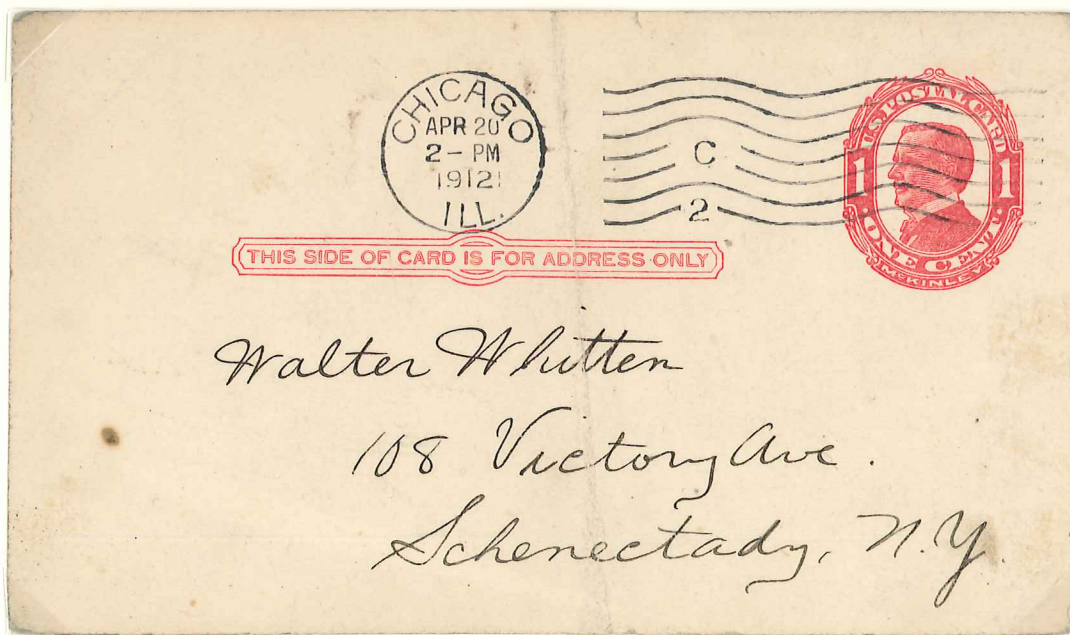


Later in April, 1912 two very distinctive postmarks were applied as part of these tests. The only other wavy line BFC Co. killer was used in Hammond, La.

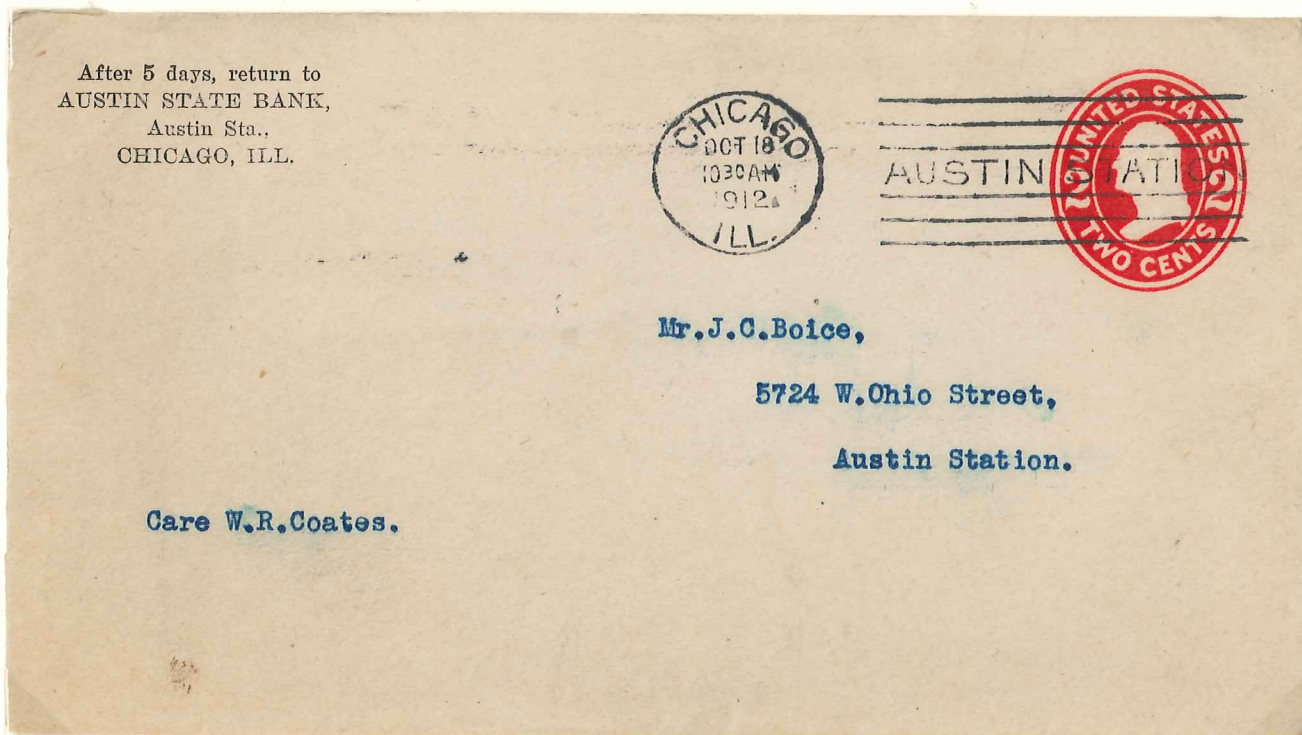


April 15, 1912 and April 20, 1912. Two of the three known examples.

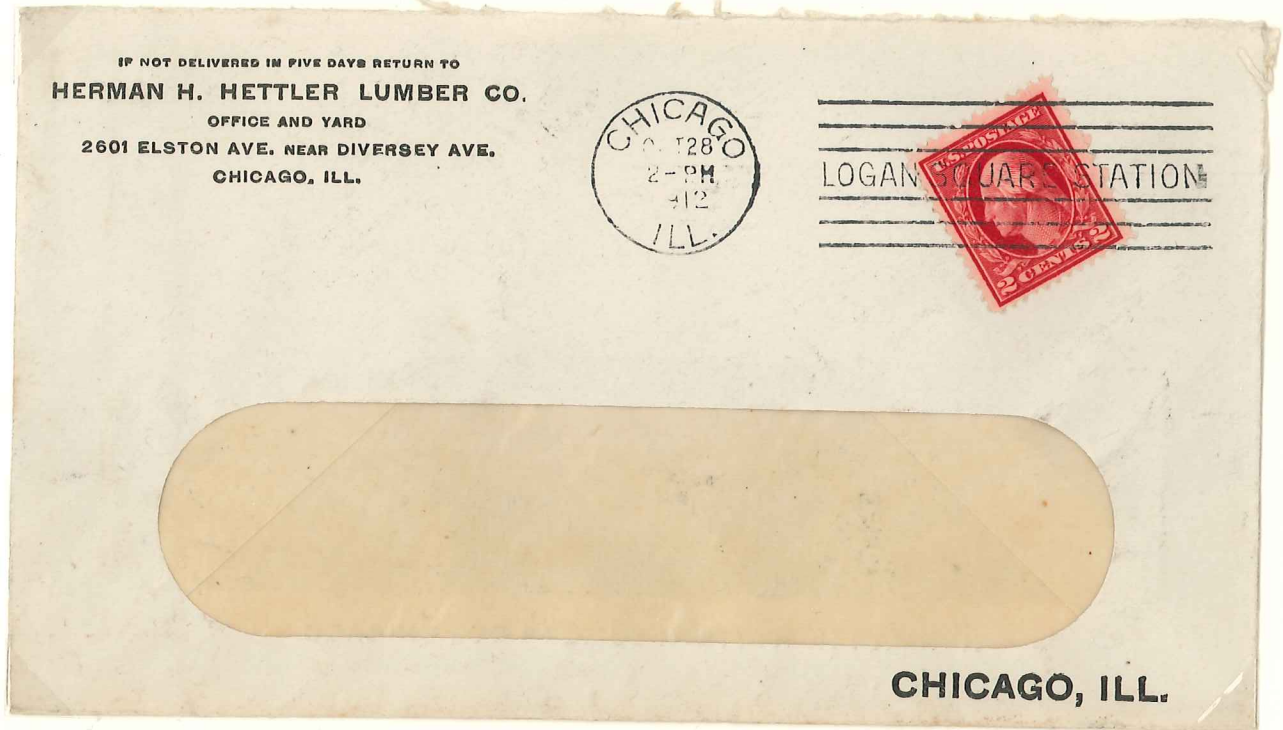
122
B. F. Cummins Co.

