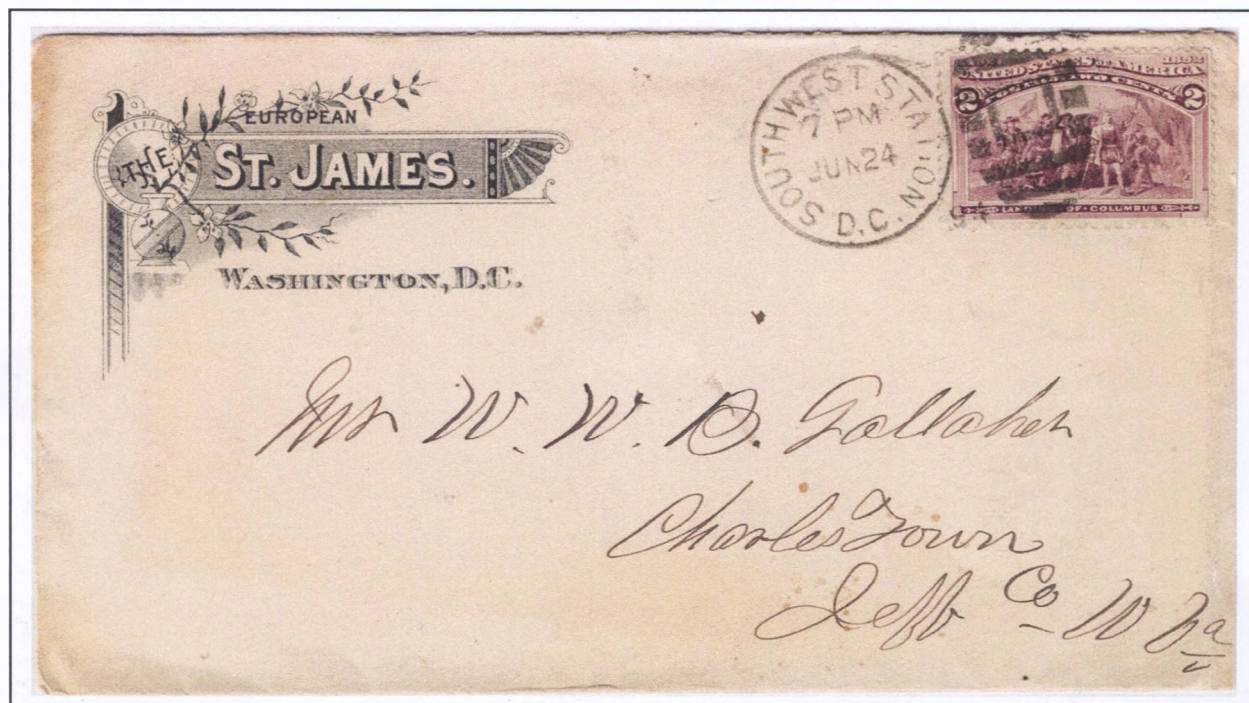




U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

Vol. 34, No. 5, Whole No. 306, August 2018



Bearing the distinctive "9-bar-ellipse-with-an-empty-box" cancel, this June 24, 1894 cover is probably the latest-known use of the "South West Station" CDS from Washington, D.C. Starting on page 88, Roger Curran explains more.

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The Official Journal of the United States Cancellation Club

The United States Cancellation Club NEWS

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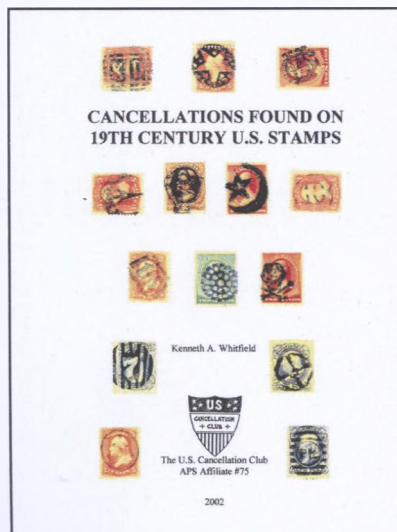
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Southbound "Favor Bag" Mail – New York City to Philadelphia

Ardy Callender

In the last issue of the USCC NEWS, I discussed "Favor Bag" mail originating in Philadelphia and destined for New York City or transiting to cities beyond. It seems only natural that the next step should be an examination of mail headed in the opposite direction; southward from New York City to Philadelphia. I could never have imagined that a study of New York square grid cancellations would lead to such new avenues of research including both railroad mail and the cancellations/procedures of Philadelphia.

The same railroad lines mentioned in the previous article (Camden & Amboy Railroad and Philadelphia & Trenton Railroad) carried mail southward from New York City to Philadelphia. A "Favor Bag" was set up onboard the ferry between New York City and Jersey City, New Jersey whereby letters could be deposited by merchants before the ferry left or by passengers during the voyage.

The earliest Philadelphia-bound letter recorded by Harvey (1988, pg. 25) was dated 18 September, 1844 and is illustrated in Figure 1. It has a blue manuscript rating mark (12½ cents) at upper right and a R. R. marking at upper left, both of which were applied at the Philadelphia Post Office. Harvey speculated that the letter "May have been carried by the favor of conductor and delivered to Phila[delphia] Post Office as a loose letter from the train." During 1845-1846, route agents were not posted on the trains but "Favor Bag" pouches rode along with the regular mail bags to be delivered to the Philadelphia Post Office on arrival. After January 1847, route agents rode onboard trains receiving "Favor Bag" letters from New York City as well as other stops along the line.

Markings

The Philadelphia Post Office employed a distinct system and specific markings on "Favor Bag" mail arriving from New York City during 1845-1847. As postmasters were required to correctly "rate" letters before delivery, each letter's origin was vital in calculating rates. Unlike the New York City Post Office, the Philadelphia Post Office chose to place origination markings on both local mail as well as mail destined for out of town. Between late 1845 until early 1847, a set of letters including "N", "N Y", "W", and "X" and the common Philly rate marker (double-lined, circled-5) were used on all unpostmarked mail. Harvey (1988, pg. 25) mentions that the "N" and "N Y" cancels serve to designate New York City as their origin. However, he believes the scarcer "W" and "X" actually have no special meaning. He states "The postal clerk, unable to find the "N" or "N Y" (lost, worn out, misplaced) but feeling under compulsion to stamp something on the cover, simply used whatever loose rubber stamp he had available."

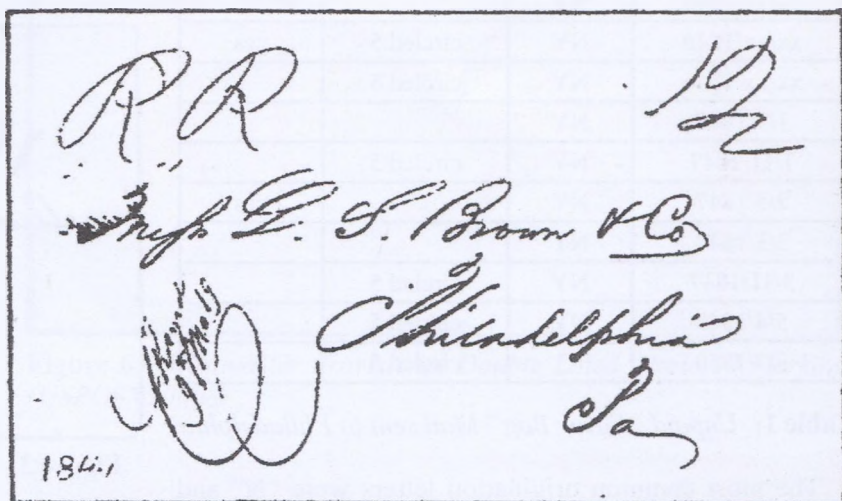


Figure 1 – Earliest "Favor Bag" (Harvey, 1988)

After early 1847, the use of origination letters was eliminated and no other postal markings other than the double-lined circled-5 rate markers were employed on unpaid stampless mail. With the advent of adhesives, stamps (and, hence, prepaid mail) were at first cancelled by the double-lined circled-5 and later with the government-issued encircled seven-bar grid. All these markings were struck in blue ink.

