



# U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

Vol. 33, No. 4, Whole No. 301, November 2016

## Backstamps, Transit Markings and an Interesting Octagonal Backstamp

by Ardy Callender

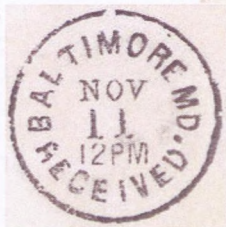


Figure 1

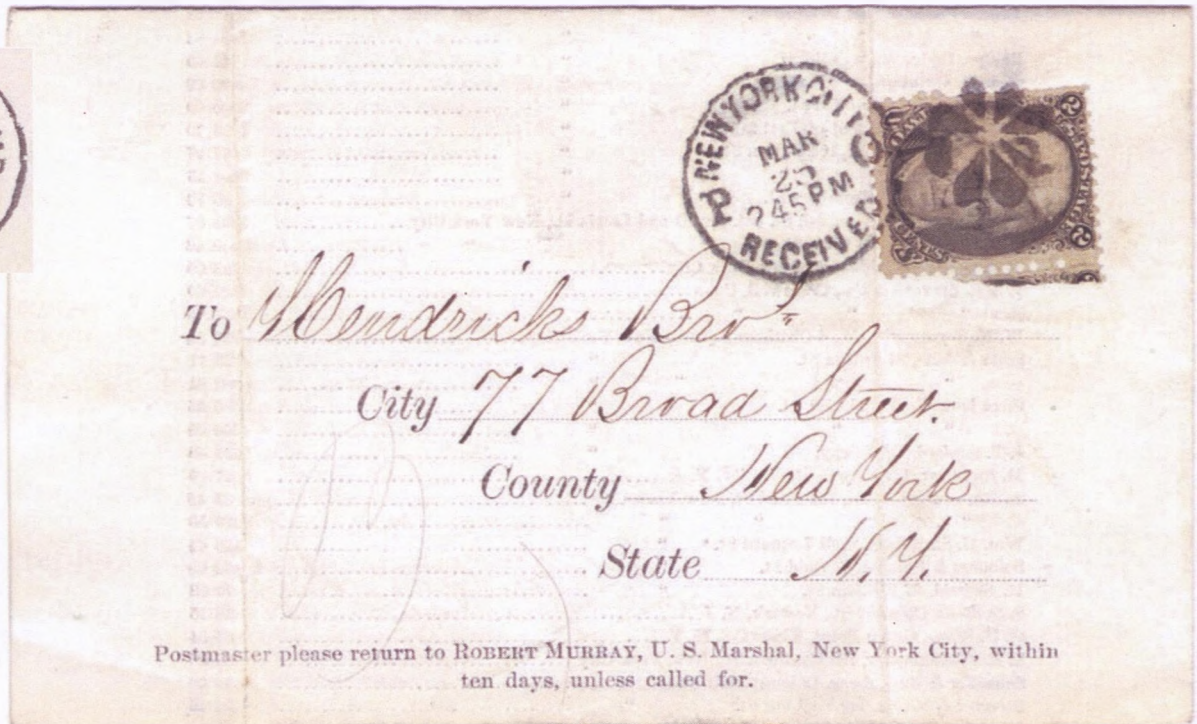


Figure 2

A backstamp is defined as any marking struck on the reverse of an envelope or folded letter. The most common type of backstamp is the datestamp struck to provide a record of receipt at the intended post office. These datestamps include the city, date, year, time and often have the word "Received" or "Rec'd" within the datestamp to confirm the arrival at a particular destination. An example of a typical receiving backstamp (Baltimore, Maryland) is shown as Figure 1. Although domestic receiving datestamps have been recorded as early as the stampless period, backstamping did not become common practice until the middle of the Banknote Era (after 1877-78).

Curiously, a datestamp including the word "Received" duplexed to a cork obliterator was employed in New York City (including its branch stations) as

both a cancellation as well as a receiving backstamp. The dual purpose duplex was used on intra-city (local) mail during the years 1869/1871. Co-editor John Donnes has researched these cancellations and graciously provided both tracings of the markings and scans of many covers. When "Received" duplexes were used as cancellations, Donnes suggests they indicated a letter was "received" from the general public while duplexes used as backstamps designated letters



Figure 3



Figure 2



Figure 4

"received" from another station or the GPO. These "Received" datestamps were replaced in June 1871 with duplexes including the letters PO towards

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## The U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

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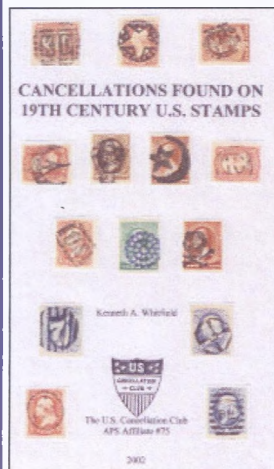
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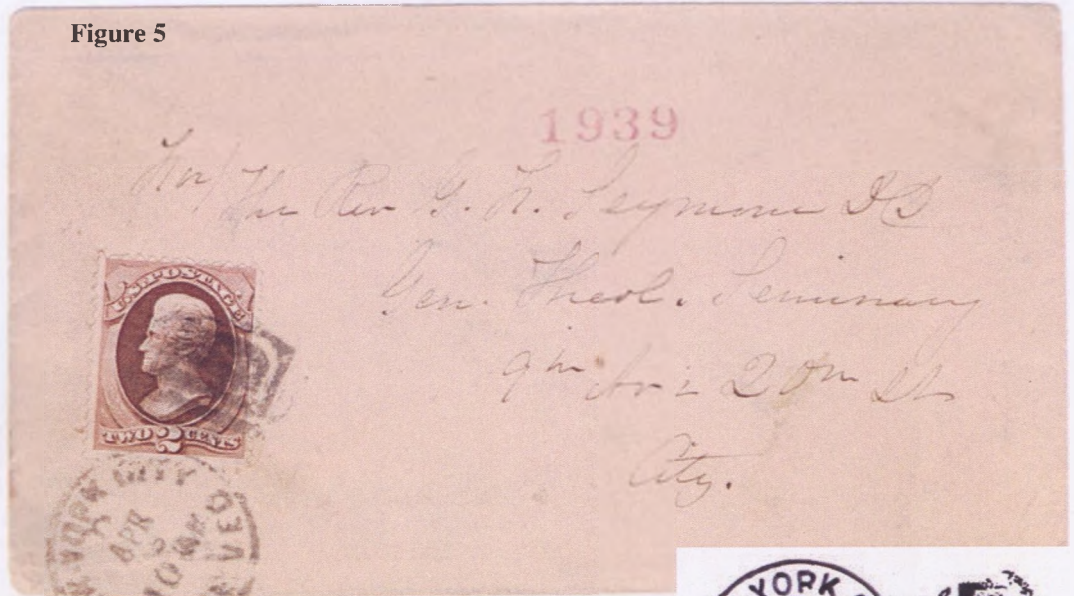
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Continued from front page

the bottom and subsequently in June 1872 with datestamps using the words "City Delivery". An example of a "Received" duplex used as a cancellation is shown as Figure 2. The local rate "in Bankruptcy" folded letter is franked with a grilled Blackjack (Scott #87) and is dated 25 March, 1869, no backstamp. The return address "Robert Murray, U.S. Marshal, New York City" indicates the letter originated in New York City (from the "public") and the PO/Received datestamp indicates it entered the mail stream at the GPO. Datestamps employed by the GPO included the letters P and O on either side of New York City (Figure 3) while branch stations used the branch letter designation just below the words New York City (Figure 4). A letter illustrating two different "Received" duplexes used as both a cancellation and a receiving mark is shown as Figures 5 and 6. The letter originated 15 April, 1871 from Station D addressed to Reverend G. H. Seymour, General Theological Seminary, 9th Avenue and 20th Street, City. The two cent National Bank Note (Scott #146) is cancelled with a "Received" Station D datestamp attached to an attractive negative "D" obliterator and forwarded to Station E. Here the letter was struck on the reverse with a Station E "Received" datestamp and attached criss-cross negative "E" cancellation and sent on to Rev. Seymour. A somewhat uncommon use of the "Received" datestamp occurs on circular rate mail. Both Donnes and the author have examples of the "Received" datestamps from both the GPO and its stations. It is speculated that because the rate for both local and circular service was the same (two cents), occasionally circular rate covers were mistakenly struck with the "Received"

Figure 5



datestamps (as cancellations). Figure 7 is an example of a circular rate cover cancelled by a "Received" datestamp at the GPO. The unsealed envelope dated 4 June 1870, is addressed to J.D Ostrander, Kingston, New York. The small sized, widely spaced "PO" "Received"



Figure 5

Figure 6



duplex ties a two cent National Bank Note (Scott #146) at lower right. Donnes theorizes that the GPO may have thought this circular to be a local letter and cancelled it with a first class obliterator. Later, because it was already cancelled, the letter was not directed to the Circular Department but sent on to Mr. Ostrander in Kingston.

Another common type of backstamp is a transit mark. Transit markings are struck on the reverse of covers to indicate the route or intermediate stops a



Figure 6

cover makes along its postal journey. Post offices which handled larger volumes of mail employed a distinct datestamp which included the word "transit" (see Figure 8). Smaller post offices often used their general or "received"



Figure 7



Figure 9



Figure 8



datestamp as a transit marking. A receiving datestamp used as a transit marking is found on an 12 August, 1890 Menardville, Texas cover addressed to San Antonio (Figure 9). As the nearest rail line ran through Ballinger, the cover was sent to the small central Texas town (population 1390 in 1890) where the Ballinger postmaster struck the red old style, double circle "recd." datestamp as a transit mark (Figure 10). It was placed in a mailbag carried onboard the train to San Antonio. It arrived the next day where it was struck with a San Antonio, August 13, 1890 "rec'd" datestamp.

