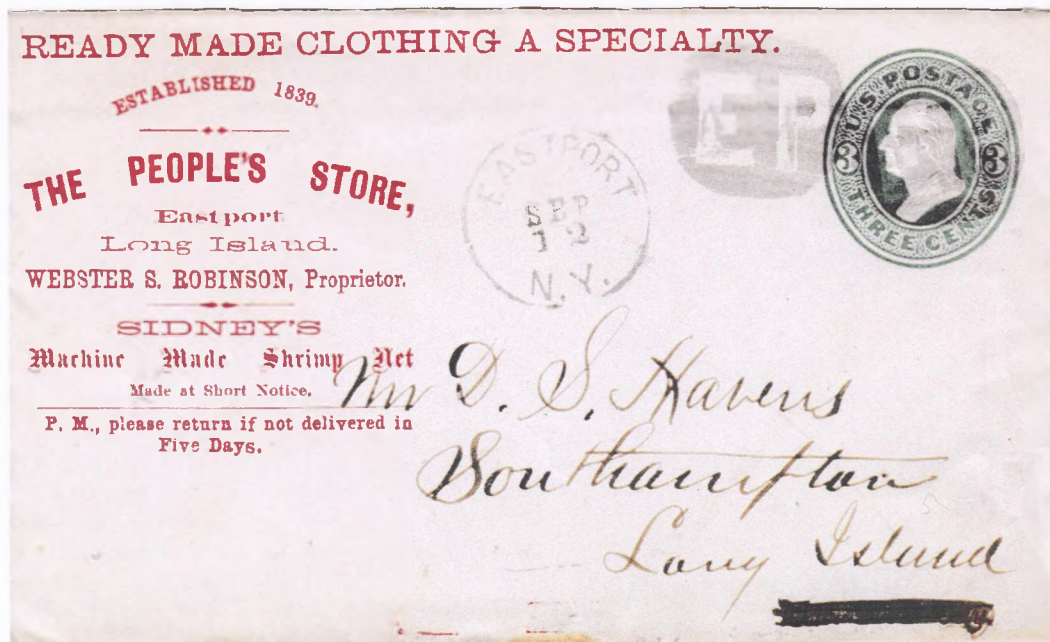




U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

Vol. 34, No. 2, Whole No. 303, November 2017



An Eastport, New York cover displaying what appears to be a newly-discovered 'EP' cancel. Roger Curran tells us more on page 33.

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The U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

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**SESCAL 2017**

The 73rd annual Stamp Exhibition of Southern California (SESCAL) was held October 13-15 in Ontario, CA.

As was previewed in the last *NEWS*, five USCC members presented talks during an all-day session, as part of the APS "On the Road" educational outreach program, the day before the show began.

In that regard, it is a pleasure to report that one of the presenters, Nick Kirke, won the SESCAL Federation Grand Award, Large Gold and USPCS Medal for his exhibit *The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City; Their Progression 1845-1877*. This was also the subject of Nick's talk which received much acclaim from the audience. In addition, Nick won a single frame Gold for his *New York City Foreign Mail Cancellations 1873-1875*.

Two other USCC members were also award winners at SESCAL. Ed Field won the single frame Reserve Grand Award and Large Gold for his *Use of \$5 stamps to Pay Registry Surcharges on Transfer Securities, 1933-48*. Ed also won a single frame Gold, the Lynn Warm Griffiths Memorial Award, and the USSS Statue of Freedom Award for *Baltimore Reds: Foreign Mail 1868-1875*.

Les Lanphear won a Gold for *United States Penalty Clause Mail, the Classic Period* and a single frame Large Vermeil for *New South Wales Penalty Clause Mail 1898 to 1902*.

WANTED !

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWS ARE WANTED! ACTUALLY, THEY ARE ESSENTIAL, OF COURSE, FOR THIS OR ANY JOURNAL TO SURVIVE. PLEASE NOTE THAT WE DIDN'T SAY ARTICLES - ALTHOUGH THEY ARE, OF COURSE, VERY MUCH NEEDED.

THERE ARE ADDITIONAL WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE. PERHAPS YOU HAVE SOME OFF OR ON COVER CANCELS THAT ARE FAVORITES AND YOU THINK OTHERS WOULD BE INTERESTED IN SEEING THEM. MAYBE THERE IS A CANCEL IN YOUR COLLECTION ABOUT WHICH YOU HAVE A QUESTION OR WISH TO FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. PERHAPS YOU HAVE SOME THOUGHTS TO SHARE ABOUT A PAST SUBJECT IN THE NEWS.

OUR CLUB CONSISTS OF UPWARDS OF 200 MEMBERS WHO SHARE A COMMON INTEREST IN, AND KNOWLEDGE OF, CANCELLATIONS. THIS CAN BE OF REAL VALUE IN COMMENTING ON ITEMS APPEARING IN THE NEWS.

AND WHEN YOU ARE CONSIDERING A CONTRIBUTION, PLEASE REMEMBER THAT HELP IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE. YOUR EDITOR OR ANY USCC OFFICER WOULD ONLY BE DELIGHTED TO HELP YOU!

New York City's Early Domestic Cancellations and NYPO Procedures

By Ardy Callender

Interest in New York City's 1851 short-lived early domestic cancellations has resulted in numerous articles and publications in the philatelic literature; the more relevant ones being listed at the end of this article.

Early studies concentrated on illustrating the markings and their variations as well as documenting color and periods of use. Subsequently, most authors came to realize the reason for the implementation of many of the markings was often a response to changes in governmental postal rates and policies. Few investigators considered other (local) factors for the adoption of these different cancellation devices. However, Hubert Skinner (1992, p.80) recognized that New York City's early cancellations were indirectly a result of the July 1, 1851 postal rate change and that the change in cancellations was actually in response to a reorganization of the New York Post Office. Procedural changes in handling mail were the true reason for the use of different markings.

Prior to July 1, 1851 incoming mail was first sent to the "Marking Department" where it was cancelled and sent onto the "Assorting Room" to be sorted and sent to the appropriate department - all mail regardless of type or class received the same cancellation. From the outset of the July 1, 1851 rate change, incoming mail was first sorted and then sent onto the appropriate department where it was examined and cancelled - each department applying its own type of distinct cancellation. Thus, different postmarking devices were used on each type or class of mail. This system remained in use in the New York Post Office throughout the nineteenth century. Exceptions do exist but are usually a result of mail sent to the wrong department or involve auxiliary uses of a cancellation. This short article will illustrate and discuss examples of both misdirected and auxiliary uses of these early cancellation devices.

