

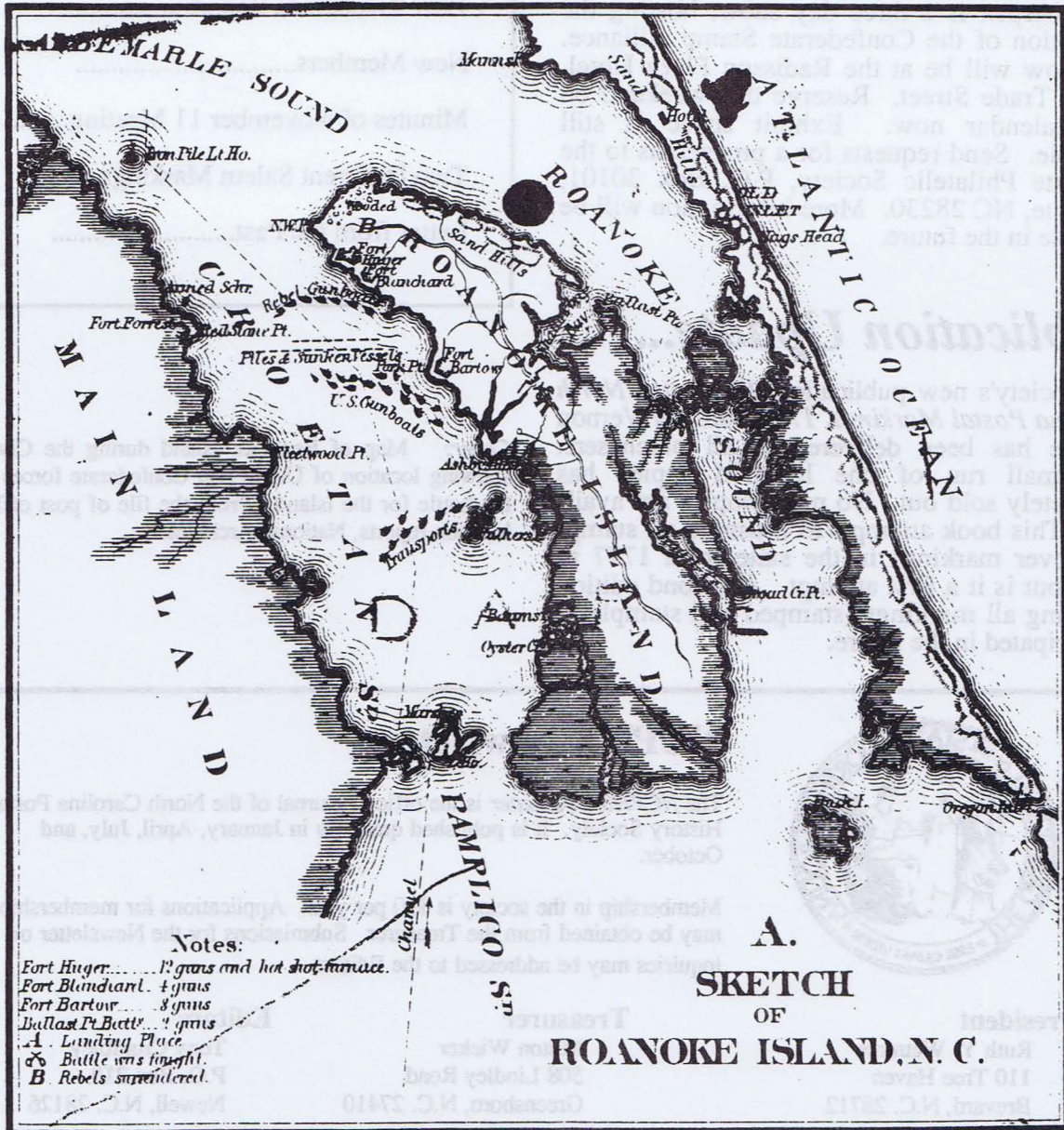
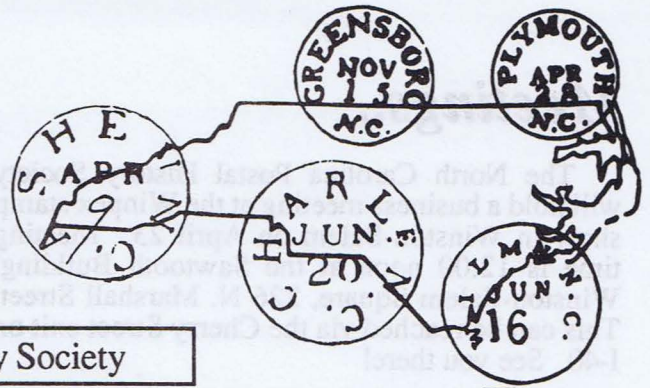
NCPHS Newsletter

The Journal of the North Carolina Postal History Society

Volume 7, No. 1

Winter, 1988

Whole No. 24



Report of Maj. Gen. J. G. Foster to the Committee on the Conduct of the War.

Bowen & Co. Lith. Phila.

Dare County

Affiliate Number 155 of the American Philatelic Society



Meetings..

The North Carolina Postal History Society will hold a business meeting at the Wimpex stamp show in Winston-Salem on April 23. Meeting time is 12:00 noon at the Sawtooth Building, Winston-Salem Square, 226 N. Marshall Street. This can be reached via the Cherry Street exit on I-40. See you there!

The Society will hold the 1988 Annual Meeting at Charpex in Charlotte, August 5 to 7. This year Charpex is a three day show, hosting the convention of the Confederate Stamp Alliance. The show will be at the Radisson Plaza Hotel, 132 E. Trade Street. Reserve this weekend on your calendar now. Exhibit space is still available. Send requests for a prospectus to the Charlotte Philatelic Society, P.O. Box 30101, Charlotte, NC 28230. More information will be available in the future.

Publication Update...

The Society's new publication, *Illustrated North Carolina Postal Markings, 1777-1865* by Vernon Stroupe has been delivered to all purchasers. The small run of one hundred copies has completely sold out. No more copies are available. This book attempts to illustrate all stampless cover markings in the state from 1777 to 1865, but is it a first attempt. A second edition including all markings (stamped and stampless) is anticipated in the future.

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Cover: Map of Roanoke Island during the Civil War showing location of Union and Confederate forces during the battle for the island. From the file of post office site location reports, National Archives.



NCPHS Newsletter

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

Membership in the society is \$10 per year. Applications for membership may be obtained from the Treasurer. Submissions for the Newsletter or inquiries may be addressed to the Editors.

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A Postal History of Dare County

by

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Dare County is the eastern-most part of North Carolina and can rightfully claim to be the oldest spot settled by Englishmen in the United States. The recorded history of the county begins in 1585, when the English began attempts to create a colony there. Today the economy of the area is based on tourism and a little fishing.

Dare County covers an area the size of Rhode Island, but most of this is water: the Pamlico, Currituck, Roanoke, and Croatan Sounds. The county consists of three pieces, Roanoke Island, the Outer Banks from the county line to Hatteras Inlet, and a large area of low swampy mainland between the Alligator River and the sounds. Most of the population resides on Roanoke Island and the Banks. In the summer, the population of some Outer Banks' resort communities swells to ten times its winter size.

The county was created in 1870 from parts of Currituck, Hyde, Tyrrell Counties. In 1920 a section of the northern banks, containing Duck and Kitty Hawk was transferred from Currituck.

