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ADDITIONAL CANCELED POSTMARKS: PART II
HUBERT C. SKINNER

Introduction

In an earlier two-part article (see *Chronicle* 179:185-191 and 180:264-268), this writer illustrated and described a number of obliterating devices designed and manufactured to cancel postmarks on letters between the United States and Canada during the period (16 November 1847 - 6 April 1851) when prepayment through to destination was prohibited. Such letters were required to be prepaid "to the Lines" but postage beyond the border could not be collected for the other country. Thus, "PAID" markings had to be marked out with pen or killer because a letter became unpaid to destination when it crossed the border between the two countries. Such obliterations **did not** correct an error or mistake but were a routine requirement for properly rating and carrying the "Cross-Border Mails."

We then turned our attention to other types of canceled postmarks. Part I of the present two-part article (see *Chronicle* 182:103-107) illustrated six covers with altered [corrected] rate markings. There is a wide variety of covers bearing rate marks which have been obliterated and corrected because a clerk misinterpreted a printed circular as a letter, a double letter as a single, misread the destination or picked up and struck the wrong device on a cover in error. At times, a postal patron changed his mind about prepayment; or other reasons, such as remailing or forwarding letters, caused postmarks to be obliterated and replaced. All six covers presented in Part I are from the 1850s. In Part II, we present eight more covers with postmarks canceled and replaced for various reasons, ranging in date from 1828 to 1863.

Altered Rate Markings

In Figure 1, a prepaid single letter from Brantford, U.C. [S.E. Ontario], addressed "Cross-Border" to "Palmyra, NY, U States" is illustrated. It was mailed "AU 27/1852" and, initially, was struck in error with the inland rate "PAID/3" which was obliterated with a blue smudge and replaced with the corrected rate "PAID/6" equivalent to 10¢ U.S. postage, the treaty rate for a letter paid through to destination. The envelope also bears the origin/exchange office marking "CANADA/PAID 10 Cts" and manuscript "Paid" and "Via Buffalo" endorsements. After arrival in Palmyra, the letter was forwarded to "Newark, Wayne Co, NY" without additional postage charges.

In Figure 2, a "Soldier's Letter" addressed to "East Caanan/Litchfield County/Conn.," and dated "AUG/6/1863" [year date inverted] entered the mails at "NEW ORLEANS/LA" and, originally, was rated with a handstamped "3" representing 3¢ postage due. Evidently this marking was in error, it was obliterated by a black grid, and the canceled rate was overstruck in red ink [now faded to brown] with a "PAID/3/CENTS" in circle, representing full prepayment to destination.

Origin Marking "Corrected"

Over the years, the Post Office Department has been relentless in its efforts to exact "tribute" from postal patrons even to the extent of charging for services not rendered by the post office but provided as a service or courtesy by individuals, private ships or expresses. One of the most outrageous examples of such overcharges is represented by the "Mail Route" of 1827-1830. By declaring the river below New Orleans a "post road," the POD was able to convert letters privately carried by ship from New Orleans to New York, Philadelphia and Providence, to letters carried "impliedly under contract" (see Bond and

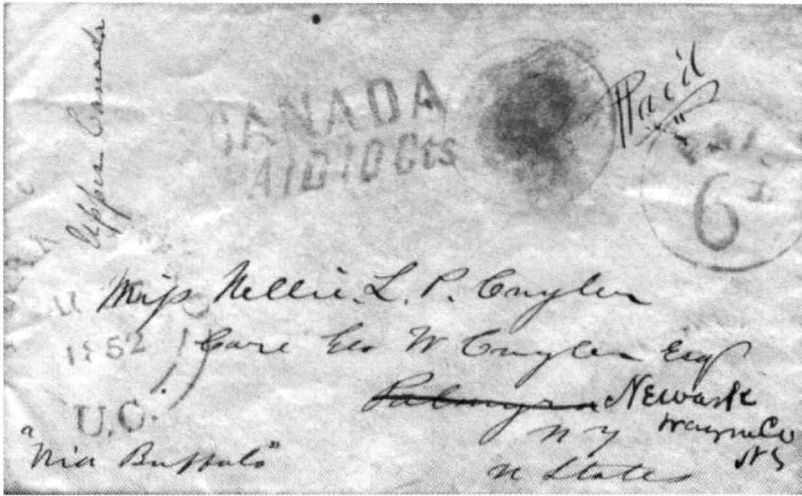


Figure 1. A cover mailed "Cross-Border" on August 27, 1852, from Brantford, U.C., to Palmyra, New York. First rated incorrectly with the 3^d prepaid inland rate, this rate marking was obliterated and replaced with a "PAID/6^d" in circle representing the correct rate [equivalent to 10¢] from Canada to New York. The cover also bears a two-line origin marking and manuscript directional endorsements. Later, it was forwarded to Newark, N.Y. without any additional postage.



