Wilmington Blockade Runner "Colonel Lamb"
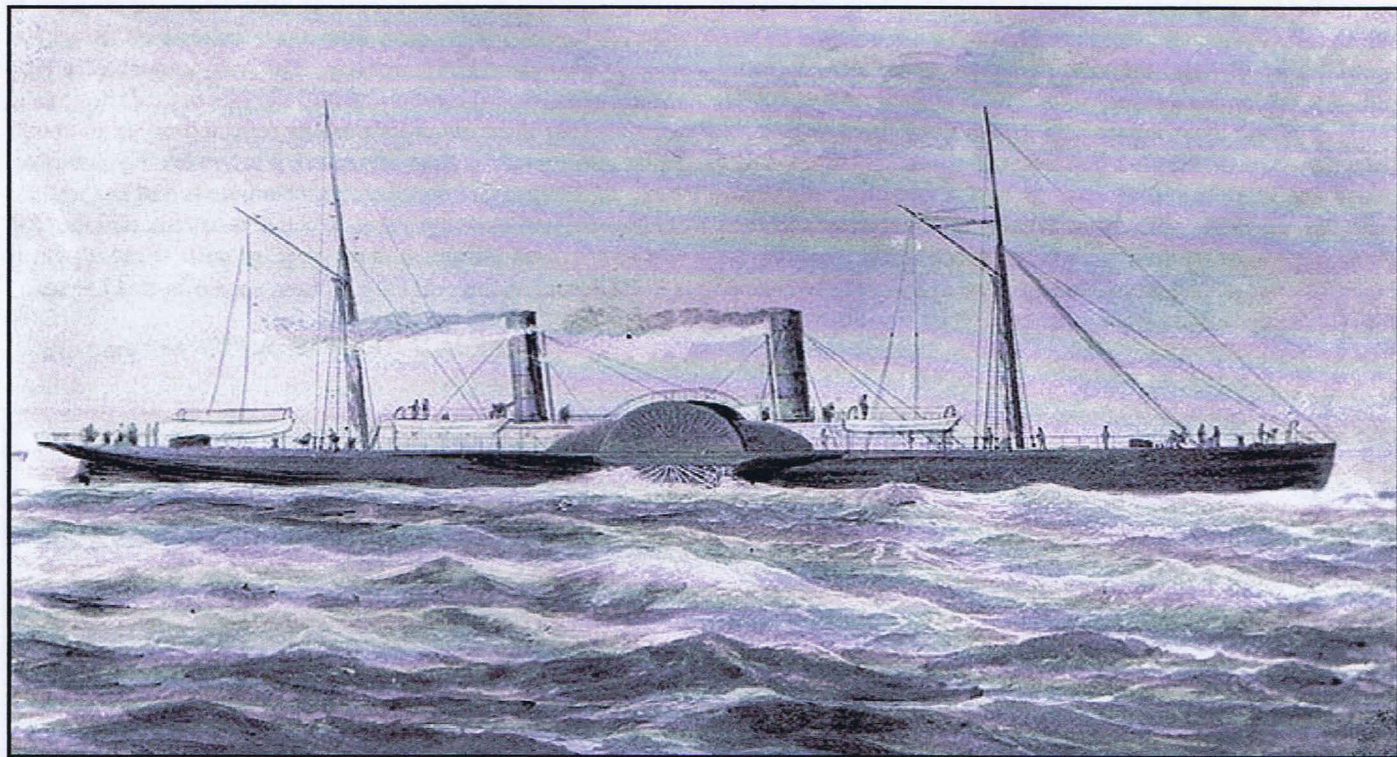
This is the final announcement of the annual meeting of the North Carolina Postal History Society (NCPHS), which will be held on Saturday, 30 July 2005, at 2:00 PM. The meeting time is a half hour earlier than was reported in the last *Postal Historian*. The annual meeting will be at CHARPEX again this year, which is held in the Charlotte Mecklenburg Senior Citizens Center, 2225 Tyvola Road, Charlotte, NC (Exit 5 off I-77). The NCPHS Board of Directors will meet at 1:00 PM before the annual meeting. At 2:30 PM there will be a presentation of awards and at 2:45 PM there will be a talk by the chief judge, John Hotchner. I hope you will plan to join us at the annual meeting.

We have fallen behind in our auctions, the last one was in the Winter 2004-05 issue of the *Postal Historian*. Gene Lightfoot, who prepares our auction, has assured me that he will have one in the next issue. We are still in need of material for the auction. If you have some North Carolina material you wish to dispose of, this is an excellent way to do it. It also provides a means for our members to acquire material for their collections. Please refer to the Fall 2002 *Postal Historian* (Whole No. 80) for the Terms of Sale for our auctions. This also includes information for consignors.

Work has begun on assembling information to document 20th century North Carolina postmarks. Harvey Tilles and I are wrestling with how to best accomplish this goal. Initially, we will work from covers at the North Carolina Archives. There are many thousands of 20th century covers and other forms of postmark information that will have to be entered into the database and organized by postoffice. I would very much like to hear your suggestions on how to incorporate the 20th

century information into our existing catalog. Among the members there are some marvelous collections and we want to incorporate the information from those collections as well as what is available at the archives. This will undoubtedly be a subject of the Board meeting on 20 July. Please don't hesitate to send me your ideas either by email or regular mail. If an update to our catalog results from this effort, it is five to ten years away.

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, or write to me. Both my email address and my mailing address appear in this journal.

Dick Winter

Blockade Run Mail Which Entered via North Carolina

by Steven Walske

Introduction

This article describes blockade run mail that entered the Confederacy through the port of Wilmington, North Carolina during the 1861-65 Civil War. The historical background that made Wilmington the most important blockade running port is explained, and the markings on incoming blockade run mail are described.

An important element of this study is a comprehensive census of 199 surviving incoming blockade run covers through all Confederate ports. Sources for this census include auction catalog listings dating back to 1949, review of major collections, and an extensive review of articles on Confederate postal history in books and journals. It is probable that the census represents at least 90% of all surviving blockade run letters.

With only about 200-250 surviving examples, incoming blockade run letters are rare. The census data is summarized in the following table, arranged by entry port and the amount of Confederate postage due. Of note is the relative rarity of multiple-weight letters. Also, only 11% of the sample shows the postage prepaid, since Confederate stamps were not readily available outside the Confederacy. As a result, collectors particularly prize blockade run letters with Confederate frankings.

September 1861 until early 1862, flag-of-truce routes were available for a limited amount of civilian mail. These were severely curtailed in 1862, so running the blockade became the best option for sending mail to the Confederacy.

