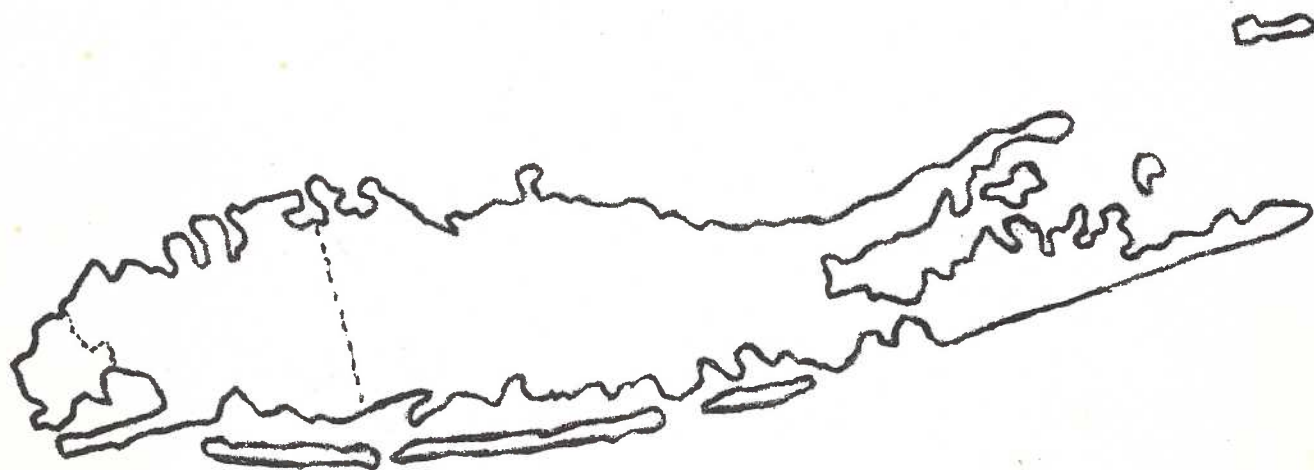


# LONG ISLAND



## POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Whole #3



# COUNTY AND POSTMASTER CANCELS OF SUFFOLK COUNTY, NEW YORK

Daniel M. Knowles, M.D.

## INTRODUCTION:

Various categories of postal history of general interest pass across the desk of the New York State postal history collector. For example, these include stampless markings, railroad postmarks, inland waterway and steamboat markings, RPO's, exchange office markings, transatlantic letters and county and postmaster cancels. Numerous postal historians have compiled many of these markings in both book form and in short articles and essays in such journals as The Chronicle where postal history is featured.

During recent years a spate of state postal history societies, e. g. New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Illinois, etc., have been established and a definite trend toward collecting postal history of a given region has emerged. The members of such societies generally have an interest in the RPO's of a particular state or region, for example, and not the RPO's of other states or localities. These collectors occasionally find it difficult to gather together information pertinent to the locality of interest from the diverse sources of postal history information. One goal of such regional groups should be the compilation of postal history markings and information of direct and particular relevance to the region of interest. That goal is one to which the Long Island Postal History Society can readily apply itself. An effort in this direction is presented here in this preliminary compilation of county cancel markings from Suffolk Co., Long Island, N. Y.

## BACKGROUND:

County and postmaster cancels (CPM's), i. e. postmarks which include the name of the county in which the particular town is located and/or the name of the then current postmaster, have been a popular area of postal history collecting for decades.

The first significant attempt to catalog CPM markings was undertaken by Warren Bates in the May 1926 issue of the American Philatelist<sup>1</sup> to the best of my knowledge. However, it is Dr. Howard Thompson and Ms. Edith Doane whose names have become the most closely allied with this area. Dr. Thompson

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### THE LONG ISLAND POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Summer 1981 Whole #3

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published an original article on this subject in Vol. I of Delf Norona's Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks and Postal History<sup>2</sup> and a preliminary compilation of such markings from Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona and California in Vol. II<sup>3</sup> in 1935. He published an updated compilation of these markings from Alabama through Florida in Billig Handbook Vol. 7<sup>4</sup> in 1948. His definitive and 'complete' compilation, containing 3,037 listings and 1,230 tracings appeared in Billig Handbook Vol. 10<sup>5</sup> in 1949. Finally, Edith Doane authored a supplementary listing of previously unrecorded markings and provided additional information in Billig Handbook Vol. 31<sup>6</sup> published in 1973.

### ORIGINS:

The origin of the county marking stems from the early days of the United States postal service. At least as early as the Regulations of 1794 we find a requirement to differentiate offices,

"Fourthly, Superscribe the bundle (now called a mail) with the name of the post-office to which it is to be sent. This superscription should be in strong and very legible characters; which will eventually save time, and prevent injurious mistakes in the conveyance of mails. And because there are offices of the same name in different states, and sometimes even in the same state, you are to add to the superscription the name of the state in which the office is situated, or some other description by which the office intended may be certainly distinguished."

Prior to 1816 there are thirteen sets of towns in which county markings might be required to distinguish the post offices because there were two or more offices of the same name in a state at the same time. Of these, one pair is in Ohio (Springfield) two are in Virginia (Hillsborough and Smith's Store), four are in New York (Chester, Brookfield, Chesterfield, and Florida) and six are in Pennsylvania (Mt. Pleasant, Newville, Salisbury, Strasburg, Washington and Waterford). Covers are known from several of these towns, but the only one where markings are known from both towns is Florida, N. Y. which is also the earliest handstamp county marking on record. Florida, Orange county, was established by January 1, 1804 with Samuel S. Seward as first postmaster. Manuscript cancels are known from 1806 on. Florida, Montgomery County, is recorded by May 1811 with John Delameter as first postmaster. The Albany Register of September 27, 1811 tells us why a county cancel is known:

"A POST-OFFICE with a weekly mail has lately been established at Florida, Montgomery County. As there is also an old Established office at Florida, Ulster county (sic), correspondents will see the necessity of designating particularly the county for which their connections may be desired. Florida Montgomery County Sept. 23, 1811"

Few county cancels are known prior to the 1850's and a number of these are in manuscript. The number of reported examples begins to expand in the

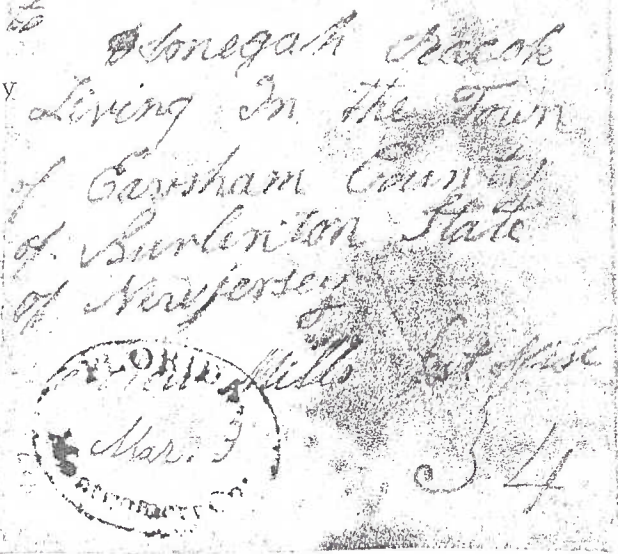


1850's but the major period of use is after 1875. During this latter period, the majority of the CPM postmarks originated from small fourth class post offices, many of which were in existence for only a short period of time.

