

The Journal of the Empire State Postal History Society

September 2007

Whole No. 9/ New Series

Alan Parsons, President
David E. Williams, Editor

Drew A. Nicholson, Publisher
Lawrence J. Laliberte, Production Editor

Inside This Issue

Departments

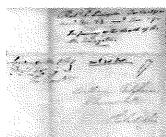
Editor's Box	2
Short Subject of the Issue: <i>Binghamton Letter Carriers</i>	24
Some Fancy Cancels From Deposit, NY	28
Post Office of the Issue: Hooper, Broome County.....	29
Cover of the Issue: <i>Ornate Special Delivery Receiving Handstamp</i>	Back Cover

Regular Features

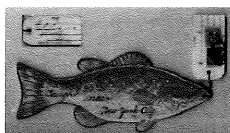
<i>Columbia County Corner</i> , By George DeKornfeld	7
--	---

Articles

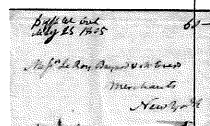
<i>A Postal Route Problem</i>	By Bob Bramwell	3
<i>Searching for the U.S.S. Seminole and Jared Linsly Jr.</i>	By David E. Williams	10
<i>Donald McKay, Master Builder of Ships</i>	By David E. Williams	15
<i>Envelopes</i>	By Bob Bramwell	17
<i>Floundering in the Mail Stream</i>	By George DeKornfeld.....	22
<i>Buffaloe Creek Manuscript</i>	By David Prezporia	25
<i>Politics and the Post Office</i>	By George DeKornfeld	26



Page 7



Page 23



Page 25



EXCELSIOR!

The Journal of New York State Postal History

Published March and September by the

EMPIRE STATE POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

P.O. Box 482

East Schodack, NY 12063-0482

Web site: <http://www.esphs.org>



Articles for **EXCELSIOR!** are solicited.

They remain the property of the authors and the ESPHS. Please contact the Editor and the author to request reprint rights or use in another publication. Please send articles and re-publication requests to the

Editor:

David E. Williams

2617 Byron Ave

Louisville, KY 40205-2609

812.968.4559/ Fax: 502.451.6156

E-mail: davidewilliams@insightbb.com

* * * * *

The **ESPHS** also publishes a **Bulletin**. Please send articles and Society news/information to the

Editor:

Glenn A. Estus

P O. Box 51

Westport, NY 12993-0451

518.962.4558

E-mail: gestus@esphs.org

SOCIETY OFFICERS

President: Alan Parsons

809 Holley Rd., Elmira, NY 14905

607.732.0181

E-mail: alatholleyrd@aol.com

Vice President: Dr. Joseph Rowbottom III

146 Kenwood Ave

Oneida, NY 13421-2808

315.363.8254

E-mail: jrowbot1@twcnr.com

Secretary: George McGowan

Address in heading

518.479.4396

E-mail: geolotus2003@nycap.rr.com

Treasurer: Dr. George Dekornfeld

1109 Rt. 8A Stop 2

Millerton, NY 12546-5511

518.329.1295

E-mail: gdekornfel@taconic.net

For **MEMBERSHIP** in the **ESPHS**, write to the Secretary at the heading address.

Dues are \$15.00 per year. There is a \$1.00 fee upon joining.

ADVERTISEMENTS are gladly accepted. Please contact the Secretary at the above address.

Editor's Box

Here it is, September already. Time sure flies when you're having fun editing! And I have certainly been having fun these past three months. Thanks to those members who were kind enough to submit an article (or three), the September, 2007 *Excelsior!* came together quite nicely. Hopefully there is something of interest for everyone between its covers. Now is when I make my usual plea for articles for the upcoming issue, due to be published in December. I need medium and shorter articles as well as longer ones. Do you have an interesting cover? Then supply the scan and a brief write-up to go with it and it just might become the *Cover of the Issue*. Do you specialize in a particular county or town postal history? How about considering a series of articles similar to George Dekornfeld's *Columbia County Corner*? Do you need help? Please contact me and let's work together to get you published. D.E.W.

A Postal Route Problem

By Bob Bramwell

I often study Robert Dalton Harris, Jr.'s *Postal Route Gazetteer*¹ to "imagine" the specific route a letter in my collection will have traveled. Recently I studied a letter sent from Schenectady to Butternuts (Otsego Co.) datelined March 6, 1837 and postmarked on Tuesday, March 7, 1837. The cover is shown below in **Figure 1**.

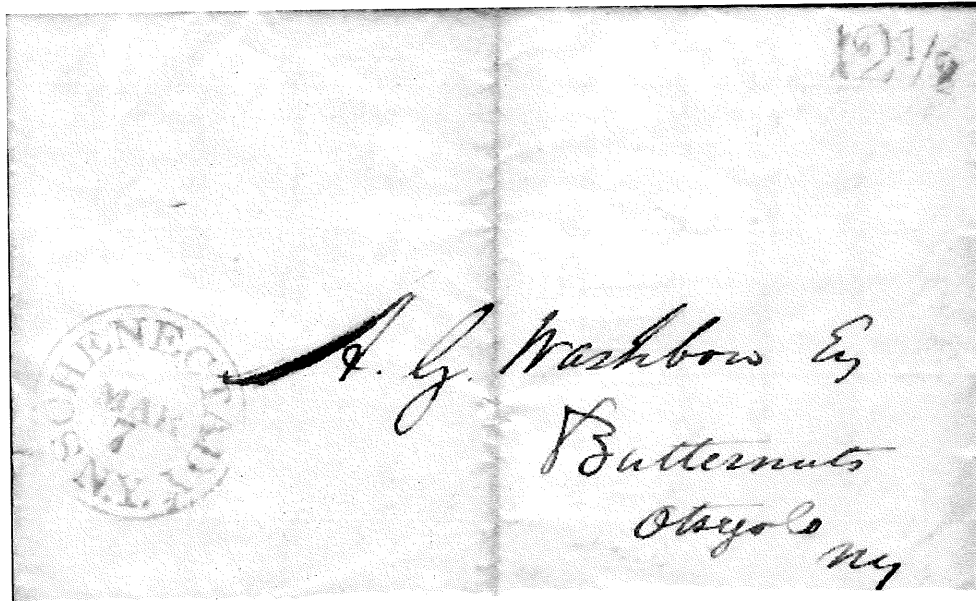


Figure 1. A cover mailed from Schenectady, NY to Butternuts, NY in March 1837. 12 ½ ¢ was charged the recipient for the single letter sheet sent a distance of 80 – 150 miles per the Act of April 9, 1816.

Question #1: When Would The Letter Be Postmarked?

Right off the bat I had a question that I hope any number of Society members have answered: *Was it "post office regulation" to postmark a letter on the day it was presented by a postal patron despite the fact there was no appropriate route offering outgoing service on that day?*

I ask this question because the most likely route of carriage for this letter, Route 607, departed Schenectady only on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and there was **no other** route offering the possibility of departing Schenectady on March 7th.

Question #2: How Would The Route Be Selected?

Schenectady was served by only one route that a quick look at the map of Post Roads portrays as the logical way to get a letter to Butternuts (#607 to Oneonta). But that route intersected another route (Route 542 from Albany to Salina) that offered an alternative. So my next question had two parts: *How did the Schenectady postmaster decide which route to send this letter out on? How did the postmaster convey this decision to the carrier?*

Would The Route Be Selected Based On Postage?

At first I thought rate might be a deciding factor, but as I discovered, the applicable 1837 postal rate of 12½¢ for distances of 80 to 150 miles applied to either route I believed was available to the Schenectady postmaster. Still, I imagine that a postmaster would choose the least costly route if more than one route were available.

Would The Route Be Selected Based on Elapsed Time?

Since my piece is not back-stamped or docketed upon arrival at Butternuts I had no way to judge the duration of its journey. But the shortest path by mileage relies on portions of four postal routes: Route 607 from Schenectady to Duanesburg (15 miles); Route 542 from Duanesburg to Cherry Valley (32 miles); Route 631 from Cherry Valley to Cooperstown (12 miles); Route 755 from Cooperstown to Butternuts (25 miles). The total distance by these routes is 84 miles. These routes are seen highlighted in red in **Figure 2**.

By comparison, the simplest route by reference to the Post Road map is: Route 607 from Schenectady to Oneonta (77 miles); a route from Oneonta to Gilbertsville (20 miles) and Route 755 from Gilbertsville to Butternuts (6 miles). The total distance by these routes is 103 miles. These routes are seen highlighted in blue in **Figure 2**.

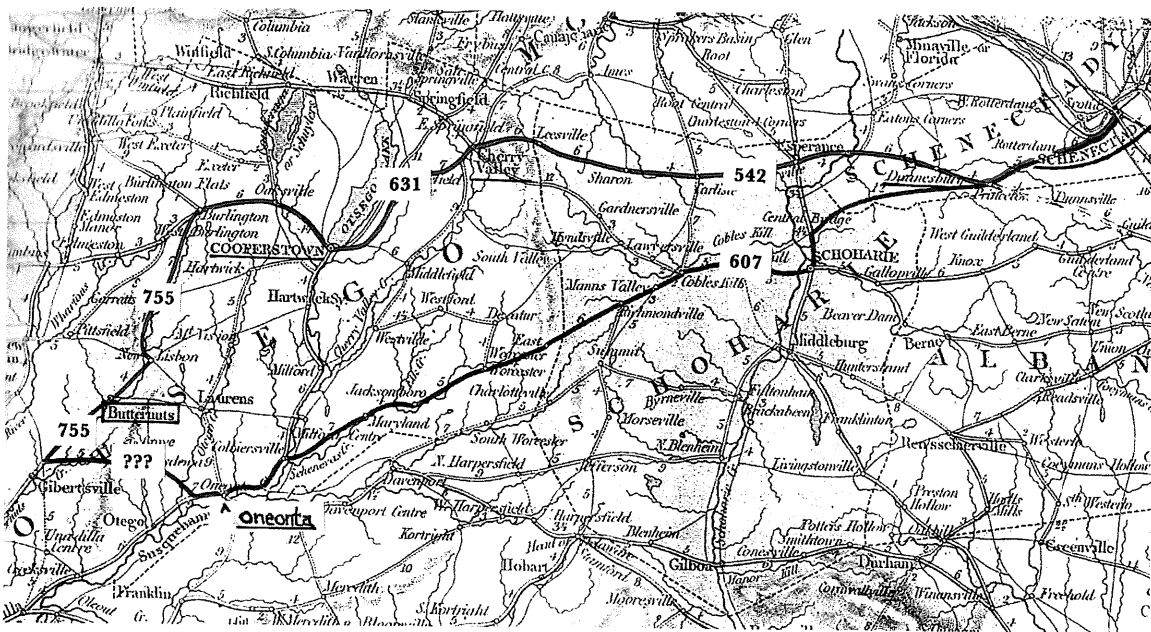


Figure 2. A portion of Burr's 1839 map showing the two alternative routes for the letter travelling from Schenectady to Butternuts.