Supplies and mail were handled in very much the same manner. They were carried through normal commercial channels to a forwarder in Nassau, Bermuda or Havana. At that point, they were transshipped to special steamships constructed for speed, shallow draft, and low profile. These blockade runners would then carry the supplies and mail past the multiple layers of the Federal blockade off the Southern ports.

Letters to the Confederacy were mailed inside another envelope addressed to a West Indies forwarder, or to a company operating blockade runners. Upon its arrival in the West Indies, the outer envelope was discarded, and the inner letter was placed in a blockade runner's mailbag. When the letter finally arrived in the Confederacy, it was rated as a private ship letter, with a 2 cents fee per letter given to the ship captain. Postage assessed was Confederate inland postage to the ultimate destination plus the 2 cents captain's fee. For letters addressed to the arrival port, the total postage assessed was 6 cents, regardless of weight.

Inland rates prior to July 1, 1862 were 5 cents per half-ounce for distances up to 500 miles, and 10 cents per half-ounce

	6 cts	7 cts	12 cts	22 cts	32 cts	>32 cts	Prepaid	Total
Charleston	18	0	45	10	4	0	6	83
Wilmington	3	0	75	5	3	3	8	97
Mobile	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	6
New Orleans	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	6
Galveston	0	0	5	0	0	0	1	6
Savannah	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	21	1	130	15	7	3	22	199

Ninety percent of the sample shows transit through either Charleston or Wilmington which reflects their significance as the primary Confederate supply ports.

Inbound Blockade Run Mail

A regular mail service into the Confederacy via blockade runner through Wilmington and Charleston began to appear in May 1862. The census shows no inbound covers via either port before that. This was because better methods of sending mail across the lines were available before 1862. From the breakdown of official communications between North and South on May 31, 1861, until the end of August 1861, private express companies were allowed to carry mail across the lines for a premium fee. Then, from

for over 500 miles. No pre-July 1862 covers are known via Wilmington. On July 1, 1862 the rates were increased to a uniform 10 cents per half-ounce, regardless of distance. For letters weighing over a half-ounce, the rates increased a full progression for each additional half-ounce. This means that, after July 1, 1862, single-weight blockade run letters were rated for a collection of 12 cents, double-weight letters were rated 22 cents due, and so on. All such letters were to be marked "SHIP" to explain the extra 2 cents due.

Blockade of Wilmington

The U.S.S. Daylight initiated the blockade of Wilmington on July 14, 1861. This was the last major port to be blockaded, which shows that the Federal Blockade Strategy Board greatly underestimated its potential as a blockade running port. It had a well-defended harbor with two widely separated entrances, and excellent railroad connections with Charleston, Atlanta and Richmond. Its only shortcoming was an underdeveloped commercial infrastructure, but that was to improve dramatically during the war.

The earliest recorded inbound cover via Wilmington arrived in July 1862, and the earliest known Wilmington datestamp on inbound blockade run mail is December 29, 1862. From January 1863 until December 1864, there were regular arrivals of letters, and virtually all mail received Wilmington postmarks until late November 1864. The latest known inbound letter arrived on December 6, 1864.

Wilmington was open to blockade running throughout the war until its harbor defenses were captured on January 15, 1865. Indeed, during the September 1863 to March 1864 period that Charleston was closed by Federal activity, this was the only port open to blockade running from Bermuda and Nassau. Consequently, more blockade run mail is known through Wilmington than any other Confederate port.

Wilmington Postal Markings

Postal markings applied to incoming letters via Wilmington typically include a Wilmington circular datestamp, a ship marking, and a manuscript indication of postage due, if the postage had not been prepaid.

Three principal types of Wilmington date stamps are known on incoming blockade run mail. They are shown below to scale with the types numbers of the *Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina, Colonial to USPS.*

Type 8 is known used from January 1863 until November 1864, and is the most frequently seen of the three types. Type 10a is known on blockade run mail from December 1862 until September 1863. It is the least common of the Wilmington datestamps, with only 12 examples in the census of 97 inbound letters. Type 10c is known used from October 1863 until May 1864, and appears to have replaced type 10a. No Wilmington datestamps of any type appear on the rare pieces of mail entering after November 22, 1864, perhaps reflecting the impending breakdown of the Confederate postal system.

The Wilmington straight-line 'SHIP' marking (20.5mm x 3.5mm) was the only ship marking used at Wilmington, and appears on virtually all incoming letters from December 1862 until mid-February 1864. At that point, it seems to have been lost or broken, since no ship markings of any type are known after February 12, 1864.

| Wilmington Type 8 | Wilmington Type 10a | Wilmington Type 10c |

Looking chronologically at the census of incoming letters via Wilmington, some interesting patterns emerge with respect to the postal markings.

Period	Type 8	Type 10a	Type 10c	No CDS	Total	"SHIP"	No "SHIP'
7/62-9/63	10	12	0	4	26	26	0
10/63-2/64*	16	0	18	0	34	26	8
3/64-12/64	20	0	11	6	37	0	37
Total	46	12	29	10	97	52	45

*Period that Charleston was closed to blockade running

The table clearly illustrates the replacement of Type 10a by Type 10c in September-October 1863, and shows that no postmarks ("CDS" is an abbreviation for circular date stamp) were used at the start and end of the blockade postal period. Also clearly shown is the discontinuance of the "SHIP" mark in mid-February 1864. Since none of the Wilmington postmarks show the year, the above findings can greatly assist in identifying the year of usage for a blockade run letter.

