

# AMERICAN PHILATELIST

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## GOVERNESS TO ROYALTY

# Different Aspects of Appropriate Cancels

Last month's column discussed the collecting of what I loosely term "appropriate cancels"; that is, those cancellations — either on stamp or on cover — that bear some close concordance to the stamp subject. As with most types of collections you can make the search for these items as simple or complex as you wish.

Such stamps and covers are frequently found in mixtures, large lots, dealer junk boxes, or even gracing your incoming mail. They frequently cost very little to obtain, but many are highly challenging to locate. At the very least, finding appropriately canceled stamps and covers challenges your observation skills. Such items greatly enhance existing standard, specialized, or topical collections, and can even form the basis of an entire collecting area.

Of course, in the more than twenty years I've been collecting these items, it has occurred to me that there are some fantastic opportunities to *create* these items, in addition to the excitement of *finding* them.

This month I'll describe a few of the different types of more complex or difficult types of stamp and cancel concordances to collect and will feature a couple I have found particularly rewarding.

I'll start off with stamps representing one of my favorite collecting areas — humorous cancels. The stamps, pictured to the right, show the occasional somewhat humorous aspects of collecting appropriate cancels. Both were found by chance in "on paper" mixtures.

Although the Boy Scout stamp would not pass the numeral concordance test, in that the "3" cancel does not match the denomination, all is not

lost. The Scout is, after all, holding up three fingers. And, of course, the *Starship Enterprise* pictorial cancel from a USPS National Stamp Collecting Month die hub is perfectly appropriate and at home on the Venus stamp showing the *Mariner 2* vessel.

There also are postal history aspects to a stamp and cancel concordance collection. The photographically cropped commercial covers shown bear self-adhesive stamps that were canceled in 1992 and 1993 in Seattle, Washington.

Why are these cancels appropriate?

These early self-adhesive stamps, the so-called experimental 25-cent plastic Flag stamp of 1990 (Scott 2575), and the 29-cent Liberty Torch stamp of 1991 (Scott 2531A) were both specifically created for use in automatic teller machines. The dimensions of each pane are identical to those of a dollar bill, to

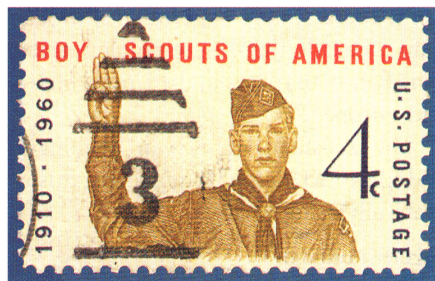
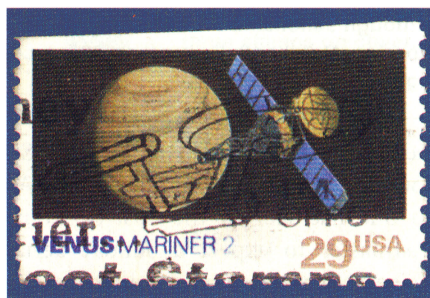
**Appropriate cancels are those cancellations — either on stamp or on cover — that bear some close concordance to the stamp subject.**

allow them to pass through the machines.

Because the use of stamps in ATMs was still quite experimental at the time these stamps were released (most were sold to collectors through the Philatelic Sales Division rather than to normal postal patrons), their official use was limited to a few ATM machines at First National Bank stations in Seattle, Washington. Thus, there can be no more appropriate cancel for early ATM-vended stamps than on covers originating from Seattle. These covers document the intended use of those stamps.

Perhaps the most difficult form of stamp/cancel concordance is that of a completely appropriate use. I've located only two covers over the years that fit that definition. Both are from 1954, and neither looks particularly impressive at first glance.

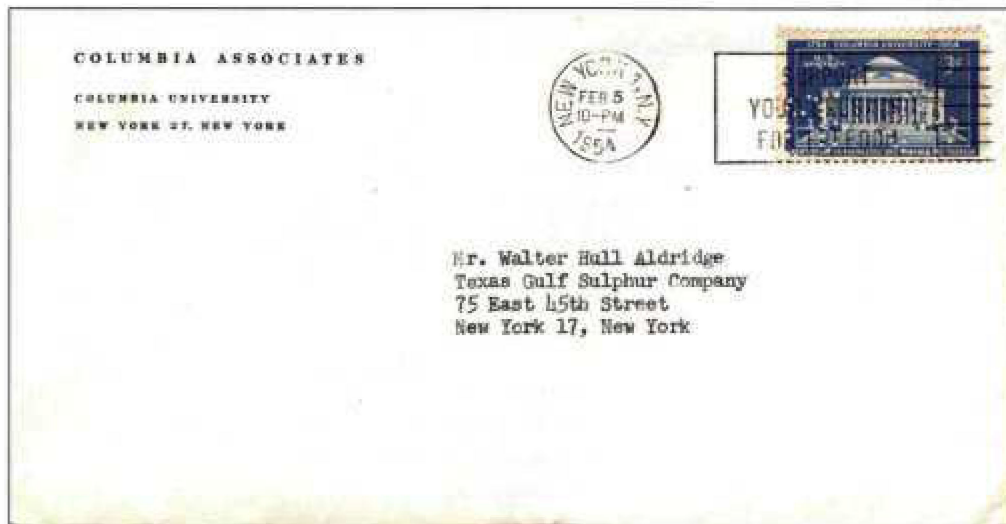
The first cover, postmarked in New York City, February 5, 1954, bears a 3-cent Columbia University bicentennial stamp (Scott 1029), released January 4, 1954. New York City is an appropriate cancel for the stamp, but what is particularly nice about this item is that it was mailed from Columbia University and the stamp even bears official Columbia University perforated initials.



