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EXCELSIOR!

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Editor's Box

This issue of *Excelsior!* started out a bit thinner than those of the recent past. The stream of contributed articles had slowed down somewhat. However, as always, our members seem to come through in the clutch. To all of those who were kind enough to submit an article or two, I wish to say "thank you". Now that good weather is finally making it feel like Spring (at least here in Kentucky), I imagine that fewer of us are spending as much time inside at our computers as we do during the long cold days of winter. But, I now make my plea for articles for the upcoming issue, due to be published in June. As you are probably aware we are on a quarterly publication schedule through September of this year in order to get our journal back on a semi-annual schedule beginning in March, 2010. I know asking for submissions every three months can be constraining, but we have many members out there who we haven't heard from. Please consider taking the time to send an article during the next three months. Share your knowledge with others. D.E.W.

ADIRONDAC, NY MANUSCRIPT COVER

By Glenn Estus

It all began with an email from fellow ESPHS member, Doug Penwell, telling me to look at a listing on eBay, the online auction site. At first I couldn't figure out why Doug had steered me towards the site: the title was "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 1852 Unstamped envelope to S".

Then when I saw the accompanying scan of the "unstamped envelope," my heart raced and I understood why Doug had sent me his email. As seen in **Figure 1**, the unstamped envelope was manuscript postmarked Adirondac, NY June 28/52 and sent to Annan in Dumfrieshire, Scotland.



Figure 1. This cover, sent to Annan, Dumfrieshire, Scotland, bears a June 28, 1852 manuscript cancel from Adirondac, NY. Adirondac is an Essex County discontinued post office (DPO). It was in operation from 1848–1855. Seen at right is the Annan receiving mark which is on the back of the cover.

Adirondac was a post office that was authorized August 3, 1848 and discontinued November 7, 1855. The only postmaster was Andrew Porteous. According to Arthur H. Masten, in his *"The Story of Adirondac"* (1968),

"A post office under (the name of Adirondac) was established through the efforts of Orlando Kellogg, Congressman from the Essex County District, and in October, 1848, Andrew Porteous received his commission as the first Postmaster.

"By the Government contract with the mail carrier, John Wright, the office at Adirondac was to be supplied with the mail twice a week from Schroon River, a distance of nineteen miles. His compensation was to be the net proceeds of postage collected at the office, not exceeding \$18.75 per quarter. The mail was then sent from Albany by way of Sandy Hill and Glens Falls." (Masten, 112)

Today, Adirondac is a ghost town. It was originally established as an iron mining town in the 1820s. In an 1854 brochure the town was described as having:

"1 Cupola Furnace; 1 Blast Furnace; 1 Forge and Puddling Furnace; 1 Stamping Mill; 1 Mill for driving small machinery; 1 Saw Mill; 1 Grist Mill or Mill for grinding feed; 1 Hay Scales; 2 Kilns for roasting ore; 1 Brick House; 1 Granary; 1 Tool House; 1 Blacksmith shop; 1 Carpenter shop; 3 Coal Kilns; 6 Coal Houses; 1 Long Wood house; 1 Store for merchandise; 1 Ice house; 1 Powder house; 1 Large Boarding house; 16 dwelling houses for workmen; 1 School House; 3 Large Barns; several Cow Stables and Cattle Sheds; 1 Piggery; 1 Building with Steaming apparatus." (Masten, 131)

By 1859, the village was deserted (Masten, 144). A huge flood in 1856 plus the financial panic of 1857 doomed the mining company and town. Today the deserted town is part of the Town of Newcomb. An excellent online resource for more information about Adirondac is found at www.aarch.org/archives/leeman.html .

In my collecting of Essex County covers for over 40 years, I have never seen another example from this post office. When I showed a photocopy of this cover to postal history dealer Elwyn Doubleday he also said that he had never seen an example from Adirondac.

I would have been very satisfied with an ordinary domestic rate cover but this cover was prepaid for the 24¢ Treaty rate to GB and was carried by American packet across the Atlantic on Havre Line *Franklin*, which left New York City on July 3 and arrived in Southampton on July 14. Because an American ship carried the letter, GB was only entitled to its inland postage, and the red 3 is a US credit to GB for that purpose. If a British ship had carried the letter, the prepayment would still have been 24¢, but the credit would have been 19¢ (3¢ GB inland plus 16¢ packet postage).

All in all, this is a very interesting cover. Even more interesting is where it was located. The seller of the cover was the Barcelona Spain stamp auction house Soler y Llach. Actually the listing was not an auction, but a BUY IT NOW sale. As you can imagine I quickly clicked on the BUY IT NOW button and purchased this gem.

Thanks, Doug, for alerting me to this gem!

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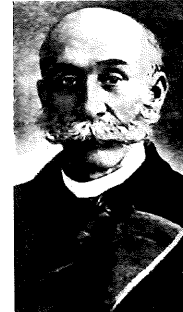
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DR. KILMER OF BINGHAMTON: SWAMP-ROOT REMEDY

By David E. Williams

Dr. Sylvester Andral Kilmer, MD was born in Cobleskill, New York on December 19, 1840. He studied under numerous well known doctors and either attended or took courses from a half dozen medical schools. He earned his Doctor of Medicine degree and started his own practice of medicine as a country physician at Barnerville, Schoharie County, New York. He moved to Binghamton, New York where he initially practiced as a visiting physician, making house calls throughout Binghamton and the surrounding areas.



S. ANDRAL KILMER, M. D.
Binghamton, N. Y.

Besides being a practicing physician, he set up a business in Binghamton, NY around 1878 where he developed a line of proprietary medicines, ointments, and pills. His younger brother Jonas M. Kilmer joined him in the business around 1881. By 1882, they had expanded their local sales so greatly that they had to expand their dispensary. A five story building, was constructed which contained a modern laboratory and the most up to date bottling equipment. At peak production they could fill 2000 bottles hourly. The original building burned in 1899 and was replaced by a six story building in 1903. A picture of that building, taken many years later, is seen in **Figure 1**. The building still stands today at 141 Chenango Street, and houses several small enterprises as well as private office space.



Figure 1. The Kilmer Building, built in 1902 at 141 Chenango Street still stands today as a testament to a family with much influence in the economic history of Binghamton, N.Y.

In 1892, Jonas Kilmer bought out his brother and brought in Willis Sharpe Kilmer, Jonas' son, as head of advertising. From this point forward, business blossomed. Advertising appeared nationwide and offices were built in other cities in the United States and in South America.

So, what does all of this have to do with postal history, you may ask. Like so many businesses of the day, the Kilmers used the mails as a means of reaching out to the rest of the country and the world. The low cost third class postage rates, in combination with colorful and intricately designed advertising envelopes, helped spread the word of Swamp Root and the other patent medicines produced by the Kilmer Company. Nationwide, drug stores and other potential distributors were encouraged to carry their products. In addition, advertisements often offered the public a chance to obtain a free sample of Swamp Root for the asking. These could be obtained either by asking their local druggist to order it for them or by directly contacting the company and having the product delivered directly to the customer. **Figure 2** illustrates an early Kilmer

advertising cover from 1886 that was recently seen on eBay. This cover features the famous portrait of Dr. Kilmer, the company founder. His image continued to be used well into the early 20th century, even though he had been bought out of the business by his brother in 1892. Unfortunately, the author was not the successful bidder on this item.

Figure 2.

Seen here is a very ornate advertising cover for Dr. Kilmer & Co. from 1886. A bottle of Swamp Root is seen along with some of the company's other medicines.

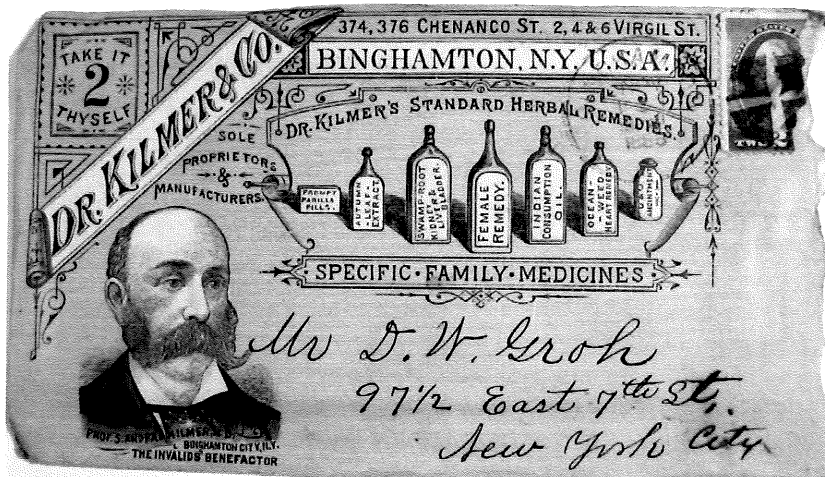


Figure 3 below shows another typical Dr. Kilmer and Co advertising cover mailed in 1897 from Binghamton, New York to Sandusky, Ohio.



Figure 3.

A cover mailed from Binghamton, NY in 1897 bearing the ornate advertising for Dr. Kilmer & Co. headquartered in Binghamton with branches in Chicago, Ill, Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, and Kingston, Jamaica. The 1¢ blue Bureau issue paid the 2 ounce single piece 3rd class rate. The cancel is a Barry Type F2. It is found from Binghamton in 1896 and 1897.

Utilizing Willis' keen sense of marketing, ads were placed in most major newspapers of the day promoting Swamp Root as the cure all for numerous ailments. Testimonials were obtained from individuals from all walks of life and these were used in large glowing ads placed in newspapers nationwide. Seen below in **Figure 4** is an ad that appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1901 which features an endorsement for Kilmer's Swamp Root by several letter carriers from Binghamton, New York.

Figure 4.

An ad from the April 28, 1901 *San Francisco Chronicle* for Kilmer's Swamp-Root in which Binghamton, NY letter carrier C. E. Stebbins touts the benefits of the product for the cure of kidney disease. He felt his disease was the result of "carrying heavy loads and continual exposure". He states that he tried Swamp-Root which is "prepared in his own city" and saw marked improvement and, in time, a complete cure.

In turn he recommended the product to two of his fellow carriers. Both E. J. Casey and S. C. Sweeney saw the same results, and in turn endorsed the statement of Stebbins.

Of special interest is the signed statement by Postmaster James H. Roberts vouching for the integrity and honesty of the three carriers.



To Readers of the "Chronicle,"

For some time I suffered from a serious kidney trouble and also gravel (calculi), which I believe was the result of carrying heavy loads and continual exposure. I had an almost continual pain in my back, was weak and run down generally. I fully realized that kidney disease was not only remarkably prevalent, but was also one of the greatest dangers of my own employment, as a large percentage of the deaths among letter carriers is due to some form of kidney trouble. After using other remedies without satisfaction, I decided to try Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root, which is prepared in my own city and recommended by so many Binghamton people. Within a short time I realized a marked improvement, and in a reasonable time a complete cure was accomplished. It has been some time since I have had to use any of the remedy and I have no fear of a recurrence of the trouble. Two of my fellow carriers (E. J. Casey and S. C. Sweeney) have also used Swamp-Root for about the same difficulty as mine and with exactly the same results, and they gladly join me in recommending the remedy to any one who suffers from kidney, liver or bladder disorders. Very truly yours,

E. J. CASEY, } We endorse the
S. C. SWEENEY, } above statement.

Chas. E. Stebbins

BINGHAMTON (N. Y.), January 7, 1901.

C. E. Stebbins has been in the employ of the Binghamton Postoffice for fifteen years, E. J. Casey for ten years and S. C. Sweeney for seven years. This long service speaks volumes of their integrity, honest and efficient work.

James H. Roberts (J. H. ROBERTS, P. M.)

Probably the most famous philatelic activity by Dr. Kilmer & Co. was their two week use of revenue provisional overprints in July 1898 on First Bureau postage stamps. According to the 2009 *Scott Specialized Catalog*, the U.S. "Battleship" revenue stamps were not available to meet the July 1, 1898 effective date of the new taxes on proprietary medicines. The Kilmer Company utilized three different types of overprints. Type "a" overprints do not contain the city name and are all dated July 5, 1898. Although considered "trials" it is believed that they were actually used in the course of business. Types "b" and "c" both include Binghamton, N.Y. in the precancel. The only difference between the two is that in the Type "b" overprints, "Dr. K. & Co." has serifs, while the Type "c" overprints are without serifs. The Type "c" overprints are known dated July 7, 9, and 11 to 14, 1898. The Type "b" overprints are known from these same dates as well as July 6, 1898. An example of one of these provisional overprints is seen below in **Figure 5**. By the end of July, the correct "Battleship" revenue stamps were available for Dr. Kilmer to overprint.

Figure 5.

Illustrated here is a Type "b" Dr. Kilmer and Company provisional proprietary revenue overprint on a 3¢ purple First Bureau issue, dated "7-12-'98."



After being bought out of the business in 1892, Dr. Sylvester Andral Kilmer began another famous enterprise which ultimately had an effect on the postal history of Broome County, New York. He built a sanitarium at Osborne Hollow and advertised its mineral spring as a health spa. The grounds consisted of a four story hotel, a spring

house with a large stone fountain flowing with a constant stream of sulphur water, and a bath house where one could have a steam bath for \$3.00 or could soak in the bathing pool. Guests would come from miles around to have their cancers treated. A combination of water treatments and medical plasters were claimed to have removed cancers of various forms from people who came there for a cure.

Dr. Kilmer's newest enterprise and his reputation led to his final endeavor of interest to postal historians. He evidently had much clout with the local population of Osborne Hollow, as he was able to convince them (and the Post Office Department) to change the name of the quaint little hamlet, which had been named after Revolutionary War veteran and early settler Eli Osborne, to Sanitaria Springs in 1892. **Figure 6** shows an 1895 cover bearing the name of the new post office.

