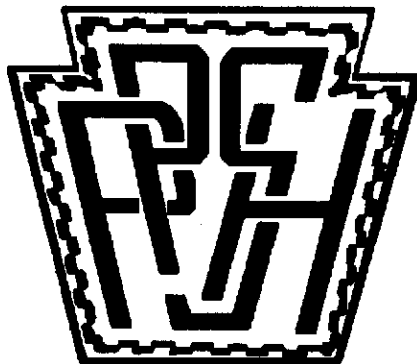


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Coronavirus Pandemic Issue IV

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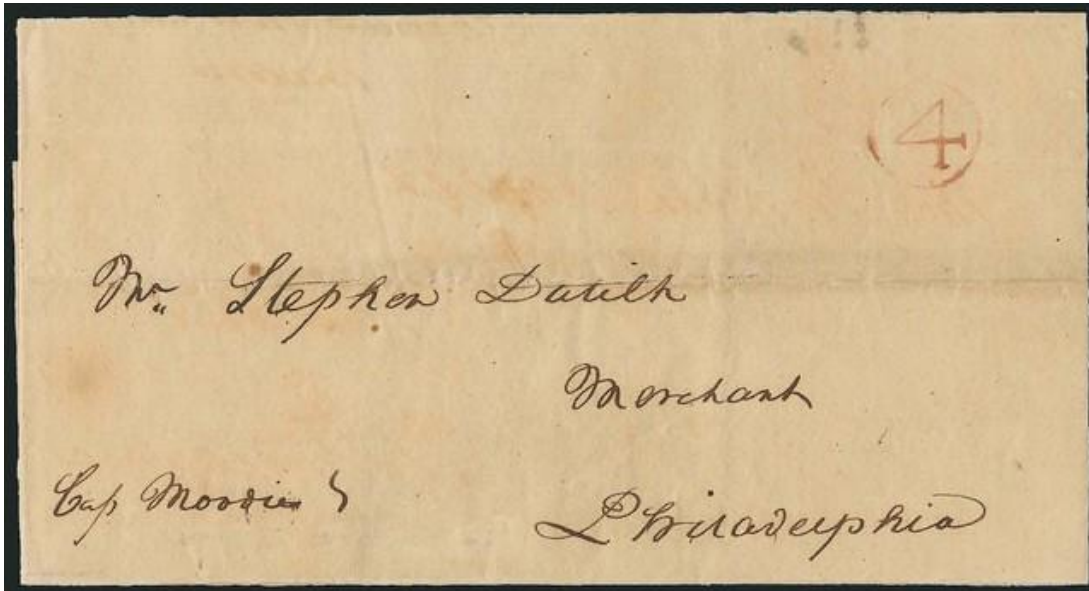
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An Even Later Use of the Philadelphia 4-in-Circle Ship Letter Marking

By Rick Leiby (# 379)

In the last issue of the *Historian* (Nov. 2020, p. 6), I showed what I believed to be the latest use by the Philadelphia Post Office of the 4-in-circle incoming ship letter marking. Subsequently, I was offered a later example which I purchased and which is shown below. Van Koppersmith brought the item to my attention indicating it was sold in the Siegel Sale 1051, lot #1059.



The cover is docketed Havana, March 30, 1799 and received on April 16. Thus there are currently six known examples of this Philadelphia marking, two in 1799!

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS continued from page 6:

I really enjoyed and I think you will too, Gus Spector's second article in this issue, entitled **A Whimsical All-Over All Over Cover**. It weaves together fun, philately and history in Gus's inimitable style. Unexpected in this article is a mid-19th Century classic Philadelphia advertised, dead letter.

In **Mail Delivery Difficulties in the 1900's**, Dan Telep describes some of the mail delivery problems encountered in the early 1900's and how they were handled. The sincere efforts to deliver mail by the USPS in an efficient and effective manner continued up until the recent cynical efforts to sabotage our postal system for political purposes.