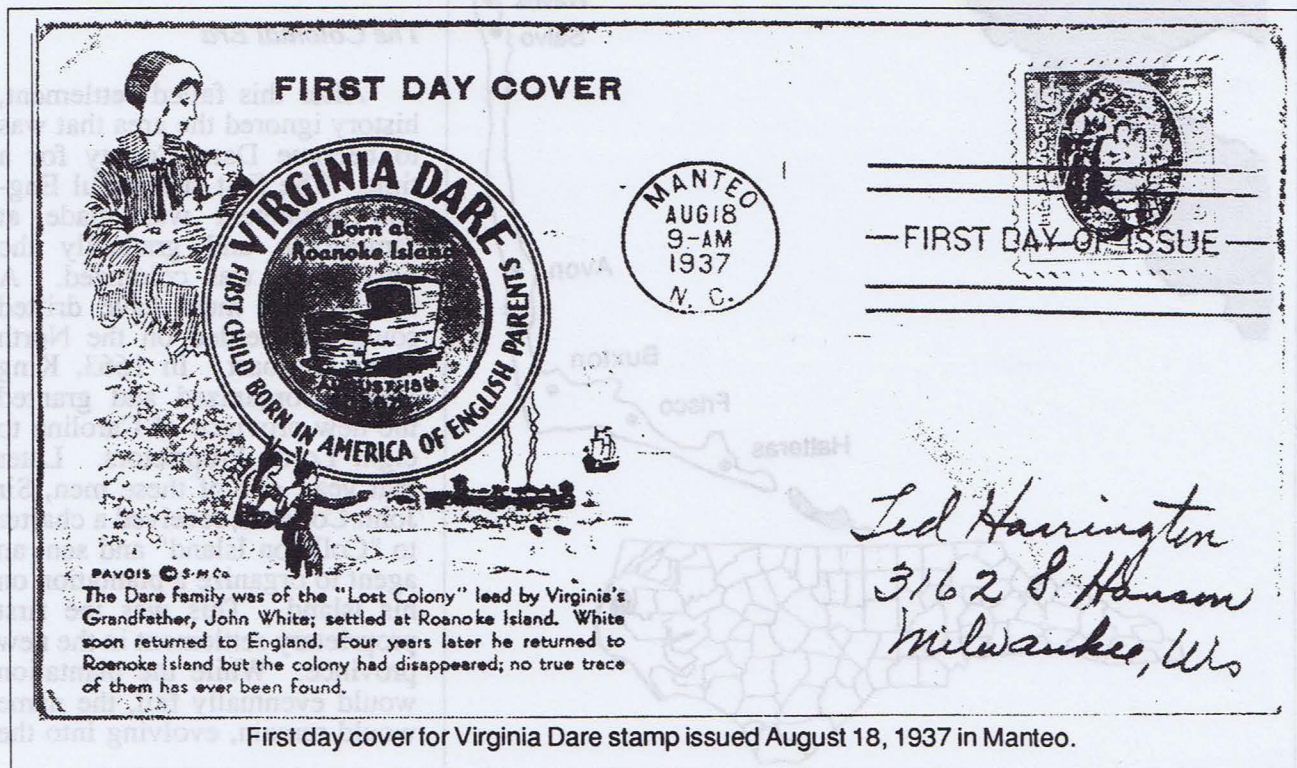
Dare has had only twenty-seven post offices. Several of these were just name changes. Fifteen are still in operation today.

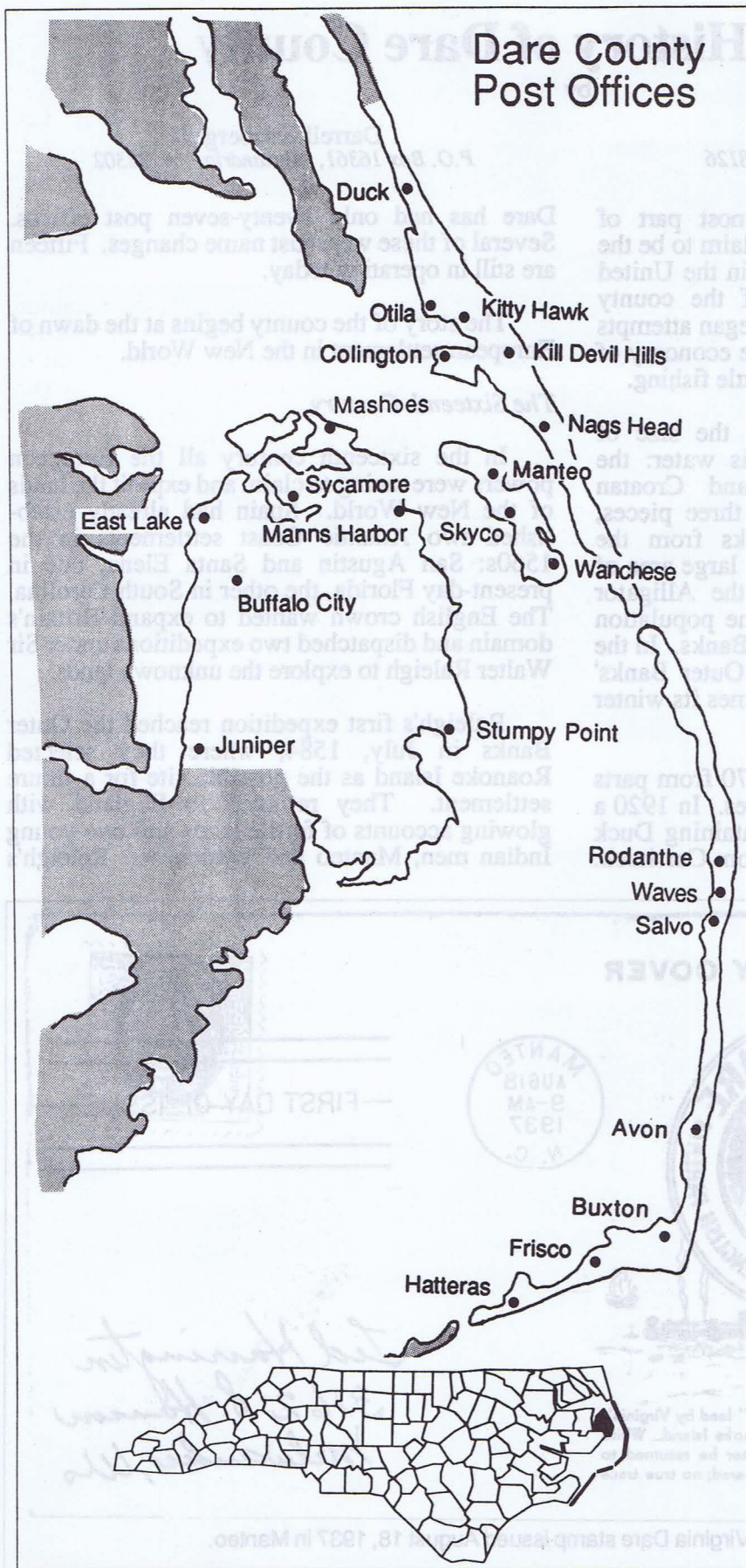
The story of the county begins at the dawn of European settlement in the New World.

The Sixteenth Century

In the sixteenth century all the European powers were racing to claim and exploit the lands of the New World. Spain had already established two Atlantic Coast settlements in the 1560s: San Agustin and Santa Elena, one in present-day Florida, the other in South Carolina. The English crown wanted to expand Britain's domain and dispatched two expeditions under Sir Walter Raleigh to explore the unknown lands.

Raleigh's first expedition reached the Outer Banks in July, 1584, where they selected Roanoke Island as the possible site for a future settlement. They returned to England with glowing accounts of fertile lands and two young Indian men, Manteo and Wanchese. Raleigh's





second expedition arrived off the coast in the spring of 1585. The flotilla remained until late August when it sailed for England leaving 107 men on Roanoke Island to build a fort. These men were picked up, starving, in June of the next year by Sir Francis Drake.

The English decided that a settlement of families had a better chance of survival than a fort of soldiers. A group of men, women, and children under the command of John White reached Roanoke Island in July, 1587. On August 18, White's daughter, Eleanor Dare gave birth to a girl named Virginia Dare, the first child born of English parents in America. When White left Roanoke in late August, his daughter and new grandchild were among the 112 who remained in the New World. White was prevented from returning until 1590 because of the war with Spain. Upon his arrival at Roanoke Island, no trace was found of the settlers left three years earlier. They became known as the "Lost Colony."

The Colonial Era

After this failed settlement, history ignored the area that was to become Dare County for a time. The first successful English settlement was made at Jamestown and gradually the East Coast was colonized. A few settlers must have drifted south and settled on the North Carolina coast. In 1663, King Charles organized and granted the new province of Carolina to eight Lords Proprietors. Later that year, one of these men, Sir John Colleton, received a charter to "Colleton Island" and sent an agent to organize a plantation on his island. This was the first proprietary settlement in the new province. While the plantation would eventually fail, the name would remain, evolving into the

present-day spelling "Colington."

Families slowly settled on the banks and islands. Many were farmers and stockmen, raising cattle, hogs, or sheep. Other made a living by fishing or cutting up and boiling down the whales that washed ashore for their oil. Attempts to create a port town on Roanoke Island were thwarted when Roanoke Inlet, opposite the island just above the site of today's Nags Head, filled with sand, eliminating the passage to the sea.

Small settlements developed on the sound sides of the banks, protected from the high winds and waves. The village of Hatteras was on the sound side of the island, in a wooded area west of the cape. By 1774, people were living at Kinnakeet and several other places along the banks.

The First Half of the Nineteenth Century

During the first decades of the nineteenth century, the new nation and state undertook a few projects to improve the Outer Banks. Low light houses were built and light ships were stationed to guide shipping. There were studies by the state to reopen the Roanoke Inlet and create another shipping route into the sounds in addition to the passage at Ocracoke Inlet.

