

Synopsis for the _____ Ropex 2019

Exhibit: Marking Equipment used by “Window Clerks” at the GPO in New York City, 1880 – 1911.

Presentation: This exhibit has been reworked to improve the balance and appearance of the material on the pages. Based on judges recommendations from another exhibit which I featured markings, the window clerk markings should be shown in original size. So, the backs of the covers are shown full size and reduced photo copies of the fronts are shown in the lower right corner of the exhibit page. Some of the written verbiage has been reduced to give a less crowded appearance. The objective is to improve the rating to a five. Each exhibit page is dedicated to a single window marker design.

On page two of the synopsis, is a list of all the special notes that is typed at the top of each page so that the judges can read the information before coming to the show. As has been stated by the judges, they just don't have the time to read all the verbiage typed on the exhibit pages. Hope this will help. Would be looking for comments on the evaluation form if you believe that the information was helpful to have before the show.

Importance: The exhibit shows all the key components for the Type WC-1 thru Type WC-12 markings. There is an almost even mix of domestically used and those used to foreign destinations.

Why were these markings used? It was the responsibility of the window clerk while processing the registered letter to inspect and verify that the back flap of the envelope was sealed. His hand stamp was the official marking that insured that the envelope had been checked before leaving the GPO in New York City.

Treatment: Is the story appropriate for a one frame exhibit. Sure is, it fits perfectly into “One Frame.” Anymore pages would just add duplication to the exhibit. I well know that, for I have been criticized on many of my exhibits for duplication and the judges always recommended to down size.

The rework of the exhibit as stated above to improve the presentation also resulted in a revised Exhibit plan with improved matching headers to show the proper order and logical choices of the material to show the story line.

Philatelic Knowledge and Personal Research: This item is always an opinion of the judges and based on what is written on the exhibit pages. All I can say is that on many of my past exhibits the judging panel has awarded between 31 to 33 / 35 in this section. Have also won two Research Award Metals on some of my other marking exhibits.

Rarity / Condition: Based on some comments, all my exhibits are being reworked to reduce almost all the identification of the rare items and will be up to the judges to determine those based on their knowledge. Only two covers a high-lighted with red borders but many more should be high-lighted. The rarity of the exhibit was greatly increased from the previous showing for the Type WC-7 marking was missing. At the Orlando Show, 2018, I found a near perfect copy of that marking. The only other was a photo copy of a damaged cover that was not for sale anyway. I have a new approach on checking this section. Based on my personnel knowledge of the material I rank each cover from 1 to 30 which is the max rating for a top quality cover. The covers in this exhibit were rated from 25 to one 30 with a total of 410 points for 15 covers. Divided out this gives an “**overall rating of 27.333**” for this exhibit.

Bibliography: “The 1882 – 1902 Registered “Letter” Marks of New York City and Some Collateral Information” by J.H. Barr. This article was presented at the Eighteenth American Philatelic Congress, October 31 to November 2, 1952.

Barr only noted what I call a WC-4 and a WC-5 on Plate III on page 70 and discussed them in the last paragraph on page 73. Barr really did not know who was using the markers and why back in the day.

Note: The history of the shows this exhibit has attended could be shown on the reverse side.

Page 2: "Type WC-1". For the purpose of this exhibit, the front window clerk is considered the employee that processed the letters that were personally delivered to the General Post Office in New York City. The steel die marker, Type WC-1, was used by all window clerk employees to cancel the stamps used on registered letters. Even today, used stamps off cover that have this cancellation can be specifically identified as being processed and canceled at the GPO in NYC.

Page 3: "Type WC-2". This marking was used by all clerks as a date stamp and a box to record the registry tracking number.

Page 4: "Type WC-3". The Type WC-3 was used by all the window clerks and was used in every post office in the United States beginning in the early 1900's.

This is the most commonly recognized Front Window Clerk Marking seen by the normal philatelist today. The primary number one employee used this marking for many years until 1896 when the postmaster general made the general equipment change at that time frame.

Page 5: "Type WC-4a". With Postal Bulletin no.1567 of April 27, 1885, the first class surface rate changed from two cents per ½ oz to two cents per oz.

Page 6: "Type WC-5". This is employee clerk number two's marker that he used when manning the front window at the GPO. Much harder to find used copies of this marking which mean that this employee spent less hours working at the front window.

Page 7: "Type WC-6". The Type WC-6 marker was used by employee clerk number three and is more difficult to find used copies than WC-4a and WC-5. Again, the employee spent less time working at the front window position in the GPO.

Page 8: "WC-7". The number four employee clerk used the WC-7 marker and is the most difficult marking to find of all the equipment used by the window clerks. There are only two recorded copies of this marking. The one showing this exhibit dated use of April 12, 1882 and a second copy dated August 4, 1883. The August 4th copy is badly damaged on the right side when the letter was opened.

Page 9: "Type WC-4b". After 1889, the markings of the Type WC-5, Type WC-6, and Type WC-7 are no longer seen used on letters. The Type WC-4a continues to be the work horse as the specific front window clerk marker. It would appear that all the employees used the same design into the middle of the 1890's. One special design has been found and shown on this exhibit page, identified as Type WC-4b.

Page 10: Type WC-4a". This cover is the "LKU" of the Type WC-4a marker that is listed in the census. The replacement marker, Type WC-8, started on December 6, 1895, "EKU", with an overlap period of 174 days of service. The usage period for this marker was fifteen years from December 18, 1881 to May 29, 1896.

Page 11: "Type WC-8". In 1895, the postmaster began investigating an improved design to the letter's back flap marking. A new rectangular design was developed that also added the words NEW YORK and REG within the design. The earliest use found of this new design is in December, 1895.

Page 12: "Type WC-8". As was stated on the second page of the exhibit under "special notes", a statement declared that the cover actually showed proof that the window clerk did perform the function of applying the registered labels. The cancellations of the stamps and the registered label proved that point. This cover below is the second example that shows the same identical proof to that same fact.

Page 13: "Type WC-9". After six years of service, the Type WC-8 was retired and replaced with a similar design which would be identified as a Type WC-9 marker.

Page 14: "Type WC-10". The Type WC-9 saw four years of service and was retired in late 1906 to be replace by Type WC-10 with beginning service in early 1907.

Page 15: "Type WC-11". With the larger volumes of registered mail, the marking equipment would be wearing out quicker and the replacement equipment had a slightly different design resulting in the new Type WC-11.

Page 16: "Type WC-12". This was the last rectangular design examiner marker used, becoming the "End of an Era." Under order no.5113 from September 25, 1910 and starting, January 1, 1911 all post offices were to change over to the three new design rubber-faced devices for registration markings on the letters which would replace all the old design markers. No.1 rubber stamp would replace the Type WC-2. No.2 rubber stamp stated "REGISTERED." No.3 rubber stamp stated "R."