



U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

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An Examination of the New York City "Cutter" Cancellations and a New Find

by Ardy Callender

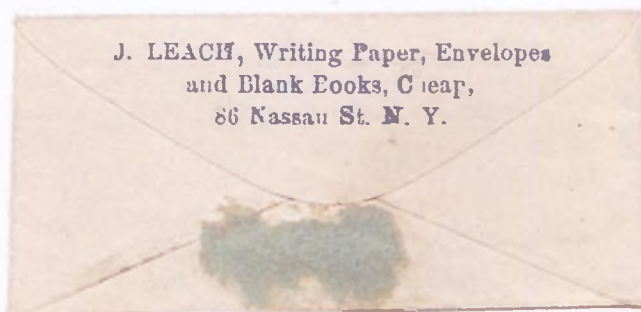
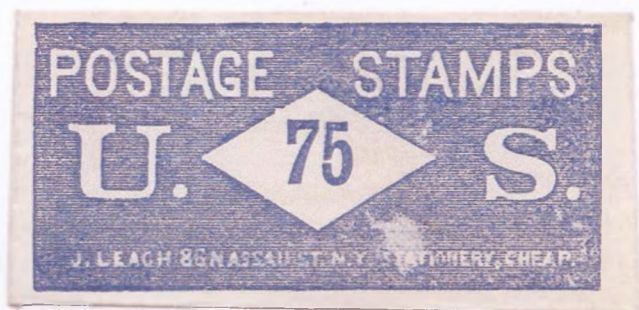


Figure 2

At the onset of the US Civil War, inflation drove hard money (coins) from the marketplace. Between February and March 1862, gold coins began to disappear, by June most silver coins went missing and by July, even the copper-nickel flying eagles and Indian cents were difficult to find. Local businessmen began privately issuing tokens and credit memos (called chits) to use for making purchases. The shortage of small change created a great public outcry as newspaper editorials exclaimed "Congress needs to do something to relieve the situation". Everyday small purchases for food items, newspapers, magazines, cigarettes/cigars, haircut/shaves, even the fare to take the ferry across the East River to Brooklyn were difficult to accomplish.

Congress debated various plans to fix the shortages. Treasury Secretary Salmon Chase recommended reducing the amount of silver in coins. Another idea was to revalue coins while others suggested the creation of a paper currency. On 17 July 1862, President Lincoln signed the "Postage Currency Act" which provided for paper notes backed by postage stamps and outlawed all privately issued tokens. The hastily issued measure was not thoroughly communicated amongst governmental departments and was interpreted by the public as monetizing

postage stamps. The public began using postage stamps as cash. On the 19th of July, two days after passage of the legislation, crowds flooded the New York Post Office to purchase stamps. The post office sold over \$20,000 on that Saturday while the normal daily purchases seldom exceeded \$1500. Postmaster General Blair, who had not been consulted regarding the "Postage Currency Act", immediately wired the NYPO to shut down the stamp windows at the post office to "change" buyers, fearing shortages of adhesives for postage. The New York Postmaster Abram Wakeman also worried about the depletion of his stock as well as the reuse of adhesives on correspondence. Third Assistant Postmaster General E. S. Zevely announced that letters with "soiled" postage would not be accepted and would be sent to the Dead Letter Office. On September 8th, the Treasury Department began a limited distribution of Postal Currency Notes (see figure 1) in New York City designed to alleviate the problems. Towards the end of the year, the majority of New York City merchants no longer accepted postage



Figure 1



Figure 3

stamps as currency. On December 15th the New York Post Office agreed to redeem the "soiled" postage over a thirty day period ending January 20, 1863.

Stamps proved problematic as a replacement for coinage as they were fragile, often stuck together and were challenging to carry. Envisioning a way to take advantage of the situation and also advertise their wares, local merchants soon began providing their cus-

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The U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

Arden D. Callender, Jr., Co-Editor
1546 Sheltons Bend Ct.
Houston, TX 77077
callenderardy@sbcglobal.net

John Donnes, Co-Editor
202 Willow Dr.
Gretna, LA 70053
jdonnes@cox.net

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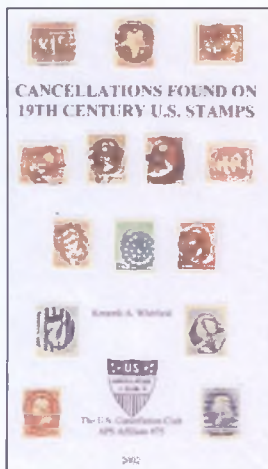
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Wesson "Time-On-Bottom" Markings Revisited, Compiled by Ralph A. Edson and Gilbert L. Levere, update of 1990 La Posta monograph, 190p. See p. 70 of November 2010 *NEWS* for announcement. \$25 postpaid to U.S. addresses.

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 at no extra cost the latest Whitfield update pages. \$50 postpaid to U.S. addresses.

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Continued from front page

tomers with small envelopes (see figure 2) with both a printed denomination on one side and advertisements on the reverse. Adhesives could be conveniently stored in the postal envelopes and exchanged in small change transactions. On September 28th, an article in the *New York Times* stated "certain persons" are circulating packages (postal envelopes) containing both unused and canceled stamps as currency and many people accept them without opening the packages to check. By September, postal envelopes

began to fall out of favor. Less than a month after the enactment of the "Postal Currency Act" John Gault was awarded a patent for encased postage, another method of protecting the durability of stamps. Encased postage coins (see figure 3) consisted of a brass backing with a thin mica cover plate allowing the adhesive to be visible between the two layers. Although encased postage provided a more secure system, it saw limited use in most major cities.

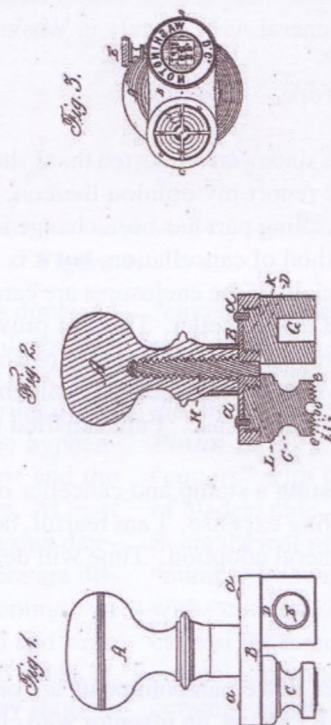
The September 30th instruction by Third Assistant PMG Zevely ordering "soiled" stamps not be accepted or exchanged was not well received by the public. An October 4th *New York Times* editorial reply to the Post Office's policy stated that if the P.O. is so concerned about using a soiled stamp for postage, "Let the P.O. give orders to destroy (cancel) every stamp before the letter is delivered..... and the panic be relieved." Immediately a series of experiments were launched at the New York Post Office to better deface adhesives. The obliterator in current use at the NYPO was a double ringed datestamp coupled to a four ring target (see figure 4). Although employed for over a year, the metal four ring target duplex proved unsatisfactory and was replaced with what has been referred to as a patent or "cutter" cancellation device.

