

# Benjamin Franklin Cummins And His Attempt to Corner the US Machine Cancel Market

By the early 1900's the United States Post Office Department (USPOD) was using machines to postmark mail more efficiently than could be done by hand. Over 25 companies had developed and tested machines in the hopes of being awarded some of that business. After purchasing some machines of questionable value by 1904 the USPOD was leasing machines annually with contracts beginning July 1 of each year.

The Time Marking Machine Co. (TMM Co.) machines included a working clock allowing the postmark to include the exact minute that the mail item was postmarked. This was believed to be of value at a time when it was important to document the handling of the mail.

By 1905 the president of the TMM Co. was Benjamin Franklin Cummins who was also president of the Benjamin Franklin Cummins Co (BFC Co.). The BFC Co. was already well known for their mechanical perforating machines used to cancel legal documents and later provided the machines to produced perfins (perforated initials) in US postage stamps.

B. F. Cummins was an aggressive businessman who also seemed to gain some advantage by being the brother of Senator Albert B. Cummins (two time presidential candidate) from Iowa. Under Benjamin Franklin Cummins leadership the TMM Co received contracts to lease machines to the USPOD starting in 1907 and running into 1913.

Starting in 1911 the BFC Co. focused their attention on developing high speed machines for the new lease period starting July 1, 1913. The USPOD advertised for bids for high, medium and low speed machines to be submitted Oct, 1911 for the upcoming contract. The BFC Co. submitted a bid for all of the business at one low price and accompanied this with a secret letter detailing their individual prices. This unusual bid threw the bidding process into chaos and ultimately resulted in two additional bids, the appointment of a machine cancel committee to evaluate machines, numerous tests in Chicago and Washington and finally a Congressional investigation into the procurement practices of the USPOD.

This exhibit will use postmarked covers to show the development and commercial uses of the TMM Co. machines, detail the history of the hand-cranked machines sold to postmasters and explore BFC Co. postmarks during the development and testing of the new high-speed technology designed to compete for the 1913 contract.

## Exhibit Outline

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| 1) Title Page                                |             |
| 2) Background                                | 1898 - 1903 |
| 3) Time Marking Machine Co. (TMM Co.)        |             |
| a) Tests                                     | 1905 - 1906 |
| b) Leased Machines                           | 1907 - 1913 |
| i) A Postmarks                               | 1907        |
| ii) B Postmarks                              | 1907        |
| iii) C Postmarks                             | 1908        |
| iv) A Postmarks Revisited                    | 1909        |
| v) D Postmarks                               | 1910        |
| c) Doremus Rebuilds                          | 1910        |
| d) Sorting Tables                            | 1911        |
| 4) Benjamin Franklin Cummins Co. (BFC Co.)   |             |
| a) Hand Powered Machines Sold to Postmasters | 1911        |
| b) Development of High Speed Technology      | 1911        |
| c) Purchase of 55 Machines                   | 1912        |
| d) Continued Development                     | 1912 - 1913 |
| e) Final Activity                            | to 1964     |

## Background

During the late 1890's, the USPOD was focused on providing timely service. Several attempts were known to include clock driven mechanisms in postmarking machines to document the exact postmarking time.

The first known postmark to have a working clock was developed by James P. Maloney. He referred to his machine as a "Time Stamp". It was similar to a stapler with a large head and did not have the capability to feed envelopes or to work at high speeds. Hand pressure caused application of the postmark.



1891 Maloney postmark, known only from Washington, D.C.

Note that the minute portion of the time was being rotated into position as this envelope was postmarked. (ex-Langford)

*What is a working clock? Removable slugs were typically inserted into postmarking devices to print the time to the nearest hour or half hour. Allowing for the possibility that slugs were available for every quarter hour and perhaps every 10 minutes. This would allow the possibility of times ending in :15, :45 as well as :10, :20, :40 and :50 from a typical postmark. This accounts for 8 of the possible minute markings out of a 60 minute hour. Any of the other 52 minutes would seem to indicate a working clock.*

*Of course a postmark with a working clock can still give for example a time ending in: 00 if that happened to be the correct time when the postmark occurred. Also a machine with a clock may have it turned off or stuck in a position where it leaves a postmark ending in 1,2,3,4,6,7,8 or 9 and still not be actually working, although the capability of a working clock was present.*

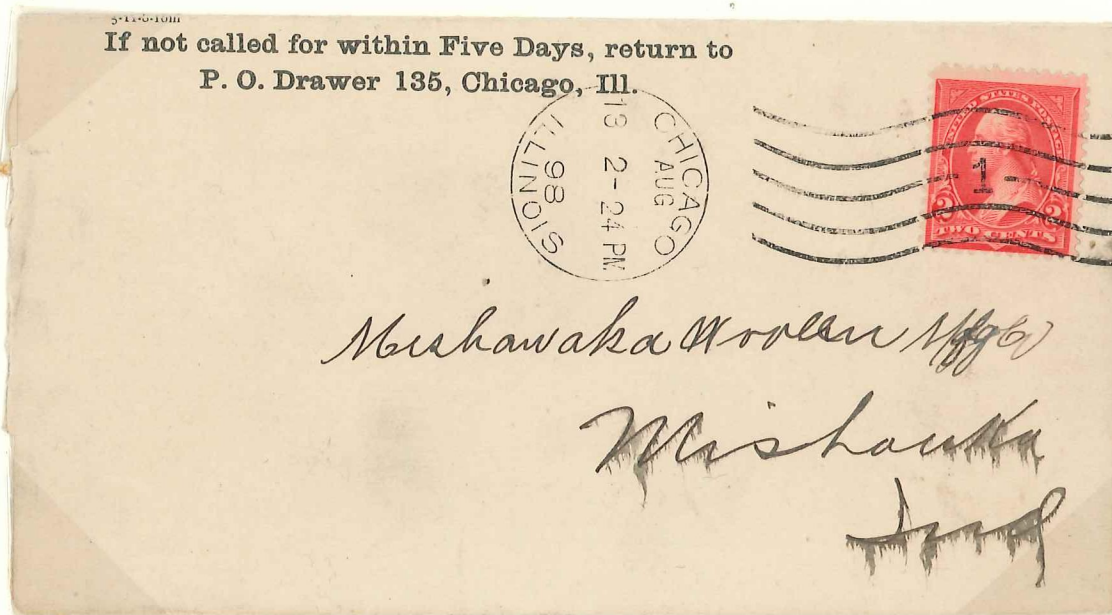
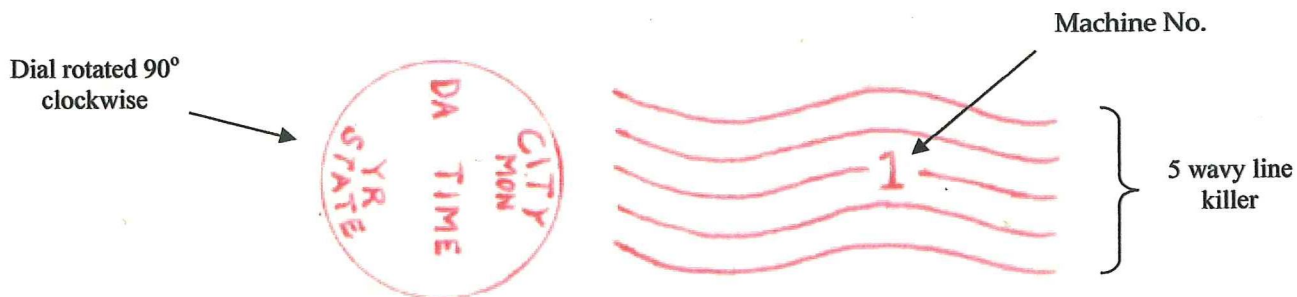
*In this exhibit I will refer to postmarks with times ending in 1,2,3,4,6,7,8 or 9 as indicating a working clock. Except for very rare postmarks they are also confirmed by a database recording observations of over 2800 Time Marking Machine postmarks.*



**Background**

Ernst R. Malmborg had patented a time stamp device similar to that of James P. Mallonnee on Oct. 14, 1890. On July 31, 1899 Malmborg received US Patent No. 615,031 for a "Postmarking and Canceling Machine" which featured a working clock capable of including the time to the nearest minute in the postmark. This early machine had a unique postmark dial rotated 90 degrees clockwise from the normal orientation. This was to accommodate the working clock and the subsequent revolving wheels of the clock which were on the same axis as the postmark dial. As all subsequent TMM Co. postmarks this had the date and time on the same line.

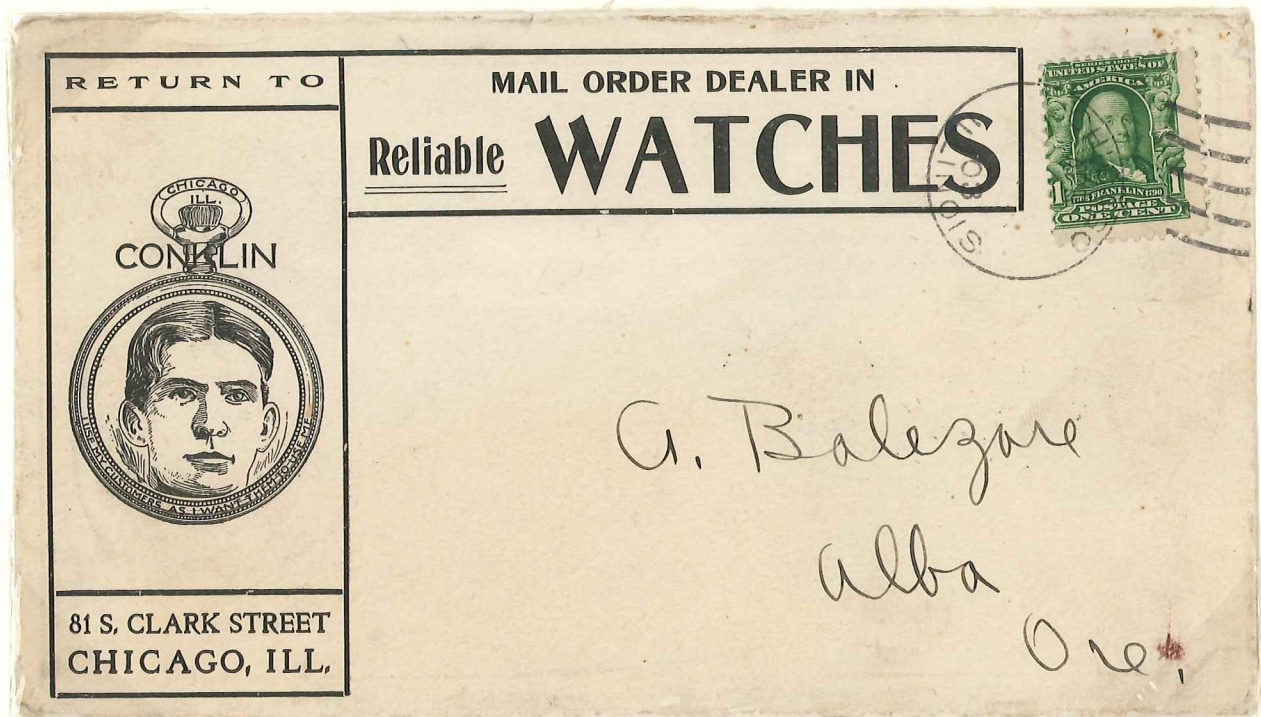
This early machine had a unique postmark dial rotated 180 degrees from the normal orientation. This was to accommodate the working clock and the subsequent revolving wheels of the clock which were on the same axis as the postmark dial.



**1898 Test of early Malmborg cancelling machine. Note the time of 2:24 PM.**

## Background

Malmborg continued to improve his machines. Five additional patents were granted from 1897 through early 1903 and the improved machines were once again tested in Chicago.



Test of Malmborg machine in 1903 with the clock dials removed to postmark 3<sup>rd</sup> class mail. (ex-Payne)

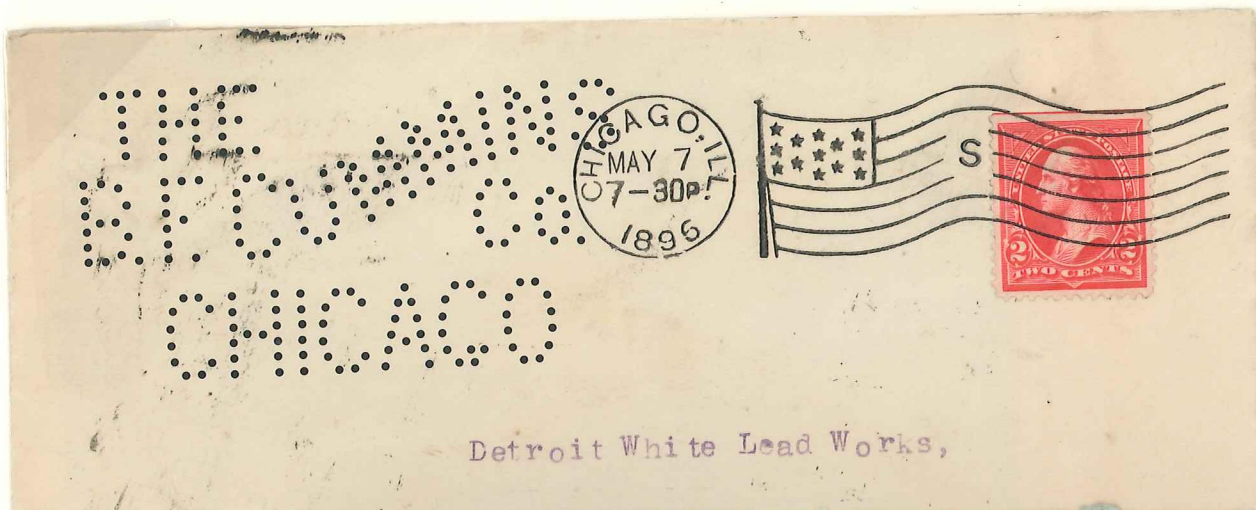
*It is very unusual to see an experimental postmark used for printed matter. This would seem to be especially the case for a machine which was specifically designed to feature a working clock. Perhaps it was tested on 3<sup>rd</sup> class mail as they wanted to determine the ability of the clock to be removed when it was not needed.*



## Background

The BFC Co. started in 1887 with "the introduction of a perforator that revolutionized the banking industry"  
(<http://www.cumminsallison.com/default.htm>, website of Cummins-Allison Co.).

Their perforating technology was also used to create unusual perforated advertising covers.



In 1907, perforated initials (perfins) were allowed on US postage stamps as a security measure for companies as shown here with the "BFC Co" 2 line perfin. Early mail related business for the BFC Co.



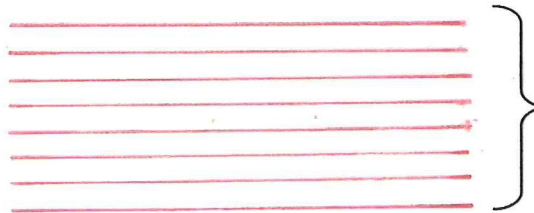
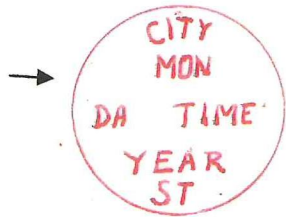
## Time Marking Machine Co.

## Early Tests

Based on successful tests of the Malmberg technology the Time Marking Machine Co. received a contract to supply up to 30 machines to the USPOD during the period of July 1, 1904 to June 30, 1905. No machines were supplied under this contract. Malmberg continued to improve his machine and his later patents were assigned to the TMM Co. and often had B. F. Cummins signature as witness.

The machines continued to include a working clock but the postmark dial has now been rotated with the town name at the top of the dial. This postmark type is classified as an A-100 in the early studies by Geschwindner, Morris and Koontz published in the Machine Cancel Forum.

Date and time on  
same line



8 Horizontal  
lines with no  
diespace.



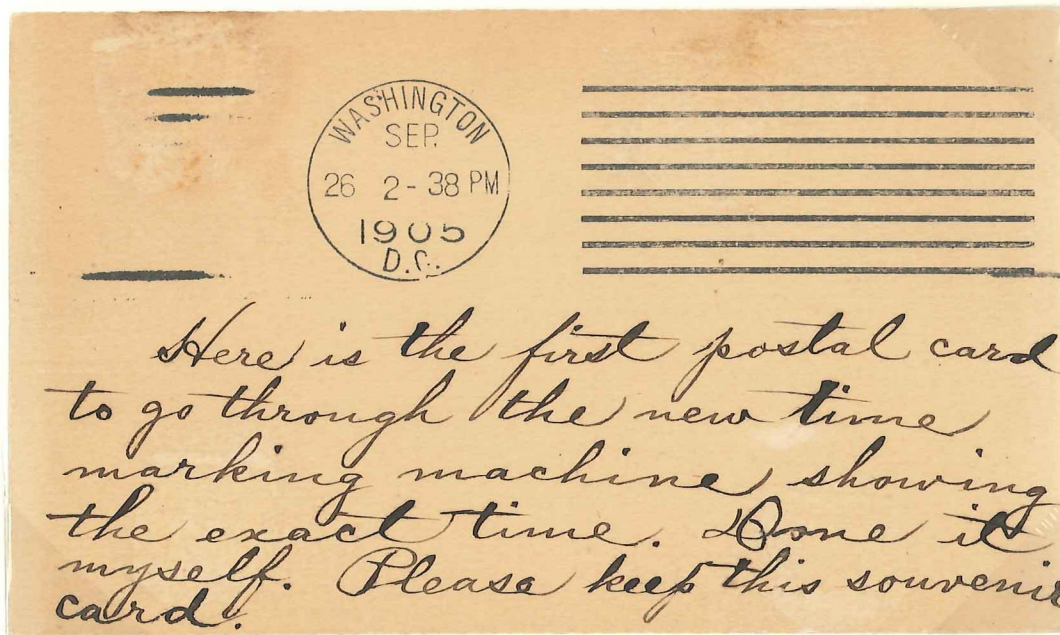
Test postmark from Washington D.C. of a Time Marking Machine postmark. Note the time of 7:04 PM.

Examples are known from June 28 and 29. Evidently the test was unsuccessful as no contract was awarded for the coming fiscal year.





Photocopy of Front (reduced)



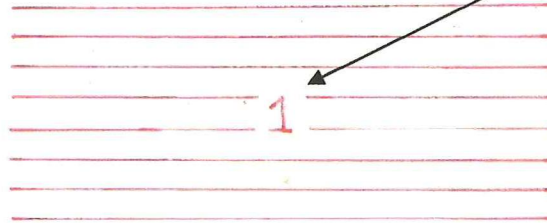
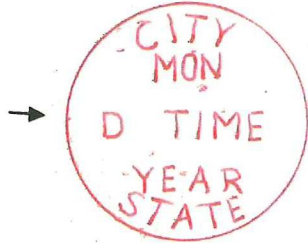
A second test was run with examples again known from only two days. This is the earliest known usage from this test. A postmark was applied to the back of the card along with the message:

**"Here is the first postal card to go through the new time marking machine showing the exact time.  
Done it myself. Please keep this souvenir card.**

The card is unsigned and addressed to T. S. Morton who no known relationship to the TMM Co.

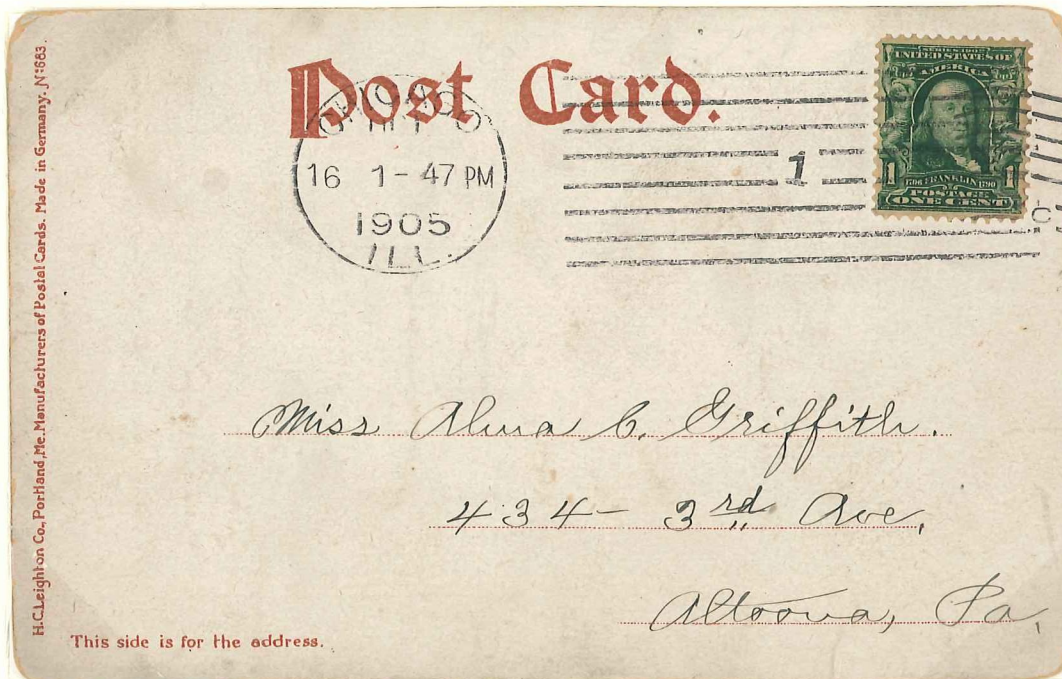
Testing continued in Chicago throughout 1905 and into 1906 using a new A-101 type postmark.

A Dial  
Circular with  
Month, Day, Time  
and Year within  
Dial



Machine  
Number

101 Killer  
8 Horizontal  
Bar Killer



In late 1905 the Chicago Post Office was in the process of moving to a new building.  
A new machine was tested at a temporary Post Office in October.  
This is the earliest reported example (ERU) from this test, which ran for 3 days.



**Time Marking Machine Co.**

**Early Tests**

Testing continued at the new Post Office.



Tests continued for nearly one month beginning on Oct. 31. Note the abbreviation of ILL.

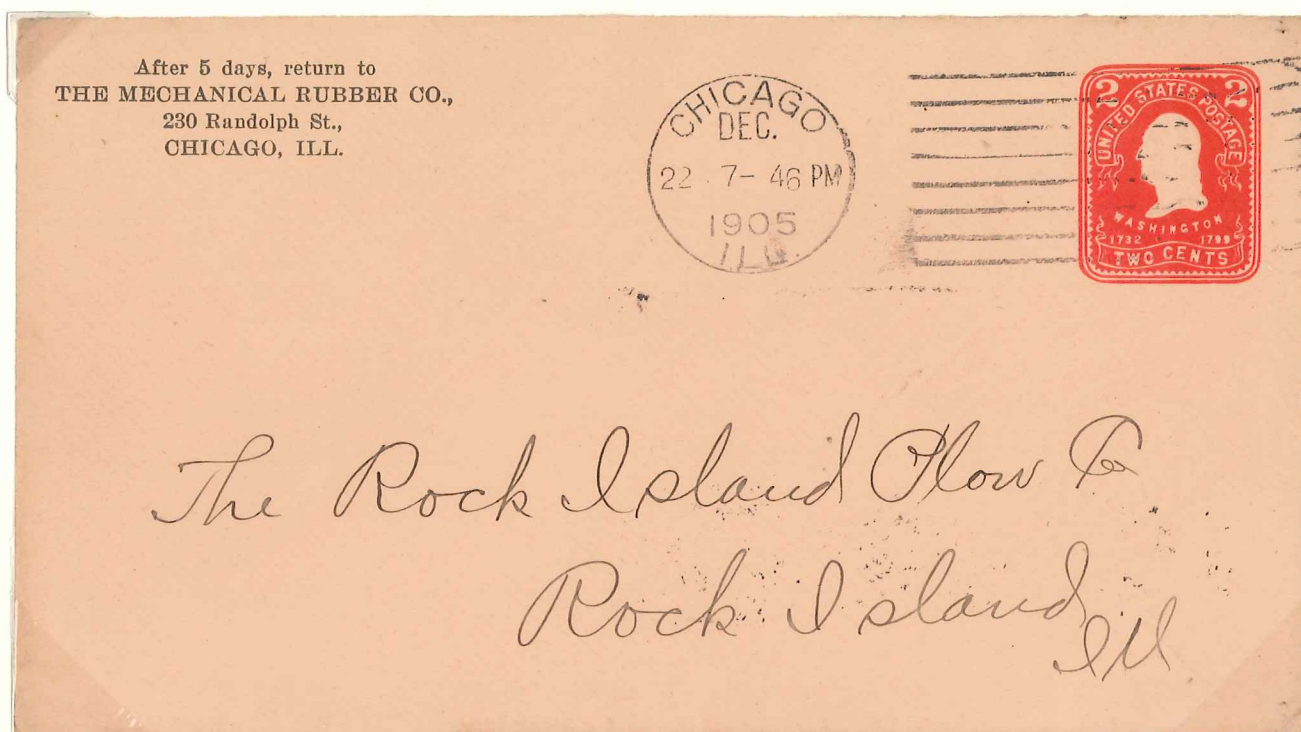


Late in 1905 the dial was changed to one using the abbreviation ILLS.  
The 100 type postmark (with no die space) was used in this test.  
This may have been the machine tested in Washington at the end of September, 1905.

**Time Marking Machine Co.**

**Early Tests**

A final test was run late in December 1905.



**Latest reported use (LRU) for 1905 Chicago tests.**



The TMM Co postmarks used a dial which had a permanent year. This required a new dial at the start of a new year. These are always distinguishable. Some are distinguished by minor changes in the fonts and location of the letters. Others have larger more obvious differences. The dial in 1906 continued to use ILLS. as the abbreviation for Illinois but the O in Chicago is now tall and narrow compared to the rounded O used in 1905.

Return, if not called for in FIVE days.

"OLD AND TRIED"

*Glens Falls*  
Insurance Co.

WESTERN DEPARTMENT

208 and 210 La Salle St., CHICAGO, ILL.

J. L. WHITLOCK, Manager.



*C. E. Wolfenden*

*Honewoc  
Wis.*



THE SPACE ABOVE IS RESERVED FOR POSTMARK.

POSTAL CARD.

THE SPACE BELOW IS FOR THE ADDRESS ONLY.



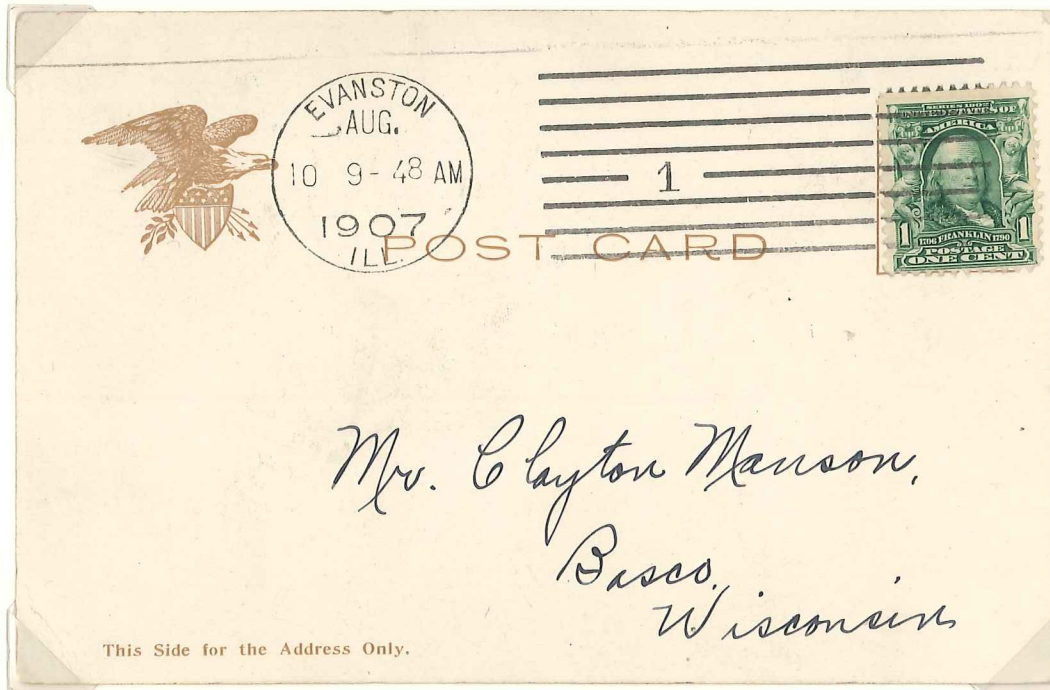
*Braud Brewing Co.  
1251 Elston Ave  
City*

Pair of test postmarks using the same dials. Examples from this final test are known from May 11 through June 14.

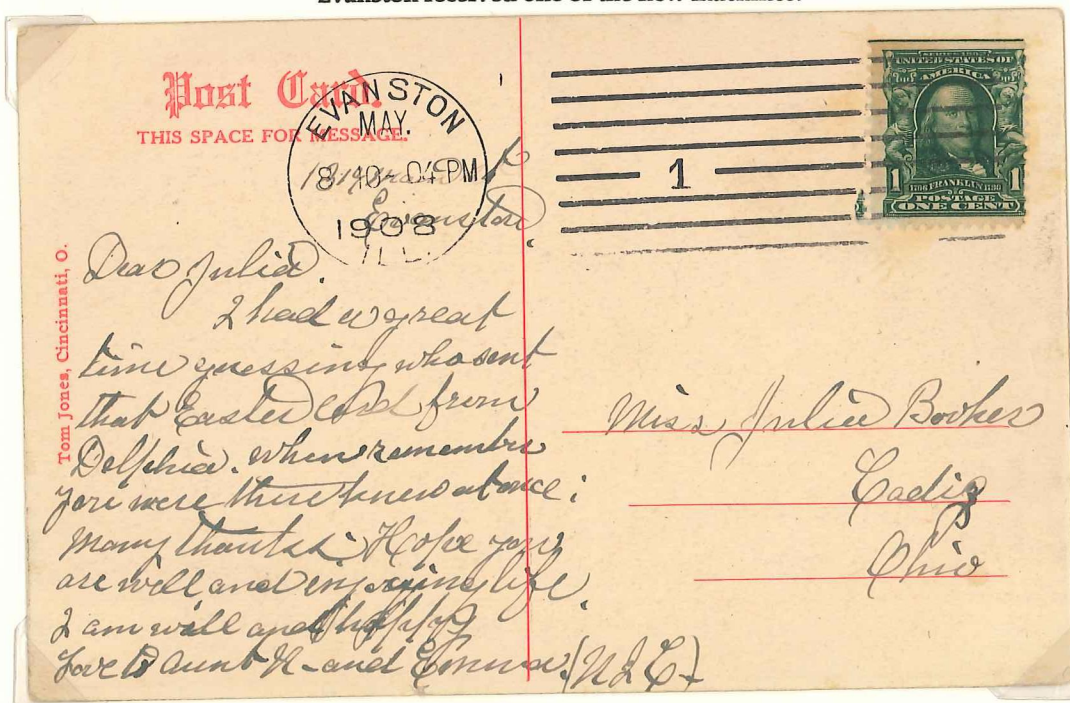


The 1905 and 1906 tests led to a lease machines beginning July 1, 1906. Six machines were supplied under this contract. These used the A postmark with a 102 type killer (which was a 101 type modified with the die space moved to the left a little). The die space could be used for either a machine number or service letter.

Service marks were inserted in the postmark to specify where mail originated. Four service markings were use, C, D, R and T: C for "Collected at outlying mailboxes", D for "Deposited at Post Office", R for "Received" and T for "Transit". These were often not changed properly, e.g. R used in an originating postmark.



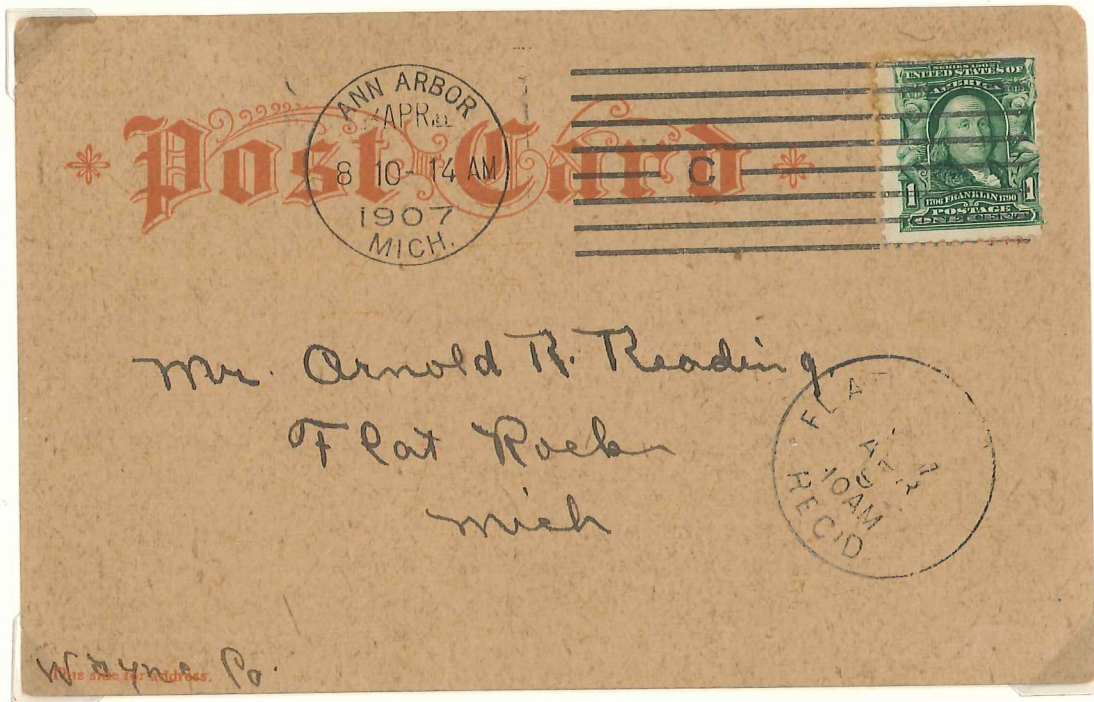
Evanston received one of the new machines.



The machine was used in Evanston for several years.

Note the dial change from 1907 to 1908 noticeable in the larger font for EVANSTON.

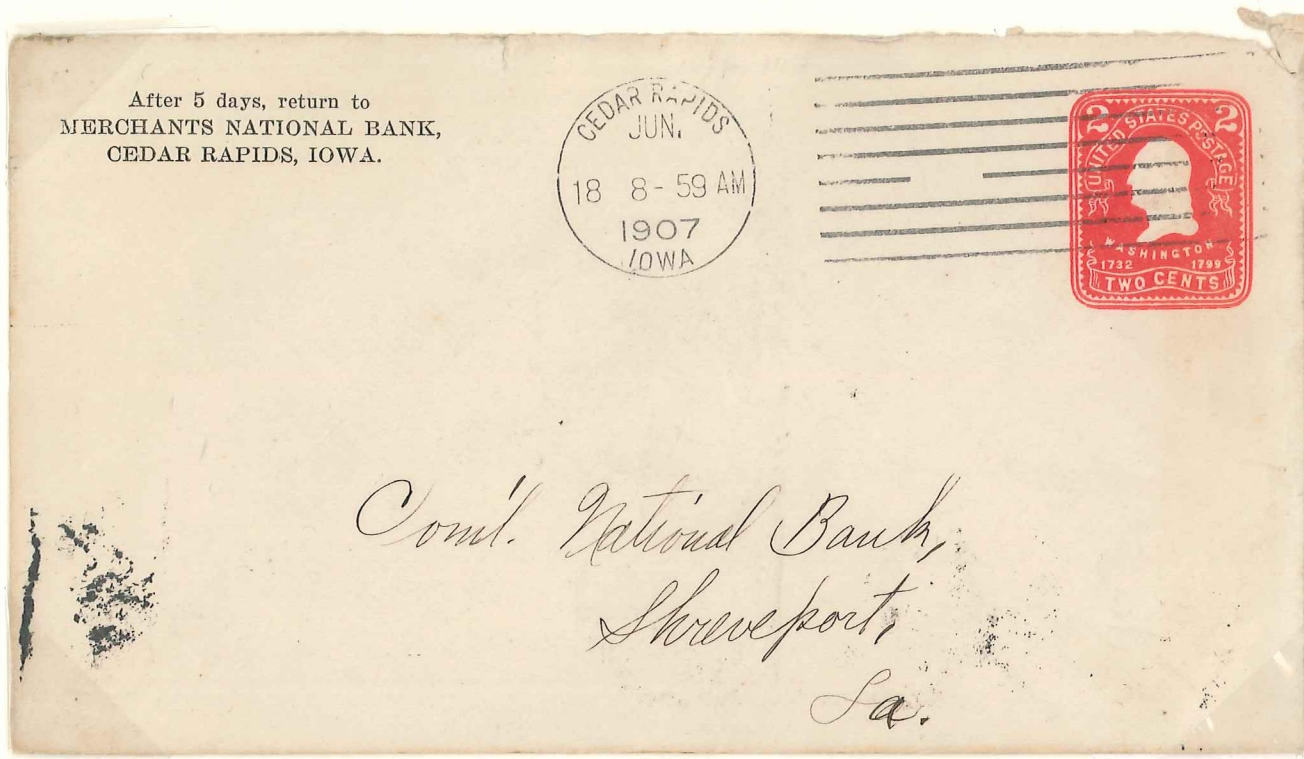




Ann Arbor received a machine the first year using a service letter in the die space.



The day and time line of the dial could be removed and used to cancel printed matter which did not require even a date of mailing.  
The 1 cent stationery paid the printed matter contract rate to Germany.

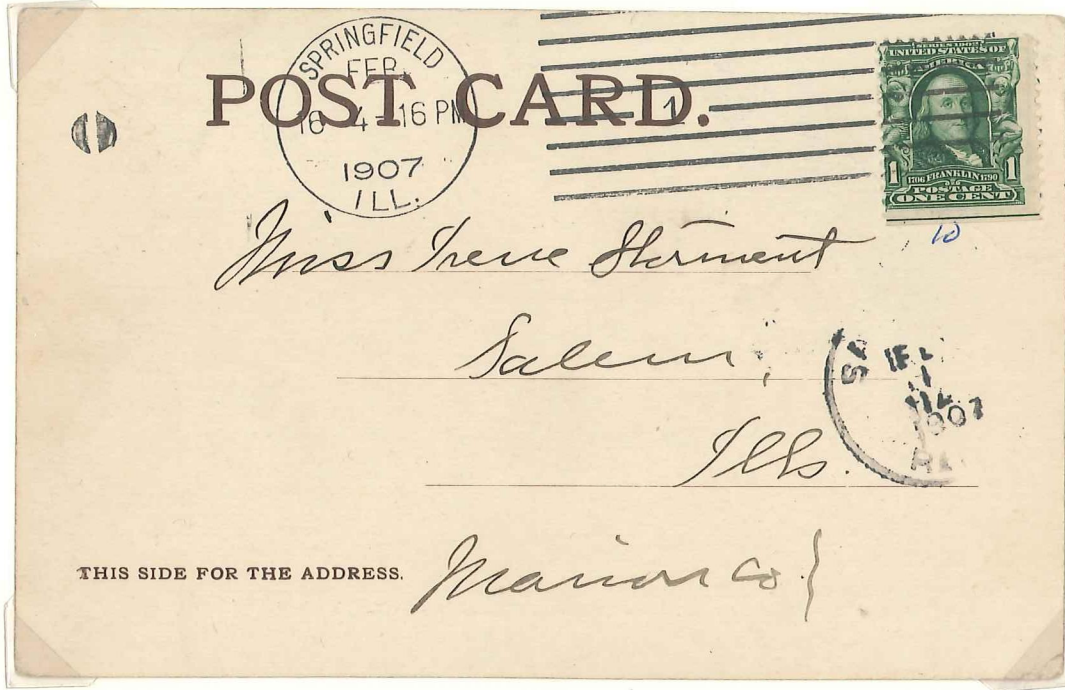


Cedar Rapids received one of the early machines. Initially used with a blank diespace.

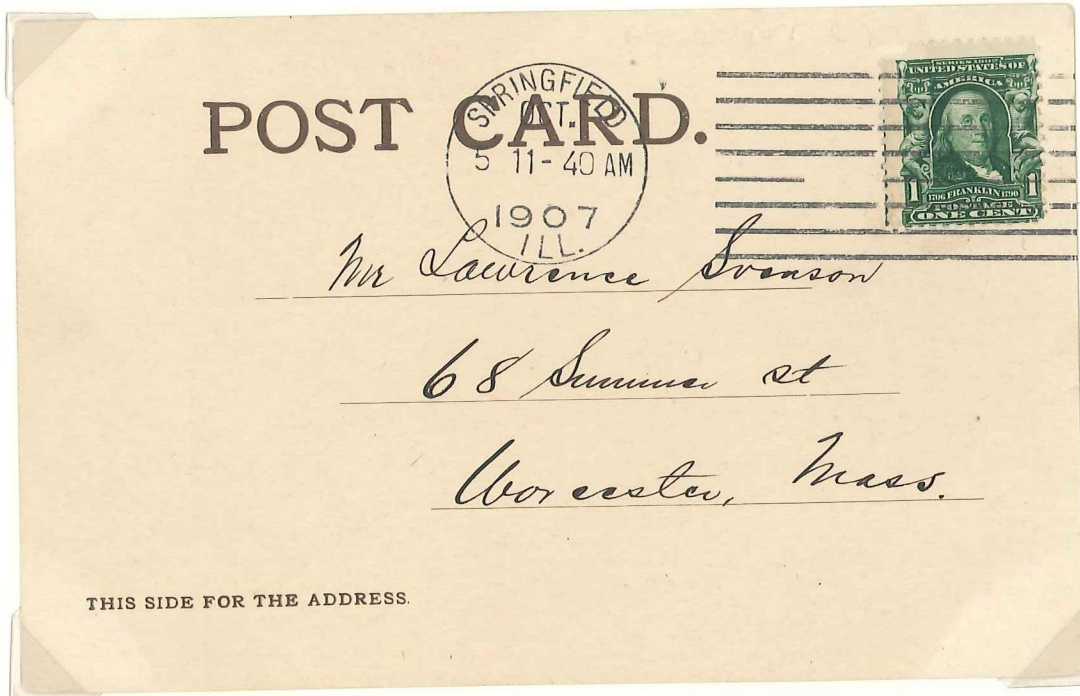


Later it was used with machine #1 in the diespace.  
There never was a machine #2.

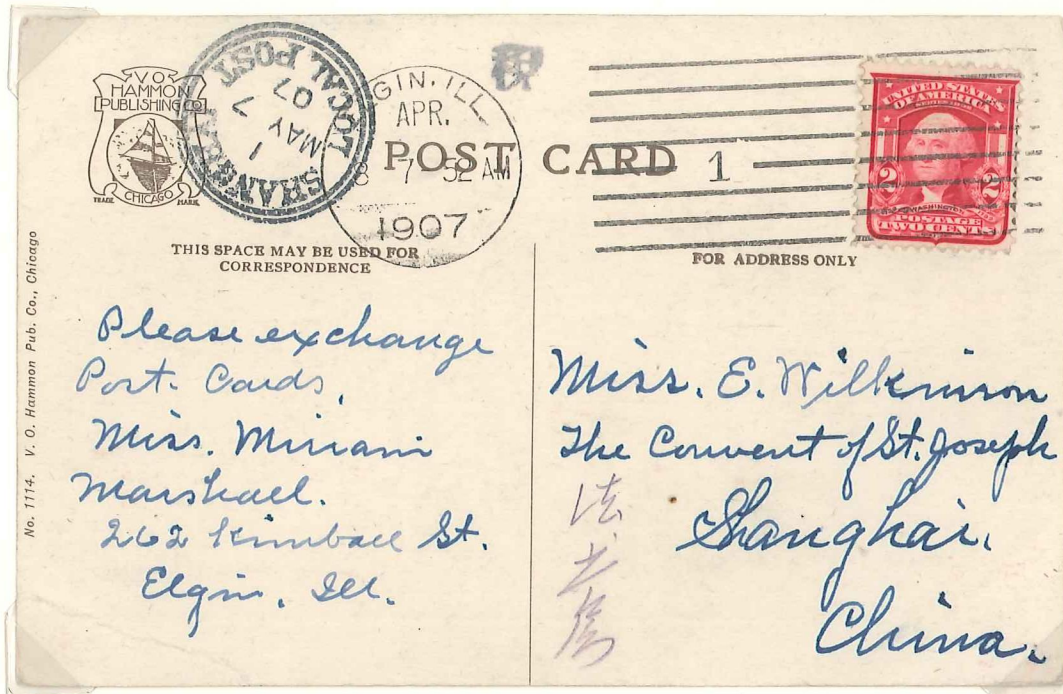




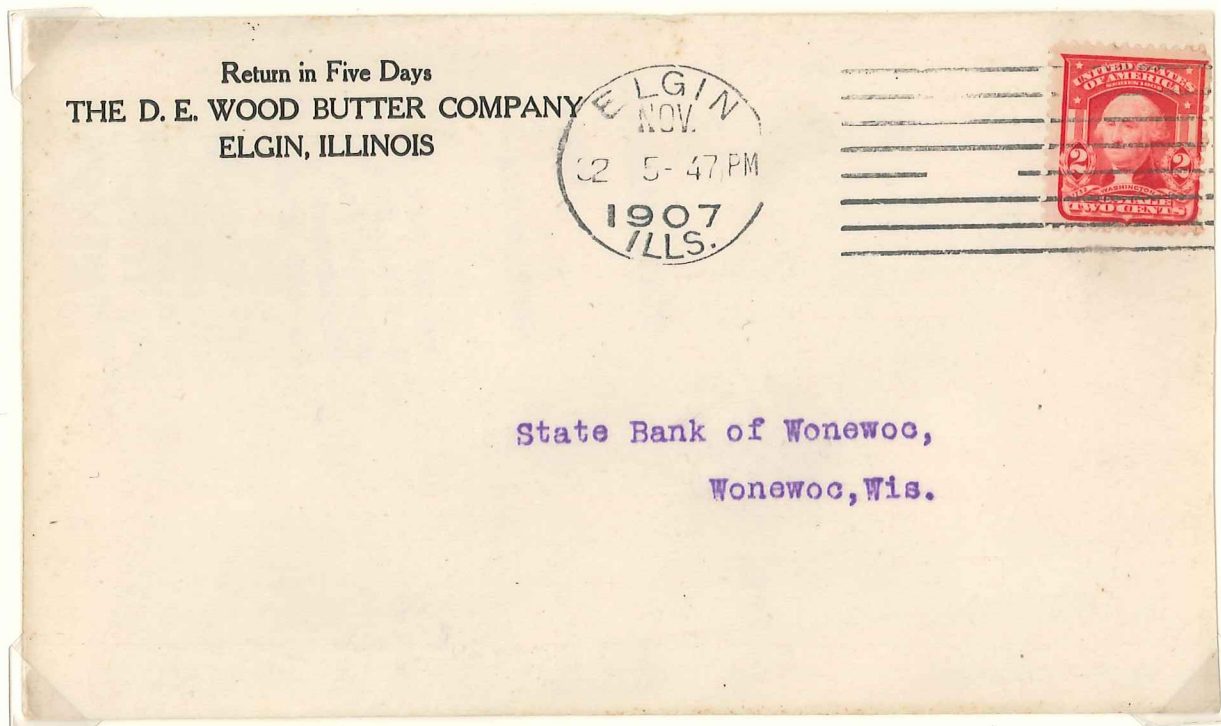
Springfield, IL also received one of the first 6 machines. Note the impression of a screwhead to the left of the dial as well as the inclusion of 1 in the killer diespace.



Later in 1907 the dial was changed as evidenced by the wider 1907. Also the 1 was removed from the diespace.

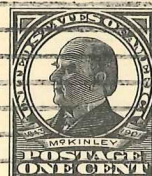
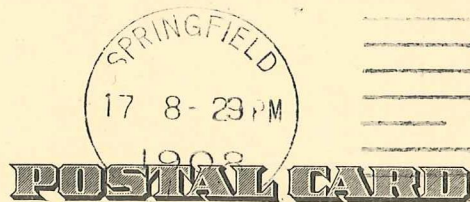
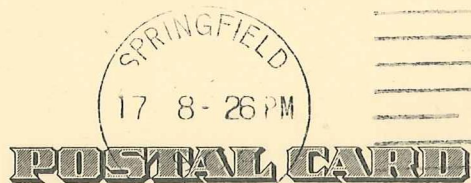


The first dial used at Elgin, IL had IL abbreviated at the top of the dial and a 1 in the killer die space.



Later in 1907 they used a dial with ILLS. at the bottom of the dial and the 1 removed from the killer leaving a blank diespace .

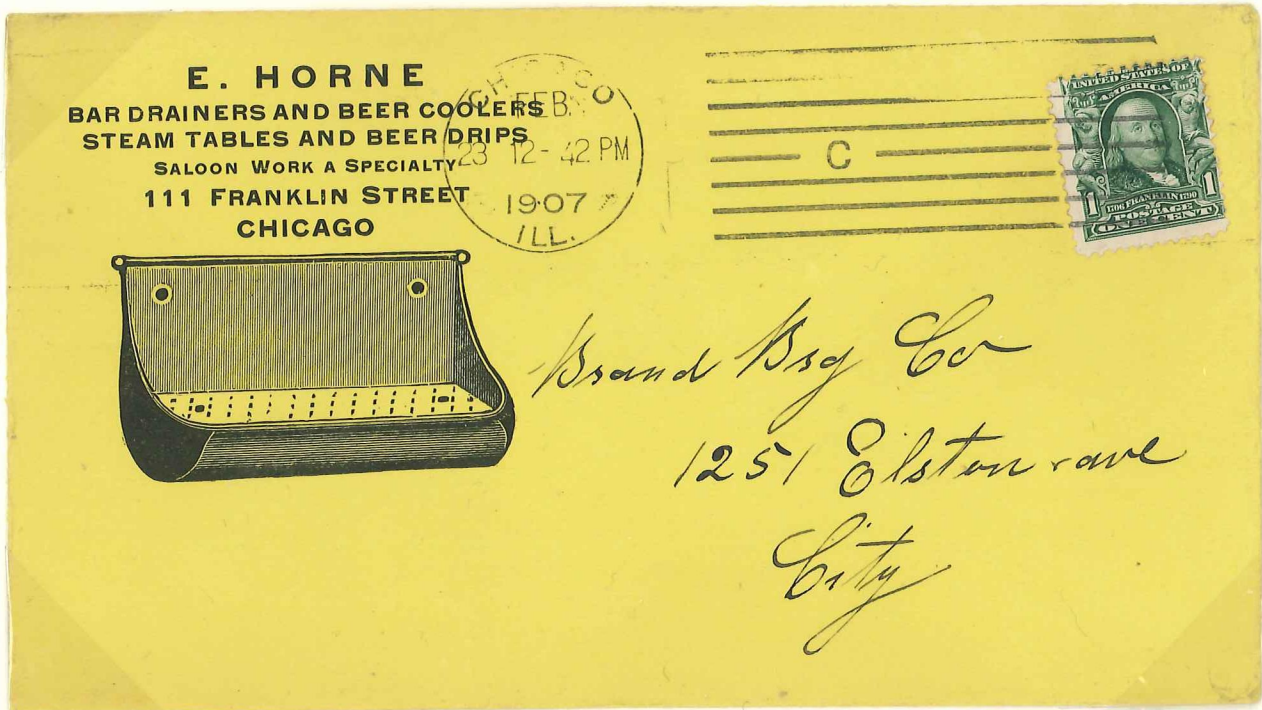




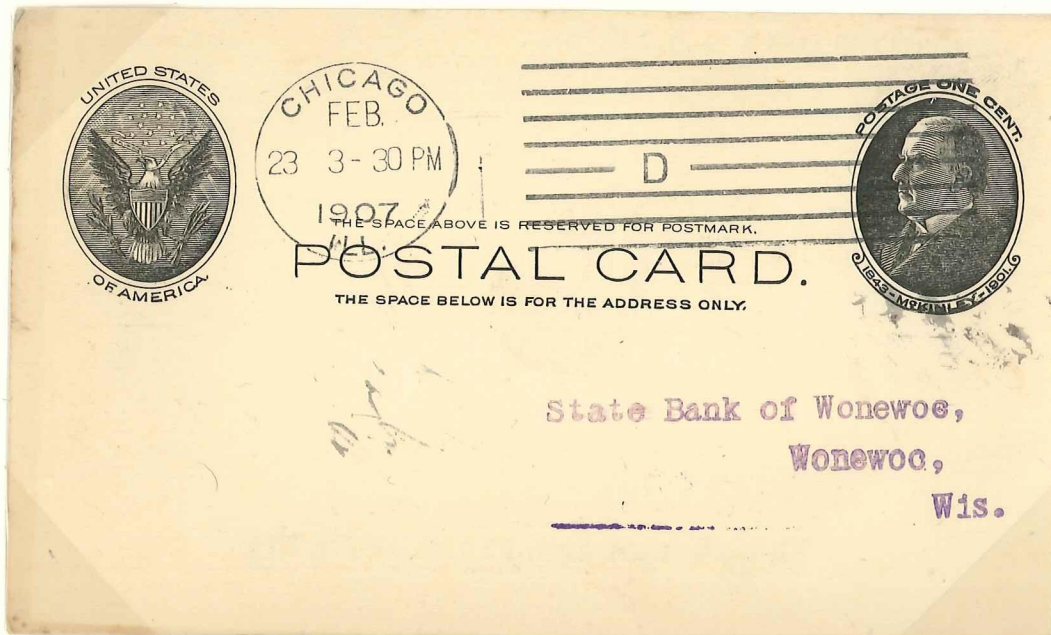
Virgil M. Brand,  
1251 Elston Ave.,  
Chicago, Ill.

A series of postal cards showing advancing minutes indicative of a working clock. The month slug was omitted for these postmarks but they are from the second dial used in 1908 in Springfield. This dial has a reported use from Aug. 20 through Oct. 2, 1908. The only 17 within that span is Sept. 17.

The final machine for the contract year ending June 30, 1907 was installed in Chicago.  
Additional Chicago machines would soon follow.



Note the working clock and 12:42 postmark time.



Canceled on the same date at 3:30 PM less than three hours later.  
The service letter has been changed to a D.

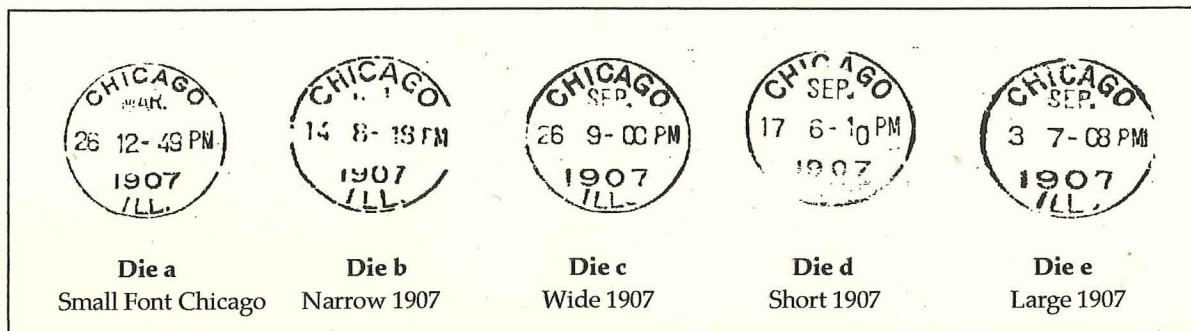


**Time Marking Machine Co.**

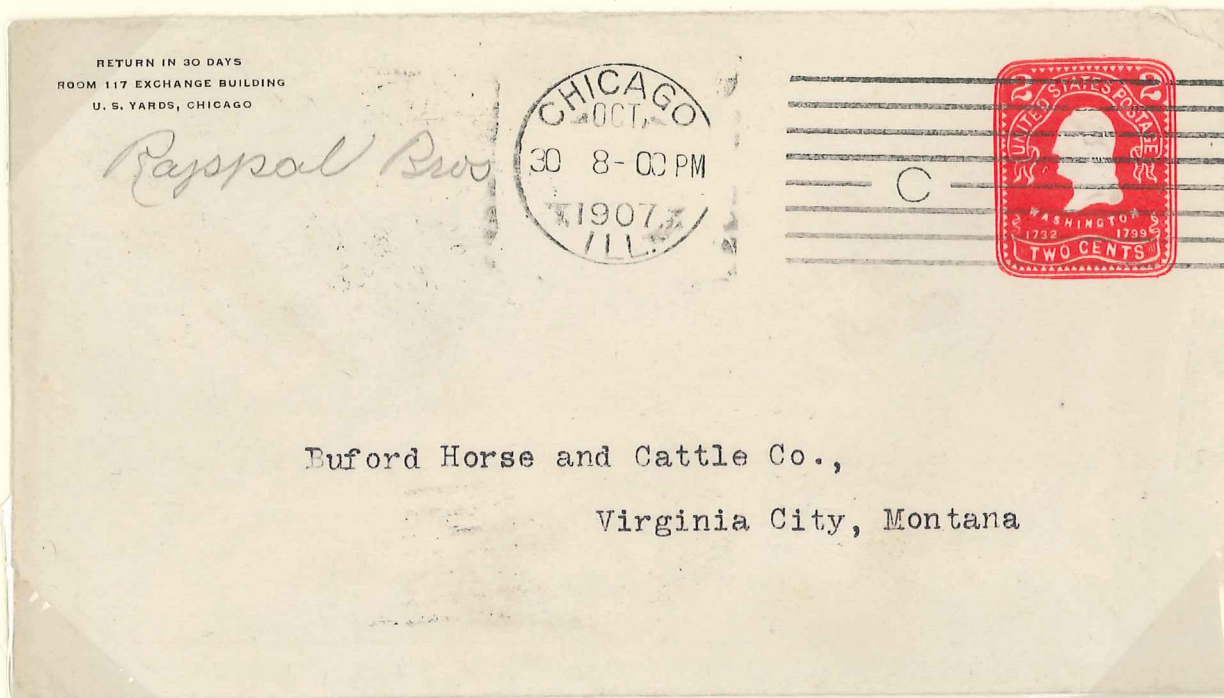
**Leased Machines – A Postmarks**

Business began picking up with the next contract year starting July 1, 1907. Additional machines were installed in Chicago. Five different dials were used in Chicago, commonly referred to by a letter designation, as shown in the following Table. At least three machines were required to cover these dates likely used.

Dial	ERU	LRU
a	2/11/1907	6/21/1907
b	7/24/1907	11/22/1907
c	9/11/1907	11/30/1907
d	9/17/1907	11/6/1907
e	8/31/1907	9/6/1907



*One way to differentiate these dials is to look closely at the way that the 1907 lines up with the ILL. In particular look at the angle of the upright portions of both L's and where they would intersect with 1907 if extended upwards.*



**It appears that first machine was fitted with a new dial in late July. This b dial has a narrow 1907. Note the very large circular 'C' service letter used with this dial.**

Time Marking Machine Co.

Leased Machines - A Postmarks

Two additional machines were used in Chicago starting in the fall of 1907.

RETURN IN 5 DAYS TO  
**ALWART BROS. COAL CO.**  
165 WEST WEBSTER AVE.,  
CHICAGO.



Dial c  
Wide 1907



V. Brand Brewing Co.,

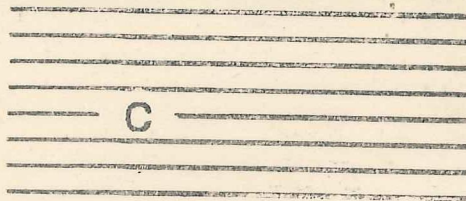
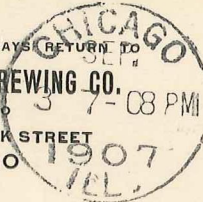


Dial d  
Small 1907

THE SPACE ABOVE IS RESERVED FOR POSTMARK.  
**POSTAL CARD.**  
THE SPACE BELOW IS FOR THE ADDRESS ONLY.

