

## 'NEW YORK CITY FOREIGN MAIL FANCY CANCELS 1873-1875'

### The aim of this exhibit

To display, on stamps, the complete range of fancy cancels used on 'New York City Foreign Mail' between Feb 1873 and Sep 1875.

### Definition of a 'New York City Foreign Mail' (NYCFM) cancel

The exhibitor defines as, 'A specific cancel applied to stamps on letters generally originating, or first entering, the mail at New York City addressed to all foreign countries except Canada'.

### Why the period Feb 1873 to Sep 1875?

Of the 245 cancels recorded in the NYCFM period 1850-78 just 88 may be termed 'fancy'. On-cover use shows that 49 of the most remarkable were produced between Feb 1873 and Sep 1875. It is these 49 cancels which are the subject of this exhibit.

### Dating of recorded cancel use

Dates for first use of a cancel, based on on-cover use, are shown directly below each tracing.

### Organisation of the exhibit

Cancels types are arranged and typified as below

Pages	Type	(tracings 30% of actual size)		
2 to 5	stars in circles			
6	stars with crosses			
7	small central stars			
8	radial spokes			
9 to 12	geometrics			
12 to 13	rosettes			
14	sunbursts			
15	wheels			
16	idiosyncratics			

### Treatment of material

Each cancel is shown on several stamps to illustrate differences in size, wear, inking and composition.

### What were the cancels made of?

Cancels were carved into hardwood or occasionally cork.

### Who designed and produced these cancels?

No evidence exists. However, the quality and intricacy of many designs suggest a professional agency.

### On which stamps were these cancels struck?

Upon United States stamps issued in 1870 by the National Bank Note Company and through 1873-1875 by the Continental Bank Note Company. The exhibit is not concerned with late usages on stamps issued prior to 1870.

### Rarity of denomination use

The descending order of scarcity of stamp denomination upon which cancels are struck is shown below;

A '5 pointed star in circle' cancel on the most scarce 90c denomination stamp

- 90c carmine (Commodore Perry) (at right)
- 30c black (Alexander Hamilton)
- 24c purple (General Scott)
- 15c yellow orange (Daniel Webster)
- 2c vermilion (Andrew Jackson)
- 12c dull violet (Henry Clay)
- 1c ultramarine (Benjamin Franklin)
- 5c blue (Zackary Taylor)
- 7c vermilion (Edwin Stanton)
- 2c brown (Andrew Jackson)
- 3c green (George Washington)
- 6c carmine (Abraham Lincoln)
- 10c brown (Thomas Jefferson) (at right)



An '8 pointed star in circle' cancel on the work-horse value, the 10c denomination stamp



### Rarity of cancel use

This is indicated with (1) being the most common and (5) being the most scarce (shown alongside dates of first cancel use).

Red cancels generally indicate 'Supplementary' use whereby for an additional fee mail was expedited onto a departing ship.

( 'E' denotes expertisation )

**EIGHT POINTED STARS IN CIRCLES**



4/10/1873 (2)



E



E



E

As these examples show, the central star is consistently under-inked



6/1/1874 (1)

Inner star generally touches the outer perimeter



Under-inked state



7/8/1874 (1)

Inner star generally does not touch the outer perimeter



Crisp early state



The cancels above measure 29mm diameter whilst on the pair at top 26mm. This indicates that several cancels of similar design were produced



E

Segment missing at 1 o'clock

FOUR POINTED STARS IN CIRCLES WITH 'ARROW-HEADS'



2/27/1873 (4)



Worn state E



3/26/1873 (1)



Worn state E



Crisp early state E



Crisp early state E



4/18/1873 (1)



E



E



Crisp early state



Worn state



E

THEMES ON FOUR POINTED STARS IN CIRCLES



9/18/1874 (3)



Over-inked state. The sole recorded 7c pair with this cancel



Crisp early state on a 6c cut square



Breaking up state



Sole recorded 90c with this cancel



12/8/1874 (1)



Shows that the larger NYCFM cancels need a multiple to be fully seen



12/12/1874 (4)



E



Rare claret colour



Crisp early state



Broken state



Broken state

E



Sole recorded 90c with this cancel

E

The consistent indistinct nature of these cancels indicates the use of a cork rather than a hardwood cancel

FIVE POINTED STARS IN CIRCLES



9/17/1874 (3)



Vertical NYCFM pairs are more scarce than horizontal pairs



Crisp early state



Under-inked state



10/1/1874 (3)



The consistent indistinct nature of these cancels indicates the use of a cork rather than a hardwood cancel



3/8/1875 (5)



Unusually full state of this complex cancel which is rarely clearly struck



7/17/1875 (5)



Crisp early state



Under-inked state

CENTRAL CROSSES WITHIN STARS



1/12/1875 (5)



Complete state of this rare cancel



Broken outer circle



Sole recorded 90c with this cancel in red



1/13/1875 (3)



Under-inked state



Crisp early state



Worn state



Outer circle beginning to break up



31mm diam.  
1/13/1875 (1)



E



25mm diam.  
2/3/1875 (5)



Crisp early state



Sole recorded 6c strip of 3 with a red cancel.  
The cancelling device lost ink as it moved right to left



