

BULLETIN



OF THE EMPIRE STATE POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Volume 58, Number 1

January 2025

Follow this cover from Upper Canada through New York City to
Kilmun, Scotland



Charlie DiComo takes us on a trip across the pond. Article on page 4.

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EXCELSIOR! DEADLINE

The deadline for the **April 2025** issue of **EXCELSIOR!** is **February 15th** or earlier if possible.

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

Secretary's Membership Report

Address Change

Stephen Reinhard
5 Linden St
Garden City, NY 11530

Reinstated

Russell A. Crow
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UPCOMING EVENTS

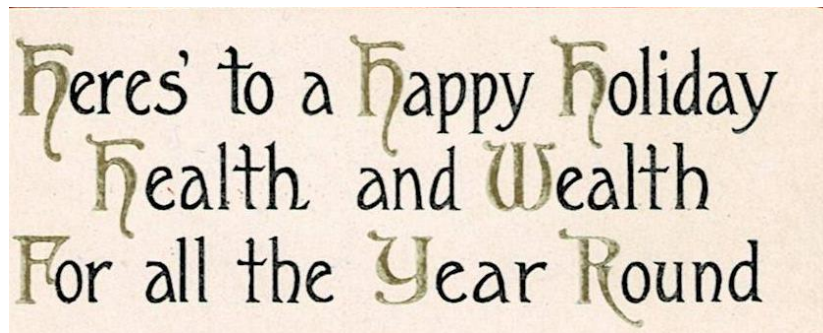
Buffalo, NY March 22-23, 2025 BUFFPEX 2025 Buffalo Stamp Club Loc. The Knights Event Center, 2735 Union Road, Cheektowaga. Contact: Alan Davis Email: ddavis504@roadrunner.com Website: https://buffalostampclub.org/	Albany, NY April 13, 2025 Fort Orange/ Albany Stamp & Post Card Show Loc. American Legion Hall, 4 Everett Rd. Ext., Albany, NY 12205. Hours: Sun. 9:30-4. Contact: Mike Krug Email: majkstamps@gmail.com Website: https://www.fortorangestampclub.org/	Boxborough, MA April 18-20, 2024 Philatelic Show, Northeast Fed. Of Stamp Clubs Loc. Boxborough Regency, 242 Adams Place, Boxborough, MA. Hours: Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-3. Contact: David Ball Email: davidball@philatelicshow.org Website: http://www.PhilaticShow.org
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Information obtained from American Philatelic Society and iStampShows.com

BULLETIN DEADLINE

DEADLINE – The deadline for the **July 2025** issue of the *BULLETIN* is **June 1, 2025**. The editor is always looking for short (1/2 page, 1 page, 1 ½ page or 2 page) articles to fill spots in the *BULLETIN*.

Submitting a one to four page article will get you a one year extension of your membership. Submit to lawrencelaliberte426@gmail.com Larry Laliberte



A scarce use of the "Greenock Penny Post" handstamp on an 1839 stampless folded letter from London, Upper Canada to Kilmun, Scotland via New York City.

By Charles J. DiComo, PhD

Let's take a trip through New York City Harbor in 1839 by analyzing a well-traveled stampless folded letter (SFL) which entered the mails in London, Upper Canada on its way to Finnart Cottage in Kilmun, Scotland in the County of Argyllshire (**Figure 1**). It originated in London, Upper Canada (U.C.) on March 31, 1839, when William Murray penned a three-page letter (**Figure 2**) to his mother and father, Captain James C. Murray of the Royal Navy ("R.N." on the address panel), discussing the Canada Rebellions of 1838 and 1839, including the Aroostook War.



Figure1: Exploded view of the 1839 stampless folder letter to Kilmun, Scotland: Entered the mails at London, Upper Canada; to New York City harbor; via sailing vessel "Virginian" to Liverpool, England; via coach to Glasgow; via coach to Greenock; via small boat.

[See related article on SFLs on page 14.](#)

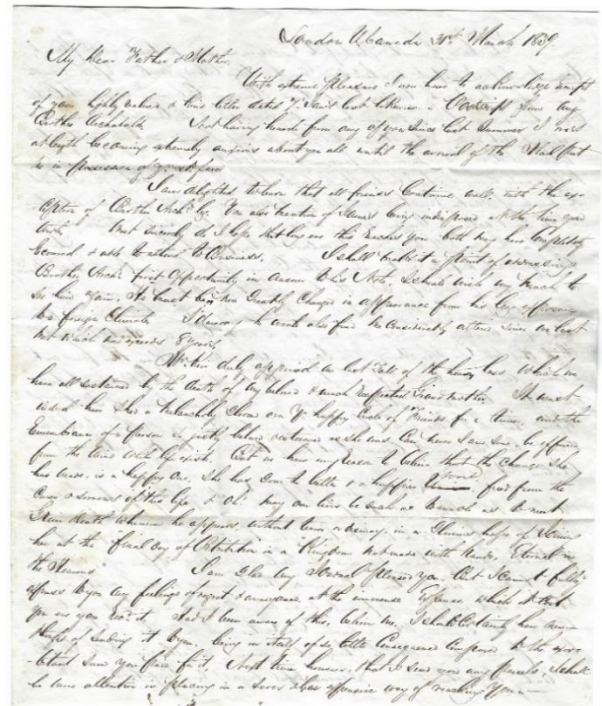


Figure 2: Page one of a single sheet, three-page letter written by William Murry to his mother and father Captain James C. Murray, R.N. at Finnart Cottage in Argyllshire County, Kilmun, Scotland.

