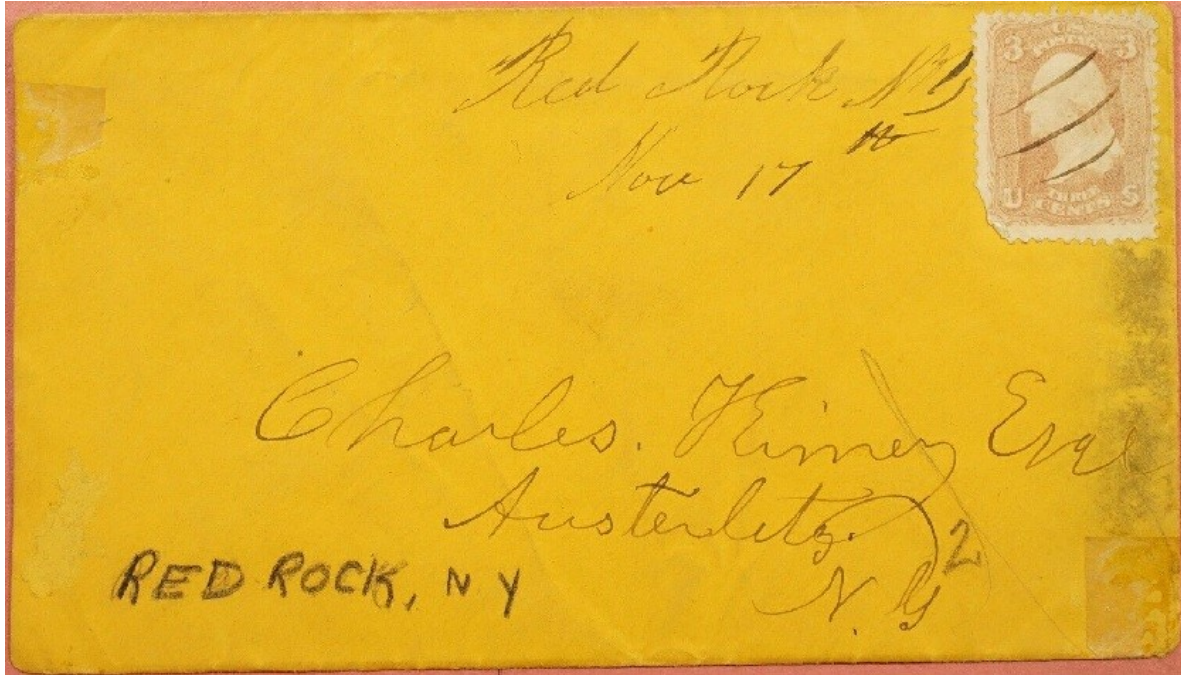


# Excelsior!

October 2024

Whole No. 40 New Series



This 1860s era cover was sent from Red Rock, as accentuated by an add-on notation at bottom left. Such notations are not uncommon among items saved by dealers and collectors of a bygone era.

## *Manuscript Marking From Red Rock*

Data still being sought to update state  
post office manuscripts handbook

By Douglas Penwell

It has now been 40 years since the 3rd edition of "Manuscript Post Offices of New York State," by Henry Chlanda and Chester E. Wilcox was published.

The majority of data is now found on the internet, eBay in particular.

Earlier this year, the collection of Irving Tesmer was sold by Siegel Auctions in New York City. Mr. Tesmer supplied dates for many Western New York post offices. I was aware of Lot 2063 in Sale 1312 that featured many manuscript markings. Some of these covers were originally purchased from the Buffalo / Erie County collection of Nate Calkins.

It has also been about 25 years since the master sup-

plement to the 3rd Edition was released. The data from the 3rd Edition, which I edited, is in the computer and is ready to be integrated with the data collected since the date of last publication in 1984. Plans are to retain most of the introduction that was used for the master supplement (though suggestions from the Empire State membership are welcome). I hope to publish an updated supplement soon.

As a means of reminding the membership about collecting data about manuscript town markings, this article discusses the cover shown.

This is a manuscript marking from the post office at Red Rock, which operated from 1832 to 1902 in Columbia County. This cover may have been reported in the master supplement, as that report was a simple "NYD #65." This specifies that no month or day was reported about the cover. The #65 indicates a 3-cent 1861 issue



# Excelsior!

The Journal of the Empire State Postal History Society

Contact: ESPHS  
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**Douglas Penwell:** A quick look at manuscript cancellations and what makes them special. Help needed to update state handbook. **Cover.**



**Charles J. DiComo, PhD:** The simple cover with a 2-cent Jefferson stamp from the Liberty series is a lesson in modern postal history. **Page 3**

**Martin H. Joyce III:** The author has created a new handbook that explores the deep and interesting history at the post office at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. **Page 4**

**Robert Bramwell:** The author from the last Excelsior! tells a little more about Franklin's Lists of Letters Remaining. **Page 4**

**Release:** Learning About Stamps Online (LASO) is a new web-based club designed to bring together collector's from near and far. **Page 5**