Multiple transit marks are commonly found on redirected mail. An interesting example of a domestic redirected letter is shown as Figures 11 and 12. The letter originated in Newburgh, New York, September 19, 1882 and was addressed to E. J. Either at 461 West 16th Street in New York City. It was received at the New York post office the same day, as indicated by the transit mark struck on the reverse at upper right (P.O., 9-19-82, 10-1 P, N.Y.). It was then forwarded to Station C for delivery as indicated by another transit mark (C, 9-20 1 A). Apparently Mr. Either could not be located and the cover was





Figure 11

sent back to the GPO where it received the backstamp (P.O. 9-28-82, N.Y.) at the center. The cover was struck with a purple "Return to Writer" pointing finger and blue B.L (Branch? Letter) handstamp on the front and returned to Mr. Esmond in Newburgh. Darwin Esmond was a well known lawyer practicing until well into the early 1900's who, judging by the abundance of his correspondence found today at auction, saved most everything he received. The enclosed letter to Mr. Either (Figure 13) states that "I have written you often already" and warns that "Unless you send me the money by Sept 25th, 1882, we shall take legal proceedings to compel you to settle this matter."

Transit markings are also commonly found on foreign destination mail as often letters were handled/resorted numerous

times before reaching their final destination. Foreign transit marks can be found on both the front and reverse of covers. During the 19th century, letters were often placed in mail bags which went unopened (closed mail) until reaching another country or postal authority. Both French and German mail transited England in unopened mail bags which were first opened on trains traveling between Calais and Paris (French) and Verviers and Cologne (German). On the train, the French and German transit marks were struck on the front of each cover and upon arrival in either Paris or Cologne, different transit marks were struck on the reverse. Other transit marks were applied at each successive stop until the final destination was reached. A preprinted cover from Ware, Massachusetts dated 25 March, 1881 to Satara India is shown as Figures 14



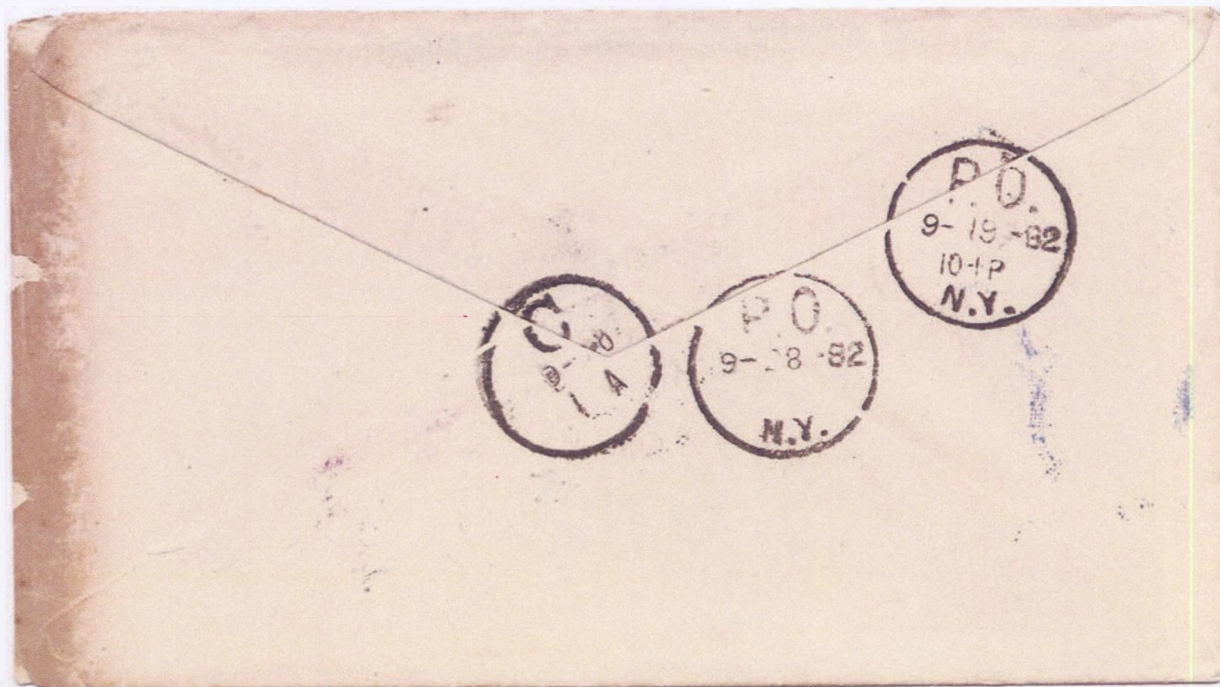


Figure 12

and 15. The preprinted directive at upper left indicates the sender wished the cover to go via both England and Brindisi (Italy). Although there is no New York transit, the letter probably left out of New York in a closed mail bag arriving in Brindisi where the mail bag was opened and the Brindisi (April 14) transit datestamp was struck. It received a lightly struck Sea Post Office (April 14) onboard a steamer to India. Transiting Satara (India) on April 27 it arrived at its final destination Mahableshwar on April 28th.

Figures 16 and 17 illustrate a redirected/returned cover which went on quite a lengthy journey before being returned to its sender over two months later. The attractive advertising cover for W.E. Fyfe & Co., Cold Storage Warehouse, left Clinton, Massachusetts on 14 August 1894, addressed to William Fyfe in Antwerp, Belgium. Prepaying the five cent single UPU rate, the cover transited the New York post office (machine on reverse) on its transatlantic voyage to Belgium. Apparently Mr. Fyfe was not located in Antwerp and the address was crossed out (black pencil) and sent on to Lloyds Bank, Birmingham, England (as noted by pencil notation on the reverse). Again Mr. Fyfe was not found and another notation in pencil at the top of the cover indicated the letter was forwarded on to the "National Bank of Scotland" in Edinburg, Scotland. Glasgow, Scotland was another stop before being directed on to Baring Bros. in London, England (see handwritten note in red on front). Baring Bros., a British merchant bank, often forwarded mail during the 19th century. The cover received three transit marks within London, went back to Birmingham for a couple of days before returning to London on the 14th of September. Since Mr. Fyfe could still not be found, the letter was sent back to the United States Dead Letter office in Washington D.C. (see triangular backstamp on reverse at left). Finally, after fifty three days, the cover was returned (purple pointing finger on front) to Clinton, Massachusetts. A complete chrono-

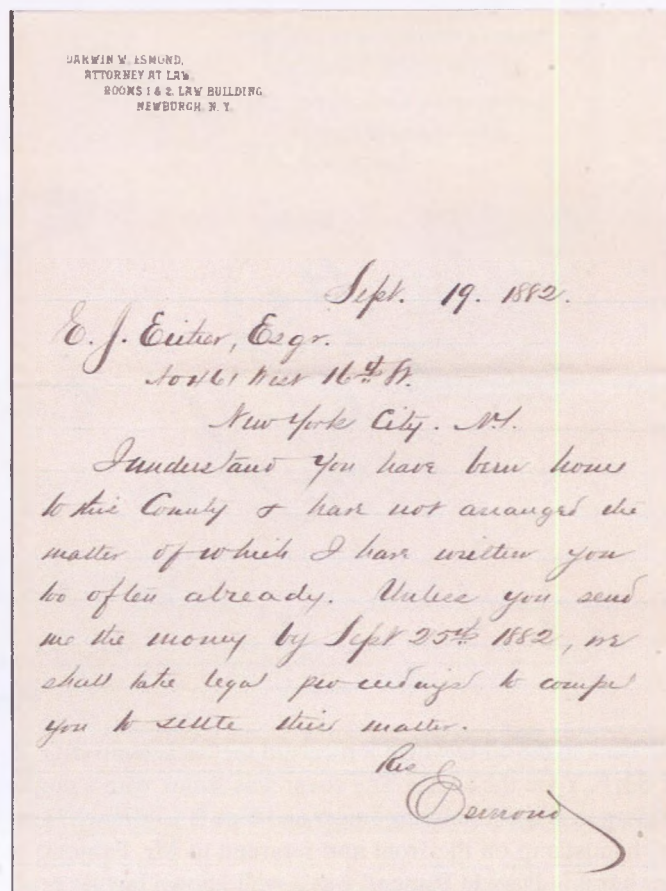


Figure 13

logic record of the trip can be gathered by the transit markings struck on the cover as shown below:

14 August 1894	Clinton, Massachusetts (front)
15 August 1894	New York, New York (reverse)
23 August 1894	Antwerp, Belgium 6-S (front)
23 August 1894	Antwerp, Belgium 8-M (reverse)





Figure 14



Figure 15

27 August 1894	Birmingham, England (front)
24 August 1894	Edinburgh, Scotland (front)
27 August 1894	Glasgow, Scotland (front)
28 August 1894	London, England - 3 transit marks on reverse (7R, 1 & FO)
12 September 1894	Birmingham, England E (reverse)
13 September 1894	Birmingham, England R.L.B (reverse)
14 September 1894	London, England Returned LR Office (reverse)
4 October 1894	Washington D.C. DLO. (reverse)
5 October 1894	Clinton, Massachusetts (reverse)

One final category of backstamps includes registry back-

stamps. Backstamping of registered letters apparently began in mid 1877 as a means for security - proving that letters had not been tampered with and were properly examined and sealed. The earliest registry backstamps (Figure 18) were employed in New York City and Philadelphia (see USCCN article "Early Registered Back Stamps" Vol. 32, No. 8, November 2015). Most registered backstamp markings include information regarding the date and city (see Figure 19). New York City used a curious series of purple mute backstamps from 1883 well into the 1890's (see Figure 20). As previously mentioned, these were apparently used for security reasons as they were normally struck over the back flaps of each envelope.