For more than ninety years, the term "patent" has been defined in philatelic literature as cancellations which cut, pierce or abrade adhesives. Certainly many of these cancellation devices have been patented with the United States Patent Office but many others with similar defacing characteristics have not. Also, cancellations exist which appear as "patent" cancels but merely mark or dent the surface of the stamp. In fact, Skinner (1994, page 181) points out the problem with this type of dented or marked cancellation and how "in 1985 the distinguished philatelist Thomas J. Alexander



Figure 4

M. P. Norton,
Hand Stamp.
 037,175 Patented Dec. 16, 1862



Witnesses

Franklin Park
Dr. H. B. Cherry

Inventor

Marcus P. Norton
Fry, N.Y.

Figure 5

restricted the definition of 'patent cancels' to 'only patented instruments that damaged the stamps they cancelled [sic] in order to prevent their reuse.' Therefore, the term "patent" refers to a broad group of cancellations of which some may or may not have been patented. Skinner (1994, page 181) chose the term "Patent and Patent-like Cancellations" in referring to this group of cancellations in his book *"United States Cancellations 1845-1869"* coauthored with Amos Eno in 1980.

Figure 6



Fred Schmalzriedt was the first to investigate "patent" cancellations and published his research in a series of articles in the *Collectors Club Philatelist* (1931-1933). These articles formed the basis for his definitive study entitled "Patent Cancellations (1847-1887)" published by Delf Norona in the *Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks and Postal History* in 1933. Schmalzriedt lists fourteen different patents granted to inventors of "patent" cancellations chronologically. He also points out that many of the "patent" cancellations figured in his article cannot be attributed to any particular patent/inventor. Three New York City "cutters" were listed in the article belonging to Schmalzriedt's Group A (Cutting cancellations, single parallel knife blades) and gave them the designation; A-1, A-2, and A-3.

"Cutter" cancellations were first named by New York Postmaster Abram Wakeman in a 3 January, 1863 letter to Third Assistant Postmaster General A. N. Zevely in Washington, DC. as follows:

Post Office New York,
January 3, 1863

Sir: Some time since you requested that I should test the utility of Norton's double post-marking and cancelling stamping iron, and report my opinion thereon. It was in use in this office when I first entered upon my duties. Since then the cancelling part has been changed in various forms. We have tried the *cutter* thoroughly. This is the most complete method of cancellation; but it is liable, even if used with the greatest care, to injure the contents of the envelope, especially if the enclosures are cards, photographs, and the like. We have also used cork, by inserting it in the cylinder of the canceller. This has proved successful, and our cancellation is now performed in this way.

I am confident no office in the country performs cancellation more thoroughly.

The design of Mr. Norton is indispensable to us. Indeed, unless I should nearly double the stamping force, we could not dispense with its use. I am satisfied the interest of the department would be subserved by securing its general use.

We are now testing a stamp and canceller on Norton's plan, made of boxwood. It promises well, and can be made at a very trifling expense. I am fearful, however, its liability to yield to the wear to which it will be subject may prevent its general adoption. Time will determine this.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
ABRAM WAKEMAN, Postmaster

Many of Postmaster Wakeman comments are of special interest to the present discussion. First, he mentions "Norton" which refers to Marcus P. Norton, an inventor who claimed responsibility for designing numerous types of cancelling devices employed at the NYPO and later sued the post office over his supposed patent for the duplex cancelling device. Wakeman's letter was written prior to Norton (and others) lawsuits which culminated in a decision against Norton in the Thomas James (Postmaster of NYPO) vs. Campbell (Norton) 1881 Supreme Court case. Wakeman also first coined the term "cutter" and in the letter refers to the disastrous effect "cutters" had upon envelopes and their contents. Finally, he comments on the "cutters" replacement obliterators in service at the NYPO made of boxwood or cork.

Norton patented numerous inventions in many different fields. Six different postmarking and handstamp patents were



Figure 7

granted between August 9, 1859 and October 4, 1870. These included the following: patent numbers No. 25036, No. 34184, No. 37175, No. 38175, No. 38175 (reissue - August 3, 1869) and No. 38175 (reissue - October 4, 1870). Patent No. 37175 (see figure 5) makes reference to "circular knives or cutters" which ".....shall cut the postage-stamps or any stamp similar thereto without injury to the contents of the envelope or packet enclosed therein, and at the same time cause a heavy circular mark.....". It is apparent that Norton's cutting blades were of a different style than the type employed by the NYPO. Besides, patent No. 37175 was granted December 15, 1862, more than two months after implementation of the "cutter" at the NYPO (on 9 October 1862). It seems probable that Norton may have designed the "cutter" but did not seek a patent on the idea.

It is assumed that the "cutters" were manufactured by Edmund Hoole of New York City. Hoole held the four year contract for supplying postmarks to the U. S. Post Office beginning in April 1, 1859. Hoole's office on Williams Street was close to the New York Post Office and correspondence exists between him and Postmaster Wakeman as well as earlier New York Postmasters Taylor and Dix. There is also strong evidence that Hoole produced the four ring targets used at New York during the 1861-1862 period.

During the month of October 1862, large scale tests were conducted by the NYPO on duplex handstamps with cutting ("cutter") and piercing obliterators. The "cutters" consisted of a series of

Figure 8



Figure 9

single horizontal knife blades duplexed to the same double ringed datestamp used previously from 1861-1862 (see figure 6). Within the outer ring of the datestamp at the top were the hyphenated words New-York in serif and the year date (1862) at the bottom. At least two different styles of double ring datestamps were employed as there are differences in the positioning of "New-York" and both a small and large sized 1862 year date exist (see figure 7). The changeable month and day slugs fit into a mortise or recess at the center of the inner ring. The sharp "cutter" blades were cut on the top of a rounded metal cylinder which fit into a slightly larger tube firmly attached to the cross bar of the handstamping device. Both the changeable month/day slugs and the

"cutter" cylinder were held in place by set screws.

