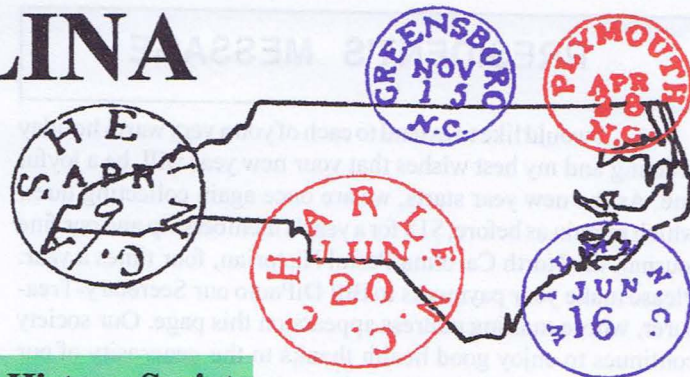


NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

The Journal of the North Carolina Postal History Society

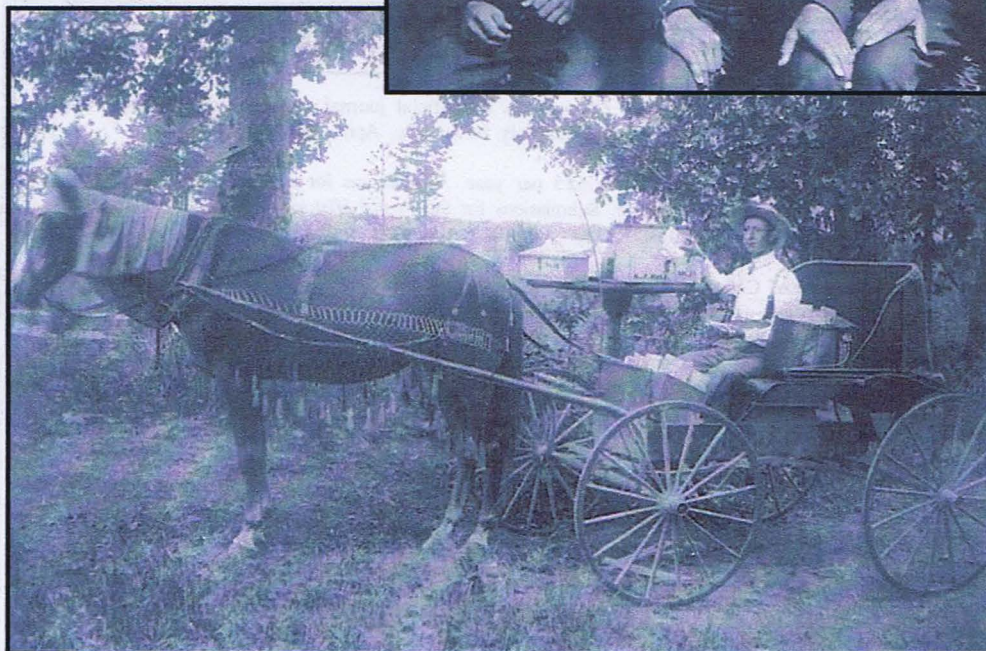


Volume 24, No. 1

Winter 2004-5

Whole 89

Rural Route Carriers in Stanly County - 1913



Oakdale Postal
Deliveryman James
Martin - 1915

Affiliate #155 of the American Philatelic Society



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I would like to extend to each of you a very warm holiday greeting and my best wishes that your new year will be a joyful one. As the new year starts, we are once again collecting dues, which remain as before, \$15 for a year's membership and our fine journal, the North Carolina Postal Historian, four times a year. Please make your payments to Bill DiPaolo our Secretary-Treasurer, whose mailing address appears on this page. Our society continues to enjoy good health thanks to the generosity of our members, who continue to contribute their time and money, for which we are most grateful. Donations above the regular membership amount of \$15 are deductible.

If recently you have had some difficulties using the postal history database on the North Carolina Archives web site, please be patient. A major update to the ENCompass software was installed a few months ago. This is the software that runs the Manuscript and Archives Reference System (MARS) in which our database resides. Unfortunately, some of the search features, present before the update, are no longer present. <http://www.ncarchives.dcr.state.nc.us>. The staff at the archives is working with the software manufacturer to eliminate the problems. Basic post office searches can still be performed as outlined in the North Carolina Postal History Project instructions.

Have you visited the web site of the National Postal Museum? This site is located at www.postalmuseum.si.edu/ and has a number of very interesting sections. You can find a good deal of information about some of their collections and other resources. Portions of some of their collections can be seen in the exhibits section. For example, you can find some excellent information on the Grinnell Missionary stamps or see some wonderful covers from Cuba in a special on-line exhibit. Every item in the current blockbuster exhibit, "The Queen's Own," from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's personal philatelic holdings, can be

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viewed on-line and in detail. Also under Resources on their Site Map is something new called the State Postal History Registry. It is still under development, but about half of the states can now be accessed for postal history information. Each state has a data page which provides information on who coordinates postal history information for that state, what state societies exist and how to contact them, what literature on that state's postal history is available from the three major philatelic literature dealers, and more. In the future this registry will offer much more postal history information through the various state coordinators. The more you look into the features of the National Postal Museum's site, the more you will learn. And, in a few months they will be opening up an on-line access to their database that will offer an even larger view into their holdings.

Our auction resumes with this issue under the new auction manager, Gene Lightfoot. The format is changed slightly, but I think you will find it easy to use. Don't forget to mail your bids to Gene Lightfoot, 1324 Brook Arbor Drive, Cary, NC 27519, or send them by email to my68gt@aol.com.

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.

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Stanly County

Nature's Wonders Driving the Local Economy and Creating a Plentiful Postal History

"The Ruffles of Plenty" -Uwharrie Indians and "Fountain of the Gods" - Pee Dee Indians

Compiled by Tony L. Crumbley

A thousand years before the first white settlers moved to the confluence of the Yadkin and the Uwharrie Rivers, the Indians knew of its abundance nature. The land was well watered and covered with tall timber with grass in some areas. These large grassy areas became the lands occupied by the first settlers.

The first dates related to the Stanly County area was a map dated 1733. The map is a general map of this part of North Carolina. At this time, no village settlements were listed. During this period of the 1700's, the land between the rivers was an isolated section with no bridges to cross the rivers and ferries were non-existent. No one dared to cross the roaring rivers during the rainy season.

Early records indicate the oldest known house within the bounds of Stanly County was located on Long Creek. It was built about 1750 by members of the Efird family, a distinguished family name to this day.

In the late eighteenth century, small settlements had begun to grow up at the junctions of Pee Dee River traffic and inland roads. Licensed inns near ferry crossings and along inland roads accommodated travelers. One of these, Colson's Ordinary, at the tip of the peninsula formed by the Pee Dee and Rocky Rivers, is the earliest structure to be recorded on a map of the Stanly County region -Collet's 1770 map. In its quarterly session for 1771, the Anson County court licensed the ordinary, stipulating that it must provide "lodging in a good feather bed and clean sheets -six pence. Every dinner not less than two dishes, good meat -shilling and 4 pence." Blasts from the stage coach driver's bugle indicated the number of passengers to be fed and lodged; inn workers had tables set by their arrival. Horses were refreshed and fresh relays were on hand. A watchtower near the ordinary allowed inn workers to monitor both river and stagecoach traffic. Another landmark on the King's Highway north of Albemarle was Kendall's Ordinary, established by David Kendall in 1826. From the inn, Kendall also operated a post office and general store.

