

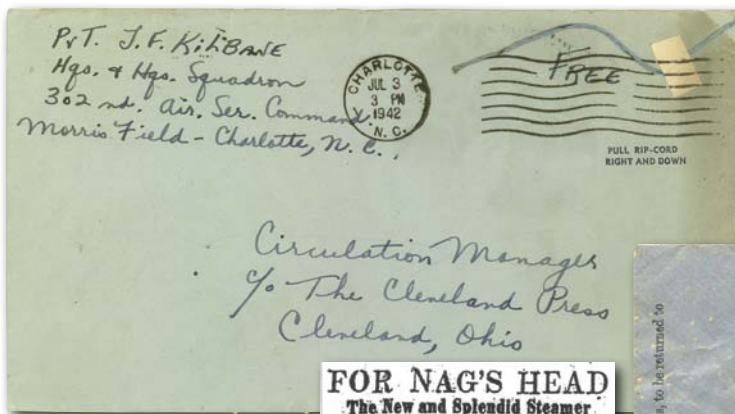
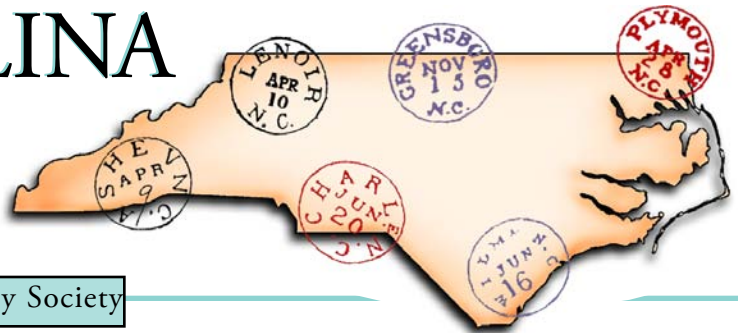
NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

The Journal of North Carolina Postal History Society

VOLUME 29, NO. 2

SPRING 2010

WHOLE 110



Self-Opening Envelopes

Curlw-Transportation
to Nags Head

FOR NAG'S HEAD
The New and Splendid Steamer
CURLEW,
CAPT. R. E. HALSEY,
WILL leave Edenton, Nag's Head, Elizabeth City, and Hertford on and after the 7th of July precisely at the hours mentioned in the following
SCHEDULE—
Leaves Edenton for Nag's Head every Tuesday and Saturday at 7 o'clock A. M.
Leaves Nag's Head for Edenton every Monday and Friday at 7 o'clock A. M.
Leaves Nag's Head for Elizabeth City every Tuesday and Saturday at 2:12 P. M.
Leaves E. City for Nag's Head every Wednesday and Sunday at 7 A. M.
Leaves Nag's Head for Hertford every Wednesday at 12 M.
Leaves Hertford for Nag's Head every Thursday at 7 A. M.
Fare to or from Nag's Head:
From Edenton, \$2 00
Elizabeth City, \$1 50
Hertford, \$2 00
MEALS—Extra.
Fodder or Hay or any other combustible matter will not be received on board unless packed according to law.
Slaves are required to have a written permit from their owners.
Should any alteration in the above schedule be found necessary due notice will be given.
Edenton June, 11th 1856. 4m13.
Pioneer and Sentinel of E. City and Norfolk Herald copy for two months.

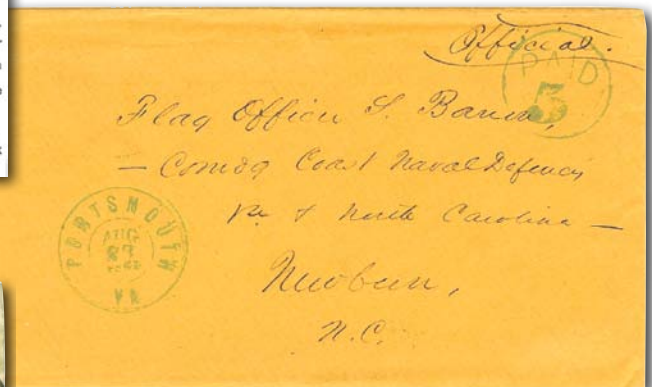


New Mechanic, NC Straight-Line

Raleigh to Heidelberg, Baden



Commodore Samuel Barron,
CS Navy Commander



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For advanced planning, the North Carolina Postal History Society will meet again this year at CHARPEX 2010, the Charlotte regional philatelic exhibition and stamp show, at 2:00 PM, Saturday, July 31, 2010. More details will be available in our next journal. CHARPEX is being held this year at the Renaissance Charlotte Suites Hotel, 2800 Coliseum Centre Drive in Charlotte. This venue is located just off Tyvola Road near Billy Graham Parkway and is only 5 miles from Charlotte-Douglas International Airport. Information about the show, exhibiting application and prospectus, and a detailed map of the show location is available on the CHARPEX web site, www.charpex.info. The Board of Directors will meet at 1:00 PM. Two director's terms will end in 2010. If you are interested in possibly serving a three-year term as a director, please contact me or Vice-President Harvey Tilles.

Please remember to pay your dues if you have not already done so. Our society dues remain at \$15 for the year and include four issues of our journal, the *North Carolina Postal Historian*. Make your payment to Secretary-Treasurer Bill DiPaolo at the address shown below. Donations above the regular membership amount of \$15 are deductible and will be very helpful to our small society.

The status box of the North Carolina Postmark Catalog update (back page) will show many more changes. Durham and Edgecombe Counties have been completed and hopefully will be on the National Postal Museum web site by the time you read this. Additions to "completed" counties with additional postmarks and new dates of use from the Postmark Collectors Club (PMCC) collections are continually being made. The date in parenthesis after the name of the county in the on-line listing will tell you the most recent file posted. Our catalog update is really growing. To date we have created almost 1,840

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new pages and illustrated about 6,985 markings not previously documented. The project is one third of the way through the North Carolina counties.