The fact that CPM postmarks are principally used in these smaller, rural offices is probably a direct consequence of post office policy. While the government began giving town cds postmarking devices in 1799, this was only for the larger offices. Gradually the number was expanded so that by 1855 offices with over \$100 in gross receipts received free handstamps and by September 1867 the free handstamps went to all offices with gross receipts over \$50. Postmasters in these small towns were expected to either use manuscript or to provide their own handstamps.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting that the earliest advertisement for handstamps with county markings appears in the April 1862 issue of the United States Mail and Post-Office Assistant. This is just a year before the government made a major change in its official town handstamps by issuing concentric circles of 29mm and 15mm in diameter.

Because the county marking was not part of the standard government town marking, and because the postmasters in the small towns had to purchase their own handstamps, the overwhelming majority of CPM postmarks are used at the smaller offices. As there were many such small offices a wide variety of postmarking devices were used. It is also possible that the limited revenues of the postmasters in these towns also resulted in an expansion of the styles used, but as prices were fairly consistent the diversity of markings probably reflects the diversity of offices and individual postmaster quirks. Nevertheless, only a few examples of a given CPM postmark may exist from a particular town.

Although post office regulations only required the postmarking device to include the name of town, state, month and day, there are several reasons why postmasters might pay extra to have a device that included the name of the county and/or his own name. First, the duplication of town names from the first days of the United States postal system on may have led postmasters to feel inclusion of the county name was necessary to precisely identify a letter's origin. Second, the advertisement and promotion of handstamps including the county name by the several handstamp manufacturers may have influenced postmasters to buy these designs. Third, there is no doubt that certain postmasters included the county name and/or their own name in the town mark for personal reasons such as pride. Irregardless, the use of these CPM cancels began to proliferate in the late 1870's and continued unabated until the 1890's when the Post Office Department began to regulate the types of postmarking devices that were permissible.



Earliest county marking -- March 3, 1814.  
A second example from Florida, Montgomery county is known March 10, 1814.



### THE MANUFACTURERS:

We have no real knowledge of who provided the early county marking handstamps. Benjamin Chambers of Washington was a major supplier of the government handstamps from 1830 (and he was advertising as early as 1822) until the end of the 19th century. He may well have made private markings as well. Collin & Co., an important supplier of townmarkings in the 1860's, does not appear to ever advertise or supply county markings. On the other hand, E. S. Zevely is known to have supplied county markings. His business was established in 1850 and was advertising by 1851.<sup>7</sup> The early Zevely advertisements did not offer county cancels per se, nor did those of his agent Charles Willard before the men split and Willard began offering handstamps on his own (51 towns in New York by 1853 of which several are on Long Island). Some authorities believe that "nearly all of the circular markings containing a county name (during the 1850's) were made in their (Zevely's) shop".<sup>8</sup> It has also been suggested that they began to include the county name in order to make the Zevely handstamps appear more distinctive than those of their competitors.<sup>8</sup>

The first Zevely advertisement noting county cancels appeared in April 1862. In this he stated,

"Post Office Marking Stamps! Delivered by mail at the following prices. CIRCULAR OFFICE STAMP, with changes for dates and screw complete ONE DOLLAR (County or Year fifty cents extra). Post-office Business. Free, Dating Stamps, and names of postmasters and post offices in straight lines, each... 50 CENTS."

A June, 1862 circular from Zevely illustrated a typical county postmark of the period. Numerous Zevely advertisements are noted in postal periodicals from 1860 to May 1869 when he apparently lost his position as Assistant Postmaster General.<sup>9</sup> An important review of handstamps is found in the November 1867 issue of U. S. Mail and Post Office Assistant. Other major sources of data are Arthur Bond's studies in J. David Baker's Postal History of Indiana (pgs. 361-385) and the Simpson book (pgs. 9-13).<sup>8</sup> One of the earliest makers of rubber stamps for postal cancellations was Fred P. Hammond & Co. of Aurora, Illinois. Established in 1872, he was advertising town postmarks of varying styles which included the county and/or postmaster's name by 1880.<sup>10</sup> Illustrations of contemporary CPM cancels in Hammond's advertisements leave no doubt that they supplied numerous of these postmarks to post offices throughout the United States. For example, some of their advertisements offered duplex devices using the popular 'wheel of fortune' killer.<sup>6</sup>

Certain other handstamp manufacturers also offered CPM postmarks. Ward and Adams, also of Aurora, Illinois, offered CPM canceling devices in an 1884 advertisement.<sup>11</sup> E. S. Miller's Stamp, Stencil and Printing House of Newark, Ohio offered duplex devices with the popular maltese cross killer.<sup>6</sup>

## PERIOD OF USE:

As noted earlier, the earliest recorded handstamped county cancel is from Florida, Montgomery County used March 3, 1814 (Calvet Hahn, personal communication), with the next earliest town being Cooperstown, Otsego County used 1816-21. Nevertheless despite scattered use in the early 19th century, the vast majority of CPM cancels were employed in the 1880's. A tabulation of the then recorded markings used by period was provided by Dr. Thompson in the 1933 Vol. I of the Cyclopedia (Table I). This table gives us an approximation of the frequency of CPM cancel usage at different periods of time in the 19th century.

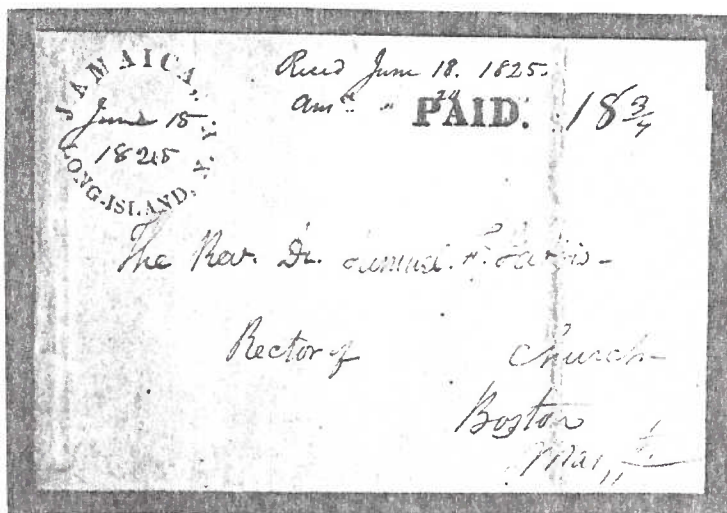
TABLE 1.  
Distribution of Period of Use of County and Postmaster  
Cancels

PERIOD	NO.	PERCENT
Prior to 1876	36	2.6
1876-1880	129	9.5
1881-1885	542	39.7
1886-1890	398	29.2
1891-1895	241	17.7
1896-Date	18	1.3

Analysis of the Suffolk County CPM cancels recorded or known to the author suggest that these figures apply to Long Island as well. The vast majority of the known Suffolk County CPM cancels were also used in the 1880's, with only occasional use in the 1870's or 1890's.

