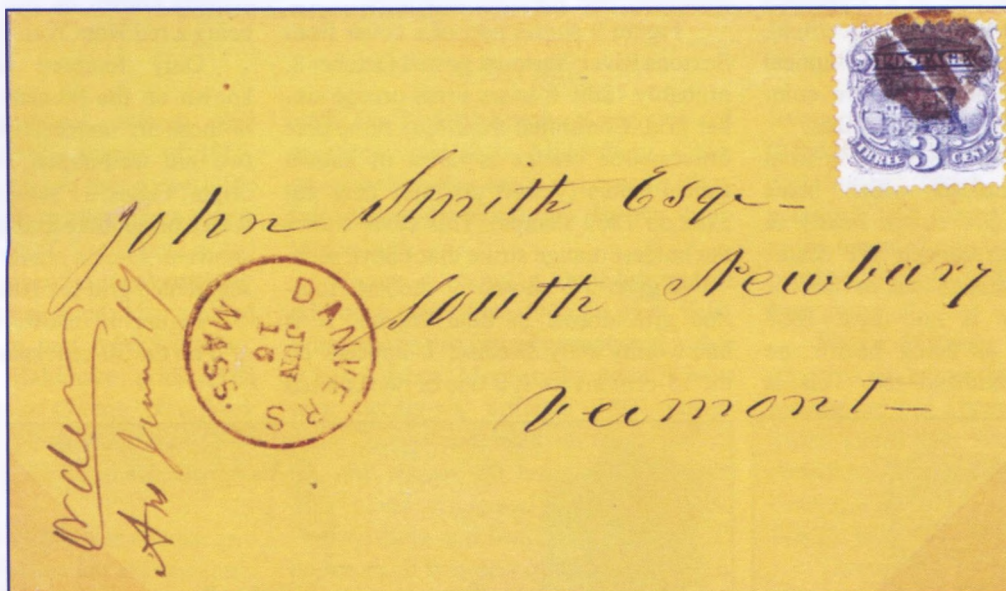


Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13

Noted in Passing

by Roger D. Curran

Readers of the *NEWS* will be familiar with the Golden, Illinois monogram "AP" cancel shown here as



Figure 1

Figure 1, a Whitfield tracing that has appeared on several occasions in these pages. This time we add an illustration of an actual strike, courtesy of Dan Haskett. One wonders about the originally intended purpose of what clearly appears to be the product of a commercially prepared handstamp. For example, was it as a linen marker or intended for the purpose of personalizing a person's stationery? Or was it ordered to be used as a canceler? Who knows. However, thanks to indefatigable researcher Joe

Crosby we now know what the letters represent. Joe reports having made numerous online searches in recent years with the answer finally being unearthed thanks to the National Archives and Records Service in Washington, D.C. The letters are the initials of Abel Peil who was appointed Golden postmaster on March 24, 1886 and served until April 9, 1889 when a William Hanna succeeded him. Thanks to Joe for his good work.

(Continued on page 98)

Rubber-Faced Cancelers – Maltese Cross and Scarab

by Roger D. Curran

Edward Willard, the great student of the Sc 210 stamp and its postal history, stated the following: "The second most prolific form of killers in this period is the Maltese cross."¹ The period he referred to, of course, is the 1883-1887 currency of Sc 210. (Willard, incidentally, identified the "star" as the most frequently encountered canceler design.) While hand-carved Maltese cross cancelers are seen all the way back to the early 1850s, it was the advent of manufactured rubber-faced cancelers in the mid to late 1870s that caused the explosion in use of this basic canceler design. When these Maltese cross cancelers first appeared is an interesting question. The earliest reported date for the "wheel of fortune" cancel, another product from rubber-faced cancelers, is February 2, 1880 which may be reasonably close to the actual date of introduction. (See the August 2012 *NEWS*.) Figure 1 shows a Maltese cross dated June 14, 1879. Also included is a June 19, 1879 scarab cancel, another of the popular designs used in rubber-faced cancelers – see Figure 2. Several years ago Arthur Beane reported an April 30, 1879 scarab strike from Newtonville and an even earlier scarab

strike, April 17, 1879, from Holliston, Massachusetts. I assume there are earlier examples, perhaps by several months or more, of both Maltese cross and scarab cancels out there to be recorded. If readers can report such, please do so!

Dan Haskett submits the interesting

find the Figure 3 design. Whitfield tracing #2599 is close, but doesn't involve the split extending through the end of the bars – see Figure 4. Cole shows a similar cancel but with the split going only part way through the solid inner triangle – see Figure 5. Willard illustrates another split



Figure 1

"split" Maltese cross cancel shown in Figure 3. The literature records several variations of the split designs but I did not

design but with obvious differences – see Figure 6. Can any reader identify a post office that used the Figure 3 cancel?

