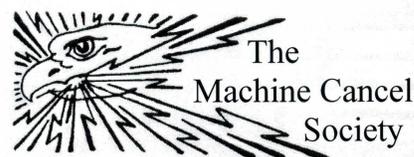


MACHINE CANCEL SOCIETY



As mail volume grew during the 19th century, the need for increased speed and accuracy in handling routine postal operations led inventors and investors to develop machines to reduce manual labor. The cancellation of stamps and the marking of mail with receipt, transit, and auxiliary messages was a major consumption of the time of post office employees. The exhibit in the following pages is a chronological display of products of American machines developed for these tasks by the significant players in the market as well as a number of ephemeral machines which failed to obtain U.S. Post Office approval. These, along with the covers marked by machines developed in other countries around the world, are what members of the Machine Cancel Society collect.

The MACHINE CANCEL SOCIETY can trace its origins back more than half a century and is American Philatelic Society affiliate No. 24. It welcomes both U.S. and international collectors of machine cancels, and it also serves collectors of postal history who want to know more about the markings on their covers made by machines.

The MACHINE CANCEL FORUM is the quarterly production of the Society. The Society's *Flag Cancel Forum*, which began publication in 1963, was renamed and expanded in 1987 to encompass all machine markings. In its current format since then, *Machine Cancel Forum II* has published over 5,600 pages of information. The Society occasionally publishes and keeps in print monographs on individual machines and also owns the stock of the latest edition of the *Flag Cancel Encyclopedia*, recognized as one of the most thorough books on machine cancels ever published.

Members also can participate as buyers and sellers in the Society's quarterly auction of covers, and a group of experienced collectors serves members by answering questions on the markings of specific machines.

We welcome your membership.

Visit us here at Booth 679. Membership information and forms are available at the booth, and—on a first-come-first-served basis—the latest SPECIAL ISSUE of *Machine Cancel Forum* can be obtained.

Machine Cancel Society Annual Meeting: Monday, May 30, 10:00 a.m. Room 1E11. MCS members are encouraged to attend, and all are welcome.

Program: An Introduction to Machine Cancels, 10:30-11:00 a.m., Room 1E11. All are welcome.

The 1860s



MCADAMS A letter from the New York City Post Office to Mr. John McAdams, dated May, 1863, states "...Will Mr. McAdams please call at this office and sign proper voucher for payment on letter stamping machine".

The cover on the left, dated several months earlier, is the result of John McAdams testing the letter stamping machine on his incoming personal mail.

MCADAMS This is one of the few known commercial uses of the McAdams letter stamping machine. A few other 1863 dated examples exist.



PEARSON HILL Contemporary documentation suggests the testing and use of at least a couple of mechanical devices in the United States during the decades of the 1860s.

Characteristics of this marking, including the strong offset, noted here, strongly indicate this marking was made by a British made Pearson Hill mechanical stamper.



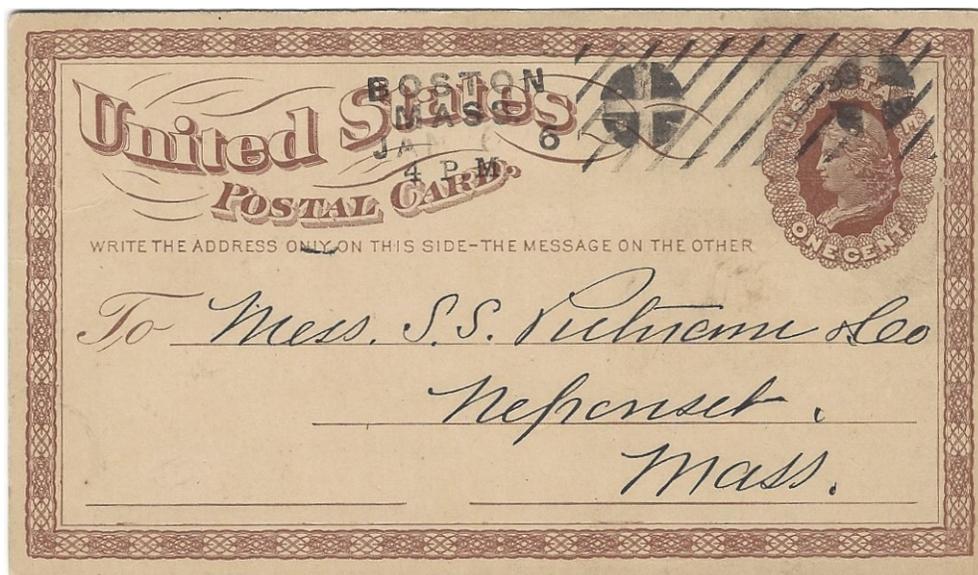
PITTSBURGH UNKNOWNNS Mystery still surrounds the inventor of the machine that created a series of very distinctive markings from Pittsburgh in the early 1870s.

The postmarks exist with several different design combinations from 1870 to 1872 and are sought after by machine cancel specialists and banknote era fancy cancel collectors alike.

PALMER AND CLARK

Timothy Palmer and Henry Clark were awarded at least two patents for cancelling machines in 1875 and 1876, which eventually led to a contract from the Post Office Department for ten machines.

However, surviving examples are scarce and known from only five cities, including Poughkeepsie, Clark's hometown.



LEAVITT Thomas Leavitt was a true pioneer in the field of cancelling machines. He was responsible for developing the first continuously used cancelling machines in the United States.

Leavitt's machines were in use from late 1875 (first prototype) until 1892, when the last machine was retired from Indianapolis. Virtually all known examples are on postal cards.

The 1880s



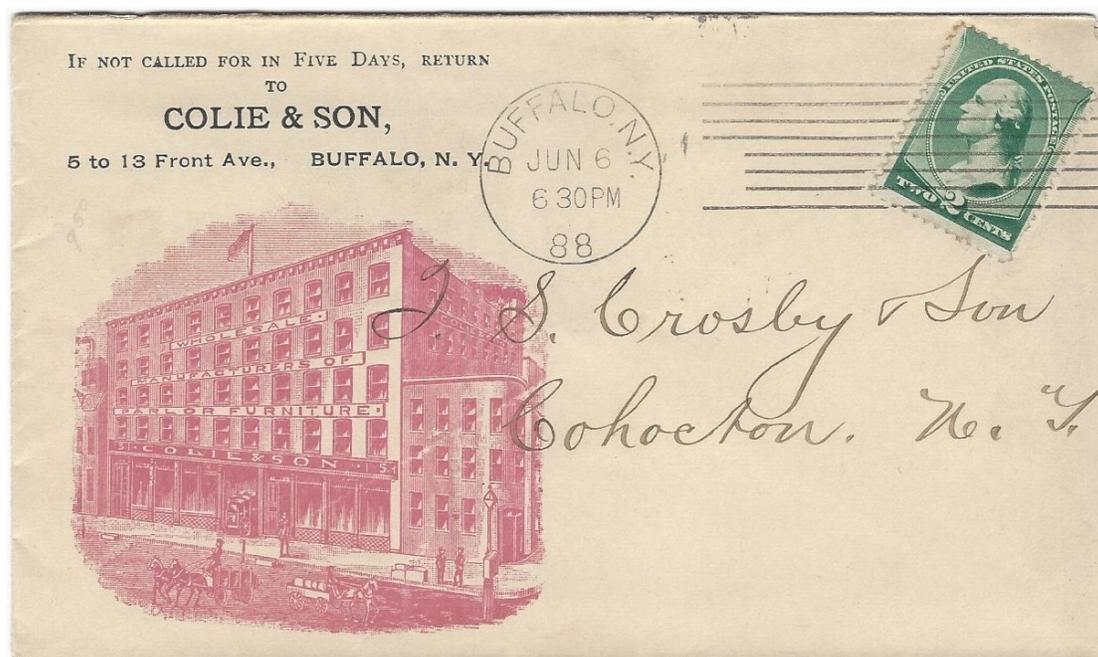
LEAVITT Though the vast majority of Leavitt cancels are found on postal cards, some experimentation was done for a couple of years in the early 1880s in an attempt to perfect a needle based feeding mechanism.

Despite extensive testing, the machines were never quite perfected to work with envelopes.

AMERICAN The American Postal Machines Company entered the cancelling machine scene in very late 1884, and would remain a dominant player for the next few decades.



After several years of use in the Boston post office, the machines eventually spread to Philadelphia, Washington, DC, and other large cities.



INTERNATIONAL

The International Postal Supply Company tested machines in Buffalo and Brooklyn in 1888, and New York and Washington, DC, the following year.

The high speed and excellent reliability of the International machines set them apart from most other manufacturers for the next couple of decades.

