

## Selected Precancels - Banknote Postage Dues

The Precancel Stamp Society defines a precancel as a stamp that has been canceled before being affixed to mail. The practice began almost as early as stamps were printed and the first postage dues were no exception.

For the most part, precancels were used in the larger towns and cities but some such as Philadelphia, Boston, and New Orleans chose not to use them.

The objective is to display selected lesser known precancels and selected precancels from some of the major cities which used them.

### Selections

Provisional  
Lesser Known  
Miscellaneous  
Punch  
Baltimore  
St Louis  
Chicago  
New York

Shown below, as an example of the most common precancel design used, is a stenciled horizontal bar on a strip of five. Minneapolis MN used the bar precancel for a short period of time before accepting the simple penline precancel.



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## Lesser Known Precancels

Denver CO - Portland ME



Portland had a precancel program from 1886 to 1894. Initially the PO used a crude group of small squares, which later developed into a group of smaller squares. To the left is one of the earlier examples.

Denver began using precancels about 1882 and continued throughout the banknote period, but they used penlines. The example on the right is of the little known brushstroke precancels used in the mid 1880's.



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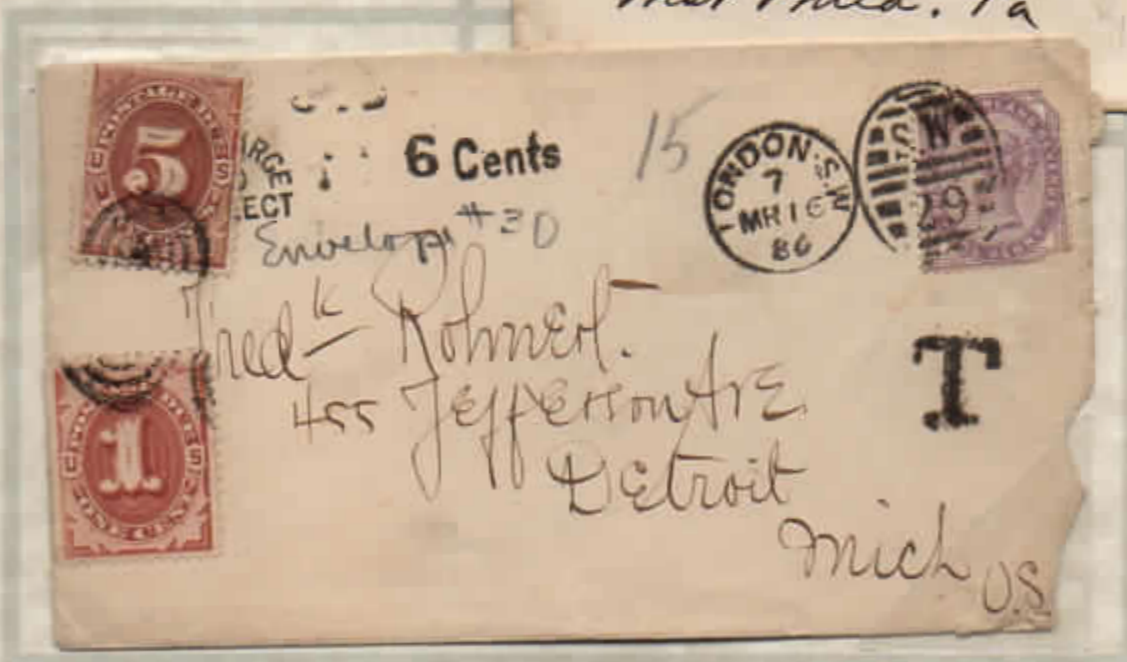
## Provisional Precancels

Hooper defined a provisional precancel as any precancellation by any device which could also be used for postcancellation.

Philadelphia did not have a precancel program but occasionally they would use available handstamps as in the example to the right with a 3rd/4th class double oval.



871 Market St.  
Philadelph  
UNCLAIMED  
Penn



The cover to the left is an example of a city which had a precancel program from 1883 to 1888 but used a postmark as a provisional precancellation.

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## Miscellaneous and Unknown

### St Paul Bars



### Cleveland Brush Stroke



### Omaha Bars



### Rochester Bars

### Akron Local Type



### Unknown



The city of use of many precancels are difficult to identify unless on cover. However, in some cases the city of use is identifiable as in the above examples.

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## Punch Precancels

Not much is known about punch precancels, as very few are found on cover, and there are not many off cover examples available.