The first device employed by the NYPO to obliterate adhesives was the 13-bar square grid cancel, shown in figure 1. It was used as early as November 11, 1846 on a cover franked by a New York Postmaster's Provisional (Skinner 1995, p.175). Struck in red, it is the most common cancellation found on both values of the 1847 Issue on covers originating in New York City.

The second device employed to cancel adhesives consisted of a 7-bar encircled grid, illustrated in figure 2. First struck in red and later in black (1851) it was used sparingly on domestic letters to other cities, letters to Canada and in a few cases on letters from Canada. It is important to note that the 7-bar encircled grid was used only occasionally on letters to foreign destinations (trans-Atlantic) prior to July 1, 1851.



Figure 1



Figure 2

As a result of the July 1, 1851 reorganization of the NYPO, domestic mail was now cancelled exclusively by the 13-bar square grid. Struck in red for the first three days and black afterwards, a typical folded letter is shown as figure 3. The letter, dated July 8, 1851, is addressed to the Hon. Edwin D. Morgan, at Congress Hall, Albany, N.Y. A well struck 13-bar grid ties the stamp (Scott #10) at upper left while the unduplexed red datestamp occurs at the right; the datestamps used in conjunction with the square grid cancels were applied in red ink during the months of July and August 1851. The



Figure 3

foreign mail department also handled letters differently as adhesives were now cancelled, for the most part, by the 7-bar encircled grid.

The folded letter displayed in figure 4 is dated July 12, 1851 and is addressed to Mr. O. G. Hill, Williamsburg, Massachusetts. The adhesive is tied at the upper left by a black 7-bar encircled grid, of the type used by the foreign mail department at this time. One might surmise that the letter was mistakenly sent to the foreign department but Skinner notes (1995, p.176): "However, of the 1851 covers recorded with this grid (7- bar), nearly all are 'U.S. Express Mail' letters." It seems probable then that the "Express Mail" desk/office was located in or near the domestic department and the letter may have been mistakenly sent to the wrong desk and cancelled by one of their clerks. Similarly, a domestic department clerk could have picked up and used the wrong obliterator up by mistake. It is also possible that the same clerk processed both types mail (both outgoing domestic and "Express Mail") and used the wrong device by mistake. For comparison, an example of an "Express Mail" cover with the adhesive cancelled by the same black 7-bar encircled grid is shown as figure 5. The blue folded letter dated December 31, 1851 is addressed to Alex Wright Esq., Lowell, Massachusetts. It should be noted that the date stamp used on "Express Mail" was very different then that applied on regular domestic mail.

The stampless folded letter shown in figure 6 illustrates another use of the 13-bar grid; obliterating a mistaken datestamp. The letter, datelined July 10, 1851 in New York City is addressed to Mr. D Wakemans P.M., Mayfield Ohio. Received in the domestic department, it was struck with the typical black datestamp used for unpaid mail indicating 5 cts. was due upon delivery. Upon closer inspection in the department, it was found to be addressed to the postmaster of Mayfield, Ohio (free mailing privileges) and the black datestamp was over struck by two strikes of the 13-bar red square grid. Two strikes of a red "Free" New-York datestamp were then added at left and the letter sent onto its final destination.

A new 11-bar square grid marking was employed in the domestic department of the NYPO beginning July 17, 1851 (Allen and Curran, 2005, p. 278). It was employed until mid-August of 1851. Figure 7 illustrates an example of this marking 11-bar square grid on another folded letter addressed to Mr. O.G. Hill, Williamsburg, Massachusetts. This cover as well as the cover in figure 4 are part of a large correspondence



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

purchased by the author. What is of interest on this folded letter is the datestamp. It is struck in black, unlike any other examples observed by the author. Certainly this must have been mistakenly applied (in haste?) by the clerk.

The final remarks involve the use of the 11-bar square grid as a cancelling device on incoming mail from other cities which possess non-cancelled adhesives. Although not common, a number of covers do exist. All examples seen by the author date from after the general period of use for the 11-bar square grid; after mid-August 1851. The most distinguishing characteristic is the lack of a Philadelphia date stamp or cancellation. It is also curious that of the five covers in the author's collection, four originated in Philadelphia and the fifth was addressed to Philadelphia, then forwarded to New York City. All five covers are franked with three-cent postage. Originating in Philadelphia, the earliest example, seen in figure 8, is dated August 25, 1851 and is addressed to Beebe & Brothers. The stamp (Scott #10) applied at upper right is tied by a strong strike of the 11-bar square grid. Of special interest to this cover is a handwritten note by a previous owner stating "Aug 25, 1851, hand carried to N.Y. from Philadelphia". A common practice in the 1840s was for mail destined for another city be carried privately (out of the governmental mails) and be deposited at another post office, paying only the local (drop = one cent) rate and then placed in either general delivery for pickup or delivered by carrier for another penny. If this was the case with the cover in figure 8, why waste one or two cents by applying a three cent stamp? Could the sender had already applied the postage before sending it off with a friend or carrier? Mistakenly applied postage could be answer for one or two examples, but five covers (or more)? Other examples follow.

A folded letter originating in Philadelphia is shown in figure 9. It is docketed "Phil Oct 29th 1851, Russell & Blair" on the reverse and is addressed to Mr. Sal Montgomery Jr., New York. The stamp (Scott #11) is tied by a strong strike



Figure 9



Figure 10

of a black 11-bar square grid at left. Another example is shown as figure 10. It also originated in Philadelphia as penned on the enclosed letter. Dated November 19, 1851, it was carried to the Philadelphia post office the following day by Blood's Despatch as noted by both a double circle Blood's datestamp and the oxidized Blood's despatch local stamp at lower left corner. It is addressed to Mess. Upjohn and Co., Architects, No. 64 Broadway, New York. Apparently sent un-cancelled, upon arrival in New York City the three cent stamp (Scott #10) was cancelled with a near perfect strike of a black 11-bar square grid.

A final example is shown in figure 11. Addressed to D. Kilgore Esq., care Mess Alain & Word, Maple Street, Philadelphia Pa., the letter was sent from Steubenville, Ohio on December 1, 1851, as evidenced by the weakly-struck datestamp at left and dateline penned across the top of the enclosed letter. It was sent unpaid as noted by the black circled "5" due marking at upper right. Upon arrival in Philadelphia the address was crossed off in black ink and the forwarding address was written at the lower left corner; care G.S. Coe Cash, Ohio Life Ins. Co., New York. Presumably Mr. Kilgore applied the three cent postage (Scott #10) and Philadelphia post office forwarded the letter onto New York City. Why the Philadelphia post office neglected to cancel the adhesive is unknown, but upon arrival in New York the stamp was cancelled by a strike of the black 11-bar square grid. The docket along the left side of the letter was written over the forwarding address by the receiver in New York City.