During his day, Captain James Murray was the real-life 'Jack Aubrey,' the fictional character in the Aubrey–Maturin series of novels by Patrick O'Brian, who rose from lieutenant to rear admiral in the Royal Navy during the Napoleonic Wars. Capt. Murray was illegitimately born in the British colony of Florida in 1778 and raised in Scotland (**Figure 3**). Murray (like the fictional Aubrey) lived through tumultuous times: the Jacobite Rebellion was still fresh in people's minds, and the American War of Independence was still being fought. Born of landed gentry, his grandfather was Lord Elbank. Murray joined the Royal Navy in 1796 as a volunteer. Ten years later he was made lieutenant and given his first command. For the next twenty years, Murray served on many ships in many stations from Russia to the far southern oceans. In 1825, he left the Navy having gained the rank of Post Captain and retired with his wife to Kilmun, Scotland where he died.



Figure 3: A portrait miniature entitled "The Dashing Captain Murray" painted by Samuel John Stump. Provenance: Bonhams 2007. Source: www.wigsonthegreen.co.uk/.

The letter sent to the Murray's entered the mails April 1, 1839, where a clerk struck the red "**LONDON**" split-ring postmark with manuscript "*April 1/39*" at lower left and the red "**PAID**" at upper right (**Figures 4A & 4B**). The postage paid at London, U.C. totaled 2s7½ dcy (pence Canadian currency) and is denoted at middle right. It breaks down as: 1s3 dcy for the United States overland inland fee; 7½ dcy for the sailing ship freight money fee; and 9 dcy for the Canadian overland inland fee (**Figure 4C**).

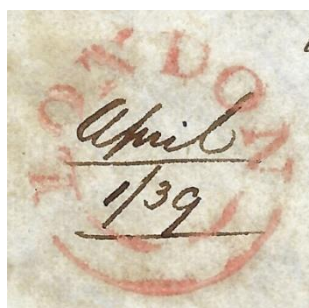


Figure 4A left & 4B above: The markings applied by the clerk in London, Upper Canada.

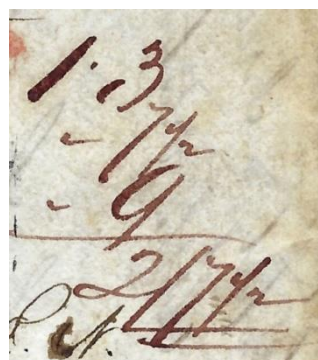


Figure 4C: The rate calculation done by the clerk in London, Upper Canada.

After an eight day transit, the SFL arrived in New York City (NYC) per the direction "*via New York*" written by William at top left. Upon arrival at the NYC Post Office, the clerk struck a red "**NEW-YORK APL 9**" circular date stamp with the uncommon use of "**APL**" for the month April, instead of the more familiar "**APR**" (**Figure 4D**). The letter was then placed in a mailbag and brought to the harbor and placed on the Red Star Line sailing vessel *Virginian*, which departed NYC on April 16, 1839.



Figure 4D: The marking applied at New York dated "APL 9".

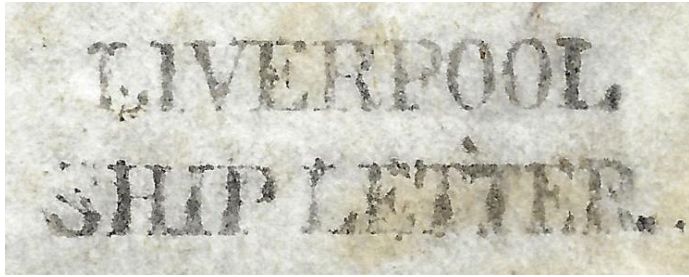


Figure 4E: The Liverpool receiving marking.

On May 6, 1839, after a twenty day transatlantic voyage, the *Virginian* arrived in Liverpool, England. The first order of business by the sailing vessel Captain was to deliver the mailbags to the Liverpool Post Office. At the Post Office, a postal clerk struck in black on the reverse “**LIVERPOOL SHIP LETTER**” (Figure 4E) and wrote on the obverse “**1s8**” (1 shilling 8 pence sterling), the postage due at destination (**8p** incoming ship fee plus **1sh** inland fee from Liverpool to the final destination of Kilmun).

The letter then traveled 240 miles north overland by coach to Greenock (see “*by Greenock*” in the address panel written by William), where the scarce two-line black “**GREENOCK PENNY POST**” marking was added at upper left (Figure 4F). The letter then made its way by small boat across the Firth of Clyde some 10 miles to Holy Loch to its final destination of Kilmun (Figure 5), a receiving house for the Greenock Penny Post. The recipients had to pay the 1s8p in currency to retrieve the letter. Finally, there is no receiving Post Office marking on the reverse, as at this time Kilmun had no known postmarks.