When I read Tony Crumbley's current article on Mechanic, North Carolina, and his instructions to an on-line web site, I thought that he had made a spelling mistake for the site Wikipedia.org, but this is not the site he meant. I was not familiar with the one he mentioned, which has a similar name, Wikimapia.org. This on-line site is another Google product, similar to Google Earth, but you don't have to load it on your computer because it is available on-line. It is easy to use and has the same quality satellite mapping as Google Map. Check it out. I think you will find it a good site to bookmark on your computer.

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 at the bottom of this page.

Dick Winter



NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

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Self-Opening Covers

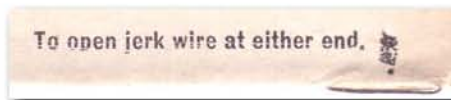
by Scott Troutman and Harvey Tilles

Figure 1 illustrates a September 25, 1900 envelope with a nice two-color advertising corner card of Byck Bro's & Co. Shoes in Atlanta, Georgia, sent to Haverhill, Massachusetts. The 2¢ stamp is canceled with a CHARLOTTE & ATLANTA R.P.O. datestamp, the marking of the railroad post office agent on the Southern Railroad. On the back are receiving markings of Haverhill showing it took two days to get there in 1900.

correspondence. Each was a wire type, three of which were return envelopes sent out by Rumpff and one was from a jeweler in Oswego, New York. Not one of the envelopes was opened using the wire. The earliest use that they reported from the Rumpff correspondence was 1902. Cornell and Nicoson came to the conclusion that these wire self-opening envelopes were quite rare.

Figure 1. ▶

September 25, 1900, envelope from Atlanta, Georgia, to Haverhill, Massachusetts, with self opening wire on the bottom. Letter canceled by route agent on the Charlotte and Atlanta Railroad (Southern Railroad).



▲ **Figure 1a.** Printed opening instructions, bottom right and left sides of envelope front.

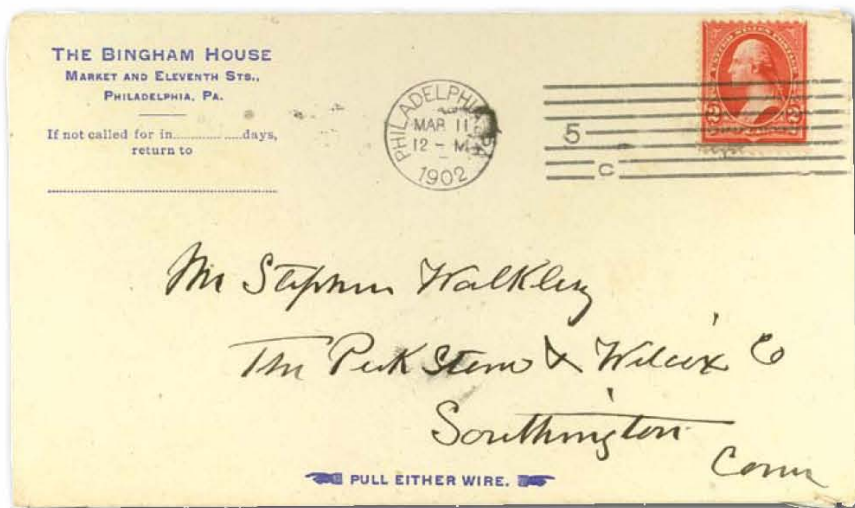


All this makes for a nice advertising or railroad post office cover to be sure, but what makes this cover special are the small markings at the bottom left and right, "To open jerk wire at either end." (Figure 1a) This is an example of a self-opening envelope. It is unclear why someone thought a self-opening envelope was needed, but at least two kinds were produced. In this example a wire goes across the bottom of the envelope and then is bent back at both ends about 12 mm. The end is actually tucked back into the envelope so it would go through the mail stream without catching on things. The idea was that the recipient would pull out one end of the wire, give a yank and the bottom of the envelope would be neatly sliced open. We can tell you, trying to catch hold of this wire is not easy. This cover from 1900 is the earliest reported example of a cover with a wire self opener that we can find.

In a November 1987 *The American Philatelist* article, "Novel Way to Open Mail Didn't Catch On," Lee Cornell and Don Nicoson discussed this type of self-opening envelope. They went through a huge correspondence from 1890 to 1930 of C.F. Rumpff & Sons, a fancy leather goods establishment in Philadelphia, and found only four self-opening envelopes in the

As a guest columnist, Everett C. Erle noted the existence of wire in self-opening envelopes and of later examples that used string instead of wire in his October 2, 1989, article in *Linn's Stamp News*, "Self-opening envelopes from 1904-1953." In sixty years of collecting covers he had seen only three examples. His wire example was sent from San Francisco in 1904. Again the recipient never saw the wire at the bottom of the envelope and opened it normally at the top.

In the Harvey Tilles collection of patent postal history there are three wire self-opening envelopes. Again, not one of his examples was opened using the wire. His covers are: from the Bingham House Hotel in Philadelphia on March 11, 1902, to Southington, Connecticut (Figure 2 and 2a); from the Wagner Typewriter Company of Chicago, Illinois, on April 10, 1902, to a Chicago city addressee (Figure 3); and from the Rock Island Plow Company of Rock Island, Illinois, on February 16, 1907, to Virginia City, Montana (Figure 4). Each cover has a printed message at the bottom, "PULL EITHER WIRE" and hands pointing to the left and right, slightly different instructions from the 1900 example shown before.