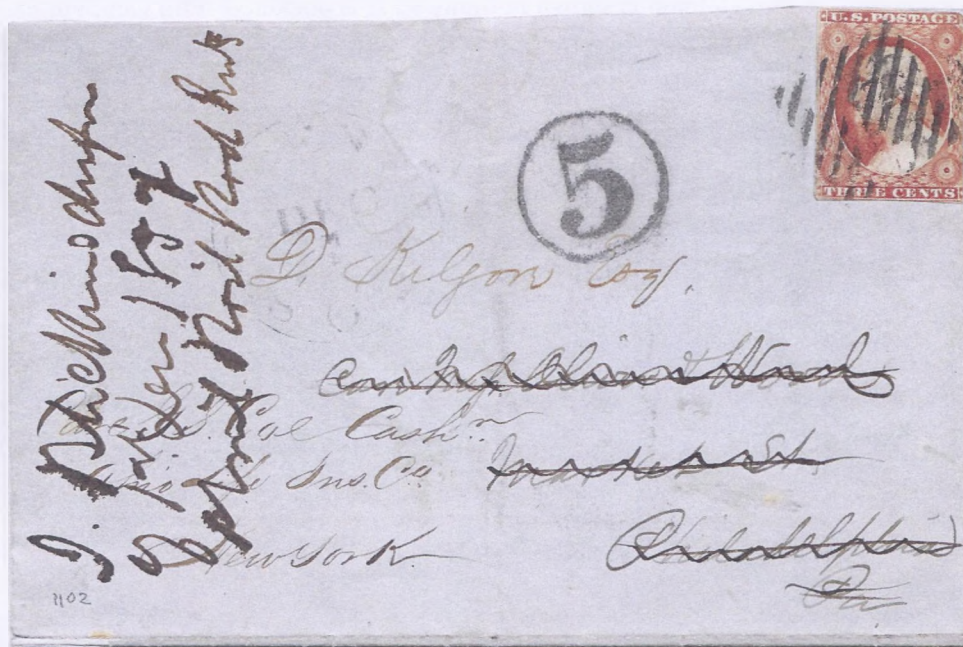


Figure 11

The question of why all the examples known to this author of non-cancelled adhesives entering the New York originated in Philadelphia is unknown. Could there have some system set up between the two post offices? Are there other examples of un-cancelled adhesives on covers entering New York City from other cities? Can someone produce an example from a different city? Any comments would be appreciated. ■

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Late Uses of Scarab Cancels

By Roger D. Curran

Richard W. Helbock wrote an informative book entitled *Postmarks on Postcards* which addressed the subject of early 20th century postal markings. Since cancellations are among the subjects covered, one can gain insight into what 19th century cancellation types continued into the next century. On pages 16-18, Helbock illustrates several carved cork cancels involving geometrics, stars, and initials. He also devotes several pages (pages 72-79) to what he refers to as 19th century design mimics. He reports a study of such markings that identified over 220 post offices that used them. Two-thirds of the total sample used target cancels, as we might expect. The second most common design involved scarab cancels, then star cancels, fine line grids typically in an ellipse shape—see figure 1, wheel of fortune cancels, and then a miscellaneous category. The *NEWS* has, incidentally, recently featured articles on early 20th century fancy cancels (mostly corks)--see February 2009 and November 2012 issues.

The purpose of this article is to illustrate two 20th century scarabs. Helbock reported 30 towns to have used scarab cancels. Figure 2 is an August 1, 1909 example from Bolton, New York and figure 3, an example dated August 24, 1921 from Turnpike, Pennsylvania, which is the latest date I have seen. The Bolton post office operated in Warren County from 1816-1954 and the Turnpike post office in York County from 1877-1926.

The earliest known use of a scarab cancel that I have seen reported is an April 17, 1879 example from Holliston, Massachusetts, a still-operating post office



Figure 1



Figure 2

established in 1818 some 30 miles SW of Boston. This report came from an Arthur Beane study of Massachusetts scarab cancels published in the May 2004 *NEWS*.

Who can submit earlier dates?

The latest date reported so far for a wheel of fortune cancel is August 5, 1917 from Wheeler, Oregon. ■

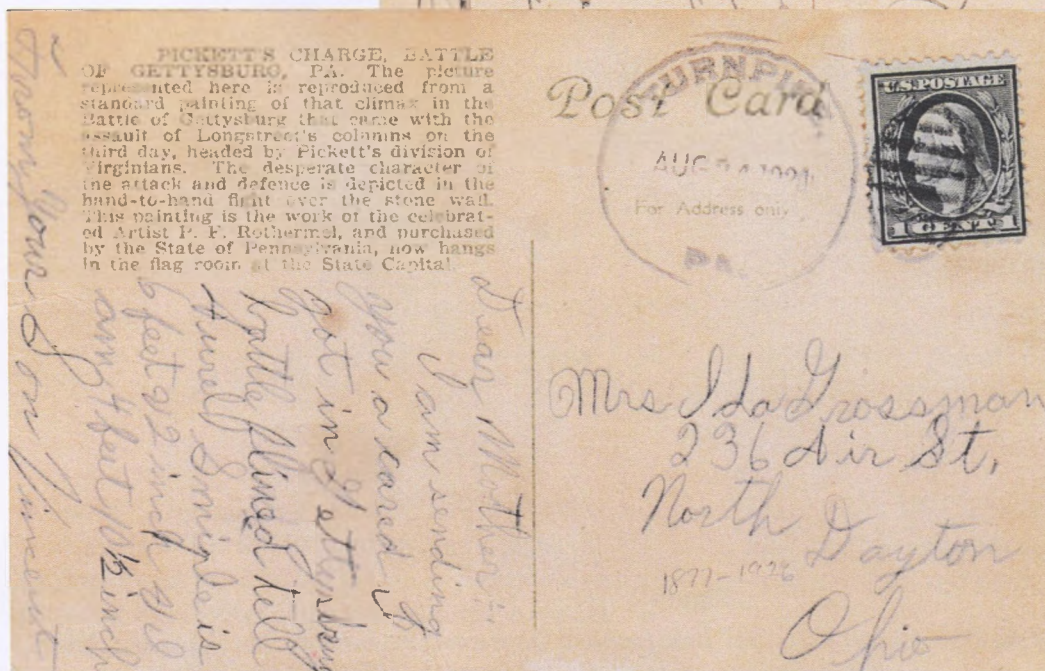


Figure 3

Early Target Cancels in Green

by Roger D. Curran

Carroll Chase, the great pioneering student of the U.S. 1851 and 1857 issue stamps made the following statement: "The target obliterator...was but rarely used on the imperforate stamps..."¹.