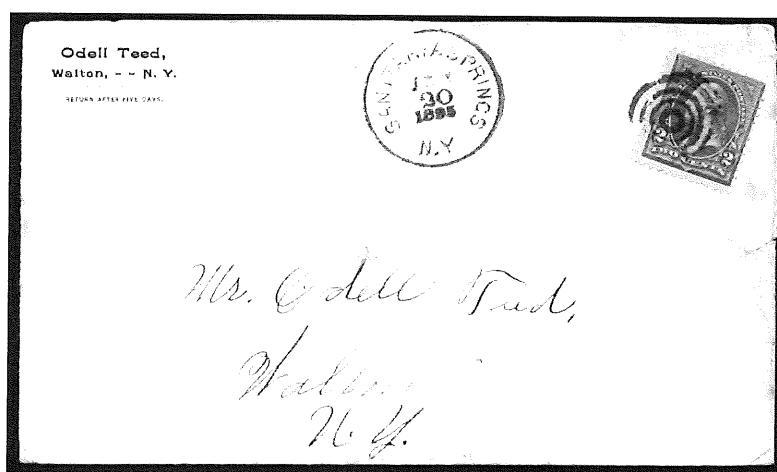


Figure 6.

On March 22, 1892 the name of the post office at Osborne Hollow, NY was changed to Sanitaria Springs. Seen here is a cover mailed from Sanitaria Springs, NY in 1895.

Interestingly enough, Kilmer's Swamp Root is still available for purchase today on the internet; however it is no longer connected in any way to the Kilmer family. When asked what Swamp Root was good for Willis Kilmer once replied, "*About a million dollars a year!*"

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RFD CANCELS – A Follow-up

By William J. Hart

In *Excelsior!* Whole No.2 (March 2004), the reader was exposed to a variety of manuscript cancel types, the varieties largely reflecting the diligence of the carrier. From the data of reported RFD cancels the demand for the carrier to participate in the canceling procedure slowly faded away in spite of the fact that the number of routes continued to increase until 1919. A summary of the data provided in Richow's Encyclopedia, where the dates were available, and from this writer's collection of 400 manuscript examples shows that manuscript markings peaked in 1910, declined after 1913, and were scarce after 1916.

The lack of monitoring and the simplicity of returning the mail for office canceling have resulted in a relative scarcity of route markings that were approved after the P.O.D. stopped providing hand stamps. There is an alternative that departs from the rigorous definition of postal history – that of collecting mail identified by addressee. To stimulate the reader's interest, here are several examples.

Figure 1 illustrates a cover mailed in 1907 from Route No. 2 Kirkville (Onondaga County), New York to an addressee at Route No. 1 Kirkville. In this case the letter was picked up by the Route No. 2 carrier, returned for cancelling at the post office, and then delivered to the addressee by the Route No. 1 carrier. Notice the lack of carrier markings even as early as 1907.

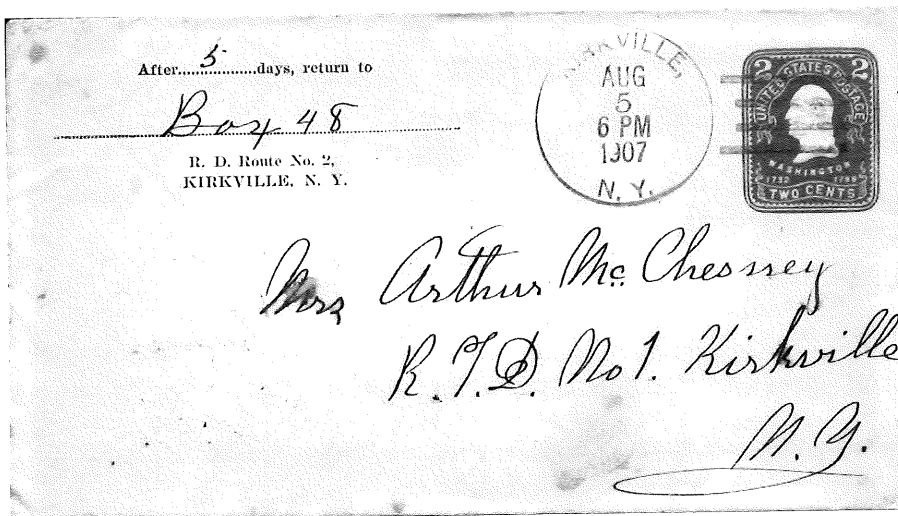


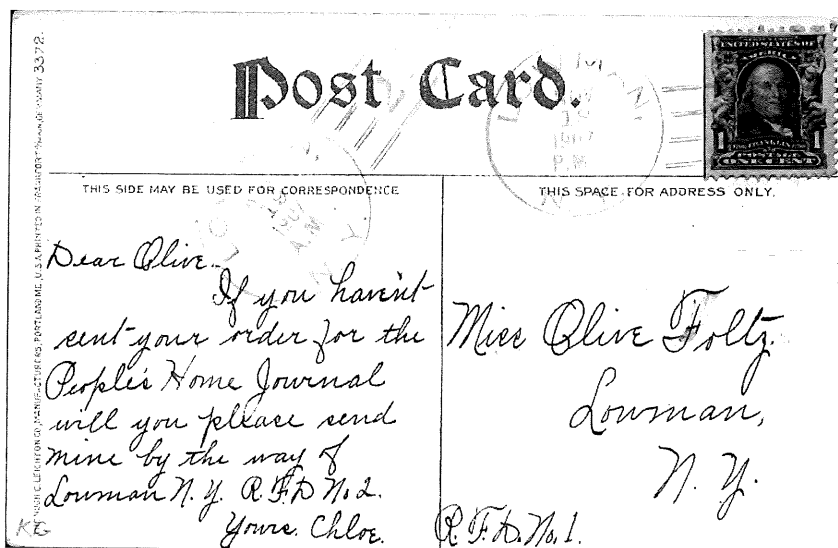
Figure 1.

Shown here is a cover from Kirkville, N.Y. with no RFD manuscript markings from either Route 1 or Route 2.

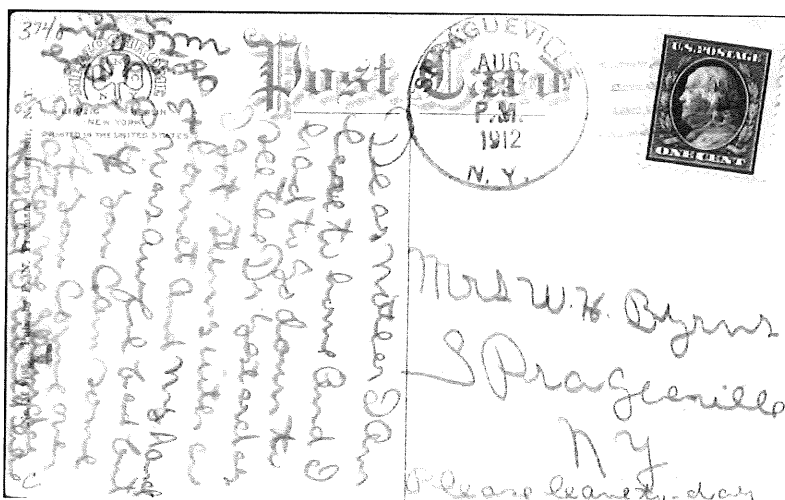
Kirkville RFD hand cancels are known from both Routes 1 and 2.

The post card in **Figure 2** shows similar example from Lowman (Chemung County), New York. In this case the two Doane cancels verify handling of the card on successive days. The card was evidently picked up by the Route No. 2 carrier and taken back to the post office where it received the November 18, 1907 circular date stamp (CDS). The card was subsequently delivered the next day to Miss Foltz on Route No. 1 as evidenced by the second CDS. RFD routes for Lowman were approved in 1904.

Lowman RFD examples are known to exist with manuscript cancels.



Spragueville (Saint Lawrence County), New York had one RFD route from 1902 to 1931. No RFD cancels are reported from there. However evidence of this route may be seen in the post card shown. Note the message **"Please leave to-day"** at the bottom of the address side of the card. This implies that the card was expected to be delivered "down the line". Hence, the route was alive and well.



List of Offices by County having RFD routes by July 1, 1903

County	Office	Date	Routes	Dates
CHN	Greene	1901	1	1-Nov
CHN	Greene	1903	1	1-Jul
CHN	Guilford	1903	2	1-Jul
CHN	New Berlin	1901	1	1-Mar
CHN	Norwich	1902	2	1-Apr
CHN	Norwich	1903	2	1-May
CHN	Oxford	1901	2	1-Nov
CHN	Oxford	1903	1	1-Jul
CHN	Sherburne	1901	1	1-Mar
CHN	Sherburne	1903	2	2-Mar

The listing to the right was omitted from the tables contained in the original article.

A NEW BUT OLD COVER

By Bob Bramwell

Pursuing all variety of Schenectady postmarks, I have started looking for newer and newer covers. I recently bought the item illustrated in **Figure 1** on eBay because I had not seen the stylish ellipse with the numeral at center before. I was also attracted to what seems to be a three-part franking and a two-part cancellation.

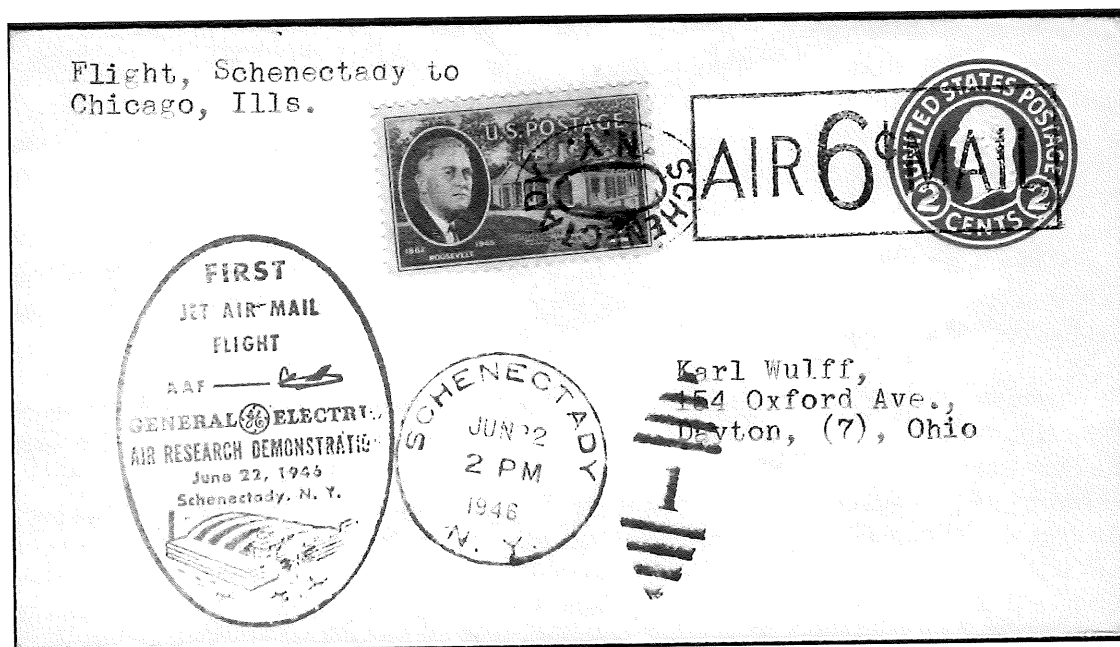


Figure 1. The cachet commemorates the first flight to carry U.S. Air Mail aboard a jet airplane. The airplane was powered by General Electric engines, so G.E. gets noted. Air Research Demonstration refers to an activity of the Army Air Force (AAF) Air Research Division, which evolved into NASA.

Why is this a new but old cover? The envelope itself is an example of Scott U429, Die 1. This preprinted 2¢ envelope was produced by the International Envelope Corp. of Dayton, Ohio between December, 1915 and sometime in 1932. So I would say that in 1946 it was pretty old. In "Envelope Years" you might consider it a grandfather. Who would keep a bunch of envelopes around for 20 years? Yeah, it would have to have been the Post Office Department.

But what is the story of the black 6¢ Air Mail overprint? When the Air Mail rate increased from 6¢ to 8¢ in March, 1944, a "Concession Rate" of 6¢ per half ounce was maintained for letters from military personnel. Everyone is probably familiar with the orange 6¢ air mail envelope (UC3 and beyond) featuring a Fairchild FC-2 aircraft.

It was about a year later that the Post Office Department decided to make use of their cache of old 2¢ envelopes, as reported in *Airpost Journal*, Vol. 79, #8, August 2008 (the article focused on overprint fakes):

"George Sloane¹ maintained a running commentary on these surcharges in his regular column in the 1945 issues of Stamps. Genuine surcharges were applied by automatic canceling machines. The Post Office Department has reported

'There were ten canceling machine dies prepared...all of which were used without re-engraving.' The ten city types of genuine boxed 6¢ air mail surcharges were first described by Antony Sturm in Philately."

Neither the cities where this overprinting was done, nor the dates when it was done, are given, and Scott's Specialized gives only the year 1945. ***Is there an EKU recorded for UC8?***

The UC8 boxed 6¢ surcharge, which raised the postage from 2¢ to 6¢, was intended only to meet demand for the 6¢ "concession rate" military mail and was originally coded by Scott as UCM1. However, as stores of this surcharged envelope came into dealer and collector hands the Post Office Department recognized it for general use as well. So I wonder how widely available this surcharged envelope would have been in 1946. In addition to not knowing in what ten cities the envelope was overprinted, I do not know how many were created. ***Does anyone know the printing history of UC8?*** Mr. Wulff lived in Dayton, which happens to be the home of the company that produced the total production of U429. Is this more than a coincidence? I have no idea. But Mr. Wulff knew enough to add 2¢ additional postage to make the 1946 rate for domestic usage.

The result is a nice multiple franking, which the Schenectady P.O. cancelled with nice strikes of both the duplexed 30mm CDS of the period and what appears to be the Schenectady "registered" double oval. Interestingly, the CDS does not tie to anything.

Beyond the physical circumstances of the envelope, there are questions about the nature of the event itself. The Army Air Force Air Research Division was doing work with the General Electric Company, presumably on jet engines. But perhaps more important for our purposes: ***What role did the Post Office Department play in this, and why?*** If this were a "demonstration" of a jet aircraft suitable for air transport use, why was an airframe manufacturer not publicly involved? If this were a use of military jet aircraft (as it most likely was), what was the point of placing mail on the aircraft for its flight from Schenectady to Chicago, except to pay a small percentage of the cost of the flight and bring some extra attention? And ***was this truly the first jet flight on which mail was officially carried?*** Let's hear from our New York State experts.

