

# BULLETIN

OF THE EMPIRE STATE POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Volume 57, Number 1

January 2024

## Presidents Message

Dear Members:

As this issue of *The Bulletin* goes to press, the holidays are among us. May I and the officers of the Society wish everyone a Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

I am pleased to report that the Society is stable, and dues continue to come in. Hint, it is time to renew. See note elsewhere in *The Bulletin*. If you can, please consider including a separate donation to the Society. These will be put to good use in supporting our efforts to maintain and enhance our ESPHS website, leverage our Facebook page by promoting the Society to a diverse audience, and of course to continue to publish our award-winning NYS postal history Journal *the Excelsior!* and this fine newsletter *The Bulletin*. On that note, why not submit an article or two on your favorite subject for publication? How about sharing a presentation, monograph or exhibit for posting on our website ([www.esphs.org](http://www.esphs.org))? Do you have any back issues of our journals to complete the online series?

All of the above shall ensure that our Society continues to grow, attracts new members (Welcome Scott), and advance the knowledge of the postal history of New York State by means of educational and historical research. I'd be most pleased to hear from you.

Sincerely,

*Charles*

Charles J. DiComo, PhD | *President*

+1 (914) 450-3791 or [charlesdicomo@gmail.com](mailto:charlesdicomo@gmail.com)

## In This Issue



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## **EXCELSIOR! DEADLINE**

The deadline for the **April 2024** issue of **EXCELSIOR!** is **February 15th** 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](mailto:nyspostal@gmail.com)

## Secretary's Membership Report

### Address Change

Gennaro Santaniello  
2077A Vestavia Park Ct.  
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John S. DeSanto  
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Queensbury, NY 12804

Charles L. Epting  
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Dover Plains, NY 12522

### New Member

Scott English  
100 Match Factory Place  
Bellefonte, PA 16823-1367

### Deceased

Elwyn Doubleday  
Charles Raffae  
Irv Tesmer

### E-mail Change

Lawrence Laliberte  
lawrencelaliberte426@gmail.com

## UPCOMING SHOWS

<p><b>Buffalo, NY</b> <b>March 34-24, 2024</b> BUFFPEX 2024</p> <p>Buffalo Stamp Club, The Knights Event Center, 2735 Union Road, Cheektowaga.</p> <p>Contact Alan Davis Email: <a href="mailto:ddavis504@roadrunner.com">ddavis504@roadrunner.com</a> Website: <a href="https://buffalostampclub.org/">https://buffalostampclub.org/</a></p>	<p><b>Boxborough, MA</b> <b>April 12-14, 2024</b></p> <p>Philatelic Show, Northeast Fed. Of Stamp Clubs</p> <p>Loc. Boxborough Regency, 242 Adams Place, Boxborough, MA. Hours: Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-3. Contact; David Ball at <a href="mailto:davidball@philatelicshow.org">davidball@philatelicshow.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.PhilaticShow.org">http://www.PhilaticShow.org</a></p>	<p><b>Albany, NY</b> <b>July 27-28, 2024</b> 12<sup>th</sup> NE Postal History and Ephemera Show,</p> <p>Loc. Polish Community Center, 225 Washington Ave. Ext., Albany, NY. Hours: Sat. 10-6, Sun 10-4 Contact: George McGowan (518) 573-5457</p>
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Information obtained from American Philatelic Society and iStampShows.com

## BULLETIN DEADLINE

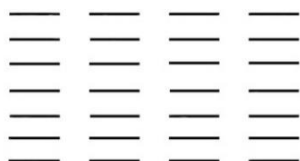
**DEADLINE** – The deadline for the **July 2024** issue of the *BULLETIN* is **May 15, 2024**. The editor is always looking for short (1/2 page, 1 page, 1 ½ page or 2 page) articles to fill spots in the *BULLETIN*.

Submitting a one to four page article will get you a one year extension if your membership. Submit to [lawrencelaliberte426@gmail.com](mailto:lawrencelaliberte426@gmail.com) Larry Laliberte

## Needed for Postal History article, Example of Hotel Champlain, N.Y., Doremus, Machine Cancel

In 1900, Osborn D. Seavey, the manager and postmaster of both the Hotel Champlain in New York and the Magnolia Springs Hotel in Florida, managed to procure a Doremus, automatic hand-powered cancelling machine from the USPS.

Seavey seasonally traveled between the two hotels as did a number of his employees. Apparently, at least for a couple of years, he also seasonally shipped the Doremus cancelling machine between the two hotels. Below is an example of the Magnolia Springs cancel produced by the Doremus machine.



Considering that the Hotel Champlain was a much larger, more popular hotel, an example of the Hotel Champlain, Doremus, Type "B" cancel should be relatively easy to locate, however it has been surprisingly more difficult to find than the Magnolia Springs cancel. It will look the same as the above except the dial will read Hotel

Champlain, N.Y. of course. If Seavey acquired the machine in the first half of 1900 when many of these Doremus machines were being delivered, it could have been used in New York as early as the 1900 summer season between July and September. How many years Seavey shipped the machine between the two hotels is uncertain, but it appears that it was only done for a few years at the most. Examples of Hotel Champlain duplex hand cancels are frequently seen from 1905 forward.

If you have an example of the Hotel Champlain cancel available for sale or can provide a scan, please contact Todd Hause at [thause@cfl.rr.com](mailto:thause@cfl.rr.com)



*Congratulations Charles J. DiComo, PhD: President, PSLC & ESPHS; Life Member USPS, Editor-in-Chief Chairman's Chatter*

## Charles DiComo garners Star Route Awards for 2023

Our congratulations go out to Charles DiComo for garnering many awards in the Star Route competition for 2023 held by the A.P.S. for best Web Site. The awards include:

Grand Champion – Philatelic Society of Lancaster County.

