

NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

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Whole 88



CONFEDERATE STATES

FRAMELINE ON A BLOCKADE

MOURNING COVER

Affiliate #155 of the American Philatelic Society



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A board of directors meeting and the annual meeting of the society at CHARPEX 2004 on 24 July 2004. The minutes of the board meeting are shown in another part of this issue. At the annual members meeting, similar status reports were given. In addition, two new members to the board of directors were elected for three year terms. I would like to congratulate Bryson Bateman and Rich Weiner as our latest directors. After the short meeting, I gave a talk on the Postal History Project at the North Carolina Archives and demonstrated the use of the archives web site to extract postal history data from the archives project. We continue to get recognition and publicity from this project and inquires from others who are interested in similar projects. To date, articles have appeared in the *American Philatelist* (June 2004), *Linn's Stamp News* (28 June 2004), *The Computelists* (July 2004), besides our own *North Carolina Postal Historian* (July 2004).

I hope to continue our auction with the next issue of the *Postal Historian* under a new auction manager, Gene Lightfoot. Bob Yacano helped us as auction manager for the first four auctions, and his assistance was very much appreciated.

As always, I welcome your comments and suggestions for improving the society. Please feel free to call me at home (336 545-0175), send me an email message at rfwinter@bellsouth.net or write to me. My mailing address appears on page 2 of this journal.

Dick Winter

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Mourning Covers from North Carolina

By Tony L. Crumbley

One of the most striking additions to a postal history collection is mourning covers. Over the years they have attracted my attention and whenever possible, I have tried to add them to my collection. Until recently, there was very little information available on the subject. Short of a few philatelic articles, little research had been published on this topic. In 2003, *Mourning Covers: The Cultural and Postal History of Letters Edged in Black* was published by author Ernest Mosher. This well-done work added much to the knowledge of postal history.

For those of you unfamiliar with mourning covers, they can briefly be described as black edged posted letters used as "harbingers of death and messengers of grief." Mourning covers are death-related as indicated by some form of mourning mark usually in black. Mourning covers have been identified in over 217 countries.

The first proven mourning cover was posted in Luxembourg in 1767. The world growth of these covers was during the Victorian era with the high point of usage in the U.S. being in the mid to late 1800's. Their use began to decline in the early 20th century though examples can still be found today.

One of the most interesting parts of Mosher's work is his research from a census of 3,864 mourning covers of which 2,255 were U.S. covers. It's interesting to compare the time frame of his known usages to those known from North Carolina. The following table shows the use of mourning covers over time:

The earliest known North Carolina mourning cover is from the 3 cent stampless era ca. 1855. (See Figures 1-2) By far,

the largest known quantities from North Carolina were used during the Civil War era 1860-65. Of the five Civil War mourning covers recorded, two were used early in the war. This was an indication of their availability when the war began and their unavailability after the blockade began. Two of the Confederate covers were envelopes that originated outside of the Confederate states. These two covers are among the most classic of all North Carolina postal history covers. (See Figures 3-6)

On the outside cover is perhaps the grand daddy of all North Carolina mourning covers. This blockade run mourning cover is franked with a Scott #10 Confederate frame line. The cover is from the collection of James Monroe. The following is what he says about this cover:

President Lincoln forbade trade with the seceded states on April 16, 1861, and later that month proclaimed the blockade of Southern ports. The blockade runners were crucial in the receipt of vast quantities of military supplies and in maintaining the lines of communication with Europe. The transfer points for both cargoes and mail were principally Nassau and Bermuda. Mail reaching the Confederate Atlantic Coast ports on blockade runners generally are handstamped either "SHIP" or "STEAMSHIP." Rate markings, generally in manuscript, reflect the regular 5 cent and 10 cent single letter rate (or multiples thereof) plus

Frequency Table of U.S. and N.C. Mourning Covers
1789-1999

	<u>Total U.S.</u> <u>Recorded</u>	<u>% of</u> <u>Total</u>	<u>N.C.</u> <u>Recorded</u>	<u>% of</u> <u>Total</u>
1789-1834	8	.4%		
1840-49	23	1.0		
1850-59	120	5.3	2	14.3%
1860-69	314	13.9	5	35.7
1870-79	198	8.8	1	7.1
1880-89	318	14.1		
1890-99	327	14.5	3	21.5
1900-09	314	13.9	2	14.3
1910-19	350	15.5	1	7.1
1920-29	175	7.8		
1930-39	51	2.3		
1940-49	20	.9		
1950-59	7	.3		
1960-69	20	.9		
1970-99	10	.4		
Total	2,255	100%	14	100%

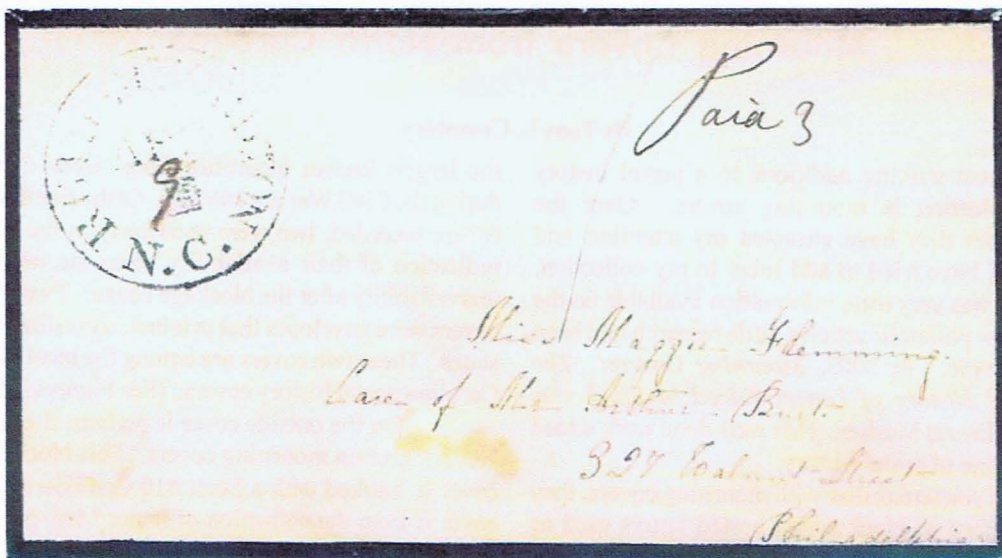


Figure 1

a 2 cent fee for the shipmaster. Normally the "SHIP" or "STEAMSHIP" markings are accompanied by town (port) postmarks; most of the Atlantic Coast blockade-run letters were received at Charleston, Savannah or Wilmington. Rarely does a Confederate stamp appear on an incoming blockade cover. When it does, it is generally a letter forwarded to an inland destination beyond the port of entry. This envelope (see cover) is one of these rare instances. It has a 10 cent milky blue Archer and Daly frameline (Scott #10), and is the only known frameline on a blockade cover and only one of four known framelines on a mourning cover.

