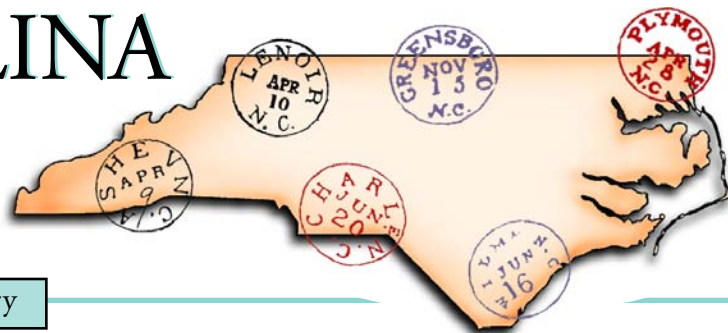


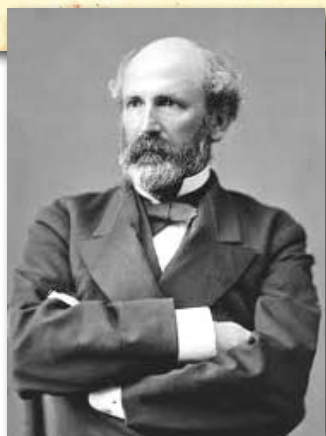
NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

The Journal of North Carolina Postal History

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Union Occupation Mail from
Eastern North Carolina



Centreville Cover to General
Matt Ransom

Mill Grove to Brackenheim,
Württemberg



North Carolina's Faces in the
War of 1812

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The North Carolina Postal History Society (NCPHS) will hold its annual meeting at CHARPEX 2013, the Charlotte regional philatelic exhibition and stamp show, at 2:30 PM, Saturday, July, 27, 2013. After a very short meeting, I will present a talk on the basic North Carolina cancel types based on my experience with the North Carolina Postmark Update project. This year CHARPEX will be held at a new location not far from last year's show. CHARPEX will be at Taylor Hall on the campus of Central Piedmont Community College, 1234 Elizabeth Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28204, conveniently located just off I-277 and Route 74. Site location details are available on the CHARPEX web site, <http://www.charpex.info/>. If you would like to exhibit, a link to the CHARPEX 2013 Prospectus is available from this same web site. The NCPHS Board of Directors will meet at 12:00 AM on Saturday in the meeting room arranged by the CHARPEX committee.

We will continue to recognize the best contributions to our journal, the *North Carolina Postal Historian*. The members of the Board of Directors will select a recipient for this award, choosing from the published articles for the past year, Volume No. 31. The award will be presented at our annual meeting during CHARPEX 2013.

There will be no auction with this journal issue. The Board will discuss the future of our auctions with an eye to improving them and possibly using on-line resources.

The terms of two NCPHS directors is coming to an end. If you would like to be on the board for the next three years, please contact either myself or Harvey Tilles, the Vice-President.

The status box of the North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update (back page) will show modest changes as our updated

IN THIS ISSUE

Union Occupation Mail from Eastern North Carolina during the Civil War, Part I by Michael C. McClung.....	3
Mystery Cover	9
A Cover from Centreville, N.C. to General Matt Ransom by Scott Troutman.....	10
Mill Grove to Brackenheim, Württemberg by Richard F. Winter.....	11
North Carolina's Faces in the War of 1812 by Tony L. Crumbley.....	13

catalog continues to grow. To date, the postmarks of 61 counties and three large cities have been documented in separate pdfs on our web site under the tab of NC Postmark Catalog. Each of these pdfs are downloadable for those who wish a hard copy of a county. Currently, there are 3,329 pages on-line in these files, and 12,971 markings are shown that were not previously documented.

The reactions to our web site from members has been very positive. I am collecting ideas from members who would like to see additions or changes to the site information. Please send me your comments either by email, writing, or telephone call. You can reach me as shown in the next paragraph. The web site serves all of our members and you are entitled to say what changes or improvements you desire. I will be happy to hear from you.

As always, I welcome your comments and suggestions for improving the society. Please feel free to call me at home (336 545-0175), send me an e-mail message at rfwinter@triad.rr.com or write to me. My mailing address appears at the bottom of this page.

Dick Winter



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Union Occupation Mail from Eastern North Carolina during the Civil War, Part 1

by Michael C. McClung



During the Civil War, as Federal troops moved into the South and occupied southern towns, they occasionally reopened local post offices for the use of soldiers and sailors. These offices are known as occupation post offices, and they were operated by the military, for the exclusive use of the military, with a few necessary exceptions. Some of these exceptions were U.S. government contractors, sutlers, express agents and prisoner of war mail. Occupation letters are characterized by U.S. postage or franking with war-dated postmarks from Southern towns. An occupation post office usually served an area larger than the local encampment, and it operated until combat troops left and a civilian postmaster was appointed, often the late spring or summer of 1865.

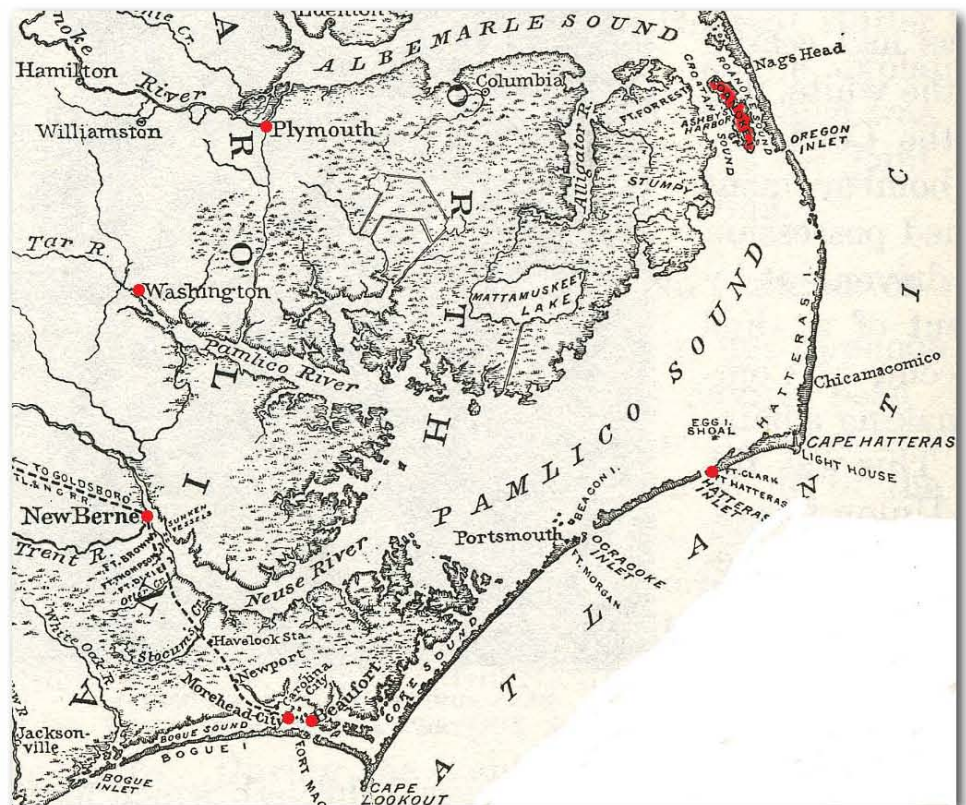
From the beginning of the Civil War the Federal military endeavored to isolate the South from trade with the rest of the world by the deployment of a naval blockade as well as by capturing and occupying major coastal ports. The coast of North Carolina became an early target for this effort. Figure 1 shows a map of eastern North Carolina which illustrates the lay of the land as it existed in 1861, including the important locations (colored in red) that will be discussed in this article.