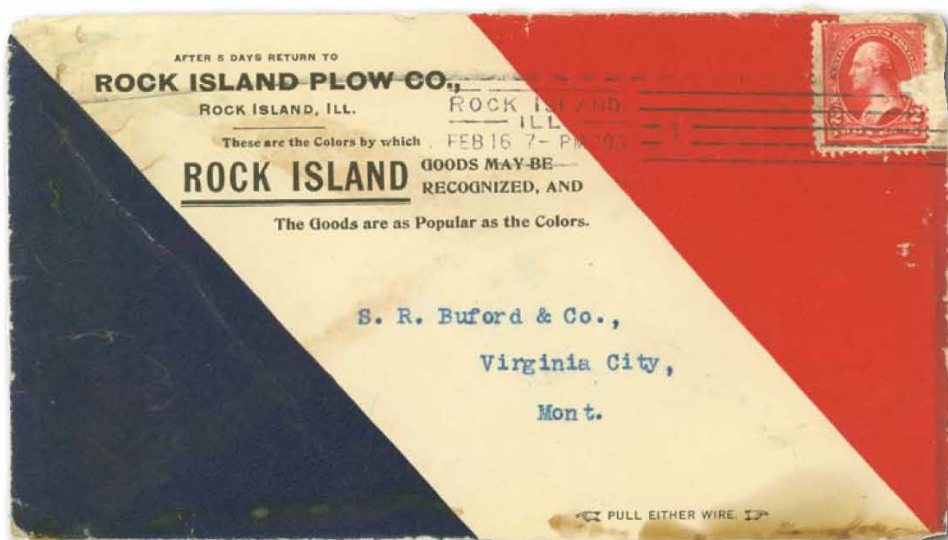


◀ ▶ **Figure 2 and 2a.** March 11, 1902, The Bingham House Hotel, Philadelphia, wire self opening envelope to Southington, Connecticut. Opening instructions are printed at the bottom center, "Pull Either Wire" and hands pointing left and right.



Figure 3. ▶

April 10, 1902, Wagner Typewriter Company, Chicago, wire self-opening envelope to a Chicago city addressee. Self-opening feature not used as wire is still in place.



◀ **Figure 4.** February 16, 1907, Rock Island Plow Company, Rock Island, Illinois, wire self-opening envelope to Virginia City, Montana. Self-opening feature again not used as wire is still in place.

Self-opening envelopes that used a string instead of wire were mentioned earlier. A patent for an envelope using a string to open it shows that the idea goes back almost fifty years before the earliest wire example seen. On April 27, 1858, a patent titled "Improvement in Envelopes for Letters, etc." was issued to Charles Phelps of Salem, Massachusetts, patent No. 20,087. Figure 5 illustrates his drawing of his "envelope opener." The patent stated, "My invention consists of a piece of cord of any suitable size

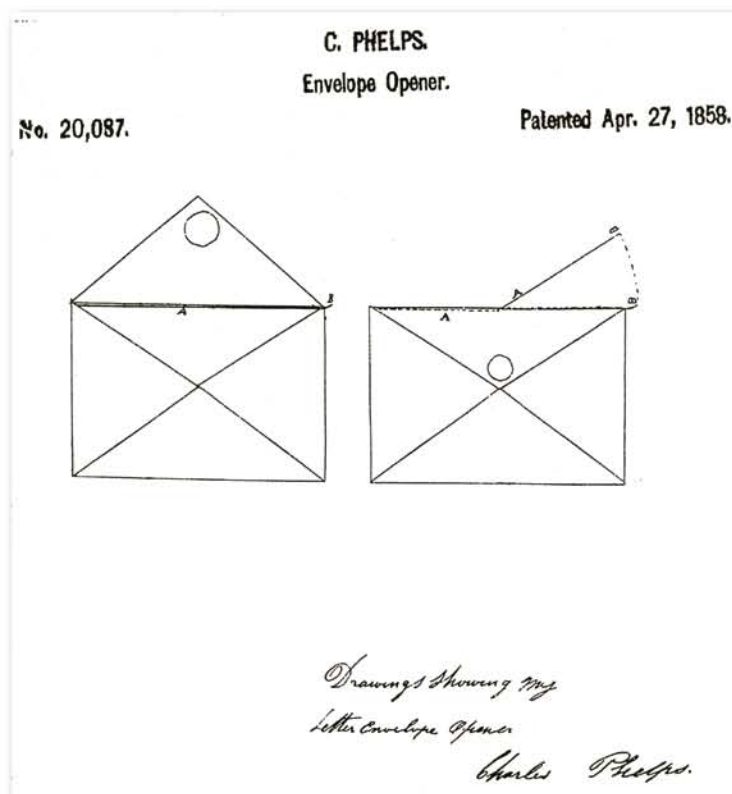
Figure 5. ▲
Drawing by Charles Phelps, Salem
Massachusetts, of his self-opening envelope as
a part of his patent approved on April 27, 1858.

and material laid in parallel with and attached to one of the creases formed by the folding of the envelope, and of such length that it shall fill the said crease and project beyond far enough to be readily seized when its use is required." The use was to open the envelope by pulling this cord. Unfortunately, no example from the nineteenth century of an envelope with this self-opening feature using a string has been seen. A search of patent records has not revealed any improvements for this original patent.

