

# Excelsior!

April 2024

Whole No. 39 New Series



**Figure 1.** An unassuming looking letter? Hardly! Investigating the cover and contents from 1797 shows an interesting postmark, postage paid for international travel, a business proposition, privateers and a quasi-war ... Wow!

## UNASSUMING COVER – MANY TALES

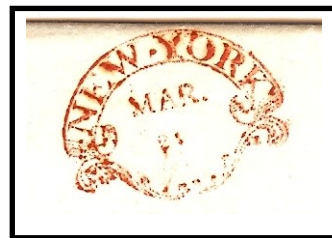
By Tom Mazza

I am no longer certain why I purchased this clean, but rather unassuming looking folded letter (**Figure 1**). It's probably because I have always enjoyed the New York clamshell postmarks.

They were, if not the first, certainly among the first fancy designed postmarks to be used in the United States. The New York city post office introduced them in early 1798, replacing the “straight-line” postmarks presumably made of loose type previously used.

The postmark is of the first type, with a raised dot between NEW and YORK. The American Stampless Cover Catalog shows this style used between early 1798 and early 1802.

These postmarks appear both in black and red, and shades of brown and olive, with no apparent reason for



**Figure 2.** A clearer example of a clamshell postmark.

the use of different color inks. As the impression is not strong, I have provided an image from another folded letter for comparison, to show the intricacy of the postmark a bit better (**Figure 2**).

But what else can be learned from the letter?

First, from the outside. The rate is a manuscript “Sh 14,” representing Ship 14.

The postal law in force at the time was the Act of February 20, 1792, effective June 1, 1792, the first to set rates in the national currency of the country, dollars and



# Excelsior!

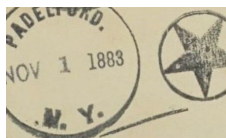
The Journal of the Empire State Postal History Society

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EmpireStatePostalHistorySociety



**Tom Mazza:** An unassuming, but handsome, cover from the late 1700s offers several interesting stories. **Cover, Page 4**

**Douglas Penwell:** The development of postal services includes the changes of the names of post offices for several reasons. Here's an example of one such case. **Page 3**



**Bob Johnston:** Here is another case of post offices changing names. That leaves the author in search of covers that may, or may not, exist. **Page 5**

**William J. DeWitt:** Another story with many threads: A banknote from a short-lived bank of the mid-1800s and

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## Voting Unanimous

The recent voting for officers and directors in the Empire State Postal History Society ended with 26 ballots and all four candidates being approved unanimously.

Positions filled by the voting were:

**President** – Charles J. DiComo, PhD (25 yes)

**Vice President** – David Przepiora (26 yes)

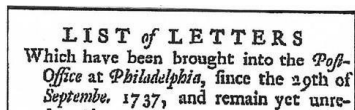
**Director** – Heather Sweeting (25 yes)

**Director** – Bob Bramwell (26 yes).



an early U.S. stamp franked on a cover from a church that is still in service. **Page 6**

**Charles J. DiComo, PhD:** Identifying markings to trace a cover's route from Louisiana to France. **Page 9**



**Robert Bramwell:** A look at one of Ben Franklin's innovations meant to move idle mail

to its proper recipients. **Page 12**

**Jeff Stage:** Dealing down the elements that makes a perfect first day cover for this author. **Page 15**



## Society Officers

**President:** Charles J. DiComo, PhD ('25)  
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djprez@hotmail.com

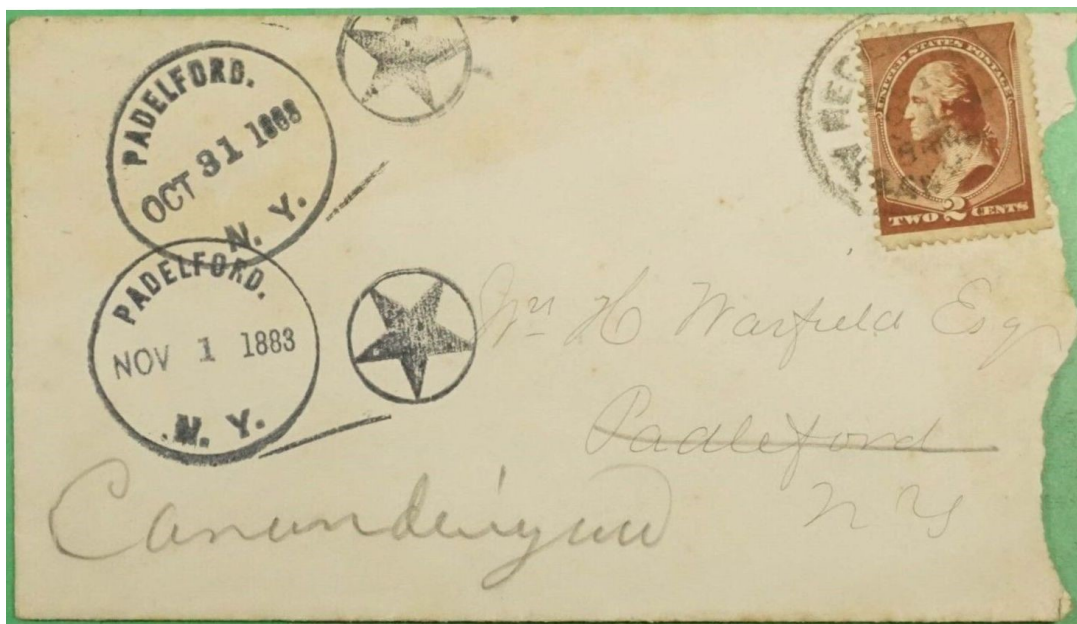
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**Board of Directors:** Steve Kennedy ('24), Jeff Stage ('24), Brian Levy ('24), John Cali ('25), Heather Sweeting ('26), Bob Bramwell ('26).

dated from January to June. For applications dated July to December terms are for 1 ½ years with a fee of \$30 (\$35 for non-U.S. addresses). Advertising is accepted. For ads, please contact the society secretary.

Since mail touches almost every person, postal history touches almost every interest. — Jim



A cover to a small community in the Finger Lakes region that carries a similar duplex Star cancellation applied on consecutive days.

## A NEW STAR AND AN UNEXPECTED SPELLING

By Douglas Penwell

The post office at Padelfords, New York was established in 1874. It is just a bit northwest of the village of Canandaigua in the Finger Lakes region.

The initial spelling was “Paddlefords” – with a double “d” and the “el” reversed as “le” – from which no postmarks have been recorded to date. This spelling was only in use for approximately three weeks.

The official name was changed to Padleford, and finally on 1894 to Padelford, to be in compliance with the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. This board also is the reason for changes from borough to “boro,” “burgh” to “burg” and “Centre” to “Center.”

These revisions coincided with the discontinuance of many offices due to Rural Free Delivery. The mail from Padelfords was handled via RFD from Canandaigua.

The first (and only) postmaster from Padelfords was Harvey Padelford. The cover shown was originally sent in October 1883 from Albany. Please note the spelling in the address, which is Padleford.

This is the first report of a star cancel from this town, in this case being a Type 2. The town name in the cancel is in accordance with the change that was documented in 1894, but without the “S.”

If Harvey Padelford ordered this cancel, we may draw the conclusion that he did so based on the actual spelling of his last name.

In many cases, we do not know what spelling to expect when we look for cancels from a particular post office. Errors, local customs and other influences can cause actual uses to vary in minor to major ways from so-called “official” sources.

Please note that the Padelford cancel is used twice, presumably once for receipt from Albany on October 31, and then for transit to Canandaigua on November 1. Based on the lines at the bottom of the circled star, these cancels appear to have been duplex devices.

Another feature of this cover is the first month of use of the 2-cent red brown issue of 1883 (Scott 210). There are a number of first day covers (October 1) from towns in New York state.

**Wanted:** Your knowledge, your interests, your articles. The Excelsior! needs all types of submissions. Share your passion, even if it’s just about a single cover. Contact the editor or president for details.



## UNASSUMING, FROM PAGE 1

cents. (Previously, rates were predominantly stated in pennyweights and grains of silver, used as a currency of account requiring conversion into the currency of the colony where paid, most often the destination.)

Fourteen cents was the sum of 4 cents for the processing of mail incoming to the port by ship, and 10 cents for the inland postage for the 60 to 100 miles from New York to Philadelphia. There is docketing indicating the letter was written December 30, 1797 and received March 10. The date of the postmark is March 9, making it a very early, if not the earliest known use of the clamshell.

