



Online Stamp Program
Rochester Spray Marking and Cancellations
RPA Meetings and Club News • Milo of Croton
Wernersville, PA Precancel Hand Stamp
USPS Postal Rate Increase in July

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Learning About Stamps Online

by Tom Fortunato

For the past several months I have been working on an organizing committee of US and Canadian stamp collectors to create a new online stamp club.

It was the brainchild of Antone Aboud, a member of the Fort Orange Stamp Club of Albany, New York. He sent an initial email to APS stamp club contacts explaining his vision of forming an online group allowing collectors to meet and learn together.

Named "Learning About Stamps Online" (LASO for short), the mission statement of the new group is, "To provide an online forum for stamp collectors of all ages, skill levels and philatelic interests who have a passion to learn. Together members will share knowledge and resources to better appreciate, enjoy and promote the hobby." LASO is in the process of becoming an APS Online Chapter.

An hour long Zoom meeting is planned beginning in either June or July to be held on the third Thursday of each month from 8-9 PM Eastern. The format and topics are being finalized now, but a wide range of subjects is planned to be of interest to collectors of every level. So, too, is a web site expected to be online at <http://www.learningaboutstamps.org> around the time this edition of Hinges & Tongs is ready. Best of all, there is no cost to participate!

At this point interested collectors are urged to register at <https://tinyurl.com/3fmr697j>. Filling out the form will allow organizers to email updates and a link to each meeting along with Zoom instructions beforehand.

Come and explore this new philatelic group!

Rochester Spray Markings and Cancellations: A Research Project with a Request for Help

by Jerry Weirich

The following provides an early report of Rochester's inkjet spray marking and cancel history. These highlights are the result of a research project that is looking for additional contributors.

The first Rochester inkjet sprays were essentially auxiliary markings. The earliest known usage at Rochester is 6 February 1992 (Fig. 1).

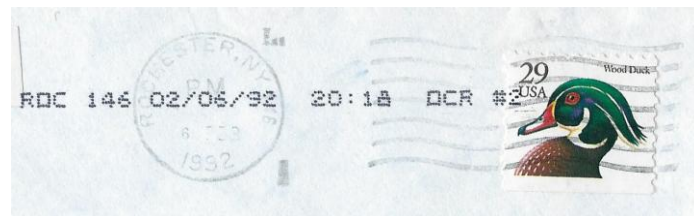


Fig. 1: Earliest known Rochester Spray Marking

Spray markings were not intended to cancel stamps but were used to date meter mail in an attempt to prevent and debunk stale mail. The USPS was being blamed for slow service but some mailers were back dating or holding their mail to make it appear that they had actually mailed letters before they did. These spray markings became quite prevalent on all types of mail and often can be found used with Die Hub cancelers which was the primary method for canceling stamps. Sometimes, the only markings on covers will be the spray marking and it actually cancels the stamps.

Rochester spray markings were quite short lived, being phased out of normal mail processing by the end of 1993 with an occasional spray marking seen in 1994 (Fig. 2). At about the same time, the USPS

continued on pages 4-6 (see Spray Markings)

Editor's Message

You will notice that this issue is short on contributions from our local members. Please take a moment this summer to send me a note about your current philatelic interest or maybe just an image of something you have just acquired or rediscovered in your collection that you think might interest others. The next newsletter will be better for it and you will make your editor's job easier!

Thank you to Jerry Weirich for his thorough and interesting article on Rochester spray markings. When you reach the end, you will see that Jerry is requesting our help in locating some missing spray cancels that might be hiding in our collections. If you do find any, perhaps you could copy me on your response to Jerry and we can print a follow-up note in the Fall issue of Hinges and Tongs.

Fred Haynes

RPA Meeting News



Unity-Village Community Center in Greece

The Unity Village Community Center is at 1477 Long Pond Road in Greece. Buy/sell/trade runs from 7:00-7:30 PM, followed by the formal meeting at 7:30 PM. A silent auction concludes most evening's program.

