



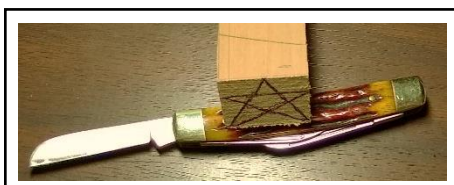
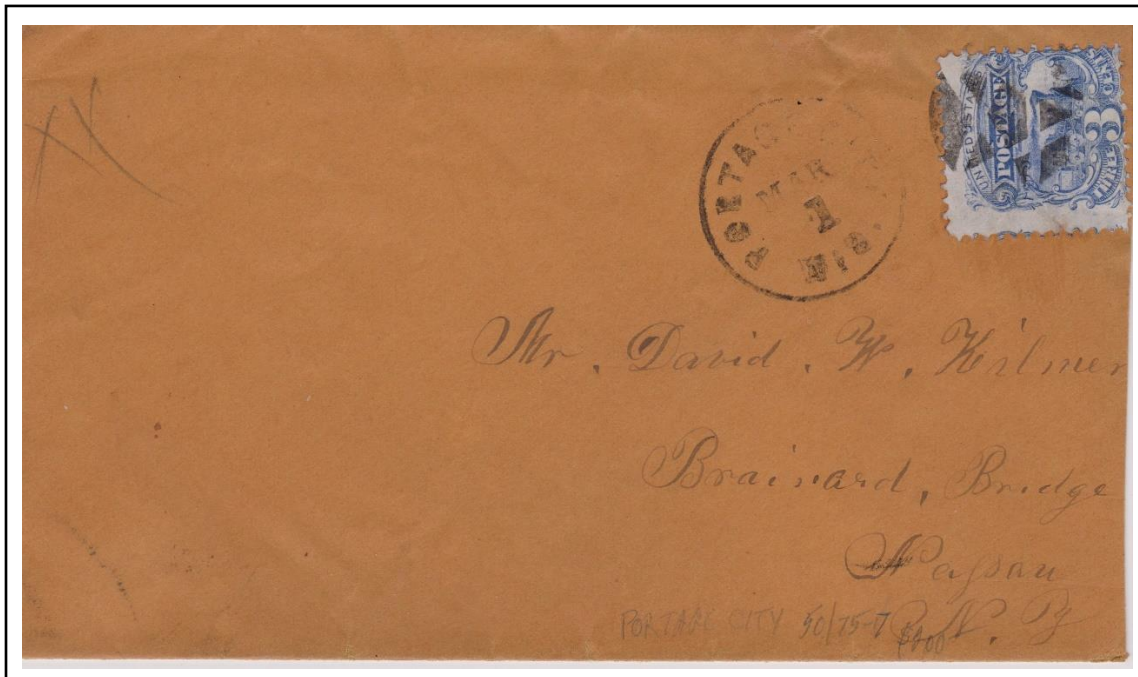
# Rail Transportation on Stamps



United States 3¢ 4-4-0 Steam Locomotive  
Issued 27 March 1869

James E. Byrne

In the era before machine cancellations became the norm and before the United States Post Office Department began requiring conformity to uniform standards, local postmasters had the option of making or buying the devices used to obliterate stamps on cover to prevent reuse. The canceller on this cover postmarked in Portage City, Wisconsin, about 1870 is a hand-carved star cut into cork or wood. Although crudely cut, the inked canceller accomplished the purpose of obliterating the stamp to prevent reused.



In an age when most postal clerks were men and pocket knives were a commonly carried by men, a hand-cut canceller could be shaped in a few minutes in a piece of cork or the end grain of a block of wood. When the image became worn, the clerk could cut a replacement.