

Vol. 26 No. 3

Autumn
1983

THE ANGLO-BOER WAR
PHILATELIST



 *
 * MAFEKING CANCEL ERRORS *
 *
 * by Frederick Lawrence *
 *

Introduction.

Although the Mafeking siege post operated under wartime conditions, there were surprisingly few errors committed in the cancellation of the siege stamps, especially if one excludes the obvious "favor" cancels, such as FE 30 (known on a small Baden-Powell head photographic stamp). However in April 1900, at least three recognizable errors were committed, of two types: missing digits and inverted digits. Part 1 deals with the missing digit error. Part 2 considers the ~~two~~ inverted digit errors. This article represents over two years' research to understand exactly what these errors are.

Part 1. The missing digit error.

This error was first reported by S. G. Rich, writing in his book, "Philately of the Anglo-Boer War." He illustrated a cover from his collection franked with an upper right corner block of four of the small Baden-Powell head photographic stamp, tied by three strikes of an AP 1 Mafeking circular date stamp, addressed to Bulawayo. (Plate 1). This cover has an April 25, 1900 Bulawayo (Rhodesia) double circular arc (DCA) backstamp. Rich described the cancel error as follows:

... On at least one date in April, between April 10 and April 19, one of the figures of the day of the month failed to print, thus giving "April 1" dates ... The "April 1" reading for April 10 to 19 has been ascribed to the second figure falling out...this assumption cannot be allowed without definite evidence.

That April 1 is a cancel error is obvious, since the photographic stamps were not issued until April 7⁶, and following dates. Although it has been a widely held view that the error was caused by the second digit either falling out or failing to print, this is not supported by an examination of the construction of the Mafeking circular date stamps. The AP 11 cancel shows the right-most possible position of the leading digit "1" in a two-digit day between 10 and 19. Schematics of both this AP 11 cancel and the error cancel are shown in Plate 1.

Thus, the AP 1 error cancel appears to have resulted not from the lack of an impression of a second digit once in the cancelling device, but rather from one which was never present. The missing digit error occurred because 11 was initially misse~~d~~_t as 1.

Cont./

Mafeking Cancel Errors Cont./

The error must soon have been recognized and corrected, as examples of the error are scarce. Only one other is reported, tying a single cyclist stamp with full bottom margin to a local cover (Plate 1). Other examples probably exist, especially on or off piece, but have not yet been recognized or reported. *As of 1992, three examples are reported.*

PART 2 The inverted digit errors.

This second part deals with the admittedly more spectacular inverted digit errors. *One* such error *is* known: AP 6, with "6" inverted, for AP 9, and AP 13 with "3" inverted. *Two one* of these *is* two errors combined, only a total of *three* examples are recorded to date. *on photographic stamps* So keep your eyes peeled, and good hunting!

not an error, but the earliest reported usage date.
AP 6, with "6" inverted, for AP 9.

Additional research subsequently showed that AP 6 is genuine for that date. It cannot be an inverted 9; All AP 6's are Type II 6/9's; all AP 9's are Type I 6/9's.
~~The first of the Mafeking cancel errors to appear during the use of the local, photographic stamps was committed April 9th, just one working day of the siege post after the issue of the small Baden-Powell head stamp, April 7th (April 8th was a Sunday). On April 9th, the "6/9" digit was accidentally inserted upside down in the "MAFEKING C.G.H." circular date stamp, resulting in impressions AP 6, with "6" inverted, for AP 9, before the error was noticed and corrected. Of course, on any other Mafeking stamp except the small Baden-Powell head stamp, this error would be difficult to recognize, since April 6th was a day of operation of the siege post. Plate 2, fig. 1 exhibits the only example recorded to date. Until just recently, with the conclusion of the research reported here, there has been doubt as to the exact nature of this error. At least one expertization committee believed that the explanation lay in the type of "6/9" digit. However, this is not the case. There were at least two "6/9" slugs available for the Mafeking canceller, and both types appear as both "6"s and "9"s. These two types are illustrated in Plate 1; one type has a smooth shank (arbitrarily labeled type I), while the other has a sharp crook at the end of its shank (type II).~~