We have two more meetings in June before our normal summer break. But the fun will continue in the fall and you will notice that many of the remaining 2024 slots have been filled. But there is one slot open in December and several more in the early months of 2025. Think about when you would like to talk about one of your adventures with stamps.

2024

- June 13 1924 Paris Olympics- Milo of Croton: From Design to Use *by Tom Fortunato*
(more on Milo in the right column of this page)
- June 27 Uncovering Hidden Varieties: The Canadian Berry Stamps Saga
YouTube video *by Arnie Janson*

ENJOY YOUR SUMMER

We will meet again starting in September. Most of the fall meetings already have programs!

- Sept. 12 PUNderful Cover Cachets
by Kelly Armstrong
- Sept. 26 A Collecting Passion Spanning 70 Years
by Reinhard Danger
- Oct. 10 APS Stamp Chat: The USPS Stamp Decoder and Scrambled Indicia
YouTube video *by Henry Jehan*
- Oct. 24 Railroad Destination Cancellations (Part 2)
by Robert Lighthouse
- Nov. 14 Love for Sale: The Prostitute Stamps of Rosario, Argentina *by Tom Fortunato*
- Dec. 12 TBA

If you can't attend a meeting in person, join us via a Zoom connection using the following link and login details at 7:30 PM each meeting night, except for Everyone a Dealer night in January

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/7117955142?pwd=amR3Z1Z3L0d4bkJaNHdJUjBmbjFaQT09>,

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**1924 Paris Olympics –
Milo of Croton:
From Design to Use**

by Tom Fortunato
RPA Program: June 13

As we approach the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France, Tom Fortunato will look back at some Olympic history at our first June meeting. He will do this through a single stamp, issued by France to commemorate the Olympics of 1924, also held in Paris.

The stamp is one in a set of four and commemorates Milo of Croton, a wrestler from southern Italy, which was a Greek colony back some 2500 years ago when Milo won gold in six consecutive Olympiads.

The stamp is modeled after a sculpture in the Louvre Museum in Paris. Tom will discuss the design process for the stamp, the printing and production, and multiple variations (color, errors, and other oddities). Of course, he will show how the 30 centime stamp was used 100 years ago.

Precancel Hand Stamp Wernersville, PA



by
**Larry
Rausch**



A precancel is a stamp that is cancelled before being affixed to mail. This practice began as soon as stamps were first issued in 1847 as a time-saving for postmasters. For large mailings, it was a lot quicker and easier to cancel a sheet of stamps in advance than to cancel envelopes separately.

During the period of 1847 to 1912 precancel usage is referred to as "silent precancels" (Smith, 2016) as there is no reference to the town or state of origin. On May 26, 1903 the Post Office Department circular specified that precancels must have the name of the Post Office and State between two parallel dark lines be printed across the face of a stamp with production starting in 1913. This pattern, as depicted became the norm for the precanceled hand stamps that the US Postal Service supplied.



This Precancel Hand Stamp in the figure just above is from Wernersville, PA. It is configured in a five row by five column format and is approximately a 5" x 5" square. If the cancelling postmaster is attentive the

full name of the town will appear on each of the 25 stamps that are cancelled simultaneously. It is easy to see how so many stamps cancelled with a large hand stamp like this end up off centered. The pair in the title box are centered well enough that the full name of the town is on each stamp.

However, the two cent Washington stamp of the right deserves a closer look. An error occurred on the device as the letters RS were transposed on only one of the 25 towns at the location outlined in red on the figure in the lower left.



Wernersville, PA is located 10 miles west of Reading, PA. with a population of 2800 in 2020. Founded in the 1850's by brothers Thomas and William Werner, Wernersville passenger rail history began in June of 1857 with the Lebanon Valley Railroad (later to become the Reading Railroad) providing service. By the turn of the century this railway stop was servicing 17 daily passenger trains. One of the reasons for this high traffic was the South Mountain health resorts which drew visitors from all over the region.