Several envelopes using string openers, each from the twentieth century, are in the Tilles collection. Figure 6 illustrates a typical



▲ **Figure 6.** July 3, 1942, string self-opening envelope sent by Private J.F. Kilbane, 302 Air Service Command, Morris Field, Charlotte, North Carolina, to Cleveland, Ohio. Letter marked "FREE" as member of the Armed Service were entitled to free postage at the time.



example, one used from North Carolina. On July 3, 1942, Private J.F. Kilbane with the 302 Air Service Command at Morris Field, Charlotte, sent a letter to the Circulation Manager of *The Cleveland Press* in Cleveland, Ohio. The envelope that he used had a military type of notation in the upper right corner, "PULL RIP-CORD/RIGHT AND DOWN." A braided fabric cord was attached to the



▲ **Figure 6a.** Upper right corner shows braided fabric cord and instructions to use it to open the right side of the letter, "Pull Rip Cord/Right and Down."

envelope at the upper right hand corner with 3½ inches exposed and 4 inches along the right side of the envelope. A small piece of adhesive was added to hold the cord in place (see Figure 6a). This was the "rip-cord" to open the letter, but it was not used to open this particular envelope. Because the letter was from a member of the Armed Forces it could be sent with

no postage and was marked by the sender “FREE.” On an inside edge of the envelope was printed “From inventor to YOU — Stationary by GORN-EAU---1828 N. St. Mary’s — San Antonio, Texas — Pat. Pend.” Patent search so far has revealed no patent was issued for this envelope. Another soldier’s letter posted at Hugo, Oklahoma, from Camp Maxey, Texas, to Baltimore, Maryland, was sent in the same type of envelope with the “PULL RIP-CORD/RIGHT AND DOWN” notation dated December 14, 1942. The white woven “rip-cord” is similarly attached and with same inscription as the Charlotte cover. These envelopes may have been a promotion and gift to some of the military by Gorn-EAU.

The Tilles collection also includes an air mail registered cover sent from Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1945 (Figure 7). It has a red and white string used to open it and is marked “PARA ABRIR/TIRE DEL HILO.” This example shows that the idea of a self-opening envelope was not confined to the United States. Apparently there was a patent on this envelope since the reverse flap is printed, “Pat. Todd U.S.A. NO. A 5723.”

What seems to be the case universally is that people just didn’t need an assist to open an envelope, so there wasn’t much point in paying extra for self-opening envelopes. This unsuccessful idea has quietly faded away.



The authors would like to thank Gene Fricks and the American Philatelic Research Library staff for help in locating information on the subject. ■

◀ **Figure 7.** August 31, 1945, string self-opening air mail registered envelope from Montevideo, Uruguay, to Wilmington, Delaware. Envelope was produced and patented in the United States for a company in Montevideo, illustrating use of self-opening envelopes outside the United States.

Previous Mystery Cover

Correct answers to the mystery cover from the last issue (Whole No. 109) were received from Maurice Bursey, Larry Lohr, Phil Perkinson, and Greg Stone. A 5¢ Confederate adhesive was missing to the left of the one currently on this cover. The rate in 1863 was 10¢. On the missing adhesive were the beginning letters “Be” of the post office of origin, Bethany Church, (Iredell County).



The *Curlew* - Transportation to Nags Head

by Scott Troutman

Last summer I made it out to Nags Head on the Outer Banks again. It was a half century since my first visit as part of a beach trip as a child. That first time I went over an old wooden bridge from the mainland to near Kitty Hawk. This time I took the new bridge over from Roanoke Island. But shortly before I made my first trip, there were no bridges and getting there was accomplished by boat. The Wright Brothers on their first trip to Kitty Hawk spent three miserable days on a sailing boat to the Outer Banks. Even in the Wright Brothers time, going to Nags Head for vacation was nothing new. From the 1830s, Nags Head was a popular summer resort. Figure 1 illustrates an 1841 folded letter from Hertford (Perquimans County) to Hillsboro (Orange County), which describes townspeople head-

Figure 1. ▶
With a dateline "Union Farm June 16, 1841," this folded letter was posted at Hertford (Perquimans County) and addressed to Hillsboro (Orange County). Letter contents refer to vacationing at Nags Head in 1841.



ing there for a week's vacation saying, "Some of the Hertford folks are going to Nags Head in five days.... I suspect a great many will go having a new place of entertainment there. We do not expect to go unless my health requires it."

Since the late colonial period, seaside locations and beautiful scenery as well as the escape from the high heat of summer, caused planters and merchants to bring their families to the coast for health and relaxation. A popular destination was Nags Head. Summer vacationers regularly patronized the Nags Head Hotel, built in 1838. Many stayed for as long as a month bringing their whole families and some even brought their horses. While the crops were growing at home they could relax, take in the sea air, and go swimming or fishing.

One problem was that the sailing vessels, which most took to the Outer Banks, were dependent on the wind. A bad storm or squall could leave you stuck at Nags Head longer than you planned or cause provisions to run short. By the 1850s the advantage of steamboat transportation was becoming obvious to the proprietors or hotel owners on the Outer Banks. They could depend on steamboats to maintain their sailing sched-

ules, ensuring a regular supply of customers to their remote lodges along with supplies to keep them happy.

Dr. Thomas Warren, a wealthy Edenton Planter, saw the potential to launch a profitable commercial transportation business and eventually placed his steamboat *Curlew* into operation between Edenton and Nags Head. In 1856, Warren, along with four other wealthy planters (Robert Dixon, Abram Riddick, S.D. Skinner and Augustine Holley) formed the Albemarle Steamboat Company to transport products from his vast farm holdings along the northeastern North Carolina riv-

ers and sounds. The company eventually operated three steamboats (*Curlew*, *Schultz*, and *Stag*) in the Albemarle Sound and Chowan River area, using Abram Riddick's wharf in Edenton.

Warren purchased the *Curlew* in 1856 from the Harlan and Hollingsworth Company of Wilmington, Delaware. They were one of the pioneer iron shipbuilding companies in the United States. Iron hulls were slightly more expensive than wooden hulls, but they were lighter, stronger and more durable and, because they used smaller-dimensioned frames or deck beams, they had a greater cargo capacity than wooden ships of the same size.