Figure 2. A soldier's letter from New Orleans, Louisiana, to East Caanan, Litchfield County, Conn., dated August 6, 1863. The cover initially was marked with a black 3 for 3¢ postage due. This marking was obliterated by a black grid and then overstruck with an encircled "PAID/3/CENTS" representing full prepayment of postage to destination; thus, altering an unpaid [due] cover to one which was prepaid.

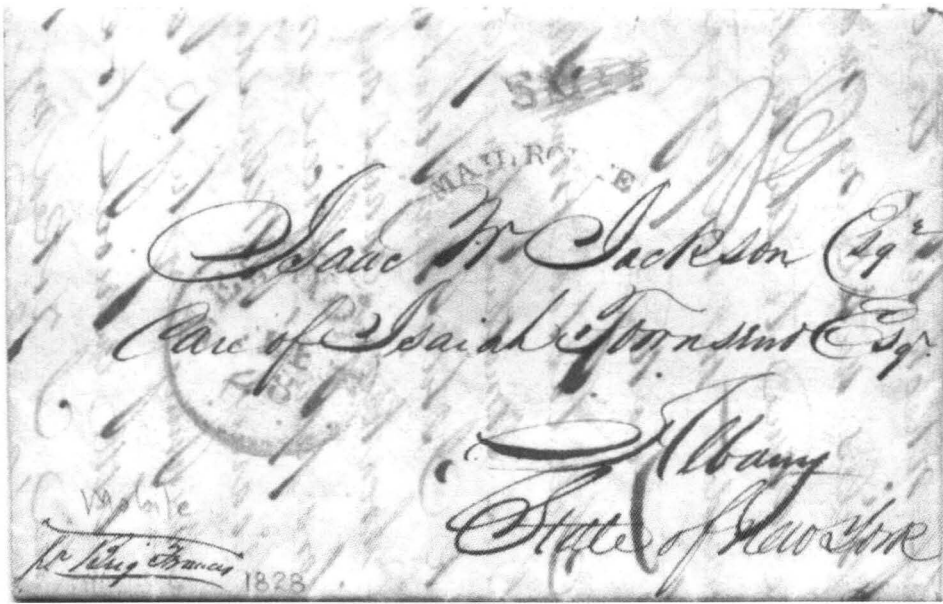


Figure 3. An example of the Post Office Department's abusive overcharges. A letter carried in 1828 by a private ship from New Orleans to New York, first marked "SHIP" but with this marking pen obliterated and replaced by the "MAIL ROUTE" [in arc] marking which enabled the POD to declare it carried "impliedly under contract" and charged 18³/₄¢ from port of entry at New York to Albany. In 1830, after New Orleans merchants complained bitterly to the U.S. Congress, the POD was required to discontinue these overcharges. Ex Henry A. Meyer [now HCS collection].

