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President

Martin Margulis
Editor

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CORRESPONDENCE OF CHARLES HUMPHREY, ESQ. OF ITHACA, N.Y.

by Ron Laby
Lansing, New York

The addressee of the folded letter shown in fig. 1, Charles Humphrey (1792-1850), was a prominent early citizen, attorney, and politician in Ithaca, Tompkins County, New York (fig.2). Research has yielded a wealth of information about him, his family, his career, and his business associates, and allowed a glimpse at a small piece of the tapestry of life in Suffolk County, in Tompkins County, and in New York State during the first half of the 19th century.

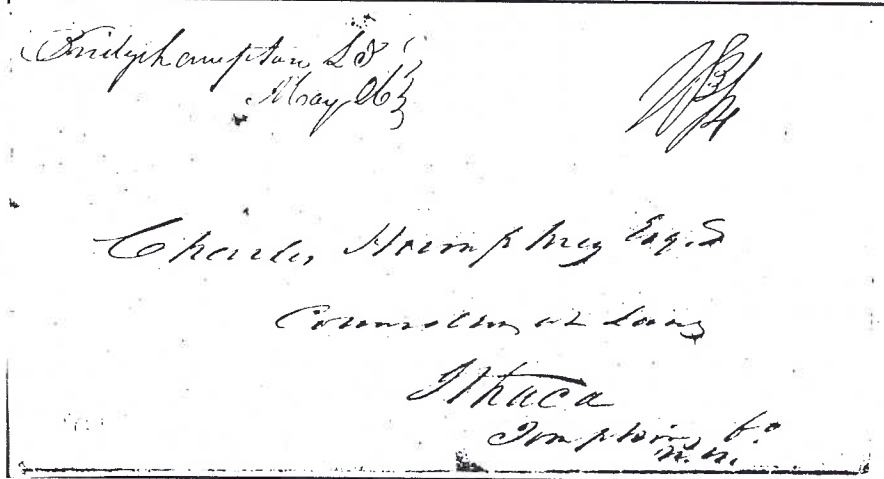


Figure 1.

Figure 1 illustrates the folded letter with a manuscript cancellation "Bridgehampton, L.I. May 26: and the rate "18 $\frac{3}{4}$." The business letter, sent by A.T. Rose Esq., concerns a client that Mr. Rose and Mr. Humphrey were representing. Abraham Rose (1792-1857), an attorney and later Suffolk County Surrogate Judge, was born in Bridgehampton. After graduating from Yale College in 1814, he studied law in New York City and began his law practice in Brid-

gehampton in 1817. His wife, Eliza Van Gelder, was the daughter of a New York City mayor.

The Ackley brothers, Henry, Warren, and Julius (1787-1864), were prominent businessmen in Ithaca during the 1820s and 1830s. It was said that Julius Ackley's last act was to drive (his carriage) to the polls and vote for Abraham Lincoln's second term. Julius' wife was Mary Halsey (1798-1877), originally of Southampton, Long Island. Thus the letter most probably refers to him. The Halsey family can trace ancestors on Long Island back to Thomas Halsey, Sr. (1591-1678), one of the original English settlers of Southampton, N.Y. in 1640. Several members of the Halsey family bore the surname "Sylvanus," so it is unclear which one is referred to here.

Members of several branches of the Halsey family settled in the Ithaca area during the early 19th century. In addition to Mary Halsey, Hugh Halsey (1765-1813), originally of Bridgehampton, farmed near Lansing N.Y., and Nicholl Halsey (1782-1865), originally from Southampton, married an Ithacan and settled north of Ithaca in what became the hamlet of Halseyville. Nicholl Halsey went on to become a sheriff, surrogate judge, member of the State Assembly, and member of Congress representing Tompkins County. Interestingly, his career mirrored that of Charles Humphrey to an extent.



Figure 2.

Charles Humphrey was born in Little Britain, Orange County, N.Y. His father James was a Revolutionary War veteran. The descendant of Scotch-Irish settlers who arrived around 1700, he studied law at Newburgh, N.Y. After enlisting in the army during the war of 1812, he rose to the rank of Captain of the 41st Regiment, U.S. Infantry, stationed near Lake Champlain at Whitehall, N.Y. Humphrey was also stationed on Long Island, and at Sandy Hook, N.J. Following the war, he resumed law studies in Newburgh. After appointment as a notary (fig. 3), and having been admitted to the

Bar in 1816, he moved to Ithaca as a representative of the Bank of Newburgh in 1817 with his wife, Miss McKisson of Newburgh. By 1820 he was Deputy United States Marshall. When the bank later closed, Humphrey stayed in Ithaca, practicing law. his house still stands on Court Street in Ithaca (fig. 4).

The People of the State of New-York,
by the Grace of God Free and Independent: To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting: Know ye, That We, reposing special trust and confidence in the ability and integrity of Charles Humphrey of our county of Orange Esquire —————
Have nominated, constituted and appointed, and by these presents do nominate, constitute and appoint him the said Charles Humphrey a Public Notary in and for our said State of New York —————
hereby giving and granting unto him ————— all and singular the powers and authorities to the said office by law belonging or appertaining: To have and to hold the said office of Public Notary ————— together with the fees, profits and advantages to the same belonging, for and during our good pleasure, to be signified by our Council of Appointment.
In testimony whereof, We have caused these our Letters to be made Patent, and the Great Seal of our said State to be hereunto affixed: Witness our trusty and well beloved DANIEL D. TOMPKINS, Esquire, Governor of our said State, General and Commander in Chief of all the Militia, and Admiral of the Navy of the same, by and with the advice and consent of our said Council of Appointment, at our city of Albany, the first day of March, —————
Sixteen ————— and in the 39th year of our Independence.
Passed the Secretary's Office, the 2d day of March — 1816 }
Robert Tilton — Secretary

Figure 3.

soon the completion of the Erie Canal linked Ithaca to rapid economic expansion throughout upstate N.Y. Among other posts, Humphrey served as Secretary of the Cayuga Steamboat Co., School Trustee, and Fire Captain. In 1825, at the age of 32, Humphrey was elected a member of Congress, representing the 25th District (Tompkins and Tioga Counties) from 1825-1827 as a Democrat. Two examples of correspondence with him during this time are shown in figs. 5 and 6.

Bridgehampton May 26th, 1834

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 17th inst. was received by Saturday's mail. In reply I would say, that I had determined on the very course Mr. Ackley wishes to be adopted, viz. only to notice the cause for trial at the coming circuit, and have agreed with Mr. Gardiner, the deft's. atty. to let it go near till the fall circuit, (and in the meantime, had determined), and hearing from Mr. Ackley since I wrote him in Dec., to have Sylvanus Halsey's testimony taken under the _____, in order to see what it would be under oath, as we should then be able better to judge whether it would be prudent to go on with the suit.

I leave home for our county circuit to day, and next week shall have to attend the circuit. you will please inform Mr. Ackley that as soon as arriving after this I shall proceed to perpetuate Halsey's testimony, and when done will send him a _____ of the issue.

Very respectfully

your obt. servt.

A.T. Rose

C. Humphrey Esq.

This was a busy and prosperous time; the census of 1820 confirmed that New York state had passed Virginia to become the most populous state in the country. Tompkins County was formed in 1817, named after former N.Y Governor Daniel Tompkins, who was at that time Vice President of the United States under President James Monroe. The Village of Ithaca was incorporated in 1821 and

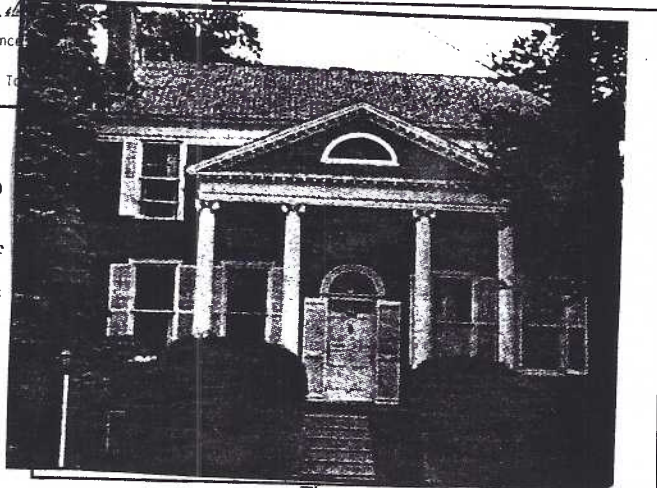


Figure 4.

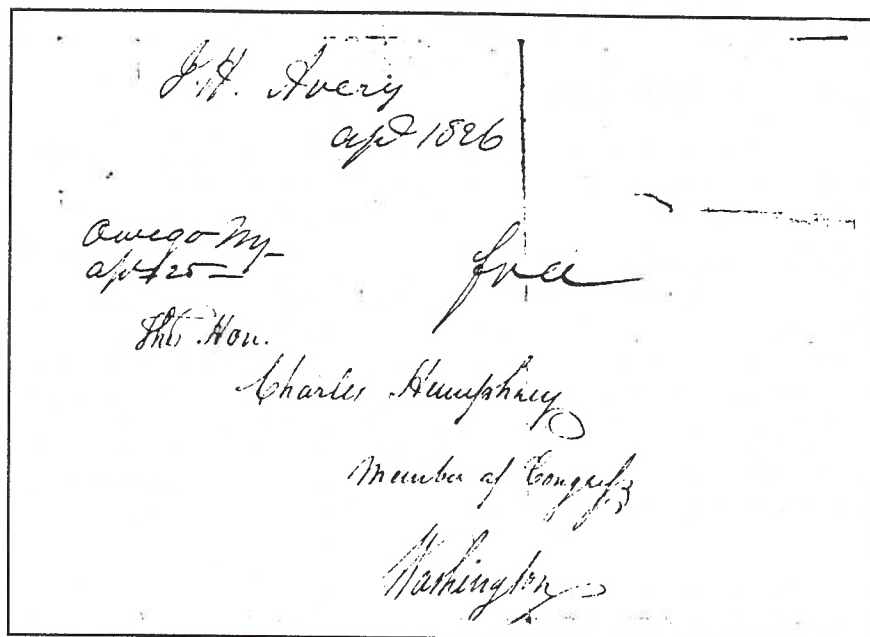


Figure 5.

The folded letter illustrated in fig. 5 bears a manuscript cancel "Owego N.Y. Apr 25-" and the notation "free," as the letter was addressed to a member of Congress. The letter, written by John Avery, may concern the appointment of the writer's son, Humphrey, to the United States Military Academy. The writer clearly was well connected, as he not only had interceded with Congressman Humphrey for his son's sake, but also expected recommendations from Governor (Joseph) Yates and (then) U.S. Senator Martin Van Buren. John Avery served as Clerk of the Tioga County Board of Supervisors 1801-1806, and practiced

law in Owego from 1801 onward. He died in 1837, and is buried in his family's vault in the Presbyterian Churchyard.

Mr. Avery's complaints about the government certainly have a contemporary ring to them. The 1827 folded letter with a manuscript "Free" marking and shown in figure 6 is also written by a constituent of Mr. Humphrey. In it, the writer asks Mr. Humphrey for help in locating a land warrant issued to a Revolutionary War veteran.

Abraham Losey, the veteran mentioned above, wished to claim his 100 acre bounty for service in the Revolutionary War. A Congressional resolution of September 1776, passed to encourage enlistment in the revolutionary army, specified that enlistees would be granted land for their service. The amount specified ranged from 100 acres of bounty land for non-commissioned officers and soldiers to 500 acres for those who served as Colonels and 1100 acres for Major Generals. A 1783 resolution passed by the New York State Assembly authorized an additional grant of 500 acres for each private, up to 5500 for a Major General:

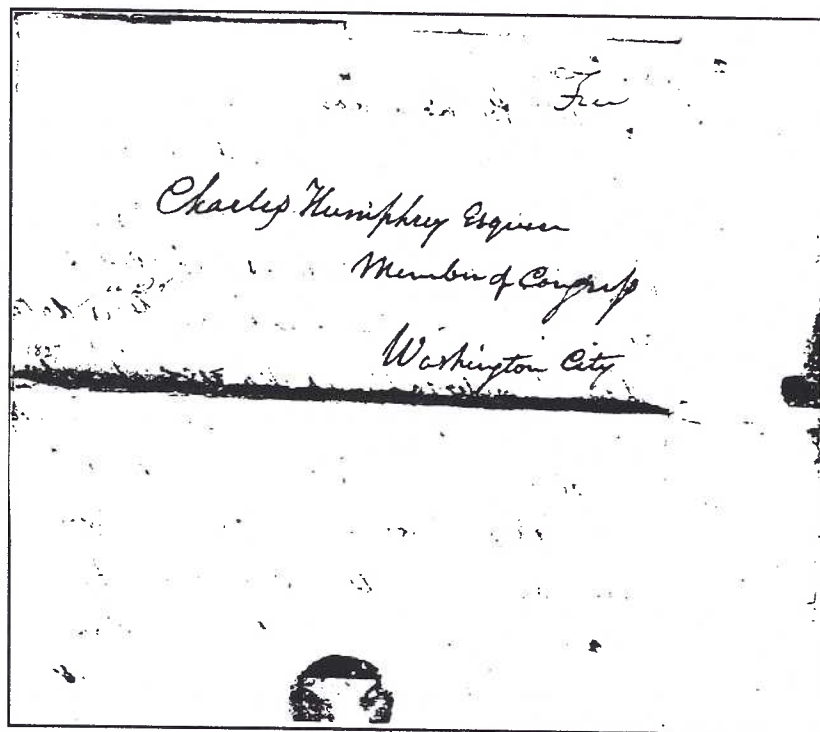


Figure 6.

...the lands so granted as bounty from the United States, and as a gratuity from this state, shall be laid out in townships of 6 square miles; that each township shall be divided into 156 lots of 150 acres each, two lots whereof shall be reserved for the use of a minister or ministers of the gospel, and two lots for the use of a school or schools...