The *Curlew*, named for the small shore birds found on the Outer Banks, was a side-wheel steamboat, measuring 135 feet long and 23 feet wide. The 236-ton ship had an average draft of five feet, which suited the shallow waters of the Carolina sounds. The side paddlewheels were 18 feet in diameter by eight feet wide. She had a walking beam engine with a 29 inch diameter cylinder and a 9 foot stroke. Walking beam engines,

though obsolete in other countries, were ideal for East Coast river navigation. Steam was produced in two furnace return-flue boilers 18 feet long, 7 feet high and 8 feet wide, rated at 30 pounds of pressure. She could make about 14 knots under steam.

Between July 8th and 20th, 1856, the *Curlew* steamed from Delaware out into the Atlantic and then into the Pamlico Sound, probably via the Slash inlet at Hatteras. A safer route would have been through the Dismal Swamp Canal but she was too wide for the canal. On July 21st, *Curlew* started daily operations at Edenton under Capt. Richard Halsey. She transported passengers and freight between Edenton, Hertford, Elizabeth City, and Nags Head.

The high demand for transport to Nags Heads in the summer seasons was especially profitable for the Albemarle Steamboat Company. Passengers could depart from Edenton, Hertford or Elizabeth City to Nags Head for a fare of \$1.50 to \$2.00 per person as illustrated in the schedule of Figure 2, an advertisement from the August 7, 1856, Edenton newspaper *American*

Figure 2. ▶
Sailing schedule of the *Curlew* from Edenton newspaper *American Banner*, August 7, 1856.

Banner. The proprietor of the Nags Head Hotel in particular benefited from the tourist trade that the *Curlew* delivered. The *American Banner* noted that three or four hundred people were to be found at Nags Head all summer, and argued “We have a splendid new steamer, the *Curlew*, why not have a stock company build a new hotel?”

There were two post offices with the name Nags Head. The first opened on June 27, 1884, but changed its name to Naghead on November 15, 1893. The office closed on April 27, 1915 with the mail going to the Griffin office. But the Griffin office, which opened on June 26, 1909, changed its name at the same time to Naghead, so the name of the office never changed, just the location. Although Griffen does not appear on period maps, the office undoubtedly was in the vicinity of the original Naghead office. The post office name was changed again on March 6, 1916 to Nags Head. Before 1884, mail from the vacationers was given to the boat captains to post in Edenton or their next port of call with mail service. No doubt the *Curlew* handled its fair share.

Thomas Burbage from Franklin, Virginia, replaced Halsey as the *Curlew*'s captain in 1857. He apparently was a soft spoken but effective captain who seldom if ever cursed – a rarity among captains of the time. He is seen standing to the left in

the picture shown in Figure 3 from *Southampton County, Virginia* by Thomas C. Parramore.

In 1860, a group of twenty four residents near Edenton established the Albemarle Steam Packet Company, with Edward Wood as president. Figure 4 illustrates a cover of the 1857-1861 period from Winton (Hertford County) to Edward Wood



FOR NAG'S HEAD
The New and Splendid Steamer
CURLEW,
CAPT. R. B. HALSEY,

WILL leave Edenton, Nag's Head, Elizabeth City, and Hertford on and after the 7th of July precisely at the hours mentioned in the following

SCHEDULE—

Leaves Edenton for Nag's Head every Tuesday and Saturday at 7 o'clock A. M.
Leaves Nag's Head for Edenton every Monday and Friday at 7 o'clock A. M.
Leaves Nag's Head for Elizabeth City every Tuesday and Saturday at 2 1/2 P. M.
Leaves E. City for Nag's Head every Wednesday and Sunday at 7 A. M.
Leaves Nag's Head for Hertford every Wednesday at 12 M.
Leaves Hertford for Nag's Head every Thursday at 7 A. M.

Fare to or from Nag's Head:

From Edenton,	\$2 00
Elizabeth City,	\$1 50
Hertford,	\$2 00

MEALS—EXTRA.

Fodder or Hay or any other combustible matter will not be received on board unless packed according to law.
Slaves are required to have a written permit from their owners.
Should any alteration in the above schedule be found necessary due notice will be given.

T. D. WARREN, Pres.
Edenton June, 11th 1856. 4m13.

Pioneer and Sentinel of E. City and Norfolk
Herald copy for two months.

in Edenton (Chowan County) with a faint green WINTON, NC cancel. Because the cancel was so faint, the stamp was canceled a second time in pencil manuscript. In addition to the *Curlew*, the Albemarle Steam Packet Company, wishing to build a faster boat than the *Curlew*, ordered a new steamboat built by Harlan and Hollingsworth to be called the *Virginia Dare*. Alas, the Civil War broke out before the *Virginia Dare* was finished, and Wood stopped payments. It later entered the U.S. Navy refitted as the USS *Delaware*.



◀ **Figure 3.** Crew of the *Curlew* showing Capt. Thomas Burbage standing to the left (*Southampton County, Virginia* by Thomas C. Parramore).

Curlew,” a reference to the steamer that carried the letter from the Outer Banks to the mainland.

Another *Curlew* competitor emerged in 1860. Two businessmen from Virginia, Edwin H. Delk and Edmund C. Lindsey, placed the steamboat *Seabird* on the Chowan River trade. During the summer season the *Seabird* ferried tourists to Nags Head.