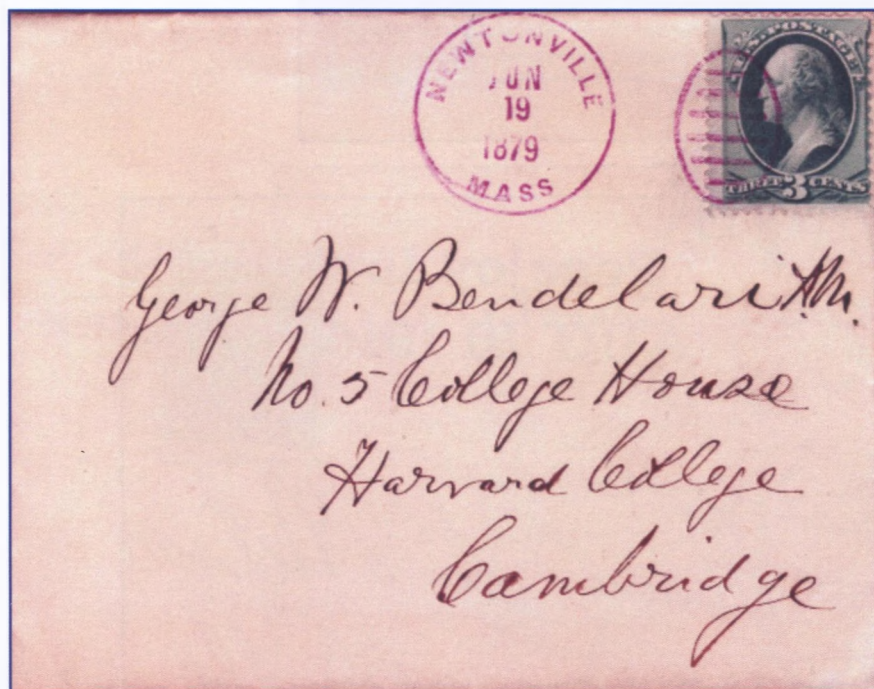


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

¹ Willard, Edward L. *The United States Two Cent Red Brown of 1883-1887*, Vol. II, H.L. Lindquist Publications Inc., New York (1970), p. 39.

Iowa Cancels, Part II

We continue in this issue with the presentation of Iowa cancels in the collection of Jim Petersen. The cover in Figure 1 bears an attractive postmaster postmark plus an overlapping, very long 6-bar cancel that is reminiscent of machine cancels. But it isn't that. The only machine cancels in 1886 (or earlier) with long bars were American Postal Machines Co. (APMC) cancels and they were being applied exclusively in Boston – see Figure 2. Perhaps the Salem postmaster saw some APMC cancels on incoming mail and decided to create, or order from some source, a handstamp that applied a similar cancel. The inks in the postmark and cancel match closely, so it appears that they were applied by the same post office rather than by a transit PO or the destination PO.

The cover in Figure 3, albeit dated a little later than this journal's primary period of concern, bears a large and bold Popejoy straight-line postmark plus a whimsical cancel consisting of stars and an elongated sunburst. It would be interesting to see if a full strike would

show any additional images. Can readers report such an example? One supposes the handstamp was cobbled together locally to meet the vision of the postmaster.

Figures 4 and 5 illustrate two cancels with thick borders that your editor has not seen in the literature. The

Hopkinton "group of dots" in Figure 6 appears to have been carefully struck so as to fully cover the Washington profile. Finally, Figure 7 shows a two ring target cancel from Keokuk with an unusual split down the middle.