Brand Brg. Co.,

IF NOT DELIVERED IN 5 DAYS RETURN TO  
**UNITED STATES BREWING CO.**  
OF CHICAGO  
686-706 SEDGWICK STREET  
CHICAGO

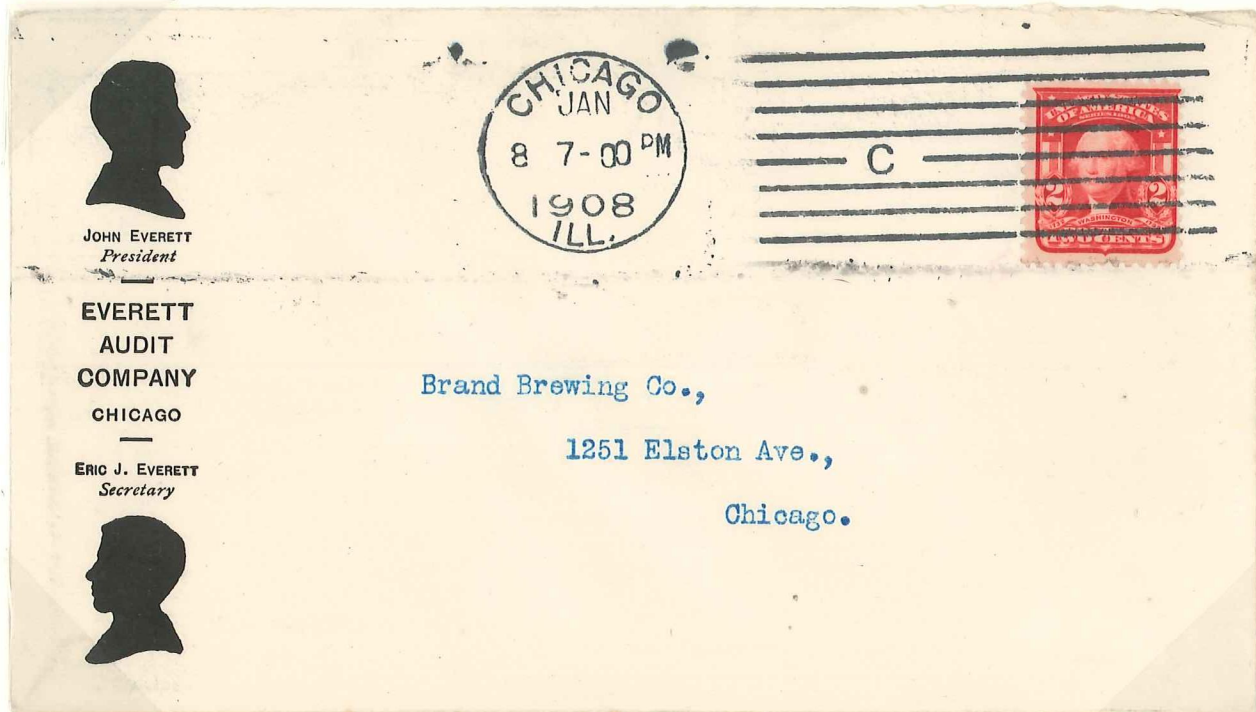


Dial e  
Large 1907

*J. M. Brand  
1251 Elston Ave  
Chicago*

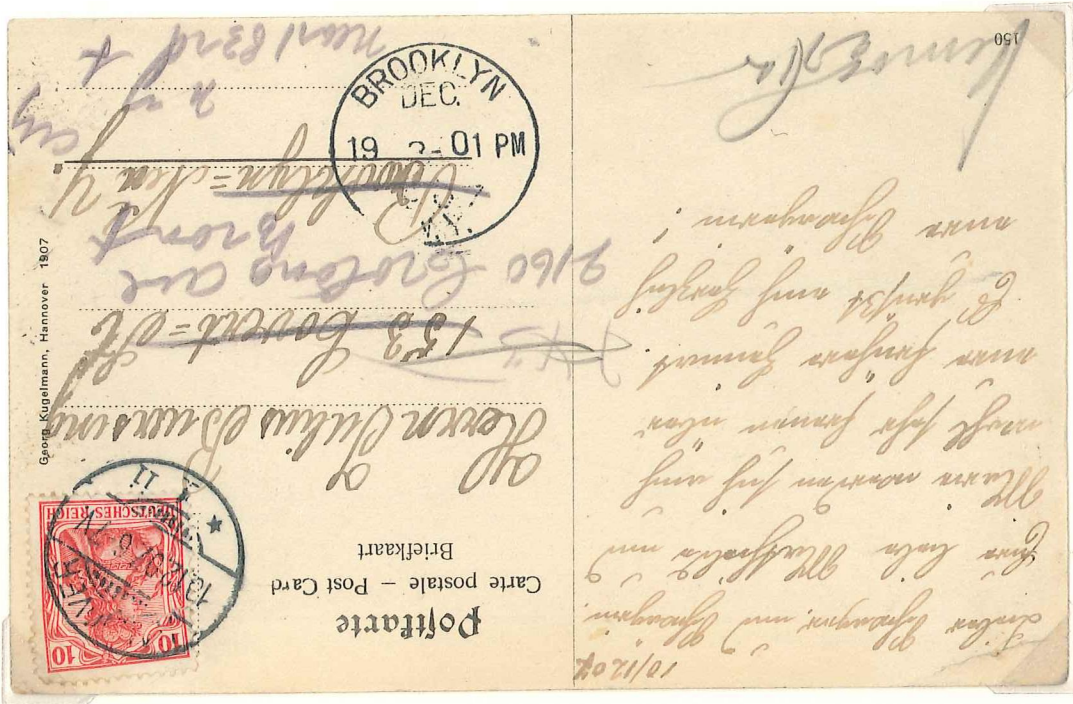
The 'e' dial was actually known used before the 'c' and 'd' dials it was probably discovered after the designations had already been made for the other machines. Because of its short use period it is likely that it is from a test.





The A-102 type postmarks appear for one day in January of 1908.

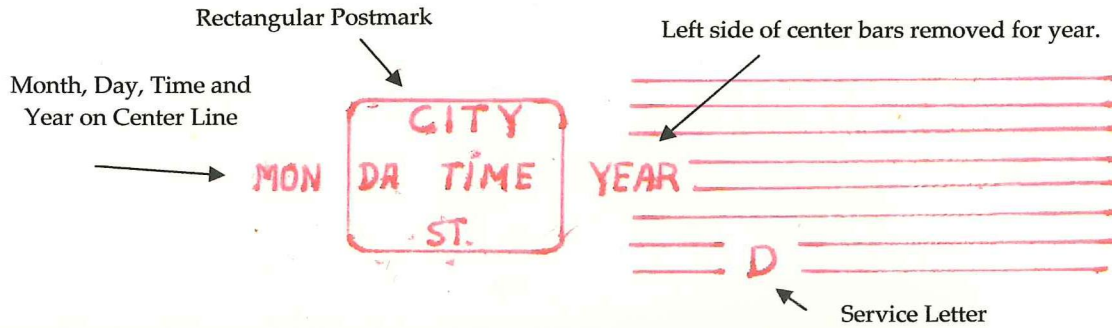
*Because of the scarcity of examples and the fact that both reported examples are from the same date, it is likely from a test.*



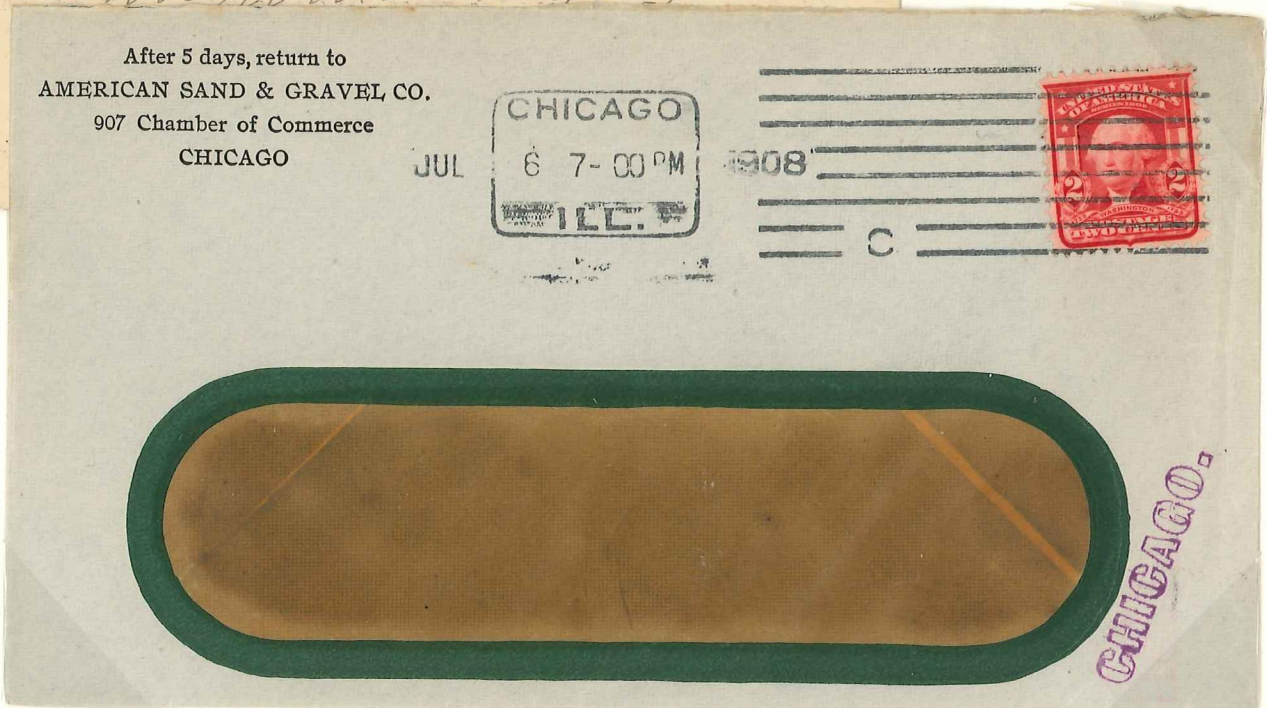
Brooklyn, NY also received one of the early machines but is not known to have used it to cancel mail. Rather it was used to impress a dial only receiving mark in 1907 and 1908 on incoming mail.



In late 1907 the TMM Co introduced a machine which impressed rectangular postmarks having the month and year outside the rectangle. This external month and year would be a feature of later TMM and BFC postmarks. With a removable year in the killer bars the dials did not need to be replaced at the beginning of a new year. These postmarks are identified as B postmarks and were always used with a 111 killer. Five different rectangular dies are known to have been used in Chicago.

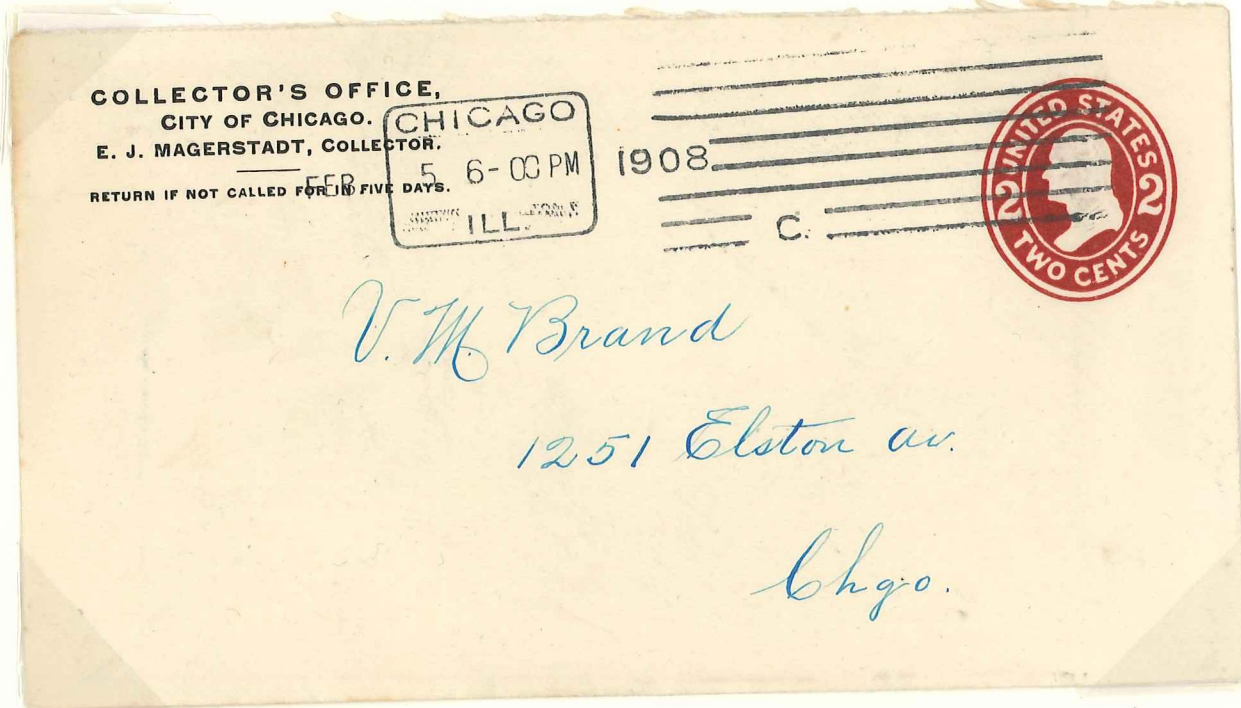


Die	ERU	LRU
a	11/27/1907	2/4/1908
a	7/1/1908	7/15/1908
b	2/26/1908	6/30/1908
c	2/5/1908	6/26/1908
d	3/10/1908	6/19/1908
e	7/1/1908	7/15/1908



The a die variety had a very long leg on the second L in ILL.  
 Introduced on Nov. 27, 1907, it was used until Feb. 4, 1908.  
 After a brief absence this die was re-used from July 1, through July 9, 1908.





The b die had flattened oval letters in Chicago. Used from Feb. 26, 1908 until June 30, 1908.



The c die with had a narrow ILL along with round lettering in CHICAGO.



Room 1021, Schiffer Building,  
CHICAGO, ILL.

CHICAGO  
APR 20 7-00 PM  
ILL.

1908



Mr. Virgil M. Brand,

Elston Ave. and Snow St.,

Care of Brand Brewing Co.

Chicago.

The d die has a very upright O in Chicago. The upright of the first L in ILL., if extended, would bisect the second C in Chicago.

CHICAGO  
JUL 8 5-30 PM  
ILL.

1908



COLUMBIA CONSERVE Co.  
INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

CHICAGO  
JUL 9 8-00 PM  
ILL.

1908



*Miss Gussie Patterson,  
#2332 Central Ave.,  
Indianapolis  
Ind.*

*Not #1*

The e die introduced is distinguishable based on shape and spacing of letters in CHICAGO and width of ILL.  
The last die was also only used in July 1908 and postmarks occasionally had with a serifed 1 in 1908.

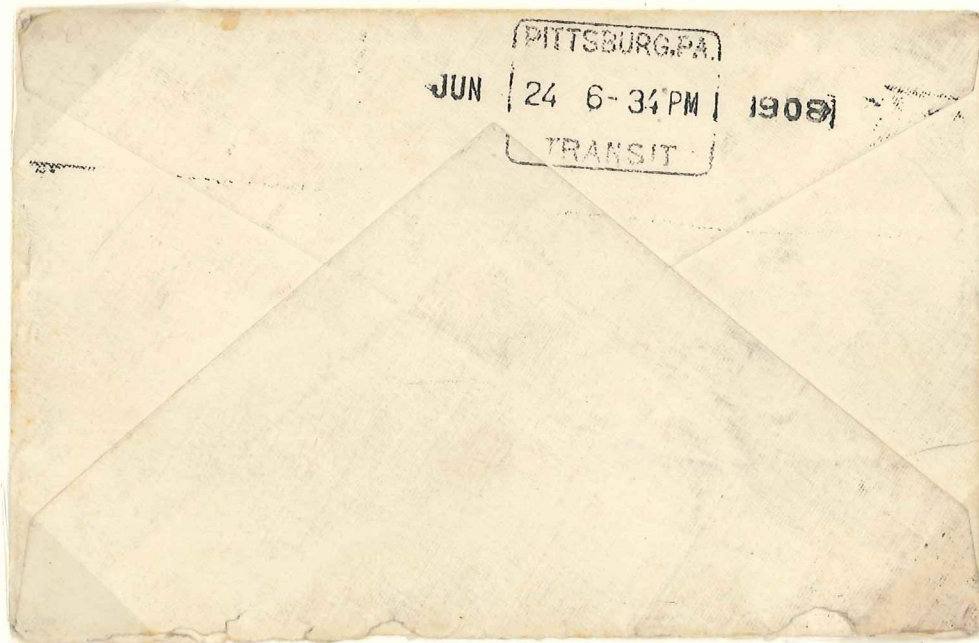
## Time Marking Machine Co.

## Leased Machines – B Postmarks

A machine impressing a rectangular TRANSIT postmark without killer was used in Pittsburg, PA, the only city known to have used a TMM Co transit postmark. They must have felt these transit markings important since they ultimately used three different TMM Co. transit markings.



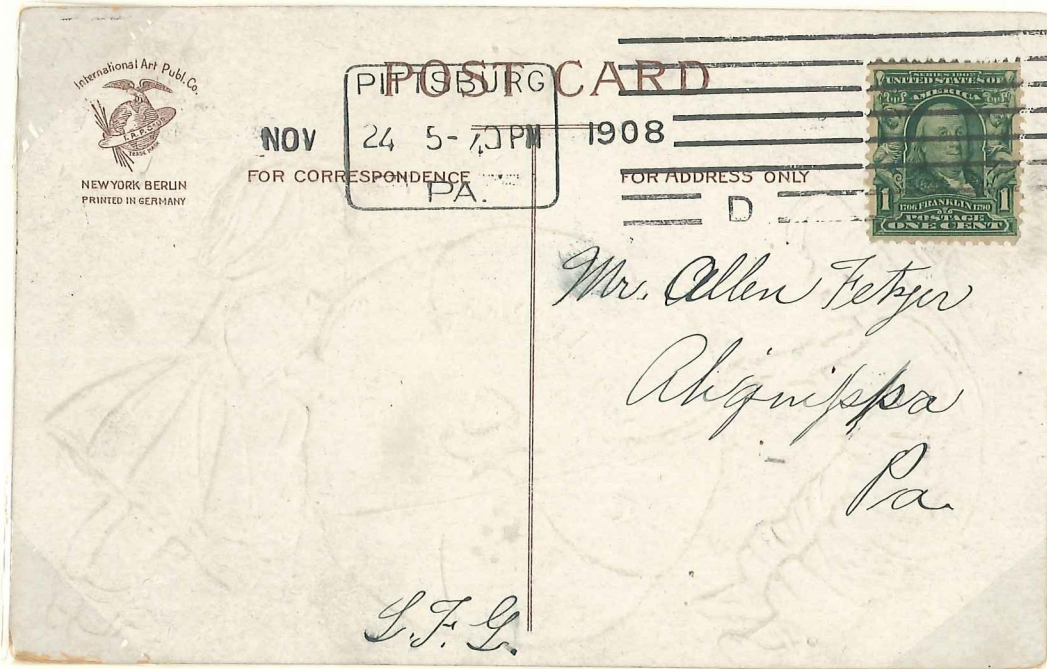
Scan of front (reduced 70%)



Transit postmark on cover mailed in Parkersburg, WV to Toronto, Canada.

Note that the top line reads Pittsburgh, PA.





A B-111 postmark was used very briefly in Pittsburgh. This is not the same postmark die as was used for the transit which was introduced over a year earlier. Only two copies are known both from the same date. It is likely that one of the B machines was moved to Pittsburg from Chicago.

*Note that the top of the dial reads Pittsburg with Pa at the base of the rectangle.*

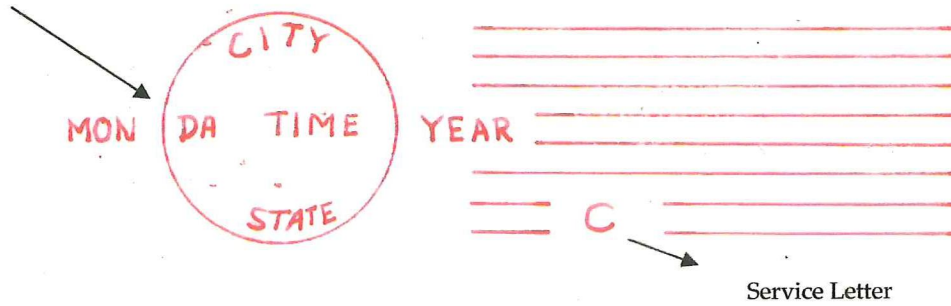
**Time Marking Machine Co.**

**Leased Machines - C Postmarks**

The Chicago rectangular postmarks were replaced with a new postmark starting with the USPOD contract which began on July 1, 1908. These continued with the month and year being located outside of the dial. The machine number was inserted in to the dial above the state. Chicago initially used a dial designated as a Ca which contained a machine number above the state at the bottom of the dial. The Chicago machines are not known with a working clock.

*This killer design was the first of a variety of related killers having the center bars indented for the year. The bottom two bars contained a displace for the service letter. This killer design is referred to as a 111, also used with the rectangular postmarks..*

Month, Day, Time and Year on same line



Ca-111, Machine #1





310 TRADERS BUILDING  
CHICAGO

CHICAGO  
SEP 14 5-30 PM  
2  
ILL.

1908  
C

RETURN IN 6 DAYS TO  
VILAS BROTHERS  
PAINTS, OILS AND VARNISHES  
227-229 FIFTH AVENUE  
CHICAGO

CHICAGO  
AUG 17 4-30 PM  
3  
ILL.

1908  
C

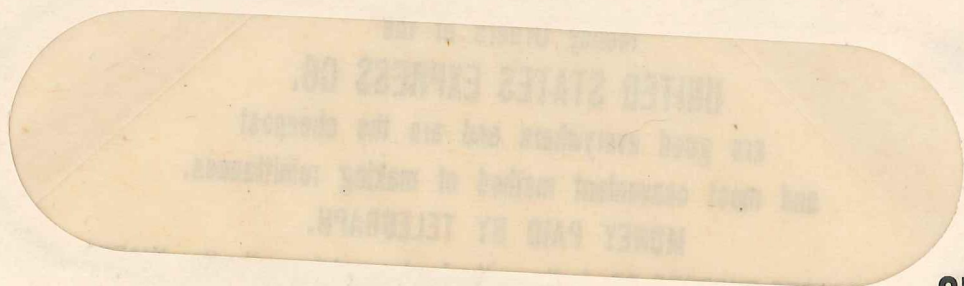
You can pay this bill at  
any Office of The  
United States Express Co.  
MAIN OFFICE:  
87, 89 & 91 Washington Street.

CHICAGO  
AUG 13 5-00 PM  
4  
ILL.

1908  
C

Return to WM. J. McCourt,  
Superintendent of Water.

OWNER OR OCCUPANT.



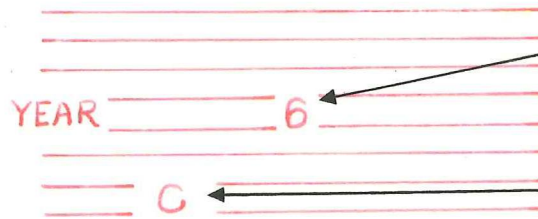
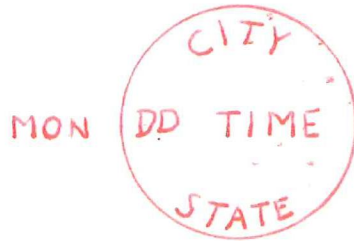
CHICAGO

Time Marking Machine Co.

Leased Machines - C Postmarks

This 111 killer was modified by inserting a space in the center of the two center bars for the machine number which was removed from the dial. The bottom two bars still contained a diespace for the service letter. This killer design is referred to as a 112. Fourteen machines impressing this postmark were used in Chicago and 7 in other cities.

C-112



Machine Number

Service Mark

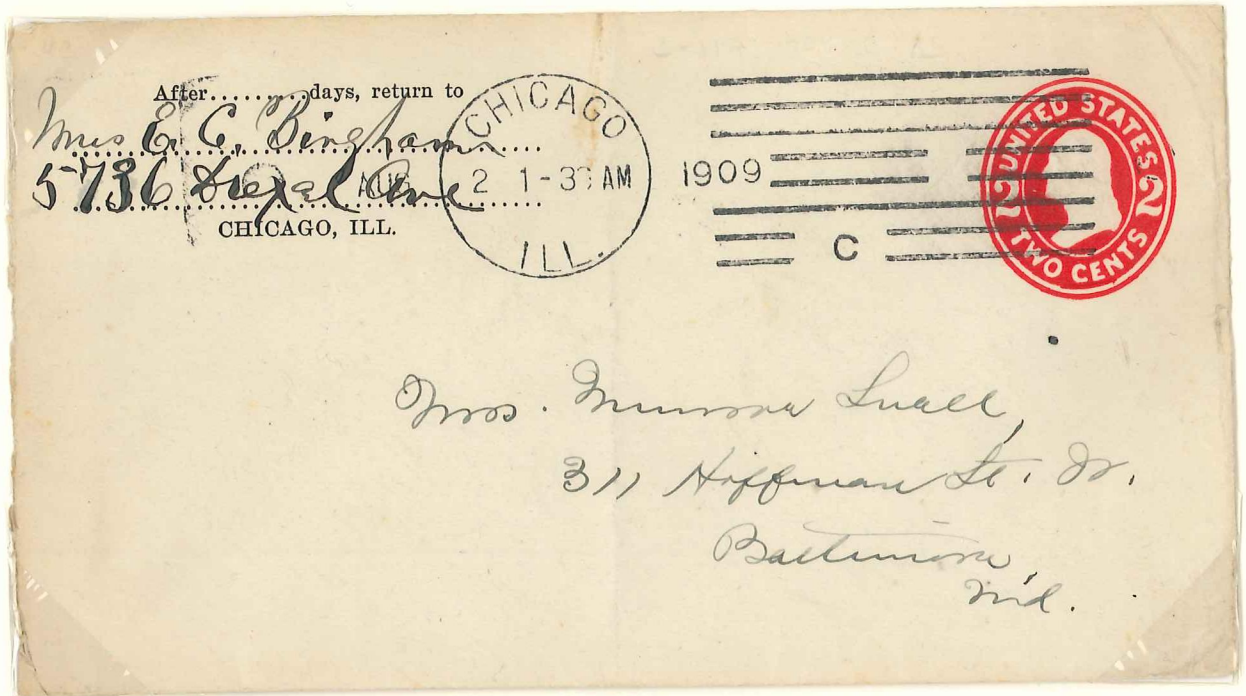
After 10 days, return to  
W. H. SALISBURY & CO.,  
166 & 168 Wabash Av.,  
CHICAGO, ILL.



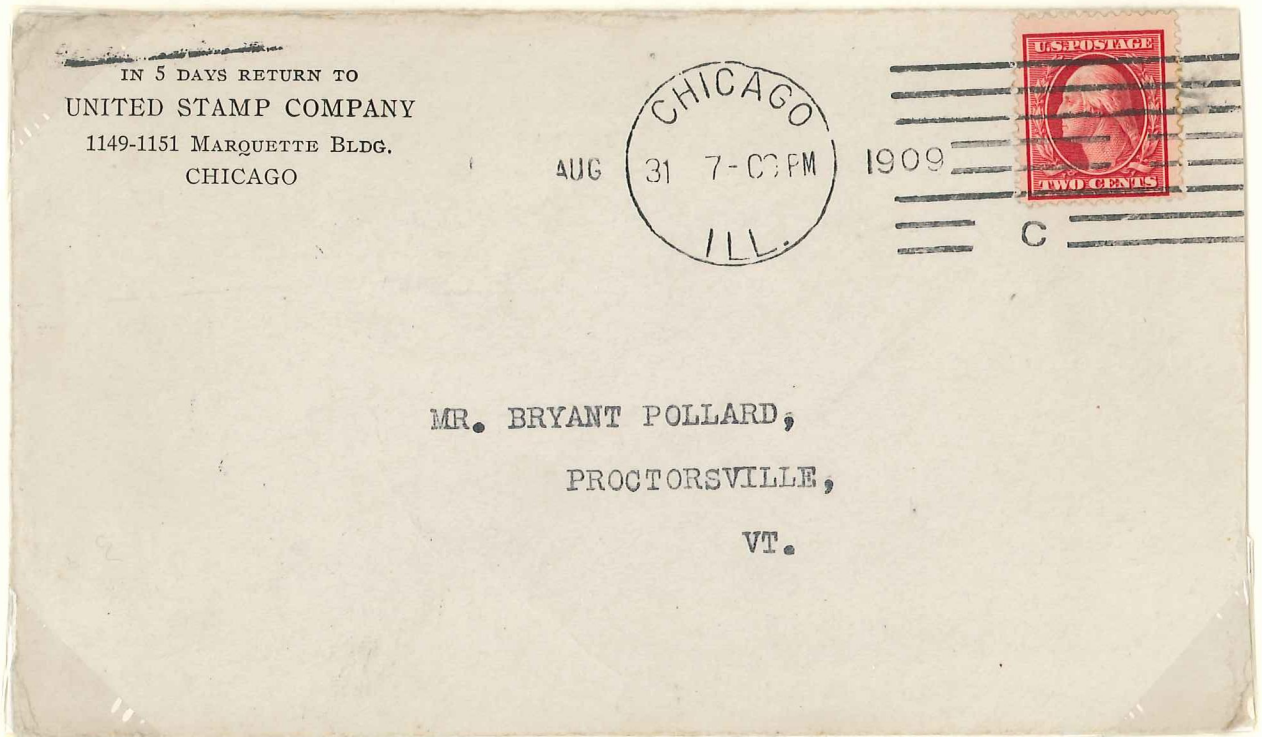
Virgil M. Brand,  
Elston Ave. & Snow St.  
City.



Circular Dial

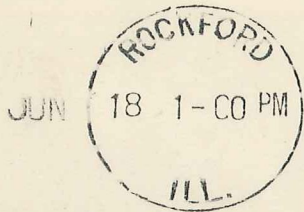


Dial Dented



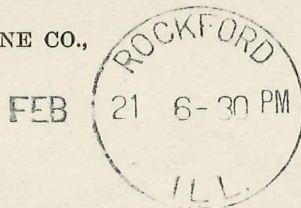
C-112 type postmarks are known from Chicago having a blank die space.  
 Early usages have an undamaged circular dial, later examples show a dent above the A in Chicago.

After 10 days, return to  
THE H. C. MARSH CO.,  
ROCKFORD, ILL.



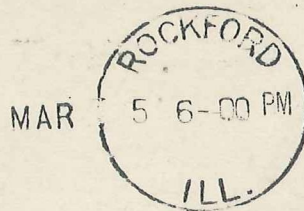
*Norton Company*

After 10 days, return to  
INGERSOLL MILLING MACHINE CO.,  
ROCKFORD, ILL.



Norton Co.

After five days, return to  
ROCKFORD BELTING CO.,  
ROCKFORD, ILL.

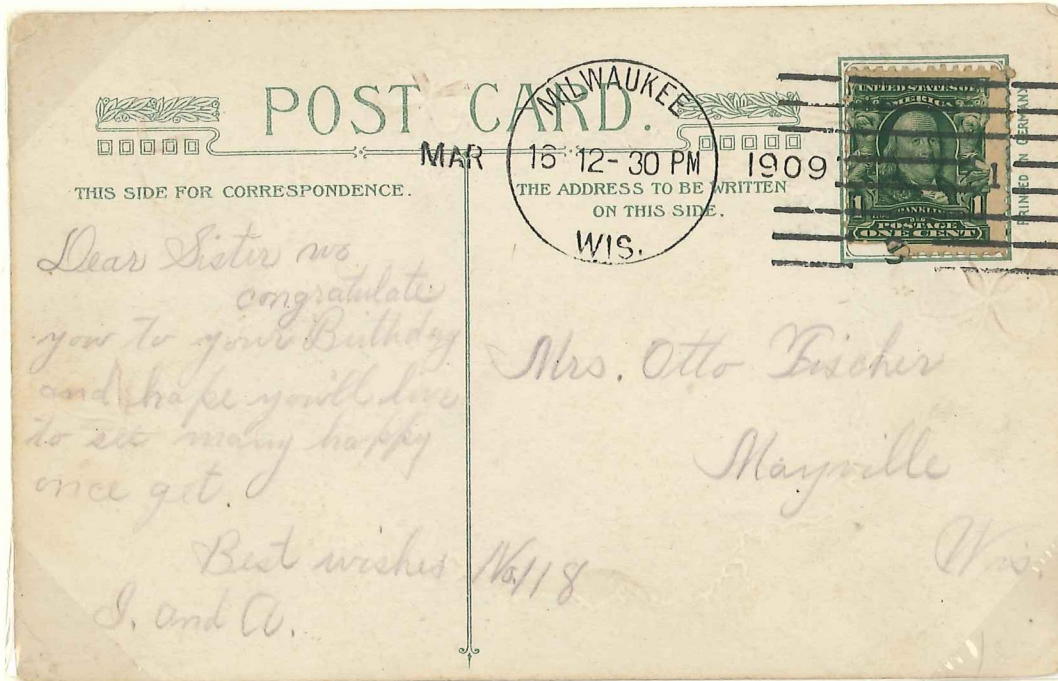


Brand Brewing Co.,  
2530 Elston Ave.  
Chicago  
Ill.

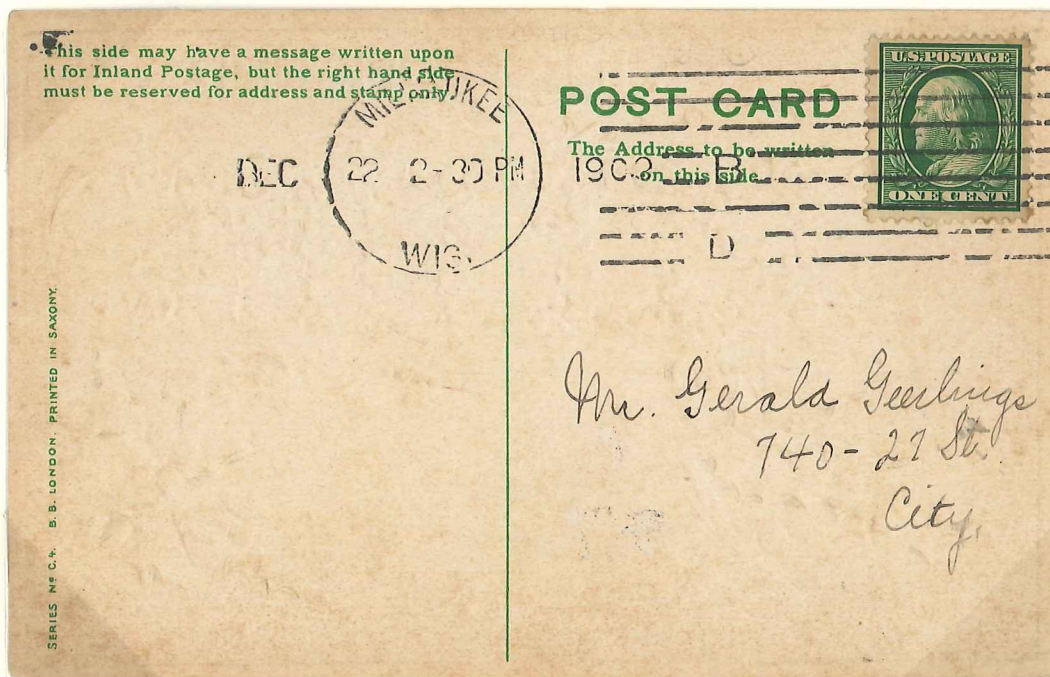
Rockford, IL also used a C-112 postmark on machine #1.  
Even though there was no need to change the dials with the new year they did use three different dials.  
From the known dates (shown below) b and c may have been changed on the new year.

Die	ERU	LRU
a	3/31/1909	11/27/1911
b	2/21/1912	11/14/1912
c	1/13/1913	3/19/1913

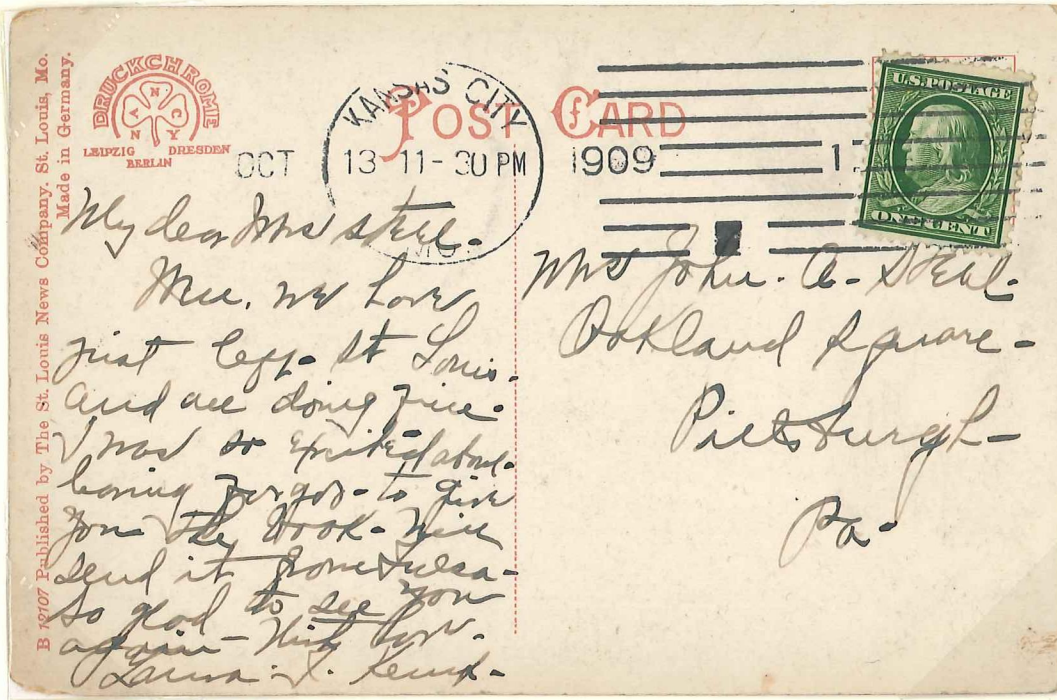




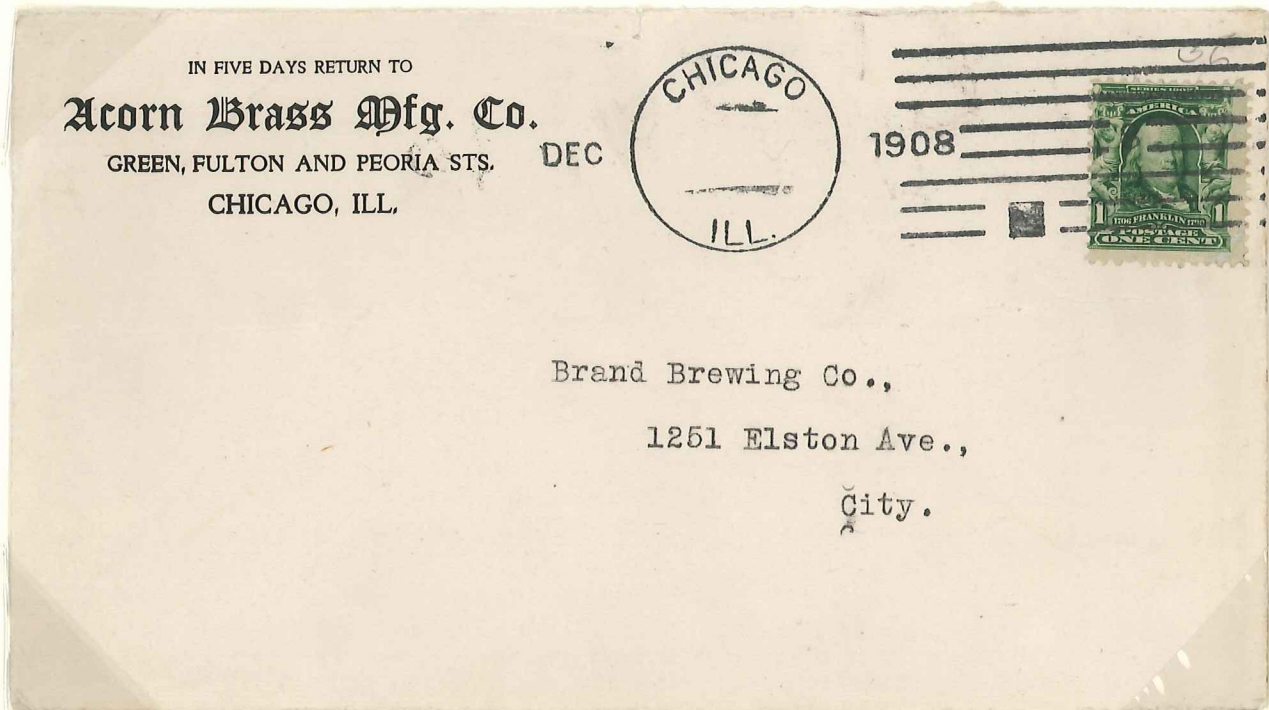
Milwaukee received a machine and initially used it with a 1 in the diespace. It is only known to have been used from April 12 to April 16, 1909.



The machine appears to have been moved to Station B designated by the B in the diespace and was used from late April 1909 into January 1910.



Kansas City used a machine with the service letter slug inserted the wrong way into the machine leaving the bottom of the slug impressing a solid rectangle.



Chicago's machine #8 was also used with a black square from the inverted service letter slug.

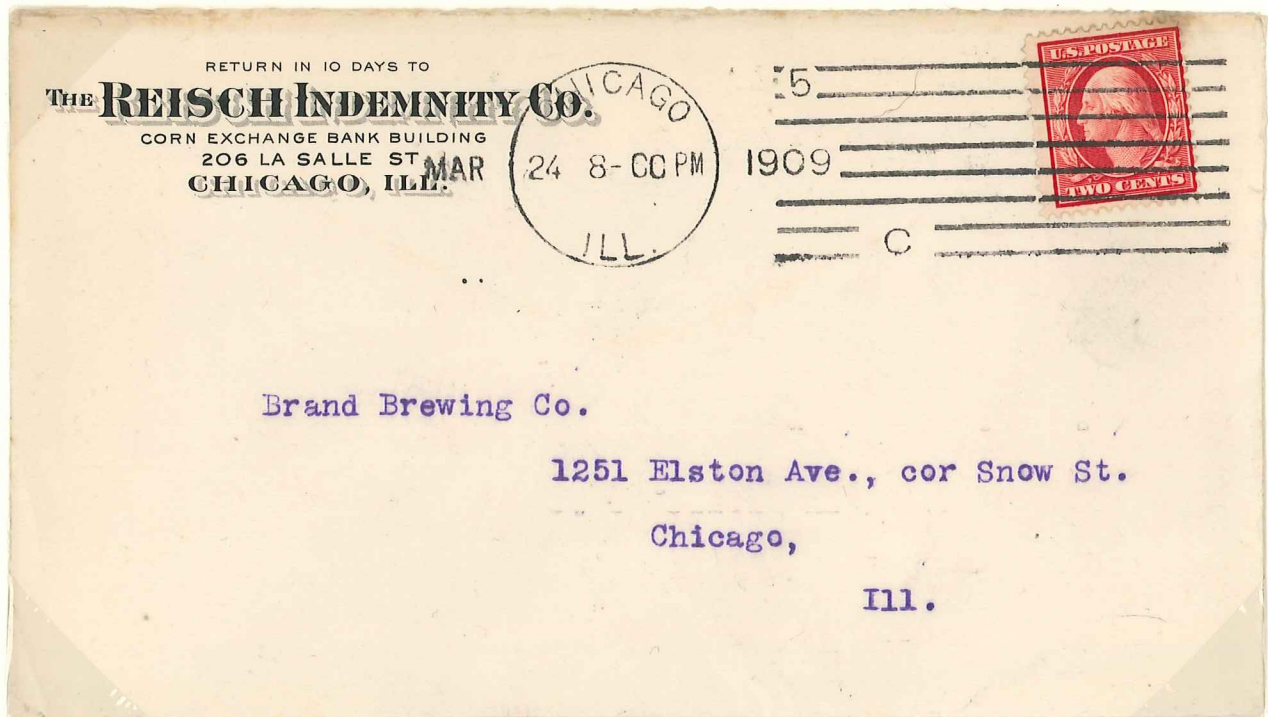
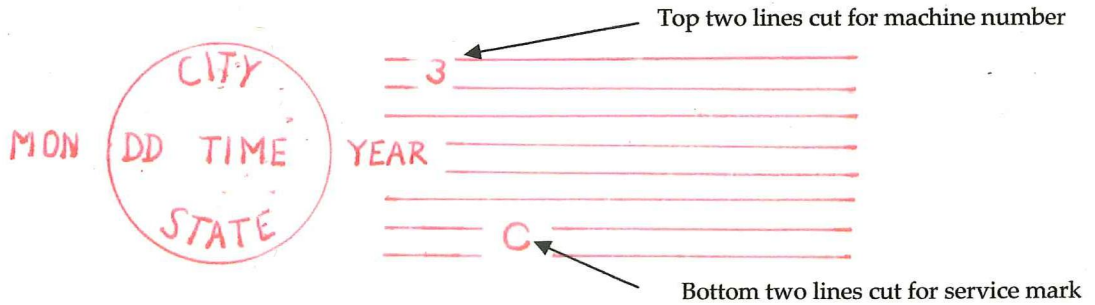


Time Marking Machine Co.

Leased Machines - C Postmarks

In March of 1909 a new style of postmark was introduced in Chicago. These had a diespace cut into the left side of the top two bars for the machine number. These postmarks, which continued to use the C dial, are classified as type C-113. This change may have been done to make the number more visible as it often printed on the stamp when located in the center of the killer bars. Chicago postmarks are known from machines numbered 1 through 20 along with single examples which have been reported from machines 21 and 23. This postmark was not used anywhere else.

C-113



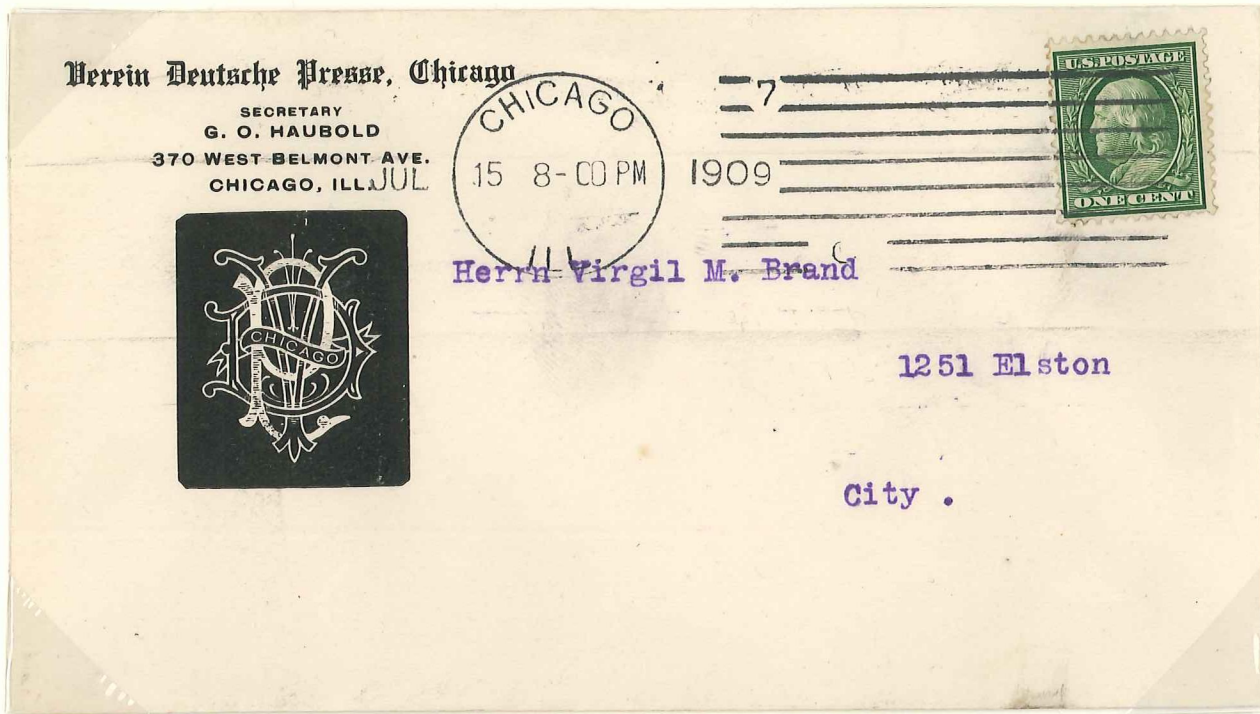
Earliest reported example of a C-113 postmark.

**Time Marking Machine Co.**

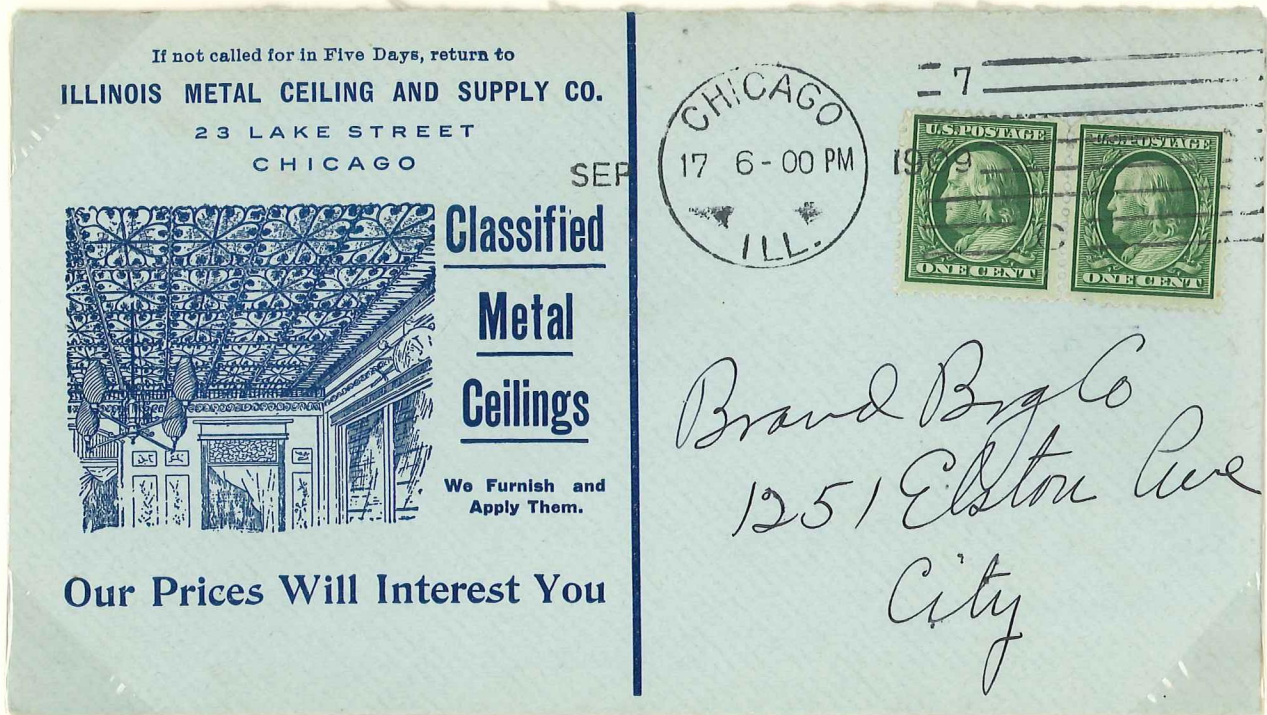
**Leased Machines C Postmarks**

The C dials were occasionally changed during the operation of a particular machine. In the examples below, the killer bars have also changed. This can be seen by the length of the top two bars to the left of the machine number which are longer on the top example. This probably was indicative of a totally new machine being installed in position 7 at the Chicago post office.

Distinct flag in G of Chicago



Rounded G in Chicago



These killers also differ by:

**Top Example**

**Bottom Example**

Number diespace  
 Length of Left portion of top 2 bars  
 7 Style  
 Bar length left of C service letter

tapers bars around the number  
 4.5 mm  
 wider and shorter  
 11.5 mm

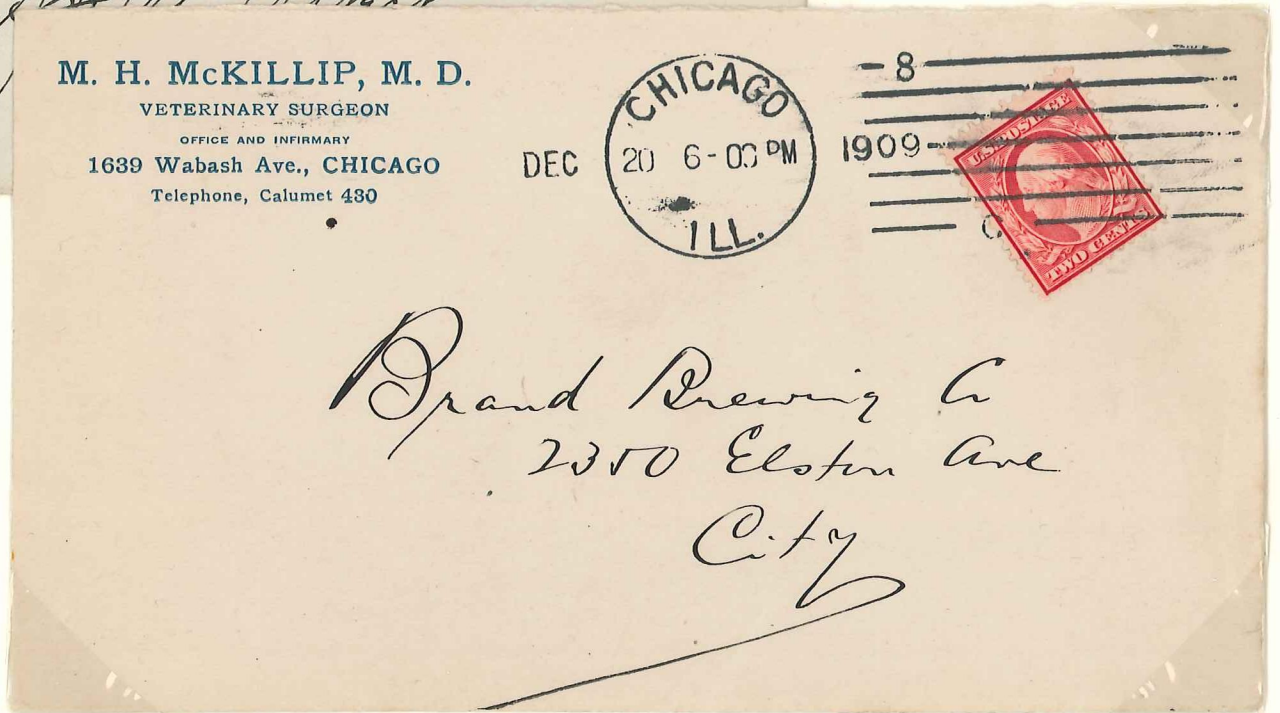
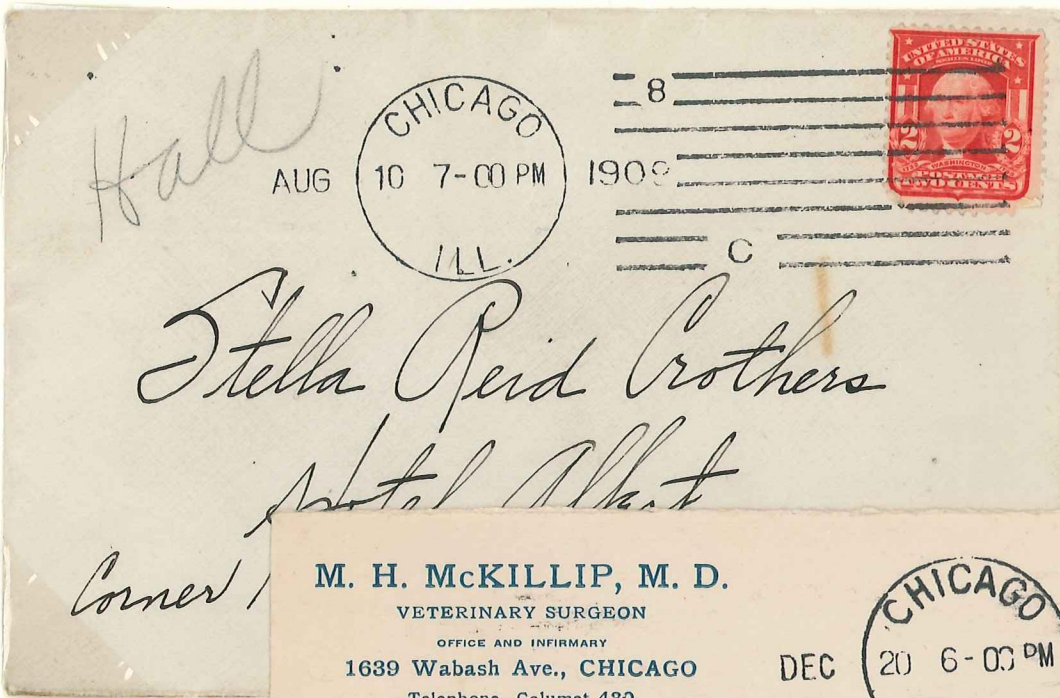
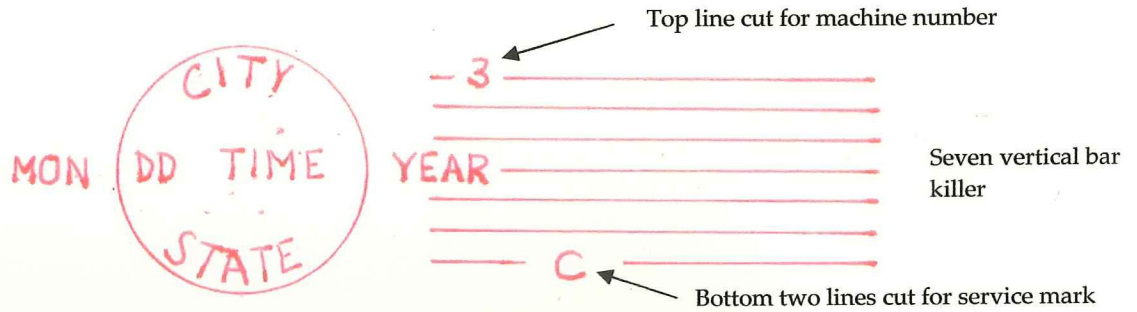
square bars around number  
 3 mm  
 taller and thinner.  
 13 mm.



Time Marking Machine Co.

Leased Machines – C Postmarks

The final killer used with the C postmarks had only the left portion of the top bar cut for the machine number. Twelve of the 25 numbered machines in Chicago used this postmark at one time. These postmarks are classified as C-114. As with the C-113 postmarks none are found in cities outside Chicago.