**Charles J. DiComo, PhD:** A Post Office Department check from 1851 shows a signature from the department's top dog, Nathan K. Hall, who had close ties with President Millard Fillmore. The two are buried near each other in Buffalo. **Page 6**



**Jeff Stage:** A cache of covers (likely) between a man and a woman had the potential of an interesting tale. But, sadly, such

was not the case. **Page 8**

**Charles J. DiComo, PhD:** National Air Mail Week of 1938 was an incredible national event. Let's remember that success with a show and tell! **Back cover**

The journal is published April and October by the Empire State Postal History Society. Articles for the Excelsior! are solicited and remain the property of the authors and the ESPHS. Please contact the editor and the author to inquire about reprint rights or for use in another publication.

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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.

## Upcoming Shows

### New York October 20

Albany Fall Stamp & Postcard Show, Fort Orange Stamp Club, American Legion Hall, Joseph E. Zaloga Post 1520, 4 Everett Road. Ext., Albany. **Contact:** Mike Krug. <http://www.fortorangestampclub.org/>.

### New York

Syracuse Stamp Show. Free admission and parking. Holiday Inn (formerly Maple Wood Inn) 400 7th North Street, Liverpool (off Exit 36 NYS Thruway). Website: <http://syracusestampclub.org/syracuse-stamp-show/>.

### November 10

### Pennsylvania November 15- 16

Postal History Symposium, APRL, APS, and the Smithsonian National Postal Museum, American Philatelic Center, 100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte. <https://stamps.org/news/c/collecting-insights/cat/postal-history-symposium>.





This modern cover mailed in November 1955 might not look terribly exciting but has a postal history story to tell.

## Unassuming, Yet Worthwhile

### Personal letter from U.S. to Munich via the 1953 international printed matter rate

By Charles J. DiComo, PhD

I recently came across the unassuming cover shown as part of my ongoing quest for international postal uses mailed from the quaint town of Pawling, in the southern Berkshires of Dutchess County, where my family and I resided for nearly a decade.

The unsealed cover exhibits a nice solo use of the 2-cent Thomas Jefferson, dry print Liberty issue series (Scott 1033). It is tied by a 6-bar, Pitney-Bowes machine cancel, dated November 28, 1955, with a time stamp of 3:30 p.m.

This envelope was mailed to a Miss Erika Schillinger at Werneckstr. 25/II in Munich, Germany, and sent via the international printed matter surface rate, which was 2 cents for the first 2 ounces (50 grams), effective November 1, 1953 through July 31, 1958. On August 1, 1958 the rate doubled to 4 cents.

Unfortunately, the cover has no contents, but, considering the date, most likely contained a holiday card or greeting.

While the rate use is not that uncommon, it was sent during the cross-over period of the Presidential and Liberty issues.

The 2-cent Jefferson dry print Liberty issue was released on September 15, 1954, while the 2-cent John Adams Presidential issue (Scott 806) was still available in the majority of post offices. (The Adams stamp was issued in four formats, including panes and coils, between June 3, 1938 and January 27, 1939.)

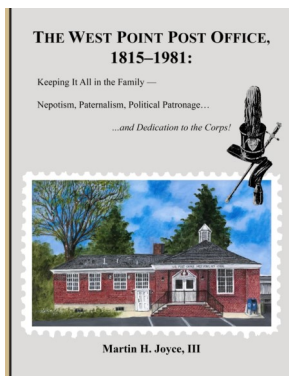
The franking and postal cancellation on this cover from Pawling – 14 months after the Jefferson stamp's first issuance – would not be considered an early use for this Liberty issue.

In the end, this is a great example of a cover amply dispelling the myth that a common stamp some say are worthless has obvious eye appeal, historic significance for postal history, and a far greater market value than the same stamp used off cover.

The author thanks Hal Klein for his insight into the printed matter rates of this era.

## Award at GASS for book about West Point post office

Duty, Honor, Country. Could there be any more patriotic message than that which from 1898 stood as the motto at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, our nation's



oldest military institution of learning?

Plenty of books tell the storied history of West Point. But a new book "The West Point Post Office, 1815-1981," by Martin H. Joyce III, of Cincinnati, offers perhaps a different perspective. At least that appears to be the case with the subtitle, "More than 150 years of Nepotism, Paternalism, Political Patronage ... and Dedication to the Corps!"

The book received praise at the Great American Stamp Show in Hartford, Connecticut, receiving 84 points in the show's literature competition. The book, judged as a handbook, received a large vermeil award, just a smidgen from the next-highest award.

On March 16, 1802, President Thomas Jefferson authorized the establishment of the United States Military Academy at West Point. It is the oldest of our nation's service academies. Each year, approximately 1,000 graduates are commissioned as second lieutenants in the U.S. Army.

In 1815, the first permanent post office was established there to serve the cadets, staff, and faculty. The history of the post office presents a unique perspective on the history of the academy, its surrounding political jurisdictions, and the U.S. Post Office Department. "The West Point Post Office, 1815-1981" tells this story through the people, events, and postal history specific to this institution.

