

BULLETIN



OF THE EMPIRE STATE POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Volume 59, Number 1

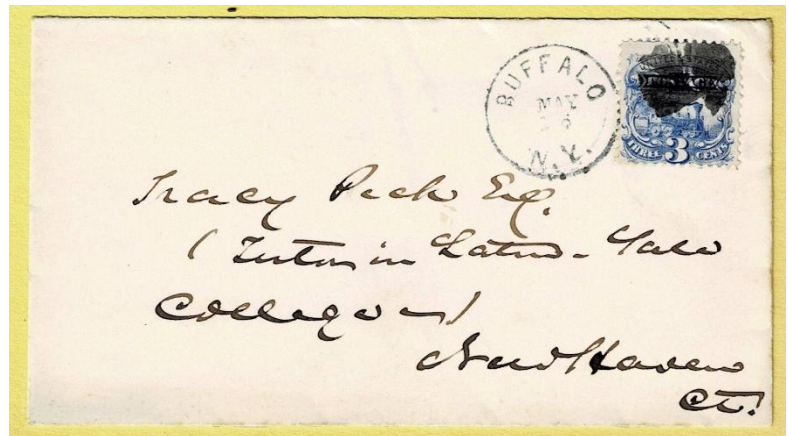
January 2026



George McGowan As the winter season and its storms approach, learn about a storm in 1966 that impacted the mails.

Page 5

Mark Fonda tells us about Tracy Peck and the Wide-Awakes that help Lincoln win the White House.



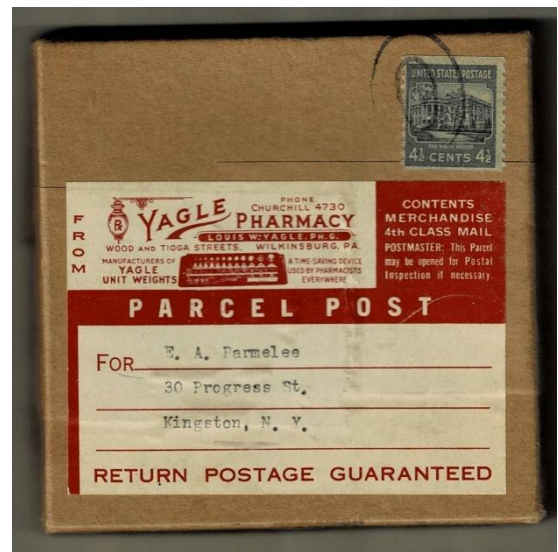
Page 6



George DeKornfeld gives us a look at marcophily.

Page 8

Lawrence Laliberte describes a parcel post package with many surprises.



Page 10

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***Bulletin* (Semi-Annually) January and July**

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EXCELSIOR! DEADLINE

The deadline for the **April 2026** issue of *EXCELSIOR!* is **February 15, 2026**, 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

No changes noted.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Albany, NY	Syracuse, NY
Apr. 19, 2026 July 26, 2026	Feb, 8, 2026 Jun 14, 2026 Sep 13, 2026 Nov 8, 2026
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 Phone: (518) 875-6104 Website: https://www.fortorangestampclub.org/	Loc. Maplewood Suites, 400 7 th N St., Liverpool, NY 13088. Hours, 10-4 Contact: David Houseman Phone: (315) 437-4901

BOSTON 2026

Boston will be the world's center of philately for eight days in 2026, as the twelfth international philatelic exhibition of the United States gathers at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center BCEC). To be held during Memorial Day week (May 23–30, 2026) in the [Seaport](#) section of the city, Boston 2026 World Expo will be a significant part of the country's 250th anniversary festivities.



In a 352,000 square foot contiguous exhibition area, Boston 2026 will be hosting a large dealer bourse, as well as a sizable postal administration bourse, and society presence. There will be an FIP competitive exhibition of approximately 3,500 frames, plus other special/court of honor exhibits, as well as a large FIP literature competition.

