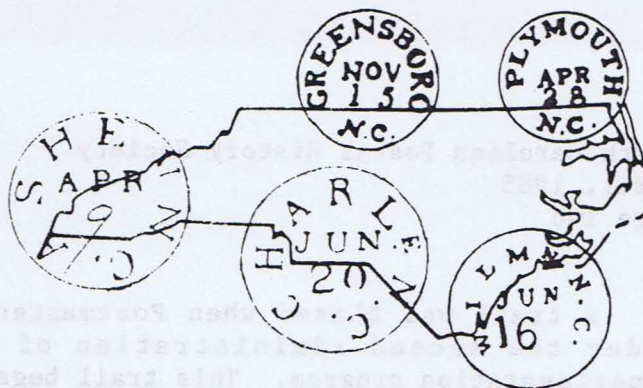


NORTH CAROLINA

POSTAL HISTORY

SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



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April, 1985

THE FIRST RURAL FREE DELIVERY ROUTE IN NORTH CAROLINA

BY: MILTON G. WICKER

In May of 1984 Dr. Harvey Tilles, President of The North Carolina Postal History Society, pulled out of the index file at the old Wilson Library at Chapel Hill a file card which read "First Rural Delivery began at China Grove." This file card lead to an article written by a W. T. Lashley for the "Uplift," Vol. XXIX #1, published by the Stonewall Jackson Manual Training & Industrial School of Concord, N.C. The date was January 4, 1941.

While some research had been done on the Rural Free Delivery Service in North Carolina, this story opened a completely new avenue of approach to the development of the system in North Carolina. Furthermore, it became apparent that little publicity had been given to the fact that the second location for experimental routes in the nation was in the rural Rowan County community of China Grove, N.C. and a first for North Carolina.

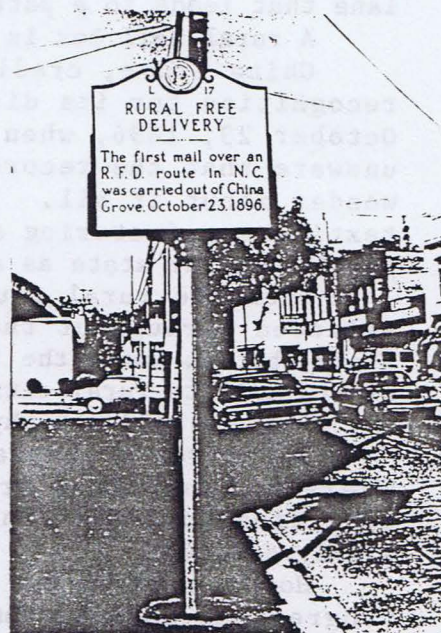
There have been many reports published about the initial routes established on an experimental basis in West Virginia. On October 1, 1896 three routes were started out of Charlestown and one each at Hall Town and Uvilla, but little notice has been given to the initial route established at China Grove on October 23, 1896. In 1938 the State Historical Commission approved a marker to be erected in front of the original Post Office site on Main Street in China Grove. See photo #1. At this time no evidence of RFD markings have been used on this route. Later markings exist, but these will be covered in a later article.

For the present, the best account of this initial China Grove route and how it came about is covered in the article referred to previously by Mr. W. T. Lashley. The article is quoted as he wrote it.

FIRST RURAL DELIVERY BEGAN AT CHINA GROVE

BY: W. T. LASLEY

Pleading with skeptical farmers to let Uncle Sam bring their mail to their front doorsteps is hardly conceivable today with the safety, speed and efficiency that characterizes the highly systematized postal service developed out of decades of experimentation and study. Yet, that is exactly what happened 44 years ago when the first rural free delivery service in North Carolina was inaugurated at China Grove in Rowan county.



A trail was blazed when Postmaster General William L. Wilson of West Virginia, under the second administration of President Cleveland, launched a rural experimentation program. This trail began with a selected group of farmers and rural citizens who did not think it safe to leave their mail outside in boxes, to today's thousands of miles of rural routes that twist through most every back road and country lane that leads to a patron of the biggest business institution on earth.

A rural mail box is no longer an oddity - it is an indispensable commodity.

China Grove, cradle for the infant rural free delivery, has received little recognition for its distinction. Only a marker is there to commemorate the day on October 23, 1896, when the route was officially approved. Many of its citizens are unaware that the record exists and very few in the country have bothered to care or wonder about it all. Yet the town, now a thriving village in the midst of a large textile manufacturing area, carries an honor distinct to itself and Rowan county, as well as to the state as a whole.

