



U. S. Cancellation Club **NEWS**

Vol. 34, No. 3, Whole No. 304, February 2018



This 1884, Sweden-bound cover from Jacksonville, Illinois, carries some fascinating and rare "K" cancels. Roger Curran tells us more on page 30.

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The Official Journal of the United States Cancellation Club

The U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

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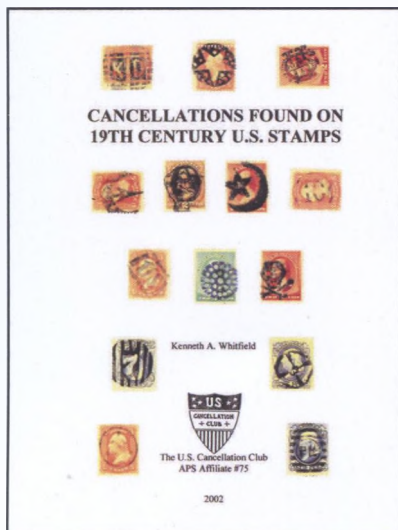
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Two Pittsburgh Cancels With Letters

By Roger D. Curran

Illustrated in Figure 1 is a well-known Pittsburgh cancel. Back in the Spring 1986 *NEWS*, Bob McKain, in an extensive report on Pittsburgh cancels 1872-1882, listed this cancel with dates of use from 12/5/79 to 12/18/79. Perhaps the "RKN" letters are the initials of a person with the "3" meaning "the third" as in "John Doe III". The letters do not match the initials of the postmaster at the time, George H. Anderson, but could be those of a clerk in the post office. We'd need a listing of clerks, of course, to check out that idea.

There is an intriguing Pittsburgh cancel dated November 11 (see Figure 2) that may bear a relationship to the cancel just mentioned. Below the horizontal bars of this cancel, which is incomplete on the right side, are letters "NK" and what is presumably the left-most portion of a third letter consisting of a vertical line. I have seen a photocopy of a second cover bearing this cancel, dated November 12, a portion of which appears in Figure 3. As luck would have it, the third letter in this strike, if it is in fact a letter, is very hard to read. I think it is distorted beyond recognition but the owner of the cover interpreted the cancel to read "NKG". There is what I see as a horizontal bar on the top of the presumed third letter that extends to the cover's edge and really nothing below that is identifiable except what may be the vertical line visible on the right side of the Figure 2 cancel.



Figure 1

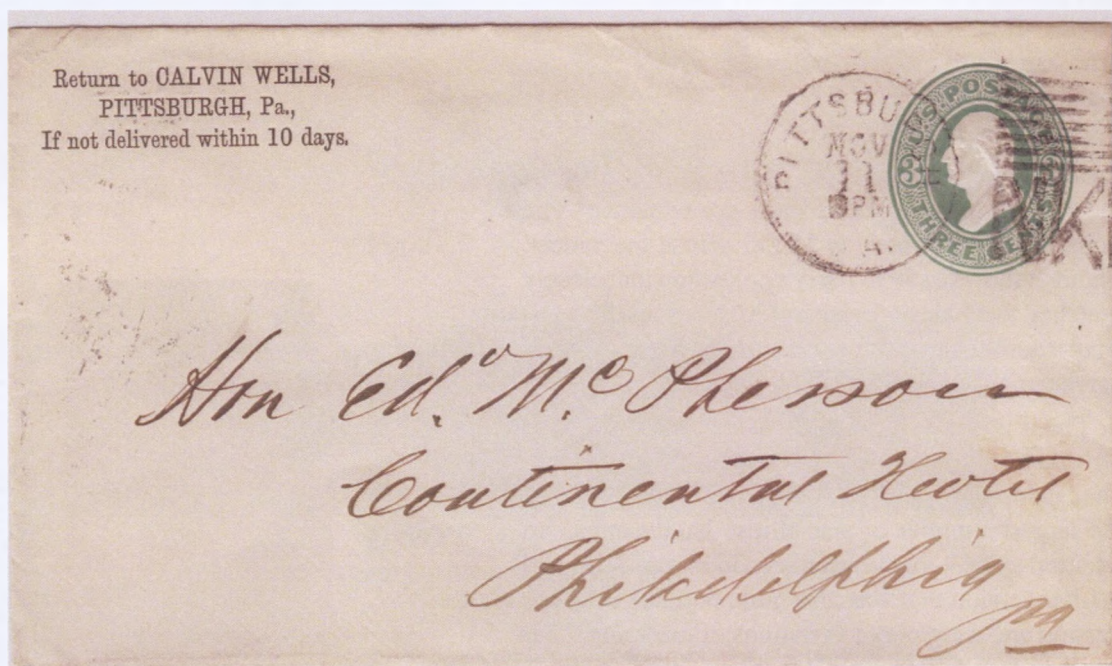


Figure 2

Bob McKain has continued to keep records on the cancels he reported in 1986 and had not encountered the Figure 2 cancel before seeing the Figure 2 cover which suggests the cancel received little use.

This brings us to a theory that the letters in Figure 3 are "NKR" but the canceler was intended, when it was carved, to produce a strike that read "RKN." If the vertical bar mentioned above was part of an "R", the letters carved on the face of the canceler would have looked roughly like Figure 4 which would have produced a strike like Figure 5.

And the theory continues that the Figure 3 cancel was quickly removed from service when the error was discovered and shortly thereafter replaced by the Figure 1 cancel.

Comments and further information on the subject will be welcomed. It would be very helpful, of course, to see a clear strike of the Figure 2 cancel and to confirm use in 1879. ■



Figure 3

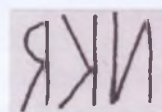


Figure 4

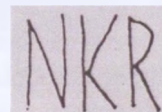


Figure 5

19th Century U. S. Postal Handstamps

By Roger D. Curran

Examples of handstamps used in 19th century post offices are of interest to many collectors of postal markings of the period. Club member Larry Rausch has been seeking them out for some years and in this article we present several types from his collection; both those designed as cancelers and, those not so designed but that were occasionally pressed into such service. We'll begin with three of the former.