## STYLES:

The most common combination of wording includes the name of the post office, the county and the state. However, in certain instances the name of an area is substituted for the county name. For example, Huntington substituted Long Island for Suffolk county. This is the same style used for the earliest Long Island handstamp on record.



Earliest L.I. handstamp 'county' style is this Jamaica item of 1825. Only one copy is on record at this point. It is ex-Hahn.

The second most common wording includes both the name of the county and the postmaster as well as the post office and the state. To the best of my knowledge the only Suffolk county CPM postmark which includes the name of the postmaster is that emanating from Springs, N.Y., the postmaster being Joseph D. Parsons.<sup>12</sup>

The most common format used in Suffolk was a simple circular arrangement, with either a single or double outer circle and occasionally an inner circle as well. The second most common format was an oval.<sup>6</sup>



*Mrs. Emmett B. Smith*  
*Brewsters*  
*Palm Beach*  
*A. G.*

This Cutchogue double line, double circle and duplex Maltese cross appears to be a product of the E.S. Miller company of Ohio.



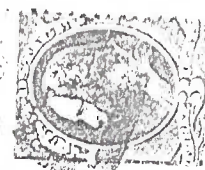
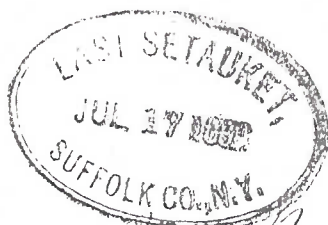
WRITE THE ADDRESS ON THIS SIDE - THE MESSAGE ON THE OTHER

*Mrs. Alice Brown*  
*Southern Pines*  
*G. O.*

One of the three Suffolk towns recorded with a county cancel in the 1870's is Yaphank with a duplex as shown above. The duplex has a star in circle.



East Setauket is known with an oval cancel from 1879 to 1883 in this double border style. It is the only town reported so far with an oval style in the 1870's.



*Mr Raymond Select  
Merrington  
of Island*

This oval style is known from East Setauket, Ronkonkoma and Saint James. Octagonal, rectangular and fancy CPM postmarks were less commonly used and none are known to the author that are used from Suffolk County. Border arrangements were usually plain but occasionally saw-tooth edges are found. Type was normally large, bold capital letters but this was occasionally combined with lower case letters. Serifs and italics were considerably less common. Although most CPM postmarks are reported in black, other colors such as blue and purple are not uncommon.<sup>6</sup>

Obviously, a great variety of styles of CPM postmarks were used from a great many towns. In order to convey an accurate mental picture of a given CPM postmark style, Dr. Thompson devised a simple codification system.<sup>2</sup> First, this system provided for the style of the postmark. e. g. a plain single line circle (CP), a plain double circle (CD), a fancy single lined oval (OvF). Second, the system denoted the format and style of type. For example:

CUTCHOQUE /SUFFOLK CO., N.Y. CDI (See pg. 6)

This code describes the use of bold capital letters spelling out CUTCHOQUE, followed by a comma, all at the top of the postmark and then at the bottom SUFFOLK CO., N.Y. spelled out in capital letters. CDI indicates that the marking has a double outer circle with a single inner circle.

The principal Thompson design codes are:

- CP: Plain single lined circle
- CI: Plain single lined circle, with inner circle
- CD: Plain double lined circle
- CDI: Plain double lined circle with inner circle
- OVP: Plain single lined oval
- OVD: Plain double lined oval
- OVDF: Double lined oval, one plain and one fancy

CANCELLATIONS AND TIME MARKINGS:

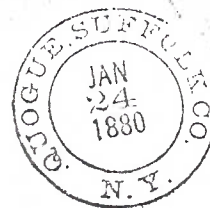
Various fancy and geometric killers were used in conjunction with the CPM postmarks. Such killers were often also attached to the CPM town marks in duplex fashion so that used together they denote the origin of the latter and obliterate the adhesive stamp. A duplex with a maltese cross killer is known from East Moriches and was also commonly used in Cutchogue (page 6). Quogue used a duplexed bull's eye killer, see below. Certain other towns used somewhat fancier cancellations: East Setauket is known with a large P cancel (page 7) and Yaphank with a 5-point star in circle (page 6).



*Mr. William S. Van Antwerp,*

*Per*

*Witchamers County,  
New York,*



Chief Signal Officer, U. S. Army.

WASHINGTON

This envelope will only be used by Postmasters for the transmission of Weekly Reports on Form 29.

The inclusion of a time marking in a CPM postmark is uncommon because the majority of the markings emanated from rather small fourth class offices that handled a small volume of mail and thus had little need for a time marking. Nonetheless, the author has two CPM postmarks from Smithtown Branch in which a time marking is included.

USAGE:

Obviously the CPM postmarks were employed primarily to postmark a given letter and to indicate the originating postoffice. However, CPM postmarks are occasionally seen used in other ways. I've recorded the Cutchogue, Middle Island, Saint James and Shelter Island Heights CPM postmarks used as back-stamps. Another usage was as a forwarding postmark. I've seen Cutchogue and Smithtown Branch CPM postmarks used as forwarding circular date stamps.

Time stamps are  
found at Smith-  
town Branch, pos-  
sibly because it  
was a change point  
on the LIRR.

"K"



Wm. H. Mearns Esq.  
35 Newbury St.  
Boston  
Mass



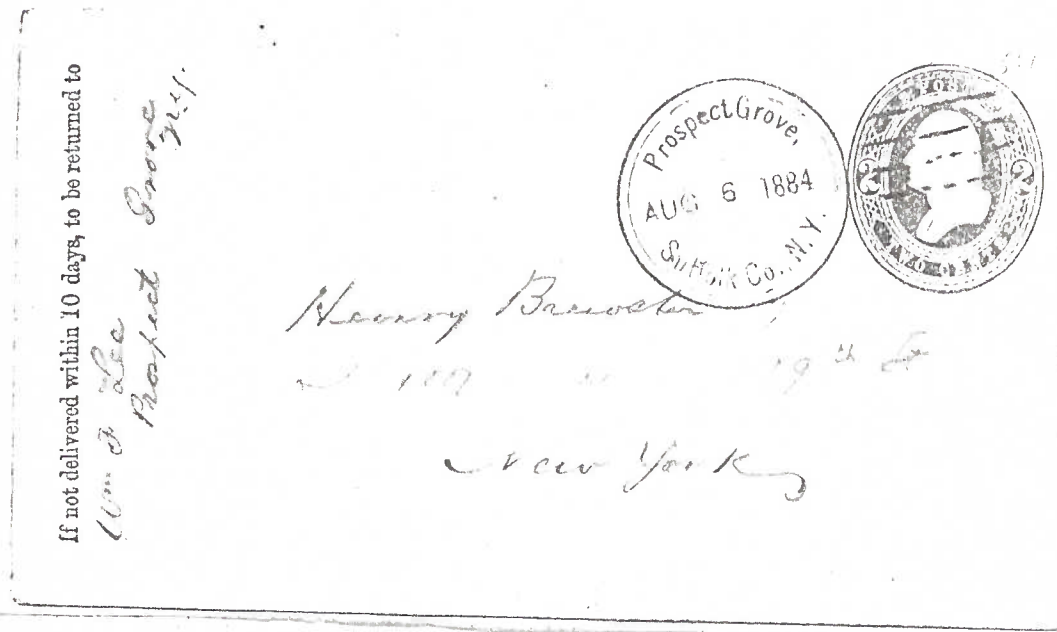
CRF

Backstamp  
receipt mar-  
ings.