Figure 1 illustrates a Type 10a datestamp on the only-known quintuple-weight blockade run letter. The December 1862 letter also has the earliest recorded Wilmington datestamp on incoming blockade run mail, and was carried on the first run of the famed blockade runner Giraffe, later re-named the *Robert*
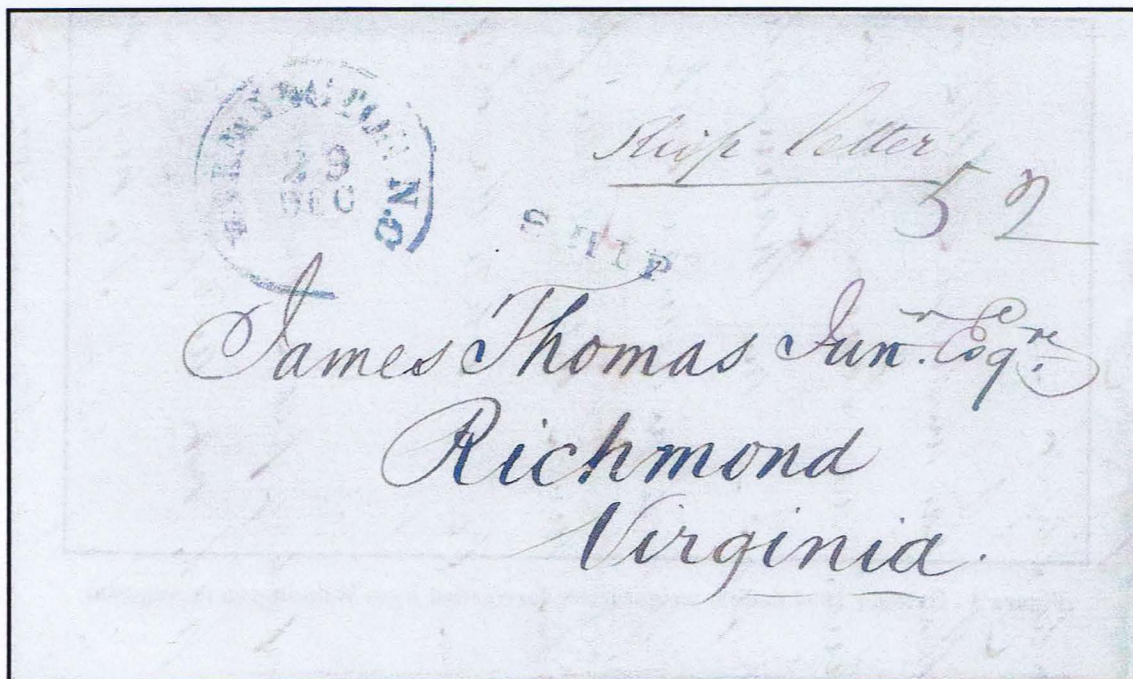
Figure 1 - Type 10a postmark on 1862 quadruple-weight rate letter with 52 cents due

Figure 2 illustrates the "SHIP" marking on an extraordinary cover. Normally, inbound blockade run mail was sent inside of another envelope that paid the one-shilling packet postage to the British West Indies. This letter shows the only known example of one envelope being used as both outer and inner envelope. It was posted in Liverpool on September 25, 1863, prepaid 1 shilling, and carried by the Cunard steamer Persia to New York on October 7. In New York, it was transferred in a closed mailbag to the Cunard steamer Corsica, which left on October 10 and arrived in Nassau, Bahamas on October 14. The red 'ld' is the credit for Bahamian postage from the British Post Office. The Nassau forwarder, Sawyer & Menendez, then placed the letter in the mailbag of the blockade runner Fannie, which left Nassau on October 19, and arrived in Wilmington on October 22. Wilmington marked the letter with their Type 8 datestamp, and rated it for 12 cents due, using the "SHIP" marking to justify the extra 2 cents due.

Letters addressed to Wilmington and showing the in-port 6 cents postage due are surprisingly rare.

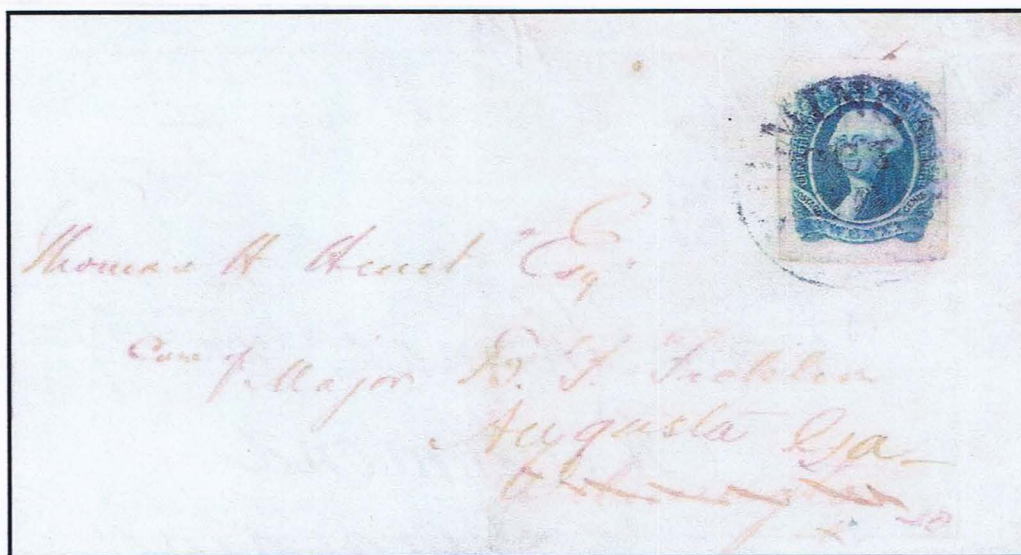**Figure 2 - October 23, 1863 letter from Liverpool via Nassau**

Figure 3 - October 1864 double-weight letter forwarded from Wilmington to Augusta.

Letters addressed to Wilmington and showing the in-port 6 cents postage due are surprisingly rare.

Figure 3 shows one of the three known. The manuscript 6 is beneath the 20 cents stamp, which was used to forward the double-weight letter. There was no weight progression for the 6 cents rate; otherwise, 12 cents would have been due.

One fourth of the 97 covers in the Wilmington census show endorsements to blockade runners. These are especially prized by collectors. Figure 4 shows an example addressed to Governor Brown of Georgia. It is endorsed to the Colonel Lamb, (see cover) which was placed into service very late in the war. On this trip, it left from Halifax, Nova Scotia (blockade runners were avoiding Bermuda because of yellow fever) and arrived in Wilmington on November 29, 1864. Typical of mail in this late period, no Wilmington datestamp or "SHIP" marking was applied, and a very crude 12 cents due marking was used

Summary of Blockade Running Activity

Since Charleston and Wilmington received 90% of the incoming blockade run mail, it is useful to compare and analyze the census database of their covers. The chart below shows the number of covers per month for each port in each chronological period, as well as an average volume through both ports. The covers per month statistic normalizes the data across different length time spans.