Prior to early 1847, both the New York City and Philadelphia Post Offices handled "Favor Bag" mail sent onward to other destinations. However, after 1847 the Philadelphia Post Office processed only local "Favor Bag" mail. Mails intended for other locations were kept onboard the train by route agents until reaching another destination. Only Philadelphia mails were offloaded and sent to the Philadelphia Post Office for delivery.

Philadelphia "Favor Bag" mail can be divided into two categories based on its destination: mail intended for local addresses or mail destined for other locations. As mentioned above, mail addressed to out of town locations was only processed in the Philly Post Office until early 1847. Each of groups can further be subdivided into unpaid versus. paid mail.

Mail to Philadelphia Addresses

Unpaid "Favor Bag" mail originating in New York City arrived in the Philadelphia Post Office without any postal markings. All markings were applied in Philadelphia. Table 1 lists unpaid "Favor Bag" mail destined for Philadelphia as compiled from Ed Harvey's 1988 article, the United States Philatelic Classic Society Census (New York Postmaster Provisional) and the author's collection.

An example of an unpaid stampless letter struck with the scarce origination letter "X" is shown as Figure 2. The letter, originating in New York City, is also struck with a double-lined circled-5 rate marker (due) at upper right. As previously mentioned, Harvey (1988, pg. 25) believed the "X" and "W" had no special meaning. An example of the originating letter "W" is shown as Figure 3. A double-lined circled-5 is struck at upper right.

Date	Origin Letter	Rate Marker	N Y P M Provisional
10/2/1845	NY	circled 5	
10/6/1845	NY	circled 5	
3/13/1846	W	circled 5	
3/21/1846	NY	circled 5	
3/28/1846	X	circled 5	
4/24/1846	NY	circled 5	yes
5/18/1846	NY	circled 5	yes
7/29/1846	NY	circled 10	yes
12/11/1846	NY		
xx/xx/1846	NY	circled 5	yes
xx/xx/1846	NY	circled 5	
1/7/1847	NY		
1/11/1847	NY	circled 5	
2/5/1847	NY		yes
3/3/1847	NY		
3/11/1847	NY	circled 5	
5/4/1847	NY	circled 5	
3/7/1850		circled 5	

Table 1: Unpaid "Favor Bag" Mail sent to Philadelphia

The most common origination letters were "N" and "NY". An example of an unpaid letter with the "N Y" cancel is shown as Figure 4. Notice that the double-lined circled-5 is missing from this cover. In the LaPosta article (1988, pg. 27) Harvey comments: "During this period, there are instances of the 'N Y' being applied without a rate, on letters to Philadelphia. A few months later, early in 1847, letters to Philadelphia appear with rate only." Other examples of missing rate markers are presented in Table 1.

New York City's Postmaster Provisional adhesives became available as early as 14 July 1845. The stamps were only valid for letters mailed at New York City. Since "Favor Bag" letters were not officially mailed in the New York Post Office, the postage on letters bearing these stamps was not recognized by the Philadelphia Post Office. The US Philatelic Classic Society Postmaster Provisionals Cover Census includes four "Favor Bag" covers and Harvey's article includes another; all described in Table 1. All of these covers received the Philadelphia origination letters and all but one received the double-lined circled-5 or circled-10 markings.

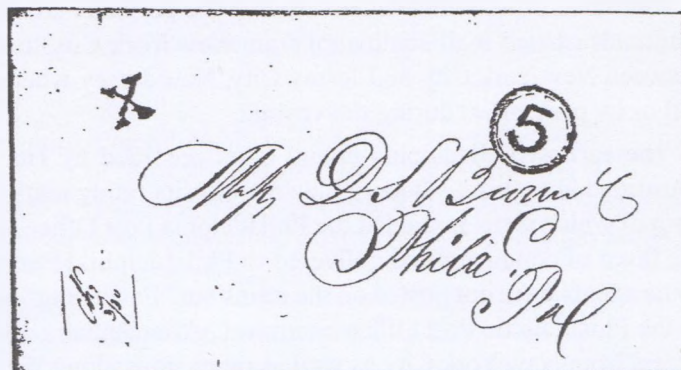


Figure 2 - "X" Origination Marking (Harvey, 1988)

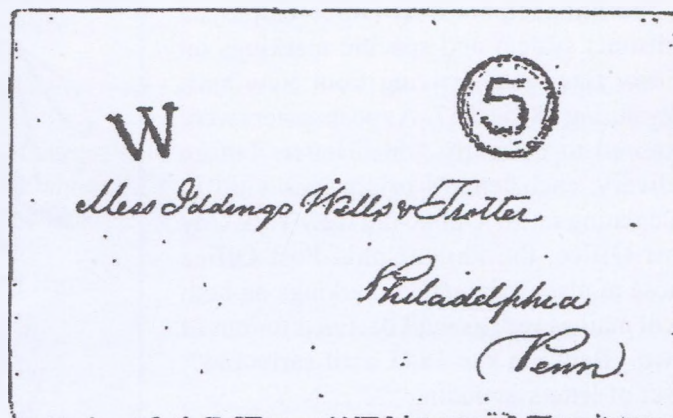


Figure 3 - "W" Origination Marking (Harvey, 1988)

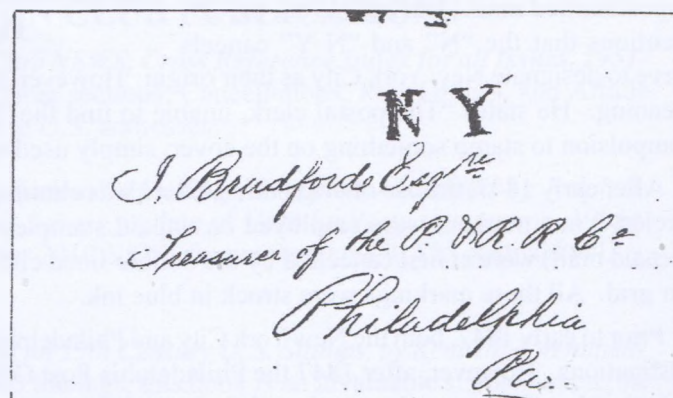


Figure 4 - "NY" Origination Marking (Harvey, 1988)

The cover shown in Figure 5 has the origination letter “N” at center and two strikes of the double-lined circled-5 at upper left. The double-lined circled-5 often appears to be a single circle as the thin inner circle merges with the thick outer ring. The double rate cover shown in Figure 6 has the “N Y” origination letters at left and the very scarce double-lined circled-10 rate marking at upper right.

After early 1847, origination letters were phased out and only the double-lined circled-5 rate marking appears on unpaid mail. Harvey (1988, pg 28) has recorded covers struck solely by the double-line circle between April 1847 and March 1851. An example is shown as Figure 7 in which the only marking is double-lined circled-5 rate marking at upper right. The folded letter is dated 3 July, 1850.

Paid “Favor Bag” mail destined for Philadelphia addresses appears to be rather scarce as I have recorded only three examples as seen in Table 2. This may be due to the short period of time I have been researching this category. The two covers franked with 1847 issues were taken from the United States Philatelic Classic Society’s 1847 Cover Census and a scan of the other was kindly provided by Roger Curran.

Date	Adhesive	Cancellation
8/3/1848	5¢	circled 5 (rate marker)
xx/xx/1850	5¢	circled 7 bar grid
12/16/1851	3¢	circled 7 bar grid

Table 2 – Paid “Favor Bag” Mail to Philadelphia

The double-lined circled-5 seems to have been used initially to cancel adhesives. An example is shown in Figure 8. The folded letter franked by the 5 cent 1847 Issue, is tied at the lower right by a blue double lined circled-5 with another strike towards the center. It is unclear as to the whether the letter was rated 5 cents due or the double-lined circle was simply used as cancelling devise. Sometime after this (around 1850) the government-issued encircled 7-bar grid became the favored obliterator.