An interesting short lived octagonal datestamp was employed as a backstamp by the GPO during 1876-1877 (see Figure 21).





Figure 16



Figure 17

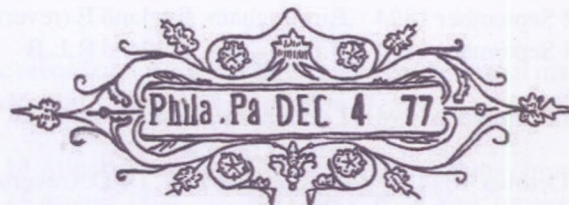


Figure 18



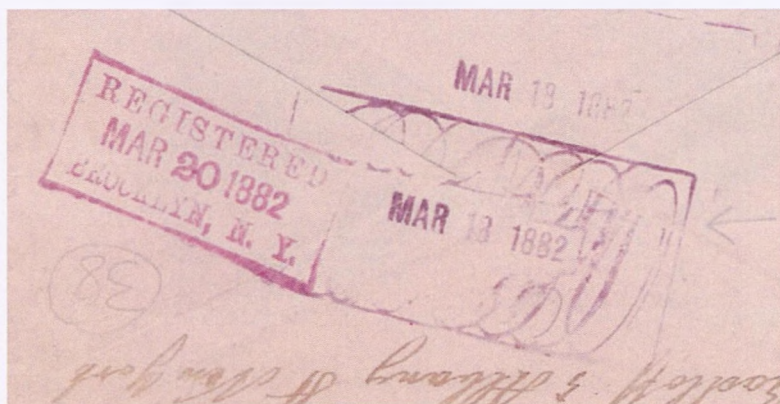


Figure 19



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23

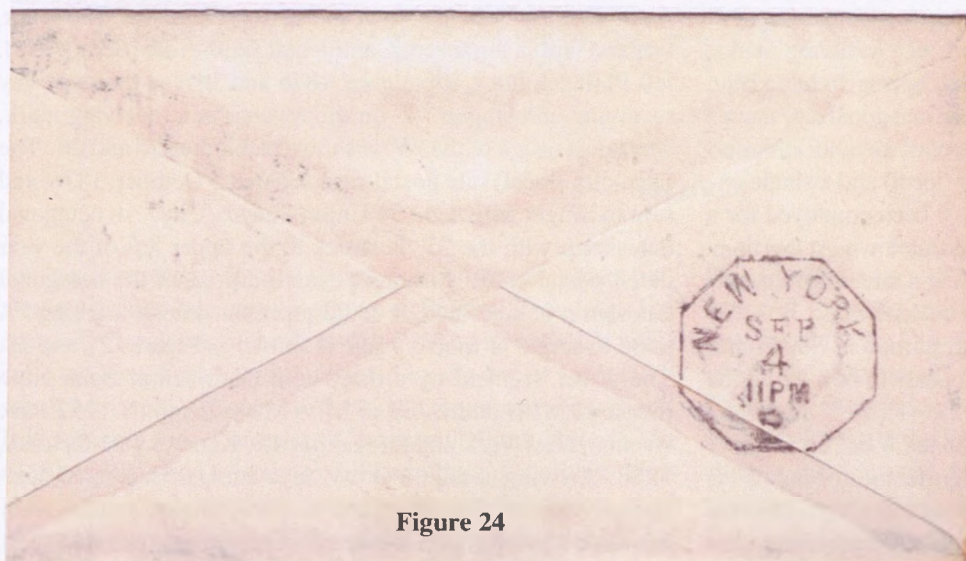


Figure 24

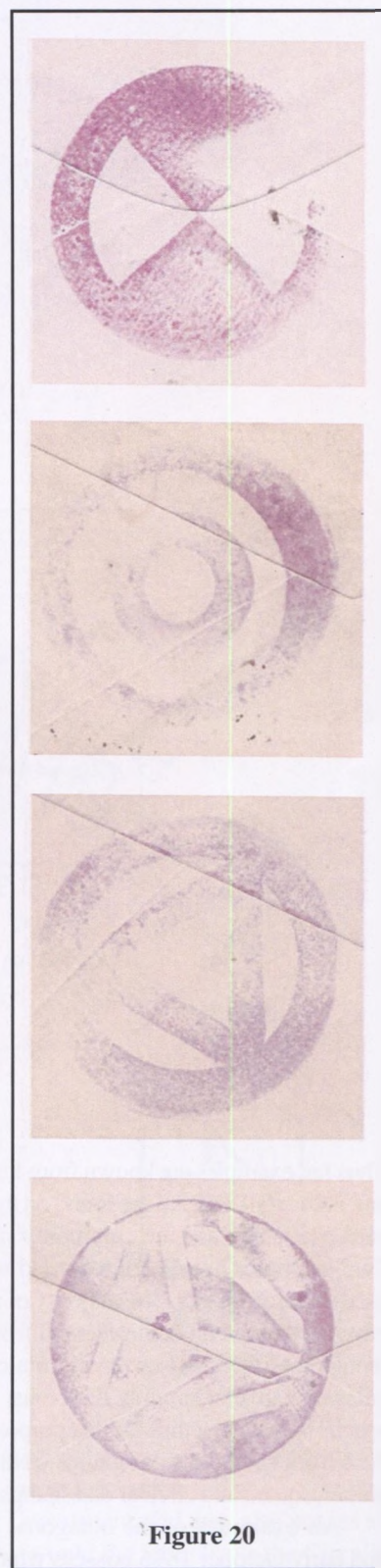


Figure 20





Figure 25

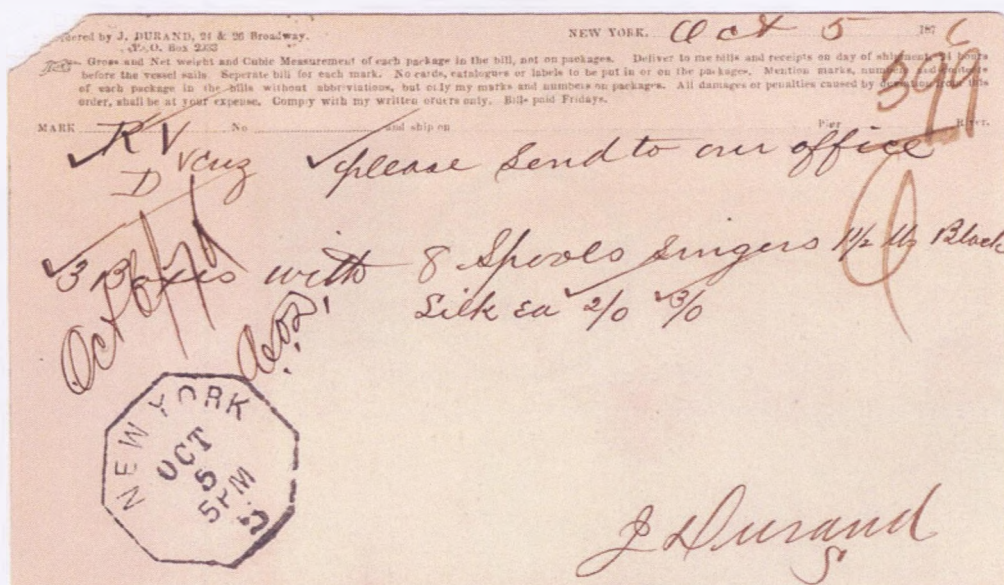


Figure 26

Thus far, examples are known from September and October 1876 and February 1877. All are found on the reverse of letters or postal cards/stationary and are commonly struck as a receiving marks. Two examples have been recorded which appear to have been used as transit marks. The majority of these octagonal datestamps have been noted on domestic mail from out of town locations although they are also known on intra-city (local) and a single circular rate cover. Certainly they must have been employed for a special service, but thus far that purpose is unknown. At this time, New York City's branch stations were using a series of "rounded" corner, square and circular datestamps as backstamps.

All examples of the octagonal datestamps in September and early October 1876 possess what appears to be a "5" at the bottom of the octagon (see Figure 22). The "5" has been recorded September 4 and October 2, 5 and 6 but by October 14, the number "5" disappears. The significance of the "5" is unknown but may represent some internal marking within the GPO. A letter originating in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania ad-

ressed to Mr. James R. Johnson care J. H. Johnson, 23 Fifth Avenue, New York is shown as Figures 23 and 24. The letter, franked with a three cent Continental Bank Note (Scott #158), left Philadelphia 4 September, 1876 and arrived the same day receiving an octagon "5" on the reverse as a receiving mark. The latest usage of the "5" is shown as Figures 25 and 26. The intra-city (local) rate postal card is dated 5 October, 1876 and sent to Singer Mfg. Co., 34 Union Square, City. An octagonal datestamp with the "5" is struck at the upper left of the year dated postal card. Although exact purpose of the octagonal datestamp is unknown, it could represent transit marking. A good example of transit usage is shown as Figures 27 and 28. The cover, franked by a three cent Continental Bank Note (Scott #158) is addressed to Miss Mary Camp, N 1252 Park Avenue, New York and left Louisville, Kentucky 21 October, 1876. Arriving at the GPO two days later, an octagonal datestamp (without "5") was struck as a transit mark and the letter forwarded on to Station K where it received the "rounded" cor-