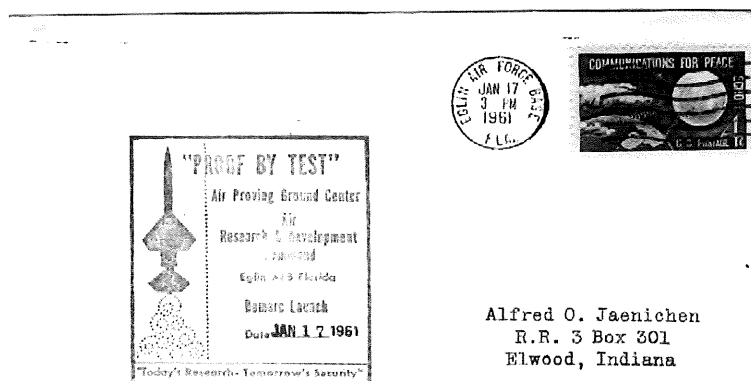


Figure 2. The Air Research Division continued its "demonstrations" at its 1961 home base of Elgin AFB, but they apparently no longer carried air mail.

NEW YORK STATE SERVICE MARKINGS

Part II: Address Deficiency Service

From an Exhibit by William J. Hart

[This is the second part of a three part series based on an exhibit sent to me by Bill Hart last year. As in Part I, Bill's exhibit write ups form the basis for the article. I have taken the liberty of adding additional details and supplying appropriate captions for the illustrations. D.E.W.]

Address deficiency service can be best described as the process or processes that the post office went through to deliver a piece of mail where the address of the recipient is either incomplete or inaccurate. Examples of such problems could be mail sent to a non existent post office or mail with a missing street number, or state. Included in the scope of address deficiency service would be those letters that are advertised or called out as a means of trying to locate the intended recipient. Address deficiency service gave rise to the use of various types of auxiliary markings and examples of these will be illustrated in this article.

The post card seen in **Figure 1** shows what can happen when there are two places with the same name, but only one has a post office. It was sent from Holmesville (Chenango County) on April 7, 1909 to the then current Loomis (Sullivan County) which opened in 1908. But Miss Allen lived in an earlier Loomis (Delaware County) which had been discontinued in 1906 and was served by the Walton post office. After determining that Miss Allen did not live in Loomis, the black “unknown” handstamp was applied. Even though they were over 40 miles away from Walton, postal workers were able to suggest R[oute] #3 Walton as the correct address and sent the piece on its way to Walton on April 8th. Perhaps they were familiar with the former Loomis post office in Delaware County.

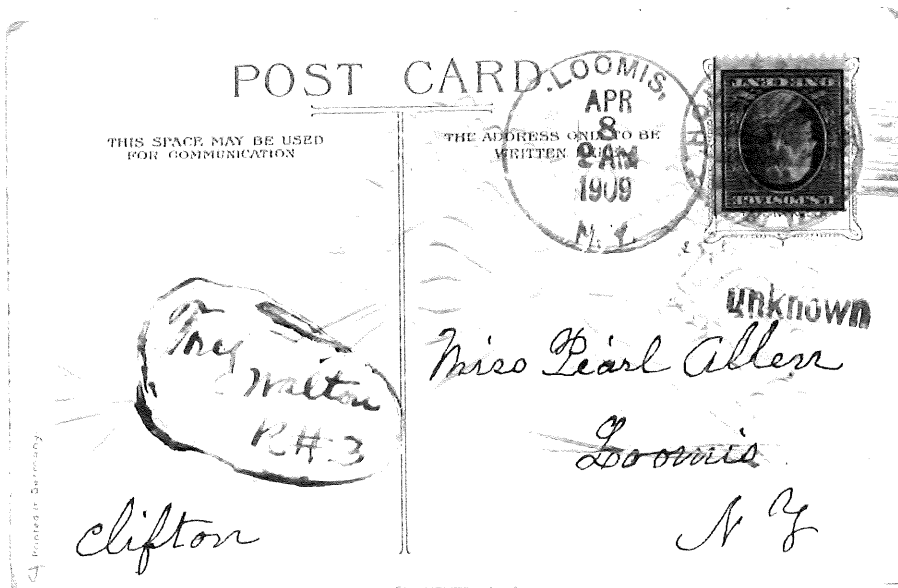


Figure 1.

This post card has a black **unknown** handstamp from Loomis, NY. It was then sent on to Walton with the suggestion to try R[oute] #3.

Figure 2 illustrates an auxiliary marking from Albany, NY, where a comprehensive directory was available to post office personnel. The sender used a town name—Columbia—that

never existed in Rens[sealer] County. The Albany post office evidently found Mrs. Horton in their directory, and sent the post card on its way to East Poestenkill (DPO 1851-1919) after applying the two-line auxiliary marking **"DEFICIENCY IN ADDRESS / SUPPLIED BY ALBANY, N.Y. P.O"** Having been mailed from Brooklyn on December 29, 1908, the card finally reached East Poestenkill on January 6, 1909.

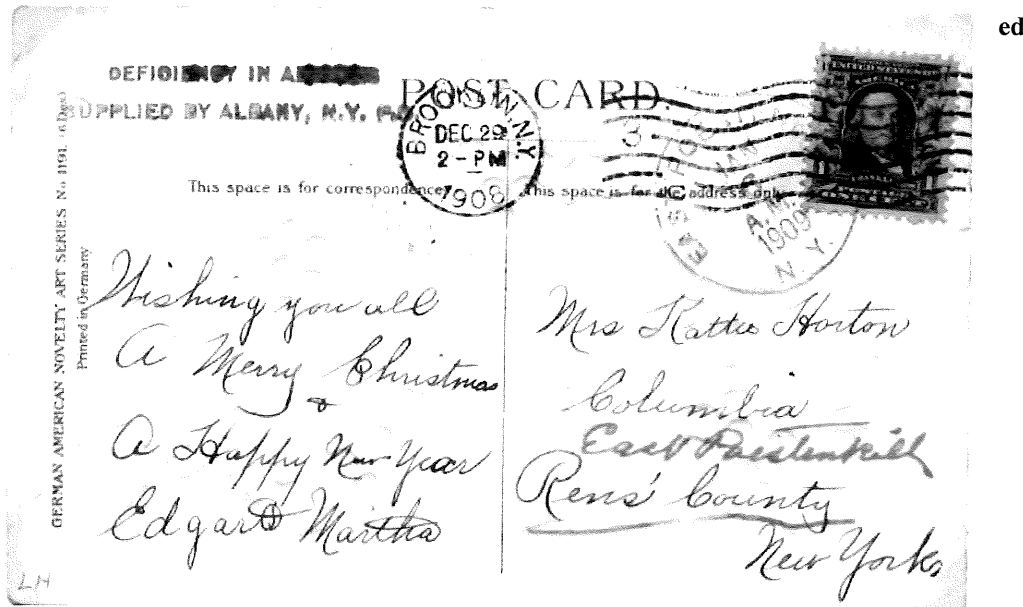
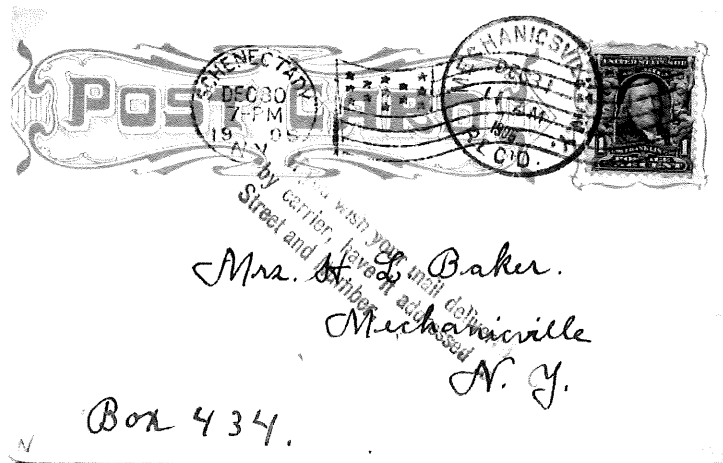


Figure2. This post card was sent through Albany for directory service and then forwarded to East Poestenkill.

An interesting handstamp from Mechanicsville (Saratoga County) appears in **Figure 3** below. The three line **purple** handstamp is a recommendation to a box holder to have mail addressed to a street and number. Perhaps this was a promotion of a new service being offered. The post card was mailed from Schenectady, NY on December 30, 1906 and arrived in Mechanicsville the next day as seen in the circular receiving cancel.

Figure 3. A postcard mailed to Mechanicsville, NY in 1906 where a purple three line handstamp reading **If you wish your mail delivered by carrier have it addressed to Street and Number** was applied.



The post card in **Figure 4** was mailed from Rochester, NY (Monroe County) to Batavia, NY (Genesee County). When delivery to 126 West Main Street was attempted, the mail carrier could find no place to leave the mail. Thus the card was returned

to the Batavia post office where the two line handstamp **Returned to Postoffice by Carrier / No. No place to leave mail** was applied. Perhaps this card was sent to a new address which had no mailbox in place.

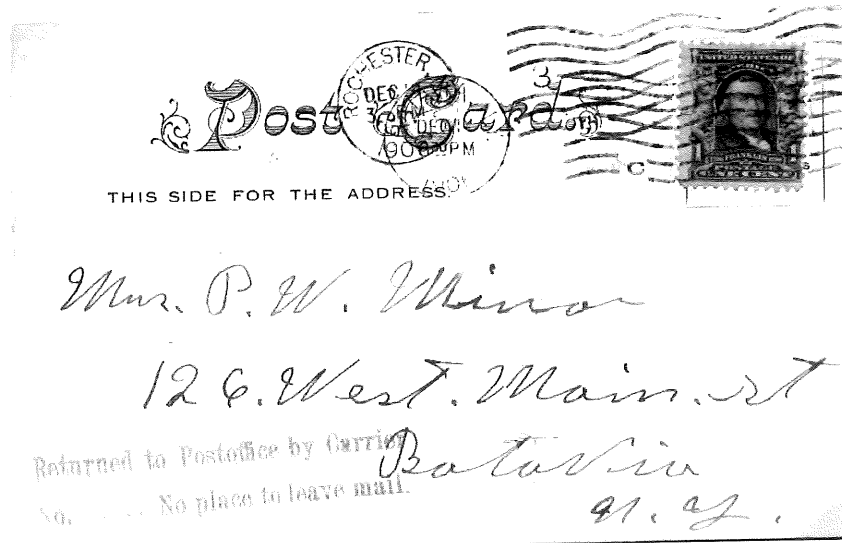


Figure 4. A post card mailed in 1906 to Batavia, NY. It could not be delivered since there was no place to leave the mail, as noted by the two line auxiliary marking at bottom left.

The two post cards seen in **Figure 5** originated in Niagara Falls, NY and show two different styles of auxiliary address deficiency markings. Both were possibly sent to friends or relatives by visitors to the city. In the case of the upper right card, the sender misspelled the town

Figure 5. Two different styles of address deficiency markings from Niagara Falls, NY.



name, abbreviated the county name and omitted the name of the state. The Niagara Falls post office was able to ascertain that the intended recipient lived in Keewaydin, Clearfield County, PA. A nicely struck **purple**, 26mm circular deficiency in address marking shows that the address was supplied by the Niagara Falls post office.

The lower left post card in **Figure 5** appears to have been sent by a visitor from the “big city.” Evidently, the Niagara Falls post office first checked the local directory and, not finding the Wall Street address therein, applied the **NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. / NOT IN DIRECTORY** and the **Deficiency in Address** hand stamps. The fact that the post office was eventually able to determine that the intended recipient was in Brooklyn as indicated by the **BROOKLYN, N.Y.** hand stamp, suggests that a very extensive reference source was available to them.

The next couple of examples illustrate how in bygone days the Post Office Department tried harder when it came to dealing with address discrepancies. The letter seen in **Figure 6** was mailed from Petersburg (Rensselaer County) in 1903 and was addressed to Middletown, Saratoga Co. Middletown had not existed in Saratoga County since 1829.

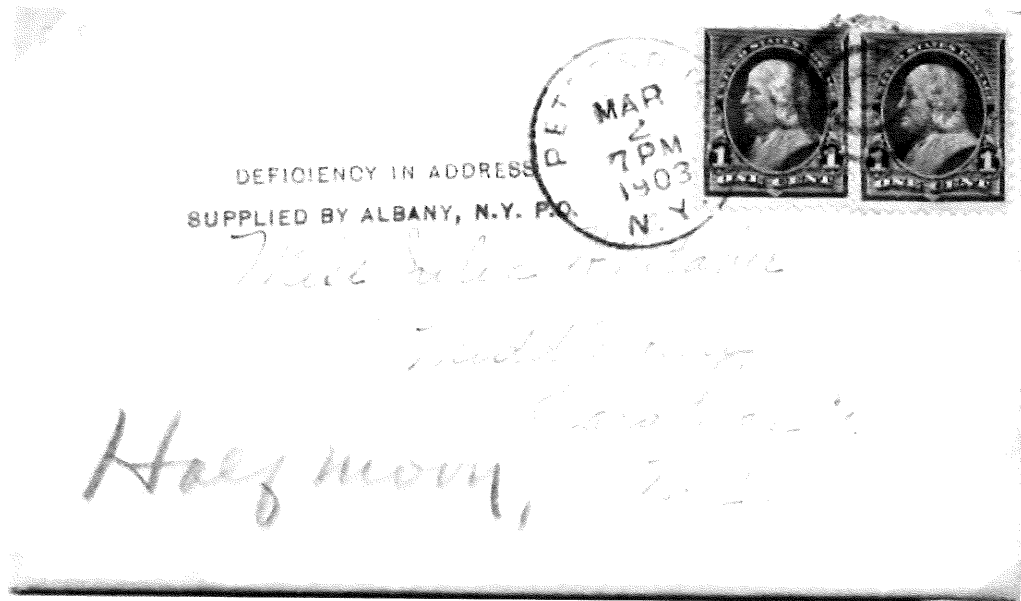


Figure 6. The Albany post office redirected the above letter to Half Moon (Saratoga County).