Tests for 1913 Contract

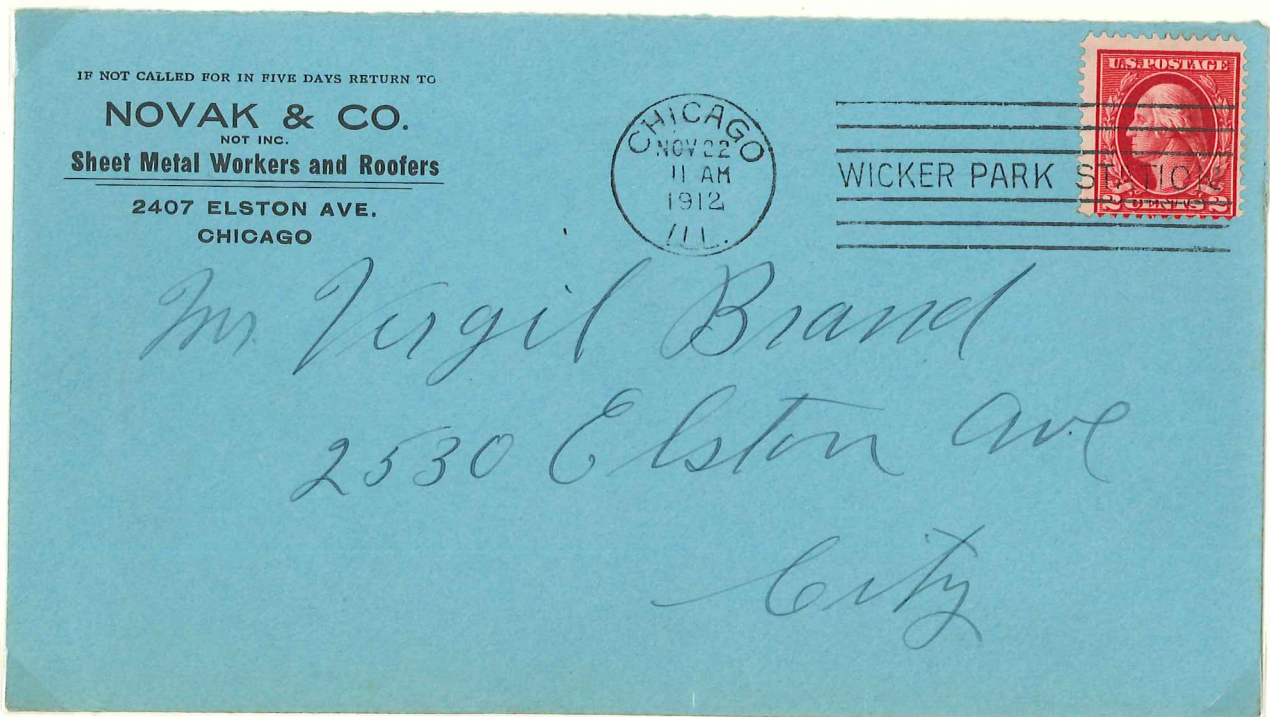
In the middle of the controversial bidding process for the 1913 contract, on April 27, 1912, Mr. Cummins suggested that the post office purchase 50 or 60 of the recently developed Model #11 motor operated postmarking machines. Perhaps because of the influence of his brother, Senator Albert Cummins, or perhaps to keep the lowest bidder in the competition for the upcoming contract the machine cancel committee recommended that this suggestion be adopted and on June 18, 1912 the post office purchased 55 of these machines without requesting competitive bids from the other machine cancel suppliers. Again this caused a protest from the competition.



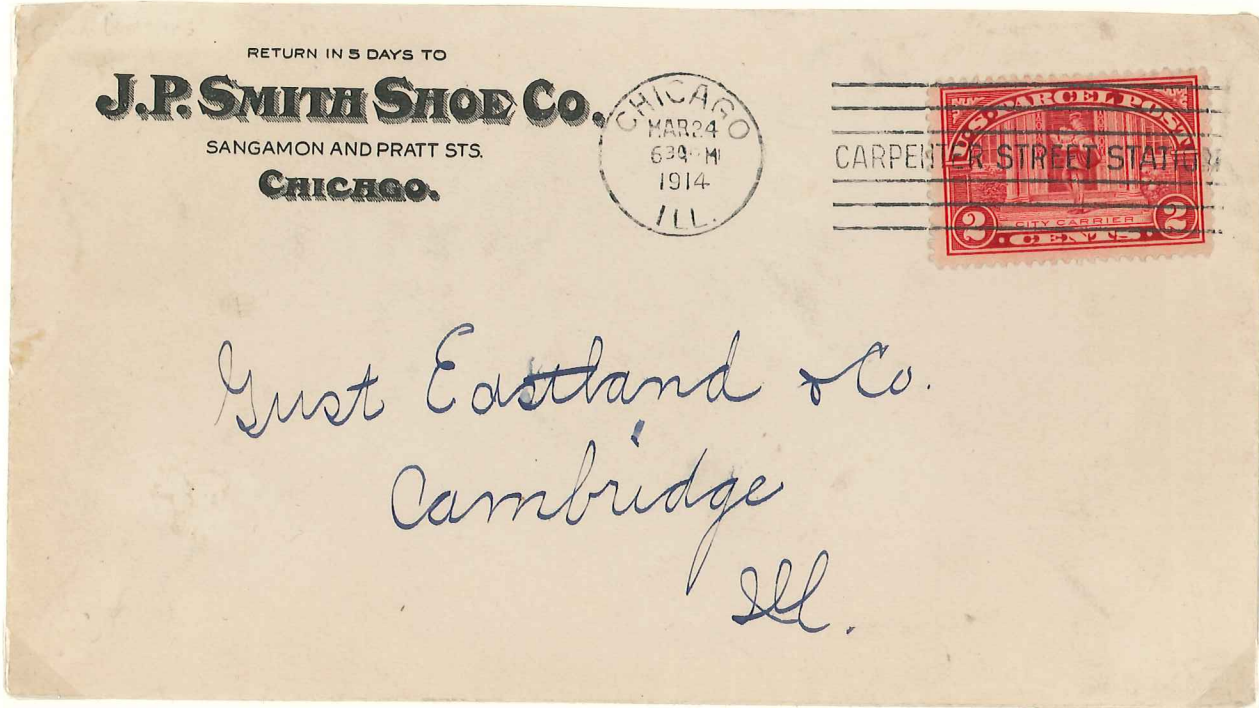
Some of the first machines were installed in October 1912 in Chicago stations.
The postmarks featured a J dial. When placed at stations the name replaced the center killer bar.