By the first quarter of the nineteenth century, scattered general stores with designated federal post offices stood along the county's inland roads. In 1824 one of these, Smith's Store, became the first designated post office for the community that was later encompassed by the City of Albemarle.

As Pee Dee River traffic increased in the late eighteenth century, two villages grew up on the western side of the river:

Tindalsville and Allenton. By the first quarter of the nineteenth century, both towns had been abandoned, their populations devastated by typhoid fever.

Located near the confluence of the Yadkin and Uwharrie Rivers, Tindalsville was named for the Tindal family, who operated a ferry crossing at the confluence. Before Stanly County's separation from Montgomery County, Tindalsville had, for a time, served as Montgomery County's seat. In the early nineteenth century, great plans were contemplated for Tindalsville as an inland port. As part of State Senator Archibald Murphey's scheme to improve North Carolina's transportation system, the state legislature planned a canal system for the Pee Dee River, making the waterway navigable between Tindalsville, the head boatable waters of the Pee Dee, and Cheraw, S.C. However, the plan never materialized. By 1835 the county seat had moved to Lawrenceville, prompting Dr. Francis Kron, the prominent Stanly County region physician and horticulturist, to note that, "It appears that Montgomery County courthouse was born under a migrating star, its fate has been to wander."

Ever since the 1750's, newcomers had been arriving here in the Yadkin Valley. The Scotch-Irish, the English, the Germans and a few French, all kept coming from Virginia, Pennsylvania and up the Pee Dee from South Carolina. A stir of new life, and also rumbles of dissatisfaction, were evident on all sides. The town of Tindalsville was being deserted because of a typhoid fever scare and the destruction by a tornado. The residents in the area of Tindalsville had been disillusioned earlier when their dream that the Yadkin-Pee Dee would be made navigable, never had come true. These unfavorable happenings disappointed many of the early settlers.

About the only favorable happening in the Yadkin section up to this time was the coming of Dr. Francis Joseph Kron, the first educated and trained medical doctor, to the community of Tindalsville. He remained here until his death in 1883.

In the early 1840's, the courthouse in Lawrenceville burned. This has been given as the reason citizens west of the Yadkin-Pee Dee asked for the creation of a new county in 1841. A more likely explanation for a new county is the fact that the river was difficult, even dangerous, to cross in bad weather. No one knew this better than Eben Hearne, sheriff of Montgomery County, who lived in present day Albemarle and had to cross the mighty river frequently just to get to the courthouse in

Lawrenceville. In fact, Eben Hearne's grandfather, Joshua Hearne, had drowned in these raging waters. "Nature had furnished an ample and dangerous reason for the division."

What we do know is that David Kendall, Eben Hearne, George Smith and John Freeman petitioned the state legislature in Raleigh to create a new county on the west side of the Yadkin-Pee Dee River. This area of land was bounded on the south by Rocky River, on the west by Cabarrus County, on the north by Rowan County and on the east by the Yadkin-Pee Dee River. This area of land, some 406 square miles, was known locally as the "land between the rivers."

In due time, after some debate and discussion, the petition was granted and North Carolina's 79th county was born. This was on January 11, 1841. Never had the people "between the rivers" been so thrilled or elated. The Old North State had made one more step toward improved self-government.

John Stanly, for whom Stanly County is named, was born in New Bern, a town named after Bern, Switzerland by the Swiss who settled there. His birth date is given as April 9, 1774. He was the son of John Wright Stanly, a wealthy merchant. When John Stanly was fifteen, his father died and his formal schooling was cut short. But this did not stop young John Stanly from a search for knowledge. Soon afterward, he began to read law under the guidance of some of the leading lawyers in his community. By applying himself, John Stanly became one of the leading lawyers of his day. He was elected to the state legislature in 1798, and for eleven successive terms thereafter, serving as Speaker of the House at one time. He also served in the Congress several terms, and left his mark on the lives of many who worked with him because of his brilliant mind and his great oratorical ability.

But like most men, Stanly was not perfect. His weakness was his temper which rather often he seemed to be unable to control. One of the worst examples of this was when he and Richard Dobbs Speight, Sr. became involved in one of their many political arguments. Speight was a man of politics, having served his state as Senator, a member of Congress and as the distinguished Governor of the state. But the conflict became too great. Tempers waxed hotter and hotter, and at white-heat, on Sunday afternoon, September 5, 1802, these two men with ungovernable tempers met. It was a fatal meeting. Stanly challenged his foe, ex-Governor Speight, to a duel. To Stanly, this was the only way to settle their differences. In this mortal combat, Speight lost. Eight days later, John Stanly was pardoned by the governor for the death of this political foe.

Apart from its farm economy and the scattered rural industries that supported that economy, Stanly County's only other significant industry during the antebellum period was gold

mining. Gold had been discovered in 1799 on the John Reed farm in Cabarrus County. Reed formed a mining company in 1803. Up to the California gold rush in 1848, North Carolina was the country's leading gold producer. In 1837, when the U.S. Mint opened its first branch in Charlotte, fifty gold mines were active in the state. In Stanly County, gold was first discovered at the Barringer Mine in the Misenheimer vicinity around 1825. This mine was the first underground or "lode" mine in the southern Piedmont. Development of the county's largest gold mine, the Parker Mine near New London, began in 1859. Like the Reed Mine, the Parker Gold Mine provided rich yields in its early mining period. Established by the Parker family, the mine was sold to the New London Estate Company in the post-Civil War period.

During the nineteenth century, a total of eleven mines were active in Stanly County: the Barringer Mine (Misenheimer vicinity); the Hathcock, Hearne and Lowder Mines (Albemarle vicinity); the Parker Mine (New London vicinity); the Thompson Mine (Albemarle vicinity); and the Crowell, Mumford and Kimball Hill Mines (New London vicinity). The mines often had small assay offices that assessed the value of the gold by U.S. government standards. At least one, the Ingram gold mine, had a commissary. By the mid-twentieth century erratic gold yields and rising labor costs had shut down all but the Parker Gold Mine, which, by the 1980s, had become Morningstar Explorations.

As it developed into a settled agrarian region, Stanley County was, on the eve of the Civil War, a sparsely populated region of 7,801 inhabitants. Industry was limited, as the U.S. Census of 1860 listed only three sawmills and one shop each of a tanner, harness maker and blacksmith.

Although Stanly County had voted against secession from the Union, the county formed a volunteer unit, the Stanly Marksmen, when war came. Five other Stanly County companies went off to the war between 1862 and 1863. The county mustered resources for the Confederate forces. A commissary was established in Albemarle where women were enlisted to sew uniforms for Confederate soldiers. A vigilance committee, with Dr. Kron as chairman, oversaw the keeping of law and order in the county during the war.

No battles occurred in Stanly County. The war's drain on manpower resources results in severe deprivations. In 1865 a riot broke out when hungry citizens stormed an Albemarle warehouse. In an attempt to remedy food shortages, County Commissioners voted to send James McCorkle to Richmond for 5,000 bushels of corn. They noted that "the large number of men in the military service of the Confederacy is such as to have a very great extent impaired and nearly destroyed the agricultural production of said county. By war's end, the county's population had been significantly reduced, from 7,801 to little

over 6,000. The region's depressed economy led to a substantial out migration of Stanly County families to the west.