These townships in the so called "military tract" were laid out across central New York. Many were named after people and places prominent in classical history, such as Syracuse, Ulysses, and Virgil. Most grants ("patents") were issued in the early 1790's, although stragglers continued to file until at least 1808, and are listed in a "Balloting Book" published in Albany in 1825. It is unclear why Mr. Losey waited for nearly 50 years before filing his claim. Due to his late date of filing, he is not listed in the Balloting Book. However, his application for a

Ithaca Febr 24, 1827.

Dear Sir,

Mr. Abraham Losey informed me, that a short time before you left this place for Washington, he had conversation with you about locating a land warrant for him. His warrant was granted for services during the revolutionary war. It is dated the 22^d day of July 1826- is No. 1186- for 100 acres of land, to be located on any unlocated parts of the 50 quarter townships and the fractional quarter townships, reserved by law for original holders of military warrants- I know not whether you have the power, while at Washington, to ascertain where his warrant may be most advantageously located, but perhaps you will be able to obtain some information, in regard to these lands, so that Mr. Losey may be enabled to locate his warrant without the trouble of going to where the lands lie- I write by the request of Mr. L. I know of nothing new, worth informing you of. We expect soon to see you in Ithaca. Accept of my best wishes for your good health and safe return, and believe me sincerely.

Your Friend

Stephen Mack

Charles Humphrey Esq.

Owego April 24 1826-

Charles Humphrey Esq.

D. Sir

I feel much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken in the application for my son Humphrey. Would it avail any thing for the Governor to interfere? If it would he will do any thing that may be reasonable required of him on the subject-

When will a vacancy happen, when does their next examination take place, please ascertain these facts. Also I wish you to ascertain whether my son will stand a chance to get the next vacancy, when it may happen please inform me early on these points M. Van Buren has been written to by W Burrows & perhaps it would be well to get him to aid you in getting an answer from the Department as to the order in which he stands, that is, whether his turn is likely to occur soon.

Our Legislature has adjourned without granting our Road or Canal, or done much else of consequence to the People.

Yours sincerely

John H. Avery

military pension was approved in 1819, and indicates that he was a resident of Ulysses, Tompkins County at that time. He was born c. 1761 and served as an artilleryman in Cap' Crane's N.Y. Regiment from 1780-1783.

Stephen Mack (1784-1857), another Ithaca lawyer who wrote the letter for Mr. Losey, was born in Kinderhook, N.Y., two years after Martin Van Buren's birth there. However, his family moved to Cooperstown around 1791, and later to Owego. After graduating from Yale College in 1813, he as well as his two brothers Ebenezer (1791-1849) and Horace (1799-1855) all lived in Ithaca from 1816 onwards. Stephen was described as a "diligent and methodical law-

yer." His brother Ebenezer founded the newspaper which became the (still published) "Ithaca Journal." Ebenezer Mack was State Senate Majority Leader 1835-37, while Horace Mack served as an assemblyman and later as President (essentially mayor) of the Village of Ithaca.

Charles Humphrey was elected President of the Village of Ithaca while still a member of Congress. Upon his return to the village, mentioned by Stephen Mack, he served two terms as Village President, then spent several years as a Judge. In 1834, he was elected to the State Assembly. Humphrey served as an Assemblyman from 1834-36, and again in 1842; he was Speaker of the New York State Assembly 1835-36, at the same time that fellow Ithaca resident Ebenezer Mack was Senate Majority Leader. While serving in Albany, he kept up a law practice in Ithaca; the 1834 manuscript letter illustrated in fig. 7 was sent by his law clerk: When Mr. Maynard mentions the "experiment," he is referring to the struggle over reauthorization of the second Bank of the United States, which had received a federal charter in 1817.

Although the federal government subscribed one fifth of its capital and chose five of the twenty five members of its board of directors, it was a private bank, responsible ultimately to its shareholders.

The bank carried on some of the functions that are now performed by the Federal Reserve Bank, in that it had great influence over the supply of credit throughout the country. From 1823-1839, its head was the Philadelphia banker Nicholas Biddle. Andrew Jackson and his supporters greatly distrusted the bank, its officers, and its officers, and its power, fearing, they said, for the public good. Others opposed the bank because it infringed on the ability of state chartered banks to carry on business.

Ithaca March 20, 1834-

Dear Sir,

Your letter for Judge Bruyn was rec^d- From the best information I can as yet obtain Morris is not worth a suit- I have this morning rec^d- a pension certificate for Mr. Babcock- Have rec^d- notice of appearance in Nichols vs. Smith from J.L. Riker + sent copy of bill to be served with a rule to answer or be attached- it seemed to be unsafe to take the bill pro confesso- Yesterday Mr. Amasa Carr who has a contract for a piece of land with Eliphalet Weeks called + wishes a deed- I found none here- he has sold the contract- the purchaser wishes to pay the money + take a deed- they will call again in about one month- please direct what to do- The examination of witnesses in Hinckley + Gardner case begins tomorrow- Nothing new here- hard times continue- the "experiment" is beginning to be felt+ discussed among the farmers + I will not pretend to predict the result for I have no confidence in my own political calculations as to what may be the opinion of the people three months hence- That there will be great excitement + exasperation I have no doubt, but whether the blame will be cast upon Andrew Jackson or N. Biddle is now difficult to determine- The spring is opening very early- the peas are plants in your garden- Something more ought to be done- We (the Capt. + I) have agreed to reconnoitre the garden today + do the best we can-

Yours S.
J. Maynard

C. Humphrey Esq.

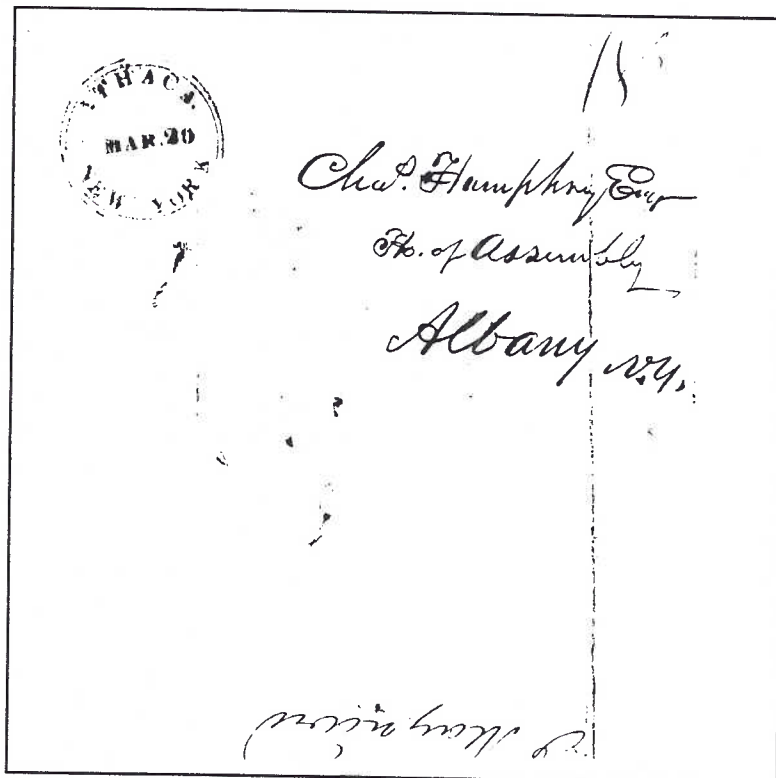


Figure 7.

Biddle applied for reauthorization of the bank's federal charter in 1832, but President Jackson vetoed the necessary legislation. Biddle then set out to show the importance of the bank to the nation's economy, evidently to convince Jackson to allow rechartering of the bank (as well as to settle his personal feud with Jackson). To that end, he called in loans, forced a contraction of the money supply, and forced up interest rates. The controversy which ensued resulted in or at least deepened an economic depression in 1833-34. His actions, however, only vindicated Jackson's fears.

Figure 8 illustrates a folded letter sent to Charles Humphrey as Speaker of the state assembly, from Geneva, N.Y. on March 1, 1835. Humphrey was instrumental in pushing through legislation on prison reform banning the use of convicts in the "manufacture (of) goods and wares for public markets that made the State a competitor with the mechanics and laborers of the state," in response to

Governor Marcy's attempts to have the prison system pay for itself. Humphrey also helped to pass legislation, establishing the first state prisons for women, in 1835. In declining health, and with Tompkins County losing an Assembly seat due to reapportionment, Charles Humphrey declined to run for re-election

following his terms as Speaker. He practiced law in Ithaca and Albany, returning as an assemblyman in 1842. His last years were spent in Albany, as clerk to the State Supreme Court.

Figure 9 shows a folded letter written by Charles Humphrey, in Albany, to his son William Ross Humphrey, also a locally prominent lawyer in Ithaca, July 31, 1846. The letter is endorsed "Paid no 27," evidently referring to Humphrey's post office account number, and stamped "PAID," but bears no postmark. Afflicted in his later years by severe rheumatism said to date from his service in the War of 1812, Charles Humphrey died in 1850.

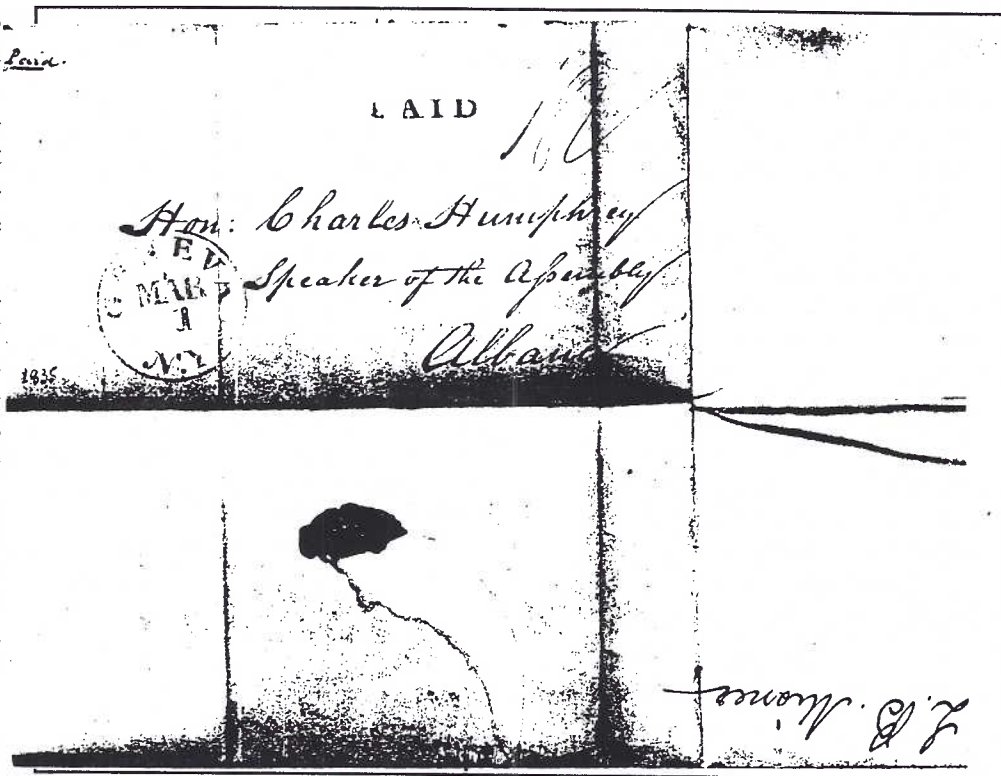


Figure 8.

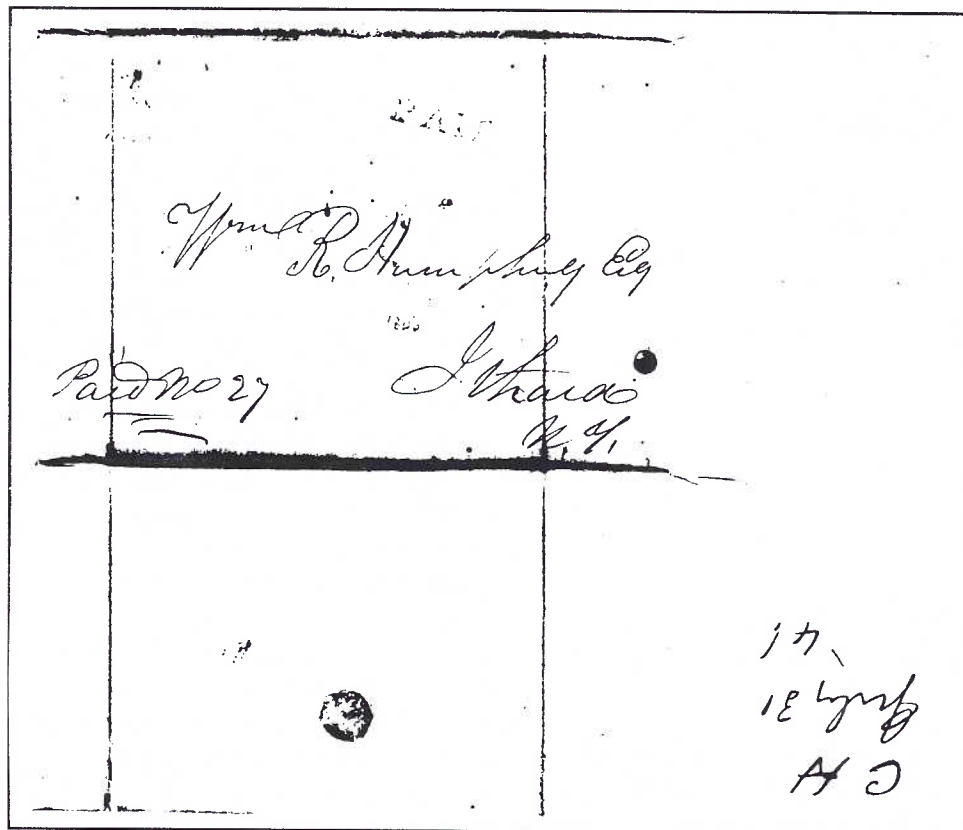


Figure 9.

My thanks to: DeWitt Historical Society of Tompkins County, Ithaca; Suffolk County Historical Society, Riverhead; Brad Arch; for help with the research on which this article is based.