In his 1933 article in the "Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks and Postal History" Schmalzriedt reports "cutters" with three different numbers of blades; nine, ten and thirteen blades. Schmalzriedt provides estimates of the "number known", the adhesives found with "cutters" and the dates of use of each of the three types. It is often difficult to count the number of blades accurately as the large blade pattern is often struck off the cover and depending on the orientation of the strike, not all blades are actually cut/struck on the envelope/ adhesive. Also, differences in the amount of ink adhering to the blades resulted in partial strikes of many cancellations. Presumably as a result of

these circumstances and more available covers to study, Skinner subsequently (1994, page 183) was able to recognize two other blades patterns; seven and eight blades. Thus a total of five different blade numbers are known. All are listed in Skinner and Eno's book (1980, page 249) as PN-A 1 thru PN-A 5.

The dates of usage of the first "cutters" and the older four ring target overlap. The earliest "cutter" is dated 9 October 1862 and four ring targets are known used as late as 11 October, 1862 (see figure 8). The earliest "cutters" employed were the thirteen blade variety. A thirteen blade cutter, dated 11 October, 1862 on a cover to Westchester, New York is shown as figure 9. The "cutter" is struck towards the top as the bottom or last blade is not visible on the envelope. Another early thirteen blade "cutter" dated 14 October, 1862 is shown as figure 10. This cover addressed to Litchfield, Connecticut appears to have the right

half of the cancellation missing, but upon closer examination, is partially under inked. Both figure 9 and figure 10 exhibit the large "1862" year date at the bottom of the datestamp.

A well struck example of a ten blade "cutter" is shown as figure 11. The 18 October, 1862 cover with green corner ad for Taylor's International Hotel and Saloons is a good example of the small "1862" year date at the bottom of the datestamp. An example with a full strike of the thirteen bar "cutter" is shown as figure 12. Addressed to South Royalton, Vermont, the 22 October, 1862 cover is dated a day later than listed by Schmalzriedt for the thirteen blade variety. A carrier rate cover addressed to Calais, Maine is the latest recorded use of a "cutter" (figure 13). The orange cover is dated 31 October, 1862 and has each adhesive struck by a strike of a ten blade "cutter".

As the "cutter" cylinder was held in place by a set screw, often the cylinder rotated within the tube attached to



the cross bar of the cancellation device. This resulted in the "cutter" blades not always struck in a horizontal position. A couple examples of blades with different orientations are shown as figures 14 and 15. The yellow cover dated 20 October, 1862 shows the rotation of the "cutter" approximately forty five degrees from horizontal (figure 14). The blue folded letter dated 21 October, 1862 (figure 15) has the "cutter" rotated almost a full ninety degrees in relation to the horizontal.

Not all "cutters" were duplexed to datestamps. Examples with ample space surrounding both the datestamp and "cutter" indicate both were used as simplex devices. Two examples are shown as figures 16 and 17. The orange cover shown as figure 16 is dated 18 October, 1862 and is franked with a strip of three one cent adhesives cancelled by two strikes of an eight blades "cutter". The datestamp at left is certainly struck in simplex, far from the cancellation at right. Another

example of simplex usage is shown as figure 17. The eight blade "cutter" cancels the three cent red at upper right while the datestamp is struck upside down at lower left. The attractive patriotic cover is dated 23 October, 1862 and is addressed to Baltic Lords Bridge, Connecticut.

Obviously experimentation was in full force during the month of October 1862 in the domestic department of the NYPO. A very old style duplex? datestamp was brought out of retirement and put to use in combination with the "cutter" obliterator. This datestamp with the initials N. Y. towards the bottom of the dial has been observed as early as 1859 (see figure 18). Previously it was employed as a simplex cancelling device or backstamp. The two covers shown as figures 19 and 20 are both dated 18 October, 1862 and both have the same datestamp with the initials' N. Y.". Both "cutters" have eight blades. The "cutter" in figure 19 is not duplexed while the other cover (figure 20) may or may not be duplexed. At first glance the cover illustrated as figure 20 appears to be duplexed but it may be that the "cutter" was struck close enough to the datestamp causing the appearance of being duplexed.

Another short lived experiment in the NYPO during October 1862 includes a different type of patent cancel referred to as the piercing pins. Two types exist, a device with 43 pins arranged in a grid

