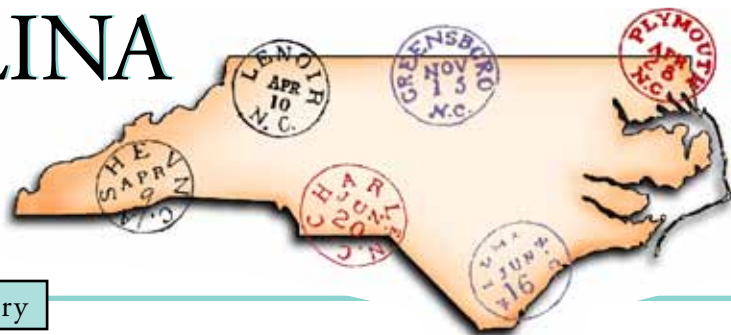


NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

The Journal of North Carolina Postal History

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North Carolina Confederate Military Hospitals



1937 Feeder Airline Service Tests

RPO Service on Branch Lines of Cape Fear & Yadkin Valley Railroad



Charlotte's Postmaster William W. Jenkins

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our lives are still being shaped by COVID-19, but we are finding ways to communicate and conduct business. With social distancing and limits on gatherings, virtual meetings via computers or smart phones are becoming common. Our annual Board of Directors meeting usually is held in July at Charpex in Charlotte, but because Charpex was cancelled, the meeting was held on October 10, 2020, via Zoom. For those who have not used Zoom (like me), it is a platform to conduct web-based meetings. Scott Steward, our webmaster, set up the meeting and guided us neophytes through the connection process. We were able to have a very effective meeting and conducted our usual business.

At the Board meeting, we reviewed the treasurer's report, which stated our finances were in good shape. Our modest dues and the very helpful support from sustaining members more than covers the costs of printing and mailing the journal, website service and other minor expenses. Membership was reported at 122, an increase over 2019.

Dick Winter discussed the *North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update*, which contains about 6,400 pages with over 23,400 illustrated postmarks not found in the original 1990s catalog. All 100 counties and separately, six large post offices, have been completed. The process of adding new information collected over the past five years is about one third completed, and continues. The *North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update* is the most visited part of the society website. The feedback from users of the catalog remains very positive.

Dues will remain at \$15.00 annually because of the generous donations by our sustaining members. The only change that has occurred in the past year is that the rate for overseas members has gone up to \$25.00 if hard copies of the journal are desired. Otherwise, our overseas members can receive the digital version of the journal at the normal annual rate of \$15.00.

The Board recognizes outstanding accomplishments in postal history research through the Earl Weatherly Award,

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which went to Dick Winter this year. Many of the contributors to the *North Carolina Postal Historian* have completed considerable research for their articles. The Board will look at ways to strengthen recognition of original research.

The Board agreed to expand for a second year our project of sending the society journal to eleven regional libraries free of charge, a project started a year ago to provide postal history information to the public supported by those libraries.

Board member Tim McRee has contacted the president of the American Philatelic Society (APS) to see how we can network with the APS to highlight our Society and to use their network to reach out to fellow postal historians around the country. The APS has identified 985 of their members who have indicated an interest in postal history. Our letter and a copy of our journal will go out in the form of a digital "newsblast." The APS plans also to present some past articles from the *North Carolina Postal Historian* to show what a quality journal we have. We will keep the membership informed of developments of our partnership with the APS.

I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Hopefully 2021 will be a better year. The Society remains strong because of the talent and support of the membership. The President and the Board are here to serve the membership, and any suggestions are always encouraged.



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North Carolina's Confederate Military Hospitals

by Charles F. Hall, Jr.



President Lincoln's call to the states on April 15, 1861, for 75,000 volunteers to suppress the secession of the states that had left the Union, resulted in North Carolina and three other states seceding to join the Confederacy. In spite of long existing sectional tensions, both the Confederate and Federal governments were ill prepared for a war on the scale that followed. Both sides expected a short war, not one lasting four years and resulting in a huge flood of casualties.

This article presents an overview of the hospitals operated by the Confederate and North Carolina Medical Departments. A comprehensive study of this topic would be voluminous; therefore, an overall summary is presented. To illustrate the story, the author will show a number of hospital-related covers. Confederate North Carolina hospital postal material is scarce. Examples from many hospitals are unknown.

When the war began, the Federal military had a system of medical services, but the Confederates created their military hospitals and medical services literally "out of thin air." Fortunately, there was an adequate pool of North Carolina physicians from which to select military surgeons. There were no uniform, medical-education standards in the pre-war United States, but there were many prominent medical colleges located in both the northern and southern states that produced trained physicians. Military physicians were termed surgeons.

The Confederate States urgently needed to establish medical services to serve the rapidly expanding armies. North Carolina rose to the challenge. Governor J.W. Ellis started the North Carolina Medical Corps on May 16, 1861, by appointing Dr. Charles E. Johnson of Raleigh as Surgeon General.

Dr. Johnson's first task was to appoint a surgeon and two assistant surgeons for every regiment. He then went about establishing hospitals in Raleigh because of the large number of recruits coming into camps of instruction in the capital city.

They needed examinations, vaccinations and treatment. He also appointed surgeons in charge, who administered the hospitals. Confederate military authorities set up general hospitals in eastern North Carolina, namely in Washington, New Bern and Wilmington, but only the one in Wilmington remained as Washington and New Bern fell to Union forces by March 1862.

During the Civil War there were two primary types of hospitals, general and wayside hospitals. General hospitals were set up on a permanent basis, usually near railroad depots or lines. They were large facilities, often with hundreds of beds, supported by on-site kitchens, laundries, storehouses, and other facilities as needed. Seven wayside hospitals were also set up along transportation routes, particularly railroad depots. Their mission was to treat soldiers on a temporary basis who were too sick or wounded to travel. They also provided bandages, refreshments and assisted with transportation. There were a few specialized types of hospitals established by the Medical Department, such as quarantine hospitals, African-American hospitals for slave labor and prisoner of war hospitals.

Establishing the hospitals in North Carolina was a formidable task, but the Medical Department wasted no time. The first hospital in Raleigh was General Hospital No. 7, or the "Fairgrounds Hospital," set up by Dr. Johnson immediately after his appointment as North Carolina Surgeon General. Although it was the among the first in the state, it was named No. 7. It was located on the state fair grounds on New Bern Avenue and was close to the large camps of instruction where thousands of volunteers reported for organization

and training. It was the first of three general hospitals established in Raleigh. The other two were General Hospital No. 8, at Peace Institute and No. 13, the Pettigrew Hospital. General Hospital No. 8 survives today on the William Peace University campus. A contemporary view of Pettigrew Hospital is shown in Figure 1. It was constructed in 1864 near the fairgrounds in Raleigh. Dr. E. Burke Haywood was the chief surgeon there.