The handstamp shown in Figure 1 is an 8-bar open (as opposed to enclosed in a rim) grid that Larry reports to be 22.5 mm in diameter. In checking the Whitfield, Skinner-Eno and Alexander references, no cancels were found that closely matched what the Figure 1 handstamp would have produced. However, a smaller version of that design (18.5 mm) and a same size version, but with the two curved end bars flattened in the middle, were found. They are Skinner-Eno SD-G41 and SD- 46, both on page 26. Who can report an on or off cover strike that would match the Figure 1 design?



Figure 1

Figure 2 illustrates a handstamp which has a metal shaded star face that is apparently glued to the wooden handle (as no nails are evident). The point to point distance is 25mm across the cancel. Figure 3 shows a star in Larry's collection that closely matches the Figure 2 star but, of course, it comes from a duplex handstamp rather than a single marking handstamp such as Figure 2.



Figure 2

The Figure 4 duplex is of a style that was advertised by John Goldsborough, a Philadelphia handstamp supplier. Goldsborough was probably the largest supplier of star ellipse handstamps. In addition to the 9-bar version seen in Figure 3, he sold a 7-bar version that was also quite popular, a 13-bar version and a couple of variations of the 9 and 7 bar stock styles that are seen less often. Incidentally, a strike, as seen in Figure 4, from Fireside, Ohio, has not yet been recorded to our knowledge. Fireside is a dead post office that was established in Seneca county in 1866 and closed in 1900.

Goldsborough star ellipses are discussed in two earlier *NEWS* articles—see November 2010 and November 2013 issues. The latter illustrated a 9-bar Goldsborough die in a self-inking mechanical handstamp. The postmark part of the die reads “BLACKSTONE, ILL”. Blackstone is an operating post office established in 1870 in Livingston county. As with the Fireside handstamp, we know of no cover that has yet been recorded with a Blackstone strike. Surely the Goldsborough star ellipse dies were used much more commonly in the Figure 4 type of handstamp rather than in mechanical stampers.



Figure 3



Figure 4

Now to present three handstamps designed for non-canceling purposes. Figure 5 shows a handstamp with a metal "DUE/3" in circle die riveted to a wood handle. Figure 6 illustrates a "PAID/3" in circle die (a very popular design with 19th century postmasters) engraved on the face of the wood handle. Some dried ink remains. Larry notes that the face of Figure 7, showing "FREE" in a lozenge, is made of bronze and this die is glued to the handle. Stamps bearing cancels with designs similar to those appearing in Figures 5-7, are shown in Figure 8.



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

Readers who have 19th century postal handstamps in their collections of a type used, at least occasionally, as cancelers beyond those in the present article, are encouraged to submit scans or photos to the *NEWS*. ■

An Unusual PMSS Steamer 'Alaska' Cancellation

By Michael J. Brown

The Pacific Mail Steamship Company (PMSS) played an important role in carrying mails between New York and Panama, Panama to various Central American west coast ports to San Francisco, San Francisco to Japan - Hong Kong - Shanghai, and San Francisco to Hawaii to New Zealand and Australia, all at various times and periods in its storied history.

A couple of years ago I noticed an interesting socked-on-the-nose cancellation in a Daniel Kelleher Auction on a 10-cent Jefferson large banknote Scott 150, pictured in Figure 1. The auction catalog advertised it as a PMSS Steamship Alaska marking. I bid on it, won the lot, and promptly sent it to the Philatelic Foundation for opinion. In due course, the PF opined that the stamp was a used Scott 150 with small faults and "STEAMER ALASKA/P.M.S.S.CO CDS (sic) CANCEL."

After I received the PF opinion, I began preparing to add it my 10-cent Jefferson collection. Using Adobe Photoshop Elements software, I extracted the 'CDS' cancel, enhanced and cleaned it up, only to discover it was not a circular date stamp at all. Figure 2 illustrates what I found in it's stead.

I tried to research the marking as well as discuss it with a few fellow collectors. However, the only reference I could find was in Kenneth A. Whitfield's book *Cancellations Found on 19th Century U.S. Stamps* on page 230, item 6832, which, of course, was published by the U.S. Cancellation Club in 2002.