First I had to make an assumption about travel time along the relevant routes, since I have no information other than for complete routes shown in the Gazetteer. As it happens, I live in a community with a 100-plus year history of carriage driving, which is the hobby of maintaining a stable of walking horses suitable to draw a carriage with driver (a cart or sulky drawn by one horse), or a driver and passengers (a carriage drawn by two horses or a coach drawn by four). By observation, I estimate that such a carriage travels at a sustained pace of 3 to 4 miles per hour.

Schedules for long routes calculate out to an average speed of about 2.2 miles per hour. Allowing for stops at intermediate post offices, food, and beverage for the carrier and his horses, this 2.2 mph seems realistic so I felt comfortable using it.

Next, I wrote down the schedules shown in the Gazetteer for all the routes I needed for this analysis. They are shown in Table 1. All of these routes except 755 have one schedule for "winter" and another, faster, schedule for the rest of the year. I made the decision to consider early March in this part of New York State to be "winter" since in many years the Erie Canal and the Mohawk River were still iced over in March (but here is another question for analyses such as this: *whose authority was it that determined whether a mail contractor was expected to meet the "summer" or "winter" schedule on any given day?*

Route	From	To	Leave	Arrive
<i>Alternative A</i>				
607	Schenectady	Oneonta	M, W, F @ 6 am	Next Day @ 6 pm
542	Albany	Salina	Daily @ 10 pm	Day +2 @ 9 am
631	Cherry Valley	De Ruyter	Su, Tu, Th @ 2 pm	Next Day @ Noon
755	Cooperstown	Gilbertsville	M, W, F @ 11 am	Same Day @ 8 pm
<i>Alternative B</i>				
607	Schenectady	Oneonta	M, W, F @ 6 am	Next Day @ 6 pm
???	Oneonta	Gilbertsville		
755	Gilbertsville	Cooperstown	Tu, Th, Sa @ 6 am	Same Day @ 3 pm

Table 1

Then, using the average speed of 2.2 miles per hour I projected the progress of my letter along the two possible routes I had identified. The results are shown on Table 2.

Route	From	To	Leave	Arrive
<i>Alternative A</i>				
607	Schenectady	Duanesburg	W 3/8 @ 6 am	3/8 @ 12:45 pm
542	Duanesburg	Cherry Valley	Th 3/9 @ 8:30 am	3/9 @ 11 pm
631	Cherry Valley	Cooperstown	Su 3/12 @ 2 pm	3/12 @ 7:45 pm
755	Cooperstown	Butternuts	M 3/13 @ 11 am	3/13 @ 10:30 pm
<i>Alternative B</i>				
607	Schenectady	Oneonta	W 3/8 @ 6 am	Th 3/9 @ 6 pm
???	Oneonta	Gilbertsville	F 3/9? @ ??	3/9? @ ??
755	Gilbertsville	Butternuts	Sa 2/10 @ 6 am	3/10 @ 9 am

Table 2

Alternative A follows Route 607 from its origin in Schenectady through Rotterdam and Princetown to Duanesburg, 15 miles distant. Having left Schenectady at 6 am on Wednesday March 8th, I project this letter would have arrived at Duanesburg about 12:45 pm. While the wording for the schedule of Route 542 is somewhat ambiguous, in winter it appears the carrier for

Route 542 departed Albany daily at 10 pm. Therefore the March 8th departure would reach Duanesburg at about 8:30 am on March 9th. This carrier then proceeded through Esperance, Sloansville, Carlisle, Sharon, and Leesville to Cherry Valley, a distance of 32 miles and a time of about 14 1/2 hours. So the letter was left in Cherry Valley at about 11 pm on Thursday March 9th. The winter schedule for Route 631 left Cherry Valley on Sundays, Tuesdays & Thursdays at 2 pm. So the letter is carried 12 miles to Cooperstown, arriving about 7:45 pm on Sunday, where it was left to await the carrier for Route 755. That carrier departed Cooperstown on Monday, March 13th at 11 am and would likely have reached Butternuts, the penultimate post office, 25 miles distant, at about 10:30 pm on that Monday.

So a letter posted on Tuesday in Schenectady would have reached Butternuts, 84 miles away, in 6 days by this series of Routes. I find it interesting that each junction with a different route is at an intermediate Post Office. This number of route transfers almost certainly delayed delivery, as there may have been a longer but faster way.

Alternative B relies on all of the Schenectady to Oneonta Route, a distance of 77 miles, departing as I have stated on Wednesday March 8th at 6 am and arriving at Oneonta by Thursday March 9th at 6 pm. The 20 mile route from Oneonta to Gilbertsville appears on the Burr map but I have not found mention of it in the Gazetteer¹. But I am going to assume that it was an "over and back" route leaving Oneonta on the morning of Friday March 10th and arriving Gilbertsville that afternoon. That schedule turns out not to be crucial (unless, of course, it was a once weekly schedule on a day other than Friday!), since the Route 755 carrier left Gilbertsville at 6 am on Saturday, March 10th, most likely arriving Butternuts, 6 miles north, at about 9 am on that Saturday. Thus by this longer but less convoluted route the letter was delivered in 3 or 4 days.

The Burden of Postal Paperwork

I can imagine another reason why avoiding the many route intersections was more practical: limiting the number of bundles required to be made up, and consequently the amount of post office paperwork required of the intermediate post masters. But this is an area I have not yet studied, and would appreciate hearing from other members, either directly or in articles published in *Excelsior!*, about how postmasters prepared bundles of mail and whether these survive to be collected.

¹ Published by Postilion Press. Available from Subway Stamp Shop, Altoona, Pa.

² The Burr map included with Harris' Gazetteer is dated 1839 and may be "slightly out of synch" with the 1837 postal routes described by the POD in the 1837 contracting cycle. For example, the Burr map names the post office in Schenectady County where Route 542 intersects with Route 607 "Princeton". The description of Route 542 calls for stops at post offices in Dunnsville and Duanesburg – on either side of Princetown. The description of Route 607 calls for stops at post offices in Princetown and Duanesburg. From other sources I am aware that Princetown, shown to be 4 miles east of Duanesburg and coded as a post town, was a post town in 1837 but was closer than 4 miles to Duanesburg and originated as a village in the Town of Duanesburg.

This is not so serious a discrepancy as clearly showing a four-horse post coach code passing through two intermediate post towns from Oneonta to Gilbertsville without having such a route described in the POD record, but until I can do the necessary research I am reasonably comfortable positing that such a connecting mail service would have existed and further would have a schedule based on the arrival thrice weekly of both the Schenectady and Albany coaches into Oneonta, a major hub.

COLUMBIA COUNTY CORNER

By George DeKornfeld

In my collecting endeavors, I find that I generally discover items of interest in one of two ways. The first involves hours of searching dealers' wares and internet sites in the hope of coming across a cover that desperately needs to be added to one of my collections. The second, which involves a great deal less effort, is having a friend who, upon spending hours of searching himself, falls across an item he knows would interest me, and points it out. This is the case with this find, discovered by our editor David Williams, who in turn pointed it out to me. And what a find it turned out to be!

The item in question, shown in **Figure 1**, is a manuscript stampless cover from the Town of Livingston (Columbia County), New York mailed to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on Christmas Day, December 25, 1810. The cover is rated an appropriate 17¢ paying the single sheet rate as per the Act of March 2, 1799 for a distance of 150 to 300 miles, the distance between the two totaling 170 miles.

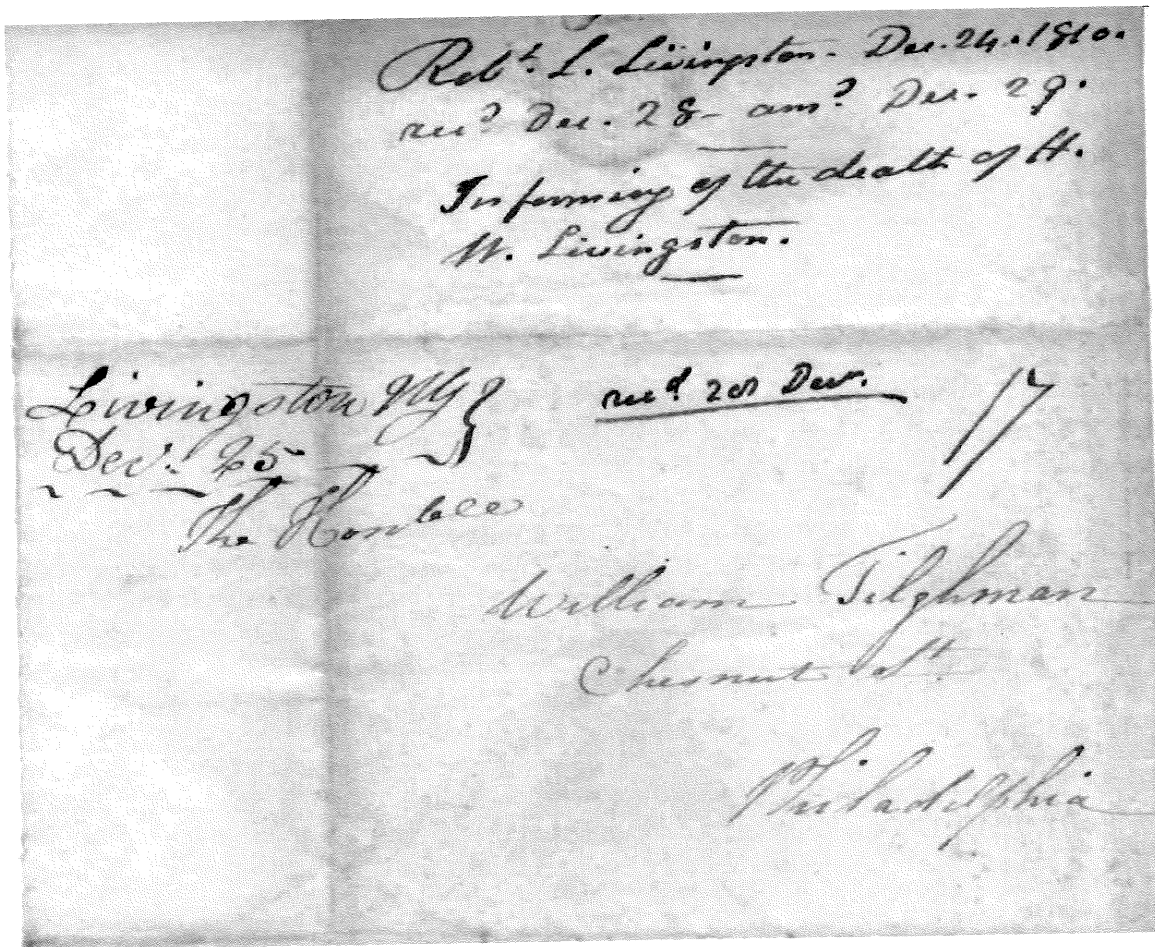


Figure 1. December 25, 1810 stampless cover mailed from Livingston, NY to Philadelphia, PA at the 17¢ single sheet rate for 150 – 300 miles per the Act of March 2, 1799.