▲ **Figure 1.** General Hospital No. 13, or the Pettigrew Hospital, was constructed in 1864 near the fairgrounds in Raleigh. Dr. E. Burke Haywood was the chief surgeon there for the remainder of the war. (Courtesy of State Archives of North Carolina)

The Confederate States Medical Department was established on February 26, 1861, commanded by the Surgeon General, Dr. Samuel Preston Moore. On September 27, 1862, the Confederate Congress brought all state-operated military hospitals under the Confederate Medical Department. In March 1863 the Department designated a medical director of hospitals for each state. The first medical director of hospitals in North Carolina was Dr. E.N. Covey. He was succeeded by Dr. Peter E. Hines in September of 1863. Dr. Hines reported to the Confederate States Medical Department, while the surgeons in charge of the hospitals in North Carolina reported to Dr. Hines.

North Carolina Surgeon General Johnson resigned after the turnover of the North Carolina hospitals to the Confederate government and Dr. Edward Warren became the state surgeon general for the war's duration. Dr. Warren's department continued to support the hospitals with food, medicines and supplies, while the Medical Purveyor Department worked to procure medicines for the hospitals and army.

The September 27, 1862, legislation also required that hospitals be numbered to prevent confusion with other hospi-

tals, but wayside hospitals were not numbered until May 1863. Some hospitals have both names and numbers, such as the Fair Grounds Hospital, which was officially General Hospital No. 7. One of the hospitals established in Richmond to treat North Carolina Troops was General Hospital No. 24, which was also known as Moore's or Haywood's Hospital.

A cover posted on November 3, 186x, from New Market, Virginia, and addressed to "Mr. Cammie M. Certain at General Hospital No. 1, Kittrells Springs, N.C." is shown in Figure 2. The return address is "Henry Huggins Jennie Ireland, Faison Depot, Duplin Co., N.C." Postage was paid with a 10¢ Jefferson Davis stamp, CSA No. 11.

Figures 3 and 4 provide well-known images of the difficult conditions of the Civil War hospitals. While these scenes are from Federal archives, similar conditions existed for the Confederate hospitals. Figure 3 illustrates a Field Hospital immediately after a battle, where the surgeons had to cope with the casualties following the battle in environments often unsanitary and ill-equipped. It was photographed in June 1862. Conditions appeared much better in Figure 4, a hospital ward in a conva-



◀ **Figure 2.** November 3, 186x cover from New Market, Virginia, to General Hospital No. 1 in Kittrells Springs (Granville County). Postage was paid with a 10¢ Jefferson Davis stamp, CSA No. 11.



▲ **Figure 3.** Typical Field Hospital immediately after a battle, where surgeons had to cope with casualties in environments often unsanitary and ill-equipped.



▲ **Figure 4.** Hospital ward in a convalescent camp. In the crowded conditions, infectious diseases spread rampantly and took more lives than battlefield injuries.

lescent camp; however, in the crowded conditions, infectious diseases spread rampantly and took more lives than battlefield injuries.

A cover sent late in the war to Reverend Mathais M. Marshall at General Hospital # 1 Kittrell is shown in Figure 5. It was from posted at Hicksford, Virginia, on March 11, 1865 and paid with a 10¢ Jefferson Davis stamp, CSA No. 12. Hicksford was on the Petersburg Railroad 37 miles below Petersburg. Both Hicksford and nearby Belfield, were combined in 1887 to form Emporia, Virginia. The war end soon after this when the last major Confederate army led by General Joseph E. Johnston surrendered to General Sherman at Durham's Station on April 26, 1865.

After a battle, the victorious army would occupy the battlefield, set up field hospitals to treat the wounded and if required, evacuate them to a hospital. The retreating army would take as many wounded soldiers as they could, but often, severely wounded soldiers had to be left on the battlefield. Sometimes their own surgeons would stay behind with their wounded at field hospitals. On May 31, 1862, an agreement was established by the medical directors of the Army of Northern Virginia and the Union Army of the Potomac, which was approved by the commanding generals, that stipulated surgeons would not be taken as prisoners of war, a practice that was generally, if imperfectly, followed by both sides.



Figure 6 is a Civil War ambrotype photograph of member of the author's wife's family. An example of a wounded soldier's fate is described from the June 9, 1862, edition of the Fayetteville Observer. It reported that Pvt. Archibald Benjamin Rooks, of Company E, 18th North Carolina Troops, was killed at the Battle of Hanover Court House, Virginia, on May 2, 1862. Actually, he was wounded and captured. He was hospitalized at Portsmouth Grove, Rhode Island. Later he was paroled, exchanged and went back to his regiment. Pvt. Rooks survived the war, returning to farming in Bladen County.

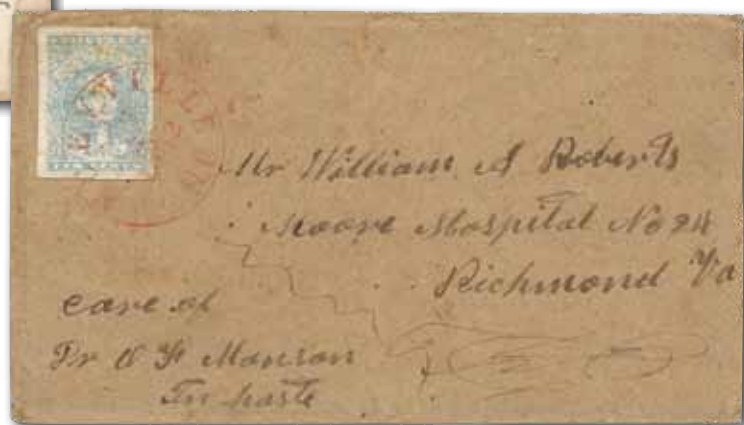
Being evacuated to a hospital could be hazardous. According to Brenda Chambers McKKean's book, George W. Cochran of the 37th North Carolina Regiment reported, "It was a ten mile trip in the darkness and every pebble a wheel hit caused pain to the sufferers; gullies, rocks, stumps brought forth groans, wails and entreaties from every wagon in the train, to all of which I contributed my fair share....a wagon turned over in front of mine filled with maimed soldiers.....But the worst was yet to come. The long street over which we must travel upon reaching Richmond was paved with round river rocks and when we entered it, it was a continuous series of bounces. I was in so much pain that I could not refrain from crying out."

Figure 7 illustrates a December 3, 1863, cover from Yanceyville (Caswell County) addressed to Moore Hospital No. 24 in Richmond, Virginia, also known as Harwood's. Moore Hos-

◀ **Figure 5.** March 11, 1865, cover from Hicksford, Virginia, to Rev. Mathais M. Marshall, Chaplain at General Hospital No. 1 in Kittrell's (Granville County). Postage was paid with a 10¢ Jefferson Davis stamp, CSA No. 12.



◀ **Figure 6.** Private Archibald Rooks, a member of the author's family was reported in the Fayetteville Observer as killed on May 2, 1862, but actually was wounded and captured. Later he was paroled, exchanged and went back to his regiment. He survived the war and returned to farming in Bladen County.



