

Some Observations about NYFM Cancels on Printed Matter

By Alex Gundel

Introduction

Most studies on the New York Foreign Mail (NYFM) cancels of the years 1870 to 1876 have been guided by their attractive geometric designs rather than by their usages. The cancels were classified according to their appearance, and Weiss [10] lists about 250 different designs.

Van Vlissingen and Waud [9] have defined NYFM cancels as having been used "for cancelling stamps on mail originating in New York City destined for foreign countries other than Canada. They were not for use on local mail in the United States or on mail to foreign countries initially mailed at other post offices even though clearing through New York City". Weiss [10] adopted this definition in general. As he was aware of NYFM cancels on a small number of domestic covers and on a few covers not originating in New York City he has softened the definition slightly "...on mail which usually originated in New York City, and was usually destined for a foreign country (other than Canada)". The definition of NYFM cancels is based on the assumptions that the Foreign Mail Division was physically separated from the Domestic Mail Division in the New York City Post Office and that all mail was routed to the appropriate Mail Division.

Weiss noted that some NYFM cancels appear on circulars only. He believed that this is a coincidence. And he considered the occurrence of NYFM cancels on domestic covers as the result of misrouting in the process of mail handling.

Valenti [5, 6, 7, 8] has studied the New York cancels used on both foreign printed matter and domestic circular mail. He came to the conclusion that foreign and domestic printed matter was processed at the same desk in the New York City Post Office using cancels that he named New York Circular Mail (NYCM) cancels. While a census of NYFM covers including circulars has been well developed over the years [9, 10], it seems that no one has yet attempted to compile a census of NYCM domestic usages. Valenti reports also new types of NYCM cancels on foreign printed matter [7].

With this article I would like to present some new NYFM printed matter covers including two new types of NYFM cancel. Using all available information the NYFM printed matter census will be expanded by about 50% in relation to that of Weiss [10].

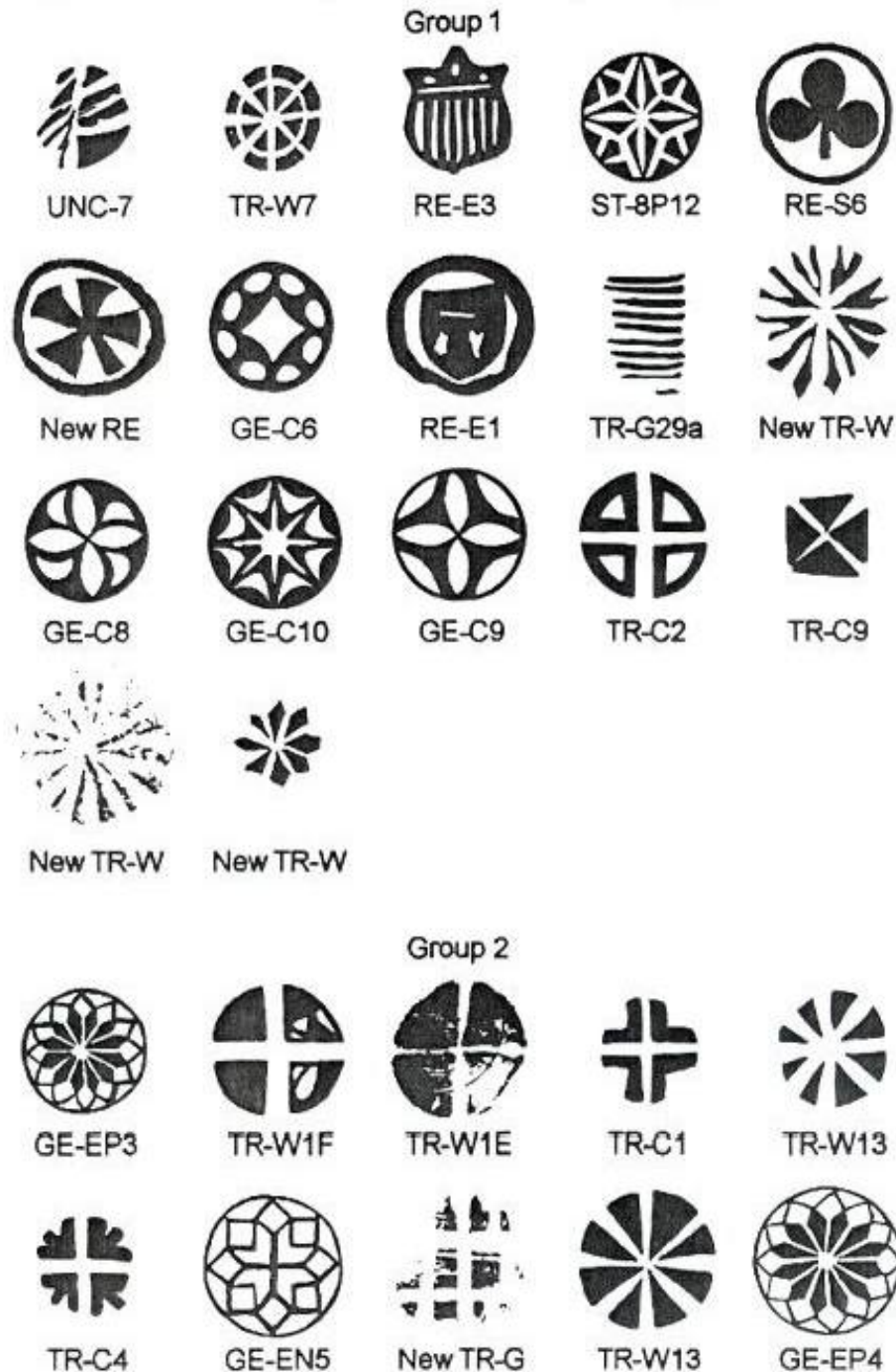
Furthermore, I will provide support to the view of Valenti [5, 6] that some NYFM cancels occur exclusively on printed matter, and show that the joint processing of domestic and foreign printed matter probably ended in 1875 concurrent with the start of the General Postal Union on July 1, 1875 and with the move of the New York City Post Office from the former Middle Dutch Church to the new location at City Hall Park. The City Hall Park Post Office could be occupied on August 25, 1875 [4]. The move of the New York City Post Office to the new site may present an important break in the use of NYFM cancels, at least on printed matter.