As is often the case, a cover such as this, appealing as it may be on the surface, has more to offer in terms of historical and philatelic importance. The body of the written letter reads:

Dear Sir

I have the painful task of requesting that you will be so good as to communicate to Mr. Greenleaf the death of our beloved Brother Henry W. Livingston.

I have the honor to remain with sentiments of respect your and their Servt

Robert L. Livingston

Monday 24. Decr 1810

One immediately sees that the name of the writer is the same as the town from which the letter originated. The 'Livingston' name, being well known in the Hudson Valley of New York, provides the historical connection to this cover.

Robert R. Livingston the Elder (1654-1728) was born in Scotland, eventually immigrating to Boston, then to Albany (where he became wealthy in the fur trade), and ultimately became the first Lord of what was named Livingston Manor. The Livingston Manor patent was granted by NY Governor Thomas Dongan in 1686 and was confirmed by royal charter of King George I in 1715. The grant totaled 160,000 acres and this tract encompassed a large portion of what would become Dutchess and Columbia Counties. The region was made a District in 1772 and the Town of Livingston was founded in 1788, being one of the original towns in Columbia County.

Robert the Elder served as Secretary for Indian Affairs (1695-1728) and as a representative to the NY State Assembly (1709-1711 and 1716-1725) where he was elected Speaker in 1718.

The first division of the estate occurred in 1728, when Robert the Elder gave one of his sons, Robert Livingston (1708-1790) 13,000 acres in the southwest corner of Livingston Manor, which Robert named Clermont Manor. In 1790, the rest of the Manor was divided by the four of Robert Jr's heirs who subsequently divided the land amongst their own families. The Town of Livingston occupies part of the original tract.

The letter reports the passing of Henry Walter Livingston who was born in Linlithgo (Columbia County), New York in 1768. Son of Continental Congressman Walter Livingston (son of Robert Livingston Jr.), Henry made a name for himself in the political structure of New York State as well, as a member of the New York State Assembly from Columbia County (1801-02 and 1809-10), as a Federalist member of the U.S. House of Representatives from the 8th NY district, and as a judge for the Court of Common Pleas of Columbia County. He died on December 22, 1810 (two days before this letter was penned).

The writer of the letter, Robert Le Roy Livingston (1778-1836) was born in Claverack, New York. He was also a representative from New York (6th District) from 1809 to 1812, serving the 11th and 12th Congresses also as a Federalist. He also served as a Lieutenant Colonel in the 23rd infantry in the War of 1812.

The recipient of the letter, the Honorable William Tilghman (1756-1827) at the time of this writing, was Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court where he served from 1805 to 1827.

As an aside, notable modern-day descendants of the Livingston family include Presidents H.W. and George W. Bush, Eleanor Roosevelt, actors Montgomery Clift and Michael Douglas, and actress Jane Wyatt.

From a philatelic perspective, docketing on this stampless cover next come under scrutiny. Docketing on the letter includes:

Robt. L. Livingston. Dec 24, 1810.
Recd Dec. 28. am? Dec. 29.
Informing of the death of H.
W. Livingston
recd 28 Dec

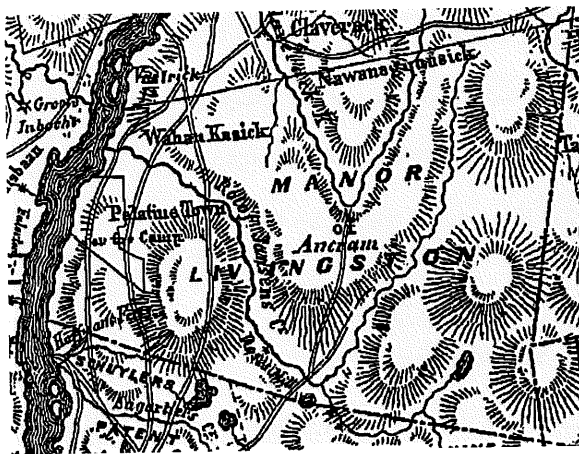
Most likely written by the recipient for filing purposes, this note confirms the date of writing as December 24, 1810. Additional docketing on the cover front reads:

Livingston NY
Dec 25

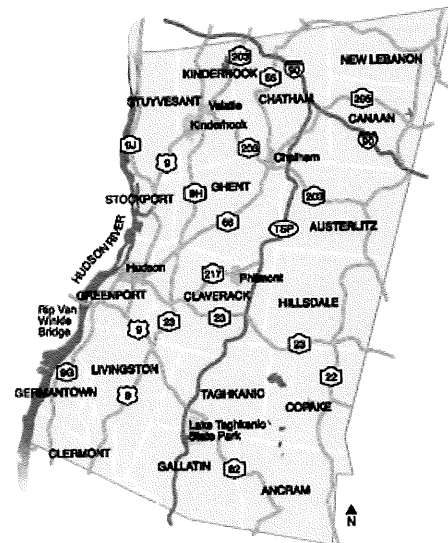
Written by the sender, this confirms the mailing date of December 25, 1810.

Why are these dates so important? A quick check of *Manuscript Post Offices of New York State* by Henry Chlanda and Chester E. Wilcox (ESPHS, 1984) provides the answer. The prior earliest known manuscript cancel from the Town of Livingston is dated September 16, 1811 making this December 25, 1810 manuscript cover the new Earliest Known Use (EKU) by nearly nine months. Thank you, David...good eye!

[George lives in Ancramdale, NY and can be contacted via email at <Gdekornfel@fairpoint.net> As he has stated previously, "Any suggestions, corrections, and/or additions are requested."
 Editor]



The original Livingston Manor in 1779



Modern day Columbia County

SEARCHING FOR THE U.S.S. SEMINOLE & JARED LINSLEY, JR.

A Philatelic Detective Story by David E. Williams

Introduction

Collectors of postal history sometimes go beyond the study of postal rates, markings, and the origin/destination of covers to explore the background and history of either the sender or recipient of the letter in question. In my case the investigation of the recipient Jared Linsley, Jr, Passed Assistant Paymaster on the *U.S.S. Seminole*, played into my decision to purchase a cover which was offered for sale. Initial questions about the cover's genuineness led to an in depth search for answers to several questions. What was the history of the *U.S.S. Seminole*? Who was Jared Linsley, Jr. and what was his role in the U.S. Navy and in particular with regards to the *U.S.S. Seminole*?

The Cover in Question

A couple of years ago a well known dealer of postal history offered me the cover shown in **Figure 1** below. The cover, bearing a 10¢ pictorial issue of 1869, was sent from Binghamton, NY to Jared Linsley, Jr. U.S.N., Passed Assistant Paymaster on the *U.S.S. Seminole* at Aspinwall New Grenada. The stamp is tied to the cover by a quartered cork killer and a Binghamton CDS dated October 29.

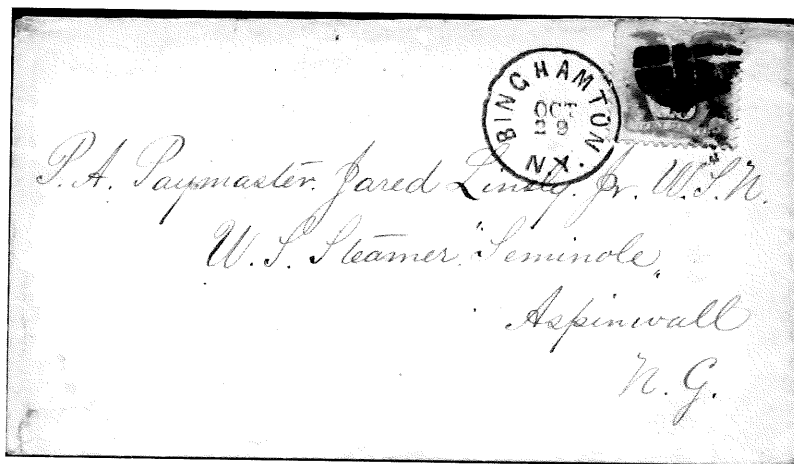


Figure 1. Cover sent from Binghamton, NY to *U.S.S. Seminole* at Aspinwall, New Grenada

While deciding whether or not to purchase this cover, and in an attempt to help determine its authenticity, I began to research the history of the *U.S.S. Seminole*. Early results did not look promising.

The U.S.S. Seminole

My early search for information began as most searches nowadays - on the Internet. In Googling the *U.S.S. Seminole*, I was directed to several promising websites. The most authoritative appeared to be the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*.

According to this website there were four *Seminoles*. The first, *Seminole-I*, was a screw sloop of war launched from the Pensacola Navy Yard on June 25, 1859.¹ *Seminole-II* was an iron-hulled screw tug built in 1879 and not purchased by the Navy until 1898.² Thus, *Seminole-I* became the target of my investigation.

Seminole-I was commissioned on April 25, 1860. She was of steam and sail propulsion with a length of 188', beam of 30'6" and a displacement of 801 tons. Her crew consisted of a compliment of 120 officers and enlisted men. In mid 1860 she sailed to Brazil and served there for about a year before being called back home after the outbreak of the Civil War. She arrived in Philadelphia on July 6, 1861 where she was fitted for blockade duty. On July 16 she was ordered to join the Atlantic Blockading Squadron. For most of the rest of the war the ship served in the Potomac and off the coasts of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. In late June 1862 she was ordered back to the New York Navy Yard for repairs. She was recommissioned on June 8, 1863 and assigned to the West Gulf Blockading Squadron where she participated in the Battle of Mobile Bay on August 5, 1864. Five days later she was sent back to Pensacola for repairs and in September was sent to Galveston where she remained in service off the Texas coast through the end of the war. Her final action in the war came on May 23, 1865 after which she sailed north and was "**decommissioned on August 11 at the Boston Navy Yard where she was laid up until sold on 20 July 1870 to Mullen and Winchester**".³ That last statement gave me great pause. If true it meant that the *Seminole* would have been out of commission from 1865 to 1870. If this were the case, how could it have been in Aspinwall in October 1869?