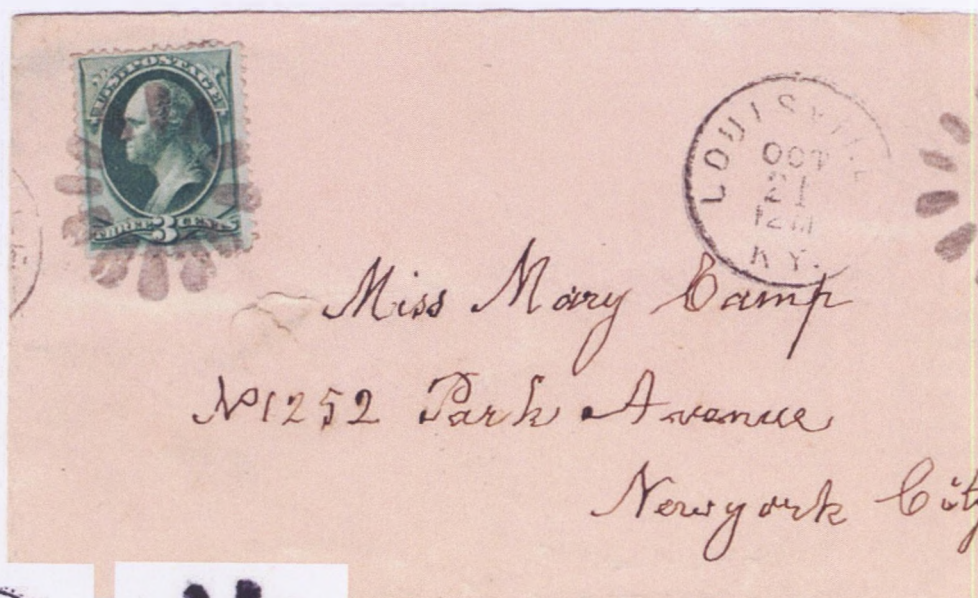


Figure 27

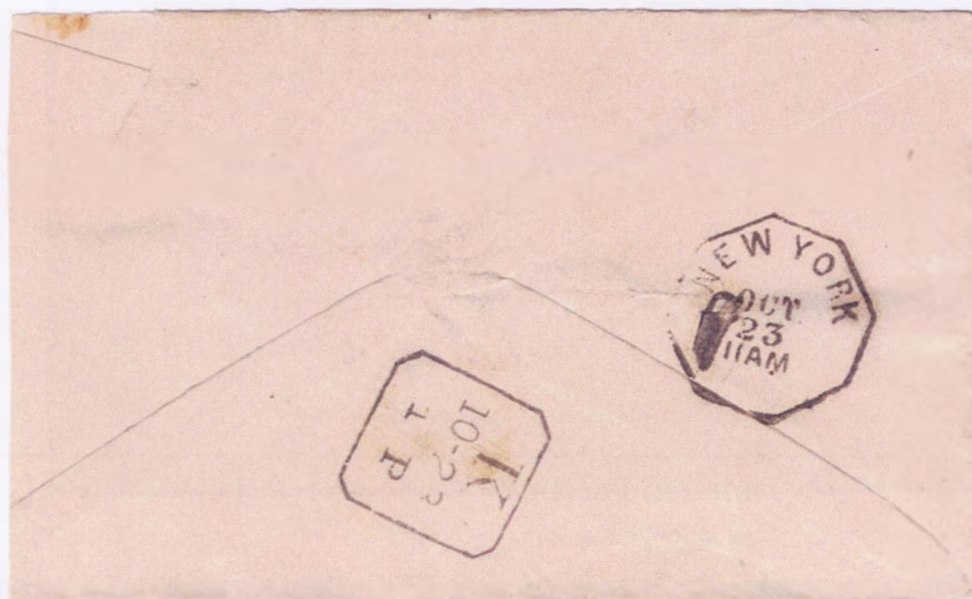


Figure 28

ner square receiving datestamp and was delivered. A most perplexing circular rate cover is shown as Figures 29 and 30. The intra-city (local) circular rate cover, missing its backflap, originated in New York City as indicated by the corner card; Hodson & Maxwell, Attorneys at Law, 187 Broadway, New York. It is franked with a one cent Continental Bank Note (Scott #156) which is tied by a simplex 9-bar ellipse at its sides. Simplex ellipse obliterations are commonly found on mail processed by the Circular Department during this time period.

The mystery here is the octagonal datestamp struck on the reverse of the cover at the lower left corner. If the cover was processed by the Circular Department, did they also possess an octagonal datestamp? Why would the letter leave the Circular Department and receive the octagon outside their department if they processed the letter originally? Was it mistakenly handled in the domestic department, backstamped with the octagon and forwarded to the Circular Department? If anyone can help with an answer, please feel free to contact the author.



Figure 29

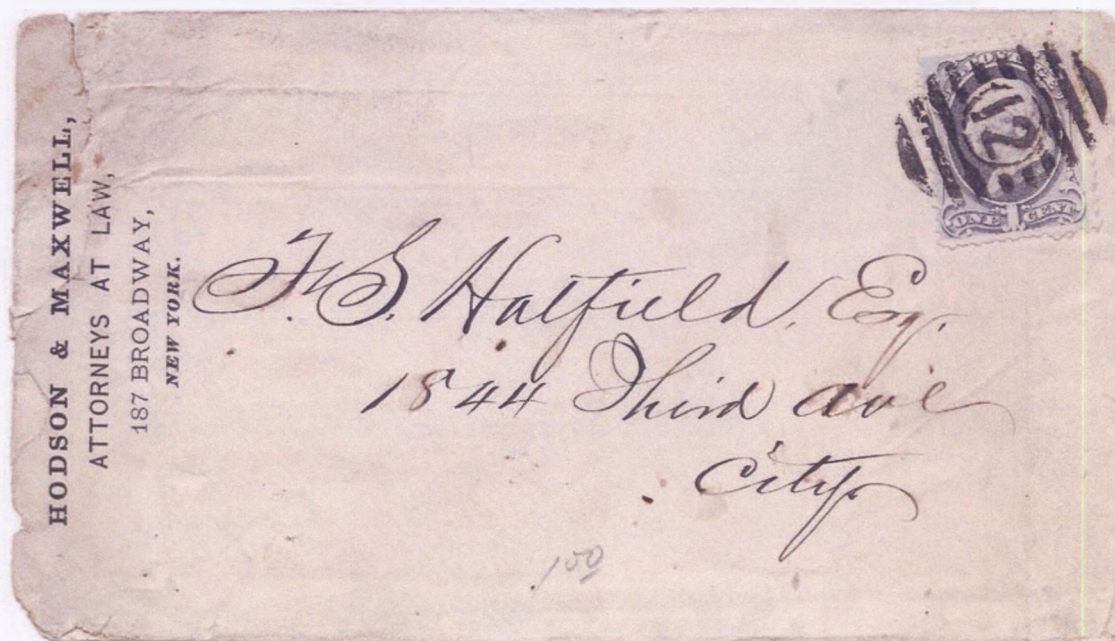


Figure 30



## Noted in Passing

by Roger D. Curran

The August *NEWS* illustrated on page 58 a strike of a duplexed Worcester and Providence route agent marking with the killer consisting of an “N” in a barred circle. We are now able to show a John Donnes tracing of that marking (Figure 1) plus a cover (Figure 2) submitted by John that illustrates what is assumed to be the mate to the Figure 1 killer – an “S” in barred circle used on that railroad. I say “assumed” because the “S” cancel involves seven bars while the “N” cancel has only five. From a Washington, D.C. received mark on the back of the Figure 2 cover, the year date can be determined to be 1883.

While on the subject of this particular rail line, lot 607 of the Siegel sale 1125 (May 5/6/2016) was the cover shown here as Figure 3 with a wonderful and no doubt very scarce killer. It was struck upside down in relation to the CDS and when right side up would read NORTH/720/A.M. Is there a “SOUTH” version of this killer? A somewhat similar cancel (Figure 4) has been attributed in the Whitfield book to the