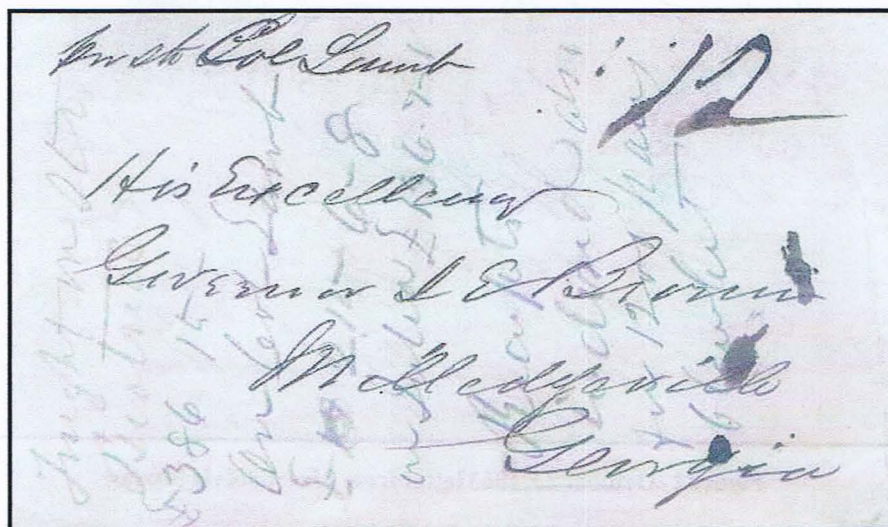The chart confirms that Charleston was faster to establish

Figure 4 - November 1864 letter endorsed to the *Colonel Lamb*

than Wilmington, with a better commercial infrastructure and a shorter distance to Nassau. However, when Charleston was closed from mid-September 1863 until early March 1864, the volume of mail through Wilmington rose dramatically, both because the Charleston mail was being routed that way, but also because overall volume was about 60% higher than the pre-October 1863 volumes through both ports. After Charleston re-opened, the volumes in the two ports were once again roughly equal, but combined volume through both ports fell nearly 15% from the previous period, probably because the Union blockade had increased its effectiveness.
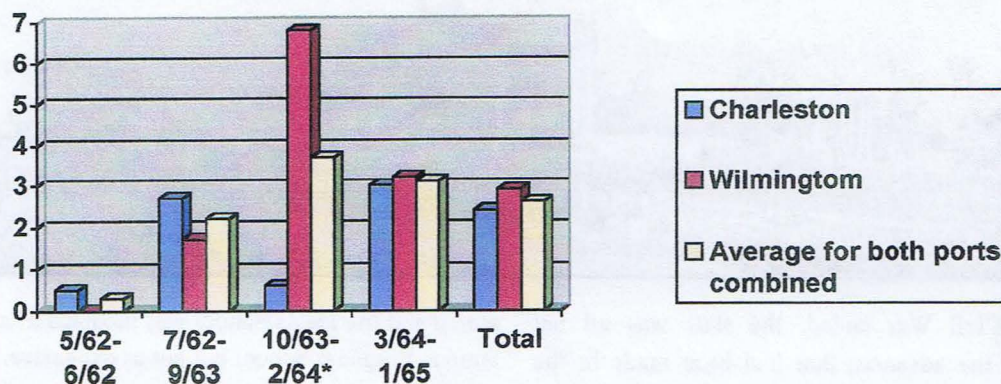

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Davis School - A Military Boarding School

by Tony L Crumbley
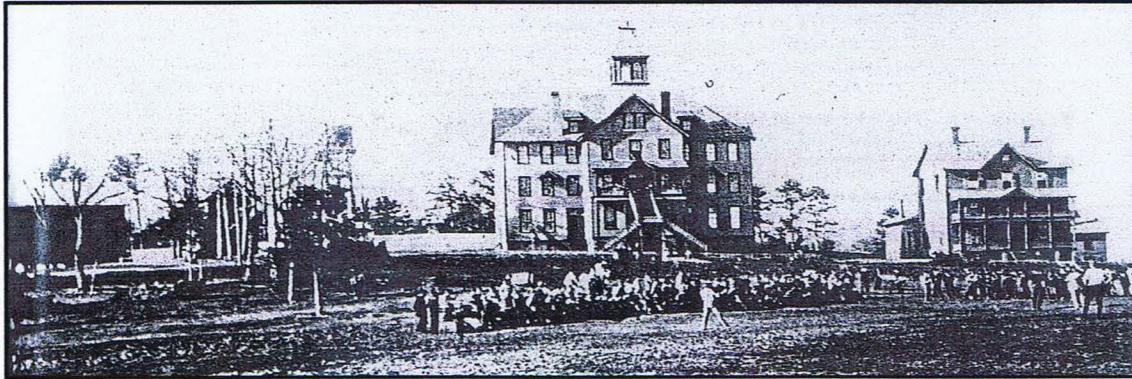
After the Civil War ended, the state was all but bankrupt, the advances that had been made in the state's public school before the war, were gone. The next 20 years were a dark period for the state. In spite of the adversity and hardship of the time, many private schools and academies were organized in the state.

In September of 1880, the Davis School opened in La Grange. It was a military boarding school for boys and was operated by Adam C. Davis, Jr., who came from a family of culture, one accustomed to education. He was the great, great grandson of James Davis, who established North Carolina's first printing press in New Bern in 1749.

Davis realized that educating youth was the best way to rebuild our devastated country. Times were hard any money was scarce and the Davis School was modeled after the famous Bingham School but not as expensive.

Adam C. Davis, Jr. received a number of military titles from Governor Jarvis, starting with Captain, then Major and finally Colonel. The Davis School stressed the classics, penmanship, military science, mathematics, history and English literature as well as full courses in telegraphy and commercial matters.

Almost immediately, the school was successful and Col. Davis proved to be an apt and thoroughly capable administrator. The school experienced phenomenal growth in a short time. By 1889 the school had 180 students from 35 counties

DAVIS SCHOOL,
LaGrange, Lenoir Co., N. C.