This article is the first of two that describe Union occupation mail from eastern North Carolina during the Civil war. The first article focuses on the history of the time, with a number of examples of related covers, and sets the background for the second article, which will feature unusual uses and fancy cancels from the occupation period.

Hatteras Inlet

The first Federal expedition to North Carolina was a combined army/navy campaign led by General Benjamin Butler and Flag-Officer Silas Stringham. The objective was to

capture and control the Hatteras Inlet, which was the doorway through the Outer Banks to the inland waterways of the Tarheel State. This was accomplished primarily by the naval bombardment of Forts Clark and Hatteras near the inlet on August 28 and 29, 1861. A Union occupation force was



▲ **Figure 1.** Civil War period map of eastern North Carolina showing the Outer Banks, the sounds, and the major locations discussed in this article, highlighted in red.

established there and it remained in the area throughout the war to control access to the sounds. Figure 2 illustrates a cover from a Massachusetts soldier at Hatteras Inlet (as seen in the Soldier's Letter endorsement). Soldiers and sailors (not officers) were permitted to send letters without stamps and with postage due to the recipient, providing they were properly endorsed and signed by an officer. The "U.S. SHIP/3 CTS." marking was applied at a northern port, and it indicated that this letter was carried by a Union contract vessel and no ship fee was required, so only the regular postage of 3¢ was charged. Mail from



▲ **Figure 2.** Soldier's letter from Hatteras Inlet to Woburn, Massachusetts, with corner card marking of the Goldsboro Bridge, Fifth Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteer Militia. "U.S. SHIP/3 CTS." handstamp applied at northern port to show arrival by Union contract vessel and 3¢ domestic postage due. The 2¢ ship fee was not required for mail brought in by these vessels.

official appointment date is June 21, 1862, and he was replaced by Mrs. Susan Richardson on September 16, 1863. Figure 4 shows two covers with manuscript Washington postmarks, dated July 22 and August 1, 1862, from the same correspondence. These may be the only extant examples of this postmark. Occupation mail from Washington was carried by supply ships, possibly via New Bern and/or Beaufort.

By September 1862, encroachment by Confederate troops surrounding Washington caused siege-like conditions in the town and the occupation post office was shut down. The siege was tightened in the spring of 1863, but was eventually abandoned because there was still a trickle of supplies and reinforcements slipping past the Confederate gauntlet on the Pamlico River. Figure 5 shows a cover that was spirited out during the siege period; it is docketed, "Washington, N.C./Fe 6 '63" and postmarked at the New Bern occupation office on February 16, 1863. So it took about ten days for the cover to travel down the Pamlico River to the sound and up the Neuse River to New Bern. Additional docketing reads, "23 days without

Hatteras Inlet was carried north by returning supply ships. Although the town of Hatteras had a post office prior to the war, a Union occupation post office was not established there.

Roanoke Island

The next (much larger) combined Federal expedition to North Carolina was led by General Ambrose Burnside and Flag-Officer Louis M. Goldsborough in early 1862 with the objective of capturing Roanoke Island, New Bern, Beaufort, other harbor towns and possibly Wilmington and Goldsboro. Roanoke Island, the key strategic location for controlling the sounds, was taken in early February and led to the evacuation of several nearby river towns, including Washington and Plymouth, leaving them open for occupation by Federal forces. Figure 3 shows a soldier's letter that originated on Roanoke Island and was taken to Philadelphia by a returning transport ship, entering the U.S. mail on March 11, 1862. The regimental history of the 6th New Hampshire, shown in the endorsement, confirms the Roanoke Island origin. Although Roanoke Island was occupied throughout the war, it never had an occupation post office. As smaller occupation garrisons were placed at nearby towns, Burnside consolidated his main force on Roanoke Island preparing to move on the more heavily defended New Bern.

Washington

Washington, one of the early towns to become occupied after the fall of Roanoke Island, was the first North Carolina town to have an occupation post office. The first occupation postmaster was Richard R. Richardson, the pre-war postmaster who did not continue as the Confederate postmaster; his



▲ **Figure 3.** Soldier's letter from Roanoke Island to Westmoreland, New Hampshire, a patriotic envelope depicting the seal of New York State. Letter carried north on a returning transport ship, entered the mail system at Philadelphia on March 11, 1862, and was marked "DUE 3" and "SHIP."

When the siege ended at Washington, the occupation post office received government-issue postmarking handstamps and it reopened. Figure 6 shows early and late uses of the 26 millimeter (mm) double circle date stamp in black, dated May 28 and September 4, 1863. Confederate activity in the area caused Federal troops to evacuate the town in September 1863, so the post office was again shut down. Federal troops returned to Washington in February 1864 as front lines moved farther

Figure 4. ▼▶

Two rare Washington covers with manuscript postmarks dated July 22 and August 1, 1862, each to the same addressee in Boston.



Figure 5. ▶

Siege cover from Washington (docketing on left side shows it was written on February 6, 1863) posted in New Bern on March 16, 1863, and sent to Lynn, Massachusetts.



◀ **Figure 6.** Early and late uses of the Washington 26 mm double circle datestamp in black dated May 28 and September 4, 1863. Confederate activity forced Federal troops to evacuate the town in September 1863, shutting down the occupation post office.



west, and, once again, the post office reopened. This time the 26 mm double circle datestamp was struck in blue until late March 1864, when Union troops began to leave, returning again in October. Figure 7 shows early and late uses of the 26 mm double circle datestamp in blue, dated February 20 and March 18, 1864.

Plymouth

Figure 8 shows a cover and letter from a soldier at Plymouth datelined December 19, 1862, and with a New Bern double circle datestamp dated December 27, 1862. Plymouth was occupied intermittently during the war, but it never had an occupation post office, so the mail was usually taken to New Bern.



◀ **Figure 7.** Early and late uses of the Washington 26 mm double circle datestamp in blue dated February 20, and March 18, 1864. This color was used when the occupation post office reopened again in February 1864.

Figure 8. ▶

Soldier's letter from Plymouth to Rochester, Massachusetts, with the corner card marking of the Scott Light Guard of Fairhaven, Company I, Third Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteer Militia. Superimposed in the lower left corner is the dateline of the enclosed letter, written on December 19, 1862, and posted in New Bern later in December 1862.