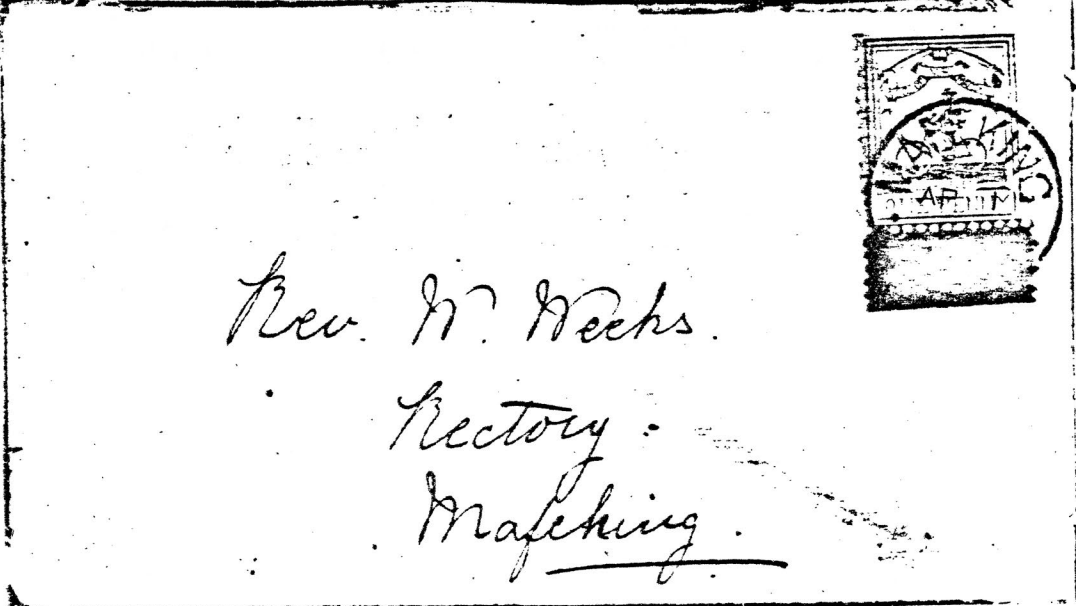
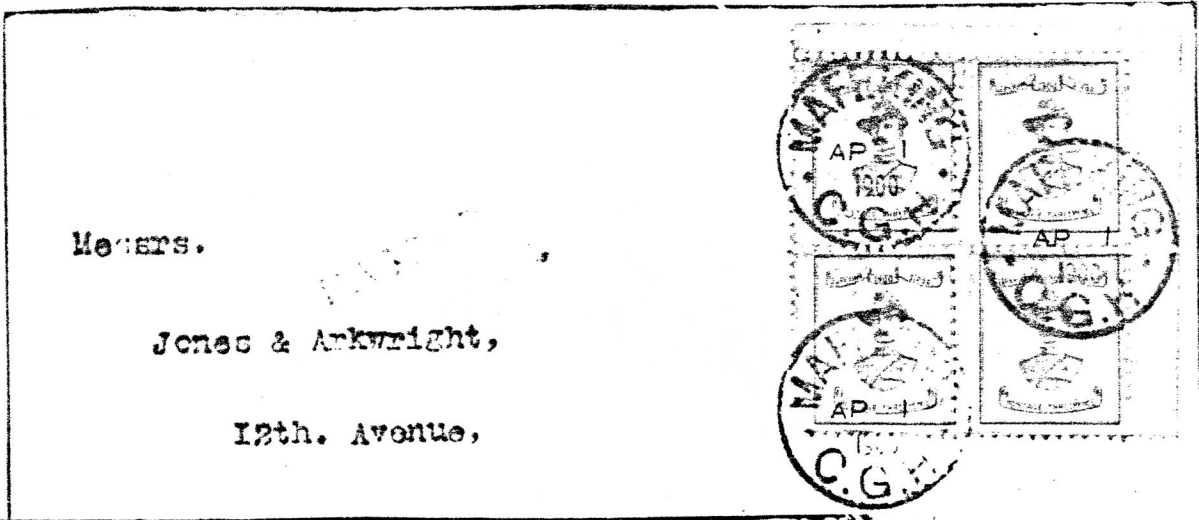
As of 1992, three examples are reported.