The book is promoted as the most comprehensive and thoroughly researched history of West Point's post office ever published. It is profusely illustrated, and annotated in detail to promote further research. Those interested in postal or military history will find it provides a unique perspective on the Military Academy as well as U.S.POD.

Joyce is a 1974 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy. He served six years on active duty in the U.S. Army, followed by a career in supply chain management in the consumer products industry. He holds advanced degrees in business and psychology from Marywood University.

Joyce is the author of "Duty, Honor, Faith, & Country: An Illustrated History and Guide to the Catholic Chapel of the Most Holy Trinity at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY," and "Postmarked West Point: A U.S. Postal History of West Point and its Graduates."

**Details:** "The West Point Post Office, 1815-1981," by Martin H. Joyce III. Softcover, 8 1/2 inches by 11 inches; 126 pages. \$23.99, plus shipping from Amazon.

## LETTER

### A little more on Franklin's lists

I thank you for publishing in the April issue of the *Excelsior!* my article on Franklin's Lists of Letters Remaining. Readers who take the time will be able to draw from those images all the crazy addresses I saw that made the resulting story one that had to be written.

In truth, there is another burden created by those lists: Where were all those people? I spent days with each one of the lists searching for geographic locations of places claimed as an address.

For example, List 1 shows a John Ross at "Fog's Manor" in Pennsylvania immediately followed by a John Rea, near "Thnuder Hill" in Pennsylvania.

Fog's Mannor is a residential location likely mistaken for Faggs Manor, an unincorporated community in Londonderry Township, Chester County, which was settled in the 1730s by European immigrants. A post office named Faggs Manor was opened in 1887 and remained in operation until 1902. The community had been named for Sir John Fagg, a member of the wider family of William Penn.

Thnuder Hill was likely misspelled for a patch of land in New London Township properly known in the 1730s as Thunder Hill in another portion of Chester County.

Suffice it to say that I had no luck in locating James Wilson, the merchant listed in "America."

**Robert Bramwell**

*Pinehurst, North Carolina*

### Submissions

Letters can be submitted to the editor at [nyspostal@gmail.com](mailto:nyspostal@gmail.com). Please put Letter and your name in the subject line.

### Postal History Dates

1811 – Postal service turns to fast-moving steamboats  
July 1, 1842 – First general issue adhesive postage stamps go on sale in New York City  
April 1860 – Pony Express begins to carry mail  
1862 – Start of free city deliv-

ery of mail

1864 – Street addresses needed on mail to assure delivery  
1907 – James E. Casey starts United Parcel Service  
1918 – Regular airmail begins  
1943 – Postal zoning begins  
July 1963 – ZIP code is launched nationwide

# Online group lassos philatelists

This past June, a group of philatelists created a free stamp club affiliated with the American Philatelic Society!

Learning About Stamps Online (LASO for short) has formed to give collectors a new way to connect with others over the internet no matter where they live. The Mission Statement says it all: To provide an online forum for stamp collectors of all ages, skill levels and philatelic interests who have a passion to learn. Together members will share knowledge and resources to better appreciate, enjoy and promote the hobby.

More than 30 volunteers active in philately in Canada and the United States met by Zoom during the early months of 2024 to discuss needs and roadblocks facing collectors. Their collaboration has resulted in this organization with the aim of helping each other through LASO's emphasis on learning.

Here are a few details:

- Membership is free to anyone worldwide.
- Monthly meetings will be held the third Tuesday of every month beginning at 8 p.m. (Eastern) via Zoom for about an hour.
- Breakout groups will be used whenever possible to foster a more personal experience for everyone.
- English is the primary language used by participants.
- Topics will vary and cover a broad range of collecting areas, including philatelic basics, how-to tutorials, general and specialized presentations.
- Each meeting is preceded by a social period, time during which collectors can chat about any topic they choose.
- The focus of meetings is not for buying or selling; however, participants may contact one another to initiate such exchanges.

Member contact information will never be utilized for non-club purposes and only released to other members with his or her consent.

You can learn more about LASO by visiting [learningaboutstamps.org](https://learningaboutstamps.org). You can also join by visiting this link: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScZ8BAuGUUCT4VO\\_BapsetnidggbfcqP9vx6dswSO150P1a3Q/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScZ8BAuGUUCT4VO_BapsetnidggbfcqP9vx6dswSO150P1a3Q/viewform).

Presentations this year are scheduled for October 15, November 19 and December 17.

If you have questions, you can contact anyone of LASO's Operation Team members. These include:

Alan Barasch ([alan@mophil.org](mailto:alan@mophil.org)), St. Louis Bears, St. Louis, MO.

Tom Fortunato ([stamptmf@gmail.com](mailto:stamptmf@gmail.com)), Rochester Philatelic Association, Rochester.

Antone Aboud ([antonejaboud@gmail.com](mailto:antonejaboud@gmail.com)), Fort Orange Stamp Club, Albany.