In actions that would foretell the economic future of the area, the planters of the coastal regions began to build summer cottages on the banks. Nags Head was a popular spot. In 1838 a hotel was erected to accomodate the summer visitors. Steamers made frequent runs from ports on the mainland to the banks, bringing summer vacationers who would often stay entire

Table of Dare County Post Offices

Office	Open	Closed	Comments
Avon	22 Mar 1883	operating	former Kinnekeet
Buffalo City	11 Oct 1889	15 Aug 1903	mail to East Lake
	29 Feb 1908	11 June 1947	mail to East Lake
Buxton	6 Mar 1882	operating	fomer The Cape
Colington	14 June 1889	28 Feb 1945	mail to Kitty Hawk
Duck	29 June 1900	31 Aug 1941	mail to Kitty Hawk, est Currituck
East Lake	15 July 1875	operating	
Frisco	31 Jan 1898	operating	
Griffin	26 June 1909	26 Apr 1915	changed to Naghead
Hatteras	15 July 1858	9 Aug 1869	mail to Washington, est Hyde
	9 Nov 1871	27 Apr 1877	mail to The Cape
	23 May 1877	operating	
Juniper	19 June 1903	15 July 1912	mail to Mon Swamp
Kill Devil Hills	28 Jan 1938	operating	
Kinnekeet	4 Dec 1873	21 Mar 1883	changed to Avon
Kitty Hawk	11 Nov 1878	operating	est Currituck
Manns Harbor	27 Sept 1876	operating	
Manteo	9 May 1870	operating	former Roanoke Island
Mashoes	27 Feb 1891	29 Feb 1952	mail to Manns Harbor
Naghead	15 Nov 1893	27 Apr 1915	former Nags Head
	27 Apr 1915	6 Mar 1916	former Griffin, changed to Nags Head
Nags Head	27 June 1884	14 Nov 1893	changed to Naghead
	6 Mar 1916	operating	former Naghead, Griffin
Otila	20 Sept 1905	15 May 1918	mail to Kitty Hawk, est & dis Currituck
Roanoke Island	2 May 1870	8 May 1870	changed to Manteo
Rodanthe	4 Dec 1873	15 Jan 1874	
	6 Nov 1874	operating	
Salvo	26 Jan 1901	operating	
Skyco	1 Sept 1892	31 Jan 1913	mail to Wanchese
Stumpy Point	18 Sept 1876	9 July 1883	
	18 Oct 1883	operating	
Sycamore	8 Sept 1906	15 May 1919	mail to Buffalo City
The Cape	4 Dec 1873	5 May 1882	changed to Buxton
Wanchese	14 June 1886	operating	
Waves	5 Apr 1939	operating	

season before returning home. In the 1840s the hotel was enlarged and a long dock was added into the sound. It was a very fashionable place for the wealthy planters of eastern North Carolina and tidewater Virginia until the eve of the Civil War.

Roanoke Island was the home of several plantations and smaller farmers. The population was scattered across the island; there were no established settlements. The 1850 census reported 442 free inhabitants and 168 slaves.

During this early period, any letters were given to ship captains who would deposit them in the mails at their next port of call. Often this was at Edenton, Elizabeth City, or New Bern (see this issue's "Letter From the Past" for a 1835 letter from Roanoke Island, posted at Elizabeth City).

In 1846 a hurricane rearranged the land. Oregon and Hatteras inlets opened, providing new channels to the ocean. The village of Hatteras developed a larger shipping and piloting business due to the new inlet. According to the 1850 census it was home to 661 residents, including 87 slaves. The first post office in present-day Dare was established at Hatteras on July 15, 1858 with Robert Styron as postmaster.

The Civil War

It took several months for either the Confederacy or the Union to realize the importance of controlling the Outer Banks and sounds. The sounds were a supply route for the city of Norfolk. If the rebels lost the sounds and the banks, they could not hold that important naval base for long. Also the sounds provided excellent protection for small ships which could harass Federal shipping and bring in supplies. In the early months of the war, Confederate raiders seized sixteen U.S. merchantmen. The state began building a small navy in the sounds.

The Confederacy sent small forces to erect and garrison forts at Hatteras Inlet, Oregon Inlet and Roanoke Island. The population of the banks generally had little sympathy for the rebel cause. Most of their ties were to the North because of the shipping and trading business.

In August, 1861 the 880 Federals with seven warships captured Hatteras Inlet and the hastily erected forts which defended it. The small rebel garrisons were forced to retreat to Roanoke Island and the banks around Nags Head. The Confederacy still controlled shallow Oregon Inlet, but the deeper, more useful, Hatteras Inlet was

lost. Hatteras village was also lost. It is not clear if its post office continued to operate. In November, the CSA Post Office Department reported it was closed, but that may be because it was not longer in Confederate hands. At present, no covers from Hatteras have been reported for this period.

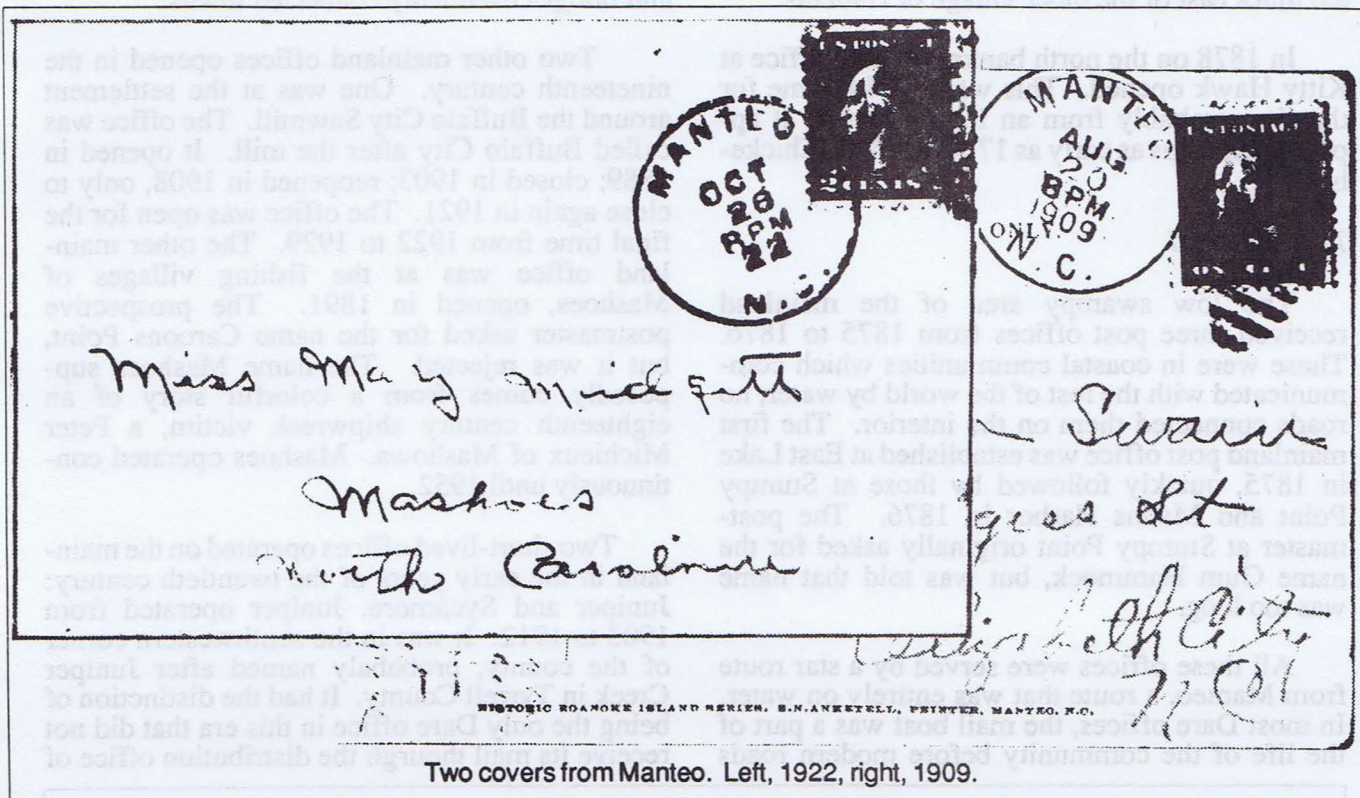
During the winter of 1861-62, while the Confederates strengthened three forts on Roanoke Island, General Henry A. Wise was placed in command of these defenses. He received some additional troops, mostly poorly armed green recruits, for a total force of about 5,000. He begged Richmond for more. In the North, General Ambrose Burnside gathered troops and ships for a second assault on North Carolina's coast.

On February 7, 1862, Burnside took Roanoke Island with 20,000 troops in eighty ships. After some fierce and messy fighting, the Confederates surrendered. Over 2,000 were taken prisoner, but some managed to flee inland, including General Wise, who abandoned his headquarters in the Nags Head Hotel. The hotel was burned rather than leave it to the Yankees.

In the next few weeks, Burnside's men took Edenton, Elizabeth City, and Winton. The lower end of the canal to Norfolk was blocked. On March 14, the majority of the Roanoke Island force departed to advance on New Bern. The Outer Banks and the Carolina sounds would remain in Federal hands for the duration of the war.

This influx of soldiers created the largest population the area had ever seen. Mail arrangements were needed by both armies. Confederate General Wise asked Richmond for a post office on Roanoke Island, but the request was denied. The army's correspondence was carried to Norfolk to enter the mail there. Jaronski reported in an 1985 article that only one questionable cover is known from the Confederate troops stationed at Roanoke Island. It was postmarked in Norfolk on February 14. If it was written on the island, it must have been penned as the place was abandoned.