A PRELIMINARY LOOK AT THE STAMPLESS PERIOD IN ESSEX COUNTY, NY

by Glenn A. Estus

I base this article on the format that Martin Margulis used in the Summer 1991 issue of the ESPHS Bulletin.

Collecting covers from Essex County, NY for a number of years, I realized that examples from certain post offices seemed to elude me. I, too, like Margulis surveyed the American Stampless Cover Catalog (ASCC), Manuscript Cancells of New York State as well as other sources. Two sources available to me that Margulis did not have was George Bernadt's Postal Markings of New York State 1792-1856 and Robert Stets' Postmasters and Postoffices of the United States 1782-1811.

I use the ASCC definition of the stampless period, i.e., through 1855 although in a few specialized rates, stampless mail was possible through 1863.

A potential problem arose with post offices with the same name that existed within different time periods. Some sources assume that the post offices with the same name were the same post office. I have identified such post offices with the addition of (1st) or (2nd). This causes a special problem with Willsborough which according to sources was discontinued on one day and reopened the very next. Actually, I believe these were two different post offices about 5 miles apart. Only Stets separates Willsborough (1st) from Willsborough (2nd).

Except for the dates for Essex Court House, the Date Established and Date Discontinued information comes from Kay and Smith. Indeed, Kay and Smith do not list the Essex Court House post office, the information for which comes from Stets.

Earliest manuscript information comes from Chlanda and Wilcox. Most of the Earliest Hand Stamp information comes from the ASCC unless otherwise cited.

Notations Used:

= information from Bernadt book

^ = information from personal collection

SIOI = Still in Operation (1996)

Post Office Name	Date Established	Earliest Manuscript	Earliest Hand Stamp	Date Discontinued
Adirondac	1848			1854
Ausable	1828	1839^		1844
Ausable Forks	1828	1828#	1839#	SIO
Bloomington	1853	1850s#		SIO
Boquet Mills	1839			1839
Brookfield	1812			1824
Chesterfield	1805			1823
Crown Point (1st)	1802			1810
Crown Point(2nd)	1817	1828#	1840#	SIO
Dead Water Iron Works	1855		1856	1858
Douws	1826			1829
East Moriah	1826	1827#		1829
Elizabeth Court House	1811	1815		1821
Elizabethtown (1st)	1802	1805#		1812
Elizabethtown (2nd)	1821	???	1839#	SIO
Essex (1st)	1801			1806
Essex (2nd)	1806	1810	1832#	SIO
Essex C.H.	1803	1803		1806
Highland	1841	???		1843

Jay (1st) (see note below)	1803			1814
Jay (2nd)	1815	1819	1850s#	SIO
Keene (1st)	1818	1831		1848
Keeseville	1822	1822	1828#	SIO
Lewis	1818	1830	1845#	SIO
Minerva (1st)	1827	1832	1850s#	1868
Moriah	1816	1830	1838#	SIO
New Russia	1850	1850	1850s#	SIO
			1845 (ASCC)	
North Elba	1849	1850s#		SIO
North Hudson	1850	1852		SIO
Olmstedville	1855			SIO
Paradox (1st)	1827	1840	1844	1847
Pineville	1828			1829
Pondsville	1820	1829#		1843
Port Henry	1829	1831	1845#	SIO
Port Kendall	1837	1840^		SIO
Port Kent	1826	1829		SIO
Putsville	1852			1854
St. Armand	1850	????#		1853
Schroon Lake	1802	1816	1854#	SIO
Schroon River	1842	1843		1902
Split Rock	1817	1825		1849
Ticonderoga (see note below)	1816	1817	1837#	SIO
Upper Jay	1844	1845	1854	SIO
Wadhams Mills	1823	1835	1853	1992?
Wells Corners	1827			1828
Wessex	1829	1838		1842
West Essex	1843	1839		1844
West Moriah (1st)	1846			1846
West Moriah (2nd)	1847	1850		1850
Westport	1816	1830	1830#	SIO
Whallonsburg (h)	1849	1850	1847	1993
Willsborough (1st)	1797	1801^		1806
Willsboro(ugh) (2nd)	1806	1806^	1854	SIO
Wilmington	1823	1828		SIO
Woodwardville	1827	1851		1854

Notes:

Jay (1st) : according to Kay and Smith, this post office never opened.

Ticonderoga: according to the ASCC there is known a Ticonderoga manuscript from the colonial period (Aug. 2, 1776).

Based on the above information I conclude the following:

Post Offices with No Known Examples (11)

Adirondac (in operation: 7 years, 3 months, 4 days)

Boquet Mills (19 days)

Brookfield (about 12 years 6 months)

Chesterfield (about 17 years 6 months)

Crown Point (1st) (about 7 years 3 months)

Douws (3 years, 10 months, 1 day)

Essex (1st) (about 5 years)

Pineville (8 months, 10 days)

Putsville (2 years, 25 days)

Wells Corners (25 days)

West Moriah (1st) (7 months, 18 days)

It is surprising that certain of these offices existed for more than 10 years and there have been no recorded examples. I would suspect that no examples will be found from Boquet Mills and Wells Corners since they operated for such very short periods.

Post Offices Known only in Manuscript (14)

Ausable	East Moriah	Elizabeth Court House	Essex Court House
Highland	Pondsville	Port Kendall	Putsville
St. Armand	Split Rock	Wessex	West Essex
West Moriah (2nd)	Woodwardville		

It is highly unlikely that handcancels exist for the above post offices since each of them were extremely small or operated in the period when no Essex County post offices used handcancels.

Post Offices Known only in Handcancels (1)

An interesting situation is Dead Water Iron Works. Established in 1855 and discontinued in 1858, there are no known manuscript markings for this office. According to Simpson's U.S. Postal Markings 1851-61, the only handcancel recorded from Dead Water Iron Works is unique (p. 106).

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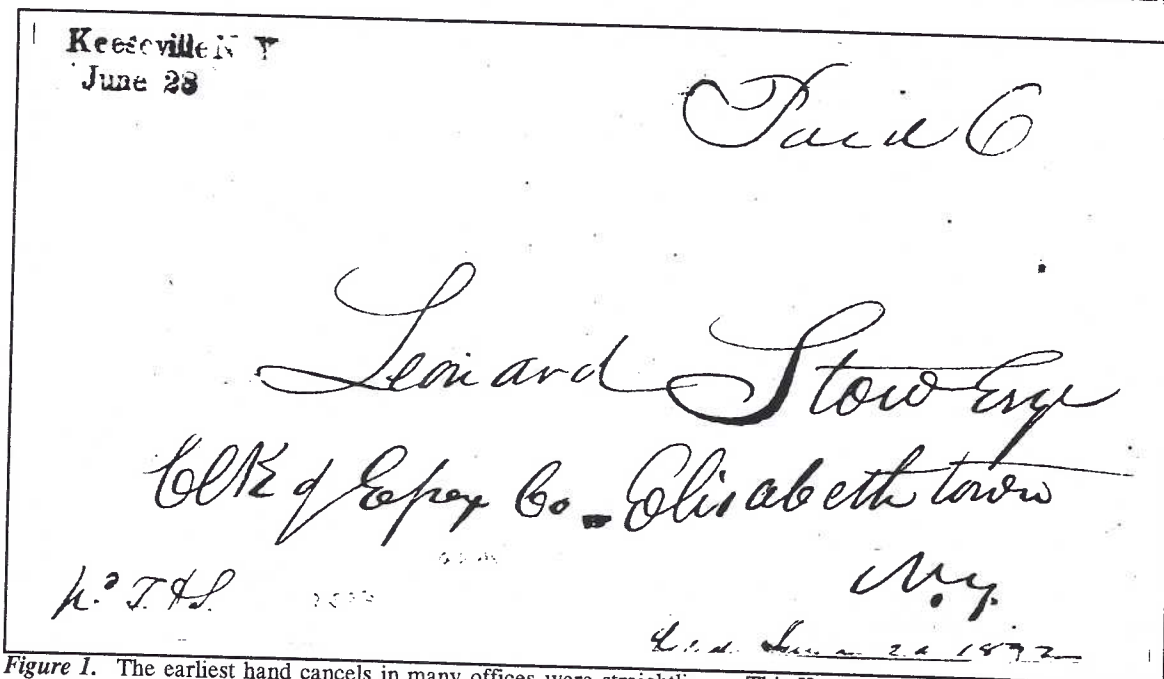


Figure 1. The earliest hand cancels in many offices were straightlines. This Keeseville straightline (1832) also has the date as part of the handcancel.

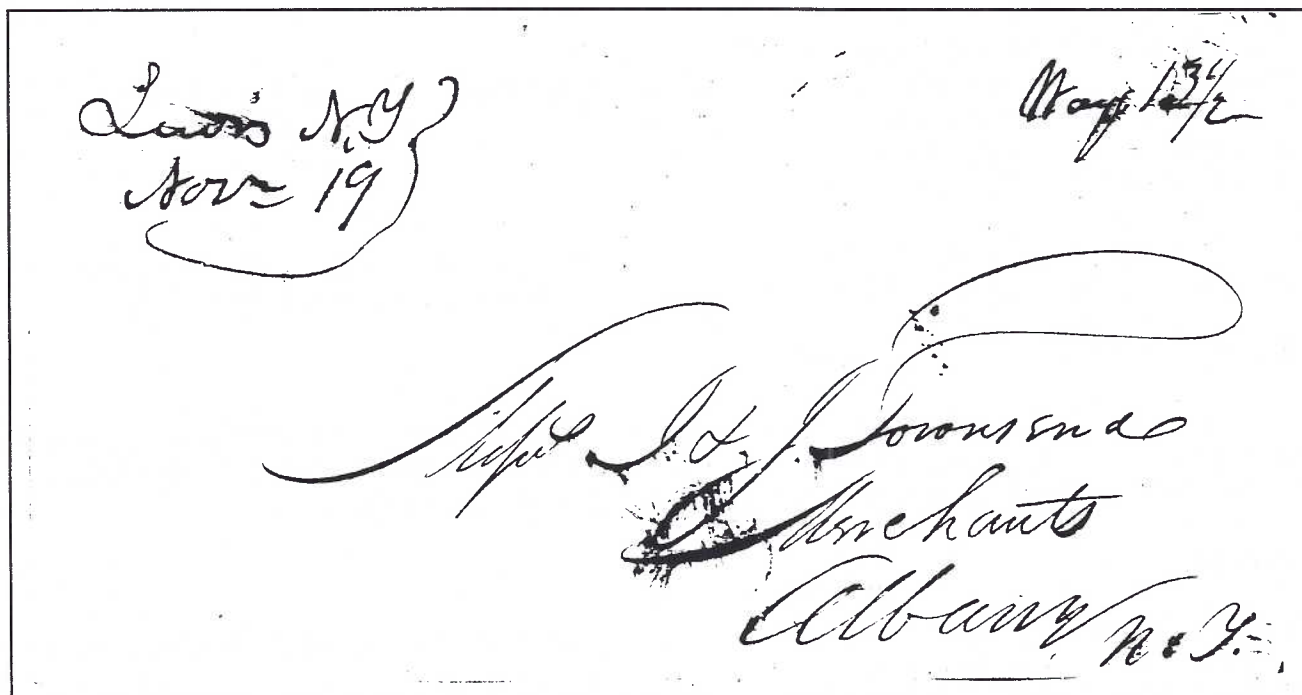


Figure 2. Another 1832 stampless folded letter with a rate of $13\frac{1}{2}\text{c}$ ($12\frac{1}{2}\text{c}$ for the 80 to 150 mile rate + 1c for the post rider). The letter is datelined Keeseville, NY. It was probably given to the post rider on his way to Lewis. Such letters are known as "Way" letters. The extra 1c was given to the post rider for his troubles.

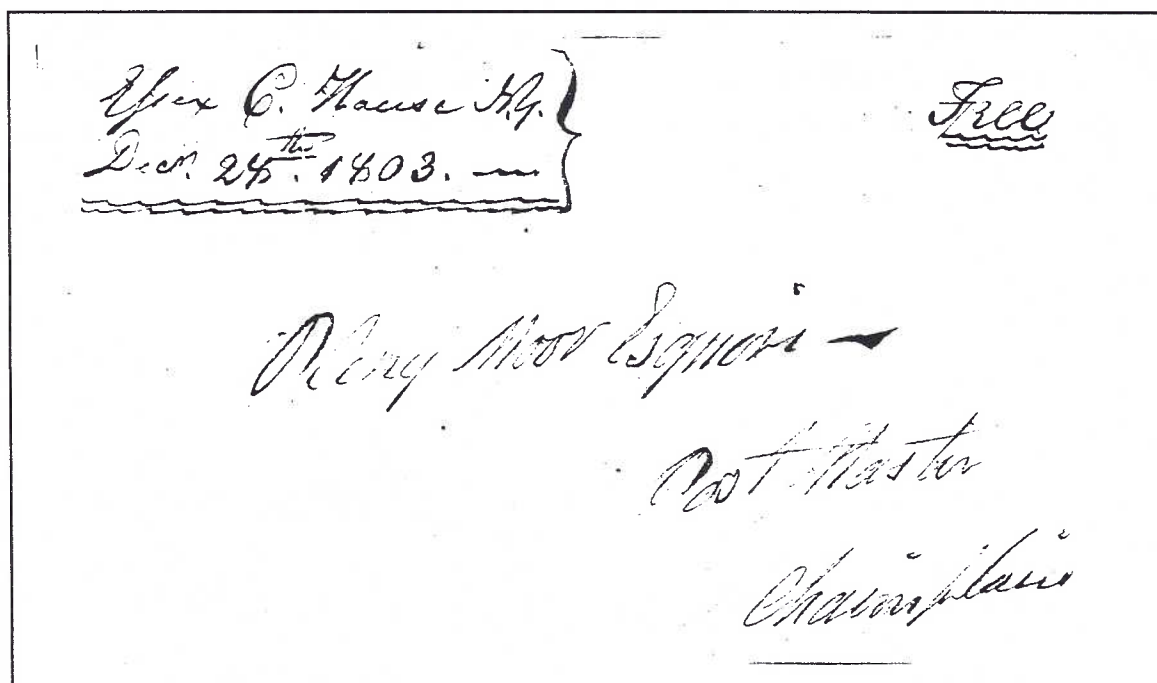


Figure 3. Stampless folded letter from Essex court House to Champlain (1803). The letter was sent "FREE." Both the writer and the addressee were postmasters.