Figure 1



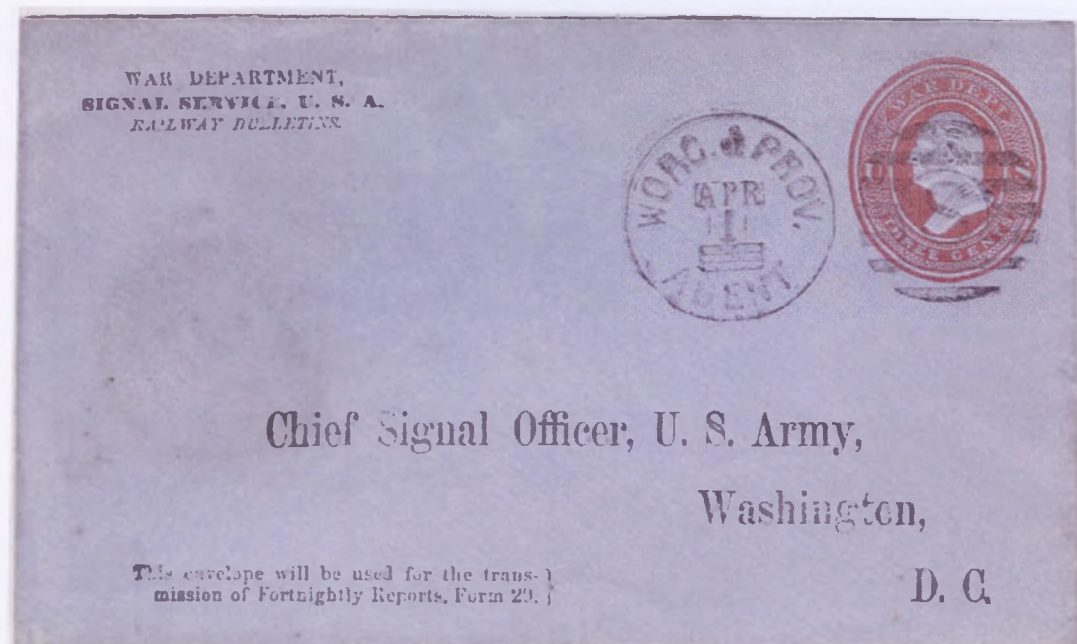


Figure 2

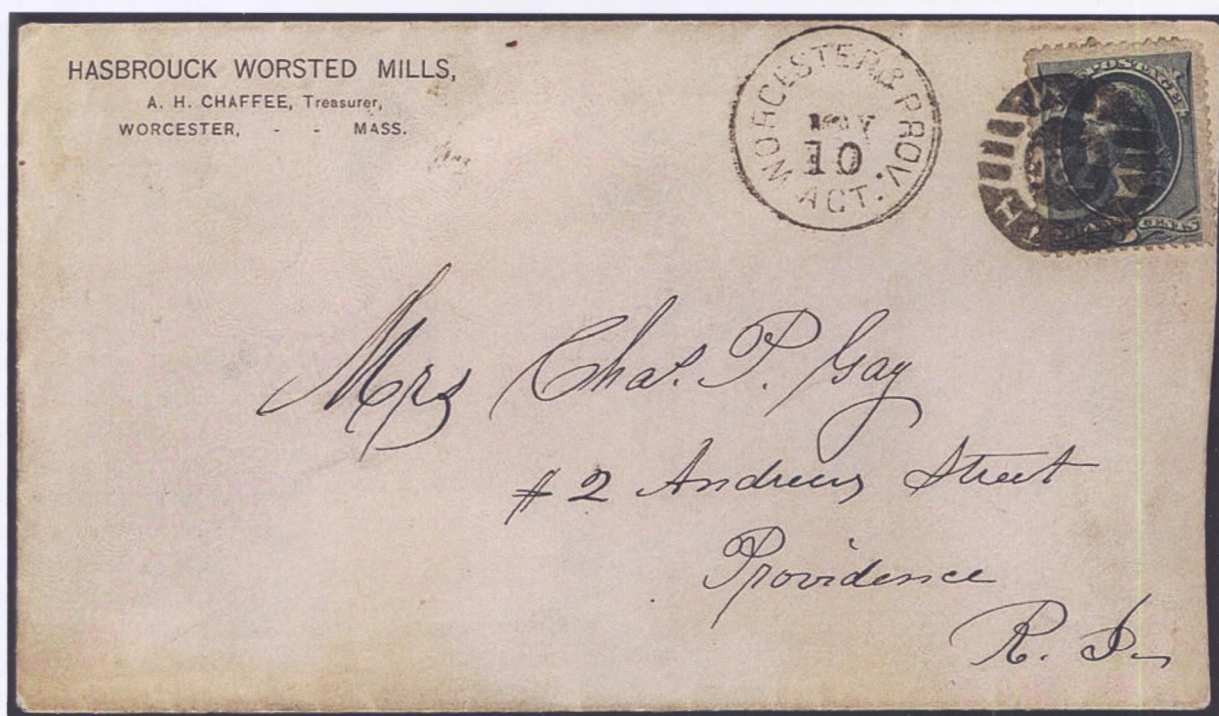


Figure 3

Worcester & Providence railroad. Readers who can add to the story of cancels used by this railroad are encouraged to contact the NEWS.

We move now to three unusual postmarks. Figure 5 is a registered cover from Cochrane, Massachusetts (DPO 1846-1902) with a fancy postmark in blue ink. In addition to town, state and date, the postmaster's name – J. Moore – and a prominent "PAID" appear along with ornamentation within the two circles. This marking was likely applied by

an inked ribbon mechanical handstamp which would explain why the ink differs from that (magenta) used for the star in circle cancels on the two postage stamps.

The remarkable postmark from Glastonbury, Connecticut in Figure 6 was submitted to the NEWS years ago by Ralph Edson. It is unclear whether the postmark and cancel came from a duplex handstamp. If a reader can show another cover with the postmark, perhaps we can answer the questions.

A Batavia, New York postmark,



Figure 4

complete with canceling bars, is shown in Figure 7 on a drop letter. Was this postmark also used on out-of-town mail? I assume that the postmark, even with



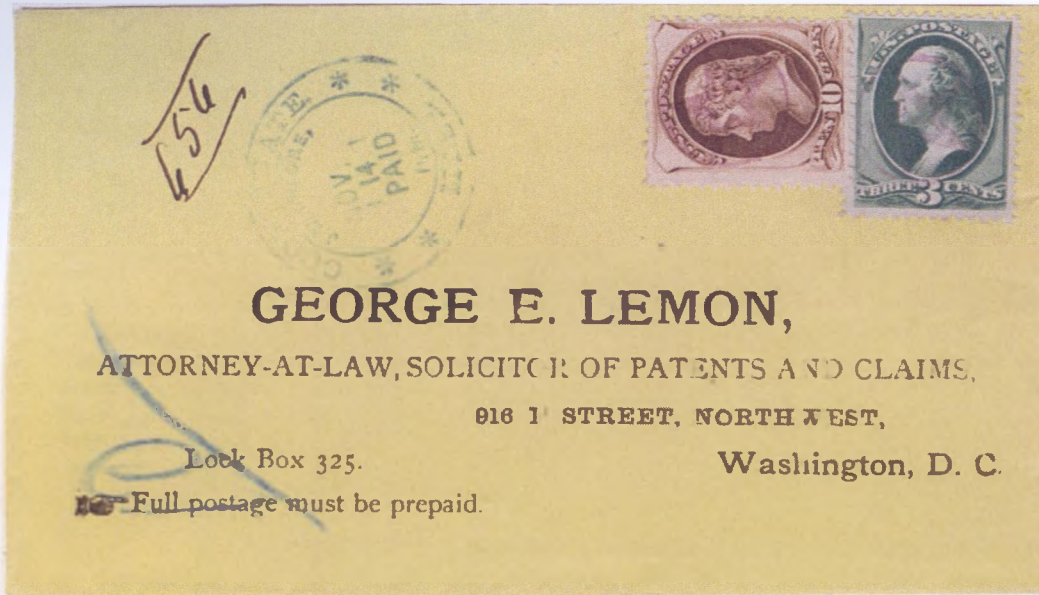


Figure 5

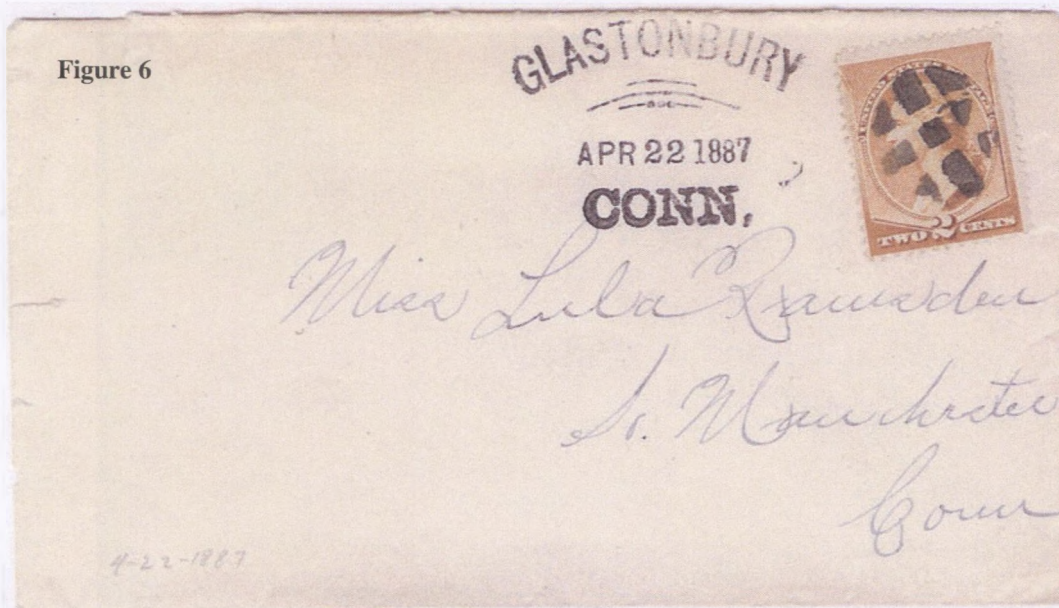


Figure 6



Figure 7

the canceling bars, would be considered a violation of the postal regulation preventing use of postmarks as cancelers. Comment is invited.

The May 2015 *NEWS* carried an article on wheel of fortune cancels from Pennsylvania. It largely reflects the examples accumulated over many years by Arthur Beane together with such additional uses this writer has been able to find. The 2015 report listed 39 Pennsylvania post offices and we are now able to add a 40th – Sterling Run – with an example dated 8/13/89. Unfortunately, the purplish grey cancel was very lightly struck and will not be clear in the Figure 8 image, but enough of the design is present to confirm it. Sterling Run is a DPO that operated in Cameron Co. from 1862-1965.

