



# U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

Vol. 34, No. 1, Whole No. 302, February 2017

## A Legal Use of a Private Steamship Cancel on US Mail

by Ardy Callender

The postal entire (Scott # U222) shown as Figures 1 and 2 departed New York City onboard the SS *Valencia*, March 4, 1886 arriving seven days later on March 11, 1886 in Curacao, Netherland Antilles. Curiously, the stamped envelope bears no U.S. governmental postal markings. In fact, the indicium is canceled by a purple double oval for the Red D Line Steamship Company (see Figure 3). Two other U.S. private markings include a purple double oval at the lower left and smaller blue double oval on the reverse for Neuss, Hesslein & Co. This firm was listed in the "Business Directory of New York City and Newark City, N.J." in 1886 as a commission merchant. How could such mail be sent legally when the cover never entered the U.S. Postal System? After all, according to Section 713 of the PL&R (1887):

"No vessel departing from the United States for any foreign port shall receive on board or convey any letter or packet originating in the United States which has not been regularly received from the post office at the port of departure."

However, there is an exception to the above rule in Section 716:

"All letters enclosed in stamped envelopes, if the postage stamp is of a denomination sufficient to cover the postage that would be chargeable thereon if the same were by mail, may be sent, conveyed and delivered otherwise than by mail."

Consequently, New York City businessmen soon took advantage of this exception and were able take mail destined for Caribbean ports directly to the Red D Line office at 135 Pearl Street (after January 1886 the company relocated to 71 Wall Street). In discussing a "Red D Line" cover in the *Chronicle* "Cover Corner" (USPCS *Chronicle*, 1990), Cal Hahn describes a newspaper account of Red D Line company policy:

"Letters relating to cargo will be received at our office and carried to destina-



Figure 1

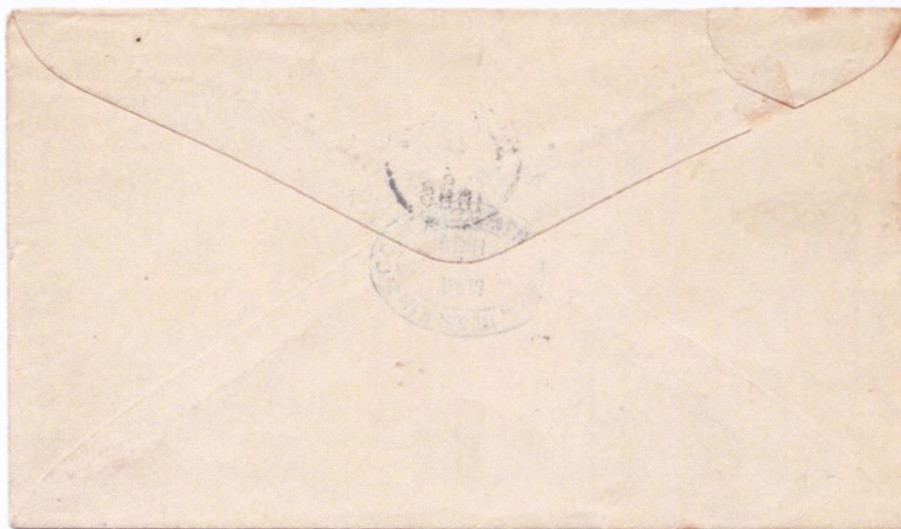


Figure 2

tions free of charge. All letters that may be sent up to noon on days the steamers sail will be delivered free provided they are enclosed in U.S. stamped envelopes of denomination sufficient to cover U.S. rate of 5 cents per 1/2 oz."

The Red D Line or Atlantic and Caribbean Steam Navigation Company was the main transit link between the United States and Venezuela for over one

hundred years. Initially the company was named after John Dallett, a Philadelphia merchant who partnered with another leading merchant, John Boulton to transfer cargoes/passengers between the U.S. and Venezuela. From the outset in 1820, the Philadelphia company contracted sailing vessels but by the summer of 1879, began chartering steamships. In 1881 the com-

Continued on page 4



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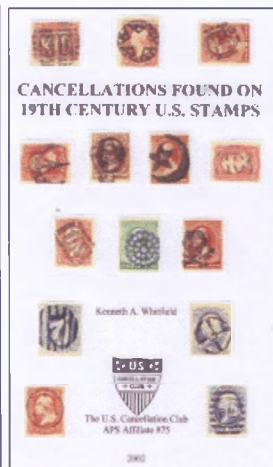
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**BULLETIN!****APS "On the Road" Course**

To feature five USCC Speakers

October 12, 2017

The 73rd annual stamp exhibition of southern California, SESCAL 2017, will be held October 13-15 at the Ontario Convention Center, Ontario, California 91764. On the day before the show, October 12, an APS "on the road" course will be held featuring the following USCC speakers – Ardy Callender, Alan Campbell, Roger Curran, Bob Grosch, and Nick Kirke.

-Based on a study of New York Post Office floor plans, Ardy will present insights he has gained on how 19th century mail was handled and moved through the New York postal system, insights that have applicability beyond just the NYPO.

-Alan Campbell will show how postal history can be told from off-cover stamps, in this case from official stamps in use from 1873-1884.

-Roger Curran will discuss the introduction of handstamps that first duplexed a canceler to a postmark, particularly from New York City, Cleveland and Cincinnati in August 1860.

-Bob Grosch will discuss the Boston "large negatives" cancels, 1878-1883, identifying the various designs and when they were employed, explaining why many were disfigured before use, showing RPO uses, etc.

-Nick Kirke will present the subject of 1870-1876 New York Foreign Mail cancels with an extended view to include the 1850-1869 period and placing this study in a broader postal history context.

*See APS website for publicity and registration details.*

**NEW EDITOR!**

It is a pleasure to announce the new editor for the U.S. Cancellation Club News, Robert Conley. The USCC Board learned of his availability through a note in The Philatelic Communicator, journal of APS Writers Unit 30. We will assist Robert, who will perform his job as a volunteer, by working to insure a supply of peer reviewed articles. Robert introduces himself to you herewith.

Dear Reader,

Your new editor is one from right out of left field – for starters, I am Australian-born and bred and I don't currently collect the fancy cancels and the like that you do. Born in 1964, I moved to the US in 2013 to marry a Detroit native, army veteran and registered nurse who I met purely by miracle on ancestry.com ... we are very distantly related by a marriage that occurred in Wales in 1865! When the necessary visa was finally issued, Heather and I moved into a house on three acres, 10 miles north of Bangor, Maine.

Heather still works as a nurse but I brought over enough assets to let me 'retire' (and be Mr. Mom to her daughter Amy) and am blessed to be able to follow my passions of philately (not just collecting but writing about it too) and model railroading. Philatelically I have collected many things including US classics but my main interests are now in revenues. I am the editor for both The Revenue Society and the State Revenue Society. I am also the auction manager for the latter. I also authored a catalog on Pennsylvanian local real estate revenues which scored a vermeil at Chicagopex 2015. So, I might be 'retired' but you can see I keep pretty busy.

I enjoy being editor so much that I volunteered to be your editor. Even though my knowledge of the things USCC members collect is sketchy at best, with the help of Club members, I hope to be able to provide you with the high-quality journal that you deserve.