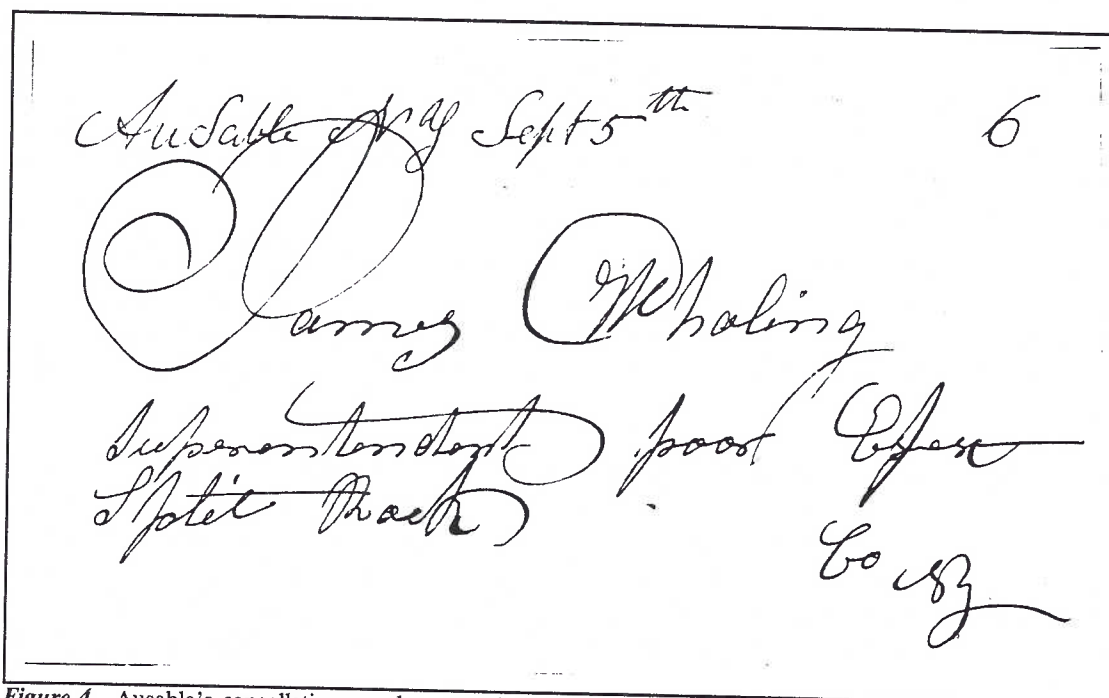


Figure 4. Ausable's cancellations are known only in manuscript. The post office name was changed from Wells Corners, its original name, in 1828. In 1844 it again changed its name to Upper Jay.

LETTER WRITTEN BY M. THOMPSON CIRCA 1833-1846

Submitted by Ken Hall

The following letter was sent by Ken Hall. He writes, "The following letter is nothing special except for one large paragraph on a bomb explosion. In it the writer gives a very detailed description of a bomb explosion in her neighborhood, and the damage it did. It is not Postal History, but it is interesting. I estimate the time period from between 1833-1846."

My Dear Beloved Brother

I should have answered your letter immediately, but Mr Thompson was thinking to write to you himself, and I thought I would write afterwards, but as he has not written, I am now a going to write myself.

Although I have got nothing in particular to write at present, it wont do to wait to get something or we would never write at all. So to commence, we are all well with the exception of myself, and I am miserable. I have very little hope of being better. The Doctor says that my disease is seated, and that it is Consumption. One of the Doctors think my left lung is gone, but I think not. But when I come to get worse, I will then send for M Dow. With care, I may live a long time yet. I keep up my spirits and that is a good medium as I can take, so dont feel uneasy until you see the letter for her to come home.

I will now tell you something else, Mother is in delicate health, and Elizabeth and Dagner, your sisters, have had the Scarlet fever, and have been very sick, but have gotten better with the exception of Elizabeth, whose eye is very bad at present.

We have had a letter from Brother James whose family is all well. He writes that he thinks of coming in the last of the summer or the first of the fall and bringing Pheby with him.

We have got a letter from Fransis lately and he has had a great deal of heavy trouble and sickness in his

family. We have heard from William also who has had a great deal of trouble, and has suffered much. I am in hopes it was all for the best, as I am now convinced he is a reformed man. His letter is such as we never had before, and it has been so much pleasure to me, and I know you will be glad to hear it yourself. He is working at his trade and his wife she is working and they are getting along well. He has two children by this time and is in land.

That rascal Mr Hathaway, has been in here. It seems when William was in difficulty, Mr H proposed that he would befriend him if he would sign a paper which he would draw up, which he William did, but did not know the contents; which was conveying to Mr H all of his contents in his fathers estate. Mr H immediately sent on here and had it recorded, and gets a deed for the same and debarring William from getting one cent.

When he was here this summer, he appears to sell it to any one for three hundred and fifty dollars cash, and if Mrs Dow or any of my Brothers had been in here, it is likely they would have bought it. Mr Thompson consulted with Mother and Mr Green and Mr DeWit, and they thought it best to buy it up for the heirs at large, and was a going to do so. Mr DeWit thought there was a flaw in it, that it was best not to do it, so it remains unsettled. The executors can neither let William nor Mr H have the money. They are expecting every day to hear from Mr H. If William could come on here, Mr DeWit could get him here, and that would be a comfort to us all.

Our Brother Robert has returned from sea, and is perfectly crazy, particular when liquor is in him. When he came back, he had no money, so he went to stay at Mother's. She treat him kindly, but Sophie treat him so, so it set him as it was mad. He came to my house and he carried on so dreadful there was no living with him. Mr Thompson had all the patience and forbearance in the world, and tried to get him to go to work, but he went from worse to worse. At last, Thompson and he had a falling out, and he got money from Mother to go on to Fransis. Instead of that, he went over to New Jersey and there got into difficulty, and was confined all winter and this spring. Mr Green went over and took him some money and used his influence to get him.

Please think he has suffered so much he would do better, but he no sooner got out than he came back and is bad as ever. God only knows what will be done with him. We are all in a great deal of trouble about him. It is liken to kill me, to see the only Brother I have got here, a crazy man, which I think he is. I have no doubt but he suffered much, and that he was out at my Brothers, Fransis.

My dear Brother, while I am writing to you, our own neighbor is called from time into eternity. There has been a dreadful accident at the corner. Our neighbor, Mr Duval had some bombs brought home about two hours ago and was examining them when one of them went off; killing five persons dead instantly, and tearing the legs of another man off. Mr Duval was standing looking at them, and it tore him all to pieces. Another gentleman was driving by in his carriage, killing him and his horse immediately, and shattered his carriage to atoms. A poor brick parson was driving past with a load of bricks killing him and a letter carrier, who was passing with letters., and another young man that was going along dead in one minute. All the houses on both sides of the street, breaking all the glass in them and injuring them other ways. It knocked a looking glass down in my house, and broke it to pieces. Mr Duval's hand and part of his arm went in to Mr E's store and the legs of the others were picked up on King and Hudson street and pieces of flesh in all parts of the street. My John has brought in a long piece of flesh supposed to be of the thigh. The wife of Mr Duval has lost her reason. M Dow will tell you who Mr Duval is.

Mrs. Young that lived in our basement, her youngest, Peter, a boy about 17 years ole, fell from a shed yesterday and was killed immediately.

My Dear Brothers, will I ever see you again. I hope so, but if God wills otherwise, we ought to try to live

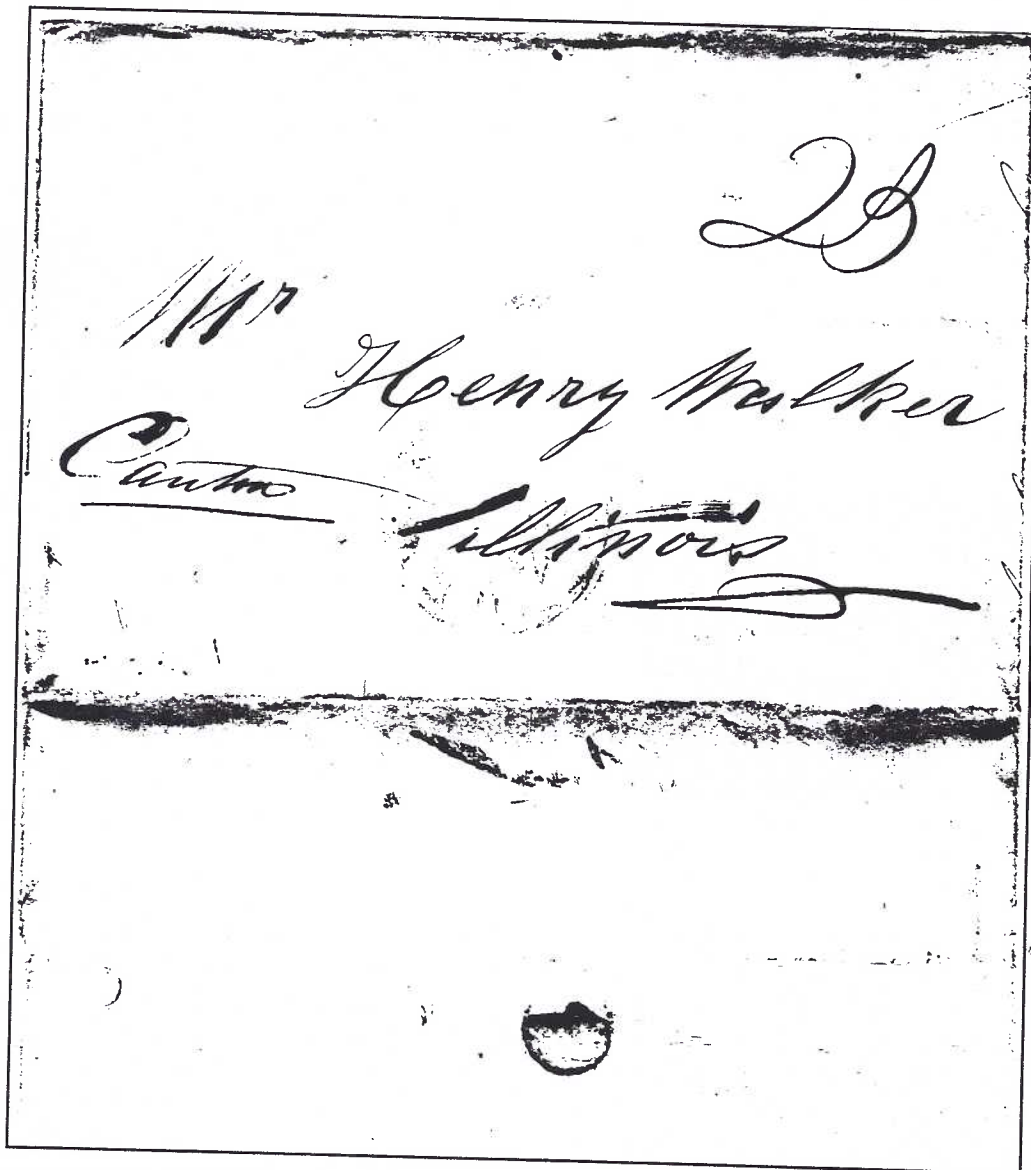
so to meet when parting is no more. You have never written to me, although I hear from you through others. Try and write to me yourself.

I have got to tell you that I would fill these sheets more but I cant, so I will tell what I can. Mr Green and Mr Thompson part to on the first May and Mr. Green goes in the timber business. Thomspson stays in the same business in company with another gentleman, but moves the yard to the opposite corner. I must tell you that Thompson has changed his politics for this election. His great friend, Mr Havameyers is held up for mayor and I believe Mr Green and I sure will give him his vote. Our dividend will be small this spring. There is a Mr Chisam that owes us over five hundred dollars, that they have been waiting to get, but they will have to make up the statement without it, or be not willing to wait any longer.

Your Sister

M Thompson

Give my kind love to your family. John and I wish you all well so good by. You will hear from Mr. Thompson in a few days.



HUDSON-FULTON CELEBRATION, 1909

by William Seifert, Jr.

A list of U.S. Navy vessels which were in the naval parade in New York city for the Hudson-fulton celebration from September 25 to October 4, 1909 follows.

I have 14 canceled cards from 10 different ships with the correct dates. I am lucky to have one card using the Hudson-Fulton stamp (figure 1) and the official Hudson-Fulton postcard with a USS Mississippi cancel (figure 2). I also have two unused cards picturing U.S. and British ships.

I pick up one new card about every other year.

Hudson-Fulton Naval Parade

1st Division - *Connecticut* (flagship), *Vermont*, *Kansas*, *Louisiana*.

2nd Division - *Minnesota* (flagship), *Idaho*, *New Hampshire*, *Mississippi*.

3rd Division - *Georgia* (flagship), *New Jersey*, *Nebraska*, *Rhode Island*.

4th Division - *Virginia* (flagship), *Wisconsin*, *Maine*, *New York*, *Montana*.

Scout Cruiser Division - *Chester*, *Birmingham*, *Salem*.

Scout Squadron - *Gloucester*.

Escort Squadron - *Aileen*, *Wasp*.

Torpedo Division - *Worden*, *Blakeley*, *Shubrick*, *Stockton*, *Stringham*, *Porter*, *Dupont*, *Biddle*.

Submarine Division - *Octopus*, *Tarantula*, *Cuttlefish*, *Viper*, *Castine*, *Nina*.

Fleet Auxiliaries - *Celtic*, *Panther*, *Culgoa*, *Yankton*, *Prairie*, *Montgomery*, *Patuxent*, *Potomac*, *Dixie*.

