



U.S. Cancellation Club **NEWS**

Vol. 35, No. 7, Whole No. 314, August 2020



Although well-documented elsewhere, this unusual and scarce killer from Bond's Village, Massachusetts has never been seen in the NEWS. Jay Kunstreich corrects the absence and announces a probably-unique, new find. His story starts on page 160.

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The Official Journal of the United States Cancellation Club



The United States Cancellation Club NEWS

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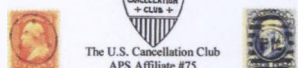
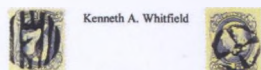
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U.S. CANCELLATION CLUB - PUBLICATIONS



CANCELLATIONS FOUND ON 19TH CENTURY U.S. STAMPS



The U.S. Cancellation Club
APS Affiliate #75

2002

U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS, Cross Reference Index for all Issues, 1951-2009. Presented in three sections: Cancellations, Post Offices, and Article Titles. \$18 postpaid to U.S. addresses.

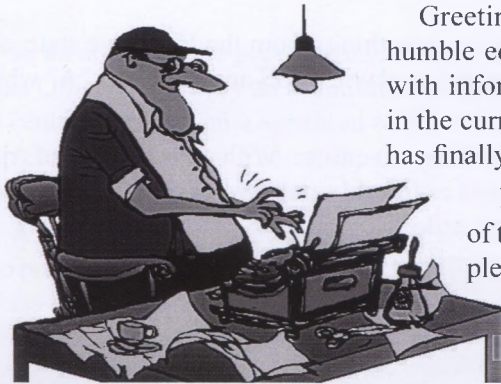
Wesson "Time-On-Bottom" Markings Revisited, Compiled by Ralph A. Edson and Gilbert L. Levere, update of 1990 La Posta monograph, 190pp. See p.70 of November 2010 *NEWS* for announcement. \$25 postpaid to U.S. addresses.

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EDITOR'S NOTES



Greetings! Our esteemed president, **Matt Kewriga** has been nudging your humble editor for some time to present a regular column intended to regale you with informative commentary about 'things' and to presage what you might find in the current, and future, issues of the *NEWS*. As you have by now deduced, one has finally succumbed to such noble entreaties.

Members will recall some of the key points in the "President's Message" of the May *NEWS*, two of which were about the Hartford Stamp Show, and a plea for more members to step forward as contributors of articles and content.

With regard to the former, it is no surprise that the Connecticut event and virtually all major gatherings across the nation have been cancelled. Your editor might not be the sharpest chisel in the tool box but even yours truly always understood that the coronavirus isn't simply just going to go away – no matter how much hope we throw at it! Unfortunately, many decision makers and politicians *still* don't get that. So, it is anyone's guess when we'll see a full blown stamp show again.

As for the latter subject mentioned by our president, a couple of folks have kindly stepped up and provided something to share. Many thanks are due to **Don Barany**, and non-member, **Jay Kunstreich**, who chime in with a couple of short but worthwhile reads and queries. If you have an interest in their subjects, I beseech you to contact them and help in their quests for information and knowledge. Let us all know about it.

Long-time member, **Jim Petersen** occasionally graces our pages, but he has excelled himself in this issue of the *NEWS*. Jim is the perfect example of where one has the goods but isn't really sure how to present it – but he is smart enough to enlist the help of others such as the always-eager **Joe Crosby** to assist, or even take on, all of the writing. Three articles in this *NEWS* would not exist if not for Jim. And we'll be seeing a lot of him over the next year or so. If you like Iowa, you're gunna love Jim! You don't need to be great wordsmith – you just need to ask.

While Matt's call seems to have had some success, we could certainly use more – more authors give us more variety and more entertainment. Fortunately, we still have **Roger Curran** and **Ardy Callender** serving up discoveries and displaying their immense experience and expertise. Unfortunately, these chaps aren't 'spring chickens' any more. We can't rely on them forever.

In this issue, you'll also find the penultimate part of the "Portland, Boston-Style, Large Negatives" study which will likely conclude in November. The same can be said for Ardy's outstanding "Black Ball Ellipses" opus.

Adding to the list of firsts, this issue will inaugurate a regular column known as "The Gem." You'll find this issue's "The Gem" on page 159. The concept is simple and self-evident. You know who to email if you have a prospective "Gem" to share.

Finally, I must thank those readers who have been kind enough to take the time to email me to acknowledge my efforts and to tell me they enjoy seeing the *NEWS*. Your editor's email and letter box are always open to welcome any suggestions, kudos or, heaven forbid, criticism.

Enjoy the rest of your summer and stay safe. Until next time, may your god go with you. ■



"running man"

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Sioux City, Iowa's Newly-Discovered "A" Killer

Robert L. Conley

USCC member, Jim Petersen seems to have a knack for finding wonderful new things from the Hawkeye state, and the following is just one example of that. Seen in Figure 1 is a Scott UX5 postal card with CDS and duplexed "A" which is hitherto unreported. Docketing suggests a March 14, 1877 strike.

Figure 2 shows the very same CDS and duplexed "A" killer on a 3-cent Plimpton entire. With a month-day of April 10, nothing hints at a year of usage – however, the second impression is not noticeably more worn than the first, so a strike four weeks later is most probable. Figure 3 is a tracing of the second strike.



Figure 1

Figure 2

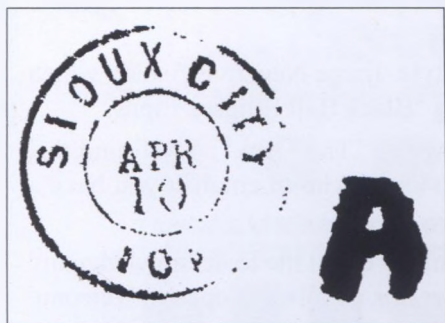


Figure 3

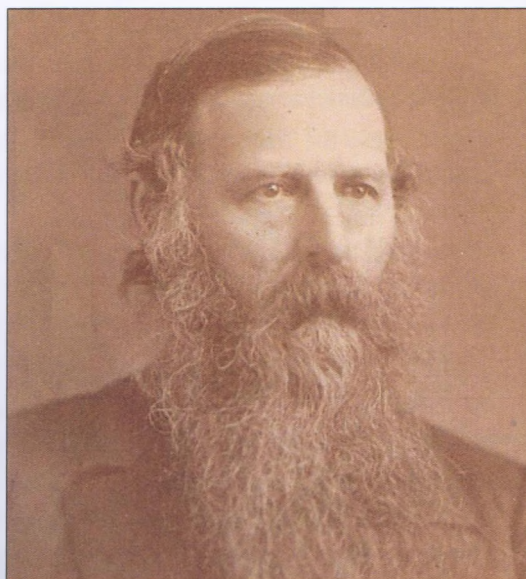


Figure 4

So, why the "A"? The postmaster¹ at the time was John Cushing Church Hoskins, pictured in old age in Figure 4. A trained engineer, graduating from Dartmouth College² in his native New Hampshire in 1841, Hoskins was appointed Sioux City postmaster on November 12, 1862, reappointed numerous times until his term ended on March 11, 1878.³

While that's all very interesting, unfortunately none of it explains why this "A" killer came about towards the end of his long tenure! ■

Notes:

1. Ancestry.com., *U.S. Appointments of U. S. Postmasters, 1832-1971* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010, accessed June 5, 2020.
2. Ancestry.com. *U.S. School Catalogs, 1765-1935* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012, accessed June 5, 2020.
3. Ancestry.com., *U.S. Appointments of U. S. Postmasters, 1832-1971* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010, accessed June 5, 2020.

Making Up the Daily Mails – Facing Slips

Ardy Callender

In an article in the previous issue of the NEWS¹, I discussed the marketing of postal forms and supplies to 4th Class Post Offices. Recently an accumulation of 19th century postal records from the small 4th class post office of Virginville in central Pennsylvania appeared on the market. One of the lots included a flyer offering printed facing-slips to 3rd and 4th class postmasters. Facing slips, an example of which is seen in Figure 1, are small pieces of paper placed on the top of either domestic or foreign letter packages indicating the destination of the packages which were then placed into mailbags.