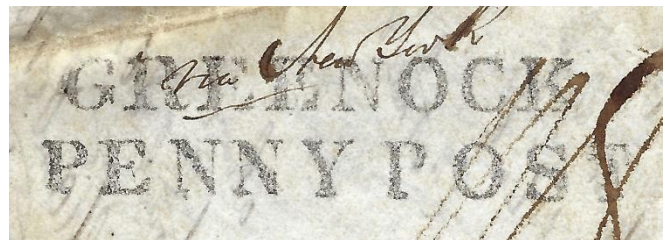


Figure 4F: The “Greenock Penny Post” marking.

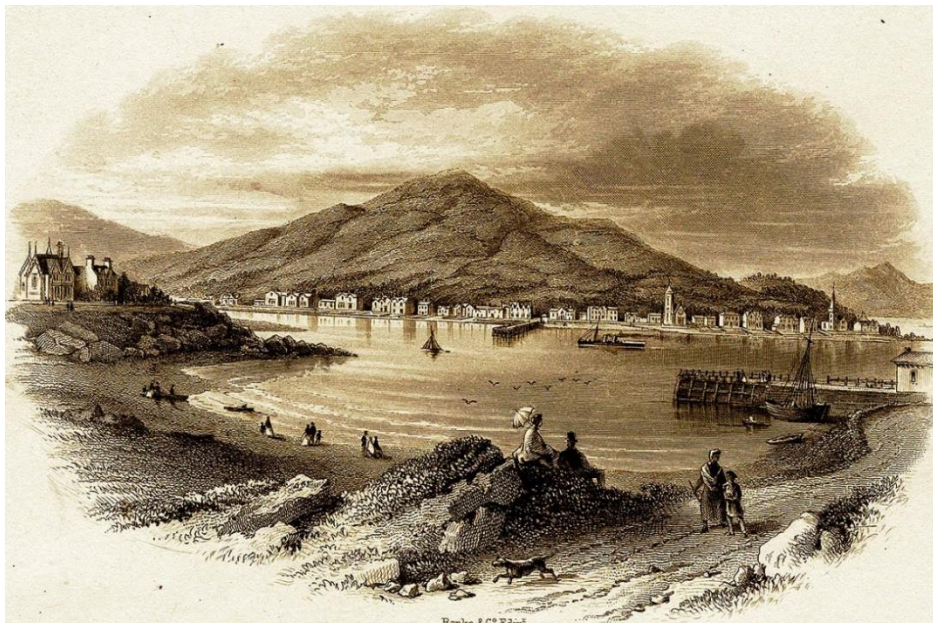


Figure 5: A view from hunter's quay (ca. 1860 of Kilmun and the Holy Loch which the small rowboat crossed to deliver the letter from William Murry to his family at Finnart cottage. source: www.delmadan.com.

reverse, as at this time Kilmun had no known postmarks.

The author wishes to thank Richard Winter for his insight on the rates and routes. Any errors and omissions are the author's responsibility. He can be reached at charlesdicomo@gmail.com.

Awards Chair Accolades

by George F. DeKornfeld, DDS

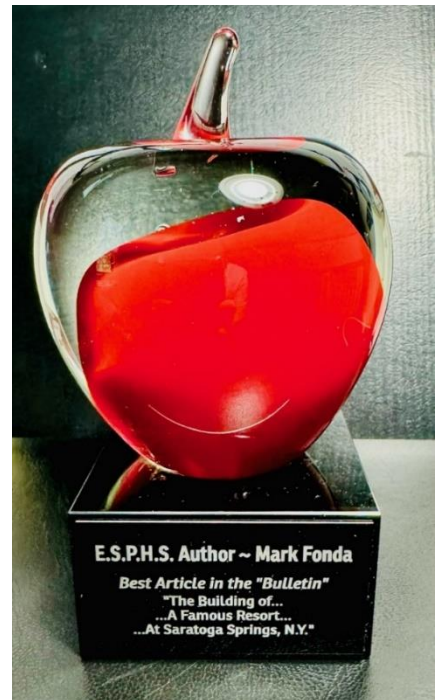


For the first time since the ‘Best Article’ award program came into being, an award will be presented each for the best article to appear in *Excelsior!* during 2023 and the best one printed in the *Bulletin*, as decided through voting by the membership. And the winners are:

Excelsior! – Voting for the best article out of the ten vying for the title for 2023 was fairly evenly distributed, with the favorite squeaking out victory by a single vote. Congrats to Jeff Stage for his *Step Right Up and Enjoy Our Oldest State Fair*.

Bulletin – Here, voting for the best article

was clearly lopsided with the winner blowing away the competition, beating out the second-place author by thirteen votes! The award goes to Mark Fonda and his *The Building of a Famous Resort at Saratoga Springs, New York*.



Trophies will be going out to the two winners in the next month or so. Thank you to all the writers that contributed to our two Journals, and please, let’s see some more and some new contributors for next year’s contest! Our Journals keep our Society vibrant and educational, and the membership would enjoy reading about your selected niche of New York State postal history!

And more..

The October 2024 issue of *The American Stamp Collector & Dealer* published a letter by member George DeKornfeld adding items of interest to a previous article on pointing hand “Return to Sender” markings by John Hotchner. It illustrated two of George’s covers.