SCARCITY:

In an attempt to document the relative scarcity of the CPM postmarks, Dr. Thompson recorded the number of examples of each postmark which he encountered.<sup>5</sup> In Suffolk county, for example, he recorded eight examples of Prospect Grove (see below) and six examples of Cutchogue (page 6), making them among the relatively more common Suffolk county CPM's. Obviously, many more examples of various other towns as well as new towns have surfaced in the intervening years and no doubt will continue to do so. Thus it is very difficult to assess rarity.



After my several years of collecting experience I can guess that Cutchogue, East Setauket, Huntington, Prospect Grove, Quogue, Smithtown and Smithtown Branch do represent the relatively more common Suffolk County CPM postmarks. Many of the remaining CPM's may be fairly rare and it is distinctly possible that certain of them, some as yet unrecorded, are unique.

SUFFOLK COUNTY CPM CANCELS:

The preceeding discussion is intended to be a brief, general review of CPM postmarks as a group. However, the information is also applicable to the CPM cancels used in Suffolk County, Long Island, N.Y. as well. Indeed, the CPM cancels emanating from Suffolk county are in many ways rather typical of the CPM cancels in general. First, the county was largely composed of small rural-style post offices in the 19th century, the type which often utilized CPM postmarkers. Second, the Suffolk county CPM cancels were similar to those used elsewhere with respect to period of use, style and format, postal usages and cancellations.

All of the Suffolk county CPM cancels whose style and format are known to me, either from published accounts or from personally having examined them, are presented in Table 2. This list is, of course, by its very nature limited and incomplete. Indeed, it is my hope that this brief presentation will push readers

TABLE 2. SUFFOLK COUNTY, NEW YORK CPM POSTMARKS PRESENTLY KNOWN TO THE AUTHOR

POSTMARK	YEARS PO EXISTED <sup>13</sup>	CPM STYLE	YRS. KNOWN
CENTREPORT, /N.Y., SUFFOLK COUNTY.	1835-1893	CP	87
T-CUTCHOGUE, /SUFFOLK CO., N.Y.	1814-	CDI	81-91
T-EAST MORICHES, SUFFOLK CO, /N.Y.	1849-	CI	82
D-EAST MORICHES, SUFFOLK CO., /N.Y.		CI	8?
T-EAST SETAUKET, /SUFFOLK CO., N.Y.*	1863-	OvD	79-83
T-EAST SETAUKET, / Suffolk Co., N.Y.*		OvDF	88
K-HAUPPAUGE, /SUFFOLK CO., N.Y.*	1856-1959	CDI	83
T-HOLBROOK SUFFOLK CO. N.Y.	1862-	CD	84
K-HOLBROOK/SUFFOLK CO., N.Y.		CDI	84
T-HUNTINGTON, /L.I. N.Y.*	1794-	CI	80-85
T-ISLIP, /Suffolk Co., N.Y.*	1802-	CI	80
T-MIDDLE ISLAND, /SUFFOLK CO. N.Y.	1821-	CD	87, 89
T-NORTHAMPTON/SUFFOLK CO /N.Y.*		CI	80, 82
T-NORTHPORT, /SUFFOLK CO. New York	1840-	CDI	77
K-NORTHPORT, /SUFFOLK CO. New York.*		CDI	77-79
K-NORTHPORT/SUFFOLK CO. N.Y.*		CP	77
T-Prospect Grove, /Suffolk Co., N.Y.*	1880-1886	CD	81, 84, 85
T-Prospect Grove, /Suffolk Co., N.Y.		CP	81, 83
T-QUOGUE, SUFFOLK CO. /N.Y.	1828-	CI	80, 82
T-QUOGUE, /SUFFOLK CO., N.Y.		CD	83, 85, 86
T-RONKONKOMA, /Suffolk Co. N.Y.*	1866-	OvDF	81
T-SAGG/Suffolk Co. N.Y.	1878-1890	?	82
T-SAINT JAMES, /SUFFOLK CO., N.Y.	1856-	OvP	87
D-Shelter Island Heights, /Suffolk Co., N.Y.	1886-	CD	91
SMITHTOWN, /SUFFOLK/COUNTY, /NEW YORK	1794-	CD	82-85, 88
SMITHTOWN BRANCH, /SUFFOLK CO., N.Y.*	1849-1953	CI	81-84, 86
B-SPRINGS, N.Y. /JOS.D. PARSONS, P.M.	1849-1923	CP	85
T-WESTHAMPTON, SUFFOLK CO. / N.Y.*	1803-1825,	CI	79-80
	1861-		
D-YAPHANK/ Suffolk Co. N.Y.*	1845-	CP	79

T: Howard Thompson

D: Edith Doane

K: Daniel Knowles

B: Carl Baker

\*: Postmark known in color other than black

Smithtown CPM in  
the typical style of  
a Zevely handstamp.



*Mr B H Thompson*  
*Smithtown*  
*Long Island*  
*N.Y.*

to let me know about other CPM cancels used in Suffolk county which are not described here or are known in other years.

This compilation is based upon the original listings prepared by Thompson and Doane. The letters T, D, E and B indicate the person who is attributed with the first report of a particular CPM postmarker. The postmark styles are tabulated using the Thompson/Doane system which has been described above. Additional years of usage and additional colors are added to the original Thompson/Doane listings based on covers in the author's collection. I have seen two additional Suffolk county CPM's which are not reported in Table 2. These are from Sag Harbor and Blue Point. Unfortunately, the format is unknown and the markings cannot, therefore, be included.

Previously unrecorded Hauppauge CPM in blue. This 1883 example is not listed in Thompson or Doane.



NOTHING BUT THE ADDRESS CAN BE PLACED ON THIS SIDE.



*To Post Master  
Smithtown Branch  
Suffolk Co  
NY*

#### CONCLUSION:

This general overview of CPM's is intended to be a brief introduction to the area of county cancels. The compilation of Suffolk county CPM postmarks is probably quite incomplete. I'm certain that a number of rather rare and elusive postmarks are hidden away in collections and have not yet been reported.

The recording of previously unlisted Long Island postmarks should be one of the key objectives of the LIPHS. If other LIPHS members have items not described here, I and the LIPHS as a whole, would be interested in hearing about them. I would also be personally interested in seeing photocopies of such covers. Please address all correspondence and inquiries to 165 Hudson Street, Apt. 2A, New York, N. Y. 10013.