Figure 1



Figure 2

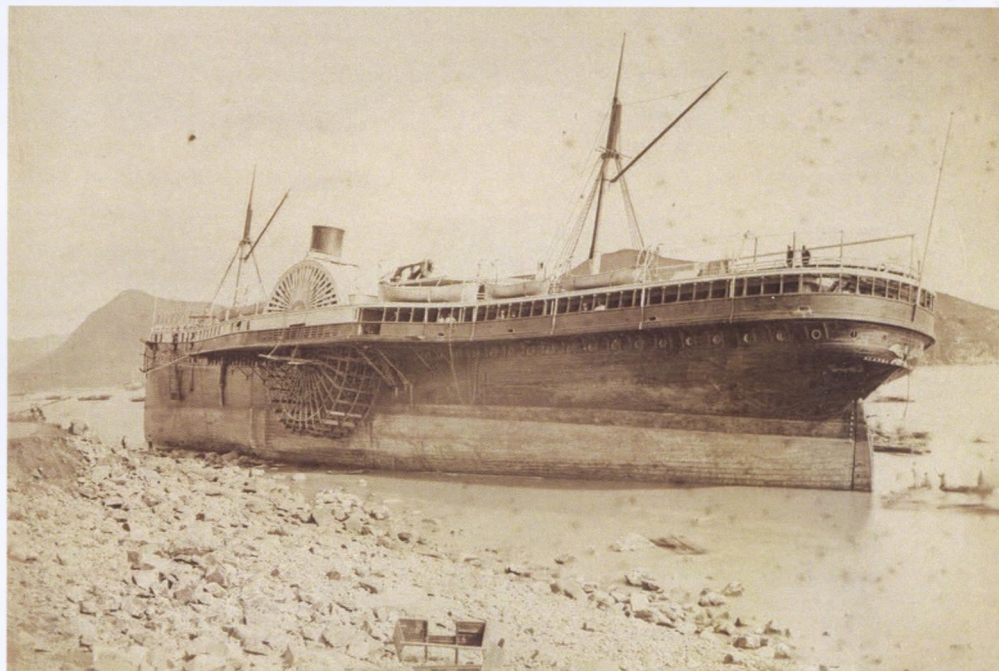


Figure 3

I could find no definitive explanation for the purpose of the handstamp. Apparently, no other such handstamp usage for a PMSS steamer has turned up. The speculation of several collectors (including myself) is that the figure 1 franking was likely affixed to a ship letter which in those times was a loose letter sent privately for convenience aboard a private ship. The Figure 2 handstamp, a device probably available to the purser for ship's business, was applied (for unknown reasons) to the letter's franking by the purser of the PMSS Steamer Alaska. The ship letter sender may have been a private person or forwarder who delivered the letter directly to the purser prior to sailing from Hong Kong or Japan, or a passenger or crew member during the voyage. The captain, or his purser acting for the captain, was required by law to deliver all such ship letters entrusted to them to the destination port's local post office before they were allowed to unload their cargoes. The captain (or purser) was to receive 2 cents from the post office for each such letter so delivered. The post office marked each letter with the word SHIP either with a handstamp or annotation. Ship letters can be found postage unpaid (postage due), as well as partially and fully prepaid using stamps.

{Continued on page 29}

More on Stenciled "PAID" as a Cancellation

By Roger D. Curran

The February 2017 *NEWS* carried an article about two stenciled "PAID" postal markings used as cancellations on Sc 65 stamps: one from Albany, Missouri and the other, as seen in Figure 1, written up by George Linn in the November 1956 *NEWS* from an unknown post office. Mr. Linn concluded his article with the following: "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 of 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."

As far as I am aware, no further information about this cancel has appeared in the literature since Linn's article. However, this statement should be qualified somewhat because Whitfield 6642, illustrated in Figure 2, does attribute to Putnam, Connecticut a cancel that is probably the Linn cancel but the tracing was not drawn with the exact ornamentation and does not show the void spaces in the lettering that are indicative of stencil usage.



Figure 1



Figure 2

In response to the 2017 article, Club member Dan Knowles wrote to report both a second on-cover example of the Albany, Missouri cancel and two on-cover usages of the Linn cancel, clearly identifying the post office of origin. Relevant excerpts of his letter, dated September 4, 2017, are shown below and his scans appear as Figures 3, 4 and 5. Many thanks to Dan for a very important contribution to the *NEWS*.

I enjoyed reading your article appearing in the February 2017 USCC News about the stenciled PAID cancellation used in Albany, Missouri. You also reprinted George Linn's 1956 USCC News commentary on his Fancy PAID Type VI in your article.

As a more than 40 year long collector of PAID cancellations on the 1861 3 cent issue, I can attest to the extreme rarity of these two cancellations.

I have encountered only one example of the Albany, MO stenciled PAID in addition to the one you reported in all of my many years of active searching. A scan of that cover is attached below. It is particularly interesting that in both instances the cancel has been placed entirely on the stamps and does not tie the stamps to the covers. Matching the identical PAID cancellation to the same town of origin on a second cover confirms that the stamps belong and that this PAID marking was used in that town.

I have encountered two examples of Linn's Fancy PAID Type VI on cover. This cancellation originated in Putnam, Connecticut. A number of fancy cancellations were used in Putnam in this time frame. The most notable are the negative "Oct", "Nov", and "Dec" cancellations. However, other fancy cancellations from Putnam include an unusual geometric, US in a circle and a peculiar "USM" cancellation with small diamond marks above and below the "USM", resembling those of Fancy PAID Type VI. The latter cancellation is #1288 in the Herst-Sampson Catalog published as Billig's Philatelic Handbook # 33 in 1972.

Whether the Putnam Fancy Type PAID VI is a stencil marking or not, I leave to you and other experts to decide. However, I hope that you find my confirmation of the Albany, MO. origin of the stenciled PAID and the identification of Putnam, CT. as the town of origin of Linn's Fancy PAID Type VI useful.



Figure 3



Figure 4

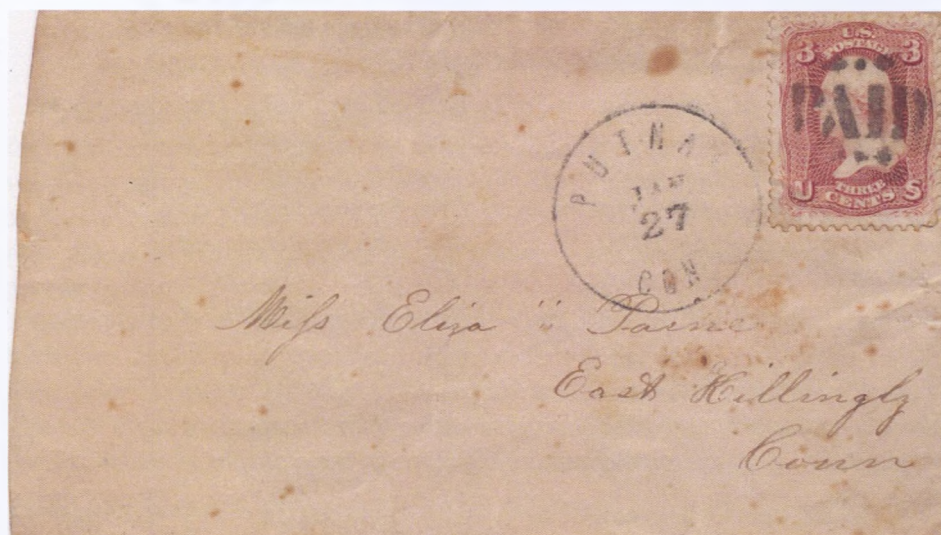


Figure 5

By happenstance, another example of the Linn cancel came on the market in 2017 and is illustrated here as Figure 6.