The 1890s

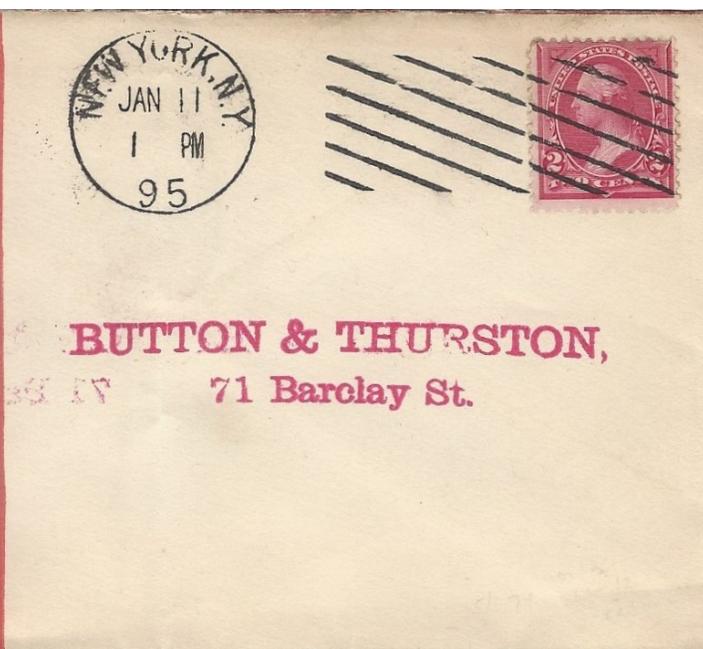
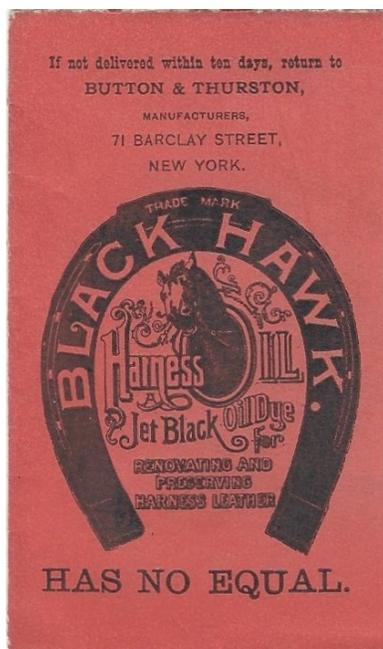
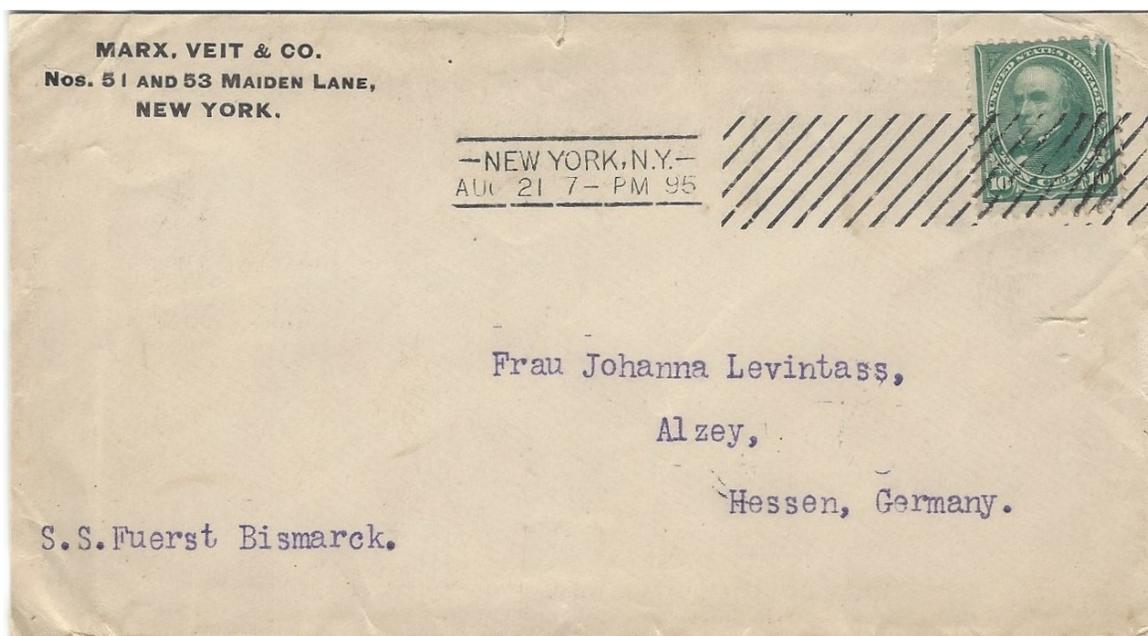


AMERICAN FLAG The 1890s was a watershed decade for the development of cancelling machines in the United States. The urgent need for efficient machines brought many new players into the market.

Late in 1894, the popular 'flag cancel' was introduced in Boston, Chicago, and Washington, DC. Eventually, over 3000 towns and cities in the United States used the flag cancel design.

BARRY The Barry Postal Supply Company ramped up work in the early 1890s, and by 1895 was tasked with filling the void left by the International Postal Supply Company, who was in a contract dispute with the post office.

The Barry machines never lived up to expectations, and were slowly phased out in the early 1900s.



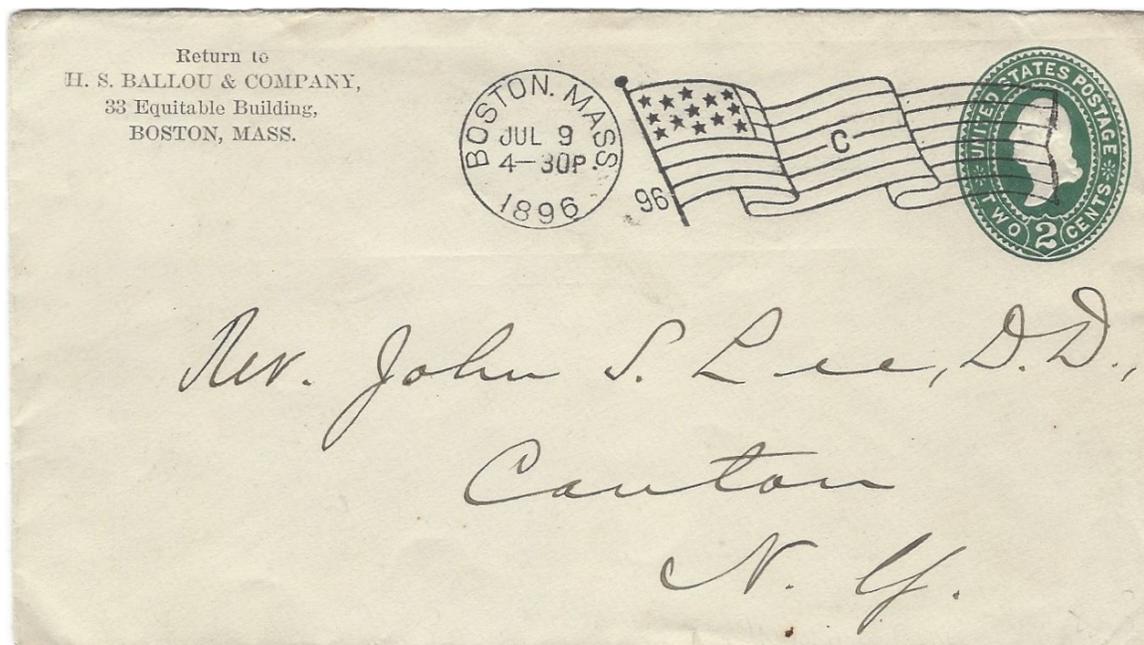
CONSTANTINE George Constantine developed a unique six-headed cancelling machine, which was tested in New York City and Washington, DC, intermittently from 1890 to 1895.

The machine was never fully accepted by the post office, and by 1895, the machine in New York City was retired.

The 1890s

IMPERIAL The story of the Imperial Mail Marking Machine Company is an interesting one, and closely intertwined with the American Postal Machines Company.

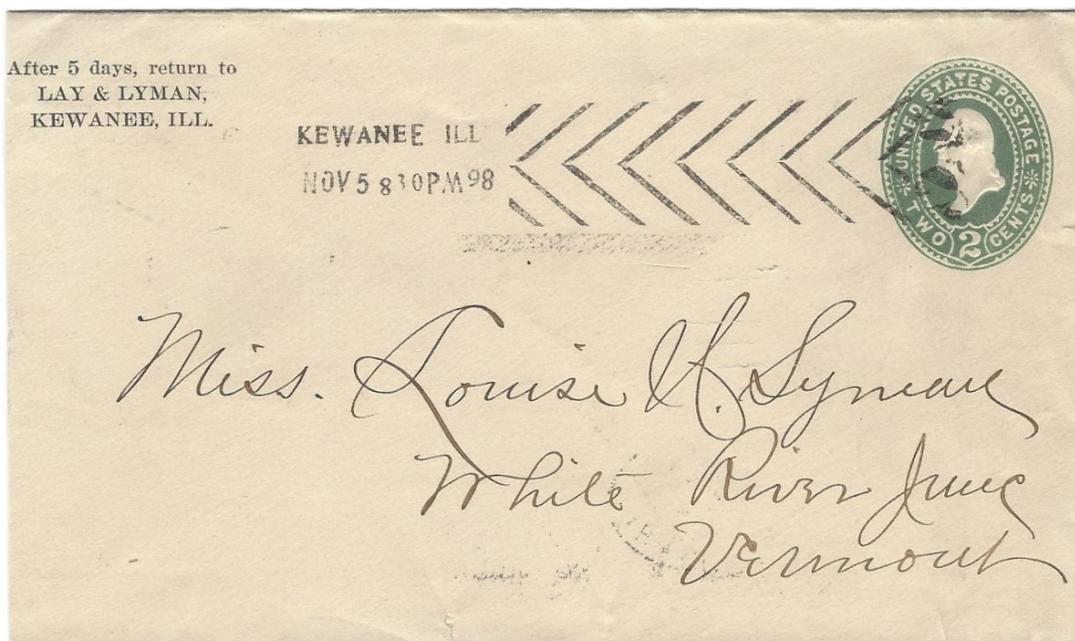
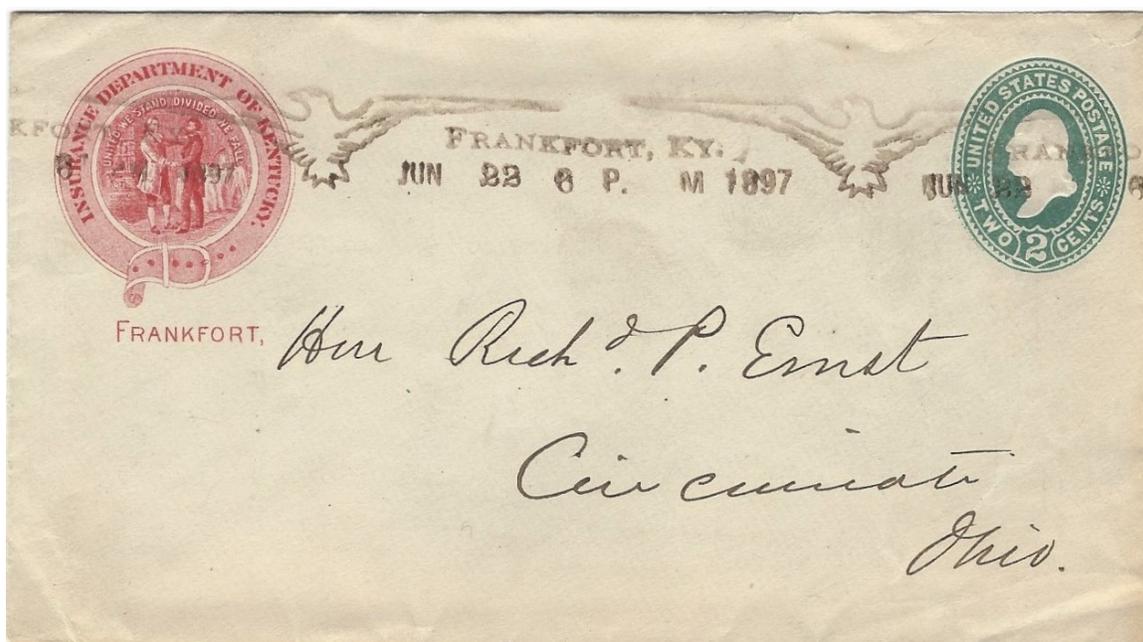
The 'involute flag' is one of the most recognizable types of machine cancels of the era, starting in 1896 and ending in 1900.



MILAM & HOLMES

Frankfort, KY, residents John Milam and Samuel Holmes teamed up to create some fascinating repeater type machine cancels from 1896 to 1899, including the well known 'spread eagle' design shown here.

