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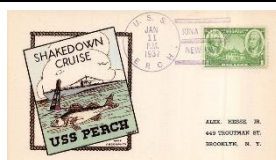
Inside This Issue

Articles

| | |
|---|------------|
| <i>A Patron's View of the Bad Management at the U.S. Post Office Department in 1840</i> | 3 |
| By Charles J. DiComo, PhD | |
| <i>ESPHS Wins Gold APS Website Award</i> | 7 |
| <i>Iona Island Port of Call Cancel</i> | 8 |
| By Larry LaLiberte | |
| <i>Where is Your Collection Going?</i> | 9 |
| By Doug Penwell | |
| <i>A New Manuscript Find</i> | 10 |
| By David E. Williams | |
| <i>The Grievances of Chief Cornplanter</i> | 11 |
| By Tom Mazza | |
| <i>The Centre Village Straightline Cancel</i> | 14 |
| By David E. Williams | |
| <i>Cover of the Issue:</i> | Back Cover |



Page 3



Page 8



Page 14



EXCELSIOR!

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For membership in the ESPHS, write to the Secretary at the heading address, or print and mail the application on our website. Dues are \$20.00 (\$25.00 for non-US residents) for applications dated January to June. For applications dated July to December (for 1.5-year term) dues are \$30.00 (\$35.00 for non-US residents).

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

If errors are noted in any future mailings of *Excelsior!*, please let me know so that we may post the corrected version on the ESPHS web site.

Don't forget to submit articles for publication in future issues of *Excelsior!*. Deadline for the March issues is February 1, while the deadline for the September issue is August 1.

Also, if you have back issues of the *Bulletin* or *Excelsior!* please let our webmaster know, as we are trying to have all back issues of these publications on the website. We are also interested in other older postal history materials that would be of interest to our website readers. Contact Charles DiComo for details.

A PATRON'S VIEW OF THE BAD MANAGEMENT AT THE U.S. POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT IN 1840

By: Charles J. DiComo, Ph.D.

This is the second in a series of articles¹ on folded letters from the stampless era that passed through New York City (NYC) headed for Europe, where the postal clerk utilized a circular date stamp (CDS) whereby the month of April is abbreviated with an “APL” as opposed to the more common “APR”.^{2, 3} The obverse of the single-sheet, folded letter written in 1840 and mailed from Illinois to Scotland is shown in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1. 1840 Folded Letter, Oquawka, IL via New York to Kings College, Aberdeen, Scotland.

Andrew W. Jack at Henderson Mills, Illinois wrote this letter on 15 March 1840 and applied an appealing burgundy red wax rectangular seal with framed Arabic characters (**Figure 2**). His letter entered the mails the next day on 16 March 1840, where the clerk added a manuscript “*Oquawka, Ill., Mar 16*” at upper left and matching manuscript “*Paid 25*” at upper right, indicating U.S. inland postage paid to New York of over 400 miles.



Figure 2. Burgundy red 30x25 mm rectangular wax seal with framed Arabic lettering on reverse.

Oquawka is a small village in Henderson County located 85 miles west of Peoria on the Mississippi River. Its population in 1840 was less than 500 persons. As directed by the sender's black manuscript "*Via N. York*" at lower left, the letter was sent to and received in New York City, where the postal clerk added a red "**NEW-YORK APL 2**" CDS; placed it in the mail which was carried by the Black Ball Line sailing packet *Europe* under Captain Marshall. This packet sailed from NYC eleven days later, on April 13, headed for Liverpool, England.

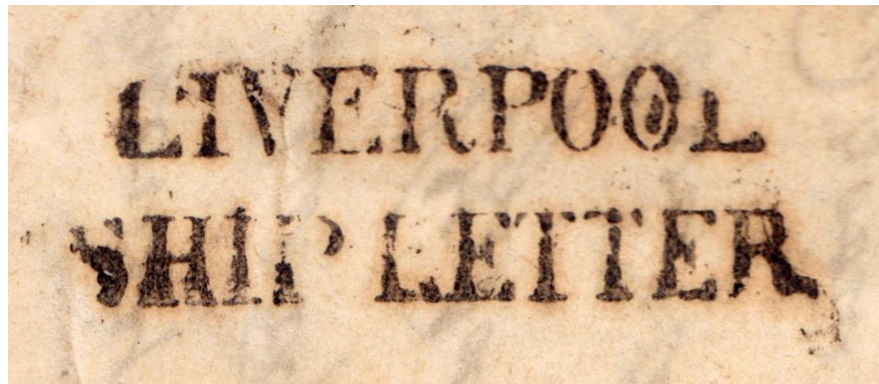


Figure 3. Top: 35x11 mm two-line black “LIVERPOOL SHIP LETTER” handstamp.
Bottom: 25 mm red circular “MAY S 12 A 1840” Edinburgh receiver, both struck on reverse.

After a 26-day transatlantic voyage, the *Europe* arrived in Liverpool on 9 May 1840, where the clerk added a 35x11 mm two-line black “**LIVERPOOL SHIP LETTER**” on the reverse (**Figure 3**) and the black “**8**” pence postage due on the obverse (**Figure 1**). From Liverpool, the letter went via overland coach some 350 miles to Edinburgh, where the 25 mm red circle “**MAY S 12 A 1840**” postmark was added (**Figure 3**). The final leg of the journey was approximately 125 miles to Kings College in Aberdeen, Scotland, where Andrew’s brother, Robert Jack, Esq. paid the 8 pence due. It is more likely that his father, the Reverend William Jack, covered the payment since at the time he was Principal at Kings College, a position he held from 1815-1854.

