

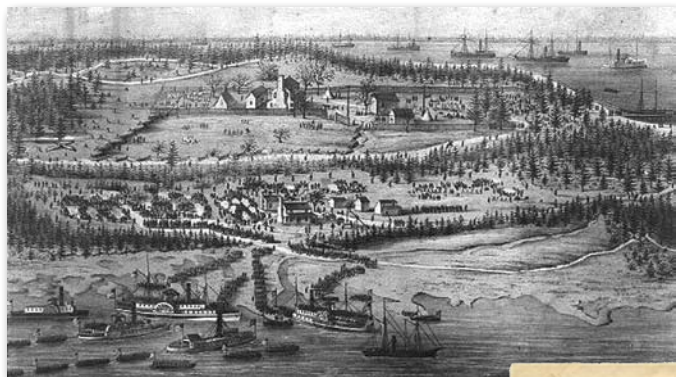
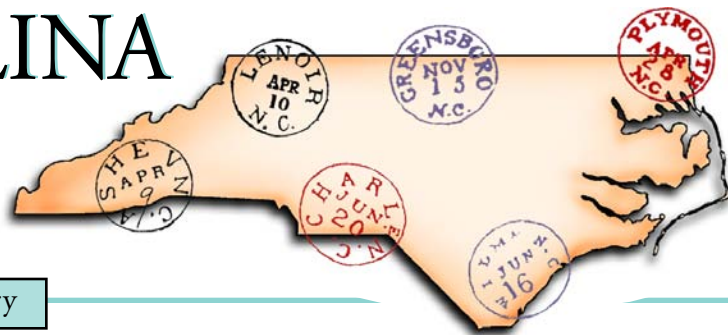
NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

The Journal of North Carolina Postal History

VOLUME 33, NO. 2

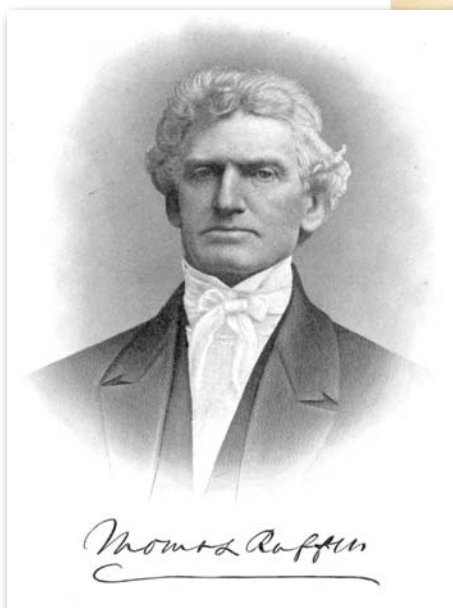
SPRING 2014

WHOLE 126



Military Mail From
Roanoke Island

Bertie County
Historical Find



North Carolina Confederate
Covers to Thomas Ruffin



Wilmington Not
Williamston

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is not too early to plan to attend the annual meeting of the North Carolina Postal History Society, which will be held in conjunction with CHARPEX 2014, July 26 and 27. This year CHARPEX will be at the same location as last year, the Worrell Building (formerly Taylor Hall), on the campus of Central Piedmont Community College, 1228 Elizabeth Avenue, Charlotte. It is conveniently located just off I-277 and Route 74. Site location details will be available on the CHARPEX web site, www.charpex.info. The show plans to have 17-20 dealers, 50-60 frames of exhibits, a silent auction, and several collector presentations. More details about the NCPHS activities will be in the next journal. I hope you will be able to attend.

Our Secretary/Treasurer, Bill Di Paolo, has moved to Florida. His new mailing and email addresses are shown below in the Masthead section.

We have made a new addition to our web site. Under the Projects page, a new project is now listed called "North Carolina Postmarks during the Stampless Period." Since the last *American Stampless Cover Catalog (ASCC)*, Volume 1, was published 17 years ago and has not been updated, we wanted to bring to our readers updated information on stampless cover markings for North Carolina. The format is similar to the *ASCC*, but we have updated the pricing and illustrated all of the handstamp postmarks instead of just a selected few. This is possible because of the work on the *North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update* and our previous catalog. The new project is in a PDF format and can be downloaded if desired. If any readers have stampless cover postmark information not shown in this listing, please contact the NCPHS editors.

The status box of the *North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update* (back page) will show more changes. The updated postmarks of 67 counties and four cities now have been documented. Additional changes to previously completed counties continue as time is available. Remember, if you want to know if a county

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has had changes made since you last viewed it, check the date in parenthesis after the name of the file posted. Also, the date of a revision appears in the lower left corner of the first page (map page) of each county. Counties that show only a month and year have not had additional updates. Currently, there are 3,773 pages on-line, with 14,663 markings that were not documented in the original catalog.

There are still a large number of our members, mostly long-time members, who have not paid their dues for 2014. We not only need their membership dues but the additional donations of our members to help us with the cost of printing our journal. Please remember to pay your dues now if you have not already done so. Dues for 2014 remain at \$15 for the year, which includes four issues of our journal, the *North Carolina Postal Historian*. Donations above the regular membership amount are deductible as we are a non-profit, educational organization.

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



NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

Library of Congress #ISSN 1054-9158.

The *North Carolina Postal Historian* is the official journal of the North Carolina Postal History Society. It is published quarterly in January, April, July and October.

Membership in the Society is \$15 per year. Applications for membership may be obtained from the Secretary/Treasurer. Submissions for the *Postal Historian* or inquiries may be addressed to the editors.

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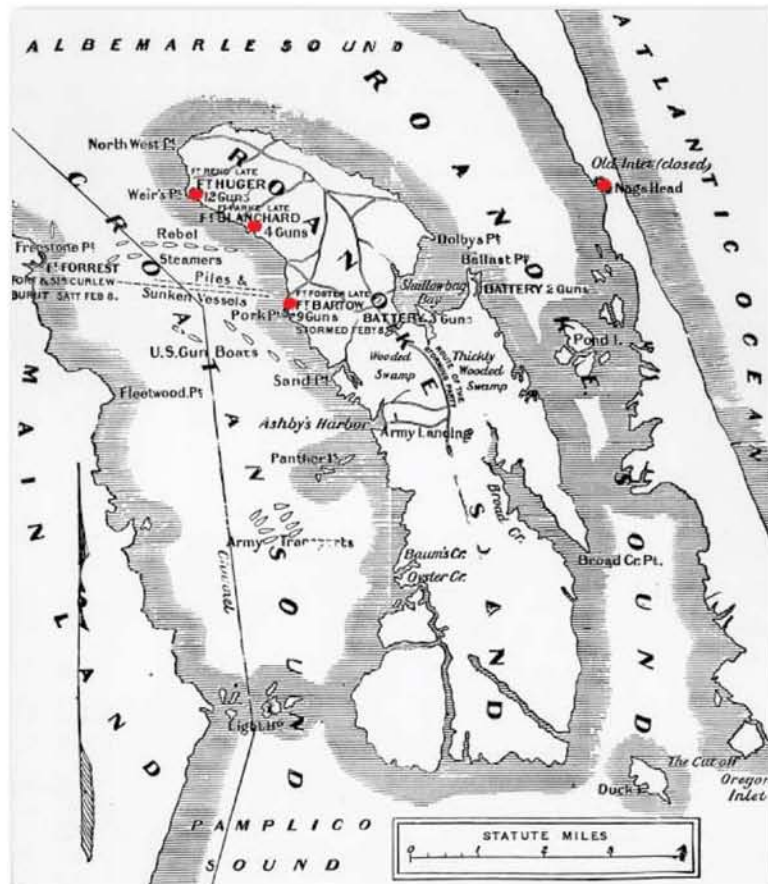
Military Mail from Roanoke Island, Revisited



by Stefan T. Jaronski

In the 1988 article for the NCPHS Newsletter (1) I pondered the question, “How was mail to/from the garrisons on Roanoke Island handled?” At the time, I speculated with some justification based on military records that mail after January 6, 1862, and until the island’s surrender on February 8, 1862, was handled at the Norfolk post office, but I had no proof. Regarding mail service before January 6, I suggested mail was processed by either Edenton and/or Elizabeth City but had no evidence. I am happy to report now that examples from the earlier period have now been identified. Elizabeth City seems to have been the processing office for at least some of the army mail from the Roanoke Island garrison.