A U.S.P.O.D. circular dated October 15, 1887 (Figure 2), exclusively authorizes McLaughlin Bros. Co. of Philadelphia "to print Facing-Slips for First- and Second-Class Offices, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1888 and Third- and Fourth-Class Offices can avail themselves of contract prices, if desired." First and second class post offices were provided these slips directly from the U.S.P.O.D. as their volume of mail was quite large. Third and fourth class offices however, could acquire the pre-printed slips by purchase using the enclosed form: "Requisition for Printed Facing-Slips" (Figure 3). The Virginville post office probably did not do business enough to warrant facing slips and thus the form was not completed but preserved – Virginville post office was established in 1839 and survives to this day. Its population was approximately 200 in 1890 and 309 in 2010. Virginville is about 20 miles west of Allentown.

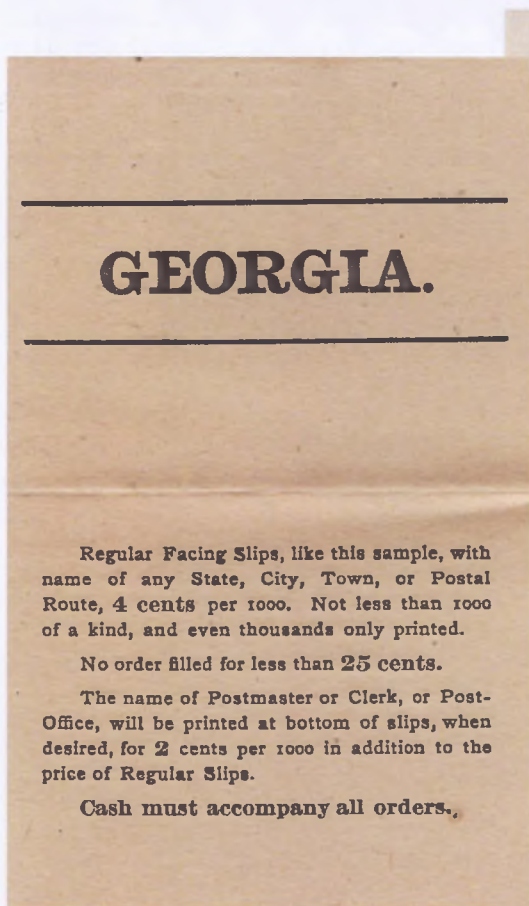


Figure 1

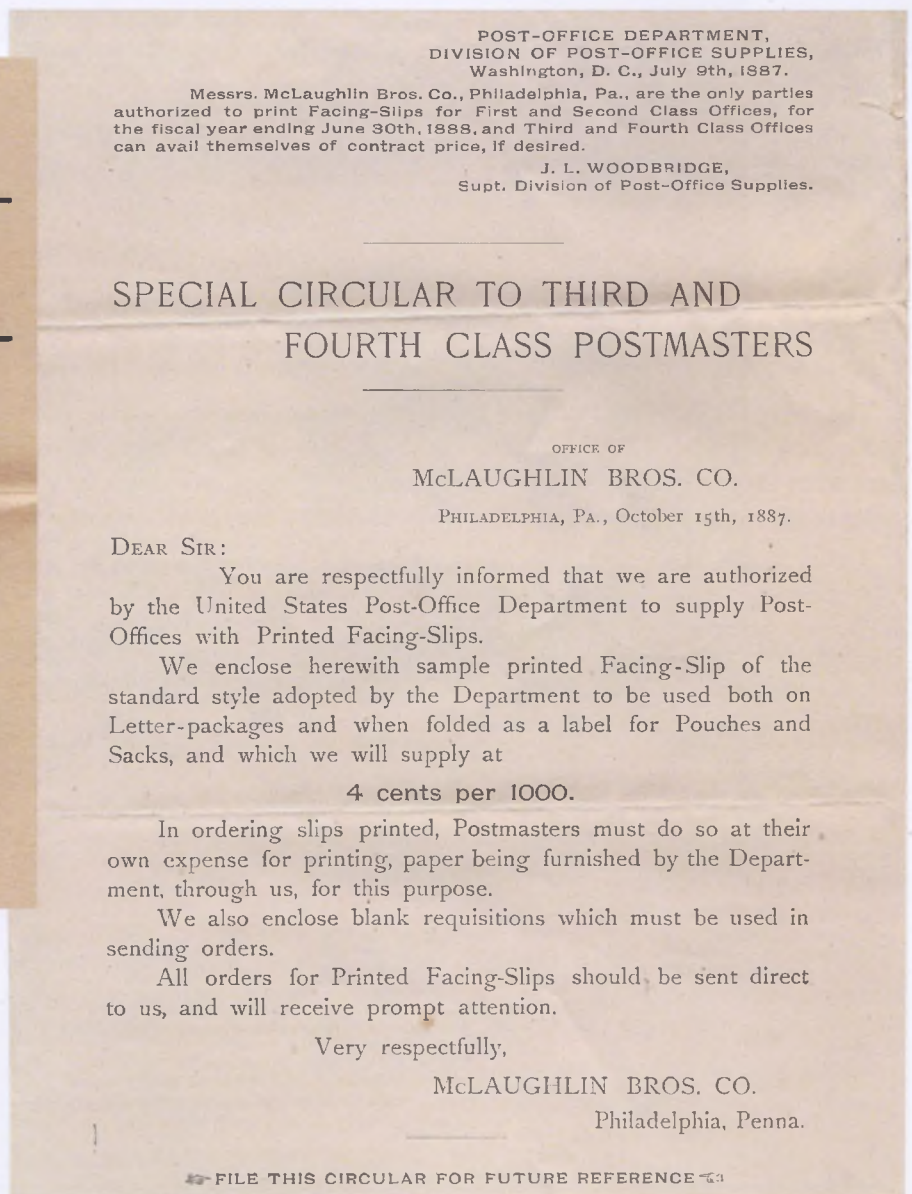


Figure 2

CASH MUST ACCOMPANY ORDER.

NOTE.—Order only by Thousands. No less than 1000 of a kind printed. No order for less than 25 cents received. ORDERS MUST BE WRITTEN ON THESE BLANKS. Send to us when more Blanks are needed.

REQUISITION FOR PRINTED FACING-SLIPS.

_____ 188_____

Messrs. *McLAUGHLIN BROS. CO., Philadelphia, Pa.*

Please furnish Facing-Slips enumerated below

for Post-Office at _____, County of _____

State of _____

_____ Postmaster.

QUANTITY—Not Less Than 1000 of a Kind.	ADDRESS TO BE PRINTED AT TOP OF SLIPS.

NOTE.—If you want name of Postmaster (or Post-Office or Assistant) to be printed on bottom of slips, write it below, plainly.

Figure 3 (With blank middle portion digitally removed)

The cover letter, requisition form and sample facing slip were sent in a Post Office Department penalty envelope shown as Figure 4. The pre-printed envelope is struck by a six bar, barreled #9 ellipse from Philadelphia dated June 18, 1888. Sent from the "Office of the First Assistant P. M. General, Division of P.O. Supplies," it reached Virginville, some 70 miles to the north west, the same day as indicated by the backstamp illustrated in Figure 5.