To achieve this goal I am using a method that Skinner [3] has proposed who pointed out that new insight may be gained if a postal history approach is taken when looking at NYFM cancels. This study arranges printed matter usages in chronological order providing a structure in which observations on the development of the postal history of NYFM cancels on printed matter can be made.

First, the available information is compiled and analyzed. Forty-seven foreign printed matter usages are described of which ten were previously unlisted and not published in auction catalogues or sales lists. Sources of information for this study were monographs [9, 10], articles from philatelic journals [5, 6, 7, 8, 11], internet sales, auction catalogues offering NYFM cancels on printed matter [1, 2] and private collections. Thirty-five of the 47 foreign printed matter covers were inspected or a picture of them was available. It is noted that 7 postal stationery wrappers and 13 postal stationery envelopes are among these covers.

NYFM cancels on printed matter are rare, only about 2% of all NYFM covers are printed matter usages, the others being letters and postal cards. Among these cancels are attractive geometric as well as traditional designs (Figure 1). In total, 27 different types of NYFM cancels have been found on foreign printed matter covers, 22 of them listed by Weiss [10, 11] and three of them discovered by Valenti [7]. Figures 5 and 7 present covers with two newly discovered designs that Weiss and Valenti do not list.

The cancels of this study are divided into two groups (compare Figure 1). The first group is comprised of cancels that are found on foreign circulars and not on letters or postal cards. The second group includes those NYFM designs that appear on numerous letters or postal cards and occasionally on foreign printed matter.



(Reduced in size 10%)

Figure 1: Display of 27 NYFM cancels that occur on foreign printed matter. Two groups of NYFM cancels were formed for this study. The first group is comprised of cancels that are found on foreign circulars and not on letters or postal cards. The second group is formed by the NYFM designs, which appear on numerous letters or postal cards and occasionally on foreign printed matter.