(Continued on page 19)

The Eagle and The Swan

By Gus Spector (#396)

During the “classic” period of the mid-19th century the “cameo” method of printing advertisements on envelopes and billheads became extremely popular, and scores of printers and engravers rose to the task of creating ever more complex and variegated designs. The “cameo” design was named as such because of its resemblance to the “cameo” of jewelry, whereby three-dimensional patterns were produced by carving away portions of the white surface of a shell to create a cameo image in relief.¹

The printed cameo is produced by employing a metal die engraved with the design in reverse. The die is placed in a small hand-screw press with a leather counter-die faced with a coating of gutta-percha. Ink is then applied to the flat parts of the die’s design using a small printing roller. The design in relief is thus left uncolored.²

Cameos were produced either embossed (giving a three-dimensional or textured effect) or un-embossed. Obviously the former was more labor-intensive and costly, since the process was much more involved.

The flap-side view of a cover (Figure 1) shows an embossed cameo advertisement for Mulford, Reeves and Company, located at 247 Market Street. Mulford *et al* were wholesale (or commission) grocers, listed in McElroy’s *Philadelphia Directory for 1855* at that address.

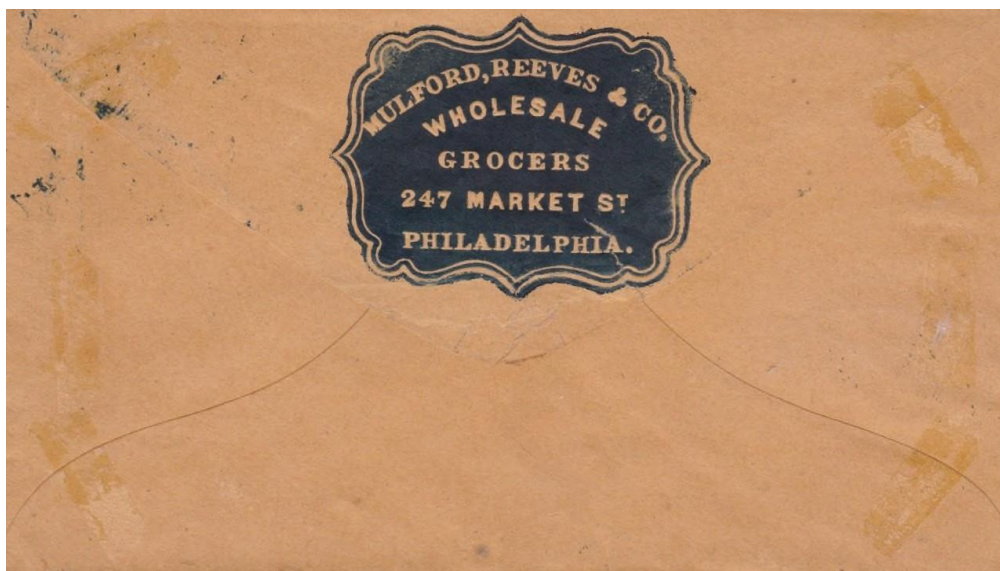


Figure 1

When the cover is flipped onto its obverse side (Figure 2), there is a second embossed cameo. This one, produced by T. B. Calvert, a prominent Philadelphia printer and designer of cameos, had been cut and pasted down onto the envelope as a corner card for the Eagle Hotel located on 3rd Street, between Race and Vine (Figure 3).



Figure 2



Figure 3

There were several “Eagle” hotels (as well as one named the “*Bald Eagle*”) listed in early Philadelphia directories. One such Eagle was located at 6th Street and Girard Avenue. Figure 4 shows a striking non-embossed cameo representation of that Eagle Hotel, bearing a 3c 1869 locomotive adhesive accompanied by a small diameter style 3-line Station D postmark.



Figure 4

However, the particular Eagle related to the cameo in Figures 2 and 3 referred to Isaac W. Webb’s Eagle Hotel on 3rd Street. The hotel’s exact Philadelphia address was 139 North 3rd Street (pre-1854 number) or 227 North 3rd Street (post-1854 consolidation of the City). Although the black city postmark is indistinct, the use of the imperforate 3c Washington adhesive dates it circa the mid 1850’s.