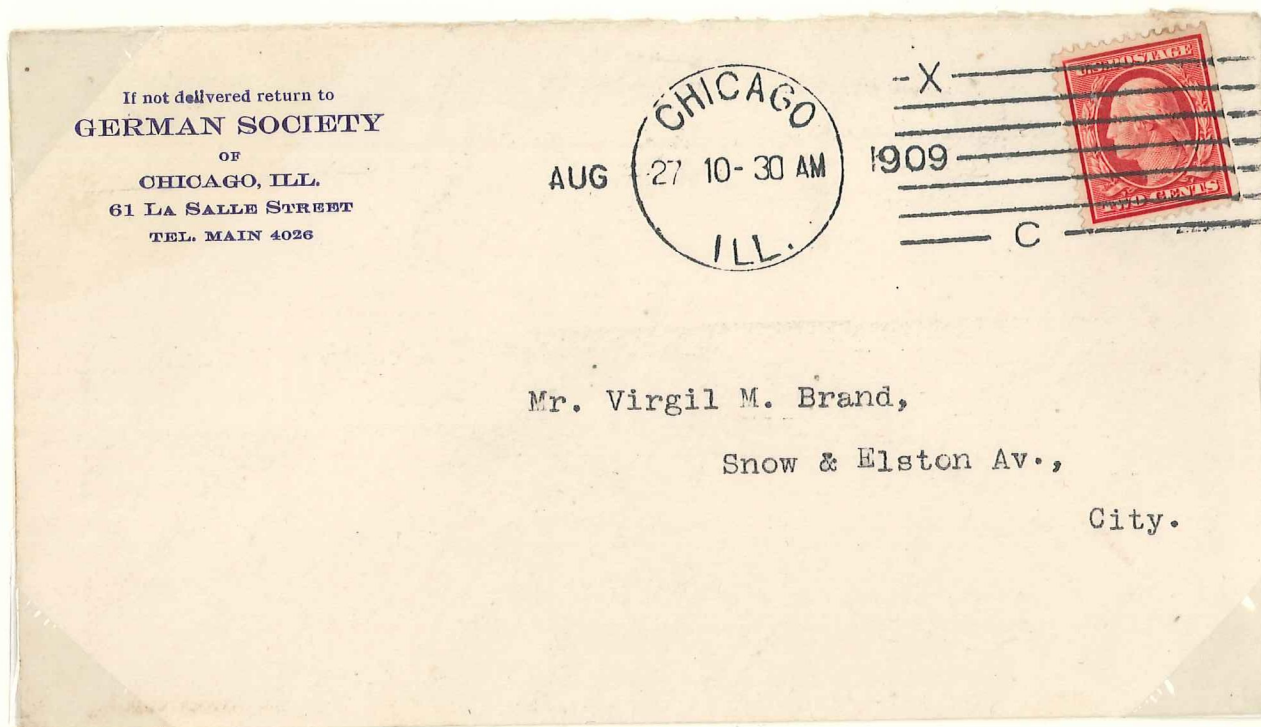


C-113 and C-114 from machine 8 from later in 1909. Note that the dial has also changed with the December example having larger letters in Chicago.

## Time Marking Machine Co.

## Leased Machines – C Postmarks

In addition to the 25 numbered machines and several with un-numbered machines, Chicago also used letters to designate machines.



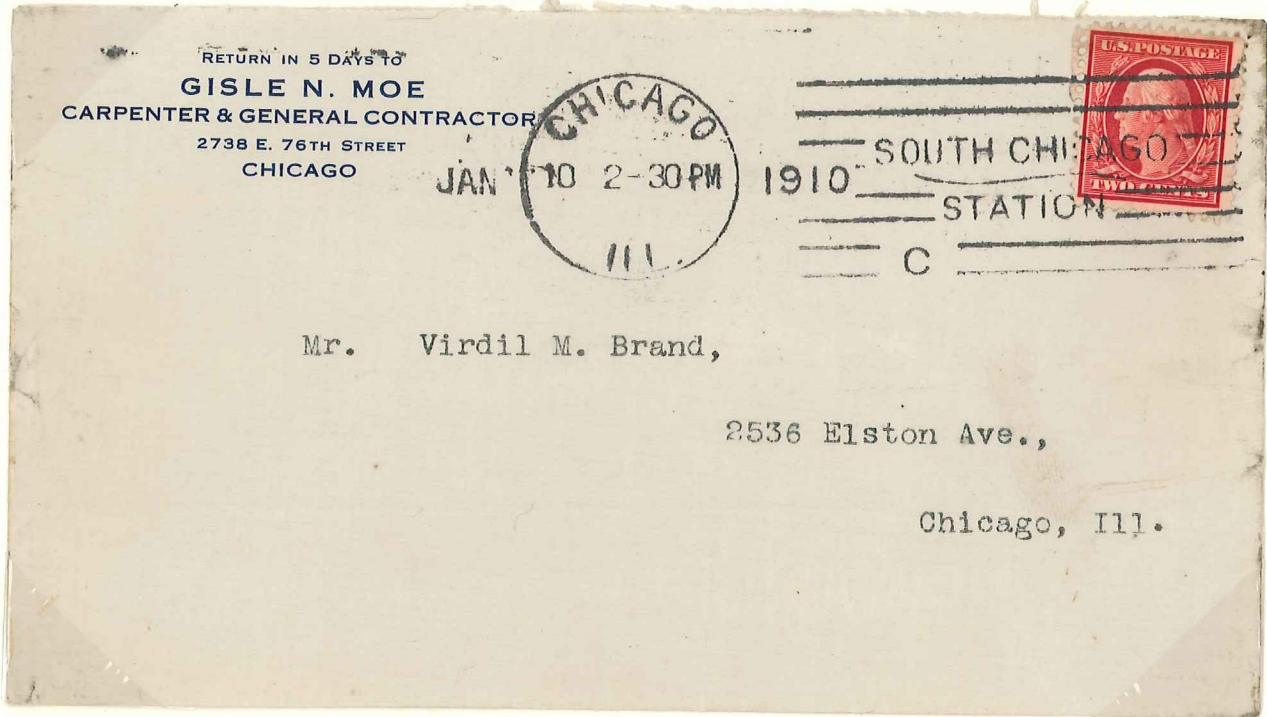
The first of these lettered machines was from machine 'X' and was used on a C-114 type postmark. This was the only lettered postmark C dial postmark. The postmark is reported from 1 week in August, 1909.



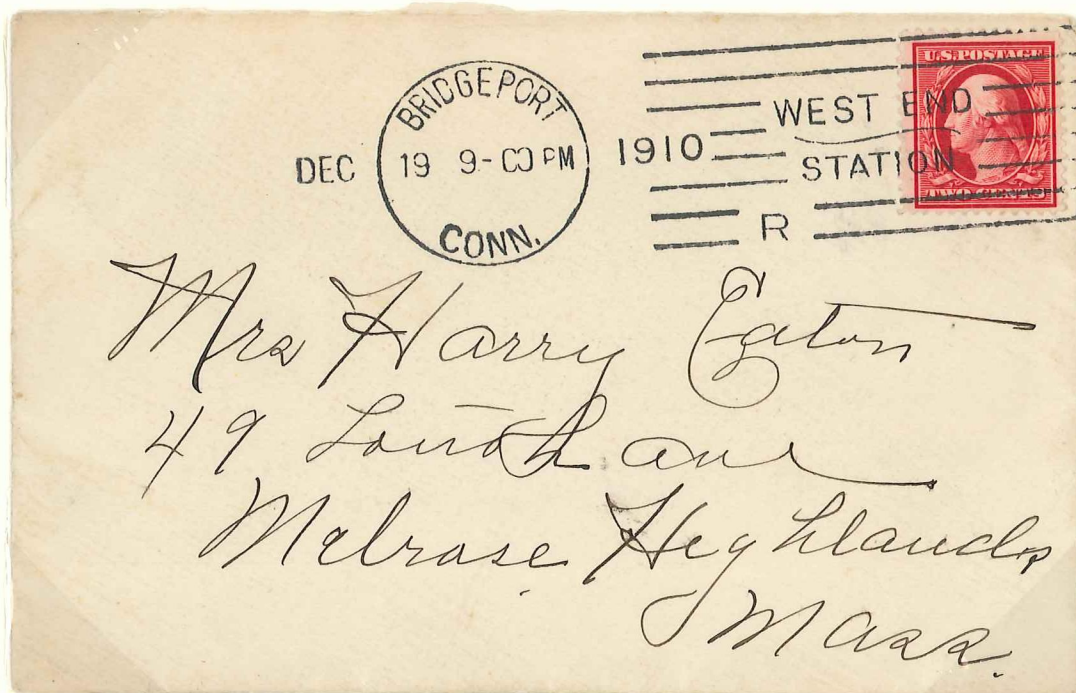
Time Marking Machine Co.

Leased Machines - C Postmarks

The C dial machines were also used at stations both in Chicago and in other cities.



Latest reported usage of South Chicago Station C dial postmark.



West End Station, Bridgeport, CT.

One unusual usage for the C dial postmarks was in Pittsburg, PA as a dial-only transit marking.

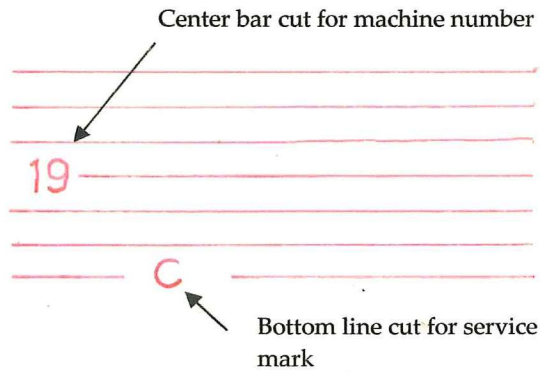


Pittsburg used a C dial containing the designation TRANSIT from March 1909 until Jan. 1910.  
This is the only city known to have used a TRANSIT C dial.

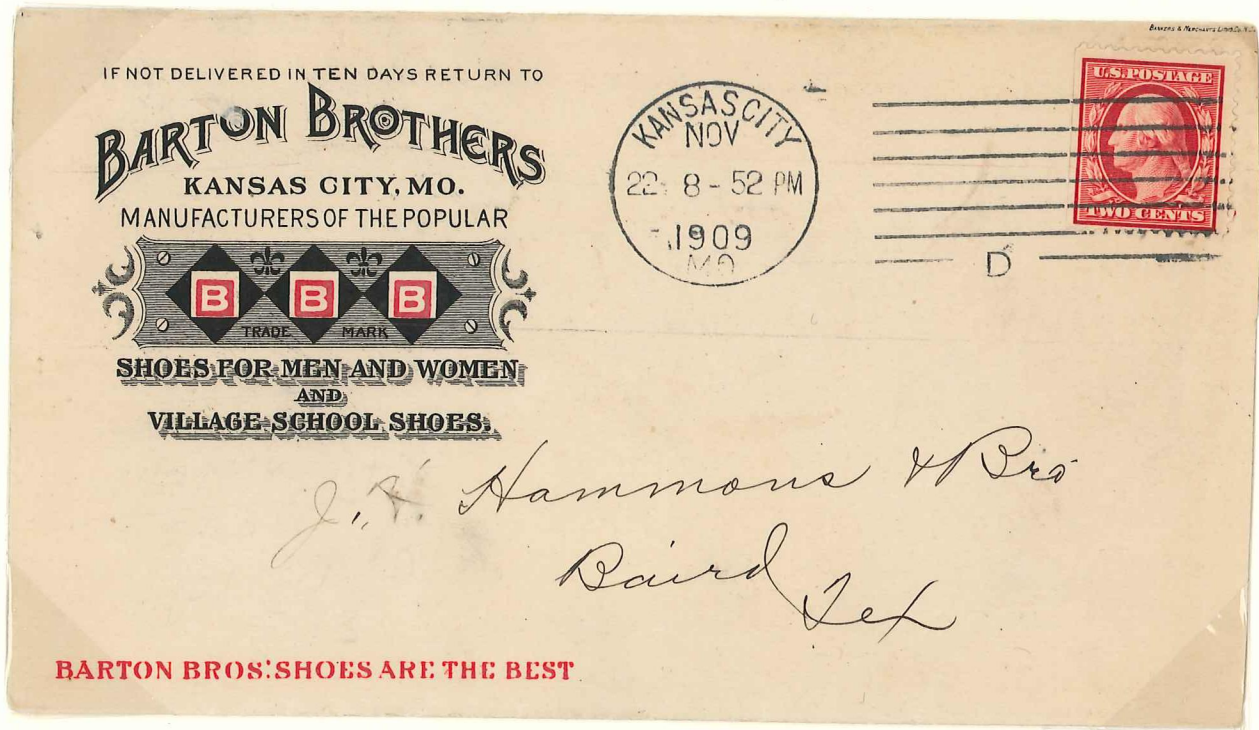


Starting late in 1909 the A dial type postmarks were re-introduced with a different killer design which moved the diespace for the service letter to the bottom bar of the postmark. This was probably done to prevent the service letter from printing directly on the stamp. These are classified as 104 killers. If needed, a diespace was also included at the left of the center bar for a machine number, classified as a 105 killer. This killer design were the most common of the TMM postmarks and were used right up to the end of the contract on June 30, 1913 and in some cases even beyond the expiration of the contract.

A-105

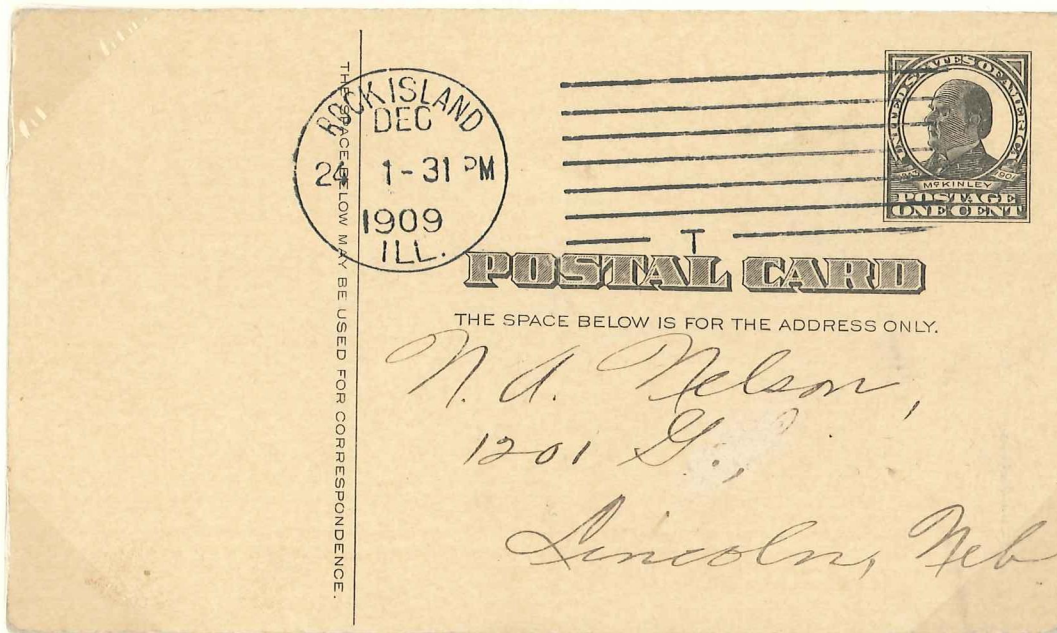


Seven horizontal bar killer

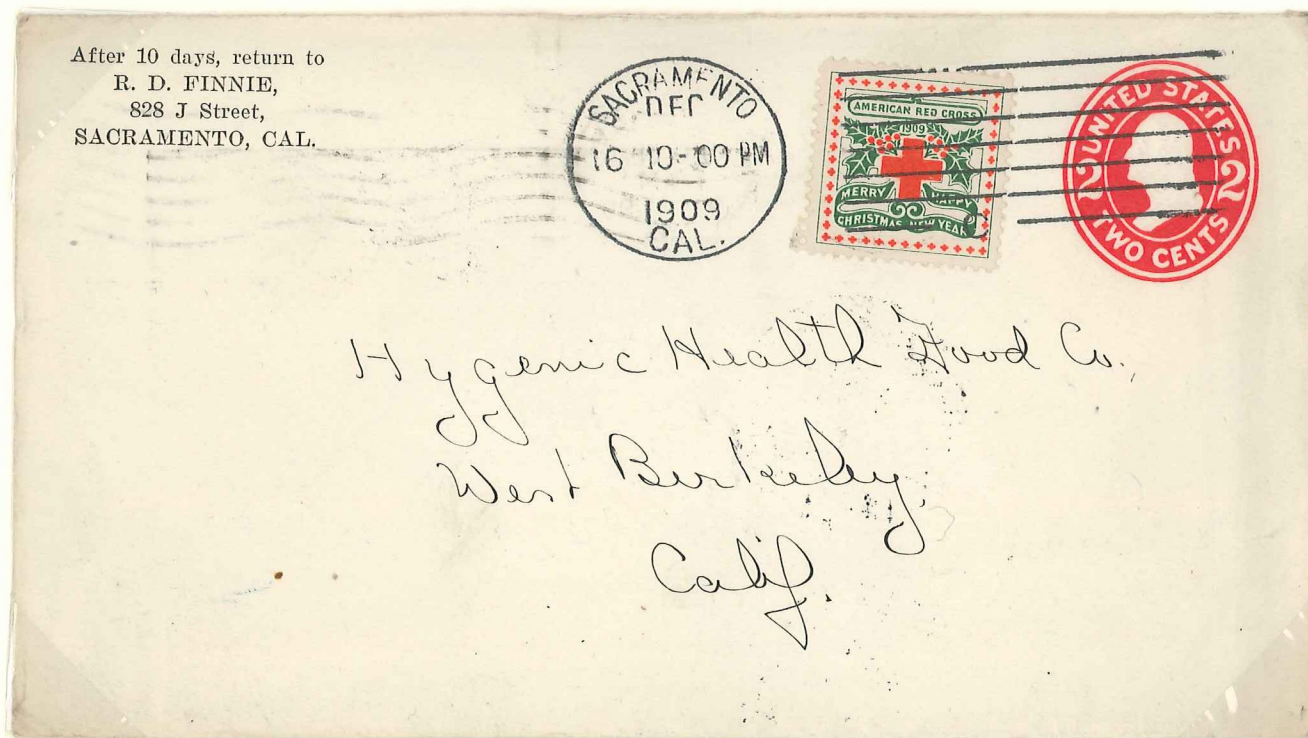


1909 Kansas City use of A-104 postmark.

Fifteen cities besides Chicago received machines with the new postmark during the latter months of 1909.



1909 Postmark from Rock Island, IL



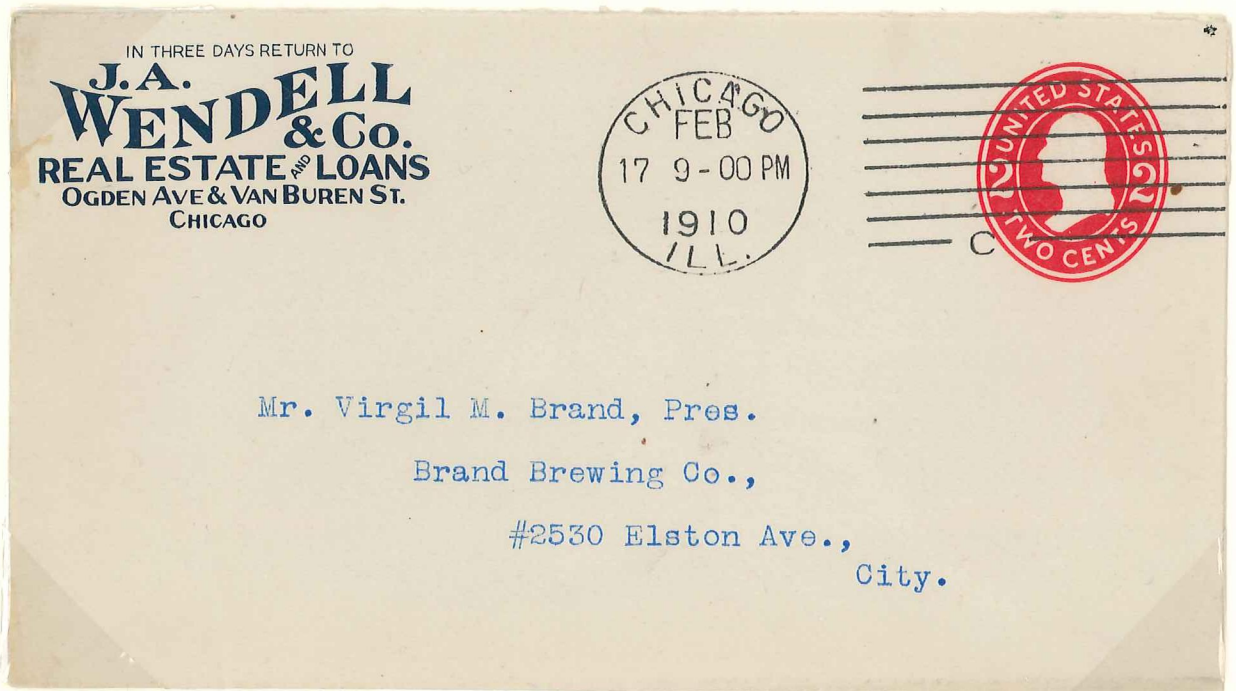
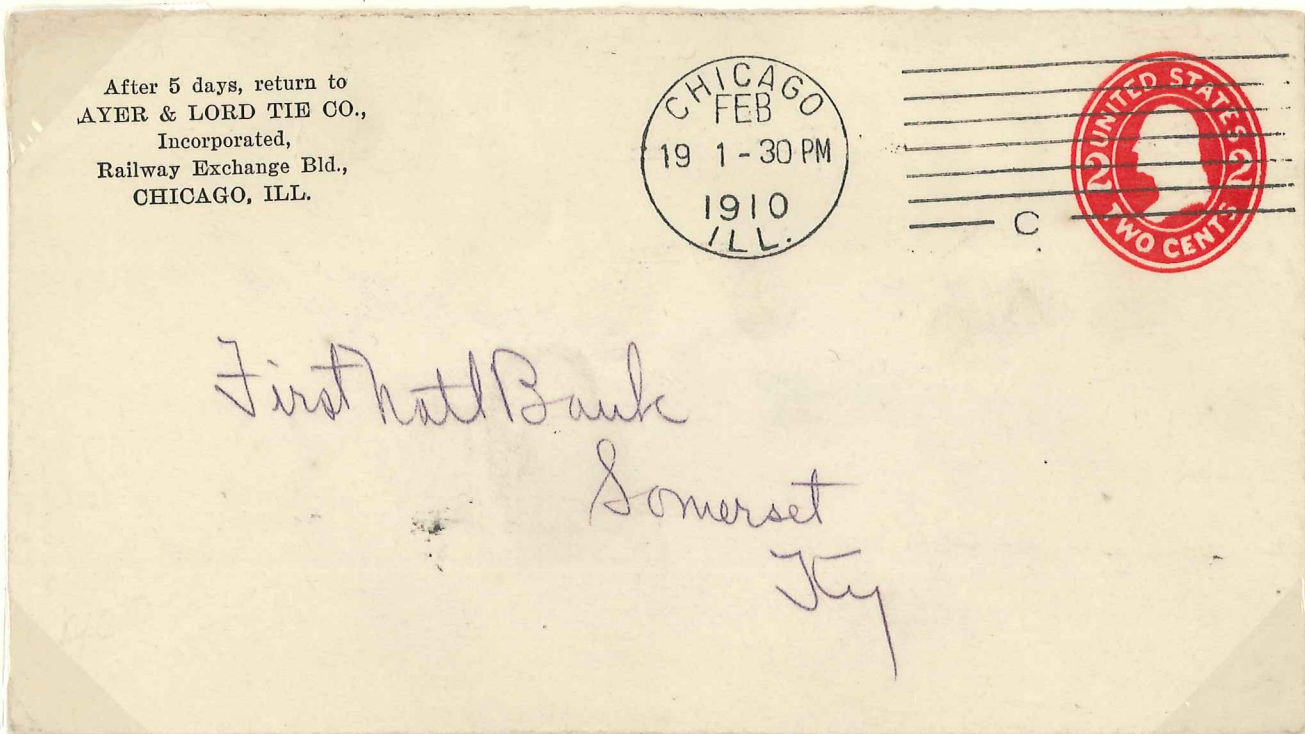
Sacramento, CA also received one of the early machines that used an A-104 postmark.



**Time Marking Machine Co.**

**Leased Machines - A Postmarks Revisited**

While Chicago used A-105 type postmarks at all 25 of their numbered machines and several with letter designations, examples are known with no machine numbers.



These A dial postmarks with no machine designation were used from Feb. 17 - 19. These are likely from a test.

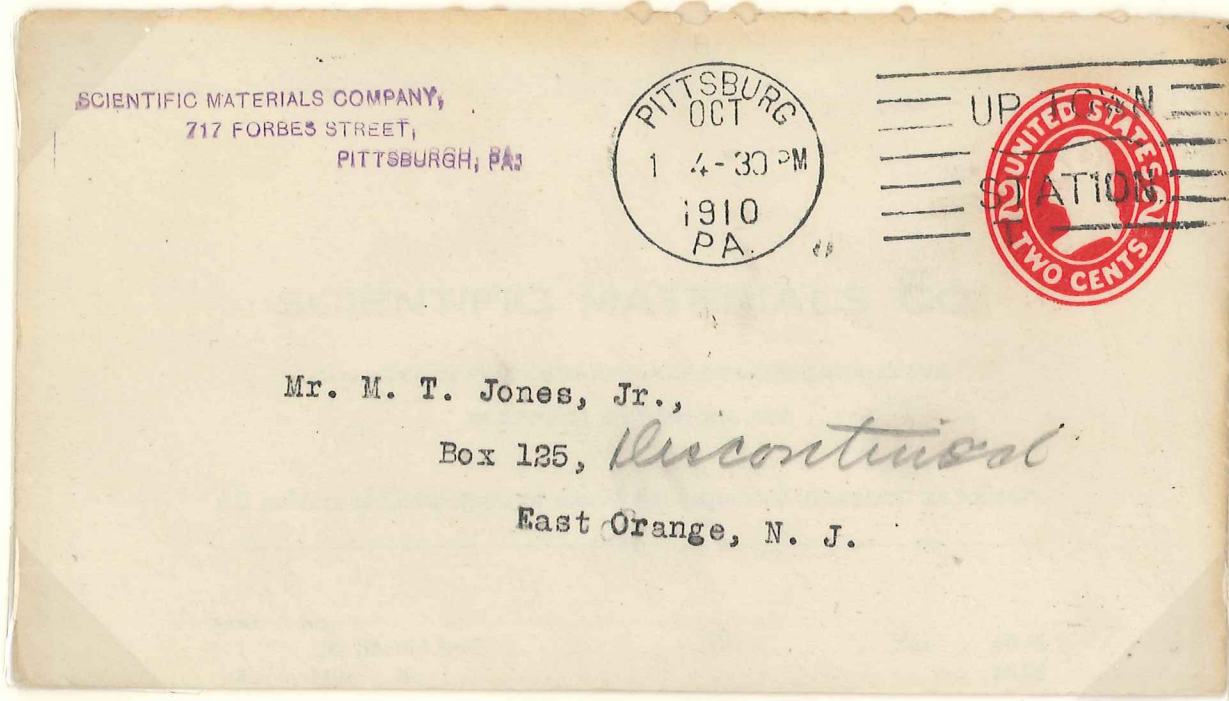




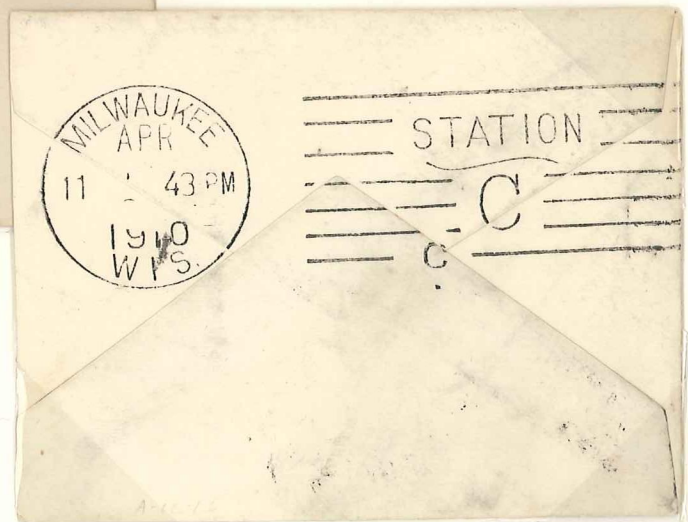
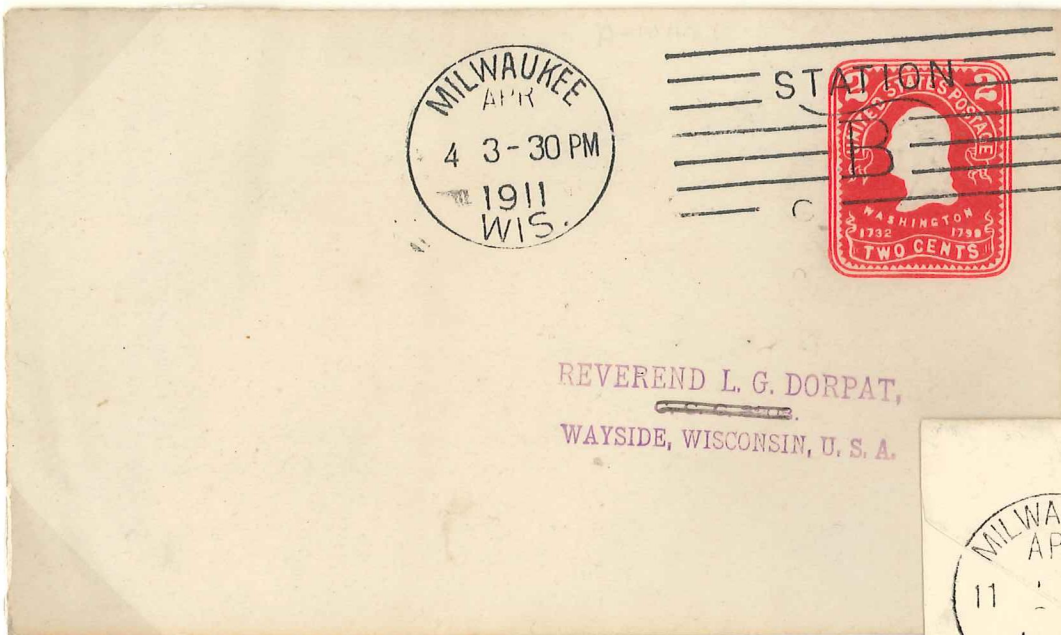
Time Marking Machine Co.

Leased Machines - A Postmarks Revisited

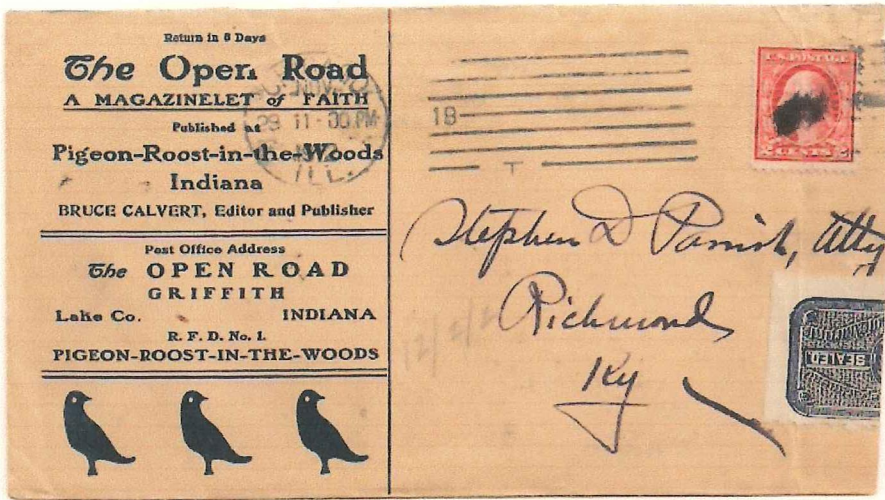
When A postmarks were used at stations the name was incorporated in the killer.



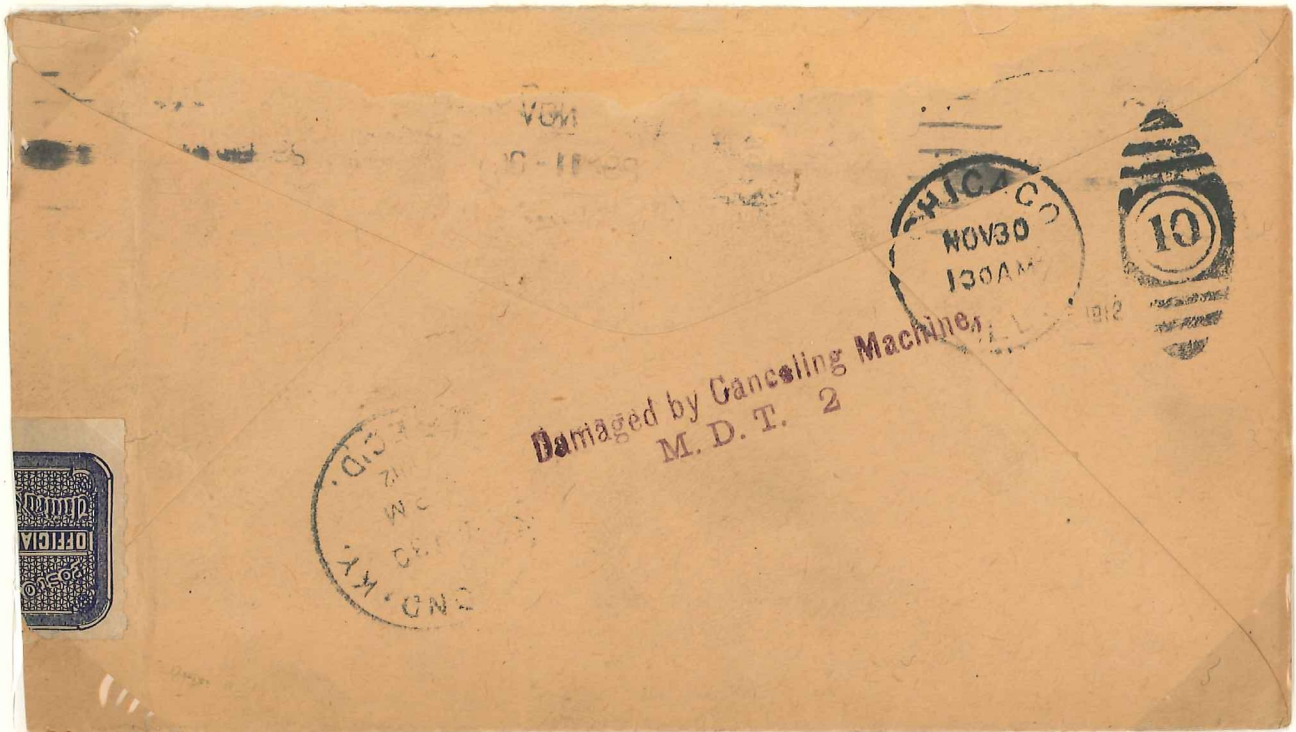
Pittsburg Uptown Station



Milwaukee Station B and earliest reported use of Station C.



Front of cover (reduced)



While these machines usually worked well, occasionally a piece was damaged going through the machine. The cover going from Chicago to Richmond, KY was damaged in the Chicago Time Marking Machine, sealed with a post office seal, and handstamped "Damaged by Canceling Machine, MDT 2"



DIRECT FROM FACTORY TO WEARER

TELEPHONE WABASH 1090-1091

# GOODMAN RAINPROOF COAT COMPANY

LARGEST  
EXCLUSIVE RAINCOAT  
HOUSE IN THE  
WORLD



FIFTH AVENUE AND  
CONGRESS STREET  
CHICAGO

*Note enclosed  
Big new  
H. Goodman*

REFERENCES:  
NATIONAL BANK OF THE REPUBLIC  
CAPITAL AND SURPLUS \$1,000,000



"RAIN PRINCESS"

2-6--1913.



d entirely upon  
making your

cturers of  
raincoats in  
ou Mr. Wearer,  
re we have sold  
We are now  
ices.

le of very care-  
y vulcanized and  
nt water-proof  
y neat English

**Goodman Rainproof Coat Co.**

**Largest Exclusive Raincoat House in the World**

Fifth Ave. and Congress Street  
CHICAGO, ILL.



6077

*C. Herrewig  
Waukegan  
Wis*

Example of an A-105 postmark from Chicago machine #9 used to cancel a 1c Parcel Post Stamp, correctly used on a small parcel enclosing a fabric sample, during the period when parcel post stamps could not be used for first class postage.



Time Marking Machine Co.

Leased Machines - A Postmarks Revisited



IF NOT DELIVERED IN 5 DAYS RETURN TO  
CHICAGO & EASTERN ILLINOIS R. R. CO.,  
OFFICE OF LOCAL FREIGHT AGENT,  
12TH AND CLARK STS. CHICAGO.

DEC



-17

Form 204, Chicago.

1909



R. B.

*B...*



-17



D

*Mrs. Maurice J. Jones  
32 Vernon Terrace  
East Orange  
N. J.*

Chicago's machine #17 initially used a C dial postmark with the external year through 1909. Later an A dial was introduced but the old 114 type canceler, with an opening for the year, stayed in use giving rise to a mismatched dial and killer.

AFTER 5 DAYS RETURN TO  
**W. D. ALLEN MFG. CO.**  
Belting, Rubber Goods  
--AND--  
General Mill Supplies  
133-135 West Lake St.  
CHICAGO.



17



C

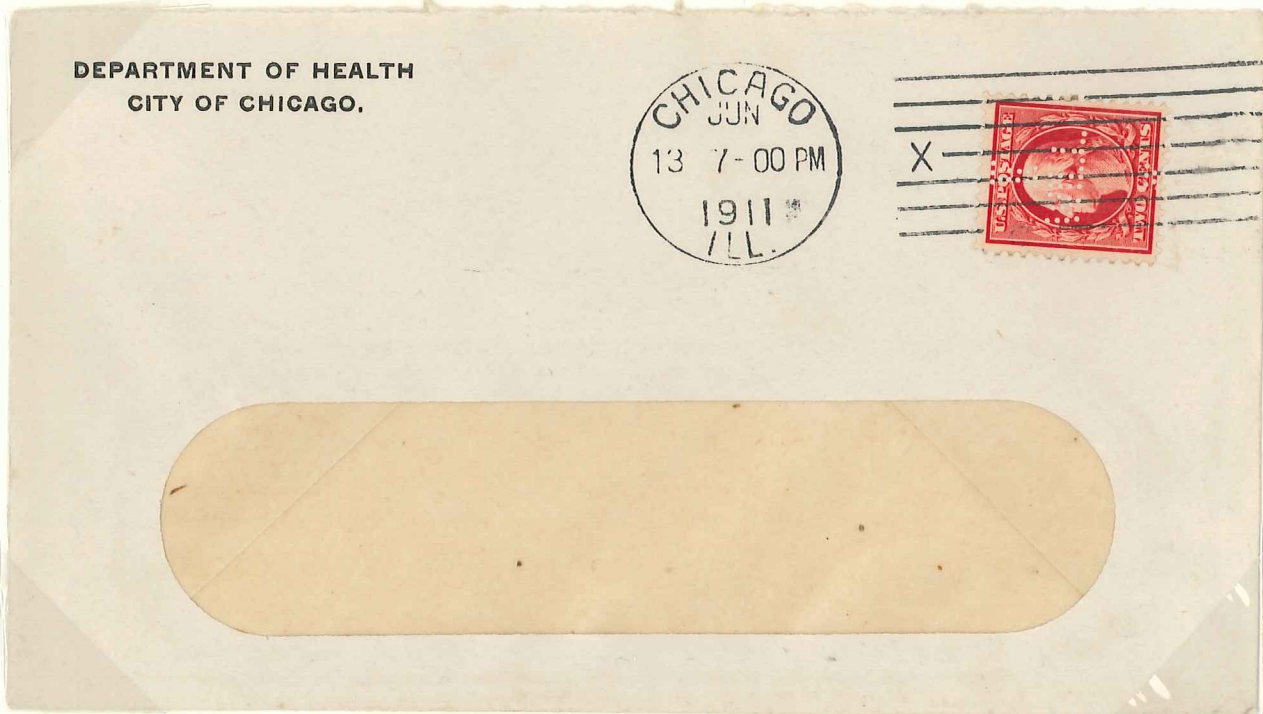
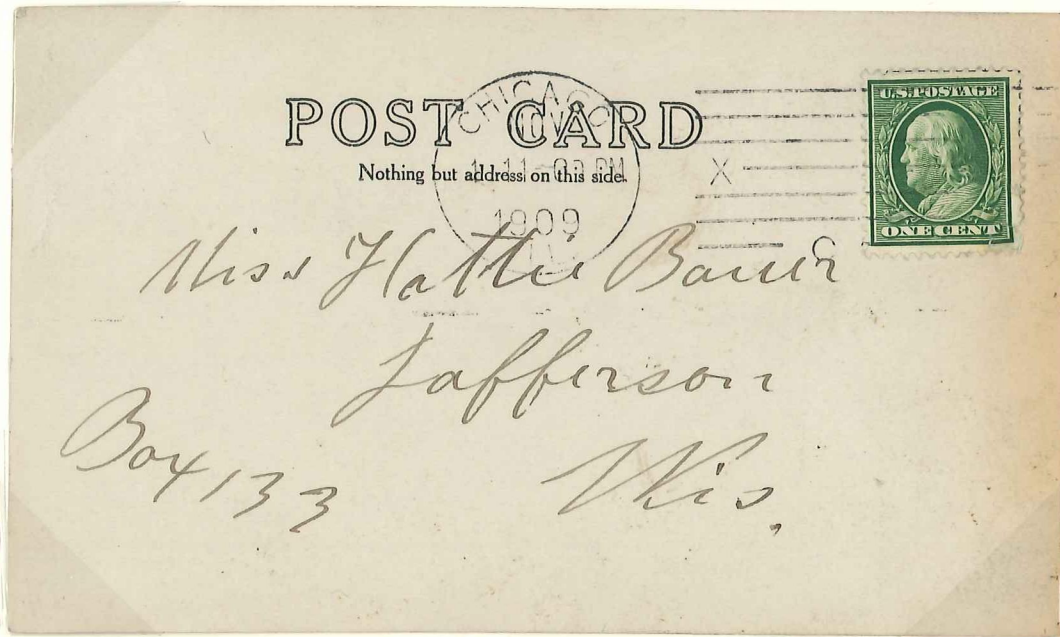
This combination was used into 1912 before giving way to the correct killer.



**Time Marking Machine Co.**

**Leased Machines - A Postmarks Revisited**

Machines designated with letters rather than numbers were also used in Chicago A-105 type postmarks. These often ran for short periods.



Examples of machine 'X' A-105 postmarks from 1909 and 1911. There are no known examples from 1910.

RETURN IN 5 DAYS TO  
P. O. BOX 23  
CHICAGO



Virgil M. Brand, Pres.,  
Brand Brewing Co.,  
City.

Personal.

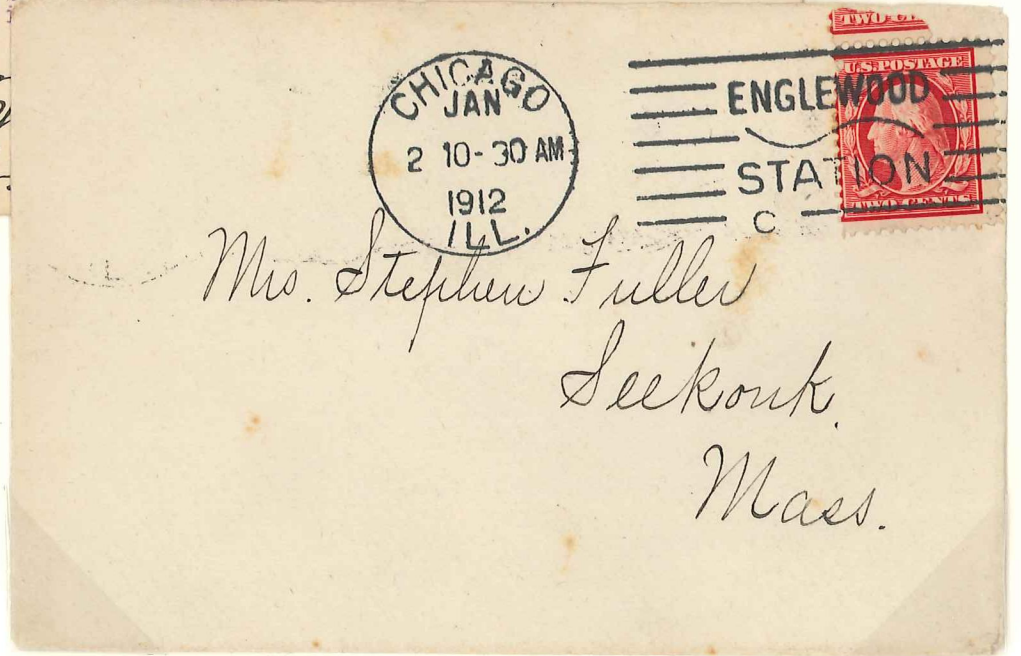
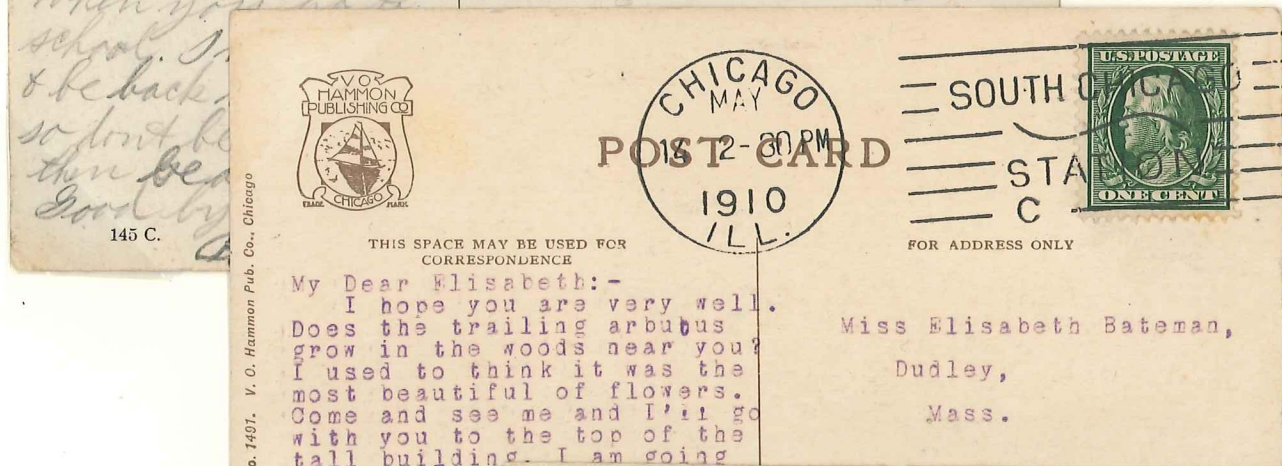
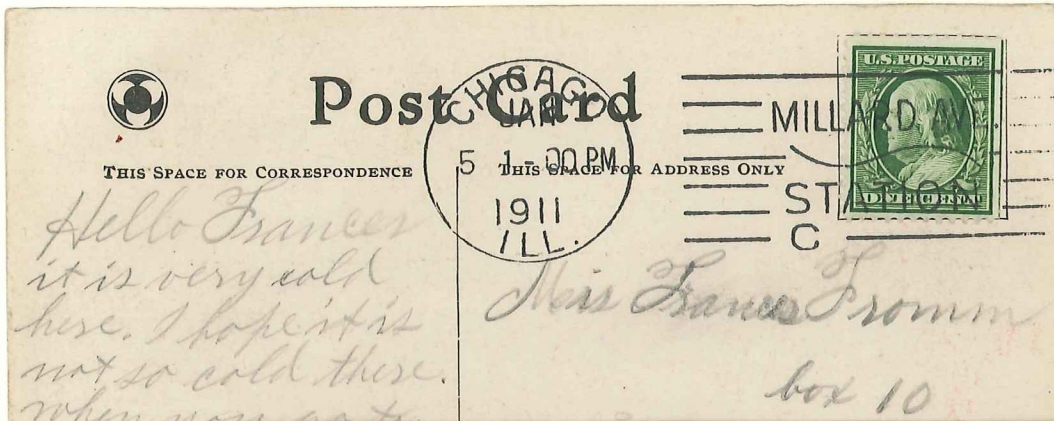
RETURN IN FIVE DAYS  
GEORGE BARRIE & SONS  
807 FINE ARTS BLDG.  
CHICAGO



*Mr Virgil M Brand  
2530 Elston  
Chicago  
Ill*

1910 and 1911 postmarks from machine 'XX'

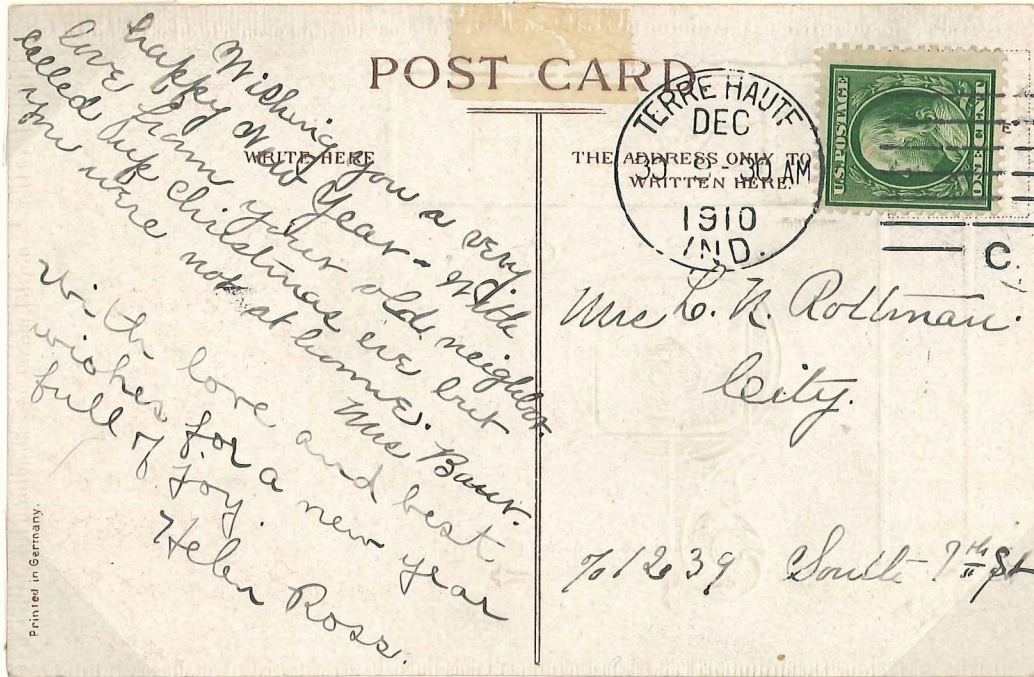




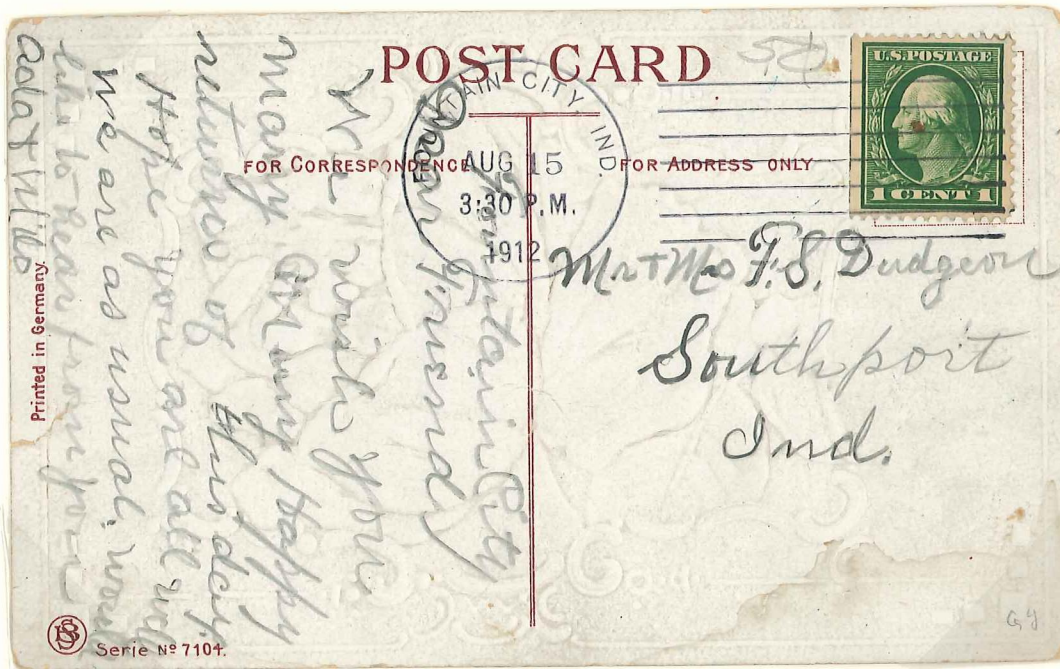
Various Chicago stations used A-104 postmarks (no machine number).



There is at least one unusual mis-spelling and a unusual Time Marking Machine Co. fake machine cancel.



The bottom of the 'e' in Haute broke off in 1910 giving rise to a TERRE HAUTF variety.



The killer on this postmark mimics those found on TMM postmarks, particularly with regards to the diespace for the service letter. This is believed to be a printed postmark rather than one impressed by a canceling machine or handstamp.



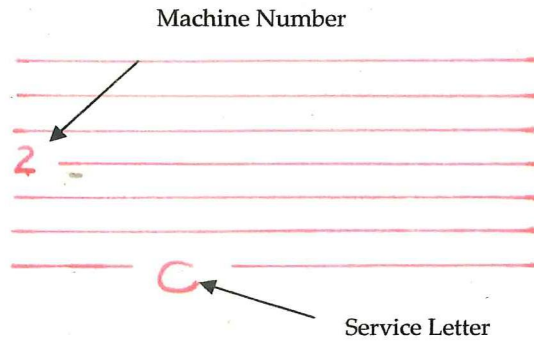
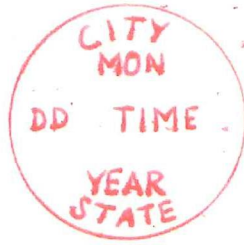
Time Marking Machine Co.

Leased Machines - D Postmarks

The last postmark type introduced was similar to the early A dials but the dial was smaller diameter. These were introduced in late 1910 and also continued through the end of the contract on July 31, 1913. These were used in 59 cities and on 27 machines in Chicago.

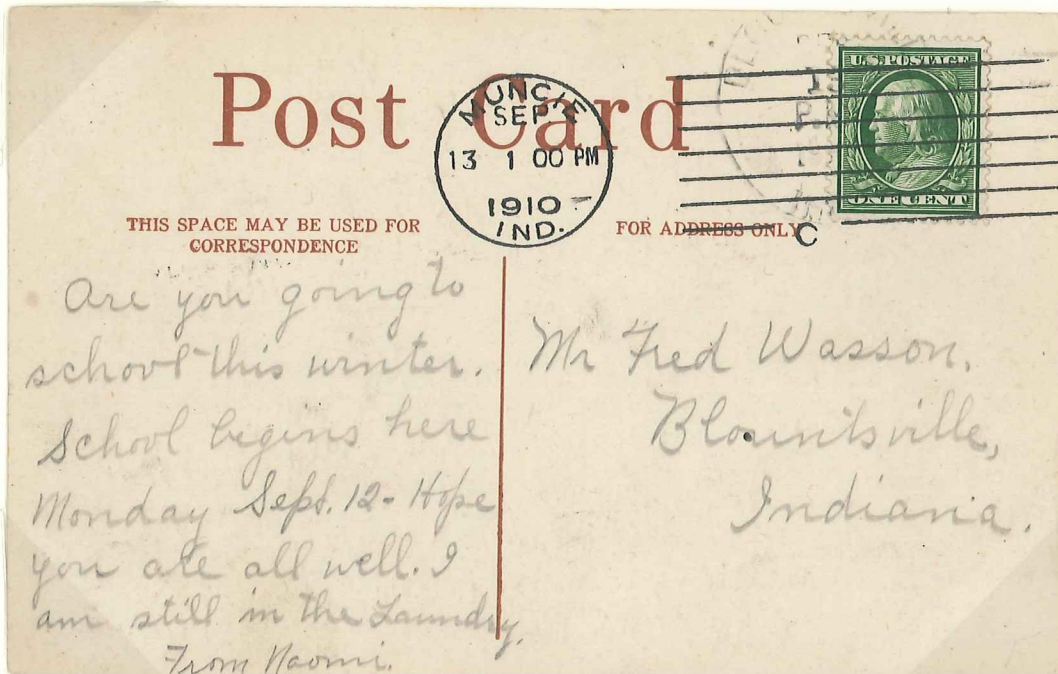
D-104 without machine no.

D-105 with machine no.



7 Horizontal Bar Killer

Service Letter



ERU of Muncie D-104 postmark .

# Time Marking Machine Co.

# Leased Machines - D Postmarks

The D postmark is also found with a working clock but it is much less common to find an example than with other postmark types. In a database of 2868 recorded examples of D postmarks (either in my collection or recorded from other sources) there are only 10 reports of working clocks.

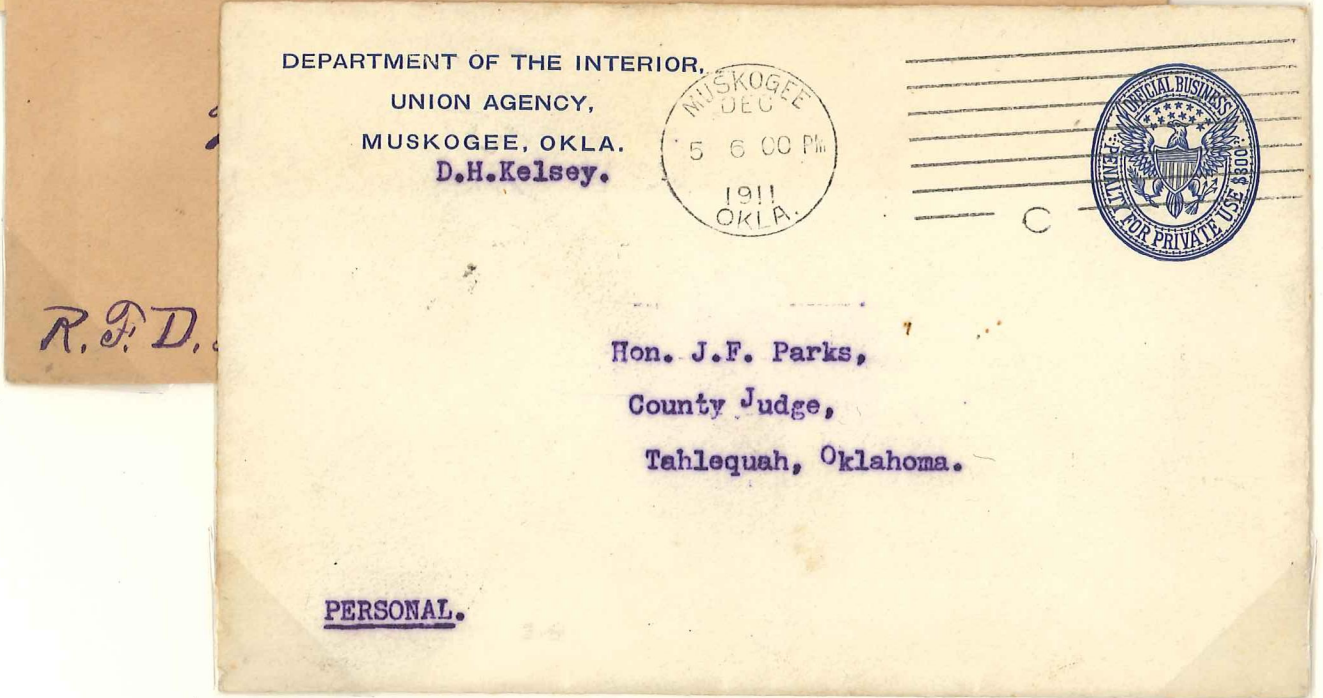
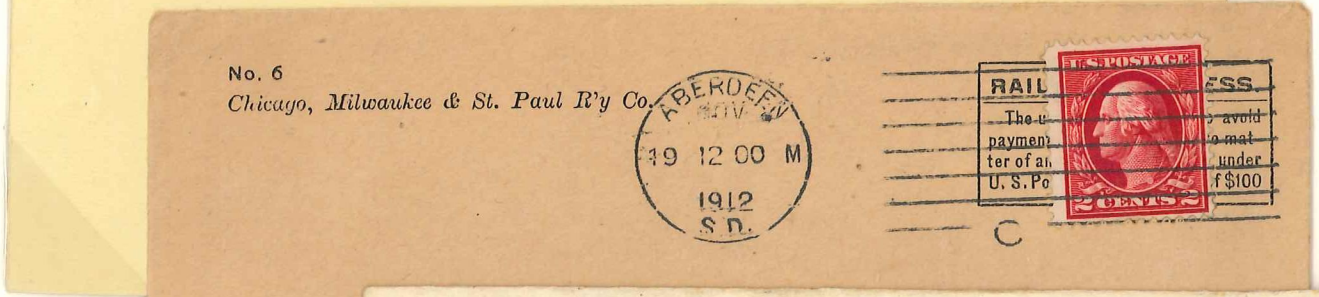
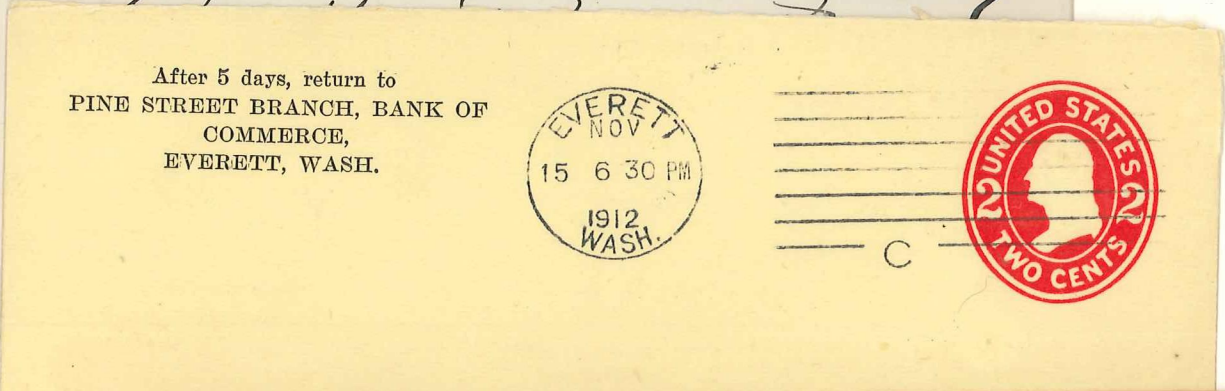
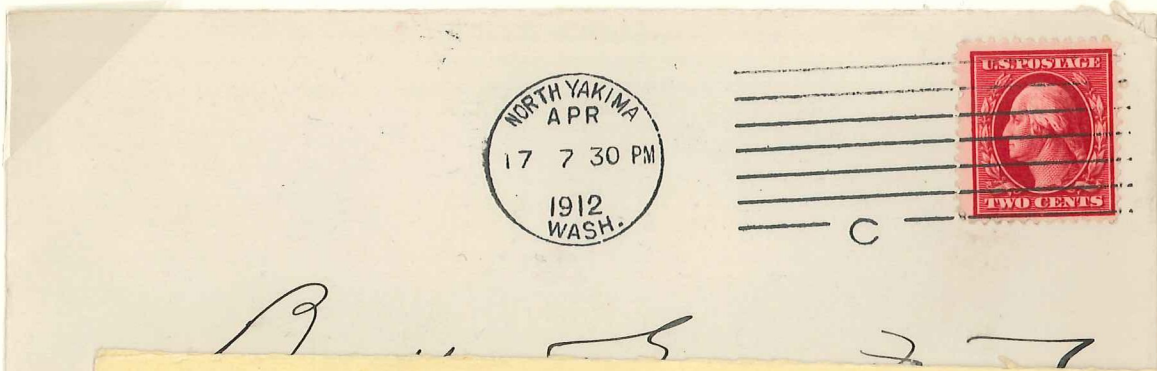
City	Examples Working	Examples Recorded	Remarks
Ottumwa, IA	1	7	14.3%,
Muncie, IN	3	17	17.6%, working in mid Nov, 1912
Ann Arbor, MI	1	11	9%
Bay City, MI	1	11	9%
Jackson, MI	1	10	10%, Earliest example working
Nashville, TN	2	14	14.3%

As discussed earlier, if the clock was working continuously 80% of the examples should end in a 1,2,3,4,6,7,8 or 9 indicating a working clock. It seems that these worked intermittently.