▲ **Figure 7.** December 3, 1863, cover from Yanceyville (Caswell County) addressed to Moore Hospital No. 24 in Richmond, Virginia. Sent care of Dr. O.F. Manson, the surgeon in charge, it was paid with a 10¢ Thomas Jefferson stamp, CSA No. 2 (Stone Y).

Figure 8. ▶
May 7, 1864, cover addressed to Dr. P.A. Cox of Wilson Hospital No. 2. The 10¢ rate was paid with a CSA No. 11 Jefferson Davis stamp.



◀ **Figure 9.** Charlotte circular datestamp used throughout the Civil War without a date in the postmark an Official Business cover to Surgeon H.S. Hilliard in charge of General Hospital at Asheville. Known as Sorrell Hospital, it was not a Confederate Medical numbered hospital. Postage was paid a CSA No. 11 Jefferson Davis stamp.



Figure 10. ▶
March 2, 1864, cover from Gardner's Ford (Cleveland County) to General Hospital No. 7, paid with a CSA No. 12 Jefferson Davis stamp. Cover is different from most because the postmark is in the lower right corner since the letter writer used the upper left corner for the letter's address.

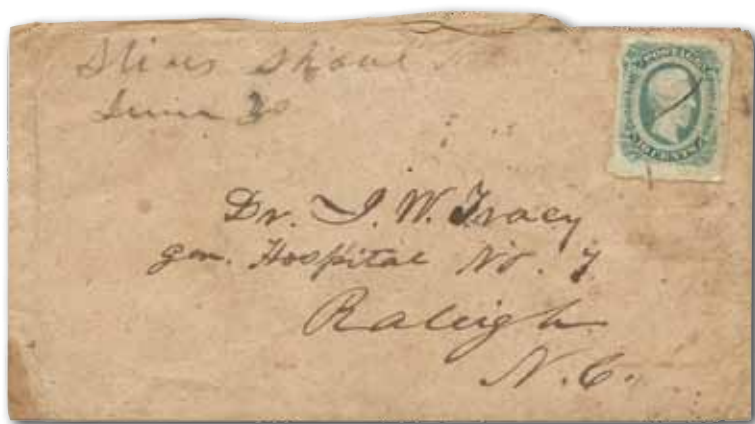


pital was established to treat North Carolina soldiers. The cover was sent in care of "Dr. O.F. Manson, who was the surgeon in charge. The 10¢ rate was paid by with CSA No. 2-Y (Stone Y), light-blue Thomas Jefferson stamp tied with the red Yanceyville circular datestamp used from May 20, 1862, to at least December 18, 1863.

General Hospital No. 2 was located in Wilson (Wilson County) in the converted Wilson Female Seminary. It was managed by Dr. S.S. Satchwell. A cover to this hospital is shown in Figure 8 addressed to Dr. P.A. Cox on May 7, 1864. The 10-cent rate is paid with a CSA No. 11 Jefferson Davis stamp. The hospital location is commemorated today by a North Carolina Highway Historical Marker. Wilson was a railroad and plank road hub at that time.

Correspondence sent to "Surg. H.S. Hilliard in charge Gen. Hosp. 5, Asheville, N.C." is illustrated in Figure 9. The date is not visible, because this Charlotte postmark was used without a date throughout the war. Tying a CSA No. 11 Jefferson Davis stamp, this circular postmark is known used in black ink from May 10, 1862, to March 19, 1865. The hospital was known as the "Sorrell Hospital" and was not a Confederate Medical Department numbered general hospital. It was set up by the Western Military District of the Department of North Carolina.

Infectious diseases produced as many hospitalizations as battle wounds. Of a total of 40,275 total deaths of North Carolina soldiers, 20,602 were from disease. A history of the 58th North Carolina Troops states, "During the winter of 1862-63, sickness, disease and death ran unabated through the fifty-eighth.



◀ **Figure 11.** June 30, 186x, cover from Stice's Shoal (Cleveland County) addressed to Dr. J.W. Tracy at General Hospital No. 7 in Raleigh. The 10¢ rate was paid with a CSA No. 12 Jefferson Davis stamp canceled by pen stroke. Manuscript postmarks were the only type used at Stice's Shoal post office.

Figure 12. ▶ Another cover to General Hospital No. 7, the Fair Grounds Hospital of Raleigh marked in the lower left corner, was sent to Dr Hal. Harriss[sic] from Yanceyville (Caswell County). The red postmark of Yanceyville is difficult to read, but the enclosed letter provides a date of July 25, 1863. The 10¢ rate was paid with a CSA No. 12 Jefferson Davis stamp.



Men from rural backgrounds had never been exposed to many of the childhood diseases so common in camp. Measles was one of the worst, transmitted by the close contact of the men with each other.”

Smallpox vaccinations were common long before the Civil War. The Medical Department established a program to collect scabs, the raw material for vaccination, from vaccinated soldiers and civilians, and used these to inoculate new soldiers against this disease. At one point, the Medical Department was authorized to pay donors \$5.00 for scabs. The main lethal diseases and illnesses were measles, pneumonia, chronic diarrhea, typhoid, yellow fever and mumps. The germ theory was not yet understood, but the importance of quarantine, disinfectants and sanitation in the hospitals was stressed.

Another persistent problem was a shortage of medicines, caused by the Federal naval blockade. Confederate blockade runners and smuggling helped relieve the shortages. The North Carolina Medical Purveyor Department was set up to procure medicines. There were drug manufacturers in the larger cities, such as Charlotte and Lincolnton, but medicines and medical supplies were sought from any source. Patriotic societies such as the Ladies' Aide Societies, the Young Men's Christian Society and the Raleigh Ambulance Company raised funds and provided supplies and nursing services for the army and the hospitals.

A cover from Gardner's Ford (Cleveland County) on March 2, 1864, was mailed to M.F. Hull at General Hospital No. 7, Ward H, in Raleigh. The 10-cent rate was paid with a CSA No. 12 Jefferson Davis stamp canceled with crossed pen strokes. The recipient was Pvt. Major Franklin Huff, Co. A, 18th North Carolina, a resident of Catawba County. He was wounded at Chancellorsville, Virginia, on May 2, 1863, and then was detailed for light duty at “a hospital in Raleigh.” The cover is different than most with the manuscript postmark placed in the lower right corner since the letter writer had used the upper left corner for the sending address location.

Figure 11 shows a June 30, 186x, cover from Stice's Shoal (Cleveland County), posted to Dr. J.W. Tracy at General Hospital No. 7 in Raleigh. This post office operated from March 8, 1847, until August 30, 1902. During the Civil War, the postmaster was E.S.E. Chambers. The 10-cent rate was paid with a CSA No. 12 Jefferson Davis stamp canceled with a pen stroke. The only recorded postal markings for this post office are manuscript postmarks.