New Bern

On March 14, 1862, after a four hour battle, New Bern, the second largest city in North Carolina at the time, was captured and it remained in Union control for the remainder of the war. Although the occupation encampment in and around the city was quite large, the postmaster, John Dibble, was not appointed until July 15, 1862, and he did not begin postmarking mail until late November of that year. Figure 9 shows a soldier's letter with a docket, "Newbern, N.C./March 20," less than a week

after the battle. This cover was probably taken to Baltimore by

a returning transport ship. A similar pre-post office soldier's letter is shown in figure 10. Docketing shows that it was written at New Bern on April 9, 1862, and the "U.S. Ship/3 CTS." marking shows that it was carried north by a U.S. contract vessel, probably a returning supply ship.

The first postmark applied at New Bern was a 27 mm double circle datestamp that was in use only for about two weeks. Figure 11 illustrates early and late uses, dated November 27 and December 8, 1862. It spelled the town name with a hyphen, "NEW-BERNE." This postmark was replaced



◀ **Figure 9.** Soldier's letter from New Bern to North Adams, Massachusetts, docketed in the upper left on March 20, 1862, less than a week after the battle that captured New Bern. Letter carried north to Baltimore and posted on March 26th. Here it was marked for 3¢ postage due at destination.

by a 26 mm double circle datestamp on December 8, 1862 which read, "NEWBERN," and it was in use until the end of the war, but without a year date after 1863. Figure 12 shows an early use of the 26 mm

Figure 10. ▶

A similar soldier's letter from New Bern on April 9, 1862, (docketing, upper right) carried north by a returning Union contract vessel and marked with "U.S. SHIP/3 CTS" handstamp indicating 3¢ postage due.



▲ Figure 11. Early and late uses of the 27 mm New Bern double circle datestamp, dated November 27 and December 8, (1862). This is a scarce postmark used only about two weeks before being replaced.

double circle datestamp of December 8, 1862. It should be noted that the "2" in the year date is very distinct. The 1863 date slug looks much like 1862 with the last digit being somewhat smudged, often causing mistakes in identification of

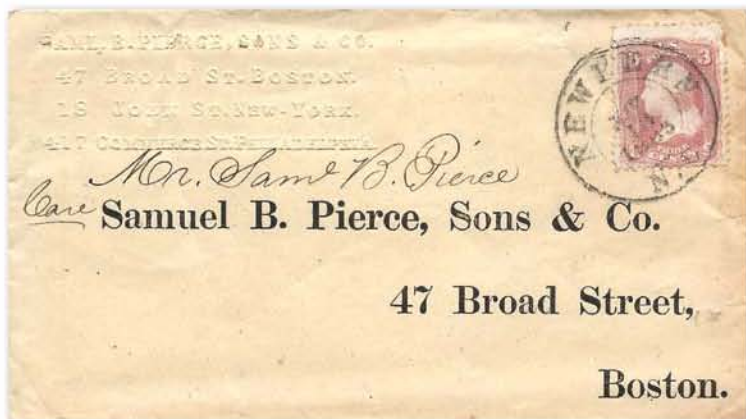


Figure 12. ▲

Early use of the 26 mm New Bern double circle datestamp on December 8, 1862. This postmark was used throughout the war and always had a year date. Misidentification of "1862" use often occurs, despite the fact that the "2" is a distinct style, because the 1863 year slug is usually smudged and often is thought to be "1862."

◀ Figure 13. Early use of the 30 mm New Bern double circle datestamp (serifs and two words) on May 13, 1863. This datestamp was used throughout the war and always has a year date.





◀ **Figure 14.** Early use of the 28.5 mm New Bern duplexed double circle datestamp on January 19, 1864. This fourth datestamp appeared at New Bern in January 1864 and was always duplexed. The spelling in the datestamp was "NEWBERNE," and it had no year date after April 1864.

townmark datestamp to cancel stamps after 1860 was no longer allowed by the Post Office Department. New Bern used many different killer positions on their duplexed handstamps, but all were in the same position relative to

Shortly after capturing New Bern, General Burnside sent a force to occupy Beaufort and reduce Fort Macon. After a month-long siege followed by a heavy bombardment the fort was surrendered on April 26, 1862. An occupation post office was established by Joseph J. Davis who was appointed on June 9, 1862, and who began postmarking mail in September 1862.

Figure 15. ▶

Early use of the 26 mm Beaufort double circle datestamp on September 12, 1862, a letter to Washington, D.C. with a "PAID/3" handstamp indicating the payment in cash. This was the only postmark used at Beaufort. The letter was missent to Newark, New Jersey, where it was redirected and the "MISSENT" handstamp applied.



the townmark datestamp.] The spelling in the datestamp was "NEWBERNE," and it had no year date after April 1864, although it was in use until well after the war was over. Mail to and from the New Bern occupation post office was handled by supply ships, and much of it might have gone

Figure 15 illustrates an early use (September 12, 1862) of the 26 mm double circle datestamp, which was the only Beaufort occupation postmark employed during the war. The cover is also marked "PAID 3" which means that the postage was paid in cash. Although this was against postal regulations, it was probably allowed because the post office was out of stamps. Additional markings show that this letter was missent to Newark, New Jersey.



◀ **Figure 16.** Cover from Morehead City (modification of the imprint at upper left) posted at New Bern on March 17, 1865, addressed to City Point, Virginia. Morehead City did not have an occupation post office and its own postmark.

Morehead City

The cover in Figure 16 originated at Morehead City as shown by the modification of the imprint at upper left. Morehead City was occupied at the same time as Beaufort, and it remained in Union control, but it did not have an occupation post office, so this letter was sent to New Bern to be postmarked and sorted on March 17, 1865.

Beaufort

Beaufort had a good accessible harbor, and it was guarded by Confederate-held Fort Macon across the bay on a sand bar.

Goldsboro

Although Federal forces, based at New Bern, made attempts to capture Goldsboro and disrupt the flow of supplies by rail to Richmond, they had little success. It was not until early 1865, when General William T. Sherman's large army entered North Carolina from the south, that the more inland towns began to fall. Figure 17 shows a cover and letter with a Goldsboro dateline of April 18, 1865. The cover was taken to New Bern where it was mailed on April 31.

Other Towns

While towns other than those mentioned above were occupied by Federal forces, at least for a time, only Washington, New Bern and Beaufort had occupation post offices. Towns to the north that had access to the Albemarle Sound, such as Elizabeth City, Edenton, and Winton, were occupied but soldiers' mail from these places was sent to Norfolk, Virginia. A number of other towns were occupied by Sherman's troops coming north late in the war. These would include Charlotte, Raleigh, Kinston and others; their soldiers' mail was handled in a manner similar to that of the Figure 17 cover from Goldsboro. Also, Fort Fisher was captured in January 1865, opening up Wilmington for occupation. Occupation mail from these towns can be identified using clues found in enclosures, docketing, regimental history, and known correspondences.