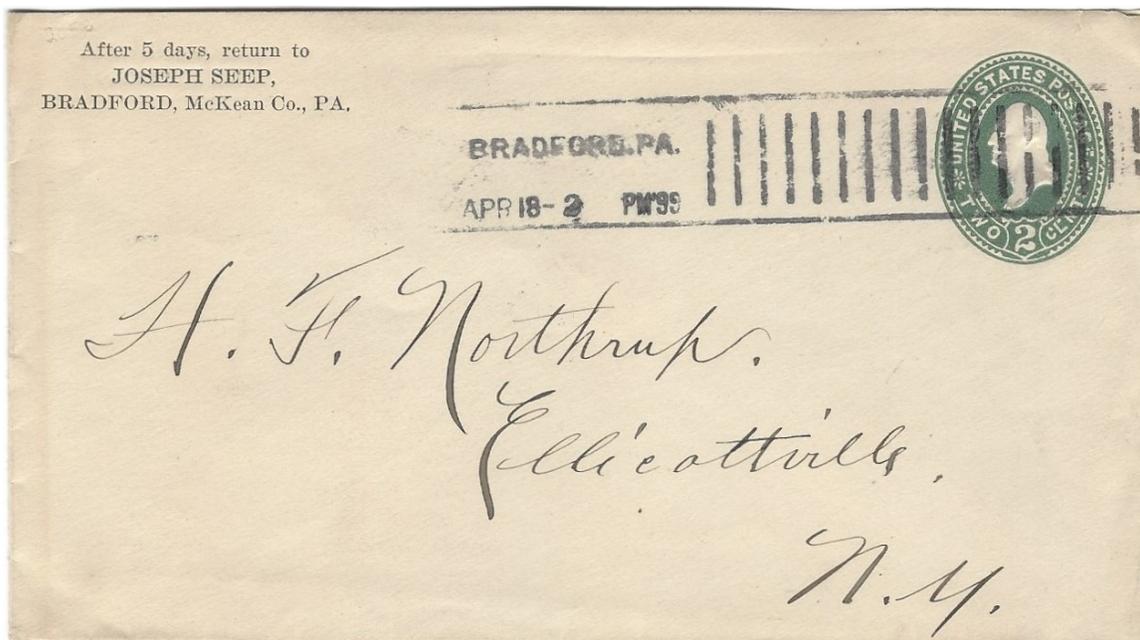
Other types were used in Louisville and Lexington KY, as well as Cincinnati, OH, and Lytle, GA.



POTTER & VAIL Gideon Potter and Edward Vail, both of Illinois, were responsible for creating a series of very distinctive postmark types used in several Midwestern cities.

Kewanee, where this cover is from, was the hometown of Vail. Despite working on their machines from 1896 to 1900, no long term success with the post office was attained.

The 1890s

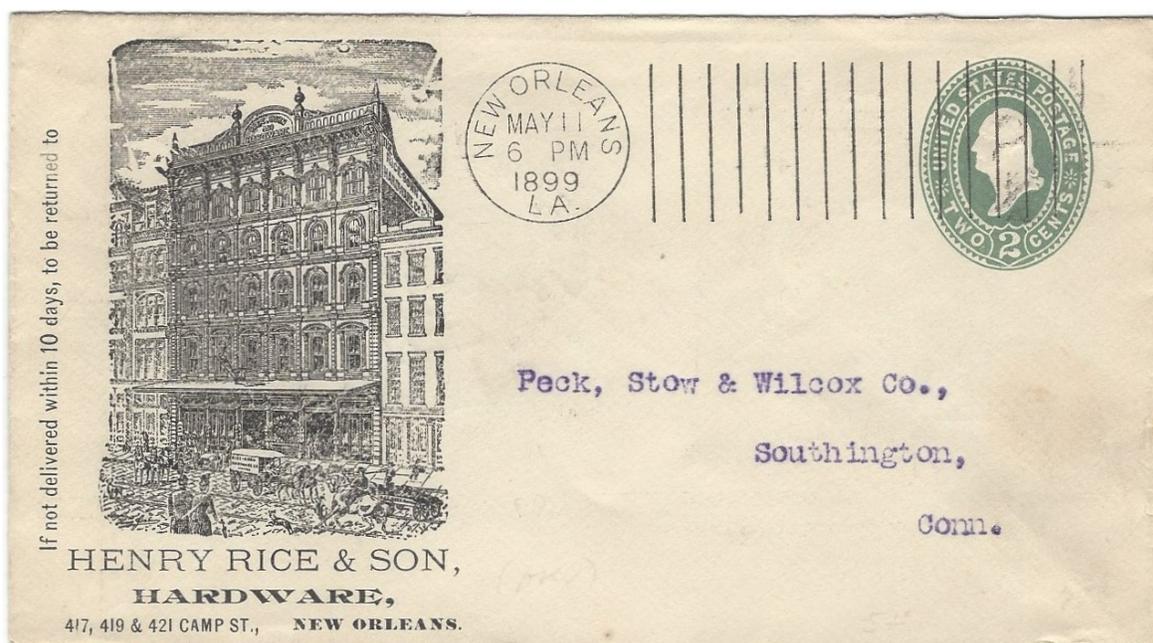


GEARY James Geary tested several different machines in his hometown of Bradford, PA, as well as in Washington, DC, and Olean, NY, between late 1895 and 1905.

However, he was never able to secure a contract with the post office, and thus many of the known Geary markings are quite scarce.

BARR-FYKE The Barr-Fyke Machine Company of Kansas City, Missouri, did extensive testing of its machines in Kansas City and Washington, DC, between 1896 and 1898.

This led to a contract with the post office, but eventual dissatisfaction with the machines led to termination of the contract by 1905.



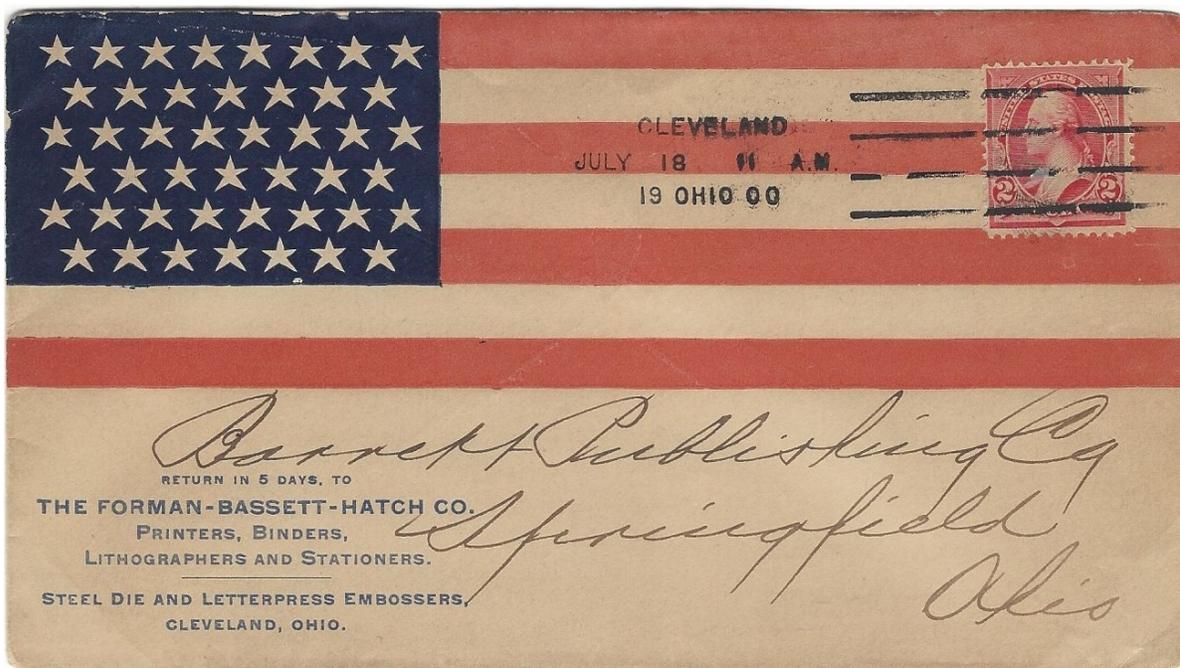
HAMPDEN The Hampden Canning Machine Company experimented as early as 1896 in New York, and within a few years was doing business with the post office on a fairly large scale.

Despite about 150 towns and cities across the country using Hampden machines, quality and performance problems also ended their success within a decade.

The 1900s

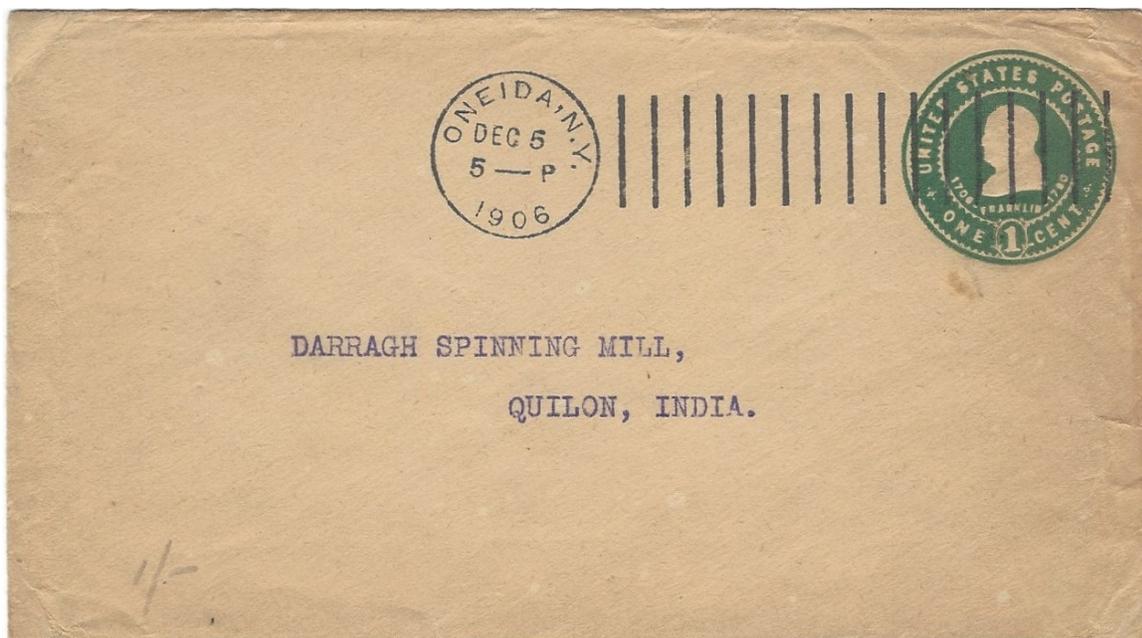
CHESHIRE Edward Cheshire tested a few machines around the turn of the century in his hometown of Cleveland, Ohio.