The addressee is a Mr. E. Dutilh. A check with the New York Public Library located a group of letters and accounts of Dutilh & Wachsmuth.

The summary given states that Etienne (Stephen) Dutilh (1751-1810) arrived in Philadelphia in 1783 and did business as E. Dutilh & Co. until 1810, except from 1790 to 1797 when he partnered with John Godfried Wachsmuth and conducted the business as

Dutilh & Wachsmuth. He traded in commodities, including sugar, cotton, coffee and other items from Haiti.

The letter itself is in French (**Figure 3**):

Jérémie le 30 Decembre 1797

Monsieur,

J'ai à m'excuser avec vous de n'avoir pas jusques à present répondu à l'honneur de votre circulaire du 10 août dernier que neansmoins je n'avais pas perdu de vue. Croyés Monsieur qu'à l'occasion je me prévaudray de l'offre honnête que vous me faites de vos services et que je me trouveray flatté lorsque vous me fournirés l'occasion de vous être utile.

J'ai l'honneur d'être parfaitement, Monsieur votre très humble et obt. serv.

Bd. Castaing.

Roughly translated, it says:

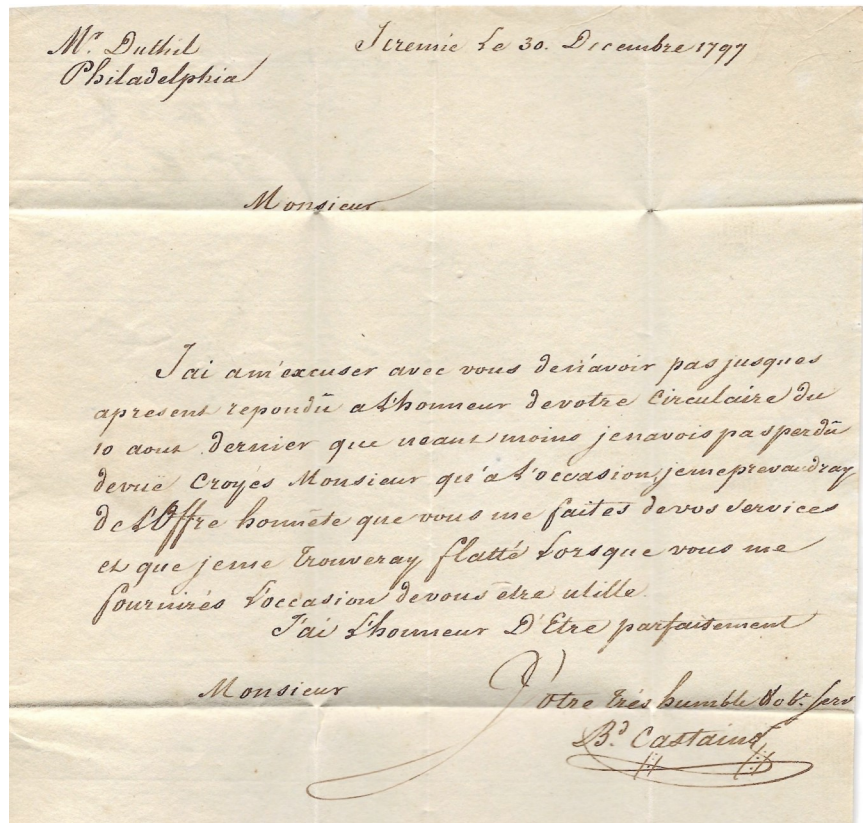
Jérémie, December 30, 1797

Sir,

I must apologize at not having until now responded to the offer in your circular of the tenth of last August, that I have nevertheless kept in mind. Believe, sir, that I will take advantage of the honest offer you made to me of your services, and that I will be honored when you allow me to be useful to you.

I have the honor, to be perfectly, sir, your very humble and obedient servant,

Bd. Castaing.



**Figure 3.** A letter written at the end of the 18th century and sent from a Bd. Castaing in Haiti to a businessman, Etienne Dutilh, in Philadelphia.

Without the offer as a guide, the acceptance is a bit ambiguous. If I were to speculate for a moment, it appears to me more likely that the Philadelphia merchant was looking for an agent in that part of what is now Haiti, rather than making a general offer to buy goods on stated terms.

In any case, after mulling it over for a few months, Mr. Castaing took him up on the offer. Little is known about Castaing, but a quick search showed an archive at the George Smathers Library at the University of Florida in Gainesville of legal papers from Jérémie, including a lease of a house by a Bernard Castaing in 1791. In any case, an interesting hint at the way remote merchants tried to get a foothold in their supply markets.

The last part of this letter's story came from looking into how it got from there to here. It is not known how much of the month between the date of the letter and sailing was taken up by the transit.

The first part of the journey is uncertain, as the origin town, Jérémie, and the departure port listed in the arrival notice in New York, Aux Cayes, are on opposite coasts of Haiti.

In any case, there was more than a month from writing to ultimate sailing to get there. From Aux Cayes, howev-

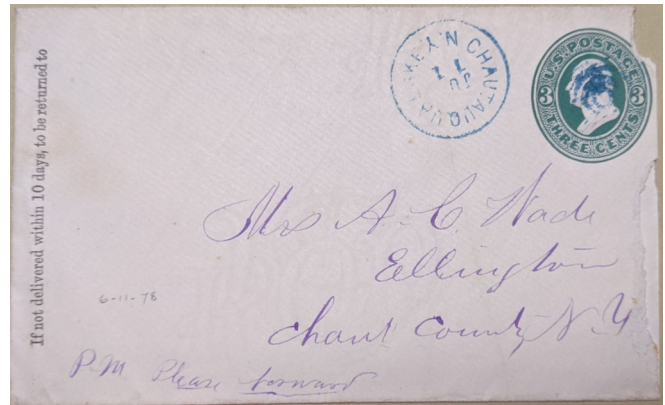
# Looking for Chautauqua Lake Postmark

By Bob Johnston

Chautauqua County is the western most county in the state, and Chautauqua Lake sits pretty much right in the center of it. My early collecting interests revolved around my hometown, Jamestown, which is at the southernmost tip of the lake, and things related to Chautauqua Lake.

When local postal history became of interest to me, I was excited to learn about things like early pioneer airmail aviator Albert J. Engel delivering mail by Curtis Hydro-Aeroplane to points around the lake, and his special handstamp on the six souvenir postcards he delivered. I also learned of the Chautauqua Lake, postmark.

The post office was established as Cowings in 1874, then changed to Chautauqua Lake in 1875, then finally



One of three examples of the Chautauqua, N.Y. postmarks that the author has seen in other collections. The owner dates it to June 11, 1878.

to Lakewood in 1880.

Over the years I have acquired some interesting Chautauqua County covers, including examples of the Engel airmails, and I have seen a few of the Chautauqua Lake postmarks, but if anyone has an example of the Chautauqua Lake postmark, or for that matter, a Cowings, available for sale, please contact me, Bob Johnston, [park2@netsync.net](mailto:park2@netsync.net).

ARRIVED,		DAYS
Ship Diana, White, Bourdeaux		43
Dolphin, Bartlett, Guadaloupe		20
North Friendship, Scult, Naples		125
Brig Swallow, Stoddard, Aux-Cayes		35
Daphne, Savage, Jacquemel		24
Ennice, ———, St. Jago de Cuba		—
Sloop Polly, Nichols, St. Thomas's		17
The Swallow failed in company with the fchr. Sunbury Packet, and parted with her at Cape-May—was boarded by two French privateers, one of which opened all her letters, and rummaged her fore and aft—The privateer's hold was filled with American seamen, in irons.		

Figure 4. The report of the Swallow, which arrived in Philadelphia after being boarded by French privateers.

er, it was carried by the brig Swallow, with Captain Stoddard, which left the island February 3, and arrived at New York on March 9 (Figure 4).

Along the way, the Swallow “was boarded by two French privateers, one of which had all letters opened and rummaged through the cargo.”

This part of the story involves a seldom explored chapter of American history, a Quasi-War with France. At the time, the also known as “The Undeclared War with France,” the “Pirate Wars,” and the “Half War.” A full discussion of this is well beyond the scope of this article.

France was, of course, our major ally during the Revolution, supplying aid of all sorts under a treaty of Alliance and Commerce of 1778.

After the Revolution, the rebuilding of our mercantile economy became an uneven process.

