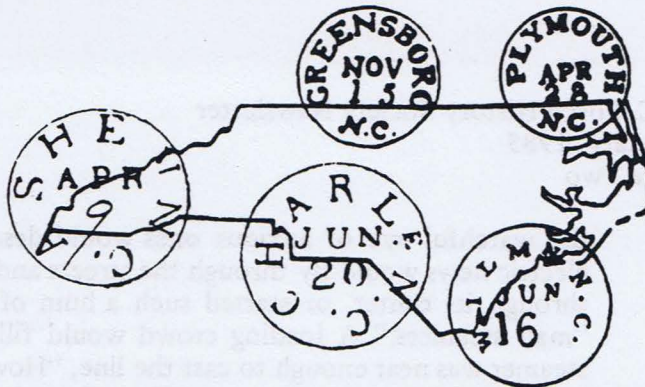


**NORTH CAROLINA
POSTAL HISTORY
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**



No. 12

(Vol. 4 No. 1)

January, 1985

MINUTES - BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, NOVEMBER 3, 1984

The Board of Directors of the N.C.P.H.S. convened at 12:05 on Saturday, November 3, 1984 in the Board Room of Mission Valley Inn in Raleigh, N.C. Tony Crumbley called the meeting to order in the absence of Dr. Harvey Tilles. Members present were Jean Bellamy, Tony Crumbley, Jim Harris, Johnny Johnson, and Milton Wicker.

The election of officers was the first business before the group. Those nominated for officers were Dr. Harvey Tilles, President; Vernon Stroupe, Vice President; Ruth Wetmore, Secretary and Milton Wicker, Treasurer. After discussion of precedence being set by this action, a vote was taken, unanimously in favor of officers as nominated.

The matter of ad revenue from the Newsletter was discussed. The shortage of society funds was apparent. Jim Harris agreed to pursue the procurement of advertisers for the January issue of the Newsletter.

Other matters of business brought before the Board included the discussion of the Society Library. Johnny Johnson agreed to confer with Ruth Wetmore and prepare a written proposal for the January Newsletter.

The Board decided to hold the next membership meeting on Saturday, February 23 at 12:00 noon in the Board Room of the Mission Valley Inn in Raleigh. The meeting was adjourned at 12:40.

"LA POSTA" CROSSES THE MISSISSIPPI

"La Posta" which from conception has been the western U.S. journal of postal history has just appointed Robert Stets Southeastern U.S. Editor. Bob, who is no novice in the publishing world, having just published the definitive work on Philadelphia post marks, is seeking articles to be published in upcoming issues of the Journal. Anyone interested should contact Bob at P. O. Box 142, Walterboro, SC 29488. Bob is also one of the principals in the current attempt to organize the S.C. postal history collectors. If you have any interest in our sister state, you may want to contact him on this matter.

CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS OF THE UNION OCCUPATION POST OFFICE AT NEW BERNE, N.C.

By Stefan T. Jaronski

The U.S. Post Office at New Berne, N.C., was reopened in April 1862. The postmarks of the town are well-known and common. What follows, however, is a little more interesting: a contemporary account of the mail operations there in 1863. This account is taken from W.P. Derby's Bearing Arms in the 27th Massachusetts Regiment (1863. Wright & Potter, Boston).

It would certainly be gross carelessness to omit mention of the steamers "Ellen S. Terry," "Dudley Buck," "Collins" and "Augusta Dinsmore," by which our communication with home was maintained. Before their three whistles were given as a signal of a "mail aboard,"

the watchful eye of anxious ones would descry the vessel below the blockade, and the electric news would fly through the streets and camps. Nothing so thrilled the department through its center, or started such a hum of expectation, as the arrival of the irregular "mail steamers." A jostling crowd would fill the wharf, and eagerly inquire before the steamer was near enough to cast the line, "How much mail Capt. Chapin?"

The regulations at the post office allowed no sleep after the arrival of the mail until it had been assorted and delivered. Some idea of the amount of letter writing in this department may be obtained from the fact that two hundred and twenty-five thousand letters were sent North from the New Berne post office during the month of January (1863), seventy-five thousand being sent on the "Dudly Buck," January 18th. It occupied seven clerks twenty-four hours, in posting this mail.

Nor were our friends at home negligent; sixty five-foot mailbags were received January 27th and 28th (1863), with an estimated mail of seventy-five thousand letters, and one hundred bushels of papers. These were extra occasions, however, but from statistics of the writer (at that time military postmaster of the Department of North Carolina) it was shown that during the months of December (1862) and January (1863), each soldier averaged to write two and one-half letters each week, and to receive about the same, besides newspapers and other printed matter. More letters were written by the soldiers than received. John Dibble, a former citizen of New Berne, and a staunch Union man, held the position of civil postmaster.