An example of a stenciled "PAID" used on a stampless cover is shown in Figure 7. The cover is not dated but the stenciled Kingston, New York postmark on the cover is reported used from 1829 to 1832 by the 1997 *American Stampless Cover Catalog* (Volume 1), pg. 248. ■

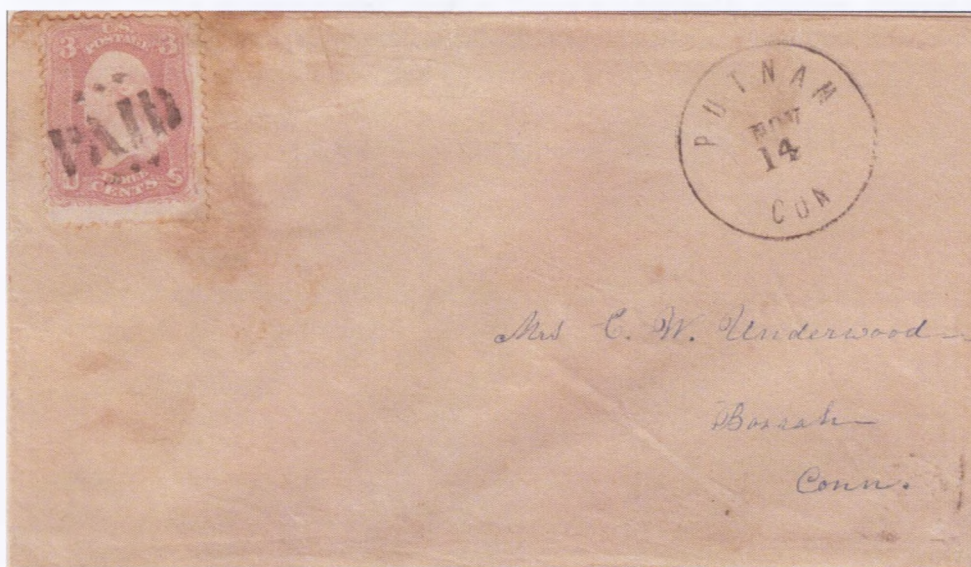


Figure 6

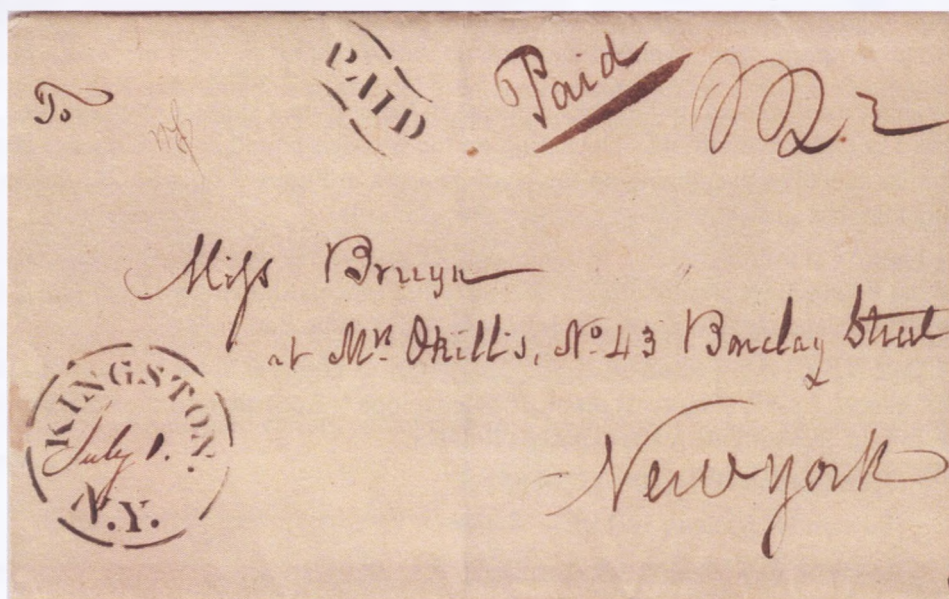


Figure 7

{Continued from page 26}

An Unusual PMSS Steamer 'Alaska' Cancellation

As to the steamship 'Alaska'; she was a side-paddle steamship of 4,011 tons completed in 1868 for the Pacific Mail Steamship Company who initially used it on its New York to Panama route. In the latter part of 1870 the 'Alaska' underwent a refitting and then sailed around South America to San Francisco where it saw service on PMSS's San Francisco to Japan and Hong Kong route. Its first voyage on that route departed San Francisco July 7, 1871.

Not always a lucky ship, the 'Alaska' was undergoing maintenance in Hong Kong when a typhoon blew it ashore from its pier on September 21, 1874. The immediate result of that storm can be seen in Figure 3. Interestingly, it was not all that badly damaged, was refloated and repaired, and departed Hong Kong to return to PMSS service on January 18, 1875. ■

Jacksonville, Illinois Cancels With a "K"

By Roger D. Curran

The Jacksonville, Illinois cover to Sweden, partially illustrated in Figure 1, bears three strikes of a circular cancel composed of a negative "K" in a triangle with additional cuts just beyond the three sides of the triangle.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

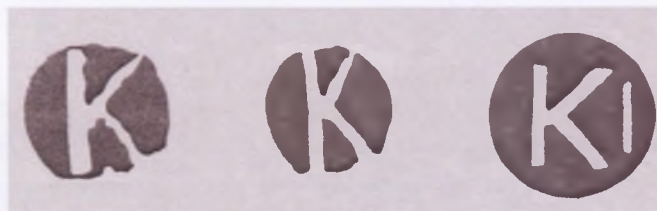


Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

This cancel, as seen in Figure 2, appears in Willard¹ in a slightly photoreduced size but without attribution. It is not listed in Cole or Whitfield. Docketing on the Sweden-bound cover indicates receipt on June 10, 1884. A somewhat similar cancel to that shown on the cover appears in Figure 3 on a Sc 216 stamp. I have not found this cancel in the literature but suspect that it is also from Jacksonville.

Figure 4 shows two negative "K" cancels listed by Cole on 1890 issue stamps (Lk-34 and Lk-35) that are reminiscent of the Figure 3 cancel.² Cole also lists the three cancels shown here as Figure 5 with the one on the left reported used on 2/14/85 and the one on the right found on 1881 issue stamps.³

Cole reports the "G" cancel, Lg-5, shown here as Figure 6, from Jacksonville on 1883 issue stamps and the negative "S" cancel, Ls-57, (Figure 7) on an 1884 envelope.⁴ According to the USPS online finder of postmasters by city, the listing for Jacksonville reads in part as follows:

- John Gordon 10/18/80—12/14/85
- Edward M. Kinman 12/15/85—8/4/86
- Leonard W. Chambers 8/5/86—9/30/89
- Cyrus W. Matthews 10/1/89—1/1/94

So what are we to make of all this? The Figure 1 cancel was struck more than a year before Kinman became postmaster and his service as postmaster ended long before the 1890 stamps were introduced. The "G" cancel on 1883 issue stamps fits with the postmaster service of John Gordon and may well represent his name. The "S" cancel, of course, doesn't fit with the name of any postmaster during the period in question.