Chase reported targets from five post offices, one of which was Danbury, CT with the cancel struck in green.² Figure 1 illustrates the front a Danbury target. Figure 2 is a portion of the reverse of the cover, magnified somewhat to highlight the tiny writing made in Chase's hand and reads: "The extremely rare green target from Danbury Ct. tying a beautiful O.B. 66L5E Rare". The "(Chase)" notation was apparently written by Stanley Ashbrook who signed the cover above the Chase note.



Figure 1

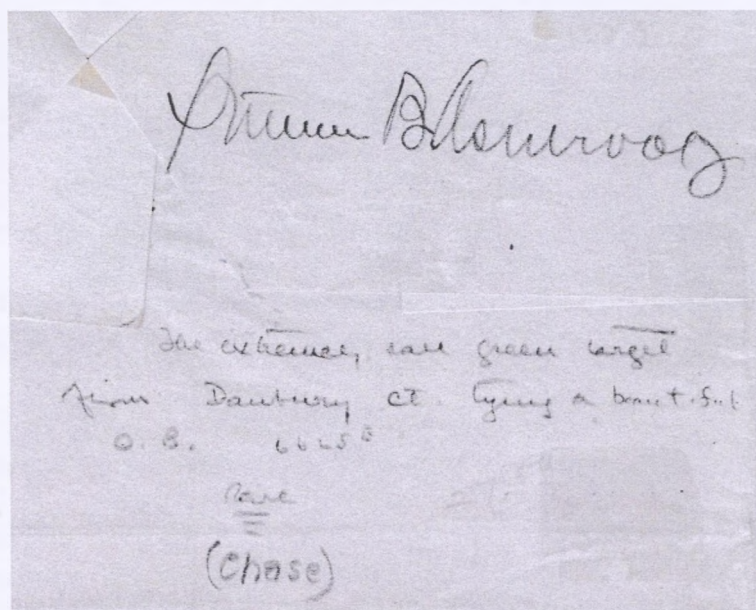
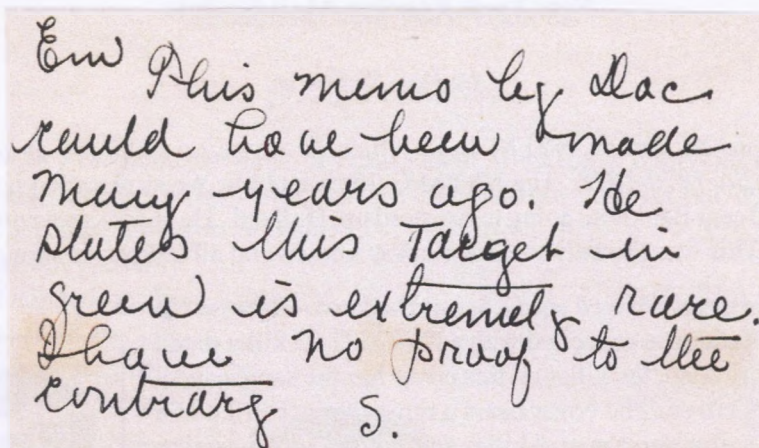


Figure 2

1. Carroll Chase, *The 3c Stamp of the United States 1851-1857 Issue* (revised) Quarterman Publications, Inc., Lawrence, MA (1975), p.334..

2. *ibid.*..



Erw This memo by Doc
could have been made
many years ago. He
states this Target in
green is extremely rare.
I have no proof to the
contrary S.

Figure 3

Also included with the cover, when it was purchased some years ago, was the note, presumably written by Ashbrook, that is shown here, slightly reduced, as figure 3. The note appears to be addressed to "Erw", whomever he may be. The "memo" referred to is the Chase notation on the cover. Ashbrook refers to Chase as "Doc" because, of course, Chase was a physician. The cover itself is blue and the postmark and cancel appear to me to be blue. I could say that the postmark seems a little warmer than the typical blue but it would be hard to declare either the postmark or cancel as green; the Scott 10 stamp, incidentally, seems very fresh with no signs of fading or discoloration.

The purpose of this article is to seek the assistance of readers who have studied colored handstamp inks used in 19th century postal markings. Do mid-19th century green inks sometimes degrade to blue? Are some philatellically accepted greens close to blue? Have Danbury green inks been seen in the early 1850s? The 1994 *American Stampless Cover Catalog*, incidentally, lists what is apparently the Danbury postmark on the cover shown in figure 1 as being used during the 1838-1854 period. It further reports it in black, blue and red inks, but not in green.³



Figure 4

Shown in figure 4 is a green 6-circle target with a dot in the center canceling a 3c imperforate on cover postmarked "MANCHESTER/MS" with ink that is also green. The 1994 ASCC lists this postmark as having been used from 1847-1853 and, as is the case in the Danbury example, reports it struck in red, blue, and black inks but not in green. A similar postmark listed only for 1854 is reported in red ink.⁴ ■

3. David G. Phillips, ed. *American Stampless Cover Catalog*, David G. Phillips Publishing Co., North Miami, FL (1997), p.30

4. *ibid.*, p.158.

New York Foreign Mail Update

by Dan Richards

The following is an update on Weiss's NYFM G-15 which is shown on page 327 in his book, *The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City 1870-1878*. The NYFM G-15 cancel Mr. Weiss recorded is on a cover dated March 21, 1871 and is franked with a 10 cent Banknote going to Amsterdam, Holland. He shows a seven-section grid killer measuring 16mm high x 18mm wide. This was the only recorded cover known and all indicators show that its origin is New York.

I have come across another cover franked with a 6 cent Banknote addressed to London, England. The 6 cent stamp is cancelled with a NYFM G-15 killer dated the same day, March 21, 1871. Also, the killer on this cover has the same cancel measurements as Mr. Weiss's cover. The cover bears a more distinct strike of a G-15 showing the cancel is a nine-section grid killer and not the seven-section grid killer as previously reported. The comparison between the two can be seen in figure 1. One would presume the cancellation on this cover was struck prior to the strike on Weiss's cover. This would account for a cleaner strike.