The drawings of Figure 1 have been taken from van Vlissingen and Waud [9], Weiss [10] and Valenti [7]; some have been produced by scanning covers and applying digital image processing techniques to the scans. These filter methods allow to exactly reproduce details of the cancels including the influence of an embossed stamp on

Type (Weiss)	Period of Use on Foreign Printed Matter	Known Foreign Usages	Covers with Red NYFM One-Line Marking PAID ALL	Number of Domestic Usages
Usages before the NY Post Office moved to the City Hall Park location and the GPU was established				
UNC-7	02/10/72	1		
TR-W7	undated	1		more than 1 (07/15/72 [7])
RE-E3	12/17/73	2 (1 not seen)		more than 5 (11/20/73, 4 undated)
ST-8P12	03/03/74	2	2 (1 wrapper [1])	more than 2 (undated)
RE-S6	04/09/74	2	2 (1 wrapper, Figure 2)	more than 3 (03/25/74, 2 undated)
New RE	05/22/74	1 [7]	1 (wrapper)	
GF-C6	08/30/74	1 [11]		2 (undated)
RE-E1	01/01/75	1	1	4 (12/14/74 [6] – 12/18/74 [1], 2 undated)
TR-G29a	05/07/75	1	1	1 (05/01/75)
Usages after the NY Post Office moved to the City Hall Park location and the GPU was established				
GE-C8	05/30/76 – 06/23/76	5 (2 not seen)		
GE-C10	03/10/77 – 04/??/77	2		
GE-C9	04/30/78	1		
Designs with no information about dates				
New TR-W	undated	1 [7]	1	1 (undated)
TR-C2	undated	1		
TR-C9	undated	2 (1 not seen)		
New TR-W	undated	1 (Figure 5)		
New TR-W	undated	1 [7]		

Table 1: Seventeen NYFM cancels that appear on foreign printed matter but not on letters or postal cards. The cancels are arranged according to their period of use. The Table presents the number of known foreign usages, the number of covers which bear the marking "PAID ALL", and the number of domestic usages. Four of the foreign usages listed by Weiss could not be inspected.

the strike of the killer. The first cancel of the second row may be a Maltese cross in a circle; the cancel is not fully struck on the only existing cover (Valenti, personal communication). The last cancel of the first group is similar to TR-W8 [7].

Group 1: NYFM cancels found on printed matter and not on letters

Table 1 contains 26 covers to foreign destinations and 19 or more domestic usages. The cancels are arranged according to their period of use. The Table has two sections for cancels used before or after the establishment of the General Postal Union (GPU) and the move of the New York City Post Office to the City Hall Park site. Cancels with no information about the date of use are listed at the end of the Table.

Table 1 gives the number of known foreign usages, the number of covers, on which the marking "PAID ALL" is seen, and the number of domestic usages. Some general observations can be made. All strikes of the killers are in black. No cover shows a dated New York City postmark, the dates have been derived from the receiving marking or from the content. The dates of foreign and domestic usages are remarkably close. If both dates are known for a cancel, the receiving date on a foreign cover lags behind the domestic usage by some days (compare Table 1). The scarcity of the cancels of Table 1 is underlined by the fact that no more than five covers to foreign destinations have been found for any of the designs.

Notably, the cancels of Table 1 appear on foreign and domestic usages until mid 1875. This suggests that domestic and foreign circulars were cancelled at the same desk only prior to July 1, 1875 when the GPU was

established, and prior to the move of the New York Post Office from the Middle Dutch Church building to the City Hall Park location. Valenti [5, 6] calls these cancels New York Circular Mail Cancels (NYCM). There are more domestic than foreign covers that bear NYCM cancels.

Cancels used for foreign printed matter after mid 1875 appear neither on domestic circulars nor on foreign letters (Table 1). This indicates that foreign and domestic printed matter were handled separately now. Consequently, this group of cancels could be called New York Foreign Circular Mail (NYFCM) cancels. They occur at least until 1878 and were replaced by simplex cancels with numbers but without date. Double oval cancels were introduced in 1879.

A newly discovered newspaper wrapper with RE-S6 is shown in Figure 2. The three newspaper wrappers of Table 1 belong to the same correspondence from New York City to the "Internationale Credit en Handelsvereniging" in Rotterdam, Holland. The RE-S6 wrapper is one of nine NYFM printed matter usages that show a red one-line New York postmark "PAID ALL".



Figure 2: Newspaper wrapper (W77, UPSS 153) with a clover cancel (RE-S6). The reverse shows an arrival marking of April 9, 1874.

