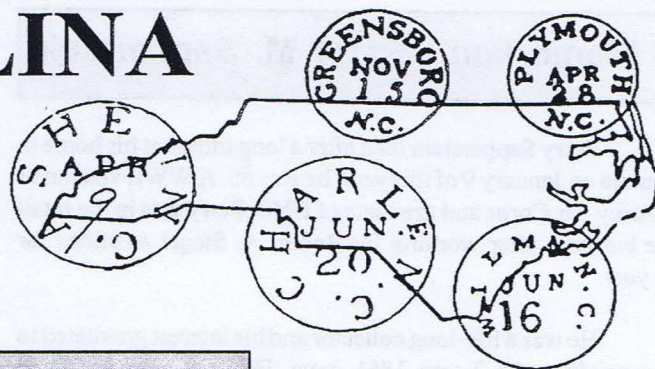


NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

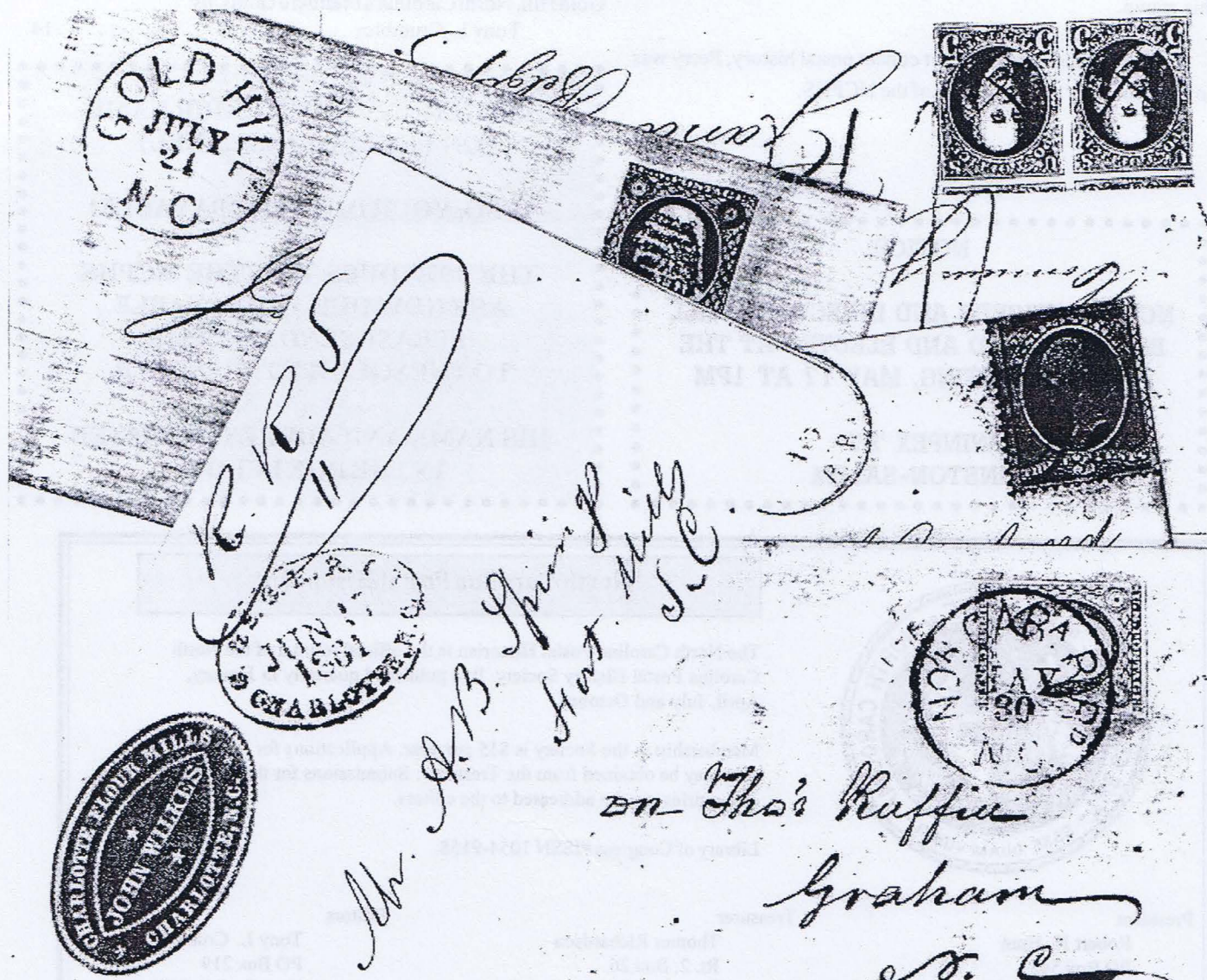


The Journal of the North Carolina Postal History Society

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Whole 60



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In Memoriam - Perry M. Sapperstein

Perry Sapperstein died after a long illness at his home in Gastonia on January 9 of this year; he was 69. A WWII veteran of the Army Air Corps and graduate of UNC, Perry was in the retail shoe business after working for Robert A. Siegel Auctions for one year.

He was a life-long collector and his interest gravitated to his specialty, the 3-cent 1861 issue. He was instrumental in forming an 1861 Study Group, which, in time, merged into the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society. He eventually became a Director of USPS. His collection was sold by Siegel Auctions in September 1994. It made over 350 lots, the largest collection ever formed of this stamp.

Even though he did not collect postal history, Perry was an early member and supporter of the NCPHS.

NOTICE

**NCPHS OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS WILL
BE NOMINATED AND ELECTED AT THE
ANNUAL MEETING, MAY 17 AT 1PM**

**WINPEX '97
WINSTON-SALEM**

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North Carolina Postal Historian

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

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BILL TO CREATE NC POSTAL HISTORY EXHIBIT TO BE INTRODUCED

by Vernon S. Stroupe

A bill will be introduced in the N.C. Legislature to create a North Carolina Postal History Commission by Representative Michael P. Decker, Sr. of Winton-Salem. The purpose of the commission will be to create a North Carolina Postal History display for the N.C. Historical Museum in Raleigh. The museum will allocate 15 linear feet of wall space for the exhibit.

Rep. Decker, a new NCPHS member, and NCPHS Treasurer Tom Richardson met with Mr. David Olsen, Director of the N.C. State Human Resources Division, for preliminary

discussion on the project.

After the meeting with Director Olsen, Decker and Richardson viewed a few of the seventeen large boxes of covers stored in the NC Archives and History from which the display material will be selected and the exhibit created. Richardson reported seeing Confederate POW mail, high value Banknotes used within N.C., county election return covers of the Vance-Holden gubernatorial election, and many other items of historical and philatelic importance.

CHARLESTON, S.C. TO BELGIUM via WILMINGTON & RALEIGH RAILROAD

by Richard F. Winter

Figure 1 illustrates a very fine example of the use of the 1847 issue adhesive on a letter to an overseas destination, in this case, Belgium. Of the 248 covers with 1847s that I have recorded which were sent to foreign destinations, only eight went to Belgium.

