The Machine Cancel Forum

The Journal of The Machine Cancel Society
APS Unit #24

A CHRISTMAS DAY (1908) USE OF AN AMERICAN MACHINE CANCEL DEVICE ABOARD THE CLEVELAND CIRCUIT RPO. THE RPO BEGAN IN 1895, AND A PICTURE OF IT IS BELOW THE CANCEL.

MARCH 2010 * * Issue # 231 S

WELCOME TO THE GARFIELD-PERRY MARCH PARTY
FROM THE OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
OF THE MACHINE CANCEL SOCIETY!

Welcome! *By the Editor of Machine Cancel Forum*

Thank you for coming to The Machine Cancel Society's 2010 Annual General Meeting at The Garfield-Perry Stamp Club's annual spring stamp show, known as the "March Party."

For those of you coming in to visit, and perhaps considering joining, a bit of history is in order to explain who we are, and what we collect.

The Machine Cancel Society began in as the Flag Cancel Society. The group was at first loose and informal. It used different names. It was not until June 14, 1961, that it was formally organized as the Flag Cancel Society, and incorporated in 1982 as an Ohio non-profit organization.

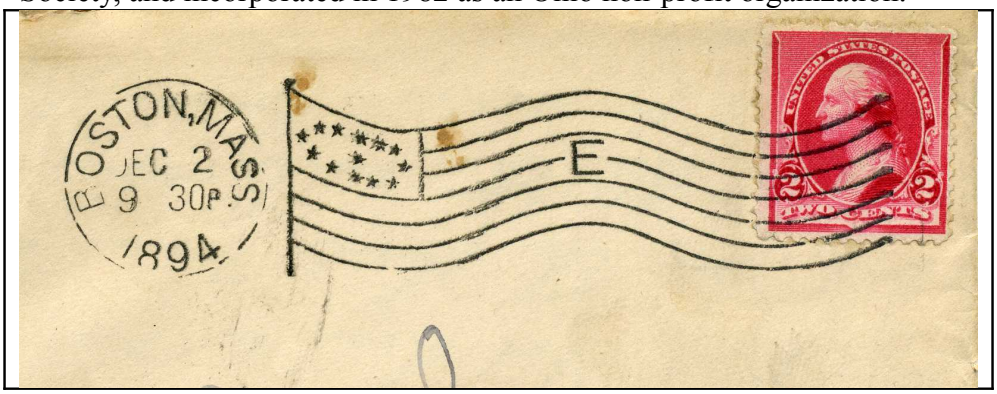


Figure 1, above: BOSTON, MASS / DEC 2 / 9 30 P / 1894 first year of use a Flag Cancel

Its publication, FLAG CANCELLATIONS, was first issued in September 1963. Its first honorary member was Col. A. C. Townsend, who began collecting flag cancels in the 1890's! Townsend is noteworthy for not only being a pioneer flag cancel collector, but in charge of the mail at Hoboken, New Jersey, Port of Embarkation for the military during World War I, and the eagle service marking used for the Safe Arrival cards and other mail.

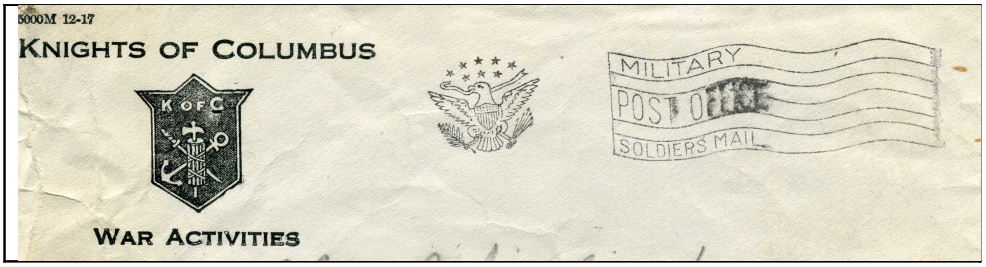


Figure 2, above: International machine applied marking to denote SOLDIERS MAIL

Flag Cancel collectors have many philatelic interests, and this included machine markings of all styles and manufacturers. But Flag Cancel collecting advanced the fastest and furthest because of the *The Flag Cancel Encyclopedia* by Frederick Langford.[1] The book is more than a list

[1] The Encyclopedia, just released in 2008 as a Fourth Edition, is available directly from its author and publisher: Frederick Langford, 184 Virginia Avenue, Pasadena CA

of dates of uses of various cancels, but explains basic concepts of machine cancel collecting.

The Encyclopedia is more than a book of cancels observed from collecting. Rather, it is a research book. Langford was able to access original post office records of machine assignment before the records were destroyed.

The Flag Cancel Society encouraged study of flag cancels, and mentored collectors on how to find, collect, and write about them. There becomes a point that additional finds become rare, and additions to one's collection becomes hard to find. As a result, there was a natural gravitation to collect and study other machine cancels found along the way of searching out flag cancels.

Other collectors, such as your Editor, did not begin as a Flag Cancel collector. Rather, the bi-plane cancels of the 1920's and 1930's caught his imagination.