Another cover to General Hospital No. 7, the Fair Grounds Hospital of Raleigh, marked in the lower left corner, was sent to Dr Hal. Harriss[sic] from Yanceyville in Caswell County, and is illustrated in Figure 12. The 10-cent rate was paid with a CSA No. 12 Jefferson Davis stamp tied by a 30.5 mm red circular

Figure 13. ►

December 17, 186x, cover from Weldon (Halifax County) addressed to J.W. Tracy at General Hospital No. 7 in Raleigh. Postage was paid with a copy of CSA No. 11, a 10¢ Jefferson Davis stamp torn from a sheet of the stamps. Dr. Tracy was assigned there in May 1864 and served until the end of the war,



datestamp of Yanceyville known used from May 20, 1862, to December 18, 1863. The postmark date is difficult to read, but the enclosed letter is dated July 25, 1863.

The cover in Figure 13 is addressed to “Mr. J.W. Tracy, Genl Hospital No. 7, Raleigh, N.C.” It was posted on December 17, 186x, at Weldon (Halifax County) and was paid with copy of CSA No. 11, a 10 cent Jefferson Davis stamp torn from a sheet of stamps. The Weldon 32.5 mm black circular datestamp was used from May 1, 1862, to June 4, 1864. Dr. Tracy was assigned to General Hospital No. 7 in Raleigh in May 1864 and served there until the end of the war.

By 1865, the Medical Department operated 14 general and seven wayside hospitals in North Carolina. The hospitals submitted weekly reports to the Medical Department. Hospital numbers and categories were sometimes changed, based on the need at the time. An example is in April 1863 when General Hospital No. 1 was at Weldon. By late 1864, Weldon had reverted to its former designation as a wayside hospital and the newly established hospital at Kittrell was named General Hospital No. 1. A weekly return dating from late 1864 lists the general and wayside hospitals for that reporting period and their surgeons in charge as follows:

General Hospitals:

General Hospital No. 1: Kittrell, Surgeon: Holt F. Butt
General Hospital No. 2: Wilson, Surgeon: Solomon S. Satchwell
General Hospital No. 3: Goldsboro, Surgeon: William A. Holt
General Hospital No. 4: Wilmington, T.R. Micks
General Hospital No. 5: Wilmington, Joshua C. Walker
General Hospital No. 6: Fayetteville, Surgeon Benjamin F. Fessenden
General Hospital No. 7: Raleigh (The Fair Grounds Hospital), Surgeon James Wright Tracy
General Hospital No. 8: Raleigh (Located at Peace Institute), Surgeon H.G. Leigh
General Hospital No. 9: Salisbury, Omitted from report, Surgeon probably J.M. Fauntleroy.
General Hospital No. 10: Salisbury, Surgeon Joseph W. Hall

General Hospital No. 11: Charlotte, Surgeon Robert Gibbon
General Hospital No. 12: Greensboro, Surgeon William H. Moore
General Hospital No. 13: Raleigh, (The Pettigrew Hospital), Surgeon E. Burke Haywood
General Hospital No. 14: Wake Forest, Surgeon Moses Jones DeRosset
Fayetteville Arsenal and Armory: Surgeon William H. Hall
(Note, not numbered but included in General Hospital Report)

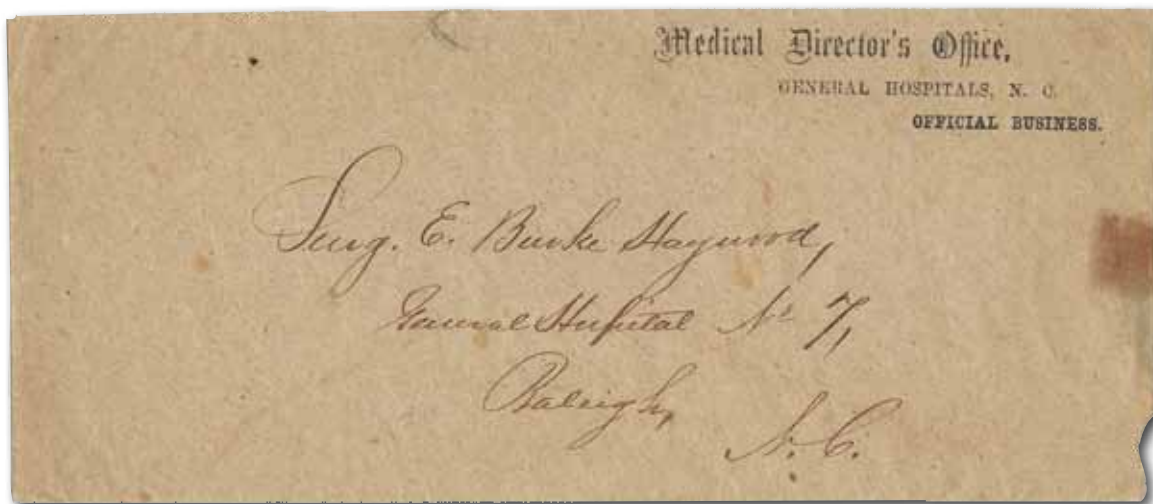
Wayside Hospitals:

Wayside Hospital No. 1: Weldon, Surgeon Henry J. Macon
Wayside Hospital No. 2: Greensboro, Surgeon Henry Holmes Hunter
Wayside Hospital No. 3: Salisbury, Surgeon M. Whitehead
Wayside Hospital No. 4: Goldsboro, Surgeon L.A. Stith
Wayside Hospital No. 5: Wilmington, Surgeon Robert Seymour Halsey
Wayside Hospital No. 6: Charlotte, Surgeon J.W. Ashby
Wayside Hospital No. 7: Tarboro, Surgeon J.H. Baker

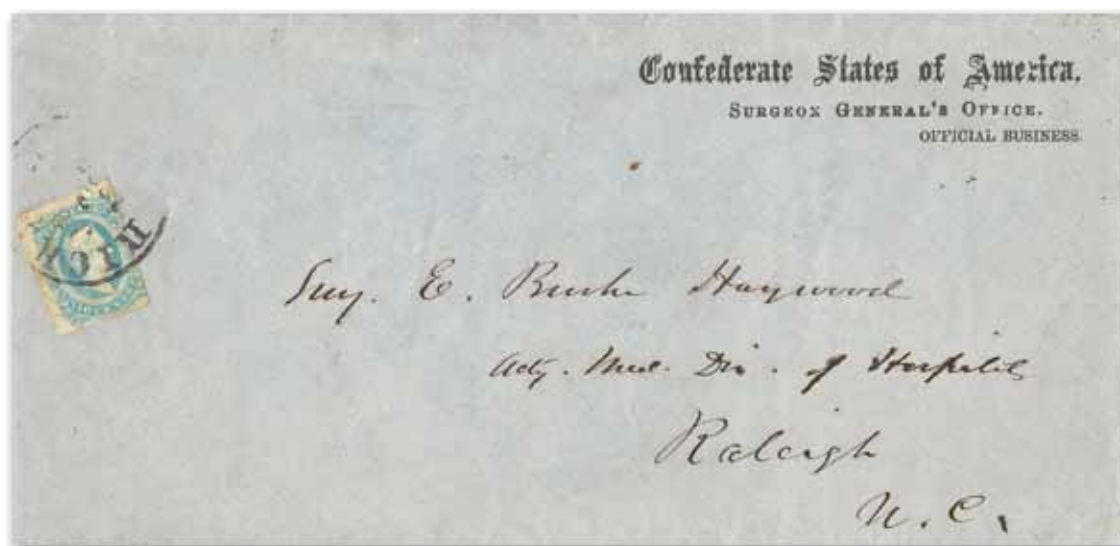
The Sorrell Hospital in Asheville was not included in this report because it was not a North Carolina departmental numbered hospital. There was also a privately operated wayside hospital at High Point at the Barbee Hotel.