Population History of Stanly and Albemarle

<u>Year</u>	<u>Stanly County</u>	<u>Albemarle</u>
1850	6,922	
1860	7,801	
1870	8,315	
1880	10,505	
1890	12,136	248
1900	15,220	1,382
1910	19,909	2,166
1920	27,429	2,691
1930	30,216	3,493
1940	32,834	4,060
1950	37,130	11,798
1960	40,873	12,261
1970	42,822	11,126
1980	48,517	15,110
1990	51,765	15,500
2000	58,100	15,680

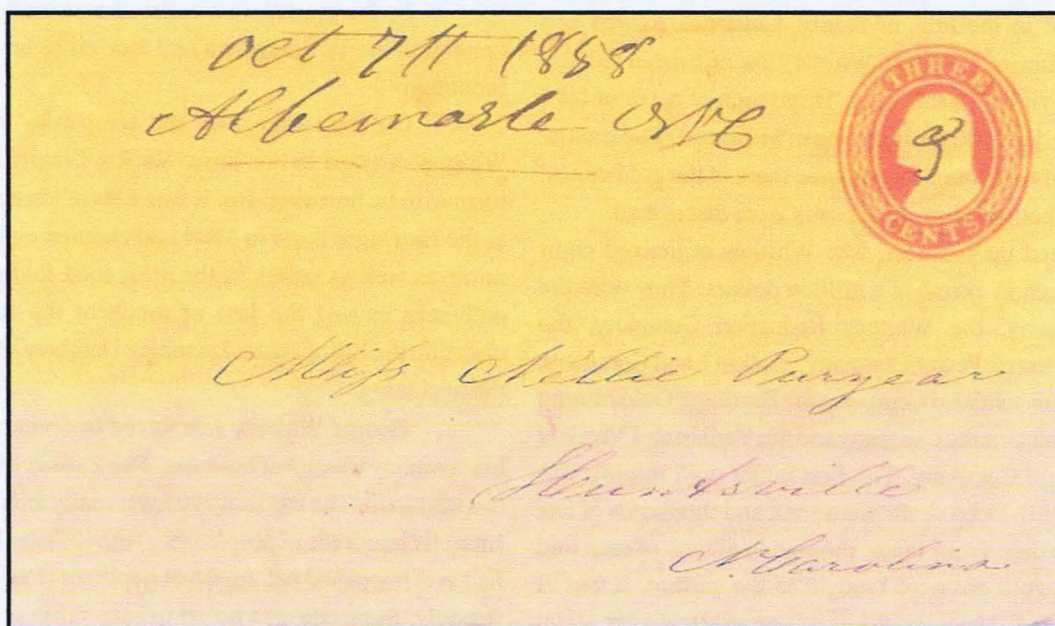
The coming of the railroad in the 1890's brought significant growth to Albemarle, including new industries such as Efir and Wiscasset textile mills. Other new businesses: Allen Clothing Store, Lillian Knitting Mills and Palmer Stone Works, all during the first decade of this century.

In 1909, a \$67,000 bond issue was voted on which would bring better services such as lights, water and sewer, and good streets. Editorials in the newspaper reminded the people that other communities had more incentives to offer industry than Albemarle did, and that the community would lose industries to

these other towns if they did not act. The bond issue was passed. By the 1920's all of these services were a reality, along with a new high school, hotel and hospital. Albemarle was becoming a city, with two of the largest textile mills in the state.

Albemarle

Albemarle, the County Seat of Stanly County, is one of the two oldest towns in the area. It was a community with a post office



PSE with Albemarle ms marking of 1858

even before it received its present name. It was known as Smith's Store Post Office as early as 1826. The post office was located about one mile east of the present day public square and George F. Smith, who owned and operated Smith Store, was the first

postmaster. Even then, the community stood at the intersection of two major roads. On March 30, 1841 Daniel Freeman was appointed postmaster and the post office name was changed to Albemarle CH.

Big Lick

After the Baptist church was established here in 1860, a community was built. The crossroads here furnished a setting suitable for a settlement. It was slow to begin with, but it grew. A store was built and a mill was constructed. A few years later, an academy was organized and this school lasted on into the next century. "Big Lick Academy," as it was called, founded in 1896 by C.J. Black, minister and later Stanly County Superintendent of Schools. The age-old salt deposit near by gave the crossroads its appropriate name.

Other early businesses at Big Lick were: a livery stable, casket factory, saw mill, blacksmith shop, cotton gin, harness shop and even a photo shop.

Why the railroad did not go through Big Lick in 1913 is not known; some say a surveyor broke a pitcher in his room and the landlady got mad. Another theory is "a gallon of corn liquor." Most likely the reason is that the people of Big Lick did not want to give up their land. Croson C. Furr offered land nearby and the railroad was put through his community, which was named Oakboro. After that, Oakboro began to develop and people moved out of Big Lick. The Big Lick post office first opened in 1860. It operated until 1915 when the mail was transferred to Oakboro. Only one cover is known from Big Lick.

Baden-Whitney

Unlike any other town or community in Stanly County, Baden came into being as the result of a heart breaking misfortune. A few miles up the Yadkin above present day Baden, "Old Whitney" woefully failed. The adventure at Whitney was a bold one, the boldest ever undertaken in the Valley of the Yadkin.

Sometime during the 1890's, a roving rich man, George I. Whitney from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, learned of all these rich mineral resources here in the Uwharrie Mountains and the Yadkin Valley. After a casual survey, he soon realized the vast potential of wealth stored in the hills of Stanly, Cabarrus, Rowan and Montgomery counties. This man Whitney lost no time in secretly buying mineral rights in this area. Thousands of acres of land were purchased. By 1900 business began in earnest. The granite quarry in Rowan was humming, as were some of the gold mines. More land was bought as more deposits were discovered.

To speed up business, Mr. Whitney organized eight corporations, each in excess of a million dollars. They were the Whitney Company, the Whitney Reduction Company, the Yadkin River Electric Power Company, Yadkin Land Company, Yadkin Mines Consolidated Company, the Barringer Gold Mining Company, Rowan Granite Company and the Yadkin and Virginia Copper and Land Company. The first major gold mining was begun at Gold Hill. Deep shafts were sunk and thousands of feet of tunnels were dug. From these, thousands of tons of rock and dirt containing gold ore were brought to the surface. It was at Gold Hill that E.B.C. Hambley, Whitney's general manager, set up his headquarters. In 1905 William J. M. Kinney was appointed the first postmaster of Whitney. The office served the many

companies of the Whitney's.

For a while all these companies met with limited success. Due to the vast investments, something else had to be done to enhance progress and ensure greater profits. A council was called and the greatest decision of all was made. Since all these properties were near the Yadkin River, Mr. Whitney decided to build a dam across this old river and put it to new uses. Electric power was his greatest need, and he saw unlimited possibilities of using water power for this purpose.

In the meantime a railroad was built from near New London to the Whitney dam and four miles on down to Palmer Mountain.

On the surface, all the companies which George I. Whitney directed in this lower Yadkin County looked good and seemed to be booming. But it was a "bust" instead! An accident at the Barringer mine in 1904 had claimed eight lives, and this mine, as well as others in the area, soon folded. Then typhoid outbreaks caused the loss of much of the labor force, even claiming the life of general manager Hambley. And this was only the beginning.

George Whitney was forced to declare bankruptcy and his company was out of business. The Yadkin River project came to a standstill. The Panic of 1907 was really felt in Stanly County. Literally hundreds of people were without jobs. Nothing like this had ever happened before, when hopes for riches had been felt so strongly. Someone was heard to say, "This is Stanly County's greatest disappointment!" Any many think it was.

