

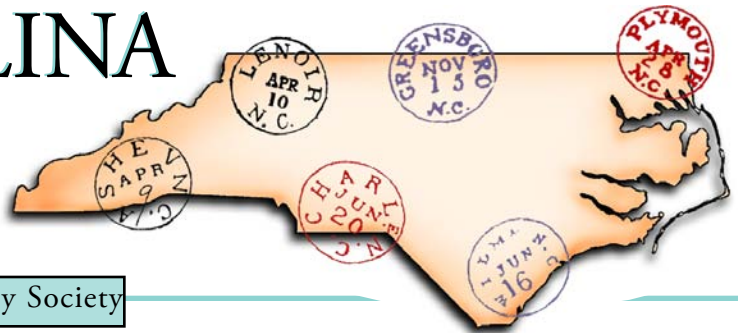
# NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

The Journal of North Carolina Postal History Society

VOLUME 29, NO. 3

SUMMER 2010

WHOLE 111



C-7—Various Field Artillery Activities, Fort Bragg, N. C.



The Postal History of Fort  
Bragg, North Carolina

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The North Carolina Postal History Society will meet at CHARPEX 2010, the Charlotte regional philatelic exhibition and stamp show, at 2:00 PM, Saturday, July 31, 2010. The Society will sponsor a talk by Frank Hall about Fort Bragg postal history. 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, <http://www.charpex.info/>. The Board of Directors will meet at 1:00 PM in the meeting room arranged by the CHARPEX committee.

This issue is devoted almost entirely to a well-researched article by Frank Hall about Fort Bragg's postal history, which is our state's largest military installation and, by population, the largest Army installation in the world. A year ago, Frank submitted his first article for our publication on the postal history of the Fayetteville Arsenal and Armory. The same enthusiasm for his subject, displayed in the Fayetteville Arsenal article, will be found in the Fort Bragg article as well. I am delighted that members such as Frank are telling their stories so we all can learn from their studies.

In January 2008, the American Philatelic Society held a very successful winter show in Charlotte. On February 11-13, 2011, their show will be back in our region again, this time at the Charleston Convention Center, in Charleston, South Carolina. Titled the APS AmeriStamp Expo, it promises to be another fine show and one worth attending. Typically, AmeriStamp

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Expo has about 85 dealers and three very full days of activities. Plan to make the short drive to Charleston to participate in the show.

The status box of the *North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update* (back page) will show many more changes. Forsyth and Franklin Counties have been completed and will be on the National Postal Museum web site by the time you read this. Additions to "completed" counties with new postmarks and new dates of use from the collections of the Postmark Collectors Club (PMCC) are constantly being made. Almost every one of the previously listed counties has had revisions because of the new information. If you want to know if the posted file of a particular county is newer than the one you may have downloaded, check the file date in parenthesis after the name of the county in the on-line listing. Our catalog update is really growing. Currently, there are 1,965 pages listed and 7,525 markings not previously documented.

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](mailto:rfwinter@bellsouth.net) or write to me. My mailing address appears at the bottom of this page.

*Dick Winter*



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# THE POSTAL HISTORY OF FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA

by Charles F. Hall, Jr.

Fort Bragg, one of the largest military installations in the United States, is located 10 miles northwest of Fayetteville, North Carolina. It is comprised of parts of Cumberland, Hoke and Harnett Counties. Camp Mackall, its sub-installation, is approximately 40 miles west in Moore, Scotland and Richmond Counties. Fort Bragg grew out of the need for additional training areas for the United States Army field artillery forces in the latter stages of World War I. After the United States declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917, the nation's military swelled from approximately 200,000 in 1914 to a combined army and navy of 4,355,000 as it grew to maturity in the "Great War" or the "War to End All Wars." The War Department required additional training areas for the greatly enlarged army.

The War Department searched for a large tract of land that had suitable terrain and a temperate climate for a major field artillery training cantonment and reservation. It would need to be extensive enough to exercise modern long range field artillery, some of which could fire at targets in excess of 10 miles. Major General William J. Snow, Chief of Field Artillery, coordinated the search for the new training area in the southeastern United States (Figure 1). Based on his staff's recommendations, a site encompassing large parts of Cumberland and Hoke Counties near Fayetteville was inspected in June 1918 by Colonel E. P. King and his party. Based on that inspection, it was recommended for approval and the location was accepted by the War Department. It not only was large enough, but was located only 10 miles from Fayetteville and offered major road and rail connections. On August 21, 1918, General Orders Number 77 were issued by the War Department that established Camp Bragg as a Field Artillery Cantonment.

The original reservation area approximated 120,000 acres and was 24 miles wide and an average of 7.5 miles from north to south. It was sparsely settled, could be purchased very economically and had a climate that made year round training practical. In 1918, there were approximately 170 families that resided on the property. The initial purchase, authorized by Congress on August 21, 1918, consisted of \$934,064 to buy the

first 50,711 acres of land, at an average cost per acre of \$18.45.

The selected area was named "Camp Bragg" in recognition of Lt. General Braxton Bragg, a native of the Tar Heel State from Warren County and a prominent, if not controversial, Confederate General who had been a field artillery officer in the Mexican War. The designation "Camp Bragg" rather than "Fort Bragg" was used since it was not envisioned to be a permanent facility at that time.



◀ **Figure 1.** Major General William J. Snow, Chief of Field Artillery, 1918 (courtesy of the Library of Congress).

The first post commander, Colonel Maxwell Murray, arrived in January 1919. Construction of post facilities had already begun in 1918 and by the early 1920s construction of facilities accelerated. By 1922, existing roads were improved and new roads were built on the main

post and the artillery reservation. Facilities for housing troops, warehouses, a post exchange, headquarters and medical facilities were constructed. Two polo fields were constructed, a post piggery and dairy

were started and recreation facilities were also built. The first unit garrisoned at Camp Bragg was a company of the 46th Infantry Regiment. The 5th Field Artillery Regiment arrived on Thanksgiving Day 1920. The 117th Field Artillery Regiment moved to Camp Bragg on January 9, 1921 and the 13th Field Artillery Brigade was organized in May 1921. These were the first of many units that were garrisoned or trained at Fort Bragg over the next 90 years. The field artillery pieces, such as the 75mm rifle, were horse or mule drawn during this period and were not fully motorized until after 1941.

General Order No. 39, War Department, September 30, 1922, designated the post as Fort Bragg, in recognition of its importance as an artillery training post and the long term investment made by the War Department towards its role in the national defense. Improvement and expansion continued throughout the 1920s and by the end of fiscal 1931, work was



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completed on permanent barracks for the artillery garrison, NCO quarters, officers' quarters, new water and sewer mains, four ammunition magazines, and headquarters buildings as well as improvements to existing buildings.