My idea about the "K" cancels is that they may represent the last name of a clerk in the Jacksonville post office. The population of Jacksonville in 1890 was reported to be 12,935 which would have necessitated a post office with clerks. Extending the idea a bit further, one can speculate that Kinman was a clerk in the post office before becoming postmaster who reverted to clerk after his postmaster tenure and the "K" cancels all represent his last name. If rosters of the clerks in the post office could be located for this time period, this would, of course, be very helpful. ■

1. Willard, Edward L., *The United States Two Cent Red Brown of 1883-1887*, (Vol. 2), 1970, H. L. Lindquist, pg. 75.

2. Cole, James M., *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894*, 1995, USPCS, pg. 262.

3. *ibid.*

4. *ibid.*, pgs 255, 278.

Boston Negatives 20, 21, 22

By Bob Grosch

The USCC has made a concerted effort for over ten years to study in detail the fancy cancels known commonly as 'The Boston Negatives.' Among this series of some 129 varieties, numbers 20, 21, 22 in solid circle have been a mystery because they differ from all the other types in a significant manner.

Bake & Davis, in *Boston Postmarks to 1890*, p.258 show these cancels, illustrated in Figure 1, as belonging to the numbers in double circle series, even though none exist with a complete double circle. Figure 2 shows the normal impression of a number in double circle.



Figure 1



Figure 2

I once considered the Figure 1 cancels to be varieties of solid circle cancels, created by carvings of a postal clerk for some unknown reason, since I have discovered these three numbers in solid circles (Figure 3).

Now a recent discovery gives rise to the possibility of yet another explanation. The stamp pictured in Figure 4 was sold on eBay recently, and it clearly has a crescent both above and below the number. What is more, these crescents appear to be manufactured into the killer, not carved by hand in an attempt to alter an existing killer. It seems likely that this newly discovered variety came from Boston, but unless we can find it on cover we cannot be sure.



Figure 3



Figure 4

If any of our USCC members have this newly discovered variety on cover, please let me know so we can add it to our confirmed list of Boston Negative cancels. ■

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An Interim Date for the New York City Norton Patent Cancel

By Ardy Callender

Norton patent duplex cancellations have been the subject of much investigation and analysis over the past thirty years. Marcus P. Norton of Troy, New York was an inventor and patent attorney who is credited with fashioning many experimental duplex cancellation devices during the mid 1850's into the 1870's. On May 3, 1859, Norton filed for a patent on a device in which the datestamp contained rotatable wheels which could record the day, month and year. The placement of the year date was perpendicular to the day/month wheels, resulting in sideways year dates, as seen in Figure 1.

These devices have been referred to as "lazy year date" duplexes. A blotter or "cancellation" element was attached to the datestamp by means of a thumbnut purportedly to cut the face of the adhesive as well as applying ink for cancelling. It is debatable as to whether the blotters ever possessed sharpened ridges as accounts in the literature and observations by the author suggest these cancellations made no cuts or indentations on adhesives. A limited unofficial test of his duplex device took place prior to April 11, 1859 and an official trial began May 4, 1859 in Troy, New York (Skinner, 1994, pg. 175).

Although Norton's patent was granted on August 9, 1859, it only covered the "blotter" element as the rotatable wheel feature had already been patented; T.J.W. Robertson was granted a patent on a device with rotatable wheels on September 22, 1857.

On July 23, 1860, Postmaster General Joseph Holt ordered that no longer could datestamps be used solely to deface adhesives, requiring a separate device for dating and cancelling. New York City Postmaster General John A. Dix responded by requesting his handstamp maker (Edmund Hoole) to attach an "blotter" to the current datestamp to accomplish the task in one strike. In a letter dated August 8, 1860, Postmaster Dix informed Washington DC. of his new time-saving device. Two days later, Dix received a letter from the First Assistant Postmaster General, John B.L. Skinner, stating that a duplex device had already been patented by Marcus P. Norton of Troy, New York.

Worried over patent infringement, Dix immediately arranged for a meeting with Norton which resulted in an agreement between Norton and the NYPO to allow continued use of Dix's duplex devices as well as to a trial of Norton's handstamps. The NYPO purchased ten of Norton's devices which first were used in mid-January 1861.

The earliest recorded Norton cancellation used in New York City is dated January 17, 1861, reported by Richard Graham in the *Chronicle* (1992, Vol. 44, No. 2, pg. 103). Curiously, most examples of this cancellation are found



Figure 1



Figure 2

on covers dating between late January and early-mid February of 1861. This was probably due to the fact that Norton's handstamps were, as speculated by Graham in a *Chronicle* article (1992, Vol. 44, No. 4, pg 264) "too fragile to withstand the pounding of constant use" and were withdrawn from service shortly after late March, 1861.

A particularly nice cover from the early period of use is shown as Figure 2. The deep yellow ad cover from the Manhattan Life Insurance Company with Native American motif is addressed to Mrs. Mary Simonson, Jamaica, N.Y. The three cent adhesive (Scott #26) is applied sideways at upper right and tied by a partial strike of the Norton datestamp dated January 29, 1861. The elements of the twelve-bar grid appear somewhat wavy as is often observed on other strikes of the cancellation.

After their initial appearance in January/February, the use of Norton's duplexes tapered off into March 1861; March 28 is the latest example recorded. Nearly a year later in January 1862, the handstamp was apparently pulled out of retirement for at least a day, as two covers both dated January 30, 1862 were reported by Graham (*Chronicle*, 1985, Vol. 37, No. 2, pg. 111 fig. 2). The cover from Graham's article is shown here as Figure 3. Because the year date is difficult to make out, Graham provided a tracing (see Figure 4). A carrier cover, it is franked with issues of the 1861 series (Scott #63 & #65). Thus Norton cancellations can be found on issues of both the 1857 and 1861 Series.