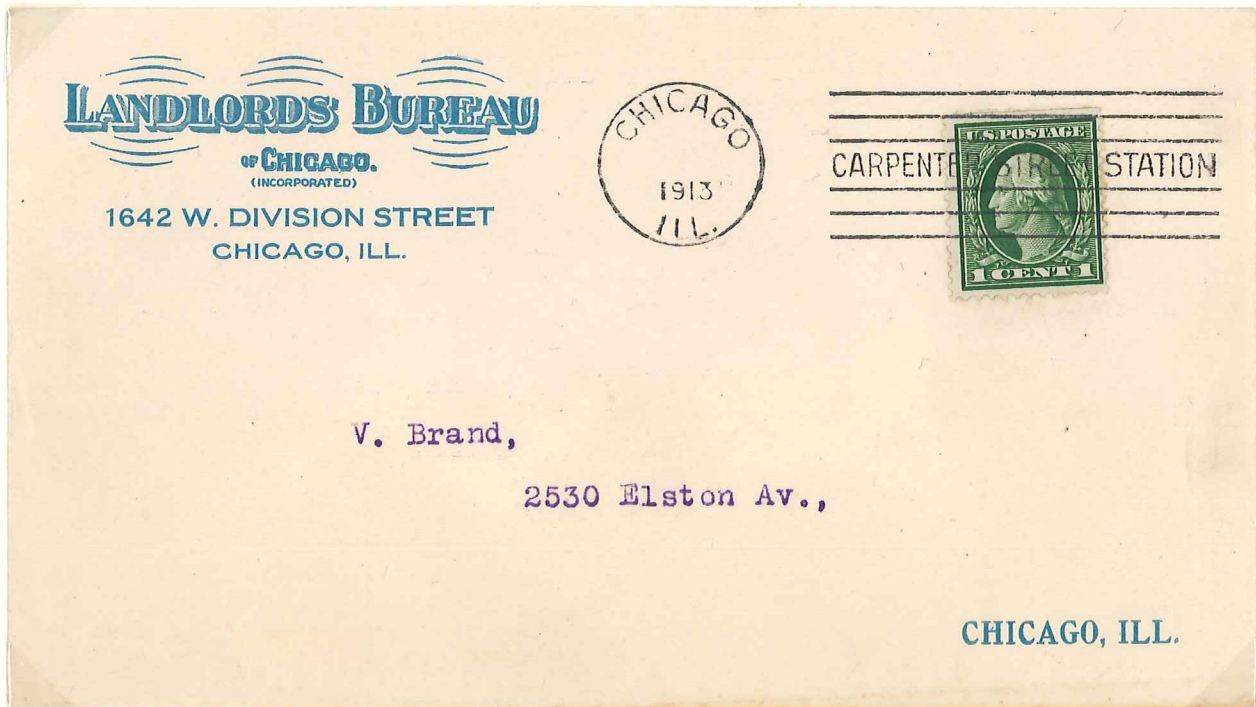
Logan Square Station, Oct. 28, 1912



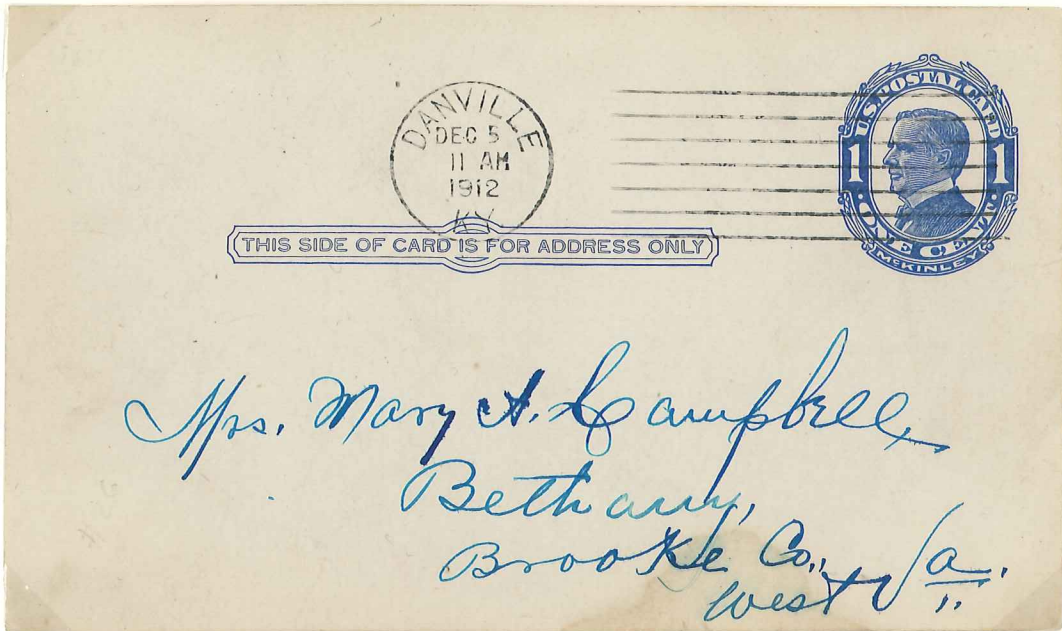
ERU from Wicker Park Station, Nov. 22, 1912



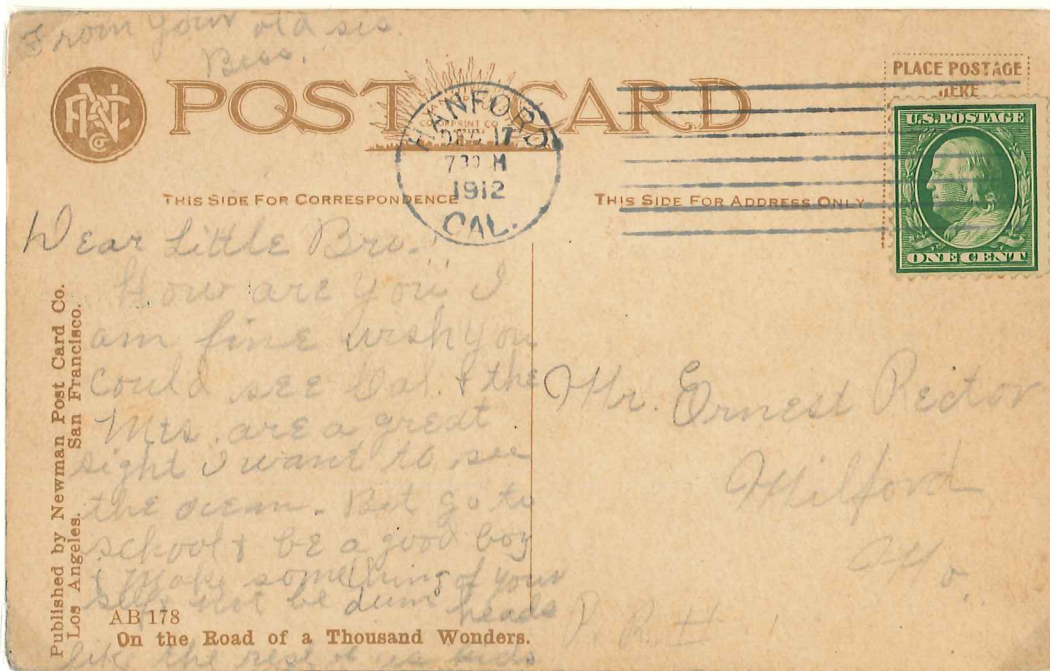
Carpenter Street Station, March 24, 1914.



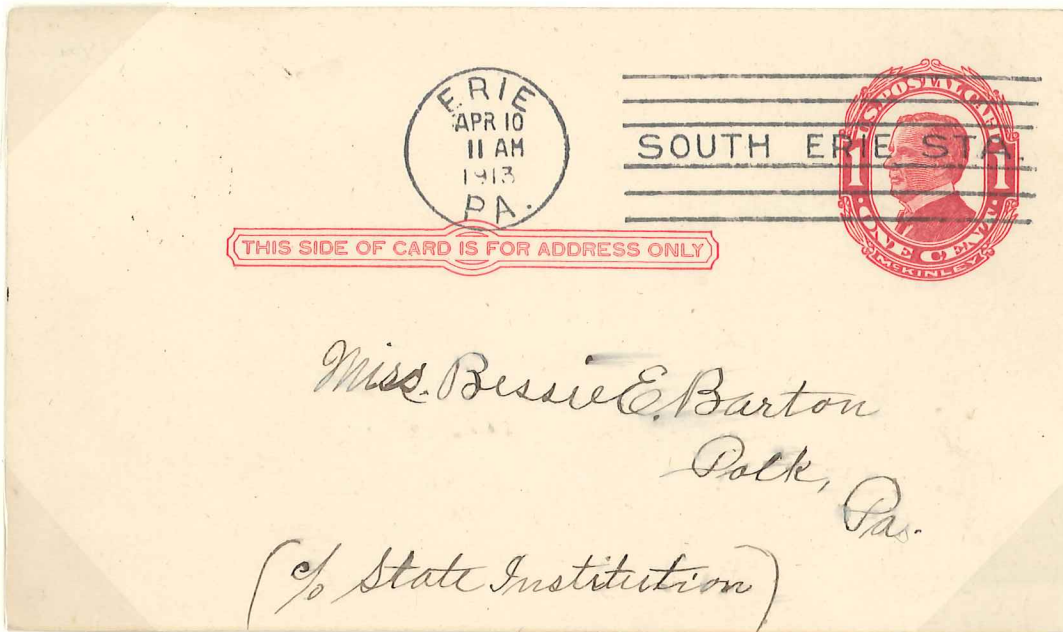
Carpenter Street Station used with month, day and time slugs removed to apply a cancel to printed matter.