The red one-line PAID ALL marking appears on seven pre-GPU covers and on one undated cover of Table 1. The one-line PAID ALL marking was applied at the NY Foreign Mail Division to indicate that the printed matter postage had been fully paid to the destination. These cancels were used only before the GPU went into effect because the conventions that the U.S. had with other governments required that fully paid mail be marked as "paid all", which included not only letters but also printed matter. Usually this requirement was met at the exchange office by incorporating "paid all" in the dated postmark. However, since dated postmarks were not used on printed matter, a separate PAID ALL handstamp met this requirement. The GPU rules did not require the PAID ALL marking any more.

There are four covers used until 1875 that do not show a PAID ALL marking. The two covers with UNC-7 (Trinidad) and TR-W7 (Guadeloupe) were indeed not paid to the destination and bear due markings applied on incoming foreign circulars at the destination. The other two covers (RE-E3 and GE-C6) were mailed to England. The U.S.-U.K. conventions of 1868/1869 did not require PAID ALL markings. Also the undated cover (Natal) with a new TR-W that is similar to TR-W8 shows a due marking.

The next three figures present later NYFM designs of Table 1 on covers that do not show a PAID ALL marking. The GE-C8 cover in Figure 3 was mailed to Germany in 1876. Figure 4 presents the second known GE-C10 cover. It was mailed to France and received there in April 1877.

The cover shown in Figure 5 comes from a series of seven covers (all UPSS 324) to the same address. Four of these covers are shown in Figures 3, 5, 6 and 7. Two of the covers are undated (Figures 5 and 7), the other dates

are: TR-C1 (Group 2 in Figure 1) received on 04/25/76 and on 04/23/77 (different types), GE-C8 (Group 1 in Figure 1) received on 06/23/76, TR-W1E (Group 2 in Figure 1) received on 07/26/76 and on 08/26/76. These receiving dates suggest that it is a monthly printed matter mailing from a single sender that arrived between the



Figure 3: Double strike of GE-C8 on postal stationery cover (U142, UPSS 324) to Saxony, Germany. There is a receiving marking on the reverse (06/23/76). Note that the cover does not show a PAID ALL marking.

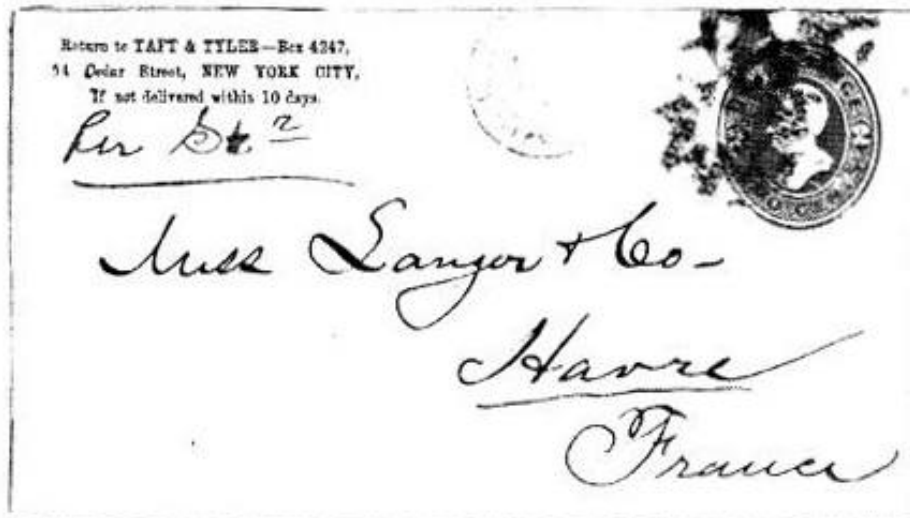


Figure 4: Double strike of GE-C10 on postal stationery envelope (U142, UPSS 324) mailed to France. Left to the NYFM cancel there is a red French marking with "ET.-UNIS SERV. ALLEM." of April 1877.

23rd and 26th of each month. Since there is at least one cover with an undisputed NYFM cancel; i.e. GE-C8, I believe that the same company posted all covers from New York to Saxony. The two undated covers presented in Figures 5 and 7 show so far unreported NYFM cancels.