The letter passed through Albany and the post office there redirected the letter to Half Moon, Saratoga County and applied the **blue** two-line **DEFICIENCY IN ADDRESS / SUPPLIED BY ALBANY, N.Y. P.O.** handstamp. What is not obvious to the casual observer is that between 1829 and 1835, the post office of Half Moon was known as North Middletown; and as Middletown between 1819 and 1829.

Figure 7 shows a post card mailed from the Netherlands to Newburgh (Orange County) in 1911. It was addressed to a street address of 27 Crown St. There is a manuscript mark of “**no such st(reet)**” and a **purple** straight line stamp of “**Not in City Directory.**” At that point the Deficiency Service of the Newburgh post office did its job and provided the correction of Kingston and left their **purple** circular deficiency marking.

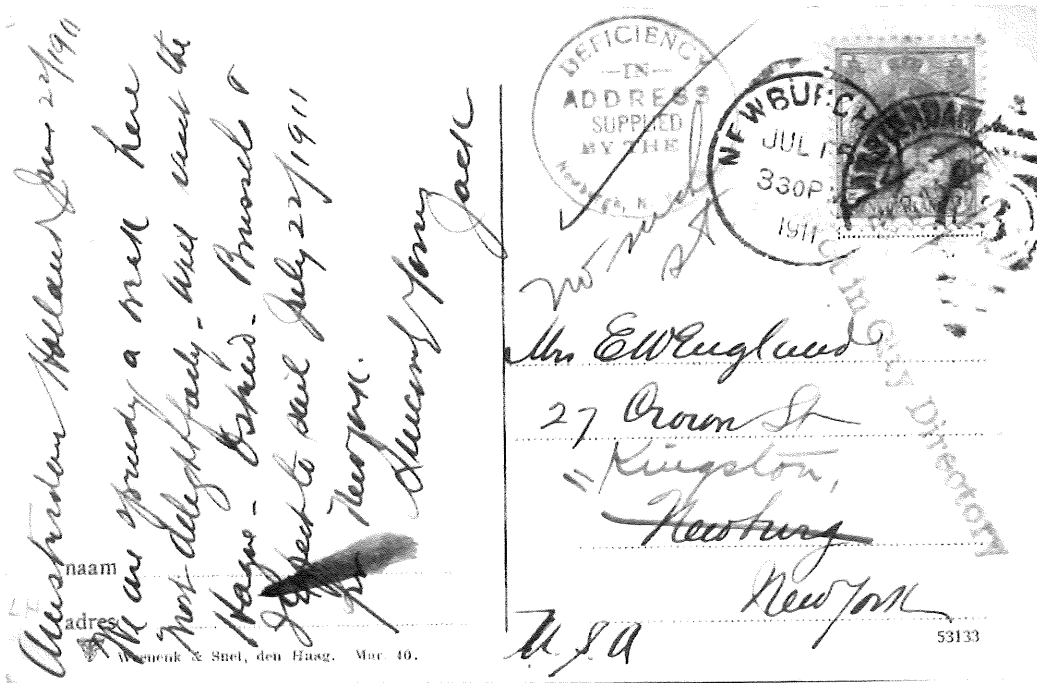
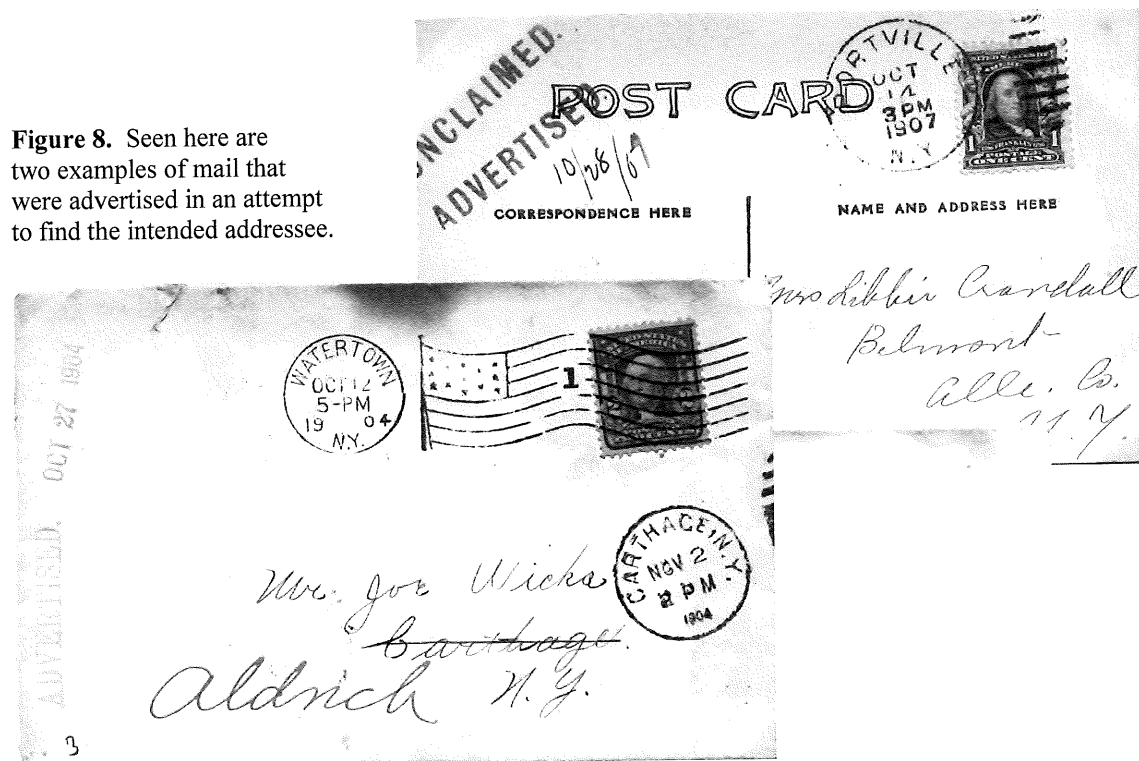


Figure 7. The Newburgh post office did its job investigating the incorrect address on this post card and sent it on its way to Kingston in Ulster County.

Advertised mail is very uncommon in the twentieth century. A couple of advertised mail pieces are seen below in **Figure 8**.



The post card in the upper right of **Figure 8** was sent to Belmont, Allegany County on October 14, 1907. Since the recipient was not known, the card was advertised on October 28 as

noted by the manuscript date written under the straight line **ADVERTISED** handstamp. The card was not claimed and the straight-line **UNCLAIMED** marking was subsequently applied. It so happens that the message on the reverse side of the card is from a worried friend.

The letter in the lower left of **Figure 8** was advertised two weeks after having been received in Carthage (Jefferson County) as indicated by the handstamps **ADVERTISED** and **OCT 27 1904**. The advertising appears to have been successful, as the letter was redirected to Aldrich (Saint Lawrence County) on November 2 with a backstamp of receipt on November 3.

In lieu of being advertised, some mail bears the phrase “**CALLED OUT**”. This phrase generally implies that the carriers were canvassed for knowledge of the addressee. One such letter, seen below in **Figure 9** bears a straight-line **Called Out** hand stamp. In this case, when the addressee was not found in the directory, as evidenced by the **Not in Directory** marking, the letter was called out. When no one could identify Mr. Kern as indicated by the several manuscript notations, the letter was evidently returned to the sender, as requested in the return address.

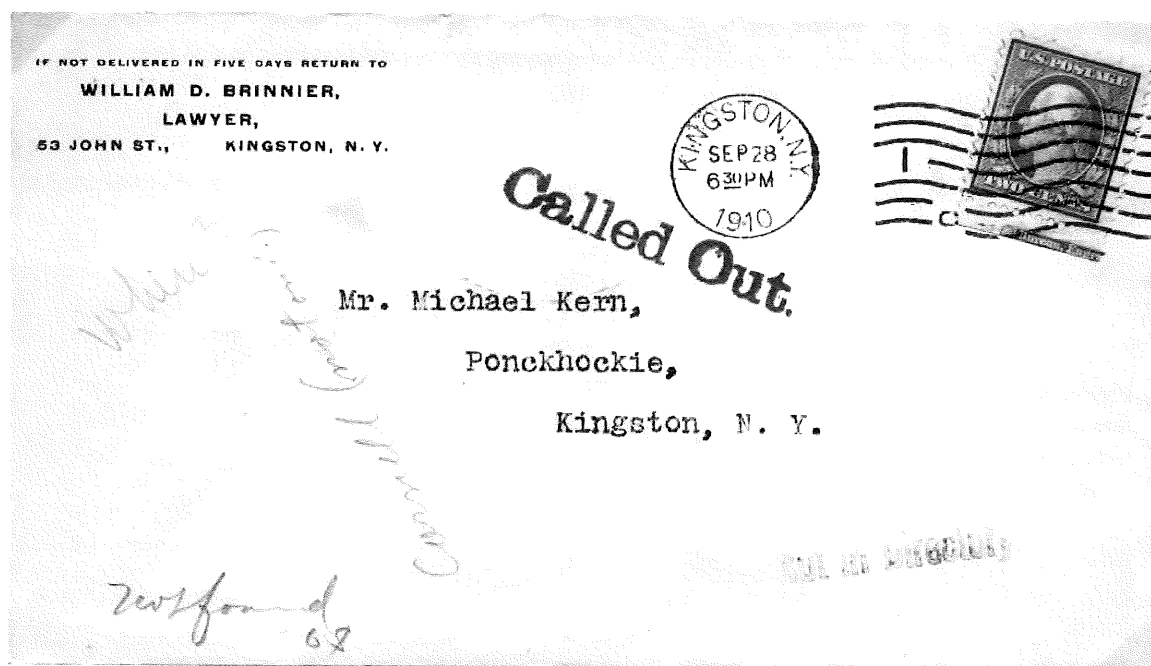


Figure 9. A letter with a **Called Out** hand stamp indicating an attempt to locate the intended addressee.

The letter seen on the next page in **Figure 10** was received in Syracuse (Onondaga County) on August 5, 1908. The sender added the notation “*lives 3 mi out city*” at the bottom left of the envelope. Evidently this did not help in finding the intended recipient as the envelope was stamped **CALLED OUT** that same day. The letter was held for two weeks before being marked with **UNCLAIMED** and **Returned for better directions** handstamps and an indistinct strike of a pointing hand auxiliary marking before being posted back to Rome with a Syracuse International machine cancel set up for transit mail (T) on August 20. It was received back in Rome the next day. Although not illustrated here, a return address does appear on the rear of the envelope.



Figure 10. This letter was called out, unclaimed and returned to sender for better directions.

A different auxiliary handstamp from Newburgh (Orange County), New York is illustrated in **Figure 11**. This card is an acknowledgement from Five Points Mission in New York City for a donation by Mrs. Craft who did not provide an address. She most likely never received the card.

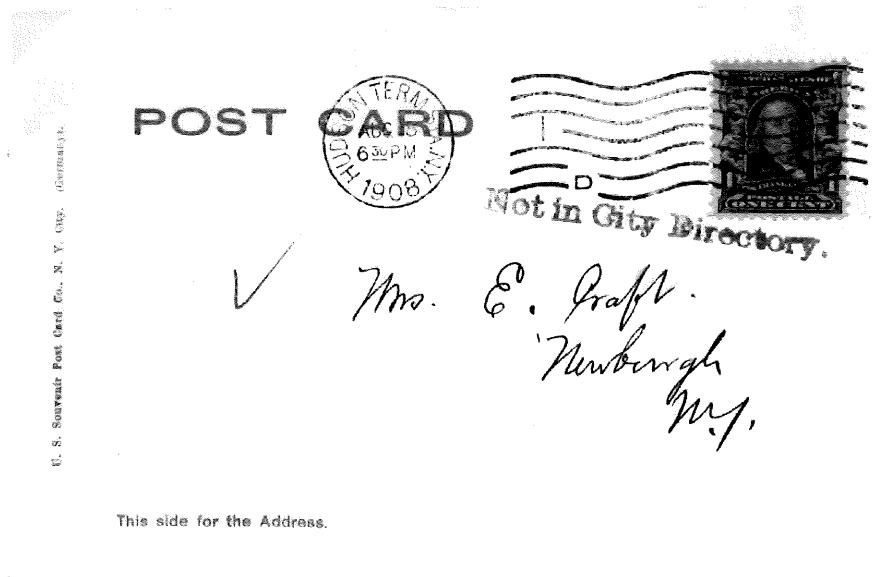


Figure 11. This Not in City Directory handstamp is from Newburgh, New York.

A rather interesting 4-line auxiliary handstamp from Stamford (Delaware County), New York is used on a post card as seen in **Figure 12** below. The clearly struck marking reads:

“Returned to sender by/Stamford, N.Y. P.O./Do not post again in this/envelope”.

In addition there is a magenta pointing hand reading **RETURN/TO/WRITER** with **UNCLAIMED** on the cuff which points to the return address at the left of the post card. The fact that Miss Rancher was not found seems most obvious. Why the 4-line handstamp was used in this case is puzzling, since the pointing hand marking says it all. Due to the nature of its message, the 4-line marking is really intended for use on envelopes not post cards.



Figure 12. Two different return to sender (writer) markings from Stamford (Delaware County), N.Y.