This letter was datelined in Charleston, South Carolina

on 19 February 1848 and was addressed to Gand, Belgium, the French name for the city of Ghent. The letter was struck in the upper left with the familiar WILMINGTON & RALEIGH RAILROAD (Harris type III)¹ circular datestamp in red on 22 February 1848. This was the marking of the railroad route agent who rode the mail car north from Wilmington.² It is not as unusual as one might think to see covers from Charleston showing



Figure 1. Charleston, S.C., 19 February 1848, to Gand (Ghent), Belgium, franked with pair of 5¢ 1847s. Red WILMINGTON & RALEIGH RAILROAD cds of 22 February 1848. London debited Belgium 1/8d and Ostend marked 24 decimes postage due.

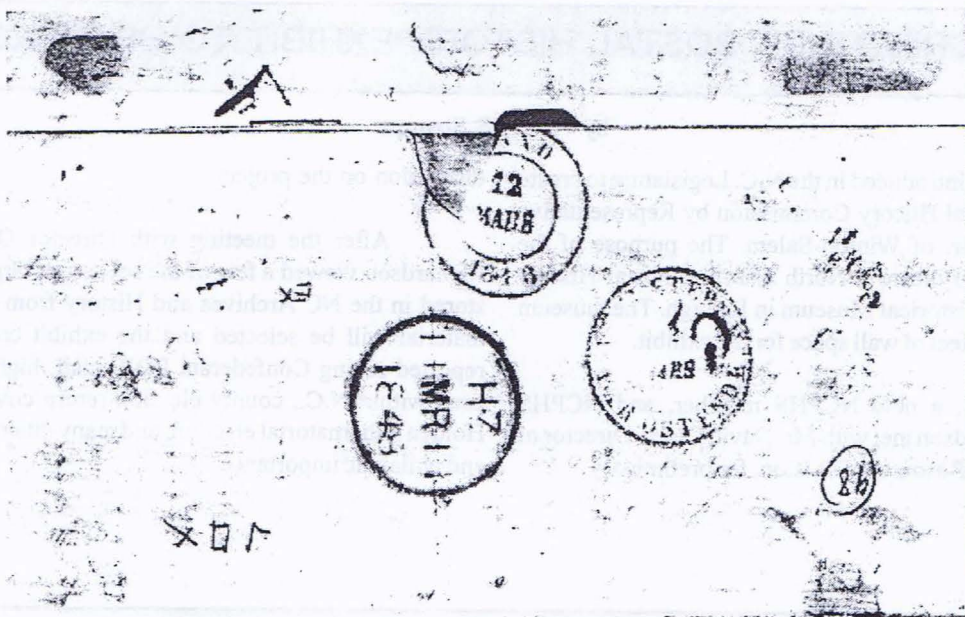


Figure 2. Reverse of cover showing London arrival (11 March 1848), entry into Belgium at Ostend (12 March 1848), and arrival at Ghent (12 March 1848). Handstamp "5" marking of Ghent indicated letter arrived in Ghent during fifth time period.

Wilmington & Raleigh railroad markings. Rather than take their letters to the post office, businessmen in Charleston often took their letters directly to the Wilmington Steam Packet wharf at the foot of Laurens Street. Here, one of four auxiliary steamers, operated by the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad, departed each day at a quarter past 3 o'clock PM for the fourteen hour run to Wilmington, North Carolina.³ This service was advertised in the Charleston newspapers as the "Great Mail Route from Charleston, S.C." or the "Great Northern Mail Line." Wilmington was the southern terminus of the 160 mile rail line to Weldon of the Wilmington & Raleigh railroad.⁴ This rail line connected to a series of railroads that carried mails all the way to New York. Transit times from Charleston to New York by this route were nominally 5-7 days.

A pair of Scott No. 1 adhesives prepaid the 10¢ United States inland rate for letters up to one half ounce going beyond 300 miles. Each was pen cancelled with a crisscross. This prepayment was the required postage to New York or Boston, from which the overseas mail steamers departed. Because there was no mail convention between the United States and Great Britain at the time, postage for overseas mails could be paid only to the East Coast departure port. The remaining transit fees were collected at the destination. The distinctive "wind mill" cancel of the Wilmington & Raleigh railroad route agent, seen on the adhesives of letters in 1850 travelling the same route, was not yet in use.

The letter was endorsed "Pr Steamer Hibernia." This was a British & North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company (Cunard Line) steamship. Because the planned sailing dates of many of the mail steamers were advertised in newspapers

in all the major cities, it was not unexpected that the letter-writer knew the name of the vessel he wished to carry the letter. The Cunard steamer *Hibernia* departed New York on 26 February and arrived in Liverpool, England on 11 March 1848.⁵ The letter was in a closed mail bag from New York to London. Here, the bag was opened and the letter backstamped with a red circular datestamp, HZ/11MR11/1848. Figure 2 shows the reverse of this cover. Normally, the London arrival markings showed dates that were one day after the Liverpool arrivals; but, on those occasions were the mails went ashore at Liverpool early in the day, it was possible to see a London marking on the same day.

London was responsible for the forward transit of this letter under the Great Britain-Belgium Postal Convention of 19 October 1844.⁶ In this case, the mails were exchanged between the offices of London and Ostend, each designated in the convention as an exchange office. The letter reached Ostend on 12 March 1848 and received a circular backstamp in red, ANGLETERRE PAR OSTENDE. This indicated that the letter had come from England and had entered Belgium at Ostend. From here, the letter went by rail the remaining 36 miles to Ghent. Arrival at Ghent was showed by a red circular backstamp, GAND/12 MARS/1848. The Anglo-Belgium convention established the rate of 1 shilling (or 12 pence) for mails between England and Belgium. Of this amount, the British were entitled to 8 pence and the Belgians, 4 pence (or 4 decimes in Belgian currency). The British were also entitled to the 1 shilling transatlantic packet fee which they charged on all letters carried from the United States to England on British contract mail vessels. *Hibernia* was such a contract mail carrier. London, therefore, debited Belgium 1 shilling 8 pence, shown in manuscript at the center right of the cover. The manuscript "1/8" looks like "n8." This amount was

equal to 20 decimes, 1 penny British currency equivalent to 1 decime Belgian currency by the convention. To this, the Ostend exchange office added 4 decimes for internal Belgian postage. The postage due of 24 decimes was marked by Ostend in blue ink. It tied the right hand 1847 adhesive to the cover. The marking was made in the French style and looks like "2N." The remaining marking on this cover was a handstamp "5" struck on the back in red, a control mark to determine the period of time the letter entered the Ghent post office. Ghent didn't include time in their arrival datestamps until 1849. Between 1844-1849, two different series of numerals were used to indicate the particular period of time of the letter's arrival. The Figure 1 letter arrived in the fifth of seven time periods on 12 March 1848.

This is an important cover. It was illustrated in Brookman⁷ and analyzed by Stanley Ashbrook⁸ and George Hargest.⁹ Brookman gave no explanation other than to say the 10¢ prepayment was correct. Ashbrook provided more information and correctly analyzed the basic rates on the cover, but his Special Service was not available to most collectors. Hargest's explanation was also correct, but he did not comment on the markings on the back of the cover. Apparently, he saw only the Ashbrook photograph of the cover front. Today, a more complete explanation can be given.

Endnotes:

¹. Tony L. Crumbley, *Postal Markings of the North Carolina Railroads* (North Carolina Postal History Society, 1994), p. 71.

². A number of Charleston covers from the same period, which travelled this route, show no markings until arrival at New York. The absence of the expected Wilmington & Raleigh route agent markings on these covers is a mystery.

³. *The Charleston Mercury*, 19 February 1848, p.3.