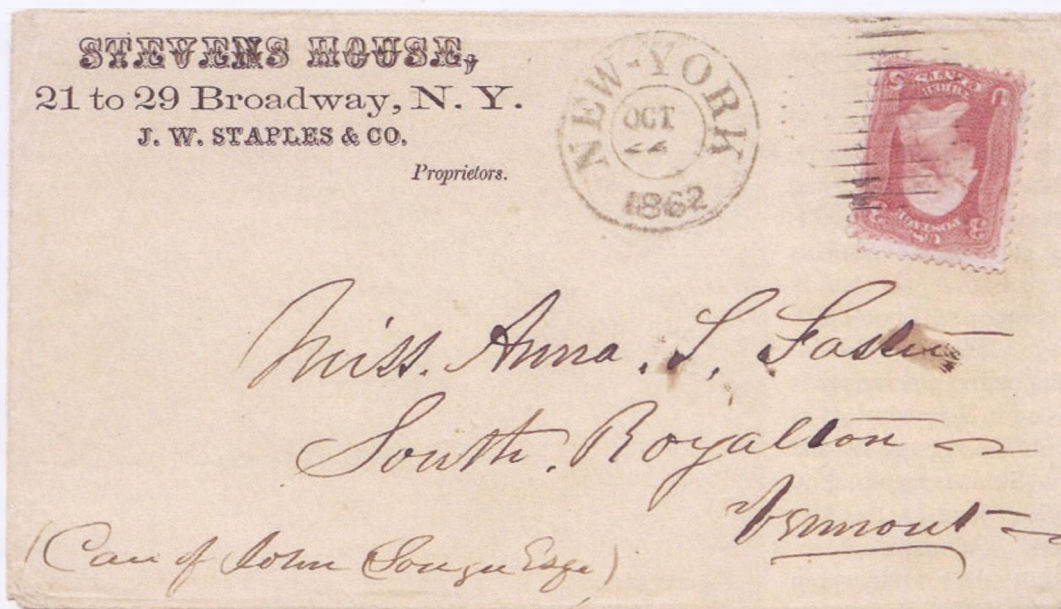


Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14

and obliterator with more than 90 paired pins also arranged in a grid. Schmalzriedt listed the 43 pin obliterator (1933, page 10) as B-4 and recorded its usage as 24-25 October, 1862. This cancellation is listed in Skinner and Eno (1980, page 251) as PN-B 4. The paired pin variety is listed in Schmalzriedt as D-4 (1933, page 12) and in Skinner and Eno (1980, page 252) as PN-D-4. Schmalzriedt reports the double pin usage as 21-26 October 1862. Both varieties are very rare with only three examples of the 40 pin variety reported. An example of the 40 pin variety is shown as figure 21. The yellow cover dated 24 October, 1862 was sent to Hartford, Connecticut. An example of the 90 paired pin patent is shown as figure 22. The orange 20 October, 1862 cover is dated a day earlier than reported for this cancel by Schmalzriedt. The paired pins are easily observed and quite distinctive. The fantastic folded letter shown as figure 23 is franked by three one cent Franklins. Each adhesive is struck by a strike of the double pin obliterator on a 22 October 1862 cover to Ebenezer, New York.

A completely new variety of "cutter" has recently been recognized. The cover dated 30 October, 1862 is shown as figure 24. Both the datestamp and "cutter" are completely different from all other "cutters" recorded. The double circle datestamp differs in that the letter-



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18

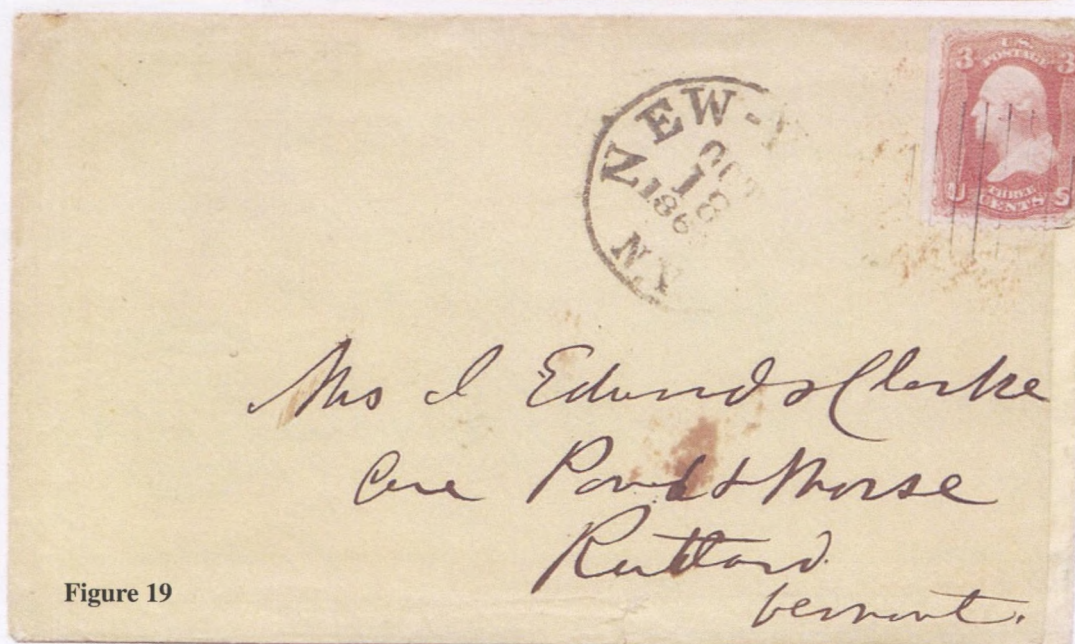


Figure 19



Figure 20

ing of New-York in the outer ring is sans-serif and there is no year date (the cover is docketed at right "Rec'd Oct 31, 1862"). Also there is a period after New-York in the outer ring of the date-stamp. This sans-serif style is similar to a type recorded by John Donnes used in simplex on a one cent circular dated 18 June 1863. Another similar datestamp was discussed in the "NEWS" (Summer, Fall 1997 and Spring, Winter, 1998) and by Richard Graham in an article in Linn's Stamp News (November 2, 2009). This sans-serif datestamp was duplexed to a five ring target used by an early experimental cancelling machine known as the McAdams's mechanical stamper. Unlike the newly recorded datestamp, both the circular rate and McAdam's mechanical stamper covers have period after both the words New and York. The circular rate cover also differs in possessing a year date (1863) in the bottom ring of the datestamp.

The "cutter" portion of the cancelling device is quite distinct (see figure 25). There are six horizontal cutting bars with two thicker partial rings both above and below the cutting bars. The groove between the upper two rings continues from the upper portion of the cancel

through the six horizontal cutting bars at each side, down between the lower two rings. It was probably constructed by machining a single groove just inside of the outer perimeter of the metal rod? in a complete circle. Later seven horizontal grooves were cut laterally across the cancel leaving a pair of partial rings at the top and bottom. The remaining metal between the seven grooves was then sharpened to form the six blades. This cancellation seems to have been developed to help alleviate the problems with standard "cutters" and their propensity to cut into envelopes and their contents. The flat surfaced upper and lower rings as a block or guide to prevent the blades from cutting any deeper than the guide rings themselves. Even if struck at an angle, the flat guide rings would prevent the blades from cutting the envelope or contents. This is the only example of this type of "cutter" recorded.

As mentioned in Postmaster Wakeman's 3 January, 1863 letter, boxwood and/or cork obliterated replaced the "cutters" towards the end of October. Cork cancelling devices were more efficient in applying ink to adhesives. A cover dated 27 October 1862 is the earliest date observed by the author of a cork obliterator (see figure 26). "Cutters" and corks were used concurrently during the last five days of October.



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23

References:

Graham, Richard E., "Duplex Handstamps, Marcus P. Norton and Patent Cancels of the 1860's", *Chronicle of the U.S. Classics Postal Issues*, November, 1992.

Skinner, Hubert, C. "Patents and Philately During the 1860's", *Chronicle of the U.S. Classics Postal Issues*, August, 1994.

Skinner, Hubert, C. and Eno, Amos, *United States Cancellations 1845-1869*, New Orleans, Louisiana: American Philatelic Society, 1980.

Schmalzriedt, Fred, R., "Patent Cancellations (1847 to 1869)", *Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks and Postal History*: Moundsville, W. Va., 1933.