I informed the dealer of the timeline conflicts that I had encountered and asked him to check with some of his sources as to the cover's authenticity. The dealer heard back from someone who stated that the Navy Historical Center's records often contain discrepancies, as he had found when doing research on some Navy ship covers of his own. In the meantime, I took a chance by emailing, and later calling, Jeffrey Forster, Assistant Section Editor of the 1869 Pictorial Issue in the USPCS quarterly, "*The Chronicle*." Jeffrey stated that this particular cover was not listed in "*The 1869 Issue on Cover: A Census and Analysis*," published in 1986 by The United States 1869 Pictorial Research Associates, Inc. However he knew of several 1869 covers sent to the *U.S.S. Seminole* in Aspinwall, and he therefore felt this cover represented a legitimate usage. Jeffrey also referred me to the USPCS website where I obtained a copy of "*Name Collections and Auctions, The 1869 Pictorial Issue*" which Jeffrey had compiled. I also found and purchased on eBay, a copy of the 1869 census publication that Jeffrey had spoken about.

Armed with the auction list and census, I began searching past auction catalogs, at least those that were available for viewing on the Internet, for other covers bearing #116, sent to Aspinwall and, in particular, to the *U.S.S. Seminole*. Not only did I find examples of these, I also found that several were addressed to the same Jared Linsly, Jr. An example of one such cover is seen in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2.

Cover sent from New York City to Jared Linsly, Jr. aboard the USS *Seminole* at Aspinwall, New Grenada on October 1, 1869.



It was Lot # 2245 in the Robert A. Siegel Sale # 819. The cover was mailed from New York City on October 1, 1869 and bears the 10¢ orange Pictorial tied by a circle of wedges killer.⁴

Two other covers are shown in **Figure 3**. Both were mailed in from New York City; one on January 5 (NYD), and the second on January 21 (1870). The images are again from Robert A. Siegel, sales; # 876 and 911 respectively. Interestingly, both were addressed to Jared Linsly in care of the American Consul. According to the catalog descriptions, these were carried back to Washington DC by diplomatic pouch and then forwarded back to New York. These two covers seemed to indicate that the *Seminole*, or at least Jared Linsly, had departed Aspinwall sometime after January, 1870.^{5,6} It seems likely that the January 5th cover was also mailed in 1870.

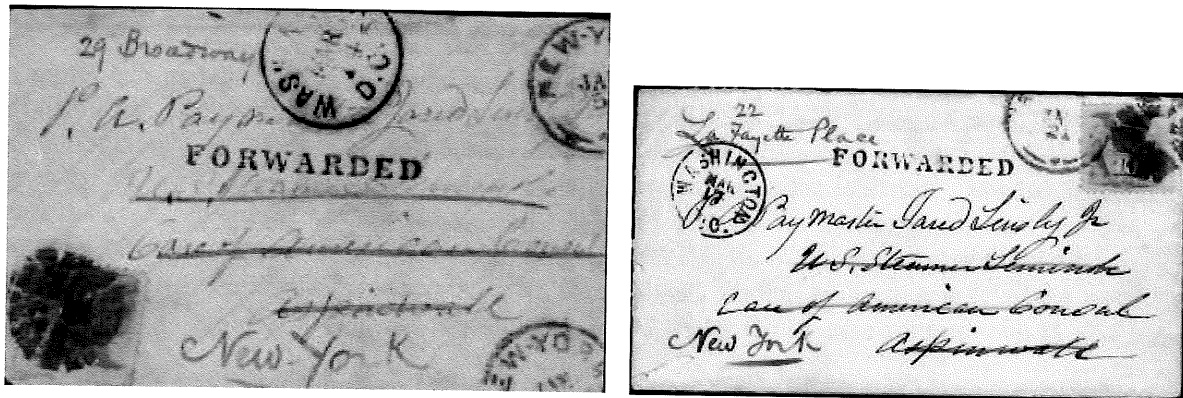


Figure 3. Two covers sent from New York in January to Jared Linsly Jr. aboard the *USS Seminole* at Aspinwall, New Grenada. Both covers were returned by diplomatic pouch to Washington, DC in March and then forwarded to New York City. One went to 29 Broadway, the other to 22 La Fayette Place.

More Covers from Binghamton

My initial searches had been focusing on other 10¢ solo usages of #116. In the course of my research I continued buying old auction catalogs that were directly related to the postal history of 1869 Pictorial Issue. In the 1978 sale of *The Juring Collection of 1869 Pictorial Issues* by Sotheby Parke Bernet Stamp Auction Company, I found Lot # 759. This cover bore three 3¢ and a single 1¢ Pictorial issue stamps and was mailed from Binghamton, NY on August 31, 1869 to Jared Linsly aboard the *Seminole* at Aspinwall. This prompted me to go back to the online catalogs and look for more multiple franking Pictorial covers to Aspinwall. In the catalog for Siegel's Sale #819, I found the cover pictured below in **Figure 4**.⁷

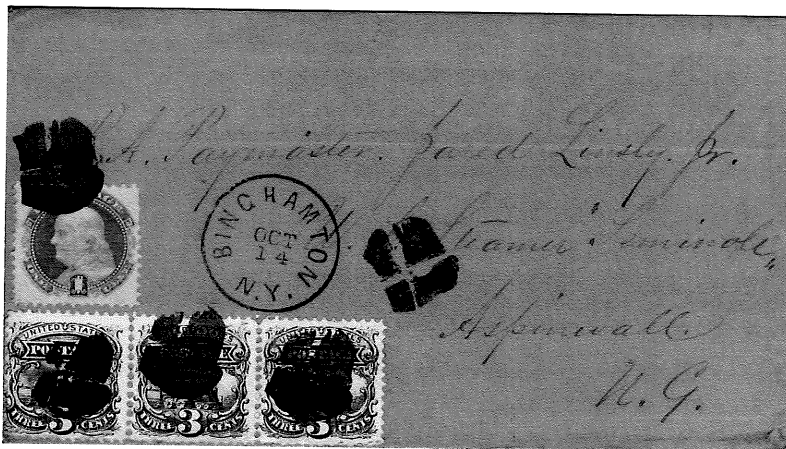


Figure 4.

Cover mailed October 14, 1869 from Binghamton, NY to Jared Linsly, Jr. aboard the *USS Seminole* at the port of Aspinwall, New Grenada. This cover was lot# 2128 in Robert A. Siegel Sale #819

The cover had been mailed only two weeks before the cover that I was contemplating purchasing. The Binghamton CDS and the quartered cork killers were virtually the same. The CDS exhibited the same slight dimples in the circle above the "N" and "G" as on the cover in question. Given all the evidence already discussed, I was pretty much convinced that I would be buying a legitimate cover. I told the dealer I would buy it if he submitted it to APS and if it came back with a good certificate, which it did.

Jared Linsly, Jr.

In the meantime, somewhat satisfied with the validity of the cover, I began to wonder just who was Jared Linsly, Jr.? How did he get to be on the *Seminole* and what was the story of his naval service? There was little information available; however some interesting facts could be pieced together from various sources.

Jared Linsly, Jr., born on July 30, 1842 in New York City, was the fourth child of Dr. Jared and Catherine Linsly.⁸ Dr. Linsly was an 1826 graduate of Yale College, practiced medicine in New York City, and was later the personal physician of Cornelius Vanderbilt.⁹ Dr. Linsly was a Yale classmate of Dr. John Jay Abernethy,¹⁰ a Navy Surgeon who later served as the Medical Director of the United States Navy until 1870. Dr. Abernethy specialized in the study of yellow fever while stationed at Pensacola and later served with the Blockading Squadron off the Carolina coast during the Civil War.¹¹ It is quite possible that he knew Jared Jr. before Jared joined the Navy. His relationship with Dr. Linsly may have influenced Jared Jr. in his decision to enter the Navy.

Jared's first assignment in June, 1864 was as a Paymaster aboard the tin-clad *Julliette* at Cairo on the Mississippi River. On July 23, 1866 he was commissioned by the President as Passed Assistant Paymaster and was assigned duty on the corvette *Massachusetts* where he remained until September, 1867. Prior to his duty on the *Seminole* he also served on the *Osceola*. While serving on the *Seminole* at Port-au-Prince there was a severe outbreak of yellow fever. Both the Surgeon and the Assistant Surgeon died as a result of the outbreak and were buried by Mr. Linsly. The Surgeon was buried at Port-au-Prince, while the Assistant Surgeon was buried at Key West.¹² Of special interest in this regard is a cover listed in "*The 1869 Issue on Cover: A Census and Analysis*". That cover, sent from Aspinwall to New York City evidently contained either a letter or docketing that referred to "yellow fever on the *Seminole*". The census lists the date as November 6, 1870¹³, however given the fact that the *Seminole* was in Aspinwall in mid October of 1869, and the fact that Jared Linsly (and supposedly the *Seminole*) were back in New York in early 1870, I am thinking that this cover might have actually originated in 1869. I attempted to find an image of the cover in an early auction catalog, with no success.

When the *Seminole* later returned to New York, several cases of yellow fever broke out and the vessel was placed in quarantine.¹⁴ Just when the *Seminole* returned to New York can be estimated by examining several sources. We have already discussed the two covers that were forwarded from Aspinwall back to New York in March 1870. Even though no docketing appeared on those covers suggesting the year of use, examination of the 1870 Federal Census for the City of New York reveals that in July 1870 Jared Linsly Jr. was listed in the household of his father Dr. Jared Linsly at 22 La Fayette Place.¹⁵ This is the same address to which the rightmost cover shown in **Figure 3** was forwarded to. Also in the "*Register of Commissioned and Warrant*

Officers of the United States Navy and Marine Corps to January 1, 1871" Jared Linsly, Passed Assistant Paymaster (ranking with Lieutenant) is listed with the expiration of his last cruise shown as February, 1870.¹⁶ In comparing the above edition of the "Register" to the January 1, 1870 edition, it is seen that over the course of the preceding 12 months, Paymaster Linsly accumulated 2 months of shore duty, 8 months as unemployed and 2 months of sea service. The 2 months of sea service agrees with expiration date of his last cruise (February 1870).¹⁷

Jared Linsly Jr. died on January 24, 1878 at his father's house at 22 Lafayette Place. At the time of his death he was serving as Paymaster attached to the training ship *Minnesota* stationed at New York City. He had held that position since May 8, 1875. His obituary noted that he had seen more sea service than any other officer of his rank.¹⁸

Conclusions

Based on the records of both the *U.S.S. Seminole* and Jared Linsly Jr. one can reasonably make the following conclusions:

The original cover in question was mailed October 29, 1869.

Both covers sent to Aspinwall in January, carried to Washington, and forwarded from there to New York in March were mailed in 1870.

The cover mentioned in the 1869 census which was mailed from Aspinwall to New York in which there was a reference to "yellow fever on the *Seminole*," was also most likely mailed in November of 1869 rather than 1870 as shown in the census.