Group 2: NYFM cancels found on letters and also on printed matter

Now I would like to compare the NYFM cancels of Table 1 with the other 21 foreign printed matter usages that also form a distinct group (Table 2). This group comprises nine designs that are found mainly on letters and postal cards in contrast to those of Table 1. Printed matter usages present a minority of the covers.

Table 2 lists about 400 letters and postal cards showing only nine different designs. The cancels are arranged

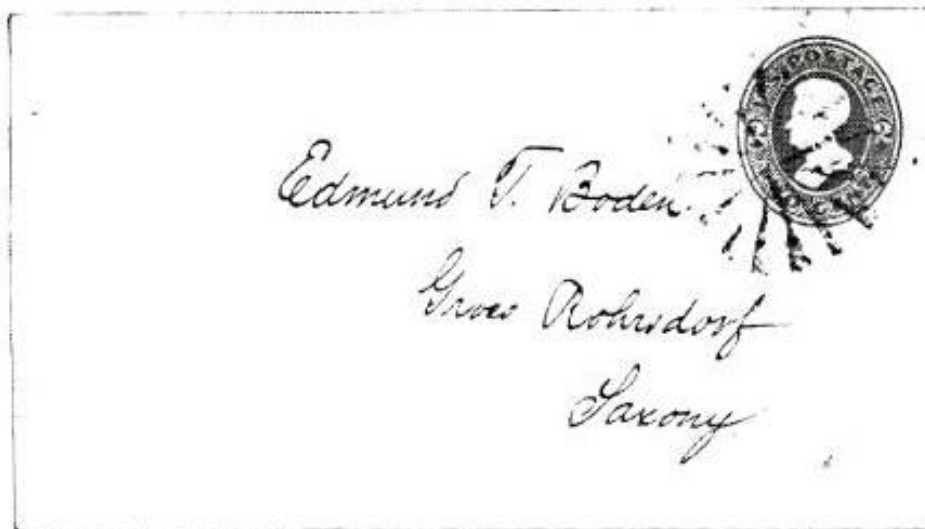


Figure 5: So far unrecorded traditional wedge cancel (New TR-W) on postal stationery cover (U142, UPSS 324) to Saxony, Germany (undated).

according to their period of use on printed matter. There are between 11 and 111 letter usages [10] and only a small number of printed matter covers. Only a single domestic use is known within this group (TR-C1 duplexed with NY date stamp on a letter [10, page 282]). The cancels were introduced between 1870 and 1875 but the first printed matter usage is of October 1875.

For the subsequent discussion it is helpful to recall that van Vlissingen and Waud [9] have introduced the concept of design families. A design family comprises cancels produced by different devices with common characteristics. The cover census [10] does not always differentiate between family members but it seems obvious that different devices must have been used for cancelling letters and printed matter if there is a gap of several years between letter and printed matter usages, e.g. for TR-C1 and TR-C4. The cancels used on printed matter are NYFCM cancels and they were applied in the new City Park Hall Post Office.

Only one of the covers, the TR-C1 wrapper, shows a one-line PAID ALL marking. The wrapper is undated and I suppose that a device of the family TR-C1 was used on printed matter prior to the establishment of the GPU. This TR-C1 is probably a NYCM cancel. It is noted that two stamps have been removed from the TR-C1 newspaper wrapper.

Table 2: Nine NYFM cancels that have been found on foreign printed matter and on letters or postal cards. The cancels are arranged according to their period of printed matter use. The Table gives the number of known foreign printed matter usages and the number of letters and postal cards. In addition, the period of use on letters or postal cards is presented. The letter *f* in brackets marks a family of designs; seven out of the nine designs are families of cancels.

Type (Weiss)	Period of Printed Matter Use	Known Printed Matter Usages	Period of Other Uses	Known Other Usages
GE-EP3 (f)	10/08/75 [6]	1	04/26/75 – 04/26/77	111
TR-W1 (f)	03/20/76 – 08/26/76	3	04/02/70 – 12/09/76	54
TR-C1 (f)	04/25/76 – 06/01/78	9 (4 not seen), 1 wrapper	01/15/70 – 11/22/74	54
TR-W13 (f)	?/76 – 08/02/79	2 (not seen), 1 wrapper [10]	10/20/70 – 05/13/78	68
TR-C4 (f)	10/05/78	2 (1 not seen)	10/06/70 – 11/05/71	13
GE-EN5	08/19/81	1 (wrapper [10])	03/10/75 – 05/28/75	13
TR-G30 (f)	Undated	1	09/20/70 – 12/06/73	11
TR-W17 (f)	Undated	1 (not seen)	02/02/74 – 05/25/78	49
GE-EP4	Undated	1 (wrapper [2])	12/15/75 – 09/07/76	40