Rather, the key to understanding this ~~error~~ *cancel date* is a study of the inter-spacing between AP and the digits of the cancel, just as was the case in the explanation of the AP 1, for AP 11, "missing digit" error. The inter-spacings for AP 6, AP 9, AP 16 and AP 26 are shown in Plate 1. Examples of these dates are given in Plate 2, figures 2 to 5.

With an inter-spacing of 4mm, the AP 6 ~~error is an inverted "6", for AP 9,~~ *is a genuine cancel for that date, the earliest reported usage.* not a "missing digit" error, for either AP 16 or AP 26. How many other AP 6 cancels on siege overprint stamps ~~were actually errors, we can only guess. It takes a photographic stamp to show off the error unquestionably!~~ *exist today*

AP 13, with "3" inverted.

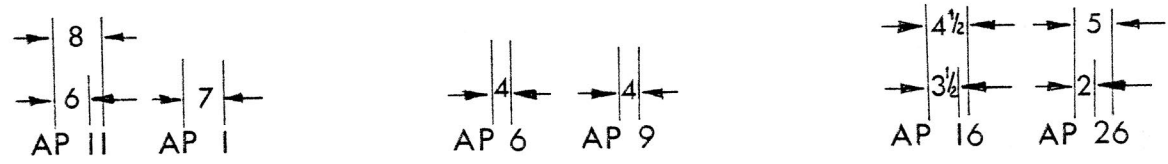
The last Mafeking cancel error was committed on April 13th, when the "3" digit was inserted upside down. The resulting inverted "3" error is easily recognized. Plate 2 exhibits ~~the two~~ *one* spectacular, on-cover, recorded examples. Quite a way to end our tour of the Mafeking cancel errors, wouldn't you admit?!



The AP I error of cancellation
 o On cover to Bulawayo
 o On local cover (within Mafeking)

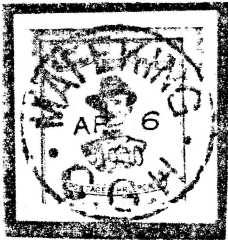
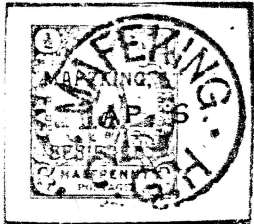