References:

Smith, D. C., 2016, Silent Precancels: A Catalog of Lines, Bars, and Designs

US Precancel Stamp Society
<https://www.precancels.com>

June 17 (5 designs)



June 20 (12 designs)



Your last two chances to buy Forever stamps for 68 cents. See more on page 6.

Spray Markings (continued from page 1)

was requiring private mailers to use spray markings on the mail they pre-processed for the USPS. There is a myriad of private mailer markings, but these are not part of this research project which is focused on USPS operations.

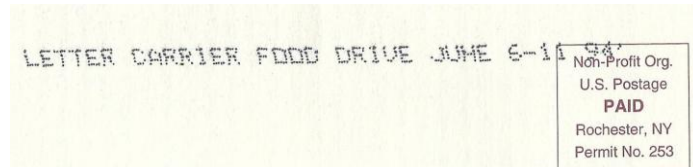


Fig. 2: Last known Rochester Spray Marking in 1994

After Rochester ceased spray markings, their use continued elsewhere into the 2000's even as experiments were taking place to replace the Die Hub cancelers. In late 2002, the Northern Virginia P&DC experimented with inkjet technology for canceling mail. In 2003 and 2004, St Louis and Orlando were experimenting with the technology. By 2005, the USPS made the decision to make inkjet spray technology the replacement for the Die Hub cancelers and proceeded to phase in the new technology from the east coast to the west coast. Rochester's last day of normal Die Hub operations was 11 October 2005 (Fig. 3) although there was periodic usage of the Die Hub cancels for years with the last one seen by this researcher being in 2013.

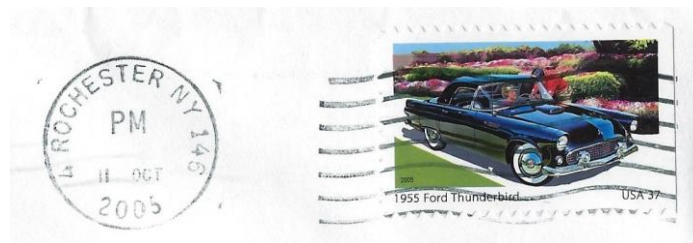


Fig. 3: Last Day of normal Rochester Die Hub canceling operations.

Rochester's first day for spray cancels was 12 October 2005 (Fig. 4). Subsequently, Rochester has deployed 40 different cancels (plus several more if cancel variations are taken in account). If a collector wants each different cancel collected by each machine, spray head designators, and the two different zip codes (146 and 144), then the total number of different cancels to collect is over 220. Quite honestly, the exact number is not known because we are still discovering new information as the research continues.

For example, how many collectors are aware that after many years of using only the "PM" time designator Rochester cancels were seen with "AM" in 2019? That detail is easily missed when focused

on cancel type, date, and machine number. How far back does this change go?

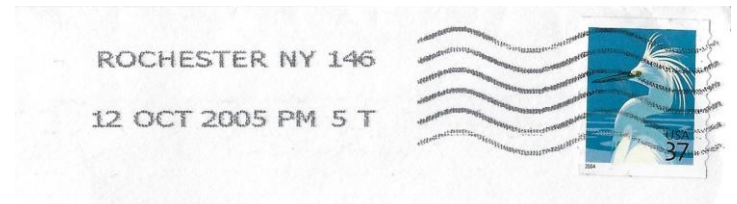


Fig. 4: First Day Usage of Rochester Spray Cancels.

The first Rochester spray cancels were produced on mail processing machines using two inkjet spray heads designated as Lead and Trail. This designation shows on the cancels as L or T to indicate which inkjet canceled the mail. The first cancel type was used to January 2006 when they were replaced by the 4-wave cancels (Fig. 5). The 4-wave cancel was used in normal operations until October 2006 and is common on all machines except #6 (only four copies seen on two days).