While this folded letter is a nice addition to my research on the use of the NYC “APL” CDS, as well as ancillary postmarks and the rates that existed during the Stampless Era on mail headed to Europe, the most interesting attribute is the content. Andrew W. Jack penned a four page letter, in surprisingly discernable cursive, where he discusses in great detail the Jack family U.S. land investments, the expanding continental railroad, the navigability (or lack thereof) on the Mississippi River for trade, and the Panic of 1837; the U.S. financial crisis that touched a major recession that lasted until the 1840’s, where profits, prices and wages went down and unemployment went up.

country from two to three hundred miles above this.

In regard to the slow and uncertain conveyance of letters from this it is owing to the bad management of the P.O. department I could carry my own letters to N.York in much less time than the mail would carry them. By a walk of about two miles from this place I could get on board of a steam boat and land at N Orleans in five or six days or by going in steam boat up the Ohio to Pittsburgh thence by railways to N.York ^{from this place} in twelve days, or by stage from this two hundred miles to Chicago thence in steam ships by the lakes in 5 days to Buffalo then by Canal or railway and the Hudson river to N.York in three days, ^{10 days from this place} While the mail takes ten days between this and Louisville Kentucky where it is about as far from N.York as we are besides having the length of the Allegany ridge between it and N.York. this may be considered one of many instances of the insufficiency of a popular government. I suppose you are a very a reformer

Figure 4. Contents on pages 2 (top) and 3 (bottom) mentioning the bad management of the USPOD and detailing the many routes available to the sender to mail a letter to NYC for passage to Europe.

The section that caught my eye is Andrew's opinion on the operations of the "P.O. Department" as he put it. **Figure 4** illustrates the original contents, which I have transcribed below for your reading pleasure. Andrew was well versed in the options available to him for sending a letter to his family in Scotland via New York City (NYC). As we shall read, he details several routes that would have been quicker, even one including him carrying his own letters to New York.

"In regard to the slow and uncertain conveyance of letters from this it is owing to the bad management of the P.O. department. I could carry my own letters to N. York in much less time than the mail would carry them. By a walk of about two miles from this place I could get on board of a steam boat and land at N. Orleans in five or six days or by going in steam boat up the Ohio to Pittsburgh thence by railways to N. York in twelve days from this place or by stage from this two hundred miles to Chicago thence in steam ships by the Lakes in 5 days to Buffalo then by Canal or railway and the Hudson river to N. York in three days (10 days from this place). While the mail takes ten days between this and Louisville Kentucky where it is about as far from N. York as we are besides having the length of the Allegany ridge between it and N. York. This may be considered one of many instances of the insufficiency of a popular government."

There were numerous routes to mail a letter in 1840 from the Midwest to the East Coast as described in Mr. Jack's letter. The 1840 Map of the Canals and Railroads of the United States illustrated in **Figure 5** depict the various routes from Oquawka, IL (red dot) to New York City (green dot). On this map, blue lines depict lakes, rivers and canals, whereas black lines depict transportation via overland stage and/or railroad.

One could send a letter overland by stage to Chicago (orange dot), then by sailing vessel across the Great Lakes to Buffalo (ultramarine dot), then by railroad or Erie Canal to the Hudson River, and finally by river vessel to NYC. Another less direct route would be south down the Mississippi River to New Orleans (yellow dot), then by sailing vessel along the southern coast, around the tip of Florida, and north past the Mid-Atlantic States to NYC harbor. A third route would have also headed south down the Mississippi River, but at the convergence of the Ohio River head northeast following the river towards Pittsburgh (purple dot), then via railroad across Pennsylvania and New Jersey to NYC.

