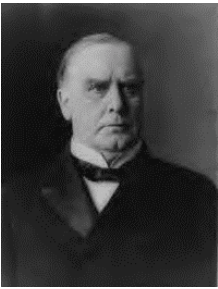


Buffalo 1901

The Assassination of President William McKinley



Shortly after 4 PM on the afternoon of 6 September 1901, President William McKinley stood on the stage of the Temple of Music to greet the last group of well wishers who had waited in line to shake his hand at a public reception. McKinley reached out to a 28 year old man who was holding a handkerchief in his hand, not unusual since the day was rather hot and humid. But Leon Czolgosz had a 32 caliber revolver concealed under his handkerchief. Two shots rang out, the first nicked a button on the President's vest and glanced off his chest, the second penetrated his stomach.

Pandemonium ensued. One of the guards named O'Brien, and James Parker, a tall black man waiting in the line just behind Czolgosz, immediately grabbed the assassin and began punching him in the face. Czolgosz fell to the floor and other guards joined in. Czolgosz, in the words of an eye witness, was a "bloody mess". Another guard grabbed the revolver out of Czolgosz's right hand. The beating would have continued, had McKinley not said "Go easy on him boys" or "Don't let them hurt him". Whatever the exact words, they saved Czolgosz's life, at least temporarily. The guards stopped their assault and the President's health was given priority.

The officials on the stage with McKinley eased him onto the floor. Word quickly spread of the shooting, and mob mentality took over, with crowds outside beating on the door and shouting death threats for the shooter. An electric powered ambulance reached the Temple of Music first and rushed the wounded McKinley to the Exposition Hospital.

The Exposition Hospital was poorly equipped for a wound of this sort. Dr. Roswell Park, the exposition's medical director, was performing a cancer operation in nearby Niagara Falls. Rather than wait for his return, the doctors present believed it imperative to act immediately, and they decided to operate as soon as prominent Buffalo surgeon Dr. Matthew Mann arrived. Dr. Mann performed quick emergency surgery in a vain attempt to save the President's life. The bullet had entered the stomach and exited out the back wall of the stomach. Mann sewed both holes but was unable to retrieve the bullet. The operation seemed to be a success. McKinley looked as if he was going to recover.

Meanwhile, a horse drawn carriage arrived to take Czolgosz to jail. The mob was still in full force, howling for revenge. The guards tossed Czolgosz into the carriage and the driver whipped the horses to push through the crowd. The mob tried to flip the wagon to get to Czolgosz. The police and guards beat and whipped the rioters. The carriage barely made it to the prison. Another mob quickly formed outside the prison

Following the surgery, McKinley was taken to the home of John Milburn, the Exposition's president, for recuperation, but gangrene and infection slowly attacked McKinley's abdominal cavity and internal organs, and his health declined. There was nothing the doctors could do when his health began to fail. Additionally, his pancreas was creating insulin at a high rate which was threatening to kill the president more quickly than the gangrene. McKinley clung to life for 8 days, dying of his wound on 14 September 1901.

Leon Czolgosz was tried, convicted, and sentenced to death by electrocution. Sentence was carried out on 29 October 1901 at the state penitentiary in Auburn.

Buffalo 1901



An in-period artist's rendering of the shooting of McKinley in the Temple of Music. Private O'Brien is at the right in the drawing, and James Parker has his hand on the shoulder of Czolgosz.

DEPARTMENT OF POLICE, Buffalo, N. Y. BUREAU OF IDENTIFICATION.

NAME Leon Frank Czolgosz ALIASES Fred Nieman

NO. 757 SEX Male COLOR White

CRIME Murder 1st deg. DATE OF ARREST Sept. 6, 1901

PLACE ARRESTED Buffalo, N. Y. COUNTY _____

ARRESTED BY Solomon, Gary, Foster PRECINCT H4

AGE 28 DATE BORN _____

HEIGHT 5 7-5/8 COMPLEXION Med

EYES Dk. Blue WEIGHT 158

HAIR Red.Br BUILD Med

PLACE OF BIRTH Detroit, Mich.

NATIONALITY Amer.

OCCUPATION Wireworker

CITIZEN Yes

SCARS AND MARKS
 I-out sc 2x7 at 2, pt of elb.
 I-out sc 2x on cent. back of hand.
 III-Irr out sc 3x, 2d phal mid fer, rear.
 III-opt sc 7x ver lt cheek 3 from ear.

DISPOSITION _____

BRIEF HISTORY OF CRIME COMMITTED:
 While Wm. McKinley the President of the United States was holding a public reception in the Temple of Music at the Pan-Amer. Exposition, he was shot in the abdomen twice with _____

PREVIOUS CRIMINAL HISTORY

NAME	NUMBER	CITY OR INSTITUTION	DATE	CHARGE	DISPOSITION OR SENTENCE
Claims none.					