Figure 25



Figure 24



Figure 26

Washington, D.C. Patent Cancels

by Roger D. Curran

Presented here are two patent cancels used by the Washington, D.C. Post Office. Figure 1 shows a cancel with a solid central circle surrounded by a ring. The handstamp that applied it contained a mechanism in the ring portion to scrape the surface of the 3¢ stamp which it did successfully in this strike. The CDS is small – about 24.5 mm. in diameter – and involves an unusual date and time arrangement – JAN/19/9/A.M. – in four separate rows stacked on top of one another. Figure 2 presents another strike of what I believe is the same CDS and cancel, albeit with the cancel now appearing to be quite worn. This cover with the docketing on the left side allows us to date the Figure 1 cover, not conclusively, but with a reasonable degree of certainty, as January 19, 1879.

Fred Schmalzriedt, the outstanding early student of



Figure 1

patent cancels and author of a 1930s landmark study illustrated this cancel which is shown here as Figure 3.¹ He reported it on a Sc 183 stamp and noted the following:

"Probably attached. Possibly David M. Cooper patent 165308."²

Although at first glance, the CDS and cancel appeared to me to be not duplexed (that is, not "attached") the distance between CDS and cancel is just about the same for both examples, so perhaps they are duplexed. Regarding the Cooper 1875 patent, Schmalzriedt quotes the specifications of David M. Cooper of Georgetown, D.C. in part as follows:

"The lower surface of the rotating disk is roughened, or provided with a series of scrapers extending radially outward from the center which operate to scrape off or file off, as it were, the outer surface of the stamp, not cutting out any particular portion, but defacing it generally, so that it cannot be used again without instant detection."

In the case of the Figure 1 strike, at least, there is no evidence that the stamp was defaced generally but rather just in a couple of sections along the outer ring. Based on the Figure 1 strike and the Schmalzriedt tracing, I think it doubtful that the Cooper patent applies to the Figure 1 cancel.

The second patent cancel (Figure 4) is similar to Figure 1 in that there are scrapes along portions of the outer ring. However, the cancel does not contain a solid central section but what appears to be an inner ring. There is a scrape or gouge inside the cancel near the middle at about the 3:00 position. This may be related to what is possibly a partial second strike of the cancel that has created a sort of "ghost" impression just above and to the right of the gouge.

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

¹Schmalzriedt, Fred R., "Patent Cancellations (1847-1887)" in *Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks* edited by

Delf Norona, Quarterman Publications, Lawrence, MA (reprint 1975), pg. 168.

²Ibid, pg. 167.



Figure 2

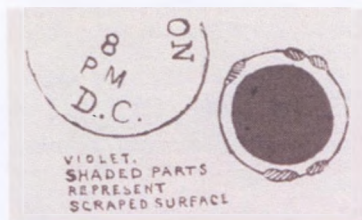


Figure 3

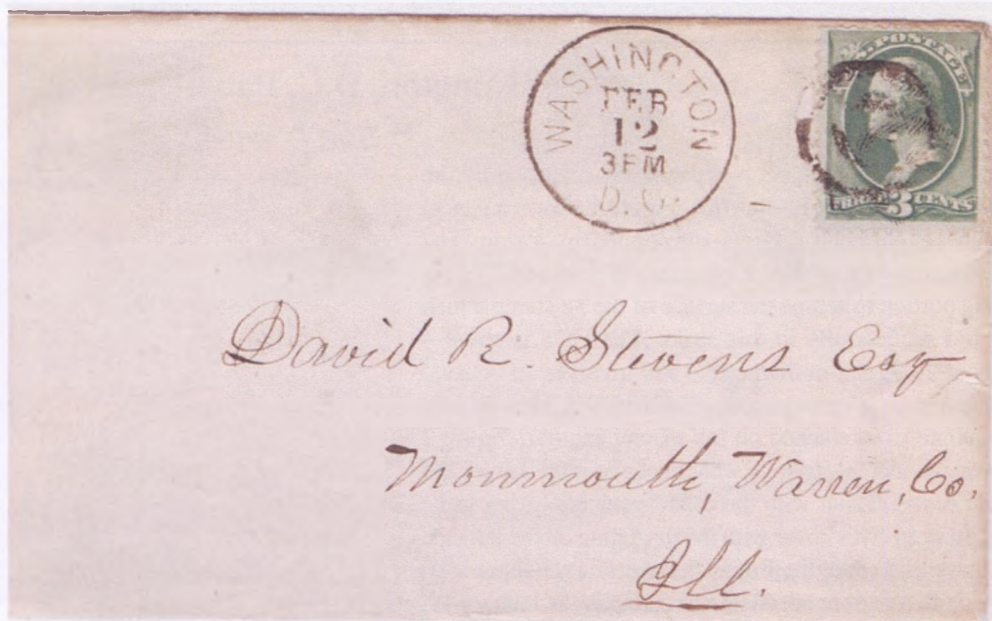


Figure 4



EXHIBIT AWARDS WON BY USCC MEMBERS: April-June 2016

ST. LOUIS EXPO: April 1-3

Gary Hendren: Single-frame Gold medal for "St. Louis Pioneer Air Mail, Oct 4-8, 1911"

PLYMOUTH 2016: April 16-17

Les Lanphear: Grand award and Gold medal; also APS Research Medal for "U.S. Departmentals, 1873 to 1884"

ROCKY MOUNTAIN STAMP SHOW: May 13-15

Matt Kewriga: Grand Award and Gold medal; also AAPE Award for Plan and Heading and Postal History Society Award for "Danish West Indies Foreign Mails: 1748-UPU"

NY 2016: May 28-June 4

Nancy Clark: (non-medal exhibit)

"The Massachussets Island Counties"

Gordon Eubanks: Grand Prix National award and large gold medal for: "The United states Imperforate Issues of 1851-56 & Their Importance in an Expanding Postal System"

Matt Kewriga: (non-medal exhibit) "United States 1870-88 Banknotes Postal History"

Nick Kirke: (non-medal exhibit) "New York City Foreign Mail Fancy Cancells"; Also Gold medal for "The Progression of New York City Foreign Mail Cancells 1845-1878)

Les Lanphear: Gold medal for "United States Penalty Claus Mail: The Classic Period"; also (non-medal exhibit) "Go—The World's Oldest Board Game."

OKPEX: June 17-18

Joe Crosby: Vermeil medal; also Pollard Memorial Medal for "Charles M Russell—The Cowboy Artist"; also silver medal for "Postmaster Please..."

Updates on Earlier Articles "Circular" Ellipses and East Capitol Station



Figure 1

The Figure 1 cancel is added to the list of "circular" ellipses presented in Ardy Callendar's front page article in the August 2015 NEWS. This Cambridgeport Sta./Mass.