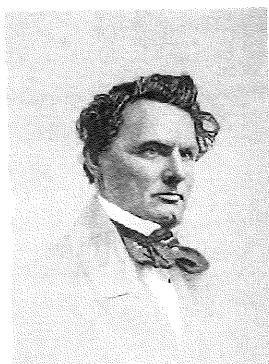
Footnotes:

1. Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships: Department of the Navy – Naval Historical Center; *Seminole*; <http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/s9/seminole-i.htm>
2. Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships: Department of the Navy – Naval Historical Center; *Seminole*; <http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/s9/seminole-ii.htm>
3. Answers.com, USS *Seminole*; <http://www.answers.com/topic/uss-seminole>
4. *A European's Large Gold Collection of The 1869 Pictorial Issue*; Robert A. Siegel Sale # 819, Lot# 2245; December 13, 1999.
5. *The Millard Mack Collection of 1869 Pictorial Issue*; Robert A. Siegel Sale # 876, Lot# 46; June 12, 2004.
6. *The Elliott Coulter Collection of The U.S. 1869 Pictorial Issue*; Robert A. Siegel Sale # 911, Lot# 177; May 12, 2006.
7. *A European's Large Gold Collection of The 1869 Pictorial Issue*; Robert A. Siegel Sale # 819, Lot# 2128; December 13, 1999
8. Genealogy Forum, Genealogy.com; <http://genforum.genealogy.com/linsley/messages/55.html>

9. Virtualology.com, Virtual American Biographies, Jared Linsly; <http://famousamericans.net/jaredlinsly/>
10. New York Times, October 31, 1879, Page 7; *Dr. Abernethy's Funeral*
11. New York Times, October 29, 1879, Page 5; *Obituary, Dr. John Jay Abernethy*
12. New York Times, January 26, 1878, Page 8; *Death of Paymaster Linsly.*
13. Jonathan W. Rose and Richard M. Searing, Editors; *The 1869 Issue on Cover: A Census and Analysis*, The United States 1869 Pictorial Research Associates, Inc. 1986; Page 77.
14. New York Times, January 26, 1878, Page 8; *Death of Paymaster Linsly.*
15. United States Federal Census of the 9th District, 15th Ward of New York City, enumerated July, 1870 Page 10.
16. *Register of Commissioned and Warrant Officers of the United States Navy and Marine Corps to January 1, 1871*; United States Bureau of Naval Personnel, United States Navy Department, Bureau of Navigation, 1871, Page 54-55.
17. *Register of Commissioned and Warrant Officers of the United States Navy and Marine Corps to January 1, 1870*; United States Bureau of Naval Personnel, United States Navy Department, Bureau of Navigation, 1870, Page 50-51.
18. New York Times, January 26, 1878; Page 8; *Death of Paymaster Linsly.*

Donald McKay, Master Builder of Ships

Some Historical Perspective of the USS Seminole and the Civil War Navy



Donald McKay, upon his return from England in late 1861, put his shipyard into readiness to build naval vessels. He was one of the earliest proponents of armored vessels and turret mountings for guns. At the time, many American papers were making erroneous statements about the Navy's readiness. McKay wrote numerous letters to the *New York Commercial Bulletin* as well as other papers refuting their views and reaffirming the readiness of the US Navy fleet.

In one such letter written later in the war, he wrote "*At the breaking out of the Rebellion, the Navy of the United States consisted of the following steamers, namely: The screw frigates Merrimack, Wabash, Minnesota, Roanoke, and Colorado, of about 3,350 tons each; of the large screw sloop Niagara, of 4,582 tons; of the first class screw sloops Richmond, Brooklyn, San Jacinto, Hartford, Pensacola and Lancaster, of about 2,000 tons each; of the second-class sloops Pawnee, Iroquois, Wyoming, Mohican, and Dacotah, of about 1,070 tons each; of the third-class sloops Narragansett and Seminole, of about 850 tons each; of the first-class paddle-wheel sloops Susquehanna and Powhattan, of about 2,430 tons; the Mississippi, of 1,692 tons; and the*

Saranac, Michigan, Saginaw, and Spitfire, of about 470 tons each; making a total of twenty-five steamers and 49,700 tons."

"Such was the steam navy with which the administration began the task of rigorously blockading 3,600 miles of the most difficult coast in the world, against the fastest and best steamers that the shops of England could produce, built exclusively for speed and blockade running at the particular localities; in addition to which the oceans of the world were to be kept free of the steamers called "Confederate Cruisers," but which, in reality, English pirates, being built in England, equipped with English guns and manned by English crews, whose purpose was not to fight our cruisers as war vessels, but to plunder our sailing merchant ships, and to keep out of the path of our war steamers."

"In this pressing emergency the Department did all that could possibly be done. It purchased every merchant steamer that could be converted into a blockading vessel or war cruiser, and the United States Navy at this moment contains every merchant steamer of any size or excellence that has been built in the country. It set at work every steam engine factory in the land that could produce marine machinery, in ordnance, and in armor-plating. It rapidly covered the Mississippi and its tributary waters with an immense inland fleet, many of which were armored, and which sweeping the Rebels from those waters, have been an indispensable element to our holding the whole interior of the country, as it gives us exclusive command of its water highways. It lined the Atlantic coast with such a blockading fleet as the world never witnessed before, and has practically closed the rebellious district to the world; the few vessels which succeeded in running the blockade being too small to carry cargo sufficient to give aid of any consequence. The Rebels have not been able to import even drugs enough to supply the medical department of their Army."

"There are now in the United States Navy, in active service, five hundred and fifty-eight steamers, with an aggregate tonnage of 408,000 tons, against the original twenty-five steamers and 49,700 tons with which the war commenced. Of this number, two hundred steamers, with an aggregate of 241,000 tons have been built by the Navy Department."

"In no country, and with such limited means, and under such difficult circumstances, has there ever been put afloat in the same time, such immense naval armaments. In no place has there been any failure, but wherever the naval forces moved victory followed. The Rebel coast has been held with a grasp of iron and nearly hermetically sealed. The pirates of the enemy have been followed around the world, and captured wherever they could be found, and the internal navigation and command of this vast country has been kept open and in the hands of the Government."

Upon finishing reading that part of the foregoing statement, President Lincoln remarked, *"That's the way to appeal to the intelligence of our people; Donald McKay tells them honestly and well what the Navy Department has done during this war."*

[The above photograph and narrative are from Richard C. McKay's *A Famous Shipbuilder Acts as Peacemaker at Home and Abroad* as it appeared at www.eraoftheclipperships.com and appears here with the permission of the webmaster. Richard C. McKay was the grandson of Donald McKay. D.E.W.]

ENVELOPES

[Editor's note: Bob Bramwell found the following article in the *New York Times* archive and approached your president and editor about the possibility of running it in an issue of the *Excelsior!* Since envelopes played an important role in postal history, primarily after the postal regulations changed to postage rates based on weight versus the number of sheets, we felt that it would be of some interest to our readers. What follows is only part of the entire article. Where sections have been excluded by Bramwell you will see a break indicator and a double space between paragraphs. Bramwell states that the "*Cosmopolitan Art Journal*," from which the *Times* took this article, was published in New York City from 1856 to 1861 and its editors fancied themselves to be "the arbiters," or at least the mouthpiece of arbitration, for the visual, performing and "social" arts of polite society as they recognized it. The font is one that Bramwell felt replicated the font from the original *Times* article. As such, some punctuation and capitalization differences will be noted. We hope that they do not seriously detract from the content.]

Envelopes: their History, Uses, Progress of Manufacture *From the Cosmopolitan Art Journal*

The little paper enclosure which we term envelope“ sustains such an important relation to our social, commercial, political, and moral world as to render it eminently worthy of notice at our hands. It has now become the *vade mecum* of thought transportation – crossing seas, threading rivers, chasing up railways, exploring the solitary paths of the forest and plains, pursuing expresses and telegraphic messengers: it is almost everywhere doing, for rich and poor alike, its good offices and trusty services.

Thousand of hands are daily busy in its production – beautiful machinery is called into requisition to cheapen and perfect the processes – elegant stores are fitted up for its exclusive sale – large capital and the best business talent are absorbed in its trade; let us look into its history, advert to its uses, detail the cunning processes of its manufacture – it will be a half hour spent agreeably and with profit.

We find, by reference to the Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, London, 1754, that „envelope“ was a term used to define a work of earth or fortification, sometimes in the form of a simple parapet, at others a small rampart with parapet. The engineers then used to inclose a camp or exposed spot with an envelope. The changes which this single word has undergone illustrate those modifications of meaning and application of words which are still going on in our language: from being a general

term of wide signification it has now become a specific name for a specific thing.

The first use of the paper inclosure in its present shape was in France, by the perfumers who made envelopes for powders, paste, scents, which became highly popular in the generation of our grandfathers. As there is nothing new under the sun, we find the cunning Japanese have used the same inclosure for many generations, not only for the purposes of packing tooth powders, perfumes, &c., but also for our more modern uses as postal carriers.

Envelopes, as postal packages, came into use in Great Britain after the act of Parliament, August 17, 1839, regulating the rates of postage by weight instead of the number of pieces. Since that time their use has become general, both by Government and by the people.

The availability of the envelope was early detected in this country; but our postal laws being hampered with the absurd regulation of charging postage upon the number of pieces, or sheets, instead of upon their weight, its use was restricted to notes and private inclosures, until the modification of the postal laws to charge postage by weight. This was by act of Congress, July 1, 1845 – since which time the envelope has become a necessity, owing to its utility, its economy, its convenience, and its privacy.

Previous to that Act, Mr. PIERSON, of New-York, (in 1843) commenced the manufacture of envelopes, by a hand-process, using little or no machinery. The process was so painstaking and slow as to make the cost of the article produced too great, and in consequence his business did not prosper. Mr. P. became discouraged, and for a time gave up the business.

In 1847, JACOB BERLIN, a man of sagacity and enterprise, purchased the little establishment of Mr. PIERSON, and commenced the manufacture, on a larger scale and more improved modes, at No. 180 Fulton-street, New-York. Still the business did not prosper, and after a fair trial of a few months Mr. BERLIN was ready to retire, discouraged. As he could not find a purchaser he had to keep his hands and machinery employed. A reward soon came. The apathetic public and Government began to call for envelopes for mail uses, and Mr. BERLIN was unable to supply the demand.

In 1853 Mr. BERLIN sold his entire business to Messrs. WM. G. WEST and HENRY C. BERLIN, and retired with a competence earned

in laudable enterprise. The new proprietors immediately increased their facilities for production, occupying the premises No. 67 Pine-street, New-York. These facilities proving insufficient, Mr. WEST, in 1854, built a large six-story building, with basement and sub-cellars, in the rear of No. 120 William-street, New-York, where the manufacture and sale were prosecuted with energy and success. In 1856 Mr. WEST retired, and the present firm of BERLIN & JONES was formed.