In 1908 the Whitney companies went into receivership.

Then in December, 1910, all this property was sold to the North Carolina Electric and Power Company. Early in 1912, a French company, L'Aluminium Francais, which was engaged in the reduction of aluminum, became interested in the Whitney properties. A group of engineers and technicians paid a visit to Stanly County, not only to see the Whitney project, but also to see about the possibility of using the Yadkin River to produce hydroelectric power. A group of lawyers also came to investigate the legal aspect of the property and the rights to use the waters of the Yadkin for power purposes.

During that summer, some 22 houses at Whitney were made ready for the officers, engineers and other personnel for the French company. This was ample proof that new hands were in the act of taking over an old, incomplete job. Everyone in the valley was elated.

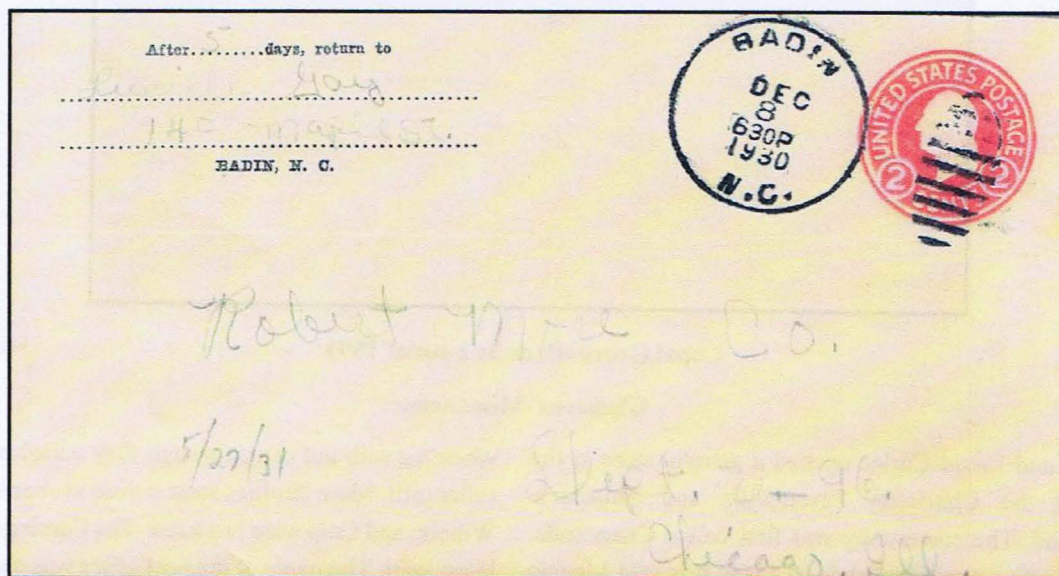
In the early fall of 1913, was begun the building of the Badin Club House, a three story frame building, the most imposing building in the community. It became the social center for the new community.

In the meantime, the place for the aluminum plant was changed from the top of the small mountain adjacent to and overlooking the dam, to a location just northwest of the town of Badin. The first location was found to be in the wrong place and even though much of the foundation of the building had been completed, the company decided to move. Here adjacent to the railroad, the giant building was soon on its way toward completion. It soon became the largest building in Stanly County. In this building was located the carbon plant, the pot rooms, the giant forges, the mighty electric motors and all the machinery of a great reduction plant. A giant processing plant it was.

As in all great construction jobs, where hundreds of

laborers from many walks of life and many areas of the country assemble, conditions were not exactly normal in Badin during these construction days. These were really wicked and woolly days. Much of the labor was of the unskilled variety and to meet the needs, boatloads of Puerto Ricans were brought in by the French. Then later, Black workmen were used in great numbers. They were placed in camps where they lived in very crowded conditions. Many of the foremen were inconsiderate and cruel, so the laborers were not treated much better than the mules and other animals. It was common rumor that unnumbered bodies lie buried in the concrete of that giant dam. It is reported that many other workers disappeared beneath the rushing waters of the Yadkin. All these "accidents" happened because some black man "sassed" the foreman or otherwise disobeyed orders. Drunkenness was the big evil of these construction days, as was gambling, fighting, shooting and murder were nightly occurrences. At one time there were 500 convicts at the Badin job, leased from the State of North Carolina. For the least offense, these young men in chains would be "thrashed to within an inch of their lives." Many of the laborers lost their lives; "when blown to bits" by dynamite.

Then came the fateful summer of 1914. "A shot was fired, a man fell and Europe and the rest of the civilized world was catapulted into a world war!" This was June 28, 1914, and Stanly County was possibly the first place in the USA to feel the first impact of this eruption in Europe. Even though some 4000 miles away, Badin on the Yadkin was the first to receive the disturbing news. Why? Because the builders of the Aluminum Company were French and Reservists in the French Army. Their homeland had declared war on Germany and they were called home immediately. By August 1, scores of these loyal French had packed their belongings and were now headed for the nearest



Baden or Badin cds on pse of 1930

seaport and to war. Their job was now to destroy rather than to construct! And in a very short time, all work at Badin had come to a shocking halt. For not only had the French left, but the nation of France stopped all capital resources from being sent out of the country. This meant the Badin project had no funds with which to operate. One alarmed resident was heard to say, "Badin, like old Whitney, is a dead duck!"

After much surveying and scrutinizing the whole situation, in November of 1915, a little more than a year after the French had left, Alcoa bought all of the French holdings. Badin and all of Stanly County breathed a sigh of relief. All work on the delayed project was resumed.

On June 17, 1917, the Narrows Dam was closed and the giant lake began to fill. On July 12, the floodgates were opened and the giant turbines began to turn. For the first time, electricity

was being generated by the waters of the Yadkin at the Narrows Dam. Another chapter in the history of industrial Stanly County was being written.

As late as the mid 1960's, Alcoa at Badin was considered one of the world's most modern smelters producing 51,000 tons of aluminum a year. By 2000, however, it had become one of the smallest and today is struggling to stay in operation.

The Whitney post office name changed to Badin on May 11, 1916. It is still in operation today.

In 1875, Caleb Lefler was appointed the first postmaster of Copal Grove, a community four miles west of Richfield. Later postmasters were all Ritchey and Ritchie's, indicating close family ties to the community of Richfield. The post office operated until 1905 when the mail was forwarded to Richfield.

Copal Grove

In 1891, Robert Ritchie was appointed postmaster of Gladstone post office. For years this area had been known for Misenheimer Springs, a healing spring and hotel. In 1909, the Gladstone Academy, which had operated in the area for years,

was sold and Mitchell School opened. Mitchell School later became Pfeiffer College and is in operation today. The post office name was changed to Misenheimer in 1904.



Copal Grove cds on 2¢ issue of 1891

Gladstone-Misenheimer

John and David Curlee opened a general store at the crossroads of the Charlotte- Fayetteville and Salisbury-Wadesboro road. The community was first called Crossroads. Then the post office was established in 1869, it is said Maggie Howell suggested the name Locust Level after a locust tree that

when the railroad came through they added a lumber mill and roller mill. More families soon moved in -Earnhardt, Barringer, Wilhelm and Culp were just a few. The Earnhardt name is one we know well. The name of the post office was changed to Ritchies Mills in 1891 and in 1893 it was changed to Richfield.