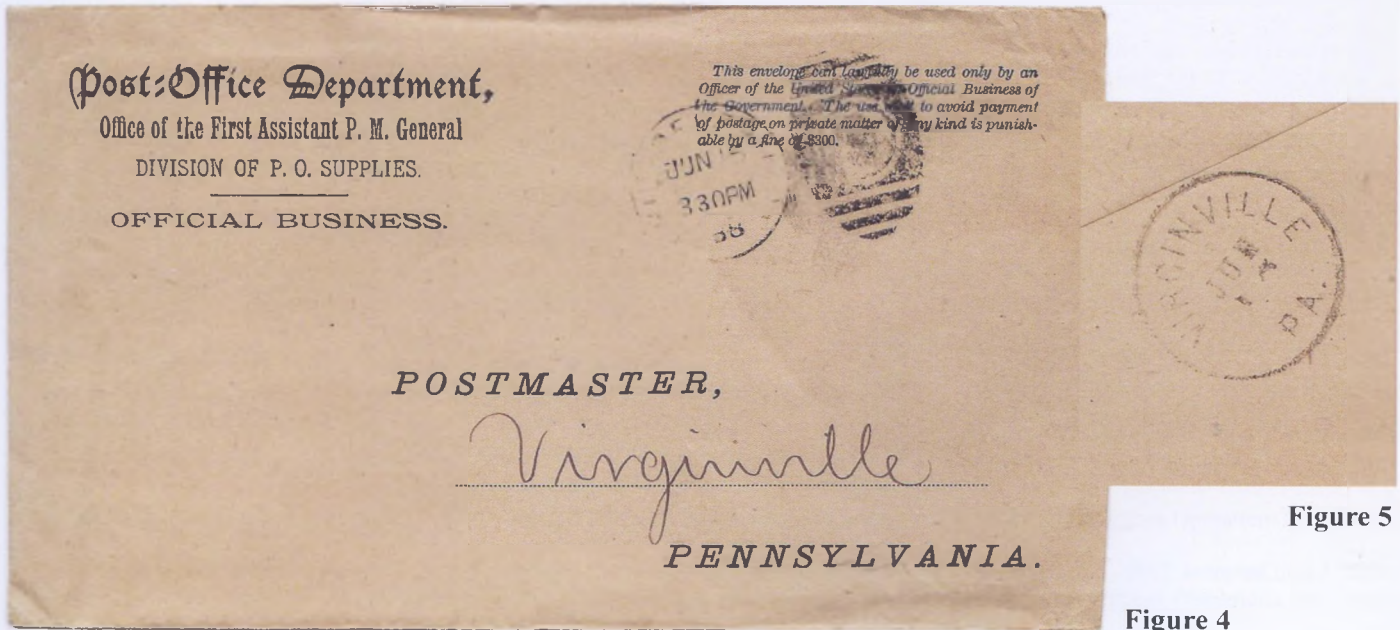


Figure 5

Figure 4

An 1878 account from *Scribner's Monthly*, provides an excellent account of "making up" the domestic mails in the New York Post Office² as follows:

"The first thing to be done is to "face up" the letters, --- to put them all with directed sides facing the same way. New York's largest correspondence is with New York, and at the table where drop-letters come through, sits an old man, with a kind of short-handled rake, --- perhaps I ought to call it a hoe. As fast as the letters fall upon his table he rakes them toward him and faces them up ready for the stamper. Every stamp (cancellation device) has its number, and by that number any miscarried or delayed letter can be tracked through all the hands that have handled it.After the stamper comes the separator, who puts the letters for each mail together; after him the mail-maker, who verifies every letter in each mail, ties them into a bundle and puts on a printed label (facing slip) marked with its destination, and stamped with his own name."

Pre-printed facing slips were also placed atop foreign mail bundles at the NYPO and were color coded per destination.³ These as well as other common early postal forms are seldom encountered as they were discarded upon arrival at their destination. Collecting collateral material aids in understanding postal procedures and processes. ■

Notes:

1. Callender, Ardy, "4th Class Post Office Cancellation Devices and Their Marketing in the 1880s," *USCC NEWS*, May 2020, pp.140-143.
2. Eggleston, Edward, "The New York Post-Office," *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, May, 1878, p.233.
3. Hargest, George E., *History of Letter Post Communication Between the United States and Europe 1845-1873*, Washington D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1971, p.28.



Boston, Massachusetts to Woonsocket, Rhode Island on February 26, 1879. Originally posted with three 1¢ 1857 issue singles that were not valid for postage due to demonetization in 1861. They were cancelled by Boston negative "D" in circle cancellations. Sender notified and "Held for Postage" straightline struck. 3¢ 1875 issue affixed same day and tied by "Roxbury Station, Mass, Feb 26" duplex with "2" barred ellipse. This is the latest recorded demonetized use recognized and held for postage, a unique combination with the 1870-88 Bank Note issue. Matt Kewriga collection.

The Bonds Village, Massachusetts, "PAID" & Intertwined Star Cancel

Jay Kunstreich

Bond's Village, Massachusetts, now known as Bondville, is one of four small villages that constitute the township of Palmer in Hampden county. Being in a sparsely-populated rural area, where even today the combined population of Palmer is only 3,900, mail use was infrequent. However, for collectors of fancy cancels, the use of an unusual 'paid and intertwined star' design, has immortalized the name of tiny Bond's Village. Figure 1 shows a clear strike of the cancel, somewhat enlarged, on an 1861-issue stamp.

Figure 2 shows the listing by Skinner & Eno.¹ Simpson² accords this cancel a rarity factor of 9 out of 10, indicating that very few examples are known. Whitfield³ also lists this killer as being seen on 1857 issues, examples of which are seen on the front cover and again in Figure 3. Note that both of the 1857-issue cancels are in red.



Figure 1

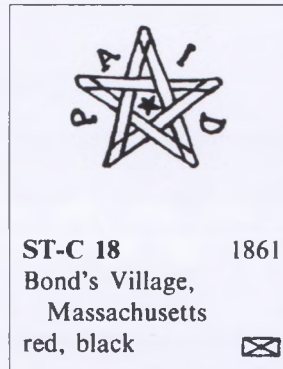


Figure 2



Figure 3

As illustrated below in Figures 4, 5 and 6, there are at least three more surviving examples on 1861 issues, all with black cancels. A further two more examples of the killer are known, in black, on the 3 cent issue of 1869 (not shown here due to poor photographic resolution). These eight examples suggest the cancel was around for all of the 1860s and possibly a little earlier.



Figure 4

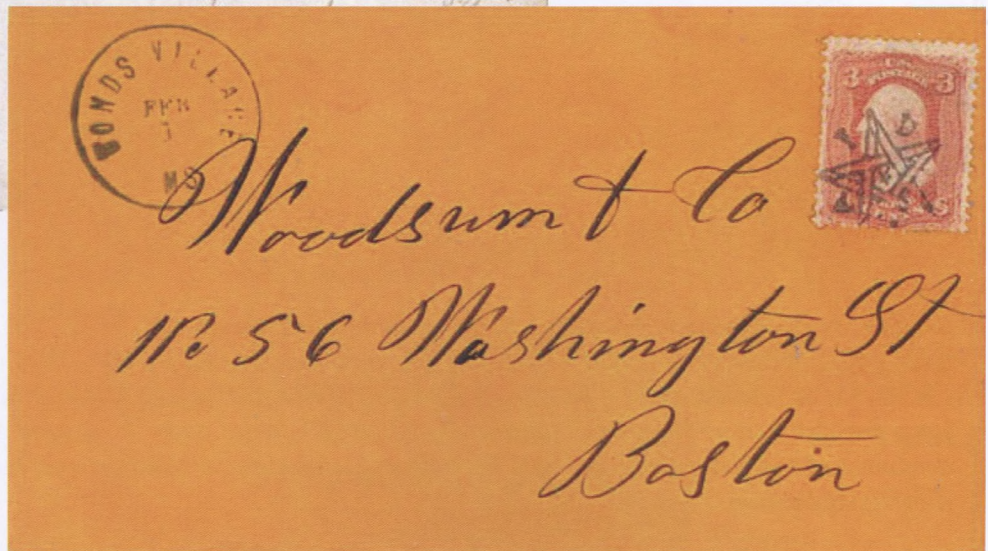


Figure 5



Figure 6

The remaining focus of this article is to announce a new find; that being a Bonds Village cancel on an imperforated stamp, Scott 11A as seen, at magnification, in Figure 7.