## RED ROCK, FROM PAGE 1

without grill. These stamps were used by the millions after the 1851 and 1857 issues were demonetized in 1861 and the introduction of the grilled issues in 1868.

The date of the cover is November 17 with an unknown exact year. The destination is Austerlitz.

Please note the heavy pencil notation at lower left. To many, this is considered to be defacing the cover. Such practices will be the subject of a future article on science (including preservation) in postal history. A good general rule is – do not do anything to a cover that cannot be undone. Make your notes on the reverse, if possible.

I have seen many covers with notations about the town or date that were exact duplicates of the markings on the letter or envelope. There is no need for such notations. Contemporary docketing, however, can be useful and may be left unaltered. A 3-by-5 card can be used for any notations.

If the cover contains any paper with acid, you should remove that with long-term storage considerations in mind. If the cover was used for "scratch" paper at some point, please use your best judgment about what to do (usually remove these notations from the front and leave them alone on the back).

It was hoped that a cover could be found with Red Rock spelled with one word ("Redrock"). Such an item could not be located. This would have been another example of conversion of spellings in accordance with the changes made in the 1890s to be in compliance with the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

Every county collector should be familiar with these changes, just as they should be with the discontinuance of many smaller post offices due to the establishment of rural free delivery routes.

If you have any questions or possible additions to the research, feel free to contact me at [dougpenwell@mail.com](mailto:dougpenwell@mail.com).

**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.



This 1851 check from the Post Office Department carries a signature on the front lower right from Nathan K. Hall, the postmaster general of the day.



## PAY TO THE ORDER OF ...

### A USPOD check to a postmaster from the postmaster general

By Charles J. DiComo, PhD

I truly enjoy the search for U.S. Post Office-related artifacts not often seen by philatelists and postal historians. The draft check illustrated fits the bill.

Shown is a U.S. Post Office Department check dated February 19, 1851 and signed by Postmaster General Nathan K. Hall.

Hall (March 28, 1810-March 2, 1874) served as President Millard Fillmore's postmaster general from 1850 to 1852, when the president appointed him U.S. district judge for the Western District of New York. He held that office until his death in 1874 in Buffalo.

This handsomely designed and finely engraved check was printed by Hufty & Danforth, with offices in Philadelphia and New York.

The engravers utilized images typical of the era on the obverse: at top center, a portrait of George Washington; at upper right, Lady Liberty with cap, shield and cornucopia; at lower left, rail cars crossing the country; and at upper left, a steam vessel and dinghy ploughing the sea. At left is a beautifully framed "Transportation of the Mails."

The check (draft No. 6415) is made out to M. Wheeler, the postmaster of the Hancock, N.Y. post office. The amount of \$40 was to be paid to a "T.J. Townsend, Treas."

The check was received at the Hancock post office and is marked on the reverse with a manuscript, "Pay to the order of A.B. Chamberlain, Agt." in one hand, signed by Chamberlain, in his hand, and then signed by Thomas Townsend.

President Fillmore (1800-1874) and Hall, 10 years his

junior, had a long history, in friendship, politically and professionally. Both were both were born in the same area of the state, Fillmore in rural Cayuga County; Hall in Marcelus in adjacent western Onondaga County.

Fillmore had little formal schooling, but studied to become a lawyer and became prominent in the Buffalo area as an attorney and politician.



Postmaster General  
Nathan K. Hall.

He was elected to the New York Assembly in 1828 and the House of Representatives in 1832. Fillmore initially belonged to the Anti-Masonic Party, but became a member of the Whig Party as it formed in the mid-1830s.

Hall moved with his family early in his youth to Erie County, attended the district schools, and engaged in shoemaking and agricultural pursuits. It wasn't too long before Hall turned his attention to the law, and studied under Fillmore's tutelage. Hall was admitted to the state bar in 1832 and joined Fillmore's practice as partner. Not long afterward, Hall joined his mentor Fillmore in the Whig Party.

Hall became involved in local politics, serving as deputy clerk of Erie County, as clerk of the Board of Supervisors, and as member of the Board of Aldermen of Buffalo. In 1839, New York Governor William Henry Seward appointed Hall as a mastery of chancery – essen-





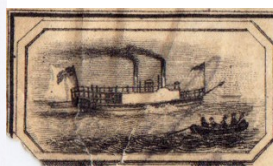
**The reverse of the Post Office Department check.**

tially a judge of the court of chancery. Two years later, Hall was elected judge of the Court of Erie County, where he served until 1845.

Hall was elected in 1847 as a Whig from New York's 32nd Congressional District, serving until March 3, 1849.

In the meantime, Fillmore was active in state and national politics, and is said to have declared slavery evil but said it was beyond the federal government's power to end it. Fillmore was prominent enough, though, to gain the vice presidential seat under Zachary Taylor, a former military hero who served just 16 months before dying in office, succumbing to a stomach disease.