Figure 17. ▲

Soldier's letter from Goldsboro to Clinton, Iowa, taken to New Bern to be posted on April 31, 1865. Superimposed in the lower left corner is the date-line of the enclosed letter, written on April 18. Goldsboro never had an occupation post office and its own postmark.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Tony Crumbley and Maurice Bursey for providing images and information for this article. ■

W

Mystery Cover



Again we had no responses to the older mystery cover or the one above presented in the last issue. This cover has a very difficult postmark to decipher; however, we believe this marking is an unrecorded postmark of Rehoboth, South Carolina, on a letter to Williamsboro (Granville County). This South Carolina post office, eight miles north of the Savannah River (Georgia line), was opened in December 1837 and operated until sometime during the Civil War. (*South Carolina Postal History and Illustrated Catalog of Postmarks, 1760-1860* by Harvey S. Teal and Robert J. Stets)

Our new mystery cover shows the office name of "Spoon-er's Creek Harbor, N.C." Where was this marking struck and what was the status of the post office at the time?

Send your answer to Tony Crumbley or Dick Winter.



A Cover from Centreville, N.C. to General Matt Ransom

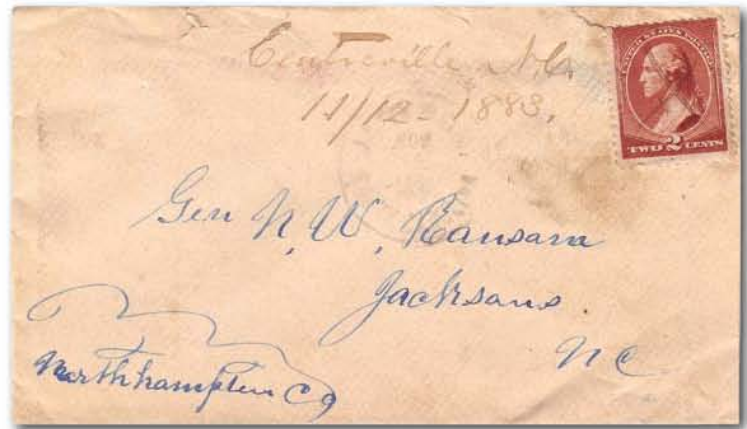
by Scott Troutman



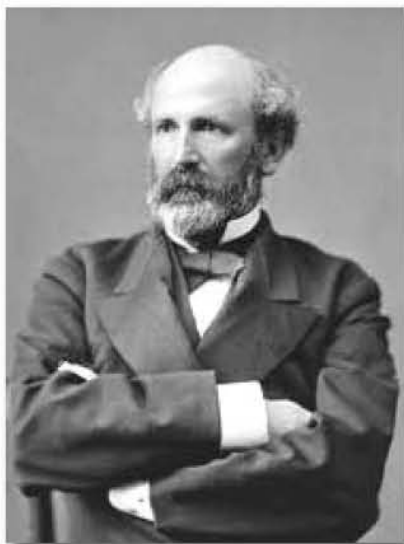
The joy of a cheap cover box is that you never know when you will find something interesting. I found the cover illustrated in Figure 1 at a Pennsylvania show in the summer of 2012 and didn't realize what I had until I did a little research on it. Hey, buck or two, take a chance.

This cover has a manuscript postmark from Centreville, North Carolina dated November 12, 1883, and is addressed to what looks to be "Gen N.W. Ransom, Jacksons, N.C." The address also noted that Jackson was in Northampton County. This cover comes from as close to in the middle of nowhere as any cover could. Centreville, in Franklin County, was opened only a very short while from January 28, 1874, until October 19 that same year. After that the mail was handled at Henderson. The post office reopened under the same name on January 26, 1883. Sometime later, the name was changed in the postmarks used there to "Centerville," seen as early as March 1895. This name change occurred about the same time in other post offices that altered "Centre..." to "Center..." Under the new name it operated until July 15, 1916, and then for a few years from July 21, 1923, until December 15, 1931. After both these later closings, Gupton handled the mail.

This cover, mailed at the reopened post office in November 1883, shows that government postmarking devices were not yet in use there. It was a tiny place then. The same is still true today. A Wikipedia entry indicates only 89 people lived in the 0.3 squares miles of Centreville in the 2010 census, and that today the mail is serviced at Louisburg. The downtown is an intersection of highway 561 and highway 58, and the town consists of nothing more



▲ **Figure 1.** Centreville (Franklin County), November 12, 1883, cover to General Matt Ransom at Jackson (Northampton County). A manuscript postmark was used when this office reopened on January 26, 1883.



▲ **Figure 2.** Confederate General Matt W. Ransom from Jackson (Northampton County) and U.S. Senator after the war.

the name on the envelope looks like "N.W. Ransom," the letter was sent to former Civil War General Matt Whitaker Ransom at his estate called "Verona" in Jackson. Given the address we can assume that Jackson was not much bigger than Centreville and everybody knew General Ransom.

Matt Ransom, born October 8, 1826, was the son of Robert Ransom and Priscilla Whitaker, and grew up in Warren County, North Carolina. General Ransom is pictured in Figure 2. His younger brother was Robert Ransom, another Civil War general. Matt was bright and graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1847 at the age of 21. He served as North Carolina Attorney General and as a member of the General Assembly before the Civil War broke out, and was chosen one of three commissioners from North Carolina to the Confederate Government Convention in 1861.

When North Carolina seceded and war began, Ransom was commissioned as a lieutenant colonel for the 1st North Carolina Infantry and later was Colonel of the 35th North Carolina Infantry. This regiment was part of his brother Robert's brigade, which Matt later commanded. Matt Ransom was promoted to Brigadier General June 13, 1863. He saw a lot

of action – the Battle of Seven Pines, Seven Days Battles, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Plymouth, Weldon, Suffolk, and the siege of Petersburg. He was wounded three times and finally surrendered at Appomattox.

Apparently, he saw something he liked during his time at Weldon, and moved there in 1866, becoming a planter and lawyer. In 1872, he was elected as a Democrat to the United States Senate to fill the vacancy in the term commencing March 4, 1871. He was re-elected in 1876, 1883, and 1889. Matt Ransom served briefly as President pro tempore of the Senate during the 53rd Congress. He later was appointed United States Minister to Mexico and served from 1895-1897. Following his term as ambassador, he retired to Weldon and ran his farm. He died near Garysburg (Northampton County) on his birthday, October 8, 1904. He is buried on his estate at Jackson.

[Editor's note: On the Figure 1 cover, just below the manuscript postmark, is a very faint circular datestamp in black ink. This is an unusual postmark, used at Jackson as a receiving datestamp. It is not a government-issued postmark, but one purchased by the postmaster from an unknown company. The 28 mm postmark reads JACKSON/NOV/13/1883/NORTH CAROLINA. It is quite uncommon to

see a North Carolina postmark with the full state name spelled out. From the North Carolina Postal History Society postmark records, we have another example (Figure 3) of this marking used on a May 7, 1883 cover from Murfreesboro

(Hertford County) to Jackson, again as a receiving datestamp. This time the postmark is sufficiently clear to see its design. The impression of the postmark on the cover to General Ransom is not clear enough to determine if the circle star killer is also a part of the marking, which might reveal that the marking device was a duplex cancel.]