It is important when verifying a NYFM cancel to have more than one cover example. A cover could travel from the post office of origin where receiving the applied killer to the stamp and then sent to a second P.O. where a non-origin

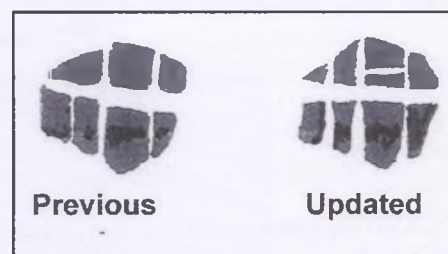


Figure 1



Figure 2

CDS is applied, thus making the cover appear to be from the second post office. The discovery of a second cover as shown in figure 2 has the G-15 cancel (enlarged in figure 3) which verifies that the origin is indeed a NYFM cancel.

Fellow club member Nicholas Kirke is presently compiling a list of NYFM cancels from years 1847 -1876. Members with NYFM information are urged to contact Mr. Kirke at kirke@philatylelist.cz. ■



Figure 3

Eastport, New York Cancels

by Roger D. Curran

Eastport, New York lies along the southern flank of Long Island in Suffolk County out near the Hamptons. Its post office opened in 1872 and still operates today. Cole lists no cancels from Eastport but Whitfield lists one: a negative "EP" in an oval that is nearly round, as shown in figure 1.

A cover bearing a similar but probably different "EP" cancel is illustrated on the front cover. It likely dates from the late 1870's or early 1880's. The cancel itself is repeated here in figure 2.

Figure 3 shows an unusually large Eastport cancel which came on the market some months ago. It consists of a positive "EP" enclosed in a rim that is somewhat shaped like a shield. An enclosure is dated 1877. Many thanks to John Donnes for the tracings of cancel and postmark which appear in figure 4.

Another large Eastport cancel appeared on the market at the same time; figure 5 shows an image from eBay posted by US postal history dealer CoverCrazy2. It appears to be a geometric design only and not including any letters.

Readers who can report additional Eastport cancels or further strikes of the Figures 3 or 5 cancels are urged to do so. ■



Figure 1

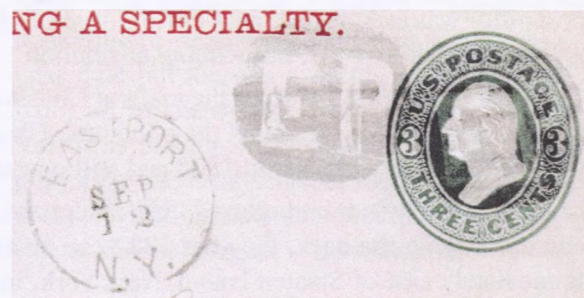


Figure 2



Figure 3

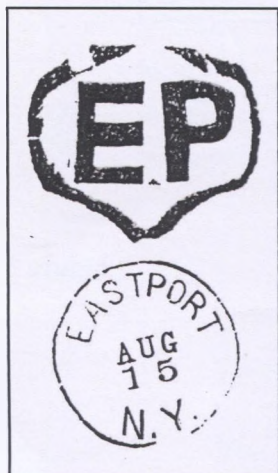


Figure 4



Figure 5

Letters in Cancels – “U,” “V,” “Y,” and “Z”

by Roger D. Curran

Cancels consisting of letters or incorporating letters of the alphabet have been discussed numerous times in the *NEWS*. This article provides additional focus on some of the letters that are less commonly seen as cancellations.

The card in Figure 1 bears a bold “U” cancel and an indistinct postmark that reads “IND” at the bottom. Fortunately, the dateline on the back clarifies the situation and reads “Union Mills” with date of December 4, 1875. The Union Mills post office was established in La Porte County, Indiana in 1845 and remains in operation to this day. The Figure 1 cancel is listed in Cole as Lu-1, but without attribution.

The card in Figure 2 entered the mails at Uncasville, Connecticut on March 31, 1884. A “U” cancel, probably duplexed to the postmark, was struck on the indicium. Uncasville is a tiny village lying between New London and Norwich. Its post office was established in 1828 and still operates today.

Figure 3 shows an unduplexed “U” cancel and a June 1 Union, New Jersey postmark. From docketing on the front and dateline on the back, the year 1882 can be ascertained. The Union post office was established in Union County, immediately east of Staaten Island, New York, in 1820. There are now three post offices within the city of Union, all zip-code 07083, servicing this highly-populated area.