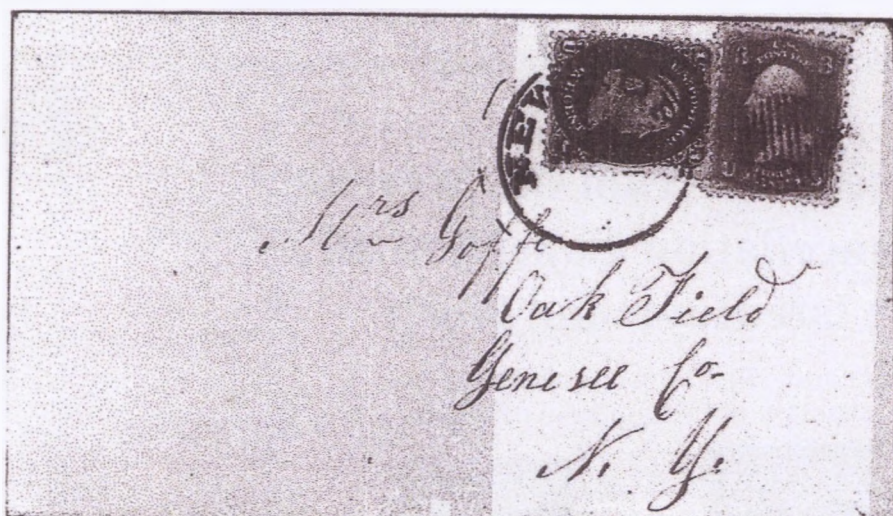


Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

Both Graham and Skinner were puzzled by the gap in usage of the Norton duplexes by the NYPO. Somewhat recently however, the author has found an interim example on a less than pristine cover clearly dated October 19, 1861 (see Figure 5). The cover with an embossed advertisement for Astor House, Stetson & Co., New York is addressed to Mr. James Jones, Hillsborough Bridge, New Hampshire. The adhesive (Scott #65) is applied sideways facing downward, has a straight edge at left and is missing a small piece towards the bottom. It is tied by the distinctive Norton twelve-bar grid which is somewhat wavy, similar to the cancellation in Figure 2. The partial strike of the datestamp visible at bottom is a result of an operation used within the NYPO where clerks placed ("faced") letters in columns and canceled numerous letters; beginning at the top and working their way downward.

Examples of Norton cancellations used from New York City are quite scarce and much sought after. Reports of other interim uses would be much appreciated. ■

Graham, Richard B., "Norton Patent Duplexed Postmarks of the 1860's," *Chronicle of the US Classic Postal Issues*, May, 1985.

Graham, Richard B., "The Beginnings of the Duplex Style Handstamps," 1859-1862, *Chronicle of the US Classic Postal Issues*, August 1991 and November 1991.

Graham, Richard B., "Duplex Handstamps, Marcus P. Norton and Patent Cancels of the 1860's," *Chronicle of the US Classic Postal Issues*, November 1992.

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



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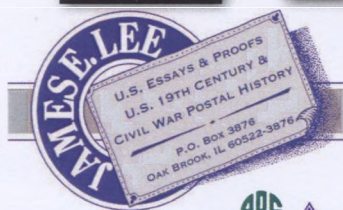
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Noted in Passing

By Roger D. Curran

Figure 1 illustrates a crisp and well placed strike of a large "C" cancel from Chamberlain, Dakota Territory dated 12/14/87. The cover involves a late use of the Scott 210 stamp that was replaced in September 1887 by Scott 213, the 2c green. The cancel is listed in Cole on page 245 and reported as a canceler on, not surprisingly, 1887 issue stamps - see Figure 2. The Chamberlain post office was established in 1881 in what is now Brule Co., South Dakota.

It would be interesting to see additional examples of this cancel to learn if they are similarly well placed and clearly struck.