Figure 14 illustrates a semi-official envelope with the imprint “Medical Director’s Office, GENERAL HOSPITALS, N.C., OFFICIAL BUSINESS.” It has no postal markings and was probably hand carried. It was sent to Surgeon E. Burke Haywood, the Superintendent of General Hospitals in Raleigh at General Hospital No. 7.

Figure 15 is a blue, legal-size envelope from the Confederate States Surgeon General’s Office in Raleigh sent on June or July 2, 1863, to Surgeon E. Burke Haywood in Raleigh, acting Director of Hospitals at the time. A CSA No. 11-ADa, 10-cent milky blue Jefferson Davis stamp paid the postage, tied with a Richmond, Va. postmark. Postage was required because only the Post Office Department and postmasters had free franking.



▲ **Figure 14.** Undated semi-official envelope with imprint, "Medical Director's Office, GENERAL HOSPITALS, N.C., OFFICIAL BUSINESS," sent outside the mails to Surgeon E. Burke Haywood, the Superintendent of General Hospitals, located at General Hospital No. 7 in Raleigh.



▲ **Figure 15.** Blue legal-size envelope with an official imprint, "Confederate States of America, SURGEON GENERAL'S OFFICE, OFFICIAL BUSINESS," sent from Richmond, Virginia, on June or July 2, 1863, to Surgeon E. Burke Haywood, Acting Medical Director of Hospitals in Raleigh. Postage was paid with a CSA No. 11, 10¢ milky blue Jefferson Davis stamp because only the Post Office Department and postmasters had free franking privileges.

In early 1865 the war came to North Carolina in full force. Previously, only part of North Carolina's coastal area had been occupied. Fortunes changed when Fort Fisher, the principal guardian of Wilmington and the remaining blockade-running seaport in the Confederacy, fell on January 15. General William T. Sherman's juggernaut entered the state on March 8 from Georgia via South Carolina. The Confederates failed to stop the

overwhelming Federal armies at the battles of Wyse Fork near Kinston (March 7-10), Averasboro (March 16) and Bentonville (March 19-21). These battles caused a large number of casualties that were first treated at field hospitals on the battlefields. Three private homes used as field hospitals have survived at Averasboro. Other surviving field hospitals are the Cobb House near Kinston and the Harper House at Bentonville Battlefield.

The hospital system was strained by these battles of March 1865 because the general hospitals at Goldsboro and Wilmington had been lost to Union forces. General Hospital No. 3 at Goldsboro was moved to High Point and it incorporated the private Barbee Wayside Hospital. Temporary hospitals were set up in churches in Raleigh and other locations. The First Presbyterian Church in Greensboro was also used as a temporary hospital. Other casualties went to the remaining general and wayside hospitals. General Joseph E. Johnson surrendered the last major Confederate army on April 26, 1865, at Durham's Station. The war was effectively over. The hospitals performed their duty until the end and then began the process of treating the final casualties and closing down operations.

In summary, the North Carolina Medical Department created a system of general and wayside hospitals when the war started. In September 1862, the Confederate Medical Department assumed control of all hospitals in the Confederate States. Although there were persistent shortages of staff, medicines and supplies, the hospitals were professionally managed with trained and experienced physicians and hospital stewards. The surgeons in charge struggled with an uncertain supply chain and surges in patient loads; but, within the resources available, these hospitals achieved their mission and successfully treated the large numbers of sick, wounded and convalescent soldiers that the war produced. ■

Author's Note: The author would like to give a special thanks to noted Civil War historian and author, Wade Sokolosky, for providing information, fact-checking and editorial assistance.

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New Marking

A cover showing a new Laurinburg marking was submitted by Jimmy Jordan of Wilmington, one of our members who routinely submits new postmarks for our *North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update*, which can be found on our website. This 30.5 mm circular datestamp has non-serifed letters and was struck in black ink. It is much wider in diameter than the Type 2 shown in the catalog for 1882-84, features that he observed when submitting the scan of the cover. When Richmond County is updated it will become Type 6.



1937 North Carolina Feeder Airline Service Tests Were Precursors to 1938 National Air Mail Week

by Steve Swain



It is well known to air mail postal historians that the 1938 National Air Mail Week event was an enormously successful series of celebrations and festivities. The well-designed national campaign included a special issue stamp, the 6¢ dark blue and carmine eagle holding shield, olive branch and arrows stamp of 1938, thousands of town and city cachets, covers autographed by postmasters and pilots, 24-hour airmail duty by many volunteer pilots, school essay contests, and more. But a lesser known 1937 air mail event in North Carolina, and in only a limited number of states, was most likely the foundation for the marketing design and strategy associated with the 1938 national celebration. Tony Crumbley's article, "All-North Carolina Airmail Week, October 11-16, 1937," published in the *North Carolina Postal Historian*, Winter 2003-04 (Whole No. 85), provided details on this event as it took place in North Carolina. The North Carolina event was one of only five experimental air mail services, authorized feeder airline service tests that preceded the following year's national campaign.

In the mid-1930s, air mail volume was growing at a significant rate in the United States. Reports confirmed that almost 11 million pounds of air mail had been flown in the first 10 months of 1935 compared to 7.5 million for the entire year of 1934.¹ As such, feeder service was more and more looked upon as a viable air mail solution.

Relying on a 1942 article published in the *Journal of Air Law and Commerce*,² a feeder airline is:

(1) a common carrier (2) performing the dual function of concentrating and dispersing mail, passengers, and/or property (3) within a given marketing area (4) from widely scattered points (5) to a few terminal points. This definition has purposely avoided limiting the scope of a feeder airline by any preconceived notion as to what shall be the size of the area served; whether a community is or is not at present served by an airline; or if the distance between stops shall be a minimum, a maximum or an average of so many miles.