Robert Conley

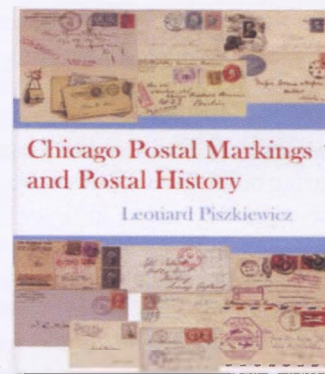
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Continued from front page

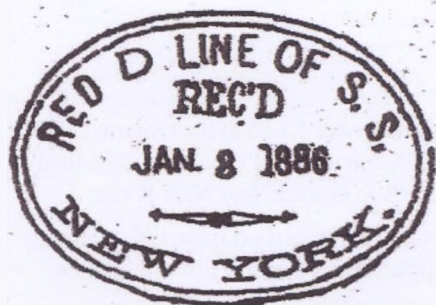


Figure 3

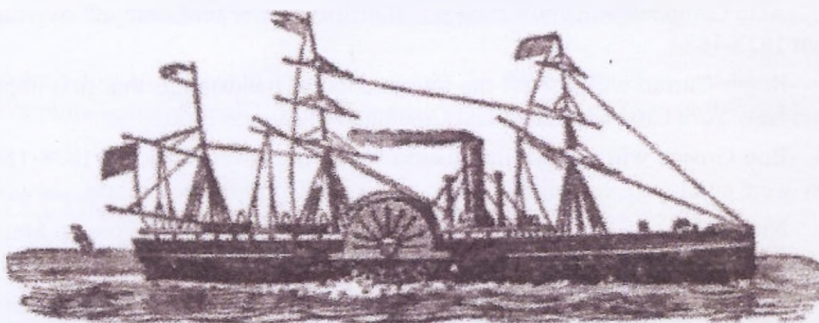
pany moved operations to New York City and formed the Atlantic and Caribbean Steam Navigation Company. Wanting more control over its vessels, the company decided to build its own fleet of ships and commissioned Cramp and Sons in Philadelphia for a pair of steamships. The *Caracas* was launched in 1881 and her sister ship the *Valencia* the following year. Both flew the American flag and had American crews. The Red D Line Company also contracted with the U.S. Post Office to carry contract mail. The steamships operated between New York, San Juan, St. Thomas, Curacao, La Guaira, Puerto Cabello, Mayaguez and Maracaibo. A newspaper ad (figure 4) indicates Red D Line steamers sailed from Pier 36, East River. To the author's knowledge, the existing covers with Red D Line markings all originate in New York City and are only known for letters destined for Curacao, although in theory, covers to any of the other destinations listed above could exist.

Returning to the stamped envelope shown as Figure 1, please note the two other markings at the center of the cover. The blue Curacao datestamp to the left of the Red D Line double oval is a receiving mark which was struck at the Curacao post office (an offset from another cover can be observed on the reverse in figure 2). The blue crayon "15" written at the center is the amount due from the addressee. It would seem that the proper amount of UPU postage was paid by the five cent governmental postal entire but remember that this envelope travelled outside of the UPU mailbags. Thus, the letter was considered unpaid and the amount not applied against the postage. Additionally, UPU rules specify unpaid letters be charged double the postage as a penalty. Therefore, the amount due would be double the

## RED "D" LINE OF STEAMSHIPS FOR

*Laguayra, Puerto Cabello, Curacao,  
and Maracaibo.*

**FROM PIER 36, EAST RIVER.**



PHILADELPHIA,	-	-	-	-	-	Jan. 8
CARACAS,	-	-	-	-	-	Jan. 16
VALENCIA,	-	-	-	-	-	Jan. 28

**The PHILADELPHIA, CARACAS, and VALENCIA are AMERICAN STEAMERS, built specially for the trade, and have very superior accommodations for passengers**

**For freight or passage apply to**

**BOULTON, BLISS & DALLETT, General Managers,  
135 Pearl Street.**

Figure 4

single rate (5 cents) or ten cents. According to Richard Graham (1991), the January 1887 *Postal Guide* states the Curacao equivalent (Dutch guilder) of a single rate was twelve and one half guilders; therefore the due charge for a single rate cover should be twelve and one half plus another twelve and one half (for the penalty) or twenty five guilders. Due rates on unpaid mail are also listed in Appendix 1 of Starnes' 1982 book on letter rates to foreign destinations. The unpaid single rate charge listed for Curacao (Netherlands) is fifteen Dutch guilders; therefore the due amount would be fifteen and fifteen (for the penalty) or thirty guilders. Starnes' fifteen guilder per single rate "due charge" seems to match the blue handwritten due amounts seen on other existing Red D Line covers. In fact, double, triple and quadruple rate covers seem to have due amounts charged in increments of fifteen:

fifteen, thirty, forty five etc. However, it must be noted that Starnes's rates extend from 1868 to UPU and may not be valid in the 1880's. Although the handwritten Curacao "due markings" indicate an incorrect amount due on the single rate letter shown as Figure 1, other covers are known (see Figure 5) which have due amounts which do represent the correct double the postage. Both Graham (1991) and the "Cover Corner" article (*Chronicle*, 1990) discuss this situation but indicate little is known about ship mail or Curacao due ratings during this period.

A similar entire (to the stamped envelope discussed above) is shown as Figures 5 and 6. It is addressed to Miss Margarita Kennedy de Davies care of Mr. James Jones, Curacao. The letter departed New York City October 3, 1886 onboard the S.S. Caracas arriving October 10, 1886 in Curacao as noted by the Curacao black re-



ceiving datestamp at center. The entire (Scott #U222) is cancelled by the Red D Line double oval and has a partial red business double oval on the reverse (back-flap missing). The due amount ("30") is handwritten in blue crayon at center. Why this cover is rated "30" cents due, when in all appearance, it is the same as the cover in Figure 1 is unknown. Similarly, please compare the entire shown as Figure 7 with the other two covers. The legal sized ten cent governmental entire (Scott #U189) departed New York City December 3, 1885 onboard the S.S. *Philadelphia* arriving in Curacao on December 9, 1885 (blue datestamp at center). A single oval (figure 8) for Foulke & Co. (insurance brokers) is struck on the backflap and a blue handwritten due ("30") at center over the Curacao receiving datestamp. Thus, we have two covers rated "30" cents due, one of which is a five cent entire (single rate, figure 5) and the other a ten cent entire described here as figure 7. To further muddy the waters, Graham (1991) illustrates a ten cent governmental entire (see figure 9) on which the due amount was "45" cents. Obviously further research needs to be done.

Some final thoughts. There are many similarities between the Red D Line and the New York City supplementary systems. Section 716 of the PL&R required Red D Line letters to be placed in a stamped envelope "of a denomination sufficient to cover the postage". Although letters were considered unpaid (because