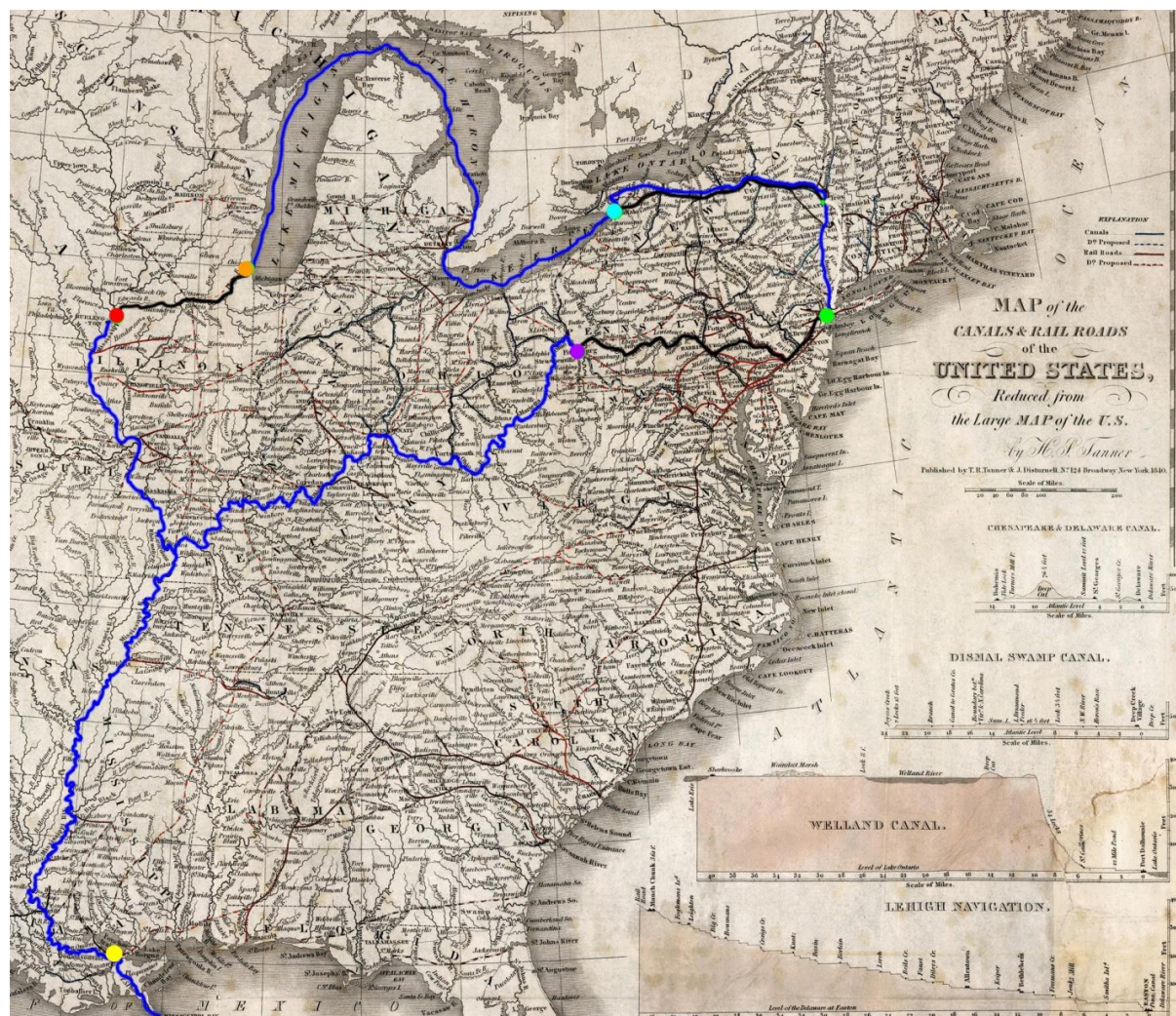


Figure 5. 1840 Map of Canals and Railroads of the U.S. depicting the numerous routes to mail a letter from Oquawka, IL (red dot) to New York City (green dot) as described in Mr. Jack's letter.

We will never discern the actual postal route this folded letter took from Oquawka to New York City. However, we are fortunate to have a well-documented account of the abundant postal routes available from the Midwest to the East Coast, as well as to Mr. Jack's colorful opinion of the shortcomings of the U.S. Post Office Department in a "popular government" in 1840.

In the end, he didn't have to carry his own letter to New York City. The good news for his family is that for 25¢ the USPOD delivered his letter to NYC, where it made the 26-day transatlantic voyage on the *Europe* and arrived at Kings College, wax seal and contents intact, nearly 2 months after being written.

Acknowledgements

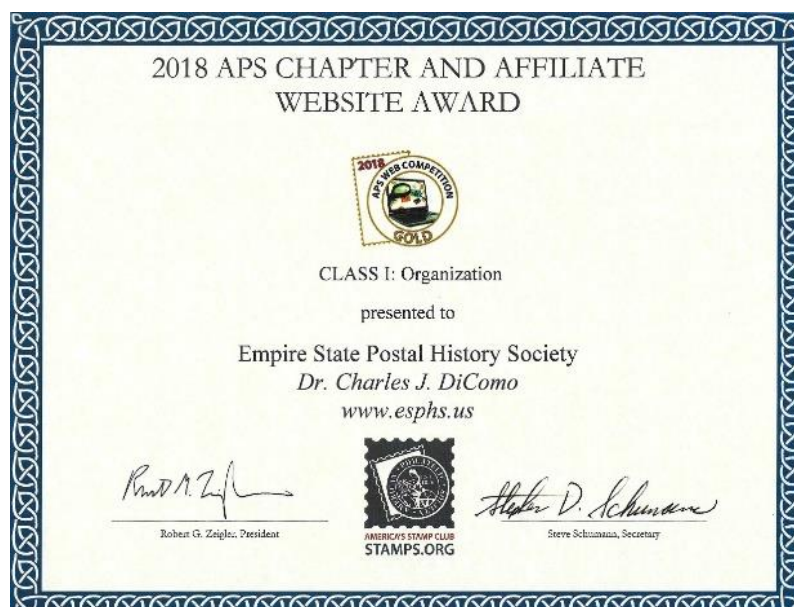
The author wishes to thank Richard F. Winter for sharing his vast knowledge and contributions to the analysis of this letter. However, any errors or any omission is the author's responsibility. He can be reached at charlesdico@gmail.com.

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1. DiComo, PhD, Charles J., 2017. From the Grain Fields of Virginia to a Gin Distillery in Holland. *Excelsior!*, The Journal of the Empire State Postal History Society, Whole No. 25 New Series, pp. 12-15.
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ESPHS WINS GOLD APS WEBSITE AWARD

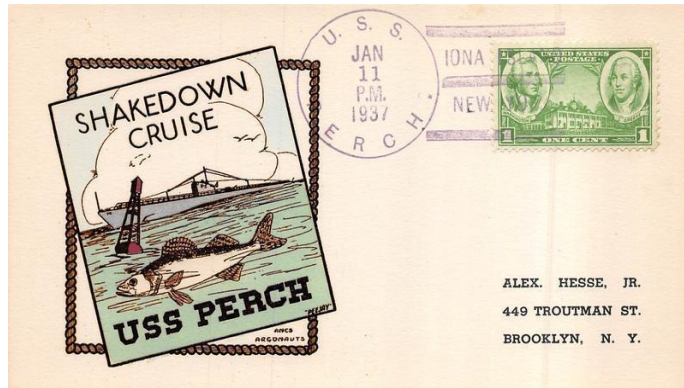
Congratulations to Charles DiComo, ESPHS web site developer and designer for his outstanding work on our organization's website. Charles received the great news from Judy Johnson, of the APS via an August 21, 2018 email. Here is an image of the certificate received from the APS.



IONA ISLAND PORT OF CALL CANCEL

By: Lawrence Laliberte

In the last issue of the *Excelsior!* (March 2018), I wrote about Iona Island's name, geography, history and post offices. Since that article was published, a new aspect of its postal history has surfaced (pun intended).



During the 1930's, it was not uncommon for postal clerks aboard naval vessels to create "port of call" cancels when visiting ports. Illustrated here is one that the clerk on the *U.S.S. Perch* (SS-176) made up for its stop at Iona Island during its shakedown cruise to receive munitions.