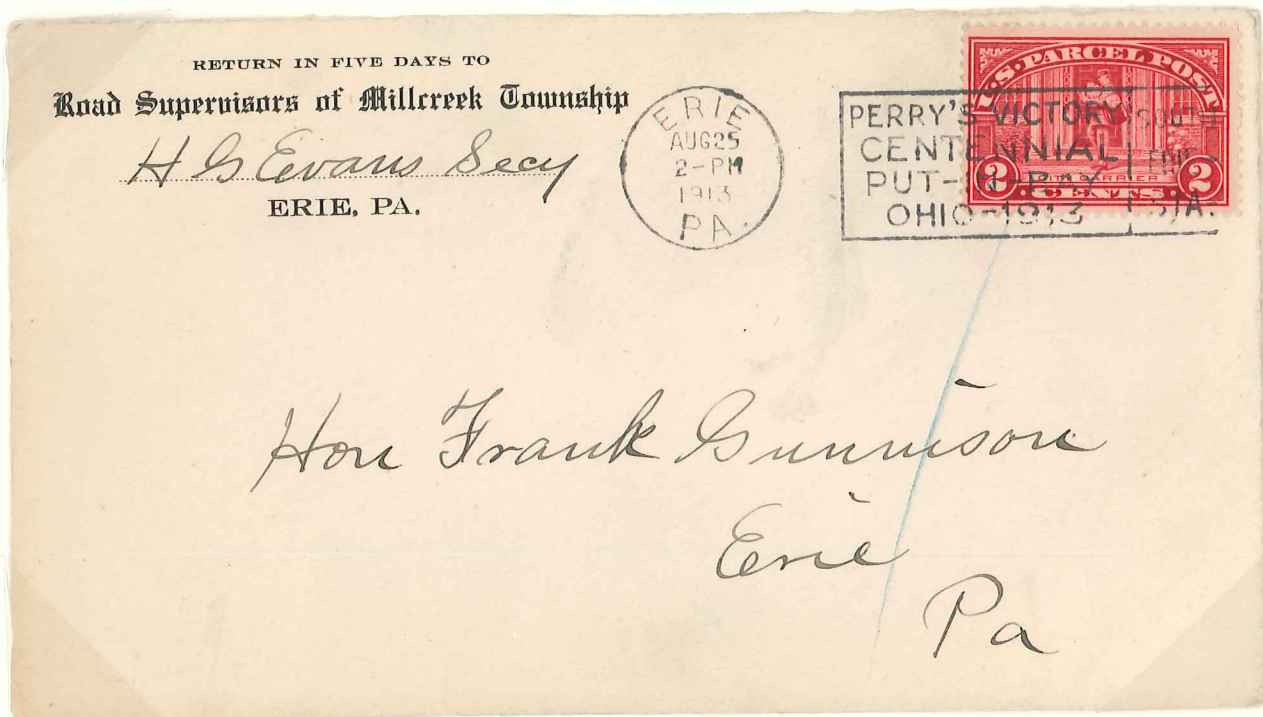
ERU from Danville, KY



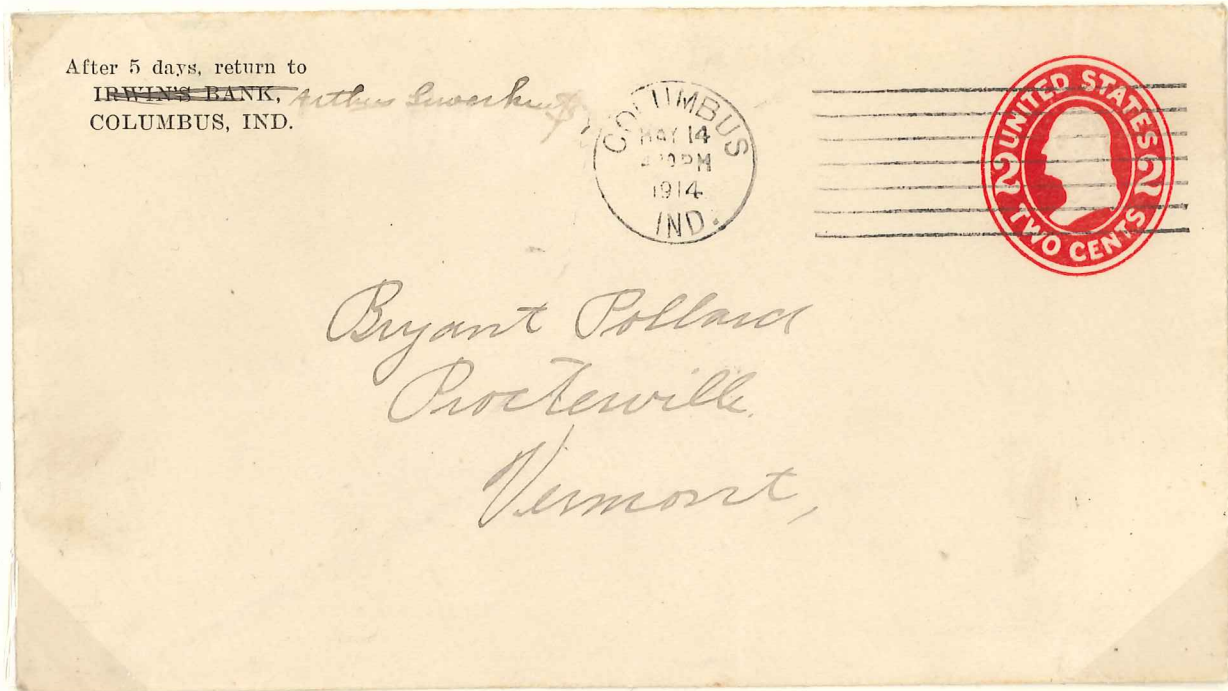
ERU from Hanford, CA.



South Erie Station, in Erie, PA received one of the original 55 machines. Used with a typical cancel design from 1912 to early 1913.



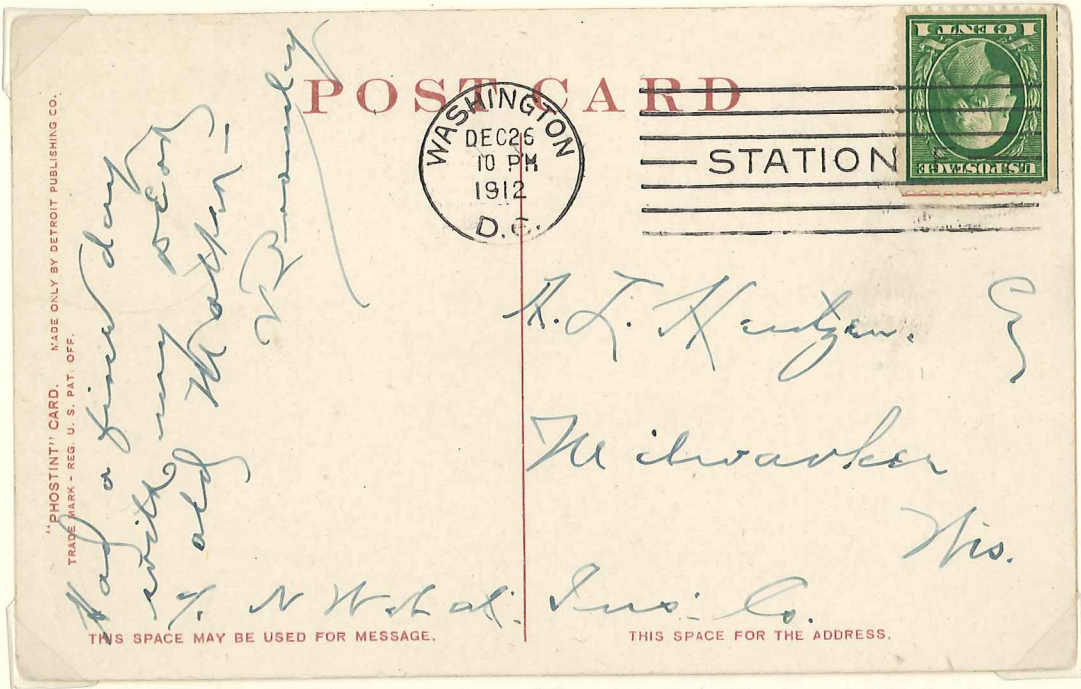
During July, August, and September 1913, the killer was changed to commemorate Perry's Victory in the Battle of Lake Erie. The original killer was returned to use by Dec. 1913.



Columbus, IN received one of the original 55 machines and initially used a dial with a tall IND.