When the rural route experimentation program was launched, only 15 sites were selected throughout the nation. Thus, China Grove not only holds the "first in the state, but is among the first in the entire United States to receive the free delivery of its mail to rural citizens.

One may well ask why.

There was no haphazard selection, nor was a mass of geographical data required. Where calculations are often involved in undertakings of this importance, the selection followed a normal and direct course, proclaiming honor where it was most richly deserved.

Honor came to two men in the naming of China Grove, both sons of Rowan county; Congressman John S. Henderson, chairman of the Post Office and Post Roads committee, and Hon. Derr Craige, third assistant postmaster general. It was a tribute to their loyal service and diligent labor.

Postmaster General Wanamaker was the first to officially suggest rural delivery, but the seed which he planted did not ripen until five years later when, under West Virginia's Postmaster General Wilson, Congress appropriated sufficient funds to begin the work.

The first bill authorizing rural delivery was introduced in Congress January 5, 1892, by Hon. James O'Donnell, of Michigan. The appropriation was for \$6,000,000 but failed of passage. A bill proposed by Hon. T. E. Watson, of Georgia, became a law on March 3, 1893, appropriating \$10,000 for experimental delivery. An additional \$20,000 was provided June 16, 1894 but the total sum was deemed by the Postmaster General as insufficient for an experimental service. Another \$10,000 was made available on June 9, 1896, and it was then that the total sum of \$40,000 was thrown into the field, the first experimental routes being established from Charles Town, Uvilla, and Hall town, West Virginia, effective October 1, 1896, just 22 days before a similar route went out from the North Carolina town.

On June 30, 1897, the end of one year and nine months after establishment of the first route, the service had grown to 82 routes from 43 post offices in 29 different states.

In 1897 the 82 routes covered 1,843 miles. The annual appropriation was \$40,000.

By 1939, the service had grown to 32,839 routes covering 1,392,657 miles and there was an annual appropriation of \$91,141,653.

The estimated number of families served by rural delivery on June 30, 1939 was 7,708,000 or 28,650,000 individuals.

The work was not to be shunted aside that easily.

The first man to carry the route was J. B. Goodnight, who lived just outside the town limits. Despite his every effort to convince the rural people, there was no acceptance of the benefits of a rural mail delivery. The worry and aggravation thus experienced led to a conviction that the experiment was doomed to failure. An inspector of the Post Office Department, Mr. Gillespie, and Col. A. H. Boyden, Salisbury Postmaster, then took a hand.

A young store manager, C. J. Deaton, was called to Salisbury for a conference with the two men. The outcome was that Mr. Deaton was placed in charge of the experimental service, now divided into two short routes.

The postal inspector requested that two men be procured for an examination on the following day. The two, A. L. Cagle and Guy Trexler, were selected and became carriers on the two routes, starting November 26, 1896. In a very short time, Mr. Deaton was appointed postmaster at China Grove.

He accompanied the carriers on their routes. "I had to go out with the boys," Mr. Deaton recalls, "and beg the people to let me deliver their mail for them for as long as 30 days, and if for any reason they were not satisfied after that time, I would do my best to satisfy them in some other way. There were only two families willing to have their mail sent out, but we gave the very best service we knew how to give and I am happy to say that it was a grand success."

Mr. Deaton is now in his sixth year as assistant tax collector for Rowan county. He served as register of deeds for a six-year period. The China Grove office is steadily progressing under Postmaster H. A. McNeeley and Assistant Postmaster E. A. Freeze. Roy E. Mills carries the rural route today.

To get the appointment as state head of the big experiment that was to reach out over the entire nation, Mr. Deaton describes his trip to Salisbury:

"On November 26, 1896 Colonel Boyden called me to meet him at a hotel in Salisbury, not even hinting as to what he wanted me to come for. The only north bound passenger train until well in the evening had just passed. The weather was dreadfully cold and all the so-called roads were frozen almost like cement. The distance from China Grove to Salisbury was nine miles and it took me three hours and 10 minutes to drive it with a real good horse."

Thus, the rural delivery began in the dead of winter, a fitting setting for a service that has gone on unceasingly through the years with a tradition that the mail must go out despite snow or sleet or rain or any of the ravages of the elements upon human facilities.