Figure 3, above: CLEVELAND, OHIO 1 / APR 2 / 1 30 PM / 1932 International slogan cancel (bi-plane)

A formal publication dedicated to all machine cancels began in 1973, a free publication published by John McGee. This attracted a dedicated group of collectors, and it expanded overseas. There was much overlap of membership between the Flag Cancel Society and the machine cancel collectors. In 1987 the Flag Cancel Society expanded its charter to the study of ALL machine cancels, and the two groups were merged. The periodic bulletin changed its name from FLAG CANCELLATIONS to MACHINE CANCEL FORUM.

The free publication by McGee and Koontz was published from 1973 to 1986 and called MACHINE CANCEL FORUM. Beginning in January 1987, the newly formed Machine Cancel Society changed its periodical's name from FLAG CANCELLATIONS to MACHINE CANCEL FORUM. The two series, 1973-1986 under Koontz-McGee and 1987-present under The Machine Cancel Society can be distinguished by their dates of

---

91107.

publication. They are also referred to as Machine Cancel Forum I and Machine Cancel Forum II.[2]

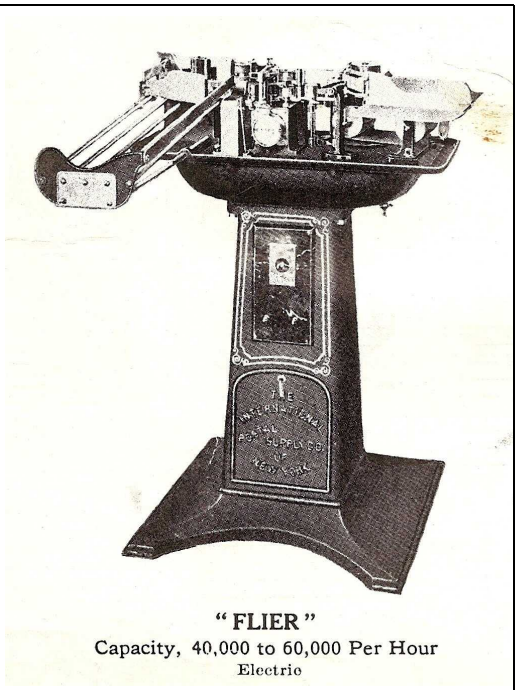


Figure 4, above: Model "FLIER" made and distributed by International Postal Supply Company.

Machine Cancel collecting is more than postmark collecting. The study is interested in not just the cancel, but the machine that applied it.

The names given to the cancels are used to distinguish look a like cancels according to their manufacturer, distributor, model, or patent holder.

Collectors will save machine cancels according to a geographical area (state, city, or other area), manufacturer, period of time (19th century, pre-1920, 20th century, etc), or purpose (cancelling mail, processing mail, service marking, etc).

And yes, many collectors will concentrate on what can be called more traditional: Flag Cancels, exposition cancels, pictorial like the bi-plane cancel, slogan cancels, or other areas.

What is a machine cancel? In the simplest terms, a machine cancel is a postal marking applied by a mechanical device. If this definition is accepted, then a 19th century Norton Patent duplex device would qualify, as would any "scarifying cancel" of the 19th century that punched or otherwise penetrated a postage stamp to prevent reuse, self-inking ticket cancels (using a ribbon for ink), and self-inking devices using an inked fabric weave of that period.[3] *This definition is quite broad, and is generally not accepted*. As noted below in Footnote 3, these are worthy of study and many machine cancel collectors do indeed study them. Indeed, our own Machine Cancel Society has a published study on a mechanical

---

[2] Many thanks to **Bart Billings** who summarized the history of The Society, and gave it to me for use on occasions such as this. Bart was editor of Flag Cancellations for ten years, and Machine Cancel Forum II for another ten year period.

[3] **Richard B. Graham** has written about these mechanical handstamps: The Gaston patent (Linns September 23, 1996 at pages 32-33); The Goldsborough fabric-weave in ticket dater cancels (Linns July 27, 1992 at pages 20-21). **Jerry H. Miller** has just published a book on European machine markings of Germany from 1866-1906, and notes that some, machine cancels and mechanical handstamps, that are likely to have been used in the United States.

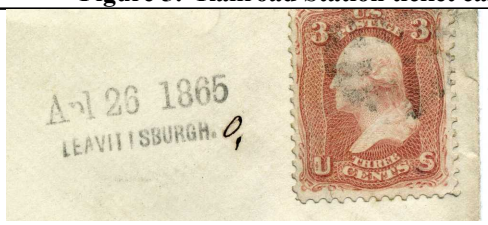
handcancel, The Perfection, published in 1991 by Bob Payne and RegMorris. In such cases, 'the readers must decide for himself whether the Parallel Pivot device impressions are collectable "machine" cancellations."[4]

Reg Morris goes on to write[5] that for a cancel to be called 'a machine cancel' is frequently defined by the Frederick Langford definition for Flag Cancels:

1. A mechanical device
2. For simultaneously postmarking and stamp invalidating
3. Consisting of a geared process
4. Which spaces [separates]
5. And moves mail into position
6. To receive an imprint [marking]
7. Of revolving dies
8. Geared to print a postal marking upon the same location on each piece of mail.