Large Golds – Philatelic Classics Society and Philatelic Society of Lancaster County

Large Vermeil – Empire State Postal History Society

## **AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF ESPHS:**

The message below was first written in 2012. ESPHS has changed since then, and so has Postal History. With the influence of the Internet, philately has been impacted substantially in many ways. In addition to the thoughts below, it is time to update Smith and Kay.

Smith and Kay (Post Offices of New York State) was first published in 1980. Since that time, many post offices in the state have closed or changed status. This would also be a great opportunity to produce a digital version, something that was not feasible in 1980 to the extent it is now. The date range could be extended into the 2020's and the updated book could be ready for 2026 publication.

### ***Now for the content first distributed in 2012:***

First of all, I want to thank all of you that have known me during the time I have been a member of the Empire State Postal History Society. This includes, but it certainly not limited to, all the customers who have made my company, Excelsior Postal History, a modest success. (No, the name wasn't taken from the NY State motto).

It would be an egregious error not to mention the wonderful friends made and the added enjoyment in the pursuit of Postal History. Even though my personal preference is for Western New York State, learning from collectors of the "other counties" has been a pleasure. I am concerned about future opportunities.

There will be no surprises when the average age of the membership is stated as "older," for lack of a kinder term. Where are the new members going to come from? Are we to depend on the American Philatelic Society for new members? That organization is in decline and will suffer the same fate as ESPHS if nothing is done.

When I joined ESPHS in December 1983, I was only 26 years old. That was a very young age to be a member of any postal history group. When was the last time we had a new member that young? Even if there were several, are there enough new serious postal historians to guide this organization into the future?

Many of you know that I served in the United State Air Force for a number of years. In my travels, it was noted that people who might be bored by, or completely uninterested in stamps can show great interest when the subject of their hometown is discussed. From this source, there is marked potential to find new members. They don't have to be collectors, either.

Another area is mentorship. My knowledge of the counties I collect has grown over the years, and many people who shared their knowledge with me are gone. Who can I pass my knowledge on to?

Have you given any thought to this? There is obviously a consideration in having new people start to collect a county. We all would prefer to have someone interested in our collecting area when it comes to the disposal of our collections. Please don't let potential competition limit your vision or otherwise keep you from trying to teach younger people about postal history or what ESPHS was founded for and has to offer.

Since I live in the Western United States, I cannot travel to New York as often as I would like to. If you know of anyone who has an interest in Western NY (the Rochester area in particular) I would like to hear from you:     dougpenwell@Mail.com

This is also a formal proposal to begin a mentoring program within ESPHS. Feedback or suggestions about this idea would be very welcome.

## A Merry Christmas

By Lawrence Laliberte



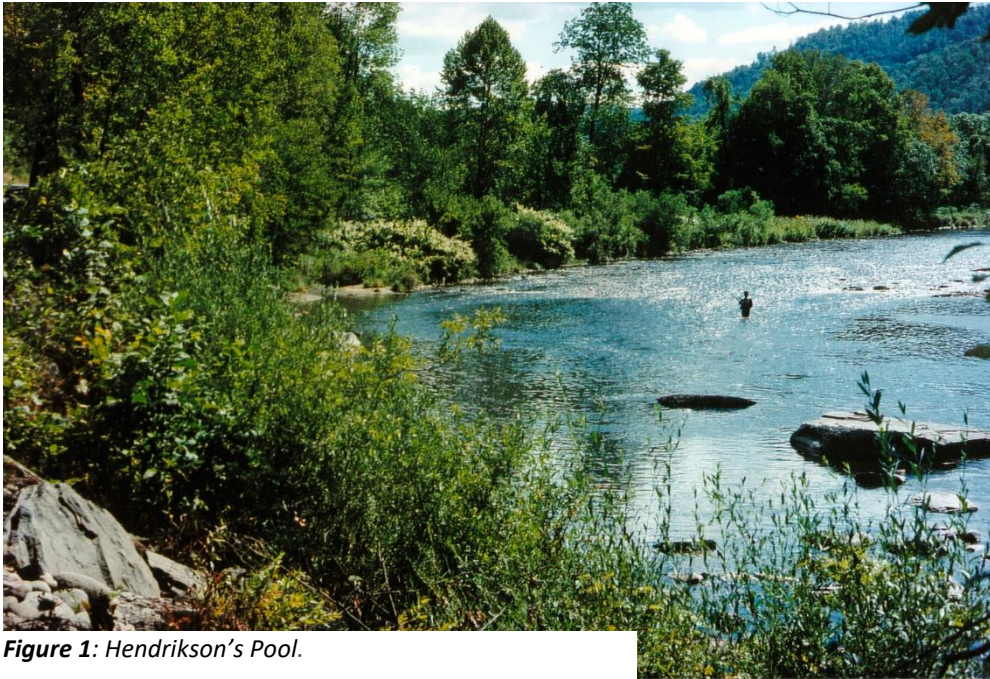
In 1908, the American Red Cross issued the first of their annual nationally distributed Christmas seal. Someone in Poughkeepsie, New York took that design, modified it by removing the "American National Red Cross" wording and the red "+" from the design and instead, inserted "Poughkeepsie Greetings in His Name". The same was done in 1909. Both of these seals, illustrated above, are highly sought after, especially tied to a cover.