-BRO. THOMAS AND EBY MFG. CO. BUFF. AND MOBL. P-1225

Police arrest record and mug shots for Czolgosz. The right side of the assassin's face has been severely bruised from being beaten by the guards.



Contemporary photo of James Parker. Although hailed as a hero in helping to subdue Czolgosz, he did not testify at the murder trial.

Buffalo 1901

The Assassination of President William McKinley

Philatelic mementos of the assassination can be divided into two parts: pre- and post assassination. Letters exist describing McKinley's arrival at Buffalo, his visit to Niagara Falls, and his speech at the Exposition on 5 September. Postcards written by fair visitors to family and friends mention seeing the President.

Eyewitness to history....."Tomorrow McKinley day"



Front and back of tourist post card written 5 September and postmarked 6 September. This card sold for \$1100 on ebay in 2004.



Tourist post card postmarked the morning of 6 September, with B01-07A.

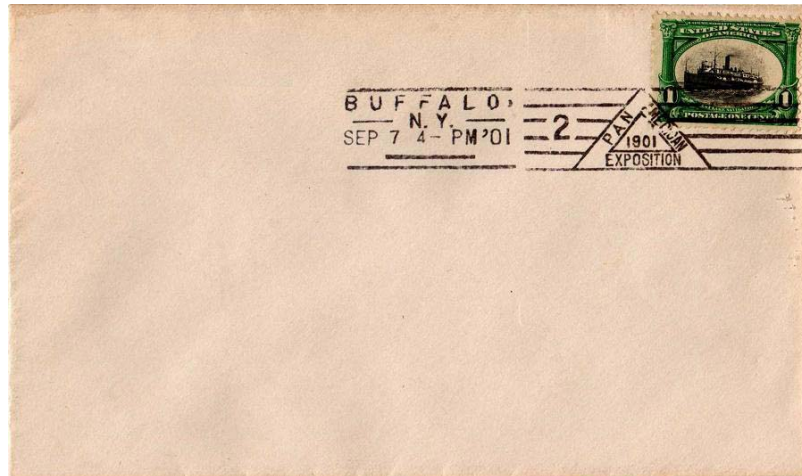
Officials closed the expo to the public on 7 and 8 September.

Buffalo 1901

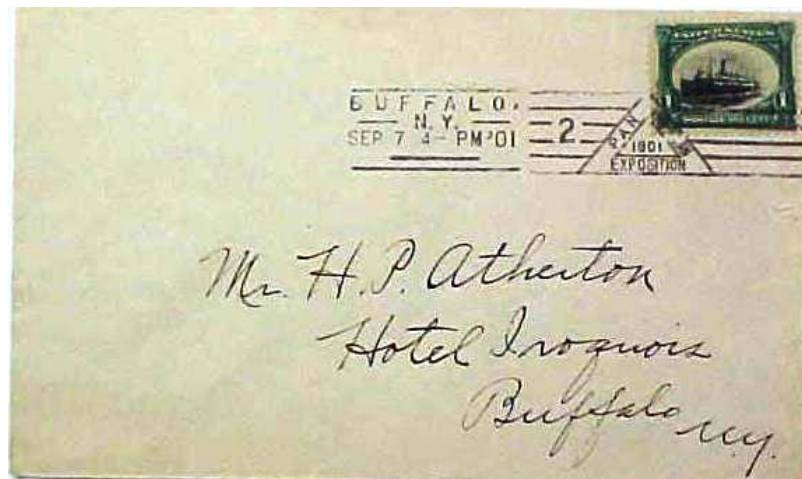
The Assassination of President William McKinley

An enterprising individual wanted to commemorate the assassination attempt, and created covers dated 7 September (day after the shooting), franked with the one cent commemorative and canceled with B01-15C.

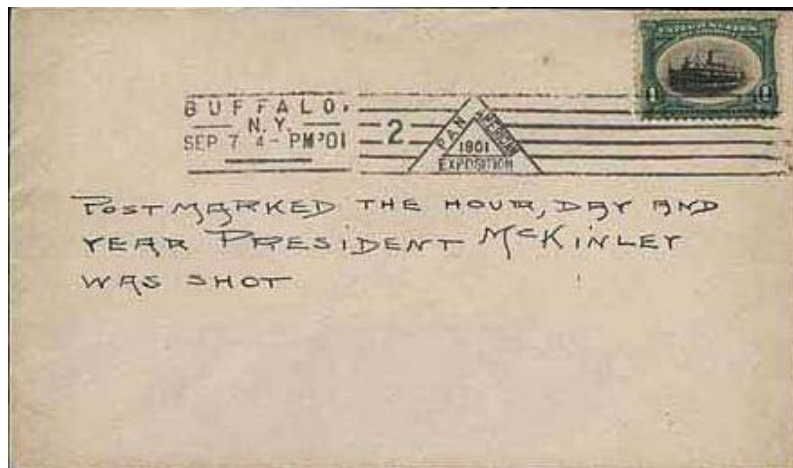
The number created is not known with certainty, but it's estimated he used a single sheet of stamps to make 100 covers. All have the time of 4 PM in the dater portion of the cancel.