The British Caribbean islands, previously quite important to our trade, were not reopened for business by the 1783 treaty of Paris ending the Revolution, and required the Jay Treaty of 1794. The French, by this time had had a revolution of their own, were engaged in their own hostilities with Britain and thought trading with their enemy broke our deal with them.

The United States’ attempts to maintain neutrality proved unsuccessful. Beginning in 1796, French privateers began seizing U.S. merchant ships trading with Britain and its colonies. All this led the Adams administration to engage in a series of diplomatic events, the remobilization of the Navy and our first international conflict after the revolution.

This Quasi-War with France was the first time the U.S. Navy took part in operations in support of our trade abroad. It lasted until September 30, 1800.

When all told, it’s not a bad story for an unassuming folded letter: A probable earliest reported use of the clamshell, an interesting peek at a market building business plan for the post-Revolutionary economy and a transit interruption in an international conflict.

You never know what might come up with a little digging.



# 1869 Stamp Helps Tell Tale of Historic Institute

By William J. DeWitt

It is not a surprise that one of my first United States stamps in my collection is the ultramarine Locomotive from the 1869 pictorial series.

I say not a surprise since my career of 25 years started with railroads before I taught for 20 years in higher education. What was more of a surprise was to find the stamp on an envelope from the Hudson River Institute of Claverack in Columbia County.

First, let's look at the stamp. The stamp was printed by the National Bank Note Co. Its design is taken from the \$1 banknote of the North Western Bank, of Warren, Pennsylvania.

Not surprisingly, the bank – which lasted only from 1859 to 1862 – also received its banknotes from the National Bank Note Co.

The Hudson River Institute, also known as the Washington Seminary, was founded in 1777, led by an effort by its minister, known as Domine John Gabriel Gebhard. Gebhard was my fourth great-grandfather and the domine from 1776 to 1826 at the Claverack Dutch Reformed Church.

The church's main building was erected in 1779, right in the middle of the Revolutionary War, according to a 1909 historical novel by Elizabeth L. Gebhard (1859-1924). Elizabeth was my mother's aunt (my great-aunt) and John Gabriel's great-granddaughter. The domine is my fourth great-grandfather.

The novel contains the image of Claverack College



The Locomotive stamp in the 1869 U.S. pictorial series, Scott 114.

and Hudson River Institute; the outgrowth of the old Washington seminary.

"On September 13, 1783," wrote Elizabeth Gebhard, who is quoted throughout the rest of this article, "Domine Gebhard wrote his Excellency George Washington a letter, setting forth his ideas in regard to the new government about to be established, along the line of towns to States, and States to the Central Government, based on the government of the Netherlands. This letter General Washington acknowledged his usual courteous fashion ..."

At Claverack, "on the Livingston estate,



The \$1 North Western banknote, and a closeup of the locomotive shown on the bill, from National Bank Note Co.





A cover franked with a pair of 1869 Locomotive 3-cent stamps. The 3-cent stamp, engraved by Christian Rost, often paid the first-class half-ounce domestic rate. The cover likely was overweight, *thus* had double the normal first-class postage.

were docks, and not far away from the lower Van Rensselaer Manor was Claverack Landing, where, when the Hudson was open, sloops came laden on their outward trips with salted meat, grain, peltries and lumber, and returning, brought cargoes of household necessities not procurable nearer home.”

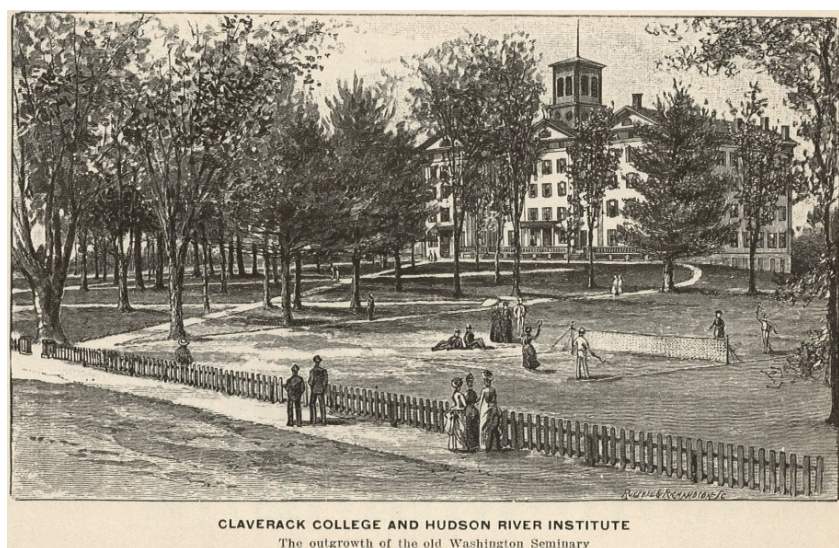
The parsonage was a regular stopping point for John Jacob Astor, “a young German from Waldorf in the Duchy of Baden, the hometown of Domine Gebhard. ...”

Astor became a wealthy businessman, merchant, real estate mogul, and investor according to his Wikipedia entry. He made his fortune mainly in a fur trade monopoly and by investing in real estate in or around New York City. He was the first prominent member of the Astor family and the first multi-millionaire in the United States. Elizabeth Gebhard also wrote “The Life and Ventures of the Original John Jacon Astor” (1915).

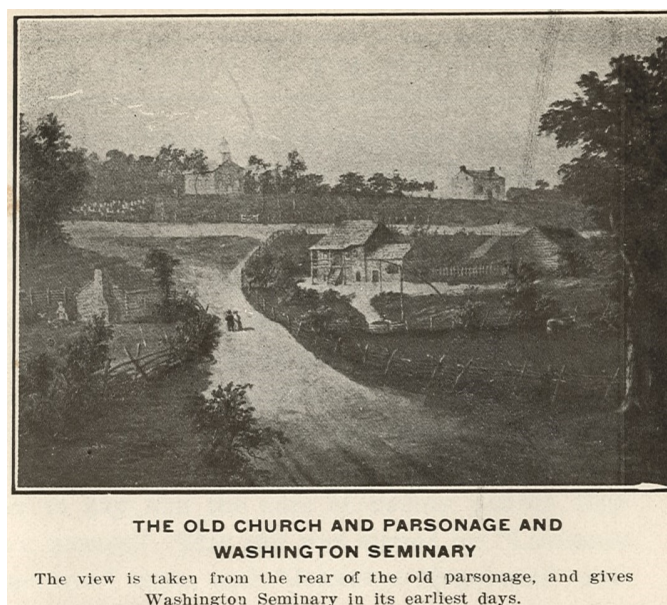
Another famous visitor was Alexander Hamilton.

“Ministers’ salaries of those

CLAVERACK, PAGE 8



An etching of Claverack College and Hudson River Institute found in Elizabeth Gebhard’s book. Below, a view of from the Washington Seminary’s earliest days.





## Stamp Shows of Note

(Courtesy American Philatelic Society)

### Pennsylvania May 4

NEPA Stamp & Collectable Show, St. Peter and Paul Church, Bernardine Hall, 13 Hudson Road, Plains.

**Contact:** Ward Wilcox

**Email:** wardw911@gmail.com

### Ottawa, Ontario, Can. May 4-5

ORAPEX, Ottawa Philatelic Society, Nepean Sportsplex, 1701 Woodroffe Ave.

**Email:** info@orapex.ca

**Website:** <https://www.orapex.ca/>

### Ontario, Canada May 10-11

Hamilton Springpex 2024, Hamilton Stamp Club, Bishop Ryan High School, 1824 Rymal Road East, Hamilton, Ontario.

**Website:** <https://hamiltonstampclub.ca/>

### New Jersey May 18

Burlington Masons Lodge Stamp Show, Merchantville Stamp Club, Burlington Lodge 32 F&AM, 2308 Burlington-Mt. Holly Road, Burlington.

**Contact:** Ryan Terlecky

**Email:** rterlecky@hotmail.com

**Web:** [www.merchantvillestampclub.org/](http://www.merchantvillestampclub.org/)

### New Jersey June 15

Burlington Masons Lodge Stamp Show, Merchantville Stamp Club, Burlington Lodge 32 F&AM, 2308 Burlington-Mt. Holly Road, Burlington.

**Contact:** Ryan Terlecky

**Web:** [www.merchantvillestampclub.org/](http://www.merchantvillestampclub.org/)

### Pennsylvania June 16

K2 Lancaster Stamp Show, K2 Stamps, Farm and Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Road, Lancaster.