⁴. Charles L. Towle, *U.S. Route and Station Agent Postmarks* (Tucson, Arizona: Mobile Post Office Society, 1986), p. 339, which also provides the names of the route agents.

⁵. Walter Hubbard and Richard F. Winter, *North Atlantic Mail Sailings 1840-75* (Canton, Ohio: U.S. Philatelic Classics Society Inc., 1988), p. 24.

⁶. Clive Parry, LL.D, ed., *The Consolidated Treaty Series*, 231 vols. (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, 1969), vol. 97, pp. 345-73.

⁷. Lester G. Brookman, *The United States Postage Stamps of the 19th Century* (New York: H.L. Lindquist Publications, Inc., 1966), vol. I, p. 77.

⁸. Stanley B. Ashbrook, *19th Century U.S. Postal History*, Special Service Issue 20, November 1, 1952, pp. 143-144.

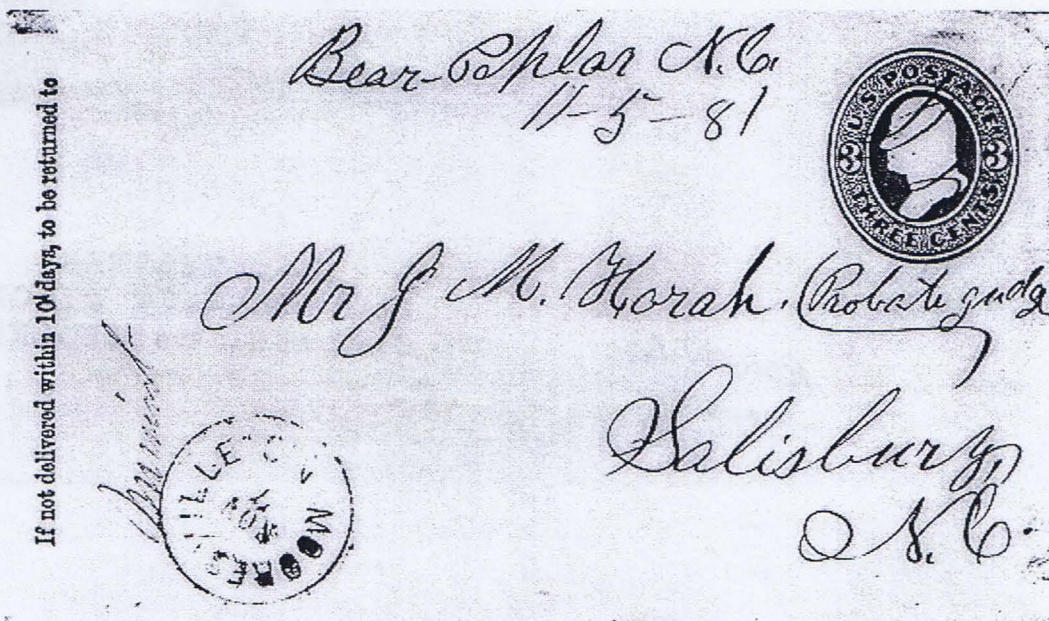
⁹. George E. Hargest, *History of Letter Post Communications Between the United States and Europe, 1845-1875* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1971), pp. 100-101.

HOW BEAR POPLAR GOT IT'S NAME

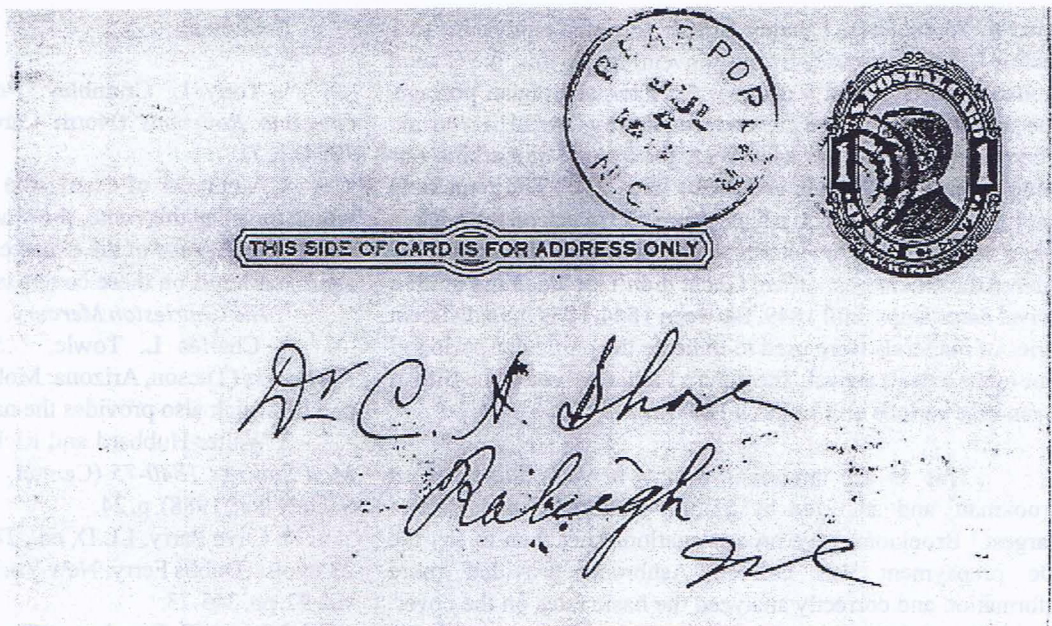
by Tony L. Crumbley

Lucy J. Kistler was appointed first Post Mistress of Bear Poplar in 1878. This community had an interesting beginning. It was first known as Forty-Four because it is located 44 miles from Charlotte and 44 miles from Winston-Salem. Around 1773 the community obtained a new name.

Thomas Cowan was walking with his wife in a wooded section about a mile from his home when he spotted a bear in a Poplar tree. While Mrs. Cowan kept an eye on the bear, Mr. Cowan went home and got his rifle. Upon his return he dislodged the bear from the tree. From that time on, the community became known as Bear Poplar.



At one point Bear Poplar had four stores, two cotton gins, a foundry, a garage, a quarry where blue granite was mined, a school and, of course, the post office. Today little remains of this community. The post office ceased operation in 1966. However, it did leave behind a few covers for us collectors.

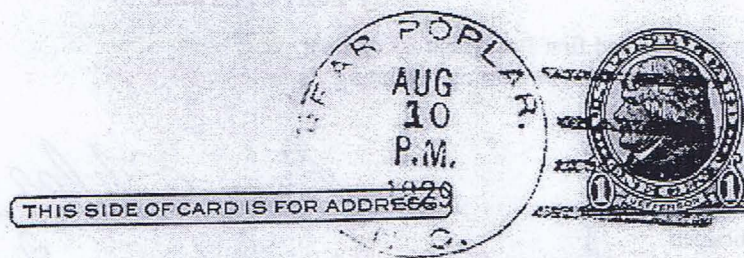


The postmasters of Bear Poplar were:

Lucy J. Kistler	12 Sep 1878
Wellington L. Kistler	25 Jun 1879
John W. Clampet	8 Oct 1897
Davie I. Haller	5 Mar 1898
Mary J. Barrier	23 Apr 1898
Thomas H. Knox	9 Dec 1904

Charles M. Johnson (Acting)	13 Nov 1926
Charles L. Beaver (Acting)	13 Sep 1927
Robert L. Steele (Acting)	29 Jul 1942
Margaret H. Steele	23 Jun 1948
Changed to Rt. 8, Salisbury	11 Feb 1966

HOW BEAR POPLAR GOT ITS NAME



M. HERTZBERG,
736 HILLGIRT CIRCLE,
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA.

ROWAN CC
78-66

CONFEDERATE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT LETTERS

by Robert J. Stets

In order to obtain as much information as possible about Confederate post offices in North Carolina for our latest publication, *Postoffices and Postmasters of North Carolina, Colonial to USPS*, I read thru available Confederate Post Office Letter Books. Here are some interesting letters from those Letter Books.

