

## **COLLECTING PRECANCELLED ENVELOPES**

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As a young collector I was fascinated with US postal cards and invested part of my allowance in two of each card issued. Later, I discovered precancelled stamps and accumulated them with hopes of learning more. Without a mentor, identifying the many poorly printed precancels was a daunting task. Eventually my interest shifted to stamped envelopes. Precancelled stamped envelopes are a wonderful combination of both my interest in precancels and in stamped envelopes (and an added plus in that the precancel on an envelope is much easier to read).

Like precancelled stamps we have both the precancel, the underlying stamp image and the envelope characteristics to consider. Precancelled envelopes as cut squares are useful but akin to trimming the perfs off and ironing out the watermarks on adhesive stamps. The entire envelope tells us a much more complete story and if that envelope also includes a corner card, a very complete story.

The search for unlisted varieties and even better, the discovery of a previously unlisted town adds spice to this collecting specialty.