Broken state



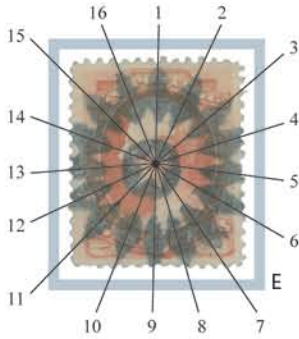
**SMALL CENTRAL STARS**



Referenced back to 1942 as with 15 outer diamonds (see at left), the 6c stamp below shows this cancel has 16 diamonds NOT 15



12/10/1873 (4)



Remarkable full early state



Broken state



8/15/1874 (3)



12/18/1873 (1)



Crisp early state on the sole recorded 3c/12c combination



One of 2 recorded blocks of 4 bearing a red NYCFM fancy cancel



Under-inked state



Worn/broken state



Crisp early state



Under-inked state

**RADIAL SPOKES**



3/5/1874 (1)



Crisp early state



'Hollow centre' variety but more likely under-inked

E



4/1/1875 (3)



Worn state



Crisp early state



3/30/1875 (2)



Crisp early state  
The sole recorded block with this cancel



6/22/1875 (4)



Under-inked state



Crisp early state



GEOMETRICS



10/17/1874 (1)



Unusually nearly full state



2/27/1875 (1)



Over-inked state



Sole recorded example of a 3c/15c combination in red



Crisp early state



1/11/1875 (1)

ALL the larger 30mm diam cancels on this page show the outer circle broken or missing. This was either due to uneven application or because the central design was carved slightly higher than the outer circle



Left cancel under-inked, right cancel over-inked



Unusually crisp state



Broken state



Crisp early state

**GEOMETRICS**



3/13/1875 (4)



Crisp early state



Broken/under-inked state



5/29/1875 (5)  
30mm diam. 8 diamonds



Remarkable crisp early state  
of this rare cancel



Broken/under-inked state



4/26/1875 (2)  
26mm diam. 12 diamonds



Crisp early state



6/24/1875 (4)



Outer circle completely  
absent



Partially worn state



Shows relatively complete states of this cancel which is invariably worn or broken

GEOMETRICS



2/26/1875 (4)

outer diamonds point *inwards*



4/21/1875 (4)

Outer diamonds point *outwards*



Relatively clear state of this scarce cancel



Over-inked state



Crisp early state of this rare cancel which is often over-inked or worn



Badly broken state



6/12/1875 (1)

30-31mm diam. 12 diamonds



8/26/1875 (5)

25-26mm diam. 10 diamonds



Worn state on the sole recorded 3c/15c combination



Broken state



Crisp early state



Stamp with part imprint at top



Relatively crisp and full state of this rare cancel



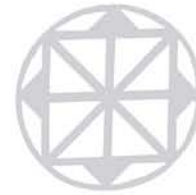
**GEOMETRICS**



9/5/1874 (2)



Sole recorded 1c/15c stamps combination with this cancel



9/13/1874 (3)



Outer circle beginning to break up



Full early state



Crisp early state



Over-inked state



Unevenly struck

**ROSETTES**



3/30/1874 (1)



Crisp early state



Worn state. The outer 'hearts' are losing their shape and becoming 'blunted'



Over-inked state on the right and under-inked state on the left on the sole 1c/15c combination recorded with this cancel



ROSETTES



4/24~~8~~1873



A remarkable full early state in rare black



The sole recorded use of this cancel on a 6c pair



Crisp early state

E

Both the 'rosette' designs on this page are commonly cancelled in red and rarely in black suggesting they were used primarily for supplementary mail



1/9~~2~~1875



Sole recorded use of this cancel on a 7c pair



Sole recorded use on a 6c cut square



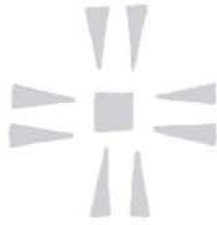
Under-inked state



Crisp early state

E

**SUNBURSTS**



2/19/1873 (4)



A crude, constantly indistinct cancel, probably carved from cork. The central 7c value shows an interesting variation at the right



11/25/1874 (3)



Worn state. The sole pair of 12c stamps recorded with this cancel



Crisp early state

This cancel measures 29mm on the 12c pair and single 6c stamp but only 25mm on the 15c stamps indicating that two cancels of similar design were produced



Sole 2 X 15c combination recorded with this cancel



12/8/1874 (4)



Over-inked state



Broken state



Crisp early state

**WHEELS**



**9/21/1875 (4)**  
**12 spokes. 25mm diam.**



This cancel was prone to over-inking  
and loss of the outer circle



**8/7/1875 (1)**  
**12 spokes. 27mm diam.**



E

Under-inked state

E

Over-inked state

Crisp early state



**9/8/1875 (5)**  
**13 spokes. 29mm diam.**



It was only identified in 1990 that this type  
existed with 13 spokes not 12

IDIOSYNCRATICS



6/6/1873 (3)



Crisp early state



E



2/12/1874 (2)



Crisp early state



Broken example where the outer circle has disappeared

E



Breaking up state



Broken state

E

E



Full strike



Over-inked state



'FOULDED ANCHOR'

3/30/1875 (5)



Under-inked state



Sole recorded use on a 1c stamp

E



Crisp full state

E



A magnificent strike on a 15c stamp

E



Over-inked state



Sole recorded use on a 90c stamp

E