A Military Boarding School,
Col. A. C. DAVIS, Sup't.
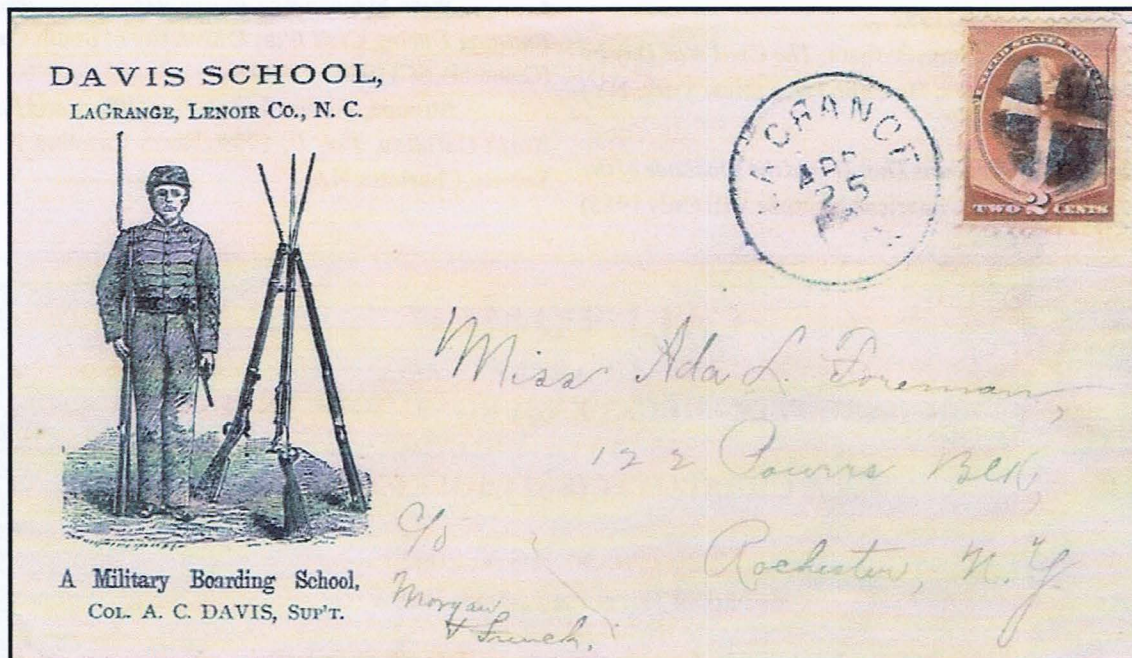
and 7 states. Only Bingham School had more with 220 students.

The Davis School had a summer session and when the passenger train stopped in La Grange on its way to Morehead City, Col. Davis saw to it that his well known band played during the 10 to 15 minute layover- quite a marketing ploy for the time. Many teenage girls made the trip just for the purpose of seeing the band.

In the winter of the 1889-90 school session, illness struck the campus. First several students became sick with headaches, vomiting and fever. Col. Davis' father was the doctor of residence. Shortly, he became alarmed at the symptoms he was detecting. Within a short time, it became clear that meningitis had struck the school. In spite of all that was done, several boys died. Parents quickly withdrew their sons. In the end, this excellent school closed, never to open again in La Grange. No one in the town of La Grange knew anything about the special Chamber of Commerce meeting called in Winston on April 18, 1890. The purpose was for the citizens to donate $20,000 to aid and encourage Col. Davis to locate his school there.

On July 20, 1890, the News and Observer announced that the Davis School would open in the fall in Winston. There would be two large buildings flanked by eleven smaller ones. Bath houses with hot and cold water were to be provided for the cadets, classroom equipment was to be first class. Adjacent to the school grounds there was a 12 acre tract of land that was to be converted into a park with shade trees, a clear bubbling stream, and an unobstructed view of Old Pilot Mountain.

In mid September 1890, the Davis School opened on the new campus in Winston with 200 cadets. Col. Davis still

DAVIS SCHOOL,
LaGRANGE, LENOIR COUNTY, N. C.,
A Military Boarding School
FOR BOYS AND YOUNG MEN.

No Academy in the country offers a broader course of study. Full course in Book-keeping. Strong Faculty. Healthy Location; never a death in School.
Terms about HALF what is charged by other schools of like character.
Session always begins first Thursday in September; Spring Term, fourth Thursday in January.
For further information, address
Capt. A. C. DAVIS, Superintendent.

emphasized the classics, mathematics and military sciences, but he added courses in bookkeeping. The Davis School was supported by the leading citizens of Winston as they attended all of its functions. When the Zinzendorf Hotel burned on Thanksgiving Day in 1892, the Davis cadets were given credit for saving much of the furniture and the lives of a number of guests.

The school year 1896-97 began with an increased enrollment and with a large number of satisfied parents. The reputation of Davis School was becoming known throughout the United States. Students were enrolled from 12 states including Texas and Minnesota as well as some foreign countries. By February of 1897, Davis School had closed its doors because parents were unable to pay tuition due to the depression. The building stood vacant for a number of years but in 1909 the Methodists of Winston-Salem acquired the property and established the Children's Home where it stands today.

LENOIR AND LANCASTER RAILROAD POST OFFICE

by Scott Troutman

Beginning sometime in the 1880's the decision was made to run a railroad from Chester, S.C. to Lenoir, N.C. It is known that there were monetary backers in Lenoir. Lenoir's furniture industry was well underway, and they needed a cheaper way to get their merchandise to market. Lenoir had no railroads and the South Carolinians were eager to take part in this venture. The decision was made to begin the construction at Chester, as this was the linkage point with the recently completed Cheraw & Chester Railroad running east, and the Seaboard Airline Railroad running west and northeast.

By 28 August 1885 the railroad was completed to Lenoir and the railroad post office was changed to the Lenoir & Lancaster. On 13 October 1883 a railroad post office was opened for a run of 108 miles between Newton and Lancaster, S.C. Lancaster was the junction point for railroads running southeast. The railroad was finished from Chester to Newton.

According to the *Directory of Railroad Post Offices* this post office operated during two time periods. The first was until 26 July 1890 when the run was shortened to become the Lenoir & Chester. The longer 135 mile Lenoir & Lancaster was put back in operation from 12 May 1893 until 24 August 1909. At that time, the longer run to Edgemont was opened. That is what the book says, anyway!

The cover shown is interesting in that has a Lenoir & Lancaster R.P.O. (344-G-2) used 9 November 1909. Maybe they had not received the Edgemont & Lancaster canceller, but that seems unlikely.

I have never seen a cover from Newton & Lancaster and the cancel has never been listed. A cancel for the Newton & Chester is listed in McDonald and Towle, and is listed as common. While McDonald and Towle also list Lenoir & Lancaster covers as being fairly common, I have seen only this one in ten years of hunting. Three handstamps are known for the Lenoir and Lancaster, shown in Figure 1.