Figure 1

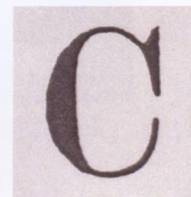


Figure 2

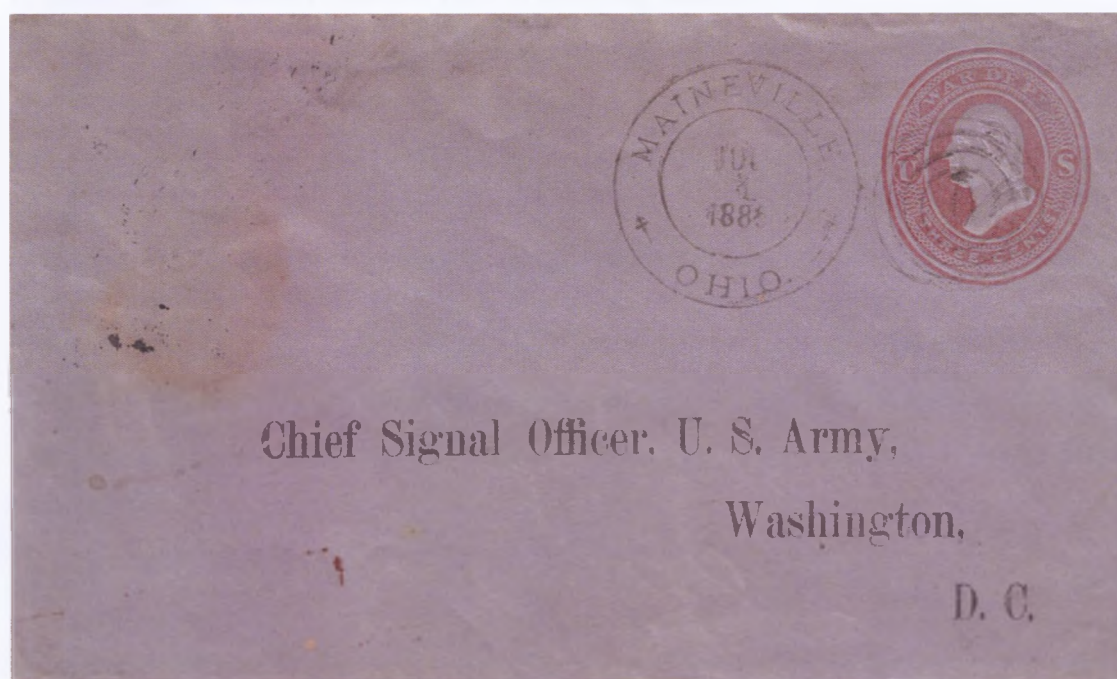


Figure 3

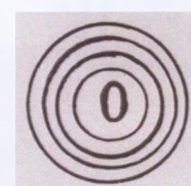


Figure 4



Figure 5

Manufactured cancels are normally geometrically precise - think wheel of fortune, Maltese cross, scarab, etc. - but occasionally they are not. Figure 3 illustrates a cover from Maineville, Ohio with the cancel consisting of a letter "O" in four rings. A tracing of the cancel (see Figure 4) shows the "O" to be shifted slightly to the right in the central circle. Cole lists the cancel, without attribution, on page 271 as Lo-17, found on 1883 issue stamps - see Figure 5. However, from the example he saw, the "O" was interpreted as occurring in the center of the circle. The Maineville post office operated in Warren county from 1854 -1919 and then reestablished in 1961. The "O" presumably stands for Ohio.



Figure 6



Figure 7

For many years the stamp with the bright purple cancel in Figure 6 has been in my collection. I had never learned where it originated and had no expectation of ever finding out. Recently, however, the Figure 7 cover from Stapleton, New York to Germany came on the market and the origin was revealed. The dateline on the reverse appears to read May 11, 1876. Are there other examples of this cancel out there in readers' collections?



Figure 8

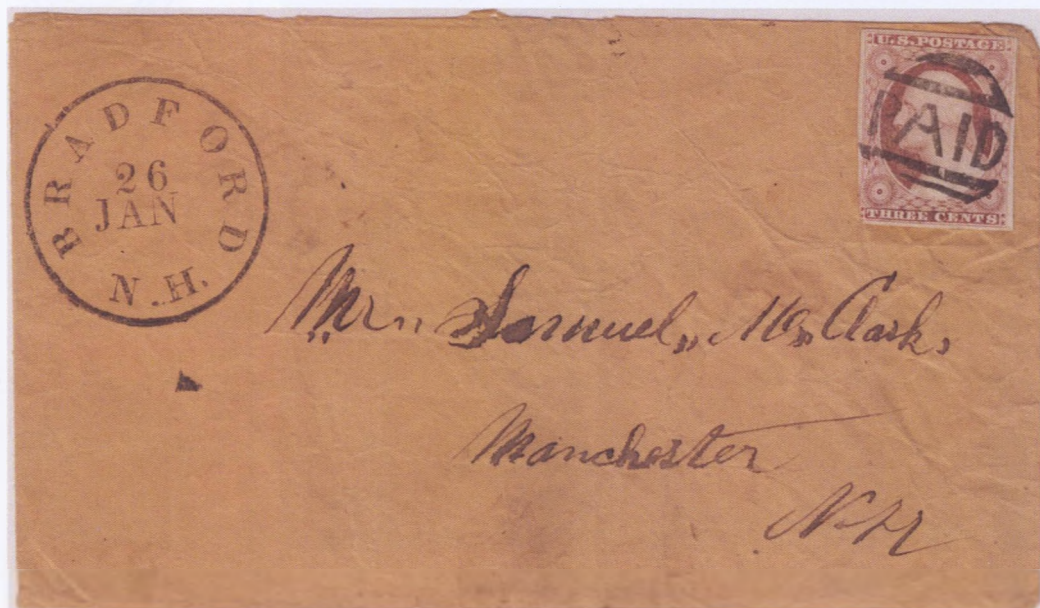


Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11

The Boston, Massachusetts post office introduced in July 1851 a circular cancel composed of the word "PAID" with three bars above and three bars below – see Figure 8 - and went on to produce a larger version with at least eight variations. Since the Boston post office was large, these cancels, in the aggregate, are fairly common. Other post offices in New England copied the concept. Most of the examples, and certainly those from Boston, appear to have been professionally engraved. But not all. Bradford, New Hampshire, employed a quite primitive "PAID" with two bars above and two below – see Figure 9. (Thanks to John Donnes for the tracing.) Bradford also used, perhaps later than in Figure 10, a more professional appearing design – see Figure 11.