### Binghamton NY Star Punch Precancel



### Various of Unknown Origin



3mm Circle



4mm Circle



H Punch

### Baltimore MD Heart Punch



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## Baltimore Corner Cancels

After a short experiment with punch cancels, the Baltimore Post Office began use of a quarter cork style cancel applied at the intersection of four stamps. Baltimore PO used this style precancel until at least 1886.



A pair of dues showing the corner cancels used in Baltimore

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## St Louis Precancels

### 3 Bar (Horizontal and Vertical)



This precancel was used from 1882 to 1892. Not only are all postage due colors found, but there are many variations in orientation and multiple impressions.



This precancel was used from 1893 to 1898.

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## Chicago Precancels - CPO

It is unknown when this precancel was used, but probably prior to the use of purple ink cancels. This is one of two known.



By June of 1880 the Chicago PO began a long series of different precancels used solely on postage due stamps. Their initial precancel is known as the Chicago Pearl or the Chicago CPO precancel. The Chicago postal clerks were not careful regarding application of precancels, so all orientations are equally as likely to be found.



Letter sent from England in August 1880. A double rate letter short paid 4 cents. The UPU required double payment for short paid mail, thus 8 cents due. The Chicago postal clerk applied a 3 cents and 5 cents postage due precanceled with the CPO cancel.



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## Chicago Precancels - Double Oval "C"

Purple



Chicago clerks continued the use of purple ink with the new precancel, "C" in double oval. This color ink was used from March 1881 to June 1881.

By the end of June 1881, Chicago changed ink color to black. This color ink was used for the duration of this precancel, until September 1882.

The clerks in Chicago were not very careful when it came to applying the roller to a pane of stamps. Thus it is just as likely to find vertical or inverted orientations of precancels.

Black



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## Chicago Precancels - Large "C"



The large "C" precancel was used from Oct 1882 to Jan 1883. This is a rather scarce precancel because of limited use.



Mailed in Jan 1883 and upon nondelivery was advertised. This cover is the latest known use of this rare precancel.



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## Chicago - 3 Bar



This precancel is known used from 10 May 1883 to 22 Dec 1888 in both vertical and horizontal orientations.



Advertised letter with a previously unreported diagonal 3 bar precancel

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## Chicago - Wavy Lines

### Narrow Spacing

Not much is known about this precancel but from my experience and the colors displayed, it was probably used contemporaneously with the 3 bar precancel. The last known use was Dec 1889.



### Wide Spacing

Based on research done by Bower and Piskiewicz, it is known this precancel was used from 1887 to 1892.



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## New York Pearl - Black

Following the Postal Act of March 1879, New York City post office began using precancellations, as early as July. By 1 Aug they began use of the iconic pearl cancel. Initially they used black ink which was used until late September or early October 1879 when the color was changed to blue and that color was used for the next eight years.



September 1879 Black Pearl

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New York Pearls - Blue



Sent from England to New York in 1883, short paid  
3 cents, paid with a pair of 3 cents blue  
New York Pearls precancels.

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## New York Pearls - Orientation Varieties

Unlike bar cancellation devices, the New York Pearl device was a roller which allowed "normal" and "inverted" displays in portrait. In addition to these usual orientations, the clerks would turn a sheet to landscape and after applying the cancellation the result would be vertical orientations, both "up" and "down".

But as is sometimes the case the roller would be underinked and the clerk would reapply the roller, resulting in double impressions.



Normal



Inverted



Pointing Down



Pointing Up

### Double Impressions



Black  
Vertical



Blue  
Vertical



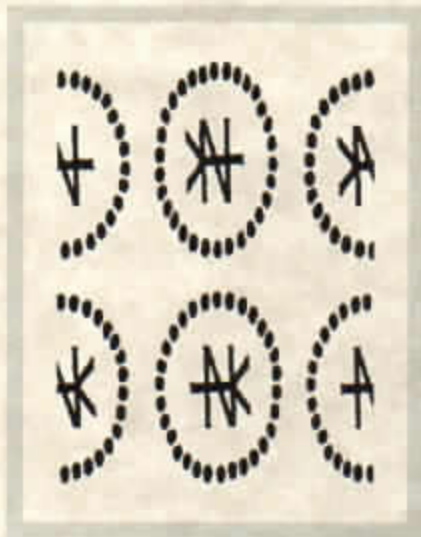
Black



Blue

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## New York Pearls - Orientation Varieties



Unique cancellations oriented left and right



Unique  
Diagonal



Skidded Cancel



Unique double impression  
oriented right and down

