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Article: Resurrection of the Columbus, Ohio, Seven - Bar Grid in a Square

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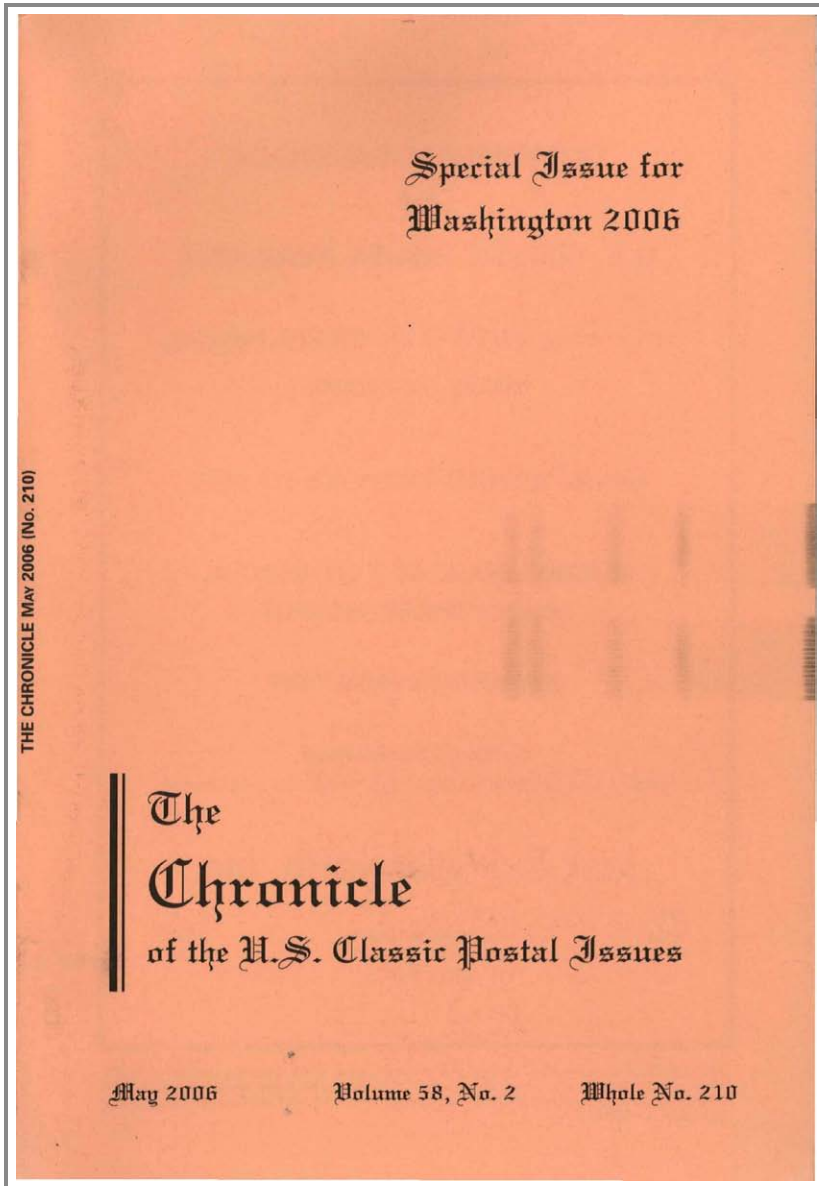


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RESURRECTION OF THE COLUMBUS, OHIO
SEVEN BAR GRID IN A SQUARE

JAMES DOOLIN

As a specialist in the postal history of all post offices named "Columbus," the markings from Columbus, Ohio, are of great interest to me. Thanks to Richard Graham's excellent article in *Chronicle* 69, "The Columbus Seven Bar Grid in a Square," we learned long ago that the distinctive cancellation that is the subject of this article was not meant to represent "Prison Bars" from Camp Chase Prison during the Civil War.¹ The marking is known used beginning in November, 1860, long before Camp Chase had even been proposed. However, I have seen this fable repeated as recently as last year in auction descriptions of 1861 stamps on and off cover, especially describing a green seven bar grid. The marking was used in the 1860's in black, blue and green, as Graham documented very well.

This marking is illustrated in James M. Cole's *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894* as marking GE-96, described as "Prison Bars-Columbus, Ohio (Circular mail cancel 1880-84)." Part of a 1¢ Bank Note cover showing the marking is illustrated with the following commentary: "The Civil War era Columbus, Ohio prison bar grid (GE-96) was revived and used on circular rate mail, without town datestamp, in the 1880's. Only the printed envelope provides indication of origin."²

Figures 1 and 2 are additional examples of this type of use with 1¢ Bank Note stamps. How this use came about was revealed in an article in *U.S. Cancellation Club News* in 1963 by Rendell Rhodes. "When John Graham retired from the Columbus postmastership on August 3, 1865, he took the square grid stamp with him. Nearly a score of years later he found the stamp and gave it to Captain Lorenzo D. Myers, then Columbus postmaster. In the spring and early summer of 1883, Myers used the stamp to cancel circular mail from state offices, but no town mark was used with it. Many of these envelopes carried an engraved or lithographed state seal on the address side which left little doubt as to the city of origin."³ This report serves to narrow the period of use of the seven bar grid cancel to 1883-84.