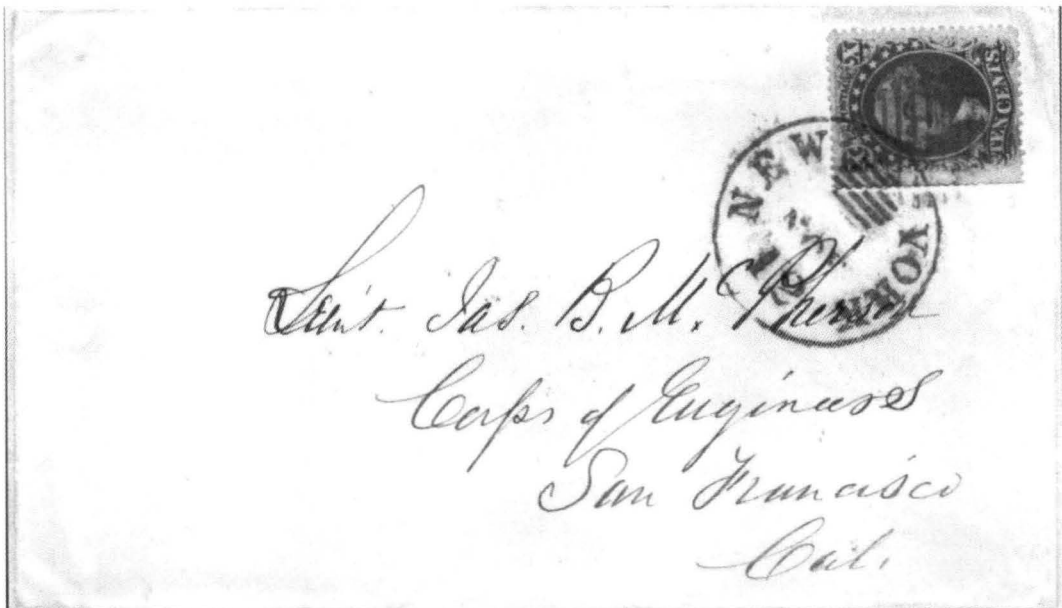


Figure 4. An example of a corrected mistake in sorting the mail. This cover with the 10¢ Type V stamp of 1859 [Scott No. 35] was canceled initially with a red eight-bar grid, a foreign mail obliterator. When noted that it was addressed to California, it was re-routed to the domestic division where the clerk responsible for the contract steamer mails overstruck the red grid with a black New York Ocean Mail postmark with integral black grid obliterator, thus correcting the sorting error and redirecting the letter.

Skinner, 1974¹) and, thus, to add one hundred miles to the postal distance charged on letters so carried by private ships.

The folded letter illustrated in Figure 3 is headed "Mobile Bay" where the missive was written on January 31st, 1828, after an eventful and nearly disastrous voyage from New York on board the brig *Bolivar* which ran aground and nearly foundered on a reef in the Bahama Banks area, "offshore Florida." Evidently, it was carried from Mobile onward to New Orleans through the "Inland Waterway" and placed on board the "Brig Francis," a private ship bound for New York. At New York, the origin marking "SHIP" was applied at first, but upon being identified as from New Orleans, "SHIP" was marked out in manuscript and replaced ["corrected"] by the origin marking "MAIL ROUTE" [in arc]. As the letter is addressed upstate to Albany, more than fifty miles away, this distance added to one hundred miles for the "post road" below New Orleans resulted in the rate "18³/₄" cents [for distances between 150 and 400 miles] which was due from the recipient in Albany.

Re-routed and Corrected

In Figure 4, a cover bearing a 10¢ Type V stamp [Scott No. 35, 1859] further demonstrates the exacting attention to the correct postmarking of letters that was routinely in effect at the post office in New York City. This letter, placed in the mails at NYC, is addressed to San Francisco but when sorted was sent to the foreign mails section by mistake where the 10¢ stamp was obliterated with the eight-bar red grid in use at this time for transatlantic letters [awaiting dispatch]. Upon noting that the cover was directed to California, it was re-routed to the domestic division where the clerk handling the contract steamer mails overstruck the red grid with the New York Ocean Mail postmark in black dated "NOV/12" [1860]. This postmark encloses a small [10 mm] circular grid, an integral obliterator. Thus, the initial mistake in sorting was corrected.

In Figure 5, a letter directed to Halifax, N.S., is illustrated. This cover is franked with the 5¢ buff stamp of 1861 [Scott No. 67] and was first sent to the foreign mails section where the stamp was canceled by an eight-bar red grid, similar to that in Figure 4. Upon its recognition as a Cross-Border letter to be dispatched by the coastwise steamer mails, it was re-routed to the domestic division where the double circle duplex device was struck over the red grid on "NOV/12" [1861], thus correcting another mistake in sorting the mails. The letter is endorsed "p^r Europa" [Cunard Line] and further rated with a black "5" for the Canadian portion of the postage due upon delivery. This is a very early usage of the duplexed double circle postmark.

Figure 6 shows another unusual cover. At the upper right it bears the 1¢ blue stamp of 1861 [Scott No. 63] obliterated by a bold five-ring target cancel struck in black, but inclined at an angle, thus lightly tying the stamp to the envelope. On the left, barely discernible, is an octagonal, double-lined carrier marking of Philadelphia, the earlier type reading, "U.S.P.O. DISPATCH/OCT 18/11 AM/PHILA." [see Evans, pp. 178-79].² This marking is thoroughly obliterated by two strikes of the five-ring target heavily struck in black. It appears evident that though the letter first was destined for carrier delivery, this intention changed, the octagonal carrier was "killed," the regular Philadelphia circular date stamp was applied to the envelope, and it was treated as a local letter.