Figure 2

9-bar ellipse measures about 23x26.5mm. and contains a "6" in the center. The dateline on the card is August 13, 1882.

The front page article in the February 2016 NEWS on ellipse cancels used by the East Capitol Station (ECS) quoted Gilbert Burr, the pioneering student of ellipse cancels, saying that he had only seen one example of the first ECS ellipse – see Figure 2. Joe Crosby currently owns the Burr collection and reports that, in later years after Burr's 1935 article, Burr did find another example – one on piece dated February 9, 1885 that extends the latest reported use of January 5, 1885 cited in the February NEWS.

Large "USPO" Oval

by Roger D. Curran

There is a large oval cancel containing negative "USPO" letters, designed for use on non-first class mail, that has been reported from a number of New England post offices. It was employed in the 1890s and examples, depending on the post office, are scarce to rare. In his 1995 cancellations book, Jim Cole listed five post offices known to have used this style of cancel.¹

Joe Crosby took up the subject in a February 1998 *Chronicle* article and extended the list to eleven post offices.² These are: Auburn, ME, Barre, VT, Bridgeport, CT, Concord, NH, Exeter, NH, Laconia, NH, Lewiston, ME, Lynn, MA, Montpelier, VT, Pawtucket, RI and Showhegan, ME. Joe pointed out that the dimensions of the cancels vary somewhat and he gave the dimensions for each post office for which he had the information. He also explained his disagreement with Jim Cole's suggestion that the cancelers were postmen's belt buckles that had been machined to create slots for the insertion of letters for the post office name and state. Readers with an interest in these cancellations

are encouraged to read Joe's informative article that illustrates the basic cancel design shown here as Figure 1.

The purpose of the present article is to provide new reports to supplement Joe's article. Figure 2 shows a Bradford, VT (47x33mm.) strike and Figure 3 an example from Rochester, NH (37 mm. high). Joe did not have the dimensions of the Lewiston, ME cancel which can now be reported as approximately 47x35 mm. Finally, Figure 4 shows a Bureau issue postage due stamp bearing a strike of the "USPO" cancel from an unknown post office. Surely there are more due stamps out there with this cancel, perhaps even some on cover.

If readers can add to the story, please contact the *NEWS*.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

¹Cole, James M. *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894*, USPCS, Inc., Columbus, OH (1995), pg. 309.

²Crosby, Joe H. "New England Large Negative USPO Oval Cancellations on Third and Fourth Class Mail" *The Chronicle*, February 1998, (No. 177), pp. 75-8.

Two San Francisco Non-First Class Cancels

by Roger D. Curran

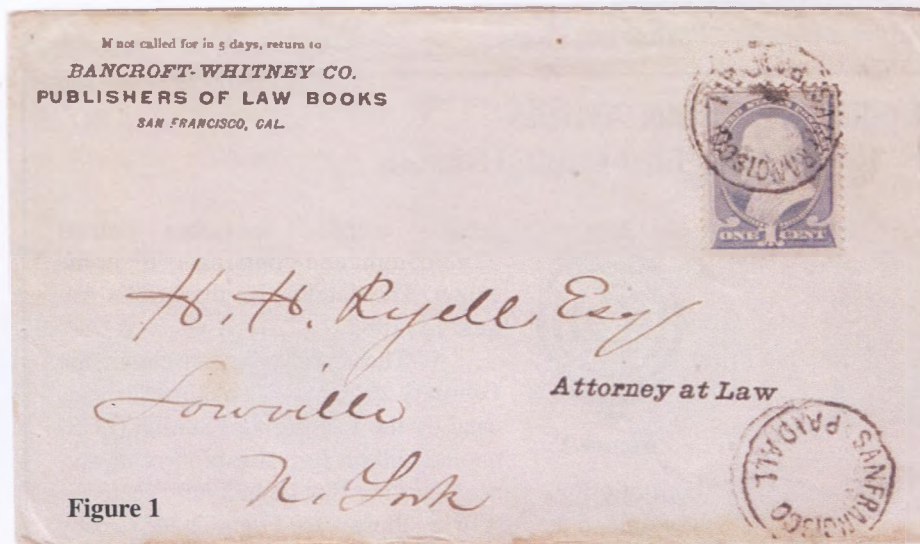


Figure 1

The cancel shown in Figure 1 is, in my experience, scarce. The diameter is about 23.5 mm. In an excellent monograph on 29th century San Francisco postal markings by John Mahoney, several versions of markings of this basic design, albeit reported in slightly larger sizes, are illustrated.¹ However, they all include the month and day in the center. Figure 2 illustrates one example.² I have only seen the Figure 1 cancel on a couple of off-cover Sc 206 stamps and



8/71-4/89

Figure 2



Figure 3

the one example (Figure 1) on Sc 212.

Figure 3 illustrates a somewhat similar cancel without a date but involving a double circle and showing "CAL" at the bottom instead of "PAID ALL." This cancel is not listed in Mahoney and I have not seen it on cover, only on a few off-cover Sc 206 stamps.

If readers can report other strikes of these cancels on or off cover please contact the *NEWS*.

¹Mahoney, John M. *San Francisco Postal Markings, 1847-1900*, LaPosta Monograph Series, Volume 8, Lake Oswego, OR (1992), pg. 101.

²Ibid.

Unusual Use of Utica, NY Rate Marker

by Roger D. Curran

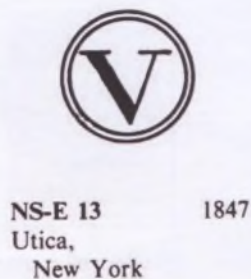


Figure 1

There is a category of cancels found on 19th century U.S. adhesive stamps and postal stationery comprised of handstamp markings designed for use on stampless mail. A principal component of this category is that of rate marks. These are found used both during and after (sometimes long after) the stampless era. See examples in Figure 1. The number in the cancel did not, of course, necessarily reflect the correct rate for the cover and was to be disregarded. A small percentage of "stampless" rate markers expressed the rate in Roman numerals. Largely, these were "V" for five cents and "X" for ten cents, although a few expressed "3" as "III." New York post offices Utica and Troy are known to have used a "V" to cancel 1847 issue stamps and, in the case of Utica, an "X" as well. See Figures 2 and 3. The Skinner-Eno book (page 269) lists an "X" in a box from Pittsfield, Massachusetts and this cancel is reported in the 1997 *American Stampless Cover Catalog* as having been used on stampless mail. A few other unattributed "V" or "X" cancels are reported in the literature. Whitfield lists three "III" cancels that are known to have been used on stampless mail – see Figure 4.