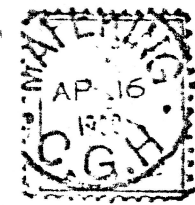

6 Type I 6 Type II

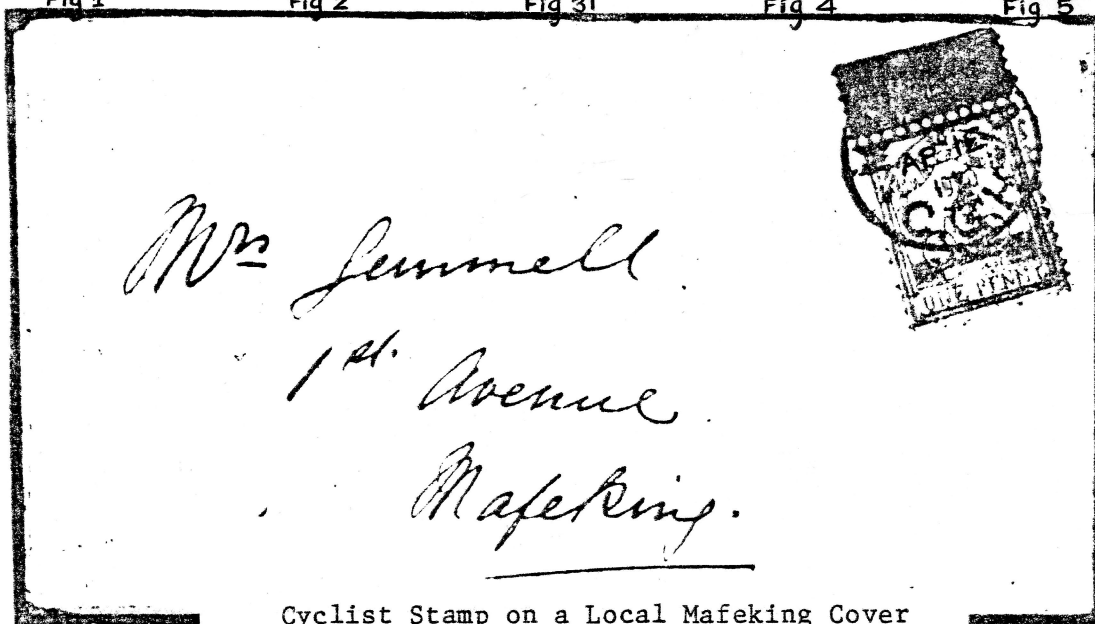
Illustrating the two different types of numeral '6'



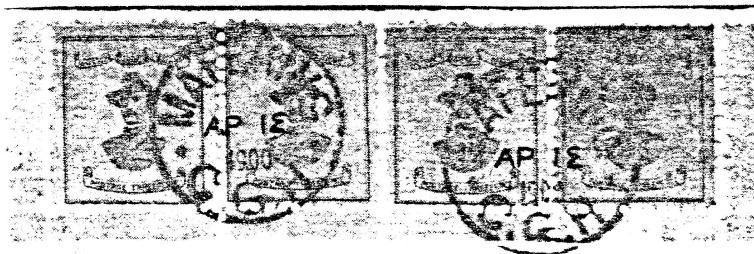
Illustrating the interspacings (millimetres) between AP and the digits 1 and 11, 6 and 9, 16 and 26

THE MAFEKING CANCELLATION ERRORS


				
AP 6	AP 6	AP 9	AP 16	AP 26
4mm separation 6 inverted, for AP 9.	4 mm separation	4 mm separation	3.5mm/4.5mm separations	2mm/5mm separations
Type II 6/9. Earliest reported usage.	Type II 6/9	Type I 6/9	Type I 6/9	Type II 6/9
	J. Adams	ex Maxwell- Joseph	ex Holland	ex Holland
Fig 1	Fig 2	Fig 3	Fig 4	Fig 5



Cyclist Stamp on a Local Mafeking Cover
AP 13 with 3 inverted
(W Grob-Sigrist's collection)



"3"
INVERTED
IN
CANCEL

851  3p blue on blue, small size, B marginal strip of 4, very fine, tied by perfect strikes of Mafeking, Apr. 13 ("3" inverted) 1900 C. G. H. town canc. on neat cover, to Bulawayo, Rhodesia, also bearing Passed Press censor in purple and backstamped, an attractive topical piece of great rarity (Photo) (179)

AP 13 with 3 inverted
(from a 9 March 1965 auction catalogue)

Vol. 27 No. 1

Spring
1984

THE ANGLO-BOER WAR
PHILATELIST



MORE ON THE MAFEKING CANCELS

By Frederick P. Lawrence

.....

Mafeking Cancel Errors - An Update.

My original article, "Mafeking Cancel Errors", which appeared in the ABWP, Vol. 26, No. 3, Autumn 1983, contained two inadvertent errors.

(1) On pg. 55, in the last line of the text, the word "misset" was mistyped as "missed", slightly altering my intended meaning.

