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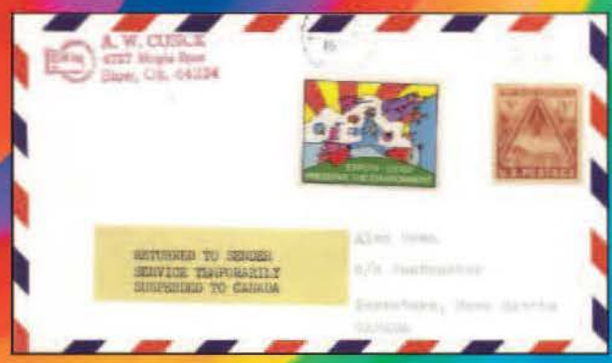
The Turbulent 1970s

By Michael Datollico



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COVER: A psychedelic swirl reminiscent of the tie-died tee-shirts of the decade provides a colorful background to a few covers illustrating aspects of the postal turbulence of the 1970s. Michael Dattiloco refreshes our memories.

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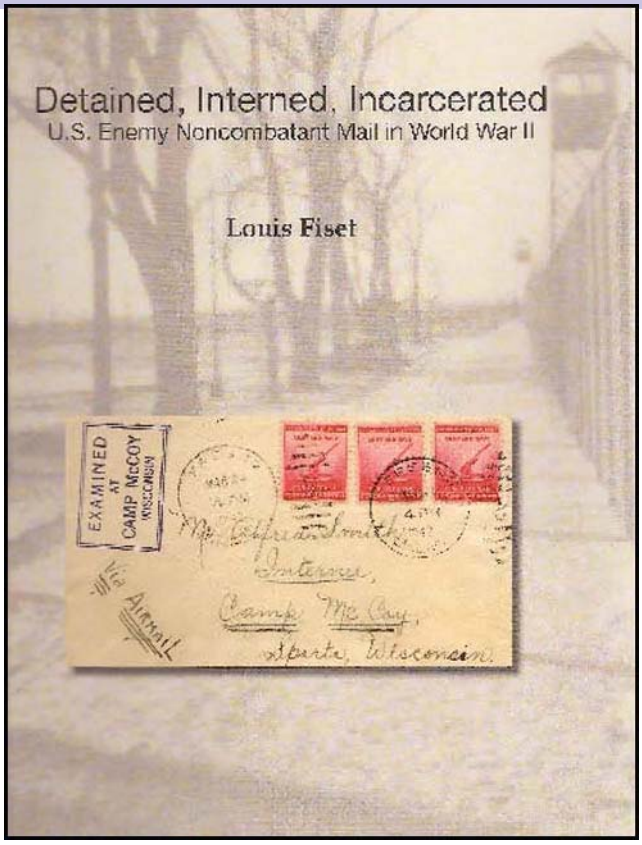
Publisher's Page

***La Posta* review:**

Detained, Interned, Incarcerated: U.S. Noncombatant Internee Mail in World War II

By Louis Fiset, 2010, 234p + CD, Hardbound. The first compilation of mail of noncombatant civilians, diplomats, and Axis merchant seamen held by the U.S. government during World War II. It breaks new ground in the area of U.S. World War II postal history, explaining why political groups were incarcerated as well as their postal history, background on historical events, and a discussion of political groups incarcerated. Edition limited to just 300 copies. $65.00



Reviewed by Cath Clark

When the Collectors Club of Chicago chooses to publish a book, it is carefully vetted for its importance to the hobby, and the veracity of its content. We at La Posta have been eagerly awaiting the publication of Louis Fiset's *Detained, Interned, Incarcerated*, and it has been worth the wait. This 234-page, beautifully produced hardback is a thorough study of U.S. enemy noncombatant mail in WWII. The text is well-written and scrupulously researched, describing the sequence of internments that ensued as the war approached, progressed, and ended.

There are 25 tables, including data on camp locations and populations, and useful chronologies. More than 250 crystal clear illustrations of covers, censor markings, and photographs, most of which are in color, make the book both educationally edifying, and a joy to the eye. *Detained, Interned, Incarcerated* is the first comprehensive documentation of the postal history of the U.S. internment program in WWII, affecting the lives of more than 140,000 people. It illuminates for the first time the differences in mail handling by the four different agencies involved in internment, documented with covers and censor markings. Within both a broad historic context, and from a philatelic perspective, there can be no doubt of this book's importance.

Chapter 1 portrays the events leading to America's incarceration program, starting with the scuttling of the German merchant ship, the S.S. *Columbus*, and the subsequent internments of German and Italian Merchant Seamen. Chapters 2 and 3 describe differences in camps operated by the War and Justice Departments. Chapter 4 is on internment within Hawaii, and Chapter 4 covers the U.S. incarceration of deportees from Latin America.

The role of the M.S. *Gripsholm* in diplomatic exchanges is elucidated in Chapter 6, followed by the handling of Axis and French diplomatic staff in Chapter 7. Chapters 8-11 give comprehensive coverage of the Japanese American experience, from Assembly Centers to Relocation Centers, and special Nisei soldier units. Finally, Chapter 12 describes the relocation of Aleuts and Pribilof Islanders to Southeast Alaska.

The book is neatly concluded with a description of the 1988 Civil Liberties Act that acknowledged serious injustices to citizens of Japanese ancestry with their WWII internment. The Act directed that relocation centers be preserved as national historic sites "as reminders of how the government turned on some of its citizens in a time of fear." Fiset also gives locations of monuments and plaques placed thus far at former internment camps and assembly centers. The Act also directed support to educational projects to inform the American people about internal incarcerations during World War II. Dr. Fiset has truly enveloped the spirit of the Act in the writing of this book.

For the collector, there is a discussion of philatelic considerations of the condition and scarcity of material, and a table giving the relative scarcity of U.S. enemy noncombatant mail according to a points system. Last, but not least, there is an outstanding CD included with the book with illustrations from three of Fiset's gold-award winning exhibits.

The Collectors Club of Chicago has chosen to publish this book because it covers a subject of lasting importance to collectors. *Detained, Interned, Incarcerated* is an exceptional book that should be in the library of both the U.S. postal history collector, and the WWII specialist.

Available from:
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The Philatelic Foundation Introduces *Opinions VIII*

Opinions VIII

One of the most highly regarded series of educational publications in philately now has an eighth book. The series tells stories on the certification of difficult items and new discoveries.

Opinions VIII was edited by Larry Lyons, who is now the Executive Director of The Philatelic Foundation. The new book was published at the end of October 2010, and includes 23 articles in approximately 250 pages.

Highlights include stories on the 1847, 1869, and 1902 issues as well as stories on stamps of 1860, 1868, 1870, 1873, 1908, Farwell Affixing Machine Perforations, Revenues, Match Stamps, Propaganda Covers, Carriers, Locals, and Western Express. A cumulative index of *Opinions I* through *Opinions VIII* is included.

The contributing benefactors for this book were George Kramer, Gordon Eubanks, Donald Sundman, and Robert Rose. The price of the book is $55.00 plus $5.00 for shipping and handling in the U.S. *Opinions VII* is still available at the same price. Orders can be placed through:

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Peter B. Larson [Idaho postal history] — ystone@cpcinternet.com
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James E. Lee [Literature Dealer. Collects Lake & McHenry Co, IL] —jim@jameslee.com & website: www.jameslee.com
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POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETIES (Listed by request)

(For a Listing of ALL U.S. State Postal History Societies see the Empire State Postal History Society)— http://www.pspsociety.org
Auxiliary Markings Club—http://www.pmarkings.org
Machine Cancel Society—http://www.machinecancel.org
Michigan [Peninsular State Philatelic Society, Michagan's Postal History Society] — http://www.home.earthlink.net/~efisherco/
Military Postal History Society—http://www.militaryphs.org
Mobile Post Office Society — http://www.eskimo.com/~rkunz/mposhome.html
Postal History Foundation —slusser.library@gmail.com
Postal History Society — http://www.stampclubs.com/phs/index.htm
Postmark Collectors Club — http://www.postmarks.org
The Postal History Foundation— library.phf@mindspring.com

The Turbulent 70s

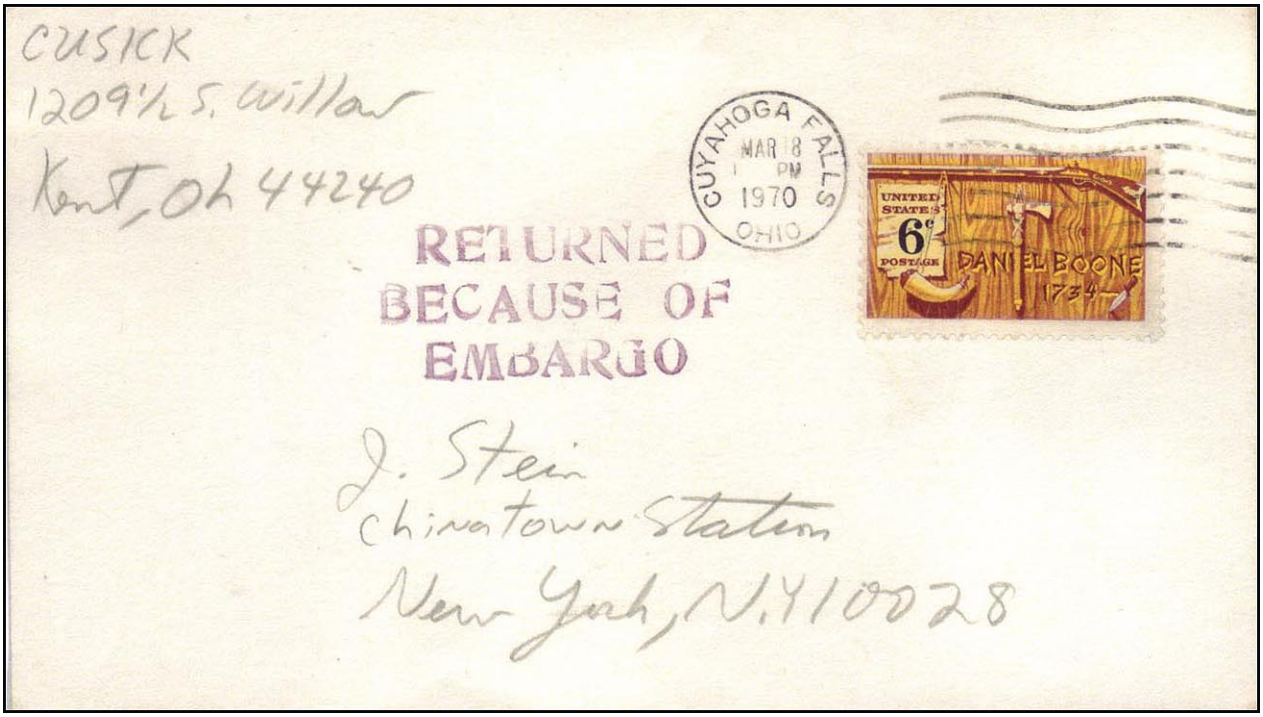

Figure 1 *Letter mailed at Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio on March 18, 1970 to a New York City address. Letter was returned because of the mail embargo declared when the postal strike began.*

By Michael Dattolico

Part 1 – Strikes and Embargos

Prologue

I grew up during the late 1960s when social upheaval largely defined American life. In February 1968 I was a third-year college student majoring in education at Florida Atlantic University. The first teacher strike in Florida's history had begun. After years of near poverty-level salaries, teachers defiantly demanded better pay and benefits. One particular hotbed of striking teachers was Broward County where our campus was situated.

The strike left Broward County and other school districts short of substitute teachers. Districts in the area allegedly sought FAU students majoring in education to work as subs. Our advisors emphatically said the strike did not concern us students, even though we likely would teach in Florida districts currently in conflict after we graduated. Some of our advisors bluntly stated that teachers were public employees who had no right to strike. The same was true, we were told, about doctors, nurses, police and firefighters, or anyone else who served the public. For such people upon whom society depended for safety, order and stability, work stoppages were unethical, immoral and illegal. I avoided the conflict and graduated in June, 1969 with a Bachelor's degree in physical education. By then, the strike was over. The teachers had won a number of concessions, notably higher salaries. I taught in Brevard County, Florida from August, 1969 through June, 1970, and was paid a considerably higher salary because of the strike's outcome.

Postal workers faced a similar situation in the late 1960s. Living on salaries that were often at or below poverty levels, they expressed their outrage by staging the first government work stoppage in U.S. history in March, 1970.

The 1970 U.S. Postal Strike

Prospects were grim for the nation's postal workers during the first half of the 20th century. After World War I, pay scales were frozen and even reduced for a time. Postal employees didn't always fare well in prosperous times, such as the 1950s when President Eisenhower vetoed postal employee salary increase legislation four times. The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) stated that in 1967, employee turnover was nearly 25%. With a starting annual salary of $6,176, mailmen could earn only $8,442 after 21 years' service. In large cities where the cost of living was high, postmen were forced to work two jobs or go on welfare. Morale plummeted, and anger reached a flash point.

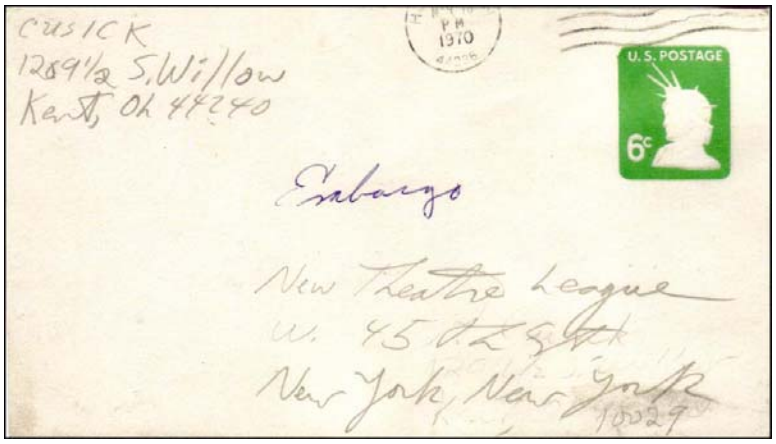

Figure 2 *Letter mailed at Kent, Ohio on March 18, 1970 to a New York City address. The letter was marked, "Embargo" in pen. The sender was a well-known postal historian.*

At 12:01 am on March 18, 1970, the situation boiled over at New York City post office Branch 36. Workers voted to strike at the strategic post office which served parts of the Bronx and Manhattan. As word of the strike spread, postal employees at Branch 41 on Long Island walked out. Workers in northern New Jersey followed, and within a few days the strike spread across the country. An embargo on mail was declared in affected cities. President Nixon ordered military units to handle mail in New York City, but the efforts failed. The strike lasted six days before workers gradually returned to work. On August 12, 1970, Congress passed legislation creating an independent U.S. Postal Service, the first major postal reform in nearly two centuries. The United States Postal Service began operations on July 1, 1971.

Mail sent during the strike bears certain characteristics that clearly identify them. They were mailed from March 18th through March 24th, the actual strike period. Some letters may show postmarks after the 24th since employees in some places did not immediately return to work when the strike ended.

Not all post offices across the country experienced work stoppages. Although workers at some California and Colorado post offices did strike, it primarily affected states in the Midwest and northeastern areas of the country. The stoppage did not necessarily affect entire states. Most if not all mail sent during the six-day strike has the word "embargo" applied to the front. Some places had hand-stamps prepared, while at other locations "embargo" was written by hand. It is difficult to determine how many covers exist. *Figures 1* through *3* are examples of embargoed mail.

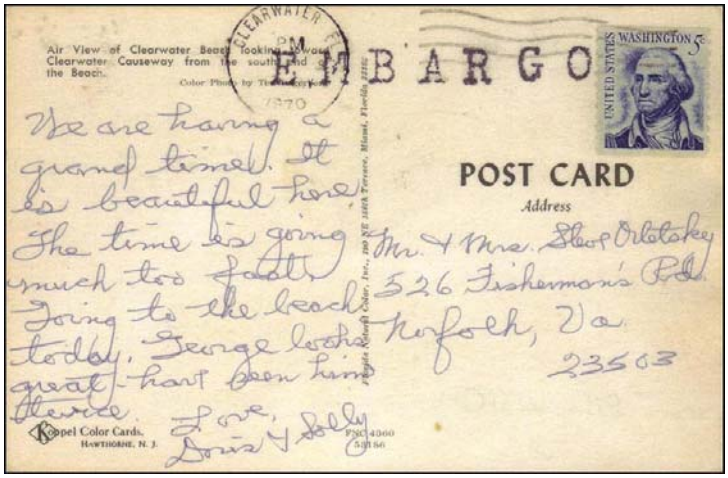

Figure 3 *Commercial postcard mailed at Clearwater, Florida on March 19, 1970 to Norfolk, Virginia. A bold "EMBARGO" parking was applied somewhere in route. This card presents a mystery, since Florida was basically strike-free. The only possibility could have been somewhere in northern New Jersey in proximity to Norfolk. Another problem exists – embargoed mail was returned to sender. There is no return address on the card. The only plausible theory is that it was marked and held somewhere until the strike ended.*

U.S. Mail to Canada

Other countries experienced strikes that disrupted United States mail in the 1970s. The first work stoppage by Canadian postal workers occurred in 1965. Out of that strike came the formation of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW). A CUPW three-week strike was organized in 1968 to gain wage increases. Another strike over wage demands was orchestrated in 1970.

In 1974 and 1975, Canadian postal strikes affected businesses in Canada and the United States. On those occasions, the CUPW struck over technological changes being instituted throughout the Canadian post office. The union's main concern involved job security guarantees as more and more tasks became automated. To avoid some postal problems, the Canadian government requested that the United States restrict mail to Canada. All mail sent to Canada was embargoed at the border and returned to senders. Especially hurt were U.S. magazines which were embargoed. Interestingly, mail intended for the United States was hauled across the border and mailed at Niagara Falls. Canadian corporations found other ways around the embargo. For example, Imperial Oil Ltd., the Canadian branch of Standard Oil of New Jersey, hid payroll checks

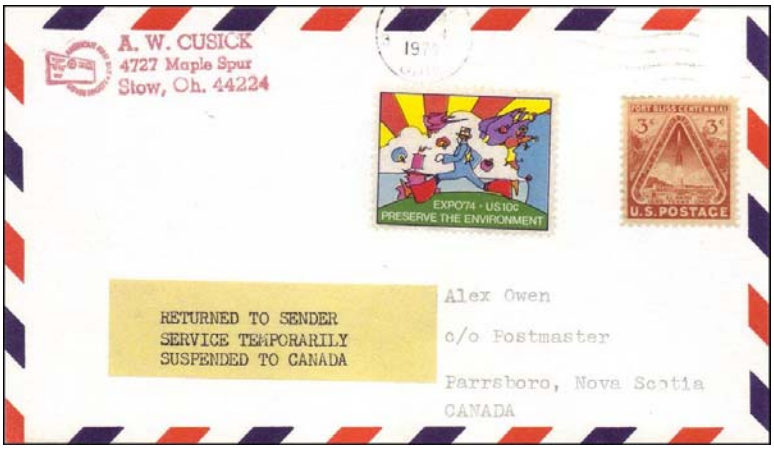

Figure 4 *Letter mailed at Stow, Ohio in 1974 to Nova Scotia. A "Returned To Sender" label has been affixed.*

in luggage, and couriers flew them from Toronto to points in the United States for distribution. American covers held at the Canadian border can be found with interesting auxiliary markings. *Figures 4* through *7* are examples of such mail.

U.S. Mail to France

During the 1970s, the French post office was embroiled in conflicts with the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT) which was comprised of 775,000 workers. Many strike motivations were political. Various union forces were in conflict with the gov-

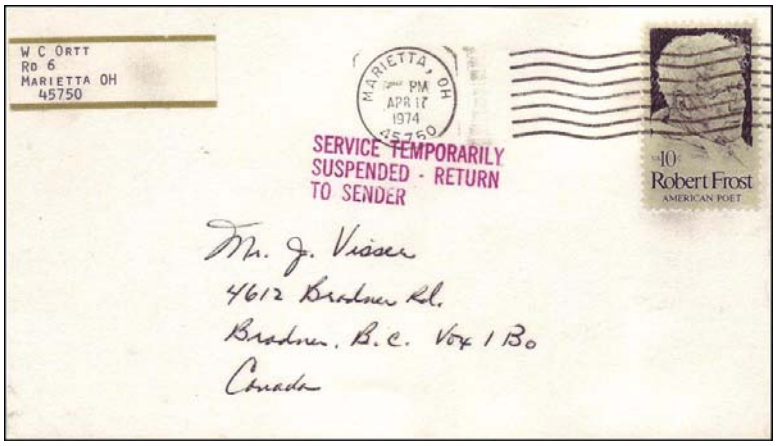

Figure 5 *Letter mailed at Marietta, Ohio on April 17, 1974 to Canada.*

Figure 6 *Letter mailed at Marietta, Ohio on April 18, 1974 to Ontario. A boxed "RETURN TO WRITER" marking was applied at the Detroit post office and returned on April 24th.*

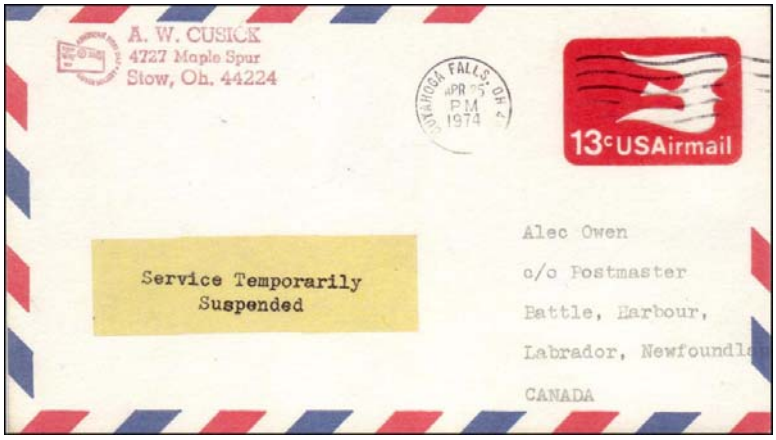

Figure 7 *Airmail letter sent from the Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio post office to Newfoundland on April 25, 1974.*

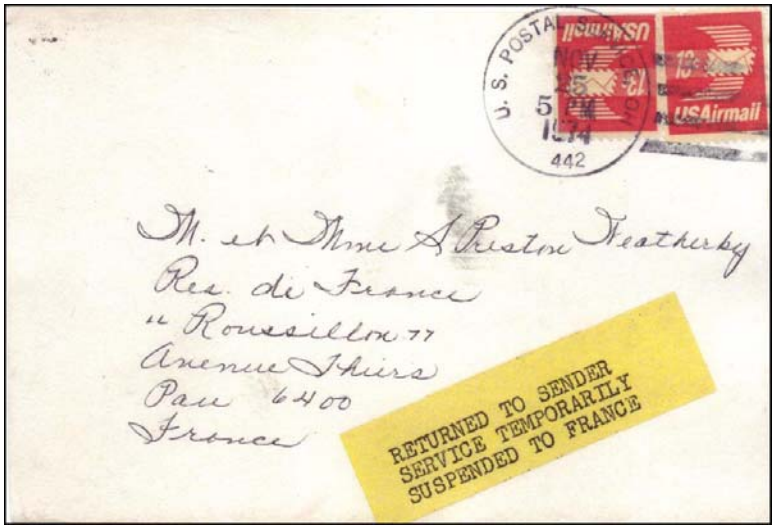

Figure 8 *Airmail letter sent to France from Ohio on November 25, 1974.*

Figure 9 *Airmail letter mailed at New York, October 28, 1974, to France.* A large "EMBARGO – Return to Sender" marking is seen at lower right. *http://members.fortunecity.com/stamptmf/auxmarks/suspended-1974france.jpg*

ernment and encouraged a strike which paralyzed the French postal service in November, 1974. As happened in Canada, the French government requested that mail be restricted to France during an especially heated period of the strike. *Figures 8* and *9* are letters mailed from the United States to France in late 1974. All letters mailed to France were returned to sender.

Part 2 - The Seven-Cent Post Card Rate of 1975

By 1975, Americans were reeling from international, domestic and economic calamities. In April, South Vietnam fell to the Communists. The country had not completely recovered from the Watergate scandal that wreaked havoc on our government. The economy was in a tailspin, casting a pall over the United States as the bicentennial year approached. At a PBS fund-raiser, journalist Alistair Cook quipped to his friend Walt Rostow:

> …Since I've known you, Americans have endured floods, earthquakes, assassinations, riots, wars, political scandals, and business downturns. What's next? A volcano eruption?

If Postmaster-General Benjamin Bailar had been present, he'd have assured Cook that a mail service volcano was just a deep fissure away.

Another postal crisis became imminent that summer. In July the 600,000 postal service workforce pushed for a wage increase. Failure to provide one prompted threats of a work stoppage, an event that nobody wanted. After watching the 1974 deficit peak at $438 million, the fiscal gap for 1975 was projected to be $870 million. The U.S. Postal Service needed immediate additional revenue to avert a catastrophe.

Bailar admitted that the Postal Service was losing $200 million dollars each month. To eliminate the deficit, Bailar requested that Congress double the $920 million dollar subsidy. He attempted to close nearly 12,000 4th-class post offices, an unpopular proposal that accomplished little. Bailar also asked for a substantial increase in nearly all mail rates.

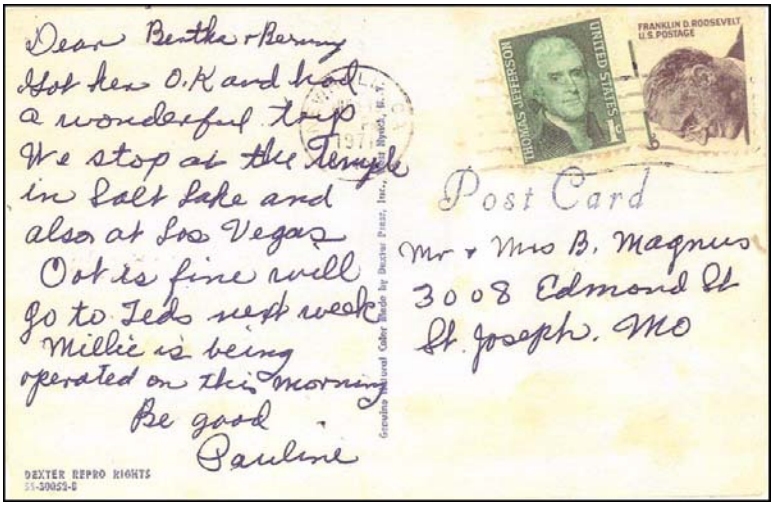

Figure 10 *Foreshadowing a postal event. Commercial card sent by surface mail in July, 1971 when the post card rate was six cents. For unknown reasons the sender affixed sevens cents postage.*

To prepare for the needed increases, Bailar had to contend with a peculiar situation. Existing rates were regarded as temporary. In order to significantly raise rates, he had to institute 'permanent' ones for 90 days before they could be raised again. The permanent rates had to be established by September to increase them again by the year's end. The American public, worn down by a gasoline shortage, high inflation, rising crime and growing unemployment, accepted the depressing news with chagrin.

The new postal rates took effect on Sunday, September 14, 1975. At first glance, they didn't look too bad. The cost of mailing a letter weighing less than an ounce stayed at ten cents. Each additional ounce actually dropped a penny to nine cents. Costs for airmail letters and cards as well as third-class bulk mail remained unchanged. Unfortunately, second-class mail rates rose 3% while the cost of sending a parcel increased 6%.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the new plan was the post card rate which was lowered from eight to seven cents. A reduction in post card rates had briefly occurred twice in our history – from two cents to one cent in 1919 and again from 1925 to 1926. The rate remained at one cent until it returned to two cents on January 1, 1952. The post card rate was lowered because the U.S. Postal Commission (Rate Board) over-estimated revenue needs in 1974, forcing a small reduction in the 1975 rate. The official cause of the 1975 post card rate reduction was not well-publicized. In any case, Americans were not impressed. Inured to dismal inflation news, the public's reaction to the lower post card cost ranged from laconic eye-rolling to jocularity. Some even regarded the lower card rate as a publicity stunt or an attempt to soften the impact of more expensive services. It was no secret that the cost of sending a first-class letter would soon move from 10 to 13 cents, a post card would go from seven to nine cents, and other fees would escalate by as much as 33% at the year's end. *(figures 10 & 11).*

To accommodate the new post card rate, the Postal Service issued a 7-cent pre-cancelled stationery card in the American Patriot series featuring Charles Thomson. It was offered to the public on Sunday, September 14th, at the Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania post office. For commercial cards, any combination of stamps was accepted. But the 7-cent Franklin stamp

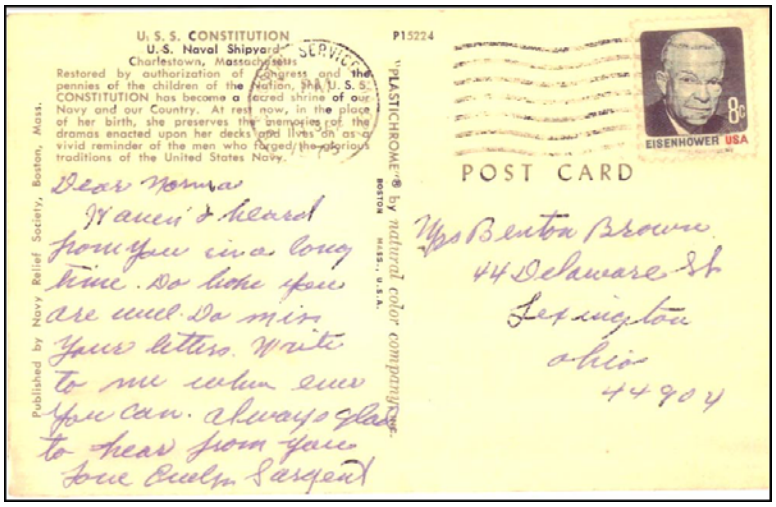

Figure 11 *From March 2, 1974 until September 14, 1975, the post card rate was eight cents. This card was mailed on September 13th, the last day of the eight-cent rate.*

(#1393D) of the 1965-81 Prominent American series was most convenient, available and already in use. Post offices replenished their stocks of the stamp. (f*igures 12 through 14).*

In the inflationary mindset of the time, Americans hardly gave the post card rate reduction a second thought. It was, folks mused, just a penny's difference in price. Besides, many postal stationery users were businesses who had ample stocks of the 8-cent cards which they intended to use. The post office did allow businesses a penny-per-card rebate but only when an extremely large volume was mailed. A more sustained shift to the new

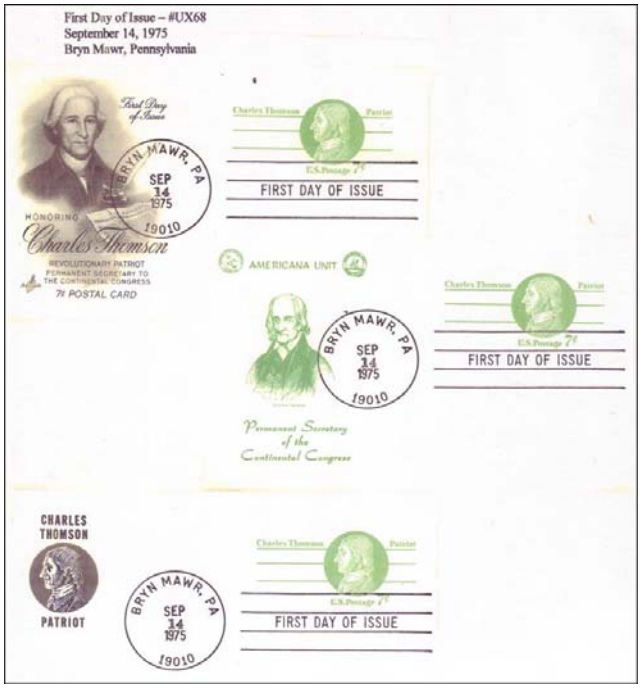

Figure 12 *Three variations of the #UX68 card issued for the 7-cent rate period.*

Figure 13 *Although the vast majority of examples seen were postmarked, these two were not. The postal stationery cards were issued in a pre-cancelled state.*

7-cent card began at the end of September when the new rate was well established, and supplies of the 8-cent cards were exhausted. Americans mailing commercial post cards seemed to use any stamp denomination, so long as it was seven cents or greater. Ten-cent stamps used for letters were routinely affixed to post cards if they were handy. Eventually, Americans adjusted to the new rate and affixed the correct postage, although they got little satisfaction from the one cent savings. *(figures 15 through 19).*

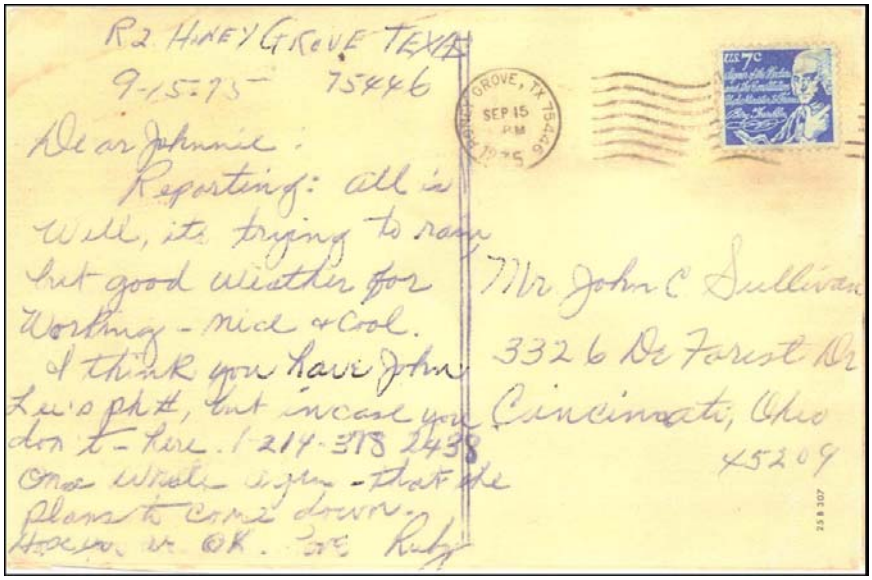

Figure 14 *Commercial post card mailed from Honey Grove, Texas on the first business day of the new rate. The 7-cent blue Franklin stamp of the Prominent Americans Issue was affixed. It was commonly used during the period.*

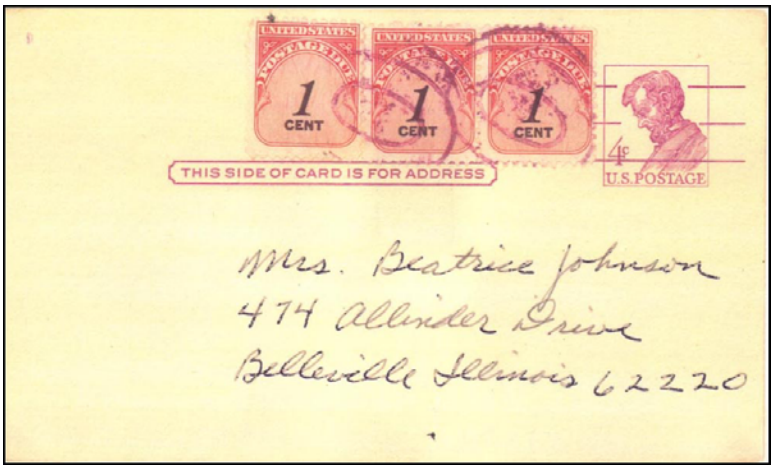

Figure 15 *The mailer of this card was likely rebelling against the current postal upheaval when he/she used an old #UX48 card. It was mailed on Monday, September 15th. The post office charged three cents postage due to the recipient.*

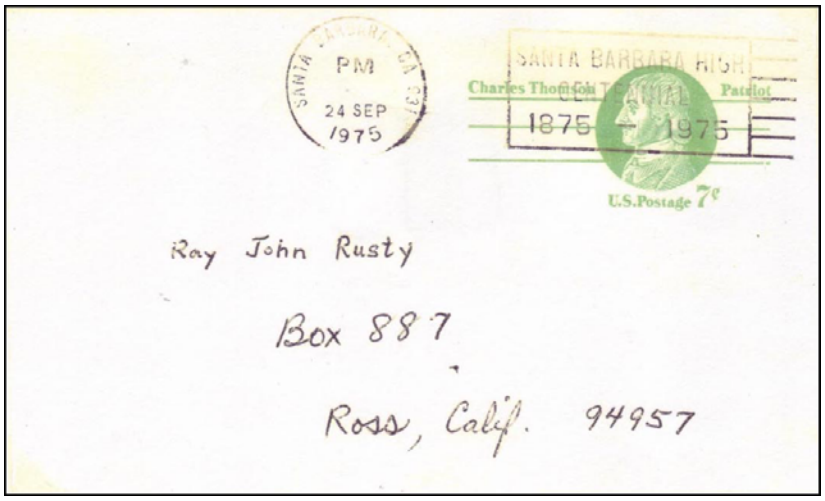

Figure 16 *The earliest use of #UX68 seen by this collector. Not all locations in the United States received this stationery for the first day of the new rate. Many people had stocks of the 8-cent #UX66 cards which they continued to use.*

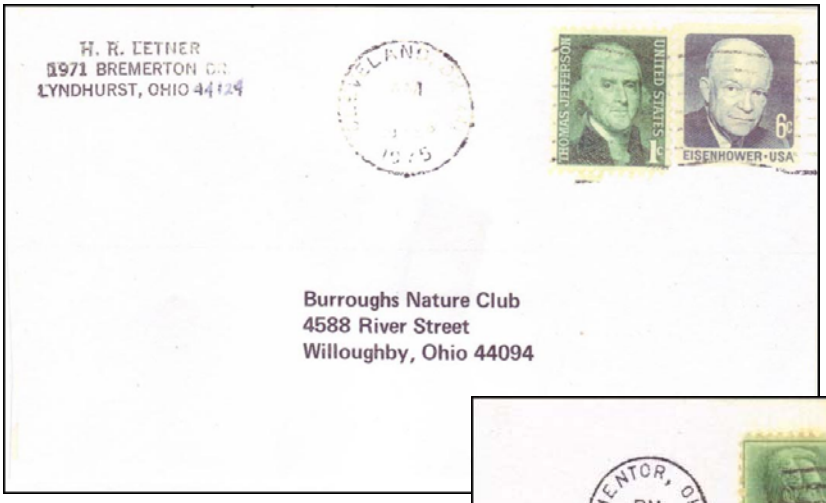

Figure 17 *Postal patrons used a variety of stamps to comprise the seven cent rate. This post card was mailed September 20th at Cleveland. A 1-cent Jefferson stamp (#1278) and a 6-cent Eisenhower stamp (#1393) were used.*

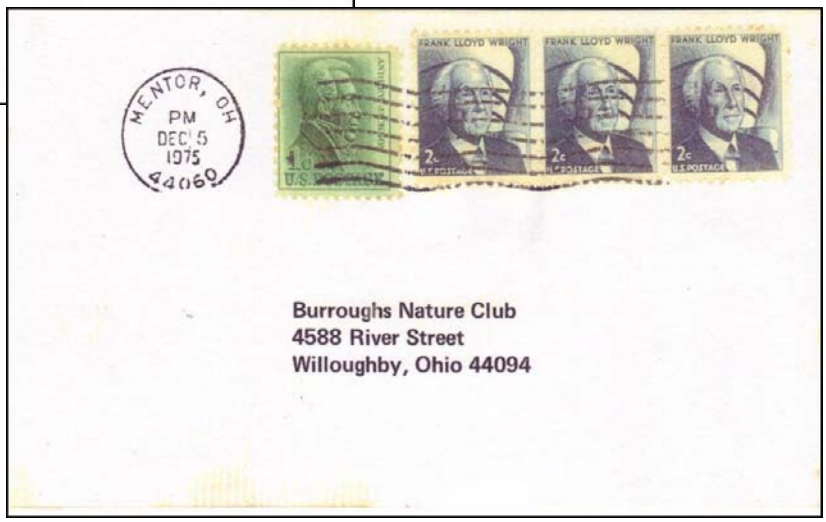

Figure 18 *Post card mailed from Mentor, Ohio on December 15th show usage of a strip of three 2-cent stamps (#1280) and a 1-cent stamp (#1209).*

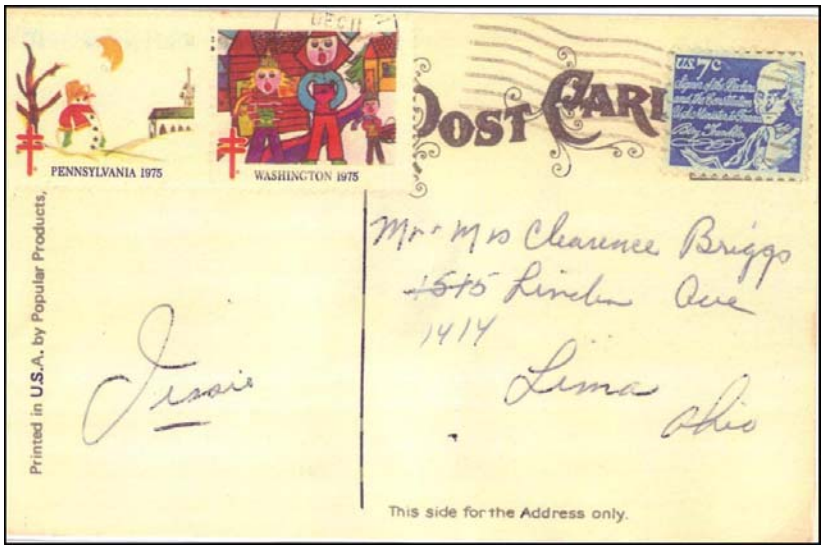

Figure 19 *The country was in a recession during the 1975 Christmas season, 1975, and people were not in the most festive mood. Christmas seals used on 1975 postcards are not often seen.*

As Christmas approached, the postal volcano rumbled again. Two groups, the Association of Third Class Mail Users and the National Easter Seal Society, filed suit in federal court asking that the new rates be cancelled. They argued that if the new rates went into effect, there would be no way for most mail users to recover overcharges if the courts declared the increases to be procedurally defective. On December 16th, District Court Judge John J. Sirica agreed and blocked the scheduled rate increases. His ruling, however, was based on something else.

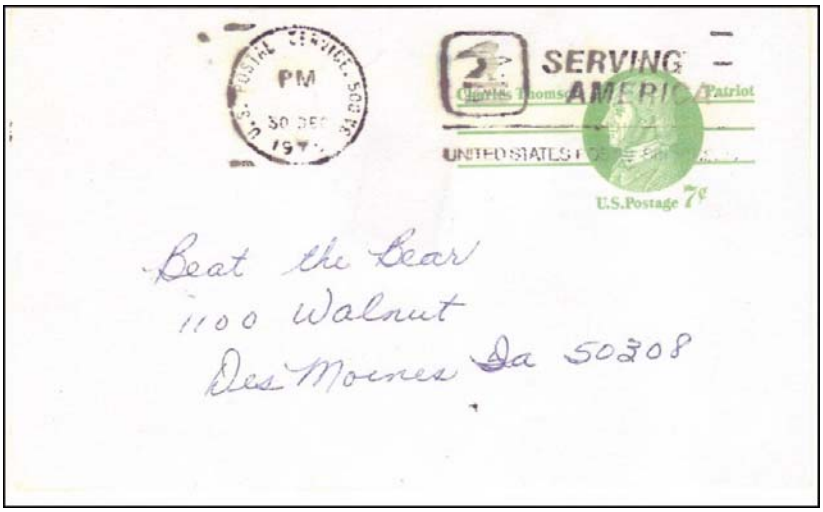

Figure 20 *Use of #UX68 on the last day of the 7-cent rate period. This card was postmarked during the evening of December 30, '75. Supreme Court Justice Warren E. Burger allowed the new rates that day.*

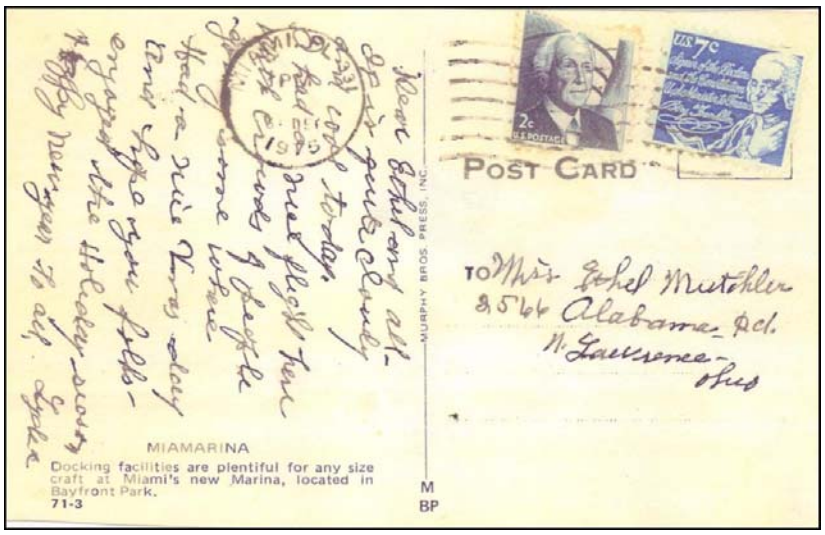

Figure 21 *Commercial post card mailed at Miami to Ohio on December 31, 1975. This was the first day of the new post card rate of nine cents.*

Sirica charged that the Postal Service did not comply with required procedures for requesting the temporary rate increases. Specifically, the judge claimed the postal service failed to file exact increases it sought to establish. His ruling also struck down plans to increase fees on registered, insured, C.O.D., certified mail, special delivery and money orders scheduled for January 3, 1976. Ironically, District Judge George Hart Jr. approved the higher amounts in a suit brought by eleven states claiming that the increase would discriminate against first-class mailers. Although the two judges were the same rank, Sirica's ruling superseded Hart's and was the effective one.

On December 28th, postal officials appealed Sirica's ruling. PMG Bailar stated that his request for a congressional subsidy increase had been defeated in October. He also informed the court that he had received a workman's compensation bill that was $161 million dollars higher than expected. As if that was not bad enough, Bailar said the Postal Service was now losing over $7 million dollars a day at the current rates. If the new rates were not permitted, Bailar warned, he would not be able to make the February 6th payroll. The postmaster-general explained that other service reductions loomed, including the elimination of Saturday deliveries and special delivery. Sirica was unmoved, however, reiterating that the postal service did not submit a valid request to the Postal Rate Commission to make the increases permanent.

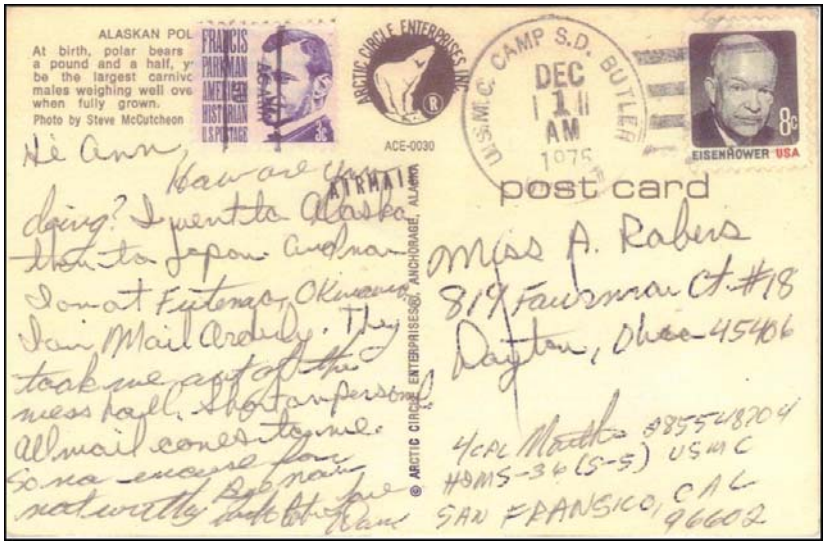

Figure 22 *The cost of sending a post card airmail remained unchanged during the September-December period, as evidenced by this postcard mailed from Okinawa on December 1, 1975 to Ohio. The sender was assigned to H&HQ-36, MCAS Futenma, Okinawa. His message states, "I am (the) mail orderly. They took me out of the mess hall. Short on personnel. All mail comes to me…" The resourceful mail clerk used an 8-cent stamp and a 3-cent issue precancelled at Agana Guam to comprise the 11-cent airmail rate.*

Hour by hour the melodrama intensified. On December 30th, the issue was heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. Testifying for the bulk mail users was former postmaster-general J. Edward Day. Chief Justice Warren E. Burger heard the arguments. At 6:00 pm that evening, Burger ruled for the postal service and allowed the new rates to become effective at 12:01 am on December 31st. *(Figures 20 & 21).*

On the last day of 1975, the post card rate was raised from seven to nine cents. There have been no further rate reductions.

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Figure 23 *Air mail post card mailed from Saipan, Mariana Islands on Christmas Eve, 1975 to Wisconsin. Domestic mail rates applied to U.S. possessions.*

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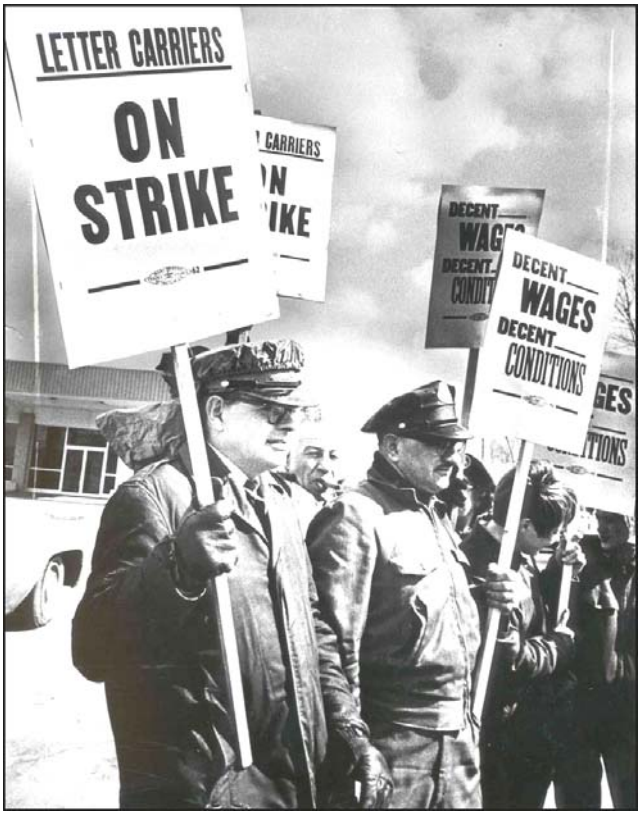


The Postmasters General of the United States

XLIX. Walter F. Brown, 1929-1933

by Daniel Y. Meschter

Whatever else, Walter Folger Brown was known as a political strategist of rare skill, an expert in government organization rivaling Herbert Hoover himself, and not least, a master chef. Ellis Hawley, the distinguished American historian with special expertise in the post-World War I period described Brown in his article in the *American National Biography*[1] as "Solidly built with a square brow, thin lips, thick dark hair, gold-edged spectacles, polished speech, and an air of quiet assurance."