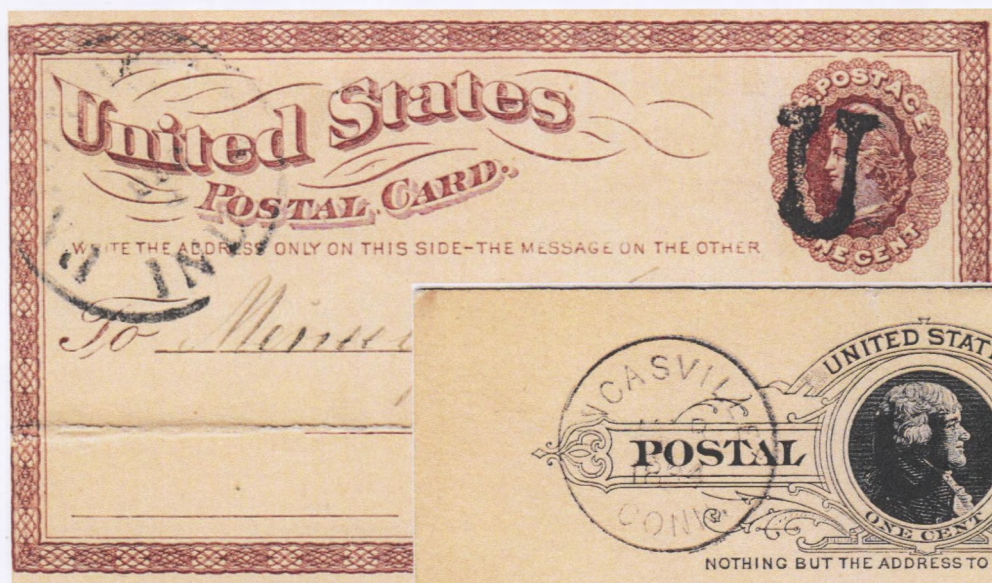


Figure 1

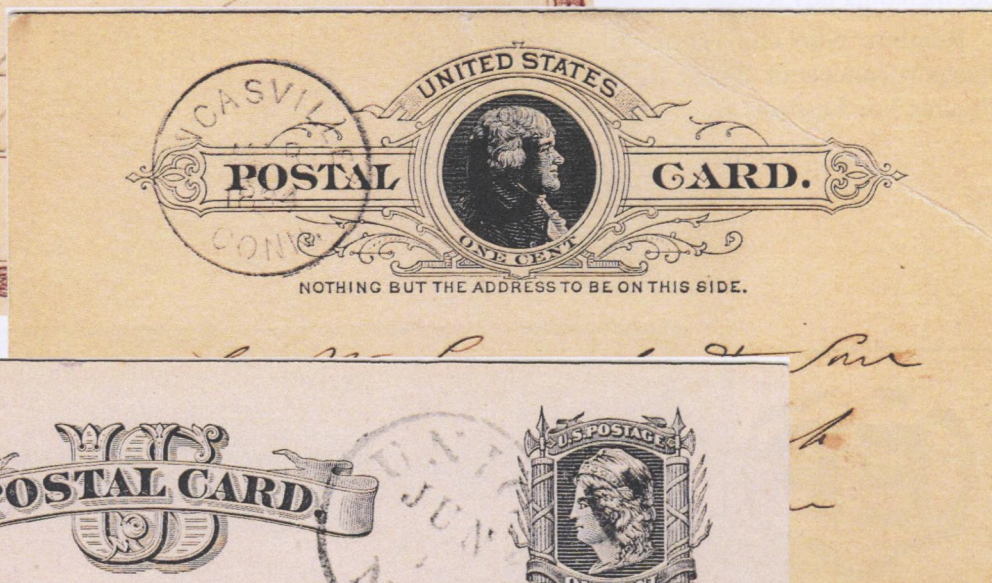


Figure 2



Figure 3

A primitive negative negative “V” cancel from Virginia, Illinois is illustrated in figure 4. The accompanying postmark, which may or may not be duplexed, is dated February 21, 1899. Virginia is 100 miles north of St. Louis, MO and its post office, established in 1839, still serves this tiny community.

A bold “V” in circle from Vermontville, Michigan is shown in figure 5. The cover's enclosure is datelined 1882. The Vermontville post office was established in 1840 in Eaton County and it still serves the village of less than a thousand residents



Figure 4

A negative "V" in circular cancel from Valatie, New York appears in figure 6. There is no docketing or remaining enclosure to indicate the year date but there is a lightly penciled "1877" from an unknown hand on the cover's front. Valatie is twenty miles south of Albany and its post office was established in 1832. It still operates today. Whitfield lists as #6242 the positive "V" cancel shown in figure 7 from Valatie.

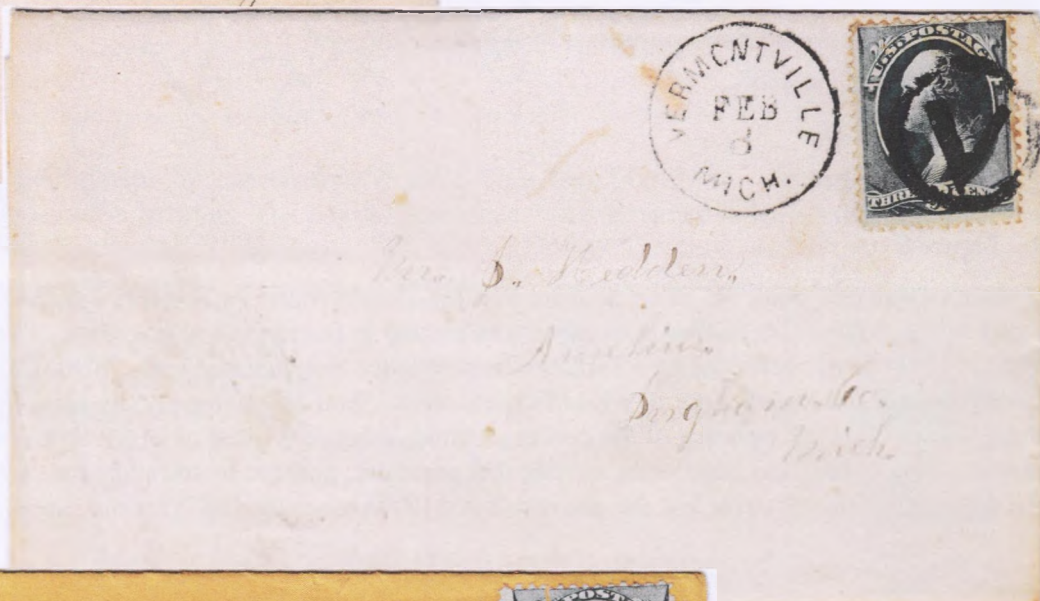


Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

The York, Pennsylvania post office at one time used the negative “Y” in circular cancel as shown in Figure 8. It appears to be an example of the one listed by Cole as Ly-6, on page 290, but without attribution. There is no information to indicate a year date. *(Editor's note: Although heavily obliterated, the item looks to be a U227 or similar in the Scott Catalog. This suggests a usage from around late 1883 or a little later. The sender, Bayler, was born in 1853 and at this time he was a lumber wholesaler residing at 102 S. Water Street, York).* The establishment of the York post office harkens way back to 1775. The York post office remains in operation to this day.