The Civil War ended the Nags Head runs. *Seabird* and *Curlew* both eventually became part of the Confederate Navy. *Curlew* was refitted into a gunboat and had a 32 pound rifled cannon put on her bow. She and *Seabird*

both became members of the so called “Mosquito Fleet,” a group of small ships used to protect the sounds. *Curlew* ferried troops to the Outer Banks and participated in the strange

A September 17, 1857 embossed envelope from Hertford to Shepperdstown [sic], Virginia, is shown in Figure 5. A notation on

Figure 4. ▶

Cover from the 1853-1861 period with faint green WINTON, NC circular datestamp to Edward Wood, president of the Albemarle Steam Packet Company in Edenton, which was building the *Virginia Dare*.



the left side of the embossed envelope (Scott No. U9) reads, “from Nags Head/by Str



engagement known as the “Chicamacomico Races.” This battle, if you can call it a battle, consisted of the Mosquito Fleet landing Confederate soldiers near Chicamacomico, six miles north of Cape Hatteras, where by nightfall they proceeded to chase the Union

◀ **Figure 5.** Red Type 3 circular datestamp of Hertford (Perquimans County) to Shepperdstown [sic], Va. on Scott U9 postal stationary. Notation on the left side indicates letter from Nags Heads on the steamer *Curlew* and was posted at Hertford, September 17, 1857. (Courtesy Tony Crumbley)

defenders south to Hatteras lighthouse. The next morning the Union troops were reinforced and they chased the Confederates back to Chicamacomico, where they reboarded the boats and went home. *Curlew* also participated in several patrolling and harassing engagements at Hatteras and in the Pamlico Sound region.

The end for the *Curlew* came on February 7, 1862, when a substantial Union fleet pushed north in the Pamlico Sound as part of the invasion of Roanoke Island. About 4 p.m. the *Curlew* tried to divert fire being directed by the Union fleet against Fort Bartow on Roanoke Island. She sailed toward the fleet and opened fire. Their cannon fire was immediately answered. One shell from the Parrot gun on the USS *Southfield* struck the *Curlew's* deck near the pilot house, wounding pilot Eli Williamson. A second shell passed through a magazine and displaced a hull plate on the *Curlew*. She began taking on water quickly. Captain Thomas Hunter turned her for the mainland

boats came aside and managed to salvage *Curlew's* cannon and other items before nightfall. The next day, the Confederate garrison in nearby Fort Forrest, sensing impending defeat, set fire

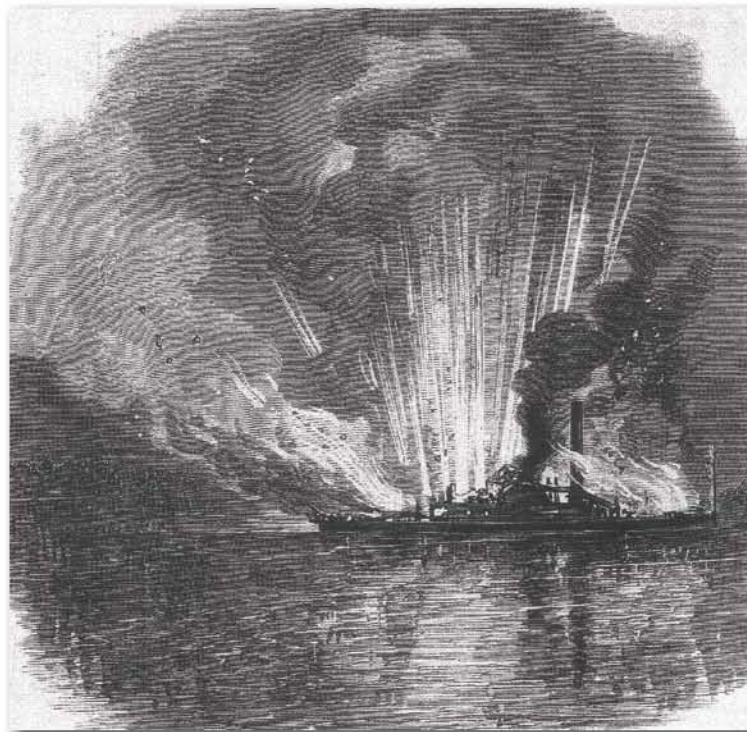


Figure 6. ▶
Engraving of the explosion of the powder magazine on the *Curlew* after being set on fire, February 8, 1862 (North Carolina Collection).

shore near Confederate Fort Forrest directly to the west of northern Roanoke Island and gunned her engines to run her aground before she went down. The *Curlew* grounded on the shoreline, and the crew made it off safely. Captain Hunter dis-

posed to their redoubt and to the *Curlew* before retreating inland. The powder magazine on the *Curlew* exploded at sundown on February 8th, coinciding with the official surrender of the remaining Confederate forces on Roanoke Island. The destruction of *Curlew* is shown in Figure 6, an engraving from the North Carolina Collection.



▲ **Figure 7.** July 18, 1885 cover with the return address of the Nags Head Hotel. Letter posted in Elizabeth City (Pasquotank County) for Washington, DC.

The steamship service did not return to Nags Head until after the Civil War. Figure 7 illustrates a July 18, 1885 envelope bearing the corner card of J. M. Whedbee, proprietor of the Nags Head Hotel, Nags Head, N.C., addressed to the Hon. Matthew W. Ransom, who along with Zebulon B. Vance (former governor 1862-64) represented North Carolina in the U.S. Senate. The letter was posted in Elizabeth City (Pasquotank County). ■

covered that sometime during the fray he lost his pants, but never figured out how. Near dusk, two other Confederate gun-

Bibliography:

Olsen, Christopher. "The Curlew: The Life and Death of a North Carolina Steamboat, 1856-1862." *The North Carolina Historical Review*, Vol. LXXXIII No. 2, April 2006, pp. 139-164.

Mechanic, North Carolina – A New Straight-Line Cancel

by Tony L. Crumbley

Many a times I have driven Highway 49 on my way to and from Raleigh and never knew I was going through the town of Mechanic. In a collection I recently purchased, one cover struck my eye – Figure 1 – a straight-line cancel from the town of Mechanic. Straight-line cancellations are rarely seen from North Carolina.

The first question that came to mind was where is Mechanic. *North Carolina Post Offices and Postmasters* provides the following information on the office:

Figure 1. ▶
Mechanic, NC, January 23, 1892.
A newly recorded purple straight-line postmark applied to a letter posted to Ashboro, N.C.