Walter Folger Brown

With respect to his character, Hawley wrote: "In his unobtrusive but complex personality, Brown combined the interpersonal skills and shrewd judgment of a political operator with the calculating demeanor of an efficiency expert, the earnestness of a reformer, and the deferential confidence of a general field officer." And finally; "His place in history is clouded by the fallout from the airmail controversy, but he was a true visionary in the aviation field, a political strategist of remarkable acumen, an interesting illustration of how reformism, business, and bossism could sometimes be interwoven." He was, in a word, a difficult man to understand.

Walter Brown was born on May 31, 1869 in Massillon, Ohio, the son of James Marshall Brown, a successful lawyer, and Lavinia [Folger] Brown1. He was reared in comfortable circumstances until he was sent to the Western Reserve Academy in Hudson, Ohio to prepare for college. He graduated from Harvard University in 1892 and from Harvard Law School in 1894. He then joined his father's law firm in Toledo, Ohio where he had moved in the meantime.

The Brown firm primarily represented utility companies while accumulating financial interests in several major corporations that Walter was able to join on a management level.

Meanwhile, Walter's strong, confident personality assured him of quick recognition as a leader first of the Toledo and then of the Ohio Central Committees of the Republican Party. He strongly supported William Howard Taft for President in 1908, but broke with Taft by 1912 to head the Progressive Party's campaign to elect Theodore Roosevelt. He left the Progressives after Wilson defeated both Taft and Roosevelt in 1912 and abandoned General Leonard Wood for President in 1920 in time to shift his support to fellow Buckeye, Warren G. Harding.

Switching his support to Harding brought Brown national attention when Harding was nominated. He served as Harding's floor manager at the Chicago Convention and after Harding's inauguration, accepted appointment as the President's representative and chairman of the Congressional Joint Commission on Reorganization. However, he was defeated for his own nomination to the Senate in the Ohio primary.

Brown's work on the Joint Committee brought a high level of expertise in government reorganization. The plan it submitted to Congress in 1924 was not adopted, probably due to the radical nature of some of its proposals and perhaps because of the manner in which, it was said, it swept away much of the mystery and intrigue of government operations on which both Congress and the bureaucracy thrived. Among other things, it proposed consolidating the Army and Navy into a single department of defense, establishment of a new department of social service (now Health, Education, and Welfare), restructuring of the Departments of the Interior and Commerce, and removal of the Bureau of the Budget from the Treasury to an independent agency. Many of these proposals were adopted after another reorganization commission many years later.

With Harding's untimely death and completion of the reorganization commission's assignment, Calvin Coolidge held Herbert Hoover over as Secretary of Commerce and appointed Brown his Assistant Secretary in 1927, thus beginning a close association of Walter Brown and Herbert Hoover who also was an advocate of government reorganization.

Backed by twenty years experience in the intricacies of party organization, Walter Brown played a key role in nominating and electing Herbert Hoover president in 1928. Hoover won 58% of the popular vote over Al Smith who won only Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and the Democratic "Solid South." Hoover also carried a

comfortable Republican majority into the 71st Congress (1929-31) with him, but only the barest majority into the 72nd Congress (1931-33), which much diminished his influence with Congress during the second half of his term. Brown joined Hoover's administration as postmaster general in March 1929 and served until the end of Hoover's term.

Brown was in office barely a couple of weeks when he announced plans to reorganize the Post Office beginning with dropping his first, third and fourth assistants, retaining only the incumbent Second Assistant who had charge of mail transportation by the Railway Mail Service, the International Steamboat Service, star routes, and the Airmail Service[2]. It does not appear whether he actually discharged these three assistants, but his appointment of their replacements later that summer indicates his plan did not work out.

The deficits he reported in his Annual Reports reflected the increasing costs of mail transportation, always the Post Office Department's single most costly expenditure. His 1929 Report showed that the annual deficit more than doubled over 1928 from $32 million to more than $85 million[3]. Brown claimed that about a third of that net deficit was due to free franking by government offices, increased air mail deficits due to current policies, and ocean mail subsidies. He went to Congress asking for authority to charge government agencies fees for free services and an increase in first class postage rates, without positive results. He had more success with the support of airline company lobbyists in being given authority to change air mail policies. Finally, effective July 6, 1932 Congress accepted his recommendation to increase first class postage to three cents an ounce after forty-nine years of the previous two-cent rate, except for a brief period during World War I[4].

Virtually everything else he might have done as postmaster general was overshadowed by what Hawley called the airmail controversy.

The problem began in the Air Mail Act of 1925 that authorized the postmaster general to contract with private companies to carry mail at a rate not to exceed four-fifths of the revenue derived from the postage on the mail carried and set the rate of postage on air mail at ten cents per ounce or fraction[5]. In addition, the Act authorized the postmaster general to make such rules, regulations, and orders as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of the Act. For its part the public considered even ten cents, five times the first class postage rate, was exorbitant and neither the carriers nor the Post Office made any money out of it.

Determining the rate of pay for carrying the mail by air proved unsatisfactory for other reasons based on the fact that carriers realized it was more profitable to carry heavier items the shortest possible distance than, say, an ordinary half-ounce letter coast-to-coast. Congress attempted to correct this situation by amending the Ai Mail Act of 1925 to change the method of payment to weight of mail and distance carried, that is, not to exceed $3.00 per pound for the first 1,000 miles plus not to exceed 30 cents per pound each additional 100 miles or fraction; and in so doing created a monster[6].

In addition to the all-too-few well-organized, well-equipped airlines to which Postmaster General Harry New awarded contracts in 1925; by 1929 in order to maintain at least an appearance of competition, many of the routes were awarded to small airlines which depended on airmail contracts for their continued existence. They typically had minimum ground crews, the fewest pilots possible flying antiquated aircraft, and insufficient capital or credit to invest in up-to-date airplanes. In order to maximize their revenue from carrying the mail, they resorted to subterfuges such as stuffing envelopes with paper material and air mailing them to themselves where their pay based on weight exceeded the postage. One such contractor was said by the U.S. Centennial of Flight Commission to have paid $6,000 postage on a shipment of worthless catalogues and directories to himself and collected a $25,000 payment for carrying it from New York to Los Angeles.

The situation when Walter Brown took office offended his conservatism and violated his understanding of the intent of Congress to advance commercial aviation in the Air Commerce Act of May 20, 1926[7]. It is not entirely clear whether Brown's air mail policies were more to advance the transportation of mail or to advance the aviation industry on the foundation of Post Office Department subsidies. His early experience as a corporate executive in the utilities industry and knowledge of business practices and government management suggest the latter and that undoubtedly was the consequence of his policies.

Brown outlined his recommendations to change the Post Office's rate scale for transporting airmail and the airmail system in a speech in Cleveland on January 14, 1930[8]. A strong Republican majority in the Seventy-first Congress (1929-30) obliged by giving Brown everything he asked for in the Airmail Act of 1930[9].

The Act's main provision was to remedy the evils of the rate scales based on revenue in the Kelly Act and poundage in its 1926 amendment. For the purpose of calculating payments Brown invented a scale he called "weight space" to describe a new basis – space, rather than weight or distance – for paying airlines to carry airmail. He started by reckoning one cubic foot of space to be equivalent to nine pounds of mail. Airmail carriers, then, would be paid not to exceed $1.25 a mile for having not less than 25 cubic feet of available space on their planes flying between such points as the postmaster general may have designated, *regardless* of whether the plane carried mail or flew empty or filled the space with other cargo. Where the space in the airline's aircraft was less than 25 cubic feet, the postmaster general still could award an airmail contract, but at a much smaller payment per mile. Brown's purpose in this provision was to discourage the carrying of bulk or junk mail to increase profits, especially by smaller and less efficient airlines and to encourage the use of larger planes designed to carry passengers and cargo in addition to mail.

A second provision allowed contractors to exchange their existing contracts under certain conditions for "route certificates' good for an additional ten years. Their advantage to this was long term financial security.

A third and by far the most controversial provision authorized the postmaster general to "extend or consolidate" routes according to his own judgment. Presumably this allowed him to modify or even vacate existing contracts n order to extend or consolidate them in a third party.

Walter Brown wasted no time moving to create what turned out to be a new industry. The *New York Times* reported on May 11th that in the first week after Hoover signed the McNary Watres Act, Postmaster General Brown negotiated five new airmail contracts that Second Assistant Postmaster General W. Irving Grove predicted would save the government $1,500,000 a year in transportation charges. It has not been confirmed whether the Post Office realized that level of economy; but Brown asserted later that his administration of the air mail increased the efficiency of the serve and lowered its cost from $1.10 to $0.54 a mile.

At virtually the same time Brown convened a series of meetings that are known to history as the "Spoils Conference," designed to put the coast-to-coast trunk routes into the hands of the three largest and best managed airline companies. The press was unaware of these meetings and they didn't become public for several years. It can be assumed that United Aircraft and Transport Corporation was represented by Bill Boeing into which he had merged Boeing Air Transport and his numerous other airline and airplane manufacturing holdings and was just then absorbing National Air Transport. Other participants certainly included Transcontinental Air Transport and Western Air Express that were combined two months later to form Transcontinental and Western (TWA) and the newly organized American Airways. These were well-organized and well-financed corporations with experienced personnel capable of acquiring and operating the kind of aircraft Brown visualized.

The outcome of the spoils conference was that Brown issued mail contracts for three transcontinental routes. The northern route from New York to San Francisco via Chicago, Omaha, Cheyenne, and Salt Lake City was confirmed in United Aircraft and Transport, formerly served by National Air Transport to Chicago and Boeing Air Transport from Chicago to San Francisco. A central route via Chicago, and Kansas City to the coast was given to TWA and a southern route from Boston and New York City via Chicago and Dallas to Los Angeles was given to American Airways.

There were in 1930 only a handful of airplanes conforming to Walter Brown's specifications for weight space and passenger accommodations. The three major carriers realized they would need a newer generation of larger, more powerful airplanes to offer safe, fast, and comfortable passenger service. Also, after the crash of a TWA Fokker tri-motor in Kansas in 1931 that took the lives of the pilot and seven passengers who included Knute Rockne, the famed Notre Dame football coach due to failure of a wooden wing strut. The CAA soon after ruled that passenger planes could no longer contain structural parts made of wood.

Boeing already was a leader in aircraft manufacture with its Monomail 200 Series airplanes followed in 1933 by the Boeing 247 airliner two months after Brown left office. The 247 was a technological break through in spite of carrying only 14 passengers. Meanwhile, the aggressive managers of American Airways and TWA approached four manufacturers among whom Donald Douglas designed and produced a prototype all-metal, low wing, two engine plane seating 12 passengers with a crew of three. The only DC-1 built was a huge success during testing and even set a new transcontinental speed record of 13 hours and 5 minutes. Its successors, the DC-2 and DC-3 models which ap-

peared in May 1934 and December 1935, respectively, revolutionized air transport for their speed, range, reliability, and public acceptance.

Aviation historians generally agree that Walter F. Brown modernized the aviation industry through the means of Post Office subsidies to force the industry to design and build the airplanes that opened the world to American aviation. Indirectly he can be credited with inspiring the aircraft that made the American victory in World War II possible.

Walter F. Brown left office on March 3, 1933 on the expiration of Herbert Hoover's term. Although now 63 with a long record of public service most men would have been proud of, he was not yet ready to retire. A week before leaving office he accepted election as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hudson & Manhattan Railroad, a commuter line across the Hudson River from New Jersey to New York City[10]. He later assumed the presidency of the corporation. He struggled for years to keep the line solvent, but like a half dozen others, it declared bankruptcy and now is a component of the New York City Transit Authority.

His place in history, however, is clouded by hearings conducted by Senator Hugo Black before a special Senate Committee investigating ocean and airmail contracts during the Farley administration a year after he left office; but he was never charged with any misconduct in office except an allegation that he operated a secret stock market account worth more than a million dollars[11]. But the charge seems not to have been sustained.

He returned to Toledo in 1946 and even though in his late seventies resumed his law practice on a limited basis and engaged in philanthropic endeavors, including the Toledo Humane Society and the Lucas County Child Welfare Board. He lived quietly during his last years in a suite in a downtown Toledo hotel and rarely appeared in public.

Walter Folger Brown died on January 20, 1961 at age 91, a month after his wife of fifty-seven years. They had no children.

(Endnotes)

1 See Vexler; Hawley, Ellis W., "Walter Folger Brown," article in *American Nation Biography*; and the *New York Times*, Jan. 27, 1961 for biographical sketches of Walter F. Brown..
2 *NYT*, April 2, 1929.
3 *NYT*, Dec. 23, 1929.
4 47 Stat 285.
5 43 Stat 805.
6 \44 Stat 692.
7 44 Stat 568.
8 *NYT*, Jan. 15, 1930.
9 Also known as the McNary Watres Act of April 29, 1930.
10 *NYT*, Feb. 24, 1933.
11 *NYT*, Jan. 31, 1931.

"A Man's Dying"

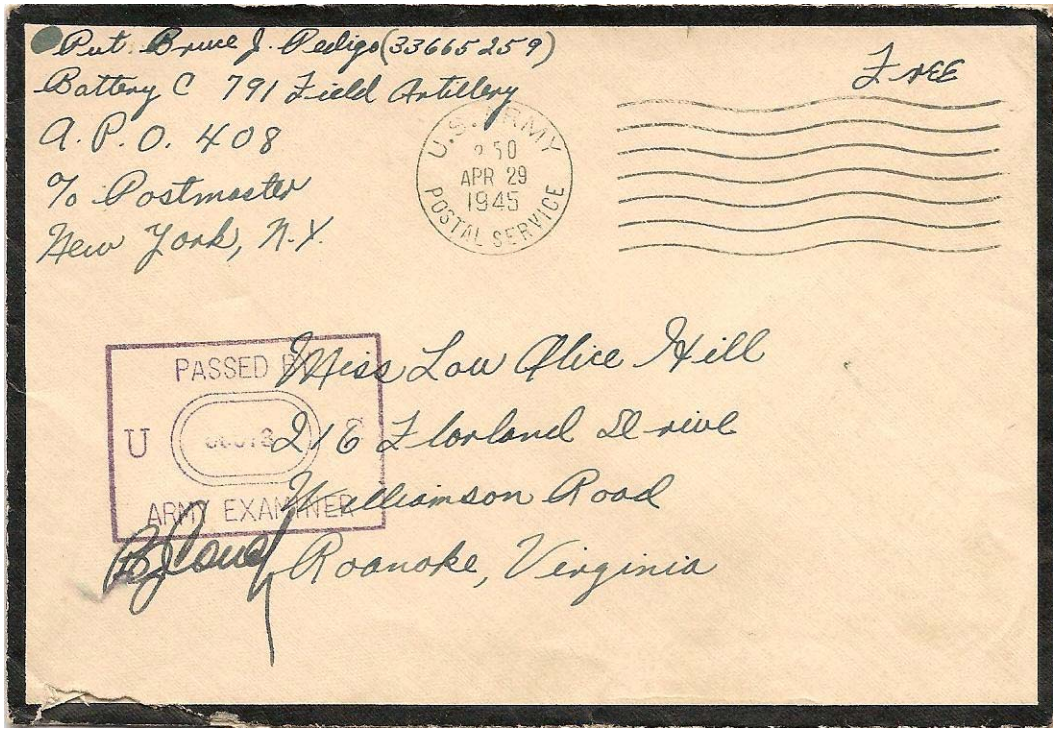


Figure 1 *Discovery of this cover from a field artilleryman in late April 1945 was responsible for setting the author off on a journey down a postal history path he had never previously explored.*

By **Richard D. Martorelli**

Introduction

"A man's dying is more the survivors' affair than his own.Thomas Mann (1875 – 1955), German writer, social critic, and 1929 Nobel Prize recipient.

At a local stamp show several years ago, I was going through a dealer's box of WWII APO covers, looking for the elusive APO#257 of the 7th Armored Division. I didn't find any that day, but I did find a free-franked APO cover with black edges and an enclosed letter. In reading the letter, there was no direct reference to a family death or mourning. I looked at the postmark date of April 29, 1945, but it still didn't make sense. A few months later, while doing other research, I read that the official period of mourning after the death of the president or a former president is 30 days. Remembering that Franklin Roosevelt had died April 12, 1945 put this common-number APO cover into an entirely different category. It was an astonishing thought that this soldier, through just a simple act, was paying homage to, and was in mourning for, his deceased Commander in Chief. (*figure 1*)

As with so many other serendipitous finds in my collecting, this set me off on a path to collect other mourning covers, and to learn about them in the context of their time and postal history.

Definition & Customs of mourning

Consulting the dictionary and encyclopedia, we learn that "mourning" is a formal demonstration of grief, usually at the death of a person and "mourning rites", of varying duration and rationale, may include denial of certain amusement, ornaments, or food, keeping vigil over the deceased's body, or other outward signs such as black clothes or an armband. "Mourning" also refers to the period of time during which signs of grief are shown. In the past, this was often time measured in years, and in some cultural traditions, the rest of a person's life. Queen Victoria is always cited as the example of this, but in my own extended family and acquaintances were several life-long widows, always in black.

The specific mention of black as a color as an outward demonstration of mourning in the Encyclopedia Britannica matches with what is observable in postal history related to death and mourning. Colors obtain

symbolism through cultural references and can have very different meanings in different places. In most Western Christian cultures, black is the color of death and mourning, as it was for ancient Romans. In the 12th century, the Roman Catholic Church standardized colors and liturgical meaning,

and black signifies the sorrow of death and the somberness of the tomb and is the opposite of white, the symbol of light and joy. There were exceptions, notably in France where white was the color of royal mourning in the 16th century. This was reprised two times in the 20th century, with the first occasion being in 1938 when Queen Elizabeth, the wife of George VI of England, had to make a state visit to France in 1938 to reaffirm Anglo-French solidarity while in mourning for her mother. The second occasion was in 1993 when Queen Fabiola of Belgium wore white mourning for the funeral of her husband King Baudouin I.

Around the world, however, other colors represent death and mourning. These include red in South Africa and dark red in the Ivory Coast; yellow in Egypt and Mexico; purple in Thailand and Brazil, and white in China and Japan.

Development of mourning covers

Mourning covers can be defined as black-edged posted letters or cards that were used in most countries, especially during the 19th and early 20th centuries. They contained announcements of a death, funeral or condolences, or correspondence from someone touched by the death of someone close to them. This death related mail has been carried in the public mail system of at least 250 different countries, with varying frequencies by decade and geography.

The first documented use of a mourning cover, containing a death notice and funeral invitation, is from Luxembourg in 1767. In his excellent book on the subject *Mourning Covers: The Cultural and Postal History of Letters Edged in Black*, Ernest Mosher concludes that the antecedent of mourning covers was printed, black-bordered paper used to announce details of a death and funeral. These notices that were usually distributed by hand, or may have been posted in a public area where local people, who might be interested in the information, would gather. In the first three decades of the 19th century, there was increasing use of the postal service. The rise in commerce and mercantilism as well as industrialization brought with it the need for people able to read and write. When Charles Dickens published "A Christmas Carol" in 1843, he wrote both of young Scrooge's apprenticeship as a clerk thirty years before the narrative events, as well as Bob Cratchit's current job. As a result of these developments, more people had the opportunity and motivation to learn to read and write, causing the literacy rate to rise.

Regarding usage around the world, Mr. Mosher documents covers from 217 "countries" (past and present) as listed in the Scott Catalog, and notes those where their usage appear to have been uncommon. He also writes that it more common to find mourning covers from countries which were influenced by the culture and social customs of Western European countries, such as Great Britain. This is probably why, no matter what the country of origin, black is the color of the mourning border. Occasionally, a cover with a different color border marking similar to a mourning cover is found. I have a 1932 envelope from France to the US with a deep purple edging on the back flaps and a matching tissue lining. The symbolic meaning of the color purple was penitence and mourning and so is the liturgical color for the Christian seasons of Lent, marking the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. So is it mourning or fashion? Without the contents of the envelope, it is hard to determine the context of use.

In the early 1800's in England, there was a high level of public dissatisfaction with, and criticism of, expensive postage rates. Each time more money was needed by the government, the cost of postage was increased. As a result of the public complaints, a Committee of Enquiry was set up in 1835. In 1837 Rowland Hill published his pamphlet "POST OFFICE REFORM". Hill proposed a uniform postage rate of one penny, and argued that it would lead to an increase in correspondence. In addition, the use of labels to have the sender prepay the fee would decrease attempts to evade the postage. Since postage was paid for the addressee, one classic scheme was for the sender to use a private code on the outside of the folded letter. When the letter was delivered, the addressee would look at the outside, read the coded message, and then refuse payment and delivery. The Post Office would receive have handled the mail several times, but received no money for their effort. As we know, Hill's plan was accepted and in implemented in 1840. In 1839 there were 76 million letters posted in the United Kingdom. In 1840 after the introduction of the Penny Post, it doubled to 168 million and ten years later doubled to again to 347 million letters.

The trend of increased usage of mourning covers in England was also reflected in correspondence in other countries as well. Mr. Mosher presents an analysis in

his book based on 3,900 mourning covers, with 50% coming from his personal collection and the rest from auctions and other collections. This shows that overall usage throughout the world increased from the 1840's to a peak in the 1910s, then declined significantly thru the rest of the 20th century. It is important to note that while post-1970s usage in this sample is minimal (0.8%, as compared to a 51% total for the four decades of the 1880s thru the 1910s), the use of mourning covers continues. Particularly from Germanic culture countries, people still use the black-bordered envelopes for communication of a death to overseas correspondents.

In the 2000s, stamps were issued, by Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands expressly for use on funeral notices or condolences. In a press release, the Belgian Post Office says, "These announcements (of death) with black surrounds are used less and less. The use of a mourning stamp ensures the sender that the announcement is handled with the same urgency" as given in earlier time to the mourning envelope. While this is a noble sentiment, none of stamps issued have any overt indication of the purpose of the stamp. The Belgian design is a sunset (possibly symbolic of the end of life), and the Netherlands design is a solid tablet with a pale diagonal striped design. Only the Austrian stamp, with a black border and a pair of wilted roses, has imagery that could readily be identified as relating to death. An open question is how many postal clerks, particularly in the current age of mechanized sorting, 9-digit bar codes and sprayed-on cancellations, will notice one stamp design that could as easily be a "modern-art" still-life composition, and then handle that one letter, or group of letters differently.

Uses of mourning covers

There are several basic uses of the mourning envelope. The first, and primary use, is for the communication of the information that someone has died. This is closely related in use to funeral notices, whether it was a religious service or only a burial. In the times when there were several mail deliveries a day, and the distances to travel (for both mail and people) were relatively small, these envelopes would often be mailed only one or two days before the funeral.

The next use is when family and friends choose to send an expression of sympathy and condolences. In the electronic and more informal world of communications today, it appears that neither email nor text messages are yet being used for these thoughts. In the late 1800s- early 1900s, affluent middle and upper class people used visiting cards, also called calling cards, as

Figure 2 *Shown full-size, this image illustrates an example of an envelope manufactured to mail calling cards of sympathy.*

part of their everyday social life. They were a necessary accessory for a gentleman or lady who called upon friends or acquaintances. In fact, the etiquette of the day was that someone wasn't "received" in company unless the person had first sent ahead their card. In general, the cards were extremely simple, usually just a white card bearing the owner's name in a tiny, formal font. Often this card was left with a message of condolence, such as "With sympathy", at the door of a house of mourning, if the sender did not know the family well enough to ask to be received. With growing distances between and within cities, there was an increased acceptability of the use of the mail system for delivering messages of condolences. Small envelopes were manufactured and used to mailed the calling cards, as shown by the upper left envelope (3 ¼ by 2 ¼ inches) in *figure 2*, dated from 1903. Not every small envelope, however, was used for sad tidings. *Figure 3* shows a 2 ½ by 2 ¼ inch Christmas card envelope from 1915 and a Prexie-franked, 3 ½ by 2 ¼ inch envelope used to mail a high school graduation congratulations note.

After the completion of the funeral and burial, the bereaved family would usually send notes acknowledging condolences and thoughts received. Often the enclosed message was a printed card, as was the case with the responses from Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy and Mrs. Ethel Kennedy. For practitioners of Roman Catholicism, "memorial cards", depicting a religious scene or a saint on the front and details of the person whom they commemorate as well as prayers printed on the back, are prepared and distributed at the funeral, and are often included with the acknowledgment responses.

The last and seemingly greatest volume category of use for black-edged envelopes is that of ordinary letters written during the "official" period of mourning.

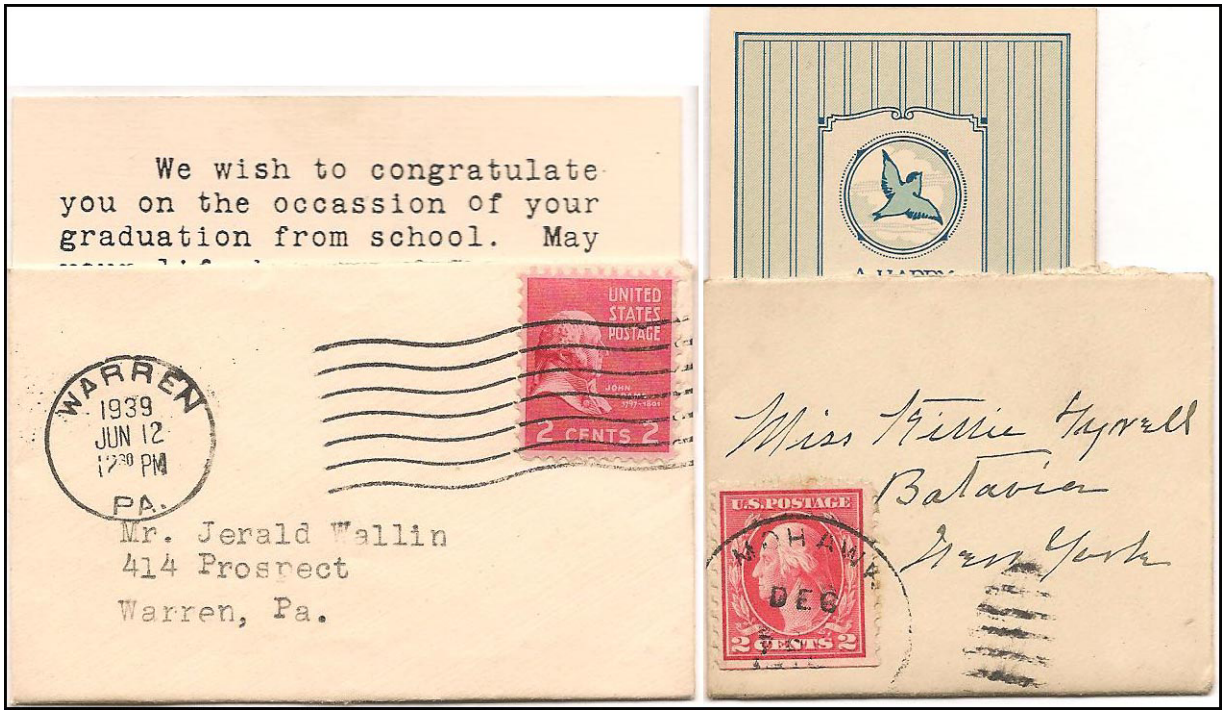


Figure 3 *Not all small envelopes carried sad tidings. The 1939 cover (left) carried high school graduation congratulations, and the cover at right contained a tiny 1915 Christmas card.*

There is much written about the length of time a person "should" be in mourning. For example, in the Victorian years, a widow was expected to wear black clothing for between one and two years, and limit social engagements based on the length of time since her husband's death. Queen Victoria herself took this to the extreme, and wore widow's black from the death of Prince Albert in 1861 to her death in 1901. On the other hand, a widower usually was expected to be in mourning (clothes and social life) for only six months. There appears to be no "absolute" time during which mourning stationery had to be used, leaving it the individuals based on their relationship to deceased. From what contents I have read, it appears that it was used for one to two years after a death.

Official postal mourning

Postal administrations around the world use stamps for celebration or recognition of significant people and events in their culture, including social, political and historical activities. Individuals are usually (but not always) dead when this philatelic tribute is issued. For this discussion, a time interval of lone year or less between a death and a stamp issuance will be considered as a "mourning stamp".

The first US stamp issue considered as a "mourning stamp" is the black 15¢ stamp showing Abraham Lincoln (*figure 4*). This stamp was issued in April 1866, approximately one year after President Lincoln was assassinated. Prior to this time, US stamps had shown Benjamin Franklin, George Washington or Thomas Jefferson. It was only in 1863 that a different face appeared on US postage, and it was that of Andrew Jackson, who had been dead for 18 years. Two other black postal items in this category are the 2¢ postal card showing William McKinley (assassinated September 1901) issued in May 1902 and a 2¢ stamp showing Warren Harding (died in office Aug 2, 1923) issued on September 1, 1923.

Figure 4

Not every "mourning stamp" issued after the death of a US president has been printed in black. It might be more appropriate to call any non-black stamp a "memorial" rather than a "mourning" issue. The first case is such an item issued for the only man to have been both a US president and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. After William H. Taft died in retirement in March 1930, a 4¢ brown stamp was issued in June 1930 as part of the 4th Bureau series. When Franklin D. Roosevelt died in office in April 1945, the first of a series of four stamps issued in June 1945 was purple, harkening back to the liturgical and ancient use of this color for mourning and traditionally associated with royalty and authority. It

Figure 5

Figure 6

may even have been a reference to the U.S. military decoration of the Purple Heart, since 1943 given to soldiers wounded in battle. It could reasonably be argued that President Roosevelt's death from a cerebral hemorrhage was a result of the effect on his health of his leadership role during WWII. Succeeding stamps in the series were blue green, carmine rose and bright blue.

The last item to be included in this category of "mourning "/"memorial "stamps is the 5c blue gray stamp honoring John F. Kennedy, issued on the first anniversary of his birthday in May, 1964. This occurred six months after his assassination. Current US Postal Service stamp issuance criteria prohibit postal items being issued sooner than five years after an individual's death. The only exception to this rule is that a memorial stamp may be issued on the first birth anniversary following the president's death. The most recent application of this exception was for Gerald Ford. The former President died in December 2006 and his memorial stamp was issued in August 2007.

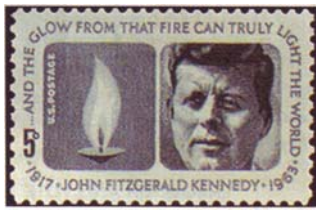


Figure 7

Worldwide, many countries have honored their deceased leaders and heroes with a wide range of postal issues. *Figure 8* shows only a few, including Germany-black bordered overprint for Field Marshall and President Paul von Hindenburg; Canada-black bordered stamp for former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau; UN- black bordered stamps showing the UN flag at half mast for Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold, and Great Britain-purple framed set of five stamps for Princess Diana, again invoking both royalty and a historical reference to mourning. The stamps issued for Princess Diana in 1998 are in contrast to the stamps issued in 2002 for the death of Queen Mother Elizabeth. The stamps were originally issued in 1990 with a silver frame for the Queen Mother's 90th birthday, and were reissued as "mourning stamps" (using the definition above) with a black frame in April 2002, less than one month after her death. Many more examples are easily found by even a cursory reading of the Scott or other catalogs.

US Rates for mourning covers

So far, we have reviewed what we mean by mourning covers and stamps, the context of when and how they are used, and some official postal memorial recognitions. But what do we find when we actually put the envelopes in the context of the postal service paid for and received?

As they said in "The Sound of Music", let's start at the very beginning, and look at domestic rates and usages in the United States.

The most frequently found covers are those bearing a 1st class letter rate. In the primary usage period of the 1860s to the 1910s, about half of the time (1863-1883 and 1917-1919), the single weight rate was 3¢. (All rate information is taken from the Beecher Books). The rest of that time (1883-1917) the single weight rate was 2¢, with a permanent increase to 3¢ in 1932.

As would be expected, this mail category provides examples of all of the uses of black-edged stationary. *Figure 9* contains a handwritten note announcing a death

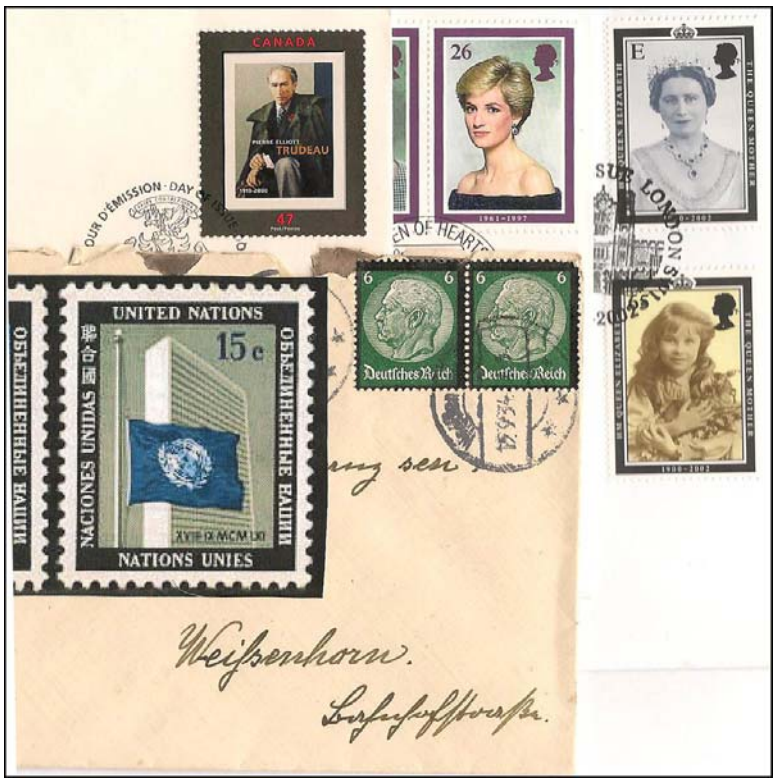


Figure 8 *Worldwide, many countries have honored their deceased leaders and heroes with a wide range of postal issues, including Germany, Canada, UN, and Great Britain.*

Figure 9

and the funeral arrangements, and was mailed in 1904 from New Hampshire to Massachusetts at the 2c rate. It was written and posted in the morning, and received at Cambridge, MA, approx. 100 miles away, at 3PM the same day.

The cover illustrated in *figure 10* was used for the delivery of formal condolences. It is a small envelope containing a ladies' calling card, with a manuscript "Sympathy". Mailed in 1902, with 2¢ postage, it is addressed "City". At this time, the local intracity carrier rate (between two stations within the same post office delivery area) was the same as the regular intercity rate. Had the sender and the addressee both been served by the same post office station, this letter would have qualified for the non-carrier local rate of 1¢.

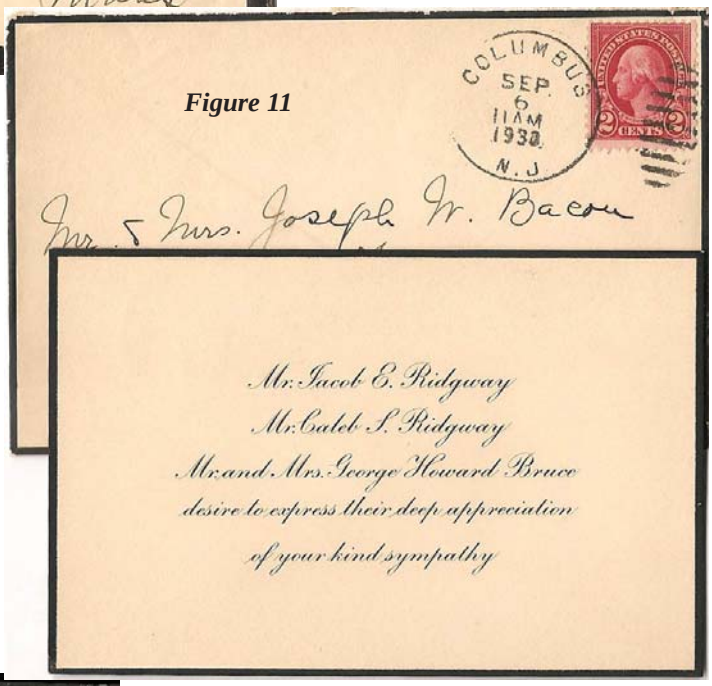


Figure 11

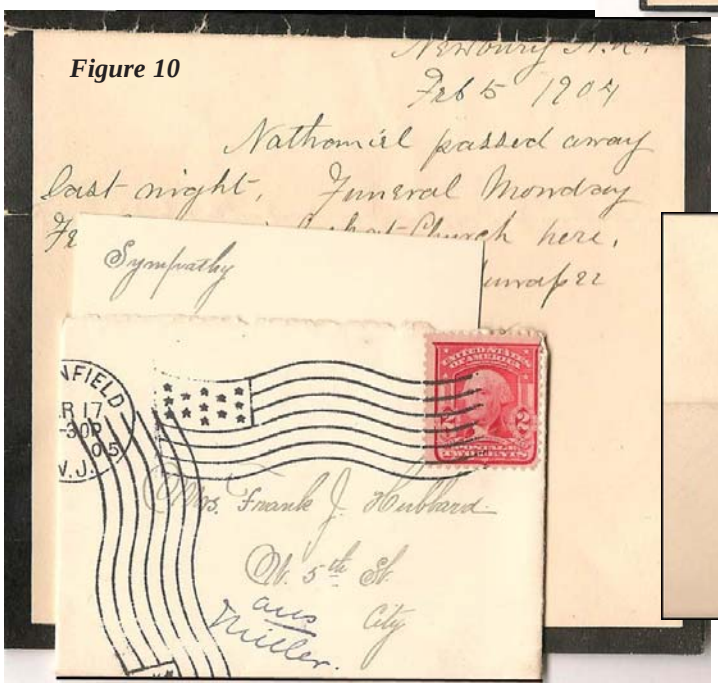


Figure 10

"thank you "card as well as several Roman Catholic holy cards as described above.

Figure 12

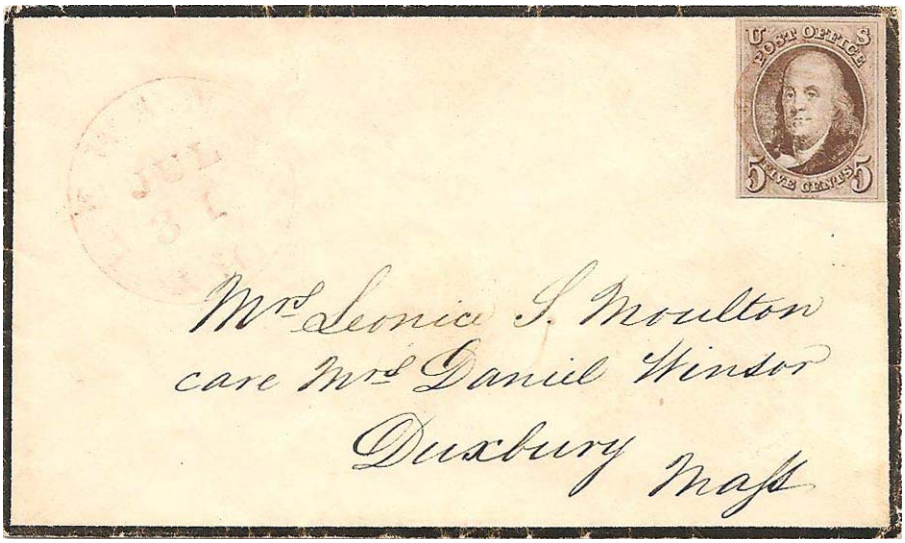


Figure 13 *July 31, Lebanon, NH, US #1 on cover*

The last category of use of mourning covers is one that seems to be the most frequently found. It is that of ordinary correspondence occurring during the period of mourning. As noted earlier, usage of mourning covers, and all mail in general, began increasing with the advent of postage related to distance. The ability to use postage stamps for prepayment was married to the increasing availability of envelopes. These originally were handmade by stationers, with the first automated machine patented in 1845 in Great Britain. The envelope in *Figure 13* was a gift from my wife Joanne on Valentine's Day 2011. It is franked with US#1, postmarked July 31 from Lebanon, NH and sent to Duxbury, MA. In Mosher's book, he illustrates just one cover with #1, and estimates that there are less than a dozen US covers franked with #1 or #2. With no information as to the sender, we can only presume that they were in a period of mourning. The addressee, Mrs. Leonice M.S. Moulton, was a descendant of William Brewster, elder and religious leader of the Plymouth colony, and an adviser to Governor Bradford . She was also a friend and correspondent of the poet and journalist William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878). At the time of this let

ter, between 1847 and 1850, the 5 cents stamp paid the postage for the trip to Duxbury, where Mrs. Moulton was visiting friends.

Figure 14 dates from 1888 is another example of an "ordinary correspondence "mourning cover. Bearing 5c for surface postage from the US to England, it is written by a daughter to her father. It is datelined from Governor's Island, NYC Harbor, which was the location of Fort Columbus, originally (1794-1806)

Figure 14 *An example of ordinary overseas correspondence sent during a period of mourning in June 1888.*

and subsequently (1904-present) Fort Jay. This became a major US Army administrative center in 1878, and became the headquarters for the Division of the Atlantic, then later the Department of the East. Both commands at times included almost all army activities east of the Mississippi River. It was considered a premier posting for commanding officers, second only to top level army positions in Washington, D.C. In her letter, the young woman writes of "getting things in shape" and "have begun returning visits" so it is likely that her officer husband had been recently transferred to the island.

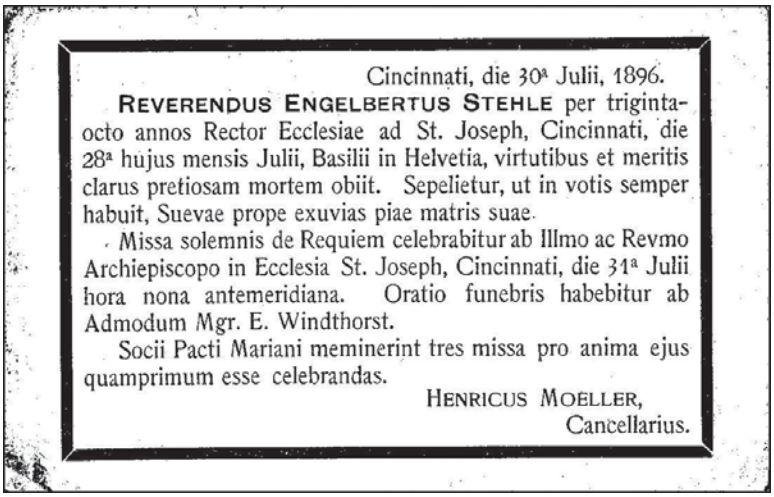
Figure 15 *An exampleof a 1st class local non-carrier post office mourning cover dating from the 1880s.*

In a prior paragraph, there was a brief description if a cover addressed "City", and how it was actually handled and franked as a 1st class letter. The cover shown in *figure 15* is franked with a 1¢ Franklin of the 1881 re-engraved series, putting its' likely usage in that decade. The cancel on the front is dated and has a town name matching the address, and the envelope was sealed. Putting all of this together, I believe that this is an example of a 1st class local non-carrier PO rate. This rate was 1c per ½ ounce from 1865 to 1885, and 1c per ounce from 1885 to 1917. I considered if this could have been a 3rd class single piece usage, as this mail category was charged 1c from 1872 thru 1925. It is a reasonable statement that a printed death/funeral notice may have qualified as "miscellaneous printed matter". Given that the cancellation is dated, however, I thought "horse", not "zebra", and chose the simpler option.

The item shown in *figure 16,* however, is definitely a 1st class local rate cover. First, the regular postage rate had increased from 2c to 3c in November 1917 as part of the effort to fund the US's participation in World War I. At that time, the non-carrier local letter rate also increased from 1c to 2c, making it the same as the carrier local rate. This letter was mailed in June 1818, so it is unlikely that the sender accidentally used the old postage rate from the prior November. Secondly, having actual knowledge of the geography of this section of the city of Philadelphia, the post office station in the cancellation is also the station that would have served the delivery address, making it a non-carrier rate cover. An alternative theory exists, but there is no way to prove it. It is possible that a Philadelphia postal clerk, seeing the black border, and knowing that the family had lost their son during the ongoing Battle of Belleau Wood, chose not to assess the additional 1c postage to the family, which would have been required since there was no return address on the envelope.

It was not only letters that were used for death notices. In the late 19th century, postal cards (US government printed cards with postage indicia) and post cards (privately printed cards, usually with an image on the back that required addition of postage) were designed to be a cheap, fast way for people to exchange short messages. They were used extensively in Europe and the United States, and in 1907 the "divided back" post card familiar from today was approved by the US Post Office for use in the United States. This lead to increased popularity and the period from 1907the development of the divided back

Figure 16 *A 1st class local rate mourning cover dating from 1919.*



Cincinnati, die 30ª Julii, 1896.

REVERENDUS ENGELBERTUS STEHLE per triginta-octo annos Rector Ecclesiae ad St. Joseph, Cincinnati, die 28ª hujus mensis Julii, Basilii in Helvetia, virtutibus et meritis clarus pretiosam mortem obiit. Sepelietur, ut in votis semper habuit, Suevae prope exuvias piae matris suae.

Missa solemnis de Requiem celebrabitur ab Illmo ac Revmo Archiepiscopo in Ecclesia St. Joseph, Cincinnati, die 31ª Julii hora nona antemeridiana. Oratio funebris habebitur ab Admodum Mgr. E. Windthorst.

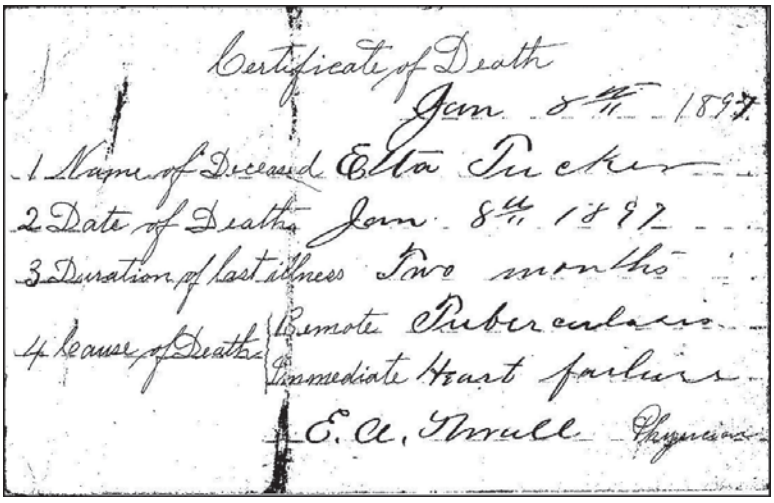
Socii Pacti Mariani meminerint tres missa pro anima ejus quamprimum esse celebrandas.

HENRICUS MOELLER,
Cancellarius.

Figure 17 *The message side of a one cent postal card, bordered in black, it contains a Latin message announcing the death of a former rector.*

until the outbreak of World War One has been called The Golden Age of Postcards; and is considered one of the main defining eras. Two items sent by regular 1st class mail are described next, while two cards with additional service payments are described later.

Shown in *figure 17* is the back of 1¢ postal card issued in 1894. It has printed on it a black-bordered message, in Latin, advising that a former rector had recently died and stated that a memorial mass was to be held at 9AM on the next day. This card was dated and postmarked at 6PM in July 1896 on a Thursday, and addressed to another priest in a town 25 miles away. Even with the relatively fast service and multiple deliveries in a day, it seems unlikely the addressee would have had notice enough to attend the service. The postal card back shown in *figure 18* is an 1897 "Certificate of Death" written by the deceased's physician,



Certificate of Death

Jan 8th 1897.

1 Name of Deceased Etta Tucker

2 Date of Death Jan 8th 1897

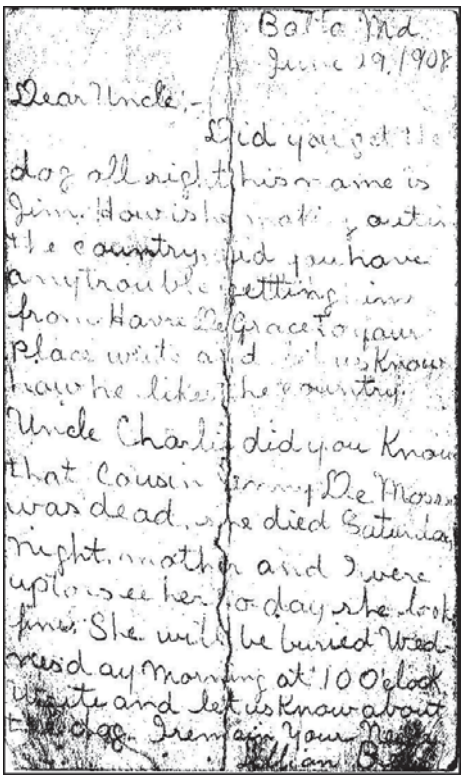
3 Duration of last illness Two months

4 Cause of Death { Remote Tuberculosis
Immediate Heart failure

E. A. Mull Physician

Figure 18 *A Certificate of Death by a physician on the message side of an 1897 postal card.*

stating that the immediate cause of death was heart failure, and the "remote" cause was tuberculosis. This disease caused the most widespread public concern in the 19th and early 20th centuries as an endemic disease of the urban poor. In New York City in 1890, one in four deaths was attributed to it. Today, there are still approximately 500,000 new cases worldwide. In the 1890s there was an increase in understanding of germs and germ theory and the development of municipal public health departments requiring reporting of communicable diseases The unusual part is that this card is addressed to what appears to be an individual in the Columbus, Ohio area. While not quite a "mourning cover" in the traditional sense, it is a death announcement, even if it turned out to be a public-health required reporting of an infectious disease. The last item to stretch the definition of a mourning cover is the postal card front shoen in *figure 19*. The card itself is the last of three successive black McKinley cards, and this one was issued in 1907. It is worn, torn and otherwise unremarkable, except for the message. It is from young girl in the city to her uncle in the country. It



Balto Md.
June 19, 1908

Dear Uncle,-

Did you get the dog all right this name is Jim. How is he getting along in the country did you have any trouble getting him from Havre De Grace to your place write and let us know how he likes the country.

Uncle Charlie did you know that Cousin Jimmy De Moss was dead, he died Saturday night. mother and I were up to see her today she looks fine. She will be buried Wednesday morning at 10 O'clock write and let us know about it. Remain Your Niece

Figure 19 *A death notice from a young girl to her uncle was contained in a larger message on this 1908 postal card.*

starts with the girl asking about her dog, which has been sent to live with the uncle. She then writes, "Please write and let us know how he likes the country. Uncle Charlie did you know that Cousin Jenny was dead. mother and I were up to see her to-day she looks fine. She will be buried Wednesday. Write and let us know about the dog." Again, an unconventional one, but still it is a death and funeral notice.

This article started with the discovery of a "Free" mail mourning envelope from soldier using a WWII Army Post Office (APO) (*see figure 1*). Additional searching produced just one other similar example from May 1945 (*figure 20*).

Figure 21 illustrates another piece "pushing of the envelope" of the mourning cover designation, as this is mail which has been returned to the sender because of the death of the addressee. The example shown is an envelope addressed to a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division and postmarked July 1944. The envelope was routed several times and finally returned to the sender with a "Deceased-Verified" marking in August 1944.