The Federal troops occupying the coast generated much mail (see Scott Troutman's article in this issue about letters from some New Hampshire volunteers). At first, the mail was sent north on returning supply ships. These covers would be postmarked in the ships' first port of call; covers from Baltimore and Philadelphia are known. By May, 1862 regular weekly mails were scheduled via Philadelphia.



After the fall of Norfolk, most mail to and from Roanoke Island was routed through that office or Old Point Comfort.

Creation of Dare County

After the war was over, the soldiers departed and life on the coast began to return to normal. Summer vacationers slowly began to return and build cottages around Nags Head. A new hotel was erected.

The United States government began several projects to make the coast safer for shipping. Two new lighthouses were begun, one at Hatteras and another on Bodie Island above Oregon Inlet. The new Hatteras light began operation on December 16, 1870. The government also established a string of lifesaving stations along the coast. These stations were to perform rescue operations when ships ran aground or were caught in storms off the beach. Originally seven stations were built, and a patrol schedule was established to cover the beaches between them. These stations proved to be too widely spaced to be effective. The disastrous wrecks of the U.S.S. *Huron* in November, 1877, and the steamer *Metropolis* in January, 1878 resulted in the loss of 183 lives. Both ships broke up just off the beach. Had the lifesaving service been able to reach them sooner, more lives could have been saved. Congress

authorized eleven more stations between the Virginia state line and Hatteras Inlet. The construction of the lighthouses and the manning of the lifesaving stations employed many of the banks' residents.

The population of the area had increased and petitioned the state Assembly for a new county. Their wishes were granted by the creation of Dare County in 1870. The county was named after Virginia Dare. A site for the county seat was selected on Roanoke Island. A post office was established in the new county headquarters, at first officially called Roanoke Island for six days in May, 1870 until the name was changed to Manteo. It is likely the quick change in names resulted in confusion in Washington. The local office probably always went by the name Manteo.

Three new post offices, Kinnekeet, Rodanthe, and The Cape, opened on the Outer Banks on December 4, 1873, bringing postal service to these growing villages. This began the process of replacing the established places names with ones fostered by the Post Office Department. Sparrow Pugh, the first postmaster of Rodanthe, asked that his office be named Chickamacomico, the name of the settlement for decades. Probably the Post Office decided this name was too long and too hard to spell. The Cape was in the village near the new lighthouse,

ten miles east of the older village of Hatteras.

In 1878 on the north banks, the post office at Kitty Hawk opened. This was an old name for the site, probably from an Indian name. It appeared on maps as early as 1730, spelled "Chickehawk."

The Mainland

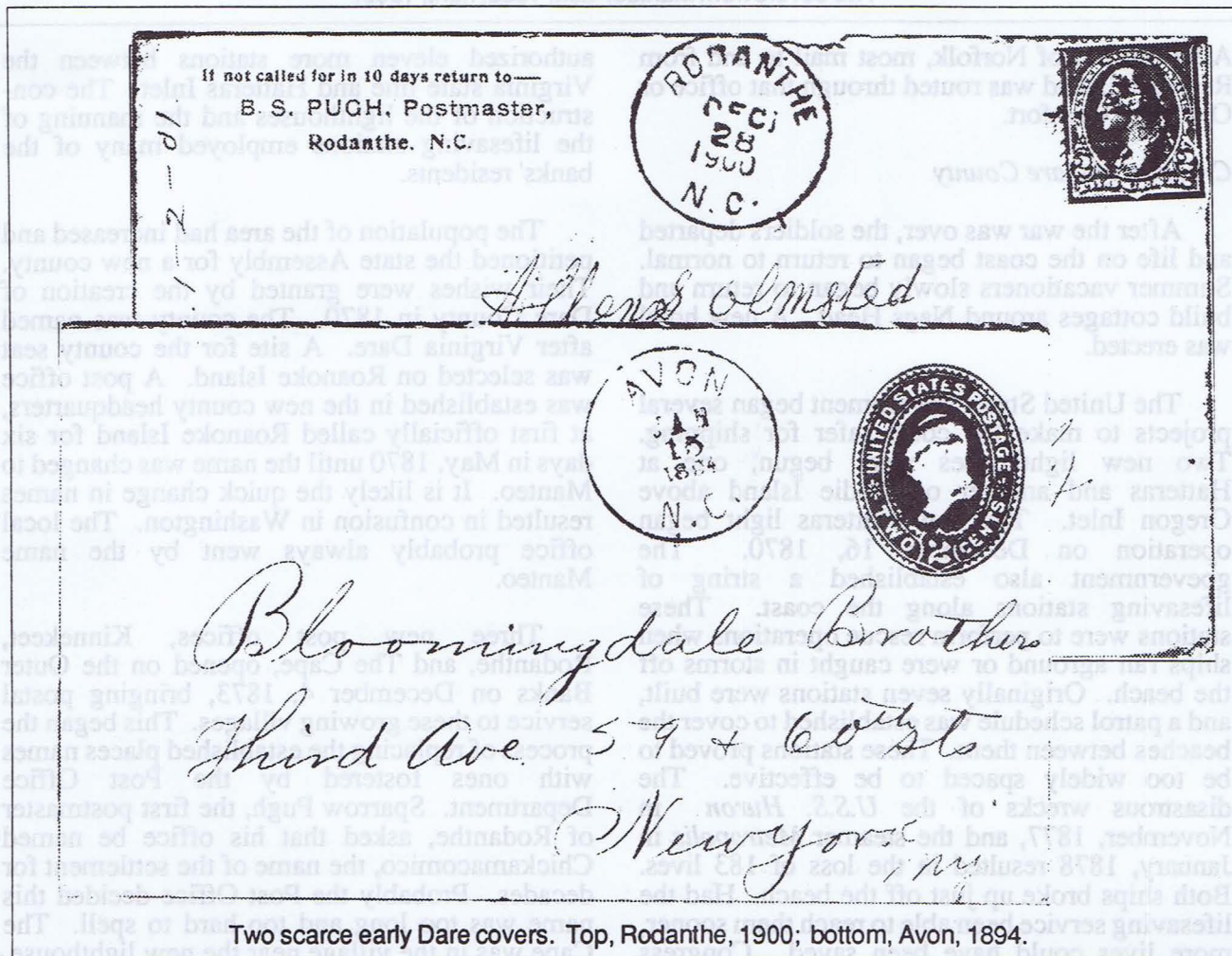
The low swampy area of the mainland received three post offices from 1875 to 1876. These were in coastal communities which communicated with the rest of the world by water; no roads connected them on the interior. The first mainland post office was established at East Lake in 1875, quickly followed by those at Stumpy Point and Manns Harbor in 1876. The postmaster at Stumpy Point originally asked for the name Gum Hammock, but was told that name was too long.

All these offices were served by a star route from Manteo, a route that was entirely on water. In most Dare offices, the mail boat was a part of the life of the community before modern roads

and bridges eventually connected towns.

Two other mainland offices opened in the nineteenth century. One was at the settlement around the Buffalo City Sawmill. The office was called Buffalo City after the mill. It opened in 1889; closed in 1903; reopened in 1908, only to close again in 1921. The office was open for the final time from 1922 to 1929. The other mainland office was at the fishing villages of Mashoes, opened in 1891. The prospective postmaster asked for the name Caroons Point, but it was rejected. The name Mashoes supposedly comes from a colorful story of an eighteenth century shipwreck victim, a Peter Michieux of Mashows. Mashoes operated continuously until 1952.

Two short-lived offices operated on the mainland in the early years of the twentieth century: Juniper and Sycamore. Juniper operated from 1903 to 1912. It was in the southwestern corner of the county, probably named after Juniper Creek in Tyrrell County. It had the distinction of being the only Dare office in this era that did not receive its mail through the distribution office of



Two scarce early Dare covers. Top, Rodanthe, 1900; bottom, Avon, 1894.



Top, 1910 postcard canceled at Griffin.
Bottom, 1909 card addressed to Griffin, Naghead Doane as receiving marking.

Elizabeth City. Juniper got its mail via an overland route from Columbia in Tyrrell County. The Sycamore post office was located in the mainland interior, supplied from Buffalo City. It operated from 1906 to 1919.

There was an attempt to establish a mainland post office called Twiford in 1904, but it apparently never opened. The appointment of W.J. Basnight as postmaster was rescinded.

Roanoke Island

After the creation of Dare County in 1870, the population increased on Roanoke Island. The new county seat of Manteo grew into a small town. Two more post offices were created in other villages on the island. These were Wanchese and Skyco.

Wanchese was created on the southern end of the island to serve the farmers and fishermen of that area. The office was named after one of the Indians taken to England by Raleigh's expedition in the sixteenth century.

The Skyco post office opened in 1892 on the west side of the island at Ashbee's Harbor. The place was the site of the docks of the Old Dominion Steamship Company. It was a regular stop on the steamer run from Norfolk to New Bern. For many years this company had a contract to carry mail sacks on its ships on this route. Probably a large portion of Dare County's mail traveled by this route. Skyco closed in 1913.