The Boston negative cancel in Figure 9 is remarkable in appearance due to its happenstance encounter with the stamp it canceled. It has what has been termed a “variated” design, meaning that the commercially obtained standard design canceler was modified to produce a cancel that differed from the normal design. In this case, the variation consisted of cutting off the upper left and lower right corners. (It is the same as or very similar to tracing #1803 in the Blake and Davis book *Boston Postmarks to 1890*.) The cancel in Figure 9 was struck both on the stamp and on adjacent areas of the cover. What makes it noteworthy, of course, is how the canceling ink failed to settle along the two edges of the



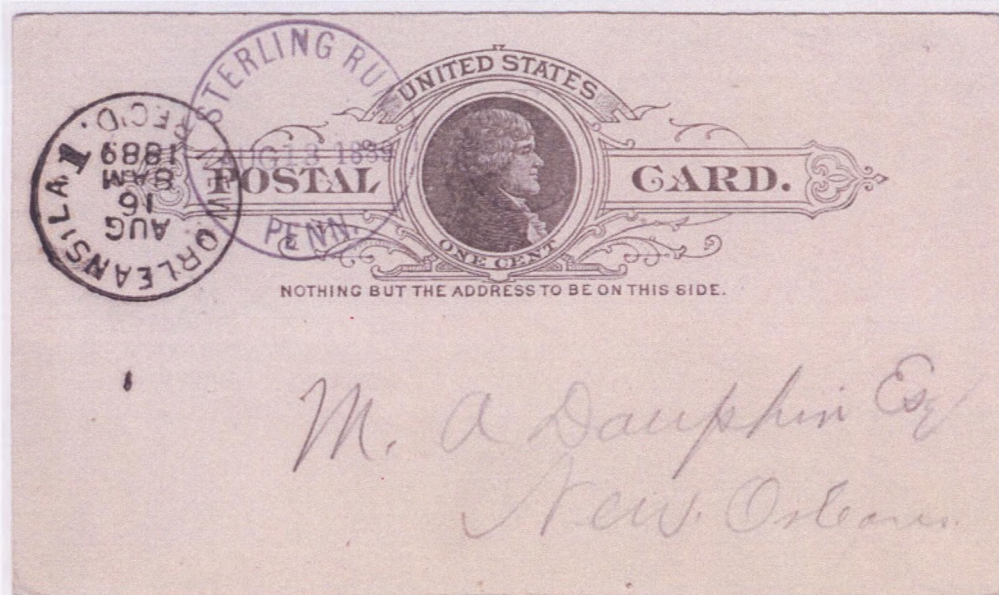


Figure 8

tained the two letter format, but without combining them as one character, such as “aesthetics” and “archaeology.”

The above is by way of introducing the cover submitted by Rob Lund appearing here as Figure 10. This Phoenix post office was located in Rhode Island rather than New York but used the same joining of the two letters. In Helbock's *United States Post Offices Volume IV – The Northeast* there is no listing for Phoenix, Rhode Island post office but there is a “Phenix” listed in Kent Co. that operated from 1849-1924. Somewhere along the way the “O” was dropped. My earliest *Postal Guide* is October 1875 and

a “Phenix” in Kent Co. is listed. Figure 11 shows a tracing of the Rhode Island postmark from page 69 of the Tom Alexander 1979 book *Simpson's U.S. Postal Markings 1851-61*. Are there other examples out there of words in postmarks with letters joined?

“Letter in wreath” cancels were used, at least briefly, in the 1880s by about 15 post offices. A typical example is shown in Figure 12. At least one post office, Quinton, New Jersey began using a “letter

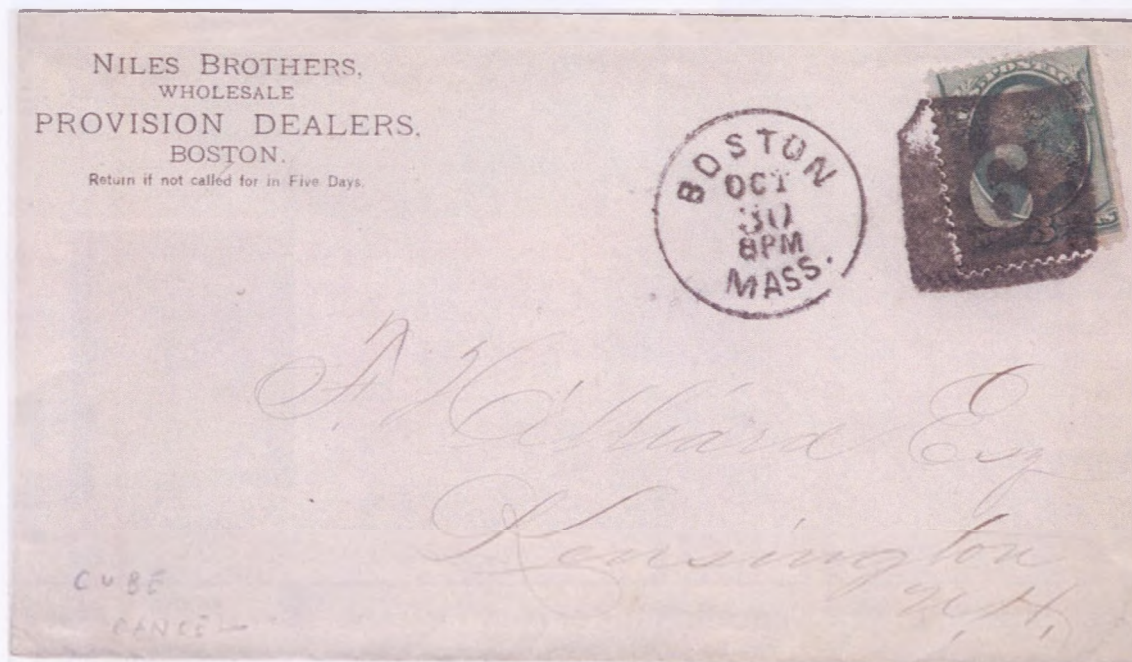


Figure 9

stamp and in an area at top left just beyond the white line at the stamp's edge. The effect was to create, in a manner of speaking, the appearance of a three dimensional square. A previous owner had penciled “cube cancel” on the cover which seems apt.

The February 2012 *NEWS* illustrates a third class oval cancel on an 1888 cover from Phoenix, New York where the “O” and “E” of “PHOENIX” were positioned together. We repeat here our 2012 comments about the unusual arrangement. Two terms will be mentioned. A “digraph” is a pair of letters used to represent a single sound and one definition of “ligature” is a character or type containing two or more letters. The ligatures (or digraphs) “ae” or “oe” were, in earlier years, used in Latin or Greek words adopted into English. More recently the preferred spelling of such words has become “e,” dropping the “a” or “o” as the case may be. However, some words have re-

in wreath” in 1879. In one post office, the letter in the canceler was rotated 90 degrees in relation to the wreath. An especially sharp strike was encountered recently and is shown in Figure 13. This cancel was used by Farmers, Pennsylvania and a 3/11/84 cover is known – see the *NEWS* Supplement to the 2001 *Special Fiftieth Anniversary Issue*.

Bill Stearns submits the Iowa City, Iowa cover illustrated in Figure 14 bearing a cancel that appears to consist of the letters “JIC” and asks if this cancel is known and what the letters represent. I have found no reference to the cancel in the literature. Jim Peterson, a specialist in Iowa postal history, stated that he has not seen it before. Assuming the pencil note of “1875” is correct, Jim reports that the letters are not those of the postmaster who, from 1871-6, was a Nathan Brainard. We appeal to readers for any information about this unusual cancel.





Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 14



Figure 13

## Banknote Era Cancellations of New Orleans

by Wendell Triplett

Dan Haskett, a US Cancellation Club member and avid collector of New Orleans cancellations, among others, sent me 14 pages of New Orleans cancels he had collected after he identified the origin using Kenneth A. Whitfield's *Cancellations Found on 19th Century U.S. Stamps*, James M. Cole's *Cancellations of the Banknote Era 1870-1894* or the Leonard V. Huber and Clarence A. Wagner 1949 book *The Great Mail* which is devoted to the postal history of New Orleans. Dan sent the pages to me because of my work in coordinating the Whitfield book update published by the USCC at five-year intervals.

Presented below are Figures that show actual strikes of cancels illustrated in one or more of the above references. In some cases, covers are shown that add information to the current Whitfield listings, which will be reflected in the next Whitfield update appearing in 2017. Newly reported cancels are also shown.

Dan's examples of Whitfield cancels 2777 and 2827 provided me with new information so that I could complete the iden-

tification of these cancels – Figures 1 and 2.

Note that the basic design of Whitfield 3697 has two slightly different versions – Figure 3. An example of Whitfield 3789 is shown in Figure 4. We can add a date (9/15/77) for Whitfield 2560 as well as illustrate an example – Figure 5. Figure 6 shows an example of Cole GCR-88. This appears to be the same cancel as the first tracing on page 167, row 6 of Huber/Wagner.

A blank space on page 81 of Whitfield allows us to add a new cancel to the Whitfield book – see the tracing of the 10/6/77 cancel in Figure 7. Figure 8 adds a date (2/5/78) for as well as showing an example of Whitfield 3777. Dan also reports a 5/4/78 usage. Figure 9 illustrates an unlisted cancel with date of 4/5/80.

Does the cover in Figure 10 show a sharp, early strike of a worn or over inked Huber/Wagner cancel – page 165, row 5, fourth tracing? A year-dated example of the Figure 10 cancel (10/26/80) is shown in Figure 11.

Figure 12 presents a nice example of Cole GCR-122. Figure



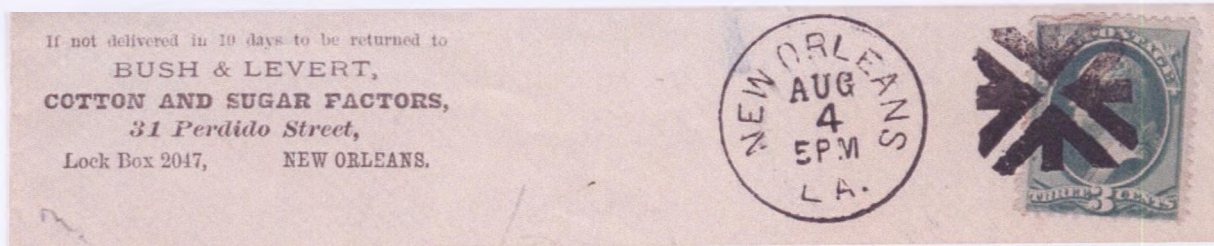


Figure 2



Figure 1



Figure 3

## 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 20<sup>th</sup> century and are of interest to specialists (e.g., airmail, registry). 576 pages...packed with illustrations.