Figure 1

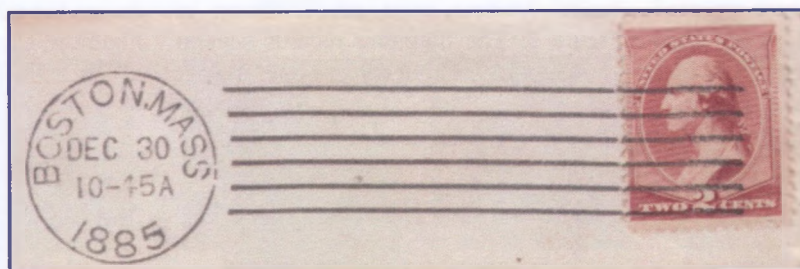


Figure 2

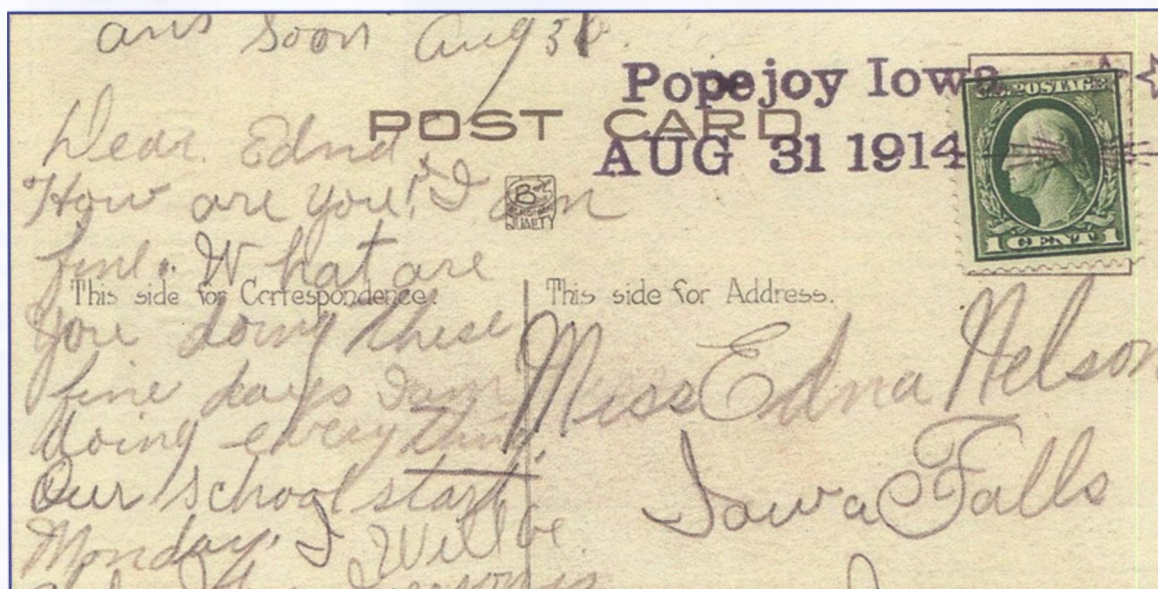


Figure 3

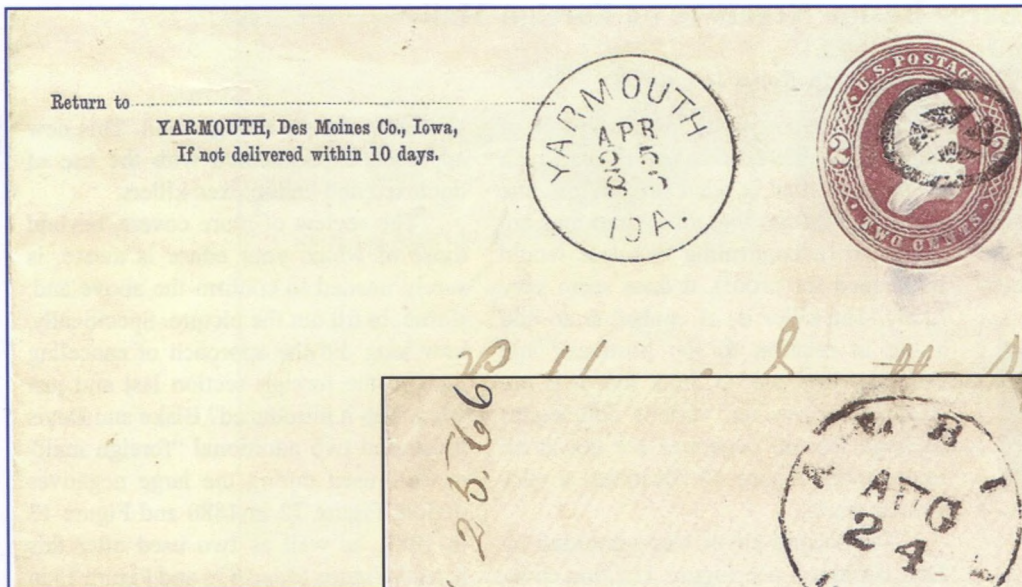


Figure 4



Figure 5

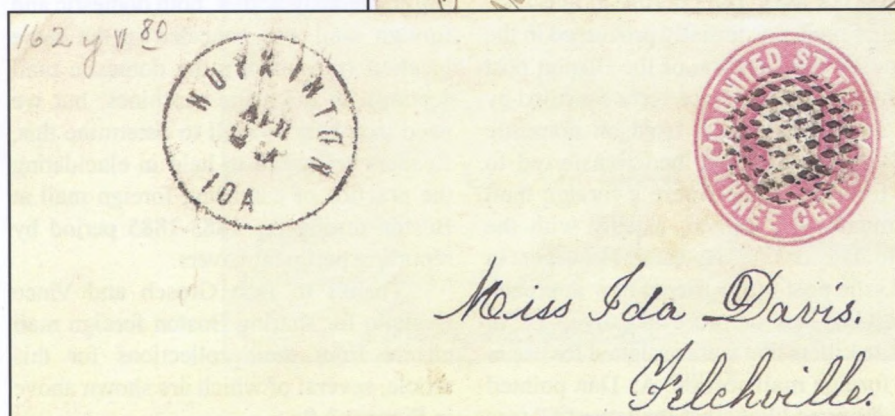


Figure 6

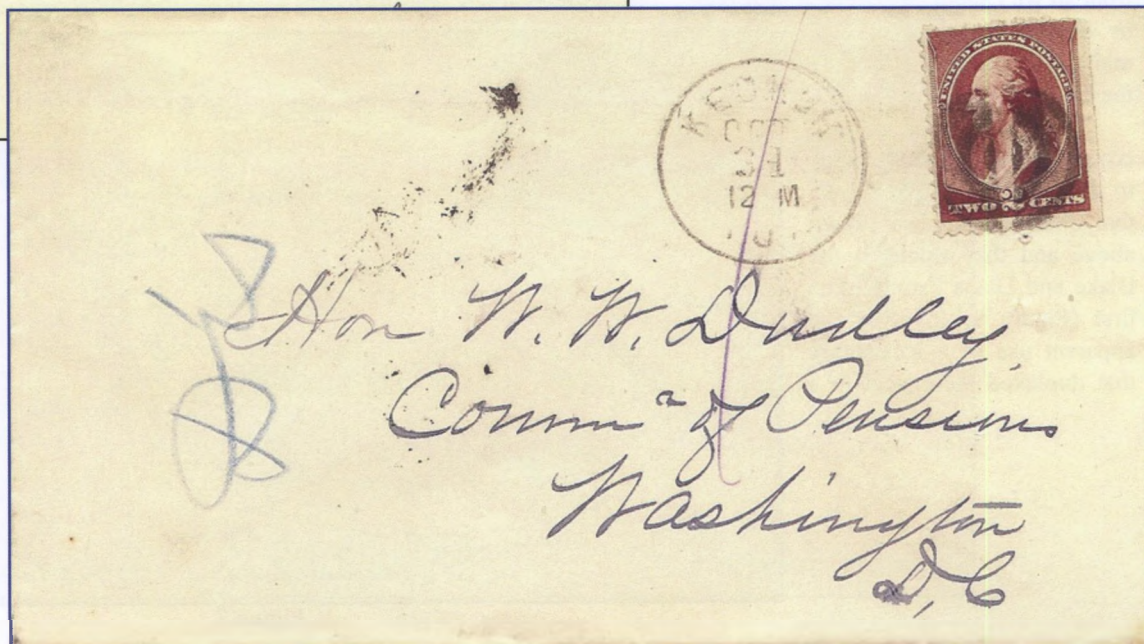


Figure 7

Large Boston Negatives on Foreign Mail

by Roger D. Curran

The standard reference on early Boston postal history, *Boston Postmarks to 1890* by Blake and Davis, includes two large Boston negatives in its listing of cancels used on foreign mail – see Figures 1 and 2. The date of use reported



Figure 1



Figure 2

for Figure 1 is March 10, 1883 and for Figure 2 June 14, 1883. It is interesting to note, however, that collectors see numerous other large Boston negatives on foreign mail. Figures 3-8 illustrate examples that are assumed to be at least generally representative of the universe of such cancels used on foreign mail. (The basic period of the large Boston negatives ran from mid-1878 through early 1883 with limited usage later.) All but one of the illustrated covers show the cancels duplexed to domestic mail postmarks with a separate Boston foreign mail postmark also present. The Figure 8 cover was not struck with a foreign mail postmark. Was that just an oversight or indicative of a practice for some period? Unfortunately, Figure 8 is just a cover front so we cannot determine a year date or whether a Boston foreign mail postmark was struck on the back.

Two 1883 foreign mail covers have recently come to the attention of the *NEWS* that differ from those shown above and they relate to the Blake and Davis listings. The first (Figure 9) involves the apparent use of a handstamp that duplexed the cancel to a

foreign mail postmark. In many years of collecting, I have never before seen such a duplex, if that is what it is. While one cannot be certain that these markings are duplexed (a confirming example would be needed for proof), it does seem very likely. The killer is, of course, at an odd angle in relation to the postmark and this may lead one to think that it is not duplexed. However, various odd angles of large Boston negatives are not at all uncommon. Figure 10 illustrates a very similar angle.

The second cover was submitted by Dan Haskett – see Figure 11. This cover shows the use of a simplex postmark and two strikes of what appears to be an unduplexed “F” in square cancel that may well be the Blake and Davis cancel shown in Figure 2.