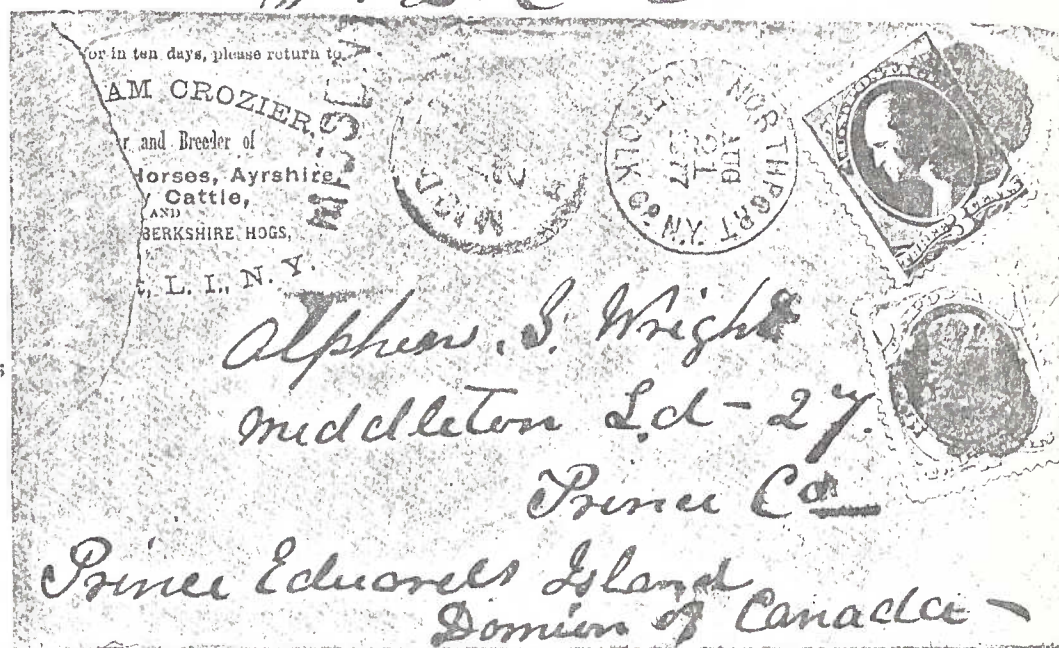
#### REFERENCES

1. Bates, W.; County cancellations on U.S. 1870-1882. American Philatelist May, 1926.
2. Thompson, H.K.; County and Postmaster Townmarks (1816 to 1916) in Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks and Postal History, Norona, D. Editor., Vol. I, 1933. Reprinted by Quarterman Publications, 1975, pp. 88-98.





Two Northport CPM's. The larger (above) is listed by Thompson while the smaller is not previously reported. A number of Crozier illustrated ad covers are known from Northport cancelled by the CDI postmark which is far more common than the small CP style.



3. Thompson, H. K.: County and Postmaster Townmarks (Alabama to California) in Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks and Postal History, Norona, D. Editor, Vol. II, 1935, Reprinted by Quarterman Publication, 1975, pp. 397-402.
4. Thompson, H. K.: U.S. County and Postmaster Postmarks in Billig's Philatelic Handbook, Vol. 7, 1948, pp. 8-27.
5. Thompson, H. K.: U.S. County and Postmaster Postmarks in Billig's Philatelic Handbook, Vol. 10, 1949, pp. 7-179.
6. Doane, E. R.: U.S. County and Postmaster Postmarks, in Billig's Philatelic Handbook, Vol. 31, 1973, pp. 8-105.
7. Stamps of hardwood are on private sale by E. Zevely, U.S. Postal Guide and Official Advertiser, 1851.
8. Simpson, T. W.: U.S. Postal Markings 1851-1861, 1959, Second Edition. Alexander, T. J. Editor, Columbus, O., 1979 pp. 76; also pp. 9-13
9. U.S. Mail and Post Office Assistant, 1860-1866. 1866-1872
10. Advertisements, U.S. Official Postal Guide, May, October 1880.
11. Advertisement, U.S. Official Postal Guide, January 1884
12. Baker, C.: Springs, N. Y. postmaster cover., LIPHS Newsletter No. 1, 1980
13. D. G. J. S. P. D. N. Y. postmaster cover., LIPHS Newsletter No. 1, 1980

## COLLECTING L.I. POSTAL HISTORY

by The Editor

In the last issue I noted that new member Robert Boos had solicited assistance from some 'old timers' in L.I. collecting to find out how he should collect L.I. postal history. As Mr. Boos put it,

"Since I've lived in the Hicksville area for most of my life and have commuted on the Long Island Rail Road for half of it, I'd probably select those as my areas if no one suggested any other. However, I would like to know what others are doing so that I don't pass up anything through ignorance..."

Mr. Boos has the right of it. The most satisfying collections are those that involve the collector's life in some fashion, such as the focus on where he lives or lived or where he works or the field in which he works. The extra meaning gives the greatest satisfaction.

Art Fitzpatrick has attempted to give a slightly different perspective in commenting upon Mr. Boos' request. He noted that when he began collecting Long Island postal history he tried to collect all of the island. Then,

"after a couple of years I decided that I had neither the time left (being of retirement age) nor the money to complete such a collection. Now I concentrate on the two townships of the North Fork of eastern L.I. (32 postoffices). I am already well on the way toward having an example of each postal marking on mail originating in Southold village whose postoffice was established in 1802..."

My own experience underscores the important role of both time and money. For completeness you must have a good supply of both. Luck also helps. I gave up general collecting years ago when it finally penetrated my thick skull that I could never afford the rarities I wanted in either adhesives or postal history. On the other hand, a collection involving stampless rarities looked attainable. Because of family associations with New York State that go back almost 200 years I focused upon a New York collection and added up every New York stampless marking reported in the catalog. The total was \$6,000 which suggested that even with 100% error, the goal was attainable. I now know that it is not. Both money and time will defeat any attempt at completeness and I've probably done as well as anyone who has attempted it.

The two intertwine. Certain rarities, although not of high value, are just not available. In setting up my collection I went over every piece of philatelic literature that seemed to refer to New York State stampless covers. Some of the items I last recorded in the literature of the early 1930's--fifty years ago. I've still never had a chance to acquire them irregardless of price. Thus, time is as Art Fitzpatrick noted a major ingredient. Some collectors cannot stand not to acquire a piece every month or so. Depending upon how you collect you may have long arid periods. No one seems to turn up anything in your area that you can afford.



Money is equally important. Some items soar in price. For example, there are 3-4 known examples of the L.I. sound steamboat 'Father Knickerbocker' handstamp. It was first reported in the early 1930's, but only one of the copies has been in readily available auctions. This example sold at the Knapp sale in 1941 at \$52.50 at the same time that a STEAMER/5/OREGON sold for \$9.50. It next sold at \$5,000 and was just recently 'offered' to me at \$20,000 while I had an equal option in the last month or so to get a Steamer/5/Oregon for about \$65. Obviously the Knickerbocker has soared and I can't afford it now. Further, note the comparative price rise. The Knickerbocker cover rose 380 times while the Oregon item went up 6.8 times. This suggests you must know which piece to buy when it comes on the market and you can't afford to buy everything. A collector who sacrificed in 1941 to buy the Knickerbocker would have done much better over the long haul.