The November issue of *U.S. Stamp News* had a review of the EXCELSIOR! (It should have been the BULLETIN, as all articles referred to appeared there.) Despite its inaccuracies, any publicity is welcome.

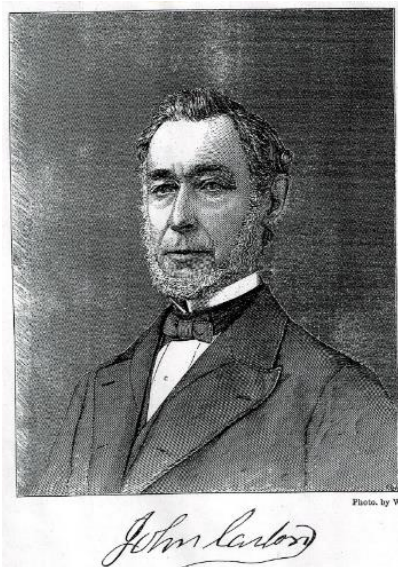
Staying Warm with Central Heat

By Mark Fonda

The Carton Furnace Company, manufacturers of hot air furnaces, **Figure 1**, invented by John Carton who began manufacturing in 1847, was located at "1st" on 133 Genesee St., later 223 Genesee St. The foundry was located at Rome St. and Erie Canal in Utica.



Figure 1: Advertising cover from Carton Furnace Company.



John Carton, **Figure 2**, was born in the county of Dublin, Ireland in 1815, the eldest son of John Carton and Julia Farrell. He was so young when his father died that he has no recollection of ever seeing him. When he was 12 years old, his mother with himself and his only brother, Thomas, emigrated to Quebec, Canada and during the same summer settled in Oriskany, Oneida County, New York.

Figure 2: Portrait of John Carton.

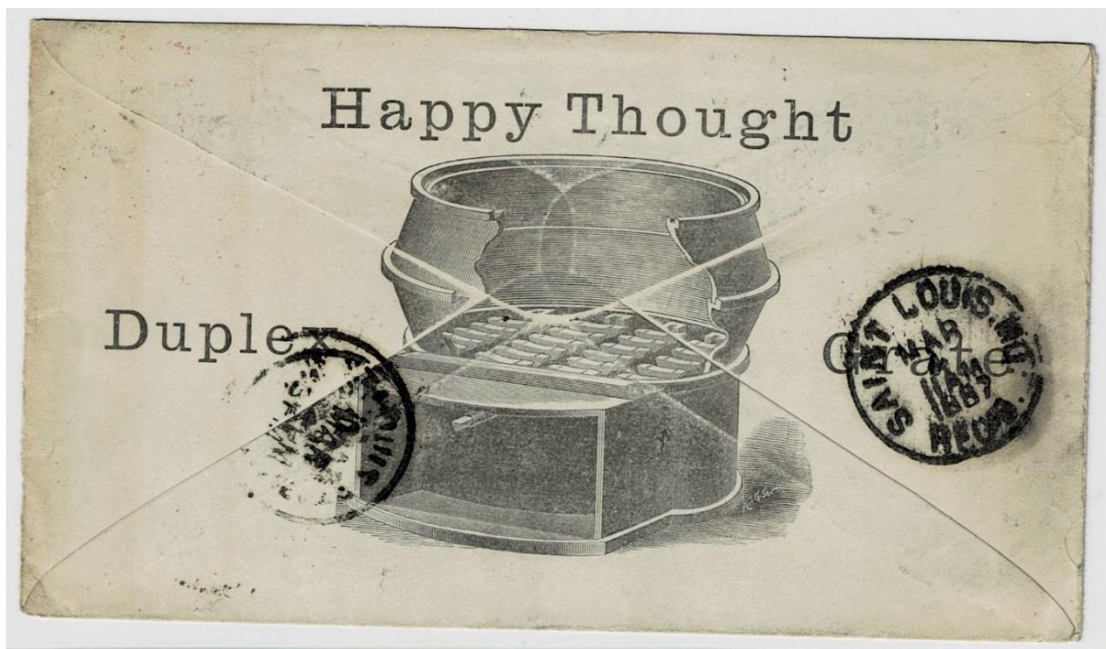


Figure 3: Back of the cover in Figure 1.

In the year Mr. Carton came to Utica, 1828, he was engaged with the firm of O'Neill and Martin as an apprentice to learn the coppersmith trades and business. At the age of 21 he finished his apprenticeship,

circa 1837, and remained with O'Neill until 1842. Around 1840, he gained a financial interest in the business.

Later, he moved to the east side of Genesee Street, at number 223. His foundry was at Rome St. and Erie Canal, where he conducted his business for 43-years.

He had an inventive mind and among his patented inventions was the Carton hot air furnace , a steam vat used in the manufacture of dairy cheese and the first locomotive headlight to burn kerosene oil. John Carton died in 1881. In 1898 his sons, William and Edward, merged the Carton Furnace Company with the International Heater Company. The furnace was taken over and improved upon.

William Carton died an untimely death after being thrown from his carriage while wintering in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Another son, Matthew, donated land for the Utica Orphan Asylum, which later became Utica Catholic Academy for Females. Another son, John F. Carton, was married to Helen A. Benoist of St. Louis, MO.