From limited data, some speculation is offered. As a general proposition, during the 1878-1883 period in question, foreign mail was initially processed in the domestic mail section of the Boston post office where the stamps were canceled by the same handstamps used on domestic mail. This mail was then transferred to the foreign section where a foreign mail postmark was applied, usually with the same date or one day later. However, in 1883 the post office tried a new approach involving one or more negative “F” in square killers that were assigned for use in the foreign mail section. As Dan pointed out, it seems likely that the letter “F” was

chosen to denote foreign mail. This new approach experimented with the use of duplexed and unduplexed killers.

The review of more covers, beyond those of which your editor is aware, is surely needed to confirm the above and, if true, to fill out the picture. Specifically, how long did the approach of canceling mail in the foreign section last and just when was it introduced? Blake and Davis illustrated two additional “foreign mail” cancels used during the large negatives period, Figure 12 in 1880 and Figure 13 in 1882, as well as two used after this period, Figure 14 in 1884 and Figure 15 in 1885. (Ten similar versions of the cancel type in Figures 14 and 15, incidentally, are listed as domestic cancels in Blake and Davis.) Were there additional cancels used in the foreign mail section? I assume that by the time canceling machines in Boston took hold in 1885, and perhaps simultaneously with it, both domestic and foreign mail was canceled in the same location (presumably the domestic mail section) by the same machines, but we need data here as well to determine this. Readers are asked to help in elucidating the practice of canceling foreign mail at Boston during the 1883-1885 period by reporting pertinent covers.

Thanks to Bob Grosch and Vince Costello for sharing Boston foreign mail covers from their collections for this article, several of which are shown above in Figures 3-8.



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

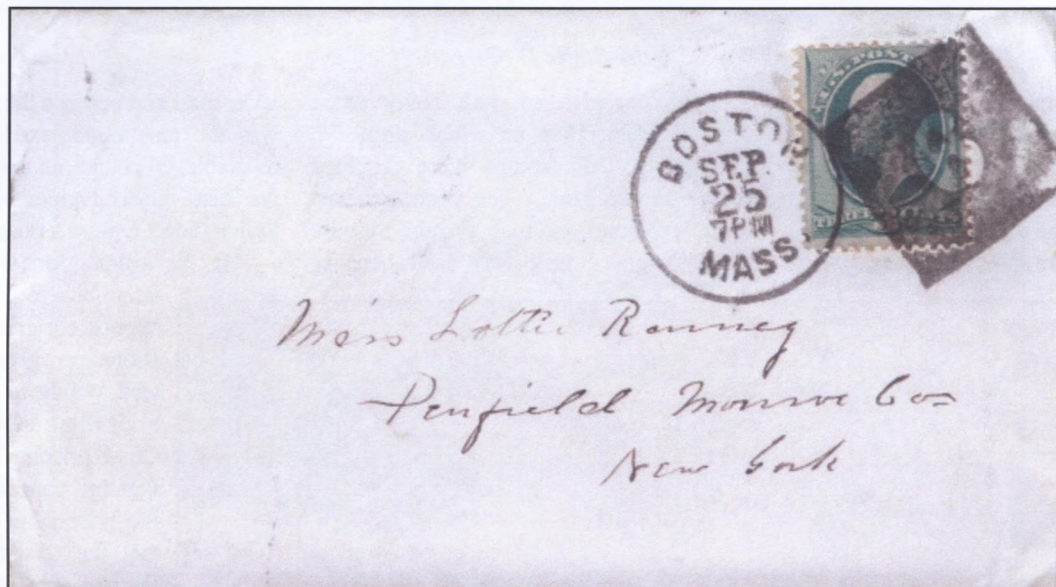


Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13

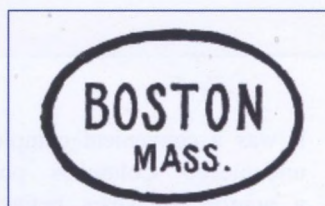


Figure 14



Figure 15

The Columbus, Ohio Square Grid

by Roger D. Curran

The Columbus, Ohio square grid is a distinctive and well-known cancel. Richard Graham wrote about it in a brief but very informative 1971 article.¹ He illustrated an early use that he dated as December 17, 1860. Figure 1 here shows a July usage that

remarkable registered mail cover dated September 26, 1884 on which single Sc 210 and Sc 209 stamps were canceled by the square grid.² The postmark was unduplexed and one may assume that the simplex square grid was used because

letter mail and perhaps the old square grid was the only unduplexed cancel readily available. Of course, an unduplexed cancel was also very convenient for circular mail which didn't require a postmark.

