

BULLETIN

OF THE EMPIRE STATE POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Volume 56, Number 1

January 2023

Presidents Message

December 2022

Dear Members:

Another philatelic year has come to a close and I am pleased to report that our Society is strong: we continue to expand our website and are leveraging our Facebook page by promoting the Society, our Journals, and the joy we find in New York State postal history and philately.

I would like to extend gratitude to our officers, board, and membership for your ongoing trust in my leadership as President. I will continue to advocate for the ESPHS and share our State's rich history and the postal history that it fashioned. A hearty thanks to our Editors Jeff Stage and Larry Laliberte, who continue to publish stellar issues. It is with their leadership and research articles from our many members and friends that we shall sustain both the *Excelsior!* and the *Bulletin* well into the future.

I am pleased to announce that the *Bulletin* and Society website have been recognized in the APS Star Route competition with a Vermeil and a Large Gold, respectively. You can read more about this accolade elsewhere in this issue.

On the last page of this issue you will find a ballot for officers and directors of the society. If you haven't voted via e-mail, please take a moment to do so or send it via snail mail.

And now on to the December *Bulletin*. Wishing all a blessed holiday season and a safe and prosperous 2023.

Sincerely,

Charles

Charles J. DiComo, PhD | *President*

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EXCELSIOR! DEADLINE

The deadline for the **April 2023** issue of **EXCELSIOR!** is **March 1st** or earlier if possible.

As an incentive, submitting a one to four-page article will get you a one year extension on your membership and a five-page article will get you a two year extension. Just think – if you write regularly for **EXCELSIOR!**--you'll have the potential of earning free membership for life!...And think about how you will enrich yourself and others. Submit questions or articles to Jeff Stage at nyspostal@gmail.com

Treasurer's Tidbits – Part I

If any of you haven't yet seen a copy of or subscribed to the ASDA's magazine, *The American Stamp Collector & Dealer*, might I suggest you take a look. Each issue contains articles by well-known and respected authors, and while still scholarly and informative, they don't come close to what could be called a "dry read" that only appeals to a small segment of the hobby. Rather, the articles, of general interest in most cases, remind the reader what fun our pastime is supposed to be. One such writer is Everett L. Parker, who in each issue under the heading of *On the Shelf*, reviews books covering anything philatelic, as well as any recently published stamp catalogues plus a myriad of society journals. With this in mind, I mailed him a copy of our April, 2022 *Excelsior!* in the hope that our society would get a plug, and Everett didn't disappoint. His kind review, published in the September, 2022 edition, can be seen below (reprinted here with the permission of ASC&D editor, Wayne Youngblood).

In today's hectic and fast-paced world, we sometimes forget that in "the old days," things did not move as fast. Today, we expect a letter to arrive at a destination thousands of miles away in just a few days. But it was much different in an earlier era.

The evidence of that can clearly be seen in the current issue of Excelsior!, journal of the Empire State Postal History Society (New York state). Daniel M. Knowles authored an interesting article about an 1839 letter written by a New York whaling ship's captain. It was sent from the Cape of Good Hope at Africa's south end to Sag Harbor, Long Island, N.Y.

The folded lettersheet was written by Capt. William A. Jones of the whaling ship Hamilton and was sent to Charles T. Dering of Sag Harbor. Dering was owner and manager of the ship. The letter apparently was transferred to another ship and eventually arrived on Long Island about 10 weeks after being written.

In the letter, Jones wrote of his failure to find sufficient numbers of whales in the Atlantic and his decision to head for New Zealand in hopes of improving his fortunes. The ship finally returned to Sag Harbor on May 7, 1840, with 150 barrels of sperm whale oil and 2,200 barrels of whale oil, Knowles wrote, so it appeared the venture was a success.

Also, Bob Bramwell wrote about John Duncan, The first postmaster of Schenectady, N.Y. His tenure likely began in March 1763, and the article was illustrated with the earliest-recorded letter entering the mail-stream from the Schenectady post office, which opened April 3, 1763. The article was nicely illustrated with examples of early postal history.

Jim Petersen discussed a well-traveled 1857 cover from Troy, N.Y., to Rock City Mills in Saratoga County, and Charles J. DiComo reported on earliest-known mail from the Caribbean island of St. Barts to a pastor in Bethlehem, Pa. The cover left on its journey to the United States on March 19, 1834, and arrived in New York City harbor on April 1. Also, Mark Fonda discussed how stampless covers can be a goldmine for postal historians.

The journal is produced in the 8 1/2- by 11-inch format and is saddlestitched. The editor is Jeff Stage. For information, contact Secretary George McGowan, P.O. Box 482, E. Schoduck NY, 12063. His email address, not listed in the journal but on the Empire State Postal History Society website, is geolotus.2003@nycap.rrccorn.