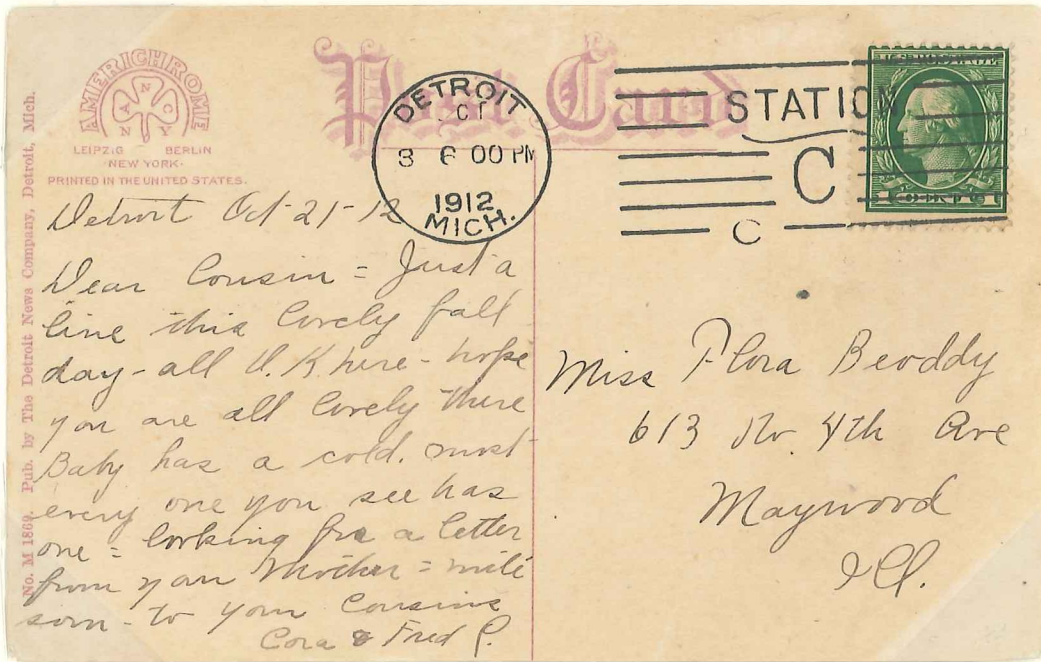
Examples of D-104 postmarks with working clocks.



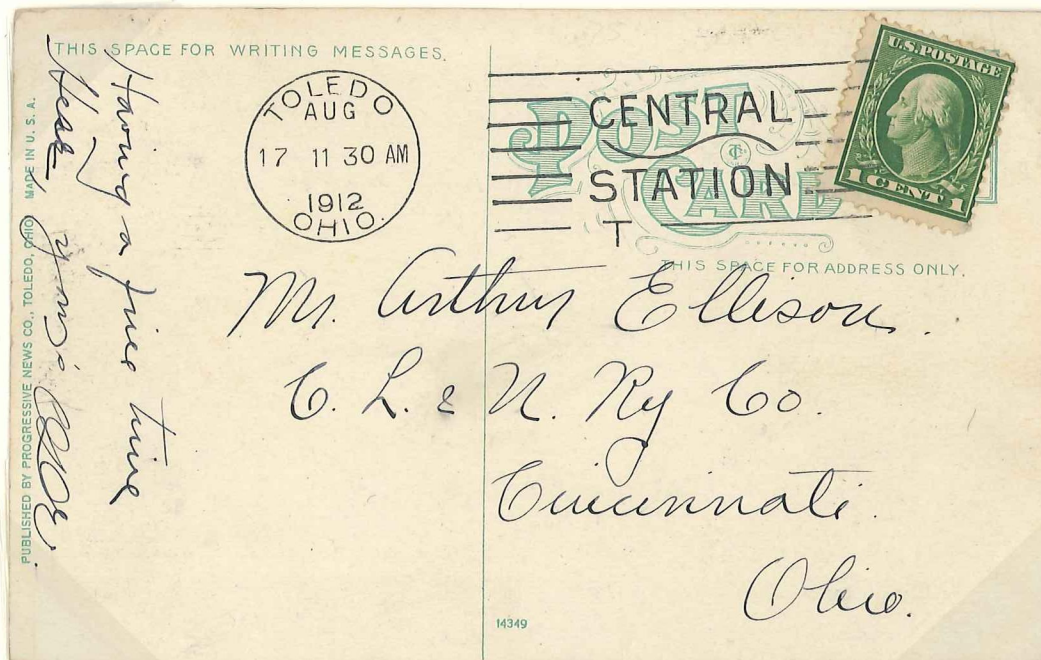


D dial postmarks were used at 51 different large and medium sized towns throughout the United States.

When used at stations, the station name was inserted into the killer bars.



Detroit Station C.

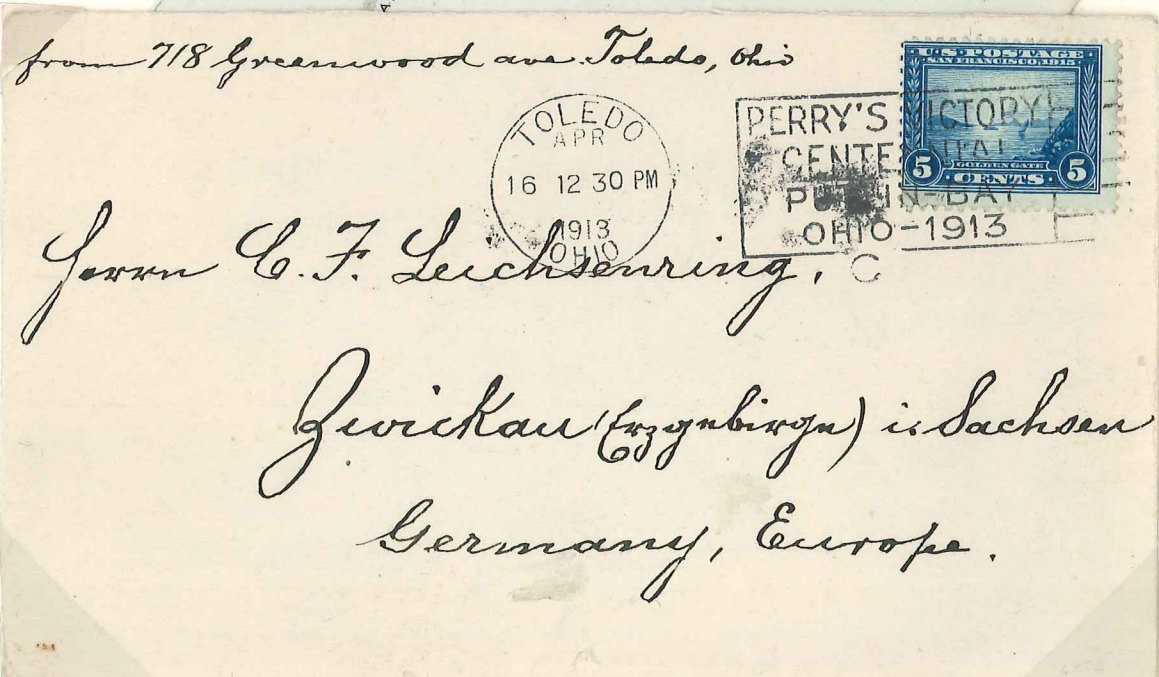
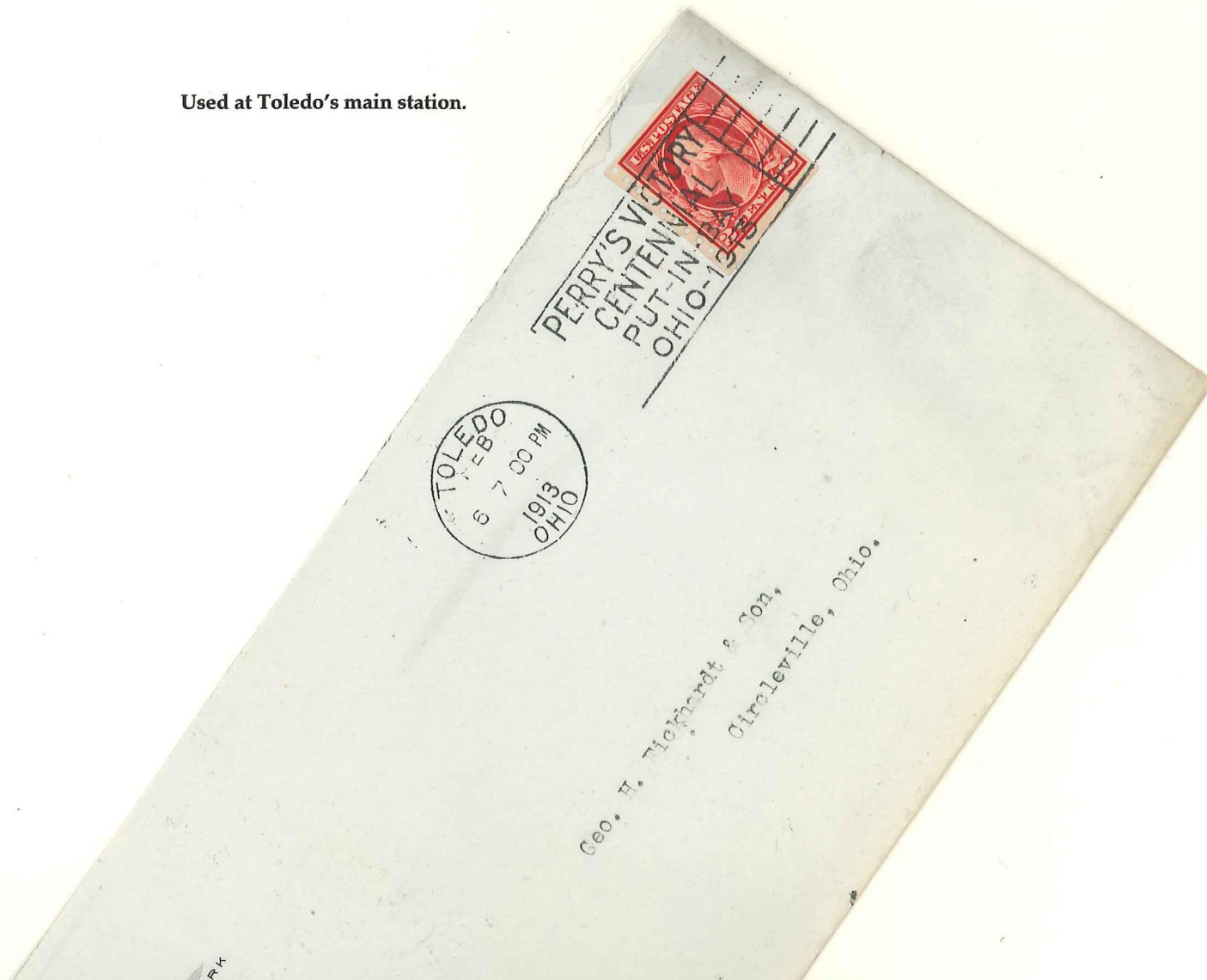


Toledo Central Station.



Toledo used one of two slogan TMM postmarks to advertise Perry's Victory Centennial in 1913.

Used at Toledo's main station.

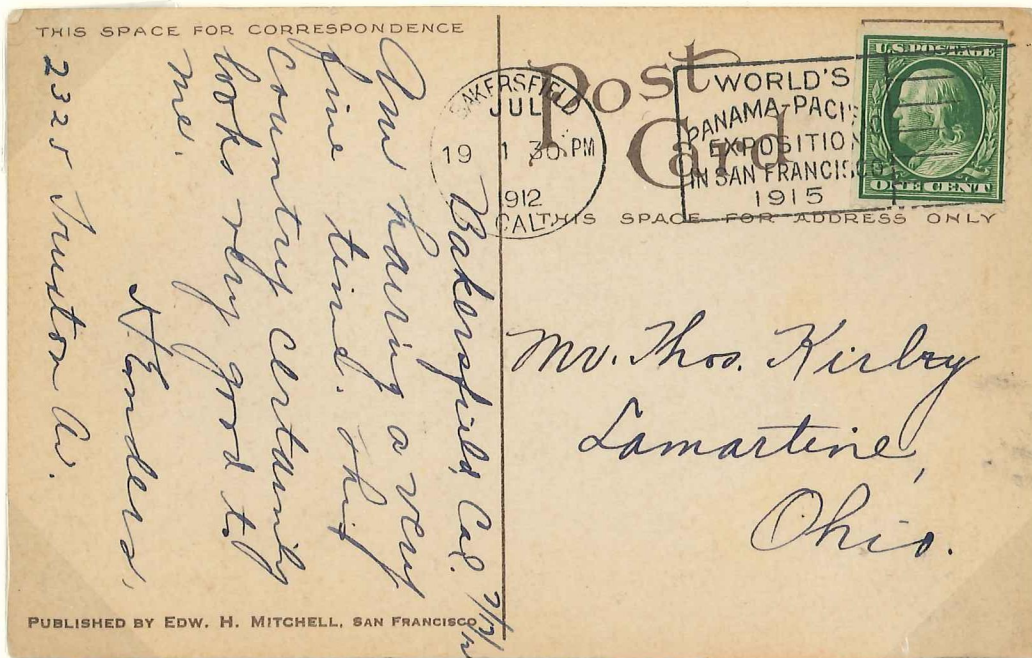


The 'C' in the killer is not a service letter but signifies Station C.

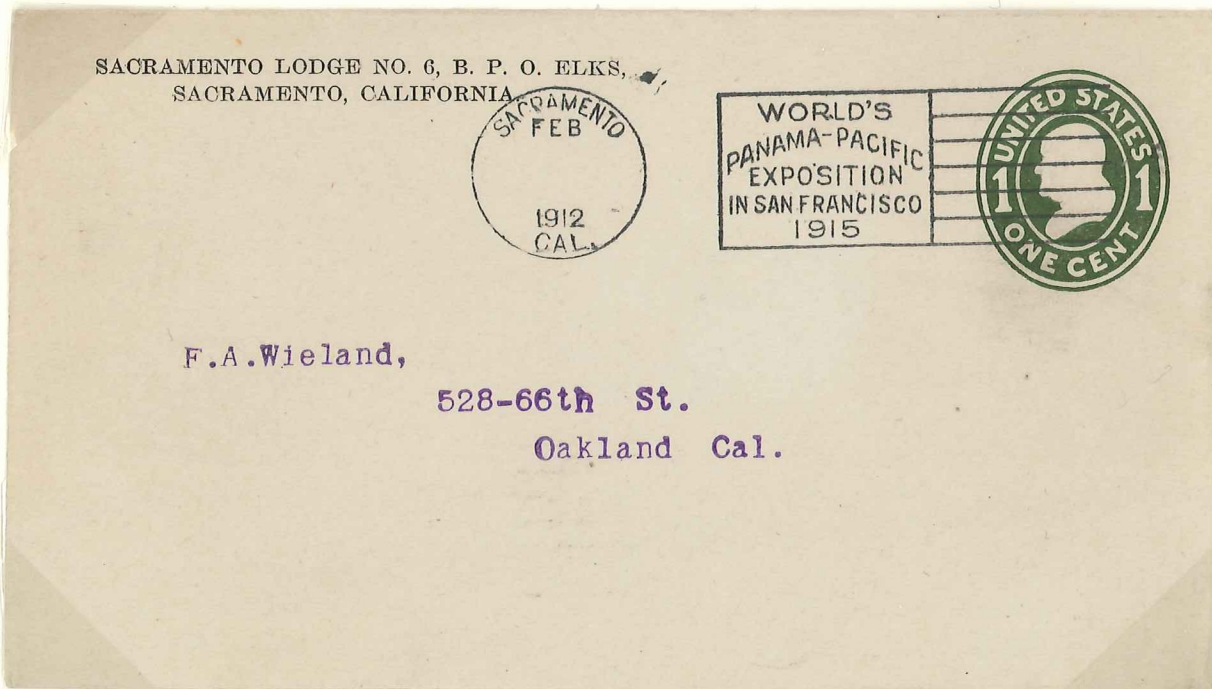
Time Marking Machine Co.

Leased Machines - D Postmarks

Two cities in California used the other slogan cancel to advertise the upcoming World's Pan-Pacific Exposition.



Bakersfield, CA



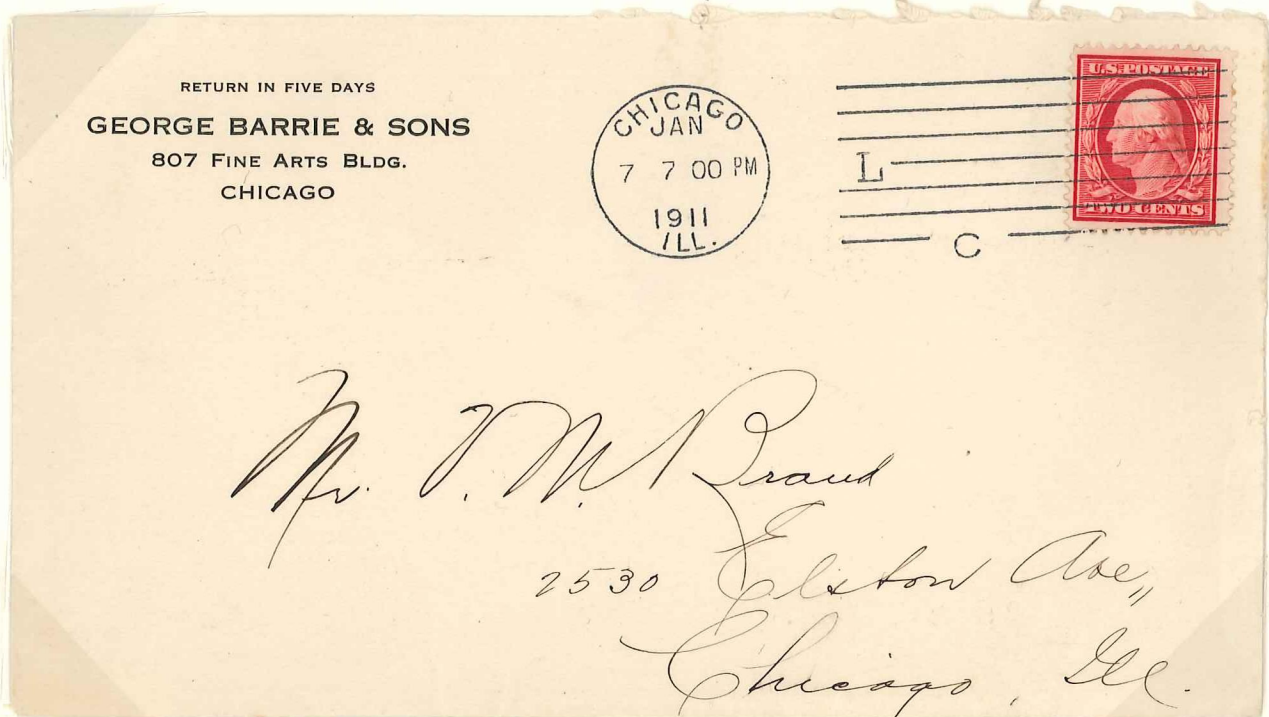
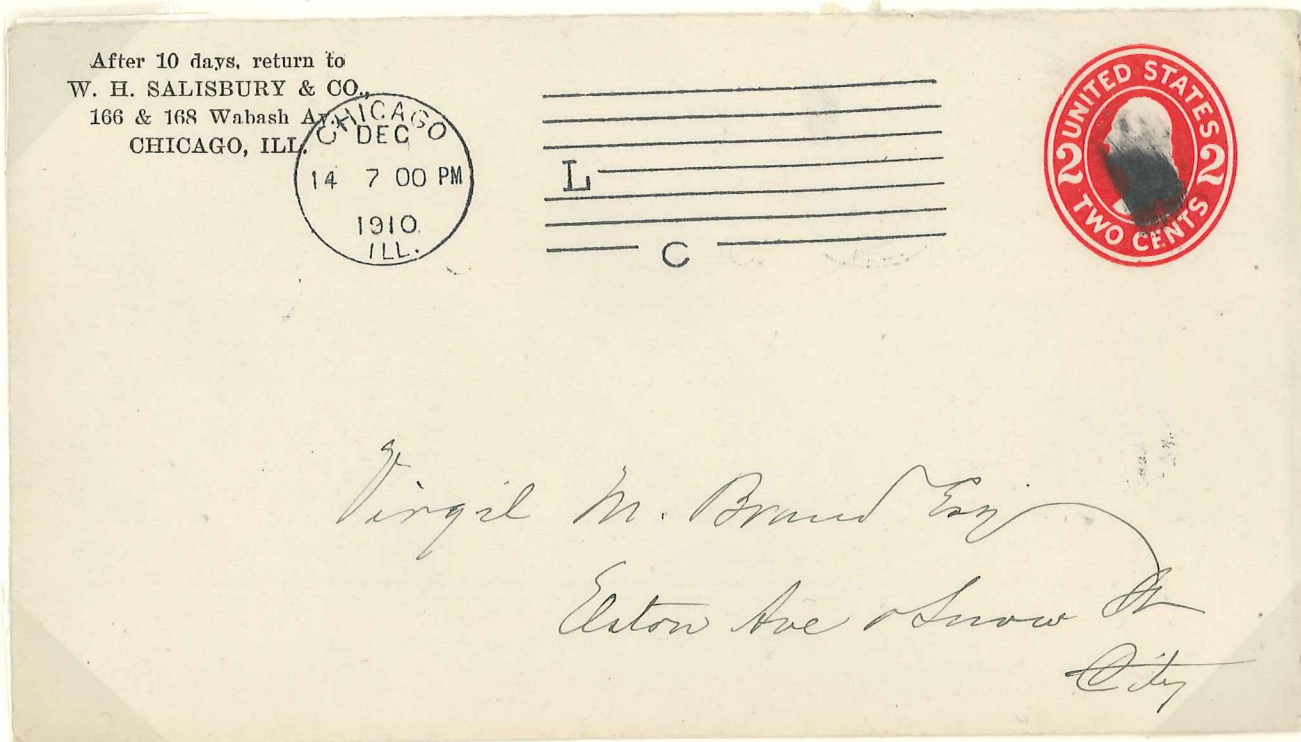
Sacramento, CA with the date and time removed to cancel printed matter.



**Time Marking Machine Co.**

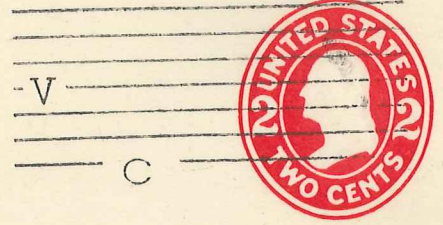
**Leased Machines - D Postmarks**

The first D postmark in Chicago appeared with an "L" lettered machine designation.



Machine 'L' with 1910 and 1911 postmark dials.

Room 1021, Schiller Building  
CHICAGO, ILL.



Mr. Virgil M. Brand,  
Elston Ave. & Snow St.,  
% Brand Brg. Co. Chicago, Ill.

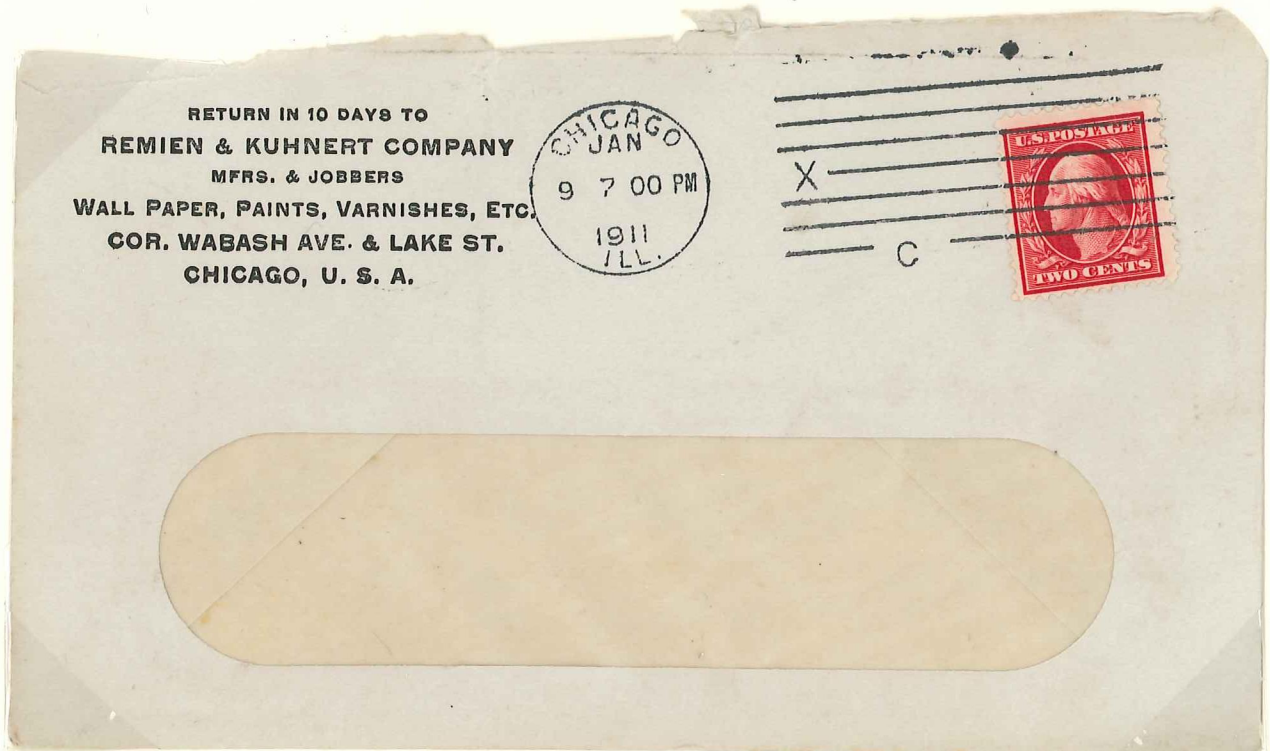
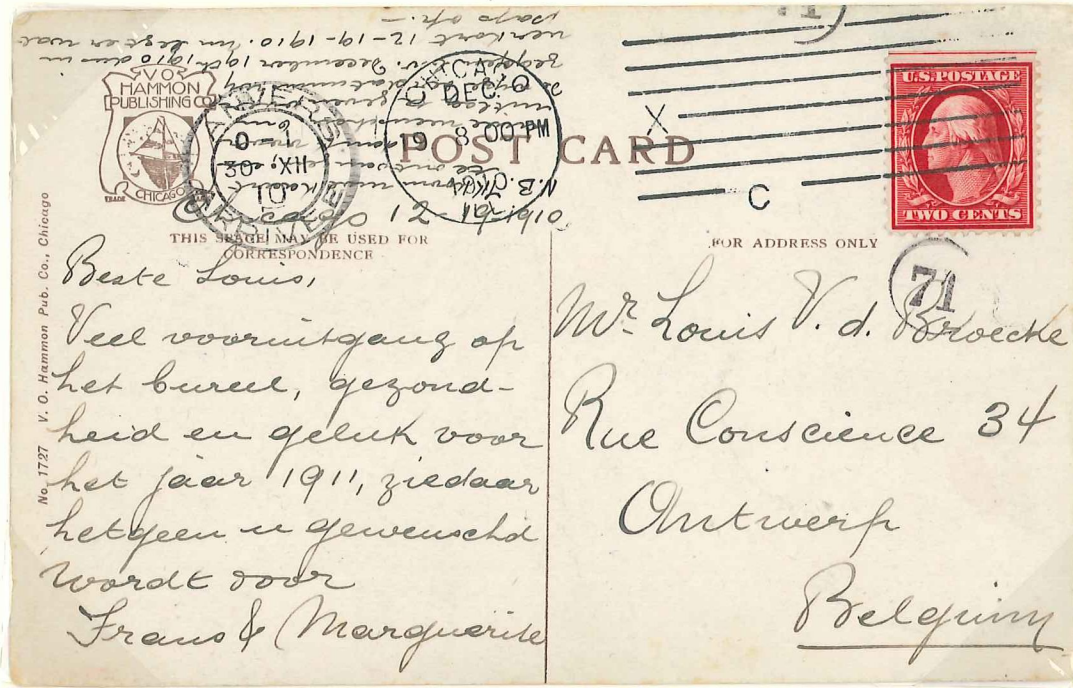
KOELLING & KLAPPENBACH  
BOOKSELLERS AND STATIONERS  
SPORTING GOODS  
PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIAL  
169-171 ADAMS STREET, CHICAGO



*Mr. Virgil M. Brand  
Elston Ave & Snow  
Chicago, Ill.*

1910 and 1911 postmark dials from machine 'V'.

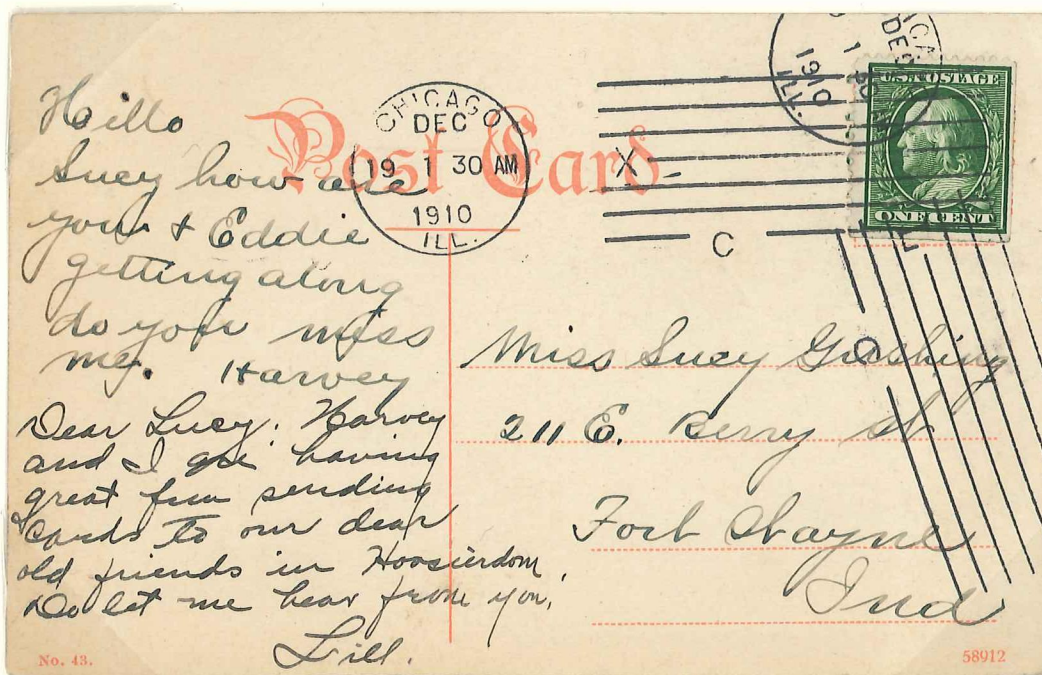




Machine 'X' with 1910 and 1911 dials.



1910 postmark from machine W.



Postcard that went through both machines X and L.







POST CARD HYDE PARK STATION



THIS SPACE MAY BE USED FOR CORRESPONDENCE

FOR ADDRESS ONLY

*Chicago*  
*131 Monroe St.*

Pub. Co. Chicago

If not called for in 5 days, return to

**JOHN N. YOUNG**  
REAL ESTATE AGENT  
ROOM 307

172 WASHINGTON STREET  
CHICAGO  
**REMOVED TO**  
No. 36 West Randolph Street  
North East Corner Dearborn St.



LAKE VIEW STATION



C

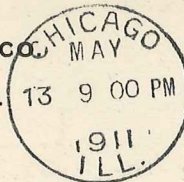
After Five Days Return to  
**HEATH & MILLIGAN MFG. CO.**  
1833-1837 Seward Street,  
CHICAGO, ILL.



PILSEN STATION  
D



IF NOT DELIVERED IN FIVE DAYS RETURN TO  
**HERMAN H. HETTLER LUMBER CO.**  
OFFICE AND YARD  
2801 ELSTON AVE., NEAR DIVERSEY AVE.  
CHICAGO, ILL.



KINZIE STATION  
C



Mr. Virgil M. Brand,

Elston & Snow St.,

Chicago, Ill.

Many Chicago Stations used the D dial postmarks.  
Examples from Hyde Park, Lake View, Pilsen, and Kinzie Stations.



## B. F. Cummins Co.

## Early Postal Business

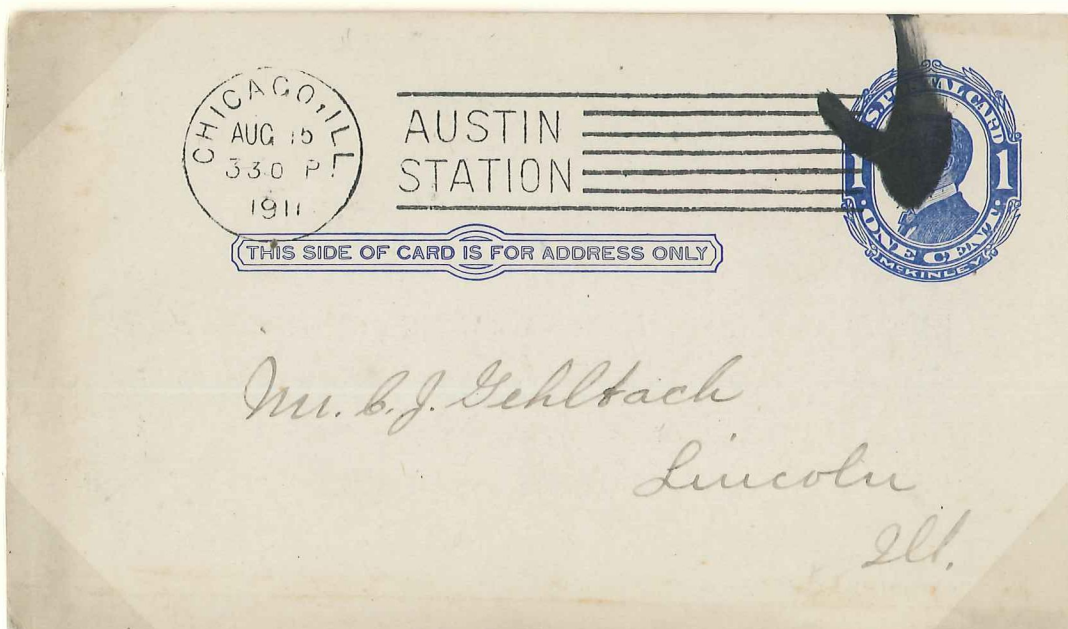
The USPOD possessed numerous Doremus machines which were not performing satisfactorily. The Time Marking Machine Co was awarded a contract to rebuild these machines. The contract to rebuild these machines was granted based on a request by B. F. Cummins and was not offered to any competitor.

The rebuilding was actually done by the B. F. Cummins Co. Twenty two machines were re-built starting in 1910 and continuing into 1911. These were of course neither TMM Co machines nor BFC Co. machines but do represent the first business the BFC Co. achieved with the USPOD.

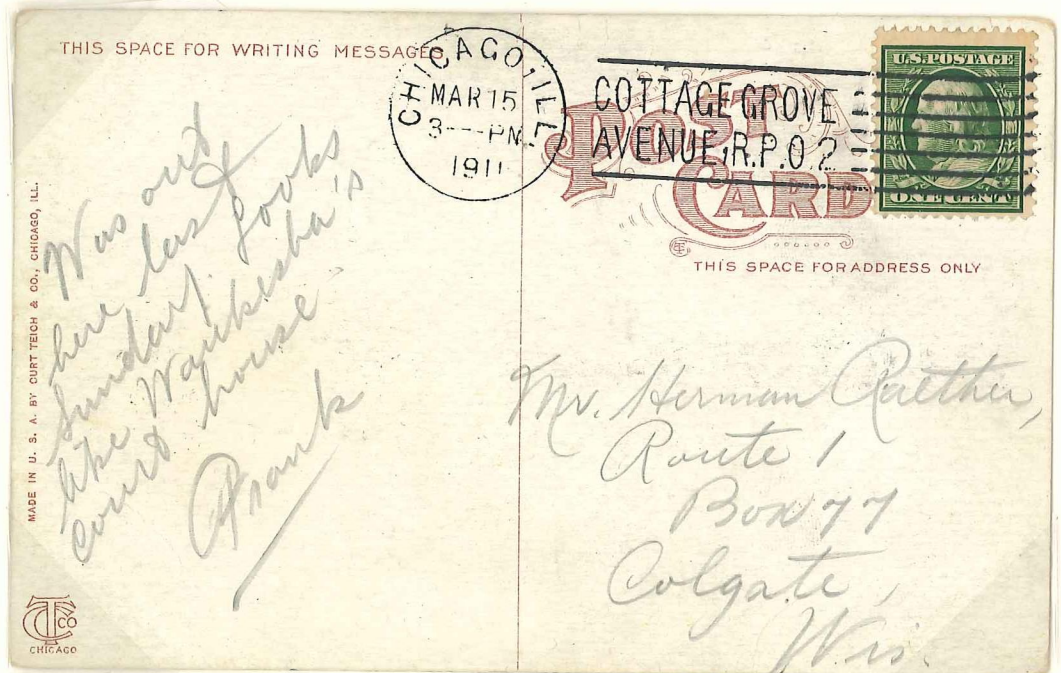
There was considerable controversy whether the machines were even improved after being rebuilt and whether the USPOD machinists could have done the work better and perhaps cheaper.



Doremus postmark from Rochester, MN.



The Rochester Doremus machine was rebuilt and installed in Austin Station, Chicago.



Two of the more desirable postmarks from rebuilt Doremus machines are those from machines installed in Chicago's Cottage Grove Avenue, RPO trolley. Both Cars #1 and Car #2 used these rebuilt Doremus machines.



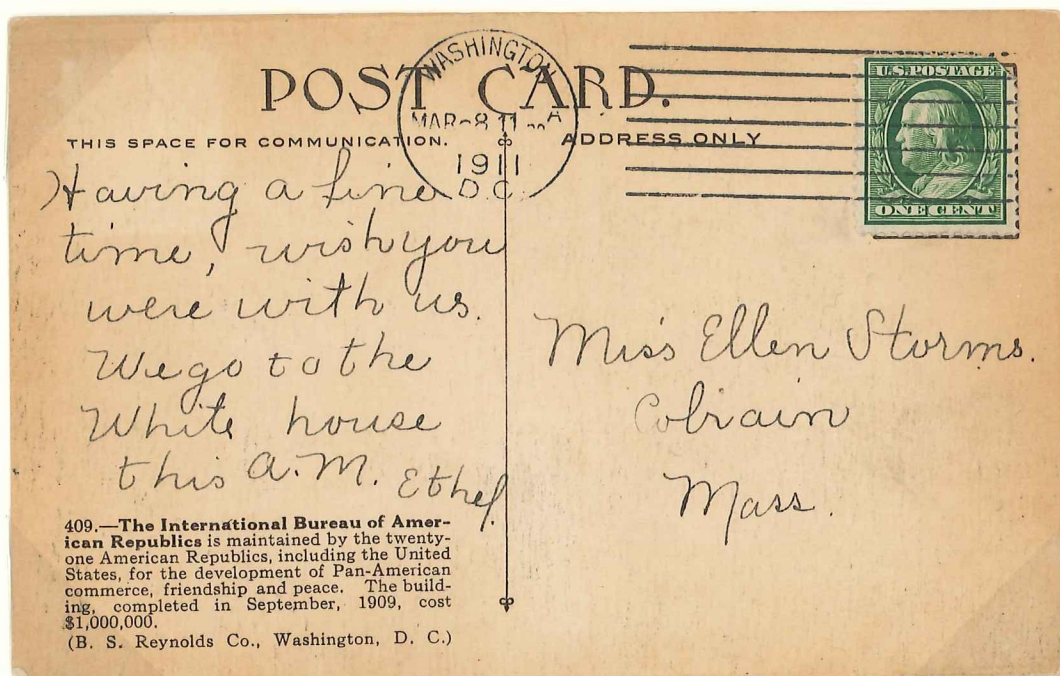
## B. F. Cummins Co.

## Early Postal Business

As early as 1905 the BFC Co. was developing sorting tables to improve the efficiency of facing the mail (arranging the covers with the stamps oriented identically). These tables were staffed with six clerks who were able to keep a fast canceling machine operating. These tables were sold to the USPOD at \$7500 apiece and represented a significant business for the BFC Co.

The records of the Congressional Investigation include quite a bit of testimony about these facing tables. Some postmasters felt they improved efficiency by as much as 33% and wanted more tables as soon as they were available. Other postmasters thought they weren't any better than a regular table and had no need for one.

On Feb. 20, 1911, J. T. Lynch and G. E. Bolton filed for a U. S. Patent on a "Combined Pick-up Table and Canceling Machine". Both inventors were employees of the USPOD but the patent was assigned to the BFC Co. The postcard below bears a postmark from a machine having similarities to some of the TMM Co postmarks (day and time on the same line) and bears a strong resemblance to some of the BFC postmarks which were introduced later in 1911.



Reg Morris, an expert in machine cancel design, felt that this was likely from the test of the facing table/canceling machine combination held shortly after the patent was filed (letter behind this page). He felt this postmark was made by the type of TMM Co. machine which printed the D type postmarks and that the clock and bellows which actuated the clock had been removed leaving had only the rotating dials to signify the time and date. Unfortunately in this example it is impossible to know the exact date of the postmark although it appears to be from March, 1911.

In the Congressional Investigation proceedings (p. 278) a letter was discussed from Feb. 6, 1911 in which C. P. Grandfield, First Assistant Postmaster General, instructs the postmaster of Chicago to instruct Mr. Lynch to proceed to Washington as early as convenient to demonstrate the new B. F. Cummins pick-up table. It seems likely that this card from their combination table was postmarked during this test. If so, it is the only reported mail piece known to have been postmarked by the canceling machine modified to be attached to this table.



The years 1911 and 1912 were very busy for the BFC Co. The post office department first requested bids be submitted by Oct. 31, 1911 for high, medium and low speed machines for the contract starting July 1, 1913. Cummins wanted to expand his business with this contract and began developing new machines based on improved technology. His plan included:

- o Sale of low speed, hand-powered machines directly to postmasters.
- o Development of new high and medium speed machines based on new technology.
- o Sale of machines directly to the post office. (This bypassed the bidding system and may have resulted from B. F. Cummins influence with the USPOD based on his brother Senator Albert Cummins of Iowa.)

Postmarks from the new hand powered BFC Co machines started to appear in 1911. These were based on patents by Rehak and Madigan, postal clerks who assigned their patents to the BFC Co., and differed significantly from the earlier TMM technology.

These were sold to postmasters of small offices and may have been purchased to simplify the job of postmarking mail. It is also thought that some postmasters wanted to provide their town the distinction of having a postmarking machine. These early machines made a variety of distinctive postmarks. Most had straight line killers but some featured oval dials, flags, wavy killers. There were even a few slogan cancels. These hand-cranked machines were a large portion of Cummins business with over 700 different towns having used them.

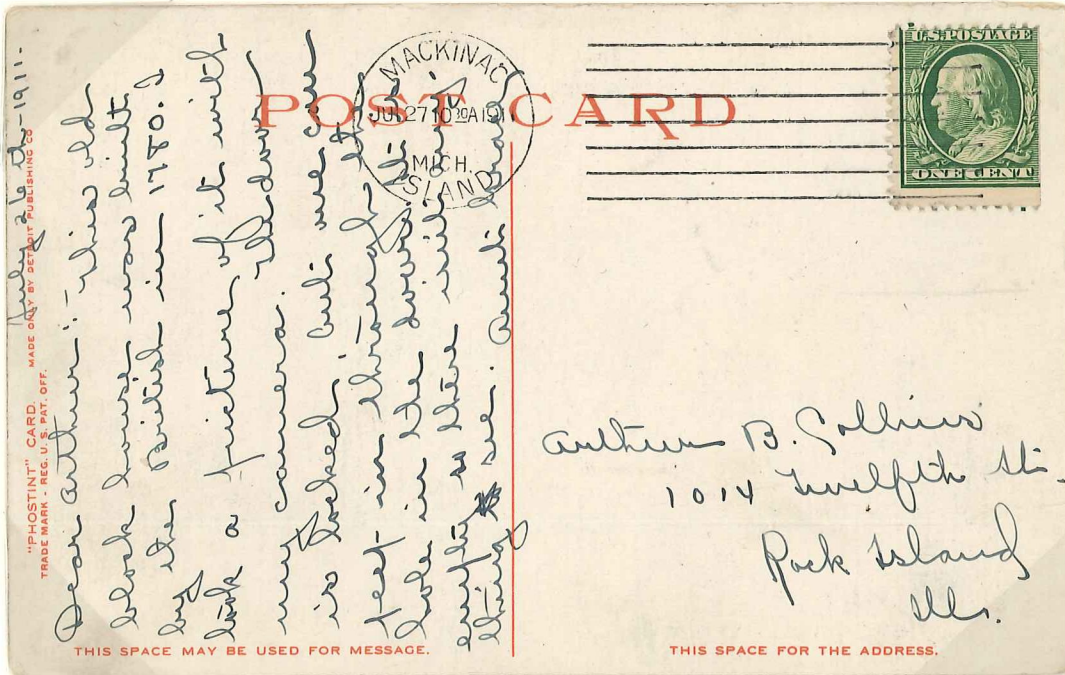
In addition to obtaining business in the US, B. F. Cummins was also interested in International opportunities. Examples are known from various countries including Panama, Honduras, and Sweden. Machines were also used in the Canal Zone.

G-121

Month, Day, Time in dial  
Year in killer



7 Horizontal Lines

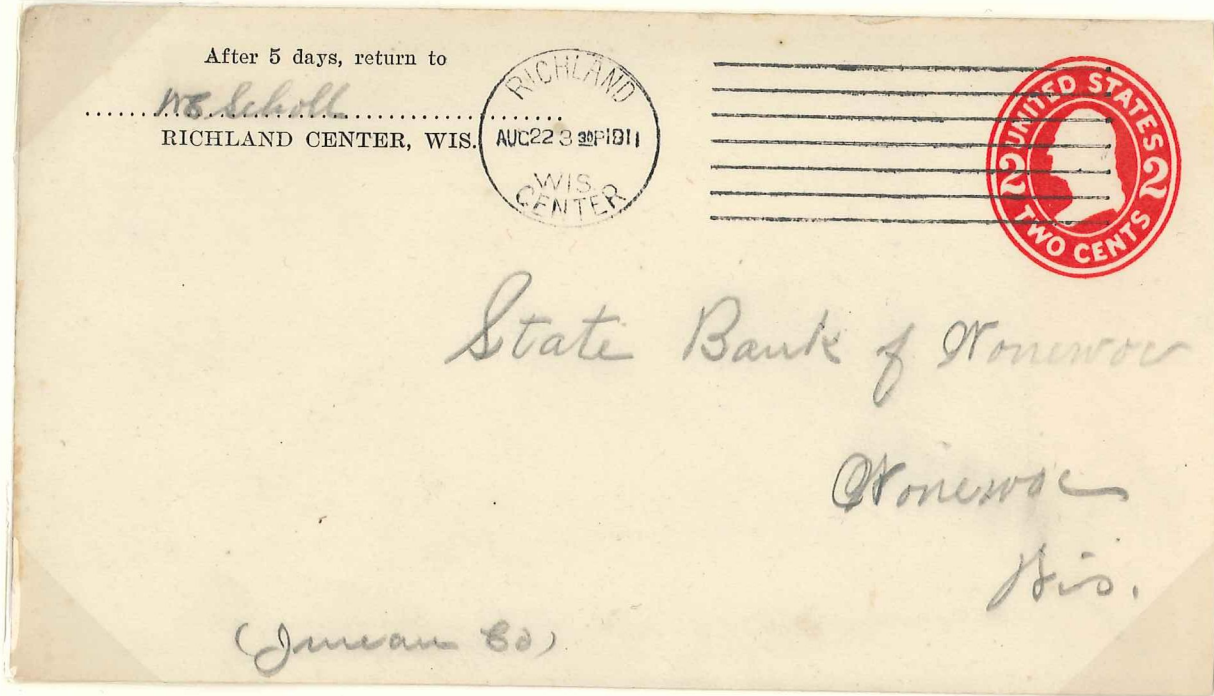


The first known BFC postmarks are from Mackinac Island, MI in July 1911. The second name of the town (Island) has been moved to the bottom of the dial below the state, this is known as a Gb postmark.

Tests of new postmarking machines were often run in a convenient post office. Mackinac Island is a popular vacation spot and it is possible that tests were run there while either B. F. Cummins or one of his employees was vacationing.



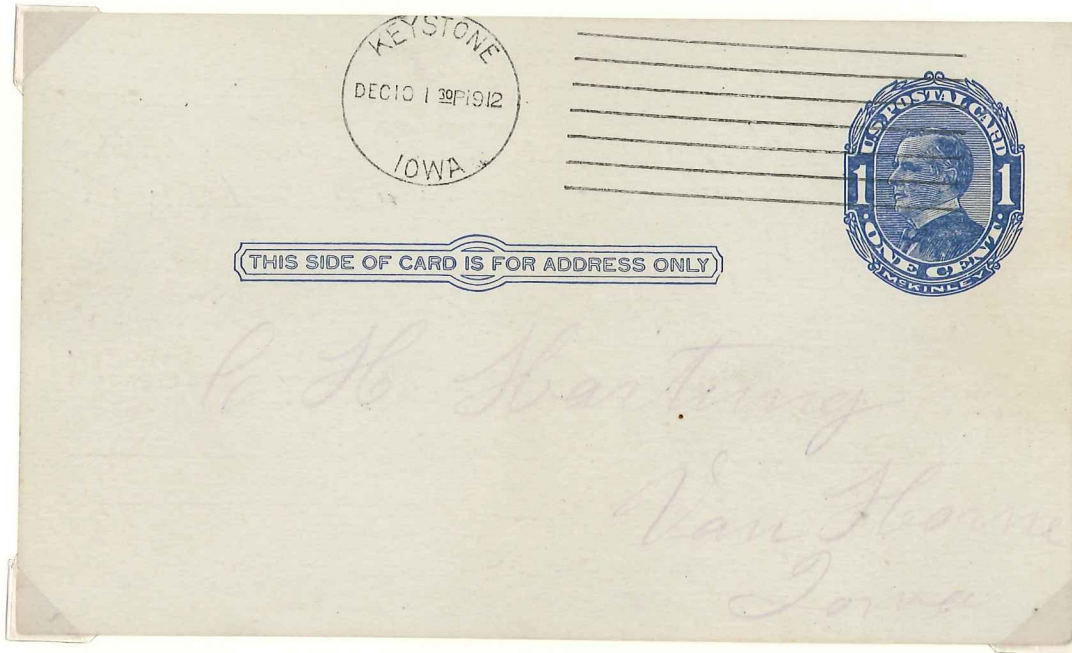
After the initial introduction at Mackinac Island additional machines impressing a G style dial were used at seventeen different small towns throughout the United States. All were introduced in 1911.



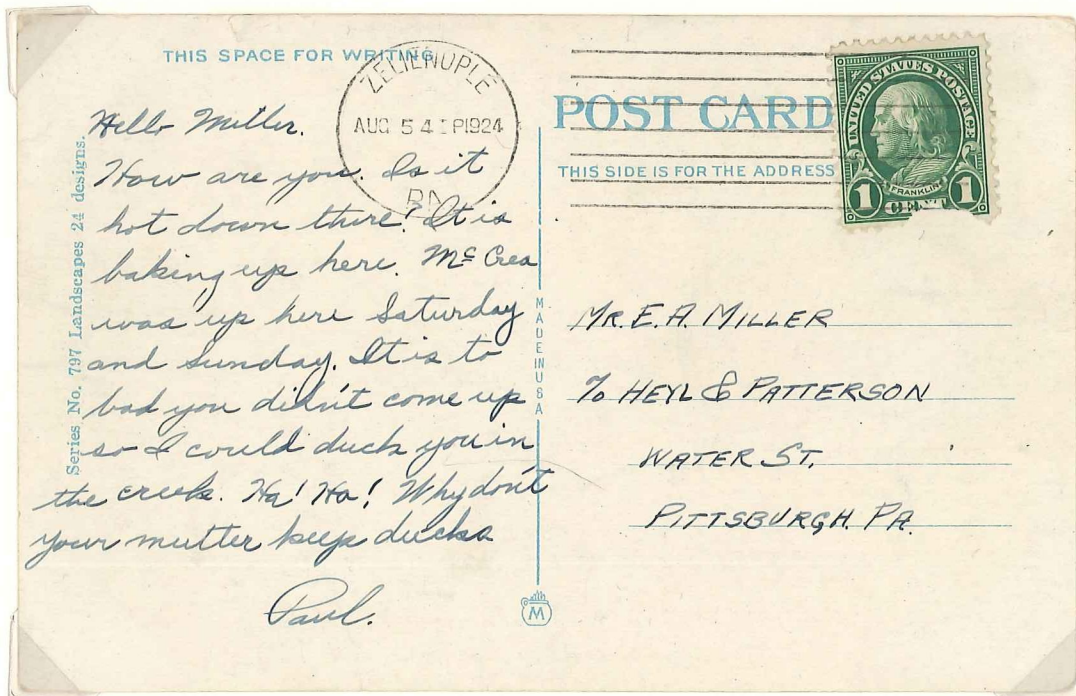
ERU from Richland Center, WI.



Towns with shorter names were able to use a G postmark, the state now moved to the bottom of the dial. ERU from Spring Grove, PA used as a receiving mark on a postcard from Italy.

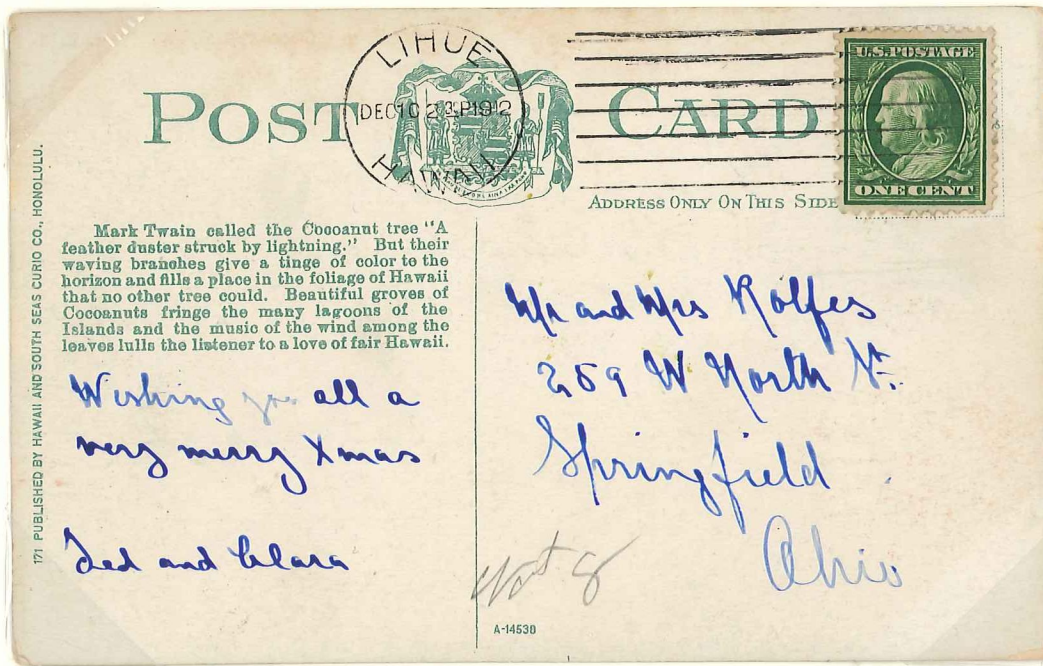


Example from Keystone, IA.