## Fish-ing in Delaware County

By George DeKornfeld

Here in (mostly) rural, bucolic Delaware County, we're blessed to have countless acres on which we can enjoy a vast array of outdoorsy opportunities, many of which come compliments of State, County, and Town lands that are open to the public. Out of all these possibilities, one of the most popular is clearly the age-old practice of the piscatorial arts, be they relished just for the thrill of feeling that 'hit' on the line followed by the fight, with the prey ending up getting released back into the water, tired, but none the worse for wear, or filling a stringer with, for example, a batch of crappies where, once home,



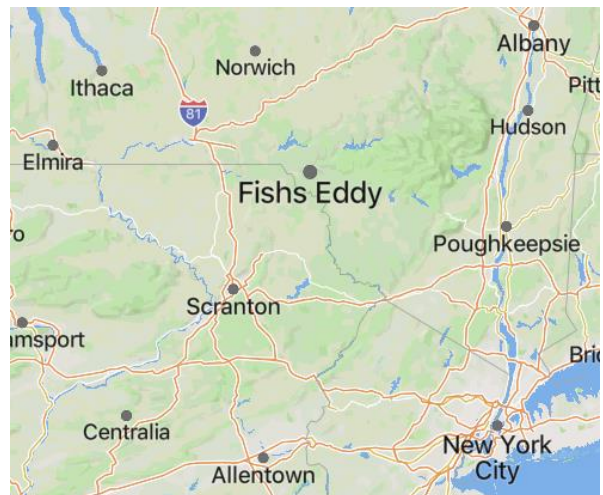
**Figure 1:** Hendrikson's Pool.

they will feature as the main characters in a good, old-fashioned fish-fry (with, of course, hush puppies on the side and a bottle or three of a good, dark, locally-brewed ale).

We are fortunate to share (with Sullivan County) the world famous Beaver Kill (also spelled, Beaverkill), a tributary of the East Branch of the Delaware River, regarded as being

the birthplace of fly fishing on this side of the Atlantic. This angler's paradise is replete with dozens of named pools and eddies such as, for example, Cooks Falls Pool, Painter's Bend, and in **Figure 1**, Hendrickson's Pool, each of which hold the sought-after brook and brown trout who enjoy whiling away their days in the cool water, waiting for a tasty morsel to float by. Yes, we are truly blessed.

Going back more decades than I care to wrap my brain around, in my younger days, I used to travel, in large part, upon Route-17 between home in Westchester County and my college, 240-miles



**Figure 2:** Where in the State Fish's Eddy is located.

or so, up and to the left, in Chemung County. Along the way, passing through Delaware County near the Town of Hancock, I always smiled whenever I saw the exit sign for a hamlet named Fish's (today, Fishs) Eddy (**Figure 2**). I already knew that the word 'eddy' was a term used to describe a small whirlpool and aware that the East Branch of the Delaware was right there, I spent years convinced that the exit ramp led to this magical rotating area of river water that was absolutely teeming with fish begging to be caught (**Figure 3**). It was that mental image that amused me to no end and caused me to ask, every time I drove by, "Hey, Eddy, how's the fishing?" (clearly, the repeated four-hour-each-way commute with its unavoidable boredom had started to affect my cognitive processes, and as proof, I also hesitantly admit that a nearby exit for another Delaware County hamlet, named Hale Eddy, had me calling out "Hail Eddy" in the best Roman Praetorian Guard voice that I could muster, while simultaneously planting a clenched fist onto my chest...). In addition to having these minor lapses in coherency, turns out I was also completely incorrect about Fish's Eddy name! So, it is with this final admission that we finally segue into some local as well as some postal history.



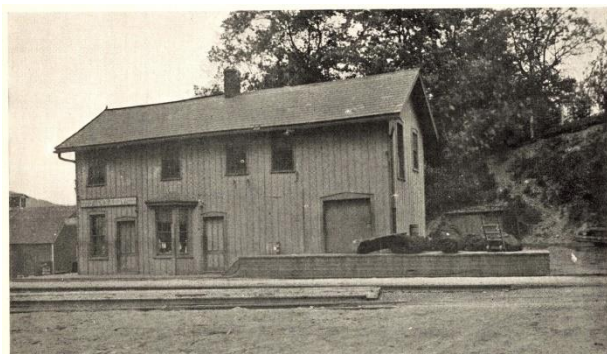
**Figure 3:** A "typical catch."



**Figure 4:** Lakin's grave stone.

One of the first travelers in this area, Jehu Fish (1814 – 1907), lent his surname to the establishment, at least in part, of the name for our chosen hamlet (the 'Eddy' part for the name coming from the river. His first name was chosen to christen Jehu Mountain located just to the east). Fish's Eddy became one of twenty-four hamlets ultimately found within the Town of Hancock. The first actual settler in Fish's Eddy was named Jonas Lakin (1765 – 1847; **Figure 4**) (1). In addition to building his own digs, Jonas opened a general store, essentially putting our little hamlet onto the map. Jonas is remembered by Lakin Island, found in the middle of the East Branch of the Delaware River, and named for him, as well as his being the 1806 name-giver to the Town of Hancock. (2)