His patents were assigned to the White Sewing Machine Company, but his machines were never accepted by the post office.



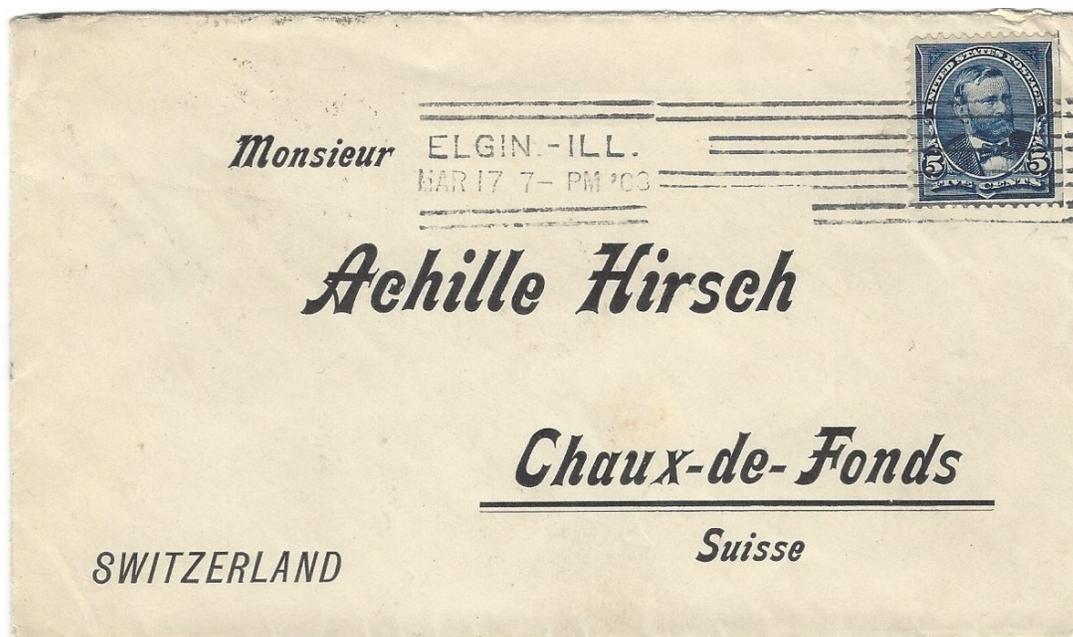
DOREMUS Willard Doremus created a very simple hand powered machine that was sold to the post office by the hundreds in the early 1900s.

Eventually, almost 800 towns and cities across the US used these machines. However, quality and speed issues led to their demise within a short time. By the 1920s, only a few machines remained in use.



PNEUMATIC The Pneumatic Cancellation Machine Company of Indianapolis started testing its machine in 1898, and was able to secure a small contract with the post office.

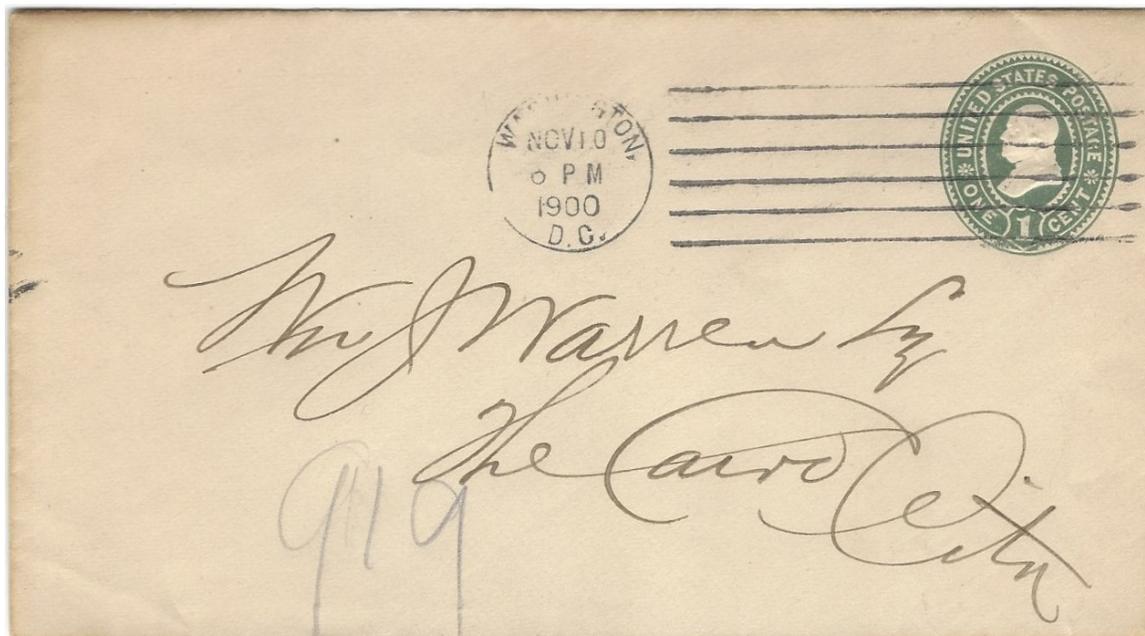
Between 1898 and 1904, about 30 cities across the US used Pneumatic machines. However, other faster and more reliable machines soon replaced the Pneumatic machines that were in place.



The 1900s

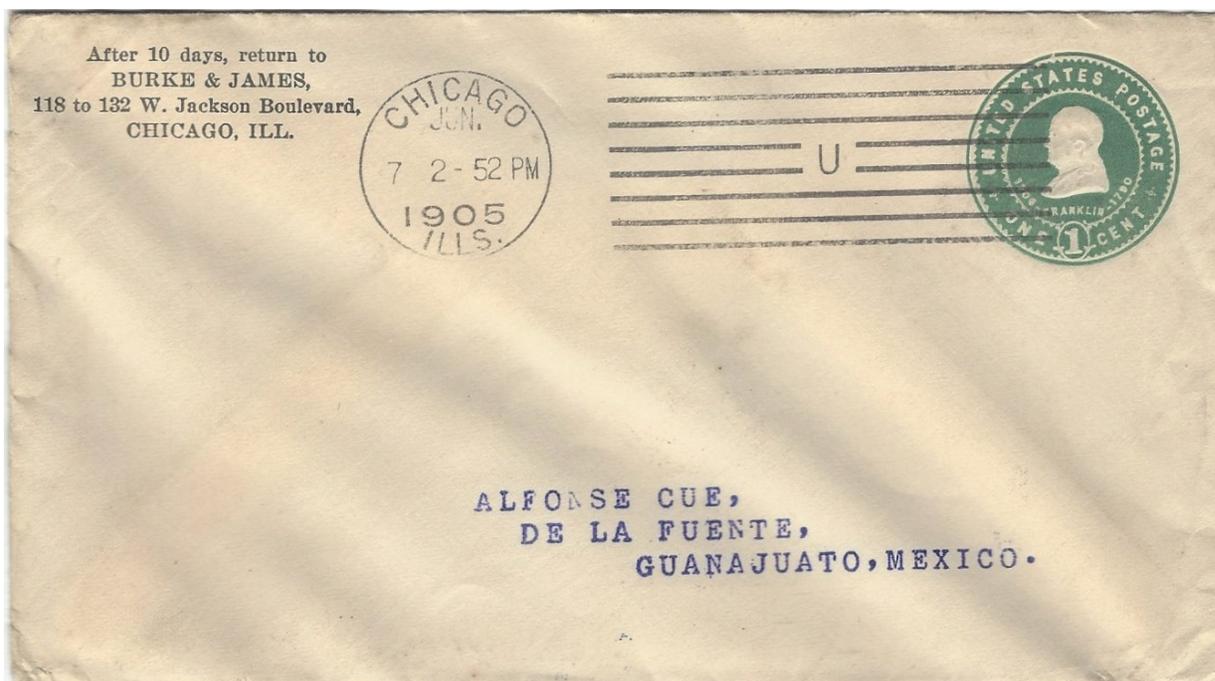
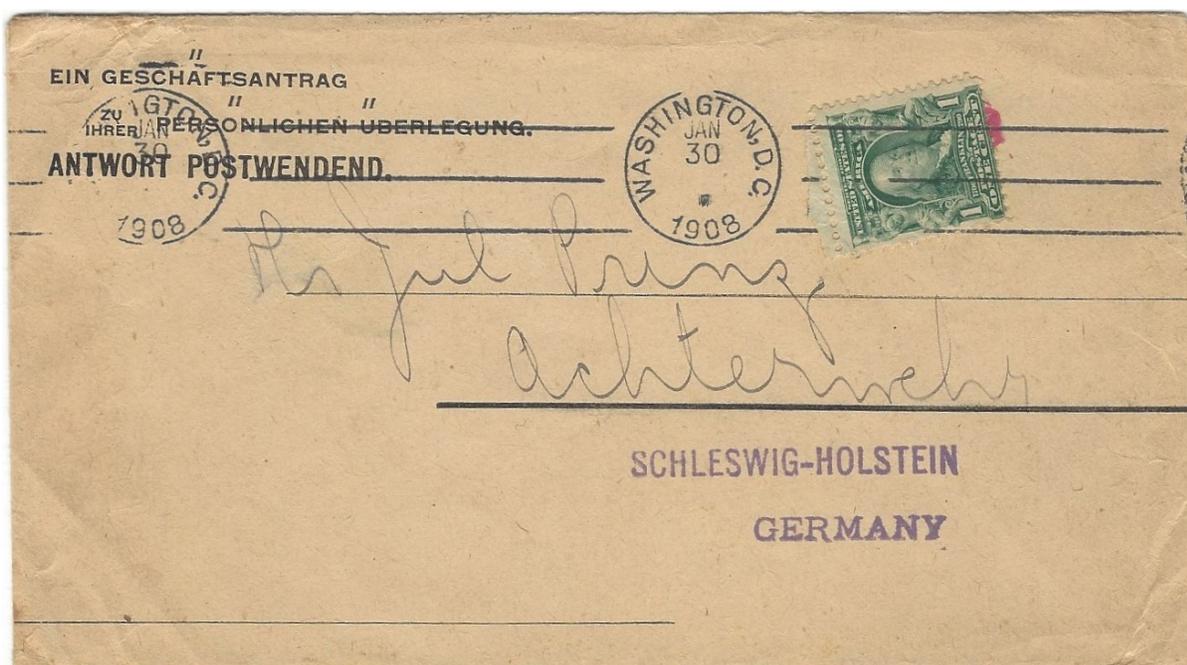
COLUMBIA The Columbia Postal Supply Company burst onto the cancelling machine scene in 1900 and would remain a major player in that market for decades.