Secretary's Membership Report

Address Change

Thomas X. Casey
380 Palazzo. Circle
St. Augustine, FL 32092-4509

New Member

Deceased
Joseph Gallagher

BULLETIN DEADLINE

By Larry Laliberte

DEADLINE – The deadline for the **July 2023** issue of the *BULLETIN* is **June 1st**. The editor is always looking for short (1/2 page, 1 page, 1 ½ page or 2 page) articles to fill spots in the *BULLETIN*. Submitting a one to four-page article will get you a one year extension on your membership. Submit to largin1@verizon.net. Larry Laliberte

Treasurer's Tidbits – Part II - Member Directory

George McGowan

Due to privacy concerns, I've been hesitant to publish an ESPHS Member Directory that includes personal information such as email addresses, home addresses, or phone numbers for fear that they could end up in the hands of those that shouldn't have them, especially in today's climate where spammers and scammers are running amok. On the other hand, the lack of a published directory hampers the ability of our membership to interact with one another, depriving us of contact with those who enjoy similar collecting interests, the looking up old friends, or the setting up of postal history trading partners or even a buyer-seller relationship.

As you'll recall, each yearly dues invoice asked about your collecting interest(s) and included the option of being included in any such future directory, so, here's my plan: Below you will find a listing of our current membership (only of those that indicated they would like to be included) alphabetized by surname, along with each member's collecting preferences...and that's all. If you see another member you would like to get into contact with, all you'll have to do is send me a message at my email address (below) and I will be glad to forward your request to them at theirs, including any contact info you wish to share (email address, phone number, etc.). Once that's done, I step out of the picture and the two of you are on your own.

Hopefully, this directory, updated annually, will stimulate some inter-action between our members, adding some much-needed life to our society, especially during these long winter months when many of us are hiding from the wintery weather in our stamp dens.

My email address is docgfd@twc.com. See someone you'd like to get in contact with? Simply flip me an email and I'll get the ball rolling.

MEMBER NAME	COLLECTING INTERESTS
Bantz M.D., Keith	New York; Hudson River Stampless
Beyer, Philip A.	U.S.; all China; Stampless; Postcards
Braithwaite, Frank	Long Island PH (inactive)
Bramwell, Robert	Schenectady
Bristol, Elliot	U.S. & Canada Stamps; pre-1900 U.S. Covers
Brody, Roger	Essex & Nassau Counties
Cali, John	Fulton; Oswego Falls; some Oswego County
Carroccia, Alfred	Erie County; New York Cancellations
Casey, Thomas	Bronx, N.Y. Letters, Covers, Postcards
Chlanda, Henry	Columbia & Dutchess Counties
Clark, Michael	Erie Canal; Stampless
Curran, Roger D.	19 th Century U.S. Cancellations
DeKornfeld, DDS, George	Columbia County; Pawling, Hobart, Stamford, N.Y.; U.S., World Classic Era, GB, Hungary, Austria, China stamps; Hunting & Fishing Revenues; Pointing Hands
DeSalvo, Glen J.	U.S. Classics; 19 th Century Nassau (Queens) & Suffolk County covers
DiComo, PhD, Charles	Transatlantic SHIP letters thru NYC; Pawling, N.Y. postal history; U.S. 1c & 3c 1851-1860 issues; Private Die Proprietary Revenues
Dowd, John	Sullivan, Kings, & Queens Counties; Wayne & Pike Counties, PA; postcards mailed from Scout Camps
Ericson, Jack	Cattaraugus; Chautauqua
Faber, Marge	Ramapo Works, Rockland County, N.Y.; Bergen County, N.J.
Ferguson, Francis	Cortland; New Hartford; Utica; Clark Mills; Patent; Poland; Clinton
Fielder, Dorothy	Otsego County; U.S. Plate Blocks; Costa Rica; Beer; Stamps with unusual shapes
Fonda, Mark	Stampless & Stamped postal history: Saratoga, Warren, & Washington Counties; Stamps: Canada & Russia
Furman, Josh	Postal Cards
Goodhart, David	Revenues; Match & Medicine
Halpern, Joseph W.	Kings County esp. Stampless; Flatbush
Harrington, Joel	Western N.Y.; PA.
Harris, Robert Dalton	Letters for content; Electric Toasters
Haynes, Joseph A.	Stampless
Hayward, Jeffrey	Richmond County; Staten Island; Desks/Business Furniture
Hines, Terrence	Katonah, N.Y.
Hogancamp-Glenister, Rebecca	Chemung County
Jaronski, Stefan T.	Ithaca, N.Y.
Joyce, Jay	U.S. Service Academies esp. West Point
Juceam, Robert E.	Nassau County; Long Island Stamp Dealers
Kennedy, Steve	Stampless; Trans-Atlantic