The cover, addressed to Matthew as it is indicated by Mr. M.A. Carton, 3885 Washington Ave., St. Louis, MO. Probably relating to Carton family connections from Utica NY to St. Louis MO.

New York RPO Cancels Part III

By George McGowan

This is the third and final segment of New York RPO's. I would be incomplete if I neglected to include some other RPO's that did not necessarily travel by steam powered locomotives.

Marine RPO's

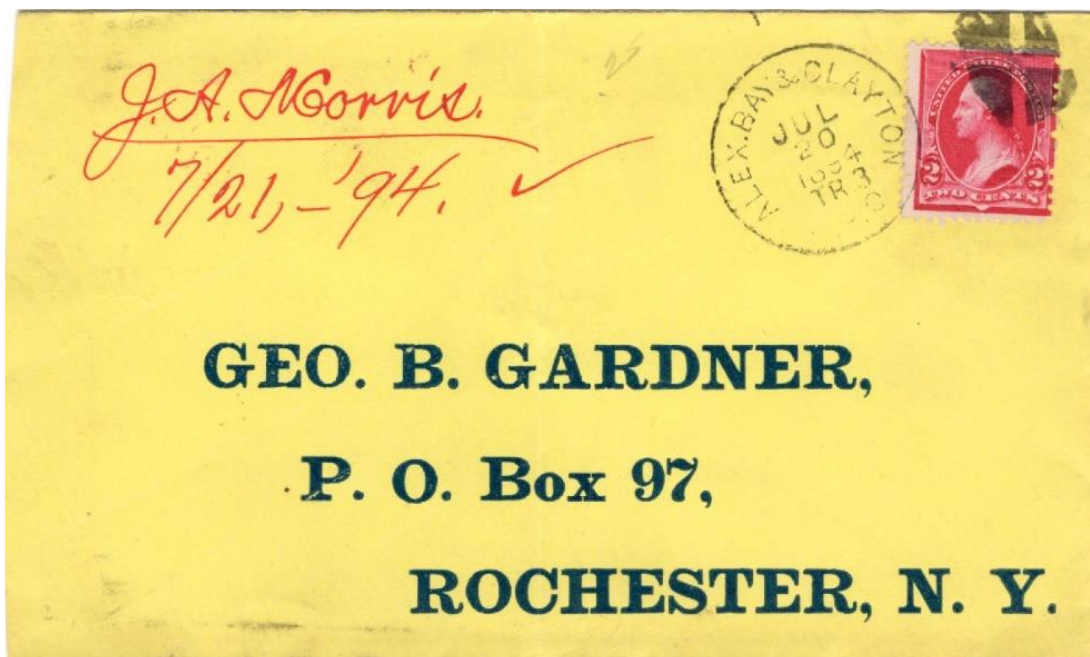


Figure 1: "Alex. Bay & Claton RPO"

Figure #1 is an example of the Alexandria Bay and Clayton RPO. This was a 17-mile Steamboat route traveling on the Saint Lawrence River 1893 to 1917. It was seasonal, running from June to September,

and was controlled by the Thousand Islands and Saint Lawrence River Steamboat company.

Some others are:

Jamestown and Mayview RPO, a summer only boat (1882 to 1890), plying Chautauqua Lake, and run by the Chautauqua Lake Transit Company.

Ticonderoga and Lake George RPO operating May to October 1882 to 1934 and was controlled by the Champlain Transit Company.

Inlet and Old Forge RPO, 1901 to 1955, sailing on the Fulton chain of lakes from June to October and operated by the Fulton Navigation Company.

Skaneateles Lake and Glen Haven RPO running from June to September and operated by the Skaneateles Steamboat and Transit Company

Electric RPO's.

Herkimer and Oneonta RPO. This was an interurban trolley running 57 miles one way. **Figure 2.**



Figure 2: "Herkimer & Oneonta RPO."

Above are mentioned a few examples. I suspect they are not alone. Another interesting group to collect are the highway post offices, HPOs, which traveled by bus.

Concluding, this area of postal history has given me many hours of enjoyment looking at sorting and researching.

WANTED: Your National Air Mail Week 1938 Covers

Greetings all. Hoping everyone has had a good and healthy year and are ready for an even better 2025. I would like to remind folks that *Excelsior!* would like to showcase covers that were part of the



National Air Mail Week campaign of 1938, when the entire country showed the importance and efficiency of the U.S. airmail system. (Thanks to a couple folks who have already submitted. Just send a high resolution image (600 dpi or better, if possible) of your covers along with a line or two of explanation. Only rule is: NEW YORK covers only!

I am sure you have a cover or two in your collection that we should highlight! The more covers we can show, the merrier. Plus, I hope to make all the other state postal history societies jealous with this fun project! Please send to the journal at nyspostal@gmail.com. Deadline: March 1. Jeff Stage, Editor, *Excelsior!*

Share your favorite cover with other members.