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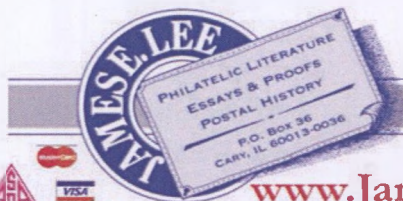
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Figure 4

## The Classic Cancel

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Figure 5

13 illustrates an example of Whitfield 3017. Three examples of what are thought to be Whitfield 3696 are shown in Figure 14.

A cancel unlisted in any of the three references is provided in Figure 15. Figure 16 shows a cancel found in all three references and an example. Notice how the tracings vary somewhat, perhaps due to one or more of the following: inking or strike variations, handstamp wear, and tracing accuracy.

Figure 17 shows a nice example of Whitfield 3664. It is interesting to note that Waterbury, CT used a cancel of the same basic design in an earlier year – 1868. Figure 18 illustrates Whitfield 2738 together with three actual strikes. This cancel is also documented in Cole and Huber/Wagner.

An example of Whitfield 2763, an iconic New Orleans cancel, is shown in Figure 19. The attractive cancel in Figure 20, similar in inspiration to Figure 19, appears in all three references. The Whitfield tracing is shown. Finally, Figure 21 shows an unlisted cancel.



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 13



Figure 10



Figure 14



Figure 12





Figure 11



Figure 19

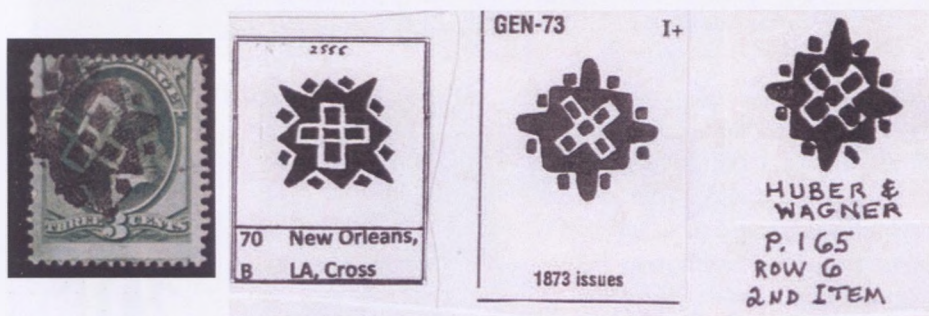


Figure 16



Figure 15



Figure 18



Figure 21

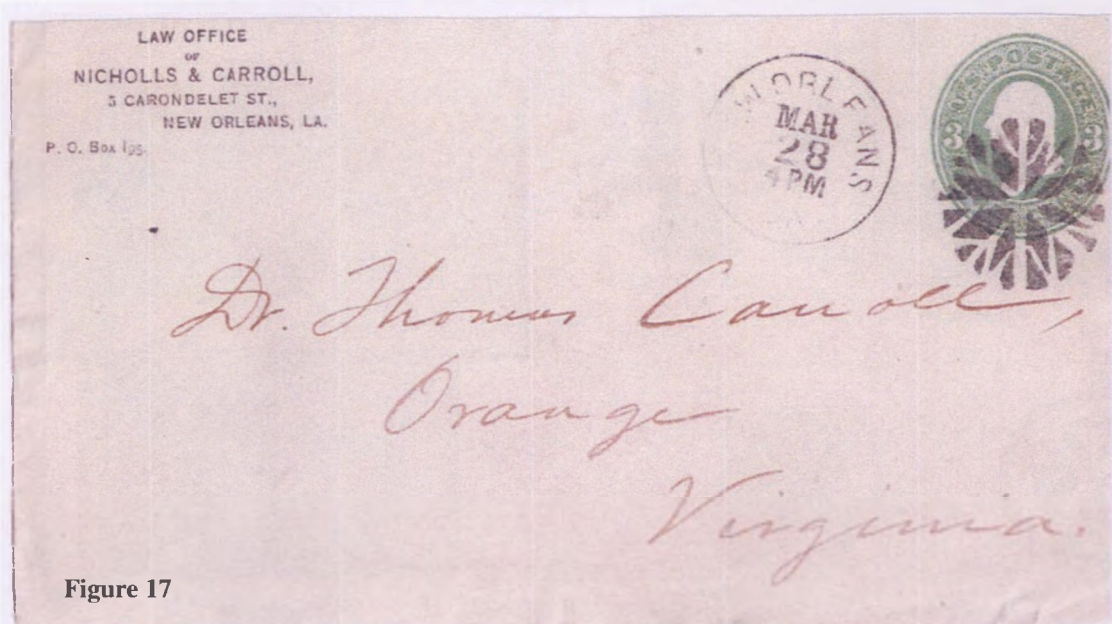


Figure 17

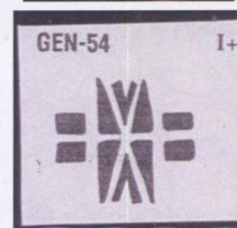


Figure 20



## USCC News Bulletin

With the February 2017 issue of the *US Cancellation Club NEWS*, Matt Kewriga will become the new editor. As most members will know, Matt brings to this role very considerable experience as a collector, exhibitor and dealer with a strong emphasis on 19th century U.S. postal history. We extend sincere thanks to Matt for accepting this job and also to Ardy Callender and John Donnes for their work as co-editors of recent issues. Ardy, John and previous editor Roger Curran will continue to contribute articles as time permits, but there is no better a welcome that Club members can extend to Matt in his new role than by submitting to him articles or copies of interesting items in their collections. See the *NEWS* masthead for Matt's email and snail mail addresses.

The USCC Board of Directors has voted to hold the USCC 2017 biennial meeting at the SESCOAL show (Ontario, California near LA) that will run October 12-15. More information about this to follow. The Board also decided to establish a new USCC website in 2017. Work is already beginning on this project.

### New York "Ocean Mail" to Nova Scotia

by Roger D. Curran

The New York "ocean mail" postmark has long been of interest to collectors of U.S. cancellations because the integral grid at the top tells us that it was designed specifically to serve the dual goals of postmark and cancel. See Figure 1 which illustrates Skinner-Eno tracing PM-OM1, page 342. This postmark has been reported used from February 25, 1854 to November 1, 1861. It was employed basically on mail to California and to a much lesser extent Oregon. The several

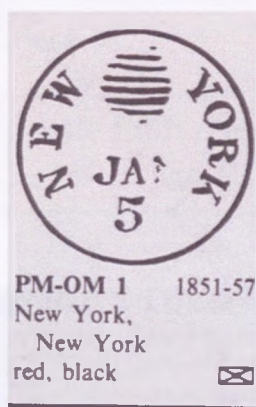


Figure 1

reported covers dated February 25, 1854, however, were addressed to eastern cities. A very few later domestic uses to eastern cities are also known as well as several to Cuba – see the Fall 1995 and Winter 1999 issues of the *NEWS*.

The purpose of this article is to present the cover in Figure 2 which shows a December 20, 1956 usage of the "ocean mail" postmark to Halifax, Nova Scotia. There has been mention in the literature of uses to foreign countries other than Cuba but this is the first example seen by the writer. It was lot 157 in the 9/13/16 Schuyler Ramsey sale of the "Skywalk" collection of Nova Scotia stamps and postal history formed by Martin Eichele. What a nice item! Readers are encouraged to submit any additional information on the subject of this distinctive postmark to the *NEWS*.



Figure 2



## New Vienna, Ohio "B" Cancel

by Roger D. Curran

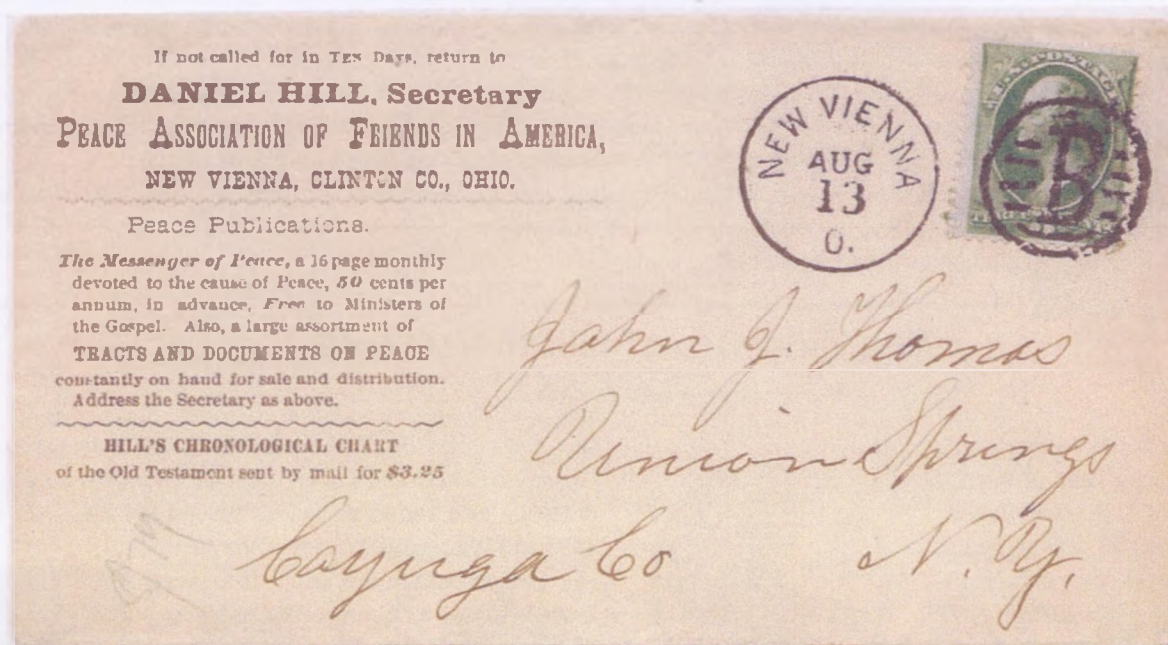


Figure 1

Charlie Wood submits the cover shown as Figure 1 bearing a very nice "B" in grid cancel. It allows us to identify the post office of origin for Whitfield tracing 5482 presented here as Figure 2. A second example of the Figure 1 cancel is illustrated in Figure 3. The distance between CDS and cancel is greater in Figure 3 than in Figure 1. This is evidence that the markings were not applied by a duplex handstamp, which is a bit surprising since the cancel is of the size and shape of killers so often placed into duplex handstamps of the period. Tracing 5481 (Figure 4) shows us that New Vienna also used a smaller version of



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

the Figure 1 design. We don't have information on the names of 19th century New Vienna postmasters but the "B" may of course, represent the last name of the postmaster at the time.