MEMBER NAME	COLLECTING INTERESTS
Klion, Reid	Oneida County
Knowles, Daniel	Long Island
Kremsky, Stuart	Broome County
Laby, M.D., Morton R.	Suffolk County
Laliberte, Lawrence	Poughkeepsie; Dutchess & Putnam Counties; Iona Island
Levy, Brian	Receiving Cancels
Main, Stephen	Allegany County
Marshall, Robert	Suffolk County, N.Y.; Orleans County, VT
Mason, Peter	Chenango & Otsego Counties; U.S. Air Post
Maxwell, H. James	Erie Canal Covers 1825 - 1862
Mazza, Thomas	N.Y. City & County
Milner, Susan	Correspondence
Moretz, Roger C.	Jefferson & Niagara Counties
Morris, Vern	Colonial
Nunge, Richard	St. Lawrence County
Penwell, Douglas	Monroe, Livingston, & Ontario Counties
Pfeffer, Ronald E.	Town of Otto (Cattaraugus County); Stampless w/ Historical Content
Pierce, Preston E.	Western N.Y. State; RPO; HPO
Price, John	Long Island Postal History
Prill, Ada	Delaware County
Rausch, Larry	Wheel of Fortune; Onondaga & Monroe Counties
Reinhard, Stephen	Aerophilately
Rose, Ellen	Utica, N.Y. postal history
Sammis, William W.	Independent Mails Period; Eastern Expresses; Forgeries (Locals & Confederate); School/College Practice Items; Parcel & Package Companies; Railroad Stamps (Registry, storage, etc.)
Schorn, John F.	NYC (all 5 Boroughs)
Shepard, Norman	Skaneateles, New Hope, Shepard Settlement
Sinclair, George E.	Chautauqua County
Spector, M.D., Jessie I.	U.S. & Israel Postal History
Stage, Jeff	Syracuse; Onondaga County; Commercial Advertising: Food & Drink, Stagecoaches, Buses
Stahl, Richard A.	Postal History
Sweeting, Heather	Cayuga & Oswego Counties; CE1-2 on cover; Modern Postal History
Tesmer, Irving H.	Covers, Western N.Y.
Thoman, DDS, William A.	U.S. Stampless
Tirums, Maris	Ulster County; NYS Doanes; Fulton City; Potsdam Village; Geneseo Village; Hudson River Mail
Tyldsley, Jr., J. Ogden	Dutchess County
White, Reginald	Putnam County; N. Westchester County
Williams, David	Binghamton, N.Y., & Broome County postal history; N.Y. Star Cancels; 2nd Bureau postal history.

The Building of a Famous Resort @ Saratoga Springs, NY

By Mark Fonda

In the beginning, it was the early Dutch settlers of a Patroonship that were introduced to the wondrous healing & restorative properties of the many different flavored mineral springs at Saratoga by the Iroquois and other New York State Indian tribes after their "Trades & Pow-Wows." Saratoga meant the "Land of fast waters" to those tribes and for a thousand plus years they came to Saratoga to heal-up after battles.

Gideon Putnam is credited as the founder of the village of Saratoga Springs. Born in Sutton Mass. in 1763, Gideon married Doanda Risely at 19 (she was 16) and first settled in Rutland, Vermont. The couple and their growing family, ultimately producing five sons and four daughters, moved to Bemis Heights in New York in 1788, but the spring rains caused serious flooding to the area, prompting Gideon and his family to move yet again. They finally settled in Saratoga Springs, and we know that Gideon built a log cabin on Prospect Hill in 1789. The main reason Gideon decided to settle in what would become

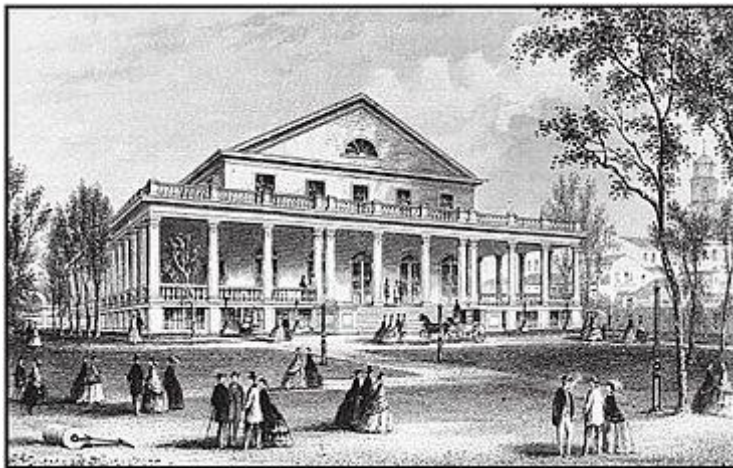


Figure 1. An early sketch of "Union Hall".

Saratoga Springs was the availability of pine wood which could be used for building materials and sold elsewhere. Two years after first settling in Saratoga, Putnam and wheelwright William Patching opened a sawmill that began producing lumber to be sold in New York City. With the wealth made from this successful enterprise he bought his first plot of land from Dirck Lefferts who was one of the initial landholders of the Kayaderosseras Patent. He later purchased more land in 1801 from Henry Walton where he began to develop the land around his residence.

Gideon was struck with the idea of the springs' valuable medicinal properties and its use by notables and travelers seeking their restorative powers. These travelers needed "LODGING". With this idea in mind, in 1801-1802 he built a three-story log hotel called Putnam's Tavern and Boarding House. While under construction, the structure was termed "Putnam's Folly" by neighbors who did not expect the establishment to be a success in such a remote area.

One of the best descriptions is in *The Making of American Resorts* by Theodore Corbett who writes "...in 1802, Gideon Putnam completed work on a 'great house' to lodge visitors at the south end on undeveloped Broadway." When Putnam died, his widow, Doanda, continued the boarding house under her family's management for the next half century as the "Union Hall", **Figure 1**, and was continually expanded to become a full service hotel.