To recap a bit: after the surrender of Forts Hatteras and Clark at the Hatteras Inlet of the Outer Banks on August 28, 1861, defense of the Albemarle Sound centered on Roanoke Island, which commanded access to the upper sound and also the Dismal Swamp Canal, leading to Norfolk. Several units were stationed on the island as early as late August (Table 1). Originally the troops were part of the District of the Pamlico (Department of North Carolina) with headquarters at Goldsborough. In November jurisdiction passed to the Department of Norfolk. Until the arrival of General Henry A Wise on January 6, headquarters of the troops was on the island. The Confederates on Roanoke were distributed among three forts (Huger, Blanford, and Bartow) and two separate batteries, all situated on the northern third of



▲ **Figure 1.** Contemporary map of Roanoke Island showing location of the Confederate Forts Huger, Blanford, Bartow, each situated on the northern third of the island, and the headquarters at Nag's Head (red dots).

Unit	Presence on Roanoke Island
3 rd Georgia	Late August 1861 – Dec. 12, 1861
8 th North Carolina	Sept. 21, 1861 – Feb. 8, 1862
17 th North Carolina (Co.'s E, I, L)	Late August 1861 – Feb. 8, 1862
31 st North Carolina	Dec. 12, 1861 – Feb. 8, 1862
Wise (Georgia) Legion, 1 st and 2 nd Regiments	Jan. 30, 1862 – Feb. 8, 1862
2 nd North Carolina Battalion	Feb. 8, 1862 –
46 th Virginia (Co.'s B, D, G, and K)	Feb. 7, 1862 –
59 th Virginia	Feb. 7, 1862 –

◀ **Table 1.** Confederate units stationed on Roanoke Island.

the island (Figure 1). When he arrived, Wise transferred his headquarters to a hotel at Nag's Head, which did not have a post office.

In 2013 I discovered a clue, the cover illustrated in Figure 2. This poor, ragged envelope is a soldier's due cover, postmarked at Elizabeth City, on October 10 [1861] and rated (due) 5 (cents), from Captain Ap. Rogers, 8th Inf(antry) N(orth)



◀ **Figure 2.** Soldier's due letter from the 8th North Carolina, "Roanoke Island," postmarked Elizabeth City, October 10 [1861]. The numeral "5" indicates postage due on the letter. Note sender's endorsement, beneath the postmark: "Roanoke Island."

C(arolina) S(tate) T(roops). The key notation is just below the sender's endorsement, beneath the postmark: "Roanoke Island." "Eureka!"

In subsequent research for this article, two more covers, in the collection of another NCPHS member, came to light to support my conjecture about this postal service. The first cover

[1862], after General Wise took command and after the island's troops were transferred to the Department of Norfolk. The second newly identified cover is a handstamped paid from Elizabeth City, dated October 16 [1861] and rated 5 cents (Figure 4). The ink notation in the envelope's upper right corner, "Paid 5" was often placed on prepaid soldiers' letter by the unit postal orderly to denote postage collected on the letter;

Figure 3. ▶

Newly identified soldier's due letter from Roanoke Island, this one from the 31st North Carolina, processed at the Elizabeth City post office on January 18 [1862]. The due postage is indicated by the "5" numeral. (Courtesy of Maurice Bursey)



is another soldier's due cover and is illustrated in Figure 3. This cover was rated (due) 5 (cents) and was from Sergeant D.C. McLean in Captain McKay's company of the 31st North Carolina Volunteers. The postmark here is dated January 18



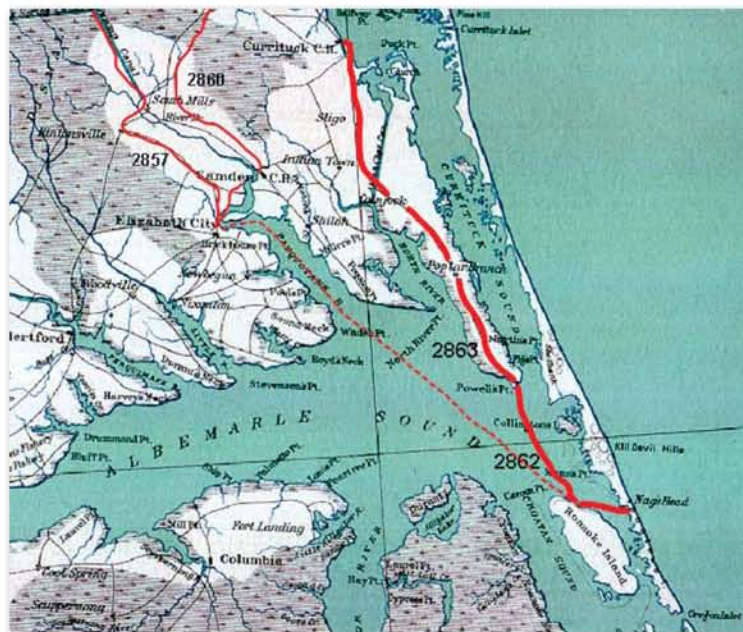
Figure 4. ▲

Second newly identified Roanoke Island handstamped paid cover posted at Elizabeth City on October 16 [1861]. This letter was probably sent by Lt. Amos Hines of the 8th North Carolina at Roanoke Island to a relative. The manuscript "Paid 5 cts" in the envelope's upper right is a typical accounting notation made by army mail clerks to denote postage payment received.

letters to be posted due were left unannotated. This clue led me to conduct some research on the addressee, Robert W. Hines, of Marlboro N.C. The rosters of the North Carolina troops on Roanoke included several persons surnamed Hines in the 8th and 17th North Carolina regiments (2, 3). One, 1st Lt. Amos J. Hines, Co. G, 8th North Carolina, was from Pitt County and a relative of the addressee, and thus was a probable sender of this cover. Yet one more Elizabeth City cover (not illustrated) has been uncovered in a private collection. This cover, dated October 28, is a handstamped Paid 5, addressed to a Lieutenant in an Alabama regiment at Manassas Junction, Virginia. The true origin of this cover is undetermined.

Although there was no official post office there, the prewar population of 452 (per the 1860 Census) on Roanoke Island was evidently served by Route 2862 (Powell's Point, Roanoke Island and Nagg's [sic] Head, Mondays, with return on Tuesdays) and Route 2863 (Powell's Point direct to Roanoke Island on Mondays and return on Tuesdays) (4). Mail from Powell's Point was sent to Currituck on Fridays (with return trip on Saturdays) where it was transferred to Route 2860 to Norfolk. The map in Figure 6 illustrates the path of

Figure 5. ▶ A view of Elizabeth City (in the distance) in a *Harper's Weekly* engraving of "Exchanging Prisoners at Elizabeth City, N.C., Landing Rebel Prisoners." (from *Harper's Weekly*, March 15, 1862.)