The show will be hosting hundreds of meetings/presentations in 40+ meeting rooms of various sizes. A large opening ceremony and closing awards dinner will be staged using the BCEC's banquet room facilities:

1

Among the many attractions that will be shown in the court of honor is an exhibit titled "The Road to Independence, "which will showcase impressive postal history items illustrating the development of the North American colonies, and the evolution of their Postal Service, from the late 17th century to the early 19th century. The exhibits story will be narrated with contemporary letters and other historical documents from every major figure of this period.²

- 1) <https://web.cvent.com/event/bbbdc1d9-e50e-44dd-8bef-eb36c9d1251f/summary>
- 2) American Philatelist, Nov. 2025

Show information gathered from *American Philatelist* or iStampShows.com. Please contact organizers to confirm.

President's Message

Wishing all a pleasant holiday season as this edition arrives in your mailbox. I hope each of you gets to partake in at least one philatelic gathering stamp show or bourse in the new year. It is these gatherings that add so much to our hobby, whether it be new acquisitions or finding some new information about a cover already in your collection, they provide a venue to expand our collections and many times to meet old friends. Unfortunately, we seem to be losing shows every year, which makes those still in operation all the more coveted.

This year, our nation will be celebrating its 250th anniversary and the Philatelic world is celebrating as well with an international show, Boston 2026 World Stamp Expo, May 23-30. If you attend, please write up a summary of your trip and maybe an article or two on covers that you find. I'm sure that the editors of the *EXCELSIOR!* and the *BULLETIN* would be glad to publish them.



Philatelically yours,

Charles

Charles J. DiComo, PhD | *President*

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BULLETIN DEADLINE

DEADLINE – The deadline for the **July 2026** issue of the *BULLETIN* is **June 1, 2026**. 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*. **Please limit articles to four pages.**

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

GHOSTS, GHOSTS AND MORE GHOSTS.



Do you have a piece of postal history in your collection that you would like to share, but are concerned about your writing skills?

We have many ghosts on our staff here at the *BULLETIN'S* office waiting to assist you. Lived is great at researching, and you can't beat Nitas for write-up.

So, why don't you scan that special cover, jot down some basic information and email it to lawrencelaliberte426@gmail.com. After the ghosts have done their magic, your item will grace the pages of the *BULLETIN*.

“DELAYED BY STORM 1 30 66:”

By George McGowan

In September of 1967 I was very fortunate to attend The State University of New York at Oswego. I also was very fortunate to have great instructors (including member Heather Sweeting’s father). I participated in sports and drank beer. I also had the luxury of having my own car.

My first winter on the lake was an experience, unforgettable snow. I would come to a stop sign, look left, then right, and see only piles of snow. So much snow that the city road department had to load it onto dump trucks and drop it into the frozen Oswego River to wait for spring when it became lake water. I repeatedly complained about the amount of snow and someone would always say “you should have been here two years ago.”

It was years later when I learned the whole story about “two years ago”. On January 27th, 1966, it started as light snow. From the 28th to the 30th the snow became heavier and heavier with the most snowfall on the 30th. Some official city records say it was 103 inches worth, but if you ask the locals, it was a lot more. Toward Watertown some records show as much as 10 feet.

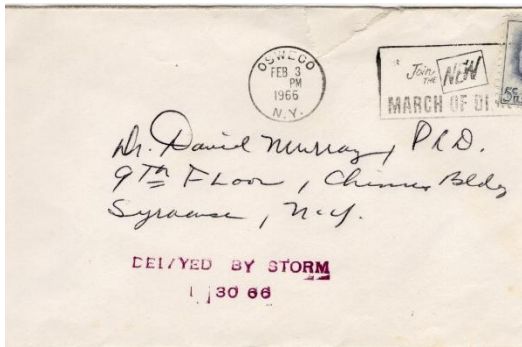


Figure 1: One of the storm covers.

Figures #1 and #2 are philatelic treasures of that event. I do not know exactly when full mail service was returned but I suspect home delivery took a while.

A friend recalled the storm because he was a student at RIT. Another, who lived in Watertown told of his experience opening his garage door. The only thing he could see was the imprint of the 12 door panels in the drifted in snow.

Fond memories.