What Happened to Newbern Post Office?

Richmond, March 31, 1862

Jno. W. Collins
Late PM Newbern
Kingston, NC

Sir, In response to yours of the 25th Inst. I have to suggest that you would deposit such articles belonging to the Government as are in your possession in a safe and convenient post office, taking a receipt thereof. It is a matter of regret that you were unable to save the blanks, twine &c. belonging to the office at Newbern.

Respectfully,
B.N. Clements, Chief, Appt. Bureau

Note: We had not previously known the name of the Confederate postmaster at Newbern, who apparently left that office in haste just ahead of the Yankees!

Move That Office, the Yankees are Coming!

October 14th 1862

PM, Winton, NC

Sir, In consequence of representations made to the Department, the Postmaster General has ordered that the site of your office be changed to California, in the same county until the departure of the public enemy may justify its restoration to the present locality. This change does not effect its name or your position as postmaster, if it will be in your power to continue as such.

Respectfully,
B.N. Clements, Chief, Appt. Bureau

There is No Such Office!

August 16, 1862

G. G. Lynch, Esq.
Weldon, No. Carolina

Sir, In reply to your note of the 13th inst., calling my attention to an office in Madison Co., N.C. named Warm Springs, I have to inform you that no such office exists and there is nothing on record in this Department to show that it ever existed.

Respectfully,
B. N. Clements, Chief, Appt. Bureau

The Letter Books do not record Mr. Lynch's answer, but a

few weeks later, Clements sent another letter sheepishly admitting that he was changing the Department's records to show Warm Springs P.O. in Madison County.

Explanation: When Madison County was formed in 1851, no one at the Warm Springs P.O. notified Washington of the change from Buncombe County to Madison County so all the records at Washington showed Warm Springs in Buncombe County. The Confederate States Post Office Dept. set up its records based on those at Washington and also listed Warm Springs in Buncombe County until Mr. Lynch explained the error to Mr. Clements.

Here's Your "Pink Slip"

Jan. 20th 1863

Acting PM
Stanleys Creek, Gaston Co., NC

Sir, The Postmaster General has this day ordered that the site of the office heretofore known as Stanleys Creek be changed to Brevard Station, on Route 5189, in same county and state, and that it be known henceforward by the name of Brevards Station. Mr. Alex R. Rutledge has been appointed postmaster at Brevards Station, to whom you will please promptly forward the document addressed to him by this mail at the office which has this day been changed and of which you have present charge.

Respectfully,
B. N. Clements, Chief, Appt. Bureau

Do You Believe in Ghosts?

April 4th 1863

Acting PM
Huntsville, N.C.

Sir, I have been informed by the postmaster at Richmond Hill, N.C. that Way Bills have been received at his office from Huntsville, NC signed by L.M. Cornelius, postmaster who, he states, has been dead since last fall and was in the army twelve months previous to that time. You will please explain the above at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully,
B. N. Clements, Chief, Appt. Bureau

You Can't Discontinue My Office!

April 18th 1863

Acting PM
Drowning Creek, N.C.

Sir, Your office was discontinued Oct. 16, 1861 by order of the Postmaster General. It appears from the books of the Finance Bureau that you still render quarterly returns. You will please explain this at your earliest convenience. Duplicate papers for discontinuance are herewith enclosed.

Respectfully,
B. N. Clements, Chief, Appt. Bureau

Confederate Mails on the North Carolina Railroads

by Tony L. Crumbley

The development of railroads did not get underway until 1836 in North Carolina. It did not take long, however, for the railroads to have an impact on the mail system. Figure 1 shows an example of a stampless cover carried from Halifax, North Carolina to Edenton, North Carolina on August 25, 1836. The letter was carried on the Portsmouth Railroad. Numerous examples of stampless covers exist from the 1840's to the 1850's and were carried on the Wilmington or Raleigh Railroad. The North Carolina Railroad was started in 1851 with ground breaking in Greensboro. Its completion allowed for direct rail service across the state. The availability of railroad covers carried on this rail system prior to the Civil War is an indication of mail activity carried on this network. Figures 2 and 3 are examples of early pre-war letters carried on the North Carolina Railroad.

To date, more than 100 covers are known that have markings indicating they were carried on North Carolina's rail system prior to the start of the Civil War. We know by this time, dedicated rail cars were regularly carrying the mails across North Carolina. A strange occurrence took place with the beginning of the war. Virtually no mail exists with North Carolina markings during the war. It is my intent, with this article, to explore what was happening during this time with the railroad mails.

quarters of its original capital and held a like proportion of its stock.

The longest railroad and largest business corporation in the state when chartered in 1849 and completed in 1856, the NCRR extended in an arc 223 miles from Goldsboro in the east through Raleigh, Greensboro, and Salisbury before terminating at Charlotte in the west. There it met the Charlotte & South Carolina Railroad which ran southward through Columbia. Further roads connected to Augusta, Georgia, and ultimately New Orleans.

To say that the two roads met is not to say that they joined physically. The NCRR and most of its connecting roads adhered to the 4'8½" gauge that later became standard across the nation. The CSCRR and its connections farther south had the 5' gauge that was then standard through most of the South. There was no continuous running of cars through Charlotte, as there was between the NCRR and its eastern neighbors. One of these was the Raleigh & Gaston, running northeast from Raleigh to the small rail hub of Weldon, North Carolina, on the Roanoke River. At the NCRR's eastern terminus of Goldsboro it connected with the Wilmington & Weldon, a north-south road linking Weldon with the state's largest seaport. From Weldon, through traffic proceeded either northward to Petersburg and Richmond or northeastward to Portsmouth, Virginia, next to Norfolk. At Goldsboro the NCRR also met the Atlantic & North Carolina Railroad, another state-controlled road that ran from Goldsboro to the seaports of New Bern and Morehead City/Beaufort. Finally, the NCRR connected at Salisbury, north of Charlotte, with the Western North Carolina Railroad, the third state-controlled road, built to extend westward to Tennessee and there link up with roads extending perchance to the Pacific coast. Actually, the WNCRR was completed in this period only to Morganton, at the foot of the Blue Ridge.