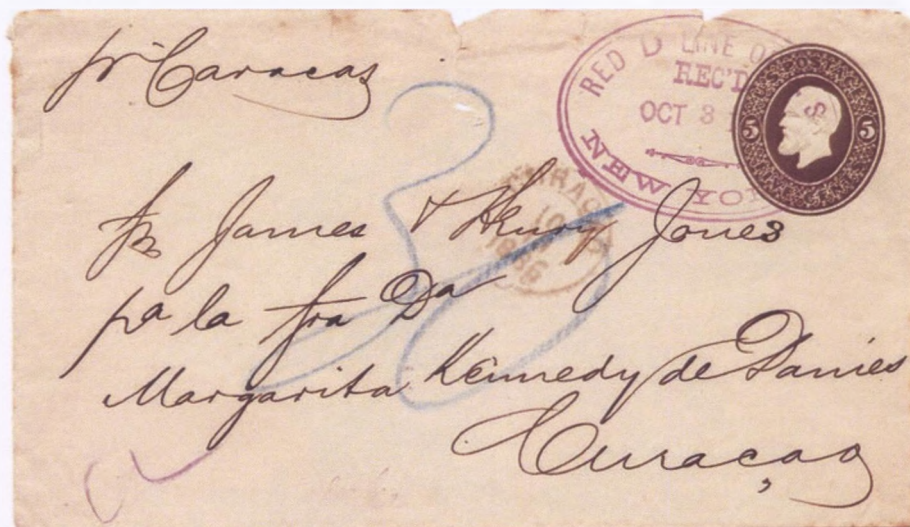


Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



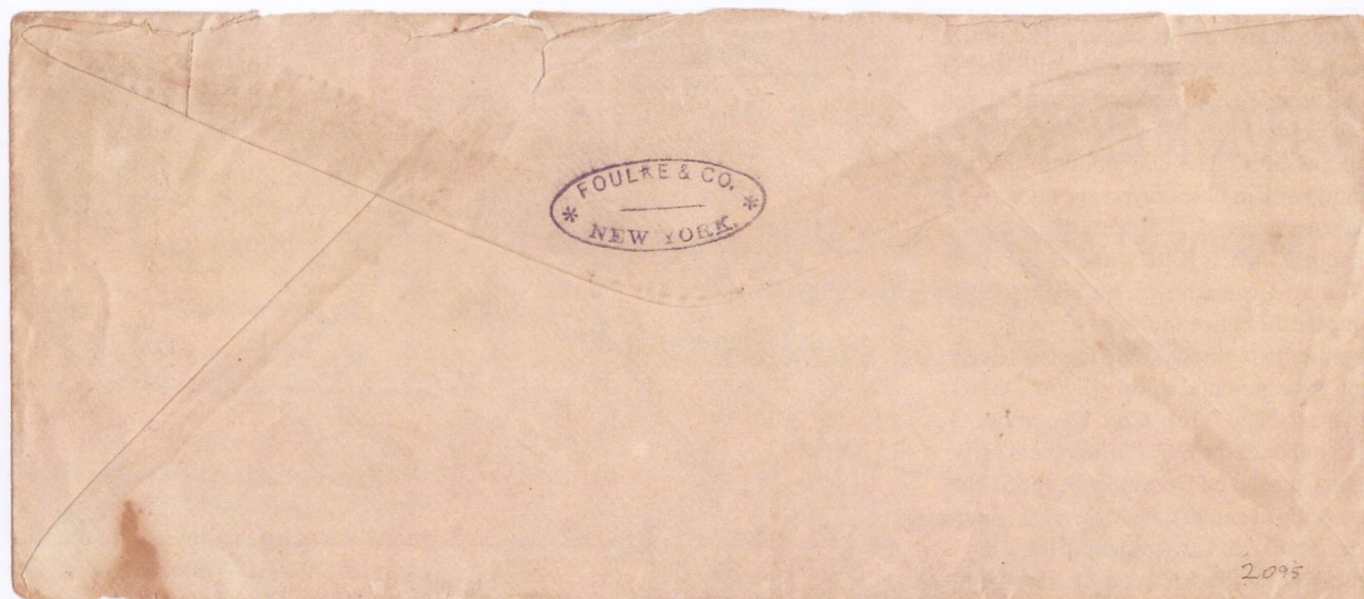


Figure 8



Figure 9

they were sent out of the UPU mailbags), in effect, they were still required to pay postage (stamped envelope) to get to their destination. Therefore, this initial charge can be thought of as a fee, not unlike the "supplementary fee" used in New York City's supplementary system. The charge for supplementary mail was double postage (fee + postage). Although a bit different, the charge for Red D Line mail was the fee (entire) + double postage due by addressee. Also similar is the process of placing mail on-board ships at the last minute of sailing. During the 1880's, supplementary mail was received at the main post office after the ordinary mails had closed. Red D Line letters were received just prior to ship departures at the Red D Line office "up to noon on days the steamers sail". Finally, both systems predominately carried business correspondence regarding shipping information as well as bills of lading. Red D Line covers are quite scarce but occasionally appear at auction or in dealer's stocks and make an excellent addition to any collection of postal history procedural oddities.

Gallagher, Scott, editor, "Answer to Problem Covers in Issue No. 146.", *Chronicle of the US Classics Postal Issues* (The Cover Corner), August, 1990.

Graham, Richard, H., "Steamship Company Mail and Postal Laws.", *Linn's Stamp News*, August, 1991.

*New Amsterdam Gazette*: New York City, July, 1885.

Starnes, Charles, J., *United States Letter Rates to Foreign Destinations 1847 to GPU - UPU*, Louisville, Kentucky: Leonard H. Hartmann Philatelic Bibliopole, 1982.

*The Business Directory of New York City and Newark City, N.J.*, New York City: The American Reporter Co., 1886.



## NYC "SHIP" Postmark Used as a Canceler

by Roger D. Curran



Figure 2

The cover in Figure 1 bears an uncommon New York postmark canceling a Sc11 stamp. An illustration of this style of postmark as presented in Alexander is shown here as Figure 2.<sup>1</sup> Alexander gives it a "7" rarity number which translates to "rare" with 7-10 examples known.<sup>2</sup> In 2005 Dick Winter examined the cover and reconstructed its itinerary. His report is quoted as follows:

"8 February 1853 (27 Jan on Greek calendar) – Syra (?) to Union Springs, New York  
 ~11 February 1853 – French Line Du Levant steamer *Caire* departed Syra  
 19 Feb 1853 – *Caire* arrived at Marseille  
 21 February 1853 – letter arrived at Paris (French entry marking applied here showing entry from Greece at Marseille)  
 22 February 1853 – letter arrived at Bureau Maritime, Havre  
 27 Feb 1853 – Union Line sailing packet *St. Denis*, Captain Follansbee, departed Havre  
 11 April 1853 (evening) – *St. Denis* arrived at New York

I can't read the Greek postmark, but it may have been applied at Syra as it starts with an "S." I think the sender (perhaps on an American vessel in the Mediterranean) put the 3¢ adhesive on the letter thinking it would pay the U.S. internal postage. Apparently, the French considered the letter paid and sent it to Havre for a sailing ship to the U.S. Upon arrival in New York, the 3¢ adhesive was ignored and the letter was marked as an incoming ship letter and rated 7¢ postage due, 2¢ ship fee plus 5¢ U.S. inland fee for an unpaid letter."

Dick remarked that he had seen no mail from Greece this early.

Another 1853 cover bearing the Figure 2 postmark as a canceler is shown as Figure 3.

It was sold as lot 39 in Siegel sale 899 of September 27, 2005 and the image is shown through the courtesy of Siegel Auction Galleries. As with the adhesive on the Figure 1 cover, the 12¢ bisect was not accepted and the cover was rated as an unpaid ship letter charged a 2¢ fee for the ship captain's service in depositing the letter in the NYPO, plus 5¢ internal postage to Boston.



Figure I



Figure 3

<sup>1</sup>Alexander, Thomas J. *U.S. Postal Markings 1851-61*, UPSCS, Columbus OH 1979, pg. 265.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pg. 4.



## Noted in Passing

by Roger D. Curran

The November 2016 *NEWS* illustrated on page 74 an odd marking that combines a Batavia, New York postmark with canceling bars. We expressed doubt that the Post Office Department (POD) would have found this marking to be acceptable for use as a canceler of stamps since using a postmark as a canceler had long been seen by the POD to create legibility problems. We wondered if Batavia used the marking only for local mail as was the case of the cover that was illustrated. Recently, the cover shown here as Figure 1 came to our attention bearing a similar marking, this from Holly, Michigan, except that it also shows a year date. And we note that Figure 1 was a piece of out-of-town mail. Apparently there was a commercial sup-

