

Linear Postcancels on United States Postage of 1908, until discontinuation of the use of the devices.

THE WESTERN HALF

This first printing, of this region, is just that. It isn't complete. It isn't the whole country. It is the culmination of decades of interest in saving the story of iconic American cancels on parcel post. Those packages you used to get, wrapped in brown paper with a bunch of different stamps, and high values you didn't see on letters. Largely ripped off and thrown away, the paper seemed of little value. But a lot of people couldn't resist saving the stamps. Thus we have the raw material.



All the *clearest* cancels, neatly printed in straight lines on each stamp were the easy favorites, like the Bureaus, above left, or the Locals, above right. We enjoy having a Precancel Stamp Society, and catalogs of those cancels we call precancels, applied *before* the stamps were affixed.



Focusing on the readable town and state names in the cancels, there was another reason to put some of them aside. They weren't as readable, and the names didn't fit on a stamp, except maybe on a commemorative, if it was done as a favor. This publication is the first edition of a catalog of the package cancels that were applied *after* the stamps were affixed, or postcancels, if you will. Actually, this is a study of *only* the linear text devices, like the CROCKETT / CALIF box cancel on the postage dues, at left.

The other package handstamp on the piece, a dated, duplex cancel, is not included in this study.



There were other circular, dated handstamps used to cancel packages, like the one at left. During the same time period, double-oval, undated handstamps were used for similar duty, like the one at right. They are not included here, either. It will be interesting to have catalogs of those, as well; and then to be able to see who used what.

Aiding basically in this study were all the precancel collectors, past and present, who couldn't resist these *other* cancels with towns and states. This catalog is for you, and represents your saving them. It is a grass-roots study. There is no record of the distribution of the devices. Many more remain to be found and listed. It would be impossible to list all contributors to this effort, but it would be remiss not to mention a few.

The late Bob Fifield made an organized effort to accumulate and study postcancels on index cards, with the help of many collectors, as in the example below.



His work lives on in this catalog.

Bill Cummings, similarly, made a generous effort to include many linear postcancel examples, from many collectors, in his popular compendium of "cancels which look like precancels". He shows good illustrations of many of the types in this catalog, but generally only if the name of the town *could* fit on a stamp, like a precancel, like the ADRIAN / MICH. above.

The sharp eyes and instincts of Bruce Brunell, Phil Cayford, Dave Smith and Matt Stephenson are responsible for channeling a lot of the material to this study; and they have each been very supportive. Likewise, Jim Callis and Ralph Kimball have been instrumental in lending expertise to the effort. And then there are the collectors. Some are more avid than others, but it seems almost everybody should be named. The study is enriched by such a great group.