Gideon Putnam is credited with discovering a number of the mineral springs in Saratoga from 1805 to 1809: Washington Spring, Columbian Spring, Hamilton Spring, and Congress Spring. Though he eventually sold the rights to the springs to different companies, he insisted that the water be free to drink from the source. The free water, which many physicians of the time affirmed held medicinal qualities, was instrumental in making Saratoga the greatest tourist destination in the country at the turn of the 18th century.

Putnam died at the age of only 49 on December 1, 1812 as the result of an accident in which he fell from the scaffolding surrounding the construction of the new Congress Hall, a second boarding house to accommodate the rapidly-increasing volume of tourists. He was buried on his own land in Putnam Cemetery and was survived by nine children and his wife who lived on until February 10, 1835.

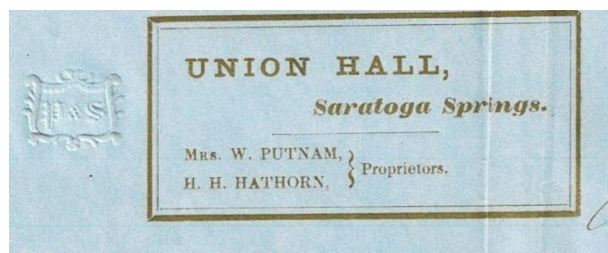


Figure 2. The letter on Union Hall stationery that made up the stampless cover in Figure 3. The letter did not scan well.

Rockwell and Washington, two sons of Gideon Putnam bought out the family's interest in Union Hall. They owned and managed it from 1836 to 1864. By 1843, Union Hall had a 240 foot front on Broadway with 160 foot wings on the north and south. An ad in 1843 stated that Union Hall had "400 feet of frontage on Broadway and included 'spacious saloons, dining halls and piazzas' also the delightful garden and pleasure grounds. These covered about four acres of land." Congress Springs, one of many

mineral springs in Saratoga was about 200 feet West of Union Hall.

An 1846 ad claimed that the building "has undergone thorough repair, been repainted and otherwise renovated and an addition of 70 feet has been made to the dining hall, so that it is now capable of seating 450 persons".

Field Horne's *The Saratoga Reader* includes a letter dated July 31, 1849 from Robert McCoskry Graham, a New York City resident, who reported when he arrived at Saratoga Springs he "sent his baggage to Union Hall and walked down there... the old Union is now under the management of Messrs. W. Putnam and H.H. Hathorn. This house still retains the reputation of being the best kept place."



Figure 3. The stampless cover sent to Clinton but missent to Hamilton.

The Mrs. W. Putnam mentioned in the Union Hall letterhead, **Figure 2**, of the July 20, 1849 stampless cover, **Figure 3**, from J.N. Grimbride to Wm. Curruth at Hamilton College, Clinton (Oneida Co.) NY would have been the wife of Washington Putnam, one of Gideon Putnam's sons. Other aspects of the cover show "5" cent rate for a distance of under 300 miles. It also has a Hamilton (Madison County) date stamp and a manuscript "MISSENT FOR'D" In the upper right of the cover is a handstamp that reads "Union Hall/Saratoga/Springs". **Figure 4** is an enlargement of that stamp. The letter may have been given to the front desk for posting where this stamp was applied. Interesting to note, that the blue color of this stamp matches that of the city date stamp. Was the post office located in the hotel?

By the time of publication of the *Gazetteer & Business Directory of Saratoga County* in 1871, H.H. Hathorn (also shown in the letterhead of Union Hall), was listed as proprietor, through his H.H. Hathorn & Co. of Congress Hall and of Hathorn Springs.

So far the Saratoga County Historian, Lauren Roberts, has no city directories for Saratoga Springs prior to 1869, so locating the writer of the stampless cover, J.N. Grimbride, addressed to Mr. Wm. Curruth at Hamilton College becomes very difficult. She notes "... keep in mind though, that someone writing such a note on Union Hall letterhead



Figure 4. The Union Hall handstamp.

might likely just have been a guest at that hotel and could have been traveling from a thousand different places.

Also of note, no information was found at Hamilton College on Mr. Wm. Curruth from archivist Jeremy Katz.

In 1864, the LeLand brothers bought Union Hall and changed the name to The Grand Union Hotel. **Figure 5.** The hotel itself constantly expanded. It retained a "U" shape for most of its existence, with one large section of the building fronting Broadway and two large wings extending down the side streets.



Figure 5. The Grand Union Hotel. Scene cropped from a post card c. 1905.

For a time, it was known as "the largest Hotel in the world" until it was demolished in 1953. The author watched as a nine year old child, stopping on his bike after school, watching as the wrecking balls on cranes crumpled and crushed the grand old structure, never forgetting losing that great one-time landmark.

Union Hotel – The Rest of the Story

By Lawrence Laliberte

As editor of the BULLETIN, I have to work with many authors and accommodate some special needs. Such is the case with Mark Fonda who produced the article on the Grand Union Hotel in this issue. Mark has limited access to the internet and no e-mail. He sends his articles to me via snail mail, usually with USPS tracking.

In preparing the large envelope, also called a “flat” by the Post Office, **Figure 1**, he attached \$5.00 in postage stamps. This was more than twice the amount needed to cover the 6 oz. weight of the item. He also attached a “Label 400” which is a tracking number label intended for use on packages when the customer applies postage. It has a peel off strip with the number on it for the use of the customer.