Corporate headquarters were located at the village of Company Shops in Alamance County, at the midpoint of the line. This place was chosen for the road's repair shops, completed in 1859, and a company town was built around them. Lacking churches, schools, and other amenities, the village did not appeal as a residence for many company officers or mechanics save as their jobs required it. To enhance the quality of life and attract additional workers, in 1863 the road reluctantly gave up its monopoly on land ownership in the town and laid off streets and lots for private sale. The descriptive but dowdy name Company Shops (see NCPHS Vol. 13, pp 2 & 3 for related article) was dropped for one of greater

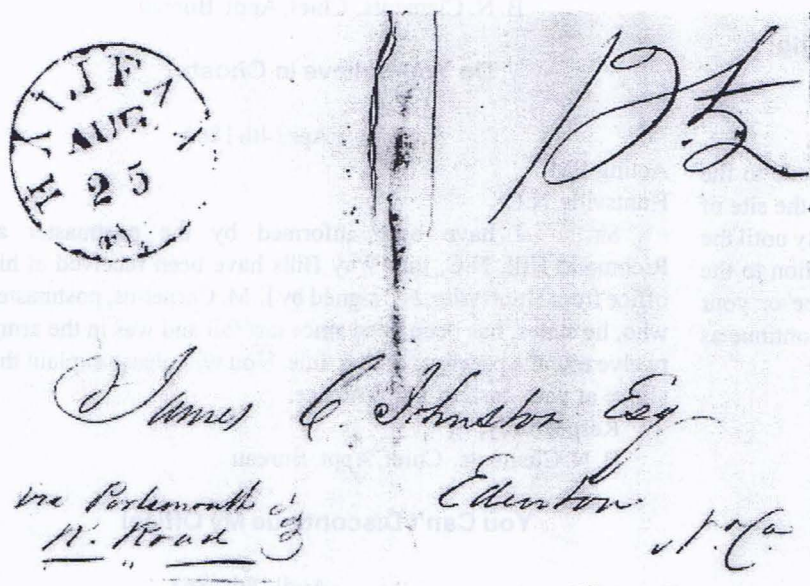


Figure 1

Few southern railroads during the Civil War were more strategically placed than the North Carolina Railroad (NCRR) or played a greater role in determining the fate of the Confederacy. The NCRR was new in 1861, a product of the American railroad boom of the 1850's. Like other southern roads, it was built with state aid—in fact, the State of North Carolina contributed three-

dignity: Vance, after Governor Zebulon Vance, who had just appointed 8 of the 12 directors. Owing to wartime stringency, the town-building efforts came to little and the name Vance was quietly shelved along with the new policy. Today, the town is known as Burlington.

Reagan's purpose was logical enough; he desired to arrange definite mail contracts. Even after the outbreak of hostilities, the United States Post Office had continued to function throughout the seceded states, an astonishing situation which the Postmaster General of the Confederacy found as impracticable as it was embarrassing. He could scarcely bring it

to an end without prior arrangements with the carriers. But before the railway officers could arrive, so much difficulty had arisen over military transportation that the War Department became interested as well.

The convention met on schedule. Represented were nearly all the companies of the existing Confederacy, save those of Texas and Virginia, a total of four thousand miles of line. Conspicuous among the delegates were Richard R. Cuyler of the Central of Georgia, Charles T. Pollard of the Alabama & Florida and John Caldwell of the South Carolina road; there even appeared three well-known figures

from states which had yet seceded: Presidents William S. Ashe of the Wilmington & Weldon, William Johnston of the Charlotte & South Carolina, and Samuel Tate of the Memphis & Charleston. The Montgomery Daily Mail thought it a body "which for worth, ability and capital represented was perhaps the most distinguished that ever assembled in the South."

The first order of business was a brief communication from the Secretary of War, containing a tentative plan for regulating

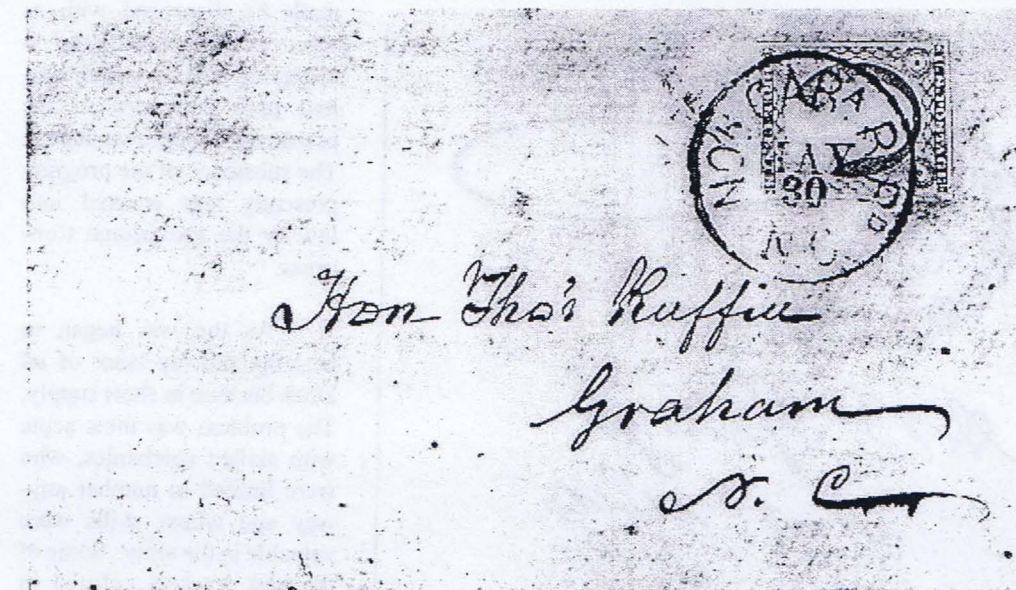


Figure 2

The war that no one wanted came at last. The smoke of the first cannonade drifted over the Carolina marshes upon a pleasant April Sunday, while on the battery at Charleston an excited crowd lustily cheered its own doom.

At Montgomery, the Confederate government realized some of the implications. They knew the South was helpless upon the sea—the new nation stood deficient in manpower, the tools at war and the means to produce them. In lieu of numbers and proper munitions, they knew with certain sincerity to trust in solution skills and southern courage.

Given adequate inland transportation facilities, intelligently utilized, the Confederate states would find themselves in possession of a constant opportunity to get there first with the most men. Who first initiated the first deliberate effort to harness the iron horse of war? In April 1861, Postmaster General Reagan called a convention of key railroad officials to meet at Montgomery on the 26th of April.

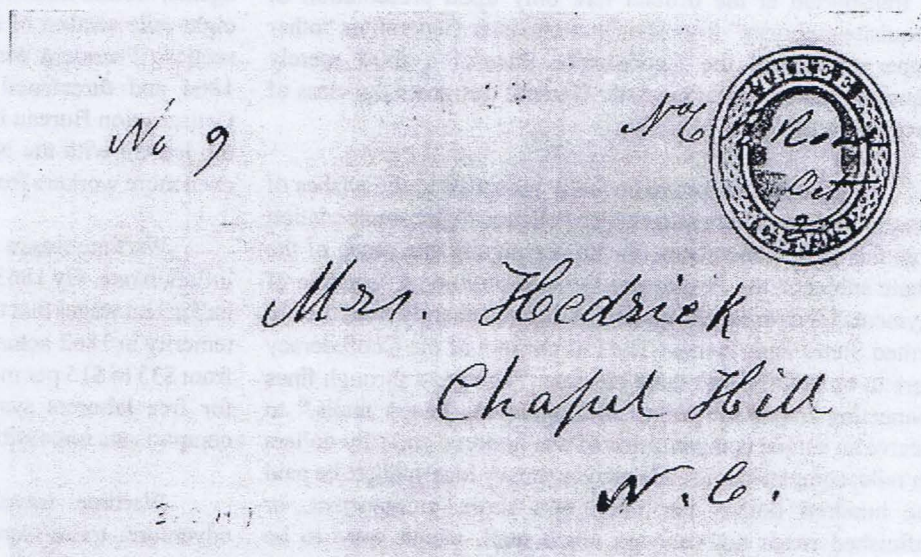


Figure 3

the movement of troops and military supplies. It was a simple program, conceived in innocence: it strove to order the transportation needs of a warring people in just two paragraphs. It proposed first that soldiers should be carried at a fare of two cents per mile and that military freight should move at "half the regular local rates." Secondly, the roads were to receive payment

discontinuing the double daily mails previously operate upon many routes. Payments were to be made, if necessary, in Confederate bonds or treasury notes. No specific time limitation was imposed; in any case, important changes would have to have congressional sanction. The whole of Reagan's proposal was promptly ratified by the delegates; they added only a

recommendation that Sunday mails be dispensed with as soon as practicable and a clarifying section which limited mail deliveries to the precincts of their own depots. The substance of the program presently was enacted into law by the Provisional Congress.