In April 1937, U.S. Senator Royal S. Copeland, of New York, introduced bills directing the Postmaster General to "conduct a survey with a view to carrying all first class mail by air, providing reduction of air mail rates and the creation of a federal bureau to improve air navigation." He is pictured in Figure 1 at his office as Health Commissioner of New York in March



Figure 1. ▲
Royal Samuel Copeland (November 7, 1868 – June 17, 1938). United States Senator from New York from 1923 until 1938. Was an academic, a homeopathic physician, and a politician. He held elected offices in both Michigan (as a Republican) and New York (as a Democrat).

1923, courtesy of the Library of Congress, Harris & Ewing Collection. Senator Copeland also asked the bureau of air commerce, "to pass on the practicability of establishing feeder air lines into state capitals and cities over 15,000 population."

In the summer of 1937, the U.S. House Post Office Committee began consideration of legislation designed to permit the Post Office Department to undertake experimental air mail services. A series of "All-State Air Mail Feeder Flight Survey Tests", sponsored by Eastern Air Lines and the U.S. Post Office Department, began in August.

The five states associated with the feeder service tests and the dates of their tests were:

Georgia: August 9-16
Florida: August 23-30
North Carolina: October 11-16
New Jersey: November 15-20
Texas: December 6-12

To promote awareness and to stimulate air mail usage during the events, the five states declared a "special air mail week"

celebration in conjunction with their feeder air mail surveys. Special town cachets were created, most with the same design that included Eastern Air Lines "The Great Silver Fleet" slogan and logo (Figure 2).

Below are examples of North Carolina 1937 feeder service air mail week covers. The cachet types are referenced to the Crumley article previously mentioned.



◀ **Figure 2.** Eastern Air Lines "The Great Silver Fleet" slogan and logo were used from the 1930s through the end of the 1960s.



◀ **Figure 3.** Charlotte, October 11, 1937, Type 2b cachet printed in black on an air mail cover to Henderson (Vance County), postmarked with a metal duplex handstamp.

Figure 4. ▶
Fort Bragg, October 12, 1937, Type 1a cachet handstamped in purple and sent to Raleigh (Wake County), postmarked with an International Machine cancellation.



◀ **Figure 5.** Morganton, October 12, 1937, Type 1a cachet handstamped in violet and sent to Kansas City, Missouri, postmarked with an International Machine and a third class mute center oval cancellation.



◀ **Figure 6.** Pinehurst, October 12, 1937, Type 1a cachet handstamped in violet and sent to Kansas City, Missouri. It was postmarked with a circular datestamp and separate parallel horizontal bars to cancel the stamps.

Figure 7. ▶ Rocky Mount, October 12, 1937, Type 1a cachet handstamped in red and sent to Raleigh (Mecklenburg County), postmarked with a Universal Machine cancellation and a third class mute center oval cancellation. Postmaster Elias Carr Speight signed as postmaster.



◀ **Figure 8.** Winston-Salem, October 12, 1937, Type 1a cachet handstamped in violet and sent to Lexington (Davidson County), postmarked with a Universal Machine Cancellation

Other strategies used to promote the event in the five states included special boxes in town post offices to post event mailings, letters addressed to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, gongs installed in post office lobbies for patrons to strike when posting an air mail letter, and model airplane contests for youngsters.

Were these events true inspirations for the National Air Mail Week celebration just five months later? Although many will characterize the marketing ideas and strategy for the 1938 event as the brainchild of Postmaster General James A. Farley, significant credit for instigating National Air Mail Week should be given to Eastern Air Lines' public relations director, Beverly Griffith. Figure 4 is a photograph of Griffith as a young man taken from *Motion Picture Studio Annual*, 1916. Griffith worked



◀ **Figure 9.** Beverly Howard Griffith, *Motion Picture Studio Annual*, 1916. Griffith worked in the film-industry primarily in the administrative field. Years later, as Eastern Air Lines' public relations director, he was said to have been "particularly adept at promoting airmail service, a task at which he was indefatigable."

in the film-industry primarily in the administrative field and was a resident of Universal City. His beginning foray into the movies came in early 1913 when Griffith went to Pinecrest, near San Bernardino, California, with the Keystone Company. He was working as an assistant to the property-man, and found his way into three films, two of which were directed by Mack Sennett. Figure 5 shows Griffith later in life as a member of the vanguard party for Capt. Rickenbacker's inaugural flight from New York City to Brownsville, Texas, to Mexico City. Griffith is the fourth from the left in this photograph, courtesy of the Eddie V. Rickenbacker Collection of the Auburn University Digital Library.

It is no coincidence that Eastern Air Lines was involved with both the 1937 and 1938 events. In his book, *From the Captain to the Colonel: An Informal History of Eastern Airlines*, Robert Serling said of Griffith: "He was particularly adept at promoting air-mail service, a task at which he was indefatigable."

As such, it is fair to say that given Griffith's significant role in the marketing design and strategy for the state celebrations – town cachets, letters addressed to President Roosevelt, "special air mail week" promotions, contests, etc. – that the 1937 feeder service tests were indeed precursors to the marketing design used for the 1938 National Air Mail Week celebration.



Figure 10. ▲

A member of the vanguard party for Capt. Rickenbacker's inaugural flight from New York City to Brownsville, Texas, to Mexico City, Griffith is fourth from the left. (Courtesy of the Eddie V. Rickenbacker Collection of the Auburn University Digital Library)

Endnotes:

1. Gorley, Marvin. "Effort Made to Bring Air Mail to Small Texas Cities." *Texas Postal History Society Journal*, November 2009. <http://www.texasstamps.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/V34N4.pdf> (accessed 17 November 2020).
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Railway Post Office (RPO) Service on Branch Lines of the Cape Fear & Yadkin Valley Railroad

by Darrell Ertzberger



At the end of the 19th century, North Carolina had two major east-west railroads. The first was the North Carolina railroad system which was a combination of several lines under the control of the Richmond & Danville Railroad (later renamed Southern Railway). This line ran from the Tennessee line through Asheville, Salisbury, Greensboro, Raleigh, and Goldsboro to Beaufort. The second east-west system was the Cape Fear & Yadkin Valley Railroad (CF&YV). Its main line ran from Mount Airy, through Greensboro and Fayetteville, to Wilmington.

The CF&YV was originally created from the union of two small railroad companies in the Fayetteville area plus the addition of a significant amount of new track on both ends to Mount Airy and Wilmington. Construction began in the 1870s. The section from Fayetteville to Mount Airy was complete by 1888. The section from Fayetteville to Wilmington was the last to be completed, opening in 1890. In addition to the 245 mile long main line from Mount Airy to Wilmington, several branch lines were built. The mail service on two of these branch lines around Greensboro is the focus of this article.

The “Factory Branch” was built from point, initially called “Factory Junction,” to Millboro in Randolph County. Factory Junction was in southern Guilford County on the CF&YV main line between Pleasant Garden and Julian. Land acquisition for the branch line began in 1886. Construction of the 9.55 mile-long-branch completed to Millboro in 1887 using convict labor. An extension of the branch from Millboro to Columbia Factory was approved in 1889. This extension, also built with convict labor, was completed by 1890. The final length of the line from Factory Junction to Columbia Factory was 18.74 miles. The settlements developing at both ends of the branch changed their names in 1891. At

the northern end, “Factory Junction” became Climax, and on the southern end, “Columbia Factory” became Ramseur.