¹Arthur H. Bond and Hubert C. Skinner, "New Orleans Maritime Mails of 1825-1830: The 'MAIL ROUTE' and 'SHIP 14¹/₂' Covers," *The Fortieth American Philatelic Congress Book 1974* (Cranford, New Jersey: The American Philatelic Congress, Inc., 1974), pp. 139-52. See also the comprehensive treatment of incoming ship as well as steamship rates, routes and markings in the newly published volume by Theron J. Wierenga, *United States Incoming Steamship Mail 1847-1875*, Second edition, edited by Richard F. Winter (Austin, TX: U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., 2000).

²Don L. Evans, *The United States 1¢ Franklin, 1861-1867, and an Introduction to the Postal History of the Period* (Sidney, Ohio: Linn's Stamp News, 1997), pp. 178-79.

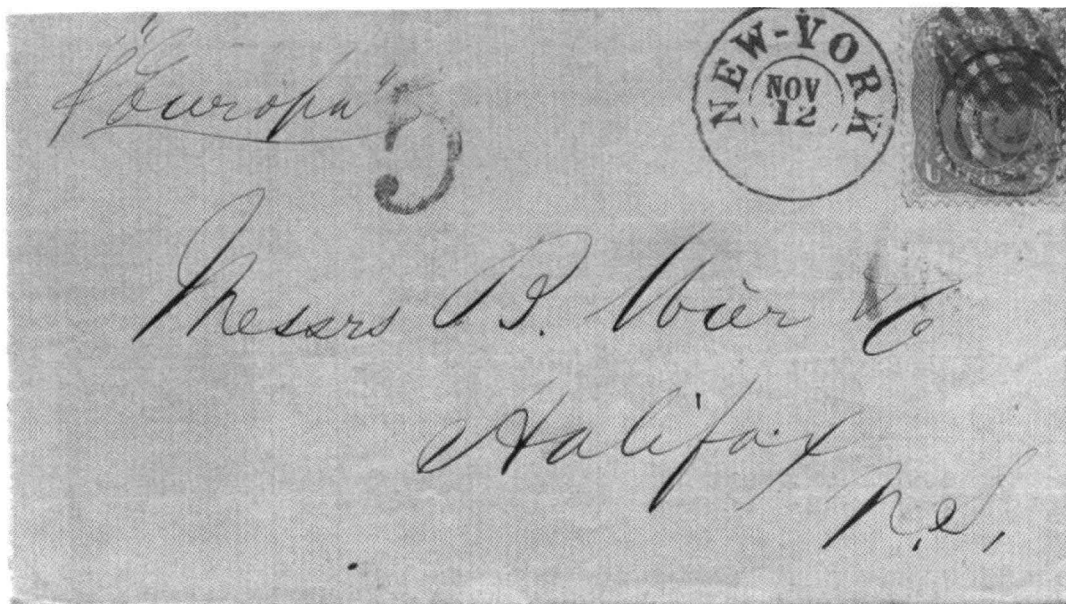


Figure 5. An example of another error in sorting the mail. This 5¢ buff stamp of 1861 [Scott No. 67] was erroneously obliterated with a NYFM red grid, then re-routed to the domestic division where it was corrected by overstriking the red grid with the double-circle New York duplex postmark [four-ring target killer] and dispatched up the coast to Nova Scotia by the coastwise steamer mail. It was carried by the Cunard steamer *Europa* and upon arrival was marked with a "5" in black representing the Canadian postage due from the addressee.