Figure 1

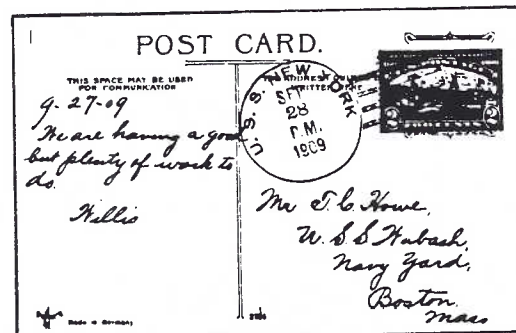


Figure 2

From the Editor:

We have a mixture of longish and short articles in the Journal this issue. There are a number of articles by Roger Curran about NYC P.M.s, a long and two short. We have a comprehensive article on *Essex County PH* by Bulletin editor Glenn A. Eustus; two covers, unrelated and needing no text which I got somewhere or other; an article by Ron Laby re Charles Humphrey; and a short article by Bill Seifert Jr., on our old-timers, who have been working for ESPHS for as long as I've been a member. Also included is a fascinating letter sent by Ken Hall of Las Vegas, Nevada telling about misfortune and havoc. Thanks to all these individuals. How about the rest of you??

The following articles are from the Winter 1996 issue of the USCC News. They were written by ESPHS member Roger D. Curran and are used with his kind permission. We don't get much about NYC and I am glad to be able to reprint articles, especially when so well written, on the subject.

NEW YORK "FACES" ON BANKNOTE STAMPS

by Roger D. Curran

Very few killers used by the New York Post Office on first-class domestic mail during the 1870-1876 period would, I believe, be considered noteworthy fancy cancels. This differs considerably from the 1860s which produced a number of decidedly attractive killers, including some that are highly celebrated. Beginning at least by November 1872, New York began using, on some out-of-town domestic mail, killers that included a hand-carved number in the design. Letters in killers are also noted but to a much lesser extent and their use began in the 1860s. These letters and numbers are interesting but not really fancy. The other designs are basically very mundane rising occasionally to something as interesting as a star and only occasionally above that. In 1876, the hand-carved canceler era in New York on domestic mail gave way to manufactured metal ellipse cancelers.

The clerks who processed first-class mail for city delivery during the period in question used some higher quality geometrics than those canceling domestic out-of-town mail, but overall they were not really remarkable. Figure 1 illustrates what might be considered one of the "better" fancy cancels for each out-of-town and city delivery mail. And, of course, clerks processing city delivery and circular mail did occasionally use "New York Foreign Mail" and other comparable designs and at these times moved themselves up in the canceling world.

One of the fanciest cancels on domestic out-of-town mail is surely the "Devil's mask" (Figure 2)¹ which is common enough to be found in a number of collections. All of which brings us to the purpose of this article which is to report on a few other "faces" out there in the New York crowd.



Figure 2.

Let's begin with an interesting cover that was in the Edward Knapp collection. In the 1941 sale of the Knapp collection, lot 1197 consisted of a cover described as follows: "#158, 3C green, tied by grotesque 'man's profile' (New York, P.O.), on an unusual Hotel advertising cover ..."

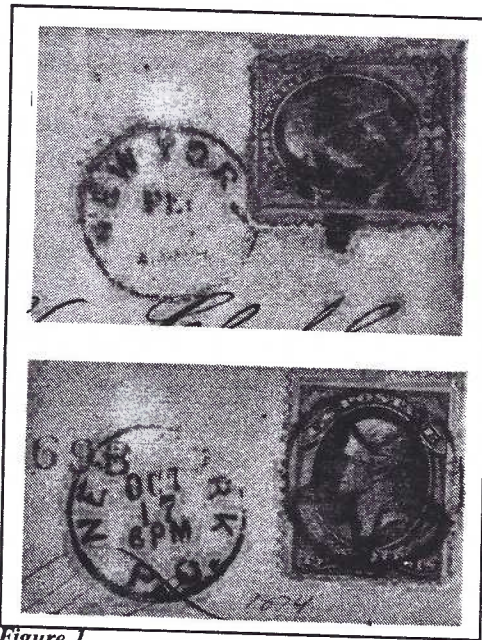


Figure 1.

Figure 3 is an enlargement of the lot illustration which shows the cover and what presumable is a representation of the killer superimposed on the cover.² In a 1985 Frajola sale³ were two postal cards described as follows:

#UX3, 1c Brown tied by large head fancy cancel, "New York P.O. Aug 10 6 P.M." cds, 1874, very fine.

#UX3, 1c Brown tied by large head fancy cancel, "New York P.O. Aug 10 4 P.M." cds, very fine.

¹ Cole, James M. Cancellations and Killers of the Banknote Era 1870-1894. p. 165, listing JO-90

² The Edward S. Knapp collection, Part Two, Parke-Bernet Galleries, Inc., November 3/8, 1941, pp. 84-5.

³ Richard C. Frajola sale of June 15, 1985.

Figure 4 is an enlarged copy of the lot illustrations. Please note that all three items are postmarked "Aug 10" with a CDS including "P.O." at the bottom. The "P.O." in the design of a New York CDS is generally associated with first-class mail for city delivery only. The postal card in Figure 4 partially addressed to "Mt. Carmel" may be an exception. I am confident that these all represent use of the same killer. The variations between the killers on the two cards are attributable, I believe, to variations in inking. Although the killer

drawn in Figure 3 seems somewhat different from those on the cards and the illustration of the actual killer in Figure 3 is unclear, the variation is presumably attributable to the accuracy of the drawing/tracing (?), inking variations, strike variations or some combination thereof.

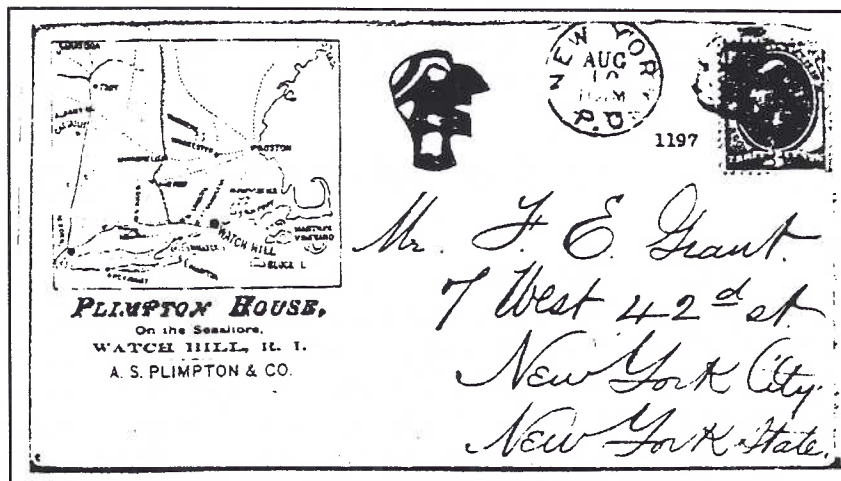


Figure 3.

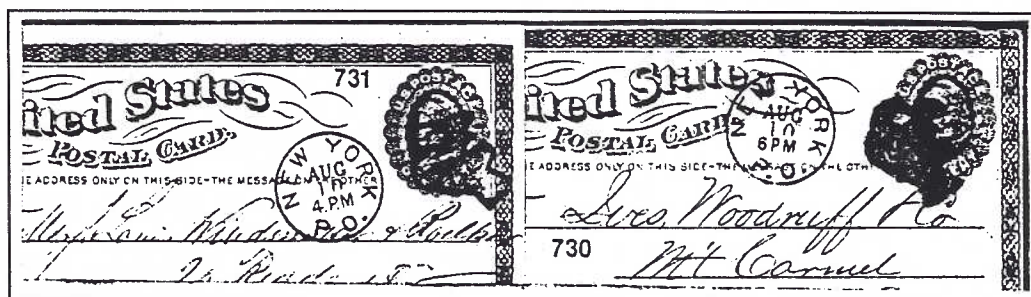


Figure 4.

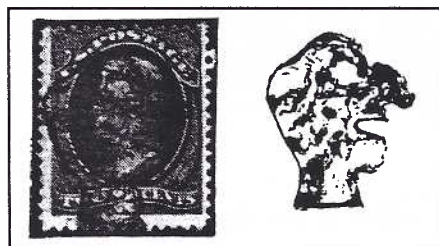


Figure 5.

A while ago I received a catalogue that listed the two-cent brown (Scott #157) illustrated as Figure 5 which was offered "as is" meaning that its genuineness was not guaranteed. Certainly it is an odd thing and one can appreciate why the describer was suspicious. However, after examining the item I believe it to be genuine and a further example of the cancellation discussed above. The two-cent postage fits the first class city delivery rate at the time. Since then I have seen two additional two-cent browns with the killer. Incidentally, the Knapp cover reflects a one-cent overpayment, given that it is franked with a three-cent adhesive and entered the mails in New York for city delivery.

Two illustrations in the Herst-Zareski cancellations book⁴ were, I believe, based on this cancellation. Both are identified in a successor to this book as from New York—the first on a Scott #158 and the second on a #210⁵. Cole (page 167) illustrates a similar cancellation as JO-134. (Might JO-133 be from another

⁴ Michael Zareski, Fancy Cancellations on 19th Century United States Postage Stamps. 1951, Herman Herst, Jr., pp 217, 219, listings 192 and 211.

⁵ Billigs Philatelic Handbook, Volume 33. Fancy Cancellations on Nineteenth Century United States Postage Stamps. 1972, Herman Herst, Jr., pp 217, 219, listings 1488 and 1507.

strike of this same cancellation?) A lot in a 1960 John A. Fox sale⁶ on an off-cover #210 bears a cancel similar to JO-134 described as follows:

Punch and Judy Mark, 2c red brown, closed tear T.

Figure 6 is an enlargement of the lot illustration. I find it remarkable that a cancel so similar to the 1874 New York profile would show up on a stamp that was not issued until late 1883. It would be wise, in my judgement for any potential purchaser of this item to secure an expert opinion first. By the time Scott #210 was issued, New York had been using standardized ellipse cancels for seven years and any fancy carved handstamp cancels on domestic or foreign mail from New York must be very scarce. Off-cover #210s with New York Foreign Mail cancels are, of course, known but unexplained. Perhaps a genuine example from 1874 provided inspiration to a faker who applied his creation to a #210. Subsequently, based on its similarity to known usages from New York, the strike on a #210 was possibly assumed to be and labeled as being from New York. This is, of course, only speculation.



Figure 6.

Gary O'Neill kindly supplied a photocopy of a New York cover in his collection bearing a round face killer with two eyes and a nose but apparently no mouth. Figure 7 illustrates this cover. Cole lists this killer as JO-102 (page 166). It is surely an unusual item.

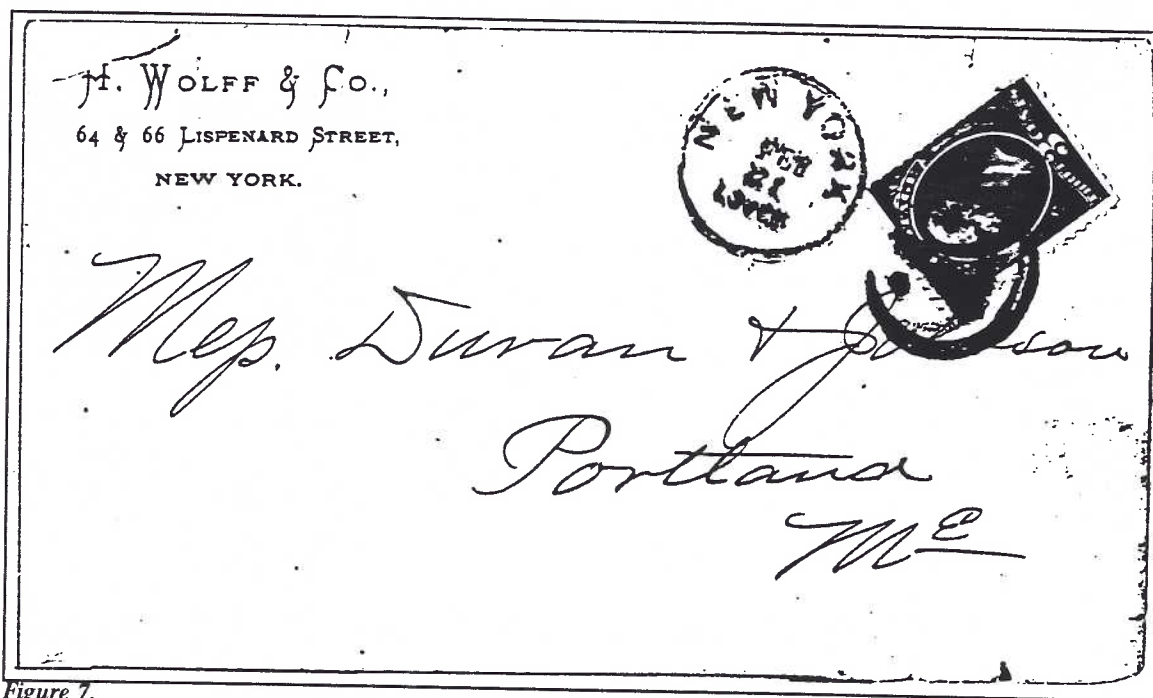


Figure 7.

Next, illustrated as Figure 8 is a New York cancel that I assumed for several years was a stylized face. Does the double hump represent eyebrows or a moustache? Grudgingly, and perhaps more to the point, is it really a "13"? Alas, I think it is definitely a "13" although I must confess to having acquired it with the belief that it was a face. We really do have to guard against believing something is what we want it to be. Finally, in a similar vein, I noted in a dealer's stock the postal card illustrated in Figure 9. It certainly appears to be a "face" killer but a close inspection proved disappointing. The killer had areas that were darker than others (and darker than the ink in the CDS) creating a somewhat mottled look. Some of these

⁶ John A. Fox sale of November 14/16, 1960, pp. 65-6.

darker areas were around the "mouth" and eyes." I concluded that a cork or wood killer, into which a two-digit number was carved, produced the original marking and that it was subsequently touched up to create the appearance of a face.