An airfield, named "Pope Field" was co-located at Camp Bragg. It was officially established by the War Department on April 1, 1919, and was named for Lt. Harley H. Pope, an army aviator who died in a military aircraft accident near Fayetteville earlier in 1919. Pope Field's mission was to provide observation aircraft and observation balloon assets to the field artillery. Artillery accuracy during the WWI period through the 1930s relied upon the Army Air Corps to provide targeting information to artillery gunners on the ground who could not directly observe their targets or accuracy of their indirect fire. This was achieved through observers in balloons tethered to the ground or from aircraft. The first units assigned to Pope Field were the 276th Aero Squadron, the 32nd Balloon Squadron and the 84th Photography Section. Pope Field grew slowly during the inter-war period but large hangers were not constructed until 1934. By the end of World War II, Pope Field's mission had evolved from providing aerial artillery observation to supplying troop transport aircraft for the airborne (parachute) units based at Fort Bragg, most notably the venerable 82nd Division (Airborne) and later, Special Forces and their support units. During the post WWII period, Fort Bragg became headquarters of the XV111th Airborne Corps, which combined a number of airborne and support units under one command. Pope Field was designated Pope Air Force Base on January 13, 1948. By this time, the Army Air Corps had become a separate service, the U.S. Air Force.

The area selected for Camp Bragg in 1918 was part of the North Carolina "Sandhills," a geological description that aptly depicts the flatland and low sandy hills of the region. The soil is largely sandy and predominately supports long leaf pines and scrub oak. Only about 7% of the land purchased for Camp Bragg in 1918 was cultivated. The early settlers found much of the soil unproductive for intensive agriculture and relied upon producing naval stores from long leaf pines and subsistence farming. When the government purchased the area, the local inhabitants were required to relocate; however, they were paid for their property. In 1918, approximately 170 families resided on the Camp Bragg property. Most families acceded to the sale but it was necessary to bring condemnation proceedings against a few property owners. Many of the local people moved to nearby towns such as Fayetteville, Vass, or Raeford. The military agreed to protect the two historic Presbyterian Churches on the property, Longstreet and Sandy Grove. The congregation and descendants of Longstreet Presbyterian Church continued to use the church for an annual service and "dinner on the grounds," which still continues. Cemeteries on post also are protected and the Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Program has identified and documented family cemeteries, military burials, and a variety of pre-historic, Revolutionary,

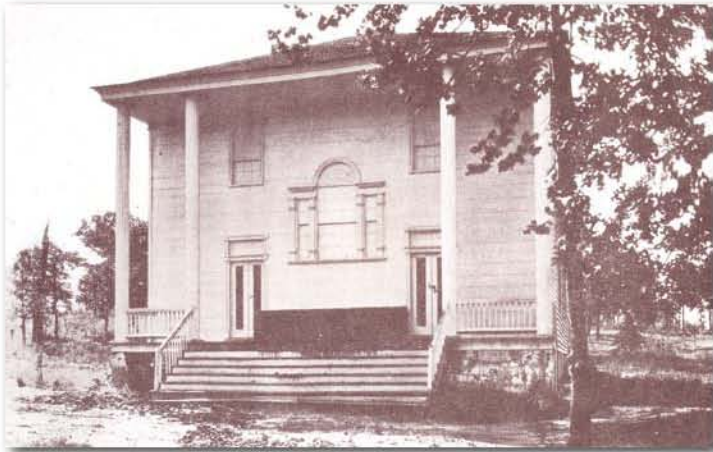
ante-bellum and Civil War sites.

The Sandhills area of southeastern North Carolina, including what became Fort Bragg, is thought by anthropologist to have been inhabited by Native Americans for about 12,000 years before the arrival of the first Europeans. The Iroquoian, Algonkian and Siouan Indians inhabited this general area. Their occupation is evidenced by stone and pottery remains found in post archeological sites.

Many of the early European settlers in the Cape Fear region were Highland Scots who left Scotland following the Scottish rebellion of 1715 and the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, culminating in the Battle Culloden of April 16, 1746. This defeat ended Scotland's quest for independence and strongly suppressed the traditional Highland culture and way of life.

Many other Scots were forced or induced to emigrate during the notorious "Clearances" of the 1800s in which the crofters, or tenant farmers, were forced from their land by the large landowners. These owners had found raising large quantities of sheep for the woolen mills much more profitable than the meager rents collected from small crofters. Many of these Gaelic settlers entered North Carolina via the port of Wilmington and migrated up the Cape Fear River region to the Sandhills of southeastern North Carolina, including the area that became Fort Bragg. They were accustomed to surviving in a difficult environment and adapted to the poor soil and hot, humid summers of the area. They established small farms, organized churches and built saw and grist mills. They learned to use the abundant long leaf pine forests that thrived in the Sandhills for lumber and to produce naval stores such as tar and turpentine. Naval stores continued to be an important industry for the area until the early 1900s when the dominance of iron hulled ships decreased the market for them.

Historians refer to the Scottish settlement of the Cape Fear region as the "Argyle Colony" because many of the first emigrants came from the western Scottish county of Argyle. Cross Creek was established by the Argyle colonists in 1739 and Campbellton in 1762. They would later combine to become Fayetteville. One of the post offices that was located on the current Fort Bragg reservation was named Argyle. It was situated in one of the more settled areas. Argyle is currently remembered by Longstreet Presbyterian Church, one of the first churches in the area. Argyle grew up around an important intersection of the Longstreet and the Yadkin Roads that ran northwest from Cross Creek, present-day Fayetteville, to the Yadkin River Valley. Tradition says the Yadkin Road followed an old buffalo path. Presbyterian services were held by the Scots at Longstreet as early as 1756, when the Reverend Hugh McAden visited the site and preached to the Highlanders at the home of Mr. Alexander McKay. It was described by Reverend McAden as a log building near a log tavern. Longstreet Church was formally organized on October 18, 1758, and the first log church was erected in 1765/66. The second building was erected in the early part of the 19th cen-



◀ **Figure 2.** Longstreet Presbyterian Church was organized in 1758 and the first structure was built in 1765. The present church was built between 1845 and 1848. When the military acquired the property in 1918, they agreed to preserve and protect Longstreet and another historic Presbyterian Church on the military reservation, Sandy Grove Presbyterian Church. These are the only remaining pre-1918 structures. Longstreet was very prominent in the life of the Argyle Community and remains today a monument to the early Scots settlers. It is still used for an annual religious service and reunion of the descendants of those early church members. (McLeod, Rev. R.A., *Historical Sketch of Long Street Presbyterian Church, 1756 to 1923.*)