The above is prologue to discussing the cover in Figure 5. It bears a Sc 114 stamp canceled by a "V" in double ring rate marker. Although there is no CDS on the cover, the corner card identifies the sender as located in Utica. This cover obviously received very unusual and probably rushed handling. Perhaps the letter was given to the post office just before a departure of outbound mail and the clerk picked up the only handstamp that was immediately available. Comment is invited. A typical use of the Utica "V" is shown in Figure 6.



Figure 2



Figure 3

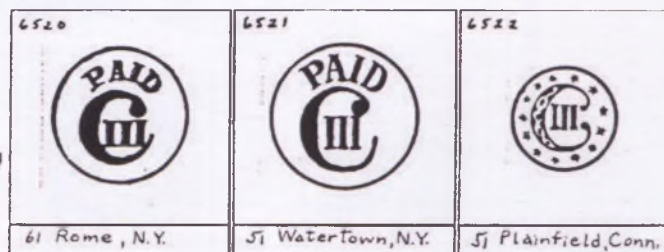


Figure 4

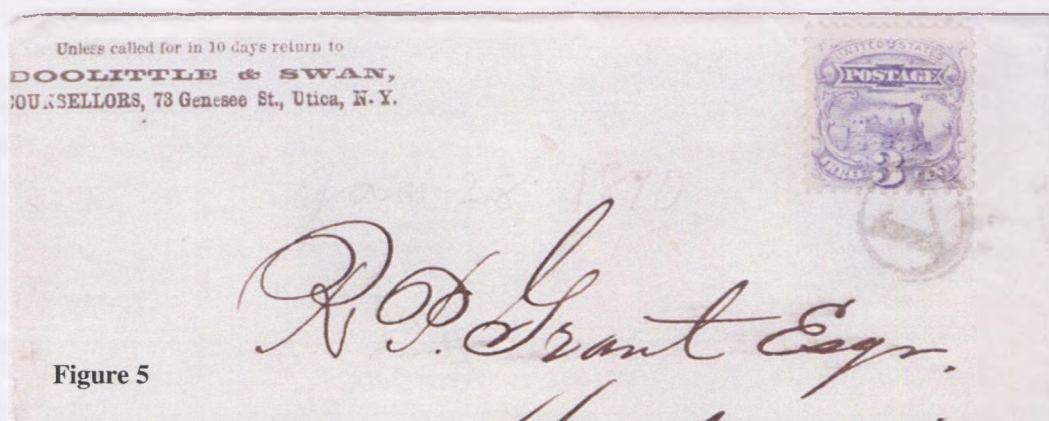


Figure 5

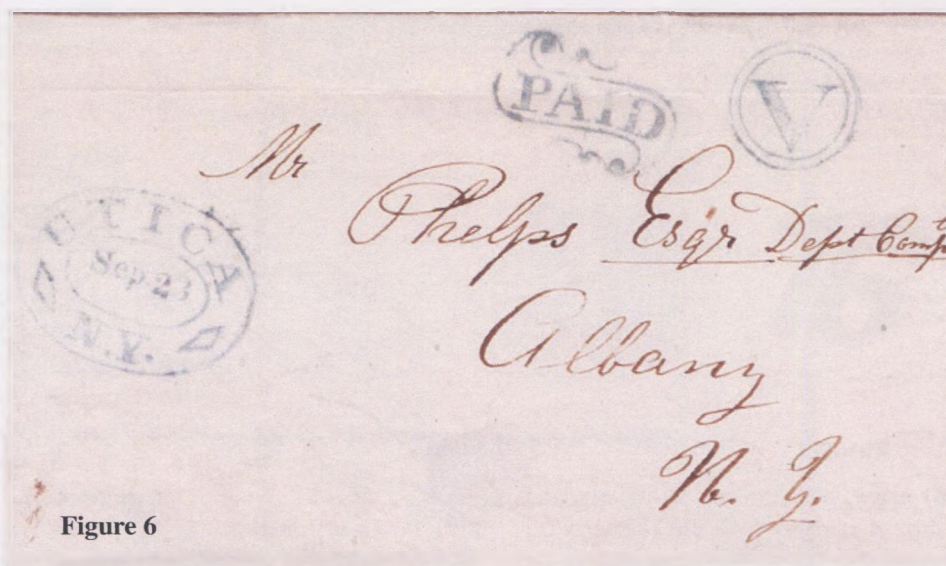


Figure 6

Star Cancels on the Scott 65 Stamp – from the Collection of Abe Boyarsky



Hartford, Conn.



Brattleboro, Vt.



Union & Stars



Gloucester, Mass.



Putnam, Conn.

Mittineague, Mass.



Chicago, Ill.



Putnam, Conn.



Ludlow, Vt.



Lee, Mass.



New York, N.Y.



New York, N.Y.



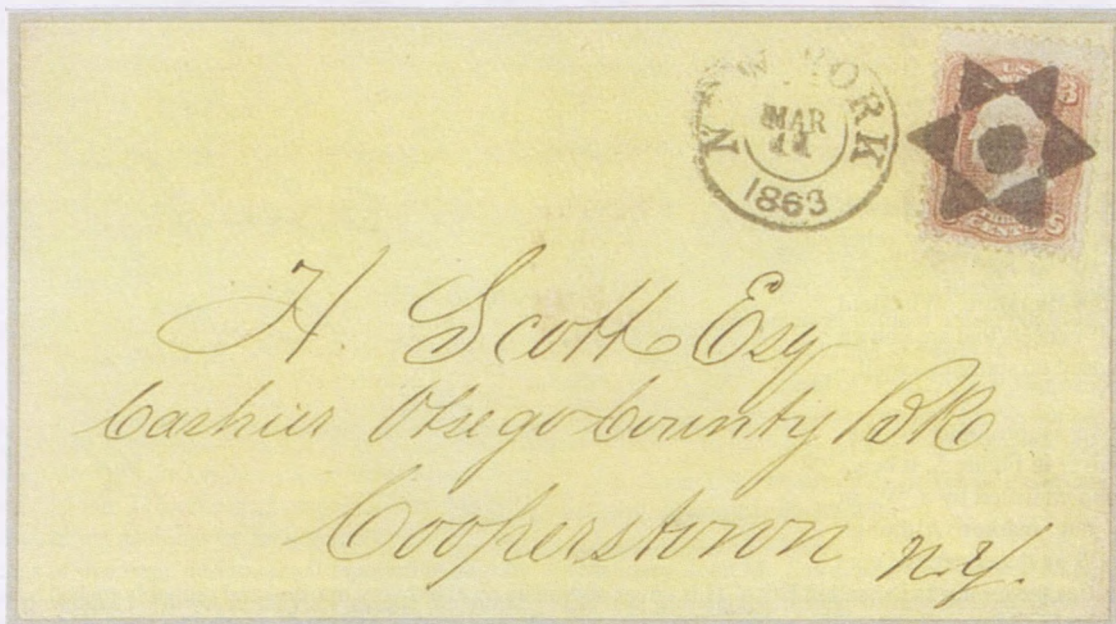
New York, N.Y.