A very small percentage were hand addressed. Several different styles of handwriting have been recorded – more than one individual addressed the covers.



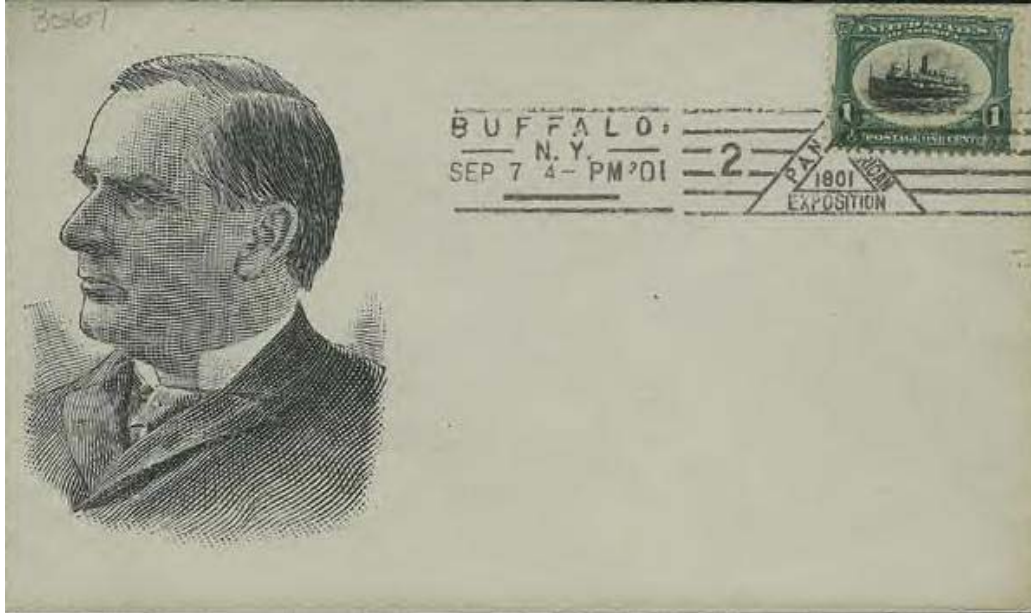
Someone embellished the cover shown at the right with erroneous information in an attempt to increase its value. This cover had been offered at least twice by a mid-level auction house, but astute bidders realized the true facts and it did not sell.



Buffalo 1901

The Assassination of President William McKinley

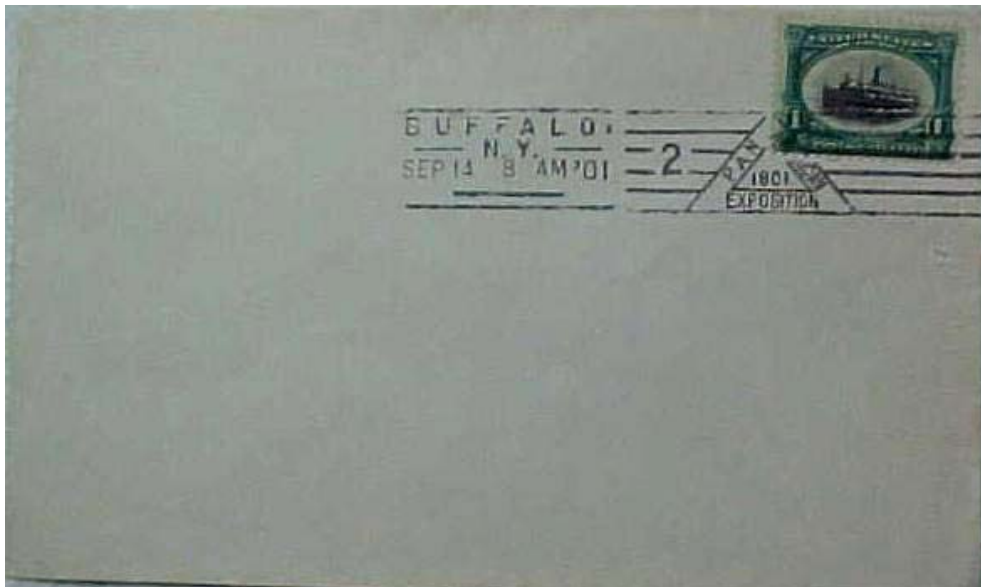
Sometime in the 1930's, the remaining examples of the 7 September 1901 covers had an attractive ¾ view portrait of McKinley imprinted on the left side. It is believed that these were created in Detroit with a possible connection to the Detroit Stamp Club.