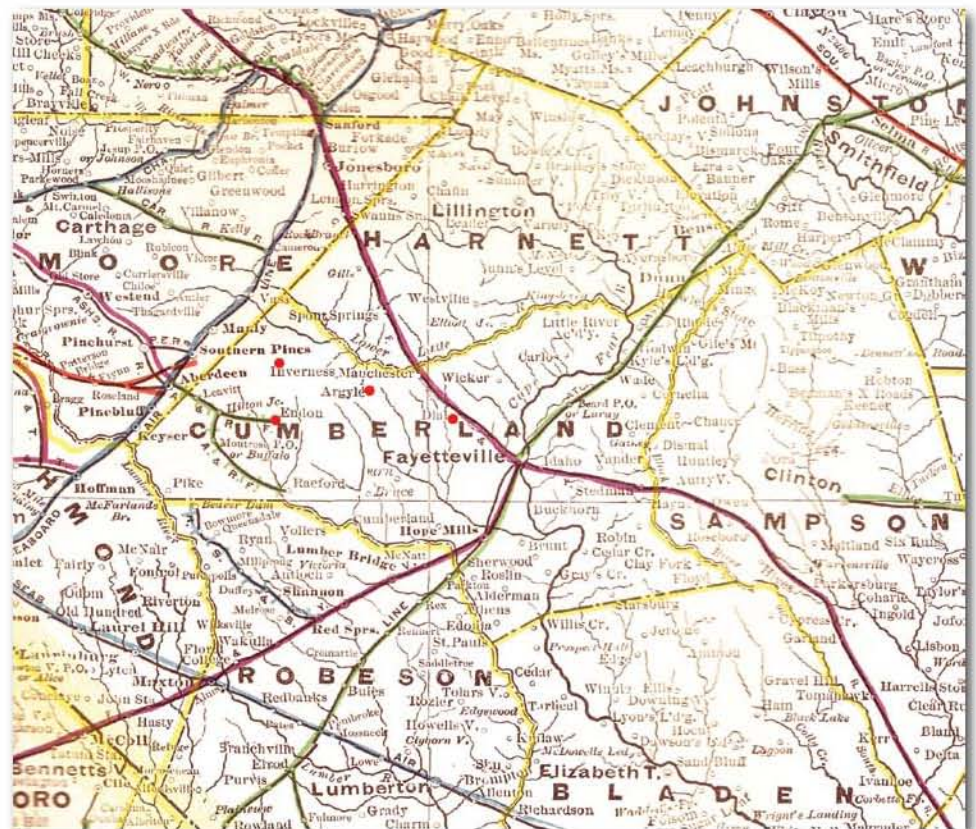
tury and was described as a frame structure. The third and present structure was built between 1845 and 1848. Its adjacent cemetery, surrounded with a sandstone wall, is an enduring memorial to those hardy people and is a virtual genealogy of Scots names. Figure 2 illustrates the Longstreet Presbyterian Church, virtually unaltered since 1848.

The emigrants named their settlements, perhaps nostalgically, for the homes they had left behind. A look at nineteenth century and current maps of the area in and around Fort Bragg reveals Scots family and place names such as Argyle, Dundarrach, Inverness, Montrose and Aberdeen. Indeed, at least some of the first generation of Scots settlers continued to speak, write and preach in Gaelic, the ancient language of Celtic Scotland. Ironically, the early emigrants from the western Isles and Scottish Highlands were free to continue their traditions in the New World at the same time that their culture, language and clan systems were being repressed in Scotland itself.

Another artifact of the cultural heritage of Fort Bragg is the retention of the original road names, although some have changed course to some degree over the past 90 years. Examples are Longstreet Road, Inverness Road, Raeford Vass Road, Manchester Road, the Yadkin Road, Blues Road, Chicken Road, and the Center Plank Road.

The postal history of the Fort Bragg area begins with the early settlers and the homes and communi-

ties they established. Pre-1918 maps of the area currently occupied by Fort Bragg show communities named Argyle and Inverness and post offices named Argyle, Inverness, Gillisville, Endon, Lumberdale, and Antonia. Dial is another pre-1918 post office that conjecturally may have been within the military



▲ **Figure 3.** In 1918, the area that became Fort Bragg was sparsely populated and approximately 170 families resided there. The only remaining post office in 1918 was at Argyle. This section of *Crum's Railway Atlas* of 1903 depicts post offices at Argyle, Inverness and Endon (red dots). The map depicts another short-lived post office, Dial, (1882-1903). It was possibly within the present military reservation. Gillisville (1885-1896) is not shown on this map, but does appear as a post office on the 1896 postal roads map published by the Postmaster General. (The author's collection).

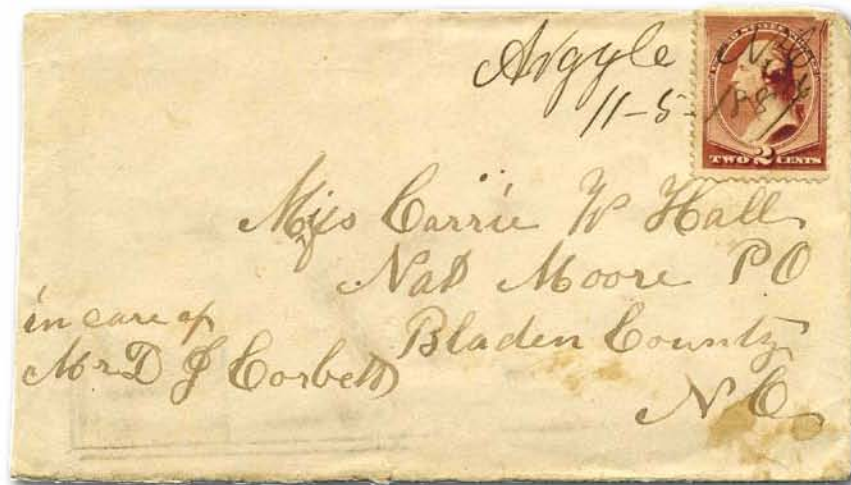


boundaries, but due to sketchy detail on period maps, this has not been validated. Figure 3 reproduces the area that became Fort Bragg as it appeared in the 1903 edition of *The Crum Railway Atlas*.

The first recorded post office on the Fort Bragg property was located near Longstreet Church, one of only two pre-1918

military post offices. While surviving postal material from Argyle is scarce, more survives than the other post offices known to have operated on the military reservation.

The *Post Office Directory*, published in 1857, detailed the revenue and relative importance of post offices. The compensation of the Argyle postmaster was \$5.00 and the net revenue to the Post Office Department was \$1.00. This shows the low volume of Argyle compared to that of Fayetteville, whose postmaster received compensation of \$1380.44 and which delivered



◀ **Figure 4.** November 5, 1887, manuscript cancel on cover mailed from Argyle to Nat Moore (Bladen County) addressed to Miss Carrie W. Hall. As there were several Hall families in the Argyle area, Miss Hall may have been a relative of one of the local residents. (Tony Crumbley collection).

structures remaining on the military reservation. It was named Munroe, probably after Malcolm Munroe, the first postmaster. It operated from February 16, 1832, until the name was changed to Argyle effective January 14, 1833. Argyle operated until August 15, 1918 when the government acquired the land. Argyle is documented on the 1913 *Rand*

a net revenue to the Post Office Department of \$1796.37. Inverness, the other post office on the Fort Bragg property in 1857, earned its postmaster only \$1.25 and sent a net profit of only \$.20 to the Post Office Department, the lowest in Cumberland County. Figures 4 and 5 illustrate mail sent from Argyle in the nineteenth century. Figure 4 is dated November 5, 1887 and is canceled with a manuscript cancel. Figure 5 is dated May 22, 1894, and

**Figure 5.** ▶

May 22, 1894, cover from Argyle to Wadesboro (Anson County). By this time postmaster Sarah J. Holt was using a handstamp cancellation. Argyle post office (1833-1918) was the longest-lived of the post offices that operated on what became Fort Bragg. This first post office that served the Argyle community opened on February 16, 1832. It was named Munroe and the post master was Malcolm Munroe. The name was changed to Argyle on January 14, 1833. (Tony Crumbley collection).



*McNally Railroad map of North and South Carolina* and other period maps. It was situated in the central part of the reservation.

Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Program archaeologists have located the possible site of one of the Argyle post offices at the farm commissary on the McLauchlin family property during the 1873-1898 period. Because of its location in one of the more populated areas of the reservation prior to 1918 and its proximity to Longstreet Presbyterian Church, Argyle certainly processed more mail than the other five confirmed pre-

is cancelled with a circular datestamp. Only cities such as Raleigh or Wilmington would have had free-standing post offices with full time postmasters. In rural areas, handling the mail was only a sideline for the postmasters, who were often merchants. The post office was a section of the mercantile store, depot or farm commissary.

The next post office on Fort Bragg began operations at Inverness on June 20, 1854, and continued operations until

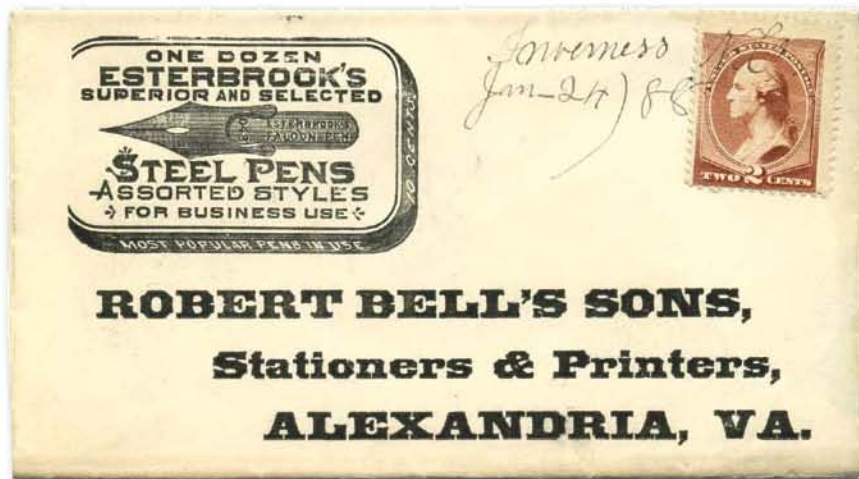
November 15, 1912. In 1911, that part of Cumberland County became a part of the newly formed Hoke County. The precise location of the post office structure is not confirmed, but military mapmakers retained the “Inverness Road” name that runs north to south on the western part of the Fort Bragg reservation. An 1884 topographical map of Cumberland County locates the post office near the Carthage Road between James Creek and Horse Creek. There are no remaining structures from the period because the War Department had

County listing of the *North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update*.

The Aberdeen and Rockfish Railroad was responsible for the next two post offices on the future reservation. This rail road was very important to the economy of the post-reconstruction Sandhills area. This remarkable accomplishment was started by Mr. John Blue, who owned considerable timberland in the area. The history of the Aberdeen and Rockfish Railroad Company relates that the line was begun in 1892 but was officially chartered on June 22, 1902. Mr. Blue was a Confederate

**Figure 6.** ▶

January 24, 1888, manuscript cancellation from the discontinued post office of Inverness located in the western part of the present day Fort Bragg Reservation at the intersection of Inverness and Manchester Roads. There are no visible traces of the community or the structures that existed before the area was acquired by the War Department in 1918. All pre-existing structures on the post were demolished by the government in 1923/24 with the exception of Longstreet and Sandy Grove Presbyterian Churches and a wood structure on the old Yadkin Road, that according to tradition, was a camp site of Lord Cornwallis during the Revolutionary War. (Tony Crumbley collection).



removed or destroyed the existing structures by 1923. The area is now unpopulated except for military training activities. The location of the Inverness Community is also documented on the 1913 *Rand McNally Railroad Map of North Carolina* and *Crum's Railroad Atlas* map of 1903. A number of the pre-reservation area family cemeteries are preserved in this area. Figure 6 illustrates a rare surviving cover that is dated January 24, 1888.

In order of establishment, Gillisville was the next post office to open on the future military reservation. It began services on November 3, 1885, with Murdoch A. Gillis as the first and only postmaster. On October 8, 1885, an application to establish a post office at Sandy Grove to be called Gillisville was sent to the Office of the First Assistant Postmaster General. “Sandy Grove” was a Presbyterian Church located about a quarter mile from the post office site. The original proposed location was described as a quarter mile west of Rockfish Creek, but the ultimate location was on the east side of Rockfish Creek, on the Center Plank Road which ran east to west from Fayetteville through the southern portion of contemporary Fort Bragg into Moore County. Mr. Gillis almost certainly operated the post office on his property and is buried in nearby Sandy Grove Church. This post office appears on the 1896 *Postal Route Map of the States of North and South Carolina*. It closed on December 4, 1896, and its operations were directed to Endon, three miles north. Gillisville served a small population and the only postal example located is a manuscript cancellation for July 12, 1886, that is illustrated in the Cumberland

veteran (Company B, 2nd Battalion, North Carolina Local Defense Troops) and an enterprising man of considerable vision. He built the railroad primarily to transport naval stores and lumber from the abundant long leaf forests in Cumberland County and, after 1911, Hoke County. It originated at present-day Aberdeen and ran east, eventually to Hope Mills and Fayetteville. Originally, the railroad transported forest products, but later developed into an important connector line and provided greatly needed passenger, freight and postal contract services. For his accomplishments, Mr. Blue was recognized as a highly respected and influential businessman.

The first post office on the Aberdeen and Rockfish railroad inside future Fort Bragg was Endon. It was located on a branch that ran northwards into the interior of the reservation. The railroad history states:

Soon the 40 pound standard gauge rails of the Aberdeen and Rockfish were threading their way into the Blue Family's “turpentine orchards” and tiny 4-4-0 locomotives were bringing back cargoes that had once trundled through woods on wagons. Short branch lines were extended to several areas to reach the timber, and by 1895, the line had reached “Endon,” an aptly named mill community said to have had three permanent residents and located at the end of the line near the headwaters of the Rockfish Creek.

Endon was three miles north of the Gillisville Post Office on the Center Plank Road. The narrative continued to say that, “in 1912 most of the trees were cut down and the turpentine busi-



ness waning, the Aberdeen and Rockfish abandoned its Endon line and used the rails to build a branch from Raeford south to Wagram.

The post office at Endon operated from March 25, 1896, until January 2, 1902, and the first postmaster was William D. Cameron. This office served the scattered families and possibly the railroad men, loggers and turpentine workers. The office was located adjacent to the railroad, perhaps out of the company depot. It apparently did not thrive and by the time the railroad closed the branch to Endon in 1912, the post office had been closed for 10 years. No example of a postal cover from Endon has been located for illustration, which confirms the short duration of operations and low volume of sales.