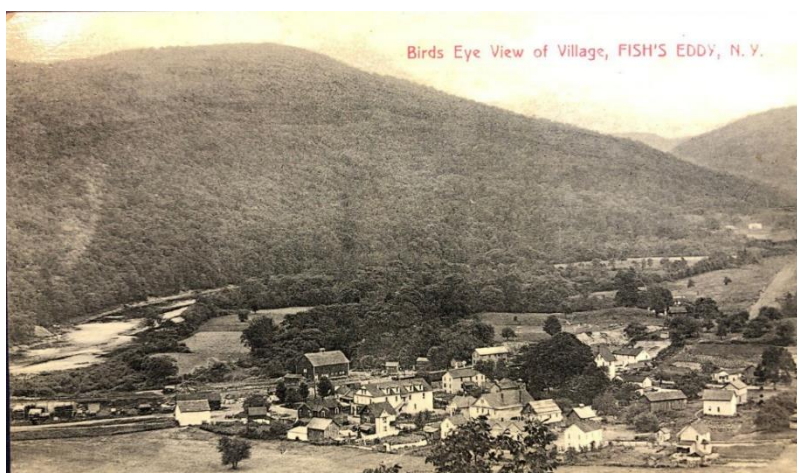


R. R. DEPOT, Fish's Eddy, N. Y.

**Figure 5:** The Fish's Eddy railroad station.

Bit by bit our little hamlet evolved into an active and flourishing Catskills community, bolstered in large part by the 1872 appearance of the New York and Oswego Midland Railroad (which was absorbed into the New York, Ontario, and Western R.R. in 1880) (**Figure 5**, the original Fish's Eddy Railroad Depot in a post card view, as it looked c1910). Constant Nicholas Proskine (1838 – 1928), who was already locally occupied with his lumber, railroad ties, sand, and bluestone businesses, built a hotel here in December

of 1875, opening Fish's Eddy up to tourism, a goodly portion of which I suspect were fishermen. The ubiquity of trees opened up the area to the wood chemical industry (known locally as 'acid factories') which went into high gear during the 1870's. The factories produced wood alcohol, creosote, wood ashes, acetate of lime, charcoal, formaldehyde, and wood tar and, thanks to huge stands of hemlock trees, leather tanneries sprang up in the area as well, bringing even more jobs into the area (3). Commerce and natural resources eventually led to the building of a second hotel along with the train line being upgraded to a two-track layout (**Figure 6**, Fish's Eddy in 1921).



**Figure 6:** The village of Fish's Eddy.

Post Office Name	Era in Service	Postmaster Name
Partridge Island	Jan. 11, 1825 - June 26, 1846	James Wheeler, II
Partridge Island	Dec. 15, 1847 – Nov. 3, 1857	James Wheeler, II
Partridge Island	Apr. 25, 1862 – Dec. 9, 1873	James Wheeler
Fishers Eddy	Dec. 9, 1873 – Nov.19, 1874	Hiram Fish
Fish's Eddy	Nov. 19, 1874 – Dec., 1894	Hiram Fish
Fishs Eddy	Dec. 1894 – to date*	George W. Smith, then et al
<p>*The 'USPS Post Office Finder' has not researched the early Fish's Eddy P.O. and lists a start date (as 'Fishs Eddy' – no apostrophe) of Feb. 2, 1942, so there may have been a suspension of some sort beginning during the early 1900's, possibly related to the fire of 1929 (see article).            Converted to a Remotely Managed Post Office under the direction of the postmaster of the Hancock Post Office on June 15, 2013.            Service temporarily suspended from October 12, 2015 to November 8, 2018.            Zip Code: 13774.</p>		

**Figure 7:** Chart showing the Postmasters of Fish's Eddy.

Although in some shape or form extending back into the pre-stamp era and at various locales (**Figure 7 Chart**), for our purposes, the Fish's Eddy Post Office opened for business on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1874, becoming one out of the 2410 post offices operating in New York State that year. The first Postmaster was Hiram Fish (1809 – 1900), the younger brother of Jehu (whom we met earlier, one of four siblings), who served through December of 1894. And like many small towns back in the day, the name 'Fish's Eddy' and consequently its post office name, were taken directly from the appellation of one of its founders.



**Figure 8:** The Fish's Eddy post office.

**Figure 8** shows us a picture of the Fish's Eddy Post Office as it appeared sometime between 1979 and 2012, the tenure of the then postmistress, Robin A. Arnoldine. This post office was created using a room in Robin's home, a double-wide trailer, that was rented out to the USPS.

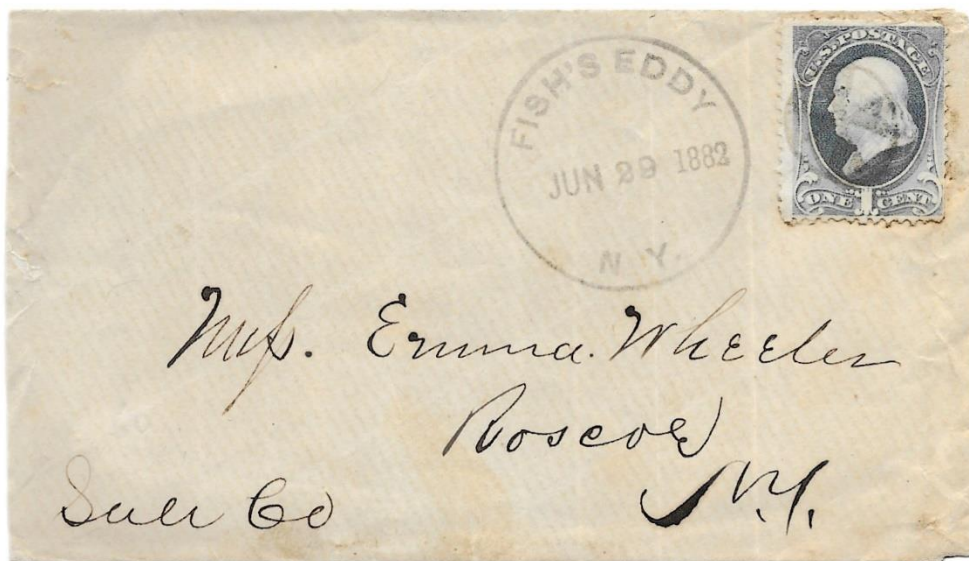
In its early history, Fish's Eddy suffered several catastrophes, some of which had a direct effect on the mail service. For example, during December of 1903, ice jams caused the Delaware River to overflow its banks flooding the area (**Figure 9**). In May of 1929, a monstrous fire destroyed nine buildings in the town, including the post office, a hall, a hotel, and a general store, along with nine more structures sustaining heavy damage. The total loss came in at around \$75,000, a tremendous amount for the time, an event that ultimately turned Fish's Eddy's growth stagnant (4).