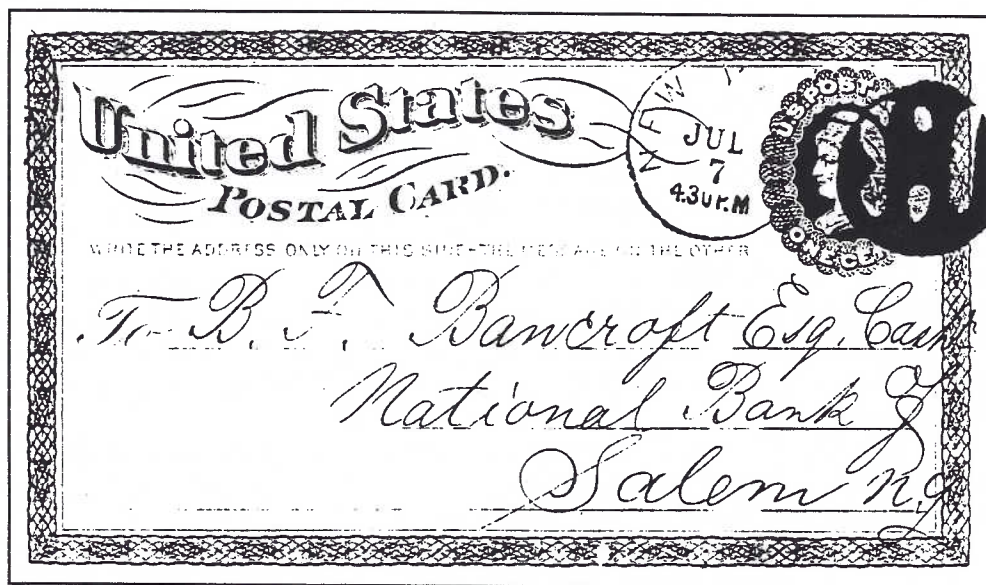


Figure 8.

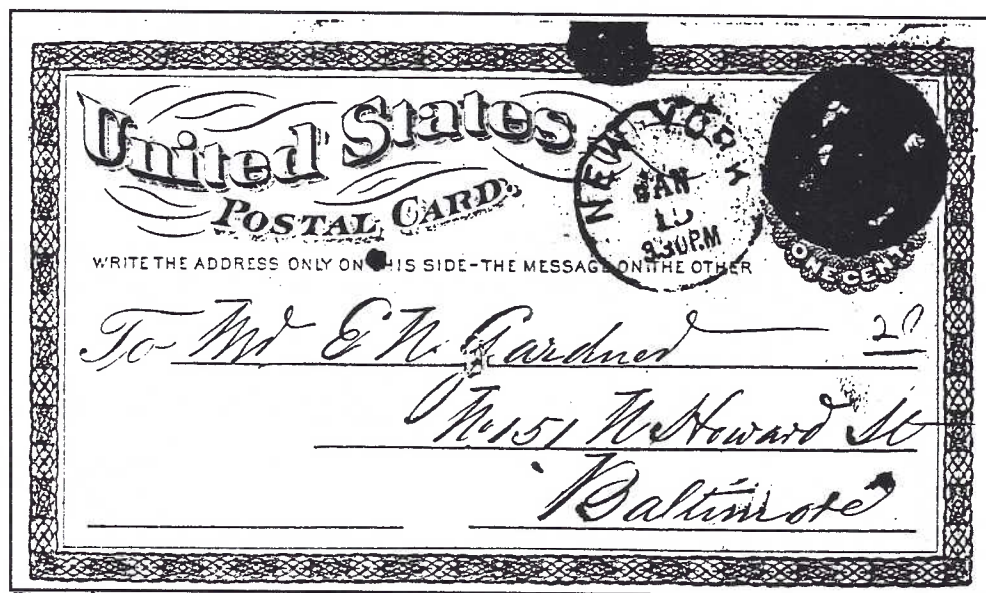


Figure 9.

PASS THE BOTTLE . . . STOPPER

by Roger D. Curran

One of the quaint cancellation devices used by 19th century post offices was the rubber bottle stopper. They can be recognized as such due to the number in the center such as "2½" which is said to denote stopper size and always appears in reverse in the cancellation. In the case of the "3," however, which is probably the most common number encountered, the reverse image, which appears rather like an "E," will become a "3" again when positioned upside down. Therefore, we see "3s" that don't appear to be reversed.

Just how many different size numbers can be located is an interesting question. Clyde Jennings reported in the Spring 1988 issue of Cancellation Club News the following numbers: 2, 2½, 3, 4, 5½, and 6.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

Edward Willard reported a "3½" in his book on Scott #210¹.

Usually, as one would expect, these cancellations are found in black ink. Blue and magenta, at least, have also been noted. Indeed, a well-known blue Chicago cancellation was apparently fashioned from a stopper. Figure 1 illustrates the cancel as presented by Richard Russell in the March 1963 Cancellation Club News. Figure 2 shows a variation, struck in the distinctive Chicago blue ink, with a horizontal bar cut into the stopper below the "3."

It may be a little surprising to think of carving rubber stoppers but such examples are not rare. Figure 3 illustrates several examples, the first two on #210 and the third on #213. Figure 4 shows radical carving to yield an "E."

It is speculated that these cancels were frequently the result of a pharmacy and post office being under one roof and one management in small country towns. This is probably true in many cases. But how then to explain uses



Figure 3.



Figure 4.

in Chicago or the nation's largest post office? Figure 5 shows a size "2" stopper used as a killer by the NYPO. I assume that the NYPO was employing at that time (1874 by the dateline) handstamps that duplexed a CDS with a ring attached to the handle into which were usually fitted wood or cork killers. However, in this case a rubber stopper was inserted.

Just recently I became aware of a second example of this NYC "2" on a cover, also dated November 4, in the collection of John Donnes. However, the strike on his cover shows a negative "12" (see tracing in figure 6), the vague outlines of which I can now see in the Figure 5 killer but would have never recognized before. Perhaps this killer was used very briefly and then taken out of service since it confused a "2" with the "12."

The latest usage of a stopper killer that I have noted is the Scott #267 illustrated in figure 7. This was a size "2" stopper but obviously smaller than the NYPO "2." Also present in the Figure 7 killer is apparently an "E8." What this means I have no idea.

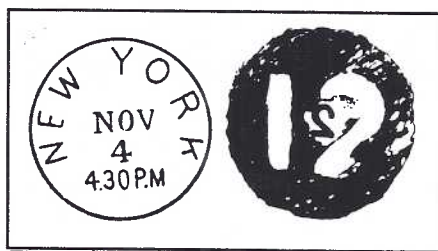


Figure 6.



Figure 7.

¹ Willard, Edward L. The United States Two Cent Red Brown of 1883-1887, vol. 2, H.L. Lindquist Publications, Inc. 1970, pp 25,6.



Figure 5.

LATE USAGES OF NEW YORK SQUARE GRID?

by Roger D. Curran

The New York square grid was introduced in November 1846 to cancel the New York Postmaster's Provisional. It was also used by the NYPO as the primary canceler of 1847 issue stamps. In July 1851 the "13-bar" grid was replaced by an 11-bar grid of the same basic design. In August, the NYPO began canceling stamps with the town mark and uses of the grid in September and later are scarce. I have seen none after December 1851.

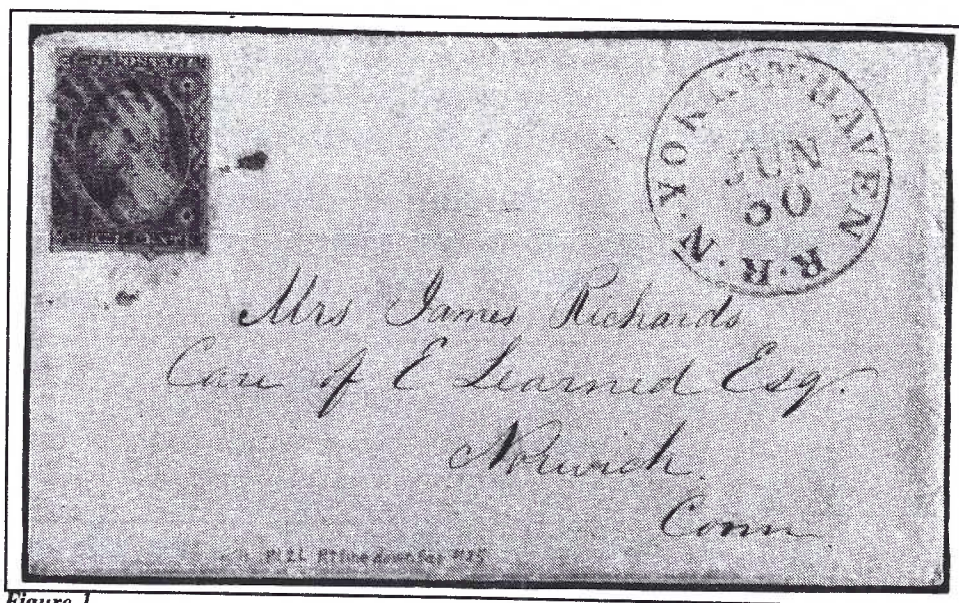


Figure 1.

No uses, that is, unless the killer on the 1853 cover in Figure 1 qualifies. Both the CDS and grid are black. I have examined this item and am reasonably confident that the killer used is the 11-bar grid. For comparison purposes, a clear strike of this grid, dated 8/1/(51), is illustrated in Figure 2. I am aware of two other covers bearing the N. York and N. Haven R.R. CDS combined with what appears to be the 11-bar grid canceling the stamp. One example, that was in the collection of Charles L. Towle, is dated 2/7/(53) and the other, which appeared in the 1977 Kelleher sale of the William Wyer collection, is dated November 17. In each case the CDS is red and the grid is black.

Route agents were under the supervision of a post office at one end or the other of the route and it seems reasonable that at least one route agent for this line was under the supervision of the NYPO. One can speculate that at some point the grid was turned over to an agent. Incidentally, the N. York and N. Haven CDS is known as a canceler of adhesive stamps and one may wonder why a route agent, under the supervision of the NYPO (if that is true), would use a grid when the NYPO clerks were in 1852 and beyond using the New York CDS to cancel adhesives virtually without exception on domestic mail. Nonetheless, the Killer on the Figure 1 cover, as mentioned above, does appear to be the 11-bar grid, especially when holding the cover at arm's length and studying the overall effect. (This doesn't sound especially precise, does it?)

I wonder if the November 17 cover is 1852. Does the fact that the CDS is red, like that of the 2/7/(53) cover, imply 1852 usage with a switch to black CDS ink later in 1853? Written on the back of the Figure 1 cover is the following: "Ashbrook notes 'scarcer' in black." I have not been able to locate this reference and thus do not know if Ashbrook discusses dates of usages of red and black inks. There is a break in the CDS rim in the Figure 1 cover just to the left of the "N" in "N. York." The November 17 cover also shows the break and it appears to be virtually the same. If it could be shown that some additional feature of the CDS changed as a result of damage or wear from June 30 to November 17, 1853 that might enable us to rule out the November 17 cover as 1853 or later.



Figure 2.

Incidentally, the enclosure to the figure 1 cover has an interesting aspect. The letter was apparently written one day and then set aside. It was datelined June 29, 1853 which was a Wednesday. The next day a note was appended and headed "Thursday morning." It began as follows: "I shall add a few lines, close and take to the 7 o'clock train . . ." Apparently, the dutiful son, who was writing his mother, wanted to make up for time lost in not mailing the letter Wednesday.

MORE ON NEW YORK "OCEAN MAIL" POSTMARKS

In the Cancellation Club News, volume 23, number 2, I discussed the scarce red "ocean mail" postmark. Examples in black are common but Calvet Hahn points out that even they are rare on stampless mail and he shares with readers the following information about two covers.

The Figure 1 cover, franked by an ex-Senator, has a June 20th (1855) "ocean mail" cds in black and is addressed to San Jose, California. It also bears the red FREE over cds (32mm size). It went out from New York on the SS Illinois that was used from 1851 until sold to the War Department in 1865. After the letter crossed the Isthmus, it was carried on the John L. Stevens launched at NYC in 1852 and abandoned in 1879. The Panama R.R. was completed in late January 1855.

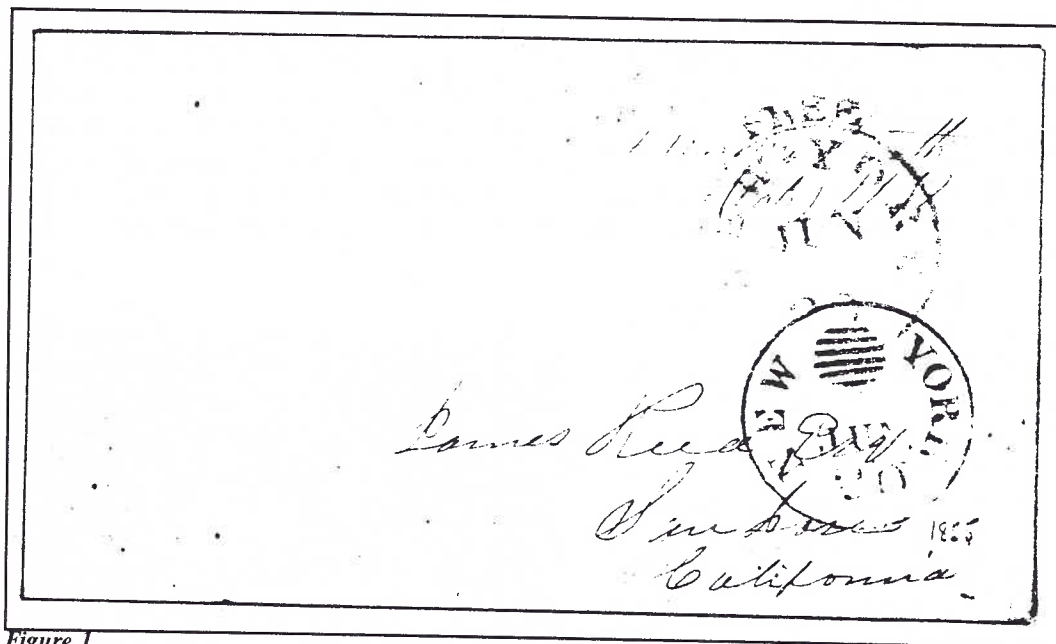


Figure 1.