Mechanic, Randolph County
Postmaster Appointments

Eli N. Howard 5 September 1884
William Bingham Acting 30 April 1924
William Bingham 5 May 1924
Discontinued 30 November 1931
Mail to Farmer

One manuscript marking is recorded from 1888. Two additional handstamp markings have been seen since the time of our early work.



Figure 2 shows a four bar cancel used from Mechanic in 1917. All three recorded markings would have been used by Postmaster Howard.

Technology is changing how we do postal history research in a positive way. I could still not find a history of the community short of a history of Randolph County. What I could find was



an image of the community. I encourage those of you with a computer to go to wikimapia.org/, key in Mechanic, NC and take a look at where the community is today. One can clearly see the crossroads of Highway 49 and Tot Hill Farm Road. The location of this post office was nearby, perhaps in one of the existing buildings that can be seen on the satellite image. I have no doubt that in the lifetime of our younger members you will be able to scroll over those buildings and find a complete history of their use. How wonderful would this be for those of us doing postal history research! ■

◀ **Figure 2.** Mechanic, NC, July 12, 1917. A four bar postmark used on picture post card to Jamestown, N.C.

Commodore Samuel Barron, CS Navy Commander, Naval Coastal Defenses of Virginia and North Carolina

by Captain James L.D. Monroe, SC, USN (Ret.)

Upon resigning from the U.S. Navy to join the Confederacy, Commodore Samuel Barron was placed in command of the naval defenses of Virginia and North Carolina. On August 28, 1861, he arrived at Fort Hatteras, to defend it against an attack by a strong Union Navy squadron. The fort could not withstand the bombardment of the next day and was surrendered by him. Among the ships that took part in the bombardment and against which Commodore Barron directed fire was the USS *Wabash*. Ironically, six months earlier he was that ship's commanding officer. Needless to say, when he surrendered, the reception by his captors was frigid.

The Portsmouth, Virginia, cover, illustrated in Figure 1 with a blue circle Paid/5 and August 23, 1861 postmark, is from his nephew James Barron Hope, an accomplished poet laureate. It was mailed just six days before Commodore Barron's capture. The letter warns

Figure 1. ▶
August 23, 1861, Portsmouth,
Virginia, to Commodore Barron from
his nephew James Barron Hope,
mailed six days before Commodore
Barron's capture.

him of a possible Federal movement against Fort Hatteras. It also passes on some other local military news of the day. I am pleased to

report that the original letter came with the cover when I purchased it and a transcribed copy of it is provided on the next page (Figure 2).

Commodore Barron was imprisoned at Fort Warren in Boston Harbor until August 27, 1862, at which time he was exchanged for seven Union officers. The envelope shown in Figure 3 was sent to him while confined in Fort Warren, a 3¢ buff entire (Scott #U35) with a New York City, June 28, 1862 postmark. The address includes the name of the prison's commander, Colonel J. Dimmick, U.S. Army, who was known as the ablest and most humane of all the Civil War prison commanders. After his prison exchange, Commodore Barron was sent overseas as the ranking Confederate Navy officer in Europe where



he was involved in fitting out blockade runners and privateers in England. He remained there for the war's duration. ■

◀ **Figure 3.** June 28, 1862, envelope from New York City to Commodore Barron while confined in the Federal prison at Fort Warren in Boston harbor after his capture at Fort Hatteras.

Commandant's Office

Dockyard, Gosport
22 Aug '61

My dear Uncle,

We had a visit this morning from a person just through Washington, & he informs us that the Govt. has collected a very large fleet of hulks, which they are loading with stone, for the purpose of obstructing the Inlets of N.C., and the mouth of the James River; - that this expedition will also make a demonstration against the battery at Hatteras. My own impression, from what I see in the papers, & what know of preparation about the Point - assuming what I hear to be true - is, that there is my reasonable foundation for the belief that the Federals have some such movement in contemplation. In all probability you have already been informed of this thro' official sources, but feeling deeply solicitous not only for the cause but for your command I send you this hurried information.

There is little here to interest you, except the fact that the gunship, screw, "Raleigh," came back today in consequence of something wrong about a pipe - she steams off tomorrow.

Mr. Taylor pronounces her very fast. May she accumulate prize money, & cover her flag with glory!

On yesterday evening I witnessed some very gratifying experiments with a rifled gun, cast at Anderson's, & sent down I think for you: the practice I learn was very satisfactory to Genl Huger, who was present, the range attained, I think was 4 miles, & there the shells burst in the air 50 or 100 ft above the water, so that with a solid projectile, I suppose, 4½ might have been attained.

The gun looks like an ordinary Columbiad, but shoots, as a darkie declared, "clean out the world!" The projectile was in the air "27," I think, McPepam told me, & during that time screamed like a demon - I should think it wasn't pleasant to have such things shooting in the neighborhood of one's shins, for they make a frightful noise.

This, I think, is all of any interest I can tell you, & having occupied enough of your time, with a fervent pray for your success & honor, I remain,

Very affly: your,

James Barron Hope

Flag Officer Barron,
Comdg Coast Naval Defence
N.C. & Va.

▲ **Figure 2.** August 22, 1861 letter from James Barron Hope to his uncle Commodore Barron warning him of possible movements by Federal forces against Fort Hatteras.

Mystery Cover



This metal duplex postmark reads "LAKEWOOD/APR/21/7AM/1892."

Can you locate the post office?

Send your answers to Tony Crumbley or Dick Winter

Raleigh to Heidelberg, Baden

by Richard F. Winter

The following transatlantic cover, submitted by long time member Bob Outlaw, illustrates a seldom seen North Carolina cover sent across the Atlantic in the Hamburg mail. A postal convention between the United States and the free city of Hamburg, Germany, was not concluded until 12 June 1857. It went into effect a few weeks later on 1 July 1857. The convention established a 10¢ rate for a ½ ounce letter for mail directly to Hamburg and 15¢ rate per ½ ounce if the letter went beyond Hamburg to a destination within the German-Austrian Postal Union for those German States that reduced their postage to Hamburg to 5¢ or less. For those who did not reduce their postage to Hamburg, the rate was 22¢ for a ½ ounce letter. By the end of 1859 all the German States had accepted the 5¢ internal fee for transit to Hamburg.