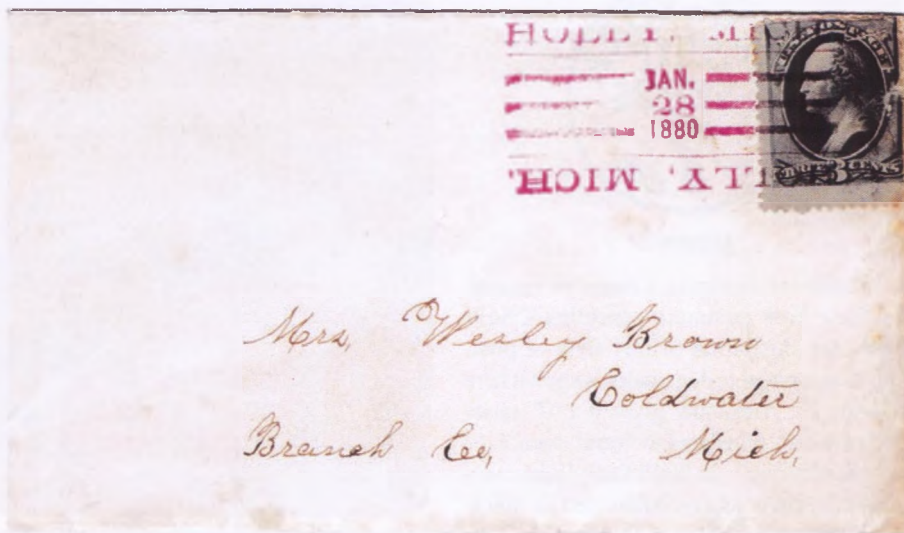


Figure 1

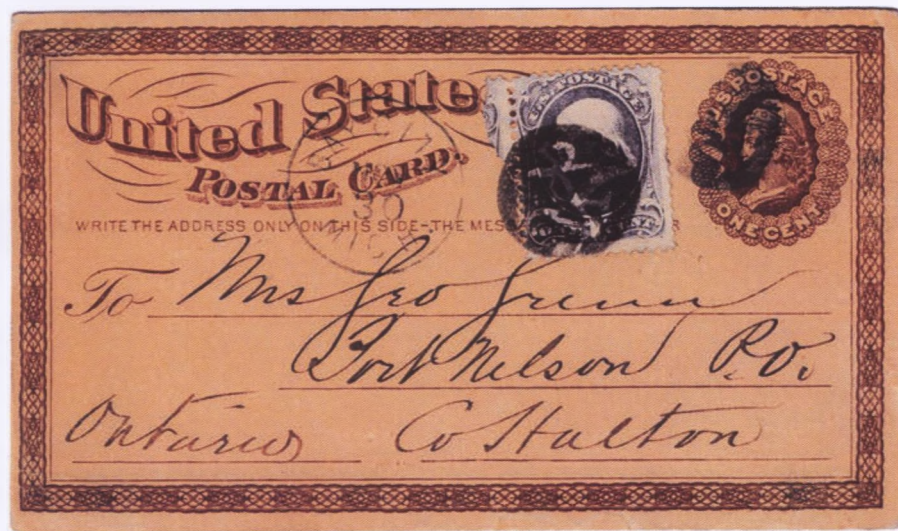


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

plier that offered handstamps with this design. Judging from covers available today, use of this postmark design never achieved widespread use. Reports of additional post offices that used these postmarks would be very much welcomed. I'm confident, incidentally, that the handstamps were rubber faced.

While on the subject of Michigan postal history, Figure 2 illustrates a quite delicate anchor and rope cancel from Bay City, Michigan which may or may not have been duplexed to the CDS. The excellent tracing is provided through the courtesy

of John Donnes. Bay City sits just below the foot of Saginaw Bay which is part of Lake Huron. The cancel is not listed in Cole or Whitfield.

The ellipse cancel on the off-cover J3 postage due stamp in Figure 3 seems ordinary enough at first glance. But there is something odd about it. In the center there clearly appears to be a letter "C." Even under magnification, it seems unquestionably to be a "C," not an incomplete letter "O" or ring. The odd thing is that the orientation of this "C" indicates that the ellipse



would have been horizontal. Vertical ellipses, of course, are overwhelmingly the norm. Any horizontal ellipse, in my experience, would be rare. I have no idea what post office used this cancel. Apart from the orientation of the “C,” the ellipse design is otherwise quite unremarkable. Can readers report other examples of this cancel or provide information on where it was used?

Figure 4 shows a pair of Banknotes bearing two strikes of a cancel consisting of a circle within which the name “SHERMAN” appears. Again, the tracing is courtesy of John Donnes. We can speculate that “SHERMAN” was the name of a railway mail clerk since such uses in the 1870s and 1880s of the last name in cancelers are well known. (See Whitfield page 153 for tracings of similar cancels). Figure 5 shows two strikes of “AYLES” within an outer rim at top and bottom. A prominent “S,” no doubt for “south,” appears below “AYLES.” Figure 6 is likely the mate to Figure 5 (although an upper rim is not visible) with what must be an “N” below. Figure 6 identifies the full spelling of the Figure 5 name to be “SAYLES.” Neither cancel is listed in Cole, Whitfield or Willard. Who can report additional examples of these cancels or the name of the rail line involved?

The card in Figure 7, addressed to an attorney in Charlottesville, Virginia, originated at Gordonsville, Virginia and was missent to the University of Virginia post office whereupon the “MISSSENT” markings and the University of Virginia postmark, apparently duplexed to the “18” in circle, were struck. The “18” in circle corresponds, of course, to the “18” in the postmark, but what would be the purpose



Figure 7

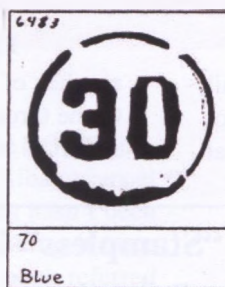


Figure 8



Figure 9

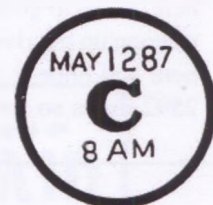


Figure 10

of restating the day in a companion marking? I assume the “18” in circle was not designed as a canceler of stamps because, as far as I know, examples have not been reported from UVa with the “18” or other similar numbers in a circle, although there is Whitfield 6483, listed in blue ink and unattributed – see Figure 8. The year of mailing the Figure 7 card, based on the dateline on the back, is 1879. Can readers unravel the mystery of this unusual duplex marking?

The Figure 9 stamp was canceled

by two strikes of a Boston marking designed to record receipt of incoming mail from other post offices. It was to be struck on the back of covers but, presumably in this case, the clerk noted that the stamp on the front of the cover had escaped cancellation and rectified the situation with the handstamp he was using. In their seminal book *Boston Postmarks to 1890*, Blake and Davis show a number of tracings of variations of this marking on page 30 – see Figure 10 for an example.

## Miles City, Montana Monogram Cancel

by Roger D. Curran

The 1890s saw a very diminished use of fancy cancels, even from just a decade earlier. And those that are noted are primarily from the first half of the decade. A cancel such as that in Figure 1 on a Sc 264 stamp, which was introduced in 1895, is unusual. The stamp and cancel were opined “genuine” in a 2016 APEX certificate. The cancel is described on the certificate as containing the letters “UM” which is understandable given their appearance. Similar but not the same cancels appear in Cole (Figure 2) and Whitfield (Figure 3). Earlier this year the



Figure 1

ML-214



1890 Issues

Figure 2

II

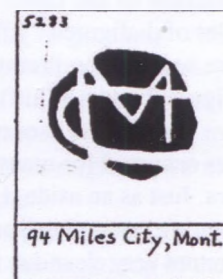


Figure 3



postal card in Figure 4, dated July 17, 1896, appeared on eBay. Surely the Figures 1 and 4 cancels are the same. I believe we can say that the letters are "MC."

Miles City is an operating post office established in 1877 and the town lies along the Yellowstone River in the less populated eastern portion of the state. The population of Miles City in 1890 was reported to be 956.

The message on the back of the card is interesting:

Miles City, Mont. July 7. 96

I arrived here at 10 this am. Had good roads from the creeks where I was delayed nearly all the way here. Hope to go on again this afternoon up the river towards Big Timber. Got lots of mail here and hope to make B.T. Thurs night or Friday. Got 2592 miles so far rode 106 yesterday. Have stopped at

ranches of all kinds and am seeing lots of the country. Came through some – pretty rugged. A.R.F.