The post card shown in **Figure 13** is an example where successful delivery was eventually made. The card was mailed from St. Louis, MO on February 20, 1908 and was addressed to Mr. Roy Howe in care of the Broadway Y.M.C.A. in Buffalo (Erie County) New York. The addressee was evidently not there as evidenced by the **NOT THERE** marking and the manuscript "*not at Bway and Bailey 104 W*". A second manuscript notation of "*Mich. St*", and the February 26 General Delivery Buffalo (Sta. A) circular date stamp, suggests that delivery was made. The meaning of the initials at the top left of the post card is not known. They appear to read **D. S A**, although the last letter is unclear. They appear to have been made using the same ink as the **NOT THERE** handstamp. *[Can any of our readers suggest the meaning of these? Perhaps they refer to Directory Service? If any one has any ideas, please send them along to me. D.E.W.]*

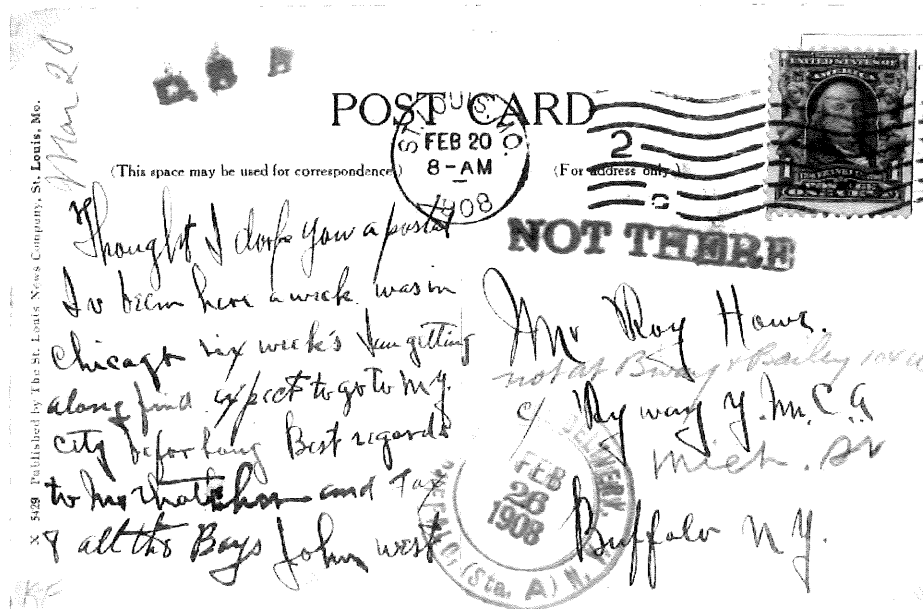


Figure 13. The Buffalo, NY post office was able to eventually track down Mr. Howe after a failed attempt at delivery caused by an incorrect address supplied by the sender of this post card.

The intended recipient of the letter seen in **Figure 14** evidently did not seek mail in General Delivery so the piece was marked **UNCLAIMED**. The recipient's name and address were crossed out, the **Ret'd to writer from Lyons, N.Y.** marking applied, and the letter was returned to the sender on November 29, 1904, six days after its original mailing. Note the two different postmarks used at Lyons. The latter postmark is a Doremus machine cancel. The "unopened" notation was most likely applied by the attorney's office upon return of the letter.

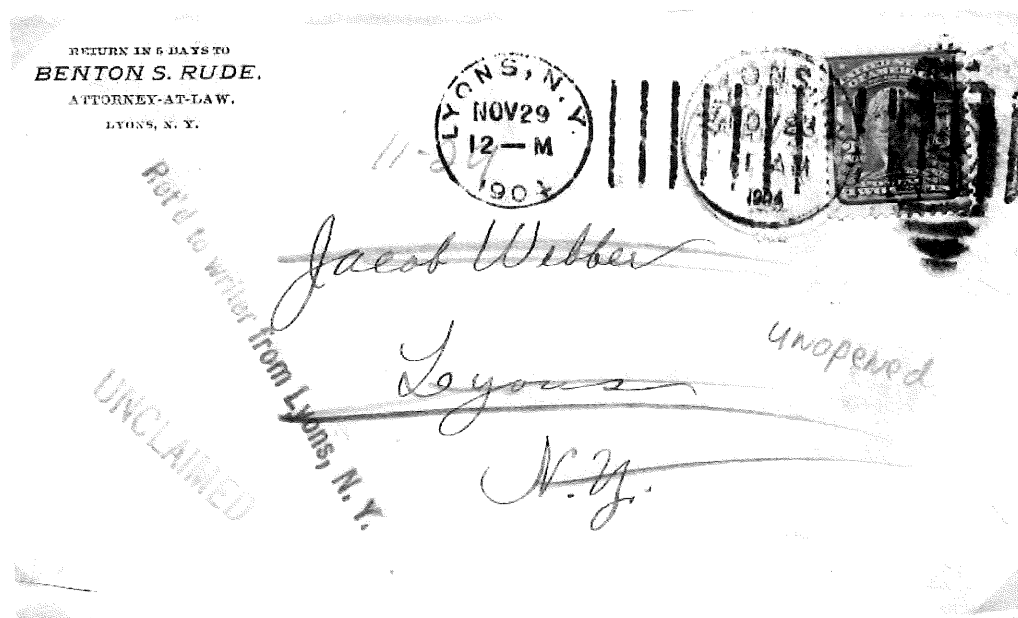


Figure 14. An unclaimed local letter from Lyons (Wayne County) which was returned to the writer.

In 1907, White Plains (Westchester County), New York had a population of about 15,000 people. The sender of the post card to Mr. Cypher in White Plains did not supply a street address for him as seen in **Figure 15**. The two rows of **magenta** numbers which appear near the center of the post card seem to indicate that the White Plains post office surveyed each of their carriers as to the whereabouts of Mr. Cypher. Each route was subsequently eliminated as the correct one, as indicated by the pencil markings through seven of the eight numbers. The correct route (#2) is indicated by a check mark. Also a weak straight-line hand stamp was affixed which appears to read “**RURAL No. 2 F.O.**” which may have meant that the carrier for route #2 found the occupant (F.O.). After locating Mr. Cypher, the White Plains post office applied the February 25 CDS and sent the card on its way to Mr. Cypher.

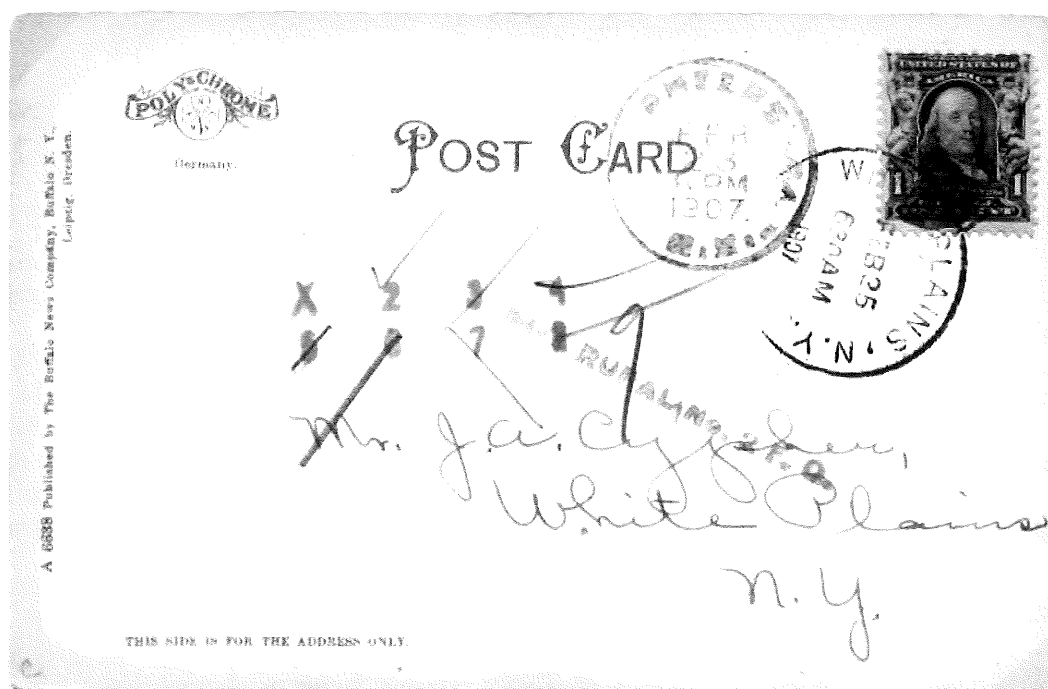


Figure 15. This post card from 1907 lacks a street address for Mr. Cypher of White Plains, New York. The White Plains post office appears to have successfully surveyed its rural carriers as to his whereabouts.

An unsealed and unfranked envelope which probably contained an invitation or an announcement is pictured in **Figure 16** on the following page. It was apparently held in general delivery at the Malone (Franklin County) post office. This cover raises several questions. First, notice the four **NOT CALLED FOR.** straight-line handstamps. The question here is when would each of the four have been applied? Was one applied on each day that the letter was not called for, or was one applied after a certain number of days that the letter sat in general delivery? Since there are no dates of any kind seen on the envelope, it is possible that the four markings would have indicated how long the article had been sitting in the post office awaiting to be picked up. The second question is why are there two Deficiency CDS cancels on the envelope? Did the clerk simply get carried away and applied two, or again does this go back to the previous possibility that each was applied after a certain time had elapsed sitting in general delivery? The final question has to do with the lack of postage. If the envelope had indeed contained an invitation or some type of announcement, why was the letter not marked “returned for postage” and sent back to the sending party? Was the recipient going to have to pay postage due when

picking up the letter? If anyone has any ideas on this mystery envelope, please send them along to your editor and they will be shared with the membership in a future issue of *Excelsior!*

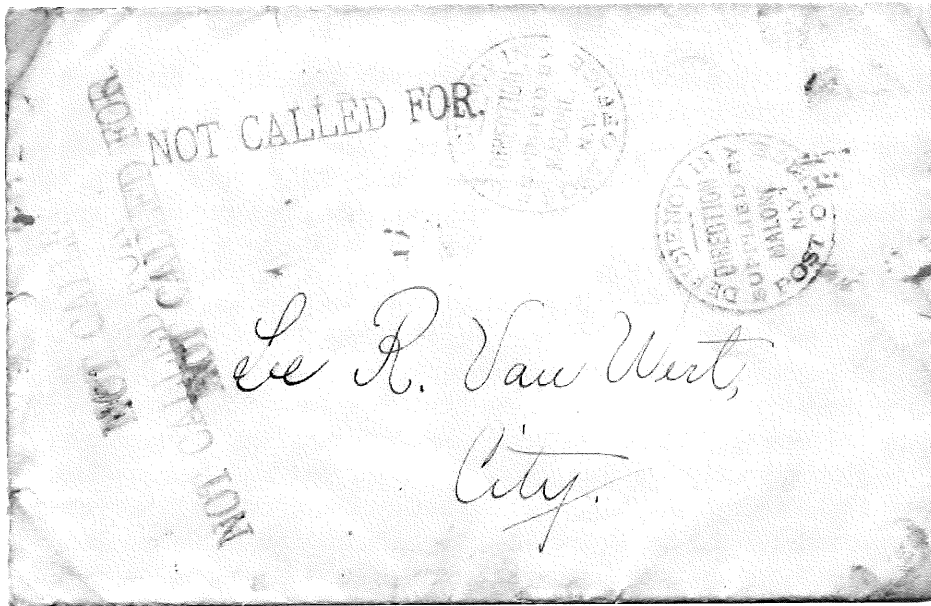


Figure 16. A letter held in general delivery at the Malone, NY post office. It appears neither to have been picked up or returned to the sender.

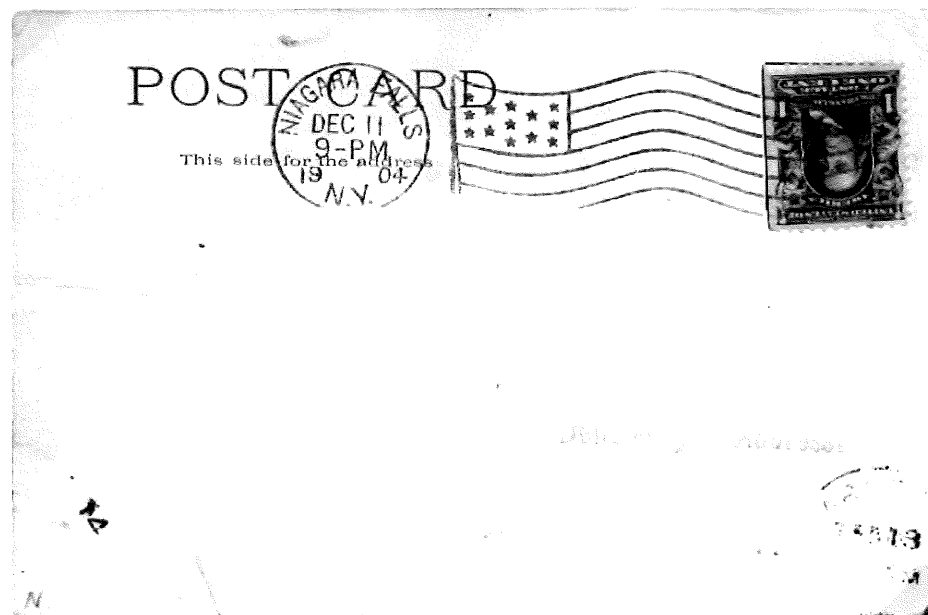


Figure 17. The ultimate address deficiency: Postmarked at Niagara Falls in 1904, the sender forgot to address the card. There is a simple greeting on the picture side. Note the weak **Deficiency in Address** marking near the bottom right of the post card.

LET'S HAVE A CONTEST

An Update from Bob Bramwell

It appears that we have a winner in our contest that appeared in the March 2008 *Excelsior!* Bob received an entry from Glen DeSalvo with a scan of a cover carried on a flight to Mineola and September 23, 1911. Glen obtained the scan from the NPM's ARAGO site. Glen states that he has in his possession a cover from the September 24th flight but not the September 23rd flight. Bob Bramwell supplied the following background and history leading up to this flight:

At a large meet in Garden City, Long Island, New York an attempt was to be made to fly the first air mail in the United States following the lead of the British two weeks earlier. Postmaster General Frank Hitchcock had attempted in November 1910 to fly a plane on a ship-to-shore flight to demonstrate a method to expedite the delivery of mail, etc. from arriving and departing transoceanic vessels. However, bad weather thwarted one attempt and a broken propeller, another [*This I think is the Hamburg-American Line demonstration and not the Navy. B.B.J.*]. Now at Garden City another attempt was to be made. Two prominent British flyers were approached to participate but declined politely when they learned that there was no remuneration. However Earl L. Ovington volunteered to make the flight. Although he flew a Curtis-type pusher biplane at Chicago he preferred his tractor-type monoplane and came to Garden City with an American-made Bleriot Queen... named the Dragonfly and bearing a bold number 13. Postmaster Hitchcock was disappointed with his choice as he expected his mail carrier's plane to be a two-seated with one seat reserved for him... The Bleriot was only capable of carrying one person. Not wishing to surrender the distinction of being the first air mail carrier he reported '*I immediately decided to postpone the flight until a two-seated plane could be procured.*' Eventually Hitchcock relented and he said, '*I handed the pouch to Ovington ...and permitted him to proceed on that first flight alone. For a time I felt rather deeply disappointed of thus failing in my ambition to become the first (air mail) carrier of record (in the United States). Afterward, when I became better acquainted with Earl Ovington and began to appreciate his fine qualities...I cease to begrudge him the honor he wrested from me.*'

Ovington took off on September 23, 1911 with a load of 640 letters and 1,280 postcards in a mail bag tucked between his legs – the first airplane carry of United States mail authorized by postal authorities. Ovington flew to Mineola, about three miles away, where, as agreed, he dropped the bag in a prearranged spot to waiting postal officials. The drop landed on time and on target, but unfortunately the bag broke on impact with the ground, scattering the mail hither and yon. After a scramble, all the letters and cards were retrieved and sent on the way via regular postal channels, all of them bearing the cancellation "AEROPLANE STATION No.1 – GARDEN CITY ESTATES, N.Y." For this feat Ovington was awarded the title "AIR MAIL PILOT No. 1."