In his article, Mr. Graham devoted attention to debunking the "prison bar grid" label that was sometimes given to the square grid, owing to its use on mail originating at the local Camp Chase prison. The label implies that the canceler was used at the prison but he pointed out that the prison didn't have a Federal post office until 1873 and the grid was used before Camp Chase had any prisoners. Also, it was used on a very considerable amount of mail not related to the prison.

Readers are encouraged to report strikes of this square grid on stamps other than the 3¢ issues of 1857 and 1861 or 1¢ Banknotes as well as any



Figure 1

is undoubtedly 1861. Mr. Graham noted that early uses were in black ink but in the October-December 1861 period and possibly January 1862, blue ink was used – see Figure 2 for a November 22, 1861 example. Then, in February and early March 1862, a bright green ink was employed – see Figure 3 for a February 3, 1862 usage. Thereafter, the cancel was again struck in black until it was removed from service, according to Mr. Graham, "probably in early 1863."

Some 20 years later, in the early 1880s, the grid reappeared as a canceler on circular mail involving largely but not exclusively one cent stamps – see Figures 4 and 5. James Doolin wrote an article on this "resurrection" and illustrated a



Figure 2

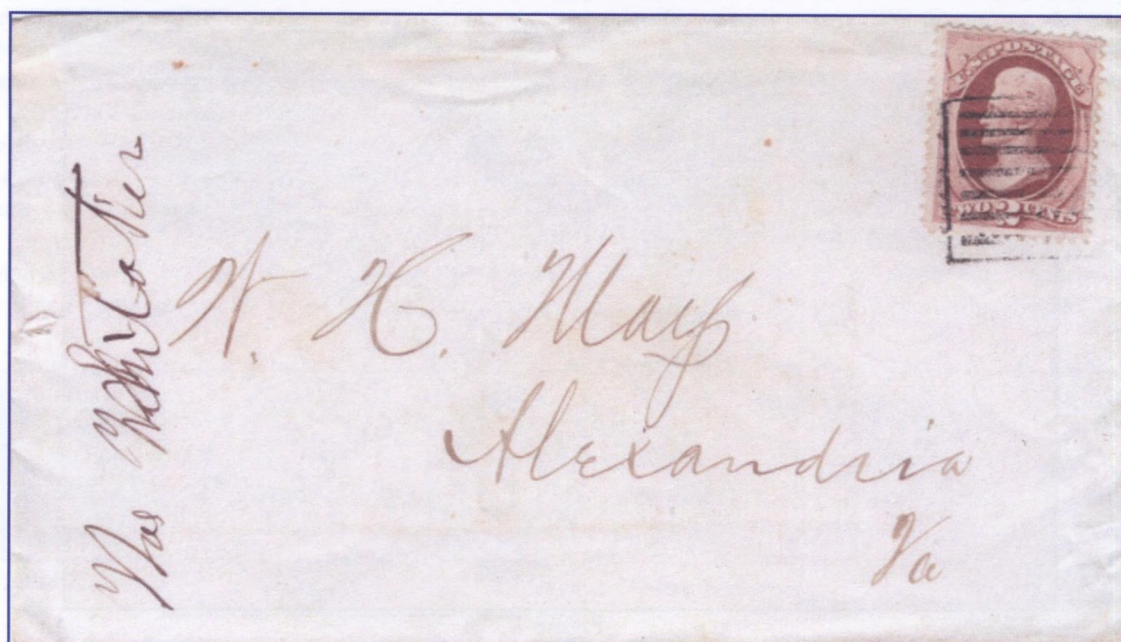
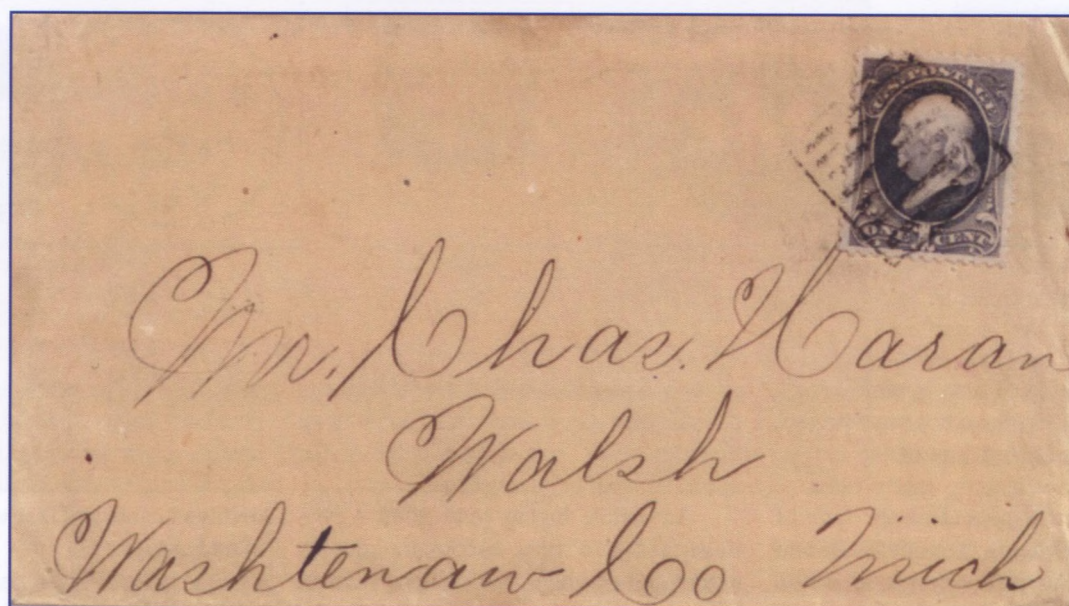
it was a convenient complement to the unduplexed Columbus postmark. For a number of years before the 1880s, Columbus was using duplexed cancels on

