



The Specialist

Contributions to this page will be appreciated; if you have something unusual or odd, a cancellation, unlisted variety or anything out of the ordinary, send it to the Editor!

If at some future time some unconquerable spirit with the optimism of youth and the wisdom of mature age attempts a compilation of all the cancellations to be found on early United States Stamps, with perhaps a table of relative rarity as has been published concerning the cancellations on the early issues of Austria, he will most assuredly give and classify among those of first rank the varieties now termed 'Straight Line Cancels' and "College Towns."

The first of these, the name of the cancelling post office given in a straight line without a frame, is one of, if not the very oldest form of obliteration. It is found on covers from almost every land and commencing with the earliest covers of the American pre-stamp period is to be found down to the present day on U. S. covers.

Notwithstanding this apparent general use covering the period of the nations postal history this type of cancellation is extremely uncommon, in fact is one of the rarest of U. S. cancels. This is largely due to the fact that in the earlier times, as even today, this very simple type of cancellation was used only in small towns. Combined with a year date, prior to 1855, the straight line cancel is one of the most sought for among the rare U. S. cancels and of these there are but four varieties known to specialists with less than twenty others of this type without the year date.

The other rarity under discussion, the "College Town" cancel is equally rare and is fraught with a historical inquiry that adds charm and interest to those who see on the bits of paper that go to make up their collections the romance, history, mirth and tragedy that mingle so closely in the designs and cancellations and which are a meaning less jumble to the mere accumulator.

We illustrate here a neat "Straight Line" cancel shown us by our good friend Thomas H. Pratt of Kingsport, Tennessee, which is a new addition to the "Straight Line" list and also adds another "College Town" cancel to U. S. Philatelic history. It is shown us on original cover with the cancel bearing in part on a 3c U. S. 1851.

"Washington College Te.", is a really real "College" cancel as it is not the name of a town named after a college, but the cancel used by the college itself.

Washington College is a school of traditions and venerable age having been founded in 1783 as an Academy in what is now Eastern Tennessee; there is a small town near it now having a population of about 500 people known as Limestone. The Academy was organized in 1795 as a co-educational college on the transference of this district from North Carolina to the Territory of the U. S. south of the Ohio River. It is still running today, has about 200 students, 11 instructors and a fine library of old books of some 3000 volumes. It is a Presbyterian College, supported by that Church and ranks high as an educational institution.