Figure 7

This is a possible very early usage, hitherto unreported – this stamp appears to be the claret variety, issued only in 1852 – but irrespective of color, it certainly entered service some time between 1851 and 1855. Of course, this stamp could have been cancelled at any time, many years after issue. The red ink, however, suggests a pre-1861 usage.

The two remaining questions are:

1. Is this the only surviving example of the killer on an imperforate stamp? and
2. Can we determine how early this unusual killer was first used?

Please send any information you might have on this killer to the editor.

Many thanks to Charles Souder for providing the images in Figures 1, 4, 5, 6 and cover. Figure 3 courtesy of Siegel Auctions, Sale 1211, Lot 474. ■

Notes:

1. Skinner, Hubert C. & Eno, Amos, *United States Cancellations 1845-1869*, American Philatelic Society, State College, PA 1980. p. 327.
2. Simpson, Tracy W., *United States Postal Markings & Related Mail Services 1851 to 1861*, American Philatelic Society, 1979. pp. 61, 63.
3. Whitfield, Kenneth A., *Cancellations Found on 19th Century U.S. Stamps*, U.S. Cancellation Club, 2012, Lewisburg, PA. p 223.

Two New Killers from National, Iowa

Jim Petersen & Robert L. Conley

Illustrated in Figure 1 is a cover from National, Iowa with a stylized negative "N" killer, cancelled on March 30, 1886. The same killer was reported by Ramsey¹ who found an example struck ten days earlier.

In Figure 2, we see another National cover – this one an unreported "A" in a circle – with docketing suggesting a cancellation on May 22, 1886, a mere seven weeks or so after the first cover. Oddly, and perhaps tellingly, the CDS and the killer on the second cover are struck at strange angles with clearly no effort made in keeping them upright. But why the "N"? Why the "A"? Why the change?

National is in Clayton county, in northeastern Iowa, about 12 miles west of the Mississippi River and the Wisconsin state line. Its post office was established March 23, 1855, discontinuing in 1908.² Nathan Slaughter, who had tried his hand at farming in the area, was from New York and he was the postmaster for nearly 18 years – from June 8, 1868 until February 16, 1886. After that, John Arnold took over as postmaster. Therefore, both of the illustrated killers and the one reported earlier by Ramsey, came about within weeks of Arnold taking over from a seasoned professional.



Figure 1



Figure 2

The obvious assumption is that the "N" stood for National (or perhaps stood for Nathan and was left over from Slaughter's term) and the "A" represented Arnold. However, to muddy the waters somewhat, the 1885 Iowa state census³ shows a Mr. A. Smith, also from New York, resided next to Slaughter and was employed as a mail carrier. Possibly, Smith stayed on as mail carrier with new postmaster Arnold, and the "A" was his creation. It is unlikely we will ever know. The haphazardly struck marks in Figure 2 do suggest an inexperienced, or mischievous, hand (of Arnold?) was involved in May 1886.

Incidentally, Nathan Slaughter had a life not without tragedy – he and his wife lost all three of their children in infancy. His wife died in 1881, aged 68. Widower Slaughter lasted another 19 years and passed in 1900, aged 85.

As for National itself, the map⁴ shown in Figure 3, also dates from 1886 and suggests a village of some importance – with a school, a hotel and two churches. National was the site of the Clayton county fairground and often hosted important events, political conventions and the like.⁵

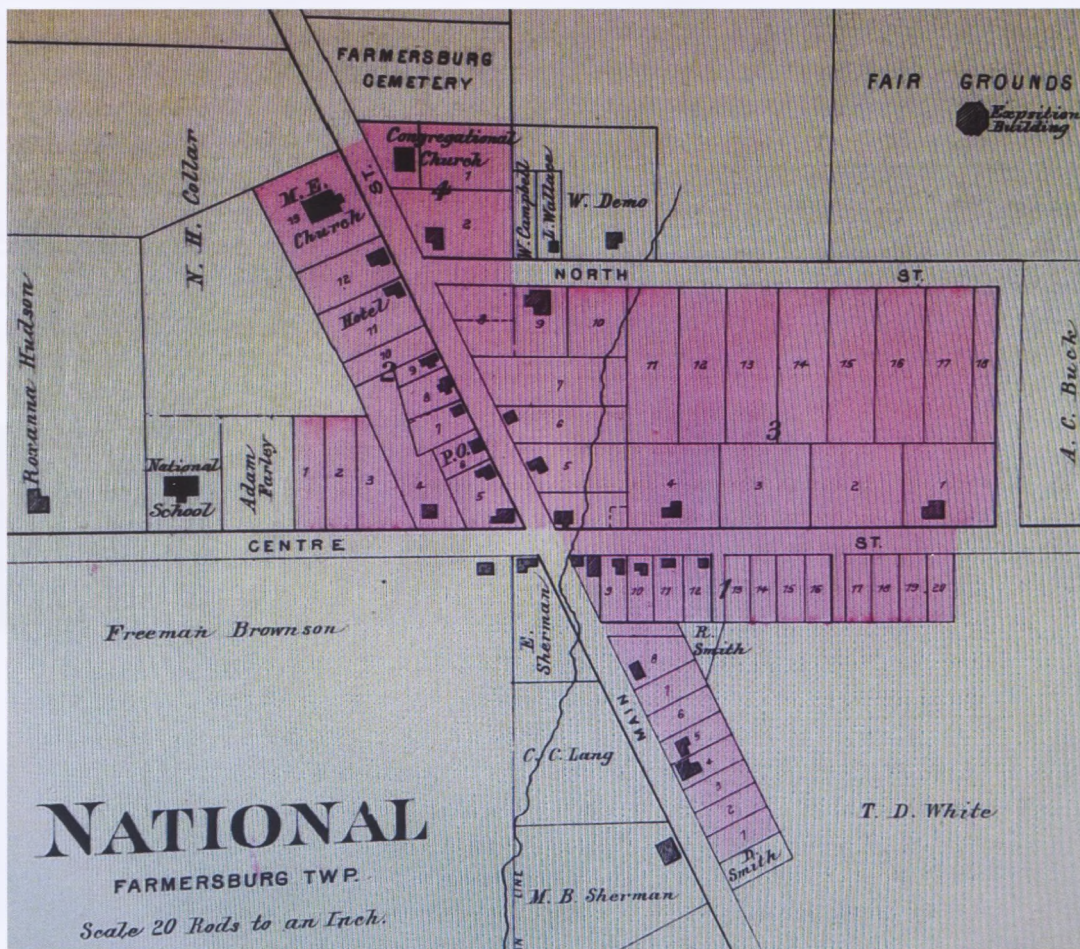


Figure 3

National has always been administratively a part of the township of Farmersburg, about 3.5 miles to the west. Farmersburg was once important enough to have a depot of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway but for whatever reasons, it eventually lost the railroad line and now most of the 19th century town center has been reclaimed as farm land.

As for National itself, the only remaining hint as to its former existence as a village once worthy of a successful post office, is the cemetery! ■

Notes:

1. Ramsey, Guy Reed, *Postmarked Iowa*. 1976.
2. Ibid.
3. Ancestry.com. *Iowa, State Census Collection, 1836-1925*, Provo, UT, published by Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2007, accessed May 18, 2020.
4. Historic Map Works, <http://www.historicmapworks.com/Atlas/US/8748/Clayton+County+1886/>, accessed May 18, 2020.
5. Price, Realto E., *History of Clayton County, Iowa*, published by Robert O. Law Co, Chicago, 1916.

Large Negative Boston-Style Cancels of Portland, Maine Revisited (Part III)

Robert L. Conley

Parts I and II covered Portland's non-variated cancels. Variated killers are discussed below.