As you can imagine, the city shut down. People could enter or leave their home by a second floor window, only to find they couldn’t go anywhere anyway. The roads were closed, the railroad shut down, and you may have already guessed, the mails were halted.

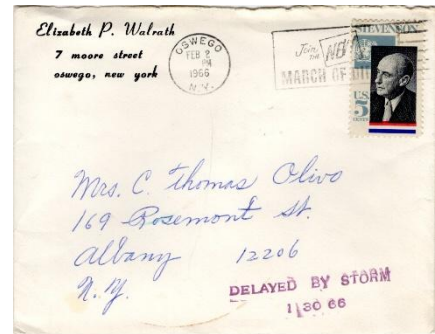


Figure 2: Another storm cover.

He Supported Lincoln

By Mark Fonda

Professor Tracy Peck, 1838 – 1921, **Figure 1**, was introduced to the civil war organization of the Wide Awakes by a zealous member, sister Kezia Peck, an ardent schoolteacher, according to her letters of March 1860 from Hartford, CT. Kezia Peck attended a rally there where Abraham Lincoln spoke against the spread of slavery and the right for workers to strike. Five members of the Wide Awakes, joined the parade for Lincoln, who delighted in the torch lit escort provided him after his speech.

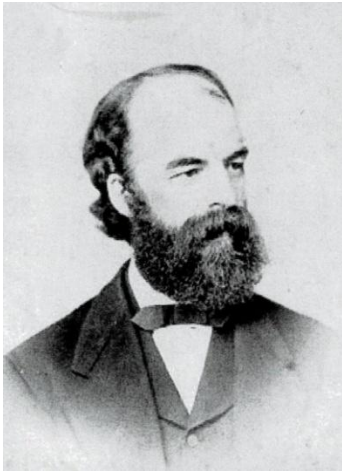


Figure 1: Tracy Peck

Tracy Peck was a bright student during these years just prior to the outbreak of the civil war. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree and was class of 1861 valedictorian.

By this time the popular Wide Awakes paramilitary organization proved to be key to putting Lincoln in the White House from 1861 to 1865 as president of the US. Lincoln personally sought out the Wide Awakes to marshal his rally speeches and campaigns and had a census in the 1860s of over 500,000 members nationwide. Military volunteers of the Wide Awakes were the first combatants and casualties of the Civil War.

In the South, similar groups were formed to halt the grip on young American voters.

Tracy Peck was from a staunch and well-respected Connecticut Yankee stock family. In his growing years of education in the Fine Arts field, one can surely surmise he did his utmost to appeal to the common sense of Lincoln's cause and the integrity of keeping the United States whole as opposed to the rebel south's hell-bent desire to divide the U.S. along the Mason Dixon line to his classmates and later student body.

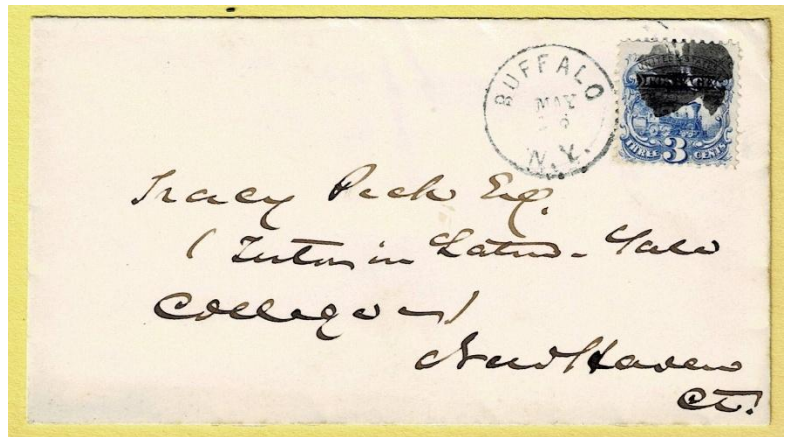


Figure 2: Cover addressed to Tracy Peck when he was a professor at Yale.

It is stated that he served as a tutor (in Latin and classical languages) 1864 - 1867 and 1869 - 1870. It is also noted that he received his PhD in Berlin, Germany in 1864 and traveled Europe extensively until his death in Rome, Italy in 1921.