Examples of Mechanical Hand Stampers that do not meet a strict definition of machine cancels, but which are very much collectable:

Figure 5: Railroad Station ticket cancellers used to cancel mail:

 Probably used by the postmaster, who also served at the railroad station across the street!	**A, at left:** Unknown manufacture of a 'ribbon cancel' which uses an inked ribbon and a mechanical device to impress the city-state, but does not itself have a cancellation. Apl 26 1896 / LEAVITTSBURGH with "O" handwritten.
	B, at left: Typical railroad 'ticket canceling device used at Taylors, Ohio.

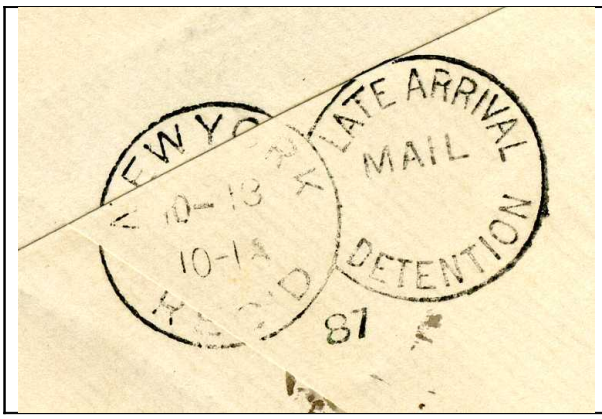
[4] Reg Morris, "The Pearson Hill Machines", Machine Cancel Forum (Dec 1977) at page 353.

[5] Supra footnote 4.

C, at left: Typical ticket cancelling device. This is a 'CENTENNIAL'
You can see the ribbon, exposed. A metal plate with city/railroad information goes on beneath the ribbon. The user places the ticket or mailpiece face down, and pushed down to force ink onto the paper.

The date is supplied by a series of disks that are selected by the user rotating a series of dials with year-month-day.

Figure 6, below: Similar self-inking devices where also used at post offices:



A, at left: TILTON: For marking late mail due to railroad delays.

NEW YORK / 10-8 / 10-1A / RECEIVED

LATE ARRIVAL / MAIL / DETENTION

87

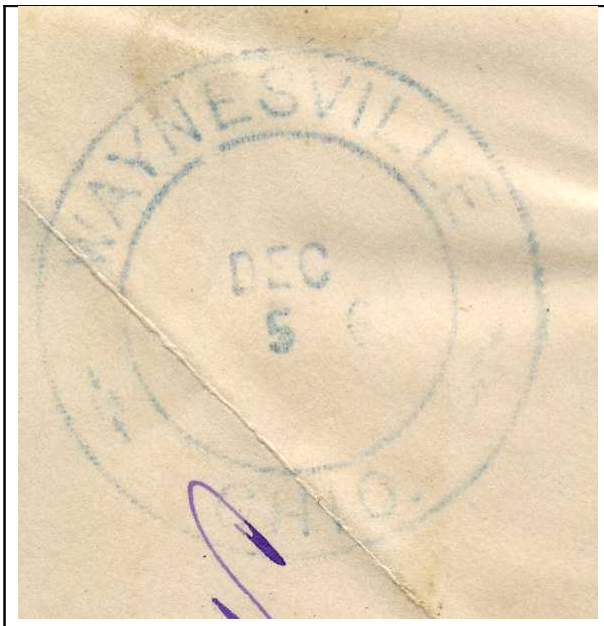
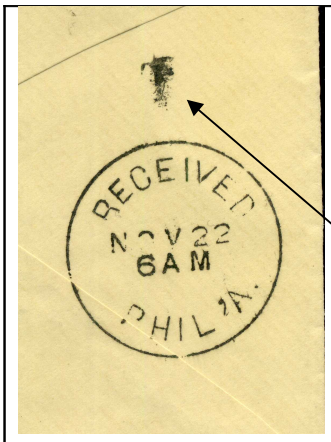
	**B, at left:** Ribbon cancel which Bob Payne identified as being produced under The T S Hudson & Hardy Patent, and likely privately purchased or used by the postmaster. WAYNESVILLE / arrow / OHIO. / arrow DEC / 5 If you look closely to the right of the "5" for the date, you will see a "6". Bob Payne pointed out that dial with the numbers for the date was horizontal to the postmark, and could print softly.
	C, at left: This is believed to be an example from the Pearson Hill mechanical handstamper. CHELSEA STA / AUG 26 / 11 AM / MASS

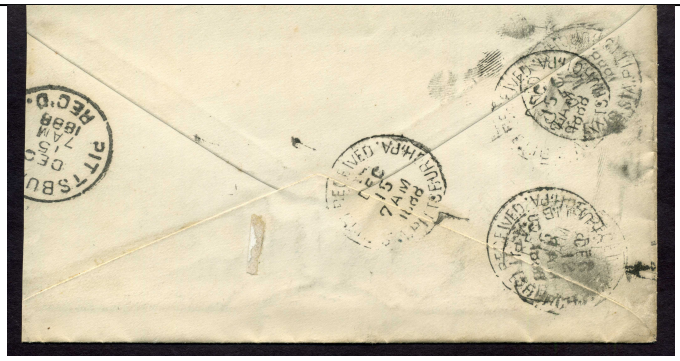
Figure 7
Additional Examples of mechanical handstampers, believed to be Pearson Hill:



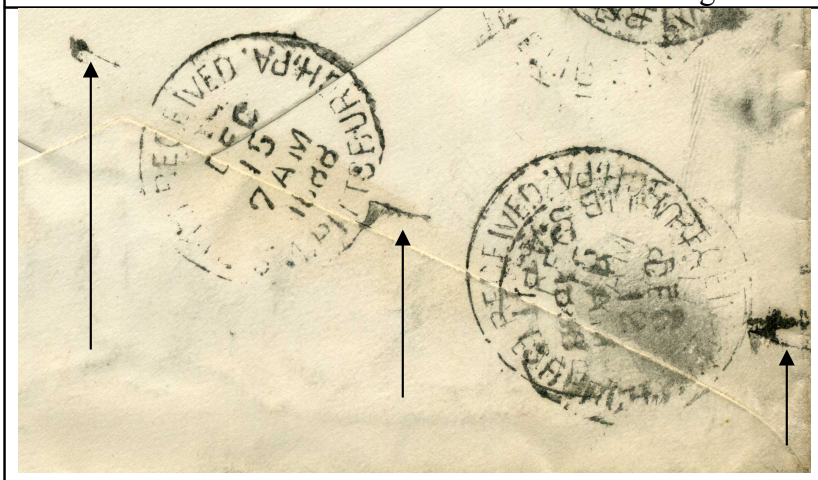
A, at left: This interesting receipt marking has been earlier identified as a possible Haller-Loeffeldhardt mechanical handstamp in society handbooks on machine cancels back in 1991. It's identification has been in doubt. Jerry H. Miller, the author of the recent German specialty book on 19th century machine markings noted the stray mark (which looks like a "T") above the receipt mark is really a screw adjustment, and that it is possibly a Pearson Hill device 'on a pivot' attached to a wall, as opposed to being a device you place on a table.

B, at right:

Back of 1888 special delivery cover mailed from Bucyrus, Ohio, to East End Station, Pittsburgh. The station marking is applied 5 times to the center and right end!



The five applications of the cancel suggests the user was having trouble applying a clear receipt marking, and indeed, one must look at several of them to make out all of the information in the marking.



C at left, closeup:

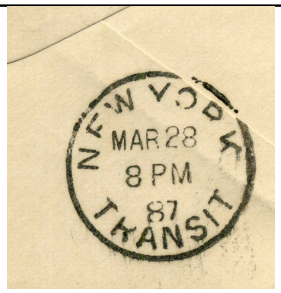
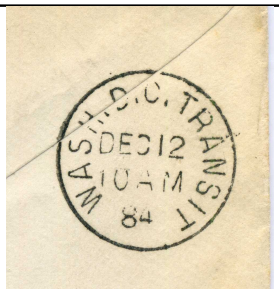
Note the "T" marking (marked with arrows) that is constant for the three Pittsburgh receipt marking that are enlarged

	at left.

From 1881, the Haller-Loeffeldhardt machine was used in Europe, and in the United States for receipt mail. "The postmark styles and sizes were patterned after handstamp cancels, and accordingly, may often be incorrectly identified, ie hand cancel versus machine cancel." Jerry H. Hiller.[6]

Figure 8:

The following receipt marks show application by a metal device and possibly are indeed Haller-Loeffeldhardt applied markings. If so, they would meet the strictest definition of a machine cancel.

A, above: RECEIVED / NOV 2 / 5 PM / PHIL'A.	**B, above:** CINNCINNATI, OHIO / AUG 15 / 1 PM / 82 / TRANSIT
C, below: NEW YORK / MAR 28, 8 PM / 87 / TRANSIT	**D, below:** WASH,D.C. TRANSIT / DEC 12 / 10 AM / 84
	
Ex Reg Morris	Ex Bart Billings

The New York and Washington examples are very finely oriented on the back of their respective covers, and appear 'square' to the corners like one would expect a machine fed cancel to lay. I also have New York examples

[6] Jerry H. Miller, From Hinrichsen to Krag, The Experimental and Early Machine Postmarks of Germany 1866 until 1906 (German Philatelic Society) at page 41. The author has made his book available through the Machine Cancel Society. Check the Machine Cancel Society web page at www.machinecancel.org for ordering information.

that are not so finely oriented, similar to the slight clockwise twist of the Philadelphia example.

The Cincinnati example is on its side in orientation to the top and bottom, and like the Philadelphia example slightly twisted clockwise.