Style	L/N	Description	EKU	LKU	#
P-VC-2	2	in circle, with inverted 'V' top and 'V' bottom	29-Dec-81	10-Mar-82	7
P-VC-4	4	in circle, with 1 horiz & 2 vert cuts	20-Apr-81	15-Jun-81	2
P-VC-6	6	in circle, with UR and LL cutoffs	20-Jul-81	6-Sep-81	5
P-VC-10	10	in circle, cut down to narrow band		Not seen	0
P-VC-12	12	in circle, cut to narrow band, w/3 octagonal sides on left	9-May-82	15-Sep-82	11
P-VC-17	17	in circle, with top sliced off, top corners rounded	2-May-xx	Year unknown	1
P-VC-20	20	in circle, cut down to narrow band	4-Apr-82	21-Jul-82	10
P-VC-B	B	in circle, with 1 horiz & 2 vertical cuts	20-Dec-81		1
P-VC-C	C	in circle, sliced diagonally on both sides	30-Jul-81	24-Oct-81	3
P-VC-E	E	in circle, with left and right sides removed	23-Mar-81		1

Note: P-VC-2 gradually wore down to be rounder at upper left and flatter along bottom and top edges as seen in the tracing below.

Note: Early strikes of P-VC-20 shown no edge break at the toe of '2' and no deterioration at the right of '0' and adjacent edge.



P-VC-2



P-VC-4



P-VC-6



P-VC-12



P-VC-17



P-VC-20



P-VC-B



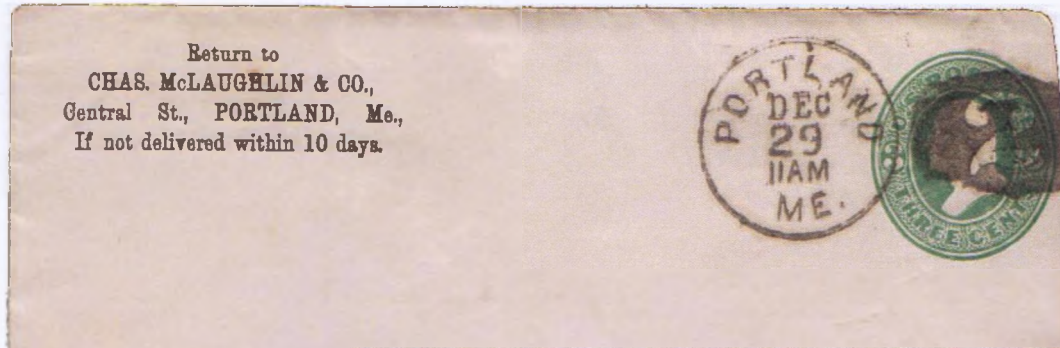
P-VC-C



P-VC-E



An early, clean strike of the oddly shaped, P-VC-6. (Vince Costello)



Two examples of P-VC-2, the first early in its life showing definite straight edges and points at top and bottom, and the second revealing the rounding/flattening of those edges and deterioration of the '2'. (Author and Roger Curran)



Three examples of P-VC-20 and the only known strike of a P-VC-B. (Roger Curran and Bill Tatham)



Examples of strikes of P-VC-12, P-VC-C and P-VC-E. (Roger Curran x2 and Bill Tatham)



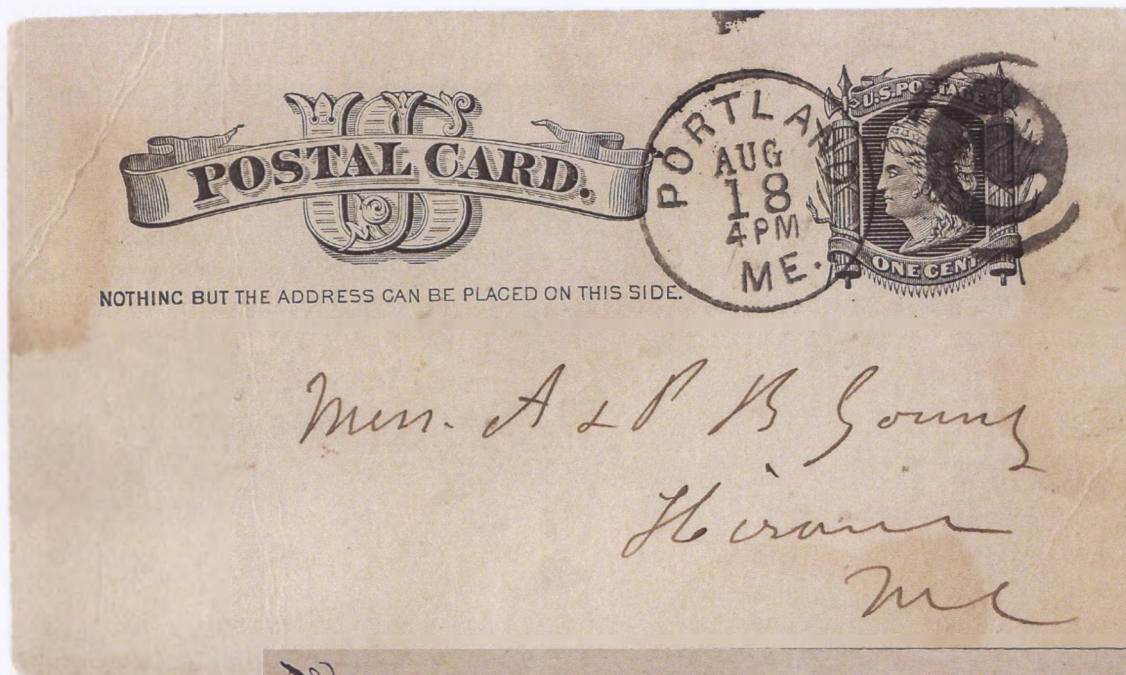
Style	L/N	Description	EKU	LKU	#
P-VR-20	20	in circle w/negative ring, sliced top & bottom		Not seen	0
P-VR-C	C	in circle w/negative ring, both sides sliced nearly vert	18-Aug-82	7-Oct-82	4
P-VR-O	O	in circle w/negative ring, both sides sliced nearly vert	24-May-83		1



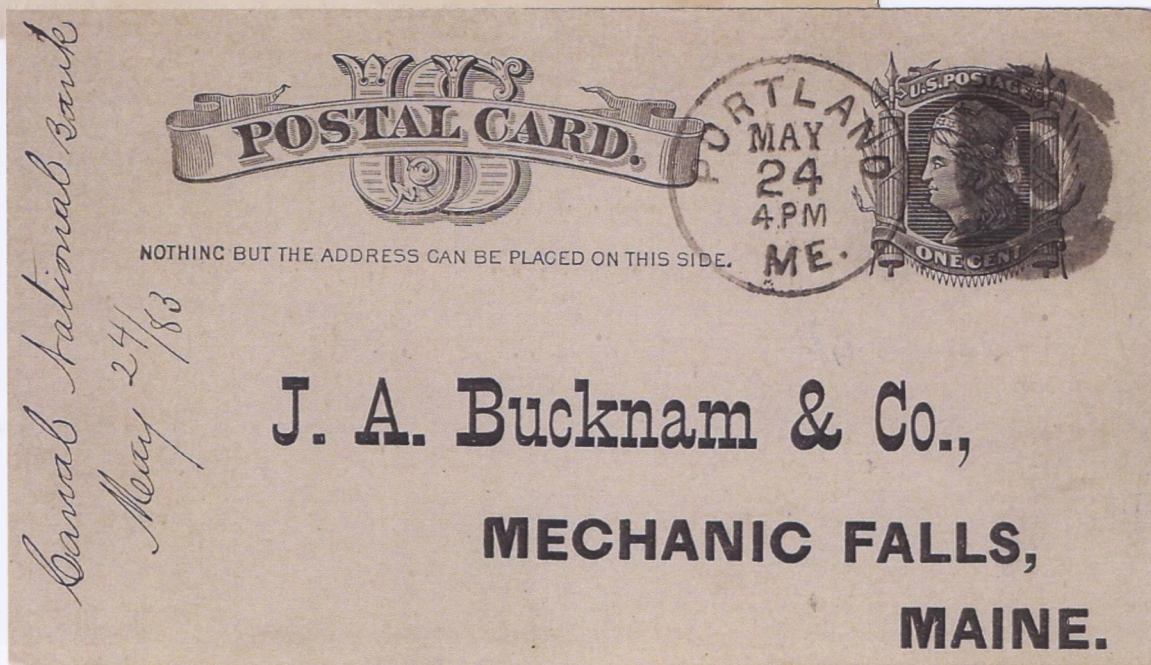
P-VR-C



P-VR-O



Variated rings were uncommon in Portland. The earliest known P-VR-C and the only known P-VR-O are shown here. (Roger Curran and Bill Tatham)