Both Cole and Rhodes imply that the marking was used only on 3rd class mail during the Bank Note period, so this distinctive grid cancel would be seen only on 1¢ Bank Note stamps. However, Figure 3 shows a registered cover from Columbus with a "Columbus, O./CORRECT/Sept. 26, 1884/L.D. Myers, P.M." double circle marking struck in magenta ink. On this cover the seven bar grid in a square marking in black was used without town mark to cancel a 2¢ 1883 stamp paying the first-class postage rate and a 10¢ Bank Note stamp paying the registration fee. This is the only example I have seen of the grid marking, from the Bank Note era, used on other than 1¢ Bank Note stamps. This is also the only example I have seen of this "Correct" marking used from Columbus, Ohio. I welcome any reports of the grid cancel on 2¢ or higher denomination Bank Note stamps either on or off cover.

¹ Richard B. Graham, "The Columbus Ohio Seven Bar Grid In A Square," *Chronicle* 69 (February, 1971), pp. 34-36. See also Graham's "The Columbus, Ohio 'Prison Bar Grid' Killers" in *Chronicle* 57 (February, 1968), pg. 24.

² James M. Cole, *Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894* (U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, 1995), pg. 24.

³ Rendell Rhodes, "Columbus 'Square Grid' Cancel Not A Prison Mark," *U.S. Cancellation Club News*, Vol. 6, No. 7, Whole No. 62 (January, 1963), pg. 57.

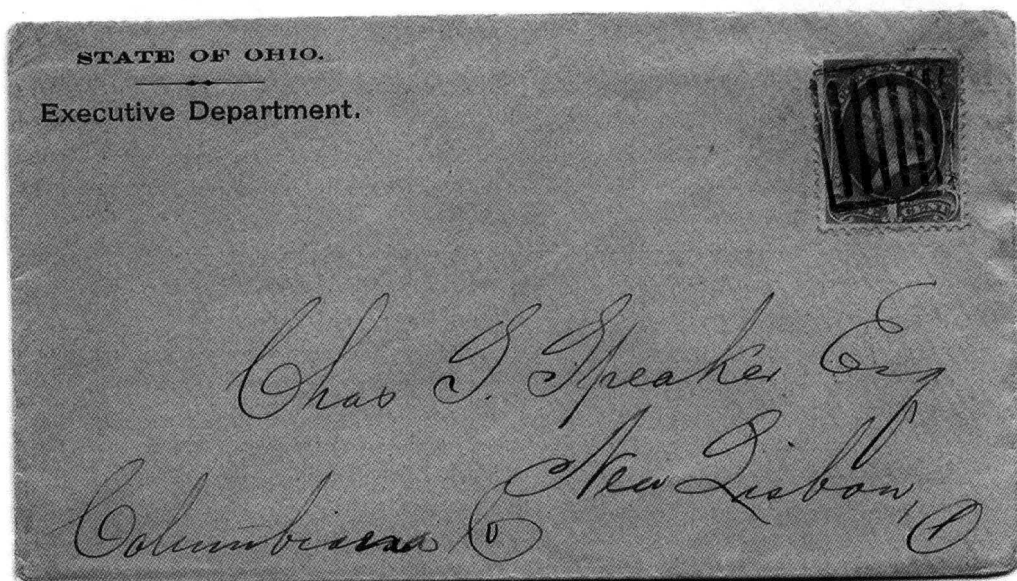


Figure 1. Black seven bar grid in a square on 1¢ Bank Note stamp, circa 1884, on unsealed circular mail. Previous use of this killer was during the Civil War on first class mail.