The cover in this article, **Figure 2**, bears a U.S. Scott #114 three cent locomotive from the 1869-1870 period when Tracy Peck was serving as a tutor in Latin at Yale college. According to archivist William Massd, Jr. at Yale, there was not much material or postal history re: Tracy Peck 1869-1870. From Yale's records, it was found that Tracy Peck commissioned American artist John Ferguson Weir (1841-1926) in 1896 to paint him in an oil on canvas which was not on view at the time of this article.

Tracy Peck's wife, Elizabeth Harriet (Hall) Peck died in 1903 and conflicting census records state he was buried after his death in 1921 at Rome Italy. However, another census record with a photocopy of the memorial headstone shows him buried with his wife at Grove St. Cemetery, Bristol (Hartford County) Connecticut.

Further research turned up his last will and testament where he requested that he be buried in Rome, Italy, a city he dearly loved.

Special recognition to Jean M. Stanton of Syracuse, NY for archival research.

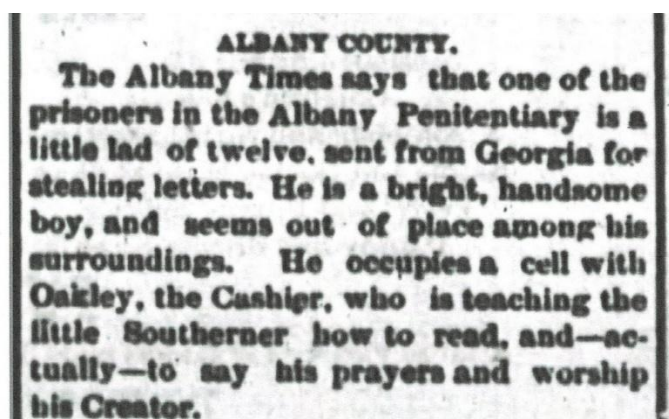
They Didn't Take the Offence Lightly?

By Lawrence Laliberte

In my capacity as Historian for the Hudson Valley Railroad Society, one of my duties is to research the history of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad's Hudson Division and the Hyde Park Railroad Station. The historic station is our home.

The following article appeared in a column that had my keyword, and it caught my eye.

Poughkeepsie Eagle-News, Nov 23, 1878.



Mail theft is a federal offence which explains why the “lad” was sent to New York and not incarcerated in Georgia. Not knowing the laws at the time, it is difficult to judge. Did they have juvenile status at the time?

I will let the article stand on its own and let the reader ponder the facts.

Dog Days

By George DeKornfeld

A branch of postal history that has many of our tails wagging is marcophily, the study and appreciation of the huge supply of the various postal markings produced over the years by a seemingly endless population of Post Offices. Circular date stamps, double circles, fancy cancels, ovals, RPO's, service, inspectorial, auxiliary, and directive markings...so many possibilities! Clearly, as time went by, the quality and variety of these markings slowly waned, the advent of the so-called 'Spray on Cancels' somewhere around 1995 signaling, if not the death of marcophily, certainly marking (pun not intended) a point in time when we marco philatelists simply stopped paying much attention. And who can blame us? The Spray-Ons are quite boring, all in the exact same format, the sole variable being the post office name, with way too many having been either poorly "struck" or badly smeared once applied. Those including pictorial elements, like the snowmen added during the winter season, do help somewhat with their visual appeal and collectability, but to only a very limited extent.

There was fun to be had with the old markings as well. Many of us have seen the serendipitously applied markings where the letter 'o' in, for example, a town name ended up making it appear as though Andrew Jackson had earned himself a black eye (**Figure 1**), or the '00' from a CDS' year date has George Washington wearing a pair of



Figure 1: Andrew Jackson with glasses.