FREE CITY DELIVERY IN NORTH CAROLINA BY: DARRELL ERTZBERGER

While free delivery of mail from the post office to a home or business is taken for granted today, this service did not exist at all until 1863. It did not arrive in North Carolina until 1883.

City mail delivery began in larger northern cities on July 1, 1863 (the South did not consider itself under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Post Office Department at that time, of course). Prior to that date, patrons had to visit the Post Office to receive their mail. Before 1855, this had a practical purpose. Pre-payment of postage, i.e. postage paid by the sender, was not required and most letters were sent postage due. It made sense for patrons to visit the Post Office to get their mail because usually

they had to pay some postage in order to receive their letters. Many people and businesses had boxes or accounts at their local Post Office to keep a running tab on the amount they owed for postage. Beginning in 1855, pre-payment of postage was required. The need to visit the Post Office to pay postage for mail generally disappeared.

Enterprising businessmen found that people and businesses would pay to have their mail carried from the Post Office to their home or office. Private local posts were established to provide this service. People would pay the private company a fee, usually a penny or two, to carry a letter to or from the post office. A couple of the better known services were Blood's Local Post in Philadelphia and Boyd's in New York City. Some of these posts issued their own stamps. These services were all legal, since the laws governing the Post Office gave it exclusive rights to the carriage of mail between post offices only.

In 1851, the Post Office Department decided to get some of this business and revenue for itself. Government sponsored carrier service was established in a few cities to carry letters at one or two cents apiece. Some local postmasters authorized this service on a sort of semi-official basis. The Post Office Department printed carrier stamps, as did some of the local postmasters.

On July 1, 1863, all carrier fees were abolished and free city delivery was provided to cities with populations greater than twenty thousand.

Free city delivery took its time to arrive in North Carolina. The state did not have particularly large cities and the reconstruction after the war did not encourage growth. Wilmington was the first place to establish free city delivery on May 1 1883.

Free city delivery did not spread quickly in the state. Raleigh established the service in 1884; Charlotte in 1887. Table I shows the date free city delivery was established for any North Carolina city up to 1910. It is interesting to note that in some areas Rural Free Delivery was established before free city service. China Grove in Rowan County had an early RFD route in 1896, but Salisbury, the county seat, did not get free city delivery until six years later in 1902.

For collectors, free city delivery has a couple of implications: the use of street addresses and the use of carrier backstamps.

Prior to the establishment of city delivery, there was no vital need for house numbers or street addresses on letters. After free delivery was established, addresses began to include house numbers and street names. A cover addressed to anywhere in North Carolina with a street address prior to 1883 would be unusual.



In some cities during the 1880's, the city carriers backstamped mail they picked up or delivered with a CARRIER datestamp. See Figure 1. Use of these backstamps appears to have stopped by 1890. They are known from Washington, Atlanta, and several other cities. It is not known if carriers in Wilmington, Raleigh, or Charlotte used them. Those three cities are the only ones in the state that had free delivery service at some time in the 1880's. Collectors should examine the back of any 1880's covers addressed to those cities for carrier markings. The author would like to hear of any markings that are found.

Table I
 Establishment of Free City Delivery in North Carolina up to 1910

<u>City</u>	<u>Date Service Established</u>	<u>Initial Number of Carriers</u>
Wilmington	May 1, 1883	
Raleigh	Oct. 1, 1884	
Charlotte	Sept. 1, 1887	
Asheville	Jan. 1, 1890	
Durham	Nov. 1, 1890	
Greensboro	Nov. 1, 1890	
Winston-Salem	Oct. 1, 1891	
New Bern	May 1, 1900	5
Goldsboro	Mar. 1, 1902	3
Salisbury	Sept. 1, 1902	3
High Point	Dec. 1, 1902	2
Statesville	Mar. 1, 1903	2
Fayetteville	Feb. 1, 1904	4
Elizabeth City	Aug. 1, 1904	4
Kinston	Mar. 1, 1905	3
Wilson	Feb. 1, 1906	4
Washington	May 1, 1906	3
Rocky Mount	Nov. 1, 1906	3
Concord	Nov. 1, 1907	3
Henderson	May 15, 1908	3
Hickory	May 15, 1908	3
Gastonia	Sept. 1, 1909	3

NATIONAL AIRMAIL WEEK - MAY 15-21, 1938
 (A NORTH CAROLINIAN THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN)
 BY: TONY L. CRUMBLEY

In commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the First Air Mail Service, the President along with Postmaster James A. Farley declared May 15-21, 1938 National Air Mail Week. Numerous events were scheduled across the nation including a massive local Cachet Campaign.