As the war began to heat up, railway labor of all kinds became in short supply. The problem was most acute with skilled mechanics, who were limited in number anyway and whose skills were valuable in the army. Some of the best workers enlisted in the army early in the war or were lured away by higher

wages on other roads, in other industries, or even working for the government. Thus the quality as well as quantity of workers diminished. The shortage also extended to common laborers and section hands—usually hired slaves—whose services were sought by urban and rural employers of every kind and by army work details.

Confederate conscription laws in 1862 limited railroad exemptions to higher officials, conductors, engineers, station agents, section masters, mechanics, and two track hands for each eight-mile section of road. In 1864 that was cut one man per section. President Webb protested vigorously at the cutbacks in 1864 and threatened to curtail services. The head of the Conscription Bureau in Richmond believed he had already been too lenient with the NCRR and responded by proposing to cut even more workers from the road than originally mandated.

Wartime wages of railway workers lagged well behind the inflation rate. By 1863 those in North Carolina received less than half in real wages that they had earned in 1860. The NCRR had the temerity in 1862 actually to lower the pay of its section masters, from \$33 to \$15 per month. But the road did not record its wages for free laborers systematically until 1865, making wartime comparisons impossible.

Wartime travel on southern railroads became high adventure: trains were overcrowded; speeds were lowered to 10 miles per hour, even to walking speed under some conditions; as roadbed and equipment deteriorated; breakdowns were increasingly common and it became almost impossible to adhere to



Figure 4

in bonds or treasury notes of the Confederate States at par, if ordinary currency were not available. That was all, and the Daily Mail reported that the delegates extended their approval "with a unanimity almost without parallel in the history of conventions." In the freshness of their patriotism they attached a minimum of qualifying clauses: one provided that the new rates should go into effect on May 1, 1861; another stipulated that troops were to be transported at the official fare only upon presentation of "requisite authority" from the Quartermaster General, or "other proper officer of the Confederate States;" a third merely requested that the Quartermaster General designate the class of certificate to be used.

The convention proved equally receptive to the wishes of Reagan. In a communication which "elicited high commendation from the various members...for its perspicuity and grasp of the whole subject," the Postmaster General outlined a schedule of payments for carrying the mails that differed sharply from the old United States agreements. The rail carriers of the Confederacy were to be divided into three classes: "The great through lines connecting important points and conveying heavy mails," to receive an annual compensation of one hundred and fifty dollars per mile; completed railroads carrying heavy local mail, to be paid one hundred dollars per mile; and short, unimportant, or unfinished roads not carrying much mail, which were to be tendered fifty dollars per mile. Though these figures represented reductions in existing payments, the service was to be simplified for all concerned, and the costs thereof reduced, by

schedules. Many soldiers, consigned to crowded and stifling boxcars, chose to ride on top; others were transported on open flatcars. One army officer estimated that a railway trip from Montgomery to Richmond was as hazardous as picket duty on the Potomac.

On the NCRR, passenger trains quickly grew from two partially filled cars before the war to six to 10 overflowing ones. Their speeds, previously up to 22 miles per hour including stops, were reduced to 17 in the first year of the war and more drastically thereafter. Two daily passenger trains (one a mixed or accommodation train including freight cars) were the rule throughout most of the war. To preserve a semblance of their posted schedules, trains sometimes cut short their stops or even passed rural stations all together. In these circumstances the road eventually gave up advertising its schedules.

Given the conditions described, wartime mail service was irregular at best. Nineteenth-century papers disseminated the news by exchanging with and copying each other. Even after the advent of the telegraph they were largely dependent on the mails—and the railroads that carried the mails—for news in the form of out-of-town papers and for the circulation of their own papers. They were acutely sensitive to train schedules, therefore, sometimes changing publication times to anticipate the departure of the daily mail train.

Mail service along the NCRR was particularly bad at times of heavy troop movements or crises in supplying the army, when the government impressed trains or even suspended civilian traffic altogether. Newspapers along the road sporadically noted, lamented, or exploded over interruptions, delays, and other inconveniences in the mail service. Often ignorant of the causes, they were inclined to blame the most visible target, the railroad.

Sometimes the train, mail car and all, would arrive more or less on schedule but without any mail, leaving editors to fume helplessly about "gross negligence somewhere." In April 1864 and again in March 1865 government impressment of all available trains suspended mail service entirely for several days. The Raleigh Confederate finally suspended publication until further notice in March 1865 because of the current "derangement of the mails."

Through March 1865 the war had been a distant presence, affecting almost everything the railroad did, but still out of sight. In April, destined to be the last

month of the war, the NCRR was suddenly at the center of things. For the first time, and virtually from one end to the other, it found itself under enemy attack. It was the Union army's most important target, next to Johnston's army. The first blows came from the west, between April 11 and 13. Major General George Stoneman led three brigades of Union cavalry, numbering about 6,000 men, across the mountains from Tennessee late in March, intending to cut off Lee's escape routes in the event of his expected defeat in Virginia. This entailed, among other things, cutting the Piedmont and NCRR lines between Danville and Salisbury. From Greensboro southward these operations would also cut off the main supply and retreat route for Joseph Johnston's army near Raleigh. Stoneman's command first veered northward into Virginia to cut railroads there. Riding hard, his men returned to North Carolina on April 9, coincidentally the day of Lee's surrender.

Next day Stoneman detached one of his brigades under Colonel William J. Palmer to take Salem and then move eastward to cut the railroads north and south of Greensboro. Stoneman himself proceeded southward with the remainder of his command toward Salisbury.

At Salem, Palmer divided his own command into four columns. One of these, consisting of 100 men, reached the Piedmont's bridge over Reedy Fork, 10 miles north of Greensboro, on the morning of April 11 and burned it just after Jefferson Davis and his cabinet had crossed it, fleeing southward from Virginia. Palmer's men missed capturing the entire Confederate government by perhaps as little as half an hour.

Johnston's position had become hopeless. He met Sherman on April 18 near Durham, both of them traveling part of the way by train from their respective headquarters. The terms that Sherman stipulated that day contained political ramifications that were unacceptable in Washington. Technically, the war resumed. No battles were fought, however, and on April 26 the

Attended 20
Mar 23
B. A. Leaphart, A.G. M.
15th Bn (Car) 1st Corps
Murphy Station I & A R R.
J. A.