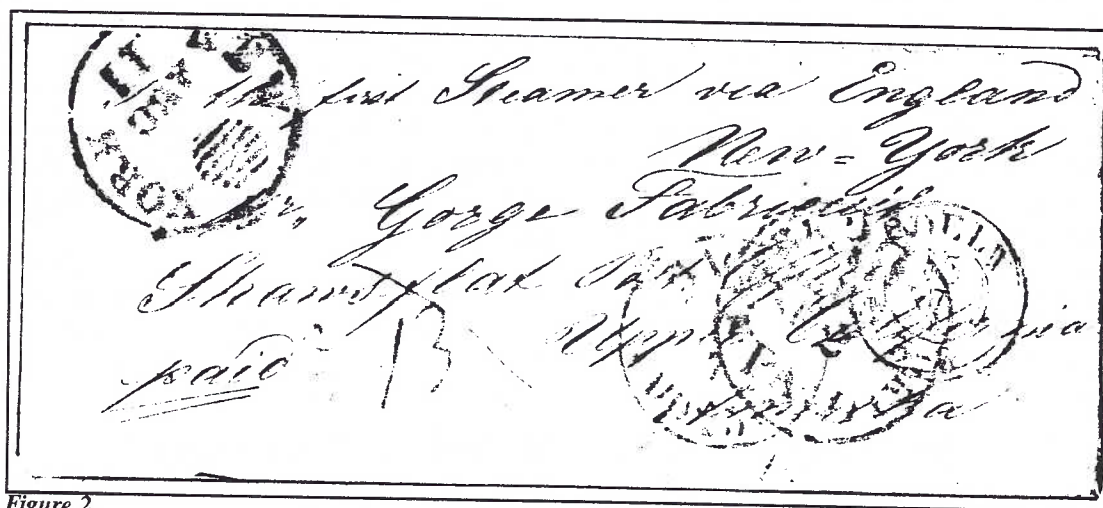
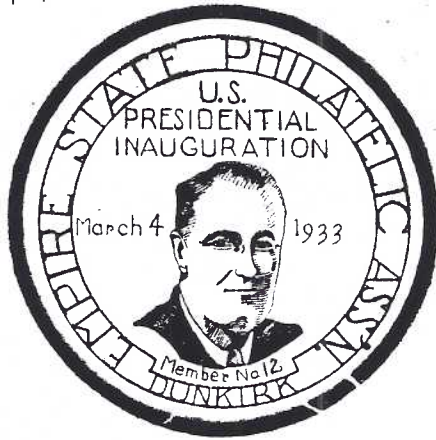


Figure 2.

Figure 2 is a letter from Germany that began in Coeln on July 15, 1856 and was prepaid to Shaw's Flat, Upper California with the 30 cent Prussian closed Mail rate. It bears the red AACHEN PAID 25 of July 16th and the N. YORK 30 AM. PKT./PAID of August 12 to show its passage on the Havre liner Argo, departing Havre July 30 and Southampton the same day, arriving in NYC on August 11. It was stamped with an unusual predated black "ocean mail" cds of August 11 to go in 1856 on the George Law to Panama. This vessel, launched in 1853, foundered at sea on September 12, 1857 with a loss of 423 lives. The letter crossed on the Panama R.R. and was picked up at Panama by the Pacific Mails Sonora which had first arrived May 5, 1854 on the West Coast. The Sonora lasted on the Panama/SF run until May 1863. She made one trip with troops to Panama in 1865 and in 1868 was dismantled and broken up at Sausalito.

TWO INTERESTING COVERS

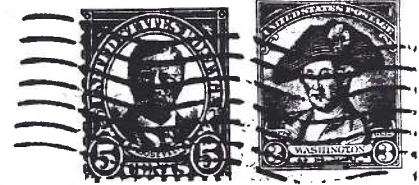
101
1151



Franklin D. Roosevelt



Via Air Mail



Howard H. Allen

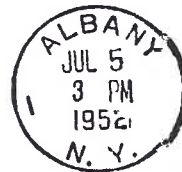
MOUNT VERNON

WASH (State)

1st. ANNIVERSARY
FORT ORANGE
JUNIOR STAMP CLUB



FEBRUARY 9-23, 1952
ALBANY, N. Y.



Mrs. Bessie Helmer
R.D.1.
Herkimer,
New York

THE EARLY REGULAR AIRMAIL, NEW YORK-PHILADELPHIA, AND WASHINGTON NEW YORK TO BOSTON AND NEW YORK TO CHICAGO

by Martin Margulis

In 1909 Thomas Edison predicted that airplanes would be used to fly mail. A year later a bill was introduced in Congress by Rep. Morris Sheppard to direct the Post Office Department to study whether aeroplane or airship mail was a practical idea. In 1911 mail was carried 15 miles from Garden City Long Island. In 1918 \$100,000 was appropriated so that the Post Office Department might set up an experimental airmail route.

Because 1918, was in the middle of America's part in WWI, all planes produced were given to the War Department. Consequently, the planes and pilots were to be from the Army, which did the actual flying.

The original route chosen was from Washington to Philadelphia and then to New York and vice versa. On May 15, 1918, the planes actually took off. The rush to get everything in motion resulted in C-3a, the inverted Jenny, but that is another story. Of the six planes involved in the first flights in Washington-Philadelphia-New York and New York-Philadelphia and Washington, only one got to where it was supposed to go, the New York to Philadelphia leg piloted by Lt. Torrey Webb.

The 24¢ rate for the route was too high and it was reduced to 16¢ in July and 6¢ in December of 1918. For 2¢ and later 3¢ a letter mailed from Washington in the morning was delivered in New York City on the same day. (Austria also had airmail in 1918, flown by army planes which also carried government letters. Civilian letters were carried when there was room. Most of the civilian letters seemed

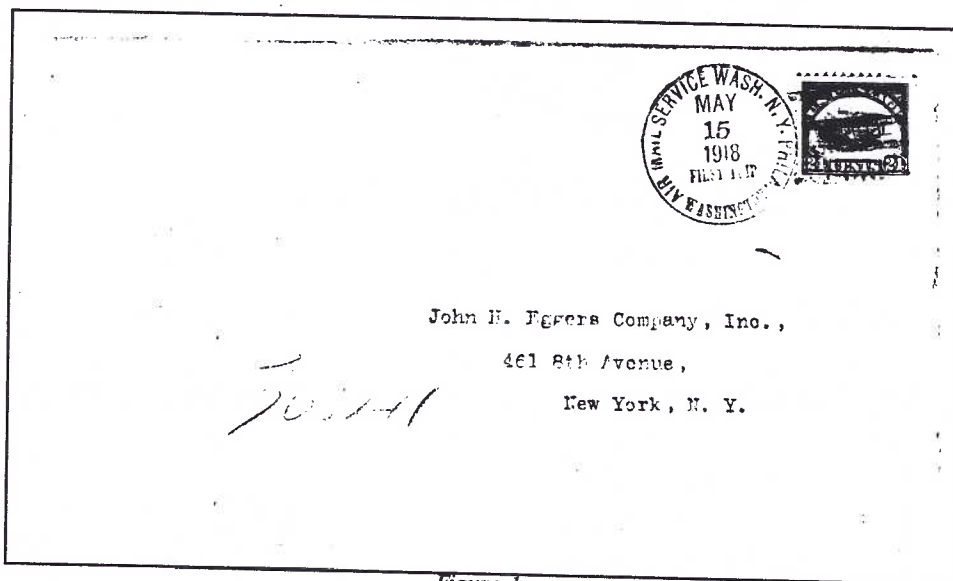


Figure 1.

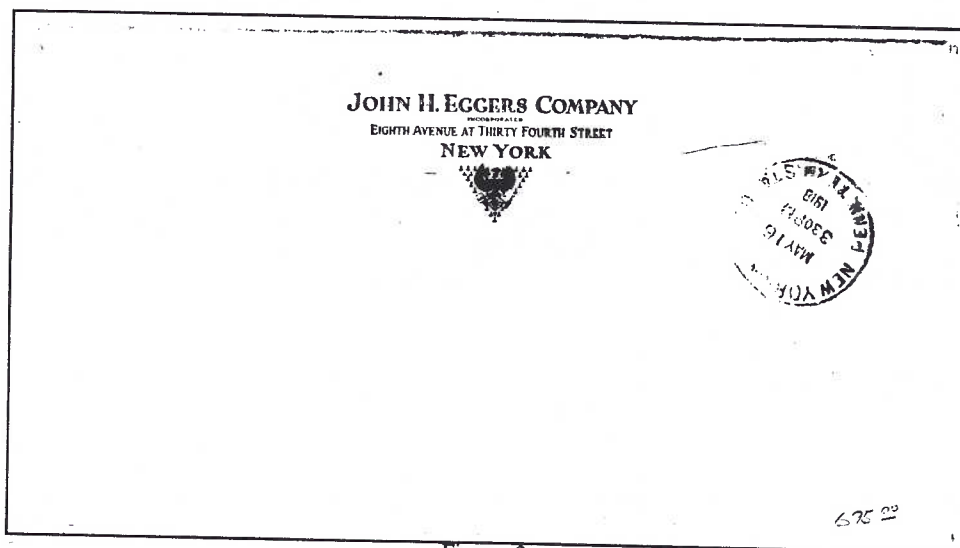


Figure 2.

to have been semi-official, or perhaps these were the only ones saved.)

Figure 1 shows a picture of one of the covers from the first northbound flight. It is back stamped on May 16th at 3:30 p.m. (Figure 2).

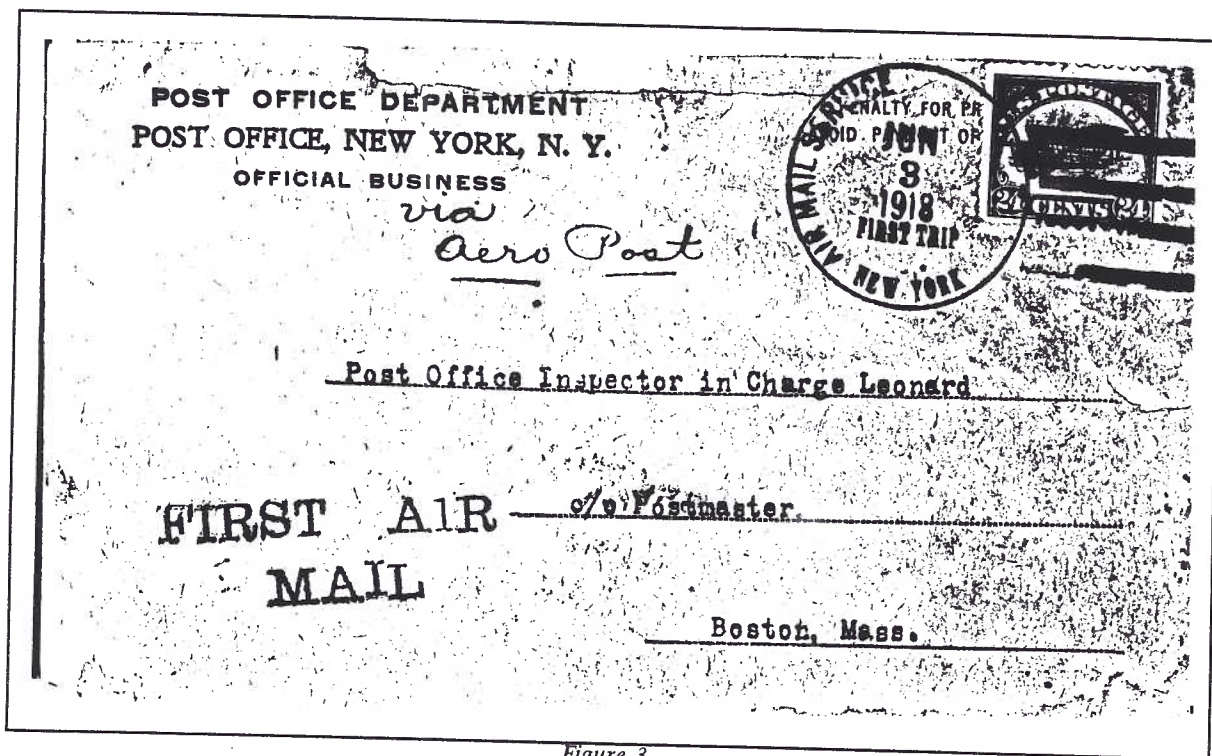


Figure 3.

On June 3rd the service was extended from New York to Boston (Figure 3). This cover is back stamped in Boston on June 6th, a less than auspicious beginning (Figure 4).

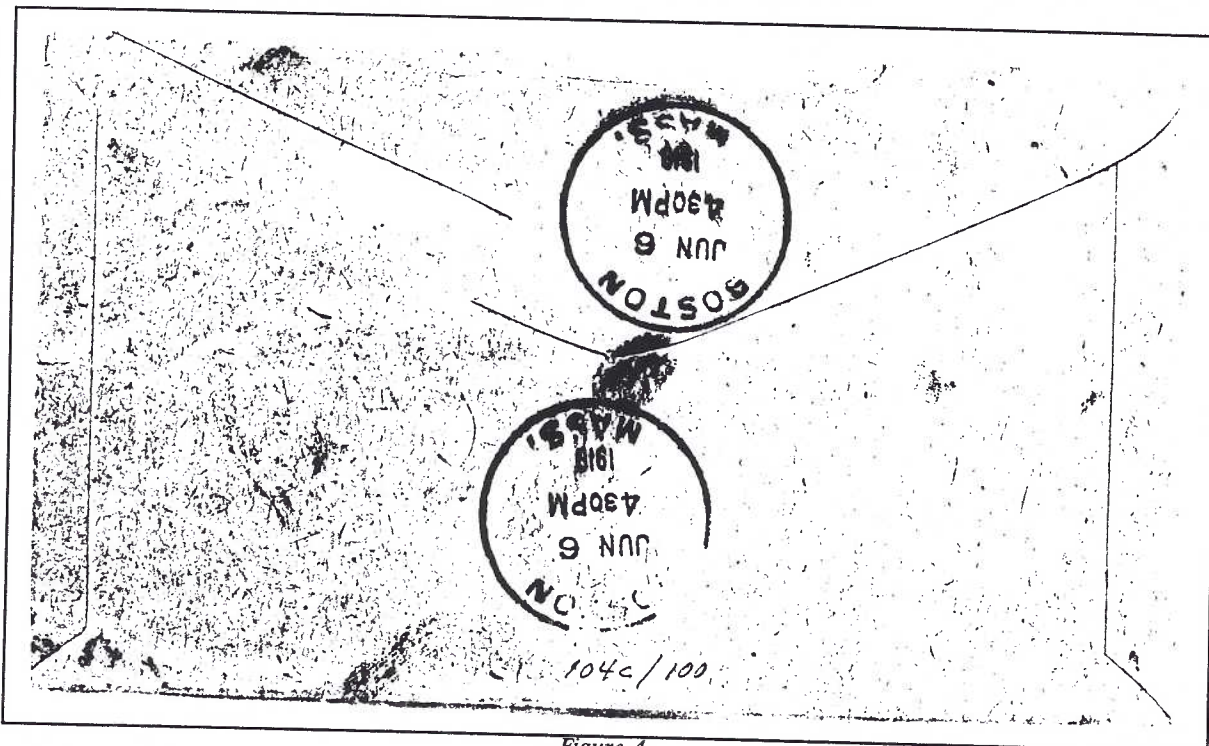


Figure 4.