The *U.S.S. Perch* was a PORPOISE class submarine. She was probably at Iona Island to receive shells for her 3" deck gun. She also sported six 21" torpedo tubes. I do not know if Iona

was equipped to supply torpedoes.

The *U.S.S. Perch* was laid down on Feb. 25, 1935 by Electric Boat Co., Groton, Conn. And was commissioned Nov. 19, 1936. After her shakedown cruise in the Atlantic, she joined the Pacific fleet.

The outbreak of hostilities found *Perch* at the Cavite Navy Yard in the Philippines. After a week of close combat and sustaining heavy damage, she was scuttled by her crew on March 3, 1942. The entire crew was picked up by a Japanese destroyer. Of the 59 crew, only six died in the prisoner-of-war camp.

Historical information from *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*.

Editor's Note: After his original article appeared in the March 2018 *Excelsior!*, Larry Laliberte received the following note which I would like to share with the membership.

Larry,

I enjoyed your article on Iona Island in the March edition of Excelsior. Your reference to and map showing Doodletown brought back fond memories of my childhood. In the 1940s, an aunt owned a summer home in Doodletown. The town, if you could call it that, was a single road village leading off from route 9W, comprising a dozen or so houses, a one-room schoolhouse, a church and one, or perhaps two farms.

I spent several weekly summertime visits to my aunt's house. There was no electricity in the town. It was my first experience using an outhouse, and I had my first taste of milk straight from the cow. Hiking was the daily routine, and we spend evenings playing board games and solitaire by the light of the fireplace and kerosene lantern.

According to local legend, Doodletown was the site where American troops harassing British soldiers on their movements south, adopted the British chant, derogatory to the Americans, substituting the words, "Yankee Doodle." Thanks for the memories.

Roger, Roger S. Brody rsbco@optonline.net

WHERE IS YOUR COLLECTION GOING?

By: Doug Penwell

Over the years, this writer has often wondered about many of the members of the Empire State Postal History Society (ESPHS). While spending my youth in Rochester, there was a brief and inconsequential exposure to postal history, but even that didn't connect with the stamp collecting that resulted from seeing my grandparents incoming mail that came from Sweden.

Later, when in the Air Force, various people contributed to a change from stamps to covers. The three principal people were Melvin Kessler, Conrad Bush and David Sudweeks. The first two people were encountered in Florida and the last in Nevada. Mr. Sudweeks was one of the driving factors that led to the focus on the three upstate New York counties (Monroe, Livingston, and Ontario) that are still collected today.

At this point, there remain approximately 70 post offices that have markings missing in my collection. What is the state of your collection? Starting in 1989, the opportunity has presented itself to attend only a few annual meetings of ESPHS. While several members of ESPHS are known from the annual meetings and from random encounters at stamp shows, there are a far greater number that I have never met. That is regrettable, as there are very few collectors who have exchanged knowledge or provided philatelic fellowship.

As a part-time dealer since 1985, the knowledge that has come from other collectors has also helped in business. It has gotten to the point where much more time is spent on the business side than on the collecting side. The fact that most of the towns being sought from the three previously mentioned counties have never been seen, has a lot to do with that. Contacts with local historians and the pursuit of letter content from towns with markings previously collected have provided additional interest. Yet, things have gotten to the point where very few of the remaining towns are anticipated to be located, mostly since all but a few were discontinued in the 19th Century.

What now? All advanced collections get to a stage where material is very tough to find. New collecting areas can always provide an opportunity to "start over" when finding covers of interest is easier (and prices tend to be lower). Of course, one can always search dollar boxes at stamp and postcard shows for 20th Century material, but many of us don't find that as exciting. You could find something unusual there, but it requires a lot of time and patience.

How then shall we get out of a "collecting slump?" You could save your money for a collection to come on the market (especially if you know of one that has material that would also fit into your collection). This is likely to be a known competitor, or perhaps another postal historian unknown to you who happened to have covers from a broader or more inclusive collecting area.

If you collect a large town, material is usually easier to find. You could produce a monograph on all the postmarking devices used from a town, and the date ranges for each. These types of publications are very useful to others in dating covers with no letter contents or docketing.

There is also the auction market, but your collecting budget may be strained when going after single lots. This writer continues to seek scarce stamps on cover from the old hometown. Many of these have not been found or purchased. If you collect a large town, considering starting a "new" county or area to collect may be impacted by your knowledge of expensive material that could become available without much warning. Setting aside a percentage of your monthly or annual collecting budget can help you to be prepared for unanticipated "high ticket" items.

There are large correspondences that many ESPHS collectors have examples from. To name a few, various State Comptrollers in Albany who received mail from all over the state, the J.D. Commins letters out of western N.Y. in the early 19th Century, the H. Scott letters out of Cooperstown, and the Edmonds correspondence out of Newburgh (he was an attorney).

There are many categories of covers to be considered, even though many of them may, or may not, be considered part of a state, county, town or other geographically based collection. There may be

a part of an existing collection of town cancels that overlaps with your own. An exhibit at a show might give you an idea of how to expand your philatelic horizons. An article in a philatelic publication (or local newspaper discussing local history) are other potential sources of inspiration.

Finally, below find a list of things you might not have considered previously. This list is hardly exclusive. This writer invites other ESPHS members to share their thoughts and ideas on this subject.