(courtesy Siegel Auction Galleries)

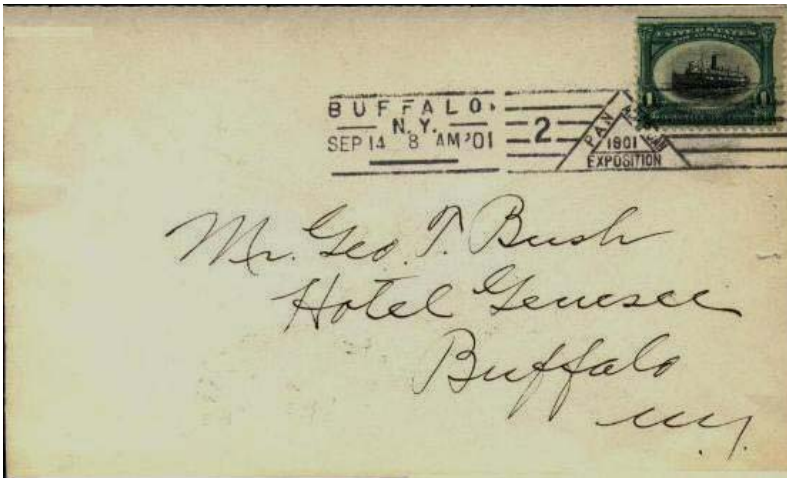
Whether or not the portrait was added to a particular unaddressed cover appears to be a function of cancel positioning. On the cover above, there was sufficient room at the left. Contrast this with the cover at the bottom of the previous page, a full-length impression of the Barry cancel that does not allow enough space to add McKinley's face.

McKinley died in the early hours of the morning on 14 September 1901. The same individual then created matching date-of-death covers. As before, all are canceled with B01-15C, but with a time of 8 AM in the dater portion, with approximately 100 made.

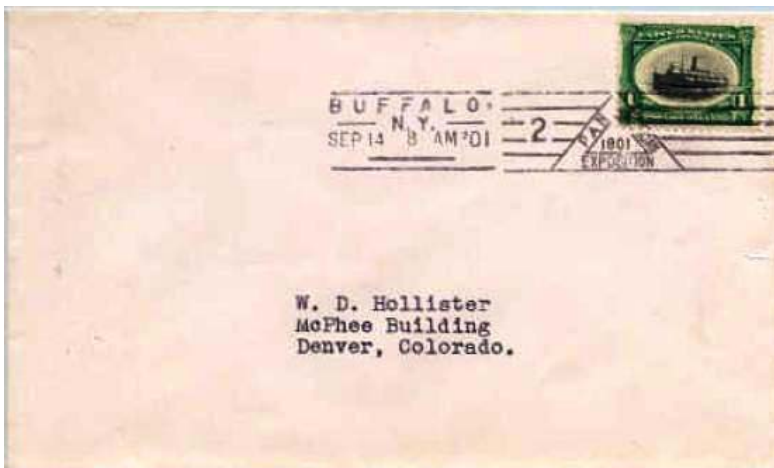


Buffalo 1901

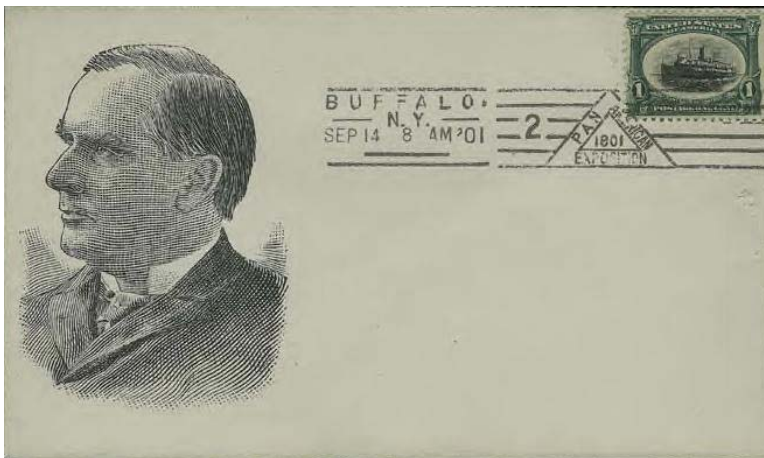
The Assassination of President William McKinley



Handwriting is the same as on the addressed cover to Atherton that was dated 7 September 1901. These two covers most probably written by the creator of the covers.



Typed covers are currently known only dated 14 September.



The portrait of McKinley was also added to the left side of the 14 September covers.