Charlotte Postmaster Paul R. Younts was named National Executive Chairman for the National Air Mail Week Campaign.

Postmaster Younts' leadership produced a very successful national campaign. In North Carolina alone, nearly 160 different towns produced special Cachets honoring this event. Many of the towns which were so small it was hard to conceive of them having seen an airplane at this time, much less consider airmail service.

With all the extensive research done by The American Airmail Society, little has been done to record the known Cachets produced for this event. Thanks to a surviving letter from James H. McKenzie, North Carolina's State Chairman, at least a partial list of towns offering Cachets in North Carolina is known. This list of towns follows; if other cities are known the author would appreciate hearing about them.

Aberdeen	Forest City	Littleton	Rocky Mount
Arden	Fort Bragg	Linville	Roseboro
Asheboro	Franklinton	Lumberton	Rosehill
Asheville	Freeland	Manchester	Rosman
Aurora	Granite Quarry	Madison	Salisbury
Bandana	Gatesville	Manteo	Saluda
Battleboro	Gold Hill	Mebane	Sanford
Benham	Granite Falls	Milton	Scotland Neck
Black Mountain	Greensboro	Minneapolis	Shelby
Boone	Grifton	Maxton	Sparta
Buladean	Graham	Mocksville	Spencer
Burlington	Hamlet	Monroe	Spring Hope
Burnsville	Hemp	Mooresville	Statesville
Barium Springs	Henderson	Morganton	Staley
Canton	Hendersonville	Mount Airy	Stiles
Central Falls	Henrico	Mount Giliad	Sugar Grove
Chapel Hill	Hickory	Mount Olive	Sunbury
Charlotte	Highlands	Mount Pleasant	Swannanoa
Cherryville	High Point	New Bern	Tarboro
China Grove	Hudson	New London	Taylorsville
Clinton	Huntersville	Newell	Thomasville
Columbia	Ingalls	Newton Grove	Tryon
Concord	Jacksonville	North Wilkesboro	Troy
Cornelius	Kannapolis	Ocracoke	Wallace
Dallas	Kelly	Oteen	Valle Crucis
Davidson	Kenly	Overhills	Walnut Cove
Dunn	Kill Devil Hills	Pinehurst	Washington
Durham	Kings Mountain	Pineville	Waxhaw
East Spencer	Kinston	Pinnacle	Weaverville
Edenton	Kittrell	Portsmouth	Weldon
Elizabeth City	Kitty Hawk	Plymouth	Whitakers
Elm City	Lagoon	Raleigh	Wilmington
Franklin	Laxon	Randleman	Wilson
Elon College	Leaksville	Ridgecrest	Winston-Salem
Enka	Leicester	Ransomville	Winton
Fair Bluff	Lenoir	Roanoke Rapids	Wolf Mountain
Faith	Lexington	Rockingham	Zebulon
Fletcher	Lincolnton	Rockwell	

MAIL FROM ROANOKE ISLAND IN THE CIVIL WAR
BY: STEFAN JARONSKI

Shortly after North Carolina's secession from the Union in 1861, the Tarheel State made preparations to defend her coast. Forts were constructed at Oregon, Ocracoke and Hatteras Inlets, while Roanoke Island was made a major defensive bastion.

By November, 1861, the Outer Banks had been placed within the District of Norfolk, VA. The district's Fourth Brigade under Henry Wise was stationed on the island. The Fourth Brigade consisted of the 3rd Georgia; 8th, 17th and 31st North Carolina (from December); Wise's Legion; 2nd N.C. Battalion; and the 46th and 59th Virginia (in February). Brigade headquarters was at Nags Head.

From November until February 1862, these troops manned Forts Huger and Bartow on Roanoke. On February 8, a Union force under Burnside attacked and captured most of these Confederates. The fall of Roanoke Island became a major controversy in the months that followed.

During the Confederate's stay on the island, supplies and mail were obtained from Norfolk. General Wise requested that a post office be opened on the island but his request was denied by the Post Office Department. The mail was transported between Roanoke and the Norfolk post office at the cost of the Army.