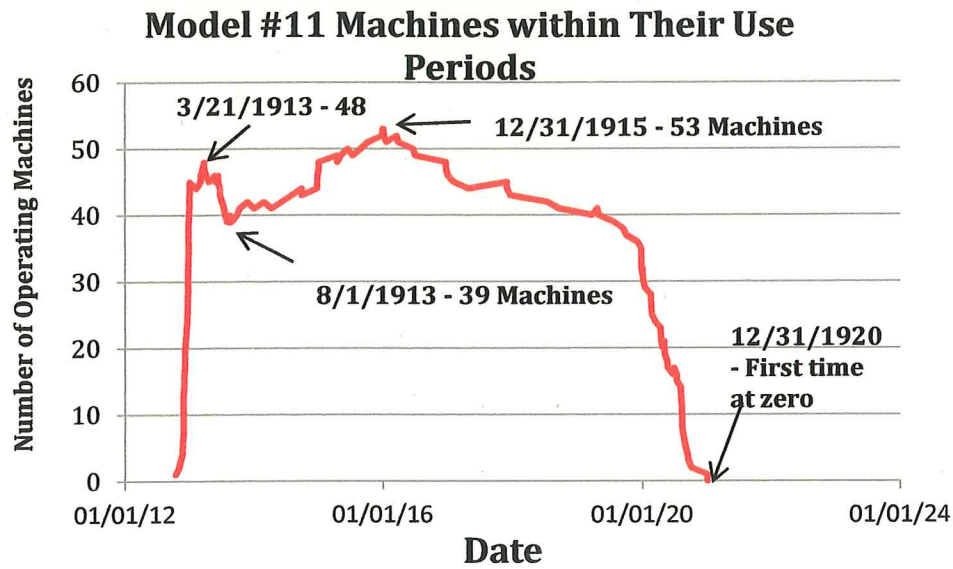
Later, by 1919, they changed the dial to one with a shorter and wider IND, probably due to damage of the early dial.



Washington, D.C., received one of the original machines, used at Station F.

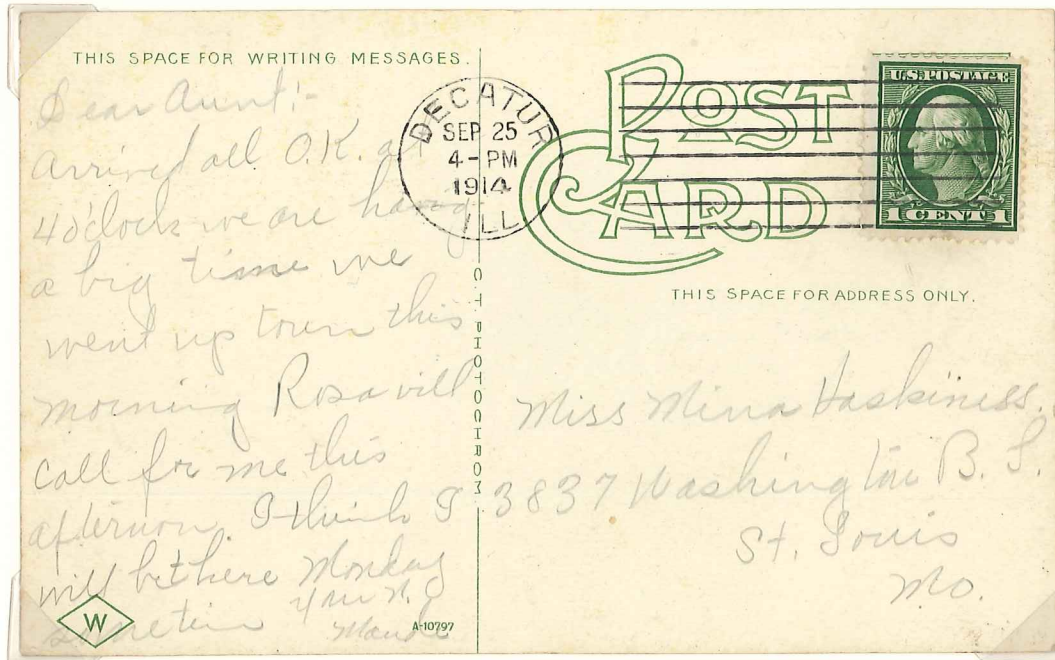


It was later transferred to Exeter, NH where 'Station F' was removed from the killer leaving a space. Later, a normal killer was installed.



55 Model #11 machines were purchased on June 18, 1912 and installation began in October of 1912. By looking at the ERU and LRU for all of these machines we can calculate, for any given date, how many machines were in their known use range. Looking at all the dates from 1912 through the entire run of these machines we can generate the graph above.

We see that the graph shows a double humped peak. Early in the life of these machines a maximum of 48 operating machines was reached on March 21, 1913 which declined to only 39 machines by Aug. 1, 1913. Later the number of operating machines grew to 53 by Dec. 31, 1915 and then slowly declined reaching zero for the first time on Dec. 31, 1920. Beyond 1920 a small number of machines appear in new post offices.

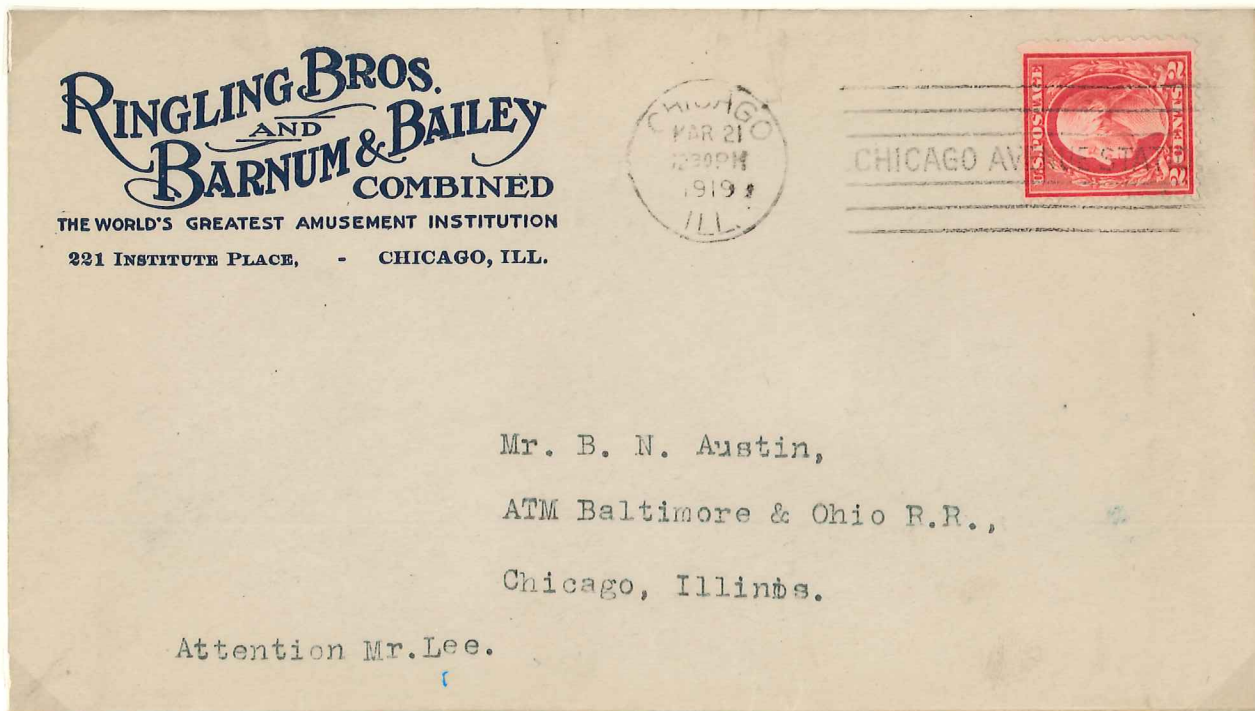


Only reported example from Decatur, IL, Sept. 25, 1914. Decatur did not receive one of the initial 55 machines and must have received this after the initial distribution.

As the killers have no distinguishing features there is no way to identify which machine this is from the postmark.