There are a number of ways of collecting postal history. In the geographic approach, which is the most popular today, we have a set of books that illustrate some of these variables. One such book is the Blake and Davis Boston Postmarks to 1890. Another is Sterling Dow's Maine Postal History and Postmarks. A third is Malcolm Nichols' Early Post Offices of Chautauqua County New York. Each handles geographic collecting from a different angle and each should be examined to see what ideas each author can contribute to your collecting satisfaction. You can also use other approaches such as the one espoused in Williard's study of the 2¢ red-brown or Vol. II of the Ashbrook study of the 1¢ stamp of 1851-60. To stimulate further interest, the following article is offered:

#### HOW TO COLLECT LONG ISLAND POSTAL HISTORY by Fred Lightfoot

The simplest way to collect Long Island postal history is to make up a list of all the post offices on the island and then visit, or write, cover dealers to see what they have in stock with postmarks of these postoffices. Such a list can be compiled county by county from Lee DeGraff's 1969 work Post Offices of New York State 1792-1969. You can even split the listing by time periods, e. g. post offices in existence between 1880 and 1910 or some other date. The Long Island Postal History Society has already published a list of the 'discontinued post offices' on the island, and use of this list will save many hours of searching through old postal guides for the names of "DPO's".

Today, most dealers who specialize in covers separate them by state. A few know enough about New York State to break their covers down by counties, which saves you from wading through thousands of covers from the 'mainland' post offices. Of course, the dealers are not infallible, and sometimes collectors mix up their careful sorting, so that a quick look through sections of their stock that are not supposed to have Long Island material is often rewarding. (Editorial comment: I particularly suggest checking N. H., N. J. and Mass. )

Major stamp shows are often the best opportunity today to go through large quantities of covers. There are many covers from Long Island buried in categories not made up by states--e. g., patriotics, county and fancy covers, covers sorted by stamp issue, railroads, etc. The dealers who own these covers often are unaware that they have Long Island postmarks.



Unfortunately, there are very few chances to buy Long Island covers over the counter in the stamp stores in Manhattan, unlike the situation that once existed there before World War II. However, some choice items do turn up on occasion, but not frequently enough to sustain the interest of someone who has only Long Island as his field. (Ed. Note: I was able to pick through a collection of about 500 L.I. covers that showed up in a retail outlet in the past two years getting a number of 'rare' covers.)

Auctions are also fertile territory. In the past few years, many remarkable Long Island covers have turned up in these sales including Revolutionary, wreck, railroad early stampless, and express company items. It takes hours to go through the catalogs carefully each month, but it does pay off.

As recent auction prices indicate, really desirable covers are not cheap today, although there are times when very rare covers can be bought, even from supposedly well-informed dealers, at low prices. These bargains help average out the high prices we have to expect in well-attended auctions. If you have been collecting long enough to have a good idea of what exists in Long Island covers, and you see one you've never heard of, don't penny-pinch. You're more apt to regret not buying a rarity than going a bit overboard on it.

Trading with other collectors can help you get covers you want without a large cash outlay.

If you are interested in 20th century post offices as well as earlier ones, postcard dealers are worth checking out. Most dealers in this area separate 'Long Island' and 'Brooklyn' and 'Coney Island' cards, and the used ones sometimes have cancels of very small post offices or rare R. P. O. 's. As the cards are priced for the post card pictures, the postmarks may be cheap.

Incidentally, post cards are good for illustrating a postal history collection. The best cards are those that show post offices but pictures of the places where the post offices were are also appealing. Many cards from around 1900 show the village pretty much as it looked years earlier. Another source of early pictures is the historical museum. Such museums often have early pictures of many localities, and copies can be obtained at a low price.

Other collateral material for Long Island postal history is rare, but it is possible to locate old newspaper advertisements for railroad, steamboat and stage service that mention the mails. These can be added to a collection or photocopies of the relevant advertisements inserted on an album page.

For the really serious student, there are archives of old documents, including letters, in various public and private institutions which can yield information on how the mails were carried before the 19th century. The letters cannot be owned, but often can be photocopied for a researcher's work.

This point of time is a good one for someone interested in any area of cover collecting. Many of the collections formed in the 1930's and 1940's when material was overflowing in New York, are coming onto the markets as their owners die or give up their collecting. Alert buyers can get material that may not reappear

AN 1845 SOURCE DOCUMENT DISCUSSING THE FIRST L.I.R.R. ROUTE AGENT'S  
PROBLEMS IN MAIL DISTRIBUTION

by An Anonymous Contributor

Remele tells us that the first train from Brooklyn to Greenport, L.I. that made the entire trip was on July 27, 1844. He also notes "route agent service was in effect in 1848, and probably as early as 1846..." This document establishes that route agent service began in 1844. Further, by checking the Federal Register for 1845 we find that George W. Smith, the first route agent on the L.I.R.R. received \$230 annual compensation for the 1844-5 year and began service November 12, 1844. His salary went to \$500 by 1847 and to \$900 by 1851. He was still serving in 1857.

Post Office Department  
Inspection Office  
26<sup>th</sup> Sept 1845

Mr George W Smith the Mail Agent under  
date of the 20<sup>th</sup> instant makes the following report.  
On Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> inst: the car in which I have my  
office to distribute the mails was left off and I was  
not able to distribute any mails from Brooklyn until  
I got to Farmingdale in consequence of not having  
any room!

Your explanation is expected

I am respectfully  
Yours Adm<sup>d</sup>  
J M Millen

3<sup>rd</sup> Ave 6<sup>th</sup> M June

George B Fisk Esq  
Post Long Island R R Co

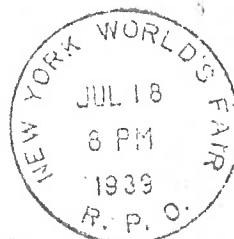
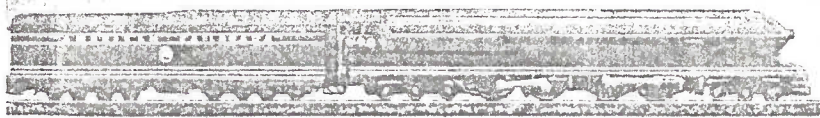
## THE NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR R.P.O. 1939-1940

by William J. Duncan

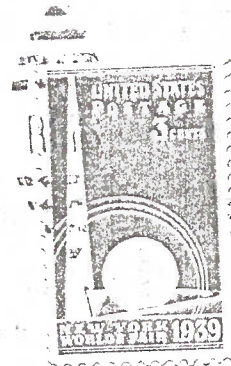
At the time of the New York World's Fair of 1939, which was extended through 1940, the largest mover of mail was the railroad system. It was just a few years later that the end of the R. P. O. era began as the bulk of mail transportation was shifted to the air lines and trucks. Because the railway mail service was at its peak it was very natural that one exhibit at the 1939 World's Fair would be a working Railway Post Office car. This car was set up on the fair grounds and mail deposited at the Fair was distributed through this car, an arrangement that enabled the viewing public to observe the Railway Mail Service clerks in action.

RAILROADS at the  
New York World's Fair 1939

*Railroads on Parade*  
*Railroads at Work*  
*Railroads in Building*



*Mr. Wm Duncan*  
*53 Roosevelt Ave.*  
*Freeport*  
*N.Y.*



An example of the mail serviced in this car during the fair can be seen above. The locomotive illustrated on the cover was the Pennsylvania Railroad's class S1, #6100, which was the world's largest and fastest coal-burning passenger engine at that time. It was exhibited at the Fair on a special treadmill operating under its own steam. It could handle trains of up to 1,200-tons at 100 miles per hour.