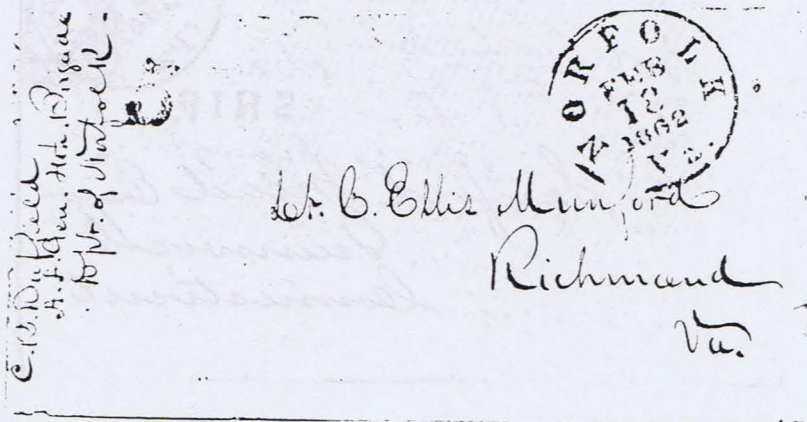


Figure 1

Covers from the Roanoke Island garrison are extremely rare. In over 15 years of searching, I have seen only one cover, maybe. This cover, illustrated here, if it really is from the brigade headquarters at Nags Head, would have been sent just before the site was evacuated February 9. It is postmarked February 18, so the true nature of the cover's origin is in doubt. The letter could have been written near the Virginia border just after the events in Albemarle Sound.

Does anyone have a cover from the garrison of Roanoke Island?

Mail from the Federal troops occupying Albemarle Sound was at first placed aboard any available supply steamers headed north. The covers in Figure 2 and 3 are such examples.

The cover in Figure 2 was sent from one of Burnside's Expeditions, while it was still on ships off Roanoke Island, February 4-8, 1862. The circular "SOLDIERS LETTER 24TH REGT. MASS. VOL./N.E.G. (New England Guard)" is a handstamped soldier's due endorsement used by that regiment throughout the war. This cover was carried aboard a supply vessel returning North and was posted at Baltimore MD on February 9, 1862. Both the postmark and due marking are in blue ink; the regimental handstamp is in black.

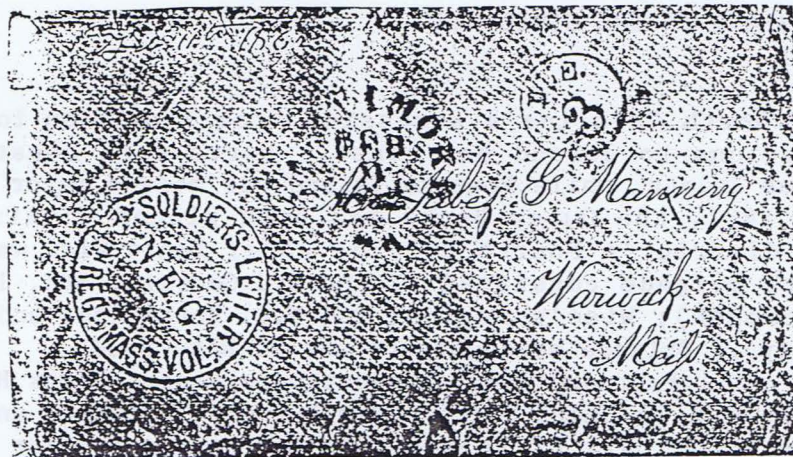


Figure 2

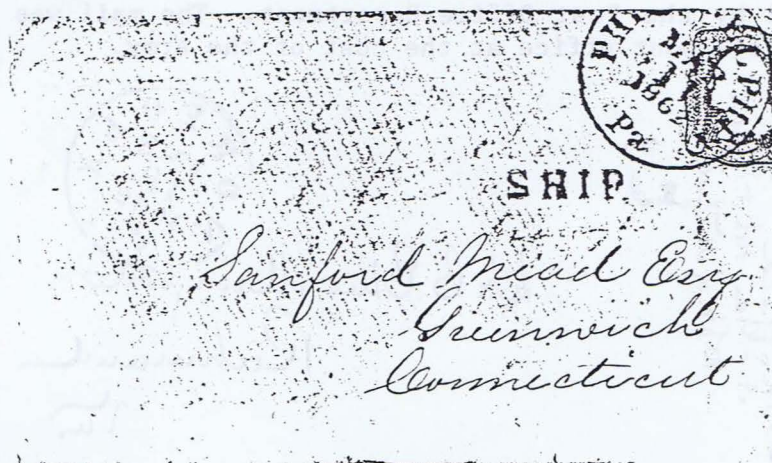


Figure 3

Figure 3 illustrates a letter from Roanoke Island sent just after Union occupation. It also was sent North on a returning supply/mail vessel, which went to Philadelphia. The sender was a member of either the 8th, 10th, or 11th Connecticut Regiments.