Fig. 5: Earliest Known Usage of Rochester 4-Wave

The first spray cancel resumed after the 4-wave cancels ended and then that cancel gave way for Rochester's first holiday spray cancel (Fig. 6).

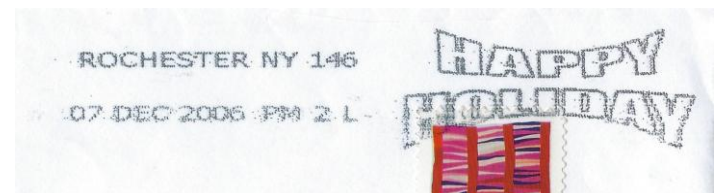


Fig. 6: Rochester's First Holiday Spray Cancel

After the first holiday spray cancel, all the machines again reverted to the original spray cancel and those continued until March 2007 when Rochester's first non-holiday special cancels were used. The "March is Red Cross Month" cancel was used exclusively on machine 1 (Fig. 7) while "March is Kidney Month" cancel was used exclusively on machine 2 (Fig. 8).

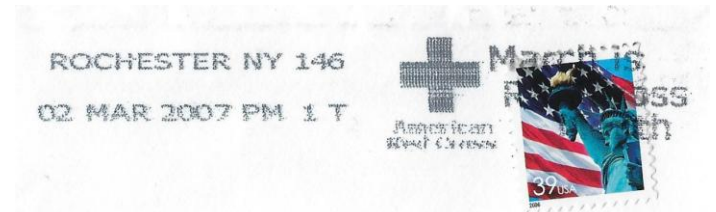


Fig. 7: March is Red Cross Month cancel

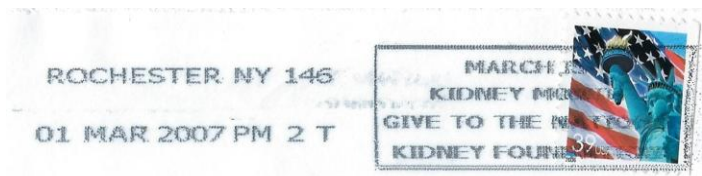


Fig. 8: March is Kidney Month cancel

After the first two special cancels, the original spray cancel returned on all machines except #1. On that machine, there was a rare reversion back to the 4-wave cancel (Fig. 9). While the 4-wave cancel is common, this out-of-period usage is scarce and was used for less than one week.

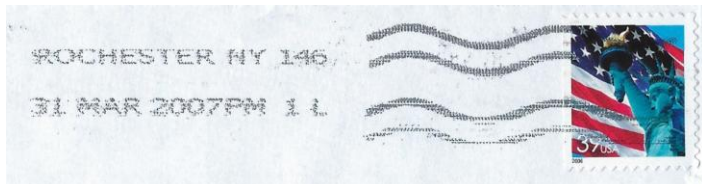


Fig. 9: Scarce Out-of-Period 4-Wave Usage

After that week, machine 1 then reverted to the original spray cancel and all machines used that cancel until mid-September 2007 when the first change of zip code from 146 to 144 was made (Fig. 10). Despite the change to zip 144, zip 146 continued to be used for one special and several holiday cancels through 2012 and a rare exception when machine 2 reverted back to the original spray cancel for some period of time in early 2012. Only a few covers have been seen so the full time period of use is unknown.

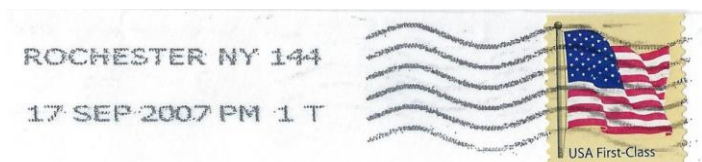


Fig. 10: Rochester changes to Zip 144

Rochester used the same holiday cancel in 2007 as in 2006. "John Adams" was the only special cancel in 2008 and the holiday cancel was once again the same one used on 2006. Year 2009 was relatively boring with only the Kermit holiday cancel being new. Year 2010 was a better year with three new special cancels and a new holiday cancel (Figs. 11, 12, 13, and 14). The special cancels from machine 6 appear scarce with only one cover seen with 2010 Census cancel and several covers seen with Missing Children cancel. No covers from machine 6 have been seen with Animal Rescue cancel. The holiday snowman cancel is particularly hard to find with a clear impression.