**Contact:** Kevin Kellman

**Email:** k2stamps@gmail.com

**Website:** <https://k2stamps.wixsite.com/k2collectiblestamps/schedule>

### Pennsylvania June 22-23

SCOPEX 2024, Mount Nittany Philatelic Society, American Philatelic Center, 100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte.

**Email:** dheller5720@yahoo.com

### New York July 13

Big Flats Stamp and Coin Show, Big Flats Coin Club and Mr. Stampman, American Legion Post, 45 S. Olcott Rd., Big Flats.

**Contact:** Wayne Nyre

**Email:** mrstampman14891@yahoo.com

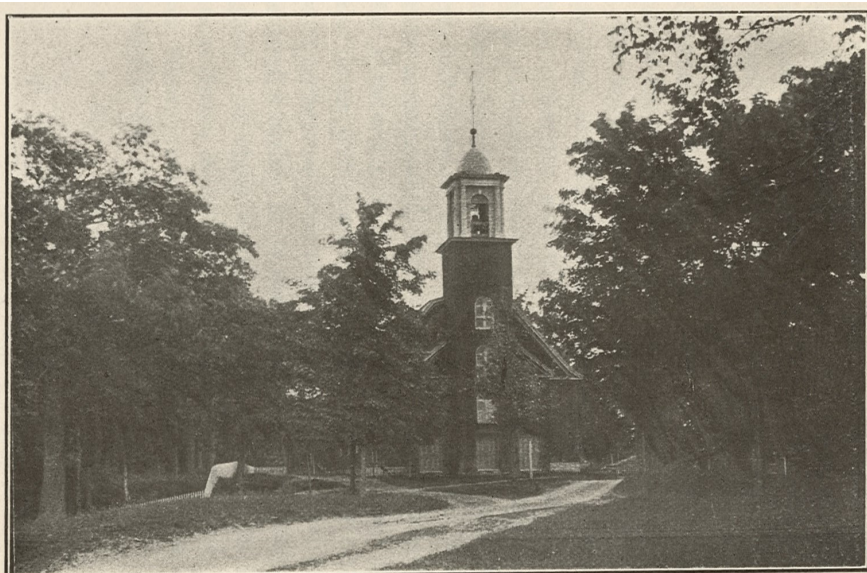
### New York August 24

August Stamp Fair 2024, Buffalo Stamp Club, The Knights Events Center, 2735 Union Road, Cheektowaga.

**Contact:** Alan Davis

**Email:** ddavis504@roadrunner.com

**Website:** [www.buffalostampclub.org](http://www.buffalostampclub.org)



THE CLAVERACK CHURCH

**The Reformed Dutch Claverack Church was dedicated November 8, 1767. It still stands today to serve its denomination.**

### CLAVERACK, FROM PAGE 7

days were not large, and the salary of the domine/minister of the Claverack church never exceeded 100 to 150 pounds a year, but with the aid of a small patrimony and the assistance of a most capable wife, Domine Gebhard was enabled to give seven sons a classical and professional education.”

The Claverack Church still stands today. “The Hudson River Institute, after many name changes, closed in 1902. Over the years, it had many prominent alumni including Steven Crane, author of “The Red Badge of Courage,” as well as Martin Van Buren, the United States’ eighth president.”

I am thrilled to tell the story that links one of my favorite stamps with this cover from a historic and family institution.

### The Author

The author had a long career working for railroads, starting in 1966 by repairing freight cars for the Chicago South Shore and South Bend Railroad, followed by the Penn Central Railroad and Burlington Northern Railroad, where he

worked for 23 years in operations, strategic planning, marketing and sales. He was president at Winona Bridge Railway. DeWitt received his doctorate at the University of Tennessee (1995-2000) and went on to teach and be administrator at the University of Maryland, Maine Merchant Marine Academy, and the University of Denver.

### Resources

“The Parsonage Between Two Manors: Annals of Clover-Reach” (1909; Third Edition 1925), by Elizabeth L. Gebhard, The Hudson Press, Hudson, N.Y.

Sales of banknotes from North Western Bank, Heritage Auctions (<https://currency.ha.com/itm/obsoletes-by-state/pennsylvania/warren-pa-north-western-bank-1-2-5-1861-as-g2b-g4b-g8a-fine-fine-pcgs-very-fine-30-total-3-notes-/a/241621-86098.s>).

“Pictorial Issues: 1869-1870, National Postal Museum (<https://postalmuseum.si.edu/exhibition/about-us-stamps-classic-period-1847-1893-national-bank-note-company-1861-1872/pictorial>).

“Claverack College & Hudson River Institute,” New York Heritage Digital Collections (<https://nyheritage.org/collections/claverack-college-hudson-river-institute>).





The front and back of a transatlantic stampless folded letter sent in 1841 from New Orleans to France via New York City.

## Louisiana to France: A 6-week journey

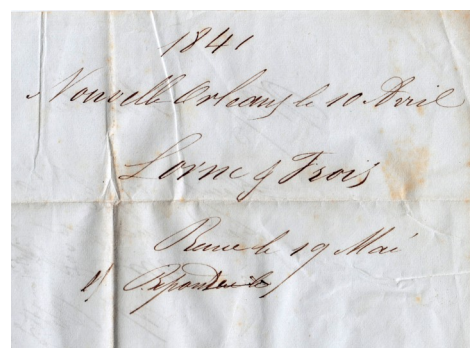
By Charles J. DiComo, PhD

Here is the story behind a transatlantic stampless folded letter with contents in French that passed through New York City harbor.

The letter was written April 10, 1841 and was sent from Lorne & Frois, 21 Chartres St., Importers & Wholesale Merchants, New Orleans, Louisiana. It is addressed a business in Le Havre, France, a port city in Normandy.

The folded lettersheet entered the mail at New Orleans, where the clerk added a blue 30-millimeter circular postal marking reading “NEW ORLEANS APR 10 La.”

There is a red, 21-by-4 millimeter “PAID” handstamp, a “50” in pencil and a duplicate “50” in blue ink. This indicates a prepayment for more than 400 miles at the inland rate of 25 cents applied for double-weight).



The writer added in cursive “via N. York” at lower left and “Packet of 24th April” at top.

Once the letter was received at New York City, the clerk applied a red “NEW-YORK APL 20” circular datestamp (note that “APL” stands for April instead of the usual “APR”).

The letter was placed in a mail bag and carried by the New York & Havre Line sailing packet Rhone, with Captain Wotten at the helm. The ship was scheduled to depart New York on April 24, but was detained three days awaiting favorable weather to sail, and departed on April 27. This line also was known as the Union Line of Havre Packets.

The transatlantic journey took about 21 days to Havre, where the French clerk added an orange-red double-circle, “OUTREMER LE HAVRE 19 MAI 41” entry marking and black “2” (decimes), which was to be paid by the recipient.

The folder lettersheet is addressed to Messieurs Porteu-Albert, Marine Insurance Co. in Havre.



An etching of the commercial harbor at Le Havre, France, from Joseph Morlent’s “Album of the trip to Le Havre and the Surrounding Area” (1841).

# Ben Franklin

## A Postal Procedure Innovator

By Robert Bramwell

Benjamin Franklin lived a life of many challenges and important accomplishments. I intend this article to draw on a particular accomplishment of Benjamin Franklin when from 1737 to 1753 he became postmaster of Philadelphia in the Province of Pennsylvania. His decision left a 100-year contribution to the record of North American postal service.

The accomplishment?

Franklin invented what was then known as the List of Letters Remaining. The digital existence of these records is appreciated by postal historians as they search the early newspapers just as I have done. But we must go back in time for the narrative to gel.

When King Charles I of England, Scotland and Ireland, opened his personal messenger service to the commoners of his realm in 1635, messages were carried by foot or horse to recipients, all of whom were expected to pay the king's expenses while nothing was demanded from the senders.

This also was the origin of determining "postage"

by the number of letter sheets and the distance carried.

One hundred years later, we find young Benjamin Franklin with a printer's shop in Philadelphia, a successful newspaper published as *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. Franklin – who in 1775 became the nation's postmaster general – was first tasked with postal duties in 1737.

Col. Alexander Spotswood was postmaster general for British North America. Spotswood was at the end of his rope with the poor financial performance of the Philadelphia Post Office.

Knowing that the majority of newspaper publishers find notable business benefits from accepting the added task of running a post office, Spotswood asked Franklin, then 31, to become postmaster at the Philadelphia Post Office. It could be lucrative as in those times the postmaster was paid a portion of the postage collected from recipients of incoming mail. Franklin accepted the offer in September 1737.