The cover is addressed to Miss Virginia A. Knox, Fredricksburg, Virginia and has a twice struck Wilmington, North Carolina, October 9

(1863) postmark with a manuscript "2" due mark. It also has "Per Steamer Flora" written at the top left of the cover and is handstamped "SHIP." At the bottom left there is a message in pencil which reads, "do you expect a box off steamer from Europe – if so write me at Columbia T.A. Ball." T.A. Ball is Thomas A. Ball, a partner in the famed firm of Keatinge and Ball who were printers of Confederate currency and one general issue 10 cent stamp (Scott #12).

The steamer Flora arrived in Wilmington on October 8, 1863, from Bermuda, one day before the letter was postmarked. The Flora operated as an Atlantic Coast blockade runner from August 1863 to January 1864, and made nine successful runs through the Federal Fleet out of ten attempts. While sailing to Halifax from



Figure 2



Figure 3

Bermuda for repairs, Flora floundered and was lost at sea on or about January 11, 1864.

Anyone familiar with mourning covers know they come with a variety of black border widths from very large 20 mm borders to very fine line borders under 2 mm wide. A myth that Mosher puts down in his book is that the width has to do with the distance of time from the death. Mosher proves there is no relation to the border size to the time of death. The size of border just happens to be what was produced and sold by the envelope manufacturer.

Most of the North Carolina mourning covers have 3-5 mm black borders around the envelopes. Mosher lists quite a variety of known mourning covers from tiny borders to borders over 25 mm, solid black envelopes, envelopes with black framers around the stamp, black lace work and diagonal black lines.

Of the 14 North Carolina covers examined, only one differs from the black border type. Figure 10 is posted from Polkton on January 1, 1898. Note this envelope only has two vertical lines on two of the corners. Figure 10 shows the reverse of this envelope. Note there is no black edging there.

Figure 9 is to the same Dr. McBride. The cover is posted

from Polkton on November 29, 1895. The reverse in Figure 9 has no black edges. This is very typical of most mourning covers.

By the turn of the century, the use of mourning covers began to decline in North Carolina. Figure 11 was posted from Flat Rock on July 29, 1913. This is the latest use of a mourning envelope the author has seen from North Carolina.

In reviewing Mosher's book on mourning covers, the author checked to see what additional North Carolina covers were illustrated. Of the nearly 500 mourning covers shown, only one North Carolina cover, the blockade cover included within this article, was shown. This is an indication of the lack of use of these covers in the state. It is quite noticeable that the vast majority of the covers illustrated were of Northern origin.

In his listing of known producers of mourning envelopes, probably 100 companies were included. Only one was a Southern company, J.P. Stevens Eng. & Co. of Atlanta. This is perhaps reflective of the lack of envelope manufacturers in the South.

As scarce as they may be, these letters of bad news can surely be an interesting area to collect for any postal history student. The author would like to hear of any additional mourning covers you might have in your collection.