When he posted that article on July 20, 2022, little did he know that a saga lasting 20 days was beginning? Posted in Syracuse on July 20TH, it arrived at the Syracuse Distribution Center at 10:23 pm departing the following day at 8:27 am destined for the White Plains Distribution Center, arriving there at 2:48 pm on July 21.

The next entry stated “in Transit to Next Facility” on July 24 with no time stated. From this point on, until its delivery on Aug. 13th, the envelope would go through the sorting machine in White Plains every day with the date and time varying but always stating its departure only to reappear the next day. Interestingly, at each new post on the tracking site, the previous entry for White Plains disappeared.



Figure 1. Scan of the entire 9x12 envelope.

In talking to several persons, who indicated that a “trap” or “reject” could not be done in order to examine the envelope for problems. One has to wonder what happens if Homeland Security needed to stop something in the mail stream. Another question, is the program set up to count the number of times a package has passed through, and when X is reached, it gets flagged?

After many calls to me, the Syracuse Post Master, and talks with a tech person at the distribution center to find out what was going on, I initiated a service request on Aug. 3rd which was automatically closed two days later. I got an e-mail requesting to take a survey. On Aug. 9th I filed another service request which piggy-backed on the original. This time, I visited my local Postmaster to see what she could do.

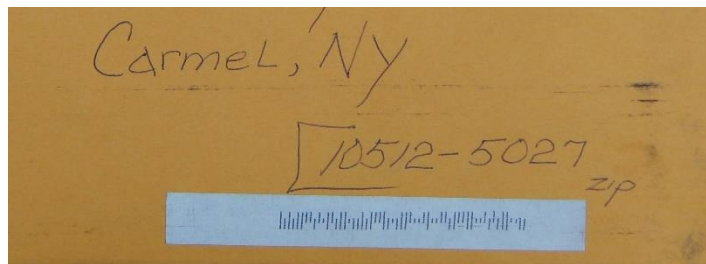


Figure 2. The city and Zip portions of the address and the added Zip code strip.

On Thursday, Aug 11th, I received a call from a person at the White Plains Center who said she would look into the problem. Apparently, she did and I received the envelope on Saturday Aug. 13th

After examining the envelope, the only thing that I could conceive of that would cause the sorter to misinterpret the address was the bracket preceding the Zip code. Ultimately, someone visually inspected the envelope and caused the Zip code bar code stripe to be applied. This allowed the cover to escape White Plains. **Figure 2.**

For a time, Fishkill housed a Postal Unit that operated remotely. Its function was to receive scans of items that couldn't be read by the sorter, and they would in turn read the address and enter the appropriate Zip code. Is that what happened to our subject envelope?

This experience led me to wonder how mail is actually handled. So, with an APS circuit box in hand, I went to the Stormville, NY post office. This is a smaller post office with less traffic which increased my chances of talking to a clerk to see what happens when a Priority Box (or any item needing tracking) is handed over for "First Contact". I talked to the Postmaster and after explaining why I was so interested in what transpired, he gave me a quick description of what happens

After placing the box on the scale, the clerk used the laser reader to scan the bar code on the box telling the program it is a small Priority Mail box and displays how much to charge.

The question comes up asking if the package contains any unmailable items. Hit No.

The Zip code is then typed in and the city is displayed on the monitor. Here is the interesting next step, the street number is entered and then the first letter of the street. The system will display options for all streets listed in the database. The clerk chooses the correct one. At this point, the address is displayed on the customer monitor for verification. Hit yes.

Payment is requested and made. The postage validation sticker and tracking sticker are generated and applied.

A receipt is generated and given to the customer. The package is then placed in a hamper designated for Priority Mail only. First class or Parcel Post package would be placed in their own hampers.

At this point, the package is on its way to the area sorting/distribution center. At the center, untouched by human hands, the package is scanned for address and tracking number and is sorted accordingly, down to the proper place on the carrier's route.



Figure 3. The Label 400 that caused all the trouble.

After looking at a scan of the envelope that is the subject of this article, he immediately zeroed in on the Label 400, **Figure 3.** He said that, as a First Class letter it was not eligible for tracking. In order to get tracking on a first class envelope, the extra service of Certification or Registry would need to be added.

If any member can expand on what happens at a distribution center, that information would make an interesting article for a future issue. Contact the editor.

A Returned Priority Mail Package to Greece

By T.P. McDermott ©

One recent day, while I was in my thirty-three unit apartment building's lobby to pick up my mail, I checked the counter shelf where envelopes and packages are placed that cannot fit in the small vertical individual residents boxes that were installed in the 1960-70s. For some residents, I'll bring up their larger mail items to their apartment door.

I have often thought of organizing a local mail service like Herman Herst Jr. had in Shrub Oak, NY during the 1960s. I enjoyed reading his books and was familiar with his old home town where he conducted his local mail service, carrying his mail across a two lane road (US Route 6) to the county store where the Shrub Oak, NY post office was located. His local Cinderella stamps dressed up his outgoing mail being sent to his stamp collecting customers.



Figure 1. The entire box as it was returned.