Buffalo 1901

The Assassination of President William McKinley

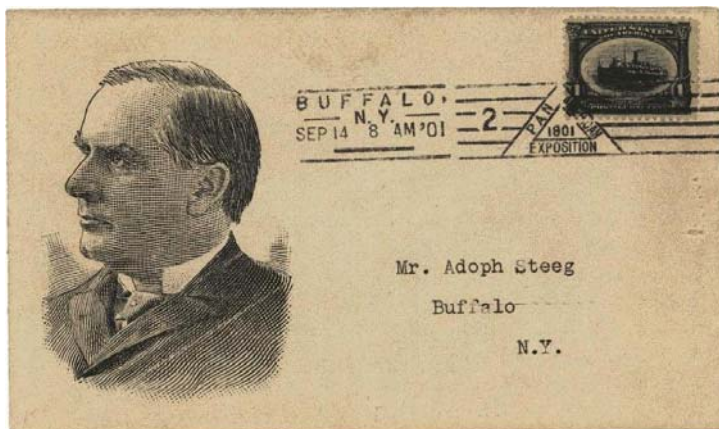
The water color cachet on this cover appears to have been added at a much later date. The addressee, Conrad Diehl, served as Buffalo's Democratic mayor from 1898 to 1902. No street address or directory searches needed for this to be delivered to Mayor Diehl, but.....is the address contemporary or another after-the-fact add-on?



(courtesy Siegel Auction Galleries)

Dr Conrad Diehl (1843 - 1918) had the distinction of being the first of Buffalo's mayors to be born in the city. Much of his time as mayor was devoted to the Pan American Exposition, which in his mind served a dual purpose – to showcase the city of Buffalo as a major city in world commerce and industry, and to pay tribute to the soldiers who served in the recently concluded Spanish American War. However, he tried not neglect his other civic responsibilities at the expense of the exposition, but was unsuccessful as his city treasurer was formally charged with misappropriating \$43,000 of city funds.

In October of 1901, Diehl announced he would not seek a second term as Buffalo's mayor. McKinley's assassination basically crushed his spirits, and he thought it in the best interests of Buffalo to complete his term of office and then return to his medical practice. Even though Diehl and McKinley were of opposite political parties, Diehl felt devastated that such an outrageous act occurred in his city, and especially at the expo to which he devoted so much of his time and energy.



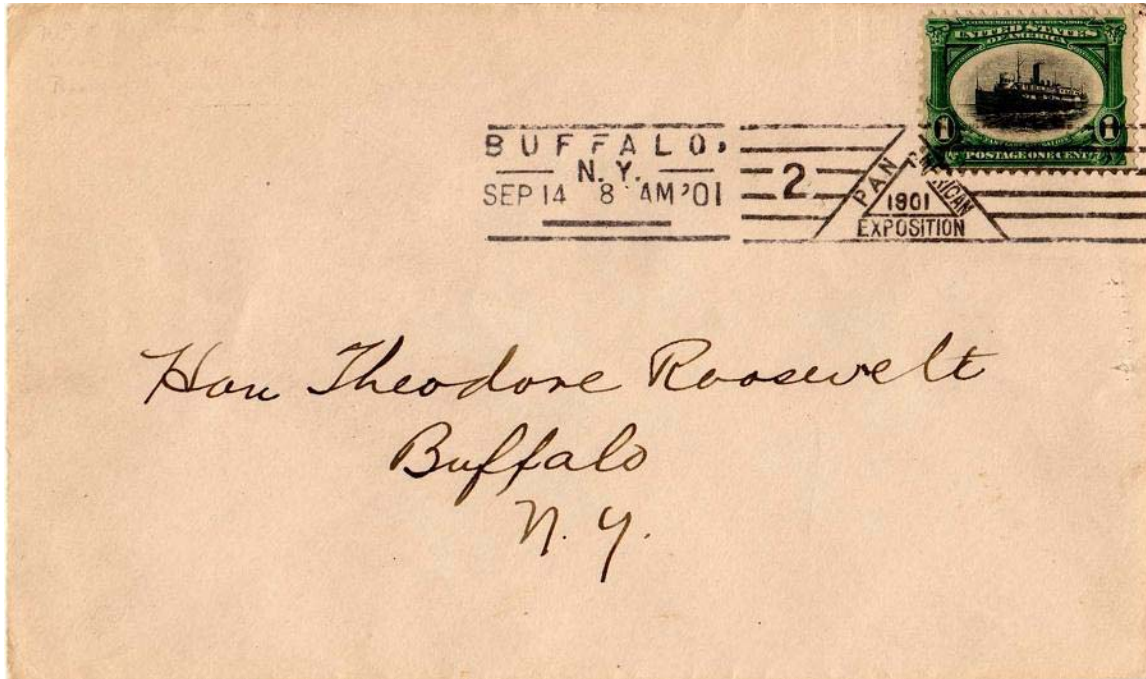
The cover shown to the left must be laughed at for its total ineptitude. Adolph (not Adoph) Steeg, a resident of Buffalo and a long time APS officer, was only 12 years old in 1901. Address probably added in the 1930's, at the same time as the cachet, and the cover perhaps a gift to Steeg.