Mourning covers are not found only as simple 1st class mail. Depending on the postage and fees paid, they can be found used in almost all classifications. As discussed earlier, in finding a dated cancellation on the front of a 1¢ franked envelope from the 1880s, I concluded that it was an example of a 1st class local letter rather than a 3rd class mailing. For the cover illustrated in *figure 22*, I came to the opposite conclusion. First, the post office where this cover was mailed in 1899 and its delivery location are 7 miles apart, and in different cities. Because of the distance, we must eliminate both of the local letter rates. Next, looking at the envelope itself, through the placement of the backstamps, we are able to determine that it was sealed

Figure 20 A "Free" mail envelope used from overseas WWII Army Post Offices (APO) in May 1945.

Figure 21 *This 1944 cover from New York to a soldier was marked "Deceased" by an officer and returned to sender with a "Deceased Verified" hand stamp marking.*

when mailed. This suggests 1st class usage, but is not definitive. Last, the cancel is indistinct but it appears to have only town name and possibly a year date. This suggests 3rd class usage. In the context of the above, as we consider the possibilities, we note that in 1899 the 1st class letter rate was 2¢ and the 3rd class printed matter rate was 1¢.

The first possibility is that this is a 1st class letter (sealed envelope and possibly a dated cancellation), but one that is underpaid. In Mr. Mosher's book, he makes the argument that postal clerks, who otherwise were diligent in enforcing postage due regulations, were respectful of the message related to a black-bordered envelope, and deliberately would let underpaid mail be processed without assessing the postage due. While this is an interesting argument, it seems as if it would be very hard for a postal clerk to know what was in the sealed black-edged envelope, as the contents could have been any one of the four categories described above. Or didn't it matter? It was a "mourning cover", no matter for what purpose, and that was enough to know. Why then didn't this knowledge spread to others, that postal clerks ignored the postage paid on mourning covers, and that this was a way to reduce the expense for both the family as well as any sympathizers? Or were the morals of the average person at the time of such a level that they would never think of taking an action that would be inappropriate??

The other possibility is that this is a 3rd class letter (1c postage rate, no postage due mark, and possibly a mute cancel). In the late 19th century and early 20th century, it was common for postal clerks to delay delivery of a letter and incur time and expense of mailing notices to addressees for the additional penny, or charge a postcard at letter rates because a few words of a message

Figure 22 *The question becomes, "was this cover sent by 1st or 3rd class mail?"*

were written on it. Mr. Mosher proposes that these same clerks would allow envelopes containing a printed death or funeral announcements to pass unchallenged at 3rd class printed matter rates if it was not permissible. Whether intentional or not, this happened often enough for examples to be not uncommonly found. Regarding sealing, the Post Office has generally defined "unsealed mail" as mail essentially on which non-1st class postage has been paid. Under postal laws and regulations, all "unsealed mail", which includes third-class mail, is able to be opened for inspection by the Post Office. So, even though a 3rd class envelope may be "sealed" (in common parlance, with the gummed flap stuck down), it has always been able to be opened for inspection by the Post Office. In summary, I believe that the overall facts support that this was a 3rd class usage, that the envelope contained only a printed notice, and that it was allowable under the postal regulations and did not require any special action, or lack of action, by the postal clerks.

In this same category is the cover shown in *figure 23*. It is another one franked with 1c postage, and contains its original contents of a printed funeral announcement. The stamp itself is canceled with a mute killer, but there is also a dated town cancel on the front which matches the town name on the announcement. On the back, the placement of the receiving cancel demonstrates that the envelope was unsealed when sent. Different from the prior example, there is a manuscript "Due 1¢" in blue pencil near the stamp. The postage due is because the cover was forwarded from Pennsylvania to another address in Maryland. Historically, and

Figure 13 illustrates a cover that contains a letter datelined 8PM, Christmas Day, 1887 at Rosemont, PA. The actual envelope, bearing 2¢ postage, is canceled "Trans.(fer) Sta.(tion) Phila. PA", apparently picked up and carried by train to Philadelphia. The town of Rosemont is approximately 8 miles west of Philadel-

Figure 23 *The notation "Due 1¢" was attracted when this cover was forwarded to Maryland.*

phia, and located along the old Pennsylvania Rail Road corridor referred to as the "Main Line". The area attracted many wealthy Philadelphians, who had one house in the city and another larger "country home" on the Main Line. While this part of the railroad was the principal route for the PRR from Philadelphia to Harrisburg (the state capitol), the name comes from the "Main Line of Public Works". This was a railroad and canal system built by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the 19th century, connecting Philadelphia and Harrisburg, and west to Pittsburgh. The letter is from a mother to her daughter in Newport, RI, another retreat in the past for the wealthy. In it, there is no explicit mention of a recent death or other reason

figure 24

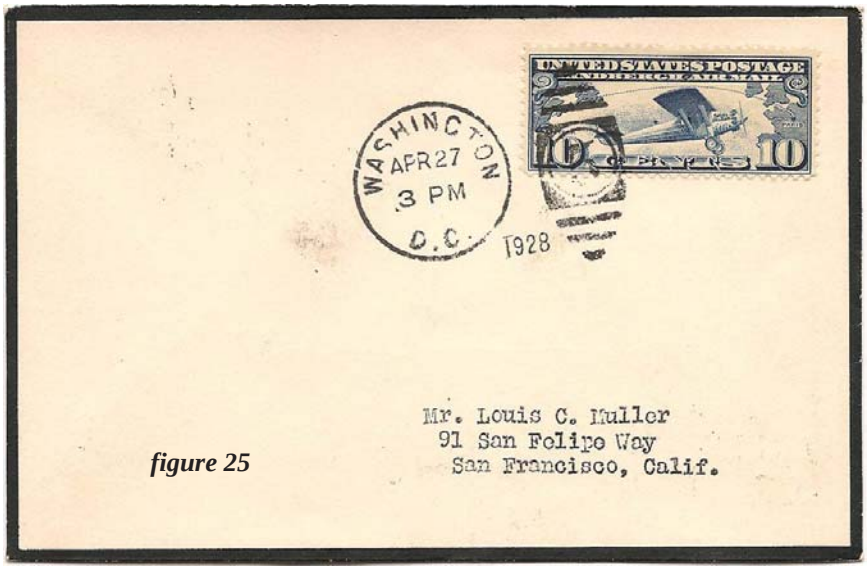


figure 25

and by the commercial potential, the US Post Office established airmail service in 1918. Referring again to Mr. Mosher's frequency distribution, it was in the following decade of the 1920's that US mourning cover usage reached its lowest point since the introduction of postage stamps in 1847. In the decades after the 1920s, US usage decreased and essentially disappeared at the same time that air mail carriage of letters in general increased. This generally makes non-philatelic usage of mourning covers carried by US airmail uncommon and difficult to find.

Figure25 shows a mourning envelope mailed in 1928, franked with a 10¢ Lindbergh stamp, traveling from Washington to San Francisco, via Chicago. From 1924 to 1926, airmail service went from government only air routes, to government routes supplemented by commercial routes, with a variety of rates depending on what route or connections were used. Finally, in February 1927, a single consolidated rate of 10¢ per 1/2 ounce was established. Eighteen months later, the rate steps were reduced and expanded to 5c for the 1st ounce, and 10¢ for each subsequent ounce. It is only in the 1928 to 1934 period of airmail service that the anomaly of greater cost for subsequent rate steps existed in US postal history.

Sweden and was carried on the Transatlantic Clipper to Lisbon, and then by air to Sweden. The back of the cover displays German but not British censorship. This is unusual because Bermuda was the main point for censorship of mail going by air or ship between the Americas and Europe. Transatlantic airmail service to Europe began in May 1939 when Pan Am FAM 18 originated transatlantic airmail service. The original eastern terminus was Marseilles, France, but with the growing war in Europe, the terminus was moved to Lisbon, Portugal, October 7, 1940 where it remained until the end of WWII. USA mail to European countries was flown by Pan Am to Lisbon, and then to Deutsche Lufthansa or other airlines. With the onset of hostilities in Europe, the British began censorship in Bermuda of all transatlantic mail carried on FAM 18 starting in January 1940. It is unclear why this and other envelopes escaped review. (As an aside, this is one of those cases in postal history collecting where the continuing mystery will be a source of amusement over time until I determine the answer.)

What seems to be truly an unusual combination is the cover illustrated in *figure 27*.This cover front was mailed in Ohio in 1936. It is addressed to Germany, and has a manuscript instructional marking "Airmail to New York, (then) via S.S. Europa". In accordance with these directions, it is franked with 6c to pay the domestic airmail service to New York and an additional 5¢ to pay the surface mail rate to Europe. The

figure 26

Figure 27 *An air accelerated cover from Cincinnati, Ohio, to Breslau, Germany, dating from 1936.*

SS Europa was owned by the North German Lloyd Line (NDL) and operated between Bremerhaven and New York, via Southampton and Cherbourg. The sender had two other rate alternatives. The first was all air, Ohio to Germany, at a cost of 30¢ per ½ ounce; the second choice was surface 3c per ounce, Ohio to NY, plus 5¢ per ounce surface service to London or France, plus 3c per ½ ounce for air service onward to Germany, for a total of 14¢ (assuming a 1 ounce letter). The routing of the cover by air to New York and by ship directly to Germany was probably faster that the surface/surface/air routing as well as being less expensive.

With almost all mail, it is important to the sender that the delivery be as quick as possible, and at the lowest cost. As described above, the combination route and rate using domestic air and foreign surface ship direct to Germany was the quickest route for the price willing to be paid. Special Delivery service was another option, allowing for the immediate delivery to the addressee when it arrived at the destination post office. The special delivery fee for an ordinary 1st class letter in the US was 10c from the inception of the service in 1885 until 1944. The majority of this fee (8¢) was used to pay the special delivery messenger, usually boys 13 to 16 years old. This payment was indicated by the most used marking of "FEE CLAIMED BY OFFICE OF FIRST ADDRESS". With the literally life-and-death messages carried by mourning covers, it is not surprising to find special delivery usages.

The cover illustrated in *figure 28* is a 1st class letter mailed in 1908 from CT to a town in MA approximately 65 miles north. It was delivered the same day as mailed, as noted by both PO back stamp and the messenger's auxiliary marking. The typical "FEE CLAIMED" marking on the front shows that the messenger would have been paid his fee. Because there are no contents, we can only guess as to why the sender wanted to rush this correspondence.

The next two items shown do not suffer from this problem. As post cards, their messages are there for all to read, bridging time from when mailed in the past to when collected in the present and passed on to the future as compact time capsules. *Figure 29* shows a picture post card mailed in 1928 between two towns in northern Indiana. It was sent special delivery with the consoling message "Can only be with you in thoughts" to what must have been a close friend. It is only from the message that this can be classified as a "mourning cover". *Figure 30* shows a government 1¢ + 1¢ message reply postal card postmarked in 1939. It was mailed between two cities in upstate New York along Lake Ontario, and received same day delivery. The sender used the card as stationary and closed it with selvage. The message told his family members that their sister was killed in a car accident in Virginia on the day before (Friday), that he had received a telegram and mailed this postcard today (Saturday) and that the funeral was

Figure 28 *A special delivery mourning cover from 1908 delivered the same day it was mailed.*

figure 29

Figure 29 *A picture post card postmarked Peru, Indiana, in May 1928 to nearby Delphi. Mailed special delivery, the card carries an apologetic message "Can only be with you in thoughts."*

and mailed this postcard today (Saturday) and expected to be on Sunday or Monday. Here clearly presented is the reason for expedited delivery.

Figure 30 *This 1929 government reply postal card carried the sad message that their sister had been killed in an auto accident the day before.*

Another category of special service occasionally found in connection with mourning covers is registered mail service. This provides a means of identifying and tracking valuable mail**,** at an additional cost to the sender., and provides an indemnity in case of loss or damage in handling, The fee charged, in addition to the appropriate class of postage ,is based on the declared value of the contents. *Figure 31* shows an envelope sent within the state of New York, in 1904 and bears a 10¢ stamp. This pays the 1st class postage of two cents and the basic registration fee of eight cents. The eight cents fee was in existence from 1893 through 1909, and was the same fee no matter if the mail piece was 1st, 3rd or 4th class.(2nd class mail was not allowed for until 1923). Originally, the service included no indemnity for loss or damage, but this was later changed to provide coverage for 1st class letters only. From the letter still enclosed, we learn that the envelope contained $5.00 cash, explaining the registration.

figure 31

The item illustrated in *figure 32* is an envelope mailed in 1894 franked with 3¢ & 10¢ Colombian series stamps, and sealed with black sealing wax. It was mailed in New York, and addressed to Lucerne, Switzerland. Anticipating that it might miss its intended recipient there, the sender added a request to forward the letter. It arrived 10 days after mailing, and on the absence of the addressee, the letter was forwarded to Bern, arriving there the same day. As noted above, the envelope bore a total of thirteen cents postage, but this was insufficient postage. The UPU surface rate was 5¢ and the international registration fee was 10¢, leaving us with 2¢ (10 gold centimes)

Figure 32 *An 1894 registered mourning cover mailed from New York to Lucerne, Switzerland.*

This is noted in blue crayon on the front at the bottom center of the envelope.

This article is only intended to be a primer on some of the many facets and examples of mourning cover usage. As in many other areas of history and social customs, it is the printed word which teaches and speaks to us from the past. As postal history collectors, we look and study how that word moved from origin to destination, by foot, by air, or by special messenger. As collectors of these black-edged envelopes, we also are given a chance to remember our humanity, and the real purpose served by stamps and letters. They are the original means to "reach out and touch someone", and they still matter. Paraphrasing, and with apologies to the poet Robert Frost, "I shall be telling this with a sigh, somewhere ages and ages hence", and it will either spark an interest or elucidate a cover use for a fellow collector, and that will make all the difference.

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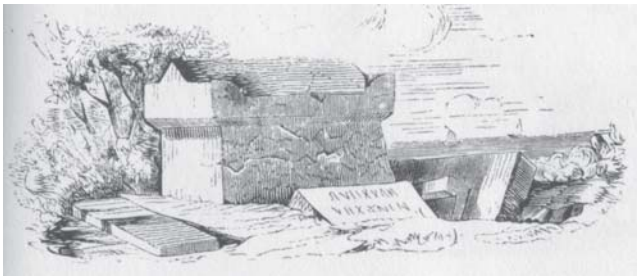
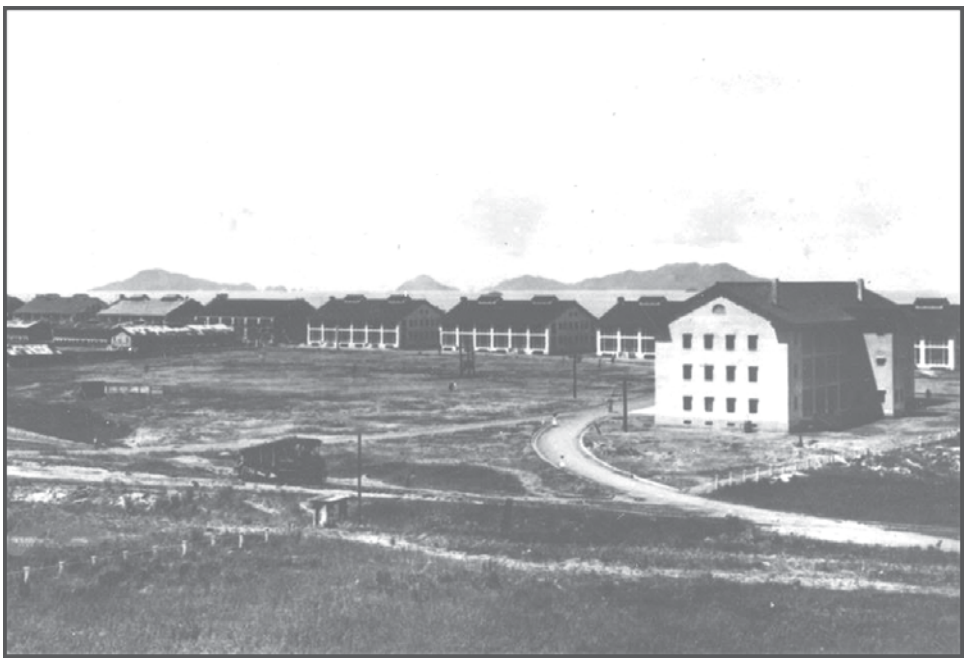


Coastal Artillery in the Canal Zone



A 1915 view of Fort Amador, the headquarters of Coastal Artillery Command in the Canal Zone. Source: http://www.cdsg.org/forums/viewtopic.php?p=269

By Wayne L. Worthington

With the close of the short Spanish-American War, the US Congress expressed a concern on how to defend the new territories. Analysis showed that since they were islands, their greatest threat in the technology of the day was a sea assault.

Additionally, all four areas, Puerto Rico, Philippines, Cuba and Guam had good harbors as entrances and so Coastal Artillery became a branch of the US Army.

Coastal Artillery came to incorporate a broad range of units including Harbor Defense units, five different long gun units and the massive 12-inch mortar units. Leading up to WWI, they added 16-inch guns that were in fixed bunkers or mounted on rails so they could be drawn into hiding and railed back out to firing positions.

By 1901, there were 126 separate coastal artillery companies trained for coastal defense. In 1907 the Coastal Artillery Corps was formally created and its school was established at Ft Monroe VA.

Coastal Artillery and Harbor Defense units were assigned to the Panama Canal in preparation for WWI. *Figure 1* shows a 1918 censored Coastal Artillery Command (CAC) from its early home at Fort Amador.

By 1924 the Corps was reorganized into regiments which were to last until 1943 when they were broken up into separate battalions.

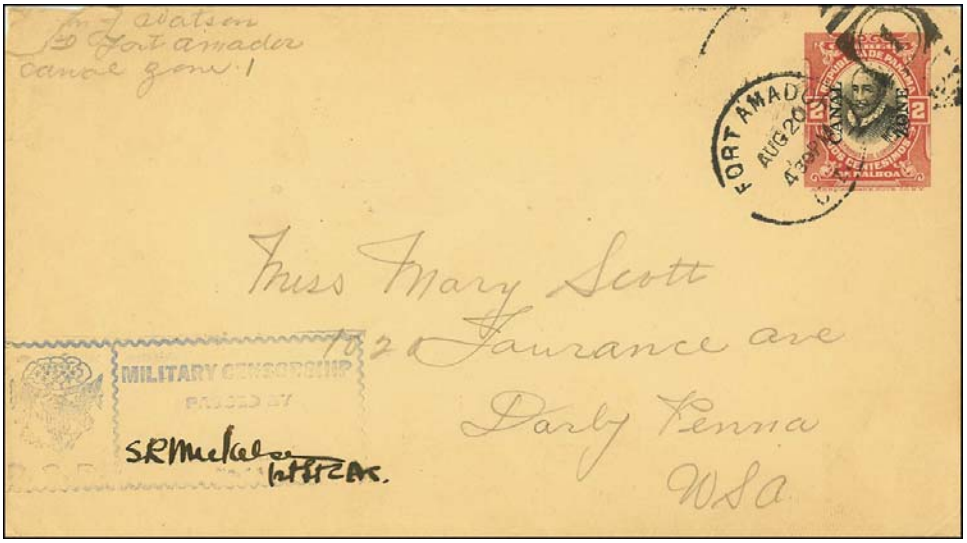


Figure 1 *A WWI censored cover postmarked Fort Amador, C.Z., August 20, 1918.*

figure 2

In the Canal Zone in 1907, major Army organizational changes were begun to defend the Canal. The first regional command was formed in the Zone to command all Army and Army Air Corps units. This was the Panama Canal Department shown in *figure 2.*

Coastal Artillery became the principal defense force in the Zone, but from their establishment through WWI, the units were poorly manned. In fact, soldiers from other type units were assigned to ensure the guns and mortars could be adequately operated.. By 1 July 1920, over 2300 additional trained coastal artillerymen were assigned to the Coastal Artillery Command (CAC) in Panama. The CAC was initially formed as a Provisional command (*figure 3*), but later all coastal artillery units were placed under the Coastal Artillery Command Brigade. The Brigade was permanently stationed at Ft Amador, but early on, elements of the Headquarters were briefly assigned at Ft Randolph to establish Brigade command over all coastal artillery and harbor defense units on the Atlantic side of the Zone (*figure 4*).

Finally, in late 1942, the Headquarters of all CAC forces and the CAC Brigade headquarters were stationed at Fort Amador. (*figure 5*)

figure 3

Assigned to the Brigade were the big guns and mortars of the Harbor Defense batteries. *Figure 6* shows a Harbor Defense (HD) battery located at Fort Randolph. Since the Panama Canal is a fifty-mile waterway with superb harbor entrances on the Atlantic and Pacific, other Harbor Defense batteries were assigned to Fort Sherman on the Atlantic side and Fort Amador and Fort Kobbe on the Pacific side.

Harbor Defense units would remain in place through WWII (*figure 7*), but their importance would

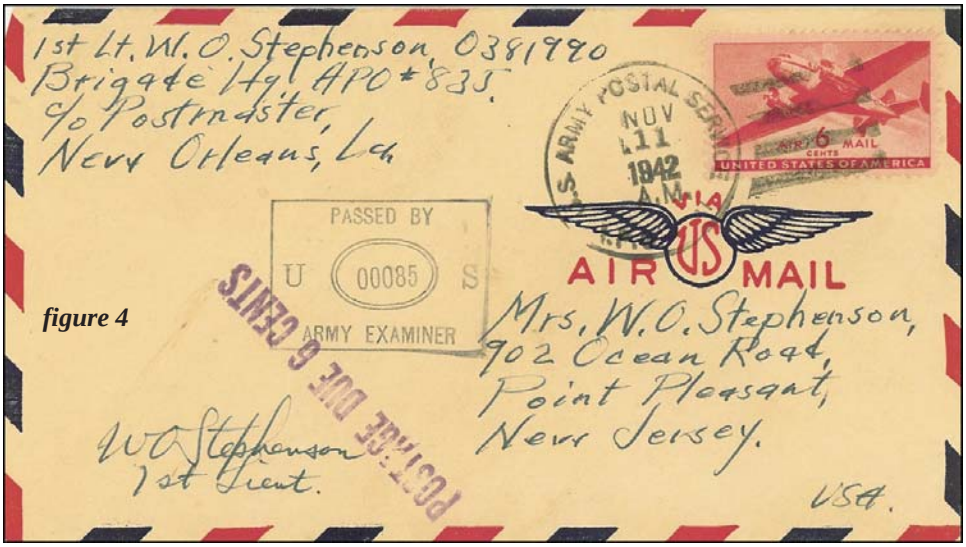


figure 4

Figure 5 *Cover from General H. E. Oldfield, Coastal Artillery Command Brigade, through APO 828 in January 1943.*

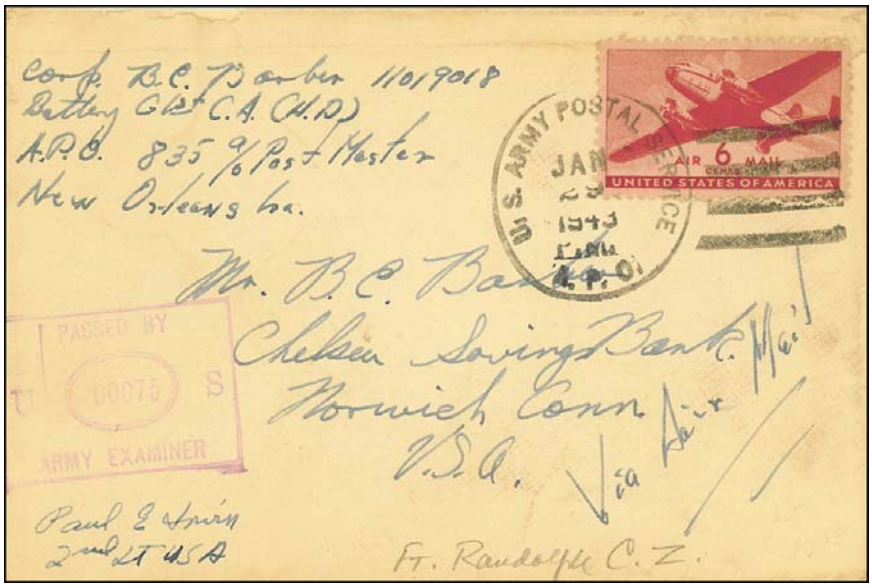
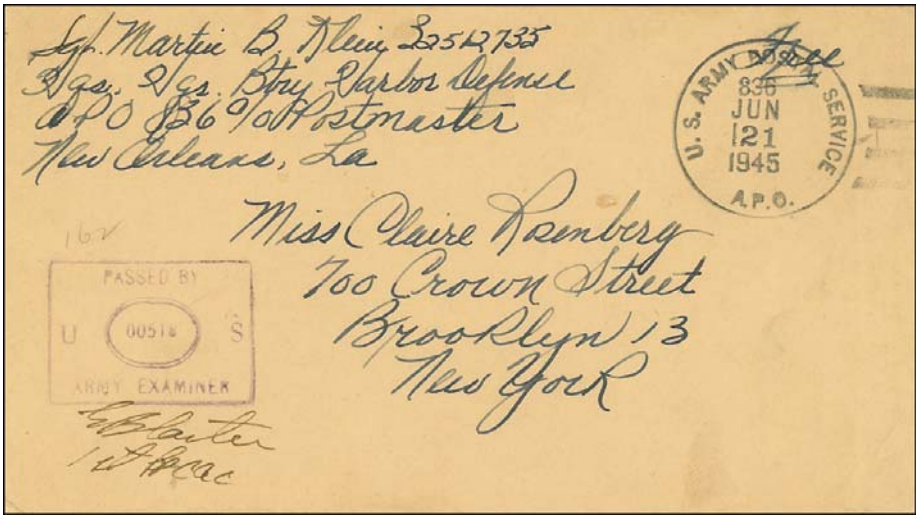
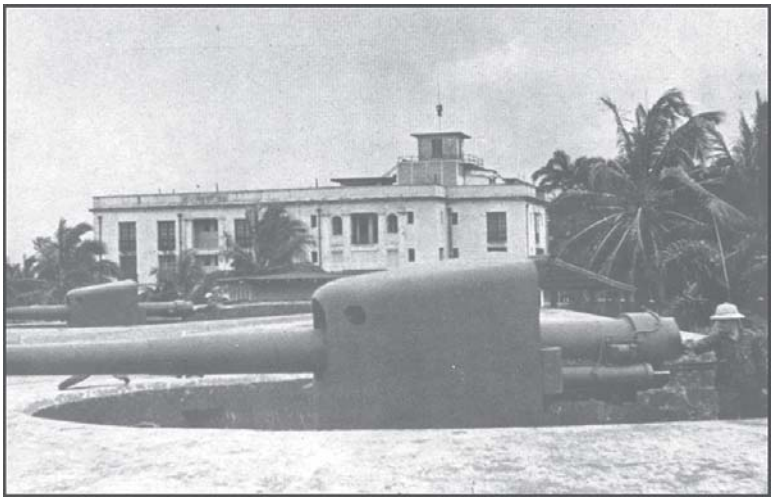


Figure 6 *Cover from Battery G,, 1st Coastal Artillery (Harbor Defense) through APO 835 in January 1943.*

Figure 7 *Cover with return address of Headquarters & Headquarters Battery, Harbor Defense through APO 836 in June 1945.*





Battery Morgan, Fort Randall, 1939. Source: http://www.cdsg.org/forums/viewtopic.php?p=269

has not been used and I have a number of covers of the two and have seen many more without seeing the Regiment designation. Regardless of what they were called, they performed as regiments. They commanded all CA and HD batteries and battalions in their area and reported to the CA Brigade.

Unit listings of the Coastal Artillery Corps under Regiments shows that the 1st CAC was activated at Ft de Lesseps CZ on 1 July 1924. As it was expanded, the headquarters was moved to Fort Sherman (*figure 8)* and the Atlantic coast was guarded by 1st CAC units at Fort Sherman, Fort Randolph and Cristobal.

The 4th Coastal Artillery was formed on 18 August 1924 at Ft Amador. (*figure 9*) The Pacific Coast was guarded by the 4TH CAC from Fort Amador

wane and, in fact, late in the war the threat level was reduced. This impacted all units as small groups were formed into cadres and deployed to the combat theaters. But the impact was a death toll for HD units; manning was severely reduced and hardware was dismantled.

The 1924 regimental organization for Coastal Artillery units was implemented in the Canal Zone. Two regimental size units were formed in the Zone as the 1st Coastal Artillery and the 4th Coastal Artillery. Curiously, the term Regiment

Figure 8 1st Coastal Artillery cover return address posted through Fort Sherman, Canal Zone, in February 1942.

Figure 9 *4th Coastal Artillery cover return address mailed through APO 826 in August 1942.*

ally, Battery C, 4th CAC was
the Galapagos Islands dur-

Preparation for WWII would see major changes in the Panama CAC. Although the long guns and mortars would remain in place throughout the war, warfare technology forced new units to be trained and assigned to the CAC. With the addition of airplanes, aircraft carriers and submarines to enemy arsenals, anti-aircraft artillery units, barrage balloon units, mine planter, searchlight and sound detector units were added to the CAC Brigade.

Figure 10 *A 1942 cover from a corporal in an anti-aircraft battery in the 72nd Coast Artillery.*

Since the Panama Canal is a fixed installation with a number of vital operational locations, the major threat evolved to be one from the air. A postal history collector researching military covers from the WWII Panama Canal Zone, will quickly discover that covers from the CAC anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) units are extensive and confusing. Figure 10 shows the 72d CA (AA) which is just one of many. Part of the reason is that improvements were continually made in the AAA guns and target acquisition capabilities which required hardware changes and additional troop training. This caused a large number of different unit designations.

figure 11

In addition to a large variety of artillery units, the CAC was responsible for a unique array of specialized units. One such unit was the 301st Barrage Balloon Battalion. Barrage balloons were used in England to bring down or divert enemy aircraft. The balloon was, in fact, a medium sized unmanned blimp designed to fly above a target area. It was tethered to a base by a large cable that could tangle or damage an aircraft. The balloons were spaced around a target along flight routes to block the attack or divert the plane into an AAA

figure 12

killing zone. *Figure 11* shows a cover from B Battery stationed at Fort Clayton. *Figure 12* shows A Battery stationed at Fort Randolph.

Another unique unit of the CAC was the Searchlight Battalion. These were paired with AAA units and Sound Detector units to acquire, illuminate and destroy enemy aircraft that might avoid friendly sea and air pickets. *Figure 13* shows the 345th AAA S/L Battalion at Fort Clayton and *figure 14* shows the 342d AAA S/L Battalion at Fort Randolph.

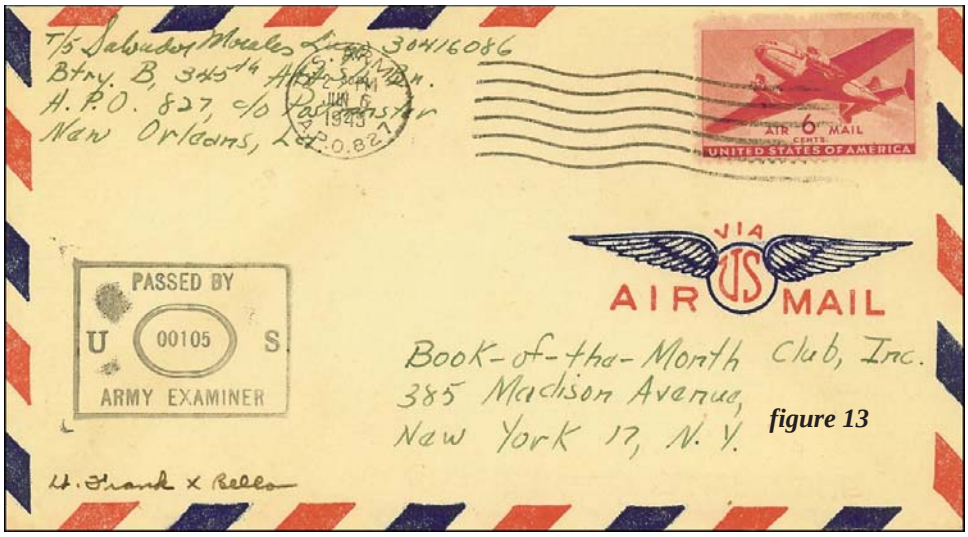


figure 13

figure 14

Figure 15 is a cover from the Detector School positioned at Ft Amador. Since Ft Amador is on a spit of land at the Pacific entrance to the Canal, a parade of airplanes, ships and boats pass the fort continuously 24 hours a day. Special target equipment for training purposes was not needed.

Finally for me, the most unusual of the CAC units in WWII was a unit often referred to as the Army's "Navy." Officially, the unit was the US Army Mine Planters Service (USAMPS). The boats of this unit were converted communications cable-laying boats

They helped the Navy counter enemy submarines with harbor mines to enhance the effectiveness of the Navy's harbor net operations. There were three mine planters in the Canal for WWII—the *Graham*, the *Niles* and the *Bell*. Finding covers from these boats represent a challenge. They will be found in US ships directories by the boat name. But while serving with the CAC, they more commonly go by their Battery designator. *Figure 16* shows a cover from the 18th Battery CAC serving at the Pacific entrance.

figure 15

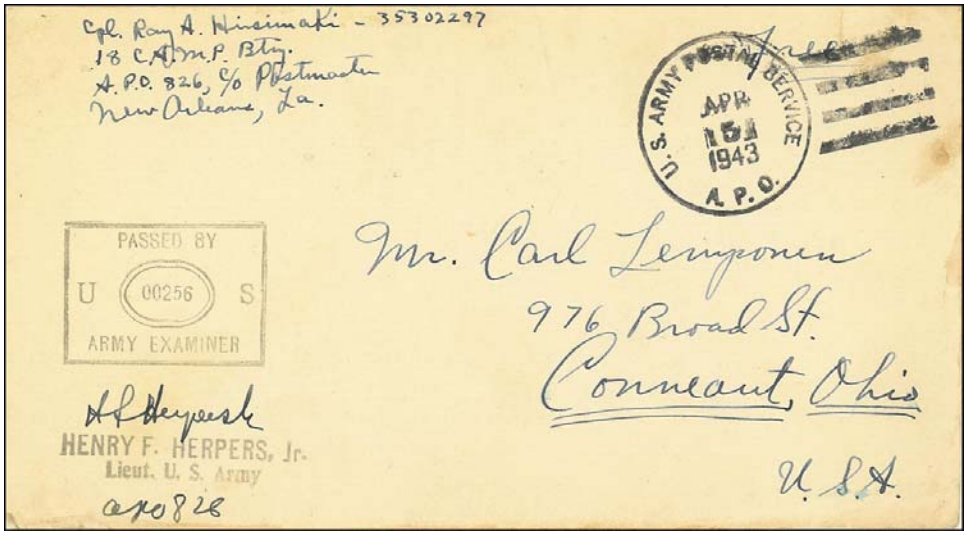


Figure 16 *This cover was mailed by a corporal in the 18th Coast Artillery M.P. Battery. In this case "M.P." stood for Mine Planters; not military police.*

Coastal Artillery Corps units were finally overtaken by technology. CAC units were disbanded in 1944 and 1945 and the Corps itself was disbanded on 1 January 1950.

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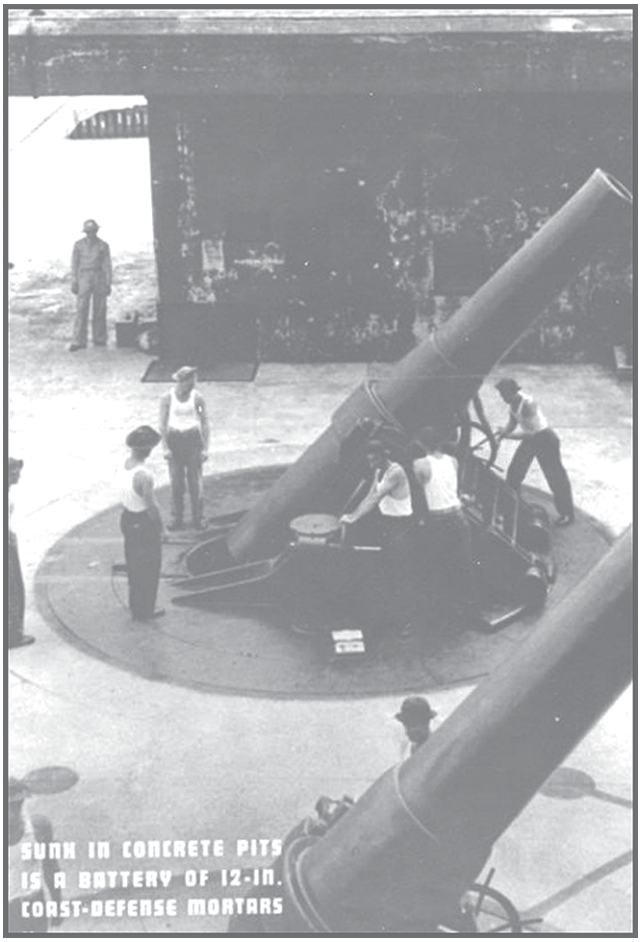
Wayne Worthington and Robert Karrer, "USAMPS In The Canal Zone During WWII", *Isthmian Collectors Club (ICC) Journal*, May-June 2009

http://www.monroe.army.mil/monroe/sites/installation/museum/artillery.aspx

http://www.cdsg.org/CACunits.htm



Batteries Merrit, Prince and Carr at Fort Grant boasted 12-inch coastal defense mortars in 1939. Source: Source: http://www.cdsg.org/forums/viewtopic.php?p=269

Receiving Marks and Abington, Montgomery Co. PA

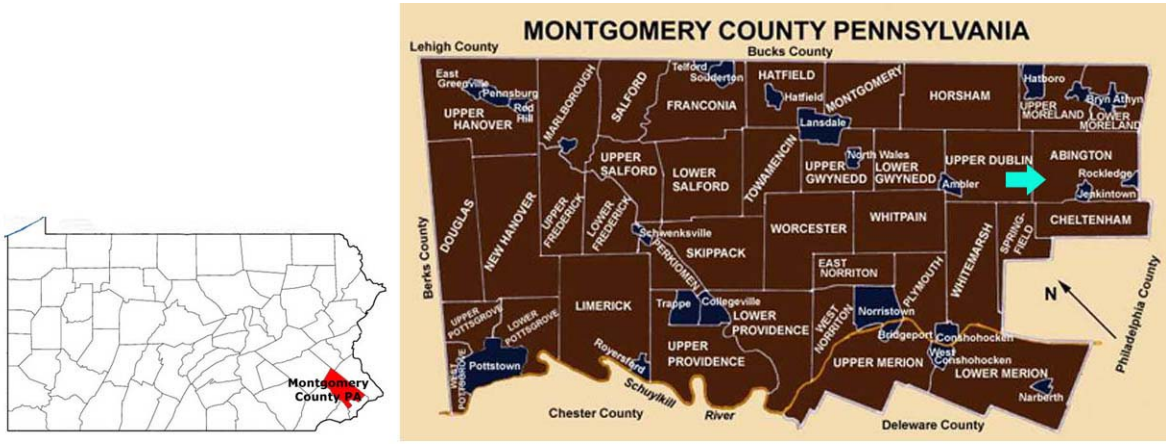


Figure 1 *Montgomery County, in Southeastern Pennsylvania, showing Abington Township, nestled against Philadelphia and amongst other William Penn-leased plantations that grew into today's townships.*

by T. Clarke, #38

Two topics are interwoven here: receiving backstamp origins and the town of Abington, Montgomery County PA. This article developed after a fortunate discovery found on the reverse of a ordinary #65 cover, recently bought.

Beginnings

It's been said that Pennsylvania has "breath-taking beauty combined with an historical legacy that is second to none in the country". Much of these can be found in Montgomery County, bordering Philadelphia's northwest boundary. Montco was part of the original, colonial breadbasket, and today, there is a general, genteel urbanization taking place. Across the lower half of the county, and especially the townships nearest Philadelphia, a crush of people and cars blunts the senses. The upper half blends west and north westward in picturesque, woodland scenery and rolling hills, apportioned among farmland as rich and beautiful as any in the country.

In 1681/2 William Penn acquired a land grant in the New World, somewhere between Maryland and New York, from King Charles, the result of the king's indebtedness to Penn's father. Huge plantations were sliced from it according to amount paid and were drawn down by Penn's surveyor, Thomas Holme. These original estates were leased, rented, or sold to individual Quaker supporters or well-heeled speculators sight unseen from a desk in London. Welsh Quakers and German settlers (for their excellent farming ability) were sold land by Penn to compliment his English compatriots.

Southeastern Pennsylvania is much of America's history, native peoples included, from the inception. Montgomery County was a part of the three founding counties in 1682: Bucks, Chester, and Philadelphia, all under William Penn's lead and guidance. In 1784, one year after the Revolution ended and the peace treaty was signed, Montgomery County was carved from Philadelphia. It began life as the 15th named Pennsylvania County, of the total 67 that will come into being by the time state subdivision ended in 1878.

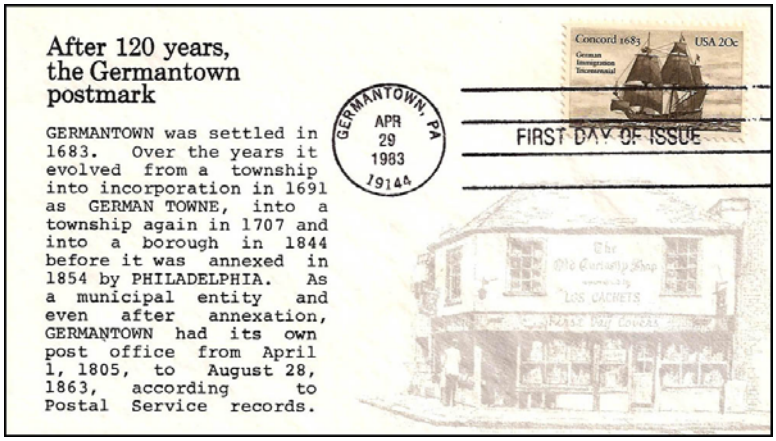


Figure 2 *The first German settlers sailed to Pennsylvania at the behest of William Penn, who admired their farming skills, orderliness, hard work.*

Variety

In addition to valuable farming, early lime kilns, forges and manufactures boosted Montgomery County into the forefront of pre-industrial America. So closely attuned to America's past, Montco offers a variety of destinations for today's sight-seers. At the top of the list of spectacles is Valley Forge National Park, where Washington molded an army. To that add a wide array of historic and interesting spots reflecting Montco's diversity. These include the somber German churches' founding centers: the Mennonites, Schwenkfelders, and Lutherans; to the flamboyant, Father Divine, self-proclaimed Second Coming, and his International Peace Mission Movement headquarters.

Visitor draws extend from the World of Scouting Museum through the "Stoogeum", the only Three Stooges museum in the world. Or, there's a bounty of famed art galleries encouraged by renown Montco colleges and universities, or living homesteads ranging from John J Audubon's plantation to the matter-of-fact Morgan Log House (Daniel Boone's Welsh-Quaker grandfather's). Tourist spots range from the Georgian masterpiece, Hope Lodge, to the Swing Era's nationally radio-broadcast Sunnybrook Ballroom.

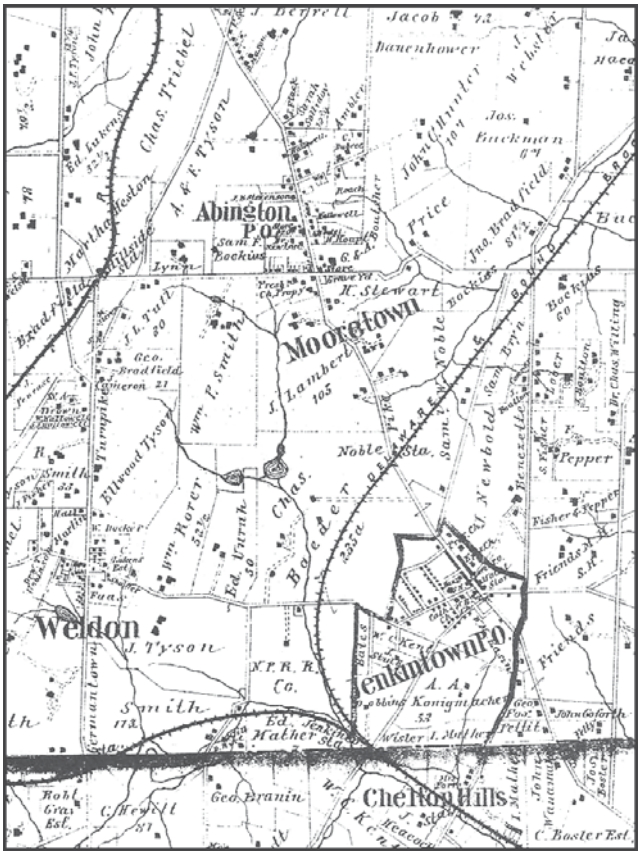


Figure 4 *The crossroads that centered Abington is fairly easy to see on this 1873 map, Susquehanna being the straight one in accordance with Penn's sense of practicality. Ephemeral "Mooretown" was named for a friendly lady tavern owner but it disappeared. Note that "Abington P.O." was specified, and that lent it enough staying power.*

Distinctions

Beginning with the domination of railroads from the 1860s and '70s, Southeastern Montgomery County (the Reading and North Penn) and Southwestern Montco (the Pennsylvania RR) have beckoned to Philadelphia's captains of industry to build restful places and call them home. Not surprisingly, in these 140 years it has grown to become the 20th wealthiest county in the country, and quality-wise was recently named the ninth 'best place to raise a family' (*Forbes Magazine*). It is indeed an influential county, as commentary in the national news continues to remind us.

Figure 3 *Edward Satterthwait's fine Abington Nurseries used the Jenkintown Post Office as shown since he was slightly closer to it, appearing upper right of Jenkintown in the map.*

Across the jutting pan handle of Philadelphia (which contains famous Germantown, among other subdivisions), the Southeastern portion of the county is composed of two

townships, Merion and Lower Merion. and has developed a particular burden of its own. As the primary line of the Pennsylvania RR system wended its way through the countryside heading west toward Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, and Chicago, it strung the villages there like pearls, and provided convenient, first class access back into Philadelphia's central business district.

Figure 5 *An 1870-80's cover sent from the North Penn Line which cut through Montgomery County, maybe from an elderly Abingtonian?, demanding "Roswood amediately" at the bottom (did he make guitars?), to Mr. Jeramid Sutter of Salsbery PO / Lancaster CO [PA].*

Many Philadelphian grandees chose to settle among these pearls (in order westward: Overbrook, Merion, Narberth, Wynnewood, Ardmore, Haverford, Bryn Mawr, Rosemont, Villanova, Radnor, St. Davids, Wayne, Strafford, Devon, Berwyn, Paoli, and Malvern). They lived in convenient and comfortable, designer, 'summer homes' away from the smoke and noise. The 'Main Line' as it became known, acquired elite status, and from about 1880 to 1940, an annoying sense of snobbery. Cary Grant, Katharine Hepburn, and Jimmy Stewart in *The Philadelphia Story*, (1940), based on a novel about Main Line activity, gives us an inkling.

More on the prosaic Southeastern Montgomery County side, though with wealthy exceptions, working class villages sprang up within great plantation boundaries called Cheltenham, Abington and Moreland –all natural namesakes from England, as were/are the plantation names further north westward: Whitemarsh, Springfield, (Upper) Dublin and Horsham. By mid-county, Welsh names are found, Gwynedd, and the old town of North Wales, and furthest out in the hinterland are the German names and culture, still very strongly felt after 300 years.

Abington

Of the many close-in towns acknowledging proud British ancestry, there is Abington, both the village and the Township, touching Philadelphia's county line. It was centered on a typical crossroads, where William Penn's practical and famous road to the Delaware River, called, with a tip of the hat to his Indian friends, Susquehanna Road, crossed the Old York Road. The earlier Abington Friends Meeting House was a mile away, but within walking distance of the crossroads were blacksmiths, a tavern, a hotel, a general store and the stage coach stop. This latter united New Hope PA and ultimately to New Jersey and New York by well-traveled stage lines to Philadelphia, ten miles to the south. Abington was one of the most auspicious locations for a village and town relative to burgeoning Philadelphia, with a built-in potential for growth and prosperity. It's location drew settlers from before 1696, less than 14 years after Penn landed.

The eastern portion of the township was originally bought in a typically friendly, mutually agreeable, Penn-Indian land purchase on June 23, 1683. The western half followed in 1687 when additional land was granted to Penn by Chief Tamanend of the Lenni-Lenape. The Friends (Quaker) meeting house and school nearby predates the town and township's formation. The Presbyterian Church's ancient graveyard is still at the crossroads, and both it and that of the Quaker's were created in the early 1700's. Both are still being populated today. Though the township already existed, it was reincorporated as Abington in 1704. When the North Penn RR reached Abington in 1855, it marked the beginning of a revolutionary quickening growth, as with many towns.

Meanwhile, the farmers and tradesmen, retailers and small manufacturers of the neighborhood saved a few precious dollars or sold a few head of cattle for important family purchases. Not the least of these, for those parents with insight, was education for able children. Otherwise it would be a routine life on the farm.

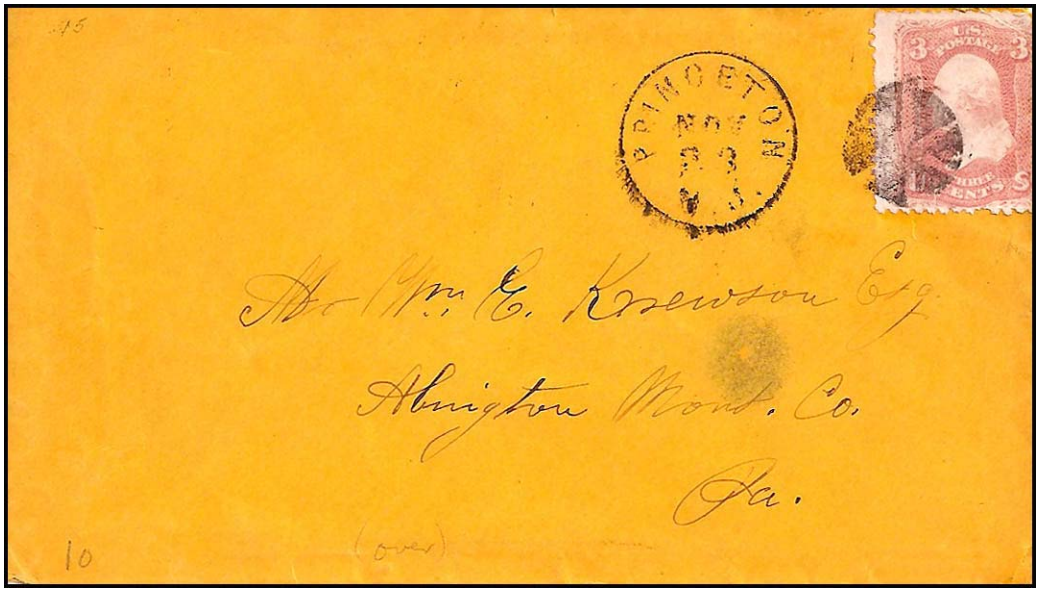


Figure 6 *This unassuming #65 cover was sent from Princeton NJ to Abington PA in 1866. The addressee Mr Wm E Krewson Esq is not included as a landowner on the 1873 map below, though he may have been the tavern owner or hotelier of the small burg, or (retired) lawyer as the 'esquire' suggests.*

Those few blessed with more than average curiosity and intelligence, a glint in the eye, and an affinity for reading, or with the desire to attain a professional certificate might go to the University of Pennsylvania or even the College of New Jersey (after 1896, Princeton University) somewhat further away. In its formative years it was a haven for young trainees for the ministry, and through the 1890s still required strict Christian (by then non-sectarian, but maybe still Presbyterian-centered) discipline. Founded by Presbyterians, it had that connection with Abington at least, hunkered as it was around its old Presbyterian Church and tombstones. Curious that an Abingtonian several generations later would contest prayers and Bible reading in school to the Supreme Court, which historically found in his favor (1963).