Some of the possible collecting categories are:

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Advertised markings | Advertising covers | Alphabetical town names |
| Auxiliary markings | Backstamps | All days of a year cancel |
| Civil War Patriotics | Commemoratives | County cancels |
| Doane cancels | Fancy cancels | First day of a post office |
| Foreign destinations | Forwarded markings | Government postal cards |
| Incoming foreign mail | In-county destinations | (by) Issue of stamp |
| Last day of a post office | Leap day cancels | Letter content |
| Manuscript markings | Military (content or markings) | Notable persons |
| Postmaster free franks | Received markings | Registered mail |
| RFD cancels | RPO cancels | Special delivery |

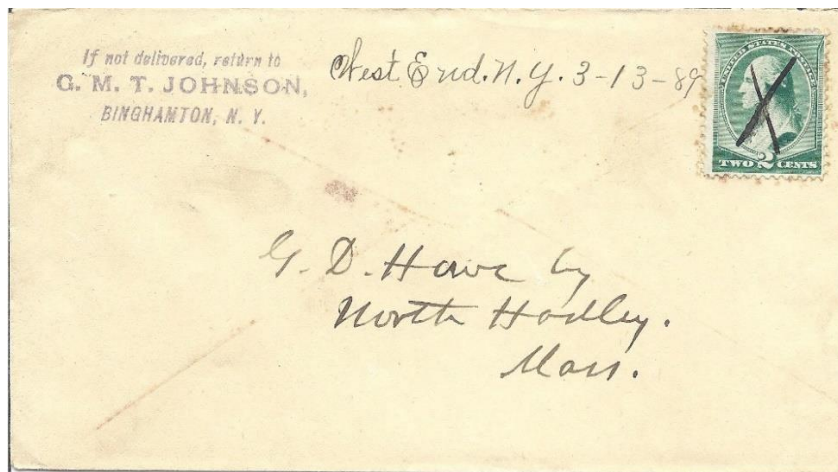
Other possibilities might include manuscript town markings with handstamp rates, handstamp town markings with manuscript rates, manuscript markings with handstamp dates, handstamp markings with manuscript dates, postcards where the picture matches the cancels, post office name changes, first day of rates, and last day of rates.

Doug Penwell can be reached at dougpenwell@mail.com.

A NEW MANUSCRIPT FIND

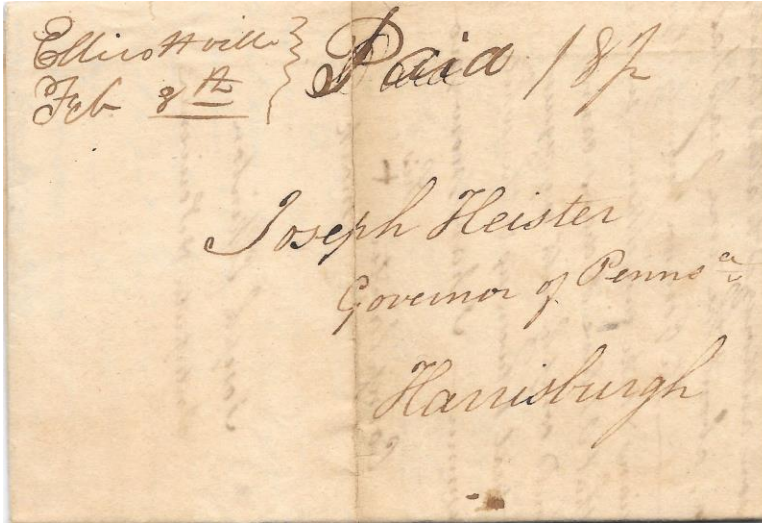
By: David E. Williams

Thanks to Doug Penwell for alerting me to a recent eBay listing. As a result, I was able to purchase the cover seen below. It is the first reported manuscript cancel from West End (Broome), New York. The West End post office was opened on February 5, 1889. This cover is postmarked on March 13, 1889, a few short weeks later. It represents the earliest cover from West End in my possession.



THE GRIEVANCES OF CHIEF CORNPLANTER

By: Tom Mazza



The subject of this article is the folded letter shown to the left. The postal markings show nothing particularly dramatic. No handstamps; all in manuscript. The postmark is of Ellicottville, a town in Cattaraugus County, New York.

The town had its first settlement about 1815 and was established as a town in 1820. It was the county seat of Cattaraugus until 1867. The first post office was established on July 4, 1820, and remained Ellicottville until August 29, 1894, when the name was changed to Ellicottville.

In 1817, the Holland Land Company had sent out Baker Leonard from Batavia to build a public house. He did, but it was well over budget, and was not accepted or paid for by the company. As a result, he stayed in Ellicottville, and ran the local tavern. The post office opened there, with Leonard appointed first postmaster July 4, 1820, which position he handed off to his clerk, Henry Saxton, who was appointed second postmaster May 26, 1821.

The rate, 18 ½ cents, was prepaid, for a transit of between 150 and 400 miles. To stay below 400 miles, the route probably went east from Ellicottville to Binghamton, then down the Susquehanna valley and west to Harrisburg. The addressee was Joseph Hiester, the fifth governor of Pennsylvania, who served one term, 1820 to 1824.

It's an old chestnut that the contents of the folded letters we acquire and occasionally exhibit should not be ignored. I'd bet that for many, if not all of those reading this, that folded letters have been bought, sold, traded, mounted, stored and even lost without having been opened, not even for a brief look.

In the case of this letter, however, if I hadn't opened it, this article would have ended a paragraph or so earlier. Although the addressee is a government official, which is a plus, his name is not a household word, at least not in my household. 1822 was not a year known for any particular social development or unrest, expansion or war, which would involve a special route or transport.

The contents, however, provided the historical side of this postal artifact. The letter was styled a speech, made by Chief Cornplanter to the Pennsylvania governor, intending to get relief from what he considered a deal he had made which was going sour. Historically, Cornplanter played a very important role in the American Revolution, and in what has been called the second war of independence, in 1812. He was a half-breed, who became chief of the Senecas, one of the "civilized tribes" who were British allies in upstate New York during the revolution. His statements at the end of that conflict became well known, especially his reference to the new states as the "thirteen campfires." While he could not be convinced to lead the tribes on behalf of the American efforts against the British in 1812, he did keep them as neutral non-participants. For those efforts, he turned down personal gifts or payments, to get a grant of a reservation, largely in Warren County, Pennsylvania, and extending

into southern New York, probably Cattaraugus County. This reservation was flooded in the twentieth century after the construction of the Kinzua dam on the Allegheny.