▲ **Figure 3.** A similar example of the unusual Jackson post office circular datestamp used in 1883. The state name is spelled out fully at the bottom of the postmark.

Mill Grove to Brackenheim, Württemberg

by Richard F. Winter



Figure 1 illustrates the northern part of Mecklenburg County, where an 1848 letter was written to the Germany States. This map extract is from an 1839 post road map of North and South Carolina drawn by David H. Burr for the Post Office Department. Letters from rural North Carolina going overseas are seldom seen. This folded letter, written in Mecklenburg County, consisted of two full pages written in the old German script. It was dated 18 February 1848 and was addressed to Botenheim in care of the Oberamt Brackenheim near Heilbronn, Württemberg. Botenheim still exists as a small village today, about 14 km. southwest of Heilbronn. The letter was addressed to a small village that had no post office, and was served instead by a regional office or “Oberamt” of Brackenheim. The cover, front and reverse, is shown as Fig-

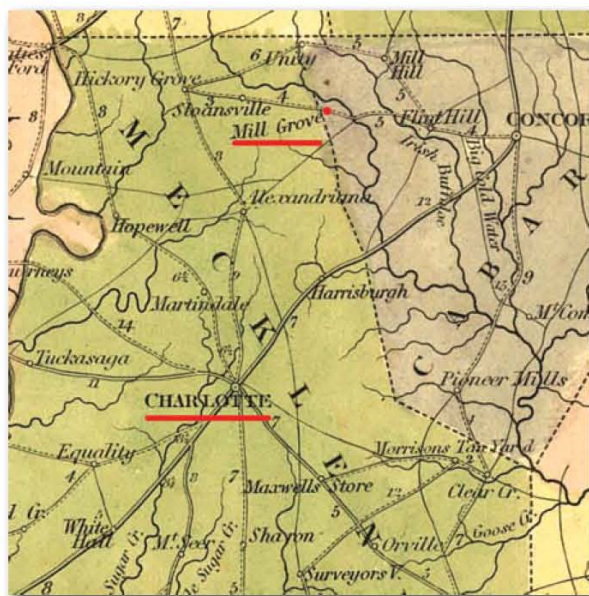


Figure 1. ►

Map of northern Mecklenburg County showing the location of Mill Grove, Cabarrus County, relative to Charlotte. This map extract is from the 1839 David H. Burr post road map of North and South Carolina.



▲ **Figure 2a and 2b.** 18 February 1848 letter from Mecklenburg County to Brackenheim, near Heilbronn, Württemberg, posted the next day, 19 February 1848, in Mill Grove, Cabarrus County, where it received a manuscript postmark, lower left. In the lower right it was indicated that 10¢ postage had been paid to get the letter to New York.

ure 2a and 2b. The letter was posted in Mill Grove, Cabarrus County, the next day, 19 February 1848. As shown in Figure 1, Mill Grove was located just inside the county line with Mecklenburg, about 18 miles north northeast of Charlotte.

The letter was paid 10¢ for the inland fee to New York, a distance of over 300 miles. This amount paid all fees to get the letter to the British mail steamship departing from either New York or Boston. At the time, this was all that could be prepaid to put the letter on a British mail steamship. At New York the letter was placed in a closed mail bag on 10 March for the next day sailing of the British vessel from Boston. On 11 March the Cunard steamship *Britannia* departed Boston with the mail and arrived at Liverpool on 25 March 1848. The closed mail bag was sent unopened to London, arriving there on 26 March 1848, shown by an orange red circular datestamp on the reverse of the letter. London postal clerks placed the letter into another mail bag for Paris, France, in accordance with an 1843 postal convention between the two countries. As all transit fees from Boston to London and then to France had not been paid the London clerk marked the red orange boxed handstamp, COLONIES/&c ART. 13. handstamp, which indicated that this was an unpaid letter and the French were debited under Article 13 of the accompanying letter bill. This article indicated that the British were owed 3 shillings 4 pence per ounce of bulk letter weight for unpaid mail from overseas.

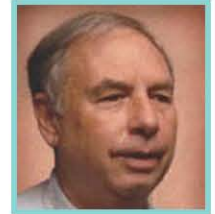
The letter arrived in Paris on 28 March 1848, shown by a black circular datestamp in the lower left corner, ANGL./ (date)/4 BOULOGNE-S-MER 4, indicating the letter entered the French mail system from England at the port of Boulogne-

s-Mer. Under an existing 1846 postal convention between France and the Thurn & Taxis Post, the letter was sent to Württemberg with the French entitled to 4 Francs 80 centimes per 30 grams of bulk letter weight. From this amount they paid the British for transit to France. The letter was marked with a red orange crayon in the center, "57/6" to show that 57 kreuzer was due to the French and 6 kreuzer to Württemberg, a letter requiring 1½ rates under the convention. This amount, which totaled 63 kreuzer, later was shown in red orange crayon as "1f3" (1 florin 3 kreuzer) on the left side. This postage due was modified to "1f6" in Württemberg, probably because of the letter weight. Also an additional 3 kreuzer was charged for local delivery to Botenheim. The total postage due was noted in red orange crayon in the upper right corner, "1f9." At destination, the postage due was again restated in black ink, lower right, as "Porto b. 1f9k."

Letters from rural North Carolina to Württemberg are not common, and the rating of these letters often is quite difficult to understand. I hope this short article will help explain what appears to be red orange scribbling all over the front of this letter. All the markings on this cover are postal markings received along the way as it traveled from the United States to its destination in Germany. Making things even more difficult is the fact that the letter writer addressed his letter in the old German script style of writing. Unless someone was educated in German before World War II, it is unlikely that even Germans can read this style of writing today, making it difficult to understand exactly where the letter was going. ■

North Carolina's Faces in the War of 1812

by Tony L. Crumbley



When we think of military conflict anniversaries in 2013, most of us think of the 150th anniversary of the War Between the States. Fifty years earlier, however, the United States and North Carolina were in the midst of another major conflict. On June 18, 1812, the House and the Senate of the United States passed a resolution declaring war with Great Britain and Ireland. This war was known by many as “The Second War of Independence.”

The war was not a surprise as it had been in the making for some time. Napoleon I of France was attempting to conquer Europe and had come in conflict with England’s massive sea power. The United States had wished to stay neutral to trade with all European countries. However, England did not see it that way. They felt they could seize American ships on the high seas in order to prevent supplies from going to their enemies. England captured U.S. ships and removed sailors from the vessels, placing them on their own vessels to fight against Napoleon. This action of “impressments” was the major reason the United States declared war.

During his term as President, Thomas Jefferson tried to keep all ships at home so they would not be seized. American merchants did not like this and refused to follow the embargo.

After James Madison became President, Congressman Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina was the chief

proponent of a bill in 1810 to boycott both French and British shipping but allow trade with any other countries and to allow their ships to pass freely in and out of our ports. This bill, called Macon’s Bill Number One, passed the House but did not pass the Senate. A new bill was drawn up, known as Macon Bill Number Two, which reopened all trade but gave the President the authority to prohibit trade with

either England or France. The bill passed; however, Macon did not vote for it, even with his name attached to it.