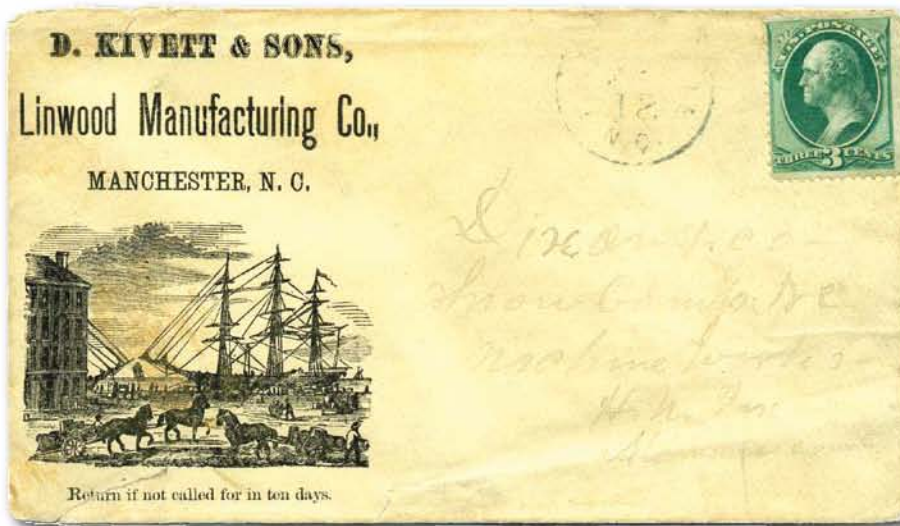
The second post office to open on the Aberdeen and Rockfish Railroad was Lumberdale. It was on a branch that began at Endon and ran five miles west to reach additional timber. Lumberdale was established at the end of the line. It

named Antonia and operated from December 22, 1885, until August 8, 1896. Its specific location is elusive, but the application for the Gillisville post office places the future site of Antonia as five miles east of the original proposed site of Gillisville. A map dated July 22, 1895, sent to the Topographical Office of the Post Office Department places Antonia on the Center Plank Road several miles east of the Gillisville Post Office. The map scale is not specified but a relative distance of five to six miles from Gillisville is suggested. Another clue to the location is found on a 1919 military land plat that identifies a property belonging to the "A. McDuffie Estate" just above the Center Plank Road. The first postmaster was Alexander McDuffie and this was presumably his property. The only other operator of the Antonia post office was Margaret A. McDuffie, which further suggests the office was on the McDuffie property, which runs three to four miles from the Gillisville site. Based on available information, period and modern maps, it is almost certain that Antonia was within the modern military boundaries.

Another post office that may have operated in the eastern part of the military reservation was Dial. It was open from May 3, 1882, until October 31, 1903, and the only recorded postmaster was James F. Martin. It is shown on both the 1913 and 1896 postal routes maps, but cannot be located on current maps. The pre-1918 maps do not provide sufficient detail to accurately place it, but it appears to have been on the Yadkin Road near the current military boundary. Dial is typical of many small, rural post offices in the past century and a half that were established and discontinued after a few years due to low volume, the disruption of the Civil War, demographic re-distribution, or postal service consolidation. No postal material from Dial is available for illustration probably because little, if any, has survived. Future research may discover its precise location.

Manchester was a community and post office that was not on the military property, but was close to the northeast boundary where Pope Field was situated. The Manchester post office operated from November 18, 1852, until October 1, 1948, when mail was sent to the nearby Spring Lake post office. Manchester was the closest post office to Camp Bragg and Pope Field and was certainly convenient to military personnel and their families. It was within walking distance of Pope Field, just over nine tenths of a mile. Figure 7 shows an early cover from Manchester to Snow Camp.

There was a post office at Montrose, a community immediately adjacent to the western boundary of the Fort Bragg



▲ **Figure 7.** 1870s cover from Manchester, a community located less than a mile from the northeast boundary of Camp Bragg and Pope Field, to Snow Camp (Alamance County). It opened as Silver Run on July 20, 1852 and was soon renamed Manchester effective November 18, 1852. While not actually on the post, Manchester was the closest post office to Pope Field and the Main Post. It was closed in 1948 and mail sent to Spring Lake. (Tony Crumbley collection.)

was originally proposed to be named "Britton," probably for the first postmaster, William H. Britton, but "Lumberdale" was the name approved by the U.S. Post Office. This remote post office operated from June 11, 1902, to March 31, 1908. Lumberdale opened only five months after Endon closed, which reflects the shift in lumbering activity from Endon to Lumberdale. Both of these offices served small populations for relatively short periods and postal material is rare. No examples of postal material from has been located for illustration.

The next post office to be identified within the future military area was located on the Center Plank Road. It was



**Figure 8.** ▶

May 21, 186x (probably 1862), from Kinston, to Miss Harriet N. Bethune at Montrose, a western Cumberland County post office that operated from 1813 to 1910. It was discontinued in 1837 but was back in operation at least by 1857. It is located approximately 200 meters from the Fort Bragg boundary on the Center Plank Road, an important east-west road that originated in Fayetteville and passed through the pre-war reservation. The postmaster at Montrose during the Confederate administration up to April 30, 1865 was L. Bethune (probably Mr. Lauchlin Bethune). Miss Bethune may have been a relation of the postmaster. (The author's collection.)



military reservation, where the Plank Road exits the military reservation. Prior to 1910, undoubtedly it served the people who lived in that part of Cumberland County. It is included for that reason. Montrose still exists as a place name at the intersection on Highway 211 approximately 200 meters from the military boundary. The Montrose post office was open from October 1, 1813, until January 15, 1910. Although it was open for 97 years, service must have been limited as no example mailed from Montrose could be located for illustration. Figure 8 illustrates an example mailed in May, 186(?) from Kinston, North Carolina to

be found. Montrose and Manchester were adjacent to the base and located on major roads. They are of interest because they served the population on the future base.

Postal operations at Camp Bragg began with the arrival of the first troops in 1918. A branch of the Fayetteville post office opened on the cantonment and mail was transported twice daily to and from Fayetteville. The branch office continued until September 1, 1921, when the Post Office Department established an independent post office of the fourth class with Richard D. Williford as postmaster. Another date recorded for establishment is July 28, 1921. Only a little over a year later when the War Department authorized the camp to become a permanent facility, the post office



◀ **Figure 9.** October 6, 1922, letter from soldier in the 5th Field Artillery Regiment to Kittrell (Vance County) showing the scarce "Camp Bragg" Columbia machine cancellation. The Camp Bragg post office existed only from July 26, 1921 to November 1, 1922. The 5th Field Artillery was one of the earliest units stationed at Camp Bragg, arriving on Thanksgiving Day, 1920. This letter was mailed less than a month before the camp was re-named "Fort Bragg." (Tony Crumbley collection.)

Montrose.

To summarize postal operations prior to the military acquisition of Camp Bragg in 1918, there are six confirmed post offices. They are Munroe (1832-1833), renamed Argyle (1833-1918), Inverness (1854-1912), Gillisville (1885-1896), Endon (1896-1902) and Lumberdale (1902-1908). There is a high degree of confidence that Antonia (1885-1896) was within the present military boundaries. Dial (1882-1903) is a candidate for inclusion, but this is conjectural until location information can

cancellation accordingly changed also to "Fort Bragg" effective September 17, 1922, with Leo P. Averitt as acting postmaster. Figure 9 shows a shortlived Camp Bragg cancellation and Figure 10 illustrates a scarce real photo post card from Camp Bragg.