The pre-Civil War era was tumultuous with a lot of indecision and polarizing views on slavery. Fillmore seemed to have a disdain for slavery, he signed into law a bill that culminated in the Fugitive Slave



**Details from the check: railroad cars, watercraft, George Washington portrait, Lady Liberty and Hall's signature.**



was especially valued by his colleague, [Secretary of State Daniel] Webster.”

“During Hall’s

Act, which endorsed the return of escaped slaves to their acclaimed owners.

In a more mundane area of his presidency, Fillmore appointed Hall as the 17th postmaster general, then a Cabinet position, serving from July 23, 1850, to August 31, 1852.

After leaving the Cabinet, Fillmore appointed Hall as U.S. district judge for the Western District of New York.

An article by Jeremy Morlock in the April 26, 2008 Herald Courier of East Aurora (Erie County) offered more about Hall and Fillmore. Morlock drew on material from James O. Putnam, a contemporary of both men who had access to Hall’s unpublished autobiography.

“He (Hall) was fully in sympathy with the President upon all the great questions and measures of the time, but his own immediate responsibility began and ended with his own Department,” Putnam records. ... To his Cabinet office he brought the same zeal, energy, judgment and fidelity which had distinguished his professional and official life. As a Cabinet officer he took high rank and

tenure as postmaster general, the postal rate was reduced from 5 cents per stamp to 3 cents per stamp on prepaid letters,” notes Morlock. “The change was made by the Post Office Act of March 3, 1851.

“Many accounts written following his death at just a few days shy of age 64 attribute [Hall’s] declining health to overwork, but praise him for his devotion. The New York Times noted that on March 3, 1874, the U.S. District Court in which Hall had served adjourned in Hall’s memory.

“In Hall’s obituary the same day, the Times noted that “Judge Hall was a man of much ability, of genial though retiring disposition, and much esteemed as a lawyer and Judge.”

The two old friends died six days apart in 1874, Hall on March 2, Fillmore on March 8. They are buried very near each other in Forest Lawn, Buffalo.

(Additional biographical information about Hall and Fillmore were sourced from Find a Grave, Wikipedia, and the Miller Center at the University of Virginia.)



# Great Story!

## Uh, Maybe Not

A Cache of Same-Source Covers  
Should Make a Great Tale, But ...

By Jeff Stage

Having spent much of my career in the news business I can confirm anything you might have gleaned about reporters and editors wanting to be the FIRST to break a story. Don't take my word for it. Just ask anyone in the business about the inner glow they have if they're the first to report some juicy scandal, a big business deal or that the local sports team signed the nation's most highly prized recruit.

And, as I have spent much of the past 10 years or so focusing on philately, I can tell you the same feelings exist if I, or whatever publication I am working with, presents something particularly interesting to the audience.

That's all to say that this story you are discovering on these couple of pages had great promise, but (so far) has been a dud ... a bland buffet ... a lovely looking peach that's mealy. So, why then, am I bothering to write this up? And, probably worse yet, expecting you to read it?

I guess because there is just enough here to show how to whet an appetite. And, who knows, maybe someone out there will have better luck than I and be able to put some meat on this story's bones. So, here we go.

I was attracted to this group of not-so-attractive dirty,



A pair of covers sent on successive days – July 4 and 5, 1894 – from Syracuse to Miss Mae Chapman in the same hand, perhaps that of Berton McCormick. The cancellations are different with July 4 being a machine cancel and July 5 a duplex hand cancel.

torn and tattered covers for a few reasons.

First, they mostly involve Syracuse (six cancels), my hometown, along with a couple of places not too far away – Auburn (Cayuga County, one cancel) and Marathon (Cortland County, 2 cancels) – of which I am familiar. Plus one outlier – a cover sent from Kalamazoo, Michigan.

I collect holidays, so I was tickled that three of them have holiday cancellations – July 4, March 17 and December 24 – along with a bonus of the date-linked “holiday” of Ground Hog’s Day – February 2.

All but one of the covers are around the same size – 4 ½ by 3 ¾ inches, with the big one, 6 ½ by 3 ½ inches – showing a commercial corner card.

The stamps are pretty standard – 2-cent red Washingtons (Scott designs A61, A88), with a couple covers carrying pairs of 1-cent green Franklins (design A87). Most of the covers have standard circular date cancel receiving marks, but two from Syracuse also have “Received 1” and “Received 2” oval cancellations on their reverse sides.

The covers are all addressed to the same three people – Berton C. McCormick, who mostly received his mail at three addresses in Syracuse. Other correspondence is writ-



The first cover in the set is addressed to Berton McCormick, in care of Dey Bros., Syracuse, and postmarked June 18, 1894 from Marathon.





Another cover sent to Berton C. McCormick at Dey Bros. This one received a wavy flag cancel on March 24, 1897 in Auburn, 30 miles west of Syracuse. The writing is similar to the covers sent to McCormick three years earlier from Marathon, 60 miles away. (Perhaps Mae was in school or visiting relatives.)

ten to Miss Mae Chapman (remember that name), of Marathon. And, finally, covers are addressed to Mrs. B.C. McCormick (whom I believe is the former Mae Chapman).