Being a careful fellow, Benjamin absorbed the ex-



The historic B. Free Franklin Post Office in Philadelphia (Source: National Parks Service). At top, the Franklin Postmaster U.S. commemorative stamp of 2006 (Scott 4024).



**LIST of LETTERS**  
Which have been brought into the Post-Office at Philadelphia, since the 29th of September, 1737, and remain yet unredem'd.

Note, *pen.* stands for Pennsylvania, *phi.* for Philadelphia, *bu.* for Bucks, *ch.* for Chester, *lan.* for Lancaster, and *co.* for County.

**A.**  
Rev. Francis Allison, at New London, *pen.*  
John Adams, in Haverham Township.  
William Abernethy, in Northampton, *bu. co.*  
Faith Attwood, *phi.*  
John Adams, *bu. co.*

**B.**  
Richard Bollans, Mate of the Amity, *phi.*  
William Boucher, Shipmaster, *phi.*  
John Burgefs, *phi.*  
Lewis Banfield, Commander of the Jenny Snow.  
William Bunn, *phi.*  
Richard Bourk, to the Care of John Emerson, *phi.*  
Robert Biggs to the Care of Margaret Chambers.  
Robert Barnett, of Salisbury, *lan. co.*  
James Brown, Hatter, *ch. co.*  
Polly Blunder, at William Moor's, Wapping, near *phi.*  
John Braynon, living with Joseph Cooper, *Jerseys.*  
Robert Brown, Mate of Capt. Richmond.  
Joseph Brockenridge, in *pen.*  
James Baker in *phi.*  
Grace Barfons, *ditto.*  
William Barlow, *ditto.*

**C.**  
Samuel Cotton, Esq; Cohasset.  
James Car, Porter, *phi.*  
John Cadwell, at John Holland's, *phi.*  
Catherine Cullen, 8 miles from *phi.*  
John Cleland, to the Care of the Rev. Mr. Tenant.  
William Collins, to the Care of Francis Knowles.  
John Couper, to the Care of John Carr, *phi.*  
William Cox, Merchant, North-East.  
Rev. Hugh Carlile, Newswriter.

**D.**  
William Dorathy, *ditto.* [two Letters.]  
Isaac Donaldson, at *phi.*  
Ambrose Davis, with Robert Miller, at Caln, *ch. co.*  
Elizabeth Davis, at Northampton, *bu. co.* [two Letters.]  
Elizabeth Derkinderen, at Mr. Peter Baynton's, *phi.*  
William Dobbs, with Moses Coats, *ch. co.*  
Roger Dyer at Leacock, *pen.*  
James Davis, at Adamgentry Township.  
Sarah Deamon.

**E.**  
William Ellis, Rope-maker, *phi.*  
Daniel Elmer, at Cohasset.  
Mary Eslik, in waterstreet, *phi.*  
William Emerson, to the Care of John Lewis, *phi.*  
Robert Eustace, Blockmaker, *phi.*  
John Edwards, of Shipston near *phi.*

**F.**  
Capt. James Finney, of the charming Molly, *phi.*  
Terence Fitzpatrick, *phi.*  
William Flitt, in West-Jersey, Gloucester co.  
William Fullerton, *Penn.*, to the Care of Adam Boyd, Minister.  
David Foster, Donnegall, *lan. co.*  
David Falconer, *phi.*

**G.**  
-----Garret, in-the-heaven, Shipback-Road.  
Peter Garcelon, *phi.*  
Jane Gibbens, in Westtown.  
Robert Gregory, *phi.*  
Archibald Graham, hatmaker, *phi.*  
Joanna Gilbard, at John Carrel's, *phi.*

**H.**  
William Hudson, in Piscataway near *phi.*  
William Homes, near *phi.*  
Patrick Hanlon, Merchant, *phi.*  
Thomas Harrup, an English Sawyer, *phi.*  
James Hawthorn of Cape-May near Egg Harbor.  
Mrs. Heir, Shopkeeper, *phi.*

Henrick Henock, *phi.*  
Samuel Hall, mariner in Chestnut-street, *phi.*  
Christel Hock, duitsche Kledemaker, tot *phi.*  
William Herinton, in West-Jersey.  
James Hughes, at Ikewater, to the Care of Mr. Craghead.  
Peter Aris Hongkinton, *phi.*  
John Huiley, Merchant, *phi.* [two Letters.]  
Abraham Hayter, near Buckingham Meeting-House.  
John Harrison, near *phi.*  
Robert Husbands, at Samuel Halls, Bricklayer, *phi.*  
John Holder, directed to be left at the post-office, *phi.*  
Joseph Houey, to the Care of John Cross, *phi.*

**I.**  
Elizabeth Jollins, to be left at Widow Fisher's, *phi.*  
Matthew Johnson, Derry-township.  
William Johnson, on board the Charming Molly.  
Mary Idmell, living with Thomas Small, Gunsmith, *phi.*  
James Jobe, with Alexander Moore, *phi.*  
John Jamison, at Milford, *lan. co.*  
Thomas Jones, Abington, *phi. co.*  
William Jones, Carpenter, in Charlestown near Skaykill.  
Joseph Johnson, directed to be left at the post-office, *phi.*  
Hugh Jones, Tanner, North-Wales.  
John Jackson, Frontstreet, *phi.*

**K.**  
David Kennedy and James Cockran, at Fog's Manor, *pen.*  
James Kilpatrick, Othorava.

**L.**  
James Leard, Taylor, for Thomas Gray, near *phi.* [two Letters.]  
John Lewis, Surgeon.  
John Lawrence near the Marker, *phi.*  
Cornick Larkin, in Donnegall.  
Michael Leger, near *phi.*  
John Letter, in *bu. co.*  
Thomas Lancafter, Carpenter, in *phi.*

**M.**  
William Mitchell, to the Care of Mr. Anderson, Donnegall.  
James Mitchell, Donnegall.  
John Miller, in Hopkings, *pen.*  
John Mauer, *phi.*  
William Miller, near Newgarden, in *ch. co.*  
Thomas Montgomery, *phi.*  
Neal M'Neal, *phi.*  
Neal M'Guigan, Taylor, *phi.*  
Jane M'Cay, *pen.*  
William M'craight, to the Care of Samuel Rees, *pen.*  
James M'Duff, *ditto.*  
John M'Cord, in Othorava, *lan. co.*  
Marcha M'Gee, *pen.*  
Hugh M'Caddan, Donnegall.  
John M'Ree, *lan. co.*  
John M'Morey, near *phi.*  
Joseph M'Lean, *bu. co.*  
William Miller, New-Garden, *ch. co.*  
James Madden, in Mutton Lane.  
Thomas Morris, to be left with Henry Pawling in New-  
Providence, *phi. co.*  
Robert Manwaring, at Joseph Large's in Buckingham.  
Moses May, Westtown, to the Care of Mr. Baker.  
Alexander Mears, Upper Dublin.

**N.**  
Benjamin Pearson, at Dabry, *pen.*  
Capt. Samuel Parfous, *phi.*  
Thomas Pope, *phi.*  
James Ponge, near *phi.*  
John Poultney, living with Henry Shepherd, *phi.*  
Elizabeth Port, *pen.*  
Captain Charles Palmer, *phi.*

**O.**  
William Qwen, to the Care of George Walters, *phi.*

**R.**  
William Readet, to be left at Cornelius Empson's, *phi.* 2  
Isaac Roberts, *phi.* [two Letters.]  
Andrew Rogers, near *phi.*  
Alexander Rickey, *bu. co.*  
Dick Rush, *phi.*  
John Ross, Fog's Manor, *pen.*  
John Rea, near Thunder Hill, *pen.*  
John Rickey.