Style	L/N	Description	EKU	LKU	#
P-VL-8	8	in octagon, with 2 horiz negative bars	5-May-83	9-May-83	2
P-VL-13	13	in octagon, with 2 horiz negative bars	7-Mar-83	26-Mar-83	2
P-VL-K	K	in square, with 2 horiz neg bars and top band altered to resemble a crown	29-Apr-83		1
P-VL-O	O	in octagon with 2 horiz negative bars	28-Mar-83		1



P-VL-8



P-VL-13



P-VL-K



P-VL-O



Examples of strikes of P-VL-13, P-VL-K and P-VL-8. (Bob Grosch x2 and Nancy Clark)

End of Part III.

The New Orleans "Bow & Arrow" Cancel

Don Barany

An incredible variety of intricate geometric fancy cancels are were produced by the employees of the New Orleans Post Office spanning the period between the mid-1870s into the early 1880s – in fact, more than 100 have been identified by James Cole¹ & Kenneth Whitfield.²

However, several pictorial fancy cancels are also known from this period, including an unusual, elaborate and very rare “Bow & Arrow” cancel. I know of only two off-cover examples both of which are on the 2 cent Navy stamp (Scott O36). Figure 1 shows the example from Matthew Bennett’s 2004 Auction #280 (Lot 1832, realized \$550) which was noted as being from the collection of Robert Markovits. The same stamp was also Lot 855 in Kukstis’ 1997 Auction #29 where it was described as being a “Bold negative Arrow through Heart.”

The second example, previously owned by Hubert Skinner and until recently, resident in Dan Richards’ collection, is seen in Figure 2. According to Mr. Richards, Skinner had identified the cancel as emanating from New Orleans – he would not have done so without proof. Indeed, Skinner had amassed photo records and notes over the years which sadly no longer exist.

If any members know of any other examples of this cancel, on or off cover, I would appreciate their sharing of scans, with provenance if known.

One other thing – while the fancy cancels from Chicago & New York have been thoroughly studied and written about by a number of philatelists, New Orleans really hasn’t publicly been accorded the same treatment. Hubert Skinner and Dan Richards started the process that I am attempting to reboot by first developing a census of known examples. With that outcome in mind, I am inviting all USCC members to participate in this study by sending along color scans of their examples of any New Orleans fancy cancels, both on & off cover, for inclusion.



Figure 1



Figure 2

I can be reached at donald@donbarany.com or through the USCC editor. ■

Notes:

1. Cole, James M., *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894*, U.S. Philatelic Classics Society; 1995.
2. Whitfield, Kenneth A., *Cancellations Found on 19th Century U.S. Stamps*, U.S. Cancellation Club, 2002.

Our Unique Newsletter

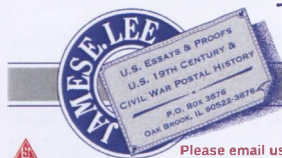


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Solid Center or "Black Ball" Ellipses (Part IV)

Ardy Callender

Negative Letter Ellipses

Numerous tracings of colorless or negative letter ellipses are recorded despite the origin of many of these cancellations being unknown. The most comprehensive study to date was published by Roger Curran in his 1996 article in the USCC NEWS¹⁴ whereby he recognized eight different negative letter ellipses. Subsequently, Curran and John Donnes, added three more letters, and they have generously provided information as well as most of the examples of adhesives and covers illustrated here.

All negative ellipses examined are composed of 9 horizontal bars and have a colorless area between the outer ring and the central core. Table 2 (shown on p.67 of the August 2019 NEWS) shows 11 different letters and one undetermined symbol have been recorded, although only eight originating cities have been identified. The ellipses were most commonly duplexed for use in domestic and foreign mail, although at least two ellipses (from New Haven, CT and Camden, NJ) were employed as a simplex cancellation on circular/printed matter rate mail. A few negative letter ellipses have the same "cock eyed" orientation of the ellipse to the datestamp as was observed in the solid ellipses discussed above: Elizabeth, New Haven, Newton, New Brunswick and Jersey City. Reports of "on cover" examples should help fill in and clarify the information reported in this article.

Two different variations of the letter "B" have been identified. New Brunswick, NJ employed an ellipse which contained a narrow, somewhat slim, letter. Curran¹⁵ reports the cancellation "shows a thinner lined 'B' possessing a slightly crude quality." An example is shown here as Figure 28. Addressed to Miss Mary Wilbur in New Brunswick, the drop rate cover is franked by a 1¢ 1873 Continental Bank Note stamp tied by a duplexed "B" ellipse killer. As seen on other negative letter ellipses, the central core is surrounded by a colorless ring.



Figure 28

A dozen or so miles south of central Boston, Brockton also used a negative letter "B" – although it is broader and somewhat heavier than New Brunswick's. Curran notes¹⁶ this ellipse "closely resembles" the tracing from Burr's 1935 *The American Philatelist* article.¹⁷ A domestic use example of this cancellation is shown as Figure 29. Addressed to Mrs. Joshua E. Blood, Woonsocket, RI, the cover is dated 24 January with the year unknown. The 3¢ Bank Note Issue stamp is applied sideways facing downward tied by a nice strike of the negative "B" ellipse.

The negative letter "E" was used, perhaps fittingly, in Elizabeth, NJ. The postal card shown here as Figure 30 is dated March 26, 1878 and is addressed to Marine Na(tional)l Bank, Bath, Maine. Although the ellipse is struck in a "cock eyed" orientation, it appears to be duplexed to the datestamp. The negative letter "E" is clearly visible within the central core and is surrounded by a colorless ring.

The post office in Marblehead, on the water just east of Salem, Massachusetts, employed the negative letter "M" in the center of its ellipse. The cover shown as Figure 31 is franked with a 3¢ Bank Note Issue and is addressed to Miss Alice Toppan, Newburyport, MA. The datestamp, dated 17 January (year unknown), is duplexed to a very clear negative "M" solid ellipse with the central area surrounded by the typical colorless ring.