During the period between the world wars, the post complement remained small and postal traffic was modest compared to the volume it would process after the huge expansion beginning in 1940. An undated but circa 1924 fact book about

**Figure 10.** ▶

A scarce, unused, real photo post card from the Camp Bragg period that lasted from 1921 until it became a permanent installation in 1922. The card shows the gun crew of a 240 millimeter howitzer. At the time, this was the heaviest and largest field artillery piece possessed by the army. It could hurl a 345 pound shell 12 miles. Mary Bayard Wootten, a prominent early 20th century North Carolina photographer, is known to have operated a studio at Fort Bragg during the 1921-1930 period. Additional research may determine if some of the early real photograph post cards taken there are products of her studio. (The author's collection).



◀ **Figure 11a.** The reverse of an early Fort Bragg post card dated August 15, 1924, with Columbia machine cancellation addressed to Wilmington (New Hanover County). During the early interwar period Fort Bragg remained a small field artillery training post.



**Figure 11b.** ▶

The front of the same card showing a proud gun crew posing with their 155 millimeter howitzer. This rough and ready crew were from Battery F, 117th Field Artillery, one of the first units to be stationed at Camp Bragg and it arrived on January 9, 1921. Note the variety of dress. (The author's collection)



Fort Bragg provides detailed information concerning postal operations for those first years. It relates that, "The volume of business transacted at the local post office kept increasing so that after a check in April of 1922, the office was raised to third class, a presidential office and given the highest rating of this class." The guide further states that a post office is rated annually on its postal receipts and the Camp and early Fort Bragg receipts compared favorably with that "of a good-sized town." In the early 1920s, the post office at Fort Bragg received mail deliveries from six trains daily and sent mail out

by five daily trains. Mail was sent and received twice a day to and from the Fayetteville Post Office. By 1924, all mail was transported to Fort Bragg by the Cape Fear Railroad.

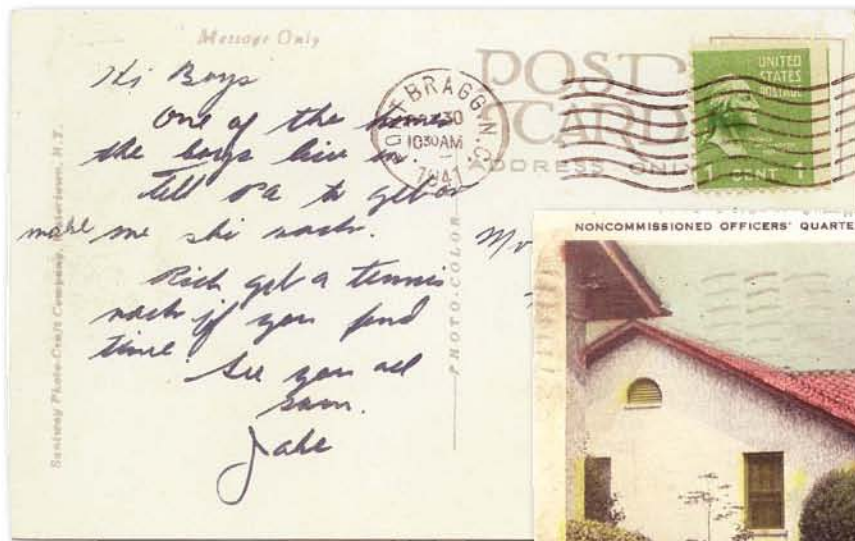
For the 1923 calendar year, the Fort Bragg Post Office conducted the following business operations:

Money Orders issued for a value of	\$116,206.66
Postal Savings:	\$ 20,715.00
Treasury Certificates (approximately:	\$ 5,000.00
Stamp Sales	\$ 7,296.59

There were 609,550 pieces of letters and cards handled,



156,585 pieces of 2nd, 3rd, and 4th class mail pieces processed and 3,480 pieces of mail handled outside of pouches or sacks. Figure 11 illustrates an early Fort Bragg post card dated August 15, 1924, addressed to Wilmington (New Hanover County). At this time during the early interwar period, Fort Bragg remained a small field artillery training



post. The card shows a proud gun crew posing with their 155 millimeter howitzer. This rough and ready crew were from Battery F, 117th Field Artillery. This was one of the first units to be stationed at Camp Bragg and it arrived on January 9, 1921.

The Fort Bragg post office was discontinued on June 30, 1941, as an independent station and operations on a post office level were transferred to nearby Fayetteville. The Fort Bragg postal facility became a branch of the Fayetteville Post Office. The “Fort Bragg” canceling device remained in use for mail posted on the base.

Soldiers posted and received their mail at their company, or for artillery units, battery orderly rooms. Mail was also posted at the Fort Bragg post office or in the surrounding towns such as Manchester, Spring Lake (1948-present), Fayetteville, Southern Pines, Aberdeen, and Raeford. Soldiers in the field on maneuvers received their mail at the ever popular “mail call” when mail was distributed by the company clerk or non-commissioned officers. Mail Call was very important to morale and the handling of personal affairs prior to the prevalence of personal transportation, cell phones or emails. Until the 1960s and 1970s, soldiers were dependent on mail or the pay telephone for communication and, unless they were privileged through rank or opportunity, lived in barracks. Off base privileges were strictly controlled.

When World War II began in Europe on September 1,

1939, the United States soon became involved by providing Lend-Lease and other support to Great Britain while continuing raw material restrictions to Japan as a result of that country’s expansionism in China. It soon became evident to the Roosevelt administration that the United States was unprepared for war should the country become involved in the widening global conflict. On August 27, 1940, Congress authorized a one year call-up of the National Guard and within the next year, approximately 300,000 guardsmen were activated for federal service. The call-up was designed to last a year, but subsequent events



▲▶ Figure 12. The front and reverse of an October 30, 1941, post card to Greenfield, Massachusetts, with an International machine cancellation. This post card is typical of the many cards from the pre-war build up period that depicted military activities. It was published by the Santway Photo-Craft Company, but many post cards of the Fort Bragg World War II period were published by the Turlington Publishing Company. These were a product of Henry Alan Turlington, who operated the Turlington Photo Shop during the 1930s and 40s in Fayetteville. By 1941, the Fayetteville Post Office assumed responsibility for the greatly increased postal traffic generated by the military build-up, but the Fort Bragg cancellation continued to be used on mail posted from the Fort Bragg branch office. (The author’s collection).

kept these units on duty “for the duration” of World War II. A popular refrain of the federalization of the National Guard was “good bye dear, I’ll be back in a year!” This call-up and the re-instituted draft resulted in a rapid expansion of the military, particularly the army. Beginning in 1940, Fort Bragg engaged in large construction projects to build new barracks and facilities for the ever-increasing number of new troops ordered there for training.

On June 1, 1940, there were only 5,406 officers and enlisted men stationed at Fort Bragg but following the rapid expansion of the army in 1940 and 1941, the garrison had increased to over 67,000 troops. This does not include civilian employees. In a nine month period in 1940 and 1941, Fort Bragg grew

from 376 buildings of various types to 3,155 buildings. The post infrastructure had expanded greatly to provide more housing and logistical support for the incoming troops. A post card from the pre-war period of expansion is shown in Figure 12 dated October 30, 1941.

Consequently, postal traffic increased proportionally during the early 1940s. This is evidenced by the comparatively large numbers of postal material dated 1940 and later. Mail call was, and remains, an important part of the daily routine and

write “free” in the upper right corner of the mail and his or her name, rank, rating and service in the upper left corner. Most of the mail sent by soldiers from Fort Bragg during WWII was sent without postage and marked accordingly. Post cards were a convenient way for busy troops to keep the family and friends informed of the soldier’s location and his news.