The printed matter usages of Table 2 are characterized as late usages within the respective design family. The first cancel in the Table, GE-EP3, seems to be an exception. Since several GE-EP3 cancelling devices have been used also concurrently [10] it might be possible that the printed matter cover presents a late use of an early device. I have no better explanation for the existence of the GE-EP3 circular cover if the date is correct; Weiss [10] lists the cover as a 10/08/76 usage. Notably, Weiss [10] reports a 2c brown Scott 210 of 1883 with a GE-EP3.

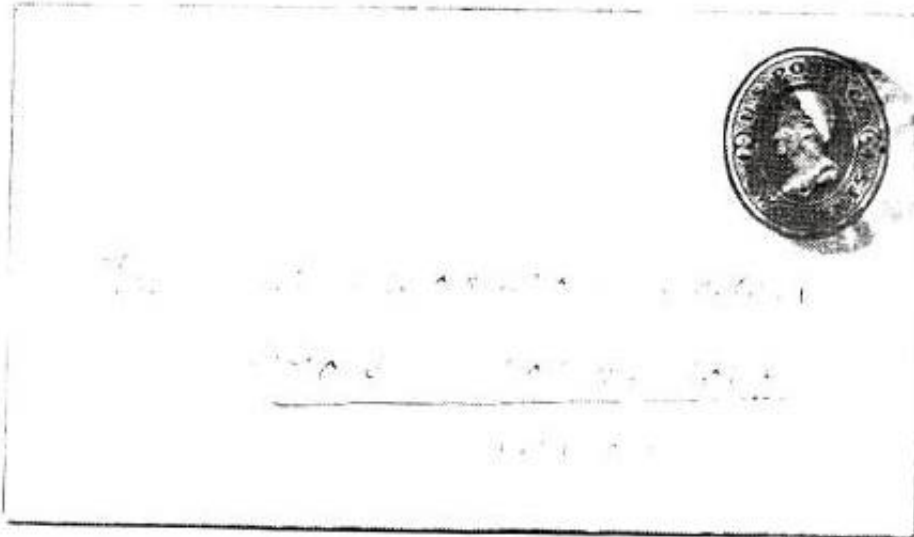


Figure 6: TR-W1E on postal stationery cover (U142, UPSS 324) to Saxony, Germany. There is a receiving marking on the reverse (08/26/76).

Figure 6 shows an example of TR-W1 of August 1876 (received August 26). TR-W1 is a family of seven or more cancelling devices with characteristic differences [10]. The one shown here is TR-W1E, and the cover of Figure 6 presents the latest known usage for this family member. Weiss [10] lists also a printed matter cover with a red TR-W1F to Mexico, the only known red NYFM cancel on printed matter (03/20/76). A later usage of TR-W1F (05/02/76) exists in black on a letter.

TR-C1 presents another family of different cancelling devices. All dated printed matter usages are later than the letter and postal card usages. However, there is one TR-C1 that was applied to a German round-the-world postcard in 1879 [10, page 280]. Type TR-W16 has been integrated into TR-C1 for this study since I think the difference is not large enough to exclude TR-W16 from the family TR-C1; this does not influence the conclusions of this study.

TR-C4 was used on printed matter again later than on letters. In addition, the device used on printed matter is different from that used on letters. Finally, the wrapper showing GE-EN5 presents the latest usage of any NYFM cancel under consideration except of the above mentioned 2c brown of 1883.

It remains to discuss TR-W13 which again presents a family of different cancelling devices. The 1879 usage is the latest known but since I have not seen the wrapper usage of 1876 it cannot be said whether a cancelling device has been used on the wrapper that has been used for letters at the same time.

For three designs only an undated printed matter usage is known. Since the cover with TR-G30 (Figure 7) belongs to the above mentioned correspondence it was used probably in 1876 or 1877. Moreover, it is a postal stationery envelope of the Plimpton issue of 1874 issued after TR-G30 was used on letters. Therefore, the printed matter usage again presents the latest use of TR-G30.