James Madison (Figure 1) served as the fourth President of the United States from March 2, 1809, until March 4, 1817. Before serving as President, he was known as the “Father of the Constitution.” Also he was the author of the U.S. Bill of Rights. Madison worked closely with George Washington to organize the new federal government. As Jefferson’s Secretary of State, Madison supervised the Louisiana Purchase which



▲ **Figure 1.** James Madison, 4th President of the United States, in office from March 4, 1804, until March 4, 1817. He grew up in Virginia, where he maintained a tobacco farm.



▲ **Figure 2.** Washington City, June 28, 1803, James Madison free frank as the nation’s 5th Secretary of State on a folded letter to Ebenezer Stevens in New York. (Author’s collection)

doubled the nation’s size. Figure 2 illustrates the free frank of James Madison in the upper right corner. This letter was sent from Washington, D.C. to New York City on June 28, 1803, while he served as the 5th U.S. Secretary of State.

Madison was born in Virginia where he spent most of his life. However, he had a North Carolina connection. Madison married Dolly Payne Todd (Figure 3) of Guilford County. Not only did she serve as First Lady from 1809 until 1817, she filled in as Thomas Jefferson’s First Lady on many occasions as he was a widower. Dolly Madison was born in New Garden on May 20, 1768. In 1790, Dolly married John Todd, a Quaker lawyer in Philadelphia. In 1793, a yellow fever epidemic broke out in Philadelphia. This epidemic took the life of both John Todd and their youngest son. Dolly Todd was a widow at the age of 25. She would meet James Madison in May, 1794 when

Figure 3. ▶

Dolly Payne Todd Madison, May 20, 1768 – July 12, 1849, wife of President James Madison, born in New Garden (Guilford County).



James asked Aaron Burr, a mutual friend, to introduce them. Figure 4 is a free frank of Dolly Madison. She was entitled to use the mail without charge as a deceased President's wife from July 1836. The letter was posted in Orange Court House, Virginia on September 6, 1836, and sent to Boston, Massachusetts.

It seems rather interesting that the war bill passed with Nathaniel Macon's name attached to it; yet, he,



▲ **Figure 4.** Dolly Madison free frank on a letter from Orange CH, Virginia, September 6, 1836, to Gov. Edward Everett in Boston, Massachusetts. She was entitled to use the mail without charge as a deceased President's wife from July 1836. (Author's collection)

like other North Carolina representatives, refused to vote for it. Their concerns were that it did not keep American ships out of England.

Nathaniel Macon (Figure 5) was born at his father's plantation on Shocco Creek, later to be in Warren County, North Carolina, December 17, 1758. He studied at Princeton University, served in the Revolutionary War, and was elected to the Senate in 1781, 1782, and 1784. He was elected to the Continental Congress but refused to serve. He was elected to the Second through the Twelfth succeeding Congresses and served from March 4, 1791, until Dec. 13, 1815. He resigned the House of Representatives when he was elected to the Senate. He was twice offered the "Postmaster General position"

Polk, a veteran of the Revolutionary War, who turned down an appointment as Brigadier General; William Gaston of Newbern who served in the House of Representatives; Joseph Pearson of Salisbury, and

but refused. Macon would continue to serve in political offices till his death, including an unsuccessful attempt to become Vice President. He died on June 29, 1837, at Buck Spring near Macon in Warren County. Figure 6 is a free frank of Nathaniel Macon as a Senator. Macon County in Western North Carolina was named for Nathaniel Macon.

Clearly, everyone was not in favor of the war. The vote in Congress was 79 to 49 in favor in the House and 19 to 13 in favor in the Senate. Three North Carolina members voted against the issue. When North Carolina Governor William Hawkins (Figure 7) got the news of the vote, he assured Secretary of State James Monroe and President Madison that North Carolina would "zealously co-operate" with the federal government. The majority of the citizens in the state supported the war.

The North Carolina General Assembly approved the sentiments expressed in Washington. They were determined to maintain and defend the Union. Congress voted for a war tax on salt, stills, and slaves to be used for the support of the war effort. Authority was also given to issue bonds to sustain the military. The citizens of North Carolina responded promptly by paying these taxes. In the Presidential election of 1812, North Carolina again supported President Madison, and the legislature reelected Hawkins as governor. These were indications of North Carolina's strong support for the war.

A minority group of North Carolina citizens did not support the war and strongly opposed the war as needless and bound to end in defeat. Some of the leaders of the opposition were Colonel William

Figure 5. ▶

Nathaniel Macon, December 17, 1758 – June 29, 1837, born near Warrenton (Warren County). For 37 years he was the most prominent "nay-sayer" in Congress. It is said of him that no other ten members of Congress cast as many negative votes.





◀ **Figure 6.** Washington City, February 16, 1828, letter with Nathaniel Macon's free frank as a U.S. Senator sent to Bartlett Yancey, a graduate of the University of North Carolina, at Caswell C.H. (Caswell County). (Author's collection)

John Stanley of Newbern. Pearson deplored the taxes and debt caused by the war. He opposed the drafting of the militia as being unconstitutional. William Gaston criticized the lack of efficiency. The army, he said, was "hastily collected, badly equipped and under the guidance of weak command." He was also opposed to the conscription of soldiers.

Because of their opposition to the war and the majority of North Carolinians being in favor, most of these men fell out of grace with the citizens of the state. Only William Gaston remained in public life. After the war, he did not participate in party politics; however, he became a judge in the State Supreme Court, where he served the State faithfully.

When the war began, the United States had only 6,683 regular soldiers. Most states had militia but their function was to protect the home front. By the end of the war, the regular forces had grown to 38,186.

After a major defeat of U.S. forces on the Canadian front, Governor Hawkins issued an appeal for volunteers. Colonel William Hamilton was placed in charge of recruitment in North Carolina. He considered the war a "Golden Opportunity." He promised to equip volunteers in "Rifle Dress and give you your favorite weapon." The pay ranged from \$8.00 to \$12.00 a month plus \$124 bounty for enlisting and 160 acres of free land when the war was over. It is estimated that 1,200 North Carolina men volunteered for the regular army.

Most of the North Carolina men were in the Tenth Regiment under Colonel James Wellborn of Wilkes County, who resigned his commission as a general in the North Carolina militia in

order to join the regulars. A few other North Carolina soldiers served in the Twelfth, Thirteenth, and Forty-Third infantry regiments. In the winter of 1813-1814, Colonel Wellborn moved his regiment northward towards the northern frontier. On their march north, they received raving reviews for their apparent war-readiness.

In addition to regular troops, the U.S. government called for 100,000 detached militia of which 7,000 were to come from North Carolina.



Figure 7. ▶ William Hawkins, October 20, 1777 – May 17, 1819, seventeenth governor of North Carolina, serving from 1811 to 1814. He was born in Pleasant Hill (Vance County) and raised a volunteer militia of 7,000 men for War of 1812.