Figure 5

two generals met again at the same place. the terms reached this time were approved and the war came to an end. It is fitting to note that this event was delayed by two hours while Johnston,

Apparently, the post office was within the railroad depot.

The conclusion one comes to is, the conditions of war, such as a shortage of labor, created major changes in how the mails were handled on the railroad. From the beginning of the war, the mail cars that once carried not only the mail, but men to sort and cancel the mail, soon became the only cars to carry mail when possible. One of the many hardships that the south had to survive.

By 1869, the mails were once again flowing freely on the North Carolina Railroad. Figure 7 is an example of such a cover mailed from Baltimore to Hillsboro, North Carolina and carried on the North

Carolina Railroad. The war created many shortages, one of which was railroad covers for us collectors to collect.

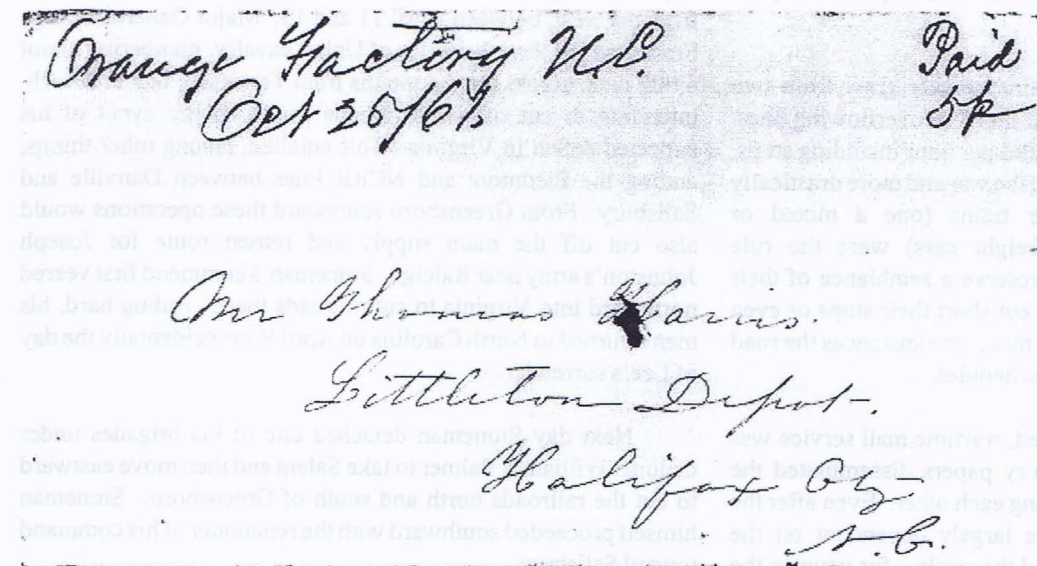


Figure 6

coming from Greensboro, was held up by an accident on the NCRR.

Throughout the entire war, it was obvious that mail did flow somewhat haphazard across the North Carolina Railroad. A search of over 1000 remaining North Carolina Confederate covers can find no official post office markings related to mails carried on the railroad.

Figure 4 shows an example of a Charlotte and South Carolina Railroad handstamp. Two examples of this marking are known. Both were official railroad business and did not enter the Confederate mail system. The Dietz Catalogue lists a Confederate North Carolina railroad marking and a Western North Carolina railroad marking. No price is given for these markings indicating the editors had no record of their sale. In twenty-five years of collecting, I have not seen these covers.

Only two North Carolina Confederate covers are known with a railroad related address. Figure 5 shows a cover from Kittrell, North Carolina carried March 23, 1863 to a North Carolina soldier at Murphy Station GRRR (Gaston & Raleigh Railroad).

Several covers are known addressed to railroad station or depots as in Figure 6.

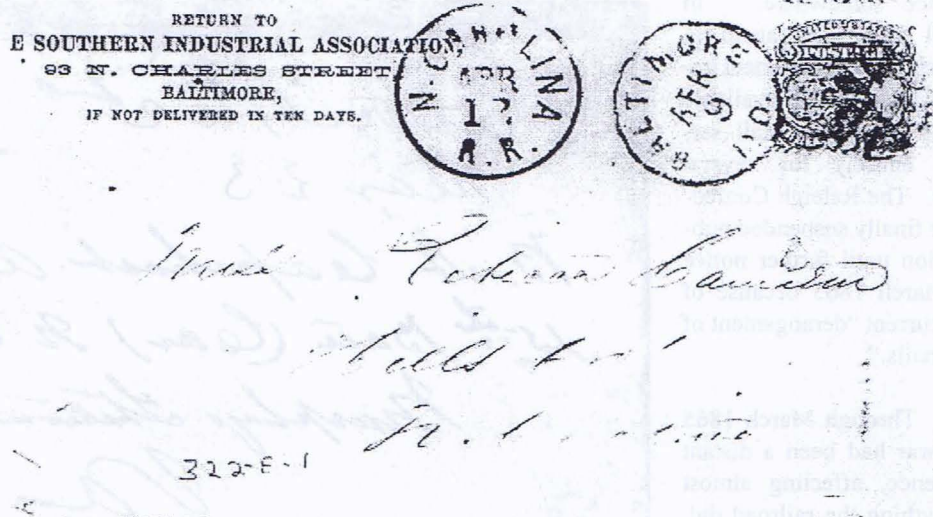


Figure 7

Wilmington, Charlotte & Rutherford Rail Road Cover

by Scott Troutman

Recently the cover shown came to light. It is thought to be the only known cover bearing this erroneous agent marking (W&R.C. R.R.) from the short lived re-incarnation of the Wilmington, Charlotte, and Rutherford Rail Road. Prior to the Civil War construction had begun from Riverside (today's Navassa) near Wilmington, and the first train ran the rails on October 24, 1860. Construction reached Laurinburg by May 13, 1861 and was halted at a place called Old Hundred (100 miles from its start) when the war broke out. At the time Old Hundred was

An effort was made to protect the central section of the line from General Sherman, so the 13 miles nearest Wilmington were pulled up anticipating his arrival in that city. Unfortunately, Sherman changed his direction and on March 5, 1865 his army arrived at the Sandhills Depot (just east of where the railroad crosses NC route 381 today) and proceeded to demolish the railroad. They wrecked about one third of the line including the company shops at Laurinburg.

Even before the wars end, Robert Cowan the railroad's president, had drawn up plans for rebuilding. By June 26, 1865 the re-built railroad was running from Sandhills Depot to Robeson's Depot (near present day Acme) and by July 24, 1865 they had reconnected Wilmington.

The new company issued stocks and bonds to try and organize the completion of the railroad to Charlotte, however the company was now taken over by carpetbaggers. The carpetbaggers used the moneys for personal gain, bribery, and outright theivery and in August of 1869 ran off to Florida leaving some

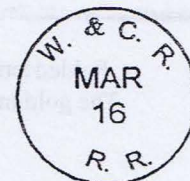
just out in the middle of a forest.

This last section of track, from Arcadia to Old Hundred is perfectly straight, some 77.88 miles This is the longest section of straight track in the state. The original plan had been to run the rail fine dead straight from Wilmington to Rutherford. This seemed a good plan until someone noted it would take them 18 miles into South Carolina where they did not have fight of way.