◀ **Figure 6.** Map of Albemarle Sound showing locations of Roanoke Island, Elizabeth City, the prewar postal routes 2857, 2860, 2862, and 2863 (solid red lines), and the probable route for carriage of army mail between the island and Elizabeth City (dotted red line) (from *Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Civil War*.)

these routes. The solid lines are the prewar routes, with the main, direct route thicker than the other subsidiary routes, while the dotted line is presumed the Confederate transport of letters to from Roanoke Island. I have not been able to ascertain whether these routes were continued by the Confederate Post Office. Comments in reminiscences of the 3rd Georgia indicate a lot of commerce between Elizabeth City and the troops on Roanoke (5). "The citizens of Elizabeth City sent us down, last night, a quantity of cooked provisions, and say they will send any thing we need, if we will let them know



▲ **Figure 7.** A view of the Confederate encampments on Roanoke Island, as the Federal Burnside Expedition lands on the island. (from Library of Congress.)

what it is.” Elizabeth City had direct connection to Norfolk via the Dismal Swamp Canal from 1805 and a stage road along the eastern bank of the canal beginning in 1818. Two postal routes connected the two cities. Route 2857 went from Edenton via Elizabeth City to Norfolk on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and back on the next days. Route 2860 ran from Elizabeth City to Norfolk via Camden and Great Bridge every Wednesday and back on Thursdays (Figure 5). The Elizabeth City post office was not a tiny one. In the year ending May 1861 The Elizabeth City postmaster’s compensation was \$424.90 with “balance due U.S.” of \$310.17, unlike Powell’s Point. Compare those figures with \$991.85 and \$1,234.95 for Newbern, or \$2,000 and \$5,943.18 for Norfolk. It makes some sense then that it would process the army mail, especially if there was a constant travel of boats between the island and the city.

Thus, it is conceivable that the army mail was regularly carried by company or regimental mail clerks via the regular boat traffic to and from the Elizabeth City post office. Collection of mail on a company then regimental level, with conveyance of that mail by one or more clerks assigned that additional duty, was common practice in the Confederate army. The clerks would also pick up mail at the post office for distribution to their fellow troops. So far, however, only three covers supporting that process have come to light, and no covers to those soldiers. There were as many as several thousand troops stationed on Roanoke Island. Why so few covers? Another question to be pursued. ■



▲ **Figure 8.** Camp of the 3rd Georgia regiment on Roanoke Island, showing the degree to which the unit made itself comfortable while there. (from *Illustrated London News*, March 29, 1862.)

References:

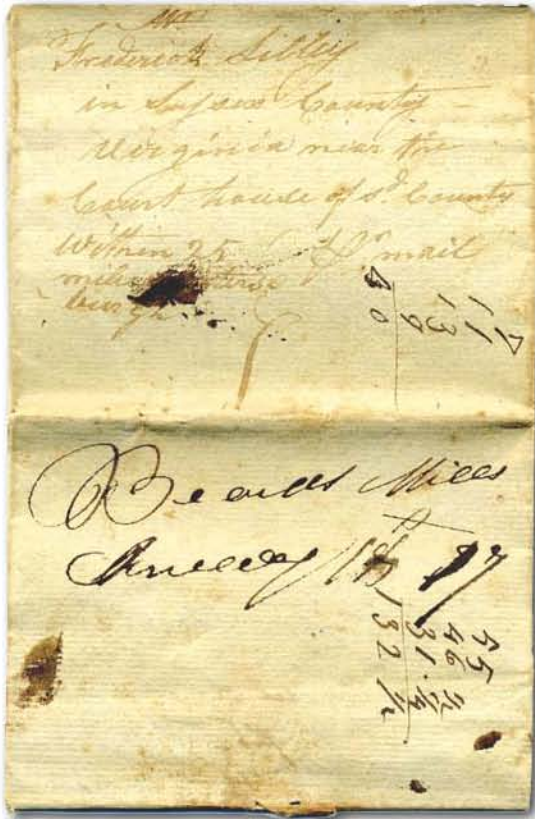
- (1) Jaronski, S.T. 1988. *NCPHS Newsletter*, Summer 1988, pp. 10-12.
- (2) Jordan, W.T. and Manarin, L.H. 2004. *North Carolina Troops 1861-1865 A Roster*. Vol. IV: Infantry 4th-8th Regiments North Carolina Troops 2004. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh NC.
- (3) Jordan, W/T. and Manarin, L.H. 2004. *North Carolina Troops 1861-1865 A Roster*. Vol. VI: Infantry 16th-18th and 20th-21st Regiments North Carolina Troops 2004. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh NC.
- (4) Bowen, E. 1855. *The United States Post Office Guide*. Appleton & Co., New York, reprinted by Arnos Press, New York, 1976.
- (5) Turner, W.W. 1864. “3rd Georgia Regiment, First Twelve Months.” (Compiled by Pearson, J.P. and M. A. Pearson, 2003.) Downloaded from www.3gvi.org/ga3hist3.html

Have You Checked Our New Web Site?

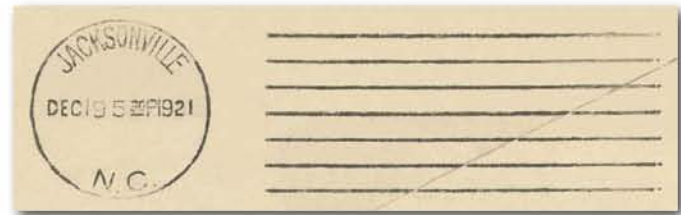
The North Carolina Postal History Society’s web site is located at
www.ncpostalhistory.com

Take a look and let us know how you feel about it.

New Markings



17 January 1815 - Folded letter from Beard's Mills (Rowan County) to "Mr./Frederick Sibley/in Sussex County/Virginia near the/Court House of S^d County/Within 25 p^r mail miles of Peters/burgh." Letter sent unpaid with 17 cents due at destination (150-300 miles rate). A few weeks later the rates were increased by 50 percent to raise money because of the War of 1812. This is the first postmark we have seen for this post office, which was in operation only about four years. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)



19 December 1921 - Times-Cummins machine cancel of Jacksonville (Onslow County), heretofore not recorded by the Machine Cancel Society. It is a Type G-121 Time-Cummins cancel that we have recorded used between 24 April 1912 and 19 December 1921. This cancel differs from the Type F-131 in that the year is on a single line within the circle that includes month, day, hour, meridian and year. The Type F cancel has the year in the killer on left side of the middle of the seven bars. (Courtesy of the North Carolina State Archives)

Correction

In the last issue (WINTER 2013-2014) there was an article by Charles F. Hall, Jr. titled, "The Postal History of Columbus County." In Figure 8 of the article, page 16, he showed a WWII patriotic cover from Whiteville dated October 8, 1845. He attributed the cachet maker of the cover to Ralph E. Davis of Wilmington.

We received an email from Jimmy Jordan, a life long resident of Wilmington and a collector of WWII patriotic covers. He told us that cachet maker Davis was a resident of Whiteville and not Wilmington. He also said that he did not recall ever seeing a Davis cachet cover with a Wilmington cancel. Jimmy sent along scans of a cover that Davis had created with a Whiteville cancellation on the cover and Davis' return address of Whiteville on the reverse.

The references used in the Hall article cited the original 1999 version of *United States Patriotic Covers of World War II* by Lawrence Sherman, M.D., where on page 12 he stated that cachet maker Ralph E. Davis was from Wilmington, NC. But on page 326 of the same book in a listing of cachet publishers, Sherman stated Davis was from Whiteville, NC. Apparently the text statement was in error and the listing was correct. Based on Jimmy Jordan's email, we now know that the correct location for Ralph E. Davis was Whiteville in Columbus County.