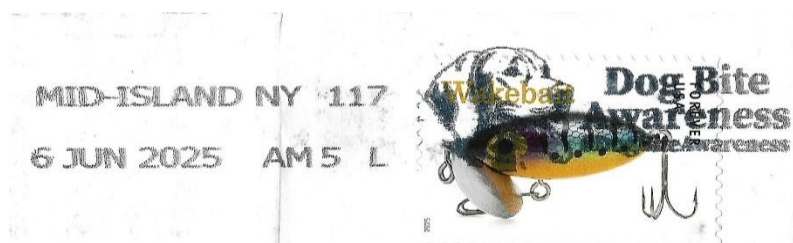


Figure 2: A dangerous catch.

spectacles. Well, as it just so happens, these kinds of entertaining results can also crop up with the Spray-Ons, adding a dimension that creates some much-needed collectability. **Figure 2** brings us such an example, found on a cover franked with one of the recent Classic Fishing Lure Forever issues (a 'Wakebait'), mailed during June from Smithtown, Long Island to Hobart, New York, the cancellation compliments of the Mid-Island Processing and Distribution Center located in Melville.



Figure 3: My Labrador?

Having never not enjoyed the company of a Labrador Retriever or two as beloved family members throughout my entire life, the image created by **Figure 2's** mix of stamp and cancellation instantaneously brought to mind a scene wholly common around here, albeit never with barbed treble hooks attached! The pose also somehow felt naggingly familiar. Then it finally came to me...King Buck doing what retrievers love to do, as depicted on our first federal duck stamp (see **Figure 3**)!

Awards Chair Chatter

George F. DeKornfeld, DDS, Awards Chair

Shown is a picture of the 'Best Article' award member Bob Bramwell received for his 2024 *Excelsior!* piece entitled *Ben Franklin – A Postal Procedure Innovator*.



The apple is one of the iconic symbols of New York (think 'The Big Apple' for New York City and, since 1976, our official state fruit -we're the country's second largest apple producer behind Washington State) so this handsome trophy is a well-deserved and perfect fit to acknowledge, via membership vote, the terrific article that Bob submitted.

Imagine how nice one of these would look on the shelf of your stamp den. Submit an article on one of your preferred NY postal history pursuits; you'll receive a year's free membership and you may even walk away with one of these awards for your efforts, all while keeping our Society educated and vibrant!

(Photograph by Joyce Bramwell)

A Double Surprise

By Lawrence Laliberte

A few years after I retired from the phone company, I started a part time job with a stamp dealer not expecting it to last over 12 years. After I left his employ, we kept in touch even thou he dealt primarily in stamps and I was into postal history. A few months ago, he contacted me to let me know that his cancer had progressed and that he had only weeks remaining and would I consider assisting in closing the business and getting the stock ready for auction. He also said that

I could take anything that interested me.

Like many small dealers he was a pack rat for 60 years and his office reflected that. There was hardly a clear space on a counter anywhere. In sifting through piles of paper that dated back many years, I came across this piece of postal history, **Figure 1**, that would bring a smile to any Prexie collector. What caught my eye was the use of the 4 1/2 cent coil stamp from the Prexie issue of 1939. Scott #844. It was a small cardboard package that measured 4.25 inches by 4.25 inches by 5/8 inches. The contents were still inside allowing the package