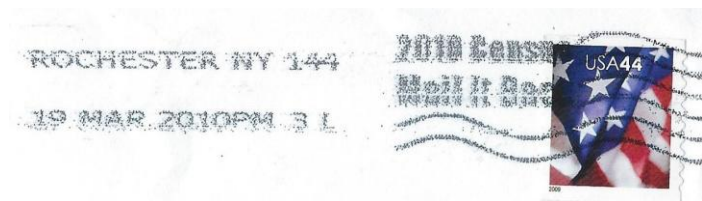


Fig. 11: 2010 Census

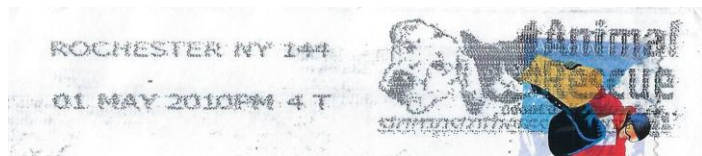


Fig. 12: Animal Rescue

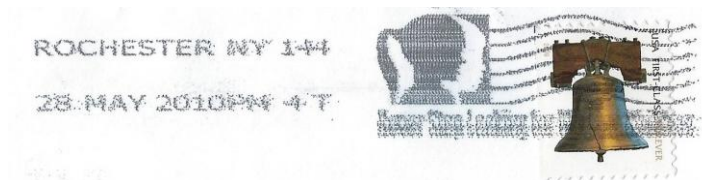


Fig. 13: Missing Children

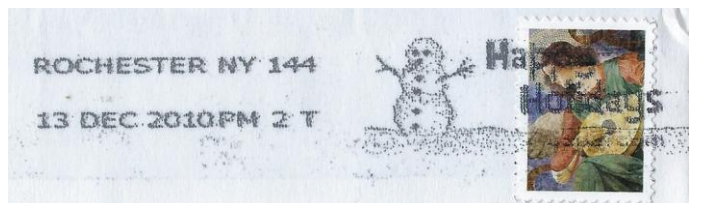


Fig. 14: Snowman with Happy Holidays

Year 2011 saw the "Sending Love" cancel and two different holiday cancels. Machines 1-4 used the Santa Sleigh cancel and machines 5-6 used the holiday cancel from 2006.

Year 2012 is probably one of the most interesting years for Rochester cancels (and many other mail processing facilities). The year saw four special cancels (Love Your Heart, Mother's Day, Just Dance (rare on machine 5, only one known copy), and the first of a series of Energy Awareness Month cancels) and one holiday cancel (sleigh from 2010) but with two varieties (Fig. 15).

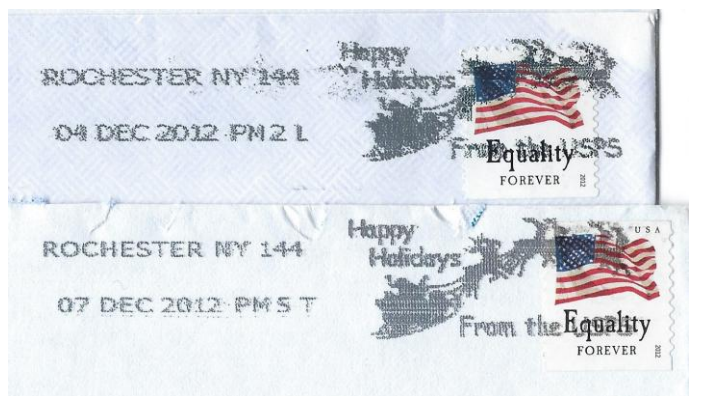


Fig. 15: Two varieties of the Rochester 2012 holiday cancel (0.5mm shorter font in text, slightly longer length of cancel on machine 5)