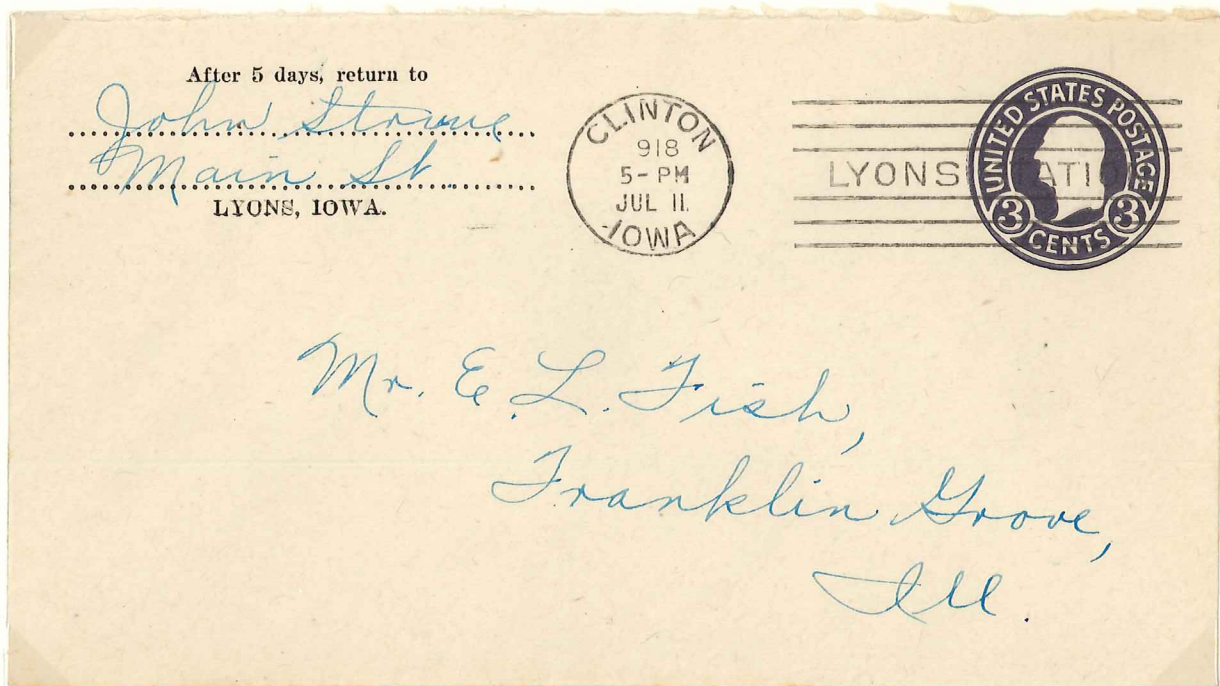
Chicago Avenue Station, in Chicago, did not receive an original Model #11 machine. This cover is the ERU from Oct. 7, 1913 and shows that by this time they had received a machine from another location.



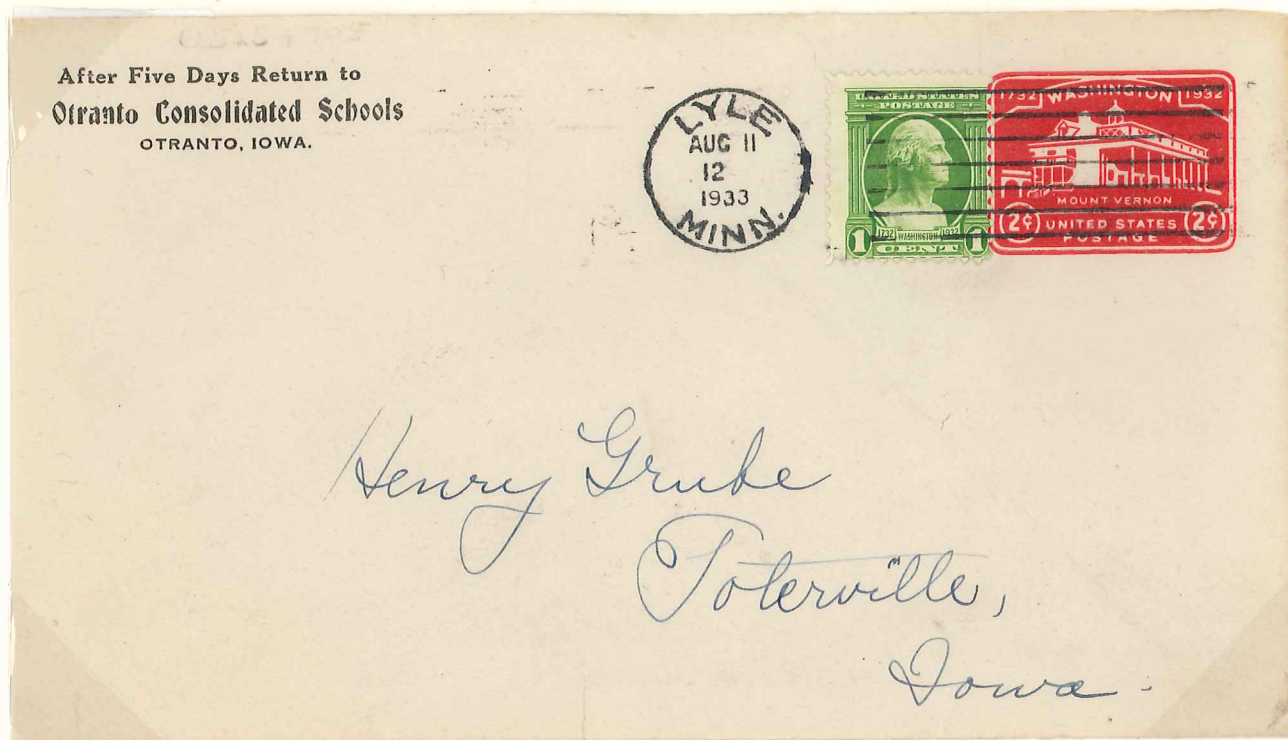
The LRU of the Chicago Avenue Station postmark, Mar. 21, 1919.



A Model #11 was transferred to Flushing, NY for use at Elmhurst Station with the station name appearing in the dial. Used here with the month, date and time removed to postmark 3rd class mail.



A Model #11 was also transferred to Clinton, IA for use at Lyons Station. Here the station name was located in the killer bars.



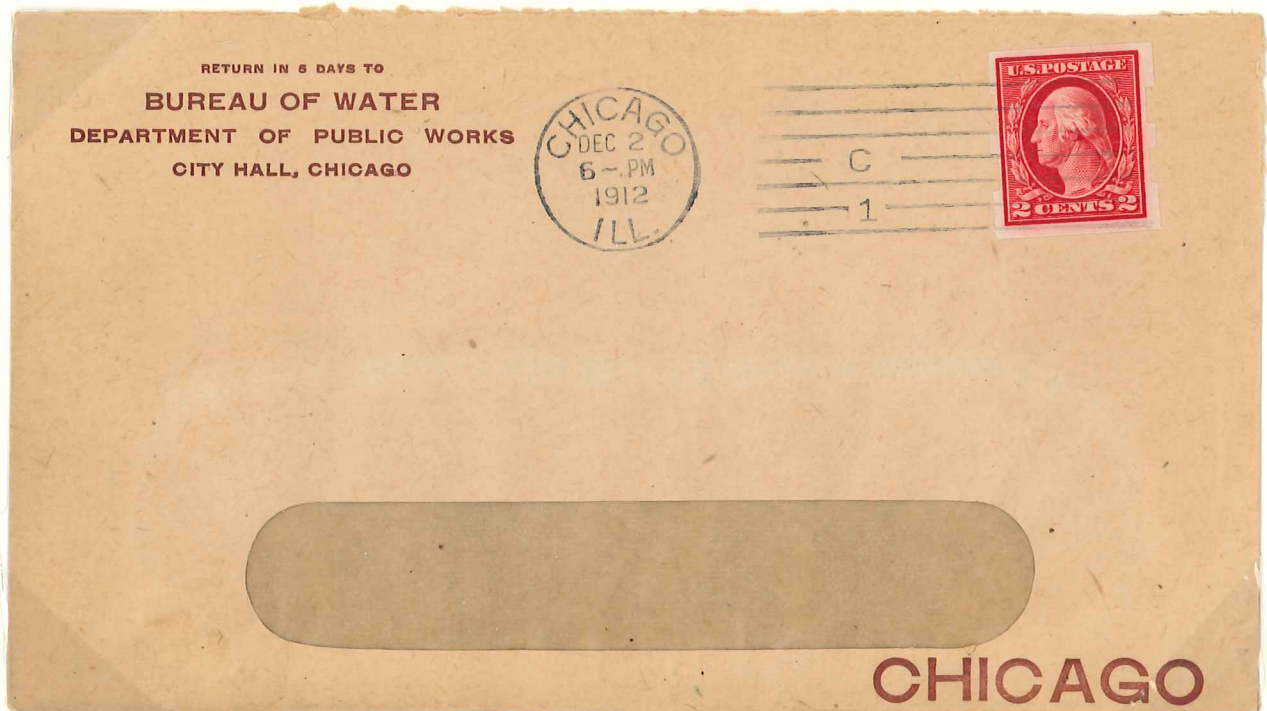
A Model #11 was transferred to Lyle, MN and used from 1923 to 1947.



Only reported use of a Model #11 from Hazardville, CT on Dec. 21, 1933.