The Name Changes and New Offices

The last two decades of the nineteenth century saw further elimination of old place

Two cancels from Duck



names and the creation of some new offices. The Cape was changed to Buxton in 1882. It was named for Judge Ralph P. Buxton. The name of the office at Kinnekeet was changed to Avon in 1883. The community formerly known as Trent, received a post in office 1898, named Frisco. The Post Office Department probably rejected the name Trent because there was an office already called Trenton in the state.

The old resort village of Nags Head got its first post office in 1884. In the drive to standardize place names in the late nineteenth century, the office name was changed to Naghead in 1893. The scattered residents on Colington Island received a post office in 1889. Both of these offices were on the western or sound-side of the banks. Mail was carried in and out by boat.

After the turn of the century, the Dare banks

received four new offices: Duck, Salvo, Otila, and Griffin. A post office called Duck opened at a small village north of Nags Head in 1900. It was named for the ducks which visited the sound on their migratory travels. For a time, many banks residents hunted ducks and sold them to processing plants in Norfolk or other mainland towns. Further south, a few miles from Rodanthe, a new office called Salvo opened in 1901. The prospective postmaster, Kenneth R. Pugh, originally asked for the name Phlox, but it was rejected.

In 1905 two additional offices opened on the banks. An office called Otila opened at a boat landing on the sound just north of Kitty Hawk. The origin of the name is not known, the prospective postmaster requested the names Sound or Atlantic, but the Post Office rejected both. The site was known locally as "Sound Landing". The office closed in 1918.

The other 1905 office was named Griffin. It opened a mile or so south of the office at Naghead. Most likely both of these offices served the same community. Both operated concurrently until 1915 when Naghead was discontinued and the Griffin office was moved and renamed Nags Head. The locals considered Griffin in the village of Nags Head. A card is known addressed to "Mrs. Laura V. Twise, Griffin P.O., Nags Head, N.C."

Covers are very scarce from Dare County prior to 1920. While the county had many post offices, the population was small and scattered. Most communities were isolated by the sounds. In 1880 only 3,243 people resided in the county. This had increased to 5,115 by 1920. In a county where the land itself is constantly changing, it is not surprising that only a few fragile paper covers and letters have survived. Furthermore there were no real centers of commerce that would generate correspondence.

The Wright Brothers at Kill Devil Hill

On the morning of December 17, 1903, an event occurred that would create a new place in history for Dare County. For three years, two brothers from Dayton, Ohio, had been testing gliders at a hill overlooking Kitty Hawk Bay for several weeks each year. They were Wilbur and Orville Wright. In the 1902 season, they made over a thousand glider flights on the banks and broke all the existing records for gliding time and distance. In the fall of 1903 they began experiments with a motor-driven machine. On December 17 this machine lifted itself and Orville into the air for twelve seconds and began the age of powered flight.

Over the years, the Kitty Hawk post office has canceled hundreds of covers commemorating the first powered flight. Most likely every North Carolina postal history collector has one Dare County cover - that being one from Kitty Hawk. Many covers were created for a special flight in 1928 to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Wright Brothers flight. Covers were canceled at Kitty Hawk and then carried to the mainland where they were placed on a plane. Still more covers were created in 1932 when the Wright Brothers Memorial was completed.

Tourism and the modern era

At the end of the 1920s the future of Dare County looked bleak. The area had no commerce or industry to speak of. The natural resources of

fish, turtles, and ducks had been depleted. The area was isolated; it was very difficult to get from one part of the county to another. The population was decreasing as young people left for the hope of jobs inland. The Great Depression dried up financial resources.

A few Dare County and Elizabeth City businessmen felt that if Dare were more accessible, if there were paved roads and bridges, commerce would grow. Plans were advanced to bridge the Roanoke Sound to connect Roanoke Island to the Outer Banks and to bridge Currituck Sound to connect the Currituck mainland to the Banks. Some Dare residents fought the plans, fearing that the bridges would only siphon off the remaining population even faster. The General Assembly had no money to build roads and expensive bridges in such a sparsely populated area.

A group of businessmen persuaded the county to issue bonds to build a toll bridge across Roanoke Sound in 1927. In 1930, a group of Elizabeth City businessmen erected a toll bridge across the Currituck Sound. The state approved money to build a paved road on the Banks from Nags Head to Kitty Hawk to connect the bridges. By the early thirties, it was possible to drive to the county seat of Manteo from the mainland. This new accessibility, the construction of the Wright Memorial, and the creation of a National Seashore, brought in more and more tourists. Dare's modern growth has been fueled by tourist dollars.

This growth brought the need for more post offices. The office at Kill Devil Hills opened in 1938. The office called Waves in 1939.

Philatelically, Dare County has received more recognition than any other part of the state. Seven stamps or stationery items have debuted in Dare. All of these can be attributed to two historic events: the Lost Colony settlement and the Wright brothers flight.

The first stamp issued in Dare was the 1937 Virginia Dare commemorative. It was issued in Manteo on August 18. President Roosevelt came down from Washington to take part in the ceremonies. Five airmail stamps or stationery have been issued at Kitty Hawk, the first being the 1949 Wright brothers commemorative. The last stamp to premiere in Dare was the 1984 Roanoke Voyages commemorative, celebrating the 400th anniversary of the explorations of the Raleigh expeditions.



Two Kill Devil Hills cancels: 1973 machine, 1952 four-bar.

Today it is easy to travel to virtually all parts of the county. More bridges have been built to connect the isolated parts of the Banks and the mainland. Tourism is the main industry.

The postal history of Dare is very interesting. Some attractive and desirable covers were created by the Union troops stationed there during the Civil War, but these items must be identified by their contents, as they were all canceled outside of the area. In later years, any non-philatelic covers are treasures. Commemorative flight covers and first day covers are easy to come by, but a cover from any Dare office before 1920 is hard to find. Collecting the covers from Dare is quite a challenge.

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NCPHS

Tales of the Mail Route Days of Luther S. Griffin

by
Flora G. Griffin

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Luther S. Griffin carried the U.S. Mail from 1905 to 1935 on Unionville rural route number two. Unionville is in Union County, North Carolina, about eight miles north of Monroe. His transportation at first was a horse and buggy. Later he used an automobile. Around 1912, he bought his first motor car, which was steered by a lever instead of a wheel. It was purchased from Sears, Roebuck & Company, and bore the label "Sears". It came only partially assembled.

Luther's mail route was about 24 miles long, and his starting salary was \$720 per year. In the winter, he would leave before sun-up and not get home until long after dark. Sometimes if the weather was very bad, it would be eight or nine o'clock before he got home. He would heat two or three bricks in the fireplace overnight. Then, in the morning, he would wrap the bricks in old rags and put them in the foot of the buggy to warm his feet. He used a tanned cowhide as a lap robe.

Addie, Luther's wife, would pack his lunch each day. On winter nights, she would cook cornbread or biscuits in a three-legged, covered black iron skillet called a "spider." She would place the skillet on the hearth, and the bread would stay warm until Luther got home.

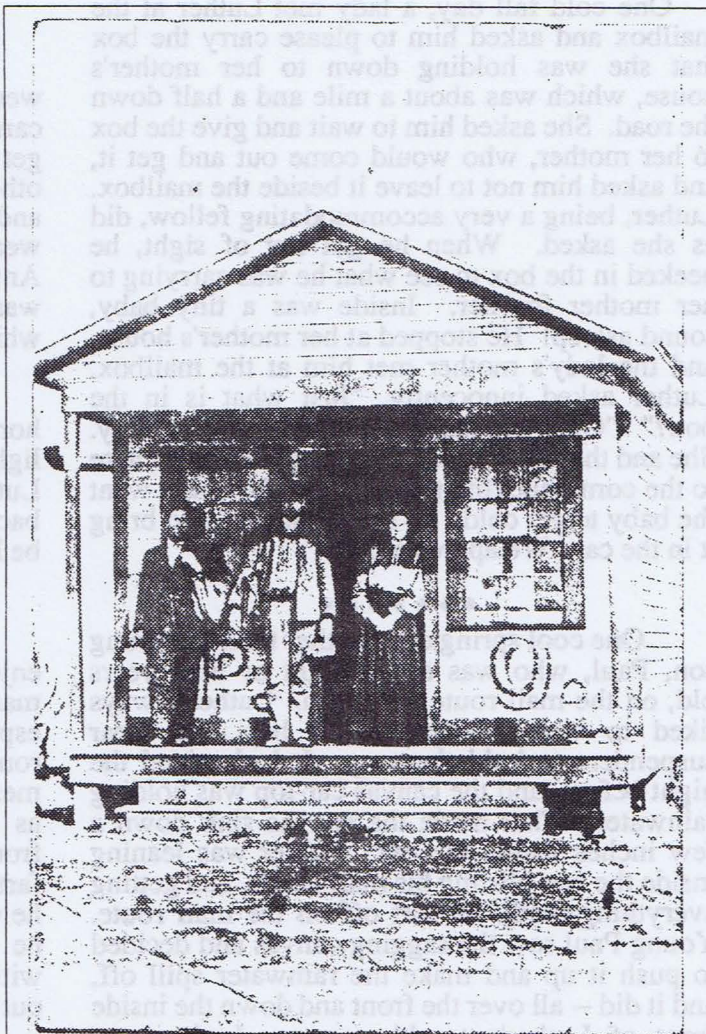
Over his career, Luther broke both his arms at one time or another. Arthritis set into these places where he had suffered the broken bones, making it difficult for him to drive. He wanted to serve his 30 years to retirement, so he got permission to hire a driver around 1930. He hired his only son, Paul, to drive for him.