(ex Bomar)

Buffalo 1901

The Assassination of President William McKinley

This next cover addressed to (now) President Theodore Roosevelt is also somewhat dubious. Roosevelt traveled to Buffalo when he heard that McKinley's health was failing, so he was present in the city on 14 September. But once again, the address is almost certainly a later add-on for enhancement, and whether the cover actually belonged to Roosevelt is highly doubtful.



(cover courtesy Peter Miselis)

Prices asked by dealers and results obtained at auction for the philatelic souvenir covers of the McKinley assassination fluctuate wildly, from lows of \$25.00 to highs over \$1000.00. The following are considered realistic values for such covers as of the publication of this book.

7 September 1901: Un-cacheted, unaddressed - \$40.00 to \$50.00
Un-cacheted, addressed - \$60.00 to \$80.00
With McKinley portrait - \$100.00

The 14 September 1901 covers have higher values, since these are legitimate covers canceled on Theodore Roosevelt's inauguration day, and as such, are in demand by collectors of political memorabilia.

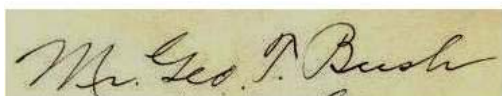
14 September 1901: Un-cacheted, unaddressed - \$75.00 to \$90.00
Un-cacheted, addressed - \$100.00 to \$125.00
With McKinley portrait - \$400.00

Buffalo 1901

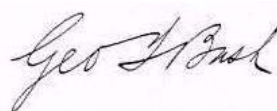
The Assassination of President William McKinley

7 and 14 September Cover Facts:

- 1) The American Philatelic Association (now the American Philatelic Society) held its 16th annual convention in Buffalo from 20 to 22 August 1901.
- 2) Two of the previous hand addressed covers, the ones to H.P. Atherton [discoverer of the 2-cent Black Jack variety now termed the Atherton Shift], and George T. Bush [a founding member of the Association] are to well known philatelists of that era. Neither attended the APA convention.
- 3) George T. Bush lived in Bellefonte Pennsylvania, where the APS currently maintains its headquarters and offices. But comparing Bush's signature to his name on the hand written cover proves he did not write the address.



Cover Address



Signature

- 4) The typed addressee, W. (Warren) D. Hollister, was employed by the Continental Oil Company, whose Denver offices were located in the McPhee Building. Uriah S. Hollister served as Vice President and General Manager of the Denver offices of Continental Oil. No one named Hollister attended the convention.
- 5) The majority of covers seen are unsealed, with relatively pristine gum on the envelope flap – some have become accidentally sealed through exposure to humid conditions, or purposely sealed by a previous owner.
- 6) Almost all of the covers have a series of small abrasions at the right edge beginning several millimeters under the lower killer bar. This is most likely a result of the gripper mechanism on the feeder of the Barry canceling machine. The abrasion most probably would not have occurred or be less noticeable if the covers had been thicker, that is, with an enclosure.
- 7) There is no evidence of any indentations or surface irregularities near the edges of the covers (front or back) that would be expected to be made by a letter inside due to the pressure of the canceling machine. No cover has been found with an enclosure. With very few exceptions, the envelope corners are perfectly square without being bumped or rounded from handling as part of the normal mail stream.
- 8) All covers are canceled with a date and time. Third class mail at the one cent rate should have been postmarked without the date/time.

7 and 14 September Cover Speculation:

- 1) The covers were made by an APA member residing in the Buffalo area.
- 2) Covers were canceled on the dates indicated by the post marks.
- 3) The cover's creator 'addressed' some covers to his philatelist friends.
- 4) The cover's creator may have had connections within the Buffalo post office.
- 5) Those covers not 'addressed' to dignitaries were mailed to the intended recipients inside a separate envelope after the fact as souvenirs.
- 6) Two separate mailings occurred, one for the 7 September covers and one for the 14 September covers. As McKinley was initially expected to survive his wound and regain his health, it does not make sense that the 7 September souvenirs were held and mailed together with those dated 14 September.
- 7) There were no enclosures in any of these covers.
- 8) These covers have a very high rate of survival, but a census has not been done.

Buffalo 1901

The Assassination of President William McKinley

According to the listing of members (then called stock holders) attending the 1901 APA convention, two lived in Buffalo: Alfred L. Becker and Raynor Hubbell. Either of these men would be a prime candidate for creating the McKinley souvenir covers – both were “in the right place at the right time”. Researching the two men seems to focus on Hubbell as the originator; however this has not been absolutely proven.

In 1901, Alfred Becker would have been 23 year old law student. At such a young age, it seems highly doubtful that he would be on sufficiently friendly terms with two (and probably more) of the philatelic ‘greats’ of the day, although that possibility does exist. Becker went on to have a distinguished legal career, serving as Deputy Attorney General for the State of New York Southern District [New York City], and authored several legal textbooks. Becker died at his Bronx (New York) home in 1948 at age 70.