Figure 9 illustrates the use of the grid as a cancel. The 5 cent stamp is cancelled “socked on the nose” by a blue encircled grid with a manuscript “Paid” to the right of the adhesive, reiterating the paid status of the letter. A later example is shown in Figure 10. Addressed to Philadelphia, the letter is datelined New York City on 16 December, 1851. The sole postal marking stuck on the letter is the blue encircled 7-bar grid, just tying the 3 cent adhesive (Scott #10) at upper left.

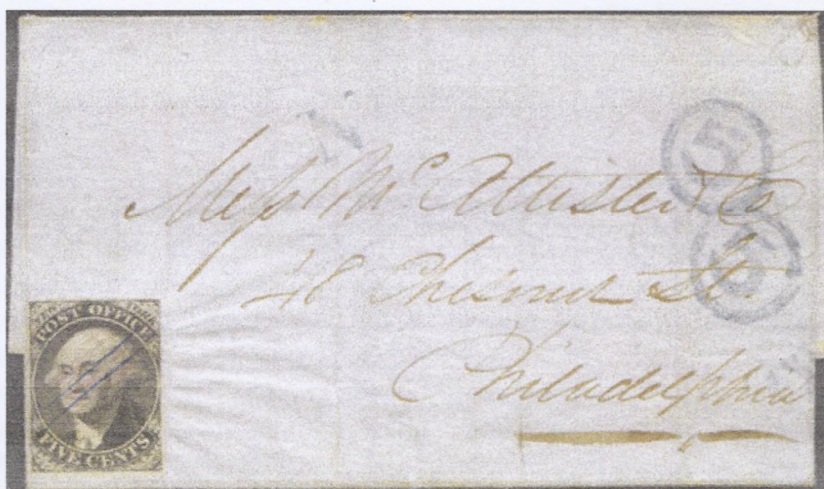


Figure 5 – Postmaster Provisional “N” Origination Marking (USPCS #20713)



Figure 6 – Postmaster Provisional Double Lined Circle 10 Marking (USPCS #20608)

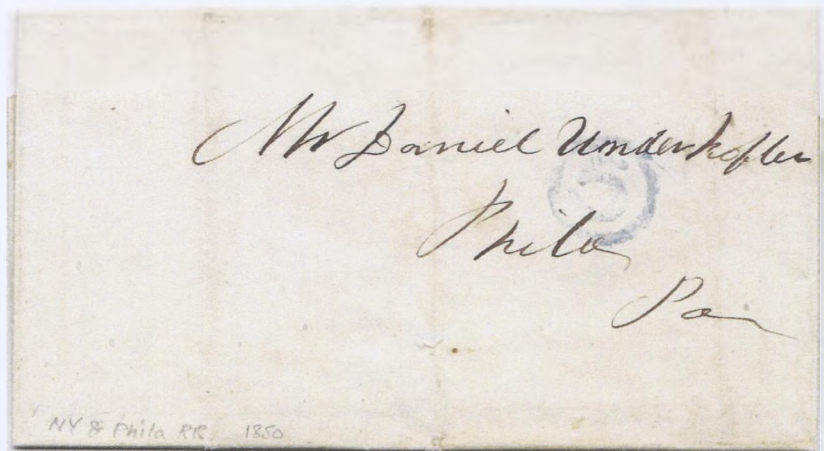


Figure 7 – Double Lined Circular 5

Mail Transiting Philadelphia

The Philadelphia Post Office handled "Favor Bag" mail destined to out of town destinations only until early 1847. Harvey (1988, pg. 26.) lists only three covers in his article and unfortunately none were illustrated. These three covers are listed in Table 3.

"Favor Bag" mail transiting Philadelphia received the same origination letters as struck on local destination mail. Two of the three covers listed in Table 3 were sent to Washington DC. and the third to Cincinnati, Ohio. The Cincinnati cover received the scarce double-lined circled-10 (rated for over 300 miles).

Date	Date Stamp Rate	Destination
9/25/1845	5	Washington, DC.
xx/xx/1845	10	Cincinnati, OH
1/11/1847	5	Washington, DC.

Table 3 – "Favor Bag" Mail Transiting Philadelphia, all originating in New York City

Thanks are due to Roger Curran for providing the scan of the cover shown as Figure 10. Any further examples of southbound "Favor Bag" would be appreciated – particularly 1845 - 1847 covers which transit the Philadelphia Post Office. ■

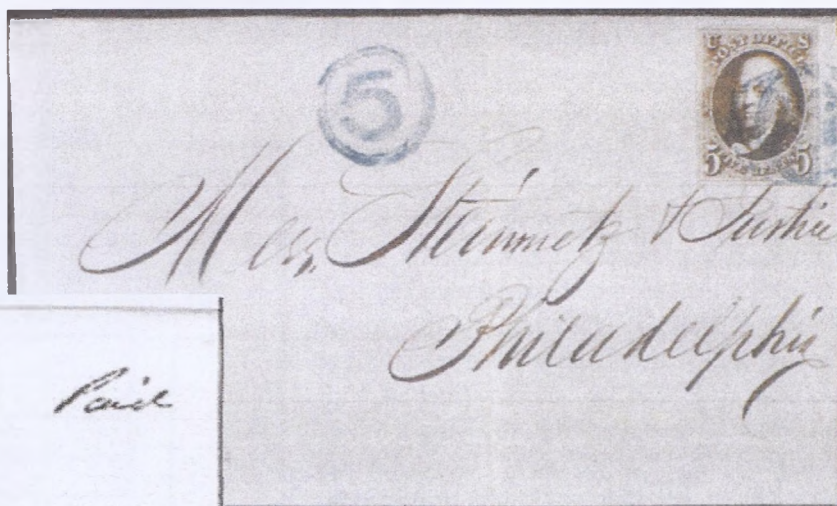


Figure 8 – Double Lined Circular 5 on Adhesive (USPCS#12650)

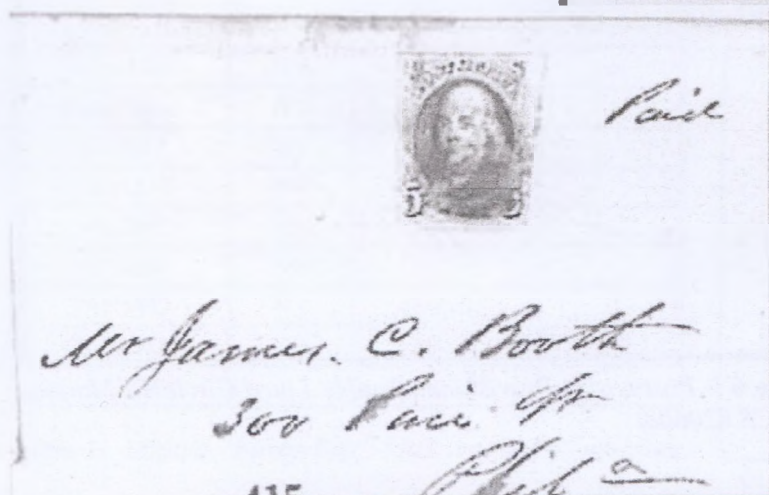


Figure 9 – Encircled 7 Bar Grid (USPCS#21592)

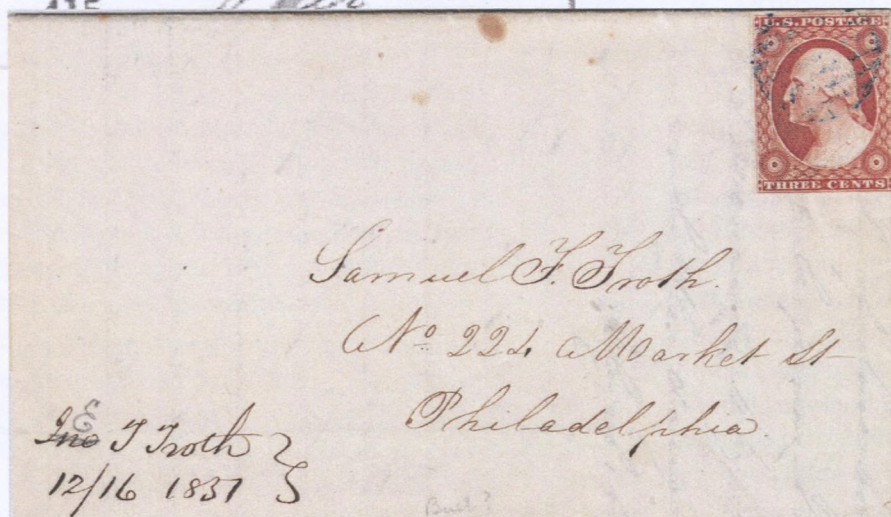


Figure 10 – Encircled 7 Bar Grid

References:

Harvey, Edward T., "Favor Bag" Mail, New York City-Philadelphia", LaPosta: A Journal of American Postal History, March, 1988.