A Bertie County Historical Find

by Tony L. Crumbley



For more years than I would like to say, Jerry Roughton has been sending me tidbits of postal history that he finds while doing research on North Carolina script. Most of it goes into the “Jerry file” for future use, which has turned up such things as North Carolina’s first black postmaster or little known postmaster appointments. Recently, Jerry sent me a copy of an article that he discovered on the web from an 1897 Rich Square (Northampton County) newspaper. This newspaper, titled *The Patron and Gleaner*, was a weekly newspaper of Lasker (Northampton County), published in Rich Square from 1896 to 1899.

The article, a letter to the newspaper editor, was in the paper published on September 2, 1897. It was an interesting article about the 1830 post offices in Bertie County. Obviously, in a previous newspaper, the editor had run a list of post offices in Bertie County from an 1830 postal guide. Perhaps the editor needed something to fill space in that paper. In a follow-up letter to the editor, a reader, Francis D. Winston, wrote in more detail about the six post offices that existed then. I found the content of Mr. Winston’s letter to the editor an interesting bit of North Carolina postal history and thought it would make a suitable article for our journal with the addition of a few cover illustrations from the post offices mentioned. What follows is a transcript of Mr. Winston’s 1897 letter that was published in *The Patron and Gleaner* and a sampling of covers related to the post offices in the article. ■

WINDSOR, N C.
Aug. 30, 1897

MR. EDITOR. In your issue of the 19th inst. you give an entertaining column taken from Mr. James S. Grant’s “Postal Guide 1830.” At that date Bertie county had six postoffices. There are now in this county 23 offices. The names of the offices and officers as published by you will be the basis of this article.

Mr. Josiah Holley, the postmaster at Colerain, was a man of large wealth -probably the largest land owner in the State. He was a very handsome man. He died in 1845, childless, leaving his vast estate to his nephews and relatives, the forefather of the Etheridges and Holleys. Col. S. B. Spruill told me that Mr. Josiah Holley was more than a millionaire, and that he was the wealthiest man in America. However that may be, he was a rich man. Colerain is still a postoffice - the incumbent a colored man. It takes its name from the Colerain Islands. Mr. E. E. Etheridge, of Colerain, could write you an entertaining column about that vicinity. It was in his hospitable home that I saw a picture of Josiah Holley. Mr Etheridge also showed me the original plat of the town of Colerain.

The postoffice at Merry Hill was discontinued long after 1830. In recent years it was re-established under the name of Walke, but in deference to the wishes o[f] the patrons of the office the old name has been restored. The present locality called Merry Hill is more than a mile from the Merry Hill of 1830. This hill got its name from the hospitality of John Webb who lived there. His comfortable home was the scene of many a merry gathering. The postmaster in 1830 was John Webb, a man of excellent repute and of the strongest horse sense. He was the father of Mr. L. S. Webb of whom I speak in connection with the Windsor office. Mr. John Webb was something of a physician without a diploma and without scientific reading. So successful was he that one of the largest slave owners in his community employed him to look after the health of his slaves. It will not add anything to Mr. Webb’s reputation as a doctor to know that he cured a bad case of dyspepsia by putting his patient on a fat meat diet! Mr Webb had a large number of sons, one of whom was the father of Mrs. Dr Wingate of Wake Forest College. Mount Gould is still a post office in the county. Mr. George W Womble, who married Miss Holley, is the postmast[er]. Many years ago a man named Gould owned the farm and owing to the fact that it is the highest point on the bank of the Chowan River it was honored with the name “Mount.” Steph[e]n Thatch, the postmaster in 1830, kept store at Mount Gould. He was a native of Hertford county and from Murfreesboro. He had a son, Stephen Thatch, who was captured and died in a Federal prison. Mr. Burrell Russell, a merchant in Windsor up to 1868 was his uncle.

Turners X Roads of 1830 is the Lewiston of to-day. The postmaster then was Robert C. Watson. Mr. Watson was a very handsome man, of great intellect and of fine business capacity. Mr. Watson’s sisters married prominent men in this county - Mr. Jonathan S. Tayloe, Mr. L. S. Webb, Rev. Wm. Hill Jordan and Mr. Wilder Bird, the father of Mrs. P. H. Winston. Mr. Watson represented this county in the Legislature. He was a staunch Democrat. On one occasion

Figure 1. ▲

First page of a transcript of Francis D. Winston’s 1897 letter to the editor of *The Patron and Gleaner* weekly newspaper of Lasker (Northampton County) published on September 2, 1897. The second page of the transcript appears on page 10.



◀ **Figure 2.** April 24, 1861, Coleraine to Edenton (Chowan County), sent free by postmaster John W. Sessoms, who wrote the manuscript, upper right. Coleraine operated from 1801 to date. Postmaster Sessoms was appointed July 2, 1860, and served until the Civil War ended. This postmark was used through the war.

Figure 3. ▶
April 13, ca. 1826, Turner's Cross Roads to North Granby, Hartford County, Connecticut, paid 25¢ for postage to North Granby. Turner's Cross Roads opened May 4, 1816, and operated until April 1, 1840, when its name was changed to Hotel.



◀ **Figure 4.** April 9, 1852, Hotel to Lake Phelps (Washington County), where William Pettigrew owned and operated two plantations. There was no post office of Lake Phelps. Letter paid 3¢ postage with Scott #10. Hotel operated from 1840 until 1872, when the name was changed to Lewiston, later to be called Lewiston Woodville.

the vote was close and Mr. Lewis Thompson stated th[at] he would send for Jere Sumpson who would vote the Whig ticket. Mr. Simpson was of Caucasian blood, but very dark. Mr. Watson threatened to retaliate by voting Dick, his carriage driver, who though a negro, was of whiter skin than Simpson. An amusing incident connected with the mail at Turners X Roads was related to me by my mother. Mr. Lewis Thompson and other gentlemen who lived a mile away jokingly told the mail carrier that they would pay more for letters than they paid at the cross roads. The carrier possessed qualities more suited to the Treasury than the Postoffice Department. On his next trip he drove through the cross roads and was going at full speed to the land of higher postage when the joke was explained to him. Shortly after 1830 the postoffice was moved from Turner's X Roads to what is now called Woodville and it was given the designation of "Hotel." You will see that name on the old maps. Mrs. Wilder Bird kept hotel there for her brother, Mr. Watson. It was the favorite boarding place of a large number of young people who attended the schools there - schools that were famed in those days.

In the course of time Hotel was changed to Woodville and Mr. James P. Johnson, a highly intelligent merchant was postmaster. After the war Mr. Watson Lewis succeeded in carrying the office back to the cross roads and the place was incorporated under the name of Lewiston. Mr. Lorenzo Stevenson Webb, post master at Windsor in 1830, was born at Merry Hill. In early life he was the clerk in a store in Edenton which was at one time occupied [by] Joseph Hewes, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Mr. Webb married Miss Edward Watson and located in Windsor. He was a prosperous merchant. He held the postoffice and was for many years Clerk and Master in Equity. He was the Cashier of the branch of the State bank located here - a bank that did the business for all of this eastern country. Mr. Webb was of the purest life, of the highest integrity. His [d]evotion to Windsor and all its traditions was touching. He lived to be 86 years old.

Mr. John E. Tyler kindly furnishes me th[e] following interesting account of the Britton's Store postoffice: "R. H. Barnes, who was postmaster at Britton's Store in 1830, was a man of good standing in his community. He kept a tavern [n]ear the spot where the Masonic Hall now stands at Roxobel. G. Hampton Barnes, the Roxobel poet, is his grandson.

Col. William Britton came to Bertie county from Petersburg, Va. I do not know the date of his coming. He was the owner of considerable property and a very successful merchant and farmer. Probably the first steam engine ever brought to the county belonged to him. The building in which it s[t]ood was burned to the ground in 1838. The burning was supposed to be the work of an incendiary.