In 1901, Raynor Hubbell was an established stamp dealer in Buffalo who advertised and sold extensively via mail to his customers. He frequently used one of the more colorful all-over Pan Am advertising designs in his mailings. From an inserted ad, Hubbell sold the more common Pan Am seals at 100 for a dollar, and often provided samples on the covers themselves.

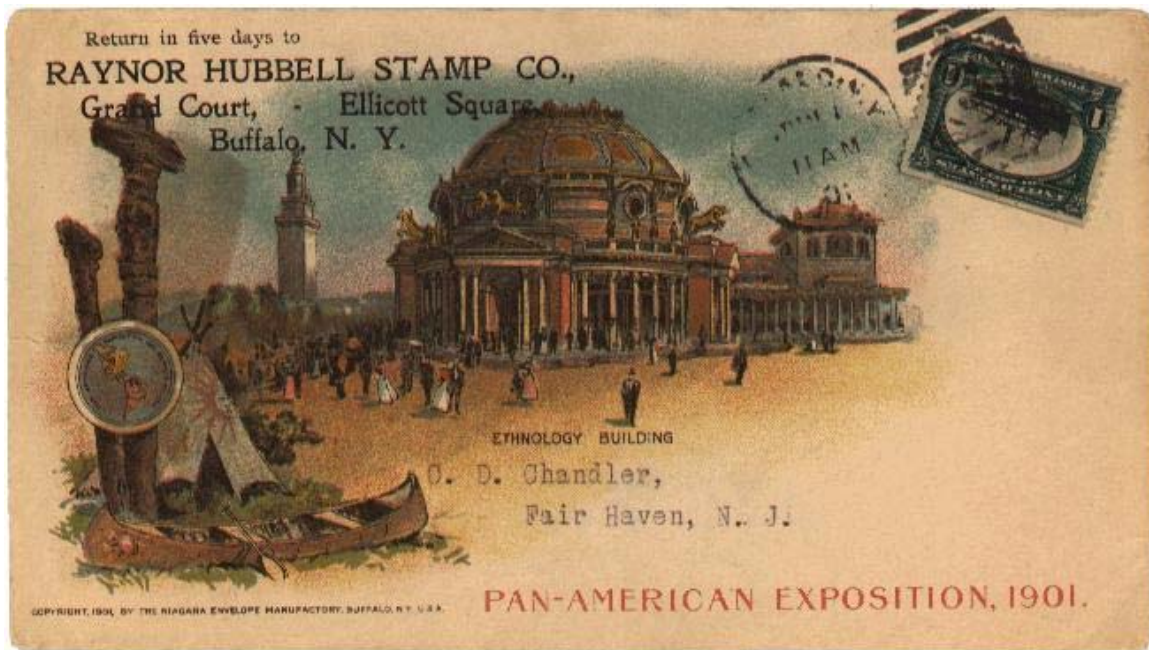


(covers courtesy Nutmeg Sales)

Hubbell's return address can be found printed either on the front or back of these covers. His use of the all-over flag covers with the 5 seals and his insert are worth between \$400 and \$600, depending on condition.

Buffalo 1901

The Assassination of President William McKinley



(ex Bomar)

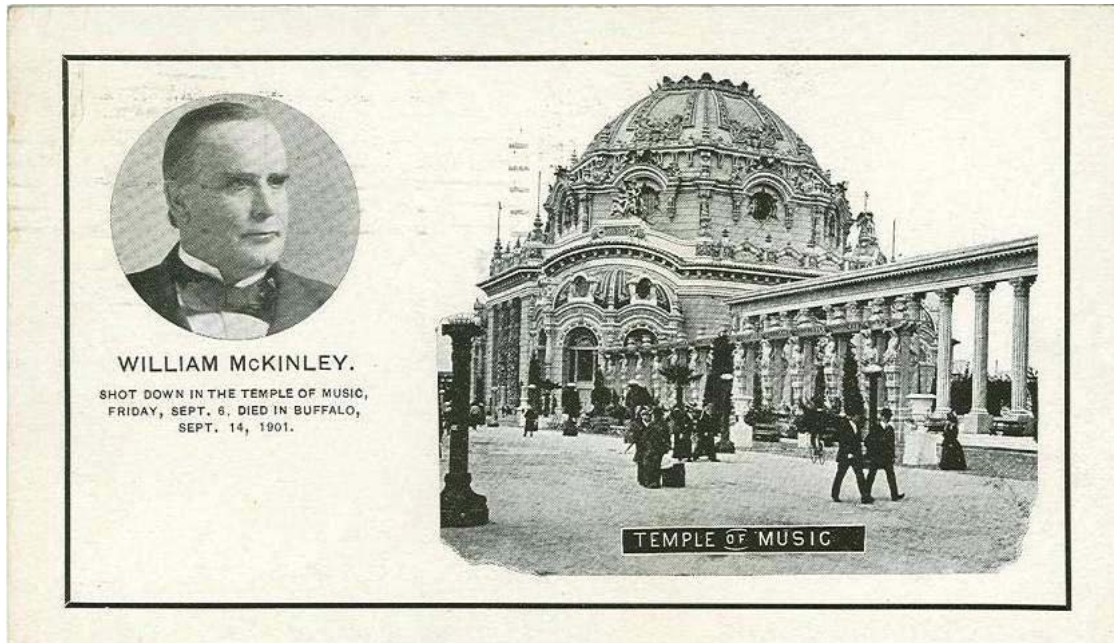
Another style of advertising cover used by Raynor Hubbell, showing the Ethnology Pavilion at the expo. Hubbell's covers indicate that he favored one-cent stamps, obviously singles for the third class rate, but pairs to pay first class postage. Hubbell's typed addresses appear to have been done on a typewriter with a purple colored ribbon.