These were to be either volunteers from existing militia or draftees, if needed. The entire detached militia of North Carolina consisted of two brigades composed of four regiments each: A regiment of cavalry, five companies of artillery, and six companies of riflemen. The commanding general was Major General Thomas



◀ **Figure 8.** Calvin Jones, April 2, 1775 – September 20, 1846, born in Sheffield, Massachusetts, and moved to Smithfield, (Johnston County) in 1795, where he practiced as a physician for eight years. In 1803, Jones moved to Raleigh. He served as Adjutant General of the state militia for five years during the War of 1812.

Brown. In 1814, a second levy was called for, but it never was assembled.

There was no formal uniform for the militia to wear. Governor Hawkins proposed one similar to what George Washington wore during the Revolutionary War. When Calvin Jones (Figure 8) of the Raleigh area attempted to raise a volunteer cavalry unit, he designed the uniform they were to wear. He described it as such:

The uniforms will be round jackets (double breasted) and pantaloons of cotton homespun, dark blue and white, mixed,

Figure 9. ▶

October 12, 1792, handstamp free frank of Calvin Jones, Postmaster of Smithfield, the earliest recorded North Carolina free frank handstamp. Smithfield opened June 18, 1792. Letter sent to Capt. Nehemiah Jones, Westmoreland, New York via the Utica post office. (Author's collection)



round black hats, with blue cockades, suwarrow boots and spurs. Each will be armed with a broad-sword or sabre, or, for want thereof, a cut-and-thrust sword, slung over the shoulder by a white belt three inches wide, and a pair of pistols. As many as have rifles and are expert in their use, will be armed with them. The others will be furnished with muskets by the public.

Calvin Jones was a prominent North Carolinian, cofounder of the *Raleigh Star* in 1808 and a leading proponent of the war. The land he owned in Wake County was purchased by the Baptists for Wake Forest College. Calvin Jones had been the postmaster of Smithville before moving to Wake County. Figure 9 is an example of the rare Jones free frank handstamp as postmaster.

On August 23, 1814, the British marched into Washington, D.C. The government led by President Madison and his cabinet fled to the Northeast in a 16 mile escape. North Carolina's Dolly Madison acted heroically when the Capitol City was burned by the British. She rescued from the fire some of the most valuable furnishings, including the famous portrait of George Washington by Gilbert Stuart. A tornado that night helped extinguish the fires. To this day, postal historians feel the impact of this burning as most of the postal records were damaged.

The nation felt the shame and disgrace of having the Capitol City burned and felt that not enough had been done to protect

order to "compel the enemy to respect our rights." After the burning of the Capitol, fears escalated that the British would burn Norfolk. Calvin Jones, afraid he would see no action in North Carolina, asked Governor James Barbour of Virginia if he could raise a cavalry corps and bring them to Virginia. Governor Barbour informed him unmounted riflemen were desired and that he was welcome to bring them; however, they never were raised.

Following the burning of Washington City, Governor Hawkins ordered seven militia companies to Newbern and eight to Wilmington. He also ordered the militia of fifteen counties to march immediately to Norfolk. Governor Hawkins asked for another draft of militia to rendezvous at Gates County Courthouse.

On Oct. 1, 1814, Calvin Jones reported to Governor Hawkins that 1,200 men had arrived. They were sheltered under piazzas and in houses within the town. Some of the men would be on their way to Norfolk the next morning; however, they were delayed until October 10th. One of the soldiers was James Iredell, Jr., a young lawyer from Bertie County. When the troops arrived in Norfolk, they were encamped at Moorings Rope Walk. They were warmly received by the



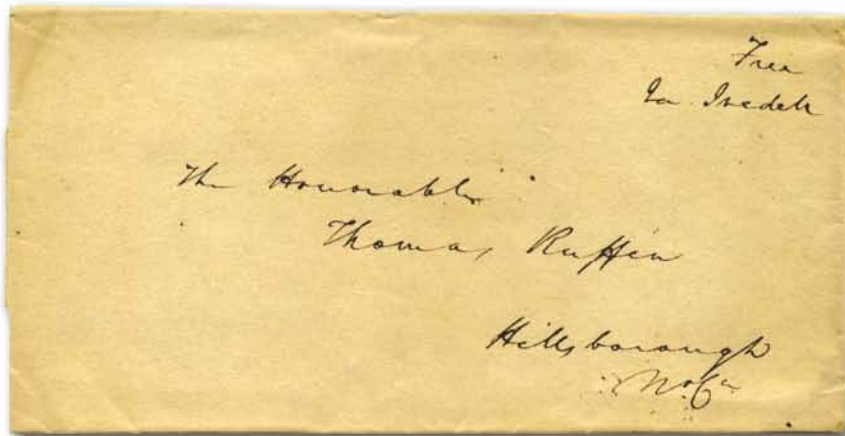
◀ **Figure 10.** Charlotte, March 30, 1817, folded letter from E. J. Osborn to Brigadier General James Iredell, Edenton, due 18½¢ at Edenton. (Author's collection)

citizens of Norfolk. Iredell wrote his sister that he and two other officers had a little hut that was large enough for two beds and a cot. They had hired a cook and were doing well.

Iredell was to become a general in the North Carolina militia and later a U.S. Senator. He served as a captain during the war and was appointed Brigadier General in the militia in 1815. Figure 10 illustrates an 1817 letter addressed to Brigadier General James Iredell of the North Carolina

the city. Colonel William Polk, who earlier had refused a commission, offered to do whatever was needed of him in

militia. He served as Speaker of the House from 1817 until 1827, when he was elected governor. He served only a few months before being elected U.S. Senator to replace Nathaniel Macon. Figure 11 is an Iredell free frank as senator.



▲ **Figure 11.** Free frank of James Iredell on a letter to Thomas Ruffin, an attorney in Hillsboro and long time political ally. Before replacing Nathaniel Macon as U.S. Senator, Iredell had been a Brigadier General of NC militia. (Author's collection)

With winter approaching, the troops were ill-prepared for the cold weather. A large portion of them contracted illnesses which they brought home and spread to others across the state. On February 15th, the regiment was discharged and another regiment was to be sent as replacements. Before this could be done, the war would end.

Without a doubt, America's greatest successes during the war were at sea. Besides the U.S. Navy there were privateers, which were private ships carrying official documents from the government authorizing them to act as if they were war ships in the time of war. During the 1812 war, 526 American privateers captured or destroyed 1,334 British merchantmen.

North Carolina's most famous privateer was Otway Burns (Figure 12) of Beaufort. Captain Burns purchased a ship in New York for \$8,000 and sailed to Newbern to recruit men. When he arrived in Newbern, he found many there were not in favor of his actions. Francis Xavier Martin, postmaster of Newbern from 1789 to 1800 and a respected jurist called Burns a "licensed robber," where upon Burns



Figure 12. ▶ Otway Burns, c. 1775 – 25 August, 1850, born at Queen's Creek near Swansboro (Onslow County). Otway was an American privateer in War of 1812 and later a North Carolina State Senator.