Cornplanter was not able to write but had a companion who performed those functions. I really can't do better than his prose in setting out the problems he wanted to go away.

"Allegheny River 2^{mo}, 2nd 1822

Speech of Cornplanter to the Governor of Pennsylvania

I feel it my duty to send a speech to the Governor of Pennsylvania at this time & inform him the place where I was from which was at Conewangus on the Genessee River---When I was a child I played with the butterfly, the grasshopper, & the frogs & as I grew up I began to pay some attention & play with the Indian boys in the neighbourhood & they took notice of my skin being a different colour from theirs & spoke about it. I inquired of my mother the cause & she told me that my father was a residenter in Albany---I still eat my victuals out of a bark dish---I grew up to be a young man & married me a wife---I have no kettle, no gun---I then knew where my father lived & went to see him & found he was a white man & spoke the English language---he gave me victuals while I was at his house, but when I started to return home, he gave me no provision to eat on the way---he gave me neither kettle nor gun, neither did he tell me that the U. States were about to rebel against the Government of England---I will now tell you Brothers who are in session of the Legislature of Pennsylvania that the Great Spirit has made known to me that I have been wicked & the cause thereof was the revolutionary war in America.---The cause of Indians having been led into sin at that time was that many of them were in the practice of drinking & getting intoxicated---Great Britain requested us to join with them in the conflict against the Americans & promised the Indians land & liquor---I myself was opposed to joining in the conflict, as I had nothing to do with the difficulty that existed between the two parties---I have now informed you how it happened that Indians took a part in the revolution, & will relate to you some circumstances that occurred after the close of the war---General Putnam who was then at Philada told me there was to be a council at Fort Stanwix & the Indians requested me to stand on behalf of the Six Nations, which I did & there met with three commissioners who had been appointed to hold the council;---they told me they would inform me of the cause of the revolution which I requested them to do minutely---they then said that it had originated on account of the heavy taxes that had been imposed upon them by the British Government, which had been for 50 years increasing upon them; that the Americans had grown weary thereof & refused to pay which affronted the King; there had likewise a difficulty taken place about some Tea & which they wished me not to use as it had been one of the causes that many people had lost their lives & the British Government now being appointed the war government & the cannons began to roar in our country---General Putnam then told me at the council at Fort Stanwix, that by the late war the Americans had gained two objects; they had established themselves an Independent nation & had obtained some land to live upon, the division line of which from Great Britain was through the Lakes---I then spoke & said that I wanted some land for the Indians to live on & General Putnam said it should be granted & I should have land in the State of New York for the Indians---General Putnam then encouraged me to use my endeavours to pacify the Indians generally & as he considered it, an arduous task to perform, wished to know what I wanted for pay therefor---I replied to him that I would use my endeavours to do as he had requested with the Indians & for pay therefor I would take

land; I told him not to pay me money or dry goods; but land; & for having attended thereto I received the tract of land on which I now live; --which was presented to me by Governor Mifflin—I told General Putnam that I wished the Indians to have the exclusive privilege of the deer & wild game he assented to—I also wished the Indians to have the privilege of hunting in the woods & making fires which he likewise assented to—The treaty that was made at the aforementioned council has been broken by some

of the white people which I know intend acquainting the Governor with—some white people are not willing that Indians should hunt any more whilst others of them are satisfied therewith & those white people who reside near our reservation tell us that the woods are theirs & they have obtained them from the Governor—The treaty has also been broken by white people using their endeavours to destroy all the woods which was not spoken about in the council at Fort Stanwix by General Putnam but has originated lately—It has been broken again which is of recent origin, white people wish to get credit from Indians & do not pay them honestly according to their agreement—In another respect it has also been broken by white people who reside near my dwelling, for when I plant mellons & vines in my field they take them as their own—It has been broken again by white people when their endeavours to obtain our pine trees from us—we have very few pine trees on our land for the State of New York & white people & Indians often get into dispute respecting them—There is also a great quantity of whiskey brought near our reservation by white people & the Indians obtain it & become drunken—Another circumstance has taken place which is very trying to me & I wish the interference of the Governor—The white people who live at Warren called upon me some time ago to pay taxes for my land which I objected to, as I had never been called upon for that purpose before, & having refused to pay the white people became irritated, called upon me frequently & at length brought four guns with them & seized our cattle., I still refused to pay & was not willing to let the cattle go; after a time of dispute they returned home & I understood the militia was ordered out to enforce the collection of the tax—I went to Warren & to avert the impending difficulty, was obliged to give my note for the tax the amount of which was forty three dollars & seventy nine cents—it is my desire that the Governor will exempt me from paying taxes for my land to white people & also cause that the money I am now obliged to pay may be refunded to me, as I am very poor—the Governor is the person who attends to the situation of the people & I wish him to send a person to Allegany that I may inform him of the particulars of our situation & he be authorized to instruct the white people in what manner to conduct themselves towards Indians—The Government has told us that when any difficulties arose between Indians & white people; they would attend to have them removed;--we are now in a trying situation & I wish the Governor to send a person authorized to attend thereto, the forepart of next summer, about the time grass has grown high enough for pasture—The Governor formerly requested me to pay attention to the Indians & take care of them—we are now arrived at a situation that I believe Indians cannot exist unless the Governor should comply with my request & send a person authorized to treat between us & the white people the approaching summer—I have now no more to speak---

Cornplanter his

+ mark

Joseph Elkinton

Interpreter & Scrivener

To Joseph Heister
Governor of Pennsylvania”

THE CENTRE VILLAGE STRAIGHTLINE CANCEL

By: David E. Williams

The Centre Village post office was established on March 8, 1851 and existed as such until it became Center Village in August 1893. I have numerous examples of covers from this time bearing everything from manuscript markings to circular date stamps from as late as 1881.