In May of that year, the new firm, to accommodate its immense business, moved its salesrooms to No. 134 William-street, where they still remain, commanding and directing a heavy trade. So greatly had the business increased in 1857 as to compel the removal of the factory to more spacious premises up town, where they have facilities for producing 600,000 per day, or 200,000,000 per year, of every size, quality and kind known in the trade, as Business, Legal, Document, Detector, Embossed, Opaque Silvered, Wedding, Mourning, Drug, Pay, Cloth-lined and Business-Illustrated Envelopes. These figures show the magnitude of consumption of the article. At the salesroom a stock of them fifteen to twenty *millions* is always kept on hand to answer any demand. Orders come from all parts of the Union, the Canadas and Provinces, South America, West Indies, East Indies, and even from Europe. Prices vary, of course, with quality, size, &c. – running from sixty cents to sixty dollars per thousand. So steady has been the demand that even during the „panic“ (1857-58) this manufactory did not discharge any of their regular hands.

-----***-----***-----

As an instance of the extent to which the self-sealing envelope has been introduced, we may mention this interesting fact: In the year 1850, Messrs. THADDEUS DAVIDS & Co., of New-York, manufactured from twelve to fifteen hundred pounds of waters per day. Counting two thousand to the pound, we have about three millions per day, then manufactured and sold. Now, we learn, the amount called for is so small that but twenty-five pounds per day (or fifty thousand in number) are made – a falling off owing almost entirely to the substitution of the self-sealer for the water.

The stamped envelope is not so largely used as it was first supposed it would be, owing to the inconvenience of always obtaining them, to their danger of being soiled or lost, and to the fact that an

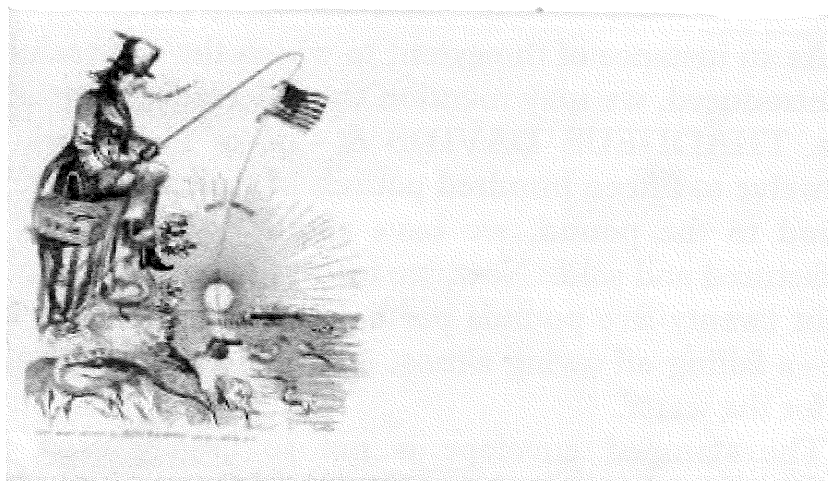
accidental wrong direction destroys them for further use. Postage stamps have become a currency, equally valuable in all parts of the country, and are, hence, largely used for small remittances. This renders them more available than the stamped envelope, and hence they are more generally preferred.

-----***-----***-----

Numbers of „patent“ envelopes have been put upon the market, but have all failed to succeed, for the reason that while they did *not* add to the security and convenience of the thing, they *did* add to its cost – in some cases very materially. This is the case of the newly introduced „ruled“ envelope. It has simply three black lines printed on the inside of the lower lappet of the envelope. These lines show through, so as to enable a person to write the direction evenly by them, *before the letter is put in*. A business man wants no such school boy contrivance; and as the printing of the lines is a „patent“, and adds materially to the expense of producing the envelope, it is not likely to have a very extensive „run“.

The New York Times
Published: April 28, 1860

[The firm of Berlin and Jones mentioned in the above excerpt became well known for their printing of Civil War patriotic envelopes. Below is one such envelope entitled “Fishing For Union Bait”. The image is used with the permission of postal history dealer Bob Patkin from his www.postalhistorystore.com website. D.E.W.]



FLOUNDERING IN THE MAIL STREAM

By George DeKornfeld

Sharing travel souvenirs with friends and family has always been a vacation mainstay for those fortunate enough to take a respite from their daily routines. Either as a way of sharing the experience, or simply a means of “rubbing it in” to those who weren’t there, trinkets and baubles have been brought back by many a vacationer to those remaining at home. Many other travelers have been known to use the mails while still away, sending their travel remembrances to those back home, the postcard being the longest-running example of these, starting with novelty cards in the 1900’s and evolving into the sharp, glossy picture postcards of today.

Gaining popularity around 1910, odd-shaped, three-dimensional souvenirs relating to many tourist destinations came into use. Identified by their attached (usually by a string) mailing tag, these items remained popular up to the time when the Post Office went to full automation, making mailing them not only impractical but frowned upon (and routinely rejected) by the postal authorities; these items stood no chance in the automatic facers and cancellers that eventually came into use (in order to mail such items today, they would need to be placed into an envelope, likely being surcharged as a rigid item, or mailed as a small parcel.).

Figure 1 shows a souvenir fish with yellow mailing tag (made by the Dennison Manufacturing Company) that was mailed to Wooster, Ohio, presumably from New York City. Franked with a 1½-cent Harding issue of 1930 and a 3-cent Washington issue of 1932, the total postage paid by the sender came to 4½ cents. The fish, cut out of ¼” plywood, weighs 1.5 oz, measures 9¾ x 4” and has the wording ‘Caught near New York City’ wood-burned onto its surface. The green highlights are printed onto the wood and the back is plain.

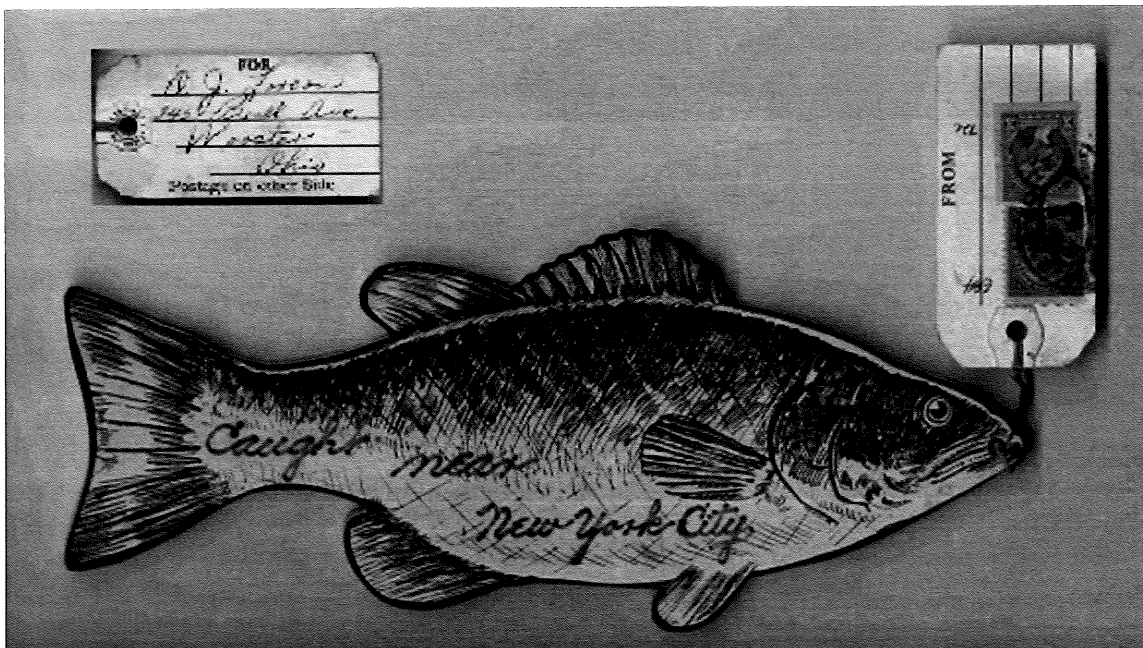


Figure 1. A 1½ ounce plywood fish mailed from New York City to Wooster, Ohio. The 3rd class rate for merchandise was 1½ ¢ for less than 2 ounces. The additional 3¢ postage evidently covered the 1st class rate for the written message burned into the body of the fish.

The 4½ cents postage rate caused some consternation, at least at first. Nothing in Tony Wawrukiewicz' *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates* seemed to fit the franking, so I posted a query on Richard Frajola's PhilaMercury site. The likely solution finally showed up in an e-mail from Ken Lawrence: *"I think its 1½¢ third class for up to two ounces of merchandise plus 3¢ letter rate for the added written message that was not allowed on a third-class card. Correct postage. Cheaper than double letter rate for an overweight mail piece."* Using Ken's analysis, my guess is the wood-burning on the fish was considered to be a 'written message,' hence the additional 3-cents over the 1½ cent 3rd class fee.

The stamps are cancelled with what appears to be an indistinct black NYC oval registry cancel. It was routine for post offices to use mute cancels, especially on third class mail items that had mailing tags affixed, so the transit time from origin to destination wouldn't be seen by the public. Some items I've seen have been sent first class surface with circular date stamps, and an occasional rare item has an Railway Post Office (RPO) cancel. However, third class was the most common method of sending these souvenirs. As an aside, the majority of these items are franked with booklet stamps; apparently many travelers kept a convenient-sized booklet of stamps with them on their excursions.

One must wonder why a fish was sent from New York City as opposed to, for instance, a Statue of Liberty souvenir, but then again, sport fishing was as popular back then as it is today.

[George adds: *"I'm in the process of creating a fun exhibit using souvenirs with mailing tags (including having my own exhibit frames made as none of these items will fit into a standard Ameripex frame). I'm up to a little over 1 ½ frames of material, but am always looking for more. If any ESPHS members have any they are willing to part with, please send me a scan and asking price to Gdekornfel@fairpoint.net."* D.E.W.]

~..~..~

Deposit, N.Y. Use of Return Receipt Form 3811

The image shows two sides of a 'Return Receipt' form (Form 3811). The front side (left) is from the 'Post Office Department OFFICIAL BUSINESS' and includes a 'REGISTERED ARTICLE' and 'INSURED PARCEL' section. The return address is 'Return to: 250 N. Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10013'. The back side (right) is titled 'RETURN RECEIPT' and contains a signature 'William H. Ford' and the date 'OCT 10 1949'.

Front and back of Form 3811 mailed from Deposit, NY to New York City on October 10, 1949 noting the receipt of the article in Deposit. Note the lack of either a registered or insured article number on the front of the form. The sender paid 5¢ extra for this service.