Another reminiscence, of which the source is unfortunately lost, viewed the mail from the perspective of the soldier:

Perhaps the most welcome figure in the camp was Ged Stout. He was a stocky, well-built, redcheeked youth of perhaps twenty-three, the mail carrier. No sooner was the steamer or train in than the men turned out in helter-skelter groups, to size up the bag and conjecture by the bulk how far the precious contents would go around. At Carolina City the honor and glory fell to me of sharing my tent with this great personage. When he came in with his bag, and the whole regiment stood grouped in the street in front I wouldn't have changed places with the commander of the department. The letters were dumped out on my bunk -- on the gray blanket -- and then we very deliberately sorted them out, putting each company's in a heap by itself.

Stout was as solemn and reticent as the postmaster general; he never answered a word to the impatient demands of the fellows as they skylarked, chaffed and grugged us. He had grown very adept at deciphering the fantastically addressed missives, and I think I never saw him grin, except when he remarked my perplexity over an address which took him but a glance to assign to its proper heap.

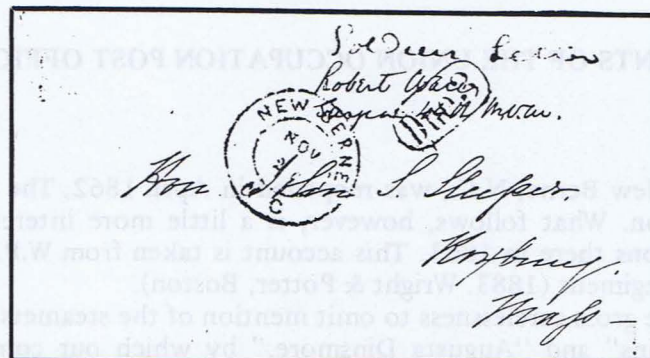


Figure 1. Soldier's due letter from the 44th Massachusetts Regiment at New Berne, N.C. The postmark is dated Nov. 20 (1862).

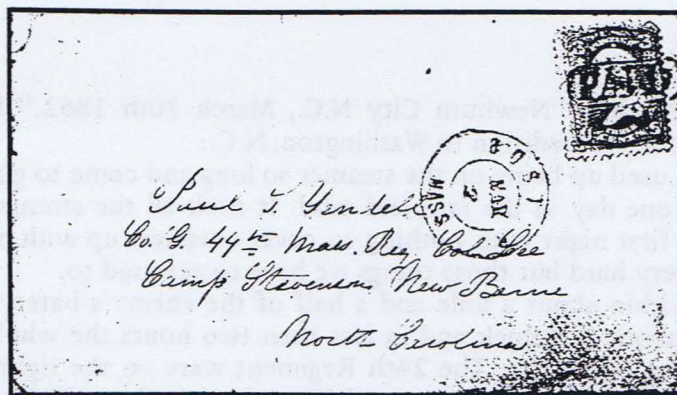


Figure 2. Typical letter addressed to a soldier at New Berne, N.C., from Boston.

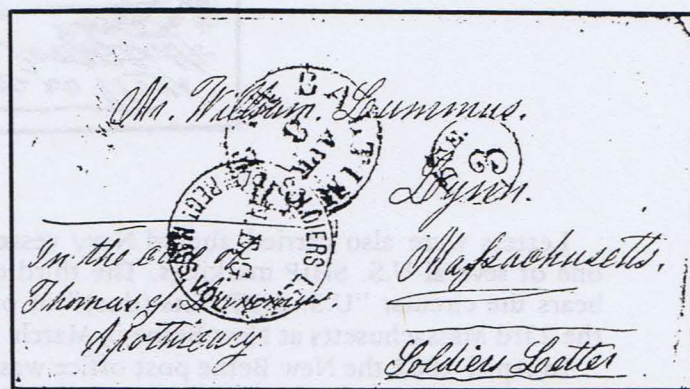
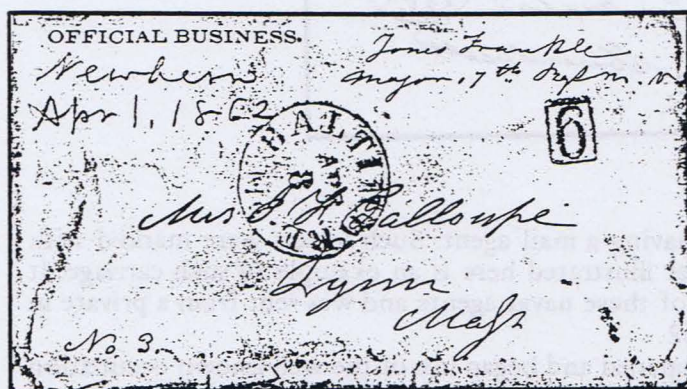
POSTAL SERVICES DURING INITIAL OCCUPATION OF NEW BERNE, N.C.

By Stefan Jaronski

The war came to New Berne, N.C. with Union occupation on March 14, 1862. After defeating the Confederate defenders, General Burnside set up his headquarters in the town and proceeded to reinforce the military occupation of the area.

It was not until several months later that the post office at New Berne was reopened to serve the troops's needs. Until then, army mail was sent north by any available steamer. Illustrated here are two examples of this early occupation mail.