The writer of our letter in 1866 from Princeton back home to Abington may well have been a son studying religion or liberal arts there, or simply a traveler stopping overnight at a hotel, heading north toward or from the Big Apple. They might be a relative or business associate who wanted to send a three cent message in advance, chugging south along the NY and Philadelphia RR to center city Philadelphia, then up the North Penn RR to Abington.

Sad Fact

Back stamps are treated as the step children of postal history collecting despite the fact that the same legalities, labor and meaning apply to them as well as their front-of-the cover brethren. Recently, with the advent of eBay, more sellers have been willing to include descriptions and scans of the backside of covers. This probably means that collectors are becoming more informed and interested in them–as a sidelight to origin markings, naturally. A little love, but not as much as origination, front markings.

Early publications, like Delf Norona's editing of the *Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks and Postal History* (1933-35) gives short shrift to back stamps. Within this Depression era work, famous collectors championed their hobby with pioneering lists, among many other topics, of Baltimore, Cincinnati, Chicago and Boston origin cancels from stampless times into the late 1800's and later. But back stamps are barely mentioned, and when so, only as 'subsidiary' markings, i.e., of second class or less importance. Though Chicago's chronology warrants all of pages 322-345, including 18 pages of dial illustrations, a single sentence suffices for the markings on the reverse. Referring to cancel ink colors, compiler Norona says: "Colors used for subsidiary markings, such as received and transit, etc., are not included." The faintest of praise indeed.

But backstamps are unquestionably the other half of the mail conveyance system. Letters get posted, postmarked, transported and received at the nearest post office, postmarked again (required to do so between the 1870s and about 1908) and delivered. Starting in early 1860s, perhaps as an accounting control –or to foster speedier clerking— a few towns began back stamping incoming letters. Philadelphia began in earnest in late 1868. She had already seen the use of back stamps during the transition from county post offices to the consolidated Philadelphia County post office, between 1854 and 1867. Examples show county or later station dials on the back, but these are transit indications, not receiving. Still, at least city dwellers

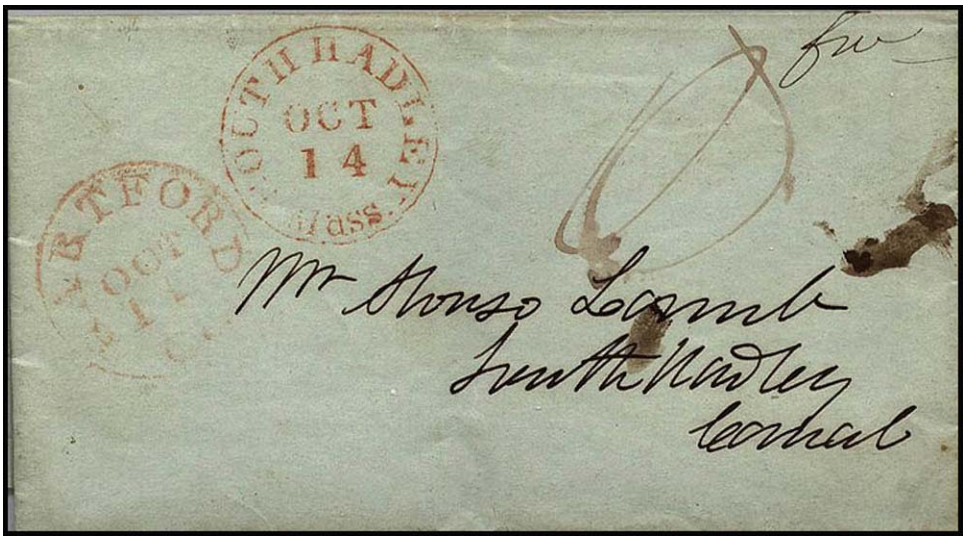


Figure 7 *A "receiving stamp" almost two years earlier than Konwiser's 1845 earliest example, is addressed 'free'— "0" cents— from Hartford CT north to Alonzo Lamb of South Hadley MA (77miles west of Boston). Was there a purpose (other than jumping the gun on the postal world by an entire generation!) to date stamp the letter's time in the mails? Maybe to indicate blame for a three day trip in the mails for a 40 mile trip, 50 minutes today, onto the stage driver or horseback carrier.*

were beginning to see postal markings on both sides of their mail while increased hustle and bustle was becoming the norm.

Backstamps

Receiving stamps came to life roughly 1863-65 on some large town (Boston) and some small town mail. Perhaps the idea coordinated with the advent of mandatory prepaid first class mail and the two cent drop letters in the Postal Act of 1863. Once in a rare while they can be found on pre-1860's folded letters. A classic observation says that Wilmington DE backstamped a folded letter on Jan 1, 1845, and possibly earlier, according to Harry M. Konwiser in *Postal Markings* (1935), p.384. The beginning in Philadelphia is the 'classic' **RECD / *date*** in brackets marking found *on the front* of a very few Philadelphia letters between approximately January 1859 and August 1861. It has been said that they were applied when letters were released after postage due amounts were paid, as in, 'I have *received* your money'. So, since a reasonable definition of a receiving backstamp is 'an indicator of *final receipt* of a letter that had already concluded its travels through the mail stream', these are not actual receiving stamps, only receipt markings.

To an observer, the practice seems accidental or a method of local accounting for late-received, missent or who-knows-what mail. They bear no other explanations other than the extra "received" marking –- we're not including forwarded mail markings here because the readdress is an obvious giveaway. Perhaps the extra marking was at the patron's request, to prove the timeliness of the enclosed information, or to supply an alibi for it coming to hand later than expected. Perhaps an incoming marking might help justify a bookkeeping entry or interest-bearing account date. Perhaps early receipt-stamping on folded letters and early stamped covers might have something to do with answering to authorities about incoming railroad- or boat-transported mail.

There is no known postal rule for *true receiving back stamps* until it was mandated in late 1868 (for Philadelphia) and maybe later in the early 1870s for other towns. Certainly, large offices rather than small would have a need to keep their various piles and pouches of letters carefully separated, accountable, and explainable, and in certain cases receipt-datable. The tracking requirements for Registry (officially begun in 1855) may have set the stage for noting the speed a letter could travel through the mail. Generally, postmasters, to maintain their reputation and job, would look forward to proving the fact that letters were delivered by them on a specific date and not before or after.

Abington Back Stamp

In the very rural suburbs, one was less likely to see a back stamp than were city folk since there was little need to trace and track ordinary letters. There weren't that many letters incoming or outgoing to begin with. A single hotelier, tavern keep, or general store owner had more urgent and practical tasks to accomplish than back stamp a half dozen letters a day that came from the next town over. To dawdle or lollygag the day away was not in their makeup nor, one would think, would they care to heft and ink their canceling devices unnecessarily.

Before Abington was granted its own post office in 1832, Jenkintown, a more prosperous village than Abington, 2½ miles south, was the lone township postal facility that began operations on July 28, 1803. It was also on the same major north-south dirt road artery,

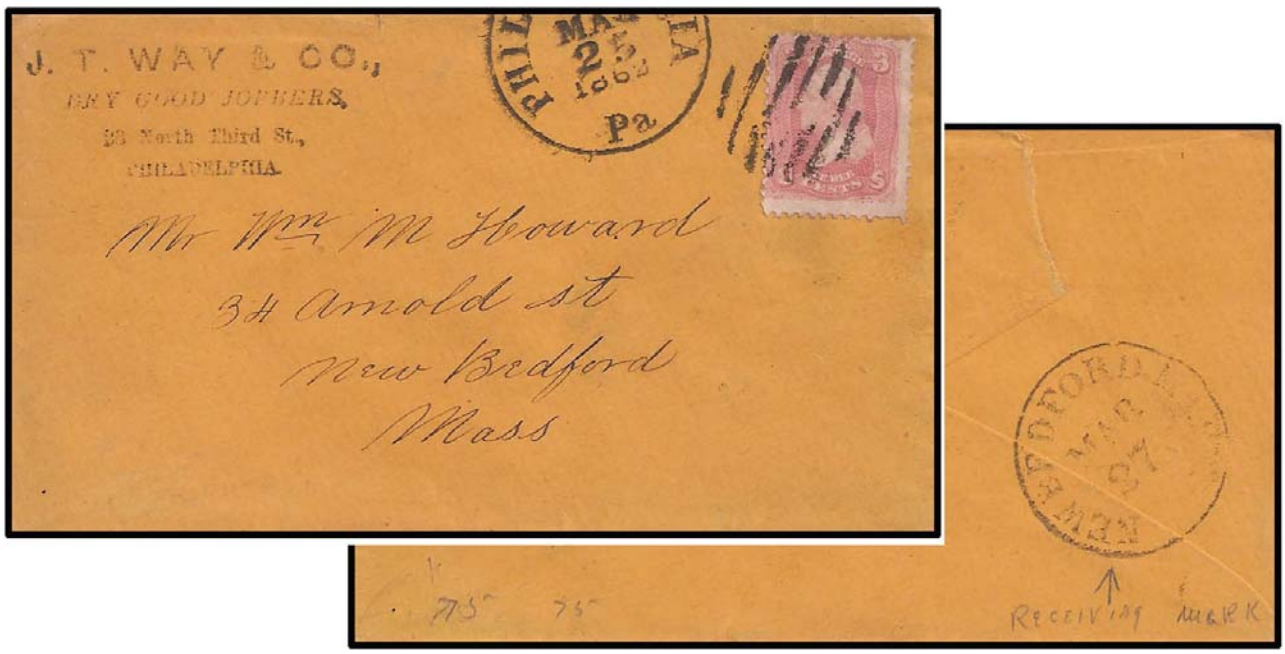


Figure 8 *This is a folded letter sent from Philadelphia to New Bedford MA, December 12 1862. Perhaps the habit of back stamping began in eastern Massachusetts, since New Bedford is 50 miles south of Boston, a known employer of receiving stamps, though applied to the front. This early example with the receiving stamp* on the back *demonstrates what the next decade will consider standard practice.*

the Old York Road. And it was closer to Cheltenham Township, a prosperous, populous from its birth. With a concentrated population of 'townies' as opposed to farm folk, it desired self-rule, Jenkintown petitioned the state and was granted separate borough status in December 1874. Abington village in the 1850s and '60s, now that the railroad had come through, was in a tug of war with Jenkintown for economic superiority and influence.

Numerically, Montgomery County is/was 10,200 Acres in size (about 15 square miles), so the Abington post office will take more and more business from Jenkintown as the years pass. It had been doing so since it commenced operation on August 21, 1832. Of the ten or more square miles of farmers and village mail service in the township, Jenkintown still retained the lion's share for now. It was a compact town of two tavern and 10 stores, plus two schools, while Abington served perhaps only a third of the region and a more distant, rural populace. In 1870, the census counted (by comparison, 674,000 inhabitants in Philadelphia) 81,000 people in Montgomery County overall, 2,440 (up from 1,836 in

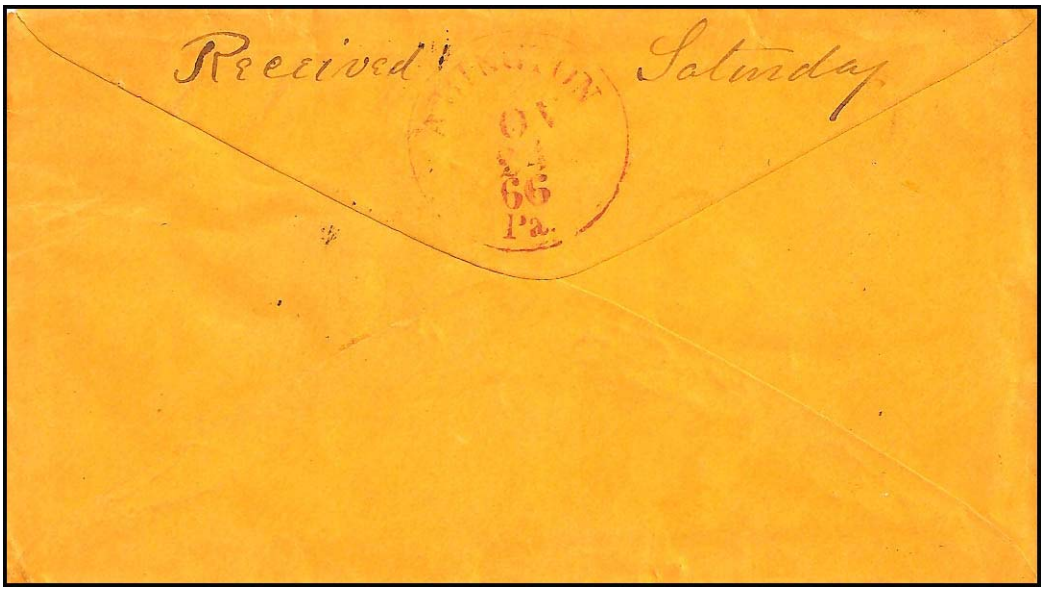


Figure 9 *The wonderful find on the back of the otherwise nondescript cover above was this receiver in red, no less. It predates nearby Philadelphia's use*

1859) in Abington Township, and 570 "taxables" in the village of Abington proper. Jenkintown's taxables in 1870 were only 199.[1]

It would be good to be able to read the letter formerly enclosed in the 1866 cover. It might clear up some of its mysteries, like who was Mr. Krewson and what did he do? Who wrote him and what was going on that the writer chose to send a letter? Perhaps a student asking for another mid-19th century 'Care package', or spending money, clean socks? Maybe it was

Figure 10 *A partially struck, faded rose, but a rose nonetheless! The '66 reaches out and grabs the viewer.*

legal business after all, or maybe church business at the well-respected church with the tall sandstone steeple.

Moreover, what was the purpose for an Abington, a village backstamp? Was this a habit the postmaster picked up after a visit to his family in Cambridge or Boston or New Bedford? Surely the General Post Office hadn't singled out Abington as an 1866 receipt marking test case.

Was out postmaster a creative non-conformist who just did things the way he thought best? Why the red ink though over the standard black which he and every other postmaster ha been expected to use since roughly 1854? Was it truly a red-letter day for some personal reason?

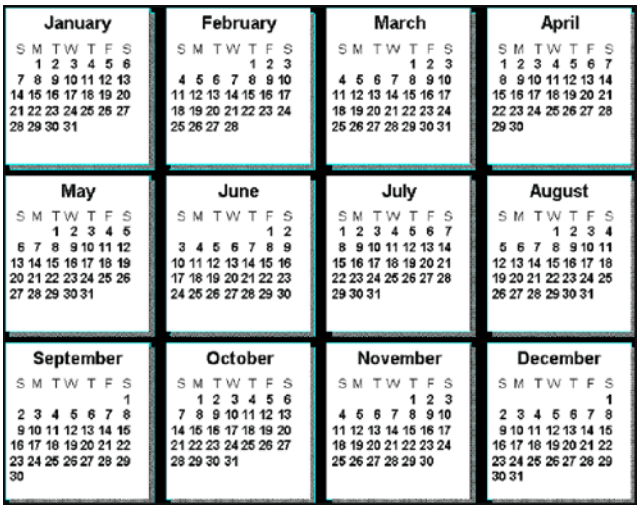


Figure 11 *November 24 did fall on a Saturday. A quick trip to the general store/post office and Mr Krewson was hailed and told a letter awaited him.*

The back of the cover reads "received ... Saturday" and indeed, Nov 24 did fall on a Saturday. President Lincoln had proclaimed the first modern Thanksgiving for the last Thursday in November 1863, but that wouldn't be for another five days. Perhaps he was an early and long celebrant?

Maybe a look through the Presbyterian Church's records, or at the names in the old Abington graveyards, certainly through the old town histories so popular in those days, might yield further information. (The writer did exhaust several Montgomery County biographical volumes of the period, to no avail.) But chances are we may never be able to uncover any more data.

* * * * *

Finding and carefully reviewing BOTH sides of covers for markings, clues, notations, and names is a must because there are still treasures great and small lurking on eBay, at shows in dealer's boxes, and in our own collections. Truth to say, most of the time interesting covers will not stand up and announce themselves.

Perhaps the reader should put down his *La Posta* right now and go take a closer look at the fronts and backs of his own pearls of postal history.

References

Buck, William J, "History of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania" in *Combination Atlas Map of Montgomery County*, J.D. Scott, 1877

Clarke, Tom, "Back Stamps: Received Markings at Philadelphia", *La Posta* Sep-Oct 2005, pp.55-64.

(Footnotes)

1. The census of taxables includes every taxable person of the age of twenty one years and upwards whether male or female resident within their respective township ward or district and the right of voting is confined to those male persons above twenty one who have resided in the State for two years preceding the election and within that time paid State or county tax and to the sons between twenty one and twenty two of voters thus qualified. Thus the list of taxables includes all who reside in the district where the census is taken at the time of taking it whether such residence has been for two years or only for one week or one day It also includes all resident aliens and it includes all who have families in the district at the time of taking the census although the master of the family may be a mariner generally at sea or engaged in business abroad It must be known to every one that of such persons there is always a much greater number in large towns more especially in seaports than in the country The settlements of the inhabitants of the country are more permanent there are fewer itinerants fewer persons from other States of the Union who come to reside for periods less than two years and fewer aliens in proportion to the population.

IMPROVING POSTMARK ILLUSTRATIONS: THE BACKGROUND

By Dennis H. Pack

Figure 1 *Postmark scan before and after having background lightened.*

When I first made copies of postmarks to use in my collection or as illustrations for articles, I was disappointed to discover that copies seldom look as good as the originals. The message is lost if the postmark in an illustration appears faint or muddy, or is difficult to see against the background. I wanted clear illustrations that convey the desired information, without changing the basic postmark. Because of my limited artistic abilities, computers seemed to offer the best means for me to achieve the results I wanted. *Figure 1* shows an example of what can easily be done to make a postmark stand out by lightening the background. The technique is explained below.

I have medium computer skills. The techniques I've used are based on trial and error and the reading of basic software guides. They are certainly not the only way to do what I describe, and they might not even be the best way. I hope that others will be encouraged by this writing to share their techniques and processes in *La Posta*.

Backgrounds behind postmarks have offered some of my greatest challenges in creating clear illustrations of postmarks. This article describes three methods I use to modify scans to make postmarks stand out from their backgrounds. They assume a basic knowledge of computers, such as being able to open programs, import documents, click and drag with the mouse or mouse pad, etc., but they contain step by step instructions how to perform each process.

This article does not deal with enhancing original postmarks, only scans.

It might be asked if it is ethical to enhance illustrations of postmarks. In some situations, I say, "no". I would not enhance an illustration of a postmark I was offering for sale. I do not guess at missing letters or numbers in a postmark, but I do enhance scans of postmarks so they more clearly illustrate in my collection and writings.

I encourage you to view the article with color illustrations in the on-line edition of *La Posta,* and I apologize if the black and white illustrations are not as clear.

Adobe Photoshop Elements software is used in this article because it is what I have learned to use. Other software, such as GIMP (GNU Image Manipulation Program, a free software raster graphics editor), will do similar work. The procedures are different, but the principles are the same. Photoshop Elements version 4.0 is used for the illustrations because it reproduces better than later versions with black backgrounds.

The names of some basic parts of the Photoshop Elements Editor screen are identified in *figure 2.* This screen might differ from other versions. Readers are referred to software guides for more detailed information about Photoshop Elements.

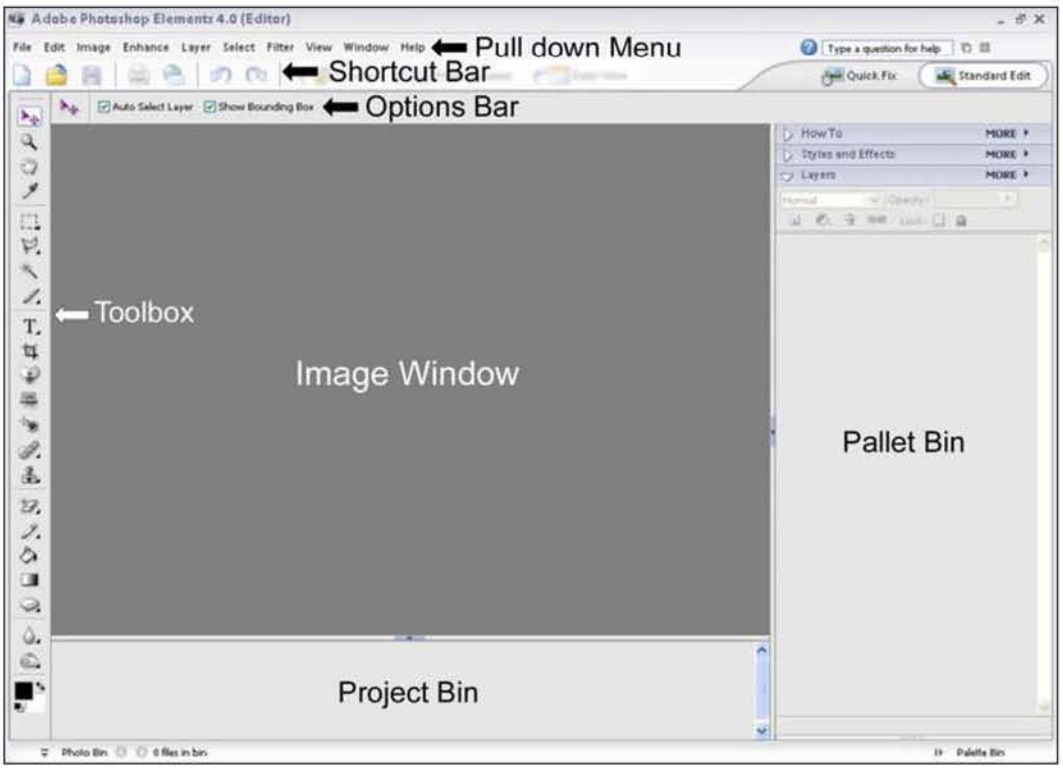


Figure 2 *The names of basic parts of the Photoshop Elements Editor screen.*

Image Window – the area where the scan of the postmark will be while we work on it.
Options Bar – contains controls that customize the tool that is selected in the Tool Box.
Pallet Bin – a storage area for layers and other pallets.
Project Bin – all of the images that are open appear here as thumbnail images.
Pull down Menu – basic controls for Photoshop Elements arranged by type or function.
Shortcut Bar – icons representing commonly used operations. In later versions of Photoshop Elements the Shortcut Bar is not present, and some functions, such as undo and redo, appear on the right side of the Pull down Menu.
Toolbox – each icon represents a tool that can be use to edit images.

Three methods of removing or modifying distracting backgrounds from postmarks are described in this article: making the background lighter, changing the color of the background, and erasing the background.

Making the Background Lighter.

This is a simple, fast way of making a background that is uniform in tone lighter.

1) Scan the postmark at 100% size and 300 dpi resolution. There is no advantage to working with a larger scan for this process.
2) Make a copy of the scan.
3) Import the copy of the scan into Photoshop Elements Editor.
4) Remember to save your work often.

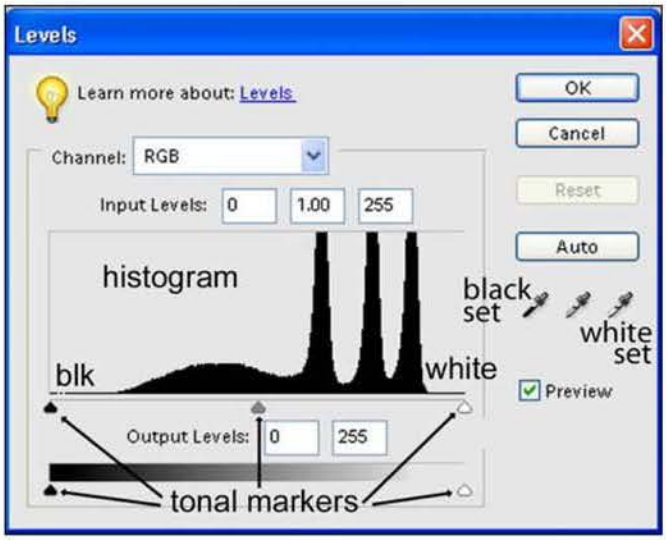
NOTE: *There are at least three ways to reverse or undo what you do to an image.*

- *In the **Shortcut Bar** or **Pull down Menu**, click on the **Undo button**.*
- *In the **Pull down Menu,*** click on ***Edit*** *then click on **Undo**.*
- *Hold down the **CTRL** key and type the letter **Z**.*

It is possible to undo multiple operations.

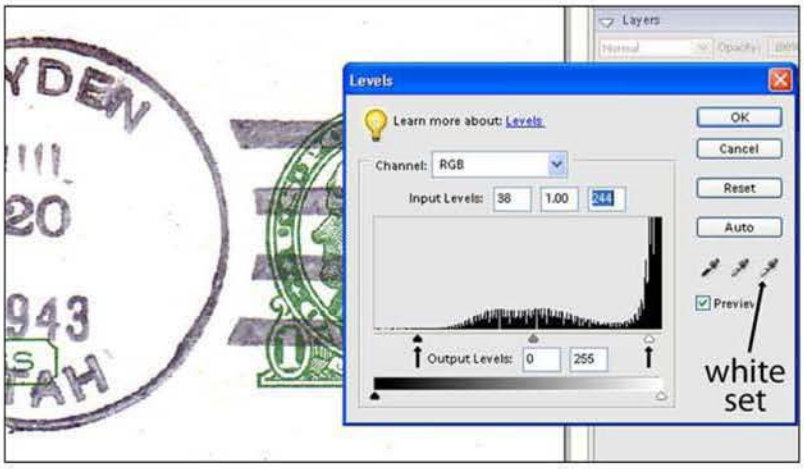
5) In the **Pull down Menu** at right, use the **mouse** or **mouse pad left button** to click on **Enhance**, go to **Adjust Lighting**, then click on **Levels**, The **Levels Dialog Box**, shown below, opens.

*The display in the **Levels dialog box** includes a **histogram** that is a representation of the tonal range of the image from black (0) on the left to white (255) on the right. The height of the lines tells how much of that tone is present. Rotating the image of the Hayden postmark 180 degrees would not change the histogram. RGB appears in the **Channel window**, so the changes we make affect all colors in the image.*



*We are more interested in the tools in the **Levels Dialog Box**. The upper **tonal markers** can be used to lighten or darken the image. Three **eyedroppers** are visible under the **Auto** button on the right side of the box. They are used to set what is white or black and to adjust the middle tones. We will use the **white set eyedropper** to make the background white. Then we will **tonal markers** to fine-tune the image.*

6) Click on the **white set eyedropper**. As you move the cursor onto the image, the cursor becomes an **eye-dropper**. Move it to a clear point on the background and click. *The background becomes the white reference and turns white.*



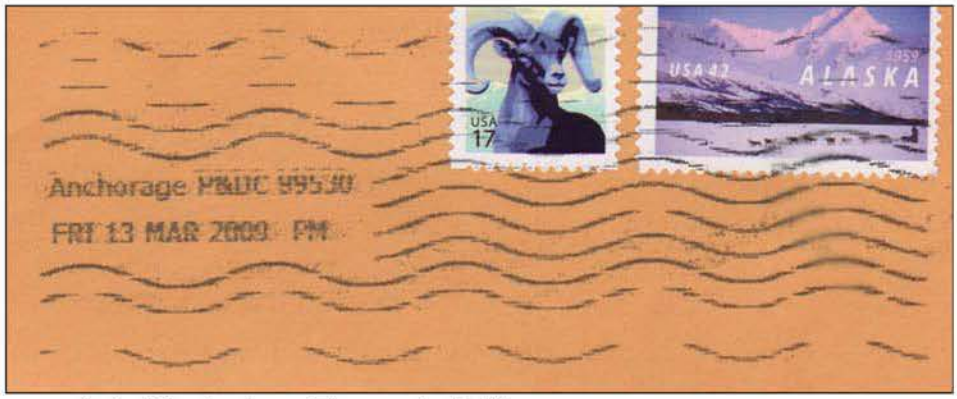
7) Move the left **tonal marker** to the right slightly to darken the black in the image which includes the postmark.
8) Move the **right tonal** marker to the left slightly to lighten the white in the image, including the background.
9) Click **OK** and save your work. It's that easy.

Changing the Color of the Background.

Color consists of hue *(the name of the color),* saturation *(the intensity or purity of the color), and* lightness *(lightness or darkness of the color). Turning a background white involves identifying the hue of the paper and increasing its lightness until the color is white without affecting other colors that are present.*

1) Scan the postmark at 100% size and 300 dpi resolution. *There is no advantage to working with a larger scan for this process.*

2) Make a copy of the scan.



3) Import the copy of the scan into Photoshop Elements Editor.

4) Save your work often.

5) Estimate the colors that make up the color of the Manila paper. *It appears to me that red is prominent in this Manila paper.*

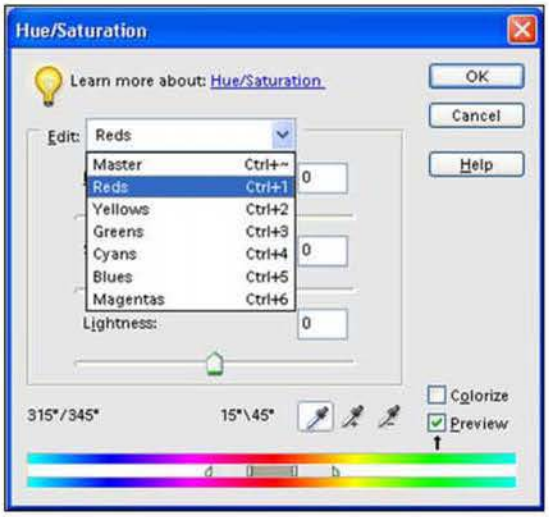
6) In the **Pull down Menu**, use the **mouse** or **mouse pad left button** to click on **Enhance**, go to **Adjust Color**, then click on **Adjust Hue/Saturation….**

*The **Hue/Saturation dialog box** shown below opens.*

7) Click on the arrow to the right of **Edit: Master**. *A pull down menu opens that permits adjustment of all primary and secondary colors collectively or individually.*

8) Click on a color, in this case **Reds**, which appears to be a prominent color in the background. **Reds** appears next to **Edit:**, similar to the graphic at right.

*Make sure that the **Preview box** in the lower right of the **Hue/Saturation dialog box** is checked, so that the changes you make are visible.*



9) Click and drag the **Lightness** slider to the right, so **+100** appears in the box above it.
10) Click the **OK button**.
11) Repeat steps 6) through 10) to more completely remove the color red.

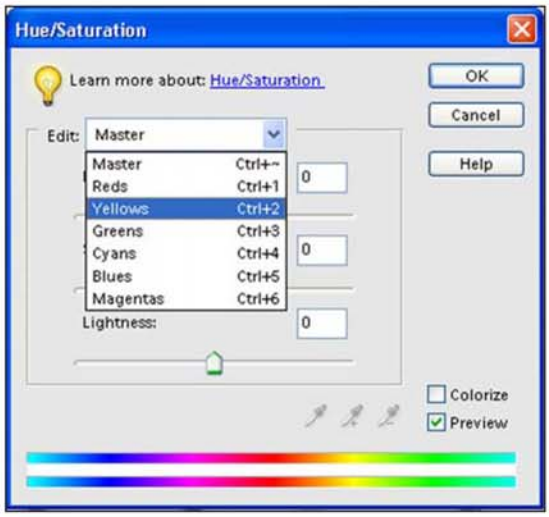
Next, we'll remove any yellow that is present.

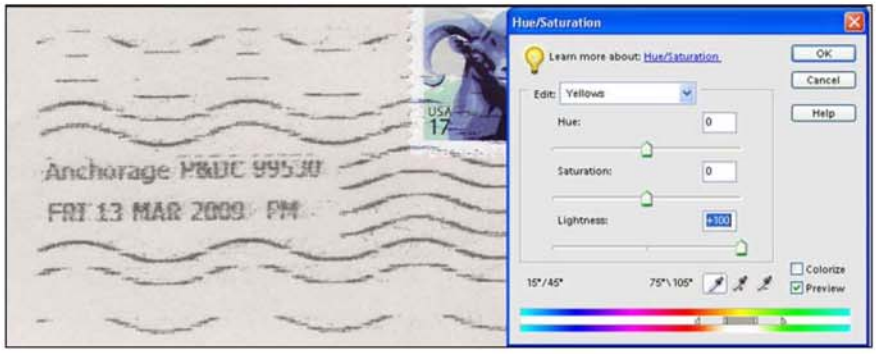
12) In the **Pull down Menu**, use the **mouse** or **mouse pad left button** to click on **Enhance**, go to **Adjust Color**, then click on **Adjust Hue/Saturation…**.

*The **Hue/Saturation dialog box opens.***

13) Click in the arrow next to **Edit:Master**, then click on **Yellows**. **Yellows** appears next to **Edit:**
14) Click the **OK button**.

*If it isn't clear what colors are in the background, experiment by lightening different colors. If lightening a particular color doesn't help, click on the **Cancel button**, or, If you have clicked the **OK button**, undo the operation as explained above.*



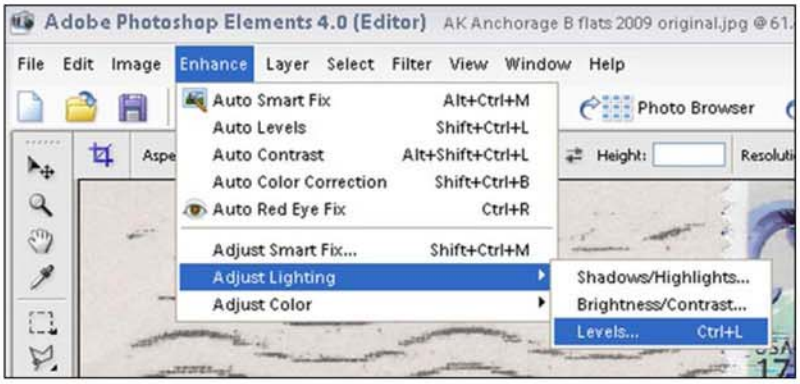


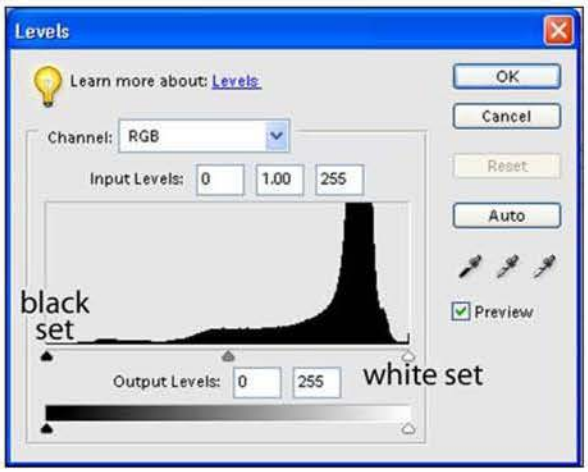
15) Click and drag the **Lightness** slider to the right, so **+100** appears in the window above it.
16) Click the **OK button**.

The background is now a neutral color, but it is too dark.

17) In the **Pull down Menu**, use the **mouse** or **mouse pad left button** to click on **Enhance**, go to **Adjust Lighting**, then click on **Levels**, as shown at right.

*The **Levels dialog box** shown on the next page opens.*



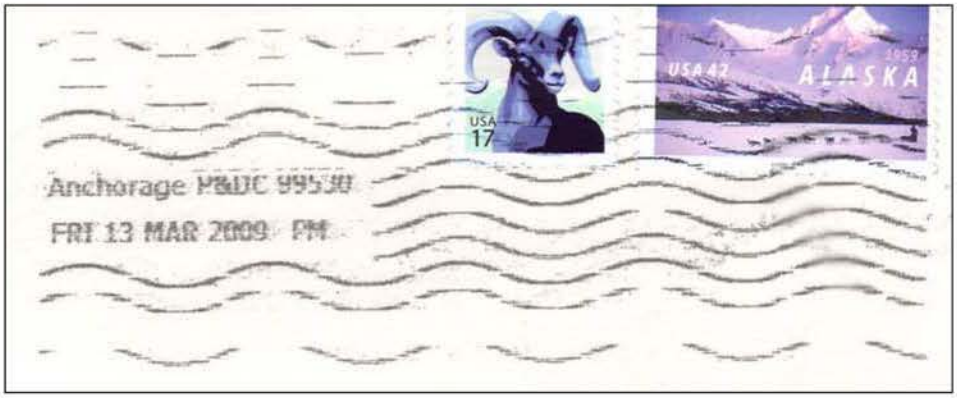


*This **histogram** is different than the Hayden postmark histogram. The predominant tone is light gray, which would be the background. Using the **white set eyedropper** might make the background so white that the stamp borders merge with it, so we'll use the upper or **input level tonal markers** just under the **histogram** to lighten the background.*

18) Click on the **white set tonal marker** and slide it to the left until the background is the desired lightness.
19) Click the **OK button**.
20) Save your work.

*The upper or **input tonal markers** determine what is black and white in an image. The lower or **output tonal markers** change the back and white references by lightening black or darkening white. Since I want a full tonal range, I don't change these.*

The color of the background has been lightened. The stamps were not affected because they contain little of the colors we lightened. Note that the postmark has not changed. Its imperfections remain.



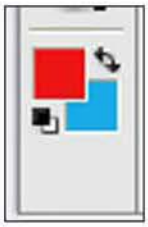
Erasing the Background

The techniques we've used might not be satisfactory for a postmark that is not a dark color, that has a background that is uneven in tone, or that is over-cancelled by other markings. The best technique could be to erase the background.

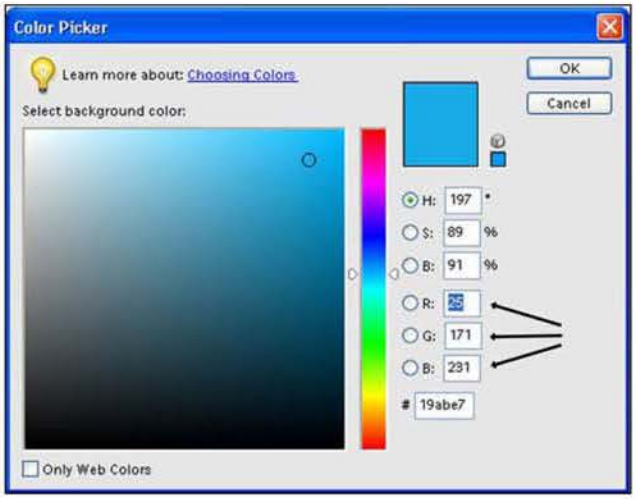
In the Ellis Island Sub-Station postmark at right, parts of the background and the postmark differ in tone, there are lines caused by the flap, and the marking is over-cancelled by part of another postmark.

1) Scan the postmark at 200% size and 300 dpi resolution. *It is easier to work with a larger image. It can be reduced in size later, if desired.*
2) Make and save a copy of the scan.
3) Open the scan copy in Photoshop Elements Editor.
4) Save your work often.

*The **Foreground/ Background color box**, shown at right, is at the bottom of the **Tool Box**. The upper color (here red) is the **foreground** color. The lower color (here blue) is the **background** color. What we erase is replaced by the **background** color. We want what we erase to be replaced by **white**.*



5) Click on the **Background color box** (here blue). The Color Picker box below opens. *The quantity of red, green and blue present in color is indicated by the numbers in the R,G,B boxes. 0 means none is present, 255 is saturated.*

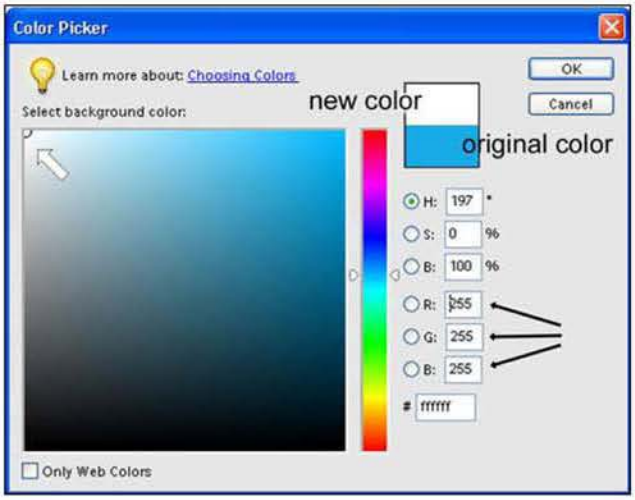


White contains saturated red, green & blue.

6) Click on the R box, type 255 in the box.

7) Click on the G box, type 255 in the box.

8) Click on the B box, type 255 in the box.



*White appears as the new color at the top of the color patch, as shown at right. It is also possible to select colors in the **Color Picker box** by clicking on them.*

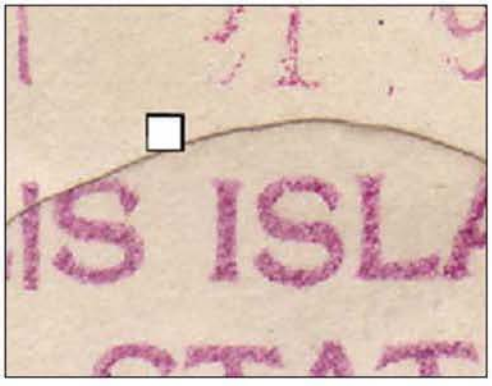
9) Click the **OK button**.

We are ready to start erasing the background

10) Click on the **Eraser Tool** in the **Tool Box**, shown at left.

*The **Eraser Tool Options** open in the **Option Bar** with the **Eraser Tool** highlighted.*

11) Click on the arrow next to **Mode:** click on **Block**.



12) Move the cursor onto the postmark.

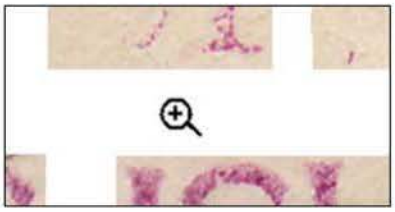
It appears as a white square, as shown at left. We will start erasing the parts of the background where the postmark is not visible. Be careful not to erase any part of the postmark itself. If you do, undo your action.

13) Click and drag the **block eraser tool** across the background where the postmark is not visible. Release the **mouse button** often and continue, as on the next page at top right

14) Keep erasing the background with the **erase tool** until the background is erased fairly close to the edge of each number, letter and the box around the postmark

If you slip and erase part of the text or a line, just undo, as explained above.
It is necessary to zoom in to complete the rough erasing of the background.

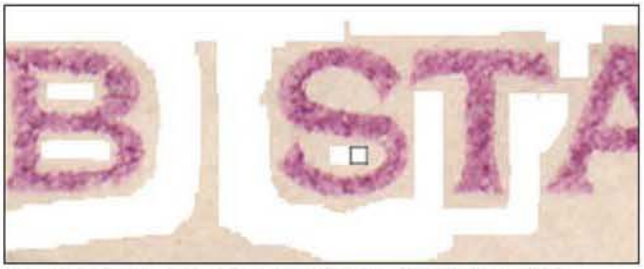
15) In the **Tool Box**, click on the **Zoom Tool** shown at right. *When the **cursor** is moved onto the image, it changes to a magnifying glass with a plus sign inside it, as shown below. To zoom in, move the **zoom cursor** to the area you want to see closer and click the **left mouse button**. Repeat clicking the **left mouse button** until image is enlarged enough.*



*To zoom out, press the **Alt key** [the sign in the **zoom cursor** becomes a minus sign] and click the **left mouse button**.*

*It is also possible to zoom in and out using the **mouse scroll-wheel**.*

16) Zoom in to make it easier to erase the background between rows and around letters. *As you zoom in the **block eraser tool** remains the same size.*
17) Click and drag the **block eraser tool** to remove more of the background.
Be careful not to erase any text or the frame.



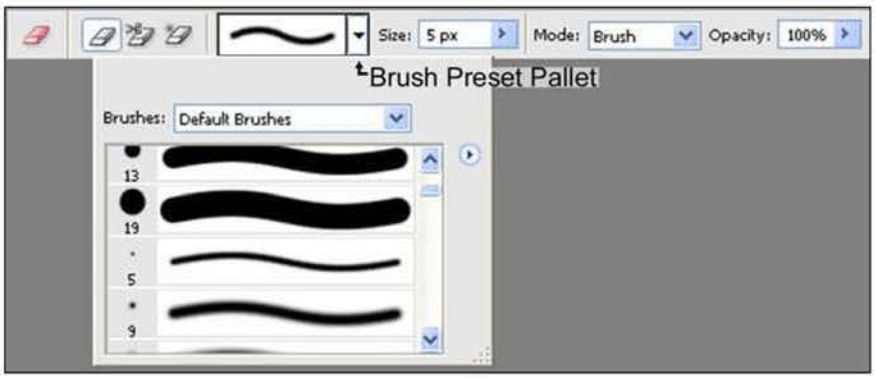
When the background between the text has been erased, we are ready to start the fine erasing. We will use a brush tool with a round soft edge to do this. It is possible to use a pencil tool, but I like the effect of the brush better. Try both to see which you like better.

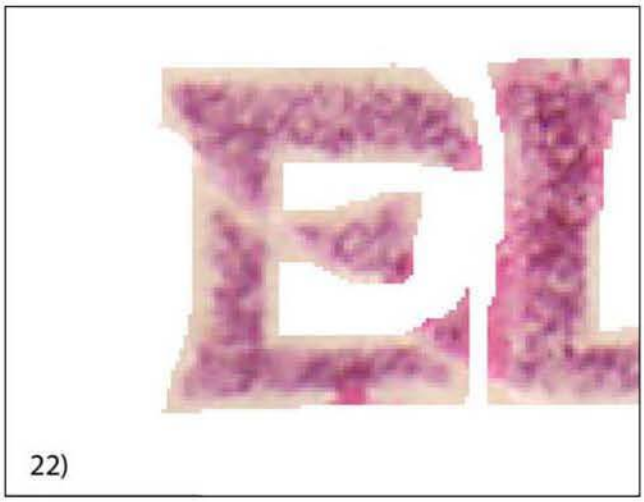
18) In the **Options Bar**, click on **Mode:** then click on **Brush**.

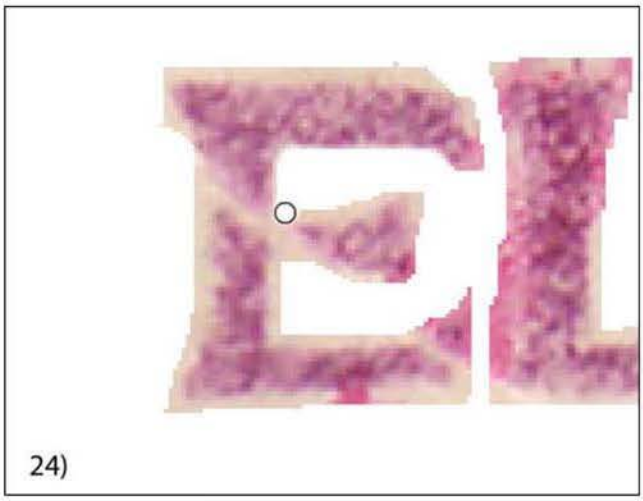
19) In the **Option Bar**, click on the **Brush Preset Pallet**. Select a **round soft tool** about **5 pixels** in size.

20) Set **Opacity** at 100%.

21) Click anywhere outside the image to close the **Brush Preset Pallet.**





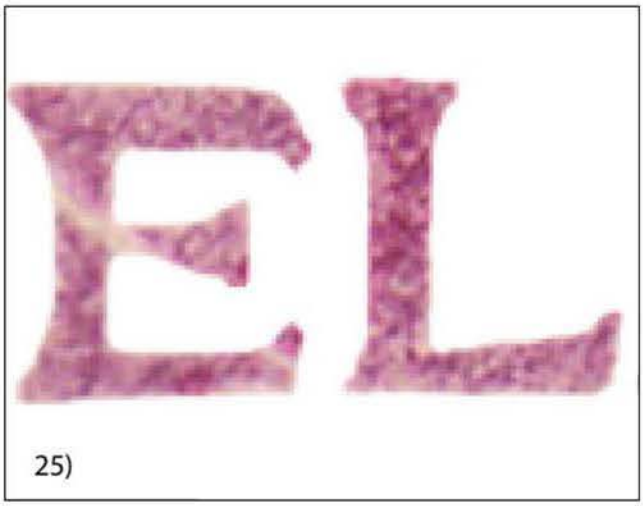


22) Zoom in until letters fill the Image Window, but not so far that the edge of the letters becomes indistinct.

23) Click on the **Eraser Tool**, if it isn't active. *The cursor will be a circle.*

24) Pick a spot on the enlarged letter and click and drag the eraser tool along the edge. Do only a small area before releasing the mouse button. Save often.

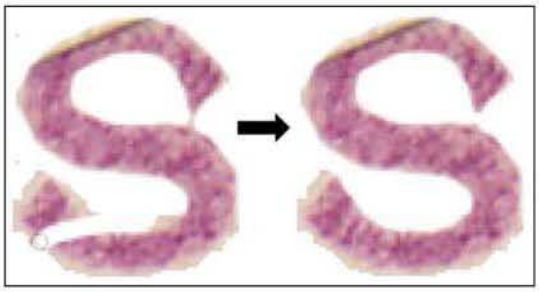
25) Continue until you have erased around all of the letters, numbers and the frame line.



26) If (when?) you slip, **undo**.

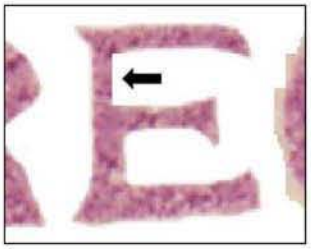
27) If some openings are too small for the 5 pixel brush, go to the **Options Bar** and resize the brush to 3 pixels or less. After you have cleaned the small area, return to 5 pixels.

Be sure to clean up any background pixels that are left after you erase around the text and frame.

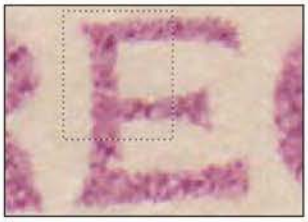


Use reasonable care while erasing, but in the words of a supervisor when I struggled with a job long ago, "You're not making a watch." A pixel plus or minus here or there will not make a noticeable difference when you zoom out and look at the entire postmark.