They made available several models and created perhaps the most diverse variety of postmarks of any cancelling machine company.



HANSEN-KRAG Despite widespread adoption of their machines elsewhere around the world, inventor Gustav Hansen (financially backed by Nils Krag) was never able to crack the US market with his inexpensive machine.

In general, repeater type machine cancels were used very sparingly in the US.



TIME MARKING

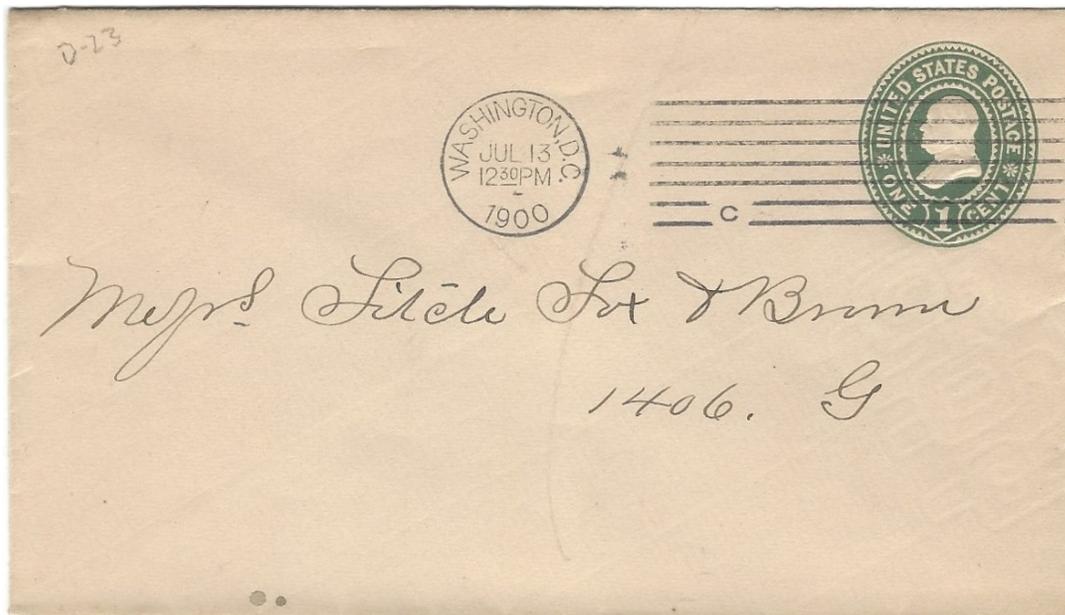
Machines from the Time Marking Machine Company impressed postal officials enough to be selected for contract use in many cities.

They were one of the first adopted machines that could show the exact time in the dial, a feature that very few other machines would match.

The 1900s

INTERNATIONAL The speed and reliability of the International 'Flier' machines quickly made them a mainstay at the highest volume post offices across the country.

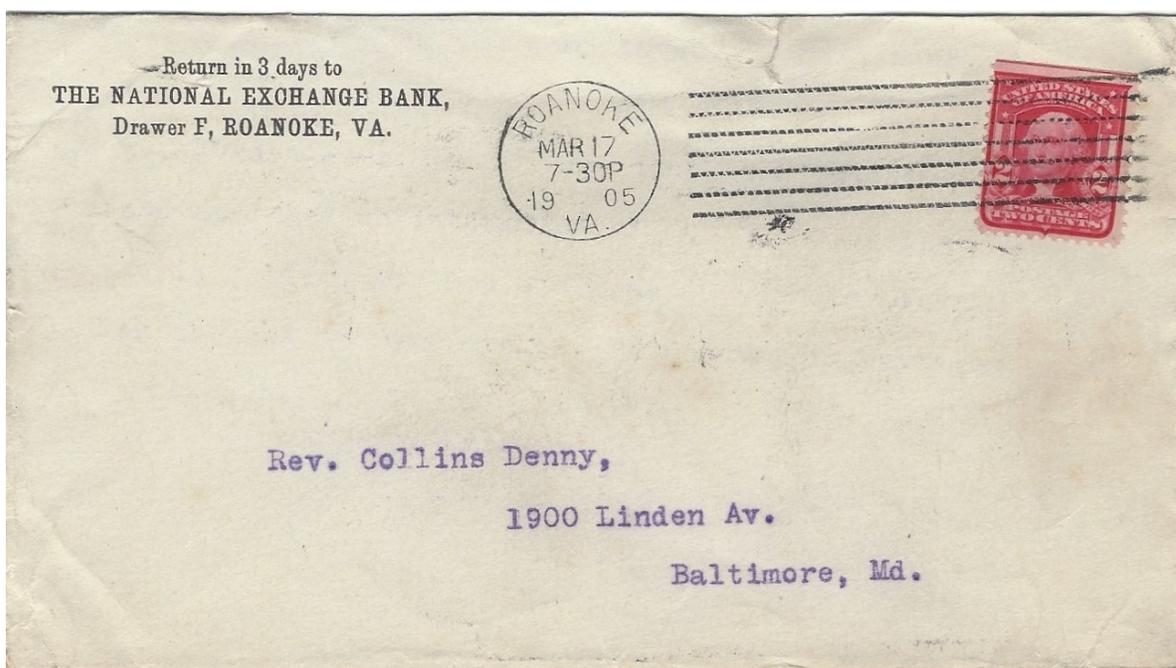
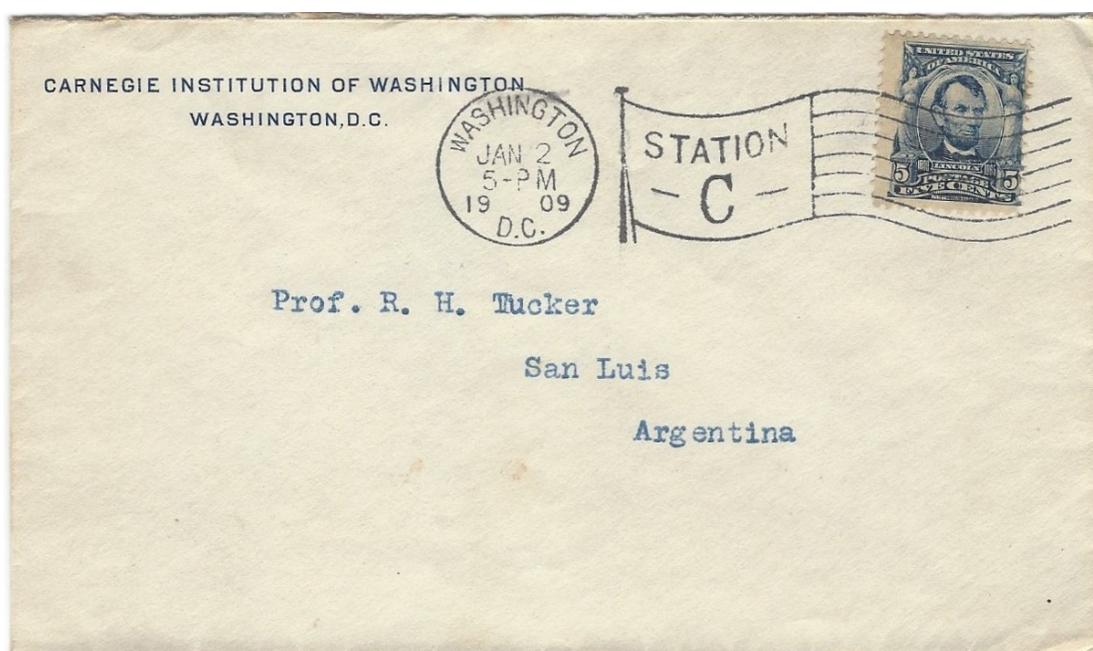
Smaller hand driven models also became widely used in small and medium size towns. International remained a dominant player in the industry for decades.



AMERICAN The installed base of flag cancel machines continued to grow in the early 1900s. By 1905, hand driven models were finding their way into smaller offices.

By 1910, approximately 1000 flag machines were in use across the country.

Frederick Langford's 'Flag Cancel Encyclopedia' is a must have reference for collectors of these popular markings.



EVANS Samuel Evans was a lesser known inventor of cancelling machines. Nonetheless, he held several patents, and his machines were tested intermittently in Roanoke, VA, his hometown, and Washington, DC, between 1905 and 1909.

The double die machine was never adopted by the post office.