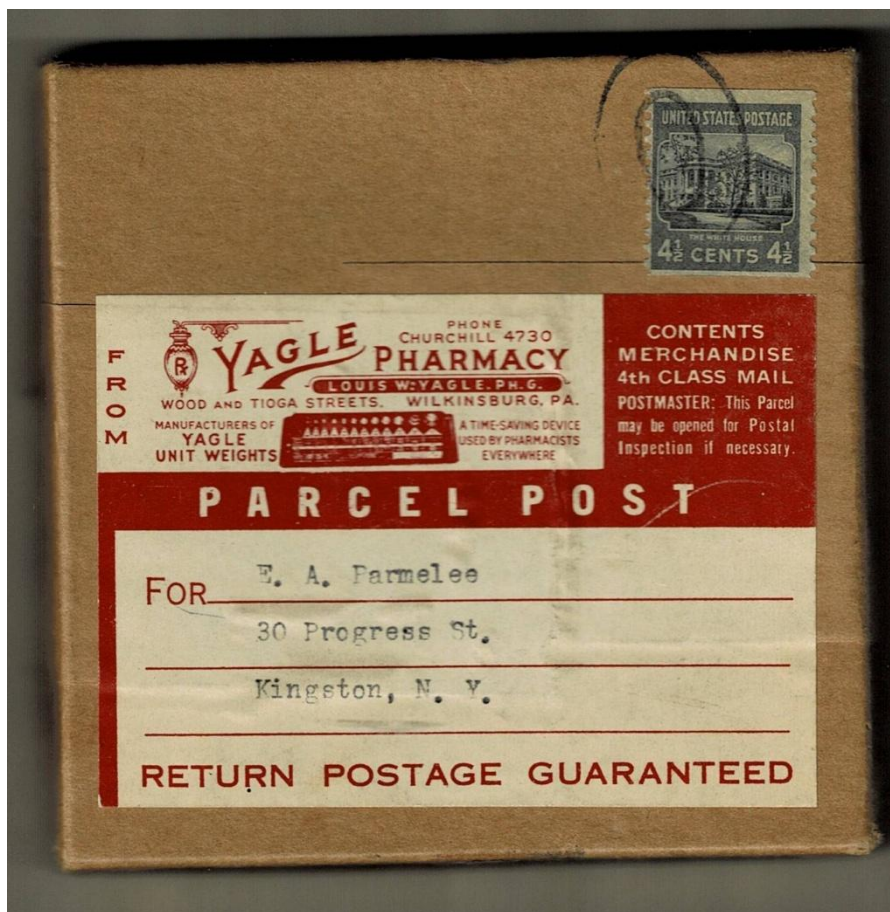


Figure 1: The parcel post package with the 4 1/2 cent prexie.

to be weighed. It weighed 2.9 oz. This would correspond to the 1952 rate of 2¢ cents for the first 2 oz., and 1 ½¢ each additional two oz.

In this time period, stamp collecting was very popular, and one could go to almost any “five

and dime” or pharmacy and find a rack of stamps to choose from. The Yagle Pharmacy of Wilkinsburg, PA, who mailed this package, apparently was very committed to the hobby as the contents of the package attest.

The second surprise came when I opened the container. Inside was a disk that could be used as an ash tray that was made of Bake-Lite. Bake-Lite was the first polymer of what became the family of polymers in the plastics family that we can’t live without today.

I quickly realized that this was not an ash tray but actually a two-sided perf gauge. **Fig. 2 & 3.** The gauge points are ridges cast into the gauge.

Per Wikipedia, “As the name of a philatelic tool used to measure perforations. Invented in 1866 by Jacques Legrand, the typical ‘perf gauge’ sometimes called an odontometer is a metal or plastic tile on which perforations of gauges ranging from 7 to 16 are marked the marks sometimes