Figure 9: J Goldsborough Patent

Combination dial and cancellation, with ink supplied by a ticket dater style device. This was patented by J Goldsborough of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

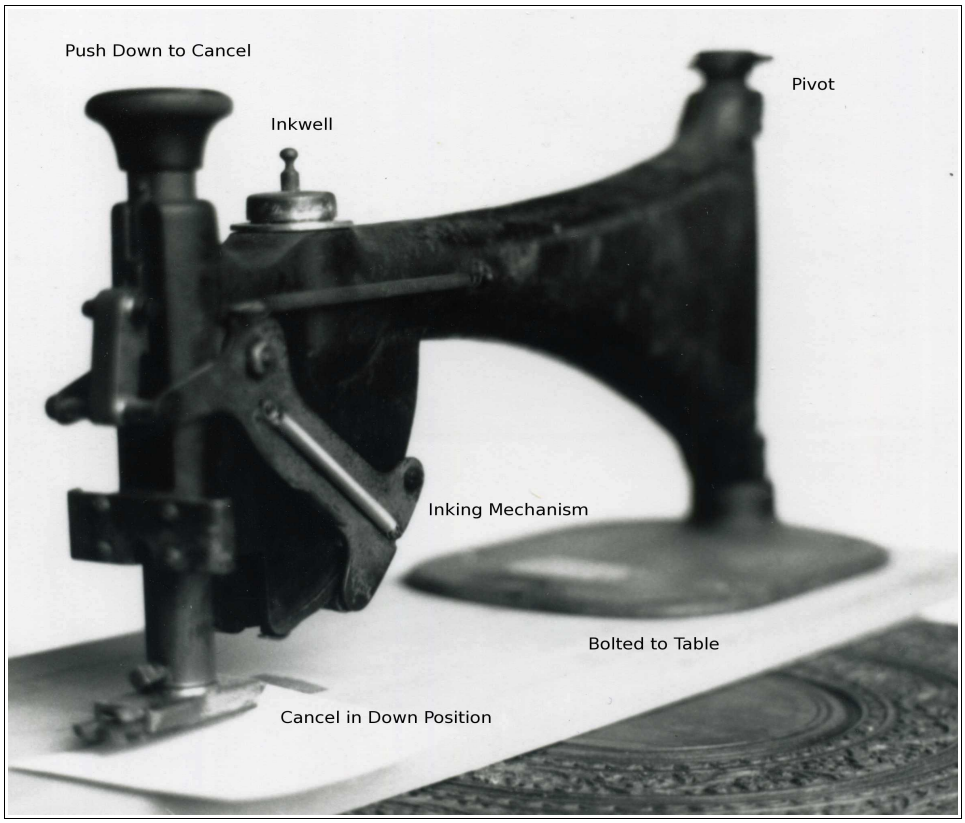
Above: COLUMBUS, OHIO / OCT 31 / 8 30 AM / ?? The fabric pattern in the cancel is a tip that a ribbon inking mechanism was used. The year in the postmark is indistinct, but is presumed to be in the 1890's.

At left: CHI & MINN R.P.O. / AUG / 31 / TR 86 / 1891 / FAST MAIL.

Is this a ribbon inked RPO cancel used on a mechanical handstamp, or is this a handstamp that is inked by an inkpad with the fabric design of the inkpad picked up by the handstamp?

Figure 10: The Perfection Mechanical Handstamp

The Perfection mechanical handstamp device is the most studied and documented mechanical handstamp thanks to the publication by Reg Morris and Bob Payne. The device was sold directly to postmasters, and used at a bit over 100 mid-west offices, mostly smaller ones. The inventor was from Detroit, and he would travel the immediate states by rail, selling his device. The device was mounted by screws to either a table or top, and could swing on a pivot arm out the table for packages. But most of the time it sat, ready for the postmaster to place a letter under its cancel head, and then for the postmaster to 'wack' its top . . . causing the cancel to come down and apply its ink. The ink would be applied to the cancel after its last application. Hence the ink had time to 'set up.'

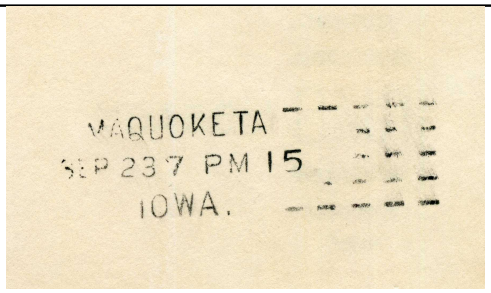


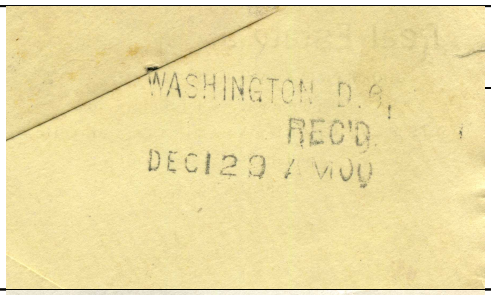
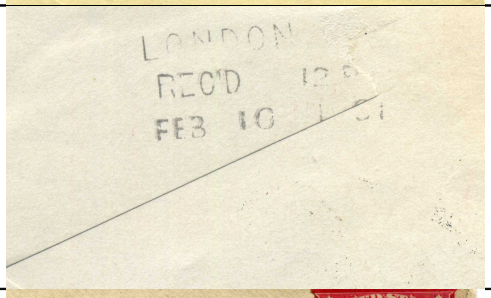
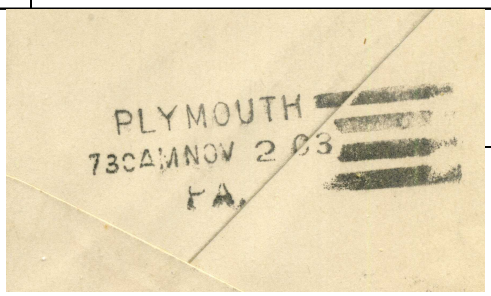
After the cancel is applied, the handle swings up and the inking mechanism swings down to apply ink, and then back up to its former rest position.

