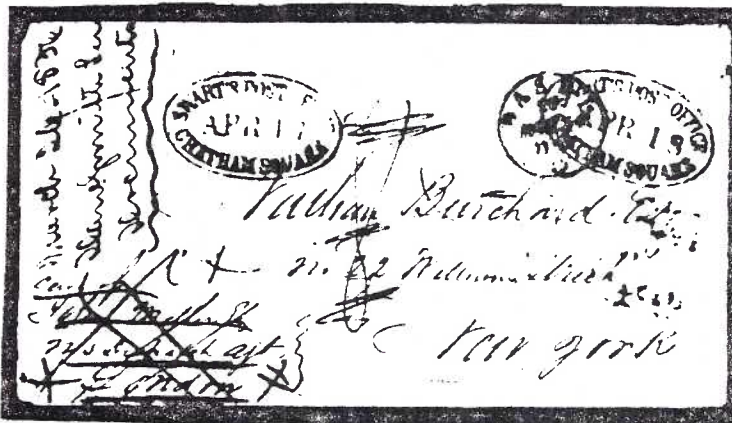

Excelsior



FRONT--Carried via diplomatic pouch across the Atlantic, this cover was turned over to Swarts's for local delivery to the addressee.

THE DIPLOMATIC POUCH AND THE SWARTS LOCAL

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An unusual, perhaps even unique, combination of markings is found on a cover sent from the U.S. Consul in Switzerland to Nathan Burchard in New York. This 1856 letter conveyed documents and travelled by post to the Dispatch Agency of the State Department in London. It was then transferred to the diplomatic pouch to cross the Atlantic. In New York, it was turned over to Swarts for local delivery. This combination of services is very unusual, particularly the omission of any U.S. postal service.

Written at the American Consulate, presumably at the Swiss federal capitol of Berne (the capitol since 1848), the letter was given its first postal marking at the Swiss-French border city of Basel, where a black 21mm circle BASEL/26/MARS 56/11 19 was applied. Apparently no charge was made for the Swiss postage. Upon arrival at the St. Denis station just outside Paris, a red double circled 21mm SUISSE/27/MARS /56/

St. DENIS receipt mark was added and probably the manuscript "8" was also added here to cover postage of eight decimes in France. A French dispatch mark was applied the same day to route the letter to Calais. It was a black 21mm circle with an interior octagon PARIS A CALAIS 20/27/MARS/56/M. At some point the French eight decime rate was crossed off, either because it did not apply to diplomatic mail or because it was paid in England. A red British shield marking, 24x24mm, showed its arrival at six in the evening at Dover, 6 EV6/MR28/1856/D. It then took two hours in transit to London where a similar shield was applied, 8NI8/MR28/1856/L. At this point it was delivered to Mr. John Miller, the U. S. Dispatch Agent in London.



BACK--The listing handstamp of the Swiss Consulate together with the various routing markings show the European handling of the cover.

The Dispatch Agent is an officer of the government assigned to handle and forward mail, particularly through the diplomatic pouch. He may also perform other functions such as arranging travel or even procuring theatre tickets. The earliest dispatch agents the author has recorded are the French agent at New York in 1783-4 and William Foxcroft, who was named as British agent to handle the Falmouth packet mail and transit arrangements to Canada following the return of the city to the Americans in 1783. In Europe, Richard Graham in his articles on B.F. Stevens as the American Dispatch Agent in London reports Nathaniel Green was the Dispatch Agent at Liverpool in 1844. A London agent was known in the 1850's. This agent is probably the John Miller who handled the subject cover of this article.

The British postoffice turned this letter over to John Miller on the 28th. He apparently applied two markings to show further routing. These are a

brown 21mm circle A C /MR-28/1856 to show arrival from Calais and a brown 21mm AD/MR-29/1856 to show dispatch to Dover. A double-struck 24x24mm shield in red shows the postal receipt at Dover, 8 NI 8/MR29/1856/D. These shield markings may be British markings to show entry or receipt from a diplomatic bag, for no further postal marking is noted. On arrival at New York, the cover was turned over to Swarts for delivery. A black 35x20mm oval SWART'S POST OFFICE/APR 17/CHATHAM SQUARE shows the first attempted delivery. It failed, and a manuscript notation, "no one in office" explains why. A subsequent successful delivery was made on the 18th and the appropriate handstamp applied.