On February 15, 2022 I carried up to a neighbor's door a Priority Mail package which was well squashed and almost broken open. **Figure 1.** I had noticed that the package had been **returned** from

Greece and had a lot of postal markings. The tenant was not home but his wife answered the door. I explained that I was a stamp collector (most people don't know what the word 'philatelist' means!) and could I have the entire empty package. She gladly started to empty it, pulling out some crumpled soft Priority Mail envelopes which were used as stuffers or fillers, a few unbound papers and a small bag of something; dropping all of it on the floor. She didn't ask questions and appeared happy to get rid of the whole thing. Oh! What a happy collector I was, having obtained an interesting postal history item.

USPS customers can pick up and use USPS supplied free Priority/Express envelopes and mailing boxes in the post office lobby. Many post offices that I have visited don't have all the various sizes nor is there any effort to indicate a suggestive rate for each different size. Our sender took a Priority Mail medium flat rate box rather than a smaller box. If you wonder why the wrong size box was picked, it might be because there are usually no labels listing the fees for mailing various boxes or envelopes. However I have recently seen where a few post offices are starting to use USPS's labeling cards which explain purpose and the cost of various Priority Mail packaging. (Editor's note; my post office in Carmel, NY not only has the fees displayed on the rack, but has an LED screen mounted in back and above the counter displaying the most common rates for various services.)

The package was addressed in ink to a female in Athens 11743, Greece. The sender address was in White Plains, NY. A neat job was done of completing the USPS Customs Declaration and Dispatch Note PS 2976-R on November 2, 2021. **Figure 2.** It included checking the items enclosed as document and gift with the description of mascara with a quantity of five and a value of 30 US dollars with a crossed out or corrected weight of six ounces and four documents with no value; total weight of two pounds, and less than six ounces. I wonder if the Greeks' Customs would know that "mascara" is a female eye cosmetic. And, what would happen if the sender would have included its translation?

Figure 2. The computer generated Customs Declaration Form PS-2976-A printed with information from Form 2976-R, seen at top left of Figure 1.

This form and its several copy parts were enclosed in a plastic document holder on the top front left side of the box. The sender paid the rate for Priority Mail medium flat rate box of 85 dollars per the Scarsdale NY post office's postage meter strip to send the box to Greece. I've been told that a smaller size, flat rate box would have been about 40 dollars. Scarsdale is a community right next to White Plains.

Someone in the USPS typed the above information on a Customs Declaration form PS297-A. With a tracking number of **CH 147 608 556 US** applied, it was on its way to Athens. With information from USPS's online tracking system we found that it had been scanned and recorded eight times in Jersey City NJ and Jamaica NY (that's near JFK airport) departing NY, on November 5, 2021 at 10:45am. It was scanned twice within 22 hours at Belgrade, Serbia and arrived at Athens on November 8 at 4:35pm. Four Greek scans including two customs points were done between November 30 and December 15, 2021. An attempted delivery was recorded on January 10, 2022 at 12:42pm



Figure 3. The label applied by the Greek Postal Service.

In Greece, a yellow form was stuck on the box's left side. **Figure 3.** I believe it was part of the Greek postal service EVTA (Hellenic Post) tracking system. We are able to see that the same USPS tracking number was included and used. I have noticed in other international mailings, the problems of assigned tracking numbers used by an originating postal service which do not match, mix or carry through the tracking in the other (next/following) postal service. (Editor's Note: Look closely at the coding bars in **Figure 2** and compare them to those in **Figure 3**.)

Somewhere on its return trip, the USPS applied the orange "Pointing Hand" return sticker to alert anyone handling the package that it was being returned.

STATEMENT OF CHARGES CP 77	
Designated operator of HellenicPost	
Office of exchange of ATHENS A.M.U.	
Date 14/01/2022	
Parcel No CH147608556US	
Reason for return	
<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> Refused
<input type="checkbox"/> Gone away	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclaimed
<input type="checkbox"/> Importation prohibited	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
SDR	
Presentation-to-Customs charge	0.00
Storage charge	0.00
Return charge	18.29
Redirection charge	0.00
Non-postal fees	0.00
Miscellaneous	0.00
Total	18.29

Figure 4. The "Statement of Charges" form CP 77.

When my neighbor's friend gave me the package, (she had already returned from Greece) she told me that she had refused delivery because the Greeks asked for fifty dollars for custom fees so she told them to keep the package. The Greek postal service placed a white sticker across the above yellow form; checking the block for "not claimed". On the package's back side there is a Hellenic Post form titled "Statement of Charges CP77", **Figure 4**, which was prepared at Athens A.M.U. and was dated 14th of January 2022. It has the original tracking number and lists a return fee of 18.29 but it did not identified what money system was intended, Euros or U.S dollars. Or, who was to be charged – the USPS or the sender. Is there a convention covering this? As the package was just left on the table, the USPS apparently was not concerned or missed it.

This piece goes to show that there are great finds to be made even in modern times.



Tom Auletta, Anne and Elwyn Doubleday, Robert Dalton Harris and Diane DuBlose and George McGowan. The venue, (The Polish Community Center), presented a variety of Postal History, Stamps, Ephemera, Post Cards and other collectibles. Over the years the show has made a table available to our society for members to gather

and also to handout copies of Excelsior and our Bulletin in hopes of attracting new members. Last year the show attracts over 200 collectors for the two days, and this year approached that number, missing by only a dozen. Please put the show on your calendar, for future shows: third weekend in July.