Unfortunately, the scan taken from the ARAGO site is not clear enough to be reproduced in detail. However, a picture of Ovington's airplane taken on that historic day of September 23, 1911 can be found at:

<http://www.usps.com/postalhistory/images/photogallery/airmailpix/hist1601flipped.jpg>

Congratulations, Glen! We are working on a suitable prize for your efforts.

COLUMBIA COUNTY CORNER

By George DeKornfeld

Having now collected Columbia County postal history for many years, I was beyond elated to come across a second cover from Suydam that is cancelled by a Doane (see also *Columbia County Corner* in the March 2005 *Excelsior!*). And, as is oftentimes the case when the contents of a cover have also been preserved, this new find provides much to mull over, including some insights into life during the early 20th Century.

The Suydam Post Office, long since discontinued, was established on November 17, 1885 and ceased operations on January 31, 1912. The only remnant of the hamlet, which, in addition to the Post Office, once consisted of a hotel, a schoolhouse, tavern, and a general store, is a historic marker on New York State Route 22. Suydam also served as a stage stop along the Ancram and Salisbury Turnpike, a well-used mail route running through the county. Near Ancramdale, where I reside, Suydam was located in southwestern Columbia County.

This find, shown in **Figure 1**, is a 2¢ issue of 1903 government stamped envelope, paying the basic first class rate, with postage added to pay the registry fee of 8¢ (accomplished by the use of four, 2¢ Washington issues of 1906, type I, three of which are booklet stamps) for a total of 10¢ in franking. The cover was mailed to Iowa City, Iowa and is back stamped by a magenta, double circle Iowa City 'registered' circular date stamp, showing a transit time of four days. Three Doane 2/1's cancel the stamps; Doanes are reported used in Suydam between October 6, 1906 and December 20, 1910.

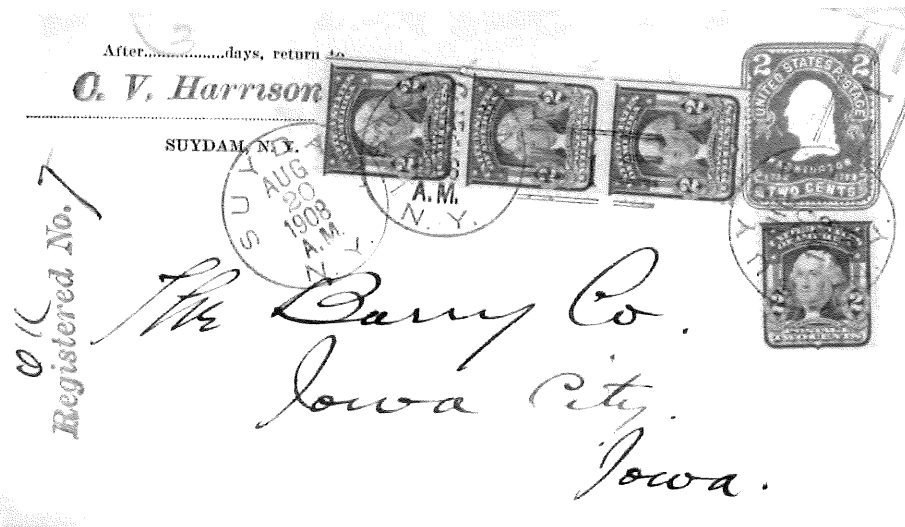


Figure 1. A registered letter sent by Suydam, NY postmaster C.V. Harrison in 1908. Doane Type 2/1 cancels tie the stamps to the cover. Postage paid was the 8¢ registry fee plus the 2¢ basic first class rate.

The sender was C.V. Harrison, a fourth class Postmaster appointed to Suydam on April 9, 1895. Information being scarce, he can only be narrowed down as having served as either the second or third Postmaster of this hamlet. As can be seen from the contents seen in **Figure 2**, Harrison was involved with more than just his postal duties. The letterhead is that of 'The

Mexican Land and Industrial Development Company – Mining, Timber, and Colonization Tracts in large Bodies' located in San Antonio, Texas. The top left of the letter lists Harrison as serving as their Secretary and Treasurer. Having crossed out the printed 'San Antonio, Texas,' Harrison datelined the letter 'Suydam N.Y. 8/22/08.'

C. V. HARRISON, SEC. AND TREAS.
Suydam N.Y. THE MEXICAN
LAND AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
Mining, Timber and Colonization Tracts in large Bodies
ALSO POWER AND WATER RIGHTS.
CORRESPONDENCE SOLICITED.
419 NAVARRO STREET

~~San Antonio Tex.,~~ 190
Suydam N.Y. 8/22/08

The Barry Co
Iowa City, Ia.

Gentlemen -

Please find enclosed
#2.00 for Eye Specific for Moon
Blindness

My mare is a valuable
one and I trust it may
be beneficial as the sight
is not entirely gone.

Very truly yours
C.V. Harrison

Postmaster
Suydam N.Y.

Figure 2. The content of the letter shown in Figure 1 is an order for Eye Specific, an equine medicine.

Explaining the registry fee (as cash was enclosed), Harrison writes:

*Gentlemen – Please find enclosed \$2.00 for Eye Specific for Moon Blindness.
My mare is a valuable one and I trust it may be beneficial as the sight is not
entirely gone.*

*Very truly yours,
C.V. Harrison*

*Postmaster
Suydam N.Y.*

According to the Iowa State University archives, the addressee, a patent veterinary medicine company, “The Barry Company was based in Iowa City, Johnson County, Iowa. In the early 1900’s, the Barry Company claimed to have a ‘sure cure’ for specific ophthalmia, moon blindness, and sore eyes in horses and cattle. They operated chiefly through mail orders. A small advertisement published in newspapers and farm magazines produced letters of inquiry from all over the United States.”

Believing this recurring disease affecting the eyes of horses was somehow related to the phases of the moon, the name ‘Moon Blindness’ was coined in the 1600’s for what is now termed Periodic Ophthalmia or Equine Recurrent Uveitis. Of interest is that this disease may be one of the first veterinary diseases ever documented, depictions of ocular problems in cavalry horses inscribed inside the pyramids at Giza (Egypt). Presenting as general malaise and photophobia with redness, purulence, and swelling of the eyes, if left untreated (and sometimes even if treated aggressively), uveitis will lead to and is in fact the most common cause of equine blindness. Causes include bacterial (Leptospirosis), viral, and parasitic infections, as well as direct trauma.

Now that this cover with its history has found a place in my collection, the search continues. My dream would be to find a follow-up letter from Postmaster Harrison detailing how he made out with his ailing mare, hope springing eternal!

Another Appeal for County, Postmaster, Manuscript & Star Cancels

Doug Penwell is currently soliciting information on county and postmaster cancels that are not reported in Dave Proulx’s original book which was published by ESPHS in 1990. It is Doug’s goal to have ESPHS publish a new edition of this book which will contain all updates reported to Doug since the first edition. If you have an unrecorded county or postmaster cancel, or an earlier or later date, please send this information to the author at dougpenwell@mail.com. Doug is also still gathering information on the earliest and latest known manuscript postmarks from New York State as a follow-up to his fine “Master Supplement of Manuscript Post Offices of New York State” which was published by ESPHS in 1999. Please send this information to Doug at the above email address.

Your editor is also still soliciting information on new star cancels from New York State. It is hoped to have ESPHS publish a second edition of Dave Proulx’s original book which was first published in 1986. When submitting information, color scans are preferred, but if this is impossible, black and white copies are acceptable as long as the color of the star is noted in the description. To date, over 450 new towns, star types, colors, and / or years of use have been recorded, with more being discovered on a regular basis. If you have any in your collections, please submit information about them to me at the email or snail mail address on page 2.

AIR MAIL SERVICE COMES TO SCHENECTADY

By Bob Bramwell

Second only to the Pony Express, Air Mail was undoubtedly the most exciting class of mail service in popular memory. To the postal historian, it offers thrills, spills, the smell of hot crankcase oil and – all in one stamp – Fast Planes, Slow Planes, Grounded Planes and Upside Down Planes. To the Post Office Department, Air Mail service was a response to calls from its best business customers, primarily banks, to improve transit times to major commercial centers. Air Mail service contracts, however, were also the “carrot” offered to entrepreneurs to organize private air transportation companies and foster development of an air transportation industry. This use of government contract money to foster a desired “national interest” had been successfully used in the early 19th century to create a network of stagecoach roads, and passenger service followed. It was used again in the middle of the 19th century to foster a transcontinental railroad system, and passenger service followed. So again in the early 20th century, the Post Office Department was viewed as the proper government department to advance the new national objective of mass air transportation.

Many histories of Air Mail service exist, so it is sufficient here to list a few major milestones and defer to those histories for the details:

Early May, 1918: The Army Air Corps, on extremely short notice, was instructed by President Wilson to organize “regular” delivery of mail between Washington, D.C. and New York City, with a stop in Philadelphia. On equally short notice, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing was asked to produce a stamp for the Air Mail rate of 24 cents per ounce in time for the inaugural flights on May 15th. The Bureau responded with a simple “airplane-in-frame” design and executed it in the fitting scheme of red and blue on white. The inevitable error occurred, and we have the Inverted Jenney as result.

May 15, 1918: Understandably, the Army Air Corps entrusted the highly visible assignment of selecting pilots to the Officer In Charge of all pilot training. He hand picked two veteran pilots for the Inaugural Flights, but when he arrived in Washington, he found that his veterans had been replaced on the morning of May 15 in both Washington and New York by young graduates of pilot training who happened to be sons of Congressmen. The flights went off and fortunately no one was killed, although one airplane was damaged upon landing in a farm field once the pilot realized he was lost.

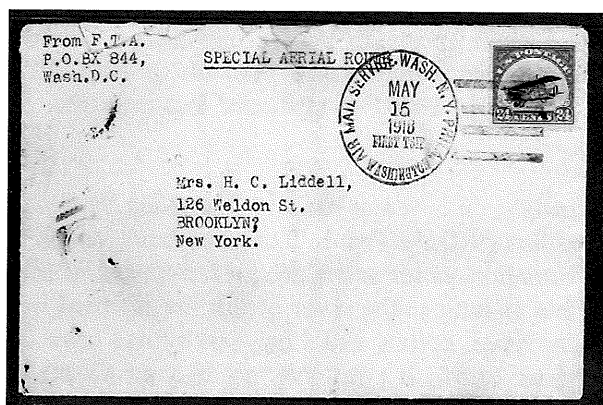


Figure 1. A letter sent from Washington, D.C. to New York on May 15, 1918 bearing a special three-city postmark with the date and phrase First Test under the date.

Early 1920's: The dream of an "air highway" from New York to San Francisco came into focus as the route, necessarily following the transcontinental railroad, was fixed. The first stop out of New York was Bellefonte, Pa. rather than Binghamton, N.Y. for reasons lost to history. While the Post Office Department operated the transcontinental route, commercial contracts for feeder routes were let, again bypassing Binghamton. To keep the mail moving day and night, airmail letters were transferred to trains on all routes at dusk and back to planes at dawn.

1925: An Act of Congress (Kelly Act) was passed requiring that Air Mail service be turned over to private contractors. It took a while to find bidders for each segment of this formidable undertaking but by 1926 all routes, including the three that made up transcontinental service, were under contract. Figure 2 shows the Air Mail routes in operation in 1926.

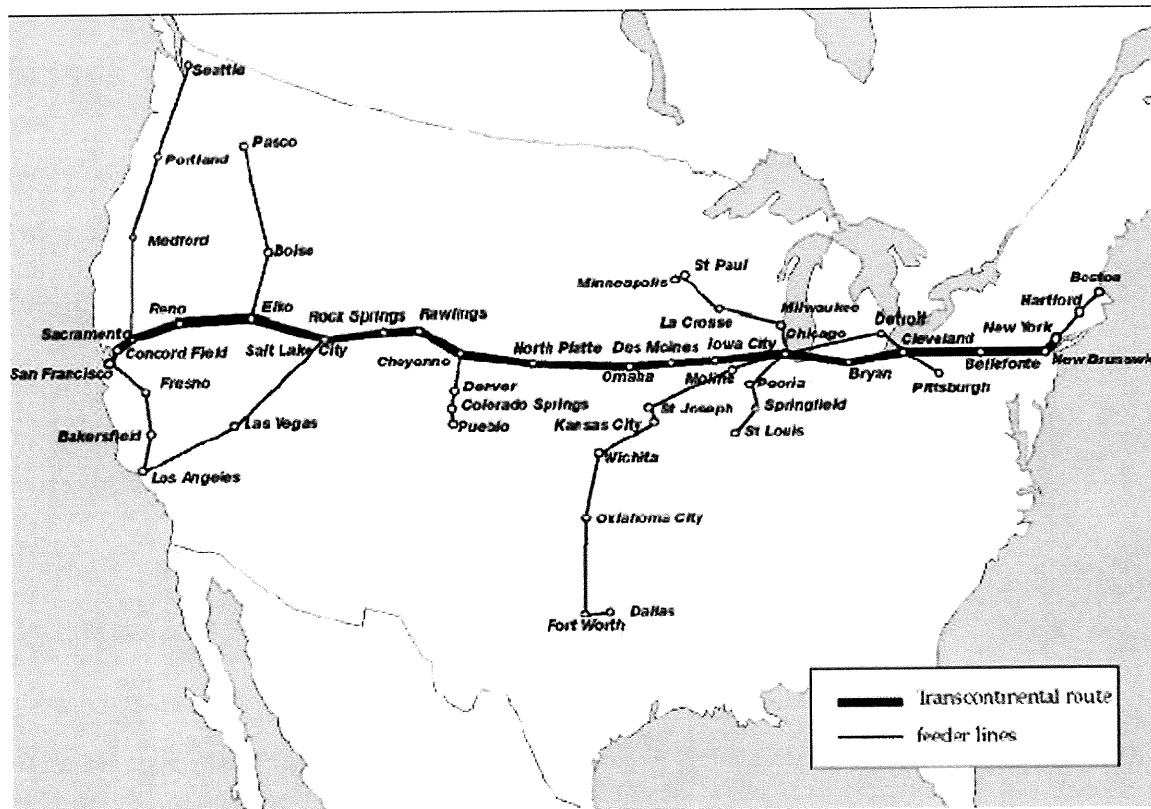


Figure 2. Contract Air Mail (CAM) routes in operation in 1926. The Transcontinental Route was divided into three segments. Most of the feeder lines make perfect sense as we look at the map today, although a few would require investigation to determine the source of mail coming and going or the politics of passing the Contract Air Mail (Kelly) Act.