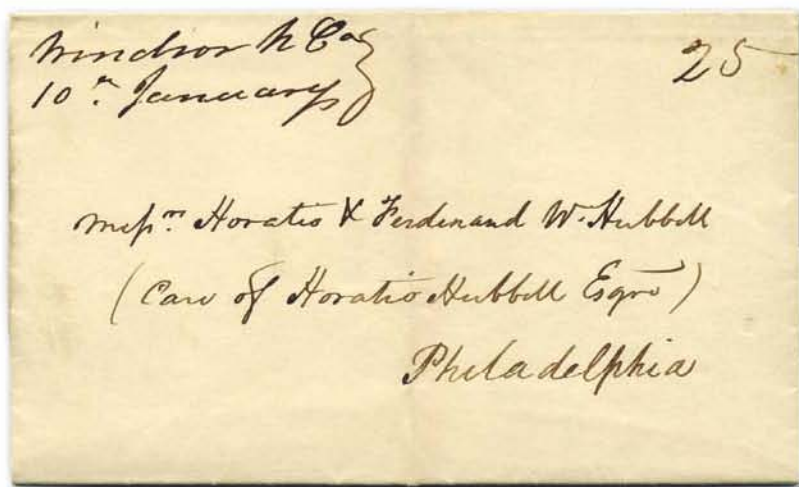
"There was a post office in South Carolina called Britton's Neck. The names of the two post offices being so nearly the same, was the principal reason for changing the name of the postoffice at Britton's Store. "Col. William Britton highly esteemed a novel by Mrs. She[r]wood entitled - "Roxobel-a Village Tale." This caused him to have the name of the postoffice changed to Roxobel." C[a]n you not induce Professor Webb to establish a course of lecture[s] on local his-tory and traditions. Bertie, Northampton and Hertford counties can furnish material of that sort for many volumes.

FRANCIS D. WINSTON

The Patron and Gleaner, Andrew J. Conner, ed., *Rich Square, Northampton County N.C.*
Thursday, September 2, 1897 [Vol. 6, No. 35]

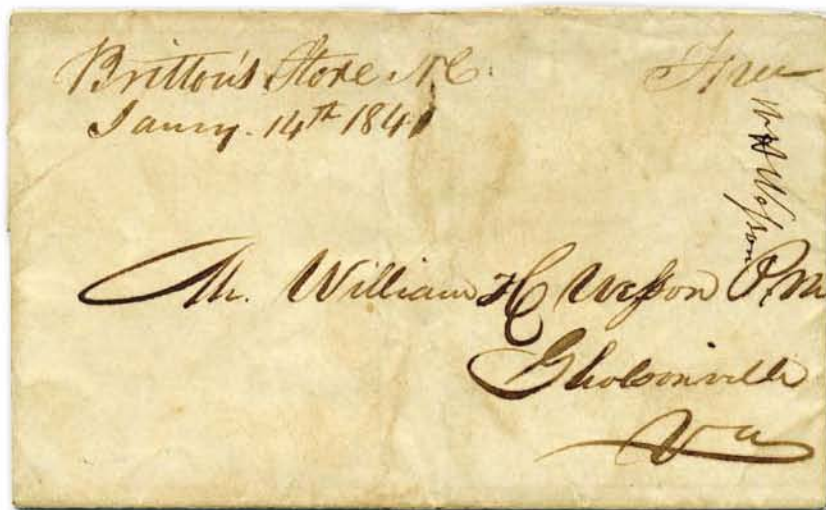


◀ **Figure 5.** November 19, 1965, Woodville to Yalesville, Connecticut. The newspaper article mentions Turner's X Roads was Woodville in 1897. Actually, it was called Lewiston in the Post Office Department records. Its name was changed to Lewiston Woodville on June 30, 1982. A separate post office called Woodville operated from October 14, 1912, until November 19, 1965. This is a last day cover from Woodville.



◀ **Figure 6.** January 10, 1836, Windsor to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, sent unpaid at the 25-cent rate. Manuscript postmark of postmaster Solomon Cherry. Windsor was the oldest operating post office in Bertie County. It opened October 1, 1794 and is still in operation today. It is interesting that the article has little to say about Windsor.

Figure 7. ▶ January 14, 1841, Britton's Store to Gholsonville, Virginia sent free to postmaster William H. Wesson. Britton's Store operated from March 14, 1816, until December 16, 1847, when the name was changed to Roxobel. The cover is of interest because it was sent free from a private citizen to a Virginia postmaster who was entitled to free postage.



◀ **Figure 8.** March 29, 1858, Roxobel to Hotel, sent free under postmaster Reuben H. Cox's franking privilege. Reuben Cox was postmaster from February 6, 1852 until March 27, 1858, when John Andrews became postmaster. It is of note that the cover is dated two days after Cox no longer was postmaster.

Some North Carolina Confederate Covers Addressed to Thomas Ruffin



by Maurice M. Bursey

More than a few Confederate covers are addressed to Thomas Ruffin. Tony Crumbley suggested to me that they might form the basis of an article in the *North Carolina Postal Historian*. As I delved into the biographical material on Thomas Ruffin, it was a surprise to find that there were three “Thomas Ruffins” from North Carolina, who were active and prominent at the time of the Civil War.

The first, and most prominent, was Chief Justice Thomas Ruffin (1787-1870) of the Supreme Court of North Carolina (Figure 1). Judge Ruffin was born at Newington, Virginia, the estate of his mother’s father. He graduated from Princeton in 1805 and returned to North Carolina to study law with Archibald Murphey. He began his law practice in Hillsborough and also farmed there. He served as a trustee of the University of North Carolina from 1813 to 1831 and from 1842 to 1868, when the old board was dismissed during Reconstruction. In 1834 the University awarded him an LL.D.

Justice Ruffin was elected to the North Carolina House of Commons several times and also served as a Superior Court judge from 1815 to 1818 and again from 1825 to 1828. He was named President of the State Bank of North Carolina in 1828 to restore it to solvency, a feat he accomplished within a year. The legislature then named him to the Supreme Court of North Carolina, where he served with the similarly talented William Gaston. In 1833 his colleagues elected him Chief Justice. He alone transformed the common law of North Carolina into an instrument for change, especially his opinions on eminent domain, which led to the expansion of railroads into North Carolina, and increased industrialization, helping to remove the sobriquet given North Carolina: the “Rip Van Winkle State.” The Dean of the Harvard Law School, Roscoe Pound, ranked him as one of the ten greatest jurists in American history. Authorities such as Chief Justice William Howard Taft and Associate Judge Felix Frankfurter called him a pioneer in adapting English common

law to the near-frontier conditions in the United States. Thus his decisions had a great influence on the jurisprudence of the states of the “Old Southwest” – Alabama west to Louisiana and Arkansas, where his decisions were followed more than anyone else’s. He was known as the “stern prophet,” and the North Carolina public venerated him so much that they preserved his Court from destruction by populist politicians.

One blot on his record was the decision he wrote in the case of *North Carolina v. Mann* in 1829: “the power of the master must be absolute to render the submission of the slave perfect,” so that the master or hirer of a slave was not liable for a battery upon the slave.

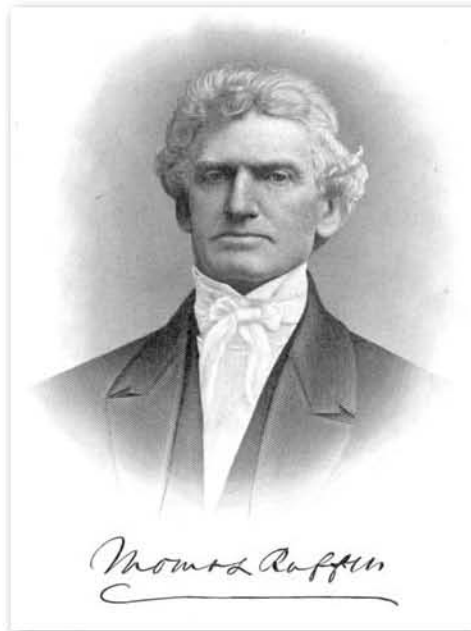
He retired in 1852 to the Hermitage, his plantation in Alamance County. An innovative farmer, he was President of the North Carolina Agricultural Society from 1854 to 1860. In the meantime he was called back to the Supreme Court in 1858, but retired a second time after about a year, and returned to the Hermitage.