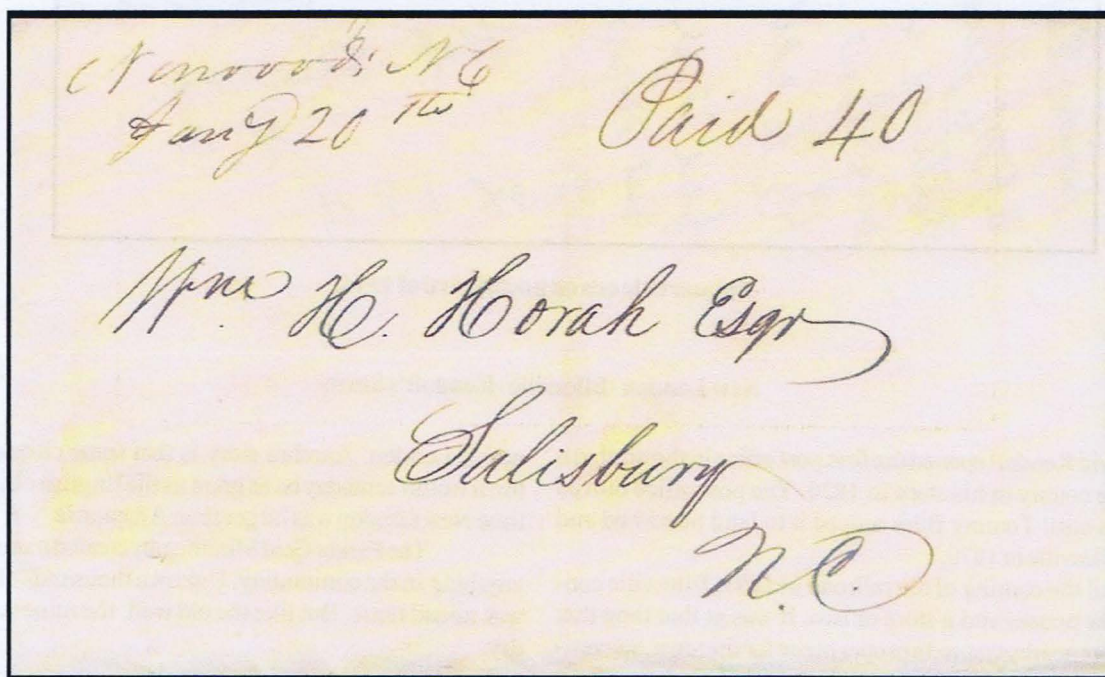


Gladstone cds on 2¢ issue of 1896

Locust-Locust Level

A very short lived post office operated from October 1889 until May 1902. It was discontinued May 1888 and reopened in February 1892. It was again discontinued in May 1903 with mail being forwarded to Milledgeville in Montgomery County. Yadkin Falls was located at the extreme northwest corner of the county on the Yadkin River.

Today with its aluminum plant in decline, and its textile mills all closed, it appears Stanly County is heading back to its roots - a community built on nature. There is currently a big push to make the Yadkin Valley the "central park" of North Carolina,



Ms markings of Norwood docketed 1845

Norwood

During the 1810's typhoid epidemic, settlers in the Allenton community had to move to higher ground. They moved to an area called Center, thought to have been the center ground between the rivers, or half way point between Cheraw, South Carolina and

Salisbury. Center post office opened in 1826 and the first postmaster was William C. Norwood. In 1830 the post office was renamed Norwood and was located in the Norwood Brothers store.

Oakboro

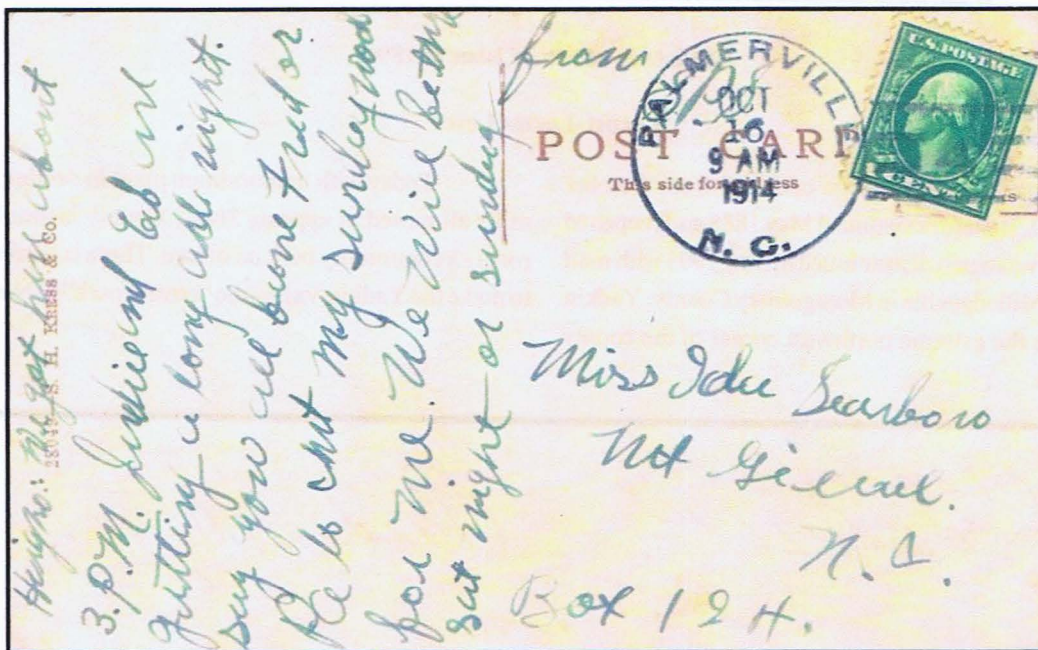
In 1905, Crosson F. Furr built a store two miles south of the bustling community of Big Lick. The village that sprung up around the store came to be known as Furr City. At first, most newcomers went to Big Lick, while Furr City remained small. J. Ellis Thomas located his blacksmith shop here, possibly because of competition in Big Lick.

Soon, however, everything would change. In 1906 power lines came through from Union County. In 1912 engineers completed their survey of a proposed railroad through the area. Croson Furr is believed to have donated the land for the railroad. The first post office did not open until 1 July 1914.

Palmerville

The post office operated from 1882 until 1926 when the mails were transferred to New London. During the boom years of the Whitney project, the building of the dam at Badin, The Barringer gold mine,

and the Yadkin River Electric Power Company, it is said that Palmerville had more mail than Charlotte or Greensboro. Palmerville was nearly submerged when Badin Lake was built.



Palmerville cds on postal card of 1914.