**Figure 9:** A photo showing the devastating flooding.



Now, let's look at a few early covers, keeping in mind that postal history originating from this town, at least in my experience, is not exactly easy to come by!



**Figure 10:** 1882 cover from Fish's Eddy to Roscoe.

In **Figure 10** we find a circular mailed to nearby Roscoe, New York in Sullivan County in June of 1882. This cover was franked by a one-cent Benjamin Franklin large banknote issue. **Figure 11** illustrates a Registered Letter mailed to Winsted, Connecticut the following year (although there is no indication of registry

service, the  
franking, 10c  
registered plus  
3c postage,  
makes for the  
proper rate; the  
envelope, a little  
reduced at left,  
may have had  
any registry  
markings clipped  
off, which,  
during this  
period, were  
often just a small  
manuscript  
notation, part of  
which can still be  
seen in our example).



**Figure 11:** Cover from Fish's Eddy to Gaylord Marsh of Winsted, Conn.

Note that both of these covers had their stamps cancelled by a duplex device with an attractive Maltese Cross-in-circle obliterator. As an aside, the registered cover is addressed to a Gaylord Marsh of Winsted, Connecticut, a famous maker of violins whose instruments today sell for several thousand dollars (**Figure 12**, a Model No. 62 from 1901 going for \$2,829) (5).



**Figure 12:** One of Marsh's violins.

That's it for now. I wish the membership Happy Holidays, health, and Happy Collecting for 2024 and beyond, and say goodbye using the backstamp on the cover found as **Figure 14**, by saying "So \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_!"



**Figure 14:** "So Long, Eddy".

By 1885, this post office was using the somewhat more mundane target killers as seen by the cover in **Figure 13**, itself not so mundane. Mailed to West Conesville, New York (Schoharie County), this envelope was short paid by one-cent due to the use of a 2-cent George Washington issue of 1883. Postage due was appropriately charged at twice the shortage, shown paid by a pair of one-cent Postage Due issues of 1884 applied right on top of the original franking, they themselves having been cancelled by a target killer, this one at West Conesville and in simplex.



**Figure 13:** The postage due letter from Fish's Eddy to West Conesville.

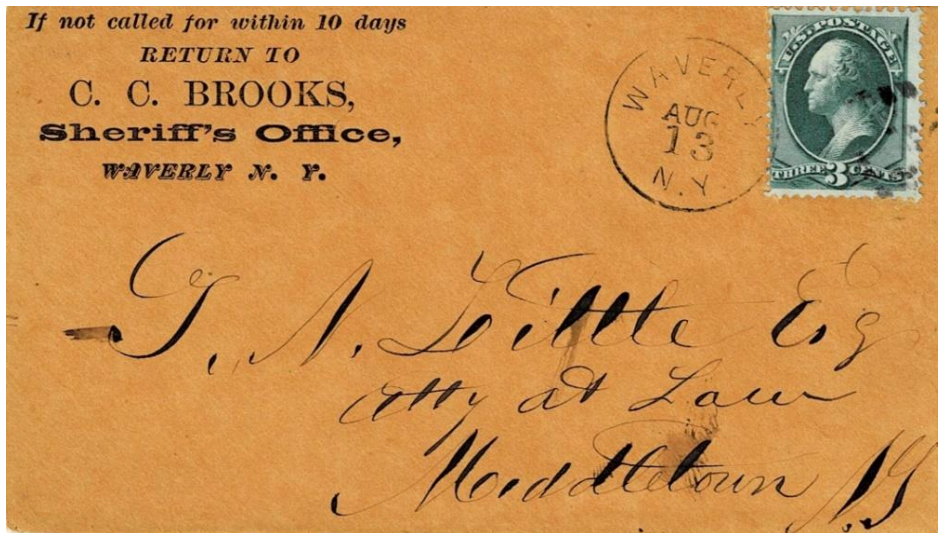
Endnotes:

- (1) <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/25794254/jonas-lakin>
- (2) [The Prosquines - Delaware County NY Genealogy and History Site \(dcnyhistory.org\)](http://www.dcnynhistory.org/)
- (3) [industry.pdf \(dcha-nv.org\)](http://www.dcha-nv.org/)
- (4) [http://www.nyow.org/Articles/Fishs\\_Eddy/fishs\\_eddy.html](http://www.nyow.org/Articles/Fishs_Eddy/fishs_eddy.html)
- (5) [Violin GAYLORD MARSH Model number NO.62 Release date 1901 shoulder rest bow Case | eBay](#)



## Wellsboro, Penn. Bank robbers captured by Tioga Co. Sheriff

By Mark Fonda and Lawrence Laliberte



**Figure 1:** The cover from Sheriff C.C. Brooks that inspired this article.

Charles C. Brooks was elected sheriff of Tioga County in 1872 and was a very active lawman. His son, Charles E. Brooks, served as under-sheriff. The offices were located at Waverly, Tioga Co, NY. **Figure 1.**

Like many small-town banks of the era, the Wellsboro, PA. bank, **Figure 2**, started out as a store in the 1830's. In 1864, John L. Robinson founded the First National Bank with his son Eugene as cashier. The Robinson family, totaling six members, lived in a home next to the bank.

On Sept 15<sup>th</sup>, 1874, a gang of about five robbers entered the Robinson home and bound and gagged everyone except Eugene. He was forced to go next door to the bank and enter the combination to open the safe. The robbers gathered up approximately \$30,000 in cash and securities before making their escape.