The correspondence begins in 1894 with covers to both Berton and Mae, I assume writing to each other. But Mae then disappears and Mrs. B.C. McCormick receives five letters from 1898 to 1908 at four addresses, in Marathon; Wirth House (a hotel) in Clinton; Almond Street, Syracuse in 1902; and six years later at East Willow



A bit of a mystery with the fifth cover in the series. We have a flag cancel from Syracuse dated August 5, 1897 on this letter sent to Mrs. B.C. McCormick at Hunt & Chapman in Marathon. It appears to be in the same hand that wrote earlier to Mae Chapman. Perhaps Mae has been called home to help with the business.

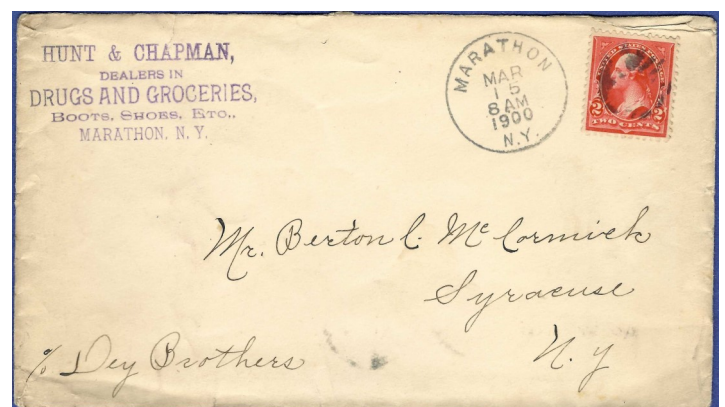


It's the start of a new year and Mrs. B.C. McCormick is staying at the Wirth House in Clinton (Oneida County), 50 miles east of Syracuse. Would love to know the reason why. Street in Syracuse.

There are also two other retail establishments involved. One is Dey Bros. in Syracuse with three covers addressed to Berton in care of Dey Bros.

The other retail locale is Hunt & Chapman in Marathon. Two letters were addressed to Mrs. B.C. McCormick in care of Hunt & Chapman. A third Hunt & Chapman cover is one sent in 1900 to Berton C. McCormick in care of Dey Bros. This is the corner card and describes Hunt & Chapman in Marathon as "dealers in drugs and groceries, boots, shoes, etc."

I thought for sure I would be presenting a neat little re-telling of the Berton McCormick and Mae Chapman (McCormick) story. Is it a love story with great romance  
**BERT AND MAE, PAGE 10**



It's March 1900 and Berton McCormick, still at Dey Bros., receives another letter from Hunt & Chapman in Marathon, where a postal clerk used a duplex cancel to mark the cover. It looks like Mrs. McCormick has again returned to the family business.





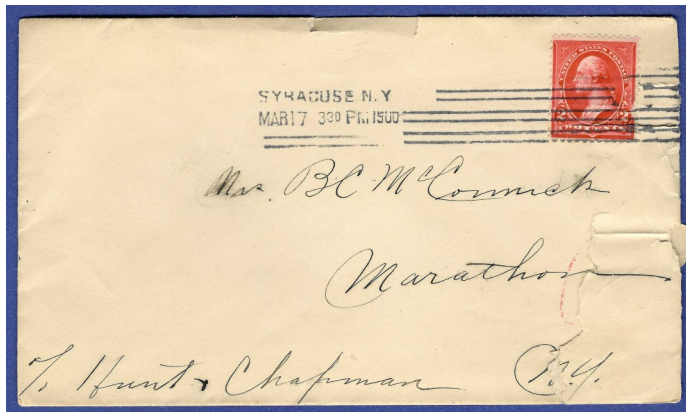
A postcard from the early 1900s shows the massive Dey Bros. department store in downtown Syracuse.

#### BERT AND MAE, FROM PAGE 9

(we hope) or perhaps deep sadness (sigh)? There certainly would be information about their careers, marriage, children, church and fraternal associations, successes (failures) and deaths. But, alas, almost nothing! (Admittedly, I have not gotten myself over to the historical association and still have hopes that something will show up there.)

I was especially surprised about this because usually mail sent to an individual at a business – such as the case here with three covers sent to Berton McCormick at Dey Bros. – is someone who usually is somewhat prominent.

Dey Bros., by the way, was Syracuse's most prominent department store. It was founded in 1877 by the Dey Brothers – Scottish immigrants Robert and Donald – first in Elmira as a dry goods store for six years before moving to Syracuse in 1883. In 1894, the brothers opened a palatial six-story structure in the heart of downtown Syracuse. The \$150,000 building (more than \$4.5 million in today's dollars) designed by the noted architect Archimedes Russell, rose 105 glorious feet on



Two days after the previous letter to Mrs. McCormick follows this one, again to her via the business, Hunt & Chapman. This St. Patrick's Day cancel may be from the Pneumatic Cancelling Machine Company of Indianapolis. The horizontal lines are arranged in pairs at different lengths.

the city's main street and (luckily) still stands today. The store closed in 1993 after serving the city and its environs for 116 years. It is now a mixed-use commercial, retail and residential building.