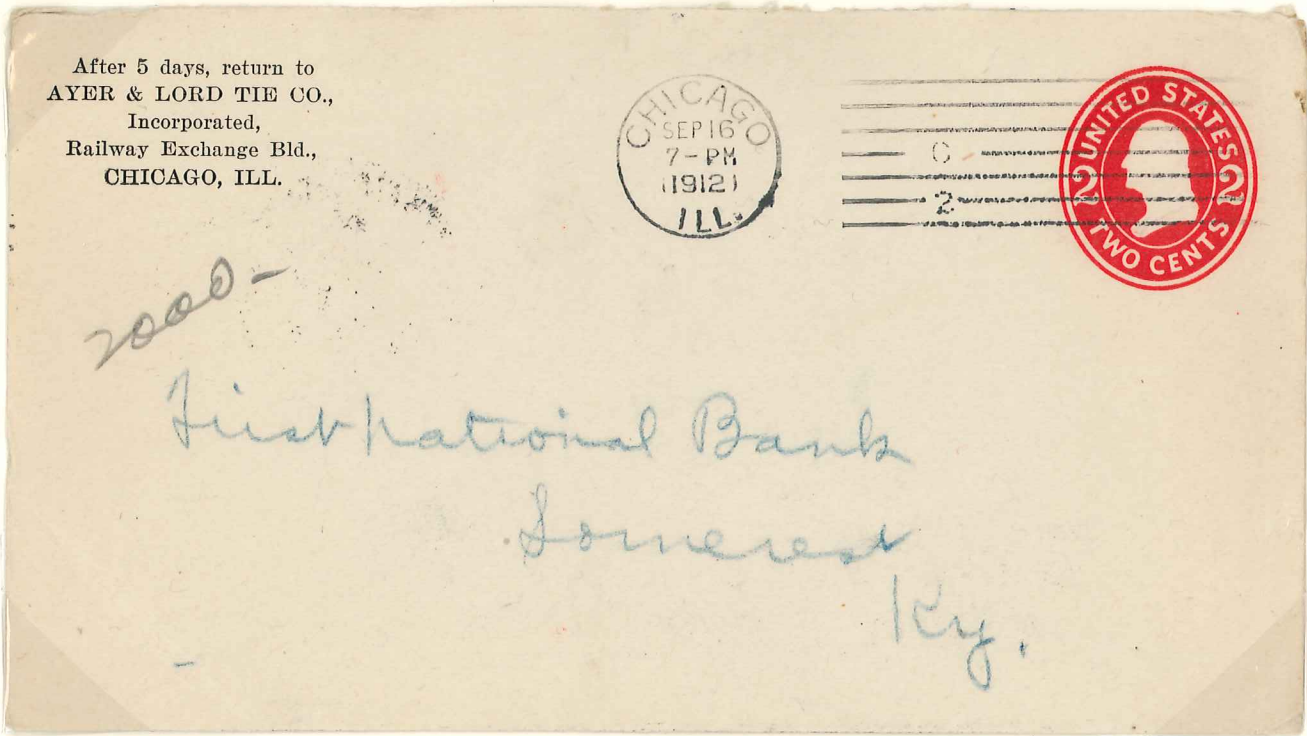
1912 continued to be a busy year for the BFC Co. The initial bids submitted Oct. 31, 1911 had all been rejected, new tests of their high speed Model #11 machines had begun, they had sold 55 Model #11 machines to the post office and new bids had been submitted to be opened on March 20. Congress had set a limit of \$270 per machine for this contract which excluded the International Flyer which had been leased at 300 per year. This was one of the better machines and International was not willing to lower their price. Again the USPOD was undecided what to do with the submitted bids.

Optimization of the new BFC Co. machines continued and is represented by a series of postmarks from Chicago which used a variety of distinguishable postmark dials and cancel designs. This work continued to be done by USPOD employees in Chicago with patent improvements often being assigned to the BFC Co. We'll look at these experimental postmarks in order of their machine number.

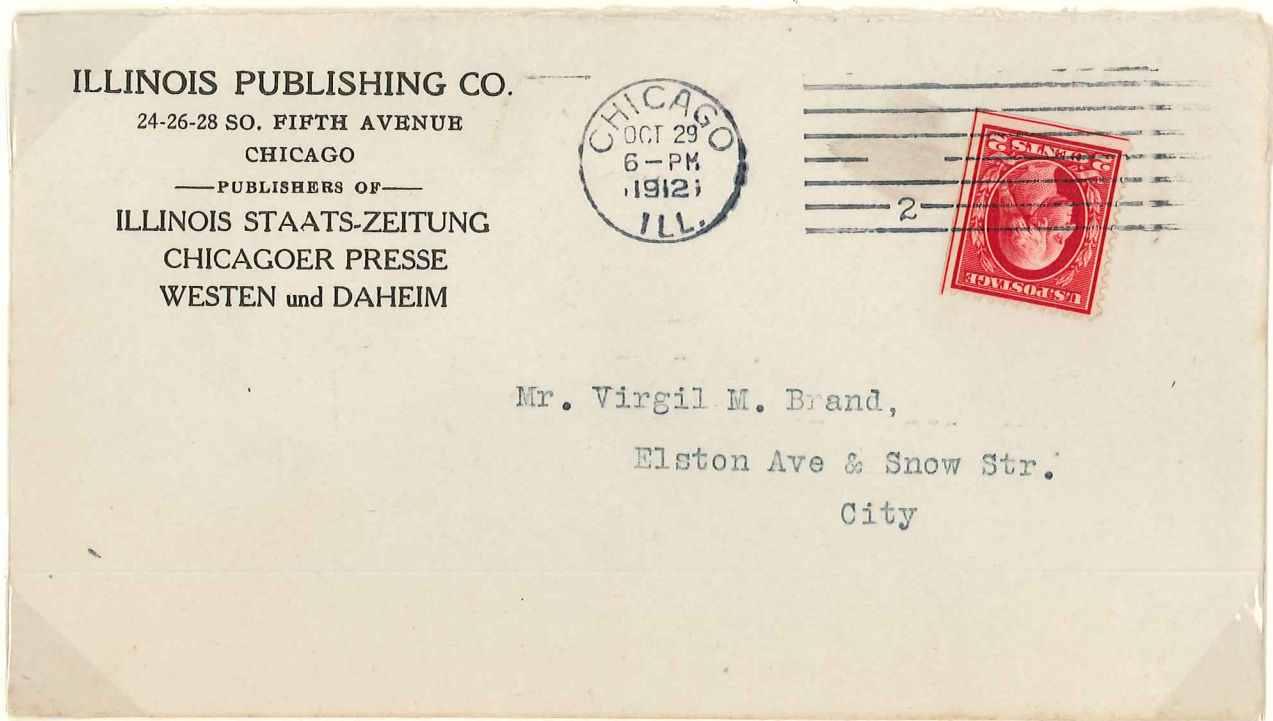


Machine #1 Dec. 2, 1912 Examples of this postmark are known from Aug. 1912 into Jan. 1913
Note the use of a Shermack perforated coil stamp.

On Dec. 9, 1912 the USPOD sent out award letters to Time-Cummins, Universal and the American machine companies based on the Mar. 20, 1912 bids.. These awards were rescinded on Dec. 11 and ultimately all bids were rejected on Jan. 22, 1913.