(2) More seriously, in "Part 2, The inverted digit errors", I erroneously stated that there exist two genuine, on cover, recorded examples of the error cancel, AP 13, with "3" inverted. Illustrated in Plate 2 was a cover presently in the collection of W. Grob-Sigrist, with one strike of the error cancel, tying a cyclist stamp with full top margin to a local cover, addressed "Mrs Semmell, 1st Avenue, Mafeking". Following publication of a similar illustration in the Scout Stamp Collectors Club Bulletin, November/December 1983, I was advised by Mr. Sheldon S. Levy of New York, NY, a long-time Scouts on stamps collector and recognized expert in the Mafeking photographic stamps, that while the cyclist stamp on this cover may well be genuine, the "MAFEKING C.G.H." cancel is most certainly a fake. (Editor's note: Mr. Levy has recently joined the ABWPS, and we look forward to his further contributions concerning the Mafeking photographic stamps, to complement Frederick's research.) He points out two aspects of the cancel which do not compare favorably with genuine examples: (1) the vertical members of the letters M of MAFEKING and H of C.G.H. are parallel, whereas in the genuine cancel, these members are inclined towards each other, and (2) the letters and digits AP 13, with "3" inverted, of the date are too large. These features of the fake error cancel can easily be seen in comparison with the only recorded genuine example of the error cancel, tying a bottom margin strip of four of the small Baden-Powell head stamp on cover, out-of-Mafeking, to Bulawayo, Rhodesia, as illustrated in a March 9, 1965 auction catalogue (and in Plate 2). Both the cover with the fake error cancel and the genuine example are again illustrated in Plate 1. Members should be alert to other examples of fake Mafeking cancels, especially as they may purport to be one of the Mafeking error cancels: AP 6, with "6" inverted, for AP 9; AP 1 "missing digit" for AP 11; and, AP 13, with "3" inverted.

Out-of-Mafeking Usages.

Although the 3d Baden-Powell head photographic stamps, small and large formats, were originally intended only for local use, between Mafeking and the defensive forts, because of the emergency conditions under which the siege post operated, a few covers sent out of Mafeking, carried by

/cont.

More on the Mafeking Cancels Cont./

native runners, were franked with these stamps. (For an excellent discussion of the ~~siege~~ post, see "The Status of the Mafeking Siege Stamps" by Dr. K. Freund, in the South African Philatelist, beginning December 1947, especially Chapters 1, 7, 2, concerning "local" and "abroad service" and arrangements with the runners). Writing in the South African Philatelist, March 1978, in his article "The Mafeking Blues", Robert Goldblatt, FRPSL stated:

Although the 3d Baden-Powell Stamp was intended only for local use, covers sent via the Northern and Southern routes have on very rare occasions been franked with local stamps. It is not clear whether these were accidentally allowed through the Post Office, or whether the authorities occasionally shut their eyes to the usage of these stamps in this manner. Such covers are, however very rare. (pg 76).

In fact, only three examples are recorded to date. And, amazingly two examples involve Mafeking error cancels and have already been presented in this discussion. Taken chronologically, the three out-of-Mafeking usages of the Baden-Powell head photographic stamps are these.

(1) An upper right full margin corner block of four of the small format stamp, tied by three strikes of the AP 1 "missing digit" for AP 11 error cancel, on cover, to Bulawayo, Rhodesia, with "Passed Press Censor" in purple. Ex-The Earl of Crawford, this cover was also in the collection of S. G. Rich. Writing about it in his monograph "Philately of the Anglo-Boer War", he stated:

The 3d stamp was intended for local use only, on mail from the town to the outlying forts and vice versa. But it was used occasionally for outgoing mail, as on the cover shown ⁱⁿ illustration 3-6. (Plate 1). Covers of the 3d locally used are definitely had to get; and those with it used on outgoing mail are real rarities. The cover here shown is definitely regular business mail and not "philatelic". (pg 53). (Editors Note: This cover appears to be the one used by Stephen Rich in his book "Philately of the Anglo-Boer War" pages 52 & 214).