Uses of Common U. S.-Style Cancels by Foreign Authorities

Roger D. Curran

One generally thinks of commercial rubber-faced killers such as Wheel of Fortune (WOF), Maltese Cross and Scarab, so popular in the late 1870s and into the 1880s, as being pretty much confined to use only in the United States. But it is also reasonable to suppose that the handstamps used for these cancels might, on occasion, be sold for use by foreign authorities. And they were. On page 57 of his book, *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894*, Jim Cole reported a WOF used from Mexico "... at Lampazos, Naranjo, Neuva, Leon." In addition, the November 2009 *NEWS* illustrated on page 119, a Guatemala WOF usage to Germany.

Shown in Figure 1 is a folded outer letter sheet addressed to Laguna, Mexico with a Sc. 209 stamp canceled by a strike of the commonly seen 6-bar scarab cancel. The postmark, which is almost certainly struck from a duplex handstamp is, to say the least, odd. It seems to be a Mexican consulate marking which I assume is a non-postal marking. But, if so, the question arises as to why a canceler was duplexed to a non-postal marking. Further, why did the cover bear the postage stamp? Figure 2 presents tracings of the two markings, kindly provided by John Donnes.



Figure 1

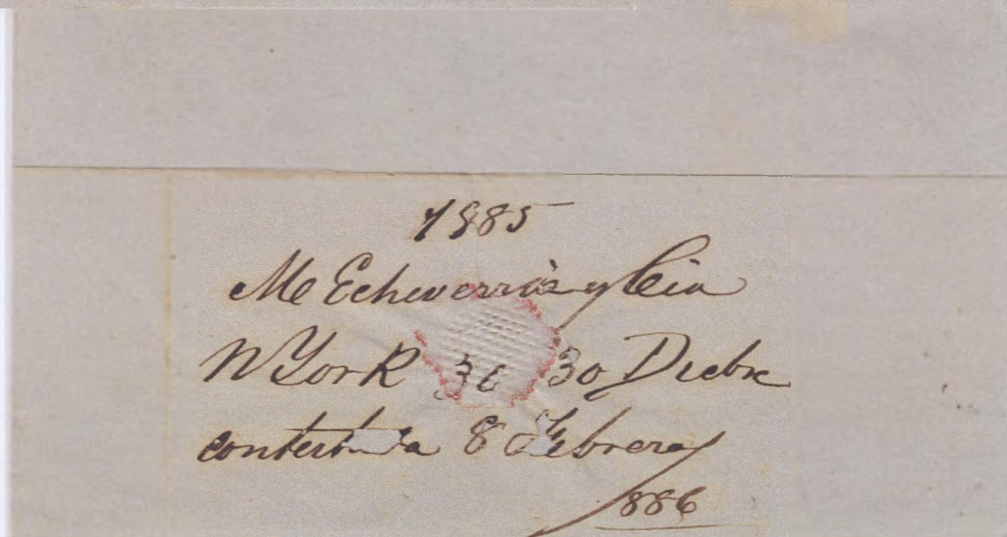


Figure 3

Figure 3 shows the reverse of the Figure 1 cover and, as can be seen, there are no postal markings present, although there is some hand-writing which seems to be dated February 8, 1886, some 6 weeks after the original cancel date.

In checking with several potential sources of information about the handling of this cover, I have been unable to learn more about it. Hopefully a club member can explain the situation or know who to contact for an answer. ■

Unusual Box Ellipses of a Washington, D.C. Station

Roger D. Curran

The South West Station of the Washington, D.C. Post Office was established as a full service station on December 1, 1891 at 714-16 4 1/2 Street, S.W. The name was changed on March 1, 1895 to "Station D." From 1891 until at least 1898, this station employed a very distinctive 9-bar ellipse cancel with an empty box in the center.

Figure 1 shows what is, as far as I know, the earliest reported use of this cancel, January 5, 1891. Figure 2 illustrates an example dated June 22, 1892 used as part of a marking to document forwarding of the cover. On the front cover, there is illustrated a June 24, 1894 example which I believe is the latest reported use.

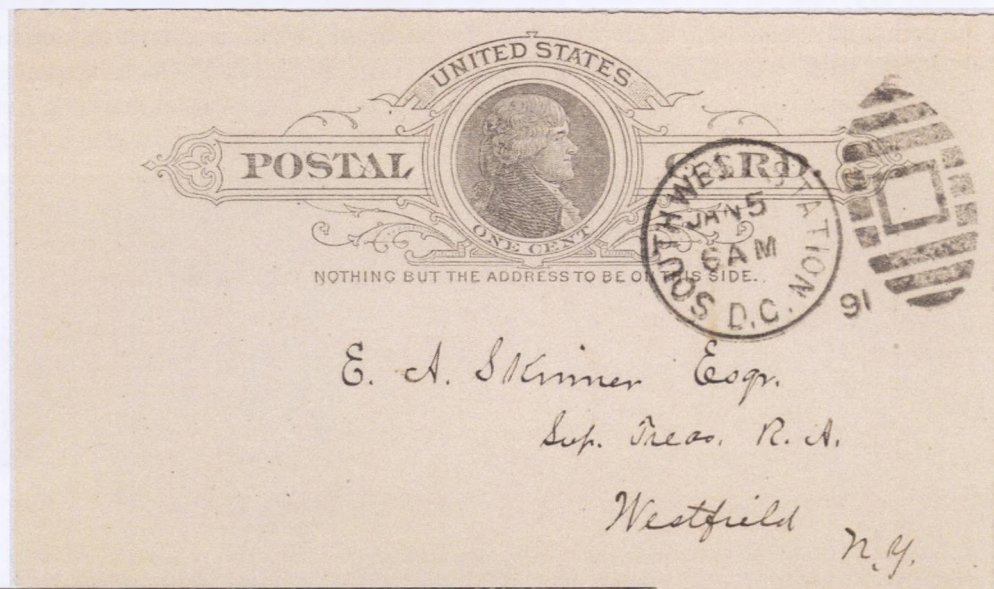


Figure 1



Figure 2

Carl Stieg, who was a long-time student of Washington DC postal history, recorded this ellipse used in two handstamps; one with a 25.5mm CDS diameter (1/5/91-1/21/92) and the other, used later in the period (6/16/92 to 6/24/94), with 26mm diameter.¹ I have found it difficult to make that measurement distinction and would combine all examples under one designation. Further, when laying a transparency of an 1891 strike over an 1894 strike, the CDSs appeared to match in size.