On September 20<sup>th</sup>, a farmer in Chemung, New York, about 50 miles northeast of Wellsboro, observed a suspicious character in the vicinity of his farm and, knowing of the bank robbery, hitched up his horse and buggy to drive to Waverly, NY to inform Sheriff C.C. Brooks.

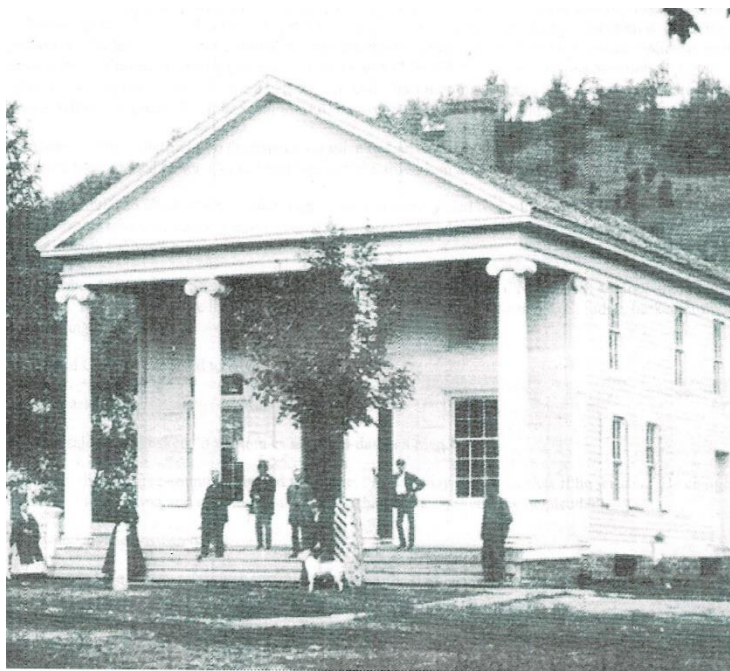


**Figure 2:** The Wellsboro, PA bank.

During the search for the "suspicious man", the sheriff and his men enquired at the Van Fleet residence if they had seen such a person. They denied seeing him, but one of Van Fleet's neighbors saw a man jump out of a second-floor window and attempted to hide in the outhouse. When confronted, the individual was found to have about \$1,000 hidden in his overalls and other parts of his clothing. The individual was identified as "Mike" Cosgrove. A search of the Van Fleet residence produced two stashes with a total of \$12,000.

Cosgrove was well known to the authorities. Six years earlier, Toronto authorities had extradited him to the U.S. after he stole more than a million dollars from a Union Express messenger in White Plains, N.Y. He managed to escape with the help of a colleague. The following year, Cosgrove surfaced in Boston, where he worked on a team that drilled into a Boylston vault and escaped with over \$400,000. He fled to Europe where he opened an American bar in Paris on Rue Scribe.

By the time of Cosgrove's trial at Wellsboro, PA, Court House, **Figure 3**, about 50 miles southwest of Waverly, Sheriff Brooks and local lawmen managed to track down and arrest Orson Cook, an accomplice.



**Figure 3:** *The Wellsboro, PA courthouse of the 1870's.*

The trial lasted from December 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup>. At his trial, Mike Cosgrove was a surly and impudent prisoner that swore to "kill the Judge!" Cosgrove was found guilty. A week later, he was sentenced to 16 years and nine months at hard labor and in solitary confinement at Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia.

In 1891, after his release from the penitentiary, Cosgrove claimed to have found "Jesus" and asked the Judge who preside at his trial, Henry W. Williams, to attend his Baptism. He did.

After serving as Sheriff, C.C. Brooks was appointed Postmaster by President Chester A. Arthur on Oct. 2, 1883, serving four years. He was again appointed on Oct. 6, 1889.

Ref: "The Wellsboro Bank Robbers," People & Life Headline Story, Carrie Hagen June 2016.

Thanks to Linda Williams, Researcher, Tioga County Historical Society, and Nicole at the Office of the Orange County Historian.

### **Treasurer's Tidbits.**

With the arrival of the New Year comes that time when the Society will be sending out our annual dues invoices. Look for yours in the coming months and please remit promptly to help keep our society viable. Included will be the 'Best Author 2023' voting forms, so please remember to vote, returning your ballot in the SASE included with the mailing.

## Railroad Post Offices of New York State

By George McGowin

### Part 1

When steamboats began to navigate the Hudson River, the government declared this and all navigable rivers to be post roads. When The Erie Canal opened for business, the government declared this and all canals to be post roads. When the railroads spread their tracks almost everywhere, the government again declared all rail routes to be post roads. These were brilliant moves by the government to ensure central control of the mails. A complete history of the mails would be too long for these pages so let's just look at the railroad mail routes.

A little explanation about RPO cancels. Let's use for example the New York City and Chicago route which traveled on the New York Central railroad. This was a very busy mail route and a long one, so long that it was divided into three sections. Each section had a different mail crew so that they weren't away from home base for too long. Mail going west would be loaded onto the RPO car of a train in NYC unsorted. The crew's job was to sort the mail so carefully that mail destined for let's say Rochester would be dropped off on the way to Chicago, and mail destined for points west would also be sorted in bags ready to be forwarded from Chicago. The same thing happened on the train from Chicago to NYC.

The mail received by the train crew was supposed to be already canceled. However, if a sorter

found a letter uncanceled, he had a route cancel designating the mail route. Also, letters mailed at any station needed to be canceled and this often fell to the rail crew, and of course, to make the train on time, some mail bags were totally uncanceled.