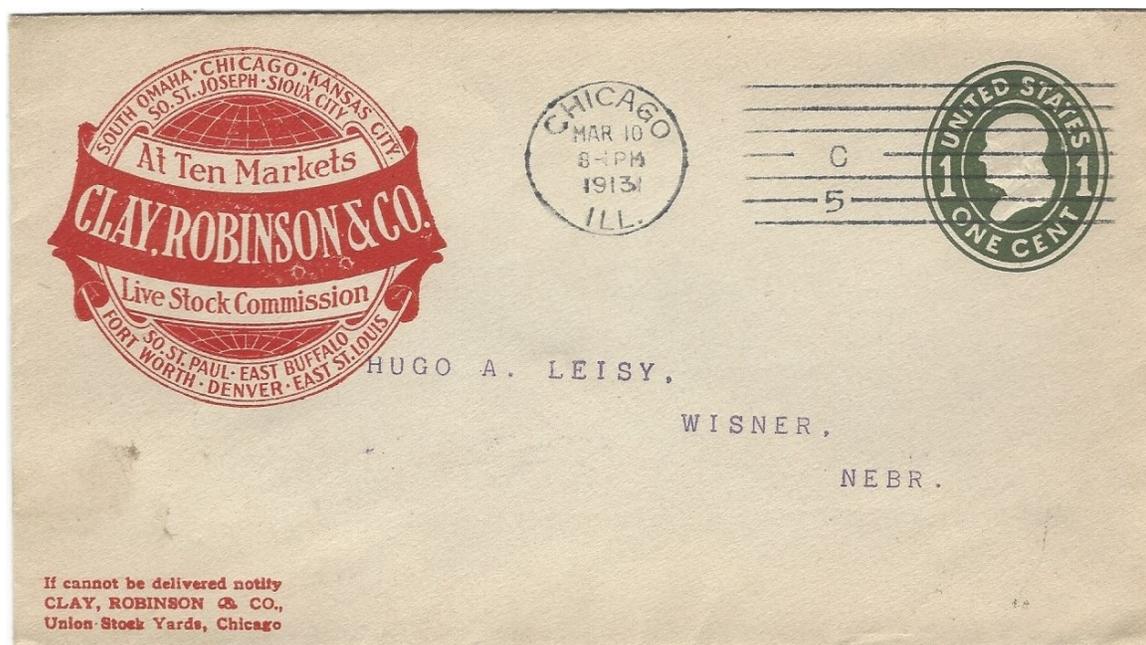
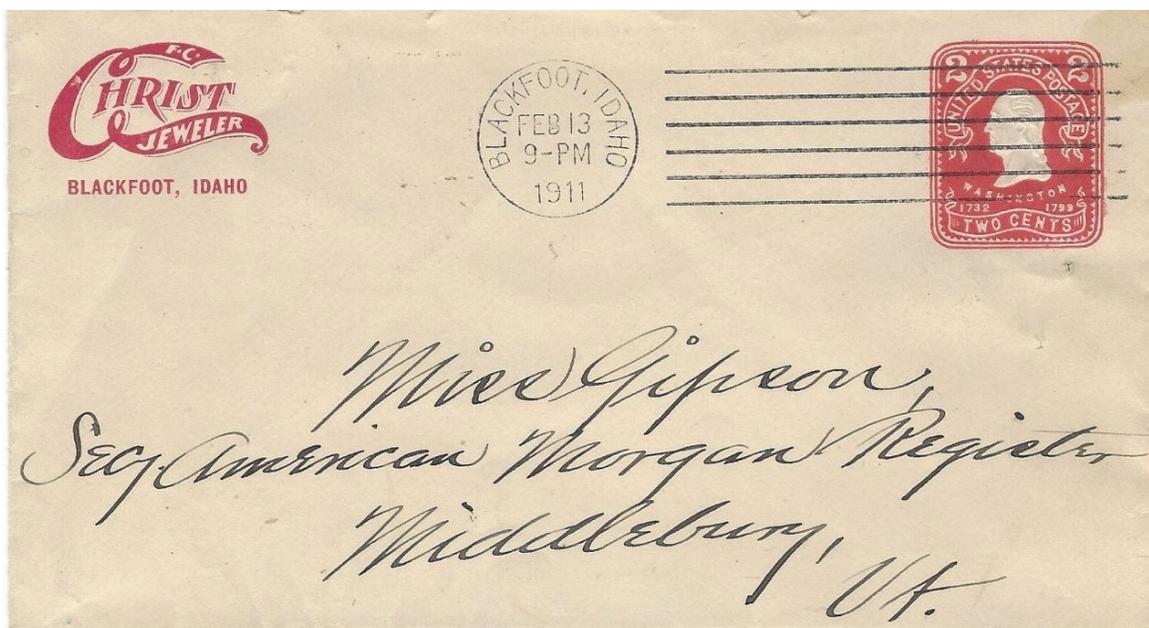
The 1910s



UNIVERSAL Intermittent testing in Washington, DC, and Hudson Terminal Station, NY, in late 1909 led to a contract for the Universal Stamping Machine Company to initially provide 25 model B machines in 1910, which produced markings like the Batavia, NY, on the left.

More contracts would soon follow for Walter Bowes (later of Pitney-Bowes) and his Universal machines, which became post office workhorses over the next couple of decades.

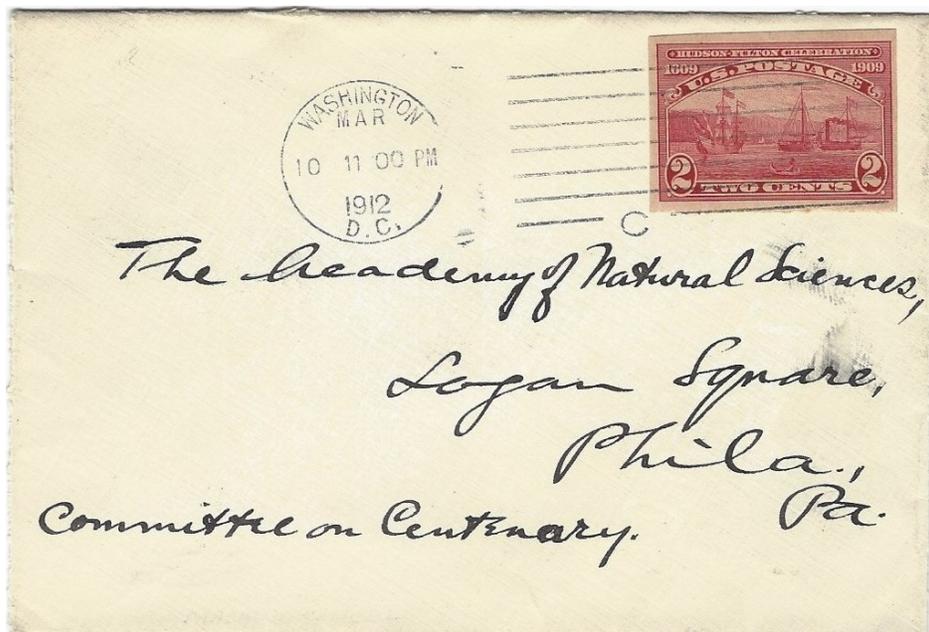
AMERICAN In addition to the ubiquitous flag cancel machine, the American Postal Machines Company also marketed a smaller hand driven machine, which was eventually used in over 60 smaller post offices across the country. Most were phased out by the early 1920s.



CUMMINS B.F. Cummins was heavily involved in the dash to sell or lease cancelling machines to the post office. In fact, for a time, he was president of both the B.F. Cummins Company, and the Time Marking Machine Company.

This cover is from one of many Cummins machine trials held at the Chicago post office in the early 1910s.

The 1910s



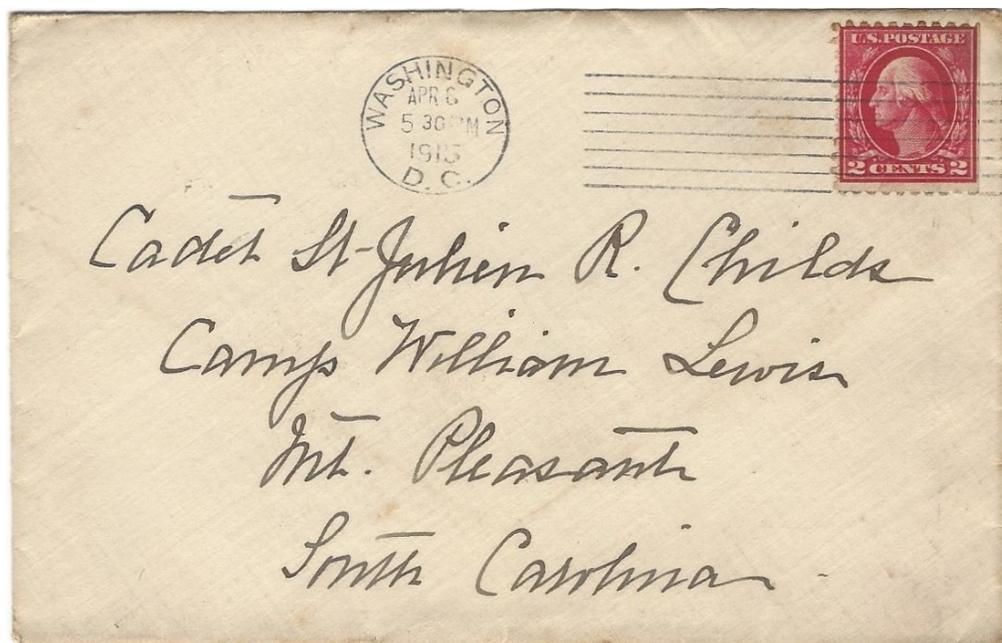
TIME MARKING The Time Marking Machine Company continued to have many machines in use across the country in the early part of this decade, especially in Chicago. Their business with the post office ended abruptly in 1913.

The Time Marking machines were eventually replaced by high speed machines from the Universal or International companies, but the Cummins machines, a close relative of the Time Machines, also filled a niche in smaller post offices.

CANCELOGRAPH Luther Mack was one of several lesser known inventors of cancelling machines in the early 20th century. His machines were tested briefly in Washington, DC, and Los Angeles, CA, but never accepted by the post office.



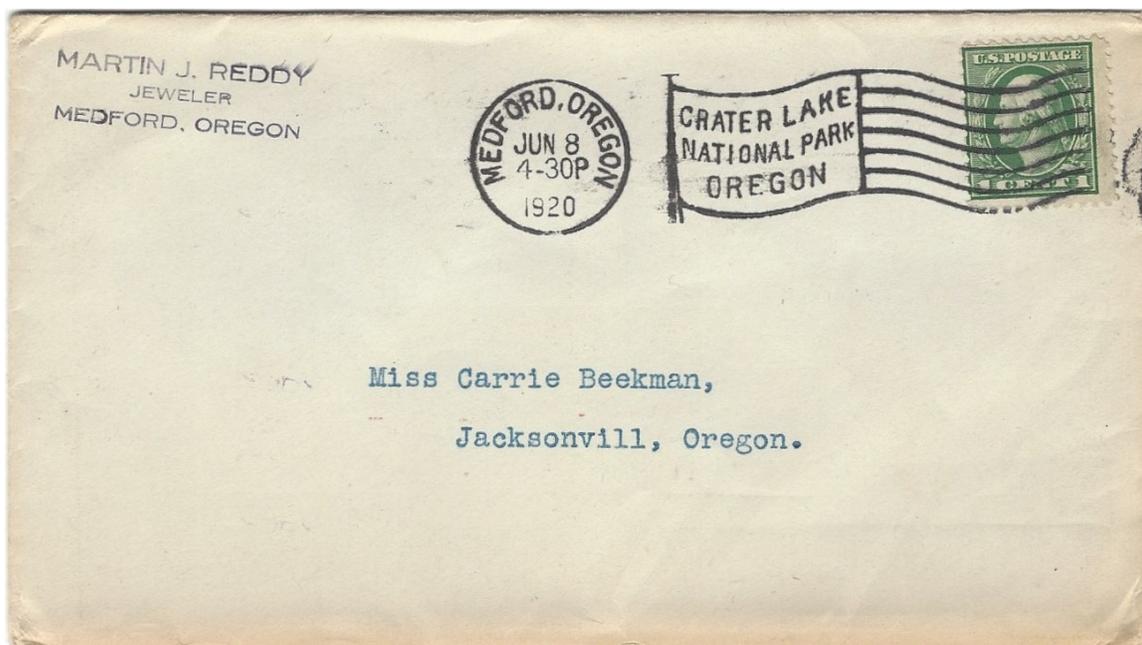
Mack would later test with meter and permit machines, but they were also not very successful.



STANDARD Fred Ielfield, a key figure in the early history of the Columbia Postal Supply Company, eventually left the company to work on his own. The Standard Mail Marking Machinery Company was the result of his work.

His machines were tested in Washington, DC, as well as Silver Creek, Dunkirk, and Springville, NY, over a two year period. No contract resulted, but this is not the last we will hear from Fred Ielfield.