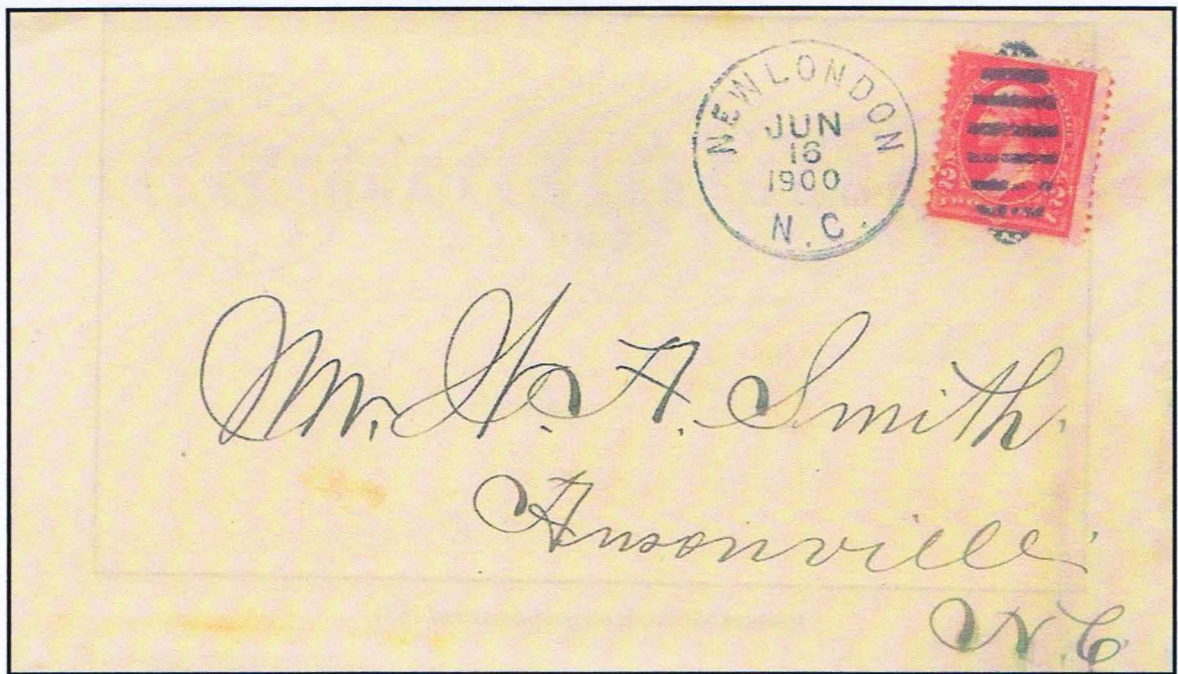
New London - Bilesville - Kendall's Store

David Kendall opened the first post office in the northern section of the county in his store in 1826. The post office moved several times until Tommy Biles moved it to land he owned and renamed it Bilesville in 1870.

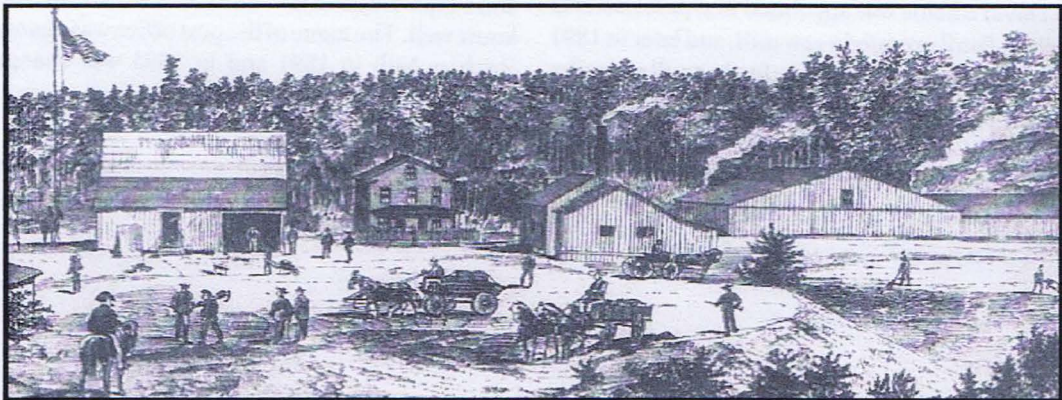
Until the coming of the railroad in 1891, Bilesville consisted of a few houses and a store or two. It was at that time that the goldminers nearby wanted a proper name for the town, suggesting the name New London. Some say the name was to honor their

native London. Another story is that some citizens believed the town would someday be as great as the English city. In fact, at one time New London was larger than Albemarle.

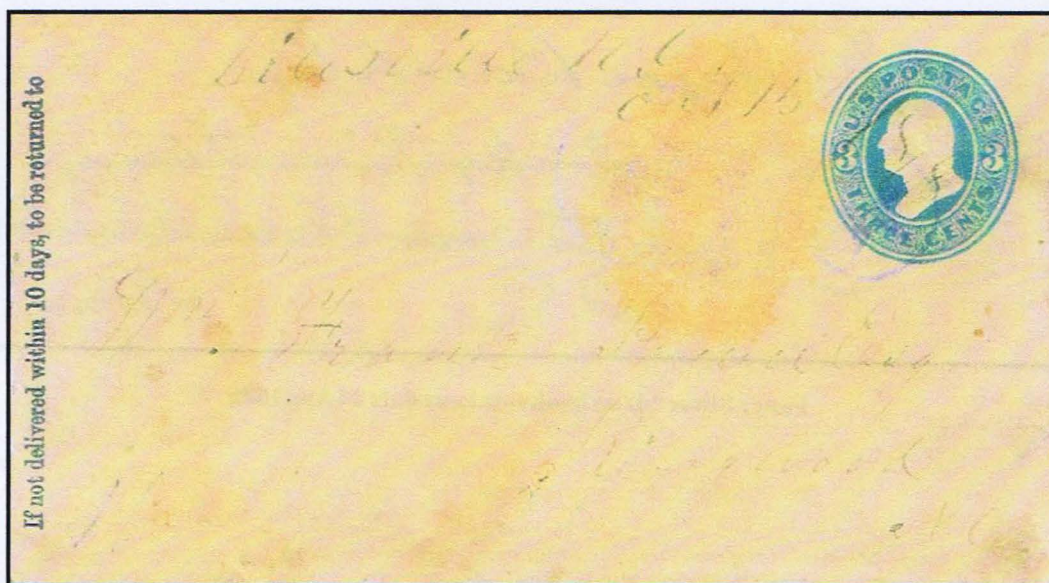
The Parker Gold Mine nearby created more excitement than anything in the community. Unknown thousands of dollars of gold was mined there. But like the old well, the mine seemed to dry go dry.