Judge Ruffin was a North Carolina delegate to the ill-fated Washington Peace Conference in February 1861 between southerners and northerners to try to avert the Civil War. Afterward, he denied the constitutional right of secession but championed the right of revolution. He thus was a delegate to the Secession Convention of May 20, 1861, in Raleigh.

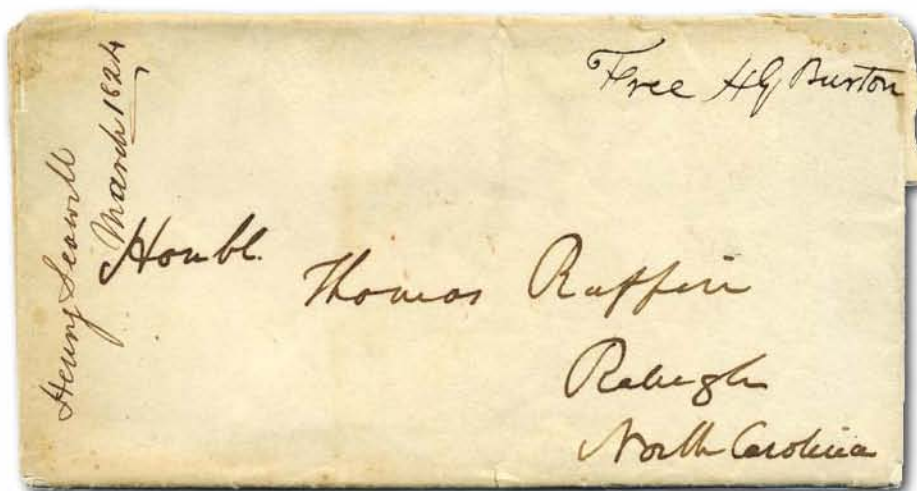
He is said to have supported the Confederate cause “heart and soul – and pocketbook.” After the War, he bitterly opposed congressional reconstruction on constitutional grounds. But he also opposed the Ku Klux Klan movement, calling it a proceeding “against Law and the Civil power of Government,” “wrong – all

wrong.”

Justice Ruffin was, of course, prominent before the Civil War, and there are a good number of pre-war covers addressed to him. An example of an official cover is illustrated in Figure 2, docketed March 1824, and addressed to him in his capacity as a lawyer in private practice from U.S. Congressman Hutchings



▲ **Figure 1.** Chief Justice Thomas Ruffin, from Ashe’s *Biographical History of North Carolina*, 1906. (Courtesy of the North Carolina State Archives)



◀ **Figure 2.** March 1824 folded letter from U.S. Congressman Hutchings G. Burton to Thomas Ruffin in Raleigh during is private practice of law. Note the free frank of the congressman in the upper right corner. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)

double-circle datestamp (DCDS) is dated Oct 25, and shows the “1” of the year, and so is classified as a Type 12 postmark.

The second Civil War cover is a small mourning cover addressed to Judge Ruffin, Graham (Alamance County),

Figure 3. ▶

October 25, 1861, cover from Raleigh to Thomas Ruffin at his plantation “Hermitage” just west of Swepsonville (Alamance County), served by the Graham post office. Cover shows red Raleigh provisional handstamp, Scott 68XU1. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)



Gordon Burton (1774 – 1836). By the end of the year, Burton would become Governor of North Carolina.

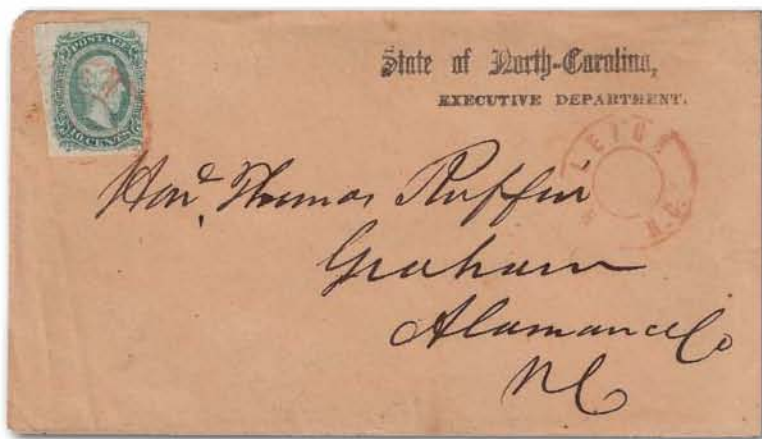
From the time of the Civil War, we have a cover addressed to Hon. Thomas Ruffin, Graham (Figure 3). At the time he would then have been living at his plantation, the “Hermitage,” just west of Swepsonville in southern Alamance County. It bears a red Raleigh provisional handstamp Scott 68XU1, made available to the public in early June, 1861, perhaps as early as the first. This is when the federal government discontinued the use of earlier stamps in the seceded states and the Confederacy’s Postmaster General, John H. Reagan, advised his postmasters to prepare their own methods to indicate that postage had been paid on a letter. The postmaster of Raleigh, George T. Cooke, had a handstamp prepared (by an unknown source), and almost all uses of this handstamp are with red ink, often very lightly struck. The blue,

shown in Figure 4. It bears a blue Hillsboro Type 5 DCDS, which was in use during 1863, 1864, and 1865. It is franked with a horizontal pair of CSA Scott No. 7, printed in Richmond, Virginia, by Archer & Daly, from plates produced in De La Rue & Co. in London, and imported by blockade runner. The first use anywhere of the Richmond printing was around the middle of July 1862. The owner has determined this is an April 16, 1863 use. The black band on the envelope denoted the passing of a loved one.

Figure 5 illustrates a semi-official cover addressed to the judge in Graham bearing a CSA No. 11 stamp canceled with a red Raleigh double-circle datestamp, Type 12. There is no trace



◀ **Figure 4.** April 16, 1863, small mourning cover from Hillsboro to Judge Ruffin, Graham post office, posted with horizontal pair of CSA No. 7. Note the black band around the periphery of the envelope denoting the passing of a loved one. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)



▲ **Figure 5.** Semi-official cover from Raleigh to Honl. Thomas Ruffin, in Graham. It was official as far as the State of North Carolina was concerned, but not by the Confederate Post Office. All government offices except the Post Office Department itself were required to prepay postage.

of a date in the postmark on the right, and the barest trace of one in the strike that cancels the stamp. Because the date is illegible, the postmarks are identified as Type 12 because more examples are known with this type in red ink than the Type 13. The cover bears an imprint of the Executive Department, the State of North-Carolina – note the hyphen. (Does anyone recall *The New-York Times*?) In the mid-nineteenth century, the Executive Department consisted solely of the Governor's office and his advisors.

Another cover – actually only a front – originally postmarked in Richmond, Virginia, carries another horizontal pair of CSA No. 7, canceled January 23, 1863, in black ink (Figure 6). It is addressed to Judge Ruffin in Raleigh, but the judge did not maintain offices in Raleigh, being retired to the Hermitage. The Raleigh post office redirected the letter to him at the post office in Graham. A datestamp of January 30 (Type 12, illegible year, but likely 1863), a straight-line FORWARDED handstamp and a DUE/10 handstamp auxiliary markings, all in blue, were struck

at Raleigh. Forwarding of letters was not free in the Confederacy, and the postage had to be paid again by the recipient.