Figure 4



Figure 5

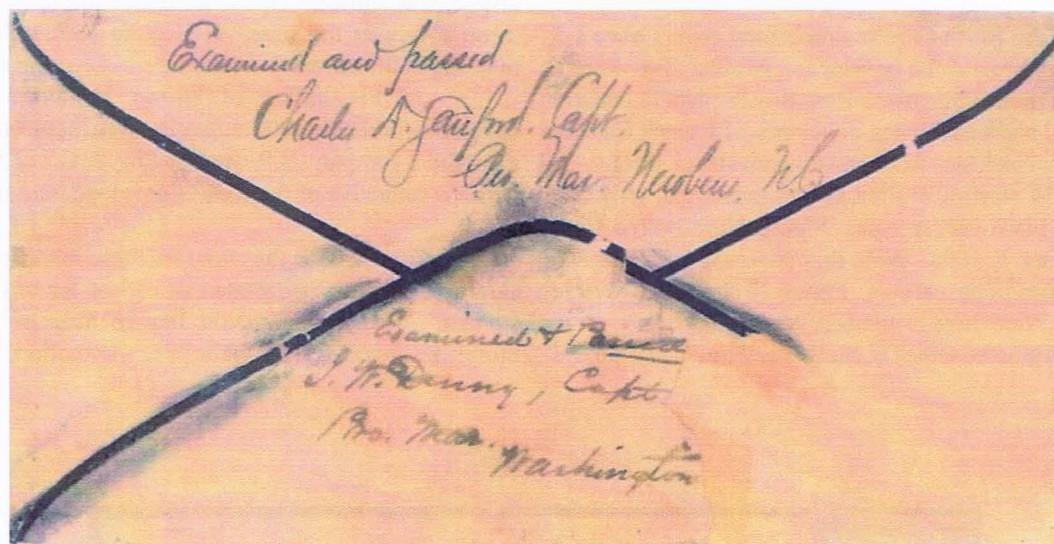


Figure 6



Figure 8

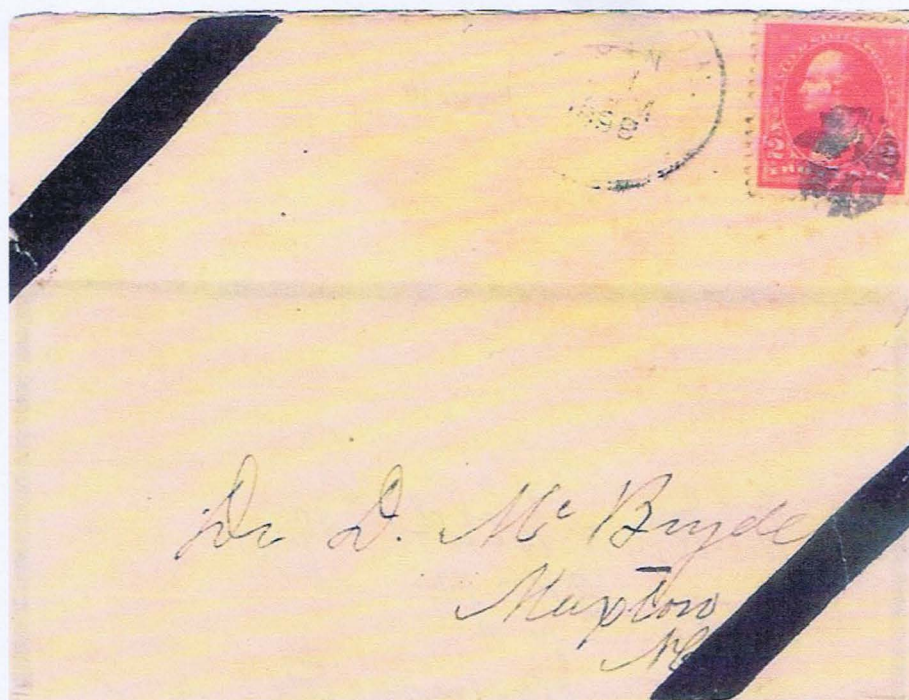


Figure 9

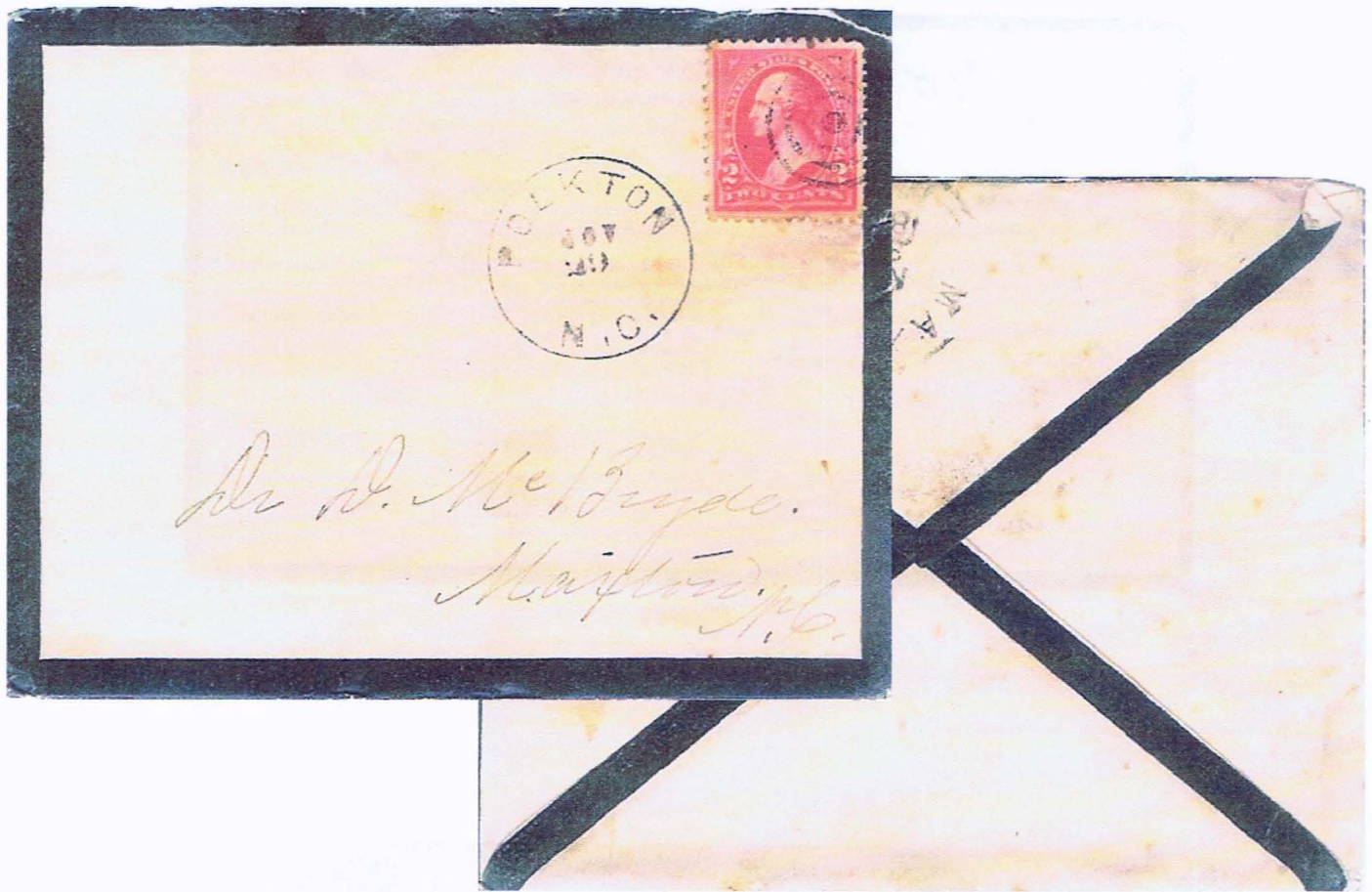


Figure 10

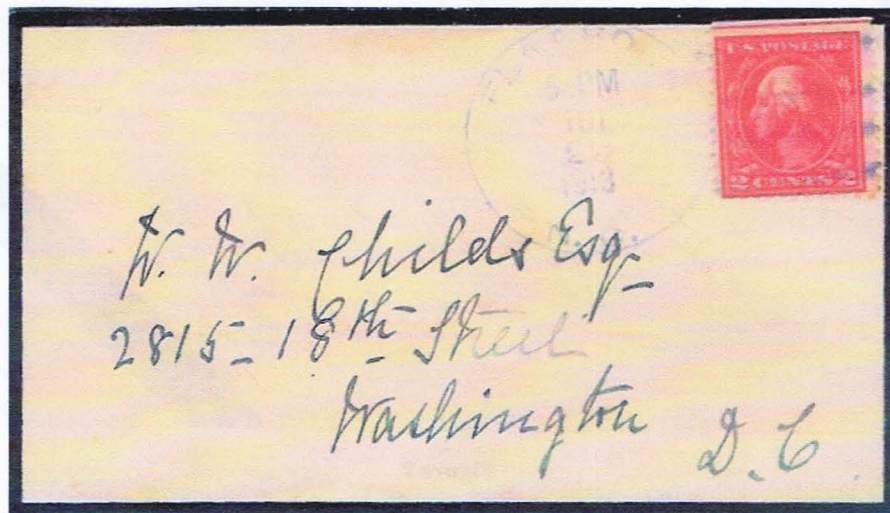


Figure 11

Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad Steamboats

By Richard F. Winter

The Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad was chartered by the General Assembly on 30 December 1833.¹ This charter allowed the company to build a railroad from Wilmington to Raleigh. Soon, however, another railroad coming south from Petersburg, Virginia, already in operation and almost completed to the headwaters of the Roanoke River in North Carolina, offered an opportunity to connect at Weldon. This new railroad could greatly enhance the economic possibilities of the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad. The owners of the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad wanted an amendment to their charter to permit their railroad to go either to Raleigh or north to Weldon to meet up with the Petersburg & Roanoke Railroad. Since the state legislature had declined to offer any assistance to the railroad company, they would have to build the railroad entirely on private funds. The people of Raleigh were not enthusiastic about subscribing to stock in the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad and the amendment was needed to help the railroad company financially. If the citizens of Raleigh would not help, then perhaps others, who would benefit from a line north, would. In 1835, the charter amendment was approved and the line was diverted north to Weldon, but the name, Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad, was retained.² The line started operations in November 1838 on two sections. The first was a 64 mile section from Wilmington north to Faison's Depot (Duplin County). The second section was a 20 mile section south from Weldon (Halifax County) to Enfield (Halifax County). The 77.5 miles between the two sections was covered by stage coach. The full 161.5 miles of track was completed on 7 March 1840.³

The 1835 amendment to the charter also permitted the company to operate steamboats in conjunction with the rail line. Article III of the amended charter read:

That it shall be lawful for said company to purchase, own and possess steam-boats, and other vessels to ply and sail from the port of Wilmington to Charleston, or elsewhere; and to take and receive for the use of said company, over and besides the profits allowed in the said original act, such sums of money, or other property for freight, passengers, or other accommodation on said boats and vessels, as they may be able to make by contracts with their customers, and accounting to such rates, as they may from time to time establish.

With the railroad still under construction, the company put two steamboats into service in 1837 on the route between Wilmington, NC and Charleston, SC. The first was the New York built steamer *Boston*. She made an initial trip from Wilmington, arriving at Charleston on 6 May 1837. She departed Charleston at 5:00 PM on 9 May and arrived back at Wilmington on 10 May 1837, sixteen hours later.⁴ Repairs must have been necessary

because she did not begin regular operations until she arrived at Charleston again on 19 October 1837. On this second voyage she carried rescued passengers from the wreck of the steamship *Home*.⁵ This coastal steamer, owned by the Southern Steam Packet Company and operating between New York and Charleston, was lost on her third voyage to Charleston on 9 October 1837, going ashore off Ocracoke light 27 miles southwest of Cape Hatteras and breaking up during a violent storm. About 20 crew members and 70 passengers' lives were lost with only 40 persons surviving.⁶

Boston was followed by the steamer *North Carolina*, making her first run from Wilmington on 5 December 1837, and arriving at Charleston the next day.⁷ The steamers were scheduled to leave Charleston at 5:00 PM and arrive at Wilmington at 7:00 AM the next morning. Because the two steamers could reliably make the run in less than a day, they became a popular means of transit for passengers, goods, and later, mail. Professor Alan D. Watson wrote:

By providing conveyance for passengers and freight to and from Charleston, the Wilmington and Raleigh company enhanced the potential use of the railroad. At the same time, the connection enabled the rail line to procure a mail contract from the federal government, which provided much needed revenue.⁸

A third steamer, the *Gov. Dudley*, named for Edward B. Dudley, then the governor of North Carolina, was added to the fleet in 1838. This vessel, built by Cornelius Vanderbilt in New York, arrived at Charleston from Wilmington on 21 August 1838, and departed again for Wilmington the same day.⁹ A fourth vessel, the *C. Vanderbilt*, was added to the fleet at the end of 1838, arriving in Charleston on her first trip from Wilmington on 2 January 1839.¹⁰ Other steamships that operated for the company were the *Wilmington* (September 1839) and the *Gladiator* (July 1840). By November 1840, the *Huntress* also was making the run.

An act of Congress dated 7 July 1838, had two important aspects that affected the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad.¹¹ Among the many new post roads authorized in the act was the following:

From Weldon to Halifax; thence to or near Enfield, Waynesborough, and South Washington, to Wilmington; thence to Charleston, South Carolina.

This was the route of the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad and their steamboat service to Charleston. In addition the new law stated:

That each and every railroad within the limits of the United States which now is, or hereafter may be made and completed, shall be a post route, and the Postmaster General shall cause the mail to be transported thereon, providing he can have it done upon reasonable terms,

and not paying therefore in any instance more than twenty-five per centum over and above what similar transportation would cost in post coaches.

Writing to the House of Representatives on 8 and 14 December 1838, the Postmaster General stated that new bids for the mail contracts to carry mail south from Raleigh to Augusta, Georgia starting on 1 January 1839, were so exorbitant that he was forced to use the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad and their boat route to Charleston.¹² Apparently, he had concluded the deal shortly before these letters were written. The 21 December 1838 *Wilmington Advertiser* announced that the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad had been awarded a mail contract to carry mail along the Great Southern Mail route between Weldon and Charleston. The Great Southern Mail route was an express mail route that carried mail from New York to New Orleans. The original route through North Carolina was by mail wagon from Blakely Depot at the Virginia border, which was the southern terminus of the Petersburg & Roanoke Railroad, through Raleigh and Fayetteville to South Carolina. In January 1839, this portion of the route was shifted east to the great concern of citizens in Raleigh and Fayetteville. The Great Southern Mail now was carried to Weldon on the Petersburg & Roanoke Railroad, then by the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad to Charleston.¹³ The first mail contract over the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad encompassed two route numbers, No. 2071 for the section from Weldon south and No. 2072 for the section from Wilmington north.¹⁴ The steamships allowed delivery of mail to Charleston 30 hours sooner than the previously used wagon route from Raleigh.¹⁵ The mail contract beginning in January 1839 caused the company to start a daily steamboat service to Charleston.¹⁶ The rigorous operations necessary to support the mail contract often

resulted in less than four vessels being available for the service while repairs were being performed on the others. The Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad discontinued the steamboat service in 1854 when the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad provided a rail connection through North and South Carolina to Charleston.¹⁷