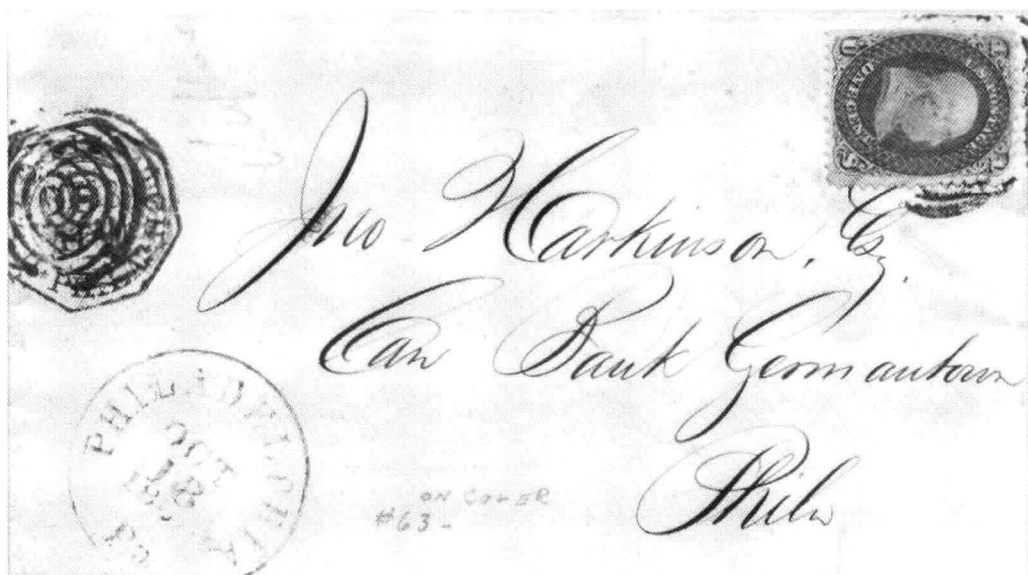


Figure 6. A cover originally intended to be delivered by carrier and marked with the octagonal carrier service marking on October 11, 1861. For some reason, the cover was reclassified as an ordinary local letter, the octagonal marking was heavily obliterated by a five-ring black target, the ordinary CDS of Philadelphia was applied, and the 1¢ stamp of 1861 [Scott No. 63] representing prepayment of the postage was canceled and tied to the envelope by a light strike of the same black target.

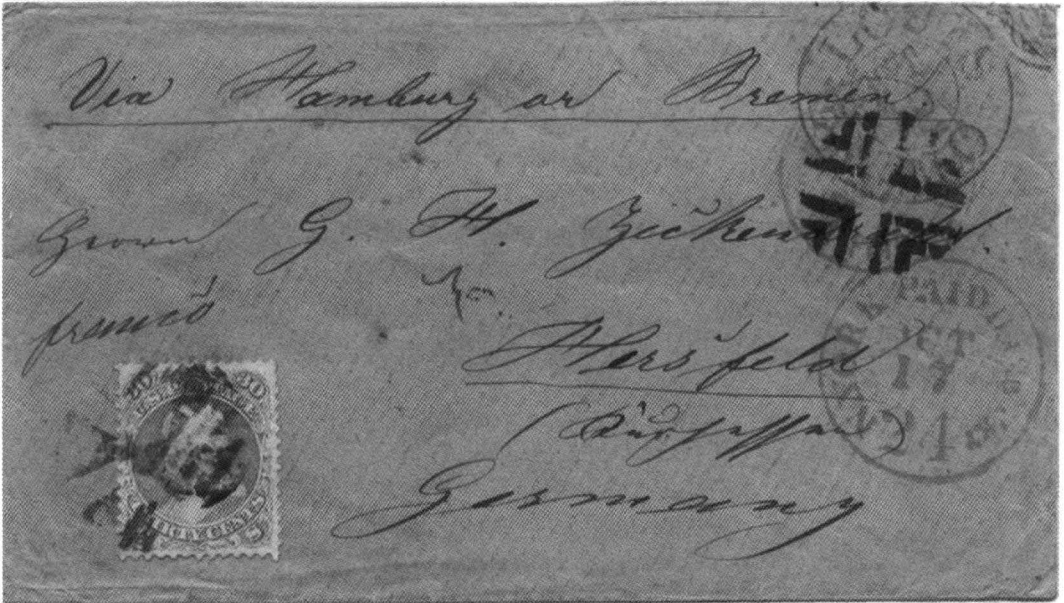


Figure 7. A letter from St. Louis to Hersfeld, Germany, endorsed by the sender for transit to Germany "Via Hamburg or Bremen." At first, the marking for dispatch by the Prussian Closed Mail was applied [in red] by mistake. Later, when the endorsement was noted, this marking was obliterated [in black] by the NYFM geometric killer currently in use on the foreign mails and replaced by the corrected dispatch marking for the mails via Hamburg [also struck in red]. This is the only recorded example of a NYFM killer used to cancel a postmark instead of an adhesive stamp.