The most significant event, however, was the modification of machines 1-4 to remove the Trail inkjet leaving those machines with only one inkjet. Machine 5 continues with both inkjets, but appears to have been relegated to surge use and, with one rare exception, used mostly for holiday mail processing. Machine 6 appears to have been decommissioned because the last date seen is 7 June 2012. The year also saw rare out-of-period usages for the original 2005 6-wave cancel on machine 2 in January and May 2012 (Fig. 16) prior to the machine modifications. The full extent of usage is unknown because only 6 days have been seen.

Lastly, after the modifications were made on machines 1-4, a new 6-wave cancel was introduced with the top line "Rochester NY 144" measuring 44mm in length instead of the 48mm length used on all earlier wave cancels. The shorter length is seen on most of the special cancels. The new 6-wave cancel (Fig. 17) became Rochester's new primary cancel and remained that way until the machines were upgraded in 2020.

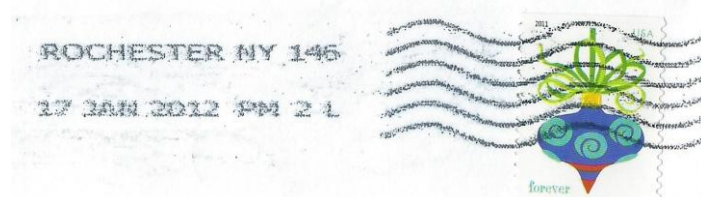


Fig. 16: Rare Out-of-Period usage of Original 2005 cancel in 2012



Fig. 17: New 44mm 6-Wave Cancel

Although significant research has been done on these cancels much more needs to be done. We still need to learn the earliest known usage dates for some cancels. Even more interesting may be finding more out-of-period usages because these may be some of the scarcer cancels. The research spreadsheets document what cancel is being sprayed by each machine for each day of the year and by Lead or Trail and PM or AM time. That means even the covers considered commonplace may help fill in a day for a machine.

The research has gotten even harder for the 2018-2024 because the volume of stamped mail has decreased significantly. After machine modifications in 2012, machine 5 usage drops dramatically and

appears to produce varieties from machine 1-4 cancels. These have not been completely explored. The spray markings research for the early 1990's is only just getting started and Rochester has some of the most inexplicable markings of any mail processing facility.

Your help is needed and the members of the Rochester Philatelic Association are the best-positioned collectors to have the material needed to make progress. If you can supply any information, share scans of your covers, or have questions, please contact Jerry Weirich (formerly of Spencerport) at jgpmj@aol.com. All contributors will be acknowledged and final results will be made available to the RPA. Thank you.

US Postal Rates Increasing

Expect to pay more for mailing a letter on July 14th. That's when the latest USPS postal rate increase takes affect for first-class (can it still be called that?) letters. The current of 68 cents will bounce a full nickel to 73 cents.

Of course, Forever stamps can still be used and will carry your standard letter no matter what the rate. Oh, the good old days when they were first introduced in 2007 costing only 41 cents!

You might not know how Canadian postal rates compare with ours. Canada Post's latest basic letter rate increase took place on May 6, but the cost depends on how you buy stamps. "Permanent" (their version of Forever) stamps sold in booklets, panes or whole coils are cheaper than buying individual ones. One at a time purchases went from \$1.07 to \$1.15 each, whereas they now cost 99 cents when bought in a book or sheet. These rates are in Canadian dollars, with \$1 Canadian exchanging at 73 cents in US currency.

Both postal administrations are suffering continuing yearly deficits. Canada Post reported a loss of \$748 million (in Canadian \$) for 2023. USPS reported a \$6.5 billion dollar loss in fiscal 2023.



Stamps like this Hank Aaron Forever issue to be released on July 31st in Atlanta will cost you an extra nickel.