Do you have a favorite cover in your collection? How about sharing it with other people who enjoy reading about postal history. Not much of a writer? Don't worry, I'm here to help with your story. Send articles or inquires to lawrencelaliberte426@gmail.com

Weather Bureau Wrapper

by T.P. McDermott ©

An item on eBay with the words “US Weather Report” caught my attention. The listing had poorly defined key words of both “scout” and an “1881” date of use. Inspecting the photo of the item revealed that the seller was mistakenly quoting the date of the postal regulation involved printed on the item. It was a wrapper sent to the local Boy Scouts of America council office in Albany, NY. **Figure 1.**

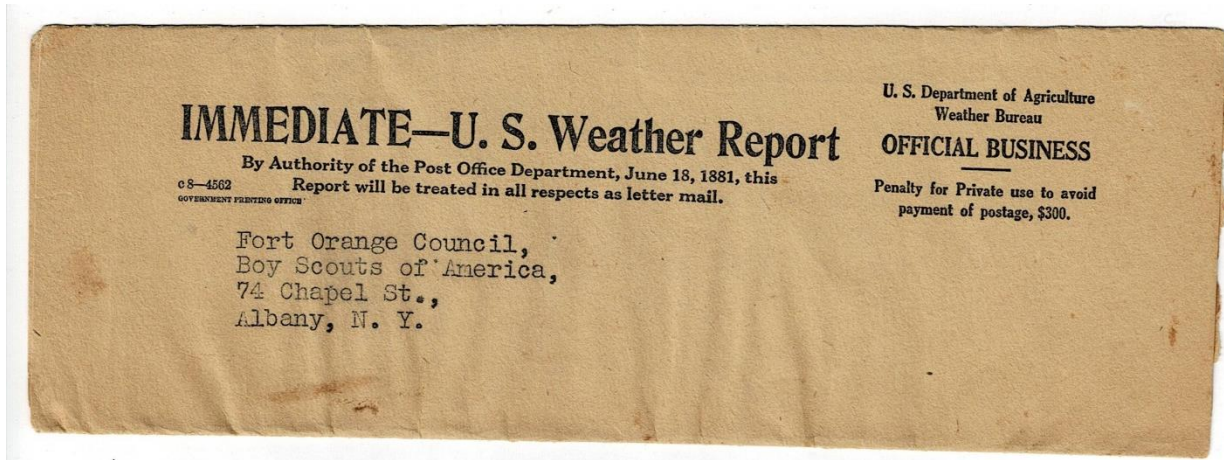


Figure 1: The Weather Bureau Wrapper. Note the directions reading “Report will be treated in all respects as letter mail.”

What’s a wrapper? It’s a postal mailing wrapper; a sheet of paper that postal services required publishers to use for rolled-up periodicals, to cover and protect their newspapers, magazines and other publications when mailing under a cheap, reduced postal rate. Various countries’ postal services routinely have given educational and intellectual periodicals inexpensive transportation and delivery services. Philatelically, wrappers are classified as being in the category known as postal stationery.

Just as the routines and processes for regular first-class mail have changed over time, so too has it occurred for this type of mail, once known as second class mail. In early times, very low value stamps would be pasted directly on the periodical to prove postal payment; later in time, indicia (stamp-like images) were pre-printed on the wrappers which would then make them accountable items of monetary value (just like mint stamps, Scott W numbers). Now-a-days, accounting procedures record and collect the payments and plastic bags have become “the thing” for many magazines. Those past methods are history or better said “forgotten”. In our subject’s case, the wrapper and its printed notice of “Official [Government] Business” points out that the correct postal fees were paid just like many other government mailings.

The addressograph address of Fort Orange Council, BSA / 74 Chapel St / Albany was for the then Boy Scout council which served the city of Albany, NY and its immediate area. The council was named after Albany’s being the location of Fort Orange, the first permanent Dutch settlement in New

Netherlands. The council's area is now a district (or subdivision) of the current Twin Rivers Council BSA. In the 1940s, the council had two camps, Hawley on Kinderhook Lake in Niverville, Columbia County, and Big Moose Lake, a high adventure camp in the Adirondacks. According to a 1955/6 tax law suit, the council purchased 1600 acres of land for a camp in Stratton, Vermont which also drew some Scouts from other states. Surely the council office needed accurate climate and weather information due to their distant camping properties. Or did the council office support the gathering and collecting of weather data or was it to support the teaching of the scouts' Weather Merit Badge?

You might not believe it today, but between the 1890s to 1930s, the weather bureaus (WB) of the USA, UK, and Canada actually mailed out a forecast of the next day's local weather to many organizations and individuals, especially farmers whose livelihood depended upon accurate predictions of the sky. By the 1890s, the WB was using the fast, penny postal cards to distribute their forecasts to many post offices and in a later time, rural free delivery would provide the final leg of delivering weather information to isolated farmers. We wonder what actually was mailed in our wrapper. Who knows! Just like today's junk mail it got thrown out. But most likely it was probably one of the many meteorological reports such as amount of rainfall, days of sunshine and winds, etc. It would not be weather forecast reports as that type of information was distributed by the daily mailing of postal cards. The brown covered *Weather Merit Badge* booklet of 1937 lists the availability of several Weather Bureau periodic publications for a very low annual cost. These included daily weather maps, *Monthly Weather Review* (likely in our wrapper), *Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin* and a monthly *Climatological Data*.

A Christmas day cancel

By Lawrence Laliberte



Figure 1: Christmas day cover shown actual size.