In March 1840, the first route agent was assigned to the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad. The agent was a Post Office Department employee who rode the train to distribute mail at stops along the way as well as to receive mail from the stations. He usually did not sort mail destined for the final terminal or destinations beyond.¹⁸ When the agent received loose mail along the way, he marked the mail with an indication of where and when it came on board, usually the railroad name and the date. The earliest route agent markings on the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad, applied to loose mail received on the train and not to the letters in the bagged mail that was carried, were manuscript markings such as "W&R Rail Road," "W&RR Road," "W&RRRd," "W&RR," and "Wmgton & Ral R Road." The earliest route agent marking recorded to date is a manuscript marking of 17 October 1840.¹⁹ The manuscript route agent markings were followed a few years later by five different types of handstamp markings, first in red ink and later in blue and black ink. The handstamp markings are documented in *Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina*, Volume IV. Letters from Charleston often were taken directly to the steamship pier and given to the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad steamship captain without going into the post office at Charleston. These letters were handed to the route agent when the steamship arrived back at Wilmington and the mail was placed on the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad car. I do not believe that the route agent rode the steamship to Charleston, but that he received the mail when the steamship arrived at Wilmington and accompanied it north on the

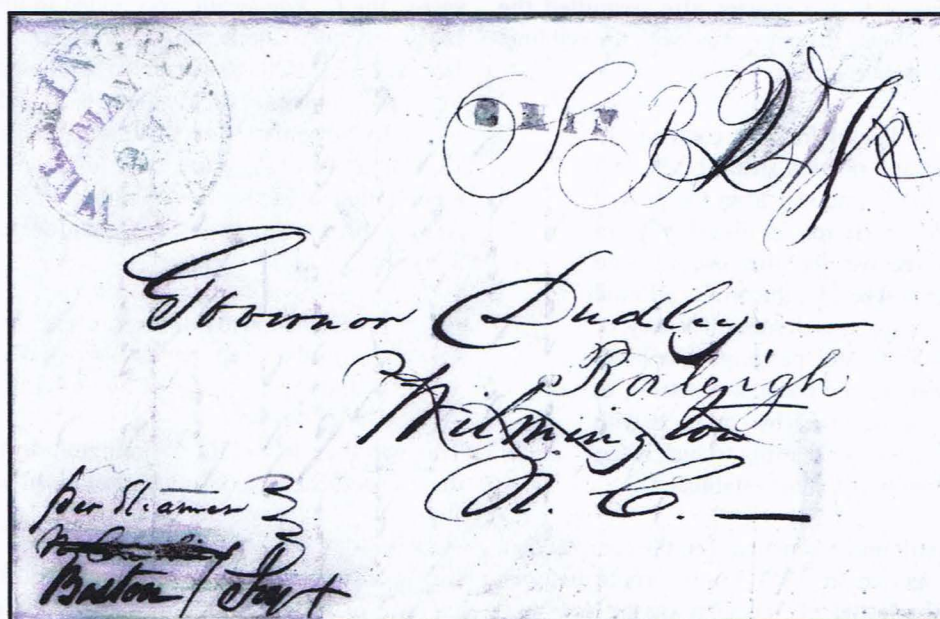



Figure 1.

19 May 1838, Charleston, South Carolina to Wilmington, redirected to Raleigh. Letter carried by Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad steamer *Boston* to Wilmington, where it was marked "SHIP" and "S.B. 14½," the postage due for a single ship letter to Raleigh. This was changed to "27" when the letter was considered double rate. (courtesy of North Carolina State Archives)

rail line.

How was mail on the steamboat route treated? Before the mail contract was awarded, the 170 miles of the steamship route from Charleston to Wilmington was not considered part of the post route. Mail carried by the steamers on this route was treated as incoming ship letters. That meant the postage charged was either 6¢ if the letter was addressed to the arrival port of the vessel, or 2¢ ship fee plus the normal inland postage fee for letters going beyond the port. Once the steamboat route became a part of the railroad contract, mail carried by the steamers no longer was considered as ship letters, but now was regular mail carried on a post route subject to normal inland mail charges. The 170 miles of the route was added to the distance the letter traveled from the arrival port. A letter from Charleston to Wilmington, for instance, would be charged 6¢ per half ounce before the contract and 18¾¢ after the contract. If the letter went beyond the port, say to Raleigh, the difference wasn't so great. It would have cost 14½¢ before the contract as a ship letter and 18¾¢ after the contract.

While working in the North Carolina State Archives, I found a most unusual letter that demonstrated steamboat usage before the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad mail contract was awarded. This letter is illustrated in Figure 1. It is the only letter that I have seen that was endorsed to be carried by one of the Wilmington & Raleigh steamboats. This folded letter originated in Charleston, South Carolina on 19 May 1838, and was addressed to Governor Dudley in Wilmington. In the lower left corner the letter was endorsed, "Per Steamer/N. Carolina," a reference to the desired steamer to carry the letter to Wilmington. Figure 2 shows an



WILMINGTON ROUTE.
The superior and swift new Steam packet NORTH-CAROLINA, Capt. W. P. Reynolds, will leave the New-York Steam Packet wharf, To Morrow Afternoon, the 20th instant, at 5 o'clock P. M. The Boat will depart on Sunday always at 5 precisely. Passage through to Halifax, \$22—to Wilmington alone, \$10, payable in Bankable Money. Apply on board as above. WILLIAM PATTON, Agent, 6 Fitzsimons' wharf.

All Slave Passengers must be cleared at the Custom-House.

N. B.—All persons are forbid trusting any one for or belonging to this Boat, without an order from the Captain or Agent.

M 19

Figure 2.