1. Stieg, Carl L. "Postal Markings of Washington, D.C. Stations," *LaPosta*, Part V, March 2001, p.45

Three covers posted after the station was designated "Station D" in 1895 are shown next. Figure 3 is dated March 21, 1896 as confirmed by the transit marking struck on the reverse, seen in Figure 4. An October 18, 1897 strike appears as Figure 5 and a May 20, 1898 usage is shown in Figure 6. Stieg reports dates of usage August 2, 1895 – October 18, 1897; the Figure 7 cover now extends his latest usage date.²

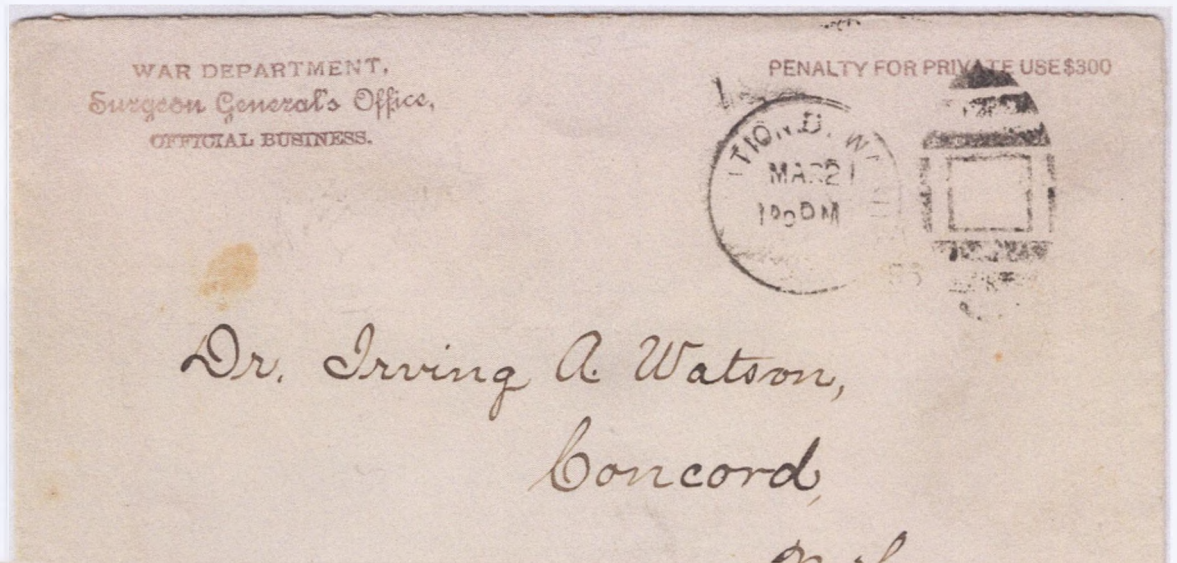


Figure 4

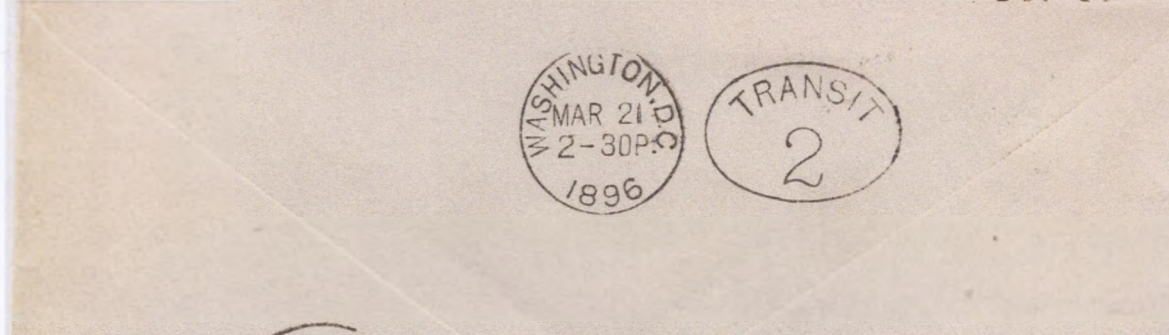


Figure 3



Figure 5

2. Stieg, Carl L. "Postal Markings of Washington, D.C. Stations," *LaPosta*, Part VI, March 2001, p.46

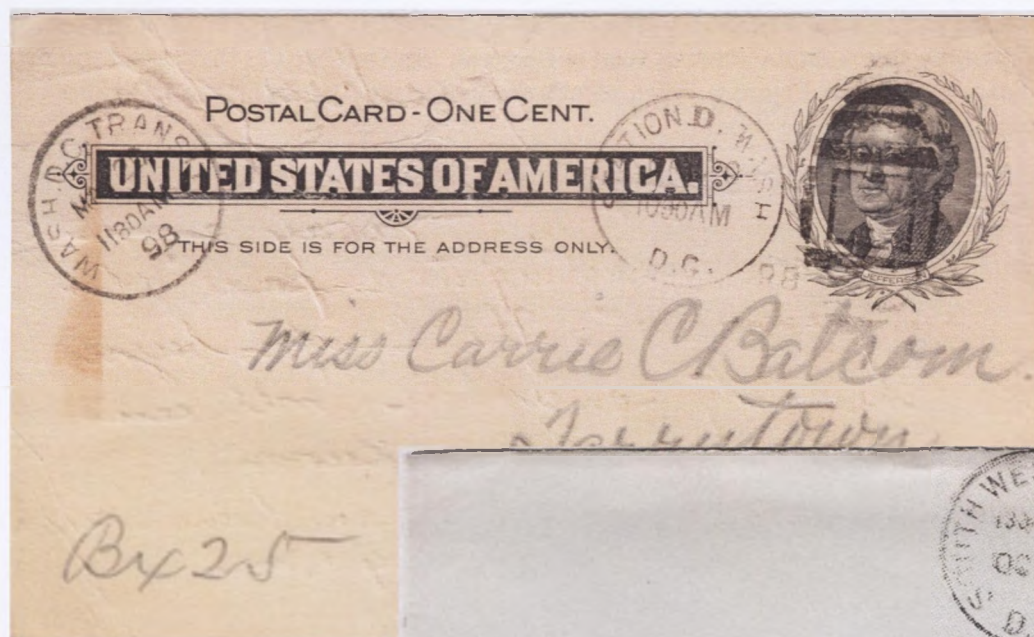


Figure 6



Figure 7

The 9-bar ellipse with a box in the center was the primary cancel employed by this station but was not the only one. Two additional cancels saw use, albeit to a very limited extent; the first (Figure 7) is a 6-bar ellipse with "S.W.S." in a rectangle in the center of the cancel. It is very scarce. Stieg recorded dates of July 19, 1892 to July 11, 1893, reflecting a usage of only 51 weeks, and the Figure 7 date of October 4, 1893 can be added.³ There is, incidentally, a cancel that was used by Washington's East Capitol Station that involves the same design concept but with "E.C.S." in the rectangle. I would estimate the "E.C.S." cancel, while not common, is seen about ten times more frequently than the "S.W.S.". Whitfield tracings of both the "S.W.S." and the "E.C.S." marks are shown in Figure 8.

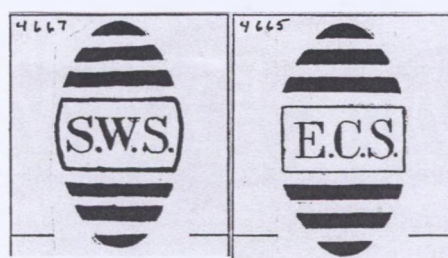


Figure 8

3. Stieg, Carl L. "Postal Markings of Washington, D.C. Stations," *LaPosta*, Part V, March 2001, p.45

For readers interested in the cancels of the East Capitol Station, an article on this subject appeared in the February 2016 *NEWS*.

The second limited use cancel is shown in Figure 9 and it has within the rectangle "STATION/D" with the "D" in a larger font size. Stieg reported this cancel from January 31, 1896 to May 11, 1897.⁴ I believe this cancel to be about as scarce as the one shown in Figure 7.




Figure 9

I am eager to learn of further dates of the cancels shown herein and of any additional cancels that were used by the South West Station during the 1891-1898 period. Since the dates so far reported represent a decidedly limited sample, the reported periods of use will probably be substantially expanded in the future.

Please send any scans or comments to our editor at uscceeditor@mail.com. ■

4. Stieg, Carl L. "Postal Markings of Washington, D.C. Stations," *LaPosta*, Part VI, March 2001, p.46



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Another Look at Large Negative Killers from Portland, Maine

Robert Conley

As a new student to the subject of the postal history of 19th Century Maine, I thought it might be a good idea to take a look at the 'Boston-style' Large Negative cancels that emanate from Portland, a delightful small city which happens to be the Pine Tree State's commercial center and largest metropolis.