His letter, which has survived, is headed "Roanoke Island, March 4th, 1862," but was written aboard one of the Union ships. The envelope was postmarked by the Philadelphia post office a week later. The post office also applied a strike of its prewar "SHIP" marking to indicate that the letter was deposited in the post office by the captain of a vessel not contracted to carry mail.

If this had been a true ship letter there would have been another 2 cents charged to make up the five-cent rate in effect.

More probably, this letter was one of a large shipment of soldiers' letters from the Expedition and so received the exemption from the higher rate. Later in 1862 such mail was stamped with the Philadelphia "U.S. SHIP" marking.

Mail to the troops was generally addressed to Burnside's Coast Division, Roanoke Island, North Carolina. Letters from home were directed by the postal system to Philadelphia, where they were placed aboard Navy or Army contract supply steamers bound for North Carolina. A major mail arrived for the troops on Roanoke Island on February 19 and another two in early March. By May 1862 there was a weekly mail for the troops.

As the military situation stabilized in the Carolina Sounds and in the Norfolk, VA area, a more regular postal arrangement was made for the Federal troops. Their letters were sent by steamer to Norfolk, where they were processed by the post office there. This system made sense since most suppliers, etc. for the troops on Roanoke came from Norfolk. Figure 4 is an example of this usage.

The cover bears the 29mm double-circle postmark of Norfolk, dated May 26, 1865. The letter enclosed is headed, "Head Quarters 101 Regt Pa Veteran Volunteers, Roanoke Island N.C., May 21st." I have seen other examples from 1863 and 1864.

If anyone has other examples of Confederate or Union mail from Roanoke Island and Albemarle Sound, I would appreciate hearing from her/him. I am also interested in recording other covers with the N.E.G. handstamp.

A NEW FIND

BY: VERNON S. STROUPE

Several times each year I go treasure hunting in the North Carolina Department of Archives and History in Raleigh. My 'treasures' are the postal markings of North Carolina and the dates of their use. The clerks of the N.C. Dept. of Archives and History are extremely cooperative in helping me find pay dirt.

Recently, I have been going through the Governor's Papers, that is, the books containing the Governors incoming mail, usually petitions, from his constituency. These are large books in which the original papers have been mounted for preservation. These books also contain the letters received by the Governor from other states and from the Federal government in Washington. It is not unusual to find letters from Tyler, Andrew Jackson, John Quincy Adams, etc. It is a most stimulating place to go hunting.

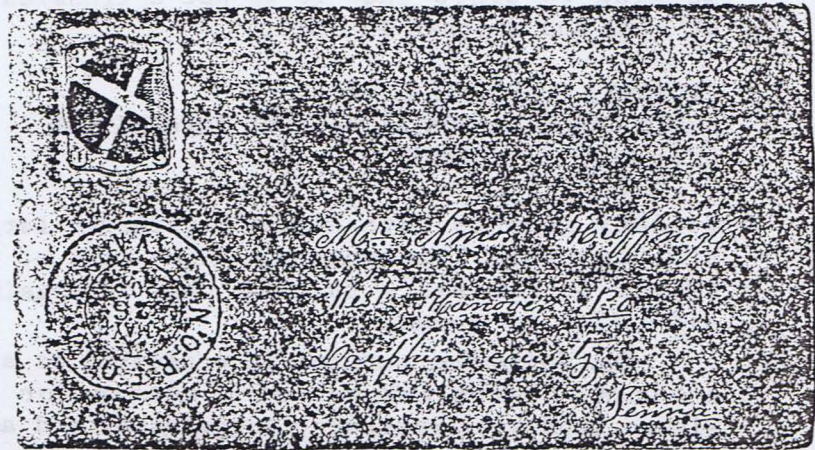


Figure 4



The Fayetteville cover addressed to Gov. Gabriel Holmes is a recent find. It is the ordinary FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. cds in red ink and with the usual black manuscript "10", but look at the fancy PAID in an oval sunburst! I found two copies of this marking to prove that it is not a transient item that we can forget; one is on a sfl of 1822 and another in 1824.