In May 2000, I was fortunate to purchase the Centre Village, N.Y. cover seen in **Figure 1**. The straightline **CENTRE VILLAGE/OCT 30 1884/NEW YORK** is accompanied by a black eight-pointed starburst killer. The 2-cent red brown banknote paid the half ounce first class rate that became effective October 1, 1883.



Figure 1. Straightline cancel on cover mailed from Centre Village, New York to New Philadelphia, Ohio in 1884.

This straightline was the only one I had ever seen in over thirty years of collecting Broome County, New York postal history. Also, the starburst killer was of interest since in my many years of compiling star cancels from New York State for the ESPHS, there was no mention of such a star from Centre Village.

While at the APS Stampshow, held in Columbus, Ohio this past August, I had plenty of opportunities to search boxes and binders of postal history from a multitude of dealers.

Seeking examples of my specialties, Binghamton and Broome County, New York, has always been elusive. It is usually like finding the proverbial needle in a haystack. If one is lucky enough to find a group of New York covers together, it is a little easier. However, searching covers grouped by stamp issue, or auxiliary markings, or stampless, the process can become very tedious. But, when one finds that special cover, the time spent searching is superbly rewarded! In addition, if the price is right it makes for an even better experience.

Such was the case with the find seen in **Figure 2**. The November 1, 1883 straightline cancel is the second and now the earliest that I have encountered. In addition to the same straightline cancel and the starburst killer seen on the 1884 cover, there are two bonuses with this one. The first is that the starburst now becomes the earliest star cancel reported from Centre Village.

The second bonus is the ornate advertising for the Center Village House, a hotel operated by George Austin. According to *Famines, Fires & Festivals, A History of Colesville* by R. Leone Jacob, it was “a pretentious three-story hotel” later owned by Belden B. Badger. A picture of the hotel when it was owned by Mr. Badger is shown in **Figure 3**.

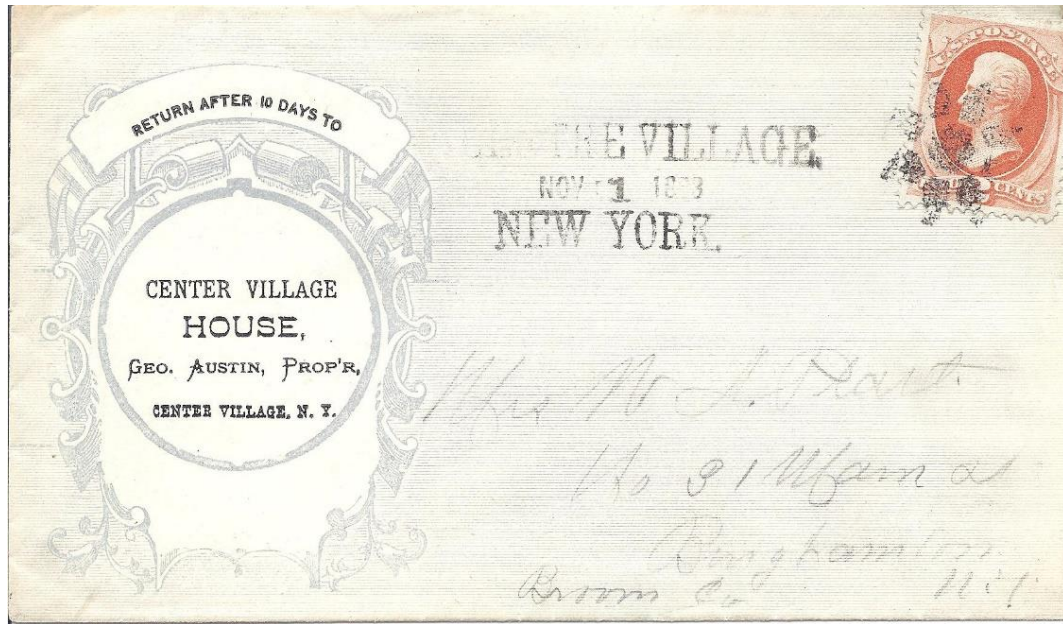
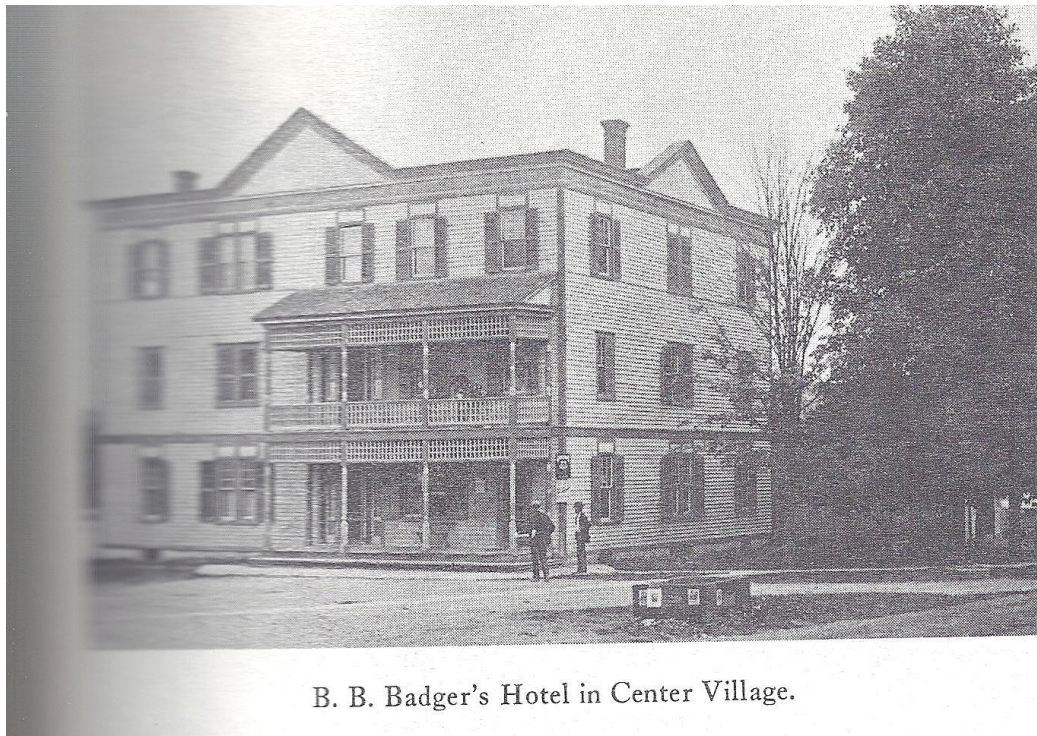