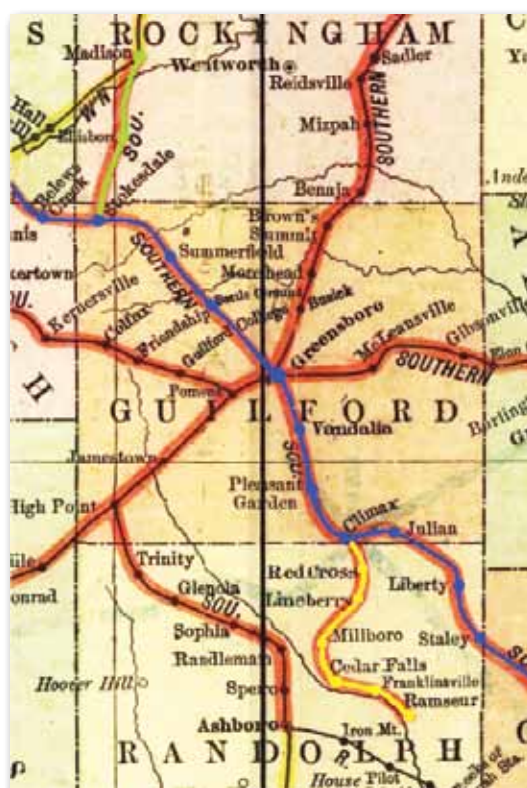
About the same time, in northwestern Guilford County and Rockingham County, the “Madison Branch” was built. This line ran from Stokesdale on the CF&YV main line north to Madison, a distance of 11.39 miles. The map in Figure 1 shows these branch routes and the CF&YV main line in the area around Greensboro. The rail lines in red are portions of the Southern Railway system in 1900. The blue line is the mainline of CF&YV. The Madison branch (Stokesdale to Madison) is overlaid in lime green. The Factory branch (Climax to Ramseur) is overlaid in yellow. The Madison

& Ramseur RPO ran over all three sections. The Greensboro & Ramseur RPO ran on the portion of the mainline from Greensboro to Climax and then on the Factory branch.

The U.S. Post Office Department (USPOD) contracted for mail service on these branch lines almost as soon as the trains began to run. Route 13031, for service on the Factory Branch from Factory Junction to Millboro, started February 6, 1888. The contract called for the railroad to carry mail in locked sacks or “closed pouches,” six time a week “or as much oftener as trains may run” in both directions.

Similar service was created on Route 13037 on the Madison Branch from Stokesdale to Madison starting February 25, 1899.

Route 13031’s closed pouch service was extended to Ramseur on March 20, 1890, shortly after trains started running to the new terminus. Ramseur became the northern end of several Star Routes that carried mail to points south in Montgomery and Moore Counties, such as Troy, Star, Asbury, Candor, and Carthage.



▲ **Figure 1.** 1900 map of rail lines around Greensboro. The CF & YV mainline is in blue. The Madison branch (Stokesdale to Madison) is lime green. The Factory branch (Climax to Ramseur) is yellow. The Madison & Ramseur RPO ran over all three sections. The Greensboro & Ramseur RPO ran on the portion of the mainline from Greensboro to Climax and then on the Factory branch to Ramseur. (Collection of Library of Congress)

These closed pouch routes on the branches received mail from and sent mail to a full RPO on the CF&YV mail line. Since 1885, the USPOD had contracted with the CF&YV for RPO service on its main line between Greensboro and Shoe Heel (later renamed Maxton). RPO service had railway mail clerks in mail cars or combination mail/baggage cars to receive, process, and dispatch mail. Closed pouch service had no clerks; it was strictly the transport of mail in sacks. In June 1888, the RPO service was extended from Greensboro to Mount Airy, running Mount Airy to Shoe Heel. This RPO, called the Mount Airy & Wilmington RPO, serviced post offices on the CF&YV main line between Stokesdale and Climax. At Stokesdale and Climax, it dispatched and received locked sacks of mail for the closed pouch routes on the branches. During this period, there would be no evidence on covers that they were carried on the branch lines.

On paper, the business plan of the CF&YV made perfect sense. It traversed the state through major industrial and agricultural areas. It crossed three major north-south railroads and several major waterways. While the railroad initially made a profit, the Panic of 1893 and the recession that followed drove it into bankruptcy. It was put up for sale in 1899. Its competitors bought portions, to dismember the line and stifle competition. The recently formed Southern Railway obtained the assets from Mount Airy to Sanford, including the branch lines around Greensboro. The Atlantic Coast Line purchased the main line from Sanford to Wilmington and its lines to Bennettsville, S.C. The portion purchased by Southern was reorganized into the Atlantic & Yadkin Railway (A&Y). In all aspects except name, it was a division of Southern Railway. USPOD recognized the Atlantic & Yadkin as the successor on the contracts of the CF&YV in March, 1899.

The next chapter in mail service on these branch lines begins in 1904 when the USPOD decided that mail volume was sufficient to establish RPO service. On November 5, 1904, the Department created the Madison & Ramseur RPO. This 61.23 mile-long-route ran from Madison to Stokesdale on the Madison Branch, from Stokesdale to Climax on the A&Y main line, which already had RPO service from the Mount Airy & Wilmington RPO, and from Climax to Ramseur on the Factory Branch. See the map in Figure 1.

Apparently, the volume was not sufficient on the Madison Branch to justify RPO service, so on March 12, 1906, the RPO route was shortened to run from Greensboro to Ramseur (32.23 miles) and it was renamed the Greensboro & Ramseur RPO. RPO service was dropped from Madison to Stokesdale, and the main line from Stokesdale to Greensboro was again only served by the Mount Airy & Wilmington RPO. The Madison & Ramseur RPO was no longer; it existed for about 15 months from November 1904 to March 1906.

The Greensboro & Ramseur RPO continued service until February 27, 1911. On that date, the Post Office announced that it would cease operating under that name and become a “short run” of the Mount Airy & Wilmington RPO. A short run RPO only covered a portion of the route for which it was named. In the following five years, the USPOD dropped RPO service, one train at time, between Greensboro and Ramseur. The last RPO service on trains 153 and 154 of the Mount Airy & Wilmington RPO ended in October 1916. After that date, only closed pouch service remained on the Factory Branch. January 1925 marked the end for the closed pouch service to Ramseur. On January 10, the USPOD created a Star Route from the major post office in the Greensboro rail terminal to carry mail by Randleman, Asheboro, and Franklinville to Ramseur, returning by Franklinville, Cedar Falls, Millboro, Climax, and Pleasant Garden to Greensboro Terminal. A few days later, on January 17, the contract with the A&Y, now named Route 13676, for mail carriage between Greensboro and Ramseur was ended.