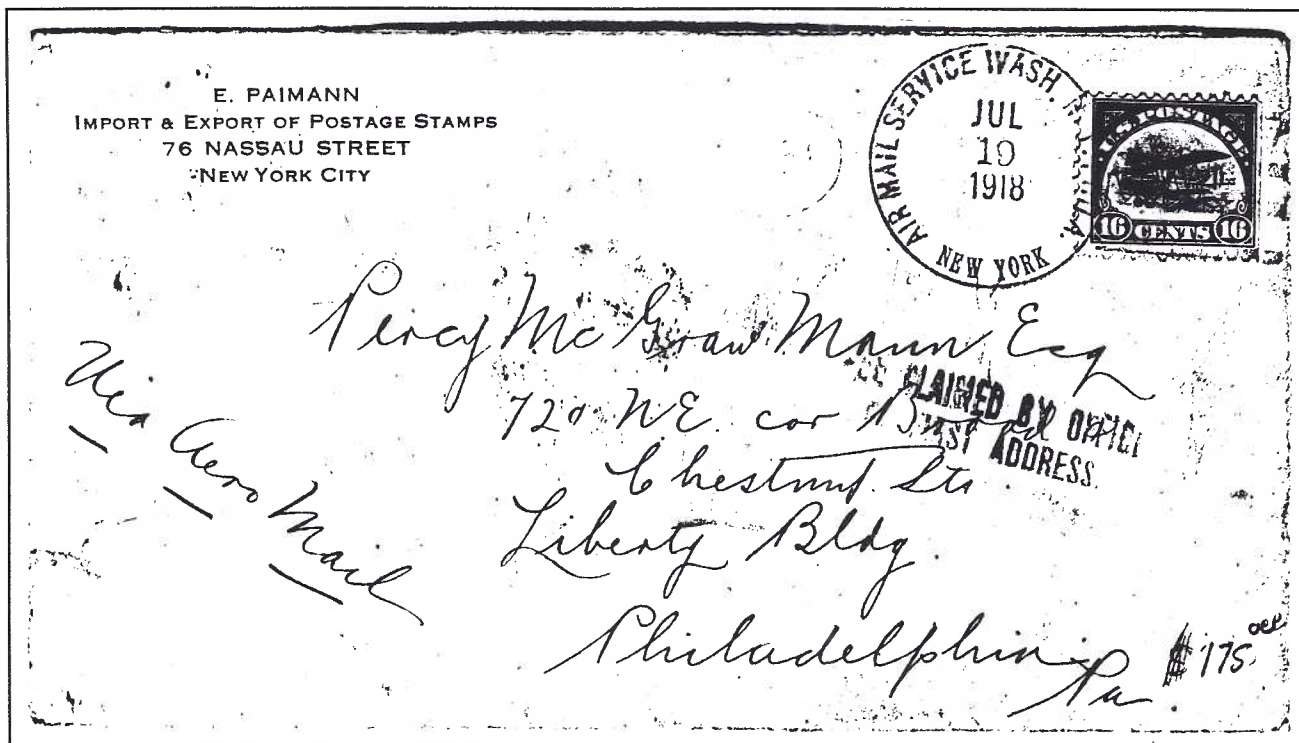


Figure 5.

Figure five shows a cover flown on July 19th at the 16¢ rate. It is back stamped in New York at 9 AM and arrived in Philadelphia before 3 PM (Figure 6).

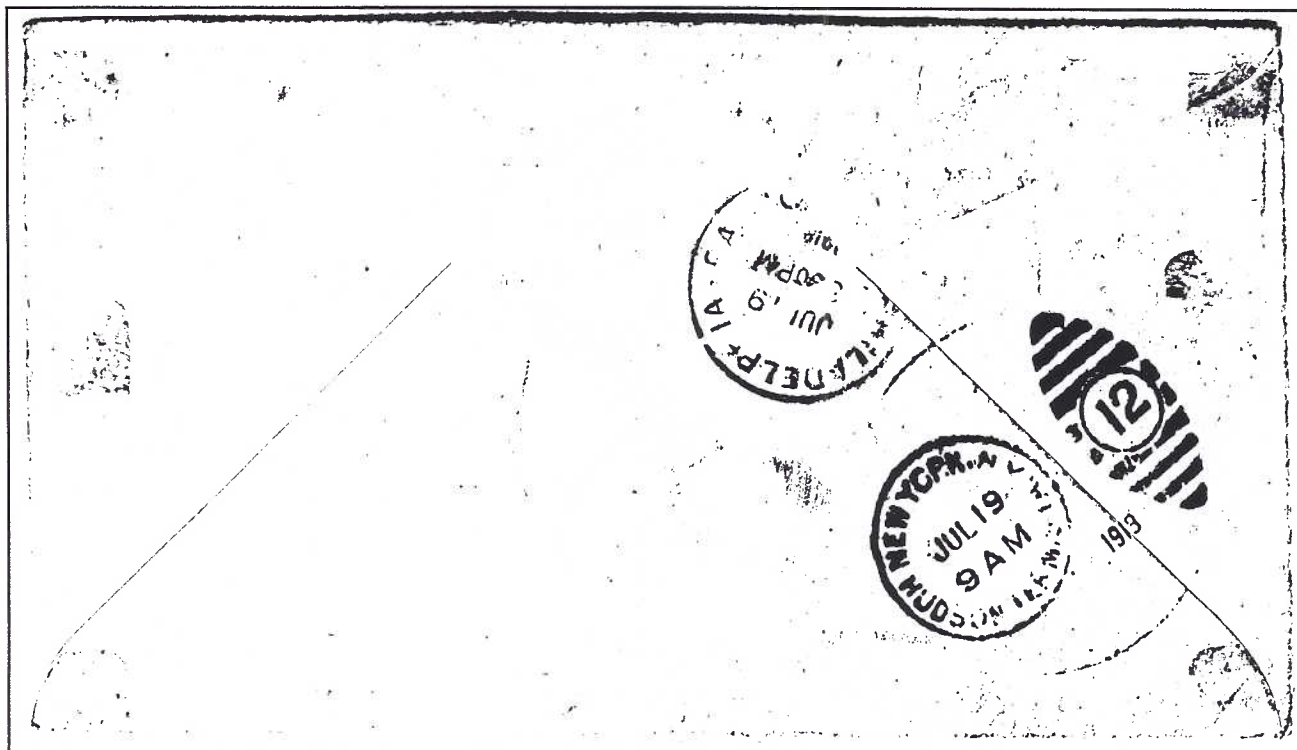


Figure 6.

Another cover (Figure 7) shows C-2 used on a first flight cover from New York City to Chicago. There is no back stamp.

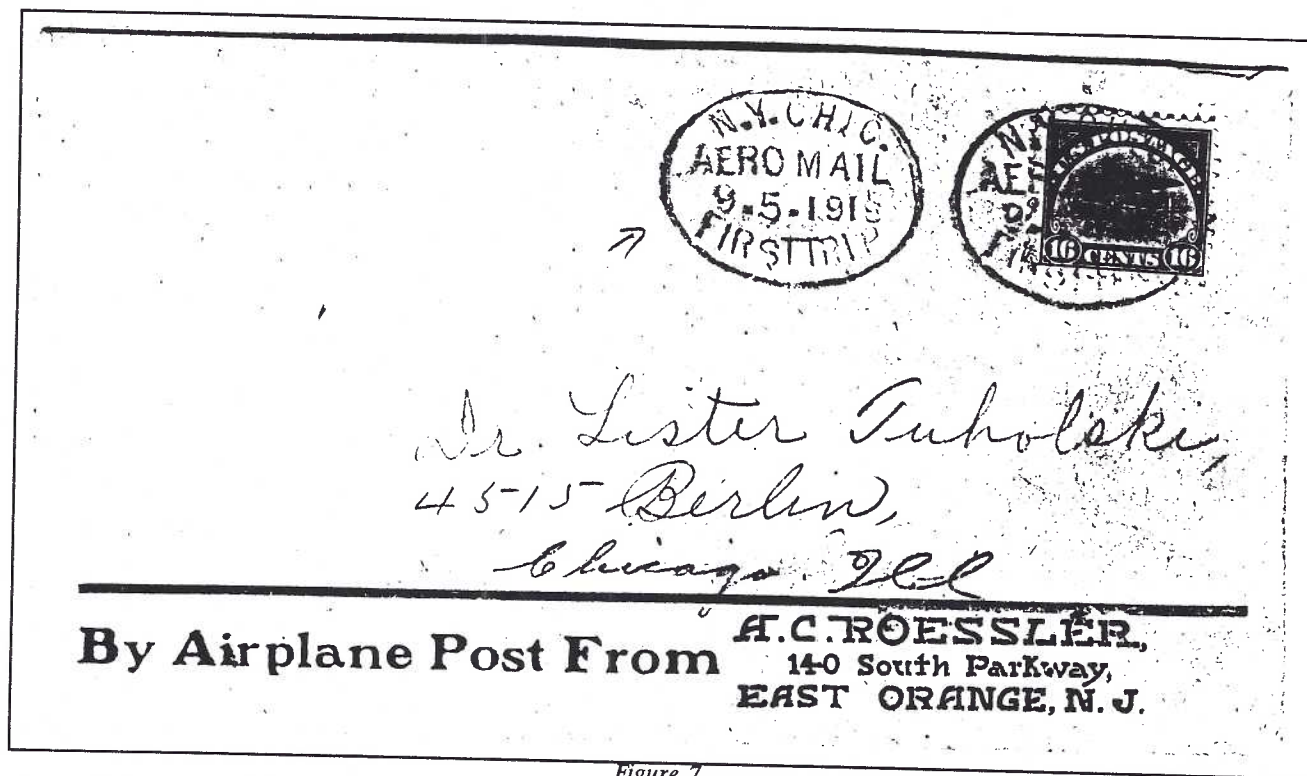


Figure 7.

The last cover (Figure 8) is from Philadelphia to New York and then on to Chicago. It was mis-directed and then returned to New York where a directory search delayed it some more before it got back to the sender.

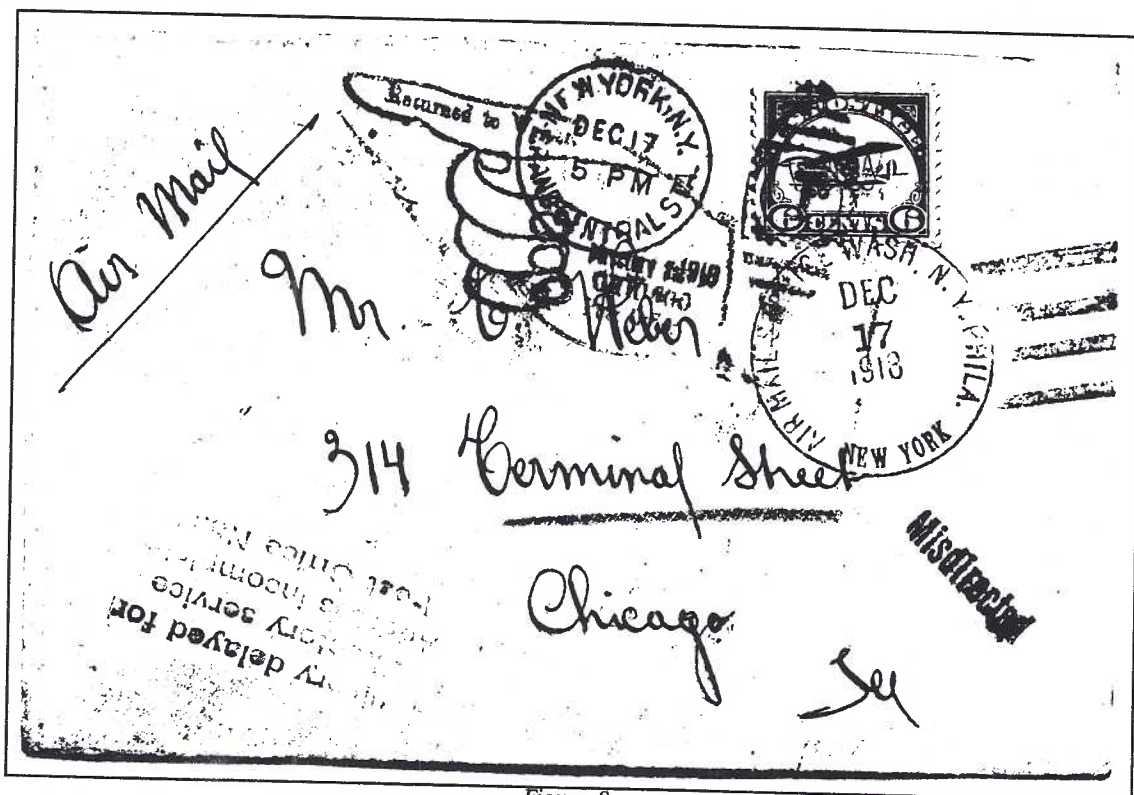


Figure 8.