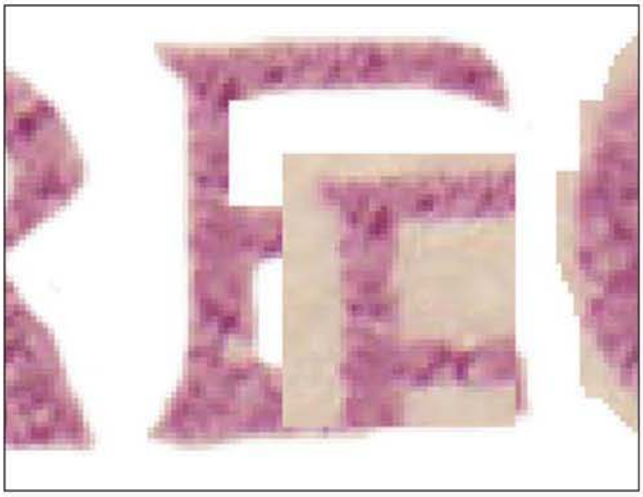
You might find that your coarse erasing removed part of the postmark, as at upper right, and that it cannot be undone.



28) Open the **original postmark scan** in Photoshop Elements. *(You have been working with a copy).*

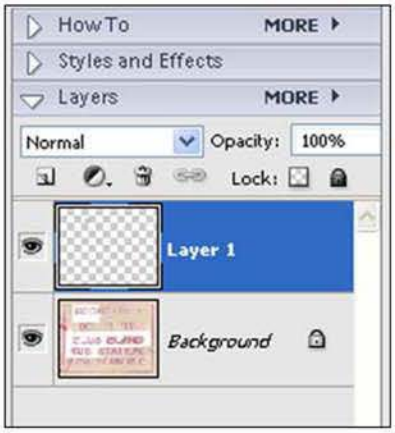


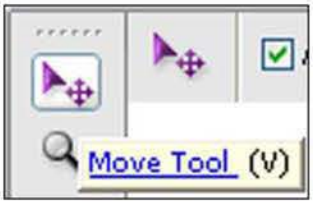
29) In the original, go to the **Tool Box** and click on the **Rectangular Marquee Tool**, seen at left above.
30) In the original, click and drag the **Marquee Tool** around an area slightly larger than the part that is damaged in the copy, as at above right. In the **Pull down Menu**, use the **mouse** or **mouse pad left button** to click on **Edit**, then click on **Copy**, or press the **Ctrl** and **C** keys to copy that area.
31) Go back to the **copy** of the postmark.
32) In the copy, go to the **Pull down Menu** and use the **mouse** or **mouse pad left button** to click on **Edit**, then click on **Paste**, or press the **Ctrl** and **V** keys.



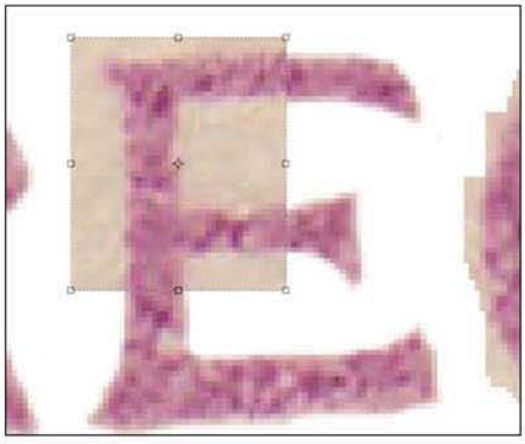
*The section of the original scan is pasted as **Layer 1** in the **Layer pallet**, as below at left. **Layer 1** is blue because it is highlighted. Any operation we perform changes only this layer.*

33) In the **Tool Box**, click on the **Move Tool,** at center below.





34) With the **cursor**, click and drag the new section so that it is approximately over the original letter, as at right.



35) To check the accuracy of the position of the new section, click the **eye** to the left of **Layer 1** to make the layer invisible, then click the **box** where it was to make it visible again. Keep doing this while using the **arrow keys** to move the section into position.

36) With **Layer 1** still highlighted, use the **block eraser tool** to erase the extra part of the new section that was not accidentally erased on the original.

37) In the **Layer pallet**, click on the **Background layer** to highlight it and make it active. (*It will turn blue or dark.)*

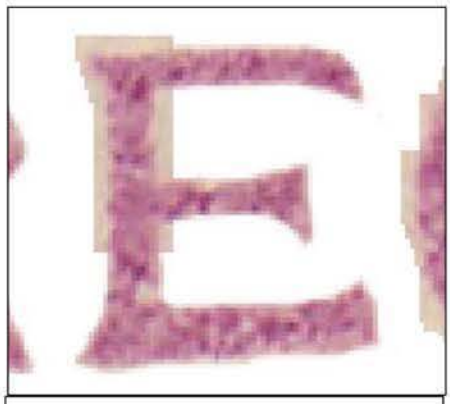
38) In the **Pull down Menu**, click on **Layer**, then click on **Flatten Image**.

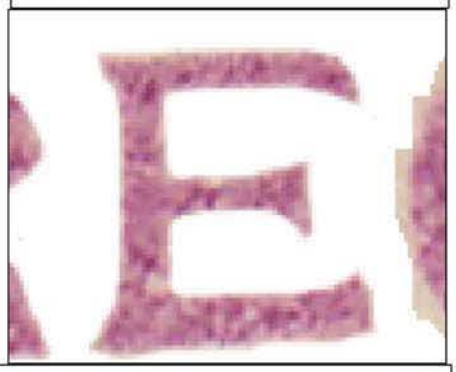
Layer 1 *will be merged with the* ***Background layer****.*

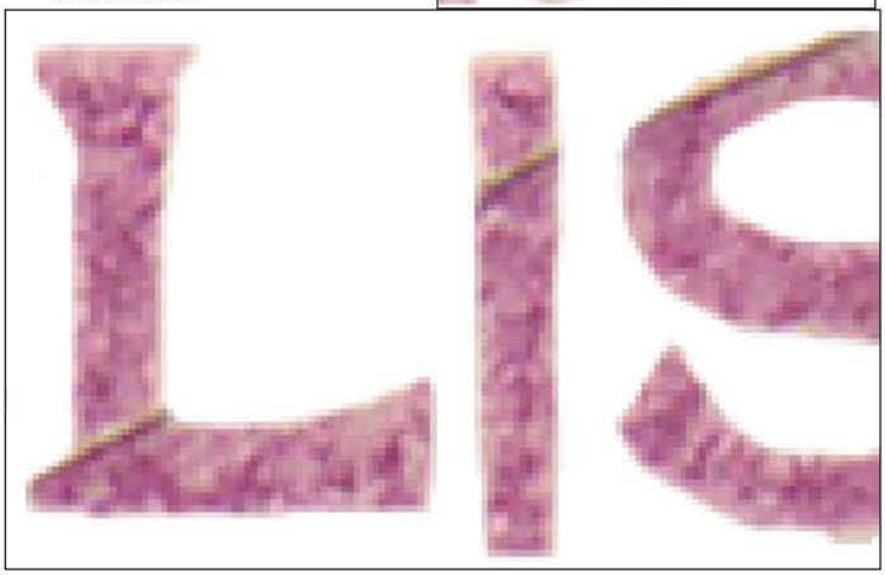
39) Use the **brush erase tool** to erase around the edge of the letter **E**.

The E is now repaired.

40) Use the **brush erase tool** to erase around the edges of each remaining letter and number and the frame.







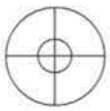
Some of the letters have lines across them from the flap of the envelope. We will remove these with the Clone Stamp Tool.

41) Zoom way in on one of the letters with a line.

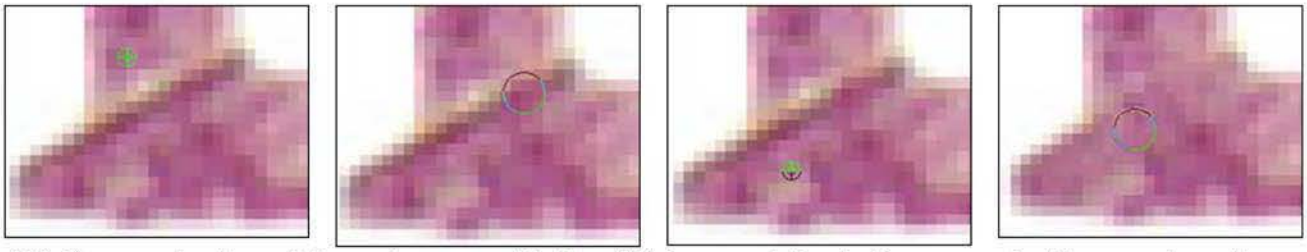
42) In the **Tool Box**, click on the **Clone Stamp Tool**, as below.

43) In the **Options Bar**, above, select a **soft round tool** about **5 pixels** in size.

44) Move the **cursor** onto a part of the letter where the line is **not** present, press the **Alt button** (*The* ***cursor*** *becomes a target with crosshairs)* and click the **left mouse button**.



You have selected an area to use to cover the line. If you receive a message that says that the area to clone has not been defined, repeat step 44.

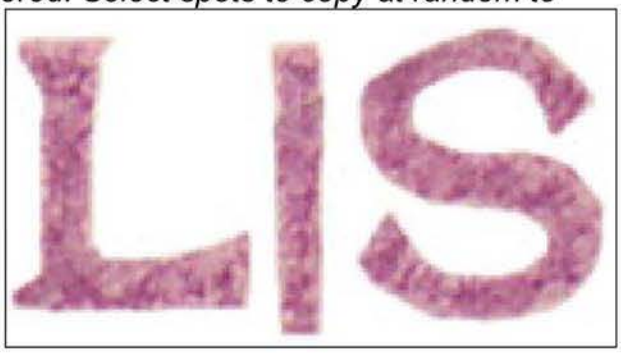


45) Keep selecting different areas with the **Alt key** and the **left mouse button** and pasting them onto different parts of the line, as shown above, until the line is covered.

Select and paste many times until the line is covered. Select spots to copy at random to avoid creating *a noticeable line of corrections.*

The clone tool can also be used to cover small holes in letters. Sometimes, it is necessary to work near the edge of a letter. If the pasted area extends beyond the edge of the letter, use the brush erase tool to restore the edge to its original size and position.

46) Save your work.



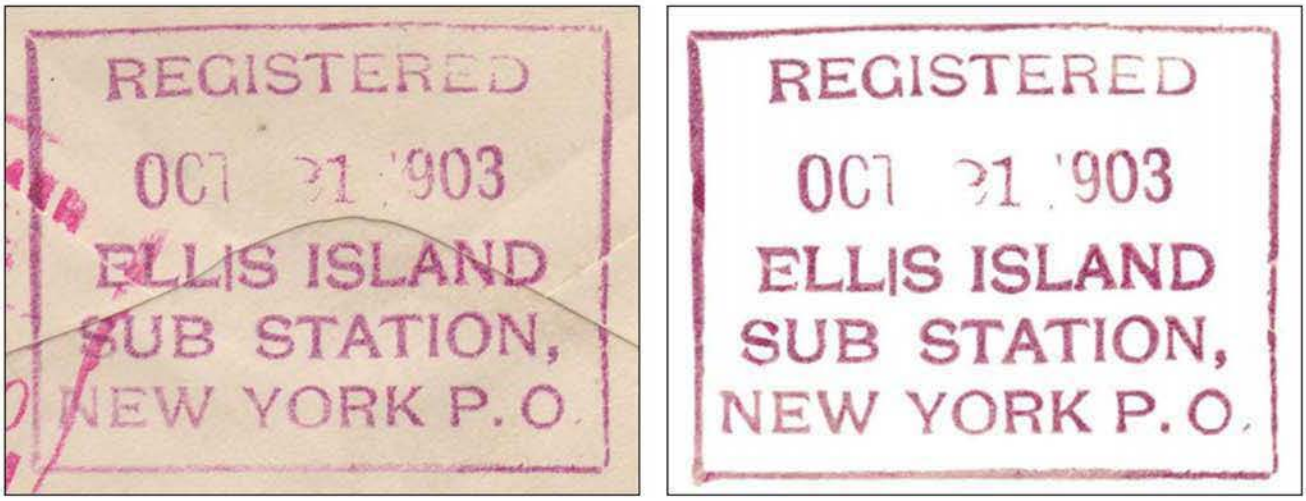


Figure 3 *Ellis Island postmark scan before and after.*

If anyone would like to try these procedures with the scans I used here, e-mail me at packd@hbci.com, and I will e-mail you jpeg copies of my scans.

If you do not use Photoshop Elements, I invite you to look at the principles followed and apply them to the software you use. For example, in making the background of the Hayden postmark lighter, we set the background as the white reference point. In changing the color of the background behind the Anchorage postmark, we estimated the colors that are present, worked through color channels to lighten the colors until they were white, and used levels to lighten the resulting background slightly.

We have barely touched the potential of Photoshop Elements Editor.

As I said at the beginning, you might have better ways to do what I have done. If so, please share them with us. For me the working with postmarks in Photoshop Elements is an on-going process of discovery. If you have questions or comments, please e-mail me.

An Air Mail Cover Census

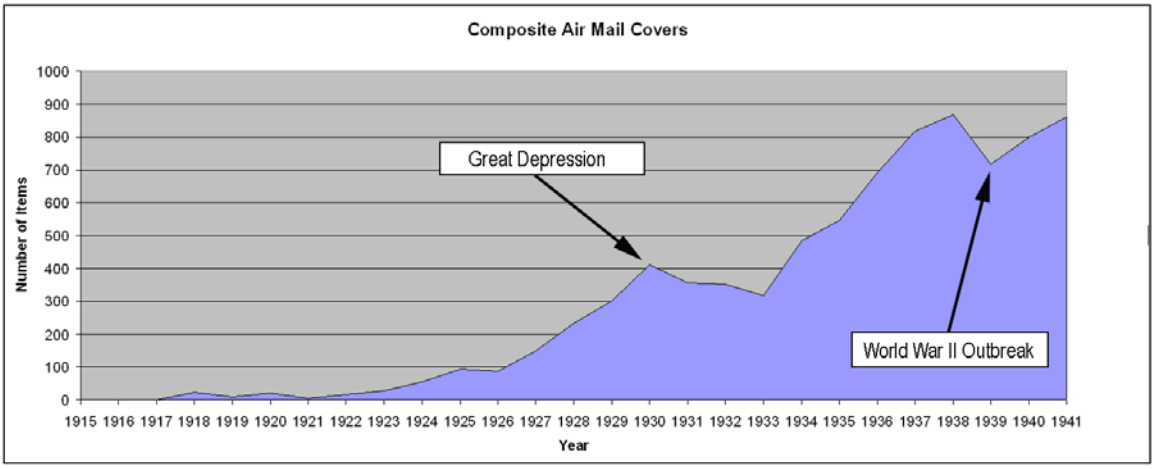


Chart 1 *A composite chart showing the number of air mail covers by year counted in the three sources of information examined in this census. A total of 8,249 covers were included in the census.*

By Richard W. Helbock

Collecting and studying intercontinental air mail covers from the pre-World War II era has provided me with a great deal of pleasure over the past decade. In the space of just thirty years air mail grew from country fair novelty acts producing souvenirs to a critical link connecting families, friends, businesses and governments over the miles around the globe. The search for new and unusual examples of mail transported by air entirely or in part presents a challenge, but the really fascinating aspect of the hobby is interpreting the stories behind the covers.

To be completely honest, for most of my 60+ years in postal history I was not a fan of air mail cover collecting. When I thought about air mail, the images that came to mind were of first flight covers with flashy stamps and gaudy cachets. The entire range of material from modest little first flight covers between two small cities bearing cachets boasting their Chamber of Commerce claim to fame all the way up to the grandiose Graf Zeppelins plastered with stamps so high priced you could have bought a meal for your family instead. Did you know that the $2.60 Zeppelin (Scott's C15) has the equivalent value in today's money of $33.09. All of these pieces were made for, and mostly by, collectors. They were souvenirs. I was not interested in collecting souvenirs, and, because that was the limit of my understanding of air mail cover collecting, I dismissed the specialty without further consideration.

I have since come to regret my hasty judgement. Air mail cover collecting, at least in the sense that it is popularly pursued today, is very much more than collecting the philatelic covers prepared by our fathers and grandfathers. There is a large and growing cadre of authors publishing fascinating, well-researched postal history articles in the American Air Mail Society's monthly *Airpost Journal*, and there are authors both here and abroad who have produced some important foundation works to encourage yet more research, e.g., Boyle's *Airmail Operations during World War II*.

When I began to build a collection, I started with U.S. air mail items addressed to overseas destinations. My original interest focused on covers franked with the Presidential series, but gradually expanded to other U.S. covers franked with other stamps. I found that my interest wasn't so much as what stamps were used to pay the franking as it was the amount of the franking and how it related to air transport over a particular route. A few years later this same logic led me to expand my interest to mail originating abroad and bound for U.S. addresses. After all if the rate and the route was the thing, why not consider mail flowing in the opposite direction?

Eventually, my interest in the subject led me to conclude that the "US-World" air mail linkage was only part of the complete picture (no doubt relocating to Australia had something to do with that recognition). I became a collector of all air mail carried from an address in one country to a destination on another continent up to and including 1941. At first, that sounds rather like returning to the days of being a worldwide general collector with a giant bulging Minkus stamp album. But while there are arguments for doing just that when you enter your eighth decade on the planet,

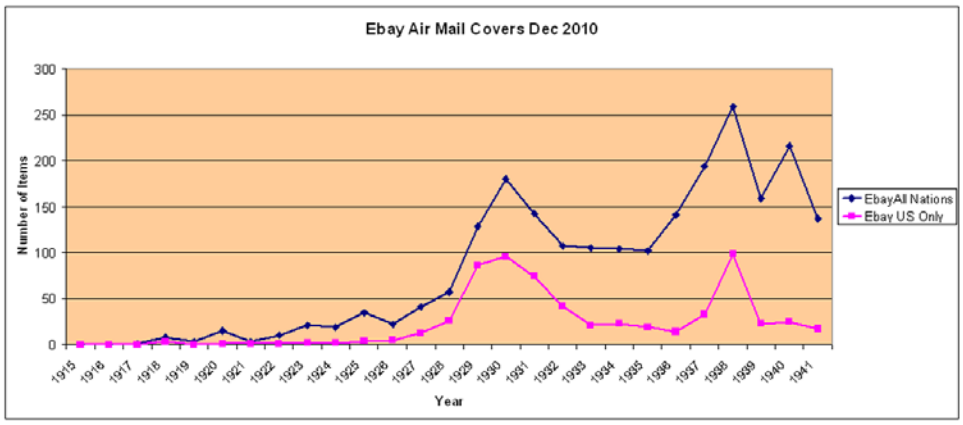


Chart 2 *Air mail covers listed on Ebay auctions December 2010*

I found that the universe of material from which to assemble such a collection is not as large as it might appear.

The United States, Great Britain, France and the Netherlands all began pioneering transcontinental air mail routes in the late 1920s. A few other nations joined them in the early 1930s, but the Great Depression had a devastating worldwide impact on economic growth and this slowed the expansion of global air mail networks.

Some nations began to emerge from the Depression by the mid-1930s and intercontinental air mail routes made impressive expansions. Britain's Imperial Airways reached all the way to Singapore and on to Australia, Air France reached Indo China, Holland's KLM reached Indonesia and Pan American connected through the Philippines to Hong Kong. Aircraft were getting larger and faster, and service was increasing in frequency. The British even did away with charging a premium for air mail carriage among destinations within the Commonwealth. But then, in September 1939, the whole world went off the tracks.

It took the United States two more years before actively joining the war, but air mail service began to suffer the effects of war on an intercontinental basis almost as soon as the British and French declared war on Germany.

My experience as a fledgling (pardon the pun) collector reflected the broad outlines of the WWII story. Examples of pre-1930 intercontinental air mail were uncommon, with frequency of occurrence expanding gradually through the early 1930s and then rapidly during the late 30s. But wouldn't it be nice to know just how rapidly air mail usage increased over time?

Census Methodology

An approximation of the answer may be found by conducting a census. Twenty years ago, in order to conduct a census of covers it was necessary for a researcher to publish announcements in all the appropriate journals and newspapers seeking help and send dozens of letters to known collectors requesting their assistance. In today's brave new world of the internet, a postal historian can access a substantial database online from just two sources: Jim Forte Postal History (http://www.postalhistory.com/index.htm?x=153&y=28) and the Ebay Auctions. This is certainly true for most 20th century postal history, but perhaps less so for classic 19th century subjects as well as exceedingly scarce 20th topics.

The time frame for my census of commercial (non-philatelic) air mail covers was defined as 1915 through 1941. I began by searching all Ebay auctions under "stamps" for the term "air mail cover". That yielded a total of over 7,000 lots, but I then began adding year dates beginning with 1915 and proceeding through 1941. For each year date, I eliminated lots that included more than one cover and lots that were obviously philatelic first flight covers. The remaining lots were divided into "U.S. only covers" and "All Nations (including US) covers." The results produced a total of 2,211 lots arrayed by year as shown in *chart 2*.

Jim Forte's website provides a number of handy ways to search his massive stock currently listed at "over 120,000 covers". I searched Jim's stock under both United States and Foreign sections for "Airmail" according to all year dates from 1915 to 1941, and the searches resulted in 4,894 covers on offer as displayed in *chart 3*.

Finally, I addressed my own modest collection, and once again examined all U.S. and worldwide air mail covers dating from 1915 and 1941. The survey found 1,144 cover and the year distribution is shown in *chart 4*.

When combined, these three sources amount to a census of 8,249 individual air mail covers with dates ranging from 1917 to 1941. *Chart 1* displays the year by

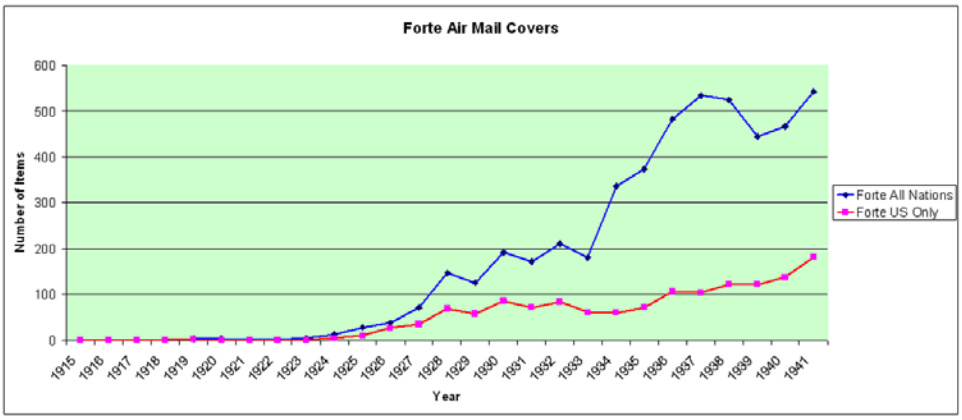


Chart 3 *Air mail covers for sale on Jim Forte Postal History site December 2010.*

year distribution of air mail covers based on the composite of the three sources. The growth in numbers of covers begins to increase at a fairly regular rate from 1926 to 1930, but the stock market crash in October 1929 touched off a worldwide economic depression that is reflected in a reduction in the number of air mail covers for the next three years.

In 1934 the number of air mail covers begins to increase again at a rate that is approximately the same as, or slightly higher, than the 1926 to 1930 rate. It peaks at 868 covers in 1938, but falls sharply to 718 in 1939 and only gradually recovers to 861 by 1941. Obviously, the entry of Great Britain and France into the war with Germany in September 1939 had an impact on international air mail flows.

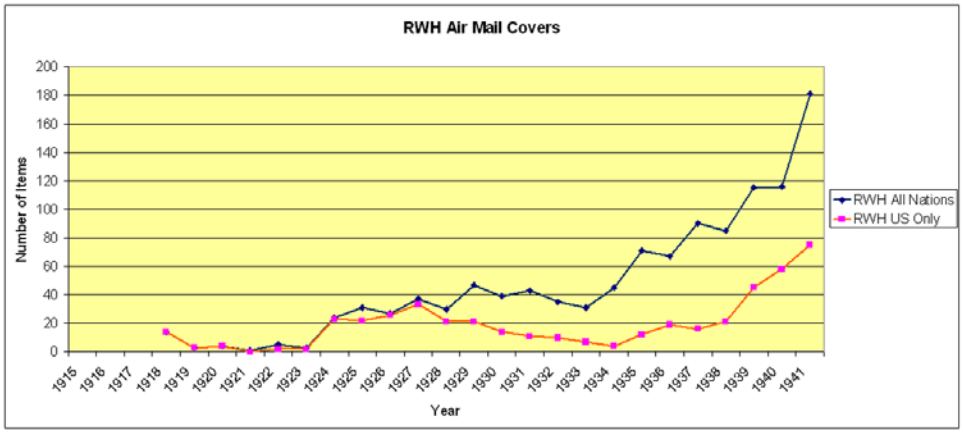


Chart 4 *Air mail covers Richard W. Helbock collection. Note that the elevated number of 1918 examples reflects an interest in the earliest U.S. air mail flights.*

Frankly, I was startled by the picture painted by the numbers in *chart 1*. I expected nothing nearly so dramatic.

Before basking too long in the glow of this impressive chart, it is worthwhile to throw out a few caveats. First, it is difficult to claim that the sample of air mail covers examined in this census is truly representative of all actual air mail during the 1915-1941 time frame. These covers have been selected from the universe of surviving mail by individuals who believe they have value as collectable items. For example, it is unlikely that Jim Forte would list an air mail cover from Chi

Similarly, even Ebay sellers usually have some basic understanding of the market for postal history and tend to ignore the commonplace. Therefore, we would expect the numbers of actual air mail covers to be far higher than those indicated in *chart 1* for the more recent years of the census. That would certainly make the slope of the line showing growth in air mail much steeper from 1934 to 1938, but would it have any impact on the decline caused by the advent of WWII?

Second, as impressive as this sample of eight thousand plus sounds to me, I know full well that it is truly miniscule when compared to the millions of actual pieces of air mail that it is intended to represent. Can it be representative? I honestly don't know, but if it is a reasonably representative sample of the *surviving* air mail from that time frame, perhaps it is representative of the long disappeared entirety.

Finally, this is just a first cut at an attempt to answer this question concerning the growth in air mail. I would love to hear other voices, see other evidence, and consider the opinions and experience of other collectors. Care to contribute to the discussion?

Figure 1 *International air mail examples between the United States and various Latin American nations dating prior to 1930 are generally not uncommon, but air mail and air accelerated mail between the U.S. and places in Europe, Africa and Asia are less frequently seen. Here, a 1929 air accelerated commercial cover from the TASS Soviet news agency in Moscow to the Associated Press in New York is shown. Air transport was provided only from Moscow to Berlin and there the German and Russian air mail etiquettes were cancelled. The remainer of the journey was probably by train to the German coast and steamer to New York.*

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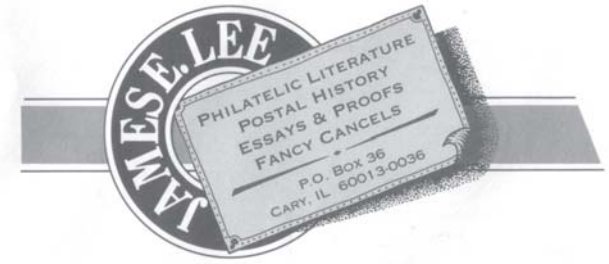

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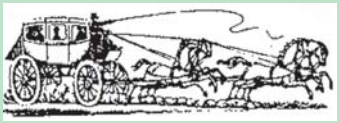

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The Post Offices of Harlan County, Kentucky

By Robert Rennick

Kentucky's sixtieth county was created from a section of Knox County by legislative act on January 28, 1819. It was named for Major Silas Harlan (1752-1782), a pioneer Salt River settler, who served with George Rogers Clark in his Illinois campaign and died in the Battle of Blue Licks. From its original 710 square miles it yielded thirty toward the formation of Letcher County in 1842 and 210 toward (Josh) Bell County in 1867. Its present 468 square mile area was set by March 22, 1873.

The county has Kentucky's most rugged terrain. Part of the 125 mile long Pine Mountain crosses it on the north. The Cumberland Mountain parallels that on the south. Between them, in the northeastern section of the county, lies the Black Mountain on a peak of which, just south of Lynch, is Kentucky's highest elevation, at 4,145 feet. This range was said by an old WPA observer to have been named for its "dark and gloomy appearance."

That part of the county south of Pine Mountain is drained by the main channel and three head forks of the 700 mile long Cumberland River. The only level land, where nearly all of the county's settlements, post offices, and rail stations have been, is in the narrow bottoms of these streams and their main branches: Straight, Brownies, Puckett, and Wallins Creeks of the Cumberland; Catron, Crummies, and Cranks Creeks of Martins Fork; Yocum Creek of Clover Fork; and Clover Lick and Looney Creeks of Poor Fork. Several streams heading in Pine Mountain: Greasy, Laurel and Big Laurel Creeks and Beech Fork ultimately feed into the Middle Fork of the Kentucky River.

The first permanent white settlers in Harlan County were Virginia-born Samuel (1762-1840) and Chloe Howard (or Hoard) who built a home in 1796 on the Cumberland River just below the forks. Other pioneer families included the Baileys, Brocks, Cawoods, Coldirons, Creeches, Farmers, Joneses, Ledfords, Lees, Lewises, Middletons, Smiths, and Turners.

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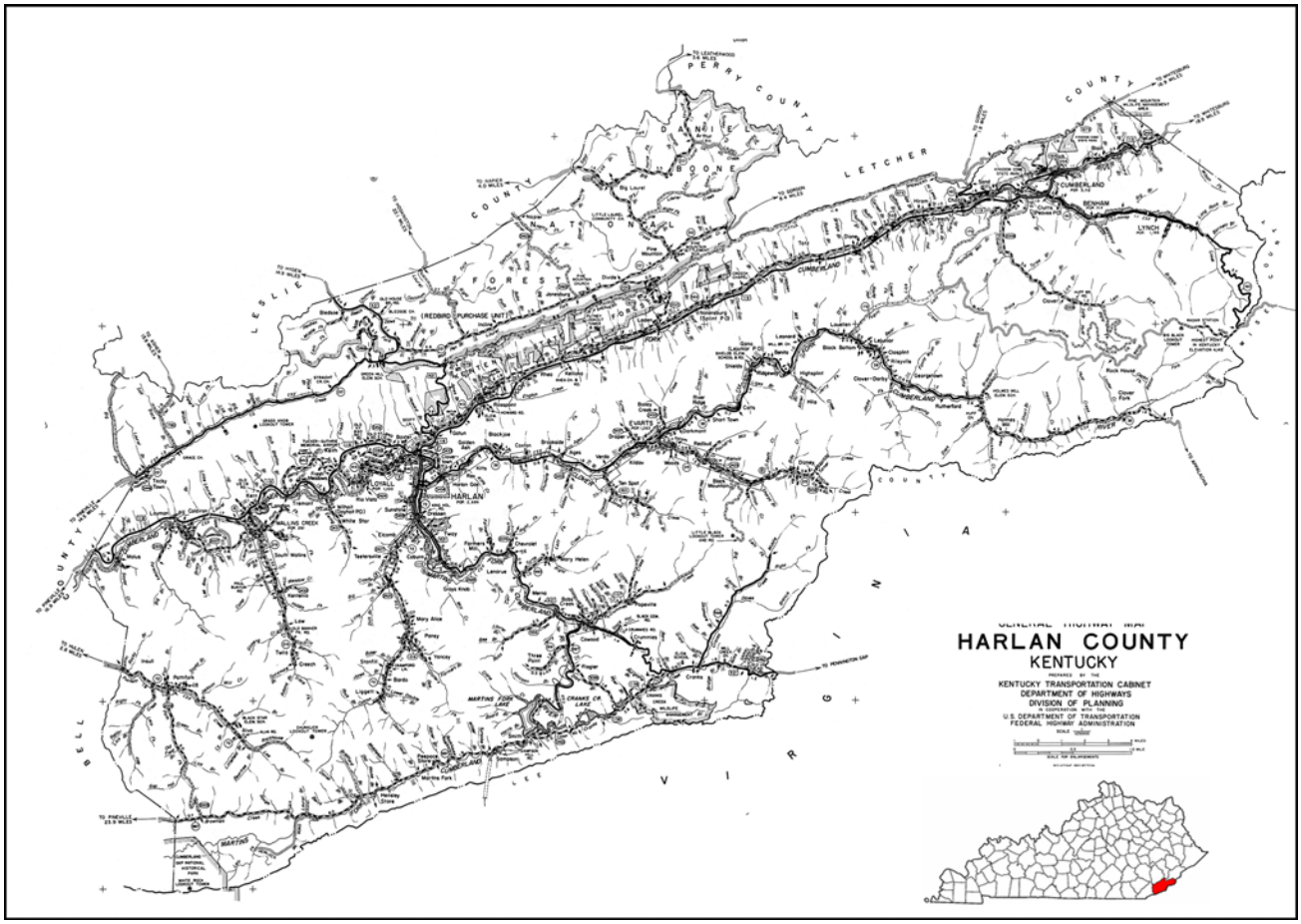
As with its upper Cumberland valley neighbors, subsistence agriculture and some commercial livestock production were Harlan's economic mainstays till the arrival of the railroads in the early twentieth century brought about he development of the county's timber and coal resources. Rail lines built or subsidized by the UN were soon extended up the Cumberland's three head forks and other major streams to bring out the coal from area mines. By the 1930s Harlan had become Kentucky's leading coal producer.

Almost from the beginning Harlan's mines attracted one of the most cosmopolitan work forces in the country, leading to the county's population peak of some 75,000 in 1940. After the Second World War, though, declining markets, over regulation of the industry, and environmental concerns led to a number of mine closings, and the mechanization of the remaining mines reduced the need for manual labor resulting in considerable unemployment. Few alternative jobs led to mass outmigration. (By 1980 the county's population had dropped to about 42,000 and by 2002 it had reached only 32,600.) But a search by newly organized county economic development committees for new sources of employment for the remaining population has not been very successful. The hoped for diversification of the county's economy through industrial development has been handicapped by the dearth of level land, distance from interstate highways, and the large amount of county land owned by non residents.

Harlan's 107 operating post offices will be considered below by their location in the principal valleys of the Cumberland watershed—the main channel and several of its branches and the river's three head forks and their principal branches. The offices will be located more precisely by road miles from downtown Harlan, the county seat, or other offices in the same valley. Harlan Town, formerly known as Mount Pleasant, is 153 road miles southeast of downtown Lexington (via 1-75 to Corbin, US 25 to Pineville, and US 119.)

Post Offices on the Main Channel of the Cumberland River

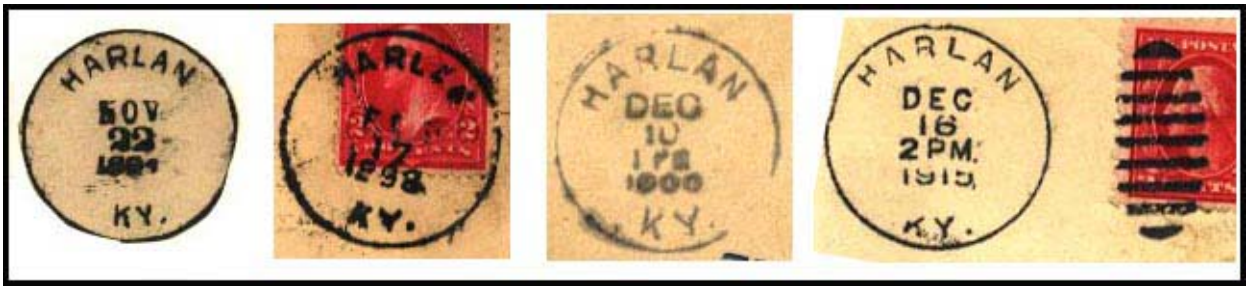
The fourth class city of Harlan centers where Clover and Martins Forks join to form the Cumberland River. By 1819, when Samuel and Chloe Howard (Hoard) sold twelve acres for the new county's seat, the site



was already called Mount Pleasant for a local Indian mound and the local post office established there on September 20, 1818, with John Pate, postmaster. The town was formally laid out in 1820 but went nowhere. In 1823 the Mount Pleasant post office closed. It was not reopened till May 3, 1824, with John Howard, postmaster, but as Harlan Court House[1]. It closed the following year, but was re-established on February 27, 1826 by Samuel Mark (sic) who was succeeded in September 1828 by John P. Martin. From September 14, 1861 through October 1865 the office was called Spurlock, probably for its then postmaster Josiah P. Spurlock. Then it became simply Harlan which it has been ever since. Though incorporated as Mount Pleasant on April 15, 1884 the town was locally called Harlan Town (and sometimes Harlan Court House). With the arrival of the railroad in 1911 the town's trustees felt that a less provincial sounding name than Mount Pleasant would enhance its image as a trade center and timber (and later coal) shipping point and so had it re-incorporated as Harlan on March 13, 1912.

By the 1880s the town had begun to grow. First its limits were extended up Clover Fork. After World War Two its southern limits were extended up Martins Fork, and with a further southward expansion in 1980 it now extends for one mile east and west and nearly two miles north and south, with its s northern limits only half a mile from Poor Fork's confluence with the Cumberland's main channel. But while Harlan Town's area has been enlarged its population, like the county's, has steadily declined, from 4,300 in 1930, through 3,300 in 1970, 2,700 in 1990, to 2,100 in 2000.

On May 22, 1866 John C. Howard established the Wallins Creek post office on the north side of the Cumberland, just opposite the mouth of this 51 mile long south bank tributary.[2] The latter is said by some to have been named for a pioneer Virginia surveyor killed by Indians somewhere on its banks. Robert L. Kincaid, in his The Wilderness Road,[3] was sure that this and several other area features were named for the Long Hunter Elisha Walden (ne ca. 1830) whose name was variously spelled Walden, Wallin, and Wallins, and who, like Daniel Boone, later moved to Missouri where he died an old man. Shortly after the establishment of the county's first coal mine on Terry's Fork of Wallins Creek and the arrival of the Wasioto and Black Mountain (later L&N) Railroad in 1911, the post office was moved across the river to near the mouth of Terry's, and the town of Wallins grew up around it. Today this sixth class city, as Wallins Creek, with an



Harlan postmarks 1894-1916

active post office, 94 miles west of Harlan, and a 2000 population of 260, occupies land on both sides of the river and extends half a mile up the creek. Its built up area continues south for another mile and now includes the community of South Wallins.

Just west and south of the Poor Fork-Cumberland confluence is the village of Baxter. Its active post office, established on June 6, 1890, with John J. Hoskins, its first postmaster, has always been on the west side of the confluence, 14 miles below (north of) Harlan. Since the railroad didn't arrive till 1911 it's not likely, as has been alleged, that the Baxter name was given by it. But as no Baxters are listed in the county's 1880 and 1900 Censuses, it's just as unlikely to have honored any local person or family.

The Layman post office was established on February 10, 1896 by Ulysses Simpson Howard on the north side of the Cumberland, opposite the mouth of Foresters Creek, and three miles below Wallins. Neither Layman nor Howard's first name choice Leona have been derived.[4]

In 1911 a Laymans Station was opened by the railroad on the south side of the river, some 300 yards east of Foresters, and to this locality the post office was moved two years later. In 1922 the office was moved east, but across the river, to serve the developing community of Dixietown where it closed in 1933.

Probably south of the river, at or near the mouth of Jesse's Branch, a mile above (southeast of) Layman's Station, Elihue Coldiron established a post office on November 16, 1928 which he named for his family.[5] His wife Mary Ella (nee Taylor) was appointed its first postmaster. In 1933, when Hisey C. Blanton became postmaster, this office was moved to Dixietown which had just been abandoned by the Layman office, where Elihue was maintaining the local store. The Coldiron office still serves this village, now also called Coldiron, between the river and US 119, and 2 ½ miles below Wallins Creek.

Another family to give its name to a Cumberland valley post office were the Days. On August 7, 1897 Milton Hensley established the Day post office on the north side of the river, probably just below the mouth of Harlan County's Four Mile Branch.[6] In 1907 it was moved three miles down the river to a site just below the mouth of Watts Creek (probably at the mouth of what's now the Rob Blanton Branch.) By 1912, after the arrival of the railroad, the office had been moved to a site just east of Ewings Creek, and three fourths of a mile south of the river to serve the new village of Wilhoit. This name is said to have been suggested by Ray B. Moss for Roy Wilhoit, the president of the Wilhoit Coal Company who, in 1911, had opened the county's second mine. On February 26, 1913, with Fred D. Keithly, postmaster, the post office was renamed Wilhoit. Shortly thereafter the Wilhoit Company was sold to the Moss and Sons Coal Company. On December 13, 1915 that firm became the White Star Coal

Company and the post office became White Star, with Moss as postmaster. Until it closed in mid April 1930 it was one mile up Ewings. Its papers were then sent to the Dayhoit post office which had been established on April 22, 1921 (with Harry C. Valentine, postmaster) at the mouth of Ewings, six miles below Harlan, where the Wilhoit Station on the L&N's Kentucky and Virginia line had been located several years earlier. Dayhoit was undoubtedly a combination of the names Day and Wilhoit, its predecessors. This post office, now on the east side of Ewings, still serves the Wilhoit community and the Fresh Meadows neighborhood on US 119, across the river.

Where Day had begun, at the mouth of Four Mile, was the later (1938 through August 1990) post office of Keith. The Four Mile Branch, also roughly four miles long, heads in Pine Mountain and joins the river 1 ½ miles above (northeast of) Dayhoit. Neither Keith nor the Emerling Station, which it served, has been name derived. Rebecca Ball (Mrs. William) Bailey was its first postmaster.

On January 7, 1914 Grant Saylor, son of local storekeeper Andrew Saylor, established at the mouth of Saylors Creek, 1 ½ miles above the Bell County line, a post office to serve the recently opened rail station of Molus [mohl/us]. Whence Molus has not been learned. One can merely wonder if there's any connection with San Juan County, Colorado's 10,900 foot high Molas Divide (or pass) and the nearby lake said to have been named for the burrowing animals. Harlan's Molus post office closed in 1966.

To serve the Hoyt mining camp on the south side of the river, opposite and just west of the mouth of Watts Creek (2 ½ miles above Wallins), James F. Henson applied for a post office. His first approved name Hoyt gave way to Cargo, and that office opened on September 28, 1918 with Alfred Caruthers, its first postmaster. By 1932 it was serving the village and L&N station (established before 1921) of Tremont. The office closed in 1933, but was re-established in 1945, as Tremont with Hazel B. Wilson its first postmaster. Till 1976 it operated on US 119, on the north side of the river in an area earlier called Pine Flat. Neither Cargo nor Tremont have been name derived.

About a mile below Baxter, the L&N acquired land from a local Creech family and, in 1920, built a rail switching yard and maintenance facility. First called Shann (or Shand) it was soon renamed Loyall [law/uhl]. it's said, for a company official (though no record of such a person has been found). Within a short time a town, also called Loyall, had grown up around the yard which soon developed as a coal shipping point. By the 1930s most of the county's coal was being shipped here by the various L&N spur lines for reshipment to Corbin and ultimately on the other L&N lines to more distant markets. The local post office, with Mrs. Nancy E. Sergent, the first postmaster, was also to be Loyall but for some reason opened, on September 2, 1922, as Shonn and did not assume the Loyall name till May 1, 1932. Though now a fifth class city with an active post office, Loyall's population has been steadily declining. From a peak of over 1,500, it fell to 1,200 (in 1980), 1,100 (in 1990), and only 766 (in 2000).

Three Post Offices in Harlan County's Stretch of Straight Creek of the Cumberland River

The aptly named Straight Creek heads in the Kentucky Ridge, a northwest spur of Pine Mountain, 1 ½ miles south of (the present) Bledsoe and half a mile west of US 421. It extends for eight miles in Harlan County and fourteen miles in Bell County to join the river at Bell's seat Pineville. It parallels Pine Mountain on the north.

Straight's 2.7 mile long Salt Trace Branch, which heads just south of the Leslie County line and joins the creek three miles above Ball County, was early named for its being a major route for southeast Kentuckians to the Clay County salt works. From July 10, 1876 through September 1888 John Forrester (sic) ran the Salt Trace post office about a mile up the branch. From 1896 through September 1911 this office operated as simply Salts.[7]

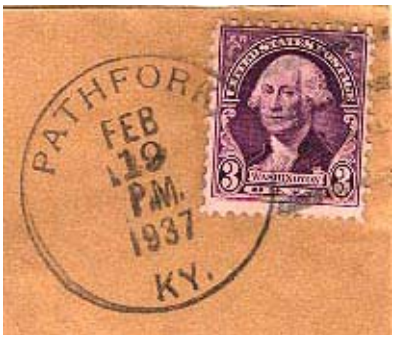
The rural post office of Gross was established by A.B. Gross on July 21, 1903 in Bell County, some 8 ½ miles up Straight Creek, and midway between Lock and Pass. In 1916 it was moved up the creek to a site 1 ½ miles from the Harlan County line. But in 1919 it was moved some four more miles up the creek, to a site, probably on the Salt Trace Branch, two miles within Harlan County. Though, according to Daniel Howard's Site Location Report, the move was for the greater convenience of its patrons, the office closed less than two years later, in August 1921.

Four Post Offices in the Harlan County Section of the Cumberland River's Pucketts Creek

Pucketts Creek, heading in the Little Black Mountain of Harlan County, extends for 101/2 miles to the river in Bell County, just below Hulen (Blackmont). It was paralleled by the L&N's nine mile long Black Mountain Spur (opened in 1915) and (the present) Ky 72.

The Saylor post office, established on November 22, 1897 and named for its postmasters (John M. Saylor was the first), occupied several imprecisely located sites. The first was likely on or near the Harlan County section of the fifteen mile long Brownies Creek which joins the river at Bell County's Miracle. By 1910 it was probably serving Mirl Daniel's store on Brownies, one mile from Bell County. By 1911, the year before it closed, it was on Pucketts, or one of its head forks, six miles from the river.

The aptly named 4 ½ mile long Path Fork heads in Little Black Mountain and joins Pucketts two miles from Bell County.[8] At or just below its mouth, Park L. Taylor established the Pathfork post office on May 24, 1916. Over the years, at several proximate locations, it has served several area coal operations including Black Star, Speed and Sackett,



Willis-Harlan, and Blue Diamond) and remains active, at the mouth of its name source.

In the early 1920s the Black Star Coal Company, the creek's main employer, built a camp 2 ½ miles above the mouth of Path Fork and named it Alva. This name, as yet underived, was then given to a station on the Black Mountain Railroad and, on October 11, 1922, to the local post office, established by Teddy D. Hail and first operated by Jesse L. Tones. This office served this area and the local Black Star School, through the demise of the coal operation, till 1974.

Fee, for local families, was the name applied to a village of some 500 residents then served by the new Pucketts Branch (OA) station of Rocky Branch, just yards from the Bell County line, and 1 ½ miles west of Pathfork. This name was proposed for its post office but replaced by Insull when Canda (sic) L. Gurley

opened it on July 24, 1925. Its name source, Samuel Insull (18591938) was the Chicago-based owner of several Harlan and Bell County coal mines.[9] By 1926 the rail station had also taken the Insull name but, some years later, until it closed, it was also known as Fee. The Insull post office was discontinued in 1955.

Three Other Wallins Creek Post Offices

When the L&N's Banner Fork branch reached the mouth of Sycamore Branch, one of Wallin Creek's head forks, five miles up from the river, it opened its terminus as Low. This name was replaced by Twila for the local post office established by Chester C. Mathis on April 6, 1917. In 1930 the office was moved half a mile down the creek to a site just above Banner Fork where it closed in 1957. The sources of neither name are known.

In 1907 the Kentenia Corporation was organized as a holding company for property acquired in three states by one Edward Mott Davis of Philadelphia and then

owned by his heirs. Shortly after some 86,000 acres of this land were surveyed to clear disputed title, the corporation secured the extension of the L&N into the area (mostly in Harlan County) and leased its holdings to several coal and timber developers. Among the several mining towns established by the developers (including the Banner Fork Mining Company) was one some three miles up Wallins Creek that took the Kentenia name. Its post office was established on April 10, 1917, with Lewis Johnson, postmaster, but was discontinued in June 1930 when the local mines had all but fizzled out.

Then there was the short-lived (1936-1939) Lisle post office, with James L. McIntyre, postmaster, which served a small but now extinct mining camp at the mouth of Ginseng Creek, midway between Kentenia and Twila. It was named for its Banner Fork station (identified as such by 1921), but whence the station's name is not known.

Post Offices in the Valleys of the Martins Fork of the Cumberland River

The twenty eight mile long Martins Fork heads in Bell County, just east of the Hensley Flats in Brush Mountain (one fourth of a mile from the Virginia line) and joins Clover Fork at Harlan Town to form the main Cumberland River channel. It is traditionally believed to have been named for the Virginia hunter and fur trader Joseph Martin (1740-1808), among the first to visit the area that became Harlan County. In early settlement times the upper Martins Fork valley was functionally tied to Jonesville in Lee County, Virginia as the latter was more accessible than any Kentucky places like Mount Pleasant (Harlan Town). The thirty post offices in Martin Fork's Harlan County watershed will be described below.

The first post office in this watershed was Cranks Creek somewhere on this fourteen mile long Martins Fork branch which heads in Little Black Mountain and joins the main stream just below Smith. The name is believed to be a corruption of Thranks, the name of a pioneer area surveyor. A number of nineteenth century Cranks were living in several eastern Kentucky counties but no evidence of any direct connection with a Thranks has been found. Anyway, this post office operated from May 27, 1848 to September 8, 1849, with Henry Skidmore, postmaster, at an unknown site on the creek, and then, from October 25, 1871 to January 8, 1874, with Albert Skidmore, postmaster, at a site (according to Albert's Site Location Report) three miles east of Martins Fork and thirteen miles southeast of Mount Pleasant. This may have been near the later (and extant) Cranks post office first established on April 9, 1908 with Harvey L. Ledford. This was four miles southeast of Cawood. It closed in November 1910 but was re-established in the same vicinity by Peter Day on December 26, 1913. It now serves scattered area homes from a site just west of the junction of US 421 and Ky 568, fourteen miles southeast of Harlan.

The post office of Ledford, some two miles up the creek and (the present) Ky 568 from US 421, was named for the family of Aley Ledford's emancipated slaves who had been given several thousand acres in that valley which they farmed and timbered. James H. (called Jeemes), the son of the family's patriarch Sinclair (Sinkler) Ledford, established the post office on May 15, 1890. It was first called Leadford, a misinterpretation by postal clerks of Ledford's illegible handwriting, but it closed in November 1893.[10] Ledford had the office reopened on January 11, 1898 as Ledford but it closed again, for good, in January 1913. After most of the creek's black population had died or moved away, the land was acquired by the Peabody Coal Company and today almost nothing remains.[11]

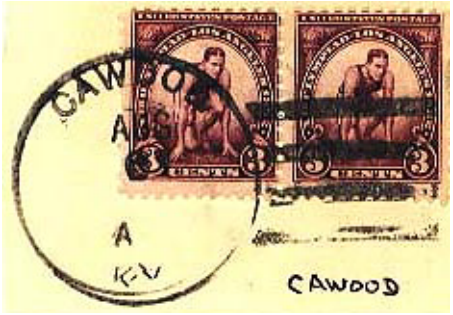
The little recalled, short-lived (September 9, 1898 through August 1901) and name-underived Glass post office may have been at two sites on Cranks Creek,

two or three miles below Ledford. In fact, its first Site Location Report had been submitted by James H. Ledford whose first proposed name was Hurst for a Harlan County family. Glass's first postmaster, though, was Leander S. Farmer.