For many years, markings from the Madison & Ramseur and the Greensboro & Ramseur RPOs were listed as unknown in the records kept originally by Charles Towle and later by the Mobile Post Office Society. No cancels from either RPO are listed in the MacDonald & Towle’s United States Railway Post Office Postmark Catalog published in three volumes between 1990 and 1995.

However, a cancel which reads “GREENS. & RAMSEUR R.P.O.” was discovered in the early 2000s and included in the revised RPO catalog, published between 2006 and 2008. It was assigned number 324-M-1. All examples of this marking known to the author are on postcards. It is known from March 19, 1907 to December 24, 1910. See Figures 2 and 3.



▲ **Figure 2.** 19 March 1907 postcard canceled on the Greensboro & Ramseur RPO and addressed to Climax (Guilford County), about a year after the line was established. It arrived at Climax later the same day.



◀ **Figure 3.** 24 Dec 1910, another postcard canceled on the Greensboro & Ramseur RPO and addressed to Climax (Guilford County), two months before the RPO ceased operations in February 1911.

After the line became a short run of the Mount Airy & Wilmington RPO in 1911, the clerks should have used cancelers with that name, even though their short run was from Greensboro to Ramseur. Collectors should be able to identify the short run cancels by train number (trains 153, 154, 211, 212, 230 or 231), but after surveying holdings of the Mount Airy & Wilmington RPO between 1911 and 1916, the author has been unable to find a marking from these short run trains.

To date, no cancels have been reported from the Madison & Ramseur RPO. Since it only had a life of 15 months and existed prior to the height of the postcard craze, one can understand why none may have survived. If any NCPHS member has an example from any of these RPOs, the author would like photocopies.

The A&Y continued rail service on the branch lines for some years after the mail contracts were ended. The Madison Branch tracks were removed sometime prior to 1938. In 1950, the last portions of the Atlantic & Yadkin Railway were officially absorbed in the Southern Railway. Freight service to Ramseur on the Factory Branch continued until the 1960s. In 1984, Southern Railway petitioned the state to abandon the branch. The tracks and trestles were removed in 1987. The route between Cedar Falls and Ramseur is now the Deep River Rail Trail for hiking and bicycling. ■

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▲ **Figure 4.** Franklinville Depot ca. 1915. Franklinville was next station northwest of Ramseur on the Factory branch. Images from along the Factory Branch are scarce.

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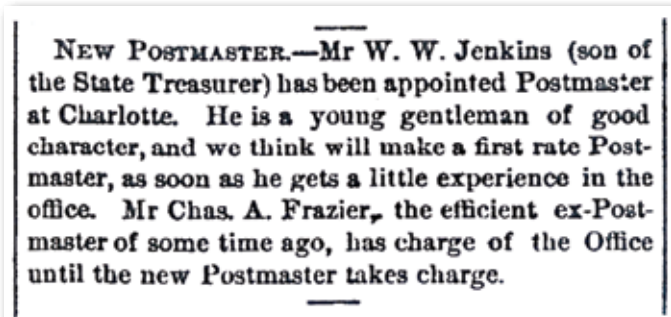
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Charlotte's Postmaster William W. Jenkins 1876-1885



by Tony L. Crumley

An acquaintance of mine from the Charlotte Public Library came across the above clipping in Figure 1 from the *Charlotte Democrat*, published May 29, 1876. As you can see, it has to do with the appointment of a new Charlotte postmaster, William W. Jenkins. Mr.



▲ **Figure 1.** Notice in the *Charlotte Democrat* on May 29, 1876 that Charlotte had a new postmaster, William W. Jenkins. His official appointment date was June 24, 1876 according to the Post Office Department *Record of Appointments of Postmasters*. Son of the State Treasurer, the newspaper considered he would make a first rate postmaster after he gained experience in the office.

Jenkins was officially appointed June 24, 1876 and serve until June 15, 1885. According to the newspaper, he was the son of the State Treasurer and “a young gentleman of good character.”

This nine-year period in which Postmaster Jenkins served was a prolific era in Charlotte postal history. Not only did we see

four different circular postmarks, Charlotte was introduced to its only non wood-cut fancy cancel as well as a straight-line cancel.

The newspaper announcement mentioned that ex-postmaster Charles A. Fraizer, “the efficient ex-Postmaster of some time ago,” would take charge of the post office again until the new postmaster could take charge. Postmaster Fraizer originally served from June 24, 1865, the first federal postmaster after the war, until March 19, 1874.

Robert McDonald took over the postal operations from Fraizer in March 1874 until Jenkins assumed duty as postmaster on June 24, 1876, serving for just over two years. We do not know why McDonald served such a short term. During McDonald’s time as postmaster a few, hand-carved wood-cut devices were used to cancel stamps and indicia on postal cards or stamped envelopes. One of the most important and easily recognized of these cancels was the crown fancy killer which was used from April 5, 1876 until August 16, 1876, in the early months of Postmaster Jenkins’ service. Figure 2 illustrates a cover with the earliest known use of this killer. The insert shows a tracing of the killer.

Illustrated in Figures 3-6 are a series of different postmarks that were used by Postmaster Jenkins during his time in office. For the collector, it was a good choice to put Postmaster Jenkins into office. We can all agree with the *Charlotte Democrat* that he did make a “first rate postmaster.”

One just never knows where the next tidbit of North Carolina postal history will pop up. ■

Figure 2. ▶

Charlotte, April 5, 1876, cover addressed to Shelby (Cleveland County). The envelope is an 1874 Plimpton Manufacturing Company 3¢ green stamped envelope with the indicia canceled by a crown fancy killer, a tracing of which is shown as an insert in the lower left corner.





◀ **Figure 3.** 1875 black on buff, government-issued postal card inscribed "WRITE THE ADDRESS..." posted in Charlotte on May 6, 1877, addressed to Black's Station, South Carolina. This Type 8 circular datestamp would have been the first handstamp used by Postmaster Jenkins after taking office in June 1876. It was used from 1875 until 1881.

Figure 4. ▶
1873 brown on buff, government-issued postal card posted in Charlotte on February 2, 1878, addressed to Salisbury (Rowan County). A double circle postmark with a duplexed Maltese cross killer in magenta ink was introduced by Postmaster Jenkins. This is a Type 9 circular datestamp, the first cancel to have a year date within.



◀ **Figure 5.** 1875 black on buff, government-issued postal card inscribed "WRITE THE ADDRESS..." posted in Charlotte on September 15, 1881, addressed to Black's Station, South Carolina. This is an early use of the Type 10 circular datestamp and was used until April 1884. It also contained a year date within the postmark.

Figure 6. ▶
December 4, 1884, Charlotte to Dallas (Gaston County) postmarked with a Type 11 circular datestamp used from 1 May 1884 to 30 December 1885. This is the first use of a time within the postmark of Charlotte.



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