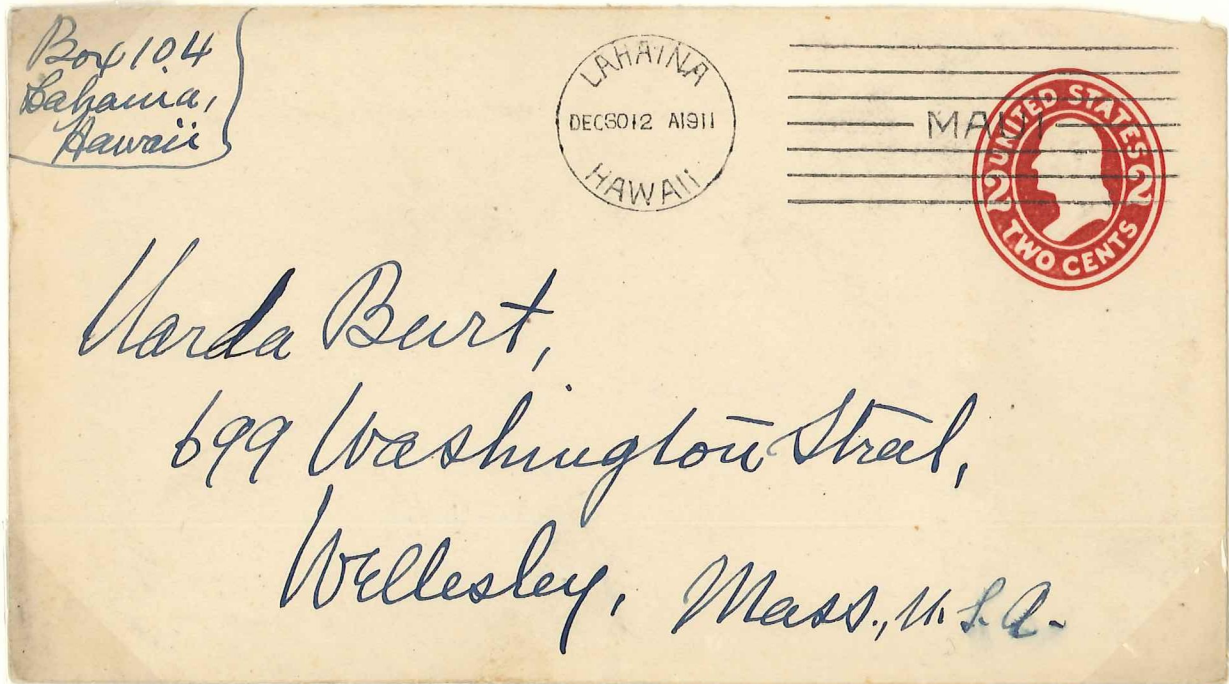


Some of these machines had extended lives. This one in Zelienople, PA was still being used in 1924.





Machines were purchased by post offices as far as Hawaii as shown by this example from Lihue.



Lahaina, HI purchased a Model #2 and it was in use by 1911. As we will see later, this machine was later fitted with a flag cancel die. This is the only reported example with the island name, MAUI, in the killer bars. There are no other G style postmarks with any text in the killer portion of the postmark.

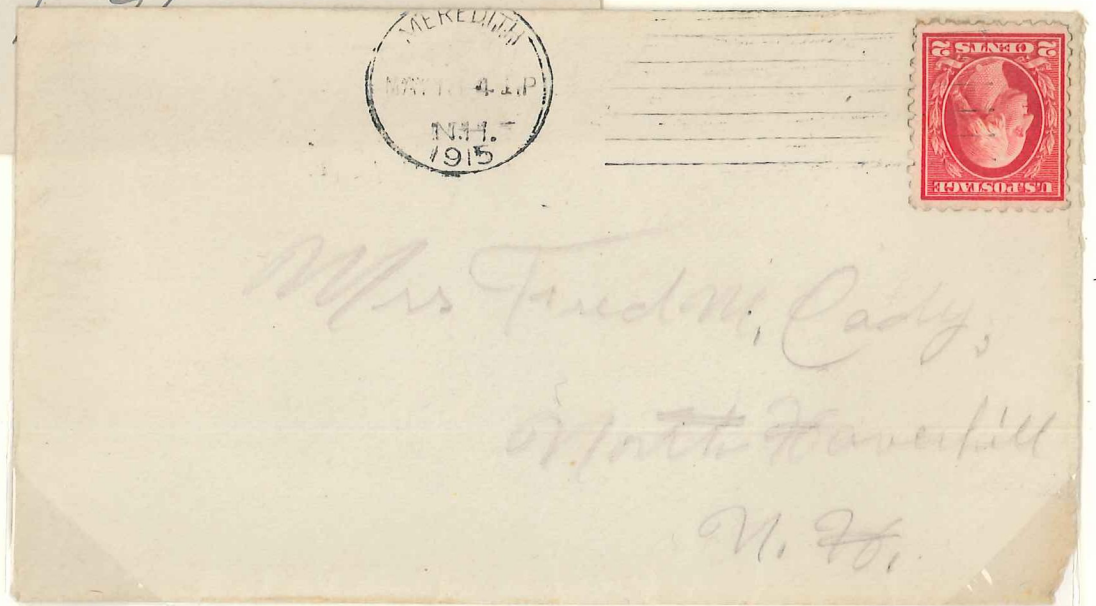
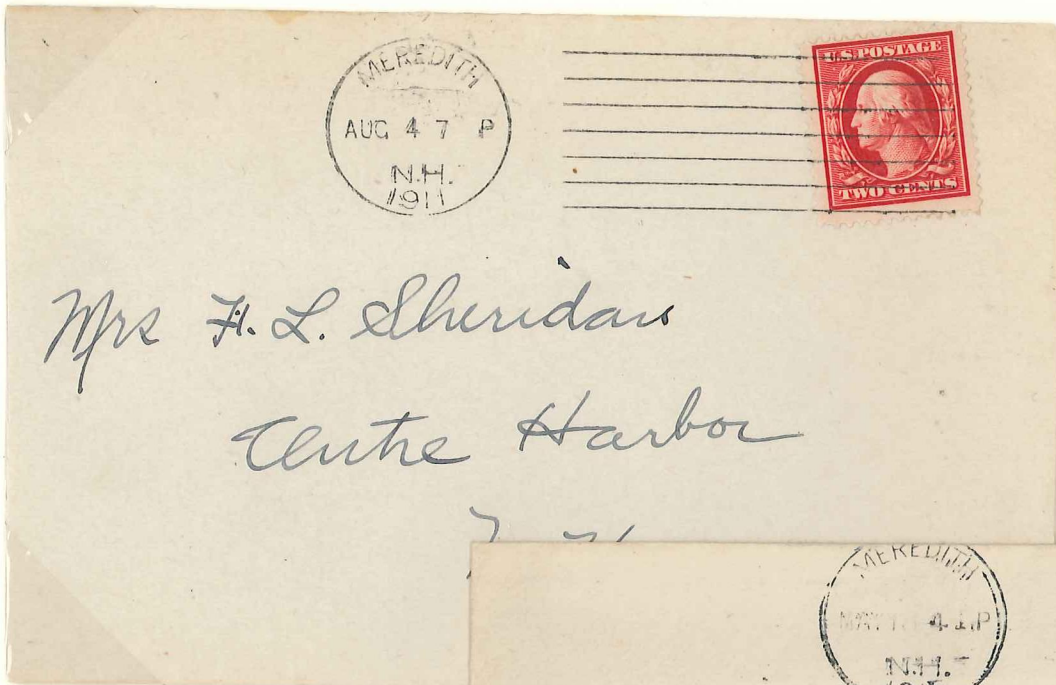
Soon after the introduction of the first BFC Co. machines, a new dial began to appear with the year at the bottom of the dial, classed as an E-121 postmark. These were introduced in 7 towns, again all in 1911.

E-121

Month, Day, Time  
in Center of Dial  
State above bottom  
Year at Bottom

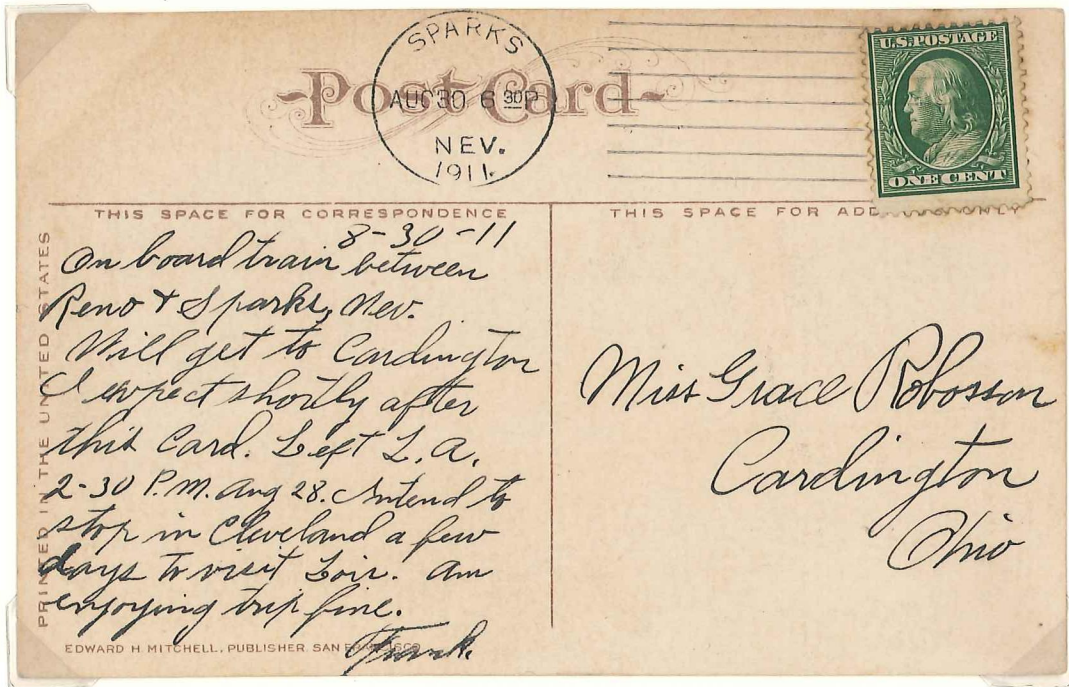


7 Horizontal  
Lines

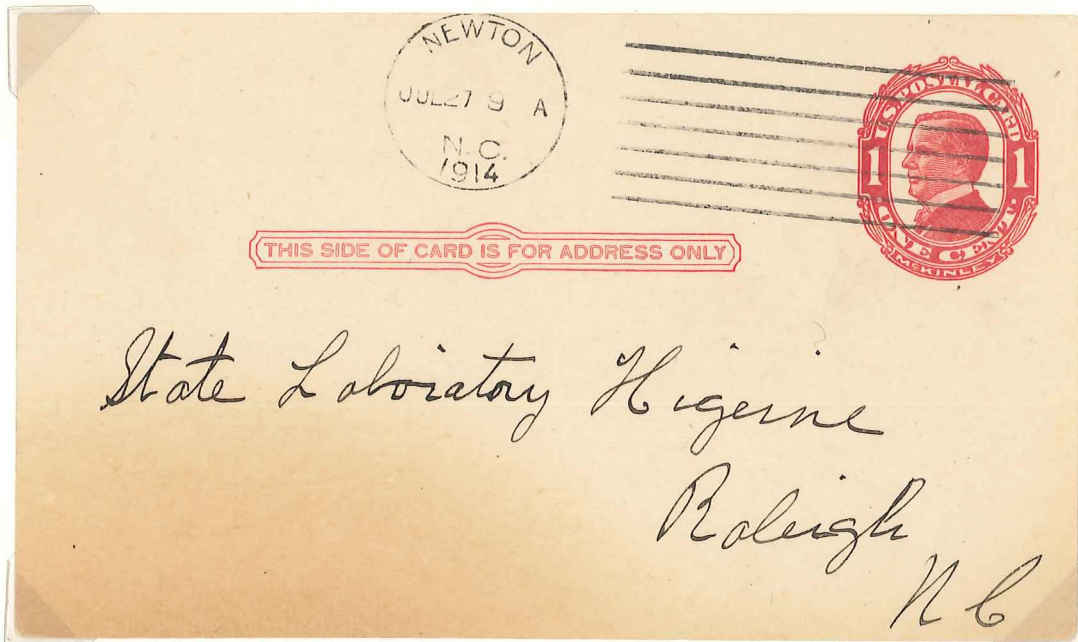


ERU and LRU of E-121 postmarks from Meredith, NH





ERU from Sparks, NV.



LRU from Newton, NC

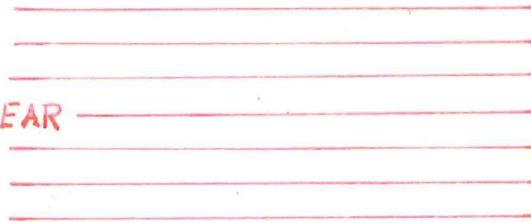
The F style postmarks followed soon after the E postmarks. These reverted to some of the design of the early C dial postmarks with the year inserted in a gap in the left side of the center killer bar.

F-131

Month, Day, Time in  
Center of Dial →



YEAR

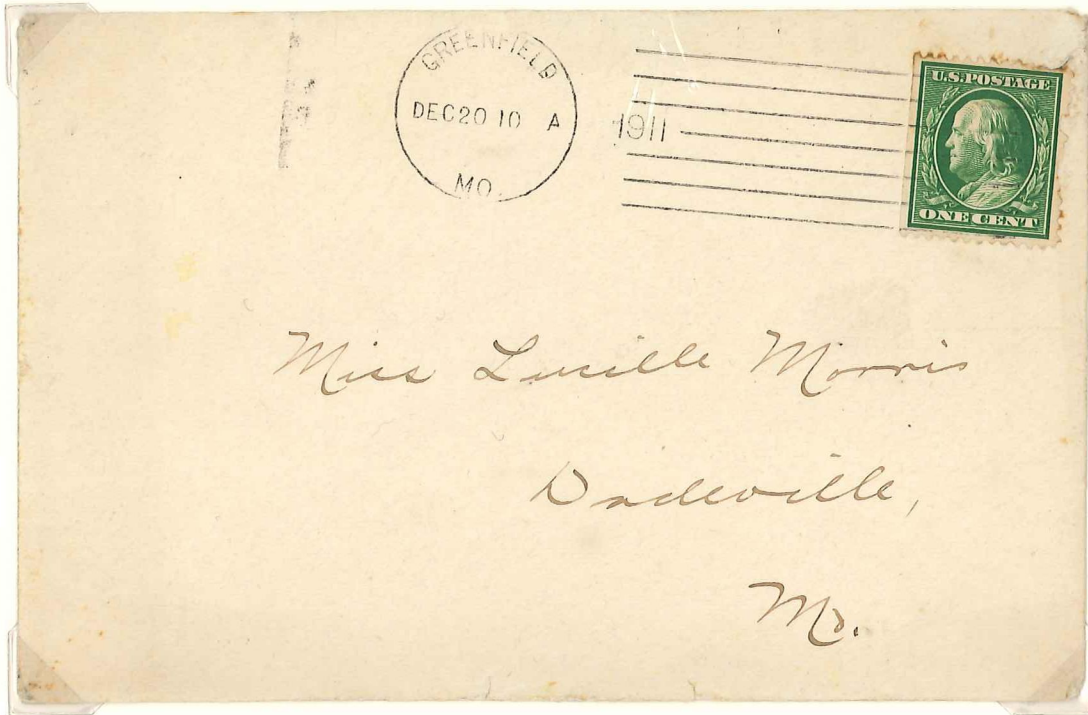


7 Horizontal Lines  
Center Line Cut at  
Left for Year

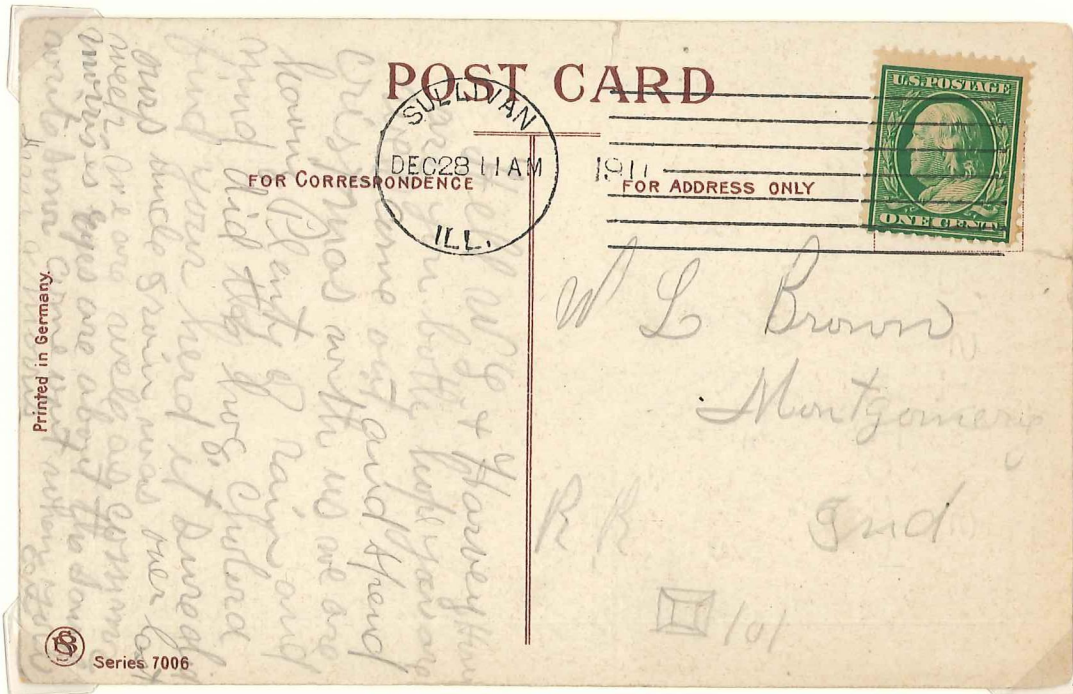


F-131 from Grayling, MI.

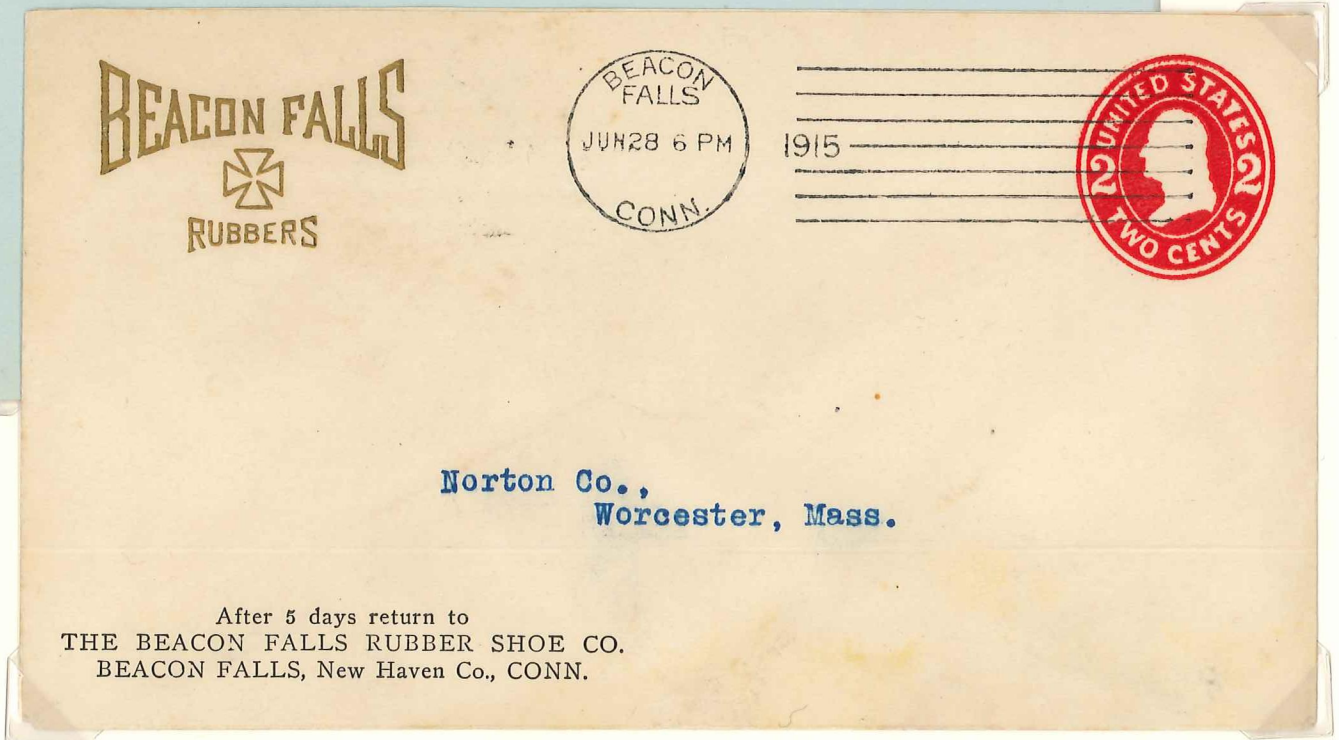
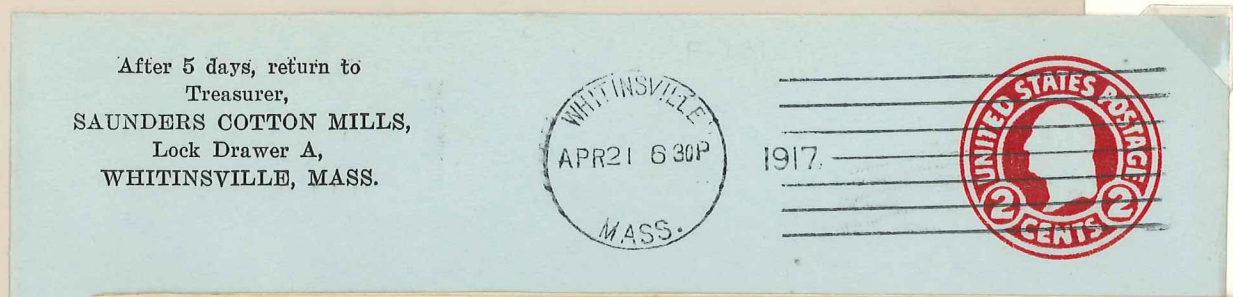
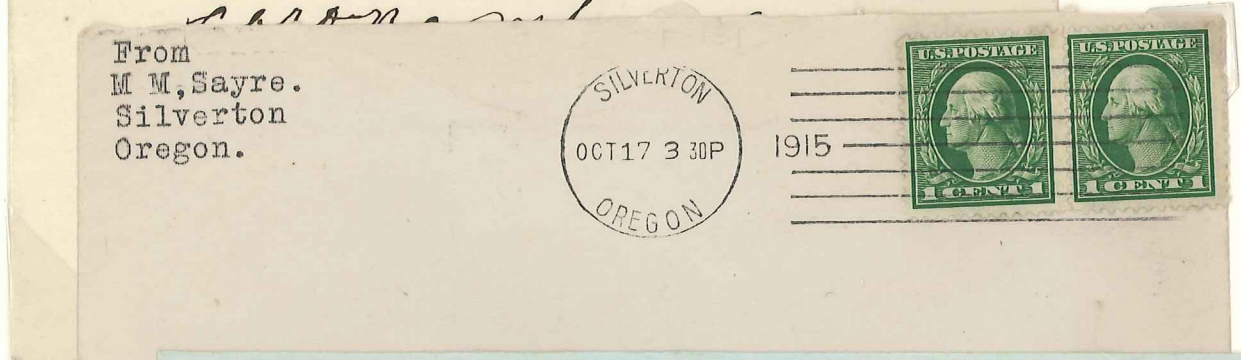
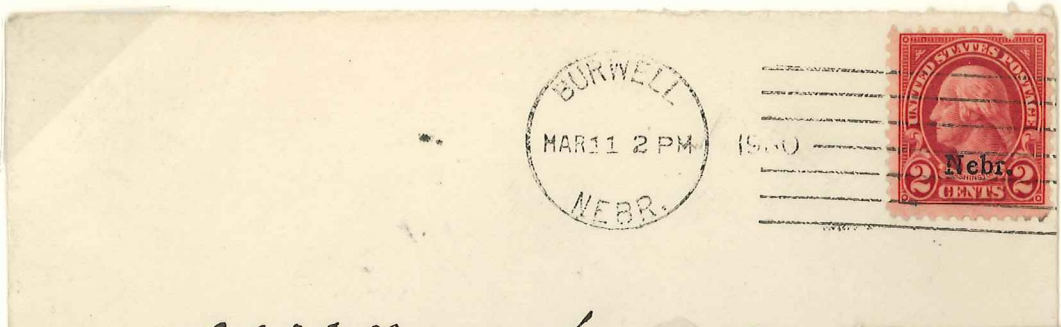




ERU of F-131 postmark from Greenfield, MO

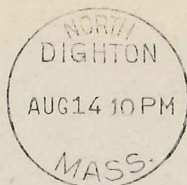


F-131 postmark ERU from Sullivan, IL



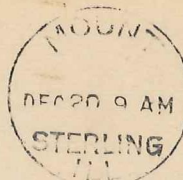


After 5 days, return to  
MOUNT HOPE FINISHING CO.,  
P. O. Box 242,  
NORTH DIGHTON, MASS.



*Boston Belling Co.*

After 5 days, return to  
J. K. PLATT & BRO.,  
136 Main Street,  
PORT JEFFERSON, N. Y.



THIS SPACE FOR WRITING MESSAGES



135299



THIS SPACE FOR ADDRESS ONLY

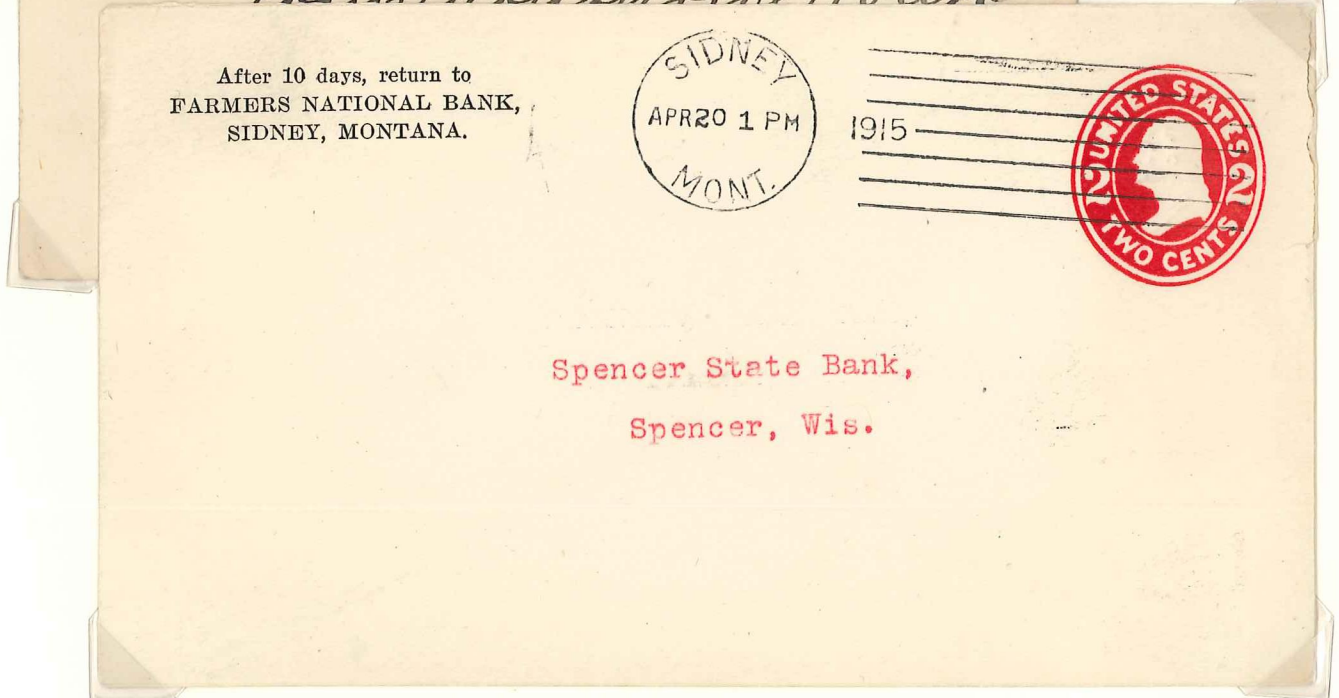
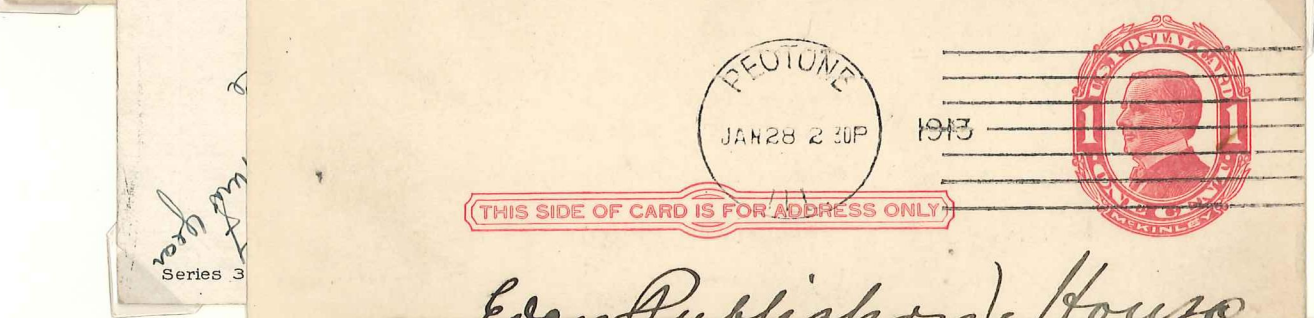
*Dear Auntie  
a nice time.  
much for excitement  
went rowing this  
morning and got  
some pretty shells  
It is a perfect day -  
with lovely clouds.  
Have taken a few  
pictures - Went to  
the movie last  
night but they were  
awful. Hope you  
are feeling well -  
I'll drop a call soon  
Winnie. Love  
Winnie*

*Ms Susan L. Beldew  
Walford  
New Hampshire  
c/o Ala Hubbard.*

Four different subtypes exist for the F dials used in towns with two word names. The first word is always at the top of the dial.

- Fa- Second name below first at top of dial (79 towns)
- Fb- Second name at bottom of dial (10 towns)
- Fc- Second name at bottom of dial above state (3 towns)
- Fd- Station name at bottom of dial (1 town)





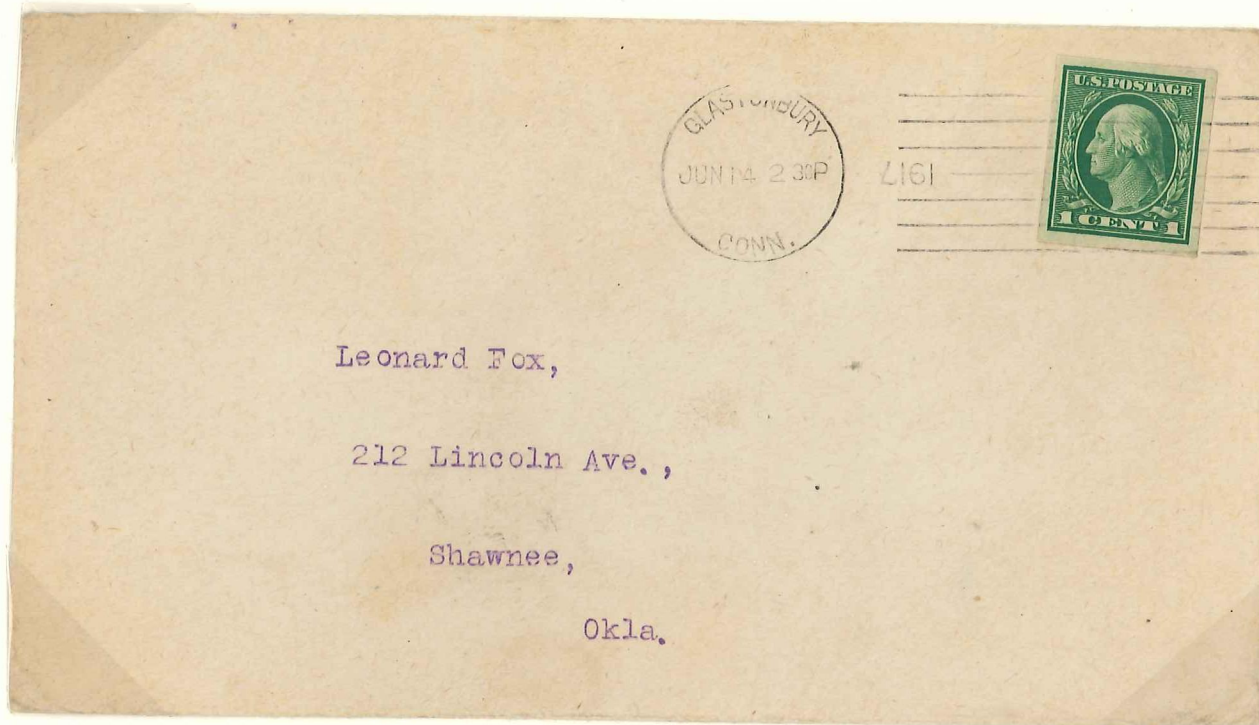
Only reported examples from Morton, PA, Potter Place, NH, Peotone, IL, and Sidney, MT.



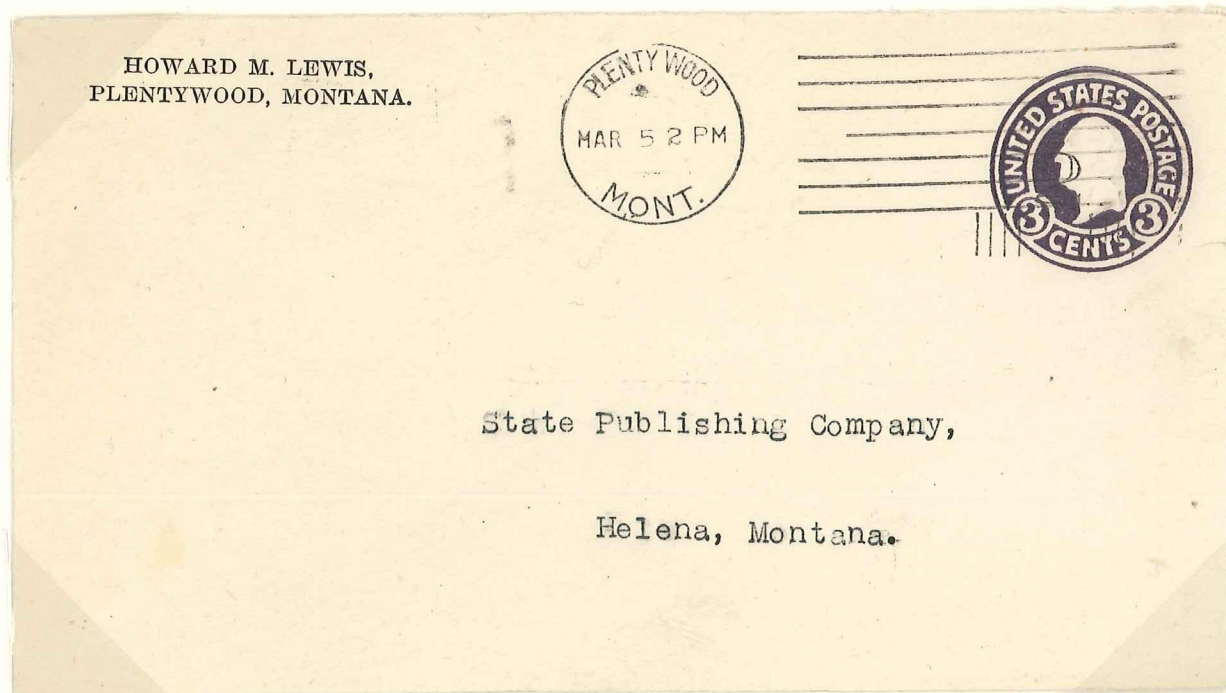
B. F. Cummins Co.

Hand Powered Machines

The removable year die in the killer bars gave rise to various errors made when setting up the machines.

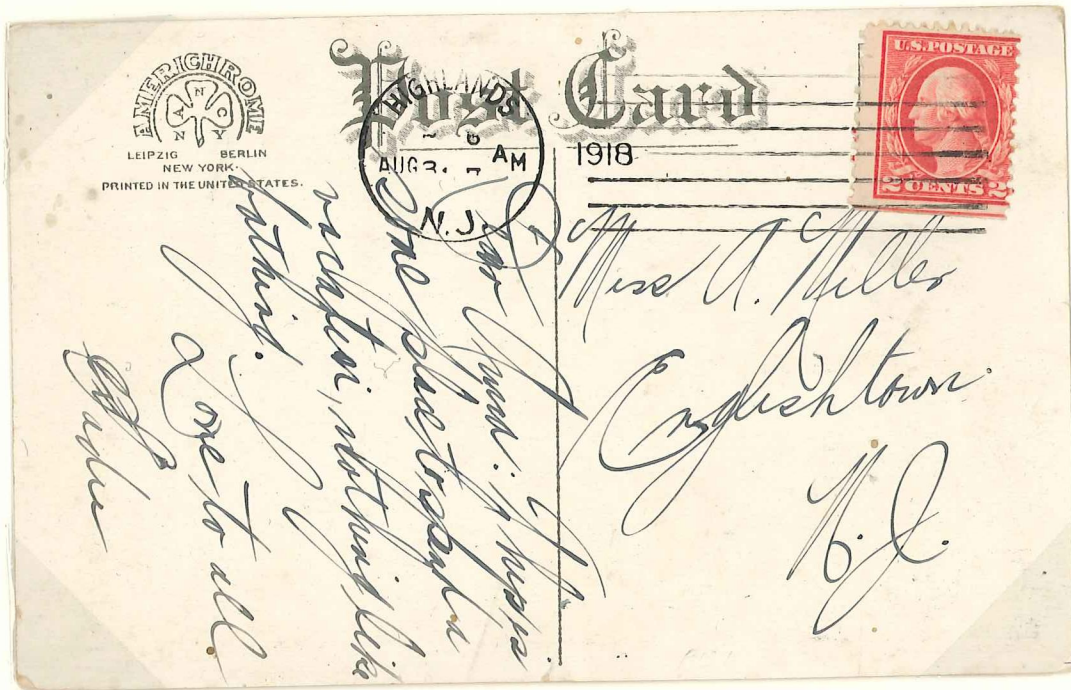


F-131 from Glastonbury, CT with inverted year.

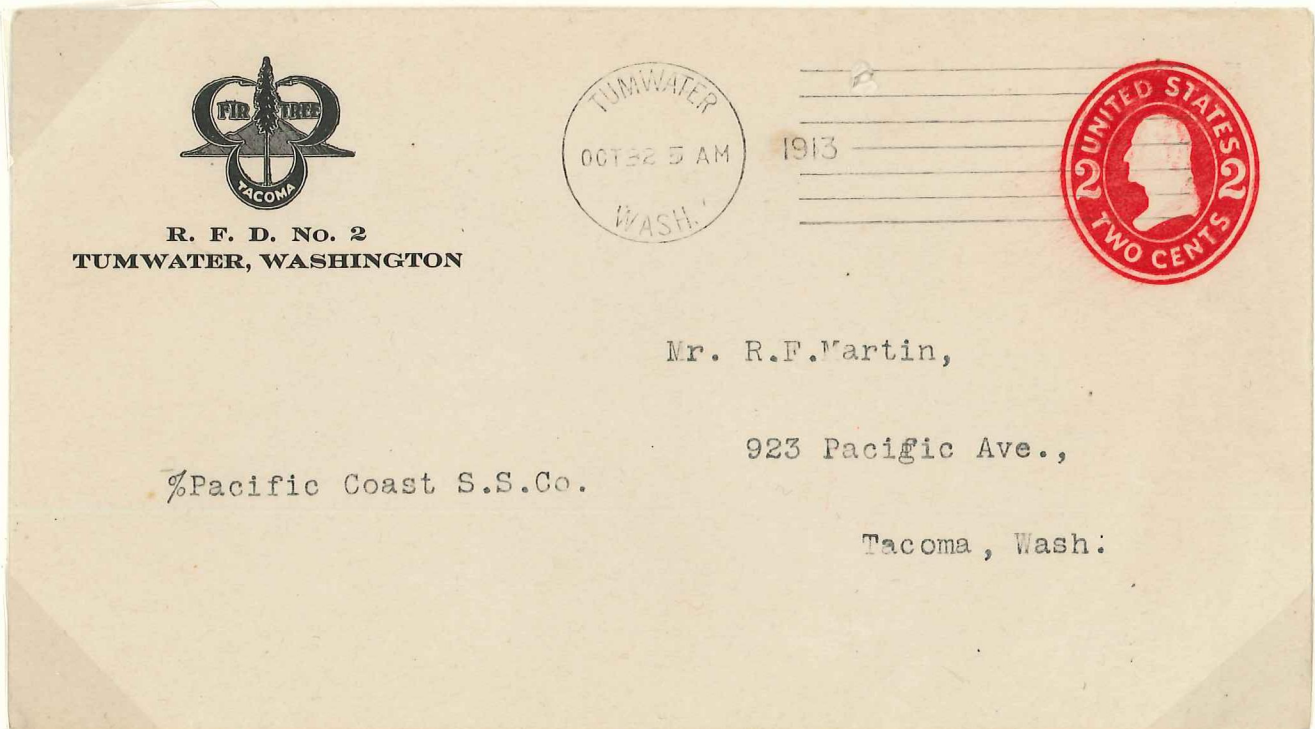


Omitted year from Plentywood, MT.

The BFC Co. machines never had a working clock but did have mechanisms by which the date and time could be rotated into position. This is different from many of the machines which had removable slugs which were inserted into the machine for the date and time.



Highlands, NJ F-131 postmark with the rotating dials causing the date and time to print above and below the dial centerline. Note that the A and the M of PM appear to individually movable.



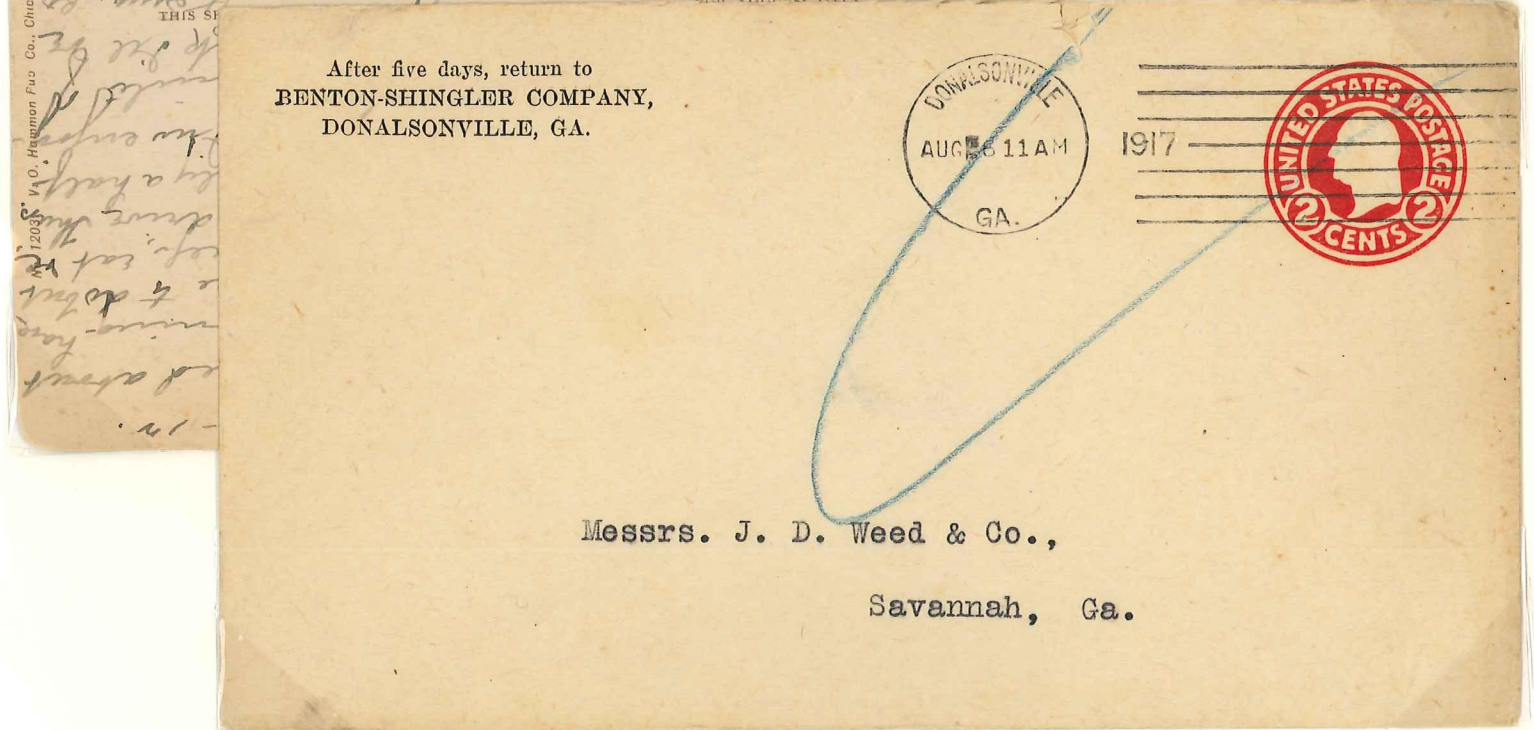
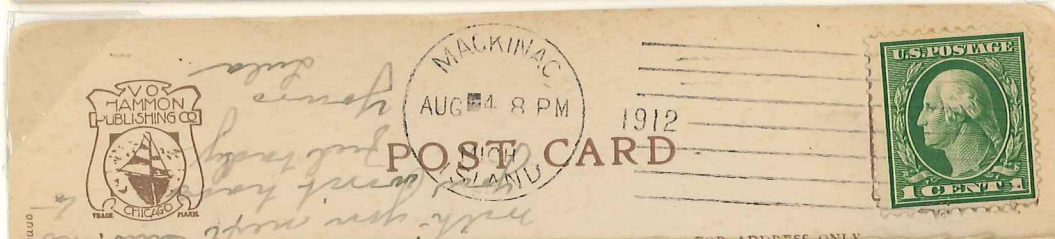
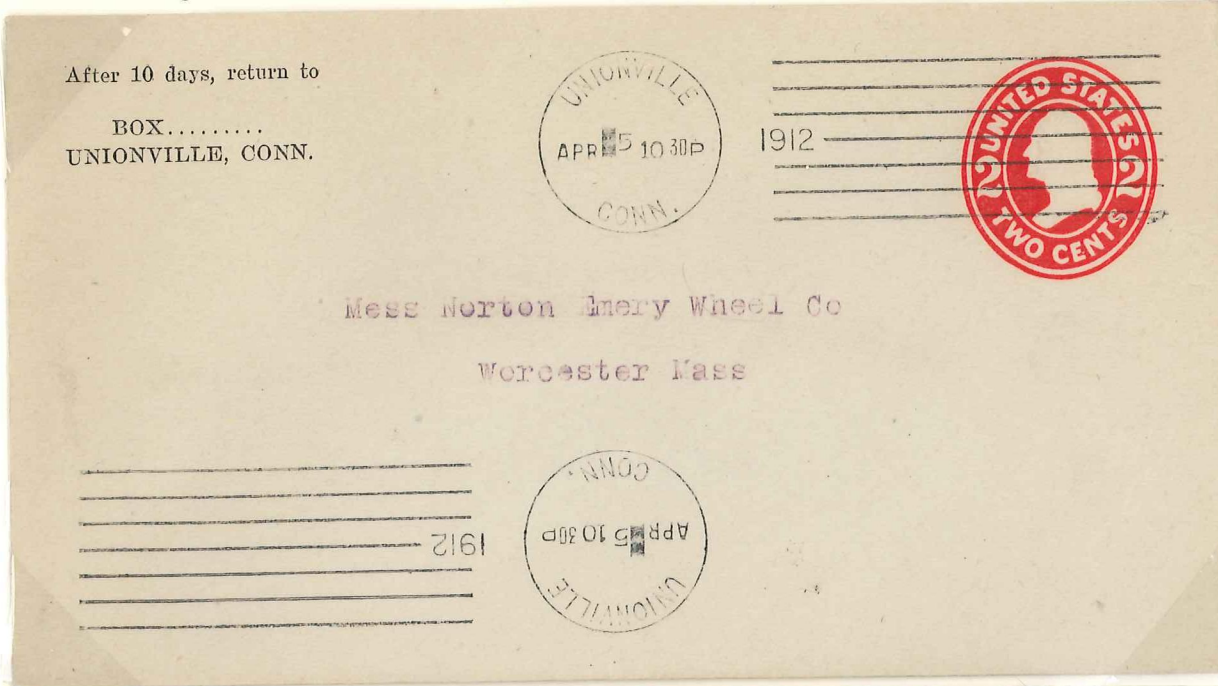
Here the dials were rotated forming a straight line but the date reads Oct. 32.



B. F. Cummins Co.

Hand Powered Machines

One of the positions in the rotation of the date must have been a raised surface which printed as a solid rectangle.

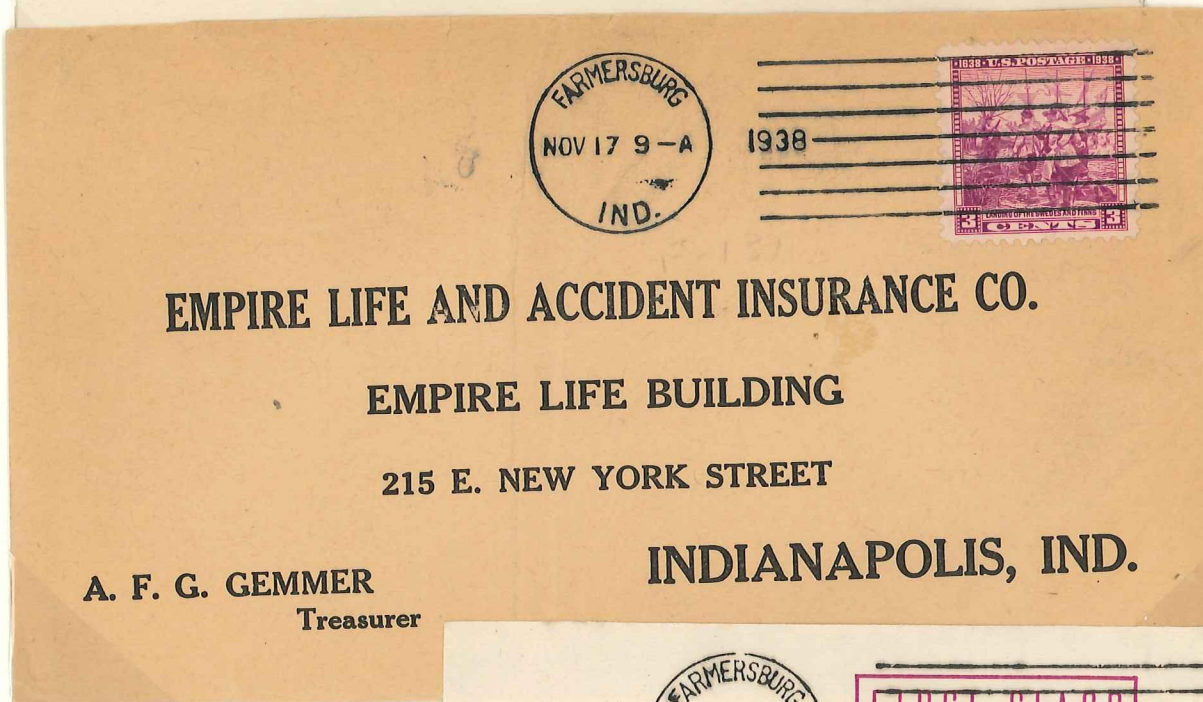


Unionville, CT, Donaldsonville, GA and Mackinac Island, MI with rectangular bars in place of the first digit of the date.

Small  
IND.



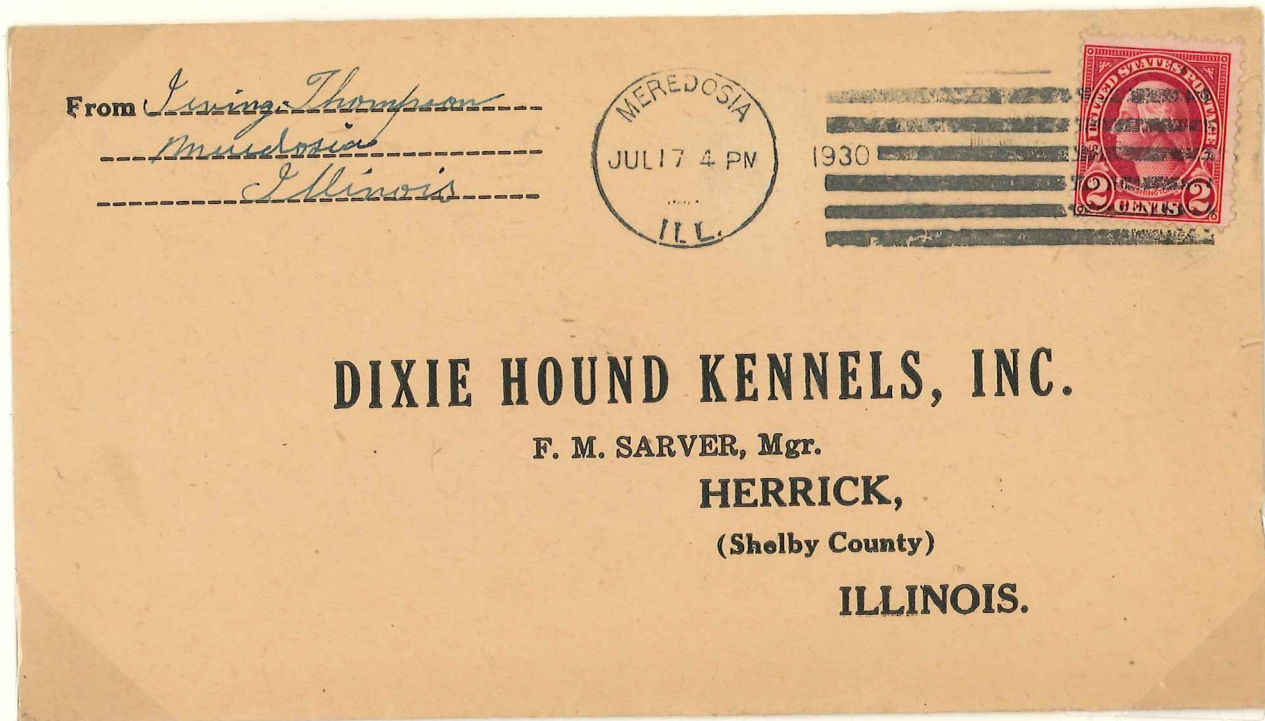
Large  
IND.



Serifed 1947.

The dial in Farmersbug, IN was changed as shown by these examples from 1916 and 1938, easily noticed in the size of IND.  
The second dial continued into the 1940's when it was used with a serified year.



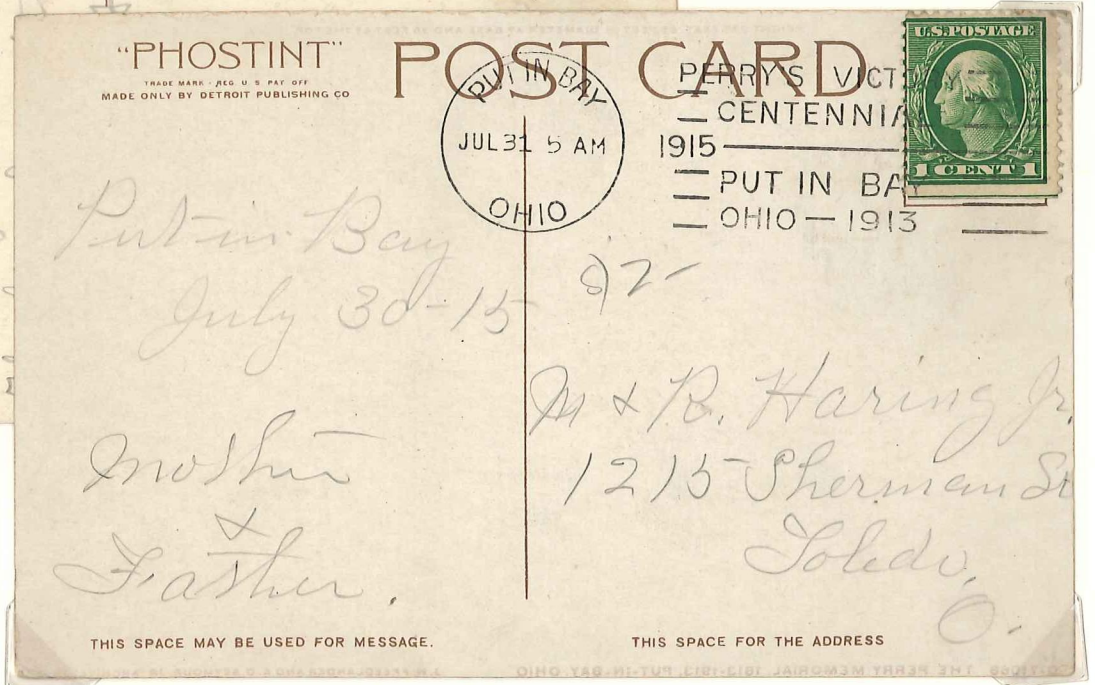
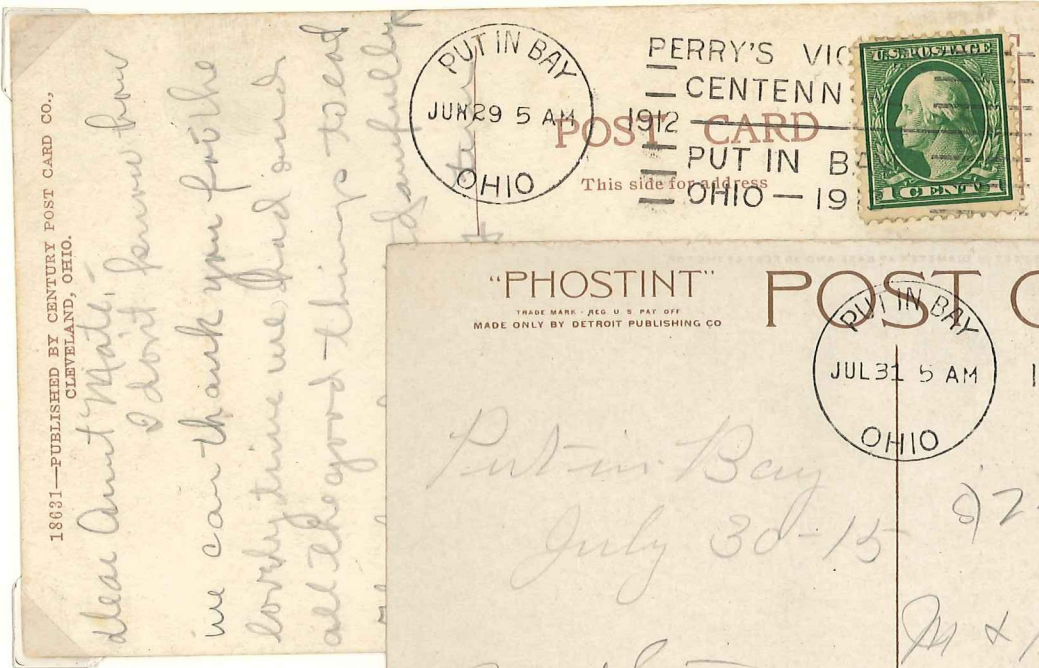


Meredosia, IL used a BFC Co. F-131 postmark into the 1930's and the killer appears to have been a rubber replacement.