A small rather wordy newspaper clipping that accompanied the cover bore witness to the excellence of this Eagle’s hostelry:

The Subscriber has the pleasure of informing his friends and the public generally, that he has taken in the above named, well known and (deservedly) popular House, which he has fitted up with entirely new Furniture and Bedding, of a superior quality. The House has also been renovated and improved in a manner which will compare favorably with the first-class Hotels in the City, and cannot fail to give satisfaction to those who may patronize his establishment. His Table will always be supplied with the choicest and most wholesome Provisions the Market affords, and his Bar with the purest and best liquors. The Stabling belonging to this House is good and extensive, and will be supplied with the best provender, and attended by careful Hostlers. Nothing, in short, shall be left undone to make his guests comfortable, and he flatters himself, that by strict attention to business, he will merit and receive a liberal share of public encouragement.

Terms \$1 per day. CHAS. M. ALLMOND,
Proprietor.

N.B. John C. Rahn, formerly of the White Swan Hotel, has been engaged to assist the Proprietor in management of the House.

April 10, 1852

Prior to the Civil War, the Philadelphia hotel business was rather strange, in that proprietors and managers were known to “defect” from one establishment to another, perhaps thereby obtaining better, more financially secure positions. Hotel advertisements would frequently place the name of its executive management just below the name of the hotel. For instance, John Smith might be listed as manager of the “X” Hotel, *late* of the “Y” Hotel. Simply put, Mr. Smith was the current manager of “Hotel X”, having formerly been employed at “Hotel Y”. It would seem that certain proprietors or managers developed some degree of popularity -or notoriety- and that their clientele would follow them from one hotel to another.

Such was the above case with Mr. John C. Rahn, “formerly of the White Swan Hotel”, and more currently named assistant to the proprietor of the particular Eagle Hotel located on North 3rd Street. Mr. Rahn had figuratively *flown* from the Eagle to the Swan.

The cover seen in Figures 5 bears an imperforate 3c Washington adhesive with an indistinct Philadelphia postmark, also likely of mid 1850’s vintage, illustrating a highly detailed and ornate cameo advertisement (Figure 6) for I. H. Baldwin’s White Swan Hotel & General Stage Office, located at 108 Race Street near Third in Philadelphia, where Mr. Rahn subsequently became employed. An earlier McElroy’s *Philadelphia Directory for 1845* listed Jacob Peters & Son as owners of the White Swan, located at 106 Sassafrass Street³. (The street name “Sassafrass” was changed to “Race” in the mid-19th century.⁴)



Figure 5



Figure 6

Perusing through my album leaves and other references, I was able to formulate a further history of the above Eagle Hotel.

According to the broadside of Civil War vintage seen in Figure 7, the Eagle Hotel at one time had been named the “Revierie”. The Eagle boasted a capacity of 120 rooms, capable of accommodating over 200 guests. The cover in Figure 8, the image being the duplicate of that in Figure 7, bearing a 3c Washington adhesive and an 1863 postmark, reveals that the hotel had undergone a surprising name change, becoming Kunkle & Company’s Barnum Hotel. However, by the 1870’s the name had reverted back to its former Eagle Hotel. The hotel was in business in 1902 when the cover in Figure 9 was mailed, and was still listed in *Gopsill’s Philadelphia Business Directory for 1907*.