BINGHAMTON LETTER CARRIERS—1877

By David E. Williams



Upon scouring the archives at the Broome County Historical Society a few years ago, your editor discovered this wonderful photograph of letter carriers from the Binghamton, NY post office. The photo, dated 1877, captures seven gentlemen dressed in the postal uniforms of the day. To my surprise, on the back of the photograph were the names of each carrier. In the front row we see George Moore, Theodore Shipper, Charles Bates, and Albert Surdam. The back row is comprised of George Martin, Charles Stebbins, and Howard Cunningham. Mailbags are clearly seen draped over the shoulders of those carriers in the back row. The carriers are seen holding a variety of mail that appears to include newspapers and circulars as well as stamped letters. Just where the photograph was taken is not stated. Up until 1891 the Binghamton post offices had generally been located at either the postmasters' house or place of business or at a hotel or tavern on the stage road. The postmaster at the time this photograph was taken was Edward B. Stephens.

BUFFALOE CREEK MANUSCRIPT

By David Przeporia

Erastus Granger was appointed postmaster at Buffalo Creek, NY (Genesee County DPO 1804 – 1808), on September 30, 1804. Records indicate that he did not start the post office until sometime in 1805, as there is no income listed for the Buffalo Creek Post Office until 1805.

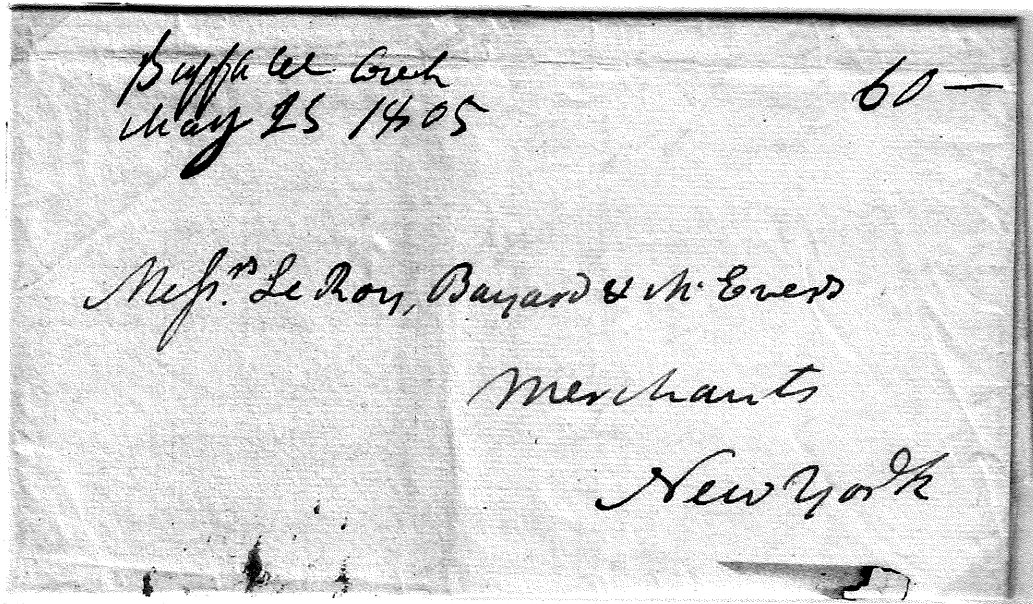


Figure 1. A triple weight manuscript Buffalo Creek, NY cover dated May 25, 1805.

The cover shown in **Figure 1** is the earliest cover I have seen from this office and was manuscript postmarked May 25, 1805 at a triple rate of 60 cents. The cover is addressed to New York City and is datelined 20 May, 1805 from Fort Erie, Ontario Canada. The cover is signed by Alexander Mac Donell and instructs the recipient to forward the enclosed at the earliest conveyance. On the bottom of the letter is written in a different handwriting "letter for the Earl of Selkirk forwd. 5 June by packet.". It was written in Fort Erie Canada and carried across the border to be posted in the US. Not only is this a great find for the fact it is a very early Buffalo Creek cover, but it was written by and sent to very prominent men.

The sender, Father Alexander Mac Donell, was a Scotsman who was the chaplain of the Glengarry Fencibles, a Scottish regiment in the British Army. When the regiment was disbanded Father Mac Donell appealed to the British government to grant a tract of land to its members. In 1804 the British government provided the members a 160,000 acre tract in Upper Canada. Father Mac Donell accompanied them to Canada and established churches, schools and organized the settlement. During the War of 1812 he raised another regiment for the defense of Canada, the Glengarry Light Infantry Fencibles. In 1826 Father Mac Donell was erected to Bishop of Upper Canada and later given the title of Apostle of Ontario.

The enclosure is written to the Earl of Selkirk, (Thomas Douglas 5th Earl of Selkirk) who was also a Scotsman. He became the earl in 1799 after the death of his father. He used his inherited wealth to settle poor Scottish farmers in Belfast, Prince Edward Island in 1803 and Upper Canada in 1804. He traveled extensively in North America and died bankrupt in 1820.

POLITICS & THE POST OFFICE

By George DeKornfeld

From the inception of the United States Post Office by the Postal Act of 1792 (effective 1794) into the early 1800's, Postmasters were appointed solely by the Postmaster General. Although to some degree these appointments were political in nature, politics became firmly entrenched in the appointing system by an 1836 Act of Congress that reformed the postal system, including providing that the President appoint all Postmasters, nominees requiring Senate approval (in 1864 when Post Offices were assigned 'classes,' this duty was pared down to just 1st, 2nd, and 3rd class post offices, the Postmaster General making appointments for the remaining smaller offices).

A so-called 'advisor system' was implemented that required potential Postmasters to associate themselves with either their Senator or Representative, followed by Presidential nomination and finally culminating in Senate approval in order to gain their position. Political party affiliation was key to being appointed, and many times when there was a shift in party power, postmasters were quickly removed and replaced by those in line with the new party's political preferences.

Political appointments were finally done away with in 1970 with the enactment of the Postal Reorganization Act removing, at least in theory, all politics from appointment of Postmasters, returning the process to the office of the Postmaster General who would now make appointments on a merit-based system.

Figure 1 shows a cover and its contents mailed from Chatham, NY to Chatham Center dated April 15, 1938. The envelope is franked with the ubiquitous 3-cent Washington issue of 1932 tied by a Universal machine cancel, with a corner card of the Democratic County Committee of Columbia County, Hudson, NY and is addressed to Mr. Francis Harris.

The contents of the letter, typed on County Democratic Committee letterhead, reads:

Dear Mr. Harris:

*Kindly be advised that I have today received word that you have been appointed
Acting Postmaster at Chatham Center, New York.*

*Very truly yours,
H. W. McClellan
State Committeeman*

H.W. McClellan, as his title indicates, was the Democratic State Committeeman, having most recently served as New York's 27th District delegate to the Democratic National Convention held in Philadelphia in 1936. The Chatham Center post office (November 20, 1893 – December 30, 1964) was about to receive a new Postmaster. Occasioned strictly by politics, Francis Harris is being notified of his pending appointment as Postmaster by the NY democratic chair; well before official notification through Senatorial channels took place.

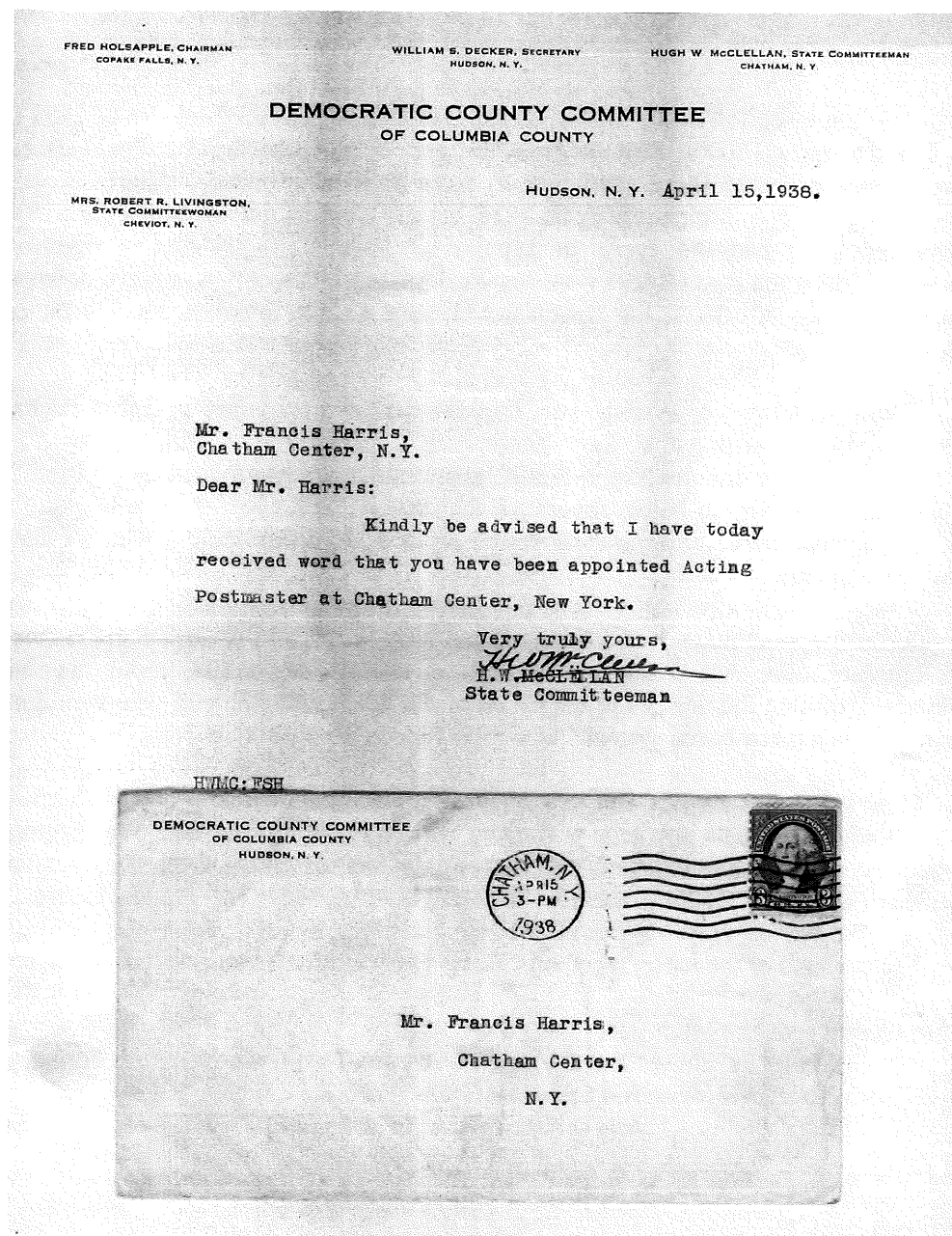


Figure 1. Cover and letter from the Democratic County Committee of Columbia County in Hudson, NY to Francis Harris of Chatham Center, NY informing him of his appointment as Acting Postmaster of Chatham Center on April 15, 1938.