By the 1890's the RPO system was so efficient that representatives from



**Figure 1:** The Messina Springs & Utica RPO.

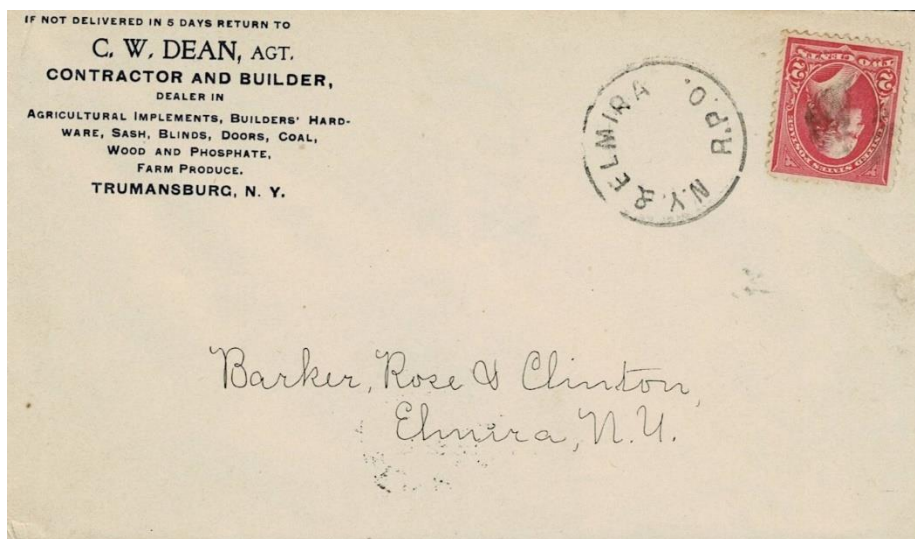
countries all over the world came to the United States to see how we did it. Somewhere in my accumulation I have a letter mailed at Boston in the morning and delivered in Chicago the next afternoon. Of course all the routes and changes had to be lined up for this to happen but in this case they did.



Collecting RPO cancels is like collecting pre-cancels or picture postcards, there are just too many out there to collect every one. So, most collectors limit their collecting to regions, specific railroads, countries, or dozens more choices. I have elected to collect only routes that begin and end in New York State.

**Let's look at a few examples.**

**Figure 1-** This is an example of the Massena Springs and Utica RPO dated Aug 24th 1900 and designated trip seven as indicated in the cancel by "TR7". It traveled the 158-mile journey on the New York Central System.

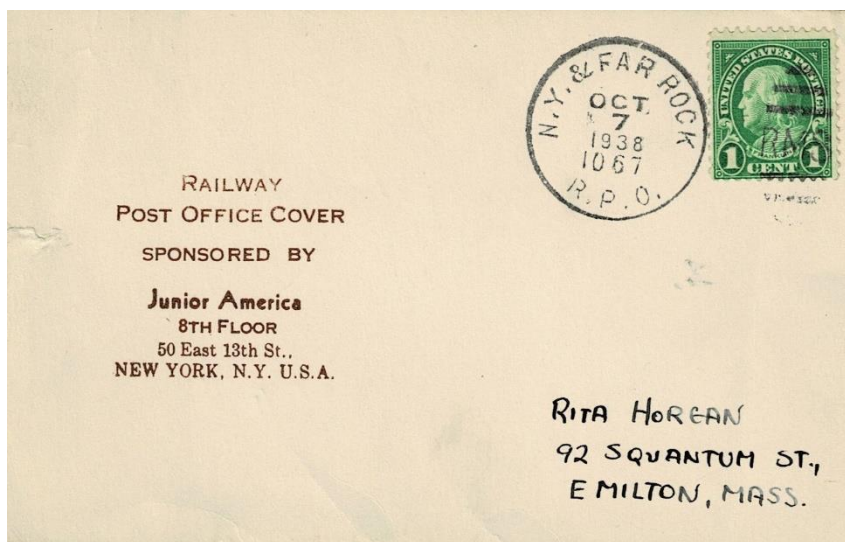


**Figure 2:** The New York & Elmira RPO.

**Figure 2-** This example was mailed from Trumansburg to Elmira and traveled at some point on the 304-mile New York and Elmira RPO, which traveled on the Lehigh Valley Railroad. It has no other details in the cancel. Over the years, cancellers wear out and new are made. Many times, they were different from the old one, making for multiple cancels from the same route.

**Figure 3-** This letter Traveled on the Long Island Railroad on the 23-mile-long N Y & Far Rockaway RPO on October 7th, 1938.

Part II will deal with mail routes on inland lakes of New York.