The 1920s

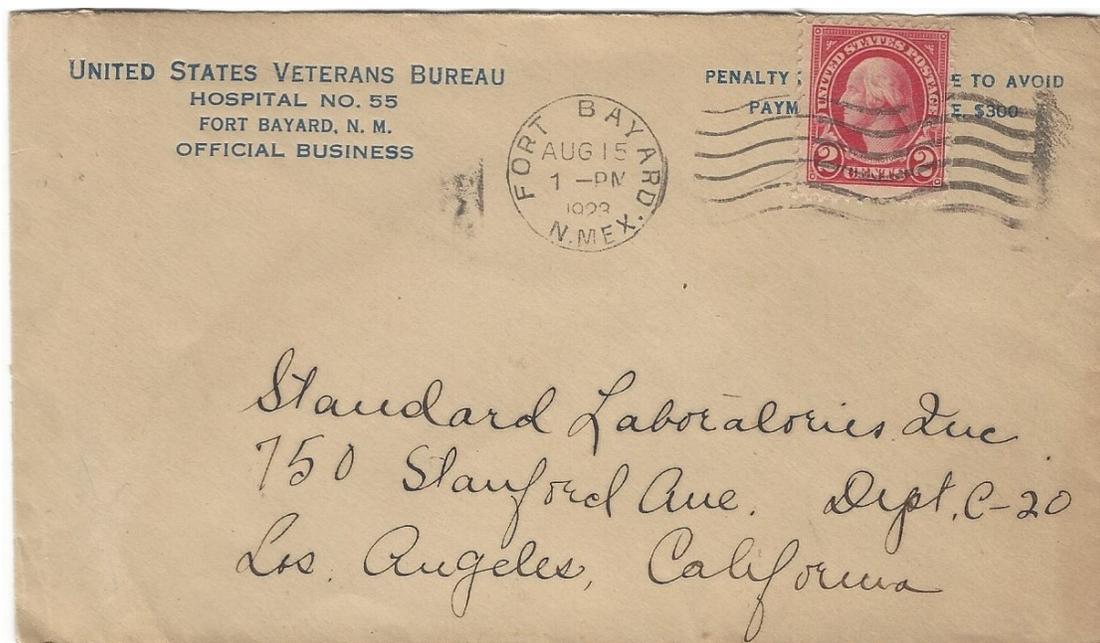


AMERICAN Slogan type cancels were widely used on machines from the American, Universal, and International companies.

While the American Postal Machines Company had gone out of business by the early 1920s, its machines remained in use for many years, and the last machine wasn't retired until 1941.

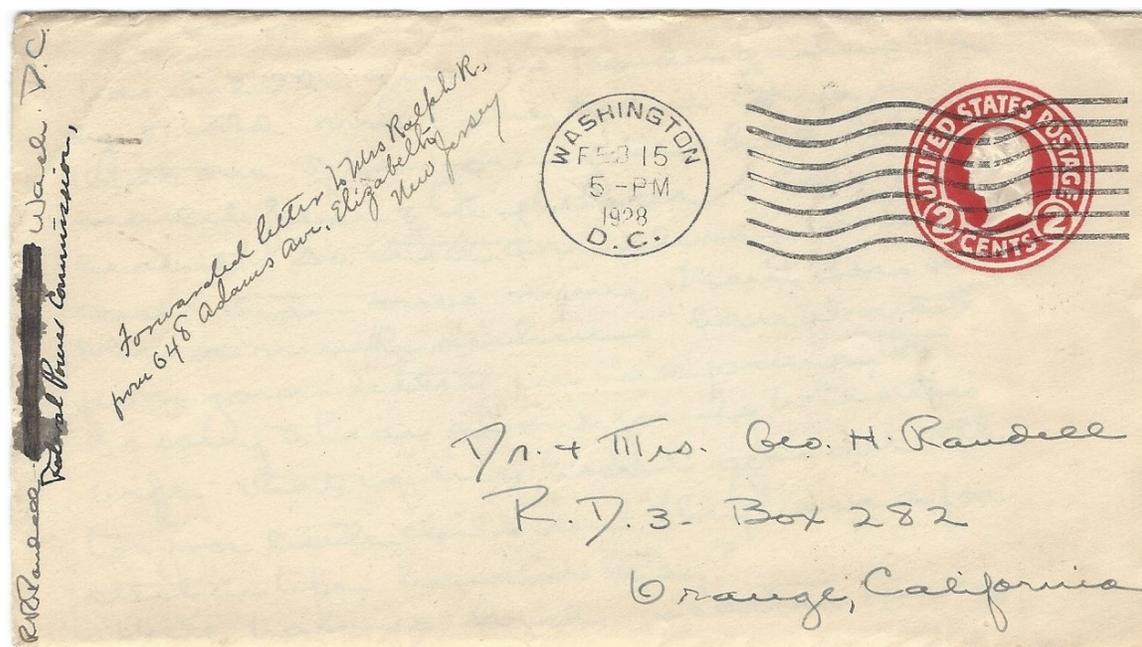
COLUMBIA While the International and Universal machines continued to dominate in the mid to larger size towns and cities, the Columbia machines were quite successful in smaller markets, where small hand driven machines were popular.

For machine cancel collectors, many different types of Columbia postmarks exist, and can be an interesting area to collect.



IELFIELD August Ielfield (brother of Fred, mentioned earlier) also worked with for the Columbia Postal Supply Company before venturing out on his own to form the Ielfield Postal Supply Company.

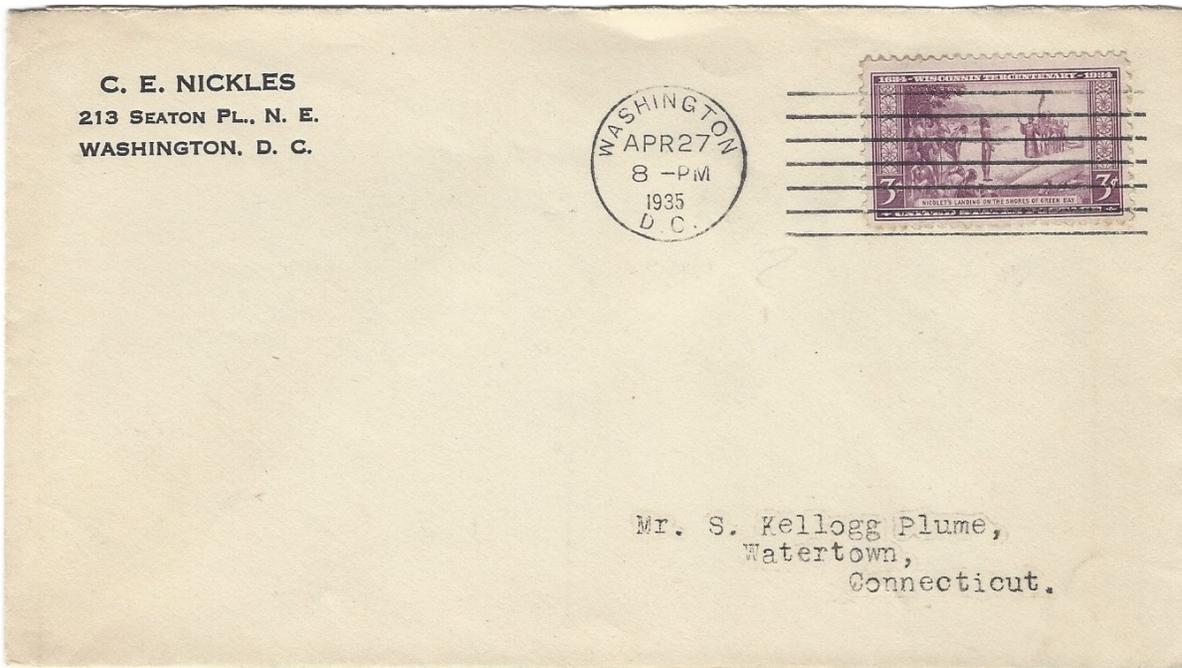
This Washington, DC, marking is from an early trial of an Ielfield machine.



The 1930s & 1940s

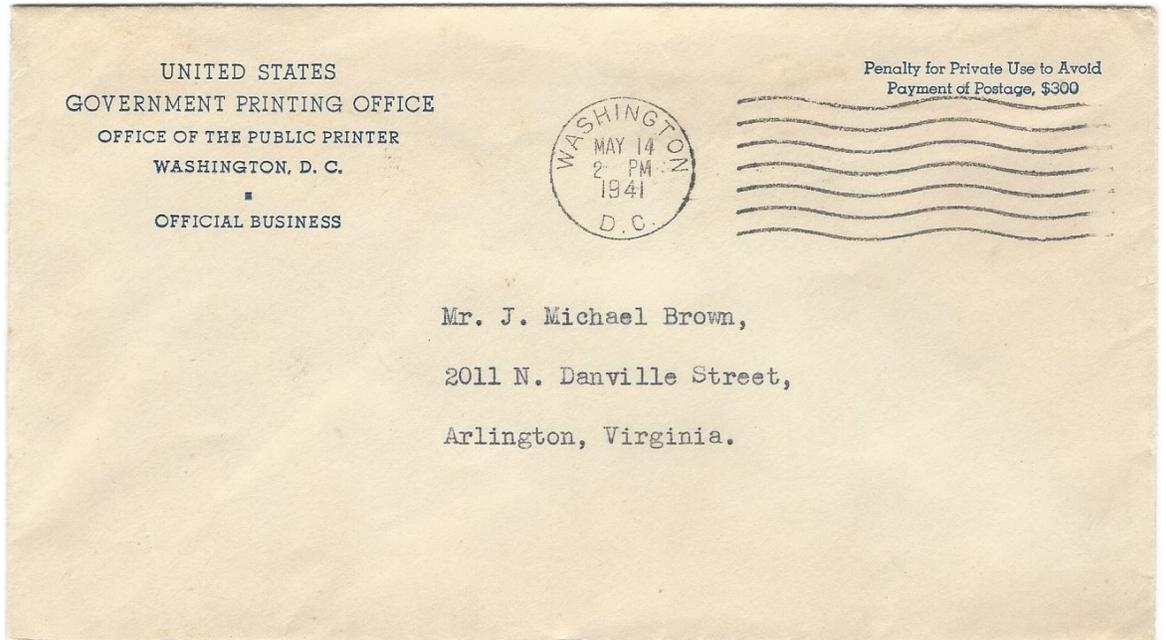
INTERNATIONAL By the 1930s, the post office was in need of replacement machines for the aging hand driven American and Columbia models.

The International Postal Supply Company tested a hand driven machine in Washington, DC, and was awarded a contract for 500 machines.