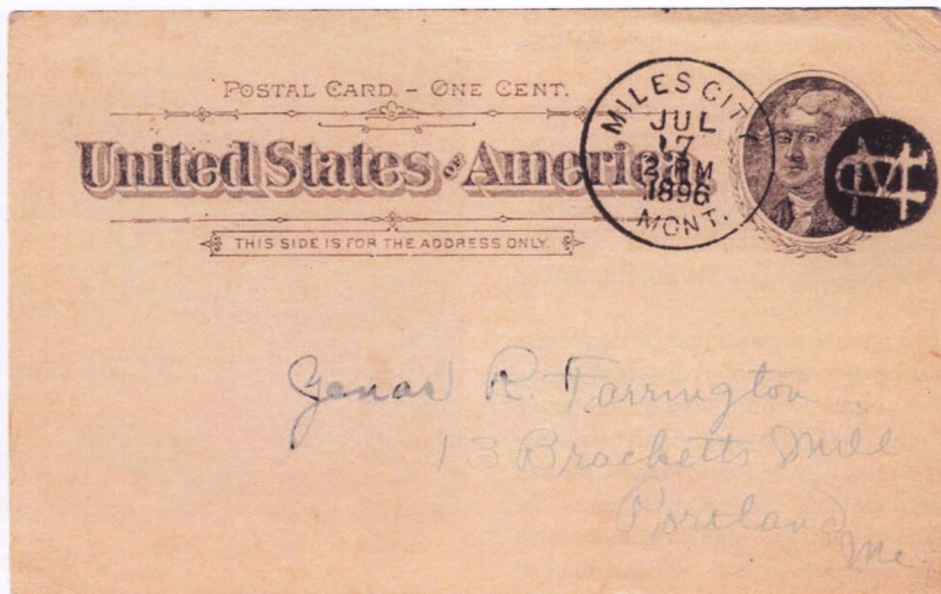


Figure 4

## Fultonville, NY "Stampless" Cancel

by Roger D. Curran

Figure 1 illustrates what can be considered a "grid" cancel of three bars. The cover is postmarked Fultonville, NY and addressed to a party at "Rome Oneida Co. NY." The Fultonville post office was established in 1832 in Montgomery Co. and operates today.

This type of cancel may have been discussed in the literature but, if so, I haven't found it. While viewing the Figure 1 cancel as a grid is reasonable, I don't believe it started out that way. It was, I suspect, originally a "10" in circle and the "0" was cut at the top and bottom to make it a grid and also, perhaps, to eliminate any confusion about a "10" rate being applicable to the cover. Several examples of disfigured "10" in circle markings used as cancelers are seen in the literature – see Skinner-Eno examples in Figure 2 and a Whitfield example in Figure 3.

Occasional uses of "stampless" rate markers as cancelers occurred for many years after the end of the stampless era. Just as an aside, I have noticed that some of the covers bearing "stampless" cancels also show town postmarks that are not very clear due to deteriorating handstamps, ink clogging, etc. In both cases, one supposes, these reflect the desires of thrifty postmasters to save money.

Comments and additional information will be welcomed.



Figure 1

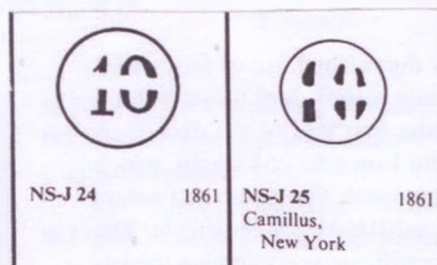


Figure 2

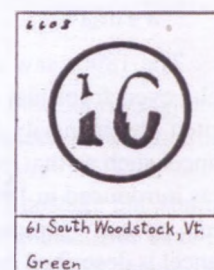


Figure 3



## A Stenciled Cancel

by Roger D. Curran

The cover in Figure 1, postmarked Albany, Missouri, bears a remarkable cancel - remarkable from the standpoint of how it was applied. It is a stenciled marking and has not, as far as I know, been reported before in the literature. Why a time consuming stenciling process was chosen is an interesting question. One can speculate that the postmaster had time on his hands and wanted to create a cancel with a distinctive appearance, which was surely accomplished. Albany is an operating post office in Gentry County established in 1857.

The Figure 1 cancel brings to mind an interesting article written by George W. Linn that appeared in the November 1956 *NEWS* and was reproduced in the *Special 50th Anniversary Issue* of the *NEWS* published in 2001. Given its direct relevance to the Albany cancel and the fact that it tells an entertaining story that hasn't been in print for more than 15 years, we are publishing it once again, this time with some minor editing. The book referred to in the article, authored by Mr. Linn, is entitled *The PAID Markings of the U.S. Stamp in 1861*. Although written many years ago (1955), it remains today a valuable resource for collectors.

### A NEW DISCOVERY

Due to the eagle eye of Mr. L.A. Hazard of Derby, N.Y., the philatelic world may be astonished to find a new type of cancellation that heretofore has never been known to have been used on any postage stamp.

The following letter from Mr. Hazard tells the story as good as I can tell it and it was due to his purchase of my recent book ... that this discovery was made.

Dear Mr. Linn:

Received your new book ... it certainly is a dandy. The print is so large and clear, the descriptions so plain and the arrangements of subject matter so logical that it is a pleasure to use the book. Wish we could have other small books on stamps like it. I can well understand that it does not pay to make such a book as the possible sales are so limited. But I for one thank you for the time and effort spent on this book.

My son and I have been studying the Fancy Paid type VI and have about decided that it might have been made with a stencil. The spaces in the letters correspond with those made by a stencil and most of the old stencils have fancy marks above and below the letters. Stencils were very common in the old days. They



Figure 1

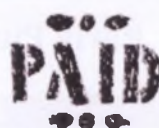


Figure 2

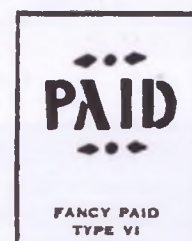


Figure 3

were used to put the address on freight boxes and any number of other things. I have a bedspring made in a factory here in 1870 with a stencil marking of 5 lines on it.

I never heard of so small a stencil but the postmaster might have been a maker of stencils or had a friend who made one for him as a novelty to cancel stamps. It would not take much more time to use than some of the old cork cancellations. It would be interesting if we ever found the name of the town where it was used.

Sincerely,  
L.A. Hazard

For lack of any better idea I am going to go along with the belief suggested by Mr. Hazard until proof to the contrary is available. This proof may be found if all collectors who may have a copy of this marking will cooperate. I should like to see such markings as I have a theory which might prove or disprove the belief of Mr. Hazard and myself.

The whole key to the thought that this marking may have been made by a stencil lies in the fact that the back loop of the letter "P" is separated from the down stroke by a fine white line. However, this line is so faint in our illustration that it barely shows and may not show at all in this illustration. The



object of that white line, which would be the face of the brass plate of the stencil, was to hold the inner portion (what appears as the white spot) in the stencil plate. You will note also that the front stroke of the letter "A" is separated from the back stroke, at the back, and that the back curved stroke of the letter "D" is also separated from the front stroke of the "D." This is how stencils were cut, usually cut from thin sheets of brass, but could be cut from other metals, or materials.

Another striking resemblance to stencils is the presence of three small marks above and below the word PAID. There is a small diamond shape mark with a round dot in the center. This is a common mark on most all old stencils. For the sake of you who may not understand what a stencil is, or how it is used, we can say that the print from a stencil is made by laying the stencil on the object where the print is to be made and then brushing over it with a small brush that has been dipped in ink. The part of that stencil that is cut out is the part as shown by our illustration of the PAID. When the brush with ink is moved over the stencil, the ink makes the print as shown.

It is not beyond the possibility that such a stencil was used to make this print and if so, it represents an entirely new and

heretofore unheard of method of canceling stamps. By all means, if you have a copy of this cancel, please let me see it for study and comparison. It is the FANCY PAID – TYPE VI, on page 89 in my book.

As yet we do not know in what town this PAID was used, so that a copy on cover would be of very great interest.

The tracing that accompanied the 1956 *NEWS* article is shown here as Figure 2 (defining better the thin white lines) and the tracing of this cancel that appeared earlier in the Linn book as "Fancy Paid – Type VI" is shown as Figure 3. The cancel is listed in the Skinner-Eno book on page 321 as PM-PD 27 with the notation "stencil(?)."

The August 2015 *NEWS* (pg. 135) illustrated two off-cover stamps canceled by stenciled markings, one a Sc 65 canceled by a partial townmark and the other a 3¢ green canceled by a numeral "6." The May 2013 *NEWS* illustrated a Sc 65 canceled by a partial strike of a stenciled Waverly, Ohio townmark.

Readers are encouraged to report information about other stenciled postal markings used as cancels.

## Early Pittsburgh Machine Cancels

by Roger D. Curran

Machine cancel specialists have identified certain Pittsburgh postmark and cancel combinations, used in Pittsburgh on a very limited basis in 1871 and 1872, as the products of a machine of an unknown inventor. The 1871 markings differ considerably from those used in 1872 and are much harder to find, with fewer than 15 covers known. The cancel portion in 1871 took the form of either a hollow star or a hollow shield. The dies were double lined as shown in Figure 1<sup>1</sup> but quickly filled with ink. Covers are reported from July through October 1871.