This example was used in Waquoketa, Iowa, and shows the device's cancel down applying a cancel to a letter. The operator would push down on the round handle at far left. The machine was operated (cancelling and re-inking) by this downward push on the handle.

Figure 11: Perfection Cancels

Examples of the Perfection mechanical handstamp cancels.

	**A, at left:** MAQUOKETA SEP 23 7 PM 15 IOWA. 1915 example from the machine pictured in Figure 9. Cataloged as Type 1 cancel.

	**B, at left:** WASHINGTON, D.C. REC'D DEC 12 9 AM 00 Test use of device
	**C, at left:** LONDON [ONTARIO] REC'D 12P[M] FEB 16 1[9]01 Test use of device
	D, at left: MARTINS FERRY FEB 1 3 PM 04 OHIO Cataloged at Type 3 cancel.
	**E, at left:** PLYMOUTH 730AM NOV 2 03 PA. Cataloged as Type 2 cancel. Note the time is represented by the half hour: 7 30 AM

Prior to the 1880's, there were very few mechanical devices that would qualify as 'machine cancels' by our strict definition.

The oldest is the McAdams, only recently identified, from examples from New York dated 1863. Another, known by Frederick Myers, was used on an anniversary trans-continental railroad fast train in June 1876. An unknown inventor, manufacturer, and distributor tested a device in Pittsburgh in the early 1870's.

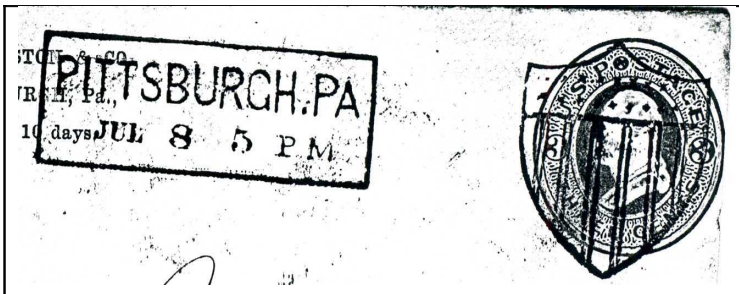


Figure 12, at left:

An unidentified machine cancel device, was used at Pittsburgh in the early 1870's with various cancels: pentagon shape, a star, and a US shield.

Another noteworthy cancel, the Palmer & Clark, was exhibited and used at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia.

Figure 13, at left:

Palmer & Clark

CENTENNIAL / OCT / 30 / 4 PM / PHILA'D. PA

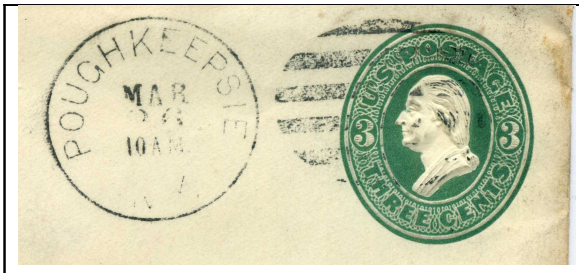
On exhibit and use at the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia in 1876.

Unlike the others noted, the Palmer & Clark was the first machine cancel to be used at multiple cities. They can be found used in the northeast and Washington, DC. One Palmer & Clark machine was, from post office records, supposed to go to Cleveland. No example from Cleveland has been found.

It is interesting to note that post office records do not indicate a machine was assigned to Poughkeepsie, New York. Yet examples have been found and are the more plentiful of this machine cancel.

Poughkeepsie in the 1870's was the home to a business school known as The Eastman Business College. It taught with a practical, hands on

method. They even had a 'college post office' using Cinderella stamps.[7] The inventor of the Palmer & Clark machine lived in Poughkeepsie. It is possible that the machine destined for Cleveland was used in Poughkeepsie as part of a test by the inventor at the post office, or as a demonstration to the school there.

	**Figure 14, at left:** The oval cancel, with bars perfectly horizontal to the postmark are a key in identifying this cancel. POUKEEPSIE / MAR 26 / 10 AM / N.Y. The contents date the cancel to 1877.

Machine cancels under our strict definition became more common with the Leavitt machine cancel. It was used in a number of cities, and there are many examples that even still sell for a couple dollars apiece. From a machine cancel operator's position, the Leavitt was not perfect, and the standard model could only cancel postal cards. A better machine was needed.