UNIVERSAL The Universal Postal Supply Company was also tasked with building a smaller hand driven machine.

They were very successful, and eventually thousands were deployed, including several hundred for military use during WWII.



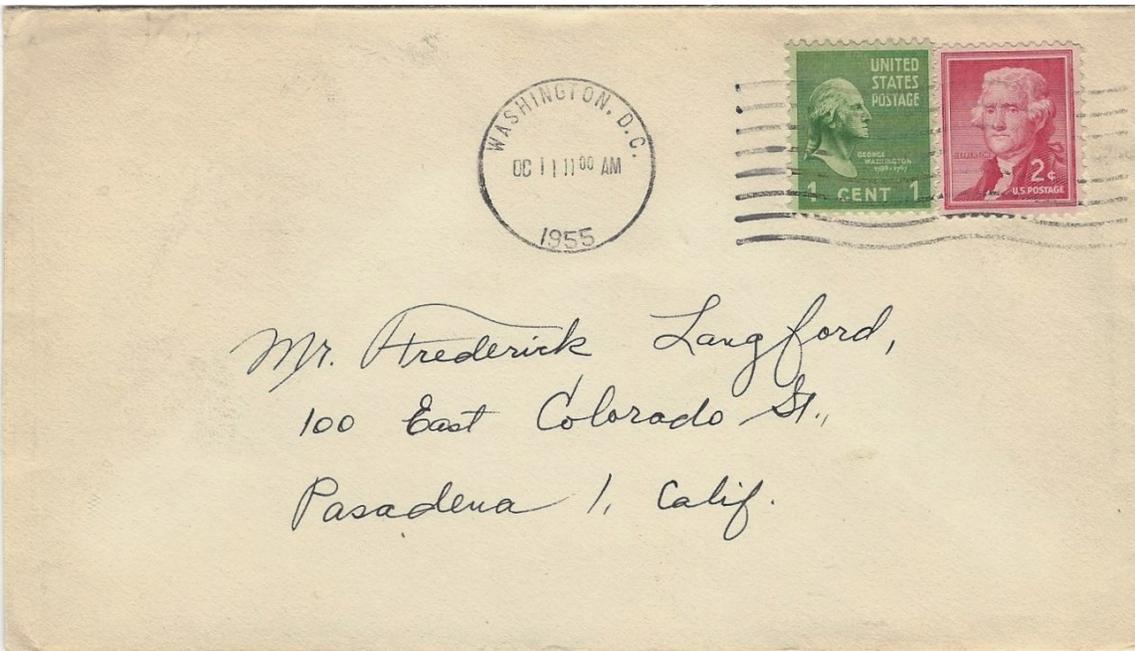
COLUMBIA-IELFIELD In order to survive and remain competitive, August Ielfield and the Columbia Postal Supply Company eventually patched up differences and formed a partnership of sorts. This allowed them to pool resources and their accumulated knowledge about the cancelling machine business.

In general, the markings appear inferior to the Universal and International markings of the same era, but nonetheless, the machines were fairly widely used for about a decade, probably due to low cost.

The 1950s & 1960s

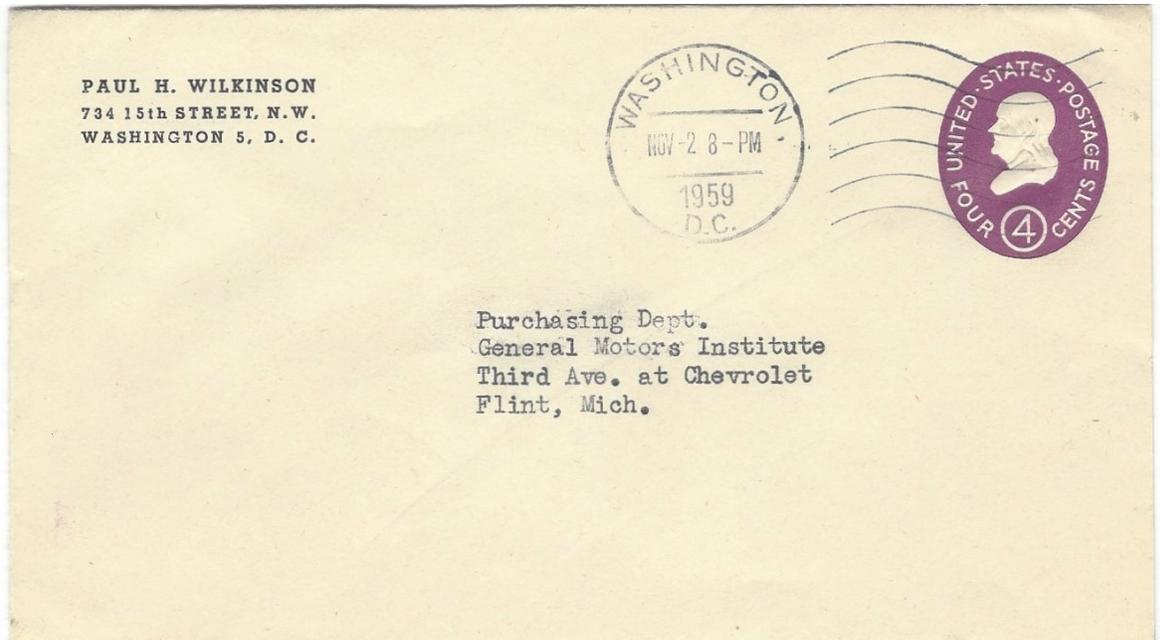
PITNEY-BOWES Mail volume was increasing so rapidly that manually facing mail matter was no longer practical at large offices.

Pitney-Bowes apparently provided the cancelling mechanism used to process this mail matter on a prototype facer-canceller known as the Reed "Fast-Mac".



INTELEX The need for a reliable facer-canceller created opportunities in the 1950s and 1960s for innovation.

Intelex Systems Inc. was able to install and test a machine (developed by Standard Elektrik Lorenz of Germany) in Washington, DC, in 1959, and eventually they were used in the new 'Turnkey' ultra modern post office in Providence, Rhode Island.



PITNEY-BOWES Pitney-Bowes developed the Mark II facer-canceller, which turned out to be very successful, since it basically completely eliminated the need to hand 'face' mail matter, and the machine could also handle mixed sizes of mail matter.

Eventually, hundreds of Mark II machines were put into service in large post offices across the country.

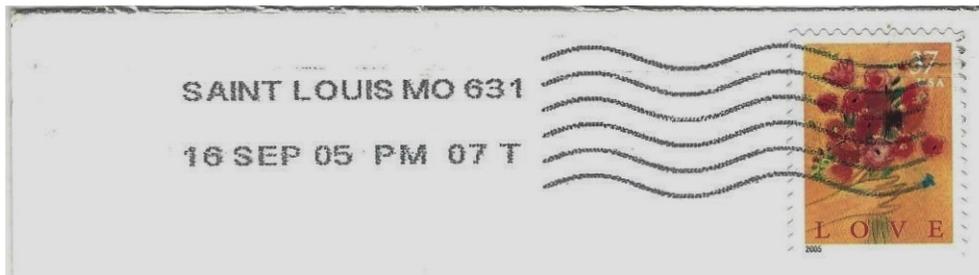
The 1970s to present



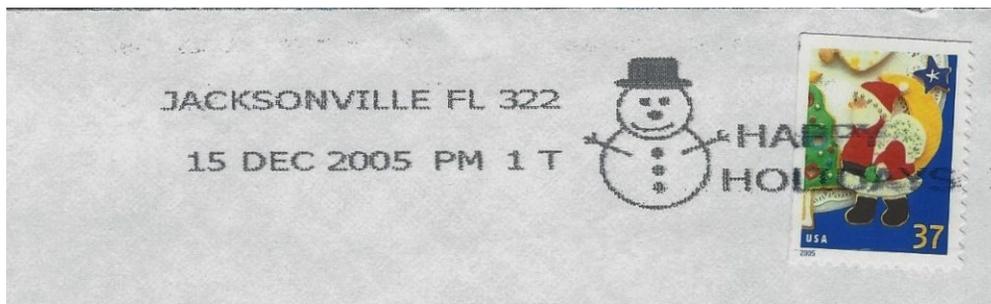
NCR National Cash Register developed a facer-canceller that was adopted by the post office. In the early 1970s, purple ink was tested on the machines.



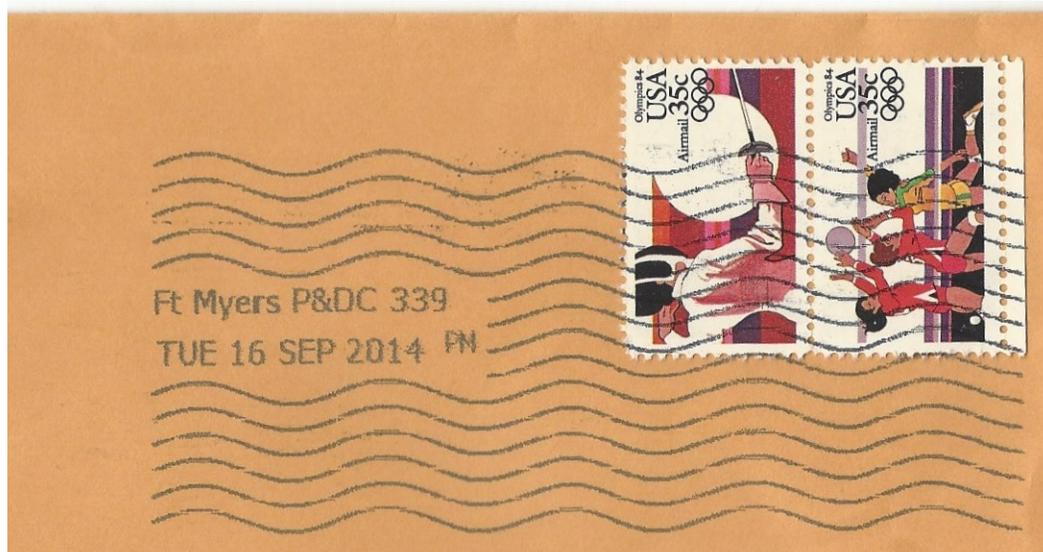
INKJET (aka SPRAYS) Instead of being impressed by a postmark and cancelling die, these markings are actually printed (or sprayed) on the mail matter, resembling early inkjet computer printing.



To the left are two generations of the inkjet type of markings. Quality issues are prevalent in the modern inkjet markings, and many are illegible, especially if the paper being printed on has any gloss or sheen.



Slogan cancels continue to be popular with the inkjet type markings.



FLATS No discussion of postal mechanization or machine cancels would be complete without discussing the plethora of interesting markings known as 'flats'.

These were produced by special machines designed to handle oversize mail matter, and many interesting varieties can be found and collected.