noteworthy postal history usages.

Thanks to Joe Crosby for his material support in the preparation of this article.

¹ Graham, Richard B., "The Columbus Ohio Seven Bar Grid in a Square," *Chronicle* 69 (February 1971), pp. 34-6.

² Doolin, James, "Resurrection of the Columbus, Ohio Seven Bar Grid in a Square," *Chronicle* 210 (May 2006), pp. 145-6.



Noted in Passing (Continued from page 88)

Sections of the solid square and solid circle versions of the large Boston negatives were sometimes carved away to create distinctive design variations that were identifiable at a glance. This allowed cancelers of the same basic design to be assigned to more than one clerk on the same day or work shift – see Figure 2

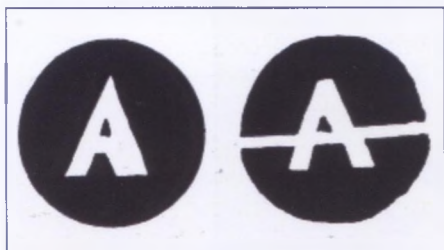


Figure 2

be more than one carving of an arrow in an “M” canceler as evidenced by the Whitfield tracing in Figure 4. This is all by way of introduction to the cancel submitted by Dan Haskett – see Figure 5. It doesn’t match either Figure 3 or 4 but has some similar elements of each. This raises the question as to whether there really are two versions of the “M” with arrow, or are the differences due to variations in the two strikes or to tracing errors. I incline to the idea that there was only one “M” with arrow killer. Readers will recall that the August 2006 *NEWS* illustrated a wonderful cover bearing the cancel shown here as Figure 6. The

postmark. They came from Toledo, Ohio and Brooklyn (Van Brunt Station), New York. It appears that both ellipse cancelers were in fixed positions in the handstamps. Dan Haskett submits another upside down ellipse, this from Rochester, New York, but it did not result from an error in handstamp construction – see Figure 7. The “R” ellipse canceler could apparently slide away from the postmarker which allowed it to rotate in the handstamp, perhaps when a set screw or other connecting element loosened. See the May 2008 *NEWS* for a strike of the Rochester “R” ellipse in a sideways position. Indeed, the Figure 7 strike here



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

for an illustration. There is one carving type that collectors have encountered that is more dramatic than any of the others. Unfortunately, it is only rarely seen. It involves an arrow carved on the face of the canceler. A tracing from the Blake and Davis book, *Boston Postmarks to 1890*, is shown here as Figure 3. There may

cover has no indication of a year date and it was speculated that this cancel with thin numerals was a forerunner of the normally seen large negatives cancels.

An article in the May 2009 *NEWS* illustrated two very uncommon duplex markings wherein the ellipse cancel was upside down in relation to the

is at a bit of an angle in relation to the postmark rather than in a more exactly upside down position. As Dan pointed out, Boston’s earliest ellipse set similarly involved cancelers that were often struck at odd angles..



Figure 7

There is a category of cancels, of which there are a considerable number of examples, that is sometimes referred to as a "group of dots" or similar label. They typically involve pieces of cork or soft wood that have been scored horizontally and vertically by a knife. Figure 8 shows an interesting example from Skinner-Eno, LC-J5, that may have started out as a carved design with just three raised letters above the surface but where a section of that surface had been



Figure 8

carved out in the shape of a rectangle. As an alternative, perhaps the partial letters

dots and near the edge in one area there appears to be a numeral "3" and one thinks of a possible rate stamp that was carved to make it more of a typical canceler. Vince sent the cover to John Donnes for his examination. John studied the cancel under high magnification, made the tracing in Figure 9 and then created enlarged scans of both the stamp and tracing for analysis. John noted a happenstance smattering of ink between the small squares in the area around the potential "3" making it appear to be something other than just a circle of squares. His conclusion, unfortunately, was that there is no "3" present.