Advertisement in *Charleston Courier* for 19 May 1838, showing expected departure of steamer *North Carolina* on 20 May. Steamer *Boston* arrived instead and carried Figure 1 letter to Wilmington.

advertisement in the *Charleston Courier* for Saturday, 19 May 1838, announcing that the steamer *North Carolina*, Captain W.P. Reynolds, was scheduled to leave the next day for Wilmington. The steamer that arrived from Wilmington that day, however, was not the *North Carolina* but the *Boston*. The endorsement on the letter was changed to show routing by the *Boston* under Captain Ivy. Note that there is no Charleston post office datestamp on this letter. It was taken directly to the steamer at the New-York Steam Packet wharf in Charleston and not to the post office. As a result, the letter did not enter the United States mail system until

arrival at Wilmington as a ship letter. On Sunday, 20 May 1838, the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad steamer *Boston* departed Charleston at 5:00 PM and arrived at Wilmington the next morning. The letter was processed on Monday, 21 May, receiving a 30mm red circular datestamp of the Wilmington post office in the upper left corner and a red handstamp **SHIP** at the top center. The latter marking indicated the source of the letter to the mail system, an incoming ship. This marking was necessary since there would be an extra 2¢ charge as a ship letter. Governor Dudley was not in Wilmington at the time, so the letter was redirected to Raleigh and not rated as a letter to the port, but one going beyond the port. The postage due was marked in the upper right corner, "S.B. 14½," meaning steamboat 14½¢. This was the single letter rate of 2¢ ship fee plus 12½¢ inland fee from Wilmington to Raleigh. This amount was changed to 27¢ when the letter was realized to be a double rate. The amount calculated for a double rate letter was 2¢ ship fee plus 2x12½¢ inland fee. The ship fee of 2¢ remained the same regardless of the weight of the letter. Only the inland fee changed for multiple rate letters.

Figure 3 illustrates a letter after the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad started carrying mail under a contract with the Post Office Department. This letter, also from the North Carolina Archives, originated in Wilmington on 3 November 1840, and was addressed to Governor Edward B. Dudley at Raleigh. The letter was not posted in Wilmington because there is no Wilmington postmark. Instead, it was given to the railroad route agent on the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad at Wilmington. Having received the letter as a loose letter, one separate from the bagged mail that was received at Wilmington from the post office, the agent wrote in black ink his postmark, "W&RRRoad," in the upper left corner, with the date 3 October 1840. He wrote the incorrect month, however, as the letter was dated in November. The route agent also rated the letter in the upper right corner for 12½¢ postage due. The Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad went north from Wilmington and did not go to Raleigh, so how did the letter get to Raleigh? In examining an 1839 map of the Post Offices, Post Roads, Canals and Railroads of North and South Carolina by David H. Burr, Geographer to the House of Representatives and late Topographer to the Post Office, I found a probable answer.²⁰ About 83 miles north of Wilmington the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad crossed the Neuse River at Waynesboro. The post road from Kinston, Waynesboro, and Smithfield to Raleigh crossed the railroad at Waynesboro. The distance by train to Waynesboro and by post road from Waynesboro to Raleigh is 134 miles, for which the rate was 12½¢. I have come across several letters in the archives with Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad route agent markings, each originating in Wilmington and addressed to Raleigh during the same period. These letters show the same rates, and presumably each was sent by the same route. One can wonder why the letters were sent by train north instead of going on the post road from Wilmington directly to Raleigh. I believe the answer lies in the frequency of the mail service. The train north left Wilmington each day while the mail wagon to Raleigh traveled less frequently. The train and mail wagon route used by these letters probably got them to Raleigh quicker than waiting for the normal mail service.

In early 1843, the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad route agent started using circular datestamps with the name of the railroad.

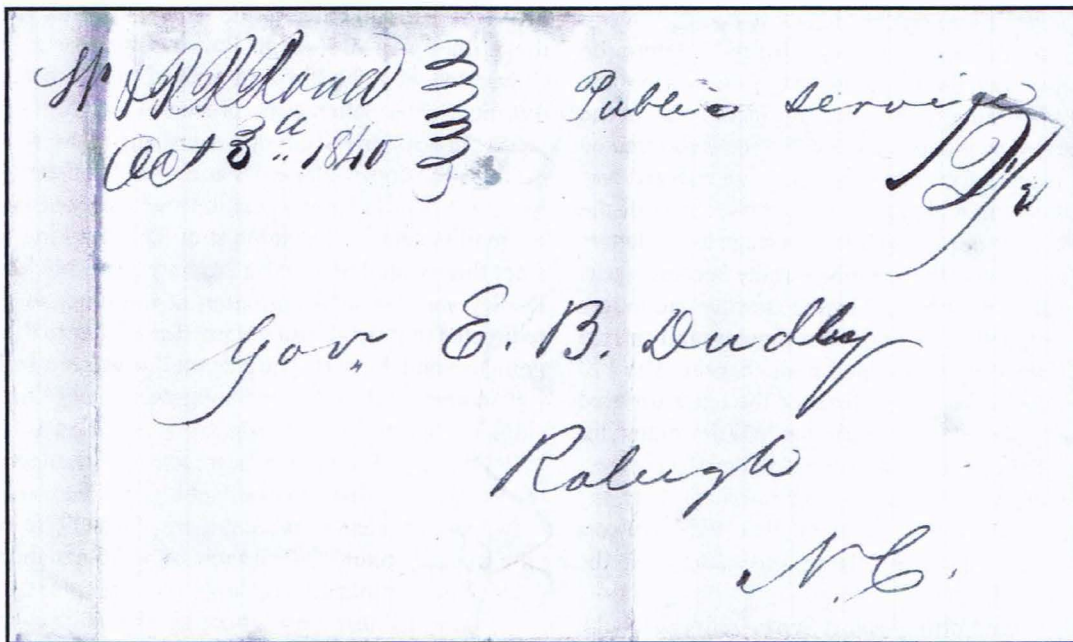


Figure 3.

3 November 1840, Wilmington to Raleigh, with manuscript postmark of the route agent on the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad. Letter probably carried north to Waynesboro, where it left the train and went by post road to Raleigh. Postage due at Raleigh was 12½¢. (courtesy of North Carolina State Archives)

Instead of posting the letter at the Charleston post office, the letter writer took it to the steamship pier and gave the letter to the captain of the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad steamship to carry it to Wilmington. The next day the letter arrived at

Wilmington, where it was given to the route agent of the railroad for the trip north. The route agent applied his 30mm blue circular datestamp, **WILMINGTON & RALEIGH RAILROAD** (type 305-H-3), dated 7 February. The letter entered the