An April 19, 1861, cover from Oaks addressed to Judge Ruffin in Graham is shown in Figure 7. Oaks, located in southwestern Orange County, was the Civil War location of the Bingham School, a preparatory school especially planned for young men hoping to enter the University of North Carolina, a few miles to the east in Chapel Hill. Its headmaster, William J. Bingham, was also the postmaster of Oaks. Often he initialed covers which passed through his hands as postmaster. This example bears in the upper left corner his initials "W. J. B." plus "& sons." The cover has a circular datestamp dated April 19, plus a handstamped PAID marking and a handstamped 5 in a circle to indicate prepayment. The five-cent marking establishes the April date as in 1862.

Finally, illustrated in Figure 8 is a wallpaper cover to Hon. Thomas Ruffin in Graham, posted in Raleigh and canceled in black ink. The Raleigh datestamp type cannot be determined from the partial strike. The date is illegible, and the cancellation of the CSA No. 11 stamp is tied to the envelope only by the letter "A." The wallpaper design is in different shades of brown on a gray background and was



▲ **Figure 6.** January 23, 1863, cover (front only) from Richmond, Virginia, to Judge Thomas Ruffin, in Raleigh, then redirected on January 30 to Graham. The 10 cent postage from Raleigh to Graham was marked DUE/10 in blue ink at Raleigh.

surely prepared from an unused roll of wallpaper left over from papering a room in someone's house. The idea of removing wallpaper from the wall in a room in order to make an envelope to mail a letter is romantic, but overwrought. I know



◀ **Figure 7.** April 19, 1861, paid cover from Oaks (Orange County) to Hon. T. Ruffin in Graham. The pencil notation, "W.J.B. & sons," upper left, is that of the Oaks postmaster and headmaster William J. Bingham of the Bingham School, a preparatory school for young men hoping to enter the University of North Carolina, making this a Confederate school cover.

of no wallpaper cover bearing traces of wallpaper paste on the outside, or of general wrinkling from wiping the paste off a piece of peeled wallpaper with a moist cloth or by soaking it.

For the record, Confederate covers addressed to another Thomas Ruffin, Judge Ruffin's son, known as Thomas Ruffin, Jr. (1824-1889) should exist. Figure 9 shows the only known portrait of Associate Justice Thomas Ruffin, Jr., which hangs on a wall in a corridor leading to the courtroom of the Supreme Court in the Justice Building of Raleigh. It was composed from two posthumous photographs and presented to the Supreme Court Historical Society in 2005.

Figure 8. ▶

Wallpaper cover with a partial strike of a black Raleigh date-stamp to Hon. Thomas Ruffin in Graham. The Raleigh date-stamp type cannot be determined from the partial strike on CSA No. 11. The wallpaper design is in different shades of brown on a gray background and was surely prepared from an unused roll of wallpaper.



Born in Hillsborough, he graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1844 and then studied law with his father and his older brother William. He began a practice in Yanceyville, but soon moved to Wentworth to set up a joint practice with John H. Dillard. He served a term in the North Carolina House of Commons in 1850-1851, and then in 1854 he was named solicitor of his district, serving until 1860.

When the Civil War began, Thomas Ruffin, Jr., enlisted as a private in the 27th North Carolina Regiment, but a few weeks later was promoted to captain of the Alamance Company of the 13th North Carolina Regiment. After serving for six months as a Superior Court judge, he returned to the 13th as lieutenant colonel, and a few months later was promoted to full colonel as regimental commander. He led the 13th at the Battles of Second Manassas, Sharpsburg, and South Mountain. He was badly wounded in the last of these battles and resigned his commission six months later. Not long after his resignation he became president judge of General E. Kirby Smith's corps,

and remained there until the end of the war.

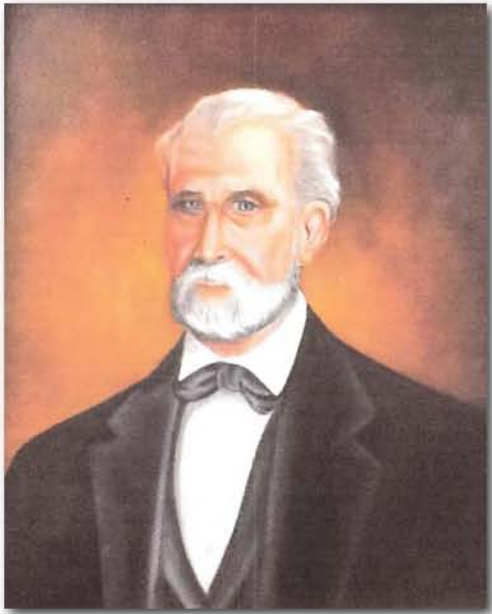
Afterwards he returned to his law practice in Graham, and in 1868 formed a law partnership in Greensboro with Judge John H. Dillard and John Gilmer. His health deteriorated, and near the end of 1870 he moved to Hillsborough and opened an insurance agency. As his health improved again, he resumed the practice of law, and in 1875 he formed a partnership with John W. Graham that lasted until his death, save for two years, 1881 to 1883, when he served on the North Carolina Supreme Court. In 1884 he led the North Carolina delegation to the 1884 Democratic National Convention.

Thomas Ruffin, Jr.'s, greatest contribution to North Carolina was his assistance, with George Davis, in preparing the contract – with no fee – for the sale of the Western North Carolina

Railroad. Governor Thomas Jarvis called the two men "the ablest, most powerful, and most unselfish men in the state."

There was yet a third Thomas Ruffin, pictured in Figure 10, not closely related to the others mentioned above, to whom covers must surely have been sent. He was born in Greene County in 1820, a bit before his parents moved to a new plantation near Louisburg. He graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1841 and studied law under George E. Badger in Raleigh, then began his law practice in the new town of Goldsboro.

He became circuit attorney for the Seventh Judicial District of Missouri, in the Ozarks, and was recognized as a fearless upholder of law and order in spite of great personal risk. In



▲ **Figure 9.** Only known portrait of Associate Justice Thomas Ruffin, Jr., which hangs on a wall in a corridor leading to the courtroom of the Supreme Court in the Justice Building, Raleigh.

1846 the University of North Carolina awarded him a Master's degree, the typical honorary degree in those days. Later that year he became first lieutenant of the Ozark Mountain Guards, of the First Missouri Infantry Regiment, which had been organized for the Santa Fe Expedition and participated in the War with Mexico.

He returned to Goldsboro by 1850, taking up the practice of law again and becoming active in local Democratic Party affairs. After inheriting a large plantation in Johnston County from an uncle, he served in the United States Congress from 1853 to 1861, resigning after secession. He was also a representative from North Carolina at the unsuccessful Peace Congress of February 1861 in Washington and to the Provincial Congress of the Confederate States in June and July of that year in Richmond.

One of seven brothers to enter the Civil War (two for the Union and five for the Confederacy), he declined an offer of the rank of colonel of an infantry regiment, but on May 16, 1861, he became Captain of Company H of the 9th North Carolina (1st Cavalry). Actively engaged most of the time, he was captured in June 1862 at Willis Church, Virginia. He was exchanged near the beginning of August. Leading a cavalry charge at Gettysburg the next year, he received a severe saber

wound on his head. He was brought to Richmond to recuperate. On the day of his capture, he had been promoted to Major, and within four weeks was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. Returning to his unit, he was "mortally wounded during a successful cavalry charge" at Auburn's Mill on October 15, near Fairfax Court House, Virginia, and died in a Federal military hospital in Alexandria three days later. Only one of the seven brothers survived the war.