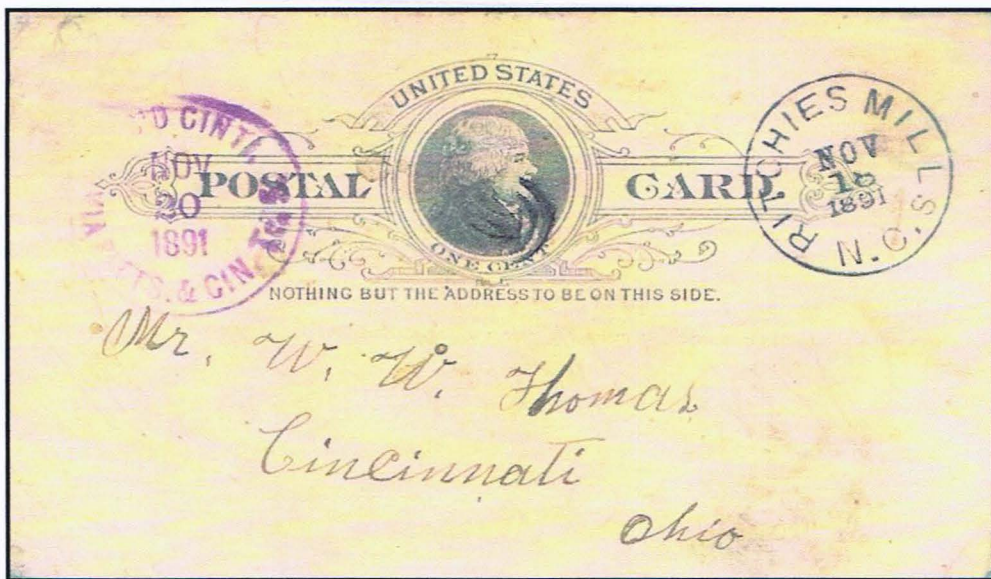
New London cds on issue of 1890's



Crowell Gold Mine near New London



Ms Bilesville on 3¢ postal stationery of 1880's

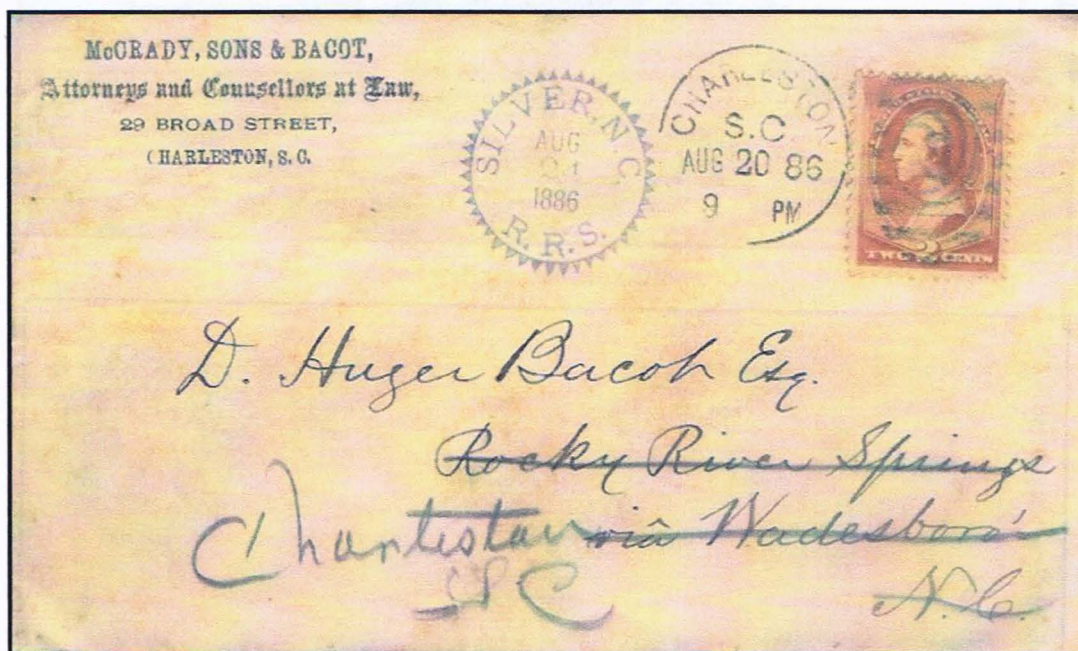


Richies Mills cds on postal card of 1891

Ritchie - Ritchies Mills - Richfield

In 1883 David Ritchie was appointed first postmaster at Ritchies - the Ritchies famil operated a saw mill, and later in 1891 when the railroad came through, they added a lumber mill and roller mill. More families soon moved in - Earnhardt, Barringer, Wilhelm

and Culp were just a few. The Earnhardt name is one we know well. The name of the post office was changed to Ritchies Mill in 1891 and in 1893 was changed to Richfield.

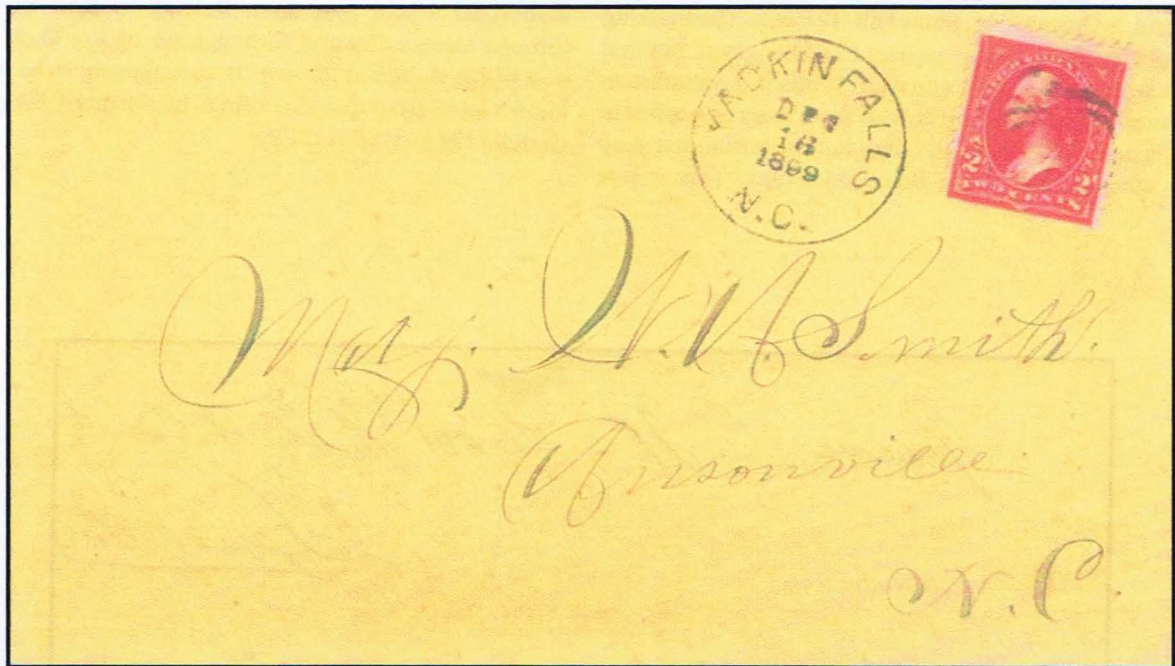


Fancy Silver cds on banknote issue date 24 Aug 1886

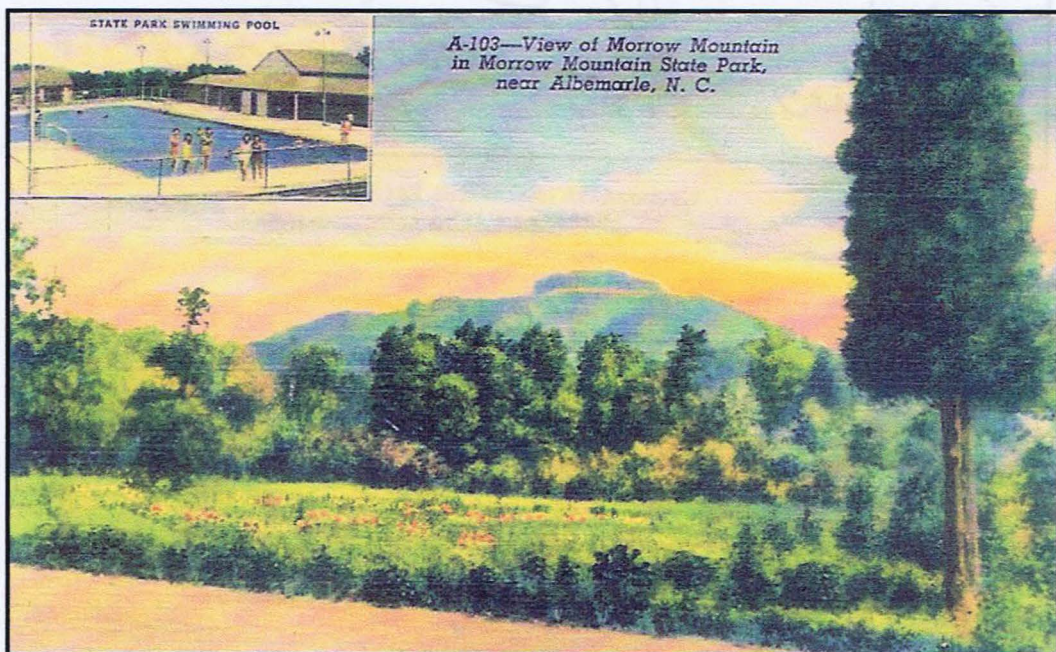
Yadkin Falls

A very short lived post office operated from October 1889 until May 1902. It was discontinued in May 1888, and reopened in February 1892. It was again discontinued in May 1903 with mail being forwarded to Milledgeville in Montgomery County. Yadkin Falls was located at the extreme northwest corner of the county on the Yadkin River.

