

# WHITNEY CACHETS on UN-MANNED SATELLITE COVERS by Don Hillger SU 5200 and Garry Toth

The late Robert B. Whitney of Florida was a prolific manufacturer of philatelic cachets for space-related events. Thanks to Eddie Bizub, the authors of this article were introduced to Whitney cachets and are now able to attach his name to a large number of cachets that were previously not identified. As Eddie points out, Whitney cachets often appear to be rubber-stamp impressions, but the consistent horizontal alignment of the cachets on the envelopes indicates they were probably printed (some of the printing is faint at times, which can lead to the erroneous conclusion that they were done by rubber stamp).

Nearly all the Whitney cachets were canceled at Cape Canaveral, Satellite Beach or Patrick AFB in Florida, with a mixture of hand and machine cancels. None of Whitney's cachets have an identifying logo or name, so his work can be recognized only through the design features he typically employed. His cachets are not fancy, but are somewhat detailed and interesting contributions to space cover philately.

Among the many cachets Whitney produced, his typical single-color or less-frequent two-color cachets are reasonably easy to pick out once one has seen a number of his cachets. He employed a wide range of colors for the printed part of the cachet: blue, green, red, black, purple, magenta, cyan, orange, and brown. Many of his cachets also include a date and time rubber stamp specific to the launch of interest. That date-time stamp is

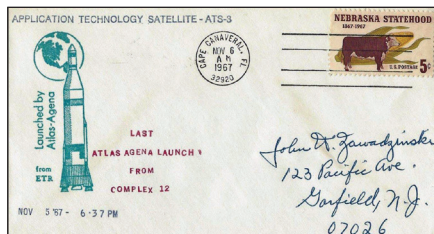
invariably a different and contrasting color compared to the main printed part of the cachet. There is no date-time stamp on event or anniversary covers, as will be seen in the examples that follow.

The designs employed by Whitney often include an image of a launch rocket and are thus somewhat generic, other than the text part of the cachet and the date-time stamp often employed. A few of his cachets have an image of the satellite that was launched, but more often the satellite is merely named and the launch rocket and launch pad are noted. A small number of Whitney's cachets have a signature of someone related to the satellite or program being featured, or of Whitney himself.

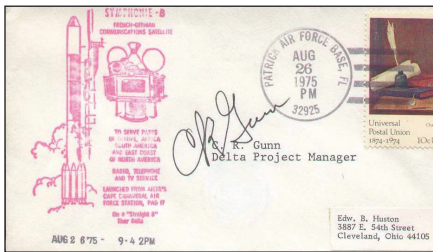
## Selected examples of Whitney cachets

Selected Whitney cachets are shown below. These covers span the years 1967 to 1990 during which he was an active cover servicer in Florida. They also display the wide range of un-manned satellites with Whitney cachets. While most are launch covers, some feature post-launch events, and others celebrate launch anniversaries.

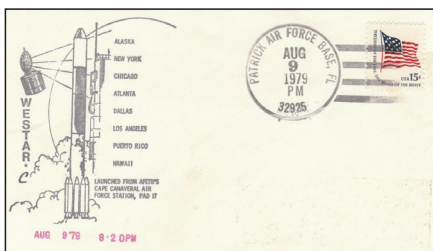
This ATS-3 communications satellite



launch cover is at the time of writing the earliest un-manned satellite cover with a Whitney cachet in the authors' online list. The earliest known Whitney cachet for an un-manned satellite is for Lunar Orbiter-5, dated 1967-08-01; the authors have no image available so far. The ATS-3 cachet is composed of a green printed portion with printed magenta text to the right and black text above. A black rubber stamp date-time group is found below the main cachet.



A Whitney cover with a magenta main cachet and a black rubber stamp date-time group below, for the launch of the Symphonie-2 communications satellite in 1975. On this cachet, the satellite is depicted with its solar panels in the folded position. This is one of a limited number of Whitney cachets that also include a signature, in this case for the Delta Project Manager, C. R. Gunn.

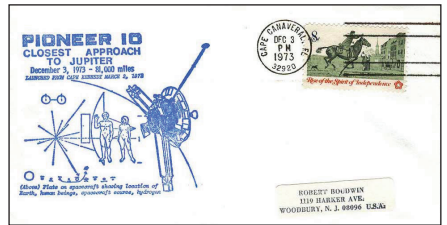


Another Whitney cover with a depiction of the Westar-3 satellite in a black cachet with a magenta date-time

rubber stamp. It is uncommon for satellites to be depicted in a Whitney cachet, which most often concentrate on images of the launch rocket and launch pad.



A Whitney single-color purple cachet on a cover for the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, in 1973, of the Explorer-1 launch from 1958. This cover canceled at Patrick AFB is also available with a Cape Canaveral cancel (those two are Whitney's two most common cancel locations). There is no date-time stamp on this anniversary cover.



A Whitney single-color blue cachet on a Pioneer-10 event cover, for the closest approach to Jupiter, on 3 December 1973. This cover with a Cape Canaveral cancel is also available with a Patrick AFB cancel. There is no date-time stamp on this event cover.

The last known un-manned satellite cover with a Whitney cachet, for the launch of the NAVSTAR/GPS-2A-1 satellite in 1990. The cachet features a red printed cachet along with the characteristic date-time rubber stamp, in this case in black..



whose URL is provided in the next paragraph.

## Online information


A checklist of (about 140 different) Whitney cachets on un-manned satellite covers, with cancels from 1967 to 1990, and covering over

40 different satellite names, is available at <http://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/dev/hillger/Whitney.htm>. The authors would like to hear from anyone who knows of additional Whitney cachet that have been missed. E-mail correspondence with the authors is welcome, using the addresses below.

## Biographical notes

The authors have researched and written extensively on the subjects of weather, climate, and un-manned satellites on postage stamps and covers, as well as other topics. For a complete list and electronic reproductions of those publications, see <http://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/dev/hillger/stamp-articles.htm>.

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## Acknowledgements

The background information on Robert Whitney and his cachets, and expert help in identifying his cachets, were mostly the result of Eddie Bizub's excellent article "Who is Bob Whitney?", published in a previous issue of *Astrophile* (whole no. 321). This follow-on to that article introduces an online site with Whitney cachets on un-manned satellite covers, of which there are many! Because of the authors' interest in un-manned space, Whitney cachets on manned space items are not covered in the online list unless they are related to an un-manned satellite or a sub-satellite launched from a manned spacecraft.

Further correspondence with Eddie reveals that Whitney created over 500 different cachets for un-manned satellite and rocket launches, when different cancels and cancel types are included. From that information, the authors generated a spreadsheet of all the Whitney cachets (mainly for un-manned satellites) for which cover images are either now in our Whitney page, or will be added only if and when images become available. The interested reader can download that list from the authors' Whitney page,