Eleventh Northeast Ephemera and Postal History Show

On July 16th and 17th of 2022 many members attended the above mentioned philatelic show in Albany. The show was organized eleven years ago by four members,



MEMBER CLASSIFIEDS January 2023

Seeking Ithaca, NY attached rate postmarks (Bernadt 8v) on SFL (purchase or image for census). S. Jaronski, 1173 Oakland Square, Blacksburg, VA 24060. [I bugdoc@hotmail.com](mailto:bugdoc@hotmail.com)

For Sale: Nicholson library of philatelic references and Dutchess Co. and area history. Request either or both lists from Larry Laliberte at largin1@verizon.net and enter "Nicholson" in subject line.

We Receive Honors



The Empire State Postal History Society has been notified that the APS Digital Content Team has released the results of the 2022 Star Route Awards. The APS Star Route competition, which was recently relaunched, judges the various newsletters and websites of APS Chapters.



Since the mid-1800s, the Star Routes were the most challenging routes in the country to deliver U.S. mail. Congress called for contractors to deliver the mail with “celerity, certainty, and security,” soon replaced with three stars. Our chapters serve and grow the hobby in those same tough terrains with that same mission.

President Charles DiComo, PhD, was recognized with a Large Gold for his work on the club’s Web site. In addition, our newsletter, the *BULLETIN*, under the editorship of Lawrence Laliberte, received a Vermeil.

Additional congratulations go to Charlie. At the 78th Stamp Exhibition of Southern California (SESCAL), he garnered a Large Vermeil at the 3rd Annual Virtual Literature Exhibit of Philatelic Articles for his brief history and examination of the “H.H. Warner & Co. ‘Safe Remedies’” major double transfer of central Vignette on 6 cent medicine stamp Sc. #RS258dt” which was published in *The American Revenuer*.

He also received a Bronze for his article entitled “The History of the ill-fated dirigible Akron and the discovery of a scarce ‘Souvenir of Balloon Akron’, fabric post card from 1912” which appeared in the Philatelic Society of Lancaster Co. *PSLC Newsletter*.



UPCOMING SHOWS

<p style="text-align: center;">Albany, NY April 16, 2023</p> <p>Fort Orange/ Albany Stamp & Post Card Show</p> <p>Loc. American Legion Hall, 4 Everett Rd. Ext., Albany, NY 12205.</p> <p>Hours: Sun. 9:30-4.</p> <p>Contact Tom Auletta at (518) 877-3027</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Boxborough, MA May 5-7, 2023</p> <p>Philatelic Show, Northeast Fed. Of Stamp Clubs</p> <p>Loc. Boxborough Regency, 242 Adams Place, Boxborough, MA.</p> <p>Hours: Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-3.</p> <p>Contact; David Ball at davidball@philatelicshow.org</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Albany, NY July 15-16, 2023</p> <p>12th NE Postal History and Ephemera Show,</p> <p>Loc. Polish Community Center, 225 Washington Ave. Ext., Albany, NY.</p> <p>Hours: Sat. 10-6, Sun 10-4</p> <p>Contact: George McGowan (518) 573-5457</p>
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Information obtained from American Philatelic Society and iStampShows.com

Help Needed

We received the following request in July. The request was forwarded to the directors of the ESPHS and the results are shown here.

July 6, 2022

Dear ESPHS

I have been researching the post offices of Greene County, New York. I have been unable to determine the location of one post office, by the name of Sportsville. Even if I knew only the name of the Town, that would be helpful.

The Sportsville office dates rather early (1834-1835), was of short duration (March 8, 1834 to May 27, 1835), and only had a single postmaster (Edmond A. Bradley). A site location report does not exist, the postmaster listing does not list any post office that would provide service at discontinuation, and I was unable to find a Post Route map from this time frame. I was also unable to find the postmaster's name in the census records.

Do you have any information in your files regarding this post office? I would appreciate any help or suggestions that you can provide to me. Thanks for listening, take care.
Lawrence Koster

Found by **Bob Bramwell**

Sportsville Post Office opened March 8 1834 in the care of Edmond A. Bradley in Greene County. See the following:

Lexington still exists, with a population of about 800. Inquiries by Mr. Koster should be productive since every town in the State has (or should have) an historian.

Bob

Found by **David Williams**

Gentlemen,

I went to this Rootsweb site: https://sites.rootsweb.com/~nygreen2/beers_history_of_greene_county_modern_catskill.htm

I did a Find (ctrl F) for both Sportsville and Bradley. No returns on Sportsville, two returns on Bradley, one a Dr. Bradley and the second was someone with the first name of Bradley.

There are various maps that come up in searching Greene County at Google.com.

HISTORICAL PLACE NAMES IN GREENE COUNTY

ITEMS EXTRACTED FROM PAGES 216-220 OF
"THE GREENE COUNTY CATSKILLS: A HISTORY"
BY FIELD HORNE
PUBLISHED BY BLACK DOME PRESS
©1994, GREENE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sportsville p.o. 1834-35. Identified as being in Lexington
(then including Halcott and west part of Jewett) by Disturnell, 382.