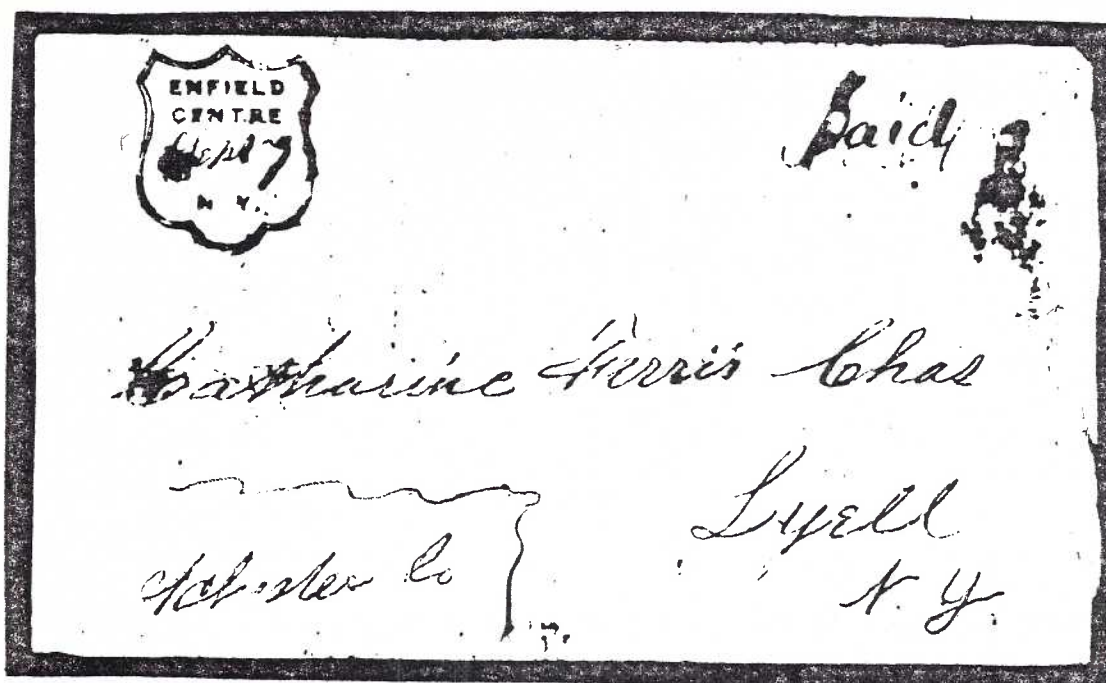
At the time of this cover, this local was no longer under Swart's management. Benjamin Lockwood had taken over, probably one month earlier, as the last Swarts advertisement is dated March 18, 1856 according to Elliott Perry in his pamphlet on the Chatham Square Post Office. In the 1857-8 New York City Directories, Swarts is listed without occupation, indicating he had left the local business. Lockwood, whose sometimes designation as "the Reverend", indicates a possible prior career in the clergy, was a book seller at the time he purchased Harriott's Broadway Post Office (between July 1853 and July 1854). The black oval Swart's handstamp is known under both the Swarts and Lockwood regimes.

THE ENFIELD CENTRE SHIELD

by R. H. Lounsbery

One of the scarcest of all the New York state markings is the shield cancellation from Enfield Centre. This 27x24mm black double-bordered shield is recorded on one stampless cover, illustrated here, and on one cover from Portage City, Wisc. with a 3¢ #25, mailed July 23rd and marked for a missent with the shield on August 30th. It is of the 1862-67 period and was addressed to Enfield Centre, N.H. The delay in rerouting it, of over a month, is unusual. The lettering on this late cover may be smaller than on the stampless which is undated. The shield handstamp is the town's chief claim to postal history fame.

Enfield Centre is a few miles west of Ithaca, on the western edge of Tompkins county. The town of Enfield is six miles square and was originally in Ulysses, a military tract location of 100 lots of 600 acres each. Of those separated March 16th, 1821, 36 are now in Enfield Centre. The town was



LISTING COPY of the stampless Enfield Centre shield cancellation. Another copy is known as a receipt mark on a letter from Wisconsin, with a 3c #25 used in the 1862-67 period.

named for Enfield, Conn. from whence many of its pioneers emigrated.

Earliest Enfield settler was John Giltner in June 1804. He settled on the John Horton farm (tract 45 of the military tract). Judah Baker followed and obtained a large tract including what is now Enfield Centre. The first death occurred while raising his barn.

Enfield Centre had its first post office July 11, 1846 with Solon P. Sackett as postmaster. Subsequent postmasters were: Elihu Dennis, June 9, 1849; William D. Bagley, October 8, 1853; John P. Broas, April 3, 1862; William Barger, November 19, 1874. Enfield Center began with Charles Wright, November 18, 1893, followed on November 4, 1897 by William Barber.

The Tompkins County History (1789) reports Moses Lovell was the first postmaster and that Samuel Ingersoll had the first Enfield Centre store. Ingersoll's Store (John) was a postoffice in 1815, but at another location. Lovell's office on the stage route was probably a private contract office as the first Enfield office was in 1822 with John Applegate. He and Asahel Lovell had settled in Enfield township area in 1805. No Lovell is recorded as a first postmaster in the county. Still a private office on the old stage route south from Applegate Corners was not illogical.