A full colour photograph of this spectacular cover may be seen on the front cover of the October 27-30, 1981 Scott Auction Galleries catalogue of Anglo-Boer War and British Commonwealth, which featured the bulk of Rich's collection. (see "A Twenty Pipe and More Problem", by the Editor, The ABWP Vol. 25, No. 3, Autumn 1982, pp 71-73).

(2) A bottom margin strip of four of the small format stamp, tied by two strikes of the AP 13, with "3" inverted, error cancel, on the cover, to Bulawayo, Rhodesia, with "Passed Press Censor" in purple. This is the only genuine example of the inverted "3" error cancel, as previously discussed. (Plate 1). Since its sale in a March 9, 1965 auction, its location has been unknown. It also has a backstamp, presumably a Bulawayo DCA.

Cont./

As of 1992, a fourth cover is reported, but not verified.

More on the Mafeking Cancels Cont./

(3) A vertical pair with bottom margin of the large format stamp, with a "6d. MAFEKING BESIEGED" overprint on 3d. stamp (SG 10), tied by three strikes of the AP 18 1900 cancel, on cover, to Bulawayo, Rhodesia, with "Passed Press Censor" in purple, and "1/JHP" checking mark in blue pencil. (Editor's note: note: Mafeking mail checking marks will be the subject of Frederick's next article). (Plate 1). A full colour photograph of this spectacular cover may be seen on the back cover of the October 28-29, 1982 Sotheby's catalogue of the collection of Sir Maxwell Joseph. It has a 26 AP 1900 Bulawayo DCA backstamp.

Each of these covers is franked with 12d. = 1s., the rate per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. for letters to the United Kingdom, Cape Colony and Natal, and Rhodesia, via the North (Freund, op cit, July, 1984, pg 120). And, of course, each is addressed to Bulawayo, Rhodesia. While other as yet unrecognized and unrecorded examples may exist to other locations out-of-Mafeking, I very much doubt it. Since the operation of the Mafeking Siege Post in 1900, only these three out-of-Mafeking covers bearing the 3d. photographic stamps have been reported. But keep looking!

.....

Out-of-Mafeking usage
(with "AP 13" cancel, "3" inverted)



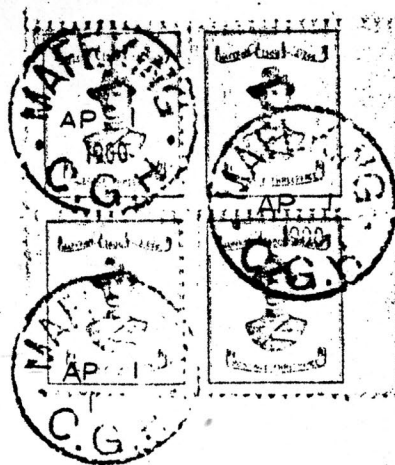
Out-of Mafeking usage
(with "AP 1 missing digit" for "AP 11")

Members.

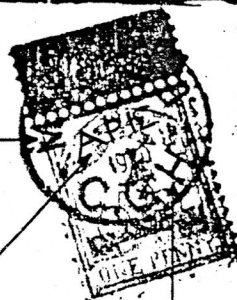
PASSED
PRESS CENSOR

Jones & Arkwright,

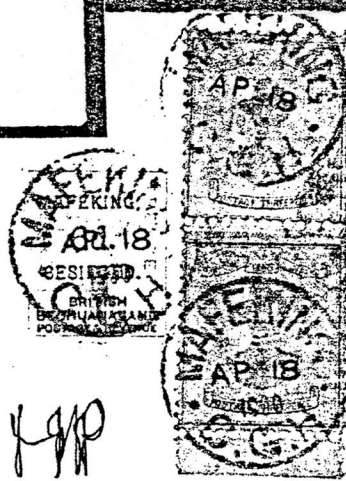
12th. Avenue,



Genuine stamp, fake cancel



Mrs. Lemmell
1st. Avenue
Mafeking.



YAP

Shodonia

Out-of-Mafeking usage
(with mail-checking mark)

MORE ON THE MAFEEKING CANCELS
(see Frederick Lawrence's article)