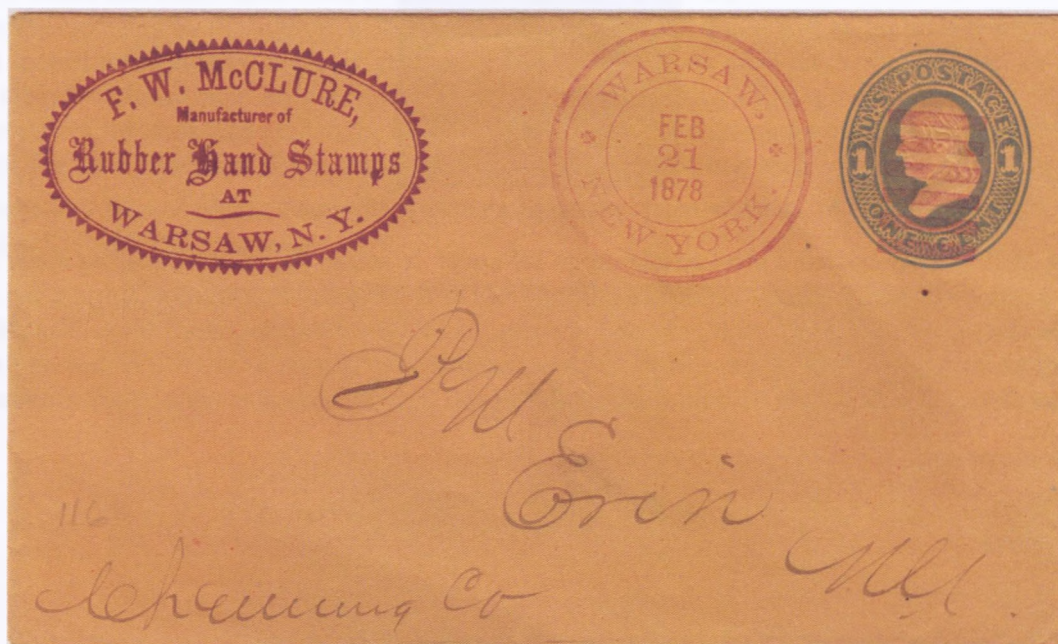


Figure 12

The cover in Figure 12 was struck with a Warsaw, New York duplex handstamp in magenta ink dated 2/21/78. The cancel consists of six horizontal bars. The corner card of a manufacturer of rubber handstamps appears in the cover's upper left corner. One wonders if F. W. McClure supplied the handstamp used by the Warsaw post office. We can surmise that McClure did advertise to the post office trade because the cover is addressed to "PM/Erin, NY". Erin is an operating post office established in 1883 in Chemung county.



Figure 13

Figure 13 shows a similar duplex marking involving the six bar cancel from Emlenton, PA dated 5/31/78. Emlenton is an operating post office established in 1883 in Verango county. Who can report other post offices that used handstamps of this same general design and has any reader seen McClure ads for handstamps? See Cole GE-55, page 22, for a possible example from Elton, New York dated 6/3/78 and Whitfield 4047 (Page 136 and 2nd revision page 295,) for another possibility, this from Slatington, Pennsylvania dated 10/11/79.



Figure 14

The February 2017 *NEWS* carried a brief article on an off-cover 7c stamp (Scott 149) bearing a star cancel that is quite similar to a rare Pittsburgh machine cancel used briefly in 1871. On known genuine examples, the point to point distance between star tips is reported to be 22 mm. and in the case of the 7c stamp they are 21mm. The difference could be attributable to an inking variation. Figure 14 shows another off-cover stamp (Scott 146) with a similar star cancel. The point to point distance here is about 21.5 mm. Could this be the early Pittsburgh machine star? Comment is invited.



Figure 15

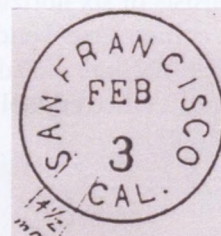


Figure 16

The cover shown in Figure 15, addressed to Camden, Maine, was struck by a duplex San Francisco handstamp dated February 15. There is no indication of a year date. The killer is a circle of six wedges and the stamp is a Scott 147. The noteworthy aspect of the cover is the magenta ink. It is decidedly unusual, in my experience, to see any ink other than black on San Francisco domestic mail of this period. The cds mark illustrated in Figure 16 is, I believe, shown in the 1992 book on San Francisco postmarks by John M. Mahoney citing dates of usage 10/73 to 2/78 – see Figure 16.¹ Mahoney didn't routinely list the ink color for the many variations of the postmarks he illustrated, but in a section showing representative postmark types, he did report the Figure 3 type in both black and magenta ink.² It would be helpful to see other examples of magenta San Francisco postmarks and cancels of this period on domestic mail to determine any pattern of use in terms of the type of mail on which it is found. ■

1. Mahoney, John M. *San Francisco Postal Markings 1847-1900* LaPosta Monograph Series, Volume 8, LaPosta Publications (1992), page 96.

2. *ibid.*, page 7.

More on Boston Star Ellipse

By Roger D. Curran

The November 2010 *NEWS* carried an article on ellipse cancels with a star in the center. One unusual example, involving a star and several dots in the center, was illustrated on an off-cover 3c green as seen in Figure 1. This cancel was reported by Blake and Davis to be from Boston.¹

Since it wasn't associated by the authors with a postmark, I speculated that it was an unduplexed cancel. Had I looked more closely at the 3c green stamp, a lightly struck semi-circle would have been noted to the left of the ellipse. This indicates, or at least strongly suggests, that the semi-circle was part of a postmark that was duplexed to the ellipse. In many years of looking for ellipse cancels, incidentally, the Figure 1 strike was the only example of this cancel that I had seen.

Club member Larry Rausch recently submitted a cover, illustrated front and back in Figure 2, that bears a second strike that adds new information.



Figure 1



Figure 2

This cover is not dated but the post office of origin is Prospect Ferry, Maine which operated from 1850 to 1907. The stamp appears to be a Scott 158, dating this cover at c.1874. Delivery of the letter to an address in Boston, MA was attempted whereupon it was learned that the addressee (if not the company, at least E E Kimball himself) had relocated to Waterville, ME, ironically a mere 50 mile road journey from Prospect Ferry. The postmark and ellipse are clearly duplexed.

In addition to the ellipse, the Blake and Davis book illustrates what appears to be the same postmark.² This listing is not associated with a cancel which indicates that no example they saw was struck by a duplex handstamp.

Incidentally, this postmark is one of eleven carrier postmarks listed by Blake and Davis and not one was associated with a cancel.³ Figure 3 combines the two markings that are shown separately in their book.



Figure 3

One assumes that the duplex handstamp was intended to be used on locally addressed mail brought to the Boston post office in a situation wherein initial processing, including stamp cancellation, was done in the carrier department. And there is the 3c green stamp which presents evidence that this was done.

However, the normal Boston procedure was, as far as I know, to initially process such mail elsewhere in the post office with subsequent referral to the carrier department. Perhaps the practice of using the carrier duplex to cancel mail was tried briefly, then abandoned, and the handstamp subsequently put in service briefly just to mark receipt in the carrier department.

Commentary and additional information would be welcomed.

1. Blake, Maurice C. and Davis, Wilbur W. *Boston Postmarks to 1890* (1949) Reprinted 1974 Quarterman Publications, Inc., Lawrence, MA, pg. 269.

2. *ibid.*, pg. 299.

3. *ibid*



DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SHARE?

Contributions to the NEWS are always needed!

Actually they are essential for this, or any, journal to survive.



Notice that we didn't say 'articles' although they are, of course, very much welcome. There are other ways you can 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. Or 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 which can be of real value in commenting on items appearing in the NEWS.

And when you are considering an article, please remember that help is always available. Your Editor would be very happy to help you put your thoughts into print.