

### Three Interesting Recent Discoveries

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As a dealer in cancellation material I am always excited to encounter the unusual and unknown item, especially when it adds new information to the area of cancellation collecting. With this article I present three 1870-80s Banknote issue covers that fit the bill well.

The first item, seen in Figure 1, is an 1873 cover from New York City to Dinard, France. The cover bears five copies of the 2-cent National Banknote Company stamp (*Scott #146*, a vertical strip of three with a notable pre-printing crease through the bottom two stamps plus two singles) paying the 10¢ rate to France. The cover has a red "NEW YORK SEP 17" exchange office postmark, reflecting a 6¢ credit to the British contract carrier<sup>1</sup> and multiple receiver and transit hand stamps confirming the 1873 year date. Each stamp bears a separate simplex strike of a 4-ring target killer. This killer matches that reported by Weiss as NYFM TR-T1<sup>2</sup>, one of two rare NYFM target killers that he definitively lists. (Note, the killer's center ring on this cover's strikes seems to have become ink filled making it appear as a "dot" within this ring. The fourth outside ring appears lightly struck on 4 of the 5 strikes.) As Weiss notes, due to the countless other target killers used in many cities during 1870s, the only provable way to collect this killer is to find it on cover. This newly reported example, only the second to surface since the Weiss illustrated cover, meets this criterion and further validates Weiss's decision to classify this common target killer as NYFM.



Figure 1

1..The only ship sailing that I can identify leaving New York SEP 17 1873 was the Cunard steamer "Cuba", arriving Queenstown SEP 27. (Hubbard, Walter and Winter, Richard, *North Atlantic Mail Sailings 1840-75*, U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, 1988.) This arrival date, however, seems rather odd given the clear "1 OCT 73 LONDON PAID" receiver. Why such a long delay between the Queenstown arrival and London receipt? I could not, however, identify any other listed boat departure that would have allowed the letter to arrive in London by OCT 1.

2. Weiss, William R., Jr., *The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City 1870-1878*, 990, p. 261, on which he pictures his reported cover postmarked DEC 21 1873 and a stamp on piece postmarked DEC 11.

However, not everyone is satisfied with classifying this target as a New York City foreign mail killer. Noted student of New York City foreign mail cancellations, Nick Kirke (“NYCFM”, Nick’s preferred designation) and recent author on this topic (Kirke, Nicholas M., *New York City Foreign Mail 1845-1878*, Collectors Club of New York, 2024) lists the 4-ring target in his new classification system for NYCFM cancellations as 70-03-10-SGEO. On p. 315 of volume 1 he shows examples with 4-ring target killer on two 1870 1869-issue covers and writes, “Until recently, I doubted this was a NYCFM cancel; after all, this ‘target cancel’ was used in many US cities. I subsequently disposed of several post-1870 examples. My misgiving centered on the fact that I had seen so few examples, and no positive proof of origination in NYC as in, say, a NYC advertisement cover use.” In correspondence with Nick he further communicated his misgivings: “In my book I admit to including several cancels in which I am not confident of their pedigree. I think your cover is fascinating but it opens more doors than it closes. 1873 was the year in which we see the introduction of many fantastic fancies. I am loath to believe that our canceller produced such a basic and rather clumsy cancel at the start of this period. I think your cancel was meant for use in the domestic department and just got used in the foreign mail department by mistake. Otherwise we would have seen a host of similar NYCFM cancels around the same time. But we do not. Your cancel simply does not feel right as a foreign mail cancel. I know that is not a logical statement but it’s what I feel. I used to own the TR-T1 in the Weiss book. I was never happy with it - certainly not to call it a rarity and spend time as Weiss did restoring it hugely.” While I understand Nick’s position, I cannot accept it. I agree that the target is a utilitarian cancellation, not anything like the fancy killers usually associated with NYCFM, and clearly not carved as those were. Irrespective of this fact, I have never encountered TR-T1 or other 4 ring killers (or any other target cancels) on domestic NYC mail during the early 1870s, only hand carved killers, including numerals. (This assertion has also been confirmed by a major NYC cancellation researcher.) TR-T1 served foreign mail cancellation, though obviously in a limited manner.

The second item is a cover (Figure 2) bearing a spectacular previously unreported killer (enlarged detail, Figure 3). The cover is canceled SHOE HEEL N.C. DEC 6 and bears a 3-cent *Scott* #158 Continental issue. The stamp is canceled by a superb SOTN strike of fancy “Shoe Heel” killer composed of the image of a shoe with the word “HEEL” below. This must be one of the most fantastic Banknote issue mnemonic fancy cancels that exists on cover and is possibly unique. Shoe Heel, a DPO, is now Maxton in Robeson County. The Maxton area was first settled in the 18th century. The community was incorporated in 1874 under the name Shoe Heel. The name changed to Tilden, in honor of 1876 President candidate Samuel J. Tilden. The name reverted to Shoe Heel in 1881 before finally settling on Maxton in 1887. The Philatelic Foundation has recently issues a certificate finding this to be a genuine usage.



Figure 2



Figure 3

The third item is a cover bearing a previously reported fancy killer, but one that is so uncommon as to warrant a new mention. Figure 4 shows the cover, postmarked EAGLE MILLS N.Y. JUL 15 1889 (DPO Rensselaer County, 1842-1915), bearing a VF strike of this town's rare and spectacularly unusual large, bare, left footprint killer. A tracing from Cole (HF-1)<sup>3</sup> appears as Figure 5.

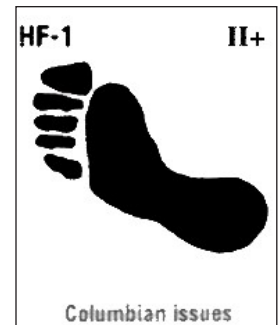


Figure 5

Figure 4

I am only aware of a single other example of this killer, a fantastic example postmarked JUL 8 1889 and discussed in *USCC NEWS*, 257, NOV 2005, p. 119, that sold in the 2011 Kelleher sale 623 of the Beane Family Collection, lot 1173, realizing \$2415. The Cole tracing indicates usage on 1893 Columbian issues, which is confirmed by a JUL 24 1895 cover to England pictured in *USCC NEWS*, 327, NOV 2023, p. 98. Notably, however, the killer on this later cover appears slightly different with distinct carving striations in the footprint that may indicate a separate, new killer or the original 1889 killer recarved. Any on cover example of this late 19th century fancy killer is notable. Can readers report any additional examples of these three killers? ■

3. Cole, James M., *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894*, The U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, 1995, p. 172.