Our club explored this subject in the early years of last decade and the USCC NEWS of November 2005 published a listing of 44 different Portland Large Negative cancels from the early part of the 1880's.

When I first learned of this earlier research, I considered abandoning the idea entirely; surely, it has all been done before. However, Roger Curran, who happens to have quite an assortment of these cancels, encouraged me to persevere. In fact, he sent me his entire collection, of perhaps 150 covers, for study! John Donnes also sent along scans of his collection, and it didn't take long to find a few new usage dates of previously-reported cancels and several new cancels. A few examples of the latter are shown here.

Figure 1 illustrates a postal card with an 11-in-a-circle killer, a newly-reported design. The reverse confirms a usage date of September 21, 1881.

A previously-unreported J-in-a-ring is seen in Figure 2. According to the reverse, the postal card dates from 24 July 1882.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Figure 3 shows a cover with an eight-in-a-square cancel. The February 20 CDS does not give a year, an unfortunate custom of the time. John Donnes' tracing in Figure 4 confirms it is a square, not a circle. It is yet to be determined if this new killer comes from the same canceler that is later altered to the design shown in Figure 5.

Not to be outdone by Messrs. Donnes and Curran, I took a look at my own fledgling collection where I found an unusual 2-in-a-flattened-hexagon (for want of a better description). Illustrated in Figure 6, this new find dates from December 29, 1881.

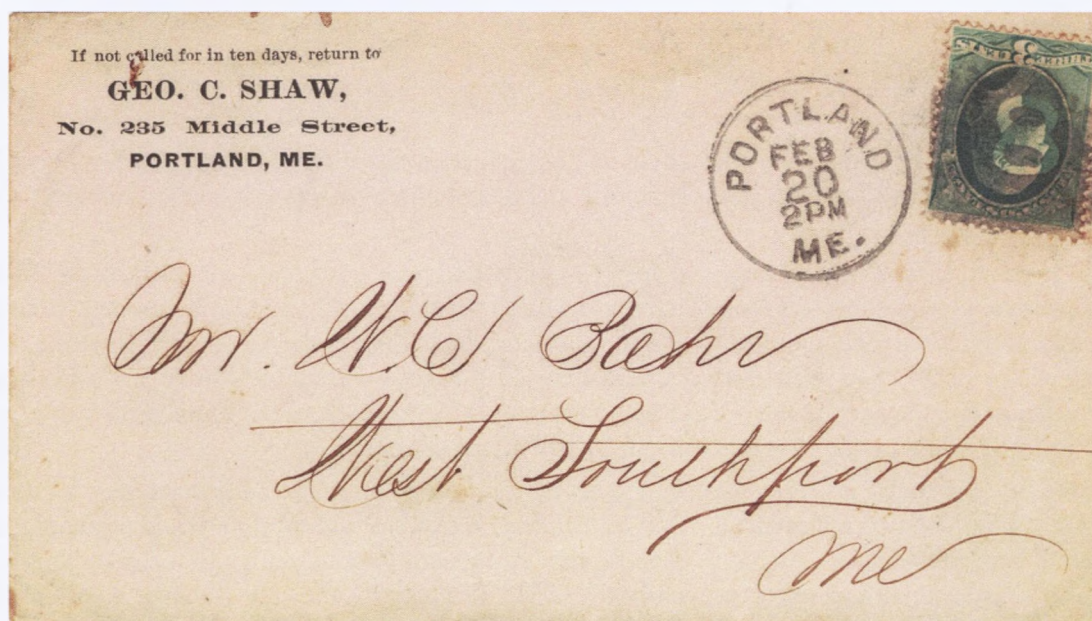


Figure 3



Figure 4

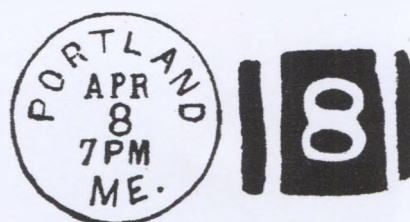


Figure 5

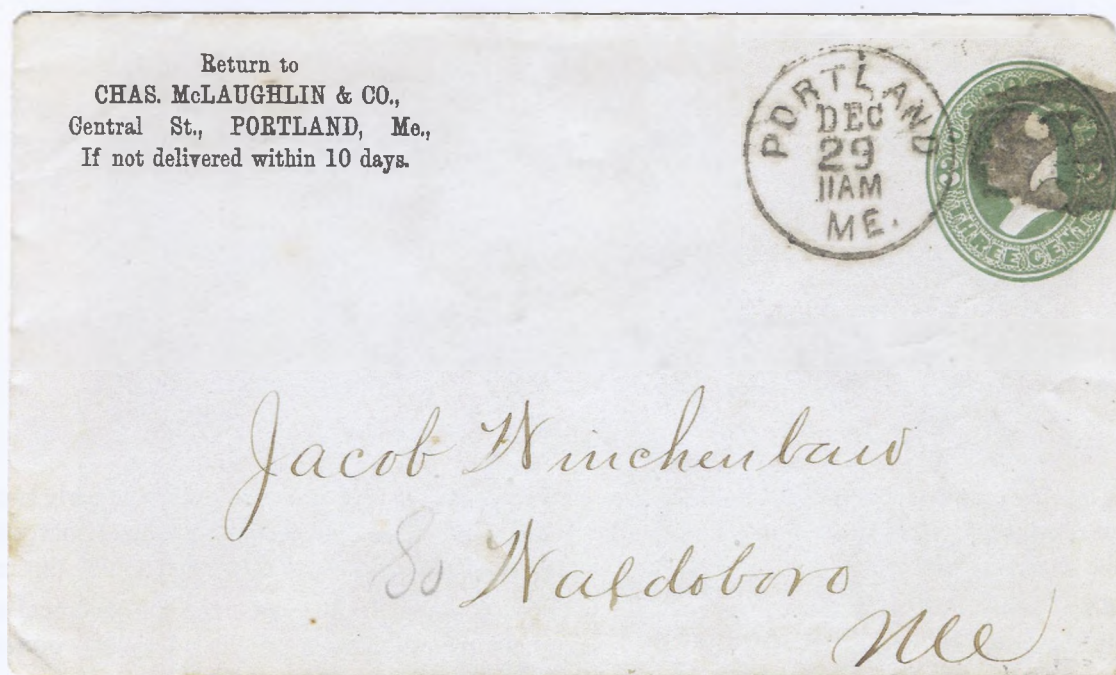


Figure 6

What I need now is for *you* to look at any Portland Large Negative cancels you might have. Even if you consider them as nothing new or notable, please send me a scan (at 300 dpi or better in jpg. or tif. format) at uscceeditor@mail.com. Further, if you'd like to obtain a copy of the USCC listing of 2005, simply email me and one will be sent to you.

Ultimately, with *your help*, an expanded update and fuller listing will be published in a future issue/s of the *NEWS*. ■

New York City Uses of Round Grid Cancel on the 1851 One-Cent Issues

Roger D. Curran

In the November 2017 *NEWS*, Ardy Callender discussed the early domestic cancels used by the New York Post Office (NYPO) beginning in July 1851. This was at the time of a major postal rate change and a reorganization of the NYPO itself.

One of the covers he illustrated was postmarked July 12 (1851) and bore a 3c stamp canceled by the 7-bar enclosed grid that had been provided to postmasters of the larger post offices when the 1847 stamps were issued. The NYPO used this round grid only to a limited extent on the 1847 issues because the NYPO preferred a square grid cancel that it had begun employing in November 1846 on the New York Postmaster's Provisional stamps. The square grid continued after July 1 to be the primary cancel used by the NYPO up until late August when the CDS became the canceler of stamps and the practice of using of a separate canceler was essentially discontinued.

As Ardy pointed out, the round grid was used by the NYPO on foreign mail and on one category of domestic mail – US Express Mail. He illustrated a December 31 cover bearing an express mail postmark and a round grid cancel in black ink. Figure 1 here illustrates an August 1 express mail cover with both markings in red ink. Red postmarking and canceling ink was used at least as late as November 3, 1851. Incidentally, the July 12 cover mentioned above is, I believe, a very scarce item.