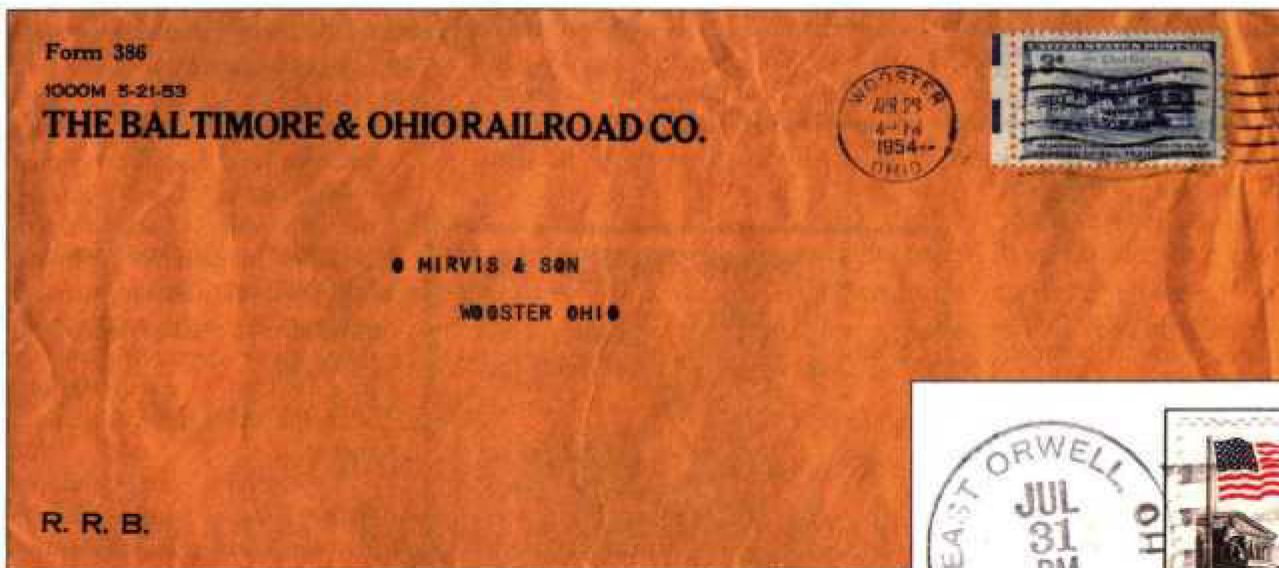
Examples of appropriately canceled stamps that have a humorous side.



These two photographically cropped covers illustrate the postal history aspect of this collecting area. Early ATM stamps were available for proper use in a few machines in the Seattle, Washington, area.



A near-perfect example of a stamp/cancel/use concordance. The Columbia University stamp (with a Columbia perfin) was used on outgoing commercial mail from the university.



A commercial cover from the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad bears the stamp that commemorates the company.



A self-contained cancel concordance that relates to the George Orwell novel, 1984.

Each bull's-eye cancellation on these stamps bears a connection to the stamp it obliterates.



The cancel on this stamp marks the 100th anniversary of the cancel depicted on the stamp.

Similarly, the second cover, postmarked April 28, 1954, from Wooster, Ohio, bears a 3-cent Baltimore & Ohio Railroad commemorative (Scott 1006). Although Wooster would certainly qualify as an appropriate cancel, the item is significant because it was commercial mail from the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.

An item caught my eye when I was sorting through a batch of cancels cut from commercial envelopes. Its connection is not quite as obvious at first glance, and it isn't a true stamp/cancel concordance, but it is a fun item, nonetheless. The cover piece bears a 20-cent booklet Flag stamp (Scott 1896) that was canceled in East Orwell, Ohio, July 31, 1984. The date and town name concordance immediately brought to mind George Orwell's modern classic novel, *1984*. Of course, any cancel from that town in 1984 would be appropriate.

Three stamps are shown with bull's-eye cancels, each appropriately canceled to a greater or lesser degree. The first of these is a 4-cent Father Flanagan stamp from the Great Americans series, canceled sometime in August 1986 in Boy's Town, Nebraska. The connection between Father Flanagan and Boy's Town is fairly obvious, but what about the other two?

The 4-cent New Mexico Statehood commemorative bears a January 6, 1966, bull's-eye cancel from Council Bluffs, Iowa. There doesn't

seem to be an obvious connection here, but one exists: January 6 is New Mexico's statehood date. It is much easier to catch the tie-in for the 5-cent Kennedy cancel. It was postmarked November 22, 1983, in Hastings, Nebraska — that's twenty years to the day after Kennedy's assassination.

Finally, I have to confess that although the bull's-eye canceled 22-cent stamp was contrived for my own amusement, still it ranks as one of my favorite items. It was just too good of an opportunity to pass up! The stamp is a booklet single from the 1986 22-cent Stamp Collecting booklet, released at APS headquarters January 23, 1986 (the exact date of the birth of my youngest son).

While I (and thousands of other collectors) created interesting first-day covers and objects to mark the occasion,



there was more fun to be had. The stamp design shows (blown up in Figure 8 from a mint example) an old cover and postmarking device. The postmark on the cover reads "South Trenton, N.Y. June 16, 1886." A quick search of the United States Postal Service's *ZIP Code Directory* for 1986 showed that the South Trenton, New York, post office no longer exists. However, I still wanted to mark the event, so I sent a few covers to the Trenton, New Jersey, philatelic center, franked with the appropriate stamp and a polite note, where they were canceled June 16, 1986 — exactly 100 years after the cover depicted on the stamp!

Whether they are found, purchased, or created, appropriate cancels can make up a fun part of virtually any collection.

An enlargement of the cancel that is part of the Stamp Collecting booklet stamp design.