The U.S. Mail is a federal government agency, and it is a federal offense to tamper with the mail in any way, or to damage a mailbox, or even to open the mailbox belonging to someone else.

Some men in the community got caught making illegal whiskey. They thought that a certain man on Luther's mail route had reported them to the authorities,

and they accused him of it, which he denied. A few days later the man's mailbox, post and all, disappeared. He thought the men who had accused him of reporting them had stolen his mailbox. This was a big feud, involving many members of several families.

One day as Luther was passing through that area of his route, a strange man stepped out from the side of the road and started to catch the bridle of the horse in order to stop Luther. Luther shouted, "Don't touch that horse! I'm carrying the U.S. Mail, and *nobody* touches my horse or this buggy without my consent!" At that outburst, the man stepped back and said, "I'm with the FBI," and showed Luther his badge.



The Unionville post office. Carrier Griffin is in the center.
The lady at right is the postmaster.

"I'm investigating the incident of the mailbox disappearing, and I wanted to ask you what you knew about this situation around here."

Years later, someone in that area was cleaning out an old dug well, and they found a mailbox and post. It was believed to be the missing mailbox.

Luther Griffin started carrying the mail in 1905, using a horse and buggy. Long days on the mail route made Luther and his horse very close companions. In those days, there was no "junk mail," and he only stopped at the boxes where he had mail to deliver, or where the flag was up, signaling there was mail to be picked up. Luther's horse learned to stop at a box if the flag was up without Luther even having to tell him to stop.

One cold fall day, a lady met Luther at the mailbox and asked him to please carry the box that she was holding down to her mother's house, which was about a mile and a half down the road. She asked him to wait and give the box to her mother, who would come out and get it, and asked him not to leave it beside the mailbox. Luther, being a very accommodating fellow, did as she asked. When he got out of sight, he peeked in the box to see what he was carrying to her mother for her. Inside was a tiny baby, sound asleep! He stopped at her mother's house, and the lady's mother met him at the mailbox. Luther asked innocently, "Just what is in the box?" "Oh," she laughed, "it's Virginia's baby. She and the other children are walking down here to the corn-shucking tonight, and she didn't want the baby to get cold. So she wanted you to bring it in the car. We appreciate it!"

One cool spring day, Luther took his young son, Paul, who was about eight or nine years old, on the mail route with him. Luther always liked to wear his pants too big, and wear suspenders to hold them up. It had rained the night before, and the canvas car-top was holding rainwater. That made the canvas sink down a few inches inside the car. Luther was leaning inside the car, placing his mail inside, and getting everything ready to start off on the mail route. Young Paul saw the sagging canvas and decided to push it up and make the rainwater spill off, and it did -- all over the front and down the inside front of Luther's too-big pants. Luther was furious, to say the least, and scolded Paul hotly.

Young Paul was about to die, wanting to laugh, but he dare not. There was not one thing funny on the mail route that day, so poor Paul just had to suffer, wanting to laugh. When they got home that night, Paul went out to the barn and laughed and laughed.

In July, 1930 Luther's first grandchild was born. They named her Ruth Bradsher Griffin for her mother, Ruth Pearl Bradsher Griffin. Luther was the doting grandfather, and was thrilled that his only granddaughter had a name that no one else had. He would remark that she was "the only Ruth Griffin," since he knew all the names of the folks in the area. One day that summer, he stopped at a mailbox to leave the mail. The teenage girl who lived there, and a her cousin came out to meet the mailman. Luther spoke to them, and the girl who lived there said, "This is my cousin from Mint Hill. Her name is Ruth Griffin."

Some of the roads in upper Union County were little more than paths when Luther started carrying the mail. The red clay in this area would get sticky and slick in places, and deeply rutted in others. One area of the route was extremely bad, and Luther always dreaded it in bad winter weather. It was known as the Antioch Hill, after Antioch Church, which was located close by. It was a red clay hill in a heavily wooded area, which got very little winter sun to dry it out.

Sometimes Luther would get out and lead his horse up the hill to encourage the horse, and to lighten the load by his 210 pounds. Later, when Luther drove a car, he sometimes would have to back the car up the Antioch Hill, making the car be like a front-wheel drive car.

Luther loved the families on his route, and enjoyed watching the children grow, court, marry, and have children of their own. He especially enjoyed watching the young people's romances. He often would carry verbal messages back and forth between them, as well as written messages. If he picked up a letter from a boy, and he knew that the girl was a little farther down his route was anxiously awaiting it, he would cancel the stamp with his pencil. Then he would put the letter in the girl's mailbox without carrying it back to the post office to go out on the mail the next day.

NCPHS

Letters from the 6th New Hampshire

by

Scott Troutman

764 Lynn Dee Drive, Winston-Salem, NC 27106

What started as an investigation of some interesting postal history material became a look into the sentiments and realities of the American Civil War in a very personal sense. For this material gives a snapshot into the lives of two young men, caught up in the great struggle of their time. It is a sad tale of the price that they paid.

The material that I acquired was three letters inside some very ratty envelopes posted through Old Point Comfort, Va. I was warned by the seller that the envelopes may not match the letters, since the dates on the letters did not match any of the legible dates in the postmarks. Two letters were from Roanoke Island, N.C. and a third was from Hatteras, N.C. All were from 1862.

The Outer Banks of North Carolina have been inhabited continuously since the mid-1650s, but letters from this region before 1900 are practically non-existent. The reason is that the climate in the area is not conducive to keeping paper, the area is periodically devastated by hurricanes, and opportunities for obtaining an education or paper were limited by the isolation of the area.

Perhaps the greatest chance in history for a great outflow of letters from the Outer Banks region came with the Civil War. By early 1862 a Federal force under General Ambrose Burnside had taken the small Forts Hatteras and Clark, which guarded Hatteras Inlet, a key deep water channel into Pamlico Sound. Roanoke and Ocracoke Islands were subsequently taken.

With the fall of Ocracoke, Ocracoke Inlet fell to Northern control. On Roanoke Island, the Confederates built a fort on the western side of the island, from which attempts were made to block the deeper water channel which provided access into the Albemarle Sound and Edenton, a key port and a nest of blockade running activity. The victories on the Outer Banks were among the first for the North, and left these island in the hands of Northern troops for the duration of the

war. The troops stationed there wrote letters home like any homesick soldiers. The postal history question has always been, what route did they take and how is it they never surface? The human question was what was the duty like for those left to the hostile lands of the Outer Banks?

In far away New Hampshire, the fall of 1861 was drawing to a close. The crops were in and for two young farm hands, Frank Gray and Henry Tenney, the duty to join up and serve their country was too much to resist. They had been schoolmates in Hancock, New Hampshire and since graduation they had worked on the local farms. Their best friend was Edwin Adams, a fellow farm laborer. Twenty-three year old Frank Gray was 5'8" with brown hair and blue eyes. Henry was Frank's age and Ed was older. They went from Hancock to Keene, N.H. where a new unit, Company E, 6th Regiment of the New Hampshire Volunteers was forming up. On November 28, 1861 they enlisted together for three year hitches. Ed may have tried to join up too, but was rejected due to his age. But Frank and Henry promised to write faithfully. And they did. From here on I will let them tell their own tale. Frank Gray will begin.

Camp Winfield

Hatteras Inlet, N.C. Feb. 8th, 1862

Dear Friend Ed,

I thought I would write you an let you know how I am getting along since we left New Hampshire. We have been through terrible hardships. We did not stop at Washington but about a week when we were ordered to join Burnside's Expedition. We left Annapolis Jan. 10. We had a very rough passage. We were much crowded and not much to eat but the old boat weathered it and we arrived here Jan 19 where we found the expedition which had proceeded us. We remained on board the boat two or three days when they thought best to land us. Here the coast of Hatteras is a very rough one.¹ This is the place that Butler took last Summer. We are encamped about five miles from Fort Hatteras.² It is a sandy barren island. There is quite a lot of trees around here. Small though. It rains about all the time here. Have not had

1. An odd statement since the only beaches Ed or Frank would know are the rocky New England shores, whereas the Hatteras beach is flat and sandy. The water may have been quite rough due to a winter storm.
2. The description sounds as though they were near the present day town of Frisco, called Trent in that time.

but a very few fair days. There has been considerable sickness with us, mostly measles. Have had twenty five deaths die from our company. I wish you was here with us, but then I don't think you would ever stand it. For if a person is not very tough it goes pretty hard with him.