The first of the two Martins Fork post offices actually named Martins Fork was established on August 21, 1854 with Thomas M. Harris, postmaster. But less than a month later, on September 12, Harris had it renamed Friendship. He was succeeded in 1856 by Washington (Wash) Smith and in 1860 by Leander Skidmore, suggesting that the office was in the vicinity of the Cranks Creek-Martins Fork confluence where it closed in June 1867.

In the mid 1880s Creed Smith, Washington's brother, and a son of Noble, the area's biggest landowner, opened a store and sawmill at the mouth of Harris Branch of Martins, just above the Cranks confluence. On June 2, 1897 Noble Lincoln Smith established there the Smith post office. In 1976 this area, some fifteen miles sse of Harlan and one air mile from the Virginia line, was acquired by eminent domain for the Martins Fork Flood Control Lake. The post office was rerouted, and when it was suspended on October 1, 1991 it was on Ky 987, just south of the impoundment.

The pioneer family of Berry Cawood [kay/wood] (1758-1848), a Revolutionary War veteran, through his son John, were the first settlers (ca. 1814) of that section of Martins Fork that centers at the mouth of its Crummies Creek branch. Here Wilson S. Hensley received authorization for a Cawood post office on April 4, 1890. But it's not likely that the office actually operated until January 27, 1896 with storekeeper Steven Moses Cawood, son of John, and a succession of other Cawoods, as its earliest postmasters. In 1924 the office and store were moved to the west side of the Fork to serve a mining camp and the L&N's Lick Branch spur station of Cawood. In 1931 they were back on the east side of the Fork serving a station called Cato at the junction of two new lines—one extending up the Fork to Smith and the other extending up the Long Fork of Crummies. Since the 1930s the Cawood post office has been on US 421, at the mouth of the Stillhouse Branch of Crummies, still serving the village of Cawood, nine miles southeast of Harlan.



Martin's Fork's Crummies Creek tributary extends for about 6 ½ miles from Little Black Mountain.

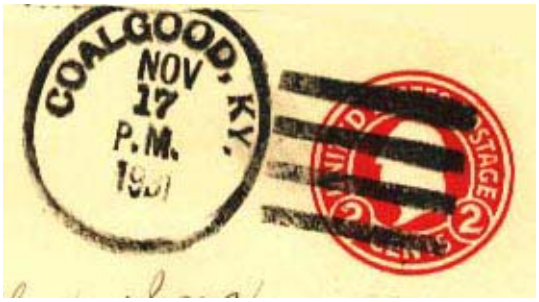
At the head of the 1.7 mile long Long Fork, which joins Crummies two thirds of a mile from Martins, lay the hamlet, rail station, and post office of Crummies. It's said that some early settlers on the creek had once observed a large herd of buffalo with crumpled horns. (Such an animal is still called a crummie or crummy.) The post office operated from August 11, 1928, with Thurman Clifford Chappell, its first postmaster, till 1983.

A post office inexplicably named George operated from June 15, 1897 through November 1909 at the mouth of Martins Fork's Turtle Creek branch, three miles below the Cawood and six miles above (southeast of) Harlan. Benjamin H. Mitchell was its first postmaster.

Just after the First World War Frank F. Cawood's newly organized Lena Rue Coal Company (named for his daughter, nee 1915) opened a mine on Turtle Creek and established the coal town and post office of Lenarue [leen/uh/roo] just above its Martins Fork confluence.

His office was established on May 29, 1919 and closed in 1965, long after his coal operation had ceased. The local station on the L&N's Martins Fork branch was called Glidden.

A mile up Turtle Creek (and Ky 990) is the coal town of Mary Helen, founded in 1917 by the Mary Helen Coal Corporation that's said to have been named for either two local women or the daughter of the coal company's owner. Within a year the L&N's Martins



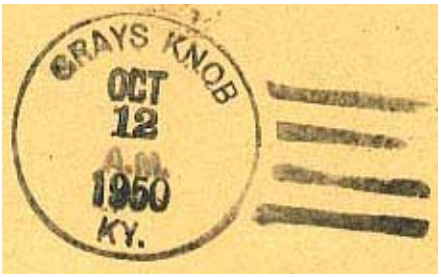
Fork branch had reached this site and situated its terminus called Merna (source unknown). Though the station's name was first proposed for Superintendent Silas J. Dickenson's post office, established on November 1, 1919, it opened as Coalgood, a transposition of the words aptly describing the quality of the coal being mined there. But only the post office, suspended on 31 August 2004 has borne this name. By the early 1980s it was serving ten operating mines, three preparation plants, a coal analysis plant, and the loading facilities for the Bow Valley Coal Resources Corporation.[12]

On September 14, 1897 William Lee established the Avondale post office, half a mile up Rough Branch of Martins Fork, nine miles above (wsw of) Smith. It closed on October 31, 1907, but was re-established on August 10, 1912 by Enos J. Howard, lasting only till the following April. Its name source has not been determined; perhaps, like many other such names in the United States, it refers to the river flowing past William Shakespeare's birthplace in England.

Some four miles up Martins Fork from Smith was the Hurst post office. Established on May 14, 1900 by Felix P. Fee, it was named for a family that included Elijah (who represented the county in the Kentucky Legislature ca. 1870) and M.B., a Harlan postmaster in the late 1890s. It closed in June 1910, but was re-established on January 21, 1922 by Walter Middleton, not as Hurst, his preference, but as Martins Fork. Delora Middleton was its first postmaster. It closed again in 1935.

The Fulkerson post office, established by and named for Clarence Fulkerson, operated from January 25, 1903 through May 1905. It served a village of some 200 residents on the Fork, four miles above (west of) Hurst. Fulkerson's first name preference was Morley.

At several sites on Martins Fork, roughly four miles above Harlan, C.E. Wilson and T.C. Berger, dba the Wilson-Berger Coal Mining Company, operated mines and founded a coal camp at the mouth of Mill Creek. At first called The Wilsonberger Camp, a name also given to the L&N's Martins Fork station there, it was shortly renamed Grays Knob for the 3,162 foot elevation overlooking the camp from the south that's said to have been named for a pioneer settler. On January 13, 1916 Paul Berger established the Grays Knob post office. Years later the local community and station were also known as Charlotte for the second wife of an area mine owner C.R. Bennett. After occupying several sites on both sides of the Fork, the post office, now serving area homes, a nearby school, and a hospital, is on US 421.



Two miles above (east of) Grays Knob, centering at the mouth of Martins Fork's Enoch Branch, was the coal town and L&N station of Chevrolet. The first local mine was opened in 1917-18 by the Williams ByProduct Coal Company owned by John and Dover Williams of Knoxville, Tennessee, which was soon acquired by the larger Blue Diamond Coal Company. On June 15, 1918 a post office called BeePee (source unknown) was established by Frank C. Eaton, the mine company's commissary manager. On December 17 of that year it was renamed for the model 490 Chevrolet said to have been driven by another Williams brother Tom that had broken down on the local road. The Blue Diamond mine closed in 1957 but the post office survived till March 1988.

Sometime before 1921 the Lick Branch Spur of the L&N's Martins Fork line reached the head of this 1.2 mile long west side tributary and opened a station aptly named Coalville. Here, 1 ½ miles above (southwest of) Cawood, the Three Point Coal Corporation opened its mine, camp, and, on August 29, 1927 (with Louis J.

Hampton, postmaster), a post office called Three Point. The company's name is said to have denoted the three virtues: service, quality, and dependability claimed for its local operation. The company permanently shut down in April 1954, and the office closed in 1965.

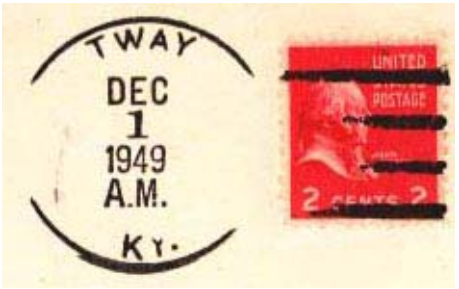
Anticipating a station on the L&N extension to its main line at Hagan, Virginia, Mrs. Emily Langford, on May 1, 1928, opened a post office on Martins Fork, about 2i miles above (southwest of) Smith. It was named Sampson. Could it have been named for the Harlan lawyer J.E. Sampson (ne ca. 1886) or for Kentucky's Governor, the Laurel County-born Flem D. Sampson (1875-1967).[13] It closed in 1950.

From 1938 to 1951 Benjamin Franklin Lankford and others operated the Sunshine post office at the mouth of Coldiron Branch of Martins, just south of Harlan's present southern city limits. According to Lankford's Site Location Report it would serve the village of Comet (with some 1,500 residents) and the L&N's Dressen Station, half a mile above (just north of the mouth of Catron Creek). Coal mining in this vicinity began just before the First World War with the establishment of the Martins Fork and Catrons Creek Coal Companies. Whence Sunshine and Comet are no Dressen was probably named for the German city and district of Dresden but it's not known why.

Railroaders used to tell how they would spy on a young lady who was always "dressin' before an un-shaded window."[14]

The county's shortest lived post office Bobs Creek was established by Mrs. H.C. Hensley and operated only from June 2 through December 1947. William M. Pope was its only postmaster. It was on the Martins Fork Railroad, just below its later Popeville Station and was named for the three mile long stream that joins the Fork there, one mile below (northwest of) Cawood.

By 1913, a mile or so above Harlan, R.W. Creech's Pineville Coal Mining Company had opened a mine. In 1914 it was acquired by R.C. Tway's Coal Company which shortly built its camp at the mouth of the Dave Smith Branch of Martins and called it Tway. But this place didn't have its post office till 1949 when Mrs. W.F. Hall applied for it as Hallwood. Because of her age and failing health, however, she turned over its operation to Mrs. Hazel C. Miller and the office opened as Tway. But it closed after only eight years.[15]



Post Offices on Catrons Creek (of Martins Fork)

Seven post offices served coal operations on this nine mile long stream which heads at the Catron Gap of the Little Black Mountain and joins Martins Fork just above Dressen. The creek, whose name is locally pronounced kaet/uhrnz (but identified on some Civil War era maps as Catherines) was undoubtedly named for another early Virginia surveyor and was first settled before 1820. Its course has been followed by the L&N's Catron Branch and (the present) Ky 72.

To serve the Turner locality at the mouth of Slater's Fork, four miles up Catrons, Carlisle B. Pope, on November 28, 1892, established the Pansy post office. This he's believed to have named for the flower. It closed at the end of 1918. On June 27, 1927 it was re-

established by John McHenry Riddle, but instead of his proposed Pansy, it was called Gulston for the local rail station. Mary E. Vaughn was its first postmaster. According to local tradition, the name is a shortening of Gull's Town attributed to an L&N engineer named Gull. Though the station remained Gulston, as did the post office till it was suspended on March 23, 2001, the village they served has always been Pansy.

The 34 mile long Slater's Fork (said to have been corrupted from Slaughters, an old Culpeper County, Virginia family name) heads in the Little Black Mountain. Less than a mile up from Catrons, about the mouth of Pounding Mill Branch, Elbert O. Guthrie established a mine ca. 1919-20 and named it and the newly opened station on the L&NTs Slaters Fork Spur for either a race horse or Yancey Gross, a civil engineer. The town was first called Slaters Fork but also became Yancey when Guthrie opened the Yancey post office on January 12, 1924. Until the re-establishment of Pansy's post office as Gulston, this office served that vicinity, less than a mile down the Fork. The coal operations on Slaters are gone, as are the local store and church, and most of the homes. The Yancey post office closed in 1966.

A mile up Catrons was the McComb Coal Company camp of Wheeler and the L&N's Catrons Branch station of Keeman. As McComb was already in use by a Pike County post office, Squire M. Wheeler opened his local office on May 2, 1918 as Elcomb. By the 1920 Census, however, the McComb name had been applied to the local precinct.

To serve the McCombs Precinct and its Black Bottom and Little Creek communities after Elcomb closed in 1935, the Teetersville post office, named for local storekeepers, operated between 1938 and 1955 less than a mile up Catrons. Mrs. Jennie Teeters was its first postmaster.

Just after World War One Floran D. Perkins, dba the Perkins-Harlan Coal Company, opened a mine about two miles below the head of Catrons, at the mouth of its Double Branches. The L&N's Catron Branch line was extended to this site, 71/2 miles above Harlan, and its station, like Perkins coal camp, would be called Catron. But the station, community, and post office (established by Perkins on February 16, 1920) were, instead, named Liggett for Perkins' wife Mattie's Ohio family. The office closed in 1975.

The Catrons Creek Branch's Bardo Station (established by 1920-21) and the coal town of Bardo, at the mouth of Jones Branch, half a mile below (north of) Liggett, gave their name to the Bardo post office operating between March 12, 1928 and 1963. The name is said to have been corrupted from Bordeaux, the French city, and was suggested by James Bowling, the superintendent of a nearby mine, who had served in France in World War One. Peter Howard Bean, the first postmaster, was succeeded in the late 1930s by Bowling.

A mile below Pansy (Gulston), at the mouth of Halls Branch, is the coal town, Catrons Creek Branch station, and active post office of Mary Alice,. They were named by the owner of the Mary Alice Coal Company, Dr. Harry K. Buttermore, for his two daughters Mary Jane and Ruth Alice.

The post office was established in 1947, with Willard Martin Buttermore, the first postmaster.

Post Offices in the Clover Fork Valleys of the Cumberland River

The thirty three mile long Clover Fork heads just north of the Harlan-Wise-Lee Counties convergence between the Black and Little Black Mountain ranges and joins Martins Fork at Harlan to form the main Cumberland River channel. It's said to have been named by Joseph Martin for the wild clover growing along its banks. Twenty six post offices served its watershed.

The first Clover Fork post office was actually established as Clover Fork by Isaac W. Huff on July 28, 1857. Its precise location at the upper end of the stream is not known. It lasted only till August 1859, but was re-established by Huff on August 22, 1872, probably at the mouth of Louder Creek, 18½ stream miles above Harlan. In February 1894 the two parts of the name were combined, and as Cloverfork it was moved around 1906 about a mile up the Fork to the mouth of Razors Creek where by 1912 it was serving the Clover Fork Coal Company camp. The post office closed at the end of 1934. At this site, now called Glenbrook, another mine was opened in 1946 by the Stonego Coal and Coke Company (later called Westmoreland) and to this site the L&N's Clover Fork line was soon extended.

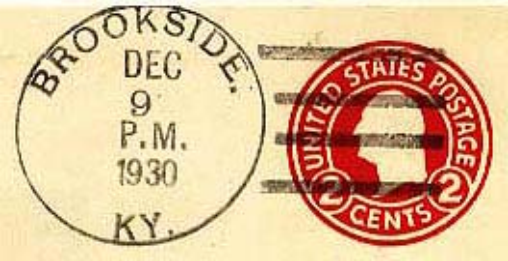
Nine miles up Clover Fork is the mile long Bailey Creek. It's said to have been named for one Carr Bailey, a Revolutionary War veteran and the leader of a group of pioneer visitors who had camped at its mouth sometime before 1800 and was one of Harlan County's first settlers. Probably at the creek's mouth, on July 28, 1857 (the very day the Clover Fork post office was established), Hugh Smith opened the Smithville post office but it, too, closed after only two years. It was re-opened on August 22, 1872 by storekeeper Wright Kelly, but according to his and subsequent Site Location Reports, it was twelve miles above Harlan and thus at or near the mouth of (the present) Bailey Branch (earlier in the twentieth century called Mill Branch). It was renamed Bayly's Creek (sic) on July 1, 1875 and became simply Bailey in September 1880. (Sometime in the mid 1870s, though, it may have been moved back to the mouth of Bailey Creek, the site of William B. Kelly's store, nine miles above Harlan, for by then cannel coal had been discovered on Kelly's land and this post office may have been serving a community called Clover Bottom with several stores and one or two mills.) Wherever the post office was in September 1900 it closed. With the coming of the L&N's Clover Fork line a station called Pillsbury was established at the mouth of Baileys Creek, and some time later the one mile long Bailey Creek Spur was built with four stations: Pillsbury, Springton, Galindo., and Lupton. By 1960 Pillsbury and Lupton were still serving that valley and the Bailey Creek community.

Equally elusive were the sites of Clover Fork's Leonard post office. It was established at some unknown location on September 28, 1860 with storekeeper Jonathan K. Bailey, postmaster. It closed after only one year but was re-established on August 22, 1872 by Jonathan's brother William R. eighteen miles above Harlan, and six miles above Bailey, at the mouth of Fugitt Creek (near the site of the future Louellen), to serve his brother's and several other stores. By 1886 the post office was at or near the mouth of Child's Creek, 2 ½ miles above, where it remained till it closed in 1911. Whence Leonard has not been determined; was it named for Leonard Farmer, son of Lewis and Anna, who, in 1860, was a twenty three year old Harlan County lawyer? No Leonard families have been found in the county at that time.

Ages and Brookside, two almost contiguous coal towns, are now served by a single post office on Ky 38 and Clover Fork, 4 ½ miles above (east of) Harlan. In February 1975 the separate fourth class post offices of Ages and Brookside, then only 400 yards apart (the closest in the U.S.), were combined into one called Ages-Brookside. With Rufus Hendricks, its postmaster, the new office was in the Eastover Mining Company offices at Brookside.

The Ages post office had been established on June 8, 1892 with Lloyd Ball, postmaster, and named for its site at the mouth of the 2.4 mile long Ages Creek, 4 and 3/4 miles up Clover. (The creek is said to have been named for an early Mr. Ages of whom nothing is known.) The office closed in June 1896. It was re-opened on December 10, 1912 with Dezzier Turner, postmaster, who then had it moved 300 yards to serve the new Ages Station on the L&N's recently arrived Clover Fork branch.

In 1917 the brothers August F. and Bryan W. Whitfield from Alabama established the Harlan Collieries, and within two years had opened a mine at a site just below Ages.[16] This site was called Brookside for its location between two brooks. Shortly thereafter the L&N opened its Brookside Station. By the early 1920s



Brookside had become a model coal town, and Harlan Collieries a model coal operation with the county's first mechanized loading facility. To serve the latter more directly than the Ages post office apparently could, the Brookside post office was established on March 24, 1930 with John H. McKinley, postmaster. It was 200 yards east of Laurel Creek and three-eighths of a mile west of Ages. Over the years site changes brought the office even closer to Ages.

In 1970 the Duke Power Company of Charlotte, North Carolina acquired the Harlan Collieries and several other mining operations in the county and established the Eastover Mining Company to run them. After a crippling 1974 strike at Brookside, many of the company's employees moved to Ages leaving nothing at the Brookside site but the company's offices. In 1980 Eastover was sold to Duane Bennett.

On September 16, 1899, after the first closing of the Ages post office, Moses B. Smith established a post office on the east side of Ages Creek and called it Coxton for one or more area Cox families. Carlo B. Crider was its first postmaster. Here, in 1912, K.W. McGuire developed the Harlan Coal Mining Company. In 1913 the office was moved about a mile down the Fork, and by 1920 it, the rail station, and the community they served were one mile below Brookside. From 1952 to 1980 the post office operated as a CPO for Harlan, four miles below.

In 1896 the discovery of gold on a ninety mile branch of the Yukon River in northwestern Canada gave a name in the next few years to a number of places in the U.S. One was a Harlan County post office at the mouth of Rockhouse Branch of Clover Fork, twenty five miles above Harlan. On February 15, 1898 William H. Short established Harlan County's Klondike post office. By 1909 it had been moved down the Fork to a site just below the mouth of Breeding Creek (given as Breedens Creek on current published maps), still serving a scattered rural population. By October 1915 it had been moved another 12 miles downstream to the mouth of Mary Wynn Branch, one mile above Childs Creek. The following month it was moved again, another mile down Clover, to what's shown on current maps as Georgetown. Here it closed in October 1918.

From February 23, 1911 through January 1913 John H. Blair ran the inexplicably named Delvale post office, probably at the mouth of Clover Fork's Mill Branch (earlier called Joes Branch).[17]

Also in 1911 the Whitfield Brothers invested in the Clover Fork Coal Company and located their mining operation on the Fork just above the mouth of the 1.3 mile long Kitts Creek, two miles above Harlan. Some say the town, rail station, stream, and post office of Kitts were named for a family but others maintain it was named for someone's mule. Anyway, by the mid 1920s the post office, established on January 4, 1913, with George P. Fitz, postmaster, and the station were serving several other area coal operations, including those of the Rex and Gold Ash Coal Companies. The office was suspended on October 1, 1982.

Then there was the Blackjoe post office, established on January 19, 1915 by Leander Bowling to serve the Wood (rail) Station, midway between Kitts and Coxton. Neither this name, Wood, nor Bowling's first preference Ada have been derived. The office closed in mid September 1935.

In 1916 Mssrs. Killebrew and Davis of Nashville, Tennessee, dba the King Harlan Coal Company opened a mine on Ewell Van King's land about a mile up Clover from the mouth of Jones Creek (seven miles above Harlan). In March the L&N's Clover Fork line was completed from Ages, three miles below, and a station was opened here called Kilday. On March 17 the Kildav post office was established with Squire Merwin Wheeler, postmaster. By the mid 1920s the post office

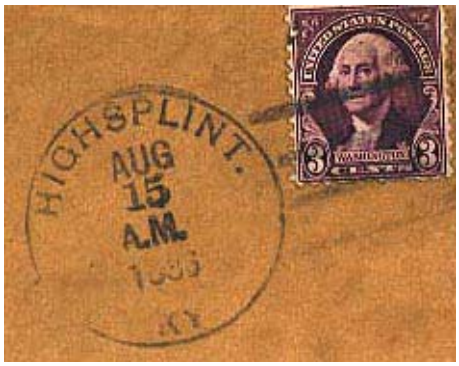
and station were serving other area coal operations—notably those of the J.L. Smith and the George R. Neal Coal Companies. The office closed in 1952.

A Harlan family of Drapers from Tennessee may have been the source of the name applied to another station and post office half a mile above (northeast of) Kildav, which also served J.L. Smith's mining camp and the Middleton Addition of Everts, just above it. The office established by Franz Sigle Newport operated between June 4, 1924 and 1952. Sometime after 1947 the station's name was changed to Harcrow.

The coal town of Verda (with a population of 950 in 1970), its station and post office were at the mouth of Jones Creek, six miles above Harlan. It's said to have been named for Verda Middleton, an early resident. The post office, established on April 24, 1917 with Chad Middleton, postmaster, became a rural branch in 1964 and closed for good in 1973.

Fifteen miles up Clover, at the mouth of Seagraves Creek, the aptly named High Splint Coal Company[18] opened a mine and, on February 7, 1918, established the Highsplint post office to serve its developing coal town. John C. Casey was its first postmaster. In June of the following year the railroad reached this site and established its Seagraves Station (which later also took the Highsplint name). This company and its mine were also acquired in 1970 by Eastover (Duke Power) and later by the Manalpan Mining Company. The Highsplint office was discontinued in 1974.

Less than a mile below Highsplint, in the commissary of the Harlan Coal and Coke Company's mining camp, James A. Evans opened the Ridgeway post office on October 6, 1925. It's said to have been named for the Ridgeway Coal Company that had opened a mine there several years before. Soon the office and the local Ridgeway Station were serving several other coal operations and a population of close to 2,000. But the office closed in 1932.



On December 14, 1918, to serve the operations and camps of the Bowling Mining, Clover Coal, Upper Harlan Coal, and W.E. Garrett Coal Companies, two miles below Highsplint, Leander Bowling, Sr. opened the Lejunior post office which he named for his son. Kenes Bowling was its first postmaster.[19] Two months before, a rail station was opened at this site and called Shields, perhaps for Tennessee-born (ca. 1865) Robert Shields, an area resident.

One half mile above Lejunior the two coal camps and L&N stations of Benito and Gano were served, from September 17, 1929 to 1940, by James Bennett's Benito post office.

By 1921 the L&N had opened a station at what was the end of its Clover Fork line, 1 ½ miles above Highsplint and just below the mouth of Fugitt Creek. As Lisbon it would serve the newly established coal camp and mining operation of the Cornett and Lewis Coal Company. Lisbon gave way to Louellen for the daughter of the company president Denver B. Cornett when the local post office was opened on December 3, 1921, with Arthur B. Babbage, its first postmaster. The station was later renamed Closplint Number Two. When the mine closed in 1958 the camp was abandoned and few of its once peak of 900 residents (ca. 1930) remain in the vicinity. The post office, though, continued till April 1985.

The coal town, L&N station, and still active post office of Closplint, miles above (southeast of) Louellen, was named for and by the Clover Splint Company which

opened its local mine in 1926. The post office was established on February 16, 1928 with James Roy Parsons, postmaster.[20]

Holmes Mill, a still active post office, was established on March 24, 1926 by Wiley Holmes (ne ca. 1883-84), a local mill owner and coal mine engineer, just above the mouth of Rockhouse, a little over five miles above Closplint, and near the first site of the Klondike post office.

From 1942 to 1950 the Short Town post office, established by John William Short and named for his family, served the Cote (or Dark Bottom) Station on the L&N, across the creek, and the nearby Short Town community midway between Evarts and Lejunior.[21]

Post Offices on Yocum Creek of Clover Fork

Yocum Creek heads in Little Black Mountain, one fourth of a mile from the Lee County (Virginia) line, and extends for 7 ½ miles to Clover Fork at Evarts, eight miles above Harlan and 8 ½ miles up the Fork. The creek was named for a pioneer settler near its mouth who, according to legend, had evaded an Indian scalping by impressing his captors with his sense of humor.[22] Other early settlers on the creek and at its Clover confluence were families of Turners, Kellys, Paces, Middletowns, Kings, Smiths, and Creeches.

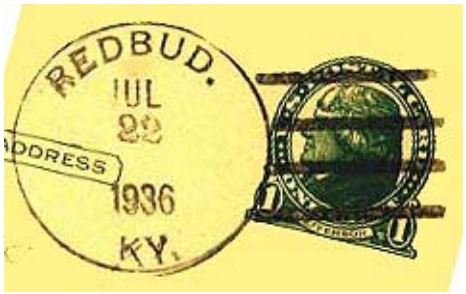
The post office of Evarts was established on February 9, 1885, with Jane Kelly, its first postmaster, at a site on the north side of Clover Fork and just above the mouth of Yocum. It's said to have been named for an early Harlan Countian of whom there seems no record, but we can't rule out the possibility of its having honored Boston-born William Maxwell Evarts (1818-1901), a director of the Consolidation Coal Company (18721877), but better known nationally as a U.S. Secretary of State (1877-1881) and senator from New York (1885-1891). By 1900 a town with several stores, two sawmills, and other businesses had grown up south of the Fork and east of Yocum, and to this site the post office moved in 1907. The town soon became the main trading center for coal camps along both streams. Evarts is now a fifth class city with an active post office and a 2000 population of 1,100 (a loss of 400 since 1970).

On January 15, 1898 John G. Farley established a post office just below the mouth of Reds Creek, about four miles up Yocum. It was probably named for Elijah Franklin Dizney, the first principal of the Black Mountain Academy founded in 1893 by the Congregational Church at Evarts. In 1908 the Dizney post office was moved one mile down Yocum to the mouth of Schoolhouse Branch (then called Howards Cove) where Black Mountain is shown on contemporary maps. In 1914 it was moved back to its original site. In 1916 it was moved 1 ½ miles further up Yocum, probably to the site of John Pace's store at the mouth of Turner Creek. In 1918 it was one mile down the creek at the mouth of Bills Creek.

In January 1921 the office was moved two more miles down Yocum to serve the coal town of Kenvir (founded in 1919 by the Peabody Coal Company's Black Mountain subsidiary) and its Yocum Creek (L&N) branch station, and was renamed Kenvir. It's said that this name was derived from an ownership dispute by companies in the two states. For years the vicinity was locally called Black Mountain and focused on a company town with a peak population of 5,000. The mine ceased operations in March 1958 though the company retained its property title. By 1980 some 2,000 persons still occupied homes on a two mile stretch of Ky 215 between Pounding Mill Branch and Britton Creek, some three miles or so above Evarts. The Kenvir post office continues to serve this area.

The Dizney post office was re-established as such on December 13, 1922 by Henry Surgener at its 1918 site, 21/2 miles above the present Kenvir post office site. After his death in 1939 it was moved a short distance to Pace's store, with Lucy Pace as postmaster. It was moved again in 1951 to the Jones Brothers store, just above Pace's, with Milton Jones, postmaster, but was suspended on May 18, 1993.[23] For some years the local community has been referred to as Punkin Center.

A locality early called Woods (for the trees), the community of Griffithsville (for a family), the Yocum Creek branch station of Sikes, and the Darby Coal Mining Camp. were served, from September 1929 to



1942, by Sally Mae and William M. Stewart's aptly named Redbud post office just below the mouth of Pounding Mill Branch, midway between Evarts and Kenvir.

Post Offices on the Poor Fork of the Cumberland River

The Poor Fork heads just short of the Wise County, Virginia line and extends for fifty two miles wsw through Letcher and Harlan Counties to join the main Cumberland River at Baxter, one mile below (north of) Harlan (Town) and the Clover-Martin Forks confluence. It's said to have been named for the relative unproductivity of its soil. Twenty post offices served its Harlan County watershed.

Harlan County's largest community, the fourth class city of Cumberland, is centered at the junction of US 119 and Ky 160, at the mouth of the Poor Fork's Looney Creek, **22??? mi**les ene of Harlan. Its site was first settled in the 1820s, and with Creech, Smith, Huff, Lewis, Nolen, Cornett, and Blair families had become, by the mid nineteenth century, the trade center of the upper Poor Fork watershed. Its post office was established as Poor Fork on February 11, 1837, with Hezekiah Branson, postmaster. By this name it and the town itself, just below the mouth of Cloverlick Creek, were known till they were renamed in June 1926 by local businessmen seeking a more propitious name for their growing community. Since 1960, however, this community has hardly been growing. Since 1960 the town with an active post office and the main campus of Southeast Community College (until recently a part of the University of Kentucky system) has lost some forty per cent of its population to reach its present level of only 2,600.

The aptly named Big Rock post office operated intermittently at (perhaps) several sites on Poor Fork, in the vicinity of its two mile long English Creek confluence, from its first establishment on October 20, 1857 by Samuel Powell. It closed on July 31, 1863 but was re-established on June 2, 1865 by John Lewis, but closed again that November. Calvin Coldiron reopened it on August 2, 1866 but it closed again on January 8, 1873. It was re-established for another stretch on June 22, 1876 but lasted this time only till July 1877. From August 1897 to September 1898 William D. Lewis maintained another Big Rock post office one mile up English, 52 miles above Baxter.

Serving the same vicinity just below English Creek for fifty seven years were three post offices. The first, Gap Ridge, was operated on the north side of Poor Fork, opposite the mouth of Gap Branch, by storekeeper Henry L. Howard and Eli Lewis between May 4, 1876 and October 6, 1880. It was re-established on October 2, 1886 by John L. Jones, another storekeeper and the local constable, as Jonesburgh (Jonesburg in 1894) and closed in May 1896.

On May 31, 1901 Benjamin W. Sergent opened the Rosspoint post office, named allegedly for a man who, during the Civil War, was stationed on top of a nearby hill to spy out a Rebel advance and warn the people in the valley. This office began about 1 3/4 miles below the mouth of English. By 1912 it had been moved about one fourth of a mile up the Fork to the mouth of Yearly Branch to which it returned after several more moves and where it closed in 1933.

One of the largest and most influential families in Harlan County history were the descendants of John Creech (ne early 1790s) and his wife Sally (nee Smith) who lived at the mouth of Clover Lick Creek of Poor Fork. On June 15, 1881 John W. Creech established the Creech post office at a site some six miles below Clover Fork Creek and the town of Poor Fork, perhaps at or near the mouth of Big Jonathan.[24]

By 1907, according to Kentucky and U.S. Geological Survey maps, it was at the mouth of Eastep Branch, about a mile above (east). On the 1919 topographic map it was shown at the mouth of Chad Branch (now the Hi Lewis Branch), 1.7 miles further east. On May 13, 1924 it was moved by postmaster Edward W. Creech another mile east to serve a larger population at the Chad Station on the L&N's Poor Fork line, two miles below Poor Fork-Cumberland. Its name was then

changed to Chad. The station may have been named for Chadwell Nolan, a local man then serving as railroad agent.[25] Here it closed in 1932.

In 1920, a mile below (west of) the site of Chad Station, the L&N opened the Hiram Station it had named for landowner Hiram Lewis. In 1943 Frances E. Creech established the Hiram post office to serve this station and the village of Chad which, by then, had some 500 residents. In 1964 the post office became a Cumberland rural branch and closed for good the following year.

At or near the mouth of Poor Fork's Coldiron Branch, half a mile below the Letcher County line, and five miles above Poor Fork (town) was the Est post office, established on March 30, 1898, with John L. Blair, postmaster. Was it named for Miss Ester Blair (nee ca. 1830), an area resident? It closed in June 1912.

Another notable Poor Fork family, the Nolans (whose name was also spelled Nolen, Nolin, and even Nowlin), gave its name to the Nolansburg post office, established on April 26, 1899 by John G. McKnight.[26] Until 1920 it was at the mouth of Holcomb Branch of Poor Fork, some DA miles above Harlan. In September 1920 the office was moved a mile or so up the Fork and, on November 1, 1936, its name was changed to Splint for a coal seam. In 1949 it was moved to a site just below the mouth of Station Branch where it served the towns of Nolansburg and Kellioka and the Poor Fork (L&N) line's Splint Station till it closed in 1957.

The Kellioka post office occupied several sites on the north side of Poor Fork. It was first established at the mouth of Jones Branch (now Deep Branch), the site of the later Rhea Station, on August 26, 1901 by John P. Kelly for whom (or his family) it was probably named (though it's not known why it appeared in this form). By 1912 it was at the mouth of Turkey Branch (now Ball Branch), half a mile east, where it closed in 1914. It was re-established on June 12, 1920 with George D. Batcheler, postmaster, some 5 ½ miles up the Fork, to serve the L&N's Kellioka Station, then 1 ½ miles above (northeast of) Nolansburg, where it closed for good the following February.

To honor himself and his wife, Bird Hensley sought to establish the Alice and Bird post office on Poor Fork roughly midway between the mouth of English Creek and the then site of Nolansburg. The non-acceptability of a multi-word name led him to suggest Lewis for his neighbor James M. Lewis (na ca. 1867). However, the office operated only between July 26, 1909 and mid August 1910.

By 1920, the Intermountain Coal and Lumber Company had acquired the Lewis site, 1,3 miles above the Rhea Station and some nine miles above Harlan, for a sawmill to process nearby Pine Mountain timber. To serve it they opened a Poor Fork (L&N) line station called Putney and, on June 17, 1925 (with Loree D. Smith, postmaster), the still active Putney post office.

At the mouth of Poor Fork's Spruce Ridge Branch, one mile above Lewis-Putney, was Dillon. This office, whose name source is not known, was operated by William D. and Mattie Lewis from November 4, 1915 through May 1927.

Another inexplicably named Poor Fork post office Dione operated between May 14, 1912 and 1957. It was established by Robert W. Cornett probably at the mouth of Banks Branch. In early 1919 he had it moved three. fourths of a mile up the Fork, two miles above (east of) the newly established Totz (Colton and later Pine Mountain)Station and six miles below Poor Fork (Cumberland) town.

In late 1920 Edgar L. Bradley applied for the Totz post office to serve the recently opened Colton Station and the Harlan Cumberland Coal Company mine begun there by Harry Totz of West Virginia. The active post office, now on Ky 522 (old US 119) was officially established on April 18, 1921. Some years ago Colton gave way to Pine Mountain Station for the ridge overlooking Poor Fork on the north.

From February 18, 1925 to 1936 another inexplicably named post office Laden served a Poor Fork station of that name two miles above Dillon.[27] Chad Lewis was its first postmaster.

Descendants of Enoch and Nancy (Jenkins) Blair, a large upper Poor Fork family, gave their name to a post office at two sites roughly miles above Cumberland (town). It was established in 1941, with Rebecca Jane Lane, its first postmaster, and became a Cumberland rural branch in 1964, closing for good eight years later.

The Clover Post Office on Clover Lick Creek

This stream, not to be confused with Clover Fork, extends from Black Mountain for 6 ¾ miles to join Poor Fork at Cumberland (town). Deer would lick salt from the rocks under a red clover cover. For years this valley was considered "the ultimate sticks" and young people hesitated to reveal to their Cumberland Schools' classmates that they lived there.

The stream's sole post office, five miles up, was established on June 18, 1901 by William M. Cornett. His proposed Clover Lick was replaced by simply Clover, and John M. Huff became postmaster. It closed in December 1902, was re-established on March 12, 1909, with Rena Hall, postmaster, and closed for good in 1934.

Three Post Offices on the Poor Fork's Looney Creek

Looney Creek, named for an early settler who's said to have fled from Indians by running up and down its course, heads in Black Mountain, half a mile from the Wise County, Virginia line and extends for 8 ½ miles to Poor Fork, just above the mouth of Clover Lick. Its entire length is paralleled by Ky 160.

The fifth class city of Benham, with an active post office and a 2000 population of ca. 600, extends for two miles along Ky 160 from a point two miles above Cumberland (town). Its post office was established on September 1, 1900 to serve a locality then called Finley, five miles above the Poor Fork post office, but was named Yowell as Finley was then in use by a Taylor County office. It initially operated out of its first postmaster Henry Blair's home. By 1907 it was serving a village of some 300 residents, four miles above Poor Fork. In 1910 Leander C. McKnight, who had become postmaster in the winter of 1907-08, moved the office two miles down the creek (west) to serve an as yet unnamed coal mining camp that was expected to have over a thousand residents within a few months. The Yowell and Finley names, though, have not been derived.

The coal camp was being built to house the miners and workers of the Wisconsin Steel Corporation, a subsidiary of International Harvester, which was to furnish coke for the furnaces of I.H.'s South Chicago steel works. In 1905 the company had acquired 3,000 coal producing acres from G.A. Eversole. The new village was called Benham for the Benham Spur, a long ridge bordering Looney on the south. According to tradition, the spur had been named for either John Benham, an eighteenth century hunter, or a Civil War deserter whose body had been found there torn to pieces by wild animals. On July 23, 1911 McKnight's post office took the Benham name. By 1915, with the arrival of the Poor Fork (railroad) branch, Benham had become a model mining town. In 1960 International Harvester sold the homes and local businesses and services to its employee residents who arranged for the town's incorporation in March 1961.

Benham is now home to the Kentucky Coal Mining Museum in the International Harvester's three story brick commissary as a tourist attraction and to provide area jobs to those laid off by I.H. successor Arch Mineral Corporation in the early 1990s.[28]

R.W., P.V., and Charles Cole were officials of the Looney Creek Coal Company that began operations in 1914 at a site just west of the newly established Benham. By 1915 they were shipping their products from a Poor Fork branch station called Clutts. On November 11, 1915 a post office that would have been

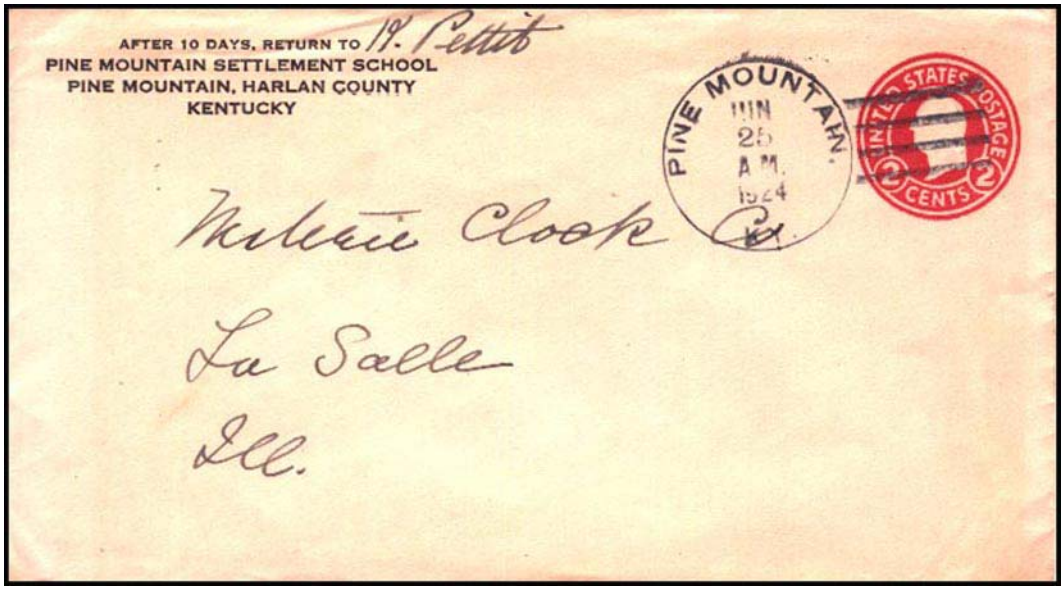
called Coles was established here, two miles up the creek, as Peevee, probably for Perry V. Cole, then the company's general manager. Charles D. Cole, Perry's son, was the first postmaster. The office was discontinued on July 31, 1933 and contemporary maps still show the vicinity as Clutts. The station may have been named for George Clutts, a Looney Creek Coal Company foreman who had come from the Pittsburg area, north of London in Laurel County, around the turn of the twentieth century.

In 1917 the U.S. Coal and Coke Company, a subsidiary of U.S. Steel, asked the L&N to extend its Poor Fork branch beyond Benham to serve a coal mine that was to open further up Looney. Since wartime demand for coal was great, the railroad agreed. A fifty mile long mining town was developed with all the modern facilities of a model coal operation. The mine and town, named Lynch for the late Thomas Lynch (1854-1914), the company's first president, had by the mid nineteen twenties the most cosmopolitan work force in Kentucky's coal country (thirty eight different nationalities were represented). The town reached a population of nearly 10,000 by the Second World War, probably making it then the largest coal town in the country. Its post office, established on January 19, 1918, with Frank A. Kearns, postmaster, as Lynch Mines became simply Lynch on October 1, 1922. By the early 1960s the town had been abandoned by its U.S. Steel owners. Their homes were also sold to former employees and the town became)3 fifth class city in 1963. Its still active post office, two miles above Benham's, has served a steadily declining population (from ca. 5,000 in 1960 through 1,600 in 1980, to 900 in 2000). Like Benham it has become largely dependent on tourism. Its mine was reopened for visitors in the summer of 2003.

Harlan County's Post Offices on the Kentucky River's Middle Fork Branches

Pine Mountain was the earliest of the six post offices serving the several Harlan County branches of Middle Fork. It was operated between May 4, 1876 and January 20, 1881 by Jonathan Cornett somewhere at the upper end of the twenty eight mile long Greasy Creek. This stream heads in Pine Mountain and extends along its northern flank to the site of the Pine Mountain Settlement School where it veers to the northwest to join the Middle Fork at Hoskinston in Leslie County. This stream is said to have been named for the greasy cooking utensils of the pioneer settlers who homesteaded along its banks.

On October 24, 1899 Elhanan M. Nolan established another Greasy Creek post office, perhaps at the site of the earlier Pine Mountain post office, about three fourths of a mile above (southwest of) the famed Pine Mountain Settlement School. He called it Jane, probably for his aunt (1842-1919), the wife of William Nolan and daughter of Samuel and Sarah Howard. After one or more moves along Greasy, Elhanan, on October 20, 1919, had it renamed Pine Mountain. The office moved at least half a dozen more times in the 1930s and 40s, to sites both above the school and at least half a mile up Isaacs Creek, a recent name for the left hand head fork of Greasy (which heads just short of the Letcher County line.) When it closed in 1975 it was near the school, at the mouth of Isaacs.[29]



This attractive cover from Pine Mountain Settlement School in 1924 appears courtesy of the Postmark Collectors Club as do all other illustrations in this article.

Since May 25, 1925 the Big Laurel post office has occupied several sites at the mouth of Big Laurel Creek, a Greasy Creek branch 1 ½ miles from the Leslie County line and three miles below (northwest of) the Pine Mountain School. Alice E. Boggs was its first postmaster. The six mile long Big Laurel Creek heads just short of the Letcher County line.

The Incline post office was established on June 21, 1905 by Harrison Cornett to serve a locality called McKnight for a local family. This, according to a 1907 Kentucky Geological Survey map, was at the mouth of Wolf Pen Branch of the 1 ½ mile long Laurel Fork of Greasy, some six miles southwest of Jane (later the Pine Mountain) post office. This fork which heads just below the site of the old Laurel School at Divide extends along the north flank of Pine Mountain, then turns ninety degrees north and joins Greasy one mile below Leslie County's Della post office site. Sometime after its establishment the post office was moved three fourths of a mile up Laurel Fork but, in 1918, it was moved back to a site 200 yards up Wolf Pen. Another move, in 1922, brought it back to Laurel where it closed in 1951.

One of Kentucky's several two county post offices was Imlay. This was established on June 1, 1893 by Richard L. Wilson some ten miles up the seventeen mile long Middle Fork tributary of Beech Fork, probably at or just above the mouth of Big Branch, four miles within Leslie County.

Beech Fork heads in Pine Mountain and joins the Middle Fork at Leslie County's Asher.[30] On January 21, 1904 John J.C. Napier had the office moved up the fork to a site one fourth of a mile within Harlan County. In 1911 it was moved another mile east (to an unknown site) where it closed in July 1913. Could this post office have been named for the early American writer Gilbert Imlay? Little is known of his life. He may have been born in New Jersey about 1754. After service in the Revolutionary War he arrived in Kentucky in 1783 as a surveyor with John May at the Falls of the Ohio. After acquiring land grants to over 28,000 Kentucky acres, he penned a "Topographical Description of the Western Territory of North America" and a novel "The Emigrants" (both published in 1793 and said to have encouraged early Kentucky settlement). Land speculations led to the loss of his claims and a hasty departure from Kentucky and America by 1785.[31]

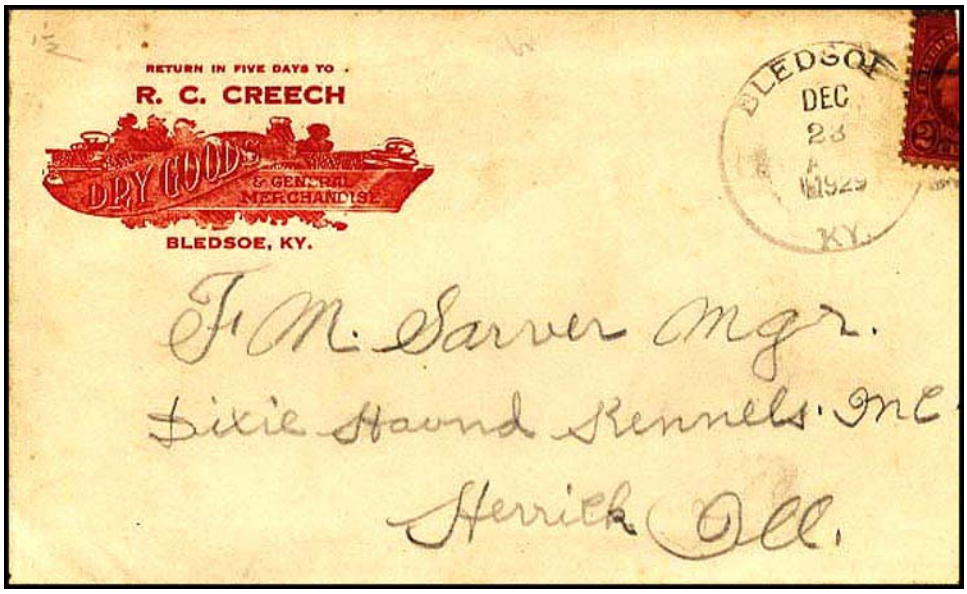
Several related Bledsoe families (e.g. James C., Dale H., and George H.) had acquired land in the Beech Fork valleys when a neighbor and fellow land owner William H. Tolliver on December 10, 1900 established the Bledsoe post office at the head of the fork and eight miles (via the present US 421) north of Harlan. In the winter of 1917-18 Chester A. Nolan had the office moved nearly 2 ½ miles down Beech (northwest) to a site half a mile from the Leslie line, about where Imlay had been when it closed 3 ½ years before. The office continues to serve the two county Beech Fork Neighborhood.

One as Yet Unlocated Post Office

James H. Greene operated the Belknap post office between April 28, 1848 and June 2, 1849. It most likely honored either Massachusetts-born Morris Burke Belknap, a Cumberland valley businessman, or his son William Burke Belknap (1811-1889). The latter helped survey coal and iron deposits in the valley until, in 1839, he moved to Louisville where he became an iron and hardware goods dealer.[32]

Twenty-four of the 107 post offices that have operated in Harlan County are still active (Harlan, Cumberland, Evarts, Lynch, Loyall, Benham, Wallins Creek, Ages-Brookside, Baxter, Big Laurel, Bledsoe, Cawood, Closplint, Coldiron, Cranks, Dayhoit, Grays Knob, Holmes Mill, Kenvir, Lejunior, Mary Alice, Pathfork, Putney and Totz). The first seven, whose residents collectively comprise over a fourth of the county's population, serve its currently incorporated towns.

At least thirty four offices are (or were) the center of viable communities with population concentrations. Most of the rest served a store, school, one or more churches, and/or a rail station. Local or area persons/families accounted for forty office names, while three



offices were named for well known non-local persons. Two offices were named for distant places, while twenty one were given the names of local or nearby features (fourteen streams, three elevations, three rail stations, and a predecessor office). Nine names were geographically descriptive. Seven offices were named for local or area coal companies or their operations. Three office names may have had two derivations apiece, while two offices had other name sources (the of county and the make of a local automobile). Twenty names are still unaccounted for, and three offices (Saylor, Cranks Creek, and Belknap) have not been even approximately located.

Nineteen post office names were not those first proposed for them; forty offices served communities, neighborhoods, rail stations, or mining camps with other names; and thirteen offices had name changes during the course of their operation.

Footnotes

1. I erred in Kentucky Place Names (1984, P. 131) that the name Harlan was chosen for the re-established post office (in 1828) because Mt. Pleasant was then in use elsewhere. Mount Pleasant was not to identify another post office till 1832, in Ohio County.

2. Mabel Green Condon, A History of Harlan County, Nashville, Tenn: Parthenon Press, 1962, P. 49Harrogate, Tenn: Lincoln Memorial Press, 1955, Pp. 67-72, 80

3. No listings for any Layman family are found in late nineteenth century censuses.

4. Elihue Coldiron (1879-1942) was a son of Jesse Coldiron and a descendant of a German immigrant Johan Georg Kalteisen (1730-1805). Jesse and his father Conrad (ne ca. 1760) were early nineteenth century settlers of the Cumberland valley between Wallins and Foresters Creeks. (According to Otto Green Coldiron, Jr., compiler, "Descendants of George Coldiron", 1997)

5.Said to be four road miles below Harlan Court House.