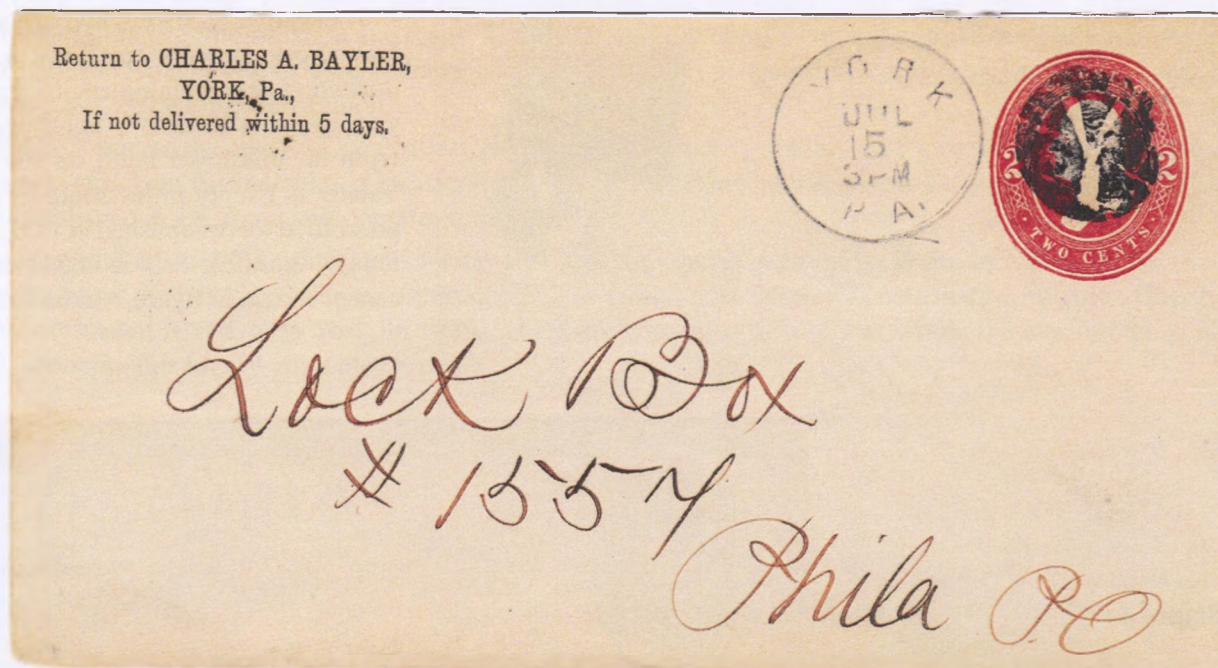


Figure 8

An example of a bold “Y” in circle from Yardley, Pennsylvania is shown in figure 9. An enclosure to this cover is dated July 6, 1887. The Yardley post office was located in Bucks county just north of Philadelphia and operated from 1883 to 1958. It was preceded by a Yardleyville post office that operated from 1828-1883. The “Y” in circle is listed in both Whitfield and Cole but not in Willard's book on the Scott 210 stamp and its postal history. At the time of writing, there was an on-cover example of the cancel pictured in figure 9 listed on eBay. It has a postmark date of August 24. A manuscript “1887” has been written inside that postmark, perhaps by the addressee, which is probably correct, given the date of the figure 9 cover and the one date listed (November 10, 1887) for the cancel in the Whitfield 2012 update.



Figure 9

A "Y" cancel from Ypsilanti, Michigan is illustrated in figure 10. Whether the postmark is duplexed to the cancel is uncertain. Docketing on the back of the cover states "May 17/71." Ypsilanti, now a city of some 20,000, is a few miles to the east of Ann Arbor and their post office, which is still in operation, was established in 1826.

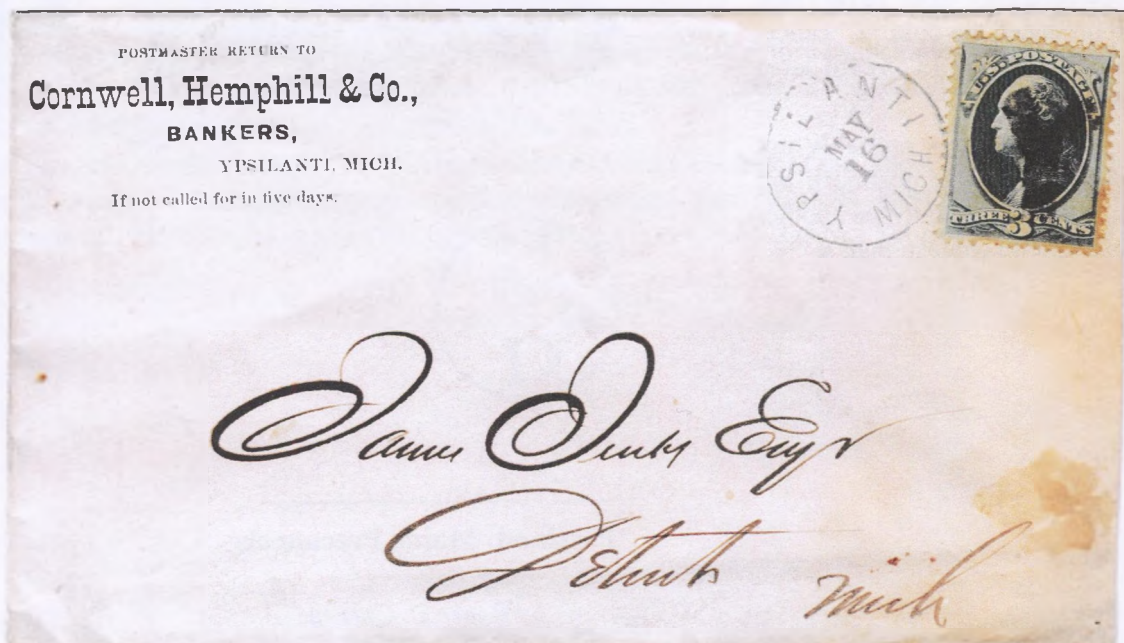


Figure 10

Figure 11 and 12 illustrate two different "Z" cancels from Zaleski, Ohio, both from 1884. The August 6 strike has a width of 20mm and that of October 31 is 16.5mm. The Zaleski post office was established in 1856 and still services the tiny village located some 70 miles southeast of Columbus.



Figure 11

Figure 12

The Zion, Mississippi post office, located about 110 miles southeast of Memphis, TN operated only from 1878-1886. It produced the bold "Z" cancel shown in figure 13 on card dated July 29, 1884.

The cancel is probably not duplexed to the postmark but it would be good to see another example to confirm that. ■