Figure 1

The above is by way of introduction to a brief discussion of the NYPO's use of the round grid as an early cancel of the 1c issues. In his outstanding 1938 two-volume study on the 1c 1851 and 1857 issue stamps, Stanley Ashbrook said this about uses of the round grid at New York: "... I have never seen a domestic cover with a 1c cancelled by this marking."¹

A number of New York 1c 1851 issue covers have no doubt come to light in the 80 years since that statement was made, including surely some 1c round grid covers. However, I assume the overall number presently known is quite limited.

Figure 2 shows the outer sheet of a folded letter postmarked July 17, probably 1851.

Figure 3 is a piece bearing a red New York City delivery postmark, known to be used from at least 1856-1862, and a red grid canceling the 1c stamp. Normally, the postmark served as the cancel.

¹ Ashbrook, Stanley B. *The United States One Cent Stamp of 1851-1857, Vol. II*, H.L. Lindquist (1938), p.114.



Figure 2



Figure 3

Finally, Figure 4 illustrates a 1c stamp on a wrapper, or a portion thereof, canceled by the round grid in black. The top line of the docketing reads, I believe, "N.Y. Times Sept. 26 1853" with the 2nd line indicating where it was received on "Oct 1. 1853".

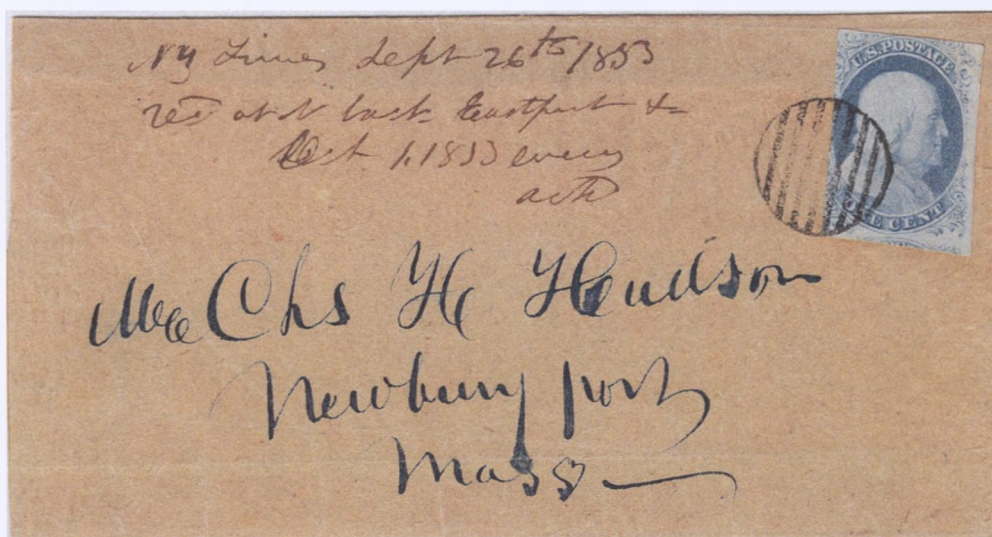


Figure 4

What other round grid 1c New York covers reside in members' collections? Scans or any additional information on the subject will be welcomed. ■

A Very Odd Cincinnati Cover

Roger D. Curran

The cover shown in Figure 1 gives us much to ponder. It is canceled October 31, 1881 and addressed in a now-faded magenta ink to a party in "Metropolis/ Massac Co./ Ills." A tracing of the CDS and duplexed "G" is seen in Figure 2.



Figure 1

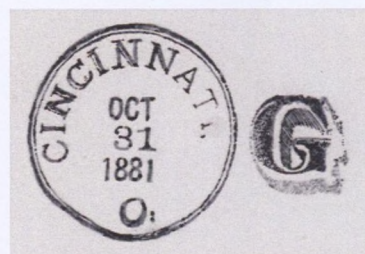


Figure 2

In Massac county, Illinios, there was a Metropolis City post office established in 1840 with name change to "Metropolis" in 1904. Being the county seat, the post office continues to this day. There is what appears to be a very smudged and large "Metropolis" received marking on the reverse as seen in Figure 3. What is surprising about this cover is the CDS and duplexed cancel which, I believe, were applied by a rubber-faced handstamp. It is most unusual to see the post offices of sizeable cities such as Cincinnati employing such handstamps to postmark and cancel covers entering the mails (given that they were too fragile to withstand the heavy volume workload that would be present). Beyond that, the cancel itself is very unlike other Cincinnati cancels of the period. One might speculate that this usage comes from a brief test of rubber-faced handstamps. The cancel, which is inexplicably in the form of a rather elaborate letter "G", barely strikes the postage stamp at the bottom.



Figure 3

Apart from the CDS and duplexed 'G' on the 3 cent green, there is a 9-segment circular cork killer which seems to be in a different ink. One might speculate the killer was added at Metropolis to properly cancel the stamp that was barely canceled at Cincinnati.

The lettering in the CDS is, of course, not fully struck. Could it be that it doesn't spell "Cincinnati" but some other town name? The ten letters of "Cincinnati" spelled out in this postmark would result in an arc that is short on the right side. In the molded rubber-faced handstamp markings we see of the period, full symmetry is standard, with any departures being highly unusual. But I could find no other Ohio post office names that begin with "Cincinnati---" and there is no populated place with a similar name in either Oregon or Oklahoma.

There is another explanation for this marking – that it is a fake. The lack of symmetry in the CDS is a concern as is the second cancel. Did the stamp originate on this cover in a situation where the originating post office neglected to apply a postmark, thus making it a "good" item on which to apply fake markings? Alternatively, was the original stamp on this cover removed, with whatever markings were on it, and the present stamp added in an attempt to create a cover that would raise fewer questions when fake markings were added? If the latter is so, however, why would the faker use a stamp so obviously canceled before? The greyish ink used for the postmark and cancel is characteristic of ink used with 1881 rubber faced handstamps. Setting all else aside, the markings do look genuine to this writer. However, the tie of the cancel from cover to stamp is ambiguous.

Needless to say, if readers have seen other examples of this or similar Cincinnati duplex markings, we would be appreciative if such would be reported to the NEWS. Comments and further analyses will also be welcomed.

Many thanks to John Donnes for the tracing and for reviewing this article in draft. ■



Editor's Note:

In my humble opinion, this cover is a poorly-executed fake.

My best guess is that the grid killer is genuine but the stamp has been moved from another envelope. Look at how precisely square the stamp is...99.9% of my covers have stamps sitting any which way but perfectly square. And there are three marks in the lower right margin of the stamp which lead nowhere. Not a single one made it across to this cover.

Then we have a CDS which looks like someone's sketched in the part around the "O." The duplexed markings are, according to Roger, but not readily apparent in these scans, of a different ink. Rather unusual to have two inks, me thinks.

Last of all, the "G"; has never been reported before despite being so distinctive. And I challenge anyone to find any other letter or number cancel of the era with such an elaborate design and detailed shading.

There are many other 'dodgy' features here. Other views are welcomed.



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More on the Unusual Cincinnati "C" Ellipse Cancels

Roger D. Curran

Cincinnati used an unusual ellipse design containing the letter "C" with a number inside the "C". It exists in at least three basic types. The first-appearing type, which involves nine bars, was used from the late 1880s into the 1890s – see Figure 1. Shown in Figure 2, a version with a smaller "C" and a smaller "1" appeared at least as early as March 1894 with use continuing to the mid 1900s. It has six bars with a solid central section ("barrel"). A third version involves a small "C" and number in a nine bar configuration as seen in Figure 3. However, I have not seen this version with numbers other than "1".