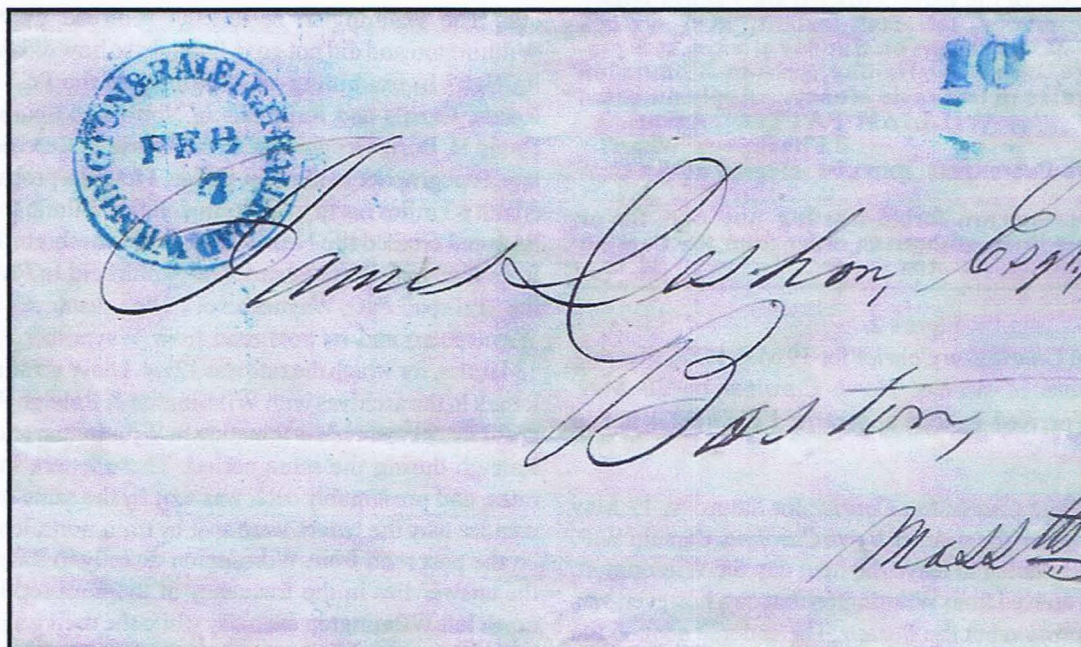


Figure 4.

7 February 1850, Charleston, South Carolina to Boston, conveyed by Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad steamship to Wilmington and given to route agent on train. Blue 30mm circular datestamp of Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad applied by route agent on train as well as 10¢ postage due handstamp. Letter entered U.S. mail on train at Wilmington.

The earliest use that I have found in the archives is 2 March 1843. An example of this marking used on a letter from Charleston, South Carolina is shown in Figure 4. This folded letter was written in Charleston on 7 February 1850, and was addressed to Boston York. U.S. mail system at this time on the train. The agent also applied a blue handstamp 10 in the upper right corner for the postage due in Boston, the rate of 10¢ for a ½ oz. letter going more than 300 miles.

For more information on the North Carolina railroads the reader is referred to an excellent article by Scott Troutman in the *NCPHS Newsletter* (now called the *Postal Historian*), No. 38, Fall 1991, pp. 3-18, titled, "The Pre-Civil War Railroads of North Carolina, Their Histories and Postal Markings." Scott lists not only all the route agent circular datestamps used on the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad, but also numerous handstamp rate markings used by the route agents as well.

¹ *Laws of North Carolina, 1833*, Chapter 78, pp. 122-32.

² *Laws of North Carolina, 1835*, Chapter 30, p. 60.

³ Cecil Kenneth Brown, *A State Movement in Railroad Development* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1928), pp. 31-44.

⁴ *Wilmington Advertiser*, 12 May 1837.

⁵ *Charleston Courier*, 20 October 1837.

⁶ *New York Commercial Advertiser*, 19 October 1837.

⁷ *Charleston Courier*, 7 December 1837

⁸ Alan D. Watson, "Sailing Under Steam: The Advent of Sailing

Under Steam in North Carolina to the Civil War", *The North Carolina Historical Review*, January 1998, p. 58.

⁹ *Charleston Courier*, 22 August 1838.

¹⁰ *Charleston Courier*, 3 January 1839.

¹¹ U.S. 5 Statutes at Large, pp 271-283.

¹² Letterbooks of the Postmaster General of the United States, Volume H-1, Record Group 28, Post Office Department, The National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹³ James D. Milgram, M.D., *The Express Mail of 1836-39*. (Chicago: Collectors Club of Chicago, 1977) p. 80.

¹⁴ C.W. Remele, *United States Railroad Postmarks, 1837 to 1861* (State College of Pennsylvania, The U.S. 1851-60 Unit No. 11 of the American Philatelic Society, 1958), p. 166.

¹⁵ *Wilmington Advertiser*, 21 December 1838.

¹⁶ *Wilmington Advertiser*, 4 January 1839.

¹⁷ Watson, op. cit., p. 58.

¹⁸ Charles L. Towle, *U.S. Route and Station Agent Postmarks* (Tucson Arizona, Mobile Post Office Society, 1986) pp. VI-VII.

¹⁹ *Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina*, 4 vols. (Newell, N.C.: North Carolina Postal History Society, 1996), vol 4, p. 4-229.

²⁰ This map is available by download from the Library of Congress at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/>, under Collection Finder, Maps, Railroad Maps, and Geographic Location of North and South Carolina. The maps can be viewed with MrSID Geo Viewer software, also available free from the Library of Congress by download.

An Envelope From Cobb's

by Scott Troutman

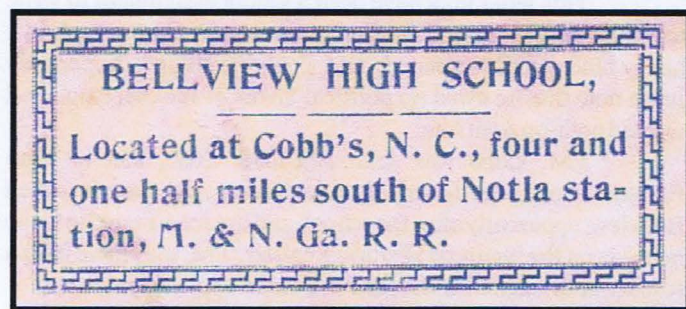
Shown is the front and back of an interesting 1894 cover from Cobb's. I had never heard of Cobb's but was intrigued by the return address, see illustration. Neither had I heard of the M & N Ga. R.R., so I thought I would see what I could find. It turns out there is a lot of history in this little cover. When you are at Cobb's (the town no longer exists under that name) you are as close to Georgia as you can get and still be in North Carolina. It is right on the border almost due south of Murphy in Cherokee County.