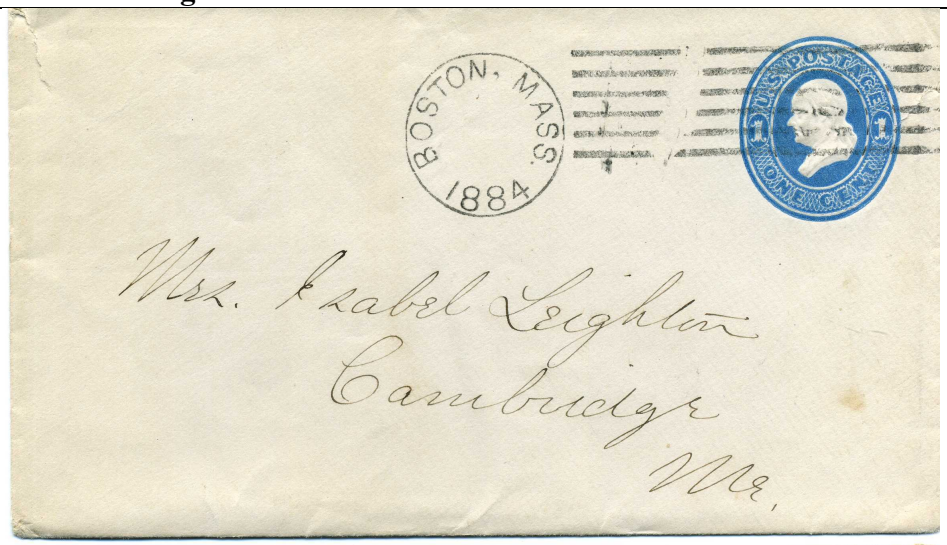
Figure 15: These Leavitt cancels are scarce to rare in value.

A, above: BOSTON / OCT / 81 / MASS. Experimental Leavitt used for envelopes.	**B, above:** BOSTON / TRANSIT / NOV 27 / 3PM / MASS. Transit marking, easily misidentified.
C, below: NORWALK / MAR 3 / 6 PM / OHIO	**D, below:** CINCINNATI / JUN 21 / 630 PM / 79 / O.

[7] George DeKornfeld, "Teach Your BOYS That Which They Will PRACTICE When They Become MEN," U S STAMP NEWS (March 2010) pages 15-17.

The better machine was produced by two different companies: The American Postal Machines Company and The International Postal Supply Company of New York.

Figure 16: First Year: American Cancel – 1884



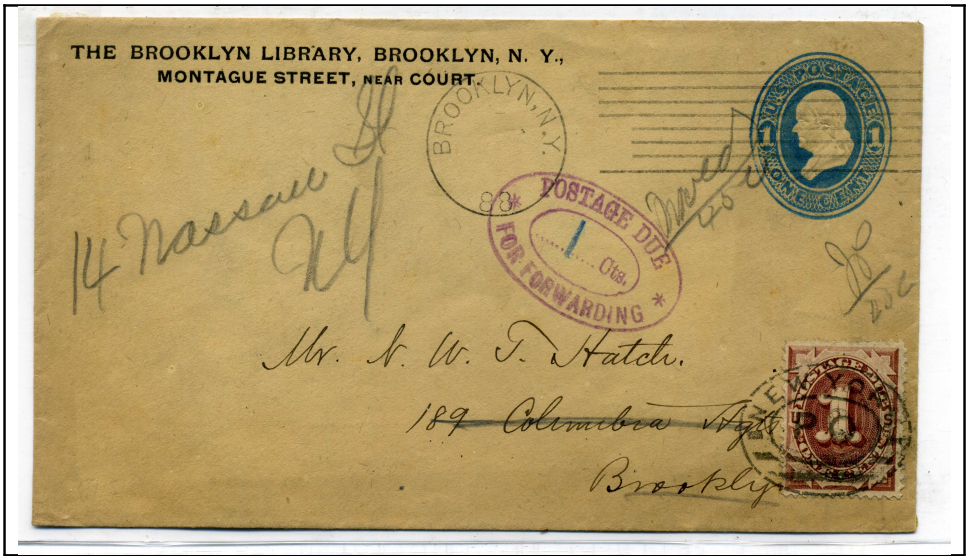
Above: an example of a first year of use of an American Postal Machines Company's cancelling device.

Figure 17: TRANSIT Marking Applied by American Cancel – 1885

Above: The TRANSIT marking was used only from May 20 to August 29, 1885. The postmark reads BOSTON, MASS / 11 30 A / JUN 16 / TRANSIT. *Note the Philadelphia receipt mark of JUN 17. Does it look*

familiar? Compare with the example in Figure 8A. It is a possible Haller-Loeffeldhardt machine! It too is rotated slightly, but counter-clockwise.
Ex Reg Morris

Figure 18: The International



Above, First year (1888) of use of an International machine cancel. Note the one-cent postage due for forwarding to a new address.
Ex Reg Morris

By 1883, George W. Hey, an attorney and counselor in patent cases, was ready to muster together his knowledge and contacts to tackle his business interest in creating and selling the best machine cancel device. By 1888 he was ready for a test of his creation, at Brooklyn and Buffalo.

By 1895, the International Flier would be recognized as the fastest and most dependable machine cancel in the world. The Flier would not be matched in speed tests, accuracy, and dependability until the arrival of the Universal Model G after World War I.

Unfortunately for the producers of the Flier, less expensive models with unfulfilled promise of dependability would cause the Post Office to select them over the better Flier. International Postal Supply Company went bankrupt even though they provided the better model, and which was less expensive over a long haul!