150-P-1



150-P-2

-RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE-

The postmark used on this letter is the 40mm circle reported as 150-P-1 in the "N" section of Vol. III of U. S. Transit Markings Catalog by Charles Towle.



and published by the Mobile Post Office Society. Under the same 150-P-1 number, the catalog seems to indicate a 30-1/2 mm circle as well but this appears to be an error. The marking is only reported for 1939, however, it is known in both 1939 and 1940. There is also a machine mail postmark from the Fair, which is cataloged as 150-P-2. It is 22mm in diameter and, as shown, has condensed wording, and is part of a 7-bar duplex. It is also known in 1940.

Also found in conjunction with the 1939-40 World's Fair at New York are facing slips. Below is an example of such a slip used on a bundle of mail made up at New York City's Pennsylvania Terminal to publicize the Railway Mail Service Day at the 1939-40 New York World's Fair held on Long Island. This example is from 1940.



Facing slips are used on bundles of mail to indicate the office of origin, and in some cases the contents, of bundles. Although the Penn. Term. R. P. O. was located under 32nd street in Manhattan in the Pennsylvania Railroad station, it should always be considered as part of the Long Island Railway postal history because for many years all Long Island Railway Post Office runs commenced or terminated in this station. In addition, Long Island mail was distributed at the Terminal on a 24 hour per day seven day a week basis. At present there is no catalog of facing slip markings but the Mobile Post Office Society is contemplating work on such a listing.

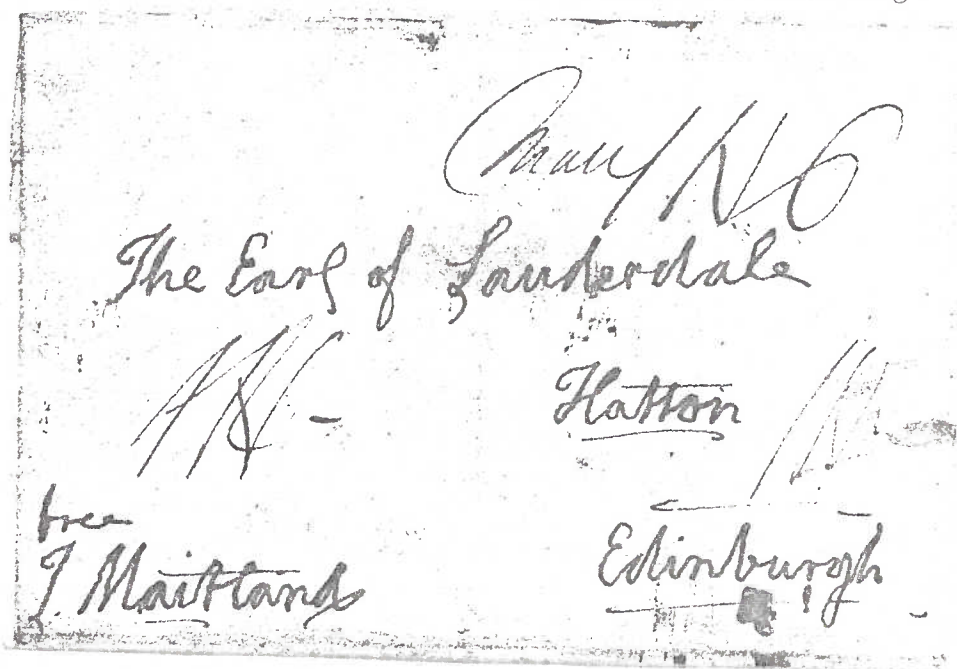


## EARLY LONG ISLAND POSTAL HISTORY III

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While there is no evidence of official mail service having been set up on Long Island after the Battle of Lexington, we do find a rare notice in Holt's New York Journal which reported on August 10, 1775 that "Last Monday an Express arrived from East Hampton...". I record no other letters or reports in the papers prior to the closing down of the New York postoffice in December 1775 or under the American takeover of the mail prior to the fall of New York. With the coming of the Revolution, Mr. Dunbar apparently withdrew his service.

Long Island enters the era of Revolutionary postal history through a series of letters written from British Headquarters on Staten Island from John Maitland to his brother the Earl of Lauderdale. Maitland was involved in getting the troops ready for the attack on the beaches of Coney Island the initial landing place, from which they were to march north to Flatbush and the Battle of Brooklyn. One of the various Maitland letters that has been on the market in recent years is illustrated below. It is dated August 15, 1776 and discusses the long-awaited arrival of Hessian troops. Maitland states he is in command of about 500 light infantry and that "we expect to begin serious business in a few days". The letter went back to England on the packet Sandwich which sailed on August 20th under command of Capt. Nottingham. The packet charge of one shilling is noted as "1N" on the face of the letter. An additional 6d rate to Edinburgh made it 1/6 'in all'.



An American correspondent, Moses Gaylord, whose letters have also been offered on the philatelic market follows. In a letter without an address leaf dated New York August 23rd, 1776, Gaylord writes his wife in Connecticut that the British landed the day before (8/22) in a force of 5,000 and that several regiments have gone to meet them. For example, he notes that the Chester regiment was

ordered over. He also reports that a Col. Gay died on the 22nd, but does not state whether or not this occurred on Long Island.

By the 25th Maitland's Hessians had gone ashore under Lt. General DeHeister, and they reached Flatbush on the 26th in time for the Battle of Brooklyn on the 27th. The American Archives 5th Series II, pg. 103 gives an eye-witness account of the fight at Gowanus Creek and General Washington's dismayed exclamation on it, "Good God! What brave fellows I must this day lose!". A second letter from another officer who reported this battle is recorded in the same source on pg. 232. I cannot ascertain if either had postal markings. We do, however, know that the New York City postmaster had been ordered to depart on August 30th and was removed to Dobbs Ferry on September 1st by orders of the Committee of Safety so it is unlikely postal markings would be found. The mail probably was by military courier or private parties.

Another report of this battle was recently offered for \$750 in manuscript dealer Walter Benjamin's The Collector. It is from American general Edward Hand to his wife, "My ever dear Kitty". This battlefield letter is datelined Long Island Aug. 27 7 o'clock p.m. and is a dramatic account of the fighting of that day. In part it reads,

"I have just time to tell you that part of the Enemy landed on this Island the 22d. They did not advance farther than Flat Bush until last night. I had a fatiguing time of it. And a number of our Troops have been hem'd in but behaved well. Many have got clear and many are yet missing. Our Pennsylvanians were chiefly of the Party--I escaped my Part only by being relieved at 2 o'clock this morn'g. Major Burd & Coll. Atlee were Out & are yet Missing... May God preserve you."

The next philatelic report comes from another of the Moses Gaylord correspondence. It is dated New York Sept. 1, 1776 and tells his wife to write him c/o Lt. Charles Simons Co., Major Newburg's Regiment of Militia in Little Dock Street, New York. This letter travelled outside the mail (the New York City postoffice having just been evacuated) and went "pr. favour Mrs. Steel".