The railroad it mentions was the Marietta and North Georgia Railroad. This was originally part of the Ellijay Railroad,

one of the oldest railroads in Georgia. The Ellijay railroad was incorporated in 1854, but didn't get going until 1874, some twenty years later and ten years after the Civil War. It originally ran from Marietta to Canton, Georgia but slowly extended itself until 1884 when it reached Ellijay. They pushed on, and in the next three years penetrated the North Carolina mountains and reached Murphy, North Carolina. In 1887 they consolidated and renamed themselves the Marietta and North Georgia Railway.

The track was built as a narrow gauge operation at the very narrow gauge of 3'0". It was initially a lumbering railroad. In 1889 they began to widen the track to the new standard gauge (4'8") but the run to Murphy did not get widened until 1897. So it was still only three feet wide when this letter was sent.

Notia, or more correctly Nottia, was the station along the line nearest to Cobb's. It apparently was just outside the town that became Ranger. This letter is backstamped at Ranger a town that had just come into being about five years before. On May 14, 1889 it took the name Ranger and discontinued use of the older name of England's Point. Ranger would have a post office until January 31, 1955 when Murphy took over its routes. The back stamp on this cover is probably the earliest handstamp known from Ranger.





There is a good chance this letter went up the railroad, though there is no way to prove it. Paved roads didn't come to the area until 1922. The letter got to Washington, D.C. from the very back woods of North Carolina in two days.

The letter was sent to Senator Matt Whitaker Ransom. Ransom is an interesting character. Born in Warren City, N.C. in 1826 by the time of the Civil War he had established himself as a lawyer and politician. When the war broke out he entered in the war as a private in the 1st North Carolina Regiment, NCV. By the time of the Peninsular campaign he had risen to become a Lieutenant Colonel but hard days lay ahead for the regiment in the battles of Seven Days and Malvern Hill where he was wounded. By 1862 he was Colonel of the 35th North Carolina (Ransom's Brigade, named for his younger brother). They saw action at Sharpsburg (Antietam) and Fredericksburg. In June 1863 he advanced to become brigadier general succeeding his brother as the commander of Ransom's Brigade. The action did

not stop as they fought at Plymouth, Weldon, Suffolk, Petersburg, Fort Stedman, Five Forks, Second Drury's Bluff, where he was again wounded, and finally Appomattox. After the war he went back to lawyering, farming and politics. He became a U.S. senator and later was appointed as a minister to Mexico. He died in 1904 at Garysburg, N.C.

This letter may have been a school assignment to write to the Senator or from a teacher at the school. On the back in a heavy blue pencil is notated. "JM Cobb, - nothing". Apparently just a note that he owed no political favors or the correspondent wanted nothing from him.

J.M. Cobb was John Marshall Cobb, son of John Franklin Cobb, the town's founder. Today the area is called Bellview, apparently after the school, and the John Franklin Cobb house is on the National Historic Register. J.M. may have been a teacher at the school at the time this letter was written.

THOSE DAVIDSON COLLEGE ILLUSTRATED COVERS

Editor

The Fall 2002 issue, Vol. 21, No. 3, of the *Postal Historian* recently fell into the hands of the Director of the Library at Davidson College. This gentleman, Leland M. Park, class of '63, has informed us that the engravings on the Davidson covers were executed by J. W. Orr in the 1850's. He was the grandfather of Louis Orr, the first American etcher to have his works on permanent display at the Louvre in Paris.

During WWII the French government hired Louis Orr to make detailed etchings of famous French landmarks in case they should be damaged during hostilities.

After the war, Robert Lee Humber, an attorney from Greenville, N.C., and "father" of the North Carolina Museum of Art, engaged Louis Orr to do a series of 50 etchings of famous landmark buildings in North Carolina. They were produced in sets and sold for \$50, mostly to institutions. Today the set is valued at \$1,000.

Collectors who have college covers in their collections must wonder about the similarity in engraving style of covers other than Davidson. It seems to this editor that UNC, Wake Forest and others may have been produced by the same artist. Who knows the answer? Who will research this question for us?

Phil Perkinson is looking for the following markings from North Carolina post offices to complete his county collection. Phil's address is PO Box 550, Norlina, NC 27563.

NC

Alvis
Bear Pond
Bobbitt
Chestnut X Roads
Dewberrie
Fairport
Fitts
Glen
Linbank
Metallia
Poplar Mount
Shocco Springs
Staunton
Vicksboro
Weavers Creek

Virginia

Cabbage Farm
Crayon
Gypsy
Jumbo
Keats
Kimono
Red Dirt
Smilax

MINUTES OF THE NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING July 24, 2004 at CHARPEX 2004

Present: John Allen, William DiPaolo, Vernon Stroupe, Harvey Tilles, Ruth Whitmore, Richard Winter

After the call to order President Winter asked that the minutes of the last meeting, as reported in the *Postal Historian*, be approved. There were no corrections and the minutes approved.

Treasurer DiPaolo reported that the Society was in good financial shape. Bank balance at the end of July was \$3,741.61, about \$500 more than a year ago. At present the Society has 86 members.

Editor of the *Postal Historian*, Vernon Stroupe reported that he had available an editorial backlog for two more issues. He asked that more articles be submitted from more people. Each quarter, 95 copies of the *Postal Historian* are printed.

Dick Winter reported on the Society auctions, of which there have been 3 netting \$112 to the Society. Some discussion ensued of increasing the size of the auction listing to include pictures and the possibility of adding a 10% commission to the buyer to cover extra expense. It was decided that the listing could be expanded without adding a buyer commission. A new auction director, Gene Lightfoot, was announced. The Board expressed its appreciation to Bob Yacano for his work as auction director.

The Board approved a \$25 frame fee to Washington 2006 for a single frame exhibit highlighting the Society.

The nominating Committee reported it would present the names of Bryson Bateman of Goldsboro and Rich Wiener of Chapel Hill to the membership for election to the Board.

The meeting was adjourned by the President.

Submitted by
William DiPaolo, Secretary-Treasurer

AIR MAIL COVER OFFER

The American Airmail Society is offering the 25th Anniversary of Kitty Hawk Flight cover as shown on the cover of Fall 2003 issue of the *Postal Historian*. Send \$20 to Don Lussky, PO Box 1172, Westmont, IL 60554.

CALLING ALL MEMBER CYBER-PHILES
 THE *POSTAL HISTORIAN* HAS COMPILED A
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 at
 vss@charter.net

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 Chattanooga, TN

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