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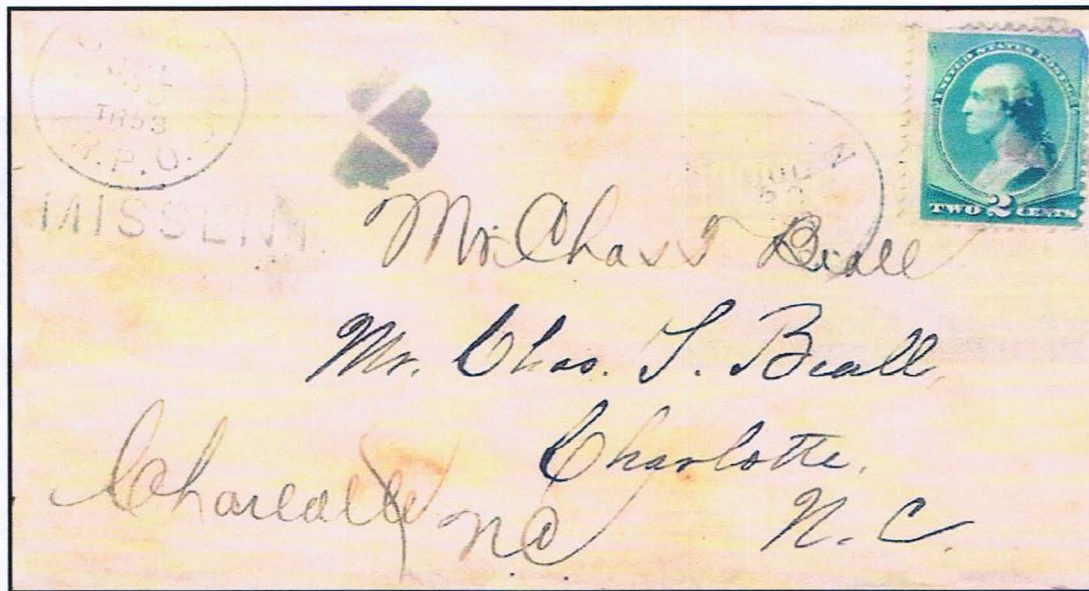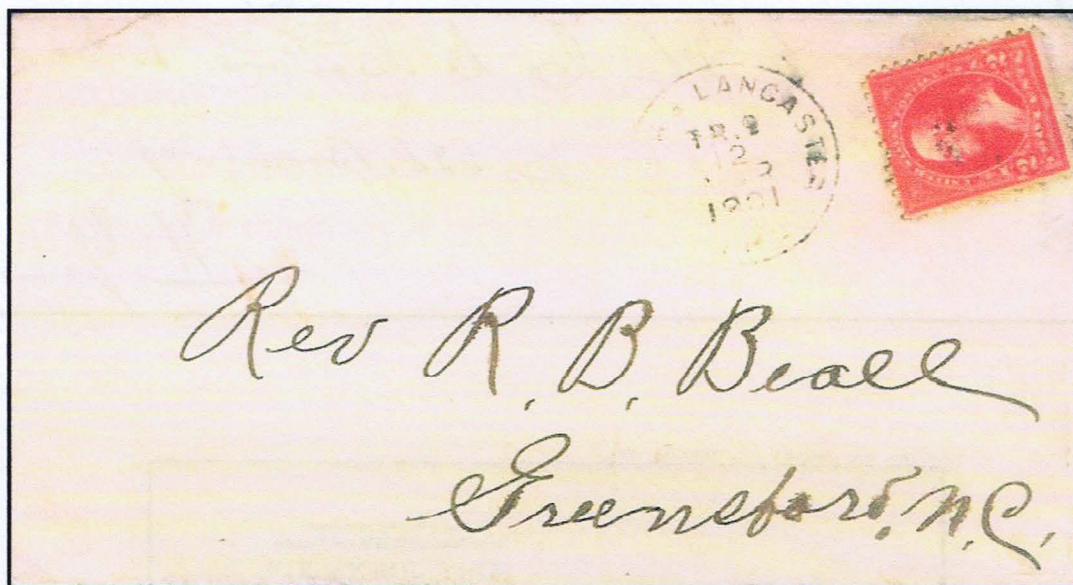
344-F-1

344-F-1   344-G-1   344-G-2

344-G-2

FORT JOHNSTON, BRUNSWICK COUNTY

by Scott Troutman

Shown is a cover postmarked Smithville, N.C. with the following notation at left: "If not called for within ten days return to James Hand, Fort Johnston, N.C." This cover is on a Scott number U82 embossed envelope, which dates the letter between 1870, when this envelope was first issued, and 1887 when the town name was changed to Southport. The Type III cancel is known used during the 1870's.

One unique feature is the unusual "X" killer, something that I don't believe has been reported before.

Fort Johnston is the oldest fort in North Carolina and today holds the distinction of being "the smallest working military installation in the world. The fort was originally commissioned in 1754 to protect the mouth of the Cape Fear River. It was named tor royal governor Gabriel Johnston.

During the Revolutionary War, royal governor Josiah Martin went there for protection from rebellious colonials in 1775. He didn't think much of it, calling it "a contemptible thing." In July, he was forced to flee to a British ship patrolling the coast when the North Carolina militia stormed the fort and burned it down. They apparently found Governor Martin" to be a contemptible thing".

By 1807 a town had grown up around the fort and was called Smithville when the post office opened that year. It was a fishing village; it had docks for shipping, and housed many river

pilots who took boats through the inlets and up the river to Wilmington. It became a staging point for boats coming out of Wilmington that had to wait for the tides to turn so they could "cross the bar". It was only at higher tides that the ships could get enough draft to escape the inlet into the open ocean.

The Fort became a Confederate stronghold and indeed had action even before Fort Sumpter was fired on. On January 9, 1861 residents of the town showed up at the fort and demanded the keys. The ordinance sergeant in charge didn't give them the keys, but let they take anything they wanted, as long as they signed for it. The next day, realizing they didn't have enough support, the townsfolk took everything back. When North Carolina seceded, the Confederates quickly took Fort Johnston and made it part of their system for controlling the river. It remained in Confederate hands until the end of the war when the U.S. Navy took it back. During the war it was renamed Fort Pender in October 29, 1863 in honer of General William Dorsey Pender who was killed at Gettysburg. The name reverted to Fort Johnston after the war.

Currently the Fort's grounds (the Civil War era fort itself no longer exists) is used by the Sunny Point U.S. Military Ocean Tenninal. However, there are plans to decommission the fort and end its long run of activity.

Mr. C. B. Collins & Co

No 335. Broadway.