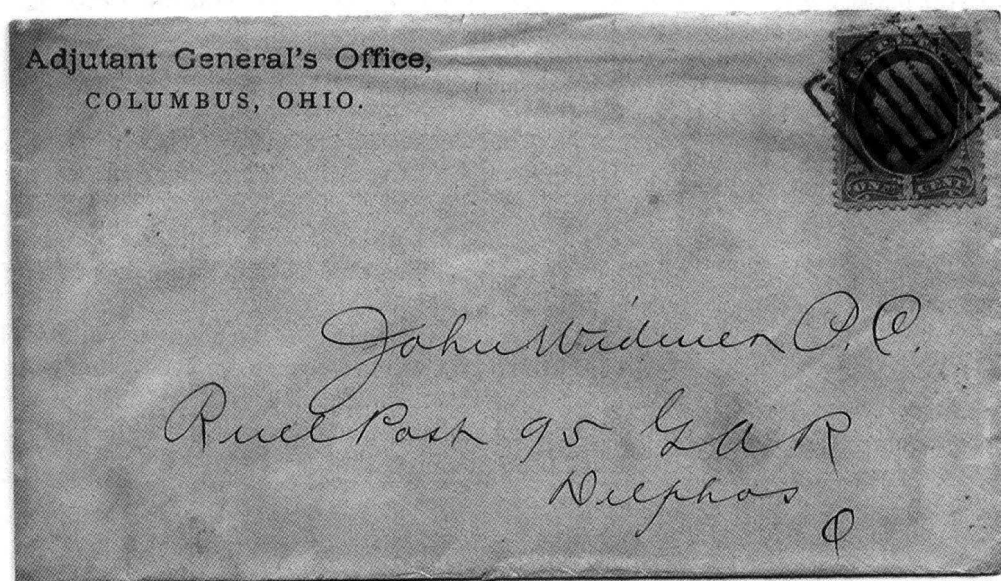


Figure 2. Unsealed circular at 1¢ rate sent from State of Ohio Executive Department. Black seven bar grid in a square ties 1¢ Bank Note stamp, circa 1884.

In Figure 4 I have enhanced the Correct marking strike from Figure 3 to bring out the design more fully. CORRECT markings are not at all common on cover. Delf Norona, in his original study of registered forms used from 1869 through 1871,⁴ illustrated several types of "Correct" markings. The marking on the Figure 3 cover is an excellent example

⁴ Delf Norona, "United States Registry System Forms, 1869-1871," *The Twenty-Eighth American Philatelic Congress Book*, 1962, pg. 153 *et seq.* See especially pp. 173-74, Figures 14 and 15.

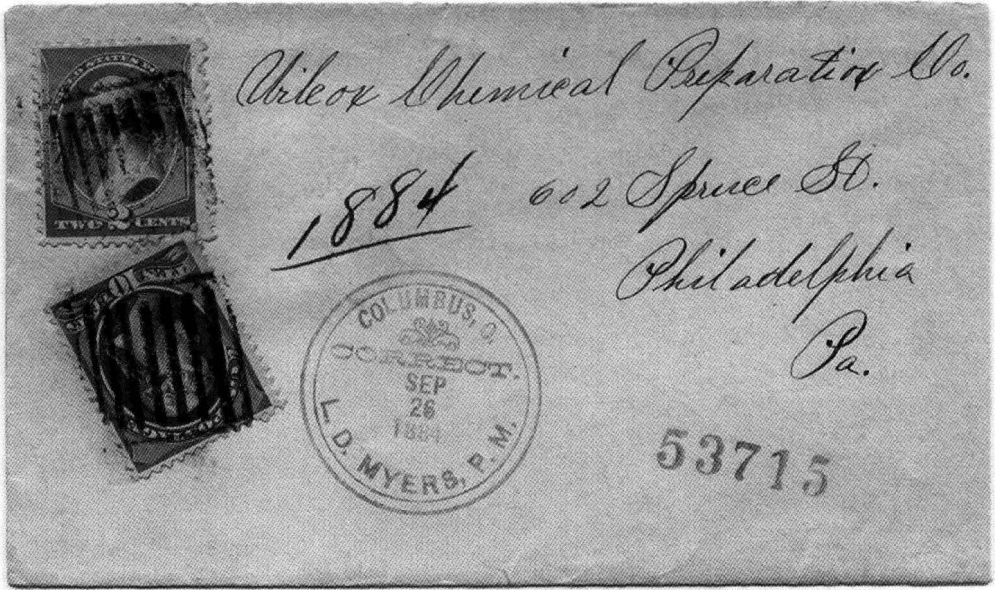


Figure 3. Registered cover from Columbus to Philadelphia, 2¢ and 10¢ Bank Note stamps, tied by black seven bar grid in a square killers, pay the 2¢ letter postage plus the 10¢ registry fee. The 32-millimeter double-circle “Columbus, O./CORRECT/Sep. 26, 1884/L.D. Myers, P.M.” date stamp is struck in magenta



Figure 4. The marking from Figure 3, with contrast enhanced.

of the full type that combined the name of the post office, date, name of the postmaster and the word “Correct”. Norona found that the “Correct” marking was intended for use by the receiving postmaster to mark a “Return Registered Letter Bills” form. However, he noted that “these ‘Correct’ postmarks were sometimes used on other forms and probably occasionally as a townmark or on an ordinary or registered envelope.” That is precisely the use the magenta marking in Figure 4 represents. I would welcome reports of other “Correct” markings on Bank Note period covers. Collectors can contact me at jamesdoolin@att.net or at Doolco, Inc., 11258 Goodnight Lane, Suite 105, Dallas, TX 75229. ■