There was a time when the Post Office was open on Christmas day as is evidenced by the cover in **Figure 1**. This tiny cover, measuring only 1 7/8 by 4 1/4, was mailed at Pleasant Valley, NY on December 25, 1912 at 8 am as per the cancel. Due to water damage, the address could not be determined. The cover bears a two-cent stamp, Scott #406 that extends off the envelope but happily is still intact.

See "Cancel" page 14

Stampless folded letter (SFL) - What exactly is it/

A while back, while researching some SFLs, the question came to mind "What exactly is a letter sheet and what were the dimensions?" I enquired of Charlie DiComo who has done extensive research in the area of SFL's. This is his reply:

"You had inquired about letter sheet paper in the stampless era. There are a few references one can look to, both by A.J. Valente, the relevant one for this conversation is entitled "*Rag Paper Manufacturing in the U.S., 1801-1900*"

What happened during the rag recession of 1850-1858 was that the price of paper nearly doubled (too many Fourdriniers chasing too few rags). Previously, the public (merchants, businesses, etc.) had used post paper or foolscap (whatever was available) for letter writing. These were the ubiquitous folded letters.

So it was that the successful paper mills, such as the South Lee Mill, began producing letter paper. They divided a sheet of post paper, then approximately 11"x17", to make an 8 ½ x 12 page (in approximate dimensions). There were already a number of envelope makers who ramped up production to meet the new demand. Many such cheap envelopes were of straw or straw-manila construction. Thus, the sheet of letter paper with a cheap envelope came to about ½ the cost of the former folded letter sheet.

There was also "note paper" that began use at this time (1851). Note paper was about ½ the size of letter paper, and thus employed the smaller note envelope (some called Ladies Envelopes). Early varieties of note envelopes are somewhat scarce, but became evermore popular in the mid-1850s.

Also, about this time (1851) the Post Office began offering 3 Cents stamps. So, now the combination of cheaper paper, cheap envelopes, and cheaper stamps brought about the paradigm shift in mailing activities."

Hope this gives you a bit more details.

"Cancel" from page 13.

Fortunately, the Christmas card was still enclosed, **Figure 2**, and reads "For Everybody, from, Frank and Clara



Figure 2: The included Christmas card.

Thankfully, we no longer need this coverage.

By Lawrence Laliberte

The cover shown in **Figure 1** would not normally have been of interest to me because it is a #10 envelope, and it is out of my usual time period. It was posted on Sep. 11, 1950 with a 1 cent Prexie paying the drop letter rate in effect at the time. Interesting, but not unusual.

What really caught my eye was the manuscript notation below the corner card of the Insurance Agency, "Polio Ins, / Expires 27 Aug. 59."