Among the early bidders were aircraft builders Ford and Boeing, who created airlines using their aircraft, and airline entrepreneurs such as Juan Trippe and the Huntington brothers, who organized the precursors to American, TWA, United and others. The government was soon successful in forging a new national industry, despite the high cost in pilots and equipment lost.

1927: Among other feeder routes, the Cleveland to Albany route, CAM 20, came up for bid and was awarded to an affiliate of Colonial Airways (forerunner to American Airlines), that

held the Air Mail contract between New York and Boston (CAM 1) in addition to the first international contract route between Montreal and New York City (FAM 1). Thus, Colonial Western Airways was formed in May 1927 and prepared to service CAM 20. Colonial Western Airways' management, hopeful that they could leverage their government contract into a thriving mail, express and passenger airline, ordered four Fairchild FC-2 Monoplane aircraft at a time when most feeder route contractors were buying aircraft built specifically to carry the mail. Each FC-2 could accommodate four passengers with baggage, the pilot, and the mail.

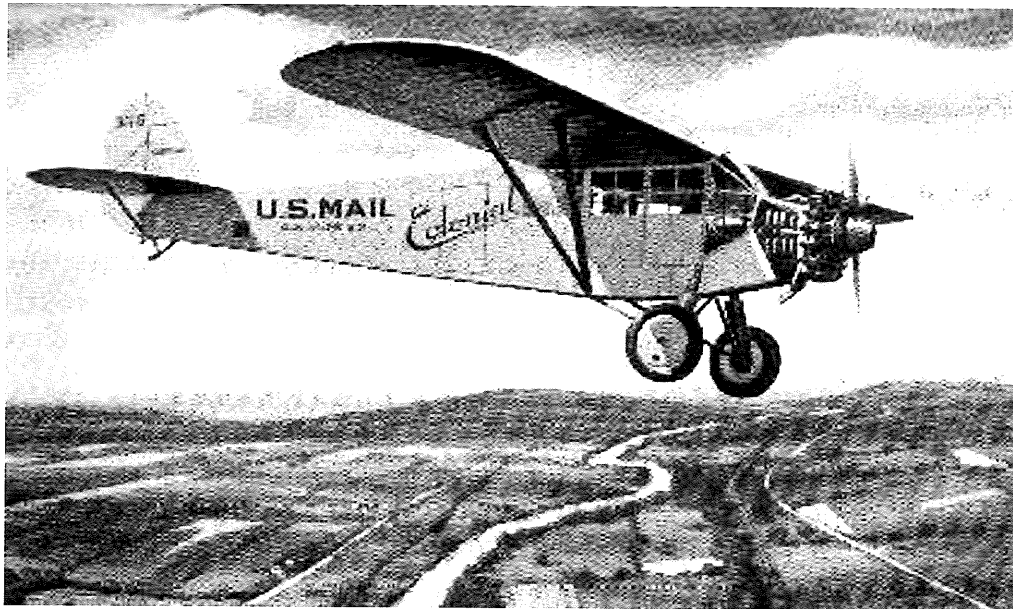


Figure 3. A Fairchild FC-2 operated by Colonial Western Airways flying Contract Air Mail route 20 between Albany, NY and Cleveland, Oh with intermediate stops in Schenectady, Utica, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo, NY, and Erie, Pa. This aircraft carried up to four passengers, their normal baggage, the pilot and the mail. Top speed was an impressive 124 m.p.h.

Meanwhile, a farmer's field in Glenville, NY, just across the Mohawk River from Downtown Schenectady, was being elevated to the status of "Port Schenectady," as the county airport was dubbed. This 97 acre parcel cost \$100,000 at the time, and local citizens pledged \$121,000 in the first week after being called on by the Chamber of Commerce to subscribe. Locating the airport north of the Mohawk had become possible with construction in 1925 of the Great Western Gateway Bridge, a multilane concrete span between Schenectady and Scotia that is still in use today.

As work on the airfield was nearing completion in July 1927, just two months after completing his historic transatlantic crossing to Paris in May, Col. Charles Lindbergh flew "*Spirit of St. Louis*" into Port Schenectady and was met by a throng of more than one thousand people.

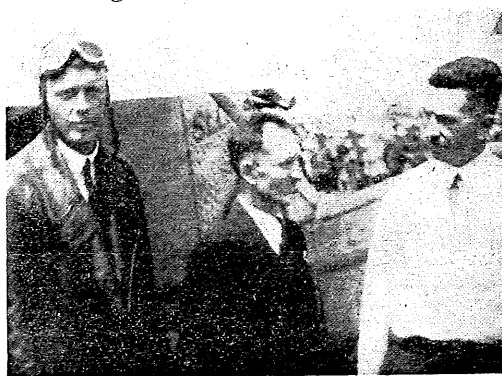
Lindbergh's Landing Here Brief But Memorable

(Editor's Note: This is another in a series of articles on historical subjects by Larry Hart, Union-Star photographer-reporter. Assistance in preparation of today's story was given by Henry C. Ritchie, now an assistant to City Historian William B. Eijner, Harry T. Ellis, principal of Scotia-Glenville Sacandaga School, and Deputy Police Chief Thomas J. Sims of Victorville. Articles in Mr. Hart's series are published in the Union-Star every Tuesday.)

By LARRY HART

At least a thousand pairs of eyes anxiously scanned the sunny skies over Schenectady Airport the morning of July 28, 1927. That was the day Charles Augustus Lindbergh, then known as "Lucky Lindy" or the "Lone Eagle" to idolizing Americans, was to make a brief appearance here on his tour of more than 500 U.S. cities.

The people started pouring into the airport area from Saratoga Rd. by auto and on foot long before 9 a.m. There were no buildings to provide shade, the site having been developed only shortly before by a private group called the Schenectady Airport Co. The "runways" were simply the grassy field which lay beyond.



Schenectady Airport was crowded with spectators the morning of July 28, 1927. That was the day Charles A. Lindbergh visited here as another stop on his tour of the United States after his solo New York-to-Paris flight. He is shown with Henry C. Ritchie (right), who headed the welcoming committee, and Donald Kehoe (center), a U.S. Commerce Department aviator who flew another plane to accompany Lindbergh on the tour. The three are standing beneath the right wing of "The Spirit of St. Louis."

Figure 4. In 1960, the Schenectady Gazette reprinted a photograph taken when Col. Charles A. Lindbergh flew into Schenectady County Airport on July 28, 1927 aboard *Spirit of St. Louis*.

Colonial Western opened the first part of the CAM 20 route on December 17, 1927 with eastbound and westbound flights between Cleveland, Ohio and Buffalo, NY with a gas and mail stop in Erie, Pa. In the two weeks to the end of 1927, Colonial Western recorded gross income of \$365.40 for flying 3,052 miles and carrying 329 pounds of mail.

The First Flight milestone for Schenectady finally came when the remainder of CAM 20 was opened to service by Colonial Western on June 1st, 1928. The westbound flight left Albany at 10:10 a.m. and arrived in Cleveland at 4:15 p.m. with intervening stops in Schenectady, Utica-Rome, Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo. The eastbound flight left Cleveland at 12:20 p.m. and arrived in Albany at 6:15 p.m. having made the same intervening stops in reverse. **Figure 5** shows the Timetable for CAM 20 passenger and mail service.

Contract Air Mail Route No. 20 MAIL, EXPRESS AND PASSENGERS

COLONIAL WESTERN AIRWAYS, INC.
(Connecting at Albany with Canadian Colonial Airways, Inc.)

Schedule

(Daily except Sunday)
EASTERN STANDARD TIME

Time from 12.01 midnight to 12.00 noon is shown in light type, and from 12.01 noon to 12.00 midnight in bold type.

Mileage	Run Down				Head Up	Mileage
0	10.10	Lv.	Albany, N. Y.	Ar.	6.15	443
15	10.25	Lv.	Schenectady	Lv.	6.05	428
84	11.20	Lv.	Utica	Lv.	5.15	359
139	11.35	Lv.	Syracuse	Lv.	4.35	313
204	12.35	Lv.	Rochester	Lv.	3.40	239
269	1.55	Lv.	Buffalo	Lv.	2.50	174
443	4.15	Ar.	Cleveland	Lv.	12.20	0

Figure 5. Extract from the Colonial Western Timetable for service in effect June, 1928.

Demonstrating the marketing savvy of Colonial Western management, passengers were accommodated on these first flights and each adventurous citizen was awarded a commemorative medal, and yes, it does say "COSTLY BALES THRU PURPLE SKIES". No record exists to explain what that meant to the management of Colonial Western Airways. The cost of a ticket from Schenectady to Albany was \$6.00; from Schenectady to Buffalo, \$54.00 and for that, hopefully, passengers got a bag tag as well.



Figure 6. On the left is a commemorative medal presented to each passenger on a First Flight of CAM 20 departing Albany, Schenectady, Utica, Syracuse, or Rochester on June 1, 1928 (Collection of Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, Washington). Seen on the right, is an adhesive baggage label used by Colonial Airways Group that illustrated the combined routes flown by its affiliated airlines.

At each stop on CAM 20 that was experiencing its first departure, mail to be carried on the June 1st flight had been stamped with a First Flight cachet, presumably by local Chambers of Commerce. The cachet used in each city was identical except for the name of the city of departure. An example of a cover sent westbound from Schenectady to Buffalo is shown as **Figure 7**, while the reverse, seen in **Figure 8**, shows Buffalo's 5:30 p.m. receiver.

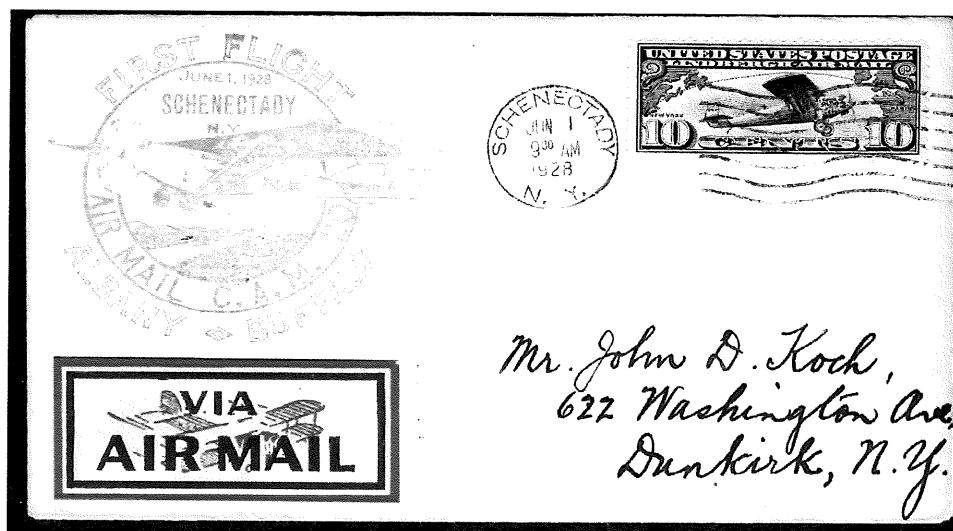


Figure 7. First Flight cover timestamped 9:30 a.m. by the Schenectady Post Office. CAM 20 left Albany at 10:10 a.m. and would have arrived at the Schenectady airport within 10 minutes.

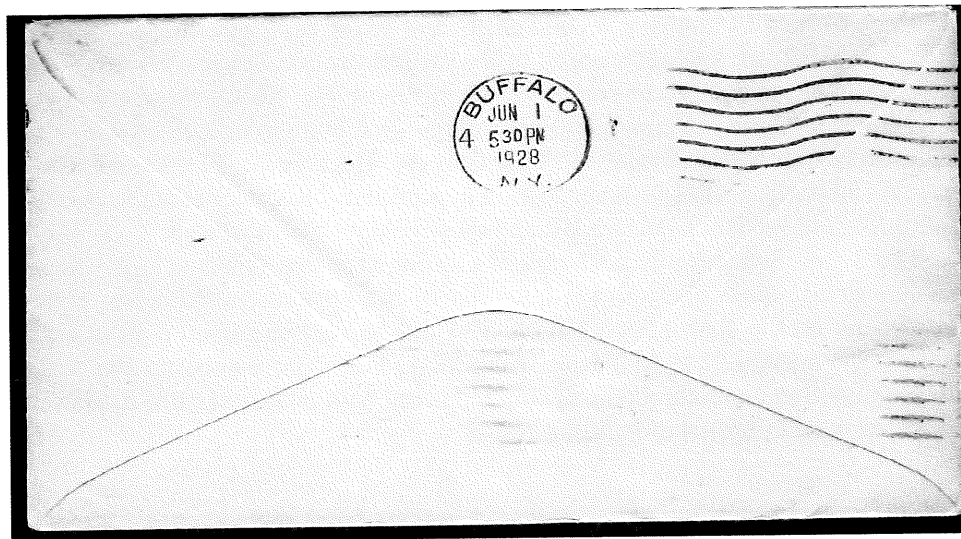


Figure 8. Buffalo receiver on reverse timestamped 5:30 p.m. on June 1st, 1928. This is probably at least a few hours after CAM 20 passed through the Buffalo air field on the way to Cleveland.