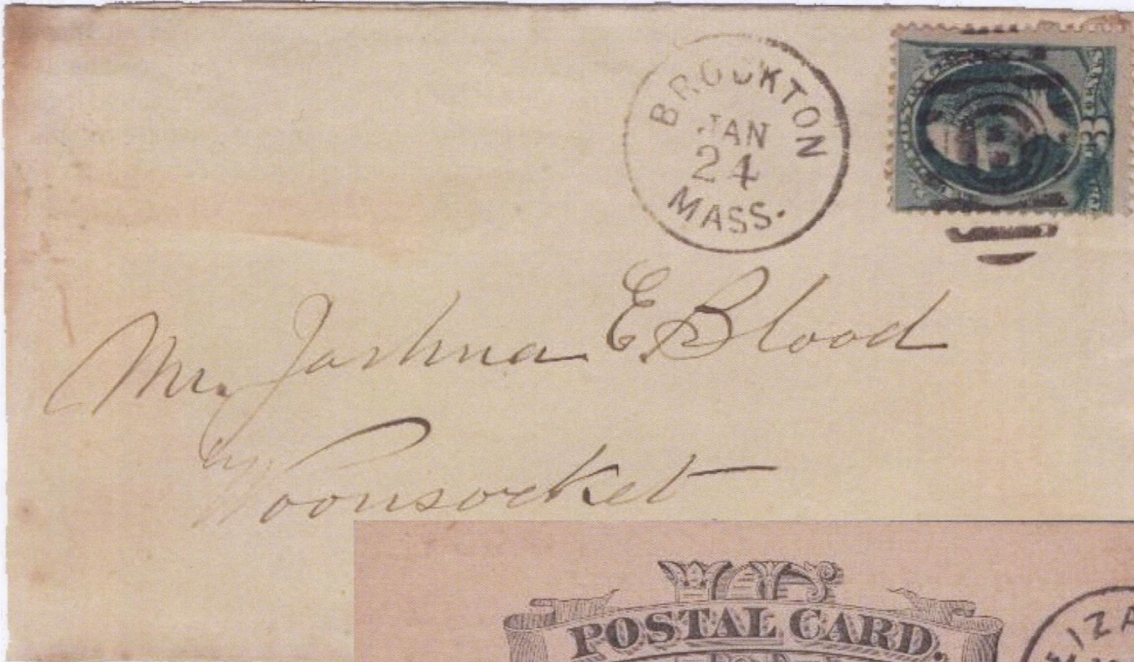


Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31

What appears to be a negative letter "M" is shown as Figure 32. The orange circular rate cover was sent to the postmaster of Bedminster, NJ. An advertisement for Felt, Carpeting and Plastering for C. J. Fay of Camden, NJ is embossed at left. The 1¢ Bank Note adhesive is tied by an angled strike of a simplex negative letter ellipse. It should be mentioned here that the letter "M" could be nothing more than the letter "W" turned upside down or struck at an angle. In fact, a closer review reveals differences between Marblehead's known negative letter "M" and the negative letter struck on the Camden cover, enlarged in Figure 33. The two vertical bars at either side of the Marblehead's letter "M" are parallel while negative letter struck on the Camden cover have tapered vertical bars. As seen in Figure 34, Cole's tracing of the letter "W" exhibits the tapering vertical bars towards the bottom of the letter. Thus it appears that the negative letter in Camden's ellipse is the letter "W" and tapered vertical bars can be the criteria for differentiating the two cancellations. Roger Curran¹⁸ adds further support for this assumption as he reports Camden's postmaster between February 12, 1879 and March 1, 1883 was Henry B. Wilson, a probable explanation for the letter "W."

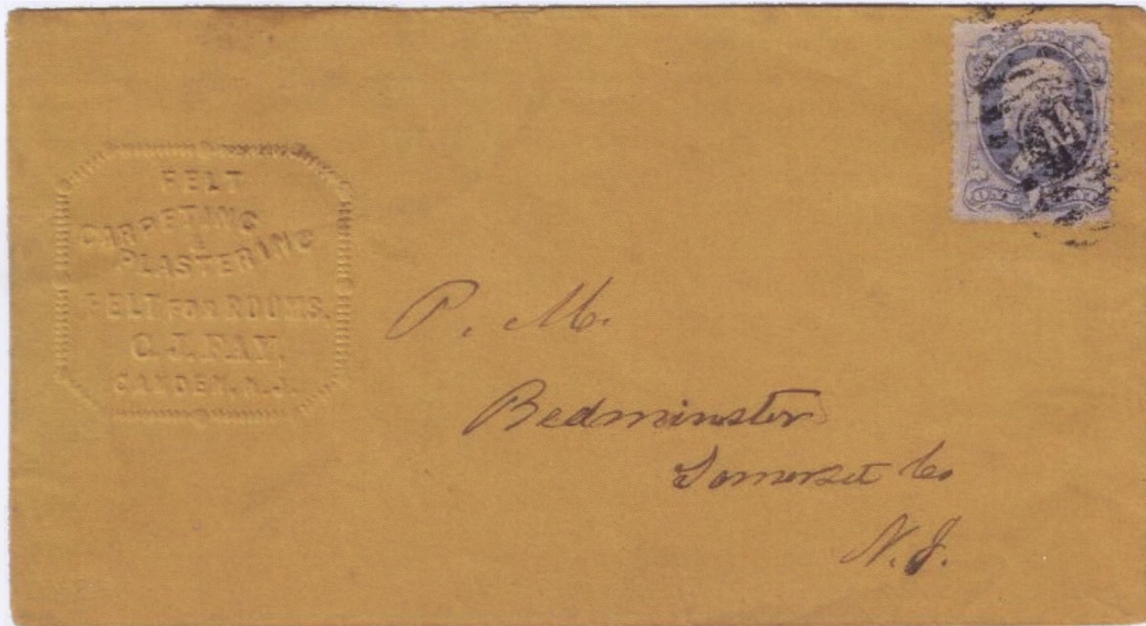


Figure 32



Figure 33



Figure 34



Figure 35

Newton, Massachusetts employed a negative letter "N" ellipse, illustrated in Figure 35. Although difficult to detect, a second example on cover is shown here as Figure 36. Part of the letter "N" is just visible at the right edge of the 1¢ Continental Bank Note Issue adhesive, paying the 1¢ circular/printed matter rate. The ellipse has rotated almost 90° in relation to the CDS.

The 3¢ Plimpton entire shown here as Figure 37, appears to have been struck by a negative "N" ellipse. The cancellation was so strongly struck that the ellipse resembles marginally enclosed solid ellipses discussed above. However, upon close inspection, the marginal line is missing at left and there appears to be part of a colorless ring around towards the bottom of the central core. The central core is indistinct due to the embossing of the indicia. Aligned somewhat to the right, the ellipse is not rotated as much as the ellipse on the cover shown in Figure 36, yet the datestamp appears to be identical. Dated 14 May, it was sent at the 3¢ domestic rate to Mr. John Fisk in South Framingham.



Figure 36

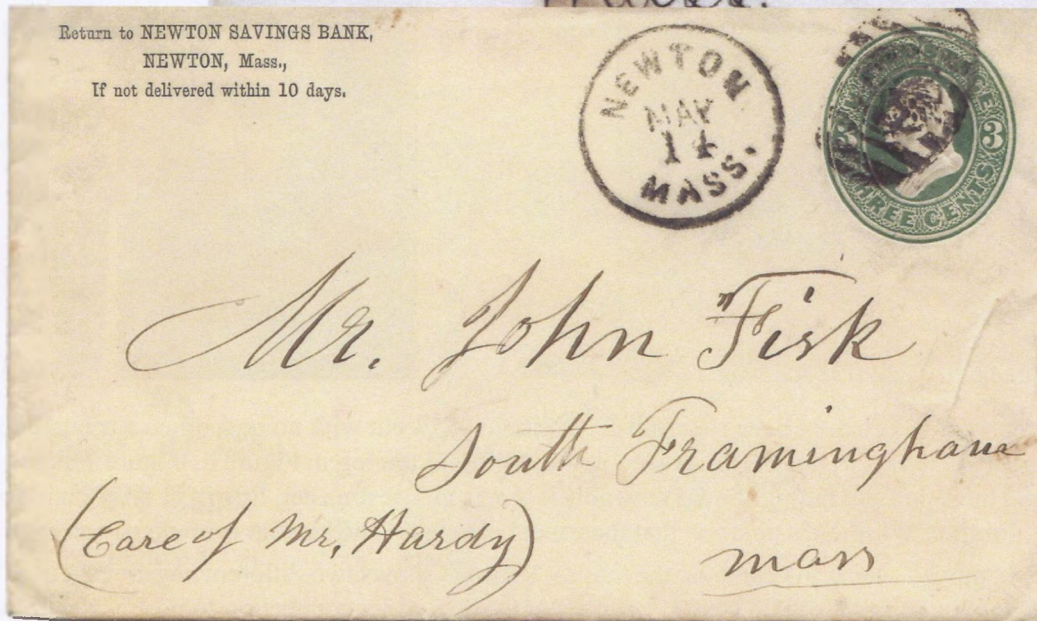


Figure 37

End of Part IV.