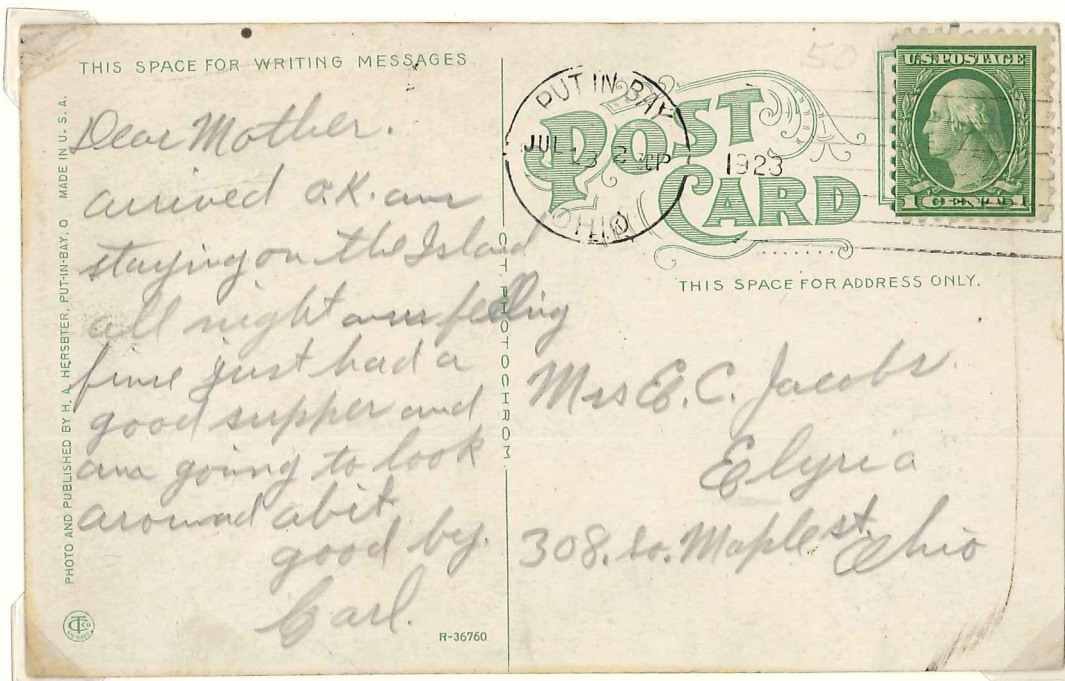


By 1935 it appears they had problems getting a new year slug and the year in this example has a very large font.





A slogan cancel based on the F-131 postmarks was used in Put In Bay, OH to commemorate Perry's Victory Centennial. The Centennial was held from July 4 through Sept. 10, 1913, postmarks are known both before and after the celebration. Postmarks are only reported from the summer vacation season.



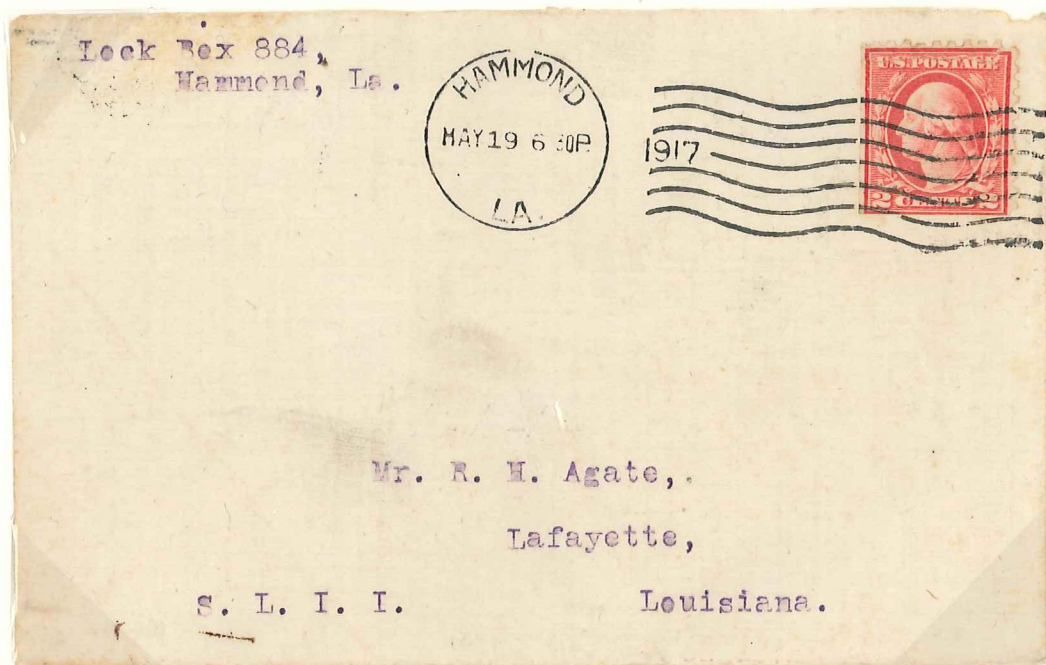
Following the centennial the killer was replaced with a standard 131 killer and used until 1925.



**B. F. Cummins Co.**

**Hand Powered Machines**

With few exceptions the B. F. Cummins (and the TMM Co.) machines applied a killer made up of horizontal lines. Two postmarks with wavy lines are known.

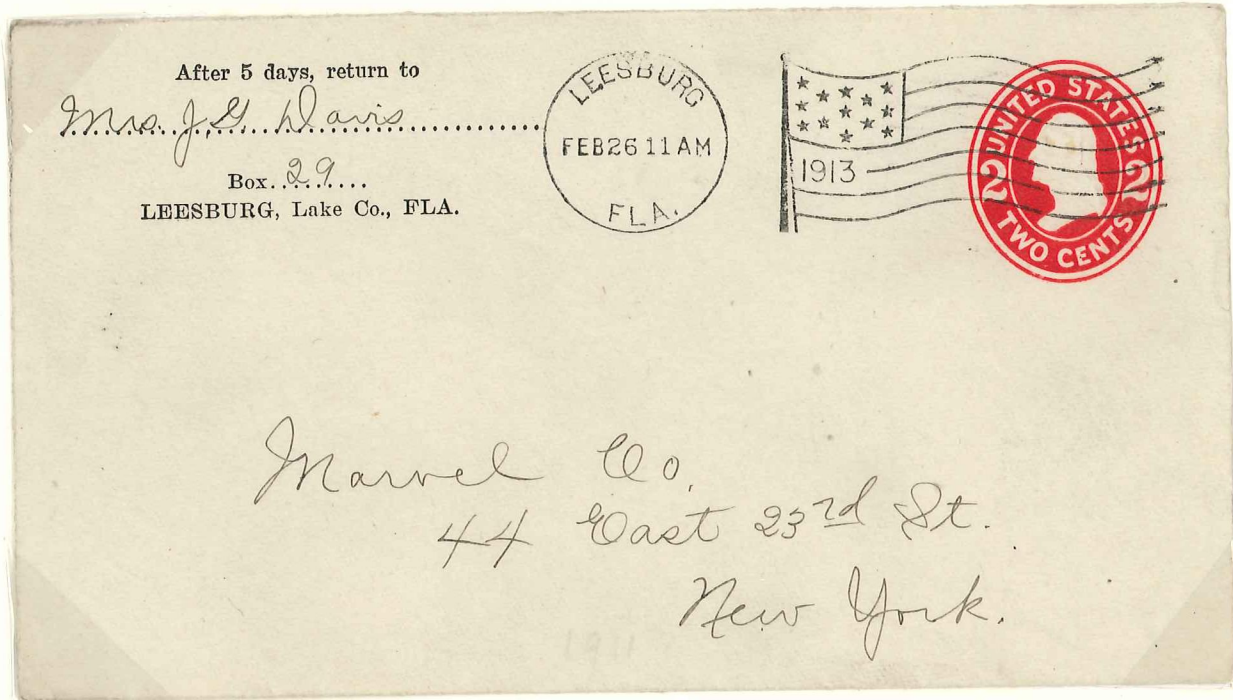


**Hammond, LA used the only F type postmark with wavy bars, a 132 killer. This killer still had a diespace for the year. Examples are known from 3 months in 1917. This is the latest reported use.**

**B. F. Cummins Co.**

**Hand Powered Machines**

The American Postal Supply Co. had found great success at this time with their flag cancels. Two flag cancels were used on Cummins machines, called a 201 killer.



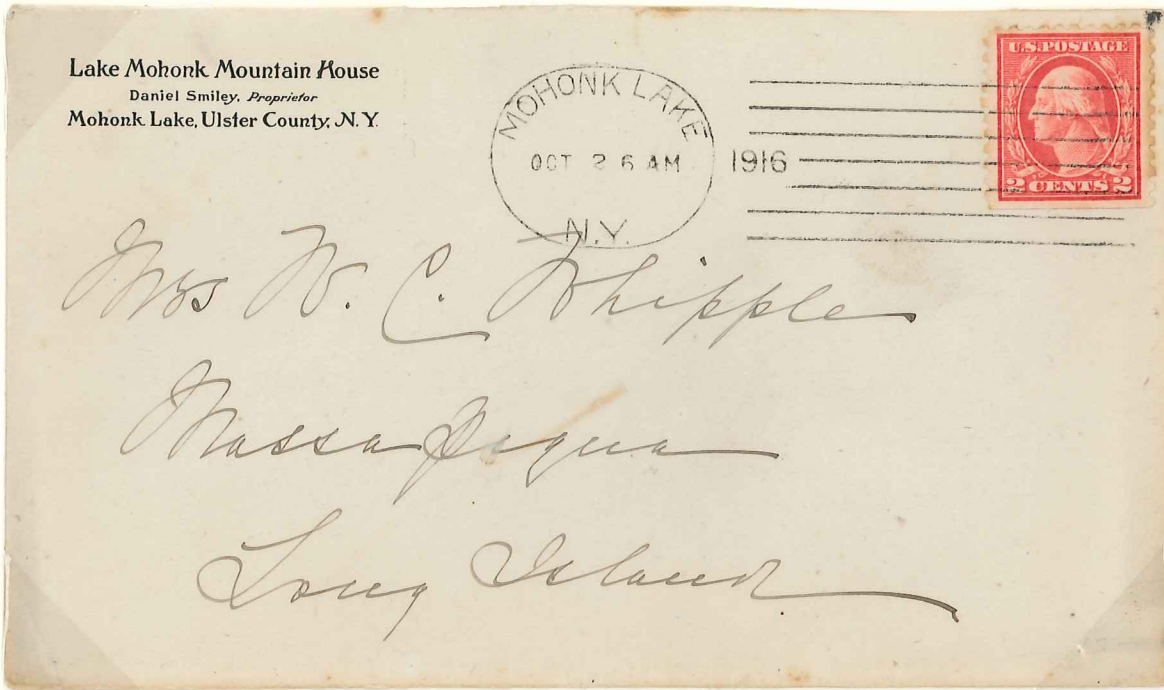
Leesburg, FL F-201



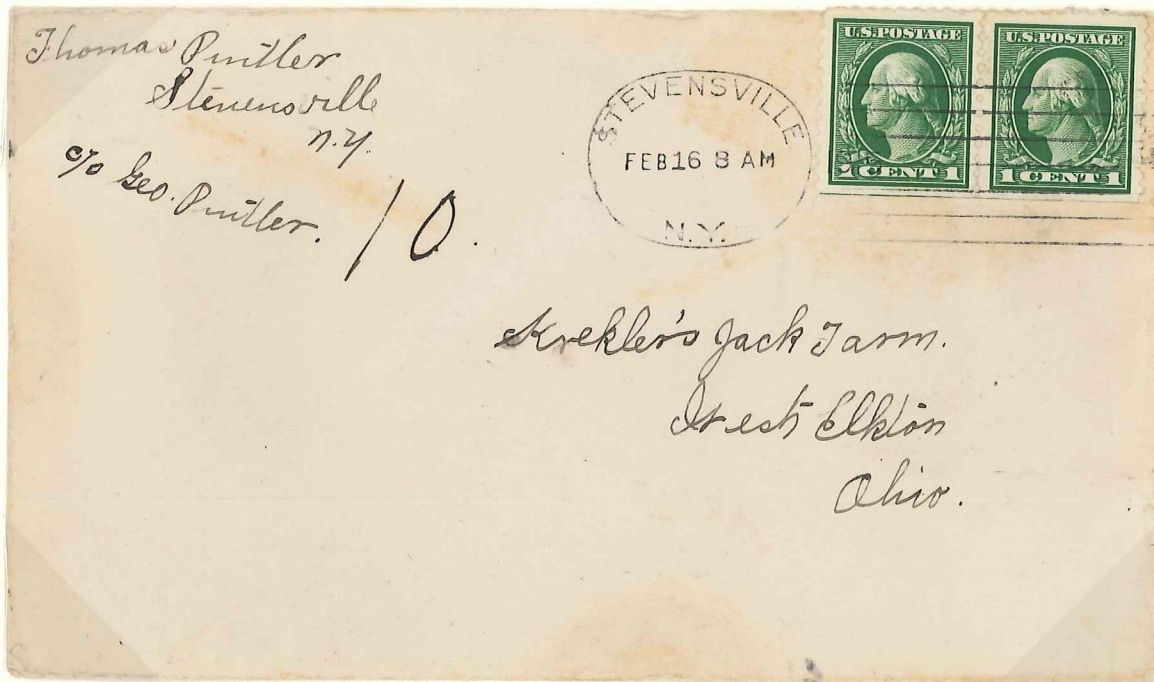
F-201 from Lahaina, HI. The scan shows the dial portion of the cover shown earlier from Lahaina having MAUI in the killer bars. The dials in both postmarks are identical.



Several towns were also known to use a distinctive oval 'H dial' postmark with these 131 type killers.



Mohonk Lake, NY H-131

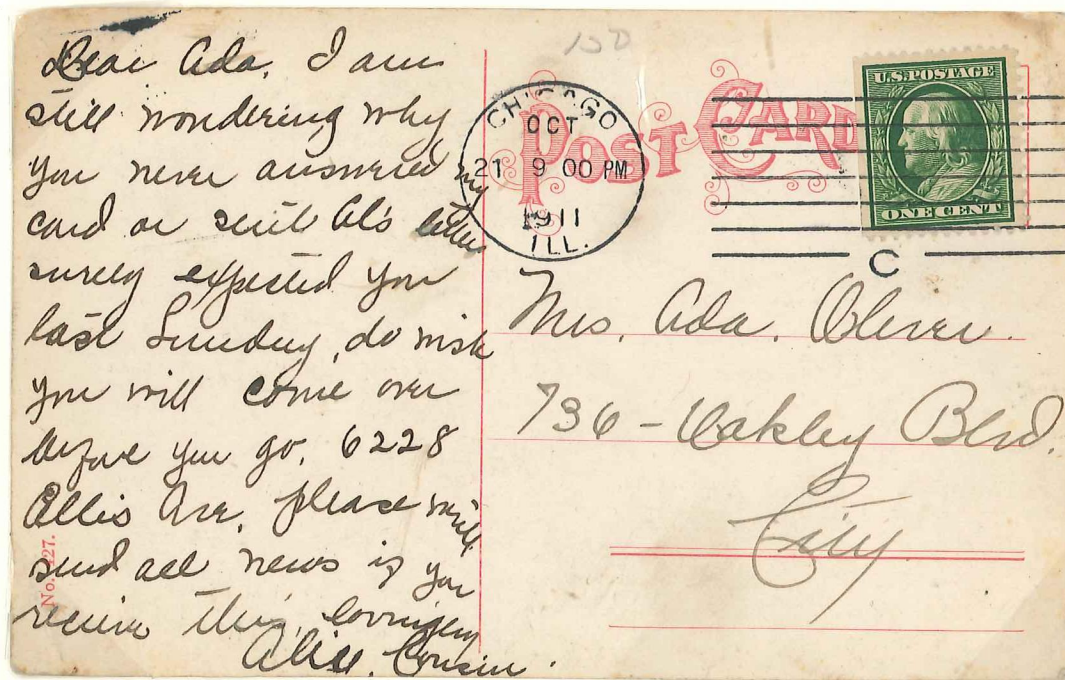


Stevensville, NY H-131 postmark

The contract to lease the TMM machines was set to expire on June 30, 1913 and the BFC Co wanted to be in a position to obtain much more business. B. F. Cummins himself had suggested that bids for that contract be opened before Jan. 1912 so companies would be able to build the machines needed to fulfill any successful bids. Bids were requested for high, medium, and low speed machines to be submitted by Oct. 31, 1911. At this time the BFC Co. had only the TMM Co technology suitable for high speed applications.

Rather than submitting a bid for high, medium and low speed machines by the October 31, 1911 deadline, Cummins submitted a single price to meet all of the USPOD's needs. This bid was accompanied by a 'secret letter' which detailed the prices for each machine category. Competitors complained that the bid did not qualify and should be dismissed. However, the bid was the lowest received and the USPOD did not want to dismiss it. A legal review by the Assistant Attorney General was begun.

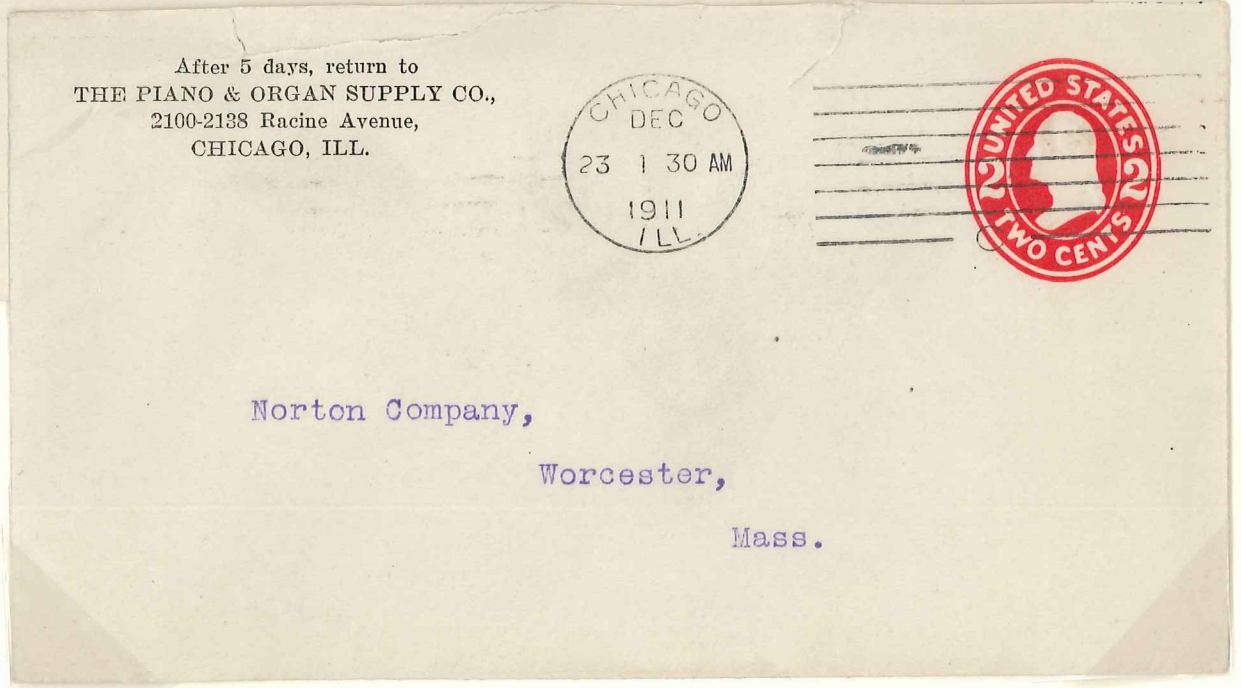
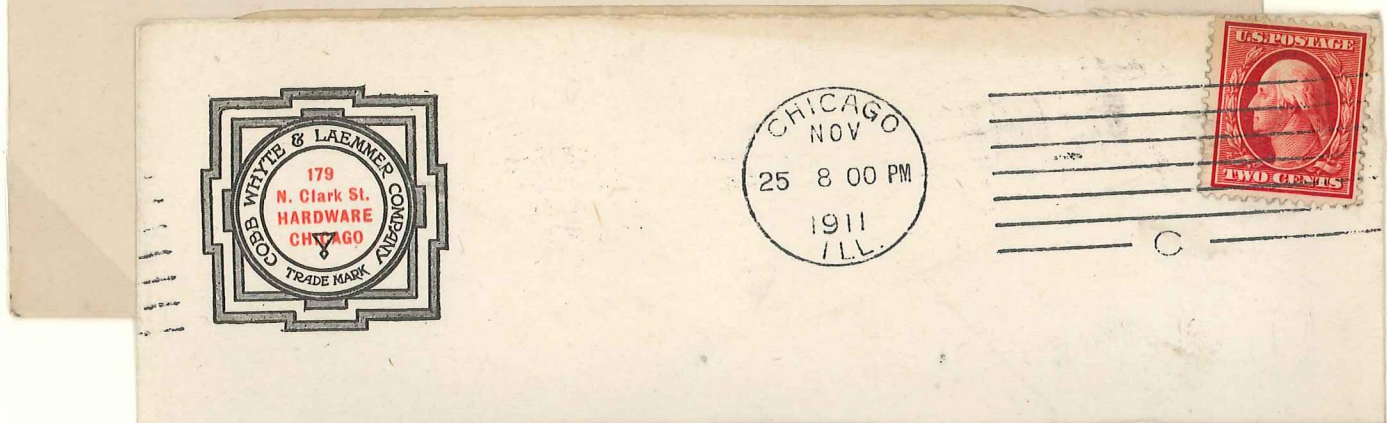
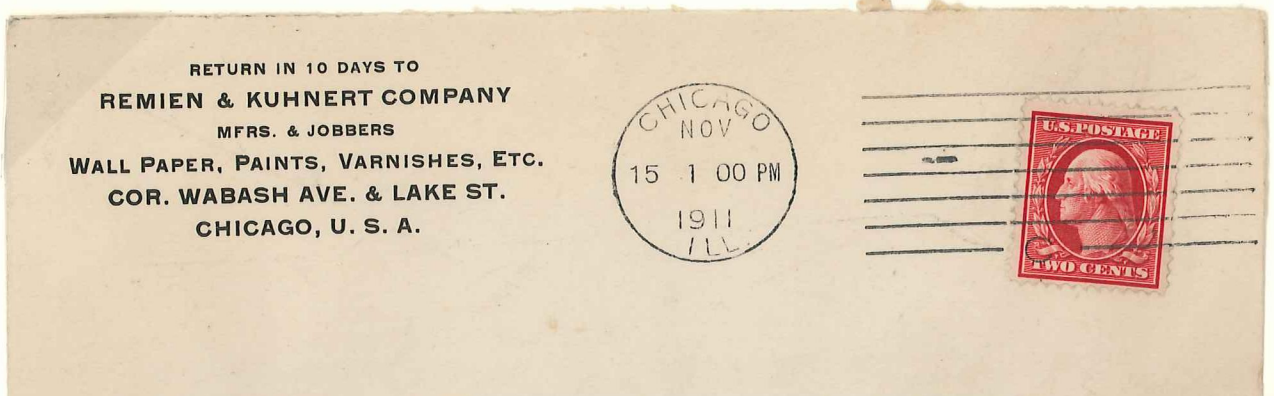
Continued testing with TMM machines started the efforts directed towards winning this contract.



ERU of un-numbered Chicago D-104 postmark. Chicago, at this time was using 25, numbered machines at the main post office. This machine was used for four days. It was then reused sporadically until Jan. 3, 1912. This was believed to be an experimental usage.



Later in November another D-104 postmark appears. This had a different dial than the earlier use. Examples are known through Dec. 30, 1911.



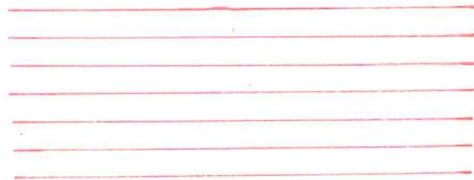
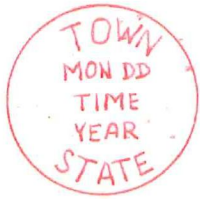
Three examples of a Chicago D-104 postmark used from Nov. 15 through Dec. 23, 1911. Note the smudge mark towards the left end of the killer between the third and fourth bars. Also note how the bottom killer bar 'bisects' the C service letter, normally it passes through the top half of the C.

While testing continued on the old TMM Co. technology the BFC Co. was working to develop new high speed machines capable of fulfilling the requirements of the contract which was to start July 1, 1913. The BFC Co. was working on new technology to compete for this contract. No decision had yet been made on the unusual bids opened on Oct. 31, 1911.

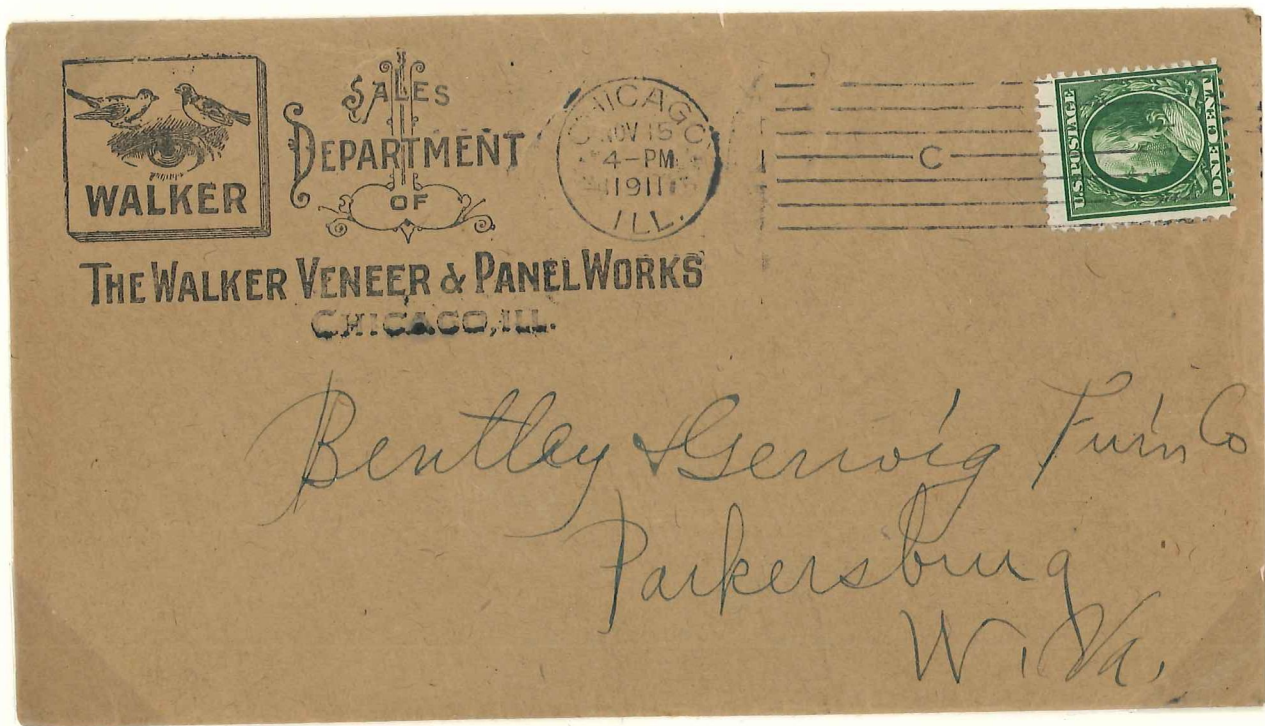
These machines were based on patents by Patrick J. Madigan and James Rehak. Despite the fact that Mr. Madigan was head machinist in the Chicago Post Office, the patents were assigned to the BFC Co. On Nov. 4, 1911, Dr. C. P. Grandfield, 3<sup>rd</sup> assistant postmaster general, gave the BFC Co approval to run 'secret' tests of their new machines in Chicago. Later he approved tests of additional machines.

**J Dial  
Postmark**

Only TMM or BFC dial  
with day and time on  
different lines.

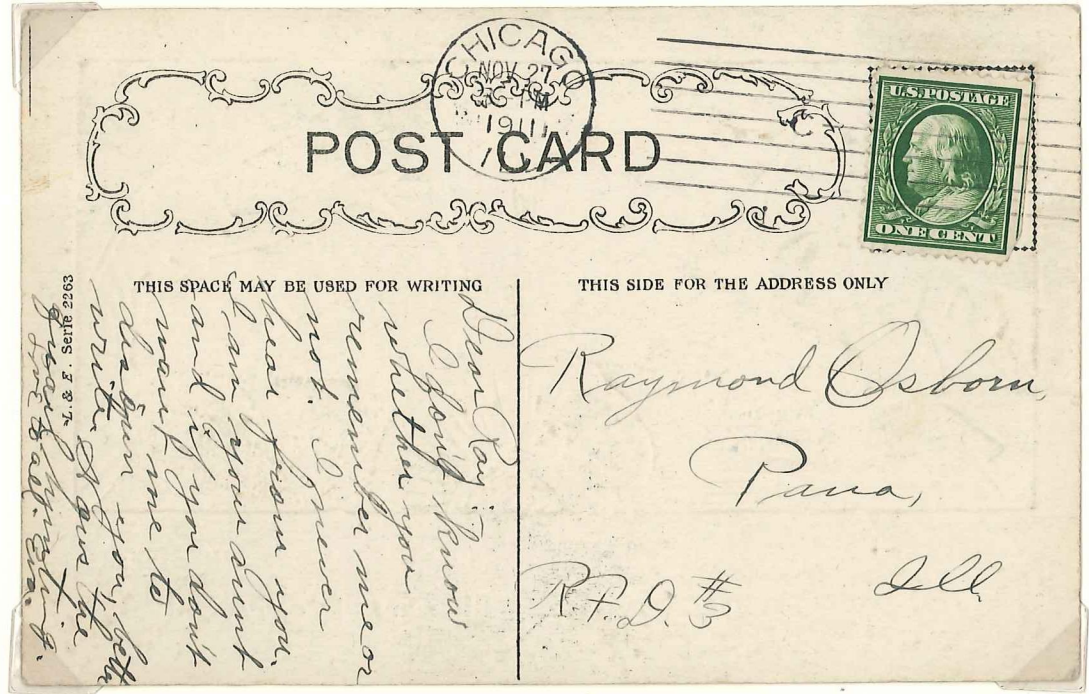


7 Horizontal  
Bar Killer



First test of the new BFC Co. postmarking machine. Examples are known from Nov. 14 - 16.





Only reported example from a later test on Nov. 27, 1911 using the same dial used on Nov. 15.

On Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>, 1911 the Chicago postmaster informed the USPOD that 4 new BFC Co machines were installed for testing.

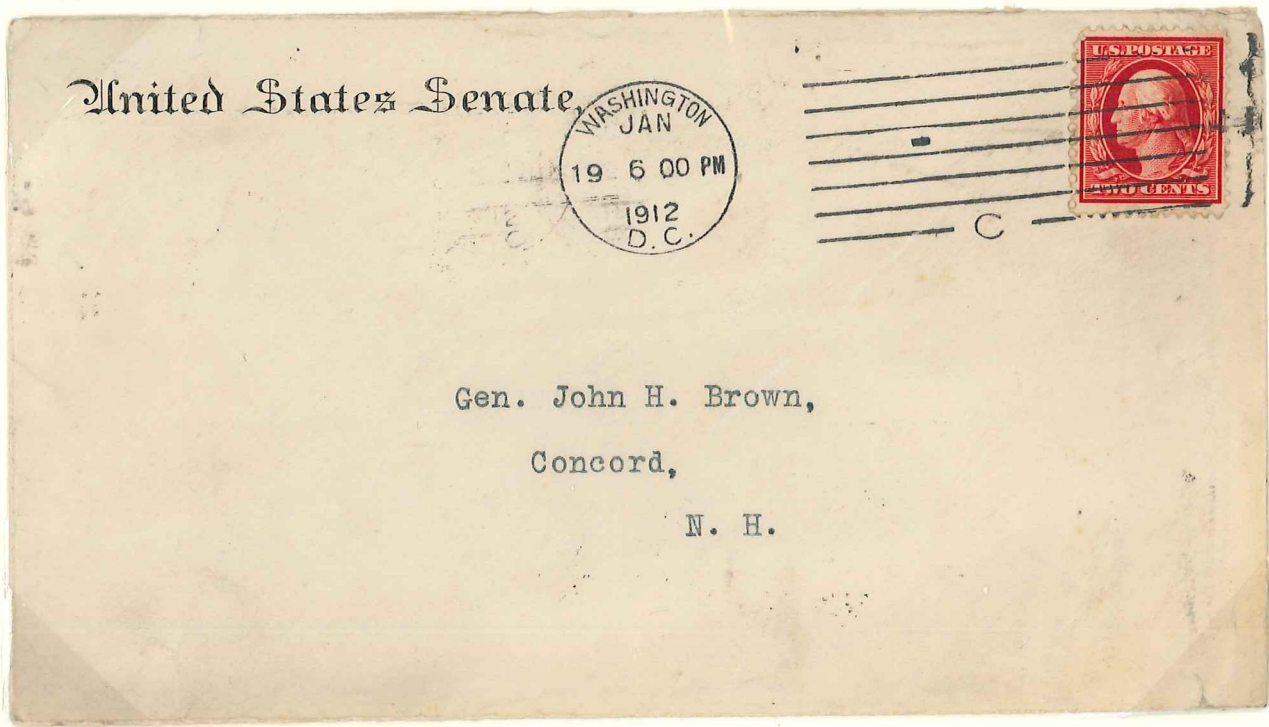
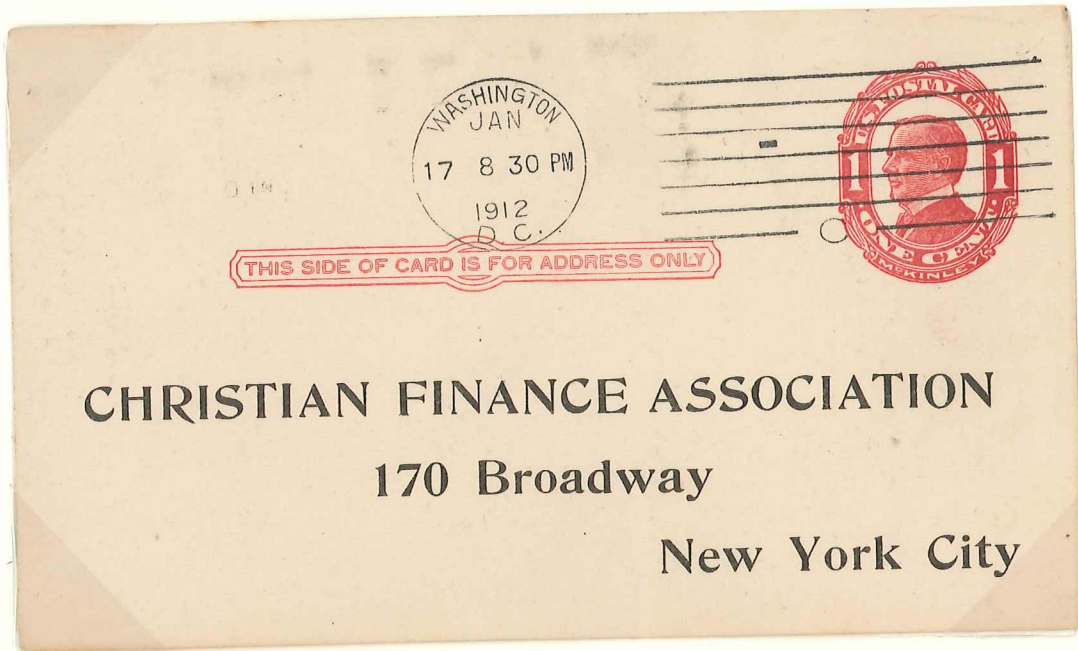


Two different postmarks probably from different machines.

Dials can most easily be distinguished by the width of ILL., which is 8 mm on top example and 9 mm on Bottom.



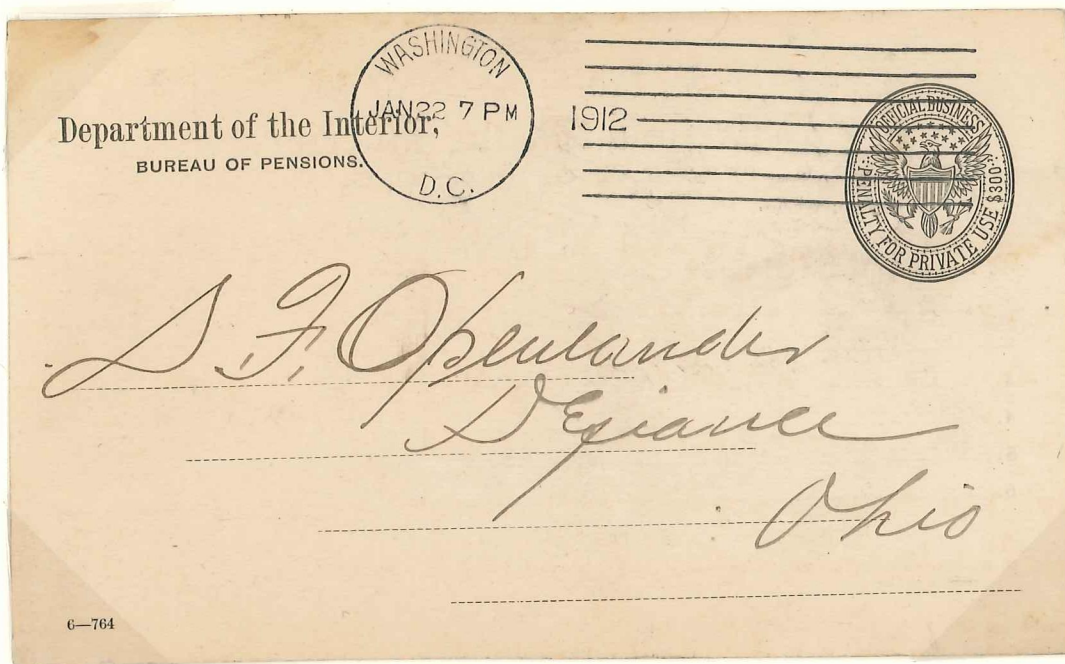
On Jan. 20 a letter was sent to each company which had tendered a bid on the Oct. 15, 1911 deadline asking them to send their machines to Washington D.C. for testing by the machine cancel committee. One reason for these tests was to determine if the BFC Co had a satisfactory machine. Some unusual TMM Co postmarks are known which make their appearance on Jan. 20, perhaps B.F. Cummins had some inside information on this new request and was able to get a head start on the tests.



Examples from Jan. 17 and 19, 1912 of a D-104 postmark which has what appears to be the same 'smudge' in the killer between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> bar. The bottom bar also bisects the C service letter similar to the Chicago machines used at the end of 1911. The dial does not match any of the machines which were in regular service. Apparently the machine which was last used in Chicago on Dec. 30, 1911 was shipped to Washington for these tests.



One of the machines sent by the BFC Co. to Washington D. C. in answer to the Jan. 20 letter was their Model #2 which had been sold to postmasters of small towns starting in 1911 (this machine impressed the E, F, G and H type postmarks).



Only reported example of a F-131 postmark from Washington D. C. from a 'preliminary' test.

*These were not included in the bidding for 1913 but the Canceling Machine hearings (on p. 608) documents this exchange between Mr. McCoy (appointed a committee of one to investigate the canceling-machine contracts with the Post Office Department) and Mr. Bushnell (Chairman of the canceling machine committee charged with testing machines and making recommendations).*

Mr. McCoy: Now, then, please describe this No. 2 Cummins machine. In the first place, what type of machine is it?

Mr. Bushnell. It was a small machine intended to operate either by hand or electric power. It is a machine which the Cummins Co. designed to sell to postmasters.

Mr. McCoy. Was it one of the machines on which they bid later?

Mr. Bushnell. No sir.

Mr. McCoy. They did not bid on it at either time?

Mr. Bushnell. No sir.

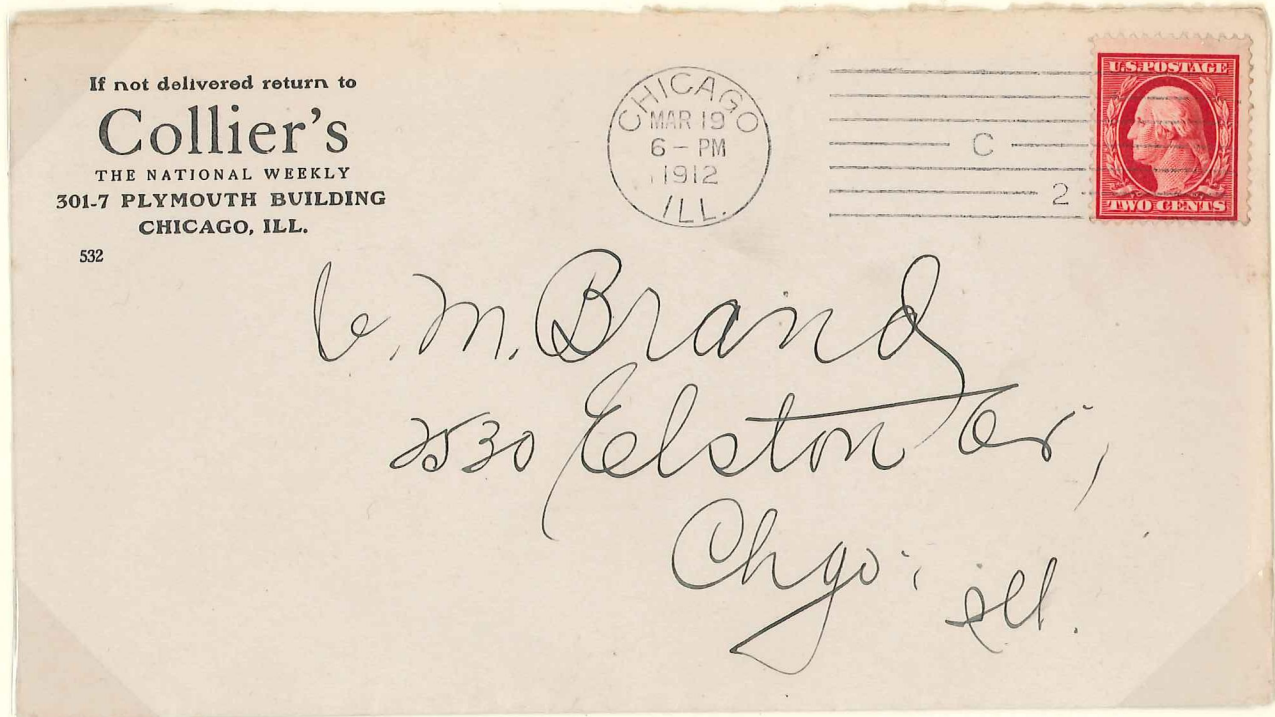
Mr. McCoy. It was not tested in Washington?

Mr. Bushnell. It was here and was given a preliminary test, as all machines are, but not as a part of the bid. It was simply there in the Washington office along with the other machines.

Tests on the new BFC Co. machines continued in Chicago as there were frequent changes in the postmarks and dials probably as a result of improvements in the machine.

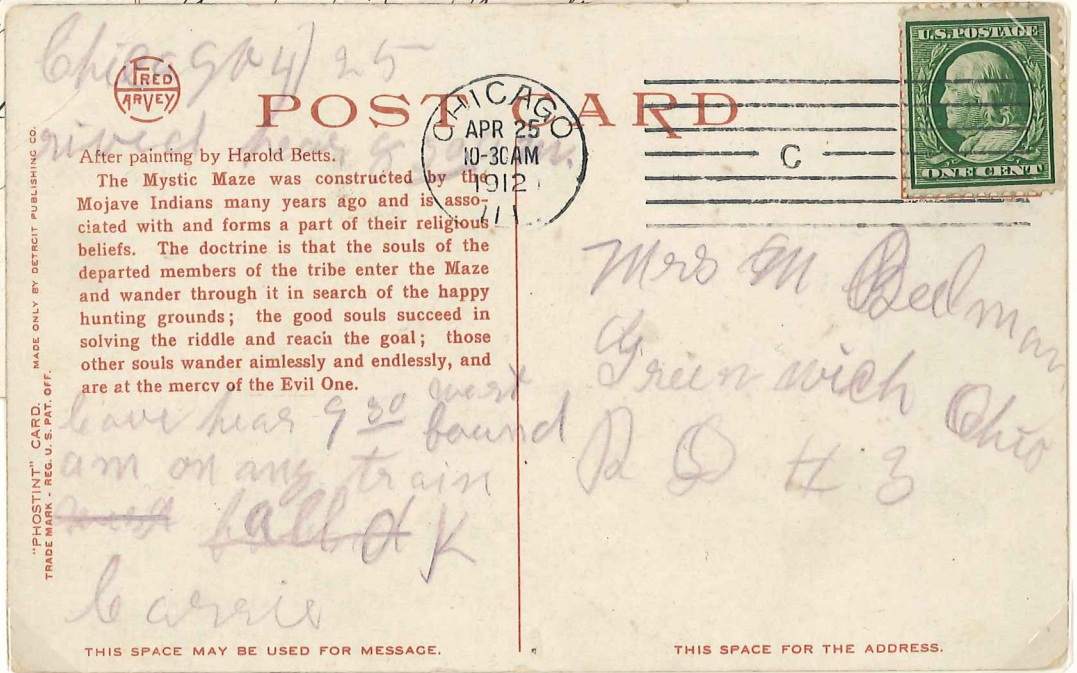
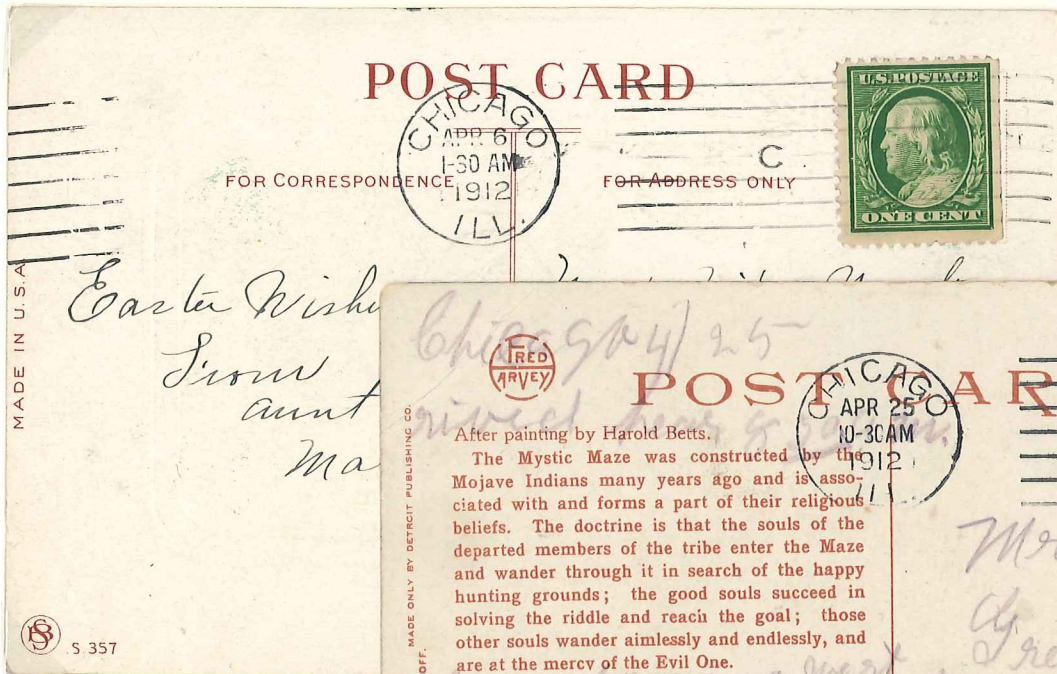
Some of these machines used killers with no machine numbers but can be distinguished by the length of the left portion of the 4<sup>th</sup> bar in the cancel.

Others had a diespace for the machine number in the killer. These killers can be identified by the length of the left segment of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> bars.

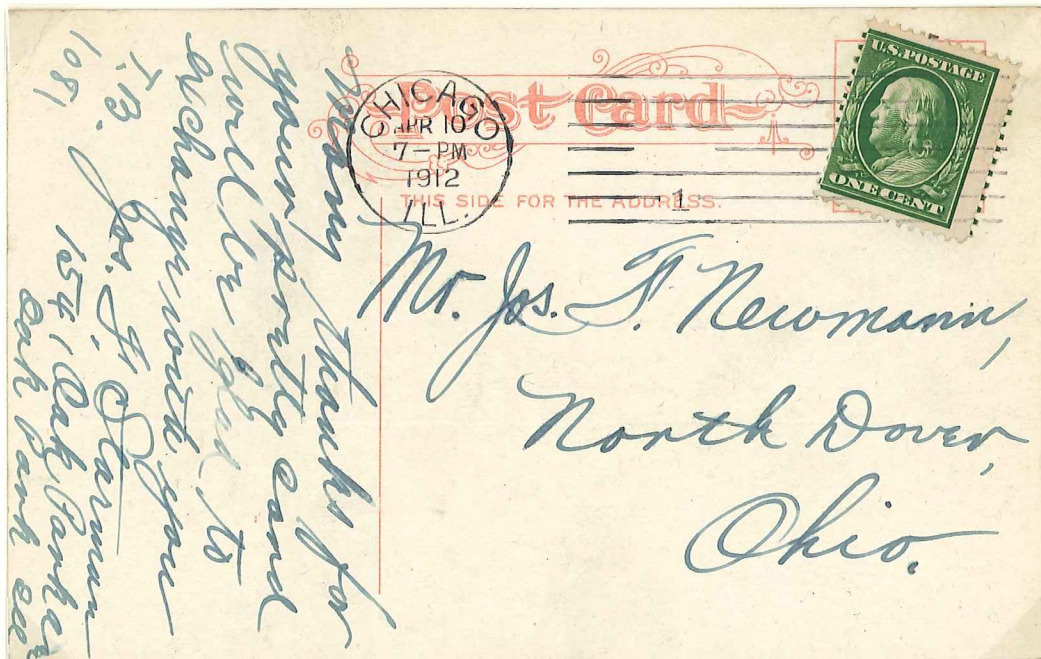


Machine #2, Mar. 19, 1912. Examples known from Mar. 12 thru April 6, 1912.



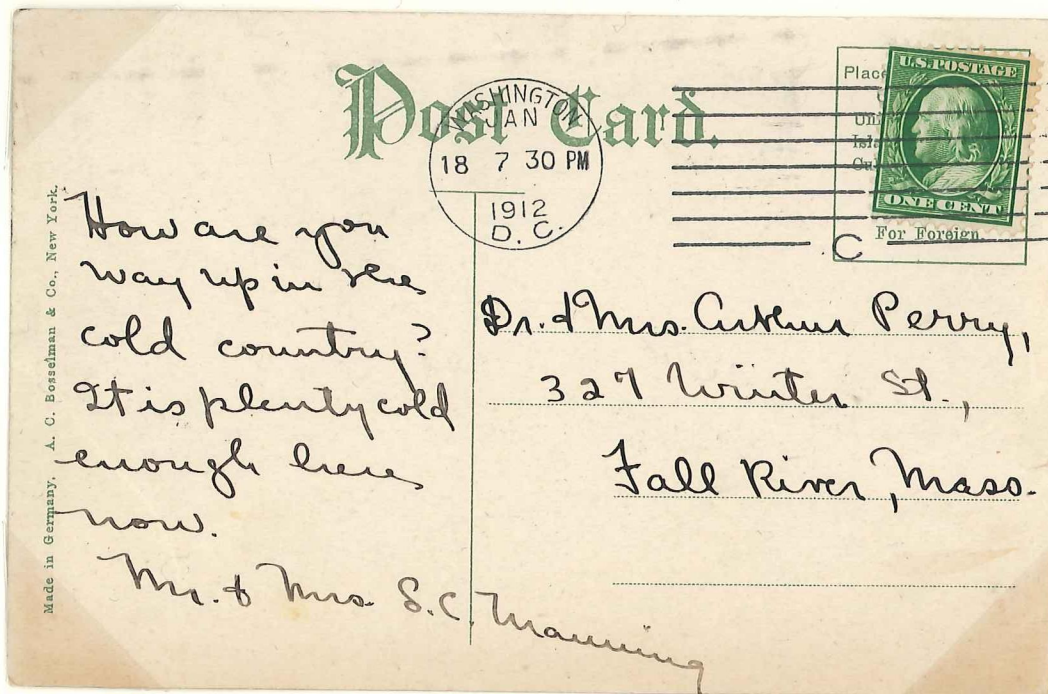


Tests continued in April of 1912. Numberless tests on April 6 and April 25. Both the dials and the killer are slightly different. Note the width of the ILL. The top example is wide while the bottom is narrower.



Machine #1 with blank diespace for service letter used in early April 1912.

Apparently a second TMM Co machine was also included in the tests which also impressed a D-104 postmark.

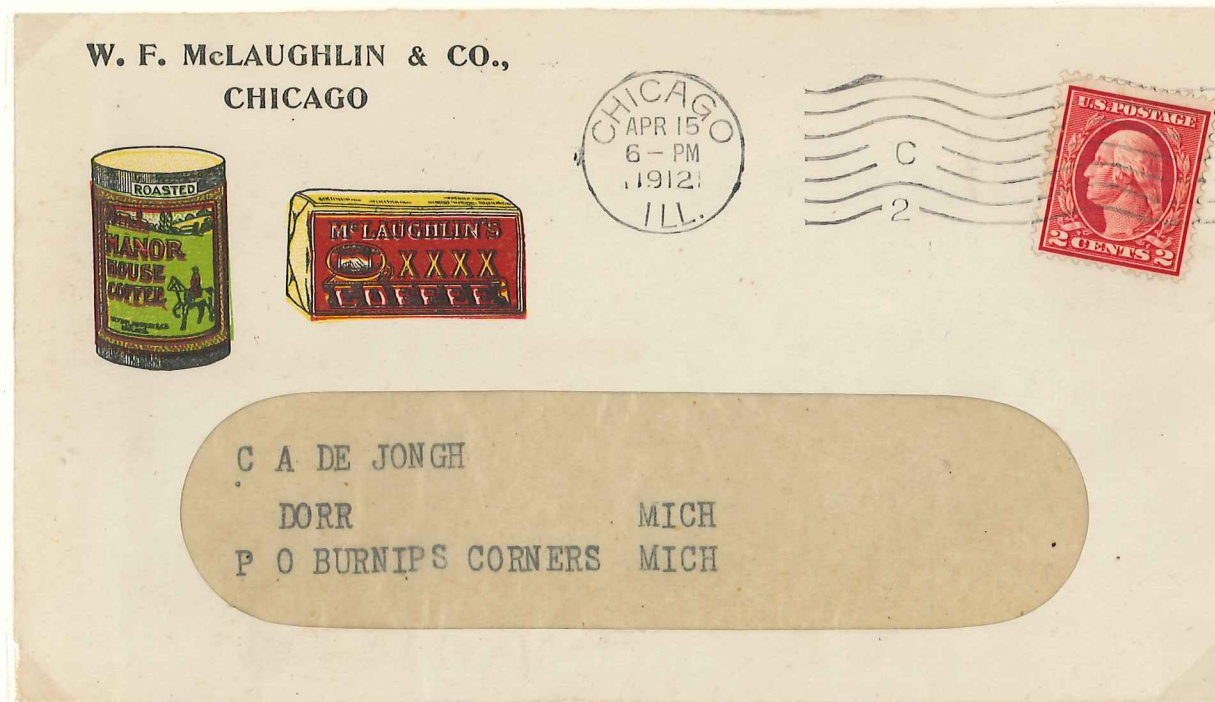


D-104 postmark from test machine in Washington D.C. on Jan. 18, 1912. Note that the bottom killer bar on this postmark does not bisect the C but rather intersects about a third of the way down. The dial is also slightly different from the previous examples from Washington. This is particularly noticeable by the shape of the G in Washington.

Despite these tests the TMM Co machines were not included in the BFC Co bids for the 1913 contract.



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.

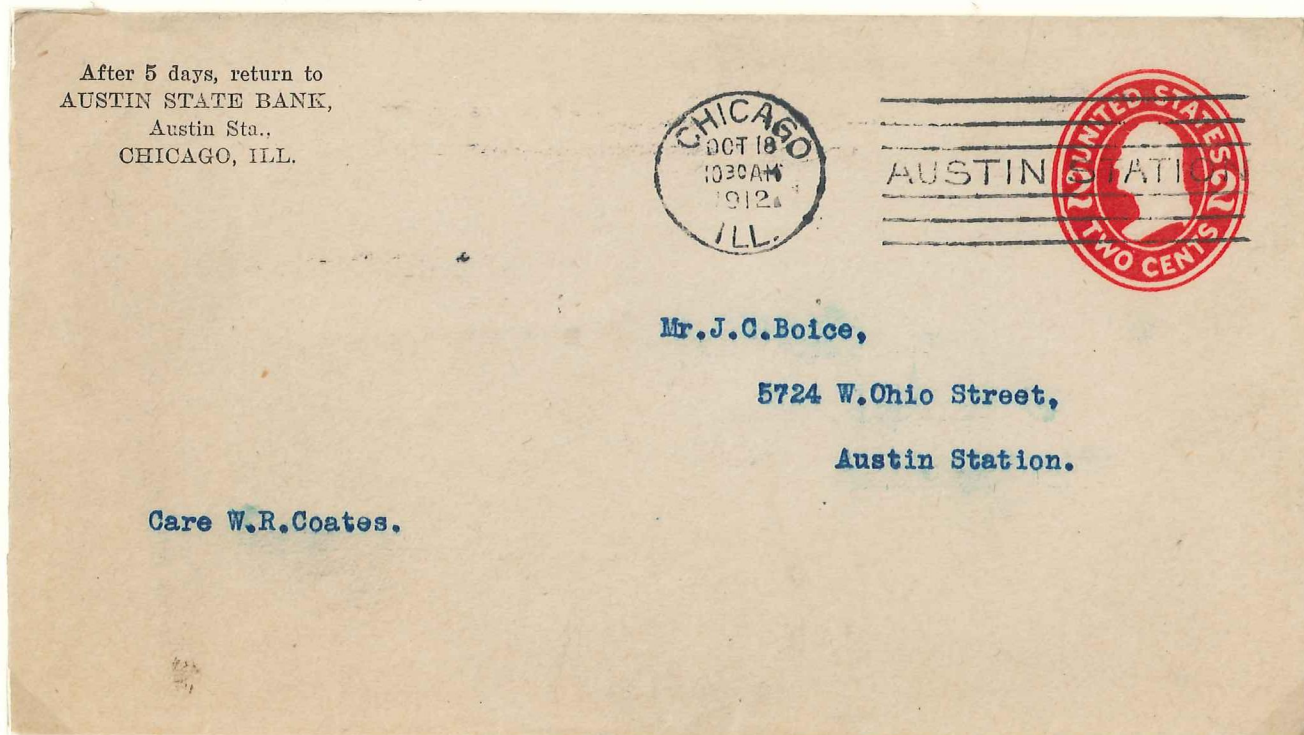


April 15, 1912 and April 20, 1912. Two of the three known examples.

122  
B. F. Cummins Co.

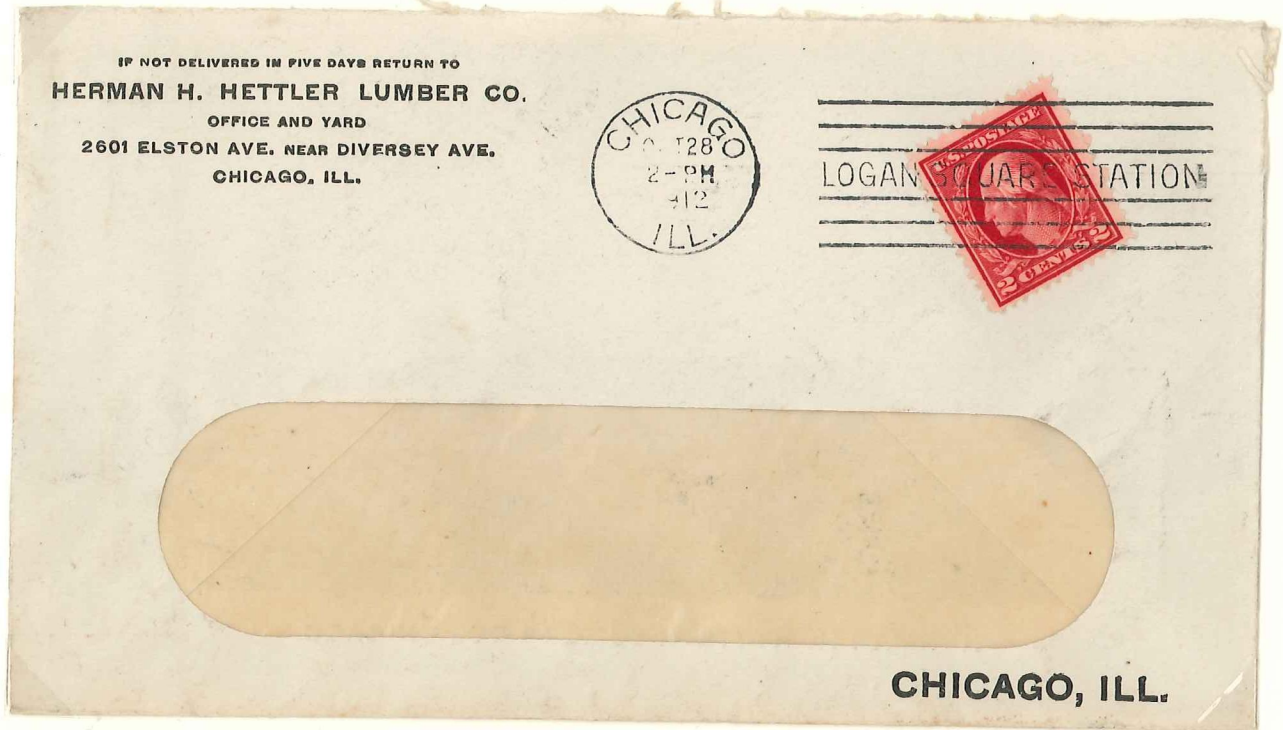
Tests for 1913 Contract

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.