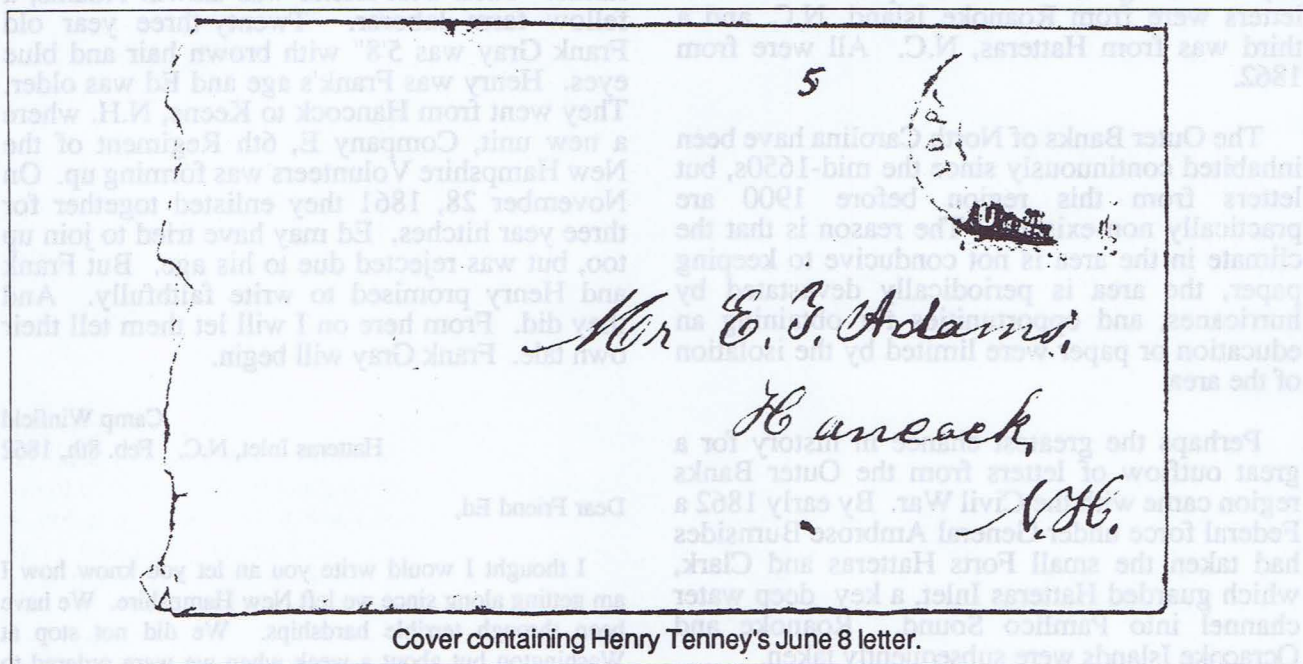
What are you doing this winter? Having a good time I suppose. I do not know how long we shall remain here. The fleet sailed last Thursday. We expect to have to move from here and join the forces under Burnside after they have taken some place. We have to drill pretty hard. Now we have got the Austrian Rifles. What do they say about the war up there? Think it is going to end soon. Well, I don't care how soon. A soldiers life is rather a hard one. Not a life that would suit me if I did not think it my duty. I have been sick for a week. But I am getting pretty well now. I don't think it will agree with me here but I don't know.

How is all the girls? You must look after them which I suppose you do. Where is Knights? Is the shad shop running now?³ Is Patrick in Hancock? Who is going to

Roanoke Island March 30, 1862

Friend Ed,

I will write a few lines to you and let you know how I prosper now adays. Frank Gray told me he had a letter from you. Said you had not heard from me but I have written two or three letters to you and have not heard from you yet, and I think it is your turn to write now. It is Sunday today and I was on guard last night. It rained like sin and it was so dark that I could not see my hand before me. It is not very pleasant standing guard in such a night as that, but we have had pleasant weather most of the time since we came here. It is almost as warm as summer. We have to drift fours hours a day.⁴ That is not very hard days work for me. Tomorrow we shall be inspected by Gen Burnside. I suppose he is going on another expedition before long. He has called for thirty thousand troops and when he gets them it will make his force forty thousand and he can do some big work with them. I hope



Cover containing Henry Tenney's June 8 letter.

be Representative? I suppose Patten will go about as he is a mind to. Henry Tenney is well. How does Cy Howard get along this winter keeping school. Well I should like to go to school in the old school. Write me more. I suppose you have not forgot the winter that you carried Margaret to school? I want you to write me all the news direct to Hatteras Inlet, via Fortress Monroe.

Frank Gray

Henry Tenney now takes over.

we shall go with them but I don't know whether we shall or not. There is a good many of the boys sick here. There has a good many of them had the dysentary, but I have been tough as a brick and am growing fat. I believe the climate agrees with me pretty well, but I want to travel up in the states and see country. I expect to get home some time this summer. I think the war will be short if we don't have more Bull Runs. I want you to write to me as soon as you get this for I want to hear from you. Write all the news and everything that you can think up. I suppose you are making maple sugar now. I

3. The shad, a boney fish, makes an annual migration up many eastern rivers. Shad shops specialized in deboning and selling shad during the runs. These shops still appear in New England.
4. Guards were put into small boats which were drifted out into the Croatan Sound in an attempt to get early sightings on boats approaching.

should like a little to eat about now, but how is the maid and is she agoing to work for Hiram this summer. But by the way, have you seen the comet.⁵ I can't write much more this time. Give my respect to all the folk. So good bye for this time. Send your letters to
Henry Tenney

Old Point Comfort
Co E, 6th Regiment, N.H. Vol, Va.

he was burnt up at the other Hospital, giving him a sweat. He was sick. He told the man he was burning him and then he fainted away. He has got some pretty sore legs and he is pretty sick today. He was taken vomiting last night and his bowels moved at the same time so it makes it pretty hard. I hope he will get better soon. It is raining here today. It rains every few days and most always lasts two or three days, but I can't write



Roanoke Island, N.C. June 8, 1862

Friend Ed,

I received a letter from you some time ago but have not been able to answer it. I have been sick now for a number of weeks. I have had the Typhoid fever and I have been pretty sick too. I am at the Brigade Hospital now. I am not very strong yet and it will be a good while now before I am joining right along. It is a good place here. We live well and you can have almost anything you want. We have had some pretty warm weather here. It is very cool today but we shall have it warm enough soon I guess. I suppose you will begin to have the same before long. Who has Hiram got to help him on his farm this summer. You had aught to be there to keep Mip Garble straight, but you must keep straight yourself and not be led astray over there in the great city.⁶ Well Ed I commenced this letter yesterday and I will try and finish it today.

Charles Barker is here in the hospital. I beleive he is a Hancock boy. He has got some sores on his legs where

much more this time. Give my respects to all that I know. Tell the old laddy that I don't feel quite so strong just now as I did last summer, but I think I shall be sometime if nothing happens to me. Ed, you write to me as often as you can and I will write. I tell you it does a fellow good to get a letter out here but I must stop. You must excuse this writing. My hand is not so steady as it was once. Accept this from your friend.

H.A. Tenney

Direct your letter as before

As it happens, this last letter was written in the rain with a sloppy pen. This is our fortune, as the ink impressed itself on the inside of the cover, which is made of very porous yellow paper. This undated cover through Old Point Comfort contained the June 8 letter. There is more good fortune as Ed Adams put a small number on each letter as they were received, these covers being letters 4, 5, and 6. This last letter was number 5.

5. This was a bright comet first sighted by Lewis Swift. Its period was estimated at 120 years but it failed to reappear in 1982.

6. Ed had moved to Bennington for a time, a slightly larger town.

The patriotic cover postmarked September 9 (1862) was the last from Henry Tenney. Its contents have apparently not survived. By June 12, 1862 his illness had worsened and he was moved to the hospital at Newport News. He died there from typhoid fever on September 8, 1862. As he said in the March letter, he did indeed get home for the summer.

The great optimism in both Henry and Frank's letters are in contrast to their final ends. Frank made Corporal in November 1862, Sergeant by January, 1863, and finally rose to the rank of first Sergeant January 1, 1864. His luck ran out at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House on May 19, 1864. He was shot in the lower jaw, shattering it in half. He recuperated in hospitals in Baltimore and was furloughed back to New Hampshire in late June. His first enlistment ran out in November and he re-enlisted with the Veteran Volunteers. But when

he reported back for duty the doctors found him unable to chew food, unfit to make it on the hardtack rations. He was mustered out honorably in February 1865. He was 28.

For those pursuing the history or the postal history of the troops involved in the expeditions of 1861 and 1862, knowledge of which regiments were involved will be vital. For it appears that the mail to and from these troops was postmarked either Fortress Monroe or Old Point Comfort and only the contents or regiment markings will give evidence of the covers' origins. Other regiments known to have participated in the battle for Roanoke Island are the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, and 51st Massachusetts; the 10th Connecticut; the 4th Rhode Island; the 51st Pennsylvania; the 9th New Jersey; the 9th New York (Hawkins Zouaves); and the 8th and 31st North Carolina.