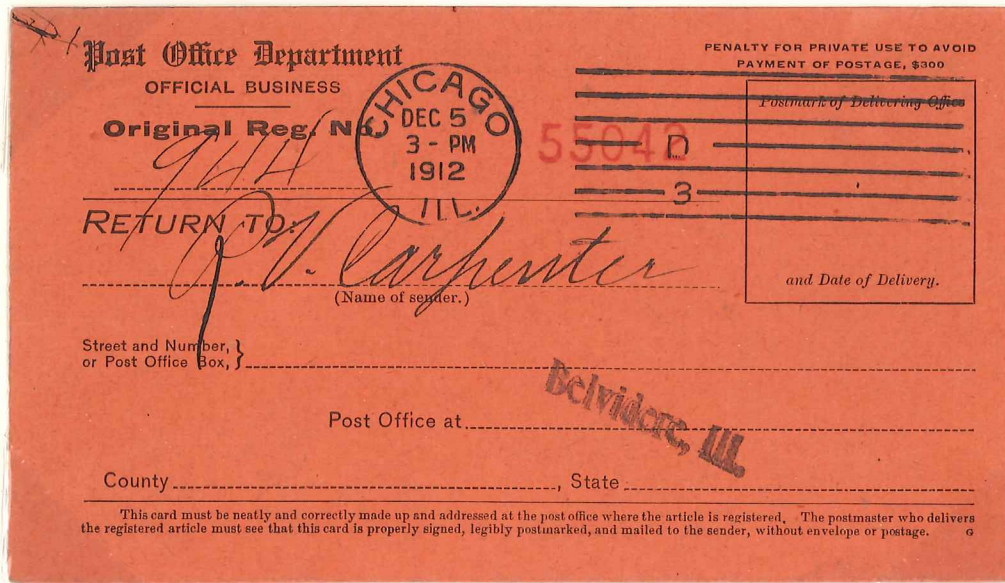


Machine #2, Sept. 16, 1912

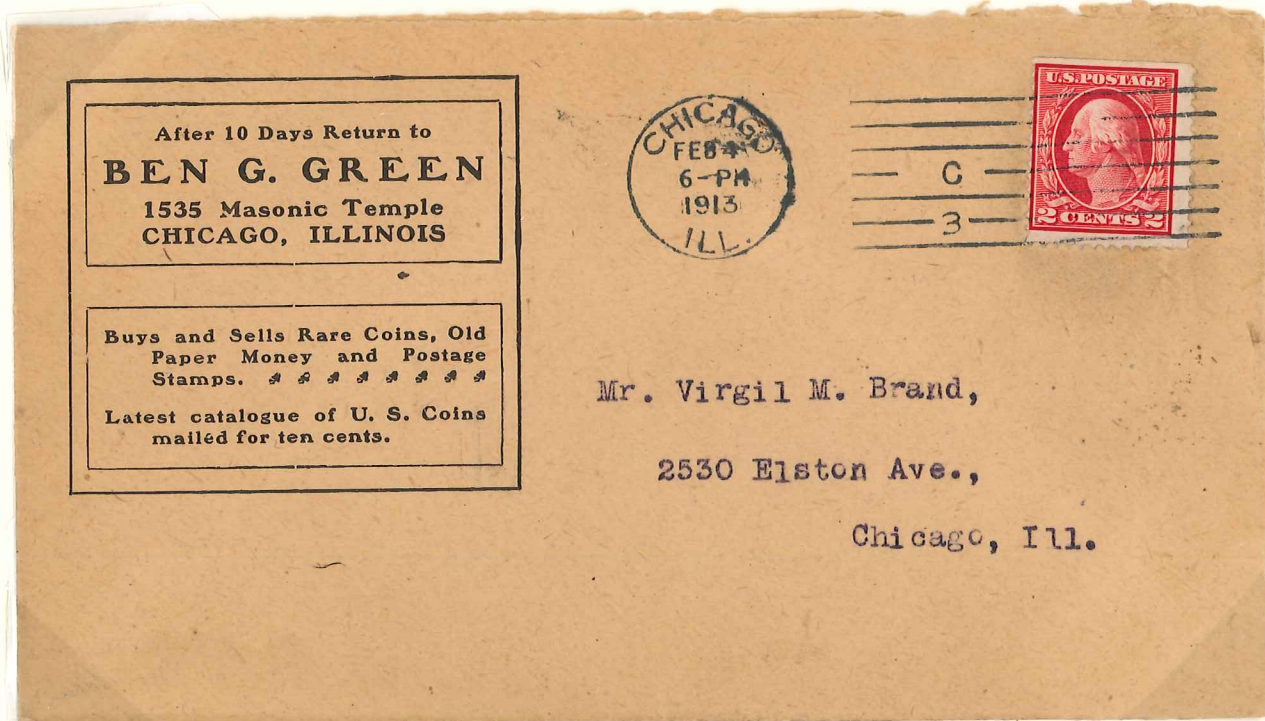


The tests on machine #2 continued into late 1912. An unusual example with a missing service mark.

The changes made to machine #3 were more extensive than the other machines. We see different service marks being used, changes to the killer bars, and more changes than the other machines being modified.



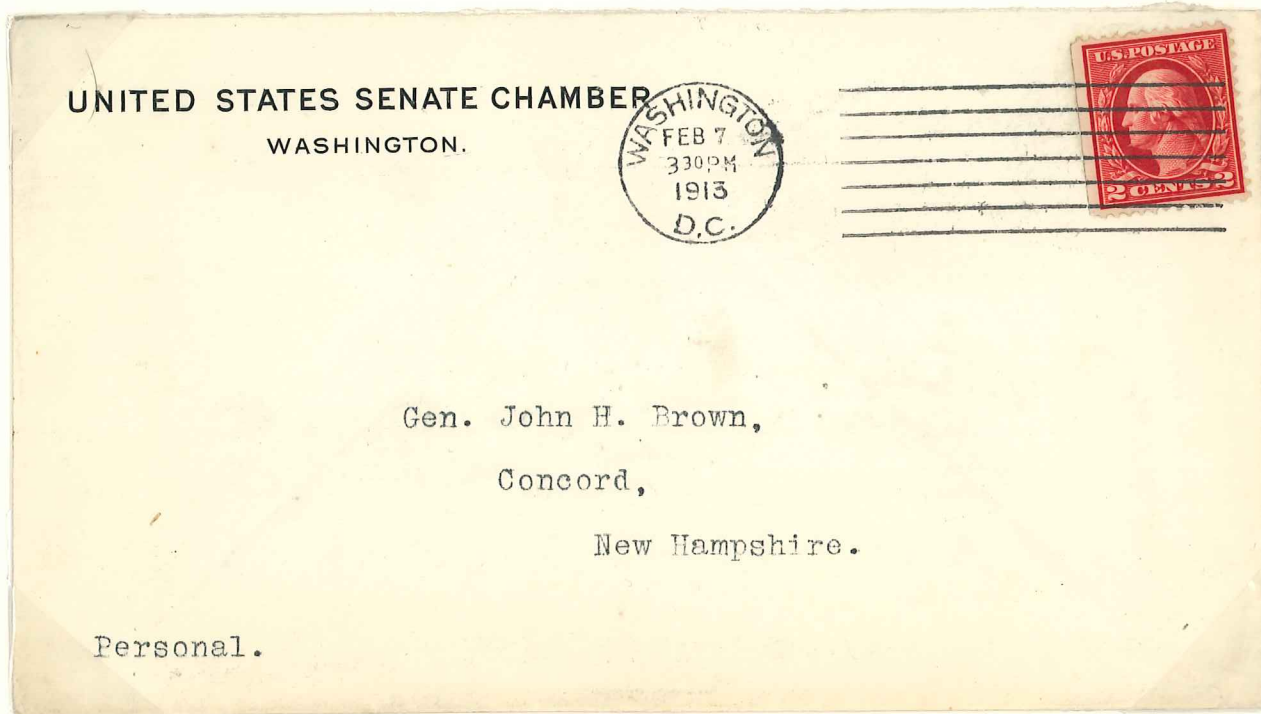
Machine #3, Dec. 5, 1912. Test postmark on a Registry Receipt with a D service letter.



Feb. 4, 1913 postmark with a different postmark die than the previous example. Differences are noticeable in the shape of the second C in Chicago and the shape of the G.

On Dec. 12, 1912 the "Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Expenditures in the Post Office Department" convened and met until Jan. 20, 1913. These hearings were led by Walter I. McCoy who had been appointed as a committee of one to investigate the canceling machine contracts of the USPOD. This hearing investigated the BFC Co bids and explored the favoritism that had seemed to be shown towards the BFC Co. The 2000 page minutes of these hearings provide a wonderful resource for understanding some of the action of the principal players in this contract bidding.

On Jan. 30 the "Machine Cancel Committee" announced that all bids of Mar. 20, 1912 were rejected and on Feb. 1, 1913 a new cancelling committee was formed to open bids on Feb. 3, 1913 and make suitable recommendations. The International Postal Supply Co. decided to enter a bid at the legal limit of \$270 per machine.



One of two examples of J-dial Washington D.C. test postmarks, both examples are from the same day but have different dials. The Proceedings of the Canceling Machine Hearings, p. 1564, records that a test of Machine #7 was run from 3:01 to 3:06 pm. 2620 pieces of mail were canceled with 32 pieces not postmarked, 7 imperfectly postmarked and 3 mutilated.

This cover, postmarked at 3:30 pm was probably part of this 5 minute test.

It was concluded from these Washington tests that the feed mechanism was judged to be based on a poor principle. This was an inherent fault and would cause permanent trouble.

The final contract did not award any business to the BFC Co. Instead the Universal, International, Columbia, and American companies divided the business. **The BFC Co. never did lease any machines to the USPOD.**