The stamp in Figure 2 is a Sc 149 that was introduced in March 1871 and I have wondered if the star cancel was from the Pittsburgh machine. The distance from tip to tip for this cancel is reported by Reg Morris and Bob Payne to be 22mm,<sup>2</sup> but in the case of Figure 2 is 21mm. Most known strikes are heavily inked but Figure 2 is not. That might account for the difference. Figure 3 shows a black and white image of a portion of a cover that was in Bob Payne's collection. The Figure 2 cancel shows breaks that are at least somewhat similar to those in Figure 3 and both strikes give the appearance of the top arm being larger than the one immediately to the left. If Figure 2 is a Pittsburgh machine star, it was likely used on a cover to a foreign destination which would make it very nice. I'm not aware that 1871 cancels are reported on a 7¢ stamp. In a similar vein, John Donnes submits the 12¢ stamp, Sc 151, in Figure 4 bearing an 1872 Pittsburgh machine cancel. Have other examples on the 12¢ been reported?

<sup>1</sup> Reg Marris and Bob Payne "The Pittsburgh Star and Shield Machine Cancels of Unknown Origin" *Machine Cancel Forum*, July 1987, pg. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 4

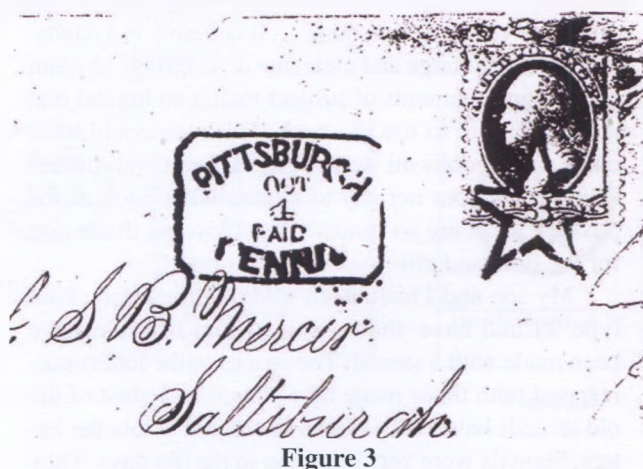


Figure 3



## Asked and Answered

by Joe Crosby

Early reports in the literature, including Whitfield who did his tracings in the early 1950s (see Figure 1), identified a particular cancel from Westerville, Ohio as containing the letters SKLO. In the Summer 1987 *NEWS*, Alyce Evans changed the identification of letters to SKED with a reported use of the cancel on May 12, 1888. She also identified William Rowe as the postmaster at the time, and reported that a Sked family lived in the area. She opined that perhaps one of the Sked family members clerked at the post office.

The Whitefield book was originally published in 2001. It has been updated twice, in 2007 and 2012, and along the way the "SKED" report was made. In the 1995 Cole book, SKED lettering is shown as well as a span of dates – see Figure 2.

This article answers Alyce's 30-year-old speculation. One phone call to the Westerville Public Library, Local History Center and I asked about a cancel from their town in 1888 that was either SKLO or SKED. The librarian, Nina Thomas, *immediately* replied that there is a large Sked family in Westerville. I asked if any of them ever worked at the local post office. She would have to get back to me. Thirty minutes later I got an email with the information about John Franklin Sked who owned a greenhouse for 40 years at the corner of College Avenue and Vine Street in Westerville and had spent a few years out west as a detective. In a letter to the local editor (undated) J.F Sked said "he was never postmaster, as previously reported, but assistant to W. Rowe." The librarian reported that William Rowe served as postmaster from 1885-1889.

So the correct attribution of this multiple letter killer is to the Westerville, Ohio Assistant Postmaster in 1888, John Franklin Sked. The known period of use is from May 12 to May 22, 1888. Now we need additional on cover examples to further expand the period of use.

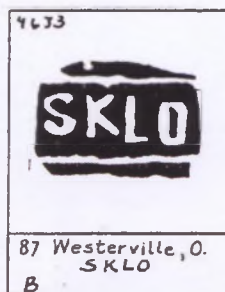


Figure 1

ML-228 II+



"SKED"  
Westerville, Ohio

May 12-15, 1888

Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

## When "US" Doesn't Necessarily Mean "United States"

by Roger D. Curran

Cancels featuring "US" in the design were popular in the 19th century. These letters are routinely assumed to represent "United States," although it is conceivable that in a small percentage of cases the letters have some other meaning such as the initials of the local postmaster or postal clerk. I am, however, aware of no cases where such an instance has been established.

But enough of theoretical possibility. There is one situation where it can be an open question as to whether a "US" in a cancel was really intended to mean "United States" and this is where the town name has the initials "US." There are at least three post offices in towns with "US" initials that used "US"

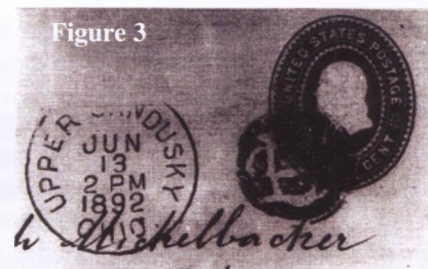


Figure 1





Figure 2



US-108

11-



Upper Sandusky, Ohio

June 13, 1892



Figure 3

Figure 4

cancels. Union Springs, Alabama employed at least three different "US" cancels. Figure 1 illustrates a cancel that matches Skinner-Eno PT-US 20. Figure 2 shows a different "US," one that matches Cole US-34. Cole also presents a third variation, US-33. Figure 3 shows Cole tracing US-108, a cancel used by Upper Sandusky, Ohio along with a black and white image from a clipping file of an actual strike. Figure 4 shows a "US" cancel from Union Square, NY, Whitfield tracing 5163. Figure 5 shows a postal card image taken from a photocopy. (For some reason, no postmark was struck on the card.) Unfortunately, there is no copy of the back but there is a note that says the dateline reads "Union Square March 31st." According to the 1876 *Postal Guide* the only Union Square post office was the one in New York. Thanks

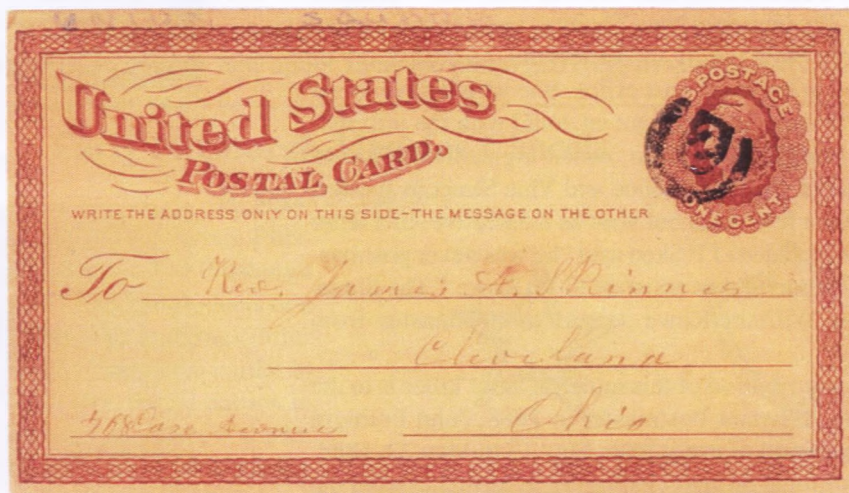


Figure 5

to John Donnes for the tracing.

The "US" in one or more of these cancels may well have been intended to represent "United States" but we'll likely never know for sure. Readers who can report additional "U.S." towns that used a "US" cancel are urged to contact the *NEWS*.