One was from 1856 (<https://tedsvintageart.com/products/vintage-map-of-greene-county-new-york-1856/>) and it can be zoomed tremendously. Another from around 1810, harder to zoom... but perhaps with an eagle eye, one could find a Bradley mapped amongst the thousands designated on these maps... too much eye strain for me!

David E. Williams

In early November, we received the following information from Mr. Kostner

To ESPHS:

First, thank you for a fine web site that contains a great deal of information about the post offices in New York State. I found it to be very helpful when researching the Greene County post offices.

I recently completed a draft copy of a book about the post offices of Greene County. Here is some input regarding the information supplied on your web site for the following post offices:

Post Office	Comment
Alsen 1902-1947	Missing from the ESPHS Greene County Post Offices listing and should be included.
Beachview 1919-1938	Missing from the ESPHS Greene County Post Offices listing and should be included.
Climax 1892-2016	Service was suspended on September 30, 2016. Not discontinued yet as of November 17, 2022
Edgewood 1881-1915	Discontinued on April 15, 1915 instead of the planned March 31 (Postal Bulletin 10695, March 24, 1915).
Gayhead 1831-1955	Should be listed as one word and not two. See Greene County Postmaster Listings (pages 391, 394, 398, 402, 407, 412, and 426), Site Location Records (pages 567-572) and various Postal Bulletins.
Kaaterskill Station 1914-1917	Missing from the ESPHS Greene County Post Offices listing and should be included.
Platt Clove 1875-1919	Ella E. Kessel was appointed as Acting Postmaster on 1/10/1917 (Postal Bulletin 11296, March 16, 1917) and then was appointed as Postmaster Ella E. Decker on 07/06/1917 after she was married on February 24, 1917(Genealogy Records).

In July of this year I corresponded with the ESPHS regarding the possible Town location of the Sportsville post office in Greene County. I haven't been able to determine the location as of yet, but I will continue to research this question by working with the Greene County Historical Society.

Please let me know if you have any questions about my input. Thanks again for all your help. Take care, Lawrence Koster.

If you have more information please contact Lawrence Koster at Email: lkoster@mindspring.com

Wanted: Your NYS Postal History Story

Jeff Stage, Editor, Excelsior!

Hello, and Happy New Year to all. I hope you all had a splendid holiday season and have an interesting and healthy new year ahead.

Unfortunately, the main thing I need to do to start 2023 is BEG! Yes, folks, I am begging you – all members in good standing with the Empire State Postal History Society – to step up and present your offerings to me, the editor of your award-winning journal, The Excelsior!

This is a great opportunity to share some of your wisdom, material, stories, knowledge and even wit with your fellow collectors.

I NEED your contributions for upcoming issues of the journal. (Those who have been paying attention know how much I HATE using capitals in text so hopefully those CAPS are clearly expressing our desperation.)

Submissions do not have to be long, though in this case, it's OK since I have nothing (zilch, nada ...) at this time just before Thanksgiving to publish in the spring.

Isn't it time to share that article that's been percolating below the surface lo' these many months? Perhaps you just have an interesting New York state cover to share or an anecdote about tracking something down. Perhaps you finally tracked down that long-sought item that completes your study of your 19th century hometown). Great – send it along!

Some of you like to send a fully laid out article with images and captions and fancy fonts, etc. Do NOT do that. It's not necessary. It takes up too much of your time and then I just take it all apart (which sometimes takes me a lot of time that I cannot afford.) Chances are, I am going to change what you do anyway.

Some of you use footnotes. I prefer you don't. Instead, note a source (such as "according to "Fundamentals of Philately," by L.N. Williams," within the text. Then, under "Resources," you can expand on that with publisher, year, page number, etc.

A big reason for this is that footnotes often slow down the reader and the more we slow down our readers, the less likely they will read the whole article. Also, if I edit and eliminate or combine text, the footnote often gets garbled or lost entirely.

So, "how do I send you an article?" you're asking right now!

Simply, send a text file with your story (please note within text where images should be placed; highlighter is effective) and send images as high resolution (at least 300 dpi) separate attachments (NOT embedded in the text). If you have a lot of images, I use WeTransfer and DropBox.

Deadline: Let's face it, the sooner you can send something the better. But to endeavor to send out the publication in early April as planned, I would appreciate receiving your articles by March 1 at the latest.

Any questions, please contact me at my personal email – centerstage98@yahoo.com – and feel free to send a copy (along with your article and images) to nyspostal@gmail.com.

Empire State Postal History Society
President, Charles DiComo
1298 Hammock Way
Lancaster, PA 17601-4695

Charlesdicomo@gmail.com

Ballot for 2023 Elections

Dear Member,

If you are receiving this ballot via email, please tic your choices and reply it to the above email address.

If you are receiving this ballot via USPS, please return your marked ballot to the address above.

Secretary - George McGowan - 2 year term _____

Treasurer - George DeKornfeld - 2 year term _____

Director - John Cali - 3 year term _____

Director - Steve Kennedy - 2 year term _____

Ballots must be received by **February 15, 2023**

Sincerely,

Charlie