I also found little about the Chapman family or Hunt & Chapman in Marathon, though I learned a little more about the Hunt family.

One tiny tidbit I learned was that Mrs. Berton McCormick was still alive in August 1933 when she spent three weeks with Mr. and Mrs. George Crego family in Baldwinsville, according to the social column in The Gazette and Farmers Journal of Baldwinsville.

One thing I was able to investigate were the postal cancellations. It was a good learning experience because my knowledge in this area is pretty low.

I certainly recognized the wavy American flag cancels, which were applied by machine in Auburn (1897), Syracuse (1898) and Kalamazoo (1902). Flag cancellations were introduced around 1894, quickly became popular and were adapted by several companies that manufactured cancelling devices.

I also knew the cancellations seen on covers from Marathon (1894, 1900) and Syracuse (1894, 1900) were likely hand-stamped with a duplex cancelling device.

#### BERT AND MAE, PAGE 11



A pair of covers – the first in 1902 from Kalamazoo and the second in 1908 from Syracuse – addressed to Mrs. B.C. McCormick at two different Syracuse addresses.



That leaves the seven-line straight-line cancel from Syracuse (1894), the seven-line wavy-line cancel from Syracuse (1908), and the interesting cancellation of three sets of double straight-lines of varying lengths with the city and date to the left and underscored by the bottom pair.

The first two could be from the International Postal Supply Company of New York, which created efficient and well-used cancelling machines. Though I admit I am still unsure of the straight-line, seven-line cancellation on the 1894 cover.

The cancellation with the three sets of double lines very well may have come from the Pneumatic Cancelling Machine Company of Indianapolis, which started testing its machine in 1898, and was able to secure a small contract with the post office, according to information from the Machine Cancelling Society.

“Between 1898 and 1904, about 30 cities across the U.S. used Pneumatic machines,” the society noted in a 2016 exhibit. “However, other faster and more reliable machines soon replaced the Pneumatic machines that were in place.”

So, that’s the story that I expect many of you who collect postal history have followed. A great find, followed by a handful of details and a lot of unanswered questions. Ah, those enduring mysteries – it’s all part of the fun of this hobby, right?

## Resources

“Syracuse’s Dey Brothers Open Their Grand Store in 1894,” April 21, 2022, [syracuse.com](https://www.syracuse.com/living/2022/04/syracuses-dey-brothers-open-their-grand-store-in-1894-called-one-of-the-most-handsome-buildings-in-the-city.html). <https://www.syracuse.com/living/2022/04/syracuses-dey-brothers-open-their-grand-store-in-1894-called-one-of-the-most-handsome-buildings-in-the-city.html>.

“Special U. S. Machine Cancel History and Overview Exhibit Frames,” from the NYC 2016 Stamp Show, by Mike Ellingson, of the Machine Cancel Society. <http://machinecancel.org/exhibits/nyc2016/web/>.

“U.S. Postmark Types,” Jim Forte Postal History, [https://www.postalhistory.com/description/US\\_Postmark\\_Types.htm](https://www.postalhistory.com/description/US_Postmark_Types.htm).

Onondaga Historical Society, Syracuse, New York, <https://www.cnyhistory.org/>.

## APS GASS 2024 Literature honorees

Four members of the Empire State Postal History Society received awards in the Literature competition at the Great American Stamp Show held in August at Hartford, Connecticut. The categories and awards were:

### Articles

Gold award to **Charles J. DiComo, Ph.D.**, for “The U.S. 3¢ 1851 Stamp: Newly Discovered Plate Flaw on 91R1L,” The Chronicle, U.S. Philatelic Classics Society.

Large vermeil to **Charles J. DiComo, Ph.D.**, for “An Unlisted Major Double Transfer on the Trenton Match Co.’s U.S. Private Die Proprietary 1¢ Revenue Stamp RO176d,” The American Revenuer, American Revenue Association.

### Handbooks

Large vermeil to **Martin H. Joyce III**, for “The West Point Post Office, 1815-1981.”

### Journals/Periodicals

Vermeil for **Jeff Stage**, editor for the “Excelsior! Journal of the New York State Postal History Society.”

**LOOKING TO ACQUIRE:**  
Pawling, Patterson & surrounding Post Office’s  
in Dutchess & Putnam Counties, New York State.



Interested in Stampless, Classic, Modern Postal History; Postcards; Bank Checks; Advertisements; Victorian Trading Cards; Bank Tags; Currency, Ephemera; etc.

Also looking for additional hamlets, towns, villages: Pauling(s), Pawling(s)ville, Campbell(s)ville, Pawlings, Pawling, North Quaker Hill, Quaker Hill, Farmer’s Hill, Stonehouse, West Pawling, Holmes, Haviland Hollow, West Patterson, Wingdale, Wing’s Station.