PROPOSED CLASSIFICATION

NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORY INFORMATION

BY: RUTH Y. WETMORE

Society members have already gathered large amounts of N.C. postal history data and bibliographic information. Some sort of organizational framework of classification system is necessary to make this increasing volume of information readily available and useful to members.

The following outline is presented as a listing of subject headings to get things started. Establishment of a system for locating sources easily will benefit you. Please send your comments, suggestions and additions to the Newsletter editor.

- I. Primary Sources
 - A. U.S. Postal Records & Publications
 - B. Lists of U.S. Post Offices, 1805-1881
 - C. Lists of State, County & Municipal Post Offices
 - D. Place Names & Gazetteers
 - E. Atlases & Postal Maps
 - F. Other Sources
- II. Postal History (General)
 - A. Colonial Period
 - B. Early Statehood to Civil War
 - C. Civil War
 - D. Late 19th Century
 - E. Twentieth Century
- III. Postal History (By Subject)
 - A. Airmail
 - B. Carriers & Locals
 - C. Express Mail of 1836-1839, 1845
 - D. Flag Cancellations
 - E. Highway Post Offices
 - F. Ship Mail
 - G. Postmarks
 - 1. Fancy
 - 2. Postmaster & County
 - 3. Doane
 - 4. Machine
 - 5. Pictorial
 - H. Postmaster Provisionals
 - I. Railway Mail
 - J. Rural Free Delivery
 - K. Steamboat Mail
 - L. Stamps - Issue of 1847
 - M. Stamps - Issue of 1861
 - N. Stamps - Issue of. . .

North Carolina Postal History Society
April, 1985
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MINUTES OF NCPHS MEETING, FEBRUARY 23, 1985
Submitted by: Darrell Ertzberger

Meeting was called to order by Tony Crumbley at 12:10 in the absence of President Tilles.

Official business of the meeting included:

Tony Crumbley asked for volunteers to serve on a committee to nominate officers and members of the board for 1986. These nominations will be introduced at the summer meeting of the society. Milton Wicker volunteered to serve as chairman. Phil Perkinson and T.H. Pierce agreed to serve as committee members.

Treasurer Milton Wicker reported on the state of the society's accounts. Currently the Society is operating in the black, however, increased revenues are needed to expand the works of this organization. The Society's goals is to have 100 members by the end of 1985.

The motion was made to have the second 1985 meeting of the society in Charlotte, in conjunction with CHARPEX '85. After some discussion, the society tentatively agreed.

Other discussions were held on various topics of interest to the members.

Members were reminded that the Society newsletter will print want ads for member free of charge. Members should send their ad to Tony Crumbley, editor of the newsletter for inclusion in the next issue. Also articles on North Carolina postal history for the newsletter are always welcome.

Members were encouraged to get out and attempt to locate old post office sites before the buildings or other old landmarks disappear. A great deal of information (and sometimes discoveries of covers) can be obtained from these old places.

Several members were conducting research projects on specific counties. They asked for the help of the members to record any markings. If you have any covers from post offices in Mecklenburg County, please send a clear photocopy of them to Darryl Wally, 324 Carlton, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514. Photocopies of any markings from Montgomery County should be sent to Darrell Ertzberger, P.O. Box 16361, Alexandria, VA 22302. Milton Wicker, 508 Lindley Road, Greensboro, N.C., would like copies of any Doane or RFD cancels from any county.

The meeting adjourned at 12:50.

N.C.P.H. SOCIETY ANNUAL CONVENTION

The 1985 Annual Convention will be held at CHARPEX '85. The N.C.P.H. Society will hold a business meeting on Saturday, July 27 at 12:00 noon. This years convention site is in the Community Room of the Eastland Mall, located on Sharon Amity Road at Central Avenue in Charlotte, NC.

Each member is encouraged to not only attend the meeting, but also to prepare an exhibit for display. A prospect can be obtained from your Editor. The N.C.P.H. Society award will again be presented to the best N.C. Postal History Exhibit.

IN MEMORIAM - GARY G. FLATOW

On February 5, 1985, Gary Flatow closed his albums for the last time. Gary was known by many of us for his love of N.C. Postal History. His exhibit of N.C. Railroad Covers has won many top awards including the N.C.P.H. Society Award. I'm sure I speak for each of you when I say we'll miss him.