In this letter Gaylord tells his wife,

"Our Army is Retreated from Long Island to Govenir's Island. Brought off their tents, Baggage Artillery with Little Loss. Some kill or wounded going but ye next Day--Our Army is healthy Considering what numbers there is..." (In regard to Long Island) "I Can't give the particulars. You will have it in print. Great numbers are slain or taken prisoners. Among the kilt my kinsman William Gaylord was kill by the Retrete. Expired in a few moments after he was Shot--Lieut. Gillet tis said was wouned or taken. Joseph Maggyt its suppos'd is Dead, Kill'd or Drowned makeing their Escape. I han't time to mention any more of my acquaintances tho not from this place--Huntington's Regiment tis said are all Cut off but Seventy or Eighty but I hope it's not So..."

He concludes by noting that he is sending four letters with this one and the bearer went out a mile last night.

The British were unable to trap Washington in Brooklyn but did immediately set out to occupy Brooklyn, Newtown, Bushwick Hell's Gate and Flushing. On Sunday, Sept. 15th they launched the attack on New York City from Newtown Creek and landed at Kip's Bay just in front of Postmaster General John Foxcroft's residence. New York City quickly fell and General Washington retreated to the Heights in Haerlem for the final battle for the city.

With the fall of New York City, Long Island was occupied by the British and this occupation did not end until November 1783 when the final British forces evacuated. Western Long Island settled in well under the British as much of the population was Tory in politics. In fact, Long Islanders flocked to the British colors forming a special contingent under Oliver DeLancy. This force was at first engaged in maintaining law and order on Long Island but later was shipped out to fight outside the state. British military bases were set up at several Long Island points such as Hempstead, Corum and Sag Harbor.

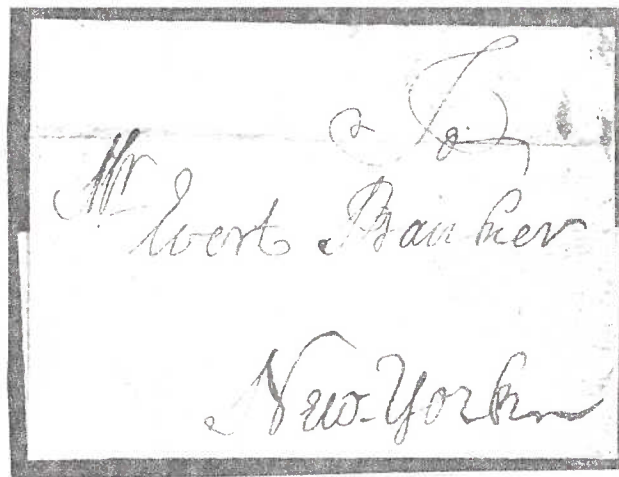
One of the most important towns on the Island at the time was Sag Harbor, which was second only to New York City as a commercial center in the state. It had joined with other eastern L.I. towns to petition Congress to put an embargo on Long Island products during the Revolution. Under the British it was made a naval stores depot and the first military move by Washington against Long Island after the loss of New York was a hit and run raid in early 1777 against Sag Harbor which burnt much of the British supplies there.

Long Island was basically the farm supply depot for the British troops in the North. Many of the farmers willingly parted with half of their forage etc. to supply the British, but as Judge Jones writes in his History of New York During the Revolutionary War the British abused the situation and eventually turned the majority of Eastern Long Islanders, at least, against them. As Jones was a Loyalist, this is a major condemnation. Jones also reports that in mid-1778 the British withdrew their bases from East of Jamaica and left the remainder of Long Island subject to hit and run raids from American forces and looters.

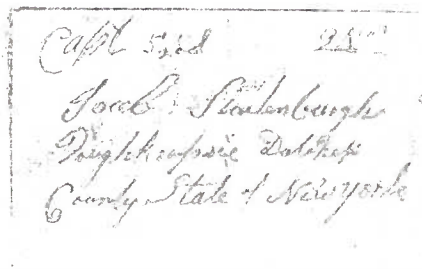


In his book, Judge Thomas Jones cites case after case of civil government breakdown on Long Island that resulted in a growing anti-British feeling. He notes that the town of Islip had frequent alarms when the British troops went by, and how men, on parole might be kidnapped by the Americans coming over from Connecticut.

The British Postmaster General John Foxcroft found that the military were not about to let him continue to perform mail services so that there is very little occupation mail with postal markings. The military, in effect, took over the postal services. A typical occupation letter from Long Island is shown below. This has no postal markings but apparently was sent by the Jamaica stage to New York City so that it might classify as "independent mail" usage during the occupation.



The contents is datelined Jamaica, October 22, 1777 and is addressed to Evert Bancker in New York. It requests that the 'cagg' which the stage will deliver be filled with the best Madeira wine and returned by stage. The letter is signed by Jacob Ogden, who is probably a relative of Abraham Ogden, the founder of Ogdensburgh.



Another Long Island cover that appears to have been transmitted during the occupation showed up in a recent Phillips sale. It is datelined Long Island Feb. 26, 1780 and is to Capt. Stoutenburg at Poughkeepsie. The writer, Ebenezer Mott reports "I have some hopes of an exchange taken place in a short time as there is one on foot now." This appears to suggest that Mott was a prisoner and was hopeful that a prisoner of war exchange would soon take place. Other correspondence from



British prisoners being held at the Lancaster barrack p. o. w. camp in Pennsylvania in April 1780 suggests that a major exchange had been in negotiation.

This cover presents several postal problems. The rate at this time was the short-lived twenty times rate. The minimum basic rate to which the twenty times was applied was 1.8 dwt or 26 dwt 16 grains. The cover, however, seems to show either a 20 or 24 dwt which is insufficient to cover the minimum rate distance of up to 60 miles. Poughkeepsie is 83 miles from New York. Further, there is a dollar conversion of \$5.50 which at twenty times is 27.5¢. However, between December 1779 and April 1780 the depreciation was not twenty times but thirty to forty times. As the dollar converted at the rate of 18 dwt. per dollar the \$5.50 equals 99 dwt. or about 5 dwt after dividing by twenty. Again, the rates make no sense and raise a question of expertizing the cover to see if the rates were added or changed.

A final letter to close out Long Island in the Revolution is shown below. It is dated London from the contents and is from Francis Brown to his mother on Long Island. Dated December 17, 1783 it reports receiving a letter recently and planning to eat Christmas dinner with Capt. Elliot. His brother Samuel Brown is on a Frigate Man-of-War which has not been back to England for seven months. He expects to come home sometime after May but hopes for a letter first.

To  
Be left at Mrs  
Edward at New York  
Wall Street  
for Mrs  
Brown at Flushing  
Long Island  
Postage 2.10

This letter apparently was put into the mail at a London receiving house whose proprietor's initials were GS as noted in the circle at left above in 14mm size. It was posted on December 27 as noted by the Bishop mark date at right. This is the date the first post-occupation packet sailed for America. That ship was the packet Tankerville which arrived February 14, 1784 where packet master John Foxcroft, the former Postmaster General, applied the one shilling (1N) packet postage due marking. The L2 "expence" is unexplained. The letter was held for private transmission to Long Island. There was an earlier packet, the Shelburne leaving England December 3rd, but it did not arrive until February 26 at Charleston, S. C. and March 3rd 1784 at New York.