If any reader knows of a Confederate cover addressed to either of the two younger Thomas Ruffins, I would be happy to hear from him or her. Both of course also served the Confederacy outside of North Carolina, and covers addressed to Thomas Ruffin, Jr., could be addressed to him in Shreveport, Louisiana, General Kirby Smith's headquarters after Vicksburg, and in other states west of the Mississippi. As noted above, the third Thomas Ruffin's war career was in the eastern theater of the war.

I thank Tony Crumbley for suggesting this topic to me and for providing images of three covers illustrated here; Buxton Copeland, President of the North Carolina Supreme Court Historical Society, who secured permission for me to photograph the portrait of Thomas Ruffin, Jr., which hangs in the Justice Building in Raleigh; and the staff of the North Carolina Collection and the Southern Historical Collection in Chapel Hill. ■



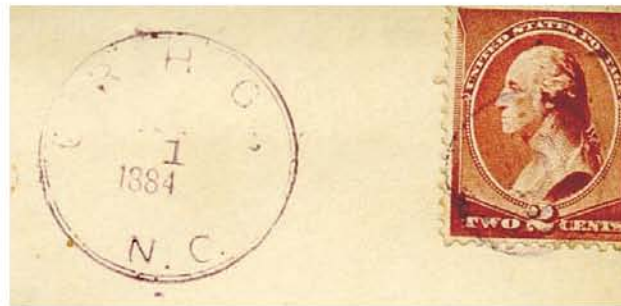
Figure 10. ▲ Congressman Thomas Ruffin, from a photograph, 1855 – 1863, in the Library of Congress.

Old Mystery Cover



There was no response to our mystery cover of the last issue. We think the reason was that the picture of the cover was too small to read the visible letters in the postmark. The cover was addressed to Trinity College (Randolph County) and was posted on 1 July 1884.

An enlarged scan of the postmark is shown below the cover. To the left is a tracing of the actual postmark from *Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina, Colonial to USPS*. The postmark was used in Carthage (Moore County) from February 1884 to June 1885 in magenta, blue, and purple ink. In the mystery cover every other letter was inked insufficiently to be seen on the cover.



New Mystery Cover

Our new mystery cover is a postal card dated 11 April 1946 from Camp Lejeune to Chicago, Illinois. In which post office was it mailed and where was the post office located? The answer may surprise you.

Send your answer to Tony Crumbley or Dick Winter.



Wilmington Not Williamston

by Richard F. Winter



On page 2-281 of *Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina, Colonial to USPS*, under Martin County, the North Carolina Postal History Society attributed an 11 July 1799 manuscript marking to Williamston. A tracing of the marking was illustrated. This was an understandable error to make, which I will explain in this short article. By the way, I also continued this error by placing the marking under Williamston in the update for Martin County. The updated file for this county was placed on our web site in April 2013. This article is intended to correct that mistake.

The Figure 1 cover was purchased in the 9-11 May 2006 Matthew Bennett Auction sale no. 304 as lot no. 1657. This was a sale of part of the Ed and Jean Siskin collection of American Colonial covers. The cover description in the sale was: “1799 (Jul. 11)

Williamston N.C. to Hillsborough N.C., folded cover with docketing, bearing ‘Wmton 11 July 99’ manuscript postmark and matching ‘17’ rating, endorsed ‘mail,’ small edge fault, Very Fine, an early example of this Wilmington postmark.” As you can see from the lot description, it was attributed to both Williamston and Wilmington. Actually the statement of “an early example of this Wilmington postmark,” which undoubtedly was from the Siskins’ analysis of the cover, was correct; but, the bold-faced typo at the beginning of the lot description relegated the cover to Williamston.

A photocopy of the same cover had been in the North Carolina postal history records of Vernon Stroupe from the 13-14 December 1994, Robert A. Siegel Auction, lot no. 1272. In this sale the cover was correctly listed as originating in Wilmington with the description “Wmton 11 July 99. Ms. postmark of Wilmington and ‘17’ on folded cover to Hillsboro.” The cover photocopy, however, went into Vernon’s records as a Williamston cover. How could this have happened?

Examples of all manuscript postmarks of Williamston in Martin County from the 1790s until the 1840s show the name completely written out. Starting in 1843, however, for about ten years the postmarks uniformly showed a substantially abbreviated version of the post office name. Figure 2 illustrates a typical postmark from this period on a 17 December 1850 folded letter to Tewkesbury, Massachusetts. Note that the abbreviated spelling was “WmSton.” Figure 3 shows a tracing from the original *Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina, Colonial to USPS* catalog listing for Williamston. The abbreviated postmark name is in the same style as the Figure 2 cover. The first part of the postmark name was abbreviated “Wm.” This style of abbreviation was used by the Wilmington postmaster in 1799 as shown by Figure 4, a tracing of the postmark on the cover in Figure 1. In hindsight, it is easy to see that one postmark has “Ston” as the second part and the other has “ton” as the second part. But this was easily overlooked by both Vernon and me. Unfortunately, pre-1800 manuscript postmarks from Wilmington are quite scarce. Less than five other examples have been recorded, and none about the

time of the Figure 1 postmark. As a result, there was no other cover with which to compare the Figure 1 cover. It was not until I saw the actual cover that I realized our mistake. Although the sheet containing the letter contents had been removed from the cover, there was a very clear docketing notation written on the inside of the outer sheet. Figure 5 illustrates this docketing notation, which had been written at Hillsboro, the destination of the letter. Docketing notations often were



▲ **Figure 1.** Outer sheet of a folded letter posted on 11 July 1799 in Wilmington (New Hanover County), addressed to Duncan Cameron of Hillsborough (Orange County). The Wilmington postmaster marked in the upper right corner a postage due at Hillsborough of 17 cents, the rate for a letter going between 150-300 miles.

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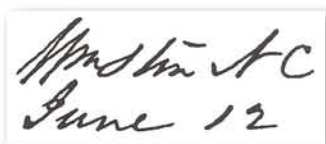


◀ **Figure 2.** December 17, 1850, unpaid, folded letter to Tewkesbury, Massachusetts. Williamston postmaster marked 10¢ postage due at destination with manuscript "10." Note postmark is abbreviated "WmSton, NC."

used to identify who wrote the letter, when it was written, when it was received, and sometimes when the letter was answered. In this case the notation read: "Wilmington N.C./Henry Urquhart/to} Letter July 11th.99./Duncan Cameron/recd. July 26th. 1799." This notation clearly shows the letter originated in Wilmington, North Carolina. This is also supported by the

postage due marked on the letter, 17 cents. This was the correct postage for a letter traveling 150-300 miles. The distance from Wilmington to Hillsboro was 190 miles. Also, the letter writer, Henry Urquhart, was a town representative of Wilmington to the House of Commons in the Assembly of 1796, a resident of Wilmington.

This manuscript postmark will be correctly attributed to Wilmington and removed from Williamston when the next changes are made to the affected counties in our North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update project. ■




▲ **Figure 3.** Tracing of Williamston abbreviated postmark used 1843-1853 from *Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina, Colonial to USPS*.



Figure 4. ▲ Tracing of the Wilmington manuscript postmark found on the Figure 1 cover. Note the similarity of the abbreviated post office name.



▲ **Figure 5.** Docketing notation on the inside leaf of the Figure 1 cover. This notation identifies the sender of the letter, when it was written, and when it was received. From this notation of the recipient we can see that the letter originated in Wilmington, not Williamston.



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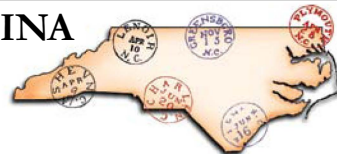
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