6. John B. Forester, Salts' first postmaster, had first proposed the name Brock for a local family. An attempt to re-establish this post office in 1915 was unsuccessful.

7. Like Kentucky's ubiquitous Trace and Road Forks, this was an early settler's route through the mountains.

8. The London, England-born Samuel Insull, who arrived in the U.S. in 1881, became Thomas Edison's private secretary and the manager of his industrial enterprises. He later created a public utilities empire of his own1 operating plants in several states till 1932 when he fled the country to avoid prosecution for fraud and embezzlement for which he was later acquitted.

9. Actually, Ledford's first proposed name was Leadford Store (sic.)

11. cf John Egerton, Generations: An American Family, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983, Pp. 105-07

12. Elizabeth L. Benge, Coalgood Post Office, in a letter to the author, May 17, 1980

13. Flem D. Sampson practiced law in Barbourville, his longtime home. He served as Knox County judge (1906-1910), judge of the Kentucky's 34th Judicial District (1911-1916), judge of the Kentucky Court of Appeals from 1916, of which he was Chief Justice from 1923-1924, and Kentucky's governor from 1927-1931.

14. R.R. South, L&N Employees Magazine, May 1949, P. 18

15. R.C. Tway is best known to Harlan historians as a founder, in 1916, of the Harlan Coal Operators Association of which he served as president from 1917 to 1926. By the 1930s Tway and his business interests were located in Louisville.

16. The brothers Bryan W., Sr. and August F., Jr. Whitfield came from Alabama in 1911 and invested in the Clover Fork Coal Company at Kitts and the Harlan Collieries at Brookside where they built their offices, store, and tipples, and the homes for their newly recruited work forces. In 1919 August F. remained at Kitts and Bryan took over at Brookside.

17. In Blair's November 1910 Site Location Report, Delvale's proposed post office was located miles west of Leonard which is known to then have been at the mouth of Childs Branch.

18. The company was named for an important coal seam.

19. Clover Gap, for the Black Mountain gap 1 ½ miles north, had been Bowling's first name choice for his Lejunior post office.

20. According to The Annual Report of the Inspector of Mines of the State of Kentucky for the Year 1900, Louisville, 1901, P. 213, splint coal is "a hard coal that will not break into small pieces when handled or shipped....It makes a good coal for domestic use and for locomotives and hard-stoked steam boilers. It ships well and stocks well...."

21. The Short family's Harlan County progenitor was probably James Short, ne 1804, in Washington County, Virginia.

22. Anna Mae Chivers, a Pack Horse Library carrier, in her WPA manuscript, ca. late 1930s.

23. Chris W. Jones of Evarts, Ky., letter to the author, January 5, 2004

24. Creech had first proposed the name Pine Mountain for the post office that was to bear his family's name.

25. Some say the station and post office were named for Chad Buford, the titular hero of John Fox, Jr's. famous novel "The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come" (1903)

26. Some have pinned this name down to one of the three late nineteenth century Chadwell Nolans of the Poor Fork valley.

27. Laden Station may earlier have been called Zande, equally inexplicable.

28. A.P. release, May 22, 1994

29. The Pine Mountain Settlement School was established in 1913 by Katharine Pettit and Ethel DeLong on a 136 acre site deeded to them by local resident William Creech. Its school, sixteen bed hospital, poultry and dairy farm, community center, and social agency made it one of the country's largest and most influential rural service institutions.

30. Leslie's Imlay site was later served by the transfer of its Helton post office.

31. See James C. Klotter's entry on Imlay in The Kentucky Encyclopedia, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992, P. 451

32. The Kentucky Encyclopedia, 1992, P. 67

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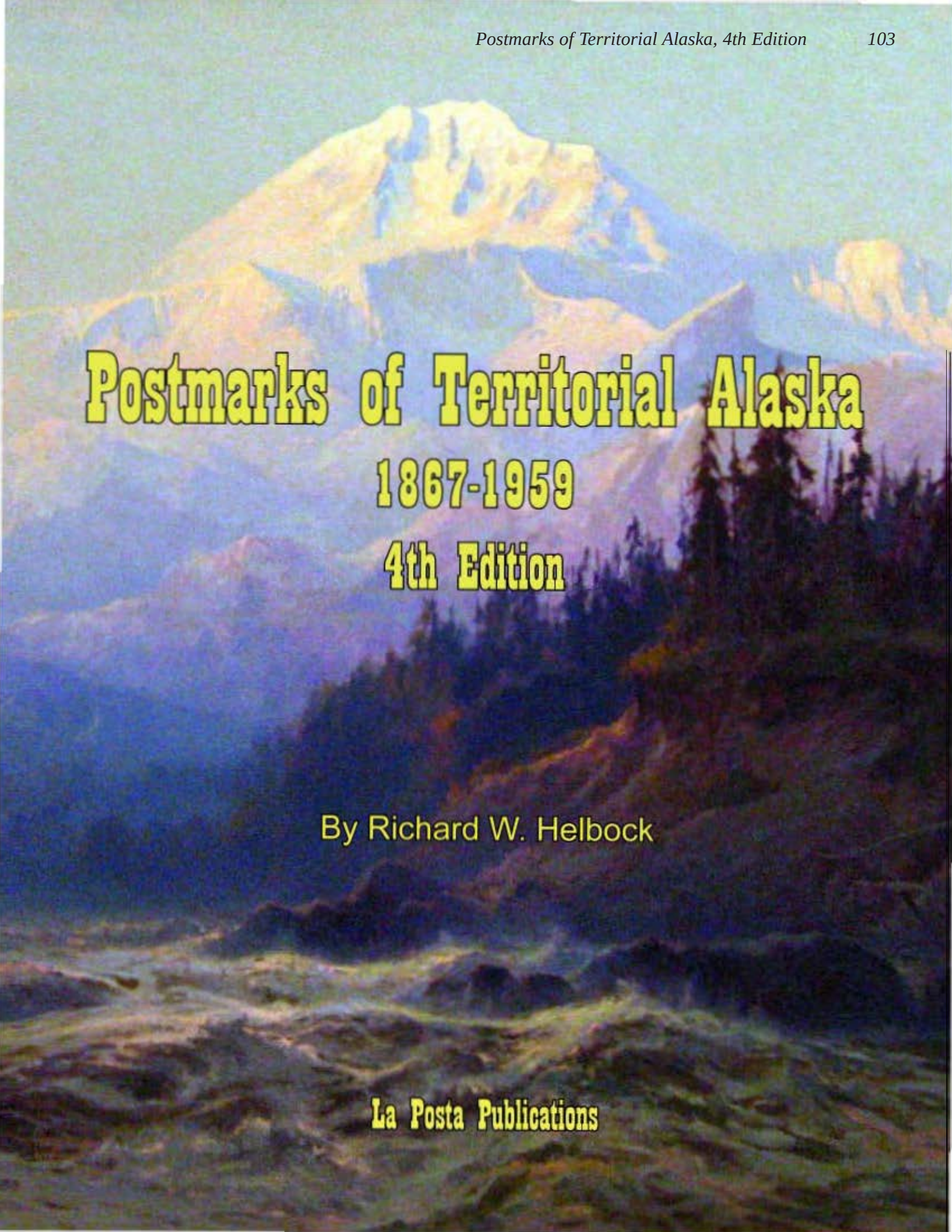
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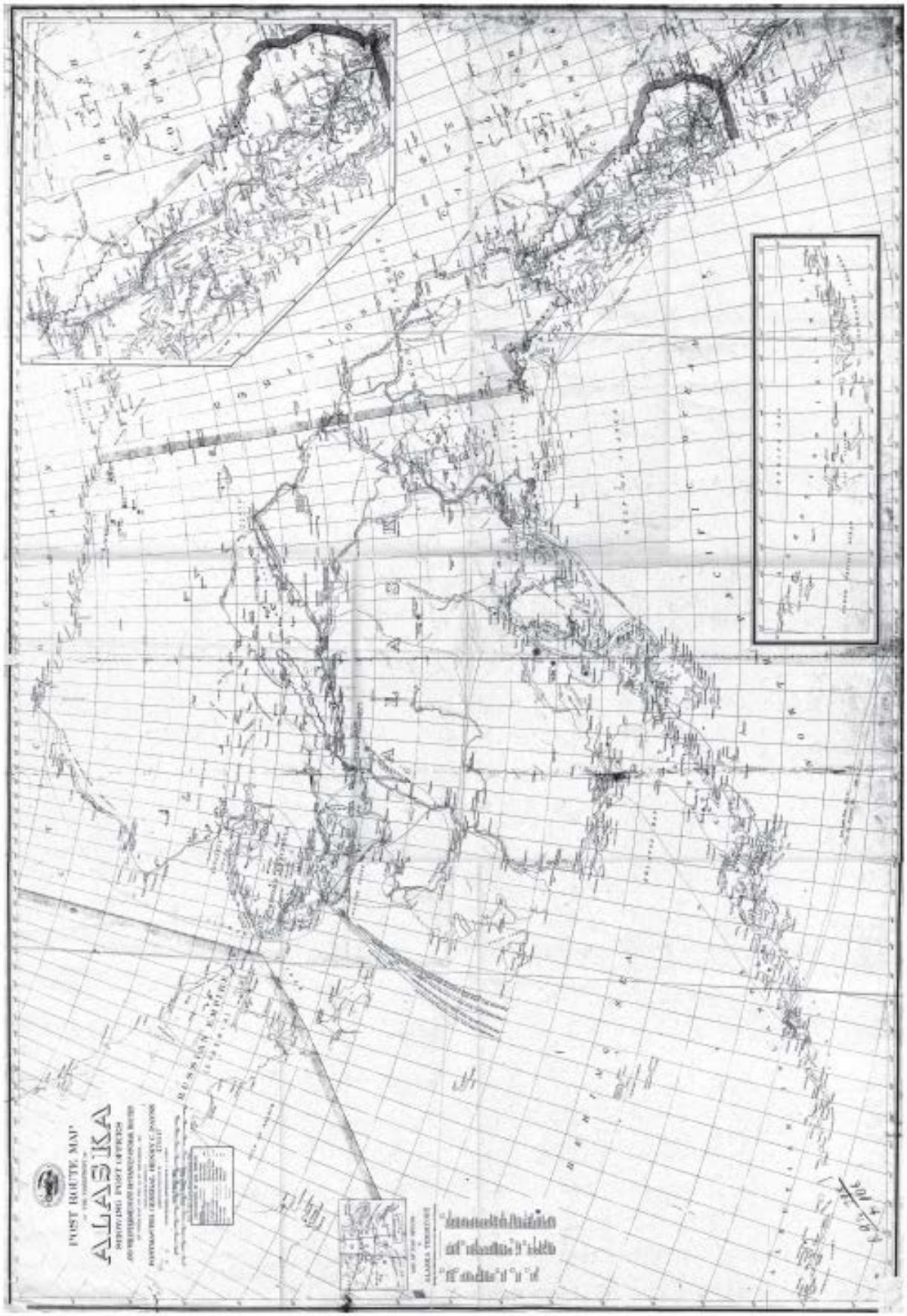

Map 1 *Postal Route Map of Alaska Territory, In order to enhance the level of detail hold down the control (Ctrl) key and press the + key on your keyboard.*

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

The author is deeply indebted to Dr.Michael Senta for his numerous contributions to this edition of Postmarks of Territorial Alaska.

Previous editions have depended upon the efforts of dozens of collectors and dealers, and over the years the list of those contributing to this effort reads like a Who's Who of Alaskan postal history. The list below contains the names of men and women who have contributed information about postmarks used by territorial Alaskan post offices. Sadly, too many of these fine people are now deceased. If I have omitted the name of anyone, please forgive me. My oversight was purely unintentional.

Len Persson
Milt Wicker
Dirk van Gelderen
Ted Woodward
Tom Mills
Don Dimpsey
Bob McKain
Don Smith
Greg Cox
Mike Kahsar
Charles Schnatter
Gordon Bleuler
Charles Towle
Hal Vogel
Justin Hess
Peter Lemmo
Dick Moyer
David Bennett
Wm. P. Hoffman
Felix Ganz
Herbert Bernstein
Gary Weiss
Tom Miller
Mike Senta
Carl Cammarata
Ray Fay
Ted Swem
Web Stickney
Don Morisch
Norma Hoyt
John Grainger
Frank Bailey
Elwyn Doubleday
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Converse Peirce
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Owen Kriege
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Emery Tobin
David Phillips
Glenn Gholston
Charles Deaton
Gene Phillips
Bob Collins
Jacque Houser
Gerald Couard
Floyd Risvold
Randy Stehle
Don Glickstein
Robert Hunter
John Amberman
Michael Dattolico
Fran Naber
Doug DeRoest
William Sandrik
Dave McCord
Julius Rockwell

One of the great rarities of Alaskan postal history, this manuscript postmark from Kodiak dates from August 24, 1869. The Kodiak post office had been established with the appointment of H. P. Cope as postmaster on January 29. 1869, but the office was closed April 12, 1875. It would be 13 years before a new post office was opened at Kodiak.

Introduction

Twenty five years have passed since publication of the third edition of this work in 1986. The passing years have brought still more discoveries and some fundamental changes in the pattern of prices paid for Alaska Territorial covers. The purpose of this, the fourth edition of PTA, is to update the published record of known postmark types and dates; to address these changes in market prices; and to offer significant new information about the post offices in which these postmarks were made.

Readers familiar with earlier editions of PTA will notice major differences in this edition. First, this edition will be published only in an electronic or digital edition. The advantage of using this new technology in a catalog such as this is obvious. Updates can be added constantly to an on-line publication and it should never go "out of date." Second, the old format whereby text was listed on an even-numbered page and faced by a page of illustrations has been replaced by a continuous alphabetically ordered flow of post offices with illustrations immediately following the postmark listing for each office. Third, the Dyke postmark code used in previous editions has been replaced by a simplified descriptive notation of the type of postmark, i.e., cds, 4-bar, Doane, duplex, machine, etc. These types are discussed in more detail below.

The Postmark Listing

Alaska was acquired from Russia by the United States in 1867. From that date until its entry into the Union on January 3, 1959, the Territory was provided postal service by the United States Post Office Department. This catalog lists and classifies all known postal markings of Alaska used on first class mail during that time period with the exception of postmarks associated with military and naval operations during World War II and later. This listing adheres to the following set of criteria and rules:

1. A postmark typically includes two essential elements: the name of a post office and the date. There are very few exceptions to this rule. Only postmarks applied to FIRST CLASS MAIL by a sending or forwarding post office have been listed.
2. Registry markings have been included only if known as the only postmark on a cover or card. This does not include registry postmarks used alone on registry package receipts, M.O.B. slips, registered package envelopes, or other Post Office Department items.
3. A postmark with the letters "REC'D" in it has not been included in the list of sending office postmarks unless it is known to have been used improperly as a sending postmark. The same rule applies to M.O.B. (Money Order Business) markings.
4. Postmark examples that differ only in ink color are not considered different types.

Postmark types are listed in chronological order of use for each post office. Each type has been assigned a number, which is referred to as the "town- type" number. All listed postmarks have been illustrated by full-size tracings or photocopies.

Earliest and latest dates on record for each postmark type are listed. In a few cases it has been impossible to determine the exact date from known examples, and a question mark appears next to the date.

The type of cancellation (killer) associated with each postmark is also listed. For pre-1900 postmarks the killer was frequently not an integral part of the postmark, and a separate hammer was used. It is therefore possible for types in which the killer is identified as a "cork" or "target" to find examples with different killers, or no killers at all. This is not a problem for most post-1900 postmarks, since postmarks and killers were installed on the same hammer, but a few examples are known where the killer differs.

The Value Number

Each postmark type has been assigned a Value Number based upon a number of factors that reflect its scarcity and demand, and are likely to influence its price. Factors considered include age of the postmark, number of years the office operated, volume of business, number of similar examples known to exist, number of all postmarks known from the office,. and auction realizations for similar material over the past five years.

Assigning value numbers to postmarks is an imprecise, subjective, and therefore controversial exercise. As a result, the value numbers relate to fairly wide dollar brackets, which are intended to encompass a fair market price for A GOOD LEGIBLE EXAMPLE OF THE POSTMARK ON A SOUND COVER OR CARD. In cases where more than one value number is shown, e.g. "5-3" the numbers apply to corresponding dates of use. The key to value numbers used in this catalog is as follows:

Value Number[1]	Dollar Range
1	Less than $5
2	$5 - $10
3	$10 - $20
4	$20 - $50
5	$50 - $100
6	$100 - $200
7	$200 - $500
8	500 - $1000
9	Over $1,000

Determination of the value numbers is based in part on the settlement history of Alaska. Almost all pre-gold rush (before 1898) postmarks are quite scarce. There were very few people writing letters in Alaska before 1898, and as late as 1895 there were only 19 post offices in the entire territory. With the exception of postmarks from Juneau and Sitka, all pre-1898 Alaskan postmarks should have a minimum value of at least $100.

Early gold-rush period covers command a premium, and, considering the large number of people who participated in the Alaska-Klondike rush, there are surprisingly few recorded postmarks from most offices. A large number of post offices were established in Alaska between 1898 and 1910. First came the "gateway" offices such as Skagway, Dyea, Saint Michael and Valdez, along with some of the busier mining camps and supply points, but, as

1 A Value Number assigned to a Town-Type in this catalog refers to the most common form of that particular postmark. In other words, for the 1906-1915 period the most common form on which Alaskan postmarks appear is the picture post card, after 1930 the most common form is the philatelic cover. Examples which appear in forms other than the most common, e.g., a 1908 cover, or a 1935 commercial cover, should command much higher prices.

gold strikes spread from the Yukon to Nome and on to Fairbanks, over 100 new post offices were created to meet the needs of a growing population. Many of these served camps that were quite small and short-lived. Given the process of application, which typically took several months to acquire a post office, it is quite likely that the boom had already passed some places receiving post offices. This may help account for the extreme scarcity of postmarks from some of the mining camps.
After about 1910, Alaska's population began to decline. There were a few late and widely scattered gold discoveries after that date, but the great boom was over by 1910 and many former camps all but disappeared. Construction of the Alaska Railroad, and the attendant birth of the City of Anchorage, was by far the most significant event during the 1910-20 decade in Alaska. Quite a number of new post offices were established during the decade, but many were short-lived and quite a few are listed among those offices from which no postmark examples are known.

The 1920s continued the general pattern of population decline in Alaska, but by mid-decade the first use of air mail had begun to replace dog teams in moving the mails to remote towns and villages. Although the population was declining, the amount of mail originating in Alaska—particularly collector generated mail—began increasing markedly by the late 1920s. Collectors sent stamped envelopes to Alaskan postmasters for servicing on the new airmail routes, for conveyance between offices via dog team, and merely to acquire examples of Alaskan postmarks. These "philatelic covers" increased in volume throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s, and, since they were created as collector's items, have survived in considerable numbers to this day. The result is, that from about 1930 to the end of the Territorial period, most postmark examples from Alaska appear on philatelic covers. In addition, with the exception of a very few short-lived offices and a few odd postmarks, examples of nearly all postmarks from Alaska dating from about 1930 to 1959 are available in reasonable quantity. On the other hand, non-philatelic examples of most post-1930 postmarks are not common.

Previous editions of PTA have detailed numerous factors of condition for both the postmark and the cover or card upon which it appears that influence value. Obviously, the clarity of the postmark influences its desirability, and will be a factor in price. Collector biases in favor of covers versus cards are not so clear cut any more, and, it is believed, the note on Value Numbers given above adequately covers this subject.

Postmark Types

The majority of postmarks used by Alaskan territorial post offices were the kind commonly called "four-bars." In these devices the cancellation was an integral part of the postmark, and consisted of four parallel bars arranged horizontally. Several variations of the basic design exist. Collectors unfamiliar with the history of 20th century four-bars might wish to consult *Postmarks on Postcards, 2nd Edition*, available from La Posta Publications, www.la-posta.com. Four bar postmarks came into general use in Alaska in 1906, and they remained the most commonly seen type of postmarks from Alaska through 1959.

Postmark designs dating from earlier than 1906 varied considerably from one another, but may be be conveniety divided into a small number types based on their overall charcateristics. The following descriptive terms are used to distinguish among postmarks in this catalog:

MSS (manuscript)

SL (straight line)

CDS (circular date stamp)

Doanes

4-bars

Duplexes

Machine Cancels

GP (General Purpose dater)

MOB (Money Order Business)

REG (Registration)

A few notes regarding each of these postmark types should assist the reader in making proper identifications.

MSS and Straight line handstamps (MSS & SL)

Manuscript and straight line postmarks were employed as temporary measures by postmasters to cancel outgoing mail in the absence of a standard—POD issued—postmark. Manuscript postmarks were often used in the early weeks of the life of a post office while the postmaster awaited delivery of his handstamp and date slugs from the manufacturer. A proper manuscript was to include the name of the post office, the name or abbreviation of the territory, and a date. In addition the postmaster was required to cancel the stamp or postal card.

Baldwin post office was established with the appointment of Robert Rea on October 3, 1905, and was still awaiting delivery of its handstamp in early February 1906.

Figure 1 *This postcard displays a Baldwin manuscript postmark of February 5, 1906. The earliest use of an official Baldwin handstamp postmark dates from August 20, 1906. (Courtesy of Michael Senta)*

Straight line postmarks, while seldom seen from Alaska Territory, filled a role similar to manuscripts. They were used for a limited time on occasions when standardized postmarks were unavailable. The fact that they depended on the availability of some form of type setting equipment meant that they were far less comonly used that a simple pen and ink manuscript. The Washburn, Alaska, straight line shown in *figure 2* dates from March 1907 and suggests that the post office—established in mid-November 1906—was still awaiting its official postmark four months later.

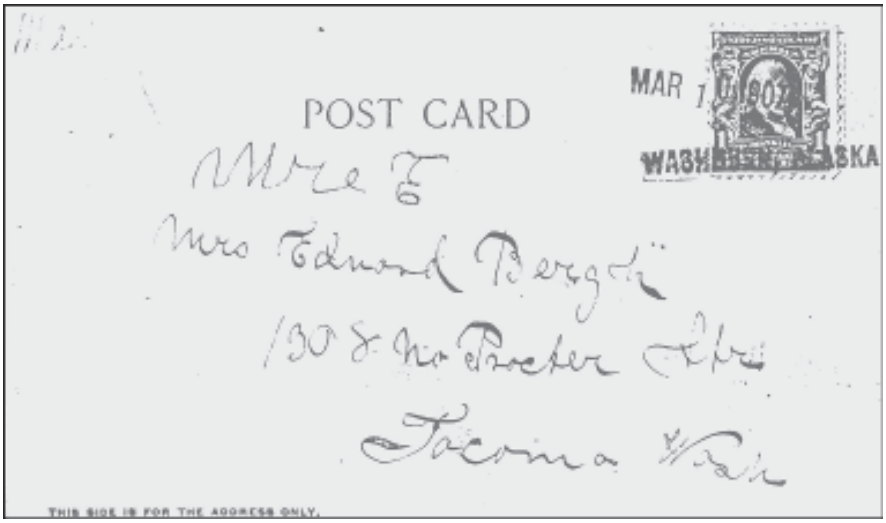


Figure 2 *Washburn post office was established with the appointment of John E. Baker on November 16, 1906. An earlier appointee had declined his appointment.*

In some cases a straight line postmark was used as an emergency measure to replace an official postmark.

Circular Date Stamps (CDS)

At the time Alaska Territory was created the Post Office Department (POD) was supplying only larger post offices with circular date stamps to postmark their mail. Postmasters at smaller post offices were responsible for procuring their own postmarking equipment and that situation remained in effect until the 1890s. Since there were very few Alaskan post offices that operated before the 1890s, we find only a handfull of territorial postmarks with unusual designs. *Figure 3* illustrates a Fort Wrangel postmark from the 1880s. See for example Douglas, Killisnoo and Loring for other early postmark designs.

In the early 1890s the POD sought to achieve uniformity in the style and design of postmarks used in all post office. To that end, they began issuing postmarking equipment to all small Alaskan post offices that consisted of a steel die on the end of a 3¼-inch wooden handle. The die was cut with the name of the post office and the name of the territory spelled out “ALASKA.” A space was cut in the center of the die that allowed placement of small slugs for the month, date and year. In addition to this postmarker, postmasters in small offices were also supplied a separate hammer with a cancel featuring a die cut with four concentric rings. Collectors typically refer to the impression made by these hammers as *target cancels*. It is important to note that the postmark and the cancel were made by separate handstamps, and, since the postmark could be used with an entirely different cancel—or no cancel at all, we distinguish postmarks of this type as a *circular date stamp* and make no reference to the cancel.

Figure 3 *The Fort Wrangel post office used a double circular date stamp (dcds) in the mid-1880s with a separate target cancel.*

The design of all circular date stamps was basically the same. Town name at the top of a dial measuring about 28 milimeters, ALASKA. at the bottom and date arranged vertically in the center usually as month, day and year. Sometimes the postmaster would get his date slugs mixed up in order, but collectors rarely consider that a noteworthy variety.

In the early 1890s the lettering used in all cds postmarks was block, or san serif, style for town and ALASKA measuring about 2½ mm. in height. The month, day and year was Roman, or serif style letters. This design remained in effect for all postmarks distributed to small (low volume) offices as late as 1894. *Figure 4* illustrates a Fort Wrangel postmark from 1898 with a combination of block town/state names and serif date slugs.

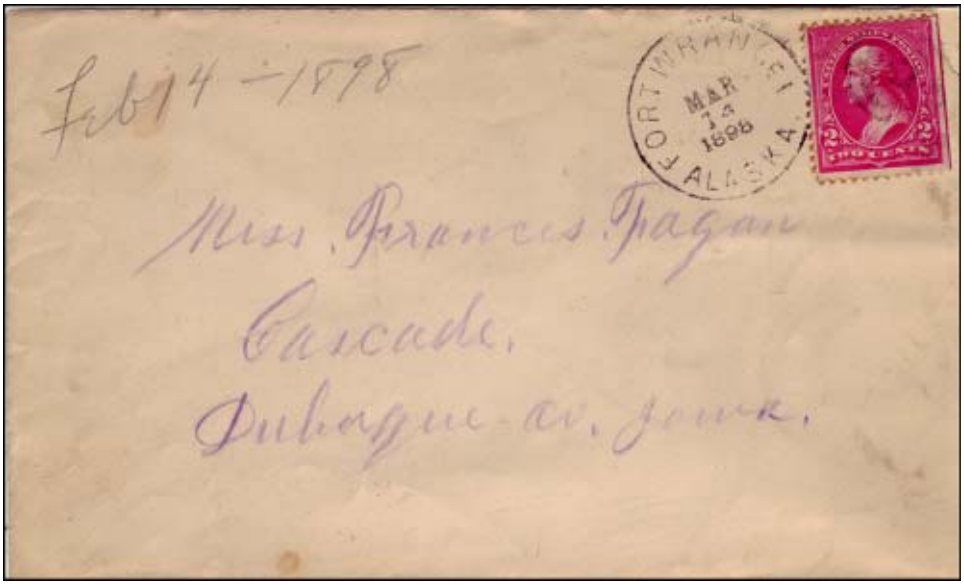


Figure 4 *This Fort Wrangel cds was probably issued in 1894.*

Beginning in 1895, or perhaps late 1894, small post offices began receiving postmarker and date slug sets that used san-serif lettering in both the town/state names and the date. *Figure 5* shows an Eagle postmark from 1902. Note that the town names and ALASKA appears unchanged in style from the early 1890s design, but the dates are all block letters.

Figure 5 *This cover from a young Lieutenant William Mitchell at Fort Egbert was postmarked in nearby Eagle with the first postmark style used by that office. The Eagle post office was established in 1898.*

Doane[2] Handstamps

Beginning in the summer of 1903 the POD began experimenting with a new type of postmark that could be used to replace the cds markings, which were a source of constant complaints over legibility of the impressions they made. These new devices featured a rubber die measuring about 2 mm. thick mounted on a 8 mm. rubber "air cushion" and attached to the 3½-inch (87 mm.) wooden handle. Their objective was both to provide a higher quality impression that allowed the postmaster to postmark the envelope and cancel the stamp all in one strike.

The initial test took place during the first half of 1903 with 500 selected offices across the country receiving the type 1 handstamps. Numbers in the killer bars—known as Doane numbers by collectors—varied according to the amount of revenue collected in the previous year by the post office. The larger the total revenue, the higher the Doane number.

Test results were apparently sucessful for in late August 1903 the Department began supplying all newly established post offices, as well as existing small offices requesting new equipment, with Doane handstamps of the type 1 design. Distribution of the type 1 Doane handstamps lasted just one month (August 28-September 28, 1903). It is estimated that only about 1,600 post offices nationwide were issued type 1 Doanes, but many of these are known to have used the handstamps for five years or more.

Newly established small post offices listed in the *Postal Bulletin* dated September 29, 1903, were issued Doane handstamps of a modified design. The five killer bars were replaced with

2 The name "Doane" honors the late Edith Doane, who was the first postal historian to reseach the postmark style. If the POD used an official name for handstamps of this type it has been lost to history.

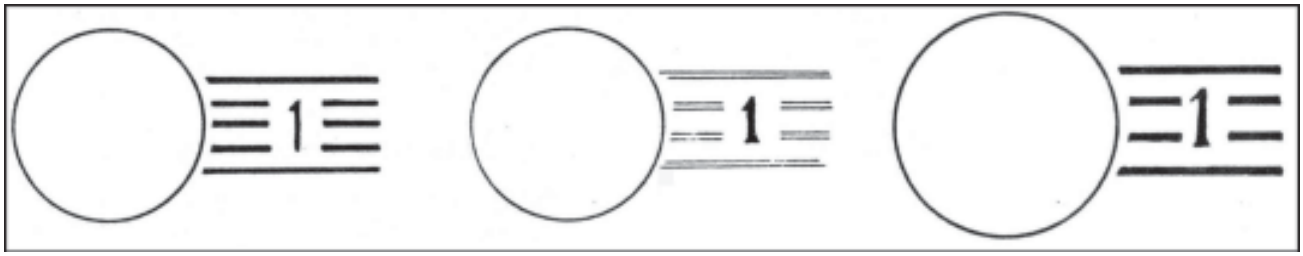


Figure 6 *The Doane handstamps were the first rubber-die postmarker/canceler devices supplied by the POD to small fourth class post offices. They appeared in three design types: type 1 (left) had five killer bars with a space for a number; type 2 (center) had four pairs of thin bars with a space for a number; and type 3 (right) had four thick killer bars with space for a number.*

four sets of very thin bars. There were a few other minor design variations regarding type styles but the killer bars offer the easiest way to differentiate bewteen types 1 and 2 *provided one has an example with the killer bars intact*. Unfortunately, a high percentage of the examples available for compilation of this catalog are cut-outs; most of which do not include the killer bars.

The distribution of type 2 Doanes lasted 22 months into the summer of 1905. It is estimated that as many as 22,000 post offices were issued type 2 Doanes making them the most common of the three design types.

Figure 7 *Fort Liscum was one of the Alaska post offices to be issued a Doane cancellation. Only 51 Alaskan post offices have been documented using either type 2 or type 3 cancels. no type 1 Doanes are known.*

Small post offices established after July 1, 1906, and those requesting new equipment, were issued Doane handstamps with a modified design. The diameter of the postmark dial was larger than that used in the previous two styles—32 mm. versus 28 mm., and the four sets of thin bars were replaced by four thicker, solid bars with a number space. The type 3 Doanes are quite easily distinguished from the type 1 and type 2 that preceeded them, but unfortunately they are very difficult to distinguish from the four-bar postmarks that succeeded them unless one has an example with the complete killer bars. Even then it can be difficult.

Distribution of the type 3 Doane handstamps continued until the fall of 1906. There were probably about 16,000 post offices across the nation that were issued postmarker/cancelers of this type.

Four Bar Handstamps

Beginning in September 1906 the POD began distributing postmarker/canceler handstamps to small newly established post offices and post offices seeking replacement equipment that resembled the type 3 Doanes quite closely *except that the killer bars were complete and had no numbers.* These were the first of a long line of handstamps that are known to collectors as "four bars" or "4-bars."

Once again, it can be quite difficult to distinguish between a late 1906 or 1907 postmark example as to whether it is a Doane type 3 or an early 4-bar without a complete strike including killer bars.

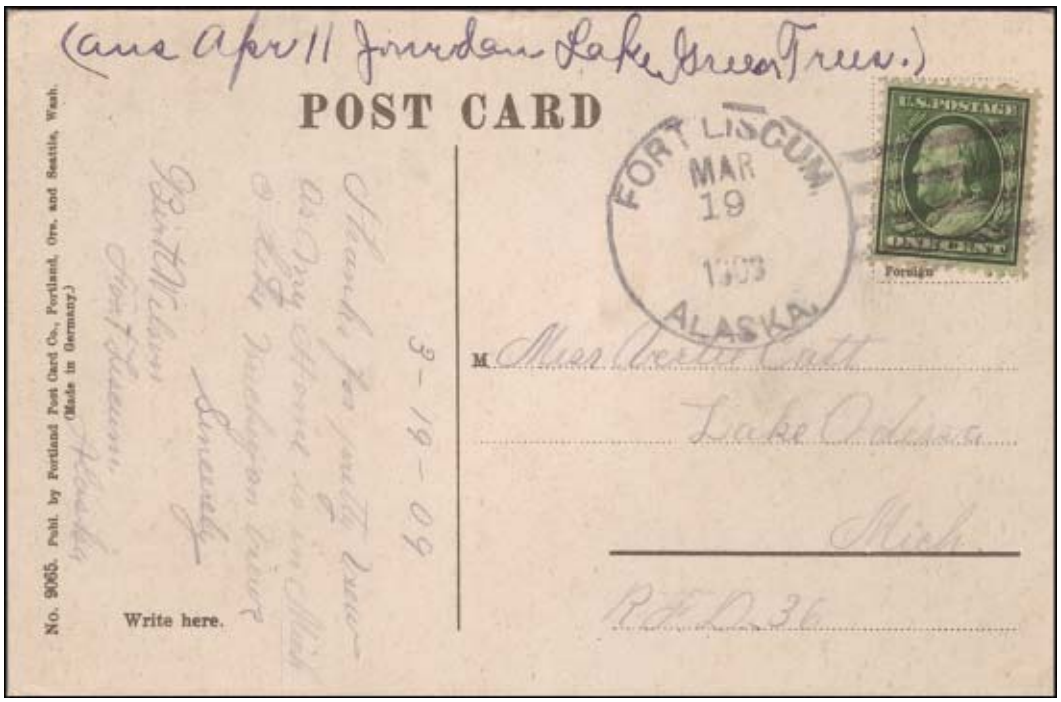


Figure 8 *Fort Liscum post office began using this 4-bar handstamp in late 1906 or early 1907. It had become rather worn by the time it was used on the March 1909 example.*

Metal Duplex Handstamps

Larger, higher mail volume post offices needed postmarking equipment that would stand up better to the demands of heavy use. The solution for moderately busy second and third class offices was provided in the form of metal handstamps. Among Alaska territorial post offices the types of postmarks made by metal duplex handstamps typically take the form of one of two types: the ovate bar grid (*figure 9*) and the barrel duplex (*figure 10*).

Figure 9 *An ovate bar grid metal handstamp was commonly used in third class post offices.*

Figure 10 *The sturdier barrel duplex was distributed to second and first class post offices*

Machine Cancels

Machines that applied both a postmark and a cancel to mail were made available to a small number of Alaskan post offices during the territorial years. Among the most popular of these were the American Machine Company's flag cancels (*figure 11*)

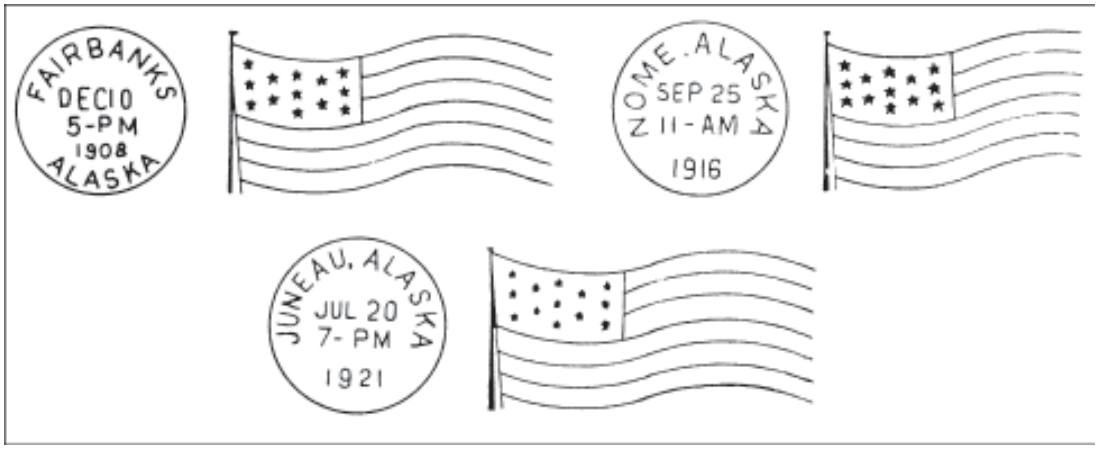


Figure 11 *Among the most popular of machine cancel designs, the flag cancels produced by the American Machine Company machines were used at only three Alaskan territorial post offices.*

Special Purpose Handstamps Registry and Money Order Business (M.O.B.)

Postmasters at some Alaska Territory post offices had access to special purpose postmarks that were intended for specialized postal services such as marking received or transit mail, registered mail, utility daters for use on parcels, or money order business. These handstamps were not intended to postmark and cancel stamps on ordinary mail, but occassionally they were used. The author has decided to list such specialized postmarks known to have been used by territorial post offices *where they meet the minimum requirement of containing a post office name and date. Figure 12* illustrates some typical examples.

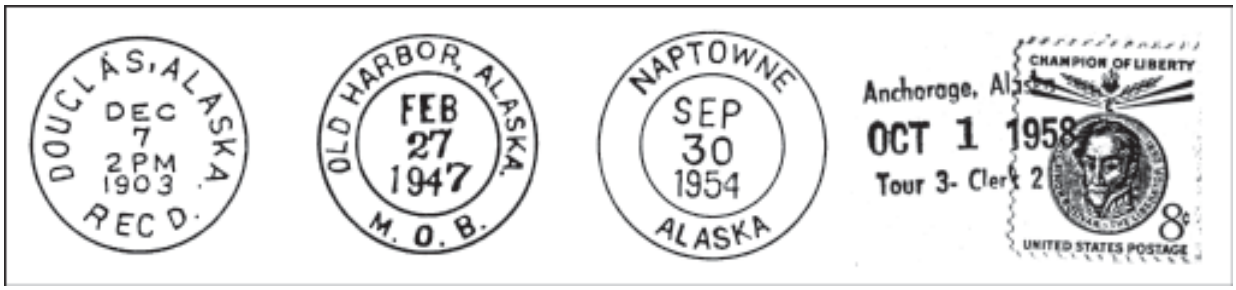


Figure 12 These postal markings were not intended to cancel stamps on outgoing first class mail, but in a small number of instances they were. Oddities, rather than rarities, they have been listed where verified by ligitimate examples.

Non-Standard Postmarks

Some postmasters chose to use postmarks that were not supplied by the POD despite the fact that such use was forbidden bu postal regulations. This is a complicated and fascinating subject and readers wishing to learn more about should examine Syehle & DeRoest, *A Catalog of Non-standard US Postmarks, 1900-1971.* The Teller non-standard that emulates a American machine flag cancel shown in *figure 13* is one of only a few examples of non-standard postmark use recorded by the author from Alaska Territory.

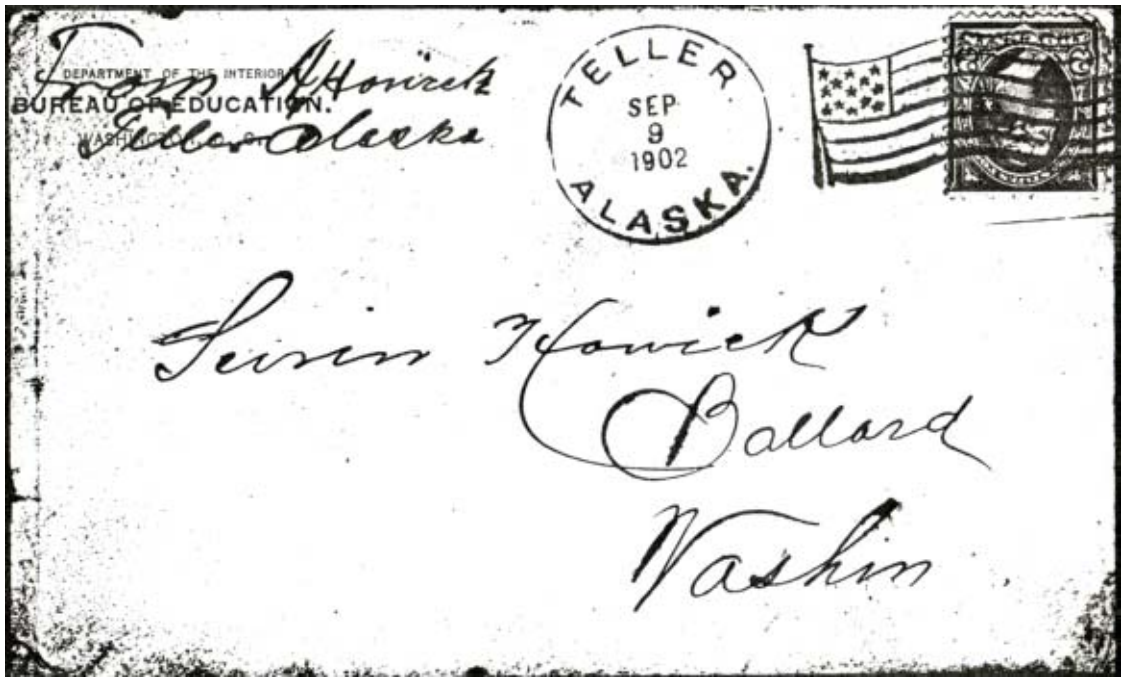


Figure 13 *The only recorded example of the Teller handstamp flag cancel.*

Post Office Information Sources

One of the major differences between this and earlier editions of PTA is the inclusion of a greater amount of information about each and every post office that operated during Alaska's territorial years. Since some of the information published herein conflicts with reports published earlier, it is appropriate to inform the reader of the sources of this information.

The single most authoratative work published on Alaskan place names is Orth's *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names*, Geological Survey Professional Paper 567, GPO, 1967. I have used Orth's work extensively herein to note the nature of settlements served by post offices, population estimates, locations, and so forth, but in all cases I have sought corroborating information. The maps used to show locations of Alaskan post offices are also based on Orth's work.

Two primary sources have provided the necessary corroboration, and have been particularly useful in listing information concerning those post offices not listed by Orth. The "Geographic Site Reports" filed by Alaskan postmasters to identify the location, and sometimes the nature of their settlement, for the Post Office Department have been extremely useful. These reports, written at the time the post offices were established by individuals at the site of the office, are considered by this author to be unimpeachable sources of information concerning the location and nature of settlements served by post offices.

For example, previous published studies have listed the Midnight (Midknight) post office on the Seward Peninsula in the vicinity of Midnight Mountain, but when we have a Site Report filed by the first postmaster of Midnight stating that his office is near the middle of Knight Island in Prince William Sound, which report deserves credence? Obviously, this author believes it is the latter.

A second primary source consulted in the composition of post office information listed herein has been the Daily *Postal Bulletins* issued by the Post Office Department from 1880 onward. Use of this information, coupled with the site reports, has resulted in the listing of Port Armstrong post office as an office from which we may expect postmarks. Previous reports have indicated that the Port Armstrong office never actually operated, but it now appears that that information is incorrect.

The result of all this checking and corroboration is, I believe, a much more authoratative listing of Alaskan post offices of the territorial years. In some cases the exact nature of communities served by an office is still sketchy, and has not been described, but what appears here has been checked and double checked. This information is based not on speculation, but the most accurate and contemporary sources available.

In addition, extensive use of the resources published on the Internet have added color illustrations as well as some data to the fourth edition. The author is grateful for all of this new information and has tried in each case to give credit where credit is due. My sincere apologies to anyone who feels that I have ignored their contribution. I can assure you that the slight was unintentional.

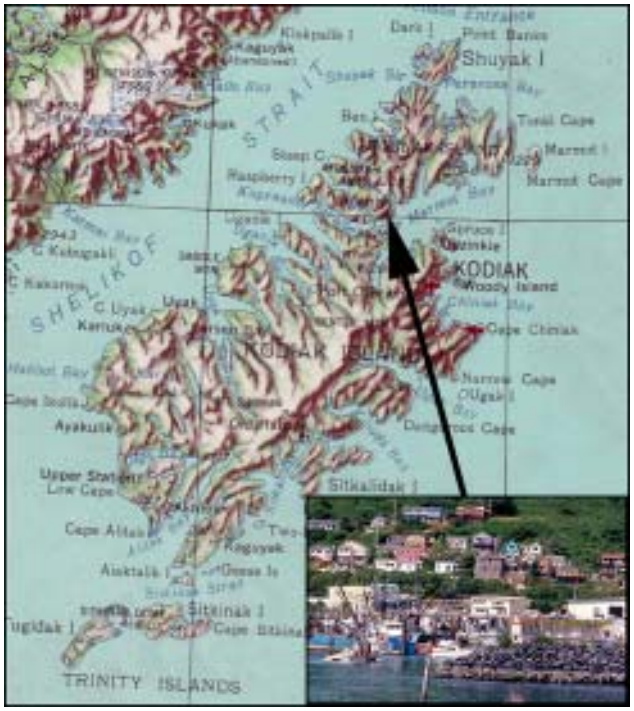
The Catalog

AFOGNAK

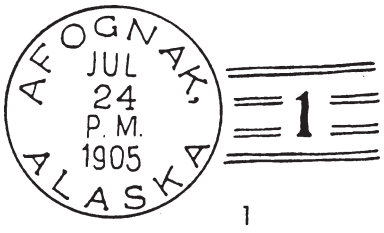
Settled by retired workers from the Russian-American Company in th 1820s, Afognak was really a series of small villages around the shore of Afognak Bay. During World War II the Navy maintained a radio station at Afornak and in 1944 the area was declared a recreation zone for Navy personnel.

On March 27, 1964, a tidal wave caused by the massive Alaska earthquake destroyed the settlement. Residents of Afognak were resettled at Port Lions on Shelter Cove of Kodiak Island after the quake. The post office was renamed Port Lions in tribute to Lions International that paid for the new village.

photo credit: traveltidingsalaska.com



Afognak (1888-1895, 1899-1900 & 1904-1965)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	6-5	Doane ty 2	24 Jul 1905	17 May 1928	Bars/"1"
2	4-2	4-bar	23 Aug 1915	28 Jul 1940	type B 4-bar
3	3-2	4-bar`	22 Sep 1923	21 Mar 1946	Serif town/state letters
4	2	MOB	2 Sep 1935	30 Aug 1937	Improper use of MOB
5	1	4-bar	7 Jan 1948	22 Nov 1955	
6	1	4-bar	12 Oct 1954	2 Jan 1959	(1)



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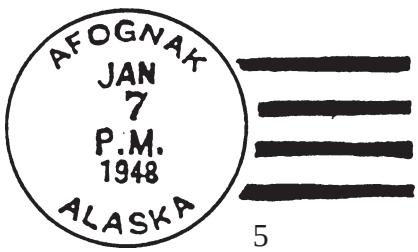

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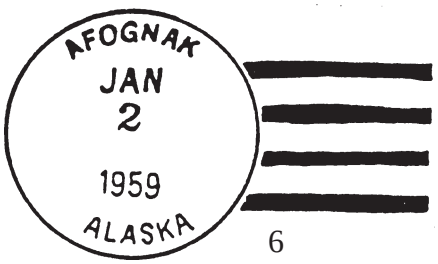

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(1) Latest date of 2 Jan 1959 indicates the latest possible territorial date. Use of this postmark type during early statehood is to be expected.

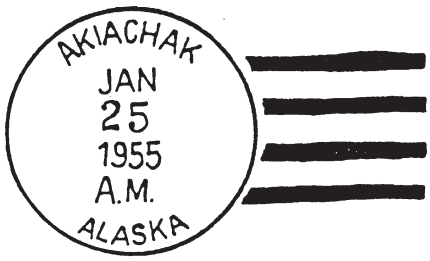
AKIACHAK

An Eskimo village recorded as "Akiak-chagmiut" in the 1890 Census with a population of 43. The population had grown to 165 in 1900 and was listed as 156 in 1939. The post office was initially opened in 1934, but closed after only two years. It reopened in 1950.

photo credit: http://www.dced.state.ak.us/dca/commdb/

Akiachak (1934-1936 & 1950-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	4	4-bar	18 Sep 1934	18 Sep 1935	Serif town/state letters
2	1	4-bar	23 Mar 1950	25 Jan 1956	
3	1	4-bar	25 Jan 1955	2 Jan 1959	Small letters

1



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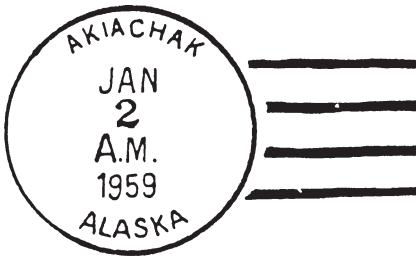


3

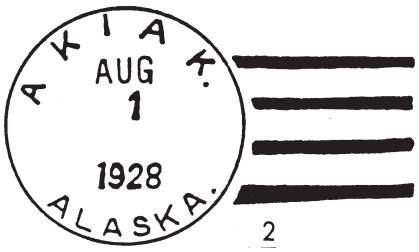
AKIAK

An Eskimo village on the right bank of the Kusko-kwim River situated 20 miles northeast of Bethel.
The name is reported to mean "crossing over", and refers to a site where Eskimos traditionally crossed the Yukon in winter. The population was 175 in 1880, 197 in 1980 and about 300 in 2000.

photo credit: http://top-10-list.org/2010/06/30/top-ten-cities-people-never-visit/

Akiak (1916-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	5	4-bar	3 Jun 1922	11 Aug 1926	Serif letters w/S.W.
2	3	4-bar	1 Aug 1928	9 Oct 1937	Wide spaced serif letters
3	2	4-bar	5 Sep 1938	4 Jul 1945	Close-spaced block letters
4	2-1	4-bar	14 Nov 1940	18 Dec 1957	Smaller lettering
5	2	MOB	2 Jan 1951		Improper use of MOB
6	1	4-bar	19 Jun 1958	2 Jan 1959	Wide spaced small letters

1



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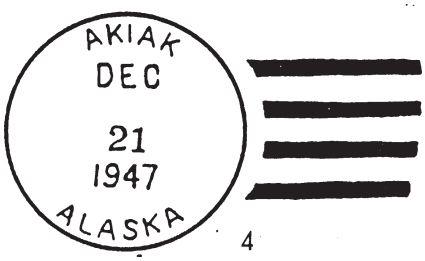

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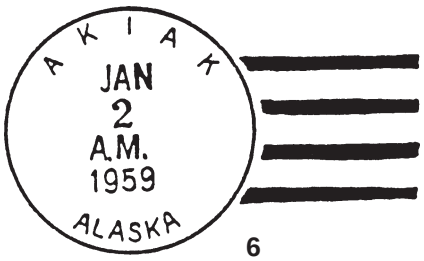

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AKULURAK

Jesuit missionaries chose this site because of its centrality to many Eskimo villages in the Yukon Delta, Saint Mary's Mission was established here in 1893, and a school was built that could house about 160 children.