Fort Bragg served a vital role in WWII in the organization and training of countless units. The 9th Infantry Division trained there before deploying to the European Theatre. The county’s fledgling airborne and glider forces grew into maturity at Fort Bragg. Its original mission as a field artillery training base continued through the Field Artillery Replacement Training Center (FARTC), that provided basic and advanced training for many thousands of artillery troops throughout the 1930s and 1940s.

There were several nearby satellite bases that supported Fort Bragg’s training mission. These were Camp Mackall, an air-

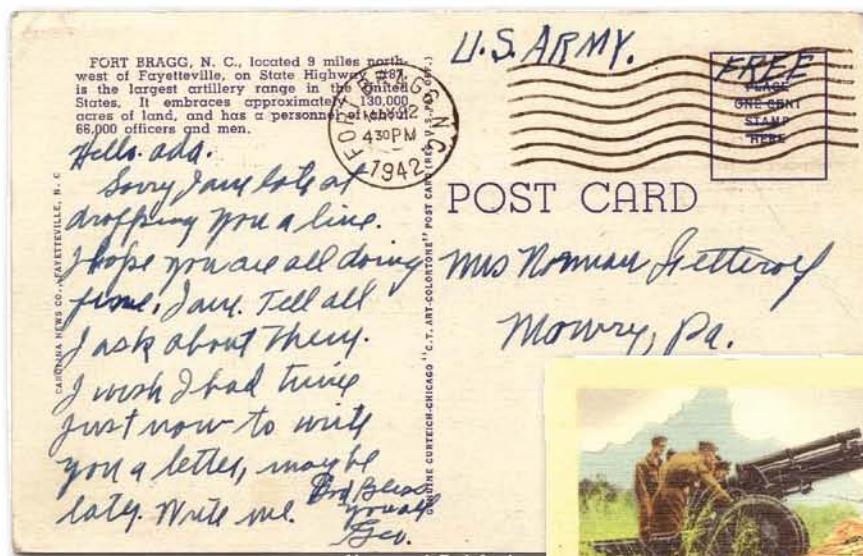


Figure 13. ▲▶

May 12, 1942, post card from Fort Bragg to Norway, Pennsylvania, with an International machine cancellation. The card illustrates the free franking privilege instituted in 1942 after the U.S. formally entered the war. This Curt Teich & Co. card was published by the Carolina News Co. of Fayetteville, N.C. (The author’s collection).



essential to morale. This was even more important in the 1940s, prior to the convenience of today’s communication options. A large variety of post cards depicting garrison and field activities was available and these cards are easily available to the postal collector today. The Carolina News Company of Fayetteville published a large variety of these post cards. Figure 13 illustrates a card from the wartime period, when military personnel were allowed to send their first class mail free. The free franking privilege was established on July 10, 1917, under General Orders No. 11, which specified that no postage would be charged for letters sent from France to the United States. This practice was ended by October 20, 1920. Postal regulations allowed free franking for military personnel again under an Act of June 6, 1932 and revised during WWII that granted free postage for active duty personnel for first-class mail sent to the U.S., its possessions and territories. The soldier or sailor had to

borne and glider training center west of the Fort Bragg reservation in Moore, Richmond, and Scotland Counties and the Laurinburg-Maxton Field in Scotland County. Knollwood Field was located in Pinehurst and was an Army Air Corps training facility.

Fort Bragg and adjoining Pope Air force Base remain significant parts of the nation’s military capacity and Fort Bragg today is still the “Home of the Airborne” and center of special operations forces. It is also an important training site for reserve and National Guard units. Postal operations are managed through the Fayetteville Post Office, but the needs of the military and dependent personnel generate a large volume of mail to and from Fort Bragg. A colorful variety of post cards are still sold and mailed from the base. The history of the post is vividly depicted in post cards, which chronicle the changes in uniforms, architecture, facilities, equipment, activities and mili-





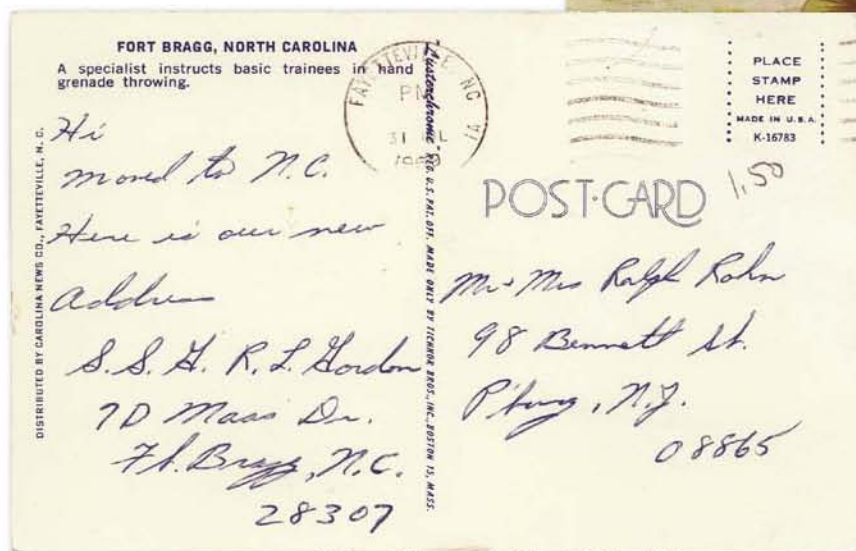
◀ **Figure 14.** The post-WWII period is reflected in this photograph from the Korean War era. In the 1950s, army uniforms and equipment were virtually unchanged from that of WWII. This 1951 dated photograph of basic training at Fort Bragg was published in 1981 by the American Postcard Co., Inc. (The author's collection).

tary technology from the early 1920s until today. World War I uniforms and Spartan barracks have given way to desert and digital camouflage, modern living facilities and the latest technology. There are over 160 post cards documented from the World War II period alone. This testifies to the market created by the large number of troops stationed and trained there for post cards to send home to relatives and friends.

After World War II ended, the army was substantially decreased in size and although



◀ **Figure 15.** The front and reverse of a post card dated July 31, 1969, from Fort Bragg to New Jersey with machine cancellation. Card shows hand grenade training during basic training. (The author's collection).



the Cold War had begun, there was relative peace until the Korean War started on June 25, 1950. The 82nd Airborne

forces. Figures 14 illustrates this training. Fort Bragg's next period of expansion occurred during the Vietnam War period. Basic training was established again at the post and it became a center for Special Forces training. Post cards were now of the chrome finish type that depict newer weapons and equipment issued in the 1960s. Figure 15

shows a post card from the 1960s reflecting training at Fort Bragg.