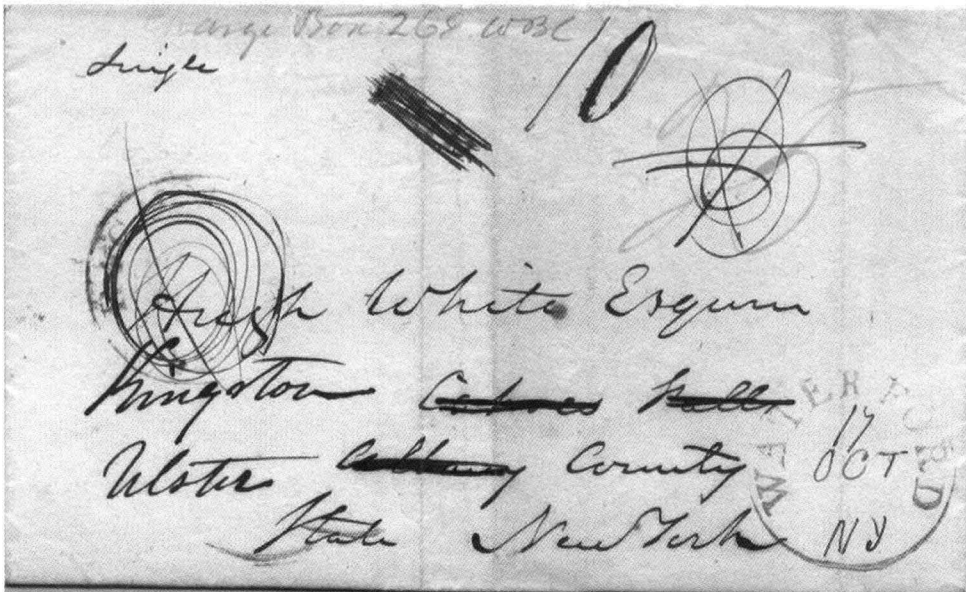


Figure 8. A prepaid letter originally carried in 1839 from Richmond, Virginia, to Cohoes Falls, Albany County, New York, a distance of more than 400 miles [single rate 25¢]. Later, it was remailed [to the same addressee] from Waterford, across the Mohawk River in Saratoga County, New York, to Kingston, Ulster County, New York, a distance between 30 and 80 miles [single rate 10¢]. The original Richmond CDS and "PAID" [both struck in red], and the manuscript "25" were marked out by penstrokes and the address was altered in similar fashion, thus allowing the letter to reach its new destination. Remailed covers are uncommon.

In Figure 7, an even more unusual cover is illustrated. This letter, addressed to Hersfeld, Germany, and endorsed in manuscript "Via Hamburg or Bremen," was mailed at St. Louis, Missouri, on "OCT/10" [1863] franked with the 30¢ orange stamp of 1861 [Scott No. 71]. Upon its arrival in New York, the foreign mail clerk first applied to the cover a marking [in red] indicating dispatch by Prussian Closed Mail—then, noting the endorsement at the top, obliterated the first directional/dispatch marking with the New York Foreign Mail geometric obliterator then in use [in black] and replaced the incorrect PCM marking with the one designating dispatch by Hamburg packet [in red]. This is the only recorded example of a NYFM obliterator used to cancel a postmark rather than an adhesive stamp.

A Rемаiled Letter

In Figure 8, we present a letter mailed originally from Richmond, Virginia, to Cohoes Falls, Albany County, New York, on "OCT/12" [1839], a distance of more than 400 miles requiring 25¢ in postage. On "17 Oct," the cover was remailed [to the same addressee] from Waterford [across the Mohawk River from Cohoes Falls in Saratoga County] to Kingston, Ulster County, New York. The straight-line red "PAID," the "25" in manuscript and the CDS of Richmond were marked out with penstrokes and the old address was similarly altered to the new one. The new rate [for a distance between 30 and 80 miles] was 10¢ [due] as marked at the top. Rемаiled covers are uncommon.

Concluding Remarks

We hope that our readers find re-rated, redirected, and re-mailed covers to be of significant interest to them and that any examples of different types or kinds of "Canceled Postmarks" or even quite different methods or reasons for canceling postmarks will be reported to us for a possible future addition to these pages. We are especially interested in obliterations which were designed specifically to obliterate postmarks rather than adhesive stamps, as were those in the first two-part article on the Cross-Border mails.

Acknowledgments

This writer is deeply indebted to Edgar W. Jatho, Jr., of New Orleans, a computer specialist who produced the images for the illustrations used here. Ed utilized state-of-the-art scanning equipment to make these excellent figures. Also, appreciation is extended to other students and postal historians who have contributed in various ways to these studies. □

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