**S.**  
George Siddal, on board the Carolina-Merchant.  
Capt. Alexander Smith, *phi.*  
William Sathlor, *phi.*

Capt. Andrew Sym, *phi.*  
His Highness Prince Schidt.  
Daniel Sigourney, *phi.*  
Andrew Scot, near *phi.*  
Peter Simpson, at Ralph Perkenfon's, *phi.*  
Eleanor Storey, at Katey Davis's, *phi.*  
James Scores, at Milford, *bu. co.*  
William Sawyer, at Mrs. Campton's, *phi.*  
Henry Sloane or Elizabeth Wylie, to the Care of Rev.  
Mr. Tennent.  
Eleanor Sharples, *phi.*  
John Smith, near Tho. Williams, Tanner, North-Wales.  
Thomas Smith, to the Care of Mr. James, *phi.*  
George Spencer, Merchant, *phi.*

**T.**  
John Turner, Carpenter, on board the Mary.  
Arthur Tough, *phi.*  
John Thomas, *phi.*  
Ann Topp, Walnut-Street, *phi.*  
Richard Tilly, Shoemaker, *phi.* [two Letters.]  
William Thompson, at Society-Hill, *phi.*

**V.**  
John Vincent, at Byberry, *pen.*  
John Valentine, Merchant, *phi.*  
Isaac Vanderpoole, in *phi.*

**W.**  
Richard Wood, *phi.* near Shamney.  
Jonathan Wright, Carpenter, *pen.* [two Letters.]  
Richard Williams, *phi.*  
James Williams, to the Care of James Elder, *phi.*  
James Williamson, *pen.*  
James Wilson, Merchant, in America.  
William Walter, to the Care of Capt. James Foster, *phi.*  
William Wight, at David Wilson's Shamney, *bu. co.*

Figure 1. The first-ever published List of Letters Remaining came off the press on March 21, 1738 in The Pennsylvania Gazette. Issue No. 484 of the newspaper for the week March 14 to March 21, 1738 required the equivalent of one full page to show the complete List of Letters Remaining accumulated from September 29, 1737 to the date this issue was composed. The list contained 168 addressee names and a total of 175 unclaimed letters.

isting Queen Anne's postal law. Noticing the manner in which legal and financial responsibility was vested by Section 31 of the Queen's 1710 law (See box, next page) for each addressee of a letter arriving at a post office, Franklin almost immediately developed the idea of advertising in his newspaper the existence of letters that had not been claimed (or rejected without opening) within a few months' time.

The design of what Benjamin Franklin identified as the List of Letters Remaining at the Philadelphia Post Office was both simple and complex. Why was that?

First, every letter bore an addressee's name and the place where that person was thought to live or where a business would be found. Complexity sprang

# LIST of LETTERS Which have been brought into the Post- Office at Philadelphia since the 21st. of March last, and remain unredeem'd.

Note, *pen* stands for Pennsylvania, *phi.* for Philadelphia, *bu.* for Bucks, *ch.* for Chester, *lan.* for Lancaster, and *cc.* for County.

**A.**  
Thomas Anderson, to the Care of Peter Hunt, *phi.*

**B.**  
Samuel Baggs, near Hatterfield.  
Thomas Brantfield, in Amity Township.  
Jonathan Brett, *phi.*

**C.**  
Richard Caswood, Wrights-Town.  
Andrew Cook, to the Care of Timothy Greer.  
John Carey, in Plumstead Township.  
Daniel Callagane, Drawer, *phi.*  
John Carter.  
Aaron Clayton, Allens-Town.  
Daniel Clark, Amorus Creek.

**D.**  
Joseph Latite, to the care of Henry Hayes, *ch. cc.*

**E.**  
Thomas Edwards, Esq; *lan. cc.*  
John Evans, North-Wales.  
Simon Eaton, Clothier, *phi.*

**R.**

**F.**  
Anthony Fryer, to the care of Tho. Hooton, Esq; *lan. cc.*  
Robert Fox, Falls Township, *bu. co.*  
Joseph Fisher, Darby.  
Thomas Parkinson, French Creek.  
William Frazer, Goldsmith, *phi.*

**G.**  
Nicholas or Leonard Gibbon, at Greenwich. [two Letters]  
Mary Glading.  
John Gerritt, School-master, *ch. co.*  
Timothy Greer, *phi.*

**H.**  
Joseph Howley, *pen.*  
Nicholas Heely, at John M'Collow's, *pen.*  
Thomas Hodge, Hopewell, *phi.*  
John Henderson, at New-London, near Whiteley Creek.  
Thomas Hall, Blackley, *pen.*

**I.**  
Joseph Johnson, *phi.*  
William Jackson, Merchant, *phi.*  
John Johnson, near *phi.*

**K.**  
Edward Kinson, *ch. co.*  
Charles King, at John Holliday's, near Duck Creek.  
Dennis Keef, to the care of Capt. Edgar.

**L.**  
John Lovelace, with Joseph Wader, in Falls Township  
Samuel Lewis, at Springfield.  
John Langtry, Merchant, *phi.*  
Bryan Leyly, to the care of Simon Hadley.  
Capt. Edward Lighthwood.  
Abraham Lee.

**M.**  
Joshua Minshall, *ch. co.*  
George Moore, Marlborough, *ch. co.*  
William Moore, Christine Creeks  
John Morgan, Radnor.

**P.**  
Thomas Piles, Water-Street, *phi.*  
Henry Pamel, Wine-Cooper, *phi.*  
Thomas Potts, Butcher, Germantown.  
Rebecca Prannington, Walnut-Street, *phi.*  
Francis Pearson, Eastown, *ch. co.*  
Samuel Pewel, Bristol Township.

**Q.**  
Robert Queate, *phi.*

**R.**  
Patrick Reynolds, Mount-Holly.  
John Rathmell, Buckingham.  
Mary Ryan, to the care of Juddy Fitzgerald.  
Timothy Ryan, Merchant, *phi.*

**S.**  
Henry Shephard, Bricklayer, *phi.*  
John Smith, to be left at the Post-Office.  
William Smith, Ditto.  
John Sketchley, at Ridley, *ch. co.*  
James Stendman, at John Haines, Gofsen.  
James Stewart, Marpleton, *pen.*  
Abraham Scott, at Rochort, *bu. co.*  
John Smith, at Joseph Lynn's, *phi.*  
George Strick, at Pennyback.  
John Stack, *phi.*

**T.**  
Thomas Turner, at Samuel Lane's in Providence, *pen.*  
Samuel Taintelman, French Creek.  
Thomas Tibbiry, at Hugh Evans's, Merion.  
Sarah Taylor to the Care of Joseph Miller, *ch. co.*  
John Thomson, Preacher, to the Care of William M'Culloch.  
Thomas Tincwood, at the Blackmore's Head, *phi.*

**W.**  
John Wilson, Birmingham, *ch. co.* to the Care of Tho. Williams.  
George Williams, in Shrewsbury, New-Jersey.  
Christopher Witt, Germantown.  
Henry Warr, *phi.*

**Y.**  
Robert Tatts, Newtown, *lan. co.*

## Queen's 1710 Law Section XXXI

Whereas many Persons having received their Letters refuse to pay for the same or often run in Debt for the Postage of their Letters, or having received some small Sum for the Port of Letters which Sums being very small in Particulars are properly to be recovered in a summary Way.

Be it therefore enacted by the Authority aforesaid That all Sum and Sums of Money not exceeding Five Pounds that now is or shall be due from any Person or Persons for Letters or Packets or any Letter or Packet to them delivered by any Deputy or Deputies of such Postmaster General or which now is or shall be due from any Person or Persons for the Port of Letters or Packets to them delivered by any Deputy or Agent of such Postmaster-General not exceeding the said Value or which have been or shall be received for the Port of Letters not exceeding the same Value without answering or paying the Moneys so due and owing to the Receiver General of the said Revenues for Her Majesties Use shall be recovered before Justices of the Peace in the same Manner and under the same Rules as Small Tythes are by the Laws of England to be recovered and such Debt or Sums of Money shall be preferable in Payment by the Person owing the same or from whose Estate the same is or shall be due before any Debt of any sort to any private Person whomsoever.

Figure 2. Issue 491 of the Gazette for the week May 4 to May 11, 1738 covered 51 days of accumulation of unclaimed mail at the Philadelphia Post Office. Seventy-seven letters remained.



# LIST of LETTERS

Which have been brought into the Post-Office at Philadelphia, since the 11th of May past, and remain unredeem'd.

*Note, pen. stands for Pennsylvania, phi. for Philadelphia, bu. for Bucks, ch. for Chester, and co. for County.*

**A.**  
Walter Adams, Frankford.  
Capt. Richard Anthony, phi.  
Thomas Ash, phi.  
Edward Annely, phi.  
Nicholas Aston, Abington.  
Anne Archibald.

**B.**  
Matthew Boucher, ch. co. 2 Letters.  
Daniel Boreman, at Jonathan Fisher's, phi.  
Evan Bevan, Merchant, phi.  
James Brown, near Abington Meeting-House.  
William Beale, Whiteland-township, ch. co.  
Thomas Blackley, Mariner, phi.  
Christopher Burn, bu. co.  
Patrick Burn, Springfield Manor.  
Stephen Boyer, at Perkiomany, phi. co.  
James Boyer, to the care of Widow Sprague.