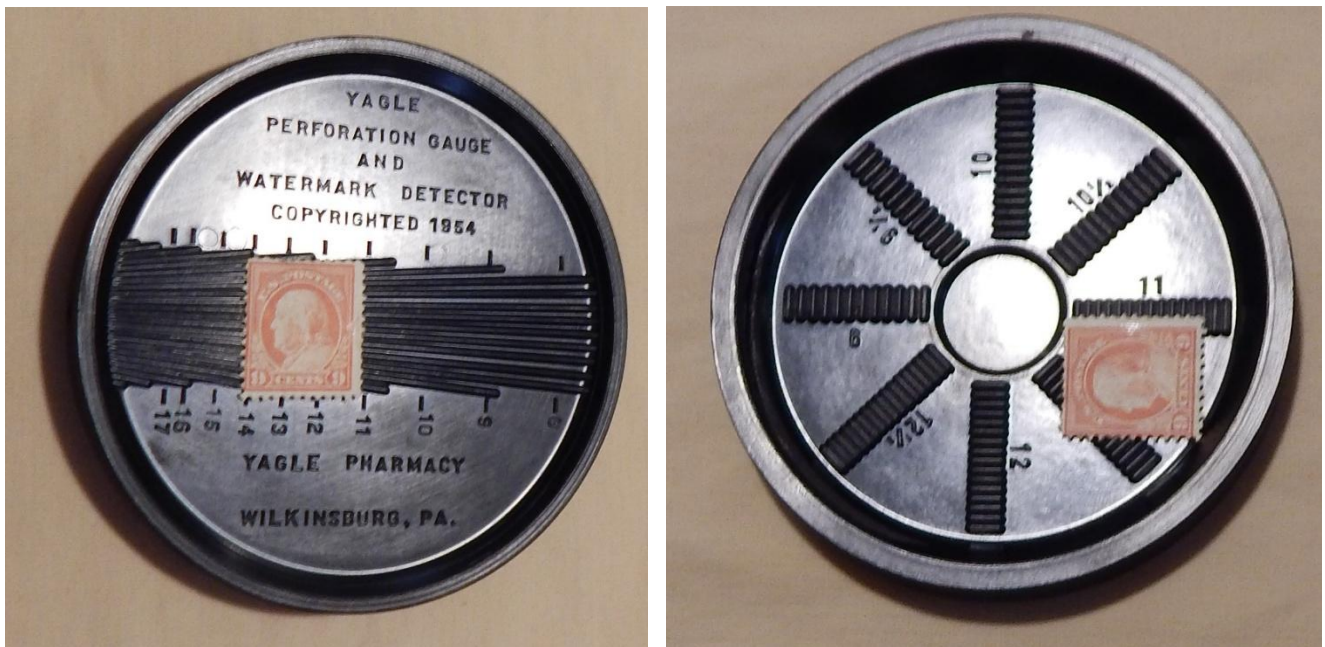
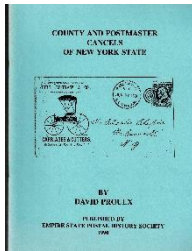


Figure 2 and 3: Both sides of the perf gauge.

appear at the edges of the tile.” Today’s sophisticated gauges are found on clear acetate and many contain additional fields that measure the size of circles, differentiate between wet and dry printings or help identify the grills on U.S. stamps.

This turned out to be a fantastic find whose usefulness in today’s environment is nil, but whose historical value to the hobby could be great.

AVAILABLE EMPIRE STATE POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS
November 2025

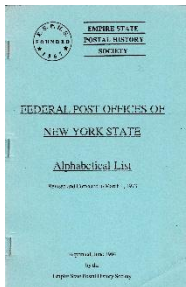


County and Postmaster Cancels of New York State

Edited by David Proulx

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

List price \$10.00; Member price \$8.00. Plus postage (**131 in stock**)

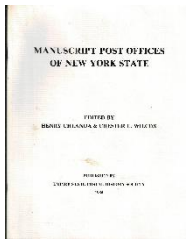


Federal Post Offices of New York State

Reprinted June 1994 ESPHS

Alphabetical List referencing county revised and corrected to March 1, 1973, 60 pages' Soft cover, 5.5" X 8.5" Format, Stapled.

List price \$5.00; Member price \$4.00. Plus postage (**1 in stock**)

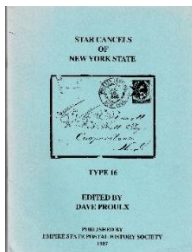


Manuscript Post Offices of New York State

Edited by Henry Chlanda and Chester E. Wilcox

1984, 54 Pages, plus the 1999 Master supplement, Edited by Douglas Penwell, 34 Pages; both are soft cover and stapled.

List price \$14.00; Member price \$12.00. Plus postage (**2 sets in stock**), 29 Supplements available, price on request.

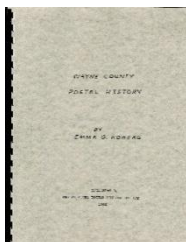


Star Cancels of New York State

Edited by David Proulx

1987, 44 pages, Illustrated, Soft cover, Stapled.

List price \$10.00; Member price \$8.00. Plus postage (**9 in stock**)



Wayne County Postal History

Edited by Emma G. Koberg

1982, 81 pages, Soft bound with Plastic spiral binding. Maps, Postmarks, and Illustrations.

List price \$10.00; Member price \$8.00. Plus postage. (**6 in stock**)

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