Figures 1 and 1a illustrate the front and reverse of an envelope without the letter contents posted at Raleigh, North Carolina, on 20 February 1859 and addressed to Heildleberg [sic], Baden, Germany. Even though the sender crossed through the first “l” in the city name of the address, he still misspelled it. Heidelberg

letter for overseas transit. This amount often was written on unpaid letters intended for the Prussian closed mail, a 30¢ per ½ ounce rate. At the Raleigh post office the clerk struck in the lower left corner a 33 mm blue circular datestamp, **RALEIGH N.C./(date)/PAID**, indicating the letter was paid! This is a type 8 marking of Raleigh in our catalog, *Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina*.

The letter was sent to New York from which place the Atlantic



◀ ▲ **Figure 1 and 1a.** Front and reverse of 20 February 1859 envelope from Raleigh to Heidelberg, Baden, Germany. Letter marked paid in Raleigh, but treated as unpaid when letter arrived at New York, where 5¢ was debit to Hamburg. Letter carried by Hamburg American Line (HAPAG) steamship *Saxonia* from New York to Hamburg. Postage due at destination was 33 kreuzer marked in blue ink, left side.

was an important city with a University founded in 1386 on the west bank of the Neckar River, 32 miles north northeast of Carlsruhe in the Grand Duchy of Baden. It lies on the main Baden railroad that connects with the German States to the North. The letter was endorsed across the top, "By Hamburg Steamer," routing instructions for the Hamburg convention mail. The manuscript "30" in the upper right corner is curious, but probably influenced the New York clerk who prepared the

steamers to Germany operated. For reasons unknown to me, the New York exchange office clerk ignored the Raleigh postmark that said the letter was paid, and treated it as a fully unpaid letter. Perhaps the manuscript "30" in the upper right corner drew his attention and not the Raleigh datestamp. The letter was prepared for the Hamburg mail. In the upper right corner he struck a 31.5 mm black circular datestamp, **5/(date)/N. YORK HAMB.PKT.**, indicating the letter would leave 1 March on a Hamburg packet and that 5¢ was debited to Hamburg as the U.S. share of the postage to be collected in Germany. Had this letter been considered fully paid, the New

York datestamp would have been in red ink and showed a 17¢ credit to Hamburg since the rate to Baden at this time was the 22¢ per ½ ounce. Because the letter was to be carried on a Hamburg steamer, the United States was entitled only to 5¢.

The Hamburg mail left New York 1 March on the Hamburg American Line (HAPAG) steamship *Saxonia* (Figure 2) and arrived at Hamburg on 16 March 1859. The arrival was confirmed by a black 27 x 20 mm oval datestamp on the reverse, **St.P.A./ (date)**, of the Hamburg city post office. The letter was transferred to the Thurn & Taxis Post Office in Hamburg, as shown by the 26 mm black circular datestamp on the reverse,

after which the rate was reduced resulting in a new handstamp. The amount of 6¾ silbergroschen was equivalent to 15¢ or 24 kreuzer. The 9 kreuzer transit fee to Baden was equivalent to 7¢, making the 22¢ rate for this letter. The letter has two 42 x 14 mm boxed rectangular datestamps on the reverse in black ink that show handling on two different Baden railroads on 17 March. Each handstamp has the initials “E.B.” for “Eisenbahn,” the German word for railroad, followed by the date and on a second line, the train and postal train designations. A 44 x 14 mm boxed rectangular datestamp on the reverse in black ink shows arrival at Heidelberg on 18 March. Here the letter was marked in blue ink on the front, left side for 33 kreuzer postage

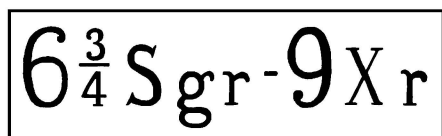


▲ **Figure 2.** HAPAG steamship *Saxonia* entering Elbe River going to Hamburg (courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London).

HAMBURG.TH.&T/ (date), dated 16 March. On the front the letter received in the upper center a blue handstamp, **6¾ Sgr-9Xr** (Figure 3), to show the international postage of 6¾ silbergroschen to Hamburg plus a 9 kreuzer transit fee to Baden was to be collected at the destination. This is a scarce marking, which I have recorded less than a half dozen times. The marking was used only from about mid-1858 to mid-1859,

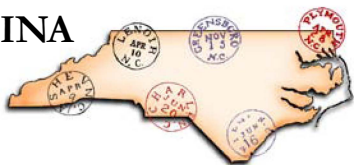
due, the sum of the 24 kreuzer international fee to Hamburg plus the 9 kreuzer transit fee to Baden.

More information on the postal conventions with Hamburg, Belgium, the Netherlands, the North German Union, and Switzerland is available in Volume 2 of my book, *Understanding Transatlantic Mail*, just published by the American Philatelic Society. ■



◀ **Figure 3.** Blue straight-line handstamp applied at Hamburg to show that the international postage of 6¾ silbergroschen (24 kreuzer) to Hamburg plus 9 kreuzer transit fee to Baden was to be collected. The total amount due was 33 kreuzer.

NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN



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North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update

The following counties have been prepared
and are available at

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northcarolina_postmarkcatalog.html](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/statepostalhistory/northcarolina_postmarkcatalog.html):

Alamance through Edgecombe and Guilford

Guilford has not been updated with the PMCC data. Minor
changes have been made to all other counties

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Confederate States

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