The period from 1890-1920 produced a variety of manufacturers and distributors of machine cancels for sale or lease. These machines are well covered in the many volumes of books available for sale by The Machine Cancel Society. One need only visit the web page of the Society for a complete list. You may find it at www.machinecancel.org.

Machine Cancel Forum is published quarterly for members of the Machine Cancel Society, an educational and non-profit, tax-exempt organization, incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio. Affiliated with the American Philatelic Society as unit # 24, our publications and past issues of Forum may be found in the American Philatelic Research Library. Annual dues are $15.00 (U.S. membership). Articles may be reprinted with permission of the author and Managing Editor. Copyright 2009 by the Machine Cancel Society, Warren, Ohio. All rights reserved. Except for reports by officers, opinions expressed in Forum are those of the author, and may not be those of the Society. Ads will be accepted on a space available basis, payable in advance, for members and member-dealers. Rates are $25/quarter page; $50/half page; and $100 full page. Members are entitled to one 50 word ad per year at no cost. Advertisements are to be sent to Forum's Managing Editor 'camera-ready'. **Visit Our Web Site at** http://www.machinecancel.org**.**

This is a special issue of Machine Cancel Forum, prepared for the Garfield-Perry March Party and Annual General Meeting (AGM) of The Machine Cancel Society. Reg Morris, Past President and one of the founders of the Machine Cancel Society, was active at Garfield-Perry. You could frequently find him manning the junior philatelic area. Bart Billings, who is retired in Nevada, lived at the time just south of here. And Bob Payne would fly in for the weekend.

Many of the Society books and publications by the trio were planned and released here. The Barry Story was the first of those releases.

It's good to be at Garfield-Perry! Thank you for hosting us!

The contents herein were prepared by A J Savakis, Managing Editor, and is solely responsible for any errors or omissions. Kindly send any additional information and findings to:

A. J. Savakis
Warren OH 44482-0609

Ohio Universal Model K Study

The Society web page has an alphabetical list of Universal Model K machines used in Ohio. I am still editing additional finds. Once the stack is done, a revised list will be posted.

Have you ever seen a Model? If not, stop by the Society table and take a look at one formerly owned by Reg Morris.

An informal meeting of Universal machine cancel collectors will be held at:

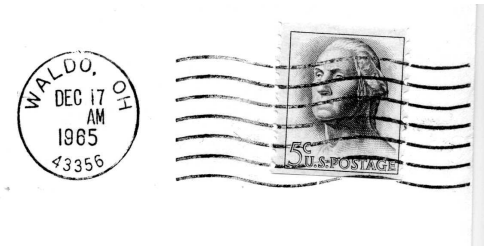
Trumpex 2010
Spring stamp show of The Warren Area Stamp Club
Saturday, May 8 at 2 PM
At the J V JOHNSON COMMUNITY CENTER
800 Gillmer Road
Leavittsburg, Ohio 44430

Leavittsburg is easily accessible from Ohio Turnpike Exit 209. Just take Ohio Route 5 north/east toward Warren, go through two traffic lights, and exit at WEST MARKET STREET. Immediately upon turning right onto West Market, go into the left lane, and turn left into Gillmer Road. Go all the way to the end of Gillmer Road to the J V Johnson Community Center.

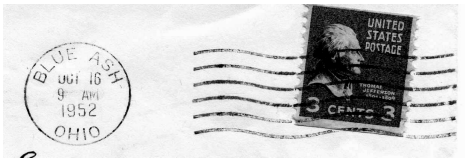
Show Notes:

<u>Universal Model K on display:</u> Reg Morris's old hand powered Universal Model K is on display at the Society Table. If you have not had a chance to see it, stop by and say hello.

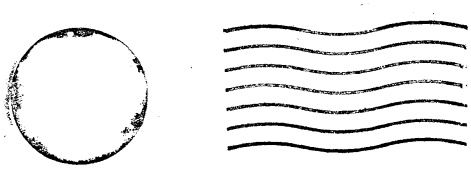
UNIVERSAL Model K
Hand powered
Seven wavy lines
6 mm between
postmark and cancellation



UNIVERSAL Model D
Electric
Six wavy lines
12 mm between
postmark and cancellation



UNIVERSAL Model G
Electric
Seven wavy lines
12 mm between
postmark and cancellation



UNUSUAL USE OF MODEL G, WITH A MUTE POSTMARK (LETTERS CUT OUT)
USED DURING WORLD WAR II
(NOTE: CANCELLATION RAN OFF AT RIGHT, AND NOT COMPLETE)

Model K's are distinguishable by the short distance between the postmark dial and the cancellation. The Model K has 7-wavy lines, unless a slogan is being used.

<u>BOB'S DOLLAR BOXES</u>: My son Andrew and I look forward to seeing you at The Garfield Perry March Party, March 19-21. Continuing a fun tradition I will have $1.00 boxes of flag and machine cancels available in my room at the Wyndham Playhouse Square hotel (the show Hotel), 12600 Euclid Avenue,

Cleveland. Check with me at the show on Saturday for my room number. The door will open at 9:00 PM so we don't conflict with the awards banquet. I will provide snack food. This event has proven to be a great opportunity to meet other collectors and socialize. Thank you *Bob Patkin*