Figure 9 illustrates a letter carried from Schenectady eastbound on the same day, June 1, 1928. Notice that the cachet is identical to that shown on the westbound letter but the envelope is different. Many envelopes were presented to the Schenectady Postmaster, postage paid, by the addressee, as Air Mail had become an immediate philatelic topic. This envelope was printed by A. C. Roessler of East Orange, New Jersey.

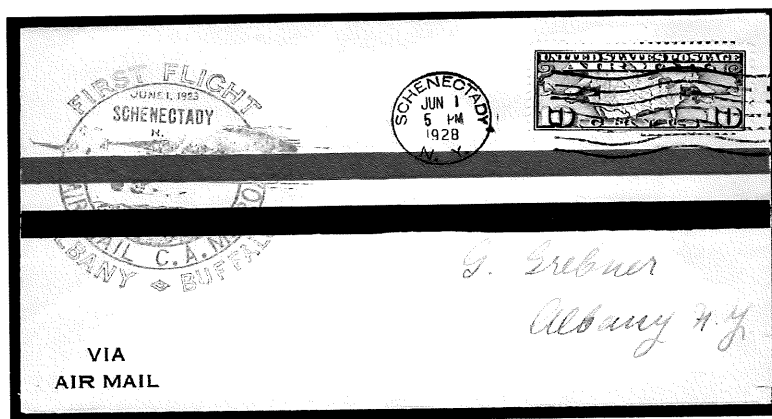


Figure 9. First Flight cover time stamped 5:00 p.m. by the Schenectady Post Office. CAM 20 left Cleveland at 20 minutes past 12 noon and was scheduled to arrive in Albany at 6:15 p.m.

Figure 10. The Albany receiver timed at 10:30 p.m. shows that there was no hurry processing this incoming letter for local delivery!

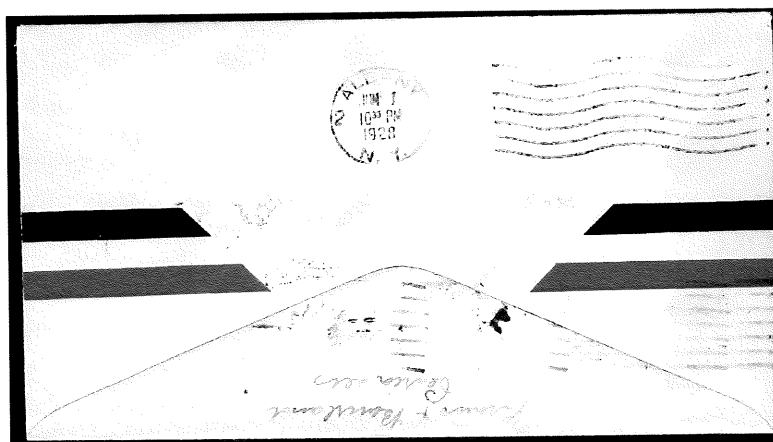


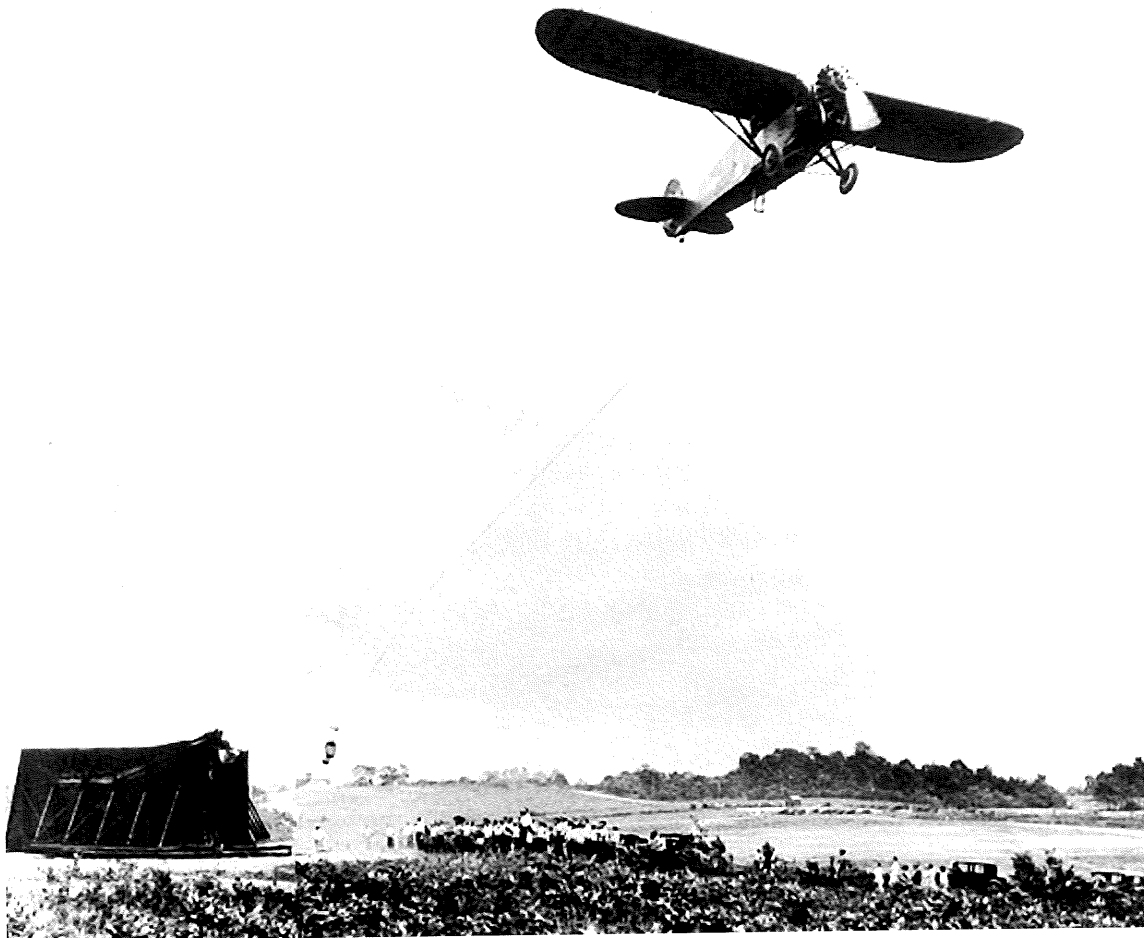
Figure 11 shows a second eastbound cover from Schenectady's First Flights on June 1, 1928. This cover was postmarked at 8 a.m. and bears on the reverse an Albany receiver identical (10:30 p.m.) to the Albany mark shown in Figure 10. This envelope was also produced by A. C. Roessler's printing company in East Orange, N.J. but was addressed with a rubber stamp by Roessler to be returned to himself in East Orange. Because of his personal interest in flight and philately – he was a cachet designer as well as a printer – Roessler may deserve to be credited with creating the fad for fancy designs printed on envelopes intended to be used only for air mail delivery. The 8 a.m. Schenectady postmark is a strong clue that this envelope was sent ahead of time to Schenectady, most likely to the attention of the Postmaster, with the request that it be carried eastbound on the June 1 First Flight. I would be very surprised if Roessler did not also send an envelope addressed to him with instructions that it be placed on the westbound First Flight. It is likely that he made the same arrangements with postmasters in Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, and Albany and perhaps in multiple copies.



Figure 11. This June 1, 1928 Schenectady First Flight cover is another A. C. Roessler envelope design. Roessler himself used a rubber stamp to self-address the envelope and had it carried on the eastbound Schenectady-to-Albany leg.

While the pilots did not sign the above envelopes, it was elsewhere recorded¹ that pilots F. P. Little and Merle A. Moltrup flew the inaugural Schenectady to Cleveland legs and that Willis H. Proctor flew the inaugural Schenectady to Albany leg.

The photo on the next page captures an early demonstration of picking up air mail in flight. The structure at bottom left positions the mail sack and also channels the drag hook to its target. The airplane in the picture is certainly a Fairchild FC-2 so my bet is that this test was conducted somewhere in New York State along the route of CAM 20 flown by Colonial Western Airways, but probably not at one of the cities receiving regular service. They don't have a picture of delivering mail in this circumstance because it was a rather inelegant procedure: kick the sack out the door.



This concludes my look at the origin of Air Mail service on CAM 20 and specifically of Schenectady First Flight material from my collection. As always, corrections, comments, and contributions to this topic are welcomed by the Editor and the author, Bob Bramwell. In a future issue of *Excelsior!*, the author will present information and illustrations of the next great step in Air Mail service through Schenectady: Night Flying.

Resources:

¹ Anyone interested in a broader introduction to the history of Air Mail should visit three websites to start:

<http://www.airmailpioneers.org/history/Sagahistory.htm>

<http://www.aerodacious.com/>

<http://www.century-of-flight.net/Aviation%20history/>

POST OFFICE OF THE ISSUE

BIG FLATS, CHEMUNG COUNTY

According to Kay and Smith's *New York Postal History*, prior to the establishment of Chemung County, Big Flats was part of Tioga County. Hence the original Big Flats post office was established in Tioga County on January 1, 1809. Although Kay and Smith state that the name of the original post office was Big Flats, the USPS Postmaster Finder shows the original name as Big Flatt, with the name being changed to Big Flats sometime prior to 1831. Most histories agree with the Kay and Smith spelling. Big Flats was in the part of Tioga County that became Chemung County on March 29, 1836. Kay and Smith state that Caleb L. Gardner was the first postmaster of the Chemung County, Big Flats post office.

Below is a photo post card of the Big Flats Post Office, which at the time was located in the Wakelee & Cunnings drug store. Since Charles C. Cunnings was appointed Big Flats postmaster on December 27, 1909, one can assume that the photo is dated sometime after that. Interestingly enough, Mr. Cunnings was succeeded as postmaster by his business partner, Dr. E. Herman Wakelee on February 27, 1918. Mr. Wakelee continued to serve as postmaster until December 7, 1936, when he was succeeded by acting postmaster David L. Churcher, Jr. The post office remained in the same building seen below until January, 1959 when postmaster Harry Beebe moved it to Canal Street.

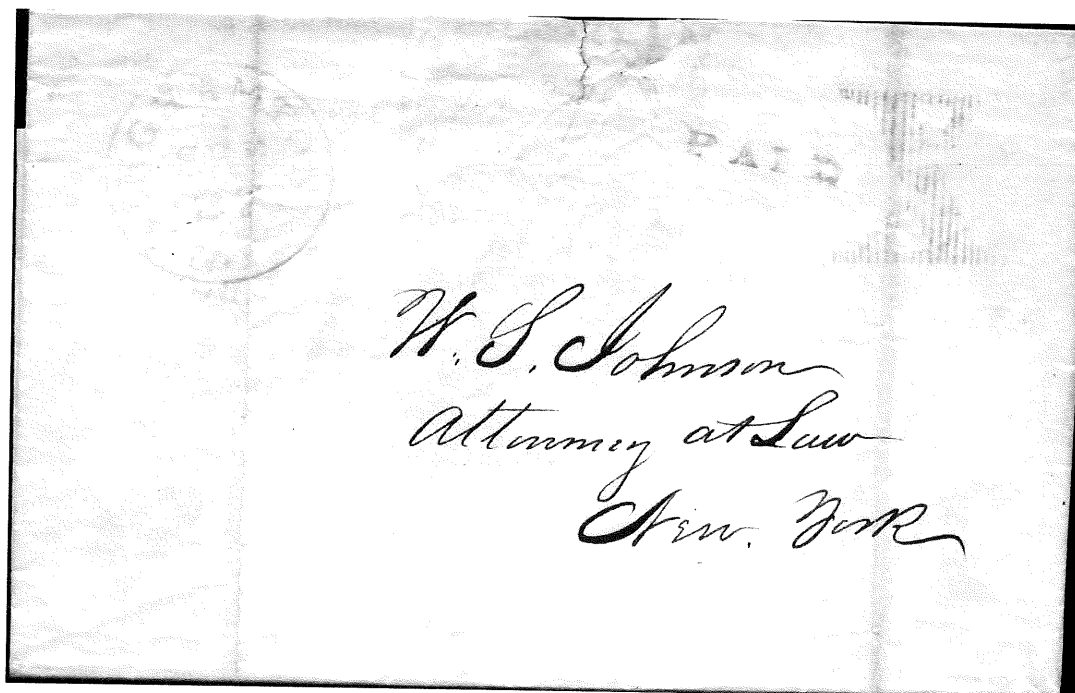


The Big Flats post office in the early 1900's

The Big Flats post office, with a zip code of 14814, continues in operation today at 471 Maple Street.

COVER OF THE ISSUE

A New Stampless Marking from Binghamton



In the June 1986 ESPHS *Bulletin*, Chester Wilcox described three different “X” markings from Binghamton during the stampless period. Two were a 13mm and an 18mm solid red “X”, and the third was noted to be a 25mm hollow red “X”. George Bernadt notes these same three varieties in his book *Postal Markings of New York State 1792 – 1856* published by the ESPHS in 1993. Recently your editor purchased the above Binghamton cover on eBay. The interesting thing about this “X” marking is that it is neither solid, nor hollow. This “X” is composed solely of vertical lines of various sizes such that there is no outline present. The starting and stopping of the vertical lines give the “X” its form. The circular date stamp (CDS) is what Wilcox described as a red 31mm “B” close to “N” with the month above the day. This particular CDS in red is known to have been in use from 9/24/1847 to 4/30/1850. The 21x3½ mm red PAID marking was used as early as 1835 and as late as 2/5/1849. Thus, this cover dated SEP/27 would appear to be from either 1847 or 1848. Wilcox describes a vertically striped “V” (with outline) from Binghamton which is reported from 9/23 to 10/18 in 1847. If the postmaster at that time had a thing for vertical stripes, that could imply that this “X” is more likely from 1847 rather than 1848. A black and white enlargement of the “X” is seen at right.