## Large "PAID/3" in Circle

by Roger D. Curran

Soon after the introduction of lowered U.S. postal rates in July 1851, post office handstamps combining "PAID" and "3" became popular. They were designed for use on stampless mail to indicate that the single letter postage rate of 3¢ was paid in cash. The handstamps typically struck the marking as "PAID/3" in a circle and Figure 1 shows a typical example.



Figure 1

As of January 1, 1856, domestic letter mail was to be prepaid and the prepayment was to be made by stamps affixed to the cover. There were many "PAID/3" handstamps on hand that were then no longer needed, but some were kept to serve as cancelers of postage stamps. The practice of using these handstamps as cancelers continued for many years, with ever decreasing frequency,



Figure 2

until well into the 1880s. See Figure 2 for an example on a 3c 210 stamp. 3c 210 stamps weren't introduced, of course, until October 1883.

"Stampless" cancels have constituted a popular collecting subject. Many readers will be familiar with the 1955 book *The PAID Markings on the 3¢ U.S. Stamp of 1861* by Linn's Stamp News founder George W. Linn. This

slim volume is very informative and provides excellent tracings.

The purpose of the present article is to illustrate what is, as far as I know, the largest "PAID/3" in circle thus far reported – see Figure 3. The diameter of the circle is 23mm. and it was used by the Shannock Mills, Rhode Island post office, a DPO that operated in Washington Co. only from 1861-1864. Linn does report two examples – one from





Figure 3

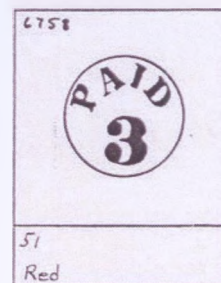


Figure 4

The smallest I could find is shown as Whitfield 6758 at 15.5mm., traced no doubt from an off cover stamp – see Figure 4. What a nice item this must be with the added plus of having been struck in red ink. If an example should be residing in a Club member's collection, I hope a scan or photocopy will be sent to the *NEWS*.

## Little Falls, New York 1847 Cancel

by Roger D. Curran

There are few “fancy cancels” reported on the 1847 issue and those that are listed are largely mundane in terms of standards applied to cancels found on later stamp issues. The Post Office Department provided handstamp cancelers to the larger post offices for use on the 1847s that produced a circular cancel, approximately 18mm diameter, composed of seven bars within an outer rim – see Figure 1. Postmasters not receiving the standard POD canceler, and who didn't want to use a manuscript cancel, were on their own in terms of acquiring (or making) cancelers. These normally took the form of grids of varying sizes and shapes. A few consisted of groups of dots and an even smaller number involved a circle of wedges. Two post offices are known to have used concentric circles cancelers. A fair number of cancels found on 1847s were produced by handstamps that were already on hand in post offices such as “PAID” and rate numbers. The above is not comprehensive but does cover the vast majority of 1847 issue cancels.

The purpose of this article is to add a circle of wedges cancel that has not received any significant attention in the literature and has not before been illustrated. Figure 2 is a folded letter that entered the mails at Little Falls, New York on October 22. Based on the dateline of the letter inside and also external docketing, we can determine the year date to be 1847. Figure 3 shows a tracing of the cancel courtesy of John Donnes.

According to the Alexander census of 1847 issue covers, only two covers are reported mailed from Little Falls. Alexander lists the Figure 2 cover and a second cover dated September 1849 with the stamp canceled by a “10” rate mark. Based on the above, it appears that the Figure 2 strike is the only reported example of the cancel. The Little Falls post office, incidentally, received no 1847 issue

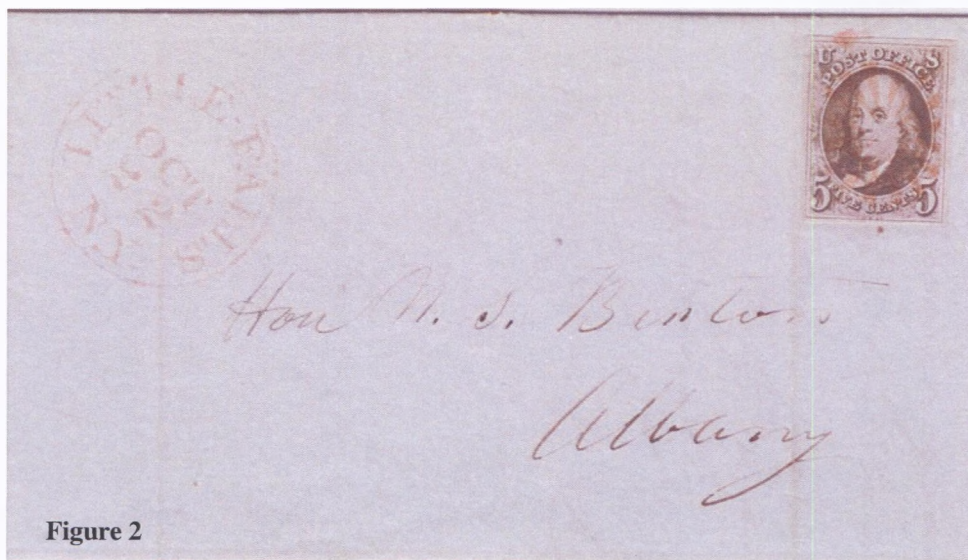


Figure 2

stamps so the two stamps used from there were carried in from elsewhere, perhaps nearby Utica. When the Figure 2 cover was brought to the Little Falls post office, this was presumably the first time the post office was confronted with the need to cancel a postage stamp.

The postmaster could have easily just marked the stamp with a pen but, I'm going to speculate, he decided this was a function that should be performed with a bit of a ruffles and flourishes spirit. And so he whittled a canceler that produced a decorative embellishment to the portrait of Mr. Franklin and was struck in such a way that it was not disfiguring. What do you think?

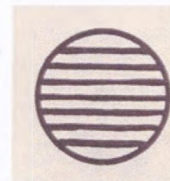


Figure 1



Figure 3

<sup>1</sup> Alexander, Thomas J. *United States 1847 Cover Census*, USPCS (2001), pg. 376.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



## Blairstown, NJ Postmaster Cancels

by Roger D. Curran

Christopher Perry submitted the cover in Figure 1 and, knowing of the very distinctive Blairstown "JDV" monogram ellipse (Figure 2) attributed to postmaster John Davis Vail, stated that he feels certain that the "V" in circle is for "Vail." I agree. Over the years there have been several *NEWS* articles that addressed these Blairstown cancels (issue whole #s 165, 193, 220, 221 and 263) and this seems a good time to summarize the situation, list dates of reported use and make an appeal for additional information.

There are at least two additional cancels involved beyond Figures 1 and 2 that are relevant. Figure 3 illustrates a large Blairstown "V." Figure 4 shows a Blairstown "V" in circle that is larger than that in Figure 1. There is no indication of a year date for either cover. There is less than one mm. distance between the Figure 1 CDS and cancel. Another on-cover example, however, shows a distance of more than 15 mm. A third example shows a 3 mm. distance. Clearly the CDS and cancel were not duplexed and I think we can assume it likely that the same applies to the Figures 3 and 4 markings. We know for sure that the "JDV" ellipse was not duplexed to the CDS. The table below lists the dates of use that I have seen or noted in the literature.

Large "V" (black)	Aug 10, Nov 11	1875*
"V" is in 21mm. circle (black)	Sep 1, Oct 18	1875*
"V" in 18mm circle (magenta)	4/13/76-10/3/76	
"JDV" ellipse (magenta)	10/25/76-1879	
"JDV" ellipse (black)	3/3/79 6/8/79-10/26/86	
*Assumed to be 1875 due to ink color		

Mr Vail is reported to have served three separate tours as the Blairstown postmaster, but the one applicable to this article is his first tour that ran from April 1875-May 1887. If readers can add to the above table, please contact the *NEWS*.

We'll conclude with two additional matters. The late Brad Arch, a well known student of New Jersey postal history, reported in the January 1981 *NEWS* (#165) the following ink colors for the "JDV" ellipse: "black (commonest), magenta (2nd commonest), blue, green, brown, and violet." My comments from a 2007 *NEWS* article are restated below:

Figure 1



Figure 2

Figure 3



Figure 4

"His listing of blue, green, and brown ink colors is very interesting. I believe I have noticed some variation in inks along the magenta-violet continuum, at least in terms of "brightness," but have never seen, or seen reported elsewhere, blue, green, or brown. "Brown" might possibly be some variation or degradation of magenta, but strikes in blue, and especially green, would be wonderful items, indeed. Who can provide additional reports of these rare colors?"



Figure 5

No reports have so far been forthcoming.

The last matter concerns the ellipse shown as Figure 5 that was presented in the Willard book with the following comment: "... could be a hand-cut substitute form the commercially prepared ellipse of John D. Vail but there is no cover to prove the point."