**C.**  
Andrew Campbell, near phi.  
John Caucell, near phi.  
Samuel Cary, Merchant, Newtown, bu. co.  
William Cox, to the care of Capt. Annis.  
Frank Carver, to the care of Mr. Gieaten.  
Henry Craly, phi.  
Jonathan Carlue, Plumsted Township.  
Catherine Clemens, at Joseph Kirkbride's.  
William Campbell, Mariner, to the care of George Gray.  
Catherine Carroll.

**D.**  
John Day, Burninham, ch. co. 2 Letters.  
Thomas Dell, Ridley, ch. co.  
William Dwarryhouse, phi.  
William Dobbs, Charlestown, ch. co.  
Michael Deal, Springfield Manor.  
Charles Dixon, at Mr. Mather's, phi.  
John Dean, near phi.  
John Denmark, phi.  
Robert Davis, phi.  
Thomas Downing, Willingtstown.  
Daniel Dawson, phi.  
John Doogan, Shipwright.

**E.**  
Poole Edwards, pen.  
Ann Eyre, to the care of Mr. Henry Dixon, phi.

**F.**  
William Fillpot, Newtown, bu. co.  
John Flower, at William Robinson's, pen.

**G.**  
John Gleave, Springfield, ch. co.  
Thomas Griston, phi.  
Mrs. Betty Grow, phi.  
Thomas Green, pen.  
John Gallagher, phi.

**H.**  
Simon Hamton, ch. co.  
Benj. Hewit, Commander of the Three Sisters. 2 Letters.  
Thomas Hutchinson, at Lancelot Martin's.  
Timothy Hanson, Esq; Kent County.  
John Hart, in Warrminster, bu. co.

**I.**  
Job Ingraham, phi.

**L.**  
Alexander Lang, at Newport, pen.  
David Lewellyn, Harford, near phi.  
Widow Leafsty, near Wilby Creek, pen.  
John Lawrence, Hopewell Township, Cony-cut-chegg.  
Abraham Lee, living with Henry Williamson, Rope-maker.  
Samuel Lilly, Goshen, ch. co.  
Landlady at the Queen's-Head, in Lord-Street.  
Rev. John Lindsey, Minister, pen.

## LETTERS, FROM PAGE 11

from the penmanship of the sender and frequent lack of knowledge as to the full name of the recipient and the names of cities, towns and villages in distant places.

The lack of coordination among the emerging colonial post offices meant that letters originating from one colony would easily be carried to the largest, or only, post office in another colony.

So, Postmaster Franklin had the task of learning what he could about the population of the city of Philadelphia and also every town, village and farm within 50 miles.

Given these challenges, let's look at the circumstances that he faced.

In March 1738, Benjamin counted 175 unclaimed letters addressed to what appeared to him as 168 different people at locations he could recognize as places close enough to Philadelphia to be within the distribution of the Gazette. It was the first attempt to show people that there were letters at a local post office and that a letter for them might be sitting and they should come check it out.

Fortunately, Franklin had set type for newspapers since about age 15 so he went at it with that

**M.**  
Abraham Musgrave, Haverford, ch. co.  
John Morrison, next the Bull's-Head Alehouse, pen.  
Benjamin Mendinghall, Concord, ch. co.  
Sarah Mays, to the care of Hugh Knight.  
Michael McGuire, at John Kennels.  
David Marshall, Duck-Creek.

**N.**  
Richard Newman, Northampton, New-Jersey.

**P.**  
Rev. Mr. Pugh, Apoquinimink.  
Martha Parker, Darby.  
John Parker, Birmingham, ch. co.  
John Pison, Jersey.  
John Palmrose, Kennet, ch. co.  
William Peterson, Racoon Creek, Gloucester County.  
Hannah Perkins, phi. or Brunswick.

**R.**  
Andrew R. . . . . at Samuel Greave's, at the Center Meeting-House, near phi.

**S.**  
Mr. Ross, Peruke-maker.  
William Robinson, at Mount Pleasant, near phi.  
Nicholas Ridgely, Salem, West-Jersey.  
Capt Joseph Richardson, phi.

**T.**  
William Satterthwaite, Bucks County.  
John Smith, to the care of R. Stephens, Newtown, near Gloucester.  
Hester Sockerman, at Nicholas Sockerman's, Kent County.  
Charles Shepherd, at Cornelius Hooper's, phi.  
William Seymour, at John Taylor's, Thorsbury.  
Ralph Smith, phi.  
Thomas Smith, Nottingham.

**U.**  
Thomas Taylor, Middletown, ch. co.  
John Tatum, Northingham, West-Jersey.  
Charles Telford, to be left at Thomas Carrel's, Mafin.  
John Tanner, at Mary Stockdale's, phi.  
Robert Thomas, Montgomery Township.

**V.**  
William Wright, to the care of Christopher Bryant.  
Joseph Williams, Miller, Merion.  
Matthew Wolington, to be left with James Miller, N-Garden.  
Phillip or Robert Wallis, New-Jersey.  
William Wilson, to the care of William Todd, Whitmarsh.  
Caleb Wheeler, to the care of Capt. Brown.  
Thomas Willmott, Monmouth County, New-Jersey.

pile of letters sorted alphabetically and made it read as best he could. Thus, the first-ever published List of Letters Remaining came off the press on March 21, 1738 as content of Issue 484 of The Pennsylvania Gazette, as shown assembled in Figure 1.

## LETTERS, PAGE 14

Figure 3. Issue No. 501 of the Gazette for the week July 13 to July 20, 1738 covered 70 days of accumulation of unclaimed mail at the Philadelphia Post Office. There were 102 letters remained for 99 named recipients.

A List of L E T T E R S in the Post Office in Third-street, Philadelphia (not before advertised.)

<b>A</b>		<b>K</b>	
<b>G</b> George Adams, N. Castle Co.	James Knox,	Perch-Bar.	
Joseph Aney,	Phil. Edward Kerr,	Phil.	
John Adams,	ditto.	I.	
<b>B</b>		<b>M</b>	
Edward Ball,	ditto.	David Leesholts,	ditto.
Capt. George Briggs,	ditto.	Hezekiah Lapineut,	ditto.
John Brown,	ditto.	Sarah Levington,	Perquo.
Daniel Bennett,	ditto.	James Love,	Chest. Co.
Moses Brinton,	Lan. Co.	Thomas Line,	ditto.
James Brice,	ditto.	John Melley,	ditto.
John Bailey,	Haddorf Id.	James M'Farland,	Forst. Br.
<b>C</b>		John Maxwell,	Phil.
Caleb Cowpland, jun.	Capt.	Morgan Morgans,	ditto.
John Collins,	Glen. Co.	Walton Marth,	
John Campbell,	Copper Minn.	Nathaniel Matthews,	
John Collins,	Buckr.	Griffith Minthall,	Wilmington.
John Cooper,	Phil.	<b>N</b>	
Sufannah Copp,	ditto.	John Nicholson,	Blackley.
William Conquerood,	ditto.	Ebenezer Northy,	Pennsylv.
<b>D</b>		Mary Neilon,	Phil.
Sarah Dordington,	ditto.	<b>P</b>	
Duncan Drummond,	Whit. Cr.	Adam and Deacon Paine,	ditto.
Thomas Dunning, 2,	Buckr.	James Parkinton,	ditto.
<b>E</b>		<b>R</b>	
Sufannah Edwards,	ditto.	William Righ,	ditto.
<b>F</b>		<b>S</b>	
Richard Foster,	Phil.	Richard Smith,	ditto.
Jean Fortescue,	ditto.	John Smith,	ditto.
Mary Finch,	Lan.	Capt. Salter,	ditto.
<b>G</b>		Alexander Stater,	ditto.
Peter Ganthony,	Phil.	John Shannon,	ditto.
<b>H</b>		Jacob Spicer,	Cape May.
Robert Hinshelwood,	ditto.	John Stapler,	Wilmington.
William Hazelton, 2,	ditto.	Thomas St. Greaves,	Chest. Co.
Mrs. Hanerwood,	Derby.	Richard Sanderson,	ditto.
Edward Howell,	West. Traff.	<b>T</b>	
John Hughson,	Buckr.	Mr. Troot,	ditto.
<b>J</b>		<b>W</b>	
Michael Jeffery,	Phil.	George Webb, and Son,	Phil.
John Jerman,	Radnor.	<b>Y</b>	
William Jeffery,	Wilmington.	Robert Young, 2,	ditto.