ARIZONA – NEW MEXICO POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Kirk's Killers of Sioux City, Iowa

Joe Crosby

After reading my article on Multiple Letter Cancels in the last issue of the USCC NEWS, Jim Petersen asked me to investigate a few of his multiple and single letter cancels from Sioux City, Iowa. Scans from his collection and the results of my research are provided below.

Figure 1 shows the relevant corner of a postal card which is struck with a negative "ERK" killer inside what might be a baseball. The card is dated May 3, 1882. The "ERK" letters are probably meant to represent the Sioux City postmaster, Edwin Ruthven Kirk, who served from 1878-1885 and again from 1889-1894 – the broken period of tenure resulting from the election of Democrat, Grover Cleveland to the U.S. presidency.¹

Ohio born, Kirk was a wealthy and successful merchant, a sutler in the Civil War and among many other civic works, organized the Volunteer Fire Department in Sioux City.² Judging by the newspapers, he was a highly respected, leading citizen and pioneer of Sioux City.³ In 1881, his annual compensation as postmaster was a very substantial \$2,800.⁴ A portrait of postmaster Kirk is seen in Figure 2.



Figure 1



Figure 2

As for the negative "ERK" cancel, it has already been reported as Whitfield 4613 but with no post office attributed to it.⁵ However, that listing interprets the letters to be "EBK" as seen in the Whitfield tracing in Figure 3. Figure 1 clearly shows the middle letter is "R" and the Whitfield listing should now note it represents postmaster, Edwin R. Kirk's initials and that its origin is Sioux City. Further, Whitfield's notation that the cancel is seen on 1861 issues is obviously an error.

Postmaster Kirk seems to have enjoyed seeing his name on the mails – Figure 4 shows two different negative "KIRK" cancels as identified by Cole⁶ (ML-206) and Whitfield (4503). Cole's ML-206 and its connection to postmaster Kirk were mentioned in the USCC NEWS of February 2005.

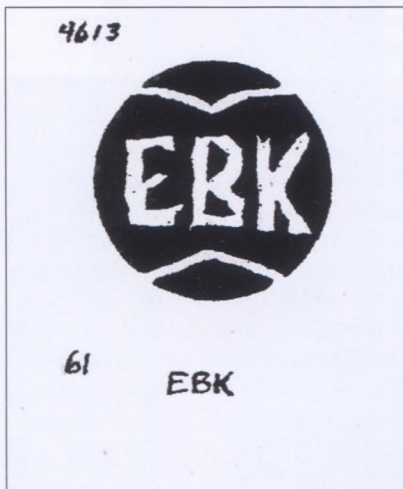


Figure 3



Figure 4

Figure 5 illustrates a portion of a cover bearing another Sioux City killer with a rough "WK." This same killer was shown in the earlier-mentioned 2005 NEWS article with the identical CDS on a Scott UX5 card. Known as Whitfield 5363 and illustrated as Figure 6, we can safely assume that the "WK" was the work of William Allen Kirk, son of Edwin, and officially the assistant postmaster.⁷ A photograph of William Kirk is seen in Figure 7.



Figure 5

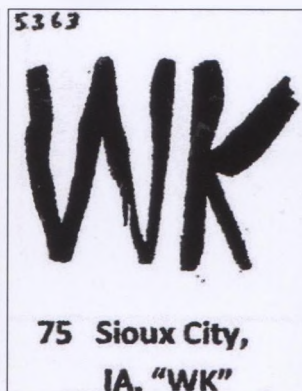


Figure 6

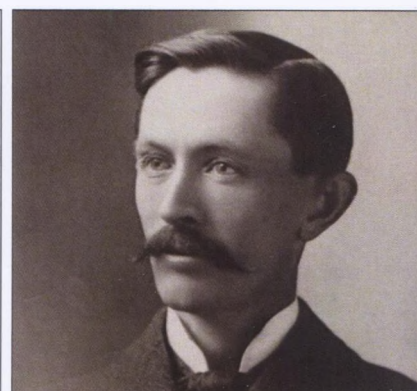


Figure 7

Assistant postmaster, William Kirk, just like his father, also liked to carve his initials – Cole lists ML-96, with a similar "WK" design on 1879 issues. The tracing is reproduced in Figure 8.

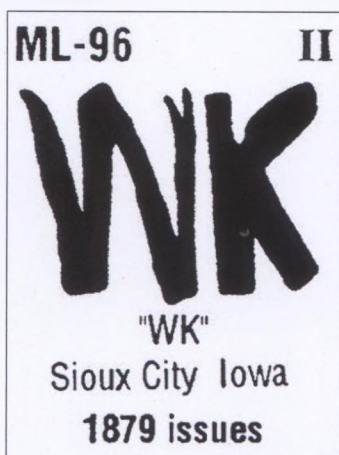


Figure 8



Figure 9

Finally, we see one last Sioux City killer – this with just a single "K". Seen in Figure 9, it certainly closely compares to the two preceding "K"s. It too, is probably William's work – then again, it might also have been his brother, Edward or a Mr. James Kennedy, both of whom were postal clerks at the time!⁸ ■

Notes:

1. *Sioux City Journal*, Sioux City, Iowa. October 1, 1900, p.2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/436448694>. Retrieved on May 26, 2020.
2. Kirkpatrick, Inez E., *A Postal History of Sioux City*, J-B Publishing Co., Crete, Nebraska, 1977. pp 28-30.
3. *Sioux City Journal*, Sioux City, Iowa. October 1, 1900, p.2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/436448694>. Retrieved on May 26, 2020.
4. *Official Register of the United States Vol. II*, July 1, Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1881, p. 417.
5. Whitfield, Kenneth A., *Cancellations Found on 19th Century U.S. Stamps*, U.S. Cancellation Club, 2002.
6. Cole, James M., *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894*, U.S. Philatelic Classics Society; 1995.
7. *Official Register of the United States Vol. II*, July 1, Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1881, p. 627D.
8. Ibid

□ *The Official Register* erroneously lists the names of two of the three Sioux City postal clerks as "Kute." The correct name is "Kirk." It is known that the given names of the two "Kute" clerks match that of the postmaster's two eldest sons and their places of birth. Further, the 1880 Federal Census shows the two clerks residing with their father, the postmaster, and lists their occupations as "P.O. Clerk." The name "Kute" is virtually non-existent in the U.S. at anytime or any place.

More on an Unusual Cincinnati Cover

Roger D. Curran

The August 2018 *NEWS* carried an article about a cover bearing unusual postmark and cancel markings – unusual enough that the question arose as to whether the markings were genuine. The pertinent portion (unusually, the left side) of the cover in question is shown here as Figure 1.

There is now new information to report. Dan Haskett recently submitted the piece shown in Figure 2. The registry fee in 1881 was 10 cents so it is fair to assume that the 13 cents franking on the piece paid the registry fee and the 3 cents first class mail rate. It is noteworthy to see how similar the positioning of the Figures 1 and 2 strikes are – the "G" cancel barely touching the postage stamp.

Dan suggested that the additional cancel of nine segments, present in both Figures, might have been intended to convey the Masonic symbol of a square and compass. In my 2018 article, I stated that this cancel "seems to be in a different ink" from that in the CDS and "G"... but on reflection now think the differing appearances may result from the different colors of the underlying surfaces. And it so happens that the shape of the "G" in Figures 1 and 2 matches the basic shape of the letter "G" seen in some Masonic symbols – see example in Figure 3.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

I now think it likely that the handstamp that applied the CDS and "G" also applied, at the same time, the cancel that was placed on the stamps. That is to say it was a triplex handstamp. The two impressions – the combined unit of the CDS, "G" and the nine-segment circle – are identical.

Could it be that a clerk in the Cincinnati post office was given permission to use, perhaps only occasionally, a handstamp that he acquired locally, based on his own design and at his own expense? The clerk was very careful to keep the "G" impression, which would have represented God, from use as a cancel on the stamp as a gesture of respect for his Lord.

Comments and additional analysis will be welcomed. ■