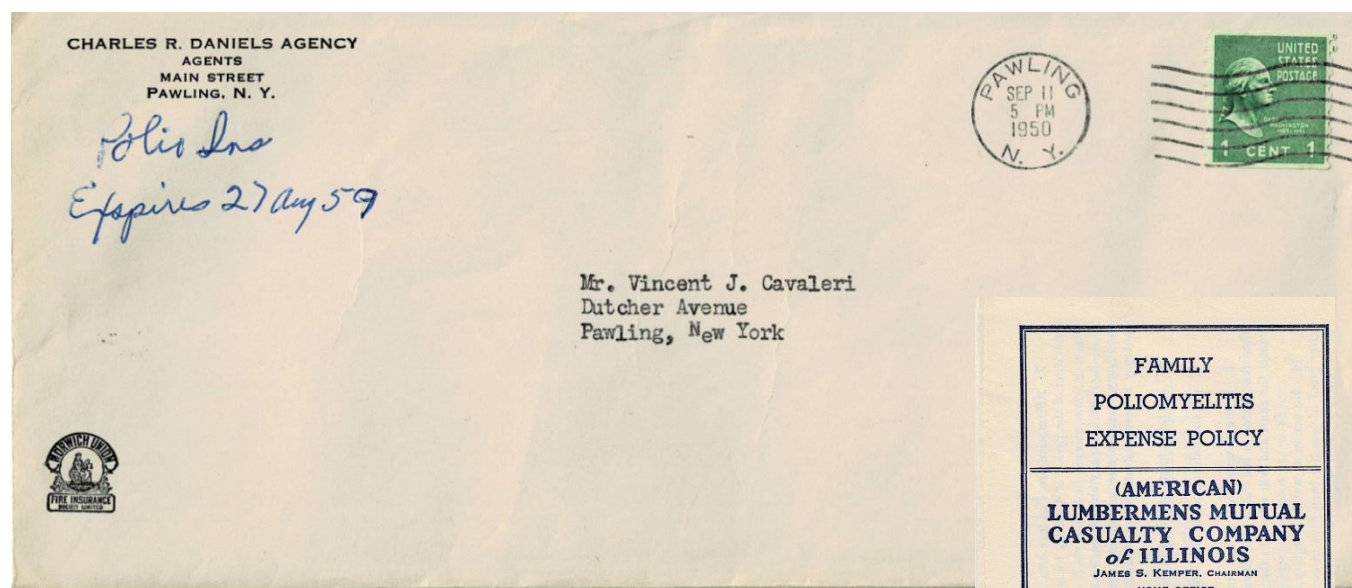


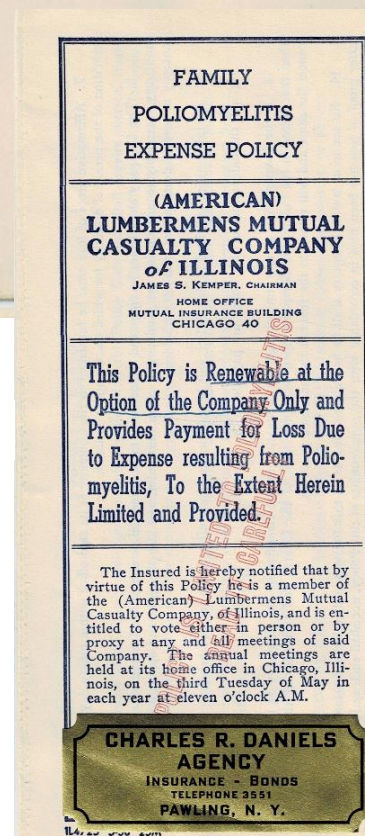
Figure 1: Above, the cover carrying the insurance policy

Figure 2: Right, the insurance policy covering Polio.

The enclosed policy, **Figure 2**, dated Aug 27, 1950, covered the expense of such things as "Hospital Care", "Iron Lung", "Medical and Nursing Care", "Transportation", and "Ambulance Service" to a maximum of \$5,000.00 coverage for each of his three daughters.

A 1955 rider to the policy extended coverage at 50% to Spinal Meningitis, Diphtheria, Scarlet Fever, Smallpox, Leukemia, Multiple Neuritis, Encephalitis, Tetanus, Rabies, Elephantiasis, and Tularemia.

The web site <https://historyofvaccines.org/history/jonas-salk-md/overview>, provided the best description of this dreaded disease and of Dr. Jonas Salk who developed a vaccine to nearly eradicate it.



Polio threatened children every summer in the first half of the twentieth century. The viral infection spread from person to person, infecting millions. For 1 in 200 infected, the disease would progress to a paralytic phase, stopping them from breathing. By the 1940s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt — a polio survivor himself — helped the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis raise enough funds to financially support several vaccination efforts.

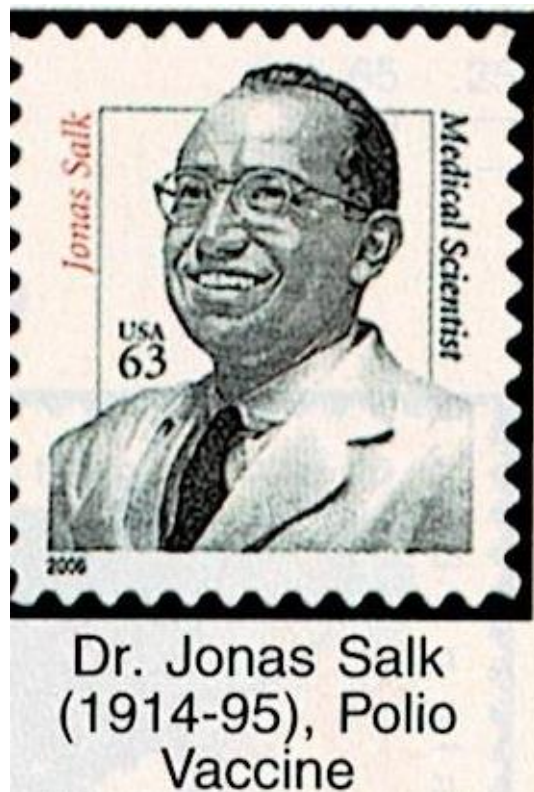


Figure 3: Scott 3428 honoring Dr. Salk.

One of those efforts was led by Jonas Edward Salk, MD. Jonas was the son of Jewish immigrants, and he was born in New York City. As the first person in his family to go to college, Jonas stood out because of his intellect. He earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry in 1934 from City College of New York, and his medical degree in 1939 from New York University Medical School. As a physician scientist, Dr. Salk worked with Thomas Francis at the University of Michigan in 1941. (Thomas Francis was known for the discovery of influenza viruses and their multiple types.)

The prevailing theory of vaccines at the time was that the pathogen used in creating the vaccine had to be attenuated (weakened to the point of being incapable of causing disease). Scientists disagreed whether a killed virus would trigger an immune response. Building on the work of scientists like Elise Ward (who developed a way to grow polio virus in non-human tissue cultures) and Isabel Morgan (who successfully immunized primates with killed polio virus), Jonas Salk successfully developed a polio vaccine by the mid-1950s.

During a series of community trials of the vaccine in 1954 and 1955, the Salk vaccine was found to be highly effective in preventing polio disease in children. Children randomized into the vaccine group had a lower rate of symptomatic polio than children randomized into the placebo group. The success of the trials was shared far and wide around the world, as the scourge of polio that had frightened many parents was about to be conquered.

After the success of the polio vaccine, Dr. Salk opened the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in 1963. He dedicated his life to researching other vaccines, including a vaccine against HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. He received numerous awards and honors for his work.

Dr. Salk died at the age of 80 in 1995 and is buried in San Diego, California.

He was honored by the U.S. Postal Service in 2006, **Figure 3**.