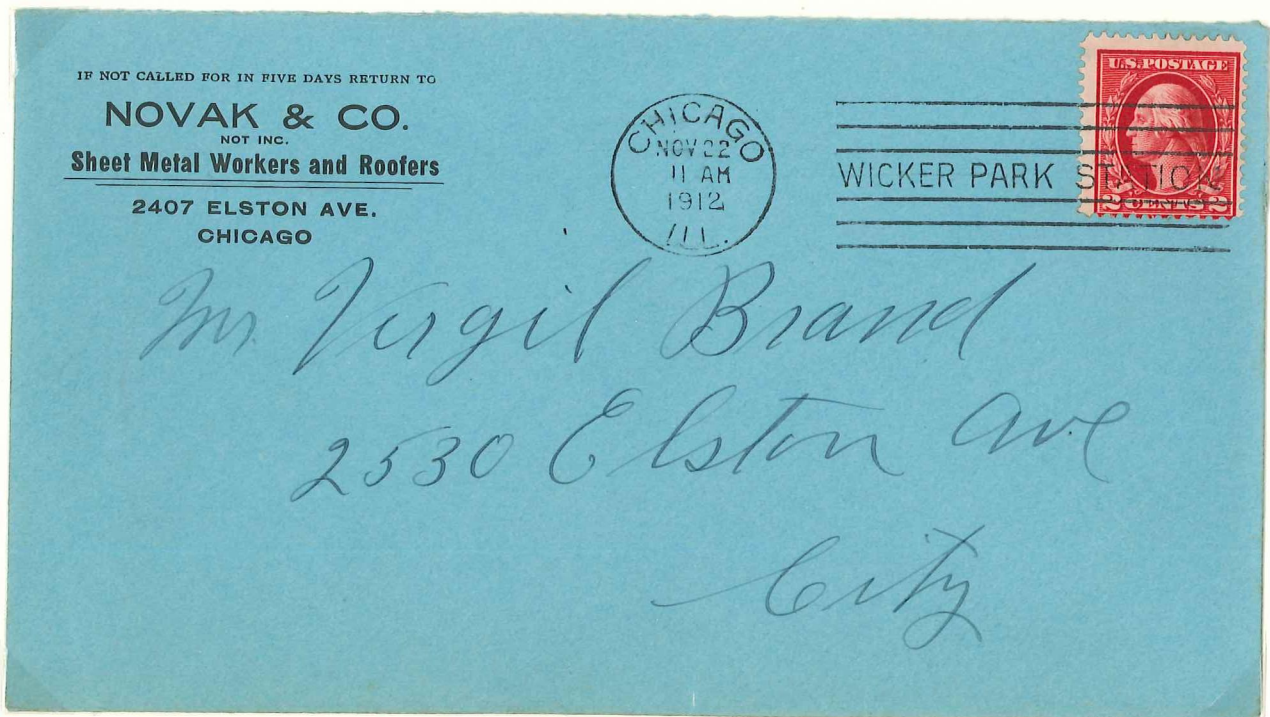


Some of the first machines were installed in October 1912 in Chicago stations.  
The postmarks featured a J dial. When placed at stations the name replaced the center killer bar.

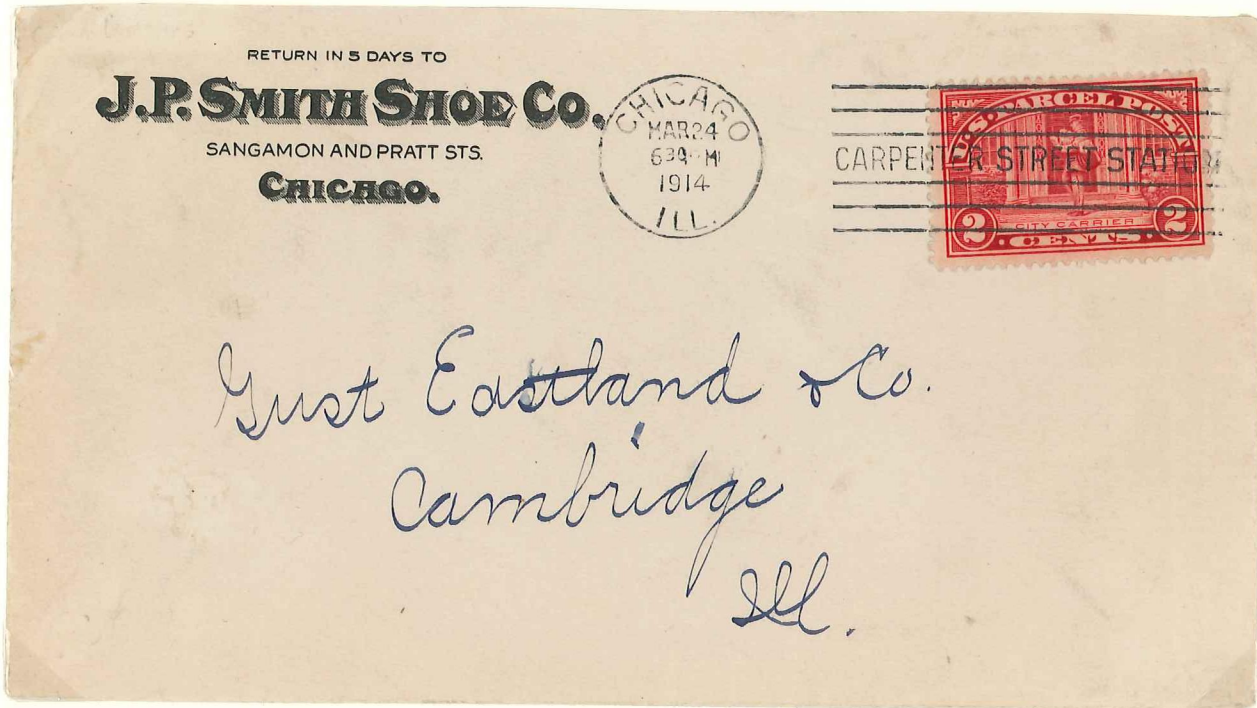




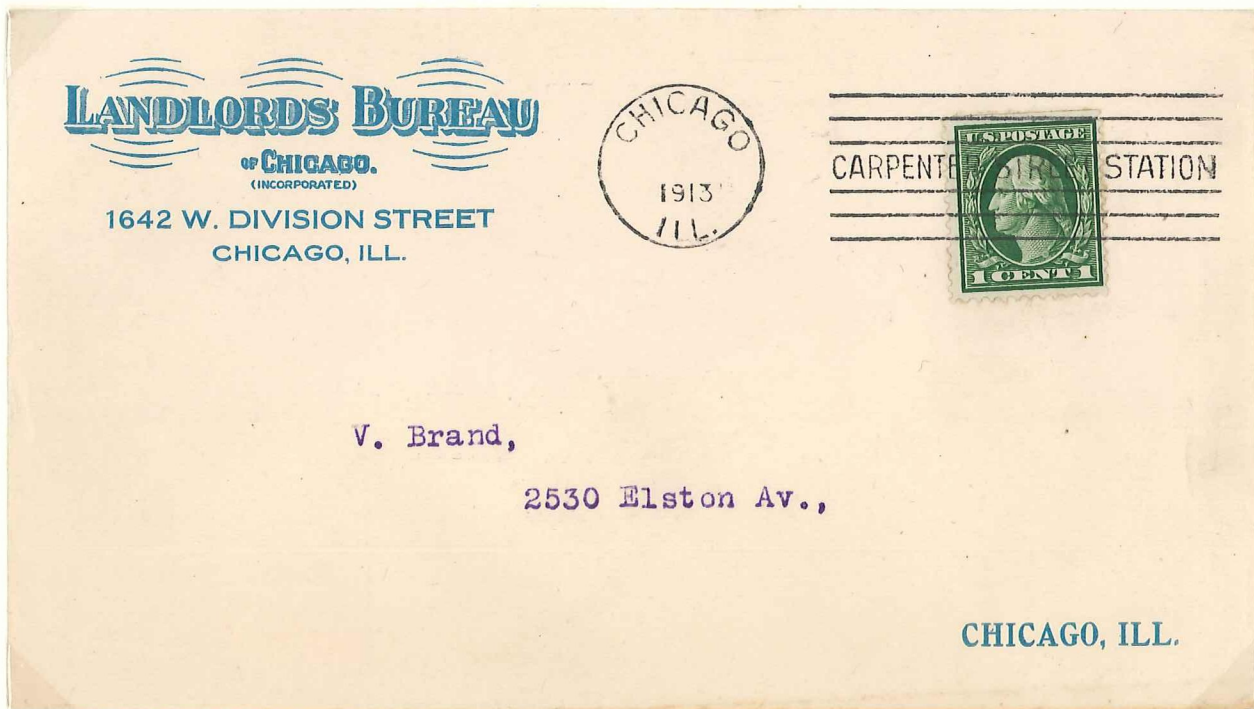
Logan Square Station, Oct. 28, 1912



ERU from Wicker Park Station, Nov. 22, 1912

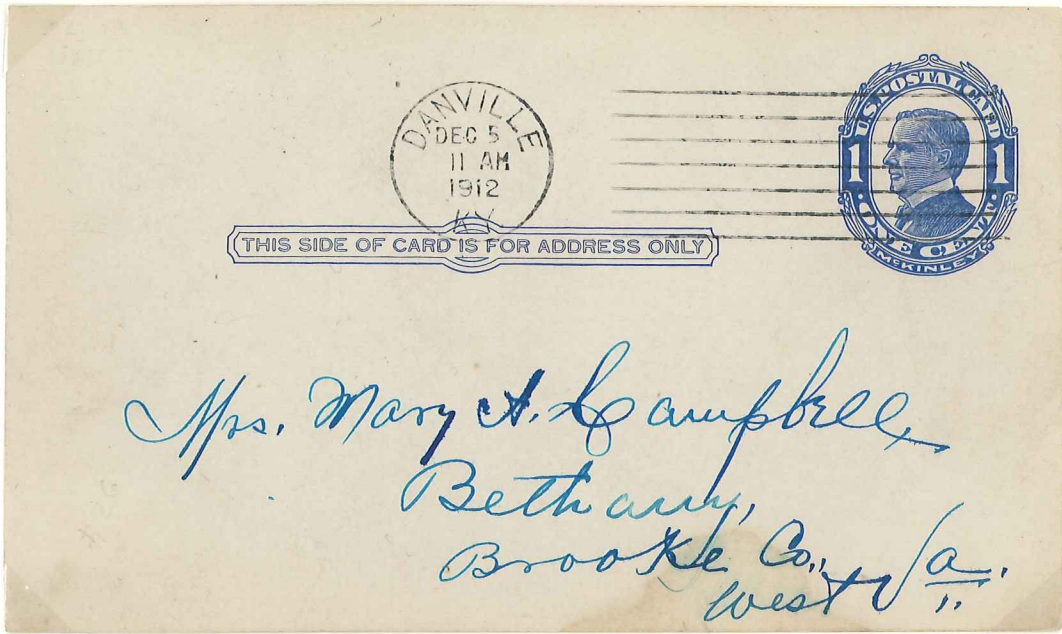


Carpenter Street Station, March 24, 1914.

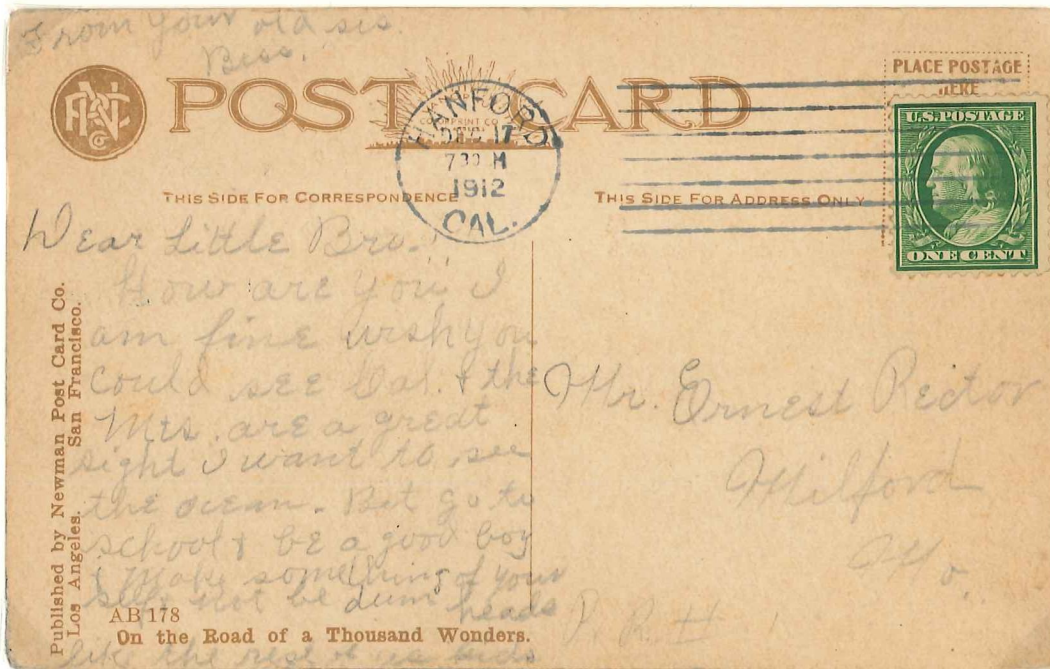


Carpenter Street Station used with month, day and time slugs removed to apply a cancel to printed matter.

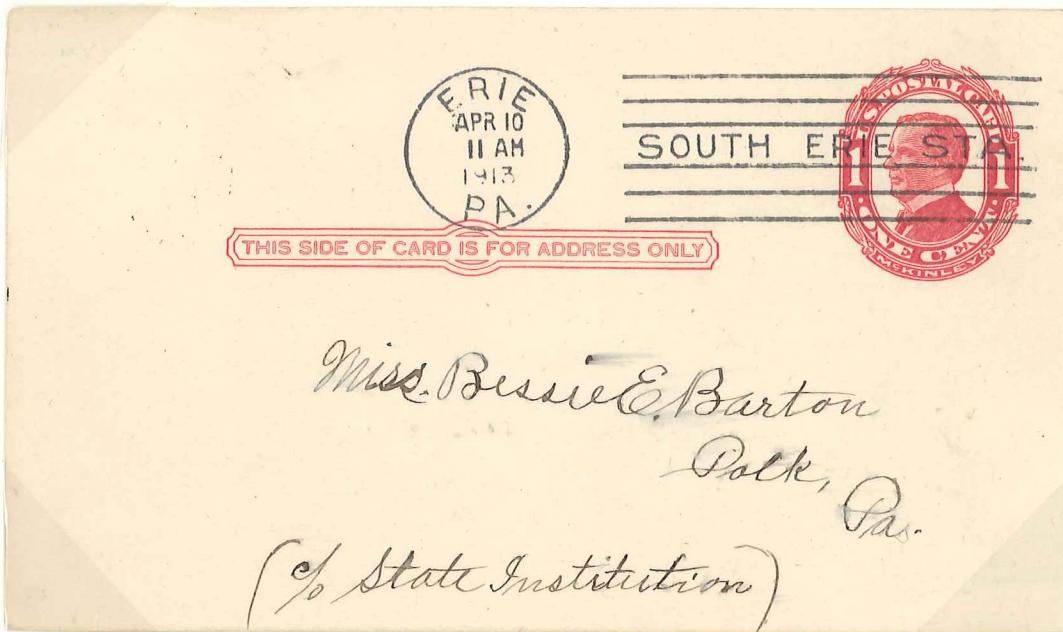




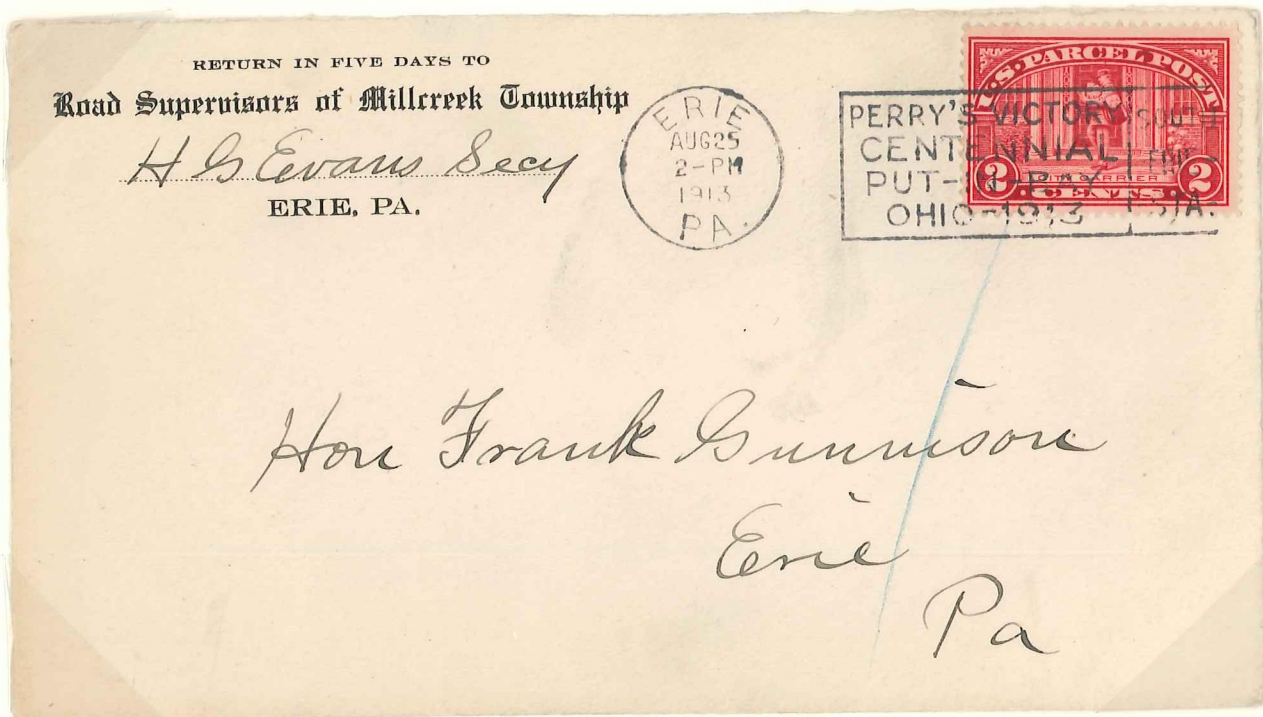
ERU from Danville, KY



ERU from Hanford, CA.

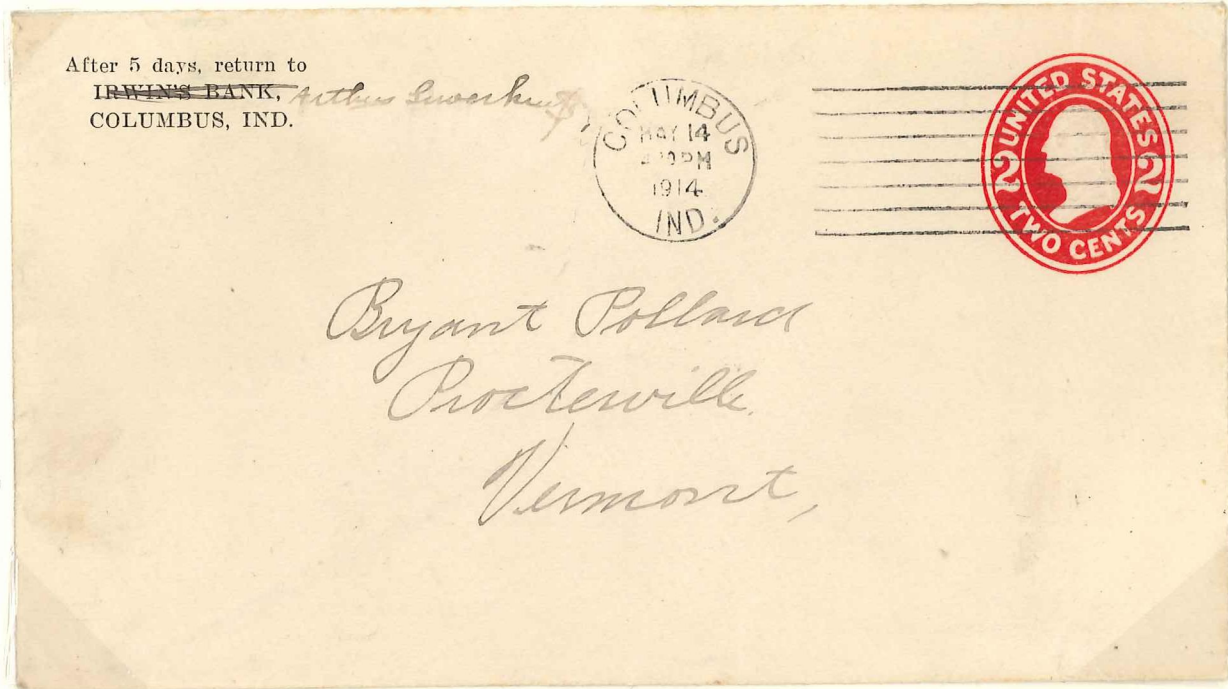


South Erie Station, in Erie, PA received one of the original 55 machines. Used with a typical cancel design from 1912 to early 1913.

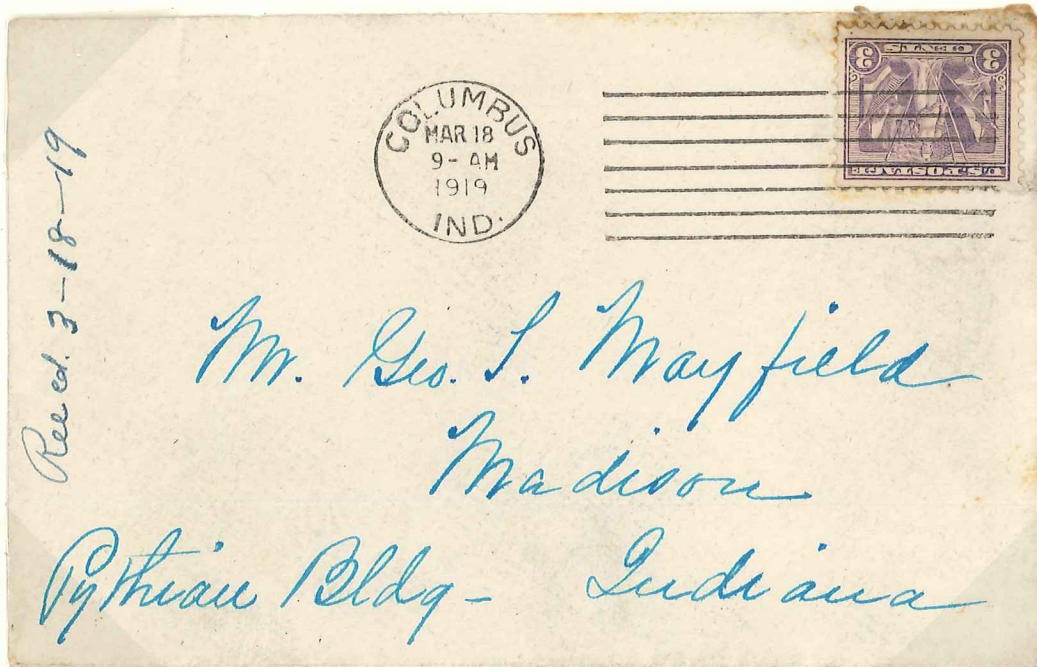


During July, August, and September 1913, the killer was changed to commemorate Perry's Victory in the Battle of Lake Erie. The original killer was returned to use by Dec. 1913.

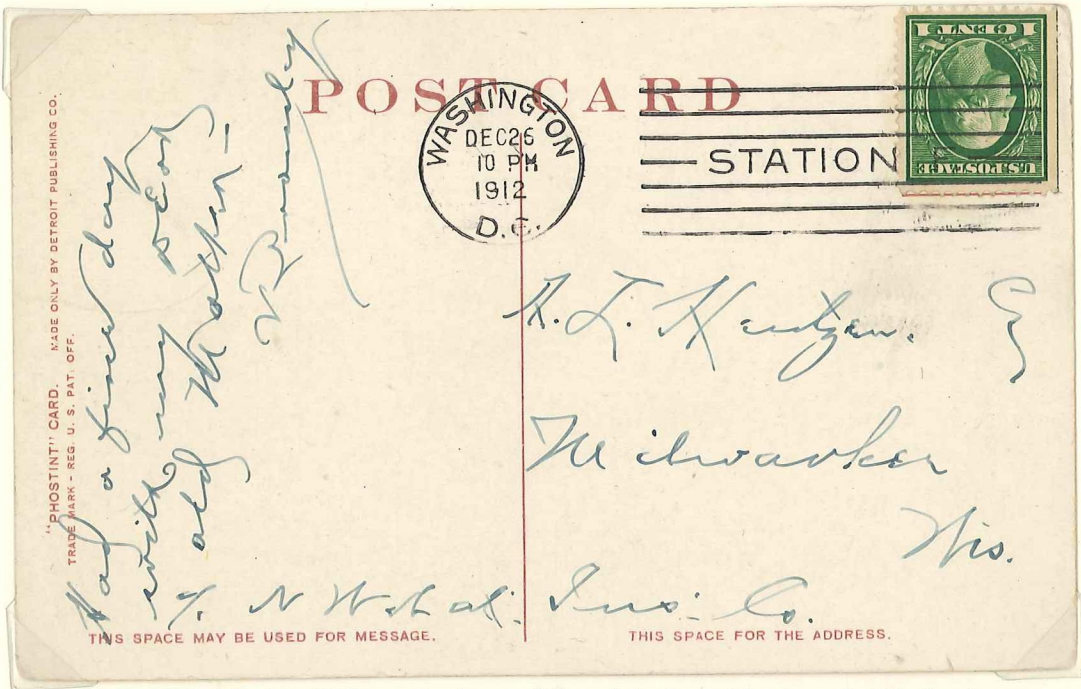




Columbus, IN received one of the original 55 machines and initially used a dial with a tall IND.



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

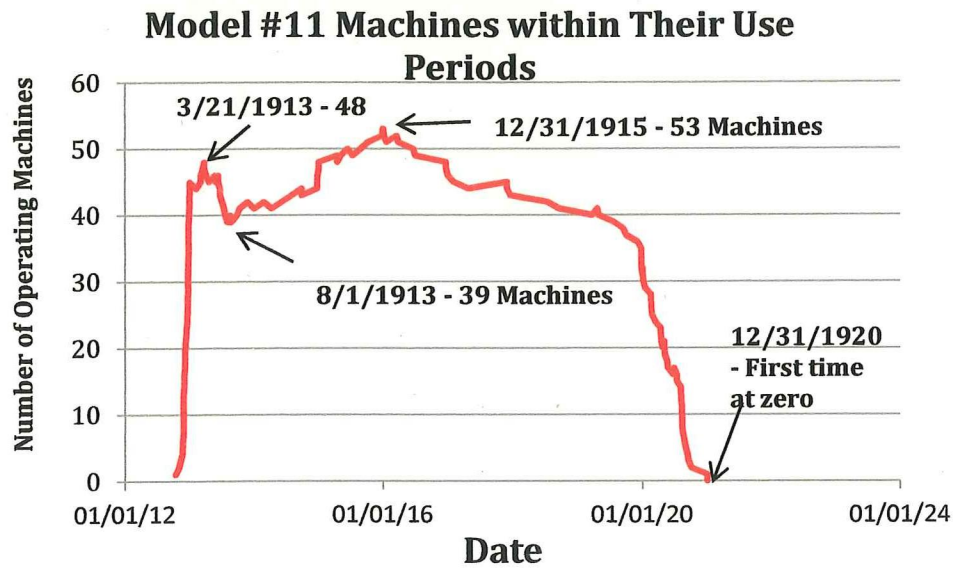


Washington, D.C., received one of the original machines, used at Station F.



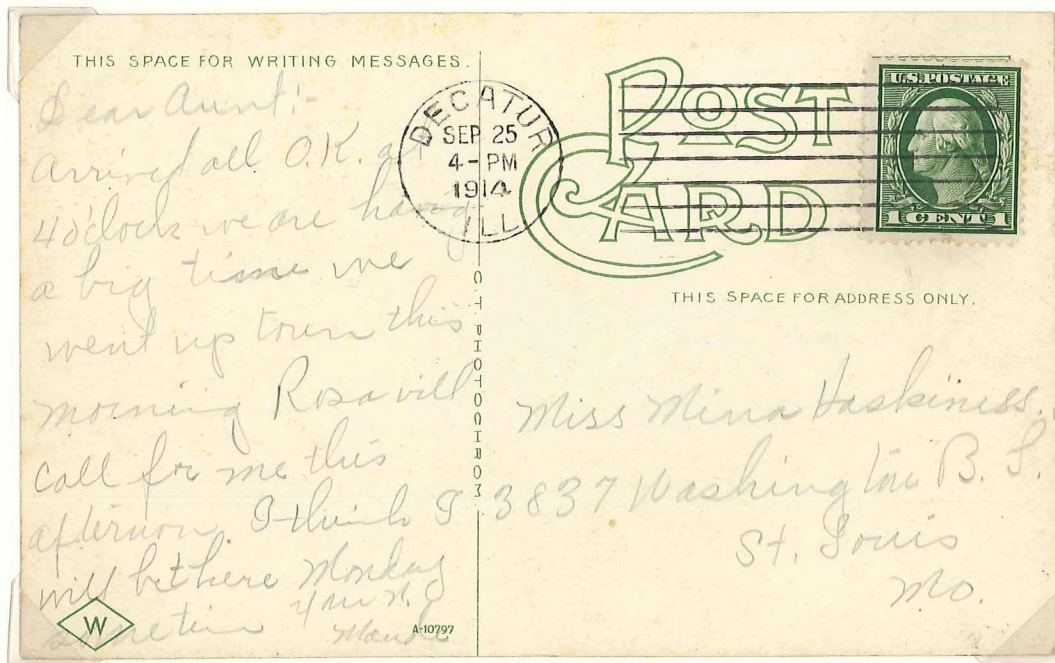
It was later transferred to Exeter, NH where 'Station F' was removed from the killer leaving a space. Later, a normal killer was installed.





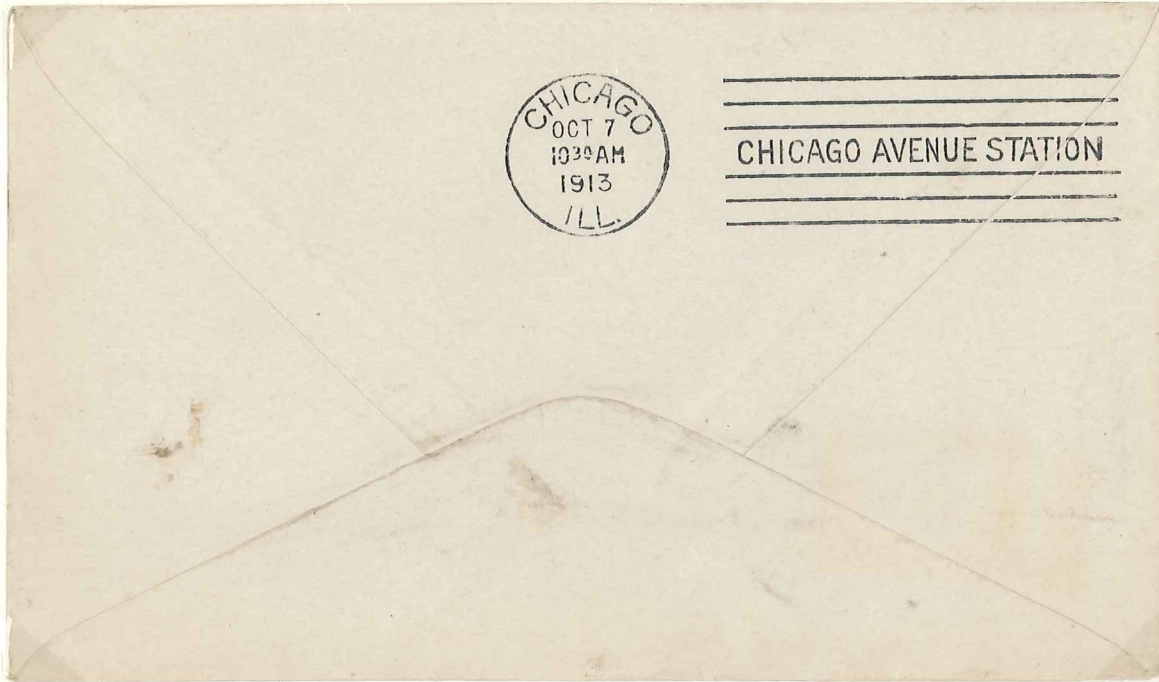
55 Model #11 machines were purchased on June 18, 1912 and installation began in October of 1912. By looking at the ERU and LRU for all of these machines we can calculate, for any given date, how many machines were in their known use range. Looking at all the dates from 1912 through the entire run of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

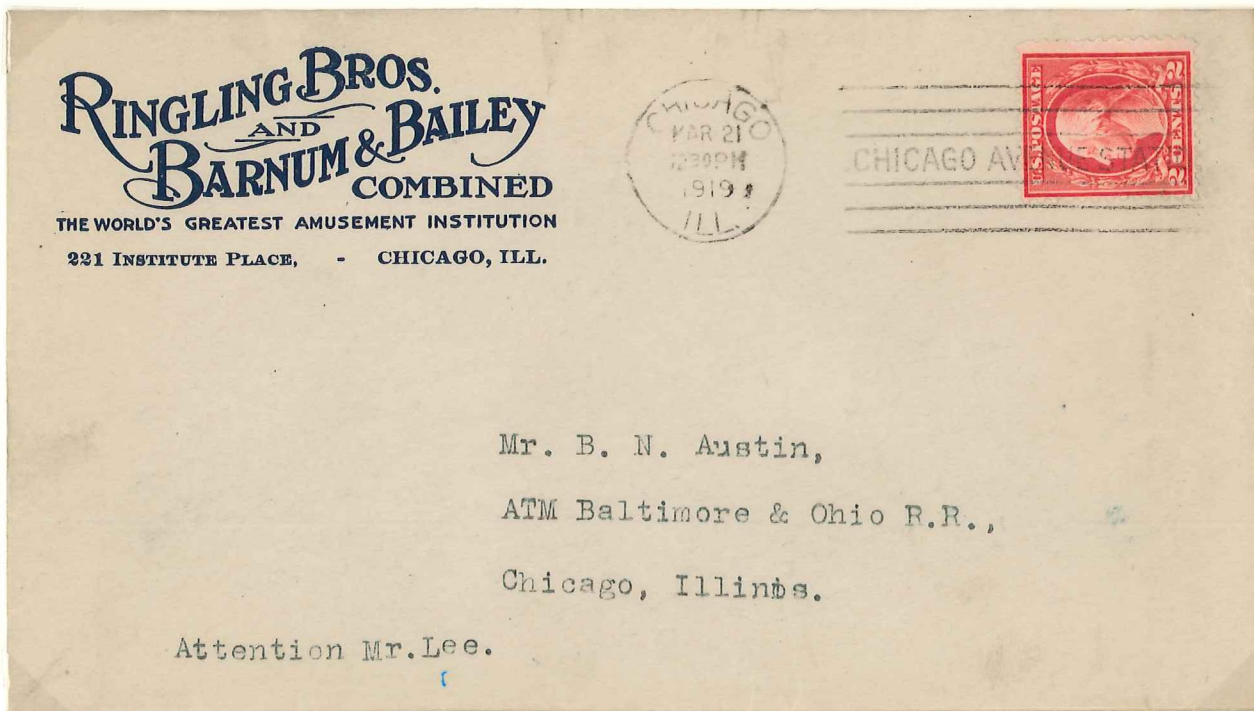


Only reported example from Decatur, IL, Sept. 25, 1914. Decatur did not receive one of the initial 55 machines and must have received this after the initial distribution.

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

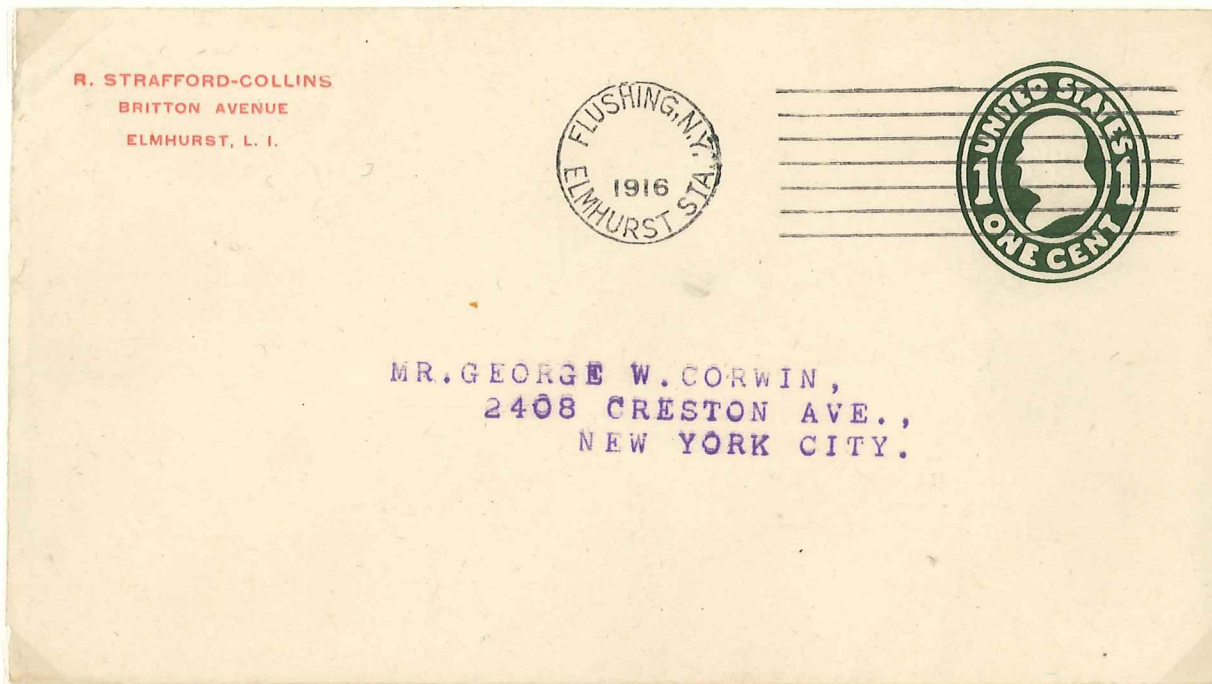


Chicago Avenue Station, in Chicago, did not receive an original Model #11 machine. This cover is the ERU from Oct. 7, 1913 and shows that by this time they had received a machine from another location.

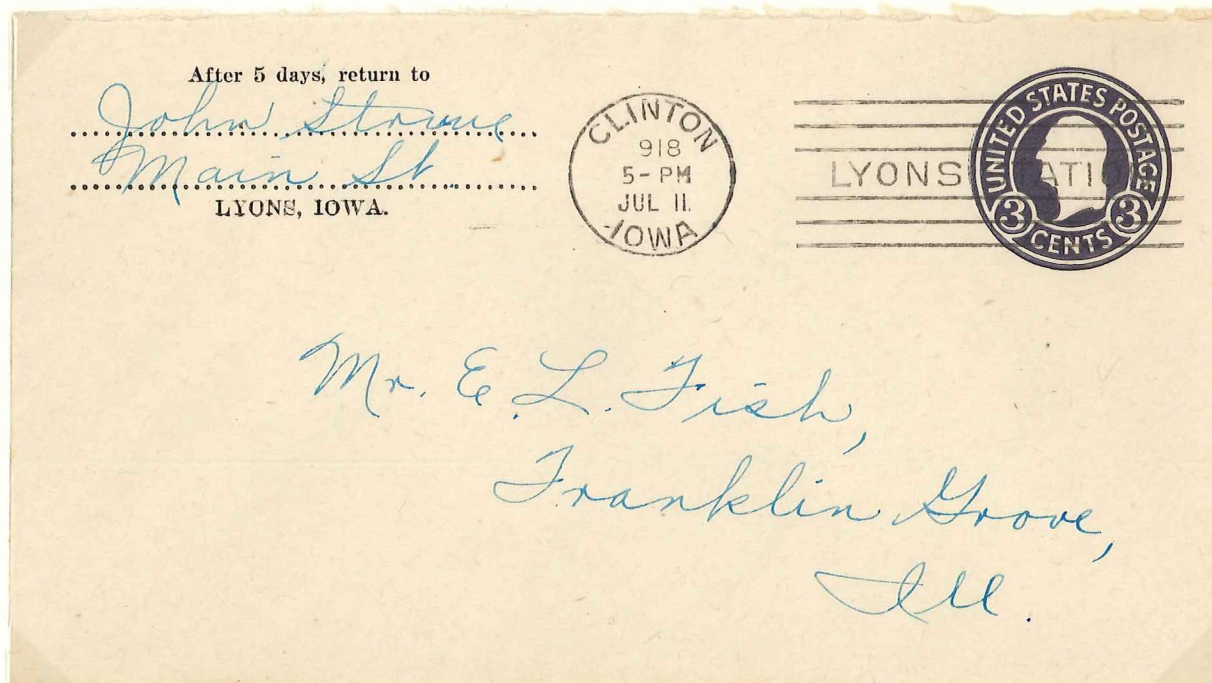


The LRU of the Chicago Avenue Station postmark, Mar. 21, 1919.

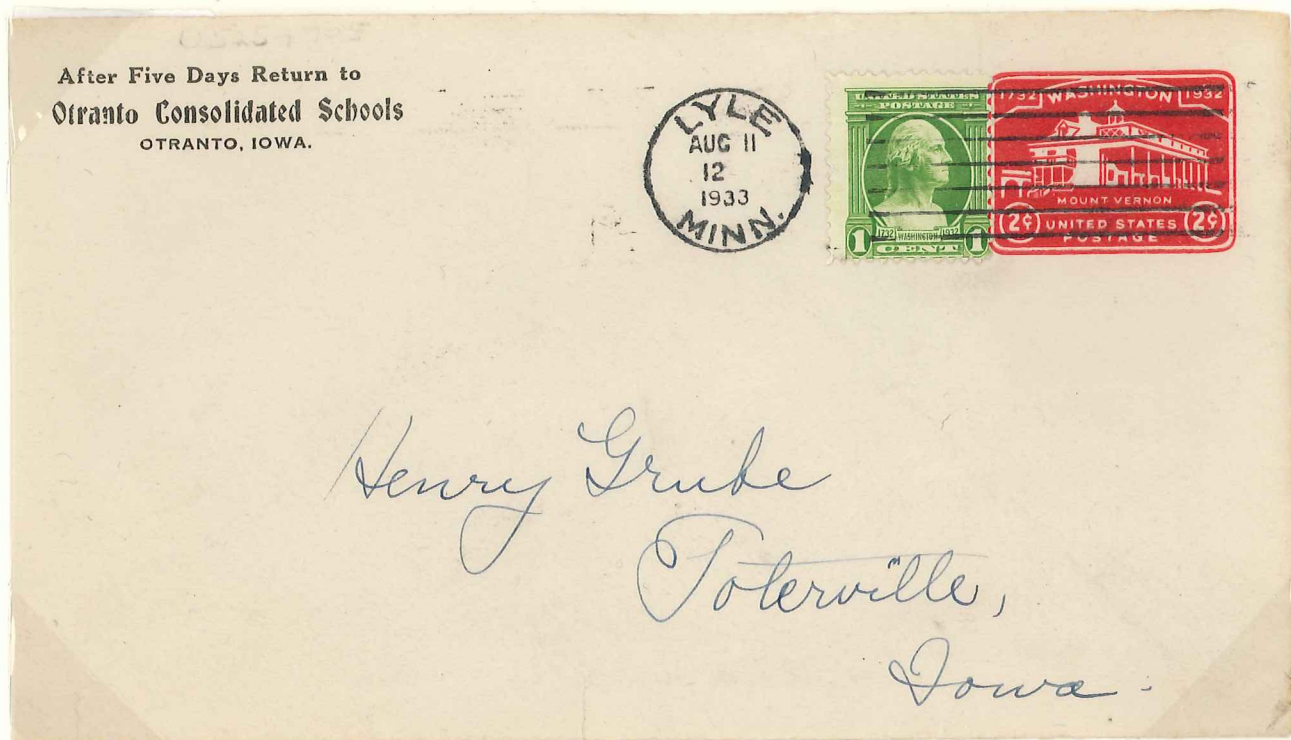




A Model #11 was transferred to Flushing, NY for use at Elmhurst Station with the station name appearing in the dial. Used here with the month, date and time removed to postmark 3<sup>rd</sup> class mail.



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.

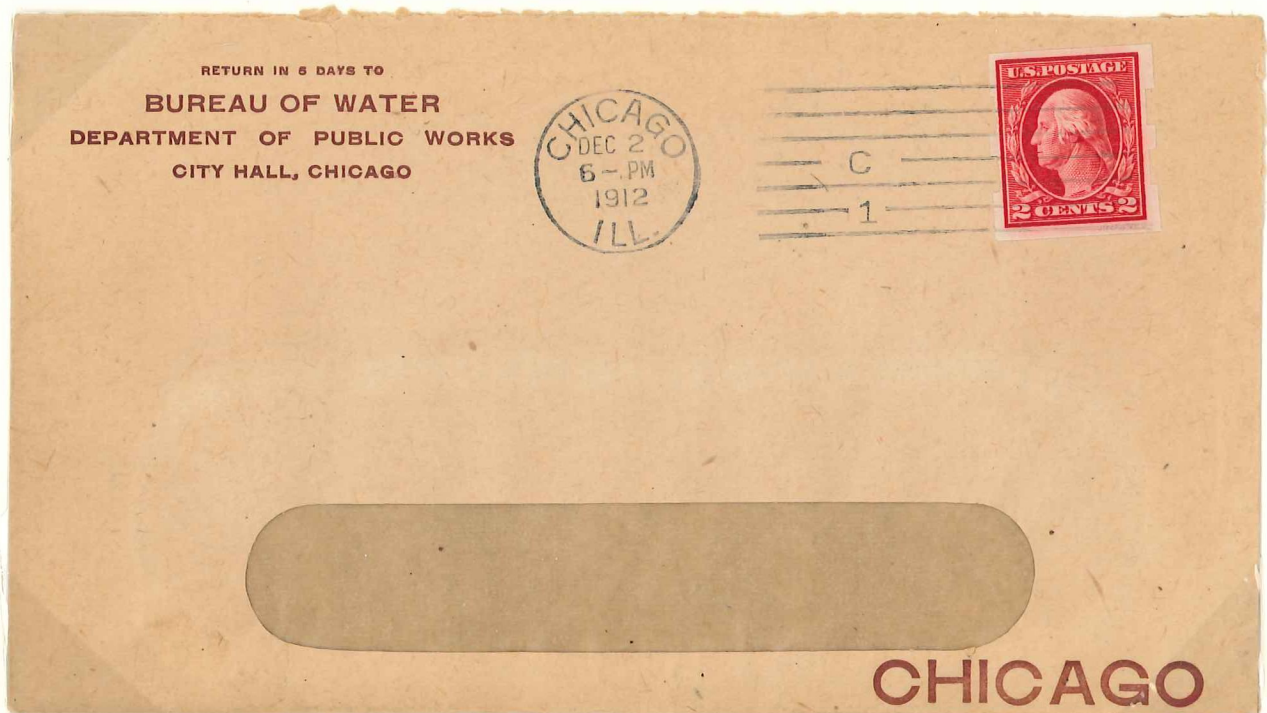


Only reported use of a Model #11 from Hazardville, CT on Dec. 21, 1933.



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.

After 5 days, return to  
AYER & LORD TIE CO.,  
Incorporated,  
Railway Exchange Bld.,  
CHICAGO, ILL.



2000-

First National Bank

Louiseville

Ky.

Machine #2, Sept. 16, 1912

ILLINOIS PUBLISHING CO.

24-26-28 SO. FIFTH AVENUE  
CHICAGO

— PUBLISHERS OF —

ILLINOIS STAATS-ZEITUNG  
CHICAGOER PRESSE  
WESTEN und DAHEIM



Mr. Virgil M. Brand,

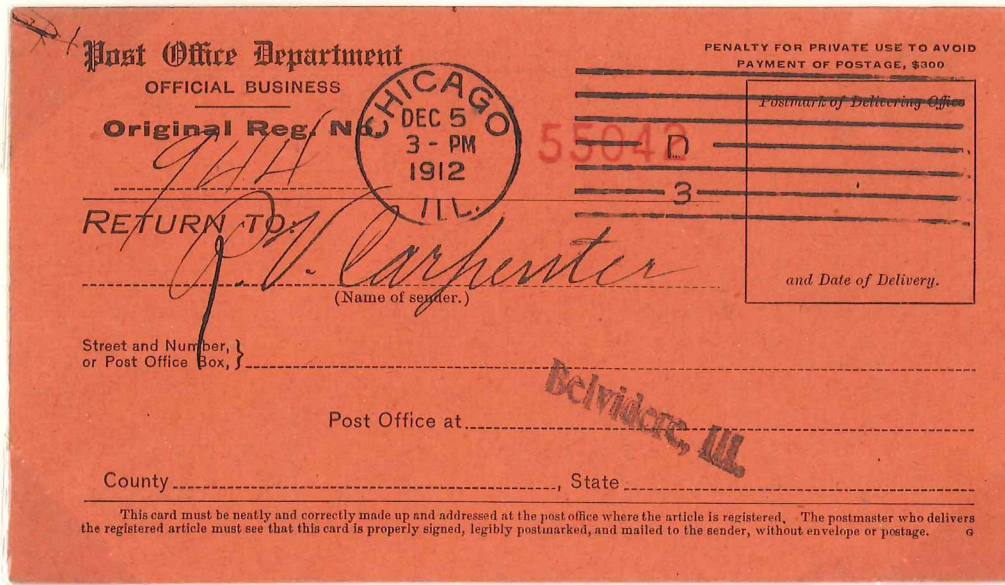
Elston Ave & Snow Str.

City

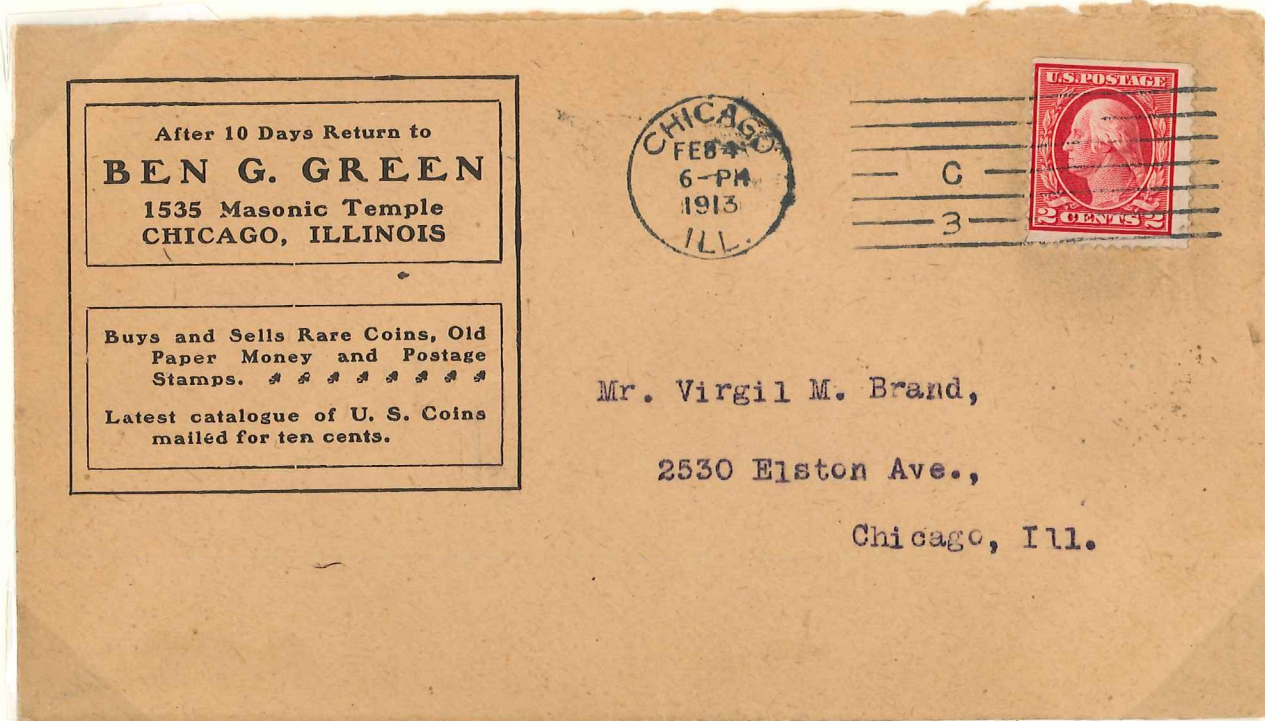
The tests on machine #2 continued into late 1912. An unusual example with a missing service mark.



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.



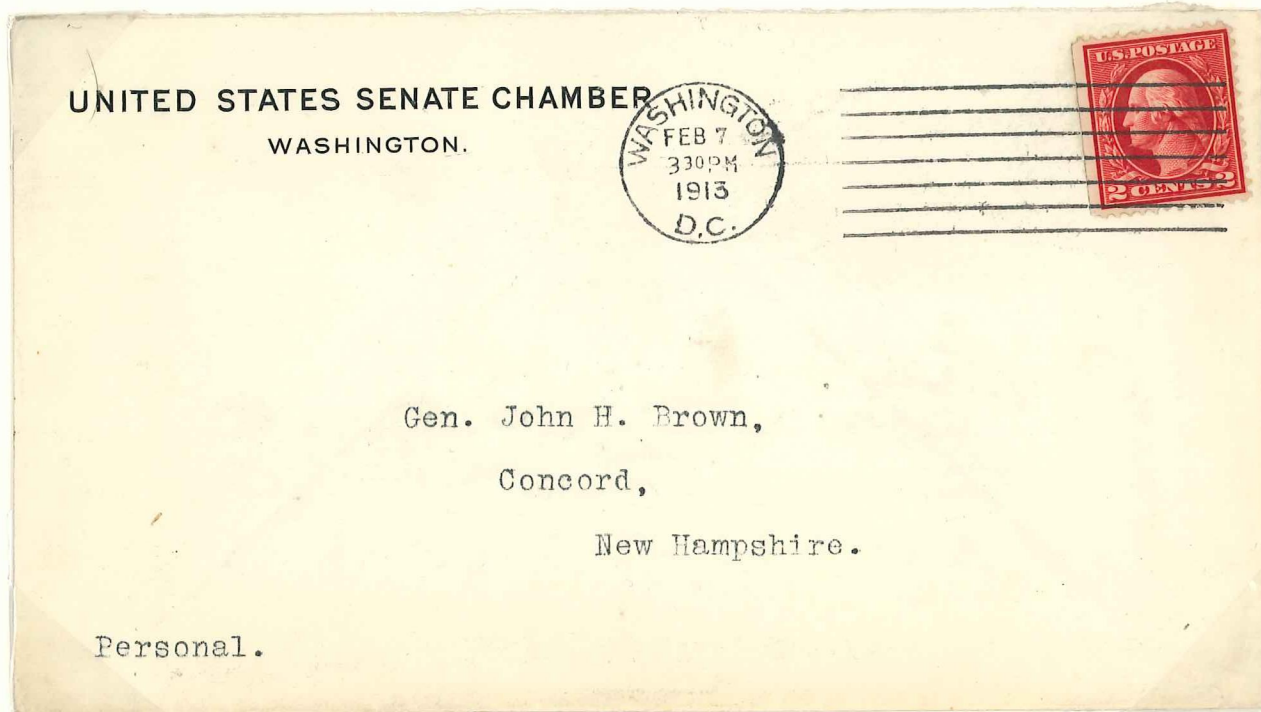
Machine #3, Dec. 5, 1912. Test postmark on a Registry Receipt with a D service letter.



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.

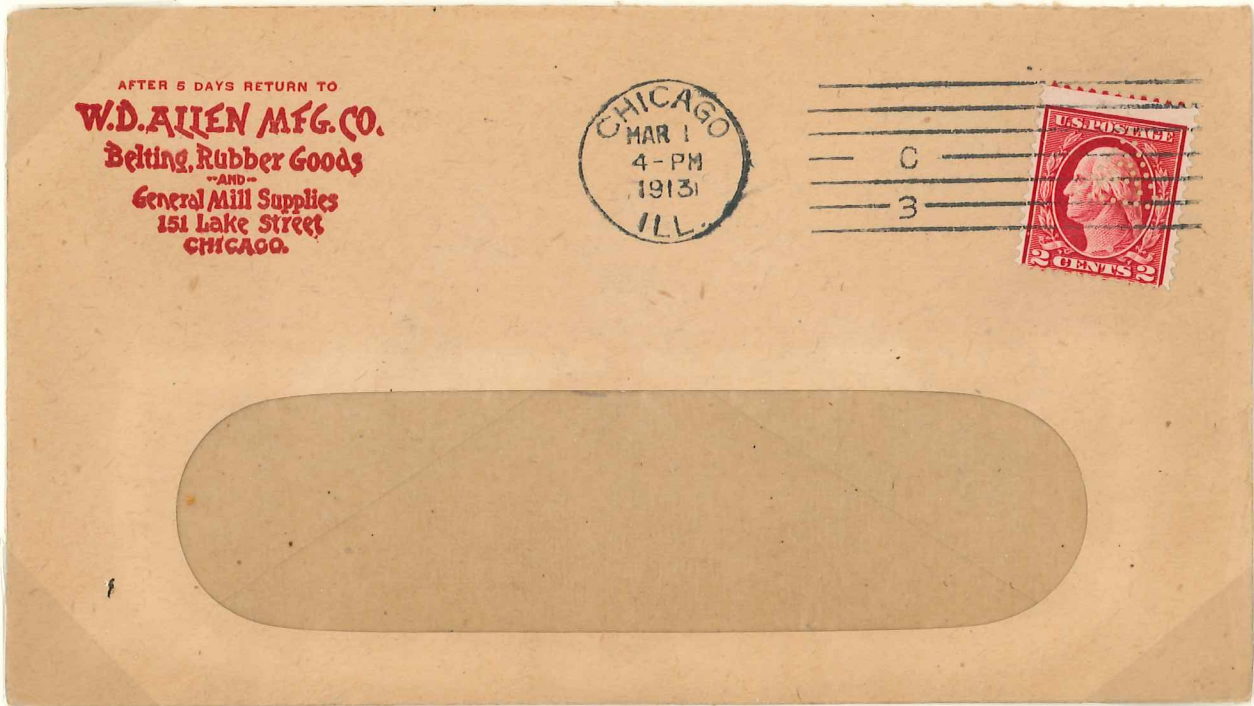
This cover, postmarked at 3:30 pm was probably part of this 5 minute test.