Bob Markovits submits the highly unusual cancel illustrated here as Figure 10. US customs houses collected Federal

bottom, but what those letters represent is unknown to your editor. While the marking was applied by a Federal employee, it was not a post office employee. There is a light cancel under the customs house cancel and one might assume that a clerk in the customs house, who was opening envelopes and processing the enclosed forms or letters, noted the light cancel and decided to improve the situation. Reader comments and additional information will be very much welcomed.

Several cancels from the collection of Christopher Perry are illustrated in Figures 11-14 below. Figure 11 shows a rare 1888 Chicago cancel thought to be the product of a mechanical device patented by Chicago resident John Sigwalt, Jr.



Figure 9



Only two on-cover examples have been reported. The tracing comes from *A Primer of Machine Postal Markings* authored and published in 1995 by Bart Billings, Bob Payne and Reg Morris. See the November 2011 *NEWS* for more discussion of this cancel and a report of another off-cover example, this from Dan Haskett. Figure 12 is a nearly

were created as part of the scoring process but that seems unlikely. Regardless of the steps involved, partial letters "JRS" can be seen. These letters are not the initials of the Shreveport postmaster, based on a check of the online USPS "postmasters by city" database, so perhaps they are the initials of a clerk in the office.

The Figure 8 cancel came to mind in regard to an intriguing cancel from Rockland, Maine shown in Figure 9 submitted by Vince Costello. Amidst the

customs duties on goods entering the US. Indeed, customs provided most of our government's revenue for nearly 130 years after the establishment of the Customs Service in 1789. The largest customs house was in New York but they were located at other ports as well. The marking in Figure 10 has "A.S." at the



Figure 10

full strike of a "PAID/3" in circle in blue ink from Larabees Point, Vermont. (This is a DPO that operated from 1831-1918.) The tracing comes from *Alexander's U.S. Postal Markings 1851-1861*, published by the Classics Society in 1979, where it is listed in black ink. Interestingly, this cancel is not reported in the Skinner-Eno or Whitfield standard references or in the Slawson et al book *The Postal History of Vermont*. Can readers show further examples of this cancel?



Figure 11



Figure 12

In the August 2012 NEWS the tracing shown here as Figure 13 was illustrated and discussed with speculation as to whether it was used at Baltimore. The tracing appeared in Volume II of Willard's study of the Sc 210 stamp, but he didn't know the origin. The cancel is at least very scarce and we have now fortunately an actual strike to present, courtesy of Mr.

Perry – see Figure 14. Reports of additional examples are eagerly sought.

The blue ink “14” in a circle of blunted wedges (Figure 15) is very interesting. The only sets of hand carved number cancels that I am aware of are the several used by the New York Post Office on out-of-town domestic mail during the 1872-1876 period. Two examples appear here as

Figure 16. Was the Figure 15 cancel part of a set? That seems doubtful because other numbers have apparently not been seen. If readers can report additional examples of this “14” or other numbers in cancels of this basic design, please contact the NEWS.



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16

Odd Targets

The target became a commonly used cancel design in the 1860s, although examples can be found on stamps going all the way back to the 1847 issue. Its popularity continued in the 1870s and 1880s, and even into the 1890s. There are two basic design types - with and without a solid center. Collectors often refer to those without a solid center as “concentric circles” rather than target

cancels. As would be expected, many variations were produced over the years and a few are shown here. The first three involve carvings into what were probably commercially sold cancelers. Figure 1 is from Hermitage, New York and Figure 2 is from Poplar Ridge, New York. The Figure 3 appearance

is reminiscent of what collectors refer to as a Maltese Cross. Its origin is unknown. The last two cancels include a 5-point star in the design. Figure 4 is listed in Whitfield as #3293, but without attribution.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

Chicago Postal Markings and Postal History

By Leonard Piskiewicz

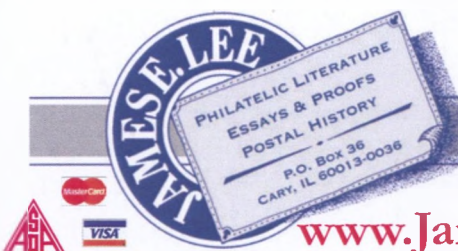
This phenomenal book is the culmination of more than 25 years accumulating Chicago postal history items by its author. It provides a comprehensive analysis of cancellations usage for all markings known used in Chicago from its beginnings as a post office in 1831 until the mid-1950s, a hugely useful book for members of the U.S. Cancellation Club! The book also includes those types of markings that continued to the end of the 20th century and are of interest to specialists (e.g., airmail, registry). 576 pages...packed with illustrations.

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