## New York "Ocean Mail" Postmark

by Roger D. Curran

The November 2016 *NEWS* carried a brief article on a distinctive New York postmark, used from 1854-1861, that includes a small circular grid within the outer rim. A tracing of this postmark made many years ago by noted postal historian Stanley Ashbrook is shown in Figure 1. I have always found this tracing to be very appealing as it captures, in my estimation, the graceful essence of the marking. This postmark is considered by students as the "Type III" 1850s New York ocean mail postmark used on mail to Cali-

fornia and Oregon via Panama. The first two types are beyond the scope of this article but suffice it to say they contain no grid and are more similar in appearance to other New York postmarks. They were used before the Type III.

In the November article, the Type III was shown on a cover to Nova Scotia dated November 20, 1856. Uses not to California or Oregon are quite unusual. However, as remarked in November, the several covers dated February 25, 1854, the earliest recorded date of use, were all



Figure 1



to eastern cities. Beyond these and the several examples to Cuba, uses to foreign destinations or non-west coast domestic addresses are very scarce. The present article lists covers in both categories.

I know of three examples of the Type III, dated later than February 25, 1854, to domestic addresses not involving California or Oregon. There is a March 9 cover, addressed to Lexington, Kentucky with no docketing or enclosure to indicate a year date. However, there is a pencil note on the back in an anonymous hand that states: "Stamp late 1853 or early 1854 printing per C. Chase." (See the Winter 1999 *NEWS* for an image of this cover.) A second cover, also postmarked March 9, is addressed to New Orleans – see Figure 2. It is the outer sheet of a folded letter, the back of which is docketed "1854/New York 8 March." It seems very likely that the Lexington cover is also 1854. For the third cover, we quote Stanley Ashbrook from page 353 of his *Special Service*:

"...an unsealed piece of circular mail with a single 1¢ 1851, Type IV from New York to Killingworth, Conn., tied by an "O.M." strike of "Mar 29." There is no evidence of year use but from the shade and impression of the 1¢ stamp, my guess is that the year is 1854."

The illustration of the cover to Nova Scotia in the November *NEWS* led to a report by Tom Mazza of several covers in his collection (Figures 3-6) bearing Type III postmarks addressed to foreign destinations. Figures 3 and 4 show covers to Panama postmarked August 20, 1857 and March 11, 1861 respectfully. Tom noted that Figure 3 was sent during the period when the ocean route was still the default route to California. The address on this cover would not be clear in the illustration. It is: "D.B. Hodges/Care of US Consul/ Panama/ New Grenada." The Figure 4 cover originated in Havana and was transmitted to New York by a forwarding



Figure 2

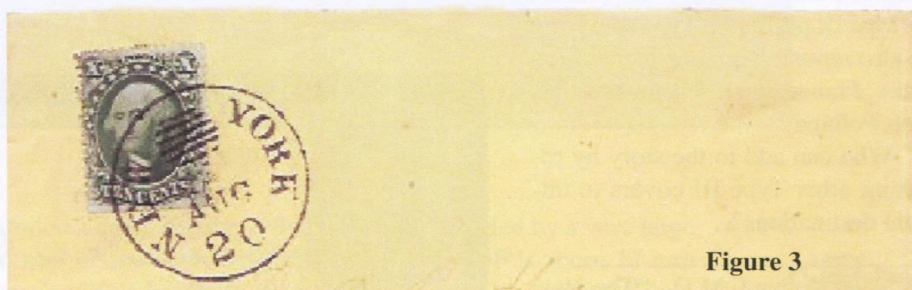


Figure 3

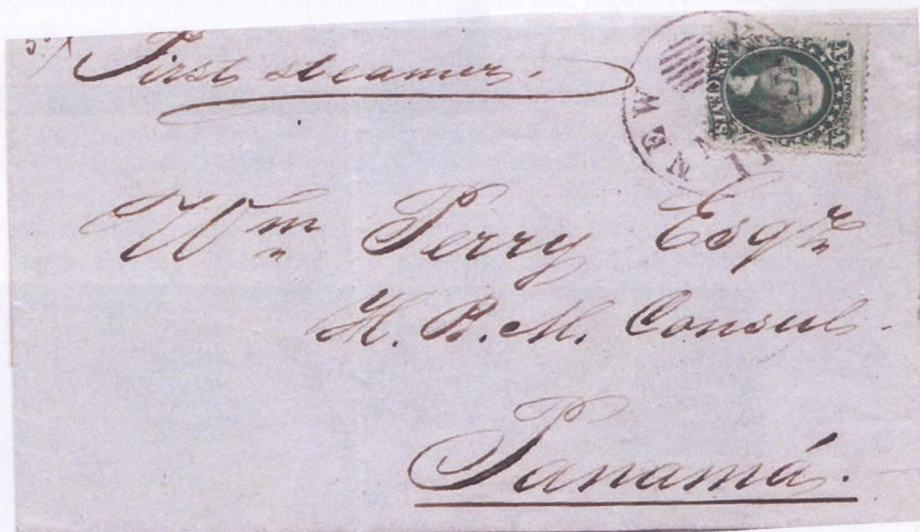


Figure 4



agent. Figure 5 illustrates a cover front to England with the pair of 12¢ stamps paying the British treaty rate and the 1¢ stamp paying carrier service to the post office. Figure 6 is a mourning cover to Paris dated June 11, 1861 struck also with a regular New York foreign mail "PAID" postmark. Siegel galleries sold the cover to Nicaragua in Figure 7 as lot 1039 in sale 1,000 (2/8/10). The cover was described as "... franked to pay the 34¢ British mail rate via St. Thomas though actually sent via American Packet Direct (10¢)...". This may well be the only known on-cover use of the 30¢ stamp (Sc 38) canceled by the Type III postmark. Type III covers are also reported to Hong Kong, Bordeaux, France and to Portugal by M. Scott Polland.<sup>1</sup>

Who can add to the story by reporting other Type III covers to unusual destinations?

<sup>1</sup> W. Scott Polland, M.D. "The New York Ocean Mail Postmarks Via Panama to California and Oregon 1851-1861" *Western Express*, Vol. 14, #1 (January 1964), pp. 5-18.



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



## Correction

by Roger D. Curran

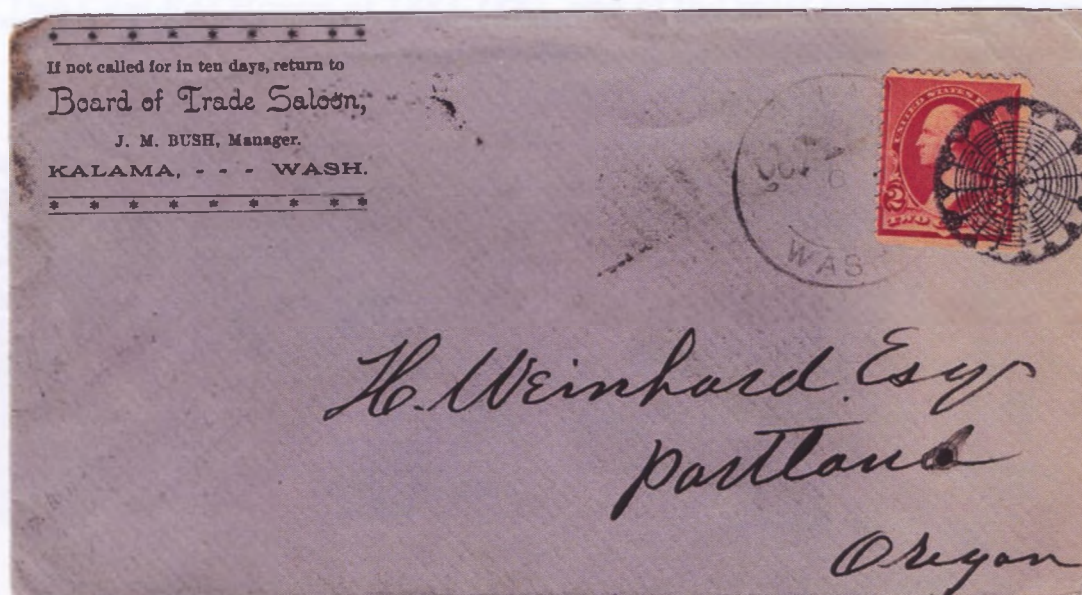


Figure 1

The May 2013 *NEWS* (pg 108) illustrated a cover bearing a Sc 220 stamp canceled by a very large wheel of fortune (WOF) measuring 23.5 mm in diameter, whereas the typical WOF is about 17 mm wide. The accompanying postmark (unduplexed) is basically illegible but is probably from Kalama, Washington. "WASH." can be seen at the bottom and the corner card refers to Kalama (see Figure 1). I speculated that the large cancel was "...due to considerable, quite evenly applied, downward pressure causing the rubber face of the canceler to spread out. WRONG! The cancels are different. Club member Larry Rausch points out (what should have been obvious to me) that while the designs are similar they differ in an important respect. The number of wedges in Figure 1 is 16 while the typical WOF has 24 (see Figure 2). Can readers show further examples of the Figure 1 cancel or of other variations of the typical WOF design.