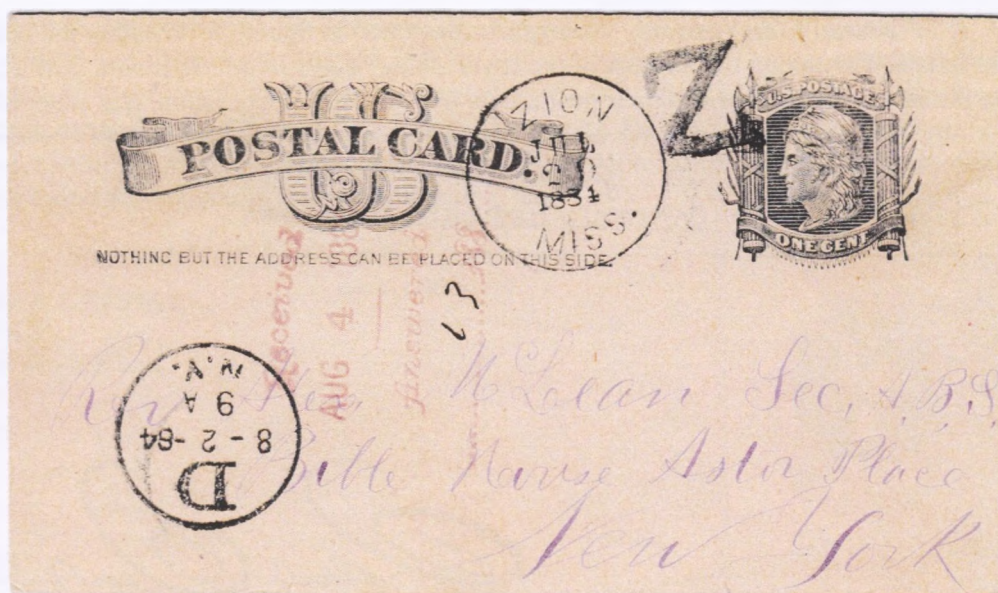


Figure 13

Portland, Maine Precancels

by Roger D. Curran

The two covers, partly illustrated below, originated from Portland, Maine with stamps precanceled by brushstrokes of a distinctive magenta ink. They originally carried circulars.

The cancel has been reported on 1c stamps of both the 1873 and 1879 issues. It is associated with George Stinson & Co. of Portland, which was a publisher of *The Centennial* and *Home and Fireside* periodicals, fine lithograph prints and art-related publications. ■



Another Postmaster's Initials Cancel: 'AHB' in a Circle from Lostant, IL. 1898

by Joe H. Crosby

In my seemingly never-ending search for the true meaning of multiple-letter 19th Century cancellations, I am finding that after not getting any answers from Postmaster Finder online, local historical societies, archives and libraries are the next best source of information about the names of local postmasters.

I recently acquired the cover illustrated in Figure 1 which has a neat bold strike in black of the letters "A H B" in an 18 mm circle on a two cent Trans-Mississippi Commemorative mailed at Lostant, Ill. Nov. 30, 1898. The Postmaster Finder for that post office only starts in 1935 with the notice that "Research on this Post Office Has Not Yet Been Completed."



Figure 1

Not being known for my patience, I contacted the Streatorland Historical Museum in nearby Streator, there being no Lostant Historical Society listed. They informed me that a postmaster in the 1890's in Lostant with the initials "A H B" was Alfred H. Bell. Voila !!

Now what else can we learn about our new friend Alfred? A Google search for that name in Lostant, IL produced a nice long listing in the Biographical and Genealogical Record of La Salle County, Illinois¹. The first paragraph reads:

"Alfred H. Bell, the genial and popular postmaster of Lostant, La Salle County, is one of the progressive merchants of this thriving town. He has occupied a number of local offices of trust and honor, to the entire satisfaction of everyone, and enjoys an enviable reputation for square dealing and public spirit."

After giving his family history and his moving to Lostant in 1894, it further reported:

"In 1897 Mr. Bell was appointed the postmaster of Lostant, and entered upon his duties in December of that year. He takes great pains to meet the wishes of his fellow citizens, and is highly commended for his promptness and general efficiency."

The Official Register shows A.H. Bell's annual compensation up to July 1, 1899 was \$652.47² indicating that his post office was rather busy for a town the size of Lostant³.

1. Published by Lewis Publishing Company (no date)

2. *Official Register of the United States*, Vol. 2, July 1, 1899, (GPO, Washington).

3. U.S. Census 1890, Lostant Village, Ill. pop. 378; U.S. Census 1900, Lostant Village, pop. 480—from *Census Bulletin Number 21*, December 18, 1900, p. 13.

4. Cole, James B. *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era, 1870-1894*, U.S.Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., 1995.

5. *Official Register of the United States*, Vol 2, July 1, 1911 (GPO, Washington)

Now we need reports of other dates of use for this cancel to determine its period of use. It is quite likely that this marking is really what Cole listed as ML 100, illustrated as "ANB" rather than "AHB", and known on 1890 Issues⁴.

Alfred H. Bell is still listed as Postmaster at Lostant as of July 1, 1911. By then his brother George was his Assistant, with two Clerks and two Rural Free Delivery Carriers⁵. ■

Editor's Note:

Alfred Henry Bell was born on November 13, 1857 in central Illinois. According to the register of Appointments of U.S. Postmasters 1832-1971, Bell was appointed Lostant's postmaster on November 11, 1897 and held that office until October 17, 1914.

In 1894, the town opened its first bank, the Farmer's State Bank at 206 S. Main Street. In 1912, the bank expanded into the other half of the property then operated as the post office, and remodelled that building (which still stands today). So, for most of the time Bell was postmaster, the post office was at that address.

In the 1900 Federal Census, despite being the official postmaster, Bell gave his profession as grain buyer. At that time, he was living with his widowed mother and his younger siblings George and Cora, who gave their occupations as post office clerks.

Bell helped establish the Masonic Lodge in Lostant in 1903 and he served as Worshipful Master there in 1906 and 1907.

In 1905, he married Estella, the town music teacher and daughter of the proprietor of A.L. Hillman Groceries which was situated on the corner of Marshall and Third Streets (building since demolished). They had only one child, Amanda, born in January 1909.

In the 1910 Federal Census, Bell gives his occupation as postmaster. His brother George resides next door (and does so for the rest of Alfred's life) and is an attorney.

After the postmaster's position was reassigned, Bell tried his hand at variously selling real estate and insurance in Lostant from his brother's law office two doors north of the bank.

Alfred H. Bell passed away in nearby Streator on May 10, 1945. He is buried with his wife at Hope Cemetery, Lostant.

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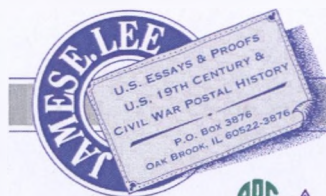
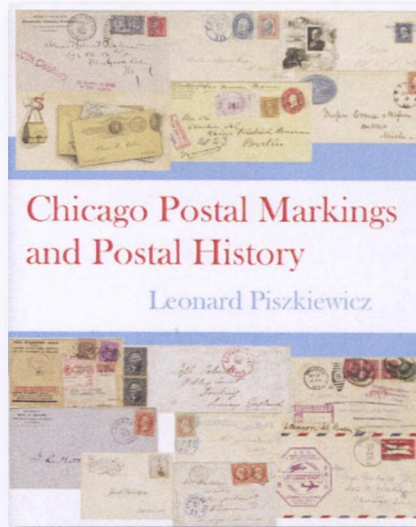
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