Figure 4. Issue No. 1324 of the Gazette dated May 9, 1754 covered and indeterminable number of days of accumulation of unclaimed mail at the Philadelphia Post Office, now relocated to Third Street. There were 68 letters remained for 65 named recipients.

#### LETTERS, FROM PAGE 13

Shown on these pages are some more Lists of Letters Remaining.

Going back to how this all started, Deputy Postmaster General Alexander Spotswood knew he wanted a change at the Philadelphia Post Office in 1737, he knew he wanted his friend, Benjamin Franklin, who owned the influential Pennsylvania Gazette, to improve post office profitability.

Franklin knew that incoming mail not being picked up by an addressee was a waste (time spent dealing with the letters; storage, etc.) and exposed that person to forfeit unpaid postage in court under British law.

Franklin knew the profit impact of advertisements in his newspaper, so he decided to try attracting unclaimed letters with every trick he could think of: ad-

vertise the recipient's name and address as given by the writers on each piece, place the advertisement in prominent locations in the newspaper, use eye-catching type fonts and use a catchy title for the advertisement.

Seeing that many letters arriving at the post office in Philadelphia contained not only the recipient's name but also instructions such as "to the care of John Richardson," "on board The Charming Molly," or "living with Thomas Small," Franklin must have realized those who sent letters also expected the colonial post to make deliveries, which they did not.

So, this left Franklin with the dilemma: who could claim these letters languishing on the post office's shelves?

Letters addressed to William Collins were to be claimed and the postage paid by someone known to be the intended William Collins.

Today, with postage visibly paid, is a different challenge to the postal system. In 1738 this was a real challenge. Without a driver's license or a credit card, how did people walk into the Philadelphia Post Office saying, "Hello, I'm William Collins. I saw the List of Letters Remaining a week ago and you have a letter addressed to me. How much is the postage? Where did it come from?"

Don't forget, the only address might be "Chester Co." But what if this letter addressed to William Collins is further addressed "to the care of Francis Knowles," end of address, literally. Who should the letter be released to?

In a few other places, my text points to other unclaimed letters that are more ridiculously under-addressed, such as "James Wilson, Mercht. in America" at almost the end of the first list.

"Why did it take more than a century to convince the postmaster general of the United States to issue a simple definition of how to address a letter?"

Franklin still owned the newspaper but had moved on within the postal system. He and William Hunter served as co-postmasters general from 1757 to 1774. In 1775, Franklin became postmaster general.

I'm inclined to believe that he had instituted the schedule for all post offices to publish their List of Letters Remaining during the first three weeks after calendar quarter.



# A Fast Train, a Photo and a First Day Cover

By Jeff Stage

I especially perk up when Central New York is connected to our hobby. This happened earlier this year when the U.S. Postal Service issued its stamps honoring the Underground Railroad. Among the 10 individuals shown is the Rev. Jermain Loguen, of Syracuse, who was among the many local heroes who helped people fleeing bondage to find freedom.

The very first Syracuse stamp is a classic – the 2-cent Fast Express stamp in the Pan-American Exposition set of 1901, which were created to help publicize the world's fair held in Buffalo.

The six stamps in the set depict modes of modern trans-

portation and all bear the inscription “Commemorative Series 1901,” making these the first U.S. commemorative stamps of the 20th century.

The stamps, the first bicolored set printed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, were issued May 1 in conjunction with the opening of the expo and sold on-site almost through the expo's entire run. The expo drew 8 million visitors by the time it closed on November 2 and, sadly, became known for the assassination of President William McKinley who was shot and killed while visiting on September 6.

The 2-cent stamp is the most common in the set as it covered the basic first class domestic letter rate at the time. The other stamps are: 1-cent Steamship, or Fast Lake Navigation stamp, featuring the City of Alpena (built 1880); 4-cent Electric Automobile; 5-cent-Honeymoon or Falls View Bridge at Niagara Falls; 8-cent Sault Sainte Marie Canal Locks; and 10-



Syracuse photographer A.P. Yates' original print of Engine 999 under full steam rests in the Library of Congress. The day Yates shot the photo, the engine set a land speed record.



The stamp featuring A.P. Yates' photo of Engine 999 and the Empire Express is part of the Pan-American Exposition set.

cent Fast Ocean Navigation, featuring the steamship St. Paul. What makes the 2-cent train stamp specifically a Syracuse stamp, you ask?

The Empire State Express (1891-1967) was a named line of first the Central & Hudson River Railroad (soon the New York Central Railroad; later Amtrak) and ran primarily between New York City and Buffalo.

From the outset, the Empire State Express was known for making fast times. In 1891, it averaged

61.4 miles per hour in a run from New York City to Buffalo.

On May 10, 1893, the railroad's publicity arm made sure everyone knew the express was out to set a new land speed record, thanks to the railroad's newest – and one of the most powerful steam locomotives of its time – Engine 999. The engine was designed by William Buchanan and manufactured by the New York Central Railroad in West Albany, New York, according to the Museum of Science and Industry of Chicago, which today exhibits the locomotive.

The Empire Express, pulled by Engine 999, on May 10, 1893 was running westward from Syracuse to Buffalo. On that run, the train hit a record 112½ miles per hour, a record that stood for decades. Following its record-setting run, Engine 999, dubbed “The World's Fastest Locomotive,” toured the country and was displayed at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The locomotive

LOCOMOTIVE, PAGE 16

## LOCOMOTIVE, FROM PAGE 15

from service in 1952.

Syracuse photographer A.P. Yates was the official photographer of the NY Central Railroad. He set up his tripod just west of the city and photographed Engine 999 at the head of the Express. It's unknown if the train was at its top speed when Yates snapped his photo (probably not), but the locomotive was at full steam.

His photo, on Page 15, rests with the Library of Congress, which notes the title as: "The fastest time on record Photo'd by A.P. Yates, Syracuse, N.Y., May 10, 1893, when Engine 999 drawing the Empire State Express train,

made the record of 112 ½ miles an hour. ... photograph shows a train running under full steam."

The impressive shot of the country's most famous, modern and powerful locomotive became the perfect subject for a stamp. At least that is what the Bureau of Engraving and Printing thought when it placed Yates' image on the 2-cent Pan-American pictorial stamp. Syracuse's first stamp was in the mail!

As the 2-cent stamp was the most used in the set there is no trouble finding covers franked with the stamp, which was sold by post offices for six months. But I was thrilled recently when a dealer offered me the cover shown on Page 16.

Why? It's not all that pretty. It has a nasty, ragged tear from the top left corner nearly to the bottom. And it looks like there was some kind of an adhesive (a price tag maybe?) above the cancellation.

But the factors that make it a beauty for me is that the cover is a from a Syracuse business, franked with a Syracuse stamp and postally canceled in Syracuse on the stamp's first day of sale – a near-perfect Syracuse first day cover.

I have not learned much about Yates, though the surname was once prominent in Syracuse.

An elaborate 24-room mansion on 49 acres built in 1852 in what is now the Syracuse University and hospital district looked like a castle and was designed by James Renwick Jr., chief architect of the original Smithsonian Institution Castle. Alonzo C. Yates eventually bought the place, which became known as Yates Castle until it was torn down in 1953.

Syracuse also was home to the 250-room Yates Hotel, which opened in 1892 and was dubbed "the



**A true Syracuse first day cover. The envelope was sent from a city business, is franked with the Fast Express train stamp and postmarked on the stamp's first day of issue.**

most elegant hotel outside Manhattan." It was demolished in 1971 and the site is home to a parking lot.

I don't know if A.P. Yates was connected to either structure.

I did learn that Yates was the official photographer of the NY Central Railroad, according to the 1897 annual of *The American Amateur Photographer* (Vol. IX) magazine, published by The Outing Co. of New York, N.Y.

A very short paragraph in the magazine is devoted to a quote from Yates in which he endorsed a product from Bausch & Lomb Optical of Rochester: "I can not speak too highly of your Bichromate of Potash Ray Filter. It is not only a success but a photographic necessity. I use it daily in my landscape work."

Another magazine I found online – this one called *The Hub* and devoted to all things automobiles – noted in its July 1900 edition that members of the new Syracuse Automobile Club first met in downtown Syracuse on June 16, 1900 and "photographs were taken by A.P. Yates, the New York Central photographer." Another train photo from Yates – this one of the 20th Century Limited – appears on Wikipedia.



**A detail of another train photo from A.P. Yates – this one of the 20th Century Limited – appears on Wikipedia. The entry notes that the photograph appeared in a 1902 edition of *Photographic Times*.**