The first cover is from Surgeon Galloupe of the 17th Massachusetts Volunteers. The enclosed letter is dated April 1, 1862. Surgeon Galloupe wrote this letter while still on board his transportship. The letter was carried by steamer to Baltimore where it entered the mails. As a result, the cover bears a Baltimore postmark, dated April 8, and due 6 marking (the letter was double-weight and thus was charged double postage).



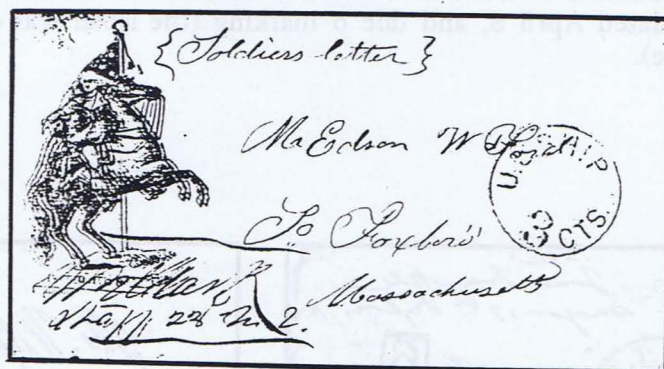
The second cover is from a private in the 24th Massachusetts stationed at New Berne. It bears the handstamped soldier's letter endorsement used by that regiment. This cover was in the same mail transport as the first and was postmarked the same day.

In the enclosed letter, headed, "Newburn City N.C., March 30th 1862," Private Davis, gives an account of some of the military expedition to Washington, N.C.:

I got pretty well used up being on the steamer so long and come to go a shore and march 15 miles in one day in the rain and mud. It took all the strength I had. We had to lay out the first night with nothing to cover ourselves up with but a blanket and it was raining very hard but those things we have to get used to.

We were then within about a mile and a half of the enemy's battery. We started the next morning about 7 o'clock and in less than two hours the whole of the 1st Brigade were under a heavy fire. The 24th Regiment were on the right wing of the brigade and the 21st Regiment was on the right wing of the brigade. They kept up a steady fire for about three hours when the order came to charge on the battery with the 21st Mass., 52nd N.Y. The most of the rebels had retreated, except the rebel cavalry which came down on our men when they made the first charge, which cut our men up very badly, but that made no difference. They made a charge the second time and they made the rebels scatter like so many sheep. During this time our gunboats were shelling two forts on the shore which they cleaned out very quick.

The addressee of this letter was instructed to direct his return letters to Private Davis in care of the 24th Massachusetts quartermaster, Burnside's Division, via Fortress Monroe. Mail for the Union troops around New Berne was evidently collected at the Old Point Comfort post office and placed aboard steamers headed for North Carolina. These were usually resupply ships or dispatch vessels. Some of the mail North also passed through the Old Point Comfort post office.



Letters were also carried aboard Navy vessels having a mail agent. Such letters were marked with one of several U.S. SHIP markings. The third cover illustrated here is an example of such carriage. It bears the circular "U.S. SHIP 3cts (due)" of one of these naval agents and was sent from a private in the 23rd Massachusetts at New Berne in March 1862.

In April 1862 the New Berne post office was reopened and began use of the well-known occupation postmarks. The earliest dated cover bearing a New Berne CDS I have recorded is April 16, 1862. Does anyone have an earlier cover? The New Berne postmark types were described by Robert S. Phillips in 1962 (Confederate Philatelist, Vol. 7, No. 10, pp. 105-110).

EDITOR'S PREROGATIVE

There's an old saying "If you want to prove something wrong, just put it in print." My years of experience in publishing is evidence of this. In the last issue of the N.C. Postal History Society's Newsletter, the article on Charlotte has several corrections which need to be made, they are:

1. October 1, 1784 should be 1794 - the year Charlotte was first considered large enough to have a post office (I could never convince you that was a typo).
2. The list of current post offices in Mecklenburg omitted Pineville and Matthews. (Honest I knew that, as Matthews is my own P.O.)
3. The reference to the first mail flying into Douglas Airport was incorrect. The mail was flown into the old Cannon Airport. (Thanks to Houston Ballard, our pioneer aviator, I now know better.)
4. I've also been informed of several earlier dates and one additional marking. Those will be published at a later date.

Keep those cards and letters coming. The only way to develop an accurate history is to challenge the past.

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By: Tony L. Crumbley

The following list is prepared as a guide for those doing research in North Carolina Postal History publications listed here may not be devoted completely to North Carolina, however, items of significance can be found within. Most of these publications may be borrowed through the A.P.S. Library or through inter library loan from your local library.

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DUES PAYMENT

To date the Society has received 1985 dues from 43 members. Thanks to each of you who responded to the first notice. Those of you who did not have one last chance. If there is a red mark on the address label used to mail this newsletter, then your 1985 dues remain unpaid. Please let this serve as the last reminder. We need your support to continue the work set forth.

1985 WINTER MEETING NOTICE

On Saturday, February 23, at 12:00 Noon the N.C.P.H. Society will hold its winter meeting. The meeting will be in Raleigh at the Mission Valley Inn. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.