In summary, the foreign printed matter covers of the second group of cancels show mainly very late usages of the respective family of cancels. At least some of the traditional cancels have been applied by special devices that were not used for letters and fall under the category of NYFCM cancels.

As stated above the domestic usages of Table 1 are circular usages. One might ask at this point about the other domestic covers with NYFM known to Weiss [10] and Valenti [5]. Besides the letter usage of TR-C1 there are

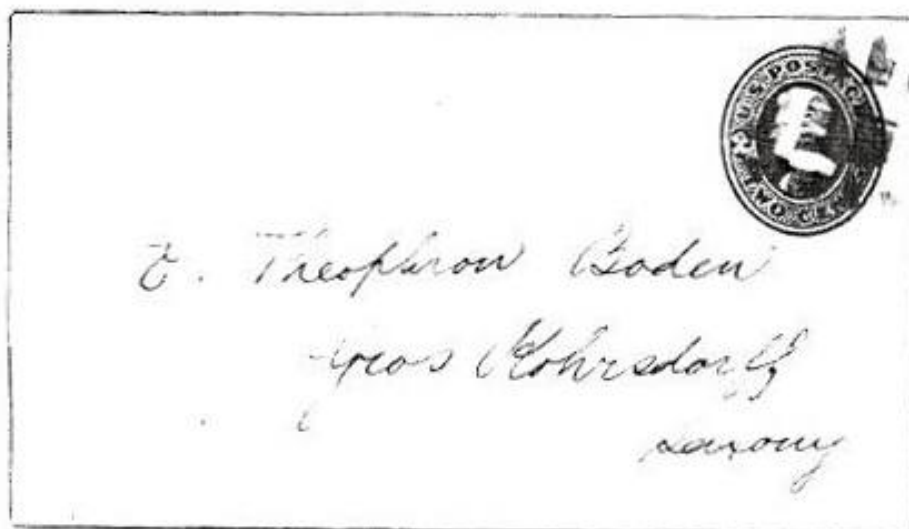


Figure 7: So far unrecorded traditional grid cancel (TR-G30) on postal stationery cover (U142, UPSS 324) to Saxony, Germany (undated).

domestic covers with cancels ST-8P11, GE-EN6 and ST-8P10, which I have not seen on foreign printed matter and, therefore, are not displayed here.

The cancel ST-8P11 seems to present an exception. It is found on numerous foreign covers, on three local covers duplexed with a postmark and on several domestic printed matter covers concurrent with the use on foreign letters. I have no explanation for the use of ST-8P11.

The situation with the other two cancels, GE-EN6 and ST-8P10, which are known on domestic mail, is different. ST-8P10 is common on foreign mail until 04/10/75 and there are several undated domestic lc covers. GE-EN6 is known on nine foreign letters until 11/24/74, on a circular with no postmark but dated 12/74 and on an undated circular. These facts put the two cancels in a special position and it would be very interesting to find more dated circular usages to domestic and perhaps also foreign destinations.

Conclusion

The expanded NYFM printed matter census helped to demonstrate that the period of NYCM cancels that were used for domestic and foreign printed matter seems to end prior to the establishment of the GPU and prior to the move of the New York City Post Office to the City Hall Park building. NYCM cancels do not appear on letter mail.

Most of the NYFM cancels that occur on printed matter after mid 1875 are neither seen on domestic circulars nor on foreign letters. New York Foreign Circular Mail (NYFCM) cancels may be a proper term for this subgroup of NYFM killers. On some printed matter covers, strikes of NYFM cancels appear after the period when they occur on letters.

Three covers possibly do not fit into this picture of printed matter usages. They show the cancels GE-EP3, TR-W1F (red) and TR-W13. These cancels are from design families that are not fully analyzed and, therefore, it cannot be excluded that they appear also on letters.

Certainly, NYFM printed matter covers exist that are not included in this discussion. I would be grateful if readers could provide information about additional covers, in particular if the covers contradict the conclusions of this discussion. The author can be contacted by email (Alexander.Gundel@DLR.DE) or by mail (Mainzer Str. 76, 50678 Cologne, Germany).

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