N.Y.
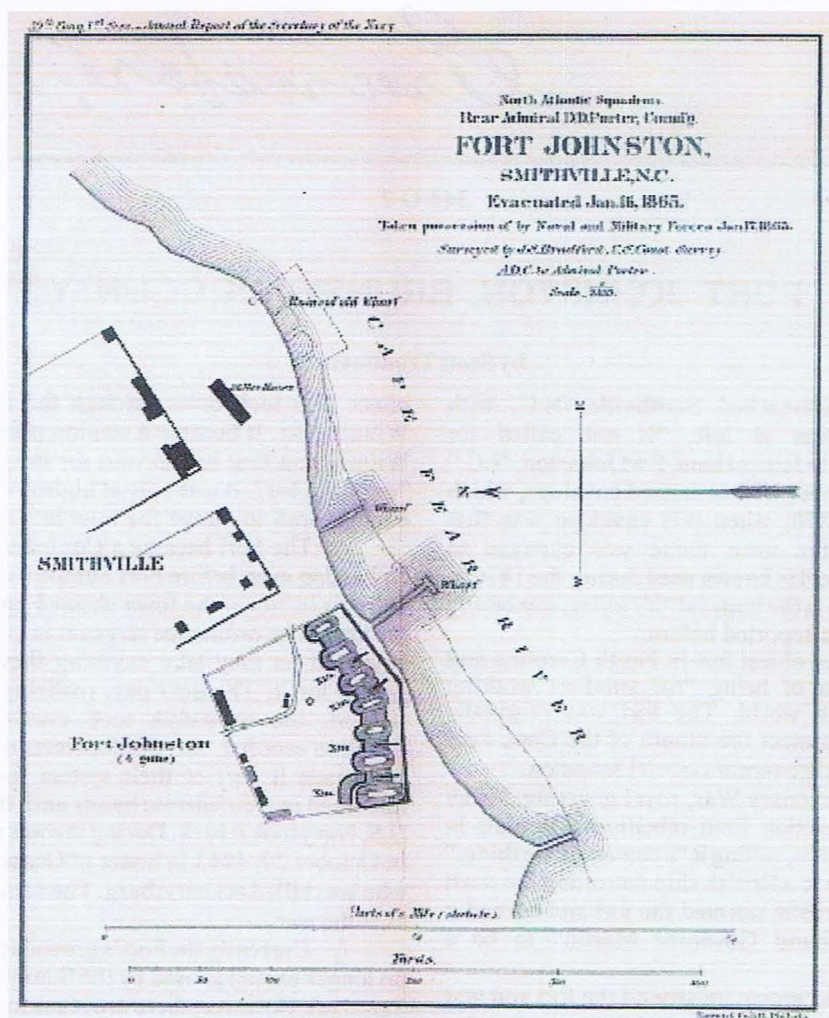
WILMINGTON & MANCHESTER RAIL ROAD COVER

by Scott Troutman

The Wilmington & Manchester Rail Road was one of the earliest railroads in North Carolina. Begun in 1851 or 1852, the railroad went due west out of Wilmington to Manchester, S.C. as part of an effort by Wilmington businessmen to get some of the shipping business which was then going to Charleston. The line was completed in 1854, and after the Civil War extended to Augusta, Georgia. It became to Wilmington & Augusta RR. At the end of the Civil War it was the only railroad in the Carolinas still in excellent operating condition.

Only a handful of postal markings are known from the Wilmington & Manchester. The cover shown here does not have a postal marking per se, its corner cancel, with an in-house hand stamp makes it worth note.

The cover is dated Jan. 10, 1867, and has the double ring handstamp of **Sec. & Treasurer/ W & M RR.** used as a return address. The cover has a Scott No. 73 with a barred killer on the stamp. It is unusual to uncover a new mark like this after 135 years.

1. *The Pre-Civil War Railroads of North Carolina*, North Carolina Postal Historian, Scott Troutman, Fall 1991, pps 3-18 ill.
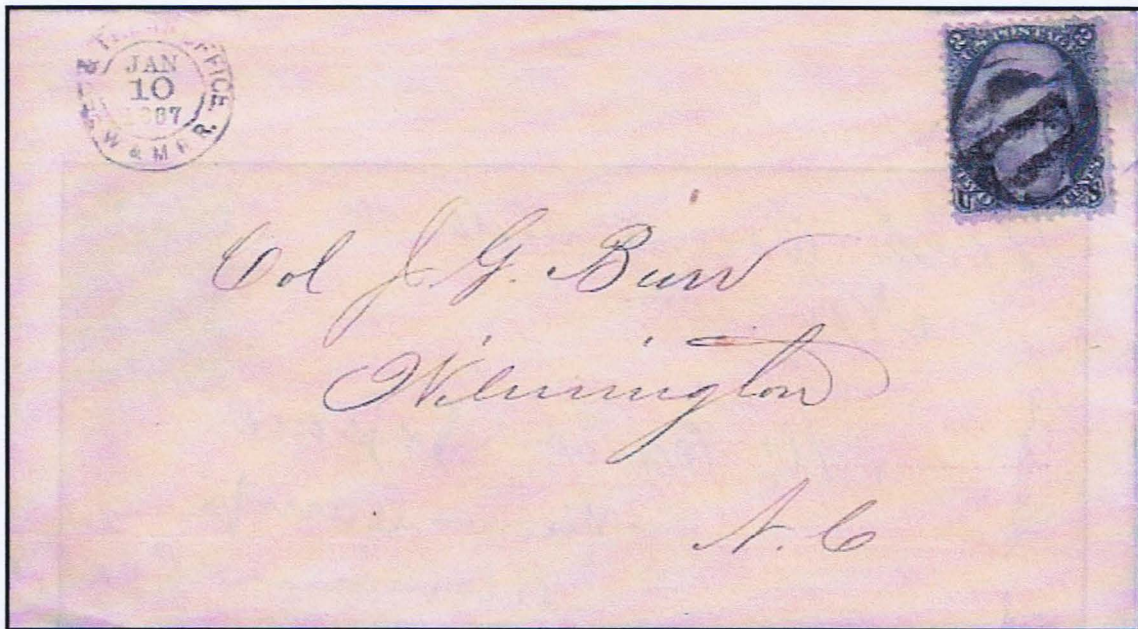
SNOW CAMP DOESN'T EXIST IN CYBERSPACE

by Throop C. Brown

I would like to share one of the most wonderful beat-up covers I ever found on E-bay. It is an 1870's cover franked with a 3 cent green Washington Banknote issue (Scott #147). It was sent from Rock Creek, a tiny community even today, to Caleb Dixon at Snow Camp.

Rock Creek is a couple miles northwest of Snow Camp. It had a post office which operated from 1828 to 1923. From 1829 to 1849 it was in Orange County, and in Alamance County from 1849 to 1923 when it became a discontinued or "dead" post office. During the period of this cover, Christopher C. Curtis was the postmaster at Rock Creek (1865 - 1889), and John Dixon was postmaster at Snow Camp (1866-80).