One must also include as a potential candidate Rollin E. Flower, another Buffalo resident and long time officer of the APS. Flower was born in 1886, so was age 15 at the time of the Pan American exposition. His young age effectively eliminates Flower from further consideration.

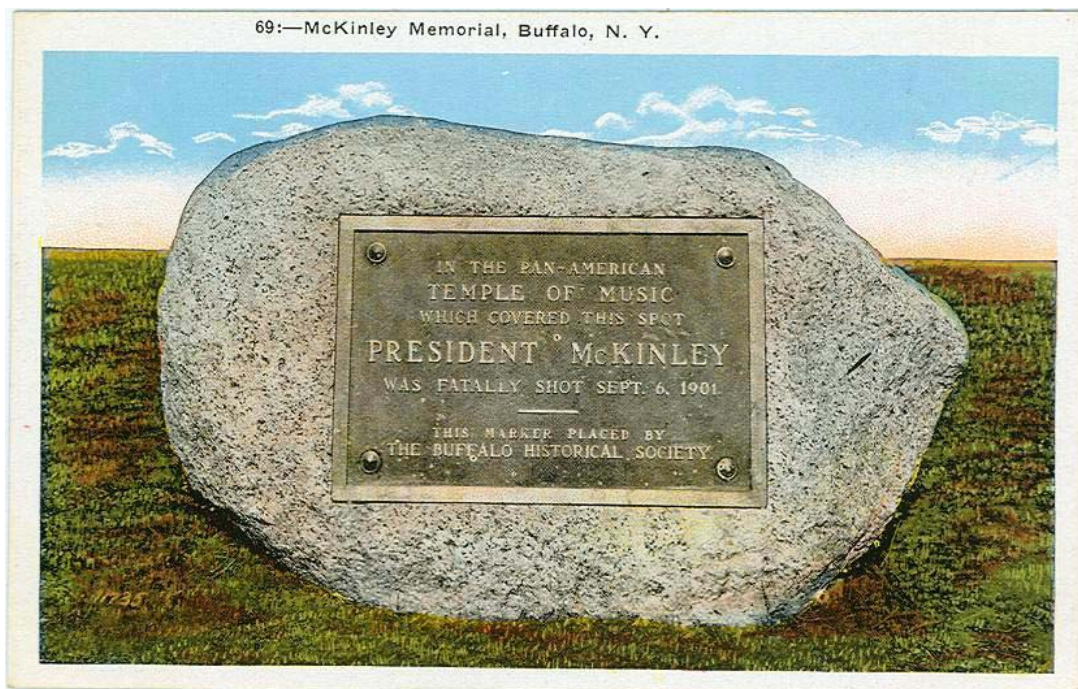
It seems most feasible based on circumstantial evidence that Hubbell fabricated the McKinley souvenir covers, perhaps both for sale and as a bonus for certain of his collector friends/customers. Comparison of a 1959 sample of Hubbell's handwriting on file with the American Philatelic Research Library with the written addresses to Atherton and Bush proved inconclusive. There are similarities in the formation of certain of the script letters, but other letters do not match up. Of course, there is a 58 year difference in time, and a person's handwriting changes with age. A detailed comparison of the typed alpha-numeric characters on Hubbell's ad covers with the typed address for W.D. Hollister cannot be accomplished at the present time.

Buffalo 1901

The Assassination of President William McKinley



This McKinley mourning post card had been quickly printed by the Niagara Envelope Company as a memorial to the late president, and sold at the expo. Earliest known use is 25 September 1901, post marked with B01-07A. Value - \$50.00 with B01-07A, any date.



A memorial plaque mounted on a slab of granite in Delaware Park marked the Temple of Music's location. This very common card is from the 1920's, and is valued at \$1.00