Scans appreciated, fair offers made, contact  
Dr. Charles J. DiComo | [charlesdicomo@gmail.com](mailto:charlesdicomo@gmail.com)

## It’s time to share

**Excelsior! is seeking images of your favorite New York NAMW 1938 covers. Details, Page 12.**

# National Airmail Week of 1938

## Let's Retell That Tale Together

By Charles J. DiComo, PhD

The year 1938 brought the world one of its most successful promotions in history – National Air Mail Week, which was celebrated May 15-21. And, in a moment, we're going to ask you to help the Empire State Postal History Society relive that special week.

The occasion was the 20th anniversary of official U.S. airmail, which started in 1918 with those famous Jenny biplanes flying between Washington, D.C. and New York, by way of Philadelphia. Though the amount of mail was nowhere near its eventual peak, of course, it was greater than ever before.

Postmaster General James A. Farley and President Franklin Roosevelt created the event as an opportunity to gain wider support and usage of the Post Office Department's airmail service, according to the American Air Mail Society. The celebration week was preceded with the issuance of a new 6-cent airmail stamp, the attractive bi-colored eagle (Scott C23).

Farley asked that every citizen send an airmail letter during the week. The slogan was "Receive To-morrow's mail today." And people responded.

Communities large and small sought sponsors to create special cacheted envelopes that its citizens could use to send mail. Authorities suggested sending mail to friends, relatives, postmasters or Farley. In California alone, 4.5 million airmail letters and 3,200 packages were posted on May 19, according to the Air Mail Society.

In Massachusetts, famous women fliers, Blanche Noyes and Edith Bernson performed mail duties, as did Alma Harwood in New York. Races with Pony Express riders in Montana and a bicycle cavalcade in New York got press coverage. Oxen carts, reindeer teams, stagecoach and wheel equipped dog sleds moved the mail from the airports and grass strips to post offices in rural Maine. An autogiro performed in Chicago. This was truly a national event.

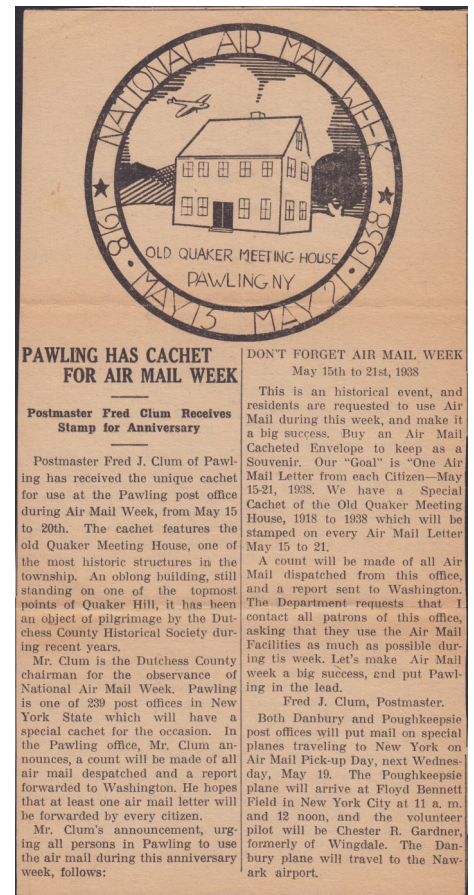
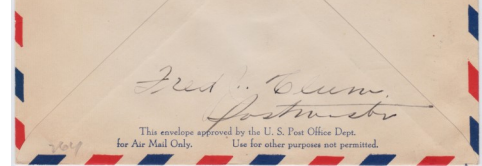
My old hometown of Pawling was among the communities to join in. I have an original newspaper clipping from the time in which Postmaster Fred Clum promotes the town's unique cachet featuring the Old Quaker Meeting House, one of the most historic structures in the township. Shown is one of many NAMW Pawling covers I have collected.

This is where YOU now come in. Editor Jeff Stage and I hope that you can dig out some of your own NAMW covers and send images to us. We'll share them in the pages of an upcoming Excelsior! All we ask is that the come from a New York state community.

Hopefully you can share a few words about the cover. What is the cachet? Who sponsored it? How many were sent? Did the locale actually have regular airmail service or was a special pickup arranged? (A few places didn't even have appropriate landing sites, but arranged for mail to be picked up via a sling system.)



**A National Airmail Week cover sent from Pawling to New York City Postmaster Albert Goldman. The back is signed by Pawling Postmaster Fred J. Crum, who enclosed a newspaper clipping about the local event.**



### Let's Show and Tell

Please participate in the NAMW Show and Tell. Scan your NAMW cover (or maybe two) against a dark background at a high resolution (600 dpi or better) as a SEPARATE jpeg (our editing system cannot interpret PDFs; please do not embed your images among text.) No need to worry about tilts – we can fix those. Please send to [charlesdicomo@gmail.com](mailto:charlesdicomo@gmail.com) or [nyspost-al@gmail.com](mailto:nyspost-al@gmail.com). Suggestion: For a topic slug use something like NAMW and (your NY town).