The Dixon family was very prominent in Snow Camp history. Many Snow Camp residents claim Dixon ancestry. Their progenitor, Simon Dixon, a non-belligerent during the Revolutionary War period, owned the mill whose foundation was across the street from my driveway. During the Winter of 1780-81, this mill was used as headquarters by General Corwallis when the British troops were returning to the coast after the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. The Dixons were forced to find alternative accommodation. When Mrs. Dixon when back to the mill to retrieve her forgotten pipe, the sentry refused her entry, but General Cornwallis intervened and allowed her to retrieve her possessions she had missed in the haste of her departure.

Less than a year later, Cornwallis found himself in Virginia on a peninsula with water on three sides and General Washington's army on the fourth. He was left with no viable choice, but to surrender at Yorktown.

But I digress, back to this cover, which is over 130 years old, and was sent less than 100 years after Cornwallis slept here. I found this cover on Ebay described as being sent from a place that no longer exists to a destination that no longer exists. I derived enormous enjoyment from contemplating the expression on the Ebay seller's face when I sent payment with instruction to mail my winnings to Snow Camp, N.C..

By the way, do you know how Snow Camp got it's name? Everybody assumes it is located in the mountains, but it is really in the middle of the Piedmont. Snow Camp was named because Cornwallis British Army got marooned here by a massive snow fall. I have never seen, but I have heard tell that one of the local churches which has wooden pews still show the gouge marks from 1781 when the Redcoats used them for slaughtering cattle for food while they were snowed-in in my backyard.
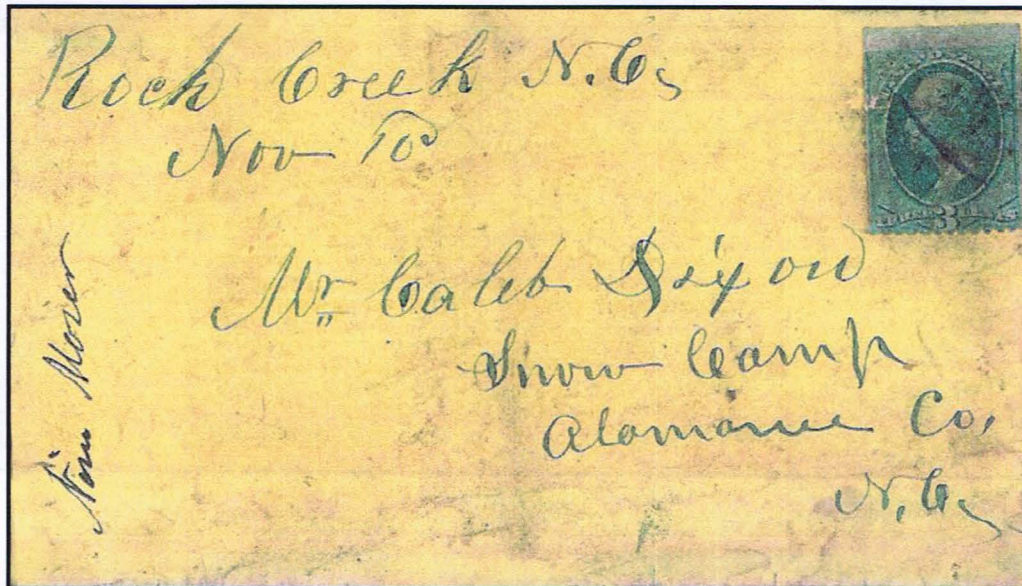
Who Says Mail Delivery Has Improved Over Time?

By Throop C. Brown

In the mail, Wednesday, 24 Nov. 2004, I received a remarkable pair of covers, both mailed from Siler City to Snow Camp, but over 100 years apart!

The first cover was from my bank in Siler City, and was postmarked Nov. 19. It traveled the fourteen miles from Siler City to Snow Hill in only five days.

The second cover, which was sent to me by Tony Crumbley, was franked by a 2˜ Columbian, and was mailed from Siler City on Dec. 6, 1893, It bears a Snow Hill receiving of Dec. 7, 1893.

Here is another outstanding example of the enormous progress we have achieved in the modern world. Just think about how far we have come! One hundred and eleven years elapsed between the two covers which had the same point of origin and destination, and, which arrived in the same mail delivery. Only difference is that the trip took one day 111 years ago and now takes only five days!
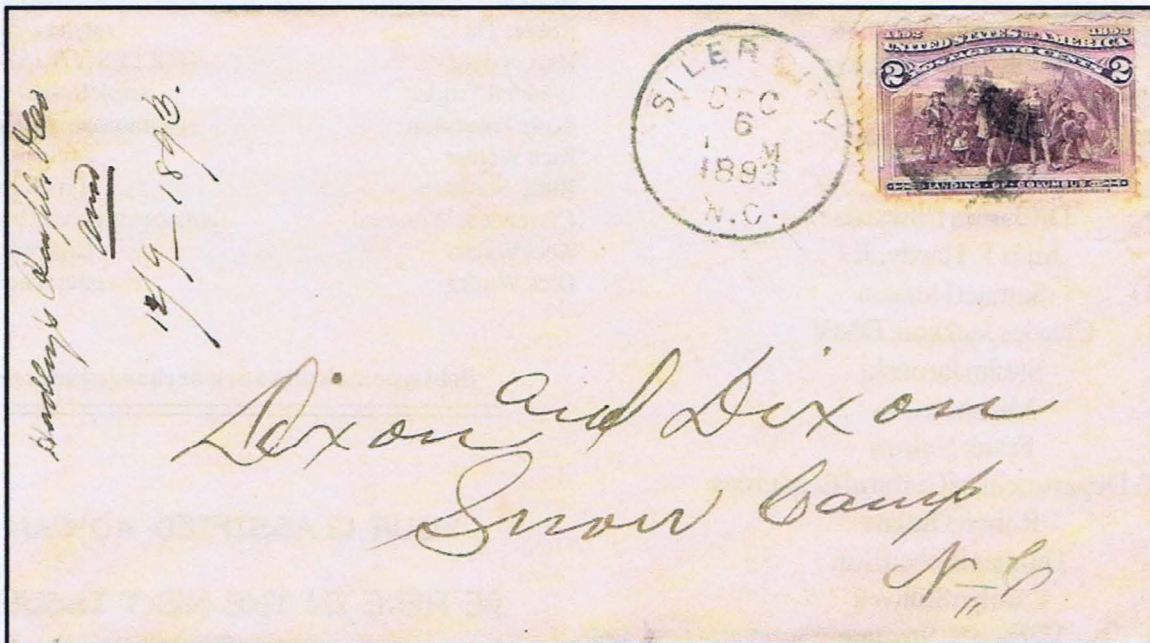

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