Figure 2. An ornate advertising cover for the Center Village House in Centre Village, New York which was owned and operated by George Austin.



B. B. Badger's Hotel in Center Village.

Figure 3. A photo of what was the Center Village House in 1883 which was later owned and operated by Belden B. Badger. The photo is from *Famines, Fires & Festivals, A History of Colesville* by R. Leone Jacob, page 81.

David Williams may be reached at davidinindiana@aol.com.

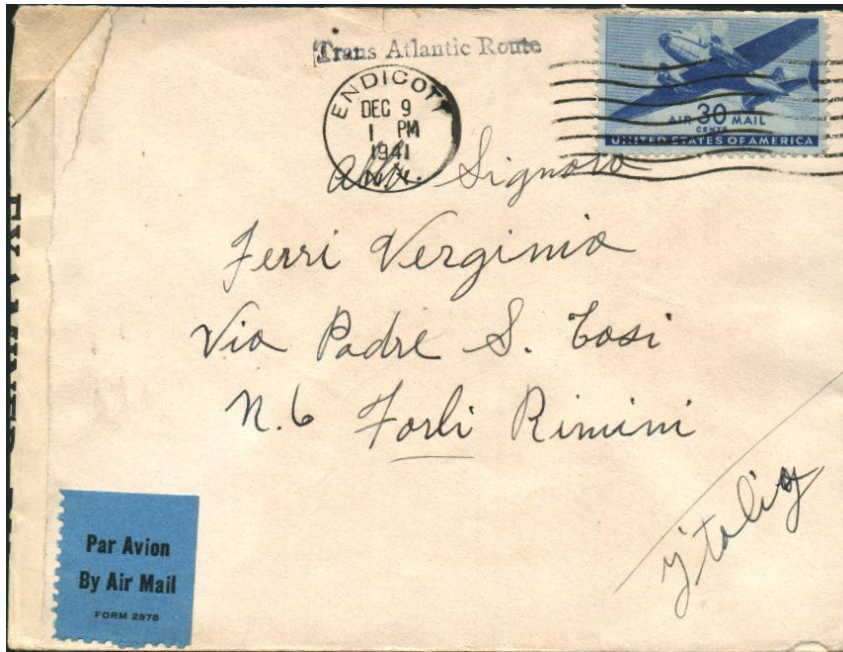
COVER OF THE ISSUE

By: David E. Williams

Time for a little more recent (albeit, seventy-seven years old) postal history with this cover. Sent from Endicott (Broome), New York on December 9, 1941 to Forli, Rimini, Italy. Mailed two

days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and two days before Germany declared war on the United States, it bears the 30-cent blue stamp of the Transport series which paid the airmail rate to Europe. The handstamp to the left of the stamp reads "Trans Atlantic Route".

Just when the letter was opened, and its contents examined, cannot be determined. However, looking at the

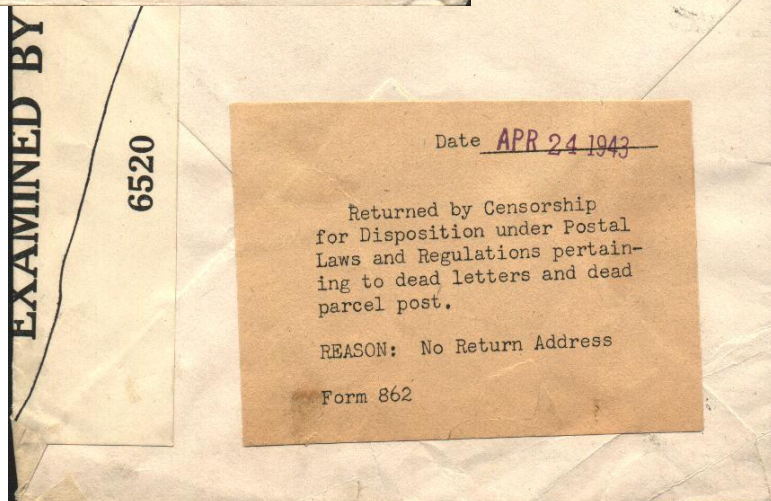


back of the envelope we see an EXAMINED BY 6520 and a label bearing a date of April 24, 1943.

The question is why did it take seventeen months from the time of mailing before it became treated as a dead letter?

In examining other censored mail sent within a few days of this piece, the Form 862s all have an April 1943 date stamped. It seems obvious that all mail from this time was held for many months before being released for either return to sender if there was a return address on the letter, or in this case, treated as a dead letter as clearly stated on the label; "No Return Address"

If any of our readers have any information as to why mail like this was detained for such a long period of time, please send comments and they will be included in an upcoming issue of *Excelsior!*. Or better yet, write a longer article that goes into more detail regarding the censoring and holding of war time mail.



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