When the war broke out, the chief engineer was sent to war along with many of its workers. Indeed, many people walked from Rockingham to Old Hundred to catch the train to volunteer to join the confederate army. During the war, many attempts were made by the military to break up the railroad and use it's rail elsewhere in the Confederacy, however, Zebulon Vance intervened as it was a key route for supplying food to the blockaded port of Wilmington. The track deteriorated and by wars end trains could barely do five miles an hour safely. In one case a black farm worker laden with implements repeatedly passed the train as he was walking up the tracks. When asked to come aboard he replied "much obliged, boss, but I hain't got time".

\$10,000,000 unaccounted for. A new company president, one Andrew Jackson Sloan, was appointed but by 1870 he had to be run off as he had again squandered most of the operating funds on personal gambling expeditions.

In late 1870 Silas N. Martin, an honest businessman took over, but he didn't have much left to work with. The line was 177 miles long now, but more cash had to be used to covert the line over to the new standard gauge of four feet eight and one half inches. It had originally been built using the Southern five foot gauge. The line went into receivership in July 1872 and operated until May 17, 1873 when it was sold to the Carolina Central Railway.



The cover was posted at Laurinburg, which was the central shops for the railroad. This was a very active shop in 1871 when this letter was sent. In addition to housing the 15 locomotives, these shops also built over 100 flat cars and 11 box cars for the WC&R.

As I noted originally, this agents mark, with its misplaced & had not been reported up until now.

Bibliography

Railroading in the Carolina Sandhills, Volume 1, The 19th Century (1825-1900), S. David Carriker, Heritage Publishing Company, 1985.

Gold Hill, North Carolina's Premiere Gold City

by Tony L. Crumbley

After gold was discovered on the Reed farm in Cabarrus County in 1799, prospectors roamed the hills of Rowan County. The first important strike was made in 1825 when the Barringer lode was discovered.

Gold Hill, a company with a million dollar capitalization was opened in 1842. A town meeting was held to select a name for the post office and Colonel George Barnhardt suggested the name of the company. This passed and became the town name. On May 15, 1844 Robert Rives was appointed its first Postmaster.

In 1848 there were 1,000 laborers employed in the 15 or so mines. The town at the time contained five stores, one tavern and four doctors. The gold mining industry continued to develop until in 1856 there were 3,000 employees within the mines. By

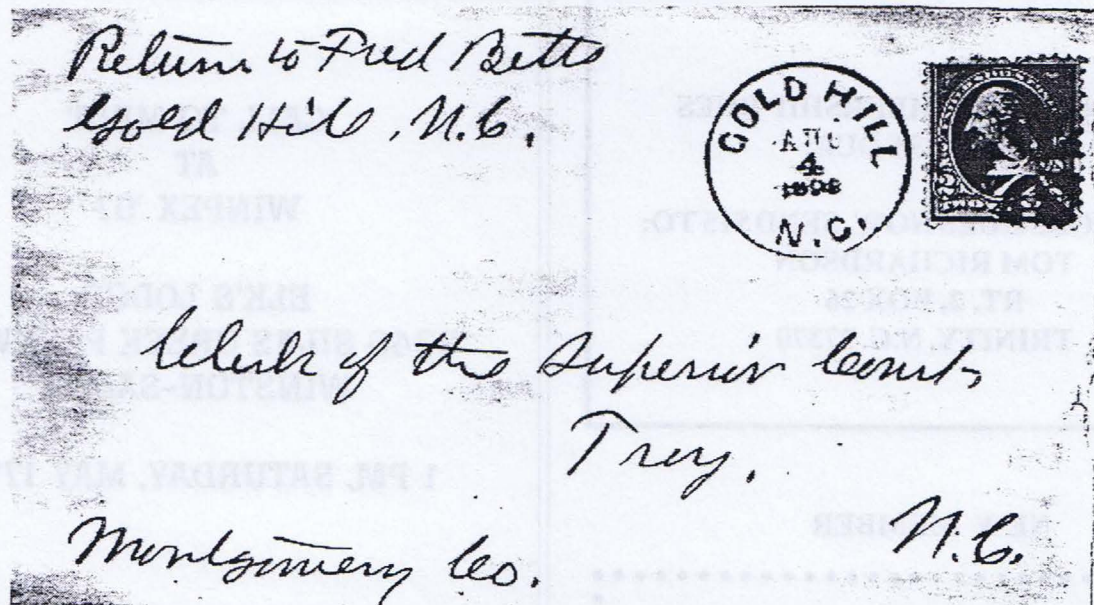
1857 Gold Hill belonged to a northern corporation and the works were more extensive than any other North Carolina mine.

With the 1849 discovery of gold in California, North Carolina lost its position as the number one gold state in the union, however, mining operations did not cease. A revival of interest came about just prior to the Civil War, but gold mining stopped completely at the beginning of the war. The hills were reclaimed by the squirrels. The hill people followed Lee to Appomatox but remembered their dreams and planned to reopen their Eldorado once they whipped the Yankees.

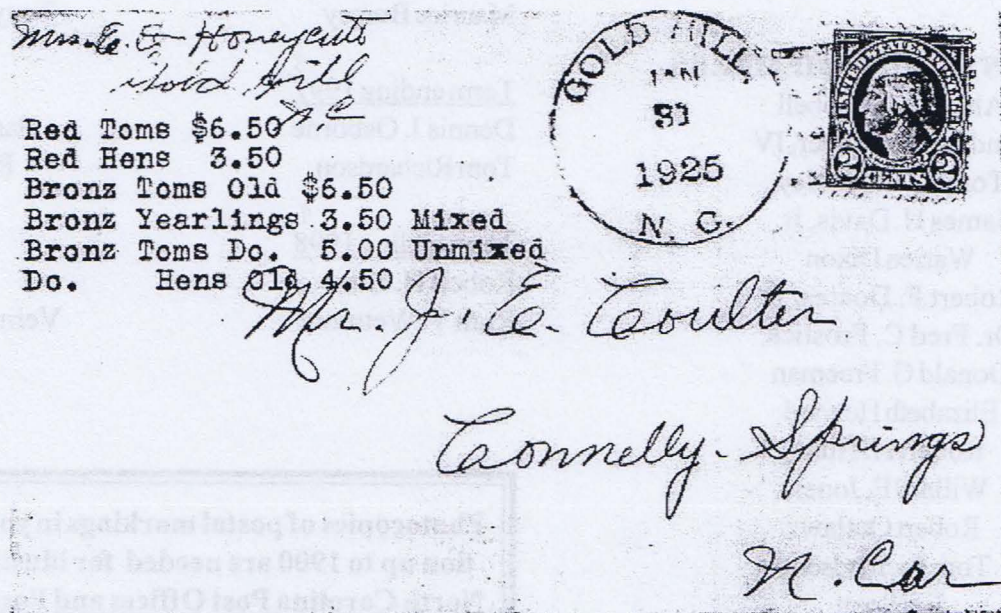
Today, Gold Hill, on Highway 601 between Albemarle and Kannapolis, is an unincorporated community with few people, but a wealth of history. There is still a few small stores and a post office and, of course, the wonderful covers we collect.



Folded letter from Gold Hill with 3¢ issue of 1851 to Philadelphia. The gold mines were still in operation when this letter was posted.



Cover to Troy in Montgomery County with dated handstamp of 1898



Postcard from Gold Hill to Connelly Springs used in 1925.
The sender, Mrs. Honeycutt was offering to sell chickens.

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Thanks to the several members who have responded!