▲ **Figure 13.** March 22, 1790, letter from Francois Xavier Martin, postmaster in Newbern, to Philadelphia showing his free frank. Martin was born in France, moved to Martinique in the Caribbean, then to Newbern where he would study law. (Author's collection)

threw him in the Neuse River. Martin later became the first Attorney General for the state of Louisiana. Figure 13 shows the free frank of Francis Xavier Martin as postmaster in Newbern, March 22, 1790, on a letter to Philadelphia.

What crew Burns could not fill in Newbern, he recruited in Norfolk. Burns cruised the Caribbean, and operated off Newfoundland, and Ocracoke. His ship, the *Snap Dragon*, captured several millions of dollars worth of prizes including the value of the ships. On one short cruise of only two and ½ months, he captured \$2.5 million in prizes. The British finally captured Burns' ship while he was home ill. The mountain town of Burnsville is named after Otway Burns. An 1851 cover from Burnsville is illustrated in Figure 14.

One of the most famous U.S. Navy officers was Johnston Blakely (Figure 15), who attended the University of North Carolina in 1797. He joined the U.S. Navy in 1800. In 1811, he was given the command

Figure 14. ▶

Burnsville, May 22, 1851 folded letter to William Williams, Esq., Asheville (Buncombe County). Letter paid 5¢ for a distance of less than 300 miles. In 1834, Burnsville was founded in Yancey County and name in honor of Otway Burns. (Author's collection)



of the *Enterprise* and in 1814, he was promoted to the *Wasp*. On May 1, 1814, Blakely sailed from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, with orders to cross the Atlantic, doing as much damage as he could to the British shipping in the English Channel and along the western coast of Europe. On the way across the Atlantic, the *Wasp* took its first prize, followed by six more during her first two weeks off the coast of England.

The *Wasp* was a 22 gun sloop weighing 509 tons and carried 173 men. Captain Blakely had many successful victories while in Europe. The two most noted were his capture of the British warships *Reindeer* and *Arion*, which were acclaimed as important American triumphs.



Between August 30 and Sept. 23, 1814, the *Wasp* captured and burned the *Lettice*, the *Mary*, and the *Three Brothers*; scuttled the *Bon Accord* and destroyed the *Bacchus*. The last ship she captured was the *Atalanta*. This was such a fine ship, Capt. Blakely

▲ **Figure 15.** Johnston Blakely, October 1781 – October 1814, U.S. Naval officer during War of 1812 and a graduate of the University of North Carolina in 1797. He was captain of the naval vessels *Enterprise* and the *Wasp*, the latter, her gallant crew and captain were lost at sea without a trace in October 1814.

put some of his men on board to sail it back to the United States. The captured *Atalanta* arrived in Savannah, Georgia, with news and letters from the *Wasp*. That was the last heard from the gallant ship *Wasp* and her captain. To date, only rumors remain as to what brought about her demise.

Before the war had begun, the United States had been having trouble with frontier Indians. After the loss of the

Battle of Detroit, Tecumseh, a northern Indian chief, began trying to get the southern Creek Indians to join forces against the U.S. troops. The British offered their support to the Indians.

In December 1813, the commanding general of the U.S. Army requested North Carolina and South Carolina to supply troops. Governor Hawkins called for eight companies of infantry, one company of cavalry and one company of artillery from the detached militia. They were to meet in Salisbury on February 1, 1814, march to Fort Hawkins in Georgia, and then to the Indian campaign in Alabama. In spite of the lack of supplies and cold weather, they arrived at Fort Hawkins at the end of March.

Before the soldiers could join General Andrew Jackson, the commander in charge, the Battle of Horseshoe Bend took place. A number of North Carolina volunteers and 500 Cherokee Indians were with Jackson, when he succeeded in breaking the power of the Creek Indians forever. By swimming the river the Cherokee Indians surprised the Creek Indians from the rear. They stole all the Creek canoes and engaged in hand to hand combat, contributing greatly to Jackson's victory. Eighteen Cherokees were killed and 36 wounded. Later after Jackson became President and ordered the Cherokees to relocate to Oklahoma along the Trail of Tears, Cherokee Chief Junaluska said, "If I had known that Jackson would drive us from our homes, I would have killed him that day at Horseshoe."

A letter from Andrew Jackson as President to P.A. Parker, Postmaster of Buffalo, New York, is shown in Figure 16. It was posted in Washington City on December 19, 1831. The manuscript free frank of President Jackson is written across the top.

The North Carolina troops continued on to Alabama to help finish the Indian problems. They built and garrisoned four forts along the Alabama River. By June, all was calm and the North Carolina troops headed home June 25, 1814.

By 1814, the U.S. Government was on the brink of dissolution. Financially, the public credit was gone. There was no money to pay soldiers or any other bills. To help generate



◀ **Figure 16.** Letter from Andrew Jackson as President to P.A. Parker, Postmaster of Buffalo, New York, posted in Washington City on December 19, 1831. Free frank of President Jackson in manuscript across the top. (Author's collection)

additional revenue, the Act of December 23, 1814, to take effect February 1, 1815, raised existing postage rates by 50%. The new rates were as follows:

Not over 40 miles	12 cents
40 to 90 miles	15 cents
90 to 150 miles	18¾ cents
150 to 300 miles	25½ cents
300 to 500 miles	30 cents
over 500 miles	37½ cents

This rate increase did not affect the added ship fee of 2 cents – just the inland portion of the rate.

Figure 17 is an example of this war rate. This unpaid letter, posted from Wilmington and going to near Averagesborough, was a double-weight letter traveling a distance of between 90-150 miles, thus was rated $2 \times 18\frac{3}{4}\text{¢} = 37\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$ postage due. North Carolina war rate letters are extremely rare. The rates were changed back to the earlier rates on March 31, 1816; thus, it was only in effect for fourteen months.

Since the beginning of the war, negotiations had been going on to sign a treaty of peace. This treaty was signed in Ghent, Belgium, on December 24, 1814. The signing news reached New York on February 11, 1815. Most in the country rejoiced. Although not many Tar Heels were engaged in military combat, records indicate eighteen were killed.

The war was over but much debt remained. North Carolina spent \$30,930 of its own funds to support the war efforts, and



▲ **Figure 17.** Wilmington, Type 4 circular datestamp used from 1815 to 1819, on unpaid August 16, 1815, letter to Mr. Alex Williams near Averagesborough (Cumberland County). This double-weight letter went between 90-150 miles and was rated $2 \times 18\frac{3}{4}\text{¢} = 37\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$ postage due. The rate existed from February 1, 1815, until March 31, 1816. North Carolina war- rate letters are extremely rare. (Author's collection)

expected to be repaid; however, it was not until 1916, one hundred years later, that the federal government finally refunded this money. ■

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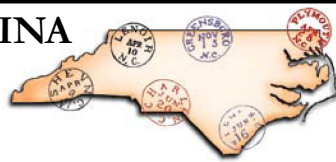
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