New York, N.Y.



New York, N.Y.





The Winter 1988 *NEWS* contained a front page article by Bruce London on the Westhampton, Massachusetts “UNION star” cancel. Bruce reported a census of on-cover examples he developed over a several year period. He documented the existence of 36 covers, 26 with legible dates. They ran from June 26, 1862 to June 10, 1867. He noted that a May 11, 1867 cover showed a decidedly worn killer and speculated that the “UNION star” was retired in mid-1867. Abe’s cover nearby is the earliest reported use in the London census. At least 10 of the 36 covers, incidentally, are addressed to a Hattie Judd, daughter of the Northampton postmaster at the time Frederick Judd.



Noted in Passing

by Roger D. Curran

The “8” cancel in Figure 1 from Ardmore, Pennsylvania is unusual and I suspect it refers to the year date of the cover. If so, it was mailed in 1878. This is reminiscent of the practice of another Pennsylvania post office. See the November 2011 *NEWS*, pg. 132, for an article on the numeral cancels of Coudersport. No other numeral cancels from Ardmore are listed in either Cole or Whitfield but perhaps they are out there waiting to be identified. Indeed, the “8” is not listed in either reference. Ardmore is known to have used a “76” cancel – see Whitfield tracing 4898 at Figure

2.

What an interesting cancel is in Figure 3 – it looks familiar but has it ever been illustrated in the literature? It was brought to the attention of the *NEWS* by John Valenti. Towle reports the Figure 3 postmark as 72-G-1. See Figure 4 with an 1887 use date.¹



Figure 1

76

Figure 2

(Towle lists no cancels with this postmark.) He also reports a somewhat similar, but clearly different, postmark as 72-F-1 used from 1880 to 1882 (Figure 5) and associates it with two cancels: an “N” in barred

circle and a negative “N” with sunburst. His “N” in barred circle certainly seems to describe the Figure 3 cancel. Who can supply more information about or reports of this cancellation?

Seeing a hand carved circle of wedges cancel from a post office as large as San Francisco on a 1902 cover (Figure 6) came as a surprise. However, it wasn’t struck in the main San Francisco post office but rather at Station 24 which, one supposes, was quite small and not supplied with the full array of handstamps. San Francisco had a number of lettered stations and Station 24 was probably a substation and, if so, would have had very little mail processing responsibility – basically limited to registered mail.

Keeping the spotlight on Davenport, Iowa after Jim Petersen’s article on 1860s Davenport cancels in the February NEWS, Figure 7 shows an unusual postmark from this post office. How often do we find a quarter hour time designation? The postmark is duplexed to a small circle of wedges cancel. There is no year date indicated on the cover, but from covers in Jim’s collection, an estimate of 1878 or 1879 seems reasonable.

Over the years the NEWS has illustrated a number of hand carved ellipse cancels. These were typically created by smaller post offices. Figure 8 illustrates a bold example on an 1895 cover which presents a late use for such a cancel.

Ken Pitt brought to our attention the point that not all “1” numerals are the same in a particular set of Washington, D.C. ellipses that was used largely during 1885 and 1886 – see Figure 9. The difference is probably due to happenstance engraving variation. The handstamp with the thicker “1” numeral likely replaced that with the thinner version.

Figure 10 shows an ellipse submitted by Dan Haskett consisting apparently of nine horizontal bars in an unusual configuration: 2 full bars across the top and bottom and five split bars surrounding the central circle. The “3” in Dan’s example raises the question of whether there was a set of some size of these ellipses. Additional reports of this ellipse style are sought.

Figure 11 is an Ithaca, New York ellipse that is unusual from a couple of standpoints. First, in terms of ellipses



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



of the same basic size and design, it has very wide spacing between the bars. Second, it has seven bars with only one split bar next to the inner circle. After seeing a few examples of this cancel, it is easy to identify on off-cover stamps. It is only known with a "1" in the center. Another cancel, this from Richmond, Virginia, is somewhat similar – see Figure 12. However, it has two split bars and there is less distance between the bars. Examples also exist with a "2" in the center.

Haverhill used at least five different hand-carved "H" cancels – see Figures 13-17. One supposes there are more out there, perhaps a fair number. I assume Figure 18 from Cole is an example.

Temple, Texas used what a complete strike would probably show to be a circular grid enclosing a "1" with serifs top and bottom – see Figure 19. Was there a "2"? From the dateline on the back we can determine the Temple postmark date to be June 20, 1885.

The sender of the cover in Figure 20 apparently neglected to affix postage before it was mailed. When the 1¢ stamp was later affixed, which paid the unsealed circular rate, a manuscript "B" served as the cancel.

A very interesting and elusive ellipse, about which little is known, is illustrated in Figure 21 (Whitfield 4668). It came from a simplex handstamp; i.e., a handstamp that, in this era, did not also include a postmark die next to it. This cancel has not yet been reported on cover and all the reported off-cover examples, except for one on a 1¢ regular issue Banknote,



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15

have been found on high value official stamps. Dan Haskett submits a new find, this on a 12¢ Treasury stamp – see Figure 22. This raises the total of official stamps reported with this cancel to perhaps no more than six.

A bold "E" killer, loaded with serifs, used by the Saramento, Benecia, and San Francisco Railroad is

shown in Figure 23. The postmark date is July 24, 1884. The Towle tracing of what is probably the same postmark appears here as Figure 24.²

¹Towle, Charles L. *U.S. Route and Station Agent Postmarks* Mobile Post Office Society (1986), pp. 184.

²Ibid., pp. 242-3.



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 20

H

Haverhill, Mass.

Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 24

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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Figure 23

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