**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.**

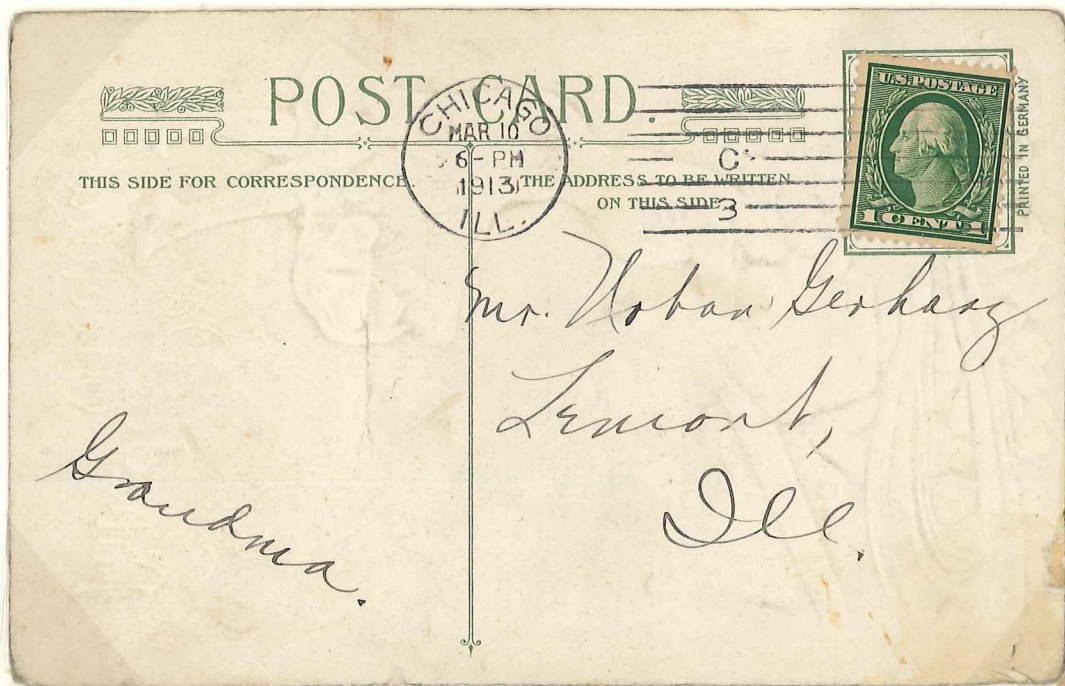
The final contract did not award any business to the BFC Co. Instead the Universal, International, Columbia, and American companies divided the business. **The BFC Co. never did lease any machines to the USPOD.**



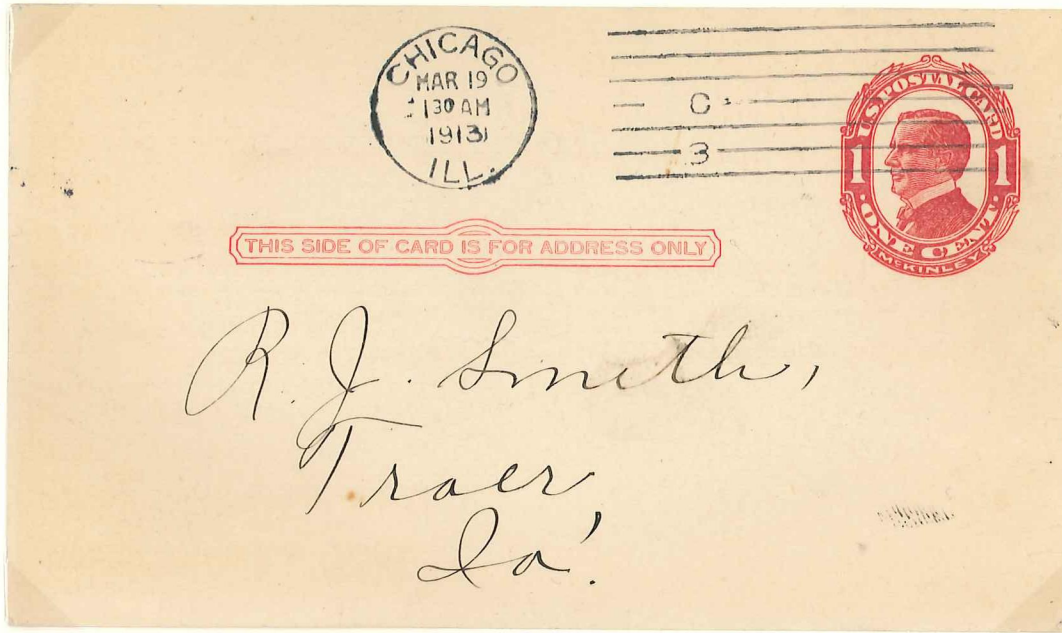
Testing continued beyond the unsuccessful Washington tests. There was probably still hope within the BFC Co. that a last minute effort could still secure some business.



Machine #3, Mar. 1, 1913. Note the shortened left edge of the top killer bar. Known only from this day. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> bars are 6 and 10.5 mm respectively.

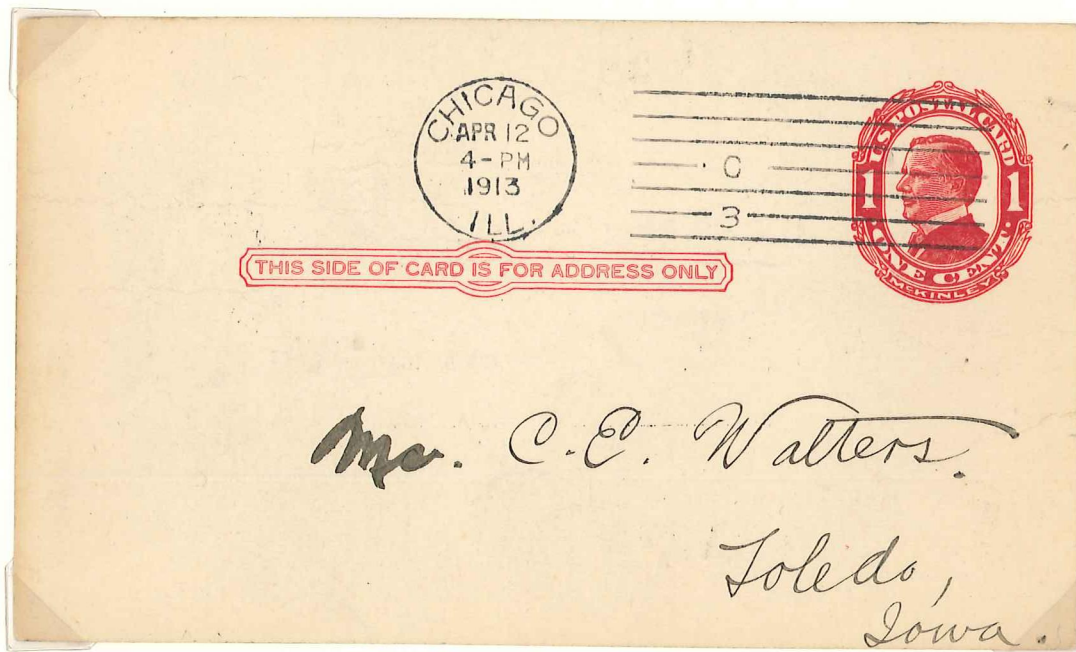


Later in March, the left edge of the 5, 6 and 7<sup>th</sup> bars were also shortened.



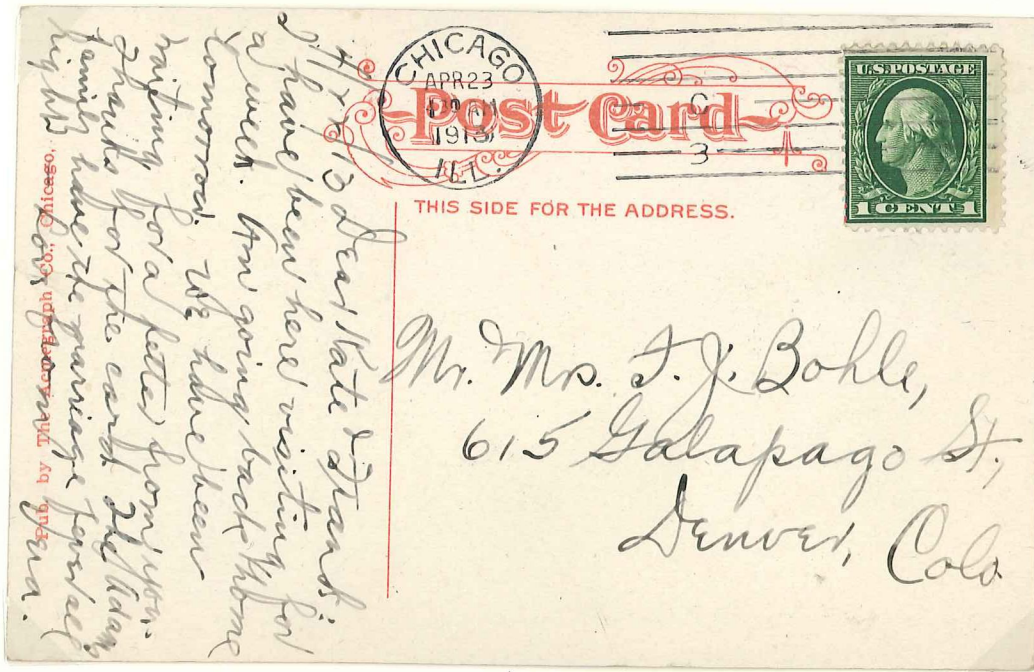
Machine #3, Mar. 19, 1913.

The killer bars are all normal length but the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> bars have been shortened to 4 and 9 mm respectively. Used for 5 days then alternated with the next postmark. This dial has a tall "O" in Chicago.



In April a different killer was in use on Machine #3 having 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> bar lengths of 8.5 and 10.5 mm respectively. Used intermittently with the previous postmark through April and early May. The "O" in Chicago is rounder in this dial.





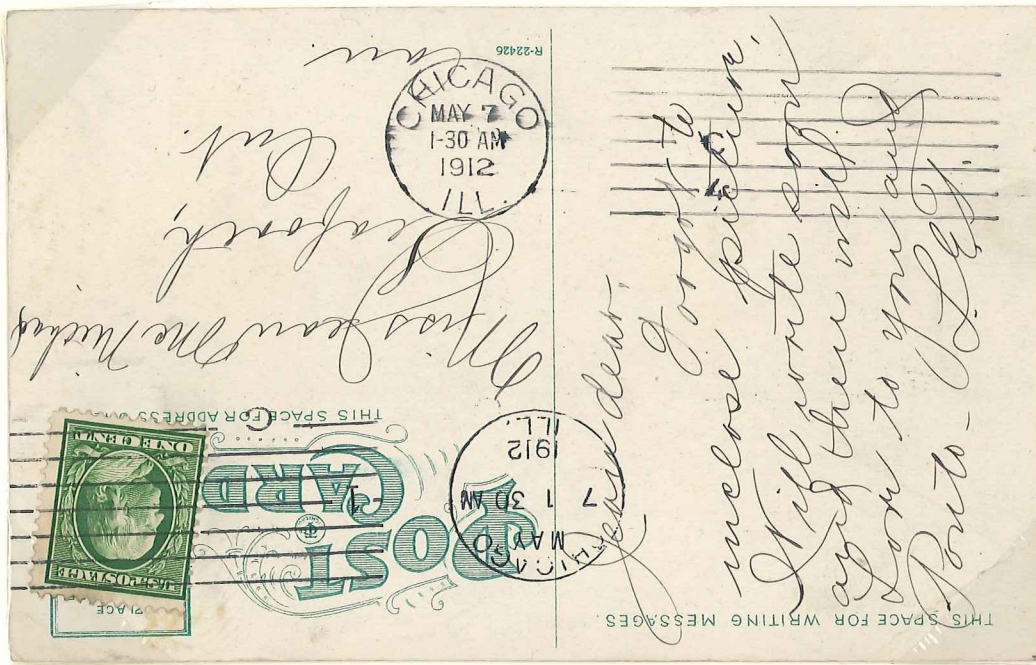
Machine #3, April 23, 1913  
The same postmark and dial as used on Mar. 19, 1913.



May 9, 1913 used the same dial and killer as was used on April 12, 1913.

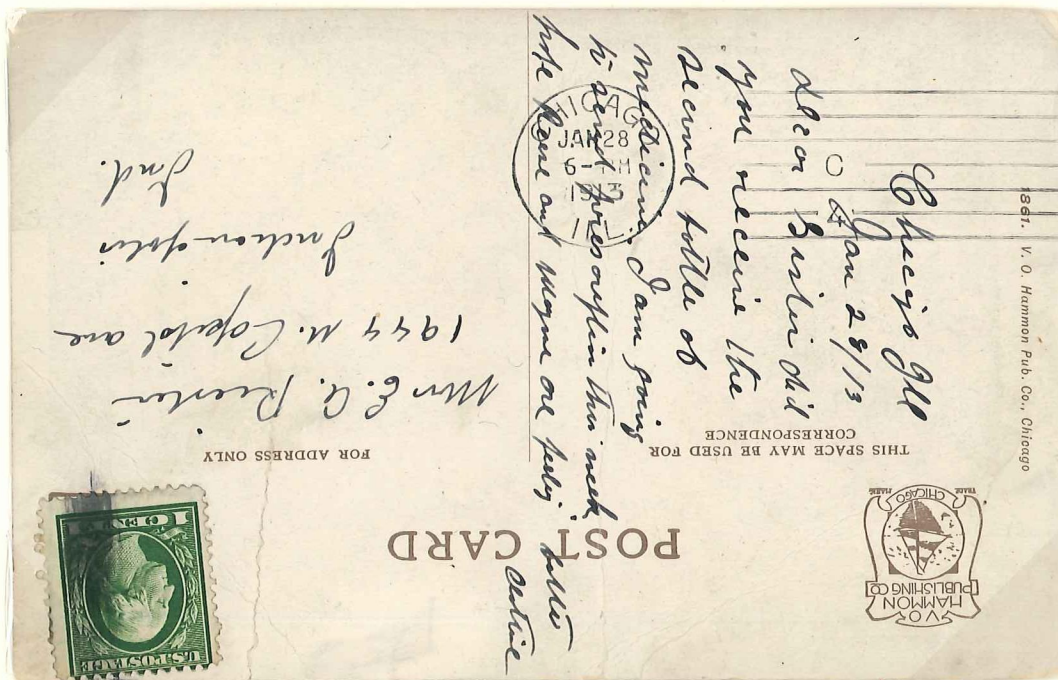
No documentation has ever been found to describe the changes being made to the machines that caused these varieties. Altogether there are 43 different J dial postmarks including distinct usage periods. 14 of these were on machine #3.





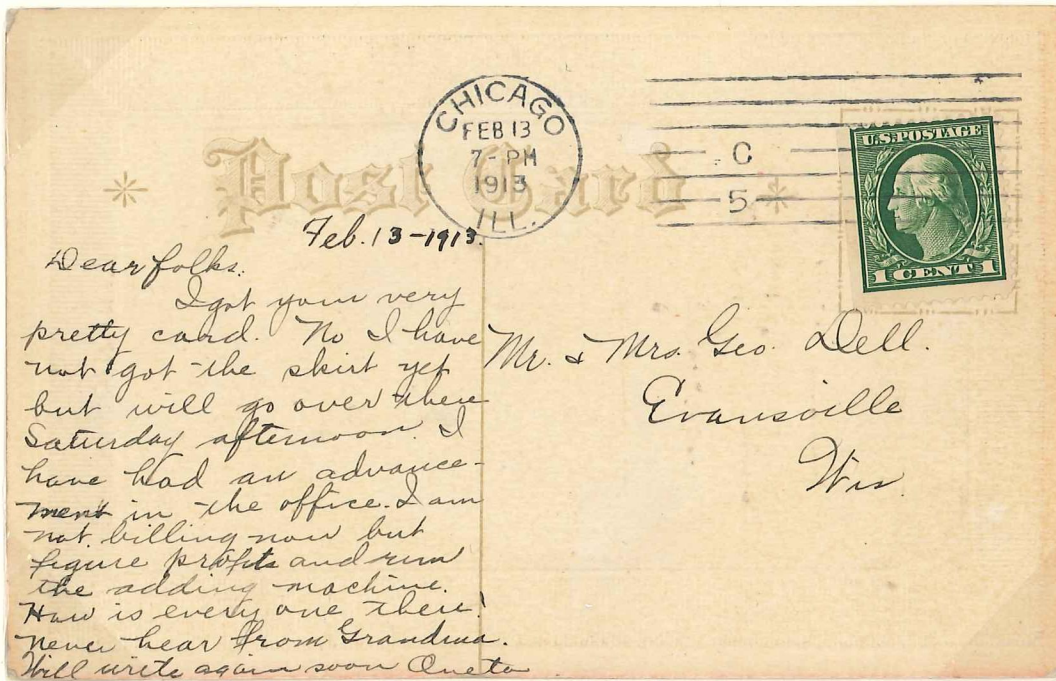
Machine #4, May 7, 1912

ERU of Machine #4 postmark with this dial and a killer having a 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> bar length of 9 and 12 mm respectively..

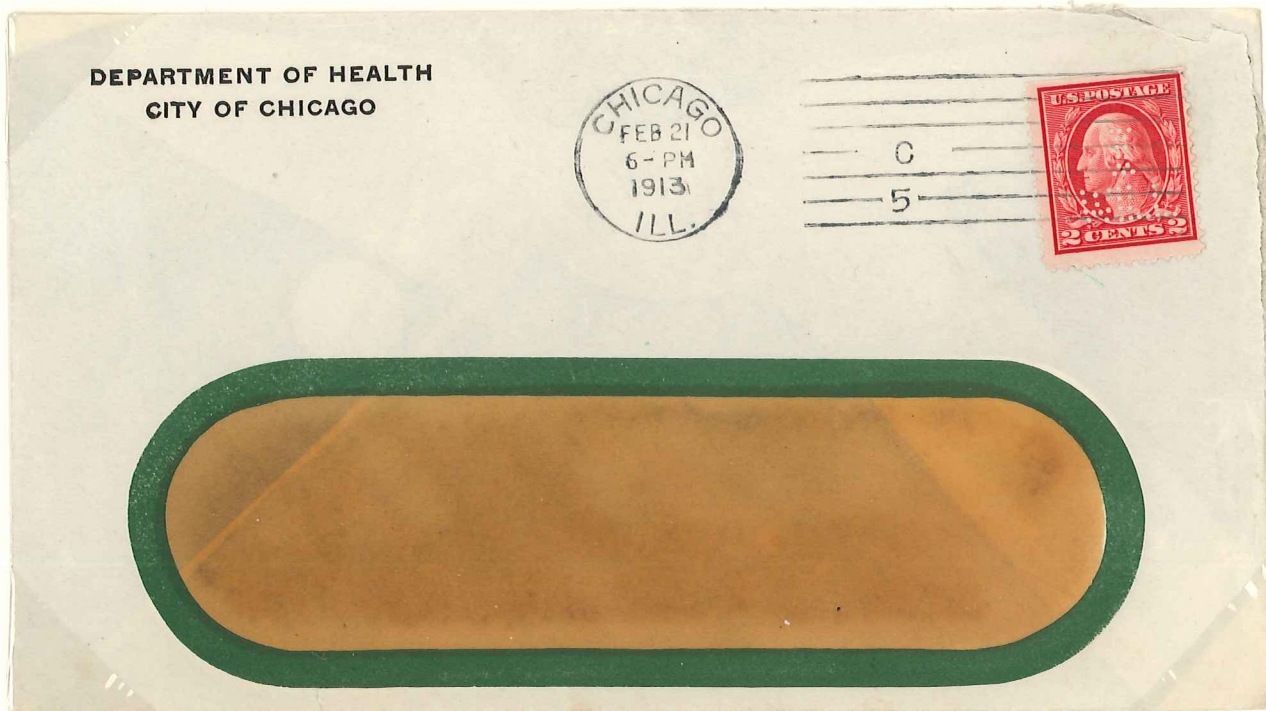


The dial and killer on machine #4 was changed in 1913 with the killer having 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> bar lengths of 4 and 11 mm. The new dial has a smaller typeface.





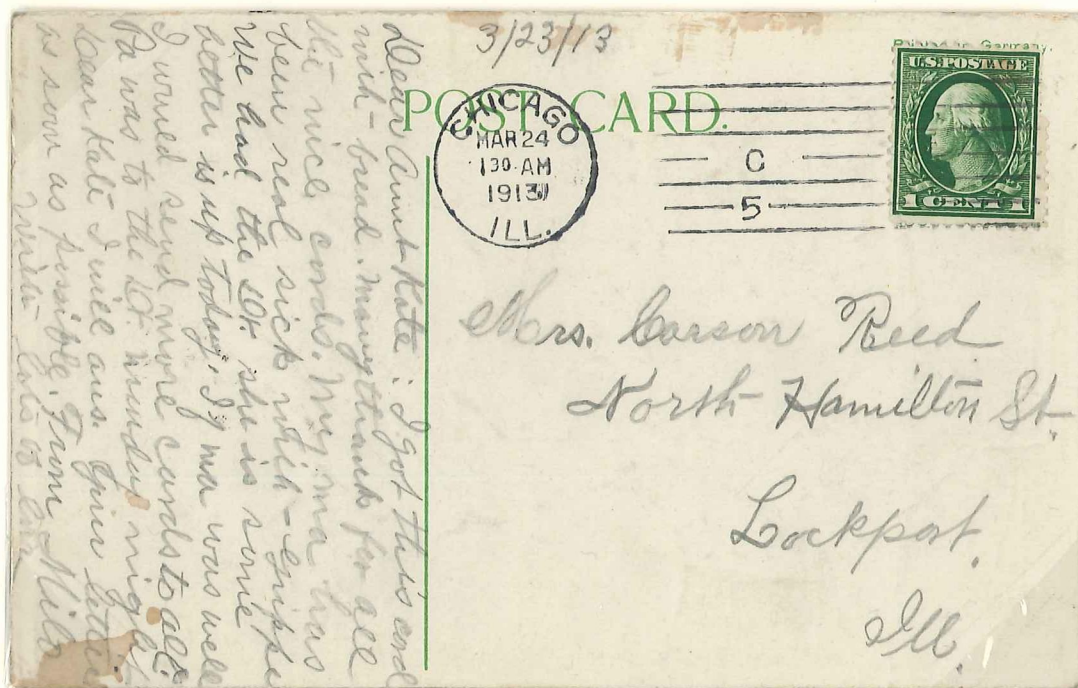
Machine #5 didn't appear until 1913 after the contract had already been decided.  
This example has 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> bars in the killer 8.5 and 10.5 mm long.



Later it appears that the 4<sup>th</sup> bar was shortened to 7 mm while the 6<sup>th</sup> bar remained at 10.5 mm.  
The dials on these postmarks are identical.

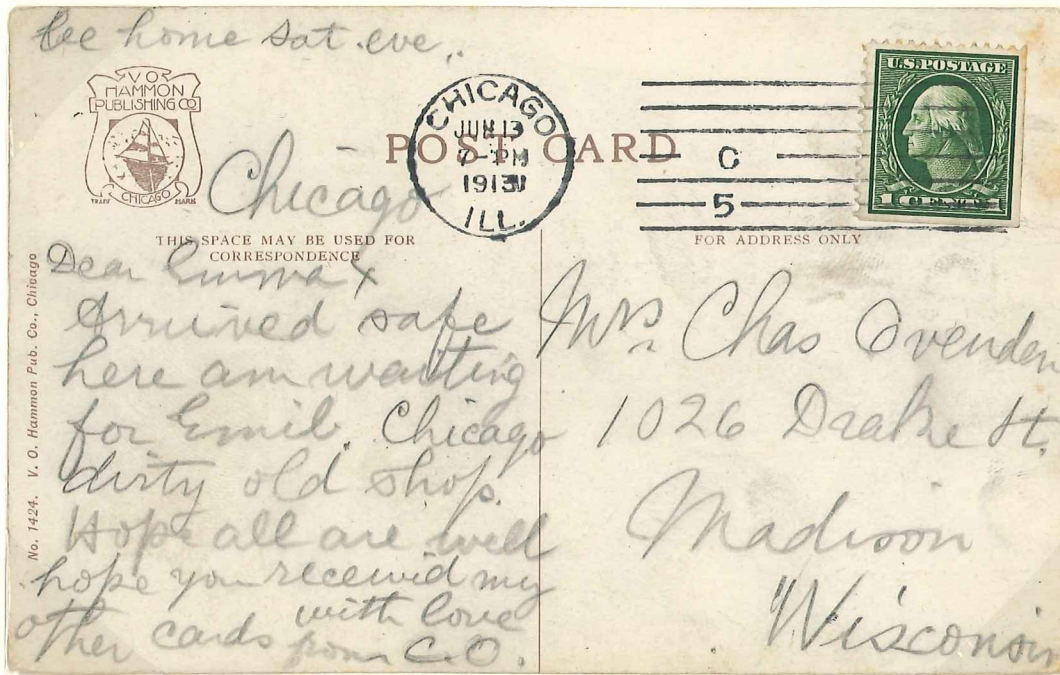


Early in March 1913 the left side of the bottom killer bar was shortened on the left side.



By Mar. 24, 1913 the bottom two bars had been shortened on the left.





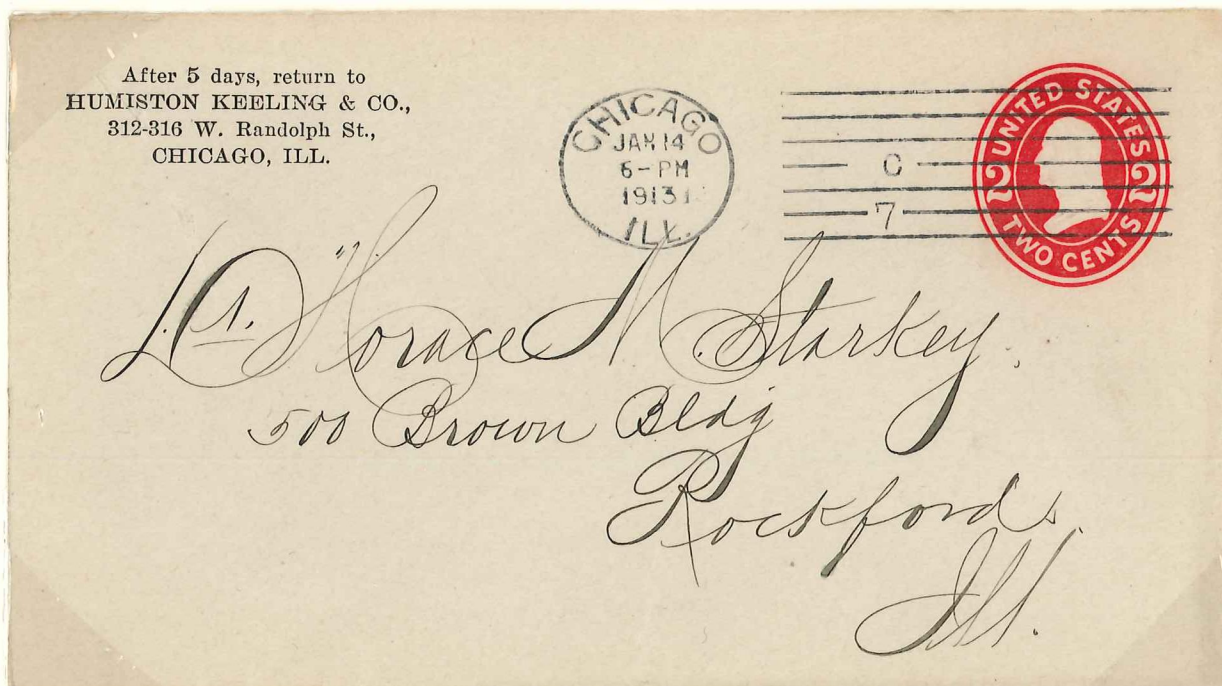
By June the killer had been replaced with one having a 4<sup>th</sup> bar only 5 mm in length on the left side but the left side of the bottom killer bar is almost equal in length to the others and the next to last bar is equal with the others. This is the LRU of a test postmark from machine #5.

The postmark was 7 days before the new USPOD contract went into effect on July 1, 1913. By this time it must have been very obvious to the BFC Co that they would receive no contract but some testing still continued.

No test postmarks have ever been reported from #6 in Chicago.

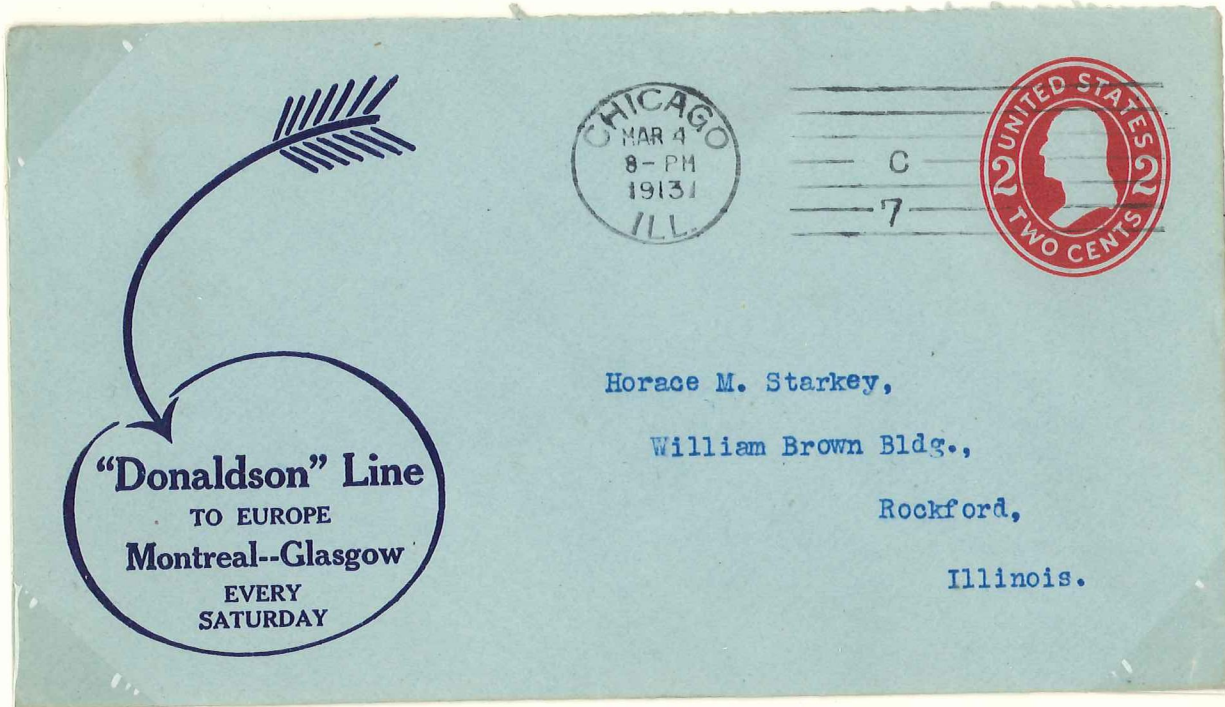


Machine #7 postmark from Dec. 17, 1912. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> bars are 10 mm and 13 mm respectively.

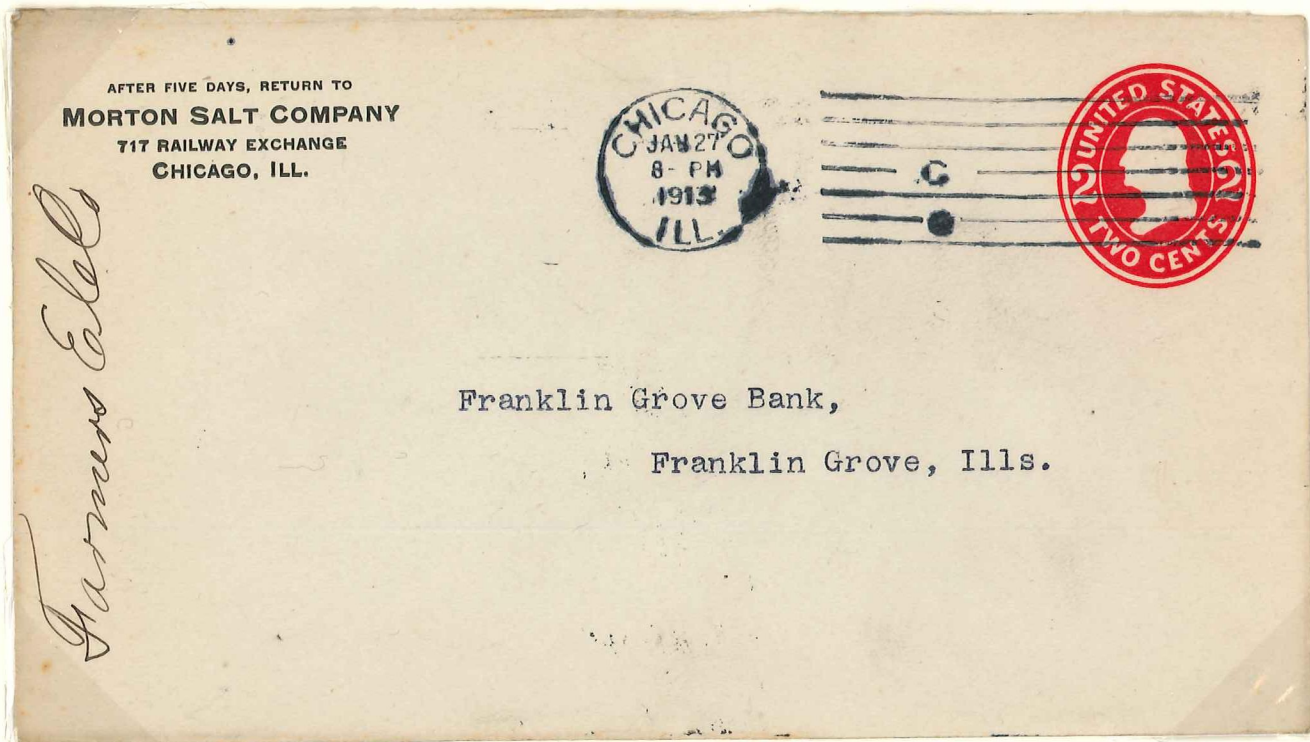


A new killer was installed on Machine #7 by January, 1913. This had 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> killer bars lengths of 8.5 and 11 mm respectively.





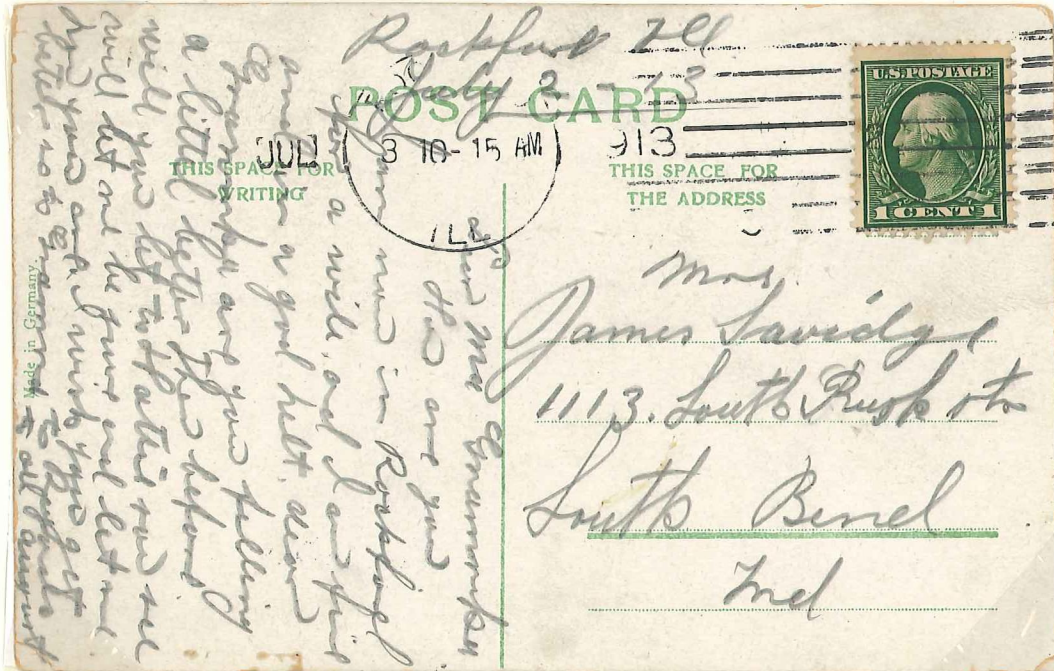
Early in March 1913 a new killer was in place having a 4<sup>th</sup> bar of only 8.5 mm.



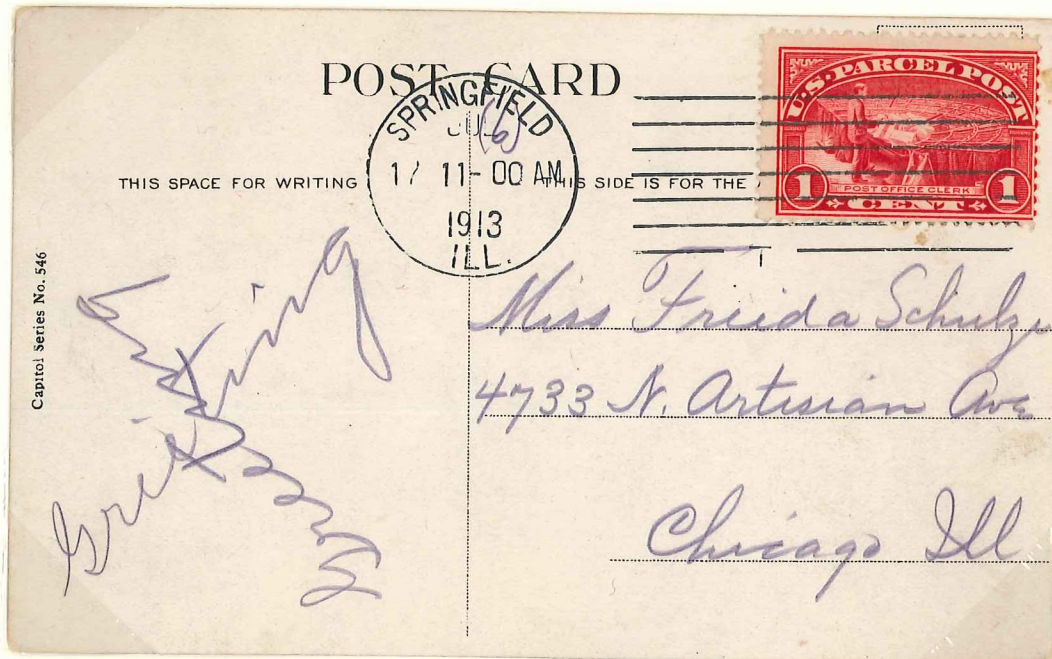
Same postmark type as used on Mar. 4, 1913 but the service letter slug has been inserted inverted printing a solid circle.



On June 30, 1913 the BFC Co contract to lease the Time Marking Machines expired. Ideally the machines would have been turned off and discontinued. However some cities continued to use their machines into July and even August of 1913. These are often referred to as "illegal usages". There were over 130 machines provided under the contract and approximately 35 machines continued to be used past the end of the contract.

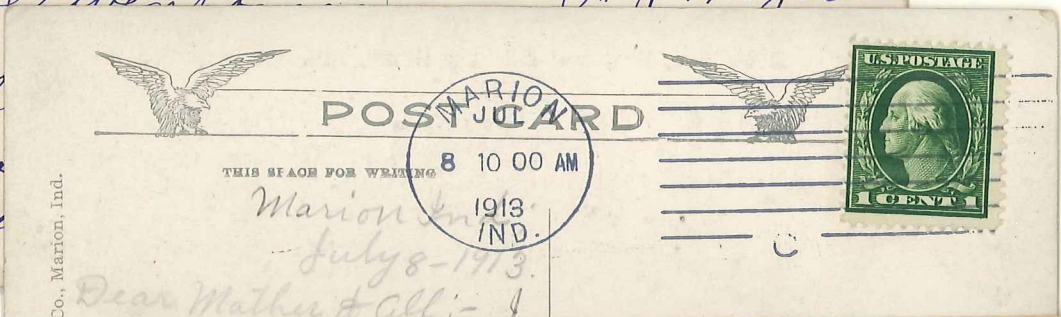
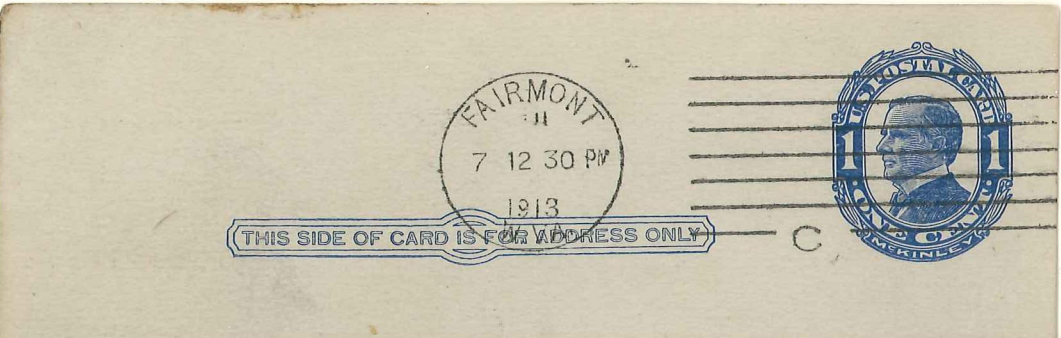


C-112 postmark from Rockford, IL machine #2. The only reported example of a C type postmark beyond the contract period. This was the discovery copy of this postmark, since then an example from June has been found.



A-104 postmark, July 17, 1913, from Springfield, IL.

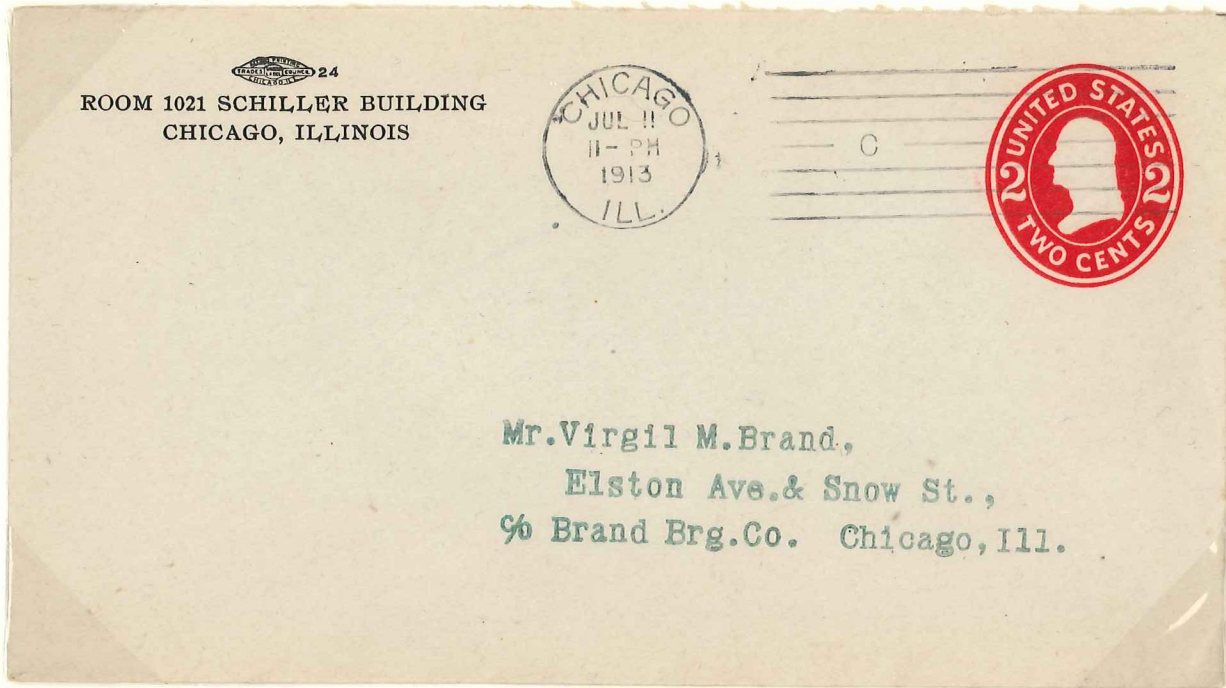




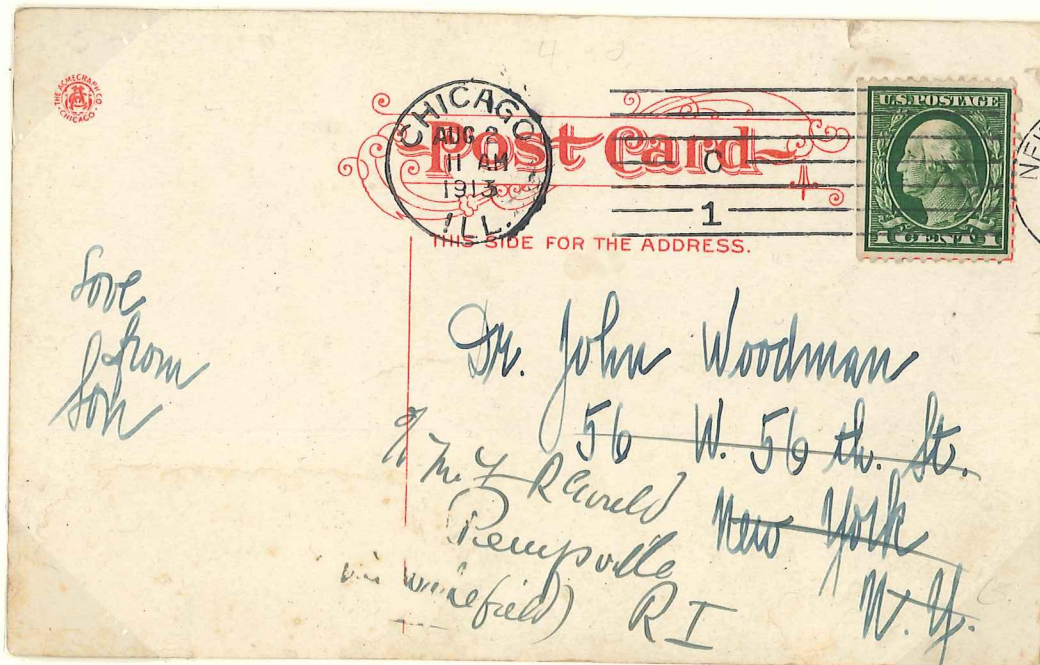
D-104 postmarks from Fairmont, WV; Marion, IN; and Kansas City, MO beyond contract period and an A-104 postmark from Gary, IN.



Even after failing to receive a contract and watching their contract expire on June 30, 1913 the BFC Co continued with some limited development and testing.

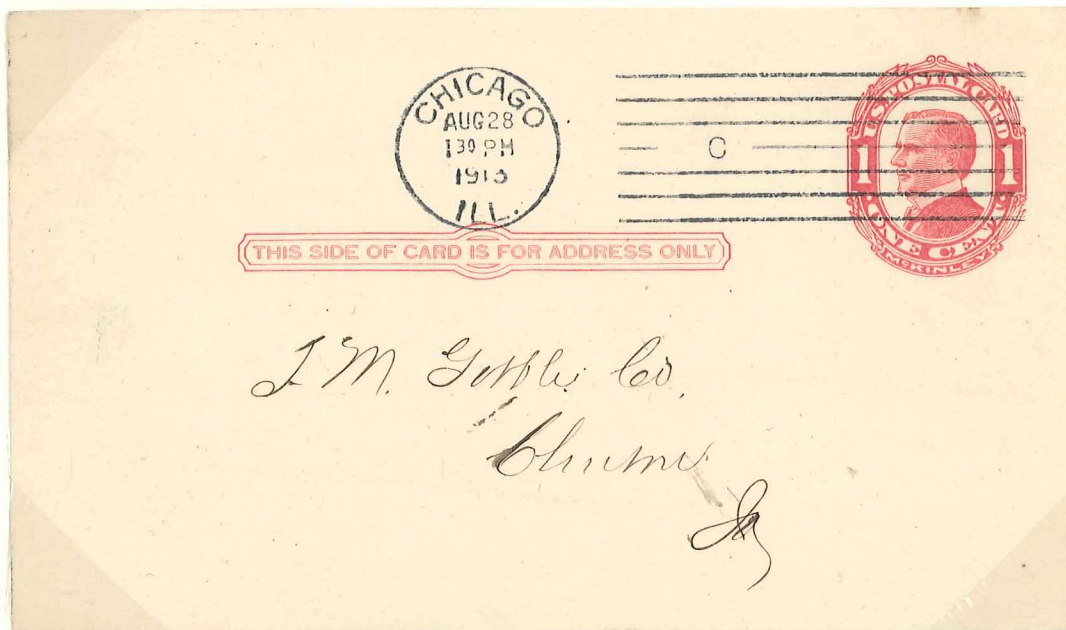


July 11, 1913 postmark from one of the unnumbered test machines.

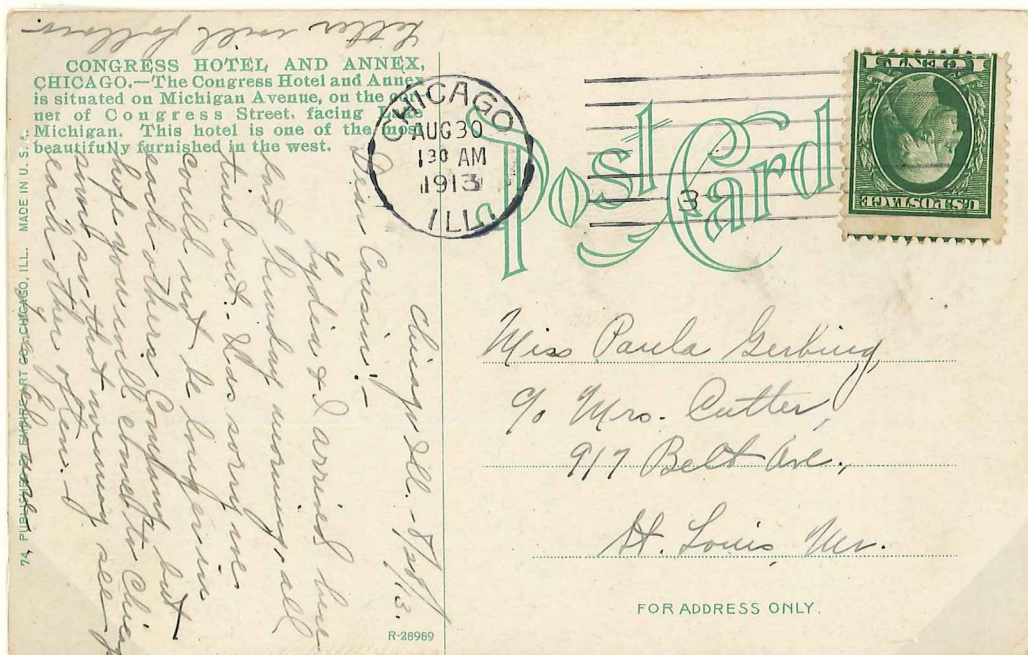


Aug. 2, 1913 postmark from machine #1.





Aug 28, 1913 postmark from one of the unnumbered test machines.  
Left side of center killer bar is 5.5 mm, a different postmark than that from July 11, 1913 on the previous page.



Aug. 30, 1913 postmark from machine #3, missing the service mark.

B. F. Cummins Co.

Final Activity

Tests in Chicago continued into September, used here on a #10 envelope, not commonly used during tests

**IMPORTANT**

CHICAGO  
SEP 10  
7-PM  
1913  
ILL.

Dayton Motor Car Co.,  
Dayton,  
Ohio.



The final tests of the BFC Co machine took place in Washington D.C. in 1916.

These were probably in a failed attempt to gain some business with the next contract which should have begun on July 1, 1916.

STORE EQUIPMENT &  
WINDOW DISPLAY MONTHLY  
SECTION of THE DRY GOODS REPORTER

215 So. Market St. Chicago, Ill.

Featuring  
Store Arrangement  
Store Fixtures  
Store Lighting  
Store Decorating  
Painting

A side view is here shown of the White House, the columns of the portico standing out in bold relief. This view is taken from the east end of the grounds, which the public is permitted to walk showing the North front and towards the State, War and Navy George Washington selected the site and laid the cornerstone in 1792. The President to occupy it was John Adams in 1800. It was burned by the British in 1814 during President Madison's Administration, who occupied Octagon House, Eighteenth and New York avenues, temporarily as the White House. After its restoration it was painted white to obliterate all marks of the fire.

Dear Cousins  
I received a letter from Mabel telling me Anna had to go to the hospital we are all very sorry and hope she will be all right let us hear from you hope you are all well  
Mary

WASHINGTON  
APR 12  
5-PM  
D.C.

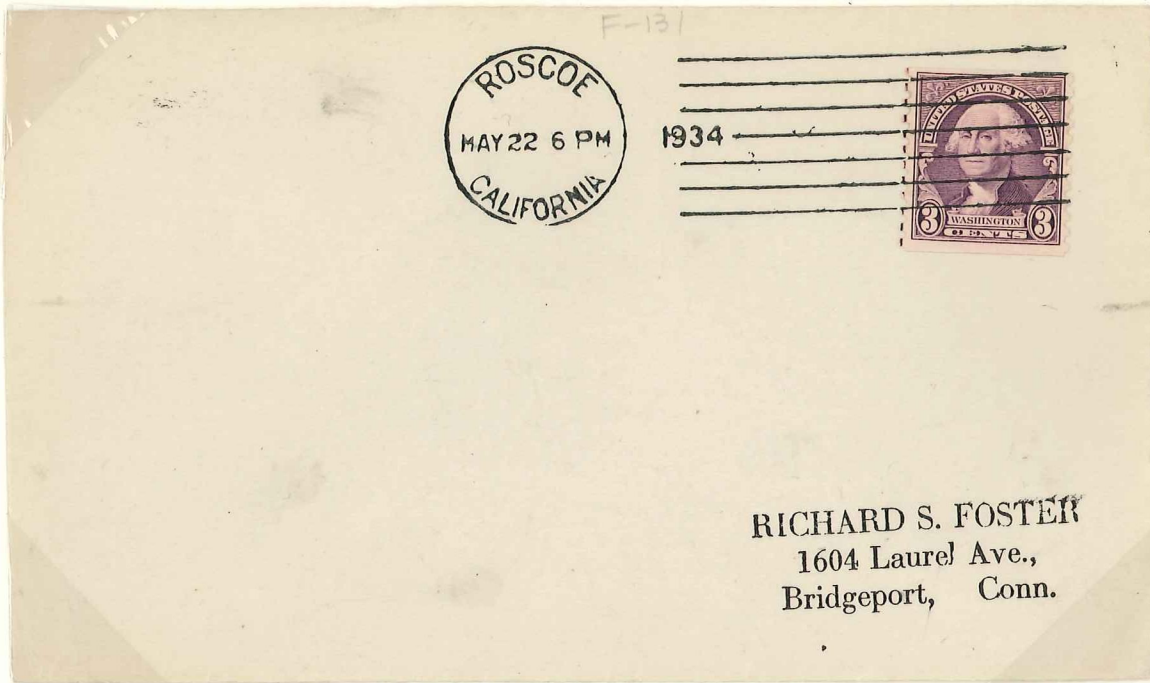
Post Card



ADDRESS

Mrs Walter Coates  
Barker  
Via Co  
N.Y.

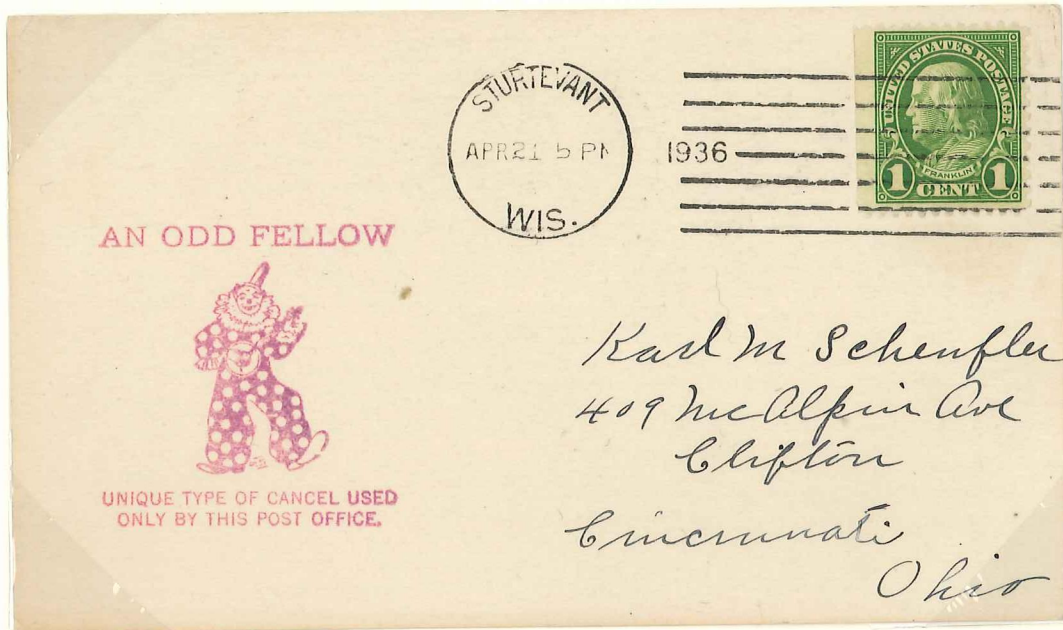




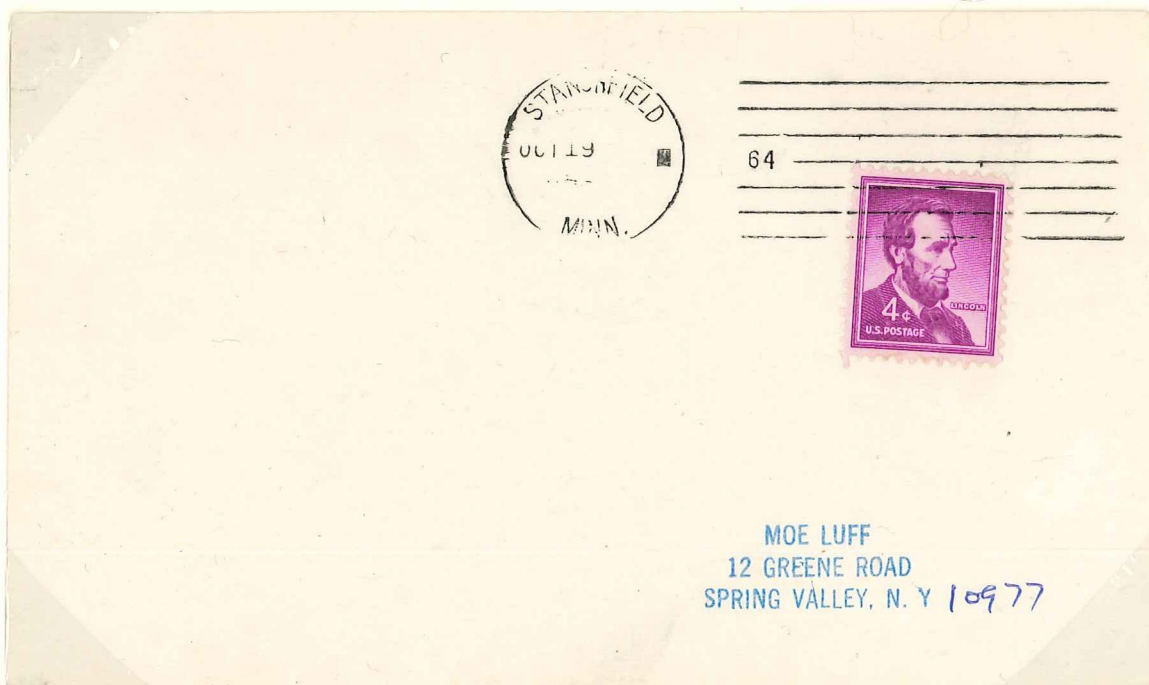
Roscoe, CA used their hand powered machine into the 1930's. The earliest reported use was from 1930. This machine was probably transferred from another city.



Conway, MA used their machine for over 30 years.



Sturtevant, WI used their machine into the 1930's. They recognized their uniqueness and used a special cachet on this philatelic card to Karl Scheufler.



Stanchfield, MN applied the latest reported use of a BFC Co machine on Oct. 19, 1964. The month and date dial appears to still rotate to get the proper month and date. The year in the killer was no longer a 4 digit year but was abbreviated to just a two digit year. It was probably a challenge to get replacement slugs for this old machine.

This cover was sent to well-known postmark collector Moe Luff.