Fort Bragg has evolved from home to a small field artillery force of horse and mule drawn artillery to a fully mechanized force during WWII as well as the home of the army's airborne and Special Forces. Fort Bragg, including the Camp Mackall ancillary facility, has grown to 161,000 acres. It has a garrison of approximately 45,000 soldiers and a proportionate dependent population. Based on population, it is the largest military base in the country. Fort Bragg supports a 21st century army based on mobility and advanced technology. Soldiers now have an array of personal communication options. In spite of these advanced technologies, postal services remain as essential to personal and official communications as they did since the Camp Bragg post office opened in 1918. ■

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<http://www.aberdeen-rockfish.com/a-r-history.html>, "Aberdeen and Rockfish History"  
[http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/statepostalhistory/north-carolina\\_postmarkcatalog.html](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/statepostalhistory/north-carolina_postmarkcatalog.html)

For additional references, contact the author.

## Mystery Cover



While there were no responses to the question of the location of the Lakewood post office, Greg Ciesielski wrote that there was a recently published monograph about the Powell Brothers, whose name appears on the printed envelope, titled, *The Postal History of the Powell Bros. Livestock Emporium*. This monograph illustrates a collection of covers related to the very large livestock operation of the Powell Brothers. The envelope style of the mystery cover was one of several different advertising envelopes that they sent out for return mail and orders. While the Lakewood postmark appears to read "N.C.," it is in fact from New Jersey. In 1892, there was a Lakewood post office only in Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Rhode Island, but not in North Carolina. Other covers from New Jersey are known showing only the bottom curved portion of the "J," which is easily confused with the letter "C."

## New Mystery Marking

This enlarged postmark (30 mm original size) was applied at the Shiloh (Camden County) post office.

Can you explain the purpose of the marking?

Send your answers to Tony Crumbley or Dick Winter





## A Weather Report Postal Card

by Scott Troutman

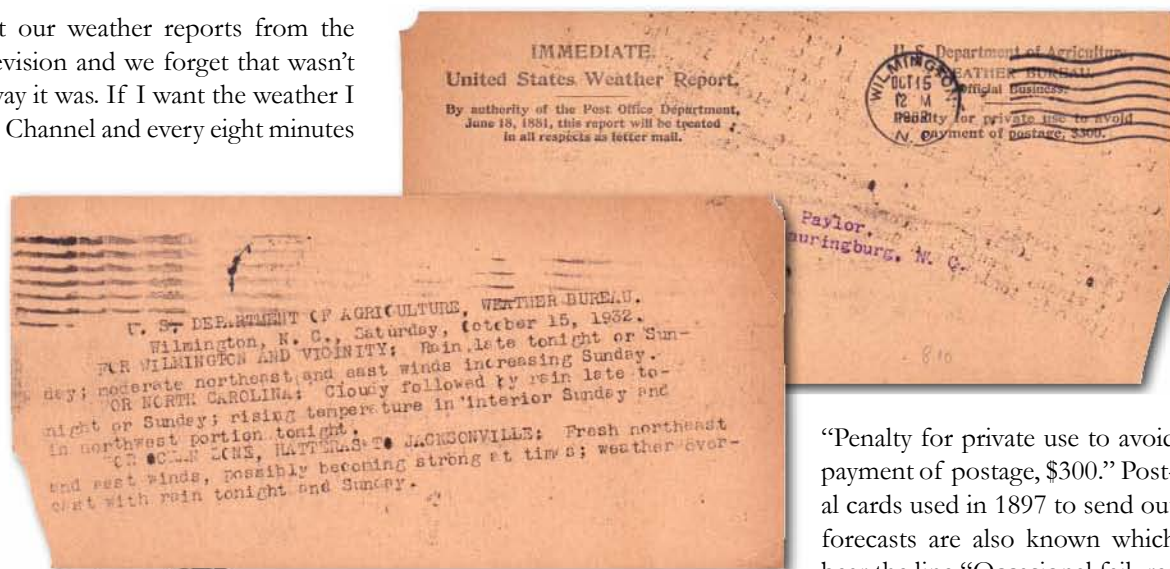
Today we get our weather reports from the radio or television and we forget that wasn't always the way it was. If I want the weather I turn on the Weather Channel and every eight minutes a local forecast comes on. As a child growing up in the Washington, D.C. metro area, I could dial a phone number and get a weather report (and the more important school closings in winter). But before the 1850s in the United

States, the weather forecast came down to peering out the window and seeing if there was a red sky in the morning or night, and using the old saw: "Red sky in the morning, Sailor take warning; Red sky at night, Sailors delight." Or you could look at the moon to see if it had a ring, a sign that rain was likely. Many went by the aches and pains in arthritic joints to predict rain. For long range predictions you consulted your farmers almanac or in the fall checked the wooly worms to see if they were more brown or black (still done at Appalachian State's Center for Wooly Worm Research).

The government didn't take much interest in the weather until the 1850s. Then the Department of War began to gather weather data for its purposes. In time this was put under the Signal Office of the Department of War and free franked envelopes created to communicate the information. In the 1870s volunteers were recruited around the nation to report weather information. They were provided with embossed War Department envelopes to send in their weekly Form 29 reports to headquarters in Washington, D.C.

One group that was very interested in the weather was farmers. On July 1, 1891, Congress transferred the job of gathering and informing the public on the weather to a new agency, the Weather Bureau, established under the Department of Agriculture. Curiously, the War Department envelopes continued to be used for sending and receiving weather information until July 5, 1884, when they were discontinued.

These were replaced with official business envelopes and postal cards which passed through the mail without franking. The official envelopes and postal cards bore the indicia,



"Penalty for private use to avoid payment of postage, \$300." Postal cards used in 1897 to send out forecasts are also known which bear the line "Occasional failures must be expected but generally

the forecast will be accurate." The forecasts on these cards were sent to local weather bureaus, newspapers and radio stations for dissemination to the public.

Illustrated are the front and reverse of an oversized postal card from the weather station at Wilmington (New Hanover County) to Lauringburg [sic] (Scotland County) on October 15, 1932, with the local forecast for the region:

FOR WILMINGTON AND VICINITY: Rain late tonight or Sunday: moderate northeast and east winds increasing Sunday.

FOR NORTH CAROLINA : Cloudy followed by rain late tonight or Sunday; rising temperature in interior Sunday and in northwest portion tonight.

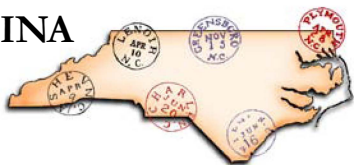
FOR OCEAN, HATTERAS TO JACKSONVILLE: Fresh northeast and east winds, possibly becoming strong at times; weather overcast with rain tonight and Sunday.

I do not know W.C. Paylor, the recipient at Laurinburg, but suspect he worked for a newspaper or radio station. This is a fairly late use of these postal cards, which were eventually phased out as quicker methods (teletype, telephone, etc.) came into use.

Despite the huge volume of these postal cards and envelopes that were used over the years, there was no reason to save them and most were trashed, making them quite difficult to find.

My thanks to friend Joe Crosby for information on the subject. For a quick reference and examples of the early weather related embossed envelopes and postal card look at Tom Fortunado's website on collecting weather related philatelic material, <http://www.fortunecity.com/olympia/tilden/186/weather>. ■

## NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN



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SEPTEMBER 1

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## North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update

The following counties have been prepared  
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northcarolina\\_postmarkcatalog.html:](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/statepostalhistory/northcarolina_postmarkcatalog.html)

**Alamance through Franklin and Guilford**

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

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