1332

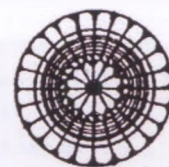


Figure 2

While on the subject of wheel of fortune cancels, collectors find that there is a wide variety of postmarks associated with them. One of the more unusual is shown as Figure 3. The Ritchie, WV post office operated in Ritchie County from 1847 to 1895.

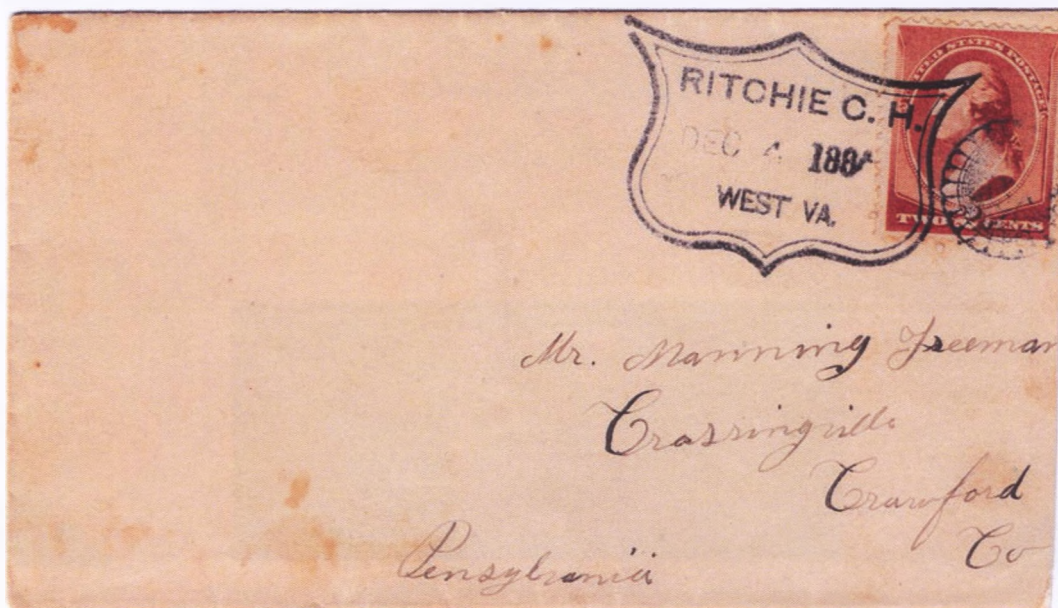
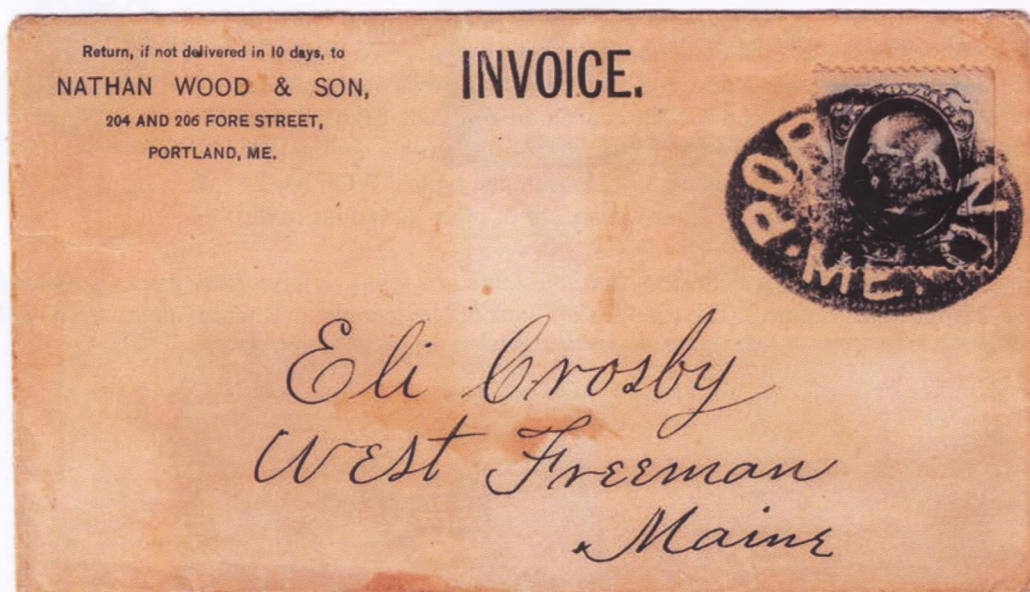
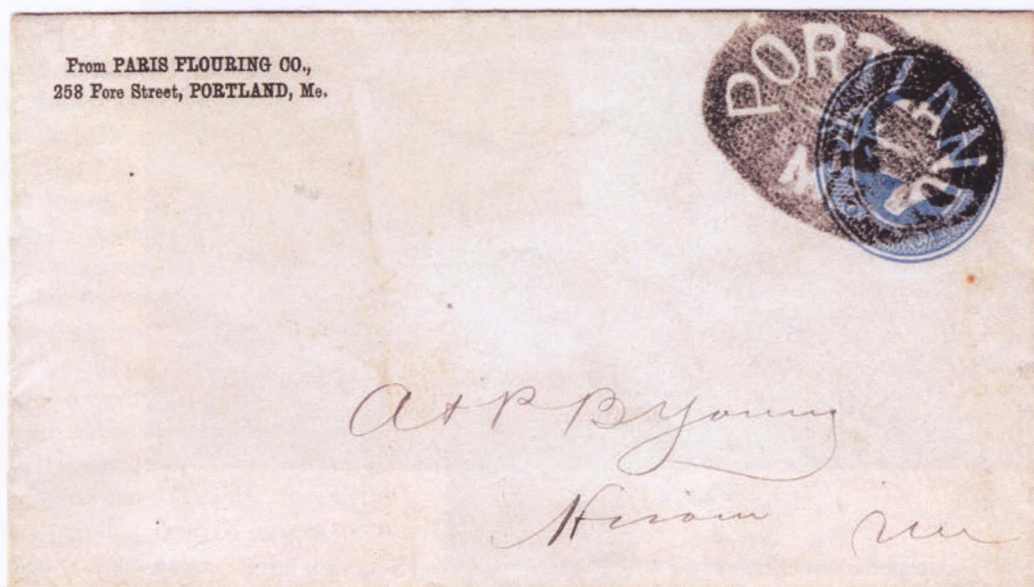


Figure 3



## Portland Ovals

Shown below are two similar but distinctly different Portland, Maine oval cancels designed for use on non-first class mail. Thanks to John Donnes for the tracings. Are there additional versions of this basic cancel design out there to be reported? An example of the bottom cancel is shown on page 313 of the Cole book.





From the collection of Edward I. Willard, author of the 1970 book  
*The Two Cent Red Brown of 1883-1887*, one of the most important references  
 on 19th century US Cancellations.

OLD THREE CENT RATE MARKS



Paid under 3



3 in a circle



Paid over 3

3



Numeral 3



Jamaica, Vermont Paid over 3



## “Large Boston Negatives” 1878-1883

One of the interesting subgroups of this category of is comprised of cancels that show hand-carved disfigurations in the designs. These were done so that otherwise identical cancelers could be made distinctive, thus allowing the Boston post office to associate them with individual clerks. Examples are shown below.