**Figure 3:** The New York and Far Rockaway RPO.

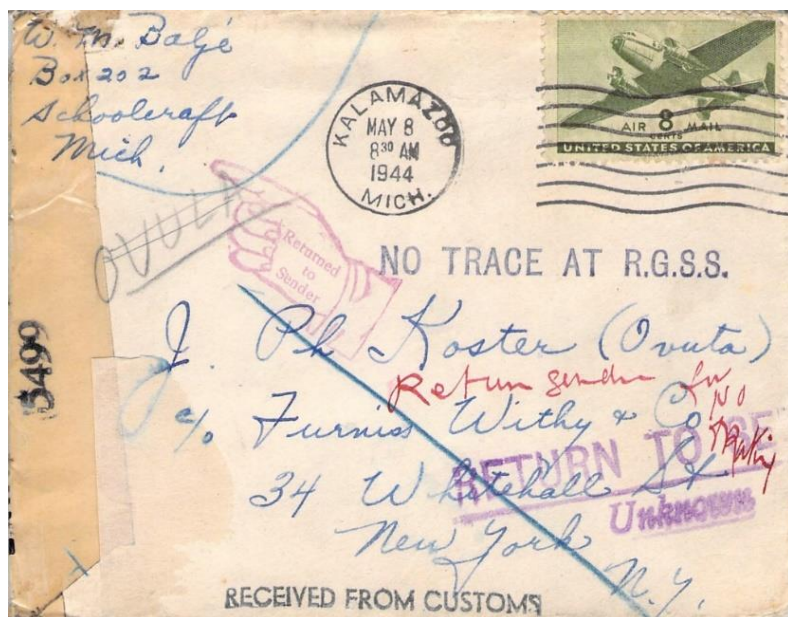


## A Ratty WWII Cover

By T.P. McDermott ©

Recently I was bidding on a pristine, philatelic prepared cover of the 1937 World Scout Jamboree which was held in the Netherlands. It had the three jamboree stamps and two of the event's traditional seals, all five nicely positioned. It is a beauty! I have a habit of checking what other items that the involved dealer might have also listed. From a variety of his other, mostly Netherlands, covers, a ratty cover caught my eye. It wasn't related to my scout collecting topic but I thought it might be interesting to study as it was well-marked up. So, I included it in with my purchase from the Netherlands' eBay dealer W.J. Meijnders.

This cover was mailed from Kalamazoo, Michigan on May 8, 1944 from W. M. Balje Box 202, Schoolcraft, Mich. to J. Ph Koster (Ovuta), c/o Furniss Withy & Co, 34 Whitehall St, New York, N.Y. The



stamp which paid the domestic air mail one ounce letter rate was an olive colored, 8 cent airmail stamp (Scott's # C26) first issued on March 21, 1944.

Added to the cover's front side were the following markings:

#1 Two light black colored hand -stamp marks --- "NO TRACE AT R.G.S.S and RECEIVED FROM CUSTOMS"

#2 A purple "RETURN TO SE[NDER]" which runs off the cover's right edge

#3 A cellophane censor's tape with the examiner's number "3599"

#4 A blue line drawn diagonally across

**Figure1:** The cover addressed to a Merchant seaman out of New York.

the address

#5 Written in red ink "Return sender for NO" (unreadable words)

#6 In pencil the word "OVULA" which was later crossed out

#7 The pointed returning hand "Return to Sender". marking

#8 A remaining portion of a paper tape that might have covered the bottom four lines of the address. This paper might have recorded the tracing efforts of one or more locating organizations. It was placed over the edge of the censor tape.

The cover's backside has the following markings:



**Figure2:** The back of the cover.

#1 The rest of the censor tape with the words "EXAMINED BY".

#2 A faint business date stamp with "4 AUG 1944" and "SHIPPING & 8 EAME".

#3 A purple rectangle hand-stamp marking of "District No 10" with an eagle design emblem for the "Collector of Customs, LICENSED no 356, New York".

#4 A "New York N.Y Sep 15, 5-pm 1944" postmark

#5 Blue lines highlight the edge of the envelope. There is no other evidence of this blue color on or inside of the envelope.

I noted the business marking on the back of the envelope has the word Shipping, so I looked up the definition of Ovuta – with no luck and then Ovula – which meant a marine snail. A Google search for R.G.S.S. came-up with Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen. Their New York City address was located in the city's finance district and near the then down town shipping piers. Furniss Withy was a British shipping company. The web site PLIMS LL SHIP DATA FOR 1944-45 reported that the Ovula, a ship build in 1938, was under Netherland Registry and was for shipping petroleum in bulk (not barrels). Yes, it was a tanker!

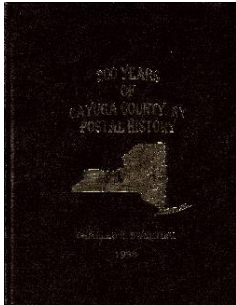
Oh! Our intended recipient must have been a merchant marine (a seaman)!

Searching on Ancestry, I found our sender, W M (Willemina Marie) Balje was the secretary/treasurer of Wicks Insurance Agency in Schoolcraft, Michigan, a small town near Kalamazoo. She was born in 1904 and died on 6 January 2000. Other members listed at her residency were from Netherlands.

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### September 2023

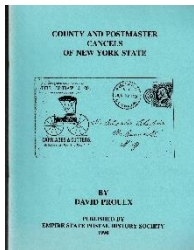


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*Edited by Charles H. Sweeting*

1998, 346 pages Hardbound in burgundy cloth with gold stamping. Contains manuscript, straight-line, county and postmaster cancels, early air mail service, local FDC'S and philatelic notables. Documentation is given for Postmaster appointments accompanied by pictures and comments about each. Site maps are included, as well as illustrations of mail used. Acid free 28 lb. paper is used.

List price \$40.00; Member price \$30.00. Plus postage (**6 in stock**).

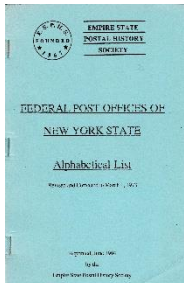


#### ***County and Postmaster Cancels of New York State***

*Edited by David Proulx*

1990, 44 pages, Illustrated, Soft cover, Stapled.

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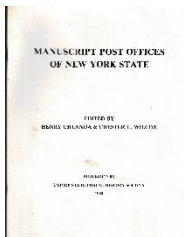
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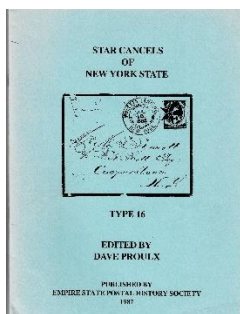


#### ***Manuscript Post Offices of New York State***

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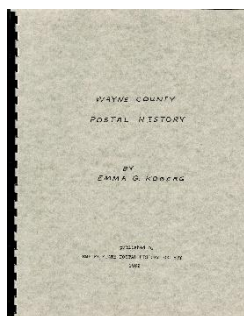


### ***Star Cancels of New York State***

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