NCPHS

'87 Treasurer's Report

by

Milton Wicker

508 Lindley Rd., Greensboro, NC 27410

Beginning Balance 1/1/87 470.78

Income

Dues collected 1987	490.00
Dues collected 1988	690.00
Dues collected 1989	20.00
Donations	19.18
Sales of Newsletter	26.00
Sustaining Members	75.00
Interest	67.84
Mail Sale #1	20.26
Mail Sale #2	27.10
Escrow-markings book	810.00
Unaccounted	2.64
	<u>2718.80</u>

Expense

Printing and postage	704.50
Misc. postage	41.71
Printing and supplies	48.86
	<u>795.07</u>

Balance 12/31/87

\$1923.73

NCPHS

New Members

Please welcome these new members:

McCary Ballard
P.O. Box 6963
Atlanta, GA 30315

J. R. Hemenway
1229 Cross Link Rd.
Raleigh, NC 27610

William A. Lampley
712 Fleming St.
Hendersonville, NC 28739

Robert Outlaw
P.O. Box A3960
Chicago, IL 60690

Jules Eugene Roseman
7961 Blackburn #5
Los Angeles, CA 90048

Kenneth W. Scott
4470 Lewiston St. NW
Roanoke, VA 24017

Ralph H. Smith
2054 Sharon Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28207

L. Phil Wicker
27 Kemp Road, East
Greensboro, NC 27410

**DISCOVER
STAMP COLLECTING
THE HOBBY OF A LIFETIME**

Minutes of November 11 Meeting

by
Del Frazier

602 Pearson Circle, New Bern, NC 28562

The fall meeting of the North Carolina Postal History Society was held at the Mission Valley Inn in Raleigh, North Carolina on the eleventh day of November, 1987. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by President Ruth Wetmore. Eight members were present. New member, Clarence Winstead of Fayetteville, was welcomed.

Minutes of the last meeting held in Charlotte were read by Secretary Del Frazier and approved as read. Since Treasurer Milton Wicker was not present, his report as of the 15th of November, 1987, was read by the secretary. The report indicated that this is an interim report, to be superceded by a final report for the year ending December 31, 1987. This represents a change to conform to the new requirement for reporting on a yearly basis. The report indicates a balance of \$1,499.22, of which, \$590.00 is held in an escrow account for the prepaid NC Postal Markings book.

Old Business; Reports of Committees

Research: Vernon Stroupe, chairman, not present. Tony Crumbley presented a report on the *Illustrated North Carolina Postal Markings, 1777-1865*. The book should be ready for distribution early in the new year, 1988.

Tax Status: Ken Schoolmeester, chairman,

not present. Del Frazier reported that he had been advised by Milt Wicker that Ken had resubmitted the request for tax exemption to the IRS.

Awards: Darrell Ertzberger, chairman, not present.

Post Office Records and Artifacts Preservation: Ken Schoolmeester, chairman, not present. Del Frazier, member of the committee, reported that he had received some photos from the Smithsonian and headquarters of the USPS that might be available to prepare some visual exhibits relating to postal history. The sample pictures were examined by those present.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Board of Directors Meeting

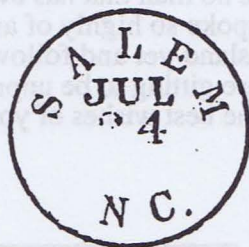
The meeting was called to order by President Wetmore after the general meeting. Present were directors Wetmore, Crumbley, Harter, and Frazier. Acting on a suggestion by Tony Crumbley, the board selected Charlotte as the site of the annual meeting for 1988. The meeting will be held on August 6, 1988, in conjunction with CHARPEX and the annual meeting of the Confederate Stamp Alliance.

NCPHS

Two Different Salem Postmarks

by
Vernon Stroupe

P.O. Box 8879, Asheville, N.C. 28814



At first glance, the two illustrated Salem, N.C. postmarks are similar. But they are very different. The left marking was used 1852-60, the right 1861-65.

There are two distinctive differences: the 1852-60 marking has the month sans serif, and the letters SALEM, N.C. are 3.5 mm in the 1852-60 versus 4 mm in the 1861-65.

A search of the NCPHS files shows four reports of the 1852-60 marking. Twenty-nine copies of the 1861-65 marking are recorded. It is gratifying to note that none of the 1852-60 markings have been listed as "Confederate."

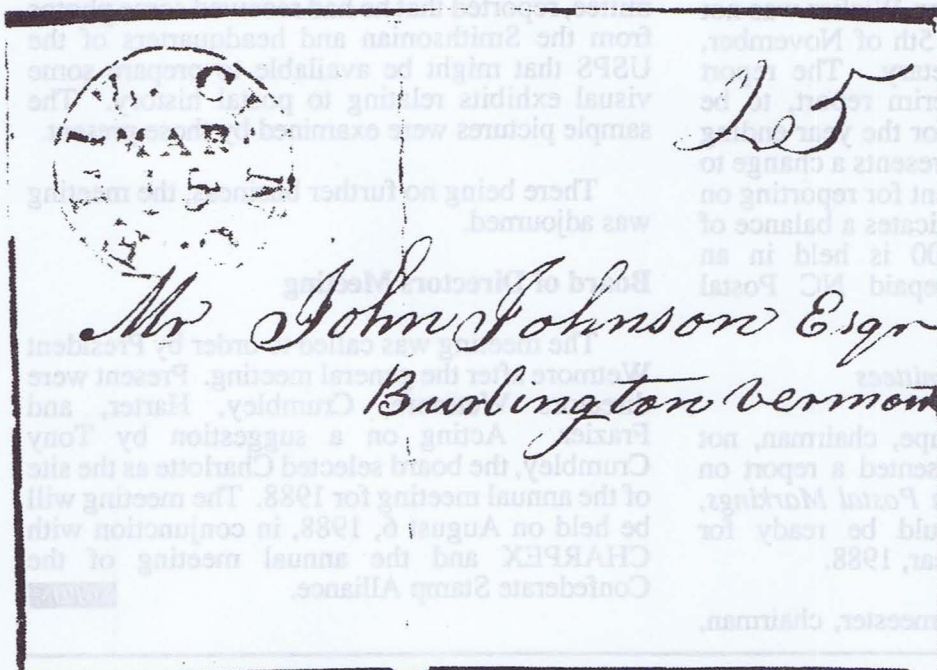
NCPHS

It is with sadness that the NCPHS notes the death of member George Scott of Roanoke, Va. in December, 1987. George was a dealer in postal history items and an NCPHS member for several years. His son will continue the business. The Society extends condolences to his family.

Letter from the Past

An 1835 Letter From Roanoke Island

This month's Letter from the Past is from the collection of Ken Schoolmeester. It is from Sameul M. Ashbee, a resident of Roanoke Island, to a merchant in Burlington, Vermont. Mr. Ashbee was apparently acting as agent for a friend, a Mr. Baum. This letter gives us some insight into life on Roanoke during the first half of the nineteenth century. This cover was probably given to a ship captain or a friend for posting at Elizabeth City, as Roanoke Island had no post office at this time.



Roanoke Island March the 2nd 1835.

Dear Sir

Your much esteemed letter of the 13th of Decr. came safe to hand, you wrote me that the other Barrel of wine you had not yet sold and that it would not sell now for the proposed price and transport fees. Mr. Baum says please sell it for the highest price that you can obtain for it so as to transmit the money on early in the spring. There is no price mentioned only get all you can for it and he says that he will be perfectly satisfied with whatever sale you make with the barrel now on hand. Please pay yourself amply for your trouble with it. Mr. Baum has sold all his wine that he made last season so that he cannot forward any this spring but nex Fall he can

forward you as much as you may want and he says the lowest price that he can deliver it in New York for is twenty dollars per Barrel. If you can make a market for any please informe me in your nex. I mentioned to Ben about that money and shamed him that all that I could about it and he says that he will pay it over to me for you as soon as he can git it and when ever he pays it to me I will send it to you. The glass and the measure is still at the light house and they will not let me have them but I think that I will go there and take them away. We have had the coldest winter that I ever experience in my life. We have had snow to lay on the ground for 15 days and the sounds froze on both sides of us fourteen days at a time so that we could not pass any where from the Island. You say, that I did not write you in my last wether I was married or no. I am not. I have never had the good luck to git a wife yet. Mr. Barnet and Mr. Martaindale are both married as I am informed. Mr. Barnet married in Edenton and Mr. M. married in Tyrrel County. Both of their wives are strangers to me. I have not had the pleasure of seeing either of them sence they were married. Please write me on the receipt of this. Please to transmit the money to the care of Blosson and Field and they can send it on by some of our vessels almost any time. I think that would be the best way. Mr. Baum and family

sends their best respects to you and often says how much pleasure it would aford him to see you again at his house and I sincerely hope that some good job may cause you to visit us again. There is no man that has ever ben here that I have heard spoke so highly of as I have of you. I live on the Island yet and follow going by water but vessels are gitting to be unprofitable. Please to accept of the best wishes of your Sincere friend.

Samuel M. Ashbee

NCPHS

PHILATELY
A FAMILY
HOBBY