Today, with its aluminum plant in decline - its textile mills closed - it appears Stanly County is headed back to its roots - a community built on nature. There is currently a big push to make the Yadkin Valley the "central park" of North Carolina, focusing on the beauty and natural resources of the region for its future development. Perhaps the next boom will be in the leisure tourist.



Yadkin Falls cds of 1899 cancels 2¢ issue



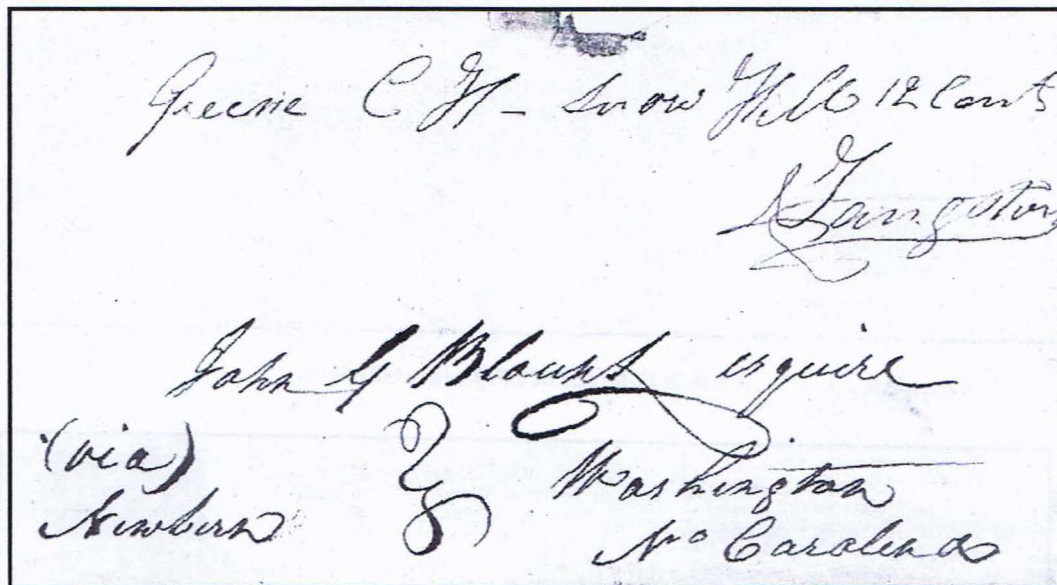
Murrow Mountain as shown in a 1943 hand-painted post card

Courthouse and Post Office Mysteries

By Richard F. Winter

Mystery No. 1 - This folded letter was datelined at Snow Hill on 15 June 1803, addressed to Washington, N.C. At the top of the letter front, in a different hand, is Greene C.H., Snow Hill, 12 Cents. The franking name (for the first half ounce) appears to be Langston, but that does not fit with our known postmaster. If this is a postmasters marking (frank), which I think it is, then there was a post office in Snow Hill in June 1803. Not only that, but the postmaster may have been someone other than Benjamin Evans. This is five

months before the earliest recorded postmaster, but it is possible because we do not have an exact date. There were no other post offices in Greene County in 1803. The act of 3 March 1801 authorized a post road from Raleigh to New Bern passing through Greene County. Although we do not know when the post office started at Snow Hill, this appears to be the earliest known letter from that post office. Interestingly the postmaster charged 12¢ instead of 12½¢.



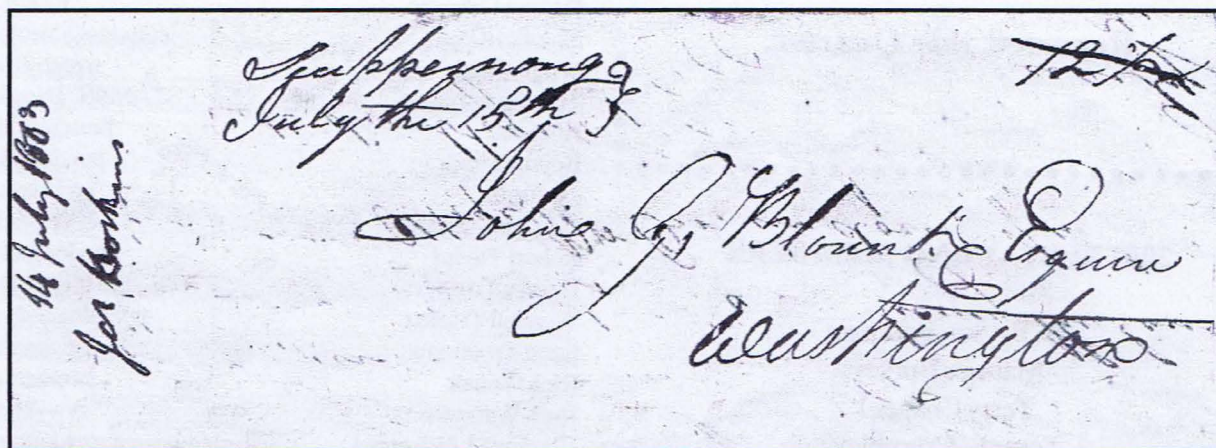
Greene C.H. - Snow Hill, 12 Cents
docketed J. Langston

Courthouse and Post Office Mysteries

By Richard F. Winter

Mystery No. 2 is the folded letter datelined 15 July 1803 has a manuscript marking in the upper left corner in a hand different than that of the letter writer. I believe this is a postal marking. It reads, "Scuppernong/ July the 15th". The only post offices in Washington County in 1803 were Plymouth, Lee's Mills (Roper, according to Powell, who said it was the county courthouse), and Washington C.H. The act of 3 May 1802 authorized a post road from Plymouth to Robert Winn's on Scuppernong River. "The first line of text in the letter "the tax on your land in this county has again come due.." seems to suggest that this letter originated at a court house. Yet the local postmaster calls is Scuppernong. This may be a case

similar to one in an article which I have written (but which has not yet been published) in which the Postmaster General in Washington, D.C. called a post office by a county courthouse name, but the actual location was some other town. Notice that Samuel Blount was both the postmaster of Lee's Mills and Washington C.H. I think there is a strong possibility that Washington C.H. was actually Lee's Mill and later called Roper. But then, why call it Scuppernong? There is a mystery here that I don't fully understand. Until I have better information, I have entered this cover in the data base for Washington C.H. The rate was crossed out in Washington by John Gray Blount, who was postmaster.



Manuscript 1803 folded letter from Scuppernong to Washington

Courtesy of N.C. State Archives, Raleigh

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