[With thanks to Drew Nicholson for digging up this cover for me at Stamp Show in Hartford, out of fellow-ESPHS member Robert Dalton Harris' stock]

SOME FANCY CANCELS FROM DEPOSIT, NY

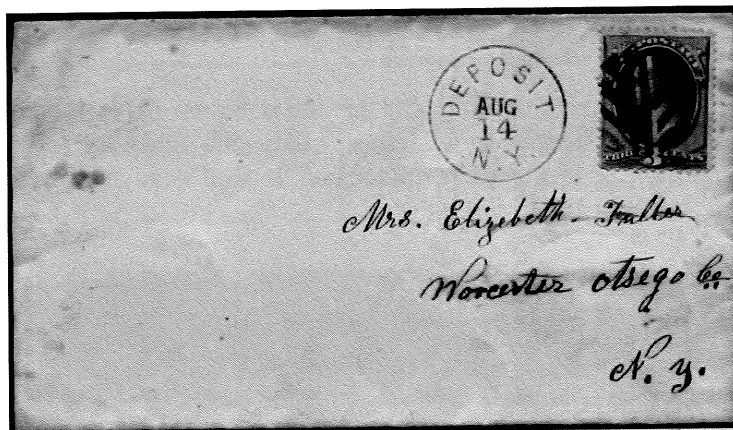


Figure 1. A fancy leaf cancel ties a 3¢ green banknote on this cover from c 1873.

Figure 2. Negative A in circle used in 1882 on 1¢ postal card of 1881 (UX7).

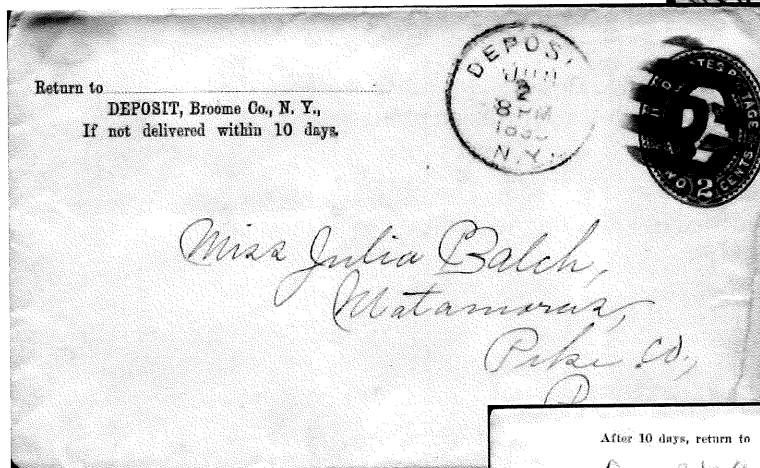
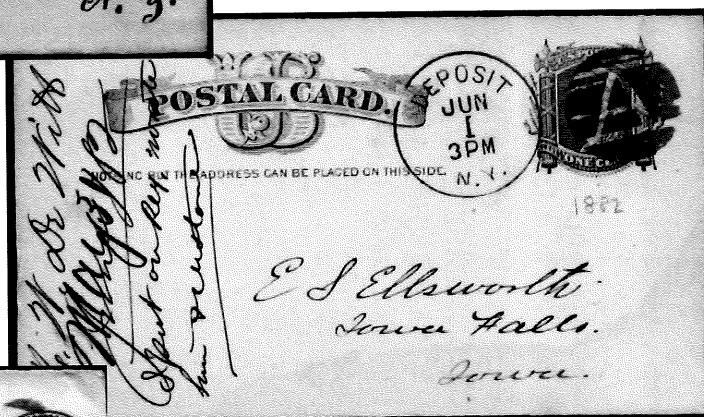
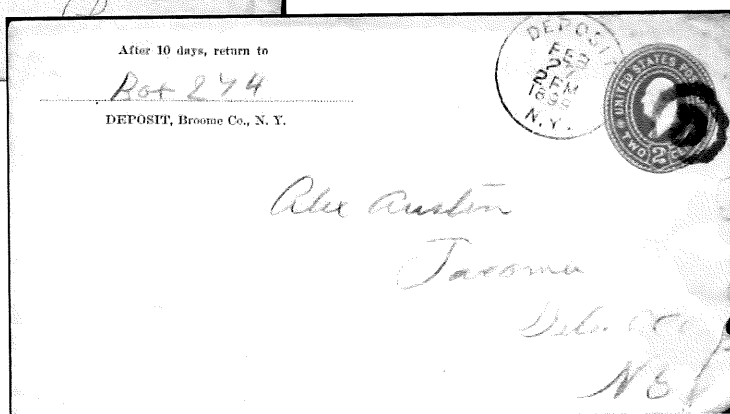


Figure 3. Solid D in barred oval from 1895 cancelling a 2¢ green stamped envelope from the issue of 1887-94.

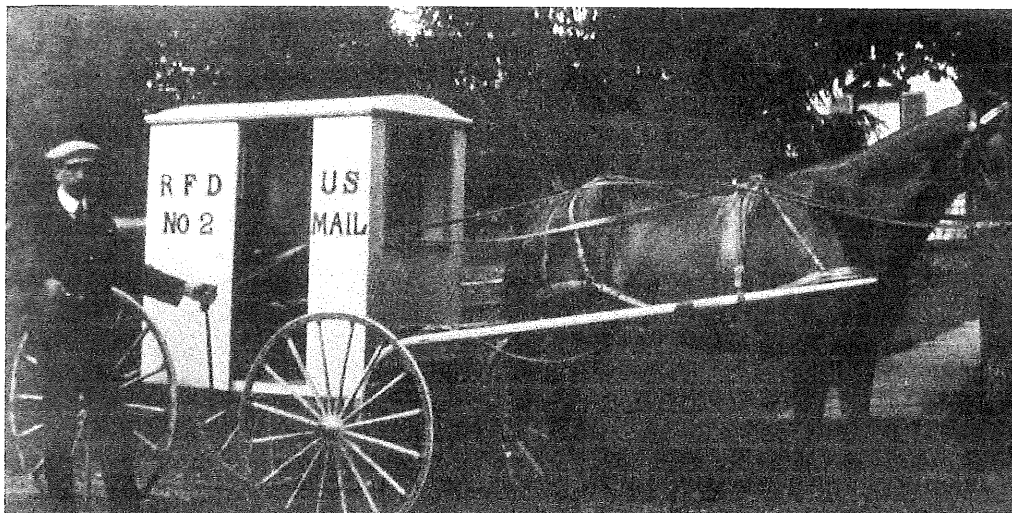
Figure 4. Crude D in circle used in 1899 on 2 cent carmine stamped envelope of the 1899 series.



POST OFFICE OF THE ISSUE

HOOPER, BROOME COUNTY

Mr. Hoppler was the local mail delivery service. He and his steed Stamp made the rounds delivering mail between Lestershire and Hooper (now Johnson City and Endwell). Besides delivering mail, he evidently also dispensed local gossip, quince jam, as well as advice on various topics. The photograph below was taken in 1910.



**Photo taken from "Images of America: Union"; Susan M. Meridith, Author;
Published by Arcadia Publishing; 1999. Used with permission of the author.**

The Hooper Post Office was established on November 5, 1853. The officially appointed postmasters of the Hooper Post Office are listed below along with the dates of their initial appointment:

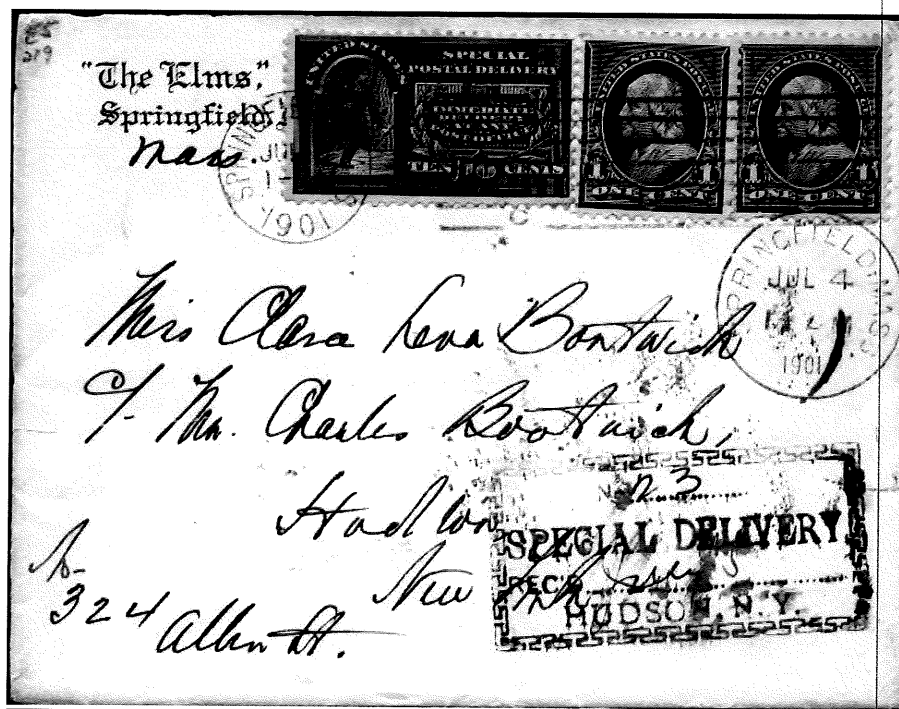
James C. Johnson, November 5, 1853
Richard Balyea, September 1, 1858
Robert Hooper, June 8, 1861
Frank Hooper, April 15, 1864
James D. Blakeslee, October 2, 1874
Charles Shorrs (or Shores), March 22, 1875
Orlando M. Newell, April 12, 1875
Frank B. Twining, May 13, 1881
Theodore Lashier, May 13, 1889
Frank B. Twining, February 2, 1894

On June 15, 1917, the Hooper Post Office ceased operation and began receiving service from the Johnson City Post Office.

*The above information was obtained from "A History of The Town of Union, Its Settlement, Growth and Development, Bicentennial Edition"; James V. Fiori, Author;
Published by the Town of Union; 1990.*

COVER OF THE ISSUE

Ornate Special Delivery Receiving Handstamp



(From the collection of the Bill Hart)

Bill Hart was kind enough to mail me his multi-frame exhibit of various auxiliary markings from New York State to use as the basis for an article in an upcoming edition of *Excelsior*! The exhibit consists of both hand and machine cancels used as forwarding, misdirected, receiving, address deficiency, and postage due markings. While perusing the exhibit pages, one cover jumped out at me as being highly unusual and worthy of our Cover of the Issue. Seen above it is a special delivery cover mailed from Springfield, Massachusetts on July 4, 1901. The cover was sent to Hudson (Columbia County), New York, where upon arrival, it received the very ornate boxed handstamp. The handstamp, enlarged 150%, is illustrated below.