The photo by a visiting Jesuit priest shows Ursuline nuns and their students at a convent in Akulurak, Alaska, in 1904. Eventually the site proved to be a poor choice due to a lack of potable water and flooding from nearby Akulurak Pass.

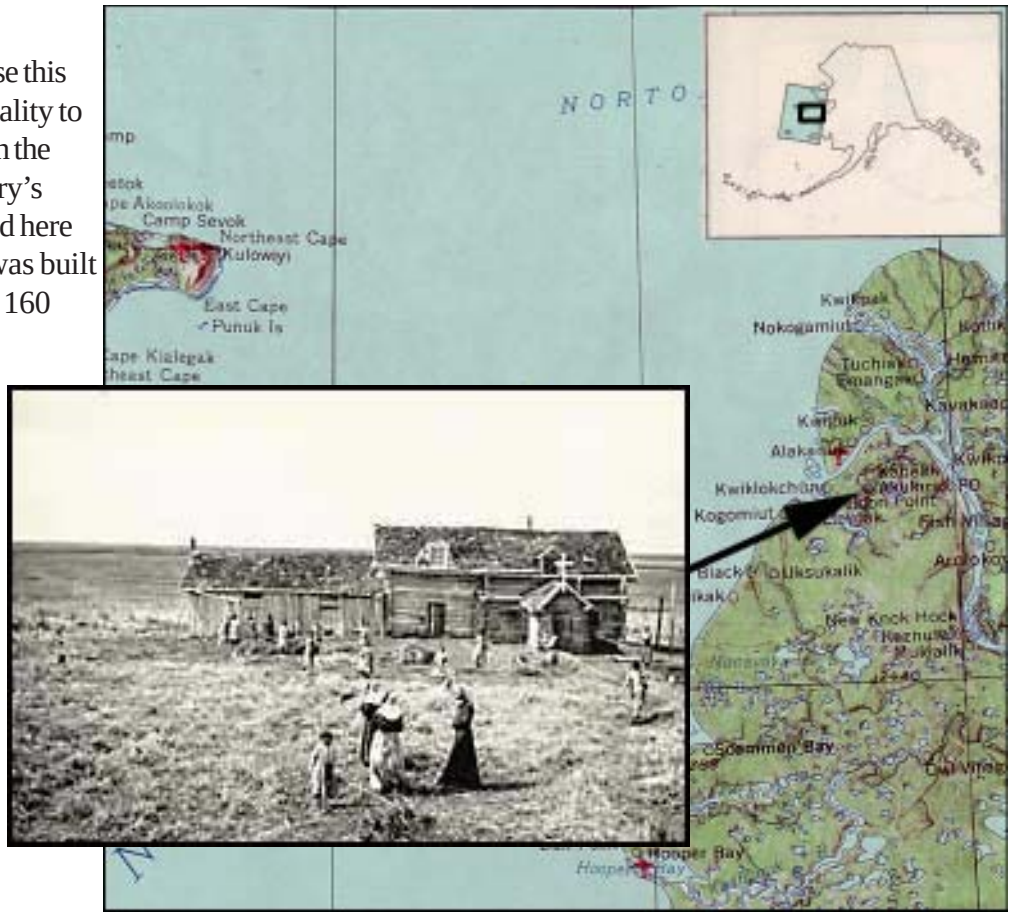


photo credit:http://www.companymagazine.org/v181/

Akulurak (1924-1951)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	3-2	4-bar	5 Jul 1925	19 Feb 1944	Small close spaced letters
2	2	4-bar	9 Nov 1946	31 Aug 1951	Larger wide spaced letters

1

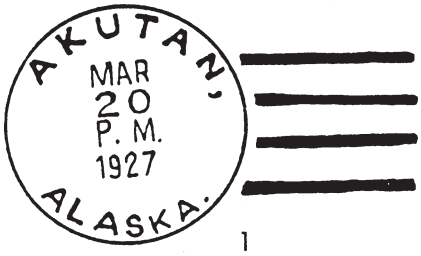
2

AKUTAN

⇦The 100 Aleut villagers were evacuated by the Navy in 1942. Photo shows homes boarded up. *Alaska State Library - Historical Collections Photograph.*

Photo credit: DIMITRA LAVRAKAS at http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=895786&page=2

Akutan (1914-1942 & 1946-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	4-2	4-bar	27 Aug 1916	21 Apr 1942	Wide spaced
2	2-1	4-bar	2 Apr 1946	2 Jan 1959	Narrow spaced



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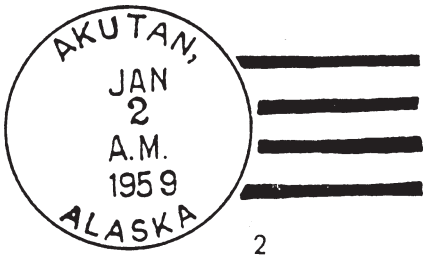

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ALAKANUK

An Eskimo village at the eastern entrance to Alakanuk Pass in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. A population of 61 was recorded in 1939 and the total in 1950 was 150.

Photo credit: http://www.ak-prepared.com/community_services/images/slide0002_image0001.jpg

Alakanuk (1947-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	1	4-bar	1 Apr 1947	18 Oct 1958	Used in statehood period
2	1	Utility dater	30 Jan 1957	2 Jan 1959	

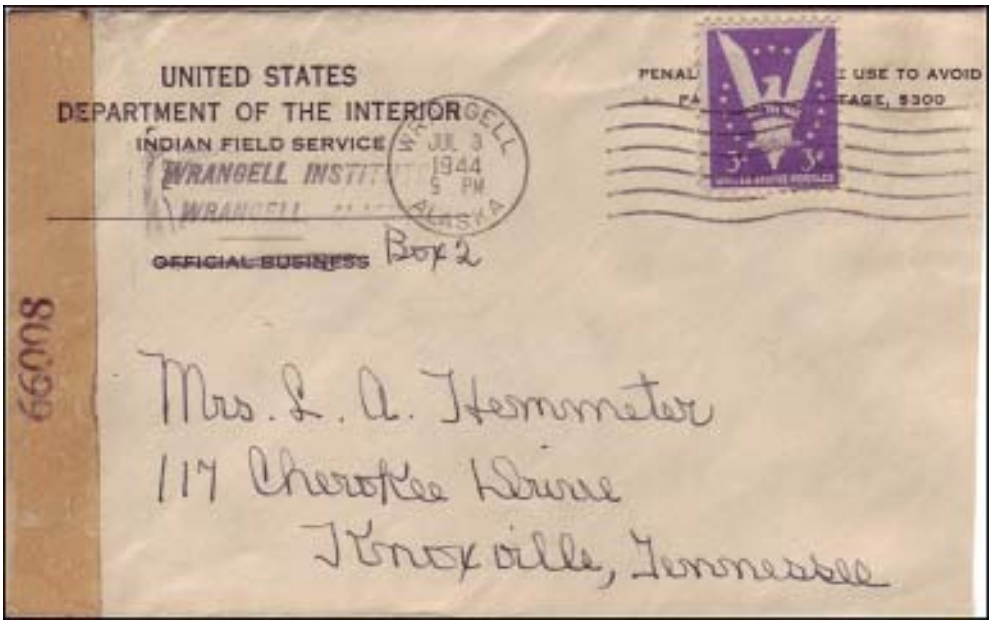
1

2

ALASKINDIA

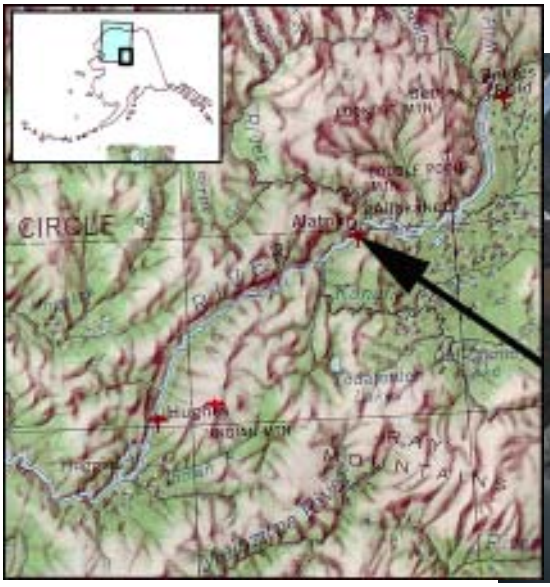
Alaskindia was a post office established in 1938 to serve the Wrangell Institute. The Institute was built in 1932 by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs and used as a boarding school for Native children until the 1970s. Located approximately five miles south of downtown Wrangell, the facility was also used during World War II as a temporary relocation camp for Aleut peoples.

Alaskindia (1938-1945)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	3	4-bar	29 Jul 1938	7 Jan 1944	4-bar



Although the Alaskindia post office officially remained open until April 10, 1945. This cover indicates that by July 1944 at least some of the Wrangell Institute mail was postmarked by the Wrangell post office.

ALATNA



Situated on the north bank of the Koyukuk River near the mouth of the Alatna this site was chosen by Episcopal Archdeacon Struck for a mission in 1906. Alatna post office was established in 1925, but it was changed to Allakaket in 1938 for the Koyukan Indian village on the opposite side of the Koyukuk River. *Photo credit: http://images.fws.gov/default.cfm?fuseaction=records.display&CFID=3812369&CFTOKEN=77466274&id=33FCF6BD-D1AE-40CE-C45F52AB56D1636A*

Alatna (1925-1938)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	4-3	4-bae	28 Jun 1928	30 Apr 1938	Serif town/state letters

ALEKNAGIK

Photo credit: http://www.dced.state.ak.us/dca/photos/comm_photos.cfm?StartRow=1

Originally an Eskimo village on the southeast shore of Lake Aleknagik, 17 miles north of Dillingham, the community has become a popular sports and recreation center with a year round population of about 220.

Aleknagik (1937-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	2	4-bar	6 Apr 1937	27 Apr 1953	Small block letters
2	1	4-bar	13 Jan 1955	2 Jan 1959	Larger block letters

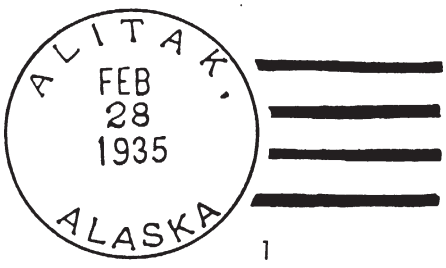
1

2

ALITAK

Alitak post office was established in 1934 to serve the Alitak Cannery and the nearby Akhiok village at the southern end of Kodiak Island. The top photo shows Ahiok village in winter and the bottom photo shows the Alitak cannery. Photo credits: *(top) http://www.aaanativearts.com/alaskan-natives/akhiok.htm?name=News&file=article&sid=1103 (bottom) http://bradleyzint.com/photography/*kodiakphotos/alitak/

Alitak (1934-1945)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	4	4-bar	28 Apr 1934	4 Jan 1937	Serif town/state letters
2	3	4-bar	18 May 1938	5 Feb 1945	Block letters



1

2

ALLAKAKET

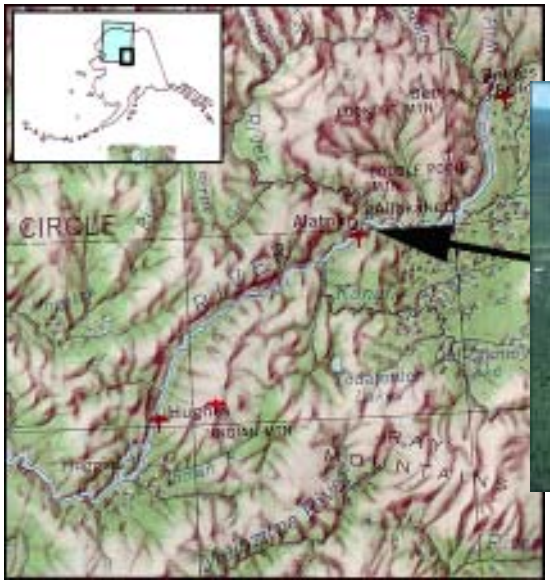


Photo credit: http://www.wingslikeeagles.com/

Situated on the south bank of the Koyukuk River on the Arctic Circle the village of Allakaket carries the Koyukuk Indian name meaning "mouth of the Alatna [River]". With a population of just 97 and no road access, Allakaket certainly qualifies as one of Alaska's more remote communities.

Allakaket (1938-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	2-1	4-bar	2 May 1938	12 Dec 1958	Block letters
2	1	4-bar	27 Apr 1955	2 Jan 1959	Smaller block letters

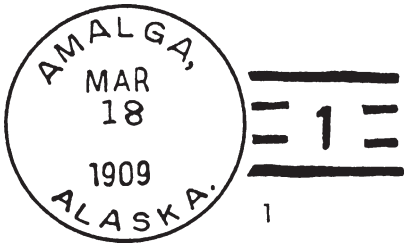
1

2

AMALGA

Amalga post office served the mining camp of this name located about four miles north of Eage River and 22 miles northwest of Juneau. The name may have been an acronym based on the partent company's name: American Alloy of Georgia. Camp connected to Lynn Canal by 7-mile long horse drawn tram.

Amalga (1905-1927)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	4	Doane ty 3	29 Dec 1905	27 Dec 1916	Bars /"1" (1)
2	5	4-bar	7 Mar 1918	29 Jul 1926	



(1) Examples of this postmark are known with indistinct and missing killer bars and Doane number. The killer bars apparently became separated from the postmark after prolonged use as shown in the 1916 example below.

This May 1916 example of the Amalga Doane cancel shows that the original killer bars and number had been replaced by four thin bars. Repaired postmark such as this are termed "composites." (Courtesy of Michael Senta)

ANAKTUVUK PASS

Situated high in the Brooks Range in a pass between the headwaters of the Anaktuvuk and Johns rivers. This Eskimo village is home to people who were once semi-nomadic.

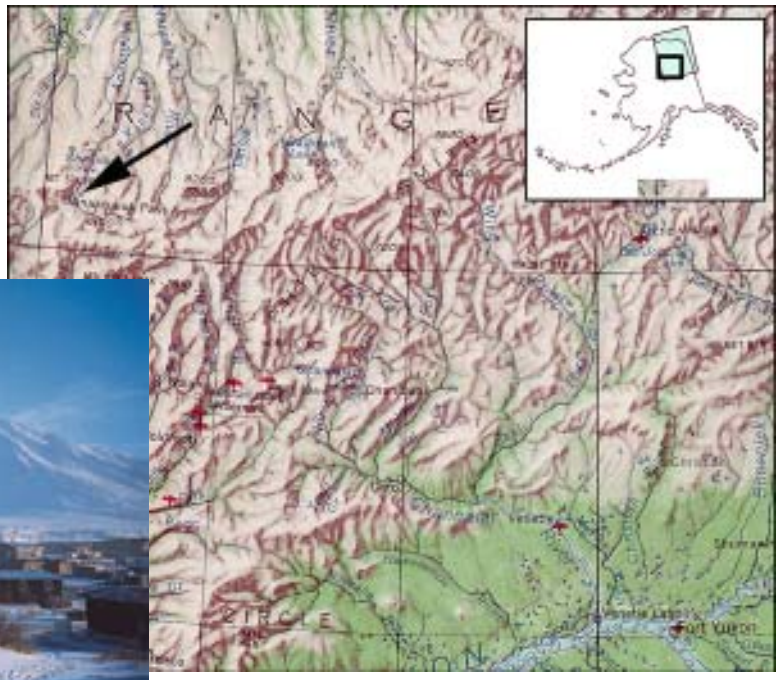
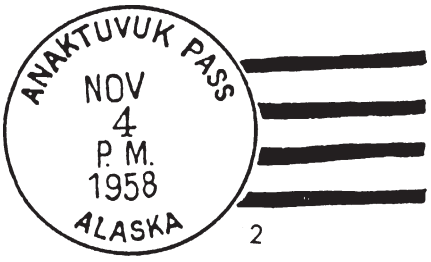


Photo credit:http://www.city-data.com/forum/alaska/149773-some-recent-ak-photos-523.html

Anaktuvuk Pass (1951-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	1	Utility dater	1 May 1951	6 May 1958	Used in statehood period
2	1	4-bar	14 Aug 1952	2 Jan 1959	

1

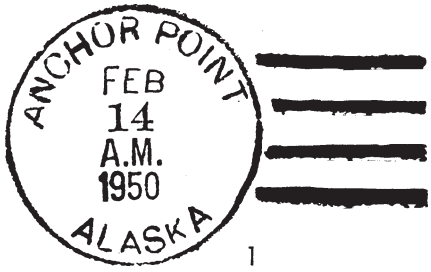


2

ANCHOR POINT

Settled by homesteaders following World War II, the first postmaster reported only "a half dozen families" in 1946, but "nearly 100 people within 7 miles" in 1950. The semi-rural nature of this Sterling Highway unincorporated place continues to this day, but there are now nearly 2,000 part-time and year round residents. *Photo credit: http://www.welcometoalaska.com/*

Anchor Point (1949-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	1	4-bar	1 Mar 1949	4 Sep 1953	Larger block letters
2	1	4-bar	15 Jan 1954	2 Jan 1959	Compact "ALASKA"



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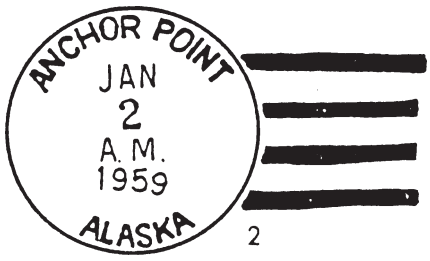
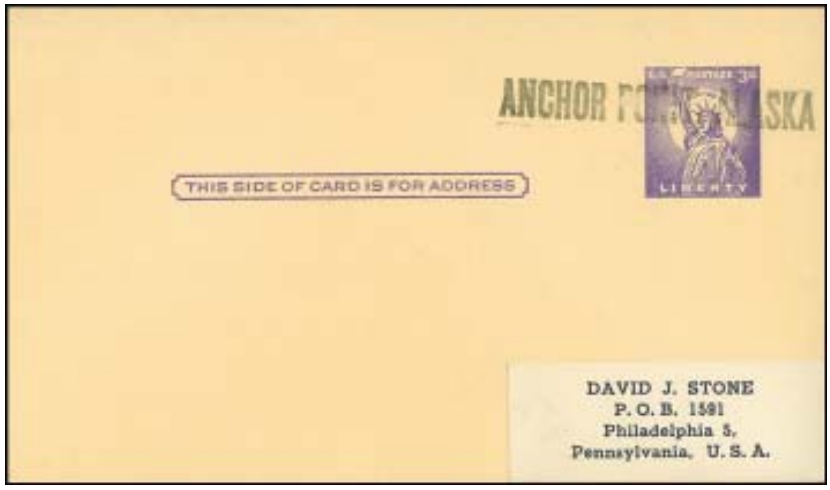


2



This straight line hand stamp from Anchor Point lacks any indication of a date and therefore fails to qualify as a postmark according to the rules established for this catalog. As postmark collecting became more popular in the 1950s, we see more and more favor cancels such as this produced by helpful postmasters and clerks for collectors. (Courtesy of Michael Senta)

Dated May 11, 1915, this is an example of the provisional use of an Alaskan Engineering Commision hand stamp in place of an official postmark that had not yet arrived. (Courtesy of Michael Senta)

This photo was taken May 6, 1915, and shows Anchorage as very much a tent camp.

ANCHORAGE

Anchorage began life as a construction camp and headquarters for the Alaskan Engineering Commision—the agency in charge of building the Alaska Railroad. The camp was first known as Woodrow, in honor of the President, and then Ship Creek. The Anchorage post office was established August 19, 1914, with the appointment of Royden D. Chase as postmaster. The name was taken nearby from Knik Anchorage. Contemporary reports suggest a population as large as 6,000 in 1917, but the Census of 1920 found only 1,856 residents. Pre-war population growth was slow. There were only 3,495 people living in Achorage in 1939, but World War II provided a substantial boost and by 1950 Anchorage had 11,254 residents. Continuing growth since statehood pushed the population to 173, 992 and the latest estimates of the city's population suggest that there are nearly 290,000 residents.

This example of the Ship Creek provisional Anchorage postmark bears two lines of text "COPY FORWARDED TO / HEADQUARTWERS" in place of the dotted lines seen in the earlier example. It is believed by the author that this handstamp featured removable lines of type in these spaces. This use on a special delivery cover actually overlaps the earliest use of the POD issued official four-bar postmark by a few days.(Courtesy of Michael Senta)

Postmarks on First Class Mail

Anchorage (1914-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1.	7	Double oval	14 May 1915	15 Jun 1915	(PTA3 Ty 2) (1)
2.	5	5-bar	9 Jun 1915	11 Mar 1916	(PTA3 Ty 1)
3.	2	Duplex	11 Nov 1915	26 Aug 1918	9-bar grid
4.	2-1	Duplex	27 Dec 1918	5 Apr 1934	Oval grid/"1" (2)
5.	1	Machine	22 Dec 1925	18 Apr 1928	Wavy lines (PTA3 Ty 6)
6.	1	Machine	26 May 1928	19 Nov 1955	Wavy lines (PTA3 Ty 9)
7.	1	Duplex	23 Sep 1934	19 Nov 1957	Oval grid/"1"(PTA3 Ty 8)
8.	1	Utility dater	7 Oct 1944	30 Dec 1952	(PTA3 Ty 11)
9.	1	Utility dater	26 Nov 1946	29 Dec 1946	(PTA3 Ty 12)
10.	1	Machine	26 Nov 1946	2 Jan 1959	Wavy lines (3) (PTA 13)
11.	1	Duplex	1 Sep 1946	30 Jul 1954	Oval grid/"1" (PTA3 Ty 14)
12.	2	4-bar	20 Dec 1949		(PTA3 Ty 15)
13.	1	Utility dater	6 Oct 1950	10 Mar 1958	(PTA3 Ty 16)
14.	1	4-bar	17 Oct 1953	2 Jan 1959	(PTA3 Ty 17)
15.	1	Roller	24 Oct 1955	2 Jan 1959	Curved bars (4) (PTA3 Ty 18)
16.	2	REC'D	20 Feb 1958	3 Oct 1958	
17.	1	Straight line	1 Oct 1958	8 Dec 1958	

Notes: (1) Used as a provisional postmark in the early period of post office operations; (2) Used with a year outside dial date type in later years; (3) Wavy lines occasionally replaced by slogan cancellations; (4) Numbers "1" through "6" follow "ALASKA."

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10 slogan (example)

11

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17

Postmarks on Registered Mail

Section 874 of the *Postal Laws and Regulations*, 1924, states:"A legible impression of the postmarking stamp shall be placed twice on the back of each [registered] letter and other sealed article, as nearly as practicable at the crossings of the upper and lower flaps. The postmarks shall not be placed on the face of first-class registered mail.

Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	5	DCDS	13 Sep 1922	19 Mar 1927	Square "period" (arrow)
2	6	DCDS	9 Oct 1922		M.O.B. improperly used
3	4	DCDS	29 Feb 1928	27 May 1929	
4	3	DCDS	15 Mar 1940	22 Nov 1944	

Reg 1

Reg 1

Reg 1

Reg 2

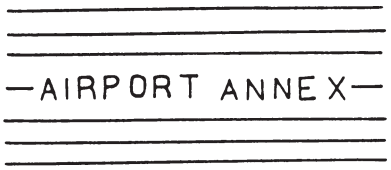
Reg 3

Reg 4

NOTE: The boxed ANCHORAGE/ALASKA (right) that was identified as "Reg 1" in previous editions is actually a parcel post marking. It is not a postmark, and will no longer considered a registry postmark even if there are no proper postmarks on the reverse of the envelope. (Courtesy of Michael Senta)

Anchorage Airport Annex (1954-1961)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	1	Machine	10 Sep 1956	2 Jan 1959	"AIRPORT ANNEX"
2	1	CDS	28 May 1958	2 Jan 1959	

1



2

Anchorage Contract Station No. 1 (1951-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	1	Utility dater	27 Mar 1953	2 Jan 1959	

1

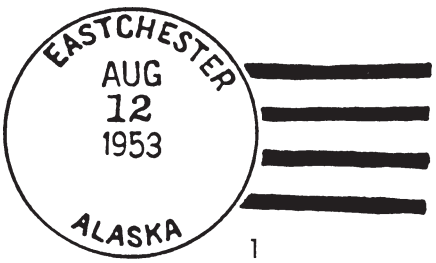
Anchorage Contract Station No. 2 (1951-1959)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	1	Utility dater	5 Feb 1954	16 Dec 1958	

1

Anchorage Contract Station No. 3 (1952-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	1	Utility dater	28 Mar 1953		

1

Anchorage, Eastchester Branch (1951-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	2	4-bar	3 Apr 1953	12 Aug 1953	EASTCHESTER / ALASKA
2	1	Utility dater	31 Dec 1951	2 Jan 1959	
3	2	Straight line	?? ??? 1953		
4	1	Utility dater	19 Mar 1956	21 Feb 1958	



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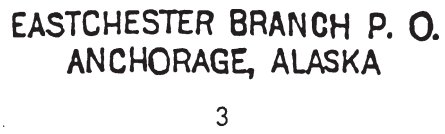
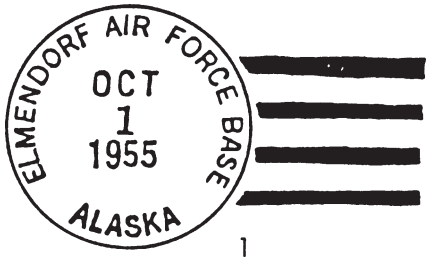


3

4

Anchorage, Elmendorf Air Force Base Branch (1955-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	2	4-bar	1 Oct 1955		
2	1	Utility dater	19 Sep 1958	2 Jan 1959	



1

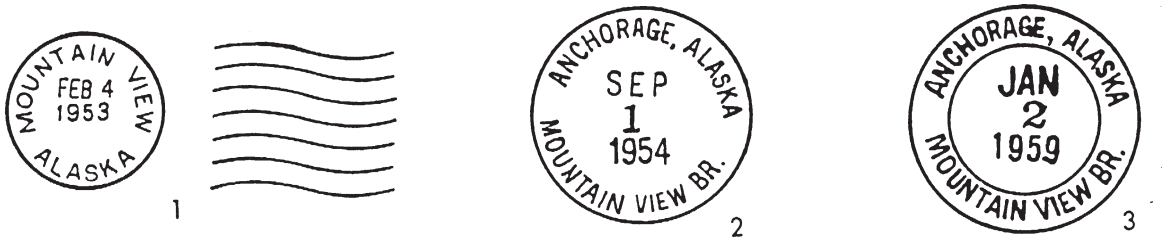
2

Post card view of Fort Richardson by Robinson. The card is postmarked at Anchorage in October 1949.

Anchorage, Fort Richardson Branch (1941-1942 & 1948-1955)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	2	Duplex	1 Apr 1941	21 Mar 1942	Oval grid/"1"
2	2	Machine	12 Nov 1941	25 Apr 1942	Wavy lines
3	1	Utility dater	1 Mar 1949	30 Sep 1955	

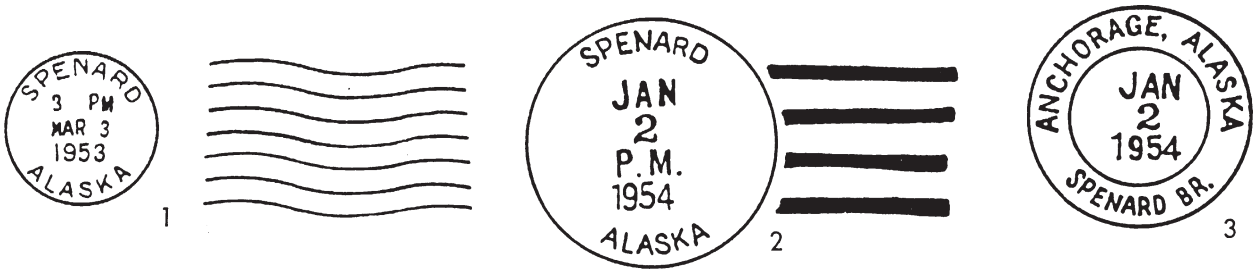
Anchorage, Mountain View Branch (1954-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	1	Machine	1 Sep 1954	1 Feb 1957	Wavy lines (1)
2	1	CDS	1 Sep 1954		(2)
3	1	Utility dater	1 Sep 1954	2 Jan 1959	

Notes: (1) In use before Mountain View was converted to an Anchorage Branch on Sept. 1, 1954; (2) Only known used on first day of post office branch covers.



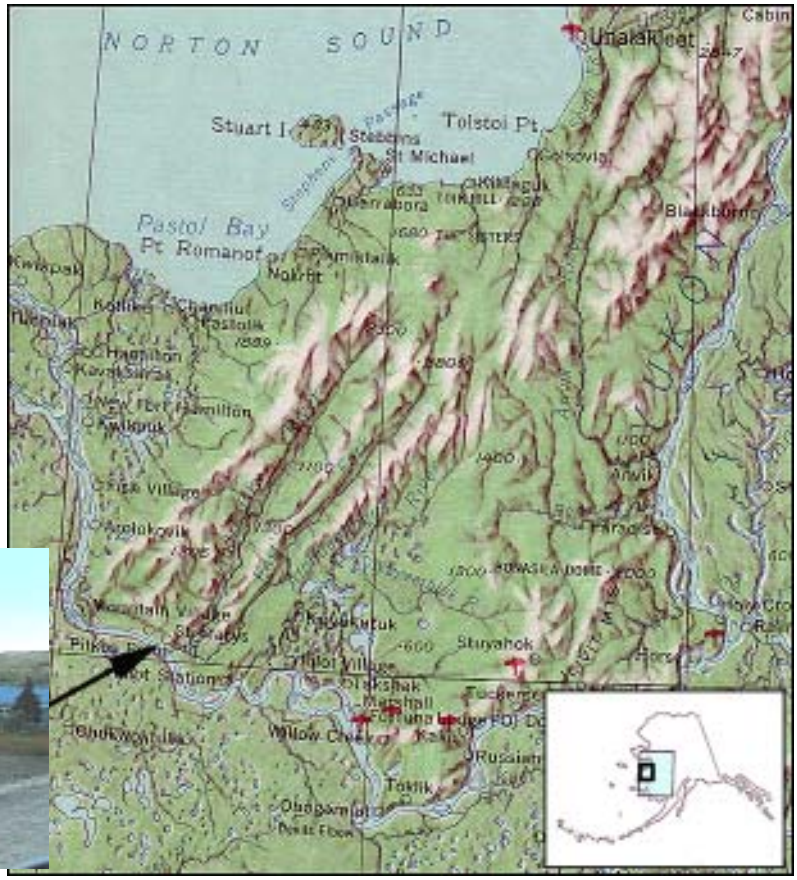
Anchorage, Spenard Branch (1954-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	1	Machine	2 Jan 1954	7 Feb 1957	Wavy lines (1)
2	1	4-bar	2 Jan 1954		(1)
3	1	Utility dater	2 Jan 1954	29 Nov 1958	

Note: (1) In use before Spenard was converted to an Anchorage Branch on Jan. 1, 1954

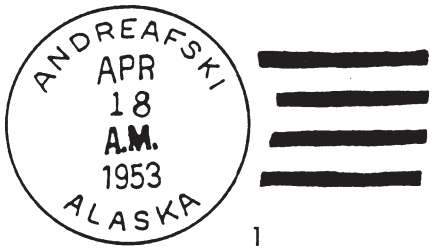


ANDREAFSKI

This post office served the Saint Marys Catholic Mission after it was relocated from Akulurak in 1951. Located on the north bank of Andreafsky River, the site had previously been an Eskimo village that was abandoned by 1912 when its residents relocated to Mountain Village. The name of the post office was changed to Saint Marys in 1954. *Photo credit: Andreafski Townsite Hall by http://www.smcsd.us/Community/stmrysphts/stmrysphts.html*

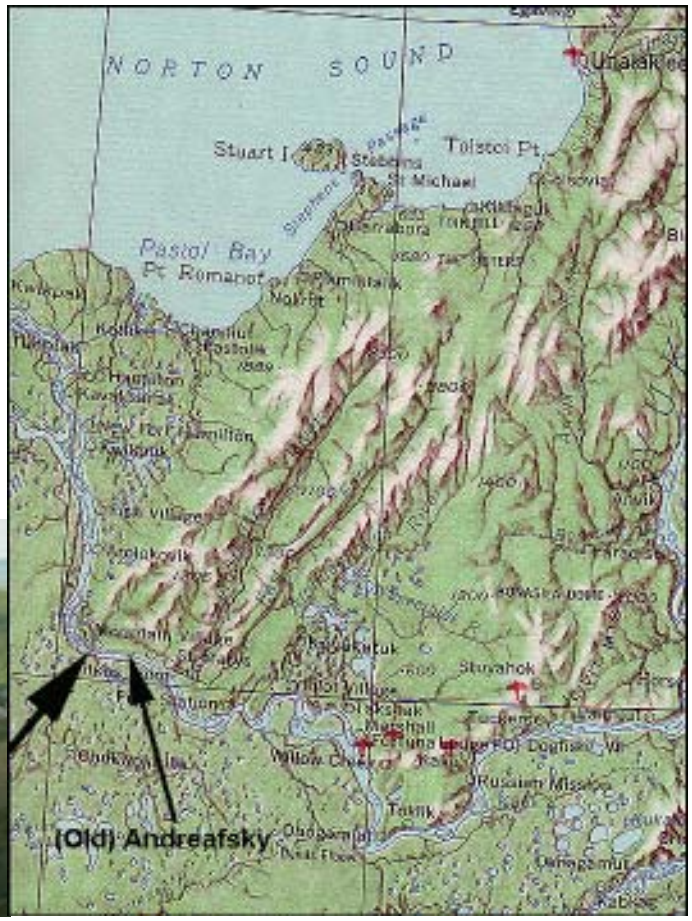


Andreafski (1951-1954)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	2	4-bar	1 Sep 1951	31 Dec 1954	



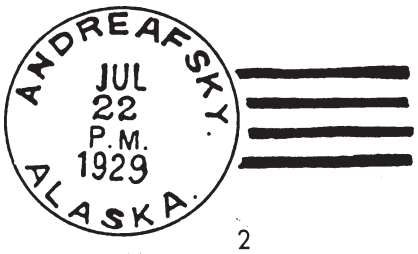
ANDREAFSKY

Andreafsky was chosen by the Northern Commercial Company (NCC) as a depot and winter quarters for its riverboats about 1898. Located about 3½ miles northwest of Pitkas Point, the NCC abandoned the place by 1912 but an Eskimo village remained and this post office was establish in 1913. The post office was relocated to Mountain Village in 1934 and its name was changed accordingly. *Photo credit: http://www.city-data.com/picfilesv/picv23428.php*



Andreafsky (1913-1934)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	5	4-bar	7 Jun 1913	24 Jan 1920	Wide spaced killer bars
2	2. 4-3	4-bar	1 Jun 1924	19 Dec 1934	Narrow spaced killer bars

1

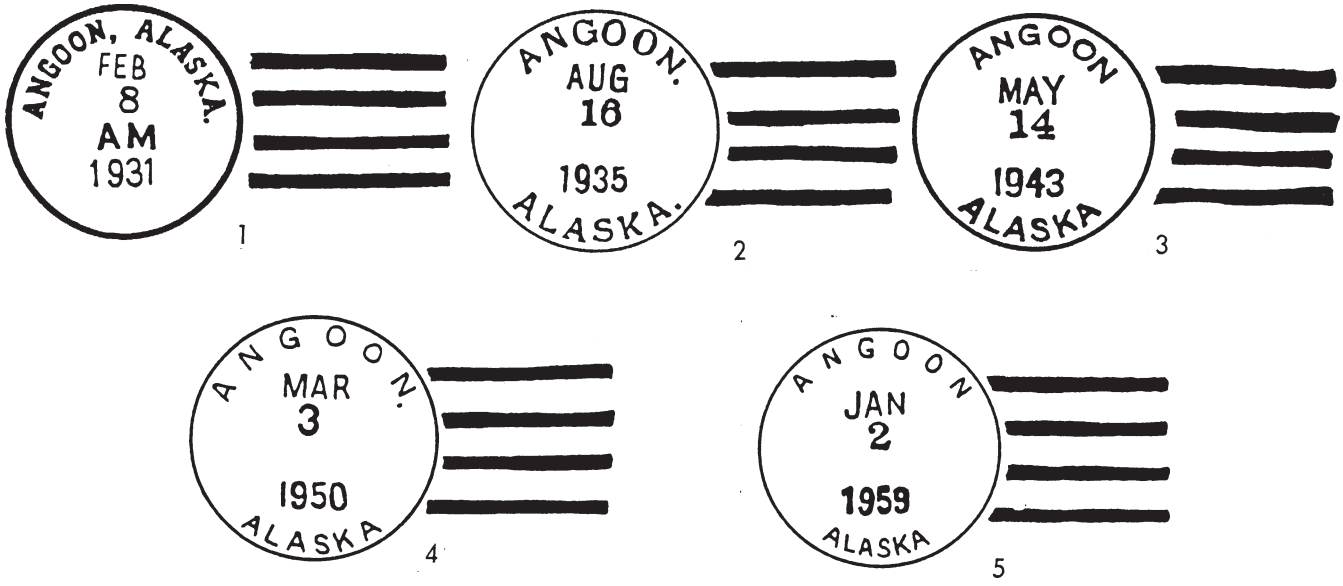


2

ANGOON

An early Tlingit Indian village on Admiralty Island with a population of 420 in the Census of 1880. When a fish reduction plant was opened at nearby Killisnoo in 1881 many of the villagers moved there. Killisnoo received a post office in 1882, but the fishery plant closed in 1928 and in 1930 the post office was moved two miles north to Angoon village and its name was changed to Angoon. *Photo credit: "Angoon in 1945" http://www.sitnews.us/Kiffer/Angoon/102907_angoon_bombed.html*

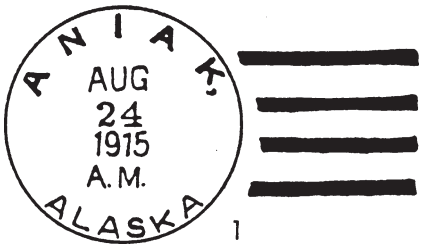
Angoon (1928-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	3	4-bar	8 Feb 1931	10 Feb 1934	Depression era style
2	3	4-bar	16 Aug 1935	6 Apr 1938	Serif letters town/state
3	2-1	4-bar	14 Mar 1939	14 Jul 1954	Close space lettering
4	1	4-bar	19 May 1944	14 Jan 1956	Wide space lettering
5	1	4-bar	29 Nov 1954	2 Jan 1959	Wide space small letters



ANIAK

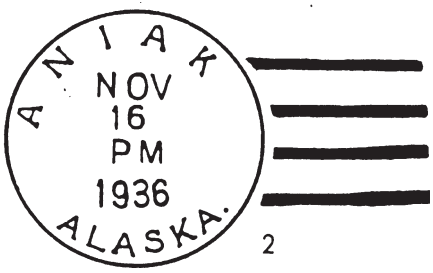
Aniak post office was initially established in 1914 to serve a mining supply center at the mouth of Aniak River on the Kusko-kwim.

The mines were located around the headwaters of the Aniak and Tuluksak rivers to the south in the Kilbuck Mountains. Eventually the mines gave out and the post office was closed in 1923. It was reopened in 1934 to serve a community built around hunting, fishing, trapping and spruce lumber.



1

Aniak (1914-1923 & 1934-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1.	6	4-bar	24 Aug 1915	27 Jul 1916	
2.	2	4-bar	25 Jan 1933	8 Nov 1940	Serif letters town/state
3.	1	4-bar	14 Feb 1941	21 Dec 1950	Close spaced lettering
4.	2	M.O.B.	19 Apr 1951		Improper use on 1st class
5.	1	Utility dater	24 Feb 1952	11 Feb 1957	
6.	1	Duplex	24 Feb 1952	2 Jan 1959	Oval grid/"1"
7.	1	4-bar	21 Mar 1952	17 Jun 1958	
8.	1	4-bar	8 Jun 1954	2 Jan 1959	



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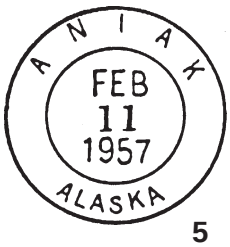

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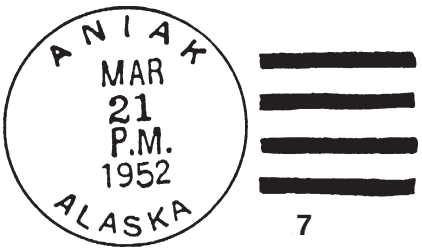

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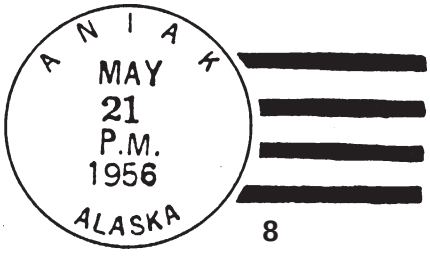

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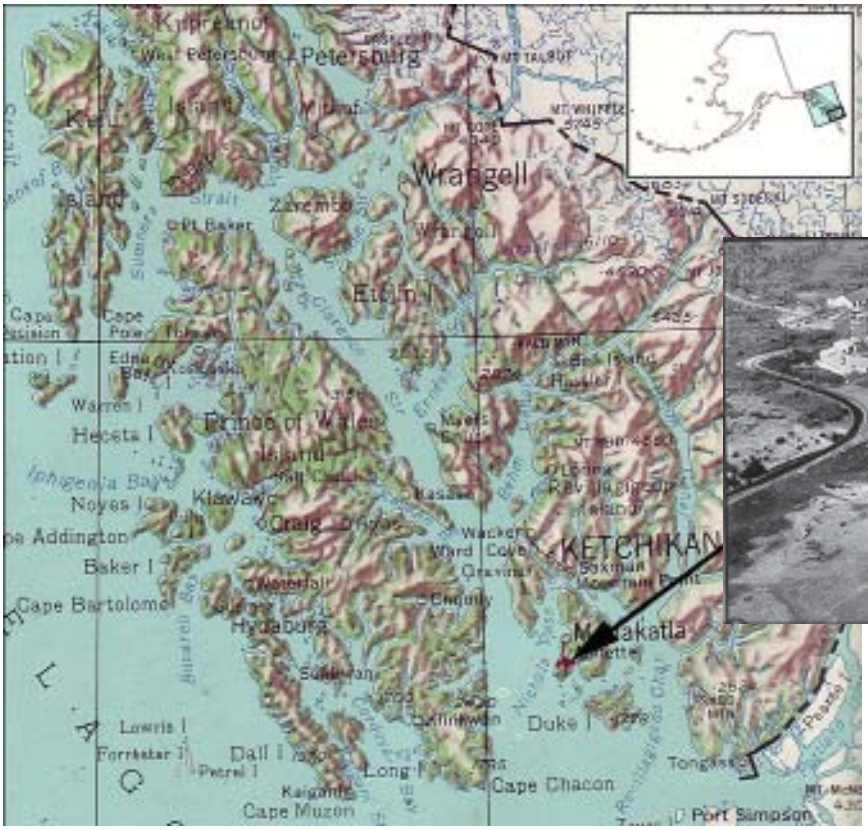


ANNETTE

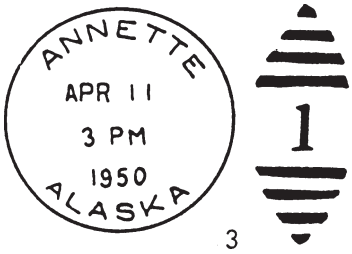
The island was set aside in 1893 as a reserve for the Tsimshian Indians, but a US Army air field was built here in 1940. APO 935 operated here throughout the war. Control of the air field was transferred to civilian control after the war.

Photo credit:"Annette Airport in 1957" http://uscgaviationhistory.aoptero.org/history02.html

Annette (1947-1977)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	2-1	Utility dater	3 May 1947	27 May 1957	
2	2-1	4-bar	22 Jul 1947	18 Aug 1956	
3	1	Duplex	23 Sep 1949	15 Nov 1952	Oval grid/"1"
4	1	4-bar	2 Sep 1956	2 Jan 1959	Smaller close set letters

1

2



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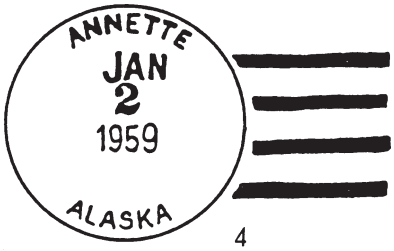


4

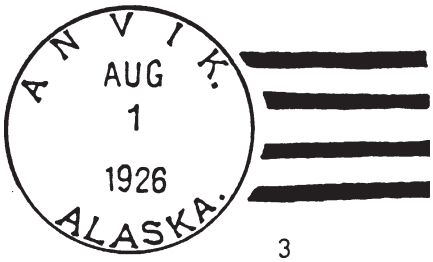
ANVIK

Anvik is situated on the west bank of the Yukon at a place where the old trail from Saint Michael first reached the great river. The Alaska Commercial Company maintained a post here, and the Census of 1900 listed a population of 166 residents. The Mitchell post card view shown here depicts the Anvik school house and post office around 1908.

Anvik(1897-Date)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	6-5	CDS	26 Aug 1899	19 Sep 1907	Target
2	5	4-bar	10 Jun 1908	24 Mar 1922	A type
3	4	4-bar	30 May 1924	9 Sep 1927	Serif letters wide spaced
4	2	4-bar	26 Sep 1928	1 Apr 1945	Serif letters narrow spaced
5	1	4-bar	23 Nov 1945	2 Jan 1959	
6	1	GP	16 Dec 1957		

1

2



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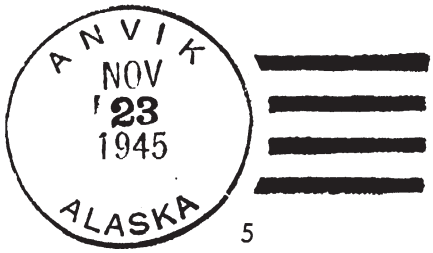

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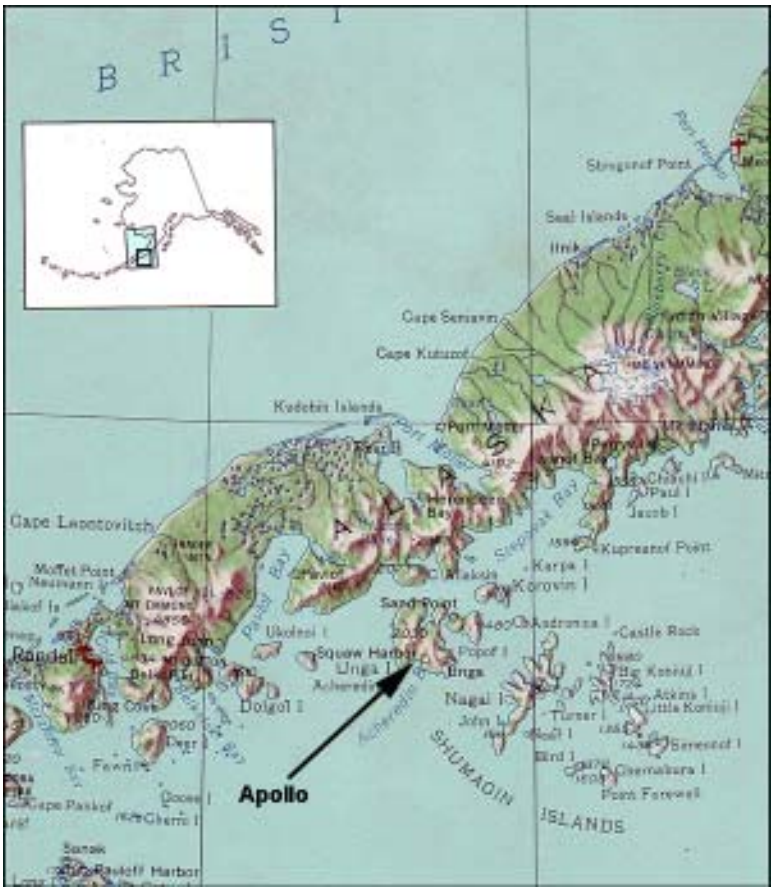


APOLLO

Apollo post office began operations May 17, 1899, on the south shore of Unga Island. The post office served the mine of the same name that produced some $2 million in gold and silver by 1904.

"Miners at Apollo Mine" http://www.westernmininghistory.com/tag/alaska/images/

Apollo (1899-1906)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	7	CDS	18 Oct 1899	31 Dec 1902	Circular bar killer

Two examples of the Apollo postmark accompanied by a circular bar cancel. (Courtesy of Michael Senta)

ATKA

Prior to World War II, Atka Island was home to population of about 100 Aleuts. The entire population was relocated in the spring of 1942 to make way for military and naval operations. The islanders were allowed to return after the war, and the post office was re-established in 1947.

Photo credit:kokodoc on http://www.panoramio.com/photo/2368882

Atka (1938-1942 & 1947-1957)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	2	4-bar	23 Jan 1939	31 Oct 1957	

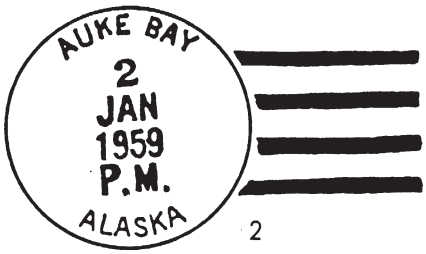
AUKE BAY

Auke Bay is a suburb of Juneau located about 11 miles north of the city on Glacier Highway. The community took the name of the bay, which was named for the Auk Tlingit Indians who occupied the northern end of Admiralty Island and the mainland north of Juneau. Photo credit: http://westjuneau.com/WordPress/2007/09/05/auke-bay-alaska/

Auke Bay (1946-Date)

Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	2-1	4-bar	23 Dec 1946	30 Apr 1955	
2	1	4-bar	22 Nov 1955	2 Jan 1959	Smaller, close spaced letters
3	3. 1	Utility dater	6 Feb 1957		

1



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AURORA

Aurora was a short-lived mining camp on the east shore of Kachemak Bay about 28 miles northeast of Seldovia. The post office operated for only two years from 1902 to 1904, and William Lomax was the only postmaster. Lomax was compensated only $4.58 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1903.

Aurora (1902-1904)					
Type	S/I Value	Postmark	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Notes
1	8	CDS	15 Jul 1903		On piece

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