Figure 7



Figure 8

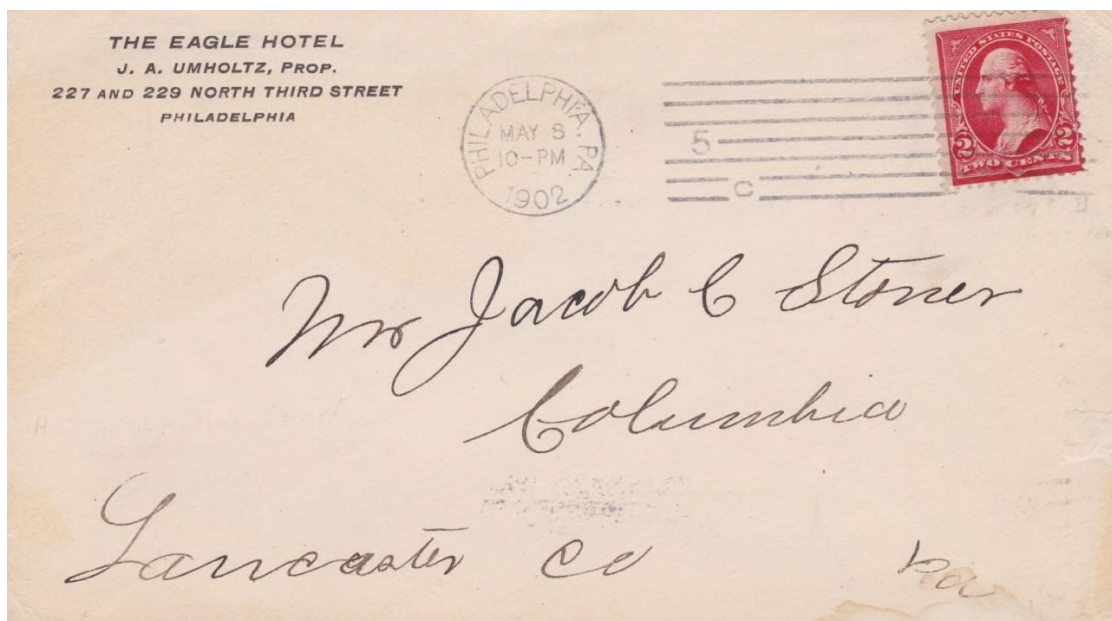


Figure 9

According to the website *Curbed Philadelphia* the actual date of the hotel building's demolition remains unknown.⁵ Currently, if one searches *Google Maps*, 227 North 3rd Street is sadly represented by a mere dot along the expanse of Interstate 676.

(P.S. The cover in Figure 10 was purchased by the author believing it to be a Philadelphia Eagle Hotel. However, upon closer scrutiny, this Eagle was actually nested in Philadelphia, New York!)

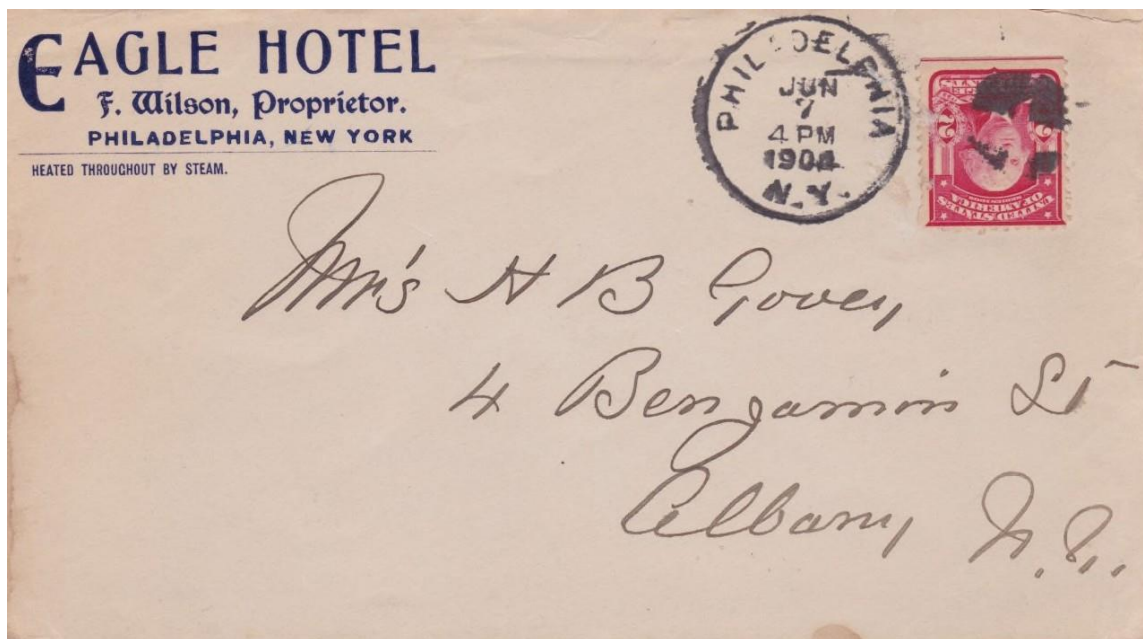


Figure 10

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- 4- Alotta, Robert I., *Mermaids, Monasteries, Cherokees and Custer, The Stories Behind Philadelphia Street Names*. Bonus Books, Inc., Chicago, Ill., 1990, p. 192.
- 5- Molly Webb, *The Definitive Guide to Philadelphia's Historic Hotels*, June 26, 2013, philly.curbed.com

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