Figure 1

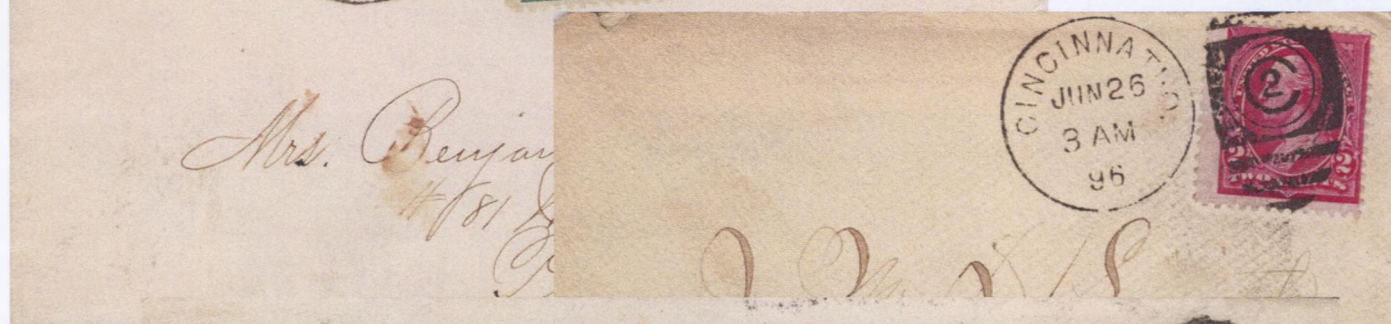


Figure 2

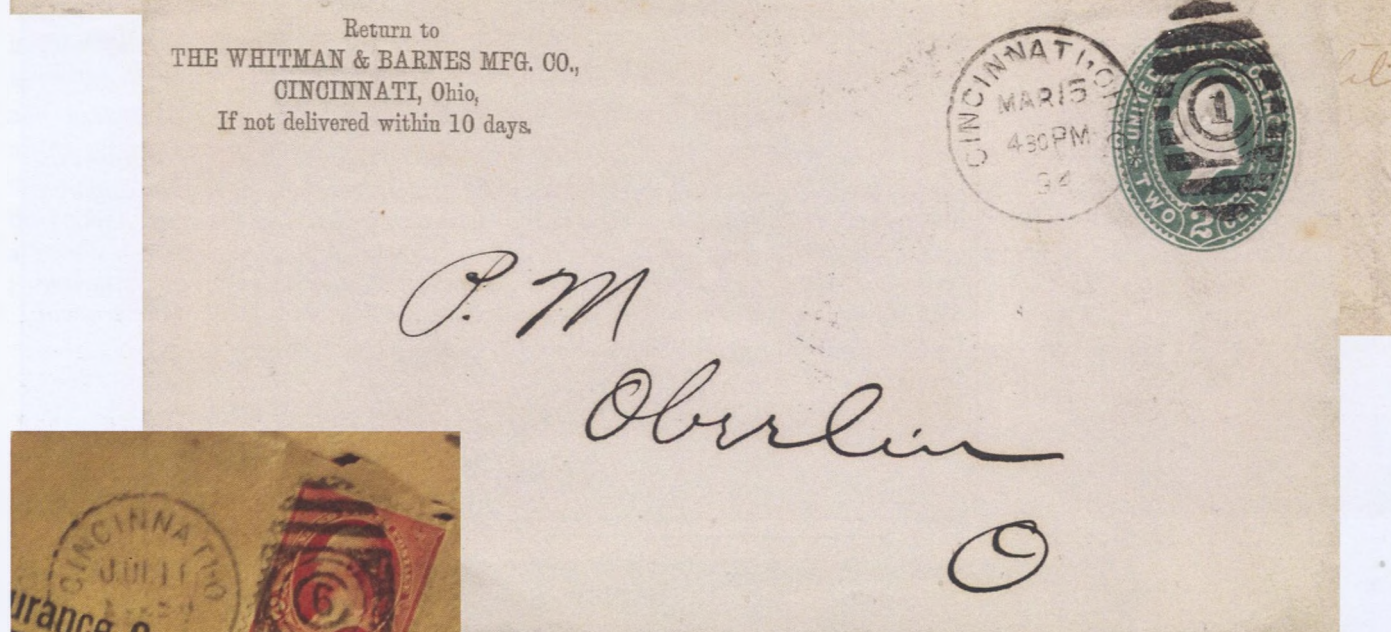


Figure 3



Figure 4

The February 2004 *NEWS* carried a brief article on these ellipses and we reported at that time that the numbers inside the ellipses ranged from "1" to "5". Club member John Dobranski has now reported a "6" in the smaller version as shown in Figure 4. Readers who can report dated examples of these interesting ellipse cancels are encouraged to do so, so that a more complete picture of their use can be developed. ■

Noted in Passing

Roger D. Curran

Among the more unusual Railway Post Office markings are those on the cover shown in Figure 1. They were struck by Andrew J. Morrison, a clerk on the Rutland and Troy Railroad. Morrison was a Civil War veteran who became a postal route agent in 1869.



Figure 1

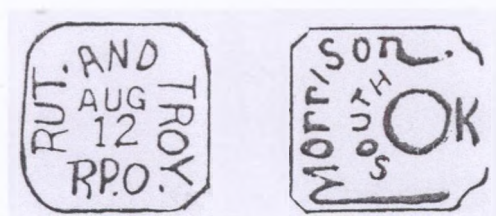


Figure 2



Figure 3

John M. Pendergast, Jr., a student of the Morrison markings, speculated that two wood blocks, carved to imprint the two markings (date stamp and canceler), were placed together in a handstamp fashioned for the purpose.¹ Representations of the two types of markings struck on the Figure 1 cover appear as Figure 2.² A variation of the "OK" canceler has been reported with a cross in the "O". Pendergast stated that the cross was caused by a metal plug that was intended to cut into the underlying stamp.³

Beginning by at least the late 1880s, perhaps earlier, Morrison began carving cancelers that contained his last name in bold letters, typically with an "N" or "S" in the center. Sometimes the trip number appeared as well. A typical example appears as Figure 3. Morrison retired in 1904 but Pendergast reported no more Morrison cancels after 1898.

Robert Conley recently acquired a number of items from James Lee including the cover discussed here, all being Maine items from the Raymond Koch collection of Masonic cancels. Figure 4 illustrates a Scott UX11 card with a Damariscotta, Maine CDS and a newly-reported killer of Masonic compass-and-square design. Figure 5 shows a tracing of the new find. Masonic cancels are considerably less common in the 1890s than in earlier decades going back to the 1860s.

1. John M. Pendergast, Jr., *More on Morrison*, published by the author in 1987, consisting of 41 page of information about the man and his markings. p.18

2. *ibid*, p.23 & p.27

3. *ibid*, p.17



Figure 4

In comparison to many other Masonic-themed killers illustrated in Jim Cole's *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894* or Whitfield's *Cancellations Found on 19th Century U. S. Stamps*, this Masonic design looks to be very sharp and precise, especially in the left and top of the cork. The deterioration along the right compass arm and an apparent crack in the lower right looks to be the result of fatigue. Presumably the postmaster, A. T. Gamage, or his clerk was right-handed! Although impossible to date accurately, this example appears to be from December 1892 or a year or so later. The still-operating post office in Damariscotta opened earlier in 1892. This picturesque little town of notable harborside and hinterland beauty is some 53 miles north east of Portland.

Two recent issues of the *NEWS* have reported hand carved 'PAID' cancels. Generally speaking, especially in the 1850s and early 1860s, 'PAID' cancels are, of course, seen with some frequency. However, those that are hand carved constitute a much smaller number. The February 2018 issue discussed an example on a 3c imperforate stamp from Bradford, New Hampshire and the May 2018 issue presented two Iowa examples in the collection of Jim Petersen.

John Dobranski recently submitted a Scott 26a with another hand carved 'PAID', this one with negative letters. Pictured in Figure 6, John asks if anyone could identify the post office of origin. This cancel does not appear to be in any literature, but John did find a second example, seen in Figure 7, that was illustrated in a Weiss sale catalog of some years ago. Can anyone shed more light on this cancel? ■



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 5

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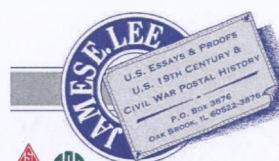


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